

SHIRLEY TO STRATFORD-UPON-AVON STRATFORD-UPON-AVON CANAL

1

TRIP TYPE: SOLO CYCLE

OBJECTIVE: CYCLE FROM SHIRLEY TO STRATFORD ON THE
STRATFORD

DISTANCE: 23 MILES

TIME: 2.75 HOURS, 8.0 MPH

NICHOLSON: GUIDE 2, PP 142-151

COSTS: FREE PARKING IN SHIRLEY. TRAIN FROM STRATFORD
TO SHIRLEY £6.80, DIRECT, 1 PER HOUR

DIFFICULTY: FAIR, BUT A FEW FLIGHTS OF SHALLOW STEPS

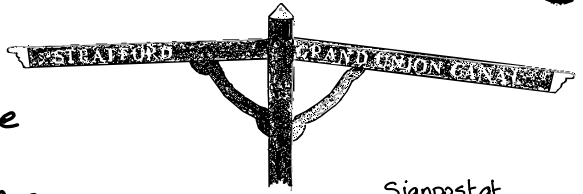
OVERVIEW: A rural ride on mixed quality towpaths. Best to attempt
the ride when the weather is dry, as there can be some very muddy
sections. You will pass the lovely Lapworth Locks, some interesting
aqueducts, and finish at the River Avon in the middle of beautiful and
busy Stratford.

1. SHIRLEY TO KINGSWOOD JUNCTION (9 MILES)

Park your car on Green Lane, Shirley, B90 1AA. Cycle up to Haslocks
Green Road and turn right, away from the railway bridge. Ride for
400m then turn right on Drawbridge Road, towards Drawbridge Inn.
Turn left on the towpath before the drawbridge

Initially the towpath is compacted earth and gravel, decent quality,
but quite narrow. As you pass under trees the towpath can be
very muddy when wet, and covered in fallen leaves which makes
progress difficult (I had to abandon my first attempt in Spring 2024
because of the slippery leaves). Once you are away from the trees
progress is easier, but there are still some muddy sections.

Take some time to admire the wonderful Lapworth locks at Kingswood Junction. If you've not done so on the Solihull to Leamington Spa ride, cycle along to the Grand Union Canal, just 200m along the Lapworth Link, then back to the locks.



Signpost at Kingswood Junction

2. KINGSWOOD JUNCTION TO STRATFORD (13 MILES)

Continue down the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal. Conditions worsen, there are some bobbly parts where the towpath has been badly repaired, and there are nettles, tree roots, and metal obstacles on the path, but generally it is just about rideable.

You will cross Yarningale Aqueduct, and further on the Ed Stone Aqueduct (aka Bearley Aqueduct, I don't know why it has 2 names) which at 200m long is the longest of its kind. They are unusual in that the towpath is level with the floor of the canal.

As you approach bridge 47 at Preston Bagot cross the minor road and continue on the left side for a further 200m to the A4189, which - pass under. Cross at the footbridge to continue on the right side of the canal. There are some narrow, nettled sections here.

Next comes Wilmore at which point your route is joined by NCR5. Initially the surface is gavelled, then metalled down the Wilmore locks.

You pass under the A46, and shortly after, at bridge 63 (as of Summer 2024) the towpath is closed, probably for some time

judging by the fencing. You are on the outskirts of Stratford. Turn left on Bishopston Lane the short distance to the roundabout, then right on Timothy's Bridge Road. Follow this to the point where the road bends to the right, at which point you can rejoin the canal.

A series of roads cross the canal. Some you can pass under, and some you need to cross the road and drop back down afterwards.

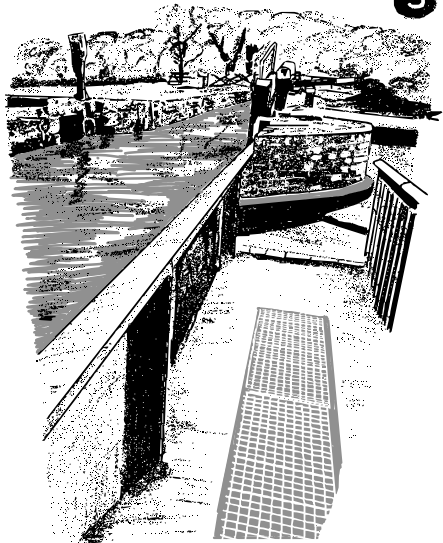
At bridge 68, Warwick Road, before the canal bends to the right, cross to the right side of the canal. Continue to Bancroft Basin and the River Avon. There is no towpath along the river, but the Avon Valley Footpath heads west from here.

You are on a large green close to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre with options for food, coffee and ice-cream, and probably a busker or two to enjoy.

3. STRATFORD TO SHIRLEY (1 MILE CYCLING)

Cycle back to the station via the Stratford Alehouse, Greenhill St, CV37 6LF, or Yo-Bard Craft Beer, Rother Street, CV37 6LU, both of which open at 3pm, and are away from the tourist traps. Trains are at approx. quarter to the hour, and take 35 minutes.

Leaving Shirley station, turn right on Haslocks Green Road, cross the railway, and immediately turn right onto Green Lane and your car.



Yarningale Aqueduct and Bucket Lock,
Stratford-Upon-Avon Canal