

# UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

## Caldon Canal and Froghall basin from Stone

Cruise this route from : Stone

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Cruising Days : 8.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 33.00

Total Distance : 52.00

Number of Locks : 60

Number of Tunnels : 2

Number of Aqueducts : 0

The Caldon Canal is widely seen as one of the most interesting waterways in the country.

This Canal gives you a real glimpse of what the canals offer, you have a staircase lock, lift bridges, mechanical and manual, a small aqueduct/viaduct, travelling at the top of a valley and then dropping into a valley, a river, 2 tunnels, not to mention the Steam Railway.

The canal was built to carry limestone for the iron industry and flints for the pottery industry. It is still steeped in history, with fascinating industrial buildings visible along the Stoke section. Further along, you may see a steam train chugging along where the Churnet Valley Railway passes close to the canal.

The outstanding scenery along the route means there are lots to see for boaters, walkers and cyclists. The unusually low Froghall Tunnel may be a challenge for boaters, but beyond it, you will be rewarded by arriving at the tranquil and secluded Froghall Wharf.

It is very much a canal of contrasts, beginning in the centre of the Potteries but also passing through the remote countryside on the summit level and the Churnet Valley often called 'Little Switzerland' because of the lovely unspoilt landscape.

Take a Steam train ride through the beautiful countryside on the Churnet Valley Railway.

Alton Towers is only 6 miles from Froghall Wharf at the end of the Caldon Canal, or take a bus or train from Stoke on Trent

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# Cruising Notes

## Day 1

As you are on the outskirts of Stone, you may like to stay moored up and visit the town before leaving. Stone is a busy, pleasant town, with excellent shopping facilities. At the canalside there are dry docks, wharves and old brewery buildings, as well as the old priory church which in 1751 was rebuilt by the parishioners. There are also plenty of pubs and restaurants to choose from if you want a meal before setting off, for example: The Star (canalside); The Three Crowns; The Crown Hotel.

Leaving Stone, you continue through the last locks of the Stonne flight, look out for the little tunnel under the road for boat horses by lock 29. You will be cruising up the valley to Meaford, via a series of locks and bridges, and for a time, the railway runs adjacent to the canal.

Soon you will approach Barlaston, a small, sprawling village, moor by the Plume of Feathers a canalside pub, as it is 2 hours to here and a good place to moor for the night. The pub has a good selection of real ales and good food.

## Day 2

Within a short distance you will come to Bridge 104 where there are some good moorings which enable you to visit the Wedgwood Pottery, set back from the canal. The World of Wedgwood, a unique, interactive visitor centre experience celebrating the very best of British craftsmanship. Experience Wedgwood for the day through shopping, food, visitor tours and art and craft workshops. You can get a factory tour and the Museum is well worth seeing, also the factory shop.

Also from here, you can reach Newstead Wood and Hem Heath Nature Reserves, both large open spaces, and a brief reprieve before you reach Stoke on Trent.

Leaving Wedgwood you negotiate Trentham Lock, and if it's nearing lunchtime, in Trentham Village there is a Toby Carvery.

Trentham Gardens can be found a short walk to the west from Bridge 106 on the southern fringes of Stoke.

The nearer you get to Stoke on Trent, the busier the canal becomes, with rebuilding of old factories and evidence of the city's pottery industry all around. The canal cuts directly through the middle of this sprawling conurbation set in amongst hilly valleys and areas of reclaimed industry and the beginnings of large scale redevelopment. There are large brownfield sites throughout Stoke but also large areas of parkland to be seen from the canal.

There is a wide choice of shops to re-stock provisions on the journey through Stoke.

Close to bridge 112 is Churchill China, a factory shop selling bone china.

Just a short walk from here is Festival park, Stoke on Trent's largest retail park, also home to Waterworld if you fancy a jacuzzi or the kids want to get rid of some energy on the long waterslides! There is also a cinema on

site, and many restaurants and food outlets.

The Caldon canal is to the right just after the Stoke Flight of locks, you soon pass a statue of James Brindley, builder of the Trent & Mersey canal.

The Etruria Industrial museum is at the junction of the Calson Canal with the Trent & Mersey. This is a Victorian steam-powered potter's miller's works, built in 1857 and which ground bone, flint and stone for the Potteries industry. There are moorings for visitors.

The first 2 locks are combined in a staircase, Planet Lock is soon reached with shops and pubs close by. 1/4 mile north of bridge 4 is Hanley park, where there are good moorings.

Moor here for the night it is 4.5 hours to here.

Walking north from bridge 8 along Lichfield Street you reach the Potteries area, ahead is the Potteries Shopping centre, to the left off Potteries way you will find the Museum and Art Gallery and Bridgewater factory shop,

Buses from the city centre ,and Hanley will take you off to Alton Towers, the countrys most renowned Theme park with an array of awesome rides if you have a day spare .

Also the railway station has trains to there.

If you do not want to moor up in Stoke, cruise onto Milton, a little village on the outskirts, there are a couple of pubs by bridge 18, it is an extra 1.5 hours cruising, so 6 hours from Barlaston.

Day 3

Five locks at Stockton raise the canal up to 484 ft above sea level to the summit.

There is a friendly farm shop near Bridge 28, and shops 250 yds north west of bridge 28 .

At Hazelhurst the canal divides and the Leek branch goes away to the right before crossing the mainline on an aqueduct and going away to your left. You can make the small detour up here if you wish to its terminus about 2.5 miles away carrying on up to Leek and visiting the Antique shops (approx) a mile from the mooring point at bridge 9.

Carrying along the main line along the Churnet valley accompanying the River.

Deep Hayes Country Park is off to your right, access from Bridge 39. It is a delightful mixture of woods and meadows, and was originally an industrial area where coal and clay were extracted.

Another 2 locks bring you down to the village of Cheddleton and you can moor here for the night, it is 6.5 hours from Hanley Park.

There is a charming flint mill by the canal, and you can watch 2 water wheels driving the flint grinding pans in a picturesque setting.

The Red Lion pub is back at the locks by Bridge 43, The Boat Inn is canalside at bridge 44.

Churnet Valley railway is by bridge 44- a preserved standard guage railway running steam trains along the 10.5 mile of track .The Churnet Valley Railway takes you on a journey back to the classic days of railway travel on a rural line that passes through beautiful countryside known as Staffordshire's "Little Switzerland". It runs

weekends and bank holidays, but look on their website for full details.

## Day 4

The canal continues its pretty journey and the canal shares the same course as the River Churnet for some distance.

At Consall Forge by bridge 49 is a hand thrown pottery & craft centre & ceramics, especially tea pots.

The Black lion pub here is in a splendid setting with a fine garden.

Beyond Consall Forge the canal gets very narrow , so make sure nothing is coming from the other direction as you may have to reverse. The Canal is enclosed by steep and thickly wooded hills, almost untouched by mankind. You pass old limekilns on the way to Flint Lock, the last lock before the end of the canal. As you exit the tunnel there are plastic strips which mark as a gauge to let you know whether your boat will fit through Froghall tunnel or not.

The dimensions of the tunnel are only 4ft 4in high and 5ft 6 inches wide and the water levels can fluctuate so all of our boats should turn just before the tunnel and moor up and walk to the very pretty village of Froghall. It is 3.5 hours to here from Cheddleton

Froghall these days comprises almost entirely of factories and dwellings associated with Thomas Bolton's copper works.

The tea rooms at Kingsley & Froghall station are worth a visit.

Froghall basin just beyond the tunnel has a picnic area and shop and limekilns.

Once a hive of industrial activity, this old canal-side wharf is a lovely tranquil picnic spot alongside the terminus of the Caldon Canal and Uttoxeter Canal Basin. There are way-marked walks that lead from the site onto the rights of way network and canal towpath. This is a popular spot for walkers to begin exploring the Churnet Valley and there are grade 2 listed Lime Kilns on the site and other remnants of the industrial past can be found in the wooded valley beyond.

It is 6 miles from here to Alton Towers, see here for local taxis companies

<http://www.thomsonlocal.com/Taxis/in/Froghall-Staffordshire/>

## Days 5 6 7

It is 16.5 hours back to Stone, so cruise for just over 5 hours a day and you should be fine

## 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](#).

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