



NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners
Issue 4 July 2018

SAFE HAND

ALL CHANGE AT CRT
REBRANDING RESPONSES
TRUE COST OF LICENCE
CHANGES



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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 **September 8th 2018**. Our email address is nabonews@nabo.org.uk



Cover photo

This month's cover photo is by the Editor, taken on the River Weaver . 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



The rebranding of CRT continues to provoke reactions, with many questioning why signs that are only read by boaters were changed within days of the relaunch—most boaters know what CRT is. Why not focus the marketing effort on the claimed 90% of people who apparently don't know that CRT is the authority that manages their nearby waterway? (And also work towards changing the attitudes of some of these people so that they see canals as a resource, rather than a convenient dump for the detritus they no longer want). It would

The Three Rs

Rebranding, reorganisation and reaction

Editor, **Peter Fellows**, takes the collective pulse of boaters after the latest changes by CRT

seem that someone in Government must have given CRT the nod that 'health and wellbeing' is where the money lies in future. If this is not the case, the change in focus is a huge gamble. Peter Underwood from 'The Floater' believes there is another way to fund the Trust and I have included a recent editorial explaining his view. I have also included a letter to boaters from Richard Parry on the rebranding, together with a response from Stella Ridgway and a selection of comments from boaters on social media. There is also a justification for the new logo from its designer. Elsewhere, David Fletcher explains what we need members to do in the light of the new General Data Protection Regulation, together with an update on changes to the way that NABO communicates with its membership.

As part of CRT's change in focus, it has appointed new directors

for the (now) six regions and I have summarised their backgrounds and waterway experience. I have also included the other staff changes that have recently been implemented, as well as the appointment of four of the six chairs to the new Regional Advisory Boards, again noting their waterway experience. Mark Tizard monitors social media daily and has reported on yet more problems faced by boaters and pedestrians, caused by speeding cyclists on towpaths. I have also received a letter on the same subject. It is OK for CRT to encourage more people to use the towpaths, but not if their 'health and wellbeing' is compromised by these selfish louts who think they own them.

Following the claimed 'revenue-neutral' licensing review, Alison Tuck has crunched the numbers and concluded that, not only will the cost of licences increase for the vast majority of boaters over the next few years, but CRT will generate an estimated extra £2M from boat licence fees—hardly making the canals 'free for everyone to use and enjoy' as CRT Chair, Allan Leighton, has written.

Howard Anguish and Mike Rodd report on news from their respective regions and Howard also looks back at NABO News from 15 years ago. Techies' Corner has an article by Keith Thompson on how he is developing his love of boats into a new career, following his restoration of a rare Dowty Turbo-craft jet-boat.

NABO Council is taking a break for the summer while its members get afloat and it will meet again in September at Tamworth Cruising Club, where you are very welcome—indeed, you may have already attended the club's boaters' weekend in August. Enjoy whatever time you have on the waterways this summer.

CRT was in its infancy when we moved onto our boat. You may remember Richard Parry held road-shows and regular meetings with boating organisations, and seemed to genuinely want to listen to boater's views. Admittedly, he was taking over an organisation that had deliberately not spent its budget, and had a policy of closing canals rather than maintaining them. The challenge was to bring boaters along with the new organisation.

Making a difference

I stood for CRT Council two years ago because I wanted to make a difference. At every meeting since, we, the boaters' reps, have said to the Trust: "you have a free resource in boaters with all this knowledge; why not use us?" We have had limited success and never an acknowledgement—the rebranding was a case in point.

When it was announced at the Council meeting in April (we didn't get to see the new branding), I said that boaters felt disenfranchised, and the launch then failed to mention them as one of the Trust's biggest income streams. So there is now a hasty press release, trying to atone for the fact that boaters weren't mentioned.

CRT: Do they listen?

Boaters' reps to Council have quarterly meetings and NABO had its first meeting with the new Head of Customer Services in June—but will they actually listen to us? Like the Council and the User Forums, they appear to pay lip-service to the feedback they receive, judging by a recent example on the Marple Flight. They were told about a problem in Lock 11 last November (after the stoppage had started); it was checked by an engineer, but we still have to find

out why it didn't get added to the programme of works.

It seems that we are in the project management world of budgets and work programmes that cannot be altered, which means that we, as customers, suffer. It is the lack of listening and the lack of communication that concern boaters. Those of us who live on the canals do so



Can you hear us?

Stella Ridgway is looking forward to meaningful discussions with CRT, rather than just being fed information

because we love the waterways and the way of life. We have experience that we will share, if only the Trust would listen. There is a failure to properly and genuinely engage with us in meaningful discussions, rather than just feeding us information. The Trust should be seeking our views prior to decisions being made, but this is lacking. Is it therefore any wonder that boaters feel disenfranchised and neglected?

We know that CRT is trying to ensure the future of the canals as a resource for all. I think most boaters get that—but ignoring us doesn't fill us with confidence. However, as Richard Parry says, 'boaters are front and centre of all decisions', so—you never know—they might start to take our views seriously.

But we also have a responsibility: if we see that something is broken or services need attention, report it. We are ears and eyes on the cut and the Trust recognises that. They need our help, but they just don't like telling us, it seems.

Have a good summer boating and hopefully some sunshine.



Fly on the wall

Observes proceedings at the June Council meeting

NABO calendar 2018

Council meetings are held at weekends and the dates for the remainder of 2018 are: September 1st, October 14th, November 11th (includes AGM). The next Council meeting is on Saturday 1st September.

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).

A full house at Tamworth Cruising Club, where Council members noted the proposals for much stricter pollution controls in London, which are to be extended to everywhere within the North and South Circular Roads and will almost certainly affect what can be burned in boat stoves, and possibly emissions from diesel engines. The new CRT Regional

Directors will soon be in place and Council members are concerned that the senior engineering staff, who would have advised them on spending priorities, have mostly left the Trust—particularly important as most of the new directors have no waterway experience. Infrastructure failures continue; the latest being Lock 11 on the Marple flight, where a bulging lock wall has restricted passage. This follows similar problems at Hurlston on the Llangollen, so perhaps boat-builders should now adopt a standard 6' 9" beam to allow all boats to use the whole system. Repairs to the embankment on the Middlewich branch await the departure of badger cubs; obviously spared from the cull that is underway elsewhere. So currently no Four Counties or Cheshire rigs.

Councillors then moved on to CRT's reorganisation and rebranding—and its spectacular success in alienating the majority of boaters. The Trust doesn't seem to realise that boating organisations and their members understand the looming black hole in its funds and the need to engage with the wider

public. If the exercise had been handled properly, with an honest and transparent discussion with boating organisations, it may have brought boaters onside before the launch and possibly even had some of them promoting the changes as they cruised the system. Boats are vital to attract visitors to the waterways and CRT knows this, but it hasn't bothered to tell boaters that they are central to achieving this and, consequently, the very people it needs for support increasingly feel ignored and marginalised. The recent licence fee increases and statements about the cost of rebranding lack transparency and stretch boaters' credulity. Richard Parry has made a start with his recent letter to boaters, but actions speak louder and the new management team will have to do much more to convince boaters that maintaining the waterway infrastructure and acting fairly as a navigation authority are its top priorities.

NABO's objection to one part of the Middle Level Bill was discussed and members decided to seek assurances from the Middle Level Commissioners before the petition is discussed by a House of Lords' committee. Councillors are also monitoring proposed changes to the system of governance at the newly formed River Thames Association. There was news from the BSS that tenanted boats may cause third party safety risks, because some tenants know nothing about boats and how they work. These boats are not currently in any separate licensing category, though they would need to be before a risk assessment can be started, so the issue is ping-ponging between the BSS and the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities.

I'm off for a summer buzz around the system, so Byebye until September.

NABO and GDPR—action is needed by you!

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a new EU law that came into effect on 25th May and replaces the current Data Protection Act. You will have seen plenty in the press about this. We started working in May to address changes needed for this law.

NABO is working on the basis of 'Consent' and this requires a positive opt-in by members for terms and conditions and privacy. We previously assumed that if you paid your subscription, you agreed to these, but this is no longer allowed for organisations operating under 'Consent'. So renewals going out now include a request for your specific agreement to the new requirements. All members who have given us an email address have been contacted through the monthly Bulletin and there is a steady flow of replies coming in. Thank you. If you have replied, please do not do so again. Those with email will get another request shortly and this will be targeted at only those who have not yet responded.

In the last edition of NABO News, we published an explanation of our data systems and the revised Privacy Policy. If you have any difficulty, or if you are worried about data loss or any other issues, please phone, email or write and tell us.

Membership Software

Our membership profile is changing: 80% of members have given us an email address and we use this to send out monthly summary bulletins about what your representatives are doing and other snippets of up-to-date news. Also, by far the bulk of members pay by standing order and other electronic methods. Cheques are used less and less, so we are gearing up to handle the new ways of payment. A few intrepid members also elect to receive renewal notices by email, so we run this as an option at the moment. We now want to expand this and make the bulk of renewals by email and configured automatically.

The membership team is working on new web software for just this. We have long used computer databases that could produce paper mail-merged documents. There is no direct way to do this using email, so at the moment we gen-

We need all members to take action to accept the new requirement of the law. This is a call for those who do not have email, or perhaps do not regularly read their emails, to give NABO the consent in writing that we need to operate. This can be by writing to us using these words:

I accept the Terms and Conditions dated November 2014 and also the Privacy Policy dated April 2018.

So please, put it on anything convenient such as a postcard, add your name (and membership number if possible) and send it to our address at:

NABO General Secretary

PO Box 104

LEYLAND

PR25 9AN

Please do respond. (This has the potential so soak up many valuable hours from the Admin team chasing this up.)

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erate pdfs and send individual emails with these. This takes as much time as printing and sending paper documents, but we cannot produce emails in bulk without a new system. We have therefore decided to move to a system that can automatically prepare electronic documents for the members who use email. This is not about excluding those who are not electronically-minded or about saving postage. It is so that we can concentrate our manual effort on postal mail for those who do not use these systems. It is also about using modern tools for admin tasks and addressing the need to make the system future-proof and resilient, so that more than one person can operate it.

So what will happen? The first change is to transfer the data to the new system. The profile page on the website will change and the 'new members' sign-up page will change but will retain the same functionality. 'Sign in' will remain the same and hopefully passwords will transfer OK! Renewals will continue with the current method by post for couple of months while we

settle down the new system. Then, when it's ready, we will turn on the email notifications. Updates will be provided through the Bulletins. (Those who do not use electronic systems will see no difference).

Who will get email renewals? The big risk in this (for NABO) is that we send out renewal notices that require 'action' to members who do not regularly look at their email inbox. At the moment, we are thinking that we will rely on emails for those members who pay by standing order, but also send written reminders to everyone who pays by other means. We will respect the wishes of anyone who wants paper, or conversely is happy to receive emails alone. There is an option on the 'web profile' page to opt into this, or you can just send an email asking for this option. If you are regularly looking at email, then please opt in now and don't wait. Just send us an email.

This all ties in well with the new GDPR issues, transparency of information and rights of members. Please support us in this next endeavour. The last thing we want to do is lose any members!

NABO withdraws its objections to the Middle Level Bill

While generally supportive of the Bill, NABO had petitioned to ensure that boaters' services would be maintained on the Middle Level. Further correspondence with the Middle Level Commissioners resulted in the following letter being sent by NABO in June:

'We note that you have given a written undertaking to the Opposed Bill Committee that, once the Bill becomes a statute and the Commissioners can achieve some income from the registration of boats in the system, they would hope to im-

prove facilities to at least the Inland Waterways Association minimum standards, in consultation with the Navigation Advisory Committee, and that the Commissioners must consult the Committee on any proposal to provide facilities or services in respect of the waterways and their banks, and any proposals to impose or vary charges in respect of use of the waterways.

We are thus able to continue to support the Middle Level Bill and formally withdraw our Petition.'

Welsh Waterways Mike Rodd



On Wednesday 23rd May, I was invited to a lunchtime meeting at the Fourteen Locks Canal Centre, Newport, which took place around a CRT Board meeting in South Wales. At the meeting, the new CRT livery and strap-lines, officially revealed the day before, were in full view. Fond farewells were said to Nick Worthington, the Waterways Manager, and to Andrew Stumpf, who for many years was responsible for negotiating the funding received for the South Wales canals from local authorities and the EU.

The new Regional Director for Wales and South West, Richard Thomas, was also present.

Around the regions: NABO's regional reps

North East Waterways Howard Anguish



The Spring local waterway forum at Castleford on 13th March followed the recent pattern and was reasonably well attended, but I have noticed over the last couple of meetings that numbers have reduced. I wonder if the 5 pm start may act as a barrier against better attendance for those who may still be working.

Acting Local Manager, Mike Marshall, chaired an interesting meeting, which led off with a review of highlights of the past year, including an outline of what goes on behind the scenes—an illuminating description of the day and night routine needed to keep some of our more challenging local waterways functioning, especially at times of strong stream flow. As an

adjunct, there was an update on the work going on to introduce an online 'Strong Stream Warning' notification, which would be available in real time and would work in conjunction with the present Scada system. This would cover all river-fed navigations nationwide and is scheduled to be introduced in April this year.

The review also covered volunteering: 19 local adoptions; 40 volunteer lockkeepers with 30 more this year; Pocklington Canal Amenity Association restoring a further two miles to full navigation, opening this year; 40,000 volunteer hours in the region last year; 200 regular volunteer workers; 40 partner groups.

Over the winter, Leeds Lock, a major structure adjacent to the Royal Armouries, was drained and was opened to the public for inspection. There was also an audio-visual presentation on local waterways at a ticketed event during the work, led by an actor dressed as a navvy, which attracted over 2,000 visitors. The meeting was shown the video, which was excellent.

After the buffet, the local CRT staff were available at tables for individual networking, following the pattern at previous meetings which seemed to work well with a variety of subjects being discussed, mostly locally focussed, although there were some points made about the new licensing structure, both good and not so good, and some criticism of the failings of the vegetation issue!

A particular point arose about HS2: CRT managers had recently taken HS2 engineers afloat on sections of South Yorkshire waterways, which would be affected by bridge building, to demonstrate the impact this may have on local navigations. Discussion arose about the transportation of bulk materials—particularly bulk rail ballast and other similar materials, together with heavy indivisible equipment including tunnel boring machines. It became apparent that they had not been aware that barges were available locally that could transport 600 tons or more meaning cheaper transport costs and a reduction of disruption to road traffic. This enlightenment may lead to increased carriage of such materials by water, and begs the question if a similar consideration could be given to such transport in other major engineering schemes, although the North East region does differ from other regions with its concentration of commercial waterways.

All change at CRT

with new Regional Directors...

CRT's new regional structure was put in place on 4th June and six new Regional Directors have been appointed.



Ros Daniels
London & South East

She has extensive experience of the heritage and tourism sector, most recently as Head of Historic Properties, London at English Heritage. She has managed a variety of historic houses, gardens and countryside for English

Heritage and the National Trust. Her waterway connection is that, in her spare time, she is a 'keen canoeist and paddle boarder'.



Richard Thomas
Wales & South West

He has had a long career in the Royal Navy, in which 'he transited two canals'. He also says he wants to become a liveboard boater, with 'aspirations to live afloat on the canal in Gloucester'.



Adnan Saif
West Midlands

He has worked in senior positions in local government, regeneration and economic development, and is currently Chief Executive of the British Muslim Heritage Centre. He has no waterway connections.



Phil Mulligan
East Midlands

He is a professional third sector manager, notably as Chief Executive of the Landscape Institute, Executive Director of the United Nations Association UK and Chief Executive of Environmental Protection UK.

A National Trust Council member, he represented the Conservation Volunteers. He also had a key role in the Government's involvement in the creation of CRT as Vice Chair of Defra's Civil Society Advisory Board. He has no known waterway connections.



Sean McGinley
Yorkshire & North East

He is a chartered civil engineer, currently the East Midlands Waterway Manager, and has worked on the waterways in management and engineering posts for 16 years. His management included the Chesterfield, Grantham and Erewash canals and

the River Trent.



Daniel Greenhalgh
North West

He is the interim Regional Director for up to 12 months. He was a site engineer for a Liverpool civil engineering contractor before joining the waterways in 2005. He is a senior manager at CRT, responsible for major

canal infrastructure projects and formerly the delivery of all the Trust's operational contracts.

Other changes:

David Baldacchino will become Head of Operations Support, **Jon Horsfall** will be Head of Customer Service Support, to lead the organisation's customer service functions, including boating, and **Peter Walker** will be Head of Technical Support. There are also two new permanent posts: **Tav Kazmi**, currently acting Waterway Manager for the South East, is Deputy Director, London & South East and **Ian Lane**, currently Waterway Manager for the West Midlands, is Head of Operational Projects in the West Midlands, including Coventry City of Culture 2021, the Birmingham Commonwealth Games and the ongoing development of the Roundhouse in Birmingham. Waterway Managers, **Nick Worthington** and **Jon Guest**, Head of Health and Safety, **Tony Stammers**, and National Heritage Manager, **Nigel Crowe**, will leave the Trust. **Denise Yelland** will be acting Boat Licensing Customer Support Manager (previously known as enforcement) until the end of September.

Simon Bamford, Asset Improvement Director, announced that interim arrangements will be made in Asset Improvement for up to 12 months. **John Ward** will be interim Head of Project Delivery and **Richard Wakelen** will take the lead role on Engineering Services, in addition to his current role, to become Head of Asset Strategy and Engineering Services. **Jason Leach** has been appointed as Programme Director for the 'Unlocking the Severn' project. **Mark Stephens** and **Richard Longton** will leave the Trust.

... and new Regional Advisory Board Chairs

CRT has so far appointed four chairs to the new advisory boards. The appointments are voluntary and for an initial term of three years.

London & South East: Sir William Atkinson.

Knighted for services to education and community relations, he is a Trustee of a number of charities, including the Royal Shakespeare Company, and has advised Government at both national and local levels. He was appointed

Deputy Lieutenant for Greater London in 2017. He has no known waterway experience.

South West: David Hagg.

Chief Executive of Stroud District Council, the authority which is leading the restoration of the Cotswold Canal. He has been a member of a range of regional and national bodies and was formerly Chair of the Trust's South Wales & Severn Waterway Partnership.

East Midlands: Anil Majithia.

He is a Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership Board member and Chair of Voluntary Action Leicestershire. He is a Governor at Coventry University and North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College and a member of the Governance Committee for Science Council. He has no known waterway experience.

North West: Walter Menzies.

The former Chief Executive at the Mersey Basin Campaign and a UK Sustainable Development Commissioner, he remains a sustainable development advocate and champion of the North West. He is a visiting professor in the Department of Civic Design at the University of Liverpool, a Trustee of the Land Trust and former Chair of the Trust's Manchester, Pennine & Potteries Waterway Partnership.

West Midland and Yorkshire

Chairs of the West Midlands and Yorkshire & North East Advisory Boards have yet to be recruited. Details of other members of the Advisory Boards are at <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/how-we-are-run/regional-advisory-boards>

More problems with cyclists

Mark Tizard monitors social media

A writer contacted CRT's Facebook page, complaining about 'cycling idiots doing an organised orienteering race along the towpath' in which 'children, families and dog-walkers were being shouted at to get out of the way because they were being timed—it was so dangerous, how there were no injuries I don't know. They were abusive when asked to slow down and refused to say who the organisers were. Surely CRT don't condone bike races on their towpaths?' The writer was told that towpaths are not places for bike racing and trying to beat personal bests and the message would be passed to the local CRT team (not very local, being 63 miles away at Red Bull).

The response from CRT was they were sorry to hear of problems while trying to enjoy our towpaths and advised that the Trust is looking carefully at cycling on towpaths which is a **growing sport and one that we need to work with** (my emphasis). That's why we are launching the 'Share the Space' campaign, aimed at encouraging better behaviours by all users of the towpath, with a link to canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/features/share-the-space-drop-your-pace-our-towpath-code. They went on to say that there may be local issues at play and they have recorded the report as a safety incident so that they can gather more information.

Something is very wrong with the attitude 'cycling on the towpath is a sport'. Sport is defined

as 'an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment'. Surely cycling on the towpath should be a recreational activity but not a sport?

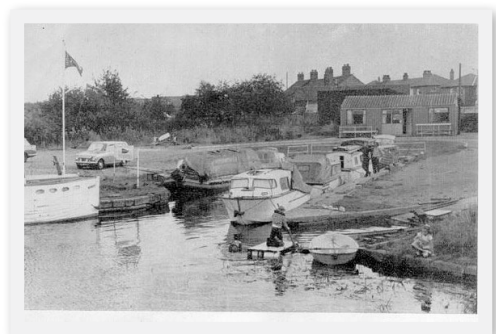
Howard Anguish commented: "That attitude about sport and towpaths (which is wrong in so many ways) reminds me that Sue Day [of the Horseboating Society] was once told some years ago that the towpath was no place for horses".

Another writer to CRT's Facebook page suggested that the Trust should take a look at www.strava.com and check out speed cycling on canal routes, where the object is to beat your previous best time and that of other speed cyclists; hardly sharing the space. And pizza delivery by bike seems to have become a bit of a plague, speeding and carrying an extra wide load (a large thermal box on the cyclist's back).

CRT responded: 'We are aware of this and believe it's the case that Strava users can set up these routes themselves to compete with their friends. We do not support this activity, and although cyclists are very welcome on our towpaths, they are not a place for racing and trying to beat personal bests. We are trying to work with Strava on this and hopefully we can work something out'. Could you let us know more information about the pizza delivery location and the companies involved? We will speak to the local team to see if there's anything we can do.

Boaters' Weekend

Tamworth Cruising Club is holding a weekend of events from August 3rd-5th. For details and registration before July 20th, contact the club at Kettlebrook Road, Tamworth, Staffs. B77 1BS, phone 07517 680337, email tamworth-cruisingclub@gmail.com or visit www.tamworthcruisingclub.org.uk.



Tamworth Cruising Club in the 1960s

The true cost of the CRT licensing changes

Alison Tuck reveals that, despite CRT saying that the recent licensing review would be revenue-neutral, boat licence fees are set to increase for most boaters over the next three years, generating an estimated extra income of £2m for the Trust

The new bands explained	
Band 1	Up to 7'1" (2.16m)
Band 2	Over 7'1" (2.16m) up to 10'7" (3.24m)
Band 3	Over 10'7" (3.24m)

CRT is introducing a 2.5% prompt-payment discount and a 2.5% discount for electronic payments in 2020. Using, as an example, a 60' narrowboat that doesn't qualify for any discounts other than the reduced prompt-payment discount, with 3% annual inflation, it is clear that licence fees will increase (red) for those who pay in full, either electronically or,

even more, by cheque/cash. Paying by monthly Direct Debit will give savings of £56.16 next year, £57.84 in 2020 and £59.58 in 2021 (green).

Widebeam owners will be the most affected, but those who previously have had no discount by paying by Direct Debit will be better off until 2020. The table shows the costs for a 60' boat in Band 2 and in Band 3. In each case, they don't qualify for any other discounts and are subject to 3% annual inflation. The surcharge for Band 2 is 5% in 2020 and 10% from 2021 (10% is the full surcharge for Band 2). The surcharge for Band 3, 5% in 2020, 10% in 2021, 15% in 2022 and 20% in 2023 (20% is the full surcharge for Band 3). If you are still following,

The vast majority of boaters have taken advantage of the prompt-payment discount. In future, year on year, those who pay annually are, at a minimum, 5% worse off due to the reduction of the prompt-payment discount. Over the three-year implementation period, they will be an estimated £73 per year worse off for the most popular boat length of 55-60 feet. Based on inflation assumptions, these changes are expected to net CRT around £2 million in extra licensing revenue (£73 x 32,000 boats).

Year	Cost under old licence terms (£)	Cost under new licence terms (£)		
		Narrowboat Band 1 (60')	Widebeam Band 2 (60')	Widebeam Band 3 (60')
Electronically in full				
2018	918.94	918.94	918.94	918.94
2019	946.50	969.99	969.99	969.99
2020	974.90	999.09	1,051.67	1,051.67
2021	1,004.15	1,029.06	1,137.38	1,137.38
2022	1,034.27	1,059.93	1,171.50	1,227.29
2023	1,065.30	1,091.73	1,206.65	1,321.57
Cash, cheque or debit card in full				
2018	918.94	918.94	969.99	1,021.04
2019	946.50	995.51	995.51	995.51
2020	974.90	1,025.38	1,077.96	1,077.96
2021	1,004.15	1,056.14	1,164.46	1,164.46
2022	1,034.27	1,087.83	1,199.40	1,255.18
2023	1,065.30	1,120.46	1,235.38	1,350.30
Monthly Direct Debit				
2018	1,021.04	1,021.04	1,021.04	1,021.04
2019	1,051.67	1,021.04	1,021.04	1,021.04
2020	1,083.22	1,025.38	1,077.96	1,077.96
2021	1,115.72	1,056.14	1,164.46	1,164.46
2022	1,034.27	1,087.83	1,199.40	1,255.18
2023	1,065.30	1,120.46	1,235.38	1,350.30

Boating and our new brand

A message to boaters from Richard Parry

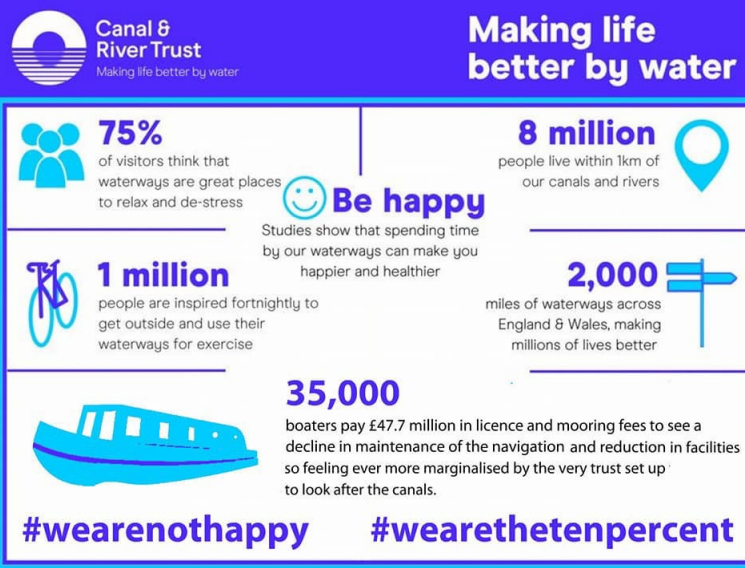
“Ten days ago we launched the Trust’s new branding, as we highlight the Trust’s role in providing greater wellbeing for the millions of people whose lives could be improved by coming to the waterways, right on their doorstep.

The reasons for the changes are explained elsewhere, but I know from conversations I’ve had, and commentary that I’ve seen, that some boaters felt our message last week ignored the core purpose of the canal and river navigations—that is, for boats to use.

The assurance I want to give you is that boats and boaters will always be at the heart of what the Trust is for, and central to what we do—the majority of our annual expenditure (well over £100m per annum) goes into keeping the waterways operational and safe for boats to use and boaters to enjoy. I am committed to active ongoing communication with you at all levels to hear your feedback about where we need to target our efforts, to deal with any issues you encounter and deliver the boating experience you expect.

So my plea would be not to take offence—as I know most of you don’t—when our message isn’t specifically about boating; it really is in everyone’s interest that we seek to address and engage a wider and different audience—including critically those who are younger, more diverse, and digitally-active. But I don’t discount the importance of ensuring that we continue to garner your support as well. To be fit for the future, the Trust needs to change, but boats and boaters need to be with us on that journey, and we will keep working to achieve that.”

“I don’t know who Richard Parry has been talking to, or what he’s been reading, but he’s missed the point entirely with this ill thought-out message. The old cliché about when you’re in a hole stop digging springs to mind.”



“C’mon CRT, you say you ‘listen and want to talk’. There is a huge resource out there called boaters, so why not ask them to help and support you instead of ignoring them. There are even a few who have many years’ industrial and commercial marketing experience and have gone through ‘brand changes’ and ‘brand launches’. Why turn your back on that knowledge?”

“A shame that this has come as an afterthought. I think the boaters’ reaction was entirely predictable, and it would surely have been better if this message had been incorporated into the original rebranding information.”

The rationale behind *that* logo

Studio Blackburn was responsible for designing the new identity for CRT. “The circular symbol fades off into stripes, which aims to represent the reflection of a bridge on a canal, as well as water ripples”, says Paul Blackburn, founder of the studio.

He also says that the new logo aims to represent the idea of ‘transition’—moving from the old to the new, while retaining the bridge element of the previous logo. “The shape now also represents a rising sun, unity and togetherness, as well as the reflections of water,” he says. A refreshed colour palette comprising two blue and two green shades is used alongside white. These four colours indicate water, sky, leaf and grass, with the dark blue core colour representing water. An extended palette of orange and yellow has also been used across communications, to symbolise both land and water.

He adds: “Modern Era, a contemporary, friendly, sans-serif typeface with a large x-height (the height of letters minus their descenders and ascenders) has been used for the logo and all copy ‘to provide legibility’. A new strapline ‘Making life better by water’ accompanies the rebrand, which aims to represent CRT’s mission to transform canals and rivers into ‘spaces where local people want to spend time and feel better’. Patterns that reflect water waves are printed on marketing communications such as posters and leaflets, alongside photographs of people using canals and animals that dwell on water, such as swans. Blackburn says that the new visual identity was inspired by ‘the [charity’s] focus on bringing waterways alive’ and ‘encouraging communities to come together to love and care for their local canal or river’.

“We were trying to create a brand system that gives [the charity] more flexibility to develop as an inclusive, modern and sociable brand to a much wider audience, rather than the current, and inaccurate, perception of ‘those people who maintain the canals’.”

“What I simply can’t see any justification for is replacing large numbers of signs that can only be of interest to boaters, such as those for mooring restrictions, sanitary stations, water points and the like.”



Another delivery of new CRT logos
Photo: Matty at Narrowboat Users Forum

“Well he would say that. But even so, I don’t share the view that CRT is abandoning boaters. If boaters contributed all funding required to maintain the system it would be a different matter. But they don’t!”

“Where it went wrong is their misrepresentation of the massive spend on this rebranding with the blatant and insulting lie that it cost only £60k. Opinion is that the logo and new colour scheme from the marketing agency may well have been £60k, but all the new signage, uniforms etc. is probably costing closer to £1m. It would be nice to have some honesty about the real cost of the exercise but I suspect the true cost is so high they prefer to take the criticism than actually publish accurate figures.”

"The issue I have with the rebranding is this: I am prepared to accept, as a 'non-marketing' person, that, where signs are aimed at the general public, the expense may be worthwhile and bring returns in terms of greater public awareness. Perfectly good signs with the old logo are already being taken down and replaced by identically worded ones in blue with the new logo."

Boaters are already well aware of CRT, so in my view nothing is being achieved with boaters other than 'that looks like a waste of money'. I think this is a major cock-up at a time they are looking for donations to help with major failures of the infrastructure. I certainly wouldn't donate money while they are, in my view at least, wasting it in large amounts."

"I think most boaters would agree that it's not that the so called rebranding exercise appears to ignore the core purpose of the waterways, it's that it's a clear waste of a substantial amount of money, based on an extremely dodgy premise."

...some boaters felt our message last week ignored the core purpose of the canal and river navigations—that is, for boats to use.

"If the x million people who live near a canal are not already 'using' the canal then how will they see all of the new signage? How is the message going to reach them?"

Mailing addresses can be purchased by region—maybe CRT are going to buy 100,000 addresses as a test-area and mail 'all of these wonderful benefits'. In marketing terms a response of 1% would be a good result. Is CRT going to set up a 'road-show' and take it to every town/village centre/shopping mall near a canal and actively present itself, the canals and the wellbeing benefits?"

Is it going to undertake 'sponsorship' of some outdoorsy type TV programmes or do some paid TV/billboard advertising? How will the responses be monitored? It is all simple marketing stuff which I am sure that the CRT marketing team has thoroughly thought through—the problem is we do not know what their plans are, so can only comment on the knowledge we have."

"What I can't understand is that they wanted a new logo so as to help the general public become more aware of what CRT are all about, but [then] produce a logo which doesn't."



Photo: thirdsector.co.uk

Why is it boaters feel so disenfranchised by CRT? Why is it that CRT staff, who are paid to enrol people on the towpath as Friends, now don't bother to approach boaters? The constant PR push over the last couple of years celebrates initiatives that rarely involve boats. Walkers, cyclists, anglers, canoeists are targeted and welcomed in increasing numbers—come on in, it's a free resource. The latest rebranding only cost £60k, honest!

New, expensive signs have sprung up, seemingly overnight, alongside the canals, directed at those who already know where the canal is—not the 7 million who supposedly don't. Millions spent on new cycle routes, walkways, canoe routes—yes, grant funded, but where are the grants to repair the listed locks and bridges?

Strip away the PR and see a different reality: licence fees increasing for the majority by a minimum of 5%, despite promises of a revenue-neutral review. Marple flight closed for eight months, closed again a week after reopening due to a failure to act on a known fault. Minworth closed shortly after reopening due to the failure to ensure it was deep enough to be navigable after the repairs were completed. Our experience, our reality.

So my message to Richard Parry is simple: Stop and think every time your media department gets a new idea. Ask: "What would boaters think of this?" We care about the canals being navigable, locks usable, moorings deep enough, services available, heritage protected, not sold. Is anyone listening to us? Your new target audience also want these things. Look at faces that light up and the waves exchanged as boats go past. Boats are the reason they flock to places like Foxton or Stoke Bruerne.

To us, the canals' biggest fans,

the canals are not free. We pay to use our boats and the canal is quite literally on our doorstep. We want to cherish and protect it. Recent press releases and media articles ignore those who pay a considerable chunk of income to the Trust, not just through licensing, while reaching out to those who enjoy the canals without paying.



If only the Trust would listen

Stella Ridgeway responds to Richard Parry

Councils already understand the health aspects of canals. Ask them what they think of their money being spent on rebranding and I think you can guess the answer.

We love the canals, and those of us who live on them full- or part-time do so because we love the waterways and the way of life. We have experience that we would willingly share, if only the Trust would listen. Because of this failure to genuinely engage in meaningful discussions and seek, AND take account of, our views prior to decisions being made, is it any wonder that boaters feel disenfranchised and neglected?

CRT needs to get boaters back onboard and make us believe that it can improve the experience of ALL who use the canals. Together we stand a chance of persuading the Government to keep this precious resource adequately funded; separately we don't.



Trip boat Jubilee approaching
Town lock at Newbury

Photo : Rob Dean K&A Trust

It is not difficult to understand why CRT is rebranding, restructuring and attempting to persuade anyone who will listen that it has the answer to everyone's problems—if only they will stroll by a canal now and then. It is even easy to sympathise with the position the Trust has got itself into.

The Tory ministers was to get the cost off the public books. But 'I told you so' doesn't help provide the canals with a future.

CRT has turned away from the concept of running a successful navigation, declaring that: 'More than 90% of our customer base are no longer water-based and we need

to adapt to their needs.' The core belief behind the restructuring—putting yet more corporate players in top jobs with little consideration for their waterways experience or ability to run a navigation—and a rebranding that moves away from canals and boating, is that the new people and new identity will bring in enough measurable support

that they can beg Government for another grant, recognising that 'our former industrial waterways can improve the wellbeing of millions of people.' Another 'cunning plan' doomed to failure like the one that brought CRT into existence five years ago. Why? Because it ignores the one genuine asset that the waterways have, that brings people to the towpaths, the one asset that can genuinely recruit support. Unfortunately, CRT rejected, with or without the support of Government, the idea of a membership based organisational structure, despite

pressure from boating groups. Some wanted to see something like the National Trust, where members pay substantial annual fees in exchange for being able to visit places and see things previously the exclusive domain of the rich and powerful. It was argued that, given open public access to the towpath, it was not possible to charge for membership.

This is a fallacy, based on a basic misunderstanding of what canals are about—boats. Without boats, any public park with a lake has as much attraction—and health and wellbeing potential—as a canal. Without boats, canals become muddy ditches, only interesting to fishermen after a few years of neglect. Yet boats are perceived by much of the public as expensive, exclusive and owned by the elite—a bit like stately homes really.

If CRT wants to capture the support of a fair proportion of that 90%, it can do so by offering them a chance to join the boaters on the water—not by the water—just as the National Trust offers the opportunity to spend time in stately homes. A membership-based CRT would not only be able to exercise democratic control over the board members and executives that is sadly lacking, it could also become a National Trust of the waterways giving members access to boating in many forms as part of their paid-for membership package. For a few pounds a month, members could be offered free charter boat trips, with CRT either acquiring their own fleet, hiring from canal businesses, or working with volunteers and using historic narrowboats.

There could be a free half day on a day boat, or entrance to historic locations like the Anderton Lift, as part of the membership. CRT could follow the National Trust further with its own tea rooms at key loca-

tions, offering historic boater fare. A national membership, at a price, giving the public access to the one unique thing the waterways have to offer, would soon produce a genuine, fee paying, committed membership, keen to see the canals in good working order so that they can enjoy their access to boating. Structured in such a way that all types and ages can get on the water, from teenage paddleboarders to grannies taking tea on a trip boat. The resources are mostly already in place. Around the country there are businesses that would be happy to come to an agreement with CRT to provide all sorts of boating experiences to paid-up CRT members. A little bit of imagination and the use of existing skilled crews could see the historic fleet in CRT's care moving members on the water, with volunteer crews and even volunteer historic boat owners joining in. Membership could provide an agreed discount on waterborne activities, taking in canoe centres and similar activities. Engaging so many more people in boating on the canals through an affordable membership scheme would mean many more advocates for the waterways, more people taking the next step into a canal holiday or even boat ownership, and the genuine uplift in 'wellbeing' CRT claims to be looking for.

It may not provide the £50m CRT needs in the coming decade but it would make a substantial difference to the size of the financial black hole and provide a genuine case for Government to give further financial support. The price will be busier waterways, more novices on boats and other minor annoyances, but such a scheme can create a genuine opportunity for waterways to become a place everyone can enjoy being on the water, not by the water. At least everyone who can afford a few pounds a month.

There is another way —and it's by boat

Obvious maybe, but has CRT realised that there's an opportunity under their noses?

Asks Peter Underwood, Editor of the Floater

Many of the promises made by CRT when established five years ago have turned to dust. It is nowhere close to replacing Government grant with income from 'Friends' and other charitable donations and a large financial black hole is clearly to be seen in its future as it loses Government cash, initially in 2022 then completely in 2027—a scant nine years away.

No new logo is going to change that reality. Many boaters warned of this outcome when Government dumped the waterways into the third sector—the only objective of

Peer-to-peer renting, still a problem?

Mark Tizard takes a look

A new licence category was introduced by CRT in June 2017 that enabled boats to be rented out on a long- or short-term basis. This resulted from increasing concerns being voiced by boaters and boating associations that boats were being rented to a third party, either in ignorance of the licensing requirements or because owners were choosing to ignore


the industry. However, after representations from the trade and others, CRT changed tack and introduced a new licence category a year ago, which required the rented boat to have a residential mooring (complete with appropriate planning permission). This new licence was to be accompanied by a stronger and faster enforcement process to deal with boats that didn't comply. NABO was concerned that this new licence category would have little or no effect on the rental market. Given that the problem was mainly identified in London and the Western end of the K&A, readers will not be surprised to learn that opportunities for acquiring a residential mooring that met the necessary requirements were extremely rare. One year on, we have yet to learn of any successful prosecutions, or any additional residential moorings being made available for boat rentals. So either the problem has been solved, or a box was ticked somewhere on the to-do list and the problem is deemed to have gone away.

them. Either way, renters are at risk from unscrupulous 'boatlords' who do not have the appropriate insurance, or in many cases, do not make the renter aware of general boat safety issues. Given that in some congested areas, boats can be double- or triple-moored; this also puts legitimate boaters at risk.

To address this, CRT initially thought of introducing a licence category that would allow a boat to continuously cruise and be rented out, provided that it met the more stringent safety and handover requirements associated with the hire

A quick trawl of social media shows that the market for rented boats still exists and many boats are still being rented out. The reality, we suspect, is that renting has moved further under CRT's radar. These are a couple of examples of adverts for short-term rentals from June 2018: 'Complete house on a boat with a double bed, shower room, fully equipped kitchen and a comfy living room. Warm and cosy with a fireplace. Perfect for a boat experience

Boutique Barges



An unusual and fun way to discover London - 2 beautifully refurbished and comfortable 57 ft narrowboats which can sleep up to 5

London
Greater London, England
UK

Boutique Barges - London - The Velvet Morning - Sleeps 4+1 - No Pets

June 2018

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1	2
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

July 2018

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Boutique Barges - London - Barbara

or just an affordable place to stay on a short trip to London. We are a cruising boat, so every two weeks we move around London—please check for our location when you book.'

'Two tastefully refurbished narrowboats offer an alternative place to stay whilst in London. The boats are not on permanent moorings and move every two weeks.'

Other adverts offer six-month lets in much the same way that you would expect to rent a room or a flat. Renters are often lulled into thinking that they have the same level of protection that you have when renting accommodation. The truth could not be more different: almost certainly, the boat insurance and Boat Safety Certificate will be invalid; and

the renter is often blissfully unaware of basic boat safety or maintenance requirements.

NABO is concerned that, one year on, the new licence category has not met the needs of boaters who are looking to rent, nor those who would be prepared to invest in getting the correct licence, insurance and BSS to meet this need. We suspect that the number of boats being rented continues to grow, as do the risks. CRT, local councils and the Government will no doubt face growing pressure regarding the environmental and social impacts of unregulated boats, and there is an urgent need to revisit and address this problem from a boat safety perspective.



Horse Power

One of a series of three mosaics by Scottish artist Alan Potter along Sleaford River Walk, at Sleaford in Lincolnshire, celebrating the three sources of power available to the navigation boatmen; the wind, horsepower and man himself

The Sleaford Navigation was opened in 1794. Lack of finance meant that it stopped short of its intended terminus, but it gradually grew to be successful financially.

Because of falling revenues caused by the coming of the railway to Sleaford in 1857, the Company obtained an Act of Parliament to enable it to abandon its responsibilities to maintain the Navigation. In fact trade continued on the lower part of the Navigation until the late 1940s.

The Sleaford Navigation Trust is working to restore the Sleaford Navigation from the River Witham, at Chapel Hill, through to the market town of Sleaford in Lincolnshire. Currently 8 of the 13 miles are open to full navigation although the whole length of the Navigation can be canoed.



The Upper Peak Forest Canal

Stella Ridgway continues her exploration of attractions along this canal.

Down from New Mills on the canal, you pass through Disley (or 'the Swingbridge place' as I heard some children call it—probably due to the swing-bridges at either end of the village). There are some lovely moorings here and worth a stop if you have time. Disley has a very good Chinese takeaway about a ten-minute walk from the first swing bridge you come to. The moorings are good and the towpath is hard-core. Lyme Park main entrance is also a short walk away.

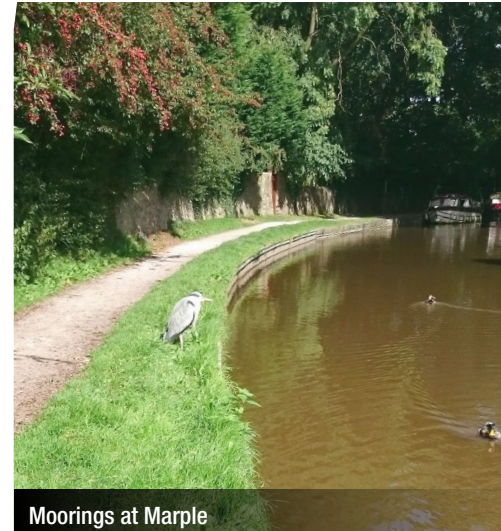
Then on to Strines: again, some nice out-of-the-way mooring places and a short stroll to the Sportsman pub from the mooring just before the winding hole.

Marple has the junction of the Peak Forest and Macclesfield canals. It is at the top of the Marple Flight and is a really nice town. There are also some lovely views to be had around about. Moor just before the footbridge (# 20) and cross it, going up the slope to the top. Turn left, walking to face oncoming traffic, through Marple Ridge and on for

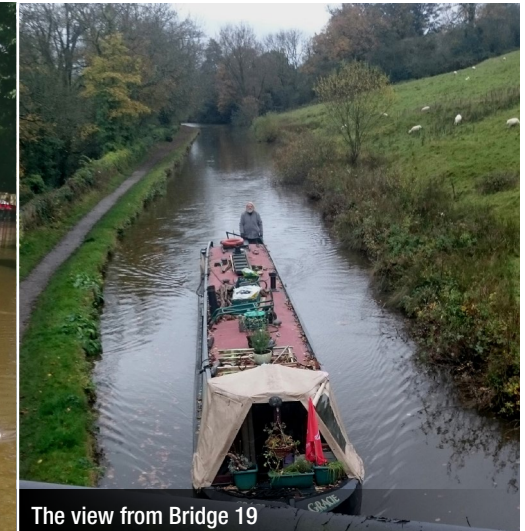
about 300 yards until you come to the, now overgrown, Marple Quarry on the opposite side of the road. It is lovely here and, if you are watchful, you will see the fairies in their tower block.

There are also some good moorings opposite the marina at Marple, but if you don't mind a ten-minute walk, moor on the bend between Bridges 19 and 20, or just after the narrow before Bridge 19. These moorings are quiet and seem as if you are in the countryside. The 358 bus stops at the bottom of the steps adjacent to Bridge 19 and travels between Stockport and Hayfield, stopping at Marple, Strines and New Mills.

Marple has an Asda store, but no longer a Co-op. There are some decent shops: Wilson's selling cheap fruit and veg adjacent to the bus stop; a laundrette near Bridge 3 on the Macclesfield Canal, which does a very good service wash; and some excellent cafés and independent bars selling real ale. At the time of writing, the Marple

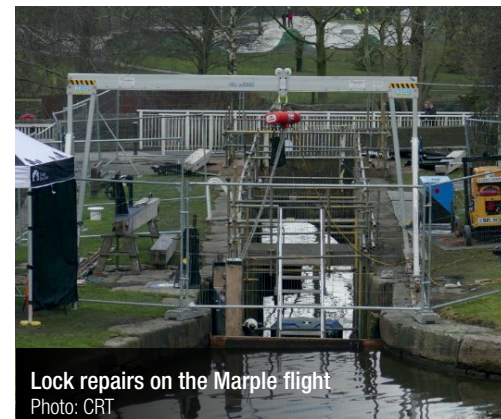


Moorings at Marple



The view from Bridge 19

Flight is only open to boats that are less than 45 feet, with the possibility that it may close completely. If you are able to get down the flight—walking it is pleasant—Brabyns Park is at the bottom of the hill, taking the path to it near Lock 7. It is a 'snake path', as the locals call it, and the smell of wild garlic is wonderful at this time of year. It is also a good place for dogs to run and swim in the River Goyt.



Lock repairs on the Marple flight
Photo: CRT



Marple Aqueduct before the railing were installed
Photo: www.penninewaterways.co.uk

TECHIES'
CORNER



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

From buckets to boats...

...digger buckets anyway, as that's what Keith Thompson usually works on.



Keith can be contacted on 07971 870083 or by email keiththesparks@gmail.com

Despite always loving boats on the water, I just seemed to lack the means to actually own one. This changed when I was in my early twenties and I saw an advert for a power-boat (in bits) in a local paper. I went to see it and recognised it as a Dowty Turbo-craft, and I remembered reading that Donald Campbell had been involved in its design. This was the first commercially produced jet-boat; 14 feet long with a six-cylinder Ford Zephyr engine connected directly to a twin-stage Dowty pump. It was capable of pumping in excess of 45 gallons of water per second through a four-inch nozzle, pushing the boat along at approximately 30 knots (35 mph). And it could travel at full speed in only four inches of water.

This was my chance of owning a

boat. I bought it for £100 and transported all the different bits home on a Transit tipper. Meanwhile, I began my two-year studies in mechanical engineering on construction plant at Bircham Newton Civil Engineering College in Norfolk. Following this, I did another two years at Stafford College on advanced engineering and diagnostic studies. In my spare time, I started to put the Dowty jet-boat back together, but I found that I lacked some parts and the necessary mechanical expertise. I had the classroom knowledge but not the practical experience. Then I started a new job, passed my heavy goods vehicle driving test, met my future wife and travelled around Australia with her; life was good but I'd forgotten about my boat project. That all changed in 1999 when my first child was born and I became a self-employed plant mechanic, so that I could spend more time with my family. My second child arrived 18 months later and, as I watched them grow, I felt the urge to take them out in a boat. I remembered my old boat and found her languishing in the corner of a field, where I'd left her some ten years previously. I'd recently completed a City and Guilds electrical course at night-school and I now felt that I had the expertise, along with finding the missing parts, to complete the project.

I rebuilt the jet unit, completely stripped and rebuilt the engine, and then made and installed a wiring loom and electrical system. I took her out on the sea in 2014, which gave me an immense feeling of achievement—and the smiles on my

two kids' faces will remain with me forever.

I am now taking the knowledge I have in the heavy plant and electrical industries and applying it to boat maintenance and repairs, trying to turn my hobby of working on boats into my job. I'm based in Evesham, Worcestershire, and work as a call-out engineer and electrician on waterways all over the Midlands.

Recent work has included fixing an electrical problem on a narrow-boat leisure battery charging system and curing prop-shaft vibration on a 42-foot Dawn Craft that is powered by two 200hp diesel engines! If you have any issues with your boat, please contact me and I will try to help as best I can.



The Dowty marine engine and pump



Dowty jet boat, sea trials in 2014

Pathe News has several films from the 1950s and 1960s about the Dowty jet-boat at britishpathe.com/workspaces/BN/Dowty.



Rewind

Issue No 4, July 2003

Howard Anguish explores NABO News from 15 years ago.

NABO at Waterway Events. Chair, Sue Burchett, mentions the NABO stand at Little Venice Cavalcade and Crick Show, reminding me that when I first joined NABO, it was considered important to have a presence at Waterway events; in fact that is how I first discovered NABO. It was great to show the flag, meet members enabling an exchange views on matters of concern, and offering the possibility of recruiting new members. It was subsequently decided to stop doing this because of the difficulties in finding volunteers for the stand. Maybe this would be something that Council could revisit?

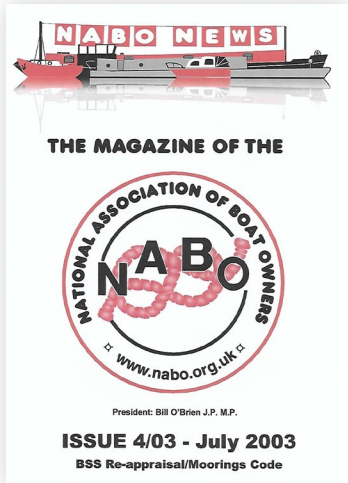
'Seems Familiar' Department: 2003! BW is merging their old 'waterway offices' into more self-sufficient 'Waterway Business Units', with, in most cases, each unit covering two or three of the old waterway areas. The existing regions will now be merged into just four: Scotland; North; South; and London. Robin Evans, BW's new Chief Executive, is adamant that the changes will bring more management staff to the 'front line', and reduce duplication of effort. He is also very keen to see much more consistency across the system, with boundaries between units becoming 'seamless'. Long-serving BW staff will have a feeling of déjà vu, as the new map looks very like the 'Area Engineer' structure of old, however the precise boundaries have yet to be finalised.

Regulations for the Sale of Diesel. April 2003 saw the introduction of the new red diesel fuel regulations—something which remains to this day. NABO was keen to explain the new procedure to members and would monitor how it settled down over the ensuing years.

Editor on the Huddersfield Narrow. Stuart Sampson, NN editor and soon to be Chairman, announced that he had traversed the Huddersfield Narrow in what he describes as the NABO News floating editorial office—aka his boat 'Sulaskar'. This was a long-awaited achievement for Stuart and his wife, Carole, who encouraged others to do the trip, while pointing out some areas where BW could improve the canal to make the trip easier and more enjoyable.

Geoffrey Rogerson predicts. Some months ago, I drew attention to the fact that a number of canals were now 'full'. As of now, (2003) some 26,000 boats are registered and approximately 1,000 new boats are being built each year. Most of the 'old' boats have gone, following the BSS. Accordingly, the current fleet is fairly stable and existing boats can be expected to be around for the next 20 or 30 years. New boats are tending to be longer (taking up more mooring space) and cruising is becoming more 'local' and 'weekend'. It is estimated that by 2007 the number of boats will be 30,000 and, by 2012, 34,000. Nice to see his crystal ball was working so well!

And finally, seen on a boat: 'Professionals built the Titanic; amateurs built Noah's Ark.'



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.

Licence evasion

Three weeks ago, I did a trip from Woodend Lock to Knowle Hill Wharf, during which I saw 27 boats without licences. When is CRT going to do something about these people, who do not pay for their licences?

Peter Butler

Editor's note:

It is a requirement of CRT's byelaws that licences are displayed on each side of a boat, but enforcement officers use the index (registration) number to check on the licence status. You can check yourself whether a boat has a licence (or if the owner has forgotten to display it) by entering the index number at <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/boating/licensing/boat-check>.

More towpath trouble

I and my disabled wife have moved onto our narrowboat 'Precious Time' to see out our remaining time on this earth. We have been on various boats throughout our working life and have noted a lot of changes, not least allowing cyclists to use the towpath. A few years ago, this was not a problem, but it has changed with time, the upgrade in cycles, and the attitude of bikers that the towpaths are theirs and everyone else should get out of their way. It has put the towpath out of bounds for my wife, grand-kids and pets. Does anyone else have problems and is anyone doing anything to sort this problem? I note that, at a recent CRT meeting, they talked about Health & Safety, but how can it be safe on a towpath with speeding cyclists mixed with pedestrians? I would love to rant on, but don't know if you want to listen, I have written to my local MP but I'm still waiting for a reply. I just wanted to know if this is something you hear about and is anything being done, or am I the only person with problems? I have to consider whether this is the life for us.

Don & Linda Hall

Mark Tizard replied on behalf of NABO:

Thank you for your email. The potential for conflict between the different users of the canals is definitely increasing, especially in areas where towpath improvements have been made. This is something NABO is very aware of and has previously raised with CRT and with the press. CRT's current focus is to increase the awareness and use of canals and towpaths, whether this is through encouraging canoeists, cyclists or other new users. This is in the belief that increased public awareness and participation will increase the likelihood of the Government renewing their funding when the current grant runs out.

It should come as no surprise to CRT that if you improve the towpath while encouraging cyclists, the speed of those cyclists will increase. Idyllic pictures of a family cycling together as portrayed by CRT are not the reality, which is often speeding commuters in urban areas or groups of mountain bikers in rural areas. You are not alone in your concerns. The more people that complain the greater the 'noise' we can make, but it's an uphill struggle as you are aware. I hope that you are a member of NABO. As a volunteer organisation we need your support. If you are not please consider joining via our website www.nabo.org.uk.

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 of several I've seen with this name, inspired by Pink Floyd.





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