



NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners
Issue 1 February 2018



WATERWAY ASSETS
LITHIUM BATTERIES
SAFETY FIRST



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NABO News

The magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners

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Cover photo

This month's cover photo is from Kev Maslin. 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.

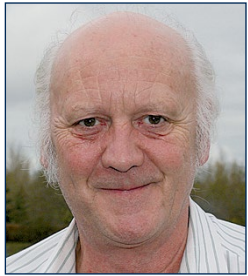
Next NABO News copy date

Articles, letters, cartoons and photos are most welcome. Images in JPEG format please. Please email or post your contributions by **March 17th 2018**. Our email address is nabonews@nabo.org.uk

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CRT Emergency No: 0800 4799947 *EA Emergency No: 0800 807060*
Contact CRT waterway managers at canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/our-regions



There's a veritable cornucopia of news, views and information to start 2018. In contrast to some social media sites, NABO News always tries to be well-informed and never knowingly distributes 'fake news'. In this issue, Mark Tizard has edited a recent presentation by Richard Wakelen, CRT's Asset Strategy Manager, on plans to rationalise and upgrade procedures for maintaining the Trust's assets. This is very welcome, following years of complaints by NABO members about unplanned

Assets and reorganisation?

Editor **Peter Fellows** looks forward to a busy year ahead

stoppages due to lock failures, insufficient water depth and overgrown vegetation. However, at the same time CRT Estates is busy selling off assets, including heritage assets that the Trust is required to protect as one of its charitable objects. I have summarised some recently proposed sell-offs, which I believe should be kept under CRT's wing for both the national and waterways benefits.

I would like to thank Howard Anguish for his first 'Rewind' contribution, after picking up the baton from Tony Haynes, detailing the Council's concerns in NABO News 15 years ago. Howard also reports on a recent NE public partnership meeting in his role as a regional rep. for NABO. David Fletcher and Mike Rodd report on the operation of

the Boat Safety Scheme and review NABO's involvement in two new safety developments. David has also been following the construction of new crossings over the River Mersey and provides a final update, now that they are open. The new NABO Council has decided who will be doing what over the next year and I have included an update of responsibilities in case you need to contact one of us. In the Techie's Corner, Phil Brooke-Little reviews the current status of lithium batteries.

Over the last couple of months, CRT has been undergoing a major reorganisation of its senior management, summarised in the News section, and it is also rethinking the roles and responsibilities of the Waterway Partnerships, which NABO has heavily criticised since their formation. Mike Rodd looks back on his involvement in setting up the original K&A Waterway Partnership, now coming full-circle with CRT's proposed change to 'Regional Advisory Boards'. I hope that the new CRT management recognises that we are all on the same side in wanting the best for our waterways. Canals were built for boats—not for walkers, cyclists, fishermen, canoeists or gongoozlers—and boating should be central to CRT's activities. Instead, NABO members are telling the Council that boaters are feeling increasingly forgotten and ignored (if it's not failing infrastructure and loss or outsourcing of facilities, it's increasingly restrictive mooring rules and regulations). I would love to trumpet CRT's achievements in every issue of NABO News but, until its senior staff start listening to people who actually know the waterways best, the boating community, I fear that this is some way off. At least the current rainfall promises full reservoirs when the warmer weather arrives.



attended this quarter's boater representatives meeting with Jon Horsfall and Matthew Symonds. Richard Parry joined us for the last 40 minutes. Andy Tidy produced some comprehensive notes, which are online. I have nothing to add to them, apart from the fact that NABO has a meeting planned with Jon Horsfall to discuss the concerns communicated in our recent letter to the Trust. The next Council Meeting is in York in March and the reps. have provided feedback to the Council that, at present, we feel the Trust doesn't value the experience and expertise that it has available in the National Advisory Groups and Council Reps. Richard Parry "has taken it on board", so we shall see.

The Trust is reorganising and we will see if this provides an opportunity for further boating reps to be appointed. The reorganisation comes at the five year point for the Trust and, like most restructures, whether it will actually work remains to be seen. We have concerns that the alignment with local councils, while good for gaining access to funding for various projects, might leave a disjointed approach regarding maintenance and vegetation clearance of canals, which frequently transverse county lines, so this will require constant monitoring. We do see this as a chance for the Trust to examine its role and how it can work with local councils in providing places for people to live as people look for alternative ways of living. This is becoming more of a challenge in cities, especially London, Manchester and Bath, where property is so expensive and renting is not an option for many. Of course, living afloat is a lifestyle choice for many and certainly the number of younger boaters in London gives hope to address the problem that the Trust has in attracting younger peo-

ple to boating.

Workmen have been trimming the hedge near us and we are told they might even be laying hedges along here. The birds will be happy. We have never left bird food out before as we had cats and, with moving every fortnight, it was something else to remember. Now we are on a permanent mooring (due to dialysis), we have purchased bird feeders and I have noticed that two squirrels have taken a liking to the seed and the fat-balls. We are also feeding the ducks, which are truly international:

From the Peak Forest to CRT Council

Stella Ridgway considers some recent developments

we have two Cayuga Ducks from NY State; they have iridescent green feathers and are twice the size of the other ducks. We started with a pair of mallards and two cayugas and now have about twenty ducks and as many birds, including robins, sparrows, wrens, blue tits, great tits and finches, plus the inevitable magpies and crows and one moorhen.

It has been nice to see old friends, who have come to winter on the summit pound. The repairs to Lock 15 on the Marple Flight seem to be progressing well, although the weather has not really been kind; we have had a lot of rain and they are promising snow. On a personal note, my thanks go to the NABO Council for working around the challenge that my haemodialysis presents. Hopefully, we can solve the issues we are having and get an NX Stage machine on my boat, sooner rather than later.

Fly on the wall

Observes proceedings at January's Council meeting

Dodging the snowflakes, I braved the weather to watch seven Council members meet at the welcoming Wolverhampton Boat Club. Their first job was to sort out roles for the new Council: Mark Tizard and Stella Ridgway both have health issues that prevent them engaging as much as they would like with CRT on a number of currently active topics and Paul Howland offered to share the Vice-Chair's role with Mark. The Council also agreed to consult other Council members over a proposed change to meet on Sundays rather than Saturdays, which are Stella's dialysis days. It also created a new post of Media Officer, which Alison Tuck agreed to take on. Other Council members' jobs remained unchanged.

CRT is not only undergoing a significant reorganisation of its waterway areas and senior managers but it is also reviewing the roles and makeup of its waterway partnerships—now 'Regional Advisory Boards'—with posts for chairs advertised in the Sunday Times at an estimated £15,000 per advert. It's also about to release the results of last year's consultations on London moorings and on the boat licensing review—will this be the end of the prompt-payment discount, despite 80% of respondents supporting it? If it is, it will add £100 a year to many boaters' costs.

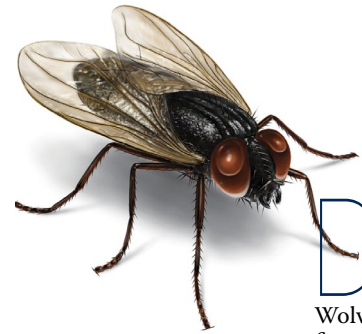
With all this going on, NABO thinks it is necessary to meet more regularly with CRT's senior management, including the new Chief Operating Officer and the interim Head of Boating, to ensure that

boaters are at the centre of the new strategies being developed; Paul's role as Co-Vice Chair will help with this. He was encouraged by the view of one old hand, who told him not to worry about these meetings: "I've never yet been to a CRT meeting that exercised my brain!"

A recent leaflet about environmental issues, which was placed on moored boats in London, not only had incorrect information but also the unintended consequence of advertising to burglars boats that were temporarily unoccupied because the leaflets were not taken inside, leading to a spike in break-ins.

Loss of waterways heritage is a serious concern to Council members, with the plans to sell off Marple Wharf last year and a proposal to sell the freehold of Blowers Green pumping station in Birmingham; although, to its credit, CRT has objected to plans to redevelop the site of the Flapper music pub, also in Birmingham. Councillors thought that public sale notices have been very difficult to find on the CRT website, with usually only a month allowed for comments. It also seems that one hand of CRT, in the form of CRT Estates Ltd., is not talking to the other hand, its Heritage Advisory Group, before these sales are advertised.

Finally, CRT's outsourcing of boaters' service facilities to local marinas has run into problems, with the one at Fazeley open for access to the facilities only from 9 am to 5 pm in summer, with shorter hours in winter and closed on Mondays. Keep warm and byeeeee until March.



NABO calendar 2018

Council Meetings; March 10th, April 21st, June 9th, July 21st (if required), September 1st, October 13th, November 10th (includes AGM).

Council meetings are held at boat clubs in the Midlands area. Members are welcome to attend Council meetings; please just let the Secretary or Chairman know in advance (contact details inside cover).



Stella Ridgway

Chair



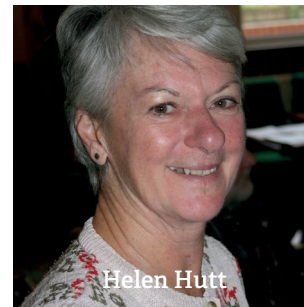
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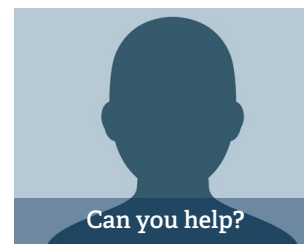
Alison Tuck

Media Officer, NAG (Licensing and Moorings), Regional Reps. Coordinator, Boater Liaison Rep. and Floating Traders



Phil Goulding

Continuous Cruising Rep.



Can you help?

The new NABO Council has a few vacancies that it would like to fill: we need a Minutes Secretary and reps for Anglian Waters and the River Severn—can you help? The Membership Team would welcome someone who could spare half an hour, every fortnight or so, helping to maintain the membership database. And the Council would welcome advice from a member who has a legal background. If you can help with any of these, please get in touch. At NABO News, I would also welcome help from members who have skills as a cartoonist or a crossword compiler.

North East Waterways

Howard Anguish



The NE annual public partnership meeting was held in November at Potteric Carr Visitor Centre—a nature reserve situated on the outskirts of Doncaster. Though reasonably well attended, I suspect that there were some there who thought they were coming to a User Group Forum, judging by some of the operational questions that were raised during the Q&A. We were joined by Richard Parry, Stuart Mills and Jon Horsfall, Acting Head of Boating, who is also the NE Waterway Manager.

Around the regions with NABO's regional reps

Following the usual pattern of these meetings, we had five presentations:

1 Tinsley Arts project 'Onwards and Upwards', presented by Sheffield City Council. This concerned the regeneration of the canal between Rotherham and Sheffield. The project consists of massive artworks, representing the industrial heritage of the area in the form of mill chimneys, but with a futuristic twist. In one, this is literally what the artist has proposed, with a brick chimney incorporated in its construction. These structures are quite massive—it was suggested that they could become a rival to the Angel of the North—and it is hoped that the area surrounding them will be transformed into a community space that will inspire local young people to en-

joy the open air and reflect on the past industrial heritage of Sheffield.

2 Leeds University presented an 'Integrated catchment solutions programme', a multi-partnership programme that has the aim of giving help to any suitable project in the Yorkshire Waterways catchment region. They hope to be able to put organisations in touch with technical assistance that may be available at the university and it is the latest in a number of joint ventures with CRT in the local area.

3 Hilary Brooke, NE Partnership member, gave a spirited talk on some of the ways that local communities can help each other to solve a variety of issues in the local waterway area. Hilary has always been an inspiring member of the local partnership and is a great ambassador for the local waterway communities, especially in the Mirfield and Aire and Calder District, and her presentation was a rallying call for people to get involved in their local waterways.

4 David Lowe, longstanding and prominent member of the NE Partnership, gave a presentation on the latest news regarding freight on the NE Waterways. Always interesting, David updated us on the efforts to bring cargoes back into the centre of Leeds and showed us what could be achieved with a little effort and imagination. Some concern was expressed that the increase in large barges using the commercial waterways may lead to conflict between them and the local recreational boating community, but I think the conclusion was that there is plenty of room for all types of waterway users. It will need some degree of education by both parties, but that should not be an issue, especially if everyone uses VHF ch. 74 to make boats aware of their presence.

5 The final presentation was by Trevor Roberts, another NE Partner, read by a colleague in his absence. It concerned a recently launched HLF-funded project called 'Ignite'. This is a youth engagement programme, which will last for four years and aims to make young people aware of the history and heritage of their local waterways. It will emphasise the potential for educational and employment prospects for young people who may not have considered this aspect of the employment market and the project will work together with CRT and other interested organisations to develop schemes and to monitor and mentor any youngsters who take part.

CRT takeover of EA navigations fails

The following statement was released this week by the EA: "Government Ministers have considered the proposals to transfer EA waterways and decided not to proceed with any transfer at the present time; however, they wish to keep the option open and return to it when they feel the time is right."

Late last year, a CRT press officer reported: "Following a recent meeting with the Waterways Minister, Therese Coffey MP, the Trust was asked to make a written submission to Defra setting out its outline proposals for a transfer to the Trust of the river navigations operated by the Agency. It is the Trust's understanding that it remains Government policy to support the transfer at the right time and provided it offers good value for taxpayers. The Trust's proposal sets out the need for the transfer to include a long-term funding commitment."

When NABO became aware that further discussions were taking place on the proposed transfer, without seeking the views of boating organisations, it wrote the letter below to the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Waterways.

NABO's letter to APPGW

I write to express our concerns regarding the proposed take-over of the navigational responsibilities by CRT of the waters currently managed by the EA. Since 1991, NABO has been the only organisation that solely represents the interests of private boaters on Britain's canals and rivers that are managed by either CRT or the EA. We exist to ensure that boaters' voices can be heard when decisions are being made that might affect their boating. We are actively involved in supporting CRT: within our managing Council we have two Council members on CRT's Navigation Advisory Group (Licensing and Mooring), one member on the Navigation Advisory Group (Operations) and three Council members on the Boat Safety Standards Committee. As well as being the current chair of NABO, I am also an elected boater's representative on CRT's Council. We are deeply concerned that the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Waterways is not seeking the views of boating organisations such as NABO, either through attendance or in writing.

Peter Underwood reports in *The Floater*;

A River Nene Facebook page saying that Irven Forbes, Waterway Manager for the Environment Agency, was telling boating organisations on the Nene that CRT will not be taking over the EA waterways 'at this time', was the first most knew that the bid had failed.

Clearly CRT's bid—the details of which have been kept secret—had been rejected by the Government, and it's likely that boaters may never know the reasons why.

Jonathan Ludford, CRT's press officer said "We are disappointed that Defra has indicated that it is not minded to proceed with the transfer of the river navigations currently managed by the EA to CRT."

The decision will be a bitter disappointment for the Inland Waterways Association, who have long advocated a takeover, but relief for some boaters in EA waterways who had become convinced that a CRT takeover would be expensive and damaging.

We are NOT in favour of CRT taking over responsibility for the waters currently managed by the EA. In our view, from a boater's perspective, CRT has yet to demonstrate that it is able to maintain and improve the canals and rivers. Indeed there remains an ongoing and increasing need for dredging and lock maintenance to ensure year-round navigation. We also do not feel that splitting the role of the EA between navigation and flood relief will be efficient, nor will CRT be able to adequately assess and future-proof the funding required to manage its increased responsibilities. Our further concern is that the Waterway Partnerships, which were seen by Defra as key to the introduction of additional, locally-sourced funds for CRT, have failed miserably and are instead now an additional expense. We feel it is important that Parliament should be made aware of the views of dedicated boating groups such as NABO. We intend to make the content of this email public. I would be pleased to clarify any of the points raised above.

Kind regards

Stella Ridgeway, NABO Chair

Terms and conditions

Mark Tizard revisits the objections that NABO had to CRT's changes to the licence terms and conditions in 2015.



When CRT proposed making changes to the licence terms and conditions in 2014, there were several areas to which NABO strongly objected and one was the inclusion of this paragraph: 'You agree that we may confirm to third party(s) whether or not the Boat is appropriately licensed and/or whether or not you are complying with these Conditions and, if not, whether we have commenced enforcement proceedings or are proposing to do so.' We were told at the time that they could not envisage a case where this might be necessary. When NABO objected to the changes in the terms and conditions, which allowed boaters' data to be passed to a third party, (e.g. an

outsourced enforcement company), we were told: "There are no plans to use a third party agency for routine enforcement purposes. However we do use experienced contractors when removing boats from our waterways and occasionally use service agents to deliver important papers to boaters, such as court documents." Here we are, three years later, and we see that this clause is being quoted in signs put up by 'District Enforcement', the car parking company that CRT has retained, to levy £150 per day fines on boats that moor on their long-term moorings without permission. One of the latest signs to go up is on the long-term moorings at the top of Hatton. Gone are the days when you could make use of an empty mooring. Now we have a parking company on a retainer. Whether or not you agree with the principle, could this be the beginning of outsourcing of CRT's licensing and enforcement function?

CRT is to roll out a policy of regularly contacting marinas, to establish whether boaters are correctly declaring a home mooring. This follows a pilot study of 12 cruising clubs and marinas, which showed that 75 boats were incorrectly categorised, whether by accident or design. The question that could be asked is: why, given that the latest terms and conditions require a boat with a home mooring to cruise, does CRT need to know whether a boat has a home mooring or not? After all, in an email to NABO, CRT's then General Council confirmed: "What it means to 'cruise' on the waterway depends upon the period

of time your boat is away from its home mooring. The longer it spends away from its home mooring, the greater the range of movement expected. As an extreme, if you never returned to your home mooring for the entire period of your licence, we would expect you to cruise continuously and therefore your pattern of movement should be the same as that of a boat without a home mooring." With this new policy seeking to clearly differentiate between boats that have a home mooring and those that do not, I assume that CRT now accepts that the 1995 Act does not indeed require a boat with a home mooring to continuously cruise.

Registering with a GP

If you have difficulty registering with a GP while travelling, this information from the Care Quality Commission might be useful.

"Expected standards of care: CQC expects practices to register people who are homeless, people with no fixed abode, or those legitimately unable to provide documentation living within their catchment area who wish to register with them. Homeless patients are entitled to register with a GP using a temporary address which may be a friend's address or a day centre. The practice may also use the practice address to register them. Practices should try to ensure they have a way of contacting the patient if they need to (e.g. with test results). Some areas have special services for homeless patients and practices may refer homeless patients to those services in line with local arrangements where it is in the best interests and with the agreement of the patient." Further information at www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/gps/nigels-surgery-29-looking-after-homeless-patients-general-practice



CRT reorganisation

The Chief Operating Officer, Julie Sharman, will appoint six regional directors for the new regional waterways. They will lead all aspects of volunteering, engagement, education, local fundraising and enterprise, events, restoration, communications, licensing and attractions and they will manage the contracts for provision of customer services. Subject to internal consultation, the new areas will be as follows:

- 📍 North West (Liverpool city region, Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Cheshire).
- 📍 Yorkshire and the North East (the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Sheffield City Region, North Lincolnshire, Humber and Stockton on Tees).
- 📍 West Midlands (the combined authority and surrounding counties—i.e. Stafford, Worcestershire, Stoke on Trent, Coventry, Warwickshire, Shropshire).
- 📍 East Midlands (Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Northants).
- 📍 London & South East (Greater London, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, Berkshire, Reading, Slough, Oxfordshire).
- 📍 South West and Wales (the whole of Wales, Swindon & Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Bath, Somerset).

Another stoppage on the Macclesfield Bridge 71, Porters Footbridge, near Congleton from 5th February to 2nd March.

Originally, it was thought that the work to strengthen the abutments to this bridge could be done without the need to close the canal, but detailed planning has shown that this will not be safe. CRT anticipates that this additional closure will have minimal impact because the existing stoppages at Bosley continue until 16th March.

If the stoppage causes difficulty, contact the Red Bull office on 0303 040 4040.

National Council boater representatives

Andy Tidy reports on a January meeting between CRT and the elected boater representatives on the National Council; an opportunity to explore issues both parties want to raise.

CRT management restructuring

The restructure, which will run to mid-February, aims to improve efficiency and at the same time increase agility to respond to customer needs. About 85 senior managers are affected and their numbers will reduce as roles are redefined. A simplified flatter management grading system will be adopted. The 2014 centralisation changes had many positive outcomes, but also some negative impacts on the flexibility of regional teams and this process will address these issues. The Trust will change to six regions, each with a Regional Director with teams to deploy according to local needs. The elements of the Trust that are best served by a national approach (e.g. water management) will be retained. The Waterway Partnerships will be revised to reflect the new regions and be given a clearer mandate to develop a local strategy, income generation and local engagement.

Short-term moorings

The feeling both within CRT and among the boater representatives is that the mooring strategy is being applied inconsistently. The regional short-term mooring period guidance should be clarified to achieve greater consistency. A Mooring Etiquette Guide is needed to help define the standards that are to be encouraged, with particular attention to disabled moorings. Guidance should also be offered on the expectation to close gaps between moored boats to maximise the mooring availability, particularly at 'honeypot' sites. In relation to fishermen asking for spaces to be left between moored boats, it

was clarified that this arrangement applies in only two locations and covers just winter moorings. The policy is not applicable generally.

Wide-beam boats

The introduction of wide-beam boats as houseboats on narrow canals, especially the Grand Union, creates a navigation obstacle, unless they remain within a purpose built marina. The canal does not have a history of extensive wide beam usage. Most are intended for use as house boats and the need to continually cruise to satisfy licensing rules causes navigation issues. The costs associated with supporting passages through Braunston and Blisworth Tunnels was raised.

Licensing review

The third phase of the consultation attracted 10,915 responses, which equates to one third of licence holders, providing a statistically credible picture of boaters' views. TONIC, the review contractor, is currently analysing the data for a Board meeting at the end of January. Any changes will be phased in from April 2019. The needs of business boats will be considered in the light of what is agreed for recreational boats and will be subject to its own consultation process.

London mooring strategy

1250 responses have been received from a target of 4500. Feedback is being reviewed by CRT and results are expected by the end of February. Overall, the process applied to this review has attracted positive feedback.

A tale of three bridges

David Fletcher reports on three important new waterway crossings that opened in the North West in the last months of 2017.



South approach viaduct
Photo: Mersey Gateway



Ordsall Chord
Photo: Network Rail



A57 Lift Bridge
Photo: Manchester Evening News

The three new crossings are the Mersey Gateway, the Ordsall Chord Bridge and the A57 Relief Road. I have reported several times on the Mersey Gateway and it is very pleasing to see that it has been completed on time and under budget. The magnificent crossing is one kilometre long and the centrepiece of a huge road project, consisting of nine kilometres of new link roads, seven junctions and many smaller bridges, on both the north and south banks of the River Mersey. It also crosses the Bridgewater Canal, the Manchester Ship Canal and the Sankey Canal. The views from the bridge over the Mersey Estuary are spectacular, so well worth a visit. It is a toll road and an alternative is to go to the park by the Sankey Canal river lock, where there is free parking, a nearby café and great views.

The Ordsall Chord is a short railway line in Greater Manchester, which opened in December and includes a large arched bridge over the River Orwell. It is very near to Castlefield Basin, at the bottom of the Rochdale Nine, and connects with the other Victorian railway viaducts in the area. It links the stations of Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Oxford Road to Manchester Victoria, and will increase capacity and reduce

journey times into and through the city. Why should we care? Well, it improves links from the West Coast Main Line to Huddersfield, Leeds and Sheffield; important if you are cruising or have moorings in the North East. It is a bit 'jam tomorrow' at the moment, but it will come into more use as new timetables are rolled out.

The A57 Relief Road includes a new lift-bridge over the Manchester Ship Canal, which finally opened just before Christmas. The A57 tackles congestion in Irlam, Cadishead and around the Trafford Centre, and is right alongside Barton Bridge on the M60. The bridge has had a chequered history, nearly finished in May 2016 when the road deck fell when the lifting-gear failed. The Ship Canal was blocked for many months, while the deck was removed, and the popular Mersey Ferry cruises were cancelled for the year. The bridge owner is our old friend, Peel Holdings, operator of the Bridgewater Canal. The local councils have been embroiled in a last minute dispute with Peel over who should pay for the maintenance and operation of the new bridge. Local residents are reported to be unimpressed with Peel's behaviour. Additionally the Barton Aqueduct, where the Bridgewater Canal crosses the Manchester Ship Canal, will also need extra spending.

Learn to sail a Thames sailing barge for free

The Thames Sailing Barge Trust is looking for ten trainees who want to become a mate or skipper of a traditional Thames sailing barge to help secure the future of the sailing barge fleet.

It will guide trainees through more than 700 enabling objectives, including full knowledge of all barge

sailing, navigation and maintenance tasks, to enable them to reach the required standard to qualify as a sailing bargemaster. It usually takes around ten years to become fully qualified, so this is a serious commitment that will require trainees to dedicate at least one weekend a month to the scheme for at least the next decade. The Trust is offering:

- training in a complete range of traditional seafaring skills, including rope-work, gear and

rigging, sail setting and trim, rules of the road, navigation, meteorology, small boat work, maintenance and leadership skills;

- a personal development plan, customised to a trainee's availability and previous sailing experience, if any, and a personal mentor to assist in each trainee's development; and
- access to over 20 Thames sailing barges in Essex, Kent, Suffolk and London with around 20 sailing days per year.

Volunteers will help not only to preserve Thames sailing barges but also to preserve the skills and knowledge required to sail and maintain them, with the aim of passing these skills on to future generations.

No previous sailing experience is required, but you will need to be: passionate about learning how to sail a Thames sailing barge; not afraid of heights; reliable and flexible (hours depend on tides and weather); reasonably fit and strong; sociable, with good communication skills; and willing to learn and apply yourself.

To apply, email training@bargetrust.org with your name, contact details and a few words explaining why you would like to be considered.

Further information at www.bargetrust.org

Photo : National Education Network



CRT partnerships and all that

a very personal note from
Mike Rodd

water turbidity, water shortages and so on.

Eventually it became clear to me, having attended meetings with the chairs of the three other trial groups, that we were on a collision course with CRT which saw the partnerships simply as fundraising bodies. In time, as the concept was extended to other waterways, we were required to come into line with the others, first by having our chairman appointed by CRT, and then by having our membership 'approved of' by the Trust. I wasn't happy with all this, but I was pressed by colleagues to put my name forward. At a rather bizarre 'appointment interview', I expressed my view that, unless all of those involved had a real commitment to the waterways, I simply couldn't see why they would wish to be actively involved. With real commitment, what they offered was far more valuable than simple fundraising. It was left to the person subsequently appointed to the position, not anyone from CRT, to have the decency to phone me and tell me that she had been appointed to replace me!

I have thus watched the subsequent, increasingly expensive, development of the partnerships, each costing £25K per year plus member expenses and staff support, with some cynicism. It doesn't astonish me in any way that they are once again being revisited, or that, surprise, surprise, they are going to be 'Regional Advisory Boards'. As a boater who is constantly seeing maintenance funding being cut back, I can't help but be appalled by the partnership shambles over the past four years or so. Volunteers can and do achieve amazing things—like restore canals and raise hundreds of thousands of pounds to restore the Crofton Pumping station—because they care passionately about what they do. It's all so simple: well, at least it is if you bother to understand why people volunteer in the first place, and then make good use of the skills and knowledge they have to offer in the second!

The topic of CRT partnerships is a particularly contentious one for me, so I can't resist the temptation to comment on the present round of proposed changes. Indeed, it was the partnerships that first brought me into NABO, when David Fletcher invited me to address the NABO AGM to discuss the Trial K&A Partnership (which, for my sins, I had ended up chairing).

When the scheme for BW to become CRT first emerged, we soon learned of the proposal to introduce 'Partnerships' to support the new organisation. As the General Manager of the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust, I jumped at the opportunity to help establish, on its behalf, a trial partnership for the K&A and the Bridgwater & Taunton Canals. Working closely with the very excellent James Young (now safely far-away and rising to the top in Australia), and supported by our Waterway Manager, we set up a process for recruiting suitable people—yes, we did it ourselves, and no, we didn't need any expensive consultants! At that point, CRT was mistakenly being referred to as a 'National Trust for the Waterways' and so, having had discussions with senior folk in the NT, we based our model on plans they had in mind, although never fully implemented, for establishing 'Regional Advisory Boards'. We then set about recruiting about a dozen folk from:

- the three counties that had originally partially funded the K&A restoration and were then still providing some ongoing funding;
- representatives from the local canal trade association;
- nominees from other canal users (anglers, canoeists, marina operators, waterways clubs, etc.); and
- others with special skills who could help in terms of strategic development etc.

The then K&A Canal Trust Chairman agreed to chair the group. He, however, soon moved on and I took his place. But we were doomed from the start: the senior CRT staff member, who was leading the partnership development, soon made it clear that he didn't approve of the fact that we were interested in more than simply fundraising. Because all of our members had a deep interest in the waterways, we were taking on a serious role in working with the Waterway Manager on key issues, such as long-term non-moving boats,

Safety first

David Fletcher and Mike Rodd describe the operation of the Boat Safety Scheme and review two of the latest discussions on safety developments.

boatsafetyscheme.org

BSS Essential Guide

boatsafetyscheme.org/media/180428/bss%20guide%202005%20complete%20web.pdf

BSS advice on CO

boatsafetyscheme.org/stay-safe/carbon-monoxide-co/

BSS advice on 230V electrical safety

boatsafetyscheme.org/stay-safe/electrical-safety/

It is not sufficient to make your boat compliant only on the day of the examination; it is your responsibility to maintain the boat in compliance at all times.

Similar to a car, on most of the UK's inland waterways, a boat needs to be licensed, insured and have the equivalent of an MOT, a valid BSS certificate. The Boat Safety Scheme is owned by CRT and the EA and is supported by many other navigation and harbour authorities.

The BSS is not an enforcement body, but navigation authorities may withdraw permission for you to use or moor your boat on their waterways if you don't have current BSS certification. Navigation authorities and mooring owners have a duty of care to all boat owners and the BSS provides some confidence that your boat will not cause damage to yourself or the people around you. Naturally, this means that your boat

has to be examined for the mutual assurance of everyone using the waterway near your boat.

At the same time, you will also be made aware of any potential risks that might develop on your boat as time passes. It is not sufficient to make your boat compliant

only on the day of the examination; it is your responsibility to maintain the boat in compliance at all times. Something that is in reasonable condition on the day of an examination may alter or deteriorate before the next examination. New equipment also needs to be installed in a safe way.

BSS requirements are available

online and written in plain English so that they can be understood by everyone, not just examiners or trade professionals. If you undertake maintenance or improvements to your boat, it is important that you understand the requirements or get professional advice if you do not. The BSS is about taking reasonable, practical steps that help boat owners keep safe on the water by following a simple process of checking minimum safety requirements, developed and reviewed by stakeholders from across the boating spectrum, including boat-owner organisations, the marine trade, surveyors and navigation authorities.

Three committees manage the BSS: the Technical Committee; the Advisory Committee; and the Management Committee. NABO has long-serving members who contribute to the management of the BSS, not examiners, rather boaters with a technical background eager to represent users' interests. NABO has, over the years, been a leading influence in securing a commitment to minimise the mandatory requirements of the scheme, and also in securing changes to the appeals procedure. It is an important part of NABO's representative activity and the general principles adopted by NABO representatives are:

- Where possible, checks should be advisory and regulation should be used only when absolutely necessary.
- Checks should be specific and should not involve personal assessment or opinion by the examiner.

NABO supports the BSS as an important contribution to safety on the waterways. If you are interested in the work of the BSS, please get in touch.

- If a check is introduced, based on incident statistics, this must be evidence-based.
- All information used by the examiner should also be available to the boat owner—who has to maintain the standard for four years.
- An installation should not be outlawed on the basis that it is difficult to examine. 'I can't see it, therefore it must be defective!' should be applied sparingly and only after rigorous consideration.
- The BSS should avoid a presumption of guilt until users prove themselves innocent.

Two current areas of work that NABO representatives are involved in are carbon monoxide (CO) and electrical systems.

CO alarms

CO is a killer and takes a number of boaters' lives every year, often from misuse or lack of maintenance, of onboard equipment. There is also increasing evidence that exhaust emissions from your own boat or other nearby boats can create a toxic atmosphere in the cabin. Tracking this down and providing evidence is key to the justification of a requirement for CO alarms. BSS is organising CO tests and trials at Mercia Marina this spring to get some science behind smoke crossover between boats. Alarms are a recommendation, not a requirement, for both housing and the Recreational Craft Directive, so why should boaters have to do this? The statistics show that boaters are at much greater risk than in general housing. But just checking once every four years will not make this happen; boaters must believe in it

too, and keep alarms in place and checked. There are many facets to the discussion of the need for CO alarms that will play out in the coming months and NABO reps will be there to assist with the outcome.

230V Electricity

Given the rapid growth in high-current and high-voltage AC and DC systems on many boats, a specialist BSS Electrical Issues Sub-Group was formed to analyse the issues and, where necessary, propose changes to the BSS requirements. The concerns are supported by evidence of a substantial number of boat fires being caused by electrical faults, as well as the need to prevent electric shocks to all boat users from the higher voltage systems. In domestic household electrical systems, excellent protection is provided by the, now compulsory, residual current device (RCD), which is designed to prevent people from getting a fatal electric shock if they touch something live. RCDs can also provide some protection against electrical fires. However, they require careful installation and appropriate electrical wiring and the designs of many cheaper inverters cannot support the use of RCDs. Key issues being faced by the sub-group are that BSS inspectors are at present not qualified to check electrical systems beyond simple observations—the presence of shut-off switches and consumer units and suitable cable sizing when visible. Inspectors themselves must also be protected from possible life-threatening shocks during inspections.



Boat Safety Scheme rise in certification charges

BSS has announced the first increase in certification charges for eight years. From 1st April 2018, BSS examiners will be charged a new price of £36 (ex VAT) for each certification they issue to a boat, which is a £7 (ex VAT) rise that they are likely to pass on to boaters. BSS intends holding the price for at least the whole of its new four-year business plan period.

Realising the value of waterways



Waterways assets—CRT's Asset Management Strategy for 2017-2021

Richard Wakelen, CRT's Asset Strategy Manager, gave a presentation to the Navigation Advisory Group which covered the development of a new Asset Investment Model, summarised here by Mark Tizard.

The five-year Asset Management Strategy (AMS) to 2021 sets out CRT's asset management approach. The AMS defines what needs to be done to improve asset management capability, and to demonstrate a level of asset management maturity that aligns with the International Standard for Asset Management (ISO 55000).

Assets

CRT manages and maintains the third largest collection of listed structures on 1,571 miles of canal and 342 miles of river. This includes 49 scheduled ancient monuments, 2,701 listed buildings, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site at Pontcysyllte. They also traverse or adjoin a further four world heritage sites, 317 conservation areas, 42 historic parks and gardens and nine historic battlefields. Waterways, reservoirs and docks are also important for wildlife and support 63 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 13 of which are also designated as Special Areas of Conservation and/or Special Protection Areas.

Understanding asset condition

In line with the obligations of CRT's grant agreement with Defra, asset management performance is assessed and reported annually against defined measures known as the 'Publication Data'. Three of the measures, known as the 'Relevant

Standards', are used to determine the payment of the conditional element of the Defra grant. CRT's current standard for inspection (Asset Inspection Procedures 2016 (AIP 2016)) classifies infrastructural assets into Principal Assets (whose failure could lead to major disruption or have serious consequences for our waterways, customers and neighbours) and Non-Principal Assets (the failure of which is considered to be of lesser significance). Under AIP 2016, Principal Assets are subject to a hierarchy of inspections (including principal, annual and length inspections) which provide information on the condition, consequence of failure and serviceability of each asset, and details of any defects affecting the asset. Each Principal Asset is assigned a condition grade from A to E, where A represents an asset in prime condition and E represents a seriously deteriorated asset.

Since 2012, there has been a year-on-year reduction in the number of condition D and E Principal Assets and last year, 13.8% were better than the Defra threshold of 23%. The Consequence of Failure (COF) of each Principal Asset is rated on a scale from 1 (low COF) to 5 (high COF).

To enhance understanding of the condition of assets and their probability of failure, Asset Health Scores and Health Indices are being

developed. These generate a score on a scale of 1 to 100. The strategy for inspections will be to assess how the existing inspection regime (monthly, annual and principal) can be optimised and aligned to reporting requirements for the new asset health indices. This is likely to introduce changes to the type of data collected and the methods and frequency with which it is collected.

Maintaining the assets

The current standard for maintaining assets (Preventative Planned Maintenance 2016 (PPM)) defines maintenance requirements for three types of assets: 1) fixed and moveable operational infrastructure; 2) operational and joint operational/estates buildings; and 3) mechanical, electrical, instrumentation, control, and automation (MEICA) assets. It includes powered locks, moveable bridges, pumping stations, powered sluices, and boat lifts, and SCADA assets including remote flow and level sensors. The strategy for PPM is to move to a formal maintenance process, with consistent maintenance standards and specifications. It will also identify the levels of resource and expenditure required to carry it out effectively, and to enable effective monitoring of the maintenance regimes. The first phase of generic PPM task lists and maintenance plans has been set up in proprietary interactive software, known as 'SAP', that CRT uses, for seven priority asset types: aqueducts, moving bridges, culverts, locks, sluices, canal and river weirs. The intention is that these generic task lists are made specific for each asset. It is anticipated that the implementation of PPM will initially increase resource requirements for delivery. As the programme progresses, there should be a net reduction in reported faults, and reactive works, for each asset.

Repairing the assets

Asset failures are classified as either an unplanned stoppage or an electrical, mechanical or structural failure. Unplanned stoppages relate to a closure of either the navigation and/or towpath, or for bridges, a road closure. CRT's strategy is to ensure the current level of reliability and availability is maintained in a sustainable way and we will improve these in line with a prioritised investment plan.

The strategy is to move to a formal maintenance process, with consistent maintenance standards and specifications...

Dredging

The condition of navigable channels is a prime measure of service for boating customers. Poorly dredged waterways create navigational difficulties, may accelerate erosion and scour, leading to increased leakage and towpath and bank collapse—potentially increasing maintenance costs in the longer term. River navigations present particular problems with the longer term degradation of lock cuttings and localised depositions after storms affecting the channel and requiring expensive reactive dredging. Dredging is very expensive and typical costs per km are currently in the range £100k to £200k, rising to £500k for removal of contaminated material. Dredging falls into one of two approaches: mainline dredging and spot dredging. Main-line dredging of long lengths of canal restores them to an acceptable depth for navigation. It ensures a regular defined bed profile and provides a depth 'reservoir' to accommodate future siltation before re-dredging. The programme is in-





formed by hydrographic surveys of the network. Spot dredging a short length of canal where navigation is impeded by a local obstruction, includes dredging winding holes, bridge and lock approaches. This is more expensive in terms of unit costs than mainline dredging and does not deal with the longer term reduction in channel depth due to siltation. CRT's strategy is to prioritise dredging alongside all other asset requirements based on risk, with investment forecast to be £80M over a 10-year period. A new dredging strategy is being developed, which will prioritise both mainline and spot dredging, and changes to our approach may be adopted if they are considered an improvement on our current strategy.

Vegetation management

Tree growth can cause damage to structures, adversely impact navigation or towpath standards and has the potential for failure, resulting in loss or injury. The Trust standard for tree risk management defines requirements for regular inspection and management to minimise the risks of loss or injury caused by failure of part or all of a tree. Maintenance requirements are identified by PPM and asset inspections. CRT's approach to the management of other vegetation along waterways is to prevent its growth from impeding navigation and/or the use of towpaths, while maintaining ecological and landscape benefits.

Prioritising investment—Asset Investment Modelling

There are sometimes competing investment demands on a finite amount of financial investment. Determining priorities for investing in existing and aging assets, compared with the need to install new assets can be complex. Such deci-

... and to prioritise dredging alongside all other asset requirements based on risk.

sions require a good understanding of existing condition, consequence of failure, the risk of an asset failing or a drought event occurring. To improve CRT's ability to make better decisions, it is developing new asset modelling capability and new asset strategies to prioritise investment using asset health, asset criticality, asset risk and a common risk currency. Investment in existing assets is prioritised, based on an assessment of the numbers in condition grades D and E and a high consequence of failure. To improve capability in prioritising investment, a new set of asset strategies is being developed. The vision is to develop new Asset Investment Models (AIMs) based on a common asset modelling methodology. The methodology and models will determine a common approach for measuring the health of all assets through a Health Score and a Health Index. The AIM models will determine current asset health and predict future asset health, taking into account the effects of degradation.

Asset and network criticality is currently assessed using three factors: safety; flood risk; and the financial impact of an asset failure. The highest risk assets are reservoirs and embankments, due to the risk of a breach, and therefore a high consequence of failure. A fourth factor is planned, to further enhance criticality assessment of assets from a customer's perspective, to reflect the impact of an asset failure on boaters, customers and visitors.

Investment optimisation will be based on risk assessed by combining the Health Index and Consequence

of Failure Index into a 5 x 5 matrix. Within the matrix, a risk profile will be established, comprising a number of risk bands, each set to ensure a risk-based approach to the prioritisation of asset investment. This will ensure that CRT meets asset specific outcomes while ensuring the Defra 'Relevant Standards' thresholds are never reached. CRT will develop a ten-year rolling investment plan, using the AIM models to aid the prioritisation of interventions on assets. The plan will include major schemes in the Priority Projects Programme, minor works in the Priority Works Programme and Operational Contracts, as well as projects funded through operational capital and fundraising.

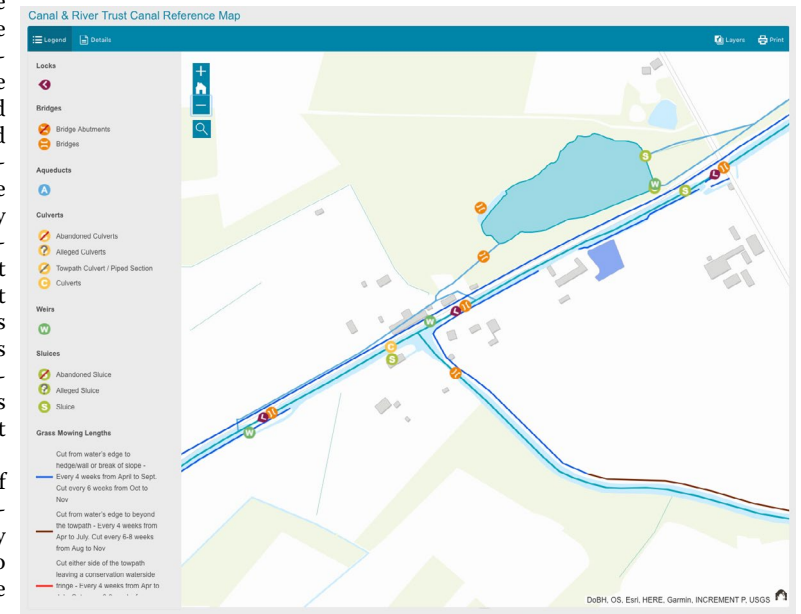
An additional aspect of the modelling capability will be the determination of a 'Common Currency', based on the Probability of Failure as a percentage multiplied by the Consequence of Failure in terms of its financial impact. The probability of failure is found through the health score of the assets, historical failure rates and predicted failure rates based on assessing functional failures. The Common Currency will enable optimisation of investment across different asset categories. It enables a trade-off in terms of financial risk between different assets as well as the different investment streams.

Development of the new asset management capability will take place in two phases: Phase 1, the new health score,

health index and risk profile modelling, initially the development of AIMs and asset strategies for fixed bridges, culverts and lock-gates, before other infrastructure assets. Phase 2 will deliver a common currency and further refine the models developed in Phase 1 and will inform the investment plan for the period April 2018 to March 2019 and April 2019 to March 2020. A review will be undertaken to assess the start and scope of Phase 2 in 2018.

Improving asset data and information

Asset information is wide-ranging and includes asset type, location, condition and capability; asset failure histories, work histories, unit costs and health and safety plans. Currently, the asset data is held in a number of information systems. The aim is to align it with business needs, including optimised asset management strategies and plans, to specify processes and systems



Photos on page 19: Circular weir on the Staffs & Worcs, Gailey roundhouse, lift bridge on South Oxford canal, Middlewich locks, Shrewley tunnel, Stratford split bridge, swing bridge at Kildwick

This page opposite: The Bratch

All photos: CRT

A map of CRT assets is available at <https://is.gd/BjsLst>



to capture data systematically. This will be used to develop a Completeness, Accuracy and Timeliness (CAT) score to help assess the quality of data that feeds the investment models. There will be three main

areas of focus on asset data: 1) data to populate the AIM models; 2) condition data collected in SAP through inspections; and 3) ZX notification process. Data to populate the AIM models is currently stored on text-based electronic Principal Inspection Reports and requires transposing into Excel, before being uploaded into the AIM models. Trust employees and volunteers will undertake this time-consuming exercise. To improve condition data collected in SAP through inspections, CRT will update the handheld scripts used by inspectors to provide a step-by-step process to enable the effective collection of condition data and develop inspection handbooks for each asset category to provide guidance on condition assessment with photos and descriptions. This will ensure consistency in the condition assessment of assets. The creation of the AIM models and new health indices is expected to result in changes to the data collected through the ZX notification process. In particular, a large proportion of data currently collected and recorded as a defect will be re-classified as condition data. A new coding structure is being introduced to differentiate between defects and condition and faults to ensure all ZX notifications are correctly coded.

Asset management is multi-disciplinary and the implementation of the AMS depends on the inte-

[The asset teams] have an established technical strength, which will improve to include asset management life-cycle planning and ... the development of optimised maintenance regimes and the prioritisation of investment.

grated activity of many of CRT's functional teams. The teams within the Asset Management and Asset Delivery Directorates have an established technical strength, which will continue to improve to include asset management life-cycle planning and decision-making for the development of optimised maintenance regimes and the prioritisation of investment. In addition, CRT's 'Growing Our Trust' internal engagement programme seeks to develop a culture that supports behavioural change, including effective communication and collaboration, customer focus and accountability. This will directly support the development of a culture necessary to improve asset management. CRT has prepared an improvement plan for the AMS to demonstrate continuous improvement towards a Maturity Level 3 against the Institute of Asset Management's self-assessment methodology, required to comply with requirements of ISO 55000:2014. The development of the AMS will be monitored through internal and external benchmarking and will involve an internal annual review of its maturity using the Institute of Asset Management's self-assessment tool. The Strategy will be implemented under the direction of the Asset Strategy Team with the National Asset Strategy Manager having responsibility for ensuring the plan is implemented, with the Director of Asset Management being the Executive sponsor.

Selling the family silver?

Peter Fellows highlights some recent proposed sell-offs

The new asset management strategy, described by CRT's Asset Strategy Manager, is welcome news and, when implemented, will go a long way towards protecting waterway assets. However, the same cannot be said of CRT's Estates Department, with three offices covering the North, Midlands and South of the country.

In its own words: 'The Estates Department manages a significant portfolio of property that includes historic warehouses, cottages, offices, industrial estates and land across England and

Wales'. In 2017 alone, the Estates Department issued notices that CRT proposed to sell off leases and freeholds, or release restrictive covenants, on 17 buildings and land that the Charity owns (see box).

Two of the sales are of particular concern to NABO: the sale of Marple Wharf at Marple in Cheshire (see NABO News Issue 6, 2017) and the sale of the freehold to Blowers Green Pumphouse in Dudley, West Midlands. NABO has written to both local councils, setting out its objections to the developments.

Marple Wharf

To the Planning Department, Stockport Council:

The National Association of Boat Owners objects to the plans in their current form. Our members use the boating facilities there throughout the year and this development will affect their ability to be able to interact with the local community; in fact, the proposal as it stands cuts the two communities off from one another. The Canal and River Trust and H2O are missing an ideal and unique opportunity for the two communities to be able to interact in a shared space and the missed opportunity for tourism should not be underestimated. Marple Junction is a key feature of the Cheshire Ring and these services mark the entrance to the Macclesfield Canal. By developing the site in the way proposed, the canal and local community are being cut off from one another, and will reduce the facilities for the New Horizons boat, a wonderful facility for the disabled community to be able to enjoy the canal and gain health and wellbeing from the space.

Marple Wharf was designed to be just that and while we appreciate that the Canal and River trust need to maximise the land potential, this development fails to consider the unique opportunity to develop a space that brings both the local land-based and water-based communities together. The proposed site for the water point does not allow for boats to safely moor if



Marple Wharf
Photo: Peter Fellows

the New Horizons boat is taking on passengers, nor is there provision for the transport bringing disabled people for their trips. Currently, the wharf is used by boaters and canoeists, as well as New Horizons. There has been another similar development at Marsworth and this has created discontent between residents and boaters, simply because the water point is right outside the development and boats queuing to get water are being abused. Marple Junction is a busy place and boaters stop here, go into town and use the local shops. This development does not encourage that interaction and a tourist destination point for visitors to come and watch the boats is being lost.

With regards to the proposed facilities, we believe that this development brings no benefits to boaters in terms of facilities, as there will be no improvement to the ones on offer despite the User Groups asking, and being promised, that boater's facilities would be upgraded and added

to, but promised showers are not mentioned in this proposal. Marple has a unique opportunity and this should not be allowed to escape. Therefore, we ask that the Planning Committee reject the plans in their current form, or at least require H2O to revisit the transshipment plans and the water point plans, as in their current form they benefit neither residents nor boaters.

Regards

Stella Ridgway, NABO Chair, CRT Council Member and Narrowboat Dweller

Blowers Green Pumphouse

Re: Dispose of freehold interest in Blowers Green Pumphouse, Peartree Lane, Dudley, West Midlands:

In response to your recent public notice for the purposes of Section 121 of The Charities Act 2011, we write to formally object to the above disposal. The Blowers Green Pumphouse, a listed building (ref SMR 7297), is an important part of the heritage of the canals, having being built in the early 1890s to house a recirculating pump to raise the water levels between Birmingham and Wolverhampton. It is exactly the type of building that meets the Canal and River Trust's charitable objects, which state:

"2.2 To protect and conserve for public benefit sites, objects and buildings of archaeological, architectural, engineering or historic interest on, in the vicinity, or otherwise associated with inland waterways."

CRT, as the freehold owner, is obliged under the above charitable objects and as custodian of the waterways' heritage, to make sure that it retains heritage aspects under any planning applications. It is also desirable that CRT retains suitable use under the Historic England/Government National Planning Policy Framework for Locally Listed Buildings. Specifically: 'In deciding any relevant planning permission that affects a locally listed heritage asset or its setting, the NPPF requires, among other things, that local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of such heritage assets and of putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.' CRT is also obliged to consider the positive contribution



Blowers Green Pumphouse
Photo: Martyn B on geograph.org

to the local economy that conserving the asset may bring. In addition, the Dudley Development Strategy specifically aims to improve the quality and range of industrial premises in Peartree Lane. Should the freehold be sold, CRT will be powerless to preserve this building for public benefit. The pumphouse currently provides services to boaters and is on a popular route out of the city, down Delph Locks to the Staffs and Worcs Canal, which is a particularly interesting route for boaters who are interested in industrial heritage. The pumphouse is also at the end of Dudley No 2 Canal, which leads to the Black Country Museum. Over recent years, CRT has sold many historic wharves and buildings that were previously part of the industrial heritage of both the canals and the country. These continual sales will harm the attractiveness of the canals to the new visitors that CRT is seeking to attract. The National Association of Boat Owners (NABO) believes that this will harm CRT's case when negotiating with the Government for future funding.

NABO asks, on behalf of our members, that you reconsider this freehold disposal. NABO also requests that every effort is made to preserve the industrial heritage that CRT has inherited and resist efforts to sell off important properties such as this.

We look forward to your confirmation,
Stella Ridgway, NABO Chair

History and uses

The name 'Blowers' arose from the blast furnaces of Netherton Iron Works that were built early in the 19th Century. Blowers Green Pumphouse is located adjacent to Blowers Green Lock on the Birmingham Canal Navigations (Dudley Canal No 2) between Park Head Junction with the Dudley Canals and Bumble Hole Junction with the Bumble Hole Branch Canal. The pumphouse was built in the early 1890s to replace an earlier pump on the Grazebrook Arm. It pumped water from the Long Pound back to the Birmingham Level and so maintained water levels between Birmingham and Wolverhampton. The Dudley Canal Trust used the building as their base when it restored the tunnels on the Dudley Canal to the Black Country Museum, until it moved to a new Lottery-funded visitor centre. The building currently houses a dance school, Acorn Performing Arts, and has a wharf, temporary moorings and boating services for water and rubbish disposal.

As we went to press, CRT's press office issued the following statement: "We've had a number of responses to the proposed sale of Blowers Green Pumphouse, many of which have regarded the future of the customer service facilities located there. It has always been our intention to retain the existing customer service facilities at the property after sale by leasing them back at no rent so that we could continue to provide these important facilities to boaters. Following the notice period and the comments received, we intend to give further consideration to the site. In particular, we would like to assess whether offering a long lease of the property, rather than disposing of our freehold interest, might be a better solution and give greater control over the future use and maintenance of the property. While we consider this option, the

CRT's 2017 disposals:

Dispose of its freehold interest in Blowers Green Pumphouse, Peartree Lane, Dudley, West Midlands

Dispose of its freehold interest in the two areas of land at Blaker Road, Stratford, London. Only the land and airspace underneath the Blaker Road bridge structure is to be included in the disposal.

Dispose of land at Lea Bridge Road, E5 9RB.

Dispose of the freehold land adjacent Simms Lane, Quedgeley, Gloucestershire.

Dispose of the freehold land located off Church View, Doncaster.

Dispose of the freehold land located off the Rotherham Road, Rotherham.

Dispose of the section of land covered by water being a wide of the Trent & Mersey Canal near Higgins Lane, Northwich, and to Grant an exclusive right to moor on this water.

Lease with exclusive rights of Northwich dry and wet docks, Hunts Island, Northwich together with exclusive rights to moor in the River Weaver for use as service moorings only.

Lease of an area of land adjacent to Bridge Street and Gas Street Basin, Birmingham.

Release restrictive covenants relating to land on Compton Road, Banbury and the Oxford Canal.

Grant three leases over the waterspace to the rear of the following properties in Middlewich, Cheshire: 6 Farley Close, 7 Farley Close and 11 Overton Close.

Lease of land and access rights adjacent to Keynsham Rd, Keynsham, Bristol.

Lease of land at Boardwalk Place, London.

Lease of land off Horton Bridge Road, West Drayton, Middlesex.

Lease of the Marina Office along with access rights to Limehouse Basin, London.

Lease of waterspace, along with access rights to Diglis Basin, Gloucester.

Release restrictive covenants relating to Sunblest Bakery, Oldfield Lane North, Greenford and land and buildings on the West side of Greenford Road, London.

property is not on the market. The outcome of our deliberations may result in further public notices being posted, which will give people the opportunity to comment again."

NABO Council members commented: "This is not a complete capitulation by the Trust's property department—often seen as being out of control—but a clear indicator that it is feeling the consequences of its decision to attempt to sneak through the sale of an historic canalside property unnoticed." And: "They will offer a long lease of 150 years, which is what they did to Minerva Works. The leases effectively mean a sale, and absolve them of any responsibility from the freehold. This is how historic buildings get lost. It's soooo back-handed property dealing."



Aspects of boat design, construction, equipment, facilities or maintenance

There is increasing talk of lithium (Li-ion) batteries as an alternative to the old tried, tested, and often failed, lead-acid technology that has been about for around 150 years. At first glance expensive, several times the cost of the equivalent capacity in lead-acid but, looking a bit deeper, you see that their cycle life is a lot greater than that of lead-acid and this goes some way to offset the cost. With Li-ion you also don't need such a high capacity, as they are happy to be run down a lot lower than lead-acid, 80% depth of discharge (DOD)

Lithium batteries

Phil Brooke-Little reviews
the current state of play

versus 60% DOD for a good quality lead-acid. Looking deeper, you find that Li-ion batteries can be charged much faster, a cost saving if you are charging using an engine.

But the true cost saving is harder to calculate. For example; if you have a large alternator, then the Li-ion batteries will be able to make use of its current pretty much right up until they are fully charged. In fact, you could stop charging as soon as the current starts to drop because they don't need to be fully charged—and indeed last longer if they aren't. A lead-acid bank on a big alternator only uses the full output for a short period, before they can only take a reduced current, and this continues to reduce down to a small fraction of the capacity of the alternator. In this case the saving on engine running could be several hours per charge and this makes Li-ion more cost ef-

fective. A caveat; your alternator should be capable of giving its full output at 14.6V without roasting. Many alternators are simply not built for continuous duty at full power in an enclosed, and often not well-ventilated, engine hole.

With smaller alternators the savings aren't so great, because the alternator is giving its maximum output for much longer on the lead-acid batteries and also would take longer to charge the Li-ion batteries. There will still be a saving, just not as great.

If you get most of your power from solar, as quite a few of us do, the charging savings only come into effect in the winter and only on the amount of engine running needed to top up.

One big difference is that Li-ion batteries are fragile; they can't be abused. A single overcharge or over-discharge and they can be scrap, meaning that you absolutely have to have a battery management system (BMS). This will prevent you over-discharging the batteries by cutting off the power completely. It will also terminate the charge when they are full and keep the cells in the battery balanced, thereby performing the job of an equalising charge in lead-acid batteries.

Some drop-in replacement Li-ions have built-in BMS, whereas the types that are made from bolt-together individual cells have to have one added—at extra cost. But this is a one-off and transferable although by the time the Li-ions die, there will doubtless be a new technology available, so it is probably best to include



fact that the technology that allows this 'maintenance-free' status actually decreases the life of the battery in a couple ways: first it promotes grid corrosion; and secondly any overcharging, rather than being rectifiable by topping up, now becomes a fatal event.

There may be irony in that the most cost-effective and long-life lead-acid battery cells are the thick-plate, pure lead cells used in things like forklifts, that differ very little from the original cell invented by Gaston Planté.

When considering Li-ion, you may also want to factor in the cost of increasing the alternator output. While all this is going on, there are developments in lead-acid technology, and of particular interest might be the carbon foam technology that is now available. This aims to remove the annoyances of lead-acid, such as sulphation and positive grid corrosion, which between them account for pretty much all lead-acid battery deaths. It would mean a reduction in replacement batteries as carbon foam batteries will potentially last several times longer than conventional lead-acid ones, at about twice the cost.

All too often backward steps are defined as progress, as they enable humans to be a bit lazier and spend a bit more money on something that is technologically worse than the original.

An example of this might be 'maintenance-free' leisure batteries. People don't like topping them up, as they are lazy, so a battery is invented that doesn't need topping up. Then people design spaces for them that don't allow topping up, so conventional batteries are no longer an option. Little thought is given to the

Some people may also have seen how the NiFe cell has also been reinvented, as it was actually a very good technology and was only killed off for financial reasons by a lead-acid manufacturer.

I hope that Li-ion cells are real progress for the right reasons. I feel that they are, and they are necessary to move us away from fossil fuels. They will do this by enabling us to store power made from renewable resources for later use. There are several other competing technologies that may end up cohabiting with Li-ion, but I think there is a good chance that Li-ion, in one form or another, will be the portable battery of choice, with possibly liquid flow batteries for larger grid support installations.

To sum up: Li-ion is certainly looking to be the way forward. It is already so for some people, especially those who rely on engine charging for their power. The scales are tipping in favour of Li-ion, and as electric vehicle development and sales progress and the cost of Li-ion reduces, I expect there will be further developments to increase its attractiveness.

The picture shows the new Mastervolt MLI-E 12/1200.

Priced around £1800, it's 90Ah but very very smart, with it's own BMS and the ability to talk to both Masterbus and NMEA 2000 control systems, unlike Trojan T-105s which just look at you dumbly—although they cost £140, around 8% of the cost of the Mastervolt

Mastervolt claim a life of 5,000 cycles at 80% DOD which compares with 1400 cycles for a Trojan T-105 at 60% DOD.

The users manual can be found here; amritwatersport.nl/image/catalog/mastervolt/accu/mv-10000013074_01MLI-EManualEnglish.pdf



Rewind

Issue No 1, 2003

It's back! Howard Anguish scours the past issues of NABO News in search of juicy little tidbits.

First, may I thank Tony Haynes for his hard work over the years—especially with the crossword, and more particularly with his perusal of past editions of NABO News, otherwise known as 'Rewind'. I have been asked if I would continue this, so here is my first attempt starting in 2003, and I hope I can maintain Tony's high standard!

Sue Burchett, in her Chairman's comments said: "A much heard comment from boaters is that boating is no longer fun, there are too many regulations." [I am sure this will resonate with many boaters in 2018!]

Mooring Prices. Referring to the latest announcement about mooring price increases, there were complaints about lack of consultation—especially at a local level.

Independent Waterways Regulator. Because of the limitations in the terms of reference for the Waterways Ombudsman, there are calls for a totally Independent Waterways Regulator. Council has issued a Press statement which, in part, said: ".....The Council of NABO has voted unanimously to press even harder for a truly independent regulator for the waterways. Support is growing both inside and outside the Palace of Westminster for someone to arbitrate when a dispute cannot be resolved between a customer or 'User Group' and one of the inland navigation authorities, a function that NABO believes should not be administered or financed by any party over which the Regulator may have to pass judgment."

EA Registration/Mooring charges. There was praise for the EA which had been able to keep its proposed increases down to 2.5%, in comparison to higher increases promised by BW.

Overstaying on public moorings. Council member, Adrian Stott, suggested ideas for tackling overstaying on public moorings. He proposed



that each 'place' be given a name, with towpath boundary markers to define the change from one place to another. A boat would be allowed to moor within a place in any 42 days, which would cut out so-called 'bridge hopping'.

Freight by Water. Chairman of the CBOA, David Lowe, sets out in detail the commercial potential of the existing waterway infrastructure and the extent of existing freight-carrying projects. He outlines the case for increasing the properly managed use of our waterways to carry cargoes and suggests this would be met with enthusiasm by many waterway users.

RNLI on the Thames. It has been a busy year for the Institution during its first year of operation. The Institution's four fully-manned stations on the river have taken part in over 800 call-outs during the year—nearly four times the prediction.

Can BW Stop Bikers? A letter from D.S. Cragg asks whether BW may not make further effort to curtail the use of towpaths by motorbikes after a local magistrate ruled that the offence was so minor that he let the rider off.

Joke time: When is a visitor mooring not a visitor mooring? When there is an angler on it!—So no change there then.

NABO News back issues are available online at: nabo.org.uk/index.php/reference/nabo-news-back-issues

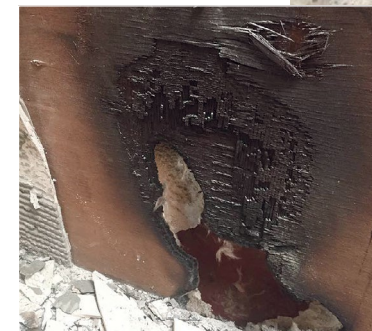
Safety first (second and third)

I've just uninstalled this stove. The customer says they have been having nausea, dizziness and sickness in the morning - all symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. This is the most dangerous one I've seen this year. The boat has a boat safety certificate and has recently had a survey as it's under new ownership.

The survey flagged the flue as 'worth checking' and as you can see, there was no connection to the roof collar, meaning it was a live exhaust venting straight into the boat. The stove itself had soot backing up into the pipe and was causing very poor draw. The final serious issue is that the tiles were directly onto a thin concrete sheet, which was directly onto wood; how this amount of pyrolysis didn't start a fire in a cavity I am going to put down to extreme luck.

The stove is being replaced as it has serious structural issues in that the recess for the spigot to sit in on the top plate has completely failed. Today we removed all the combustibles and built a fire box. A new flue is being fabricated and the new stove is ready to drop in. It only takes minutes for you to lower your registry plate and check your flue at the roof end. Hot meeting cold causes them to rot there. You can slow this down by packing the void with rockwool.

Please people, check your tiling by looking at its cross section to see if you have an air gap and correct retardants and take five minutes to see what is happening at the top of your flue. This is one of my most common repairs. Stay warm and stay safe. You can check these things yourself. This stove really could have killed its owner or burnt the boat down.



Stove Right - Narrowboat & marine stove servicing & installation service

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Letters to the Editor

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

London pollution

If the Mayor of London is so keen to clean up pollution from moored narrowboats, he should set a national example by sponsoring the installation of electric bollards at all London moorings. Then it would be perfectly reasonable to ban engine running (while moored) for the purpose of battery charging. We should also be insisting on provision of electric bollards as a planning condition in those mooring places (such as Marple Wharf and Marsworth) where the occupants of newly developed houses are likely to subsequently complain about engine running. I would like to think that most boats have better ways to make hot water. So all they would need is a battery charger, until they get round to wiring the boat for mains lighting and power outlets. There is no easy answer to heating a boat without using diesel or solid fuel but, as far as I know, diesel heaters do not produce NOx or particulates and generally make less noise than a diesel engine.

Derek Wright

Tower Hamlets Better Boating Guide—encouraging environmental awareness in the London boating community

I have just sent this response to CRT, who are supporting this council initiative after these leaflets have been circulated in London, issued by Tower Hamlets Council. Incensed is not the word: Is this a joke? Seriously this has to be a joke!

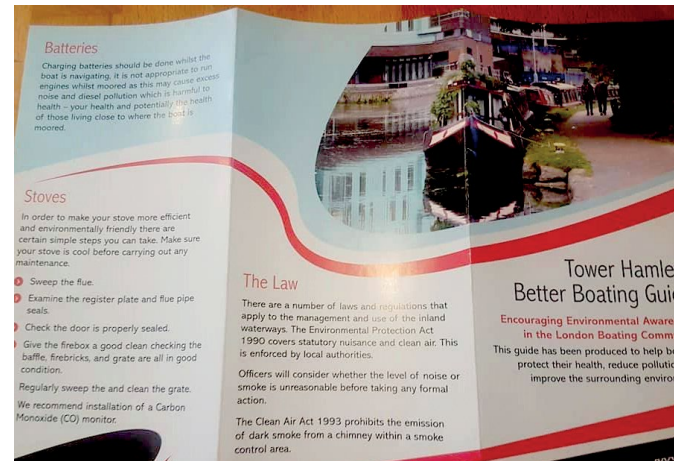
London has a population of millions. It has millions of individual journeys in vehicles that pollute. Everyday, by air, road and rail. Then because energy is expensive, people in houses have wood burners fitted to reduce their bills. Even if you cleanse the London waterways of all boats and replace them with electric 'Go Boats', it will make bugger all difference to air pollution.

And I have never laughed so much at that leaflet: solar power—yes it's great free energy and it charges your batteries. It's bloody genius. Just

one small thing I feel I really need to point out, since this was obviously written by someone who doesn't live on a boat and has never boated in urban areas.

Let me explain: you see CRT and BW before it, sold off land adjacent to the canals to property developers and they built these amazing multi-storey housing complexes that rich people bought to let—only they don't let them because it's actually a tax scam, but I digress. In order to charge batteries you need a good 8 hours worth of sun to get them anywhere near charged. A finite roof space means the solar panel is a supplement to your power generation, not a replacement. Then add in the shade from these wondrous multi-storey tax avoidance structures all along the canal in urban areas and your solar panels on the roof of your boat do not provide you with sufficient amps to charge your batteries. Hence the need for running your engine. If you don't fully charge batteries, they die and you have to buy more.

Boaters are obsessed with reducing power consumption, finding efficient ways to do things. When I run my engine, I'm charging my batteries and heating my water. My solar maintains my batteries during the day and runs my fridge and circulation pump for my back boiler to heat the boat during winter. Even with my meagre existence, it's not enough, so I have to run my engine. I would wager a very large sum that liveboard boaters are extremely efficient in energy conservation and generation, especially compared to households or councils or businesses. We know exactly how much diesel, coal, wood and water we consume—we all have the equivalent of smart meters—as we need to plan and source fuels. If you ask any liveboard, they can tell you how many litres of fuel they use month on month, how many bags of coal, how long their water will last, how often they need to empty the toilet and how long to charge their batteries. We are constantly looking for better ways and sharing information on how to reduce our consumption. How many



households, businesses and councils can say the same? Do I need to put in an FOI to get the figures from CRT? How many of CRT's vehicles are electric? Are there plans to change them to electric? What about all the petrol power tools that CRT has to use on the cut? When you are replacing lock gates, what powers your generators? Sustainable electricity to power your offices? Have you got solar panels on your roof or wind turbines? I would wager that if CRT switched its fleet of workboats and road vehicles to electric, used solar and wind power to power its site machinery and sourced the power for its buildings from sustainable power generation, the reduction in pollution would far outstrip the amount of pollution from all the boats in London.

So we have millions of road journeys, a hundred thousand houses burning wood, a plane taking off and landing every four minutes at London's airports and millions of lorry journeys delivering goods throughout London. Not to mention the large ships/ferries going up and down the Thames. And who do we target? I know, those pesky liveboards who are living the dream. May I suggest that CRT, councils and the Government use Pareto Analysis* to solve this issue and let the rest of us get on with our sustainable low-impact boating lives. The only conclusion I can draw from this is that it is now turning into a sustained attack on liveboards, in particular liveboards in London. Nothing to do with air pollution. This is about persecution of people who don't want to live in houses, who want something different.

This is about posh people's views out of their expensive homes. This is nimbysism at it worst. And shame on CRT for being complicit in this.

Alison Tuck, one hacked-off liveboard boater.

**The Pareto Principle, also known as the 80/20 rule, is the idea that by doing 20% of the work you can generate 80% of the benefit of doing the entire job.*

Towpath hunters

Peace and quiet and a beautiful view; isn't that what we all seek on the cut? And the last thing one wants is 30

horsemen and a pack of hounds careering down the towpath. For a start, I believe that riding a horse on the towpath is against the law—perhaps NABO's legal advisors can advise? Then there's the damage to the ground, already soft and muddy, which now resembles a ploughed field. And my beloved pet cat: terrified, but thankfully inside the boat at the time or the hounds would have killed her.

Worse was to come: the hunt returned, the dogs all over the place; the huntsmen making no attempt to control them. They were on both banks, in the water, on the bow and stern of my boat and one tried to get on the roof. I take pride in my boat and I will not have huge muddy hounds all over it, so I literally kicked them off. The huntsman's response: "If you kick that dog, I will kick you!"

Of course, I reported this appalling incident to both the police and CRT, neither of which did anything about it. So now it's up to NABO: the Cheshire Hunt may be rich and powerful, but they may find out that NABO is powerful too.

Don May, Nb. Wine & Roses

The incident took place on December 19th from 2—3 pm on the Weaver Aqueduct on the Middlewich Branch of the Shroppie between bridges 8 & 11. Crime No 502 and reported to Steve Maguire at CRT. The Cheshire Hunt plans to meet on Saturday 10th February at the Aqueduct Marina, Church Minshull (www.cheshiredragandbloodhounds.co.uk)

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