

UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

Stafford and historic Shugborough hall from Nantwich

Cruise this route from : Nantwich

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[Stafford-and--historic-Shugborough-hall-from-Nantwich-Cruising-Route.html](http://www.ukcanalboating.com/Stafford-and--historic-Shugborough-hall-from-Nantwich-Cruising-Route.html)

Cruising Days : 11.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 61.00

Total Distance : 118.00

Number of Locks : 82

Number of Tunnels : 2

Number of Aqueducts : 0

Lovely rural route along the beautiful Shropshire Union Canal, with pretty villages and Canalside pubs along this tranquil stretch of Canal.

It is one of the most scenic of all the canals, the deep, moss-grown cuttings are atmospheric and full of wildlife, and you can often spot herons and kingfishers.

Through the lovely Staffordshire countryside to the half timbered town of Market Drayton the home of Gingerbread! The town has some beautiful architecture from timber framed houses to a stunning 14th century sandstone church. On entering the town you pass over the pretty 40 Steps Aqueduct so called because of the 40 steps leading up from the road to the canal.

In Stafford there are many shops & pubs- also good to visit is the Ancient High house- Four hundred years of history are waiting to be discovered within the walls of England's largest timber framed town house. Step inside and embark on a journey from Elizabethan days through the turbulent Civil War era to the more refined Edwardian period.

Also visit Stafford castle: First built by William the Conqueror to subdue the rebellious population, the Castle has dominated the Stafford skyline for over 900 years. Uncover the secrets of the site through Norman times, the medieval period, the English Civil War, right up to the present day.

Also Shugborough Estate -Journey through the historic estate of Shugborough and experience the nation's best 'upstairs downstairs' experience. Set in 900 acres of stunning parkland and riverside gardens with elegant mansion House, working Victorian Servants' Quarters, Georgian farm, dairy & mill and restored walled garden

Cruising Notes

Day 1

The canal known affectionately as "The Shroppie", was one of last on the whole network to be built. Many of the navigators who built it had previously worked on the newfangled railways, which were starting to be constructed all over the country. The navigators employed the techniques used for railway construction to create the high embankments and deep cuttings for the canal, so that it was much more "level" than earlier canals, and did not therefore need to traverse through loads of locks, which slowed up the progress of boats and their cargoes.

Nantwich is an old market town, well-known for its salt-springs since Roman times. Much of the architecture is of Tudor style, since it was rebuilt after a fire in 1583, and many of the buildings are listed. The oldest building is St Mary's Church, dating from C14th, and this is a Grade 1 listing. Many of the buildings are timber-framed, or half-timbered, including the Crown, an old coaching inn. Nantwich Museum has lots of information regarding the fire and re-building of the town.

Not far from Nantwich is Hack Green Secret Nuclear Bunker, now a museum, but previously a government-owned nuclear bunker. For more information, and to arrange a visit, see their website where you can find opening times, contact details, prices, and find out about the Ghost Hunt!

Leaving Nantwich, you will now head towards Audlem, and a series of locks, although you only have to complete 3 locks in the Audlem flight before you get to the moorings.

There is an attractive picnic area and BBQ facilities just north of bridge 83 at Coole Pilate.

The cruise to Audlem is, again, through countryside and quite remote, so nice to wind down before mooring for the night.

It is 3 hours to here ,

Audlem is a typical Canalside village , there are some pubs in Audlem and local stores. The Bridge Inn is Canalside at bridge 78.

Day 2

For the most part, today's cruising will be reasonably tranquil, with little indication of habitation, just open countryside, until you reach Market Drayton.

Market Drayton is a small market town, near the Welsh border, and the canal actually runs close to the town centre.

The town claims to be the 'Home of Gingerbread', which has been produced here for the last 200 years. The town centre is a mix of C17th black and white buildings and modern buildings, and on Wednesdays there is a street market that dates back for over 750 years.

If you want a bit of adventure, you might like to go on one of the town trails – Murder and Mayhem, The Boyhood Haunts of Clive of India, and Children's Wild Animal Adventure Trail. Also, you might like to take a

look at the 40 Steps Aqueduct, a breathtaking structure on the Shropshire Union Canal. There are many other attractions in and around here, so you might like to visit the website for more information.

There are many pubs in and around Market Drayton, and shops
It is 5 hours to here

Day 3

Leaving Market Drayton, you will soon encounter the Tyrley Locks, a series of four locks, rising 33 feet, and overhung by trees.

The landscape now is empty and quiet, with hills to the left, and open countryside all around, whilst you leisurely cruise towards Shebdon, a small hamlet, where there is an aqueduct almost right beside the pub, The Wharf Inn, yet the canal cannot be seen from the pub as the pub is down the embankment. The Anchor is another pub along this stretch of canal, and is also very remote, but worth a visit as you pass it anyway.

It is not far now to Norbury Junction, where you will find Norbury Bridge No. 38, your mooring for tonight.

On leaving Norbury Bridge, you will immediately pass Shelmore Wood, to your left as you make your way towards Gnosall.

Gnosall is a self-contained village, with all local amenities. The main building of note is the C15th St Laurence's Church, which is worthy of a visit, if only to see the Norman tower arches or the modern stained glass windows.

It is 6 hours to here.

The Boat Inn is by bridge 34 and the Navigation by bridge 35 and the Royal Oak in the village by the railway bridge.

There are also local stores.

Immediately after passing through Gnosall, you will cruise through the 81 yard long Cowley Tunnel, so look out for drips!

You will now travel several miles through remote, unspoilt grazing land, towards Church Eaton, although very little remains of the village, except for the church of St Editha, at the end of the main street.

Again, the canal is remote, and by turns it goes through cuttings, or along embankments, affording beautiful views of the surrounding countryside. The relaxing nature of this stage of your cruise is the perfect time to take stock, and enjoy the wildlife all around you.

Wheaton Aston is your stop for the night, The Hartley Arms is canalside at Bridge 19.

The Wheaton Aston lock is unique by way of being the only singular lock on the canal route as the other locks are bunched together in "flights". This made for quicker working by the boat people because locks could be easily prepared in advance of the boats. At Wheaton Aston you will find a waterside garage that offers some useful facilities for boaters and a canalside pub. Wheaton Aston also has a few basic supplies.

It is 8 hours to here

Day 4

You will see the Belvide Reservoir which supplies water for the canal off to the right. A very short distance from there is a cast iron aqueduct, the Stretton Aqueduct, which was built in 1832. It is used to cross the A5 Watling Street.

Chillington Hall, close to the village of Brewood (pronounced Brood), is home to the “Fancy Bridge” named by the workers who built the Shroppie. Powerful landowners demanded grand and ornamental bridges where the canal crossed their properties and this is a fine example of such work. A tree lined avenue crosses the canal here leading up to Chillington Hall which is now a venue for Weddings. Just a short distance upstream from Chillington Hall is Brewood and you will find shops, pubs and restaurants close at hand and there is also a boatyard all of which should meet any of your requirements.

In the far distance, you may catch sight of small settlements, but until you are almost at Autherley Junction, you could be the only people for miles around.

At Autherley Junction, the Shropshire Union Canal and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal merge, turn left here.

The canal is very twisting through the countryside passing a very busy marina at Hatherton , the Fox & Anchor Inn is canalside at bridge 71

At Gailey there is an attractive round Toll-keepers watch tower just above the lock, with a small canal shop on the ground floor.

Penkrige. There is a small store at Penkrige Lock for basic supplies but if you chose to go into the centre there is a wide choice of shops and pubs. Above the lock is the best place to moor to visit this relatively old village. Moor here for the night it is 9 hours to here.

Day 5

Continue along the canal northwards towards Stafford.

In Baswich there is a footpath which leads into Stafford town centre where you will not be short of stores, pubs and facilities. From bridge 98 it is 1.5 miles into Stafford town centre (to your left) , there is a frequent bus service.

In Stafford there are many shops & pubs- also good to visit is the Ancient High house- Four hundred years of history are waiting to be discovered within the walls of England's largest timber framed town house. Step inside and embark on a journey from Elizabethan days through the turbulent Civil War era to the more refined Edwardian period.

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Stafford has a great mix of national and independent retailers along the bustling high street, in modern indoor

shopping centres, and in picturesque cobbled streets.

At Baswich there is a nice Pub The Radford Bank Inn, canalside.

Milford is the gateway to Cannock Chase and as a consequence can be quite busy in high season.

You now enter the famous Tixhall wide section of canal and Tixhall Gatehouse which is just a stones throw from the canal, as grand as most grand houses which is the only remnant of Tixhall Hall which burnt down long ago, well worth a short walk for a closer inspection. It is recommended that you leave enough time to enjoy Tixhall Wide, moor up, have a picnic or a walk and enjoy this impressive area as it certainly is a highlight of the cruise.

Soon the canal arrives at the Great Haywood Junction.

Great Haywood is where the Staffordshire and Worcester Canal meets the Trent and Mersey, turn here . Shugborough Hall lies just to the south west of the junction .

Shugborough Estate

Journey through the historic estate of Shugborough and experience the nation's best 'upstairs downstairs' experience. Set in 900 acres of stunning parkland and riverside gardens with elegant mansion House, working Victorian Servants' Quarters, Georgian farm, dairy & mill and restored walled garden, which are brought to life by costumed living history characters who share their lives and powerful stories from the past with visitors. Explore Lord Lichfield's private rooms and hear the stories of one of the nation's grandest families, with NEW Shugborough Revisited.

It is 5 hours to here.

Day 6 day 7 Day 8 day 9

It is 30 hours back to Nantwich so about 7-8 hours cruising per day.

Useful Links

Description : Hack Green Secret Nuclear Bunker

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

Telephone : 01270 629219

Description : Chillington Hall

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

Telephone : 01902 850236

Description : Stafford Castle

Website : <http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/stafford-castle-and-visitor-centre>

Telephone : 01785 257698

Description : Shugborough Estate

Website : <http://www.shugborough.org.uk/homepage.aspx>

Telephone : n/a

Description : The Ancient High House

Website : <http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/the-ancient-high-house>

Telephone : 01785 619131

Description : Market Drayton Tourist information

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

Telephone : n/a

Description : Nantwich Tourist information

Website : <http://www.visitcheshire.com/places/nantwich-p96451>

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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