



Development pressure is creating a situation where we need to be increasingly vigilant in the regions for local development proposals that threaten our waterways. Marsworth, on The Grand Union was a typical example where proposed development would damage the waterside scene and heritage in a way that many found unacceptable. A late intervention by Waterway Groups, including AWCC, ensured a rethink resulting in a development that met approval by most parties.

There is also a waterborne threat as CRT moves to legalise the activities of traders and other concerns operating on the waterway system. A current example, identified by South and West Region, is the proposed siting of a wide-beam, trade boat on visitor moorings, very close to the lock at Bradford on Avon. This proposal caused much concern by boating organisations and local interests due to a feeling that the mooring site and size of the boat was unsuitable for a busy area of waterway very close to a lock. The NEC was asked to support region by making representation to CRT and the local authority in the hope that the proposal be stopped or modified to create an acceptable development. Letters were sent to the Head of Business Boating at CRT and the Planning Officer at the local Authority suggesting that the development be reconsidered in the light of our reasoned concerns. To our surprise and consternation, CRT raised no objection to the development despite objections from AWCC, other waterway organisations and local residents. We have spoken to the Local Authority Planning Officer to emphasise our objection to the proposals and we await a decision as I write.

The NEC needs the help of members if we are to identify and comment on proposed development, particularly where there is a national interest or concern. This is clearly a time consuming task but CRT has helped by posting a weekly list of received proposals on its website; local authorities offer a similar service. Time for action is often short and although the NEC is able to act quickly, it is obviously an advantage to be warned early in the development process.

We say good bye to Robin Evans as CEO of C&RT and welcome Richard Parry, who has vast experience in rail based transport systems and infrastructure. Poacher turned gamekeeper perhaps. AWCC has written a "farewell" letter to Robin wishing him well for the future and will similarly welcome Richard in the fullness of time. Robin's letter of response is reproduced below. *Paul*



Robin Evans
Chief Executive

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30th May 2013

Paul LeBlisque
Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs
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Dear Paul

Thank you so much for your 'farewell' letter. It was extremely good of you to write and I very much appreciate your kind words.

Leaving the waterways after such a long time will be quite a wrench but it is a good time for me and the right time for the Trust.

Thank you, Paul, David and the AWCC, for all your support and encouragement over the years. I have always been grateful for your level headed reasonable and pragmatic approach – not as common as I would have wished elsewhere!

I know the Trust will continue to rely on your support and enthusiasm and I wish you all well for the future.

With best wishes


Robin Evans
Chief Executive

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NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



REPORT TO N.E.C. MEETING

I write this report, as the scene is one of clear blue skies with temperatures that could be mistaken for summer. How different from this time last year as drought gave way to flood that closed our waterways but ensured a plentiful supply of water for this season's boating. With CRT approaching its first anniversary, it is perhaps a time to reflect on its first year as guardian of our waterways. I believe we should congratulate the trust on achievements to date given the tremendous change of structure, culture and governance it's staff has experienced. I detect a real will and enthusiasm to carry on the good works of BW along with a wish to address those matters where it's predecessor was perhaps less effective. CRT has certainly inherited many burning issues, amongst which are those boaters without a home mooring who wish to ignore the rules and the enforcement of licensing and mooring regulation. CRT Operational Staff and the Local Waterway Partnerships, not always in complete harmony, are addressing both matters. I believe that we must have national agreement on the basic rules of navigation and mooring whilst accepting that some interpretation may be required at local level. I suggest that boaters and other waterway users would not welcome the possibility of region, or waterway specific sets of procedures.

We can expect CRT to begin a clampdown on illegal trading on the waterways along with the creation of new trade moorings. The current proposal at Bradford on Avon illustrates that we must be vigilant to planning applications that involve this type of mooring.

On to other matters:

Northwest Region 40th anniversary: I would like to offer my congratulations to the officers and member clubs of the region on this achievement. I have cruised the superb waterways of the region on two occasions and have always been impressed by the welcome and hospitality so typical of our clubs.

Crick Boat Show: Held over the May Bank Holiday, the show was deemed a great success with visitor numbers of over 23,000 exceeding those of last year by ten percent. The expected invasion of locusts, that being the only remaining curse, did not materialise and the weather was definitely on our side. AWCC occupied its usual pitch with a steady stream of visitors throughout the show. I would like to thank all who gave up their time over the weekend in order that AWCC was well represented. I am sure we all recognise the necessary work involved, particularly with setting-up, taking-down and storage.

EA Waterways, and their future is now part of a joint review by the department, central government and CRT. We are told that a good indication of progress will be available towards the end of this year. A meeting of the NNUF takes place on July 8th, which is in my diary to attend, when there will be an update of the state of play.

CRT User Groups: I am sure you will be aware that national user groups that existed under BW are

no longer in existence having been replaced by the LWP Process and the formal Advisory Groups of which the Navigation Advisory Group, NAG, is one example. BWAF, the senior group under BW, has been replaced by the National Users' Forum, which is a vehicle to inform major waterway users of strategic developments within CRT. NUF has no formal advisory role.

NAG is not related to any waterway organisations and its members are independent: this makes feedback to users difficult particularly as much of the group's work is forming policy. I am not convinced that this is entirely helpful in the wider scope of things and will be seeking agreements as to those parts of the group's work that may be shared with users.

The Heritage Advisory Group, universally seen as a success under BW, was deleted from the CRT menu much to the concern of many members, myself included. My opinion is that heritage touches all things waterway and needs a user-orientated input. We have taken this to Nigel Crowe, CRT Head of Heritage who has committed to re-establish a user orientated forum.

AWCC Speaker AGM 2014, I am pleased to inform you that John Dodwell has agreed to be our guest speaker on the day. Many will know John as very active trustee, giving much time to fostering goodwill amongst the sometimes-conflicting requirements of waterway users. He has always been very pro AWCC.

This leaves me to wish you all a happy and safe summer,

Best wishes, Paul

REGIONAL CHAIRMEN'S REPORTS

LONDON

Thames Tideway Tunnel

I attended one the nine presentations on the new proposed Super Sewer which is to run down the T Thames to Beckton. There is very strong opposition to this project (not in my backyard) there will obviously be local upheaval where the tunnel sites are on land. However raw sewage has been discharged into the tidal Thames for many years, Thames Water have proposed the new sewer to solve the problem. The majority of the construction will be on the Tideway, it is essential that the tunnelling contractors are made to use water transport for all spoil removal and to transport to site all necessary plant and construction materials. If these conditions form part of the contract the land based work will be kept to a minimum.

This will ensure the local residents are not disturbed unnecessarily. I have now received our Planning Inspectorate registration number on behalf off the AWCC for the forthcoming enquiry.

At the Crick Show I spoke to several exhibitors to ask if they would like to advertise in Alert I have forwarded details to G. Bridge and B. Rich.

Community Resolve

These meetings were set up to have a dialogue between the continuous moorers and boaters with a mooring. Myself and several other people at the meeting came away very disappointed. **MOORING POLICY** should be implemented to **NATIONAL POLICY GUIDELINES** with no exceptions.

I have been trying to arrange a meeting with Sorah Ahmed who has recently been employed by C&RT to try and sort out the London Mooring Problem.

Slough Arm

First the promised dredging was cancelled due to a collapsed

embankment now it is closed for urgent bridge repairs.

AWCC Outing to Bristol and Bath this was a very enjoyable trip with many interesting sites to visit.

TREVOR GILLAM

SOUTH & WEST

The Region held a meeting last weekend and I was glad to see so many Clubs represented – I was afraid some could be out on their boats!!

Unfortunately, our Treasurer has had to resign due to the ill health of her husband and our Secretary has just come out of hospital and was unable to attend. We all sent them our best wishes. It really is most unfortunate as they were both willing volunteers. I asked at the meeting for help, if only on a temporary basis. One Club has promised to ask members at their next meeting if anybody is willing to step in and help.

The meeting was held at Burghfield Island Boat Club which meant it was quite a long distance for some to travel, however it was well worthwhile. It was a beautiful day and the Club have a super Club House which was only finished recently.

The main concern of the Region is the implications regarding the Planning Application for a permanent mooring to be sited on Visitor Moorings below Bradford on Avon lock – the busiest lock on the canal. It beggars belief that CRT could have ever agreed to this action. We learned that a form can be downloaded from the CRT web site for an “Operating Proposal – Fixed Trading Location”. This states - *We will use the information provided to assess your proposals for navigational safety, water quality*

and other likely impacts on the waterway. What is interesting is who, in CRT, could possibly have assessed this situation and agreed that it was a sensible proposal. After years of discussion regarding the situation with boats mooring for long periods of time, particularly in “honey spots” and on visitor moorings it makes no sense.

The representative from Canal Taverners Boat Club has found another application for a similar mooring but had missed the cut off date for objections. Brian Rich has agreed to set up a Google Alert to look for Planning Applications affecting the waterways.

There is also a problem at Bradford on Avon with regard to hire boat companies using visitor moorings above and below the lock for their turnarounds. The Boat Club have been corresponding with Susie Mercer regarding this situation.

Erica has asked the question if Planning should be a regular item on the Agenda of the NEC and I personally think this could become a very important item..

I understand there are plans to hold a User Forum this month but I have not yet received any details. Hopefully this area will not be moving to the surgeries but I don't hold out a lot of hope.

PAULINE KING

REGIONAL CHAIRMEN'S REPORTS

NORTHWEST

Trent & Mersey Breach – Dutton

It has been widely reported that the breach was completed and the canal re-opened ahead of schedule on 2nd May. The event was broadcast on the BBC 'One Show' with a typically dumbed down presentation. This opens the way for full cruising in the North West.

Manchester & Pennine Waterway Partnership

On 13th May I was invited to their first annual conference, held at the Lowry Centre. There were several speakers including Walter Menzies, Vince Moran and Tony Hales.

The Partnership's draft manifesto was launched and there were syndicate groups of attendees to provide feedback. I have attached the link to the manifesto. It looks good high level stuff but the trick is to translate the visionary statements into tangible benefits for all the different interest groups who want different priorities.

<http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/library/3262.pdf>

40th Anniversary of AWCC North West Region

On 1st June the Region celebrated its 40th anniversary with a social event at Watch House Cruising Club. The event attracted over 40 people from various boat clubs and honoured guests who had served the Region over the years which included Ian Sutherland and Keith Noble.

Bridgewater Federation Rally

The annual rally was hosted by Worsley Cruising Club over the May Bank Holiday weekend and attracted over 100 boats.

CRT User Groups

The North West was represented at the three meetings that cover the Region.

Maureen Shaw Plaque - Middlewich

On 23rd March the commemorative plaque celebrating the life of Maureen was unveiled opposite her former cottage at Wardle Lock. The plaque includes an interpretation panel telling Maureen's story. AWCC NW made a donation to the plaque appeal.

Bramble Cutting – Volunteer Project

In April Broken Cross Boat Club installed 4 new BBQ stands that they had fabricated over the winter. The site has received critical acclaim from passing boaters. I have a meeting with CRT next week to discuss other items on the plan for the site. The biggest item is to extend the mooring with piling to increase the capacity of the site. Unfortunately it would seem that the HS2 (if it is ever built!) will pass within 500 metres of the site

Carbon Monoxide & Fire Safety Booklets

Over 700 Carbon Monoxide and 350 Fire Safety booklets have been issued to clubs in the Region.

BRYAN POLLARD
Regional Chairman

MIDLANDS

Some points of interest from the May meeting of Midlands Region which as usual was well supported:

A minute's silence was held for John T Sutton of Stoke on Trent Boat Club. The Club and the Sutton family thank everyone who sent messages of condolence. His funeral was well supported, with the majority of those present from the Club and other Midlands Clubs. Alan Eggby was also remembered in the tribute.

Various police forces are now offering a 'canalwatch' service in one form or another. Clubs should contact their local Police to check what is available in their area, if not already in contact.

Stoke on Trent and Atherstone are considering ways of encouraging boaters to stop rather than pass through the area. This suggests that the spending power of visiting boaters is being more widely recognised.

The controls on Ivy House lift bridge on the Caldon Canal have been re-sited on the towpath side, and it is understood that this may happen elsewhere. A great help for single-handed boaters.

There are three User Groups covering Midlands Region. The meetings vary in attendance, representation and content. We continue to be represented at all meetings.

Lynne Cater, Rep for WRG Boat Club, is beginning her third year as a volunteer lock-keeper.

Clubs are encouraged to support the Lapal Canal in its current predicament.

The Erewash CP&DA held its rally over the bank holiday weekend, well supported and much enjoyed. They are in the finals of the Renaissance Awards.

The topic which caused most discussion at the Midlands meeting was that of HS2 and the stance of the NEC. The Region has posted a motion for this agenda, and it is hoped that the meeting will agree the proposal. Midlands are concerned that the officers of AWCC are not as pro-active as the Region believes they should be. Every time there is anything controversial, a plethora of emails circulates as to what should or should not, might or might not be done. AWCC officers have been elected to represent the Regions and act for them, their clubs and their members. Midlands Region urges the NEC officers to be more dynamic and pro-active in getting things done.

IAN WOOD

REGIONAL CHAIRMEN'S REPORTS

NORTH EAST

As reported at the A.G.M., we are now holding our Regional meetings in the week AFTER National meetings, so as to be as informed and up-to-date as possible in reporting to our member clubs.

Our next meeting is next Wednesday, to be held at Hull Bridge Boat Club, one of the 2 clubs which have failed to attend meetings over the past few years. The other absentee club, Bethells Bridge, on the Driffeld Navigation, now has a new secretary who is hoping to attend.

Jean & I have attended the User Group meetings for Manchester & Pennine and for North-West Waterways, and a colleague from South Pennine attended the re-scheduled North-East meeting in April. The Manchester & Pennine meeting was well-informed with detail of all major and minor works undertaken and planned for the region. North-West was not so

informative and tended to concentrate on small local matters.

North-East replied to my question about the long-awaited lock landing replacement at Fairies Hill on the Calder - the February completion promise has now slipped to June, because C & R T has revised the design from a fixed landing to a (more sensible) floating pontoon. We await further news!

Sunken cruisers continue to cause environmental concerns at both Cooper Bridge lock and Battyeford. The Trust is reportedly taking the lengthy legal steps necessary to have the wrecks removed and destroyed.

Staying with the Calder & Hebble Navigation, the major £2m replacement of the Cooper Bridge Weir, originally scheduled for completion in April, is now approaching completion despite several delays caused by flooding during the construction period. The cofferdam on the weir proper has now

been drawn, and the remaining smaller cofferdam protecting construction of the fish pass appears (June 4th.) to be ready for removal. Most of the heavy plant is now off-site.

The failure of the top gates at Shepley Bridge lock in Mirfield closed the navigation in late April, and in so doing prevented boaters from accessing the Huddersfield and the Rochdale canals. C & R T removed the gates and built a new pair commendably quickly at Stanley Ferry workshops, fitting the replacements on May 22nd. to re-open the canal to navigation.

GARTH ROBINSON

SOUTH & EAST

Regretfully the South and East report is unavailable due to computer problems. Ed

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

AWCC Website

The website continues to attract a steady stream of visitors. Since the AGM, the site has received around 1000 visits, and overall the trend seems to be rising, which is good news. However, approximately 70% of the visitors appear to be new, with the remainder returning visitors. This suggests that the site is doing well with the search engines, but isn't getting much returning interest. I hope that a makeover of the website, plus a focus on the upcoming 2014 Golden Jubilee rally may get our membership and other boaters interested.

ALERT Electronically

This continues to work, we think,

satisfactorily. One new subscriber to the personal list since the last meeting. No immediate activity to promote the electronic distribution is planned for this summer.

Club Information Database/ Handbook

An PDF version of the handbook, zipped into a password protected archive, has been forwarded to all Regional Secretaries for distribution to Clubs and their members. The archived version appears to have been quietly received, although we hear some Apple users had some issue with unzipping the archive. A solution is available.

Online access to the database has been discontinued, but all changes that I apply to the master version are being backed up on a daily basis to our website archive, so all is secure and retrievable. There has not been much interest in a distributed version for regional secretaries to manage locally and synchronise as needed with my master version. However I hope to have the distributable version available for later this year, for regions who want to take it up.

Brian Rich
Acting Communications Officer
30th May 2013

CLUB NEWS REPORTS

NOT THE EASTER CRUISE

Stoke on Trent Boat Club's Easter Cruise was called Not The Easter Cruise, as it took place a week late. Eleven boats left their Endon base to moor at Cheddleton, where they enjoyed a meal at The Old Schoolhouse Tea Rooms.

On Saturday morning, boats were iced in, and it was nearly



9 boats from Stoke on Trent BC plus two moorers in the basin

lunch-time before nine of them ventured forth, through Froghall Tunnel to moor in Froghall basin. No problems except one boat becoming stuck in this very low tunnel – shouting to other club members to drop water through the lock below the tunnel, lowered the water level and freed the boat to complete the journey.

Rear Commodore Graham Churton says that Froghall Basin offers excellent moorings, close to the Churnet Valley Railway and excellent hostleries, all in a delightfully rural setting. Club boats of all shapes and sizes made it through the tunnel, and he would encourage the many boaters who cruise the delightful Caldon Canal to venture through the short but low tunnel into the basin below. There is a height gauge at the lock before the tunnel to help you.

On the Saturday, the North Staffordshire and South Cheshire branch of the IWA along with the Caldon & Uttoxeter Canals Trust, chartered a train from the Churnet Valley Railway to take passengers to places not normally visited. This unique trip was to thank volunteers for the restoration work done by WRG on the Johnsons Lock site. WRGies were joined by members of Stoke on Trent Boat Club, IWA and CUCT.

Pictures by Rupert Smedley:



The CVR train with passengers exploring the site of Johnsons Lock on the Uttoxeter Canal restoration.

EREWASH RALLY

We had a wonderful rally at Langley Mill over one hundred boats attended. We had great difficulty accommodating the huge crowds who attended. There was a wonderful spirit throughout. Much beer (real ale) was supped and after the twenty three barrels went we had to get more supplies in.

I went to the awards ceremony but yet again we came away empty handed. I am not a bad loser (I am really) but when true volunteers are up against contractors with a few volunteers litter picking round them, then it not a level playing field.

The Lune Aqueduct won in our category.

HOWARD SMITH



DRY DOCK OVERHAUL

A team of members from Bridgewater Motor Boat Club have recently completed a full refurbishment of their historic dry dock. Built in 1890 the dock once served the working boats of the Bridgewater Canal Co. The club took over the Victoria Dock Yard in the 1970's and have been using the dock ever since. The old wooden stocks were removed and new steel ones fitted as well as resurfacing the dock floor and fitting new drainage systems. The scheme was overseen by Projects Officer Steve Lockhart and utilised the various skills of the members involved. The dock, which can take 3 boats at a time, is well used throughout the year by the members but any spare capacity is available to non-members at a very reasonable cost. Anyone wishing to book the dock should ring Facilities Officer, Chris Walsh, at the club on Sunday mornings on 01928 577106.

Monday October 6th 2008

08.30 Gill and I met Alex, the mechanic at St Jean de Losne for him to do the oil-change and top up the coolant. We had travelled down to Dijon on the previous day by Eurostar and TGV and stayed overnight. Our crew, Pat and Keith Broughton and Phyllis and John Saxon, who had travelled by car and stayed nearby, were busy shopping, having spent the previous night at Conflans les Honorines, the boatman's' village west of Paris. When all of the checks were complete we set off down the Saone (Hour reading 2688). We had a fairly uneventful trip down to Chalons where there was plenty of room in the marina. 59km 2 locks 6.4 hours

Tuesday.

Left Chalons in the mist at first light 07.30. By the time we got to Ormes, the sun was shining and the wind was brisk, there was lots of gravel and construction traffic around Macon but it stayed sunny. We finally tied up at the village stage at Montmerle where we found good facilities including power and water. 90km 2 locks 9.6 hours

Wednesday.

Left at 07.30 in the rain, and for the first two hours, we steered from outside for reasons of visibility. We saw our first "coaster" near Villefranche. At Couzon Lock we experimented by using a line from the bow round the bollard to the centre door, which worked well, keeping all but one of the crew in the dry. At Couzon a following cruiser was denied entry to the lock because, we think, they hadn't got life jackets on. Just below the lock we met 2 no. 3000 tonne pans with a pusher tug. At 13.00 we are through Lyon and on the Rhone. Lyon was very attractive to look at but did not appear to want boats to stop. At Pierre Benite Lock you start to see the foresight of the French engineers; the Rhone was tamed, a useful source of renewable energy was utilised and many hectares of marshland were reclaimed, and all of this was planned and executed in the sixties and seventies. These locks are so easy it's just not true, however we did

get held up for a breakdown at Vaugris. They said 40min. and it took 45 so that's not bad. Tied up in the marina at Roches des Condrieu.

93km 3 locks 9.6 hours

Thursday.

Left at 08.30 after shopping for bread, weather dry but cool. At Pk 47 there is a



village landing stage that looked like a possible overnight mooring. At this stage the benefit of yesterday's rain meant that at 1000 rpm we were doing nearly 12 km/hr. compared with 10 km/hr before. The river became much more attractive as we headed south. The River Isere enters and leaves a canalised section before Bourg les Valences lock, at which the VNF were operating a suction dredger. We were lead through the delivery hoses by a pilot boat and had to wait at the lock while a diver was welding underwater. We had to wait for a "gas boat" to ascend and followed a graveller into the lock. We tied up for the night at Valence marina.

70km 3 locks 8.4 hours

Friday.

Started 08.30 ,weather dry and cool again. At La Vaulte there seemed to be a possible mooring on the west bank. We locked through Beauchastel with "Gems", a boat from Falmouth via Eastbourne (and the Canal de la Somme) after waiting for a huge hotel boat to ascend. Gems was faster than BV so we locked through Chateau Neuf on our own. This was the deepest so far at 61 feet. At Viviers we rejoined Gems and took a landing stage with a pylon alongside because the stages are so short. Here we had power, water, a view and a mooring slightly off-line where the

wash from passing freight did not disturb our sleep. We took some time out to explore this fascinating little town and ultimately found an eating place open.

55km 3 locks 6.5 hours

Saturday.

It was foggy, a real pea souper! A small boat wanting to head upstream was firmly told to "stay put" by radio. Also the water level had dropped a foot in the night. We kicked our heels and did some chores but the fog stuck with us until noon. Gems had VHF radio so we kept close to them and set off for Bollene, the deepest lock on the river at 75feet. Due to our late start we decided to stop at the village pontoon at St. Etienne des Sorts. This was an error of judgement as we didn't find anywhere open to eat and the river traffic guaranteed us a rough night! Not to mention the TGV's thundering down the east bank of the river.

38km 1 lock 3.6 hours

Sunday.

Misty again but we set off at 08.00 with Gems and pretty soon regretted it. As we passed Marcoule power station the mist turned into a man made fog and we could only stay in visual contact with one bank of the river. By Caderousse lock the fog had dissipated and we followed a new container vessel "Gaudiana" into the lock. Below the lock is the junction with the Ardoise branch. To go up the branch might have been a better option for an overnight stop. After the railway bridge we turned sharp left upstream into the Avignon branch, mooring at the marina immediately above the well-known Pont. Refuelled at the marina. Spent the rest of the day sightseeing in Avignon.

43km 2 locks 5.5 hours

Monday.

Left at 08.00 it was dry and cool but we had a brief shower as we passed under the sensational TGV combined bridge and junction. We passed quickly through Beaucaire lock to find that the river was almost a metre down. We encountered a dredger and guessed that the water level had been lowered for their benefit. The freight traffic seemed

unaffected so we assumed that the river is over deep in this reach. The Petite Rhone was much more affected, the training walls were clearly visible most of the way to St Gilles lock but we still made good progress. We were now on familiar territory, we pushed on to Aigues Morts and tied up in front of the Capitainerie. Sadly we didn't get a vivid sunset. We spent time in town eating and enjoying the carnival atmosphere, we also took the chance to replenish food and drink stocks.

81km 2 locks 8.8 hours

Tuesday.

Left Aigues Morts at 11.45 in the sunshine, taking the west passage (there is a one-way system here) and potted gently up to Palavas where we took the chance to shop and top-up with fuel at the back door of Champion 1km up the River Les. (they have a proper landing by the filling station) We stayed overnight at the marina and revisited Palavas. The weather had really warmed up and we were now able to take full advantage of it.

28km 0 locks 3.4 hours

Wednesday.

Had a lazy morning in Palavas finally departing at 11.00 to make the 13.30 bridge opening at Frontignan. The | Etang de Thau is a salt water lake at sea-level which we crossed in near perfect conditions. We put into Marseillan and were directed to an "outside" berth where the hotel boats usually tie up. I was a little apprehensive at first, because I have seen boats getting knocked about there when the Etang gets rough but we had no problems and still had power and water. We celebrated by testing the wine at Richemer and dined at Le Quay.

35km 0 locks 5.3 hours

Thursday.

We had noticed that the sliding roof had been badly affected by damp and rot had set in so, as one of our jobs, we lifted the hatch, dried it and cut away as much of the rot as we could. We then got some wood preservative and coated the dodgy areas giving lots of time to dry. This obviously won't cure the problem but hopefully it will arrest any

further decay over the winter. We left Marseillan at 11.45 and after mooring in Agde went to lunch on the riverside, returning via the railway station to check trains for our crew to return via Montpellier to their car at St. Jean the following morning. We then passed through the famous "Round Lock" which gives access to the River Aude above and below the weir and also to the Canal du Midi.

11km 2 locks 1.7 hours

Friday.

Broughtons and Saxons left for station 08.15 in the sunshine. We boated on through the "Ouvrages de Libron" (where a complex system of duplicated sluices should allow boats to cross the River Libron on the level when the river is in flood) and tied up for the night at Villeneuve les Beziers. The tourist office on the quayside pointed us towards the launderette in the campsite and to the "Fete des Primeurs" the celebration of the wine harvest. We ate at a canal-side restaurant "La Cremade"

Saturday.

Sunny, dry and bright again we shopped in the street-market and set off for Beziers at 10.15 but missed the last "slot" to go up the Fonserrannes staircase by a few minutes. We took the opportunity to revisit the staircase on foot and to look at the "Pente d'eau" or water-slope. This is one of the less successful pieces of French engineering, basically it is a sloping concrete channel with a moving dam holding back a wedge of water in which a boat floats. The works including the moving dam lie decaying and the staircase locks have been back in use for many years. The lock-keepers work the flight and amuse themselves by filling chambers not from the lock above the one in use but from the one above that, which gives rise to a tidal-wave rushing down the floor of the lock and severe turbulence in your chamber. When they judge that there is enough water to get over the sill they beckon you through the torrent of moving water to the next chamber. When you take into account the concentration of hire-craft hereabouts

you can see what a tourist attraction this turns out to be! We tied up for the night above the staircase and enjoyed a fantastic view of the Basilica at Beziers. At night VNF drain the whole of the staircase and there are NO LADDERS, anyone who survived falling into a chamber would have to wait until morning (if they survived the fall) to be rescued.

8km 11 locks 2.3 hours



The "rapids" at Fonserrannes

Sunday

Managed to drop part of the water filter over the side while performing engine checks, No amount of fishing would find it so, inevitably and reluctantly, I stripped off and went in the water. Fortunately it didn't take long to find it with my foot and after refitting it we set off along the 54km "grand bief" the level pound all the way to Argens Minervois. We stopped at Poilhes hoping to eat lunch out but the restaurant said open at 7pm. It was a nice day so we decided to spend a leisurely afternoon there, sadly the restaurant never opened at all so we had to raid our emergency supplies and eat on board.

12km 0 locks 1.8 hours

More from John Wilkinsons's fascinating log in the next issue of Alert.

AWCC NATIONAL RALLY 2014

DOES YOUR BOAT CLUB HAVE A HISTORY TO TELL?

The Black Buoy Cruising Club, who are hosting the AWCC Golden Jubilee Rally in July 2014, would like to produce a film, in slideshow format depicting the history of the AWCC and its clubs. The intention is to show this at the rally on a flat screen in a rolling format such that visitors can chose to view as much or as little as they wish.

To do this we need clubs to help by providing photos, a potted history of the club and some background information.

Without being too prescriptive we would like any or all of the following

Background information -

- Name of Club
- Location
- Waterway Authority
- Number of boats
- Number of Members
- Date formed
- Date joined AWCC

History

A short potted history of the club (maximum 400 words)

Photos

Up to eight digital photos (a mixture of old and new). Any format accepted (but with best resolution possible bearing in mind these will be displayed on a large screen). It would be helpful if the photos were identified with captions either in the filename or accompanying email (e.g. "Old clubhouse - 1973" or "View of club moorings 1980" etc).

You can either attach the photos to emails or upload them to somewhere on the web and provide links. Please be aware that some email providers place size limits on file attachments.

Please send your contributions to Allan Richards via the following email address awcc50film@talktalk.net

EDITOR

The National Executive Committee who met at Retford and Worksop Boat Club on the 8th of June, have been busy considering issues such as the granting of a mooring to a trade boat at a very busy and congested spot at Bradford on Avon. Other concerns are the effect that the HS2 rail scheme will have on various individual clubs and the canal system as a whole.

Chairman Paul wrote to Robin Evans on his retirement as Chief Executive of C&RT offering our Associations best wishes and I reproduce his reply to Paul along side Paul's report on page one. I think the third paragraph is very telling of the excellent relationship which has been forged between the AWCC and BW/C&RT by both Paul and his predecessor David Pearce.

Ann Banks continues with preparations for the Black Buoy/AWCC 50th Anniversary Rally to be held next year. For more information contact Ann on 0121 705 0808.

A smattering of club news items this time. PLEASE let me know what is happening at your club and members tales of their travels around the system or further afield I know that club members are interested in what is going on at other clubs. Finally if you know of anyone who would benefit from advertising in alert please contact Terry Ariss our Development Officer. (tel 01494 452380)

May I wish you all a happy and safe summer of boating and if visiting the northwest please call in at BMBC at Runcorn where you are sure to receive a warm welcome.

Graeme Bridge Editor.

Watch this space...

50th Anniversary Rally
July 2014
Craft Market 
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NEW for this Rally - a Craft Market

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OR do you know someone who does?
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OR do you know someone who is?

Put your name down now for a stall.
 Contact Beverley Graham (from BBCC)
 on beverley1965@fsmail.net, or
 0121 779 7910

SNIPPETS

Popular canal-side Coffee Shop reopens

May 1st was a special day in Shireoaks. The pretty village near Worksop got its Coffee Shop back. Right by the bridge over the Chesterfield Canal, Nona's was a very popular stopover for walkers and cyclists as well as a meeting place for local people. Then in June 2011, the owner, Dawn Siddons, moved the business to the brand new Hollingwood Hub on the canal near Chesterfield. This has proved a great success and is a very popular venue.

On the very first day of opening in the new premises, Laura Elliott was taken on as an apprentice. She learnt about baking, customer service, book keeping etc. She rapidly earned a positive reputation amongst the customers for her happy, welcoming manner. She passed her NVQ from Chesterfield College in record time. Laura feels that the time is now right to start her own business, so she has taken over the lease at the original Nona's back in Shireoaks.

Laura will start off with a similar menu to the tried and tested one. Everything is homemade; there are drinks, sandwiches, light meals, ice creams and of course a selection of cakes to die for. In addition, there is a supply of information about the canal supplied by the Chesterfield Canal Trust.

Kath Auton, Membership Secretary for the Trust, said "We all wish Laura the very best of luck. She is a very special young lady. Whilst she will be sorely missed at Hollingwood, I have no doubt that the people of Shireoaks will very quickly take her into their hearts."



Friendship Cruising Club find good use for excess income

The Friendship Cruising Club is a small friendship group who have no base but meet at various venues on the River Soar and other East Midlands waterways to share a joint interest in the waterways.

At the AGM in March a Race Night was enjoyed by members and it was agreed that the profits should be donated to Rainbows, a local children's hospice in Loughborough. The treasurer, Stan Sidorowicz presented a cheque for £200 to Jennifer Leach, Community Fundraiser.

You may have heard on the news that the EU is taking action against Member States who are failing to comply properly with their obligations under EU law. The bits that made the news are about the UK's failure to apply EU Social Security legislation correctly and also for some Spanish hospitals failing to recognise the EHIC. What they didn't mention is that the continued use of Red diesel at a lower VAT rate by private boats in the UK is possibly being referred to the European Courts (source link below):

Taxation: Commission requests United Kingdom to ensure private boats do not use lower taxed fuel

The European Commission has formally requested the United Kingdom to amend its legislation to ensure that private pleasure boats such as luxury yachts can no longer buy lower taxed fuel intended for fishing boats. Under [EU rules on fiscal marking for fuels](#), fuel that can benefit from a reduced tax rate has to be marked by coloured dye. Fishing vessels for example are allowed to benefit from fuel subject to a lower tax rate but private boats must use fuel subject to a standard rate.

Currently the UK law does not impose fuel distributors to have two separate fuel tanks, one with marked fuel subject to a lower tax rate and the other with regular fuel subject to a standard tax rate. As a consequence, private leisure boats can not only use fuel intended for fishing vessels but also risk heavy penalties if they travel to another Member State and the ship is controlled by the local authorities.

The Commission's request takes the form of a reasoned opinion. In the absence of a satisfactory response within two months, the Commission may refer the United Kingdom to the EU's Court of Justice.

For full details: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-470_en.htm

BRIAN RICH

OBITUARY

JOHN THOMAS SUTTON

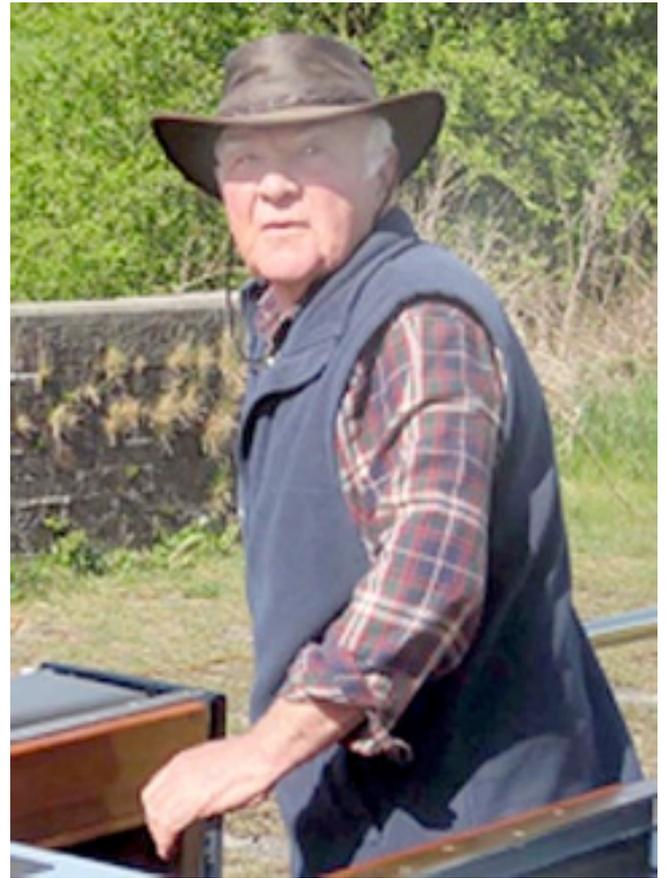
Stoke on Trent Boat Club has lost one of its stalwarts in John T Sutton, who passed away this month, after a short illness.

John was a founder member of the Club, a Life Member, Past Commodore and Vice President, as well as a Trustee. He served on the committee in various roles until recently. He also was a keen and active member of the Inland Waterways Association, serving on the committee of the local branch, Stoke on Trent as it then was.

The waterways, boating and the boat club were John's life. Having trained and worked all his life as an engineer – except for serving in the Forces, John did much of the fitting out of his four boats himself, to an extremely high standard.

The parish church at Hanford in Stoke on Trent was packed at his funeral service, many of the congregation being club members and others connected with the waterways. His wife Pauline and daughters Tina and Jackie are all members of Stoke on Trent Boat Club, where friends and family gathered afterwards to say farewell to a boater who was much loved and highly respected by all who met him.

Many boaters will unknowingly have a memento of John, as he was responsible for the manufacture, and often design of hundreds – indeed thousands – of the



brass rally plaques which decorate our boats. Picture of John T Sutton at the helm of his narrowboat Thomas.
Picture Marie Condliffe, Stoke on Trent Boat Club

TERRY POUND

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Terry Pound, who was Secretary of the North East Region for a considerable number of years. Terry was a real enthusiast for the AWCC and for boating in general and was loved and respected by all who new him.

There will be a full Obituary to this special man in the next issue of Alert.

Ed

JIM HUNT

It was my sad duty last month to report to the NEC that Jim Hunt, Commodore of the Taverners Boat Club, on the Grand Union in Northamptonshire, had passed away following a short time in hospital. I first met Jim when I joined the club in 1980 and we struck up a friendship that has endured over the years. Jim was technology teacher and lecturer who had the rare ability to design, manufacture and teach the subjects close to his heart, be it a hovercraft or piece of period furniture. He was passionate about education and the need to encourage his students to achieve the very best. Jim had an easygoing nature, which combined with a wicked sense of humour made his company always a pleasure. He held flag officer posts in the club, succeeding me as commodore many years ago. He led the club with enthusiasm, despite being far from well throughout his time in office, to become a respected figure in the local waterway community. Jim enjoyed the waterways in the family narrow boat, his favourite cruise being along the G.U. to Warwick. Health problems curtailed his boating activities in recent years but he remained enthusiastic about the club and its members. The church at Toternhoe was packed for a moving funeral service with a congregation drawn from his friends, waterway and teaching colleagues; a following get together at the local hostelry rounded off the day, as Jim would have wished.

It has been my privilege to know Jim; he will be sorely missed by family and friends alike.

Paul le Blique

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As well as not having to pay for a pump out, owning your own system means that emptying your waste tanks can be carried out in many more locations, not just where there is a pump out station. It also means that this can be done at almost any time, even when yards, marinas or pump stations are closed or unmanned.

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