

# THE FLOATER

JUST WON'T GO AWAY

Issue 7 April 2016 The only paper for boaters produced by boaters

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# Councils seek boat controls

Across England local councillors are starting to gather new powers, or strengthen old ones, giving themselves a say in how boaters should behave on our canals and rivers - Peter Underwood has been checking out a power grab

**L**ocal councils appear to have developed hostile attitudes towards boaters, with our two university cities and a major London borough using various legal devices to drive out or restrict the rights of boaters, sometimes ignoring the navigation authorities.

In Oxford the relationship between boaters and the city council looks like being further damaged by an attempt to use a legislation condemned by human rights campaigners to take over control of the towpath and the actions of boaters.

The Labour Council is pushing forward with a Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) - broad powers which allow councils to criminalise particular, non-criminal, activities taking place within a specified area, to deal with boats mooring in the city - despite it's own Scrutiny Committee warning it was unworkable Oxford Council apparently see the powers as a way of attacking what they claim is illegal mooring on the canal and the River Thames, as well as scruffy boats and even drinking on the towpath or having more than a set number of dogs.

This latest attack is part of a deteriorating relationship perhaps going back as far as the sale of Jericho boatyard. More recently, there has been UMBEG (Unlawfully Moored Boats Enforcement Group), an attempt by the Environment Agency, British Waterways, as it was then, and council working together to control moorings.

UMBEG failed to do enough in the eyes of a small group of councillors led by Deputy Lord Mayor, Coun. Colin Cook who now apparently see a PSPO as the way forward.



The southern end of the Oxford Canal, this last 400 metres is mainly residential moorings. ©Mat Fascione

Oxford Council seems unwilling to accept that the Thames, the Oxford Canal and other waterways are not controlled by them but by navigation authorities and that those agencies have the only enforcement powers. As soon as the PSPO plans were revealed boaters, including the National Bargee Travellers Association (NBTA), warned that the plans were 'unworkable' and risked discriminating against boaters. The council was told it was facing a threat of legal action over a proposed public spaces protection order (PSPO), which would cover the River Thames, the Cherwell and Oxford Canal. The boaters said the order would criminalise 'normal and necessary boating activities', Initial victory for boaters came when the council's scrutiny committee decided the PSPO had serious flaws and should

be scrapped. Craig Simmons, Green Party leader and chairman of the council's scrutiny committee, said the draft order was "half-baked" and criticised "silly" measures restricting how many dogs people could walk at a time.

"This is an issue about practicality, because at the moment it is unworkable."

The city council leaders claimed it was part of efforts to tackle illegal mooring, drunken antics and criminal and environmental damage, while local boaters warned that measures would prevent boaters from running engines, generators and stoves and "leave dozens of homes without lighting or heating."

Councillor Colin Cook, ignored the decision of the council's Scrutiny Committee and put the PSPO back on the agenda with a public consultation claiming, according to the Oxford Mail: "Clearly there are some things that could be changed, but I do not think that will be as complicated as some people have made out. "The whole point of consultations is to adapt your proposals before you implement them, based on people's feedback and you have got to start somewhere."

Local boater and organiser of several meetings about the PSPO, Jon Ody said: "In 2010 Oxford City Council, led by Jericho councillors Cook and Pressell, secretly formed the Unlawfully Moored Boats Enforcement Group, which has spent £45,000 of taxpayers money attempting to eradicate people living on boats in

Oxford.

"Six years later and this very questionable, probably illegal, amateurish and very prejudiced attempt to overrule national legislation is apparently the best they can come up with for how they've spent that money."

At a meeting after the decision the boaters agreed to start a campaign looking at legal challenges to the PSPO, recruiting national and local support for their cause. Meanwhile the Cambridge Evening News reports that boats mooring on the Cam face being slapped with a fine in an attempt to create an 'effective deterrent to prevent visitors from breaking the rules'.

Visitors on the Cam will be slapped with a fine if they stay more than six hours; with the council drawing a parallel with cars parking on double yellow lines.

Those mooring on designated bays for visiting will be able to stay for no more than 48 hours.

Currently boats that the council claims are moored illegally only have to move on after a legal eviction process in the courts.

The local newspaper reports Coun Carina O'Reilly as saying: "It doesn't actually have that much of a deterrent effect because it's so slow."

"One of the reasons for bringing this in is it creates that deterrent. At the moment, we have no deterrent process." The council insists the new rule will not apply to locally registered boats under any circumstances and that they

are keeping a 48-hour visitor mooring period, with no return for seven days on moorings owned by Cambridge City Council.

"Inconsiderate and sometimes dangerous mooring has caused a number of issues with other river users," according to one council manager.

Most boaters agree Cambridge does not have enough visitor moorings, with the majority of boats wanting to stay longer than 48 hours.

In London, Hounslow Council has made allegations of 'disgusting and dangerous' behaviour at 'illegally-moored' houseboats on the Thames in Brentford, following criticism of its plans for a new marina beside Watermans Park.

Council Leader Steve Curran is reported by the West London News as claiming 'illegally-moored' houseboats are being rented out as "sub-standard accommodation".

He wrote in a letter to the Hounslow Chronicle: "Most people living on the boats are being exploited and they are also being put at serious risk." The council has something of an axe to grind as it wants to build a £5.45m marina on the site and it is taking legal action to remove the 30-odd boats which it claims are illegally moored on the

It says the marina will provide the authority with 'vital income', and act as a 'catalyst for regeneration'.

Boat owners say they have the right to remain and are fighting the proposed marina which they describe as an environmental catastrophe likely to cost closer to £20m. They have produced their own plans for an alternative marina, which they say would be more environmentally sustainable and could be built for a fraction of the cost.

The Port of London Authority (PLA) is the navigation authority and the final arbiter, and the council claims it was only looking at their plan

The local newspaper reports Stephen Alexander, who owns one of the boats at the moorings, as saying the boaters' plans were rejected without a hearing and claimed Mr Curran was "completely misinformed" about the renting arrangements, sewage disposal and electrical supplies for the vessels.

He also complains of harassment by the council by illegally disconnect electricity supplies, restricting parking, legal injunctions and court proceedings.

Wherever you look local councils seem to have a level of hostility towards boaters not seen before.



Above: The boaters plan for moorings at Brentford Below:Boats moored at Watermans Park on the Thames in Brentford © Thomas Nugent



Boats on the River Cam in Cambridge by Midsummer Common. ©Roger Kidd

# Whatever happened to making money from C&RT friends?

It now seems clear that the Canal and River Trust's Friends scheme is not making money but costing the Trust cash that is sorely needed to keep the system going, especially with millions more needed for flood repairs. Allan Richards looks at what has gone wrong.

By Allan Richards



**What is the purpose of C&RT having a friends scheme? Surely the prime reason is to provide a significant income stream for the Trust. However, C&RT annual reports to date suggest that the Trust would be much better off financially if it did not have friends.**

To understand what has gone wrong we have to travel back in time to consider projected income from all charitable giving.

A year before the Trust was formed Head of Fundraising, Ruth Ruderham, was recruited at a salary of £70,000 per year. She is quoted as saying "It's not often a new charity of this size and status is born. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a fundraiser to have a start-up charity that's not tiny.

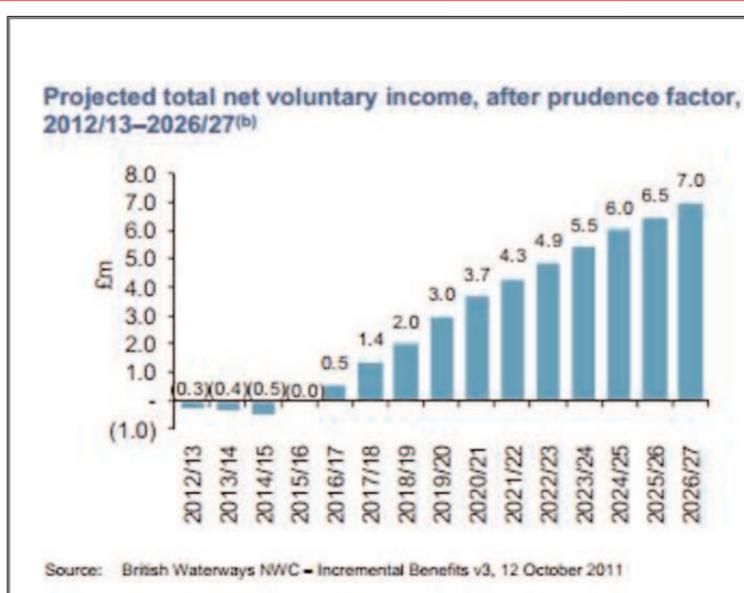
"The organisation has an ambitious fundraising target: it wants to become one of the top 100 charities by voluntary income within the next decade, which would involve raising £13m a year. It has been working with Think Consulting Solutions to achieve this goal". In May 2012, a report to BW's directors and C&RT's trustees by KPMG set out very clearly the projected financial benefits of having charitable income and where this would come from.

After ten years of operation, C&RT expected 58% of its charitable income from regular donors - the friends. The rest would come from public appeals, legacies, trusts, companies and major donors. The report notes that face-to-face fundraising was the only viable way of recruiting these regular donors and states that Trustees believe that this method of fundraising was ideally suitable as towpath recruiting by professional fundraising company 'chuggers' would be from a self selecting population of potential donors. The only fly in the ointment was a parliamentary select committee who seemed to be more in touch with the challenges of fundraising than Think Consulting Solutions and British Waterways. Although much more modest projections were given to parliament than Ruderham's '£13m within ten years', the select committee still thought them very optimistic. These parliamentary concerns were addressed by introducing a 'prudence factor' to the final financial projections - put simply, new financial projections reduced previous figures given.

Over the course of just a few months, Ruderham's £13m a year by 2021/22 had been reduced by two thirds to £4.3m.

On casual inspection these projections looked much more sensible. For one thing, they reflected the high costs of building up a file of regular donors in the early years. No more was heard from Ruderham about becoming one of the top 100 charities for some time.

Instead the message was the recruitment of 100,000 donors in ten years and this was before Canal & River Trust was even launched! When it did launch, things



went wrong very quickly on the charitable giving front. Some 50 'experimental' local appeals quickly disappeared when they failed to raise much money.

A national appeal for the £2.1 million needed to repair a breach at Dutton



**C&RT chair Tony Hales: '...we now have more than 11,000 Friends'**

(on the Trent and Mersey Canal) was closed having raised just £19,527 - that's less than one per cent of the amount needed. The repair was later found out to be bodged.

To add to the charitable giving misery, C&RT's carefully selected main chugging company, CM Fundraising, went broke and by the end of its first financial year (2012/13), C&RT had managed to recruit just 2,164 'friends'.

In financial terms, charitable giving lost £0.4m, slightly worse than than the projection in the KPMG report. C&RT's £222,000 a year chief executive, Robin Evans, who had masterminded BW's move to the third sector had already announced his intention to step down before year end saying '... it's the right time for me to move on and a perfect time for the Trust to have a new leader.' The financial year 2013/14 saw no improvement. Having blamed CM Fundraising for its poor friends performance in its first year, the Trust's Marketing and Fundraising director, Simon Salem, then blamed other chugging companies for refusing to work with him.

Charitable giving lost £1m, instead of the projected £0.4m. Thus, over its first two years, C&RT had accumulated losses of £1.4m - twice the

projected amount. In terms of numbers, the Trust claimed over 5,500 donors. With chugging companies refusing to work with them in its second year, C&RT started recruiting their own staff on zero hour contracts at about £9 per hour, paying them a small bonus of £35 for every 10 signed friends.

C&RT's third year Annual Report (2014/15) suggested that CaRT had managed to double its number of friends from 5,500 the previous year. In his chairman's report, Tony Hales, who was also a member of the trustees fundraising sub-committee stated '... we now have more than 11,000 Friends, people who generously support us with their monthly donations'.

Further on this statement is repeated, as a highlight, in a section of the Annual Report that suggests that the Ruderham was 'in attendance' at Trustee fundraising sub-committee meetings without her boss, Simon Salem, being present.



**Simon Salem, Marketing and Fundraising Director told board the Trusts had fewer than 10,000 members**

These sub committee meetings appear to have led Ruderham to report to the full board in March 2015 that the Trust's 10-year fundraising ambition was on track to:-

have 100,000 Friends be raising at least £10m every year be a top 100 fundraising charity be seen as a partner of choice for socially-minded companies However, just two months later her 'on track' claim to Trustees was

"we now have more than **11,000** Friends, people who generously support us with their monthly donation"

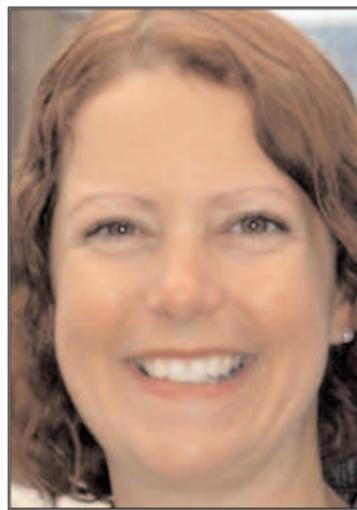
**Even the 'prudent' projections of income from friends don't pan out when just a tenth of the target have been recruited.**

blown out of the water. Her boss Simon Salem told a board meeting on 20th May 2015 that, at the end of its third financial year, the trust still had fewer than 10,000 friends (the actual number was 9,754).

Its Annual Report showed a further loss of £1.1m to add to the previous years losses of £1.0m and £0.4m. C&RT's losses on charitable giving over its first three years were £2.5m which is over twice as high as envisaged in the KPMG report. It is projecting further losses for this year (2014/15).

Sadly, C&RT's Trustees approved an Annual Report that simply failed to address its poor performance in recruiting friends. Instead of admitting that the Trust had fewer than 10,000 friends but really needed to have 30,000 to be on track, they allowed Tony Hales to claim 'over 11,000' and paint a very rosy picture, a decision that will lead many people to not trust claims in future Annual Reports.

Perhaps it is little wonder that a year later Tony Hales, Simon Salem and Ruth Ruderham are no longer with the Trust. Ruth joined Prince's Trust as Director of Development. C&RT's aspiration is that recruitment of 100,000 friends by 2021/22 will lead it to become one of the top 100 charities by voluntary income. Performance to date suggests that - with just five years to go and just a tenth of that total - it is a target likely to be massively missed.



**Ruth Ruderham, Head of Fundraising promised £13m a year and 100,000 donors**

## Criminals to aid Montgomery restoration?

The long term restoration of the Montgomery Canal could make extensive use of a 'Community Payback' scheme. It has already been able to help with improving towpath surfaces and hedgerows on a half mile stretch in Shropshire.

The Canal & River Trust, is working with Warwickshire and West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) to carry out environmental improvement work along a section of the dry canal in a trial project.

Ten supervised sessions will allow the Trust to gauge the effectiveness of this new approach and may form part of the ongoing restoration project for years to come. Howard Griffiths, waterway supervisor from the Canal & River Trust said: "It offers participants the chance to learn valuable work skills and is a highly cost-effective way to improve the canal towpath and hedgerows."



## The Floater

Written designed and published by News Afloat - a unique boat-based publisher travelling on the British inland waterways. Check out The Floater website at:

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The Floater is published at least once a month in .pdf format as well as on the Issuu platform and a web version on the website at [www.TheFloater.org](http://www.TheFloater.org)

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# From high-flyer to canopy maker - now Tony is in the skies once more

The Floater takes a look at canal traders – people making a living on our canals and rivers. Their numbers are increasing almost daily and the chances are you will see a floating market or a sole trader on the canal this summer. Our first subject has been trading longer than most, first in a pair of boats travelling the Midlands and, in more recent years aboard his boats on a mooring on the Shropshire Union Canal

**T**ony Saunders is an engineer and entrepreneur who ran his own toolmaking business before giving it all up and turning his engineering expertise to the creation of cratch covers and canopies, as well as sets of covers for traditional working boats.

Now he lives on and works from a boat and butty moored on an idyllic wharf on the Shropshire Union - a very different lifestyle from the days when he flew his own light aircraft, although he is now back in the air in his spare time. Born 60 years ago in the village of Highley in the far south-eastern corner of Shropshire and brought up in nearby Cleobury Mortimer, Tony Saunders has lived through the decline of British manufacturing.

Qualifying as an engineer, he set up a toolmaking business serving the region's car industry and exporting successfully to Germany. It brought him all the trappings of a successful business – big cars, a nice house and even a light aircraft, as well as a narrowboat. His business thrived for many years until, around the turn of the millennium cheap competition from China and eastern Europe finally caught up as it did with so much manufacturing in the Midlands.

Tony and his wife Mary, along with their children Caroline and Terry had swiftly taken to the waterways, and when he decided the time had come to change his lifestyle and find something less hectic to provide a simple living he turned to the canals they had come to love. "We wanted something that we could do from a boat, that would provide us with enough to live on," he said.

"My engineering background meant that working out how to cut and sew the right shapes for a cratch cover, and later even complicated pram-hoods, was fairly easy for me. It is just geometry really.

"The early ones took a long time as we worked out the techniques – two weeks for the first one – and I even had to go back to my old trade of toolmaking to produce some-



Tony leans on the historic crane at Shebdon Wharf where his pair of boats are now based



Tony Saunders grappling with a cratch cover, assisted by his wife Mary

thing to bend the frames for a pram-hood, but we slowly began to build up a trade."

His wife Mary says they took to it like ducks to water and for some time their daughter Caroline worked with them, saved to buy herself a boat and then fitted it out herself. She has only recently sold the boat to buy a house. Tony bought a butty, Bethesda, from Wolverhampton Probation Service, and it gave the business its name. For several years they cruised the pair around the sys-

tem, picking up repair work as well as making new covers and hoods. Tony explained: "One of the things that inspired us to start the business was how difficult it was to get simple repairs done, most of the big operators didn't really want to know about replacing zips or patching holes. "We do lots of repairs and we do them cheaply as it is the best form of advertising. Lots of people pass on our details to others needing repairs and it is surprising how many times someone comes back a

year or two later to order a completely new cover from us." Spending winters moored at Ellesmere on the Llangollen Canal and cruising the West Midlands canals in the summer months, Tony built up a regular customer base. When an opportunity came up a few years ago to moor at the beautiful Shebdon Wharf on the Shropshire Union Canal they grabbed it with both hands. The wharf still has its old crane and a former small warehouse building and



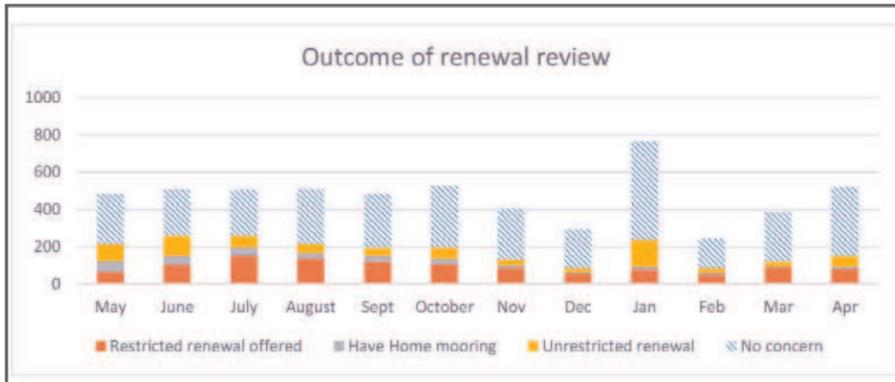
Tony concentrates on the geometry of his latest cover as it passes through his industrial sewing machine.

Tony and Mary can moor their pair of boats, side by side. He still works on the butty but the old buildings have provided some valuable extra space. Tony explained: "More and more people know we are here and they know we will repair their canopies when they drop by. "The business is slowly growing and I do find myself travelling by road across a fairly big area to pattern and fit new cratch covers and hoods. "One really gratifying recent development has been getting orders for sets of covers from the owners of traditional working boats. I have fitted to covers to Ivor Batchelor's old butty and his new motor and a set for Mal Edwards, a boat based fender maker. It has been fascinating to make sure they are correct and historically accurate." Does he miss his old lifestyle as a high-flying businessman? "Not at all," he said, "we have a much better lifestyle on the canals where we can relax, work at our own pace and generate our own business. I have also begun to fly again as a hobby as the business has grown more successful. "If you work with your hands, as I do now, you are never going to be rich – but you can be very happy and comfortable."

# No more three month licences for errant CCers

**A**fter a year of operation the Canal & River Trust is scrapping a scheme to give three month restricted licences to continuously cruising boaters they claim to be 'non-compliant' and go straight for refusing a licence - potentially depriving a boater of their home.

The Trust claims - despite many boaters saying they have not had proper communication - that it 'launched an information drive to provide greater clarity to boaters without a home mooring'. It says it has been getting in touch early to let boaters know when they haven't been moving enough and sending text messages to overstaying boats to see if they need any help. Mike Grimes, head of boating at the Canal & River Trust, said: "Our emphasis on better communication, alongside a defined period in which to resolve problem cruising patterns, seems to be having a



Month by month, what C&RT says happens to those boaters to whom a full licence is refused

positive effect. "It has been encouraging to see that many boaters on short duration licences have been able to increase their range of movement, while a number have opted to take home moorings. Half of those issued with a three month licence, and nearly two-thirds of those issued a six month licence, improved their cruising pattern whilst on a restricted licence and were offered further licences on this

basis. "It was always the intention that offering three month restricted licences would be a temporary measure whilst the approach bedded in during its first year.

"Six month restricted licences may still be offered to those boats that aren't quite meeting the movement requirements to allow them a final opportunity to show an improvement.

"Boats without a home mooring that are not moving in line with our guidance, despite all the communication they have received, will no longer be offered a licence of any duration.

"We are continuing our programme of education and communication, which I believe is essential in meeting the needs of both boaters and the Trust, to ensure everyone can enjoy our canals and rivers."

C&RT claims welfare officer Sean Williams, will always approach each case sympathetically and says that, since May 2015 it has granted over 860 extended stays and equality adjustments for boaters without a home mooring.

Out of 5,600 CCers C&RT subjected 40 per cent to a 'more detailed review' and offered 1,130 a restricted licence, with 652 boats accepting a restricted licence. C&RT says 220 are still within that restricted licence period and of the 432 that reached the end of their restricted licence, 268 'showed improvement' and were allowed further licence, 96 sold their boat, obtained home mooring or moved away from C&RT waters and 68 were refused a further CC

clamping down on boat dwellers without permanent moorings on its inland waterways'.

It concludes that most boaters without home moorings who have not travelled 'far enough' will lose their homes.

The NBTA statement says: "With ever increasing downward pressure on boat dwellers without permanent moorings; persistent harassment; violations of privacy and lack of support for the needs of live-aboard boaters including provision of adequate facilities; repairs to faulty facilities; inadequate moorings in some towns and cities; continual encroachment on towpath mooring space in favour of visitor moorings and inadequate dredging affecting navigation and ability to moor where this is permitted, CRT's agenda is clear.

"The NBTA calls upon the live-aboard boating community to stand up to this determined attack on our way of life."

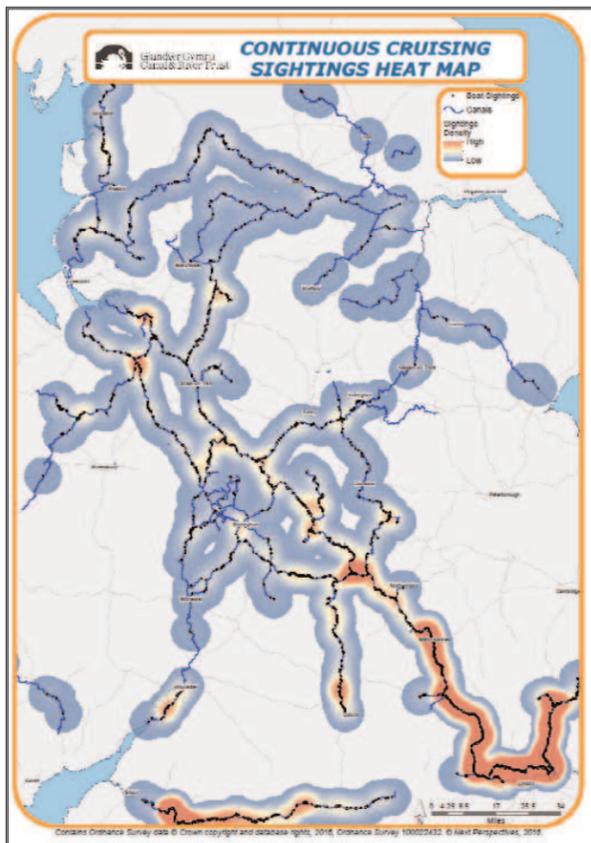
The NBTA is organising a demonstration with the March for Health, Homes, Jobs and Education on 16th April 2016 to demand that CRT stops evicting or threatening to evict boat dwellers without permanent moorings based on their travel pattern, because of an arbitrary and unlawful minimum distance 'rule' that has been imposed since last May. It also wants to see an end to mooring time limits shorter than the 14 days in any one place allowed in legislation and wants positive action to

## Film is a look at liveaboard stresses

**A** film looking at a family on a pedal powered boat on the Kennet and Avon Canal who find their liveaboard lifestyle under threat is the subject of a film currently being promoted by the National Barge Travellers Association (NBTA and supported by community groups around Bradford on Avon. Film maker Wendy Zakiewicz launched her new film 'Off the Cut' at the end of March in St Margaret's Hall, Bradford on Avon, in an event supported by the Bradford on Avon Community Area Network. 'Off the Cut' provides unique insight into a community of boaters living on the Kennet and Avon canal. The film follows a family on their pedal powered boat as they embark on a journey in which their way of life, and that of the whole community, comes under threat. It is a resonance clearly understood by the NBTA who say: "More than 800 boat families on Canal & River Trust waterways are threatened with eviction and the seizure and destruction of their homes after their boat licences were restricted to 3 or 6 months or not renewed at all, following the charity's decision to adopt a punitive new policy of enforcement against boat dwellers without permanent moorings.

maintain the banks and towpaths of the waterways, install more mooring rings and more facilities.

NBTA also plans to take pictures of all the boat dwellers on the march to bring to another demonstration planned at the CRT offices a few weeks later.



Where are all the CCers? This is where C&RT says its data collectors spot them.



These are the regions where C&RT have issued the most time-restricted licences - London, the South East and the South West account for the vast majority

## 14-day moorings in Brum not yet consulted upon

**T**he attempt by West Midlands Customer Services Manager, Ian Darby, to remove nearly 20 per cent of the 14 day moorings in central Birmingham without consultation has yet to be rectified, despite his decision to back-peddle on one of the sites - a disabled mooring at the entrance to Cambrian Wharf. He says he has discussed the missing moorings - a short stretch either side of the mainline by the Barclaycard Arena and two or three spots by the water point at Holiday Wharf - with Waterways

Manager Ian Lane but without any conclusions.

Mr Darby adds in respect of the Barclaycard moorings: "It seems ridiculous to say now the last few feet of a mooring is then by default a 14 day one because the totem pole isn't right at the end of the moorings or somebody has removed arrows". He has no comment on those swept up in the enlarged water point on Holiday Wharf.

He does seem to recognise that standard C&RT procedure before changing mooring signs is to consult with boaters, saying: "In truth I

think consultation is the best way forward because it's going to be very difficult to sensibly sign what's being suggested and it will make things more of a mess around the city centre.

"What we are trying to do is make things clearer and two day moorings with a short 14 day bit on the end doesn't do that."

Ian Darby has yet to say whether he will reverse the "tidying up" changes whilst he goes through a formal consultation process.

## 'Primitive and unsanitary conditions' claim boaters

**L**ondon boaters hit by a lack of water, rubbish and toilet facilities have been protesting as more facilities are removed.

A tow-path gathering in late March at Stonebridge in Tottenham saw increasing frustration amongst boaters when almost 70 members of the community battled the wind and rain to come together to discuss their options.

The National Barge Travellers Association (NBTA) claims the necessities for living a decent life on the water are being taken away, and boaters feel that their plight is ignored.

It says access to facilities is now being removed and restricted, and boaters are 'increasingly forced to endure primitive and unsanitary conditions'. Pointing to a surplus of £39.4 mil-

lion made by C&RT in 2014/15, and the Trust's reserve fund of £660 million, the NBTA says the charity can easily afford to install more facilities for boaters, but instead it has demolished water taps, toilet facilities and rubbish points at Waltham Cross. C&RT is now restricting the opening hours of the toilets and show-

ers further up the Lee in Stonebridge, despite attempts by the NBTA to negotiate to try to prevent this.

The event at Stonebridge was also a celebration of the boater community, and included music, crafts, public speakers and home-made food.



# Liveaboard boat owners get win on points over Broads planners

**With the unelected Broads Authority vacillating between concession and draconian action the boaters living on their vessels on Thorpe Island in Norwich have claimed a partial victory in the courts.**

In mid March the Broads Authority attempted to take one step closer to the removal of all liveaboards from Jenner's Basin at the western end of Thorpe Island after serving Interim Injunction Notices on landowner, Roger Wood. Instead, in The High Court of Justice (Queen's Bench Division), Mr Justice Nicol ordered that boaters must not moor additional vessels at Jenner's Basin other than those already there – a decision that meant those already moored could stay, along with an extra two named vessels.

Despite that the Enforcement Notice was not set aside and all planning rights at the western end are now effectively lost. Gary Barnes who has led the Save the Island campaign said: "We must and we will submit a fresh planning application in line with the 2014 Planning Inspector's Report. "Our intention is to work with The Broads Authority and the onus is on them to act reasonably. It would not be possible for them to justify further injunctive action if we submit a design that reflects the 2014 Report."

Although not an uncondi-



**Relief for the boats on Thorpe Island**

tional victory Gary says that it is an improvement on where the boaters stood at the beginning of December 2015, when 41 Notices had been served on those residents of Thorpe Island moored at the western end, ordering them to leave by 18th December backed by threats of criminal prosecution if they did not comply.

"At the beginning we said that our primary objective was to secure the right of those moored at Jenner's Basin to stay and to live their lives in peace. We still have some work to do – not least the submission of a planning application that is fit for purpose – but, given that is in hand we can now say that the residents really are going nowhere. "They are staying right

where they are. Yes, there are compromises to be made – there are requirements in the 2014 Planning Inspector's Report that we don't really agree with but will comply with nonetheless. "These include the restriction on the number of moorings and the removal of the wrecks, but compromise was always going to be important in moving forward to secure a future. "So, it's a victory on points after a very long fight. But a win is a win at the end of it all." He issued an appeal to the Broads Authority: "Countless times we have attempted to negotiate with you. "Countless times we have asked for talks to resolve the planning dispute at Jenner's Basin. "Countless times you have

abused your power, spending hundreds of thousands of pounds of taxpayer's money to achieve very little through the Courts. "What we want now is to once again demonstrate our reasonableness in meeting your expectations of us and for you to enable our hopes for the future. "As a Planning Authority it is your responsibility to work with local people to include everyone in your vision for The Broads not just an elite minority. "You have made us feel that we are worthless. You have made us feel that we are not wanted. It's time now to see the contribution we make and value diversity because that is surely what separates a civil society from what it was before."

## IWA and C&RT sign deal on work boat movements

**An illustration of just how close the Inland Waterways Association and the Canal & River Trust have become is the latest deal between the two bodies over work boats.**

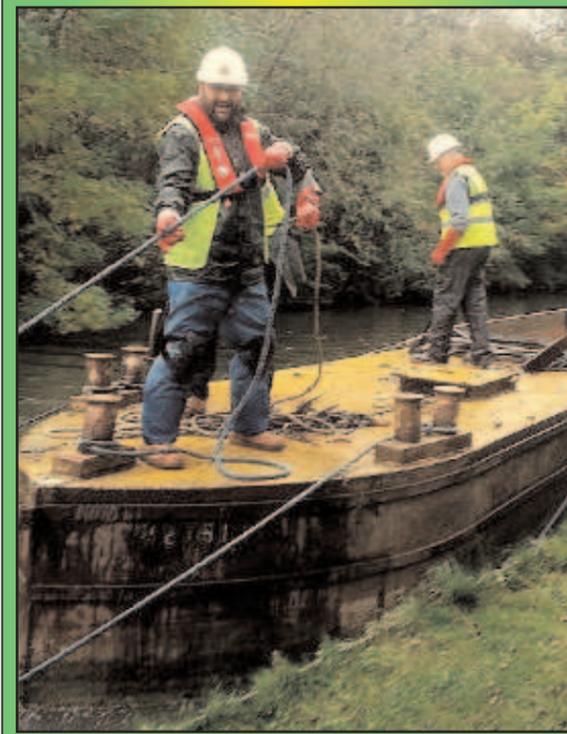
According to the Trust: "The IWA recently stepped up to answer our call for skilled volunteers to help with a new approach to the deployment of our workboat fleet.

"We're reorganising our fleet into a nationally managed resource so we asked the IWA to work with us to help with the inspection and moving of craft. "IWA volunteers will provide the necessary knowledge and skills, as well as the national coverage required for the work."

From April C&RT will be organising workboats centrally to 'co-ordinate the fleet on a more strategic basis'.

Craft will be 'hired' to the regional maintenance and construction teams. The aim is to make more efficient use of the workboats across all of our different teams and by volunteers, such as IWA's volunteer work parties.

According to C&RT: "The work will also include IWA volunteers monitoring the condition of craft and reporting any potential issues which will then be used to develop programmes of repair work."



## IWA festivals provoke big C&RT spend

**By John Quinlan**

**John Quinlan, cruises in the boat he built and has CC'ed for 15 years**

**Boat festivals seem to be important to many boaters and they seem a clear illustration of the cosy relationship between the Inland Waterways Association and the Canal & River Trust.**

I guess that the solitude and nature of the canals and rivers gets to some boaters and the need for a heaving mass of people becomes paramount.

The IWA seems to organise a few of these festivals, and on a grander scale than most. I suppose it's the Tom Rolt spirit of going to far off places under difficult conditions that truly inspires them.

The first I.W.A rally I saw was at the Child Beale estate on the Thames, many years ago. There were narrowboats, hundreds of them moored 5 or 6 deep, my only thought as I passed them was that I hoped none of them caught fire. I kept going. My second experience was a bit more involved, I was over-wintering on the Great Ouse between Denver and Ely, normally any activity such as a cow walking along the river bank is considered a major event as it is desolate there. This time there was real activity. Moorings were being quadrupled in length, rusted siding was being repaired. There was full swing activity, why? Well the I.W.A. was having a rally at St Ives later that year. In the end it all came to nought as a ballast train de-railed on the bridge just West of Ely and the river was closed for many months. All the attendees with boats coming from the canals had to be flushed down the tidal 100 foot river. Attendance was low that year I understand.

Last winter I was moored at Northampton Marina, and noticed dredging equipment being activated in Northampton, "Great" I



**Festival crowds - this one is Crick, not an IWA event, several years ago**

thought "they are finally going to dredge below Islip Lock as it desperately needs it and has for years". However it was not destined for Islip. It was used in Northampton which really has no real problem with water depth. We departed for an extended cruise via the Northampton Arm, which is very slow weedy, reedy and shallow, fought our way up the leaky locks, and were happy to use the services of "Leon the wino" as the going through the locks was getting difficult. He is not a C&RT volunteer but helps the boaters through the locks.

On our return to Northampton many months later the Northampton arm was transformed. The locks worked like a charm. A truly huge distance had towering piles of spoil forming

a dyke along the offside, I assumed it had been dredged, the reeds which blocked over half of the width of the canal were all but gone. There had been an I.W.A rally in Northampton. Sadly there was no sign of Leon, or the spirit of Tom Rolt that I could see.

If the IWA paid for the work that their festivals and rallies cause the C&RT and the EA to undertake that would be fine, but it would seem that in fact the ordinary boater is paying for the IWA "jollies".

At least we know who the boss is. Let us hope the IWA acts in a responsible manner and chooses places that desperately need improvement/dredging for their future shindigs, like below Islip Lock or Bugsworth Basin.

# Boat rides on derelict canal section boosts interest in heritage

Last summer, when Colin Logden, of Owd Lanky Boat group gave free rides in his vintage Windermere boat 'Whimbrel' on the unrestored Holme section of the Lancaster Canal, it kick started a community event involving many local residents and friends.

Colin hopes the steady raising of the profile of the Lancaster's Northern Reaches will help bring restoration a step closer. From the start, it was surprising to see the amount of interest it generated, and there was often a queue of would be passengers chatting at Holme Turnpike bridge. Keith Tassart, Colin's right hand man, was talking to one of the local residents about the coke oven site, explaining that there used to be a plaque on the canal bank. This resulted in an offer to replace it free of charge. Behind the scenes, Medwin Sherriff, chairman of Holme Parish Council, has been collecting information, and this resulted in it all coming together and the new plaque being installed. It is not known who the unknown donor is, other than a local person, but Colin says: "We all owe him our thanks." Now, Brian Crawley, chair of



Colin Ogden - in the hat - and Whimbrel attending the IWA Trailboat Festival on the Northern Reaches of the Lancaster last year.

Carnforth Coke Oven group, has also completed a successful survey of the Holme site as a forerunner to future archaeological

excavations. In a further escalation County Councillor Roger Bingham and District & Holme Parish councillor Brian Cooper,

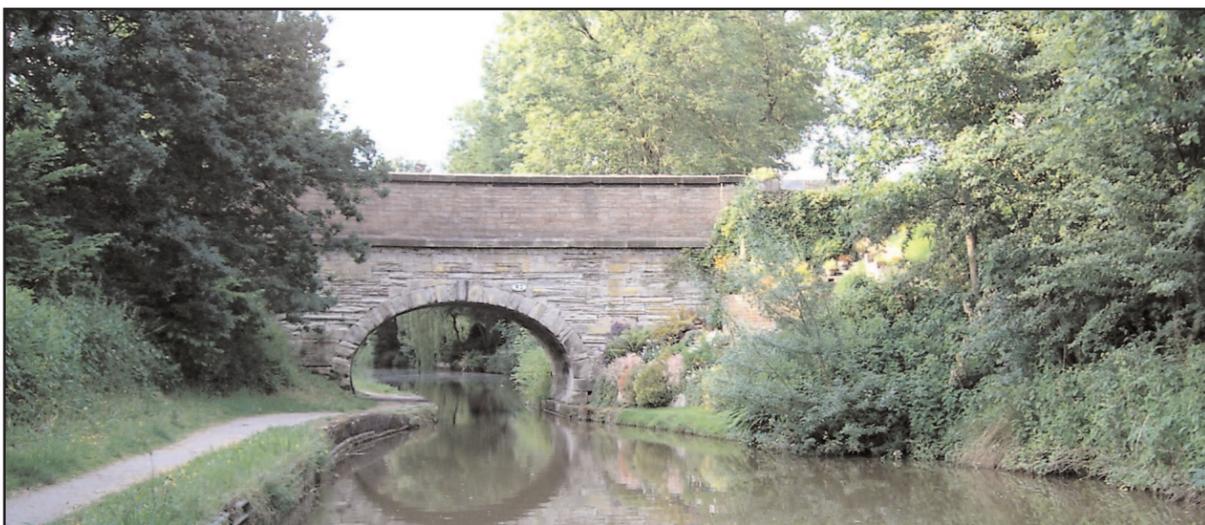
along with Keith Tassart and friends are looking into resurrecting the Holme Dinghy Rally.

# Another carbon monoxide death on board provokes more safety warnings

An inquest has decided that yet another boater has been killed by carbon monoxide fumes.

Christopher Reuben, 52, was found dead on his Dawncraft vessel, called Nomadic, on Macclesfield Canal at Adlington in October last year. An inquest at Macclesfield town hall on March 7 concluded that Mr Reuben, from Manchester, died accidentally, according to the local newspaper the Macclesfield Express. Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Boat Safety Scheme, are again urging boaters to make vital checks to avoid similar tragedies from happening.

Three boaters have been killed ever two years for the past 20 years as a result of carbon monoxide, according to the Boat Safety Scheme. Graham Watts, manager of the Boat Safety Scheme said: "Over a million people are using boats safely each year, including thou-



The Macclesfield Canal makes a peaceful scene but it has been the location of yet another death by Carbon Monoxide poisoning.

sands of people who live aboard on the inland waterways, but our reminder to crews and skippers is to treat the risks with due respect. "Prevention is the key to staying safe. All engines and appliances need to be properly installed, well maintained and used according to the instructions.

"But carbon monoxide can

occur or be made worse when ventilators are blocked, or fresh air is in short supply. Burning fuels need the right amount of oxygen to combust safely and it's also incredibly important to keep exhaust fumes out of the boat's interior.

"If there's a smell of exhaust fumes aboard, there could be deadly carbon monoxide in the cabin

and that's why our belt and braces advice is to fit a carbon monoxide alarm approved as meeting BS EN 50291-2. These are the type best suited for boats. "And if an alarm goes off, open the doors, hatches and windows and get ashore straightaway. "The skipper should turn off appliances and engines as they get out. If anyone feels unwell, giddy, con-

fused or sick they should get very urgent medical treatment." Nick Evans, head of prevention at Cheshire Fire Service, added: "I would encourage anyone living or holidaying on boats to ensure that they protect themselves by checking that their boat is fitted with both working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors."

## Long wait for Rochdale to reopen

It doesn't look as if the flood-damaged Rochdale Canal will be fully reopened to boaters for most of this year – bad news for those planning a round trip using the Pennine canal after celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Leeds and Liverpool waterway.

Planned works on other canals are also likely to suffer. Canal & Rover Trust gave a timetable for smaller repairs to the Northern waterways stretching into the summer months and announced: "Beyond the summer the remaining challenge will mainly involve repairing the breach and landslip that occurred on the Rochdale Canal.

"These are two major, and complex, engineering jobs and so timescales are slightly less clear. We will share more information when we have more details.

"Repairing the damage caused by some of the worst flooding ever seen on our waterways has placed real pressure on budgets and the availability of our staff and contractors.

"With flood-related works estimated to cost just over £10m (with £5.5m being provided by Government in relation to the works at Elland Bridge) we will have to delay or scale-back some other projects that were in our plan for the year ahead. We'll be able to provide more details in the coming weeks."

Canal towpaths have been brought back into operation much more swiftly, using volunteer labour and C&RT says that alongside the efforts to repair towpaths for those on foot, it's been 'working hard to fully understand what needs to be done to reopen the affected waterways to boats'.

As part of the first phase of the programme, it is planned to reopen 12 miles of waterways to boats in time for Easter. This will be in two sections; the Rochdale Canal between Sowerby Bridge and Hebden Bridge and the Calder & Hebble Navigation between Cooper Bridge and Figure of Three Locks.

The next stage won't be until early summer when C&RT hopes to be able to reopen a section of the Rochdale heading west from Hebden Bridge towards Lock 15, then the Calder & Hebble between Salterhebble and Cooper Bridge.

Elland Bridge and Crowther Bridge need to be completely rebuilt. In each case Trust engineers are planning the rebuild so that the canal can be reopened to boats once the new bridge foundations and a concrete arch are in place – hopefully in July.

This will mean that boaters can then use the canal while the remaining works to rebuild the bridge take place, reinstating an important link from Hebden Bridge to Wakefield and beyond and to the Huddersfield Broad Canal.