

# UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

## Stourport and return from Gailey

Cruise this route from : Gailey

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Stourport and return from Gailey

Cruising Days : 8.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 38.00

Total Distance : 66.00

Number of Locks : 58

Number of Tunnels : 2

Number of Aqueducts : 0

This is a comfortable one week cruise to Stourport and back, along what is almost certainly one of England's prettiest waterways.

Throughout its length, this historic canal follows the local land contours as it winds its way south towards its junction with the River Severn at the unique inland port of Stourport.

Include a visit to the magnificent riverside town of Bewdley and Bewdley Safari park.

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## Cruising Notes

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town of Bewdley and Bewdley Safari park.

## Day 1

There is an attractive round Toll-keepers watch tower just above the lock, with a small canal shop on the ground floor.

The canal is very twisting through the countryside passing a very busy marina at Hatherton , the Fox & Anchor Inn is canalside at bridge 71 and as it is 2 hours cruising to here it might be a good place to moor up for the night.

2 Hours cruising to here

## Day 2

Continue south to Atherley Junction, the M54 makes a brief intrusion but you soon pass under & away from from the rumble of traffic. At Atherley continue straight on down the Staffs & Worcs canal, this is the Junction with the Shropshire Union Canal. This section is called Pendeford Rockin, and there is only room for boats to pass in designated places, so keep a good lookout.

When you get to the Aldersley Junction, keep right along the same canal.

Despite meandering through the suburbs of Tettenhall and Wolverhampton the canal remains peaceful in nature there are just more joggers, dog walkers, fishermen, cyclists and canoeists.

Dunstall park race course is just to the left of the canal just south of Aldersley junction with horse-racing fixtures throughout the year. [www.wolverhampton-racecourse.co.uk](http://www.wolverhampton-racecourse.co.uk)

If you need provisions then it is worth stocking up by Compton Lock, which is the 1st lock of 31 locks which drops the canal 294 feet down to the River Severn. There is a pub – The odd Fellows hall 50yds west of bridge 59, and Bridge 59- a restaurant beside the canal.

Just past Wightwick Locks is Wightwick manor (National trust) open Mar-dec, off to your right about 300 yards across the busy road & up the hill. It was built between 1887 and 1893 & has many William Morris wallpapers. There are many finely decorated rooms and the Great parlour gives the impression of a Tudor House. It has beautiful 17 acre gardens.

There is the Mermaid pub 100 yds west of bridge 56.

The canal enters a quiet stretch before reaching the staircase at Bratch which is slightly misleading, it is not a conventional staircase at all, it is in fact three separate locks in quick succession with a short pound between and connected to a side pond by a culvert, they raise the canal by over 30 feet. The locks are overlooked by a unique octagonal tollhouse, parapets and bridges all in a striking red brick and thankfully manned by a lock-keeper to avoid the congestion that can occur at peak times.

Moor up just after Bumblehole Lock & bridge by Houndel bridge 45. There is a pub here- The round oak, and a few shops not far to the north east of bridge 44.

It is nearly 6 hours cruising to here

### Day 3

You soon reach Botterham Staircase locks- a 2 step staircase with a bridge crossing in the middle. The 2 locks by Swindon village soon follow, you can also get supplies in the village, as there is a village shop. There are 3 pubs here, one east of bridge 40, one west, and the Greyhound Inn in the High Street. Hinksford is next & there is also a lock and a small aqueduct, and another pub 2 mins NE of bridge 38.

The canal makes a remote journey through the Rocky & Gothersley locks, at Rocky lock rooms have been carved into the sandstone. At the next aqueduct is Devil's Den a curious narrowboat house cut into the rock.

At Stourton Junction the Stourbridge canal turns off to the left , you continue straight on.

Within this small area there is a fantastically peaceful aqueduct over the River Stour to the North, the stunning tollhouse and circular weir at the Stewpony and not least the picturesque series of locks leading off the Stourton Junction towards Stourbridge and Birmingham. This being a quieter area with less boating traffic it is certainly a section to relish and take your time.

Just across the river from Stewpony Wharf is the impressive bulk of Stourton castle, it is the birthplace of Cardinal Pole born in 1500 who was a friend of Mary Tudor & is now privately owned. Also near the Wharf the long abandoned Kinver Light valley railway used to run from Stourbridge to Kinver.

There is a small tunnel at Dunsley – just 25 yards before the town of Kinver is reached off to your right after Hyde & Kinver Locks.

Kinver is a spectacular small town, well worth stopping for a day or so rather than seeing it from the water. Located a short distance from the Kinver Lock and some convenient visitor moorings there is a plethora of small family run shops, quality food outlets and gastro dining as well as more traditional pub food and local ales, the Enville Brewery is just down the road and the local pubs have an astounding variety of guest ales. Additional to the tearooms, souvenir shops, local crafts and catering facilities the natural beauty of Kinver's setting is well worth exploration. The town itself is located within a wooded, undulating valley and nearby is the well known tourist attraction of Kinver Edge, a 150 metre sandstone escarpment that was inhabited until as late as the 1950's by dwellers and hermits who dug out homes from the soft sandstone. You will see rooms, windows, cupboards, doorways & chimneys carved out of the cliffs. A dwelling on the Holy Austin Rock has been meticulously restored to give an accurate view on how the inhabitants on Kinver Edge lived since medieval times. Aside from the dwellings it is worth the walk to the peak of Kinver Edge for the far reaching views across Staffordshire.

Heading south to Cookley the canal winds through scenery that is wooded and rocky in equal measure . The Cookley Tunnel is an unexpected highlight of the cruise, for such a short tunnel, only 65 yards in length, it has a unique appearance not just with the overlooking cottages and the severely steep gardens, but the trees and depth of the wall for such a short stretch of water gives a somewhat surreal appearance to the northern approach. There are facilities nearby, in particular The Eagle and Spur pub which is popular with locals, has a nice beer garden and is handily located opposite a convenience store and adjacent to a good quality butcher, access is easiest by mooring on either end of the tunnel and walking up the bank into the village centre or above Debdale Lock. Cookley is on the fringes of Kidderminster but is very quiet and feels a world away from the busy streets of Kidderminster. The village is set well above the canal, which passes underneath it in a tunnel. It is useful for supplies. Cookley tunnel is unusual in that it is rough hewn from the living rock.

The peaceful village of Wolverly with the church sat atop the hill overlooking the village is followed by the Wolverly Lock which offers plentiful visitor moorings on the approach to the lock giving access to the picturesque village of Wolverly which is only a two minute walk from the convenient moorings above Wolverly Court Lock. The short walk rewards with a pretty village setting well away from the noise of the main road with good food, local ales and a warm welcome at the popular Queens Head Pub overlooked by a fine village church to explore after lunch. The church stands on a sandstone rock so steep that it has to be approached by a zigzag path cut through the stone. Many of the houses close by are partly carved from the rock, their dark back rooms actually caves.

The pub called the Lock, which is lockside, predates the canal being built around the 16th century. You are now approaching Kidderminster. The best place for access to the town is from moorings between bridges 15 & 16, or from the mooring above Kidderminster Lock just below the church.

Famous for its carpet industry Kidderminster surrounds the canal, there has been a great deal of money invested in regenerating Kidderminster and it is thriving once more, this stretch constitutes the only truly urban section of the whole cruise directly through the centre of Kidderminster. The lock in the centre of town is overlooked by the impressive parish church sat atop the hill and the town provides a good place to stock up on provisions at the local supermarkets located within 100m of the canal with mooring provision, as well as the pedestrianised shopping centre, markets on a Thursday and Saturday and eateries all within easy walking distance of the canal.

The most famous leisure activity in Kidderminster is undoubtedly the Severn Valley Railway, conveniently situated within walking distance of the canal alongside the railway network's site. The first indication to the existence of the steam railway is the very impressive Severn Valley viaduct as you leave Kidderminster, take your time to improve your chances of seeing a steam train cross the viaduct to truly take a step back in time. The Severn Valley Railway can take you to Bridgnorth via Bewdley at a relaxed pace and back to your boat within a day. Tel 01299 403816 or 0800 600900. Both towns are situated along the non-navigable section of the River Severn and offer old world charm and facilities and fantastic local ales and a wealth of pubs and eateries.

After Kidderminster the canal soon reaches the end of your journey at Stourport on Severn. There are shops by Bridge 5a, above the Lock there are temporary moorings. The canal basins are always full of colourful boats, with plenty of craft passing to and from the River Severn which is just beyond the 2 locks. NE of the basins is Mart lane & the original 18th C terrace of workmens cottages have been declared ancient monuments. To the east of Stourport is Hartlebury common, 216 acres of dry heathland, the views from the top are splendid.

Stourport is good for supplies, but Bewdley is much more interesting as it is a magnificent small 18th century riverside town with fine river frontage and an elegant bridge spanning the River Severn.

There is a road into Bewdley on either side of the river, or leave the boat in Stourport & walk along the riverside path it is about 3 miles, or take a bus to Bewdley, it is well worth the effort. The town has a mix of old timber framed buildings and 17th and 18th century houses. The museum gives a fascinating insight into the area and the lives of the people with interactive displays.

The Severn valley Railway has a station here, see above for details.

If you have time take a bus from Bewdley & take a day out to visit one of the Midlands Top attractions- Bewdley Safari park - there is a safari, & 27 rides & attractions for all the family. Guided Safari Bus tours of the Animal Reserves may be booked at Main Reception.

Day 4 - 7

It is 18.5 hours cruise back to Gailey marina

## Useful Links

Description : Gailey Pottery

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

Telephone : 01902 790078

Description : Wolverhampton City Guide

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

Telephone : n/a

Description : National Brewery Centre

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

Telephone : 01283 532880

Description : Stourport-on-Severn Tourist Info

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

Telephone : n/a

Description : Severn Valley Railway.

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

Telephone : 01562 757900

Description : West Midlands Safari Park, Bewdley

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

Telephone : 01299 402114

Description : Kinver Edge and Holy Austin Rock Houses

Website : <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/kinver-edge/>

Telephone : 01384 872553

Description : Dunstall Park Racecourse, Wolverhampton

Website : <http://www.wolverhampton-racecourse.co.uk/>

Telephone : 01902 390000

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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