



NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners
Issue 3 June 2015

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The magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners

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Cover photo

This month's cover photo is from Helen Hutt. The sculpture, 'Gauging the Ribble' was erected in 2000 to commemorate the opening of the Link.

Win a year's free membership by having your photo selected for the front cover of NABO News. Please email photos as JPEG attachments, ideally portrait format with a file size of 2MB or larger.

Next NABO News copy date

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

Please email or post your contributions to nabonews@nabo.org.uk by **20th June 2015**

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April Fools!

Editor **Peter Fellows** stops chuckling long enough to write his piece

Our annual April Fool's article usually catches out a couple of members, but not this year as I didn't receive any comments. Instead, there was a sense of humour failure at CRT and IWA. CRT posted (for a while) a note in 'Boaters' Update' saying that they'd like the article removed from the NABO website as 'It's nothing to do with us or, as we've been informed, the IWA. There's a reasonable chance it's a scam!' To be fair to CRT's representative, when we pointed out the date and the link to the fictitious website, 'loseyourpension.com', he immediately saw the joke, but apparently some members of the IWA also thought it was genuine and they were not pleased. In case I have confused any members—my apologies!

Our first foray out on the waterways since winter was not our most enjoyable of experiences: in the week before the sunny weather arrived, howling winds and horizontal sleet made progress along the southern Shroppie difficult as we crabbed up the canal. Then the calorifier packed up, flooding the engine compartment with the contents of the water tank. RCR couldn't help as it was a 'domestic incident' and we were still able to move the boat, but they booked us into the nearest boatyard at Oxley Marine in Wolverhampton. We duly arrived and I would like to give credit where it's due, and acknowledge the service, professionalism and general good humour provided by engineers David and Phil, not to mention co-owner, Orpheus, who also writes the occasional article for Narrowboatworld www.narrowboatworld.com/index.php/guest-columnist-section.

Towpaths are in the news this month, following the publication of CRT's policy on sharing them, and David Fletcher and Simon Robbins both share their views on the document, making very different points. Elsewhere, Louis Jankel continues his series 'frequently asked questions' about boating, this time focusing on 'mechineers', and Stephen Peters has a look at the early legislation that led to the establishment of BWB.

David also writes about solid fuel stove failures that could lead to a fire on board; please follow his advice. Mike Rodd's concerns over 240V electricity and carbon monoxide—both potential killers on boats. Helen Hutt attended a meeting, organised by CRT and the Worcs, B'Ham and Droitwich Canals Society, on how organisations like NABO can increase support from the younger generation; something frequently discussed at NABO Council nowadays. Finally, with news of rare and endangered crayfish found on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, I have included an article on invasive species of plants and animals that are threatening the native waterways wildlife. Here's hoping for some more good boating weather over the next few months.



Phil in his natural environment
Photo: Orph Mable





Times of change

Chairman **Mike Rodd** has some thoughts on the K&A, and boat safety.

A beautiful little canal

Wasn't April just wonderful for cruising? As we always do after my wife's hectic Easter time, we had a lovely break on the Mon & Brec—just perfect weather, a good number of hire boats out (vital to the economy of South Wales, where the Mon & Brec is the most popular tourist attraction), and each morning brought another batch of new-born lambs. And, after much winter work (thanks, Nick and Kevin), this beautiful little canal is in great condition. I'm delighted to see that CRT is taking notice of the many appeals by both the hire boat companies and us private boaters, through the sensible consultation process, to modify the visitor moorings—having more 48-hour ones in the villages etc. and getting rid of some silly 24-hour ones way out in the countryside. Also, it is clear that CRT is now quietly making progress down there with enforcement actions against the boats that had gaily (but illegally) kept saying they had a home mooring, and then seemed to escape any enforcement despite sitting for months on the visitor moorings or in other popular spots.

Life on the K&A

And so it's back to running trip boats for the K&A Canal Trust—great fun and the main source of income for this amazing organisation, especially important now, as it struggles to ensure the future of the world-famous Crofton Pumping Station. Despite the herculean efforts of the volunteers in keeping the 200 year-old engines in perfect working condition (such that they take over the

work of the CRT electric pumps when in steam), the building itself is failing badly, so they need to raise £2 million as a matter of urgency and necessity! Being out on these boats far too often (we are short of MCA-qualified Boatmasters—hint, hint!) does give me a good chance to watch what is happening on the enforcement scene. There are certainly many boats moving more often than in the last few years, and that aspect of the K&A pilot exercise (which has just run its one-year course) has certainly worked. Up on our end of the waterway, however, there are still too many boats overstaying the 14-day requirement. It has to be said, though, that many of these are not liveaboard boats, but boats simply left moored somewhere for weeks on end as their owners are unwilling (or unable?) to pay for a home mooring. At the same time, it's interesting to note that many of our marinas have spare capacity.

But it is worrying to speak to the many excited new boat owners (many of them with widebeams) passing through on their way down to the Western end of the waterway, blissfully assuming that they will not require a home mooring and will be able to live on the boat, nice and close to Bath, often providing accommodation for their offspring (and their paying friends?) while they are at university. "Are you aware of the continuous cruising requirements?" I ask. "Well yes, but the various websites say don't bother, nobody checks up on you..." comes the answer. Of course, this latter situation is changing. NABO supported the initial proposals, although from

the April edition of NABO News you will know that we weren't happy with the changes that occurred between our agreeing to the initial proposals and the follow-up letters issued to all CCEr's. We watch this with much concern—NABO has always said that we support the concept of continuous cruising and believe that it is a very important part of our canal culture, but that (sadly) enforcement is essential because of the abuse by a very small number of so-called 'boaters.' But enforcement must always be within the legal powers given to CRT.

Mains power and carbon monoxide

NABO's very active role in the Boat Safety Scheme is proving to be a real eye-opener to me, ever since I was nominated to the BSS Technical Committee when my predecessor as NABO Chairman, David Fletcher, was appointed the BSS TC chairman. The learning curve has been steep but the work undertaken by staff and the many representatives from the supporting bodies is immense, especially over the past year when we have been concentrating on the revised requirements for hire boats. For me, a couple of aspects here have been very close to my own professional interests. First is the need to ensure that BSS keeps up with changing technology—for instance, the ever-increasing use of AC devices on boats. These of course require not the relatively simple little 12- or 24-volt supply, but seriously large AC support. And 240 volts AC is a killer so we must make sure that the users (and their friends) are protected in the same way as we are in our homes, through the work over many decades of my previous employers, the IEE/IET, and its famous wiring regulations. These don't (yet) apply to boats, but the same risks apply.

The second aspect of particular importance to me at this time is the question of smoke and CO alarms. On the K&A we have too many incidents resulting from fires on boats—admittedly not on hire boats, but on private ones. One of our NABO representatives reports how his CO alarm was set off by a cruiser moored right next to his narrowboat, and just last week my own boat's CO alarm fired off when a boat passed very close by with exhaust smoke pouring out from the engine. So this issue affects all boaters. Would you stay in a B&B without smoke alarms? Well, if you did, the owners would be liable for prosecution. Do you have smoke and CO alarms in your boat? From a NABO perspective, the crucial issue is the extent to which changes in hire boat requirements need to be reflected in the rules for our private boats. Lots to think about there!

Just a minute

Finally, our Council meetings are proving to be very lively—enhanced by several new council members and a regular number of non-Council members attending. The excellent work by Helen on providing regular and detailed financial reports is making us all feel far more aware of our financial position, where, incidentally, we are holding our own—a great credit to our Council's action two years ago on reducing costs. David, Helen and Sue have also really got on top of our membership database, and David is hard at work rebuilding the website. But, as we said before, we really do need someone to be our minutes secretary! No pay, but a great team to work with! Have a great May/June cruising, and if you are on the K&A and you see one of our KACT trip boats, please wave—there's a good chance it will be me under the battered bush hat!

Fly on the wall

Observes proceedings at the Council meeting in April



NABO calendar 2015

Dates for Council Meetings in 2015: 13th June, 25th July (if required), 5th September, 17th October, 14th November (AGM).

Council meetings are held at boat clubs in the Midlands area—see the website for details.

Remember that members are welcome to attend meetings—please just let the Secretary or Chairman know in advance (contact details p4)

A second visit to the BCN Society HQ at Titford pumphouse with guests Alan Wildman of the RBOA and Mick Fitzgibbon. Council members kicked off proceedings with a discussion of towpath cycling. One of them, who views an urban towpath from his house, reported ‘accidents’ nearly every day caused by speeding bikers. All waterway groups agree there’s a problem and a serious accident is waiting to happen. A previous NABO Chairman had said bikers should dismount and walk past moored boats ... but life was different then and that is not going to happen.

CRT’s new Terms and Conditions took up the rest of the morning. Although it has made a few changes following NABO’s objections, Council members are still not satisfied with the legality of some parts; if they are shown to be ultra vires you are not bound by them. Lunch from a local sandwich shop was said to be good quality and reasonably priced—certainly some of the dropped crumbs were very tasty and kept me going through the afternoon.

As CRT’s new customer service ethos spreads through the Trust, local staff have been told to make friends with boaters. One such employee told a Council member he was already friends with boaters; “It’s head office that has a problem!”

The CRT letter to CCers rumbles on with many genuine CCers asking CRT for sighting data and clogging up its systems. One was reportedly refused the data until he sent in his cruising log.

The EA seems likely to be back on the agenda after the election and Council members discussed NABO’s views of CRT taking over its waterways. It is concerned that cash could migrate from CRT to manage the Thames and leave canals the poorer. Budgets would be needed for both navigation and flood control, and although the two organisations seem to work well together on the Trent and Severn, the Thames is much more complicated.

Mooring issues in London were also back on the agenda, with reports of a boat now delivering water to moored boats so that they don’t have to leave ‘their’ moorings and risk someone else nicking them.

The afternoon concluded with a long discussion of membership—members leave when everything is going well and join when there’s a problem. Perhaps NABO should create a crisis to get new members, but the consensus was that CRT is quite capable of doing that—NABO has had more new members in the last few months than for many years, so maybe boaters are beginning to see that there are problems. Finally an update on BSS developments and accidents the waterways, with someone noting that the canals should be a lot safer now that Tim and Pru have stopped filming! ...Byee

BORING... but important

A  message from the Membership Team

First, a sincere thank you to all of you for continuing to support NABO, through your subscriptions and donations. Without you we would not be in a position to lobby for changes on your behalf or represent your interests as boat owners.

But as always we have one or two issues ...

Banking botheration

We have two bank accounts receiving subscriptions, Barclays (Sort code 20-37-13) and Santander (Sort Code 09-01-51). The Santander account is the original, so if you are a long-standing member, then it is most likely that you are paying to Santander. For various reasons we must close the Santander account before the end of this financial year.

So, if your standing order currently pays to Santander, you'll receive a letter before your next renewal date. This will ask you to cancel and set up a new one to Barclays, using a 'foolproof' form to us to send to your bank. This has nothing to do with which bank you are using; this is about the NABO receiving account.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could deal with this promptly and tell us that you have done so. If you are familiar with online banking, you can make the change yourself. In this case you will need the Barclays bank account number which we will provide on request. Please ask if you are unsure. When you make the changes it is very important that the old standing order is cancelled, otherwise we will be paid twice.

Membership subscriptions

Most members pay by standing order, which is our preferred method because it involves the minimum administration effort, provided the amount is correct and the membership number is quoted. Cheques continue to be acceptable of course, but you can also pay electronically by bank transfer (details will be in your renewal letter), again mentioning your membership number. You can use Paypal (but please be aware that NABO has to pay a 4.2% charge on each pay-

ment). Most of our new members pay this way, because it can be done on line there and then when they join.

We've been asked several times about direct debits. We do not have a direct debit system. We are just not large enough to do this, and the costs for another party to handle this for us are not viable. Larger organisations may be able to offer more options ... but we're not a large organisation.

Please do not confuse bank standing orders, which are in your control, and direct debits where the receiver can adjust payments. We have no control of your standing orders, and it is for the member to change the details including cancellation when membership ends.

And finally ...

If you receive a letter or an email from us, please don't take offence, take action! If you think we have got it wrong, tell us! Yes, we make mistakes too.

And please let us know if your contact details change, you have a new email address, or (heaven forbid!) if you wish to resign. This will not only save the membership team time and effort, it will also ensure that you continue to receive the vital information and support you deserve.

Help needed in London

NABO is looking for a London representative who can attend the Better Relationship Group meetings and comment on proposed additional facilities, changes to mooring arrangements etc.

Please contact one of the Council members if you are able to help.

More information on the Better Relationship Group; canalrivertrust.org.uk/boating-in-london/london-boating-bulletin/better-relationships-group

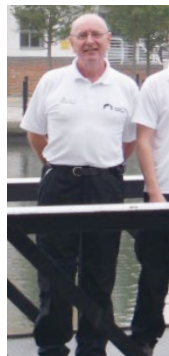
Below the surface

During the winter, CRT completed major works at 100 locks, replacing 144 lock gates, as part of the £45 million programme of work to repair and restore historic structures. A wide variety of weird and wonderful objects were recovered from the waterways: six Boris bikes were found when City Road Lock on the Regent's Canal was drained; and 24 shopping trollies were pulled out of Tinsley Lock on the Sheffield & Tinsley Canal in South Yorkshire.

On a drained 1 km stretch of the Regent's Canal, volunteers removed guns, a machete, safes, car bonnets, baths, sinks, over 120 tyres, phones, cameras and an unexploded WWII hand-grenade, as well as mattresses and traffic cones. Overall, it took 160 volunteers 739 hours and 10 trips to remove more than 10 tonnes, or 38,000 cubic feet, of rubbish.

London enforcement

Simon Cadek, CRT's London Enforcement Manager gave a recent presentation in which he reported that out of around 150 new first-year licences that are coming up for renewal this year, 19 have been given 3-month restricted licences and 41 have been given 6-month restricted licences. Also, 12 boats have been seized in London since January with 25 about to be seized. 371 boats in London are currently 'in the enforcement process for not CCing and around 20 for overstaying. The new policy now applies to all boats, not just first time licence holders.



Drayton Turret footbridge makeover

Built in the early 19th century, the gothic-style, Grade II listed footbridge is near the entrance of Drayton Manor theme park on the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal.

The bridge dates from when Sir Robert Peel (British Prime Minister and founder of the police force) built his new mansion at Drayton Bassett. The canal ran through his estate and it is widely thought that he wanted the bridge to be a feature. Only someone as wealthy and influential as Sir Robert could demand such an elaborate, custom-made bridge at the end of his garden.

A £54,000 restoration project is being funded by public donations to CRT and a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of a Tame Valley wetlands landscape partnership scheme. Restoration will include replacing loose mortar and the old paint, replacing the timber deck and improving the towpath around the bridge.



Sarah Brice—CRT Project Manager for the restoration of Drayton Turret footbridge

Photo: CRT



New moorings in Macclesfield

As the canal is too shallow for boats to moor next to the bank, there is a new 84-metre pontoon visitor moorings for up to six boats close to Macclesfield town centre, near the A6 Buxton

Road Bridge (Bridge 37). There will also be improvements to the towpath and access from Buxton Road. The £130,000 funding has come from public donations and from the sale of a derelict garage site opposite the new moorings that has been an eyesore for years. The redeveloped garage site will have new moorings along the canal below William Street.

...and the Lancaster Canal

Changes here include:

- Providing a mix of 48-hour and seven-day moorings in the summer and 14-day moorings for the rest of the year;
- Additional moorings at Lancaster and Galgate, with plans for other areas in future;
- Use of moorings at Lancaster University for a nominal fee for a trial period this summer;
- Improved service facilities at Cadley, Moss Lane and Bilsborough.



Photo: CRT

NABO meets CRT

Mark Tizard reports on a recent meeting with CRT's Head of Customer Services.



Ian Rogers, Head of Customer Service at CRT
You can contact him at ian.rogers@canalrivertrust.org

On Wednesday 29 April, Mike Rodd and I met with Ian Rogers and we had a good, open exchange of views. Slightly tongue-in-cheek, we opened the meeting by thanking CRT for contributing to a surge in new members over the last couple of months! We covered a range of subjects and I've highlighted the key areas below:

Terms and Conditions

We acknowledged the changes that CRT had made to the terms and conditions, largely as a result of NABO's feedback. We made the point that, as an organisation, we wanted well-written and easily understood terms and conditions, and we were surprised that CRT had not chosen to consult with boating organisations. The fact that the proposed terms and conditions have now been revised as a result of our representations made this clear. We reiterated that, in our view, some of the advice for those with home moorings, for example, was just plain wrong and went beyond CRT's legal powers.

Enforcement

Ian stated that CRT's aim was to get boaters to move within a reasonable range to enable the maximum number of boats to enjoy the waterways—and not to remove boats from the canal system. The focus is very much on the boats that have either not moved or hardly moved, and CRT will be robust in its approach. So far, a substantial number of boats that were being offered only a 3-month licence extension from May had not renewed their licences. CRT will be managing the follow-up

process externally via their legal advisors for those that do not renew licences.

We queried whether and how winter moorings would affect required movement patterns and we were advised that the availability of winter moorings in the future was currently under review. CRT wants to be seen to be reasonable in dealing with those boaters who have a genuine hardship, breakdown or illness, but evidence may be required if this is only reported towards the end of a licence period after a pattern of non-movement.

Meetings

There was agreement that the meetings of boating associations achieved little as they are currently set up, and we discussed using them as briefing sessions or to discuss a specific issue. It was agreed that the views of the other associations would be sought. Separately, it was agreed that we would hold one-to-one meetings with Ian or other CRT managers when we had issues to raise.

Ombudsman

We queried whether, to ensure the independence of the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman's Committee would contain some boating members who were not appointed by CRT. Ian undertook to look into this as he was unaware of the details.

Support

We reiterated the wealth of experience that exists within NABO and hoped that CRT would consider engaging with us in advance of major changes in future.


Dealing with dredgings

New legislation has caused a dramatic increase in the cost of disposing dredgings via landfill and it is now illegal to take 'wet waste' to landfill. CRT has recently opened a pilot dredgings treatment site near Coventry. The site is intended to provide a cost-efficient place to process dredgings that aren't suitable for spreading onto agricultural land or re-profiling eroded canal banks. The first 3,500 tonnes of dredged material was taken to the new site in March. CRT, in partnership with Land and Water and FCC Environment Ltd, will be trialling different methods to dry out the dredgings, which will then be reused or, if they are contaminated, taken to landfill.

The site includes drying lagoons to drain wet dredgings and provide opportunities for a range of uses for the dried material, including landscaping, capping landfill sites and land restoration. If the material has to go to landfill, the weight after drying should be reduced by a third, so reducing the costs to the Trust. Vince Moran, CRT Operations Director, said: "If the trial site proves successful we will be able to plan places to deposit the dredged material with greater confidence and also save money that will be ploughed back into the waterways. The treatment site has been made possible thanks to our 15-year contract with the Government, which gives us the ability to plan for the future."

Canal History

Information boards and plaques can be found on the canal towpath along with distance markers.



More History: www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

Canal Art

Sowley Bridge Weir: Jack O' The Lock can be seen at the entrance.

Luttedendfoot: The Fenster

Mytholney: The Hawk

Hidden Bridge: The Horse Bench


Toshenden: The Globe

The Summit: Lock 30 The Ribbon

The Summit Pound: The Walnutoid

The Story of the Canal Connections Art Project
www.canalrivertrust.org.uk
www.connectionsartproject.co.uk

Getting Around



Railway Stations at Sowerby Bridge, Mytholney, Hidden Bridge, Toshenden, and Walsden. Frequent services to Manchester, Leeds, York, Burnley, Blackburn, Huddersfield. Bus services follow the canal all along the valley, except at Sowerby Bridge (use of Taxi Lane only).


Walks

Visit these websites for walks on the tops or in the trough (valley) with details of routes too:

www.thetopwalkers.co.uk
www.canalwalkers.co.uk
www.canalrivertrust.org.uk
www.penninepaths.org.uk/TrafficEdge-a-Tail

Visit the Tourist Information Centre at Hidden Bridge or Toshenden - both within easy reach of the canal to find out which way.


Take a look at www.visitrochdale.com



Horseboating on the Rochdale Canal

Welcome to the Rochdale Canal in the Upper Calder Valley in Calderdale

Explore its moors and wooded valleys with tumbling streams. Enjoy the beauty of the Pennines. Shop in its towns and villages. Eat in its cafes, pubs and restaurants. Discover its history. Appreciate its art.



Hidden Bridge

New boater's guide to the Calderdale section of the Rochdale Canal

The guide is available at canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/library/9925-rochdale-canal-in-calderdale-boaters-information-leaflet.pdf

0800

Freephone numbers from mobile phones

Numbers starting 0800 or 0808 have been free when dialled from a landline, but mobile users are often charged for them, typically between 14p and 40p per minute. From 1st July, all 0800 or 0808 numbers will be free for all callers. Also see www.ukcalling.info/faqs to find how the cost is changing for calling numbers starting 084, 087, 09 and 118.

Photo: CRT



Crayfish rescue

More than 150 endangered white-clawed crayfish, the UK's only native crayfish, have been discovered in the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, during repairs near Gargrave. They were found in underwater crevices in drystone walls. CRT staff relocated the rare protected species, whose population has plummeted in recent years. American signal crayfish were brought to England as fashionable seafood, but in addition to being predators, they started a virulent outbreak of the *Aphanomyces Astaci* plague in the 1970s, which spread across the waterways wiping out large populations of white-clawed crayfish. Other predators include the red swamp, noble and narrow-clawed crayfish.



The white-clawed cray fish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) is an endangered European freshwater crayfish, and the only species of crayfish native to the British Isles.

Photo: David Gerke



Remote-controlled bridges

CRT is consulting over proposals to introduce remote-controlled bridges on the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal. Comment cards and an online survey of views at www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/gsbridges are available until June 30th.



Park End Bridge: Philip Halling, Map: gloucesterdocks.me.uk



Mike Grimes



Ian Lane

New Waterway Managers

Ian Lane is the new waterway manager for the West Midlands (from Leamington Spa to Great Haywood and Stourport to Fazeley).

Mark Evans has taken over the K&A region, which includes the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal.

Vicky Martin is the new waterway manager for the South East region (from Rickmansworth and Oxford to Warwickshire and Leicestershire).

... and the new Head of Business Boating

Mike Grimes has been appointed as CRT's Head of Business Boating, replacing Phil Spencer who retires at the end of June after 47 years' service.

Solid fuel stove fails

David Fletcher looks at the safety of this ubiquitous appliance

The failure of a solid fuel stove was reported at a recent BSS meeting. The base-plate of the stove had cracked badly on three sides and allowed air into the stove under the ash-pan. The stove went into thermal runaway because of the extra air getting in, but fortunately the owner was present and able to monitor events until the fuel burnt out.

The maker of the stove has said this is not a unique event, and that there are several reported every year. It is reported that the cause is corrosion in the joint gaps around the base plate. The 'rust' swells, putting tension into the castings. Subsequent heat from the fire cracks the cast iron material. The corrosion comes from dampness in the acidic

ash, either from rain or condensation, when the stove has not been in use. Stoves that are not in regular use are obviously vulnerable.

Now the end of the fire season is coming, it is obviously a good time to have a good clean out and make

The advice for when when a stove is not in use is:

- Clean out the bottom of the stove;
- Do not leave the chimney open to rain;
- Leave the ash-pan door open so that there is a flow of air.

sure that rain and condensation are not getting in. If you have had a similar experience, please let us know.

Failure crack in stove base
Photo: David Fletcher



Mechineers

Continuing his occasional series, **Louis Jankel** looks at boat mechanics



A much-maligned breed and not least by me! Most of them deserve every deprecation you will hear about them! A mechanic who classes himself (or herself) as an engineer (a ‘mechineer’) has delusions of grandeur even if they do have letters after their names. Be certain that this mechineer will not have the bad taste to demonstrate any signs of wealth before you. Quite the reverse, the mechineer will continually complain that they have to work all hours God gives to put bread upon the table—where the pinch of salt is well-hidden. Failure to make it to a promised visit will include the sad tale of the van’s unreliability, not to mention another couple of dozen

‘most likely’ so make sure that is the case.

I have had two excellent mechanics work on my boat. On occasions, I have also had some seriously terrible bodes masquerading as work. Often the mechineer is aware of his or her bad work being the result of them taking on too much work and bodging everything they touch. Reputation is everything even if the shortage of mechanics often allows one little choice. Be certain that many mechineers with deservedly dreadful reputations can cheerfully work for years on an undiminished and unsuspecting group of new boat owners.

The mechineer will continually complain that they have to work all hours God gives to put bread upon the table—where the pinch of salt is well-hidden.

ingenious tales that will enrich your life. The mechineer’s domestic partner will be hostile to all boat owners because you are responsible for the growing list of unattended ‘odd jobs’ about their home. Actually, the real culprit is either a fishing rod or favoured publican. Effort expended around finding a good mechanic is time well-spent. Use word of mouth above all other methods to establish a mechanic’s competence. If you see someone working on a boat, don’t be shy; ask for a business card. Most likely, the owner of the boat is sufficiently confident to allow this mechanic to attend, unsupervised, and carry out work on the boat. I say

To a scrupulous mechanic, a last minute call to attend your boat is their nightmare and your misfortune. Unless the mechanic considers your business as valuable, your sexual appeal irresistible, or your ‘goodwill’ status high, you will end up sad, poor and with a ruined trip. Your mechanic knows if you help yourself by caring for your boat, and this will figure in the quality of care the mechanic will offer. A dead battery on a well cared-for boat is much more likely to be a 10 minute job than a dead battery on a boat that is short of TLC and that might need a couple of hours to track down a fault. The first mechanic I was blessed with was so unreliable that you would have to book him for a service months in advance and then spend a fortune on telephone calls to coax him into fitting you in. One Sunday morning, my batteries failed up the Thames past Windsor. I telephoned my mechanic, Richard, and within the hour he had been down to the

boat and had me up and running. It was a sad day when Richard moved on. Every boater needs a 'Richard' but very few 'Richards' are born. He was one of the exceptions to my rule; Mick is the other.

Keep any surveyor's report on your boat to show the next owner just how much work has been carried out to improve the boat while it's in your possession. Keep all boat-related invoices, those paid to mechanics and those that cover the purchase of gizmos. Such information does much to calm the suspicious purchaser of your boat. Following such a policy will exclude you using the 'black economy.' I have never found even a half-competent mechanic who insists on working exclusively for cash-in-hand. You are warned.

Finally, I caution you with a true tale: the genius who surveyed my boat when I bought it explained that my 12-volt electrical system was a mess but my 240-volt system was fine. This was a most interesting observation considering that the boat did not have any 240-volt facilities whatsoever! He had lots of letters after his name—and still has!



Photos: Chesterfield Canal Trust

New Cuckoo boat

Cuckoo boats were unique to the Chesterfield Canal between the 1770s and the 1920s. They were horse-drawn and equipped with a mast and sail for when they ventured onto the River Trent. The last Cuckoo boat known to be in existence, Dawn, rotted away over twenty years ago.

Since 2011, volunteers from the Chesterfield Canal Trust have used hand-tools, as the original builders would have done, to build the first Cuckoo boat for over 80 years, led by David Bownes, who worked on one as a young man. At 70 feet long and weighing nearly 10 tons, craning was considered too dangerous as the boat may have snapped in half; and building a cradle for it was too expensive. Instead, it was launched down a slipway with a specially-lengthened trailer. The boat will be named on 6th June at the Worksoop Water Day organised by the East Midlands Waterways Partnership, at the Lock Keeper pub in Worksoop. For more information, see the Chesterfield Canal Trust's website www.chesterfield-canal-trust.org.uk.

Alien attack

Peter Fellows examines some invasive plants and animals in and on the waterways



American Mink

First arrived in Britain in 1929 at commercial fur farms and by 1956 escapees and deliberate releases were breeding in the wild. Numbers have increased rapidly since then and they are now widespread on canals and rivers. The mink can be mistaken for the native otter, however, whereas otters are shy and unlikely to be seen during the day, mink are confident and can be seen at all hours. Mink are smaller and slimmer than otters, allowing them to hunt burrow-dwelling prey such as water voles.



Some introduced invasive species can cause devastating effects on native wildlife, competing for food, space, sunlight and water. The animals are often larger and more aggressive than the natives, and the plants choke canals and rivers with their rapid growth.



Terrapins.

Although originally native to Britain around 8,000 years ago, red-eared terrapins were re-introduced as pets from the USA during the Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles craze in the 1980s. Their subsequent irresponsible release into the wild has prompted fears for the health of native wildlife as they eat bird's eggs and insect larvae. They are aquatic but need dry land to bask on sunny days. The Midlands and Southern England support the largest terrapin populations, mostly American red-eared terrapins, although snapper turtles and European pond terrapins have also been seen.

Chinese Mitten Crabs

First discovered in England more than 70 years ago, probably accidentally transported here from Asia in the ballast of ships. They have large white-tipped claws that are covered in soft fur (hence their name) and have a ravenous appetite for almost anything. Their extensive burrowing leaves canal and riverbanks vulnerable to collapse and they can also damage drainage embankments and structures. They can reproduce and spread very quickly along rivers and canals.



American Signal Crayfish

Thrived in the wild since they were introduced as fashionable seafood in the 1970s and 1980s. They are 15cm (6 ins.) long, aggressive, and breed faster than the native species. They also damage river banks by burrowing. They have depleted the native white-clawed crayfish over the last 30 years and as a result these are now a protected species. The signal crayfish can also carry a fungal disease, 'crayfish plague', which is harmful to native species and can be spread by wet footwear and equipment.



Zebra Mussels

Arrived in Britain's waterways on the hulls of ships from Eastern Europe. Up to 5cm long, these molluscs rapidly form large colonies that attach to almost any submerged hard surface, impeding the operation of canal gates and sluices. They increase water clarity by feeding on plankton, but this allows sunlight to penetrate and stimulate the growth of invasive weeds. They can drastically altering the ecology of waterways by taking over spawning grounds and changing the populations of animals that the fish eat. They are spread to other waters by boating when the mussels attach themselves to boat hulls.



Zander

Voracious predators with fang-like teeth, which they use to kill native fish. They are highly adaptable and have spread rapidly from The Broads where they were first introduced in 1878. The fish was legally introduced into the Great Ouse Relief Channel in 1963 and they have now colonised large slow-flowing waters of central England. They have sharp eyesight that makes them well-suited to hunting in deep water channels, where other predators may not venture.



Killer Shrimp

Highly invasive and considerably larger than native shrimps, growing up to 3cm long. They usually have a striped appearance although they can be uniform in colour. They are native to the Black Sea and have spread over Western Europe in the last 20 years, probably by commercial shipping. They were first discovered in British waters in 2010 and are considered to be one of the most damaging invasive species, with the potential to significantly affect the ecology of rivers, canals and lakes and even causing extinctions.



Giant Hogweed

Introduced into 19th century ornamental gardens and can now be found along waterways and areas of wasteland, reaching heights of up to five metres. It contains sap that can burn the skin when it is exposed to sunshine. Its height prevents sunlight from reaching other plants, which increases the risk of bank erosion because when the weed dies down in winter it exposes bare banks where other plants would otherwise be. The Wildlife and Countryside Act makes it an offence to plant or cause giant hogweed to grow in the wild.



More information:

www.nonnativespecies.org

Lancashire Invasive Species Project at www.lancashireinvasives.org

<http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/features/invasive-species-rogues-gallery/>



Japanese Knotweed

One of the most invasive weeds in Britain and its dense growth crowds out native vegetation, erodes riverbanks and causes structural damage. Originally native to Japan, Taiwan and China, it was introduced as an ornamental plant in the 19th century. It has no natural predators and can grow at up to 2 cm (1 inch) per day to 3 metres high (10 feet).

It cannot be cut or manually removed because of its ability to grow from fragments as small as 1cm long.

Floating Pennywort

Introduced in the 1980s by the aquatic nursery trade for tropical aquaria and garden ponds. This fleshy-stemmed plant uses its roots to weave a floating mat of lush foliage. It is a highly invasive plant that grows rapidly in late summer, up to 20cm (8 ins.) per day, and crowds out native plants, removing oxygen from water and killing fish and insects.

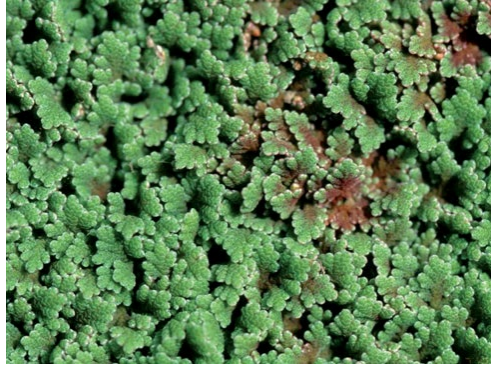
Like Japanese Knotweed, it can grow from miniscule fragments, making removal difficult and expensive.



New Zealand Pigmyweed

Also known as Australian Swamp Stonecrop, was originally sold as an oxygenating plant in the 1970s at garden centres. The weed grows rapidly throughout the year and can quickly smother native vegetation in a variety of habitats, from canals to damp ground.

It can also re-grow from tiny fragments. The weed forms a dense mat over the surface of canals that blocks out light and oxygen, killing anything living beneath it.



Water Fern

Also known as Fairy Fern, is a popular pond plant, originally native to North and Central America, which forms dense mats of vegetation on the surface of water. It is able to withstand winter temperatures and invade a region very rapidly.

As it spreads across the water it reduces light and shades out other plants, as well as de-oxygenating water and causing the death of fish. The plant is free-floating and able to grow in any depth of still or slow-moving water.



Himalayan Balm

A densely growing, pink- and red-stemmed weed that shades out and stifles other plants, so that when it dies back in autumn it leaves waterway banks vulnerable to erosion.

Its seed pods explode open when ripe and can shoot around 800 seeds up to seven metres away, thus both dominating an area and colonizing new areas via the waterway.

Photos:

Mink: Needsmoreitalin Wikipedia
 Pond terrapin: George Chernilevsky Wikipedia
 Signal crayfish: David Perez Wikipedia
 Zander: Elnuko Wikipedia
 Mitten Crabs: Lycaon Wikipedia
 Zebra mussels: Museo8bits Wikipedia

Killer shrimps: Non-native species secretariat
 Giant hogweed: Dismachus Wikipedia
 Japanese Knotweed: MdE Wikipedia
 Floating pennywort: Velela Wikipedia
 Pigmyweed: Terpsichores at Wikipedia
 Water fern: Topjabot at Wikipedia
 Himalayan balm: Lancashire Invasive Species Project

The purse strings

Next generation waterway support—where will it come from?

Helen Hutt reports on a meeting in Birmingham in March, organised by the Worcester, Birmingham and Droitwich Canals Society and CRT.

Speakers:

Rob Jackson, Rob Jackson Consulting (volunteer programme management); Charley Johnston, BCNS; Daniel Haynes, Birmingham University Conservation Volunteers; Sophie Bond, Army Cadets; Beverley Gobbett, CAMRA; Aniela Kaczmarczyk, Tinder Foundation; Nicky Wakeford, CRT.

A list of canal societies and trusts that need volunteers is available at www.canaljunction.com/canal/society.htm

Opportunities for volunteering are publicised by IWA at www.waterways.org.uk/support_us/volunteer/volunteer_with_iwa and by CRT at canalrivertrust.org.uk/volunteering.

The main theme of the meeting was how to recruit, motivate and retain volunteers. All speakers emphasised the importance of embracing social media to stimulate interest—and not just among the younger generation! It seems that more and more older people are using Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, with the fastest growing age group using Twitter being 50+. Investment in online communications is vital. Help with getting the best out of social media is available through the Tinder Foundation (www.tinder-foundation.org), which offers free advice (e.g. guidelines for setting up and using a Twitter account, internet security, analytics, distributing newsletters electronically).

Another common theme was that volunteers and members are motivated by what they can achieve for themselves (e.g. learning new skills

or using existing skills in a different way), rather than what the organisation wants them for. However, people don't generally want to use their everyday work skills in a voluntary role. Peer recommendation is a powerful recruiting tool.

Again, it's 'what the organisation has done for me' not 'what you can do for the organisation'. Understanding why and what sort of people join is important, in order to focus recruitment on the right sectors. Using an online tool like Survey Monkey can help.

Aside from the speakers, comments from attendees included: "Are there too many organisations, all competing for similar members?" and a comment that membership generally seems to be static or rising slightly, not falling, despite the inevitable loss of older members, generally due to physical infirmity.



Photo: CRT

Better towpaths I

Better Towpaths for everyone?

Simon Robbins looks through the latest glossy from CRT

CRT's document was mentioned in the last NABO News so I thought I'd take a look. The document is, I suggest, a pretty poor showing. To me the nine key points are just a list of the same old platitudes, stating the blooming obvious when it comes to general towpath use. It's loaded with glossy high colour images of photogenic spots, when the reality in many places is that too many of our towpaths are at best disappointing and often eyesores. If you remove these images from the document there is

perhaps a page and a half of actual text, which is totally aspirational but not in my view underwritten with anything but hopes and wishes.

For boaters there is, of course, precious little.

- No mention of better visitor moorings or new facilities for boaters, despite many previous consultations crying out for this.
- No mention of standards of upkeep for existing facilities for boaters or anyone else for that matter.

Have a read yourself

canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/news/new-policy-aims-to-give-better-towpaths-for-everyone



Better Towpaths for Everyone

A national policy for sharing towpaths



- No mention of vegetation management.
- No mention of refuse and rubbish management which is the main blight for all towpath users. There are no targets for improvements and no commitments for spending, and it seems that CRT is totally dependent on third-party

funding for any improvements. Even more curious, given the obsession in their PR with the subject of volunteering, no mention of the Towpath Taskforces or how to get involved locally. As usual with CRT, a fundamental issue has, for me, been diluted down into spin and banal blandishments with no substance.

Photos: pp23–25 CRT

Better towpaths II

David Fletcher shares some thoughts on sharing towpaths.

CRT has published its national policy for sharing towpaths, and I have heard presentations on it in a number of meetings. It has also been an agenda item for user groups this spring.

From the policy's words, the main three areas of focus are:

- Better infrastructure—we have secured investment of £15m to widen and resurface towpaths over the past two years and will continue to use external sources of funding to carry out similar schemes across the network. Additionally consideration of lighting and access/barriers will be added to the Trust's existing towpath design guidance.
- Better signs—clear and prominent shared-use signs will be installed across the country where there are concerns raised by local stakeholders and customers. These are designed to encourage safer sharing such as at blind spots, pinch points and on busier

towpath stretches, where there may also be moored boats.

- Better behaviour—a range of initiatives to encourage considerate use of towpaths will be developed. The 'Share the Space, Drop your Pace' campaign and towpath code, which have been successful in London, will be extended to other parts of

the network and, where needed, we will look at other methods to promote safe behaviour such as downloadable materials and volunteer towpath rangers.

And what is wrong with that?

However, in all the meetings I have been to, boaters have been universal in their concerns about high-speed cyclists being a thorough nuisance on the waterway, and wanting action taken. The traditional worry about anglers is no longer mentioned.

CRT is caught between a rock and hard place with this one, and much the same applies to us boaters. The survival of the canals depends on community support and funding that flows from it. It is essential that the use of towpaths by walkers and cyclists grows, because the navigation activities alone cannot support the business. (Only ten years to go to renegotiation of the DEFRA contract!) It is not surprising then that the policy is more about walkers and cyclists rather than our needs, which in this area are politically secondary. If we want a canal exclusive to boaters, be prepared for your licence fee to go through the roof—about three to five times more expensive.

So what can we do?

Better Infrastructure.

CRT takes a lot of new money to repair and improve towpaths courtesy of Sustrans or the County Councils. Perversely, this is good for boaters too, as we get good access, and other available funding can go to navigation projects. Boaters are afraid that the towpath turns into a racetrack,



or is paved to edge and we lose moorings. Other projects provide access ramps and steps at bridges, and they should be welcomed for the benefits to boaters as well. I have heard recently that on a number of occasions CRT has turned down funding for towpath improvements in some locations because the outcome was not likely to be correct, and they are to be encouraged, even congratulated for doing this. Your local input is key to any planned projects. Perhaps we should ask CRT to maintain a list of externally funded towpath projects so that we can keep an eye on what is going on?

Better signs.

This is inevitable, though I am not greatly in favour of masses of signage on listed structures. Selfish speeding cyclists are not likely to take any more notice of a CRT sign than they do of red traffic lights or towpath user's polite appeals to slow down. Signs have their place in a modest way, but the main point is the next one about behaviour.

Better Behaviour

CRT has no stomach for reintroducing cycling permits, because it is counter-productive for increasing usage and it also has a high cost. It would have to come hand-in-hand with enforcement. However, there was never any enforcement in the past on this issue, so that is not an option. But neither is doing nothing. There are clearly some bad areas: Regents Canal, Birmingham Navigations, K&A west end etc. But what will happen to the new projects at the River Weaver and Aylesbury



Arm? I have expressed a view that there needs to be a campaign of intervention at hot-spots to stop cyclists and warn them that speeding is unacceptable. But CRT is not rushing to do this. They say that they do not get enough complaints to justify it and that more cyclists are injured than pedestrians. The option for action is in the policy document, and it is up to us to make the complaints when we see bad behaviour, otherwise nothing will happen.

NABO's policy for a number of years has been as follows:

15 Cycling

NABO is against any organised cycling or performance events on the towpath. Boaters and pedestrians should have priority over cyclists on the towpath and we remain very cautious, on safety grounds, of the 'upgrade' of towpaths in order to create cycle-ways. NABO is in favour of any steps taken to ensure that cyclists slow down before passing moored boats and pedestrians. CRT should take responsibility for allowing cyclists on towpaths and enforce its bye-laws.

Is it time for a change? Please let us have your views.

CRT Acts of Parliament

A look at the post-war legislation that led to the establishment of the British Waterways Board.

Stephen Peters continues his series of articles on the legislation that governs CRT activities

Copies of all relevant Acts are obtainable from the CRT website.

If you are interested in the rights of navigation have a look at www.caffynonrivers.co.uk/_resources/cms/pdf/boats_on_our_rivers_again.pdf

When CRT took control of the BW waterways, it inherited the latter's Acts of Parliament. As previously, I have selected the main provisions of the most relevant Acts and omitted words or sections that are superfluous to a basic comprehension of the legislation, or which have been superseded by subsequent legislation.

British Transport Commission Act 1954 Chapter IV

Section 16 gave the BTC powers to enact Byelaws and this is the enabling legislation by which BW and CRT Byelaws have been made ever since.

Section 43 (3) [of the 1962 Act] states *inter alia* that ‘...the Boards shall have power to demand, take and recover such charges ... subject to such terms and conditions, as they think fit’. CRT relies on this wording quite frequently.

Transport Act 1962 Chapter 46

The post-war Labour government had nationalised the railways and other transport undertakings with the Transport Act of 1947. This established the British Transport Commission but in 1962 it was decided by Parliament that this should be split up, and the British Waterways Board (BWB) was established in **Part I** of the Act. The Act

sets out the duty and powers of BWB together with financial provisions.

Part II deals with the division of BTC's assets and the treatment of debt.

Part III specifies how BWB could charge for services and facilities and **Section 43 (3)** states *inter alia* that ‘...the Boards shall have power to demand, take and recover such charges ...subject to such terms and conditions, as they think fit’. CRT relies on this wording quite frequently!

Transport Act 1968 Chapter 73

Part VII of this Act relates to inland waterways controlled by BWB and **Section 104** and the associated schedule specifies which waterways are to be regarded as ‘commercial waterways’ principally for freight carriage and which are to be classed as ‘cruising waterways’ and used for recreation. Any canal or river not mentioned would become a ‘remainder’ waterway. The Minister could re-designate waterways in the future and, indeed, did so on a number of occasions.

Section 105 stipulates how BWB shall maintain each category of waterway, with the first two being kept in a suitable condition commensurate with their use; and the remainder being dealt with in the most economic manner possible (See Section 107 which permitted BWB to abandon and close remainder waterways).

Section 105 (5) effectively removed the Public Right of Navigation

from inland waterways where such a right had been established by statute. When the Bill was going through the House of Commons, a certain Margaret Thatcher vowed that a future Conservative government would reinstate the public right of navigation. We are still waiting!!

Subsequent sections amend the duties of the Board, established the now defunct Inland Waterways Amenities Advisory Council and set out how the Minister could close canals not controlled by BWB.

British Waterways Act 1963

Chapter XII

This Act gave BWB powers to abandon sections of the Birmingham Canal, St. Helens Canal and the Macclesfield Canal. This era of closures and abandonment was the easiest method to deal with unwanted canals.

British Waterways Act 1965

Chapter XXIII

Further canals were abandoned by BWB; notably sections of the Birmingham Canal and the Lancaster Canal. Another section gave the Board powers to construct a new cut into the Regent's Canal Dock, thereby obviating the necessity to rebuild the river lock from Limehouse Cut to the Thames.

British Waterways Act 1966

Chapter XIII

Another Act granting powers to close more remainder canals and to extinguish all rights of navigation thereon.

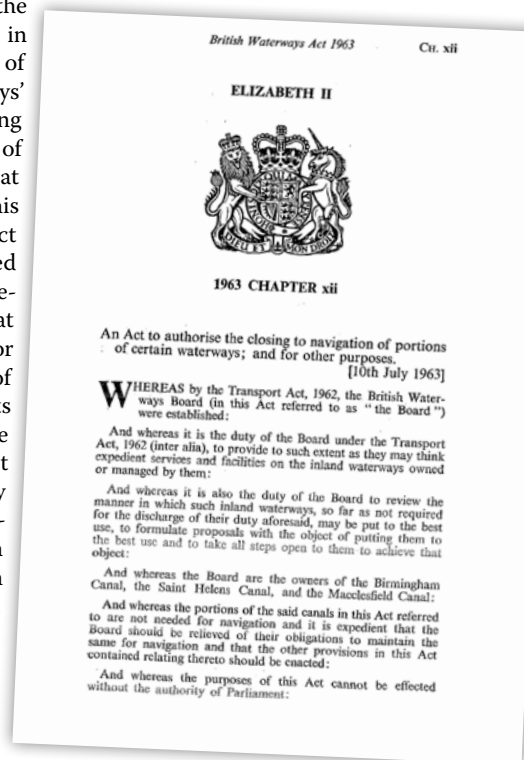
British Waterways Act 1974

British Waterways had enormous political support to improve the commercial waterways of the industrial north during the early '70s and Government investment was made available to improve

the Sheffield & South Yorkshire Navigations. BW promoted a Bill to enable larger vessels to be taken up to Rotherham. This subsequently became the British Waterways Act 1974 (Elizabeth II 1974 Chapter xxiii). The Act stretches to 43 pages,

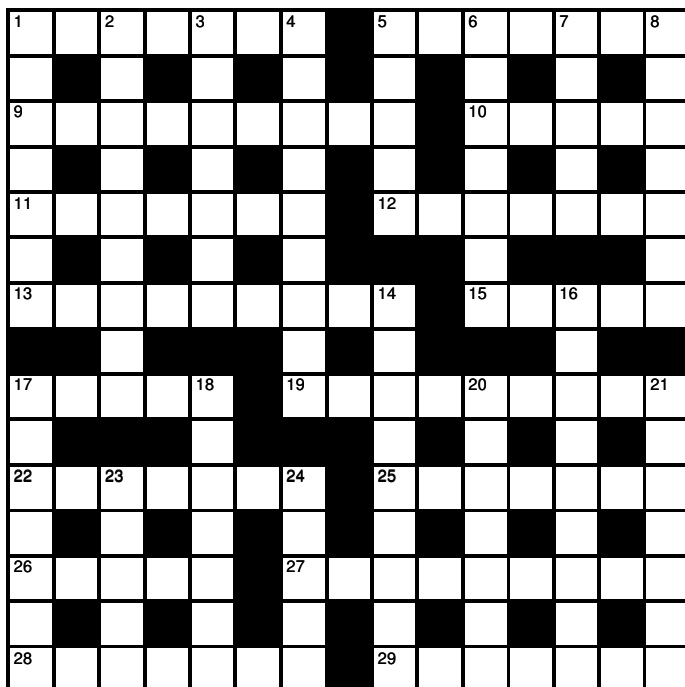
Margaret Thatcher vowed that a future Conservative government would reinstate the public right of navigation. We are still waiting.

most of which concern themselves with provisions to acquire land and to construct new works including locks and realignments. The Act also provides the opportunity in Part V to tidy up some previous legislation by amending the Act of 1971 to include the Upper Trent in the definition of 'river waterways' and amending the duration of pleasure boat certificates. This is also the Act that introduced the binding requirement that the charges for registration of pleasure boats for river use only shall not be increased by a greater proportion than the increase in charges levied for licences to use any of the CRT waterways.



NABO News crossword 23

By Canaldrifter

**I name this boat ...**

If you have spotted a boat name that made you smile, please let us have a photo to use in future issues. Here's one from Brian Holt.

Answers to Crossword 22

Across: 1 Boiliff, 5 Cafes, 8 Ablutions, 9 Sir, 10 Storm, 12 Tideway, 13 Canal and River, 15 Nureyev, 17 Visor, 19 Ash, 20 Waterways, 22 Tepid, 23 Re-enter.

Down: 1 Boats, 2 Ill, 3 Intimal, 4 Floating voter, 5 Cased, 6 Fishwives, 7 Sprayer, 11 Ownership, 13 Contact, 14 Reverse, 16 Yawed, 18 Riser, 21 Art.

Across

- 1 Old working boater's power source. A salami cooked around the north? (7)
- 5 Confused aged nun helps to prop up the load (7)
- 9 Taking a bite I trap it in two parts (9)
- 10 Holds up banks with painful medical condition (5)
- 11 Gathered the highly developed (7)
- 12 One who rejects a long tow rope? (7)
- 13 Similar to a rush with broken edges we are fond of (9)
- 15 Goes and dies (5)
- 17 In the lad enters, loaded (5)
- 19 Walkways for round little people in tanks? (3,6)
- 22 Bonus animals on the stern (7)
- 25 Quickly enter and collide with! (3,4)
- 26 Heron lands badly on French river (5)
- 27 Bring cake crumbs for unattended horse towing (9)
- 28 Barge partially unladen? (7)
- 29 Light gull lands on local area network (7)

Down

- 1 Blaster blows up Cassiobury Park Locks on the GU (7)
- 2 Scatter a dime around a canal length when confiscated (9)
- 3 Shorten a canal feature? (7)
- 4 Rough trips find sea spray (9)
- 5 Speed up in the ocean! (5)
- 6 Write up melody for a sea god (7)
- 7 Sort of windable but not new without notes (2-3)
- 8 Sees run ruined and makes certain (7)
- 14 Practical replica I'm rebuilding (9)
- 16 Confused genie in on space rocket propulsion (3,6)
- 17 Breasted in a later aligned position? (7)
- 18 Closest organ in the nest! (7)
- 20 Of taxonomic classification at a pub in the winding lane! (7)
- 21 Fired weapon? (7)
- 23 Smell about right on the fork? (5)
- 24 Cry for the Queen when clean (5)

Rewind 15 years

Tony Haynes continues his look back through NABO News from June 2000

BSS: If you get your boat tested two months before it is due, you have that time to do any rectification work. After a re-test your certificate will run from the expiry date of the old one. Chairman Sue Burchett says it is a small concession but a useful one. 18,706 failure certificates have been issued. 4,152 have still not passed.

BSS special feature: Boating user groups expressed their concern that the internal review of the BSS will have neither an independent chairman nor user representation. All the major boating bodies have jointly asked Waterways Minister, Lord Whitby, to set up an independent impartial inquiry. He was told that the scheme is over-burdensome, over-regulated and rapidly becoming unworkable.

BW unsound on gas soundness testing: BW confirms (very wrongly) that it is permissible for a non-CORGI registered BSS examiner to conduct gas soundness tests in private craft because they are not subject to the Gas Safety Regulations. (They are!)

Ex-examiners: 114 examiners have left the scheme since August 1996. The most common reasons cited were the cost of the scheme and not enough work!

Engines: 62% of new marine engines at the Boat Show would fail the BSS even though they have a satisfactory safety record, are sold worldwide, and are fitted in new craft complying with the Recreational Craft Directive.

Flotation inflation: In a NABO survey it was found that the average cost of obtaining a BSC more than



The Greyhound
Photo: Keith Williams

doubled in the first five years. It appears that a major problem is inconsistency between examiners.

BW now calling time? BW buys a pub; The Greyhound at Hawksbury.

Floating pubs: After the inquiry into the Marchioness disaster it is intended to licence the sale of alcohol on boats in England and Wales. Previously tripboats were exempt from licensing laws once they had cast off, even on canals. A named crew member will have to obtain a licence and be present on board whenever alcohol is sold.

Colour change: One flight of locks on the Shroppie is being painted grey and white instead of the usual black and white. BW would like NABO's opinion on this. Sue says, how nice that they are at least taking users' views into consideration on the really important issues!

Internet boat sales: The first advert appears for narrowboatworld.com offering boats-for-sale listings online at £25 a month or £50 until sold! NABO members offered a third off.

BW's prostate problem? According to a letter-writer the sanitary station at Kingswood must have the lowest water-point pressure in the whole of Warwickshire.

Letters to the Editor

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

Recruitment activity

Just a quick note to say how much I and several friends enjoyed reading your open letter to Ian Rogers, head of customer services at CRT. We felt you raised good points which really do need to be hammered home. CRT must be made to realise that all boaters are not only customers but also major contributors to CRT and without our continued support CRT will cease to exist.

NABO is, in my opinion, the foremost organisation for boaters and should be joined and supported by every boat owner; then we can make demands as to how the canals and rivers are administered. I really do appreciate the hard work NABO puts in and I promise to do my utmost to recruit more members as I continuously cruise.

I have placed a dozen NABO leaflets on the information stand inside the Bosley service block and I have also given membership application forms to four boaters as I helped them through the locks. Three seemed genuinely interested in joining, another is a possible.

I'm going to stay on this mooring for 14 days, then move down the locks to a mooring immediately below the bottom lock, which I think will be a good place to persuade boaters that they really should be NABO members. They can't exactly run away while they're waiting for the lock to fill or empty, and a lot seem to like stroking my dogs, so it's easy to begin a conversation and then give them a form. I'm aiming to recruit ten new members this month.

Graham Holmes

'Bottom of the Garden' Moorings—Judge Perrett delivers wisdom from the Bench

CRT tell us they are legally entitled to charge for such moorings. They may be right, but there is seemingly less to their entitlement than at first appears. This idea revolves around a single court case which took place in Birmingham, nearly

25 years ago. Judge Perrett, summing up in the Allen, Crennell and Shaw case analysed a mooring in a very simple way: "A mooring has two basic elements. One is the waterspace upon which the boat floats. The other is the land to which the boat is accessed and secured. The two are interdependent and only together make a mooring."* 'End of Garden' mooring charges are one sided.

This evaluation is so simple, its significance is seemingly lost on most moorers. Here's why: If a length of waterspace is arbitrarily valued by CRT at £500 per year, it follows that the land (the other element of the mooring) has a not-dissimilar value. In other words, if CRT values its waterspace (the element for which it can charge) by implication it values my land. After all, without it CRT does not have a mooring to sell. It only has an anchorage. Presented with a EOG mooring bill, it would seem logical to argue (and I do) that I will pay their £500 bill if they pay my £500 bill. My bill being for their use of my land (i.e. the land required to create the mooring they want to charge me for. In my own case, I argue that if their half is worth £500, then mine is worth at least £1000. This figure, I argue, balances up CRT's one-sided thinking. I invite other moorers to use the same argument.

Simon Greer

* Extracted from the transcript of the Perrett judgment, Case Nos 9177961/2/3

From NABO's Facebook Page

As a boater of 25 years I love my life living on the water, never have I missed paying my way, moving every 14 days, respecting others. However, over the last two years I have been badgered, harassed and chased to the point of being pushed towards a breakdown ... why? ... because I didn't have a home mooring. I have now been on four waiting lists as well as bidding for moorings, but what a lot of the non-boating CRT folk seem not to realise is that you need to be patient when on

a list for a space for your vessel to come available. There is such a shortage of moorings in the north, but they won't allow any new ones! I work full-time, saving to retire to cruise. Boats are for using, the canal is for boaters to use. I don't want to live in a marina, I want to live on the water and enjoy the natural freedom the waterways have to offer. But I am bullied into having a mooring—and now I have one, apparently I can't leave my mooring unless I am cruising!

It's about time we had boaters running the canals/rivers heritage. I get the feeling it's all about targets and numbers, not people and tradition.

Name supplied

CRT's Regulations

I have read every word (on the T&Cs) and I am very impressed with your attention to detail and logical arguments. I remember the days when NABO was formed in '91. I was at the IWA event when your organisation was first promoted. IWA was promoting 'Waterways for All' and stated openly that they were not an organisation for boaters. Their support came mainly from boaters and records show that this was the start of their declining membership. At that time I was an IWA Branch Chairman and a Director of the Mersey Basin Trust Ltd. I sat on the committee with a board member of the RYA which I joined, as they had plans to increase their presence on the inland waterways—it never materialized at that time but in more recent years they have made some progress.

My main thrust is that CRT is trying to make new regulations that are in direct opposition to Maritime Law. They cannot do this. CRT staff can only board your boat to affix a court order to the main mast; they have no right of entry. There are a number of boats on inland waters that have full British registration (Blue Book) Part I. My boat is one of these and has been for over 40 years. I think CRT has overlooked this point and you could add it to your argument as Maritime Law extends to all navigable waters in the UK.

NABO is clearly an organisation prepared to tackle difficult situations, to the enhancement of your growing reputation. Keep up the good work.

Chris Potter

A strange tale

I have something of a strange tale to relate. Like a scene from Hitchcock's horror movie 'The Birds', a member of CRT's bankside staff recently discovered the corpses of over 200 dead crows floating in the Tinsley Canal at Sheffield. The location where the birds were discovered was close to the point where the M1 crosses both the River Don and the Tinsley Canal. There was a great deal of concern by the local population plus a great deal of speculation that the crow fatalities were a result of an avian flu outbreak.

An ornithological pathologist was employed by CRT to examine the remains of the crows and after a series of stringent tests, much to everyone's relief the pathologist confirmed the problem was not avian flu, but was related to a series of vehicular impacts. During analysis it was noted that there were varying colours of paint embedded in the bird's beaks and on their claws.

CRT employed a forensic science company specialising in paint analysis and this revealed that 98% of the crows had been killed by impact with lorries and 2% by cars. The Trust then hired an ornithological behaviourist to determine if there was a cause for the disproportionate percentage of truck kills versus car kills.

The behaviourist concluded that crows habitually eat road-kill and are also known for having a higher intelligence than other bird species. It seems that the crows always have one or more of their number to act as a look-out and warn other crows of any approaching danger. All look-out crows, without exception, could shout a loud clear 'Kah,' but none could shout 'Lorry'. The Trust will now institute an education scheme, similar in scope to the scheme to educate the high-speed commuters and time-trial cyclists on the towpath.

The local Waterways Partnership has joined in and will employ an ornithological speech therapist to educate the corvids, especially those acting as look-outs. It is thought that it will help the corvids to more clearly enunciate the word 'Lorry' to other crows. CRT and the Partnership are anticipating equally spectacularly good results for both schemes.

Michael Fitzgibbons

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