



NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners
Issue 3 June 2025



Turbulence on the Thames
Stafford Riverway
restoration
Festivals



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The magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners

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Next NABO News copy date

Articles, letters, photos and cartoons are most welcome. Please email your contributions to nabonews@nabo.org.uk or post to the Editor by 12th July 2025.

NABO Calendar 2025

19th July Zoom, 13th September Zoom, 15th November face to face after AGM (provisional date) at Tamworth Cruising Club.

Cover photo

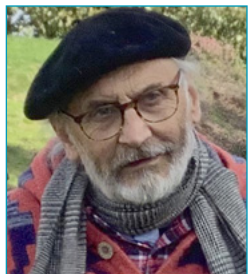
This month's photo shows traders at Stafford Riverway open day. Please email your photos for the front cover of NABO News to the Editor, as JPG, ideally portrait with a file size of 5MB or larger.



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In the field of better boating there are a few things that would be very easy to achieve and a cost effective way of making life better on water. Internet and phone signal are a bit of a lottery on the canals so it would be helpful if information was presented in an immediately intelligible form.

Most boaters don't have the luxury of unlimited data on 5G. On a personal note, one recently concerning statement 'Please note that as of 14 April 2025 until further notice, we are not accepting any new applications for End of Garden Moorings. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this may cause' caused alarm, fortunately while I had access to internet. I asked our chair if she had heard anything about this

ing mooring applications. I thought CRT needed more income.

Stoppage notices eg: Between Salwick Bridge, Bridge 26 and Bridge 99. We are pleased to welcome a canoe challenge event, organised by Age UK Lancashire between 07:00 and 20:30 on Saturday 31 May. The event will use a section of canal between Salwick Bridge, Bridge 26 and Bridge 99 on the Lancaster Canal... Not until the last sentence is the canal mentioned. Although I have travelled on the Lancaster canal I wouldn't remember the details to know whether my journey would be affected. Just one example of many.

I am becoming increasingly concerned about the number of potentially new liveaboard boaters who ask questions about being 'off grid'. To me there is no chance of truly being off grid when on inland waters. Access to rubbish disposal, fuel supplies, pump-out, food and water are all necessary and, occasionally, emergency services for health and mechanical repairs. So what does being off grid mean? Just the absence of mains electricity? Many government and local government services require a postal address, which, even as a continuous cruiser retains some boater on grid connection to land.

I have been asked frequently where our long cruise will take us this year. Looking at unplanned stoppages it's very difficult to predict, yes we'll go somewhere and hopefully get back to our mooring but where, really depends on weather and functionality. After one of the driest springs on record the reservoirs have little chance in maintaining summer water demand.

Happy boating!

A plea for descriptive precision

Editor **John Sadler**

and she enquired from CRT promptly receiving the following response 'I have been passed your email below regarding the Trust's End of Garden Moorings which are administered by our Waterside Moorings Team. Due to a temporary staff shortage we paused applications for new end of garden moorings for a short period and we hope to re-open the application process very shortly. All existing end of garden moorings are unaffected by this, it's just the application and assessment of new end of garden moorings. We will updated (sic) our website to confirm that this is just a short term issue.' At the time of writing the website has not been amended, potentially delay-

In drought conditions

Chair **Anne Husar**



There's a BBC report that we've had 'the driest spring in England since 1961, with northern regions experiencing the driest start to the year in nearly a century.

Almost all of the UK is expected to have below normal or low river levels in May, apart from the south-west of England and southern Wales. It went on to say that if drought conditions become severe, the government can 'reduce boats' movement on waterways. A glance at the stoppages confirms that any government pronouncement is already unnecessary on several canals. Toddbrook coming back in to operation would help the Macc, Peak Forest and Trent & Mersey but not until next summer, assuming it fills up over the winter and spring.

In the meantime there's confusion about whether boaters have to notify CRT if movement becomes difficult because of drought. There's this on their overstay page: You do not need to apply for an extended stay....where we.....have drought. But then there's this on another Q&A: 'If an emergency stoppage does happen, don't worry, we'll help you work out a plan. If you think you're going to be stuck in one place for longer than 14 days or are worried that your 'movement pattern' might break the rules, then contact our team.'

This is the reply when I asked for clarification: 'We don't need to be notified if customers find themselves within the stoppage area and are struggling to move, and an extended stay application isn't necessary. We will consider water supply issues and take sensible and pragmatic

decisions that won't unfairly penalise people that can't move. We have given as much notice as possible through the Stoppages and Notices, so hopefully people have used that time to attempt to move somewhere more appropriate, though I appreciate not always possible. When reviewing licenses without a home mooring, we will consider if boats are in areas that have been affected by water supply issues. We'll take that into consideration to ensure we make fair and sensible decisions. I should add that whilst I accept that navigation will be difficult, it is still expected that everyone shares the space fairly, observes mooring time limits and makes every effort not to block essential facilities for prolonged periods of time.'

Finally, Nabo welcomes on board the new CEO, Campbell Robb who will be taking the helm in October. By the end of the year we should begin to see the cut of his jib as he learns the ropes although he may still be maintaining an even keel at that point. From stem to stern, there will be much for him to fathom out if he's in for the long haul with time to try different tacks. We wish him smooth sailing and look forward to seeing him on the cut, maybe doing a bit of lock wheeling or just simply gongoozling. Reading his statement, I wonder if anyone has told him that CRT is a navigation authority? Final thought, let's hope he has the ear of DEFRA.



Let's get together

Vice Chair **Andy Williams**

The final report of the Canal and River Trust (CRT) Trustees' Future of Boat Licensing Commission is due in September 2025.

It will be presenting the opinions and options that the Commission considers to be central in determining a future approach/approaches to licensing people (giving them permission) to 'go boating' on CRT waters, together with commentary on potential legislative reforms. The first big question for me about the Commission's work is who will get to see that report, whether in full or in part? The second follows on from that namely, who will get an opportunity to respond to the report, and how will they do it?

Regarding the first question, the original Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Commission from November 2024 don't require that the report—or its findings—be made public. Instead they indicate that once submitted to the CRT Board of Trustees, the Trustees will respond to its findings, outlining any proposed legislative reforms or other accepted changes. Presumably they will then submit their opinion to Campbell Robb, the new CEO of CRT from October 6th. That bit's not clear. What is clear is that there is no commitment to open up the report, in full or in part, for further consultation, say by organisations representing boaters' interests. It could well be that neither we, NABO, nor any other organisation representing boaters' interests, will get to see or review the report. But what if we do get an opportunity to respond, for example to an Executive Summary, Trustees' opin-

ions, or even on CRT's reflections on the report's recommendations? How to potentially respond?

You can be sure that CRT has already started setting up its own mechanism for reviewing the Commission's report or at least whatever the Trustees pass on. What if some part of the Commission's report or Trustees' reflections is released for review to NABO and others? If we aren't ready on the day we'll be playing catch-up with CRT. On top of that it's surely relevant, nay important, that boaters' organisations speak with the same or at least similar voice? If we respond with fractured views that's not going to look good. I'd suggest that we already need to be thinking about how to demonstrate a united front. Maybe a (temporary) 'Alliance of Boaters' Organisations' that could jointly review released proposals and then be dissolved once it is all done and dusted (that's not to say that individual organisations couldn't then fight on on any matters of specific concern to them)? Something like that happened in the run up to the handover of the responsibilities of the British Waterways Board to CRT in 2012. The more recent establishment of the 'Fund Britain's Waterways' initiative was also an indication of what can be done when those with a shared interest in the waterways get together.

It's time to get ready, now. As the Scouts say, we need to "Be Prepared". Or as William Shakespeare has said *"Better three hours too soon than a minute too late"* The Merry Wives of Windsor.

Fly on the wall

From the minutes by **Peter Braybrook**

Since the previous meeting, Mon and Brec has water for another year by agreement with water authorities obtaining abstraction from the river Usk.

Overstay notices: It was noted that CRT have issued overstay notices for boats locked in by stoppages on the Stratford on Avon Canal. Matthew Symonds has now rescinded them all. Ken Hylins said that he is available to deal with any problems.

Update for Toddbrook reservoir: Hoped to be operational for Summer 2026.

Policy discussions:

CRT licence increase and surcharges: Ken Hylins reported that he has sent another email to Matthew Symonds with reference to discrimination. He has not had a reply.

Fund Britain's Waterways: Anne thanked Malcolm for his part in planning the FBW Westminster cruise on May 7. He was disappointed by the turnout from MP's particularly the APPGW. CRT's patron His Majesty the King was present in another boat but was not involved in the FBW action. The flotilla continues on its way up the Thames/Oxford Canal and the GUC. The crossing of the Wash will be 23rd to 28th June although this may be affected by a CRT stoppage.

CRT Licensing Commission: The commission has received 8000 replies to the survey. Most were from boaters but there was input from towpath users as well. Anne and Andy will be meeting the commission for a strict one hour meeting. There was discussion and concern about the misuse of licences as a tool for pressurising boaters, particularly toward getting home moorings. The discussion led into the general area of Terms and Conditions and the move toward a contractual approach. This approach by a monopoly has always been a concern of NABO.

Marina Terms and Conditions: Following a discussion of the issues it was noted that primarily this is a commercial decision and moorers must investigate the T & C's before signing the

agreement. Restrictive T & C's are very common and used as a tool to curb unreasonable behaviour with catch-all clauses. David agreed to pick up these issues.

Meeting with Matthew Symonds: Anne reported that the meeting on May 12 was much better than the meeting in January. The new national boating manager, Alex, appears very willing to receive the problems and act on NABO's concerns. Water resource is now a priority with a weekly meeting of their water co-ordination team. Anne has continued contact with Margaret Clarke a hydrologist who has written for Nabo News (last month). She is very concerned about CRT's care of reservoirs particularly Rudyard which is not being used to its full potential.

CRT CEO Position: It was mentioned that Richard Parry is going boating in his retirement and is having a boat built. NABO wish him well in his endeavour. The incoming CEO, Campbell Robb, will take up post in October. There are concerns that the fact that CRT is a navigation authority may be getting lost.

CRT issues: It was reported that there has recently been a "near miss" on the River Trent where a lock keeper let two unlicensed craft in a very poor condition through the lock. The boats sank. It was noted that EA stop unlicensed craft from using the locks, why cannot CRT?

Chargeable moorings, particularly in London, will be reviewed at the end of the year. It was noted that there have been periods of non-use, even around Cavalcade.

Refuse disposal: CRT are acting on the new laws. There will not be compostable toilet disposal or oil disposal facilities. CRT are attempting to work with local authorities to ensure that boaters can use domestic recycling sites.

Welfare Officers Report: Ken Hylins reported that he will assist with overstay notices due to stoppages. He indicated that more people are finding it difficult to pay for a full 12 month licence and he will be asking CRT for consideration of interest free instalment plans or

equal payment for two six month licences. Andy highlighted problems with making payments on instalments. Historically, CRT have not been good at managing the automated payment systems and there have been errors in standing orders and direct debit. David told of another problem that six month licences cannot be paid for by instalments.

EA: Malcolm reported on a new EA payment system for visitor moorings. There will be 24 hours free but registration will be required on arrival. A smartphone is required. In the past lock keepers used to administer moorings. They are now not allowed to do it. There is a deficiency in the numbers of lock keepers on the Thames. Vacancies have been advertised. Services are in crisis with none on a long length of the river. The lock keepers are voting this month on industrial action concerning a whole raft of grievances.

BSS: Mike Rodd will be attending the next AF and TF meetings. The fire services have agreed the types of smoke alarm suitable for boats.

David Fletcher sits on a BS committee, working on environmental standards for diesel engines to include HVO and hybrid operation. They are also looking at battery electrical systems where we now could have voltages of up to 600 volts. They are also working on gas systems.

Andy indicated that there should be a method of getting feedback on technical matters. There used to be a technical section in NABO News. Council was reminded that to reinstate this would require a technical writer.

BSS Examiners have been fully reviewed in the last three years and procedures are very robust with respect to gas safety. There have been no gas safety events on boats in the past few years.

Welfare Report

Ken Hylin, Welfare Officer

Iwould like to highlight a matter raised at the latest NABO council meeting. This is the 'Keep moving' penalties enforced when there are valid reasons for extended mooring such as network failure.

The first thing you must do is challenge these notices. If there are issues which restrict movement, especially those caused by low water levels or movement is being restricted by lock closures. These notices

may seem trivial but can play a part when you apply for your licence and could lead a six months licence being issued through no fault of your own.

If you have any difficulties in challenging these notices please don't hesitate to get in touch and I will help or advise you through the process. This also applies if you get a reduced licence for the same reason, again please contact me for help and advice.

Peter can be contacted on
07852 911539 or at
welfare@nabo.org.uk

In Remembrance

In many of the canalside cemeteries are buried the unfortunate mishaps of the original navigators. We owe them so much, it would be good to preserve their memory out of respect and also for future historians of the network.

Since January 2023, John Gilmore has been campaigning tirelessly trying to shine a light onto

cemeteries because of the many issues affecting them at the moment and into the future, like the total lack of grounds maintenance.

It would really help to promote this cause to sign the
petition: petition.parliament.uk/petitions/711892

AI for CRT?

Sue Tonious

John Cleese recently said in response to a suggestion that film studios are contemplating replacing writers and actors with the use of Artificial Intelligence(AI) to mimic their talents, that it would be easier and more efficient to replace executives since they have no talent at all.

It made me chuckle but immediately, I thought of another organisation where talented manual workers could be usefully employed and rewarded by replacing some executives with AI. After all, the canal network has been in existence for over 200 years with very little innovative thinking. So perhaps AI could be employed to do comparisons between successful canal and navigable river ways and generate some new revenue streams and even a maintenance schedule or two.

By using programming statements like if-then-else, the vagaries of the disintegrating English climate could be accommodated in a logical way. It might mean that navigators weren't too sure that their route was plausible but at least they would know the risks. It would seem that with a volunteer group set to compile a digital database based on a Postcode Lottery funded four year heritage survey, that work may have already started. Using AI on the images stored comparisons could be made, deterioration logged and a timescale prediction of structure failure created, resulting in proactive maintenance and fewer unplanned stoppages.

AI can also create sensible answers from a knowledge of the Terms and Conditions, boaters may be advised that they can indeed travel in the dark and not just in tunnels. Just imagine a system that talks to you, "Where are you now?", "Where would you like to travel to today?", "How long would you like to stay for?". "Would you like to know where the customer service facilities are along that route?" Please enter your debit card to pre-book the mooring. And the dreaded "You are approaching a non navigable section turn around when possible."

With the increasing use of AI wherever possible to make life easier for humans CRT should be able to rent out some of their unoccupied or cheaply rented warehouses for use as data centres. Very handy, next to a water source for temperature control. It may even allow the generation of a profit from the £692m property portfolio held by CRT currently making a loss of around £24m.

So with new revenue, logical maintenance plans and a workable climate change alternative, [...] *no winters of discontent, all is well. Our bruised arms hung up for monuments, Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings, Our dreadful marches to delightful measures. Dive thoughts, down to my soul...* Shakespeare, Richard III.

Turbulence on the Thames

Lock keepers ballot by **Malcolm Blundell**

The petition to sign:
gmb-southern.org.uk/ea-petition

There is ill feeling amongst the lock keepers of the Thames towards the EA. They believe that they are being played by senior managers and are fully aware of the support they have from the boating community. Unless some resolution is found soon they will probably start a work to rule.

A ballot of 98% of the keepers determined that just under 93% support strike action and 100% support industrial action short of a strike.

EA appear very risk averse and seem to prefer to have nothing to do with lock keepers and boaters, just concentrating on weirs instead, for which they claim to have funding. This ignores the impact locks have on navigation. They would still retain staff on projects working from home, although some lock supervisors appear not to have visited their locks in months.

Update

The GMB and Lock Keepers representatives have had a meeting with EA Directors. It was made clear to them what the lock keepers want. I have been told that the Union is to meet Emma Hardy, the waterways minister sometime week beginning 2nd June

In the letter sent out by EA, shown below, paragraph 4 is telling. There are far fewer temporary staff and permanent staff on 18 Month contracts. What happens after that? Having gone through the staff list EA needs to be out recruiting now as many current staff are leaving within that timescale. It's clear that in 2 years time EA hope to start shedding lock keepers but they have not yet come up with a publicly acceptable alternative. If the lock keepers and the union don't get clarity then I think they may just go directly to strike despite my earlier optimism.

Dear TWF member

On Friday 23 May the GMB Union confirmed that their members amongst our Lock and Weir Keepers on the non-tidal River Thames voted in favour of industrial action. We are disappointed with this outcome but remain committed to working with our staff and the GMB to resolve this issue.

We do not know yet what form any industrial action might take, but our planning to mitigate any effects, including on our water level management capability, is well underway. We will also ensure that we provide clear and timely guidance to those boaters, businesses, and communities should any impacts be identified.

We absolutely want to deliver more for all our stakeholders along the non-tidal Thames, and to work with you to improve our service offer and deliver value for money to support a thriving navigation.

Our Waterways staff, including our Lock and Weir Keepers, are important in delivering our navigation responsibilities, and we have not proposed any cuts to jobs or services. Instead, recruitment to support the Lock and Weir Keepers is underway for additional seasonal staff until the end of this year, and for extra full-time staff on 18-month contracts. This is while we work with all our navigation staff, across all the waterways in England for which we are the navigation authority, on how we can modernise and improve our service for all our boating customers.

I will keep you updated on any key developments and potential impacts as we understand more. In the meantime, if you would like to discuss this matter further, please do contact me, at WaterwaysThames@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely, Maria Herlihy
 Thames Waterway Manager

Caveat emptor, moorers

Rather than on the cut, in the marina. Word is out that some rather unpleasant behaviour by some marina management teams has started to become the norm. Whether that is because of some quite harsh trading conditions or just a way of getting rid of 'awkward' customers remains to be seen. At this stage NABO would like to keep track of unwanted management behaviour, any moorers who feel that they have been unjustly treated can email the facts of their case to feedback@nabo.org.uk. Anonymity will be preserved to protect against victimisation but if there is sufficient evidence we could make the behaviour the subject of a future article.

Terms and conditions of contract should be stated, studied, understood and agreed at the time of acceptance. Sadly I suspect, as in the case of banks, when they change if you don't like the new rules the only option is to find a new marina. Currently, as with any residential rental agreement, remember that you have virtually no security of tenure. Although this situation is under consideration, see *Mentions in The Houses* in this issue.

Boat Licensing

NABO have been included in discussions with the Future of Boat Licensing Commission. Detailed questions are required to remain unpublished but NABO would like to get input from members.

In the course of our input the Commission members asked a range of questions. And while no specifics were offered the observation was made that there were already many similarities between our sub-

missions and the opinions of other contributors. From their side the Commission members proposed four specific topics for additional feedback from NABO. These were briefly reviewed in the meeting but NABO will need to establish a position and feed it back to the Commission as soon as possible. The topics are as follows:

- 1 Are paid boating licences still the best approach to charging for the use of CRT waterways? Could they be scrapped, perhaps to be replaced by another approach, say by paying tolls according to the waterways used? Does being licensed maybe encourage responsible boating?
- 2 Noting already that boaters have expressed a sense of 'unfairness' what is the understanding of 'fairness' when it comes to contributing financially or in other ways to the running and upkeep of CRT resources considering the range of users and levels of usage of those users?
- 3 Possibly relating to #2 and recognising that CRT is very dependent for its activities on the contributions of volunteers, nevertheless are volunteers useful and well thought of?
- 4 In the context of boating, is fund-raising (i.e. not income such as from boating licences) really relevant as a core tool to raise money for CRT? Does the process of fund-raising cover the cost? Is it a money-maker or a loss-maker?

Feedback from paid up members is needed. The latest date for feedback will be confirmed but given the envisaged scheduling it's likely to be by mid-June. Apologies for the tight schedule but it's out of our hands.

Nantwich Bank

David Fletcher on the continuing saga of Nantwich Bank on the Shropshire Union,

A geotechnical team arrived recently and did some test drilling at the bottom of the slope near the traffic lights. Towpath not obstructed at that point, despite closure warnings.

According to one of the workers, they are going to drill multiple holes for soil investigations along the towpath. They are basically taking samples to determine the composition of the bank. The towpath and slope have been marked with survey paint, mainly near the top of the slope and further down near the overspill. In both of these

places the towpath has slumped out of horizontal over 25 years.

It will take weeks because access is poor and everything has to be wheelbarrowed into place

The towpath is closed, and the moorings too but there are still a few boats that can't read

Watch this space.

Chair: I can't imagine what they can do to reverse this years-old slippage along so much of the embankment with the houses now built at the bottom. Next instalment very much anticipated!



Yellow Bags of shame at Lock 28, Oxford Canal

A plea to CRT from **Peter Braybrook**

I walked up the towpath past Hardwick Lock No 28 on Thursday, 28th May 2025, and noticed that the off side top and bottom paddles are both yellow bagged “under repair”. I have searched the notices and stoppages page for maintenance and repair and find no navigation stoppage or restriction planned up to 30/6/25.

In line with your commitments under the “Better Boating” initiative please would you inform us when the repair of these is planned. Otherwise an unplanned stoppage is inevitable on the failure of one of the near side paddles.

I also noticed that the by-wash culvert is either blocked or seriously restricted and water levels above the lock are increasing beyond design. This does bring the advantage that the silting of the pound is less felt by deep drafted boats but also shows a lack of attention to the general maintenance of this pound.

In the hope that we will be able to navigate unhindered through Hardwick lock in the very near future.





Cotswold Canals Trust

Working for Restoration

Spring 2025 so far has been one of the driest in nearly 100 years; bad news for canals, like ours, that rely on a limited water feed to function. Along with the Canal and River Trust, we are having to manage our water resources carefully and are looking to restrict boat movements through the locks to the essential minimum.

Although water in the canal appears not to move, the canal actually flows from the east finally discharging into the Frome and Severn rivers. Spillways by each lock move water through the pounds as do the locks when boats go through them. Although we have a licence to abstract water from the River Frome at Goughs Orchard, this is restricted according to the river water levels. Elsewhere we rely on streams such as the Slad and Painswick, and on run off and field drains from the valleys.

In times when water supply is plentiful, the canal acts as an important part of the flood alleviation in the Stroud valleys, but in periods of drought limited water flow can uncover problems with leaks in the pounds or through the locks. This was the case recently in the pound between Newtown Lock and Blunder Lock, emptied because of faults with the paddles that control water movement through Blunder Lock and insufficient water to keep the pound full. The canal itself is nearly 250 years old and much of the engineering infrastructure restored when the current section of canal was reopened is over 10 years old. It takes a lot of volunteer effort to keep the canal in water but when parts do fail, as at Blunder Lock, it can take time to identify the cause of the problem in order to repair it.

Fromebridge Nature Reserve

Vegetation has been cleared from the canal and relocated to the pond, which will soon be fenced. Dredging between the A38 and Occupation Bridge is complete, with silt now being moved by volunteers.



Towpath construction is set to begin in early June, followed by fencing to protect the canal banks from cattle, with the goal of opening the new Fromebridge Reserve by early August. The newly installed bird hide will open once the towpath and fencing are in place. Meanwhile, restoration work on Occupation Bridge is nearing completion, with scaffolding soon to be relocated to Westfield Bridge. Preliminary work has been done at Ocean Swing Bridge in preparation for operating the hydraulic drive with electrical power.

It's a pleasure to see how much joy the restored canals bring to the public and we do appreciate them acting as our eyes and ears to let us know when there is a problem on the canal, often before our volunteers are aware. We are very conscious that, whenever there is a problem that affects water levels or water quality, impacts on wildlife on and in the canal can be serious. For that reason, we work closely with the Environment Agency and other wildlife organisations to monitor and minimise any impacts and to identify better ways of working.

The Stafford Riverway Link

There is an exciting restoration project to open up Stafford to canal visitors. A project open weekend took place on May 24 & 25 to show followers and supporters the progress made to date. This was accompanied by a selection of traders and musicians..



History and Heritage

Work started on the 1½ mile navigation in 1814 to link Stafford Town Centre with the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal at Baswich. It involved constructing a roving bridge, basin, aqueduct, lock and lock house at Baswich, and straightening and deepening the River Sow. In the centre of Stafford, a short channel was cut parallel to the river leading to a coal wharf near Green Bridge. The waterway opened in 1816 and was navigable until the 1920s. Although its main purpose was to carry “coals, lime and merchandise”, the waterway was popular with pleasure boaters. It was owned by Lord Stafford and leased to the Staffs & Worcester Canal Company from 1838 until 1927.

At Baswich, the junction with the main canal was blocked-off in 1929 and the aqueduct trough removed. The lock house was occupied until 1956 and demolished soon after. The roving bridge and remains of the lock survived until they were demolished in the 1970s, although traces of this bridge and the pound walls are still visible. Weir levels on the river have been changed, and the Rivers Sow and Penk realigned. The river channel and all the other bridges into Stafford are still in place, and parts of the towpath have been upgraded. The channel in Stafford was infilled in 1930 and the coal wharf site is now part of the Riverside Retail and Leisure Complex opened in 2016.

The Project

The team will be working with Stafford Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council, Canal & River Trust, the Environment



Traders relaxing in the sun

Agency and others, during works to complete the excavation and construction work on the basin. This work is well underway as the photos show. We were accompanied on a walk round the basin to get a feel of the scope of what has been achieved already. Although there is much to do it is a credit to all the volunteers that so much has been achieved and to a very high standard of workmanship.

The next major phase will be

the construction of a roving bridge at the Junction with the towpath. This will allow pedestrian and farm vehicles to continue access while creating a new connection between the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal and the basin.

A new lock has to be built from the basin connecting it to a navigable channel into the rivers Penk and Sow. Some work will also be required to create a navigable link into Stafford Town Centre.

Basin and new lock
White posts showing the new cut'



CRT's Better Boating Plan

This has been a real success, or at least I've not had a single response to the contrary. NABO spends a lot of time and money publishing the NABO News, but it's failing to get responses from members..

Getting the basics right

Boating should feel easier, with locks and swing bridges better maintained and easier to use. There should also be fewer unplanned stoppages that disrupt cruising.

CRT will fix all outstanding broken paddles by spring 2026 and set a target from April 2025 to repair any paddle faults arising as soon as possible (but no longer than four weeks). If a paddle repair cannot be fixed as it requires a longer stoppage, a repair may be deferred until the next works stoppage period.

CRT will target more resources on planned preventative maintenance (PPM), prioritising re-greasing and clearing vegetation at locks and swing/lift bridges in the spring and early summer ahead of the busier period of boating.

CRT will spend more delivering improved grass-cutting in 2025/26. They will also review where and when they cut grass —ensuring grass is cut at locks and mooring sites and cutting more towpaths to the water's edge, making it easier for boaters. They'll update their tree management standards and programmes to increase tree surveys. This will inform more winter tree works and assign higher priority to the clearance of fallen trees blocking navigation and towpaths.

Boater facilities

CRT acknowledges that boater facilities are important, so when they do break, they'll work quicker to fix them. Combatting overflowing bins and fly tipping will improve the experience of using these facilities. CRT also acknowledges

that many boaters care about recycling, facilities will be adjusted to make it easier. The new 'Simpler Recycling' regulations have been in force since April. They'll roll out segregated waste, recycling and food waste collections at their sites in England by summer 2025. CRT will review refuse collections at their busiest sites to reduce overflowing bins and take measures to help tackle fly-tipping.

If water, Elsan or pump-out boater facilities break, CRT will fix them promptly.

Better communication & customer service

The Trust want to make it easier for boaters to tell them if there is a problem so that they can fix it. Being able to find up-to-date information is important, so they'll improve the communication and customer service providing more opportunities to meet and talk with them.

CRT will develop a Boater App to make it easier for boaters to access the online services provided, when and where they want. For example, this will enable fault reporting and find out what has already been reported.

The stoppage notices system will be improved, making sure that the information for boaters is clear and accurate —adding photos so that boaters can see the cause of the stoppage and what is being done to resolve it. The booking system for operated structures and pre-bookable moorings will be updated to make it more customer friendly and easier to use.

CRT plan to improve how they communicate with boaters. The Boaters' Update e-bulletin will be updated, and they'll increase their social media boating activity. They'll provide more opportunities for boaters to meet and speak with colleagues. A 12-month calendar of boater meeting dates will be published.

If you spot failures or improvements, have any comments drop a line to feedback@nabo.org.uk or nabonews@nabo.org.uk we would love to hear from you

CRT'S PROMISE TO KEEP CANALS OPEN FOR BOATING

"We will demonstrate to boaters that keeping our canals open for navigation is at the heart of what we do."
Sadly it continues to look like heart failure to most boaters.

Closed to navigation at the time of writing

Dudley No 2 canal, Blackheath Bridge
Huddersfield locks 5 to 1E
Huddersfield Narrow Canal Lock 11
Macclesfield canal now in more than one place
Kennet and Avon lock 101
Kennet and Avon Lock 10 to Lock 1
Kennet and Avon River Avon
River Severn Bevere Lock
Leeds and Liverpool Lock 90-91
Leeds and Liverpool Lock locks 7—11
Worcester and Birmingham Tardebigge Lock 58
Oxford Canal Dukes cut
Walsall Canal Tame Valley No 1 bridge—
Birchills Junction
Rushall Lock Flight, sluice failure
Lancaster Lock 7 Glasson Branch
Lancaster Canal Ribble link, sea lock failure
South Stratford Lock 40 Wilmcote Top Lock
Chesterfield Canal Worksop town Lock
approach wall
Anderton Boat Lift
Grand Union Canal, Clitheroe's Lock, Lock 99,
Brentford
Barge Lock, Stourport on Severn—The map
shows navigation will be closed from Gilgal
through to the river, incl the staircase. Do
they really mean that? That would mean no
access to & from the Severn to the Staffs and
Worcester
Check Rochdale Locks 1-24 and Wigan Flight
Watford flight lock 5
Navigators are further hindered by closures
not under CRT
Bridgewater Canal



Mentions in the Houses



Lord Cashman

Amendment 206A—Renter's Rights Bill in the House of Lords

Moved by **Lord Cashman**: After Clause 63, insert the following new Clause—"Residential boat fees to be classified as rent; The rights set out in Part 1 of this Act extend to any individual—(a) for whom a boat is their only home, and(b) who is liable to pay a boat licence fee, boat registration fee, boat rental fee or mooring charges."

Lord Cashman non-affiliated: These amendments address a series of wrongs that need to be righted. Relying solely on the Financial Conduct Authority and the tenuous protections of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 is an insult to houseboat residents and just does not work. They need security of tenure and basic rights, hence the amendments ... The need for legislative action is becoming urgent. The rights and protections afforded by this Bill and other Acts of Parliament should apply to residential houseboats because they have tenancies and agreements for their moorings, a mooring fixed to a pier or the riverbank. They have to abide by all the obligations of residents within their local environment; additionally, they pay council tax, energy bills, water bills and insurance, but they are missing statutory rights and protections. They have less protection if the land owners of moorings increase mooring fees, develop the site or, in some cases, refuse to re-new licences.

The problem is growing. It is happening across the country, along the rivers and canals of the United Kingdom. One solicitor specialising in this area said the calls are increasing monthly. We need these amendments. The calls are from

people now facing not only eviction from their moorings but having to physically move their homes. They must take their homes with them or abandon them. She told me that these calls are often coming from vulnerable people, including disabled people who pay council tax and have leased residential moorings.

Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer Liberal Democrat: My Lords, I have added my name to Amendments 262 and 271. I am very grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Cashman, for tabling them and for his excellent introduction, which explained the lamentable situation we have arrived at whereby people living on boats continually fall through the cracks between housing and what is now known as Defra. I will go a little bit into the history, so that the Minister will perhaps appreciate the need for action now.

Those with permanent moorings have some protection, although the cost of mooring fees and licences is an issue. I am especially concerned with those who do not have a permanent mooring and are classified as continuous cruisers, which means they can stay for a maximum of only 14 days in one place. This situation dates from the British Waterways Act 1995, when Parliament removed the need for boat dwellers to have a home mooring.

The Canal & River Trust, which is now responsible for our waterways, has embarked on a review by an independent commission. It says that the review will seek to implement any reforms, including any legislative changes, as soon as possible after its conclusion. The ability to moor somewhere is obviously essential if a boat is your home. Given the Canal & River Trust's rule that



Baroness Miller

continuous cruisers cannot stay on any one mooring for more than 14 days, for a boat to remain a home there must be a supply of available moorings....

My right honourable friend Vince Cable raised the issue in 2006 when he was MP for Twickenham. He identified one reason why the navigation authorities and regulatory bodies are rather hostile to residential boat owners. He said that at best they tolerate them, but they do not see them as integral to canal conservation. So there was a certain amount of prejudice against boat dwellers and Travellers, and I do not believe that has changed.

The Minister who replied to my right honourable friend Vince Cable is now the noble Baroness, Lady Smith, Leader of our House. She said that a working group had been formed and that action in this area had been sought for a number of years.

Well, that was 19 years ago and the solution is no nearer, because the department responsible for waterways never considers housing matters for boat dwellers, and the housing department, which has been through many names in time, does not relate to waterways issues.

Ed—Sadly the debate raised some points about the difficulty of implementing the legislation in regard to moveable homes. Lord Cashman eventually had to withdraw the amendment acknowledging the consequences of that will be the continuation of people being evicted from their homes, caravans and boats. The evictions and homelessness will be accompanied by families in despair.

Sir Andrew Mitchell, Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Minister for Development: Asked the Secretary of State for Environment,

Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his department has taken to clear up waterways in the West Midlands.

Emma Hardy, The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Navigation authorities are responsible for keeping their waterways clear of obstacles, rubbish, aquatic plant overgrowths, and any other impediments to ensure safety of navigation for users. They also work closely with the relevant authorities in responding to pollution incidents; an example of this was the Canal and River Trust working with the Environment Agency and others to deal with a serious pollution incident in the Walsall Canal in August 2024.

From **Canal and River Trust**: Around one mile of the canal in the Pleck area of Walsall has had to remain closed for boats for the last eight months.

Henriette Breukelaar, regional director, Canal & River Trust, said: “We’re delighted that dredging of the Walsall Canal has started; this is a major milestone in the canal’s recovery.

The awful spillage of cyanide into the community’s wonderful and historic canal has left this section ecologically devastated, wiping out wildlife, including the microorganisms that form the foundation of the canal’s ecosystem.

So far, we have spent around half a million pounds of charitable funds, covering costs such as staff time, dam installation, materials, contractors, and lab testing. This is a huge resource that has been diverted from other essential activity to keep the region’s canals open and safe.”

The plan is to re-open for navigation in early June.

Ed.—We can only hope that the £500,000 can be reclaimed from the source or their insurers



Sir Andrew Mitchell



Emma Hardy

Environment change

By John Sadler

The Department of Transport has recently developed a model to support the development of policies to reduce maritime emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants.

It uses data collected from Automatic Identification System (AIS) transponders which means that vessels not required to carry these are currently excluded from their modelling. As part of the continuous improvement of the model, they are looking to widen the scope of the model by producing emissions estimates and forecasts for vessels that fall within the UK inland waterways and leisure craft sector. They have awarded Ricardo a contract to conduct research to improve their understanding of emissions from inland waterways and leisure craft in the United Kingdom. Key objectives of this research are to review existing methodologies used to estimate emissions and provide data for use in their model. Data they are most interested in:

- The population of vessels using inland waterways within the UK
- Technical specifications of vessels such as, vessel type, engine types, engine power, and number of engines on the vessels including auxiliary, pilot or boiler.
- The engine's internal combustion type
- Fuel used by vessels
- Vessel age
- Information regarding any modifications to the vessel to make it more efficient
- Fuel consumption and activity of the vessel

To support this work, they are inviting stakeholders from across the inland waterways and leisure craft sector to participate in this research. This engagement will ensure they gather accurate and relevant data to expand the scope of their modelling.

Subsequently NABO had a request from Neve Hamilton of Ricardo for help in finding data on:

- Vessel types and counts
- Vessel operation and activity patterns
- Spatial information (e.g. vessel locations, movements and routes)
- Fuel type and consumption (e.g. diesel for propulsion, wood for heating, LPG for cooking etc.)
- Modifications or retrofits that could affect emissions
- Historical time series and trends

Of course NABO does not hold data of this type but Canal and River Trust do on licence application forms. Other navigation authorities like EA and the Avon trust presumably would also be able to answer some of the questions. 'Spatial information' could be extracted from the spotter reports. Fuel consumption is probably only known by individual boaters.

Although we're unable to provide the specific data requested, we could circulate a short survey to our members. They may supply information on vessel type, hours of operation, and fuel usage, although there is no compulsion for them to reply.

If council approves, a link will be posted on the NABO website.

The Amsterdam solution

by Ian Hutson

I like gongoozling. Unlike personal solvency, riding a bicycle, and human relationships it's something that I haven't already SNAFU'd beyond repair.

It has taken me half a century of empirical study to conclude that I am much better at Doing Gongoozling than I am at Doing Sex.

With sex (I have discovered) tearful embarrassed hysterical laughter, breaking wind, pointing, snorting, taking notes and surreptitious photography are quite frowned upon whereas with gongoozling they are all positively *de rigueur*. You can gongoozle in public on a bench without engendering legal disapprobation and/or Community Service orders. Eating Marmite sandwiches and swigging from a tartan flask of tea during sex is not recommended in any of the mainstream manuals, but when gongoozling it is near-essential.

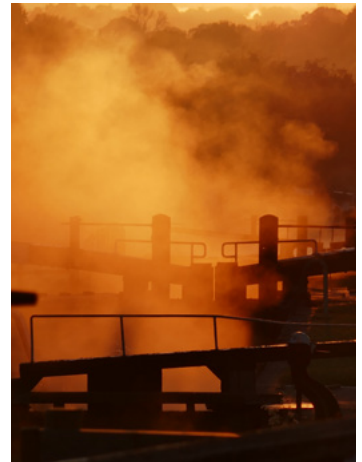
With gongoozling (only) it seems to be fine and dandy to wander up to the participants and offer advice and assistance. Heck, you can leave your ancient parents parked alongside in their wheelchairs on day release from the home while you gongoozle, whereas with sex I have discovered that this is really not recommended unless you cover them first in the manner of a budgie's cage at night.

Choose a good (near-disastrously leaky) lock or a whole lock flight such as Hurleston and settle in for some sweaty tantric heckling; Hurleston is a cruising nexus for six large holiday hire bases...

Do we put the boat in the lock bow first or stern first? This on a narrow canal with no winding hole nearby. I've got all of the paddles

open but the lock's not filling. I've got all of the paddles open but the lock's not emptying. What's a "fender"? Why won't my boat move? The pound's empty. Why has my centre-line gone guitar-string taught? The pound's full. Do all of the boats that go into the locks at one end come out of the other end? Not always, no. Why are the lock volunteers ignoring me? I've been snapping my fingers at them, waiter-summons style, for ages... Who knew that flip-flops and lock ladders don't mix? If cills are dangerous then the Canal people should do away with them. Which side do I push on to open/close the gate? It's only a seven-foot gap over cold water, I'm sure I can leap across that easily, windlass in hand. No, no, I always leave my windlass on the spindle, it's quite safe. Give it more revs and a rooster tail, that'll sort the problem. Just drop the paddles, no need to be gentle. Hey—I just smacked heavily into every wall and every gate and not one of the airbags on this hire boat went off as they should have. **HELP!**

With relatively minor investment the Canal Company Ltd could rake in quite the pile of moolah. Seaside-style "What The Vlockie Saw" machines... curtained-off peep-hole locks... benches unlocking for fifteen minutes a £1... Heck, what about a subscription based website with live webcams? Coin-operated gongoozling. Or "app" operated I suppose, nowadays. Simple.



Hurleston
Photo: Ian Hutson



Rewind

From the NABO archives

Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it

Improving openness and accountability

A Consultation by British Waterways
July 2003

The waterways we care for belong to the people of this country. This paper is about making sure that their views, both as stakeholders and customers, are fully represented and effectively listened to. It is important because it is an opportunity to take a big step forward in improving British Waterways' openness and accountability.

Everyone in British Waterways is committed to getting the processes of dialogue and accountability discussed in this paper absolutely right. We believe that the integrity of decision making that will result from the right processes will benefit customers and users of the waterways as well as enhancing the security and long term future of the waterways themselves.....

Let no-one doubt then that my Board and Executive management team are committed to getting an excellent result from this consultation. We look forward to hearing your views.

The four principal components to the package are:

- A more streamlined and responsive internal complaints procedure that takes full advantage of the flatter management structure being introduced by the recently announced reorganisation of BW;
- A reconstituted and updated Waterways Ombudsman Scheme that is transparently independent

from British Waterways;

- The setting up of a new national consultative framework that is representative of all significant groups and bodies that have an interest in the waterways; including arrangements for elected committee(s) to have direct access to the Board and senior management of BW; and
- Adoption by BW of improved procedures for direct consultation that include following the Cabinet Office Code Practice on Written Consultations for all national written consultations.

This consultation is directed to all those who have an interest in the effective stewardship of the waterways in the care of BW. This includes:

- Individual users and associations of users of the waterways and their corridors (e.g. boaters, anglers, ramblers, cyclists etc);
- Those with specialist interests in the waterways and their corridors (e.g. wildlife and heritage bodies);
- Those who make a living on the waterways;
- Those who live or work alongside the waterways;
- Local and central government in England, Scotland and Wales.

Snippets from the contents—which are many pages long—in response to what is seen by some as a closed institution some enlightenment it was proposed to create:

- An improved internal complaints procedure together with a better publicised and transparently independent Waterways Ombudsman, to further improve the accountability of BW at the

level of specific disputes and complaints.

- There remains a need for improved openness in the field of BW policy and strategy. The Board of BW decides the policy and strategy of the organisation within a framework set by ministers and on the basis of recommendations made to it by the executive

directors. Although appointed by ministers, and required to report through them to the Westminster and Edinburgh Parliaments, the workings of the Board can both appear, and sometimes actually, be remote from the users and stakeholders of the waterways and waterway corridors.

A NABO appeal for help!

nabo.org.uk/registration



NABO is fighting battles on numerous fronts trying to keep the canal network open for as many people as possible. We are involved in discussions with CRT and EA as well as other bodies affecting the operation and continuation of navigable waterways. Sometimes we have to travel to meetings in person (expenses provided) but mostly meetings are on-line. More members would be greatly appreciated.

Full Member

This is the primary membership that covers one Full Voting Member for which the only qualification is that you are the owner of any sort of boat capable of use on the inland canals, rivers or Broads of the UK. Any or all part owners in a boat-share or syndicate scheme may also join as Single Members with individual voting rights. Cost £25 per annum.

Full Member and 1 Family member

This is the primary membership that covers one Full Voting Member and one family member for which the only qualification is that you are the owner(s) of any sort of boat capable of use on the inland canals,

rivers or Broads of the UK. Any or all part owners in a boat-share or syndicate scheme may also join as Single Members with individual voting rights. The family member(s) are of any age who normally boats with and is associated with a nominated boat-owner who has joined as a Full Member. They are considered to be of the same household/address. Family Members are counted as Full Members as far as voting rights and membership of NABO Council are concerned. Cost £30 per annum.

Other memberships are available even to non boat owners that appreciate the work we do in preserving access to the canal network for all.

Cropredy Festival

by Duncan Wright



In 1644 the sleepy North Oxfordshire village of Cropredy, four miles north of Banbury was rudely awakened. Parliamentarians fought with royalists at the battle of Cropredy Bridge, where they tried, but failed, to capture King Charles I. Afterwards the village returned to its slumber and for over 100 years nothing much happened once more.

In 1777 the outside world encroached and the Oxford Canal came to the village, enabling transportation of coal and other goods between Coventry, Oxford and the Thames.

Once again the village returned to its sleepy existence for another 200 years until 1979.

The folk band Fairport Convention, having had its heyday, decided to disband. As a farewell gesture they were having one final festival, which was headlined by none other than Led Zeppelin. One year later Fairport Convention decided to revisit this event and have a reunion festival, again in Cropredy. And so the Annual Reunion festival, now known as Fairport's Cropredy Convention, was born.

Over 40 years later the festival is still going strong, continuing its traditions of good beer, wholesome food and above all great music. The only interruptions to this annual event have been as a result of COVID where the 2020 and 2021 festivals were cancelled.

I've been a regular visitor to Cropredy for the festival since 1988 and in that time have been entertained by an eclectic mix of headline bands including Alice Cooper, Madness, 10CC, Jethro Tull, Fisherman's Friends and many, many others. The festival also has a long history of introducing new acts and new talent to the audience.

A short time after each band or act has performed, you get the opportunity to meet them, take a selfie or get an autograph. Often the stars can be seen wandering the field or at the beer tent, don't be afraid of saying hello! Editor: in 2024 we were assisted through Cropredy Lock by a Norwegian Marillion tribute band, who were fascinated by the workings of a lock.

My earliest journeys to the village were as a backpacker. In later visits we had a car, trailer tent or motorhome. In 2022 we decided to take in the festival as part of our summer cruise, breaking our travels and going native for a while in Cropredy, and it certainly beats slumming it in a muddy field. The best tip we can offer is get there early, as the later you leave it the further you'll be moored from the action.

Cruising from the North it takes a couple of full days travel from Braunston to reach Cropredy. Passing through rural countryside, with only Napton and Fenny Compton there's little opportunity to get in any supplies you'll need for the

duration of the festival.

From the South you cruise through Banbury a few hours before Cropredy which affords one last chance to stock up on food, ale and suntan cream. Banbury, a historic market town on the banks of the River Cherwell offers a market on Thursdays, plenty of pubs, eateries and shops plus a few historic attractions for the sightseer. For anyone with a crafty frame of mind the charity shop Orinoco offers a wealth of craft materials on sale.

Back in Cropredy the village itself boasts two pubs: the Red Lion and The Brasenose Arms, a village shop and a cafe. On Wednesday a butcher's van calls and sells excellent pork sausages. On Monday evenings a mobile fish and chip van also calls, and very good it is too! If you feel the urge to go further afield a bus service runs to and from Banbury on Thursday and Saturday. On other days if you walk up to Williamscot, about a mile away, there's an hourly bus service both to Banbury and Daventry every day.

During the festival weekend both pubs host their own fringe festival as does the campsite down School Lane. So if the music on the main field

doesn't appeal to you, your wristband will get you into nearly all of the fringe events for free. The beer boat puts on its own fringe music event the week before the festival. The Mikron Theatre puts on a couple of their plays at the rowing club. There's a car boot sale on the Saturday morning at the cricket club.

Each morning during the festival and on the Sunday morning after, if you don't fancy cooking, you can get a tasty full English breakfast at the rowing club or the village hall or even a continental breakfast at the church.

As a boater, Cropredy offers a sanitary station with water point, toilet, bins and Elsan point. If you need a pump out Cropredy Marina can see to your needs. Coal, gas and diesel can be had periodically from Bob on "Dusty"; the Jules Fuels boat that operates between Oxford and Fenny Compton. Bob can be contacted via his Facebook page.

I can thoroughly recommend the festival for its relaxed, dog friendly atmosphere, great music and entertainment, good food and drink and the wonderful feeling of wellbeing you're left with once it's all over.

Fairporting is a verb

(a crowdsourced poem)

by Heather Wastie

Summer morning,
walking the dogs through stubble fields,
a glorious fiddler
sound-testing speakers

With the wind in the right direction,
drifting up and down the canal,
resonating along the towpath,
snatches of Madness, Lulu, Status Quo

Flags flying high
Extravagance of tie dye
Listening to music
while cows wander by

Slip sliding in mud,
rain washing
contact lenses

Pubs pound
to the local band sound
and the crowds just go
with the flow

The whole village buzzing,
revellers mixing with graveyard spirits
in moments of merriment,
candles burning at both ends

Earplugs in on Saturday night
Volume up to maximum

Sunset at the end of a wonderful day
Singing who knows where the time goes?

Sitting in the bathroom,
window wide open,
listening to Petula Clark;
staying put for Meet on the Ledge,
Simon Nicol's voice saying
Thank you Cropredy and good night.

Previously published in *To the Future, Love Cropredy*, Heather's new collection is *YOU ARE HERE* both published by lapalpublications.co.uk

Access to health care in the West Midlands

Between December 2024 and April 2025 Healthwatch Warwickshire asked a series of questions of people living on the canal network. Working with professionals in Local Primary Care Networks (GPs), local hospital staff, the emergency services, and the Canal & River Trust they wanted to understand if there is a need to improve access to Health Care Services for the Boating Community.

Healthwatch listened to 57 people on canal towpaths, at local marinas across Coventry and Warwickshire and through their online survey. They heard about people’s difficulties in accessing services.

Through their work with boaters, they heard about the health inequalities, stigma and bias which people can face when accessing health care. As a result they invite services to better understand the specific needs and challenges of the boating community to improve access and care for all.

For the full survey results see:

Healthwatch Warwickshire How do people who live on boats get the health care they need?

healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk/report/2024-07-08/healthwatch-warwickshire-annual-report-2023-

A CASE STUDY

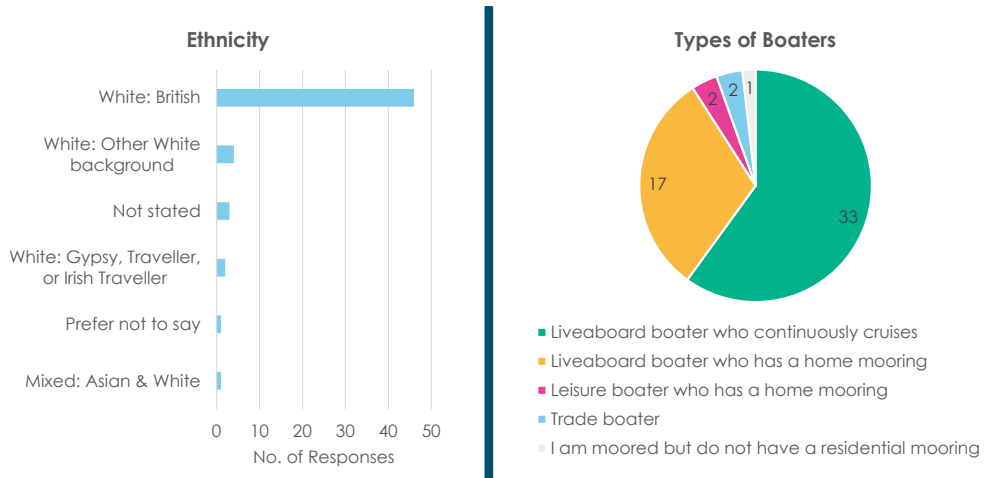
Living at a marina as a family with young children offers an affordable alternative to renting, particularly for those who work from home. However, it comes with unique challenges, especially regarding official documentation and residency status.

With both children born around the Covid era, registering for healthcare and schooling required tenancy registration at the marina. Despite this, marinas do not permit their address to be used as a permanent residence, making proof of address a significant hurdle for essentials like passports, driving licenses, and employment verification.

Who we heard from

Approximately 36,000 boats are registered with the Canal & River Trust across England and Wales. Warwickshire is home to several canals, making it a popular area for boaters. Around 10–15% of all boaters are based within the West Midlands region.

We heard from 57 people who live on boats along the canal network.



Gnosall C'Fest

Following a really great festival last year with an estimated footfall of over 1500, the Gnosall Towpath Restoration volunteers are already working on C'Fest 2025. It's pencilled in for 18-20 July, so make a note in your diary.



Letters to the Editor

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

Google Canal View

Referencing the 'Towpath' Article "Does CRT have a 'wait till it breaks' policy" by Peter Braybrook, I put forward this idea.

Google have a version of maps called "Street View".

I am suggesting "Canal View" which can be created either by a dedicated Data Collector or by members of NABO or indeed any user of the canal system, entered into one [data]system. I calculate that it would take about 1500 hours travelling time to record the whole system using a continuously running 360 camera or however Google record their map data. In the way that street view enables examples of deteriorating walls, I suggest that canal view would create a one off complete visual asset record of all the canal assets from which it would be possible to categorise every crack in every bridge (including the underside), every collapsing towpath and

every leak in every lock; to prioritise and plan work that could be programmed for action just "before it breaks".

I would also like to see extensive use of neoprene rubber as facings and patches on lock gates.

Adrian Koe MBE KSG

I name this boat ...



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- Crew relay
- Breakdown assistance
- Boat recovery

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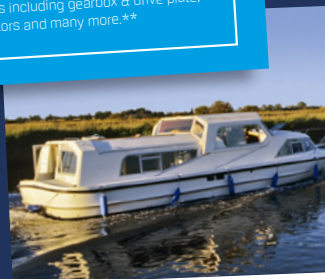
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Covers a huge range of specified parts including gearbox & drive plate, couplings, starters, alternators and many more.**



*Excluding Retainer Cover, RPC can be added for £75.

**Excludes Consumables such as cables, filters, rubber components and the like that require routine wear and tear replacement.

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