

UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

Coventry and return from Sawley Marina

Cruise this route from : Sawley

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Cruising Days : 11.00 to 12.00

Cruising Time : 62.00

Total Distance : 131.00

Number of Locks : 62

Number of Tunnels : 2

Number of Aqueducts : 0

Cruise from Sawley past lovely Canalside village and pubs, through rural landscape and the occasional town like Burton on Trent where you can visit the Brewery museums.

Cruise to the historic Coventry Canal Basin, with easy pedestrian access to shopping, eating and drinking, theatres, art galleries, the Transport Museum and Sir Basil Spence's remarkable Coventry Cathedral. The Coventry Canal Basin was opened to traffic in 1769 and extended in 1788 the canal warehouses, date back to 1837 and were used for loading and unloading grain, cement and other goods.

Just a short walk from the marina is Coventry Transport Museum - a motor museum, it houses a collection of British-made road transport. It is located in Coventry because the city was previously the centre of the British car industry. The Museum is huge.

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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 left. The Crew & Harpur Arms at Swarkstone 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.

From the Fazeley Junction we veer eastwards (don't turn right) through Tamworth and pass over the aqueduct over the River Tame and come to the Glascote Locks.

There are plenty of mooring places around the locks and if you need provisions there are facilities nearby in Tamworth home of the Tamworth Manifesto in the 19th century and Tamworth castle, an Historic Fortification which is well worth a visit. Also there is the fantastic snowdome where you can ski or snowboard, but you do have to pre-book.

There are pubs by Bridge 74,73 & 69.

For lovers of the rural setting this is where the finer section of the canal is, there are nature reserves at Hodge Lane and Pooley Fields and Pooley Hall .

At Alvecote marina you can see the remains of a Benedictine priory through the trees.

The rural setting is largely due to reclaimed mining land, the spoil heaps have grassed over and lakes now fill the sinkholes caused by mining, all in all it's nicer than it sounds.

As well as Pooley Hall, Polesworth offers shops and pubs but also remnants of an Abbey and a tithe barn which lends the village considerable character and interest.

Moor here for the night it is 7 hours from the Fradley Junction.

Day 5

Onwards from Polesworth the rural scenery is ever improving, giving a chance to unwind and take in the scenery to charge the batteries before the downward journey through Atherstone Locks, with views out to the Anker Valley in the west and rolling hills to the east.

The town of Atherstone borders the east bank of the canal, only running alongside the canal on the bottom half of the flight of locks beyond bridge 45, despite this, the setting of the entire flight feels detached from an urban setting other than some well kept homes and gardens in view of the canal. The locks are usually in a series of two or three with long pounds between most that offer some of the best moorings along the canal due to the

quiet setting and proximity to local pubs and shops a short walk away. Atherstone flight will now be a quick process whether by design or not, despite being in good working order the locks operate reasonably sedately, take time to take in the architecture of some interesting footbridges such as footbridge 47 or the old buildings along the canal or the re-creation of a canal side yard.

Moor up after the Top Lock , there are a few pubs and a few shops in the town. The town has a pleasant 18 century feel with a market place in front of the church.

After Atherstone we once again find ourselves cruising through the 'nicer than it sounds' reclaimed industrial land towards Nuneaton where we thankfully say goodbye to the railway line for good and meander through some pleasant woodland.

Hartshill yard houses a splendid clock tower, and some attractive British Waterways buildings.

The canal passes near to the recently redeveloped pedestrianized shopping centre in Nuneaton, and offers large supermarket shopping, pubs and modern shops within easy walking distance of boat wharf at bridge 20.

Nuneaton and Bedworth (pronounced Bedearth by locals) almost merge into one but between them is Marston Junction which leads to the Ashby canal which is 22 miles of some of the laziest, lock free canal boating in the country. If you have given yourself enough time a detour up the Ashby Canal is recommended, at the very least, to see the sight of the Battle of Bosworth. See end of these notes for a full description of the route.

Bedworth lies to the west of the canal and is barely seen at all, in fact the remainder of the cruise the canal winds through urban centres yet is surprisingly rural in nature for much of it. On the lower edge of Bedworth lies Hawkesbury and the entrance to the Oxford Canal at Hawkesbury Junction. Hawkesbury Junction boasts nicely redeveloped industrial architecture and one of the most striking bridges on the network in black and white cast iron. There is also a lovely pub here, The Greyhound Inn, and its 8.5 hours from Polesworth for ideal for a nights stop.

Day 6

Cruise down to Coventry basin, passing the Greyhound on your left.

Moor up in the historic Coventry Canal Basin, just on the north side of the city's inner ring road with easy pedestrian access to shopping, eating and drinking, theatres, art galleries, the Transport Museum and Sir Basil Spence's remarkable Coventry Cathedral. The Coventry Canal Basin was opened to traffic in 1769 and extended in 1788 the canal warehouses, date back to 1837 and were used for loading and unloading grain, cement and other goods.

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Coventry Cathedral- Sir Basil Spence was the architect of this beautiful building. Its a modern, 20th-century place of worship plus you can see the Medieval ruins of the building bombed in WWII.

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum - it has extensive and wide ranging collections which include Natural History, Archaeology and Social and industrial history.

Day 7 to end

Its 2 hours to Coventry basin each way , so if you are running out of time and need to get back then turn around at Hawkesbury Junction & start heading back, its nearly 29 hours to get back from Hawkesbury Junction so about 4 days @ 7 hours per day, its 31 hours from Coventry basin.

Useful Links

Description : Coventry Cathedral

Website : <http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/>

Telephone : 024 7652 1200

Description : Herbert Art Gallery and Museum

Website : <http://www.theherbert.org/>

Telephone : 024 7623 7521

Description : Coventry Transport Museum

Website : <http://www.transport-museum.com/>

Telephone : 024 7623 4270

Description : Tamworth Snowdome

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

Telephone : 0844 800 0011

Description : National Brewery Centre

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

Telephone : 01283 532880

Description : Tamworth Castle

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

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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