

# UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

## Market Harborough and return from Gayton

Cruise this route from : Gayton

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Cruising Days : 8.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 40.00

Total Distance : 82.00

Number of Locks : 48

Number of Tunnels : 4

Number of Aqueducts : 0

A tranquil rural route through rolling Northamptonshire countryside.

Pass through Weedon, well known for its antique shops and with a number of good pubs.

The 4-lock staircase flight at the pretty village of Watford and the two 5-lock staircases at Foxton both have lock keepers to hand.

There is also a manually operated swing bridge at Foxton. Moor in the revitalised canal basin at Market Harborough to explore the lovely town.

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## Cruising Notes

Day 1

Head back down the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union to Gayton Junction.(Turn right out of the marina). At Gayton Junction turn right down the Grand Union Canal. Soon you will pass the village of Bugbrooke, and the Wharf Inn is by bridge 36, or there is a couple of village pubs if you walk into the village.

You will probably want to move on & head for the village of Weedon which is just over 2 hours from Gayton &

ideal for a 1st nights stop, there is a small aqueduct over a road as you approach the village. There are takeaways, stores & pubs in Weedon , you can moor up near the Church . The Heart of England pub by bridge 24 is a good family pub. Just before you get to Weedon is the Narrowboat Inn beside bridge 26, with canalside seating and mooring.

## Day 2

A short while after leaving Weedon you will pass Brockhall Park on your right, (access from bridge 18). The Hall here is Tudor in part, and in the Victorian courtyard farm buildings has been established The Heart of the Shires Shopping Village.. The Shopping village has about 25 widely ranging shops, including a tearoom, so is well worth a visit.

The canal continues through open landscape until you begin the climb up to the Norton Junction through a series of 7 locks called the Buckby locks.

The New Inn is canalside at Buckby Top Lock, with canalside seating and moorings.

It is 5 hours 20 minutes from Gayton marina to here, or 3 hours from Weedon to here.

At the Norton Junction turn right along the Leicester section of the Grand Union Canal, it meanders through the rolling fields until the Watford Locks are reached. South of bridge 6 is the Watford gap motorway services on the M1, 24 hour sustenance and provisions are provided. There is a Thai restaurant quite close to the canal here.

At the Watford Locks there are 2 locks followed by 4 staircase locks, where the top gate of one lock forms the bottom gate of the next lock etc. You will need to consult the friendly lock-keeper before using the Watford Locks which are open daily April-Oct 8am to 7pm and Nov-mid April 8am to 3pm. There is then 1 more lock and this will be all you have to negotiate before you get to the mile long Crick Tunnel. After passing through this you can moor up by bridge 12 and walk into the village or there is a restaurant and coffee house by the bridge- Edwards of Crick.

Crick is a large village with an off licence and stores, and 2 or 3 pubs. From Weedon it is 6 and half cruising hours to here, so ideal for your 2nd nights stay.

## Day 3

After Crick the canal wanders east in a series of loops causing it to miss the only 2 villages on this stretch at Yelvertoft & Winwick. It is only a short walk into Yelvertoft from bridge 19 where you will find the Knightly Arms, children and dogs are welcome. There is also a general stores, a post office and a butchers. Hills surround the canal, causing its meandering, but there are no locks on this section.

2 miles east of bridge 31 is Stanford hall, a William & Mary brick mansion built in 1697, and open to the public on selected days.

There are splendid views over the Avon Valley to the West on the run past the Welford Arm, but do not turn off the Grand Union down the Welford Arm, continue on northwards to Market Harborough.

You will soon pass the village of North Kilworth on you left, there are a couple of pubs here -The White lion & The Swan Inn, serving food & Real Ales.

The canal continues northward entering the wooded cutting that announces the Husbands Bosworth Tunnel which is 1166 yards long and was opened in 1813.

After the tunnel the canal continues through a remote but attractive stretch as it winds its way through 5 miles of countryside until the Foxton Staircase Locks are reached. (Moor up for the night anywhere after Gumley Road bridge 60.)

Moor up wherever there is a space, as there will probably be a queue, and walk along the tow path until you find the friendly British waterways lock-keepers by the Locks. They will take a note of your boat name & tell you roughly how long the wait will be to go through the locks, but there is plenty to do whilst you wait.

You will probably have taken about 7 hours to get along this lock free stretch, so you can find a nice place to moor up for the night, then negotiate the locks tomorrow, as it takes about 2 hours to get through the locks.

Foxton is the site of a steam powered Inclined Plane, which replaced ten locks and lifted narrow boats 75 feet. It was opened in 1900 but suffered from mechanical and structural problems. The locks were reopened in 1908 and now work beautifully. Whilst here visit the Foxton Museum and gift shop. The well stocked canal side shop offers you groceries, hardware as well as the traditional "roses and Castles" canalware, made and hand-painted on site.

Stop for a cream tea in the canal side cafe or a well deserved pint & a meal in the Foxton Locks Inn. Spend a couple of hours watching the colourful narrow boats passing through the staircase locks. British Waterways organise events based on Foxton Locks.

#### Day 4

Once you have passed through the locks, turn a sharp right down the Market Harborough Arm of the Canal, and you will cruise for a very pleasant 2 hours until you reach the canal basin.

Market Harborough – A market town mid way between Leicester and Northampton. Visit Welland Park, the town's museum and the old grammar school, a 17th school built on stilts. If you pop into a taxi you can visit nearby Rockingham Castle built by William the Conqueror. If you need to entertain the children then visit Wicksteed Park one of the biggest and best playgrounds in Europe.

The town has many nice pubs, and shops. There is an antique and collectors market every Sunday in the market hall. Eat at the Waterfront Restaurant & bar located in the marina Tel 0871 426 4797, there is also a bar a short distance away -The Union Inn Hotel, Tel 01858 433277

The Old Union Canal Society gives guided walks along the canal during summer months and follow the historic town trail.

You are welcome to stay moored up in the Marina and use the car or public transport to visit the many local attractions.

If you have negotiated the locks today, you will have cruised for about 4 hours.

#### Day 5

It takes 20 hours to get back to Gayton from here, so you will need to average about 7 hours a day cruising, but a nice detour is to go down the Welford Arm and moor up in the basin there for the night, this does extend the cruise to 21.5 hours.

It takes about 7.5 hours to get from Market Harborough to here. It is 13 hours cruising from the Welford Basin

where there is a nice pub, back to Gayton Marina, so 2 days cruising.

Day 6

cruise up the Welford Arm onto the main arm of the Grand Union Canal again, and cruise past Yelvertoft & Crick, through the Crick Tunnel and through the lovely Watford Locks again to Norton Junction. Turn left at the junction, and then moor up before the top lock, by the New Inn.

It is 8 hours cruising to here from Welford.

Day 7

Day 8

You will then have a leisurely 5.25 hours cruise back to Gayton.

## Useful Links

Description : Stanford Hall, Lutterworth, Leicestershire - An historical home with museums, tearooms and gardens

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

Telephone : n/a

Description : Heart of the Shires Shopping Village

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

Telephone : 01604 230213

Description : Leicestershire Tourist Information

Website : [www.visitleicester.info](http://www.visitleicester.info)

Telephone : 0116 299 4444

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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