

UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

Pewsey and return from Aldermaston

Cruise this route from : Aldermaston

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Cruising Days : 7.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 43.00

Total Distance : 64.00

Number of Locks : 90

Number of Tunnels : 2

Number of Aqueducts : 0

Starting from the small boating centre of Aldermaston Wharf, cruise west to the picturesque market town of Newbury.

There are some nice pubs at the canalside village of Kintbury before arriving at Hungerford, stop off and visit the numerous antique shops and admire the charming canalscape.

Then it's on to Great Bedwyn and Crofton Pump Station, home to the world's oldest working beam engine.

Don't miss the historic conservation village at Wootton Rivers on your way to the traditional village of Pewsey with its beautiful thatched cottages.

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Cruising Notes

Aldermaston wharf is close to the railway station with good connections to Paddington in London, taking 55 minutes from London Paddington , or 13 minutes from Reading railway station. At Aldermaston Wharf is the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust Visitor centre, with a picnic area, and serving light refreshments from Easter -Oct.

There is also the Butt Inn pub at Aldermaston Wharf, serving real ales and excellent food for all the family.

Day 1

Turning out of the marina westwards, you will immediately encounter a lift bridge which is electrically operated by canalboaters, and which spans a busy road. Follow the instructions by the bridge. You will then have your first lock, once through here you will see a disused gravel pit, some a haven for wildlife since the 1960's.

The scenery is very rural until you reach Thatcham, when you get to Woolhampton be careful of the current below the lock which can cause problems.

Woolhampton village is 200 yards north of the canal, there is a pub canalside, or a couple in the village, it is an hours cruising from Aldermaston to here, and makes an ideal place to stop for your 1st night.

Day 2

Passing Woolhampton you pass through 3 locks in this rural landscape until you reach the rapidly expanding village of Thatcham, which is now almost a suburb of Newbury. There is a railway station close to the canal near bridge 42. There are various pubs and restaurants in Thatcham access is from bridge 42, and a Nature Discovery centre north of Widmead Lock with shop and cafe.

It is 3.25 hours from Aldermaston to here.

You soon pass Newbury racecourse on your left. See their website for details of race days. Concerts are also hosted here.

The River cuts right through the town and above Newbury Lock is the delightful quiet West Mills area where rows of terraced houses face the navigation and there are extensive moorings. Beware of the current below Newbury lock. It is 6 hours from Aldermaston marina to here, or 5 hours from Woolhampton and an ideal place for your 2nd nights mooring.

Victoria Bridge 59 is handy for getting to Newbury to the north, or the racecourse to the south.

Newbury developed in the Middle Ages as an important cloth town, and the town has managed to retain much of its period charm. The District Museum is one of the most interesting buildings in Newbury built in 1626 as a cloth weaving workshop. The town centre has many shops, pubs and restaurants to choose from. A short bus or taxi ride away is the Living rainforest, which gives you the opportunity to experience rainforest life under glass.

Day 3

The canal soon leaves Newbury behind, and once more enters the rural Berkshire landscape. To the south of the canal is Hamstead Park, a very fine park which borders the canal, there is an old watermill by the lock. Soon the canal reaches Kintbury which is just a small village to the south of the canal up on the hill. It is a quiet village with a station, and attractive buildings by the canal, including a watermill and a canalside pub. There are also 2 pubs in the village, and stores.

It is 4.5 cruising hours from Woolhampton to Kintbury.

Once leaving Kintbury the River and canal run side by side through pretty woods, and soon Hungerford is reached. The handsome Hungerford Town Bridge gives easy access to the centre of the town which is set out along a wide main street. There are many pubs and restaurants in the town.

It is 5.75 hours cruising from Newbury to Hungerford.

You can moor up at Hungerford, or continue on to Froxfield and visit the Pelican pub just 2 mins from the canal, and in an area of outstanding natural beauty with a garden by the lake and river.

Hungerford is a small historic town located in the midst of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

It is 7 hours cruising from Newbury to Froxfield.

Day 4

Little Bedwyn and Great Bedwyn are soon approached, the latter has attractive houses of all periods, a stores and pubs along its main street from bridge 95.

From Froxfield you have to negotiate 7 locks to take you past Great bedwyn, as the canal climbs higher. Then another 3 locks as you approach the Crofton Flight of 7 locks with the village of Wilton to the south. The Bruce Tunnel is just 502 yards long, but makes a pleasant change.

Towards Wootton Rivers the canal climbs down through a series of locks , the pub in the village to the north of the canal is an attractive 16th century pub in the main street. The village is very pretty & composed almost entirely of timber framed thatched houses.

The canal continues through the vale of Pewsey. Pewsey Wharf is a mile from the town centre, and has developed as a Canalside settlement on its own, with a pub, warehouses and cottages.

To the North hills descend to the waters edge, to the south the land opens out giving fine views over 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.

It is 8.5 hours cruising from Froxfield to Pewsey Wharf.

Day 5

Day 6

Day 7

Day 8

Back to Aldermaston, just over 7 hours per day

Useful Links

Description : Newbury Race Course

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

Telephone : 01635 40015

Description : The Living Rain Forest

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

Telephone : 01635 202444

Description : Hungerford Tourist Information

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

Telephone : n/a

Description : Crofton Beam Engines

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

Telephone : 01672 870300

Description : Beale Park Wildlife Gardens

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

Telephone : 0844 826 1761

Description : Shaw House was built in 1581 by Newbury clothier Thomas Dolman. This fine Elizabethan building was home to successive Dolman families, the flamboyant Duke of Chandos and the Andrews and Farquhar families. Shaw House then began a new life as a school for g

Website : <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=29158>

Telephone : 01635 279279

Description : Newbury Tourist information

Website : <http://www.newbury.tourist-information-uk.com/>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Basildon Park, an 18th century Gerogian mansion restored in the 1950

Website : <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/basildon-park/>

Telephone : 0118 984 3040

Description : Bucklebury Farm Park offers a magical experience and a great value day out in the countryside

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

Telephone : 0118 971 4002

Description : Highclere Castle, home to Lord & Lady Carnarvon and where Downton Abbey was filmed

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

Telephone : 01635 253210

Description : Donnington Castle. The striking twin-towered 14th-century gatehouse of this castle, later the focus of a Civil War siege and battle, survives amid impressive earthworks.

Website : <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/donnington-castle/>

Telephone : 0870 333 1181

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

Telephone : 01635 279279

Description : The Nature Discovery Centre offers a great day out for all the family. This fantastic visitor centre is packed full of interactive wildlife and natural history displays

Website : <http://www.bbowl.org.uk/nature-discovery-centre>

Telephone : 01635 874381

Description : The Reading paintballing centre is one of the largest in the UK and offers six huge paintball game zones, such as the epic London Apocalypse

Website : <http://www.paintballgames.co.uk/paintball-reading-centre>

Telephone : 0844 477 5115

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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