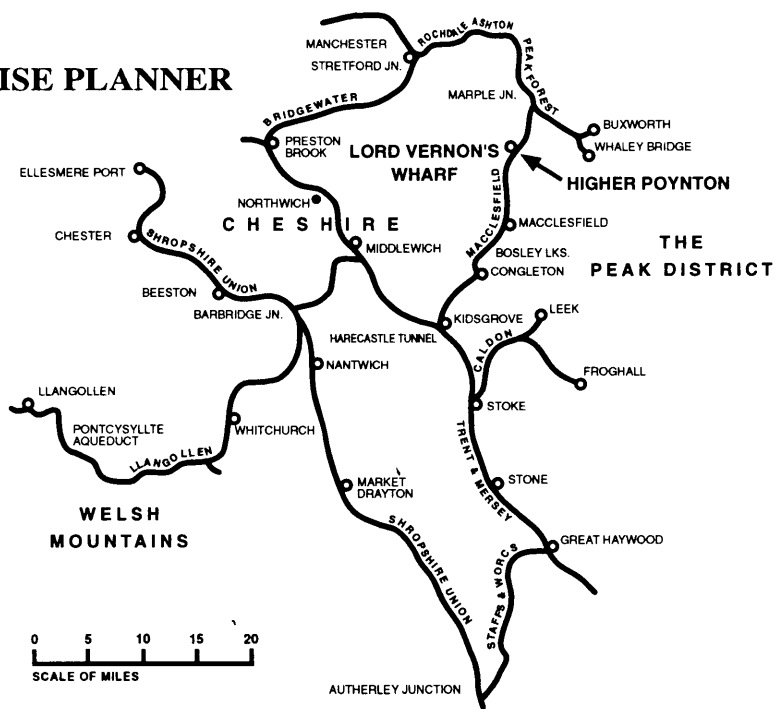


## CRUISE PLANNER



Our location on the Macclesfield Canal gives a superb choice of routes for both novice and experienced skippers.

Situated close to the Peak District National Park, The 'Macc', Peak Forest and Caldon Canals, in particular, offer quiet cruising, beautiful wildlife and some spectacular scenery, especially when spring or autumn colouring shade the trees, hills and moorland.

The following selection of cruising routes gives **average** cruising times. The **actual** time taken will depend on your boating experience, time of the year and dare we suggest, the activity (or lethargy) of your crew! Cruising inland is very leisurely and totally relaxing, with a **maximum** speed of 4mph but more usually 2 or 3 mph, and with locks taking 10 or 15 minutes each, depending on whether they are 'set' in your favour or not.

If you are a newcomer to narrowboating may we suggest a 'there and back' route rather than a 'ring' for your first cruise? It is far easier to judge the time needed and makes sure that you don't spoil the fun and relaxing pace having to rush back at the end of your holiday.

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## A SELECTION OF THE MANY CRUISING ROUTES AVAILABLE

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### “LOCK FREE CRUISING”

**3/4 days**

45 miles. 0 locks. 18 hours cruising  
Macclesfield and Upper Peak Forest Canals.

At 500 ft. above sea level this is the highest stretch of canal in England. It offers superb views, travelling as it does along the edge of the Pennines, between the Derbyshire hill town of Whaley Bridge in the Peak District and Bosley Locks overlooking the Cheshire Plain.

Whilst passing through no locks, this cruise does require the swinging of some bridges on the Peak Forest Canal, so it's not entirely free of “activity”. It is however a good cruise for newcomers to the Inland Waterways, those with very young children and also the less able bodied. This route is also normally available ‘out-of-season’ when many others are closed due to lock repairs.

Pearsons Canal Guide describe this route as “having something for everyone”. It even calls it “a real ale drinkers paradise”! You pass near some of Cheshire’s most famous historic houses, Lyme Hall with its deer herds, Adlington Hall, black and white timbered Gawsworth Hall, the old silk town of Macclesfield with its museums and cheese market and the newly restored Buxworth (Bugsworth) canal basin with nearby Toddbrook Reservoir.

There are plenty of good restaurants and of course the ever changing scenery, herons, kingfishers, ducks, coots, squirrels and if you are lucky, foxes and other wildlife.

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### THE PEAK DISTRICT CRUISE

(Shortened)

95 miles. 60 locks. 50 hours cruising **7 days**

(Full)

115 miles. 60 locks. 60 hours cruising **10/11 days**

Upper Peak Forest, Macclesfield, Trent & Mersey and Caldon Canals.

Cruising around the western edge of the Peak District National Park this route offers superb scenery and a variety of plant and wildlife. The Peak Forest Canal which opened in 1800, clings to the hillside overlooking the River Goyt during its passage from Whaley Bridge to Marple junction, where it joins the Macclesfield canal. Here the Peak Forest descends through 16 picturesque locks before passing over Marple Aqueduct, 100 ft. above the River Goyt. Our route however turns towards the old town of Macclesfield which is well worth a walk with its mediaeval market place and silk museum. Bosley Locks (12) are a delight as are 16th century Gawsworth Hall and the fabulous moated black and white timbered Little Moreton Hall. Harecastle Tunnel near Kidsgrove is one of the longest tunnels on the system. Stoke-on-Trent with its working potteries is “untidily interesting” but this is compensated for by its nesting kingfishers and the magnificent collection of pottery at Hanley Museum and Art Gallery. The Caldon becomes a ‘little gem’ of a canal. Narrow and shallow in parts, it leads to the remote Churnet Valley, Flint Museum and finally Froghall. A branch of the Caldon goes to the charming market town of Leek, “Queen of the Moorlands”, at the southern end of the Peak District.

The cruise can be shortened to 7 days by missing out the northern section from Poynton to Whaley Bridge.

A delightful cruise both for first timers and experienced crews.

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## THE CHESHIRE RING

97 miles. 92 locks. 54 hours cruising **Very Busy 7 days.**  
**Pleasant 10/11 days.**

Macclesfield, Trent and Mersey, Bridgewater, Rochdale, Ashton and Peak Forest Canals.

One of the classic ring routes, the Cheshire Ring can be completed in 7 days by an experienced skipper and crew, but it really needs 10 days or more to appreciate this route or if you are newcomers to inland cruising.

Heading south down the 'Macc' you leave the hills of the Peak District behind and turning on to the Trent and Mersey, descend "Heartbreak Hill" (26 locks in 7 miles) to the Cheshire Plain and Middlewich, a salt town since Roman times. Continuing on the Trent and Mersey, completed in 1777, you come through the lovely River Dane Valley to Northwich and its salt museum, followed by Anderton boat lift "one of the seven wonders of the waterways" built to transfer narrowboats in a water filled tank down to the Weaver Navigation below. On reaching Preston Brook you enter into the famous Bridgewater Canal. Built by the Third Duke of Bridgewater in 1765 to transfer coal from his mines at Worsley, this is the forerunner of all modern canals, a 'broad' canal and lock free until meeting the Rochdale Canal in Manchester. A Victorian City and once 'Cotton Capital of the world', Manchester's museums of 'Science and Industry', 'Air and Space', Granada T.V. Studios, China Town and Manchester Town Hall are all worthy of visits. Whilst much success has been achieved in restoring canal side buildings in the Castlefield area of Manchester, unfortunately the same cannot be said for the Ashton Canal - it's definitely not for lingering! At Portland Basin (Industrial Heritage Centre) you turn into the Lower Peak Forest Canal which eventually brings you over the fine River Goyt aqueduct to the picturesque 16 locks up to Marple and its junction with the Macclesfield Canal. If time permits then the scenic Upper Peak Forest Canal can be explored before heading back down the "Macc" towards Poynton.

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## THE FOUR COUNTRIES RING

158 miles. 120 locks. 76 hours cruising **10/11 days.**

Macclesfield, Trent and Mersey, Staffs and Worcester, Shropshire Union Canals.

A popular ring route which can be extended to include the picturesque Caldon Canal (**14 days**).

Travelling down the scenic Macclesfield Canal you turn into the Trent and Mersey heading for the memorable Harecastle Tunnel and then the popular manufacturing towns of Stoke-on-Trent - a timely reminder that the canals were built to serve the industrial revolution. The world famous Wedgwood potteries and Gladstone Pottery Museum can be visited before the canal passes the market town of Stone and then traverses quiet meadowlands down to Great Haywood and its junction with the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. Pleasing countryside and river valleys take you to Atherley Junction. Then north to the 'Shroppie' through beautiful wooded areas to the medieval black and white timbered buildings of Market Drayton. Continuing on you reach the ancient 'olde-worlde' salt town of Nantwich before turning towards that other salt town ('Wich') of Middlewich. Here joining the Trent and Mersey Canal you climb the heavily locked stretch to Hardings Wood Junction before turning back on to the 'Macc' Canal.

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## THE WALLED CITY OF CHESTER

'There and back' Chester 126 miles. 124 locks. 66 hours cruising **10/11 days**.  
Chester, Ellesmere Port and Cheshire Ring 166 miles. 136 locks. 82 hours cruising **14 days**.  
Macclesfield, Trent and Mersey, Shropshire Union (plus Cheshire Ring Canals).

This cruise to the fascinating walled city of Chester follows the northern section of the 'Four Counties' route before turning at Barbridge onto the broad Shropshire Union Canal. The rural 'Shroppie' takes you past ruined Beeston Castle into the heart of Chester with its Roman Fort, medieval walled town, Georgian terraces, cathedral, zoo, riverside walks and unique two tier shopping Rows which were built in the Middle Ages.

Extending your cruise to Ellesmere Port allows you to visit the boat museum where a rich variety of original canal craft are displayed in the setting of a 19th Century canal port together with all kinds of canal boat memorabilia.

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## THE WELSH MOUNTAINS CRUISE

185 miles. 138 locks. 98 hours cruising **14 days**  
Macclesfield, Trent and Mersey, Shropshire Union and Llangollen Canals.

Travelling from the Peak District hills to the Cambrian Mountains this cruise offers a pleasing variety of scenery, hills, plains, rural villagers, old towns, and of course the dramatic Pontcysyllte Aqueduct which leads to the village of Llangollen in Wales,

Preferably a cruise for early or late season, since the Llangollen Canal is fairly shallow, narrow and very popular in the summer months, when it is definitely a route for the gregarious!

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## THE GRAND NORTHERN CIRCUIT

353 miles. 212 locks. 160 hours cruising **21 days**

This one is only for the experienced skipper and crew who want a challenge, some very active cruising and the trip of a lifetime! A classic route covering 12 different waterways, narrow and broad canals, tidal and non-tidal rivers. Starting on the edge of the Peak District passing through Victorian Manchester along the Bridgewater Canal towards the famous Wigan Pier, then climbing the Pennine hills on the Leeds and Liverpool canal to Skipton in the glorious Yorkshire Dales, descending to Leeds you join the River Aire before cruising 3 different canals to meet the tidal River Trent at Keadby. Cruising south you pass through the 'lace' town of Nottingham to the famous brewing centre of Burton-on-Trent. At Fradley junction the route turns north on the Trent and Mersey canal heading for Harecastle Tunnel and finally the 'Macc' canal again. A truly memorable cruise.

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