



Bruce Boats
Kennet & Avon Canal Trust

Member of the
Accessible Waterways
Association



Accessible Holiday Hire Frequently Asked Questions

What are the boats like?

We have four widebeam canal boats specially built to accommodate those with limited mobility. All have ramps and lifts for access, and accessible toilets and showers with grab rails. The saloon is spacious to allow for at least two wheelchairs with an open plan kitchen area.

How many people can come?

Hannah sleeps 12, Rebecca sleeps 8, Rachel sleeps 6. Diana sleeps 10 but is mainly used for day trips. The boat layouts are on the website. Some are fixed bunks, some are wide beds that fold out from the seating in the saloon, and Rebecca has an electrically-operated hospital bed.

What do they cost?

For a week's hire, Rachel costs £1200 and the larger boats £1600. We need to add 20% VAT unless you can sign the VAT-relief form certifying a person in your group has a disability or chronic illness. We may be able to offer shorter holidays - please contact us for availability. Unfortunately we are not able to offer weekend breaks (Friday evening to Sunday evening).

What time should we arrive?

Please arrive at the wharf between 12.30 and 1pm on your first day. Hires normally begin on Fridays (Rachel and Diana) or Saturdays (Hannah and Rebecca).

What time does our hire end?

You must vacate the boat by 9am on your last day, to enable our volunteer cleaning team to get the boat ready for the next group. This means you need return to Bedwyn the evening before. If an early start doesn't suit you, you may prefer to depart the evening before instead.

Where can we leave our car?

We have ample car parking at the wharf behind a locked gate. You may leave your car here, at your own risk. The gate is locked overnight.

Can we bring our dog?

Well..... putting aside the preference of our volunteer cleaners, we recognise that dogs are part of the family, so the answer is Yes. Please keep them off the beds and soft furnishings, and a bit of extra cleaning before you leave would be helpful too. There is a small charge of £30 per dog per holiday.

Where can we go?

Have a look at our Route Planning Guide on the Useful Info section of the website, which gives details of places and approximate timings. There is also a copy on board each boat, along with other maps. Remember that although the speed limit on the canal is 4mph, you will in fact go slower than that due to the size of the boat. When you are passing moored boats, you must go at your slowest speed ("tickover") which is about 2mph. They say that the canal is "the fastest place to slow down"...! Here is a brief overview of what is in store for you:

Go west...

A journey westwards takes you up four locks to Crofton Pumping Station. There is a nice mooring here - it is a good place for the first night. After that there are six locks in quick succession to the summit level of the canal and a 500m tunnel. Four locks begin the descent to a 16-mile lock-free stretch through remote countryside. The first town on this route is Devizes, with the famous Caen Hill lock flight of 29 locks in just over two miles. Another day's journey takes you to the beautiful town of Bradford-on-Avon.

or go east...

There are good moorings at Froxfield for the first night, after four or five locks and about 3 hours travelling. The locks (and occasional swing bridges) continue at fairly regular intervals all the way to Reading, through delightful towns and villages: Hungerford, Kintbury, Newbury... after Newbury the canal has some river sections so watch out for the current and always moor the upstream end of the boat first!

What should we bring?

Unfortunately we are unable to providing bedding - you will need to bring sleeping bags / duvets and pillows, linen, towels. We recommend packing in squashy bags rather than hard suitcases as they are easier to store when empty. Bring a range of clothing and sensible shoes for outdoor use, as well as good waterproofs and sun hat / sun cream so you are prepared for all weathers. Temperatures on the boat overnight range from hot if has been sunny during the day, to quite cool. Sometimes in the same night!

Is there heating on board?

Yes, all the boats have central heating, which can be set to come on for 2 hours at a time.

Can we charge phones / medical equipment?

Phones can be charged via the USB sockets or your own charger in standard 3-pin sockets. The boats have inverters which can power medical equipment if required.

Will I get a phone signal / is there wifi?

Phone signals vary along the canal, depending on your network. Most places are now OK. There is no wifi on board, likewise no TV - we would encourage you to make the most of going offline for a bit, and enjoy the wildlife and your surroundings.

What are the kitchen facilities like?

Each boat has a normal gas cooker with over, grill and hobs, an under-the-counter fridge with small freezer compartment, a tap for drinking water, and hot and cold water for washing up. There will be ample pans, cutlery and crockery for everyone on board.

What about water?

Each boat has a large water which will last for between one and three days depending on usage. We recommend that you fill this every day to ensure you don't run out. There is a water tank level gauge which shows how much you have left. There is a tap with a filter for drinking water.

What about toilets?

There are two flush toilets on Hannah, Diana and Rebecca, and one on Rachel. With careful use, the tanks should last for a whole week. There is a tank gauge so you can monitor how you are doing. Should you need a pump-out, there are self-service machines along the canal, and boatyards will often do it for you too. Please only put the essentials down the toilet - no wet wipes, sanitary towels, etc, and stick to 2-ply toilet paper to avoid blockages.

What about fuel?

Your boat will have a full tank of diesel which will be more than enough for your holiday. Cooking is on gas, and there will be two gas bottles on board. All fuel is included in the price of your holiday.

Extra charges

At Bruce boats we don't believe in hidden charges, but if you lose or damage anything we will ask you to pay for a replacement. A replacement windlass (lock key) costs £25 - it is worth checking after every lock that you still have the right number on board!