

# BYWATER CRUISES

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Cruise quietly through beautiful  
Shropshire countryside

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## Bywater Country Cruise

One day or one or two nights

In the heyday of canals many thousands of horses would have been employed in pulling barges on the rivers and canals of the United Kingdom. Sadly there are now only five horse drawn trip boats working on a regular basis and "Countess of Maesbury" is the only horse drawn boat upon which you can enjoy a full day out or a holiday cruise.

A Country Cruise can be enjoyed by any group of friends or family seeking a unique day out or booked with shore based accommodation at the beginning and/or end to make it into a short break holiday.

To travel on a horse drawn boat is a totally unique experience and with "Countess" slipping silently through the clear waters of the Montgomery Canal and our horse, Cracker, clip clopping in the distance you have effectively stepped back some 200 years in time. Your journey through the countryside is marked by many small farm bridges, deserted village wharfs and the passage of the occasional lock which allows Cracker time to rest and usually refuel with grass.

If you have booked accommodation your Country Cruise begins the moment you arrive at your hotel, guest house or self catering cottage and comes to an end on the evening of your cruise or can be extended for an additional night. Passengers booking a Country Cruise enjoy one full day cruising the Montgomery Canal. Please see a 'Passenger's Diary'.



## Dates 2015

All Bywater Breaks can be booked on any weekdays and some weekends between May and October by any group of family or friends to a maximum of 10 people.

The Bywater breaks listed below can be booked by individuals, couple or groups.

Heritage Break	Tue 16th - Fri 19th June
Bygone Times Break	Mon 22nd - Fri 26th June
Heritage Break	Wed 9th - Sat 12th Sept
Bygone Times Break	Mon 14th - Fri 18th Sept

## Prices

<b>Bywater Country Cruise</b> One day and one or two nights	Group size:	4 people	£100.00 per person
		6 people	£65.00 per person
		8 people	£50.00 per person
		10 people	£40.00 per person
<b>Bywater Break</b> Two days and two or three nights	Group size:	4 people	£190.00 per person
		6 people	£125.00 per person
		8 people	£99.00 per person
		10 people	£75.00 per person
<b>Bywater Heritage Holiday</b> Two days and two or three nights	Group size:	4 people	£220.00 per person
		6 people	£150.00 per person
		8 people	£120.00 per person
		10 people	£99.00 per person
<b>Bywater Bygone Times Break</b> Three days and three or four nights	Group size:	4 people	£350.00 per person
		6 people	£300.00 per person
		8 people	£280.00 per person

Please note that the prices given include all travel on the boat/s but do not include your shore based accommodation and travel to/from the boats. These costs will be quoted on request depending on standard of hotel, guest house or self catering cottage chosen.



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## Bywater Break

Two days and two or three nights

A Bywater Break is the only holiday in the world that enables you to spend two full days horse boating through English countryside. On day one of your **Bywater Break** we cruise the complete length of the **Montgomery Canal** to **Frankton locks** where the canal joins the **Llangollen Canal**. The following day we retrace our steps to **Maesbury Marsh**. These are two very special days that cannot be enjoyed in any other part of the British Isles. Please see map and 'A Passenger's Diary'

## Bywater Heritage Holiday Break

Two days and two or three nights

Join **Bywater Cruises** for two very different days out in beautiful scenic mid Wales and Shropshire.

On the first morning of your **Heritage Holiday Break** you will be driven to the wharf at **Llangollen** to board your canal boat for a memorable journey along the **Llangollen Canal**. Once under way you can sit back and relax as the magnificent scenery of the **Vale of Llangollen** slips slowly by. Such is the historical importance of this length of the **Llangollen Canal** that it has recently been granted **World Heritage status**. Your crew will serve you morning coffee and cakes whilst underway. The canal takes a sharp turn onto **Thomas Telford's** famous aqueduct and you will suddenly find yourself 'cruising through the sky' 120 feet above the river **Dee**. Built in 1805 the **Pontcysyllte aqueduct** is one of the '**Seven Wonders**' of the waterways. Passengers crossing the aqueduct cannot fail to be impressed by the experience.

Once over the aqueduct your crew will moor up and you will be served a delicious light lunch and picnic that has been freshly prepared on board. In the afternoon we retrace our steps to **Llangollen** when you have a second chance to admire the mountain scenery whilst enjoying an afternoon cream tea. You will be returned to your hotel in plenty of time to relax before dinner.

On the second morning of your holiday you will be driven to **Maesbury Marsh** where you can help harness **Cracker** and enjoy a canal side morning coffee, after which you step aboard our Victorian style horse drawn packet boat "**Countess**". There is no finer way to travel than on a horse drawn boat through the shires of England. Once "**Countess**" is underway you can be as active or

**Redwith Bridge** Now the limit of navigation following the restoration from Gronwen wharf in 2010.

**Bridge 83** A unique accommodation lift bridge, peculiar to the Llangollen and Montgomery Canals.

**Gronwen Wharf Bridge 82** Only the 18th century wharfingers cottage remains but Gronwen was once a busy wharf where coal from the nearby Sweeney Mountain was loaded.

**Maesbury Mill Bridge 81** The short arm remains that once ran to Maesbury Mill where corn from Canada was milled for domestic use. The original lift bridge has been replaced with a modern metal structure based on the historic design.

**Bridge 80** Our base at Canal Central where a modern eco-friendly canal side tea rooms was built in 2005.

**Bridge 79** It is hard to imagine that the wharf at Maesbury was once a hive of activity as the main trans-shipment area for all means of produce going to and from Oswestry. The original canal side warehouse dated 1795 still remains (now a characterful canalside inn) as does the ancient crane.

**Bridge 78** A flat topped farm bridge with a winding hole (where narrow boats can be turned round) and where boats could discharge or load goods from the nearby farm.

**Ashton Bottom Lock** The last of the three locks, Aston Bottom lock is situated in quiet Shropshire countryside. The lock keeper's hut remains in situ and access can be gained to a large nature reserve designed to replicate a disused canal where a multitude of flora and fauna are to be found.

**Ashton Middle Lock** Located in timeless Shropshire countryside this remote lock lifts the canal by some seven feet.

**Ashton Top Lock** Once the limit of navigation this lock raises the canal by a further seven feet and is located alongside a nature reserve created to ensure the survival of rare plants and vegetation that once grew in the Montgomery Canal when it was in a dilapidated state.

**Queen's Head Bridge 76** The bridge here where the busy A5 trunk road crosses the canal was a major obstacle to the canal restoration. The modern raised bridges now allows navigation to boats. The popular Queen's Head inn stands nearby. Sand was once loaded here and the canalside warehouses are now a popular canoe centre.

**Rednal Bridge 74** The nearby 18th century warehouse is unique in as much as it was the exchange point for passengers arriving or leaving on the packet boat that ran an 'express' service between here and Newtown and the nearby railway. The 'signals' requesting boats to stop still remain in situ.

Bridge 74 is a finely proportioned roving bridge where the canal towpath changes from one side of the canal to the other. Such is the design of 'roving bridges' that the horse line does not need to be disconnected and both horse and boat can continue uninterrupted on their way. To the best of our knowledge Bywater Cruises are the only horse drawn boat operators whose horses can be seen negotiating a roving bridge.

**Rednal Basin** Soon after Rednal the canal passes Rednal Wharf. This extensive basin, entered via a swing bridge and now a nature reserve, was once a hive of activity where goods were moved between the railway and canal. Badgers have now set up 'home' in the railway embankment on one side of the basin.

**Perry Aqueduct** En route to the locks at Welsh Frankton the canal crosses an area of low lying farmland know as Perry Moor. Perry Aqueduct marks the location of the canal breach in 1934 which its then owners, the London Midland and Scottish Railways, failed to repair. This inaction resulted in the Montgomery Canal being officially abandoned in 1944. The canal now crosses the River Perry on a modern narrow steel aqueduct replacing the original brick built structure.

**Graham Palmer Lock** Soon after crossing the Perry Aqueduct the canal arrives at a small lock named after Graham Palmer. Graham was a larger than life figure who was the founder of the Waterway Recovery Group who, under his leadership, took on the responsibility of restoring this length of canal to navigation. Since closure in the 1930's the arable peat farmland had dried out and shrunk and the restored canal had to be lowered some 20" as a result. A memorial stone by the lock has been placed in his memory. The Waterways Recovery Group continues its work to this day.

**The Weston Arm** Soon after Bridge 71, the canal widens out at the junction of the Weston Arm. This length of the canal was planned to be the main line of the canal to Shrewsbury before it was decided to take the main line to Nantwich instead. A short length of the arm remains for overnight moorings but traces of the old canal can be found by any enthusiast wishing to do so.

**Welsh Frankton Locks** The bottom lock at Welsh Frankton marks the limit of canal over which Bywater Cruises are authorised to cruise. These four locks were finally re-opened in 1987. Two single locks give way to a pair of staircase locks and raise the Montgomery Canal by over 30 feet. Beyond the top lock is the main line of the Llangollen canal. Surrounded by unspoilt Shropshire countryside the locks at Welsh Frankton are kept in pristine condition by resident lock keepers and provide a rich source of entertainment when boats are going up or down.

idle as you wish. Sit and watch the world and and wildlife slip slowly by or take a gentle stroll along the towpath to keep Cracker company. The crew always appreciate help at the locks if you are 'au fait' with a windlass and there is much to admire in the way the early canal builders used their skill and imagination to dig their infant navigations through virgin landscape. We stop for lunch a a canalside inn before retracing our steps to Maesbury Marsh to arrive in time for an afternoon cream tea.

As with all Bywater Cruises you can be returned to your hotel in time for dinner or choose to drive home.

## **Bywater Bygone Times Break**

**Three or four nights**

Join Bywater Cruises for three very different and enjoyable days out in the beautiful countryside and scenery to be found in mid-Wales and the Shropshire Marches.

After breakfast on the first day of your Bygone Times Break you will be driven the short distance to Llangollen Wharf to step aboard our motor driven canal boat for an unforgettable cruise along the Llangollen Canal. Please see details given for a Heritage Holiday Break.

On the second morning of your Bygone Times Break you once again travel the short distance to Llangollen Wharf - this time to "step back in time" and board a horse drawn boat for a timeless journey through the Vale of Llangollen towards the Horse Shoe Falls. After your cruise there is time to enjoy a leisurely lunch in Llangollen and take a stroll round this historic little riverside town. In the afternoon we board a heritage Steam train for a whiff of nostalgia on a journey westward through the Vale of Llangollen towards the Cambrian Mountains. Returning from Corwen we end the afternoon enjoying afternoon tea overlooking the River Dee.

On the final morning of your holiday we drive you to the Montgomery Canal at Maesbury Marsh where, after enjoying a delicious mid-morning coffee, you step aboard our horse drawn boat "The Countess of Maesbury".

Ratty in 'Wind in the Willows' may have exclaimed that there is nothing, absolutely nothing better than messing about on boats but, as you will experience once you are underway, there is no better way to travel than on a horse drawn boat, through the Shires of England. Please see details from 'A Passenger's Diary'.