

RIVER LEA NAVIGATION / RIVER STORT BROXBORNE TO BISHOPS STORTFORD

1

TRIP TYPE: SOLO CYCLE

OBJECTIVE: CYCLE FROM BROXBORNE TO BISHOP'S STORTFORD
ALONG THE RIVER STORT NAVIGATION, RETURNING
BY TRAIN TO BROXBORNE

DISTANCE: 16.6 MILES

TIME: 2 HOURS 20 MINS, 7.1 mph

NICHOLSON: GUIDE 1, PP 126-127, 134-137

COSTS: FREE PARKING AT BROXBORNE. TRAIN FROM
BISHOP'S STORTFORD TO BROXBORNE £3.60
(20 MINUTES, 4 PER HOUR)

DIFFICULTY: MODERATE

OVERVIEW: Definitely a ride of two halves: the first 9
miles are easy riding with good towpaths, but
after Harlow Mill lock conditions are much
more difficult - rutted earth, tree roots,
branches and the occasional muddy swamp
impede progress. Generally scenic, but not
spectacular.

1. BROXBORNE TO HARLOW MILL LOCK (9 MILES)

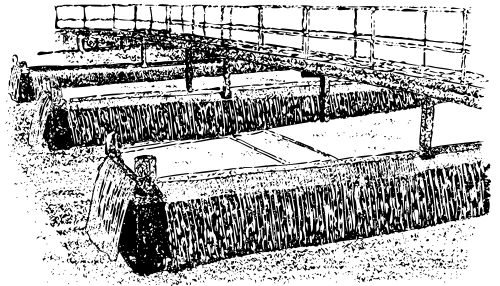
Park your car on McKenzie Road, EN10 7JF, or Churchfields
EN10 7JP, for free after 10a.m. (restrictions apply before then).
Alternatively use the Broxbourne station car park, or Broxbourne
Meadows or Old Mill car parks (charges apply).

From McKenzie Road turn right on Station Road, then left on
Churchfields. Turn left onto Mill Lane, past the canoe hire
centre, under the railway, and turn sharp left at the river.

Cross the bridge to The Crown, and turn sharp left down the cobbles to the path.

Continue on the narrow path through the woods. This becomes an unmaintained potholed track for some distance.

At Dobb Weir cross the bridge to the left-hand side, then cross the walkway over the unusually shaped weir and turn right.

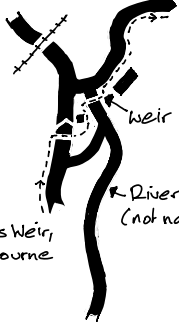


Dobbs Weir

Fieldes Weir

Just above Fieldes Weir the navigation splits: head right to Bishops Stortford, left to Hertford (River Lea/Lee).

River Lee Navigation to Ware



River Stort, to Bishops Stortford

From Dobbs Weir, and Broxbourne

Just before the Fieldes Weir lock cross the footbridge. Turn left round the back of the lock cottage garden, then right over the weir

Footbridge. A quick left and right and you are on the towpath, which is decent quality compacted earth and gravel.

When you reach the B&B, High Street, turn left to cross the river then right before the level crossing to rejoin the towpath on the other side. The towpath continues to change sides a number of times.

At Burnt Mill Lock cross the bridge on Burnt Mill Lane and carry your bike down the steps to the lock (or continue on Burnt Mill Lane for 30m and turn left on Burnt Mill Close to avoid the steps).



Next is Harlow Mill Lock. Just after this, cross the river on the A1184 (Harlow Road) bridge, then turn left back onto the towpath.

2. HARLOW MILL LOCK TO BISHOPS STORTFORD (7 MILES)

Conditions become much more difficult at this point. The towpath is mainly earth, rutted, stony with tree roots and the odd overhanging branch. At one point there is a makeshift bridge made from corrugated iron, and at another 3 deep muddy trenches cut across the towpath, with no obvious way round.

On many canals the urban sections see improved conditions, but not at Sawbridgeworth, but you can take the train back from here if necessary, and things then do improve a little for the final stretch into Bishops Stortford, which has a disappointing town centre (at least the bits you encounter on this ride. However it is not as bad as Aylesbury :)

Cycle as far as the Causeway Bridge (A1250) which is the limit of the navigation. It is just 2 minutes back to the station. I found 2 pubs shut at lunchtime, and so resorted to the Wetherspoons.

Trains back to Broxbourne are 4 per hour and take 20 minutes. On arrival ride up Station Road back to your car.

