

# The Heart of England



## Stourport Ring

P1 N2 L16

Alvechurch/Worcester 7 7.5 116

Gailey 7 8.5 116

One of the most popular one week cruises. This route of contrasts takes in the 21st century Birmingham city centre, 19th century heritage and some of the most rural stretches of canal imaginable along with the River Severn.

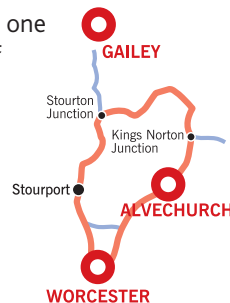
Much of the stunning new development in Birmingham city centre is focused on the canalside area - Symphony Hall, the International Convention Centre and the Sea Life Centre. Branch off to the impressive Netherton tunnel or visit the award winning Black Country Museum.

(B'ham TIC 0870 2250127 / [www.beinbirmingham.org.uk](http://www.beinbirmingham.org.uk))

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 403816 / [www.svr.co.uk](http://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 Museum. (Worcester TIC 01905 726311)



## Stratford-upon-Avon & return

P2 N2 L15

Alvechurch 7 7 110

Worcester 7 6 44

(Avon Licence required from Worcester)

Cruise through idyllic stretches of countryside to this historic town, each route offering a superb mixture of culture, history and shopping.

Moor in the beautifully maintained canal basin at Stratford, near to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. (01789 403444 / [www.rsc.org.uk](http://www.rsc.org.uk))

The convenient Tourist Information Centre (0870 1607930) gives details of all you need to know about Shakespeare's birthplace.



## The Black Country Ring

P1 N3 L12

Gailey 7 7.5 76

Alvechurch 7 8 80

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

Birmingham centre boasts 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](http://www.bclm.co.uk))

Amongst other attractions on the route are Dudley Zoo & Castle. (01384 215313 / [www.dudleyzoo.org.uk](http://www.dudleyzoo.org.uk)) and Drayton Manor Park. (08708 725252 / [www.draytonmanor.co.uk](http://www.draytonmanor.co.uk))



"We only wish the holiday could have been longer!"

# short breaks



## Staffordshire & return

P1 N2 L16

> Gailey to Stourport ☾ 7 ☀ 6 📖 58

> Worcester ☾ 7 ☀ 6 📖 80

> Gailey to Worcester ☾ 7 ☀ 8 📖 72

Passing through Worcester by canal, you join the River Severn for a leisurely cruise up to Stourport where you join the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. Here you will appreciate the contrast between the wide river and the more intimate atmosphere of the canal, which threads its way unobtrusively through the landscape, encouraging you to stop at will. This canal takes you north past dramatic sandstone rocks and through the beautifully preserved Bratch locks towards Autherley Junction where you have the opportunity of joining the Shropshire Union Canal for a short while. You will probably want to turn here in order to make the most of the return journey which, apart from opening up new views of the countryside, will give you a chance to visit some of the attractions you may have missed on the way up, such as the Severn Valley Railway, or the sandstone caves at Austcliffe.



Weekends: Friday to Monday (3 nights)  
Midweek: Monday to Friday (4 nights)

## Lapworth & return

P2 N2 L15

> Alvechurch ☾ 3 ☀ 4.5 📖 0

(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!

> Alvechurch ☾ 4 ☀ 6.5 📖 36

(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)

## Stoke Prior & return

P2 N2 L16

> Worcester ☾ 3 ☀ 5 📖 38

Cruise up the Worcester/Birmingham Canal. This trip takes you north into rural Worcestershire where you pass through the very heart of 'Archers' country to the village of Stoke Prior.

## Stourton Junction & return

P2 N2 L16

> Worcester ☾ 4 ☀ 6 📖 41

Cruise up the River Severn to the inland port of Stourport, where you join the idyllic Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. Before returning to Worcester, you'll be able to enjoy seeing North Worcestershire at its best from this gently meandering canal.

## The Birmingham Mini-Ring

P1 P3 N3 L3 L16

> Alvechurch ☾ 4 ☀ 7.5 📖 49

A mid-week break that takes you through some of Britain's finest industrial architecture, travelling along the Worcester & Birmingham, Grand Union and Stratford Canals. Cruise through some of the most exclusive Warwickshire villages. Moor in Birmingham near the National Sea Life Centre - a real treat for every member of the family. (0121 6436777 / www.sealifeurope.com)

## Droitwich Ring \* NEW for 2010 \*

P1 N2 L16

> Worcester ☾ 3 ☀ 6.5 📖 41

2010 should see the opening of the restored Droitwich Canal. The canal links the Worcester and Birmingham with the River Severn at Hawford creating a new mini ring from Worcester. Cruising the ring will take approximately 20 hours so a short break is possible, but will require long days cruising. The Droitwich Canal is an amalgamation of the Droitwich Barge Canal and the Droitwich Junction Canal both built to carry salt from Droitwich Spa but were abandoned in 1939.

## Avon Ring

P2 N2 L15

> Alvechurch ☾ 14 or 10/11 ☀ 6 📖 139

> Worcester ☾ 14 or 10/11 ☀ 6 📖 139

(Additional licence required for River Avon)

To really enjoy the delightful river cruising on both the Severn and Avon you will need at least 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.



## Warwickshire Ring

P6 N3 L13

> Alvechurch ☾ 14 or 10/11 ☀ 6 📖 128

> Rugby ☾ 7 ☀ 8+ 📖 120

> Gayton ☾ 10/11 ☀ 7

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 (08708 725252 / www.draytonmanor.co.uk) 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.

(Warwick Tourist Information Centre 01926 492212 / www.warwick-uk.co.uk)

> On a two week cruise, include a trip along the Ashby Canal.

