

Bar Bosun, or diligent deck hand ?

How far do you expect to travel on your narrowboat break? Should you spend every waking moment driving the canal boat to a specific destination? Or should you take things a little more slowly...?

The Diligent Deckhand tries to travel as far as possible during his time on board. He will ruthlessly wake at dawn to start each leg of his journey and will cruise for at least ten hours every day. Long before Diligent Deckhands begin their holidays, routes are plotted and daily mileage is calculated. Distance is everything.

At the other end of the scale is the Bar Bosun. The Bar Bosun spends just a few hours travelling down the canal and stops at the first sight of a cosy canal side pub. Bar bosuns don't usually get far at all. They're interested in relaxation at the highest level. Tasting the local ales is of high importance on their list of cultural activities.

These caricatures are the two extremes of canal holiday folk, but you're sure to spot them on your narrowboat break, even if you lie somewhere in the middle!

Planning your pace isn't really necessary. The best thing to do is to simply turn up and play it by ear. You can moor (park) your boat nearly anywhere along the canal so it's really easy to decide as you go along.

It is important to remember that the leisurely speed of a canal boat is only around three miles per hour, and locks can take a fair amount of time to traverse. If you're a budding Diligent Deckhand, remember that canal boating is a slow process- rushing isn't an option! If you're planning to undertake one of the famous 'ring' routes on your narrowboat break, will you still be happy to man the tiller (the steering mechanism) on a rainy day?

Likewise, for Bar Bosuns, there are plenty of other activities to try out. Plus, if you have to retrace your steps to return to the marina, you'll want to pop into some pubs you didn't go in before!

Narrowboat breaks are all about relaxation and enjoyment. Whether you spend plenty of time in the historical canal side pub (which once provided for the canal workers of the industrial revolution), or make the most of the cruise through the abundant lush British countryside. To see some suggestions of routes and holiday options, see our page on marinas.