



NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners
Issue 4 August 2023



**Fund Britain's
Waterways**

The Calor Problem

**Energy Bills Support
Scheme**

**The Accessible
Waterways Association**



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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 2nd September 2023.

Cover photo

Leaky bottom gates at Hack Lane. Photo by the Editor

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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As the scent of honeysuckle wafts through an open window and is subsequently overpowered by the inimitable odour of barbecue from a neighbour, I realise summer has indeed arrived.

I have received over 50 notices of works and other stoppages in the last week, the presentation of the notices is not great. The headline information, for example 'Navigation closure notice: Leeds & Liverpool Canal, Navigation: Closed, Towpath: Open' then on opening the email, 'The bridge has been repaired and navigation traffic can resume.' I'm sure it saves a few seconds although it wouldn't take much to preface the notice headline with 'Amendment' or 'Navigation reopened'.

Still waiting for the lock to fill

Editor John Sadler calls for reports and more action at #RepairWaterways.



As we travel around the network I have heard from many people on its perceived state, how it used to be better etc. As a boater for over 30 years, I'm not sure that memory is the best or most accurate way of recording the works required or indeed of the repairs achieved. Stourbridge only re-opened on the 27th May 1967 after a battle with British Waterways in 1962 who wanted to close it, the Kennet & Avon Canal only reopened in 1990 and the Droitwich canal in 2011. Three good examples of improvements in the network that perhaps get forgotten.

I would like to propose that we keep a database of observations of instances of disrepair. Canal and River Trust are usually aware of the problems and schedule work,

as dictated by funds and severity. However, as one example, the non-towpath top gate paddle mechanism on Park Gate lock on the Staffs and Worcester has been destroyed, including the concrete base. I've seen it in this condition for two years, although locals say it's been like it much longer, but its restoration does not appear in the latest winter schedule. Whilst it is possible to operate the lock on one paddle it does cause delays in busy periods and there is the chance of the other paddle failing, which will close the canal.

I am not proposing this database as a way of criticising CRT, it would be helpful to have the data to assess the general state of the network accurately when requesting Government funding. I believe it would encourage boaters to be more involved in the upkeep of the network, enhance greater involvement with CRT and aid understanding of their problems of funding and maintenance. We could also highlight works completed in a short turnaround or in the longer term, find volunteers or even help raise funds.

So, if you find a problem that requires attention or will do in the future, please send the location, date observed, concise detail of the problem, photo if possible, your name and contact details to nabonews@nabo.org.uk or Tweet [#RepairWaterways](https://twitter.com/RepairWaterways). I will keep personal data private and only use the contact details to update you on the progress of any repair work. Let nobody moan about the state of canals unless they have reported its problems.

That's my summer project, in between cruising. So far our progress has not been halted by anything other than the weather although we have had to choose canals that are, and likely to remain, open. Happy cruising to all!

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The National Association of Boat Owners
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The Jubilee Pageant by Tim Lewis

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What a time to be involved with NABO! Your Council has always been very careful only to take on activities that will have a direct impact on our boaters—who, of course, are the very reason we exist. But when we DO take on a new mission, it needs to be something where—as a professionally led body—we can make a real difference. Seldom have there been so many issues requiring our attention as now. Fortunately we have the benefit of an enthusiastic and highly motivated Council.

Time to make a real difference.

Chairman **Mike Rodd** explains how NABO is starting to apply pressure where it counts.

As I highlighted in my last Chair's report, your Council quite correctly made the decision that there is currently no point in continually nagging CRT about the things that we feel they are not doing well. On the contrary, with a government that is clearly determined to reduce the funding for the waterways, the best thing we can do is to accept that there is now no alternative to CRT, and that reverting to the good?/bad? days of the British Waterways Board being part of government is just not feasible. Therefore, the best thing we can do right now is to bring as much pressure as we can on government to ensure, at the very least, adequate funding of all the waterways. See the Defra update on page 17—EA and Scottish waterways have already had massive cuts.

To this end, we set about (as reported in detail elsewhere in NABO News) bringing together other

organisations with a stake in the waterways, with the specific objective of presenting a united front. We thus approached a broad spectrum of other such bodies, and were delighted with the response. The IWA, in particular, totally agreed with us; indeed, our suggestions fell in line with one of their own major campaigns. Together, we set up a joint meeting of as many waterways-related bodies as we could think of, and the response exceeded our wildest expectations. This has led to the proposed actions outlined on page 14, starting with a direct appeal to government, to be followed by a range of supporting projects. We are exceptionally grateful to the IWA and especially to its Chair, Les Etheridge, for all their work. At NABO, we simply don't have access to the supporting infrastructure.

Calor talks bombed

The Calor Gas situation, which again we have described in NABO News. In essence, Calor suddenly announced that they were stopping support for a range of their smaller gas cylinders, which are used by the majority of smaller boats.

The result is that such boats would have to make significant structural modifications to their gas compartments to allow the larger containers to be used. So here is another issue of direct importance to many of our members. We supported the Boat Safety Scheme in approaching Calor, thereby achieving some temporary changes—without, sadly, changing Calor's long-term plans. The short-term effects are leading to some horrendously dangerous situations, such as the illegal self-filling of existing cylinders. Given Calor's monopoly of the supply of gas to boats, alternative solutions are not easily found. We have also been struck by how few boaters were or

still are aware of the situation. On behalf of NABO, my predecessor as chair, David Fletcher, is now leading a major campaign to try to sort out a long-term solution.

The next urgent situation we have had to deal with relates to the government's scheme for assisting many of us to cope with the dramatic increases in energy costs. However, the more than welcome support did not address the issue of how those boaters who live on their boats as continuous cruisers can access support. The problem was and in many cases still is how folks not having a home base could be identified by government as being eligible for funding. We supported CRT's simple solution, that they (CRT) could supply details of applicable boats, but that does not yet seem to be working in most counties. My vice chair, Anne Husar, a liveaboard herself, has been active in trying to sort this out. Her recent radio interview and the articles she has been producing, will go some way towards helping to sort out another preventable difficulty that is affecting many of our members.

CRT's inconsistent application of welfare provisions

Ongoing work by our Council, through its Welfare Officer, Ken Hylins, is highlighting a breakdown in CRT's handling of boaters with—often temporary—personal problems that restrict their capacity to move their boats, meaning that they then don't meet CRT's minimum movement requirements.

Ken has had to deal directly with a series of such boaters, and in some cases CRT personnel have been making totally unreasonable demands that potentially violate human rights requirements. NABO has always insisted that its members should meet CRT's interpretation of

the (albeit very fuzzy!) movement requirements. Nonetheless, NABO has also accepted that there will be problems that require sensible, reasonable, short-term interpretations. Thus, for example, in one particular case Ken had to intervene when a boater, who cannot read, could not understand the notices sent to him regarding his movement, and was being verbally harangued by the CRT officer concerned. Ken has developed a good working relationship with the CRT senior officers leading the enforcement, but it often seems that those on the ground have little understanding of how to deal appropriately with some of the boaters involved.

So, it's been a very busy time for NABO and its value to the boating community has been more evident than ever. We always see a small increase in membership when there is a potential impact on cruising, etc., but we have to accept that many boaters, as long as they can keep moving as they wish, see no point in joining a boater representative body. So we remain—as do other similar waterways bodies—a small organisation. Nevertheless, it's clear from the paragraphs above that NABO is punching above its weight, in the effect it is managing to have—and, with the NABO AGM on the horizon, we are certainly looking for more help!!

I hope you have all enjoyed the great sunny weather—we certainly did, managing to find some lovely shade on the beautiful Mon & Brec Canal, although it is worrying that there seems to be a serious downturn in the number of hire boaters so far this year. I know the costs incurred by the hire boat companies have increased substantially, but at the moment a week's holiday in Spain is cheaper than hiring a boat for a week!!

Fly on the wall

Observes proceedings at the Council meeting in June.



NABO Calendar 2023

The remaining Council meetings in 2023 will be on 2nd September, 7th October (by teleconference) 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.

Following the decision at the previous meeting, an approach was made to the IWA and other organisations with a view to us all coming together to try to ensure that CRT, the EA and other waterways authorities are appropriately funded by government. It turned out that IWA are running a campaign called Protect Our Waterways but agreed to lead the suggested joint activity.

Approximately 30 other organisations attended a virtual meeting on the 5th May and agreed to come together with the purpose of addressing the funding question. A steering group has been formed and it will lead a single purpose group, **Fund Britain's Waterways** (FBW). FBW has issued a press release reproduced on page 14.

Other actions will include a Birmingham protest cruise from 12–14th August. A petition will be presented to Downing Street; a website is being set up within the IWA website (for simplicity); a logo is being drawn up. A cruise to Westminster is also planned for later in the year depending on permissions. There will be some lobbying at the political party conferences.

Approval was given to some funding for the campaign. The treasurer confirmed that funds are available. IWA, British Marine and RYA will also contribute. The cost of attendance at political party conferences is very high.

There is considerable experience

in the group of influencing politicians. Sir Michael Fabricant MP has seen the press release and will be consulted as chair of the All Part Parliamentary Group for the Waterways.

Calor Gas situation There are shortages of bottles in various places. There is a real concern that boaters are doing dangerous things. Some pictorial evidence has been submitted to CRT but there appears to be little enforcement action taking place to stop it. David is going to raise a complaint should there be no response from CRT and this situation continues. Some larger 19kg cylinders are available readily from builders merchants. They do not fit on many boats. Self refilling is a real safety problem. This will be raised at the Boat Safety Scheme AC this week.

Continuous Cruising funding situation and any action? Boaters are still not all getting the government support. There has been no movement on the government position and applications stopped at the end of May. A petition by NBTAs is about to be handed in to Downing Street. Media coverage has gone cold. Some contact initially from the BBC has stopped, but recently BBC Wales and BBC Wiltshire have contacted NABO see And on Radio, see page 22.

With reference to Continuous Cruising a correspondence is in progress with a member about his cruising pattern and data interpretation by CRT. We will keep this correspondence going. The legal advice already received by NABO will be adhered to. We would not be in

a position to make any contribution to court costs should it get that far.

Boaters Rep Meeting There has been no recent meeting. The next one is in July and a NABO representative will join on line.

Meeting with Matthew Symonds: The next meeting will be in late July.

Regional Meetings: There is an upcoming London meeting which we will try to attend. It was stated that crime is really horrendous in London and rising where boats are an easy target.

Stoppage and Winter Works programme There has been no response to the suggestion that the dredging programme could be put into the winter works. In the absence of details further discussion was not possible. It is believed the programme is at the second draft stage.

Media & Publicity CRT Boaters Update has got ahead of the government funding announcement and seems to have leaked details! The Rochdale and the northern canals are being talked about a lot. Their condition is becoming notorious. Water shortages are already a problem with restrictions and closure looming on the Macc and Peak Forest. The Chesterfield is closing too because of lack of water.

Welfare Officers Report Ken Hylins is finding financial matters are taking most of his time and he is supporting about eight boaters through the benefit system. He is also supporting disabled and illiterate boaters who have been harassed and their inability to read and write has not been taken into account in dealings with CRT. These are not isolated cases. A side effect of his help is increasing the membership. Ken will produce an overview for NABO News.

National Inland Navigation Forum This group have reacted very well to the FBW issues and is participating. Mike reminded the meeting

that EA are reorganising and have issued new conditions for joining their forum. The user forum for the Thames has been superseded by a new Thames forum which is open to representatives from groups other than boating. This too has Terms and Conditions attached to it. EA is also very short of money and has the same pressures as CRT from the levelling up and well-being agenda. It is believed that there is a move to reestablish the All Parties Parliamentary Group for the Thames.

Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) NABO will have a representative at the next BSS meeting. Lithium ion and lithium iron phosphate (LiFePO) batteries are raising concerns. Fire is a big problem and sinking is the only way to extinguish a serious lithium fire on a boat. Lithium fire extinguishers are available but very expensive and their use is very limited. Containment bags are also available for small items such as mobile phones. There has been a bit of publicity about insurance changes because of lithium batteries and charging methods.

It was reported that the planned boat electrical publication, being produced by IET, is now out for consultation and it is likely to be published later this year. There is obviously a market for this.

If we are tackling big issues like the lithium batteries question we should not set ourselves up as an authority. The Editor responded that boaters should be made aware of these issues. It was noted that there is a lot of unregulated work going on and care needs to be taken. Emphasis should be made that professional advice must always be sought.

The AGM will held on 18 November 2023 at Tamworth Cruising Club. There will be some changes to the Constitution which will be notified to members.

Wales and Southwest Mike Rodd



A quiet time in terms of regular meetings etc., but sadly a very busy time on the Kennet and Avon canal where we have suffered a series of lock and bridge failures, effectively closing the canal for many lengthy periods. There has also been concern about water shortages, although the aquifers are looking pretty reasonable. As a result of the concerns some restrictions on movement have again been put in place. On the trip boat which I skipper we had a paddle failure right in the middle of one of our public trips. Fortunately one of the crew had the phone number of a local CRT organiser and they managed to get one of their volunteer lock maintenance folk out urgently.

Funny though, he arrived with the necessary pneumatic fluid but no tools to open the filler point. Fortunately we came along and could help him.

On the Mon & Brec it has been a great time

Around the regions with NABO's regional reps

to cruise as much vegetation clearing has been taking place and, for us, relatively few boat movements.

However, this could be due to the fact that the six hire boat companies operating in the area appear to have experienced a significantly reduced number of hirers. Given the importance of this canal as one of the prime visitor attractions of South Wales, the consequences are worrying. But then, are the costs of hiring a boat getting too high?

East Midlands Regional Representative

Any members who would like to volunteer for the role of East Midlands Regional Representative please contact one of the NABO Council.

CRT news

North West Region

Canal and River Trust are pleased to report that they have successfully trialled a new pump-out contactless card reader in the North West Region. Following this trial they will be rolling out the card readers nationally over the next six months. The new system will combine contactless technology with the existing MeterMacs platform.

CRT West Midlands

The Annual Public Meeting, was held on the 11th July 2023. The event was open to the public to hear Trust colleagues and some of our key regional partners share what's been delivered over the last year and more, and how we can work together to realise the potential of the West

Midlands canal network during what is expected to be a challenging period for all.

Leeds & Liverpool Canal Lock Flight Operating Times, 2023

Due to increasing pressure on water resources and staffing, the following three sections of canal at Bank Newton and Gargrave will be kept locked until 10am. Last passage into these sections is 2.30pm and padlocks will be put on the following locks by 3.30pm.

- Holme Bridge lock (30) to Higherland lock (32)
- Anchor lock (33) to Stegneck (35)
- Bank Newton bottom (36) to Bank Newton top (41)

From an update on 22/06/2023: please check CRT Boaters Update site for more recent information.

NABO at the user groups

All-Party Parliamentary Water Group

Anne Husar reports

CRT's New Head of Environment, one day in to the job, shared the CRT presentations with Heather Clarke.

- CRT are claiming 10.2 million visitors to the canals 2022/23.
- The inland waterways are officially classified in the same category as 'ditches'. A plea for better recognition was made!
- £20-30m extra funding needed (yearly?) to maintain infrastructure resilience. This was followed by a plea from Sir Michael Fabricant (MP) for the Defra grant to be maintained.
- 25 MPs have written to Defra to urge them to continue funding CRT.
- A new group for disabled boaters, the Accessible Waterways Association has gained funding and was launched at the Little Venice Cavalcade. (see later article)
- The 'Levelling Up' fund has given a £13m grant to the Llangollen towards the Trevor Basin works, amongst other 'improvements'.

In reference to an announcement on Defra funding, my question to Fabricant was how did he define 'forthwith'? After much discussion with another of the attending MPs, he eventually blamed the slow civil service for holding up the grant.

The Montgomery Canal was the feature presentation given by the chair Michael Limbrey :


- 9 nature reserves have been built, fed by water that comes in from the canal and then out again. These are to protect nature from the boats. Limbrey said that boats are an integral part of a living, working canal and the Montgomery restoration strategy integrates ALL aspects, including boats.
- The 'Levelling Up' fund has given a grant of £20m which will get all but 2 miles and 2 trunk roads of the canal in Shropshire finished, opening it in to Wales.
- After 8 years of restoration work, the canal is about to open to navigation.

#PaddleSafely

British Canoeing has just launched its #PaddleSafely campaign in partnership with the RNLI, and in collaboration with a range of groups including: British canoeing clubs and delivery partners, RNLI local ambassadors, professional bodies, charities, and retailers.

This campaign aims to keep paddlers safe on the water this summer by raising awareness of safety among seasoned and novice paddlers.

It focuses on these five key safety messages.

- 
- ✓ Wear a personal floatation device
 - ✓ Carry a means of communication
 - ✓ Check the weather
 - ✓ Tell others your plans
 - ✓ Paddle within your ability

Navigation Advisory Group

The Canal & River Trust has made a new appointment to its Navigation Advisory Group (NAG), three appointments to the NAG sub-groups for moorings and locks, and two appointments to its Fisheries & Angling Advisory Group (FAAG). The voluntary groups help advise the Trust on boating and fisheries issues respectively.

Each appointment is for an initial three-year term and is an unpaid voluntary role. Members of the advisory groups are drawn from the communities they represent, and include boaters, boating business owners, angling coaches, fish experts and scientists.

Navigation Advisory Group

Hannah Sterritt has been boating since 2018, when she first went on a hire boat holiday. She and her partner have lived aboard their 54ft narrow-boat since 2020, initially on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal and, since 2023, cruising the main network.

Additionally, Alan Moss and James Lowe have joined the NAG moorings sub-group, while Graham Puddephat has joined the NAG locks sub-group.

Fisheries & Angling Advisory Group

Paul Edwards is a keen angler and current secretary of Shropshire-based Hodnet Angling Club, and a member of Bay Malton Angling Club. Paul has a commercial background in sales and marketing and has driven the implementation of

various modern systems for Hodnet AC.

Richard Gibbs is a level one angling coach and has held numerous administrative positions within fisheries and angling organisations, including being appointed the first secretary of the Grand Union Canal Anglers Consultative, and being the fishery officer for the Tring Anglers for many years. A retired police officer, Richard brings experience of the challenges of enforcement of legislation and environmental crime more generally.

Matthew Symonds, head of customer service at Canal & River Trust, said: "I am delighted to welcome all our new advisory group members to the Trust. Our advisory groups are places where we can work through ideas with people who can share their first-hand knowledge of the subjects.

"In the last few years, our volunteers on our Navigation Advisory Group have reviewed the Trust's proposed schedule for winter stoppages, advised on national and local proposals including accessible moorings, the Strong Stream warning system, and towpath works, and helped us develop the customer service facilities review, boat licence consultation and Boater Census. Meanwhile our Fisheries and Angling Group members have played a key role in developing the successful Let's Fish events, policies around non-native fish species, and canal angling participation. This only scratches the surface of the huge range of initiatives they have been involved in."



Fishing the Waterways:

There are many free 'Let's Fish!' events taking place around the waterways, including the following in Nottingham, between Wilford Street Bridge 10 and Wilford Street Footbridge 9.

- Monday 31 July 2023 08:00 until 16:30
- Monday 14 August 2023 08:00 until 16:30
- Tuesday 29 August 2023 08:00 until 16:30

There will be some mooring restrictions while these events take place. If you are in the area of a Let's Fish! event, please follow any advice or requests

given by the organisers.

CRT will be introducing a charge for third-party events taking place across their estate to help cover costs of processing and facilitating them. The charge will be levied on event applications received from 1 June 2023.

Further details about all fishing events can be found on CRT's Let's Fish! website canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/fishing/lets-fish/find-a-fishing-event.

Moorings under review

To moor or not to moor

Tom Freeland, CRT Boating & Customer Service Manager, West Midlands, gives an update on Llangollen and Alvechurch moorings

Thank you for all of your feedback and good ideas in response to our consultation on changes at Llangollen town and basin moorings. We've now finished the consultation, taken everything on board, and shared our response on our website.

We're looking to run the following changes as a trial this year:

- Adjust the pricing to £12 per boat per night—including full access to electricity—to allow us to recover our costs.
- Provide four 5-day moorings for those needing to stay longer—on pontoons in the basin nearest the feeder.
- Improved signage and leaflets on site for greater clarity on costs and stay times.
- No other changes to the moor-

ings—all other moorings will remain at 2-day stay, with the same number of berths available, and the charge will continue to apply overnight only.

- Trial to run from 1 May to 31 October.

While the trial is running, we'll be looking into how we might progress some of the other ideas, including metered bollards, flexible payments and stay times, and managing the approach through the narrows.

We'll review all of these and let you know our next steps by 17 October at the latest.

Changes at Alvechurch

CRT will be trialling changes on site from 24 April until the end of October.

Llangollen consultation response

canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/where-we-work/west-midlands/llangollen-moorings-trial-2023

CRT welcome your feedback during the trials, send responses to enquiries.westmidlands@canalrivertrust.org.uk or call 0303 040 4040.

Mooring in Birmingham: Searching for the common-sense solution

Mooring Trials.

After the consultations for changes to mooring times in Birmingham many of the CRT proposals have in fact been altered and moderated in the direction of common sense. The trial has now commenced.

CRT asks all owners who use the BCN to watch out for over occupied or empty areas within the Birmingham City centre area so that we can constructively comment on the mix of mooring times and limits.

CRT are looking for a practical solution that enables all users to moor for the time necessary for them to enjoy the facilities and amenities of

the city. The same goes for Alvechurch where another trial is underway.

The West Midlands Annual Meeting takes place in early July and NABO will be represented to hear the Canal and River Trust presentations from the West Midlands management and advisory group.

On the weekend of the 12-14 August there will be a Campaign Cruise by the Fund Britain's Waterways group. We would like as many boats as possible to converge on the Mailbox to show our passion for the waterways and the necessity of realistic and adequate funding to keep them open.

Fund Britain's Waterways

The recent press release addressed to Government on the launch of this new campaigning group.

For more information about Fund Britain's Waterways, or to join the group, please visit fundbritainwaterways.org.uk or email info@fundbritainwaterways.org.uk

WE CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO STOP INLAND WATERWAYS FALLING INTO DISREPAIR

Britain's unique and well-loved network of canals and navigable rivers is deteriorating because of inadequate funding.

At a time of unprecedented challenges caused by the climate emergency and high inflation, government is failing to respond. Fund Britain's Waterways (FBW), a coalition of organisations representing hundreds of thousands of users and supporters of inland waterways, is campaigning for national and local government to act now and protect the public benefit and natural capital of our waterways.

Management of Britain's 5,000 miles of navigable inland waterways is fragmented. The Canal & River Trust (CRT) has the greatest responsibility covering 2,000 miles. It is already in a difficult financial situation with a fixed government grant of £52.6m per year until 2027. Defra was expected to confirm funding for 2028 onwards in July 2022 but has not yet made an announcement. Other waterways face similar problems: the Environment Agency is operating with £22m per year, one third of its identified requirement, and Scottish Canals has over £70m of maintenance work outstanding.

The consequences of failing to

maintain waterway infrastructure were clearly shown by the evacuation of 1,500 local residents in case the dam at Toddbrook Reservoir collapsed in 2019. This event has shown the need for increased spend on CRT reservoirs of up to £25m per year, but it is as if the lessons have not yet been learnt.

The Covid19 pandemic demonstrated the value of Britain's inland waterways as people sought blue and green spaces to help recover. This was acknowledged in Defra's own Environmental Improvement Plan, providing levelling up, economic, environmental, health and wellbeing benefits for us all.

The combined annual economic and social value of CRT waterways alone has been quantified as £6.1bn, including cost savings of £1.1bn for the NHS from active use of the waterways and towpaths.

Despite this greater understanding of their value, and the deteriorating state of the infrastructure today, the Government appears intent on significantly reducing its funding for the waterways, says Les Etheridge, Chair of the FBW steering group and National Chair of the Inland Waterways Association.

He said: "Government needs to recognise that saying their value

the inland waterways is not enough to prevent their decline. Whilst we in FBW understand the financial pressures that everyone faces, the financial cuts are too deep, and adequate public funding needs to be allocated to maintain these national assets. FBW will be taking action starting with a campaign cruise in

Birmingham over the weekend of 12–13 August 2023.’

FBW has the stated intention of significantly widening membership to any organisation or individual with an interest in using or supporting inland waterways whether canal, river, tidal river or estuary—excluding navigation authorities.



FUND BRITAIN'S WATERWAYS

The initial member organisations of Fund Britain's Waterways include:

Accessible Waterways Association, Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs, Basingstoke Canal Society, Braunston Marina, British Canoeing, British Marine, British Marine's Inland Boating Association, British Marine's Passenger Boat Association, The Broads Hire Boat Federation including British Marine's London and Thames Valley Regional Association, Chesterfield Canal Trust, Commercial Boat Operators Association, DBA—The Barge Association, Electric Boat Association, Fox Narrowboats, Great Ouse Boating Association, Historic Narrow Boat Club, Inland Waterways Association, Kennet & Avon Canal Trust, Kennet & Avon Trade Association, Lowland Canals Association, National Association of Boat Owners, National Inland Navigation Forum, Newbury Boat Company, Residential Boat Owners' Association, Roving Canal Traders Association, Royal Yachting Association, Thames MotorBoaters Association, Torksey Yacht Club,

Fund Britain's Waterways

NABO asks for clarity about the government's goals for the canal and river system



On 29th June 2023, In response to the following request for a written answer

To: Greg Knight, Conservative, East Yorkshire

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking with Cabinet colleagues to help encourage the use of canals and rivers; and if she will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow, The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Our inland waterways are an important national heritage asset. Benefits of inland waterways include biodiversity, pleasant routes for active and sustainable travel, physical and mental health, water stewardship, recreational benefits, waterborne freight and renewable energy. The waterways networks host utilities including broadband cabling, as well as playing a key role in system-wide flood risk management, land drainage and water supply.

We published our Environmental Improvement Plan in January 2023 and will work across government

to deliver against its commitments, including to “continue to work with navigation authorities as appropriate, recognising the value of access to blue space, particularly within inner city environments. For example, announcing future funding for the Canal and River Trust to support local access improvements and awareness.”

The ten points of the 262 page Environmental Improvement Plan

- Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife
- Goal 2: Clean air
- Goal 3: Clean and plentiful water
- Goal 4: Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides
- Goal 5: Maximise our resources, minimise our waste
- Goal 6: Using resources from nature sustainably
- Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Goal 8: Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards
- Goal 9: Enhancing biosecurity
- Goal 10: Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment

NABO News Editor comments; It would seem that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary thinks it quite reasonable not to announce CRT funding for six months after the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) and 12 months later than expected.

If the above response has any credibility, why has the Environment Agency (EA) been given half of the revenue and a third of the capital figures they consider necessary to maintain rivers and navigations under their control?

FBW warns against the latest CRT funding offer

After months of waiting for Defra to announce its decision on future grant funding for the Canal & River Trust (CRT), and less than a fortnight after the launch of Fund Britain's Waterways (FBW), the Secretary of State has now confirmed that the Government plans at least to continue providing grant funding to CRT beyond March 2027 when the current grant comes to an end.

Whilst this is welcomed, FBW members including the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) are deeply concerned that the Secretary of State has only gone as far to offer "over £400m" for the ten-year period from April 2027 which marks a further dramatic cut. According to CRT it will equate to at least a 40% reduction of funding in real terms compared to recent levels. The current funding, which has been fixed at £52.6m per annum since 2021, is already failing to keep up with inflation and the physical toll that more frequent severe weather is having on the waterways' infrastructure.

Defra's offer is simply not enough to avert the decline of CRT's network, particularly given the charity already faces a deficit of £12 -15m. The grant it receives from Defra makes up almost a quarter of its income and is critical in helping it lever in other sources of income and fund its essential maintenance programme. As Richard Parry, Chief Executive of CRT, has said the proposed funding cuts from 2027/2028 will have a potentially "devastating impact".

FBW is campaigning to ensure that beyond this Parliament there will be sufficient grant funding to retain the huge environmental, economic and social benefits that Britain's inland waterways provide. That includes the 2,000 miles of waterways managed by CRT which alone contribute £6.1bn per year in economic and social value. It is why, as part of FBW's broader campaign, it will continue to work with CRT and others to encourage the Government to rethink this week's funding announcement.

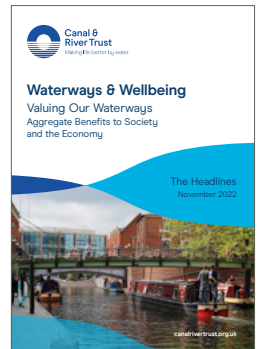
Les Etheridge, Chair of FBW, said: "The Government must take heed of CRT's warnings. Otherwise, these proposed cuts will result in the closure of waterways, harming businesses and placing communities at risk as the condition of CRT's waterways inevitably deteriorates."

Following the Government's announcement, Canal and River Trust (CRT), are issuing a stark warning that a reduction in grant funding of over £300 million, in real terms, will threaten the future of the nation's historic canals, leading to their decline and to the eventual closure of some parts of the network.

Richard Parry, chief executive of the Canal and River Trust stated that whilst welcoming the Government's commitment to providing long term support to such a critical national network but warned that, unless a more realistic funding settlement is secured, it will turn the clock back on one of the nation's greatest heritage regeneration stories and lead to the loss of substantial public benefits.

Defra's written statement is available to view at: questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2023-07-10/hcws924

CRT media release
canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/news/government-funding-cuts-put-future-of-nations-historic-canals-at-risk



Valuing Our Waterways
(November 2022)
published by CRT
/ Simerica-Jacobs,
with all methodology
aligning with 2022 HM
Treasury Green Book
valuation techniques
canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/valuing-our-waterways

Making the waterways more accessible for all

We look at the launch of The Accessible Waterways Association



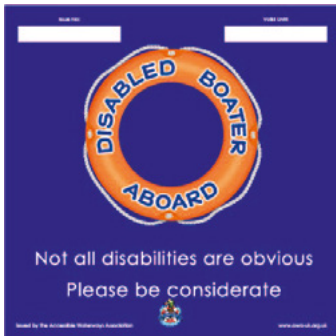
More information can be found at www.awa-uk.org.uk.

AWA conference with CRT

On 2 December 2023 we are holding a 1 day conference in association with CRT to celebrate the International Day of People with Disabilities.

Disabled Boater Forum

Next virtual meeting Wednesday 16 August 2023 6—8pm, contact dan.noakes@canalrivertrust.org for an invite.



The Accessible Waterways Association (AWA) was 'launched' at the Canalway Cavalcade at Little Venice over the Mayday bank holiday weekend this year after securing grant funding from UnLtd, to "build lasting social impact".

The aims of AWA are:

- to be a hub of information, support and assistance to disabled people who want to enjoy the canals and rivers.
- to work with the various waterways authorities (Canal and River Trust (CRT), Environment Agency (EA), Broads Authority and many others) and other organisations to do whatever is possible to make the UK's network of canals and rivers, and their surrounding environments, accessible for everyone.
- to be the administering body of the Boaters' Blue Card Scheme.
- to offer consultancy services to ensure that accessibility needs are fully and properly considered when new build, remedial or upgrading works are carried out on the waterways.

AWA is a totally independent organisation from any of the waterways authorities.

Much of the navigable network was built over 200 years ago when the needs of disabled people were simply not a consideration. Indeed, they were designed and developed

for the transport of industrial goods. It was a very tough environment, worked by equally tough fit healthy people and horses. Many of the structures and buildings are listed or subject to conservation orders. That heritage presents challenges to adaptation and development. However, AWA believes that it is high time for history to give way to progress, but in such a way as to retain and enhance that precious heritage so that everybody can enjoy and appreciate it equally. There is a big need to find ways to work within, around and in sympathy with that heritage instead of dismissing adaptations as impossible because of its constraints.

AWA's founder, Tracey Clarke, is registered as Severely Vision Impaired and lives afloat with husband, Tim (who has a hearing impairment) and two furry crew members; Loki, Tracey's yellow Labrador Guide Dog, and Ozzie, Tim's Pug mix who is in training to be his hearing assistance dog. Tracey says: "Living with an impairment among such a sociable community as that of the boating world, inevitably leads to discovery of ever more people who are also in a similar situation. This accumulation of knowledge led me to set up a series of meetings and then a Facebook group called IWAF (Inland Waterways Accessibility Forum)". The aim of IWAF is to be a forum for discussion among fellow disabled people who want to enjoy the waterways in any way, but who face extra challenges because of disability.

This in turn led to the setting up of regular online meetings, every two months, between disabled boaters and relevant members of CRT staff. These meetings have become popular and constructive, leading to some progressive action. This includes the designing of some new mooring bollards that will be installed by the Trust at strategic sites around the network, where designated 'accessible moorings' will be created. Out of these meetings has also come the idea of a Boaters' Blue Card scheme. This has led to the birth of AWA, initially to be the administrative body for the Blue Card Scheme. From there, the concept of the organisation has developed and will no doubt continue to evolve.

Tracey adds: "AWA would also like to acknowledge the support we are receiving from the Canal & River Trust (CRT) and their generous offer in funding the initial print run of the Boaters' Blue Cards."

The Boaters' Blue Cards are 15cm square durable cards for optional display in the windows either side of a boat. They will serve to inform passers-by (both on other boats and on the towpath) that there is a person aboard who may perhaps be less aware of, or less able to react to approaching hazards etc. It has a clear, neutral logo that simply states: 'Disabled Boater Aboard'. It does not identify the person's impairment. That is entirely up to the individual if they wish to display an additional card or sticker that shows an emblem appropriate to them. This card will not (yet) grant any entitlement to mooring concessions or any other benefits. It will, however, serve to tell others that there is a person aboard who might appreciate a little extra consideration and/or assistance. This would include informing lock keepers and other staff of the various waterways agencies that the bearer



might need or be glad of some extra assistance in working the locks or other structures.

Membership of AWA is open to all who live with disabilities, impairments, or accessibility issues, and who want to enjoy the Inland Waterways and their surrounding environments. This may be as a boater (either living aboard or holidaying), a hire-boat owner, an angler, a cyclist, a gongoozler, a walker/wheeler on the towpaths, or a volunteer or staff member of the many waterways authorities. Members will get a membership card which will entitle the bearer to some benefits and discounts. These will be added to and announced in the Members Only section of the website as we continue to negotiate affiliations with shops, pubs, restaurants, chandleries, marinas, and other organisations.

There is also an option for Corporate Membership, which is open to businesses and other organisations and will include a comprehensive directory entry to publicise the services they offer. This can be enhanced by subscribing at different levels.

Relaxing aboard the Madam Butterfly, run by Accessible Boating accessibleboating.org.uk

Activists float Energy Grant petition to Downing Street

Energy Bills Support Scheme report by the National Barge Travellers Association



Kim Marshall hands in the petition at the door of number 10

Photo: NBTA

A group of boater activists, who led a flotilla of boats from Braunston to London on a 15 day journey south, have handed a petition with 5,490 signatures into 10 Downing Street.

The petition, started by the National Barge Travellers Association (NBTA) calls on the government to reverse their exclusion of itinerant boat dwellers and others without a fixed address from receiving the £400 Government Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS) and £200 Alternative Fuels grants, which the

Government promised to “every household” in the UK last May.

The boats moored up in Paddington Basin around 1pm on Saturday June 10th, and were greeted by a group of supportive boaters in the area, many of whom have also been campaigning for the Government to follow through on their promise to provide financial support during the spiralling cost-of-living and fuel crises in the UK.

On Monday 19th June at 1.30pm, the boaters—led by flotilla organiser and retired teacher, Anita Weedy—handed in their petition to 10 Downing Street, over a year after the UK government pledged to support

‘every household’ with their energy bills. Despite this pledge, itinerant boaters and hundreds of others without fixed addresses have received nothing, whilst second home owners have been handed hundreds of millions of taxpayers pounds after the government automatically paid multiple Energy Bills Support Scheme to them, even though each household is only entitled to receive the grant once.

The flotilla was organised by Anita Weedy, a retired teacher who lives aboard her electric narrowboat, Watt Way, and navigates widely around the UK’s canal system as an itinerant boater. Anita says:

“Our treatment by the government smacks of unfairness, pure and simple. The country was told that every household would receive support, and that nobody would be left out in the cold—yet that’s turned out to be utter nonsense. Tens of thousands of us have been excluded for completely arbitrary reasons, with some facing an absolutely brutal winter with no support as a result.

I’m a contributing member of this country. I’ve worked hard and paid my taxes and yet now, because of the fact I’ve chosen to live on a boat, suddenly I don’t count as a household any more? I’m sick of being lied to and messed around by this government, and I fully intend to hold them to the promises that they’ve made.”

The increased cost of living has placed an immense financial burden

on many people in the country. Many itinerant boaters are on low incomes or pensions, with 48% earning less than £20k per year. With rampant inflation, stagnating wages and the cost of fuel and food skyrocketing, many are struggling to make ends meet. Most itinerant boaters—who move their boats around Britain’s inland waterways without a permanent ‘home mooring’, changing location roughly every 14 days—rely on diesel engines to navigate, bottled LPG gas to cook and heat water, and other forms of fuel to heat and light their boats. Although winter is over, many boaters have found their finances dramatically impacted by the cost of fuel to stay warm during the cold months—and with no government assistance, some are still struggling to recover.

The flotilla and petition hand-in were supported by the NBTA, who have been campaigning for the in-

clusion of itinerant and off-grid communities since the grants were first announced in May last year. tNBTA Chair Pamela Smith said:

“The fact that boaters have travelled halfway across the country to deliver this petition shows the strength of feeling that continues to animate our community on this issue. The government may think that by ignoring us we’ll simply go away, but they’re wrong.

Not only has the failure to include boaters and others without a fixed address led to immense hardship this winter gone, it’s contributed to a real and enduring loss of boaters’ trust in the government to deliver for them on a basic level. Boaters will continue to make their anger about this rank unfairness known to their representatives, whether via legal proceedings, continuing to lobby their MPs or when they next have the opportunity to go to the polls”.



NABO is still trying to obtain justice for boaters

Peter Braybook wrote to the Rt Hon Victoria Prentis KC MP, Attorney General

Dear Mrs Prentis,

Energy Support Grant Discrimination

I wrote you the letter below on 23 March 2023. I have not received a reply to date. The

discrimination continues. Applications for the Energy Support Scheme closed at the end of May and many households who happen to be boats have not received a penny on support for their increasing bills. Please do what you can to advise the relevant minister to act lawfully.

Yours faithfully, Peter Braybrook

Dear Mrs Prentis,

Energy Support Grant Discrimination

As Attorney General, I understand it is your role to provide impartial legal advice to the ministers of HM Government.

Currently the Department of Energy and Net Zero are responsible for the current energy bills support schemes. These are, I understood, intended to support those who are living off-grid i.e. not connected to the main electricity and gas

network. There are many who live on boats in such a situation. Those who have a fixed residential mooring can apply for the grant but those who do not but cruise the waterways continually are excluded. These include retired folk on fixed incomes, coal boat operators, haulage and towage contractors and waterways chaplains as well as those who have chosen an itinerant lifestyle as “bargee travellers”. This has been covered by the press with articles in The Guardian and Observer

under the headline “Left out in the cold: the Boaters locked out of fuel support”. They are locked out because the website for the Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP) reads “Who cannot apply... You cannot apply if you live: ...on a boat as a continuous cruiser” (currently under review).

I believe that this discrimination against one part of the boating community arises from a misconception that that the Canal and River Trust (CRT) licence “continuous cruisers” differently to other boats. This is not in fact the case as s17 (c) of the 1995 British Waterways Act, which deals with the licensing of boats on CRT waters, provides this reason for CRT to refuse a license:

(c) either—

(i) the Board are satisfied that a mooring or other place where the vessel can reasonably be kept and may lawfully be left will be available for the vessel, whether on an inland waterway or elsewhere; or
(ii) the applicant for the relevant consent satisfies the Board that the vessel to which the application relates will be used bona fide

for navigation throughout the period for which the consent is valid without remaining continuously in any one place for more than 14 days or such longer period as is reasonable in the circumstances.

The licence to use the boat on Canal and River Trust's waters is exactly the same for those with moorings and those without. It is only reasons for refusal that differ.

Those people who live on boats are in as much need of support as any other household in the country.

Please advise the Secretary of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy that the continued exclusion of these folk from the support that they need (AFP) is unlawful and arises from mis-interpretation of the Statute. I am hopeful that this will enable the current review of the issue to be completed quickly so that these households will get their entitlement before the Local Authorities responsible for this “discretionary” payment run out of money.

Yours faithfully, Peter Braybrook

B B C RADIO WILTSHIRE

The fight continued on radio....

An informative interview with Anne Hussar on BBC Radio Wiltshire, it starts at 2:07.57.

Ben Prater - Boaters in Devizes challenge exclusion from the Energy Bill Support Scheme - BBC Sounds

Canal dwellers tell local MP Danny Kruger that the government must be held to account

www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0frf8zt

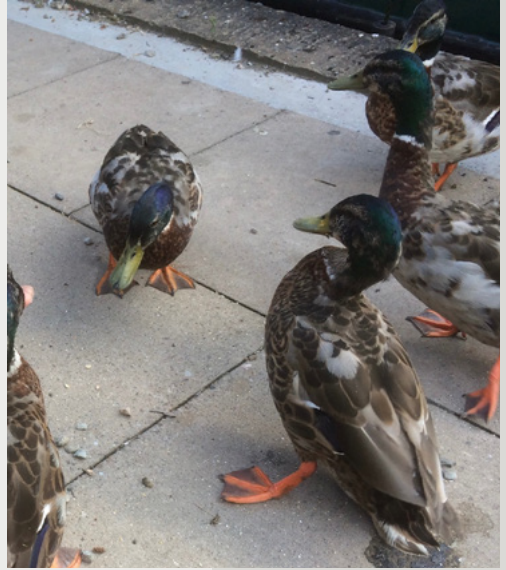
The Boater Bit

By Rod Chaytor®

Looking for lunch, the boater came
 To choose from fish or fowl or game
 At the fishmonger's where, ill luck,
 Her eye did light upon wild duck.
 Then took she home the readied bird
 To cook in orange sauce, preferred
 Arrangement of the offering,
 And so prepared leg, breast and wing.

Unseen, upon the water's edge
 Among the reeds and trees and sedge
 A webbed rebellion now did break
 Led by a large and angry drake
 Who called on coots and cousins ruddy
 To gather there for vengeance bloody
 Because his sister, bird aquatic,
 Had, in gravy aromatic,
 Been served up like some poor sinner
 As main course of the boater's dinner.
 So they set to with beak and bill
 Upon the stem and stern to drill
 While ugly ducklings now did peck
 Along the hull and down the deck.

Inside, the boater, all replete,
 Lay down her head, put up her feet,
 Unknowing of the angry blast
 Occasioned by her duck repast
 And that is how she came unstuck –
 The first recorded death by duck –
 The bow went down, the ropes did slack
 And died she from a quack attack.



The Council meeting



Revenge is sweet

The Calor problem

Calor Gas announced earlier this year that they were withdrawing from the small size 4.5kg butane and 3.9kg propane bottle market.



After pressure from the Boat Safety Scheme, backed by user committee pressure, Calor backtracked a small amount, agreeing to refill these small bottles as long as the existing fleet of bottles remains serviceable.

Also, they will only be available at distribution centres, i.e., not at marinas. You can see the announcement on the NABO web site.

We regard this proposal as useless, and our advice remains that if you can source an alternative to Calor that can fit your boat, and you can obtain it, you should go for it. We have heard that BandQ do have Flogas bottles in the small sizes for new hire. If you can fit the larger dumpy Calor BBQ gas bottle in a locker, this might also be a good solution. We have heard from the South coast of some success in getting 4.5kg butane bottles from distribution centres, but this is hit and miss. You cannot expect to get these bottles across the waterfront on the inland waterways.

We hear reports of, and see on the cut, boaters using 19kg bottles on deck outside the lockers. We also hear of boaters fitting 6kg bottles horizontally into a locker. Please please don't try these types of unconventional supply arrangements, which are not allowed under the BSS examination, and are uniquely dangerous. They just put other boaters

and the general public at risk. If it is clear that rules have been broken and deliberate deceit employed to pass the BSS examination and there is an accident and injury, you can expect to go to court. It is just the same as using a mobile phone when driving, selfish.

We do consider that further action is needed to put pressure on Calor, to maintain contact with alternative suppliers and consider complaints to the regulatory authorities. We are active with other user groups on both inland and coastal waters, to achieve this.

In the meantime, we are aware that Calor are not fully supplying the market for 13kg and 6kg propane bottles. Marinas and trading boats are routinely undersupplied and sell out within days of new stock coming in. Staff are spending a lot of time on the phone answering customers ringing around to find stock. They do not feel supported by Calor.

We are in touch with some of the coastal user groups who are seriously affected with more than 10,000 boats with gas lockers tailored exactly to Calor's sizing.

If Calor are withdrawing from the market we would like Flogas to take on the fleet of bottles and continue the supply, and we would like Calor to give up exclusive rights on the marinas so that alternatives can be supplied at the waterfront. We would also like CRT and EA to take immediate action against boaters storing cylinders inappropriately. They have a duty of care to do so, transgressors are easy to spot. We have all seen examples.

Chewing my GOMS

Ian Hutson has problems with his teeth

No, I'm not talking about a dental problem. Grumpy Old Man Syndrome. I don't suffer from it; I enjoy it. Mind you, in decades past I also enjoyed GYMS, and I'm not referring to those Institutions of Torture wherein sweaty people burn off their breakfasts. I used to be Young and Grumpy.

I keep checking the status of the old Defra Grant renewal. I do this not because of any particular fascination with the machinations of dust-covered bureaucrats or the hard-working, selfless, talented souls of the Canal Company who deal with them on our behalf and with the good of the boating masses in mind. No, I do this because I can't believe that there's such argument over fifty-odd millions per annum. Surely it's hundreds of millions, or (US-style) "billions"? Nope, it's a load of monumental fuss over a million quid a week, from an organisation (the "government") that annually disperses some (US-style) "trillions"—using 'disperses' in stead of 'disburses' quite deliberately.

A government apparatus that, I will add, and I am reliably advised, paid £38,600,000 as some sort of "cancellation fee" to a private company, during the feeding frenzy that was the recent global medical... thingy. Just one such example that has come to light of late, documented by the Good Law Project, and here carrying no suggestion of wrongdoing or illegality, for I have no doubt that our civil servants and politicians are beyond reproach in all such matters, but do please search the net for a random arrange-

ment of letters as follows 'good law project ecolog matt hancock' and see for yourselves.

I mention that unfortunate-looking concatenation of fiscal arrangements not because it's one of dozens, hundreds, maybe even thousands such, but to indicate the scale of matters. The Defra grant that gives a fighting chance of keeping two thousand miles of delicious historic waterways and infrastructure in operation for all to enjoy is—and I just checked the number of zeros again—fifty million a year. Hoops to jump through, much gnashing of departmental teeth, wringing of hands, shoulder shrugs and displays of public purses empty of coin.

But "we" managed to find more than two thirds of that annual grant—£38,600,000—as a "thank you, but we won't be doing business with you after all" payment to just one private (although it must be noted, very well-connected) company.

It do make a chap wonder, don't it? Anyone else turning GOMS years old this year? Are you having cake and party hats? A clown?

PS I still doubt myself so can someone else please check—in the matter of the upkeep of two thousand miles of stonking, working, living, breathing history, we are arguing about some fifty millions, not "billions"... my brain-gland keeps rejecting the notion as "utterly ridiculous".



Decaying Shropshire Union Canal Company building and crane, Ellesmere Wharf, on the Llangollen Canal

Sources:

goodlawproject.org/exclusive-whatsapp-messages-reveal-matt-hancock-helped-tory-donor-win-covid-contract-that-cost-the-taxpayer-38m/
canalrivertrust.org.uk/refresh/media/thumbnaill/46785-canal-and-river-trust-annual-report-2021-22.pdf

Rewind

Issue No 4 2008

Howard Anguish reviews NABO News from 15 years ago.

LAND NAVIGATION ISSUES, NEWS, AND VIEWS



Looking back over these short articles since I first started, it is increasingly apparent that some of the pieces recur with similar themes and I have been reflecting on concerns that are familiar in 2023.

In this 2008 edition these subjects come together on this one issue; warning about the ongoing viability of our waterways and these issues seem even more urgent today.

Concerns about the ongoing viability of Waterways in 2008 & beyond.

A Defra held a series of meetings with stakeholders, based on the ongoing viability of waterway users based on three main subjects:

- 1 People Standards—families, age bands, aspirations, BW Performance standards.
- 2 Safety—Minimum BW Safety Standards could include equipment & crew training, together with customer oriented training for BW Staff.
- 3 Performance Standards—BW staff and facilities, including staff training, customers' expectations & waterway reliability to enable trouble free cruising.

B A major revision of the BW Licence Terms & Conditions had been underway, including the need to recognise the needs of Continuous Cruisers. Subjects under discussion included:

- 1 Is a licence system still the best way forward?
- 2 Does Size Matter? Length, beam, number of berths, provision of suitable moorings.
- 3 Commercial Vessels.

4 Continuous Cruisers

5 Discounts

“Just as an aside, after the controversial claims had been made by certain individuals within APCO that there was a 98% support for both charging continuous cruisers £1500 in lieu of a mooring fee, and charging all boats by area, NABO tested this with an online survey. It showed 64% against the first and 55% against the second.” ... “Boating has been booming over recent years but all good things must come to an end. Those of us with long memories and experience to match have seen it all before. Many boat builders went out of business when VAT on luxury goods reached an alltime peak of 25 per cent in 1974, and hire fleets were affected by the recession of the early 1990’s. Will 2008 be the beginning of the end?”

In 2008, this concern led to the formation of “Save our Waterways (SOW), a waterways enthusiasts’ organisation aimed at keeping the waterways alive for everyone. SOW had much support holding meetings, rallies and demonstrations gaining national publicity. Some boaters may remember SOW; indeed, I remember attending many of their meetings and events.

Reading some of the contributions in NABO News, the situation appears to be much more uncertain and worrying than it was in 2008, and if we are not careful, we may well be seeing the end of waterway cruising as we know it. Following the recent lead by NABO & IWA should we be considering a similar effort to attempt to save our waterways before it’s too late?

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

Letters to the Editor

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

A teetering tower of Waterways World

Many of you will know or have heard of Graham Wigley who, for 58 years, has operated out of Gas Street Basin with camping boats & a party boat. He has been trying to retire for quite a few years & finally it has happened. He has sold his boats with the exception of Collingwood so he's still got a base in Gas Street.

As you can imagine he is gradually getting rid of things and a 6ft high pile of Waterways World is a start! He wasn't sure how far they go back but I guess quite a way!

If you are interested in this whether for yourself or a group let me know & I will pass your details to Graham.

boundarypost@gmail.com

Brenda Ward

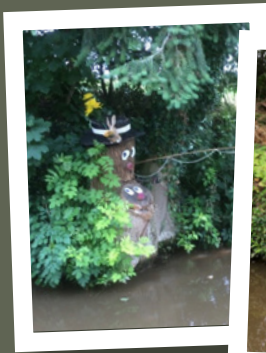
In the unlikely event of Summer...



Oddities of the Canal

Sharon Wells is feeling watched

Stump Man, below Tyrley Locks on the Shroppie, takes different costumes and accessories according to the seasons and festivities. Don't know who his tailor is, but Stump Man appears to have progressed from being a single parent to a pipe-smoking Royalist, and his fishing tackle has become very serious!



2017



2019



2021



2023

Photos: Sharon Wells

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