

Wash Crossing and Middle Levels Cruise 2018

Some of you eager beavers are beginning to ask some questions, so I thought we should post something on Mobilise etc even if only to match Martin and Rich's efforts!

We are booked to cross the wash in the window of 25th June to 3rd July. So, we will arrive in Wisbech not later than 3rd July evening (if at all!) So everyone will need to be at the Boston Visitor moorings by the 23rd/24th I guess to presumably get up to date info and no doubt an induction and inspection from Darryl, our pilot. More later.

His email did contain the following advice or possibly requirements:

All I ask is for well maintained vessels, (clean diesel is a must), a decent anchor with some chain and a thorough check around the boat before departure. We had a weed hatch come off mid Wash last season which could have ended with disastrous consequences had it not been in its own compartment and a near sinking caused by some rotten timber and corroded bolts (ironically on a lifeboat!) But as it was wooden I don't think it will happen to any of you. Also we had a skin fitting fall off due to galvanic action. (Luckily before departure) I am not trying to scare you, just hit bits with a hammer occasionally

I'm not sure what he means by clean diesel. I'm not sure that his requirement is to have had your diesel cleaned, only for it to be clean. You can have clean diesel in your tank but clogged filters and lines, which would be just as bad. I have never cleaned my diesel, so far never had a problem. However I do change filters regularly and drain the bottom of the tank similarly (some do not have a drain tap apparently), and try to only fill up from reputable sources. Tony Little has offered his gear to clean your diesel- possibly we can get some more info from Darryl in due course.

We will moor overnight at Wisbech Yacht Harbour, but can't book this until we know when we are going.

We are local to Nottingham we are quite happy to try and organise/suggest some stops on the way up to Boston- things to do that are near are Nottingham Embankment, Lincoln, Torksey (although it's a social stop not an attraction!), various moorings up the Trent and Witham, Coningsby (Battle of Britain Memorial Flight)

Those that have said they are going to Bedford now have moorings for the festival I think, the organiser is quite excited to have a cruising club attend that will have crossed the Wash- as we will have done if we get to Bedford! The press will be about I am told.

As far as I know, based on what people have told me, is that the boats wanting to go to Bedford are, Cormorant 11 (2 not eleven), Great Escape, Dabbling, and Clara Grace. We may have two spare spaces that we have sort of squirrelled away at the moment. Any takers? We will have to give them up sometime.

Some background info:

Moorings on the Middle Levels aren't quite as bad as first thought, however they can be small (possibly 6 boats max) and therefore may be a bit sparse in the summer. So you can see that the chances of getting 10 boats in on a single mooring are few and far between. The exception to this could be the GOBA moorings on the Ouse which whilst having absolutely no facilities (even rings) are often quite long and where the river is very wide, so breasting up will be ok. The banks look a bit soft though, so it may be a good idea to bring some substantial pins and make sure you have a plank as we didn't test the depth at the edge. The actual middle levels section is quite short on moorings, for instance we will definitely need to split up around Outwell and Upwell as if the moorings were completely empty you wouldn't get us all on. Anecdotal evidence from the people we met was that the popularity of the available moorings was very variable; plan to arrive in popular places mid week.

Services: Quite sparse, saw a few pump outs but no actual elsan points. Water here and there, more later

We think that given the lack of large moorings on the Middle Level, and the fact that some may not want to do all the bits, we will end up spread all over the place anyway. So a visit to Peterborough Yacht Club at the start of the cruise may be the only large social gathering we can fit in.

The start date is very variable, due to not knowing when we will be able to do the crossing. Also we (Clara Grace) may have a week off before we set off, or have a break somewhere (to be confirmed)

I am presuming that Bob is covering the Boston, Crossing and Wisbech part of the trip for those that are doing it. Including safety stuff, insurance requirements and moorings at Wisbech after the crossing

Places we are planning to visit, but this may be modified:

Peterborough

March

Upwell/Outwell

Small villages, water, butchers, shop

Brandon Creek

Most Easterly point of system

River Wissey

Very scenic etc

Ely

Cathedral, waterfront, all services

Cambridge

Mooring very sparse, may have to be completed by bus. £50 extra licence for 7 miles and one lock!

Bedford/St Ives/St Neots

Dead end, quite interesting, see IWA/Waterways write ups/articles

Ramsey

Seen a picture with 3 boats rafted up! 40 foot drain!

The planned route is :

Key: GOBA = Great Ouse Boating Association, EA = Environment Agency

These are suggested cruising days, however since we probably can't move about en masse anyway then people will be staggering the days by adding stopping days and rest days

Notes:

EA Licence requ'd for Middle levels etc, current cost £219/30 days, based on a 15-20m boat with an engine over 4hp

Cam Conservators licence requ'd for Cambridge, £50 (2017) for 7 miles and 1 lock

EA Key and windlass requ'd

I haven't listed the locks on the middle level as there are not very many at all. Lots of locks on the Northampton Arm

For detailed info on moorings/facilities on route to Bedford see Waterways article

Day	Detail	Distance	Notes
1	Leave Peterborough, via Stanground, Whittlesey, moor in March	5 hrs	3 mooring sites in March
2	Leave March , via Upwell and Outwell	2 ½ hrs	Various Moorings Upwell/Outwell. Upwell= Butchers, pub? Shop
3	Leave for Denver Sluice, to River Wissey.	2 hrs	Time is to Wissey, excursion down Wissey, dead end. 3 mooring sites on Wissey, GOBA x 2, EA
4	River Wissey and Brandon Creek		Furthest East on system. Moorings 2x GOBA, 1 x EA
5	Head South to Ely	2-6 hrs, depending on start location	Good idea to arrive in Ely on a Wed. Can be busy. We have a possible contact in Ely who can advise on mooring state by phone. Various sites for mooring on way, at Littleport, (4) and one just north of Ely
6,7,8	To Cambridge via Wicken Fen?(for those that want to, see note)	6 hrs	Cam Conservators licence requ'd for Cam. Possible cost £50
9	Cambridge to Popes Corner	6 hrs	
10	Popes Corner to St Ives	6 hrs	RSPB Reserve, Water, EA and GOBA mooring, private yard with all facilities. 4 mooring sites around St Ives
11	St Ives to St Neots	6 hrs	Between St Ives and St Neots there is Hemingford Grey, Hemingford Abbots, Houghton, Huntingdon (water, Boat Club) Huntingdon Boat Haven, all facilities no fuel. 10 mooring sites as far as we can see St Ives-St Neots
12	St Neots to Bedford	5 hrs	9 mooring sites St Neots- Bedford (mostly GOBA)
13	Possible Bedford River Festival		14-15 th July
14,15&16	Earith,	18 hrs	
17	New Bedford River, (Tidal) to Denver	1 day	
18	Upwell fen, Outwell, Pophams Eau, Sixteen Foot Drain to Horseway and the 40 Foot Drain	6 hrs	Moorings at Upwell, Outwell, presume moorings near Hosewy and Ramsey as its 40 foot wide
19	Ramsey	2 hrs	Visit?
20	Ramsey, Floods Ferry, Whittlesea, Peterborough	5 hrs	
21-26	Peterborough to Grand Union Junction	5 DAYS	54 Locks, some contacts made with local boat clubs to arrange a visit if possible but unlikely at this point of the cruise as we

			may well all be spread out anyway
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