

THE KENNET & AVON CYCLE ROUTE



The Kennet & Avon Canal

weaves through spectacular scenery between the Thames and the Bristol Avon. Its route is a fusion of natural rolling landscape intersected by the urban and modern Reading and the World Heritage Sites in Bath.



England's most southerly cross-country broad beam canal links London and the Bristol Channel. The route of the Kennet & Avon Canal takes it through some of the nation's best-loved landscapes, including West Berkshire, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the southern tip of the rolling Cotswolds.

The canal's impressive architecture is in keeping with surroundings that also provide a habitat for a diverse range of flora and fauna.

Long sections of the canal towpath are level, wide and ideal for cycling; much of it forms part of Route 4 of the National Cycle Network.

It is free from motorised traffic and suitable for all ages and abilities.

Cycling along the Kennet & Avon Cycle Route

The Kennet & Avon Cycle Route is Britain's most popular long-distance waterside cycle route. The first section will take you through historic Bristol and Bath, past the stunning aqueducts at Dundas and Avoncliff, to the dramatic Caen Hill Locks at Devizes.

The canal itself starts at Bath, however, there is no direct cycle route along the Avon River from Bristol to Bath. Between these two cities follow the Bristol to Bath railway. This attractive route through the Avon Valley was a pioneering traffic-free cycle path and set the standard for the National Cycle Network.

After Bath, cycling is permitted throughout the length of the canal, except for a few short sections near Reading. Please be aware that the canal is also very popular with walkers, anglers and boaters and there may be times when it is necessary to dismount.

Long sections of the towpath – including the whole length from Bath to Devizes, around Newbury and between Thatcham and Reading – have been improved as part of a partnership between British Waterways, Sustrans and local councils. The result is a wider path with a surface that is more suitable for cyclists and disabled users.



Along the central section of the canal between Marsh Benham and Devizes the towpath is less suitable for cycling. Cyclists can continue between these points by following Route 4. This combines the improved sections of the towpath with diversions along rural lanes where the towpath is less suitable. This applies particularly if you are using bicycles with relatively narrow tyres, which are mainly designed for road use.

Log onto waterscape.com for up-to-date information on cycling and any towpath restrictions.



Getting to the Kennet & Avon Cycle Route

The Cycle Route is easily reached from London by rail and there are convenient main line stations at Reading, Thatcham, Newbury, Hungerford, Great Bedwyn, Pewsey, Trowbridge, Bath and Bristol (Temple Meads). This makes it very easy to plan a day trip with a mileage to suit individual preferences.

The whole length can easily be covered in two or three days and accommodation is available in many locations along the way.

ACCOMMODATION LISTS AVAILABLE FROM THE FOLLOWING LOCAL TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES:

Bristol

Centre Harbourside, Wildwalk at Bristol, Anchor Road, Bristol BS1 5DB
T: 0906 7112191

Devizes

Visitor Centre, Cromwell House, Market Place Devizes SN10 U9
T: 01380 729 408

Bath

Abbey Chambers, Abbey Church Yard, Bath BA1 1LY
T: 0906 711 2000

Pewsey Wharf

T: 01672 564 700

Bradford on Avon

Information Centre, 50 St. Margarets St, Bradford on Avon BA15 1DE
T: 01225 865 797

Newbury

The Wharf, Newbury Berkshire RG14 5AS
T: 01635 30267

Aldermaston Visitor Centre

Newbury, Berkshire
T: 0118 971 2868

MORE INFORMATION:

Detailed maps of the Canal are available from waterscape.com

For more details on the National Cycle Network contact Sustrans on **0845 113 0065** or visit www.sustrans.org.uk

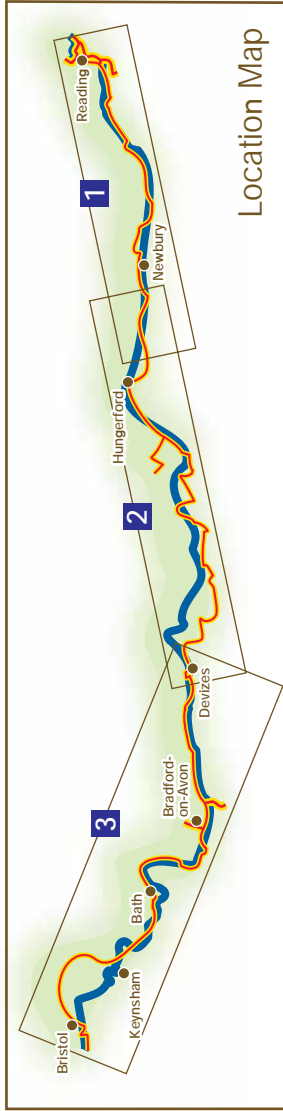
For public transport information contact Traveline on **0870 608 2 608** or visit www.traveline.org.uk



Courtesy and Safety Code for cyclists using the canal

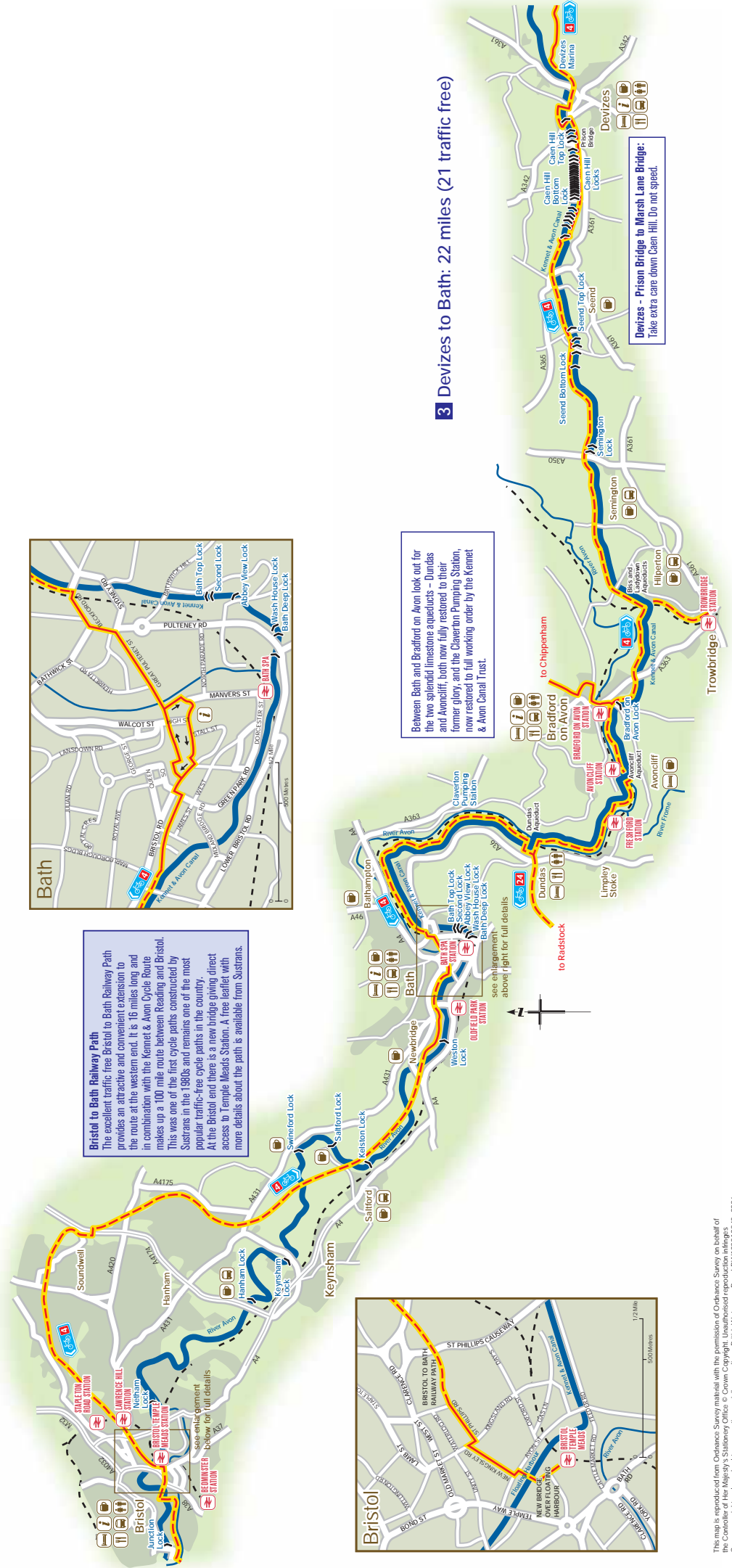
- Give way to others, particularly walkers and wheelchair users on the towpath and warn them of your approach. A polite 'hello' and 'thank you' mean a lot.
- Watch out for anglers' tackle and give them time to move it before you try to pass.
- We recommend that you do not cycle towpaths after dark, but if you do, please use front and rear lights. Look out for mooring ropes and pegs where boats are tied up.
- Motorcycles are not permitted on the canal towpath.
- Fit a bell to your bike and use it to warn others of your approach.
- Access paths can be steep and slippery. Join or leave the towpath with care.
- You must get off and push your cycle beneath low or blind bridges, and where the path is very narrow.
- Do not cycle too fast on the towpath. Remember that the standard speed for boaters and walkers is just 4mph. If you need to get somewhere quickly, use a road.

The Kennet & Avon Canal Cycle Route



Location Map

Details of National Cycle Route 4 continuation to London and Route 5 to Oxford can be found on the Thames Valley Cycle Route Map



Bristol to Bath Railway Path
The excellent traffic free Bristol to Bath Railway Path provides an attractive and convenient extension to the route at the western end. It is 16 miles long and in combination with the Kennet & Avon Cycle Route makes up a 100 mile route between Reading and Bristol. This was one of the first cycle paths constructed by Sustrans in the 1960s and remains one of the most popular traffic-free cycle paths in the country. At the Bristol end there is a new bridge giving direct access to Temple Meads Station. A free leaflet with more details about the path is available from Sustrans.

Between Bath and Bradford on Avon look out for the two splendid limestone aqueducts - Dundas and Avoncliff, both now fully restored to their former glory, and the Claverton Pumping Station, now restored to full working order by the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust.

3 Devizes to Bath: 22 miles (21 traffic free)

Devizes - Prison Bridge to Marsh Lane Bridge:
Take extra care down Caen Hill. Do not speed.

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Information and contacts

This route is suitable for family cycling over the entire 100 miles from Reading to Bristol, particularly the sections along the towpath between Reading and Marsh Benham, Devizes to Bath and the Bristol to Bath Railway Path which are traffic free with no difficult gradients.

The middle section between Marsh Benham and Devizes is mainly on specially selected quiet roads with occasional hills but no difficult gradients. Easy access by rail makes the route particularly suitable for shorter day trips.

BRITISH WATERWAYS is the public corporation responsible for the care and enhancement of the nations 2,000 mile, two centuries old network of canals and rivers, working in partnership with public, private and voluntary sector organisations to develop and improve waterways in a sustainable manner, for the benefit of everyone. www.britishwaterways.co.uk

WATERSCAPE.COM provides information on all of Britain's waterways, and guides visitors through the complete waterside experience in an easy to use, fully comprehensive online resource. The site includes a full range of services including:

- How to hire a canal boat or waterside holiday cottage.
- Recommendations on walking, cycling, jogging and angling beside the water.
- Best waterside bars, pubs and restaurants.
- Waterway guides with information on visitor attractions, local history and wildlife.
- News and events guides and listings.

SUSTRANS – the sustainable transport charity – works on practical projects to enable people to choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. Sustrans is the charity behind practical and innovative solutions to some of the UK's biggest transport challenges, including the award-winning National Cycle Network, Safe Routes to Schools, Bike It and TravelSmart.

The National Cycle Network is a comprehensive 10,000 mile network of safe and attractive cycle routes throughout the UK and includes much of the Kennet and Avon Canal towpath. For more information call Sustrans on **0845 113 0065** or visit www.sustrans.org.uk

DESIGN: WWW.TOTEM-DESIGN.CO.UK

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BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET

