

## **Why Choose Wales for a narrowboat holiday?**

Wales is famous for its beautiful scenery; mountains, valleys, rolling hills, rivers, picturesque villages and warm people.

Welsh canal barge holidays on the Llangollen canal are a fantastic way to explore rural Wales at the relaxed pace it deserves. The Llangollen Canal snakes across North East Wales and takes you through two tunnels and across two aqueducts; the Chirk Aqueduct and its more famous neighbour the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. You'll get the chance to master the art of navigation through locks, but without those exhaustive lock-staircases (one lock after another). This should leave you plenty of time to simply admire the views as you cruise, to stop off at rustic canal-side pubs or to make the most of the nearby facilities available for canoeing, white water rafting and rock climbing.

You won't need to learn the Welsh language to get by on a Welsh canal barge holiday, but a grasp of some of the pronunciations is a big help - the infamous 'll' sound takes a little practice - put your tongue in the position for 'l' and blow out. You'll need to tell your friends about your experiences in Llangollen after all! And the famous Pontcysyllte Aqueduct? Start with calling it Pont Ker Sulty and work from there- not forgetting to use the 'll' sound, of course. Another stumbling point for most English speakers is the 'dd'; in fact nothing like a 'd' sound at all, more along the lines of 'th' as in 'this'. Despite some difficult pronunciations you shouldn't be frightened to try out some Welsh, after all a little effort goes a long way and it will make your barge holiday in Wales far more rewarding. Why not greet the other canal dwellers with a Welsh good morning 'bore da' (boreh da), or say good night to the locals in the canal-side pub with 'nos da'.

Wales is a country steeped in legend. Tales of Merlin, King Arthur, princesses, giants and dragons have been passed on through the generations and the spirit of Celtic imagination and story telling is still alive and well. You're bound to come across some of these myths on your barge holiday in Wales, and with the mystical beauty of the Welsh landscape it's easy to let your imagination take you away.

One site famous for the legends surrounding it is Castell Dinas Bran. This ruined castle in Llangollen was reputedly the hiding place for the Holy Grail according to 12th and 13th century manuscripts, while 19th century folk tales tell the story of a treasure-filled cave beneath the castle which can only be found by a boy who is followed by a white dog with silver eyes. Visit this medieval castle for yourself; close to Llangollen Wharf and with fantastic hilltop views.

The population of Wales according to the last census was just under 3 million, with the most densely populated areas in the south around Cardiff, Swansea and Newport. This leaves most of the north positively rural and largely untouched by overdevelopment. Barge holidays in Wales are a great choice for those who really want to unwind and to enjoy the experience of being close to the vast array of nature that flourishes in this lush green landscape. The Llangollen Canal lies in the Welsh borderlands which are home to 32 of the UK's 62 butterfly species, a pleasure to encounter when cruising during the summer and autumn months. The canal is also home to wildlife such as otters, dragonflies, water voles and kingfishers.

By taking a Welsh canal barge holiday on the Llangollen Canal, you have the chance to take in the wildlife, landscape and culture of Wales at your own pace. To experience the magic of cruising one of the most revered canals in Britain, see availability and booking and select Blackwater Meadow Marina.