



NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners
Issue 3 May 2018



REBRANDING CRT
NABO PRIVACY POLICY
INFRASTRUCTURE
MATTERS



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NABO News

The magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners

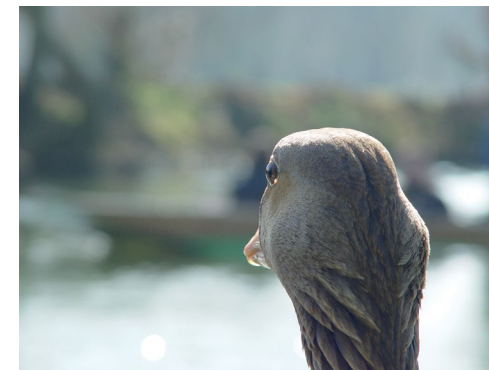
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Articles, letters, cartoons and photos are most welcome. Images in JPEG format please. Please email or post your contributions by **June 16th 2018**. Our email address is nabonews@nabo.org.uk



Cover photo

This month's cover photo is by David Bell www.freeimages.com, "View from a Goose". 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.

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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



Where to start when looking at recent CRT actions? First, the design of the new logo was leaked ahead of its planned launch on 22nd May, and met with almost universal criticism by boaters, as reported in this issue. Followed a few days later by the release of CRT's new name—'A Trust for the Waterways and Wellbeing'—producing a range of responses, from sadness, derision and anger to complete incomprehension. I think most boaters recognise that CRT has a potential problem, with two-thirds of the general public not knowing who or what the Trust

I don't believe it!

Editor **Peter Fellows** channels Victor Meldrew with some thoughts on the 'Trust for the Waterways and Wellbeing'

is. It is worried that there may be a threat to further Government funding if it can't demonstrate benefits of the waterways that are wider than simply allowing us to cruise them. (The annual Defra grant has an extra £10m if CRT can meet certain targets, but this decreases year by year after 2022 and the grant ends in 2027 with no guarantee of further Government funding). Added to which, the planned income streams from Waterway Partnerships have not materialised and the recruitment of paying 'Friends' is well below target. So, the management reorganisation that has been underway since the end of last year is probably inevitable and, if done properly, may result in reduced costs and increased revenue. But attracting more (non-paying) walkers, cyclists and gongoozlers to the towpaths for their improved wellbeing will do nothing for CRT's bottom line—so the rebranding is, cynics might say, simply a PR exercise

to convince Ministers to renew grant funding.

There is a significant risk in all of this, which rightly concerns many boaters; CRT, or TWW as we will have to start calling it, is the largest navigation authority in the country and its responsibilities for maintaining and preserving the waterways and their adjacent buildings and other infrastructure are written into the charity's objects. For many years now, I have documented in NABO News the lack of maintenance, from vegetation management to dredging and unplanned closures due to lock failures and other avoidable stoppages—another round-up of recent ones is in this issue. I have also reported on proposed sales of historic buildings and wharves, where CRT Estates seems to put short-term revenue generation ahead of protecting the waterway's heritage—indeed another planned sale is reported in this issue, this time of Claverton pumphouse-keeper's cottage.

The move from centralised control to give more autonomy to waterway regions is welcome—and may avoid future cock-ups like the repairs at Minworth. It is reported that many waterways staff have not reapplied for their jobs in the current reorganisation. Inevitably, their expertise and experience will be lost (unless they join the growing army of outsourced contractors). The concern is that recruitment of the new Regional Waterways Directors and other regional staff from non-waterway organisations, with little experience of managing waterways, who will also be required to promote the 'wellbeing' agenda, will lead to waterway heritage, maintenance and even, dare I say it, waterway improvement slipping further down their list of priorities.

Only time will tell, but at present it looks like NABO's workload to defend our waterways is set to increase over the next few years.

What bizarre weather we have had over the last two months: March was snow, rain and ice; April started with a summer blast and descended back into winter—it's the time of year when you really don't know what to wear to cruise in. As I sit typing this, having relit the stove due to a temperature of 7°C, I am watching the birds and squirrels through the window as they feed on the birdseed and fat-balls we have placed in feeders in the hedgerow. The hedges are rapidly being covered by foliage, although we have had to move the fat-ball feeder as the squirrels have knocked it to the ground twice in two days and taken the six fat-balls in it. The ducks have started to pair off and I saw a nesting goose down by the river the other day. Cattle are being let out to pasture and ewes are in lamb—boating is especially magical at this time of year, particularly if we can get a nice day.

I have been to two national meetings, the CRT Council in March and the National User Group, both reported in this issue; both had an early start, although I was home earlier from Birmingham than from York. It is interesting to see how the Trust positions the presentations with the different stakeholders. The Council is really all about fundraising and building profiles in the local authority areas, whereas the User Group is about who uses the canals and how the Trust can best serve them. The presentations are therefore slanted accordingly.

Due to the management reorganisation, we are going to arrange a meeting with the new Head of Boating once the person is confirmed in post. The other major change has been the new logo. Although the Trust will not officially launch it until May, a logo has been lodged with the Intellectual Property Office (in black

and white). We were told it is to be blue and green, but there has been much derision on social media, and I have to say that, from a PR point of view, the Trust has not endeared itself to the one group that should be its advocates. It is such that, by the time it is officially announced, a lot of boaters will not be engaged and, if they are not, the Trust faces an



Boaters 'animate the canals'

Stella Ridgway enjoys the spring and some CRT meetings

uphill struggle to get boaters onside. This is after the excellent response to the recent breach near Middlewich, which has brought boaters, the local community and the Trust together. So, instead of building on that, the Trust has shot itself in the foot regarding public relations.

What the logo will do, along with the new tag-line 'Trust for the Waterways and Wellbeing', is anyone's guess. It will be interesting to see what will happen after 4th June, when the new regions are finalised and positions announced. There will be a lot of new names as, having placed all the senior management positions at risk in December, many chose voluntary redundancy and will possibly go to join contractors who work with the Trust. (If you were a senior manager and were told you need to reapply for your job and take a new contract or take redundancy on the terms with which you transferred over from the public sector, you would probably take the money and run.) Of course, from the Trust's point of view, it wishes to get rid of the permafrost of managers who always seem to remain in any

takeover/change of any organisation and who don't buy into the new model; so this enables the organisation to quietly reform.

Quite where that leaves the boating community is also anyone's guess, as CRT's forums are less about asking for advice and using boaters' knowledge and more about talking at us. Perhaps things will improve in the future and the new Waterway Advisory Groups will be more effective than the Partnerships.

But until the Trust is willing to listen to boaters and really use the knowledge that is readily and freely available we are destined to just be a tick in a box regarding 'consultation'. The private and business boating reps on CRT Council have said this at every meeting we attend. It's been two years now, and we are still telling them and they are still not listening. Although the boating team has been quite good about taking points on-board, it's the rest of the Trust who seem to see boaters as 'animation for the canals' and not much else.

Finally, if you are a boater without a home mooring and you wish to apply for a reasonable adjustment regarding your cruising pattern, you are likely to have been sent a 'Capability to Cruise' questionnaire. On behalf of NABO, I have been assisting the Trust in refining this after

the trial period (which the first draft didn't mention at all). It asks lots of questions, which, to be honest, I struggled to see the relevance of in relation to cruising, but the Trust tells me they are there to fulfil obligations under the Equality Act 2010. I have asked that the Trust publishes full guidance notes and that these are made available to Citizen's Advice. I also made the point that this will be used by boaters seeking adjustments to cruising patterns due to a characteristic covered by the Equality Act, and they are not claimants (the form is based on a 'Capability to Work' form). If you have been sent one of these forms and need help to complete it, please get in touch and let me know of any comments you may have.

I do hope you all enjoy your boating over the summer (?) months—hopefully, the Cheshire Ring will be back in action soon. As the Environment Agency has now said that I can put the grey water from dialysis into the canal, the machine on our boat takes a step closer—just a generator to source and cupboards to remove to fit it in—and the chance to cruise again moves closer. Enjoy your boating and do contact us with any suggestions you may have.

Nesting Birds: Seasonal Advice

As we enter the nesting season, remember that it is a criminal offence to disturb nesting birds and if a bird nests on your boat you won't be allowed to move either the nest or the boat. To reduce this risk, avoid the use of tyre fenders which coots like to nest in and cover over grow boxes that are not in use; ducks love them. If you find the beginnings of a nest, you must not interfere with it. Contact the local enforcement officer—email enquiries@canalrivertrust.org.uk for their contact details. You'll need to send them a photo of the nest and they'll probably want to take a look before authorising an overstay.



Photo: Anna Hughes annacycles.co.uk

Fly on the wall

Observes proceedings at the April Council meeting

The second teleconference of the year started with a discussion of licensing. Although the licensing review was supposed to be revenue neutral, in fact the increases will generate an estimated extra £500,000 over three years. Although NAG (Licensing & Mooring) and the vast majority of those consulted during the review had recommended that congestion charging should be nothing to do with licence costs, the review of 'benefits' of mooring in popular areas appears to be still on the agenda. However, this NAG will be killed off in May, so there will be no further discussion on licensing. NABO considers it unacceptable for CRT not to continue consultation—although mooring discussions will be transferred to NAG (Operations). But like the London consultation, which was due to be published months ago, nothing is being done, probably because of the ongoing internal management reorganisation.

As one Council member put it: "no-one is driving the show at the moment and everything is on hold as the managers are consumed with their own internal injuries." The omens are not good: a number of experienced senior staff have decided not to re-apply for their posts. Having to look for external applicants risks getting regional directors who have no expertise or experience of the waterways—at least they will not now be expected to manage the EA's waterways as well.

CRT continues to receive numerous complaints from boaters about widebeams on narrow canals. It is

likely to respond with advice to widebeam owners on which canals are suitable, but it was noted that it is not just the width of a canal that is important, but also its profile. To be suitable, two widebeams should be able to pass without running aground or ending up in the trees. Perhaps widebeams are a good thing because they stir up the mud and might encourage CRT to do more dredging and vegetation management.

Council welcomed the 'capability to cruise' guidance released by CRT, which can allow boaters to request an extended duration at a mooring. But they questioned the need for medical questions, particularly as CRT does not have medically qualified staff to assess the answers. They suggested issuing a disc that could be displayed explaining that an extended stay had been granted.

Finally, the stoppage at Minworth on the Birmingham & Fazeley canal. Contractors who worked on embankment repairs have been widely blamed on social media for leaving rubble in the canal, which reduced the water depth from three feet to two, causing numerous boats to run aground mid-channel. But it was CRT managers at fault, who thought money could be saved by not having the rubble removed. After the outcry, they are now re-employing the contractor to remove it but, because the canal was re-watered, the rubble is now classed as polluted and hazardous and will have to be disposed of safely—at a hugely increased cost. Byebye until the summer.



NABO calendar 2018
Council meetings will now be held on Sundays and the dates are amended as follows: June 10th, July 22nd (if required), September 2nd, October 14th, November 11th (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).

Around the regions with NABO's regional reps

North West and Borders David Fletcher



The North Wales and Borders Waterway Spring User Forum was held in April in Nantwich. The Middlewich breach was extensively explained: the cause is reported as over-topping, following misuse of the lock-gear. Paddles were left open, but then shut in Middlewich, the first lock of the branch. The second lock, Stanthorne Lock (one km. distant) was left open, causing the level to rise in the pound and finding a low point in the bank, causing the overflow and wash-out. The design of the repair is ongoing, but repairs will take all year and costs are estimated at £2m-3m. Contractors have installed a stone access road and they will install a temporary stone ramp to allow construction vehicles access to the canal bed. A topographic survey showed that 2,800m³ (> 200 lorry loads) of the embankment has been washed away and will need to be replaced. A major concern is uneven loading on the river aqueduct structure, which is currently at risk, due to the loss of ground, and an assessment is needed to confirm whether construction vehicles can safely cross it. Badgers are present on the offside bank and there may be a delay in starting, in case of disturbance. This requires installation of cameras to monitor any badger activity before applying for

a disturbance licence. A discrete repair is said to be possible, and it is not necessary to cut down the rest of the embankment, despite the fact that there is evidence of a lot of sand in the structure. Fundraising is underway, mainly in response to community activities in the town, which is very supportive. CRT is thinking about an open day in May. In the meantime, there is no access and sightseers are not welcome—the best views are on social media. It is too soon to know the impact of the cost on other major work.

Hurleston Lock 4 will be repaired in the coming winter. The towpath wall has moved again and it must be taken out and replaced. The stoppage has to fit in with many other stoppages on the Llangollen.

CRT confirmed that it has been in contact with the drag hunt to stop them using the Middlewich Branch towpath. The EA has removed the stop-planks on the Chester River Dee lock, and it is now hoped that a boater who wanted to access the river can make his planned trip this year.

CRT's reorganisation is not yet clear: North Wales and Borders will become part of the North West Region but will most likely lose the south Shropshire Union (as was long ago) and the south Llangollen and Monty to the West Midlands.

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Our Website and Security

David Fletcher explains how NABO meets the requirements of the new GDPR Regulations

Computer security is the process of preventing and detecting unauthorised use of your computer systems. It involves the process of safeguarding against intruders from using your computer resources for malicious intents or for their own gains (or even gaining access to them accidentally).

NABO operates a website so that we have a presence on the internet as a source of information, a communication tool and a means of recruiting membership, and as a central depository for the management of the Association. Computer Security applies to all of us too.

Most of the information we hold is common knowledge and open to non-members and therefore of low risk, but a few items are hidden behind a user name and password system that restricts access. The main features with restricted access, useful for individual members, are the ability to download the latest NABO News and to access personal membership data. Many members have access to this and use it from time to time.

NABO Council members have a higher level of access and this enables them to publish items on the web-pages and make other changes. Anyone accessing these accounts could make unauthorised changes to the site to our detriment, so it is important that these privileges are protected.

We hear from time to time about organisations, like phone companies and banks, that have been hacked, leading to a loss of data. This causes

great distress to customers and potentially exposes them to financial fraud. This is the last thing we want. Our approach is two-fold: first, to protect against attack and/or loss of data, and, secondly, to make sure that there is nothing 'critical' within the data that would cause embarrassment.

Our systems do not employ any money transfer systems. We have a PayPal account, but all money transfers are operated using PayPal's website. Our site provides an interface link and no confidential financial data passes through, or is held on, our site. We do not operate a direct debit system for several reasons, but one important one is that we do not want the responsibility of operating such a system.

Your personal membership data held in the database contains only the data that you see on the renewal form, sent to you every year. We do not hold any bank account numbers or dates of birth. We deleted dates of birth some time ago as we do not really need them. The data consists of names and addresses, emails, phone numbers, names of boat and the like. Other non-personal data relates to joining and renewal dates, methods and amounts of payments, records of contacts with members and suchlike that enable us to run the organisation and prepare letters that are tailored to individual needs. It is not our intention to hold data that would cause any embarrassment to the membership.

Web security is an important part of providing this service and we work on that all the time. Two of the

most important protections are to use a reputable service provider who is monitoring systems, and then to use the latest software available to us.

The software system provides continual improvement and best practice advice, and we follow that too. We also monitor what is going on all the time. We aim to provide a level of security that is proportionate, bearing in mind we are not GCHQ with state secrets at risk. The most likely risk for us is malicious cyber attack and if this occurs we would simply take down the site and rebuild using our back-up systems. With all these considerations in

place we are confident of maintaining our presence on the internet.

One vulnerability where we can all help is not to use simple passwords that computers can 'guess' very quickly by going through a whole dictionary. This means using enough letters, capital letters, symbols and numbers to make sure that the combination is not in a dictionary and not guessable. If you have trouble signing in, you may need to reset your password to comply with the new rules.

If you have any difficulty please get in touch. If you are worried about data loss or any other issues, please write and tell us.

NABO Privacy Policy

The National Association of Boat Owners (NABO) is a common interest association established in the United Kingdom. The objects of the Association are as follows:

- a to provide effective representation for owners of vessels on Britain's inland waterways on any subject or matter which is relevant to the owners of such vessels;
- b to organise events, demonstrations, rallies or other activities which, in the opinion of the Council, will further the object in clause (a) above, but not to organise or actively engage in any event which would in the opinion of the Council bring the Association into disrepute.

Our address is:

NABO, PO Box 104, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 9AN.

Security of your Personal Information

This policy applies to all website and email services provided by NABO. NABO is committed to protecting the security of personal information. We use a variety of security technologies and procedures to help protect your personal information from unauthorised access, use, or

disclosure.

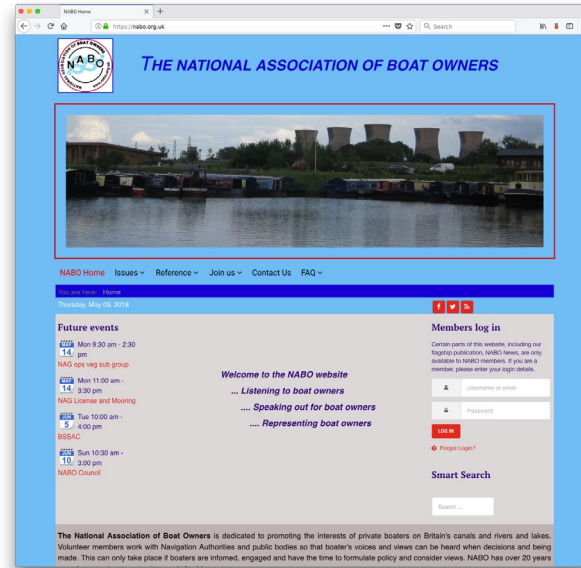
General use of the Website and use of Cookies

When you visit the NABO website, a cookie is often placed on your computer (if it is set up to accept cookies) or an existing cookie is read if you have visited the site previously. By using this website, you consent to the general terms and conditions of usage and to the terms of this privacy policy. For members who have arranged access rights, this may be used at member's discretion to remember your login details, to make it easier for you.

Use of Member's Personal Information.

We obtain and use a member's personal information from the original application to join or from amendments made by the member directly or as instructed in the member's correspondence. We hold this for the following purposes:

- to deliver membership benefits;
- to deliver paper and electronic services, such as newsletters or downloads that you request;
- to help us create and publish content most relevant to you;



- to alert you to amendments, corrections, special offers, updated information and other new services from NABO, if you so request; and,
- to allow you access to limited-entry areas of our site as appropriate.

Membership data is held in the web-based database and this contains only the data that you see on the initial application form and on the renewal form sent to you every year. We do not hold any bank account numbers or dates of birth. The data consists of names and addresses, emails, phone numbers, names of boats, mooring locations and the like. Other non-personal data is joining and renewal dates, methods of payment and amounts paid, records of contacts with members and suchlike that enable us to run the Association and deliver communications that are tailored to individual needs. It is not our intention to hold confidential data that would cause any embarrassment to the membership. NABO does not hold more information than is needed for the purposes stated.

Access to Data

Council officers and administration staff have access to the data in order to carry out their assigned duties. Non-members cannot access any

of the above information. On 'log in', members can see and edit or delete their own data, and agree with the terms and conditions and these policies, but cannot see other information. Names and contact details of Council officers are published on the website and in the magazine, NABO News, in order that they may be contacted for the purpose of carrying out the Association's work.

Sharing Your Personal Information

As a matter of principle we do not sell the information we retain about members to any third parties. We do share limited information in the following limited and specific circumstances:

- We use agents to perform certain operational functions such as magazine and bulletin distribution and the use of PayPal processing for membership subscriptions. We pass on to these partners only the information they need about members or prospective members to perform the service required, and they are not allowed to use this information for any other purpose. Our internet service provider may be authorised from time to time to access the web-based structure of the programme for the purpose of maintaining the functionality of the system.
- We may disclose members' personal information if required to do so by law or in the good-faith belief that such action is necessary to: (a) conform to the edicts of the law or comply with legal process served on NABO or the site; (b) protect and defend the rights or property of NABO; or (c) act in urgent circumstances to protect the personal safety of NABO employees, officers and members, or members of the public.

Collection of your Personal Information

We will ask members when we need personal information that allows us to contact them. Generally, we request this information when you are registering as a member but we may also request it before downloading or viewing limited-access content or ordering email bulletins. In each circumstance, we try to limit the information we request to the minimum required to

deliver the service to you. We may also use various standard technologies such as cookies to track user activity on our site.

Control of your Personal Information

When you register as a member, or otherwise give us personal information, NABO will not share your information with third parties without your permission, other than for the limited exceptions already listed. It will only be used for the purposes stated above. At the time of registering for membership, and at any time thereafter, members have the option to opt out of receiving phone calls or email from NABO by not providing that contact information. If members provide contact details, NABO will assume that they are there to be used. If you do not opt out, we may send you what we, in good faith, believe to be useful and relevant content about our services. You can view the information that we retain about you by logging in to your account. At any time, you can change your preferences for how or whether we contact you, or change the information that we hold. For members who do not have a web access account and password set up, options can be changed by written correspondence and email. Phone calls are not acceptable. It is each member's responsibility to ensure that the personal information held by us is accurate.

Retention of Data

Members' information is retained on the web

database for at least one full tax year after resignation. If a member does not renew membership and fails to respond to correspondence, the data will be held until the situation is resolved. Long-term records in paper and electronic format, including web system backups, are held by Association officers, but these are not online. Members may delete online data at any time, either themselves or by written request to the Association. They may also request deletion of archive material, but NABO reserves the right to charge for this service.

Member's Agreement

Members are required to formally agree to our terms and conditions and, separately, to this privacy policy. NABO has to retain the method and date of this agreement. Members can record their agreement by:

- website 'Log in' and editing of their profile;
- sending their agreement by email (from the email address retained by the Association); or,
- written agreement.

Members may elect not to receive emails or phone calls by deleting or requesting deletion of contact details. NABO recommends that members have at least two independent methods of contact. It is very problematic and costly for the Association to attempt contact with members who do not advise it of changes to their contact details.

NABO Council, April 2018



Photo: CRT

Licensing Update

Revenue neutral or an under the table increase for the Trust?

Mark Tizard takes the pulse

As readers may recall, the primary aim of the long-winded, three-stage licensing consultation was that the licensing process should be simplified and that the outcome should be revenue-neutral. NABO concluded that the consultation achieved neither of these aims. There has been much discussion on social media, and recently NABO was sent a Freedom of Information response in which CRT itself clearly states that, rather than being revenue-neutral, the licence changes were expected to yield a net £500,000 at the end of the implementation period!

When CRT was approached with these figures, to challenge the revenue-neutral claim, the response was that these figures were wrong, that the number of widebeams was likely to be in excess of these figures, and that the outcome was revenue-neutral.

On being shown that in fact these were CRT's own figures, further investigation was promised. The response was: "Ah yes, only year one is revenue neutral"; the additional £500k will come from the second and third years of the three-year implementation period. Interestingly, widebeams now make up 17% of the total licensed boats on CRT's waters.

As it is highly likely that CRT will be applying an annual licence increase to years two and three of the implementation period, the increase in revenue is likely to be substantial. NABO is fully aware that CRT needs to increase its revenue and is generally supportive of this. But rather

CRT response to the Freedom of Information Act request

"Dear Mr B _____,

Thank you for contacting the Canal & River Trust with your request for information. You requested the following information: How many widebeam craft are affected by these increases to their licence fees? (Reply: 5857). How much extra revenue will the Canal & River Trust generate from these increased licence fees? (Reply: The Trust estimates that the proposed changes would increase Boat Licence Fee Revenue by £500,000 by 2023. This assumes no change to the number of boats or the pattern of licensing from the current position. This calculation also assumes that the number of customers paying online and receiving the PPD discount remains consistent.)"

than be economical with the truth and insult boaters' intelligence, why not come out and be open and honest? The recent boat count showed that, of 34,453 boats counted, only 3.1% were unlicensed. This is a further welcome reduction.

NAG (L&M) to be Wound Up

Since its formation, the Navigation Advisory Group for Licensing and Mooring has assisted CRT in the development of the Trust's thinking on a wide range of issues, including the review of licensing, development of the London Mooring Strategy, winter moorings and how CRT can address unauthorised renting of boats.

CRT believes that, as a number of these areas of work and the three-year term of appointment for most members are reaching a conclusion, it is the 'right time' to bring the NAG (L&M) to a close.

Ongoing policy work around moorings will transfer to NAG (Operations) but there will be no further NAG oversight or advice on licensing.

CRT Council Meeting

Stella Ridgway recounts her second Council meeting, held in York.

The following are my recollections from notes at the March meeting and they are not designed to be an exact record and are not minutes (I have used some notes from Andy Tidy—mostly the finances as he explains it better than I could).

We were invited to York this year. Owing to dialysis constraints, I opted for a long day, getting up at 4.45am, catching the 6am train and arriving at York at 8.15am, where we were met by two young ladies from the Leeds Office with a sign and everything. Once everyone who was coming by train had arrived, it was a short bus ride taking us the six miles to Naburn Locks. This is a fascinating place: Kenny, the lock-keeper has been there over 30 years and his cottage is flooded on average five times a year, but he remains remarkably sanguine about this. It is a beautiful place and, although the Trust operates the River Ouse navigation, the only land that the Trust owns is the island, stables and lockkeeper's cottage. There is a caravan park next door (a good catchment area) and the river cruises start and return here, taking passengers into York. The challenge now for the Trust is to make the island at Naburn Locks a tourist destination and teaching place. To this end, it is redeveloping the old wharf offices and making them flood-resistant by stripping plaster off walls and putting drain holes in the floors. It was a lovely sunny morning and the river had subsided enough for our cruise to take place. It is the only real chance to meet other Council members and

Trustees, so much 'networking'. We arrived at the pier and there was a short walk to the Yorkshire Museum through the gardens. The Council meeting ran from 11.30 am to 4.30 pm, with a short break for lunch. There is always a dinner in the evenings for the Trustees and local business people and councillors; a chance to drum up funding opportunities for both the local waterway area and the Trust nationally. The day was a series of presentations by senior managers on what the Trust has been doing. There are only two meetings per year; the other is in September with the morning being a public meeting, so this is the longest Council meeting. I could not get to Bath last year as I had dialysis that day; so this was the first Council meeting I have been to since the first meeting in Liverpool two years ago.

Allan Leighton opened the meeting and then Richard Parry reported the following:

- Towpath satisfaction is at 91%, although awareness that the Trust maintains the towpath is only at 36% (a lot of people believe towpaths are operated and maintained by local government); the target is 40%. There are 23,500 Friends of the Trust.
- The Trust had a turnover of £200m and a small surplus of £800k. Income included a £2.7m grant from the Postcode Lottery (most of which has been spent on the Marple flight and aqueduct). Income was higher than budgeted.
- A recent High Court judgment in the Trust's favour in the case of



Passenger boat on the River Ouse into York, passing the Bishop's Palace. Photo: Stella Ridgway

- Thames Water v CRT may mean additional income in the future.
- There were 240 winter stoppages and 180 lock gates replaced.
- Eight open days attracted 15,000 visitors.
- Safeguarding procedures and processes are in place for visitors, volunteers and staff.
- There will be a new regional structure, with the Regional Directors in place in April and others in place by June. 18 of the 60 posts (reduced from 78) still have to be filled, and only 27 of these new managerial posts are senior.
- No gender pay gap exists within the Trust. Male gender pay is -3.6% and the median pay gap is 13.8%
- Julie Sharman, the new Chief Operating Officer, reported on the following:
 - A tanker full of oil was illegally dumped in Pym's Brook, which drains into the River Lea Navigation. This resulted in a five-week stoppage and there is an ongoing police and EA investigation.
 - As a result of the recent drowning in Manchester, a temporary barrier was erected to prevent people crossing the lock gates rather than using the bridge 30 feet away.
 - The Middlewich breach, although not as big as Dutton in 2012, has challenges regarding access. As

with all unplanned stoppages, this diverts contingencies and means planned works are put further back.

Business Plan 2018-19

Main points:

- CRT's focus is on 'Caring for the Waterways', 'Sustaining Waterways' and moving to become a 'Waterway and Wellbeing Trust' to extend CRT's aims to a wider audience.
- The quality of contractors is being closely scrutinised following well-known issues with Carillion.
- The EA transfer now appears unlikely.
- BWML is seen as a non-core operation and a buyer is being sought.
- £8.4m is to be spent on dredging, £20.6m on operational works (culverts, aqueducts etc.).

Appointments

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the Appointments Committee, reported: The Terms of Reference have been amended to reflect the new Regional Advisory Boards and recruitment of chairs is underway in the six regions, with the minimum and maximum number of seats on regional committees defined. Following the departure of some experienced trustees, replacements are being sought.

Review of the National Council

Group discussions concluded that the Trust should clarify the roles of appointed and elected Council members. A Council member's handbook would be of benefit, defining what a Council member does and, more importantly, doesn't do, how it is done and how best to maximise the influence membership offers. The Trust should look at a way of partial refreshment of members rather than

changing them en masse. Maybe the use of smaller sub-groups, such as the boaters' reps' meeting, would be beneficial.

Finance

Long-term debt (from Andy Tidy's notes, as his explanation is brilliant). Stuart Mills (Chief Investment Officer) and Sandra Kelly (Finance Director) reported to the meeting. At its inception it was agreed that the Trust should carry some debt, initially via a £25m revolving credit line, increased to £50m in 2016. This debt was consolidated in a private bond placement of £150m at the end of 2017. The debt is agreed over a 30-year term at less than 3%, offering stability. The money is invested in the Trust's investment portfolio, of which property is making 10.8% and non-property 9%. In effect, the Trust is borrowing cheaply, based on its asset base and inherent strength, investing the money in assets that are earning a return higher than the financing costs, and the difference (called 'arbitrage') is profit applied to the Trust's wider operations.

Andy comments: Don't be blinded by this high finance stuff. In simple terms, the Trust owns investment assets of £800m which is an endowment that provides income. They see an opportunity to make more money from this source and are borrowing some long-term money to buy more commercial property. It's a bit like a glorified 'buy to let', where you use the value of your home to support a cheap second mortgage to buy another property, which you then let out. The private placement was to a number of well-known North American and European institutions which, we were assured, do not carry reputational risks. I am comfortable with this overall arrangement, which appears prudent and well stress-tested. However, as with personal

Responses to the CRT rebranding

Under the strapline: 'We love and care for your canals and rivers, because everyone deserves a place to escape', CRT announced that it will launch a new, revitalised brand. It is concerned that most of the general public do not know about the Trust, which does not auger well for when it tries to convince the Government to extend its grant.

Hence the current management efforts to reposition CRT in the public mind with its 'wellbeing' agenda as its focus. It commissioned a new logo, which it hopes 'will appeal to those who don't currently know about us, whilst still connecting with our existing users and supporters.'

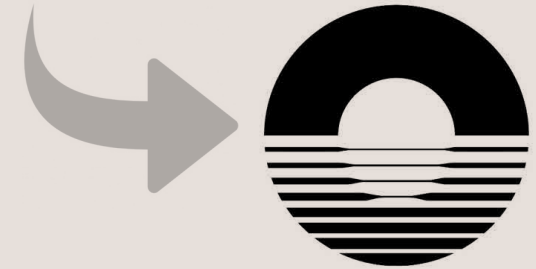
CRT has claimed that the total cost of the rebranding will be £60,000. The initial responses from boaters have been less optimistic, with comments on social media ranging from a predictable "waste of money" from many, to "rearranging the deckchairs" and "I think the new logo is quite fitting really, a semi-submerged car tyre floating in the water....."

Brian McGuigan, who operates coal-boat 'Alton', took a lorry tyre that he had dragged out of the Peak Forest Canal to a Manchester and Pennine User Group Meeting. He said: "We reckoned that CRT used the image of our tyre in the cut as the basis of their fabulous new expensive rebranding logo. At least it raised a few laughs from customers and CRT staff alike."

Within hours of its release, one wag had amended the logo to resemble Mickey Mouse and another commented: "CRT wanted to rebrand because they felt the general public didn't immediately recognise who they were and what they did, so they dumped the design that had a distinctive looking canal bridge with an obviously canal type bird, and replaced it with a dodgy generic sinking polo mint—seriously what am I missing?"



British Waterways



Mark Dutton's Mickey Mouse (above) and Brian McGuigan with their take on the new logo.



debt, a little is fine, but one can overdo things. The Trustees assured us that they have no current intention of any further placements beyond £150m and, in my view, any further increase in long-term debt should be discussed before it is entered into.

Licensing

Jon Horsfall (Interim Head of Boating) reported that 32,000 leisure licences and 1,000 business licences, covering 32,000 craft, generated £27m of income. He said that boaters should be major advocates for the Trust.

The rules covering licensing are within the 1995 BW Act and there has been a dramatic increase in the number of boats used as dwellings since the Act was passed, particularly in London and on the K&A. (My comment—the majority are boats without a home mooring, which is partly by choice, but also because of a general lack of permanent moorings in these areas). Jon mentioned the choice that people make to live in these areas, but the London Mooring Strategy is still to be issued. He said that the recent licensing review was about fairness, not income generation.

With this in mind, CRT has opted to give a 2.5% discount to all those paying by direct debit, whether annually or monthly. The consultation elicited 11,000 responses and an overriding desire was to see boat area included in the licence calculation. However, they decided against using boat area as there would have been those who ended up paying a higher licence fee. The review has so far generated 15–20 complaints. Some aspects, such as electric and historic boat discounts and areas of high demand, are subject to a further ongoing review to ensure that CRT delivers the desired outcomes.

Brand Update

Nicky Wakeford reported that CRT brand awareness has been growing and has risen from 30% in 2016 to 36% today (the target was 40% for this year). The cascade of engagement is: beneficiary (e.g. towpath user), to follower (social media), to Friend, and then to volunteer. The slower than expected growth in public awareness is a major issue, as it is inextricably linked with the bid for further Government grant funding when the existing package expires. Focus groups were convened to identify the key message needed. Wellbeing emerged as the key message that the Trust is not communicating—i.e. the benefits of being able to spend time beside the water, which has a proven link with people's emotional and physical wellbeing. The resulting strapline is 'making life better by water'.

This will be accompanied by a change in logo to a circle shape in blue and green, to give a better fit on the towpath and digitally. They wouldn't show us the new logo but it will be launched on 22nd May*, with all web-based screens changing that day and everything else replaced as they roll it out over two to three years. The cost is to be met from the existing marketing budget and we are assured that this exercise has not involved expensive consultancies; the main cost being a graphic designer for the new logo.

My comment: I've had more messages concerning this than anything else—particularly as the breach and lock closures have closed both the Cheshire and Four Counties Rings. So I asked on behalf of boaters: "Why now? Why not tell us the cost?" Nicky responded that there were no extra funds going towards it.

With the Government grant coming to the end of its term, the



Trust needs to raise its profile (it is the 18th largest trust but the Woodland Trust is better known). Without the Government grant, there would be a 25% income gap, which cannot be filled by the other existing income strands. In order to maintain the waterways into the future, both the online and towpath presence needs to be increased, so that the Government can see the benefits of supporting the waterways as a health benefit for the wider land-based communities. I understand the need for increasing awareness, but to announce this into a vacuum was not the smartest move in my humble opinion. All we have is that it is modern and it will influence people who are not influenced now.

* In fact the new logo was leaked a month earlier.

April is Stress Awareness Month, and here at the Trust we're big believers in the importance of finding ways to feel happier and healthier, every day. Our canals and rivers are the perfect place to unwind, to exercise or to grab five minutes of peace in your busy day.

Whether it's your lunchbreak or a weekend break, feel better for free by using the waterway that's right on your doorstep.

Claire, Canal & River Trust

What's local to you?

Being by water makes you feel good. Find somewhere beautiful where you can relax, think, picnic, walk, run, commute and more, all for free.

Five ways to feel better

GPs and health groups have identified five ways to wellbeing. Discover how our canals can help you achieve them this Spring.

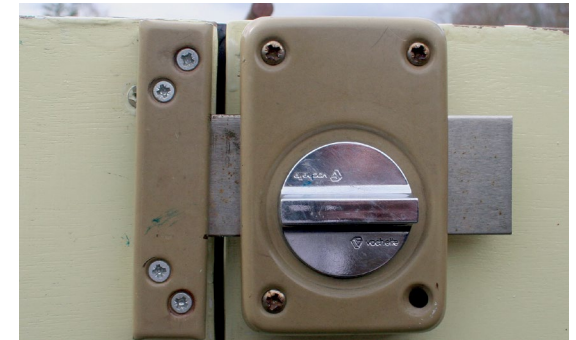
Door Security

Helen Hutt writes;

Further to the article on boat security (*Crime Prevention, NABO News, Issue 2, 2018*) the lock I have on my stern doors is made by a company named 'Vachette' in France, which now seems to be part of ASSA ABLOY. It locks with a key on the outside and operates with a knob on the inside, with two turns required.

The one I have just bought in France, the 'Pluton', cost €33; there are several different models, but this appeared to be the least expensive. They are readily available in DIY stores in France and, with a bit of searching, available in the UK.

Although their websites, www.vachette.fr and www.assaabloy.com, can be read in English I have found them difficult to navigate, but the Pluton can be found at webshop-vachette.fr, and search '16395000'.



National User Forum

Stella Ridgway reports from Birmingham on Wednesday 18th April

The forum had various presentations that repeated the ones at Council, albeit with a boating slant. These are my notes and recollections, which should not be viewed as exhaustive or as minutes; if I have omitted anything, this is unintentional. The Trust both reviewed the last year and looked forward to the coming year. These were all presentations with little opportunity for Q&As. As the meeting is only two hours long, they cram as much in as possible, leaving very little time for comment; but that seems to be how they wish to do things—tell us, rather than properly consult.

Julie Sharman, Chief Operating Officer, described a new structure for the regions, which takes effect from 4th June. She showed some slides, but, as I was at the back of the room, I couldn't see them (perhaps this is a good thing). Some regional directors are external appointments, so may not be in place in June, due to notice periods. Reservoirs are full, boding well for the coming boating 'season'.

Then onto rebranding and how the Trust needs to reposition itself and have a new image. This needs to be improved for future funding, as the Government grant of £53m ends in 2027; they start renegotiations in 2021 for the grant to continue. They see the canals as a 'National Health Waterway' and are to reposition the Trust as a 'Waterways and Wellbeing Charity'. First and foremost, the Trust is a navigation body and without a functioning navigation there can be no spin-off benefit for other users. Navigation therefore remains core to CRT and is reflected in the

ongoing spending plans.

Jon Horsfall, Interim Head of Boating, introduced the next section on boating and Matthew Symonds had a presentation taking us through the changes:

- The London Mooring Strategy has generally been positively received, with 75% viewing it positively. There are improvements to towpath moorings, increased management of short-stay moorings, improved services in outer London, creation of new offside long-term moorings, and improved boater services to be implemented in 2018/19.

- The annual Boater Survey conducted in March showed fewer boats in central London and evidence that boats are moving outwards. The increase in licensed boats in London has slowed, with only 150 new boats compared with 400 in previous years. Nationwide, there were an additional 400 boats listed without a home mooring and continuously cruising.

- Nationwide, licence evasion has fallen from 4% to 3.1%, although there was a slight increase in London to 5.1%.

- There is recognition that there are many more widebeams than previously; 18% over 7'1" wide and they are being taken onto canals that were not built for them, in terms of both canal width and profile. CRT's approach is by communication and guidance on which waterways are considered unsuitable for unrestricted widebeam movement. Individual issues will be addressed by com-



munications with the boaters concerned, with enforcement seen as a last resort.

- Implementation of the licence review begins in April 2019, phased in over five years. Width criteria will be phased in from April 2020. The wooden boat discount remains, but historic and electric boat discounts are still to be reviewed.
- There will be further work to look at options to address growth in the use of canals in London and other areas by boats without a home mooring. There is no difference in licences for boats with or without a home mooring.
- Business licence renewal is now available online, and further consultation is to be held in the future.
- Reasonable adjustment requests for reductions in cruising patterns are now being received at an average of 20-30 per month. There were over 700 in place last year. To ensure a standard approach nationwide, a 'Capability to Cruise' questionnaire has been trialled from Jan 2018 and NABO and other groups are helping to refine the questions to be asked. This is to ensure that the Trust fulfils its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Watersports/unpowered craft

guidelines have been produced.

- The online mooring strategy is being worked on and is expected by the summer.

Next was a presentation by Peter Walker (Technical Support), which was very outward looking, dealing with things like major infrastructure projects, acquisitions and hydrology. He is currently busy with HS2, which will reach Curzon St., Birmingham in 2026 and complete Phase 2a in 2027. Phase 2a construction will be active from 2020 to 2026 and has 50 points of impact on CRT, either at live waterways or potential restoration sites. They are asking boaters to be the eyes and ears for the Trust, to ensure that nothing unexpected is implemented in the construction phase or, if so, to report it to the helpline. The various phases will have a significant impact, but CRT is doing what it can to reduce these, such as using sound-deadening fences. The various phases will have a significant impact, but CRT is doing what it can to reduce these, such as sound deadening fences. He assured us that the various impacts will not result in multi-month route closures, with most being overnight or 24-hour stoppages.

Stuart Mills (Chief Investment Officer) was next, giving us a brief outline of what the Trust does to maximise revenue to use for

NABO at the User Groups

Julie Sharman, Chief Operating Officer; Jon Horsfall, Interim Head of Boating and Stuart Mills, Chief Investment Officer

Photos: CRT, The Floater

maintenance of the waterway infrastructure. In 2012, CRT inherited a £615m endowment of assets to provide income, and since then the aim has been to grow capital and enhance investment income, with the aim of generating an 8% return with modest amounts of income volatility.

The portfolio has changed over time to improve returns and simplify management. In 2011/12, investment income was £21.7m and this has risen to £30.4m in 2017/18, with assets growing in value to £850m. The investment portfolio has grown well and is delivering increasing amounts of income that are available to be spent on operational improvement projects.

The new Asset Improvement Director, Simon Bamford, delivered news about the Marple Flight reopening being put back until the end of May, owing to the state of the brickwork at the bottom of Lock 15, the one that collapsed. They were given Postcode Lottery money, which was used to do a 'Marple Makeover'—extra work on the flight in addition to lock gate replacement. Locks have been repointed, gates repaired and replaced, and a new surface and washwall created on Pound 12. In addition, new railings have been placed on the aqueduct at the bottom of the flight. £60m was spent last winter, plus £10-15m of third

party money, mainly on towpaths. In-house staff undertook 1,000 work packages spending £17m, including 257 emergency projects, and 180 gates were made or fitted. A further £30m was spent on contractors at 160 larger projects. £7.8m was spent on dredging at 38 sites, £1m spent grouting locks, £1.4m spent on off-side vegetation control, 40,000 dog and litter bins emptied, and 27,000 customer/boater service visits made.

The Middlewich breach was caused by overtopping, attributed to paddles being left open and not asset failure, with 3,000 cubic feet of material washed away. There is now a solution being worked on to build a road along the canal bed. The narrowing of Filance Lock on the Staffs and Worcester canal was addressed last winter. £500k will be spent to repair the bottom lock at Hurleston next winter. A priority list is being worked through to tackle the known pinch-point locks. The spend is split as follows: West 34%, Midlands 29%, North 20% and South 17%. As we had by then run out of time, there was no other business and Richard Parry wrapped up the meeting.

The walk back to New Street Station in brilliant sunshine made the train journey worthwhile and thankfully my train ran on time and I had a seat (after the train down was cancelled and I stood for most of the way there).

An artist's impression of School House Bridge restored and culverted as it appeared in 2055



Claverton Pumphouse Cottage

In 1813, Claverton Pumping Station began pumping 2 million gallons of water a day into the Kennet and Avon Canal from the River Avon, 48 feet (15 metres) below, using only power from the river itself. To pump enough water, it required a 19-foot (5.5 metre) diameter waterwheel, which is over 23 feet (seven metres) wide. After falling into disrepair in the 1950s, volunteers restored it to working condition in the 1970s and a team of volunteers still maintain the pump. Alongside the pumping station, a cottage was built for the engine-keeper and his family. From 1813 until 1953, each of the four engine-keepers lived there while they maintained the pumping station, and many would argue it is as important to the pumping station's heritage as the waterwheel itself.

However, CRT will not let the volunteers, who expertly restored the pumping station, now restore the semi-derelict cottage. Instead, the Trust plans to auction the property to raise money. Unlike the pumping station, the cottage is not listed and could easily be torn down by a new owner. There is demand for such houses so close to Bath, and the cottage will attract a good price, but CRT could raise a steady income in the long term from renting it out. If the cottage were made available to the pumping station volunteers, they would restore and maintain it. This is the only canal pump in the country where the living quarters still stand, and it forms a unique and important heritage site.

You can sign a petition to persuade CRT to make the right decision at you.38degrees.org.uk search 'Claverton Pumping Station' or visit www.claverton.org.



Montgomery Canal Appeal

John Dodwell asks can you donate to restore more of the Monty?

Restoring the Montgomery Canal has long had a special place in the hearts of waterway supporters. Many NABO members may have cruised the seven miles already open off the Llangollen. Closed illegally in 1936 when the railway owners refused to mend a small breach, it took the volunteers at the Welshpool 1969 Big Dig to stop it becoming the route for a road bypass. The canal is in a deeply rural and attractive area, so money is scarce. The canal has the advantages that it is in single ownership, so we don't have to buy land back; there's a water supply; almost all the locks have been restored; and 50% of the canal's 35 miles have already been re-opened.

A recent Heritage Lottery Fund grant has helped to kickstart restoration that will get to the winding hole at Crickheath Basin. Rather than wait until that's finished, an appeal fund has been launched to raise money for the next stages, such as rebuilding School House Bridge, the last lowered bridge in Shropshire. One photo shows the canal with a road causeway where the bridge was; the other photo is an impression of how the rebuilt bridge will look. We aim to use skilled volunteers as much as we can, but we still need to pay for materials and the hire of plant. About £300,000 is the estimate to rebuild the bridge and over half has already been raised. Can you help to raise the last of the money that is needed?

If so, please visit the website www.RestoreTheMontgomeryCanal.uk and click on 'donate', or send a cheque, made payable to 'Restore the Montgomery Canal', to Tixall Lodge, Tixall, Stafford ST18 0XS

Infrastructure Matters

A roundup of recent work following infrastructure failures and repairs.



Bumblebee Lock

Member Andy Williams took this photo of Lock 29 (Bumblebee Lock) on the Leicester Line, commenting: "Likely to be an unplanned stoppage this year to prevent a wall collapse. The front layer is hanging on by its teeth and next layer is also damaged. I'm amazed it has been allowed to get into such a state and stay like this without repairs"

He notified CRT and the Regional Engineer, Neil Owen, replied: "Thank you for your email regarding Lock 29, and raising the concern regarding the loose brickwork on the chamber walls. I have spoken to the local Asset Engineer and reviewed the last dewatered inspection, undertaken in 2003, and a photographic record of the lock, taken on annual inspection in the intervening period. There was a section of the missing brickwork present in 2003

and since then a second small section has started to deteriorate. It was our initial intention to undertake repairs to this lock in the stoppage in 2016 but Lock 29 was not fully dewatered and, since the rate of deterioration over the preceding ten years had been very slow, the decision was made to delay the repairs until the next dewatering of the lock for gate works.

The next routine engineering inspection is due in June 2018 and at this time we will take the opportunity to remove any loose bricks and reassess the condition of the lock wall behind the front facing. I can however assure you that the lock wall is stable and, having seen the very slow rate of change over the last 15 years, there is certainly no risk of the lock being closed as a result of this issue."

Northampton Lift-bridge

Another member, Geoff Wood, photographed lift-bridge 7, below lock 13 on the Northampton Arm, commenting: "Failure looks to be due to a rotten beam that failed. This would have transferred the load onto the other beam which also then broke. The good thing was there was no one under it when it failed".

Minworth Pound

Several NABO members have commented on the problems they encountered at a pound on the Birmingham & Fazeley canal at Minworth, where previously boats with a draught of three feet were able to pass. It was refilled with water after extensive work by CRT contractor, Kier, to repair an em-



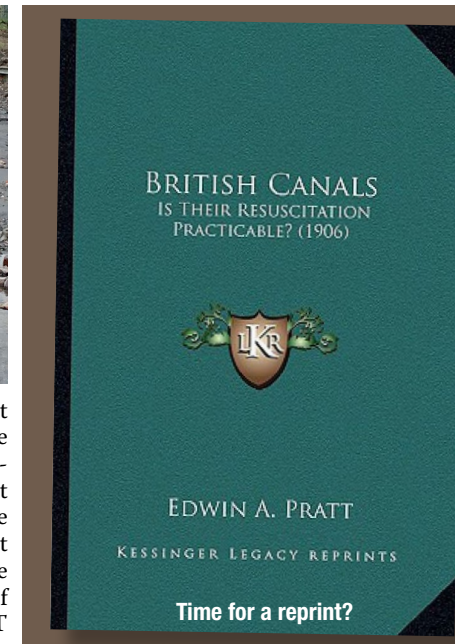
bankment against the A38 trunk road and deal with multiple canal bed leakages downstream of there. Subsequently, even boats of two-feet draught were grounding. The photo shows the hardcore that was left in place after being used by the contractor to drive plant along the canal bed. The works were overseen centrally by CRT, not by the local West Midlands Waterways Office, whose waterway manager has had all the flak and whose staff have had to send out notices apologising for the problems.

Some boaters thought the problems were down to Kier, but they weren't. At the end of the work, Kier

advised CRT that the rubble must be removed before re-watering. Against the advice of the contractors, and not wishing to add to the already large cost of the contract, CRT decided to re-water with the rubble left in place, having had the timbers that the vehicles drove over removed. CRT considered that the silt here was not of a hazardous nature, but it was, and therefore the rubble also became hazardous, having been mixed with the silt on re-watering of the pound.

The result was another five-day stoppage, with the return of the contractor and a large machine back in the canal bed to remove the now hazardous rubble, at hugely increased cost.

CRT should surely know that all silt around the BCN, and many other former heavily industrialised areas, is hazardous and make cost assessments based on this fact.





Rewind

Issue No 3, May 2003

Howard Anguish reviews concerns expressed in NABO News 15 years ago.

This issue is mainly concerned with the recently proposed mooring charges—questions being raised in the House of Lords, and NABO producing a petition to BW in response to the proposals. There was a blank copy of the petition in the magazine to encourage all members to contribute.

The opinion was that the new charges can be described as the typical 'Curate's Egg'—good in parts. One concern was that this would be the trigger for the possibility of increased charges. In a section titled 'Notices' there was a piece that suggested the mooring charge trial period on the K&A was over, and that notices were going up proclaiming this was now the Law! I suspect

this was a tongue-in-cheek comment, but it is interesting that even then there was controversy on this particular waterway!

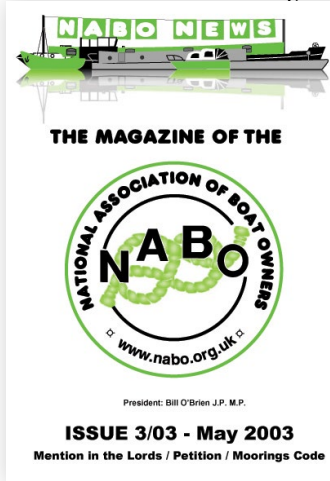
Robins Evans was welcomed as the newly appointed Chief Executive together with a new customer services manager (Simon Salem?) and NABO expressed hope that there are expectations for a better dialogue with British Waterways.

Fly on the Wall comments on a recent Council meeting discussion on crime on the cut and whether there was a need to have a telephone number other than 999. This is, of course, in the days before smart phones and GPS were ubiquitous, boaters still relied on more

antiquated methods of communication. Fly also speaks about a recent move by BW to remove safety barriers on lock gates. The move was to improve the safety of anglers when crossing gates. No mention or concern about the reduction in safety for users of the gates—namely boaters!

Celia Kennedy, a recently elected Council member, was the author of a letter entitled: **The Lot of the Liveaboard** *"Interestingly, most of the canal system has been restored by volunteers or their help (in terms of labour). Yet, British Waterways is now treating these people with disdain, and courting the very people who have no interest in the canal system, other than that it is fashionable to pose with their boat, and those with a commercial interest, namely BW and its self-interested subsidiary enterprise. We are supposed to be living in a democratic society, not a dictatorship, so why are people who fought so hard to rebuild the canals given no voice by those heading BW? Consultation just means to tell us their plans. Let me know what you think."* The sentiment in the last sentence may resonate with many people even today!

A letter from David Daines, concerning income from anglers where he suggests that all rod licence fees are going into the coffers of the EA with none going to BW for waterway upkeep, and that the only income directly generated from angling is the fee paid by angling clubs and associations, paid as rent for the use of specific water. Is this still the case in 2018?



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

Letters to the Editor

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

Pastures New

After almost thirteen years of living aboard and continuously cruising, I have sold my boat, 'Suits Us', and bought a motor-home. There are three reasons for this: 1) I want to travel more widely than is possible on the canals, before it's time for me to push up the daisies; 2) I'm beginning to find it hard work to negotiate flights of locks single-handed; and 3) I feel undervalued and occasionally harassed by the Canal and River Trust, which, in my opinion, disregards the terms of the 1995 British Waterways Act by trying to force boaters to move specific distances between moorings and minimum annual cruising distances. These were deliberately left unspecified in the said Act as a form of protection to those of us who choose not to have a home mooring. I believe CRT is behaving illegally because no Act of Parliament can be changed, altered or modified other than by a new Act of Parliament. It is the Law. As a result of my change of lifestyle, I am therefore resigning my membership of NABO with immediate effect. No doubt, in my new nomadic lifestyle, I shall visit canals occasionally and talk with boat owners, and in doing so I shall continue to encourage them to join NABO. Finally, I wish to thank everyone involved for making NABO the foremost organisation for boaters and for its dedicated work in attempting to provide worthwhile protection for our rights and wellbeing. I wish you every success in the future.

Graham Holmes.

No Voice with CRT

This is (for the moment) a simple question, without (for the moment) any future goal. But it has come about with all the current talk about, and criticism of, CRT. We, as boaters, tend to get indignant about lack of consultation, and there are comments about 'the canals being for boaters', almost as if CRT is beholden to us; that it MUST

listen to those of us who happen to be floating on its waters. But it's not 'ours', is it? By this, I mean CRT is an independent body, a charity. I pay money to them so that I can use one of their 'services', namely going on their canals. As a canal user, I am certainly an 'interested party' (a stakeholder) when it comes to using the waterways but, as far as I am aware, I am not actually any sort of 'Member' of CRT and therefore have no formal voice as an individual. That is, unless I am, maybe, a Friend of CRT, or via a completely separate membership body such as IWA, NABO, etc. The bottom line therefore seems to be that, even if it were logical, CRT does not need to consult those who use its services about its plans, including rebrands, logos, etc. Or does its Charter say different?

Andy Williams

Marple Development

I have received notification that a revised plan has been issued for the Marple redevelopment (reference number DC/67001). Please write with objections as the more they receive, the more they will have to think again. See planning.stockport.gov.uk/PlanningData-live

Stella Ridgway

I name this boat ...

If you have spotted a boat name that made you smile, please let me have a photo to use in future issues. Here's one spotted by Janice Steckerl.





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