

Key Information

Start: Lockside, Marple, SK6 6BN
Unload boats but then move cars to car park in the village
Finish: Canal Basin, Whaley Bridge, SK23 7LS
Free car park on Tom Brads Croft

Portages: 0
Time: 2-4 hours
Distance: 6.5-7.5 Miles
OS Map: Explorer OL1 - The Peak District, Dark Peak area



For more information scan the QR code or <https://bit.ly/whaley-bridge>

Take a one way journey along the Peak Forest Canal with no locks or portages. At 518 feet above sea level this is the highest stretch of navigable water in the entire canal system. There are spooks abound along your route - you'll be glad you don't have to turn around and go back to the start!

1. Unload your boat on Lockside before moving your car to park, considerately, on a side street. Put in on the Peak Forest Canal and turn right along it.

2. As you leave Marple keep a keen eye out for the headless ghost of King Charles who has been seen here - despite never having visited when he was alive.

3. Upon reaching the first of a series of swing bridges at Disley, you can limbo, portage or open these but please return them to their original positions.

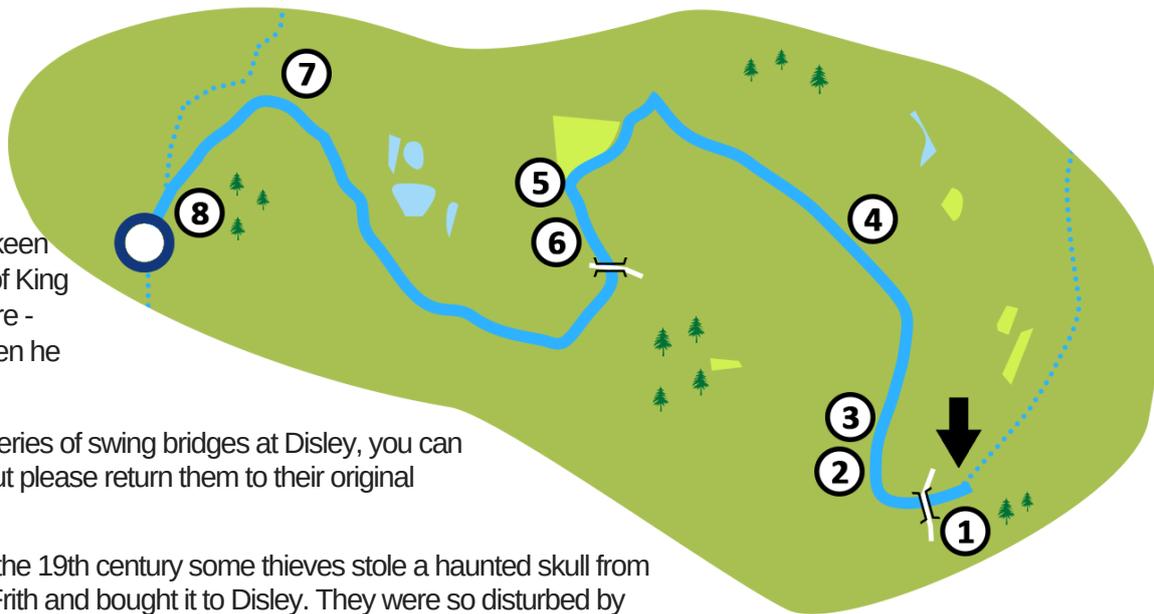
4. Do you hear screaming?! In the 19th century some thieves stole a haunted skull from a farm in nearby Chapel en le Frith and bought it to Disley. They were so disturbed by the scary incidents which began to befall them that they hastily returned it. As the fabulous vista of the Peak District which opens up before you, you will now need to negotiate a draw bridge, similar to those which appear on Dutch canals.

5. As you pass under a bridge by the Swizzels Matlow factory spare a thought for William Wood who was murdered along this road in 1823. The hole in the ground, caused when his head hit it, has stayed ever since. No grass grows there and the spot is marked by a memorial stone.

6. At a fork in the canal it is right to your finish but it is well worth taking the left fork first to explore Bugsworth Basin. The three large basins formed part of a large inland port to bring the canal as close as possible to the limestone quarries at Dove Stone. Bugsworth Basin was the scene of a grisly crime in 1898, when John Cotton murdered his wife Hannah on board their boat. The crime was witnessed by three schoolgirls, who testified against John in court, leading to him being convicted and hanged at Derby Gaol. Hannah's ghost was known to be seen at the public house nearby, where she spent her last evening.

7. Retrace your route to where the canal forks and take the other fork on to your finish at a smaller basin, by a railway interchange, in Whaley Bridge. Here you will have been able to park your car in the free car park.

8. Before you leave Whaley Bridge, why not give yourself one final fright and visit the Co-op here. In 2015 the shop made the national news when CCTV caught shadowy shapes moving around after closing time, as well as doors slamming and objects moving. That year the shop closed early on Halloween - just to be safe!



Find out more information at: gopaddling.info

There are no locks or tunnels on this route but there are two low bridges and some swing bridges. We would advise that you ensure you have considered the craft you are in, the water levels and the potential need to portage. If you do go under these bridges please look out for and nuts and bolts protruding from the underside of the bridge. Portage on the towpath side.

It is possible to set up a car shuttle in order to do this route in one direction (as described). If you choose an out and back trip ensure you plan for a full day on the water.

The Peak Forest Canal was completed in 1800 except for the flight of locks at Marple, which were completed four years later to transport lime and grit stone from the quarries at Dove holes, to industrial Manchester and beyond. Constructed on two levels, it goes from the junction with the Macclesfield Canal at Marple, six and a-half-miles to the termini at Whaley Bridge or Buxworth. At 518 feet above sea level it's the highest stretch of navigable water in the whole canal system, as it clings to the hillside with fabulous views on a clear day, of the Pennines and the flat plateau of Kinder Scout to the south. Approaching Whaley Bridge there is a branch to the left leading to Bugsworth Basin, the only inland interchange basin in Britain's narrow canal system.

Along the route there is an eclectic mix of industrial and rural scenes as the navigation clings to the side of the Goyt Valley.

There is a lovely crossover bridge at the junction with the Macclesfield Canal; the Possett Bridge. It is so called because Samuel Oldknow promised the workmen a possett of ale if they completed the construction by a certain date. They did and earned their reward.

Further information can be found on the following websites:

gopaddling.info

canalrivertrust.org.uk

goyt-valley.org.uk/the-murder-stone/

Licence

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 & suncream!

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!

Licences: 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 find out more about British Canoeing [membership here](#).

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paddling?**

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