



NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners
Issue 6—November 2012

CONFUSION OR CLARITY?
CRT's continuous cruiser initiative
K&A mooring strategy

GOOD NEWS: LICENCE FEES PEGGED
BAD NEWS: EU diesel tax to rise

FLOATING HOMES
NABO response to the houseboat consultation



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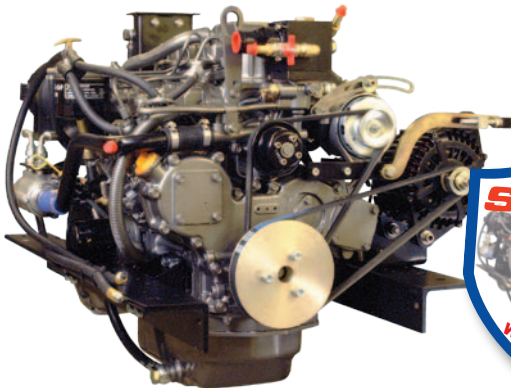
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NABO News

The magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners

Issue 6 November 2012

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Contributions

Articles, letters, cartoons and photos are most welcome. Images and photos in JPEG format please.

Contributions to nabonews@nabo.org.uk

Next NABO News Copy Date

Please email or post your contributions by
8th December 2012

Front Cover Photo Competition



This month's cover photo is from Matthew Veasey, showing the breach near Dutton Hollow on the Trent & Mersey Canal www.facebook.com/LittleLeighVillage

Win yourself a year's free membership by sending us an image for the front cover of

the new NABO News. In the first instance please send a low resolution JPEG by email. The photo should ideally be portrait format with a width of at least 1800 pixels.

NABO Calendar 2012

Council Meetings in 2012:
Saturday November 17th (AGM)
Saturday November 24th

The AGM is at the Beef and Barge pub at Brookhaven, Trowbridge Road, Widbrook, near Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 1UD (01225 309318). Council meetings are normally at the Waggon and Horses, Church St., Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3AD. Remember that members are welcome to attend meetings—just let the Secretary or Chairman know in advance (contact details overleaf).

NABO News is published by the **National Association of Boat Owners**
FREEPOST (BM8367), Birmingham B31 2BR Editor: Peter Fellows

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Bouquets and brickbats

Peter Fellows gets his party clothes ready for the AGM

By the time you read this it will be approaching six months since the CRT took over the waterways and now is a good time to look at how things have started off. There has, of course, been an enormous number of appointments to the various advisory groups and local partnerships, and it will take some time for these to all bed in and begin to work—and to see how CRT Trustees are able to coordinate and make sensible policies from the outcomes of these diverse deliberations. At present there are, as might be expected, some plusses and minuses as reported in this issue.

A bouquet is due to CRT for the new dredging policy, which promises to be more transparent, with increased funding and a request for inputs from boaters. If you know somewhere that has some high spots let the local waterway manager know and CRT promise this will be taken into account when planning dredging priorities.

However, there remain issues to be addressed with the new K&A moorings strategy as reported by Geoffrey Rogerson. Elsewhere in this issue CRT has announced its policy towards continuous cruisers, which has the support of the IWA

and Residential Boat Owners Association. This follows a statement in NABO News on NABO's position earlier this year and much debate in the letters pages. The CRT announcement came just as we were going to press and NABO will make its response in a future issue.

There are also updates on the CRT consultation on houseboat permits and CRT's efforts to deal with the serious canal breaches due to heavy rain in September which has caused it to rethink how it will spend its funds. So in the last six months CRT Trustees and managers have certainly been busy, with four important policy statements and work on the ground to deal with the unprecedented drought-then-deluge that has not occurred for 100 years—not a bad start, but there remain issues to be addressed.

Elsewhere in this issue Louis Jankel reports on progress with consultations between the EA and Thames user groups, there is my own two pennyworth on a visit to the Droitwich Canals and there are articles on boat safety following a number of recent sinkings.

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM on the 17th November.



Something old, something new

Chairman **David Fletcher** rallies his troops for a rousing AGM

We have all heard of the serious breach and stoppages on the T&M in the last few weeks. CRT could have done without it at any time, but not in the first months of the new organisation. The local team are obviously pulling out all the stops to get it fixed and get boaters moving again. It is an awakening to the new opportunities for fundraising and it must be done; we should welcome the chance to ask new contributors who enjoy the system to give money, spreading the load; and give too if we are able and willing. We are all thinking how it could have been avoided, perhaps by the return to the policy of lengthsmen who would have that important local knowledge. As an engineer who has worked on old equipment, I am only too aware of the fine judgement between keeping things going at low cost and throwing in the towel for expensive replacements. We should support the engineers who have to make these judgements and the funding they need to make them more precise. I wonder if, with the current spell of weather swings, we are seeing circumstances not seen within recent experience. Our role as boaters is always to tell navigation authorities if we are concerned about something.

Licenses pegged to inflation

I welcome the CRT announcement that from 2014 boat licence increases will be held at inflation only. This will provide confidence to newcomers and some relief to we who are paying the significant sums. Next year the increase will be at infla-

tion plus 2% as for the last two years. This increase on the licence income is a tidy sum, not enough to mend a breach, but enough for something that makes a difference to boaters' experience and not just lost in the big bucket of money that is needed for maintenance and overheads. Now the pressure is on the EA to follow suit on their registration fees and hold increases down to inflation as well.

In the last few weeks the CRT Trustees debated the age-old issue of bona fide navigation. NABO made a submission prior to the meeting based on items from NABO News, including one from Tony's 'snippets' of articles from the early days of NABO. Last year, we took the lead to sit with BW to help with the revised wording of the guidance notes, so we are satisfied with them at the moment. As I write, the paper from the CRT meeting has been released. There is much to agree with and a few hoary old favourites to mirror the new proposals for mooring on the west end of the K&A. There will be a lot of work needed in the coming months to gather views, form a consensus and go into print.

Enough of CRT. We are coming up to another AGM and there is a lot to think about for our future: where we are going and how we should spend our energy. You are always very supportive, but there are just not enough of us at the moment, both as members and on the Council. We have some hard decisions to make. Please try and be there to support the Association and give your views.

Correction

Last month I let you all down with some incorrect wording in this column when referring to Sally Ash, CRT Head of Boating. I apologise and accept that my written comments were of an unacceptable standard and fall short of proper respect for Ms. Ash and CRT, who are doing a difficult job. NABO is from time to time in disagreement with navigation authorities, but I should not let that impinge on the accuracy of what I write.

NABO AGM

NABO's AGM will take place at The Beef and Barge pub near Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, on Saturday 17th November commencing at 10.30am with the venue open from 10am for tea and coffee. The format this year is to quickly run through the formalities, elect officers (nominations received are shown below), and hear our Chairman's review of the past year combined with an open session about NABO's role and its future position. After lunch at 12.30pm (free to all NABO Members who attend), we plan one of our 'Boaters Forum' sessions and our Guest for this is Mike Rodd, a NABO member but better known as Chair of the K&A Trust. The Forum is open to all comers—not just NABO members—and boat clubs and marinas within striking distance of Bradford on Avon have been invited. It's informal and Secretary Richard Carpenter keeps some form of order. With NABO Councillors past, present and future on hand there is always a great deal of experience in the room to discuss issues affecting boat owners. Everyone will have a chance to join in the debate about all issues and it is a unique opportunity to better understand all that is involved, without it being too formal.

NABO Council

The following existing Councillors have been nominated and have indicated their willingness to stand for election again: **David Fletcher, Stephen Peters, Andrew Colyer, Peter Fellows, Simon Robbins** and **Geoffrey Rogerson**. We also have a new nominee, **Jane Taylor**, an independent councillor and psychoanalyst based in the Staffordshire/Derbyshire area, who lives aboard nb Ofira with her partner. Jane hopes to be able to bring her skills to NABO and help boaters and their boating needs by understanding and communicating with them at all levels. **Richard Carpenter** has offered to continue as General Secretary subject to the new Council's approval, but will not be a full Council member due to other pressures (permitted in our constitution in the case of General Secretary, which is seen as an administrative role). At a recent Council meeting, all expressed many thanks for the work put in over the past few years by John Slee, who has stepped down from Council and

NABO Boater's Forum

Starting at 12.30 after the AGM

A chance to put your questions to **Mike Rodd** of the K&A Trust and **NABO Council members**.

Open to all

so please pass on this invitation to attend our forum to any boating or canal friends



retired to enjoy his journey around the system. John has been responsible for so much of our move to embrace new technology as well as his viewpoint as a bona fide continuous cruiser.

Members are reminded that the new Council can co-opt people to become Councillors, and so if we have willing helpers who may like to try a role there is a mechanism in place to join us.

The Beef and Barges's address is at Brookhaven as part of the marina, BA15 1UD, Tel: 01225 309318. We are able to arrange lifts from Bradford on Avon Station—just let me know if you require one.

Boat Licence Fees: 2013 and beyond

CRT Trustees have decided to limit boat licence fee increases to inflation only for three years from 2014. Their decision was made at the same time as endorsing the third and final year of BW's planned licence prices, which will see licence fees rise from 1st April 2013 by 4.6% (2% above inflation). Simon Salem, CRT's Marketing Director, said: "Whilst boaters alone can't be expected to pay the full cost of looking after the waterways, their boats are integral to the appeal of the canals and rivers and therefore to the ability of the Trust to win support from other sources. In making a three year decision to peg licence fees to inflation, we have listened to boaters' clearly expressed desire for certainty over future fees. We have also done what we can to limit increases, recognising that the number of boats on the waterways has remained static and that boaters face significant financial pressures as part of the wider effects of recession."

Breaches latest

In late September, heavy rainfall caused a large breach that closed the Trent and Mersey Canal at Dutton Hollow, south of Dutton Lock. There was also significant damage to a supporting embankment at Croxton Flash near Middlewich. Vince Moran, CRT Operations Director reported: "Our civil engineering contractor is on site at Croxton Flash and has started work, which includes laying an access track. At least 50 metres of embankment will need to be repaired working from the river below, which will be challenging. At Dutton, the Trust's engineers are assessing various solutions for what will be a complex repair given the challenges of access to the site—half a mile from the nearest bridge and the embankment is on a steep slope. A 'finger in the air' estimate is that 1,000 tonnes of material has been washed away. We had not recorded any leaks at the embankment before the deluge or any other reasons to be overly concerned. We are really grateful to the member of the public who alerted us to a developing problem at the site so that we were able to get stop planks in before the breach happened."

The canal and towpath remain closed from Big Lock to Bridge 179 at Whatcroft and at Dutton Hollow from Acton Quay at Bridge 209 to Bridge 213. Between Whatcroft and Acton, the canal level is navigable and customers are able to access the services at Anderton. Anderton Boat Lift remains operational for access to/from the River Weaver.

Update by Vince Moran

This time last year our focus was on the worst drought in over 100 years and we were re-jigging our plans to release around £1m for drought alleviation measures. Then the rains came! Flash rains hit us first at Hebden Bridge where torrential downpours tore up stretches of towpath, gouging channels and ripping down walls—with additional unplanned costs of around £300k. Then we discovered that an area of the Mon & Breck Canal was beginning to leak badly. The solution is relining at a cost of around £1.5m—so that was almost £2m of unplanned works before



we got through the summer! Just before the Trent & Mersey breach, we were planning to release the £2m contingency fund to undertake maintenance and repair projects this winter such as lock grouting, bridge painting and maintenance, stabilisation of Woodseaves Cutting and some additional dredging. Then the Trent & Mersey breached, with the repair estimated at £1.75m. The choice was either to defer the additional projects or overspend by around £1.5m. To delay any of the works now would cause inconvenience to boaters and probably cost more in the end. So I am pleased to say we have decided to overspend so that we can undertake the majority of planned projects and fix the Trent & Mersey. This means using some money from next year so there will be less around in 2013/14. We're planning to have the Trent & Mersey fully open by Spring, but we don't need any further unforeseen events this year! I'd like to thank the boaters and members of the community who have contributed to the breach appeal, which now stands at over £11,000. This financial support wasn't available a few months ago and is an indication of the opportunities presented by being a Trust. Details of how to donate can be found at: www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/breach or alternately text BREACH to 70800.



A sinking feeling?

Following a number of recent sinkings and partial sinkings where water entered through the weed hatch, the Boat Safety Scheme committee has reminded owners of boats with weed hatches to make a routine of checking weed hatch covers. You should especially check that the hatch sealing gasket is in good condition and effective. You should also inspect the hatch body and cover, at least annually, to make sure they are still in good condition with no early signs of problems. At the same time, monitor the distance to the waterline: the accepted standard is at least 150mm between the weed hatch top and the normal waterline, but changes to ballasting or adding equipment during the boat's life may mean the stern sits lower in the water. Also the natural pull-down of the stern when underway causes water from the propeller to test the weed hatch seals every time the boat is put in gear. So, if you don't do so already, make it a routine to check that the hatch cover bolts are fully tightened before setting off and any time after the hatch has been used.

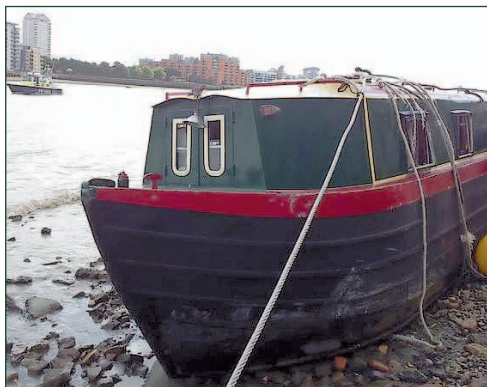


...and another

The Port of London Authority has issued a safety bulletin in response to a narrowboat sinking in Limehouse Reach in August. The boat was delivered by road to South Dock Marina for a new owner who set off for an overnight berth in Limehouse Marina a short distance up the River Thames. The boat had five adults and a dog on board. Shortly into their trip the crew noticed a change in the engine note and opened the engine room hatch to find the engine half-submerged.

Everyone moved to the stern to try and bail out the engine room, but were unable to cope with the amount of water entering. The engine room filled and flooded into the main cabin submerging the aft coaming, resulting in the vessel sinking within ten seconds. None of the crew or the dog had lifejackets, but they were rescued by a nearby rigid inflatable boat and a police launch. The hull of the vessel had been completely double-plated and the increased weight resulted in a reduced safety clearance with the bottom of the engine room vent approximately 65mm above the waterline. With three people on the aft deck, the engine room air vent became submerged by 50mm and the resulting flooding and sinking of the vessel was inevitable.

The following safety lessons should be carefully considered by narrowboat owners before venturing onto the tidal Thames: it is a Category C waterway, where wave heights of up to 1.2m may be encountered and vessels should be suitably prepared for these conditions. Through-hull fittings, vents and exhaust outlets should be positioned as high up as practicable to meet the conditions likely to be encountered. Where these cannot be moved to a safe location, consideration should be given as to whether the boat is suitable to navigate the tidal river. Where modifications have been made to a vessel, such as the extensive use of double-plating, it is important to check that sufficient clearance remains for the vessel to safely navigate the waterway. Lifejackets and other safety equipment should always be provided when navigating the tidal Thames and it is strongly recommended that lifejackets are worn at all times when on deck.



CRT and CC

As the debate goes on, CRT issues a policy briefing

The briefing and policy paper is available at <http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/library/2153.pdf>

Geoffrey Rogerson examines the implications on page 24

In October, CRT's Council and Trustees, with the support of the IWA and the Residential Boat Owners Association (RBOA), announced their interpretation of the law relating to continuous cruising and proposed a number of new initiatives to address perceived misuse of licensing and mooring rules.

- Greater clarity for continuous cruisers on how to comply with the licence terms, backed by sufficient enforcement to avoid continued growth of non-compliance.
- Stronger enforcement of maxi-

mum time limits at visitor moorings, including new signage showing a limit of total days per month as well as the maximum stay time for a single visit.

- The introduction of extended stay charges to deter overstay-ing, backed by more frequent site visits by the Trust's enforcement team; and
- A strategic role for the Trust's Waterway Partnerships in identifying priority areas for action.

“Those who live aboard at their home mooring and those continuously cruising within the spirit of the legislation will not be adversely affected by the new initiatives.”

At 'hot-spot' locations on the western end of K&A and within London, CRT is already discussing solutions with local boaters. There will also be more focus on validating new applications for licences from boaters without a home mooring, and 'strengthening boater education' in respect of boat licence terms and conditions.

Simon Salem commented: “Those who live aboard at their home mooring and those continuously cruising within the spirit of the legislation will not be adversely affected by the new initiatives.”

Alan Wildman, chair of the RBOA, commented: “RBOA welcomes the commitment to tackle the question of non-compliant continu-

The CC Debate

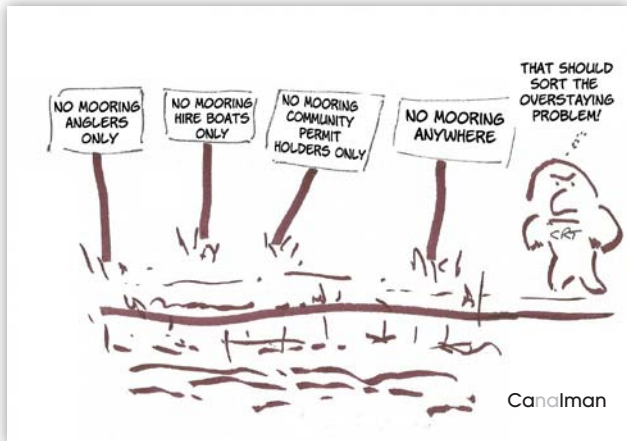
There has been much discussion of late in letters to NABO News and elsewhere about continuous cruisers. This is NABO's position:

- We support genuine continuous cruisers who navigate bona fide within the terms of the 1995 BW Act.
- We support proportional enforcement of the 1995 Act (section 17) specifically on bona fide navigation and we support significant funding for enforcement of the Act.
- We support the publication of summary boat checking data so that the extent of any problems is clear, and to give greater transparency on enforcement by CRT.
- We suggest that any new initiatives are justified by evidence-based decision making and legal transparency.
- We understand the need for time-limited interim solutions where residential boaters are disadvantaged though previous lack of enforcement.

To summarise, the continuous mooring debate is divisive; boaters should stick together. All boaters have a responsibility to use the waterways unselfishly and, where a boater is shown to not be bona fide navigating, NABO supports proportional and even-handed enforcement to encourage unselfish behaviour. NABO is pleased to see these long-standing issues high on the list of CRT priorities. They need to be resolved within a set timescale, with clear terms of reference that can lead to a workable and widely supported conclusion.

ous cruising patterns. It recognises that CRT is making a commendable effort to assist those whose lifestyle falls outside the continuous cruising licence terms. There is certainly no desire to drive anyone from the inland waterways, only to find a way for us all to work and live together in harmony and within the rules.”

Paul Roper, Chairman of IWA's Navigation Committee, said: “IWA has been concerned about this issue and so welcomes the acceptance by CRT that something needs to be urgently done about the problems caused by non-compliant continuous cruisers, and in fact anyone over-staying, especially on visitor moorings. We look forward to a prompt resolution of this matter for the benefit of all users, whilst having



proper regard to applying sympathetic transitional arrangements for any residential boaters who may currently be in default.”

It pays to read the small print!

Mike Annan notices new EU licence proposals and changes to red diesel tucked away in an amendment to the RCD

A committee of the European Parliament recently published its proposals to amend the Recreational Craft Directive (RCD) which applies to all new boats. As you would expect, much of it related to the technical details of marine engines and boats and probably most are not controversial to any of the member states, since they seek to keep boats up to date with advancing technical standards. However, tucked away is one important proposed amendment that doesn't really belong there, but it is to be considered by the European Parliament in December this year. This proposal works on the principle of 'he who shouts loudest' and comes primarily from the Belgian and Netherland's representatives. It reads:

(26a) there is no harmonisation or level playing field with regard to watercraft licences or technical checks, and tax evasion can still take place

through the use of agricultural diesel. Therefore the Commission should consider submitting proposals to harmonise watercraft licences at Union level, to encourage regular technical checks and to prevent tax evasion by discouraging the use of agricultural diesel.

If unopposed at the meeting, this would become the EU's stated position and it then instructs its President to forward its position to the Commission and to National Parliaments. Don't be confused: the license they refer to is not a waterways licence but the equivalent of a driving licence. Do we want one, do we need one? It will be a version of the International Certificate of Competence (ICC) and could become compulsory for all boaters. Is that really a part of the recreational craft directive? I think not! Plus, if you cannot win the arguments about the use of red diesel by boats, why not try and slip in some controls through this innocuous piece of red tape.

So we must ensure that our representatives in Brussels consider this proposal and that our Waterways Minister clearly understands the views of boaters and NABO. Why not write to your MEP—they will be at the Parliament meeting on 11th December. The main document is on the NABO website.

Bottom too near the top?

CRT's dredging strategy as outlined to the Navigation Advisory Group.

Extract from a presentation by **Graham Holland**, Head of Asset Management

Why Now? Previous 'promises' made to users were not always well defined and processes were not as clearly defined as they should have been, leading to concern from user groups about past 'arbitrary' decisions on dredge depth etc. A failure to communicate reasons for decisions has led to requests from user groups for a coherent written strategy. The current review will also 'put to bed' some historical internal and external misconceptions about minimum open channel dimensions and dredge depth, and prioritise dredging against other major works projects and within strategic expenditure categories.

pre-treatment is required on-site to lower the water content by vacuum, centrifuge, lime, mixing, spreading, drying—each of which is expensive, laborious and may increase disposal volumes. Waste regulations make disposal increasingly expensive and costs have doubled between 2003 and 2006. Disposal on-site as back-fill to pilings or as bank protection is preferred. Disposal to local agricultural land is covered by environmental legislation and disposal to a licensed Trust-owned tip is possible but there are few left with adequate capacity. Disposal to a licensed waste site has high transport costs (generally £100-200k/km, but >£500k/km when dredgings are classed as contaminated) and there are few sites available in UK.



Photos:
CRT

Methods of dredging, waste treatment and disposal

Excavation using floating dredgers and hoppers is normal; land-based excavators are possible if access allows; water injection dredging is used on rivers;

cutter suction dredging is rarely used; hoeing and raking is used for weed and debris removal; and finally spot dredging is used but often has high unit costs due to site set-up. Liquid waste is now banned so

Depth identification, normal water levels and channel design considerations

1990's research gave an average sedimentation rate of 6mm/year, which implies that 100 km per year requires dredging. We have traditionally assumed a 25-year cycle of dredging, but the latest research methodology and software is now allowing better analysis and shows that 40-year rural and 50-year urban cycles may be appropriate. There is an 8-year hydrographic survey cycle covering the full network, using GPS-controlled single point echo sounding for surveys of reservoirs, docks and tidal waterways. The survey output produces a contour bed plan and digital terrain model that ena-

bles volume calculations for dredging and reservoir capacity. A GPS-controlled scanning profiler collects a swathe of data across the canal bed at many thousands of points, which allows us to extract cross-sections at any point. The cross-section data is used to calculate Dredging Priority Trigger (DPT) compliance. The data is compiled into the national survey database and is used in a 'Network Stewardship Score' calculation.

The 'controlling water level' is established to ensure the accuracy and repeatability of surveys and the GPS height and position is found on a controlling weir to an accuracy of <20mm. Work is currently underway levelling all the weirs across the network, with 958 completed so far. The current 70/30 DPT compliance map shows that of 3078 km of canals and rivers, 217 km (7%) fail and so trigger further consideration. A proposed 90/10 DPT compliance map shows 488 km (16%) or double the number of failing lengths and better matches customer complaint data.

BW previously committed to dredge to the original canal profile if it could be determined, with caveats about bank stability, ecology etc. Pre-dredge surveys probe to the 'hard bed' to try to determine the original profile. The design is generally trapezoidal and we aim for a minimum 0.5m depth at wash walls unless there are moorings, with side slopes generally 1:3. A 1m wide x 0.3m deep shelf is left on the offside for emergent vegetation.

Ranking—the dredging matrix score

Sections of canal that are identified as 'failing' trigger further work, taking into account traffic type (is the waterway commercial or leisure use?), boat usage (what are the annual lockage figures?) and water management (could the pound act

as reservoir storage if dredging is carried out?). The calculation results in a Matrix Score, that together with customer complaints of obstruction and weed growth, allows sections of waterway to be ranked to produce a priority list for dredging planning. The timing of dredging depends on many factors, including land agreements, disposal issues, nesting season, protected species, SSSIs, boat traffic, and the potential for fish kills due to reduced dissolved oxygen, which is less likely in winter. The national dredging team at Hatton considers potential dredging projects alongside other asset repairs. A term contract is drawn up with Land and Water Services, with an agreed minimum throughput, which results in a contract discount when achieved.

New dredging strategy

The new strategy and methodology is to be published, with clearly defined responsibilities for surveying, ranking, prioritisation, approval, design and delivery. The DPT is to be logically defined and published and based on lock width and cill depth constraints where possible, plus an allowance of 1m for boats to pass plus a dynamic draught allowance. The DPT is to be continually reviewed as better data becomes available. The 8-year hydrographic survey is to continue, but we no longer commit to dredge to original dimensions, although we will take them into account if they can be determined. A generic dredge depth of 1.35m will be used if this can be safely accommodated, or a clear explanation given if different. We will have improved customer comment analysis and further research on sedimentation rates based on modern surveys. Greater consideration will be taken of navigation difficulties and hot-spots and the km length pass/fail criteria will

How much?

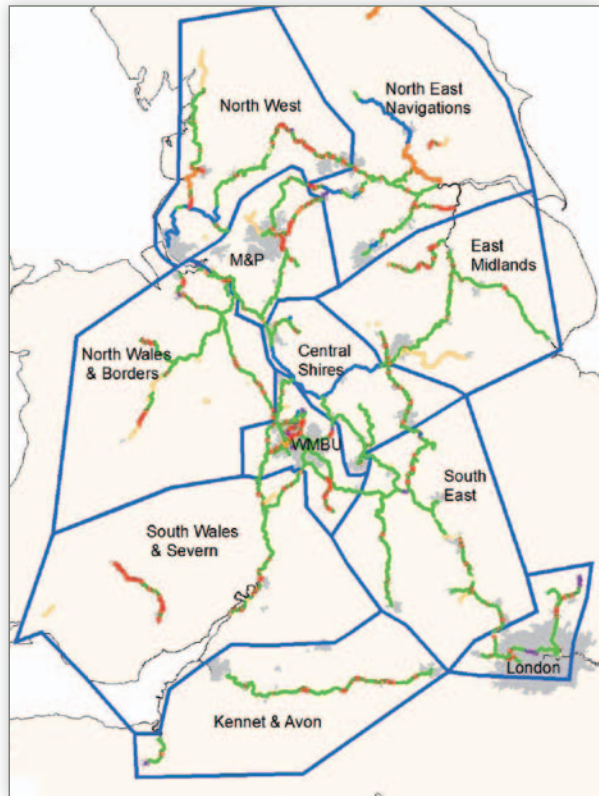
- Generally £100k to £200k per kilometre.
- When classed as contaminated, greater than £500k per kilometre.
- Waste Regulations make this increasingly expensive—costs per km doubled from 2003 to 2006.
- Series of Acts and Regulations 1998 to 2005—these are still continuing.
- Traditional disposal to landfill or to banks and behind bank protection are most cost effective.
- Liquid waste is now banned so pre-treatment required—eg. lime, centrifuge, PFA.

Annual Dredging Expenditure

Year	Cost	Length (km)
98/99	£500,000	*
99/00	£1,685,000	*
00/01	£2,778,000	143
01/02	£3,773,000	113
02/03	£6,817,000	90
03/04	£4,950,000	95
04/05	£2,230,000	40
05/06	£4,649,000	64
06/07	£5,132,000	58
07/08	£4,770,000	53
08/09	£2,978,000	45
09/10	£3,453,000	64
10/11	£3,546,000	*
11/12	£3,742,000	*

* no data

News: Dredging Policy



DPT 90/10 compliance map: problem areas shown in red

change from 70/30 to 90/10, so doubling the number of failing lengths. There will be an increase in the ratio of spot dredging to mainline dredging over next three years, subject to completion of a spot dredging review. We will introduce planned cyclical 'linear spot dredging' on some navigations and better identification of feeder dredging requirements. There will be better communication of the programme and designs to NAG and Waterway Partnerships and compliance with all defined processes is to be monitored and traffic-lighted. The Trust will develop further proposals with Land and Water for dredging waste treatment sites.

Annual dredging expenditure

This has risen from £500,000 in 1998/99 to £3,742,000 in 2011/12. The current 10-year average is £4m/year, which excludes approximately £0.75–1m/year for spot dredging. The total dredging expenditure is to rise steadily from £5.3m (2012/13) to £10.5m (2021/22), but kept under review for efficiency savings. This gives £80m of investment over 10 years and possibly more depending on the Trust risk profile.

Poor mobile phone reception?

A poor mobile phone signal is a problem in parts of the waterway network and until now the best you can hope for is that it improves as you cruise to a different area. Sitefinder is a government database of mobile phone transmitter base stations around the country, hosted by Ofcom. You can search for the nearest base stations using a postcode, street name or town name, or the database can be used to find the name of the phone company, operating characteristics and type of transmission at each base station site. The Sitefinder map is at www.sitefinder.ofcom.org.uk.

1 radio transmitter found at this map location.	
Name of Operator	3
Operator Site Ref.	BA0118
Station Type	Macrocell
Height of Antenna	21.7 Metres
Frequency Range	2100 MHz
Transmitter Power	18.7 dBW
Maximum licensed power	35 dBW
Type of Transmission	UMTS

Click here to send an enquiry concerning this mobile phone base station to the operator.

The Waterways Ombudsman



Hilary Bainbridge, Waterways Ombudsman since 2005

This is my final annual report as my term as Ombudsman is about to end and a successor will shortly be in post. In the report, I comment on the changes affecting the Ombudsman scheme during my seven years in post and the fact that the nature of complaints has not changed significantly.

I said: ‘Some issues, particularly those exacerbated or created by the unhelpful and sometimes inconsistent clutter of Waterways legislation, crop up very regularly. I would number among those continuous cruising, houseboats, mooring management, mooring fees, insecurity of residential boaters and ‘end of garden’ moorings. I can deal with individual cases but unfortunately cannot myself resolve any of the significant underlying issues with the law.’

“Some issues, particularly those exacerbated or created by the unhelpful and sometimes inconsistent clutter of Waterways legislation, crop up very regularly.”

The Waterways Ombudsman has powers to investigate complaints about British Waterways and, now, CRT. Until July 2012, I also had power to investigate complaints about British Waterways in Scotland. I can only consider complaints which have already been through the organisation’s own complaints procedure. The Ombudsman is independent and impartial, and when appropriate, can make binding recommendations.

Hilary’s last annual report can be downloaded from www.waterways-ombudsman.org/docs/Annualreports2011-12.pdf

Canal ‘Laureate’



CRT and the Poetry Society have appointed boating poet, Jo Bell, to bring a new perspective to the canals and rivers. *Locklines* is part of a wider partnership between the CRT and Arts Council England, which aims to attract more visitors to the waterways through innovative arts projects. Jo is a poet, archaeologist and boat-dweller, past Director of National Poetry Day and Cheshire Poet Laureate. Her recent show, *Riverlands*, is about the River Nene in Northants and she is also working on a new book *Fireships* with poet Martin Malone.

Jo came to the canals as an archaeologist, working with historic narrowboats, and she has lived aboard her 67ft narrowboat Tinker for a decade, mostly in the Midlands and North West. “The canals are England’s truest way to travel; long green lines where people go to think, walk, fish and gongoozle. Good poetry is about noticing,” says Jo. News of her journeys and projects will be on Twitter: [@canalpoetry](https://twitter.com/canalpoetry), her website: www.jobell.org.uk and a taste of her work below;

Springtime at the Boatyard

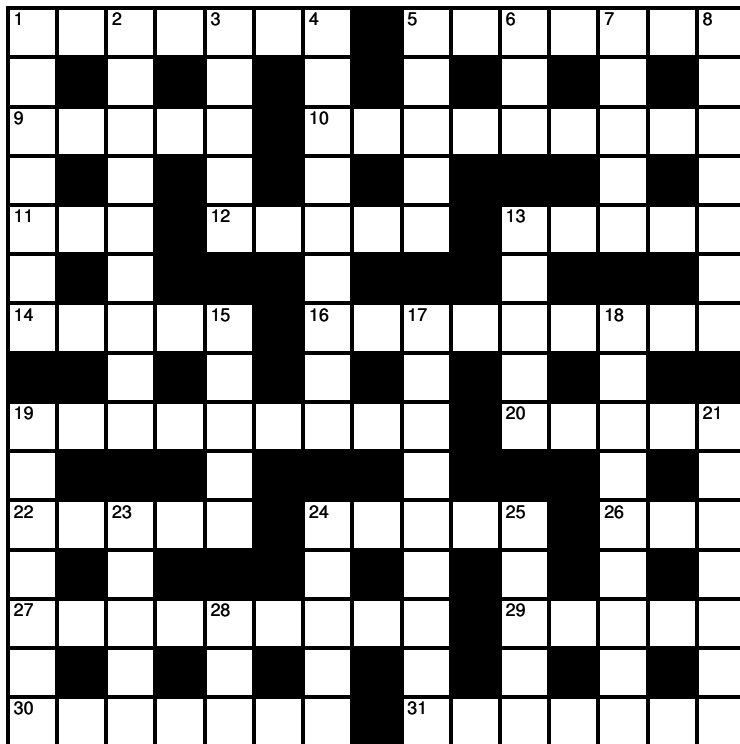
You can keep your cuckoos.
We hear Spring’s first song
in the sound of angle-grinders,
brazen as a mating call across the yard:
the saw blades and the welders
working between weathers
like a nesting bird; and swarf
as bright as daffodils on workshop floors.

You can keep your catkins;
we have rust like pollen on our skins.
We walk between steel shells
and smell the fresh blue boiler suits
of all the coming days,
when warmth will stretch our hulls
and make of summer afternoons a shed
for building this year’s stories.

Crossword

NABO News Crossword N° 8

By Canaldrifter



Answers to Crossword 7

Across: 1 Chester, 5 Shallow, 9 Leeds, 10 Liverpool, 11 Uncannier, 12 Grebe, 13 Insects, 15 Lengths, 17 Joshers, 19 Speed up, 21 Truck, 23 Bluebells, 25 Applauded, 26 Roast, 27 Derwent, 28 Deep end.

Down: 1 Calculi, 2 Exercises, 3 Tyson, 4 Rallies, 5 Several, 6 Arrogance, 7 Loose, 8 Walkers, 14 Check mate, 16 Tidal wave, 17 Jutland, 18 Sub edit, 19 Sounded, 20 Posited, 22 Upper, 24 Barge.

Across

- 1 Star goes under at Thames lock (7)
- 5 Forty poles shaggy? (7)
- 9 Canal of the countryside (5)
- 10 Biker finds branch on top of boat's engine (6,3)
- 11 Degree of infinity (3)
- 12 BSS checks, not cricket! (5)
- 13 Onward east of the Clyde? (5)
- 14 Lift the boat, and throw it! (5)
- 16 Eventually, in the early morning, we hear (2,3,4)
- 19 Vessels carrying beer in Australia (9)
- 20 A subject to pick out (5)
- 22 Makes secure going up and down? (5)
- 24 Rest for a snap? (5)
- 26 Note the debt (3)
- 27 Reservoirs that fed the Stratford canal (9)
- 29 Penetrating means of seeing (1-4)
- 30 Sir also hides amongst the crew (7)
- 31 Waterway based theatre group perform at yards (7)

Down

- 1 Cloth attachments on a working boat (7)
- 2 Hitch worn out on the Weaver (9)
- 3 Dark until broken (5)
- 4 Sorry hike goes wrong around the NE of the system (9)
- 5 Central point of a scenic cruise? (5)
- 6 Eggs on small boat crew, we hear! (3)
- 7 Broadcasting from the flight? (2,3)
- 8 Sportswear for PE in the bottom of the boat? (3,4)
- 13 Fast hire boats (5)
- 15 Total income is obscene! (5)
- 17 Sank in the lock? (9)
- 18 Claim pint off proposer (9)
- 19 Seasonal old Thames boat company? (7)
- 21 Boat on which curries are devoured? (7)
- 23 Old gas group favoured by the Queen! (5)
- 24 Markers will be markers, it seems (5)
- 25 Bridge over the Yorks Derwent (5)
- 28 Shortly the Senior Doctor will appear (3)

Snippets from NABO News

Tony Haynes continues his rummage with a look at NABO Newsletters from 1997.

97/1 January

1997 heralds a new look cover.

River Trent: Associated British Ports are very concerned about the safety of narrowboats on the tidal Trent and would like to close the river to them.

Cycle permits: BW will try a pilot scheme by making a charge of about £12 for a cycle permit on the K&A. If the scheme works it will extend to the rest of the country in 1998.

K&A: has won £25m from the Lottery Grant.

97/2 March

Consultation: The Ombudsman found BW guilty of maladministration over NABO's complaint that a steep rise in licence fees over three years constitutes an important policy change, which BW had not communicated to users prior to the increases.

Forth & Clyde and Union Canals: get £32m from the Millennium Commission. In four years' time the waterway will be opened from sea to sea with a new feature, the Antonine Wheel, linking the two canals in place of eleven abandoned locks at Falkirk.

Ribble Link: a £2.7m grant from the Millennium Commission will make the link from the Lancaster Canal to the Leeds & Liverpool possible at last.

97/3 May

Letter: A member reports that he was running his boat engine and a small generator at Worcester at 11.30pm when thieves attempted to steal his generator from off the deck. He gave chase and recovered it.

97/4 June

Letters: No less than six members wrote in to say that a boater running his engine and a generator at 11.30pm deserved to have his generator stolen!

97/5 August

A Charity?: David Fletcher, (BW's CE), floated his idea about how BW could be changed to Charitable Trust status.

BSS costs: A questionnaire produced some horrific answers. Of 140 returns the average cost has been over £400 with a top figure of over £3000.

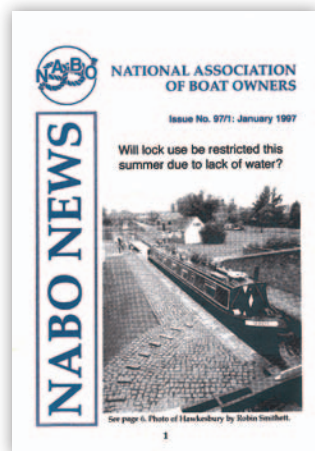
Ombudsman's statement: "Dr Fletcher (BW's CE) makes it clear to me that he finds it time-consuming to deal with pressure groups such as NABO. However, he has to accept that pressure groups are a fact of life and they exist to champion their members. He may find this irritating but he has a responsibility not to let his irritation show."

Letter: (From the neighbour of the boater who ran his generator at 11.30pm in Worcester). There are no houses within a mile of the moorings and he had consulted his neighbouring boaters. The particular generator is very quiet.

97/6 September

Licence fees: will increase by 13.3% despite howls of protest from user groups.

BW fined: BW is fined £18,000 for allowing a company to abstract more than its legal quota of water from the T&M during drought conditions.



Dawdling down to Droitwich

A trip down the reopened Junction and Barge Canals in the company of Peter Fellows

In brief

The Droitwich Barge Canal is a broad canal, opened in 1771, which links Droitwich Spa to the River Severn, six locks and six miles away at Hawford Mill, Claines. The Droitwich Junction Canal is a narrow canal, opened in 1854, which has six locks over 1½ miles and links Droitwich to the Worcester and Birmingham Canal at Hanbury Wharf. Both were abandoned in 1939. The restoration plan began in 1973, with the Barge Canal reopened in 2010 and the Junction Canal in July 2011.

With the opening in 2011 of the two restored Droitwich Canals, there is now a new mid-Worcestershire (mini) ring of 21 miles and 33 locks, comprising the Droitwich Barge Canal, Droitwich Junction Canal, Worcester & Birmingham Canal and River Severn.

History

Natural brine springs have made Droitwich an important centre for salt production since before Roman times. Improvements to the River Salwarpe were promoted on many occasions to get the salt to wider markets, but they all failed: an Act of Parliament was first obtained in

1662 to construct six locks on the river, but the work was abandoned in 1675; another Act in the 1670s authorised improvements to the Rivers Salwarpe and Stour and a fourth attempt was made in 1703. In 1747, there was a proposal to make the river Salwarpe navigable and in 1755 there was another scheme to construct a pipeline to carry brine to Hawford on the River Severn, but again these all foundered.

With salt production increasing, in 1767 Droitwich Council asked James Brindley to survey a route from the town to the River Severn. The following year, an Act was ob-

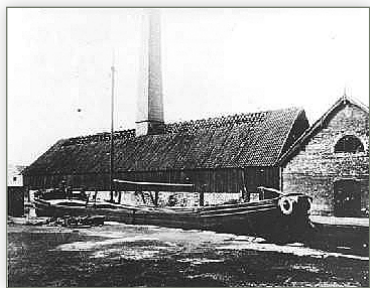
tained to authorise construction by the 'Company of Proprietors of the Droitwich Canal Navigation', which had powers to raise £33,400 by issuing shares and an additional £20,000 if required. Although Brindley was officially in charge, he was busy building the Trent and Mersey Canal at the time, and so resident engineer John Priddey found the contractors. The working capital of £13,400 was raised by issuing 134 shares, mostly bought by local people, and construction started in 1768. As work proceeded, a further 66 shares were issued, raising another £6,600, and a loan of £3,500 was taken out, making the total cost £23,500 (about £1,497,000 today).

The resulting broad Barge Canal was capable of taking Severn Trows which were 14.5 feet wide and 64 feet long. Like most of Brindley's canals, it was a contour canal to reduce the number of embankments and cuttings required. The 90o bend near Salwarpe Church was necessary because the more obvious route to the north of the church was specifically excluded by the Act. The canal was 5.7 miles long, and included eight locks, with a total fall of 56.5 feet. The official opening was on 12 March 1771 and the canal was commercially successful, with the first dividend being paid in 1775. By 1777, the £100 shares were trading at £160.

The canal company's fortunes started to decline after 1830, when a source of brine was discovered at Stoke Prior to the north east of Droitwich. Much of the salt was transported to Birmingham on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal,



Cherry Orchard Salt Works



The Trow Henry

but tolls were also negotiated to use the Barge Canal to link via the River Severn for sales in Gloucester and Bristol. The new railways took away further trade but an Act of Parliament was obtained in 1852 to construct the Droitwich Junction Canal. This was intended to eliminate the overland transport of both salt and the coal used to evaporate the brine. To make it easier to compete with the railways, the locks on the Barge Canal were lengthened, so that coal could be carried from the River Severn through both canals without having to tranship it to shorter boats. The Junction Canal was opened in 1854 and was one of the last canals to be built in the 'canal mania' era. It was 1.75 miles long and included six locks, the final one connecting the canal to the River Salwarpe. After 160 yards on the river, the original sluice through which the Barge Canal was supplied with water was converted to a wide lock. This was 75 by 15 feet and had four sets of gates, so that it could be used whatever the level of the river. Subsidence caused by salt extraction was a problem and the lock had to be rebuilt in 1875/6 and 1903, the first time to raise it by 9 feet and the second to raise it another 5 feet.

As the financial position of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal Company worsened, it received offers from three railway contractors to buy both its canal and the Junction Canal to convert them into railways. The company accepted an offer, but the bill was defeated in 1866, as was a second attempt the following year. In 1873, the company received an offer from the Sharpness New Docks Company to take over its canal and both Droitwich Canals. An Act of Parliament was passed in 1874, and the new company became the 'Sharpness New Docks & Gloucester & Birmingham

Navigation Company'. The company worked to improve the canals, dredging 73,000 tons of mud from the Droitwich Canals in 1881, and altering the upper cills of the locks in 1888-9, to give a navigable depth of 6 feet. The locks were 77 feet by 15 feet and could accommodate boats carrying 115 tons. But the company realised that the canals were not profitable and by 1906, the costs of maintenance exceeded the income and they were gradually allowed to decay. Commercial production of salt was discontinued in the early 1920s: the last boat to use the Barge Canal was in 1916 and the Junction Canal did not see any traffic after 1928. An Act of Abandonment was obtained in July, 1939.

Restoration

In 1963, a campaign for restoration was started by Max Sinclair, who suggested that it could be completed in under two years. The Droitwich Council realised the potential amenity value of the canal and a restoration group was formed in 1969, as part of an IWA campaign 'Safeguarding Britain's Waterways'. This led to the formation in 1973 of the Droitwich Canals Trust, a limited company with local authority support, which began work on the restoration. In 1975, the canal benefitted from the Manpower Services Commission's Job Creation Scheme, which provided people to work on restoration and maintenance. Funding included £200,000 from Wychavon District Council in 1980 for work in Vines Park, including a new mooring basin, and an award from Shell for a new swing bridge. The section of the Barge Canal through Vines Park was opened in October 1986, enabling the Trust's trip-boat to provide longer trips. An engineering feasibility study in 1994 concluded that full restoration



Max Sinclair, who has been rewarded for paving the way for the transformation of the Droitwich canals, winning the English Heritage Angel Award for the Best Rescue of a Historic Industrial Building or Site.

The award celebrated "his drive, commitment and vision that made the restoration of the Droitwich Canals possible", English Heritage said.

Mr Sinclair is modest about the award. He said: "It recognises all these volunteers. That's all that pleases me... At last, after years and years and years in the wilderness, the work has been recognised."

Boating: Droitwich Canals



Lock 1 and the River Sever



Lock 2



Tunnel under the A449



Coney Meadow Riverbed

Before and after pictures of the restoration
Photos: BW



Council, Worcestershire County Council, BW, The Waterways Trust and the Droitwich Canals Trust. The Partnership's aims were to create and manage a linear canal park that would conserve and enhance the environment and provide a range of recreational opportunities.

In 2002, BW assessed the cost of completion at £9.5m. In 2004, the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded £4.6m to the project, with other funding provided by Advantage West Midlands and local councils. BW took over the lease of the canals from the Trust and submitted a planning application for their restoration on behalf of the Partnership in 2007. By this time a total of £10.5m had been promised, some of which depended on match funding, and the Restoration Partnership needed to raise £1m to release the other funding.

Although the majority of the 7 mile length of the canals was still in existence, a 550 yard stretch between the M5 motorway and Hanbury Locks had to be completely rebuilt. An existing culvert for the Body Brook was used to allow the canal to pass under the motorway. The Barge Canal and Junction Canal were connected by canalising a 600 yard stretch of the River Salwarpe through the centre of Droitwich. The river was made wider and deeper, and a new weir was constructed next to the new lock 7 to maintain water levels. To minimise mixing of canal water with river water, a pipeline was built under the towpath, from above lock 7 to below the Barge Lock.

A housing development along the river bank was intended to partially fund the river improvements, but the developer withdrew from the scheme, which resulted in delays to the full reopening of the canal. The Barge Canal was officially opened in September 2010 and the whole

was possible, but identified problems of passing beneath the A449 at Hawford and ensuring an adequate water supply. Widespread public support and recognition of the economic, social and environmental benefits that restoration would bring to Droitwich led to the formation of the Droitwich Canals Restoration Partnership in 2001. Members of the partnership were Wychavon District

canal was completed by mid-2011. The total cost of the restoration was £12.7 million. The Droitwich Canal Trust has now been succeeded by the Droitwich Waterways (Pamela May) Trust Ltd., which has taken over the residual assets of the Trust, including the Pamela May community boat.

BW, as lead partner, managed the delivery of the construction works. These included:

- Lock 1: removal of silt, up to 9 feet deep in the chamber, rebuilding 4-8 courses of bricks of both walls, re-pointing 10-12 courses of bricks and reinstatement of sandstone and brick copings to lock edge. New lock gates from BW's Bradley workshop, escape ladders set into recesses, ground paddle gearing and operating stands, mooring bollards and laying of new brick-paved, gate operating 'quadrants'.
- Lock 2: perhaps the worst condition of all the locks; significant silt removal, rebuilding and re-pointing 12-16 courses of bricks, reinstatement of sandstone and brick copings, removal of farm access bridge and construction of a small footbridge, installation of a new byewash.

- Constructing a tunnel under the A449 dual carriageway.
- Locks 3-4 and 7-8: partial demolition of lock 4 walls to remove poor facing brickwork, rebuilding and re-pointing, new gates and other work as for Lock 1.
- Lock 5: drilling and grouting to correct a bulge and voids in the lock wall. Removal of a pedestrian bridge at the lock tail. New gates and other work as for lock 1.
- Lock 6: Removal of pedestrian bridge on the lock tail. Sealing a serious leak through the canal bank, underneath the by-weir channel. New gates and other work as for lock 1.

All works were undertaken by the WRG and other volunteers except for installation of new lock gates and quoins.

- Building a new access bridge to the rugby club.
- Installation of pontoons in Netherwich Basin.
- Installation of an interpretation and audio trail.
- New canoe pontoons for use by local schools, installation of otter holts, owl and bat boxes.
- 24 hectares of brownfield land regenerated.
- Extensive dredging of 5 miles of

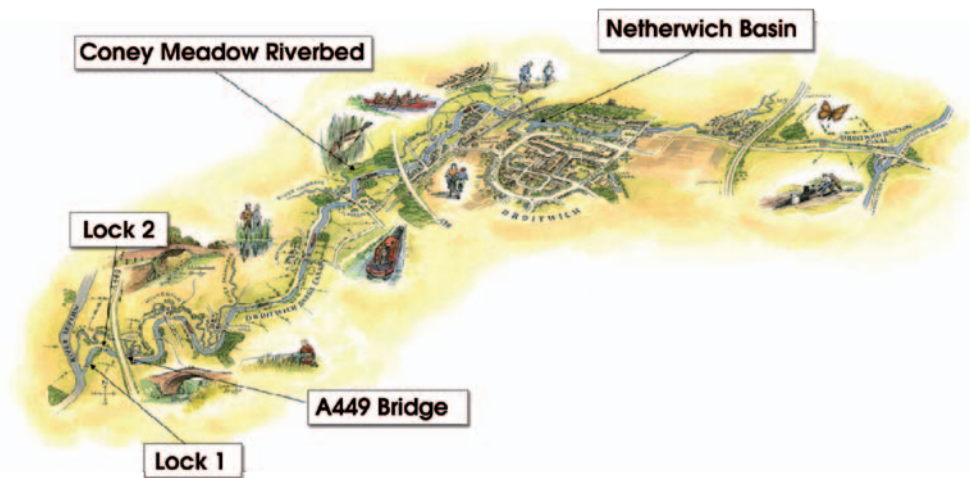
Further information

Droitwich Waterways (Pamela May) Trust Ltd at www.worcs.com/dwpmnt and www.worcs.com/dct/newpress.htm

BW's Droitwich Barge Canal Restoration Guide can be downloaded from <http://www.waterscape.com/media/documents/23654.pdf>

The Droitwich Canal at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Droitwich_Canal

Droitwich Spa Marina, WR9 7DU. Tel: 07970 626807 droitwichspamarina.co.uk

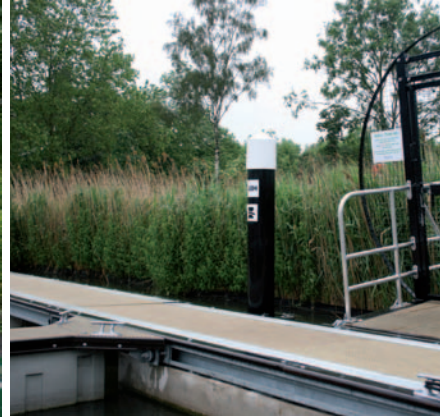


Boating: Droitwich Canals



Left to Right:
A tight fit under the M5
Secure moorings in
Netherwich Basin
Mural in Netherwich Basin

Photos: Peter Fellows



the Barge Canal. Reed fringes retained to support wildlife.

- Coney Meadow reedbed established as a 5.5ha wildlife habitat using reeds displaced when the canal was dredged.
- The economic benefits of the restoration are calculated as:
- £2.75m p.a. additional visitor spend from 322,000 additional visitor days, including 20% boating increase on W&B Canal & River Severn, 3,300 new boat movements, 12,000 cycling visits, 2,000 canoe visits and 3,500 angling visits p.a.
- 196 Full Time Equivalent jobs.
- £144,000 calculated annual health benefits.
- £3,088,800 increase in values of adjacent houses.

The restoration project was recognised by the Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE) West Midlands when it won the Construction Award and it was declared the overall winner. The Partnership's achievements were also recognised by it being awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award in the 2012 Waterways Renaissance Awards run by the Waterways Trust.

Cruising to Droitwich

Cruising the new canals from

Hanbury Junction, the first structure is the narrow junction bridge, followed a few hundred yards later by the first of three deep narrow locks. A volunteer lock keeper was on hand to assist and to explain the operation of the side ponds. The paddle gear was unexpectedly hard work for such new gates. Then past the huge new 238-berth Droitwich Spa Marina, with its 70m entrance structure—one of the largest entrances onto a canal in the UK—so boaters have no excuse for hitting it! Pumpout, water and diesel are available at the marina; useful as there are few facilities as yet along both Droitwich canals. There are also facilities for cranage, a slipway, toilet/shower block and laundry.

Then down the new staircase locks and a further lock onto the River Salwarpe. A boater has written 'Clear your roof now!' on the lock bridge and this is good advice, because a few hundred yards downstream is the tunnel under the M5. There is a height gauge across the river, but it is very close to the tunnel entrance, giving little time to remove items from the boat roof if they are too high. A series of pilings on the offside allows boaters to tie up to clear the roof, but this might be a tricky manoeuvre if the river is



flowing fast. It would seem better to have put the height gauge below the lock, but maybe there are good reasons why this is not possible. We had about 2 inches to spare between the boat and the tunnel roof—the tiller pin being the highest point on the boat, which I had forgotten to check for! Then through a canalised river section, where the new towpath has no mooring rings or bollards to prevent boaters mooring here, and on to the junction with the Barge Canal at the wide Barge Lock on the edge of Vines Park. After remembering to operate the swing bridge over the lock first, there was a fall of about four inches and some youths in the park offered to close the gates. Cruising through Vines Park was reminiscent of entering Bancroft Basin from the canal in Stratford on Avon: the quiet canal suddenly giving way to crowds of people enjoying a sunny afternoon in the park. Two further swing bridges and on to the secure pontoon moorings at Netherwich Basin at the other end of Vines Park. These are excellent facilities with rubbish disposal nearby and a water point on the first pontoon.

The Barge Canal is lined with reeds for much of its length and is scenically very attractive with plenti-

ful wildlife. There is a winding hole above lock 6, which the guide books claim to be suitable for 70-foot boats, but which looked closer to 60 feet. The only other winding hole is a couple of miles from the River Severn and there are few mooring places or access to the bank along the canal. This is not a major issue for boaters wanting a through passage, but if the river is closed when a boat arrives at Lock 1, Hawford, there is no place to moor, other than the lock landings, and no opportunity to wind. New moorings above Lock 1 are therefore a must as soon as funds can be found, even if they are just a wooden jetty on scaffold poles.

Robin Smithett, writing in the June 2012 issue of *Wych Waterways* magazine, published by the Droitwich Waterways (Pamela May) Trust, gives his wish-list of future improvements to the two canals. The Droitwich Canals Trust should be congratulated for the amount of work that they have achieved to get the canals reopened on a relatively small budget. Cruising them was a real pleasure. These improvements can't happen overnight—look at what still needs to be done to the K&A, twenty years after it reopened—but they would make cruising this new ring even better.

No rest for the wicked: Robin Smithett's wish list for the Barge Canal

- 1** A noticeboard in Droitwich giving the state of the River Severn, or a number to call.
- 2** Resurface to towpath between Barge Lock 2 and the A449 tunnel, which gets very muddy.
- 3** Fender or mark Junction Canal bridge 15 to keep boats away from underwater metal.
- 4** Repair Vine Park wooden fendering.
- 5** Install timber baulks to guide boats into locks that were built without wing walls.
- 6** Cut back reeds on the Barge Canal to allow access to the bank in case of emergency and create visitor moorings on the Barge Canal.
- 7** Increase the length of the winding hole at bridge 14.
- 8** Install lighting on pontoons in Netherwich Basin, a water point at Hanbury and a sanitary station at Droitwich.
- 9** Reinstate the spill weir above Lock 1 at Hawford to avoid flooding the lockside and realign the piling to allow two boats to enter breasted.

K&A Mooring Strategy

Geoffrey Rogerson expresses his concerns over issues raised by the recent towpath mooring plan.

The briefing and policy paper is available at <http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/library/2153.pdf>

Some years ago, as readers of NABO News may recall, the question of 'roving mooring permits' was raised. NABO at this time took legal advice and subsequently had a meeting with BW (in 2011) at which we were told that the roving mooring permit proposals had been dropped. Stuart Samson, our former chairman, was instrumental in analysing the legality and implications of any such plan. As you will see from the following, the idea has re-emerged in the recent 'towpath mooring plan' produced by CRT's Director of Boating, Sally Ash, for the K&A Waterway Partnership.

NABO Council has asked me to address certain issues raised and put forward our views in the hope that it will assist the partnership sub-committee in its deliberations. In addition, as a member of the K&A Mooring Strategy Steering Group (MSSG) during the last year when these issues were debated, I am able to comment on the work done by the MSSG during this period. Months of work were undertaken in the MSSG by members of the national and local user organisations¹. Many aspects of mooring were examined, though it has to be acknowledged that the group failed to achieve full consensus. Now the Local Partnership is to take on this difficult task. Partnerships were set up to guide CRT decisions about spending, to develop local engagement, raise external funding and make recommendations to the local waterway manager. I would question whether the local Kennet and Avon Partnership is best placed to make

recommendations and implement a controversial mooring plan that has national implications.

I will deal with the points in the order that they arise in the towpath mooring plan document.

Paragraph 2.

To improve access to popular visitor moorings by boats being used for leisure and holiday purposes, and to stretches of 'unmoored' water by anglers.

To have stretches of 'no mooring' exclusively for anglers would seem pointless as the anglers' use of the canal, with the exception of formal matches, is at best sporadic. To deny the ability to moor at these stretches to ALL boats is quite unacceptable.

Paragraph 2.4

To clarify local rules and achieve understanding and compliance through effective, positive, communications and support, reducing dependence on requirement for exercise of legal enforcement powers.

'To clarify local rules'. Any such rules must not exceed the powers given in the 1995 Act. Sally Ash comments that she would anticipate the mooring plan being introduced elsewhere; accordingly any changes would have to be legally acceptable nationally.

Paragraph 3.1

Designate visitor mooring stretches; sign them clearly at start and end points; specify 'return rules' in the form of max. x days within any calendar month.

There is no power within the 1995

¹Members other than NABO: IWA, K&A Trust, RBOA, AWCC, APCO, Wiltshire County Council, unaffiliated boaters, Valley Parish Alliance, National Bargee Travellers Association.

Act to establish 'return rules' or any form of maximum days within any calendar month. Any such local rule would be open to legal challenge.

Paragraph 3.3

New type of 'Community' mooring permit for continuous cruisers who have been recorded by the Trust as being resident on the towpath in July 2012. Approx. 20 locations each accommodating up to around ten boats to be designated where permit holders can stay for up to 28 days at a time before moving on to another one—or any other length of towpath providing they comply with the rules for that location.

The concept of 20 locations times 10 boats, assuming an average length of 50 ft per boat would remove a further 2 miles of moorings for all other boaters. Apart from being unacceptable, this is in direct conflict with BW/CRTs own declared intention of reducing on-line permit holder moorings by one for every ten new marina berths available.

Paragraph 3.3ii,

Permit holders will be treated as having a home mooring and permits will be subject to all applicable terms of the mooring agreement for our directly managed moorings.

The community mooring permit would seem to endeavour to establish a new category of boater other than that of the 1995 Act section 17 3(c) i and ii. The wording is quite clear in the Act: 'either/or'.

Paragraph 3.4

Define neighbourhoods for boaters without home moorings and, using additional Trust resources, enforce continuous cruising rules (14 day limit) strictly.

In an endeavour to define neighbourhoods it was established by the MSSG at our very first meeting

with Sally Ash, that for example, Claverton was a different place from Bathampton. Members of the MSSG walked the entire length of the canal between Bath and Devizes and NABO provided a map indicating places, attached, which was considered to be generally acceptable. We would point out that it would be purely for guidance, as the 1995 Act does not permit place to be defined specifically.

Paragraph 4, Paragraph 2.

We are now seeking advice from the Kennet & Avon Waterway Partnership on the details of the plan and how implementation might work. To assist with this, we are separately sending to them some possible draft schedules detailing visitor mooring locations and maximum stay times, neighbourhood definitions, new 'community' mooring zones and terms and conditions for the associated mooring permit. Our suggestions for these are based on discussion within the mooring strategy steering group (2010/11), but since the group did not achieve consensus, we are asking the Partnership to review and make the case for any amendments to the draft schedules.

It is stated above that the suggestions are based on discussion within the MSSG. However, our responses show that most MSSG members are quite clear that the concept of the community mooring permit was never raised. We would appreciate copies of the draft schedules for our perusal.

Paragraph repeat 4, 5.1 (BW numbering)

Local government—Ken Oliver (Wilts CC Canal Officer)

While Wiltshire County Council is represented on the sub group, I cannot see that Bath and North East Somerset (BaNES) will be happy

to accept decisions affecting their part of the canal without being represented. The responses we have received indicate that the national boating organisations are very unhappy that, following the year they spent on this whole problem, they are not represented on the follow-up. In particular they are concerned that any recommendations made by the partnership have the potential to affect national canals which are of course their main responsibility and brief.

Paragraph 5, 6.1, Paragraph 2

What has been missing in most cases from our time limits is any indication of how soon a boater may return. This has hampered our ability to enforce the stay limits.

Any time limits on returning to moorings again can be for guidance only, within the context of 'bona fide navigation'.

Paragraph 5, 6.1, Paragraph 3.

The schedules need to allow for some lengths of towpath where no mooring

is permitted—this is for the benefit of anglers and to enhance the general visual landscape amenity. Boats are an attractive feature, but not if they are moored almost nose to tail over long distances.

Previous comment re: anglers applies. As far as general visual landscape amenity is concerned, when walking the canal the MSSG group felt that there were already many places where boats did not moor, if only because it was not possible.

Paragraph 5, 6.1, Paragraph 4
Time limits and return rules

Setting maximum stay times is effectively meaningless without clarity on rules for frequency of return to the location. In determining the best approach for implementing this, we needed to make the rule simple and unambiguous for boaters, and it needs to be practical to implement by 'back office' systems. This led us to discard the option of a 'no return within x days' approach in favour of a 'maximum x days within any one calendar month' rule. Boaters wish-



ing to stay longer may purchase daily extended stay permits. Our boat data checker will post a note onto the boat with at least 24 hours' warning of when the extended stay permit requirement starts, and the amounts accruing will be invoiced by post to the licence holder's address with an alert being sent by text message. Debts will be pursued in the first instance through normal collection procedures, but if these remain unpaid, we may decline the renewal of the boat's licence.

With regard to maximum total day limits not applying to hire boats, we would point out that boats from the new Foxhangers Marina may regularly weekend at the Barge Inn at Seend, and similarly the boats from the Bradford on Avon Marina may regularly weekend at Bradford on Avon either above or below the lock. Accordingly to differentiate would be unfair, illegal and generally a nonsense. With regard to unpaid debts we would point out that as long as a boat conforms to the requirements of the 1995 Act, BW/CRT are bound to issue a licence. BW/CRT does not have the power to remove a licence for unpaid charges etc. These should be dealt with through the small claims court.

Paragraph 6.3

6.3 'Place' definitions

These are needed to provide the local context to our guidance for boats without a home mooring. Continuous cruisers without one of the new 'community' mooring permits must comply with these. The draft schedule provided to the Waterway Partnership draws on the work of the MSSG.

Comments as in 3.4.

Comments arising from the above.

The arbitrary ending of the MSSG, formed at the specific request of

BW, has led to unhappiness within the group. Members of all the major boating organisations were represented and just as the question of enforcement was due to be discussed, the committee was abruptly terminated; this after a year's work by volunteers. The subsequent appointment of the K&A Local Partnership to carry on the work of the MSSG has been criticised as there is no representation by the national bodies; yet we might well expect that any new 'rules' could be applied nationally. The proposals put to the Partnership bear little or no relationship to what was discussed by the MSSG (i.e. 'angling-only lengths', 'breathing spaces', 'return rules', etc.)—all of questionable legality.

The fact that the proposed roving/community mooring permit has been put forward as emanating from discussions by the MSSG is patently untrue and would appear to be an attempt to introduce something that has not been consulted upon; and is not only contentious but also of questionable legality.

An attempt to obtain details of the proposed schedules given to the K&A Partnership has been refused. Are we to assume that whereas the MSSG work was open and transparent, the schedules recommended to the K&A Partnership are now to be kept secret? Under any reasonable code of conduct the above arrangements should have been transparent and open—to date, they have been neither.

That proposals put to the Partnership have not been made available to the former members of the MSSG is unacceptable. Should this latest attempt to introduce the roving/community mooring permit etc. come to nought, then serious questions must be raised regarding the judgement of the CRT in yet again pursuing this set of ideas.

Floating homes

The CRT consultation on houseboat mooring permit terms and conditions

David Fletcher responds on behalf of NABO

NABO attaches great importance to all mooring strategies as they have a significant impact on all styles of boating and the enjoyment of the waterways. NABO welcomes written terms and conditions for Houseboat Certificates (HBCs). These should be based upon the applicable laws. It is not for the CRT to apply terms that are in conflict with these laws or create additional requirements that are not covered by these laws. NABO regards the provision of HBCs as an important contribution to the housing market, the options for residential boating, and the social contribution to the waterways. NABO deplores the small number of HBCs currently available and the apparent mystique over the terms and conditions. Written terms and conditions will go some way to set aside this mystique.

Definition of houseboats

NABO is satisfied with the proposed wording: *“1.4 Houseboat means a boat whose predominant use is for a purpose other than navigation and which, if required for the purpose, has planning permission for the site where it is moored. A houseboat may be used for navigation from time to time provided it does not become its predominant use.”*

The definition of ‘Houseboat’ is set out in the 1971 British Waterways Act and the 1995 British Waterways Act. These definitions are defined for the purpose of licensing and the law of the land. CRT has no powers

to change this.

Houseboat Certificate benefits

CRT has stated that: *‘The reason why some people prefer to have a houseboat certificate is because it carries some ability to assign the mooring permit upon sale of the boat.’* There are other unstated benefits: for example, HBCs give better mooring rights including basic protections against being evicted from moorings and being made homeless. The right to assign is in itself a poor justification for paying the additional cost of mooring. NABO finds the CRT statement insensitive and inappropriate.

Cost of a houseboat certificate

NABO does not support a different cost for HBCs. CRT state in the consultation document that there is no difference in practical terms between the HBC and the pleasure boat licence, so there should be no difference in cost. The differential in mooring prices provides a premium for CRT, and this should be the medium for this and not to distort the licence costs and create a precedent of different licences for different costs.

Right of assigning an HBC and associated mooring permit

NABO notes that there is an anomaly in the uncontrolled right of a holder to assign CRT moorings and believes this is arguably wrong without regulation (there are tried and tested models under the mobile homes



legislation, where the pitch owner gets a proportion of the sale value). However the right to assign an HBC is part of the law, and CRT cannot reasonably undermine this right by refusing to assign the mooring permit.

NABO concludes that assignment of the mooring permit should be in parallel with the right to assign an HBC. To do anything else would not be in accordance with the law and the intent of the law. CRT should consider this in the long term for primary legislation if they require further powers. However it is noted that assignment of mooring costs that shelters moorers from review in costs is an unreasonable benefit, and unfair to others enjoying similar facilities.

This review should apply either to all HBC holders, if there is a legal basis for this, or to none at all. NABO does not support generating new terms and conditions for new HBCs in an attempt to solve this problem. CRT has no power to introduce two levels of conditions for HBCs.

Assignment of HBCs and associated Mooring Permits

CRT suggests conditions to con-

trol assignment of HBCs. Lack of a licence or bad track record of payment: NABO regards this as a matter of proportionality. It would be wrong to prevent assignment for a late payment or other minor issue with licence fees. NABO is unhappy that licence issues be linked with payment for services. CRT should use normal payment recovery for these latter items and not mix these with licence terms which are a fundamentally different issue with their own specified redress for CRT.

Exceptional mooring sites in London

NABO notes that there are discrepancies for some sites and supports bringing them in line with the law. However previous terms and conditions are a matter of contract, and if CRT requires relief from these then this is a matter for negotiation, perhaps arbitration and settlement. NABO does not support the use of BW Acts to bully HBC holders in negotiations.

NABO notes CRT's obsession with auctions and with the view that these alone can reflect market conditions. NABO does not agree with auctions.

Photo: Kyo Koike, University of Washington Libraries

Have Your Say

Letters to the Editor

Opinions expressed here are independent of NABO policy and statements made have not been verified as true.

Waterways Tennis

I am pleased that NABO continue to publish the diametrically opposed views of those trying to moor in places that are occupied by overstaying boaters. I am also pleased to read the response by CRT Trustee John Dodwell; at least CRT recognise that there is a perceived problem in this area. I don't think that, as Panda Smith suggests, there is a marginalisation of the rights of those who wish to live on a boat without a permanent mooring. All that is being asked is that boaters do not stay in one place, usually where the facilities are, continuously. After all, the clue is in her association's title (Travellers).

I have never suggested that ALL continuous cruisers do not move; I have met many on my cruises who are also concerned about boats that do not move and usually start a conversation: "I am a continuous cruiser, and I do!". I will sign off again using nb Holly as my current home mooring is on the Wey Navigation, a river and not a canal, so I cannot take Simon Greer's view that the title 'canalboat' would be more appropriate. He seems to be rooted in the canal network and does not see other boating opportunities. I presume he also believes that owners of all those boats on the 'small ships' register are smallminded!

Mick Joy, nb Holly

CRT job creation scheme?

Two days ago, a hopper and pusher tug passed us descending the Atherstone locks. An operative was in the hopper busily shovelling out mud INTO THE CANAL!

Sadie Dean

A new member's experience

I have for a while felt I would like to give my support to an association dedicated to inland boating, but have felt unsure whether any of the exist-

ing ones meet my needs. Not being a residential boater, RBOA is not an option, and I am unable to see the IWA as sufficiently a boaters' organisation, so NABO certainly appears to be my strongest choice. After meeting your chairman a couple of times, he has not given me the hard sales pitch, (which I appreciated!), but has been good enough to do things like arrange for sample magazines to be sent. If I'm honest, these didn't immediately grab me in a way that said 'I must join' and it has taken me a while still to decide to do so. However approaching three weeks ago, I finally decided to sign up online. I quickly received a standard email along the lines of '*Thank you for registering as a NABO member on the website. Your payment has been received*', but to date that is all I have received, either electronically, or through the post.

Now, I'm not exactly sure what I was expecting—I don't think anything ever stated—but I suppose I might have anticipated some kind of initial 'welcome' pack, perhaps either containing the last published magazine, or at the very least telling me when I might expect to receive the next issue to be published. This seems a fairly usual thing to happen when subscribing to something like this. At the moment I'm not exactly feeling like an 'included' new member of NABO.

Additionally, I have seen notification of an AGM at Bradford-on-Avon in November. However, I have not had notification of this from NABO in any way—I have picked it up on Facebook and on canal based Internet forums—if I were not involved in these, I would so far have been unaware. I would politely suggest that if NABO is keen to both increase its membership, but also participation of its membership in NABO events, it could probably learn something from listening to my initial impressions.

Alan Fincher

Editor's note: I will definitely be taking up Alan's points with the new Council after

the AGM. NABO's response is not as good as it should be and this is another example of what happens when it does not have enough people to help out.

Licence (refund) evasion?

I have left the Canal & River Trust waters for good and my boat is on the Wey at Pyrford. I have of course already bought a NT licence as well as the short-term licence I needed to come down the Thames from the South Oxford. When I applied for a CRT licence refund, I received a reply stating "... unfortunately you are not entitled to any credit for the unexpired period of four months in respect of the licence for the above vessel" and referred me to the Terms and Conditions. The sum in question is around £220, being one third of the purchase price of the annual licence in December 2011, costing £667.51. I am utterly enraged by the CRT's refusal to make a refund for one third of a year on my licence, which I see as pure and simple theft of my money. Why should they get away with this? Indeed, I would argue that in law it has questionable validity: the retention of monies paid in respect of a vessel that CRT knows to be no longer occupying their waters can be regarded as theft or retaining monies by false pretences.

The purchase of a CRT licence is mandatory, not voluntary. When I buy from an on-line retailer or sign up with a power supply or mobile phone company, it is reasonable that I should concede to any terms and conditions the seller may choose to impose since, if I dislike them, I have the option of declining to purchase. I am exercising choice, not fulfilling a legal obligation. That is not so with a boat licence. People whose vessels have left CRT waters indefinitely should not be obliged to make a gift by default to the Trust of several hundred pounds. The licence purchaser should be eligible, on surrender of the licence discs, for a pro-rata refund of any part of the unexpired period of the licence.

I intend to fight this and I wonder how many other boat owners realise that if they leave CRT waters they won't get anything back on their licence. I certainly didn't know this.

Ann Berry



I name this boat ...

If you have spotted a boat name that made you smile, please let me have a photo to use in future issues. Thanks to Peter Lloyd who spotted this one at Kings Lock in Middlewich. He commented "You might like to compare it to the other picture taken in Stoke on Trent".



The day before

Anything can happen on a river.
Give me an hour of daylight anywhere,
I'll look for water. This afternoon
it's Wellingborough, where the Nene
has looped its smoked-glass gut around the mills.

A painted bandstand on the civic paving stones,
pushchair babies squinting at the sun
and seagulls neat as handkerchiefs;
yellow leaves by railings, benches glossed
with drunks and lovers: the river pushes by.

The river gathers up and spends itself,
a silk-slub carrying the weirs in its weave.
Be mindful. Pay attention; sip the day,
be glad of all its minutes and its weathervanes
spinning all directions, bright and high.

Jo Bell

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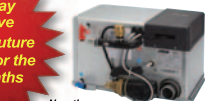
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