



NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners
Issue 3 May 2022



Skipper's guide to commercial navigations

Thames Navigation User Forum
CRT's sustainable boating tips



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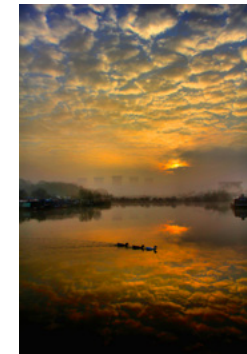
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Next NABO News copy date

Articles, letters, cartoons and photos are most welcome. Images in JPEG format please. Please email your contributions to nabonews@nabo.org.uk or post to the Editor by June 25th.

Cover photo



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.

This time it's Mercia Marina on the Trent & Mersey by Michael Fitzgibbons.

My apologies to Phil Clayton for the wrong credit for his photo on page 27 of the April issue.

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Having had virtually unbroken sunshine since the last issue, the waterways have been at their busiest so far this year. But the increased lock usage, coupled with lack of rainfall and reservoir issues, means that it is only a matter of time before we'll start to see restrictions appearing on some of the more vulnerable canals (like the Chesterfield, L&L, Macclesfield, Peak Forest and Huddersfield Narrow).

Lock restrictions on the horizon?

Peter Fellows is keeping an eye open for lack of water

This is in addition to closures caused by lack of maintenance, as highlighted on the K&A by Mike Rodd in his Chair's column.

As we await the outcome of the Defra review of CRT, expected

sometime around July, Mike also assesses what is driving the move by both CRT and the EA away from boating towards towpath walkers, paddlers, fishermen and the like—all part of Defra's interpretation of the Government's 'levelling-up' policy perhaps?

Andy Soper reports on the recent meeting of the Thames Navigation User Forum in which the EA managers ignored earlier representations from boater organisations on its proposals to reorganise the management of its waterway. Helen Hutt recounts her experiences of travelling for a month from Evesham to Little Venice to take part in the London Cavalcade.

Finally, ex-NABO Chair, Stuart Sampson, has written an excellent 'Skipper's guide to the Yorkshire and Trent commercial navigations' to help people boat safely with the big boys, and I've included it as a pull-out with this issue.

Happy boating.

Commercial barges on the Sheffield & South Yorkshire Navigation at Rotherham.
Photo: Peter Fellows



We've seen many intriguing responses to our appeal for members to write to their MPs asking for support for CRT to continue to receive Government funding, at least at the current level.

While we have always been the first to highlight the many shortcomings of CRT, we are also only too well aware that they will simply not be able to cope if they do not receive this support. The original Cameron model (now being re-energised by the infamous Rees-Mogg) was that the so-called 'quangos' should be taken out of Government departments and made into charitable organisations that would then be able to attract charitable funding. Experience has shown, though, both in CRT's case and elsewhere, that although charities may find it slightly easier to attract funding for projects, boring old maintenance just doesn't excite donors in the same way...

Many of those who have objected to our suggestion feel that the only way ahead is simply to revert to the original BWB model! That simply will not happen, I'm afraid—especially with all the other current pressures on the Government.

It is also very interesting to see the responses from some of the MPs—they do genuinely seem to value our suggestions and many of them had clearly not fully understood the situation—I guess many were not in Parliament when the original bonfire of the quangos was introduced.

And yes, yes, I know as well as anyone how badly CRT is failing to maintain the canals. For example, on the K&A where I am an MCA-registered Boatmaster, we have never seen so many problems—we have tried unsuccessfully for three years to get a paddle fixed, for ex-

ample, being told that as long as one paddle works, what's the problem? The problem is that our public trips, raising funds solely for the benefit of the canal, have had to be reorganised to cope with a lock that takes up to 15 minutes longer to fill—adding up to 30 minutes to a trip. And last week, at the same lock, one of the bottom gates developed a serious fault. So, until it could be fixed (that is, when CRT's contractors could get around to it!) it was only available

Effects of 'bonfire of the quangos' start to hit home

Chairman, **Mike Rodd**, analyses how Defra policy is driving the change in emphasis by CRT and the EA away from boating.

for reduced hours. Did CRT bother to consult us about the timing—as a major user of that lock, often up to six times a day? Did they, hell!

But, despite all this, and other problems like it, we keep coming back to the simple truth that there is no alternative, especially now that the Government is confronted by issues of far more importance than the canals!

Sadly also, the situation with the EA waterways' management continues to be a total mess! As I have reported before, the EA is reorganising itself in the way it supports its waterways—and a recent 'proposal' to re-structure itself was heavily criticised by its own National Navigation User Forum, with all the boating representative organisations simply rejecting the proposals out of hand. Did the EA listen? Of course they didn't! At the recent Thames Navigation User Forum, these

The various boating organisations have come together in their united opposition to what the EA is doing.

self-same proposals were simply repeated, and it was made clear that they would be approved by Defra.

The only good thing about all this has been that the various boater and boating organisations have come together in their united opposition to what the EA is doing. The key problem is that, rather like CRT (and isn't that strange and significant?), the emphasis is no longer on boating (despite that being their prime source of funding outside of Government grants) but on all the other potential, but largely un-chargeable, users—walkers, swimmers, paddlers, fishermen, towpath users, etc., etc. And all this apparently fits in with the catch-phrases of the Defra policy of 'Protection and long-term resilience' (of what?), 'Transition to net zero carbon usage', 'Natural capital', 'Access to the outdoors' and, of course, 'Levelling up'—whatever all that might mean.

Of importance to the role of NABO is that, with the exposure we have been receiving, our membership continues to increase. The biggest growth is in our social media work—sadly, not all of those who contribute are willing to pay to be members, but I guess that is just the issue with the new electronics-based world.

We are especially delighted to see the work that our Council member, Ken Hylins, is doing for members with special needs. Very quietly, he has made close contact with relevant representatives, both within CRT and within other disabilities groups and the equalities organisations. What is very evident is that in some

regions CRT is doing a super job of supporting boaters who really need special consideration. In other areas, however, the support being given is very poor and the pressure that is being exerted on some folk is simply cruel—demanding, for example, that they move, even though they are receiving crucial short-term local medical support.

We continue to follow the situation in London very closely but, rather like CRT itself, we don't really see any simple answers. Clearly, the extensive over-boating that is evident to all is simply driven by the perceived low cost of living on a boat—so buying (often beaten-up) boats and 'sort-of' meeting the continuous cruising requirements of CRT (by swapping one's mooring with another boat, via a now well-known website every 14 days!) means that CRT has absolutely no hope of controlling the boat numbers—as, in fact, it can't control the number of boats anywhere on its waterways. And if CRT does start catching up with non-moving or non-licensing issues, the owners just argue for as long as possible, and eventually simply sell the boat and buy another one. At its heart, though, this is largely a housing issue—and it will ultimately be up to local Councils to take any real action to solve the root causes.

From NABO's point of view, we are naturally very concerned that all this means that London is largely a no-go area for our members—and this simply cannot be right. So we have to press for moorings to be available for visiting boats at all times, even if these have to be reserved ahead of time—adding to the need for effective monitoring and enforcement.

As far as the very fuzzy continuous cruising requirements go, we have always recognised that they

are very vague legally, and probably do need a complete overhaul. This would be very complicated, however, and is certainly nowhere on any Government priority list. Also, the outcome might be even worse, so we have always taken the line that, provided CRT's stated requirements are seen to be fair, we will support them. For this reason, for example, when continuous cruising requirements on the K&A canal were proposed (an overall annual end-to-end movement with a 14-day requirement to move at least one km, etc.) we were supportive, and this has largely worked well for most genuine boaters. London is more difficult, though.

As NABO's representative on the Boat Safety Scheme's Technical Committee, I am alarmed by the (still quiet) suggestions that some changes be made to the time pe-

riod required between inspections. I personally feel that the present four-yearly requirement is correct and reasonable. Of course, the inspectors would be happy to see this period shortened but—given the increasing cost of boating and, quite frankly, the lack of real evidence of any need to change the present approach—I will continue to urge NABO and other boater representatives to oppose any change. Other small tweaks to the scheme might be helpful, though—for example, requiring an inspection when a boat is passed on to a new owner.

Despite all this, it is a real joy to be able to go boating once again, even if you have to plan your trips more carefully given the large number of stoppages etc! The joys and benefits of boating remain—so let's make the best of them as summer approaches...

Wales and South West Mike Rodd



A not very well-attended meeting of the South West Users' Group, with only some 24 folk present (including numerous CRT people) but still a useful and well-structured session.

The Regional Director, Mark Evans, gave a slick summary of the past year and, of course, highlighted the difficulties caused by the storms etc. He also emphasised the significant amount of non-boater outreach activities which has been taking place—not surprising, as this is clearly CRT's current focus, given the soon-to-be-completed Government review of waterways' funding! This presentation left plenty of time for delegate input.

Especially worrying was the concern by the volunteers at the famous and unique CRT-owned

Around the regions with NABO's regional reps

Claverton pumping station (water-wheel driven) who do all the maintenance and system running, but feel neglected by CRT, with poor support.

The National Bargee Travellers Association Chair raised the usual complaints from live-board boaters and also the issues relating to the future of the Bridgewater Docks, which had been handed back to the local council by CRT.

Personally, I expressed the K&A Canal Trust's concern about the apparent policy of only fixing paddles when both failed—as is being experienced (for going-on 3 years!) at Dunmill lock on the K&A, with serious issues for the public trip-boats which have to over-run on promised trip timings. Mark promised to sort this out—we shall see!

Fly on the wall

Observes proceedings at the Council meeting in April



Council members had another teleconference. London congestion was first up, which is really a housing issue—and it will be up to local Councils to take the action needed to solve the problem. So it's good that the Greater London Authority's housing department wants to engage with NABO and other organisations.

However, Council members thought that, unless funding is provided, CRT can do little to ease the pain. Loss of heritage was discussed (again) with

the recently appointed CRT advisory group seemingly stagnated. But maybe sales of property have slowed down? Tim Coghlan of Braunston Marina has taken on the lease of the Stop House, so at least it has a stay of execution.

NABO has been having meetings with regional directors: some far more receptive than others, but NABO will keep trying!

The EA's proposed new structure has many resemblances to CRT's—although at a recent meeting the latter denied that a future union was on the cards. NABO's had great publicity recently over its letter to MPs, especially the coverage in *Narrowboat World*. People

have already started writing to their MPs and some have received a good response. But plenty more to do, so keep up the good work!

Ken Hylins is doing a great job guiding boaters in the North West, where local welfare officers appear unsympathetic. He's engaged with the new national welfare officer, Michelle Simmons, who agrees that the treatment of some vulnerable boaters has been "disgraceful". Boaters are now contacting Ken first, before CRT! However, in other areas (such as the K&A, for example) local officers are much better. CRT's intention to create designated moorings for disabled boaters was welcomed—but will non-disabled boaters co-operate? Fly understands that disabled moorings, having bollards with an orange wheelchair painted on the top—may be used by others, but they must move if a disabled boater wants to use them.

Meetings of the CRT Customer Services Facilities working group (which Helen Hutt attends as a Boater Rep.) continue, but it could be some months before a complete, verified set of data is available. Once that's done, work will start on building a set of standards to be applied across the network.

The perennial problem of speeding cyclists came up again, with reports of a child so terrified by a towpath incident that he will not go near the canal again.

Byeeee.....

The next Council meeting will be on 18th June at the Weighbridge Inn, Alvechurch Marina, B48 7SF (Alvechurch station 5 minutes' walk).

Members are welcome; please just let the General Secretary or Chair know in advance (contact details inside cover).

The dates for other Council meetings in 2022 are 3rd September (teleconference), 8th October (teleconference) and 12th November (after the AGM).

NABO at the user groups

Thames Navigation User Forum

Mike Rodd needed to leave the April meeting early, but **Andy Soper** of The Barge Association kindly agreed that we can report his notes.

Some 25 people attended with about 15 from user organisations. Less than a week before, the EA circulated 46 pages of papers for consideration at this 2½ hour virtual meeting. Many attendees expressed disappointment at the expected range of topics, but welcomed the delivery of papers before the meeting. This note summarises the key points and issues.

Thames waterway overview

There has been a reduction in numbers of resident lock-keepers (LWKs) and reliefs, from about 60 in 2018 to 55—some confusion over the exact number—none of the managers present was in post in 2018!. 24 temporary LWKs are being recruited this year. The estimated minimum required to achieve seven-day cover is about 78 LWKs, so 55 + 24 should be adequate to man all locks. However, there is still significant absence due to Covid, which may explain some of the dual- and triple-siting over the Easter weekend.

24-hour moorings

The EA presented a somewhat disjointed plan for managing short-term moorings. Members were not impressed as it has no electronic payment options, inadequate oversight and enforcement, and a slew of relaxations for breakdowns, medical issues etc. that will be easy to abuse. Discussion was gutted due to shortness of time and further discussions will take place.

Winter works

While members congratulated the EA on opening the river fully on 31st March, it was unfortunate that it immediately closed Rushey Lock for two weeks for further work, so disrupting up-river hire trade. Probably the biggest disappointment of the winter works is the failure to address the unreliability of the operating pedestals under public power, as they failed to find a competent contractor for the second year running.

Enforcement

Following up registration and other issues is in the hands of a manager and just six warranted officers. The fairly good news is that the cost comes out of central EA funds and not the navigation.

The EA was keen to report its success in prosecuting Alastair Trotman (owner of five AirBnB slumboats) including costs of £20K to the EA. Sadly, the court awarded a payment rate of £200 per month, so it will be some time before it sees the money!

I reminded the meeting that in the grey areas of Facebook it is common knowledge that declaring 'Mickey Mouse' and 'no fixed abode' will get you through Teddington lock and, even if you are chased up, as long as you pay the registration fee before the court date, there will be no penalty and the EA will drop the case. I am told it will be different this year...

National Navigation

The EA national navigation department is under the oversight of Deputy Director, Andy Wilkinson. I reported in February on the unsatisfactory meeting of the National Navigation User Forum. His report submitted at the time repeated plans for a new complex 'Engagement' model, unchanged despite the challenges at the national user meeting and I explained our disappointment that no amendments appear to have been made. The arrogance was clear—we know best—no changes.

Apparently there are some 49 organisations that the EA is approaching to improve the diversity of the forums. A request for sight of the list was ignored.

Communication

The EA stated that it will be reinstating (!) its customer newsletter, which will be emailed to all registered customers. The proposed list of statistics was as dull as ditch-water and the forum reminded the EA that it has a Communications sub-group, which might have usefully been involved in its preparation.

NABO at the user groups

CRT National Users' Forum

Anne Husar reports

The April forum had poor attendance, with more CRT staff than other group representatives.

Water resources

Due to reservoir issues, the Chesterfield, L&L, Macclesfield and Peak Forest, and Huddersfield Narrow canals will probably all suffer to some degree from restrictions this 'season'.

Review of works

13 winter stoppages have overrun their March completion date, some caused by Covid, but also recruitment issues: several staff leaving and difficulty in attracting new staff. Gargrave, on the L & L, should reopen in May and the Caldon should reopen by June, but both canals will have stoppages again from this September to March 2023. Sheffield & Tinsley should reopen in June, but Daw Bank is closed until September. There will be more use of external suppliers and £60m has now been allocated for the next three years, rather than the expected £40m.

Boating update

March's National Boaters' Survey is not finished yet, but results should appear in the next few weeks. A bigger survey, which Matthew Symonds also referred to as a 'census', is planned for the summer—CRT wants to know exactly who goes boating/has a boat.

The Disabled Boater Forum was mentioned, and CRT is now more aware of the needs of this group of boaters. Visitor moorings' signage will be installed to show accessibility for disabled boaters.

Vegetation management

Three contractors have been awarded contracts. There is flexibility in the number of cuts if needed due to unexpected vegetation growth. 800+ trees blew down in the two winter storms but only one culvert was ruptured.

Public safety on the towpaths

A film is being made for sharing on social media to try to educate speeding cyclists/raise awareness.

For the minority of speeders, CRT thinks it's unrealistic to expect any change in behaviour if a speed limit is introduced, or anything else! I got the feeling that CRT doesn't want to confront this issue; all very negative rather than a can-do attitude.

HS2

CRT is successfully working with HS2 to get the best result/least impact on the canal system. There are 13 sites of impact as well as the Chesterfield, Ashby and Lichfield restorations.

CRT has funding from HS2 for towpath improvements on the Staffs & Worcs, Trent & Mersey and GU.

Grant review

Because of inflationary pressures, CRT is having financial problems with the Government grant being a fixed amount until 2027.

At the moment it represents 25% of CRT's income and the Trust needs an indication of what grant, if any, will be available after this for long-term planning.

They have now begun work on the economic case for another grant. If they get nothing, there will have to be a post-review 'push' to try again. They expect a decision in July and will press Defra to publish details of the outcome.

Questions

A couple of waterways businessmen asked about being given enough notice of stoppages to plan for their hire business.

I asked about maintaining a balance between the needs of navigation and those of selling water in the current restrictions; boating will apparently be prioritised.



Boating safely with the big boys

A skipper's guide to the Yorkshire and Trent commercial navigations

by Stuart Sampson

Preparation

If you are intending to use the tidal Ouse or Trent it is a legal requirement to be insured for 'tidal access' and have Marine band VHF and full navigation lights, as well as normal river safety gear, anchor, life-buoy, life-jackets etc. and a light to see by is essential if moving after dark. A minimum of port and starboard lights should be fitted if navigating commercial waterways.

If on flowing water make sure your anchor is accessible and attached to your boat. Using heavy chain helps the anchor grip. Additional rope,

preferably nylon which is springy and sinks, can be added between boat and chain to bring the length up to the recommended five times the depth. Attach it where your boat can stand the backwards and downwards pull when the anchor bites. If your lifebuoy has a lifeline, ensure that is attached too.

Check your fuel supply, engine, propeller and steering gear for anything that might cause you to lose power or control during a continuous run of up to nine hours at high throttle if on the Trent tideway.

This is mainly for pleasure boat skippers unaccustomed to rivers, tides and waterways carrying freight.

The advice is given in good faith and no liability can be accepted for any consequences of its use.

It cannot be comprehensive in a guide of this size so you should gather as much information as you can from other sources including CRT's Boater's Handbook, charts, tide tables, experienced personnel and other publications.

Original content courtesy of First Mate Guides, NABO and the barge operators, updated by Stuart Sampson in 2021 with information kindly supplied by IWA, CBOA and CRT.

In an emergency

If life is at risk dial 999 and request the emergency services or the Coastguard.

Otherwise ring CRT

0800 4799947

In office hours CRT

0303 040 4040

or for the Trent, CRT Newark Office

01636 704481



Charts

The Boating Association's "Sissons Charts", essential guide to the tide-ways, can be obtained from the locks adjoining the river.

Note that the red lines on these charts only show the line of deepest water and barges in particular need to follow it more closely than you do.

Booking and making passage

Updates

This is version SS v.2 2022 of this guide

This guide can be downloaded at cboa.org.uk/downloads/010222-skippers-guide.pdf

Latest updates are available at cboa.org.uk/sgupdate.html

or scan the QR code above

The Boating Association charts are available from theboatingassociation.co.uk/index.php/store#!/Publications/c/2703498

Locks on the canal navigations are mainly user operated unless a commercial vessel is due in which case a mobile lock keeper will be present.

Lock-keepers on tidal access locks need to be warned at least 24 hours in advance. They can then give advice on departure times to suit the tides, conditions and your destination.

Once you are penned out onto the river they inform their col-

leagues at locks on your route by phone or VHF Ch. 74 when to look out for you. This communication is maintained along the whole river so your whereabouts is known.

If you change your plans you must let them know.

You can break your journey on the Trent tideway at pontoon moorings in Torksey Cut or south of Dunham Bridge. Notify lock-keepers of this intention too.

Shipping

Aggregate traffic towards Leeds is being revived, from the North Sea via Goole and from other quarry wharves. Petroleum products are shipped up the SSYN for Rotherham and anywhere you might meet a barge carrying an Abnormal Indivisible Load.

Barges may be up to 200 ft by 20 ft, carrying up to 600 tonnes—i.e. BIG.

Around Keadby you may meet coasters—even bigger.

Despite their size, barges may well travel faster than you, so keep a good lookout behind. Make positive and decisive course changes to avoid them and to show you have seen them. Remember your sound signals.

Prolonged blast: "Warning—I'm here/coming"

Skippers of commercial vessels have a living to earn, but many boat for pleasure too.

Remember they have to treat you as you would treat a fragile dinghy, so assume they can't see you or avoid you, and give them the deep water, and plenty of room to swing. Empty barges are badly affected by cross-winds, and can't see ahead so well.

Don't try to 'nip past' a barge. A boat can become trapped in the water level depression beside a moving barge and only escape by stemming up against the bank, or turning and taking on its stern wave using full power. Both actions are very risky in confined waters.



Landing

If you can see a barge about to emerge from a lock, or the lock is emptying and a red light shows, hang back so both you and the barge have steerage-way when you pass. If you must land a crew, tie up securely as far from the lock as you can so the barge has room to counter the effects of cross-winds, currents etc.

before passing you. A side-swipe from an overhanging barge stern would do your boat no good.

Never try to hold your boat or moor it on a handling line when a barge passes. You may be safer staying at the helm and letting your boat ride the wash.

Marine band radio channels

On CRT waterways keep a listening watch on Channel 74 for messages between barges and locks. You may be asked to switch to Channel 6 to free up 74.

Some barges give helpful position reports when approaching hazards and warn each other about pleasure craft. You can benefit from these messages too if you know the call signs and the names of locations along the route. Listen for lock

names. If followed by '-mobile' the keeper is at his designated lock, a lock nearby, or travelling in his van.

Don't expect strict radio discipline, and familiarity with Yorkshire dialect helps. Don't be afraid to announce your own position, and share what you glean about barge movements with boats without radio.

For Associated British Ports, channel 15 is used. See the Trent map

Locks

It is essential to obey the traffic lights: the lock-keeper will only display a red light with the gates open for a good reason, for instance a barge is coming through.

Seek the lock-keeper's advice if you have any doubts about river conditions. Portage unpowered craft round lock.

Wash and waves

Large and fast vessels can cause considerable disturbance, that from big cruisers can be particularly uncomfortable.

Few skippers look back to see how their wash affects smaller and moored craft. Take waves head-on if you can. Winds can also make long reaches too rough for inland vessels,

await calmer weather. Even then, keep front doors closed and ensure anyone on open deck has good reason to be there, is holding on and wearing a life jacket.

Don't venture out on spring tides if there is any likelihood of meeting a tidal wave, the Aegir.

VHF Ch 15

On ABP waters it is a legal requirement to keep a listening watch on Channel 15

Lock traffic lights

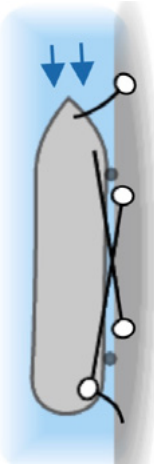
Red flashing	
River in flood. Tie up, no keeper.	
Red	
Wait, keeper maintaining or working the lock.	
Red+Green	
Wait, keeper preparing lock for you.	
Green	
Enter with care, keeper to operate	
Amber	
Land a crew to operate. No keeper	



Don't forget the other kind of wave—that used by skippers, both pleasure and commercial to greet each other.

Mooring

If not properly tied up, boats can be dragged off moorings, or heeled over to the point of sinking by the displacement current of barges. On rivers moor up facing the flow. Narrow-boats can often use the in-



Entering tideway locks

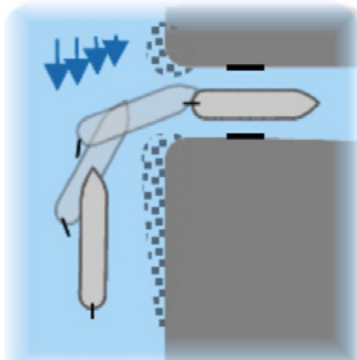
Keadby, West Stockwith and Selby locks may have to be entered when there is a current flowing across their mouths. To enter without making contact with the side walls, approach slowly against the flow with your boat about half its length away from the bank, and parallel to it.

When you are about half a boat's length from the entrance apply throttle and rudder to steer into the lock, tie up and then acknowledge the applause from the bystanders. Longer narrowboats need full power

side of pontoons leaving more space for others.

Ensure you have ropes to resist fore and aft movement (springs) and keep all lines as near level as you can and securely tied to cleats, bollards or rings—not mooring pins. The pull on steep ropes, e.g from roof cleat, can cause severe tipping. Allow slack for level change.

Use big fenders and place them so they will not get caught under anything—boats and pontoons do not always move together in choppy water.



Ouse and Trent tides

Twice a day a tidal surge comes up both rivers at around 11 m.p.h.: i.e. eleven miles further up the river it arrives one hour later. The surge is a level rise followed by up to 3 hours of upstream flow at Keadby, the 'flood', which diminishes in strength and duration as it goes up river, usually losing its battle against the natural river flow before reaching the weirs at Cromwell and Naburn.

This explains why the end of the

upstream journey on the tideway can be so tedious.

The assistance you get going with the flood tide will be greatest on spring tides, but even then it can be disappointing if there is a large amount of 'fresh' coming downstream.

Time your journeys north, i.e. downstream, to avoid fighting the flood by mooring at Torksey or Dunham as it passes.



Farndale H and Fossdale H
Photo: Mike Ricketts

Vigilance points

Question—Where are you most likely, and least wanting, to meet a freight barge on these waterways?

They may appear suddenly at bends, narrows or junctions, or be encountered broadside across the navigation, possibly even aground both ends.

We have tried to identify points where this is most likely and mark

them on the sketch maps in red triangles if the risk is current, or yellow if in the more distant future—Think railway signals.

These also include wharves, where, even though barges might be tied up, they might be running their propellers to tension their lines creating a swirl that can send you off course.

Strong stream indicators

The following maps show with blue the course of river stretches, where flow can increase dangerously, and canal sections where you will be safe.

If in doubt and no flashing red, check the level indicators set into the entrance walls of river locks before entering a river stretch. Levels in the red may not seem to present

headroom risk but the real danger lies in the strong currents that accompany them.

The relationship between current and level depends on weir lengths and whether sluices are open. Put your trust in whoever calibrated them and stay put.

Vessel names you may hear on VHF

Tugs:

Robin Hood, Arthur-a-Bland, Little Shuva, Kirkby

Work Boats:

MCB13, Pride of Collingham, Calder, Hood, Hiddekel, Grampus, Grebe, Exeter

Tanker:

Exol Pride,

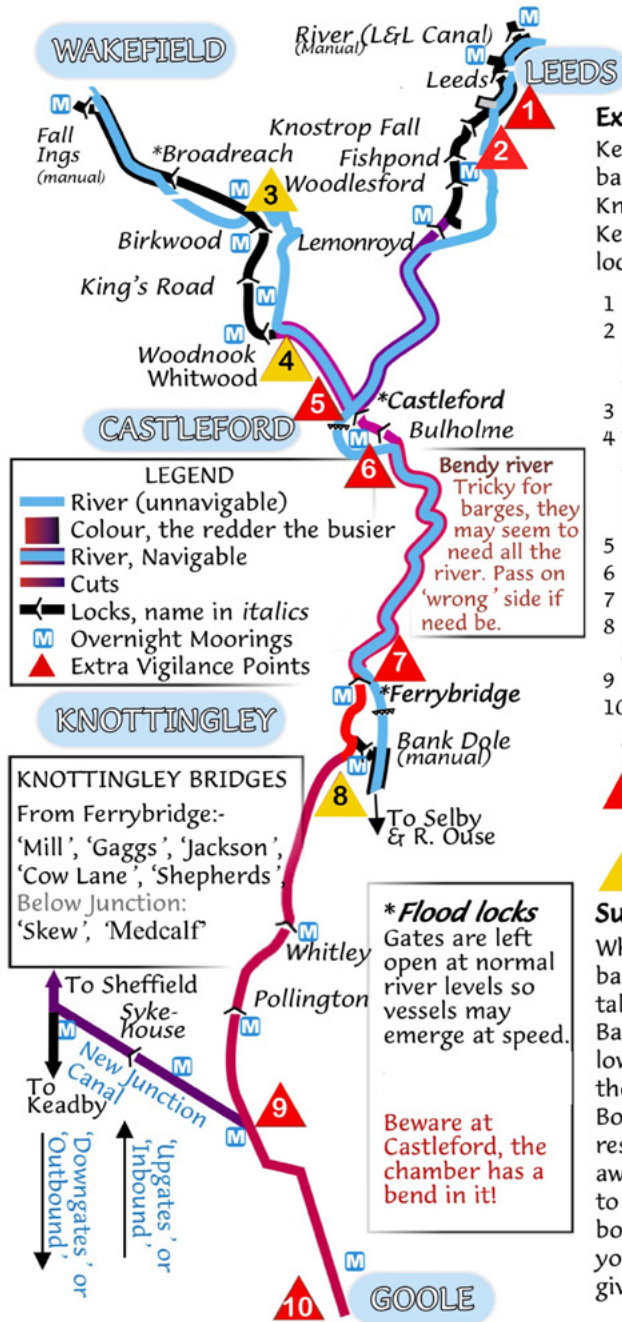
Dry Cargo Barges:

Battle Stone*, Farndale H, Fossdale H*, Fusedale H, George Dyson*, Humber Princess*, Cawood

Note—* marks vessels in preparation in 2022

Also note—barges often omit the 'H' or 'Humber' from their name on the radio.

Aire & Calder navigation



Extra Vigilance points

Keep a special look-out for barges on the cut through Knottingley, (Ferrybridge to Kellingley), and at these locations marked on the map:-

- 1 Knothrop wharf
- 2 Knothrop Lock to M1 Bridge
Bendy, narrow, moorings, wharf & rowers
- 3 Birkwood Quarry Wharf
- 4 Whitwood Aggregate
Staithe and blind bridge (Stephenson's). Barges need middle arch
- 5 Castleford junction
- 6 Castleford Cut
- 7 Ferrybridge Flood Lock
- 8 Kellingley Konect (formerly Coal Staithes
- 9 'Went End' or New Cut Jctn
- 10 Goole - sand wharf and general barge mayhem!

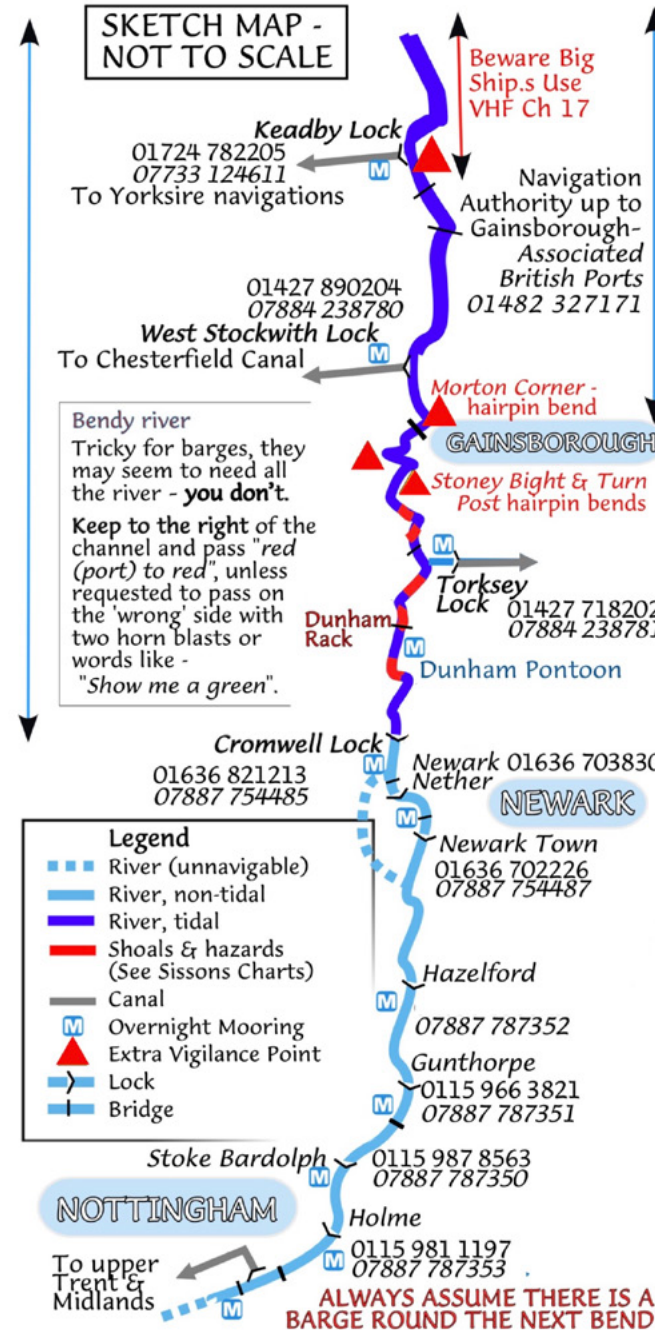
▲ Current hazard

▲ Future potential hazard

Surges

When lock-keepers pen barges through quickly, tell-tale surges are produced. Barges also send fast moving low waves both ways when they pass through bridges. Both can make moored craft restless 10 minutes or more away, but are more difficult to detect from a moving boat. If you know the feel of your vessel these surges can give you useful warning.

River Trent



VHF Ch 15

On ABP waters it is a legal requirement to keep a listening watch on Channel 15

Beware central shoal north of bridge at **Dunham Rack**. Use eastern bridge arch.

Extra Vigilance ▲
Keep a special look-out for barges at wharves and hazards marked by triangles on the map.

Sheffield and South Yorkshire navigations



A skipper's guide to the Yorkshire and Trent commercial navigations

is endorsed by



Canal & River Trust



Inland Waterways Association



Commercial Boat Operators Association



British Marine Federation



National Association of Boat Owners



Historic Narrow Boat Club

Mikron 50th anniversary tour

Mikron Theatre Company will be putting on 135 shows between April and October.

Raising Agents

Raising Agents is about 100 years of the WI: Bunnington WI is a bit down-at-heel and when a PR guru becomes a member, the women are glad of new blood—initially.

She re-brands them the Bunnington Bunnies. They're hopping. With stakes higher than a five-tiered cake stand, a battle ensues for the very soul of Bunnington, perhaps the WI itself! Above all else, like the WI itself, *Raising Agents* is a story of friendship.

Red Sky at Night

The second show, *Red Sky at Night* is about the wild and wonderful world of weather.

Through the chronicles of history, people have gazed up and marvelled at the mysteries of the weather. Generations have tried to master the elements, and to understand the magic of the skies. Hayley's sunny, beloved dad was the nation's favourite weatherman. He could make a typhoon sound like a tickle. Hayley is now following in his footsteps, to join the ranks of the forecasting fraternity. Or at least, local shoestring teatime telly.

When the pressure drops and dark clouds gather, Hayley is melting faster than a lonely snowflake. She's seen the future's forecast, but will anyone listen? Bring your anorak and your factor 50. Well, you never know.



You can find the dates and venues, or search for the nearest show to you, at mikron.org.uk/shows.

Mikron Theatre Company at Apsley on the Grand Union in 1977. Left to Right; Matthew Marsh, unknown Derek Harman, Mike Lucas, Sam and Sarah Lucas

Photo: Mikron from unfinishedhistories.com



London calling!



Helen Hutt bites the bullet and heads for Little Venice.

Having booked myself onto the IWA's London Cavalcade in 2020, I finally got there this May Bank Holiday. Covid, of course, had intervened!

I admit I probably wouldn't have come to London again (my last visit was ten years ago) because of the dodgy reputation the capital has acquired: too many boats, nowhere for visitors to moor, crime on the towpath, and so on... but the Cavalcade provided an incentive. I left Evesham on 30th March and 222 locks (excluding the 16 x 2 on the diversion along the Aylesbury Arm and back), three swing bridges and seven tunnels later, I arrived in Little Venice on 29th April.

Getting around a hundred boats into their allocated places is not for the faint-hearted but, hats off to the IWA volunteers, it all worked brilliantly. The Friday night was spent in the beer tent doing a canal-based quiz; over the long weekend there were food stalls and entertainments galore, spread around the Pool,

Paddington Arm and Rembrandt Gardens. The public came in droves, making it a thoroughly jolly affair.

Boats adorned with bunting competed for the best-dressed boat award; a dozen processed around the Pool after dark on Sunday, sporting some amazing illuminations; and there was the inevitable boat-handling competition. All super fun.

So, back to those 'deterrents to visiting'. The increased number of liveboard boats, especially widebeams, was evident as early as Milton Keynes but at no point up to Kensal Green was it impossible to find a mooring spot (on pins or Armco rather than rings). Everywhere felt safe enough. The Paddington Arm (considerably extended and improved since my last visit) provides plenty of visitor moorings, some pre-bookable, along with Rembrandt Gardens and Delamare Terrace.

As I write this, I can't vouch for the stretch of Regent's Canal from Little Venice to Limehouse—that's a trip for later this week!

River Thames restrictions, May to August

May

- **Sunday 15, 8am to 5:30pm.** Bray reach, Avenue Road to Maidenhead railway bridge for the Maidenhead Junior Regatta. The navigation channel will be on the Taplow side of the river.
- **Monday 16 to Friday 20**, daily from 9:30am to 7:30pm. Henley reach for filming of 'The Boys in the Boat'. Upstream from Temple Island to the Upper Thames Rowing Club. The navigation channel will be on the Bucks bank, Fawley Court side of the river.

June

- **Sunday 12, 6am to 9:45am.** Romney reach, A332 Windsor/Eton relief road bridge to the Windsor and Eton footbridge for the Windsor Triathlon. The navigation channel will be one-way on the Eton, north, side of the river.
- **Monday 13, 6am to Tuesday 28, 6am.** Henley reach for the Henley Royal Regatta practice and Henley Women's Regatta. No boats can navigate within the regatta course or crew warm-up area. The navigation channel will be on the Bucks bank, Fawley Court side of the river.
- **Friday 17, 10am to 5pm.** Boveney reach, 200-metre length in front of Oakley Court Hotel for the Dragon Boat Races. The navigation channel will be on the north side of the river.

July

- **Monday 4 to Sunday 10.** Henley reach for the Henley Music Festival. Boats travelling downstream must be within the regatta course and boats travelling upstream must be on the Bucks bank/Fawley side of the river.
- **Sunday 10, 8am to 4:30pm.** Henley reach, Riverside Barns, Remenham Church Lane to 300m upstream

of Hambleton Lock for the Henley Swim Festival. The navigation channel will be on the Bucks bank, Fawley Court side of the river.

- **Monday 11 July to Friday 12 August.** Henley reach. Deconstruction of the Henley Royal Regatta course. Boats travelling downstream must navigate within the regatta course from the regatta finish to the barrier. Boats travelling upstream must navigate on the Bucks bank/Fawley side of the regatta course.
- **Saturday 23, 6:15pm to 9pm.** Henley reach, Henley Rowing Club upstream around Rod Eyot returning downstream to the Angel on the Bridge public house for the Henley Club to Pub Swim. The navigation channel will be on the Wargrave Road, left side of Bird Island and Rod Eyot.

August

- **Friday 5, 9am to 4:30pm.** Sunbury reach, the Desborough Channel and the Surrey side of D'Oyly Carte Island for the Weybridge Community Regatta. The navigation channel will be on the old river channel at Shepperton.
- **Saturday 16 and Sunday 17, 8am to 6pm.** Molesey reach, Platt's Eyot to Grand Junction Island for the Molesey Amateur Regatta. The navigation channel will be on the Middlesex, right hand, side of the river (including the Middlesex channel around Platt's Eyot).

The Thames near Goring
Photo: Peter Fellows



Towpath trials

Carolyn 'CJ' Green watches the goings-on from her tiller.

CRT 'Slow Down' video

www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRDJZGQoQQ

As you already know, CRT doesn't possess a magic money pot, so improving crumbling towpaths is not high on its list of priorities. Instead, they look to outside agencies (councils etc.) for assistance.



Photo: CRT

When Sustrans decided to upgrade sections of towpath, CRT must have thought "Whoopee", I mean what can possibly go wrong? Make the towpaths more accessible, then surely everyone wins?

The problem is that while CRT and Sustrans have put up notices informing us of towpath closures, no-one is being told exactly how the paths will be improved. We do not know what the surface will be, whether grass verges will be retained or lost. We don't even know if 'wild moorings' will still be possible. There's no mention of the potential environmental impact.

Now, as much as I welcome the thought that I will no longer risk trench-foot squelching through the

mud every winter, or break an ankle/leg/hip falling down any of the many cleverly camouflaged potholes during the summer months, I worry that these improvements will actually cause more harm than good.

Spend time on the towpath on any sunny day and it quickly becomes obvious that the idea of 'Sharing the Space' is aspirational rather than a reality. With dog-walkers, joggers, rambblers, anglers, cyclists, boaters, parents pushing buggies and toddlers toddling or feeding the ducks, our narrow (usually less than 1m wide) towpaths are already full to bursting. For the most part we tend to treat each other with respect, but just last weekend while locking down a flight I saw several families, all with young children, being forced onto the grass verges so that cyclists could pass. Bells were rung—some persistently—until the way ahead was clear.

The majority of cyclists are considerate and use the bell to announce their presence, but a few are in a hurry and they appear to have decided that they have priority over other users. If you improve the towpath surface to the point that it becomes a cycle-path, then you are enabling these numpties to treat it as a racetrack.

The faster cyclists can cycle the more likely it is that someone, be it human or animal, will be hurt—maybe seriously. What happens then? Who will be held responsible? Have CRT or Sustrans undertaken any risk assessment or will they wait until it's too late? Not so much Share the Space, more Watch this Space.

They walk among us

Ian Hutson has words for boaters who can't use a water tap without breaking it.

The Canal and River Trust's 'body Corporate' gives us much to complain about, laugh at, and despair over. Faced with two thousand miles of centuries old middle-weight engineering in need of a vast amount of tender, loving care, they recruit 'Brand Co-ordinators' and 'Diversity and Inclusivity Managers' instead of blokes—male or female—with spades and hammers.

In a modicum of fairness though, it must be said that some boaters obviously couldn't rub two brain-cells together if they needed to start a fire. There are people who get to drive, drink, vote, may be summoned for jury duty, give blood (the Greek and Roman gods help us all) and, which is worse, are allowed to produce children without license who cannot use a basic outdoor tap without breaking it. Two options—turn one way for water, the other way for not water—are obviously one too many options for them.

This is the hitherto very handy facility installed above Cholmondeston Lock on the Middlewich Branch. The tap itself has been twisted out of position so many times that it is now loose on the stand and the tap mechanism has been absolutely jammed; it cannot be turned. Someone who goes by the name of 'Knuckles' has turned the tap 'on' so hard that it will likely never move again. I am six-foot tall in my flat-cap, built like a Korean brick outhouse—and even fully-caffinated I can't turn that tap.

The guard that 'protected' the tap from accidental knocks has been twisted and bent to one side. The

only control over the water is now the 'stopcock' tap in the post itself, accessed from the rear. *That* tap still works but is squeaking like Hell because it has also been royally abused.

Do gorillas with anger-management issues hide in the hedgerows and sneak out at night to fill their kettles from these facilities?

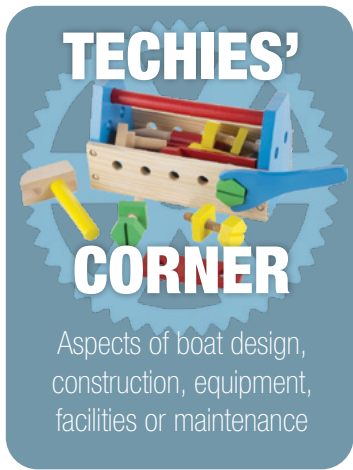
You can't track these Facilities Luddites by footprints, only by scat. The spoor that they leave is wanton—and expensive—destruction. What, I must wonder, do such creatures make of really complicated mechanisms, such as lock gates and lock paddles, swing bridges and... flush toilets?

Scathing? Yes, I am being scathing. This genuine vandalism, misuse and abuse makes it so much more difficult to confront the Canal & River Trust Ltd. on, about and in respect of all other matters. It plays right into the hands of their [undeclared, but obvious and evident] policy of removing all boater facilities via Corporate neglect. How may we sneer at their excuses of 'boater' vandalism when basic plumbing can't survive the ditch-dweller hand?

There are few enough facilities about, even in rural Cheshire. Please be kind to the ones that we still have. If you don't know how to turn a tap on and off without breaking it then please ask. Anyone without calloused knuckles and/or a sloping forehead will be able to tell you how.

Grrr!





CRT's sustainable boating tips

Here are 12 tips that CRT thinks you might find useful, or at the least provide (eco-friendly) fuel to fill our Letters page.



1. Choose hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) fuel.

For the short- to medium-term, HVO is a viable alternative to diesel, and one that most boaters can use immediately, reducing CO₂ emissions by up to 90%. It is now beginning to be sold by boatyards across the system.

2. Change to a hybrid or fully electric engine.

A serial hybrid system is one

The boating community has long been known for its willingness, perhaps eagerness, to adapt in the name of sustainability. Matthew Symonds, national boating manager, says that this trend continues to grow among boaters: "With environmental concerns increasingly on the minds

of consumers, sustainability is a key area of innovation for the inland waterways sector".

of the most efficient forms of propulsion, which can reduce fuel consumption to one third of a standard diesel installation.

Fully electric engines are an option for boats that have electric charging points at their moorings, but the currently limited electric charging infrastructure on the waterway network could limit the use of the boat, especially on longer journeys.

3. Fit a generator.

Using diesel engines to heat the water on board is not an efficient use of energy. But using the engine to run a 240V generator to power onboard electrical systems is much more efficient. It reduces carbon emissions and makes the power produced more versatile and useful.

4. Power sharing.

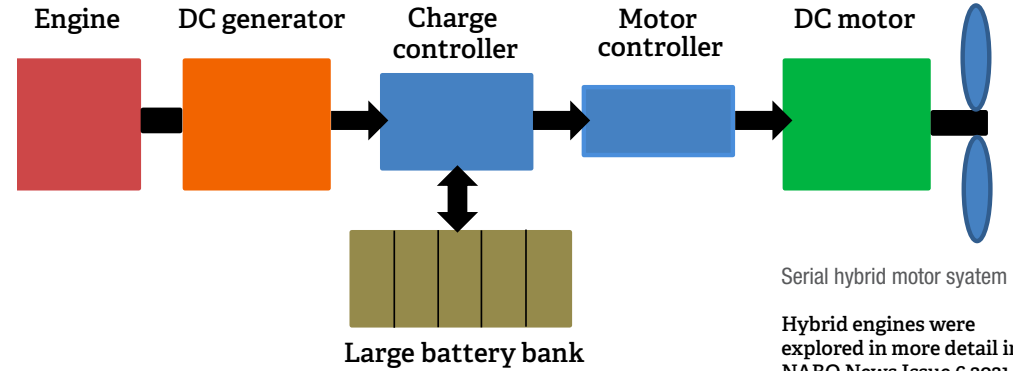
One boat engine could be used to power the electrical systems of up to 30 boats, reducing costs and CO₂ emissions. It obviously requires co-operation, but only simple equipment is needed to distribute power from one engine to many boats.

5. Replace lead-acid with lithium batteries.

Lithium batteries take less engine running time to charge and they don't need to be fully charged. Compared to lead-acid, they can take around ten times more charges over their life cycle and they cost less to charge, particularly with careful charging management. Although the purchase costs are likely to be higher than lead-acid, they save money and CO₂ emissions over the longer term.

6. Invest in solar panels.

Photovoltaic panels are becoming more efficient and there is a wide range of solar panel products to heat hot water and charge batteries. Get



professional advice before choosing a system. Wind turbines also assist with battery charging.

7. Fit a water source heat pump.

Some boat-builders are now fitting water source heat pumps, which concentrate heat from canal water to reduce other power needed for heating.

8. Save water.

Collect the first litre or so of shower water to use for rinsing washing-up in the galley, and use washing-up water to flush the (non-composting) toilet.

9. Choose water-based paints.

Water-based epoxy paint systems reduce the time between painting coats and lower the amounts of hazardous chemicals introduced into the aquatic environment.

10. Use eco-products.

Choose lower phosphate soaps and detergents for washing, and toothpaste and shower gels that are micro-bead free. Avoid products that are made from polypropylene or polyethylene, or have these plastics on the ingredient list, as they can degrade into potentially hazardous micro- or nano-plastics. Select fully

biodegradable alternatives, such as beeswax wraps, instead of clingfilm, and bamboo toothbrushes.

11. Reduce plastic waste.

Most marine plastic debris comes from inland sources, transferred to the sea along rivers and canals. Reduce plastic waste by using refillable water bottles and shopping bags. Ensure that rubbish is tied securely and put into canalside bins that have closable lids. Biffa bins are sorted for recyclables.

12. Properly secure fenders.

Lost plastic fenders add to the plastics in the canal and can degrade to micro- and nano-plastics. Lift side-fenders when cruising and consider changing to natural rope fenders.

Helen Hutt's solar panels

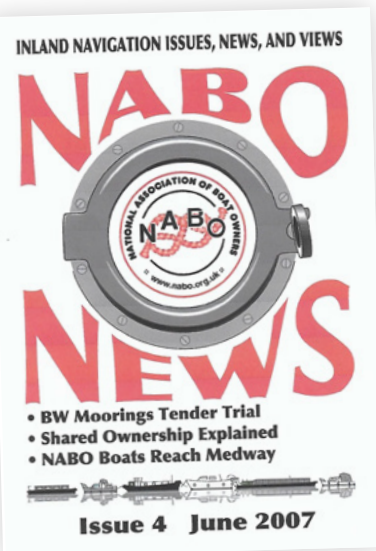




Rewind

Issue No 4 2007

Howard Anguish reviews NABO News from 15 years ago.



Tendering for British Waterways moorings. British Waterways decided to scrap the waiting list for those wishing to purchase a mooring, and instead decided to set up a bidding system with vacancies going to the highest bidder. More on this controversial subject in forthcoming Rewinds.

Standedge tunnel. Carole Sampson, Yorkshire Rep/Secretary, outlines some of the newly agreed tunnel transit procedures. She had been involved with BW as NABO representative on a steering committee where the rules were drawn up, but in future she announced that I would be taking over as representative. Many years later, I am still there despite the many changes that have taken place since then, including the change to CRT! In this new role, I remember attending a number of meetings to agree the implementation detail of these new procedures. Part of my ongoing work involved site visits to Standedge, with one highlight being a full transit of the tunnel, organised by BW, including me for NABO. We were ably guided by Fred Carter, a longstanding BW foreman at Standedge, who gave us a detailed rundown on the unique features of the tunnel. A particular highlight was stopping in the middle of the tunnel and disembarking, using one of the connecting tunnels called 'adits' to visit the unused rail tunnel,

and meeting up with the accompanying BW Landrover escort vehicle. On exiting at Marsden we were welcomed by fish and chips, which were very welcome!

Tony Haynes, recently appointed NABO News Editor, advised that he would be standing down as editor because of health issues, so the search resumed for a new editor to assume the role. More in the next edition of Rewind.

Stuart Sampson and wife Carole hinted strongly that they were also thinking of standing down at the next AGM, after a long time in post as Chairman and Secretary respectively. More to follow.

Shared ownership boating. I joined NABO as a shared ownership boater and I put together an article setting out how this type of boating worked, vis-à-vis outright ownership. I wrote an article in this edition, 'Shared Ownerships—what's that all about?', in which I attempted to dispel a few myths and misunderstandings about how the scheme worked. These included the benefits and some of the pitfalls, and specifically the difference between shared ownership and timeshare. I am surprised to see how little has changed over the years, other than the inevitable cost of living increases. I still have the article on file, so if anyone would like a copy please email me.

In previous Rewinds, I have mentioned 'NABO cruises in company' and the latest was just getting underway with a small number of boats heading from London to the River Medway. The Chairman's report will be included in the next Rewind.

NABO News back issues are available online at nabo.org.uk/index.php/reference/nn-back-issues-2

Letters to the Editor

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

Ridiculous signage

Seen on my trip along the Trent and Mersey Canal at Church Lock 47. Is there any point to this ridiculous sign informing boaters of the obvious?

It actually has trees growing in it! Someone coming to the lock for the first time might think that it's the working lock that is closed because it's so obvious that the derelict lock hasn't been in use for years, so why bother with the sign? It's bad enough that half the side-by-side locks along this section are out of action, either temporarily or permanently.

It concerns me that CRT will just allow the temporarily-closed locks to become permanently closed due to their inaction. Our canal heritage is being destroyed by CRT's failure to act.

Dean Hawkey
NB Polveithan

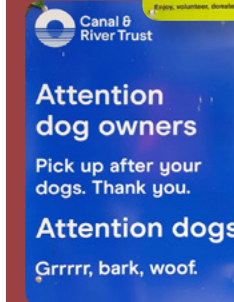


I name this boat ...

If you have spotted a boat name that made you smile while cruising, please let me have a photo to use in future issues. Here's one from Brian Holt.



Can we feel a (rather depressing) competition coming on?



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