

****Drifters press release***Drifters press release***Drifters press release****

DRIFTERS' TOP 10 CANAL BOAT HOLIDAY FACTS & FIGURES

1. There are over 30,000 canal boats on our waterways and numbers have increased by 40% in the last ten years²
2. The popularity of boating has been fuelled by the waterway renaissance which has swept across the UK in the last 15 years, with over 200 new miles of waterways re-opened and over £1billion invested²
3. 371,000 people¹ go canal boating each year and numbers have increased by 23 per cent in the last five years³
4. There are over 3,000 miles of canals and rivers to explore in Britain
5. Drifters offers 500 of the 1,100 narrowboats available for hire
6. Inland waterways hire and passenger boats generate £90million a year and employ 1500 people
7. Celebrities do it too! Kiera Knightley, Kevin Spacey, Harrison Ford, Calista Flockhart, Timothy Spall, David Suchet, Timothy West and Prunella Scales, have all enjoyed the relaxation of a canal boat holiday
8. Drifters offer 35 holiday starting points, from Falkirk on the lowland canals in Scotland to Goytre in the Breacon Beacons and the stunning city of Bath in SW England.
9. The main hire boat Season runs from March to October and narrowboats range from 32ft to 70ft and can accommodate up to 12 people. Some bases also offer winter cruising.
10. 2013 prices start at £99 for day hire, £385 for a short break (three or four nights) and £565 for a week.

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"; and the awesome three-mile long Standedge Tunnel cutting through the Pennines.

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 canal boats are fully equipped with all the essential mod cons: central heating, hot water, TV, 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 jobs²
10. **Try something new** – with around a fifth of hire boaters new to the market each year², 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

¹Source: British Marine Federation's 'UK Leisure, Superyacht and Small Commercial Marine Industry Key Performance Indicators 2011/12' (Press office Tel 01784 223811)

²Source: The Canal & River Trust (Press office Tel 020 32044514)

³Source: British Marine Federation's 'Watersports Participation Survey 2012'

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