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The Black Country Ring

7 nights, 48 hours, 80 locks

Pearson's P1, Nicholson's N3, Lockmaster L12

This route is packed with options for family activities and also includes a rich mixture of canal scenery.

- Birmingham centre boasts the Sea Life Centre, the NIA, Symphony Hall and Brindley Place, all with canal frontage.

- Encounter life as it was when the canals were built for commercial use at the Black Country 'Living Museum' at Tipton.

(0121 557 9643) www.bclm.co.uk

- Amongst other attractions on the route are Dudley Zoo & Castle

(01384 215 313) www.dudleyzoo.org.uk and Shugborough Hall.



Birmingham and Return

8 hours, no locks

Use a canal boat as your base for a weekend in the active centre of Birmingham, or explore some of the Birmingham Canal Navigations. It is reputed that there are more canals in Birmingham than in Venice, and certainly just as much to see and do.

The Stourport Ring

Pearson's P1, Nicholson's N2, Lockmaster L16

7 nights, 48 hours, 116 locks

One of the most popular one-week cruises from Alvechurch, this route of contrasts takes in the 21st century city center, 19th century heritage and some of the most rural stretches of canal imaginable.

- Much of the stunning new development in Birmingham city centre is focused on the canalside area. Symphony Hall, the International Convention Centre and the Sea Life Centre are all very close by.

(Birmingham TIC 0121 693 6300)

- If time permits, experience the wonder of steam trains on the Severn Valley Railway, with a trip from Kidderminster to the picturesque market town of Bridgnorth.

(01299 403 816) www.svr.co.uk

- Take an enviable river perspective of the magnificent Worcester cathedral in a city where you will also find both quaint and modern shopping malls and, of course, the Royal Worcester Porcelain factory.

(Worcester TIC 01905 726 311) www.visitworcester.com



Avon Ring

Pearson's P2, Nicholson's N2, Lockmaster L15

10/11 nights, 58 hours, 139 locks

(Additional license required for River Avon)

To really enjoy the delightful river cruising on both the Severn and Avon, you will need a 10 or 11 night break. In fact, allowing two weeks enables a detour down to Gloucester to visit its docks, warehouses and museums. Worcester, Tewkesbury, Evesham and Stratford each offer a superb mixture of culture, history and shopping.



The Birmingham Mini Ring

Pearson's P1, Nicholson's N3, Lockmaster L13
4 nights, 22 hours, 49 locks

A four night mid-week break that takes you through some of Britain's finest industrial architecture, travelling along the Worcester & Birmingham, Grand Union and Stratford-upon-Avon Canals.

- Breathtaking Warwickshire countryside cruising through some exclusive villages of the area.
- Moor at the National Sea Life Centre - a real treat for every member of the family.
(0121 643 6777) www.sealife.co.uk

Warwickshire Ring

Pearson's P6, Nicholson's N3, Lockmaster L13
10/11 nights, 58 hours, 128 locks

Another route with the option to moor at the heart of Birmingham, this cruise includes the spectacular Hatton locks and some fine stretches of the Grand Union canal.

- Once at Coventry, it is a short walk to the war-torn cathedral and its striking 1962 replacement.
- Drayton Manor Park & Zoo (01827 287979) and the Snow Dome at Tamworth (08705 000011) www.snowdome.co.uk offer activities for all the family.
- Warwick Castle is possibly the finest medieval castle in the country. (0870 442 2000) www.warwick-uk.co.uk
- On a two week cruise, include a trip along the Ashby Canal.



Stratford-Upon-Avon & Return

Pearson's P2, Nicholson's N2, Lockmaster L15
7 days, 42 hours, 110 locks

Cruise through idyllic stretches of Worcestershire & Warwickshire countryside to this historic town.

- Two National Trust properties - Packwood House and Baddesley Clinton Hall - are within walking distance of the canal.
- Moor in the beautifully maintained canal basin at Stratford, by the steps of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (01789 269191) www.rsc.org.uk - the convenient Tourist Information Centre (01789 293127) gives details of all you need to know about Shakespeare's birthplace.

Lapworth Flight / Kingswood Junction / Hatton (& Return)

Pearson's P2, Nicholson's N2, Lockmaster L15
3-4 nights, 8 hours, 0 locks (Top of Lapworth)

Briefly heading north, then turning down on the Stratford Canal towards Stratford, this relaxing route involves no locks at all. The views around the "Lapworth Flight" (of 18 locks) are stunning, and a leisurely walk along the canalside from the top lock allows you to take in the atmosphere without the effort of travelling through yourself!

4 nights, 19 hours, 36 locks (Bottom of Lapworth)

- Taking a midweek break gives time to go down the locks to Kingswood Junction. Just a couple of hours further cruising takes you towards either Knowle, the top of Hatton Flight or Wootton Wawen.

- Country World Craft Village is a short walk from the top of Hatton locks.

(01926 843411) www.hattonworld.com