

# UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

## Wansford and the Fens from March marina

Cruise this route from : March

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Wansford and the Fens from March marina

Cruising Days : 5.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 18.00

Total Distance : 52.00

Number of Locks : 10

Number of Tunnels : 0

Number of Aqueducts : 0

An idyllic journey through wide countryside bursting with wildlife and quintessentially English charms. As well as mingling with geese, swans and precious species of endangered wildlife, this route is full of history, in the company of two Tudor queens and Viking hoards .

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## Cruising Notes

March to Wansford - through Ashline Lock, Orton Lock and back.

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From the very start of this route, heading along the Old River Nene, you succumb to the marvellously odd gratification that comes from crossing an invisible line. Beyond Floods Ferry you will cross the Greenwich Meridian, the line that defines the world map, separating east from west just as the Equator does south from north. After mulling on the moment, travelling along the west side of the divide, keep your eyes peeled for the fork right turn onto Whittlesey Dyke. Straight on towards Ashline Lock (a boater-operated manual lock), you'll arrive at the historic market town of Whittlesey. The cheeky route suddenly decides to test any helmsman's skills with a savage 90° bend, followed with the reward of cruising glorious open countryside riddled with

wildlife and fen colours.

Peterborough lies ahead, and the first peep of its cathedral across the water sparks emotions with resonance worthy of its powerful history. As far back as 654AD there was a monastic settlement on the site, but Viking vandals destroyed the monastery in 870. Then evolution of the site followed with ups and downs through Civil War and peace, and changes that lead to the Peterborough Cathedral that stands today. Royal blood burns passionately through the living flowers of this cathedral since the graves of two Tudor queens lie here. Catherine of Aragon, the first wife of King Henry VIII, was buried here in 1536. Mary Queen of Scots was buried here in 1587 and remained until her body was moved to Westminster Abbey in 1612.

As the river calls again, the water road leaves the dazzle of the city behind. A sculpture park and the 500-acre Nene Park run alongside the river's route. Two miles upriver from Peterborough Bridge you encounter Orton Lock, the first of a series of Guillotine locks that are special features of the River Nene. With its brutal name, this guillotine lock spares nothing for the sensitivities of the locally beheaded Queen, but it is a simple gate that is easily operated. Just ahead is the entrance to Ferry Meadows Country Park where you can moor up and make use of its cycle hire, visitor centre, shop, play areas, miniature railway, cycling, walking, kite-flying, pony riding, nature-spotting and fishing. There are also various water sports at the water sports centre and on its associated ponds and lakes.

Travelling on you'll pass more lakes with inspiring views dotted with little sailing boats and cute villages wafting idyllic green scenes. But when the route reaches Wansford all grown-up thoughts slip from mind, as Wansford railway station is the home of the little blue engine everyone knows as Thomas! The station is the headquarters of the Nene Valley Railway and excites visitors with the irresistible thrill of riding a steam engine.

The river, the 'Old Great North Road' and the railway dance closely together at the point of the station, since Wansford village was once on a main route between London and the North. Your route turns round here to retrace the gentle journey back to March. But, if time allows, followers of gore may wish to carry on as far as Fotheringhay where Mary Queen of Scots was beheaded in the castle in 1587.

## Useful Links

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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