

SKIPTON TO LEEDS LEEDS & LIVERPOOL CANAL

1

TRIP TYPE : SOLO CYCLE

OBJECTIVE : CYCLE FROM SKIPTON TO LEEDS ON THE LEEDS & LIVERPOOL CANAL, RETURNING BY TRAIN FROM LEEDS

DISTANCE : 30.5 MILES

TIME : 3 HOURS, 10 mph

NICHOLSON: GUIDE 5, pp 135-147

COSTS : CAR PARKING IN SKIPTON. TRAIN FROM LEEDS TO SKIPTON, 3 PER HOUR, £4.60

DIFFICULTY : EASY

OVERVIEW: A lovely ride through the Aire Valley on excellent towpaths. The only difficulty is finding free parking in the popular town of Skipton, and you will probably have to pay if parking in the town itself. There is a large car park at the station, or at Coach Street, BD23 1LH, in the town centre. Parking in Leeds is another option, but again you will probably have to pay. However the train fare is cheap, and the beer is good, which helps balance things up.

1. SPRINGS BRANCH, SKIPTON (1 MILE)

It is well worth doing the Springs Branch while in Skipton. This is essentially a feeder which runs round the back of the castle, down through the town centre to join the main canal close to Belmont Bridge, and is very pretty.

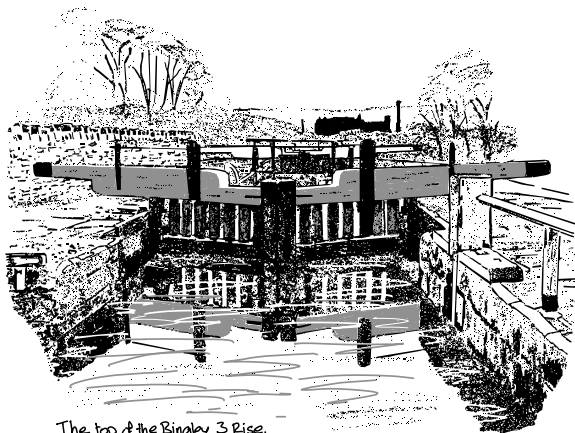
From Coach Street Bridge take the towpath up the Springs Branch to the pool. The path is on a raised walkway over the pool, and you can continue to where it joins Chapel Hill. Turn left and come back to Raikes Road that way. Rejoin the towpath at Mill Bridge and head back down

to Coach Street Bridge.

Take Coach Street to Belmont Street, turn right to Belmont Bridge and cross it.

2. SKIPTON TO LEEDS (29 MILES)

Once you have crossed Belmont Bridge, turn right on Belmont Wharf and head down the slope, then double back onto the towpath, which passes back under the bridge. Head east.



The top of the Bingley 3 Rise,
Leeds & Liverpool Canal

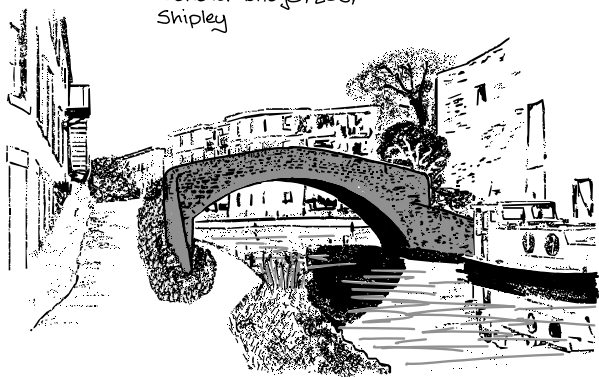
The towpath is excellent, metalled or good quality gravel, and wide, all the way to Leeds. Pass through the villages of Kildwick, Silsden, and Riddlesden on the outskirts of Keighley (the best place to drink Timothy Taylors).

There are no locks until you come to the spectacular Bingley 5 Rise, at the top of which is the decent Five Rise Locks Café on the far bank. Take a moment to take in the engineering, and the sheer size of the locks, before freewheeling down the slope.

Next come the Bingley 3 Rise, and shortly after, just before the Seven Arches Aqueduct, the towpath changes to the left as the canal crosses the River Aire. Although

you are passing many conurbations, the ride has a very rural feel to it as it runs alongside the river in the valley.

Junction Bridge, 208,
Shipley



Pass by Salks Mill at Saltaire, which is worth a visit in itself. There are some good pubs, bars and curry houses here, if you have the time or inclination. Continue through Shipley back into the countryside, past Kirkstall Abbey, into a more industrial landscape as you approach the centre of Leeds.

The ride finishes at Granary Wharf, a new development right by and under the central railway station. Plenty of bars here to choose from, including Salt and Osset Brewery taps, which cross sell their beers.

There are lifts up to the station platform level from the wharf and frequent trains back to Skipton.

If you are stopping overnight in Skipton as I did (doing the Skipton to Burnley ride the following day), I would give the Beer Engine micro pub a try.

