

# UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

## Stoke Bruerne and return from Market Harborough

Cruise this route from : Market Harborough

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Cruising Days : 8.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 40.50

Total Distance : 89.00

Number of Locks : 48

Number of Tunnels : 6

Number of Aqueducts : 0

A tranquil rural route through rolling countryside.

Market Harborough - a quaint, traditional English market town that dates from 1203.

Pass through Weedon, well known for its antique shops and with a number of good pubs.

The 4-lock staircase flight at the pretty village of Watford and the two 5-lock staircases at Foxton both have lock keepers to hand.

There are 3 fantastic tunnels at Husbands Bosworth, Crick and Blisworth.

The Canal Museum is at the heart of the beautiful village of Stoke Bruerne on the Grand Union Canal. It's a treasure trove of stories, displays, films and collections all about our waterways. The Canal Museum Housed on two floors of a historic corn mill, The Canal Museum provides an excellent overview of the history of Britain's canals. Together with the audio guide that is free with museum entry, it is the key to understanding the rich waterway heritage of Stoke Bruerne and the Grand Union Canal.

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## Cruising Notes

The marina at Union Wharf has been redeveloped by British Waterways over the last few years. 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

The base at Union Wharf Marina is at the end of the Market Harborough Arm, & you need to cruise for about 2 hours (5 ½ miles) to get back on the the main Grand Union Canal.

It is a lovely rural cruise to Foxton which is at the base of the lovely Foxton flight of 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. The locks are open from 9.30-5 pm, with last entry at 4.15pm.

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 countryside 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

The Battle of Naesy 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 on 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.

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)

it is a good place to moor up for the night as it is 8 hours cruising to here.

Day 3

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 it summit level of 412 feet. Four of these locks form a staircase, with a 'one up one down procedure. The locks are open from 9.30 -5pm with last entry at 4.15pm.

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 were 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, and to Aylesbury which is your

destination.

There is a pub just along the canal in the London direction of the Grand Union, called The New Inn at Buckby Top Lock by the canal.

The Buckby flight of Locks is open from 9.30-5pm with last entry at 3.30pm.

There are 7 locks along this stretch with only the railway & the old Roman road- Watling Street (A5) to keep you company. The canal is 1800 years younger than the road, but looks more outdated!

There is also a canal craft shop in one of the red bricked cottages by the locks.

From Bridge 18 you can access the Heart of the Shires Shopping Village- Set around a Victorian Courtyard converted from a selection of Victorian stables and farm buildings, this shipping village offers over 20 individual shops with character ranging from Kitchenwear to Menswear, plus Gift shops and a first class restaurant and tea room. Open 10-5 daily.

The next stretch of canal begins to meander as it avoids the hills, but passes directly through Weedon a good place to moor. This charming village has good facilities like a store, PO, garage & takeaways. There are also a few pubs like the Narrowboat by Bridge 26, the Heart of England & the Globe by Bridge 24, and the Plume of Feathers at the aqueduct by the Church. There are good moorings above the church.

The next village close by is Nether Hyford, there is also a Pub & stores here.

Bugbrooke is a short walk away by bridge 36 , the Wharf Inn is canalside by the Bridge, The Bakers Arms & The Five Bells Pubs are in the village. The village also has stores, PO and a garage.

The canal then reaches Gayton Junction where the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union goes away to the left, Gayton marina another of our marinas is situated along this arm.

Unless you particularly wanted to visit Northampton, it is not worth negotiating this arm, as you cannot navigate onto the River Nene in a narrowboat, and there are 17 locks down the 5 mile stretch to get to the town, where you will have to turn around and come back again

At the Gayton Junction keep going straight on towards London, the canal soon reaches the Village of Blisworth, there is a Pub- The Royal Oak in the village serving Real Ales.

Just outside of the village is the start of Blisworth Tunnel- at 3057 yards, Blisworth is the 3rd longest canal tunnel open to navigation in Britain. The Tunnel opened in 1805 and originally boats were legged through. The tunnel is wide enough for the passing of two 7 ft boats, but keep to the right.

Turn & moor at the end of the tunnel, it is 9 hours to here.

At the end of the Tunnel is perhaps the best example of a canal village in the country- Stoke Bruerne. The houses flanking the canal are built mostly of Blisworth Stone. The warehouses and cottages along the Wharf have become a canal centre, with the Canal Museum standing out amongst them. It is housed in a fine old stone warehouse, and the unique collection of exhibits include a traditional narrowboat, steam and diesel engines, and extensive displays of canal memorabilia. Open Summer 10-5, in the winter Tues-Sun 10-4pm.

There are a couple of pubs by the Canalside- The Navigation and the Boat Inn, and a couple of restaurants in the village.

Day 4  
Day 5  
Day 6  
Day 7  
Day 8

It is 20 hours back to the marina at Market Harborough, so cruising for 6-7 hours per day should see you back in time, but work out your timings for the flights of locks at Buckby, Foxton & Watford.

## Useful Links

Description : Stoke Bruerne Canal Museum

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

Telephone : 01604 862229

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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