

## Christchurch Stour Canoe Trail

### General Information



This is a very pleasant trip along the Dorset Stour from Iford Bridge to the mouth of the river in Christchurch Harbour. The Stour rises in Stour Head in Wiltshire but most of the rivers course is within Dorset. By the time it reaches Christchurch it's a well established river that slowly meanders its way through the countryside.

### Start

Start at Old Bridge Road near BH6 5RG. Please be considerate when parking and changing clothes.

This is a circular trail so there is no need for a car shuffle.

### Distance

5 miles approx 2 hours

### OS Maps

Land Ranger 195

### Route

Put your boats on the water below the old bridge, if you wish you can first head left under the old bridge and the new one next to Iford Bridge past Christchurch Golf Course (<http://www.golftoday.co.uk/clubhouse/coursedir/dorset/christchurch.html>) to the weir the river is flanked on both sides by footpaths and is a quiet paddle. However, this trail aims to turn right towards the sea. After a mile or so of paddling you will pass under two bridges the first is a footbridge and the second is the main rail line to Weymouth. The river then takes a large meander around Southbourne before running under Tucton Bridge. This bridge was built in 1905. It was commissioned to replace a timber toll-bridge and many features imitate in reinforced concrete the original timber design. This marks the point where the river becomes significantly busier. You can then carry on down to the Sopers lane car park where the Christchurch Circle trail begins or retrace your steps for a cool drink at the Iford Bridge Pub. (<http://www.sizzlingpubs.co.uk/theifordbridgebournemouth/>)

### Safety

Slipways are called that for a reason so do be mindful that they can be covered in slime and when wet are very slippery!

Christchurch Harbour has several areas that are designated SSSI please do not land unless you are sure of authorised access. Familiarise yourself with Canoe England's You, Your Canoe and the Environment at <http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/access-and-environment/environment/you-your-canoe-and-the-environment/> and <http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/access-and-environment/canoeing-on-the-sea/>

The Estuary, by definition, is tidal please ensure that you will have enough water to get back (or be prepared for a muddy wade). At times the tide moves with great speed so be aware of

objects that you could become trapped against. Check the tide times and weather conditions before you set out. At low tide there are large mud banks. There can also be very strong tidal flows near the entrance to the harbour (known locally as "The Run").