



<http://www.theaa.com/walks/by-canal-and-river-from-rodley-421291>

**A pleasant walk, along the banks of the River Aire and the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, that shows the rural face of Leeds.**

**Distance** 4 miles (6.4km)

**Minimum time** 2hrs

**Ascent/gradient** 33ft (10m)

**Level of difficulty** Easy

**Paths** Riverside path and canal tow path, 1 stile

**Landscape** Surprisingly rural, considering you are so close to Leeds

**Suggested map** aqua3 OS Explorer 288 Bradford & Huddersfield

**Start/finish** SE 223364

**Dog friendliness** Can be off lead on most of walk

**Parking** Rodley, by Leeds and Liverpool Canal, close to swing bridge

**Public toilets** None on route

The Leeds and Liverpool Canal starts at the canal basin in Leeds, where it links up with the Aire and Calder Navigation. From here it begins a journey of 127 miles (205km) across the Pennines. The canal was built between 1770 and 1816, with the Leeds-Skipton section being opened, to a fanfare, on 8 April, 1773. Two boatloads of coal arrived at Skipton Wharf that day, and were sold at half the normal price. That's an indication of just how important it was, for local industries, to create good transport links. Those towns through which the canal ran could look forward to a profitable future; those the canal avoided were likely to struggle.

For a few years the country was gripped by 'canal mania', and many waterways were built on a speculative basis. Only a few canals, including the Leeds and Liverpool, actually made money for their investors; many more proved to be expensive white elephants. And even the most successful canals were rendered obsolete with the coming of the railways. Though the Leeds and Liverpool Canal is no longer used for commercial traffic, it is navigable throughout its length. Canal craft today are recreational, with boating enthusiasts being able to take a leisurely route from the heart of Leeds up to Skipton and Gargrave, on the fringes of the Yorkshire Dales.

**1** Cross the canal on the swing bridge, and bear left along the broad tow path to pass beneath the bridge that carries the ring road. Walk for another 150yds (138m), and turn right after another canal swing bridge, on a paved lane between houses. Go left, almost immediately, to follow a path down steps and across the River Aire on an old stone bridge.

**2** Bear right, on the far side of the river, through a gap stile, to join a riverside path. Walk under the ring road again, and continue on the path, signed as 'Riverside Path to Newlathes Road'. When the river bends to the right, your path goes left, uphill, through a metal kissing gate. Keep straight ahead on a field path, parallel to a railway line on the left, and following a wall. Take a kissing gate, and follow a path between fences, to cross the railway line on a footbridge. You emerge into a housing estate, where you turn right, along Newlathes Road. 100yds (91m) before a T-junction, take steps to the right and continue down a road, Newlay Lane, to a metal bridge over the River Aire.

**3** Cross the river and continue up the road, passing the Abbey Inn. Go left, just before a bridge, to gain access to the tow path of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Go right, under the bridge, soon passing a boatyard and a swing bridge near a mill. By some industrial units is another swing bridge (and an access road to Rodley Nature Reserve, whose wildfowl-rich meres are accessible at weekends). Continue along the canal tow path to arrive back in Rodley.