**Wilts and Berks Canal Towpath**

**109 km / 68 miles**

**Oxon, Swindon, Wilts**
Linking the historic cities of Bath and Oxford, the route passes through beautiful countryside, following where possible, the towpath of the Wilts & Berks Canal. Starting at Semington bridge on the Kennet & Avon canal, the route follows the upper River Avon valley from Melksham via Lacock towards Swindon and then runs through the Vale of the White Horse, finishing just south of Abingdon where it joins the Thames Path National Trail. Passing close to prehistoric monuments, historic towns and picturesque villages, this gentle journey uses a mix of public and permissive rights of way plus reinstated towpath and offers plenty of interest for canal, history and wildlife lovers alike. Waymarked in places, the route is never more than 1km from the line of the historic canal.

\* Note: Some sectons of canal (& towpath) are in private ownership. Please respect the work of the Trust and it's relationships with landowners and avoid walking on sections that are not PRoW or permissive paths - see published route.
\* Note. Some of the PRoW are overgrown and obstructed in places. The Trust is working with the PRow Officers in each Council to resolve.

The Wiltshire, Swindon & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership has plans to restore the whole towpath by 2017, thus creating an exciting long distance path between the historic cities of Bath and Oxford. In 2012 it is hoped to reinstate the canal towpath between Royal Wootton Basset and Swindon town centre, most of which will use the historic towpath. At present the canal is largely non-navigable, although sections have undergone painstaking restoration thanks to the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust. Boat trips run most summer weekends on the section known as Kingshill in Swindon. Elsewhere, they provide an air of tranquility as nature has attempted to reclaim whole stretches.

Canals, with their towpaths, are a special feature of this walk. Although man-made and built for early transport needs, the canal and its banks are becoming linear nature reserves of increasing importance. In places, the towpath already provides an excellent public amenity and enormous potential for so much more to benefit both the community and the environment. An illustrated route map showing sites of interest along the length of the towpath will soon be available from the Trust.

Please check the website regularly for the latest route changes onto the reinstated towpath.