

Birmingham to Wolverhampton



The Route

Where: Birmingham's Gas Street Basin to Wolverhampton station

National Route Numbers:

5 and 81

Distance: 15.5 miles

Terrain: canal towpath - mostly flat and traffic-free

Public transport:

railway stations at Birmingham, Wolverhampton and more along the route

Bike hire: On Your Bike - 0121 6666933

Maps: Birmingham and Black Country Canals leaflet available from British Waterways - 0121 506 1300.

OS maps: Explorer 219, Landranger 139

Tourist information:

0121 643 2514

Towns to search for on Sustrans website mapping:

Ladywood, Tipton (Sandwell), Wolverhampton



Birmingham Main Line Canal

The ride begins five minutes from New Street Station at the Gas Street Basin, originally a busy industrial canal interchange, now a key part of the transformation of Birmingham into a modern, cosmopolitan European city. You may want to fuel up at one of its cafés before setting off. Close by at The Mailbox is a permanent exhibition of the smallest works of art on earth, extraordinary pinhead sculptures created by Willard Wigan, which have been described as the eighth wonder of the world - well worth a visit.

You need to leave plenty of time for this ride, as nothing hurries along the canal unless it is the waterfowl. Take time to enjoy the slower pace of life along this green corridor through the city, and please cycle considerately. Keep your eyes open, as there have been sightings of

otters on Birmingham's canal network, and this route is shared with many plants, mammals, birds and insects.

The industrial origins of the canal are still evident in the buildings on its banks. The route passes the Galton Valley Heritage Centre where you can explore the industrial history of the area. If you are struggling with the distance but don't want to bail out and use the train, think kindly of Victorian engineer Thomas Telford, whose improvements to the canal lopped 7 miles off its total length.

Cyclists on canal towpaths must carry a canal cycling permit. These can be downloaded from www.waterscape.com/cycling/permit.html or obtained from British Waterways on 01923 201120.

