

# UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

## Birmingham from Sawley Marina

Cruise this route from : Sawley

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Birmingham from Sawley Marina

Cruising Days : 11.00 to 12.00

Cruising Time : 59.00

Total Distance : 108.00

Number of Locks : 112

Number of Tunnels : 4

Number of Aqueducts : 0

A lovely cruise taking you through lovely and varied scenery to Birmingham , the UK's 2nd biggest city, and its colourful Gas Street Basin which is in the heart of Birmingham's canal network, and has been redeveloped into a unique experience where traditional narrow boats moor up next to cosmopolitan cafes and bars.

Amongst some of the attractions are the National Sea Life Centre and the Jewellery Quarter Discovery centre, also many fine Art galleries and over 500 restaurants offering every choice of food!

For shopping a visit to the new Bullring is a must, which covers an area the size of 26 football pitches and has a huge range of shops.

Drayton Manor -The UK's best family theme park with kids rides, family fun, zoo, and thrill rollercoaster rides.

Birmingham from Sawley Marina

## Cruising Notes

Day 1

A short river section takes you to Derwent Mouth, and the entrance to the Trent & Mersey Canal.

Within an hour or so of departure, you will arrive at Shardlow. This is an attractive canal village, with a restaurant and some canalside pubs, including the Navigation Inn, near Bridge No.3, a haunted pub with its own

moorings. Also near the Canal is The Old Crown.

This is a good place to moor for the first night.

There is a Heritage Centre, near Shardlow Lock as you leave the village, where you can gain insight into canal life from the early 18th century.

If you feel like a stroll around the village, you could follow the Village Trail.

All around there are examples of large-scale canal architecture. By the Shardlow Lock is the biggest and best of these buildings, the C18th Trent Mill, now The Clock Warehouse, an attractive pub/restaurant.

It is one hour to here.

## Day 2

Passing Weston-on-Trent to your right, there is a pleasant walk south east down the lane near Weston Lock, to the river opposite Kings Mills. In the village, there are a couple of pubs with restaurants.

Soon you will come to the small villages of Swarkestone & Barrow-on-Trent to your left. The Crew & Harpur Arms at Swarkestone is near the river bridge, and The Ragley Boat Stop Pub is 300yds west of Bridge No.17.

There is a good pub alongside Stenson Lock & Marina, about hour before you get to Willington, called The Bubble Inn. Moor up at Bridge No.19 for access.

The next main village is Willington, about 5 hours cruising from Shardlow. This has a village green, pubs, shops and a Post Office. The Green Dragon is a popular & welcoming pub, with moorings.

A 12 arch stone aqueduct carries the canal over the River Dove.

At Bridge No.29a you will find The Mill House Bar, with its own moorings and large canal side terrace. Children welcome in the family dining area, and inside and outside play areas.

At the Horninglow Basin you might like to moor up and get some fish and chips.

Burton-on-Trent has traditionally been associated with the brewing industry, it is internationally known as the brewing capital of Great Britain.

You can visit the Heritage Brewery Museum if you moor up here.

Coors Visitor Centre is 3-4 miles from Horninglow Basin. Here, you can see all aspects of brewing during the late C19th, and also a preserved steam engine, cafe & shops. Conducted tours round the Brewery are also available.

Marstons Brewery Visitor Centre Tours of the brewery, including the unique and world famous Burton Union System, are generally available Monday to Friday. At the end of the tour, sample some of the real ale in the Visitor Centre. Please telephone in advance to book if you want to visit.

The previous section of the canal has double-width locks, but once you reach Dallow Lane Lock, you will see the first of the narrow locks, which are wide enough for one boat only at a time.

There are numerous pubs near the canal.

You can moor at the visitor moorings near Shobnall basin, from where you can walk into the town.

Or you can cruise on to Branston, which is a good place for overnight mooring. It is just over an hour or so from Burton-on-Trent.

At Branston, you can moor near The Bridge Inn, at Bridge No.34. It serves good food and real ales. There is also a seasonal shop selling provisions, home made cakes & crafts.

Nearby is the Branston Water Park, with several walks around the ponds and lakes, which were formed from old gravel pits. There is a small Visitor Centre a short walk from the towpath.

It is 8 hours cruising to here from Shardlow.

### Day 3

3 hours' cruising from Branston will bring you to Alrewas, a large, attractive village with shops and pubs, which is well worth a stroll around.

The canal meanders through the village, passing well tended gardens and a bowling green. With the C13th church, a friendly and tranquil felling is created. The back lanes hide pretty half-timbered thatched cottages. There is a fine butchers shop, and also well worth a visit, is a wonderful wine & whisky store – Barkers of Alrewas - which has hundreds of bottles of Scotch whiskey among its stock.

Good pubs here are The Crown Inn, near Bridge No.46 and The George & Dragon in the village.

3 more hours cruising will take you to Fradley Junction, where the Trent & Mersey meets the Coventry Canal.

The Swan public house is situated on one of the most picturesque waterside locations in the Midlands. It is in a 200 yr old listed building, with cosy fires, real ales, and good bar meals with a carvery on Sundays.

You may spot some of the wildlife to be found here including kingfishers, herons and moorhens. Visit the shop and Information Centre if you're looking for souvenirs.

Visit the Fradley Pool Nature Reserve, and perhaps have a go at pond dipping, or view the abundance of birdlife from the bird hide. For the more energetic, pick up a map and guide and try one of the wonderful walks - listen out en route for the green woodpeckers.

Moor here for the night it is 6 hours from Shobnall Visitor Moorings.

### Day 4

Turning left down the Coventry Canal you encounter flat open country with no locks and at Huddlesford is the junction with the Wyrley & Essington Canal, now only used for private moorings. There is an award winning

friendly canalside pub here, - The Plough serving real ale & good food.

At Whittington which you can approach from bridge 80 , there is a PO stores, garage, chemist, Chinese takeaway & off licence. The village centre is to the west of Whittington Bridge, the shops are best approached from Bridge 78. There are 3 pubs here, The Swan Inn on the Canalside, and the Bell Inn & Dog Inn in the main street.

From here you can catch a bus into Lichfield, which is well worth the detour.

The three spires of the 13th century Cathedral in Lichfield, the 'Ladies of the Vale' are a visible landmark for miles around. The modern shopping centre contrasts sharply with the graceful Georgian buildings of the city centre. There are excellent pubs & restaurants and night clubs, with a Farmers market on Sundays.

You can also catch a train into the centre of Birmingham from Litchfield.

Hopwas is a pretty & tidy village with a green, built on the side of a hill. It has a PO, and a convenience store. It is a nice stop for an overnight stay, as on the Canal is the Tame Otter Pub, where real ale & food are served all day, there are moorings available, also here is the Red Lion, food at lunch and in the evenings, steaks are a speciality.

At the Fazeley Junction turn right along the Birmingham and Fazeley canal, soon you will reach Drayton Manor Theme Park - The UK's best family theme park with kids rides, family fun, zoo, and thrill rides. The entrance to the Theme park & Zoo is a short walk from the canal to your right.

Featuring Stormforce 10 with a backward water drop, Maelstrom, Shockwave- Europes first stand up roller coaster, and the vertical drop -New for 2011 is Ben 10 Ultimate Mission the ride, Ben needs you to stop Vilgax from stealing the Omnitrix and the only way is to board the "Mecha Vehicle", Good luck on your mission! . Adults & children will love the white knuckle rides, but the park has many family rides and a Thomas Land area for the younger children, and a Zoo to explore. The park is closed during November to March.

The Gothic style footbridge at Drayton Bassett is worth a photo, it has twin battlemented towers which look quite ridiculous on such a small construction, but it is wonderfully eccentric.

You will pass Cliff Pool Nature Reserve and Middleton Lakes Nature Reserve on the right and there is also a childrens farm at Broomey Croft near Kingsbury Swivel bridge.

At Bodymoor Heath is a lovely pub- the Dog & Doublet by Cheatles Farm bridge. To the left is Kingsbury Water Park, a 600 acre landscaped park containing 30 lakes from old gravel pits. There are walks, nature trails, fishing, horse riding, sailing and wind surfing and power boating.

At the village of Curdworth there is a pub to the south of Curdworth bridge, and another in the village.

Moor here for the night it is 8.5 hours to here.

Day 5

Have a good breakfast as there are 27 locks today to take you into Birmingham, the while journey will take about 7 hours but you will only be travelling 8 miles!

The Minworth Locks are soon reached & there is a handy transport cafe near Hansons bridge. There are also pubs – the Hare & Hounds by Minworth Green bridge, and The Boat by Caters bridge.

All shops are readily available alongside the canal around Salford, a good access point is where the A452 crosses the canal at Tyburn bridge.

Soon there are 2 canals away to your left, take the 2nd turning to Cambrian Wharf, taking you through the flight of 11 locks at Aston to Aston Junction. Turn right here through the Farmer's Bridge flight of 13 locks where you will need the BW anti vandal key. Moor up in Cambrian Wharf, or turn left at Deep Cuttings Junction and moor up in Gas Street Basin, or turn right at the junctions and moor up in one of the loops which turn off the main canal.

Day 6 to end

It is 29.5 hours cruising back to Sawley so 4 days at just over 7 hours per day.

## Useful Links

Description : National Sea Life Centre

Website : <http://www.visitsealife.com/birmingham/>

Telephone : 0871 423 2110

Description : Visit Birmingham

Website : <http://visitbirmingham.com/>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Drayton Manor Theme Park

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

Telephone : 01827 285551

Description : Gas Street Basin, Birmingham

Website : <http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/directory/65/gas-street-basin>

Telephone : n/a

Description : National Brewery Centre

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

Telephone : 01283 532880

Description : Kingsbury Water Park

Website : <http://countryparks.warwickshire.gov.uk/country-parks/kingsbury-water-park/>

Telephone : 01827 872660

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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