

# UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

## Gailey and return from Anderton

Cruise this route from : Anderton

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Cruising Days : 11.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 66.50

Total Distance : 139.00

Number of Locks : 74

Number of Tunnels : 2

Number of Aqueducts : 40

Cruise through small Cheshire towns like Northwich, Middlewich and Nantwich along the Middlewich canal and Shropshire Union canal with its tranquil setting and small villages and canalside pubs to the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal

Nantwich is an old market town, well-known for its salt-springs since Roman times. Much of the architecture is of Tudor style, since it was rebuilt after a fire in 1583, and many of the buildings are listed. The oldest building is St Mary's Church, dating from C14th, and this is a Grade 1 listing. Many of the buildings are timber-framed, or half-timbered, including the Crown, an old coaching inn. Nantwich Museum has lots of information regarding the fire and re-building of the town.

Not far from Nantwich is Hack Green Secret Nuclear Bunker, now a museum, but previously a government-owned nuclear bunker. For more information, and to arrange a visit, see their website where you can find opening times, contact details, prices, and find out about the Ghost Hunt.

Market Drayton is a small market town, near the Welsh border, and the canal actually runs close to the town centre.

The town claims to be the 'Home of Gingerbread', which has been produced here for the last 200 years. The town centre is a mix of C17th black and white buildings and modern buildings, and on Wednesdays there is a street market that dates back for over 750 years.

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# Cruising Notes

## Day 1

Your destination for the night is Billinge Green Flash, 4 miles away, between Broken Cross Bridge No. 184 and Croxton Aqueduct.

Leaving the marina, you will first head towards a place called Marston, where you will see a series of flashes to the right of the canal.

Marston's claim to fame is the Lion Salt Works, which is at present being restored and will become a heritage attraction. In 1986 it closed as a salt works and is now a museum.

Moving on from here, you will now be approaching Wincham, a small village which was also the site of salt mining. The industry in the village ceased in 2005 when British Salt bought it.

Next, you will reach Northwich, where if you arrive early enough, you may like to take a look around the museum, which was previously a workhouse. There is also a town with many good shops and places to eat or just have a drink, such as the Riverside Inn, which as its name suggests, is located on the River Weaver.

Just a little further, and you will be at the mooring for the night.

You have navigated 4 miles in 2 hours.

## Day 2

The suggested mooring for tonight is at Rutters Bridge No. 2, 14 miles away.

Leaving your mooring, you will ultimately be heading towards Middlewich, where you will bear right onto the Shropshire Union Canal, and for a time, the canal twists and turns, with a sharp curve to the left just after Billinge Green Flash.

For the most part, your journey to Middlewich is through open countryside until you reach Croxton Aqueduct, where you will now be in the suburbs of Middlewich.

Before turning onto the Shropshire Union Canal, you might like to moor up and stroll into Middlewich, where there is plenty to see and do. Annually, during the month of June, Middlewich hosts a folk and boat festival called the Middlewich FAB Festival. If you are cruising this way at the right time and would like to take a look, visit the website for more details and information.

In the town there are plenty of shops, bars and cafe's, so whatever your taste or whatever you want to do, there will be something for you. There are lots of pubs, including The Cheshire Cheese, The Big Lock and The Kings Lock, to name only three.

When you leave here, bear right onto the Shropshire Union Canal, and out of Middlewich, where once again

you will be in open countryside, interspersed with woodland, until you reach a small village called Church Minshull, beside the River Weaver.

If you want to look around, then you need to moor between bridges 14 and 15, where you will find a gateway in the hedge, giving easy access.

Moving on from here, you will now be heading towards Barbridge Junction, where the canal meets the Shropshire Union Canal Main Line. Just before the junction, you will reach Rutters Bridge No. 2, your mooring for tonight.

You have cruised 14 miles and navigated 8 locks in a little over 7 hours.

### Day 3

After leaving your mooring, you will soon be at Barbridge Junction, where you will turn left onto the Shropshire Union Canal Main Line.

If you are a little later leaving, you may like to start your day at the Barbridge Inn, a short walk from Barbridge Marina, and right alongside the canal.

Once on the Main Line, make your way towards Hurleston Junction and stay on the Main Line, making your way to Nantwich.

On your approach, at Bridge No. 92 by Nantwich Basin, there is a nice little picnic area beside the largest of the sculptures on the sculpture trail on this stretch of canal, so if it's near lunchtime, here might be a good place to moor and take in the scenery before you reach Nantwich.

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Leaving Nantwich, you will now head towards Audlem, and a series of locks, before reaching Adderley Bottom Lock No. 12, where you can moor for the night, so as not to stop in a flight of locks – these will be tomorrow's task.

The cruise to Audlem is, again, through countryside and quite remote, so nice to wind down before mooring for the night.

You have travelled 12 miles and navigated 17 locks in around 7 hours.

## Day 4

Your destination today is Norbury Bridge No. 38, around 14 miles away.

For the most part, today's cruising will be reasonably tranquil, with little indication of habitation, just open countryside, until you reach Market Drayton.

Market Drayton is a small market town, near the Welsh border, and the canal actually runs close to the town centre.

The town claims to be the 'Home of Gingerbread', which has been produced here for the last 200 years. The town centre is a mix of C17th black and white buildings and modern buildings, and on Wednesdays there is a street market that dates back for over 750 years.

If you want a bit of adventure, you might like to go on one of the town trails – Murder and Mayhem, The Boyhood Haunts of Clive of India, and Children's Wild Animal Adventure Trail. Also, you might like to take a look at the 40 Steps Aqueduct, a breathtaking structure on the Shropshire Union Canal. There are many other attractions in and around here, so you might like to visit the website for more information.

There are many pubs in and around Market Drayton, so now may be a good time to have a nice pub lunch, or even just a refreshing drink, before continuing your journey.

Leaving Market Drayton, you will soon encounter the Tyrley Locks, a series of four locks, rising 33 feet, and overhung by trees.

The landscape now is empty and quiet, with hills to the left, and open countryside all around, whilst you leisurely cruise towards Shebdon, a small hamlet, where there is an aqueduct almost right beside the pub, The Wharf Inn, yet the canal cannot be seen from the pub as the pub is down the embankment. The Anchor is another pub along this stretch of canal, and is also very remote, but worth a visit as you pass it anyway.

It is not far now to Norbury Junction, where you will find Norbury Bridge No. 38, your mooring for tonight.

You have cruised 14 miles and navigated 10 Locks in just over 7¼ hours.

## Day 5

Today you are cruising towards Ford Houses Aqueduct, which is about 17 miles away.

On leaving Norbury Bridge, you will immediately pass Shelmore Wood, to your left as you make your way towards Gnosall.

Gnosall is a self-contained village, with all local amenities. The main building of note is the C15th St Laurence's Church, which is worthy of a visit, if only to see the Norman tower arches or the modern stained glass windows.

Immediately after passing through Gnosall, you will cruise through the 81 yard long Cowley Tunnel, so look out for drips!

You will now travel several miles through remote, unspoilt grazing land, towards Church Eaton, although very

little remains of the village, except for the church of St Editha, at the end of the main street.

Again, the canal is remote, and by turns it goes through cuttings, or along embankments, affording beautiful views of the surrounding countryside. The relaxing nature of this stage of your cruise is the perfect time to take stock, and enjoy the wildlife all around you. The only interruption to your tranquility is the M54, which you will pass under between bridges 5 and 6, but it soon becomes a distant memory, and peace is restored again.

In the far distance, you may catch sight of small settlements, but until you are almost at Atherley Junction, you could be the only people for miles around.

At Atherley Junction, the Shropshire Union Canal and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal merge, and you will need to bear sharp left to join the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal towards Gailey.

A little way along this stretch of canal is Ford Houses Aqueduct, where you can now moor for the night, if you choose.

You have navigated 2 locks over 17 miles, in just under 7¼ hours.

Day 6

Day 7

Day 8

Day 9

Day 10

Day 11

Today you will start on the return journey, after turning at Gailey Wharf.

## Useful Links

Description : Hack Green Secret Nuclear Bunker

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

Telephone : 01270 629219

Description : Market Drayton Tourist Info

Website : <http://www.shropshiretourism.co.uk/market-drayton>

Telephone : 01630 653114

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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