

UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

Warwickshire ring from Gayton

Cruise this route from : Gayton

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Cruising Days : 11.00 to 12.00

Cruising Time : 75.50

Total Distance : 138.00

Number of Locks : 147

Number of Tunnels : 8

Number of Aqueducts : 0

This route combines historic castles, like Warwick, daredevil rides at Drayton manor, tobogganning or ski-ing in Tamworth, the Stairway to heaven at Hatton's 21 locks, Braunston's pretty canal village and much more. (May require a longer stay)

Are you looking for a holiday combining relaxing narrowboating with adventures on and off the water? One offering traditional 'Olde English' towns, cosmopolitan cities and memorable waterway sights? Then you will love the Warwickshire Ring.

Sections of the Coventry, Oxford, Grand Union & Birmingham & Fazeley canals are components in the Warwickshire Ring which, despite the almost constant proximity of conurbation and industry, manages to carve a surprisingly rural route through manicured fields and ancient meadows for much of its length.

Warwickshire ring from Gayton

Cruising Notes

Day 1

Head back down the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union to Gayton Junction.(Turn right out of the marina). At Gayton Junction turn right down the Grand Union Canal. Soon you will pass the village of Bugbrooke, and

the Wharf Inn is by Bridge 36, or there is a couple of village pubs if you walk into the village.

You will probably want to move on & head for the village of Weedon which is just over 2 hours from Gayton & ideal for a 1st nights stop, there is a small aqueduct over a road as you approach the village. There are takeaways, stores & pubs in Weedon , you can moor up near the Church . The Heart of England pub by bridge 24 is a good family pub. Just before you get to Weedon is the Narrowboat Inn beside bridge 26, with canalside seating and mooring.

Day 2

A short while after leaving Weedon you will pass Brockhall Park on your right, (access from Bridge 18). The Hall here is Tudor in part, and in the Victorian courtyard farm buildings has been established The Heart of the Shires Shopping Village. The Shopping village has about 25 widely ranging shops, including a tearoom, so is well worth a visit.

The canal continues through open landscape until you begin the climb up to the Norton Junction through a series of 7 locks called the Buckby locks.

The New Inn is canalside at Buckby Top Lock, with canalside seating and moorings.

It is 5 hours 20 minutes from Gayton marina to here, or 3 hours from Weedon to here.

At Norton Junction you can then go down the Grand Union 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 $\frac{3}{4}$ 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. 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 6 hours cruising from Weedon to Braunston.

At Braunston Turn turn left at the junction, the canal now passes open countryside with a backdrop of hills, there are no locks or villages and you continue on until you reach Napton Junction. You will be travelling north at this junction, but if you want a nice pub to stop at for the night, it is worth continuing left down the Oxford canal to bridge 111, as the haunted pub The Bridge at Napton is by the Bridge. Best access to the hilltop village is by Bridge 110, the village is scattered all over the hill, but the pubs and shops are at the bottom.

It is 7 hours cruising from Weedon to Napton

Day 3

Next morning turn your boat around as you are headed back to the Napton Junction, where you should turn left as the Grand Union continues northwards.

The agricultural landscape continues, interrupted only by the 3 locks at Calcutt, although soon you will reach the Stockton locks, a group of 8 locks, with 2 more fairly shortly afterwards. The Boat Inn besides Bridge 21 can provide refreshment just before the locks, and the Blue Lias Inn is just after them by bridge 23. There are old blue lias quarries around here and huge fossils have been found from the Jurassic period in the blue lias clay.

In the village of Long Itchington there are 2 canalside pubs on either side- The two Boats Inn and the Cuttle Inn. There are stores and a garage in the village.

The canal continues to fall away on its journey to Warwick, and of particular interest are the top 2 locks at Bascote which form a staircase.

The isolated countryside ends just after Bridge 35, where the canal carves a fairly discreet course through Leamington Spa. The town is largely mid-Victorian with long rows of elegant houses. The assembly rooms, Art gallery & museum are worth a visit at the Royal Pump Rooms in the Parade www.royal-pump-rooms. Tourist information Tel 01926 742762,. There are a variety of pubs & shops and a supermarket not far from the canal.

Leamington & Warwick are hardly distinguishable, but the best place to moor to walk ½ mile or so into the town centre, is by Bridge 49.

Warwick was virtually destroyed by fire in 1694, but there are some medieval buildings remaining, which mix with the 'newer' Queen Anne styles. Warwick is a lovely little town & you can get all your provisions here. Warwick Castle is well worth a visit and is possibly the finest medieval castle in the country, it is open all year except Xmas, see the Kingmaker exhibition which uses wax sculpture to recreate the preparations for battle in 1471, as well as the dungeons, ghost tower & sumptuous state rooms.

The Warwick County museum in the Market Hall houses a tapestry of Warwickshire dating from 1588. The Lord Leycester Hospital is a superbly preserved group of 14th century timber framed buildings.

It is about 9.5 hours cruising from Napton to Warwick.

Day 4

Soon after Warwick the Hatton Locks loom, they are undoubtedly a large undertaking being 21 locks in total ,but the lock gates are in good working order and towards the top the views back over Warwick are worth the effort, there is of course room for two narrowboats side by side to help share the load.

The Waterman Pub & restaurant has fine views over the Hatton Locks.

Hatton Country World is south of Bridge 55, there are 20 independent shops in the shopping village, and the Hatton Farm Village is great for kids with farmyard animals, fun fair rides and adventure play areas.

A couple of miles further up from Hatton is the 400 metre long Shrewley Tunnel which comes out into open farmland as the canal heads into the northern reaches of Warwickshire.

East of bridge 65 along the Heart of England way is Baddesley Clinton, a national trust property

This atmospheric house dates from the 15th century and was the home of the Ferrers family for 500 years. The house and interiors reflect its heyday in the Elizabethan era, when it was a haven for persecuted Catholics - there are three priest's holes. There is a delightful garden with stewponds and a romantic lake and nature walk.

2 miles west of Bridge 66 is Packwood House, another National Trust property.

The house is originally 16th-century, yet its interiors were extensively restored between the world wars by Graham Baron Ash to create a fascinating 20th-century evocation of domestic Tudor architecture. Packwood House contains a fine collection of 16th-century textiles and furniture, and the gardens have renowned herbaceous borders and a famous collection of yews.

There is a flight of 5 locks at Knowle and the canal heads past the larger town of Knowle on the outskirts of Solihull.

You can moor up at Catherine de Barnes as this is the last place to moor before Birmingham.

There are stores here & The Boat Inn is close by.

It is 8.75 hours cruising to here.

Day 5

Past Catherine De Barnes the canal now is into the city of Birmingham (there is a pub here by Bridge 78 and stores in the village).

A short walk west of bridge 88 is Birmingham railway Museum which has open days throughout the year.

The 5 Camp hill Locks take you to Bordesley Junction where you turn right to the end of the Grand Union Canal, through the Garrison Locks to Salford junction. Turn right here onto the Birmingham & Fazeley canal.

Past Minworth the canal loses Birmingham and the industry that has accompanied it.

The Hare& Hounds is by Minworth Heath bridge, and the Boat Pub has moorings.

At Curdworth there is a stores and a couple of pubs in the village.

Moor here for the night .

It is 8.5 hours cruising to here.

Day 6

There are 6 locks at Curdworth and the M6 motorway looms close to the canal.

You can moor up at Cheatles' farm Bridge near Bodymoor Heath. The Dog & Doublet is a lovely pub just by the bridge.

Flooded gravel pits and the bird life they attract, constitute Kingsbury Water Park- the visitor centre is east of Bodymoor Heath Bridge, across the motorway. A 600 acre landscaped park.

Continuing north the canal continues through quiet and attractive open farmland, by Drayton Bassett there is a folly footbridge which is very curious in its Gothic style with twin battlemented towers.

If you fancy a family day out, then moor up just past Drayton Swivel bridge as this is the entrance to Drayton Manor Theme park.

Drayton Manor Park is home to some of the biggest wettest and scariest rides around with Shockwave, Europes first stand up roller coaster, Stormforce 10, with a backwards water drop and Apocalypse voted the scariest ride in the UK by Channel 4's The Gadget Show. There is also Thomas land for the smaller children, and a Zoo. It is definitely the place to spend a whole day.

After the intensity of Fradley Junction, Fazeley is remarkably serene, it is the location of British Waterways central shires office and offers limited facilities such as cruising information but regrettably no shops or eateries.

From Fazeley we veer eastwards (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, on the run from Alvecote there are nature reserves at Hodge Lane and Pooley Fields and Pooley Hall .

At Alvecote 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 6.5 hours to here.

Day 7

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. It is 4.5 hours cruising to here.

After Atherstone we once again find ourselves cruising through the ‘nicer than it sounds’ reclaimed industrial land towards Nuneaton .

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

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. Turn a sharp left onto the Oxford canal but be aware that at peak times the stop lock can cause surprisingly large queues for a six inch drop.

Moor around here for the night it is 8.5 hours cruising

Day 8

The canal meanders past the village of Ansty offering a chance to moor up and visit a pub, The Rose & castle is canalside.

The canal turns southwards after cutting through the middle of a golf course and passes under the M6. The canal follows a southerly course into deeper countryside, trading motorway for railway line which follows the canal on and off into Rugby, with only intermittent passing trains.

The canal skirts past Brinklow village which requires a bit of a walk to get to enjoy some of the amenities there, but the canal starts to dish up wooded areas as it plunges through mostly arable countryside with only the occasional passing train reminding boaters that they are in a busy corner of the country.

The canal runs past Rugby through its northern side, missing the busy centre. The canal provides more striking examples of cast iron bridges and an aqueduct giving much to keep the eyes busy.

Newbold Tunnel is short at 250 yards and there are pleasant moorings with a choice of pubs closeby.

There are frequent buses from Newbold into Rugby town centre, which has a pedestrianised shopping centre, a leisure centre and an open market. Rugby's reputation is inextricably linked with it's public school, where one day in 1823 a schoolboy picked up the ball in a game of football, & ran with it, thereby founding the game of 'Rugby'. 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 stop just for the shopping opportunities alone, bear in mind that after Hillmorton there is only limited opportunity to shop for food for quite some time. The centre of Rugby is a very pleasant place offering nice parkland and places to eat and drink in abundance.

There are shops to the south of bridge 59 and a picnic area below bridge 58 with a huge Tesco supermarket nearby.

Moor here for the night it is 6 hours cruising to here.

Day 9

The canal dips into green parkland and a golf course on the way out of Rugby, crossing over the River Avon before arriving at Hillmorton Locks. There are some great renovated old buildings in this area and aside from some unsightly radio masts near the canal, Hillmorton Locks is an area with of peaceful beauty that belies its proximity to rail lines and Hillmorton directly to the south. Rugby Radio Station dates from 1926 and was used

to operate the first trans-atlantic radio telephone link between London & New York.

By Bridge 71 there is Bardsey's Lock stop Cafe bistro, which is open Wed-Sat for meals or takeaways & has won awards for the best waterside restaurant.

By Bridge 73, the Royal oak is canalside.

The canal winds southwards and aside from crossing under the M45, dives in to expansive areas of arable farming and not a settlement to be seen in miles.

The village of Willoughby lies to the west of the canal, there are pubs and a few shops here and it is a bit of a walk from the canal, those seeking civilisation should maybe wait until Braunston slightly south from here which is a bit more accessible from the canal. Braunston also marks the point at which the Grand Union joins the Oxford Canal for a few miles before the southern arm of the Oxford Canal begins and the Grand Union veers northwards at Napton on the Hill, this can be an exceedingly busy stretch of canal due to the convergence of boat traffic and the proximity to multiple marinas in the area.

Moor after Bridge 90 and walk into Braunston for the pubs and shops.

You will be turning left at Braunston Turn back to Gayton marina if moorings are hard to find.

It is 5 hours to here

Day 10

Day 11

After negotiating the long Braunston tunnel turn right at Norton Junction and make your way back to Gayton marina.

It is 6 hours back to the marina.

Useful Links

Description : Packwood House, Tudor Manor House near Lapworth

Website : <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/packwood-house/>

Telephone : 01564 782024

Description : Drayton Manor Theme Park

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

Telephone : 01827 285551

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 : Hatton Country World
Website : <http://www.hattonworld.com/>
Telephone : 01926 843411

Description : The Bullring Shopping Centre, Birmingham
Website : <http://www.bullring.co.uk/shops>
Telephone : 0121 632 1500

Description : The Mailbox, Shopping Centre, Wharfside
Website : <http://www.mailboxlife.com>
Telephone : 0121 632 1000

Description : Warwick Castle
Website : <http://www.warwick-castle.com/>
Telephone : 0871 265 2000

Description : Tyseley Locomotive Works
Website : <http://www.tyseleylocoworks.co.uk/tlw/>
Telephone : 0121 708 4960

Description : Baddesley Clinton, Moated Manor House
Website : <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/baddesley-clinton/>
Telephone : 01564 783294

Description : Earlswood Lakes
Website : <http://www.fisheries.co.uk/earlswood/>
Telephone : 01908 302556

Description : Kingsbury Water Park
Website : <http://countryparks.warwickshire.gov.uk/country-parks/kingsbury-water-park/>
Telephone : 01827 872660

Description : Tamworth Castle
Website : <http://www.tamworthcastle.co.uk/>
Telephone : n/a

Description : Leamington Spa Royal Pump Rooms
Website : <http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/royalpumprooms/>
Telephone : 01926 742762

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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