

# ALERT

A W C C N E W S L E T T E R

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT STAFFORD BOAT CLUB.



The well attended meeting commenced with a warm welcome from the Commodore of Stafford Boat Club, John Mountford, who described how the Club had built up from nothing over the years by the efforts of it's members and was justly proud of what they had achieved.

The Association's President Geoff Ashton then formally opened the meeting. Chairman Paul le Blique gave his report (reproduced on page 2) then handed back to Geoff who presented the accounts. The reports from the other officers and those from the regions were then presented and are reproduced elsewhere in this issue of ALERT. The next item on the agenda was the election of officers and the President enquired if there were any members wishing to stand for election to any of the NEC posts. There being none, the existing officers were re-elected en-bloc. The position of National Treasurer was accepted by Midlands Region Treasurer, Graham Churton. Ken Bearpark had regrettably had to resign the Treasurer's position because of family pressures and his wife Heather had resigned as ALERT Editor. Geoff thanked them both for their past efforts. The vacant Editor's position was accepted by Graeme Bridge from the Bridgewater Motor Boat Club. With the formalities completed the delegates enjoyed an excellent lunch provided by the ladies of Stafford Boat Club.

The second half of the meeting was a presentation by Lynne Berry and Ruth Ruderham on the Canal & River Trust, a report of that presentation is given on page 12. There followed a Question and Answer session with some members concerned about the way the election for boater representation had resulted in a concentration of members from one large organisation which had a much larger remit than simply canal boating. The response was that the Trust must represent all aspects of the canals and rivers and that there would be opportunities to elect other members to the Trust at future elections.



**Graham Myatt**

*The BLUEBELL TROPHY was awarded to the retiring Midland Region Chairman in recognition of the outstanding service given to the Association over many years. Graham is however still going to be around as he takes up the role of Region Vice Chairman & Quartermaster In presenting the trophy National President, Geoff Ashton thanked Graham for all his efforts on behalf of the Association*

## NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



### National Chairmans Report to AGM 2012

Looking back over the past year, I realise just how much time and effort we have spent supporting the move to CRT through consultations and user group meetings. It has been time well spent, as the terms of transfer are far better than we could have expected. The Transition Trustees, BW and the DEFRA Team are to be applauded for their success in giving CRT the best possible start. AWCC clubs are recognised as an integral part of the waterway community and we are assured that BW lease

agreements will be secure following their transfer to CRT.

The four members of Council elected to represent private boaters should be congratulated on their success, as theirs will be the responsibility to ensure that the CRT properly supports all private boaters, ranging from the occasional user to those who choose our waterways as their legal home. We should encourage our four Members of Council in this challenging task as their success or failure will be judged by a nation-wide boating community.

CRT is the future of our waterways and we in AWCC should continue to promote and support its cause as the only solution to years of under funding and restrictions imposed on BW.

I believe that CRT should adopt EA rivers in three years time, ensuring they too benefit from trust status to create a joined-up inland waterway system. An additional funding package will be required to meet the liabilities that EA Waters bring with them.

It was encouraging to see so many members at the AGM and I would like to acknowledge the time and work that the NEC and Regional Committees have spent supporting the association throughout the last twelve months,

Last but by no means least; I would like to offer our thanks the members of Stafford Boat Club for their hospitality and support

Best wishes,  
Paul

## REGIONAL CHAIRMEN'S REPORTS

### London Region



At the February regional A.G.M. the committee were elected en bloc however we need a new secretary.

Clubs reported that moorings were full and they were thriving.

#### Consultations

Representatives from our clubs have attended British Waterways, A.T.Y.C., London Waterways Commission and other meetings during the year.

#### London Waterways Commission

The- proposed river-walk is unlikely to be ready for the

diamond jubilee or the Olympic Games.

Cross-rail tunnel sections are to be manufactured near my club at Old Oak Common however the ready mixed concrete will be supplied by the Kings Cross Depot near S.P.C.C. these materials unfortunately are not to be moved on the canals, another missed opportunity which will lead to thousands of unnecessary lorry movements.

D.P. Ports who are building the massive London Gateway Terminal on the Shell-Haven site, plan to build a small depot at Greenford on the Grand Union and transfer

the freight between by water.

#### The Big Waterways Cleanup campaign

This was launched early in February Theo Thomas from Thames 21 is to coordinate the volunteers this has been launched prior to the games for obvious reasons but it is hoped the legacy will last indefinitely.

#### British Waterways

In my 2009 report I spoke about the proposed waterside developments for Brentford.

After many meetings the unique warehouse structure has been saved.

The new properties are laid out with spaces from the Land and the water. British Waterways should have negotiated more effectively on our

# REGIONAL CHAIRMEN'S REPORTS

## (London Region Continued)

behalf during the negotiations with the security agencies to keep Commercial Road Lock open before and during the Olympic Games, this lock is nearly 2 miles from the Olympic site so there very little risk from vessels using the lock.

B.W. however have bent over backwards to offer concessions to Continuous Moorers

Who have not met their licence terms and block the visitor moorings and lock landings with their boats. In the London area during the last three years.

At the forthcoming user group I will ask why neither A.W.C.C. or I.W.A. were invited to this meeting on 19th January 2012 where the concessions to these moorers were discussed and agreed.

### Olympic Restrictions

To find out more go to B.W. website Sarah Emmings is the Olympic coordinator.

### Moorings and Track.

The contractors are on site and the Basingstoke Canal is once more brought back from the brink of closure.

Two years ago the Environment Agency decided after a lot protest not to sell their lockside cottages however they have now decided to rent them out so experienced people will not be on hand in an emergency.

British Waterways deserve credit for pursuing unlicensed craft around our region.

Moorings in the region are very difficult to find clubs have a few spaces.

### Social Events.

We supported the Basingstoke with a boat trip and lunch on board the John Pinkerton we then

travelled to Byfleet Boat Club for a BBQ and games all very enjoyable.

Our autumn social was hosted by Hillingdon Canal Club another good event.

The annual gathering of boats was again held at our favourite venue Willowtree Park numbers were down a bit.

### Lastly

My thanks to Terry Aris my vice chairman who has done an enormous amount of work in facilitating the AWCC joining the RYA as affiliate member. Terry all so serves on the inland waterways panel. My thanks also go to my committee and regional representatives for their loyal support.

### Trevor Gillam

## Midland Region



The Midlands Region continued with 28 clubs as we did not recruit the expected additional club. On average 18 clubs are represented at the 4 meetings p.a. In line with the new constitution, Howard Smith was elected as Midlands President in May. At our AGM on 3<sup>rd</sup> March Ian Wood was elected as Chairman. Ian is a second generation boater and is a member of Black Buoy C.C. We also now have someone in place in all the committee roles.

New Treasurer Graham Churton seems to have brought us good fortune as

financially, it was the most successful year for some time. Actually, this was mainly due to expenses being minimal due to the use of e-mail. This has only been achieved with the co-operation of all Midlands clubs and the persistence of Erica Martin, our Secretary.

Our region covers three BW areas – East Midlands, West Midlands and Central Shires. We managed to get representatives to the User-group meetings in all three areas. I would like to thank those who attended on our behalf and report back. In my first AGM report four years ago I said *“as in other regions, Midland boaters are finding costs increasing at an unprecedented rate – boats, licences, moorings, fuel”*. While boat and mooring prices might be more competitive, the cost of licences and fuel continue to rise. It could have been worse for those who take out 3 and 6 month licences had we not successfully objected to last year's proposed increases. These high costs combined with the economic situation are limiting younger people coming into boating. The average age of club members is rising all the time. This cannot go on forever. Recruitment of young people is vital to the future success of the clubs. I just wish I knew how to do it.

The move to C&RT is now well advanced (although delayed) with the council election closed last week. The



# REGIONAL CHAIRMEN'S REPORTS

## (Midland Region Continued)

West Midlands partnership has been up and running for some time. I have not yet met a boater who knows what they are doing. Not surprising as they are operating in a vacuum as the charity does not yet exist. When the charity is up and running my feeling is that the big push for support will be aimed at the general public not at the boaters who are captive. I believe it is vital that we get as many boaters involved as possible so that we are not swamped.

Lastly I would like to thank the officers, representatives, those who help in other ways and members for their support during the year and all those locally and nationally who have supported me during my four years as Midlands Region Chairman.

**Graham Myatt**  
(Vice-chairman)

## North East Region



Our previous Chairman, Bob Mennell had, unfortunately, to retire from the position under strict doctor's orders. It was a great pity as Bob was really enjoying the work. We all wish him better health for the future and that he gets at least some pleasure in his enforced inactivity.

When Bob first took over the chairmanship, and began chasing up BW regarding various local

issues, it would appear he encountered great problems actually being able to get hold of some one to talk to. But as time went on, and no doubt as he became better known, this problem decreased considerably.

I am not going to mention any specific incidents, but several of the local problems were, and still are, over safety issues. BW still seems to be very slow to investigate and act on these issues, even after there had been an accident.

Not only is the branch short of a chairman, but at present we do not have a secretary either.

The previous incumbent to this position also had to retire from the job. Word has been sent out to all the clubs asking for volunteers for both of the vacancies, but as yet, no response. This is hardly surprising, as most clubs it seems, even have difficulty in recruiting an AWCC rep. Many entries in the Minutes of Meetings, under the heading "Club Reports" have "No Report" against them. Two local area clubs have pulled out of the AWCC altogether, over the last two years.

I can only hope that as the warmer weather encroaches upon us, and boaters cast off their winter woollies, at least a couple of people will come forward and fill both the empty berths on the committee.

**Terry Brown**

## North West Region



All NW Regional meetings were well attended, All BW customer forums attended by NW AWCC Delegates.

June 2011 National Executive Council meeting was held at the

Watch House Club, with an impressive attendance of all National Officers.

### **Ribble Link.**

After discussions between NW Region and British Waterways regarding boaters concerns about the 2 ft draft restrictions on boats passing the Ribble Link, BW did depth soundings on the Link, and have now agreed a draft max of 2 ft 9 in, ( or whatever that is in metric).

Internet booking not yet available, boaters wishing to book passage through the link should contact BW for an information pack. More information on the BW Website.

### **Bramble Cutting**

Broken Cross Club are been working with BW on plans to improve and extend the Visitor Moorings at Bramble Cutting, on the Trent and Mersey Canal near Middlewich. Work will be done by Volunteers with BW help. These moorings were originally established by Broken Cross Club, are popular with cruising boaters.

Update at AGM

### **River Weaver**

AWCC NW Region secretary, Nick Culliford has been attending meetings and liaising with BW regarding the new development at Northwich on the River Weaver. Visiting boaters have expressed concerns about the lack of visitor moorings on the Weaver, and plans for the new development seem not to improve the visitor mooring situation.

Vale Royal Barge Lock on the River Weaver has reopened for boat passage, (within normal operating hours), after a lengthy

# REGIONAL CHAIRMEN'S REPORTS

## (North West Continued)

refurbishment. Nick also answered queries from BW's Sally Ash about mooring problems on the Shropshire Canal at Audlem.

No Federation of Bridgewater Clubs Rally this year, but a boat gathering is planned over weekend May 28<sup>th</sup> at Dunham Massey on the Bridgewater Canal

National Chair, Paul Le Blique and Vice Chair, Ann Banks visit the AWC NW Region AGM on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2012. This meeting will also be attended by a Police Officer from the Anti-Terrorist Unit to explain how security will affect boaters, particularly in relation to the Olympic Games, where canals pass close to Olympic Venues.

**Bryan Pollard**

## South East Region



We have 13 clubs in our region. 7 clubs send regular representatives to our regional meetings.

**Thrupp Canal Cruising Club.** Thrupp have now begun training with the handheld checking equipment for the volunteer Canal Rangers posts. Thrupp has said the system should be up and running by the end of April.

**Drought Conditions.** Most of the South-East area is in Drought Conditions. Water is being taken from the River Nene above Northampton, the non navigation part, for Pitsford Reservoir. Lower down the river EA will soon start taking water from the top up Grafton Water. The Canal is very

short of water at Tring Summit. Stoppages are more than likely this summer if heavy rainfall is not fore coming.

**Crick Boat Show.** Volunteers are once again asked for to help with Crick Show. Volunteers are required to help put the stand up 1<sup>st</sup>. June, take it down 5<sup>th</sup>. June and help on the stall the other days. Unfortunately our river clubs will be involved with the A.N.R.C. Rally at Peterborough Yacht Club hence the South-East Region will be short of volunteers. Please give your names to Paul Le Blique.

**Northampton Marina.** Northampton Marina is now open with all the usual facilities. Water and Elsan emptying are free but Pump out will cost between £8 and £14. Tokens will be required for this. Because of this Midsummer Meadows Sanitary Station has been closed.

**Nene 250.** Nene 250, celebrating the River Nene being open to navigation for 250 years, the celebrations went off very well last August. 16 boats from our river clubs turned up for the boat parade. The whole day in Becketts Park was well supported and enjoyed by everyone.

**Northampton Boat Club.** Northampton Boat Club celebrated their first 100 years last August and is producing a book of their 100 year history.

**Club News.** There is good communication between most of the clubs, reporting on their events and news.

**Ralph Sullivan  
(on behalf of John Brown)**

## South & West Region



As you will all know this region is only very recently reformed, having been held in abeyance for the past few years. Consequently there is little to report.

We held a meeting in January, when Paul came along and talked to representatives from the current three clubs plus a possible new boat club. All were very keen to take things forward. Subsequently I have met with David Butcher and Wendy Beaumont and we have agreed to hold our first meeting in April inviting other Clubs that we hope will join us in the future.

However, I have continued to attend BW local Canal User Forum Meetings, although these have only been called a couple of times a year. Most of the content of those meetings has related to low water levels and overstaying on moorings. The Local Manager, Mark Stephens, always reports on work in progress and work in the pipeline. Once again this winter there have been closures for lock gate replacement with an open day being held at Crofton for the public to see a gate actually been replaced. This was incredibly well supported.

I have been attending, for the past eighteen months, the Local Mooring Stake-holders Group although this group has had various titles over the period of time. The meetings have been rather overwhelmed by the Unaffiliated Boaters and the National Bargee

# REGIONAL CHAIRMEN'S REPORTS

Travellers Association from day one.

## (South West Continued)

Last June the Project Leader, Damian Kemp, became ill and no meetings were held until October which Mark Stephens chaired. It was expected that another meeting would be forthcoming but in November we were all notified that there would be no further meetings of the group; in December Sally Ash, Damian Kemp and BW Technical Teams would consolidate proposals put forward by the group. Sally and Damian would then brief

Mark Stephens and BW of the outcome of this consolidation. Between January and May 2012 it is to be decided whether to endorse what had been agreed, with subsequent implementation – assuming BW/CRT agree. All along the group were saying implementation of the current law would help keep boats moving but there are not sufficient enforcement officers to be able to carry this out and there is no guarantee that this will be improved once CRT comes into force. Wiltshire County Council has invited people living on board within the County to a

meeting to be held at the end of February in Devizes. The focus of the project is to:

>understand the key issues facing live aboard boaters

>identify good practice and share learning to influence the delivery of key public services for the future

>tell your stories to a wider audience. One of the members of Pewsey Wharf Boat Club is going to the meeting and I hope to have more to report.

**Pauline King**



**Watch this space...**

- AWCC is 50 in 2014!...SO.....
- We're having a Rally!!
- July 11/12/13<sup>th</sup> @ BBCC, Grand Union Canal, Knowle, West Midlands
- Relax...Reunite...Reminisce...Rock 'n' Roll 'n' Roister the weekend away.....
- Remember the 40<sup>th</sup>? Well you wouldn't want to miss the 50<sup>th</sup>!!



## **Stafford Boat Club Boaters Gathering 8/9/10th June 2012**

£ 15 Including brass plaque

Stalls. Inter-club Games

Musical Entertainment

Bar Food Raffle etc

This event will be supporting-

Stafford Riverway Link Restoration Project.

Applications forms for boat, Caravan or Motor Home available from Stella Machin, Hon Sec

SBC

or download from

[www.staffordboatclub.co.uk](http://www.staffordboatclub.co.uk)

### **BOAT RALLY**

24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> May 2013

**To celebrate 45 years of the Association & The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the re-opening of The Great Northern Basin**

Boat / Caravan Entry: £ 15 for 2 adults  
(Additional Crew members £5 per person)

A plaque will be awarded to all craft entering and attending the Rally

Further enquires to Mrs Christine Baylis

Tel: 01623 201208 Mob: 07889 444190

Application forms for the event can be obtained from the website

<http://erewashcanalpreservationanddevelopmentassoc.org.uk/>

or by emailing: [subscribe.erewash@btinternet.com](mailto:subscribe.erewash@btinternet.com)

## **Federation of Bridgewater Cruising Clubs.**

**Boat Gathering on weekend 26/27th May at Dunham Massey on the Bridgewater Canal.**



# PARLIAMENTARY WATERWAYS GROUP

## Parliamentary Waterways Group Meeting 15 March 2012

Allun Michael was in the chair, with several Members of Parliament in attendance from both Houses, including the current and several former Waterways Ministers.

It being the AGM, Allun Michael stood down as chairman and proposed that in future there should be co-chairs from Government and Opposition. Tony Baldry and Hue Iranca Davies, two former Waterways Ministers were accepted into the posts.

Richard Benyon, the current Minister then gave his statement, which was very similar to the one he had given in Feb on the subject of the financial settlement with the Canal and River Trust (CRT). (A detailed explanation was provided on the AWCC website at the time.) He thanked all concerned, including trustees, officials and user representatives for their co-operation in achieving what was a unique and robust deal. It was the best possible under the circumstances and unique in that it was to last for 15 years and that the principle of trust status retained cross party support. He confirmed that the CRT Order had been placed before Parliament on 29 Feb. It is my understanding that the £25M cash grant has been paid into the pension fund.

He did accept in questioning that CRT would require Government assistance for the foreseeable future. It did prompt a discussion on the estimate for charitable giving, which was set by Lynne Berry as £10M p.a. after 10 years. Tony Hales suggested that there would be a net loss (cost over income) in the first 2 years.

Hue Iranca Davies asked about the backlog of maintenance and another MP asked about executive pay levels. The Minister said that it was important that the BW assets were maintained in good condition for the future. He expected a small increase in D & E class assets in the next 2 years and then a fairly rapid decrease. On salaries, he said that it would be up to the Trustees and Council to regulate. Robin Evans added that money had to be spent as directed (by DEFRA) as part of the setting up conditions, e.g. maintaining existing assets as opposed to new restoration projects.

The length of the Parliamentary process was then examined. The Trustees are planning a formal launch at the end of June to fit between the Queen's Jubilee celebration and the Olympic Games. If this were not met, a rearranged launch in September would be much

less effective, as all the summer canal events would be over. The Chairman undertook to expedite a 40-day process, rather than a 60-day process as currently planned, if at all possible.

At the end of the session, questions from the floor were allowed and I was able to raise the subject of the correspondence between John Burrell and myself on behalf of AWCC. Put simply, CRT is not currently a charity as it is not registered with the Charities Commission, the Articles of Association lodged with Companies House are basic and not designed for a charity and do not mention a Council as part of the governance structure. Hence, the Council members have no powers whatsoever until substantial change is made. This has been discussed with Nigel Johnson of BW and basically, it is a 'roundtoit' problem.

The PWG was a very good place to give it a public airing. There were a largish number of MPs present, including former Waterways Ministers, so with the limited time available, I needed to be brief, but being so I have found in the past often gets better results. Tony Hales had just set out the overall timescales, so I asked for a specific date when the legal matters, Articles of Association, etc, would be resolved. The politically correct answer of 28 March was given by Robin Evans (the same day as the proposed first meeting of the Council), but I was able to cause some amusement by commenting that it was of course the "right" answer. It helped underline the problem. However, he knows as well as the rest of us that he will now be held to it! It is of course an almost impossible target. Another target given by Tony was 20 March for registration as a charity, so we will see how they do with that one. I have made the point to many, including members of the press that producing a draft of the Articles could have been done weeks ago by a volunteer solicitor. I could have even attempted it myself! (But I am not volunteering now!) Note: none of the newly elected Council members were present at the meeting.

David Pearce

### STOP PRESS.

*Robin Evans rose to the challenge given by AWCC at the PWG. The CRT is now a Registered Charity and has the appropriate Articles of Association to support the charity.*



# COMMUNICATIONS

## Report to AGM 2012

As you may be aware, the AWCC has been without a Communications Officer for the past year, which has meant that a number of things that we had hoped to develop have not come to fruition. I hope that in the near future we will have new officers for this post, which will allow us to proceed with developing new services for AWCC Clubs and their members.

## AWCC Website

The website continues to attract a steady stream of visitors, averaging about 320 visitors per month. We suffered a few days outage during the year when the site was hacked by unknown persons and stopped working. With the help of our web hosts, we were able to find how the hacking had occurred, to rectify the problem, re-instate the website, and add a number of additional security features to reduce the likelihood of it happening again. The project to allow individual AWCC member access to the members area has not progressed this year due to lack of a full time Communications Officer. Hopefully this will be progressed in the near future. We would like to put much more information about Club events onto the website. If you have anything you would like to appear on the site, please forward it to the Communications Officer.

## Receiving ALERT Electronically

Last summer, we asked all Clubs whether they were willing and able to accept the AWCC Newsletter as an electronic PDF file, rather than by post. Clubs were asked if they would opt-in to receiving eMail notification that a new version of ALERT was available in the public area of the AWCC website for download and distribution to Club members. Any Club who chose not opt-in would continue to receive ALERT by post.

The idea received positive approval, and we have set up the service using MailChip, a free web-based service which allows us to set up mailing lists, create the notification eMails, and schedule the emails for distribution. Clubs are invited to opt in via a link to the MailChip website, and can opt-out at any time through a link which is included in any notification eMail.

log on to <http://eepurl.com/f2Dk5>

To date, we have 48 Clubs signed up to taking the notification service. We would be pleased if all Clubs would take ALERT in this way, as it represents a significant cost saving and helps us keep AWCC membership fees down. *(especially with the impending hike in postage. Ed)*

As an additional service, we also offered a similar service to any AWCC member to receive the email notification personally. The link to subscribe to the service was published in the last ALERT, and is also available on the AWCC website. We currently have 57 individual subscriptions to this service, which is freely available to all members and interested parties, and we invite any AWCC member to sign up.

## Club Information Database/Handbook

The database has been used extensively this year to get Club information up to date. The databases is updated on a regular basis by Regional and Club secretaries as new information becomes available. If any Club would like to maintain it's own information online, we can arrange to them to be issued with a user name and password.

I would like to remind all Clubs that they have been sent a login and password to the members area on the AWCC website; up to date handbook information is stored as PDF files, including the standard handbook, the loose leaf page versions and the indexes.

## Brian Rich

Secretary and Acting Communications Officer





## TECHNICAL OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE 2012 AGM

### Introduction

1. I apologise for being unable to deliver this report in person.
2. I have concentrated on extracting information from the incident data prepared by the Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) for 2011. When analysed, this data helps BSS plan its activity to address the risks from boats that have been inadequately constructed or maintained and used.
3. It is worth remembering that BSS is concerned only with the start of fire, the spread of fire, explosion and pollution.

### Accuracy of data

4. The data includes incidents relating primarily to boats used on inland waterways. Incidents on coastal boats are recorded where the craft may be of a type that could be used inland, or where the systems aboard may be common to those on inland boats.
5. The data cannot be considered as a complete record of incidents. Many minor incidents are not reported to any agency, or collated and published.
6. The review is based on 237 incidents, 206 on inland waterways and 31 on UK coastal waters.

### Carbon Monoxide (CO)

7. There were no fatalities resulting from CO incidents. CO continues to affect boaters, especially those living aboard. Engine exhaust fumes, heater combustion gases and solid fuel stove flue gases are the main sources of CO incidents.
8. A re-vamped CO leaflet will be released shortly and this will coincide with a new BSS web-portal and the use of social media.

### Fire and explosion

9. There was one fatal fire, on the Medway, which was started deliberately by the victim in an act of self-harm. 2011 has been the first year in at least a decade where no fatalities were recorded on boats inland, or on the coast.
10. A major cause of fires over recent years is deliberate fire setting. BSS records continue to show that around a quarter of fires on inland waterways boats are set deliberately.
11. Fires and explosions related to electrical installations is the highest ever at 17. Batteries are highlighted again; in 2011 there were seven battery explosions on inland boats.
12. Solid fuel stoves (SFS) their installation, maintenance and incorrect use continue to feature across the range of fire and CO incidents. *Already in 2012, five incidents linked to SFS have already been identified.*
13. BSS continues to work with its consultant and the solid fuel industry to promote good practice messages about safe installation and the correct use and maintenance of appliances and flues. BSS will also publish information concerning the choice, storage and use of fuels, as well as the safe disposal of ash and embers.
14. A major cause of fires over recent years is deliberate fire setting. BSS records continue to show that around a quarter of fires on inland waterways boats are set deliberately.

### Safety self-awareness (escape)

15. The risks from being trapped in a burning boat or sinking vessel appear under-appreciated. The locking of one escape route on the outside of the boat while the crew are sleeping on the inside is still commonplace.

### Additional information

16. I'm happy to provide additional information, if it will be of use to members.

Andrew Phasey



## NEW MEMBERS OF N.E.C.



### **Ian Wood     Midland Region Chairman**

I have a 36 foot Springer narrow boat named 'Turritella' mainly bought by my brother who lives in Pretoria, South Africa. We have been keen waterways enthusiasts since childhood when the family first acquired a boat.

Initially at Nantwich soon followed by a move to the BBCC on moving to Solihull due to my father's work. He was a member and commodore there before going back to Nantwich. I rejoined BBCC several years ago and became rep two years ago.

I am 56 years young, divorced with three grown up children and 7 grandchildren. Apart from boating I also enjoy walking and reading, mainly thrillers and detective stories. I cycle to keep fit and have cycled the C2C from Whitehaven to Sunderland, the Cornish Way from Lands End to Bude and the Trans Pennine Trail from Southport to Hornsea all since becoming 50.

### **Graham Churton     National Treasurer**

I retired after a 32 year career in the Royal Navy some years ago. I have been narrow boating since the mid 1970's. I am a Director and Trustee of the Beatrice Charity which was set up to give local (North Staffordshire and South Cheshire) disadvantaged children the opportunity to experience the tranquil surrounds offered by the Caldon Canal. I am also Midlands Region treasurer.



### **Bryan Pollard     North West Region Chairman**



I have been boating for 26 years starting with hire boat holidays, 7 years in a share boat arrangement before having our own boat built in 2000. She is a 53 foot semi-trad named Eden Keel moored on the Trent & Mersey Canal near Anderton.

Having spent 36 years in the telecommunications and cable TV industries I retired in 2004. I am 64 years old, married to Linda and have 2 daughters and 2 grandchildren.

I am a member and former Commodore of Broken Cross Boat Club, and also a member of the Trent & Mersey Canal Society.

I have been AWCC Club Rep for 8 years before becoming Vice Chairman and now Chairman of AWCC North West region.

Currently I am the Broken Cross Boat Club co-ordinator for a BW Volunteer Project at Bramble Cutting on the Trent & Mersey Canal.

# INTER CLUB COMPETITION

## Inter Club Trophy-New rules.

The AWCC wishes to acknowledge and encourage the increasing use of the Internet and computing to produce and distribute Boat Club Magazines and Newsletters. This is more relevant than ever with the recent hike in postal charges, which now outstrips the cost of production.

### THE INTER -CLUB COMPETITION

Best Hard Copy Magazine / Newsletter Award  
 Best Web Based Magazine / Newsletter Award  
 Inter Club Trophy, Best Overall from the above.

There will be two categories with a winner in each category. In declaring the winners the Judge may also declare a "Highly Commended" to any entry they feel deserves recognition. The Judge will then declare one of the two winners as Best Overall. The winner of Best Overall will be asked to judge the following years competition.

## A guide to Judging Criteria

### The Cover

Is the club name, Logo, Burgee on it, has the name got a relevant twist to it. Is it eye catching?  
 Use of Colour.

### Contents page

Editorial List of contributors, info about contents?

Club contact details Location, Post Code, phone numbers, key personnel, web address, e-mail address etc.

### Content

Reflection of the membership, Member contributions, letters, new members.

Pictures / artwork / clipart relevance, quality, balance, context/ understanding.

Boating issues National, Local, is AWCC mentioned?

Reader ease, Page numbering, print quality, types of font used, legibility

Club events, reports on past & notice of future events, trip reports, useful advice.

The X-factor/Wow factor, Things not already covered. Originality, use of humour etc

*Thanks go to Heather Bearpark and Peter Davies of South Pennine Boat Club for assistance in compiling this list.*



## INTER-CLUB TROPHY 2012

The winner of this year's Inter-Club Trophy is **North Cheshire Cruising Club** with their monthly magazine, **The Ditchcrawler**. AWCC Rep, John Suggitt was at the recent AGM to receive the award. Congratulations go to Editor, IAN BRUCE. The runners up this year were Thrupp C.C. and The Boaters Christian Fellowship

The Competition continues with an expanded format, the full details of which can be found opposite. This year's winner, Ian, will judge the entries for the 2013 award. Whichever category you are entering (you may enter both) please send to the editor at the addresses shown on the last page of ALERT.

Please also include Ian if you are sending electronic versions of your mag or newsletter.

[ian@waterwaysongs.co.uk](mailto:ian@waterwaysongs.co.uk)

(Please note any mags / newsletters already sent to Heather will be forwarded to Ian.)



# AGM PRESENTATION .....CANAL & RIVER TRUST



**Canal &  
River Trust**

Following this year's AGM, members were given a presentation by Lynne Berry, OBE, who represents the Transition Trustees followed by Ruth Ruderham, BW Head of Fundraising.

Lynne explained that the Canal & River Trust will be one of the biggest charities in the country. It will also be a **local** charity, therefore it is planned to launch the trust simultaneously at a minimum of 12 locations around the country including major national publicity events at Birmingham and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. Details of these events will be available through all usual waterways media. She hoped that AWCC boat clubs would get involved with events in their area. This could be achieved by forming links between local clubs and local Partnership Boards to share creative ideas.

The date was not yet confirmed as it would depend of how long MP's and the Lords took to pass all stages of the bill but it was hoped to launch towards the end of June.

Lynne thought that what had been achieved in respect of funding agreements and the 15 year commitment to the new Trust was unprecedented in her experience and showed the Government's determination to make the new arrangements work. What was also impressive was that this had all been done in such a short time scale.

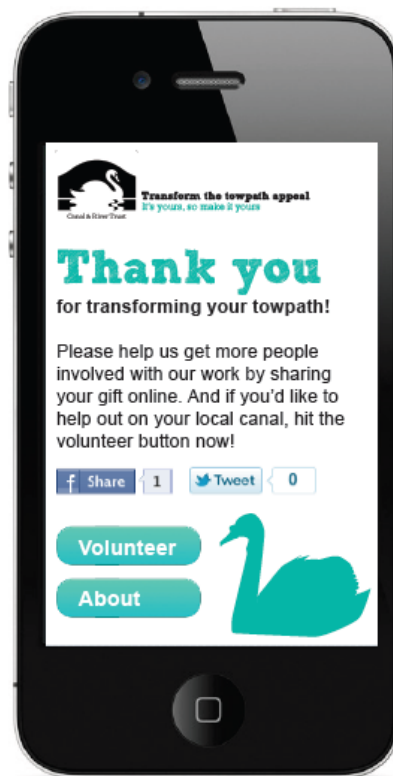
## Launch Day Locations

1. Birmingham (National & WM)
2. Pontcysyllte (Wales & N Wales & Borders)
3. Devizes (K&A)
4. Little Venice (London)
5. Stoke Bruerne (SE)
6. Etruria, Stoke (Central Shires)
7. Nottingham (E Midlands)
8. Liverpool (NW)
9. Leeds (NE)
10. Todmorden (Manchester & Pennines)
11. Gloucester (S. Wales & Severn)
12. Ellesmere Port (Museums)

Ruth Ruderham then explained the plans for public fund raising, which it was estimated, will raise 10% of the income required. Over the first 10 years it was hoped to enroll 100,000 supporters and raise £10 million per annum. This would include a "Friends of Canal & River Trust" scheme. There would be opportunities for

commercial sponsorship and corporate partners, some of whom have already signed up, but Ruth expected the general public would be the major contributors.

Modern technology would be used to allow the public to help in funding schemes that appealed to them. A practical way to do this would be to install display boards on the towpath showing, for example, proposed improvements to the canal and it's towpath and giving a phone number to pledge a donation from a mobile phone. The caller would then be thanked and asked if they would consider becoming a friend of the waterways.



In closing Ruth offered the following ways AWCC members could become involved.

## Fund-raising

- Select local projects and help fundraise for these amongst members and in the community
- Promote Friends scheme to members – and become some of our first Friends yourselves!

## Volunteering

- Consider a community adoption of your local mile stretch.
- Suggest companies with whom you could partner on an adoption.

# EDITORIAL



Welcome to the new look ALERT I do hope it meets with your approval, it is after all your newsletter so please let me know what you think.

Firstly I would like to thank Heather for the splendid job she has done since she took over the role and her kind offers of help to a newbie like me.

I would like to make ALERT reflect those people who volunteer to become involved with AWCC. They are the life blood of the organisation. They are clearly people who are willing to give their time and effort to helping others, often complete strangers, when they are away from home base on their boats. The Reps and Officers of the Association are of a rare breed in this grab it all age, giving up time and effort for no material reward.

I have met several such people on my travels over the years and I would like to feature their stories and tales in these pages over the coming months. I would therefore like to hear from readers about those people who go the extra mile at your particular club.

I took on this role as Editor (after a heart rending plea from Ann Banks) because I have always felt that a national organisation like ours, made up of so many disparate parts needs something to give it an identity and I feel this is ALERT's main purpose. There are now so many sources of information about boating and navigation matters that to just duplicate that information would be pointless. There will still be the regional reports and those from officers who are expert in their fields like the Technical and Parliamentary Affairs Officers, but hopefully it will be mostly about people, and in particular those people you are likely to meet on your travels.



Graeme Bridge ALERT Editor

I will start the ball rolling by introducing myself. I am happily married to my wife Sue and have two grown up children and three Grand Children (13, 7 & 6). I am nudging 65 and I took early retirement from a job in the UK nuclear power industry in 2002 where I worked as a mechanical fitter/technician. I have been a member of the Bridgewater Motor Boat Club based on the Bridgewater Canal at Runcorn since purchasing my boat *Desiderata* in 1988. I have served on the Club's Committee for 21 years, 18 as its Chairman. I have been the BMBC rep to AWCC since 1989 and I was North West Region Chairman for 5 years until 2007 and Vice Chairman for 5 years prior to that. I have been Chairman of the Runcorn Locks Restoration Society since its formation in 2004. Outside of boating I am a keen musician and presently play double bass in a "Glenn Miller" style big band.

For anyone sufficiently interested I am featured in a (very) short BBC film clip on the internet at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/courses/manchester-ship-canal/lessons/manchester-ship-canal> (clip No 8)

I am hoping to produce an alternative "Printer Friendly" version of ALERT as I know that some of you have concerns about the amount of printer ink some of the block colour pages use up when reproducing downloaded copies from the web. To get around the problem I will try to remove these large block colours from the stylised page headings and some of the adverts.

Talking of adverts, if anyone knows of a business that might benefit from advertising within these pages please ask them to get in touch. It will help them and help us by bringing in revenue to help cover production costs. On a similar point, please do make use of and recommend our sponsors services and products if you are able. Some years ago BMBC transferred all its insurance cover to a company advertised in ALERT and made considerable savings.

I have just received a copy of Stoke Boat Clubs magazine Paddle Post and inside there is a report of a typical club work party where the members are getting stuck into clearing and tidying the club grounds in preparation for the coming year. We hold similar events at my boat club and it always amazes me how much work gets done. Everyone working together for a common cause. But I am often asked how we encourage people to come along and get stuck in. I have sometimes heard the comment that it is always the same old faces that do the lions share of the work, so how do you get everyone to do their bit.

That question was asked at one of our club meetings many years ago and we decided to set up a scheme where the efforts of members were

rewarded in a direct way. The club has various assets such as a dry dock and slipway and a couple of working berths, also we have club moorings. We set up a scheme whereby credits were awarded for any work carried out for the club, everything from taking on a Committee post to cleaning the windows and tending the flower beds.

These credits are used when making use of the club facilities mentioned and if members don't have enough credits then they have

to pay a cash equivalent when renewing their membership.

The scheme has now been operating for over 12 years and in that time there has been a vast amount of work carried out and there has never been more than 2 or 3 members that have had to add cash in lieu of credits so we feel the scheme has been quite successful.

I know it won't work for every club as some aren't fortunate enough to have assets and facilities to offer. I would however be very interested to find out how your boat club encourages full involvement from

all of your members. If you let me know I will put together an article in a future issue of ALERT.

PLEASE SEND ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE SUMMER/AUTUMN ISSUE TO THE ADDRESS SHOWN ON THE LAST PAGE. THE DEADLINE FOR THAT ISSUE IS 14th JULY.



Pictured at the presentation from left to right are, Nigel Foster, Lisa's husband. Marcus Hoyle who raised £500 with his own charity night. Lymm C.C. Commodore Phyllis Greenough. John Richardson, National Director for GUCH. Club Members John and Beryl Moulton, ( Lisa's Mum and Dad ) and Glenys Kershaw

### Fund Raiser at Lymm Cruising Club.

L.C.C. based on the Bridgewater Canal presented GUCH (Grown up Congenital Heart Disease) with a cheque for over £2,000 at their March Meeting.

The money was raised for the Commodore's Charity in various ways. The club held a Charity Evening in September and raised over £1,200. The money was raised by holding various raffles throughout the evening including the use of a new Mini car for the day, a rag rug made and donated especially for the event, as well as an auction. The food for the evening was donated so all ticket money went to the charity, also the entertainment was provided free by "The Two of Us".

ticket sales (£500) was added to the Commodore's Charity money. Also various other raffles were held during the year and the money raised by the book club also went to the Charity. Lisa Foster one of Lymm Cruising Club's members sadly died in July after a life long battle with heart disease, she attended many meetings and seminars that GUCH held all around the country and worked tirelessly raising the awareness of GUCH. Lisa is sadly missed by so many at Lymm Cruising Club and that is why the Commodore decided to make GUCH the clubs Charity for 2011. (GUCH also received in the region of £1,800 in memory of Lisa from Lymm Cruising Club members instead of flowers at her funeral).

In December other members organised a talent evening and all



# SNIPPETS

## DIAMOND JUBILEE PAGEANT

Andrew Phasey our Technical Officer will be one of the boats flying the flag for the AWCC at the royal event on the Thames on Sunday the 3rd of June. He will join over a thousand craft that will be mustered for a sail past which will be from Putney Bridge in the West to Tower Bridge and onwards to Canary Wharf in the East. There are expected to be over a million spectators lining the banks and the event will be televised around the world. It has been described as the greatest Thames flotilla for 350 years.

## EMERGENCY NUMBER

Staffordshire Police have launched a Canal Watch scheme [Neighbourhood Watch on water!] Stoke on Trent BC has had a presentation and have signed up. The 112 number should NOT be used in future, as it is not in use.\* 999 for emergencies and for non-emergencies 101 should be used. This automatically connects to the police authority from where the call comes, with an option to request another police area, should you wish. (\*As 112 is a Europe wide standard emergency number this may just be a local Staffordshire police issue.) *Ed.*

## CRICK SHOW

The AWCC will be at the Crick Show from again from 2—5 June 2012.

This is a plea to AWCC club members to spend part of one day manning our stand. You will receive a pass for the show and be able to browse the exhibitions and stands in return for helping to promote the AWCC's work on your behalf.

<http://www.crickboatshow.com/visitorinfo.html>

Please contact [secretary@awcc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@awcc.org.uk)

## SIZE DOES MATTER!

Graham Churton, Rear [Cruising] Commodore of Stoke on Trent Boat Club organised an unusual 'Will it fit' competition as part of their Easter cruise. A spike was set into the towpath on a straight section with no moored boats. Boaters had to put a marker showing the length of his/her boat, then to mark out its beam. Estimates varied widely, with one husband and wife who each had a go, showing 15 foot difference in what they thought. Even the beam estimates were wildly inaccurate, but the most amusing point is that all the men over-estimated the size of their boat, whilst all the ladies underestimated!

## STAFFORD RIVERSWAY

I have to admit to being unfamiliar with this scheme which is looking to connect the old Sow Navigation from Baswich to Stafford Town Centre, a distance of some 1.5 miles. I found my liking for home made jam was helping support the scheme when I was at the AGM at Stafford Boat Club where Stella Machin, SBC Secretary, had jars of Jam and Marmalade for sale, the proceeds from which go to support the restoration scheme. Such is the fame of these preserves that Lynne Berry, our speaker at the event was under orders from B.W.'s Tony Hales to return with fresh supplies to replenish those purchased during his visit the previous year.

## L&L SWING BRIDGE

Malcolm Holbrook tell us that that BW have completed the conversion of the notorious Crabtree swing bridge (32) outside the SLIPWAY Pub at Burscough to electrically operated (it was the bridge that you had to turn 18 or 20 turns with a windlass).

He says, "When I went through at the week-end I was astonished to find that the control panel is on the TOWPATH SIDE. Maybe BW have at last got the message that it is safer for both single-handed boaters and inexperienced crew if the steerer can get to the control panel. The system is not without its faults, the LCD screen is small and the instructions are difficult to read, especially in bright sunlight, and worse still if you do not have your reading glasses with you. There is no protection to the screen and so vandals will have a field day. It should have a BW key lockable stainless steel cover for protection. The other potentially more serious problem is the emergency stop button which is in the middle and not covered. Anybody (including vandals) can push it easily resulting in the bridge locking in the position at the time and requires a B.W. call out to reset it. So to BW, for once, congratulations on at long last heeding the problems of single-handed boaters."

## Donation for Cancer Hospital

Ian and Vera Short recently presented a cheque for over £500 to Clatterbridge, the Wirral based specialist cancer hospital. This was funds raised by the members of the Bridgewater Motor Boat Club during Ian's 12 months term as Commodore. Various raffles and fund raising events all helped boost the grand total. Some of BMBC's members had received treatment at the hospital in the past so it was considered an excellent cause.

## EREWASH SWING BRIDGE.

Readers will recall that in the last issue of ALERT we reported on the Erewash Canal Preservation Development Association which had been involved in refurbishment of the Langley Mill swing bridge. Midland Region Vice Chairman, Howard Smith who has a long association with the Erewash tells me that their project has reached the final of a country wide "Renaissance" Award for the restoration of the bridge.

# OBITUARIES

## Graham Whorton

It was with great sorrow that we heard of the passing of our recently retired Chairman, Graham Whorton on 26<sup>th</sup> January.

A long standing member of the BCN Society, Graham offered his services as Chairman at the end of 2007. He oversaw the celebrations for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society and the 1858 Dudley Canal improvements. In 2009, Graham was instrumental in securing the future of the BW Heritage Working Boats Atlas and Malus by bringing them under the joint management of the BCN Society and the Coombeswood Canal Trust.



Graham continued to involve the Society in many other organisations and activities such as the Birmingham & Black Country Half Marathon, for which the Society provided floating drinks stations along the canalside route and resurrecting the BCN 24 hour challenge. He was also instrumental in ensuring that the Society was the first such organisation to obtain Self Supervising Work Party Status from British Waterways.

Despite bouts of ill health, Graham was active in organising and participating in the Societies Rallies and Work Parties, notably the successful Pelsall Rally of 2011. He also assisted with a new project being launched by the IKON Gallery. All involved in this project, particularly the young people, found him to be extremely helpful and supportive.

All who knew Graham will be aware that they have lost a good friend of the waterways.

Brenda Ward B.C.N.Society

## Maureen Shaw

We have to report the sad loss of one of our Waterways Characters, a lady known by hundreds if not thousands of boaters both Locally and Nationally. Maureen lived at the Wardle Lock Cottage, at the junction of the T&M and the Wardle Canal / Middlewich Branch, many will remember her at the lock side for her advice, help and chats or maybe the odd rollocking if things were not being done correctly.

Memories of her life and the lost lifestyle on the working canals were the subject of talks Maureen gave to Societies and Boat Club meetings around the North West.

As a baby Maureen was abandoned in a Middlewich Pub and adopted by a passing working boatman and his wife. She spent her childhood traveling the canals on their working boat, experiencing first hand a lifestyle now long gone.

Later she married a working boatman, Jack Shaw and they lived aboard their boat until Jack began working for British Waterways and they moved into the lock cottage. Then along came the family of two sons and a daughter.

Her final journey was aboard 1938 Thos Clayton Motor Boat "TAY" (pictured above)

She was a wonderful lady who will be much missed by all who knew her. Donations to Macmillan and the local hospice raised over £500. Bryan Pollard, NW Region Chair, and Harry Davies, NW Region officer attended the funeral on behalf of AWCC.

(My thanks to Bryan Pollard for the use of the picture)





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