

# UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

## Waltham Abey and the Lee Navigation from Limehouse Basin

Cruise this route from : London

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Cruising Days : 4.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 12.00

Total Distance : 27.00

Number of Locks : 14

Number of Tunnels : 0

Number of Aqueducts : 0

The Lea Navigation waterways were given a new lease of life following the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

From the titanic 114.5m high ArcelorMittal Orbit, the UK's tallest sculpture, to the idyllic parklands across the Park, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park will enthral visitors young and old.

Waltham Abbey is a fine old town with an amazing architectural gem in its ancient Abbey, and its pedestrianised streets make it a relaxing place to walk around.

The Royal Gunpowder Mills are definitely worth a visit, just to the north. The Mills are an Anchor Point of the European Route of Industrial Heritage, set in 175 acres of parkland and containing 21 buildings of major historical importance. It tells the stories of explosives, propellants and finally rocket motors and fuels from the Civil War to the Cold War.

## Cruising Notes

Day 1

From Limehouse basin take the northeast exit to the Limehouse Cut which was the first navigable canal to be dug in London and was one of the earliest canals in England. It opened nearly 250 years ago in 1770. At that time most of the area was rural in character. Now it is more urban, but pleasant and interesting none the less. The canal is now a tranquil place with parts of the banks semi-wild and it is a home to wildlife including swans,

ducks, geese, cormorants, moorhens and coots.

Limehouse Cut no longer has any locks to call its own. At its western end, it is connected directly to the Limehouse Basin which has lock gates at its entrance from the River Thames and at the mouth of the Regent's Canal. At the eastern end, the Limehouse Cut connects directly to the Lee Navigation which is a canalised river with Bow Locks linking to the tidal Bow Creek.

Many of the old working buildings on either side of the Limehouse Cut are still present, interspersed with more modern houses and apartment blocks.

The Limehouse Cut joins The Lea navigation, ignore the right-hand turns to Bow Creek and Abbey creek which are tidal, and Bow Back River.

All locks on the Lea Navigation between Old Ford and Rammey March are mechanised and you will need a watermate key and a windlass to operate them, there are instructions at each lock.

This area has been completely re-developed after the 2012 Olympic Games, and the Olympic Stadium is off to your right, and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is in front of you.

The River Lea runs directly through the Park, forking into the waterways that once upon a time served the Victorian industries of Stratford and Hackney.

For over two hundred years, these waterways and the docks they served drove London's economy, but economic change neglected the waterways, leaving them derelict and ultimately a barrier, rather than a connection, for local communities. After falling out of use in the second half of the 20th century, the waterways were given a new lease of life following the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. From the titanic 114.5m high ArcelorMittal Orbit, the UK's tallest sculpture, to the idyllic parklands across the Park, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park will enthral visitors young and old.

Hackney Marsh is a footballer's delight with numerous pitches, as the river approaches Lea Bridge it passes Middlesex Filter Beds Nature Reserve- Whether you want to relax in our large open spaces, pack up a picnic or explore our nature reserve. See what you can spot in the wildlife garden and see the willow dome, or head to the filter beds and bird watch from the hides.

The café is perfect for chilling out with comfy sofas while you enjoy a bite to eat or drink.

The WaterWorks Centre is just a stone's throw from other fabulous activities, Lee Valley Ice Centre is just a ten-minute walk away and Lee Valley Riding Centre five minutes.

At Lee Valley White Water Centre experience white water rafting at the 2012 Olympic venue.

The river now follows the wide sweeping course that is typical of this navigation.

At Walthamstow, about .25 miles northeast of Springfield Marina is the old Copper Mill, built 1800 to process copper that was brought from the Port of London along the River Lee.

There is plenty of wildlife around here.

Walthamstow Marshes are .5 mile upstream from Lea Bridge, now an SSSI this is the last remnant of the once extensive river marshes.

There are huge reservoirs to the east blocked off by high embankments.

Opposite Warwick Reservoir East is Markfield Beam Engine museum. This Grade II listed building houses a splendid compound beam engine built by Wood brothers around 1886. It has been fully restored and when

supplied with steam pumps clean water - it cleaned the sludge from sewage through sand filters, a splendid example of Victorian public health engineering. Open 2nd Sunday of each month.

Moor for the night at Tottenham Hale between bridges 23 and 24 it is 2 hours to here.  
The Ferry Boat Inn in Tottenham is closeby towards the reservoirs- Homely & rustic, family friendly waterside pub with a garden serving classic pub grub with deals.

Day 2

Above Tottenham Lock there are lots of moored craft.

It is not advisable to venture up any of the side creeks that feed into the river as they are heavily silted up.

Pickett's Lock name was used for the nearby area. However historically this area was marshy farmland.

Lee Valley leisure centre is to the left and has all sort of sports activities -squash, yoga, swimming and golf, sauna, solarium, multi-screened cinema and restaurant.

Just north of Ponders Lock, there is a pub in a former pumping station.

At Enfields Yard are the attractive buildings of the Canals and Rivers Trust yard and Enfield Lock is accompanied by a handsome house built around 1889.

After nearly 4 miles of reservoirs, the landscape, at last, begins to open out.

At Waltham Town Lock is the start of more open country.

Waltham Abbey is a fine old town with an amazing architectural gem in its ancient Abbey, and its pedestrianised streets make it a relaxing place to walk around.

The town goes back before the Norman conquest when King Harold chose it for a centre of learning and religious development.

The Abbey was founded in 1030 and was one of the most important and prosperous in the country.

The Royal Gunpowder Mills are definitely worth a visit, just to the north. The Mills are an Anchor Point of the European Route of Industrial Heritage, set in 175 acres of parkland and containing 21 buildings of major historical importance. It tells the stories of explosives, propellants and finally rocket motors and fuels from the Civil War to the Cold War.

Turn around just north of Waltham Town Lock and begin your journey home tomorrow.

It is 4 hours from Tottenham to here, so spend the afternoon having a look round Waltham and its Abbey.

Day 3 Day 4

It is 6 hours back to Limehouse Basin so make your way back.

## Useful Links

Description : Queen Elizabeth Olympic park

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

Telephone : n/a

Description : London Tourist information

Website : <http://www.visitlondon.com>

Telephone : n/a

Description : London pre bookable moorings

Website : <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/our-regions/london-waterways/pre-booked-visitor-moorings-in-london>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Lee Valley Park

Website : <https://www.visitleevalley.org.uk/>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Waltham Abbey

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

Telephone : n/a

Description : Royal Gunpowder Mills

Website : <https://www.royalgunpowdermills.com/>

Telephone : 01992 707 370

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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