

carrickcraft



route planner lower bann

Starting at Coleraine

Lower Bann

Our Coleraine marina is in the middle of this thriving town with plenty of shops, pubs and restaurants. Your first decision is to check the weather forecast as you will want to be on the river for the best weather. If there are a couple of not-so-nice days, order a taxi from the marina and head off to the World Heritage site at the Giant's Causeway. Continue on to the Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge which is not for those of you who suffer from vertigo. And maybe on the way back call in to the oldest whiskey distillery in the world at Bushmills.

Back on the river, you can cruise downstream for a couple of hours past mudflats and golf courses. Over the dunes you can see the rolling waves of the Atlantic Ocean - but don't worry you won't be going that far! Come back up through Coleraine and continue under the town bridges to the first jetty at Mountsandel. This is reputed to be the oldest human settlement in Ireland and is a fascinating site. Continue on towards Cutts Lock where you will leave the tidal estuary and move onto the Lower Bann proper. The lock-keeper at Cutts will let you know what is happening along the river so leave a bit of time for a chat.

Continue on past Loughan Island towards Camus. This stretch is designated as a waterski zone so keep a lookout for skiers. And if you want to try some skiing yourself there is a ski school at Loughan Island. Call in at Drumaheglis Marina if it's late as there are no more moorings until you get to Carnroe. Drumaheglis has no restaurant but has a shop nearby.

Leaving Drumaheglis you will travel along one of the best fishing stretches on the river so be aware of anglers and keep your wash to a minimum. Next stop is the jetty at Vow, and just a short walk through the woods to the Anglers Rest for a pint and some food. Nice place to stop overnight.

Within minutes you will arrive at Movanager Lock with an interesting swing bridge feature. Carry on towards Kilrea Bridge where there is a jetty - Kilrea is about 1km from the river and has plenty of shops. Soon you will arrive at another lock, Portna, which is a double-chamber lock so pay particular attention to the instructions from the lock-keeper. You will also see the eel-traps in this area. Eels are a huge part of the economy of the Bann and Lough Neagh and considered a local delicacy. Most are exported and you will see traps along the river but especially in Toomebridge.

Next stop is Portglenone with a new 20-berth marina very close to the town centre. Shops, takeaways, pubs and restaurants are all here which makes it a good place for an overnight stop. You will now head into Lough Beg which has excellent wildlife and an interesting ruin on Church Island (only approach by dinghy). Finally you arrive in Toomebridge, the limit of our navigation with more shops and pubs. You must not go through the lock into Lough Neagh.

The journey should take two to three days (and then you have to get back to Coleraine) but as with all boating holidays, things somehow always seem to take longer.

