



# NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners  
Issue 5 October 2015

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### Cover photo

This month's cover photo is by Peter Lloyd, a misty morning at Fenny Compton.

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

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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](mailto:nabonews@nabo.org.uk) by **21st November 2015**

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# Oxford woes

Editor **Peter Fellows** gets to grips with the vegetation and tries to find someone to take his money.

**T**he fine weather over the summer has not only produced a good harvest for farmers this autumn, but also encouraged NABO members to produce a bumper crop of letters for this issue, covering diverse topics from problems cruising the Caldon and Leek Canals to thoughts on paddle pawls.

Thank you for getting in touch and thank you also for a steady supply of photos for the front cover and boat names that have made you smile—please keep them all coming.

We were fortunate to be on the South Oxford and Stratford Canals during the sunny spell in July (although descending the Napton flight with the thermometer pushing 35°C was a challenge). But I was dismayed at the state of the South Oxford Canal since we were last there a few years ago: overhanging trees narrowing the canal and blocking lines of sight at bends, overgrown towpaths north of Thrupp etc. etc. In contrast, the Southern Stratford remains a delight, with well-kept locks and towpaths and little offside vegetation to obstruct passage. Contract staff were grass-cutting the (beautifully kept, apart from gates that won't stay closed) Wilmcote flight and told us that their numbers were being cut and their workload increased. They had been transferred for a while to the South Oxford to try and help sort out the situation, but had found it 'too far gone' and had given up for this year.

The other annoying sight on the South Oxford, which I've yet to see elsewhere, is the proliferation of signs telling me that I can moor for

'14 days without charge'. What is the meaning of this? I know I can moor for 14 days (anywhere unless the mooring is time-restricted). And what if I stay for 15 days? How much is the charge and who do I pay it to? Enough grumbling, it was a great trip.

I perhaps shouldn't report this as we've all had to learn sometime, but it was amusing: as we were moored in Bancroft Basin, watching the tourists watching us, an inexperienced crew arrived with a strong wind blowing across the basin, causing them considerable difficulty in handling their narrowboat. A passerby on the bank shouted for them to throw him a rope to help them moor. The bow rope was duly thrown and the passerby was heard to shout: "Shouldn't this be attached to your boat?!"

There has also been plenty of waterways news over the summer and I've included a roundup of goings-on at CRT. For boaters, an important appointment is Mike Grimes as the new Head of Boating, now having more authority than the previous incumbents of this post.

Stephen Peters continues his series on the regulations that govern CRT's activities and he has also written the first instalment of an article on what the Trust can and cannot do if it wants to move your boat.

We also continue the series on roving traders, this time focusing on Jackie and Mick Warren on their Jewellery Boat.

Finally, I look forward to seeing you at the AGM in Wolverhampton in November.



Who do I pay?

Photo: Peter Fellows



## It's not our fault

Chairman **Mike Rodd** refuses to play the blame game

**L**ife is never dull when you get involved with the NABO Council, that's for sure! Just as we were all really enjoying some lovely late-summer cruising, we opened one of the canal mags to find that we are being blamed for the recent changes in CRT's winter mooring requirements, and suddenly the social media are full of some really silly hot air! Yes, we (and others) did point out to CRT staff (when they first introduced the idea, as always, without consultation) that the idea

*The idea of a winter mooring that allows you to moor almost anywhere for five months is simply not legal.*

of a winter mooring that allows you to moor almost anywhere for five months is simply not legal under the Waterways Act, and probably not acceptable under local authority residential-site conditions.

Once again, an ill-thought-through scheme that would end in tears and upset a lot of boaters, many of whom are valued NABO members. We also said that we could envisage a possible compromise scheme—but that was ignored as well. Suddenly I was being accused of being anti-liveaboards! What nonsense—if my own life plans had not been altered by my wife's career changes, that is exactly what we would be doing right now.

And a large number of NABO members are indeed continuous cruisers, and many of those take up winter moorings.

### Consulting CRT's new head of boating

The recent appointment of Mike Grimes as CRT's new Head of Boating led Mark and me to seek an urgent meeting with him—they both live near Kings Lynn, so it was a long trip for me from Hungerford. Mike certainly has a very clear vision of the problems caused by BW (and sadly, now CRT) not consulting at an early stage with their most passionate customers—us!

He certainly 'gets' our point that so much of the silly nonsense that has gone on for years, whereby BW/CRT invent far-reaching new 'rules' in order to solve (possibly) minor or local problems, could be avoided by simply talking to the groups that represent the boating community. We have kept saying that, yes, there is an issue about some boaters not observing their agreed requirements for continuous cruising, but just stop and think about how widespread the resulting problems actually are before introducing draconian measures that affect us all.

And also, do understand that many of the boats that don't move aren't actually lived on at all, simply being left where they are because the owners have opted not to have a home mooring, neither continuous cruisers nor liveaboards. The fact that only about 300 boats (out of 30,000!) have been issued with short-term licences says something about the actual size of the problem.

### Mon & Brec gates and research at Crofton

On a personal note, I am delighted to see the innovative use of materials

in a pair of new bottom gates down on the lower end of the Mon & Brec (the part that is not owned by CRT)

Under active restoration by the local canal trust a top gate was installed about a year ago. The significance of these gates is dramatic: based on designs by the K&A's Bill Fisher, a project was started about four years ago involving the K&A Canal Trust, the Mon & Brec Canal Trust and Swansea University, investigating new lock-gate designs, using modern materials. A key factor also (from an idea originating from within BW) is to make these in the form of 'flat-packs' assembled and adjusted on site using only a light-weight crane, having been transported there on a small trailer pulled along the towpath by a 4x4.

With a life expectancy of some fifty years and a build cost similar to that of the traditional wooden gates, the short- and long-term cost saving implications are enormous. Of course, many CRT gates are listed structures and couldn't be renewed in this way, but many could be replaced by such a new design—and indeed, many of the gates on the K&A are already built of steel anyway.

Also, again being personally involved, I was very excited to see the initial results of a design project involving students from Bath University's Mechanical Engineering Department, investigating the instrumentation of the Crofton Pumping Station, using 21st century monitoring equipment. The vision is to provide a complete, real-time picture of what is happening when the engine and pumps are operating (i.e., to measure temperature, pressure, stresses, etc., as well as water flow rates). This will provide both an insight into how the 200-year-old systems are working, detecting any potential problems, and giving



visitors (both on-site and online) a web-based picture of the whole operation. Linked to CRT's water monitoring supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system, a complete picture could be made available on-line, showing the end-to-end water flow across the whole K&A waterway. This is a wonderful example of applying the latest technology to support and enhance an amazing 200-year old feat of engineering still working to perform the tasks it was originally installed to do!

**Crofton pump house**

Peter Turvey

### **Council candidate**

Finally, we are very pleased to see Stella Ridgway come forward to stand for election to the CRT Council. After hearing her views at the recent Council meeting, we have no doubt that she will prove to be a very effective representative of boaters, sharing NABO's core values. We hope to see members (and those interested) at the AGM. We don't have a speaker this year, but this leaves time for more discussions. The AGM will be finished by lunchtime and members are invited to stay on for the first Council meeting straight after lunch.

# Fly on the wall

Observes proceedings at the Council meeting in June



## NABO calendar 2015

Dates for Council Meetings in 2015: 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)

**C**ouncil re-located the September meeting at very short notice (c..k-up with planned venue at Wolverhampton!) so I had to fly across the BCN, down to the lovely Weighbridge pub at Alvechurch. Some of the more outspoken Council members were busy

doing what boaters do in summer—boating. So the Chairman thought he was in for a short meeting and he would get back to his village carnival in time to cheer on his wife's float—silly chap—this is NABO after all, with plenty to say all round.

Once again, the Council welcomed NABO members to the meeting; this time long-term members Peter and Margaret Lloyd, Stella Ridgway, a member who is standing for CRT Council, and NABO's new auditor, James Steckerl.

Listening to a report on the first meeting with CRT's bright and shiny new Head of Boating, the old hands all felt they had heard it somewhere before—lots of promises to listen to (and take notice of!) CRT's prime customers (boaters) are starting to wear a bit thin! Chairman Mike is more positive though.

Dismay when Council members heard that one of canal mags had blamed NABO for making CRT change its approach to winter moorings. The Council always likes to make things happen, but this was an outrageous accusation as it has

always supported the winter mooring concept and many of NABO's most active members make extensive use of them. NABO had warned CRT that the scheme was illegal (whereby you could moor anywhere during the five winter months, unlike the previous scheme where only designated moorings were made available)—essentially implementing roving mooring permits which had been shown to be contrary to various Waterways Acts. But it was CRT's legal beavers who agreed that NABO, once again, was right, not NABO making CRT change its policy. However, if CRT had listened, it would not have upset so many of its best customers who, quite naturally, liked the new scheme. When will these people ever learn?

Moving on to figures provided by CRT on the number of boaters who had been issued with restricted licences because of their (alleged) unacceptable movement patterns, there are about 300 in total. Council was intrigued. A numerically competent councillor calculated that this represents about 1% of boats on CRT waterways. A big problem or what? Having said this, it is clear that there is now a significant movement of boats on the K&A.

Sighs all round when the meeting returned once again to the new licence terms and conditions. Although CRT had changed some aspects of its original proposals (without, of course, acknowledging any influence by NABO) there remain several important aspects that NABO's own legal beavers say are unacceptable. Visiting member,



Peter Lloyd, made the point that he wants NABO to advise him what boaters should do to protect themselves in the long-term. The Council would make one last attempt to talk to CRT but if this did not result in any progress, then in accordance with the solicitor's recommendations, it would advise members to add a caveat to their licence agreements to say that 'no aspect of the agreement should be contrary to the relevant Act of Parliament'.

Finally, Stella Ridgway gave a passionate run-down on why she was driven to stand for election to CRT's Council. As a liveboard whose great grand-dad was a fly-boatman out of Middlewich, she is determined to ensure that boaters' views

are heard at the presently seemingly passive Council on aspects such as: towpath safety and responsible cycling; more boater facilities in popular areas; accessible long- and short-term moorings; and fair and consistent enforcement. After ensuring that she was sane and sober, the Council had no problem in supporting this remarkable person, who, like the chairman, talks with a funny accent! See you at the AGM .... Byebye!



## New website launched

We have now made some significant changes to the website and it went 'live' in July. This has been forced on us by the ever-changing world of computer software and the need to follow the latest supported upgrades. The latest software presents many new opportunities, only limited by our imagination and the energy that we have to put into using it. One feature is that the layout adapts automatically to suit whatever computer, tablet or phone is being used. If you have any problems, let us know and we can try and fix it. It is the nature of things that we cannot test all the combinations of hardware, platforms and browsers, so please bear with us. The pictures at the top of the home page are selected at random from a library. If you have something suitable for the letterbox style, please send it to me. And if you are a buff, or even vaguely interested in the software or Facebook systems, we can always use some help.

## The NABO AGM

The NABO AGM is on Saturday 14th November at the Wolverhampton Boat Club, Barnhurst Lane, Bilbrook, Wolverhampton, WV8 1RS (by boat it is on the Shropshire Union Canal, about one mile up from Autherley Junction). We will start at 10.30 am with the AGM formal business, followed by a presentation and discussion. After a light lunch, there will be a meeting of the new Council, at which NABO members are welcome.

There is still time for you to stand for election to NABO Council for 2015–2016. The Council meets around seven times per year and the work is rewarding and interesting, giving an in-depth insight into what is really happening on (and to) our waterways. You'll learn what goes on behind the scenes and make some new friends along the way. There are few formalities and you can choose how much or little you are able to contribute, either from the comfort of your home or out and about at meetings.

This year, the Council really needs people with social media skills to help with supporting our Facebook and Twitter presence, so if this is you, don't be shy—let us know.

Please complete the nomination form in the last issue, or photocopy it if you would rather keep your NABO News intact, and then return it to Richard Carpenter by 9th October either by email to [gen.sec@nabo.org.uk](mailto:gen.sec@nabo.org.uk) or by post to PO Box 104, Leyland, PR25 9AN.

# CRT roundup

## Winter moorings

Over the last two years CRT piloted a different approach to winter moorings by offering a general towpath permit that allowed boaters to stay anywhere in a defined area but has concluded that this is legally questionable and the pilot has ceased. This year, it will offer a range of fixed winter mooring locations for one to four months with no winter moorings in central London although they are available in greater London.

All winter moorings will be charged per metre per month in three tiers based on their attractiveness, location and facilities, available between 1st November and 29th February 2016. Boaters will be able to book a different site each month.

Both continuous cruisers and boaters with a home mooring are eligible for a winter mooring, but those in enforcement may not be eligible. Booking will open on 1st October and boaters should register on the website at [licensing.canalrivertrust.org.uk/Account/](http://licensing.canalrivertrust.org.uk/Account/) Register before this date.

For details see [canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/library/11659-winter-mooring-faqs-201516.pdf](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/library/11659-winter-mooring-faqs-201516.pdf), and if this doesn't answer your question, email [wintermoorings@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:wintermoorings@canalrivertrust.org.uk).

## Winter stoppages

The closures of CRT waterways this winter are available at [canalrivertrust.org.uk/notices](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/notices).

## CRT Annual Report

CRT's Annual Report and Accounts for 2014/15 claims the highest levels of interest in visiting and using its waterways—19.5 million people made a slightly incredible 400 million visits to canals and rivers. There was an increase in volunteering of 14% to over 400,000 hours and 100 community groups adopted a stretch of canal. In reporting fundraising 11,000 people donated £1.6 million to support the Trust and £12 million came from lotteries, trusts and other funders.

For boaters, in 2014/15 CRT replaced 150 lock gates, dredged 130,000 tonnes of silt and reported 14% of locks, bridges and aqueducts now in the lowest condition grades (D and E).

For researchers there are now 37,000 records and over 22,000 historic images available digitally in the national waterways archives.

You can find more details at [canalrivertrust.org.uk/annual-report](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/annual-report).

## New Head of Boating ... and new Chair ...

Mike Grimes has been appointed as Head of Boating, bringing together his responsibilities for business boating and licensing and enforcement. He reports to Ian Rogers, the Executive Head of Customer Services. The combined team will address the entire boating community rather than treating business boating separately. This is intended to ensure consistency in processes, such as licensing and communications, to all boaters.

Allan Leighton, Chair of the Co-Operative Group and formerly CEO of Asda plc and chair of the Royal Mail, will take over from Tony Hales as CRT Chair after the Council meeting on 23rd September.

## ... as Vince bows out

Vince Moran, Operations and Asset Management Director at CRT, will retire early in 2016 after 18 years' service.



Top: Mike Grimes, Allan Leighton  
Bottom: Vince Moran

# Satisfied with CRT?

The public is less satisfied with CRT than a year ago, despite claims regarding 'a year of success', writes **Allan Richards** in Narrowboat News.

**C**RT has published information showing that public satisfaction is actually falling. A survey published in the middle of last year found that 71% of boaters were either 'slightly satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with CRT. CRT set out to increase that figure to 75% but the end result has been a decrease in satisfaction to 64%.

The substantial drop in satisfaction over the last 12 months is only part of the story. Despite heavy promotion of its open days, fewer

people visited than last year when 10,096 attended. This year, against a target of 11,000, CRT only achieved 9,807.

Towpath user satisfaction level has also dropped. In 2013/14 it was 85%. This year a target was set to maintain that level but it fell to 76%.

Perhaps CRT is suffering a backlash against its determination to turn its towpaths into high-speed cycle routes.

Whatever the reason, the Trust can not afford to ignore it.

Autumn on the Coventry Canal

Photo: Mick Fitzgibbons

## Boaters don't much like CRT: Who says so? CRT does

### ...but waterway workers are appreciated

**N**ABO constantly complains that CRT doesn't listen to advice—a view that has been reinforced by many boaters. A CRT survey of 1900 boaters has shown that 48% of boaters had a favourable impression of the Trust, but 52% disagreed (33% said their impression was neither favourable nor unfavourable and 19% had an unfavourable impression). However, 58% had a positive impression of contact with CRT staff out and about on the waterways with 11% having an unfavourable impression. Over half of respondents, 58% trust CRT to look after the waterways, 21% don't, but only 50% agreed that CRT values the views of boaters, with 28% disagreeing. In March 2014, only 24% of respondents agreed that they felt respected by CRT, which rose to 35% by December, with 26% disagreeing.



# New boaters appointed to NAG

**C**RT's Navigation Advisory Group is made up of boaters with a variety of backgrounds to bring a range of perspectives to the advice provided.

New appointments have been made to the NAG Moorings and Licensing Sub-group, which is increased from five to twelve members. New members increase the representation from continuous cruisers and bring skills from business boating and charities.

## **Diane Warner**

Diane has been boating for over 10 years on both wide and narrow beam boats, living aboard and continuously cruising. She is on the board of The Barge Association, has volunteered with CRT and the WRG, and administers two waterways-related Facebook groups.

## **Sam Worrall**

Sam lives on her boat on the K&A and works as gypsy, traveller and boater outreach and engagement officer for Julian House, a charity offering support to the socially excluded.

## **Gren Messham**

A boat owner for more than 30 years and has previously been involved in waterways restoration, Gren worked in the water and wastewater sector for 35 years and is currently a trustee of the IWA.

## **Will McCallum**

Head of oceans campaigns at Greenpeace and has previously held several volunteer management positions. Will has lived on board his boat since 2011, travelling between Oxfordshire and London.

## **Dave Williams**

Dave is another liveboard boater who has experience as a finance director and currently runs an internet payroll bureau.

## **Mark Tizard**

Vice-Chair of NABO, with over 35 years of boating experience, currently spending 3-4 months a year cruising. Mark was formerly a director of two technology companies with a wealth of change management experience, who also fundraises and volunteers for various charities.

## **Lee Wilshire**

Lee is a planner and urban designer, lives on his boat and is a member of London's Better Relationships Group. He is working on projects on the canal network, from affordable moorings to a recycling barge.

## **Alison Tuck**

Alison has been living aboard for 11 years, has been a continuous cruiser and now runs a business from her boats. A former chair of the Roving Canal Traders' Association, she was one of CRT's first volunteer lock-keepers and adopted the Warwick Bar stretch of the GU Canal where she has her home mooring.

They will join existing members: Paul LeBlique (Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs); Beryl McDowall (Residential Boat Owners Association); Tim Parker (former chair, Association of Pleasure Craft Operators); and chair, Mike Annan (Buckingham Canal Society). Members meet three or four times a year and serve three-year terms. The new members will attend their first meeting in October.



# My statement for election to CRT Council

**Stella Ridgway**, newly appointed as a NABO Regional Representative is standing for one of the posts of Boaters' Representative in the forthcoming elections to the CRT Council



Stella attended the NABO Council meeting held on Saturday 5th September and as a result, it was decided unanimously to support her in her forthcoming campaign for a place on CRT's Council.

Mike Rodd, NABO chairman, says "We feel that Stella will be able to truly represent a high proportion of the boating community and that her views are aligned with NABO's core values."

You can contact Stella on [stellaridgway@gmail.com](mailto:stellaridgway@gmail.com)

“I continuously cruise with my husband and two Labradors on NB Gracie. I am the great granddaughter of a fly-boatman out of Middlewich and I work within the financial sector. We have five grown children in the UK, Norway, USA and New Zealand.

I have considerable experience in mediation and consultation and if elected I would:

- Encourage CRT to focus on the maintenance of the canal navigation and infrastructure;
- Seek to ensure that all users respect the canal and its environment;
- Canvas and seek boaters' views on, for instance,
  - towpath safety and responsible cycling;
  - more facilities in popular areas;
  - accessible long- and short-term moorings;
  - fair and consistent enforcement.

If we all show consideration and treat others as we would like to be treated, I believe we can preserve our way of life. Boaters and visitors on the towpath should be able to enjoy a safe environment to enjoy the wildlife, passing boats and canal side attractions.

The vast majority of boaters respect the canal environment and boat responsibly and I would encourage CRT not to affect the enjoyment of the vast majority when trying to manage the irresponsible behaviour of the few.”

## Summer reservoir levels

CRT's Water Management team monitors reservoirs weekly and advises on operational use to avoid shortfalls later in the year, before the autumn refill commences. July started with a record-breaking heat-wave, at least for one day, at 36.7°C. Throughout the rest of July, the north was generally wet and cool, whereas in southern areas it was predominantly dry, interspersed with intense downpours.

Overall, rainfall for July was more than 150%

of the long-term average. Despite the wetter conditions, demands for water increased, leading to sizeable changes in reservoir holdings, with many seeing 10-15% usage over the month. Although the early part of August was not warm or sunny, there was not much rainfall either.

The GU North group saw more substantial use and in August this was the only group that was less than half-full. Many reservoir groups had around two-thirds capacity, which was reasonably good for this time of year, which has the largest demand for water.

Reservoir group	June holding %	July holding %	August holding %	Change July—August %	Min. historical August holding 1998-2015 %
BCN	91.3	79.7	74.1	-5.6	20.1 (2011)
Caldon	89.3	78.9	66.0	-12.9	50.4 (2008)
Chesterfield	90.7	87.1	82.0	-5.1	61.4 (2005)
Grantham	100	98.5	96.4	-1.7	82.7 (2006)
GU North	76.7	57.2	37.7	-19.5	24.8. (2011)
GU South	85.5	74.9	66.9	-8.0	60.2. (2011)
Huddersfield Narrow	96.2	81.0	58.0	-23.0	38.4. (2011)
Kennet & Avon	80.5	82.3	81.6	-0.7	43.4. (2004)
Lancaster	100	89.8	78.7	-11.1	64.4. (2006)
Leeds & Liverpool	94.5	75.8	61.9	-13.9	23.1. (2010)
Oxford & GU	80.3	67.8	55.5	-12.3	38.2. (2011)
Peak Forest & Macclesfield	88.5	75.7	63.8	-11.9	50.0. (2010)
Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union	91.6	85.5	79.0	-6.5	59.6. (2010)



photos of either the boat or any damage, send them as well. OPLAC has also purchased a recording camera which is available for borrowing to record wash problems. It can be attached to the inside of a window of a houseboat for this purpose. More information: [www.oplac.org/iwash](http://www.oplac.org/iwash)

NABO members who moor on the tidal Thames may be interested in a new group called iWash (inconsiderate Wash) set up by the Organisation of PLA Customers (OPLAC). If you encounter inconsiderate wash you can send an email to [wash@oplac.org](mailto:wash@oplac.org) with the date and time of the incident. If you can identify the boat, or have

# Crofton research

**T**wenty five years after re-opening the Kennet and Avon Canal, the K&A Canal Trust has completed the first phase of a project at Crofton Pumping Station, near Marlborough in Wiltshire, which pumps water from Wilton Water into the summit pound.

University of Bath mechanical engineering students investigated how a remote sensing instrumentation and data collection system could help improve knowledge of the 200-year old technology, the oldest fully working beam engine in the world.

The aim is to preserve the machines by having an improved understanding of what is happening when the engine and pumps are operating by measuring temperatures, pressures, stresses etc. and how and why the equipment deteriorates under use.

The students have provided detailed information on the range of measurements that could be taken and the selection of sensors that are appropriate for a Grade I listed structure and engines, together with proposals for data acquisition, transmission, storage and display of the information.

Other proposals are for interactive and self-powered models to demonstrate the forces used in the water pumping plant, a prototype installation to demonstrate the use of remote temperature sensing, and an interactive display.

The K&A Canal Trust will investigate how the ideas can be taken forward and the possibility of industry sponsorship to take the project to the next stage

[www.croftonbeamengines.org](http://www.croftonbeamengines.org)



Dick Poole operating the Crofton beam engine

Photo: Siobhan Boyle / Wiltshire Times

## 2016 Leeds & Liverpool celebrations

On 11th and 12th June next year, the IWA, the Eldonian Village Trust and Liverpool City Council will hold a festival at Eldonian Village in Liverpool to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Although nine months way, if you want to attend by boat it is essential to book early as the numbers are restricted and it is expected that places will be fully booked before Christmas.

Boats can arrive from 8th June on the L&L, or boaters at the Merseyside River Festival the previous weekend can move up from the dock complex to the festival site during the week, provided they have booked their Liverpool Link passage. Information and booking forms are available at [waterways.org.uk/chester/chester-merseyside](http://waterways.org.uk/chester/chester-merseyside)

## Railings for Marple aqueduct

Grade I listed Marple aqueduct on the Peak Forest Canal is one of three historic sites to be opened up to the public as part of the 'Revealing Oldknow's Legacy' heritage project, previously reported in NABO News. This is the highest aqueduct in England, with a drop of about 90 feet down to the River Goyt.

There are currently no railings on the offside flat surface to prevent people from falling from the aqueduct if they step off their boat. There are also recorded and anecdotal incidents of adults and children walking on the unfenced area. CRT has therefore decided to install safety railings, following a consultation on the most suitable form to use that is sympathetic to the heritage of the structure.

Designs for the railings are now being prepared, guided by a majority preference for traditional vertical iron rails. The timetable for installation is subject to Listed Building and Scheduled Ancient Monument consent.

### Marple Aqueduct

Photo: CRT



## Thames winter work

The EA will spend £1m to repair eight locks on the non-tidal River Thames, closing parts of the river for five months from November to March. Locks will be closed to boating when lock chambers need to be drained or lock gates removed for the work to be carried out.

The programme of work, which may be subject to change, is as follows:

- 2nd November to 18th December; Cookham Lock, Berkshire. Replacing lock gate control system; Boulter's Lock, Berkshire. Re-sheeting the tail lock gates.
- 2nd November to 26th February 2016; Temple Lock, Buckinghamshire. Refurbishing the lock chamber.
- 2nd November to 4th March 2016; St John's Lock, Oxfordshire. Re-sheeting the head and repairing the tail lock gates; Godstow Lock, Oxfordshire. Re-sheeting the lock gates; Culham Lock, Oxfordshire. Refurbishing the lock chamber.
- 4th January to 26th February 2016; Day's Lock, Oxfordshire. Minor repairs to the lock chamber.



- 11th January to 4th March 2016| Penton Hook Lock, Middlesex. Repairing the tail lock gates pintle.

#### For the latest river information

EA Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or 0845 988 1188. Select 'option 1' followed by 011133

River conditions can also be viewed online at: [www.gov.uk/check-river-conditions-and-closures/river-thames](http://www.gov.uk/check-river-conditions-and-closures/river-thames).

Updates on the stoppages:

[www.gov.uk/river-thames-conditions-closures-restrictions-and-lock-closures](http://www.gov.uk/river-thames-conditions-closures-restrictions-and-lock-closures)



The Anderton Lift and toll houses, now,

Photo: CRT  
in the 1920s

Photo: The Waterways Archive

## Anderton boat lift toll houses

The two toll houses at the Anderton Boat Lift in Northwich have undergone a £90,000 restoration. The toll houses were used by the clerk, who weighed a boat's cargo and collected the toll before allowing the boat onto the lift. Funded by the Saltscape partnership, the project aims to protect, restore and celebrate mid-Cheshire's unique salt heritage and landscape.

CRT now plans to furnish the buildings as they would have appeared in the 19th century and is appealing for old photos of the toll houses and boat lift, and any memories or stories about the lift.

Contact enquiries [northwalesborders@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:northwalesborders@canalrivertrust.org.uk) or phone 0303 040 4040.

An interesting article on the electrification of the boat life in the 1920s can be found here: [www.mikeclarke.myzen.co.uk/Anderton%20boat%20lift%20A5.pdf](http://www.mikeclarke.myzen.co.uk/Anderton%20boat%20lift%20A5.pdf)



Roving traders:

## The Jewellery Boat

A look at people who make a living from waterway-based trading. This time, Jackie and Mick Warren on The Jewellery Boat



For more information of events they will be attending, their website is [jays4jewellerysoapandcrafts.co.uk](http://jays4jewellerysoapandcrafts.co.uk) or on Facebook [facebook.com/jays4jewellery](https://facebook.com/jays4jewellery)

**N**arrowboat 'Half a Shilling' is home to Jackie and Mick Warren, members of the Roving Canal Traders Association and licensed by CRT to trade on canals and rivers, which they have been doing for the last three years. Their trading started when Jackie gave up work to cruise the canals with Mick, a retired fire fighter, and found she still needed a hobby.

Her family asked if she would make them some jewellery pieces and this escalated to what is now 'The Jewellery Boat'. They attend

events and festivals selling their own jewellery designs, made using natural gem stones and a variety of glass and Tibetan silver spacer beads.

It is not only jewellery though: they also sell soaps, which they have made for them as these are categorised under 'cosmetics' and therefore have to conform to EU legislation to be sold in this country. They have chosen to use just two suppliers for the high quality products that are used in their soap production. The glycerine that is naturally produced using the cold processing method is completely retained in the soap so their soap naturally moisturises while simultaneously cleansing the skin very effectively.

They also do a range of soaps that are suitable for use by vegetarians and vegans, which are not tested on animals and have no added animal fats or preservatives, only natural oils. The aromatherapy candles that they make themselves are aimed purely for relaxation, using eco soya wax and natural oils. They also stock various crafts including dream catchers, wind chimes and window crystals.

Mick has a range of tiller pins and has been a stockist of Miracle Leisure Cleaning Products (Brass-mate) which started off their trading career. Finally, they also hand-tie floating key rings for boaters and a range of paracord bracelets for men, women and children.

# CRT Acts of Parliament

**Stephen Peters** continues his series of articles on the legislation that governs CRT activities by looking at the most recent and arguably the most controversial legislation that CRT wrestles with on a daily basis.

**W**hen 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 Acts and omitted words or sections that are superfluous to a basic comprehension of the legislation. Copies of all relevant Acts are obtainable from the CRT website.

*[The 1995] Act arose from problems that BW had encountered gaining access to land to carry out repair and maintenance work*

works to maintain its waterways. Periods of notice and conditions are prescribed to safeguard the interests of affected land owners.

Part III deals with 'Regulation and

## **British Waterways Act 1995**

After a protracted and controversial passage through the various executive stages of Parliament, the British Waterways Bill finally received Royal Assent early in 1995. Its full title is Elizabeth II 1995 Chapter i.

Originally this Act arose from problems that BW had encountered in previous years gaining access to land to carry out repair and maintenance work. The legislation also contains new measures to regulate and manage the inland waterways notably the application of conditions to permit a boat to be lawfully used on the waterways.

The debate on these provisions took over six years and could be the basis of another article (or three!). There are also further provisions concerned with the removal of vessels and control of moorings. Miscellaneous sections cover the status of docks, the usage of River Severn locks and additions to the classified river waterways.

Part II is entitled 'Entry on Land' and Sections 3 through to 15 contain provisions for CRT to carry out emergency operations and routine

Possibly one of the most talked about pieces of waterways legislation ever, the infamous Section 17(3) of the British Waterways Act 1995, 6 years in the making in Parliament and the subject of endless analysis, discussion and legal challenge ever since, responsible for the introduction of the phrase "**bona fide for navigation**" into innumerable English pubs.

### **Section 17**

*(3) Notwithstanding anything in any enactment but subject to subsection (7) below, the Board may refuse a relevant consent in respect of any vessel unless—*

*(a) the applicant for the relevant consent satisfies the Board that the vessel complies with the standards applicable to that vessel;*

*(b) an insurance policy is in force in respect of the vessel and a copy of the policy, or evidence that it exists and is in force, has been produced to the Board; and*

*(c) either—*

*(i) the Board are satisfied that a mooring or other place where the vessel can reasonably be kept and may lawfully be left will be available for the vessel, whether on an inland waterway or elsewhere; or*

*(ii) the applicant for the relevant consent satisfies the Board that the vessel to which the application relates will be used bona fide for navigation throughout the period for which the consent is valid without remaining continuously in any one place for more than 14 days or such longer period as is reasonable in the circumstances.*

**More Information:**

The 1995 Act can be downloaded here; [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukla/1995/1/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukla/1995/1/contents/enacted) and links to all the waterways legislation is on the CRT website; [canalrivertrust.org.uk/publication-scheme/publication-scheme/who-we-are-and-what-we-do](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/publication-scheme/publication-scheme/who-we-are-and-what-we-do)

Management of Inland Waterways' commencing with Section 16 which imposes terms applicable to new or renewed houseboat certificates. This must be read in conjunction with Schedule 1 to the Act. There are not many houseboat certificates in circulation but this Act gives holders security and rights of assignment which are valuable and jealously guarded.

Section 17 introduced for the first time a requirement for vessels to be insured; and to comply with boat standards. The requirements are more fully detailed in Schedule 2 to the Act. CRT may refuse a 'relevant consent' i.e. a licence or pleasure boat certificate, unless the vessel is insured and has a valid Boat Safety Certificate and either an acceptable place to moor it or the vessel will be

### *Parliament did not see fit to define bona fide for navigation.*

used bona fide for navigation without remaining continuously in one place for more than 14 days i.e. 'continuous cruising', but such terminology does not appear in the Act. Note also that Parliament did not see fit to define bona fide navigation. If these conditions are not met CRT may give notice and withdraw the 'relevant consent'—Pleasure Boat License—and the vessel may then be subject to enforcement under Section 8 of the 1983 Act.

Section 18 states that 'no person shall moor or otherwise leave a vessel on an inland waterway so as to cause obstruction or hindrance to navigation ...' and any vessel contravening this will be deemed a relevant craft for the purposes of Section 8 of the 1983 Act. (i.e. CRT can remove it).

Section 19 gives CRT powers to remove vessels to permit works

subject to a period of notice. If the owner fails to comply with the notice CRT may remove the vessel and serve notice of where it has been removed to if it is not readily visible from its original location. The removal and replacement of such vessels is at the cost and risk of CRT and compensation may be claimed by the owner if loss or damage is suffered. Clarification is given that any vessel moored in contravention of the notice to move shall not be deemed to be unlawfully moored (and therefore Section 8 of the 1983 Act will not apply).

Sections 20 and 21 make provisions in regard to private moorings and the erection of mooring structures.

**Part IV**

Part IV is a Miscellaneous and General collection of provisions including Section 22 which places a duty on CRT to have regard to protecting and conserving flora and fauna and historic assets. CRT is under a duty to have regard to public access to towing paths, etc.

Sections 25 and 26 enabled BW to de-classify or appropriate parts of certain docks for other commercial uses but protected the right of passage for vessels.

Section 28 defines the jurisdiction of CRT in respect of the entrance lock to Limehouse Basin from the River Thames.

Section 29 repealed the requirement from 1842 for locks on the River Severn to be open night and day.

Section 30 added the River Weaver to the category of 'river waterways'.

Section 37 excluded certain Scottish lochs from the above legislation following intensive lobbying by peers with land-owning interests along the Caledonian Canal.



# CRT's powers to move vessels—part 1

**Stephen Peters** explains what the Trust can, and cannot, do.

**N**ABO is frequently asked what powers CRT has to serve notices and to move a pleasure boat on its waterways. The following information sets out the various pieces of legislation that CRT may use to have boats moved or removed from its waterways. Where the original legislation makes reference to predecessor bodies we have changed the wording to CRT where appropriate. This information is NOT intended to be legal advice but is merely our understanding of what the legislation permits.

## British Waterways Act 1971

Section 5 states:

- 1 It shall not be lawful to keep, let for hire or use any pleasure boat on a river waterway unless a certificate, in this Act referred to as a 'pleasure boat certificate', in relation to the pleasure boat is then in force or unless there is then in force in relation to it a licence issued by CRT allowing the use of all inland waterways without further payment.
- 2 Any person who contravenes subsection (1) of this section shall, for each offence, be liable to a fine not exceeding fifty pounds and a daily fine of five pounds.

**Commentary:** Note the distinction between a 'pleasure boat certificate' which is solely for boats used on rivers versus a 'licence' which allows pleasure boats to use all CRT waterways. CRT may take action under Section 8 of the 1983 Act if they deem the vessel to be on its waterways 'without lawful authority'. CRT

cannot fine anyone—only a magistrates' court can impose a fine on summary conviction.

## British Waterways Act 1975

Section 5 extends the provisions of the British Transport Commission Act 1954 Section 16 (Canal byelaws) as follows:

- 1 In their application to CRT the provisions of subsection (2) of section 16 (Canal byelaws) of the Act of 1954 shall be construed to have effect as if the power thereby conferred to make byelaws for regulating the use of the canal included the express power to make byelaws for excluding any vessel from the canal, prohibiting the use of any vessel of the canal or prohibiting the use of the canal except in compliance with such conditions as CRT may prescribe, but any such last-mentioned byelaws shall not apply to tidal waters.

**Commentary:** CRT does not have powers under its byelaws to physically move or remove a vessel.

The 1975 Act Section 6 amends the British Transport Commission Act 1958 as follows:

In its application to CRT, section 19 (as to vessels sunk, stranded or abandoned) of the act of 1958 shall have effect as if in subsection (7) thereof for the words 'at the principal office of the Commission' there were substituted the words 'in a conspicuous position on the vessel or on the land or foreshore near such vessel'.

## NABO News crossword 25

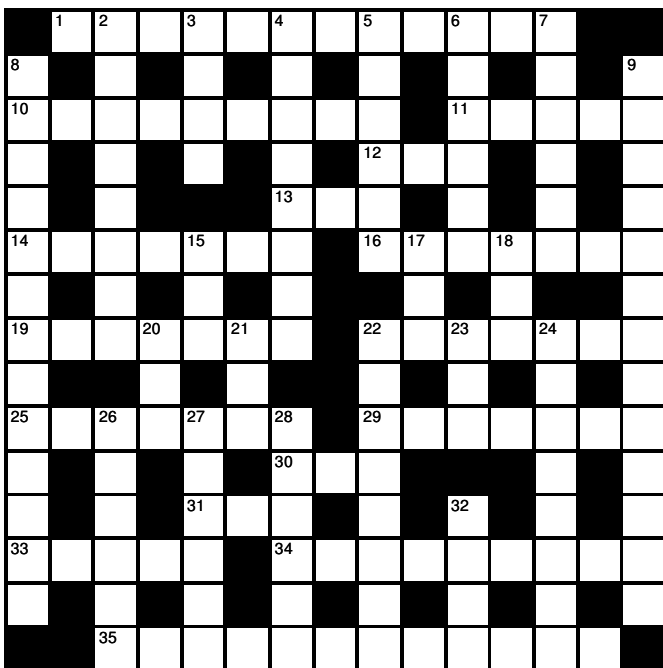
By **Canaldrifter****I name this boat ...**

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 Aileen Butler.

**Answers to Crossword 24**

**Across:** 1 Braunston, 6 Racer, 9 Archway, 10 Regents, 11 Sea-food, 12 Harbour, 13 Immediate, 15 Serve, 16 Mount, 19 Uttermost, 22 Noticed, 23 Ensured, 25 Heretic, 26 Norfolk, 27 Masts, 28 Sailmaker.

**Down:** 1 Boats, 2 Acclaim, 3 Newbold, 4 Toyed, 5 North west, 6 Regards, 7 Conlour, 8 Resurrect, 13 Immingham, 14 Aqueducts, 17 Upturns, 18 Tacitus, 20 Rostrum, 21 Oar-lock, 23 Ennui, 24 Dakar.

**Across**

- 1 Canal from Hardings Wood to Marple (12)
- 10 Cautioned about proper boat training (9)
- 11 Instrument we could stop little Joseph playing? (5)
- 12 Welsh navy needs aid? (3)
- 13 Exercise back with paddles up? (3)
- 14 Sink in the drain? (7)
- 16 Boat hirer who keeps coming back for more (7)
- 19 Sing out for boating excursions (7)
- 22 Road to tidal Thames, perhaps? (7)
- 25 Very good seek net tangled (7)
- 29 Rend rag for boat's engine in reverse (7)
- 30 Winded exclamation? (3)
- 31 Capital debt (3)
- 33 Tied up, we hear, in confidence (5)
- 34 What you hope to be doing after falling in! (9)
- 35 Fuddled heirs around Northern Narrow Canal (12)

**Down**

- 2 Pontcysyllte, perhaps? (8)
- 3 Puddle in a bed (4)
- 4 Super ice cracked by gourmets (8)
- 5 End in shortly referring back to boat protection (6)
- 6 Going out in tidal waters (6)
- 7 Phone about north east twist in refute (6)
- 8 Two thick stews stirred on the Trent (4,9)
- 9 Planter near crossing of Calder and Hebble Canal terminus (7,6)
- 15 Lock the writer through? (3)
- 17 Make mistake in river rally (3)
- 18 River in tourists' itinerary (3)
- 20 Pub back in good running order (3)
- 21 Sink back in the locker? (3)
- 22 Bad weather announcers! (8)
- 23 Get back attention in Israel (3)
- 24 Napton turner? (8)
- 26 Fen ought to give ample boating (6)
- 27 What Peter Fellows Did Next! (6)
- 28 Ruffle learner shortly on the Ouse past the junction? (6)
- 32 Travel slowly from the station to the boatyard? (4)

# Rewind 15 years

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

**Members' Resignations:** Over a dozen were received in August, all of them due to the increased cost of boating. BW continues to insist that there is no problem. Those giving up boating are urged by Wendy Hook, the editor, to also write to Customer Services so that BW can see the extent of the problem.

**Mowing:** Stuart Sim, BW Operations Director, has instructed staff that that 'rather than creating an interesting fringe area, BW is in some places creating a jungle that is of little value and is growing out of control'.

He goes on to suggest that the cutting of vegetation on lock approaches should be extended to allow for queuing boats. Also they should be creating regular informal mowing lengths so boats can moor away from busy sites.

**Grit:** Chairman, Sue Burchett, appeals to BW to get rid of the horrible grit that towpaths are being surfaced with. It is dusty in the dry and sticks to your shoes when wet and ends up on the carpet in the boat. It is also nasty if anyone falls on it.

**BSS:** A review is looking into why the scheme came into being at all. Sue Burchett finds it very strange that we have all these safety regulations for steel tanks travelling at 4mph on water when flimsy caravans can be towed at 60mph on a road with no checks at all.

**SSSIs:** We all like to see wildlife along the canals, but some people forget that canals were built for boats. English Nature is putting forward plans to declare SSSIs in places and inhibit boat movements.

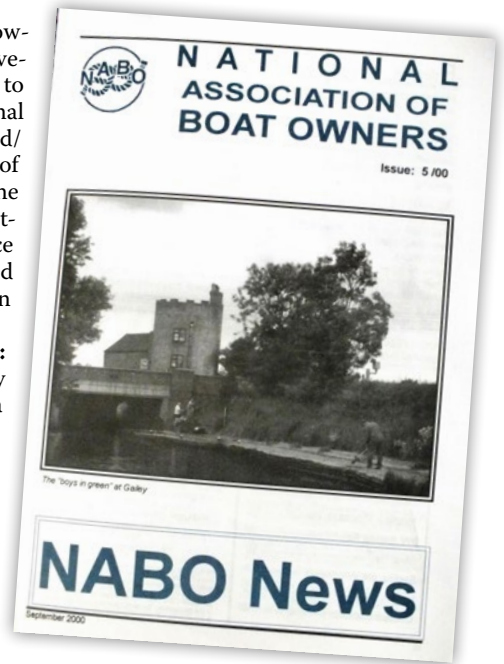
**Cycleways:** Towpath improvement seems to relate to canal narrowing and/or creation of cycleways. One member reported a cycle race being organised along a section of towpath!

**BW Marinas:** At one newly owned marina BW is offering moorings for widebeam boats that are too large to navigate through the bridge over the marina entrance.

**Coconuts:** A reader notes that as well as seeing them floating in the Paddington Arm, they appear on the river Soar too. What have Southall and Leicester in common?

A huge Asian population. Apparently coconuts, often decorated and with garlands of flowers, feature strongly in the funerals of some sects. The nuts are said to contain the spirit of the deceased. He states that on discovering this he has stopped breaking them open to eat, and has sent them on their way in due reverence!

**Anderton Lift:** The Royal Mail has recognised the restoration of the Anderton Lift by giving it a post code—CW9 6FW.



## Letters to the Editor

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

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### **CRT licence invoices by email**

I recount my recent experience of renewing my boat licence, which was due on 1st September. I did not receive the usual invoice by post in July. Then we were away cruising and did not get back until the end of August, expecting to find the renewal on the doorstep, but it was not there, so I rang the CRT office. I was able to make the renewal there and then, paying over the phone. A CRT staff member told me that following a recent system change, if they have an email address, they are now sending out the renewal using that and no longer using post. Having paid (and getting the prompt payment discount), they would send the licence and confirmation shortly, also by email. I could not remember receiving a renewal email from them in July, but I went back and checked. I get all the stoppage mails, so I do scan and delete a lot and it was possible that I had deleted the renewal in error. But I could not find it. An unsolved mystery!

A week after the renewal, I had not received the new licence papers, so I got back on the phone. Where is it? Sent by email..... but this time I was sure that I had definitely not received it. What email address are you using? Now we get down to the detail and there is a spelling error in their record of my email address. And to my shame, this shows in the last years' paperwork too ... so my fault for not putting it right. I tried the mis-spelled address in a test email and of course the provider rejects it straight away, the address does not exist. So the reality is that if CRT staff have an email address, they are assuming that they can send out licence renewals and renewal invoices; job done. But I now know that if the email is rejected, as must have happened twice, there is no effective office system to alert them to the fact that the delivery has not been made. I have pointed out to CRT that this simple check is rather important. If you are not a regular email user, then your renewal may not get the attention it needs. Perhaps in this case it is better

that CRT doesn't have your email address at all!  
**David Fletcher**

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### **More on paddle pawls**

I consider it bad etiquette to leave a paddle pawl flipped over to the non-active side of top dead centre (TDC). However when I mentioned this to a lock keeper assisting us down the Marple flight he said he always left the pawls off so that if a paddle had inadvertently been left partly up it would shake itself down as the gate was moved. My normal way of working is to hold the pawl clear with one hand while winding down with the other hand. This is not difficult. So I would not be bothered by retained pawls in the sense that something stops them being flipped over TDC. There is a Hargreaves ground paddle pedestal design where the pawl can bounce itself over TDC while winding up; these certainly need a restraint on them. Then of course there are the little wedges on a chain that need putting between the rack and pinion on a few ground paddles. All we can say about these is that heritage rules over health and safety.

There is the hydraulic paddle gear that generally needs winding down—what a chore, even if the number of turns down is only half what it is to go up. Then there are a few badly adjusted hydraulic ones that drift down of their own accord and need the windlass hung on the spigot to counter the drift, or one needs to engage the anti-vandal lock if the windlass needs to be deployed elsewhere. And I found one on the Ashton flight that was harder to wind down than up.

The best paddle winding gear I have seen so far was one known as INTOGEAR seen on just one lock (so far) at lock 76 on the K&A (two locks west of Kintbury). There was a phone number in the casting: 0121 771 4911. It is difficult to describe the action other than a fine grain auto-ratchet—it purrs rather than clacks. When you go to wind up or down it releases the ratchet



automatically. The benefits of hydraulic are obtained mechanically. Is this one a test sample to see how long the ratchet lasts? I saw it on 24th July 2012 and from the state of the paint it looked to have been there a few years. So is it still there and still working properly? You will see from the photos that it is designed as a retrofit to existing paddle gear up-stands and operates on a pretty standard looking ground paddle rack. I think this gear deserves wider use.

**Derek Wright**

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**Issues with the Caldon and Leek canals**  
Towpath maintenance and cyclists

We wrote to Richard Parry at CRT regarding our recent trip up the Caldon Canal and Leek Branch. It rather echoes a letter in a recent NABO News regarding the position of boaters in relation to other users. Our letter follows, with replies from Darren Green, Waterway Manager, Central Shires, followed by our further comments to him.

**Pamela and Ralph Worthington, nb Lapaz**

Dear Mr. Parry,

During our recent cruise up the Caldon and Leek canals, it reinforced our view that boaters are becoming less and less important to the waterways than other users. We base our views on the points below.

*Thank you for your letter of July 2015 sent to Richard Parry regarding your recent trip on the Caldon Canal and Leek Branch. I have been asked to respond on Richard's behalf. I am sorry that you feel that your view, as boaters, is becoming less important and that the points you raised detracted from your visit to the Caldon. Since Richard became the CEO of the Trust he has spent considerable time meeting and talking to boaters to reassure that you are important and we need to be doing more for you. One major change as a direct result of this is that my role as waterway manager has changed recently so that I can now focus more on these kinds of issues. We do accept that we are trying to open up the canal network to more people to enjoy and benefit from this fantastic environment, but this does create challenges which we are working hard to try and resolve. I would now like to address your points:*



**1. Vast stretches of towpath sides are covered in vegetation so high that it would need a leap of faith to reach the bank in the event of an emergency.**

*I am aware that certain lengths of the towpath do have vegetation fringes that have quite dense and high growth whereas other lengths are relatively clear. These fringes are a feature of the Caldon beyond Stockton Brook heading towards Leek and Cheddleton because of the more rural environment of the canal though they are not continuous and do have sections with no fringe growth.*

Whilst we accept most of your reply, we would like to point out that more could be done.

**2. The towpath side of the canals are so shallow that it is difficult to get moored up within three feet of the bank.**

*At all the visitor moorings you should have found sufficient depth to be able to moor your boat. To provide sufficient depth to moor along the whole length of the towpath of the canal would not be either cost-effective or ecologically viable, however, I do accept that we need to identify more casual moorings that are maintained to allow boats to moor up overnight.*

We accept that the depth at the visitor moorings is usually sufficient, but the number of visitor moorings towards the upper end of both canals is very limited, which quite often means that you have to attempt to moor outside the designated moorings.

**3. Offside trees are so overgrown in places (particularly the upper end of the Caldon) that the width is restricted to one boat. This meant that when we met another boat on the concrete section near Froghall, we had to stop while the other one had to force its way through the overgrown trees.**

*The waterway operates a four-year cycle on maintaining the offside vegetation over the 200 miles of navigations that it is responsible for. The Caldon canal was re-visited last winter and I had been informed that those lengths affected by overgrown trees had been dealt with. I am aware of the narrowness of the concrete lined section towards Froghall and appreciate how navigation could be affected by trees. As a result of your email I am investigating this situation and will aim to rectify*

*this autumn/winter.*

Accepting that your maintenance of offside vegetation is usually sufficient, areas where canals are particularly narrow (e.g. the concrete-lined section towards Froghall), perhaps should be monitored on a more frequent basis. Glad to see that you are investigating this situation.

**4. The upper end of the Leek canal before the winding hole is so restricted by reeds and so shallow that there is only room for three boats maximum to moor. This means that if three or four boats arrive at the same time, someone has to turn round and go all the way back to the start of the canal (see (6) below).**

*The winding hole that you refer to I have taken as been at the terminus of the canal at the aqueduct rather than the one adjacent to Bridge 9. We are aware of the reeds growing in the channel and there is a job planned for this year to remove a large proportion of these to improve access and mooring.*

We were not referring to the winding hole at the terminus but the one adjacent to Bridge 9 (we know that we would be unable to wind at the terminus as our boat is 62 feet). Our point is that if there are more than two boats moored at this point, further arrivals would be unable to moor and would have to retrace their steps. Clearing the reeds would increase the mooring space.

**5. The towpaths have been beautifully surfaced for most of the length of both canals, so much so that you risk life and limb from speeding cyclists, one of whom nearly ran me down (no audible warning of approach, and I don't have eyes in the back of my head). It was lucky that she did not end up in the cut.**

*I am sorry to hear about your incident with the cyclist. Both the Caldon and Leek Branch have recently benefitted from investment by the Department of Transport via Staffordshire County Council to improve the towpath surface as part of a wider project to improve cycle access to the Peak District. The Trust has not contributed financially to any of these improvements. As part of this project the Council will be working with the Trust to promote and educate in the safe use of the towpath by cyclists and other users. You may already be aware, but the Trust has recently introduced a Sharing the Towpath initiative and*

*we will be working to educate our cycling visitors to use the towpath responsibly, which includes fitting and using a bell.*

Whilst we accept that CRT has not funded the improvements to the towpaths, we would like to see a policy that when towpaths are improved in this manner CRT insists that some form of speed control is put in place (e.g. rumble strips every 10 metres or so). We feel that no amount of education will reduce the speed of a large number of irresponsible cyclists and it is our experience that mild remonstrations to them results in abuse.

**6. Contractors were resurfacing the tow-path on the Leek canal and had six or seven workboats with six or seven workmen carrying this out. In addition to making it tricky to negotiate this area, some of the workboats occupied the only other decent mooring at that end of the canal, south of the Leek tunnel.**

*The Contractor carrying out the towpath work for Staffordshire County Council had been informed and been requested to plan works to minimise disruption whilst the work was being undertaken. The Trust's team that were monitoring the work had been informed of instances that had caused issues for boaters due to a lack of consideration and had taken this up with the Contractor when they became aware. In hindsight, it may have been prudent to temporarily close the end of the Leek Branch to navigation whilst the work was being undertaken, but we had preferred to try and keep the navigation open but accepted mooring would be very limited due to the number of craft.*

We had no issue with the contractors carrying out the work, the issue we had was that the contractors boats were moored all along the visitor moorings just south of the Leek tunnel.

I would like to stress that cyclists and walkers pay nothing towards the upkeep of the waterways so why do they get the best facilities and boaters have to put up with a second class navigation?

*I would like to thank you for contacting the Trust to make us aware of your concerns and I am sorry that your cruise on the Caldon was spoilt by the above issues.*

We trust that our response clears up any misunderstandings and is taken as well-intended constructive criticism.

## **A boat to sell**

We stopped living on board last year and considered the implications of down-sizing to a shorter boat for summer cruising, so started to look at the market. We were sure that our boat would sell quickly during the summer and got a valuation from a broker. There is a bewildering selection of choices when looking for a narrowboat and it was essential to decide what we wanted. A cruiser or semi-trad stern, less than 50 feet would suit us now.

Looking on the internet and at various brokers lists helped to find a small selection to look at. Descriptions and pictures help to make the selection but going to see your choice is essential. It is only when you walk on board that you know if it is the boat for you. It was while we were looking at boats for sale when we met a couple who were looking for a liveaboard boat... perhaps it was fate, being in the right place at the right time. They came to see our narrowboat and liked what they saw. An offer was accepted, subject to a survey, which is a binding contract. They were happy to hand over a 10% deposit after a trial run.

We all then signed the agreement to sell, together with a witness. Our prospective buyers have been able to see all of our boat documentation and have us provide an in-depth demonstration. Our buyers arranged for a survey to be carried out and a few things needed fixing before a 'pass' could be obtained. Everything except the gas bottles had to be removed from the gas locker as we had an anchor and concrete ballast which were relocated in the well-deck storage space. The gas locker floor had to be painted and the bottles made secure away from the regulator. The shower pump pipe had to be looped up higher than the outlet to ensure water could not get in when on a river. Our solar panel feed, although fused, was connected to the wrong side of the battery isolator and should be direct to the batteries (it is so annoying when so-called experts carrying out work on boats but do not seem to know the rules! A boat survey is so much more involved than the safety test). Once the new owners had transferred the funds we gave them a Bill of Sale.

From start to finish the process took six weeks—but it is going to take a bit longer for us to find the boat we like!

**Chas Moore**

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