

# UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

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## Snarestone and return from Market Harborough

Cruise this route from : Market Harborough

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Snarestone and return from Market Harborough

Cruising Days : 11.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 72.00

Total Distance : 160.00

Number of Locks : 54

Number of Tunnels : 8

Number of Aqueducts : 0

This cruise has everything, staircase locks at Foxton & Watford, tunnels, beautiful countryside, towns like Rugby, and the beautiful lock free Ashby Canal.

The Ashby canal is steeped in history, this beautiful, tranquil canal passes by the historic scene of the Battle of Bosworth. It meanders through a very level, rural environment - therefore no locks were ever needed.

Snarestone and return from Market Harborough

## Cruising Notes

The marina is located at the northern end of Market Harborough - a quaint, traditional English market town that dates from 1203. You can enjoy delicious food and fine ales in the town's historic coaching inns or just potter around the market and the fine selection of family owned shops. From Union Wharf it's just two hours cruising to the 'Leicester Line' of the Grand Union Canal.

Market Harborough – A market town mid way between Leicester and Northampton. Visit Welland Park, the town's museum and the old grammar school, a 17th school built on stilts. Visit nearby Rockingham Castle built by William the Conqueror. If you need to entertain the children then visit Wicksteed Park one of the biggest and best playgrounds in Europe.

The town has many nice pubs, and shops. there is an antique and collectors market every Sunday in the market hall.

Eat at the Italian Restaurant based at Union Wharf Marina. Open 12-14.15 & 18.00 til late.

The Old Union Canal Society gives guided walks along the canal during summer months and follow the historic town trail.

You are welcome to stay moored up in the Marina and use the car or public transport to visit the many local attractions.

The Grand Union canal boasts an extraordinary variety of wildlife, from feeding herons, and hunting owls, to water voles. A number of diverse species thrive in this tranquil and often unique environment.

## Day 1

Cruise from Market Harborough for a couple of hours until you reach the main Grand Union Canal, where you stop and negotiate the famous Foxton Locks.

Foxton is the site of a steam powered Inclined Plane, which replaced ten locks and lifted narrow boats 75 feet. It was opened in 1900 but suffered from mechanical and structural problems. The locks were reopened in 1908 and now work beautifully. Whilst here visit the Foxton Museum and gift shop. The well stocked canalside shop offers you groceries, hardware as well as the traditional “roses and Castles” canalware, made and hand-painted on site.

Stop for a cream tea in the canal side cafe or a well deserved pint in the Foxton Locks Inn. Spend a couple of hours watching the colourful narrow boats passing through the staircase locks. British Waterways organise events based on Foxton Locks

Cruising time from Market Harborough to here- 2 hours

## Day 2

On the 2nd morning walk along the tow path until you find the friendly British waterways lock-keepers by the Locks. They will take a note of your boat name & tell you roughly how long the wait will be to go through the locks, but there is plenty to do whilst you wait

Cruise from Foxton towards the Watford Locks to the South.

The Canal weaves its way through an remote but attractive stretch. There are no villages on the canal here, Husbands Bosworth being hidden by the tunnel.

Look out over the vale of Welland and to the nearby Laughton Hills. Slow down, cruise on and watch mile after mile beautiful and unspoilt contryside unfold

Enjoy an easy cruise as the canal meanders through unspoilt surroundings passing through the Husband Bosworth Tunnel. The Tunnel is 1166 yards long and was opened in 1813. Stop and moor for a while, stroll into Husband Bosworth for a pub, newsagents and general store. The Bell Inn here serves Real Ale & food daily.

North Kilworth is off to your right, with a couple of pubs- The White Lion & the Swan Inn.

Kilworth Wharf Marina – overnight mooring maps & gifts

At the Welford Junction you can if you wish take a slight detour up the Welford Arm an overnight mooring makes a pleasant stay with the facilities of the village close by.

There is even a local on your doorstep – The Wharf Inn, with large well kept gardens by the River Avon. Some open air theatre functions during August. Nearby are the Welford & Sulby reservoirs – a public footpath from the village crosses the causeway between the two reservoirs that supply the canal & provides good views of the

wildfowl on both.

The Battle of Nasey 1645 was fought 2 miles east of Welford. Here Fairfax's New Model Army routed the Royalists under King Charles I, ensuring the end of the Civil War.

Gently continue your journey passing the Hemplow Hills to your left, and open fields of grazing sheep.

2 Miles east of Bridge 31 is Stanford Hall, a William & Mary brick mansion built in the late 17th Century. On display also here is a replica of an experimental flying machine built in 1898. Teas, shop & craft centre. Open pm Easter -Sept.

The next stretch of the canal wanders southwards in a series of loops through wonderful rural scenery with not much signs of habitation.

Yelvertoft is a delightful village to stop for a while and there are moorings between bridges 19 and 20. The local is the Knightly Arms which serves real ales & home cooked food. You can stock up on supplies here as there is a stores, off licence & butcher.

it is a good place to moor up for the night as it is 7 hours cruising to here if you didn't go to Welford & back.

### Day 3

Before you pass through the Crick Tunnel, you can moor up at bridge 12 & visit Edwards of Crick, a restaurant & coffee house offering a wide ranging menu. Stroll into the village of Crick, home of one of Britain's largest annual boat show held each year in May and have a pint and a meal at one of the local pubs . There is an intriguing second hand shop here open Wed Fri & Sat that is worth a visit (14.00-18.00)

Crick Tunnel is 1528 yards long, & has no tow path so if you wish to walk it you will have to go over the top. Meet the lock-keepers at the Watford Locks and they will cheerfully help you on your way through their complex set of locks. Watford Locks raise the canal to its summit level of 412 feet. Four of these locks form a staircase, with a 'one up one down procedure.

The new Inn is Canalside at Buckby Top lock & has moorings.

The small village of Watford is not to be confused with the large town of Watford in Hertfordshire. Moor up at Bridge number 6 for a true taste of the Orient at the Thai Garden, Restaurant in Station Road.

Once through the Watford Locks continue towards the Norton Junction where we meet the Oxford Canal.

(You soon will find that the M1 motorway swings away from you, but if you want 24 hr provisions you can moor up by Bridge 6 which is right beside The Watford Gap motorway services.)

At Norton Junction you can then go down the Grand Union towards London, or we recommend that you head west towards Braunston.

From Norton Junction to Braunston the canal runs westward through hills and wooded country, then into a wooded cutting which leads to Braunston Tunnel.

Off to the north on your right you will pass the small village of Welton on a hill. At Bridge 6 ¾ mile from the Canal you can find a 400 yr old pub – The White Horse Inn.

Braunston Tunnel was opened in 1796 & is 2042 yards long.

Long rows of moored craft flank the canal, but there is usually plenty of places to moor, as it is worth strolling into Braunston as there are a fine selection of old buildings here. The British Waterways office in the Stop House, was originally the Toll office between the Oxford and the Grand Union canal. It is worth stocking up on

supplies here. By lock 3 there is a haunted pub- the Admiral Nelson. In Braunston itself there is the Wheatsheaf which also has a Chinese & Thai takeaway. The Millhouse Hotel has a canalside garden, and the Old plough in the High street dates from 1672. The village has stores & a takeaway.

It is a good place to moor for the night, it is 6 hours to here.

#### Day 4

At Braunston Turn turn right up the Oxford canal, the canal runs through wide open country for quite a mile, only momentarily interrupted by the M45 just after Barby Bridge.

Continuing up the Oxford canal Rugby comes in to sight, you descend the Hilmorton Locks and the canal swings in a wide arc around the town. There are shops near bridge 59 to the south, and a picnic area below bridge 53 with a huge Tesco supermarket nearby.

Rugby is a large town with many shops and of course is the home of the game of Rugby. It is 30 minutes walk to the town centre.

If you need to stock up on provisions, the selection of shops to supply food is brilliant in Rugby, offering deli's, supermarkets, organic shops, local produce, bakers and butchers, and making it worth a look just for the shopping opportunities alone. The centre of Rugby is a very pleasant place offering nice parkland and places to eat and drink in abundance. There is a pedestrianised shopping centre and an open market with a town crier.

The Web Ellis Rugby football museum tells the story of the game of Rugby over the last 160 years  
As part of your tour of the birthplace of the game be sure to take a walk along the Pathway of Fame, a unique tour which celebrates the history of the game and some of its most notable players.

The town and borough has much more to offer than its unique connection with the famous game. It has links to great literary figures such as Rupert Brooke, Matthew Arnold and Lewis Carroll.

It is 4.5 hours to here.

Soon you will encounter the short Newbold Tunnel, which is very magical with coloured lights. Newbold Quarry park is beside the canal, it is a local nature reserve, there are wildflowers, butterflies & birds and muntjac deer.

The canal continues on this lock free stretch with no villages to speak off, until you reach Brinklow which is about a mile off to your left by Stretton Stop.

There are 3 pubs in Brinklow which can be accessed from the road to your left just before Stretton Wharf. There are stores & a takeaway as well.

It is 7 hours to here & a good place to moor for the night.

#### Day 5

The canal continues north west through quiet farmland only briefly interrupted by the motorway which is soon left behind for the moment. There are lovely elegant iron bridges along the canal.

Soon the first signs of Coventry appear, sharp bends in the canal lead to the stop lock before Hawkesbury Junction which is the end of the Oxford canal before it joins the Coventry canal. The lock has very little difference in depth, so takes very little time to fill up or empty!

There is a lovely cast iron bridge after the lock, and to your left is a very attractive disused engine house. The

steam engine used in the Engine house was installed in 1821, having been previously used for nearly 100 years at a colliery. The atmospheric steam engine is now housed in Dartmouth Museum. There is also a nice pub canalside- the Greyhound, decorated with canal memorabilia.

Turn sharp right on the Coventry canal, away from Coventry.

You will soon reach Marston Junction where you turn a sharp right to join the Ashby canal.

The canal begins at Marston Junction where it links to the Coventry Canal in urban Bedworth. There is a now disused stop lock to pass through, the gates now removed, and it's just 1 mile to Bulking Road Bridge where there is a pub – The Corner House Hotel, within walking distance.

Next along the way is the Gamecock Barracks, which used to be called RAF Bramcote during World War II, (you may recognize some of the base from TV and films! ) Once you pass the boats moored at Bramcote Wharf it's just a short hop to the tiny village of Burton Hastings where the Church of St Botolph lies at the centre of the village. This little English church is a simple old stone building with a tower from the 14th century and you get a lovely view of it from the canal.

The character of the Ashby has already shown itself by this point with rural farmland, woodlands and the occasional bridge. The only town of any significant size along the entire canal is Hinckley, which it is to be found a short distance from Burton Hastings. There is the neighbouring medieval village of Stretton Baskerville which can be seen just before you pass under the A5 Watling Street which lies in the outskirts of Hinckley. The A5 is the only major road to cross paths with the Ashby but it is worth stopping by the A5, despite the noise, to enjoy a refreshing drink in the friendly waterside pub- The Lime Kilns Inn by bridge 15.

The Ashby Canal skirts around the outside of Hinckley, flanked by housing & light industrial buildings, Trinity Marina can be found at Hinckley, and can supply you with all your boating needs plus there is a laundrette, café, restaurant, and good moorings (To avoid grounding you should always moor at a designated spot- by bridge 16, or just past trinity marina on your right, or just before Bridge 17a on your left.).

It is 6.5 hours cruising to here

The town centre of Hinckley is within walking distance and offers many different shops and eateries and of course pubs. South of bridge 16 is a greyhound stadium. The Concordia Theatre offers performances all year round. The Hinckley & District Museum has been established in a row of thatched cottages once used for framework knitting, and the museum now houses displays from prehistoric to the current period.

The section of canal running through the Hinckley district is designated as a conservation area, and, as with the rest of the canal there are lots of birds and wildlife to be seen with the towpaths regularly used by walkers, cyclists and anglers alike.

Following on from Hinckley you pass the small villages of Wykin and Higham on the Hill and there are a couple of pubs at the latter- The Odd fellows Arms & The Fox Inn. Higham is 1 mile west of bridges 21 & 23. Running alongside the canal here are the remains of a loop railway built in the 1870's to carry coal , but it was abandoned in 1900 having never had a train run on its tracks.

This is a short section with a few bridges carrying the country lanes over the canal, then you are on the outskirts of the village of Stoke Golding, which proudly boasts to be the “Birthplace of the Tudor Dynasty”. Stoke Golding itself is to the right of Bridge 25, but there are good moorings by bridges 27/28.

It is 8 hours cruising to here.

This is the site of the Battle of Bosworth where in 1485 The War of the Roses finally ended with King Richard III being defeated by Henry Tudor, who was crowned King Henry VII, the coronation being held here, in Stoke Golding.

It is a stunning village, it has an impressive Grade 1 listed Saxon church, the window sills of the Church still show grooves, which legend has it were caused by the soldiers sharpening their swords on the eve of the battle. There is a village shop where you can pick up supplies for your journey, and it's well worth having a walk around the village which is full of beautiful buildings from times past. This is also the home of the Ashby Canal Centre (marina) who have done a lot in the restoration of the northern section of the Ashby Canal. The White Swan & George & Dragon Pubs are in the village.

## Day 6

Heading north out of Stoke Golding you pass Dadlington, another small village with the Dog & Hedgehog pub , and then you find yourself in the busy Sutton Cheney Wharf. There is a trip boat here, and a café- Cafe Canalside that opens 9-5, and it is just a short walk from here to the Battlefield Visitor Centre which has interactive displays about the battle. There is also another café here and a shop. You can take a walk through the woods along the battle trails, or why not take a ride on a steam train on the Battlefield Line Railway from Shenton to Shackerstoneand walk back along the towpath, around a 5 mile walk. There are also moorings at Shenton where you can also walk to the battlefield. Shenton station is here and old steam & diesel trains run along the Battlefield Line of 9 miles between Shackerstone & Shenton via Market Bosworth during the season.

After leaving the battlefield the canal crosses the road using the only aqueduct on the entire canal, the lovely little brick built Shenton Aqueduct. Next along the journey is Market Bosworth to your left which is a good place to stop, a mile walk from the canal takes you to the town centre where there are shops, a café, and several pubs. A market is held every Wednesday. This is the last chance to stock up on supplies till the end of the canal, so make sure to get everything you need before continuing on.

Just to the west of bridge 42 is Bosworth water Trust, a large leisure park with a 20 acre lake for water pursuits. Craft & wetsuits for hire.

The canal continues to meander through open fields passing Congerstone village to Shackerstone which is the home of the Battlefield Line Railway. There is a tearoom at the station and a wonderful railway museum packed with exhibits and memorabilia from the days of steam. The wooded section beyond Bridge 53 marks the start of Gopsall Park. The hall here was demolished in 1951, however Gopsall Wharf by Bridge 58 was the last site used for loading coal and transporting it to the paper mills along the Grand Union Canal.

The Rising Sun Pub is in the village.

Snaresstone is the home of the Snaresstone Tunnel, which is quite short at 228 metres and is only suitable for one way traffic as there is a kink in it, there are moorings at the entrance which are convenient for visiting one of the two pubs in the village. The tunnel leaves us with just a half mile cruise to the end of the canal which finishes suddenly in the middle of the countryside.

Beyond here work is in progress to restore the northern section of the canal.

Turn around just after the tunnel on your left. The Globe Inn is in the village by the canal.

It is 5 hours cruising to here.

## Day 7

It is 36 hours back to Market Harborough so 4 days cruising at 9 hours per day, or extend it to 14 and take a leisurely cruise back.

If on a 10 day holiday spend the 7th night just as you turn back on the Coventry Canal, by Bulkington Bridge 14, there is a canalside pub.

## Day 8

8th night moor at Braunston

## Day 9

9th night moor at Yelvertoft

## Day 10

## Day 11

10th night moor at Market harborough or close to the marina ready for 9.30am departure the next day

## Useful Links

Description : Coventry Cathedral

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

Telephone : 024 7652 1200

Description : Hinckley and District Museum

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

Telephone : 01455 251218

Description : Battlefield Line Railway

Website : [www.battlefieldline.co.uk/](http://www.battlefieldline.co.uk/)

Telephone : 01827 880754

Description : Bosworth Water Trust Leisure Park

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

Telephone : 01455 291876

Description : Award winning Farm shop a short walk from Bridge 25 on Ashby Canal

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

Telephone : 01455-212199

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](#).

