

Key Info

Start and finish:

Hope and Anchor Pub,
Wanlip Road, Syston, Leics
LE7 1PD



Scan or visit
bit.ly/soar-hope-anchor
to find the map
in Mapometer and
download the GPX file

Time: 1.5 - 2.5 hours

Distance: 5 miles

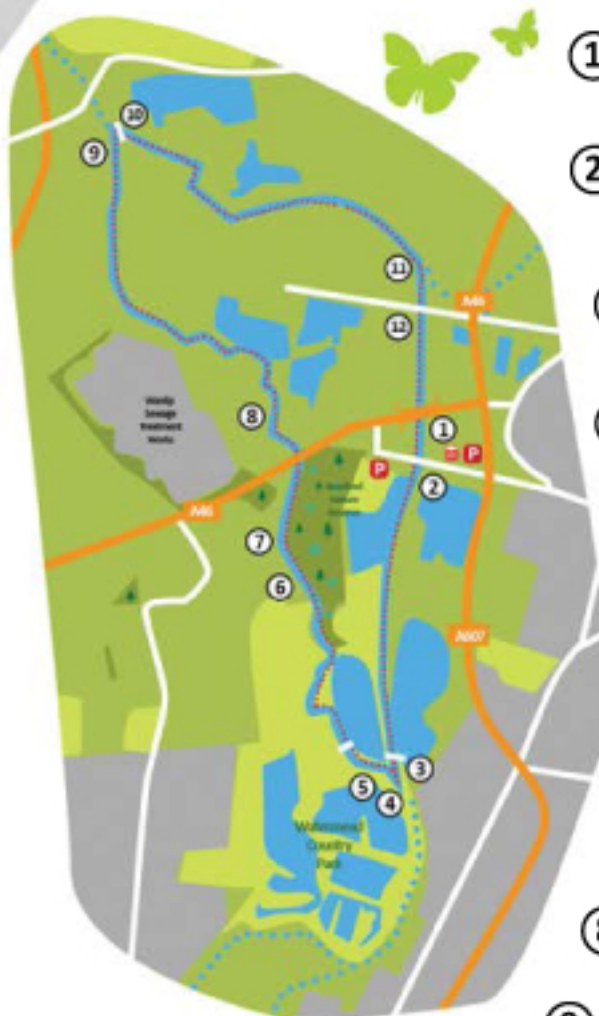
Locks/Portages: 3

OS Map: Explorer 246

Loughborough and 233

Leicester and Hinckley

This trip takes you around the perimeter of Watermead Country Park North and out to Cossington, using both the Grand Union Canal and backwaters of the River Soar.



- 1 Starting from the Hope and Anchor pub in Syston, put into the canal and turn left, towards Leicester, under the bridge next to the pub. Watermead Country Park is on your right beyond the towpath.
- 2 600m from the start, just behind the towpath, is a toilet block in the park. These are the only public facilities on the trip. Continue down the canal past the remains of conveyor belt bridge pillars from when it was an active quarry.
- 3 At just under 1 mile you will pass under Johnson's Bridge. Immediately after portage on the right hand bank, just before the weir to your side. Relaunch below the weir either side of the tree on the corner.
- 4 This section is the original course of the River Soar and is indicative of the rivers natural size before it was remodelled for navigation.
- 5 An assessment of river level needs to be done here. If the water is high on the weir and pushing hard around the first bend a decision to come back another time could be a good call. Similarly, if the water is low and there is a sand beach on the corner, it will probably be too low to paddle.
- 6 Continue along the narrow, willow lined channel, past a large bird watching hide on the right. At 1.8 miles you reach Wanlip metering weir, where you should pass between the two concrete walls in the centre of the flow. Watch out for fallen trees after the weir.
- 7 At 1.8 miles the A46 Western Bypass Bridge is the only noisy interruption to an otherwise rural paddle.
- 8 Continue past the sewage works and a new wind turbine. This stretch of river is often thick with reeds and weed from the additional warmth and nutrients in the water.
- 9 Cossington Weir is reached at just under 3.5 miles. The river crosses the canalised River Wreake and goes under a footbridge at the top of the weir. You turn right here onto the Wreake.
- 10 You can add some fun to your journey by shooting the weir (if the backwater level is ok to paddle then the weir will be ok to shoot). If you choose to do this you will have to portage back up to the Wreake to continue your journey.
- 11 At a split in the river at 3.9 miles you take the left fork towards Junction Lock. Portage the lock on the right, on a platform by the large willow tree and put in above lock.
- 12 Paddle past the weir on the right and continue to another fork at Three Ways Bridge. Take the right hand fork back onto the Grand Union Canal proper. Pass a small marina before heading back under the A46 and to your start point.

Find more
paddling trails at:
gopaddling.info



Parking at the pub is by arrangement and in return for your custom. Parking is also available inside Watermead Park, with a short portage from the north of John Merrick Lake to the canal towpath. An alternative start point at Thurmaston Marina has a free car park and requires the paddler to head north for 800m and join the loop at the portage from canal to river at Johnson's Bridge (No. 17).

On your journey the river meanders through overhanging trees and can be challenging. A lopping saw can be a useful tool on this trip.

Watermead Country Park has two sections, both created from the spent gravel pits which are a feature of the Soar Valley. The north section of the park belongs to Leicestershire County Council and extends to the boundary of Birstall in the south. The other section, on the opposite riverbank, extends to the edge of Leicester City and was developed by the City Council. Both parks are a haven for wildlife and popular with visitors.



Visit our website
britishcanoeing.org.uk
for more information

Safety and Licenses

We want you to enjoy a safe trip, so here are a few tips for staying safe and paddling responsibly.

Paddle Safe:

Be prepared and take the right kit:

- Wear a correctly sized buoyancy aid
- Mobile phone – in a waterproof case
- Whistle – to attract attention in case of emergency
- Map and / or route description
- Appropriate clothing for the weather conditions + spares in a dry bag
- Food, drink & sunscreen!

Paddle Responsibly:

Respect the natural environment and other users:

- Respect other waterway users #sharethespace
- Be environmentally aware, minimise your impact
- Ensure you have the correct licence if required
- Observe navigational rules – keep right and give other users space
- Check, Clean, Dry after every trip!

License Information: The waterways in this trail are managed by the Canal & Rivers Trust and require paddlers to hold a license. British Canoeing membership includes a full annual license for this waterway - please take your membership card with you as this acts as your license.

Non-members can either purchase a British Canoeing membership from www.britishcanoeing.org.uk or buy licenses direct from www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

