WILTSHIRE & THE NORTH WESSEX DOWNS

Great Walks IN BRITAIN

# The Kennet & Avon Canal from All Cannings

**An easier walk of two halves, beginning along the tranquil Kennet & Avon Canal towpath and returning via a section of the Wessex Ridgeway**

## Essential Facts

| | |
|---|---|
| Route distance: | 14.8 km (9.3 miles) |
| Approximate time: | 3 hours 40 mins |
| Approx. total ascent: | 36 metres |
| Start point Grid Ref: | SU 070 618 |
| GPS Ref: | SU 07066 61817 |
| Recommended O.S. Map: | Explorer 157 |
| Toughness Rating | Wiltshire 1 |

**Please see the notes on Toughness Ratings at the end of this report**

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A Team Effort
Full Info from the Great Walks web site

# THE ROUTE

The starting point, **S**, is the road junction closest to the Kings Arms pub, well signed from all directions, in All Cannings village, east of Devizes. Parking is available in the village lanes.

From the T-junction at **S,** follow the Moor Path signpost, going straight on past the Kings Arms to your immediate right. The path enters a meadow, and you cross the bridge and continue past a small private fishing lake to a field. Turn right as you enter the field and continue round its edge, keeping the fishing lake and field boundary on your right.

At the end of the field, bear right along a footpath that soon rises to a swing-bridge, **A**, on the Kennet & Avon Canal. Turn left along the towpath. You are now on a section of the White Horse Trail, the ninety-mile circular path that links Wiltshire's eight chalk downland figures of white horses.

Keeping the canal on your right, continue for 4 km to the swing-bridge at Bishops Cannings, **B**. Notice the Second World War pill boxes sited along the other side of the canal as you go. Continue along the towpath and in approximately 700 metres you will reach the Bridge Inn at Horton Bridge, with its canal-side garden and direct access for boaters.

Soon after the inn, look high to your right and you will get your first glimpse of the Devizes New Horse carved into Roundway Down. Cut to commemorate the Millennium, it is the most recent of the eight horse figures and the only one that faces to the right.

Continue along the towpath for a further 2.5 km to Coate Road Bridge (bridge no.136) and leave the canal by ascending the slip path and steps to the road, **C**.

Turn left and immediately left again and proceed along a quiet paved road signposted Coate for approximately 100 metres. Turn right and proceed along the gravelled Gipsy Patch track. After approximately 250 metres, turn left and follow a shady footpath until you reach a T-junction. Turn right and go up the only noticeable gradient on this walk. You are now on the Wessex Ridgeway and will soon enjoy open views in all directions, with the Devizes New Horse clearly behind you.

When you reach the byway crossroads at **D**, turn left and follow the gravel track to the hamlet of Coate. Continue past The New Inn and turn left. Proceed along the paved lane for approximately 100 metres and go through 'Pete's Gate' on the right.

Cross the field keeping to the right-hand half and go through the gap in the hedge. Then aim diagonally towards the gate with the farm buildings behind. Go through the gate and turn right. Proceed along the paved lane passing Lowerfields Farm on your left. At the end of the lane, bear left following the WCC footpath through another gate.

Continue along the track and where it changes to grass, keep the field edge on your left.
Go through another gate and head straight on towards a pylon. Go over the double stiled bridge, **E**, and continue to the pylon. Pass under the wires and make for the double gate in view.

**The Kennet and Avon Canal**

**A Timbered Cottage**

**The Wessex Ridgeway**

Go through the double gate, which has a concrete slab at its base bridging a stream, and proceed across a field aiming towards the village church ahead. Go through one more gate and follow the field edge, keeping the fenced boundary on your left. The White Horse figure you can see on the hillside ahead is the Alton Barnes White Horse – a walk for another day!

After approximately 150 metres, the field layout changes so that a hedged boundary is now on your right. Keep straight on along this field edge until you reach the private fishing lake encountered earlier.

Turn right just before the lake and retrace the footpath to the junction beyond the Kings Arms, to return to **S**.

### Refreshment

The Kings Arms
Public House
All Cannings
Tel: 01380 860328
Home-cooked food and traditional ales, Beer garden

The New Inn
Public House
Coate
Tel: 01380 860644
Beer garden, real ale, meals, Dogs welcome

The Bridge Inn
Public House
Horton
Tel: 01380 860273
Canal-side garden
Meals and bar food available

**The Kings Arms**

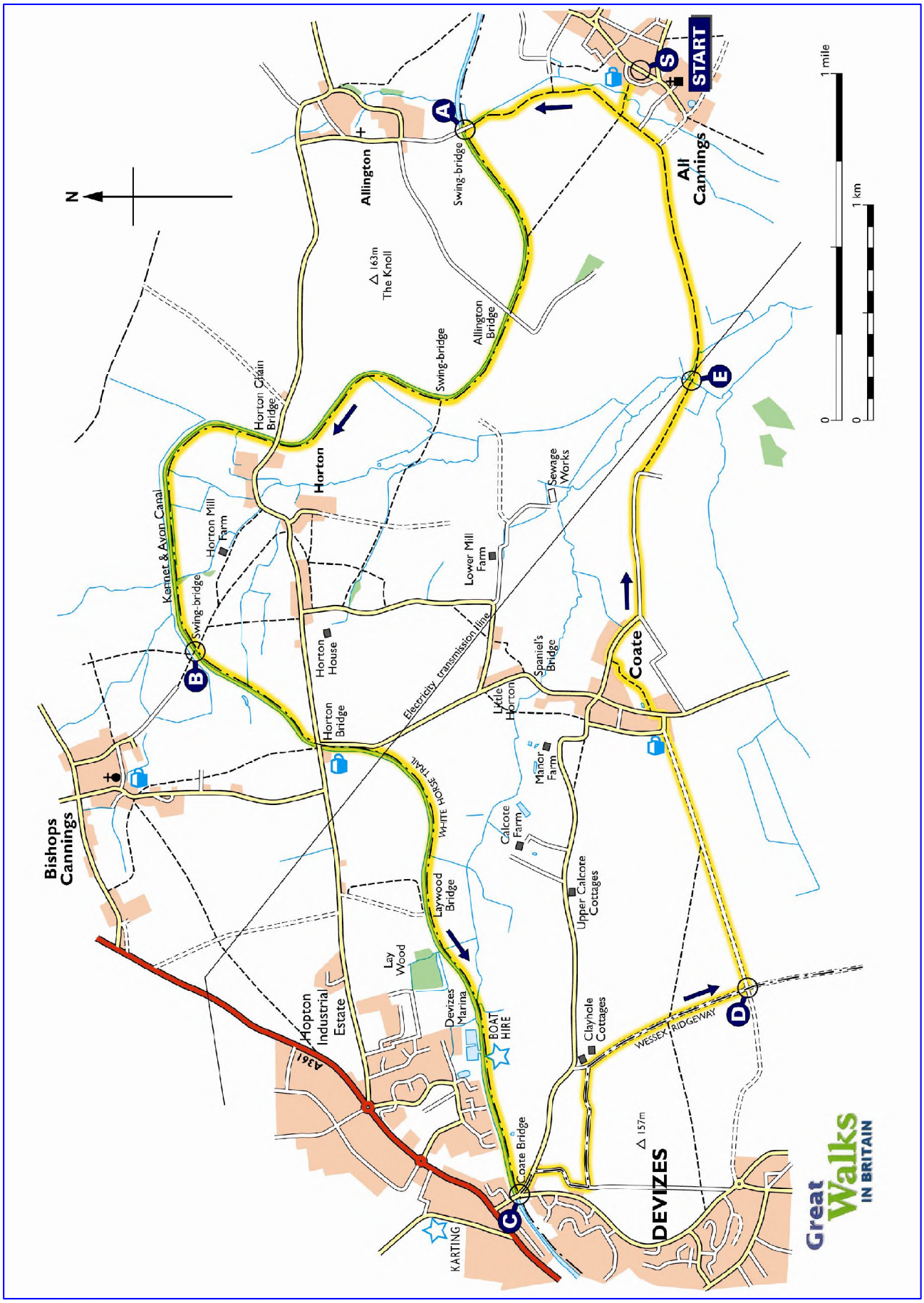
## LOCAL INFO

As its name suggests, the **Kennet & Avon Canal** links the River Kennet in Berkshire to the River Avon at Bath. It is almost 100 km long and was opened in 1810 after 16 years of construction. Initially profitable by transporting heavy cargoes, its demise began with the opening of the Great Western Railway in 1841. During the Second World War, the Kennet & Avon was used as a second line of defence against possible invasion, with pill boxes strategically sited along its length. Its use today is mainly for the leisure industry.

Devizes New Horse is the most recent of the Wiltshire white horses. Designed by Peter Greed, it was cut on to Roundway Down to the north of Devizes by around two hundred local people in 1999 to mark the Millennium. This horse is the only one in Wiltshire, and one of only four in Britain, to face to the right.

## THE KENNET & AVON CANAL FROM ALL CANNINGS
## G.P.S. WAYPOINTS

| WAYPOINT NAME | MAP REF | | CO-ORDINATES | | ELEVATION: Metres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALL S | S | SU | 07066 | 61817 | 122 |
| ALL A | A | SU | 06775 | 62579 | 125 |
| ALL B | B | SU | 04357 | 63816 | 125 |
| ALL C | C | SU | 01840 | 62332 | 129 |
| ALL D | D | SU | 02788 | 61255 | 143 |
| ALL E | E | SU | 05590 | 61514 | 113 |

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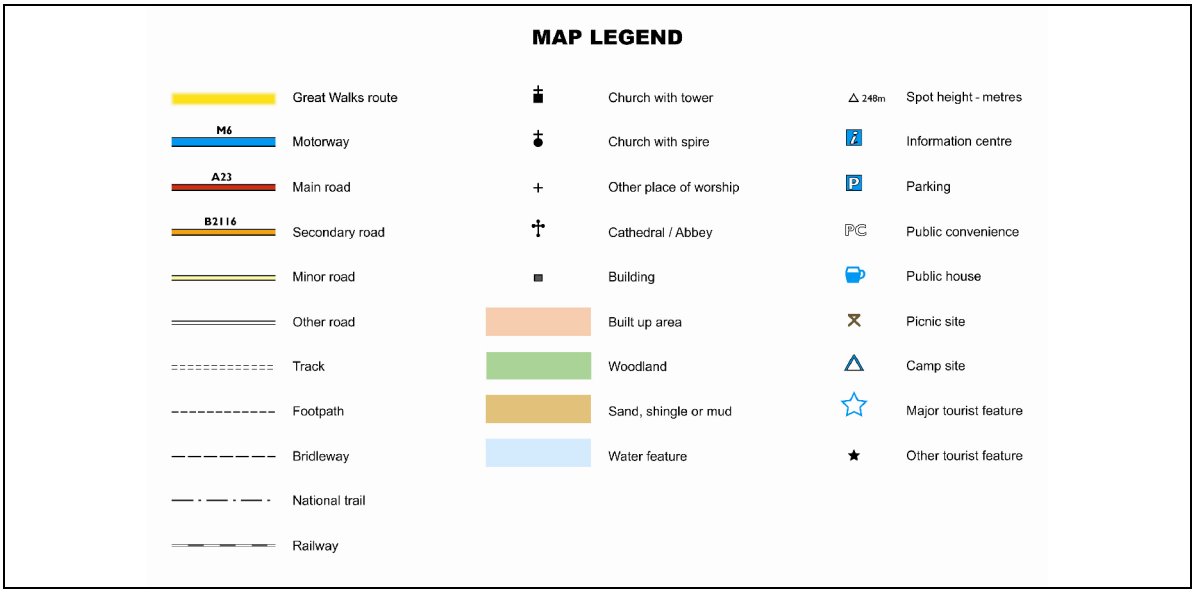


# Safety First

**Safety should always** be your first priority in planning and undertaking a walk, whether on your own or leading a group. Please read these Safety First and Walking Our Routes notes.

**Lead a group** of other walkers only if you have leadership and navigational experience adequate for the 'worst case' conditions which may be encountered on the particular walk, bearing in mind the terrain, possible weather and navigational demands.

**Weigh up the capabilities** of your party, in terms of fitness and walking speed. Adjust your time expectations accordingly.

**Ensure** all your party are adequately clothed for the weather and conditions. Footwear is particularly important. Clothing must protect against cold, wet or strong sun according to the time of year.

**Emergencies** are quite rare, but it is essential to think ahead about what to do if someone in your party sustains an injury. Will you have a First Aid kit ? Is there a qualified First Aider in the party ? How could help be summoned in a serious eventuality ?

**Refreshment**, particularly water, can be vital. Dehydration in hot summer conditions can be rapid, and frequent intake of fluids is essential.

**On tougher walks** it is a good idea to tell someone where you are planning to go – and when you expect to be back. Remember - mobile phones often lose reception in mountainous or isolated areas.

**All our walks use legitimate routes**: Public Rights of Way, Public Footpaths, Bridleways, Permissive Paths, Access Land, Byways and Roads.

**Road** walking calls for particular care. When there is no defined footpath or verge wide enough for safe walking it is usually best to walk on the right – facing oncoming traffic. An exception may be a tight bend, where walkers would be more visible on the left.

**Occasionally** you may find a public footpath blocked or unuseable. It is perfectly in order to take the shortest available diversion without damaging crops, perhaps around a field margin.

**It is courteous** to close gates after passing through, sometimes even if the gate was open when you arrived – particularly if it is obvious livestock may escape.

**Mutual respect** for farm animals is to be encouraged! Don't frighten or annoy them, but equally don't put your party members in danger or discomfort. You certainly wouldn't be the first walkers to go round the outside of a field of frisky bullocks.

**Dogs** should always be kept on a lead anywhere near farm animals, and under close supervision elsewhere in the countryside.

## Walking Our Routes

**Our walks** are designed to be negotiated using the route directions in conjunction with the map section provided. We suggest walkers also take the Ordnance Survey Explorer or Outdoor Leisure map recommended for each walk.

**On mountain, moorland and open heathland** walks it is **ESSENTIAL** to have navigational expertise and tools, including the recommended Ordnance Survey map(s).

**Take care** to observe any cautions in the route description; exposed paths, areas liable to flooding etc.

**Consider conditions before setting off.** Will heavy rain have made a water meadow impassable? Will frost or snow make a path slippery?

**When navigating the route** look for clues to confirm you are in the right place. Are map features where you would expect on the ground? Are features mentioned in the text where expected? If you suspect you may have taken a wrong turn, take action sooner rather than later. It is better to re-trace to a known point rather than carry on regardless with the possibility of becoming increasingly confused.

**All our routes are carefully checked** before publication, but features can change on the ground – sometimes surprisingly quickly. Footpaths may be re-routed, buildings can appear or change significantly and these days pub names seem to change frequently.

**The approximate time** given for each walk is based on an average walking speed of 2.5 miles per hour (4 km/hour), plus an allowance for ascent, descent and any difficult terrain.

**Total ascent** is the approximate total ascent over the whole walk.

**GPS users** can enter in the waypoints provided in each of our walk reports. It is important to read our guide **Introducing GPS for Walkers**, available as a PDF file from the Great Walks in Britain web site.

**Remember that GPS** is a great navigational tool, but only one of those available to the navigator. Never dispense with conventional map and compass – and the training and skills to use them, especially on mountain, moorland or open heathland walks.

### TOUGHNESS RATINGS

Most of our **Wiltshire & North Wessex** routes can be undertaken by reasonably fit walkers able to utilise the map segments and our recommended Ordnance Survey maps, together with the route guidance notes.

The toughest walks should be undertaken or led only by experienced walkers with navigational expertise. Always consider recent and forecast weather.

Each walk has been allocated a **Toughness Rating**:

1. Easier walks with modest ascent and generally on well defined paths. There may be stiles or narrow gateways to negotiate.

2. Routes which are more demanding. They may include more ascent and possibly paths which are looser or more difficult underfoot.

3. More strenuous walks. There may be prolonged steep ascents, and perhaps several ascents over the whole walk. Conditions may be challenging underfoot.

4. The toughest walks, requiring considerable fitness and navigational experience. There may be prolonged steep ascents. The ability to navigate by compass may be essential.

Toughness Ratings are allocated in the context of the terrain in the edition area.
For example a walk rated as demanding in Cambridgeshire may be equivalent to a moderate route in Wiltshire & North Wessex.