

UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

Snarestone and return from Gayton

Cruise this route from : Gayton

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Cruising Days : 8.00 to 11.00

Cruising Time : 54.00

Total Distance : 127.00

Number of Locks : 34

Number of Tunnels : 4

Number of Aqueducts : 0

Cruise up to the lovely canal village of Braunston, through the town of Rugby to the lovely lock free Ashby Canal.

The Ashby canal is steeped in history, this beautiful , tranquil canal passes by the historic scene of the Battle of Bosworth.

It meanders through a very level, rural environment - therefore no locks were ever needed.

The 22-mile long canal commences at Marston Junction and drifts gently through countryside barely touching a village - let alone Ashby-de-la-Zouch, the town which gave the canal its name.

Hedgerows and reeds give an air of timelessness whilst offering ideal habitats for many species of wildlife.

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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.

Bugbrooke is 1.5 hours from Gayton.

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. There is a selection of antique shops here which are well worth exploring.

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 Norton Junction you can then go down the Grand Union west towards Braunston. From Norton Junction to Braunston the canal runs westward through hills and wooded country, then into a wooded cutting which leads to Braunston Tunnel.

Off to the north on your right you will pass the small village of Welton on a hill. At bridge 6 ¾ mile from the Canal you can find a 400 yr old pub – The White Horse Inn.

Braunston Tunnel was opened in 1796 & is 2042 yards long.

Long rows of moored craft flank the canal, but there is usually plenty of places to moor, as it is worth strolling into Braunston as there are a fine selection of old buildings here. The British Waterways office in the Stop House, was originally the Toll office between the Oxford and the Grand Union canal. It is worth stocking up on supplies here. By lock 3 there is a haunted pub- the Admiral Nelson. In Braunston itself there is the Wheatsheaf which also has a Chinese & Thai takeaway. The Millhouse Hotel has a canalside garden, and the Old Plough in the High street dates from 1672. The village has stores & a takeaway.

At Braunston turn right up the Oxford canal, the canal runs through wide open country for quite a mile, only momentarily interrupted by the M45 just after Barby bridge.

Moor up just before bridge 73, the Old Royal Oak pub is here.

Continuing up the Oxford canal Rugby comes in to sight, you descend the Hilmorton Locks and the canal swings in a wide arc around the town. There are shops near bridge 59 to the south, and a picnic area below bridge 53 with a huge Tesco supermarket nearby.

It is 9.5 hours cruising to here.

Rugby is a large town with many shops and of course is the home of the game of Rugby. It is 30 minutes walk to the town centre.

If you need to stock up on provisions, the selection of shops to supply food is brilliant in Rugby, offering deli's, supermarkets, organic shops, local produce, bakers and butchers, and making it worth a look just for the shopping opportunities alone. The centre of Rugby is a very pleasant place offering nice parkland and places to eat and drink in abundance. There is a pedestrianised shopping centre and an open market with a town crier.

The Web Ellis Rugby football museum tells the story of the game of Rugby over the last 160 years

As part of your tour of the birthplace of the game be sure to take a walk along the Pathway of Fame, a unique tour which celebrates the history of the game and some of its most notable players.

The town and borough has much more to offer than its unique connection with the famous game. It has links to great literary figures such as Rupert Brooke, Matthew Arnold and Lewis Carroll.

Day 3

Soon you will encounter the short Newbold Tunnel, which is very magical with coloured lights. Newbold Quarry park is beside the canal, it is a local nature reserve, there are wildflowers, butterflies & birds and muntjac deer.

The canal continues on this lock free stretch with no villages to speak off, until you reach Brinklow which is about a mile off to your left by Stretton Stop.

There are 3 pubs in Brinklow which can be accessed from the road to your left just before Stretton Wharf. There are stores & a takeaway as well. The canal continues north west through quiet farmland only briefly interrupted by the motorway which is soon left behind for the moment. There are lovely elegant iron bridges along the canal.

Soon the first signs of Coventry appear, sharp bends in the canal lead to the stop lock before Hawkesbury Junction which is the end of the Oxford canal before it joins the Coventry canal. The lock has very little difference in depth, so takes very little time to fill up or empty!

There is a lovely cast iron bridge after the lock, and to your left is a very attractive disused engine house. The steam engine used in the Engine house was installed in 1821, having been previously used for nearly 100 years at a colliery. The atmospheric steam engine is now housed in Dartmouth Museum. There is also a nice pub canalside- the Greyhound, decorated with canal memorabilia.

Turn sharp right here passing the Old Engine House on your left.

You will soon reach Marston Junction where you turn a sharp right to join the Ashby canal.

The canal begins at Marston Junction where it links to the Coventry Canal in urban Bedworth. There is a now disused stop lock to pass through, the gates now removed, and it's just 1 mile to Bulking Road bridge where there is a pub – The Corner House Hotel, within walking distance.

There are moorings here, so an ideal place to stop for the night.

It is 7.25 hours to here

Day 4

Next along the way is the Gamecock Barracks, which used to be called RAF Bramcote during World War II, (you may recognize some of the base from TV and films!) Once you pass the boats moored at Bramcote Wharf it's just a short hop to the tiny village of Burton Hastings where the Church of St Botolph lies at the centre of the

village. This little English church is a simple old stone building with a tower from the 14th century and you get a lovely view of it from the canal.

The character of the Ashby has already shown itself by this point with rural farmland, woodlands and the occasional bridge. The only town of any significant size along the entire canal is Hinckley, which it is to be found a short distance from Burton Hastings. There is the neighbouring medieval village of Stretton Baskerville which can be seen just before you pass under the A5 Watling Street which lies in the outskirts of Hinckley. The A5 is the only major road to cross paths with the Ashby but it is worth stopping by the A5, despite the noise, to enjoy a refreshing drink in the friendly waterside pub- The Lime Kilns Inn by bridge 15.

The Ashby Canal skirts around the outside of Hinckley, flanked by housing & light industrial buildings, Trinity Marina can be found at Hinckley, and can supply you with all your boating needs plus there is a laundrette, café, restaurant, and good moorings (To avoid grounding you should always moor at a designated spot- by bridge 16, or just past trinity marina on your right, or just before bridge 17a on your left.). The town centre of Hinckley is within walking distance and offers many different shops and eateries and of course pubs. South of bridge 16 is a greyhound stadium. The Concordia Theatre offers performances all year round. The Hinckley & District Museum has been established in a row of thatched cottages once used for framework knitting, and the museum now houses displays from prehistoric to the current period.

The section of canal running through the Hinckley district is designated as a conservation area, and, as with the rest of the canal there are lots of birds and wildlife to be seen with the towpaths regularly used by walkers, cyclists and anglers alike.

Following on from Hinckley you pass the small villages of Wykin and Higham on the Hill and there are a couple of pubs at the latter- The Odd fellows Arms & The Fox Inn. Higham is 1 mile west of bridges 21 & 23. Running alongside the canal here are the remains of a loop railway built in the 1870's to carry coal , but it was abandoned in 1900 having never had a train run on its tracks. This is a short section with a few bridges carrying the country lanes over the canal, then you are on the outskirts of the village of Stoke Golding, which proudly boasts to be the "Birthplace of the Tudor Dynasty". This is the site of the Battle of Bosworth where in 1485 The War of the Roses finally ended with King Richard III being defeated by Henry Tudor, who was crowned King Henry VII, the coronation being held here, in Stoke Golding.

Stoke Golding itself is to the right of bridge 25, but there are good moorings by bridges 27/28. It is a stunning village, it has an impressive Grade 1 listed Saxon church, the window sills of the Church still show grooves, which legend has it were caused by the soldiers sharpening their swords on the eve of the battle. There is a village shop where you can pick up supplies for your journey, and it's well worth having a walk around the village which is full of beautiful buildings from times past. This is also the home of the Ashby Canal Centre (marina) who have done a lot in the restoration of the northern section of the Ashby Canal. The White Swan & George & Dragon Pubs are in the village.

Heading north out of Stoke Golding you pass Dadlington, another small village with the Dog & Hedgehog pub , and then you find yourself in the busy Sutton Cheney Wharf. There is a trip boat here, and a café- Cafe Canalside that opens 9-5, and it is just a short walk from here to the Battlefield Visitor Centre which has interactive displays about the battle. There is also another café here and a shop. You can take a walk through the woods along the battle trails, or why not take a ride on a steam train on the Battlefield Line Railway from Shenton to Shackerstone and walk back along the towpath, around a 5 mile walk. There are also moorings at Shenton where you can also walk to the battlefield. Shenton station is here and old steam & diesel trains run along the Battlefield Line of 9 miles between Shackerstone & Shenton via Market Bosworth during the season.

After leaving the battlefield the canal crosses the road using the only aqueduct on the entire canal, the lovely little brick built Shenton Aqueduct. Next along the journey is Market Bosworth to your left which is a good place to stop, a mile walk from the canal takes you to the town centre where there are shops, a café, and several pubs. A market is held every Wednesday. This is the last chance to stock up on supplies till the end of the canal, so make sure to get everything you need before continuing on.

Just to the west of bridge 42 is Bosworth water Trust, a large leisure park with a 20 acre lake for water pursuits. Craft & wetsuits for hire.

The canal continues to meander through open fields passing Congerstone village to Shackerstone which is the home of the Battlefield Line Railway. There is a tearoom at the station and a wonderful railway museum packed with exhibits and memorabilia from the days of steam. The wooded section beyond bridge 53 marks the start of Gopsall Park. The hall here was demolished in 1951, however Gopsall Wharf by bridge 58 was the last site used for loading coal and transporting it to the paper mills along the Grand Union Canal. The Rising Sun Pub is in the village.

Snaresstone is the home of the Snaresstone Tunnel, which is quite short at 228 metres and is only suitable for one way traffic as there is a kink in it, there are moorings at the entrance which are convenient for visiting one of the two pubs in the village. The tunnel leaves us with just a half mile cruise to the end of the canal which finishes suddenly in the middle of the countryside.

Beyond here work is in progress to restore the northern section of the canal. The Globe Inn is canalside.

Turn around at the canal terminus & head back to Shackerstone to moor up for the night.

It is 9 hours cruising to here.

Day 5

Day 6

Day 7

Day 8

It is 26 hours back to the marina, or just under 9 hours per day.

Useful Links

Description : Coventry Cathedral

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

Telephone : 024 7652 1200

Description : Hinckley and District Museum

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

Telephone : 01455 251218

Description : Battlefield Line Railway

Website : www.battlefieldline.co.uk/

Telephone : 01827 880754

Description : Bosworth Water Trust Leisure Park

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

Telephone : 01455 291876

Description : Award winning Farm shop a short walk from Bridge 25 on Ashby Canal

Website : <http://tomlinsonsfarmshop.co.uk/>

Telephone : 01455-212199

Description : Rugby Tourist information

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

Telephone : n/a

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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