

# Bridgewater Canal - Castlefield to Little Bollington

**Level of Trail: Easy** (Please be aware that the grading of this trail was set according to normal water levels and good environmental conditions. Environmental conditions can change the nature of the trail within a short space of time. Please check weather and water level/conditions before heading out.)

## Route Summary

Paddle from an inner city conservation area, near the city of Manchester, along the first canal in England to be built under an act of parliament. The route passes by an eclectic array of semi-derelict buildings and the wonderfully regenerated area of Salford Quays; now home to the BBC, the Lowry Theatre and the Imperial War Museum. You also pass Old Trafford football ground, home to Manchester United.

## Start Directions

Access the canal by walking down the side of the Coal Wharf Car Park. Put in between the moored barges and head off out of the basin, turning left towards Salford Quays.

## Alternative Start and Finish

Trafford Rowing Club, Walton Park Leisure Centre, Raglan Road, Sale, M33 4AG.

## Description

Castlefield, your start point, is an area of extreme historical significance. In AD79 the Roman fort of Mamucium was established here. This fort was to give its name to Manchester and has been partially reconstructed for the public to view.

As you start your journey you will notice the Manchester Metrolink high above you. This runs off towards Sale and Altrincham and will keep you company for most of the journey.

**Distance:** 11 miles or 6 miles to Trafford Rowing Club

**Approximate Time:** 2.5 – 3.5 Hours

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

**Waterways Travelled:** Bridgewater Canal

**Type of Water:** Canal

**Type of Trail:** One way

**Portages and Locks:** None

**Nearest Town:** Salford, Sale and Stretford

**Start:** Castle Street, Castlefield, Manchester, M3 4LZ.  
Parking fees apply.

**Finish:** Large lay-by, on the A56, at Ye Olde No. 3 Public house, Lymm Road, Little Bollington, WA14 4TA.

**O.S. Sheets:**

**Licence Information:** A licence is required to paddle this waterway. Further information can be found in the '[Useful Information](#)' section of this document.

**Local Facilities:** There are a range of facilities along the route, including a variety of shops and canal side

Once you pass under the A57 Mancunian Way and leave the restored Castlefield area, an area of industrial waste is entered. The Manchester Ship Canal is never far away and after a mile you pass Pamona Lock, on your right, which is the connection of the two canals. After this the two canals move away from one another and the impressive home of Manchester United soon towers above the canal on the left.

After passing a massive container terminal the canal splits. To the northwest (right) is Worsley and Leigh, southwest (left) is Stretford and Sale. You are taking the left hand fork.

The busy Manchester Metrolink again joins your journey and both transport links continue side by side for 5 miles to Timperley.

The Bridgewater Way also begins here, with numerous dwellings and a refurbished towpath, providing many access and egress points as it makes its way through Stretford and Sale.

At Stretford there is a small, busy marina surrounded by a pleasant modern housing estate. It is also home to Stretford Cruising Club. Here it is difficult to imagine this is still part of the Greater Manchester urban sprawl.

After around 4.5 miles you pass over the River Mersey and under the vast M60 motorway flyover. The canal and towpath is busy with boaters, fishermen, walkers and cyclists. You will also pass a couple of canal side pubs; all proving the Bridgewater Way project a great success.

Having passed through Sale and a large cemetery on the right, you then pass the Trafford Rowing Club, which shares facilities with Walton Park Sports Centre. There is parking here to access or egress from the canal and this is your alternative start or finish point.

There is evidence and warning notices, to users of the canal, of the Mersey Basin flood relief scheme. Flood water is run off into neighbouring fields and parkland and held until the River Mersey subsides; thus protecting the tramway and other urban developments from flooding.

You now pass through another large industrial area before the gives way to a more rural feel. After Seamon's Moss Bridge, at just over 8.5 miles, the scenery abruptly changes to the largely flat, arable countryside associated the the Cheshire Plain.

It is obvious you are now within the boundary of Dunham Park, as the fields fall gently away into the valley of the River Bollin, a tributary of the Mersey. After passing through Dunham town the canals skirts Dunham Massey hall, on a high embankment. Dunham Massey is an outstanding National Trust property. The beautiful 18<sup>th</sup> century house is set in a wooded and well stocked deer park and was once the seat of the Earl of Stamford. It also boasts a fully restored and working, 400 year old sawmill.

The canal now crosses the river on an aqueduct, before arriving at the tiny village of Little Bollington. It is then just a short distance to your egress point at the layby by Ye Old No. 3 Public House.

## Finish Directions

Park at a large lay-by next to Ye Old No.3 Public House, Lymm Road, Little Bollington, WA14 4A. The lay-by is on the A56, one and a half miles from J8 of the M56, heading towards Lymm.



## 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](#).

Venture-Out, a Go Canoeing Tour Provider, have boat hire locally if you need more equipment:

[www.venture-out.co.uk](http://www.venture-out.co.uk)

Further useful information can be found on the following websites:

[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/471/parking\\_in\\_public\\_areas/146/on-street\\_parking](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/471/parking_in_public_areas/146/on-street_parking)

<http://www.bridgewatercanal.co.uk/>

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dunham-massey>

## 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 the proper attire. 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 capsized

**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



Photo by James Carnegie

### 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 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 November 2016.***

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