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**Whilton
marina**

**Venetian
marina**

YOUR GUIDE TO
GETTING AFLOAT

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“...Realise Your Dream”

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BOAT BUYING MADE EASY

Buying your dream boat is a big step, and a big investment. Whether you're buying for leisure, pleasure, living or long-term cruising, it's important you know what to ask, and what to watch out for.

When you deal with Whilton & Venetian Marina, you can relax – because we'll take some of the strain for you. We aim to make your purchase as smooth and hassle-free as possible.

This guide aims to give you the key facts about boat buying, and understand what happens when you purchase.

It's a big decision and a very personal one because every person (and boat) is different. So take your time, think about it and ask questions.

If you ever need someone to talk to, remember we're here to help – *seven days a week, 51 weeks of the year.*

ABOUT US

Whilton Marina and Venetian Marina together are the biggest brokerage in the UK. We're a family-run business and have been trading since 1971.

We have two marinas, Whilton in the midlands and Venetian in the north west. At any one time, we have up to 120 boats, ranging in price from £9,000 to £90,000. Whatever your budget, we'll help you find the right boat for you.

It's a good idea to pop in and see us. That way you can look around, touch things and really experience what's on offer – people tell us it makes a big difference. You can browse around without anyone

breathing down your neck, we'll just be there when you're ready to talk. To find out more about how we do business, please turn to the *What people say about us section on page 16.*



BOATING BASICS

Narrowboats, widebeams and barges

All narrowboats are 6 feet 10 inches wide. Generally they are all made entirely of steel, although some older boats have wooden and sometimes even glass reinforced plastic (GRP) cabins.

Widebeams are wider than narrowboats and dutch barges are larger still.

Our canals are designed around narrowboats; with this type of vessel you can travel the whole waterways system, whereas you can't do that with a widebeam.

Getting the right size of narrowboat

Your main priority should be finding the right boat for your needs. That depends on the number of people who will be aboard and the time you'll spend on the boat.

Generally speaking, a 30-40 foot boat is ample as a holiday boat, whilst 50+ feet is ideal for extended cruising or a 'liveaboard'.

Some people get hung up about boat length, but there's really no need. There's a myth that boats must be 57 feet long - because some locks have a maximum length of 60 feet. (For example, the Calder & Hebble restricts boats to 60 feet, and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal has a limit of 62 feet.)



Some locks are only big enough to allow one boat in, *other locks you can get two in, but it's tight.*

CHOOSING THE RIGHT STERN

There are three main stern types on narrowboats – **traditional**, **cruiser** and **semi-traditional**. The table below explains the differences between the three main stern types.



Traditional stern

This the smallest stern area offering the least external space, and stems from traditional working boats.



Cruiser stern

Offers a large external space ideal for recreational cruising.



Semi - traditional stern

A good compromise between traditional and cruiser; these have the looks of a traditional stern with the space of a cruiser.



You can find video demonstrations of stern types on our YouTube channel; please visit www.youtube.com/whiltonmarina or www.youtube.com/venetianmarina for details.

WHAT'S ON BOARD

Here's a quick guide to some of the services and utilities you'll find on a narrowboat. Hopefully this will help to guide your purchase based on the things that are most important to you personally.

Electricity

All boats rely on a 12-volt supply from two battery banks. One bank starts the engine (like a car battery); the other powers domestic items such as TV, lighting and your water pump.

For 240-volt items, you need to connect from shore or land line, plugging into an electricity supply where available.

Or you can use an inverter, which converts battery power to 240v.

You can buy a diesel or petrol generator.

The alternative is to buy 12-volt compatible fridges, TVs and so on; these are very efficient for boats but are also more expensive to buy.



Running water

There is a water tank that you fill with a hosepipe, this feeds an internal system which gives you running water. The pressure is obtained by a water pump.

On board tanks

These are used to store your domestic water or as a holding tank for a pumpout toilet. Tanks are either made from steel, stainless steel or plastic.

Hot water

You can heat domestic water by an instant gas water heater (such as Paloma or a diesel heater).

Or you can use a calorifier; this uses excess hot water from the engine cooling system or central heating boiler.

Diesel fired heating such as Webasto, Mikuni and Eberspacher also provides hot water.

Toilets – two main types

Pump-out – these flush, emptying into a holding tank and you have to pay pump-out costs (prices differ from marina to marina).

Cassette – these empty into a cartridge that you lift out and empty at any Canal & River Trust Elsan point.

Engine – three main types

Air cooled – like a car engine, these rely on a flow of air to keep them cool.

Keel cooled (sealed system) – the engine is cooled by the flow of water through a tank on the stern of the boat; most modern engines use this system.

Raw water cooled – takes pumped water from the canal which is pushed around the engine and uses a heat exchange to cool it down.

For simplicity, choose a modern water cooled diesel engine or older air cooled diesel engine.

Heating – three main types

Solid fuel stove – such as Squirrel.

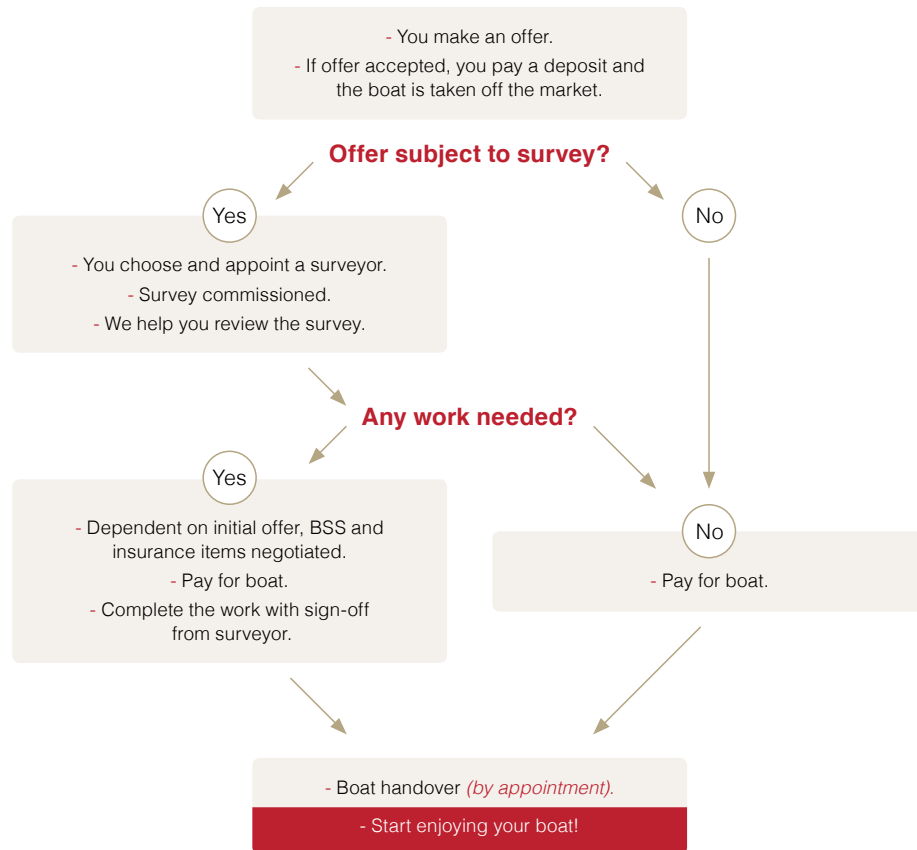
Gas central heating – such as Alde.

Diesel fired heating – such as Webasto, Mikuni and Eberspacher.

Heating type is down to personal choice. Many people like the dry heat of solid fuel but it takes time to prepare the fire; whereas gas and diesel provide almost instant heat.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU BUY A BOAT

So you've seen the boat of your dreams - what happens next? There are ten key steps involved in the boat buying process, as shown below.



IN MORE DEPTH

Surveys

It's a good idea to get a survey done when you buy a boat. That way, you can be confident your boat is structurally sound.

We suggest you pick an independent qualified surveyor (preferably an inland waterways specialist who understands steel-bottomed boats). We've got a list of reputable surveyors if you need help finding one.

There are three types of survey:

- **Full pre-purchase survey** – this is like a complete boat health check. Done both in and out of the water, it checks everything from a structural and safety viewpoint.
- **Hull survey** – this checks aspects related to the structural/insurance parts of the boat, such as the hull and stern gear. This is done with the boat out of the water.
- **Internal survey** – this is a safety check inside the boat. It tests things like vents, fire extinguishers, wiring etc.

When you have an out of water survey you need to pay a 'slip' or 'haulout' fee. We'll take the boat out of the water for you, so the surveyor can do technical assessments of your hull.

After the survey (if you have one), we'll talk you through the technical stuff and explain what's important. We will then work with you and the boat vendor to agree a deal that is fair and reasonable. Please note, we only negotiate on things that relate to boat safety or insurance, not cosmetics like door handles and appliances.

At this point we can also quote for any additional work you would like us to carry out on your behalf, which we will be happy to do once the boat is paid for and belongs to you.



RUNNING COSTS

Once you've bought your boat, the canals are your ticket to a voyage of discovery. You might decide to tour the country, set up home, go cruising, breathe in the contrasting architecture or relax into a gentler pace of life.

As with any investment, you will need to budget for running costs. So here's a quick guide to some of the costs you can expect when you're a boat owner.

Insurance

- There are two types of insurance
 - fully comprehensive
 - third partyThese are similar to other types of insurance on the market.
- We recommend you use a specialist marine insurance company, as they will understand your specific needs.
- For older boats (20 years and older) you may need a survey to get insured.



Licences

- Most waters are Canal & River Trust controlled and you will need a current licence to cruise them.
- To get a licence you need current Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) documentation, which is the equivalent of a boat MOT; insurance is also required.
- Some navigations also require an Environment Agency licence.
- There are also private stretches of consortium-owned water (such as the Upper and Lower Avon) which will charge separately.

Moorings

- Probably the most significant cost, these vary depending on location and facilities. Each marina runs its own systems and set of rules.
- CRT offer linear moorings alongside the towpath.
- Details of costs can be found at www.canalrivertrust.org.uk or from your chosen marina.

Fuel

- Heating costs vary depending on usage. Webasto quotes a figure of 0.25 to 0.5 litres of fuel per hour, depending on the load.
- The average gas system consumes in the region of 465g/H per hour, which means a 13kg gas bottle will last for approx. 28 hours of continuous burning time.
- Fuel tanks are typically 200 litres.
- Engine consumption is around 1 litre per hour of cruising.

Maintenance

- The costs of maintaining your boat can vary depending on usage.
- At the very least we'd recommend you allow for an annual engine service; look after your engine and it will last forever (we've got engines that are 40 years old and still going strong).
- It also makes sense to budget for a blacking of the hull every two years.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Before you buy, it's natural to have a list of questions that you want to ask. We thought it would be a good idea to answer the questions that people ask us most often, so some examples are shown below.

Q: What does 10/6/4 mean?

A: The numbers used tell you the thickness of the steel used to build the boat. In this case, it means the bottom plate is 10mm thick, the hull sides are 6mm thick and the cabin is 4mm thick. Today's standard specification is 10/6/4, but 8/6/4 and 6/5/3 is common on older boats; if they've been looked after they will still give you many years of service.

Q: What is the cruising speed limit?

A: Canals have a speed limit of 4 miles per hour; a comfortable pace is 3mph.

Q: Do I have an inboard or outboard engine?

A: Most narrowboats have an inboard engine. A few short narrowboats have outboard engines – that is, the engine is mounted on the back of the boat.

Q: How old is the engine in my boat?

A: With recently built boats the engine will usually have been fitted when the boat was built; these tend to be Vetus, Barrus, Beta or Isuzu. In older boats the engine may have come from a car or been a stationary engine driving a pump or generator, these engines have been marinised (such as BMC Perkins or Listers). Don't worry about engine age or hours though; this isn't critical because a narrowboat engine turns very steadily at a slow pace.

Q: Should I have the boat surveyed when I buy?

A: We recommend you do, unless the boat has had a recent survey.

Q: How do I pay for my boat?

A: You can pay in any of the following ways:

- a) Debit card at our office (in person)
- b) Cheque (takes up to five working days to clear)
- c) Bankers draft
- d) Direct transfer (CHAPS same day transfer)
- e) BACS (takes three working days)
- f) Cash (up to a maximum of £10,000)

Q: When should I insure the boat?

A: From the day you expect funds to clear, as that's when you'll own it.

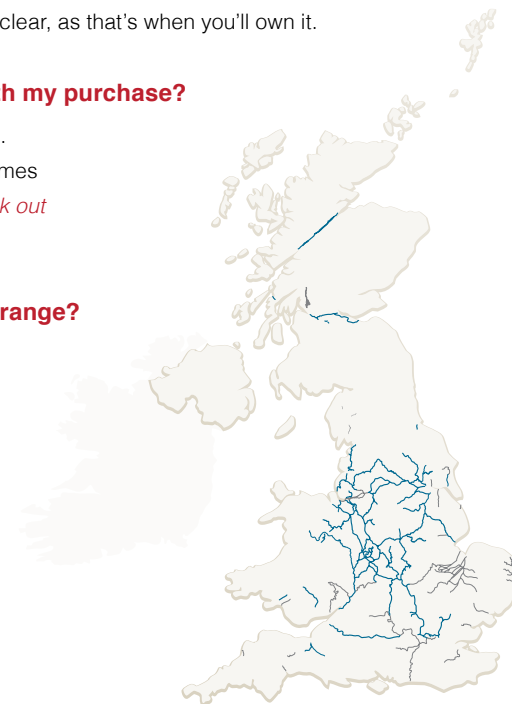
Q: Can I get finance to help with my purchase?

A: It depends on your circumstances.

Marine finance companies sometimes arrange finance for people – *check out page 16 for some contacts.*

Q: What is my typical cruising range?

A: All UK inland non-tidal waters (Broads, Fens inland tidal waters for access to the inland waterways system).



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Q: How do I steer the boat?

A: You use a Morse Control (like an accelerator and gear lever all in one) with a steering tiller to move the boat left and right. This only works under power though; if the power is off, you can drift! And boats don't steer in reverse.

Q: Where can I moor the boat overnight?

A: You can moor almost anywhere on the towpath side of the canal, except on bends, close to locks or in some short pounds where mooring is not allowed.

Q: A lot of your boats have a recent hull survey, what does that mean?

A: We try and encourage our vendors to have a hull survey. That way, you have peace of mind at the beginning of the process that the boat is structurally sound. (Note - not all vendors agree to do this and the cost of a survey is normally at the buyer's expense.)

Q: How long does the sales process last?

A: If a boat is being surveyed, then between four and six weeks is the norm. If you just want to take the boat as it is, then once we have cleared funds you can start using the boat.

Q: When a boat is under offer can I look at it?

A: No, at Whilton & Venetian it means we have a deal agreed and someone is going to buy the boat.

Q: Can I have the boat blacked at the time of survey?

A: No, at the point of survey the boat still belongs to the vendor so we can't undertake the work on your behalf. Blacking is also a three day process and because our slip ways are always busy, this needs to be booked over a weekend and in advance.

Q: Is it bad to have a boat over plated?

A: No, over plating is common and can add years on to the serviceable life of a boat.

Q: What is BSS or BSC?

A: BSS is the Boat Safety Scheme. BSC stands for Boat Safety Certificate, which is issued after a boat has been tested under the rules of the BSS. It's an independent safety check of the boat (like an MOT on a car) and lasts for four years. This makes up the main part of an internal boat survey.

Q: What is RCD?

A: This is the Recreational Craft Directive that applies to new boats. It's a statement from the manufacturer that the boat meets current regulation and is safe and fit for purpose; this also lasts for four years. It is similar to buying a new car that does not need an MOT.

“ Thank you
for handling the
sale of my boat
so efficiently and
speedily. ”

Anita Martin



WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT US

“ The guys at Whilton Marina are such a great team... we bought a narrowboat from here and they were so helpful from start to finish... I would recommend anyone who is buying a narrowboat to buy it from here.”

Gillian Wilkinson Stirrup

“ Your friendly and efficient manner made it a much less stressful experience than we expected... we hope to see you again in the not too distant future.”

Gerard and Marie

“ Thanks for such a rapid and efficient sale – all your staff were brilliant!”

J and P Hillier

USEFUL LINKS

Boat Safety Scheme

www.boatsafetyscheme.com

Canal & River Trust

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

Environment Agency

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency

Collidge and Partners

– inland waterways insurance
www.collidgeandpartners.co.uk

RoyScot Larch

– finance specialists
for narrowboats and widebeams
www.royscotlarch.co.uk

Royal Yachting association

– training courses
www.rya.org.uk

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you need more help or advice before making your decision, remember that our sales team is always eager to help.

You can contact us by:

**Whilton
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T: 01327 842577

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Our opening hours are:

9.00am - 5.00pm during Winter

9.00am - 6.00pm during BST

And don't forget, our marinas are open
seven days a week, 51 weeks a year.

No appointment necessary.

“...Realise Your Dream”

GLOSSARY

This list explains some terms people use when talking about narrowboats.

Air draft

The height of the boat taken from the waterline to the highest fixed point on the boat (so you won't hit a low bridge).

Aft

The rear of the craft.

Anodes

Blocks of magnesium fitted to the hull below the water line which corrode (rather than the hull) due to electrolysis.

Appliance record

Completed along with the four yearly Boat Safety Scheme inspection, this lists a boat's installed appliances, fuel type and ventilation.

Berth

The number of sleeping spaces, or the space where a boat is moored.

Boat safety certificate

An 'MOT' for narrowboats, which lasts four years.

Bow

The front of the craft.

Counter

Flat area below the water line above the swim.

Draft

The amount of the hull that is below water.

Freeboard

The distance between the waterline and the lowest deck level where water can enter the inside of the boat.

Gunwale

The top edge of the hull where it joins the cabin side, literally 'gun wall' (but pronounced 'gunnel' to rhyme with 'tunnel').

Hull

The main part of the boat that sits in the water and gives a boat its buoyancy.

Port/port side

Left-hand side when standing at the stern facing forward (towards the front end).

Skeg

A steel horizontal bar welded to the base plate (normally in channel form). Protruding from the stern to carry the lower end of the rudder post and bearing, it also gives some protection to the propeller.

Starboard/starboard side

Right-hand side when standing at the stern facing forward (towards the front end). Comes from the Norse term 'steerboard', describing the oar used to steer the boat.

Stern

The back of the boat.

Sterngear

The propeller, propeller shaft, sterntube, sterntube bearing and stuffing box or packing gland (an adjustable gland to help keep water out of the engine space bilge).

Swan's neck

The 'S' shaped steel bar welded to the rudder post. The tiller bar (brass shiny bar with a wooden handle on the end) is fitted to the swan's neck on a motor boat.

Swim

The after (back) underwater part of the hull that goes to a point to allow a cleaner flow of water over the propeller.

Tiller bar (or extension)

This is a brass shiny bar with a wooden handle on the end; it fits on the swan's neck of a motor boat to give extra leverage.

Transom

The normally rounded after (back) part of the boat, above the water where the steerer stands.

Tumblehome

The amount a cabin side slopes inwards (to give more bridge clearance).

Waterline

The line on the boat's hull, where it floats.

Windlass/lock key

A cranked handle for opening and closing lock paddles.