



### Chichester Canal

This walk starts at Hunston Bridge car park. From Emsworth follow either the A259 or A27 to Chichester. At the first roundabout on the Chichester bypass, follow the A27 East, and again at the next roundabout.

At the third roundabout, turn right onto the B2145 signposted to Hunston. Follow the road south to a mini roundabout where you turn right towards Hunston. Approaching Hunston there is another roundabout, and the car park is on the right hand side just before the Hunston village sign turning back on yourself. If this is full, you can drive up

to the roundabout, turn left and park in the Parish Council car park on the right hand side down Foxbridge drive.

If you are using a wheelchair or have a pushchair, you can only go as far as the canal basin in Chichester, and will have to return the way you came. This is still a very pleasant walk.

*Leaving the western end of the car park, cross over Hunston Bridge to take the towpath on the far side.*

The canal is very rich in wildlife, and there is an unusual mix of land and seabirds living along the canal. If you are lucky, you may see a Grey Heron fishing, or Common Terns diving for fish in the canal.

*Follow the towpath north until you reach the canal basin close to the centre of Chichester. There is a cafe here run by the Chichester Ship Canal Trust.*

The Trust runs canal boats down the canal as far as Hunston Bridge, and depending on which you take, you can get a cream tea on the trip.

If you are using a wheelchair, at this point you need to retrace your route back to Hunston Bridge.

Chichester canal seems strange to any visitors familiar with inland

waterways, because it seems to go simply from the basin in Chichester through to Chichester Marina.



In fact what remains today is only a small part of the original Portsmouth and Arundel canal, designed to create an inland water route from Portsmouth Harbour through to London.

In reality, it was a bit of a disaster from the outset, and never achieved the objective of its builders.

The first part of the canal in Portsmouth, which is still in evidence, failed almost as soon as it came into existence, the salt water polluting the wells on Portsea Island.

Very quickly, the operators were forced to close the canal on Portsea Island, although the line of the canal can still be traced through Southsea.

The next section was through Langstone Harbour, to the north of Hayling island and then down Chichester Harbour to the canal entrance in what is now Chichester Marina.

This was similarly blighted. On the opening of the route, the Mayor of Portsmouth travelled on a barge to join a celebration at Langstone, only to be stranded when the barge ended up on a sandbank until the next tide.

Incredibly, the only road access to Hayling Island at the time, a wadeway across the channel south of Langstone (it can still be seen at low water) was cut through to allow barges to pass, effectively cutting the island off. It was not until three years later that the bridge was built.

The canal from Chichester Marina to Arundel was completed in 1823, but because of all the problems was never successful, and the arrival of the railway doomed the canal as a

functional navigation. It was abandoned in 1855.

Where you are walking is the link from the canal to the centre of Chichester. The Ford to Hunston section closing in 1847.

*Pass round the basin to its northern side and take Basin Road north. At the Police Headquarters, turn right into Kingsham Road and head east along this road.*

The Police Headquarters buildings are a fascinating example of Art Deco design, built in 1937, in the same year that the by-pass was opened, it also has accommodation dating back to the period.

*Continue on until you pass Herald Drive on the right hand side. Just beyond the turning you will find a footpath on the right hand side heading south.*

*Take the second footpath off to the left from this footpath, which leads you past some garages and onto Exton Road. Turn left into Exton Road and follow it round to Hay Road, where you come across an open space between the houses.*

*Turn right and walk around the open space along Hay Road and turn right*

*down a cul-de-sac towards Kingham Primary School.*

*Just to the left of the school entrance is a footpath that heads due south towards the A27. At the end of the path turn left.*

*You now need to cross the A27 Chichester by-pass, over the new footbridge.*

*At the end of the footbridge the other side of the road, take the footpath which heads east, along side the A27 towards Portsmouth. Turn left onto a footpath following the finger post and then heads SSW between some fields.*

As you walk south, look out to the left hand side of the path and you will see a group of gothic styled buildings that used to be a Carmelite Convent, but which has now been converted into Chichester Free School.

*Keep on this footpath until you reach the edge of a field where the path turns left through a kissing gate.*

*Keep left after the kissing gate and you are back to the eastern end of the car park where you started.*