

Long Distance Canal Boating

For More Experienced Boaters

Can you handle the locks like an old hand? Already know your windlass from your weed hatch?

How about undertaking a serious challenge? If you're confident and fit, consider one of the following routes for a real adventure.

The Warwickshire Canal Ring

If you have plenty of experience, the famous Warwickshire Ring could be a challenge well worth consideration. Make your way through 94/107 locks (depending on your route), and 103 miles in total. Possible in a week if you're prepared for nine hour days of cruising, more realistic in two weeks, with a little time to stop off and see some sights. You'll cruise down the Coventry, the Grand Union and the Birmingham and Fazeley canals.

The Leicester Canal Ring

How about an attempt at the Leicester Ring? At 157 miles, with 102 locks, it's big and impressive. The Leicester Ring encompasses the Coventry Canal, the Trent and Mersey and the Grand Union.

The Four Counties Canal Ring

The Four Counties Ring is easily accessible from Alvecote Marina. Head North West on the Trent and Mersey, South on the Shropshire Union and finally loop back East on the Staffordshire and Worcester. You'll probably need two weeks for this one with 94 locks over 110 miles.

Completing one of the 'ring routes' is a real accomplishment. You'll get the respect you deserve when you casually mention it to the locals in the canal side pubs en route- with good reason! To navigate 100 odd locks in a week or two involves some seriously hard work, so a degree of physical fitness is really important.

Also, ensure you have sufficient time for your journey- you'll probably want to have a day or two where you can visit a town or an attraction, so bear this in mind when you book.

We recommend the Pearson's Canal Companion series if you want to get your hands on a good map to plan your route.