

**Press release...press release...press release...press release...press release...press release...**

## **BOATING HOLIDAYS ARE ON THE UP ON UK CANALS & RIVERS**

**...reports Drifters, the flagship organisation for narrowboat holidays in Britain [www.drifters.co.uk](http://www.drifters.co.uk)**

With Britain's canals in better shape than ever and with hundreds of top quality boats available for hire, boating holidays have never been more popular on the UK's peaceful inland waterway network.

With over 500 boats and 35 bases to choose from, Drifters includes the very best independent boat hire fleets.

### **Top Ten Drifters Waterway Holidays Facts**

1. The number of boats on our waterways has increased by 35% in the last ten years<sup>2</sup> and there are now more boats than at the height of the Industrial Revolution
2. Canal boating has seen a higher rate of growth in the last eight years than any other kind of boating activity<sup>1</sup>
3. The popularity of boating has been fuelled by the waterway renaissance which has swept across the UK in the last decade - 220 new miles of waterways have opened and over £1billion invested\*, including the Dretwiche Canals which reopened in 2011, creating the new Mid-Worcestershire Ring, the only canal loop in Europe which can be travelled on a short break
4. 320,000 people<sup>1</sup> go canal boating each year, exploring over 3,000 miles of inland waterways
5. Drifters offer over 500 of the 1,100 holiday boats available for hire on British Waterways' 2,200-mile network
6. Celebrities do it too! Kiera Knightley, Kevin Spacey, Harrison Ford, Calista Flockhart, Timothy Spall, David Suchet, David Jason, Timothy West, Prunella Scales and David Dimbleby, have all enjoyed the relaxation of a UK inland waterway boating holiday in recent years
7. Drifters offer 35 holiday starting points, from Falkirk on the lowland canals in Scotland to Goytre in the Brecon Beacons and the stunning city of Bath in SW England.
8. Choose from taster day-hire and short three/four-day breaks to one or two-week cruises and between self-drive hire boats or fully catered hotel boats
9. The main hire boat Season runs from March to October and narrowboats range from 42ft to 70ft and can accommodate up to 12 people
10. Prices start from £330 for a short break and £470 for a week's cruise.

### **Top Ten reasons for taking a canal boat holiday**

1. **The fastest way to slow down** – with speed limits of 4mph and hundreds of miles of tranquil unspoilt countryside to cruise through, stress levels are immediately reduced and a whole new much steadier pace of life takes over
2. **Freedom** – the majority of our inland waterways offer boating holiday-makers free moorings, so, glass of wine in hand, you are free to choose wherever you lay your boat for the night
3. **Fitness** – working the locks, exploring local footpaths, historic sites, towns and villages, cycling the towpaths and standing at the tiller enjoying the fresh air are all the ideal antidote to stuffy gyms and office blues

4. **The greener way** – a boating holiday is estimated to be some 20 times better for the planet than spending two hours flying for a holiday overseas and as soon as you swap your car for a boat, you'll be using a third of the fuel and emitting a sixth of the pollution
5. **Pubs galore** – with hundreds of waterside pubs, a watering hole is never far away, many of them historic rural locals
6. **History is all around** - thousands of historic structures make up the waterway system, including: the soaring majesty of the World Heritage Status Pontcysyllte Aqueduct; the extraordinary Anderton Boat Lift AKA "The Cathedral of the Canals"; the stunning Caen Hill Flight of 16 locks in Devizes; and the awesome three-mile long Standedge Tunnel in Yorkshire.
7. **Watch out for wildlife** - waterways provide homes for large numbers of birds, plants and animals, including many protected species - the water vole, otter and kingfisher, so there's always something special to look out for
8. **Lap up the luxury** - Today's canals boats are fully equipped with all the essential mod cons: central heating, hot water, TV, DVD players, showers and flushing toilets, with some boats offering five star accommodation
9. **Help keep the local economy afloat** - £1½ billion is spent by visitors to the waterways each year on goods and services, supporting 54,000 jobs\*
10. **Try something new** – with around a fifth of hire boaters new to the market each year<sup>#</sup>, it's easy to learn how to steer a boat and navigate the waterways.

**For more information about Drifters boating holidays call 0844 984 0322 or visit [www.drifters.co.uk](http://www.drifters.co.uk)**

**For Drifters press enquiries, including photos and destination details, contact Debbie Walker on 01628 635831/077486 40577 [walker.debbie@sky.com](mailto:walker.debbie@sky.com)**

*\*Source: British Waterways Press Office (T 020 7985 7263)*

*<sup>1</sup>Source: British Marine Federations' Watersports & Leisure Participation Report 2009*

*<sup>2</sup>Source: British Waterways Annual Report & Accounts 1999/2000 to 2008/09*

*<sup>#</sup>Source: British Waterways Holiday Boater Survey 2008*

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