

# Conwy Estuary



**No. 3 | Grade A | 17km | OS Sheet 115 | Tidal Port Liverpool**

- Start** ▲ Beacons Car Park, Conwy (773 790)
- Finish** ● Beacons Car Park, Conwy (773 790)
- HW/LW** at Conwy are around 30 minutes before Liverpool, at Dolgarrog Bridge 30 minutes after Liverpool.
- Tidal times** The south-going stream (flood) runs up the estuary and begins 5 hours before HW Liverpool.  
The north-going stream (ebb) runs north out of the estuary and begins around HW Liverpool.
- Tidal rates** In Conwy Harbour and beneath the Conwy bridges the average spring rate can exceed 6 knots. The rest of the estuary tidal rates tend to be 3-4 knots.
- Coastguard** Holyhead, Tel. 01407 762051, VHF Weather 0235 UT.

**INTRODUCTION** The lower reaches of the Conwy display varied and beautiful scenery, historic monuments, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and spectacular views of the Carneddau mountains of northern Snowdonia. The advantageous strong tidal streams generated as the rising waters flood in from the Irish Sea will help you on your way to Dolgarrog Bridge, some eight kilometres upstream.

**DESCRIPTION** The Beacons car park is easily reached from the A55 by following signs for Conwy Marina then taking a left at the mini-roundabout, signposted 'Car Park'. Launching here during the middle hours of the flood will give a swift ride past the marinas of Conwy and Deganwy. A passage through Conwy Harbour close to the west shore will be easier going and will provide more opportunity to enjoy the views of the walled town and castle. Once under the bridges the strong currents ease as the estuary becomes wider and the east shore is a nature reserve managed by the RSPB. From the town of Llananffraid Glan Conwy the estuary becomes much narrower and the rolling countryside closes in.

After 8km you will pass beneath the bridge that connects Tal y Cafn on the east bank with Ty'n-y-groes to the west. It is possible to egress from here but parking along the road beside the bridge is minimal. Less than 1km after the bridge the river becomes even narrower, bound into a shallow rocky gorge known as the Tal y Cafn rapids. In deep water there is nothing here but a few gentle boils but at lower levels rougher water may be encountered and some rocks may have to be avoided.

In the last 4km to Dolgarrog the river winds its way through low-lying farmland and the banks are hidden by tall, dense reed-beds. The aluminium works at Dolgarrog soon come into view. A couple of reed-infested islands make route finding more interesting but the bridge at Dolgarrog is not far away.

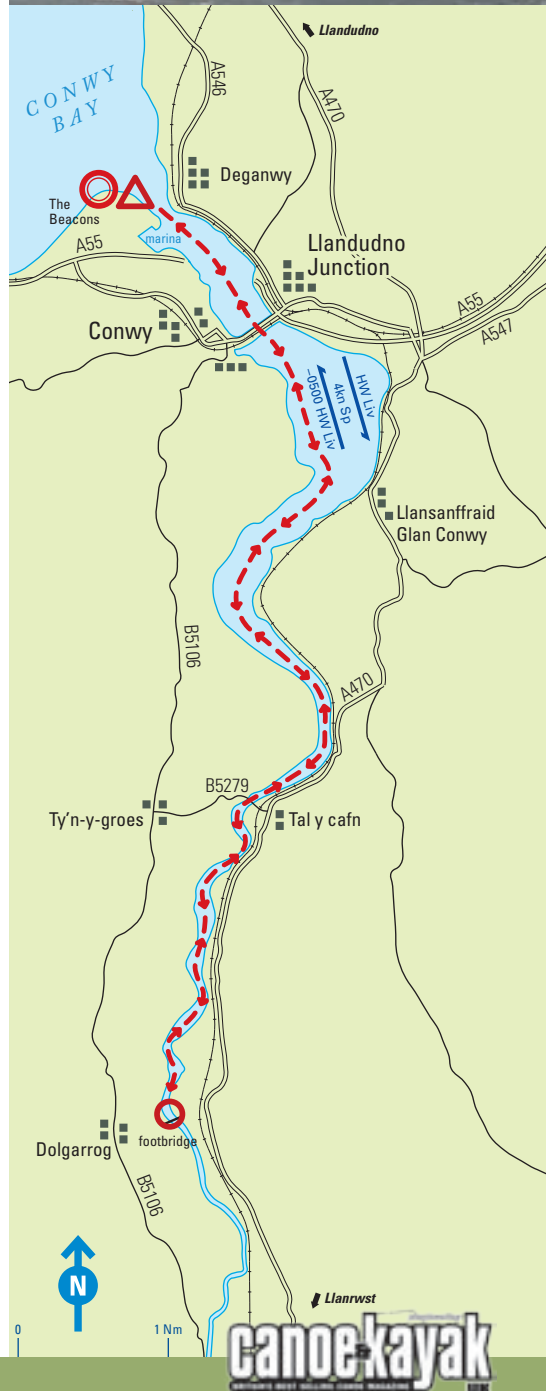
Dolgarrog Bridge is the official finish for the annual Conwy Ascent Race and Tour event (organised by Dyffryn Conwy Paddlers in spring). There are public rights of way from Dolgarrog, 1km to the west and from the A470, via Dolgarrog Station 300m to the east. The normal tidal limit is another 4km upstream, close to Trefriw but you will have seen the best of the tidal stretch of the Conwy. However far you choose to paddle up the estuary, you should begin your return as the water begins to flow downstream to avoid exposed mud and sand-banks.

**TIDE & WEATHER** The Conwy Estuary is generally well sheltered and can make a bad weather alternative to paddling around the Ormes. Strong winds from the north-west can produce gusty conditions around the Conwy bridges. When coupled with an ebbing spring tide, large standing waves or confused water conditions may be encountered in the harbour area. The tidal stream running through Conwy Harbour runs up to 6 knots. Swift action is needed to avoid mooring buoys and moored craft.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** In recent years harbour traffic has increased dramatically, the Conwy Estuary is becoming increasingly popular with pleasure craft, jet skis and powerboats.

The old town of Conwy boasts an abundance of shops, pubs and cafés. There is a youth hostel and plenty of camping nearby. One campsite of note is Conwy Touring Park, 3km south of Conwy on the B5106, with its view over the middle part of the estuary, Tel. 01492 592856.

The Conwy by Tal y Cafn and Ty'n-y-groes | Andy Biggs



Excerpt abridged and adapted from *Welsh Sea Kayaking* by Andy Biggs & Jim Krawiecki ISBN 0954706188, published by Pesda Press, Caernarfon. For details of this and other books, as well as downloads of further mini-guides and route cards in this series, visit: [WWW.PESDAPRESS.COM](http://WWW.PESDAPRESS.COM)

Trip Name & Number	
Page Number	VHF Weather
Date	Weather Forecast
Coastguard Contact	

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tidal Port		Mean Sp Range			Local Port		
		Mean Np Range					
Tidal Port Tide Times (UT)	Height in Metres	Tidal Range in Metres	HW/LW	+1 Hr for BST?	Local Port HW/LW Time Difference	Local Port HW/LW	Sp or Np Tides

TIDAL STREAM TIMES

Location	Direction of Tidal Stream	Tidal Stream Time Diff.	Tidal Port HW (BST?)	Tidal Stream Start Time	Tidal Rate	Est. Max Speed
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ROUTE PLAN

Location	Notes	ETA	ETD
Start			
1st			
2nd			
3rd			
4th			
5th			
Finish			