

UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

Grand ring from Gayton part 1 to Oxford

Cruise this route from : Gayton

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Grand ring from Gayton part 1 to Oxford

Cruising Days : 15.00 to 22.00

Cruising Time : 114.00

Total Distance : 247.00

Number of Locks : 175

Number of Tunnels : 2

Number of Aqueducts : 0

The Grand Ring, also known as the Thames Ring offers an eclectic combination of narrow canal, broad canal, tidal and non-tidal river waters.

The Grand ring travels from the lower reaches of one of the world's best-known rivers, to the land of dreaming spires and academia of Oxford, continuing northwards along the Oxford Canal and returning via the Grand Union Canal.

Upstream from Brentford the tidal Thames passes the Royal Botanical Gardens and the first in a number of small islands. Teddington Locks are the largest locking system on the river and denote the transition from tidal to non-tidal. The weir is a gauging point for water flow and flood warnings are issued from its monitoring station. Past Hampton Court Palace the Desborough Cut is an artificial channel avoiding a twisting loop of river. The weir at Shepperton Lock is the most southerly point reached by the Thames and the journey now reads like pages from a gazetteer of famous places; Windsor Castle, the playing fields of Eton, Henley and its regattas.

At Isis Lock the Oxford Canal heads northwards and locks become few as the channel winds its way through the rolling Oxfordshire countryside. Because of the contour method of construction used by engineer James Brindley the canal traces a convoluted course as it follows the contours of the land and on the summit pound around Wormleighton a stretch of three miles loops back on itself to within less than 1,000 yards of its starting point.

Boaters' weddings

Tooley's Boatyard at Banbury, built in 1790, has been restored as a working exhibit and there has been much redevelopment of the surrounding area. At Napton-on-the Hill as the Oxford Canal skirts past Napton Junction, known locally as Wigram's Turn after a boating family that once lived here. Braunston Turn sees the broad-

gauge Grand Union Canal continue past the historic village of Braunston and its church, noted for its traditional boaters' weddings.

Blisworth Tunnel is one of the longest navigable tunnels in the country; the Stoke Bruerne Museum lies beyond its southern portal. The long pound through Milton Keynes is remarkable for its lack of locks. At Bull's Bridge Junction the Paddington Arm heads for its eventual meeting with the Thames at Limehouse whilst the main line locks back down to the Thames at Brentford.

Grand ring from Gayton part 1 to Oxford

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Cruising Notes

This ultimate route takes two to three weeks to complete, but includes plenty to see and do over a three week cruise. An extra licence is required when joining the Thames.

The river cruising on the Thames is superb, with all locks manned during the daytime. Visit places such as Hampton Court Palace, Windsor, Eton and Henley.

Three weeks gives time to explore The Paddington Arm which goes right up to Little Venice and London Zoo.

Take in the delights of the southern waterways including Oxford, Banbury, Leighton Buzzard.

Please inform us at the time of booking if you're doing this route. You're also required to show that you have a suitable amount of experience to undertake this route.

Starting at Gayton marina near Northampton head down the wide Grand Union Canal to Stoke Bruerne and its Waterways Museum.

The canal continues in rolling countryside with few locks to Milton Keynes new town, then through the Chiltern Hills to meet the River Thames at Brentford Lock in west London.

The Paddington Arm leaves shortly before, and forms part of the London Ring through central London, Little Venice and Camden Lock.

At Brentford a short tidal section of the River Thames leads to Teddington Lock and keeper controlled locks for the section to Oxford (licence fee payable). The Thames goes past Hampton Court, Windsor Castle, Henley on Thames, and Wallingford to reach Oxford, with its historic University, 'dreaming spires', and Inspector Morse locations.

Lock keepers on the Thames are generally available between 9am and 6pm during the summer season and take their lunch 1-2pm. The lock keepers are there to help you through the locks and also to maintain the lock site and facilities and operating the weir. If they are not available they will display a blue 'self-service' sign. When this is displayed there will be operating instructions provided.

Joining the South Oxford Canal, noted for its scenery, lift bridges, and narrow locks, the meandering route passes through Banbury and picturesque villages such as Cropredy to reach the Grand Union Canal at Napton

and on to Braunston.

Route:

From Gayton Marina turn right back onto the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union Canal, then left towards Aylesbury at Gayton Junction. Very soon you will come to Blisworth Tunnel, at 3057 yards it is the 3rd longest tunnel open to navigation in the UK. 2 boats can pass so keep to the right. Originally the boats were legged through when it opened in 1805, and you can see the leggers hut at the south end of the tunnel. Just before this is the village of Blisworth, where there is a shop and a pub, The Royal Oak situated in the village.

Once through the Tunnel you come to the lovely Canal village of Stoke Bruerne, where there is a Canal museum which is worth a visit, and canal shops. There are also 2 lovely pubs and 2 restaurants in the village, so it is worth spending the 1st night here, as it is less than 2 hours from Gayton.

You can moor up just past the 1st lock. Stoke Bruerne is perhaps the best example of a canal village in the country, and the Blisworth stone built houses flank the canal. The warehouses and cottages along the wharf have become a canal centre. The canal museum is housed in a fine 200 year old stone warehouse and there are many exhibits detailing the 200 year old history of the canals, including a traditional narrowboat.

Once leaving Stoke Bruerne you immediately encounter the rest of the Stoke Bruerne Locks 6 more to do. Stoke Park is 1.2 mile west of the canal at lock 20. Stoke Park house itself was destroyed by fire, but the pavilions & colonnade survived and are open to the public together with the gardens throughout August 3pm-6pm. The canal then meanders through open landscape in its journey down to Milton Keynes, the village of Grafton Regis is about a mile walk from Bridge 57 and has a pub called the White Hart. The small thatch & stone village of Yardley Gobion is south west from bridge 60, and has a store, off licence, and pub called The Coffee pot.

The Navigation pub is canal side by Thrupp Wharf at bridge 64. At bridge 65 is the village of Cosgrove, there is a curious pedestrian tunnel under the canal, also a pub canal side called the Barley Mow with mooring (the pub is open all day). There is also a splendid stone canal bridge here, decorated in the Gothic style and built in about 1800.

There is one lock to negotiate near the Old Stratford Cut, and soon you will come across stunning Iron Trunk Aqueduct - a must for a photo opportunity. It's a magnificent Georgian structure, which carries the Grand Union Canal over the River Ouse. Built in 1811 by canal engineer Benjamin Beavan, following the collapse of the previous brick-built structure, the aqueduct stands at an impressive 10.8 metres high and connects Wolverton with Cosgrove.

You now start to reach civilisation with the outskirts of Milton Keynes in sight. Great Linford is a lovely village built in the traditional golden stone, it is a magnificent canal village with church, manor, farm and almshouses close to the canal. From Great Linford you can get into Milton Keynes on a 15 minute bus journey.

Milton Keynes has a lot to offer, it is one of the major shopping areas around this area, and is great for the more adventurous. You can toboggan on real snow in The Toboggan Zone, and go indoor skydiving.

Behind the Giffard park pub by bridge 78 there is a late opening store and an off licence. Fenny Stratford is, about 2 hours cruising away, also on the outskirts of Milton Keynes but near a train station from where you can

get into the city very easily. The lock is just short of Bridge 22 and a pub is just by the Bridge.

It is just under 8 hours cruising from Stoke Bruerne to Fenny Stratford.

Leaving Milton Keynes behind you, the next leg takes you past Leighton Buzzard, a picturesque market town with 17th and 18th century houses and half timbered cottages, a 600 year old cross stands in the centre of the town. Bridge 114 is a good place for mooring, as there are some useful supermarkets to the north. There are also a couple of pubs off to your right.

There is a steam railway in the town , The Leighton Buzzard Railway is one of the last survivors of the hundreds of 2 foot (610mm) gauge light railways. Today's Leighton Buzzard Railway offers an 85-minute round trip from Page's Park to Stonehenge Works, which is in the Bedfordshire countryside to the north of the town. The current track is just under 3 miles (4.8km) long.

Check the website for the timetable.

Whipsnade Zoo is a short taxi ride away, it is a zoo and safari park located at Whipsnade, near Dunstable, its a sprawling, 600-acre home to more than 2500 animals, with tours, adventure play areas

There is now a quiet empty stretch of canal with just the occasional lock on your climb up towards the Chiltern hills.

Look out for the Whipsnade White Lion cut into the hills which is visible from the Canal around Horton and Slapton. It was cut in 1935 and is over 480 feet long.

The Aylesbury Arm to your right continues to Aylesbury, but you are keeping straight on. The quiet scattered village of Marsworth is close by, as is the Marsworth Reservoir by Bridge 132, there are a couple of pubs nearby to bridge 132 at Startops End, or by bridge 130.

After the Marsworth Locks ignore the Wendover Arm to your right.

To your left is College Lake and there is a wildlife centre here , a top bird watching site also rare breeds of sheep, cattle and poultry.

Soon you will reach the tiny village of Bulbourne and pass the old British waterways workshops where lockgates were made by traditional craftsmen.

The lovely named Cowroast lock with its old toll office ,marks the summit level , and a short respite of an hour or so from the locks!

You negotiate more locks as you pass through Berkhamsted. Together with the adjoining village of Northchurch it is separated from other towns and villages by lovely countryside, all of it in the Metropolitan Green Belt and much of it classified as being an area of outstanding natural beauty.

By Pitstone Wharf is a Pub, chandlery and tea shop

Throughout the length of the canal running past the town there are interpretation boards depicting local industry and navigation.

There is a useful supermarket on the towpath between bridges 53 and 52.

Berkhamsted is a market town with buildings of all periods. There are also the ruins of a Norman castle where William 1 received the offer of the English crown in 1066. Berkhamsted lies on the western edge of

Hertfordshire, bordering the Chiltern Hills. Over much of the last millennium it was an important market town with strong royal and literary connections; today it is a vibrant residential and cultural centre, and while it is now part of the Borough of Dacorum it has retained its own strong identity. Together with the adjoining village of Northchurch it is separated from other towns and villages by lovely countryside, all of it in the Metropolitan Green Belt and much of it classified as being an area of outstanding natural beauty.

The Old Mill Pub is in a great location beside the Grand Union Canal in Berkhamsted. Its old mill-race thunders (or trickles, according to the season) over a weir and through the secret courtyard off the bar and the building retains the character of its Georgian & Victorian origins.

Hemel Hempstead is a well planned new town with excellent shops built around a charming old town with attractive streets. The Old Town Hall is an Arts centre in a Victorian building with an imaginative programme of theatre, comedy and music.

To the east of the canal close to Lock 67 is the Paper trail- a fully working Victorian paper Mill, with visitor centre and tours . - Frogmore Paper Mill is the world's oldest mechanised paper mill - the birthplace of paper's industrial revolution. Today it is still a working paper mill producing around 100 tonnes of specialist grade paper every year on historic paper machines. Open- 2017 – Every Thursday and the first Sunday of each month from 11.00 to 16.00. Open for pre-booked group visits only on all other days.

The canal descends steeply passing several large paper mills in Apsley. The shops south of bridge 152 are much closer to the canal than those in Hemel Hempstead.

There are several large Canal side pubs as you pass Hemel Hempstead , like the Paper Mill pub near Apsley marina - Large waterside pub with open fires, balcony and terrace serving classic British food and real ales. Also the Fishery Inn near Bridge 149, - Rustic pub, with an open fire, waterside terrace and banquet seating, serving British grub.

Kings Langley off to your left is soon reached, there is a useful store just west of bridge 158.

Kings Langley is a small country town and there are the remains of a palace there. The tomb of Edmund de Langley, brother of the Black Prince lies in the Norman church.

The canal follows the course of the River Gade, so twists and turns through the valley.

North of Rickmansworth is Common Moor to your left and Croxley to your right where part of the old village still survives with several attractive houses around the village green, and Watford where the canal keeps well away from the town and instead climbs through Cassiobury Park, a long and lovely stretch of wooded parkland. The park was once part of the 17th C gardens of the Earls of Essex , and in the avenue of limes many of the trees are 300 years old. The Park stretches for 190 acres.

At Blatchworth Locks in a marquee on the lawn between the locks is Annis Kitchen serving drinks and snacks in conjunction with the Canal Centre there.

Just before the lock is a Tesco supermarket with moorings for patrons.
Rickmansworth is off to your right north of bridge 173.

After heavy rain there is a strong current between bridge 177 and Copper Mill Lock.
There are canal side pubs at bridge 180 and 177.

Black Jack's lock and Copper Mill Lock are very attractive with tiny timbered cottages, a small mill, and attractive canal side buildings.

The big mill at Copper Mill was once a paper mill, but when the Canal was built it re-invented itself and made copper sheets for the bottom of boats.

East of Bridge 80 there are shops at South Harefield.

The canal continues southwards past the village of Denham through a landscape of lakes, woods and mills across Harefield Moor, a stretch of common land with much wildlife to enjoy.

Between the A40 Road bridge and 183 Denham Bridge there is a gravel wharf on the off-side loading into large barges, so beware of them operating and allow them to manoeuvre in the deepest part of the channel.

Uxbridge Lock is in an attractive setting with a lock-keepers cottage at the side, and a modern flour mill with lovely landscaped gardens right down to the waters edge.

There are many pubs near Bridges 185/186, The Crown & Treaty is near Bridge 185, The Dolphin is at Bridge 186 as is the General Elliott.

There is a large shopping centre in Uxbridge, access from Bridge 186.

The Battle of Britain was directed by the late Air Marshal Lord Dowding from the RAF HQ in Uxbridge. The town has a selection of modern and futuristic buildings.

In the early 19th Century the Paddington Packet Boat used to run daily from Paddington to Cowley , pulled by 4 horses, it made the 15 mile lock free journey in a remarkable time, taking passengers up and down the canal.

Cowley and Uxbridge to your left are the first sighting the outer suburban belt that surrounds London.

At Cowley Peachey Junction head straight on towards Brentford as you pass Yiewsley, West Drayton and Hayes Town, at Bulls bridge Junction you keep straight on towards Brentford. There are visitor moorings at Bulls Bridge.

At bridge 202 is the Old Oak Tree pub.

At bridge 203 is the canalside pub The Lamb with moorings.

The lock free stretch stops at Norwood with a 12 lock drop down to the River Thames which includes the 6 lock Hanwell flight , it is an interesting and attractive cruise in parts.

Norwood and Hanwell locks are kept padlocked and can be operated with a CRT key.

The Fox pub is at the bottom of Hanwell Locks 50 yards from the canal, in virtually a village location.

Beware the weir after bridge 205a, it can be hazardous when there is fresh water in the river.

Boston Manor House is 1/2 mile north of Bridge 208, it is a fine Jacobean manor house built in 1623. The house has three state rooms including the State Drawing Room with its fine plaster ceiling and mantelpiece. One of the earliest examples of English Renaissance style, the exterior of the house is particularly fine.

There are moorings above Brentford Gauging locks with full facilities.

It is 4 hours cruising from Bulls Bridge to these Visitor moorings. There are various pubs in Brentford.

Syon House is the 16th century seat of the Duke of Northumberland , and the entrance is 300 yards west of Brentford Gauging locks. It is noted for its fine Adams interior and period furniture and its paintings and it has 55 acres of Capability Brown gardens.

Brentford Gauging locks are subject to the tide, they are not operated by a lock keeper. Boats are requested to use the single lock on the toll office side to minimise the use of water, you will need a Watermate key to use the lock.

Boaters should download the CRT London tideway availability leaflet to find out information about the tide on the Thames.

At Brentford you pass through the Thames Lock, it has to be 2 hours before high water to gain the benefit of the flood tide. The lock is controlled by a lock keeper. Brentford lock keeper on 020 8568 2779, Teddington Lock keeper can be contacted on 020 8940 8723 and Richmond Lock keeper on 020 8940 0634.

The Thames here is tidal, Teddington Locks is 5 miles upstream and the upper limit of the tidal Thames.

It is essential that you keep all dogs inside the boat when operating these tidal locks.

Brentford High Street bridge is unnavigable at the top of the spring tides due to less than 4 feet headroom.

Kew Gardens is opposite the Thames Lock.

Kew is London's largest UNESCO World Heritage site offering unique landscapes, vistas and iconic architecture from every stage of the Gardens' history. Its one of the World's great botanic gardens with thousands of rare outdoor and hothouse plants. Kew Palace was built in 1631 in the Dutch style.

Richmond park to your left is the largest of the Royal parks created in 1637 by Charles I.

The Kew Observatory was built in 1729 in the Old Deer Park.

The pretty village of Isleworth is passed on the right, Van Gogh taught here and used the Thames as the subject for his first attempts at painting.

Soon you will approach Richmond Lock.

For around two hours each side of high tide, the sluice gates are raised into the footbridge structure above, allowing ships and boats to pass through the barrage. For the rest of the day the sluice gates are closed and passing river traffic must use the lock alongside the barrage. This period of free navigation can be dramatically changed due to prevailing conditions. In drought conditions the gates will be closed for longer periods, whilst in periods of high fluvial flow they may remain open for much longer. For current information please contact the Lock Foreman on 0208 940 0634.

The sluice gates ensure that the water level between Richmond Lock and Teddington Lock is maintained at or above half-tide level.

Richmond Bridge is one of the most handsome on the River Thames, with five arches and parapet.

There are moorings by the Hammertons ferry at Ham House, overnight moorings vary from £20-£40 depending

on boat size.

It is 1.5 to 2 hours to here from Brentford .

Ham House is a superb 400 year old historic riverside mansion, situated beside the River Thames in Ham, south of Richmond in London. It is claimed by the National Trust to be "unique in Europe as the most complete survival of 17th century fashion and power.

Opposite is Marble Hill House , Built in the 1720s, Marble Hill was an idyllic Thames-side retreat from court life for Henrietta Howard, mistress of King George II. In this perfectly proportioned villa, inspired by the 16th-century architect Palladio, she entertained many of the poets and wits of the age.

The ferry runs between Ham House and Marble Hill Park.

Beware the sandbanks by Eel Pie Island just off to your right.

Twickenham was one of the most desirable and elegant places to live in the 18th century. Nearby is Strawberry Hill House — often called simply Strawberry Hill— it is a Gothic Revival villa that was built in Twickenham, London by Horace Walpole from 1749 onward, not open to the public.

Teddington is just around the corner, and the end of the tidal Thames.

Traffic moving upstream must observe the light signals at the end of the lock island.

RD Blackmore author of Lorna Doone lived in Teddington from 1860. The Anglers pub is situated right next to Thames TV studios and has mooring for customers. It is situated overlooking Teddington Lock.

Kingston upon Thames is off to your left , this Royal Borough was where 7 Saxon kings were crowned.

Thames Ditton has a few boatyards offering overnight mooring, like Taggs Boatyard, and Ferryline cruisers. This pretty, unspoilt village has managed to escape development .

It is 3.75 hours to here from Brentford .

Above Kingston bridge to your right is Hampton Court Park and Hampton Court Palace, close to the river but protected from it by a long red brick wall,

Discover the magnificence of Henry VIII's favourite royal residence at Hampton Court Palace. Immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of the bustling Base Court and marvel at the breath-taking grandeur of Henry's State Rooms. Stroll through over 60 acres of enchanting gardens, lose yourself in the famous maze and appreciate the beauty of one of the greatest palaces on earth.

Sunbury Court Island is lined with immaculate chalets and bungalows.

Walton on Thames is on your left, Shepperton and its famous film studios are to the north near the vast reservoir. Shepperton marina has overnight mooring available.

The river twists and turns past Chertsey and Weybridge, although the Desborough Cut removes some of the twists and turns. The River Wey joins the Thames here.

At Penton Hook marina which is approached below the lock, it is possible to get overnight mooring and a short distance away is the mega theme park- Thorpe Park - Thorpe Park is not for the faint?hearted. It has some of the biggest roller coasters in Europe and the rides here are built to scare. It is perfect for adrenalin junkies.

It is 8.5 hours to here from Brentford or 5 hours from Thames Ditton.

The Magna Carta Memorial can be seen through the trees, the sealing of the Magna Carta was in Runnymede in 1215,

There are fine views across the park to Windsor between the Victoria and Albert bridges, below the last bridge the navigation passes Ham Island now a bird sanctuary, to Old Windsor Lock towards Runnymede .

Across Windsor bridge is Eton, the long and rambling High Street is a pleasant place to walk, Eton College was founded in 1440 by Henry VI and 18 former Prime Ministers have been educated here.

Explore Windsor:-

The main street of Windsor curves around the castle and is full of pubs, shops, restaurants and souvenir shops. Windsor castle is the largest inhabited castle in the World, established by William the Conqueror during the 1070's the present castle was started by Henry II during 1165-1179. It has been meticulously restored after the disastrous fire in 1992, and includes:

Magnificent State Apartments furnished with treasures from the Royal Collection

- St George's Chapel (one of the most beautiful ecclesiastical buildings in England and the burial place of 10 monarchs)
- Queen Mary's Dolls House, a masterpiece in miniature
- The Drawings Gallery featuring an exhibition (see below for current display).

LEGOLAND Windsor is a theme park dedicated to children aged 3-12 years old. An inspirational land where the kids are the hero. It's a family attraction like no other - where the fun never stops and imagination knows no bounds. With over 55 interactive rides, live shows, building workshops, driving schools and attractions, all set in 150 acres of beautiful parkland, LEGOLAND Windsor is a unique family theme park.

There are moorings before or after Windsor railway Bridge, Windsor is to the south of the River, Eton to the North.

It is 4.5 hours from Penton Hook marina to here

Just before Bray Lock & The M4 bridge, is Monkey island with its smart Hotel, but which was once the fishing lodge and pavilion of the 3rd Duke of Marlborough built in 1744 on rubble salvaged from the Great Fire of London . To the north of Summer Leaze bridge is Dorney Court and Church, a gabled and timbered Tudor manor House built c.1440. The house has many original features and contains fine furniture and paintings.

Soon Maidenhead is reached, and the riverside is busy and attractive. There are moorings beyond Boulters Lock, or Maidenhead Railway bridge. Maidenhead is a dormitory suburb of London with much new development, and has many shops, pubs and restaurants.

After Maidenhead you emerge into a steep thickly wooded hillside which marks the grounds of Cliveden owned by the National trust. Nowadays you can only appreciate this former home of the Astor family from the beautiful gardens, see website for opening times.

The Cliveden deep as it is known continues to Cookham Lock.

At Bourne End the river is very wide and favoured for sailing.

Marlow Town Regatta and Festival takes place every June featuring a traditional rowing regatta on the Saturday with a family fun, canoe regatta and dragon boat race competition on the Sunday.

Explore the wildlife and World War One training trenches at Marlow Common.

It is 3 hours to Henley to here.

This part of the Thames is very popular for sailing so watch out for all the pleasure craft.

Marlow is without a doubt one of the loveliest locations on the River Thames, set amongst the rich meadows of the river valley and alongside the woodlands of the Chiltern Hills.

The vibrant Georgian market town is made up of historic streets and an abundance of boutique shops, restaurants, cafes and bistros all adding to the town's unique charm.

The town's most famous landmark is the suspension bridge which spans the River Thames and joins the counties of Buckinghamshire and Berkshire.

The bridge was designed by William Tierney Clark and first opened in 1832. Marlow has always been known as a fashionable riverside resort and attracted many famous people to the area.

Residents of the town have included Thomas Love Peacock, Jerome K. Jerome, T.S. Eliot and Mary Shelley who finished her gothic masterpiece Frankenstein while living in the town.

Marlow is also home to one of Britain's most premier rowing clubs which has produced many Olympic oarsmen including Sir Steve Redgrave whose statue stands in Higginson Park.

Dine at The Hand & Flowers, the first gastropub to hold two Michelin stars, located on West Street. Choose one of the award-winning beers brewed locally in Marlow Bottom by the Rebellion Beer Company

Enjoy a tour of the Rebellion Brewery on the first Tuesday night of the month

Take a walk in the award winning Higginson Park. Set in 23 acres of lawn beside the River Thames and Thames Path the park has a great facilities for all the family to enjoy including a large playground, cafes, skate park, a brick in grass maze, mini golf (summer holidays only) and boat hire.

Walk the Thames Path from Higginson Park upstream to Temple or Hurley lock or downstream to Cookham or Bourne End.

Hurley is soon passed, a small village that has a couple of pubs.

The famous rowing town of Henley on Thames is reached. There is mooring before and after Henley bridge see link below for details

Henley has an attractive waterfront, many moored boats and resident swans.

Henley is a fine market town and the main street runs down to the River Thames. The famous Henley Regatta is held in the 1st week of July. There is a River and rowing museum just outside Henley. Exhibits include the world's oldest rowing boat see website.

Also in Henley is Fawley Court which was designed by Wren & built in 1684, with grounds by Capability Brown. It has a library with various documents of the Polish monarchy and Polish militaria.

The river continues weaving its way through a series of islands to Shiplake lock.

Wargrave overlooks the Thames, and the striking Woodclyffe Hall in the High Street was often visited by the novelist Henry Kingsley. The Church here was burnt down in 1914 by the suffragettes. There are 3 pubs in this small town.

At Sonning Bridge use the central arch and go slowly.

The Village, which lies back from the River, is a pretty meticulously preserved village & has a PO, stores, pubs and cafe. There is mooring beyond Sonning Bridge see link here for details :

<https://www.thamesvisitormoorings.co.uk/moorings/Sonning/>

The Great house Hotel lies beside the Thames , with fine gardens and lawns, one dining room is 700 years old, and the main bar is a beamed room with stone fireplace, the Ferryman's Bar has a choice of real ales and meals, there are also moorings here.

With Caversham on your right cruise past Reading on your left, just a short distance from the marina is Caversham Lock.

Between the 2 bridges is Fry's island.

The Thames continues past Tilehurst and soon Mapledurham House is reached with mooring just beyond the lock. The house is still occupied by the Blount family who bought it in 1490, and built the present Elizabethan manor house, with grounds sweeping right down to the Thames. The House and Watermill are open on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays from Easter Saturday until the end of September .

Pass to the east of the island 1/4 mile below Mapledurham lock and either side of the island 1/4 mile above the lock.

Just before Whitchurch Toll Bridge there should be moorings on your left.

After the toll bridge there is Whitchurch lock to negotiate.

The wide reach above Whitchurch is often busy with sailing and rowing boats from Pangburne College. The Thames enters open farmland and one of its most pretty stretches.

Beale Park , to your left, covers 300 acres of water meadows, and the bird collection includes peacocks, flamingoes, parrots, and rare owls. Open March-Dec 10.00-18.00. There is mooring here, also nearby is Basildon Park & house. Now run by the National trust, built around 1776, this is the most splendid Palladian mansion in Berkshire. Open Wed-Sun 13.00-17.30 April -Oct. Also gardens and woodland walks.

The brick Gatehampton railway Bridge was built by Brunel.

Goring is set in a splendid deep wooded valley by one of the most spectacular reaches on the River. The Church Bell dates from 1290 and is one of the oldest in England. There are moorings before Goring bridge.

See link for moorings here <https://www.thamesvisitormoorings.co.uk/moorings/Goring/>

There is plenty of time to have a look around and stretch those sea legs - Two National Trails – The Ridgeway and the Thames Path intersect at Goring and Streatley, making the villages a popular stopping off point for those who prefer long distance walks. However the area is equally popular for its countryside allowing pleasant strolls both along the river and on the beautiful hills that bestride the Goring Gap with magnificent views in all directions across Oxfordshire and Berkshire. As a visitor you will be spoilt for choice if you are looking for the

perfect picnic spot.

The River follows open countryside again, with just Goring Lock and Cleve Lock to negotiate in the next couple of hours until you reach Wallingford. Moorings just past Wallingford Bridge, taking the central arch.

This town is one of the oldest in the borough dating from 1155. Well preserved banks and ditches of Saxon defences still remain. At the rear of the George Hotel is the entrance to the remains of the Norman castle built on a mound in 1071 and finally destroyed by Fairfax in 1646. Walk up the hill from the river to enjoy the town centre, shops and market square. The Cholsey and Wallingford Railway is 15 mins walk west of Wallingford, steam and diesel trains run on 2.5 miles of track.

Just past Benson Lock is the town of Benson, which is hardly more than a village but was once the home of the Kings of Mercia. There is a stores and pub.

The River Thames turns west and north to take a wide berth around the Roman town of Dorchester, passing the massive 114 acres of earthworks known as Dyke Hills. It continues to make its widening way past Abingdon, there are moorings just before the bridge.

Abingdon is a 18th century market town which grew up around the abbey. It has an extensive shopping centre with precinct. Abbey meadow by the river, is a public park with swimming pool and cafe. The River is dominated by the gaol, an impressive stone bastille built around 1805, which is now a leisure and sports centre. Abingdon Museum is housed in what is one of the finest town halls in England, built by one of Wrens masons.

The Thames then passes through open countryside on its final stretch up to Oxford. It is a lovely stretch of urban waterway up to Osney Bridge, with terraced houses facing the river. The river is much used by rowing clubs and small boats so care should be taken.

Useful Links

Description : Woburn Safari Park

Website : www.woburnsafari.co.uk/

Telephone : 01525 290407

Description : Silverstone Racing Circuit

Website : <http://www.silverstone.co.uk/>

Telephone : 0844 372 8200

Description : Snozone Indoor Snow Slope Complex (Xscape)

Website : <http://www.snozoneuk.com/>

Telephone : 0871 222 5673

Description : Heart of the Shires Shopping Village

Website : <http://www.heartoftheshires.co.uk/>

Telephone : 01604 230213

Description : Airkix Indoor Skydiving, Milton Keynes

Website : www.airkix.com/plan/milton-keynes.aspx

Telephone : 01908 247770

Description : Stoke Bruerne Canal Museum

Website : <http://www.stokebruernecanalmuseum.org.uk>

Telephone : 01604 862229

Description : Milton Keynes Tourist Information

Website : <http://www.destinationmiltonkeynes.co.uk>

Telephone : 01908 688293

Description : Castle Quay Shopping Centre, Banbury

Website : <http://www.castlequay.co.uk>

Telephone : 01295 256296

Description : Bletchley Park

Website : <http://www.bletchleypark.org.uk>

Telephone : 01908 640404

Description : London Zoo

Website : www.zsl.org/zsl-london-zoo

Telephone : 020 7449 6200

Description : Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Website : <http://www.kew.org/>

Telephone : 020 8332 5655

Description : Syon Park

Website : <http://www.syonpark.co.uk/>

Telephone : 020 7870 7777

Description : Ham House and Garden

Website : <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ham-house/>

Telephone : 020 8940 1950

Description : Hampton Court Palace

Website : <http://www.hrp.org.uk/hamptoncourtpalace/>

Telephone : 0844 482 7777

Description : Thorpe Park

Website : <http://www.thorpepark.com/>

Telephone : 0871 663 1673

Description : Runnymede

Website : <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/runnymede/>

Telephone : 01784 432891

Description : The British Monarchy

Website : <http://www.royal.gov.uk/>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Windsor Castle

Website : <http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/visit/windsorcastle>

Telephone : 020 7766 7304

Description : Dorney Court Nr Windsor

Website : <http://www.dorneycourt.co.uk/>

Telephone : 01628 604638

Description : Visit Banbury

Website : <http://www.visitnorthoxfordshire.com/areas-to-visit/banbury>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Strawberry Hill House

Website : <http://www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk>

Telephone : 020 8744 1241

Description : Maidenhead Tourist Information

Website : www.maidenhead-town.co.uk/maidenhead-tourist-information/

Telephone : n/a

Description : Marlow Tourist Information

Website : <http://www.marlowtown.co.uk>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Blisworth Canal Festival

Website : <http://www.blisworthcanalfestival.co.uk/>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Visit Richmond

Website : www.visitrichmond.co.uk/

Telephone : n/a

Description : Wallingford, Oxfordshire

Website : <http://www.wallingford.co.uk>

Telephone : n/a

Description : River and Rowing Museum

Website : <http://www.rrm.co.uk>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Stanlake Park

Website : <http://www.stanlakepark.com>

Telephone : 0118 934 0176

Description : Reading, Berks Information

Website : <http://www.reading.gov.uk>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Leighton Buzzard Railway Ltd

Website : <http://www.buzzrail.co.uk>

Telephone : 01525 373888

Description : Warner Brothers Film Studios

Website : <http://www.wbstudiotour.co.uk>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Henley Royal Regatta

Website : <http://www.hrr.co.uk>

Telephone : 01491 572153

Description : Abingdon Information

Website : <http://www.abingdon.gov.uk/>

Telephone : 01235 522711

Description : The Queens Royal Swan Marker

Website : <http://www.royalswan.co.uk>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Oxfordshire Information Site

Website : <http://www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Kirtlington Village Information

Website : <http://www.kirtlingtonvillage.co.uk>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Rousham House and Gardens

Website : <http://www.rousham.org>

Telephone : 01869 347110

Description : Aynhoe Park

Website : <http://www.aynhoePark.co.uk>

Telephone : 01869 810636

Description : Cropredy Festival

Website : <http://www.fairportconvention.com/cropredy>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Claydon House

Website : <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/claydon>

Telephone : 0844 800 4642

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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