

## **An idiot's guide to Barge Hire**

Don't know your canals from your rivers? Not sure which end of the barge is which? Then start right here. We've broken it down to the absolute basics, we've cut out the lingo and we've sorted out some answers to those questions you weren't sure whether to ask!

### **The Canal...**

- \*Different to a river as it has no current.
- \*They are all manmade.
- \*Most were dug by hand in the 18th Century.
- \*They are only about 4 feet deep- if you fall in, stand up!

### **The Locks...**

- \*These have been built in areas where the canal needs to go up or down a hill.
- \*Difficult to explain but easy to get the hang of once you're on your barge.
- \*Going Up a Hill  
Open the first gate (someone has to get off the barge). Drive your boat in, and close the gate behind you. The person who is on land turns a handle which lets water into the area where your boat is. The water level rises, and so does your boat. Open the second gate and drive your boat out, at the top of the hill.
- \*Going Down a Hill  
Open the first gate (someone has to get off the barge). Drive your boat in, and close the gate behind you. The person who is on land turns a handle which lets water out of the area where your boat is. The water level goes down, and so does your boat. Open the second gate and drive your boat out, at the bottom of the hill.
- \*They're easy. And fun. We promise.

### **The Boat...**

- \*Long and thin, with everything you need on board.
- \*You stand outside at the back and steer using the tiller (a pole attached to the rudder).
- \*Steer to the right and the barge swings to the left.
- \*Steer to the left and the barge swings to the right.
- \*Big and slow- so it's easy and relaxing to drive.
- \*Inside there are bedrooms, bathrooms, a lounge and a fully fitted kitchen.
- \*Nothing like the traditional boats of the Industrial Revolution- think modern luxury, a comfy and totally private floating hotel.

### **Who are the Crew?**

- \*You are the captain, and your barge hire holiday companions are your crew.
- \*We train you up and then leave you to it.
- \*You can call us 24 hours a day if there are any problems.

### **Where do we go?**

- \*Anywhere you like! The canal is free for all to cruise on.
  - \*You can stop wherever you please.
  - \*We can help you decide where to stop off- we'll show you some great places on the map when you arrive at your barge hire marina.
- Still have more questions? We have no problems with absolute beginners taking barge hire trips- when you arrive for your barge hire holiday we will take you through everything, step by step.
- Ask us as many questions as you like- and we promise not to laugh.