

GYPSY NEWS

CanalScapes Autumn 2026 Update



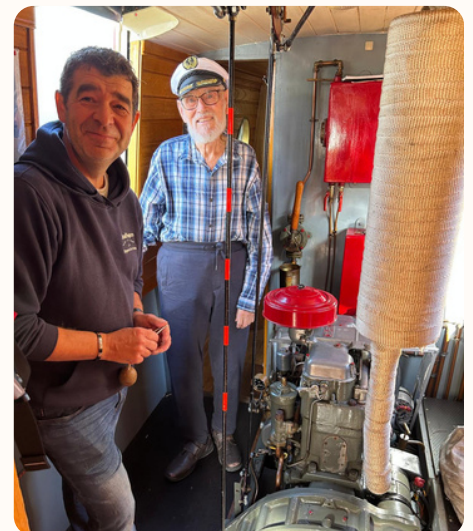
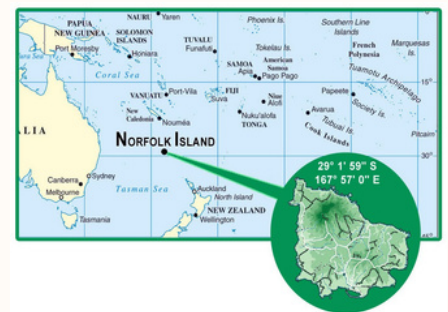
THE CANAL IN ITS REFLECTIVE SEASON

Autumn has settled gently over the canal, painting the sky in those dramatic colours that only this season seems able to manage. There's a quiet stillness in the air, the kind that makes the water feel reflective in more ways than one. Leaves drift, the light softens, and the whole canal seems to pause for a moment. It's a beautiful time to be out here, watching the season change one calm, copper-toned day at a time.

SKIPPER'S SEASONAL OPENING NOTE

It's been a great year on the waterways, steady, honest, and full of the kind of moments that stay with you. Pendelvin Gypsy has welcomed guests from all over, including our furthest-travelled visitors from **Norfolk Island in the Pacific**. That one still makes me shake my head in disbelief. And in October, Stephen joined me aboard **at the age of 90**, sharp, funny, and a reminder that the canal has room for every generation.

Those two trips, miles apart in every sense, have nudged me to think more about accessibility on the waterways. Not in a grand, official way just in the simple, practical ways that make the canal feel welcoming to both overseas travellers who've never stepped on a narrowboat before, and older guests who might need a steadier hand or a gentler pace. The boat, the experience, the way I host... all of it is slowly evolving to make sure anyone who wants to enjoy the cut can do so comfortably. That's the beauty of this place. Calm water, good company, and a day that moves at whatever speed you need it to. If you've been aboard this year, thank you. If you're thinking about it, there's always a space for you on Pendelvin Gypsy, whether you're travelling halfway across the world or simply taking things one careful step at a time.



HERITAGE SPOTLIGHT: PUBS ON THE CUT

Canalside pubs have always been part of the story of the waterways. Long before leisure cruising, they were the beating hearts of working routes. Places where boatmen swapped news, warmed up after a cold day on the cut, and found a meal that didn't come from the cabin stove. That tradition hasn't gone anywhere. Today, these pubs still offer the same mix of comfort, character, and community, just with fewer horses and more Sunday roasts!

Along our stretch of the Trent & Mersey, each pub has its own personality. **The Greyhound at Burston** sits quietly off the towpath, a proper country pub where time seems to slow down the moment you step inside. A little further along, the **Dog & Doublet at Sandon** brings that classic canalside welcome, a favourite for boaters who want good food and a warm seat after a steady cruise.



The Hollybush at Salt is one of those places that feels like it's been part of the canal forever. Boatmen once called for a pint and a chat, and you can still sense that history in the beams and brickwork. Further from Stone near to our turning point, the **Saracen's Head at Weston** has become a regular stop for many of our guests. A lively, friendly pub that's embraced its role in the boating community. And just up the road, the **Woolpack at Weston** offers a different kind of charm: simple, honest, and exactly what a village pub on the green should be.

Together, these pubs form a thread that runs alongside the water, a reminder that the canal has always been more than locks and towpaths. It's a social route, a meeting place, and a way of life. Pendelvin Gypsy continues that tradition today, giving guests the chance to enjoy the same stops, the same stories, and the same warm welcomes that boaters have relied on for generations.

We now run dedicated 6-hour cruises that take in these classic canalside pubs, a relaxed way to enjoy the water, the heritage, and a proper pint or two along the way. Step aboard Pendelvin Gypsy and make a day of it — good food, calm water, and the best of Staffordshire's canal tradition all in one journey.

★ BIG NEWS FROM CANALSCAPES: WE'RE ON SKY TV!

Every so often, something happens on the canal that makes you stop, smile, and realise just how far this little boat has come. This is one of those moments. After a year of steady cruising, brilliant guests, and more stories than I can count, CanalScapes is heading to **Sky TV**.

Yes, Pendelvin Gypsy will be featured on **TravelXP Channel**, as part of the programme **Discover Britain**. You'll be able to watch it on **Sky Channel 178**, at 7pm on **October 31st**.

Big thanks to BIG PICTURE TV for making this happen!



Discover Britain

It's a huge milestone for us. What started as a simple idea, creating calm, meaningful experiences on the water has grown into something that's now being shared with viewers across the world. The team at Discover Britain spent time with us on the cut, capturing the atmosphere, the heritage, and the quiet magic that makes these waterways special. Seeing Pendelvin Gypsy on international TV is something I never imagined when this all began.

And there's more. Our **TV advert** will start airing the week before, at the same time and on the same channel. So if you're flicking through Sky and spot a familiar boat gliding along the Trent & Mersey, that'll be us.

This is a proud moment not just for CanalScapes, but for everyone who's stepped aboard this year. From our furthest-travelled guests from Norfolk Island to Stephen at 90, every trip has shaped the story that's now being shared on screen. It's your laughter, your conversations, your time on the water that made this possible.

So mark the date, tell a friend, and settle in at 7pm on the 31st. Pendelvin Gypsy is heading to Sky and you're part of the journey.

LOOKING BACK AT 2026 — AND AHEAD TO 2027

AUTUMN & WINTER ON THE CUT

As the year draws in, the canal takes on a different kind of beauty. The water settles, the colours deepen, and the pace naturally slows, perfect for the kind of trips Pendelvin Gypsy was built for. Our autumn and winter cruises in 2026 have been some of the most memorable yet: steady days on the water, warm cabins, misty mornings, and those quiet evenings where guests can simply settle in and enjoy the stillness.



This season has also seen more people choosing our 6-hour pub cruises, taking in the Greyhound, Dog & Doublet, Hollybush, and the Saracen's Head. It's been a pleasure to share these routes with guests who appreciate the heritage and the gentle rhythm of the waterways at this time of year.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2027

As we prepare for a new season on the water, 2027 already promises fresh journeys, quieter routes, and more moments of calm aboard Pendelvin Gypsy. One of the early highlights will be the Norbury Canal Festival, running from 1st–3rd May, where we'll be proudly showcasing the boat among the heritage craft and canal traditions that make the event so special. If you're thinking about joining us next year, now is the perfect time.

Book your 2027 trip before 31 December 2026 to keep 2026 prices — plus an extra 10% off.

A gentle nudge to secure your favourite dates, and a thank-you to everyone who continues to support and share the journey with us.



Christmas and New Year aboard Pendelvin Gypsy are normally spoken for months in advance. Quiet stretches of canal, warm cabins, soft lights reflecting on still water, and that unmistakable feeling of slowing down when the rest of the world speeds up.

This year, though, something rare has happened:

Our Christmas and New Year short-stay dates are still open.



If you've ever wondered what the cut feels like in mid-winter, this is the moment. Expect misty mornings, cosy evenings, festive touches onboard, and the kind of peaceful holiday escape you simply can't find anywhere else.

Whether it's a gentle Christmas retreat or a New Year reset on the water, Pendelvin Gypsy offers a calm, restorative way to end the year. Just you, the canal, and time to breathe.

These dates won't stay open for long — book your festive stay now and make Christmas 2026 one to remember.





*In GypsyNews, we share the **rhythm of CanalScapes**, the journeys, the people, and the quiet reflections afloat.*

*DeeperDive takes you **further beneath the surface**, exploring the craft, the stories, and the heritage that continue to shape life on the water.*

*For readers who enjoy going a little further, who like to know **the “why” behind the experience**, we’ve created the DeeperDive section. It’s a space for the background, the unseen details, and the moments that don’t always make the front page but enrich every edition. A place where **curiosity meets the cut**, and where each story finds its deeper meaning.*



Skipper's Journey Back to the Water

In 1985, a teenage boy stood at the tiller of Rutherford's floating restaurant in Stone, guiding diners gently along the Trent & Mersey Canal. Day after day, in all weathers, he cruised between the Star and the winding hole at Sandon, learning the rhythms of the water and the quiet responsibility of being a skipper. That boy was me, and although I didn't know it then, those early years on the canal would shape the rest of my life.

Four decades later, after a career that took me far from Staffordshire, I've found myself back where it all began. And that homecoming is the story behind CanalScapes, a new skippered narrowboat experience based at Aston Marina.

A Life in Engineering and Aviation

After my early boating years, I joined the British Army in 1989 as a helicopter technician with the Army Air Corps (REME). Ten years of military service taught me precision, discipline, and the importance of keeping people safe, skills that would later prove invaluable.

When I left the Army, I founded EleV8 Aviation, an aerospace engineering company that has taken me to projects around the world. Since 2017, EleV8 has supported the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight at RAF Coningsby, leading a major project to digitise the technical manuals for the Spitfire, Hurricane, and Lancaster. It's work that helps preserve the safe operation of these iconic aircraft for future generations.

But despite the excitement of aviation, the canals never quite left me.



Lockdown, a Family Boat, and an Unexpected Realisation

In 2020, during lockdown, my family and I bought a narrowboat as a way to escape the four walls. What began as a simple outlet quickly became a rediscovery of everything we loved about canal life, slow days, open skies, and conversations with strangers at locks.

Curious onlookers often asked what boating was like, so I began offering short rides. Ten minutes later, they'd step off smiling, surprised by how peaceful and restorative the experience was.

Those moments revealed something important:
many people would love the canals... ***if only someone made it easy for them to try.***
That realisation became the seed of CanalScapes.

Introducing CanalScapes: A Different Kind of Canal Experience

Today, CanalScapes offers skippered day trips and short stays aboard Pendelvin Gypsy, our classic narrowboat moored at Aston Marina. Unlike traditional hire boats, every trip is fully skippered, guests can relax, learn, or simply watch the world drift by.

In the evenings, I step off the boat, leaving guests to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the canal entirely to themselves. It's a gentle, unhurried experience designed for people who want to reconnect with nature, celebrate a special occasion, or simply try something new without the stress of steering.

Many local guests still remember Rutherford's floating restaurant from the 1980s and are delighted to discover I may well have skippered them 40 years ago. One even presented me with a painting of Pendelvin Gypsy, watched over by the Spitfires and the Lancaster, a perfect blend of my past on the water and my years in aviation.



Coming Full Circle

Now, in 2026, as my long-running project with the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight draws to a close, I find myself returning to the very waters where my journey began. CanalScapes isn't just a business, it's a homecoming, a chance to share the calm, beauty, and heritage of our local canals with people who may never have experienced them before.

For those who live in and around Stone, the waterways are quite literally on our doorstep. My hope is that CanalScapes helps more people rediscover what makes them so special.

Mark Wilson
Owner & Skipper, CanalScapes

