



# NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners  
Issue 1 February 2023



**Water transfer: new funding for CRT?**  
**Reviving the Dead Dog CRT provisions for disabled boaters**



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# NABO News

The magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners

**Issue 1 February 2023**



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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](mailto:nabonews@nabo.org.uk) or post to the Editor by 25th March 2023.

## Cover photo

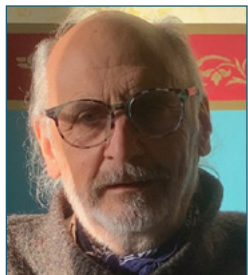
Taken by the Editor, during a break in writing and compiling, of the entrance to Cowley tunnel on a snowy morning.

Please email your photos for the front cover of NABO News to the Editor, as JPEG attachments, ideally portrait format with a file size of 2MB or larger.



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What a time to take up the challenge of editor! Following an experienced editor of many years.

I have a lot to learn, not least hundreds of new acronyms. At first sight there seems to be innumerable committees and guidance groups, each with their own agenda and abbreviations.

## ...it's hello from me

Incoming Editor **John Sadler** eases himself into the editorial chair.

I have some experience of inland boating starting around thirty five years ago, first with cruisers and for the last seventeen years by narrowboat. Although we did take the last cruiser onto the narrow canals we were always worried by the large steel vessels, but it was enough of a taste to get us hooked.

When we first started boating the River Severn and Sharpness Canal were still in regular commercial use by grain barges from Healings at Tewkesbury and timber vessels. We enjoyed mooring on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal for many years although winter cruising was limited by the River Severn level. Sometimes we even had to wait for the level to drop before embarking on our Spring and Summer cruises. No electronic display of flashing lights then, you just looked at the river level, tide timetable and took the advice of the lock keeper.

Partly to avoid the climate change affected Severn, we moved house and boat to the Shropshire Union a couple of years ago. A delightful canal

and a house with an end of garden mooring!

There are some serious issues facing us this year; many of the articles are quite long because of the complexities. I have done my best to contain the maximum information in the minimum amount of words.

### New season, same old issues

Looking back to Peter's column of February 2022 it seems that most of the significant issues of 2022 have been transferred to 2023. The future of the waterways being somewhat dependent on the outcome of the DEFRA review of CRT, we are still anxiously awaiting a decision.

It is difficult to feel positive about this when central government is limiting or cutting its spending in all areas. I share Peter's opinion that it's time for the national asset side of waterways to be separately and securely funded by a mixture of funds raised from mooring, licensing and government grant. The non-waterway expenditure would then be less of an issue to boaters with the future of the canal infrastructure secure.

Fly on the Wall's view of the Council meeting in January observes discussions on the need for progress, detailing some of the deficiencies in the activities of CRT to protect the network. The selling off of assets continues to be a concern. There seems to be confusion over mooring periods; summer as per the blue notice boards, any change for winter ??

I offer my sincere thanks to NABO Councillors for their support, for both me and NABO News. I would like to thank Chris Pink for continuing to offer his excellent design skills. I would also appeal to association members, to keep up your involvement and contributions—please keep them coming.

Best wishes for the forthcoming season.

As CRT's tape is not cold and wet weather resistant, perhaps we could fund some blue string?

Photo Sharon Wells



I must start by welcoming our new NABO News Editor, John Sadler, who has bravely stepped forward to take over from Peter Fellows, who is leaving the waterways and decamping to live in Ireland!

And what a hard act he will be to follow—each year, Peter has somehow managed to develop NABO News to the point where it is now widely recognised as one of the premium journals related to our waterways. Each edition is full of insightful commentaries on the state of the waterways, and provides technical content of interest to all. I know also how much it is both welcomed (and often feared) by the respective waterways' operators! I often count the days between its publication, and the first reactions from the latter organisations...

### New year on the NABO Council

I need also to follow up on our AGM, and say how pleased I was to see new people offering themselves for election to our Council.

Indeed, it is the first time since I became your chair, that we have a full complement, and what a pleasure this is, to see so much support forthcoming. We are, however, still lacking a General Secretary—so please give that some thought. The duties are not arduous but are essential: it is largely a case of acting as the “postmaster” for all incoming information—some of which just needs binning, but a substantial amount needs to be flagged for the attention of the appropriate councillor or regional representative. We try to have each council member play a distinctive role, and so they need to receive and deal with all relevant material—some of which it is vital for us to react to, especially where it might have an impact on the water-

ways. We do need always to be seen as a willing “consultant”—for example, by local authorities, as a vital component of any consultation on proposals that might impact on the waterways under their control.

And what a crazy and worrying time it is, to be involved with the waterways and their politics! With a government in some serious chaos, and with the ministers responsible changing every few months, the funding of the waterways is clearly a long way from the top of any government agenda!! We were very pleased that the Chair of the All Parties Parliamentary Waterways



## Cruising through chaos

Chairman **Mike Rodd** looks at what's in store for this coming year's boating.

Group, Michael Fabricant, reacted to our (and other) pressures to get some recognition of the issues at stake, related to the future funding of CRT, by setting up a Westminster Parliamentary Debate. This was reasonably well attended by many MPs but the offhand response by the relevant minister was just so depressing.

And the chaos that I have previously reported on, in the changes to the EA's management teams responsible for its waterways (essentially the rivers), has been of deep concern: One objective seems to be to replace people with real local expertise, by folk with almost no experience in the areas for which they are now responsible, while simultaneously ignoring any input from the waterways' representative organisations. With attitudes like this in a government department, it is no wonder that things are in such a mess!

### The Wellbeing... of the navigations

So where will we be when CRT's future funding is finally revealed? Being perfectly honest, with the issues currently facing the government, we can only expect that CRT may be confronted by a very difficult situation. One has to suggest that maybe CRT should take a hard line and simply give the waterways back to Defra and tell them that the CRT model just doesn't work? Would that achieve anything better, though? Right now, the CRT's CEO, Richard Parry, has been saying that CRT will simply have to adapt to a world in which the funding available is seriously reduced. In that case—given that experience over the past few years (where, even with the present level of funding, CRT has not been able to keep the canals in a fit state, and stoppages have never been worse), what will be the consequences? Again, as hinted at by Mr Parry, does this mean that some of our canals will simply be left unattended, while CRT concentrate on the more popular ones? Perhaps, one might (quietly) suggest that CRT should simply revert to its core business—that is, looking after the waterways for which it is responsible—and not spend seemingly endless efforts in stressing how vital they are to the well-being of the whole population, putting up vast amounts of signage to this end, and employing a serious number of staff who have nothing to do with caring for the actual canals?

### 240V standards for boats

Away from the stresses of waterways politics, for me personally it has been very pleasant to get back to something I really know a bit about—electrical engineering! (I spent a large chunk of my working life as an academic in this field. I also cut my teeth—and many fin-

gers—earning some of my university funding by working with my father on wiring houses. From my own observations and also from sitting on the Boat Safety Scheme's Technical Committee, I have increasingly become concerned at what I was seeing, especially recently, as boats are making more extensive use of 240 volt AC systems.

I soon realised that there is no clear and readily accessible guidance on boat electrics available, and that the official IEE/IET wiring regulations simply do not apply to boats. This led to discussions with my past employers, the Institution of Engineering and Technology (the IET, which was the IEE), who eventually agreed to produce an IET-sponsored guide to Electrical Installations in Small Craft. With a couple of very enthusiastic authors with wide experience in this area, this text has made significant progress.

Over Christmas, the editorial team has been undertaking a major review of what, it is hoped, will soon be ready to go for editing and input from its many sponsors. The text will be aimed at those involved in the area, but has been designed to be readable by those with less experience or technological expertise.

Of particular importance is the extent of the material required regarding the use of the various types of lithium-based batteries, as these are now being extensively used in road vehicles, and many boaters are now starting to use them too.

However, at least our pre-Christmas woes of water shortages are being (over-?)addressed, and although there are many canals needing extensive winter work, most of us (including me!) can get out and enjoy at least some days of wonderful winter cruising. I wish everyone good cruising in 2023!

# Fly on the wall

Observes proceedings at the Council meeting in January.

Concern was expressed that water quality is not being monitored by CRT. If it is, and there are some photos of CRT dipping canals in the West Midlands and Liverpool, the results of qualitative testing are not being published. At a time when changes to facilities provided by CRT are under review, testing and visibility of the results should be more of a priority.

The quest for Government support of fuel costs for residential boaters is ongoing. The main impasse now seems to be methods of qualification and distribution. The Government have announced that support with energy costs for off-grid households would go live in January 2023. However, that doesn't include people without a fixed address.

Defra's report on its review of CRT is still ongoing, but intimations from CRT are looking less than positive. CRT are continuing to sell off assets. The Navigation Yard at Northwich is still on the market and the future of King's Norton Junction House is undecided. Although this is a worry for those interested in preserving canal history, I imagine that CRT's response would be a cost-based argument. The Cultural Heritage Advisory Group (CHAG), do not seem to have published any minutes on this. The page on canalrivertrust.org.uk has not been updated since 24 May 2021 confirming new members.

CRT's Disabled Boaters' Forum has not received recent responses to requests for information on avail-

able services.

Evicted boaters is a delicate subject since boaters legally have no security of tenure. Many moorings do not have planning permission for residential occupation. Whilst long periods of boat occupation may be tolerated, it's doubtful that boaters would want to draw attention to it.

The CRT winter works programme has been changing on a regular basis—boaters need to check for the most recent iteration for stoppage details and also check it for accuracy as some 'nearest winding points are incorrect.

NABO's social media contact is on the increase but we need to convert more followers into paid members.

CRT's mooring durations need to be monitored; there was a feeling that they are being reduced. There is confusion on whether the nice new blue signs apply in winter. Llangollen basin charges are a deterrent for anyone to moor there if accurate!

NABO's GDPR and privacy agreement due for review this year.

No news from EA. The expanded panel are not communicating.

CRT's Navigation Advisory Group; we have no representation. Any news comes via CRT.

Boat Safety Scheme; the current four year period is under review. With increasing costs and courses for examiners, reducing the validity period would be an easy way to increase their revenue. Sadly without benefit to boaters. Advisory committee meeting on February 21st.



## NABO Calendar 2023

The Council meetings in 2023 will be on: 11th March (by Zoom), 22nd April, 17th June (by Zoom), 2nd September, 7th October (by Zoom) and 18th November (after the AGM).

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

## Anglian Waters Mark Tizard

After a long dry summer with many weeks of little rain, ironically both the Nene and Great Ouse are currently closed to navigation, firstly due to the snow melt and now, as I write, heavy rainfall. Standing on the river bank outside the marina watching the river rushing by, I'm glad we're moored on floating pontoons. However, even with all this excess water we are told that Grafham Reservoir is still only at 60% of capacity.

Talking of reservoirs, Anglian Water have announced plans for a new reservoir to be built within the angle of the Forty Foot and Sixteen Foot Drains on the Middle Level. From the map, with little detail, that accompanies the plans it would appear that the intakes will be from the River Delph, which runs alongside the Old Bedford River, and from the junction of the Old West River and the River Cam. Not that any of this will trouble boaters until work actually starts.

### Works on the River Nene:

- Wollaston Lock 16 January 2023 until 30 March 2023



## Around the regions with NABO's regional reps

- Perio Lock 16 January 2023 until 30 March 2023
- Nunn Mills Bridge near Northampton has also been closed to navigation but Facebook reports it is now open. If coming this way, it would be best to check first.

### Lock closure on the Great Ouse

- Cardington Lock 11 January 2023 until 1 March 2023

Both Brownhill and Eaton Socon Locks have both been closed since the beginning of November but are now open for use, when the flooding dies down!

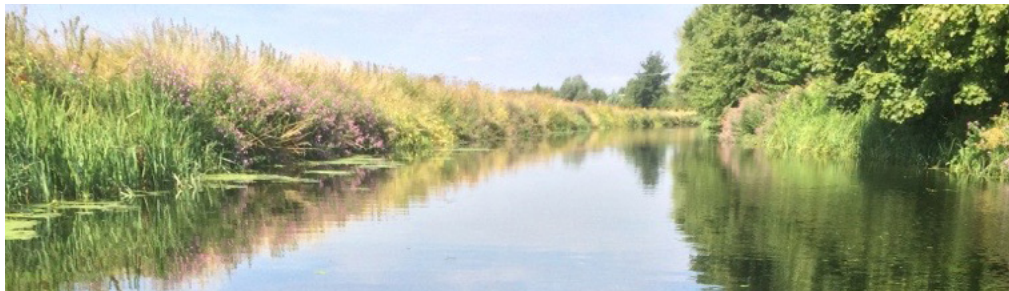
There's an on-going problem with the head of navigation of the Brandon Creek. The area available to wind a boat is severely restricted by siltation, according to locals, brought about by the installation of a fish pass. We cruised up there at the end of July, following a pair of weedcutters, and moored at Brandon. We knew we would have problems when we watched local youths swimming. When they stood up the water only came to their middle thighs and we need 30 inches of



River Great Ouse (above) and King's Dyke (opposite)

Photo: Sharon Wells





water. In the event we did ground mid turn but fortunately a hired narrowboat with experienced crew reversed towards us and dragged us round. Several boats have since grounded, mainly deep draughted, longer boats but all have managed to be released.

Eventually the EA issued a restriction but unfortunately accidentally rescinded this a few weeks later resulting in another narrowboat becoming stuck. Don't let this stop you cruising the river, boats can still turn at the junction of the river and the Cut Off Channel and, if the weed-cutters are elsewhere, there is a mooring on the left as you approach the aqueduct.

Huntingdon District Council have published proposals to attract more visitors to Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey. Unusually these all include improvements to the riversides. The new moorings at Ramsey are already open and the

improvements hopefully will allow 70 foot boats to turn. No mention of a water tap though, something certainly needed in this outpost of the Middle Level. In Huntingdon the derelict boat yard between the two river bridges is intended to be re-developed for leisure use; no mention of moorings but one can hope. The plans for St Ives are the most peculiar, coming in for a lot of derision on social media.

The artists impression shows a large pontoon moored out alongside the river channel immediately downstream of the Chantry Bridge. The artist obviously never stood on the Quayside watching the boats as they line up to pass through the navigation arch. Fortunately the actual text of the report simply says a pontoon the length of the Quayside to make mooring for boats easier. Given that the mooring bollards are usually above roof level this would be very welcome.

## Wales and Southwest

### Mike Rodd



We are all delighted to see major winter work taking place on both the K&A and the Mon & Brec.

Of particular importance on the latter is that extensive vegetation cutting back is in progress. Hopefully many of the really dangerous areas of growth around the entry to the numerous bridge holes on this very twisty canal will be sorted. We were somewhat taken aback when some dredging was suddenly announced around Hungerford on the K&A. Whilst we always welcome dredging, we were amazed as to where it was taking place, close to

the chosen section there were areas that really needed it. But also we were deeply concerned that the dredging almost exactly overlapped with our extensive annual K&A Canal Trust income-generating Santa trips. Fortunately, the contractors understood our problems and did their best to allow us to work around them. One has to ask why such dredging cannot be scheduled in the same way as the winter works programme and hence relevant bodies such as NABO and related Canal Trusts can be consulted?

A bit surprising was the last minute scheduling of a CRT Users Forum in a week close to the Christmas break! Like many other regular attendees, I found it impossible to attend and fortunately the meeting was then postponed. I have to comment though on how useful these forums are proving to be and hats off to Mark Evans, our very approachable Regional Director!

# New CEO For IWA

Dave Pearce has joined IWA as CEO from 3rd January 2023. Dave will be working 17 hours a week for the association.

Dave has worked in the charity sector for over twenty years and previously for twenty six years in the commercial sector. He brings a broad range of skills, knowledge and experience to IWA and is also a boat owner. He is passionate about the waterways and everyone who uses them, although initially his focus is likely to be finance.



Photo: Hoarding UK

# Lockgate

There is a discrepancy in numbers thrown up by CRT's latest tweet and this FOI request on the subject.

CRT tweeted: "Did you know that the average lock gate lasts 25 years? Each year, around 180 lock gates are made at our workshops."

See this from a recent FOI by Allan Richards.

Year	Locks	Gates	Leaves
2017/18	87	115	188
2018/19	69	81	131
2019/20	68	81	132
2020/21	42	55	92
2021/22	52	75	122
2022/23	51	71	121

Figures given in CRT's Annual Report (see Paul Monahan's article in the last NABO News) state they have 3105 gates and 5,843 leaves. CRT go on to say that replacing 140 lock gates leaves per year would give a replacement interval of 42



years. CRT and BW before it have always claimed that the average life of a lock gate is 25 years.

As such, CRT should be replacing 234 leaves per year.

## Strike action at the EA

Trade unions have informed the Environment Agency of their intent to call their members to take part in further industrial action.

Plans are in place to minimise any disruption to our essential work to protect the environment and respond to incidents. Automatic back-up systems

will provide flood alerts and warnings. During this time, water levels may fluctuate more than the normal range. As such, river users are asked to ensure that their boats are moored to accommodate slightly higher water levels, as they would during strong stream notices.

# Reviving the Dead Dog

The Canal & River Trust has this week started a £533,000 ten-week project to repair the Grade II Listed Interchange Basin Towpath Bridge on the Regent's Canal in Camden.

Built in 1846, the historic bridge known locally as 'Dead Dog bridge', is an important local landmark carrying the Regent's Canal towpath across the canal basin beneath the Camden Interchange Warehouse ('Dead Dog Tunnel'), and is the busiest canal footbridge in the country with over one million walking and cycling visits per year.

The work, which is due to be completed by the end of March 2023, will include: repairs to the bridge's wrought iron lattice parapets; cleaning of the underlying cast iron beams; and cleaning and repointing the abutments and approach parapets.

The bridge will be closed throughout the project, and towpath diversion routes will be in place. The canal will remain open for boats to navigate.

A CRT spokesman said "The Interchange Basin Towpath Bridge, known locally as 'Dead Dog' bridge is a key route for people using the canal through Camden and with over one million visits each year, is one of the busiest bridges on our network. Now over 175 years old, the bridge's striking wrought iron lattice parapets will be lovingly restored, ensuring this historic bridge continues to carry millions of visitors enjoying the Regent's Canal in Camden, for many years to come."

"With consent from the London Borough of Camden's conservation team, our engineers are working with specialist contractors to care-

fully repair, clean and repaint the bridge's historic parapets and re-point the abutments on site."

Built at the beginning of the 20th century by the London & North Western Railway (LNWR), the massive Grade II Listed red brick Interchange Warehouse in Camden was designed to bring together canal, rail and road transport in one covered building, with three layers of storage.



Photo: CRT

The entrance to the Interchange Dock became known as 'Dead Dog Tunnel' because, of the secret underground workshop.

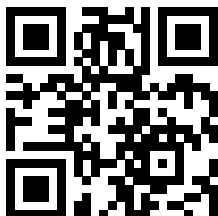
Today, the Interchange Building is a co-working office space. Using the Interchange Dock, iRecycle transports waste from the Interchange Building by barge to the Powerday recycling centre in West London.

To find out more about the Dead Dog bridge repair project, go to [canalrivertrust.org.uk/deaddogbridge](https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/deaddogbridge), call the Canal & River Trust on 03030 404040 or email [customer.services@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:customer.services@canalrivertrust.org.uk)

# River Canal Rescue WaterNav

Newly relaunched inland waterways mapping app

The upgraded WaterNav App is downloadable via Google Play and Apple App Store and feedback can be shared directly via the app.



River Canal Rescue has redesigned and re-launched its WaterNav app, making it freely available to all. The rescue service believes everyone should have access to the app—which allows navigation without wifi or data connection—as it improves safety and shares key information.

The new WaterNav, which was previously split into eight different regions due to the amount of data stored offline, now incorporates all UK routes in a single app with a route planning function.

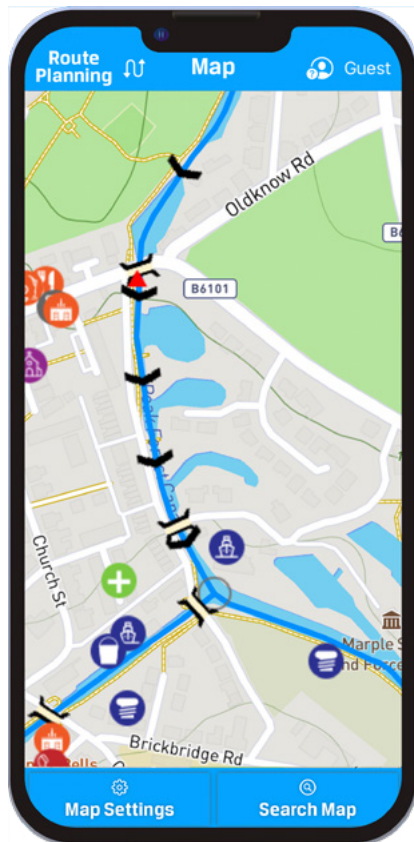
Detailing Places Of Interest (POI), including supermarkets, pubs, train stations and marinas, plus journey times and canal/river information, once installed, it can be used offline so is not reliant on the internet or data packages. However, as the current POI information is limited, RCR is asking boaters to check and update the data as they cruise.

There's also a help/SOS function linked to RCR HQ, for boaters who require assistance. Plotting the user's position within a 5m radius, this has proved invaluable in emergency situations or when cruising on rivers with no access.

RCR is committing substantial resources to developing WaterNav and hopes to make it the 'go to' navigation and information tool for boaters. A second development phase, bringing a host of new facilities, is expected by the summer and RCR is also developing an in app

game to encourage youngsters on to the waterways.

Managing director, Stephanie Horton, explains: "We've upgraded WaterNav so it's easier to access the UK-wide maps and in future, enhanced reporting tools will better connect the boating community. The new updates later this year will revolutionise waterway navigation and add some much-needed technical facilities.



### Friday 23rd June 2023

- Meet & Greet Top of Wolverhampton Locks
- Food & Drink available—Great Western to arrive before 6.30
- Water, Rubbish Elsan.

### Saturday 24th

- Cruise to Cannock Extension Arm, Norton Canes
- Toby Carvery booked for 6.30.
- 15 miles 6 hours 0 locks.

### Sunday 25th

- Cruise to Longwood Boat Club
- Fish & Chips Evening—pre-orders taken. 9 miles 4 hours 0 locks
- Water, Rubbish, Elsan and Shops.

### Monday 26th

- Cruise to Walsall Basin via Rushall Locks
- Free Evening. 11 miles 6 hours 9 locks
- Water, Rubbish and Elsan at Ocker Hill.

### Tuesday 27th

- Cruise up Walsall Locks to Nickelodeon, Old Bentley Arm.
- Variety of shops—Talk from Councillor Phil Bateman.
- 7 miles.8 locks.
- Water, Rubbish, Elsan at top of locks, also at Sneyd Junction

### Wednesday 28th

- Cruise to Bradley Workshops down the Bradley Arm
- Evening BBQ and raffle. 6 miles 2.5 hours 0 locks
- Water and Rubbish facilities.

### Thursday 29th

- 12-1pm Bradley Workshops Visit
- 1.30pm Walk & Talk with Dave Pearson
- Late afternoon cruise to Mad O'Rourke's Pie Factory at Tipton booked for 6.30—pre-orders taken. Moor on main line.
- 3.5 miles 1.5 hours 0 locks.

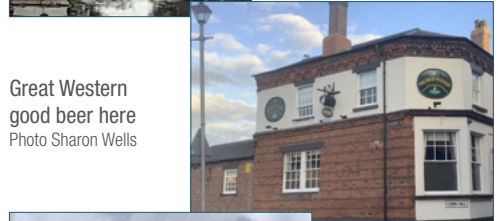
### Friday 30th

- Cruise to Pumphouse, Titford Canal via The Crow Oldbury
- Chinese take away evening—pre-orders taken—and quiz.,
- 3 hours 6 locks

## BCN Explorers Cruise 2023



Top of the Wolverhampton 21  
Photo Sharon Wells



Great Western good beer here  
Photo Sharon Wells



Workshops, Gates and Leaves  
Photo Sharon Wells



Mad O'Rourke's Piggy Heaven  
Photo Sharon Wells



Tipton Porker mmm...  
Photo Sharon Wells

# Winter works update

Please note that this not a complete list of winter work and that it can change. Please check on the latest information with CRT.

## Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Lock 6, Kidderminster town centre Navigation Closure

An additional stoppage is required. The stoppage is required to carry out a refit and realignment of the bottom end gates which have been causing issues over the summer. There is an existing full closure at Wolverley until 17th February, so CRT have taken the opportunity to include these works to avoid any disruption during the summer months.

Please note that this stoppage will run until the 21st February meaning the navigation is closed for a short while longer.

## Shropshire Union Canal Goldstone Culvert. South of Tyrley Locks Navigation Closure.

### Update 21/12/2022

This stoppage is being removed from the winter works programme. CRT state "We have to constantly review our priorities and as more urgent works have been introduced into the winter works programme, this project has been re-prioritised"

They will be rescheduled into a future winter programme.

## Llangollen Canal Culvert 51, Hampton Bank near Welshampton and Culvert 62, Ellesmere Navigation Restriction.

These restrictions are being removed from the winter works programme. CRT state "Our design development work to date has identified the need for more site investigations requiring third party access agreements and more detailed design work to ensure the most effective repair.

The site investigations can be completed without any restrictions to navigation, and alongside the detailed design work, will be completed in

early 2023 to enable this project to be rescheduled into the winter works programme for 2023"

## Shropshire Union Canal Washwall repairs at Norbury upstream of Bridge 38 3 January 08:00 to 3 March 2023 Navigation Closure

### Update 21/12/2022

Following a previous update, the washwall repairs will be taking place upstream of Bridge 38 for 20 metres. Access to Norbury Wharf will be accessible from the South.

Norbury Wharf Limited will be open as normal throughout the period of this stoppage from 8.30am to 5pm each day.

Their business will be accessible by water from the south and boats will be able to turn around in the canal basin at Norbury Junction. Boats over 57' might find this tricky.

## Shropshire Union Canal Audlem Lock 9, Audlem, Crewe. Audlem Lock 11, Audlem, Crewe. 3 January to 10 March 2023

### Update on 14/12/2022:

Due to a delay in the lock gate production for this stoppage, a 2-week extension will be required. The delay with the lock gate production is due to essential repairs being carried out at the Bradley workshop during Autumn meaning that the workshop was closed for several months. Due to unforeseen challenges with weather, this has meant that the workshop was closed for 4 weeks longer than anticipated.

## Leeds & Liverpool Canal Opening Times for Lock 13, Newlay Top Lock to Lock 7, Kirkstall Little Lock 1 December to 19 March 2023

Passage can be booked with a minimum of 72 hours notice.

**Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday**  
■ Up direction: 09:00 & 13:00

- Down direction: 11:00  
**Tuesday, Thursday & Sunday**

- Up direction: 11:00
- Down direction 09:00 & 13:00

To make a booking, please sign in to the online licensing pages and click on 'my boats', followed by the 'bookings' section. [licensing.canalrivertrust.org.uk/Account/SignIn](https://licensing.canalrivertrust.org.uk/Account/SignIn)

### Leeds & Liverpool Canal Bingley Three & Five Rise Locks 1 December to 9 March 2023 Opening Times

Throughout the 2022/2023 Winter Season, Bingley 3 & 5 Rise will operate on the following times and can be booked with a minimum of 72 hours notice

#### Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday

- Up direction: 11:00
- Down direction: 09:00 & 13:00

#### Tuesday, Thursday & Sunday

- Up direction: 09:00 & 13:00 slot
- Down direction 11:00

Boaters should arrive at Bingley 3 & 5 Rise 15 minutes prior to their passage booking and introduce themselves to the lock keeper on arrival so they can go through any safety procedures.

To discuss a booking, if you will be late arriving or you are unable to make your journey call 03030 404040 or 0800 4799 947 on a weekend to notify the lock keeper.

### Paddington Arm (Grand Union Canal) Mooring suspension and towpath closures 30 January to 14 April 2023

There will be a mooring suspension and towpath closure to facilitate the installation of boater facilities and towpath upgrades by on behalf of OPDC/Hillingdon Council. Moorings will be intermittently suspended between Steele Road and Barrett's Green Road and a towpath diversion will be in place.

### Grand Union Canal Camp Hill Customer Service Facilities, Grand Union Canal

Closed until further notice.



Above: The dam busters at Norbury  
Photo Sheila Hurst  
and Below: The dam builders of Audlem  
Photo Ian Hutson



## NABO at work

# CRT Boater Representatives

Helen Hutt attended the meeting in January.

### Customer Service Facilities

The setting of minimum standards. The results of the questionnaire have been analysed, showing an overall agreement with the 5-hour premise, and that water, Elsan and rubbish should all be within this range. A full report is expected in April.

### Boater census.

There were more than 10,000 responses, including a very large number of constructive comments. Hopefully the statistics will be published in February, followed by a more detailed report once the comments received have been analysed and summarised.

### Fuel payments to liveboards.

CRT is working with the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy team (which is responsible for implementing the scheme) and expected the process to be finalised by the end of January.

### Winter works cancellations.

This seems to have happened as a result of “a perfect storm”—lack of resources, spiralling materials costs, inflation and unforeseen events (eg leaking roof at lock gate workshop), and maybe the programme had been too ambitious.

A mid-point review is imminent to try and prevent this happening in future years.

### Dredging.

It was agreed that more spot dredging is required and that details of dredging operations should be published in the same way as stoppages.

### Defra

There is still no definitive news but CRT believes a decision on future funding will be made by the end April.



## CRT appoint new fundraising director Maggie Gardner

Maggie Gardner said: "Our mission is to protect and preserve the canals both for now and future generations, but we need public support, alongside vital funding from government, to ensure their survival. I'm excited to be joining the Trust and securing the future of these national treasures." Ms Gardner is an experienced fundraiser with a background in marketing, notably 15 years as director at global development charity Practical Action, and the Freedom Fund, a global US-based charity, and in consultancy.



# Funding from water transfer?

## The Cotswold Canals water transfer Scheme

Proposals are underway to secure the nation's water resources for the future.

Among the various regional groups, Water Resources South East (WRSE), an alliance of the six water companies that supply drinking water across London and the South East of England, have now submitted draft proposals for addressing the region's increasing vulnerability to serious water shortages:

Water resources are under pressure, and this will increase with time.

The proposal, being put forward by the Cotswold Canals Trust, could see up to 300 million litres of water per day being transferred from the River Severn to the River Thames via the canal. Connecting the River Severn to the Thames would not only enhance our natural environment but also be sustainable and would provide wider recreational and social benefits compared to a buried pipeline. Solutions to transfer water to regions with shortfalls are being evaluated but the Cotswold Canals Severn-Thames Transfer is

not included in the draft plans even though it delivers so much more.

"This scheme has huge advantages over more traditional solutions like reservoirs and pipelines," says Ken Burgin, Director at the Cotswold Canals Trust. "We end up with a restored canal, no loss of countryside and less need to keep taking water from the ground in the South East."

The restoration of the Cotswold Canals is a project of national importance, the water transfer scheme is almost certainly the most promising way of getting the restoration of the whole 36 miles of the Thames—Severn link restored within perhaps 12 years or so.

The Trust believes the Severn Thames Transfer is the best value option—one that considers a range of factors alongside economic cost and seeks to achieve an outcome that increases the overall benefit to customers, the wider environment and society. It is also deliverable more quickly than other solutions being advocated in the current draft plan.

### Further Information and points of contact

More information on the Cotswold Canal's solution [cotswoldcanals.org/wxfer/](https://www.cotswoldcanals.org/wxfer/)

WRSE draft Best Value Plan: [wrse.uk/engagementhq.com/our-consultation](https://www.wrse.uk/engagementhq.com/our-consultation)

Email WRSE by 20th February 2023 [contact@wrse.org.uk](mailto:contact@wrse.org.uk)

Thames Water are running a parallel, but separate, consultation on their draft Water Resource Management Plan with a deadline of 21st March 2023

[thames-wrmp.co.uk/hearing-your-views/feedback-form/](https://www.thames-wrmp.co.uk/hearing-your-views/feedback-form/)

You also can email your feedback to both the [consultation@thames-wrmp.co.uk](mailto:consultation@thames-wrmp.co.uk), copy in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) at [water.resources@defra.gov.uk](mailto:water.resources@defra.gov.uk)



# The Westminster Canal

## The future of the UK's waterways debated in Parliament

On Tuesday 22 November, the future of the UK's canals and waterways, with a particular focus on the 2,000 miles cared for and looked after by the Canal & River Trust charity, was debated in the House of Commons.

Michael Fabricant, MP for Lichfield and chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Waterways, initiated the debate, before many other MPs, including Rebecca Pow, the Minister for Waterways, responded.

The debate opened with Michael Fabricant MP setting out the unique contribution to the nation of the Trust and its waterways, from the economic impact through to the huge social and environmental benefits to society.

The debate heard how the Canal & River Trust, formed in 2012 to protect and preserve its waterways across England and Wales, is awaiting the outcome of the UK Government's review of its funding contract beyond 2027. The current grant is fixed until 2027 and is declining both in real terms and as a proportion of the Trust's total income. MPs spoke about how, with the increased threat from climate change events not envisaged in 2012, the Trust is increasing its expenditure on the core national infrastructure in its care. Hence, continued funding from Government beyond 2027 is essential to protect the many benefits from waterways, minimise risk to its numerous neighbouring com-

munities and avert the network's long-term demise.

Michael Fabricant MP explained how the delays to the Government's review was causing great concern for waterway users and will soon start to hinder the Trust's ability to plan for the future, with so many important long-term projects to deliver.

Rebecca Pow, Minister for Waterways, responded to the debate by commending the array of colleagues present at the debate and acknowledging the role of volunteers and the huge range of public benefits delivered by the inland waterways, from leisure and recreation through to industrial heritage, mental well-being and as the green corridors that canals forge through both the countryside and urban areas.

The Minister also spoke about ensuring the critical infrastructure of the canal network is resilient to climate change and how it can help meet net zero targets, not least through active travel and the transfer of water to support the security of public water supply.

On funding, she acknowledged the Trust has very effectively worked on generating other income streams to reduce its dependency on government funding and that Government was 'looking with a laser focus' at all the issues that have been raised and the continued funding case for the grant into the future. She said Government has to get the decision right, which is why time is being taken, but an announcement on the Trust's funding beyond 2027 would

be made 'forthwith'.

Richard Parry, chief executive at the Canal & River Trust, commented: "The Trust's work to protect and preserve our historic canal network delivers wide ranging benefits to society and it was good to see this unique value, that only comes from a resilient and adequately funded canal system, acknowledged on all sides of the House".

"The nation's 250-year-old canal network is old and fragile. In partnership with Government, we bear a huge financial responsibility for its day-to-day care to keep it safe and available for millions of people to enjoy. As we continue our discussions with Defra around our ongoing

grant, we welcome the cross-party recognition of the importance of the canal network and remain focussed on achieving an outcome that will enable us to meet the rising cost of sustaining the nation's historic waterways, managing the potential risk to all the places they run through and delivering our statutory responsibilities for the long-term."

"We welcome today's debate and look forward to working with Defra to ensure that the case for the waterways' future funding is evaluated thoroughly and, together, securing the future of this critical national network that is both a treasured part of our history and plays such a vital role in our society today."

Waiting ballast boat for towpath volunteer repair work at Gnosall, interrupted by snowfall.

Photo: Sharon Wells



# HVO: The greener alternative



**H**VO fuel is a paraffinic diesel fuel available to buy in the UK and is already breaking the ground in helping businesses reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by up to 90%.

HVO fuel is one of the cleanest fuels on the market. It's a second-generation, synthetic, advanced renewable diesel alternative that eliminates up to 90% of net CO<sub>2</sub> and significantly reduces nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>), particulate matter (PM) and

carbon monoxide (CO) emissions.

As a paraffinic, renewable fuel, HVO can be used as a drop-in alternative to fossil diesel, meeting EN 15940 standards and Fuel Quality Directive 2009/30/EC Annex II. There's no need to modify existing infrastructure—you can simply top up and go.

## More expensive than diesel

Currently HVO is more expensive than the less green options, partly because of production costs. The equipment needed to convert plant-based oil into a useable fuel requires high pressure vessels at temperature. Higher consumption could provide economies of scale.

George Eustace, MP, has proposed a Bill to reduce the tax burden on HVO so that it can achieve parity with kerosene. If there was parity of cost with kerosene—the cost of conversion is modest—we would see a very rapid

Jonathan Mosse of Crown Oil has teamed up with travel writer Tom Kitching, to trial HVO on 1937 unconverted wooden-hulled oil tanker, the *nb Spey*, which has the original single cylinder Bolinder hot bulb engine.

Further information: [crownoil.co.uk/faq](http://crownoil.co.uk/faq)

Photo: Jonathan Mosse / Crown Oil



## First Hand Experience

Peter Braybrook has been running his boat on HVO for a year now.

"I had a discussion with "Dusty" yesterday our local canal coal boat. He will not stock HVO as the price is so high he would not be able to take a margin from it. He is selling diesel at £1.25/L but could not sell HVO at less than £2.25!

I am very interested in any subsidy that George Eustace might be able to achieve. However, HMRC have just slapped fuel duty on HVO from April 2022 so I don't think they will give that up lightly."

adoption of HVO. The key point is that, if the Government were to target carbon emissions, the incentive to use renewable fuels would become quite obvious. The challenge is that the Government are not so much targeting carbon with their current strategy, as targeting the adoption of a chosen technology.

"The advantage of mechanical injection systems is that the engine can take advantage of using low-emission alternative fuels, such as HVO and GLT, without alterations to the engine," adds Beta Marine CEO Andrew Growcoat.

## For sale

The Navigation Yard in Northwich, regarded as historically important, is up for sale to developers. The UK's unique canal heritage, continues to be sold off by the charity that had been charged with protecting it, the Canal and River Trust.

Very sadly, there is little left for them to sell now, the Navigation Yard at Northwich being the latest in a long line of auctioned or sold heritage about to be lost. CRT Trustees, the Protector and the Cultural Heritage Advisory Group all turn a very blind eye and so it continues.

CRT said; "The sale of the former office and yard will generate much needed capital that will be reinvested into waterway maintenance programmes across our network. If possible, we will seek a purchaser that has a proven track record in delivering high-quality development schemes that are sympathetic to the heritage importance of the various Grade II listed buildings on the site."

Selling assets to provide capital for running costs seems a rather short-sighted approach. If it's by auction, the highest bidder becomes the new owner regardless of their sympathy to canal heritage.



## Llangollen Basin

A conversation with a CRT licence officer for the Llangollen canal regarding the moorings at Llangollen conflicts slightly with local rumour.

A closure is going to happen; it is down to a contractor but they cannot say definitely when. CRT will lock the service bollards and turn the power off; the contractor cannot say exactly when this will happen. There is currently no plan to keep the power on. This may or may not affect the linear moorings; we are led to believe only the basin. The 14 day cruising rules still apply. It is down to the boater to plan around stoppages, and continuous cruising rules of two weeks still apply. He said obviously overstays within reason and on request are allowed, but only mentioned an extra week. Any overstay will be subject to the normal notices and actions.

Apparently there is a sign that states two day limit, £6/day, £60 each day after. Neil at the cafe said he's not from CRT, he only manages the fee

collection and clarified the rules, but again, he isn't from CRT and the CRT officer may also be wrong. He said the rules are two days in summer at £6/night, 14 days in winter at £6/night. The £60 is a fine if you haven't been paying the £6.

The CRT licence officer went on to say that the price of the Basin moorings is expected to rise to £20/night by summer.

CRT have an issue at the Basin with boaters who have overstayed the permitted two day/14 days and seek to rectify and pursue any overstayers as some have stayed for more than two weeks, some more than three weeks.

Also, CRT have some issues with vandalism around the Basin. They do not assume or even accuse boaters, and they don't believe they are to blame.

Given there is little place to moor up outside and the increased cost of mooring in the basin I imagine visitor numbers are likely to decrease.

## NABO at the user groups

# Disabled Boater Forum news

The next Disabled Boater Forum is on 15th February.

Accessible Waterways Association AWA aims to raise awareness of disabled boaters and other disabled waterway users such as towpath users, anglers, and other visitors.

Tracey Clarke  
[tracey.clarke@awa-uk.org.uk](mailto:tracey.clarke@awa-uk.org.uk)

You can also join the conversation on Tracey's Facebook page: IWAF Inland Waterways

Please send your feedback on disability matters to: [leanor.bridgwoodhill@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:leanor.bridgwoodhill@canalrivertrust.org.uk)

\*CRT Boater Report  
[canalrivertrust.org.uk/refresh/media/original/46962-2022-boater-report.pdf](https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/refresh/media/original/46962-2022-boater-report.pdf)

A meeting was held on Wednesday 22nd December attended by Strategy and Engagement Manager Matthew Symonds (MS), Welfare Officer Michelle Simmonds, National Operational Property Manager Stephen Bosworth (SB) and Licence Support Advisor Ellie Bridgwood-Hill (EBH) for the trust and 10 disabled boaters (DB)

Stephen Bosworth talked about his team and their areas of work. He highlighted the pressures on the budget at present given inflation and rising costs of materials etc. He also emphasised his personal commitment to improving accessibility wherever possible, within the constraints of budgets, legislation and the requirements surrounding historic buildings. He will return to the Forum regularly in 2023 to present intended works and receive feedback from the Forum.

**DB:** How is the Trust funded?

**SB:** It is a combination of self-generated income, a government grant, charitable income such as donations and third-party funding such as National Lottery grants.

**MS:** A breakdown of income and expenditure is available in the Boater Report\*.

**DB:** For any building works, repairs, renovations or developments, what planning considerations are in place to accommodate the needs of disabled people? For any future plans, consultations on repairs, renovations or developments would you please include actual disabled

people in those conversations—preferably onsite.

**SB:** Refurbishment is typically like-for-like at the moment. There are restrictions on historic buildings that make it impossible to improve certain aspects. However we can do better and we plan to consult this group routinely in future.

**DB:** Many people think they know what disabled people need, but having people on-site with visual impairments, wheelchairs etc., is invaluable. Often small changes can make a big difference. Also, the people who attend each meeting vary. Consulting disabled boaters needs to be more systematic to ensure the right people are involved (e.g. specific disabilities). This may fall within the Accessible Waterway Association's (AWA's) remit in future (see below, on the AWA).

**SB:** Yes, I understand this point. We have some ideas about how this might work, which we will work through with MS in the new year.

**DB:** Is there a plan to increase the number of water points on the western end of the K&A? Currently there are only boatyards, no Trust facilities.

**MS:** At present we don't have a minimum standard of what facilities you can expect. We are working to establish this at present (see below), and once it is in place we can identify and address any gaps in this minimum provision.

**DB:** A lot of work has been done at Greenford Quay but it doesn't

seem to include any boater facilities. Is anything going to be built? The facilities referred to are not owned by the Trust but have been built for a private mooring scheme.

**MS:** We have been in contact with the developers to request that they make facilities on their private mooring scheme available to boaters but we have not yet had a positive response. We will ask our regional manager for an update.

### Canalside developments

There was a wider discussion of property developments that benefit from canal side locations but fail to contribute by providing facilities that boaters can use.

**MS:** The Trust provides hundreds of facilities (water points, Elsan, pump-out etc.) across the network and is committed to continuing to do so. We are working to produce a minimum standard (not looking at specific sites at this stage). We ran a consultation that had over 900 responses, including approximately 200 from boaters who said they were disabled. MS summarised the results of the consultation, which will be published in full in the new year. Based on these results, we are proposing to include water, waste and recycling, Elsan and pump-out in the minimum provision. There will be a maximum 5-hour cruising time between water and Elsan points, and 10 hours between pump-outs with more provision in very busy areas. We are proposing that showers, washing machines and tumble dryers do not form part of the minimum provision. However, we do not plan to close them immediately. Where possible, we hope that other local providers—mooring providers, clubs etc will take over the running and maintenance of these facilities.

Although most boats have toilets on board, the consultation

*There will be a maximum 5-hour cruising time between water and Elsan points, and 10 hours between pump-outs.*

shows that boaters are keen for the Trust to continue to provide toilets. However, they are expensive to maintain and many are vulnerable to vandalism. We will maintain toilets in visitor destinations and where they are used by staff and volunteers, who will be able to open them to boaters on request, but they will not be public toilets for everyone to use all the time. MS welcomes the Forum's comments and ideas in relation to toilets in particular, as more work is needed on this aspect of the minimum standard and it may affect disabled boaters in particular.

### Questions and comments

**DB:** How does the response rate compare to other surveys and consultations? Was it low because it came immediately after the census survey?

**MS:** We publicised the consultation through social media, the website, the Boaters' Update, and through multiple boating organisations. It is about a 2.5% response rate which is only slightly lower than the average for our surveys (with the exception of the census, which was unusually high). The timing may have been a factor and we also expect people to engage more when we consult locally on specific sites.

**DB:** I was hoping showers would be part of the minimum standard as I use them regularly due to the space available in your showers vs onboard and the hot water, and I know fuel

boats use them regularly too.

**MS:** They are very expensive to maintain because of statutory requirements (e.g. prevention of Legionella). We are not looking to close them all immediately; there may be other options for specific sites. We will also run local consultations so we will let you know when they go live.

There was a discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of using Radar keys for toilet access. Several members of the DBF have Radar keys but, like the BW key, they are easily available online and vulnerable to misuse by people who are not entitled to use them.

Another option is for the Trust to get better at signposting facilities provided by others e.g. Changing Places toilets, facilities available at marinas.

**DB:** This may be the cheapest solution if we can get public services on board and raise their awareness of the existence of disabled boaters who would benefit from access. This could be part of the AWA's role in future.

### Digital access to facilities

There was discussion of installing a new digital system that would allow much better management of access to facilities, but this would be very expensive.

**MS:** To give you an idea, we are trialling contactless access to pump-outs in some areas and converting each pump-out point to the new system costs around £1,500. The cost to roll that out across all our facilities would be astronomical.

**MS:** The next steps are site-specific consultations. Nothing is going to change overnight and we will return to this Forum with more details on planned changes.

### Accessible mooring standard

MS Summarised the work carried out so far with Marcus Chaloner (MC) to develop an accessible mooring standard. Thank you to all those who contributed with feedback and ideas. Marcus will attend our meeting in February.

- Bollard/ring design: MC is mocking up a design to share with you in the new year.
- Sites for initial roll-out: We have not had a lot of specific suggestions but please let us know which places/waterways you would like to see included in the first roll-out.
- Accessible mooring sign: Thank you for all the feedback on the icons and wording. Based on the feedback, we may drop the tiles showing a wheelchair, walking stick and pregnant person symbols. We are also considering adding a QR code to link to the map which will indicate nearby facilities.

### Accessibility and pregnancy

There was a discussion of whether it is appropriate to include pregnancy: being pregnant does not necessarily entail mobility issues, but it is a protected characteristic that we are legally obliged to consider.

Likewise the symbol for older people with a walking stick: there are many older people on the waterways and they don't all necessarily need to use accessible moorings.

**DB:** Although the wheelchair symbol has many drawbacks, it is universally recognised.

**MS:** A key part of the scheme is communication, asking boaters who don't have access needs to be aware and considerate. We are expecting a lot of questions about what the accessible mooring spaces mean.



# The Gingerbread Railway

Ian Hutson disturbs some Second World War ghosts.

**M**oor between Shropshire Union bridges 82 and 83, wait for the dead of night, and you'll like as not hear two things; the theme from the television series Dad's Army; and a train crash. Sounds that stem from the lashings of history ladled over that stretch.

The line of the Nantwich & Market Drayton Railway crossed the canal where today there remain two stubs of brickwork embankment. Quite why the line closed is a mystery, but I reckon it was because Dr Beeching's new diesel locomotives were failing far too regularly to leap the gap across the canal, whereas the old steam-loco could make it in one.

Built during the 1860s, when England still had manufacturing, the line carried typical traffic of six passenger trains and some twenty freight trains in either direction. Market Drayton was renowned at the time for the production of gingerbread, such sweet sticky brown predominance of the freight bringing about the nickname of 'The Gingerbread Line'. Neat huh?

Dad's Army? Coole Pilate was, during WWII, home to a Platoon of Home Guard, there being a guard post on Bridge 82 and a supplementary

guard at Hack Green Nuclear Shelter, which was then not "nuclear", but just a new-fangled electric RADAR Station. Four chaps were on bridge duty every night and arrangements were made to block the road with gingerbread girders in case of an invasion.

Dad's Army was accurate in many ways and the Coole Pilate Home Guard struggled for uniforms, guns, and accommodation. Initially housed in a horsebox, moving "up-market" to a hen house and, eventually, to a nearby cottage they patrolled the towpath more authoritatively than even a present-day angler wishing to angle right where you're moored.

The upshot of this is that I highly recommend that when next you are there, and some stentorian voice issues a challenge 'Friend or foe?', do not assume that it's the Secretary of the angling club and simply reply with a cheery 'Joggen on, meinen Doris'. You may be even closer to being shot than you thought.

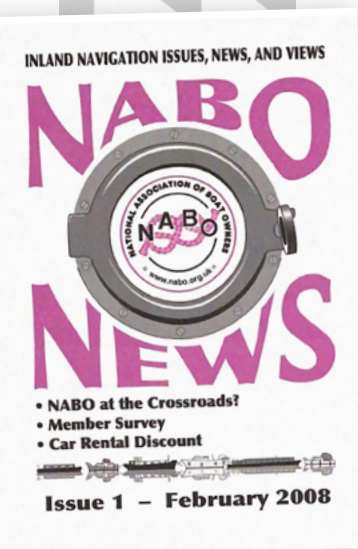
All of this and more is detailed on the new C&RT signs at Coole Pilate. Oh hang on—no it's not, they took down the perfectly good metal sign during the £rebranding£ and years later there's still nothing in its place.



# Rewind

Issue No 1 2008

Howard Anguish reviews NABO News from 15 years ago.



This being the first Rewind of 2023 I hope you had an enjoyable Christmas and best wishes for 2023. I wish Peter Fellows all the best as he starts his new venture, and a warm welcome to our new editor.

**NABO at the crossroads** In 2008, NABO started a periodic assessment of members needs with a timely reminder that NABO was (and still is) the only one exclusively to look after the interests of boat owners and run totally by boat owners. With many pressing needs it is worth reflecting that in 2008, waterways were looking seriously at radical changes as

to its funding and administration, leading ultimately to the establishment of CRT.

Currently we have even more serious issues about the entire survival of our waterways and we may soon have to make stark choices when defining our priorities.

**Members' survey** In the first NABO News of 2008 a prominent subject was a detailed member survey and as Vice Chair I was deeply involved in gathering and sorting the member's responses to the detailed survey replies and I will sort out some relevant responses for the next Rewind.

One issue raised was whether it was time for NABO to prioritise its efforts with a view to reducing the number of causes and concentrate on selected matters of urgency and relevance. In my view in 2023 this

subject is even more relevant than it was in 2008. With the funding review looming ever closer I am sure that in the coming months I don't think it is an exaggeration to say that the Waterways as we know them may be forced to prioritise what facilities it offers to its customers.

**News year's resolutions** In the Twas ever thus department, "2008, a new year, new resolutions, new optimism, and a time for looking forward.

So what do we see ahead for boaters and boating? Bills, hassle, worry and stress, congestion, boat rage, weeds, nettles, and bureaucracy. It's all depressing stuff, and many of the old school, recognising that boating ain't what it used to be, are selling up and taking to motor homes. Who can blame them?

We will be paying more than anywhere else in Europe for the privilege of navigating an ever shallower ditch, with poorly maintained facilities, overgrown towpaths, and, it seems, a growing number of anti-social types.

So what's the solution? Mebbe we should ask Carole to organise a Challenging Cruise to France. One way of course."

**BW Standards** In a final quote from the BW list of standards, wouldn't it be nice if CRT still followed these simple guidelines!

*"All vegetation that could hinder navigation should be kept trimmed."*

*"When dredging (if ever!) BW fail to acknowledge that some people do have 70 ft boats!"*

*"All water depth should be adequate for navigation."*

NABO News back issues are available online at [nabo.org.uk/index.php/reference/nn-back-issues-2](http://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.

## The devil in the lithium detail

I refer to the latest NABO News item about lithium batteries. Sorry but I think referring to lithium ion batteries generically is a big mistake. Yes the item does hint that there are different lithium chemistries but it's a bit subtle! The bottom line is that LiFePO4 batteries are as safe as lead acid, or safer. LiFePO4 is extremely difficult to set on fire either by overcharging or by physical damage, and even in that highly unlikely event it can easily be extinguished. It doesn't explode and spray hot sulphuric acid around unlike lead acid!

By comparison lithium cobalt oxide technologies are quite unstable, easily set alight and continue to burn even when under water (it makes its own oxygen for combustion!)

So any talk about Li batteries needs to specify the chemistry, otherwise it is a bit like talking about "fossil fuels" without distinguishing between diesel, petrol or LPG.

An area of concern is second hand batteries ex electric vehicles. If they are LiFePO4 then fine. If they are some higher energy density technology, then be afraid! The devil is in the detail and awareness perhaps needs to be raised on these differences.

Full disclosure: I have 600Ah of LiFePO4 batteries with home grown BMS and alternator controller. The batteries are fantastic!

Nick Norman

*Mike Rodd, NABO Chair sits on the BSS Technical Committee*

The Boat Safety Scheme has continued to review what information should be given to all boaters on the use of lithium batteries.

Some types are reported to be extremely dangerous, leading my own major boat insurers to advise their customers as follows: **SAFETY WARNING: Lithium-ion battery devices. All instructions from makers & suppliers regarding storage, charging & use MUST BE**

## FOLLOWED to the letter due to the continuing fire problems.

The issue is that, whilst some of the lithium-based batteries are safe to use in a boat environment (provided that they are correctly installed, monitored and charged etc., and not mixed with older, more conventional, batteries), there are some types that have already been proved to be extremely dangerous, and have been responsible for major boat fires—which are then also (please note!) **impossible to extinguish.**

## A plea to CRT

What I would like to see is CRT spending far less money on projects not directly associated with cruising the system.

Far fewer signs, more moorings, better dredging and a roll back of the intrusive need to book passage through an ever increasing list of sites.

*From an email to NABO*

## I name this boat ...

If you have spotted a boat name while cruising that made you smile, please let me have a photo to use in future issues.

Here's one from Janice Streckerl, how true it is!



# A low cost, easy way to filter contaminated water from your bilges

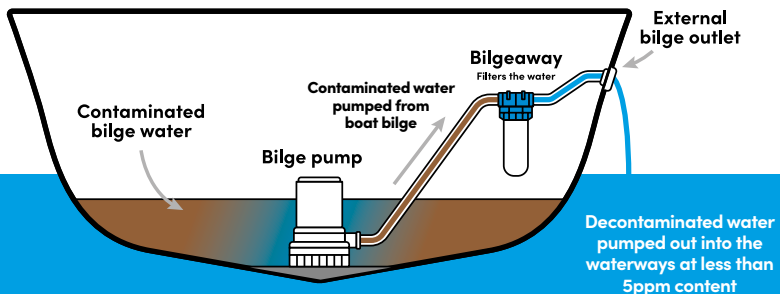
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