

STANTON AQUEDUCT TO KENDAL LANCASTER CANAL

1

TRIP TYPE : SOLO CYCLE

OBJECTIVE : TAKE THE TRAIN FROM LANCASTER TO OXENHOLME, AND RETURN BY CYCLING TO STANTON AQUEDUCT ALONG ROADS, THEN TO LANCASTER ALONG THE LANCASTER CANAL, WHICH IS PARTIALLY DISUSED.

DISTANCE : 27.7 MILES

TIME : 3¼ HOURS, 8.8 mph

NICHOLSON: GUIDE 5, PP 81-89

COSTS : FREE PARKING IN LANCASTER. TRAIN FROM LANCASTER TO OXENHOLME FROM £7.50 (PRICES VARY A LITTLE) 13 MINUTES - RESERVATION REQUIRED ON MOST SERVICES AS IT IS THE AVANTI WEST COAST MAIN LINE.

DIFFICULTY : MODERATE

OVERVIEW: A nice ride on mixed quality paths through lovely Poshman Pat countryside. Parts of the canal have been cut off by the M6 motorway (the Lancaster Canal Restoration Trust is doing its best to get the waterway fully restored, but it won't be easy).

The short train journey is somewhat stressful, as the cycle storage on most Avanti trains is in the engine compartment, which is locked on departure, and you must ensure the staff at Oxenholme station are aware you want to get off there (Lancaster station staff will do this for you).

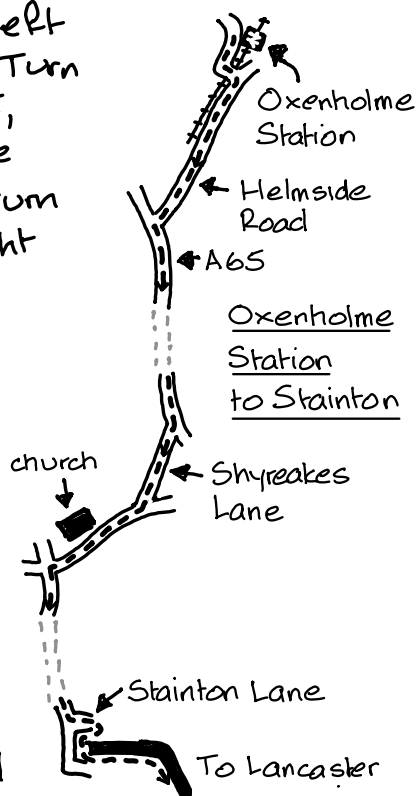


1. LANCASTER TO STAINTON AQUEDUCT (3.5 MILES)

Parking in Lancaster for free is not easy. You should find space on Willow Lane, LA1 5TX. From there, at the Northern end, turn right onto West End, and head up the hill. At the sharp bend, bear right to the station entrance. Trains to Oxenholme are frequent, but as mentioned, most require cycle reservations as they are Avanti services.

Leaving Oxenholme station turn left up the hill, and cross the railway. Turn right on Helmside Road to the A65, Burton Road. Turn left and continue for about a mile on the A65 then turn right on Shyreakes Lane. Turn right at the T junction and left at the crossroads just past the church, towards Stainton.

Just before the road takes a sharp left over the bridge turn left, double back to your right, and join the canal which is blocked off at this point. Go round the end of the block and continue the short distance to Stainton Aqueduct on a good quality path.



2. STAINTON AQUEDUCT TO TEWITFIELD LOCKS (9 M)

From Stainton Aqueduct continue on the good path to Crooklands. Half a mile further on, where the M6 crosses over the canal, you emerge onto a road and briefly cycle along the A65 footpath under the motorway bridge before turning right to rejoin the footpath.



Continue past Farleton. The gravelled path stops abruptly at a bridge. Continuing along the towpath will take you to another M6 blockage. Climb up to the road and turn left across the canal to the crossroads. Turn right on the A6070. Take the first right, North Road, towards Burton. Pass under the M6, and 200m further on take the path to your left to rejoin the towpath.

Once past Burton village the quality drops, becoming grassy and bumpy along to the point where we again encounter the M6. A track to the right brings you out on the prettily named Cinderbarrow Lane. Turn left, cross the M6 bridge, and immediately turn right through a gateway to the top of Tewitfield locks, aka Northern Leaches Locks.

3. TEWITFIELD TO LANCASTER (12 MILES)

Drop down the 8 Tewitfield locks, a good place to eat your sandwiches and take a minute to consider the lack of foresight of the builders of the M6, and the difficult job the restoration society will have to re-open the canal. The locks, which are in a sorry state, were

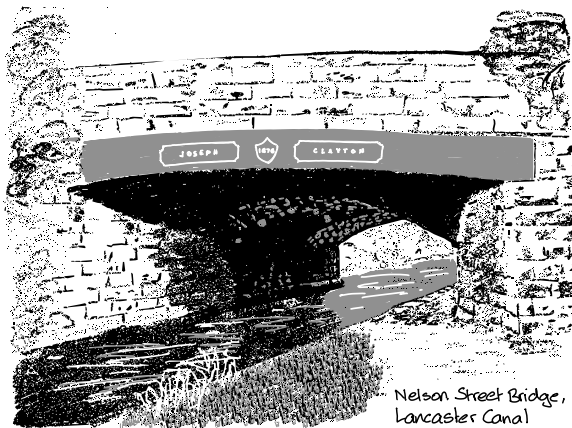
the only locks between Preston and Kendal when the canal was fully open (there are a few down to Glasson Dock which you will traverse on the Lancaster to Glasson Dock ride).

Continue on the poor quality windy contoured path past Borwick, Capernwray, and back under the M6 (here at least a bridge was put in) as you approach Carnforth. The towpath quality improves and it is patchily metalled or gravelled all the way to Lancaster.

A nice if busy - with - walkers stretch takes you to the impressive Lune Aqueduct, after which a sharp bend leads you towards Lancaster city centre.

Leave the canal at Nelson Street Bridge, 101, which is close to the Accidental Brewery on Bulk Street, LA1 1PU, an upstairs bar I have visited more than once and which is well worth a look. There are plenty of other good pubs including the John O' Gaunt on Market Street, LA1 1JA, for something more traditional.

To return to the railway station continue downhill on Nelson Street onto Brock Street. Turn right on the one-way system (A6) then left at Meeting House Lane. Turn right on West Road past the station entrance to drop back to Willow Road and your car.



Nelson Street Bridge,
Lancaster Canal