

UK Canal Boating

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Telephone : 01395 443545

Email : contact@ukcanalboating.com

Booking Office : PO Box 57, Budleigh Salterton. Devon. EX9 7ZN. England.

Bath and the Vale of Pewsey from Hilperton

Cruise this route from : Hilperton

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Cruising Days : 8.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 38.00

Total Distance : 68.00

Number of Locks : 74

Number of Tunnels : 4

Number of Aqueducts : 4

Cruise to the historic City of Bath , one of Britain's most appealing cities with Roman and Georgian architecture, including the famous Roman Baths, see the Royal Crescent and Jane Austen centre.

The Vale of Pewsey – tranquil, spiritual and ancient. The Vale is a beautiful area in the eastern half of the county with the village of Pewsey at its centre. It is a walking and exploring landscape, studded with pretty and unspoilt villages and forms the western extent of the North Wessex.

Devizes is a historic market town with a colourful Medieval past, wealth of history and architectural heritage with

more than 500 listed buildings and a large Market Place in the heart of the town. Take a tour of Wadworth Brewery, sample their famous 6X and meet the Shire horses that still deliver to pubs in the town.

See the 29 locks of the Caen Hill flight on the Kennet and Avon canal, a triumph of Georgian engineering.



Cruising Notes

You are on the outskirts of the delightful town of Trowbridge, the county town of Wiltshire, it is one of the three largest towns in Wiltshire.

The town's lengthy history is recorded in the museum, which tells the fascinating story of Trowbridge's people and past. The museum has also won the Association of Industrial Archaeologists award for 'best site visited' in 2008 & it is located in the last woollen mill in Trowbridge, which closed its doors as a mill in 1982. The fascinating collections in the Trowbridge Museum are accessed via The Shires Shopping Centre - built on the site of part of the woollen mill and home to a diverse selection of more than 50 shops all on one level and undercover.

Day 1

If you have all your provisions you can begin your journey. If not if you walk back along the towpath to Hilperton Road bridge 166, there is a convenient stores here.

Just an hour from Hilperton you reach the medieval town of Bradford on Avon . Here you will come across your first lock. With good moorings below the lock (and a choice of canalside hostelries) you can walk up to the lock and

watch a few boats go through to gain confidence before you go through yourself. Being a wide beam canal, the locks take two narrowboats, so you can share the experience, and effort, with another boat.

It is 1 hour cruising from Hilperton to here so an ideal place for your 1st night.

Bradford on Avon to the North of the canal, is a lovely town, one of the beauty spots of Wiltshire, and one of the highlights of the Canal. It is a miniature Bath, rich with architectural treasures from the Saxon period to the 19th Century. Bradford upper Wharf is very attractive, with a small dock with some of its original buildings still standing, and an old canal pub by the lock. The town centre is very compact, you can walk down the hill from the Canal wharf. There is also a swimming pool near the canal. The Great Tithe barn stands below the canal embankment and is one of the finest in the UK, dating from the 14th century with a massive cathedral like structure. The splendid 9 arch Town Bridge is very unusual as it has a chapel in the middle, dating from medieval times, but used during the 17th & 18th centuries as the town prison.

Westwood manor lies 1 mile south west of Bradford on Avon, a 15th C stone manor house open through the National Trust.

Day 2

The River Avon rushes along beside the canal, Avoncliff is a nice place to stop with its tearoom and pub overlooking the river.

One of the most impressive structures on Britain's waterways, the Avoncliff Aqueduct at over 100 metres long and 18 metres wide, carries the Kennet & Avon Canal over the River Avon.

Further along, if you moor at Limpley Stoke Bridge, walk down the the Railway bridge & turn left you will find a lovely 400 year old Pub called the Hop Pole, which was originally a monks wine lodge.

After crossing Dundas Aqueduct you will see a restored ¼ mile section of the old Somerset Coal Canal, the canal collected coal from 30 collieries throughout the 19th C.

The Dundas Aqueduct was built in 1804 and is one of the most well known features of the canal.

It is best viewed from the valley below to appreciate its full beauty and architecture.

West of Claverton Road bridge is the American Museum in Britain, housed in a manor built in 1820. The museum houses American decorative arts from the late 17C to the mid 19C.

Claverton Pumping station to the east of the canal has a waterwheel pump which is the only one of its kind on British canals. The pumping station is run by volunteers and is open every weekend during the season.

Bathampton & Bathwick are on the outskirts of Bath, turnaround just after the Cleveland House Tunnel, or if your boat is under 50 foot long, you can turn a bit further along after Sydney Wharf Bridge 188.

Mooring here puts you in line with the rooftops of the city and an enjoyable walk away from the city centre.

Cruising into Bath is like gliding into Regency Britain. It is 3.5 hours from Bradford on Avon to Bath

Day 3

Turn the boat and cruise back the way you came, past Hilperton marina again on your way to the Vale of Pewsey.

The canal sweeps through undulating woodland and arable farmland past the rural village of Semington through a series of swing bridges which are something of a hallmark of this section of canal.

There are 2 locks at Semington and a swing bridge, it is a very pretty village & best access is just before the lock.

As well as the many swing bridges around Seend there are 5 locks to navigate, luckily there are plentiful moorings at the ever-popular Seend Cleeve and close by pubs and quiet countryside to please the eye and fill the stomach.

There is the Brewery Inn 200 yds south of Lock 19 and the Barge Inn by Lock 19.

The Three magpies pub in Seend Cleeve has good quality food, nice beer garden and good ales- it is 200 yds south of Sells green bridge and a good place to moor for the night as it is 8.5 hours cruising to here.

Day 4

The hills to the south climb steeply up to the village of Seend and to the north flat pasture land stretches away.

Today you conquer the fantastic Caen Hill flight of 29 locks in just 2.25 miles.

At Lower Foxhangers the first of 7 locks is reached which takes you to the bottom of the flight of 16 Caen Locks.

It is worth mooring up near here & take some photos of these fantastic locks as they really are quite a sight.

At the top of the locks is a cafe if you are in need of refreshment after the climb up the hill through the locks. The views from the top are well worth the effort, with views over Salisbury Plain to the south and the Avon Valley to the west charting the route taken from Bath.

You soon reach Devizes & there are moorings by Devizes Wharf. Stock up on supplies here as there are no towns until you get to Pewsey & Hungerford.

It is 6 hours to here

Devizes itself has the atmosphere of an old country market town. Handsome 18th century buildings now surround the square.

Devizes museum has one of the finest prehistoric collections in Europe including the Stourhead collection of relics excavated from burial mounds on Salisbury Plain.

Devizes visitor centre is home to an interactive exhibition introducing visitors to the medieval origins of the town.

Wharf Theatre is canalside and hosts a variety of performances throughout the year.

There are the usual pubs, restaurants, take-aways. Shops and a cinema in the town.

The battle of Roundway was fought near here in 1643 between the Roundheads and the Royalists and the

Roundheads were all killed or captures. The battlefield is largely intact & can be explored on foot.

Day 5

From Devizes Wharf you set off again, with not such an energetic day as yesterday, there are no locks, you cruise to the Vale of Pewsey and back to Devizes again.

As you leave Devizes you cruise through rural surroundings, the village of Bishops Cannings is accessed from Bridge 133 with a pub in the village, and All Cannings from bridge 128 where there is a small shop & pub.

More small villages are passed but there is hardly any habitation canalside as you pass through the Vale of Pewsey. A miniature suspension bridge carries a private footpath from Stowell Park across the canal, as is the only surviving example of its kind. Stowell park House was built in the early 19 century, and can be clearly seen from the canal.

The Barge Inn is canalside in Honeystreet before bridge 124. Beyond the village to the north can be seen the white horse cut into the hill in 1812.

At Wilcot bridge 117 you can get to the small village of Wilcot where the Golden Swan Pub stands beyond the green at the far end of the village. A one handed ghost is said to haunt this pub.

Pewsey Wharf is a mile from the town centre but has a pub canalside. There are shops in the town which can be accessed to the north of Bridge 114. To the north, hills descend to the waters edge and to the south the land opens out, giving fine views over the Vale of Pewsey.

It is nearly 4 hours to Pewsey from Devizes, turn your boat just beyond Milkhouse Water Bridge 112 and strat back to Devizes, the whole trip will take 8 hours

Day 6 7 8

It is 10.5 hours back to Hilperton marina so on **Day 6** tackle the Caen Locks, you should be an expert by now, and see how far you can get, there is no rush, plenty of time to get back to the marina

Useful Links

The information above is provided in good faith to assist you with planning your canal boat holiday. Information accuracy cannot be guaranteed, however, if you do see something that needs updating, please don't hesitate to [contact us](#).