



NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners
Issue 6 December 2018



URBAN MOORINGS
NEW NABO COUNCIL
CRT ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING





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Cover photo

This month's cover photo is a seasonal view at Bath Top Lock by Ian Redding.

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

Next NABO News copy date

Articles, letters, cartoons and photos are most welcome. Images in JPEG format please. Please email or post your contributions by January 28th 2018. Our email address is nabonews@nabo.org.uk

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Details of NABO's new PO Box address will be included in the January issue.

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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



Part of NABO's raison d'être is to influence navigation authorities and other organisations for the benefit of boaters. Last month, we clocked up our latest influencing success when the changes we sought to the Middle Level Bill were written into the Act, guaranteeing provision of boater services on the Nene-Ouse Link. The issue at hand is how to communicate what NABO does, and seeks to do, targeting boat owners who are not members. Many boaters, especially younger ones, now get the majority of their waterway-

Spreading the word

Editor, **Peter Fellows** explains NABO's focus on promotion and recruitment

related news and views from social media and other on-line sources. So NABO needs to further adapt the way it communicates in order to reach these boaters. If we can get our messages across effectively, we can hopefully convince many of these boaters that NABO membership will benefit both them and the waterways as a whole. To this end, the Council has made a number of changes. Ken Hylins joined the Council to take a lead on promotion and recruitment, in addition to assisting boaters who are having problems staying on the water. Alison Tuck will develop NABO's social media presence as Media Officer and Mark Tizard has become the General Secretary, while continuing his roles as Communications Officer and moderating NABO's Facebook page. We are also updating NABO's publicity material with a new flyer to hand out to boaters. Boater-to-boater recommendation

is one of the most effective recruitment tools. If you can help in letting others know about NABO and the benefits of membership, please get in touch.

Part of NABO's success is down to getting accurate, up-to-date information about what is actually happening on the ground (or on the water!) in the waterway regions, and the Council therefore decided to expand its regional representation. We need new reps for the Middle Level and River Trent, so that all the major river navigations are covered. Please let us know if you can help fill these vacancies or others shown on page 2. Another of Ken's roles is to coordinate the regional reps. Phil Goulding has become the Severn rep. and David Williams continues for now as the Thames Rep. Peter Vickers is our new North West Rep. and Mike Rodd has added Southern Waterways Rep. The other regional reps. are unchanged.

In this issue, Alison Tuck describes a new 'Urban Moorings' initiative. Fly on the Wall recounts a presentation by, and a discussion with, Adam Comerford, CRT's Hydrology Manager, at the October Council meeting. This was a useful insight into CRT's management of water resources during the summer drought and the Council gave Adam feedback on boaters' views of water resources.

Finally, it is with great sadness that I learned of the death, on 1st November, of Harry Arnold. He was always ready to help if I was stuck for a high quality photo for NABO News and he donated the images from his extensive collection, built up over 60 years as a waterways photographer.

My best wishes for a happy festive season, whether you're cruising or planning next year's adventure.



My thanks go to this year's Council members for their support and especially to Mark, Mike and Paul for attending meetings and covering for me. This year has been challenging for boaters in the North, with the North West being virtually cut off from the system. In July, there were 13 emergency or long-term stoppages due to water shortages, maintenance and pollution incidents. There are a lot of places where the canal bottom seemed too close to the top, either because it hadn't been dredged or it had not been cleared properly after a stoppage. Some maintenance works were done during the stoppages, so the winter closures might not be as long in some areas

CRT announced redundancies just after last year's AGM; it appeared to be the longest consultation on record as new posts were not confirmed until June. Although the licence review was released as predicted, the London Mooring Strategy was not and it appeared that the Trust was just a bit lost. Certainly the logo fiasco needs learning from, as it has alienated the very people, the boaters, that the Trust needs onside as it repositions itself as a 'waterways and wellbeing' charity.

The decision to make management decisions more regional has resulted in winter moorings also being organised regionally this winter, with some bizarre decisions; there doesn't appear to be any rhyme nor reason about some. So disbanding the Mooring and Licensing National Advisory Group seems to have been premature. The year finishes with a further 200+ roles 'at risk', as CRT moves central roles to regional posts. I hope that these do not take a year to be sorted, as the director's roles did.

In July, I expressed the need for the Trust to listen to boaters, instead of bundling us together with all the other 'customers of the towpath' and engage with boaters, boaters reps. to Council and boaters' organisations. While we have had some very good discussions with the Boating Team and the Head of Customer Service, there no longer seems to be an overarching brief to put boaters front and centre in the 'non-boating' areas of the Trust.

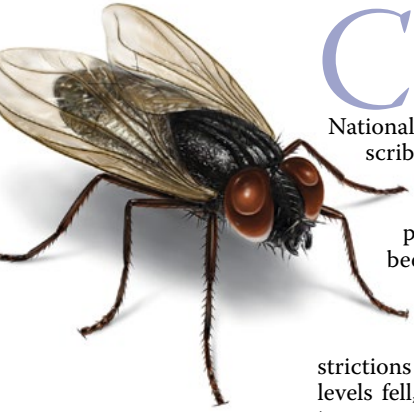
A challenging year

Stella Ridgway reviews the last twelve months

So marketing, PR and the Press Office Council and boaters are still not being included in decision making. Even though the Boating Team might take our suggestions on board, other parts of the Trust do not, resulting in boaters feeling even more disenfranchised. The Executive Team wants and needs boaters and their organisations to get onside with the wellbeing agenda to encourage the Government to continue the grant. I am afraid that this year the alienation of boaters has been rather more successful and it will take a great deal of work to make this right.

The lack of inclusion of boaters and Council in decision making is an ongoing theme in Council and is at the top of the elected reps' agenda—so watch this space to see if this is listened to and acted on. Let us hope that with the new regional structure we can have a good collaborative relationship. (For those old enough to remember, this is a return to the BW structure of 20 years ago).

Finally, my thanks go to former Chair, Sue Burchett, and to General Secretary, Richard Carpenter, who resigned this year. We thank them both for their service.



Council and guest members met at Tamworth Cruising Club in October. Dr Adam Comerford, CRT's National Hydrology Manager, described the effects of this year's summer drought and heat-wave on water supplies. Most navigations had been kept open for boating by closely monitoring reservoir levels, introducing progressively greater restrictions to lock operations as water levels fell, and using back-pumping in some areas. But the North West was severely affected by low reservoir levels and infrastructure failures on the Middlewich Branch, the L&L, Macclesfield and Peak Forest canals, which resulted in extensive long-term closures. In the Midlands,

Fly on the wall

Observes proceedings at Council meetings in October and after the November AGM

NABO calendar 2019

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

The dates for Council meetings in 2019 are as follows: January 20th, March 17th, April 28th, June 23rd, September 1st, October 13th, November 17th (includes AGM).

South East and South West, extensive back-pumping allowed these canals to remain open, even if lock passages were restricted. A wide-ranging discussion then covered future challenges, including new environmental legislation, under which CRT now has to apply to use water resources that were previously freely available. The use of canals for new water transfer schemes for utility companies may help improve waterway infrastructure and water depth. The discussion also included management of water leakages, dredging and lock-gate repairs. NABO made it clear that boaters had little sympathy when leaking gates caused navigational problems and were a hazard in the operation of the lock itself. There were also issues surrounding the publicity

given to the water-saving measures and closures. Adam said that if they produced drought notices too early, the hire trade accused them of scare-mongering, which impacted on their bookings. Changes in CRT's senior management were also discussed, noting the new focus on localism, with the Waterway Directors being given greater responsibility for the condition of their waterways, including water depth, and greater local control over management of resources. CRT does spot-dredge if enough people complain, so if members know of a stretch where the bottom is too close to the top, they should let CRT know.

The EA has published a timetable for implementation of registration fee increases before the 'consultation' has ended. Also, a Defra consultation on air quality in towns and cities may impact boaters who use solid fuel stoves and run their engines to charge batteries, despite pollution from these being insignificant, compared to emissions from road vehicles.

The new Council met after the AGM in November. To save money and reduce its pension liability, CRT is introducing new pension packages that are less favourable. As a result, longstanding CRT staff are taking voluntary redundancy, with the consequent loss of their knowledge and expertise. Some winter mooring prices are comparable to marina charges, but the high-priced moorings are the ones that sell out first. There are also continuing problems with canoeists in tunnels, the latest being Saltisford Tunnel with its notorious kink that hides the canoes. Over the coming months, NABO will arrange meetings with the new Regional Waterway Directors to develop closer working relationships. Festive greetings and bye-bye until 2019.



Stella Ridgway

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Paul Howland

Co-Vice Chair



Helen Hutt

Treasurer



David Fletcher

Webmaster, NAG (Operations) and BSS Rep.



Mike Road

Legal Affairs and BSS Rep.



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NABO News Editor



Phil Goulding

Continuous Cruising Rep.



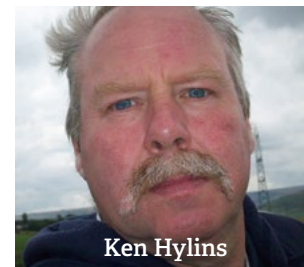
Mark Tizard

Co-Vice Chair, NAG (Licensing and Moorings), Communications Officer, Moorings Rep.



Alison Tuck

Media Officer, NAG (Operations) and West Midlands Waterways Rep.



Ken Hylins

Promotion and Recruitment, Assistant for the Disabled

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

Membership and Web Issues

Webmaster **David Fletcher** gently chivies the membership

We can report that the new online membership system continues to work well and is signing up new members every month. Members with email addresses are now receiving an acknowledgement when their subscription record is updated with any renewal. This is not automated, but follows the Treasurer checking bank accounts and reporting, usually weekly, and the membership team then updating the database. This might be ten days after an electronic transfer, but much much longer if you send a cheque by post. If the membership team are away or do not have internet access, then all this may well take longer. We do not stop sending out bulletins and NABO News at the end of a subscription, because we know that boaters are not always able to get mail or email, and time is needed.

Very few members now use cheques for payment, and we are grateful for this, as electronic payments considerably reduce our administrative workload. We like standing orders and direct bank transfers; all are safe for members and are easily set up.

Trials have also started of automated email reminders for subscription renewals and members with renewals from November have been receiving them. Formats will change as we gain confidence and receive members' feedback. At the moment these will be in parallel with the longstanding system and are for extra information. If you look at your email regularly please elect to receive renewals by email. You can do this by updating your profile on-line or send a message by 'Contact us'.

We have also made some changes to the website, using the latest software for security, and making the pages friendlier to use on small screens. We cannot possibly test all combinations of browser and hardware, so if you have problems, please tell us.

GDPR is a continuing issue for us. 75% of members have responded, but the balance remains a challenge. Those with an email address have been sent numerous messages asking for

agreement. If we don't get a rejection message, we cannot tell if the message has not been opened, sent to spam, ignored, or has not been delivered; such are the quirks of email. Everyone has seen the notices in previous issues of NABO News. When members' annual renewal notices are sent out, if there is no record of GDPR acceptance, we will request agreement at that time. In the event of no response, this is a serious issue for individual members and we will have to consider in Council what action to take. The GDPR laws are there to protect members, but it is difficult to manage when we get no response and guidance. We will also continue to run 'sweep-up' mailings to email and post so that we can complete this important approval early next year. If you are not on-line or do not have an email address, don't worry. We will continue to use paper postage to manage your membership, including GDPR. But please, please read and respond to the letters we send to you. GDPR applies to you because we hold your data—even if you do not use email.

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North West Waterways David Fletcher



I attended a Forum meeting in November at Anderton. This is the first (for me) under the new regime and was hosted by the Regional Director, Daniel Greenhalgh. He is a good guy, a proper civil engineer who knows about canals and fixing them. I think we should support him all we can. There were the usual presentations and, for the NW having had the Middlewich breach, double lock collapse on the Peak Forest, dredging the Weaver and Marsh lock, a culvert failure



North West Regional Director,
Daniel Greenhalgh

on the L&L, multiple towpath deaths in central Manchester, and no water all summer, there were plenty of big items to talk about.

And this was the flavour of the meeting. No time to talk about the local bits and pieces, veg plans, toilets, waterpoints, dredging etc., and the parish pump things that we could do on the old scheme, when the meeting covered the Shropshire Union, Llangollen and the Weaver only. There were representatives from the Macclesfield, Huddersfield, L&L, Trent and Mersey, Rochdale etc. All very interesting, but not my immediate concern.

So the first impact of CRT decentralisation is more centralisation for me, the user. Not good. And then there were the usual wellbeing and branding presentations, which just upset the boating user population, who understand the importance, but cannot get their heads around all this distraction when there is maintenance, water saving and serious boating to be done.

The meeting was held in a tent at the bottom of the park. The wind was blowing hard throughout and the projector attached to the tent roof

was leaping about all the time. It made us all quite seasick with the words and pictures rocking and rolling. In the meeting it was reported that:

- Lock 11 at Marple needs a complete rebuild next year with piling both sides and then reconstruction.
- Lock 4 at Hurleston will be rebuilt on the towpath side with piling and then reconstructed.
- The L&L is still short of water and may need restrictions to continue.
- The plan is to get the breach repair at Middlewich open before Christmas and finished in the New Year.
- The lock gate on the Weaver will be floated out, repaired by splicing and replaced.

Around the regions: NABO's regional reps

There are a few items that were not covered in the meeting. South of Nantwich on the Shroppie, Network Rail is working on a rail bridge (89A), cleaning and painting, and the canal is closed during November and early December.

This is a big job and there is a substantial camp installed on the west side of the bridge. The span is low and double-track width and will be full of scaffolding; hence the full closure. Obviously, the north end of the Shroppie is now isolated, unless you fancy the Manchester Ship Canal.

At the Nantwich aqueduct, the handrailing on the water side of the towpath has been removed. This not an original feature, having been added in 2004 as part of a local council towpath improvement project. This removal is subject to a listed building consent application and is contrary to previous promises by CRT to repair the handrails. For two years, they have been strapped up with wooden boards and clamp-bolts; apparently the repair is too hard for them. The towpath over the aqueduct is quite narrow and uneven underfoot, due to the original ribbed brick set flooring. The good thing is that cyclists will be unlikely to ride over the surface. Let us see what the County Council think.

EA registration charges increase...

The EA consultation ran for six weeks in July and August 2018 and the results were published in November. There were 441 responses (from a boating population in excess of 34,000—a response rate of around 1.3%). Unsurprisingly, 86% of respondents kept their boats on EA waters, with the majority (64%) owning motor cruisers and 17% owning narrowboats.

Overall, 51% of respondents strongly disagreed/disagreed with the need to increase EA boat registration charges in order to maintain the navigation service. However, there was variation in responses from boaters on individual waterways: 88% of Upper Medway users strongly disagreed/disagreed with the increases, as did 87% of Anglian waterway users and 62% of Thames users. 81% of all respondents strongly agreed/agreed that the boat registration charge is important in the overall cost of owning or operating their boat/s.

When asked about the services that were most important, the top eight ranked were: channel dredging (66%); drinking water supply (41%); compliance and enforcement checks (39%); assisted passage (staff to operate locks) (38%); tree and vegetation clearance (35%); routine

patrolling by river (33%); short stay/overnight moorings (28%) and pumpout/chemical toilet disposal (28%). Nearly half of respondents (48%) said they did not feel confident that the EA is working to secure a sustainable funding future for the waterways that it manages. The main reasons were poor services/facilities (53%), (the need to) seek other funding streams (37%), (EA should) act like a business/be efficient (35%), more/better compliance and enforcement activity (32%), and all or some charges are too high or should be reduced (28%).

So having received a clear message that the majority of boaters do not agree with the increases in registration fees and many do not regard the EA as being able to manage its waterways effectively, the EA concluded: “Although the majority of respondents did not agree with the level of increase we proposed, they were very clear they did not want to see any decrease in service levels. And some respondents felt the service is not currently meeting expectations. Operational costs are rising so we can only maintain service levels if our overall funding position improves. After careful consideration, we will implement the increases we proposed.”

New Leeds Wharf

David Lowe, Chairman of the CBOA reports on commercial freight developments in the North East

The Commercial Boat Operators Association (CBOA), the national trade organisation for operators of barges and other commercial craft on the UK's inland waterways, has welcomed the news that the West Yorkshire Combined Authority has agreed to provide £3.17m towards building a new wharf at Stourton on the Aire & Calder Navigation as part of the Port of Leeds project.

For some time, CRT, strongly encouraged by CBOA, has been reviewing the building of a new wharf, with room for either one or two barges to be tied alongside, depending on demand. The site is well-located logistically, being close to the mo-

torway and rail connections. The new wharf will be able to handle sea-dredged aggregates brought by barge to Leeds from the Humber. Steel and timber products are also possibilities, along with other goods imported via the Humber ports.

With modest improvements to the navigation, barges will be able to bring containers to Stourton, thus relieving traffic congestion on the M62 and reducing pollution. Existing barges can carry up to 550 tonnes: the equivalent of 27 lorries, each carrying 20 tonnes. With the navigational improvements, it will be possible to bring Euro-Class 11 barges across from Europe, which can carry 650 tonnes.

... and at CRT

Alison Tuck has done some digging and does the maths.

Following the licensing consultation, which CRT stated was intended to be revenue neutral, in a recent press release, Jon Horsfall, Head of Customer Services (we no longer have a Head of Boating), announced that there was to be no increase next year.

This was, of course, a nice piece of PR spin, as the vast majority of boaters who take advantage of the prompt payment discount will have a 5% year-on-year increase in their licence fee from April 2019 as the discount has been halved. Boat licences account for 14% of CRT's income (£10m from business licences and £20.4m from private licences). That in itself annoys me as the hire fleet has such a massive say in all things CRT, yet private boaters are ignored. Also, if you look at the figures in the Annual Report, it says there are 34,207 licenced boats and the average licence fee is £630. If you do that calculation, the revenue from private licences should be £21,550,410, yet they state it is £20.4m. There are so many discrepancies in the Annual Report that it's hard to see what's right. Anyhow, if you take the £20.4m

figure and, assuming a 90% uptake of the prompt payment discount (and if everything else stays the same as 2017/2018), the new revenue from reducing the prompt payment discount to 5% will be £21,318,000 – in other words, an additional revenue of just under £1,000,000. This compares to an inflation hike of 3%, which would give CRT a £600,000 revenue increase (Note: these figures do not include business licences).

And here's something else: the volunteer hour's calculation. The Annual Report states that it costs £19.7m for volunteer management (page 39) and the number of volunteers' hours is recorded as 616,300 (page 7). That works out at a cost to CRT of £31.96 per hour. One Key Performance Indicator in the Defra grant is the number of volunteer hours. If CRT doesn't hit KPI targets, no grant from the Government. They have spent £19.7m to get that KPI. Also, the money spent on volunteers works out at 9.6% of income generated. So, basically, the private boat licence income pays for volunteers! And the spare change can go to maintenance.



CRT Annual Public Meeting

Andrew Tidy picks out the juicy bits

In September, CRT held its sixth Annual Public Meeting at the Austin Court Theatre, a stone's throw from Old Turn Junction in central Birmingham.

The meeting was led by Allan Leighton, the Chair of the Trust, with CEO, Richard Parry, and his senior team providing a series of presentations to highlight the achievements and challenges over the last year. They also outlined the key elements in the plan for the year ahead. These presentations were followed by a Q&A session from the floor. I can't hope to capture everything that was said, but here are the stand-outs as I saw them:

Allan Leighton



- Income stands at £204.9m, an increase of 5% after allowing for exceptional one-off grant income received last year.
- Volunteer activity grew to 600,000 hours.
- The aim is to develop CRT from a 'national asset' to a 'national treasure'.
- Wider use of the waterways can make a real difference to national wellbeing.
- The heart of activities remains, and will always remain, navigation.
- The regions have been trimmed to six, each with a new director.
- A new brand identity has been delivered in line with the new objectives.
- Asset quality continues to improve.
- Investment values have grown from £480m when the Trust began to £750m today.
- 225 local adoptions are now operating.



Stuart Mills (Chief Investment Officer)



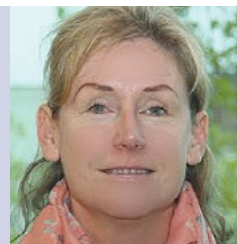
- The Defra grant represents 25% of income, assured for nearly ten years.
- Investment income now generates £50m.
- The Trust has been following a strategy to diversify investment away from its property bias.
- Investment income has increased 40% in six years, beating market averages.
- Non-property investment values were adversely impacted by exchange rates last year.
- A bond issue for £150m concluded, releasing an extra £100m for investment and locking into a 3% interest rate for 30 years.
- Additional investment will generate a net £2m to £3m income pa.
- The BWML sale is nearly complete.
- Inclusion in the Peoples Postcode Lottery as a preferred beneficiary has seen grant income increase from £3m to £6m.
- There are now 27,000 active friends.
- Boat numbers are up by 2%.

John Horsfall (Head of Customer Services)



- The licence review had 11,000 responses.
- The London boating strategy had 2,000 responses.
- Business licensing has been automated.
- Evasion rates are down to 3.1%—the lowest yet. This is attributed to a focus on helping people to stay on the water, rather than harsher tactics.
- 70% of boaters are satisfied with CRT—below the 72% target and slightly down from last year.
- The licensing changes were explained.
- A caveat to look at high-usage areas was flagged up, given the rapid growth in boat numbers in some locations.

Julie Sharman (Chief Operating Officer)



- Health and safety has high priority with incidents being monitored daily.
- Among staff there is typically one reportable incident per month that results in a 7-day absence.
- There were 313 public incidents (not all are brought to CRT's attention). 9% relate to CRT asset deficiencies.
- Fatalities have declined from an average of 60ish p.a. to 40 p.a. today. Common reasons for public deaths are misadventure, alcohol and substance abuse.

CRT's video of the meeting is available here: www.facebook.com/canalrivertrust/videos/2207349929289687/ and a full report is on their website here: canalrivertrust.org.uk/meetings/29160-canal-and-river-trust-annual-public-meeting-2018.

Richard Parry



- A key aim is to broaden the appeal of inland waterways.
- 250 miles have been awarded Green Flag status (K&A, Lancaster and Chesterfield canals). The plan is to move this achievement to urban areas where the benefits are greatest.
- CRT spends £150m p.a. on the network.
- Stoppage update: Middlewich should reopen in December and Marple in March 2019.
- Progress is being made on the historic boat collection in Ellesmere.

Adam Comerford (National Hydrology Manager)

- Described the impacts of this year's low rainfall and the high temperatures. 10% of network was impacted by closures or restrictions.
- 2018 will probably set a new benchmark for water shortages.

Nicky Wakefield (Marketing)

- Rebranding repositioned the Trust as a waterways and wellbeing charity.
- The new brand works better on digital platforms.
- The total cost was 0.1% of income or about £200,000. £60k was spent on the logo, £50k on digital templates, £20k on signage, £30k on uniforms and £50k on launch events.
- Initial results after three months: awareness of CRT for those within 1km of a waterway increased from 47% to 55%, recall of messages from signage is up from 6% to 9%, website visits are up by over 10%, and propensity to pledge tangible support is up from 2.1m to 2.8m. These are very positive outcomes and will continue to be monitored closely.

Questions and Answers

These came thick and fast and the best I can do is summarise the key questions as I understood them, to give a flavour of the subject matters:

- Future funding plans/sources.
- Protection for vulnerable boat dwellers.
- Best practice sharing among regional boards.
- Cyclists and space issues.
- Wide-boat licensing fee increases (including a petition against these).
- Opportunities for CRT to influence beyond the canal corridor.
- Need to safeguard the built canalside heritage.
- Facility issues including refuse collections.

Contacting CRT

CRT has summarised the ways in which boaters can get in touch to report a problem or ask a question:

- 1 **by phone** to the Customer Services Team on 0303 040 4040 (030 numbers are for not-for-profit organisations and charities and cost no more than calls to geographic (01 and 02) numbers);
- 2 **by email form** or **by Live Chat** using a pop-up support box on the web-page at canalriver-trust.org.uk/contact-us/ways-to-contact-us. CRT states that it will respond to emails within five working days, so for urgent queries use the Live Chat or the phone number.
- 3 **by Tweet** to [@CRTcontactus](https://twitter.com/CRTcontactus); 4) by writing to CRT Head Office at Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes, MK9 1BB.

More reorganisation

As part of its 'waterways and wellbeing' strategy, CRT is planning to move some centrally managed activities to the six new 'customer-facing' regional teams. The aim is to improve customer service and to respond to the needs of the local waterway and surrounding communities.

The changes will affect around 240 CRT staff, whose existing professional, supervisory

- Leaving space for fishermen between moored boats.
- Pressures on shared water space with non-boaters (e.g. rowing).
- Limitations in growth of residential moorings.
- Anticipated inclusions/exclusions in the review of high-usage areas.
- Tone of solicitor's correspondence to vulnerable boaters.
- CRT involvement in Icknield Port Loop development in Birmingham.

I think that's about all I can remember—any errors or omissions are entirely my fault and can be attributed to advancing age and very bad handwriting.

No, it's not April 1st

CRT has won an award for 'Openness in Reporting' at the Building Public Trust in Corporate Reporting Awards, which celebrate organisations that are leading the way in the openness of their communications to stakeholders.

The focus of the award was on charities that clearly articulate what they do, why their activities are important, what their outcomes have been and what their plans are for the future.



and management roles are now 'at risk'. There will also be an overall reduction in the number of senior managers. Waterway operatives, team leaders and volunteer leaders are not affected by the changes.

A period of consultation with trade unions will give those affected the opportunity to discuss their aspirations and preferred outcomes.

Middle Level success

As reported in the July issue of NABO News, NABO petitioned to ensure that boaters' services would be maintained on the Middle Level and that this should be written into the Act. The Middle Level Bill went through the House of Lords' Parliamentary process and their amendments were considered and agreed by the House of Commons on 16th October.

The Bill received Royal Assent and was enacted on 1st November. In response to NABO's petition, the Middle Level Commissioners wrote to the Lords, undertaking "to spend at least 25% of the annual income received from charges ... on providing facilities on the Nene-Ouse Navigation Link, which meet the current Minimum Standards for the Provision of Facilities for Boaters as published by the Inland



Waterways Association ..."

Boaters on the Middle Level will now have to pay a licence fee, have a BSS certificate and be insured.

Details of the Act are available at services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/middlelevel.html.

Islington eco-mooring zone

CRT and Islington Council are to create an 'eco-mooring zone' for visiting boats between York Way and Danbury Street on the Regent's Canal from October 2019. With Defra's support, the zone will have electric charging points to provide boaters with an alternative to running generators for power or running their engines to charge batteries.

This is part of a response to dangerous levels of air pollution in the city, although there is clear evidence that the impact of boat emissions is minimal compared to pollution from road vehicles. CRT claims that: "The people most at risk from engine fumes are boaters themselves. Using cleaner sources of energy, like electric charging points, will benefit boaters' health." It adds: "Boaters live close to nature and many are keen to embrace 'green' initiatives like solar panels and clean fuel. The new eco-mooring zone will enable boaters to reduce their reliance on using their engines for energy and to embrace a green-

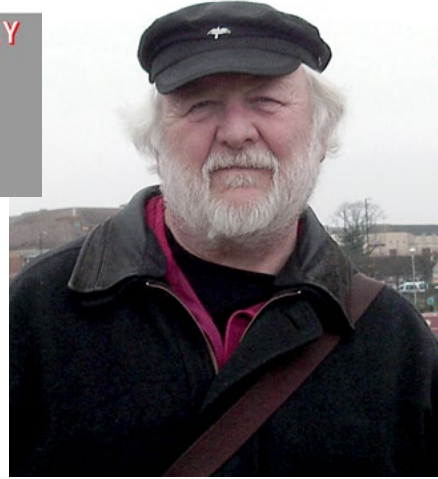
er way of life." For the next two years, running of diesel engines or generators will be banned.

After this, CRT will evaluate progress "ahead of the implementation of the full restrictions planned for the eco-mooring zone". Although some boaters see the introduction of electric bollards as a way of helping them to be more eco-friendly, others see it as part of the gentrification of the canal in Islington, where there are frequent complaints from canalside home owners about engine noise and fumes. The development will prevent boaters without mains electric systems from mooring there.

CRT also says that there will be: "... a progressive encouragement for boaters mooring here to move from burning of solid fuels to using electricity for their heating and cooking." The Trust and the Council will work with the boating community to identify the support required to move fully to electrical power, including offering training and technical advice.

THE FLOATER JUST WON'T GO AWAY

As a journalist for the past 50 years, I decided that, if no-one else was able to hold Canal & River Trust to account, I could use my set of skills to attempt to tell the real stories behind the unrelentingly positive spin being churned out by its dozen or so public relations officers. I wanted boaters to know the real numbers, the stories of harassment and incompetence, behind the managerial gobbledegook and corporate bullshit. We have had results – you



Floater sinks

Thorn in the CRT side [Peter Underwood](#) takes his last bow in The Floater November 24th

always know you are getting somewhere when you are threatened with legal action and senior executives start telling lies about you. And yet, and yet....

Despite the flim flam figures in C&RT's annual report, less is being spent on the essentials of navigation and the number of unplanned stoppages is soaring – to the point that the Trust has had to go to amazing lengths to fiddle the figures, as The Floater has explained. I suppose my hope was that boaters would join together to bring pressure to bear on C&RT, especially after it completely changed its priorities away from navigation into the ludicrous con-

cept of 'wellbeing' in the desperate hope that it would persuade a government that has already washed its hands of the waterways, to provide cash for walkers, cyclists, fishermen and all the others it aims to drag onto the towpaths. C&RT doesn't want to give priority to boats and navigation; we have steadily fallen down its priorities.

So my dilemma was whether I had the energy and commitment to carry on researching and writing what were, in essence, the same stories over and over again. The answer is that I have decided I can't be arsed to carry on. Boaters have had enough information by now to be in little doubt that C&RT has been transformed into a hollow husk, populated by over-paid executives who want nothing to do with real boaters and waterways. The trajectory is downhill. I am a boater, and a liveaboard and will remain one, but I am now going to get what I can out of the system before it slowly closes down or C&RT is forced to hand it back to government. So there will be no more news stories from The Floater website, which I am mothballing.

River Severn Fish Passes

A new project will allow fish to access parts of the River Severn for the first time in centuries. The project is being managed by CRT, the Severn Rivers Trust, the EA and Natural England, with funding of £10.8m from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £6m from the European Union LIFE programme.

It will reopen 158 miles of the River Severn to fish, by creating routes around barriers that currently prevent migration to spawning grounds. This will help to secure the future of many declining and protected fish species, especially the threatened twaite and allis shad, which were a staple food hundreds of years ago. These two shad species, along with sea- and river-lamprey, have been unable to migrate beyond Diglis since the installation of locks and weirs in the 1700s, and became extinct in the upper reaches of the river. The project will install 'state of the art' fish

passes on four weirs on the River Severn and fish passage improvements at two sites on the River Teme.

The 'Unlocking the Severn for People and Wildlife' project will also offer heritage, education and science programmes that aim to reconnect eight million local people with the river. This includes working with over 200 school classes and 100 community groups and creating thousands of volunteering opportunities. The project also aims to attract more visitors to the region and boost the local tourist economy. Recreational fishing on the River Severn contributes £13.5m per year to the local economy and the project is expected to increase this by £4m.

Work began at Powick Weir and Knightsford Bridge Weirs in July and work at Diglis, Holt, Bevere and Lincomb Weirs will be carried out over the next three years.



Harry Arnold

Inland waterway photographer, journalist, author and historian, Harry Arnold, passed away on November 1st after a lifetime of extraordinary contributions to the waterways. They were in his blood: he had a line of skippers in his family going back to 1770, operating Sailing Flats and motor barges on Merseyside and the Irish Sea. He started as a partner in a horse-drawn hostel-boat on the Bridgewater Canal, before moving into boat hire and narrowboat building. He later became a stalwart supporter, advocate, restorer and chronicler of the waterways. He was a founder owner of *Waterways World*, the owner of *Narrow Boat* magazine, and he edited a number of publications, including *Motor Boats Monthly*, *Canal and Riverboat*, the *Inland Waterways Guide*, *Motor Cruiser*

and IWA's magazine, *Waterways*.

Trading as 'Waterway Images', his company undertook photographic, publicity and consultancy work for hire-boat companies and with the IWA to promote the national campaign against government cuts to navigation authorities' budgets.

Harry undertook all types of photographic work for BW and CRT and produced two of their annual calendars. Civil engineering photography and old working craft were his particular specialities, using his wide-ranging knowledge of waterway history and construction. His photographs record the changing waterway places, craft and people over 60 years. Harry was also a waterway consultant for TV and radio programmes for the BBC and other production companies and authored two books: *The Montgomery*

Harry with the daughters of Jack Roberts at the launch of Jack's autobiography as a Shropshire Union Fly-Boat captain. Harry was President of The Shropshire Union Fly-Boat Project and was lucky enough to know Jack and learn horse boating skills from him



Canal and its Restoration and *The Llangollen Canal*.

He energetically supported many waterway charities and organisations, leading campaigns to promote and protect canals and their heritage. He was central to setting up the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port and worked on major BW projects, including the Anderton Boat Lift restoration.

He was a trustee of the Montgomery Waterway Restoration Trust, a chairman of the Shropshire Union Canal Society, chairman and vice-president of the Trent and Mersey Canal Society, an honorary life member of the Sankey Canal Restoration Society and the Friends of President. A specialist in historic craft, he was Chairman of the Shropshire Union Fly-boat



Harry was a stalwart of the Trent and Mersey Canal Society and campaigned for the restoration and reopening of the Anderton Lift. This photo is of Lindsay, Aberystwyth and Cypress at the top of the lift in July 1962
Photo: Harry Arnold /Waterways Images

Restoration Society and a trustee/director and President of the Saturn fly-boat project. He was also one of the founders of the Narrow Boat Trust. He was made Honorary Life Member of the Bridgewater Motor Boat Club for campaigning to support the Bridgewater Canal and north-west waterways. He was the

IWA Vice President and served on many IWA committees, including the National Council,

Harry received an MBE in 2010 for the significant role he played in protecting the inland waterways. In 2015 CRT presented him with its first 'Outstanding Personal Achievement Award'.

BSS Incident and Accidents 2018

Compiled by **Rob McLean**, BSS Communications Manager from investigative work by **Dave Washer**, BSS Technical Assistant

The BSS has published a review of 85 incidents and accidents on inland waterways from January to October. All victims in the fatal reports were liveaboards. In February, a narrowboat owner died in fire that started when embers fell from the stove through its open door onto a rug and wooden floor. There was no smoke alarm and the death was related to carbon monoxide and smoke inhalation. Alcohol consumption

fuel stoves include:

- A cruiser went under a bridge and the stove chimney hit the structure. The chimney and stove collapsed and set fire to the whole boat. The BSS had long expired.
- An intense fire developed when the wooden surround to a stove caught fire on rental boat.
- The activation of a CO alarm on a narrowboat prompted the owner to check the cause and discover a cracked stove body.
- A rotating cowl on the chimney of a solid-fuel stove lost its wind-vane when rivets and a weld failed and the cowl remained in one position, facing the wind. The wind was strong enough to create a back-draught and CO escaped into the cabin and set off the CO alarm.

In March, a liveaboard owner died in his cruiser when it caught fire and exploded in a marina. Three other boats were damaged in the fire, one completely destroyed.

The fire investigator concluded that, although the cause is unknown, it was most probably accidental and could have been ignition from an electrical appliance or electrical cables, ignition from cooking activities, a leak of gas supplying the cooker, or careless use of matches, lighters or candles. The lifestyle of the victim, and in particular the cluttered environment within the boat, may have been contributory factors in his subsequent inability to escape from the fire.

A marina security camera recorded the rapid spread of the fire within four minutes: 18:00 Light

may have been a factor. The stove had a broken catch, which meant that the door was not restrained and allowed uncontrolled air to enter the stove, as well as allowing the burning contents to fall out. The hearth did not meet BS8511:2010 to extend well forward from the door and there was no upstand at the outer edges to prevent burning fuels reaching combustible materials on the floor.

Other incidents related to solid

Serious incidents 2018

A major injury is a person treated at hospital

Type of incident	Fatalities	Major injuries
Explosion/fire, petrol, gas, fume ignition	3	12
Carbon monoxide poisoning	-	4
MOB/capsize/collision / sinking	2	6
Other personal injuries	-	7
Total	5	29

appeared within the boat when a light was switched on as darkness approached; 19:52 Light within boat gradually dimmed—the fire may have started and produced smoke which obscured the light within boat; 19:53 Light increased in intensity due to a developing fire; 19:54 Light inside the boat flares up significantly. The fire becomes more ventilated leading to growing intensity; 19:55 Significant flare up in the boat—possibly gas bottles exploding; 19:56 Increased flames around the boat and coming from the top of it as the fire broke through the canopy. The clarity of CCTV footage then decreases due to glare from the flames.

In April, there were major injuries to two adults and a child, including serious burns, when a cruiser exploded. There are reports of it being a gas explosion although there are also anecdotes of a smell of petrol. The private boat had a BSS Certificate issued three years earlier. In other fires related to electrical systems, a narrowboat battery on a two-year old boat exploded when a cell overheated under charge while the engine was idling. Shards of casing and battery acid were scattered. A cable shorted out on the engine block of a cruiser, causing a spark and igniting combustible materials. The engine had been replaced within the previous 12 months.

Faulty CO alarms

Following media reports about non-working, imported CO alarms sold on internet shopping sites, the BSS cautioned boaters that choosing the right CO alarm is an especially critical decision, as boats can fill within minutes, sometimes seconds, with lethal levels of the highly toxic gas.

The BSS and the Council of Gas Detection and Environment Monitoring (CoGDEM) urge boaters to choose an alarm that has been independently tested and certified by the British Standards Institution (BSI). Look for the Kitemark on the alarm or packaging, or look for the Loss Prevention Certification Board (LPCB) Certification Mark. CO alarms certified to BS EN 50291-2 are the best choice for boats, but if you already have a CO alarm that is certified to BS EN 50291, or 50291-1, CoGDEM's advice is to keep it, test it regularly and choose a unit certified to BS EN 50291-2 when it needs replacing.



According to Which magazine the Topolek GEHS007AW CO alarm (£14.99), though a bestseller on Amazon, failed to detect CO in more than 80% of tests.



BS EN 50291:2 Recreational

This part defines additional testing required for carbon monoxide detectors, which are likely to be subject to movement or vibration during their lifespan. Therefore alarms conforming to this standard tend to be more robust than alarms simply carrying the part one of BS EN 50291.

Some alarms are not recommended for use on boats and a list of recommended alarms that are suitable is available at www.boatsafetyscheme.org/media/294453/boat-co-alarms-may-18.pdf

Protecting Birmingham's Canal Heritage

Peter Fellows reports on a push to create a Planning Conservation Area to protect the central canals

Further information in
The Floater 26/9/2018

The currently stalled attempt to build a 12-storey block of flats on the site of The Flapper pub on Birmingham's Cambrian Wharf has led to a bid to protect all of the city's central canals by creating Planning Conservation Areas.

Dr Ted Hiscock, a GP in the city for four decades and now an artist, has found that although some areas, like Gas Street, are protected, many other parts of the city's canals are not. These include Cambrian Basin and the Farmers Bridge flight of locks.

"The canal basin with residential moored boats, a canalside pub and six late-18th Century Grade 2 Listed canalside mews cottages, namely Kingston Row, are links with the industrial past of Birmingham's canals."

He has produced an academic paper for the City Council, CRT and Historic England that high-

lights the lack of official protection for Birmingham's canals. "I took it to Birmingham's only Conservation Officer, who implied it doesn't stand a chance of receiving recommendation by the Council. I have made an application to Historic England to list the Farmers flight of locks and that shabby organisation sent me the standard refusal letter, saying it is not a National Monument and has no historical heritage."

"Research demonstrated that only 8% of Birmingham's canals are protected by conservation, and some of those that are designated are neglected. This proposal would extend the canals under conservation by 12km, making a 17km network under a designated Conservation Area, or 30% of the city's navigable canals. These would include: Birmingham & Wolverhampton (2.5km); Icknield Loop (1.25km); Soho Loop (2.25km); Birmingham & Fazeley (2.25km); Digbeth Loop (0.75km) and Worcester & Birmingham (3km). If the Lapal Canal from Selly Oak (Battery Park Junction) to Weoley Castle were also to be included, a further 2.25km would be added". He wants the city's Planning Department to be more sensitive to the ecological, historical and conservation needs of the canal network and be more selective about architectural styles and designs of canal margin architecture. He is now gathering public support for the idea from CRT, MPs, the National Trust,



Gas Street is one of the few areas protected by a Conservation Area
Photo: Peter Fellows

the BBC, Heritage England and local people.

"If the council is reluctant to support this proposal, the Secretary

of State for National Heritage can designate in exceptional circumstances. These canals ARE a National Heritage."

Reflections of Cresent Wharf, Birmingham

Gas Street Basin visualised by Ted Hiscock in 2009 available as a print from artist.com/ted-hiscock/371-reflections-of-cresent-wharf-birmingham/?artid=2839

More on his website tedhiscock.com



Locking down
Farmer's Bridge Flight



Urban Moorings

What is it all about?

Alison Tuck reveals a unique development, taking shape in a quiet corner of Wolverhampton.

More information

We have a website www.urbanmoorings.co.uk and on Facebook you can follow our progress or catch up on all the other work we have done to the site in the three years we have been here [facebook.com/urbanmoorings](https://www.facebook.com/urbanmoorings)

Living on the canal provides a set of challenges that many on land have never experienced; self-sufficiency being at the forefront. It gives us a unique way of looking at the world and our surroundings. Generating power, getting water, emptying toilets, rubbish disposal, somewhere to moor, access to shops, breakdowns—these are all day-to-day problems that have to be overcome. Forward thinking, creativity and planning are essential. Urban Moorings wants to share this with land-based dwellers.

We have seen and witnessed developers building next to the canal to try and give residences that sense, but most times it fails because there is still that barrier of bricks, which means it feels staged. We boat past and wave but never stop to talk, or to interact with the land. This is because developers don't know what boats need, or how to integrate the canal into their developments. The canal always seems to be an image for someone's window.

But the canal is a lot more than that: it is a living breathing micro-world, of nature, holidays, working folk and stories. It's like living in a 2000 mile linear village where everyone knows you and your boat. We aim to open a path to this by removing barriers and creating a hub for people to interact. Three years ago, our journey started.....and here's part of it so far.

Finding the site

We contacted CRT with the idea of creating our own moorings and we presented a business plan that was received well. We originally looked at a site at the top of Camp Hill Locks in Birmingham, but CRT Property had plans for that. They could only offer it for around five years as it's on a list for redevelopment as part of the regeneration that Birmingham City Council is working on.

So a meeting was held with the Waterways Manager and we scoured the CRT property database to find a suitable site. Horseley Fields in Wolverhampton sprang out at us and so it began.

The wharf in history

The site is of historic interest: limekilns were situated here, feeding the nearby factories; the Boat House is locally listed; and the wharf and slipways were originally built in 1890 by the London and North Western Railway, later passing into the hands of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway. They were used to maintain boats that were used to transport coal and other raw materials to the site and take away the lime.

The aerial photograph from the early 20th Century shows the site in active use, with the limekilns, moored boats and slip buildings clearly visible. Limestone to feed the kilns would have been transported to the wharf on narrowboats from

The aims of Urban Moorings

- To create a space where difference and different ideas are the norm.
- Spaces where we can share the canal-folk way of looking at things.
- People to explore and learn about the rich industrial history of the site and the area around it.
- To be an eco-zero waste site, putting an emphasis on reusing waste in imaginative and inventive ways.
- To show that it is possible to reclaim once-polluted and derelict sites with little commercial potential and regenerate them as community and creative sites as a complement to the surrounding environs.
- To integrate with nature and have it as an everyday experience on our site.
- To encourage the community to plant and garden on whatever scale they are able to, at the site and at home.
- To provide a flexible space to experiment with the arts.
- To provide a space for the community to engage with exhibitions and performance.
- To provide a space for micro businesses to operate on a flexible basis and share ideas.



Right: Aerial photograph of the site from the early 20th Century.

Below: An aerial view from Google showing the site when we first arrived. Parts of the canal arms have been filled in and built on and buildings have been demolished.



some of the many quarries in the Black Country. Pigot and Company's Directory of 1842 and White's 1851 Staffordshire Directory both list a lime-burner at Horseley Fields in the name of John Ellis, who was presumably based at the wharf.

The work begins

When we arrived on site, the only access was by boat and we had to cut our way in with loppers, as buddleia had taken over.

The bank on the front had eroded and gang-planks were needed to get onto the land. The arm has brick walls and the depth was OK for boats to get down and moor up. The first day was dragging out Heras fencing and other debris in the arm so that we could get our boats in and moor safely.

Then it began ... clearing the site after years of neglect and making plans of what we were going to do. The first major project

was to gain access from the land. The part of the site that has the Boat House and a large shed, which we affectionately call 'the shed of doom' as it's collapsed and is full of rubbish, is owned by Wolverhampton Council. After meetings upon meetings, we finally had agreements, tenancy and access sorted out. At the same time, we were going through the process of getting permission to build a walkway around site so that we can have moorers.



Raising the money

Our project is purely funded by what we earn; we have no capital investment. So far, it's income from moored boats that has funded the work. It took nearly eight months to get final approval from CRT to start the walkway. This required many meetings, a rather large operating proposal report that detailed the work, lots of engineering drawings, risk assessments, method statements, and securing public liability insurance. It was like pulling teeth, but we got there.

We started on the walkway in January this year; it was all done using hand tools with no heavy machinery. It required eight months of volunteer labour, over £2000 worth of timber, hundreds of pounds of fixings, screws and bolts, one post-driver and lots and lots of cups of

coffee. We used waders to get the initial alder posts in, then as the silt got a lot deeper towards the arm, we moved to putting the posts in using a resident's boat. We quickly established a rhythm and a weekly schedule and, with the extremely hot and dry weather, we were able to complete the walkway in October. The last stage is to add rubber bumpers, handrails and planting along the bank to stop any further erosion and to make it an even lovelier place to be.

Looking to the future

The next phase is to turn the pile of bricks and debris into a boat facilities area. We would like to have a small chandlery, to supply diesel, gas and coal, and have composting/Elsan facilities as well as water for visiting boats.

The completed walkway
Photo: Alison Tuck

A Dip into the Archives

David Fletcher emerges from the vaults, covered in dust, just in time for this issue

Turning pages in the archives and shredding the rubbish, I have been scanning some interesting bits. As well as Howard's regular look through NABO News from 15 years ago in 'Rewind', there are other documents that give a fascinating view on what was going on 20+ years ago. Here are four items of interest:

Monopolies and Mergers Commission

A 1994 report by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on the services provided by the BWB. This report has a wide range of content, but examples that resonate today include: the "efficiency and effectiveness of BWB's long-term preventative maintenance and repair programme"; "the scope for improving BWB's management structure and the use made of its manpower"; and "BWB's methods for determining the level of charges to customers".

'Partnership with the People'

A consultation document from BWB in 1999. This was the consultation branded "Your views matter" with green window stickers that some boaters still

display. It says: "The Government has invited BW to find new ways to involve a wider range of people in their waterways....." There is talk of membership schemes, a charitable trust, and visits to the waterways by 10 million people every year.

The Inland Waterways: towards greater social inclusion

This 2001 report by IWAAC*, explores ways in which our inland waterways can foster social inclusion by enhancing the quality of life of those who live near them who do not currently use and enjoy them.

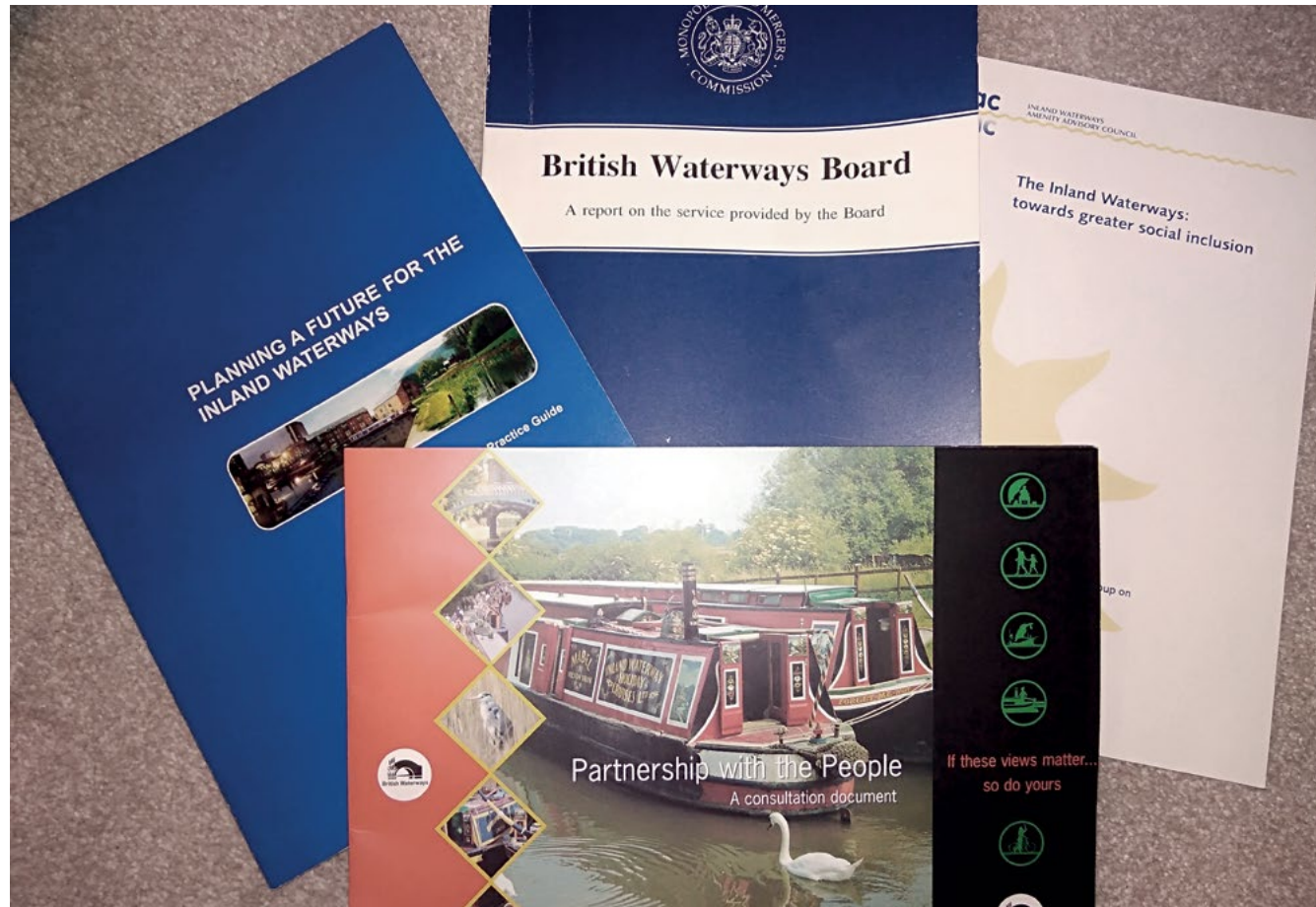
Planning a future for the inland waterways

Another IWAAC report, this time from 2001, is a good practice guide, which explains the contribution that the waterways can make to re-

generation and other projects and highlights examples of good planning.

All of these subjects are still on the national agenda and key to the ongoing viability of the waterways. The IWAAC reports are very well written with a wealth of advice and the quality of their output speaks for itself.

Overall, I conclude that the issues to hand have changed little in 20 years. Getting more of the population involved and managing the budget are the key issues.



*The Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council was a statutory body, set up under the 1968 Transport Act to "advise the Government and British Waterways on matters affecting the use of BW canal and river navigations for recreation and amenity". It was abolished when CRT was set up, against advice from NABO and other user groups.

Rewind

Issue No 6, 2003

Howard Anguish explores NABO News from 15 years ago.



Chairman, Sue Burchett, calls it a day. After what appears to have been a challenging year, the NABO Chairman announced that she had decided to stand down after six years on the NABO Council as Minute Secretary, Chair and Vice Chair and again as Chair.

Improving Openness and Accountability. This latest initiative by BW in the form of a consultation appears to have got off to a rocky start. Despite advocating better consultation, one national meeting was cancelled at short notice, and in Sue's words "Conspicuous by their absence are local User Group meetings, usually set for the spring and autumn. The autumn round has got lost in the re-organisation process. So much for the intention to improve consultation."

British Waterways Marinas Ltd. It is ironic, bearing in mind that currently (2018) BWML is up for sale, that the spotlight was on this newly formed sub-set of British Waterways, with particular concern about the perception that BWML was playing on an un-level playing field compared to other commercial marinas. "For instance, BW does not have to pay business rates or levy connection charges on itself. The criticism seems to have touched a nerve within BW and it has now published a consultation document establishing a protocol for its ownership and operation of marinas."

Worried Woman of the Waterways. Away from waterway politics, WWW mentions the cour-

tesy that boaters have traditionally shown to each other, but she also hints that standards of thoughtfulness may have slipped somewhat in recent times. That seems to be continuing trend in 2018 and I think we all have come across some examples of selfishness during recent times. She also makes a telling point which resonates today. "Other worries over priorities concern the fact that anglers, cyclists and walkers seem to get preferential treatment on the towpath. We are just the ones that pay the most. Boats are no longer the quintessence of the canals. It is no longer a question of considering our quality of life. We are there to complete the scene for the tourists; we qualify as being 'quaint'! Are you surprised that I worry?" I seem to have heard this opinion voiced extensively in recent times. A somewhat disillusioned BW employee apparently confided in her with the comment: "They'll have us walking up and down the locks selling ice-cream next, instead of seeing to aspects of the navigation!"

What's in a Name? Stuart Sampson, mentions the change of name for the Business Units to 'Waterway Units', linking this to a map showing the boundaries, with photos of the eight General Managers. As one BW spokesman put it: "The Units should be like different stores from the same chain, offering the same standard of service no matter which one you visit". Stuart comments: "We just hope this is how things will work out, especially as the border between the Yorkshire and Northwest Units follows the line of Bedlam Dike!"



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.

Smoke alarms from Oxford Fire Service

Howard Anguish wondered what became of the suggestion that Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service gives a smoke alarm to every boater. We moved to live aboard our boat in September 2003 and shortly after that we were approached by Fire Officers in Banbury with the offer of a smoke alarm, which we gladly accepted. It had an 'off' facility that reset after ten minutes for those toasty moments that occur in the confines of a narrowboat. The only disadvantage was that the battery was not replaceable as it had an anti-tamper fitting to prevent inadvertent (or intentional) disconnection, so we had to replace it when the battery ran out after about six years. I have pointed other boaters toward this service which I believe Oxford Fire and Rescue still provide.

Peter Braybrook

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 I spotted during the year.

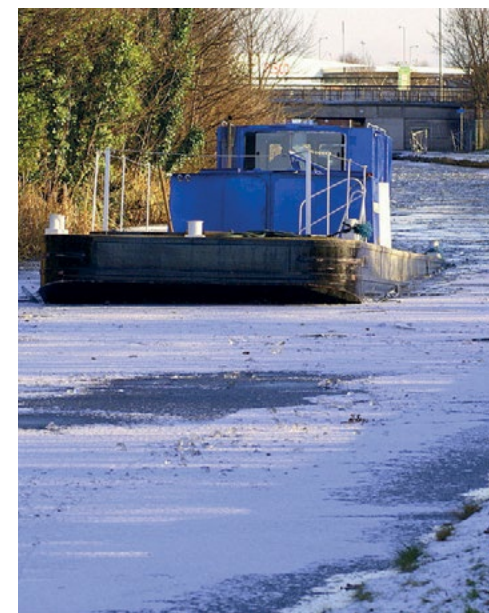


Water Witch on the L&L

Photo: Richard Morrison (The Old Brit at Flickr)

Question from a London boater

Hi! I'm only three days into my new boat life so please excuse my ignorance as I'm a total newbie. I was wondering if anyone would be able to explain the procedure for getting coal/gas/diesel delivered. Also, do you know if there is any way to get water delivered? I won't be able to move my boat for the next two weeks and I am concerned that I may run out of water. Any advice will be much appreciated.



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Christmas Eve
Christmas Day
Boxing Day
Thursday 27th Dec
Friday 28th Dec
Saturday 29th Dec
Sunday 30th Dec
New Years Eve
New Years Day

9AM - 1PM
CLOSED
CLOSED
10AM - 4PM
10AM - 4PM
10AM - 4PM
CLOSED
CLOSED
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*Merry Christmas
& A Happy New Year*



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