

Fradley & return from Kings Orchard Marina by Carolyn (Booking Office)

Kings Orchard Marina is our new hire base for 2021 and I couldn't wait to enjoy a day out on their day boat, meet the Marina staff and explore one of the day hire route options. New to boating, my friend James and his two girls joined me and my daughter on our little adventure.

We received a warm welcome from the Kings Orchard team, who got to work kitting the girls out with life jackets whilst checking our boating experience and completing our handover. Although I have taken a few holidays I am always a little nervous navigating out of a marina, Kate offered to drive us out but after my little wobble I decided that I could do it! Sure enough, once you have mastered the technique it all comes back to you and I skippered us out of the marina like a pro!

A kind dog walker shouted 'clear' from the footbridge over the canal entrance and we took a right onto the Coventry Canal and started to head towards Fradley Junction. In no time at all we approached Streethay Wharf and I slowed down to 'tick over' whilst passing the moored boats – relieved that there wasn't a boat coming in the opposite direction! James, busy making the tea shouted up, 'why are we going so slow', he clearly wasn't paying attention when he watched our videos on the website!

We chose a beautiful sunny day and as we pootled along the pretty, peaceful Coventry Canal I realised how much we all needed this day out. What a year, a day on the water was definitely what the doctor ordered!

The girls sat at the front of the boat looking out for wildlife, throwing various treats to the swans and raiding the picnic! It was lovely to see them outdoors and entertaining themselves.

As we approached Fradley junction a passer-by opened the swing bridge for us and we had to make a quick decision where to moor.... with an audience! Directly in front of us was the Swan Inn pub, bustling with people enjoying one of the last days of summer sunshine and the entertainment as we made a 3 or 4 point turn in front of them!



Feeding the swans outside the Swan Inn.



Between us we had brought a variety of food and the girls set to work cooking pasta whilst James joined the queue for the pub. The cruising time to Fradley was only around 1.5hrs so there was plenty of time to relax, enjoy lunch and take a walk down to the locks. We chatted to boaters coming through the locks and I explained how they worked to the girls, who now can't wait to take a holiday!



Plenty to see at Fradley Junction!

As we cruised back to the marina we passed another ABC boat called Wood Warbler. The crew looked as though they were having a wonderful time - we gave them a little wave and I did wonder if I had booked their holiday from Gailey Wharf!



Leaving Fradley Junction and the Swan Inn behind us!

We had a fabulous day out on Happy Days and if you are thinking of trying narrowboating for the first time our Kings Orchard location would be the perfect place to start.

I am already planning my route for a holiday next year.....