

B2 First – Gapped Text

*In the following text, six sentences or parts of sentences have been removed. Above the extract you will find the six removed sentences PLUS one sentence which doesn't fit. Choose from the sentences (A-G) the one which fits each gap (1-6). Remember, there is one extra sentence you do not need to use. **Write the correct letter in the box.***

Choose from the following sentences to fill the spaces in the text. There is one extra.

- A. Though our pace was slow in terms of distance covered, it was never boring.
 - B. We even remembered a torch to light the walk back from the pub!
 - C. That is why we were given a thorough explanation of all the safety regulations in force along the canal.
 - D. He patiently talked us through the boat's simple controls.
 - E. It passes through no big towns but has everything else that makes this type of holiday such fun: lovely scenery, friendly people, and a few locks, lift-bridges and a tunnel thrown in for good measure.
 - F. At a speed of four miles-per-hour, we travelled less than 20 miles in three days.
 - G. Sometimes there was so much to take in we almost forgot to bow our heads for the distinctive stone hump-back bridges: so narrow and low they seem to grow out of the banks.
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Drifting the Slow Lane on a Welsh Canal

Two hundred years ago, Britain's canals were the arteries of the Industrial Revolution but now they are used almost exclusively for pleasure. They're a great way to meet the British - and other nationalities: even actors Harrison Ford and Calista Flockhart have enjoyed a Welsh narrowboat holiday. Bob Barton reports on a trip afloat in Mid Wales.

Less is more on the canals. (1) Yet we felt we had seen and experienced so much and let into the secret that is one of the most beautiful parts of Britain's unique waterway world.

We became very fond of *Bronwen*, our three year-old cruiser, which was our movable home for a few serene days as we sailed along the Monmouth and Brecon canal in Mid Wales. With home comforts including a fully fitted kitchen complete with gas cooker and fridge, crockery and cookware; comfortable beds; a shower and toilet; central heating and cosy lounge area with TV and DVD player, it is easy to see how some boaters become so enthusiastic they decide to live on them for months at a time.

Any fears we had about taking charge of a 50ft-long behemoth on a narrow canal with its numerous toytown-like stone bridges were quickly dispelled by John of Cambrian Cruisers. (2) How to take on water, work the locks and lifting bridges we would encounter, and even came along with us for the first ten minutes to check we had got the hang of things.

We need not have worried: by the end of our first afternoon of cruising we had negotiated four lifting bridges, one tunnel and five locks, all enough to give my 'crew' a hearty appetite to be sated in one of the many canal-side pubs. One of the lifting bridges was electrically powered and my daughters, aged 11 and 15, loved closing the gate across the road to stop traffic and pushing the buttons to make lights flash and the bridge slowly rise.

The 35-mile Monmouth and Brecon Canal is a small, isolated part of Britain's 2,000-mile (3,220 km) network of navigable waterways, but it is a real gem. Built to carry coal and iron down to the sea, it is an 18th-century time-capsule, now used entirely for pleasure, which winds its way south from the market town of Brecon through the rocky uplands - the highest in Southern Britain - of the Brecon Beacons National Park. (3)

Its banks canopied with a wide variety of trees, the canal is constantly twisting, first one way and then another. For much of its length it is on a ridge, high above the foaming waters of the River Usk, whose route is even more convoluted than the canal; while in the distance are sheep-dotted meadows and craggy peaks with romantic names such as Sugar Loaf and Table Mountain. (4) There's always something to see, someone to wave at or talk to, or another brew of tea or coffee to attend to: it is thirsty work!

This being springtime, wild flowers were everywhere - bluebells, daffodils, forsythia and primroses, growing in huge bunches along the banks. Other seasons offer their own delights, I'm sure. Birds spotted ranged from skylarks and chaffinch to pheasants and the ubiquitous ducks with their ducklings in tow and, at one stage, a bat even circled our boat. Farther on, white tree blossom floated down on us like snowflakes - an idyllic scene. (5)

We prepared breakfast and lunch on board using the ample facilities, but when we wanted a more substantial meal there was a good choice of pubs, often with a blazing log fire, in canalside villages such as Talybont-on-Usk. At the *Coach and Horses* in Langynidr there was a particularly tasty, wide-ranging menu: the Portuguese owner, Abilio, explained that he arrived here as chef but liked it so much he decided to buy the whole pub and settle down.

One of the liberating aspects of canal boating is that you can moor up for the night almost wherever the fancy takes you. We just hammered in the mooring spikes, tied-up, placed a plank across to the bank and our mobile home was all set for the night. (6)

Brecon is best-known for its annual Jazz Festival when the whole town comes to life with the sound of music and of people having a good time. Sadly, we weren't able to sample the event this time - but we did manage to visit nearby Hay-on-Wye, the fascinating "town of second-hand books" established by Richard Booth in 1961, on our way back to the airport.