

# UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

## Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal

Cruise this route from : Stourport on Severn

View the latest version of this pdf

[Staffordshire-and-Worcestershire-Canal-Cruising-Route.html](#)

Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal

Cruising Days : 8.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 53.00

Total Distance : 92.00

Number of Locks : 82

Number of Tunnels : 4

Number of Aqueducts : 0

The Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal runs through softly undulating West Midlands countryside. It skirts around the edges of Birmingham without ever becoming truly urban.

Cruising the full 46 miles length of the canal, returning the same way.

Wonderful scenery on perhaps the most attractive canal in the country.

Pleasant towpath walks and country pubs

At one end, it connects to the River Severn at the historic Stourport Basins in the Georgian town of Stourport. The southern reaches of the canal run close to the River Stour, which is an important wetland habitat. The canal near Kidderminster and Kinver has unusual sandstone 'cliffs'.

At its northern end, in Staffordshire, it runs through the wild pine woods and heathland of Cannock Chase. It then passes the grounds of the grand Shugborough Estate, before joining the Trent & Mersey Canal.

Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal

## Cruising Notes

## Day 1

If time allows take a train ride on the Steam Railway. The Severn Valley railway is a full-size standard-gauge railway line running regular steam-hauled passenger trains for the benefit of visitors and enthusiasts alike between Kidderminster in Worcestershire and Bridgnorth in Shropshire, a distance of 16 miles.

The journey is full of interest, for the route follows closely the meandering course of the River Severn for most of the way on its journey between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth. One highlight of the trip is the crossing of the River Severn by means of the Victoria bridge - a massive 200-foot single span, high above the water which, incidentally, features in the film 'The Thirty-nine Steps' with Robert Powell in the leading role.

There being few roads in the Severn Valley, some of the views are only visible from the Railway. The scenery is varied and largely unspoiled, punctuated by the quaint 'olde worlde' charm of country stations, each one giving ready access to local villages and riverside walks.

The canal basins at Stourport are full of pretty moored boats, the locks are open 24 hrs, and form a staircase, the lock-keeper is around much of the day in case of difficulties. You should proceed to the eastern corner of the upper basins to join the Staffs & Worcs canal. There is a useful tea room & craft shop by the lock and temporary moorings.

You soon leave Stourport behind and approach Kidderminster with its smart new developments.

Beyond Falling sands Bridge look out for the steam trains on the Viaduct on the Severn valley Railway. There are good moorings at Weavers wharf between bridges 15 and 16, with supermarkets & cafes nearby.

It is 2.5 hours to here

## Day 2

Leaving Kidderminster behind you soon enter the open countryside again, until the canal is encroached by trees and cliffs which make you feel you are in the jungle.

Wolverley is north west of bridge 20 and is a fascinating village once dedicated to the nail-making industry. The church stands on a sandstone rock so steep that the building has to be approached by a zig-zag path cut through the constantly eroding stone. In the base of this outcrop is the remains of a smithy's shop. Many of the houses nearby are partly carved from the rock, their dark back rooms actually caves.

At Debdale lock a doorway reveals a cavern cut into the solid rock, which may have been used to stable towing horses.

The canal continues through secluded woodland and pretty locks to the very pretty village of Kinver, where you can stock up on provisions or get some fish & chips! It is worth having a look at the fascinating Rock houses, carved out of the cliffs and in continuous occupation for 150 years until 1935. (Walk up Stone lane close to the White Hart Hotel until trees appear on your left, then follow the path into the trees, the rock houses are at Holy Austin Rock).

Stewponey Wharf at the head of Stewponey lock is very interesting wharf with a restored octagonal toll office.

You pass by the Stourbridge Canal and at the far end of the aqueduct near here is a curious narrowboat-house known as the Devil's Den, cut into the rock. Further on after Rocky Lock rooms have been carved into the

sandstone.

The canal forks and you should keep left to avoid the marina, the countryside becomes flatter and more regular. There are pubs east and west of Bridge 40.

There are occasional locks and canalside pubs including a 2 step staircase at Botterham lock which has 4 locks in total.

After Bumblehole Lock you pass reach the village of Wombourne, there are the usual shops in the village. Moor by Bridge 43 There is a pub near here.

It is 8.5 hours to here

Day 3

You soon reach the 3 Bratch Locks just north of Wombourne. These locks are open from 8am to 8pm and you should carefully study the operating instructions before use, or consult the lock-keeper if in any doubt.

The Octagonal toll house, lovely setting and unusual layout of the locks make an interesting view, but just treat each one as a separate lock & you should be OK.

Wightwick manor is about 300 yards north west of bridge 56 across the busy road and up the hill. It is National Trust , and has many William Morris wallpaper and fabrics, and beautiful 17 acre Edwardian gardens. If you Moor the Mermaid Pub is 100 yards west of bridge 56.

You are soon approaching the outskirts of Wolverhampton, there is a handy supermarket near Compton Lock this lock marks the end of a 31 lock climb from the River Severn at Stourport a rise of 294 ft. , the canal manages to preserve its rural character on the outskirts of Wolverhampton.

You pass the Aldersley Junction where the Birmingham Mail line branches off to the right, and soon after the Atherley Junction where a big white bridge marks the entrance to the Shropshire Union Canal. Known to local boatmen as "Cut End" due to it being where the Shroppie met the much older Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, Atherley Junction was once a busy place with workshops, a toll office and stables, today Atherley has a boatyard with a hire fleet and a club house. Many of the original buildings still exist and it is home to bridge #1 on the Shroppie which is an original design by Thomas Telford. There is also the original shallow stop lock where Sam Lomas used to control boat movement and issue toll tickets.

Do not turn off but continue up the Staffs & Worcs canal through a very narrow cutting with very few places for passing, so look out for oncoming boats.

The Motorway makes a brief intrusion in the pleasant farmland landscape.

The considerable age of this canal is shown by its extremely twisting course, with very few villages along this stretch of former heathland.

Moor by Gailey Wharf, there are visitor moorings before or after the lock.

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

the ground floor.

It is 8.5 hours to here

Day 4

You soon pass the old village of Penkridge which has shops if you need to stock up.

After Penkridge you have Teddesley park off to your left, the Hall was demolished and used to house WW2 prisoners of war.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Great Haywood is where the Staffordshire and Worcester Canal meets the Trent and Mersey.

Shugborough Hall lies just to your right -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.

Turn around and moor.

It is 7 hours to here

Days 5 6 7

It is 26.5 hours back to Stourport  
So cruise for about 9 hours per day back to the marina.

## Useful Links

Description : Shugborough Estate

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

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](#).

PDF created : 20 Feb 2023

© <https://ukcanalboating.com>