

RIVER DON



NEAREST TOWN - Sheffield

O.S. SHEETS -110 Sheffield & Huddersfield

START – Tinsley Park Road – SK 390893 (220 yds to canal) ; OR at Victoria Quay, City Centre

FINISH – Same, or if wishing to shuttle from the end of the river trip, SK 397909, Meadowhall, at the base of the Tinsley Flight of canal locks

TYPE OF WATER - Urban industrial river (no access problems), and the Sheffield canal

Licence – A licence to paddle the canal is included in the Canoe England membership fee. Otherwise licenses can be obtained from

<http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/license-it> or <http://www.waterscape.com/>

(Take your Canoe England membership card with you as it is your licence as well)

DISTANCE – 8 miles round trip; this could take most of a day, with the portages, and inspection of the weirs. This is an urban river and has some rubbish etc, plus 5 weirs (this is the Five Weirs Walk trail)

VEHICLE SHUTTLE REQUIRED

No, not if doing the round trip

PORTAGES

The Tinsley Flight of locks is steep, (11 locks), although the paddler will join them some way up the flight. The weirs can mostly be shot safely, but if not, portaging is easy. A portage trolley is not only useful, but almost very necessary!

LOCAL FACILITIES

Both ends of the Trail have plenty of facilities such as cafes and toilets, and Meadowhall is a major shopping experience; the super tram route follows the trail.

DESCRIPTION

The trip takes place in the former industrial area between the M1 to the east, and Sheffield City Centre to the west. This was the area of the former Tinsley Steel Works, now gone, and largely replaced by the Meadowhall Shopping Centre, visible from



the motorway.

This is an interesting and unusual canoe trail, made much easier than in other urban areas by the provision of a riverside walking trail, which means that many of the usual access problems associated with many 'town' rivers have been dealt with. These often include high retaining walls, lack of access both on and off the river for canoeists and anglers alike, and a general 'unget-at-able' feeling of rivers. The walkway winds around bridge arches etc, and provides convenient platforms for access on to the river, and some portage points.



The trail is a partnership of agencies, the Trust formed in 1987 by Sheffield Wildlife Trust, and Sheffield Junior Chamber of Commerce, supported by the City Council. Funding came from the European Community, National lottery, Yorkshire Forward, and other government grants.

The walk is 5 miles long, from Lady's Bridge (near to the Victoria Quay canal basin), to the City boundary at Meadowhall. The purpose is to provide access for all, including wheelchair users, walkers, cyclists and canoeists. Wildlife is maybe surprisingly abundant, with kingfishers and heron, and plenty of fish.

The route is basically a circular one, taking off on a section of canal with no locks for three miles, paddling into Sheffield City centre, and the basin at the end of the Sheffield and South Yorkshire canal, and transferring on to the River Don. This follows the 'Five Weirs Trail' along to Meadowhall, and then transfers back on to the canal, either paddling or portaging the Tinsley locks.

From the start, it is a 200 yard portage, crossing one road, to launch on to the canal near the Friendship Inn, and the canal winds its way into the city, amongst warehouses and industrial estates. The end is obvious, at a large basin with many narrow boats, the brick arches above you, and the Hilton hotel. Go through the arches by the hotel, cross the road, and go downhill to the road junction, where the river is on your left. The Walk can be joined upstream of the bridge, with a platform about 25 yards away. The Don can be low, but able to be paddled, and is alright for plastic boats, but others might give it a miss!

The weirs can be easily seen, and are of shallow angle. If in any doubt, it is always possible to land and inspect. The river basically follows a 'canyon' between buildings, with some more open and green spaces. The weirs described were all free of obstruction in late 2010.

Weir 1 is Walk Mill Weir, shoot right-hand side, with portage steps etc. No. 2 is Burton Weir, left side, using platform, or maybe down weir face.

Third weir is Sandersons, with fishing/portage platform on right hand side. The fourth is Jessop's Weir, left side with earth banks, but more difficult due to the path being on opposite side. In summer, vegetation can make the portage awkward. Possible portage down face of weir – inspect.

The fifth and last weir is alongside Meadowhall centre, with low earth banks, and inspection and portage is easy from the right side.



The river then comes alongside on the right, under the major motorway visduct, and portage back is easy via the Giant Steps and the base of the Tinsley flight. The way back to vehicles is by either a long portage up the hill, or paddle and portage.

NEARBY VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

Full details and map available from
www.sheffield.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/cycling-and-walking-prow/walking/walkingmaps
Click on Five Weirs Walk

(Dec 11)