

The Wilts and Berks Canal

The Wilts & Berks Canal was abandoned in 1914 and is currently thought to be the longest restoration project in Britain. Restoration is underway due to the dedication and extraordinary efforts of volunteers, and the enabling works of the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership. Several miles of the waterway have been returned to water with numerous structures, including bridges, locks and lengths of towpath, restored or in the process of restoration. The Partnership is aiming to complete the restoration of this important recreational and wildlife resource by 2025.

The main line of the canal runs for 52 miles between the Kennet and Avon Canal at Semington and Abingdon on the River Thames, with the 8 mile North Wilts branch connecting to the Thames and Severn Canal at Cricklade, and a further 4 branches at Chippenham, Calne, Longcot, and Wantage

The Wilts & Berks Canal in the Melksham area

Melksham Town Council is a key member of the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership and assists with the restoration of the canal through the provision technical assistance, consultation and financial support.

The adjacent Kennet & Avon Canal opened in the same year as the Wilts & Berks and both will therefore be celebrating the 200th anniversary in 2010.

To mark this historic occasion the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership has initiated a new project to create the Melksham Link, a replacement route for the historic alignment from the junction at Semington. The proposed route will use the River Avon in the town, where local canoeists are looking forward to an extension of waterway facilities, and the extended towpath network will allow safer routes for walking and cycling and will provide a link to the Sustrans National Cycleway Network. Full details of the project are shown on the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership web site: www.wiltsandberksanal.org.uk

The restoration of much the North Wilts branch of the Wilts & Berks Canal is part of separate multi-partner project to create the Cricklade Country Way, connecting Swindon to Cricklade, the Cotswold Water Park and the River Thames using the restored canal, railway, cycleways, bridleways and footpaths.

[Cricklade Country Way project](#) .

Please contact the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership for more information about the project in Wiltshire, Swindon and Oxfordshire.

[Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership](#)

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For further information about the Partners and other organisations please follow the links below

[Wilts & Berks Canal Trust](#)

[Waterscape \(Wilts & Berks Canal\)](#)

[British Waterways](#)