

# CROMFORD CANAL

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TRIP TYPE: SOLO CYCLE

OBJECTIVE: TAKE THE TRAIN FROM CROMFORD TO LANGLEY MILL. CYCLE BACK ALONG THE CROMFORD CANAL (MUCH OF WHICH IS DISUSED) TO CROMFORD WHARF.

DISTANCE: 19.5 MILES

TIME: 3 HOURS, 7.1 mph

NICHOLSON: GUIDE 3, PP 65, 70, 71, 76, 77

COSTS: PARKING AT CROMFORD STATION (£2.90 FOR THE DAY)  
TRAIN FROM CROMFORD TO LANGLEY MILL £18.70,  
1 PER HOUR

DIFFICULTY: HARD (VERY HARD!)

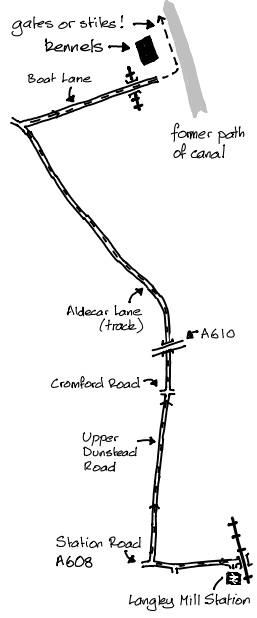
OVERVIEW: A VERY HARD ride which frankly I wouldn't bother doing unless you are determined to complete the set as I am. Not recommended for anything other than a fit person with a lightweight bike. Much of the Cromford Canal is disused, and filled in with no towpath as such. There are narrow bumpy sections with nettles and mud, carries over gates and stiles, steep steps, and busy roads to cross.

There is a book called 'A Walker's Guide to the Cromford Canal' which may provide more detailed information on the route, but may not assist the cyclist.

## 1. LANGLEY MILL TO BUTTERLEY TUNNEL (5 MILES)

Park at Cromford Station, DE4 5JJ. There are only 15 spaces but they are little used, and only £2.90 for the day. Trains are 1 per hour, but the connection at Nottingham is not good, and you will have a significant wait - have a coffee, you'll

need it. Make sure you take a train that stops at Langley Mill as not all Ilkerton trains do.



The Nicholson Guide suggests you turn right out of the station (under the railway), along Cromford Road and turn down Plumtre Road to pick up the path. However this is more of a walking route. Instead, turn left out of Langley Mill Station, then right on Upper Dunstead Road. Follow this to the cross roads where it becomes a pathed track (Aldecar Lane) which passes under the A610. Follow the track for a mile then turn right (straight on says dead end) down to the kennels at the bottom.

If you turn left just past the kennels there are 3 tied farm gates to navigate. If you go straight on through a single gate into a field then turn left, you have a tricky stile to take your bike over. Your choice. Either way there is a footpath which follows the line of the filled in canal, which is not obvious.

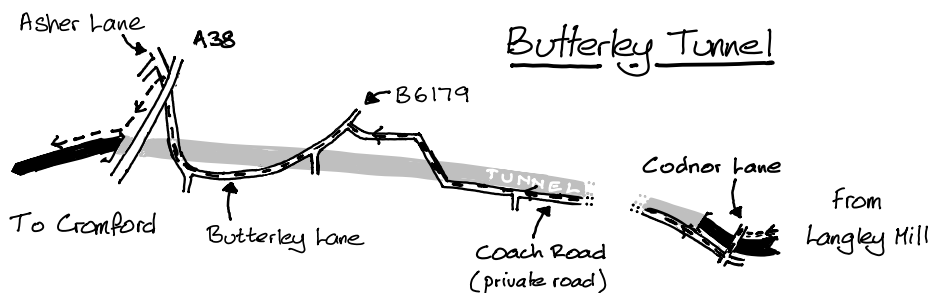
Conditions are very poor, muddy and narrow for a mile until you reach a stile onto a wooden walkway. Turn right and follow the path round to the left. This path is much better, gravelled and wide as it passes through a nature reserve. The path then rises through a series of old locks at Ironville.

You can continue on the towpath, which deteriorates again, or cross at the top of the locks and join Coach Road on the

opposite bank at this point, which runs alongside the canal to Butterley Tunnel.

Assuming you've come along the tawpath, take the slope up to Newlands Road / Codnor Road, turn left over the canal, and right on Coach Road, which at this point becomes a private road, so if you are challenged (which is very unlikely) do the decent thing - dismount and walk your bike, as it is a public footpath.

## 2. BUTTERLEY TUNNEL TO AMBERGATE (9.5 M)



Continue for a couple of miles along Coach Road which bends right then left before emerging on Butterley Hill, B6179. Turn left for 150m then bear right onto Butterley Lane, which is a track. This takes you to Asher Lane, where you turn right, and pass under the A38. Immediately turn left. There is an access road to an industrial estate, but take the footpath to the left down to the western tunnel entrance, then turn right on the tawpath.

The path is poor again to Buckland Hollow Tunnel. There is a huge embankment here carrying the A610, and the only way over it is to carry your bike up 60 steep steps.

This brings you dangerously out onto the busy main road, which you must cross (there are crash barriers both sides to navigate) in order to descend 60 steps on the other side. Be warned, this section is VERY dangerous.

Note: once up on the A610 you cannot access the canal via the sloping road some 200m further along because of gates and fences.

The towpath continues to be poor to Hartsay Bridge, at which point the path continues over fields with no visible canal. I bailed out at this point, deciding to take the road to Ambergate. Turning right would have taken me to the busy A610, so I turned left up the hill (Bridle Lane) to Upper Hartsay, turned right to Heage, right on School Lane to Nether Heage, up over the hill to Ambergate. The road drops steeply and under the railway to the A6, where you turn right.

### 3. AMBERGATE TO CROMFORD (5 MILES)

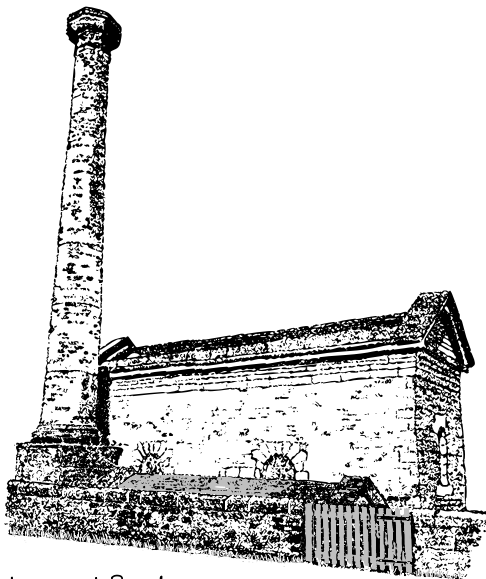
This is the easy bit, with a good quality towpath, nice scenery, interesting industrial architecture, and a lot of walkers both with and without dogs.

Continue on A6, Mallock Road, for 400m to Chase Road. Turn right and join the towpath to your left (or continue 300m on Mallock Road until you see a track leading up to the canal on the right. The canal, railway and main road all run parallel to each other.

Gregory Tunnel is short, with a narrow railed towpath.

Shortly after the tunnel, at the short Nightingate Arm, cross to the right-hand side to continue on the towpath past Leawood Pumpouse. It is less than a mile to Cromford Wharf, where there is a café (you'll probably need another coffee).

Continue through the car park, turn right on Lea Road and continue the short distance to the station approach.



Leawood Pumpouse  
Cromford Canal