

A life less ordinary on Scotland's canals



Scots across the country could soon be swapping cul-de-sacs and cottages for waterways and wide-beam barges as Scottish Canals launches phase two of its residential mooring scheme – Living on Water.

Four new moorings in West Dunbartonshire's picturesque Bowling – the gateway to the Forth & Clyde Canal – are the first of more than 70 to be offered to the public as part of the second phase of the Living on Water initiative, a project that aims to create vibrant houseboat communities on Scotland's waterways.

Inspired by similar schemes in Scandinavia, Holland and England, Living on Water was originally piloted in 2012 with the introduction of sites at Glasgow's Speirs Wharf, Leamington Wharf in Edinburgh and Muirtown Wharf in Inverness. The success of these full-time moorings inspired the expansion of the project and the introduction of eight new locations, as well as additional moorings at the original pilot sites. These new locations mean that more than 70 families could soon be living a life less ordinary on the water of Scotland's canals.

Katie Hughes, Director of Estates at Scottish Canals, said: "Living on Water offers an alternative to traditional accommodation. It encourages residents to live a greener, more relaxed and individual way of life. Also, it can be significantly cheaper when compared to living inland – something which, in the current economic climate, has real appeal. We want to create houseboat communities around the canal network and encourage more people to live, work and play on and along the waterways.

“Since the launch of phase one in September 2012, we have had a fantastic response, not just from leisure boat owners choosing to begin living on-board, but from those completely new to living on the water. From professionals looking for affordable city centre living, to retirees searching for a tranquil spot to settle down, we have ensured there is something for everyone.”

Transport Minister, Keith Brown, added: “It is fantastic to see the work Scottish Canals is doing along Scotland’s waterways; transforming them into vibrant communities and providing residential opportunities for those looking for a way of living on Scotland’s beautiful water landscapes.

“I am pleased to hear of the success that the Living on Water initiative has had to date. This innovative approach, providing over 70 new residential moorings facilities, creates opportunities for people to set up home on Scotland’s canals”.

“Our country’s canal system offers a unique space for people to live both in the city and amongst stunning scenery. I wish Scottish Canals the best of luck with the launch of their second phase.”

Scotland’s 137-mile canal network is already home to around 100 residents, from families and first-time buyers, to retirees who have decided to downsize. One such resident is Liz Jones, who has been living aboard Dungraftin with her husband Billy for the past five years.

“We have always enjoyed being on the water and already had a leisure boat at Loch Lomond, but after raising two kids, we were ready to do something for us and fancied a new challenge. I felt that we had been cautious all our days and our dream was to live on the water full time.

“Living on water is so very different, but something I immediately took to. I enjoy the tranquillity of the canal and friendliness of the people we meet. Strangers say “good

morning” and smile.

“I love sitting in the back deck area, or as I like to call it – our ‘conservatory’. Although we have visited quite a lot of the Scottish canal network, when we are at home, we are south-facing, so we are able to watch the sunrise to port and sunset to starboard – it’s moments like these that make living on water even more magical.

“Our grandchildren love coming to visit and our wee dog loves the boat – in fact, he doesn’t know anything different until he visits a ‘real house’, where loves to run around especially up and down the stairs!”

The new moorings, which start from £2,000 a year, are being sold via an auction process at the Living on Water eBay shop and many, such as Leamington Wharf in the capital, are already proving extremely popular. Available off-plan from marketing agents Click-Let Water, the moorings come equipped with a good range of facilities including electricity, water supply and refuse disposal as standard. Many of the locations also have additional amenities such as facilities blocks which include showers, toilets and a laundry, others also boast storage sheds, cafés and landscaped gardens.

All revenue generated by the Living on Water initiative will be reinvested in safeguarding the heritage of the 200-year-old waterways and in projects that will help bring vibrancy, income and jobs to the communities that line their banks.

The nation’s canal network is in the midst of a renaissance and, with more than £1million recently invested in the upgrade of its towpaths and the launch of large-scale such as the Kelpies at the Helix and Scotland’s first urban white water centre at Pinkston in Glasgow, the 137-mile canal network offers some incredible sights. Providing a freedom that traditional living can’t compete with, exploring the many wonders of the waterways is as simple as untying a rope and

taking to the helm.

In total, 73 moorings will be available across the 11 sites by the end of September, with the majority of new locations going live in June and July. Both the additional and existing moorings at Muirtown Basin in Inverness (nine in total), Speirs Wharf in Glasgow (five in total) and Leamington Wharf in Edinburgh (two new sites) are available now and the other sites will roll out as follows:

- Bowling – four new moorings by 11th June
- Linlithgow – four new moorings by 17th June
- Causewayend – six new moorings by 25th June
- Southbank – eight new moorings by 28th June
- Cadder – six new moorings by 29th June
- Applecross Street – six new moorings by 5th July
- Grangemouth – 15 new moorings by 11th July
- Ratho – eight new moorings by 19th September

Submitted by [Grant Thomson](#)

