

Families[®]

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West

Reading, Henley, Wokingham and Bracknell

Canal boat holidays

If the thought of lazy days pootling along some of Britain's 3000 miles of navigable waterways floats your boat, then your first port of call should definitely be **Drifters Holidays** who operate nearly 500 hireable narrow-boats in 30 different locations around the UK. You choose your departure point and your ultimate destinations from the miles upon miles of tranquil canal and backwater routes with overnight stays in picturesque villages or the urban waterways of our towns and cities. You can travel as much or as little as you please, stopping at night on towpaths or in designated mooring facilities on the riverside. Canal boat holidays are particularly good for families - while mum tops up her tan on the roof, the children can help dad with the lock manoeuvres or take a turn at steering. Whilst canal boats are suitable for young children, those with very inquisitive toddlers might want to wait until they're a little older. You can also take well behaved pets on most boats. Drifters narrow boats can accommodate up to twelve people and come fully equipped with galley kitchens, central heating, flushing toilets and showers, plus all bedding, cooking utensils and crockery.

Pascale Gravell recently took a three day break with Drifters and highly recommends the experience, citing the ability to stop wherever you want and sight seeing and picnics as a particular draw. "Our children absolutely loved watching the wildlife," says Pascale, "there were baby ducks and cygnets and my daughter Lily insists she saw a water fairy!" And, if the only thing putting you off a waterways holiday is the thought of managing the boat or working the locks, then relax. The whole process is part of the fun of the holiday and your hirer will brief you comprehensively before you take your first tentative moves downstream. *Families* readers can take advantage of some exclusive discounts by quoting *Castle Wharf Promotions/Go Boating* when booking with Drifters (www.drifters.co.uk, 08457 626 252); £50 off a part week, £100 off a full week, £250 off two weeks. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. You can also find great ideas for enjoying the waterways at www.waterscape.co.uk