

# THE BEAR NECESSITIES

Yorkshire-based hire company bearBOATING is taking floating holidays to a new level of luxury. *Amelia Hamson* finds out more



*jessicaBOO* on a rural stretch of the Leeds & Liverpool.

**B**earBOATING, based in the beautiful Yorkshire Dales, offers luxury floating holidays on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, as well as RYA-certified training breaks. Owners Jeanette Hardy and Andy Stakes launched the business – quite literally – at 2012's Crick Boat Show, where narrowboat *jessicaBOO* was placed in the water for the first time. A second narrowboat, *mollyMOO*, was floated shortly afterwards and

new for this season is a wide-beam called *nemoNOO*, which is in the final stages of its build.

Andy and Jeanette are keen sailors, having chartered boats all over the world for many years. However, good seas are hard to find in the Yorkshire Dales. They also wanted to include their family of Newfoundland dogs – a breed renowned for being strong swimmers – in their adventures. This led them to the Leeds & Liverpool Canal and the flat-

bottomed boats of the inland waterways.

The company name hints at the couple's two passions: 'bare boating' is a sailing term for chartering a boat without a skipper, and Newfoundlands are often singled out for their bear-like resemblance. Hence, 'Bear Boating'. And the boats are all named after their pet pooches too...

## 'Boatique'

When designing the hire-boats Jeanette and Andy took time to consider what holidaymakers really want in return for their hard-earned cash. The pair have coined the term 'boatique' to describe their craft, and the word 'luxury' pops up regularly too – and rightly so.

*jessicaBOO* and *mollyMOO* are both four-berth, 57ft narrowboats with a Tyler-Wilson shell. Their interiors have a reverse layout and are finished to a high standard with bespoke, hand-built oak furniture and granite worktops in the galley. This is kept modern with a stylish grey-and-cream colour scheme, tiled floors and chic fitted blinds



The galleys have handmade units and granite worktops.

over the portholes. Everything is designed to be long lasting and easy to clean, as well as dog friendly.

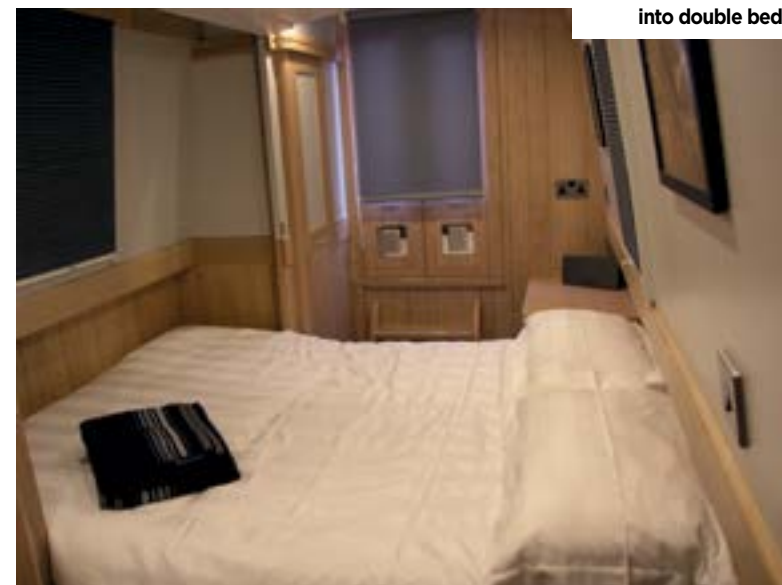
The boats have good-sized well decks for lounging and sunbathing, but for those not-so-clement days there's plenty of onboard entertainment. Don't expect the usual crumpled decks of cards or part-complete board games here, however. A flat-screen TV, DVD player, Wii games console, wifi and iPod docking station provide boredom-busting rainy-

day amusements. There's also a welcome pack onboard for each new party of guests – a selection of indulgent treats and handy essentials for tea breaks.

*nemoNOO* is the company's newest addition. The eight-berth wide-beam has been built to the same exacting standards as the two narrowboats on a modified Tyler Wilson shell – a larger-than-average rear deck with steering wheel controls allows for an extra outside seating/dining area. It has



The narrowboat cabins have sofas that convert into double beds.



The galley with breakfast bar.

two cabins with separate bathrooms and the option of further sleeping space in the saloon. All the beds are king sized, but can also be converted into single bunks.

Not yet in the water, *nemoNOO* is already proving a popular choice with potential hirers. With plenty of advance bookings in place and a high level of interest, Jeanette and Andy are already considering further additions to the fleet in the future.

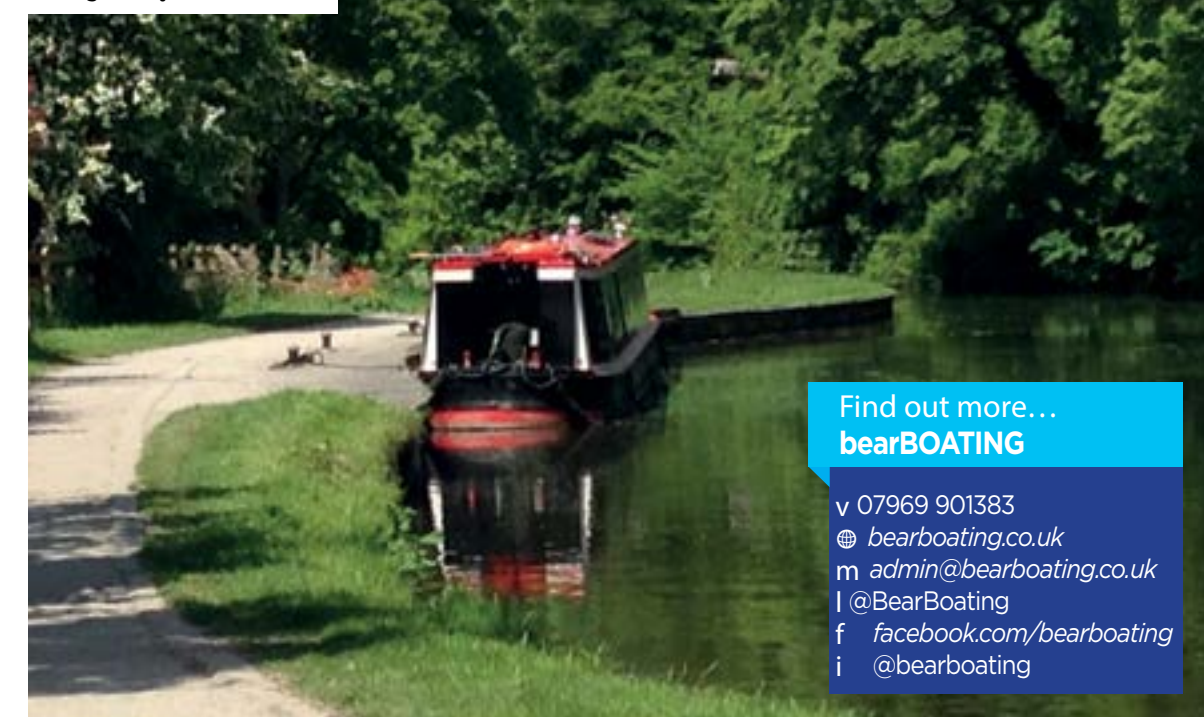
## Cruising options

bearBOATING operates from two bases: Apperley Bridge Marina and Barnoldswick Lower Park Marina. Having done their research, Andy and Jeanette saw a market for one-way cruising holidays – turning around halfway through a week-long break to re-do the same stretch is not everyone's cup of tea.

With just 39 miles between the two Leeds & Liverpool bases, holidaymakers can enjoy a steady cruise, with a minimum of one and a maximum of five hours of boating per day. This allows plenty of time to hop on and off to explore places like Saltaire and Skipton along the way – as well as giving novices a generous timeframe in which to tackle Bingley Five Rise.

Leeds city centre is just one day's cruise from Apperley Bridge Marina, so a trip to Clarence Dock or Brewery Wharf is ideally suited to weekend or short, mid-week breaks. It's also possible for week-long hirers to extend their journey in Leeds or, at the other end, Barrowford, if they want to see more of the L&L during their holiday.

bearBOATING promises high-end floating holidays on the L&L.



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The plans for bearBOATING's new wide-beam *nemoNOO*.



Luxury 'boatique' holidays with bearBOATING.