

### Key Information

Paddle the entire length of a World Heritage Site; through beautiful Welsh countryside and along (and over!) spectacular engineering. Llangollen Canal will carry you past castles, through tunnels and over the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, which rises 39m above the Dee Valley.

**Start:** Horseshoe Falls car park, Llantysilio LL20 8BN  
**Finish:** Gledrid car park, Chirk LL14 5DL

**Portages:** 0 (1 swing bridge), 2 tunnels (lighting & nav rules)  
**Time:** 2–5 hours  
**Distance:** 11 miles (one-way)  
**OS Map:** Explorer 256 Wrexham & Llangollen



For more information scan the QR code or visit:  
[bit.ly/3CBzzaE](https://bit.ly/3CBzzaE)



This section has no locks and has a slight flow from Llangollen to Chirk. There is a wide, well-maintained path along the whole of this section. At Froncysyllte there is a small lift bridge which may require portaging. The Llangollen section can be busy with canal boats in the warmer months. The route can be adapted/shortened.

There are two tunnels which require a forward-facing bright light or head torch (Canal & River Trust requirement). Before entering the tunnels secure your light and check the tunnel is clear of other craft (two-way navigation).

For safety SUPs cannot be paddled across the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct or through the two tunnels. Please hop off your board and walk on the towpath, towing your paddleboard along the canal (Canal & River Trust requirement).



**1.** Park at Horseshoe Falls (Llantysilio) car park (pay and display/free for NT members). There are toilets (accessible) and a picnic area. Walk out of the back of the car park (following the signs for Horseshoe Falls), down the grassy slope towards the stone Meter House. Please carry (rather than drag) your paddlecraft to prevent erosion to the grass bank. Cross the footbridge behind the Meter House and follow the path to the purpose-built canal access point (approx 200m from car park).

Launch and turn right, heading east towards Llangollen. Enjoy the gorge-like feel to this section, where the canal has been dug into the steep rock walls.

**2.** Paddle under the stone road bridge and past the Chainbridge Hotel (public bar and restaurant).

3. Continue past Llangollen Pavilion and Llangollen Basin, where many of the canal boats are moored.
4. Next up is Llangollen Wharf, home to the Wharf Tea Room and base for the horse drawn boat trips. Easy access if you fancy a break.
5. The view to the left opens up to reveal the ruins of Castell Dinas Brân (c.1260) perched on the hilltop above.
6. Bridge 41W is the access point from the Sun Trevor pub. There is a sloped paved path and bridge over the canal to the A539. The pub is across the main road (75m from canal) (potential alternative access for customers).
7. Bridge 38W is the access point for the Bryn Howell hotel and restaurant. There is a sloped paved path and bridge over the canal to the hotel (75m from canal) (potential alternative access for customers).
8. Bridge 33W marks the crossing point of Offa's Dyke Path, a 177 mile trail along the Wales/England border.
9. Paddle under Bridge 31W (Rhos-y-Coed) and into the pretty Trevor Basin (6 miles from start). This is the perfect place for a break, with picnic benches, large grass banks, toilets (accessible, 50m from the canal), visitor centre and the Telford Inn pub. The Chapel Tea Rooms are a short distance away (150m, pavement). This is an alternative access point with a blue badge car park about 50m from the canal (paved and level) and the main Pontcysyllte Aqueduct Car Park at the end of the basin 'Arm' (pay and display, 100m, paved).
10. Paddle out of the basin, heading south towards Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. This 307m aqueduct crosses 39m above the River Dee, with breathtaking views of the valley. There is a railed footpath on the left, however, it is an unguarded drop on the right. For safety SUPs cannot be paddled across the aqueduct: please hop off your board, walk on the towpath and tow your board across (Canal & River Trust requirement).
11. Continue along the scenic journey through the outskirts of Froncysyllte. Froncysyllte Basin is an alternative access point (6.5 miles from start), with very limited parking next to the canal (grass and concrete access). There is a lift bridge (28W) which may need portaging if it's lowered. (Portage: 10m, concrete edge, paved level access.)
12. Whitehouse Tunnel (8 miles from start) is 174m long. Paddlers must be equipped with suitable head torches or lighting. If you're on a SUP please walk on the towpath and tow your board through. (Canal & River Trust requirements.)
13. Paddle past Chirk Marina on the right and enjoy the sweet smell of the Cadburys factory!
14. Chirk Tunnel (9.5 miles from start) is at the end of a wooded section and is an impressive 421m long. Paddlers must be equipped with suitable head torches or lighting. If you're on a SUP please walk on the towpath and tow your board through. (Canal & River Trust requirements.)
15. Immediately after the tunnel is Chirk Aqueduct. At 220m long and 20m high it is the little brother of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, however, the view still packs a punch. At the midpoint you cross into England. SUPs are permitted to paddle across this aqueduct.
16. The stretch to Chirk Bank/Bridge 21W takes you past pretty cottages and countryside. The Bridge Inn is a short walk from 21W (150m, pavement/road). Chirk Bank is an alternative access point (grass and concrete), with very limited parking next to the canal before/west of Bridge 21W.
17. The canal continues through the outskirts of Chirk to Gledrid Bridge 19W. Get out at the bridge to either Gledrid car park (before the bridge, grass/gravel access, accessible parking bay) or, if you need some refreshments, to The Poachers pub (after the bridge, grass/gravel access).

The canal was designed by Thomas Telford and William Jessop to feed water from the River Dee at the Horseshoe Falls into the canal network. Completed in 1808, they built aqueducts and tunnels to take the canal over and through difficult terrain.

It also carried cargo, primarily limestone from Llanymynech and Froncysyllte, and traffic peaked in the 1860s. Although cargo transportation declined the canal was a popular tourist attraction; with Victorian visitors enjoying horse drawn trips along the canal. It was also used as an 'open pipeline', supplying water to various industries and, ultimately, transporting 12 million gallons of water a day from the River Dee to Hureslton Reservoir in Cheshire.

The area was designated a World Heritage Site in 2009, and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site extends along the Llangollen Canal from Llantysilio across the Dee Valley to Gledrid Bridge. Now the canal is used for leisure rather than cargo, with about 15,000 boats motoring along this feat of engineering each year.

The Canal & River Trust has invested in canoe access points to prevent bank erosion: please use these where possible. They have also produced a guide for paddlers using the canal:  
<https://bit.ly/3AFsbug>

Further information can be found at the following websites:

[www.canoewales.com](http://www.canoewales.com)

[www.britishcanoeing.org.uk](http://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk)

[www.gopaddling.info](http://www.gopaddling.info)

[www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)

[www.pontcysyllte-aqueduct.co.uk](http://www.pontcysyllte-aqueduct.co.uk)



## Safety and Licences

We want you to enjoy a safe trip, so here are a few tips for staying safe and paddling responsibly.

**Paddle Safe. Be prepared and take the right kit:**

- Wear a correctly sized buoyancy aid
- Mobile phone – in a waterproof case
- Whistle – to attract attention in case of emergency
- Map and/or route description
- Appropriate clothing for the weather conditions + spares in a dry bag
- Food, drink & suncream!

**Paddle Responsibly. Respect the natural environment and other users:**

- Respect other waterway users #sharethespace
- Be environmentally aware, minimise your impact
- Ensure you have the correct licence if required
- Observe navigational rules – keep right and give other users space
- Check, Clean, Dry after every trip!

**Licences:** The waterway in this trail is managed by the Canal & River Trust and requires paddlers to hold a licence. If you are an existing Canoe Wales (or British Canoeing) member the good news is that your membership includes an annual licence for the waterway covered within this trail – please ensure you take your membership card with you on the water as this acts as your licence, if stopped with no licence, you will be at risk of being fined. For more information on Canoe Wales membership please click [here](#).