

NAVIGATION NOTES

The Pocklington Canal is managed by British Waterways and all boats using the canal are required to display a current BW licence. The locks on the canal were designed to accommodate craft of the traditional Yorkshire size (ie 57ft 6ins x 14ft 3ins), but experience has shown that narrowboats of up to 60ft in length can usually negotiate the locks. A standard windlass is required as is a T-key to release the security locks on some of the swingbridges. Airdraught is limited to about 8ft, but this depends on the water level, which varies. There are winding holes at Storwood and at Gardham Lock and it is also possible to turn at Melbourne.

At times when the River Derwent is in flood the lower reaches of the canal (below Gardham Lock) can be inundated making navigation impossible and presenting a risk to moored craft. This normally only occurs in the winter months, although, exceptionally, it can happen in the at other times. In late summer, the canal can be severely affected by weed. British Waterways do have a weed cutting boat but in very hot summers this is not always able to keep pace with the weed growth. Improvements to the Pocklington Sewage Works carried out in 2005 reduced the amount of nutrients in the water that feeds the canal and this was expected to reduce the problem; although at the time of writing (autumn 2006) it was too soon to make a proper assessment.

The canal is approached from the River Derwent, which is susceptible to flooding and can be impassable. So it is wise to check the condition of the river with the lock keeper at Barmby Barrage (tel: 01757 638579) before setting off. In the summer months, the River Derwent may also suffer from excessive weed growth; which can make navigation difficult, especially for boats with no weed hatch.

Although the River Derwent has not been tidal since the building of Barmby Barrage in 1975, the water levels do vary on a tidal cycle. This is because sluices are opened when the water is low in the River Ouse. Consequently, there is considerable variation in the depth of water and in the available airdraught during the course of each day. The short length of beck between the River Derwent and Cottingwith Lock tends to be shallow and may have to be navigated when the river level is high, the ideal time being about three to four hours after high water at Barmby.

Boats coming up the River Derwent and destined for the Pocklington Canal, are advised to time their passage through the Lock at Barmby for high water or soon after, and to continue up the river to Cottingwith Lock without stopping. If this procedure is followed, there should be sufficient water in the beck. Craft making the passage downstream are advised to leave Cottingwith Lock about four hours after high water at Barmby .

Access to the River Derwent from the main network of inland waterways, involves navigation of the tidal River Ouse, which can have strong currents especially on spring tides. For this reason boaters who are not experienced in tidal waters are advised only to undertake this passage on neap tides. Two routes are possible and advice on planning both these passages is given below. Whichever passage is used, it is essential to contact the lock keeper at Barmby 24 hours in advance as the lock is not always continuously manned.

PASSAGE FROM SELBY

This approach has the advantage of avoiding the part of the river used by large ships and thus may be more suitable for boaters who are not used to navigating amongst shipping. Although it is unlikely that seagoing ships will be encountered, a lookout should be kept for the sizeable barges that use this section of the river. The flood tide through Selby can be very

swift and too strong for the average inland boat to punch. Consequently, it is best to enter the river at high water and use the first of the ebb to travel the seven miles downstream to Barmby. It is important to keep the lock keeper advised of your movements (VHF Channel 74 BARMBY LOCK), so that he can have the lock prepared. If this procedure is followed, the ebb tide should be relatively gentle and, provided it is not a spring tide, entry to the lock not too difficult.

PASSAGE FROM GOOLE

The principle here is to plan the tidal passage so as to arrive at Barmby Barrage at high water. High water at Barmby is about half an hour after high water at Goole. This is best achieved by leaving Ocean Lock in Goole half an hour before high water Goole. However, allowance should be made for a delay of up to one hour at Ocean Lock due to large ships manoeuvring. Consequently, it is advisable to book Ocean Lock for an hour and a half before high water and if necessary proceed slowly upstream towards Barmby. The channel must be followed, especially between Howdendyke and Boothferry Bridge, where the river is shallow outside the channel.

The lock at Goole is part of the commercial dock system and is controlled by Associated British Ports. The ships using the port have priority at the lock and this can cause delays especially around the high water period. Passage through the lock is free of charge around high water (2 1/2 hours before to 1 hour after), although it can be expensive at other times, especially at weekends and outside normal working hours.

The Port of Goole operates on VHF Channel 14 and the port authority insist that all craft passing through the lock have a VHF radio.

RETURN PASSAGE

When returning to the main waterway network, the simplest option is to return via Selby. It is best to plan the passage through Barmby Lock for one hour before high water so that the lock at Selby can be entered at high water. Remember to advise the lock keeper at Selby (VHF Channel 74 SELBY LOCK) of your movements.

To return via Goole, it is best to set off one hour before high water at Goole. This involves punching the tide for the first half of the journey, so progress may be slow. However, it should be possible to arrive at Goole in time for the free passage through the lock.

WARNING

The locks at Barmby Selby and Goole can be very difficult to enter from the river when the tide is running fast. This is particularly so on the flood tide especially on springs.