



Canal &
River Trust

Beam engines, boats and Bedwyn brail

Fabulous canal and countryside scenery with some history thrown in too. Enjoy this circular walk from Crofton Pumping Station to Great Bedwyn, taking in stretches of the Kennet & Avon Canal

For information about Great Bedwyn visit www.greatbedwyn.com

Distance: 7.27 miles (11.7km). Duration: about 4 hours. Easy walking: towpath, tracks, field and woodland paths (can be muddy in winter), stretches of road

Nearest train stations
Hungerford, Pewsey, Great Bedwyn
National Rail Enquiries T: 03457 484950
Bus information
Traveline T: 0871 2002233
Visitors' car park at Crofton
Pumping Station



Guiding you step by step



Peaceful water and pretty village

Industrial heritage - beam engines, windmill and canal - combine with diverse scenery to make this walk a delight. And you can even take refreshments at a café or pub if you wish - perfect.

The walk begins at Crofton Pumping Station which is owned by the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust and is home to two historic Cornish beam engines.

These are the oldest working steam engines in the world still performing the job they were built to do.

There are two beam engines, one of which is an original 200-year-old Boulton & Watt. Both are fed by a hand-stoked, coal-fired Lancashire boiler.

These are magnificent pieces of industrial history and you can find out more at www.croftonbeamengines.org.uk

Begin your walk

Park in the visitors' car park and cross the road to the Pumping Station. Admire the tall brick chimney, built in 1859.

You can explore the site either now or at the end of your walk. The engine house is open in the summer and if you want to see the engines in action visit on special steaming weekends.

In the summer the Engineman's Rest Café is open for refreshments.

Head across the grounds, down the wooden staircase and through the railway tunnel to the Kennet & Avon Canal, opened in 1810.

Cross the lock (number 60) using its attached walkway, taking care not to slip into the water.

Turn left once on the other side and

you will quickly come to a finger post. Take the direction pointing to Wilton Windmill.

You will be on a footpath (muddy in winter) crossing a field. Peaceful Wilton Water is on your right (although you might hear a train roar past).

Wilton Water was created in 1836 to be the main source of fresh water for the pumping station.

Enjoy the views of the pumping station across the water. You may see swan, duck and geese and a solitary grey heron waiting on the bank for fish to swim within reach.

Wilton Water forks and you are now following the left arm, keeping it on your right side until you reach the village of Wilton, with its pretty thatched cottages and pub.

The duck pond is in front of you so turn left on the road and pass The Swan Inn on your right, or stop for refreshments before continuing.

Follow the road left until you come to a fork. Take the right fork signposted Wilton Windmill and continue walking up hill.

Soon you will see the windmill across the fields on your right. If it is open you can visit, otherwise continue walking on the peaceful lane. For summer opening hours visit www.wiltonwindmill.co.uk

Pass a finger post and head in the direction of Great Bedwyn.



Into the woods



Discover hidden paths

Stop a while in the wood; visit Great Bedwyn and discover its link to Henry VIII; admire canal boats run by The Bruce Trust. These are specially designed for people of all abilities.

Pass Hill Barn Farm house on your left and just after it you will see a small brideway sign pointing left.

Take this turning onto a grassy path keeping the fence and house on your left.

It becomes a woodland path which you follow until you reach a finger post pointing to Great Bedwyn. Take this direction and you will enter Bedwyn Braille.

Follow the surfaced track through the newly planted trees.

Soon you will come to a bench with views down a long ride (tree-lined avenue) and two trees carved into a face and an owl.

Take a rest if you like or carry on in the direction of Great Bedwyn indicated on the finger post.

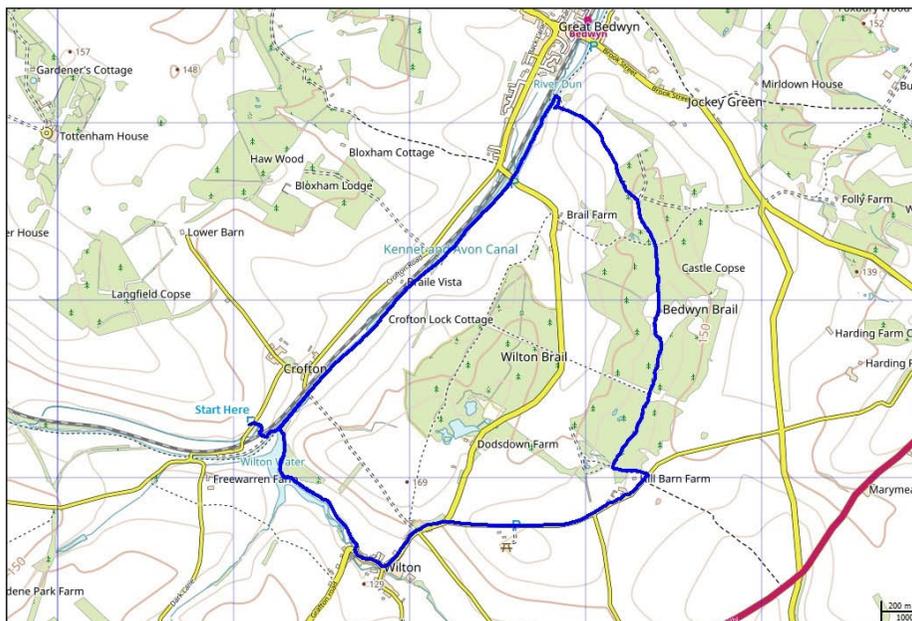
Keep walking along the track past a small barn on your right until the track becomes a grassy path and you will come to a clearing.

Head for the left hand corner of the clearing where a narrow path (muddy and slippery in winter) leads on through the woodland.

Eventually you will come to a field and see the church and village of Great Bedwyn at the end of it.

Carry on down the left hand side of the field and the canal which passes in front of the village also comes into view.

Stay on the path which will bear right and you will come to a gate at a canal bridge, lock (number 64) and the towpath.



Take your time walking the towpath

If you want to visit the village of Great Bedwyn turn right onto the towpath and walk past the colourful narrow boats at their tranquil moorings.

Among them are boats belonging to the Bruce Trust. For information about what they offer visit www.bruce-trust.org.uk

You will come to another bridge (number 97). Walk up to it and turn left over the bridge into Brook Street for the Village Stores or Three Tuns pub. This pretty village also has a train station.

If you don't want to break your walk at Great Bedwyn, when you reach the canal turn left and walk along the towpath, passing under a bridge (number 98).

At the next lock and bridge (number 99) pause to look up.

Notice the strange domed shapes on top of the bridge.

These anti-tank obstacles were placed there in the Second World War to prevent enemy tanks from crossing in the event of an invasion by Nazi Germany.

They were never taken away again, a poignant reminder of the threat that once faced our nation, even in these rural corners.

Stay on the towpath and eventually the tall chimney of Crofton Pumping Station comes back into view.

When you reach it, cross back over the lock and head through the grounds. If you didn't visit the engines at the start of the walk, now is your chance to do so.

Discover places to visit, ways to volunteer and how you can donate at canalrivertrust.org.uk



Get involved, join us

In an increasingly fast-paced and crowded world, our canals and rivers provide much-needed spaces where we can slow down, enjoy the environment and relax. The Canal & River Trust is responsible for caring for 2,000 miles of waterways that run through the heart of England and Wales. With your support we can protect these havens. Forever.

Thanks to our waterways millions of children have the chance to experience local wildlife - even to see a kingfisher or an otter close up. Those struggling with the pressures of day-to-day life have somewhere to rejuvenate themselves. And many of us have a place

on our doorsteps where we can simply stretch our legs and soak up 200 years of history.

Our waterway network is a national treasure. It makes people's lives better and we're here to ensure that it is protected forever.

Sign up for our monthly Canal & River Trust newsletter to read the stories of the people we meet along the waterways. Get the latest offers, learn about our work and keep up-to-date with news and events.

All photos by C Robson, Canal & River Trust

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Find out more at canalrivertrust.org.uk

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