

River Aire, Bingley

Moderate Challenge Trail Please be aware that the grading of this trail was set according to normal water levels and conditions. Weather and water level/conditions can change the nature of trail within a short space of time so please ensure you check both of these before heading out.



Route Summary

Be surprised at this picturesque industrial landscape of this part of the Aire Valley. The trip is essentially one of contrasts from the moving water of the [Aire](#) to the placid waters of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, from the industrial mill chimneys to the rural landscape on the fringe of Bingley.

Set in the foothills of the Pennines the busy little town of Bingley is a good site from which to undertake a canoe trip. [Bingley](#) is a small town on the fringe of industrial West Yorkshire, Keighley being upriver, and the conurbation including Shipley and Bradford to the east. Much of Bingley is an island set between the river in the south and the Leeds-Liverpool Canal to the north. The industrial landscape of this

Distance: 3.75 miles, 2.5 miles on river, the canal back is 1.25 miles

Approximate Time: 1-2 Hours

The time has been estimated based on you travelling 3 – 5mph (a leisurely pace using a recreational type of boat).

Type of Trail: Circular

Waterways Travelled: River Aire and Leeds Liverpool Canal

Type of water: Urban and rural river and canal.

Portages and Locks: There are three portages: - two weirs on the river, and one set of locks on the canal. See full details in useful information.

Nearest Town: Bingley

Vehicle Shuttle Required: Yes (but you can walk between the start and finish points)

Start: Beside the River Aire above Bingley Weir, SE 1043 3947 Bingley BD16 2QB

Finish: Canal beside new flats in Bingley; SE 1192 3912 BD16 2TW

O.S. Maps: OS Landranger Map (1:50 000) Leeds & Bradford Sheet 104

Licence information: A licence is required to paddle on this waterway. See full details in Useful Information below.

Local Facilities: Toilets and cafes in Bingley town

part of the Aire Valley provides a picturesque and pleasantly surprising recreational canoeing experience.

Start Directions

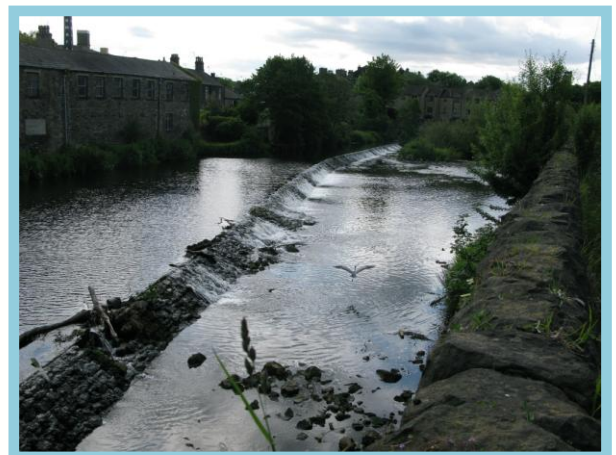
Beside the River Aire above Bingley Weir: To reach the start, take the A650 road from Bradford to Keighley. This main road runs through the centre of Bingley and forms part of the main street. Turn off the A650 opposite Bingley Fire Station onto the A629 road to Halifax (this is a small road that climbs high over the hills to Halifax). Here, you will enter a quaint, narrow street called Millgate, with the Old White Horse public house on the right. Within 50ft the road crosses the River Aire on a stone bridge. Immediately after crossing the bridge take the first right turn, opposite the Brown Cow Inn, into a street of terraced houses. Turn immediately right again and follow the track down to where a gantry carries pipes over the river just above the weir. This is the launching point, please ensure that vehicles are parked at the side of this track, and there is only room for one vehicle. Do not obstruct as access is required to premises.

Trail Description

The beauty of this trip is that the start and the finish are within ten minutes walk of each other. It is advisable to take all vehicles to the finishing point and walk back to the start.

A good launching point is twenty feet or so upstream from the metal gantry across the river. Once afloat and drifting downstream, Bingley weir is encountered. If there is enough water, shoot this weir on the far right. If there isn't, canoes can easily be carried over. A stopper with a long tow-back develops at the weir base in high water. Always check the weir before you get on. Once past the weir and under the road bridge, the river narrows somewhat. Overhanging trees on the banks, whilst making the trip more picturesque, do pose a potential problem particularly in high water, for the unwary.

The best course is down the centre of the river. A quarter of a mile downstream from the start, the river passes through Myrtle Park. In extreme flood conditions, the metal bridge here can appear very low. A quarter of a mile after this bridge and after rounding a bend, Harden Beck joins the Aire on the right. At the same point there is an island in the centre of the river, this should be passed on the right hand side. It's fun manoeuvring round the rocks here in low water. Almost half a mile beyond this point one reaches Cottingley Bridge, which carries the main A650 Bradford-Bingley road over the river. Just over a quarter of a mile below this bridge is a shingle bank. The current flows sharply to the left and under some trees - take care here, particularly with inexperienced paddlers - it is potentially dangerous.



The next major landmark down the river is Hirst Wood Railway Bridge. After the bridge, the river swings to the left, an eddy on the right enables an inspection of the water ahead. Check the broken weir and stepping stones, with small standing waves. Rocks lie below the surface. These rapids mark the end of the river section.

Just after the rapids the Seven Arches Aqueduct can be seen. Land on the right hand bank just after the small shingle bank on the left, well upstream of the aqueduct and preferably before the sewage works on the left. A track takes one to a small footbridge over a stream and up onto the top of the aqueduct. Total paddling time to this point is approximately one hour.

The Seven Arches Aqueduct is an impressive structure and carries the Leeds-Liverpool Canal over the River Aire. The aqueduct was designed by Mr. J Longbottom, who also designed the famous three and five locks at Bingley. This section of the canal was opened in 1774.

The cruise along the canal back to Bingley is the most tranquil and leisurely part of the journey and disturbed only by the occasional barge or water bus. The canal takes a much shorter and more direct route than the river: from the aqueduct the journey takes about one hour. The first and only obstacle is Dowley Gap Locks, less than a quarter of a mile from Seven Arches Aqueduct. A portage round is necessary. Paddling down the canal the scenery becomes increasingly industrial as the centre of Bingley is approached. The end of the journey is marked by the metro water bus stop on the left hand bank.

Finish Directions

Canal beside new flats in Bingley: Access to the finishing point is to turn down the track, turn left opposite the Brown Cow, over the bridge, turn right at the traffic lights into Bingley Main St., follow the road until a set of traffic lights are reached almost opposite Bradford & Bingley building society on the right. Turn left at these lights into Ferncliffe Rd., then take the first left into Chapel Lane and the first right down Midland Hill into the car park at the bottom. This used to be next to the canal, until someone built a new dual-carriageway, the new A650 right through the town! Access to the finish is now over a high footbridge. A metro water bus stop on the canal bank marks the end of the canal trip, and a walk over the footbridge is now required back to vehicles. The walk back to the start takes approximately ten minutes.



Useful Information

The waterways in this trail are managed by Canal and Rivers Trust and require paddlers to hold a licence. If you are an existing British Canoeing member the good news is that your membership includes an annual licence for the waterways covered within this trail – please ensure you take your membership card with you on the water as this acts as your licence, if stopped with no licence, you will be at risk of being fined.

You can buy a licence directly from [Canal and Rivers Trust](#) for this waterway or by becoming a British Canoeing member you'll have a licence to cover you for a whole year. A British Canoeing membership gives you a whole range of benefits including licenses to paddle on 4500km of Britain's waterways and Civil Liability Insurance, worth up to £10 Million. If you are planning to paddle regularly this will save you great deal of money and hassle alongside having peace of mind. For more information on British Canoeing membership please [click here](#)

High water is considered anything above 1.0m on the Environment Agency gauge at Cottingley Bridge. The weir at the get-on is potentially hazardous, forming a long and powerful tow-back in high levels. Always check the weir before you launch. Please note that the weirs have many overhanging trees near the river bank and these may pose a potential problem for the inexperienced or, wary paddler, particularly at high water levels. Check the first weir from the bank before you launch.

For river level advice please visit

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/riverlevels/default.aspx>

[River Level Advice](#)

Other Nearby Visitor Attractions

Bradford – National Media Museum, Salt's Mills, Saltaire World Heritage Site, Alhambra Theatre. Please click [here](#)

CANOEING SAFETY ADVICE

Spending an afternoon or day canoeing on a Canoe Trail can be a fun way to experience nature, help you to stay fit and healthy and enjoy spending time with friends and family. It can also be a dangerous journey, if appropriate safety guidelines are overlooked. To help make sure you remain safe at all times, read on to see our canoeing safety advice guidelines.

Wear appropriate clothing

Always wear shoes. Rocks, rough terrain and river beds present serious hazards to boaters without suitable clothing. Nearly 90% of all boating injuries are attributed to lack of proper footwear. Other canoe safe clothing includes hats, gloves, additional dry clothing, and layered items which can easily be removed. Take or wear a windproof top and course always wear a buoyancy aid - for children make sure the crotch straps are used.

Be sure to:

- Know the weather forecast and check the water conditions before you set out canoeing. There is an [Environment Agency](#) website where information concerning river levels can be found. We recommend checking this before heading out as the river levels can rise and fall quite quickly in wet or dry conditions.
- Observe navigation rules for this waterway.
- Check to see if there are any events on the waterways when you wish to travel.
- Check that your equipment is well maintained and ready for the water.
- Check that your boat has the required buoyancy to keep it afloat in the event of a capsize



Photo by James Carnegie

ALWAYS be certain to let others know where you're going and when you're expected to return.

MAKE SURE that the journey you plan is within your capabilities.

MAKE SURE you never paddle alone.

Equipment Checklist

Use the canoeing safety advice checklist below to make sure you have everything you need:

- Boat
- Paddle
- Buoyancy Aid
- Bailer/sponge
- Small First Aid Kit
- Phone (in a waterproof bag)
- Drinking water and snacks
- Suitable clothing for the weather

Environmental Good Practice

One of the great things about paddling a canoe trail is enjoying the journey and different environments that you paddle through. So when you are out on the water please consider the following things to help keep the wonderful waterways and environment as you found them and to avoid accidentally disturbing wildlife and their habitats.

- Take your **litter** home with you
- Keep **noise** to a minimum
- Where possible keep to any **designated paths or launching points**.
- **Do not "seal" launch** or drag boats to avoid wearing away natural banks. Float your canoe for launching, lift out when landing and carry it to and from the water.
- Canoe a **safe distance away from wildlife**. If you see signs of disturbance move away quietly.
- Familiarise yourself with the local area, its **sensitive places and protected areas**
- On rivers, **avoid paddling over gravel banks** in low water conditions – they may contain fish spawn.
- Ensure you **don't remove or damage any plants or animals** from the waterway as they may be protected or harmful if transferred to other catchments
- When clearing litter left by others, **handle it with care**.
- **Be the eyes and ears on the water**. Report pollution, wildlife problems, damage, incidents etc to the relevant authorities: **Canal & River Trust**, Emergencies: 0800 47 999 47
RSPCA for wildlife and animals in distress: 0300 1234 999 (24 hours)
Environment Agency: 0800 80 70 60 (24 hours)



CHECK, CLEAN, DRY

Help minimise the spread of invasive aquatic species and disease by following the campaign advice before putting your canoe and equipment in and out of the water (some invasive species can survive in damp or wet conditions for five or six days on water recreation clothing and equipment).

- **CHECK** all your equipment and clothing for living organisms and plants fragments. Pay particular attention to areas that are damp and hard to inspect.
- **CLEAN** and wash all equipment, clothing and footwear thoroughly away from water source. If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them. When practical, completely dry out all equipment and clothing before going to a new site.
- **DRY** all equipment and clothing - some species can live for many days in moist conditions. Dry your kit with towels. Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

Canoeists and kayakers take environmental concerns very seriously and already follow existing voluntary environmental codes of conduct. You can find more information about canoeing and the environment in British Canoeing's two publications covering inland and coastal paddling 'You and Your Canoe'. Both are available on the [British Canoeing website](#).

*We have taken great care to ensure the currency, accuracy and reliability of this information. We cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions but where such are brought to our attention, the information will be amended accordingly. Users should be aware that environmental conditions outside of our control can change the nature of the Trail within a short space of time. It is recommended that weather and water conditions are checked beforehand, and tide timetables where applicable. **This trail was last reviewed in January 2013***

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