

# The Historic NARROW BOAT OWNERS CLUB



# newsletter

2010/2



**THE HISTORIC NARROW BOAT OWNERS CLUB  
COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2010/2011**



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**FRONT COVER:** *Swallow* and *Saltaire* wait to set off on the parade  
**BACK COVER:** *Barrow* parades steered by a new recruit for the  
Young Working Boaters Club?

Photos: Tim Coghlan. Taken at the Braunston Gathering last year

**Website: [www.hnboc.org.uk](http://www.hnboc.org.uk)**



# FORE-END



Greetings from Beggarlee Wharf

Congratulations are due to our friend Harry Arnold who has been awarded an MBE in the 2010 Queen's Birthday Honours List for the significant role he has played in Britain's inland waterways scene for almost 50 years. His name is well known in the waterways world as a photographer and as a writer - recording the changing places, craft and people of the waterways since the late 1950s.

Although we signed up 4 new reps at the recent AGM, there are still 2 vacancies. We need a rep for the Fens Area and one for the Kennet & Avon, so if anyone feels they would like to help with this, please approach any committee member. We meet 6 times a year at various locations, break at lunch time for a pub meal and carry on in the afternoon. I regard it as a pleasant social occasion, as well as a chance for interesting discussion.

As I promised you, this mag is a little later than usual, which gave us the chance to take *Ambergate* out for an airing! We did meet several of you but as we were somewhat incognito in our modern boat we escaped notice! The trip didn't go entirely to plan, in fact not at all to plan, and involved us hanging around near the medical centre at Whaley Bridge for some 4 weeks while I had pneumonia. We will try again next year to boat the Huddersfield Narrow. Returning via the Shroppie we noted that the Audlem Mill shop has a most extensive range of canal books.

There were noticeably fewer moving boats than we had expected on our trip, and I'm beginning to wonder if the escalating cost of boating, particularly diesel, is causing people to reduce their annual mileage or even driving them off the system altogether. However having said that, there was an excellent turnout of historic craft at Braunston last weekend.

Val



An Exhibition at the  
**Herbert Art Gallery - Coventry**  
**Life on the Coventry &  
Oxford Canals**

The Robert Longden  
Photography Archive

I understand that there are many  
more photos than were shown in  
Sonia Rolt's book

**A Canal People**

26th June - 30th August  
Upstairs in Gallery 4



## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

by Phil Prettyman



Thanks to all of you who supported our Easter gathering at Coventry. It was a splendid turn out with 37 boats jammed into the basin - probably the busiest scene in the basin's 200 year history! We had a number of events using the bar and other facilities in the converted coal cellars, this included a 'tat' auction which raised over £200. Next year we shall be supporting the Ellesmere Port gathering - and there is some suggestion that we might follow this with a trip across the Mersey to Liverpool.

We were all very pleased that Dave Prior, our Fens rep, was well enough to be able to join us at Coventry, although sadly he passed away shortly afterwards (see page 7). He will be greatly missed by the Club and his many friends across the waterways community. The Club committee has decided to use the money that we raised at the Coventry auction together with an additional donation in order to purchase some sort of memorial for Dave. As he was an active supporter of the restoration of **Sculptor** at the Waterways Museum at Stoke Bruerne, we have offered to purchase a new set of top planks for **Sculptor** in Dave Prior's name.

Following the debacle over the Marsworth Yard development, BW have embarked on a much more comprehensive consultation process on this and other property developments. The Club and other waterways groups have been involved in some useful and informative discussions around property issues and it is my impression that we are getting much better and more open information on heritage issues. Even so, we continue to rely on members to alert us about any waterways heritage or development issue that might arise in your area.

Another way in which feedback from members is crucial is that of navigation problems and pinch points. Often, when we raise specific problems with BW we are told that few complaints have been logged. A long tradition of self-reliance often means that members deal with most navigation issues themselves and rarely call BW. It would be very helpful if these incidents were logged by email with the Club (via Sue Cawson). Some of them are well known - eg Hurlleston bottom lock, but even here there is a lack of data - how many and which boats can or can't get through. If you are not sure if your boat can get into the bottom chamber at Hurlleston then try it next time you are passing and let us know. Others are less well recorded - have you had trouble at Bridge 13 on the Coventry?

A very welcome move by BW is the encouragement of their area managers and other staff to join club members on our boats for trips along waterways in their area. Several of these have already taken place and the response from BW managers is very positive. If you are willing to participate and, especially if a trip can be organised on a loaded boat or a pair, please let me know, or better still contact your local BW manager directly and invite them along.

Phil

### **Inglesham Lock – IWA Announce National Restoration Appeal**

The IWA launched a national appeal on Saturday 26 June 2010, in order to raise funds for the restoration and re-commissioning of Inglesham Lock at the junction of the Thames and Severn Canal with the River Thames.

IWA wishes to show continued support to the Cotswolds Canal project following its previous set back regarding certain funding commitments, and to consolidate and build on the recent gift of the lock at Inglesham to the trust by British Waterways.

The target for IWA to raise in support of the whole appeal is £125,000

Go to [www.inglesham.org.uk](http://www.inglesham.org.uk) to make a donation, or send your donations marked 'Inglesham' to IWA Head Office, Island House, Moor Road, Chesham, HP5 1WA





## HAROLD GWYTHER 1936 to 2010

Ian Mac of *Spey* writes:

Harold was responsible for introducing me to canals at the tender age of 8 years. He was my Sunday school teacher and, on the last Sunday in July he took the whole class out on the narrow boat *William*. We met at Sunday school early on the Sunday morning, walked up to Crumpsall Green and caught the 'bus to Oxford Road station where we caught the train to Brooklands. Here we boarded the boat and set sail. When we arrived at Lymm we had a Sunday school lesson on the green grassy bank by the underbridge before we set off again for Broken Cross where we left the boat, walked back to Northwich station and caught a steam train home.



This suited Harold well as Manchester Grammar School, of which he was an Old Boy and a leader of one of its Scout groups, broke up ahead of the other Manchester schools, so they were able to get away on a cruise early. We all loved it. Harold was still living at home at the time and was a member of St Matthew's choir. I can still picture him singing away in his white surplice with his flaming red hair. He was an accomplished choral singer all his life and, for four years, a very competent church warden. At this time he was working for British Railways on the electrification of the West Coast main line to London.

*William* (Royalty class) was used by Troop One Scouts of Manchester Grammar School and kept at Worsley Cruising Club's moorings at Patricroft on the Leigh Branch of the Bridgewater Canal. For some time Harold was club secretary.

Harold, Alan Jones and John Wilson bought the boat in 1962 from Gordon Waddington when the coal traffic (George Page, Bill Atkins) from Boothsbank to Runcorn Gas finished. Many boys were introduced to canals by this wonderful boat. It was one of the few boats to attempt the Rochdale 9 through Manchester city centre in the late 1960s when it was almost impassable and there would be several 'barge crawls', as they were called by the Scouts, each year including one along the near derelict Erewash Canal when it had to be pulled by a tractor and one through London to the rivers Lee and Stort.

Alan Jones (*William* and *Clematis*) writes:

I first met Harold in 1947 when, as a boy of 11, he joined the 1st MGS Scout Group. We both remained joint leaders of it until 1993. We had decided that canal boating would make excellent and interesting Scout training and had experimented first in 1953 with a tin life boat covered by a tarpaulin (see David Jones' articles in past newsletters on Uncle Joe Prescott), then with Manchester Hire Cruisers (Hayman and Bishop) boats, in 1954 with ex Cowburn & Cowpar *Stork* (then recently converted by Gordon Hardman) and in the *William* which was at first mistakenly converted with a full length cabin and from 1973 clothed over and equipped as a camping boat. Of course and perforce we became quite knowledgeable about Bolinder B9 M10 engines. Harold was awarded the Silver Sword by IWA and Silver Scorn (one of its highest awards) by the Scout Association.

He graduated MSc at UMIST in electrical and electronic engineering, joined British Railways as an apprentice trainee at Derby and became a Technical Assistant and instructor. During the so-called 'Beeching Cuts' he joined in 1964, as a Senior Lecturer, the staff of the John Dalton College of Science and Technology which became in turn the Manchester Polytechnic then the Manchester Metropolitan University. Harold took *William* along the Rochdale and, typical of him, even as far as it would fit along the Calder and Hebble in 2004.

Our last cruise together was along the Ashby Canal in 2008.

He leaves Lynda, three children and two grandchildren. He inspired many people to become life-long canal enthusiasts and to take up influential positions in the canal preservation movement.



## DAVID PRIOR 1941 to 2010

I am sorry to have to report that our East Rep, Dave Prior, died on 14th April.

Dave was born in Southall in 1941 and when he was seven he used to go down to the canal and scrounge rides on the passing working boats. Eventually they used to let him steer on the Paddington Arm and later on the Regents Canal. This is where he learned the trade and got to know a lot of the working boat families.

He later came back to the canals living on various boats for some 24 years. During the last 10 years he had *Callisto* and then *Indus 2* from which he traded coal around the Milton Keynes area.



During his years afloat he got into helping the waters to run from various organisations, serving five years as Chairman of the IWA Milton Keynes Branch, then one year as regional Chairman. He also served as Chairman of the 2001 IWA Festival at Milton Keynes and Chairman of the Leighton Buzzard Canal Society. He was until recently Treasurer of the CBOA.

Unfortunately, his health began to deteriorate while he was living on half of the tug *Bream*. He then gave up living aboard and moved ashore near Bedford. However he didn't settle to life on the bank and later bought another boat. We were then sorry to learn that he felt the need to resign from the Committee.

Although by now needing a wheel chair to get around, he joined us in Coventry for the Easter Gathering, and he seemed happy and cheerful whizzing round the basin in the newly acquired motorised wheelchair.

Peter Oates adds:

Laura and I are very saddened at Dave's passing.

Dave finally left the boat he was living on in April and moved into a small cottage near his family. With others, we helped him with the move and saw him settled in reasonably comfortably although he was feeling very tired. We had previously arranged with Dave to take his boat this week to be sold at Braunston Marina. We arrived at Braunston in the evening to the news of his death.

Dave was indeed a kind and thoughtful man - always ready to help others. Despite suffering from disability and pain for a number of years, he has always displayed the determination to continue with life as near to normal as his body would allow. Lesser men would not have achieved as much as he did or lasted as long.

## Foxton Locks Festival 14 & 15 August

The Foxton Inclined Plane Trust invite your support for this event which will include an historic boat gathering. Members are encouraged to attend.

Contact: Tel: 01162 792657 or email: festival@fipt.org.uk



Boat No.

Comp.

41

A Pearsall

Enceladus, Lyra

List of Equipment.

2	Head hooks complete with shafts.	2	1
3	Wood runner blanks.	3	3
1	Box Mast.	1	1
2	Stands.	2	2
	Complete set of gang planks with stays.	1 1/2	1 1/2
1	Deck Scratch and False Scratch.	1	1
1	Hard Bilge mate.	1	1
1	Camp box.	1	1
1	Cool box.	1	1
1	Food box.	1	1
1	set of stern fenders. (thru)	3	3
1	bow fender.	1	1
1	bow rope.	1	1
1	cotton throw line.	1	1
1	Up-hill Straps.	1	1
1	Down-hill Straps.	1	1
1	oil sump.	1	1
1	lugs-eyes.	1	1
1	galia lugs-eyes.	1	1
1	hook for anchor pin.	1	1
1	hook for anchor pin.	1	1
1	Lead block fixed, with straps.	1	1
1	set of side blocks, fixed, with straps.	1 1/2	1 1/2
1	complete set of patent dressed top blocks.	1	1
1	set of slippers.	1	1
1	set of top strings.	1	1
1	Score plans.	1	1
1	galvanized mast head lamp. (Oil burning).	1	1
1	electric head lamp.	1	1
1	navigation lamp.	1	1
1	engine room lamp. (oil burning.)	1	1
1	engine room electric hand lamp.	1	1
1	electric battery.	1	1
2	cabin electric roof lamps.	2	2
1	engine room electric roof lamp.	1	1
1	2 gallon paraffin can.	1	1
1	water can.	1	1
1	hand bowl.	1	1
1	tillers.	1	1
1	lipstick.	1	1
	Bellocks and keys to cabin and engine room.	1	1
1	electric warning lamp.	1	1
1	mouth horn.	1	1
1	tool box.	1	1
1	screw driver.	1	1
1	pair of pliers.	1	1
1	oil can.	1	1
1	rust priming tool.	1	1
1	starting handle.	1	1
1	set of spanners 1/2" - 3/16"; 1/2" - 5/16";	1	1
1	3/8" - 1/16"; 1/2" - 3/8"; 5/16" - 11/16".	1	1
1	Wave lifter.	1	1
1	box spanners and wavy bar.	1	1
1	instructions book.	1	1
1	drawing of gear box.	1	1
1	valve extractor.	1	1
1	valve Springs.	1	1
1	tin of grinding paste.	1	1
1	Brass.	1	1
1	Shovel.	1	1
1	fire bow.	1	1
1	High Box.	1	1

Signed, STEWART.....

Andrew Boucher sent this interesting inventory for **Enceladus & Lyra** which had been given to him by Arthur Pearsall many years ago. It had been issued 26.4.1938. See opposite.





## SLOUGH & BRIGHTON

Andrew also sent this picture of Arthur Pearsall, and his sister-in-law Hannah Boyes, with the **Slough & Brighton** taken at Hillmorton in June 1953. Arthur was shortly to leave the boats, living at Hillmorton and taking up a job on the maintenance until his retirement.

Having previously worked on wide boats for such as Marylebone rubbish dept. and Harefield Lime Co. at Springwell, Arthur and his wife Sarah went to work for the GUCCo. in the 1930s as did his brother Tom and wife Carrie (of **Golden Spray** and later **Aber & Alperton** fame). On the death of Sarah's father John Boyes in 1935, Sarah's mother Sarah Anne and sister Hannah joined Arthur and Sarah on the GU boats, having the **William & Adelaide**, **Mizar & Zenith** and **Enceladus & Lyra** before moving into the **Barrow & Brighton** at about the start of the war. They swapped the **Barrow** for the **Slough** after an accident with a carboy of acid at Fazeley St. and kept these until early 1953.

Hannah and her mother left boating then, her mother being 90, and moved into their house at Hillmorton, Arthur and his wife joining them a few months later.



### Braunston Gathering

Stop press: 91 Boats attended the gathering this year:

**Adamant, Aldgate, Alcor, Angel, Ant, Arcangel, Archimedes & Ara, Atalanta, Atlantic, Aquila, Ariel, Beatty, Battersea, Bittell, Bletchley & Argus, Cactus, Callisto, Camel, Capricorn, Cassiopeia, Chertsey, Chiswick, Clover & Fazeley, Columbia, Corona, Cyprus, Darley, Dodona, Dorado, Dove, Dover, Empress, Fenny, Fulbourne, George, Grange, Hadley, Hare, Hood, Ian, James Loader & Betelgeuse, Joseph, Jubilee, Kestrel & Vienna, Laplander, Ling, Madeley, Manchuria, Marquis, Mecca, Nutfield & Raymond, Owl, Oxford No 1, Pacific, Panther, Pelican, Pisces, Plover, Renfrew, Roach, Sagitta, Saltaire, Sandbach, Sculptor, Sickle & Cedar, Skylark, Southern Cross, Stanton, Star, Stratford, Tardebigge, Tasmania, Thea, Themis, Thor, Towcester, Tug No 2, Tycho, Vesta, Victoria (Royalty), Victoria, Vulcan, Water Lily, Whitby.**

Report and pics in next issue. Val

## THE HEMELRYK AWARD

The award this year was presented to Paul Barber for his work on **Whitby**. When purchased by Paul, this large Northwich motor was suffering from extensive corrosion, to say the least. The work was carried out by Paul, with the able assistance of Barry Argent, at Paul's yard in the Sheet Stores basin, Long Eaton. The hull work is among the most extensive that we have seen carried out on this type of vessel. This included, not only a new bottom, but replacement of most of the hull sides up to the top guard, new counter and deck, engine room roof and steel back cabin, front deck and bulkhead and new stern gear. Extensive riveting was undertaken using some 1,000 rivets. The knees were removed, straightened and re-riveted. The cabin interior was also refitted from scratch.

Paul has fond memories of his time working for Threefellows Carrying Ltd. and at that time **Whitby** was one of the boats used on the River Soar gravel contract. He has now bought the name of Threefellows Carrying Ltd. and **Whitby** is in the process of being painted in Threefellows' distinctive livery.



Our Chairman presents Paul Barber with the Hemelryk Award

Photo: Steve Wood



Stuart Shuttleworth and Malcolm Webster are congratulated by our Chairman, at the AGM

Photo: Steve Wood

## THE KEAY AWARD

This year the Keay Award goes to Stuart Shuttleworth for work carried out on **Towy**. The old cabin was removed and the engine hole dismantled. Wherever possible original parts of the boat were renovated and re-used, where not, the parts were templated. The front metal bulkhead was stripped of extraneous pipework, needle gunned and unnecessary holes filled. The main diesel tank was

removed and renovated. This exposed the original wooden stank from oil boat days which was in a perilous condition. Its renovation became a project for son James, under the guidance of Adrian Polglaze. Re-using original materials extended to renovation of some of the original nails. The gunwhales were removed to mid boat and the underlying timbers made good. **Towy** was found to have spread by an inch, and was pulled in and bolted by the engine 'ole. The new gunwhales were fitted and cabin and engine 'ole rebuilt. Where metal fastenings were visible they were riveted. Stern deck and side cants replaced. The floor was repaired in the engine 'ole and replaced in the back cabin. On docking, 32 rot spots were repaired, the hull was re-shoed, dried out and recaulked. The upper guards were replaced. Coincidentally the re-float took place on the 70th anniversary of the original one at Uxbridge. Naturally a party was held, with guests of honour being members of the Berridge family from carrying days.



## MYSTERY PICTURES



Photo: John Wain

Right then, I almost beat you last time - definitely slowed up the responses!  
I believe both these pics are somewhere on the BCN. The upper one was taken in 1966,  
I don't have a date for the lower one. The pub on the bridge is the Oldport Hotel

I'm relying on you to give me the locations, I don't have a clue about either!! Val

Weaver Collection No 151





## HNB OC EASTER GATHERING 2010 - BISHOP STREET BASIN, COVENTRY

Mike Harrison writes:

Prior to the Club's Easter Gathering, I had been delegated to receive the entries, and by the time Val and I set off the weekend before, I had 41 boats on the list. This was very encouraging, but perhaps a little worrying as to whether we could pack them all into the basin. Upon our arrival on the Wednesday we found that Sue had already installed some 10 boats

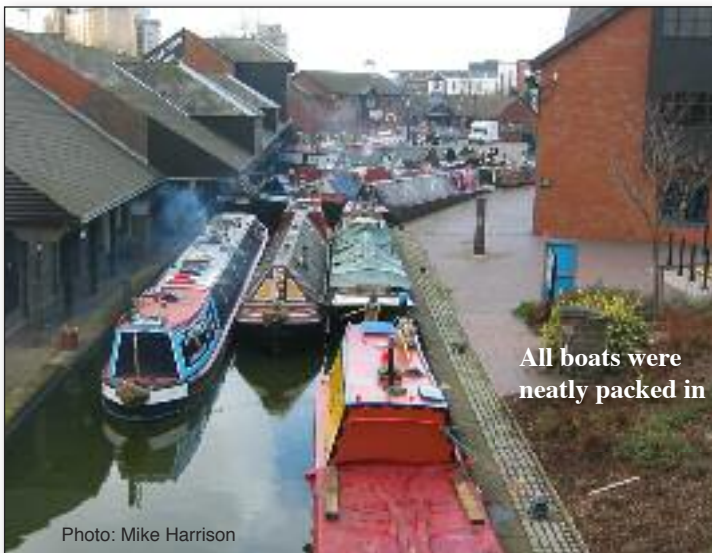


Photo: Mike Harrison

All boats were neatly packed in

and the remainder arrived steadily over the next two days. We eventually managed to pack in all the boats that arrived, a final total of 37.

An advantage of this location was the proximity of the city centre with its many and various attractions, including a large Transport Museum, several art galleries and museums - all free - as well as the world famous cathedral.

The Courtaulds factory, very recently demolished, had been alongside the canal, just before the basin, and had been one of the main destinations for the Cowburn & Cowpar boats carrying chemicals from Manchester. It was therefore thought that it would be a good idea to invite the 8 C&C motor boats to join us. We were very pleased that 5 of the 8, **Skylark, Snipe, Starling, Swallow** and **Swan** were able to attend, and these made a fine sight tied together.

Other boats gathering were: **Aldgate, Bath, Bootes, Callisto, Clover, Cyprus, Dodona, Elizabeth, Gerald, Hare, James Loader & Betelgeuse, Kestrel & Vienna, Manchuria, Marquis, Mecca, Owl, Panther, Plover, Sagitta, Sickle & Cedar, Stanton, Thea, Victoria, Warbler, Whitby, Zodiac.** *Ambergate, Dot 6* and *Harrier*.

In spite of the mainly inclement weather the event attracted much attention and it was good to see so many of our members who came by road and rail to join in.

The Committee had booked the use of Taylor John's House, a licensed function room built in the old coal vaults and conveniently situated beside the basin. This was used for our events throughout the weekend, the first of which was an illustrated talk on the history of the Cowburn & Cowpar Company given by Alison Smedley and Mary Gibby on the Friday evening. We were pleased to welcome our member John Jackson and his wife. Mr Jackson had been employed as a chemist by C&C and he was able to add many interesting details.

On the Saturday, Clair and Iain set up the Club Shop in Taylor John's House. We were grateful for this accommodation as it was very cold and wet outside. A pleasant surprise was an invitation to look round the converted warehouses on the south side of the basin. These are now used by a number of artists and craftspeople and have been nicely restored, with much of the original chutes and hoist mechanisms still intact.





Various canal films were shown in the afternoon, and Andrew Boucher arrived with an absolute treasure of a film made in 1956 and entitled 'The Boat People'. I don't think any of us had seen this film before - thank you Andrew for a rare treat. The evening session was a talk about the Coventry Canal and its history given by a member of the Coventry Canal Society.

Sunday dawned a fine sunny day which encouraged much polishing of brasses or a convivial day entertaining guests and visitors around the boats. Our archivist Richard Booth



Photo: Alison Smedley

was able to join the bell ringing team in the old cathedral tower, for the Easter service. Another attraction of this morning was the trans - shipping of timber, destined for the restoration of **Lucy**, from **Skylark** to **Betelgeuse**. Peter Boyce was in charge and the operation involved the use of a portable wooden gantry (known as Elmer) and chain blocks to lift a large

section of tree trunk which can be seen still resting in the hold of **Skylark**. We were also pleased to see a contingent of the Young Working Boaters Club.

The auction in the afternoon was an hilarious event and very well supported. The tables were weighed down by all manner of tat - sorry, useful and interesting items, which were all sold by our Chairman who has finally found his vocation as an auctioneer!! This raised some £240 for Club funds.

Sunday evening concluded with a very interesting, well supported waterways quiz, which had been compiled and was expertly presented by Peter Oates and Laura Sturrock. This resulted in a nail biting climax with a tie for first place. The winning team was then decided by a tie breaker question which involved deciding the number of full length narrow boats it was possible to fit into a lock on the Panama Canal!!

The final event of the gathering was on Monday morning, when members walked through the city to the Warwick Road United Reform Church, where our member David Lowe, an accomplished organist, gave us a delightful recital. We were then invited behind the scenes at the Church to view the component parts of a Wurlitzer pipe organ, which is in the process of being restored, and will eventually be installed by church members.

By now boats had begun to disperse and all agreed it had been an excellent and enjoyable event at an ideal venue. Thanks are due to Ros Prettyman who did much of the spadework in organising the weekend.

**There was much discussion at Coventry regarding venues for future Easter Gatherings. Some members expressed the wish that more notice should be given and that members have the opportunity to express their views on the location chosen.**

**To this end the committee will be pleased to receive your suggestions for the Easter Gathering in 2012. Bear in mind that the venue will need to accommodate some 40 craft and have nearby premises for members to congregate and that rivers can be more subject to flooding early in the year. We look forward to hearing from you.**



## Know Your Committee

Assistant Archivist - Vivienne Scragg



My first encounter with boats was in Derby, when as a child I used to play around my granddad's pig sties, not far from what was then the ice factory, now demolished. The disused Derby Canal was nearby and I remember sunken wooden boats almost lost in the reeds. I realised much later that this was the site of an old wharf. Also many years ago my mother's relations owned the High House at Egginton on the Trent & Mersey Canal.

I got into boats big time just over ten years ago when I went to live on a new boat, *Molly Maguire* which my late husband Scraggy had built by Tony Francis (one time owner of **Beck**). I lived on *Molly* at Barton Turns Marina for just over 5 years and worked at some of the local boatyards, doing blacking, pump outs and painting and being a housekeeper for 16 plus timeshare boats. Later I worked as a banks person on the Llangollen Canal for a period whilst Scraggy was tug driving on dredging contracts.

Some 5 years ago we then did a deal and bought **Monarch** and a year later we also acquired **Grimsbey** and re-united the pair after 62 years. Then, as most of you know, Scraggy died of Weil's disease in September 2005. This was a bad period in my life, but I managed to carry on with the boats, and am now working at Fradley Junction.

At Easter last year I was lucky to find Simon, a new man in my life who is just as fired up about historic narrow boats as I am.

My heart and soul is into the history of working narrow boats and the people who worked them. I am continuing to live on **Monarch** which I regard very much as a living museum, which we have borrowed for the time being.

I am looking forward to assisting Richard with the Club's Archive

Viv



## The Boat Museum – Ellesmere Port Easter Gathering 2010

Report from David Osborn

For the historic narrow boats attending this year's event at the Port the weather was unusually kind, with the wind not turning to blow straight towards the cabin doors for the boats moored stern on in the top basin until the Sunday and the rain held off as well, which was another bonus. Although the weather on the trip to the Port was not so considerate and for those who came in via the Manchester Ship



*Seaford* at Ellesmere Port for Easter

Photo: Euan Corrie

Canal on the Wednesday a rough passage with the waves breaking over the fore-ends.

Most of the visiting boats were in place by Friday evening with **Saturn** being tied in the space that used to be occupied by **Merak**, now looking a sad state in the arm behind the Island Warehouse. **Saturn** was part loaded with beer casks from the Spitting Feathers Brewery, Waverton near Chester, which supplied the real ale for the weekend bar in the Rolt Centre.

The Friday evening talk was given by Norman Stainthorp, who, at the time the Museum was in the process of being established was working for the then Local Authority. It was an amusing dissertation from the perspective of being on the "other side" and the considerable amount of effort put in behind the scenes by a number of Officers and Councillors from the Local Authority to get the project up and running.

The Boatman's Games held on the Sunday morning were in the main supported by an enthusiastic younger set; some of us "old-uns" having decided a couple of years back to retire whilst we still had our dignity!!

Generally, the boat exhibits, which had been worked on by the Museum staff or by the growing band of volunteers, were improved, both narrow and wide. It is such a disappointment that the wooden hulled boats for which the Museum has responsibility continue to deteriorate, the exception probably being the box boat, which is now out of the water awaiting replacement of the bottoms, stem post and two lower strakes, funded by a grant from the Association of Industrial Archaeologists. The Heritage Boat Yard project continues to make progress with **Mendip** receiving attention on the bank.

A pity a number of the 'high tech' touch screens in the Island Warehouse were again not working and the lighting in the lower part was atrocious when visited on Saturday afternoon. In the shop, the number of books relating to the historical aspect of canals had improved but, still not a definitive selection of those currently available.

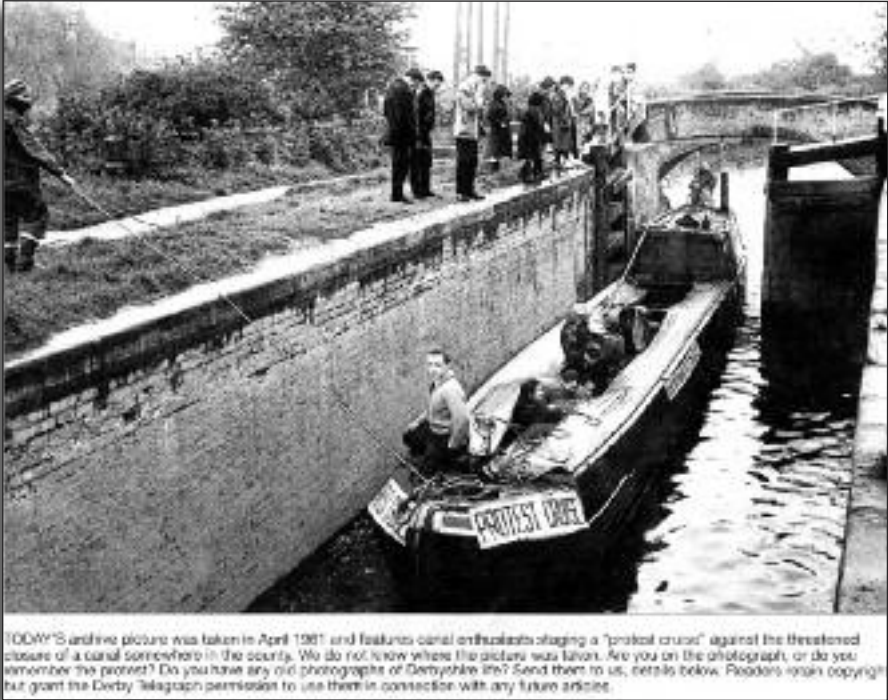
Visiting historic working narrow boats included:

**Acacia\***, **Alton**, **Buckden**, **Dory**, **Empress**, **Gainsborough**, **Kenilworth\***, **Lacerta**, **Lamprey**, **Lead-Us\*** (fore end of GUCCo **Lepus**), **Lindsay**, **Malvern**, **Petrel**, **Radiant**, **Regulus**, **Sandbach**, **Saturn**, **Seaford**, **Spey** and **Victory\***

\* Denotes full-length cabin.



## Starlight and the fight to save the Erewash Canal



This photograph recently appeared in the Derby Telegraph and we were pleased to be able to identify it for them. The pic shows **Starlight**, an ex Seddons boat in Sandiacre Lock on the Erewash Canal. The occasion was a cruise organised by the Inland Waterways Protection Society to protest against the threatened closure of the upper section of the Erewash Canal. **Starlight** was at that time owned by Davison Bros. of Trent Lock.

The Erewash Canal was eventually saved, allowing the present day campaign by the Friends of the Cromford Canal to restore the 14 mile waterway through to Cromford. In fact Hugh Potter, FCC Archivist, has dug out a press cutting from 1961, part of which I have reproduced below: (Accompanying this was a poor quality photo of **Starlight** at Langley Mill)

### The **Starlight** at Langley Mill

#### Protest Against Closing Canal

Under a grey watery sky a small crowd of people waited at Langley Mill to see the arrival of the narrow boat **Starlight**, which had been chartered by the Inland Waterways Protection Society to make the voyage from Trent Lock, Long Eaton along the whole length of the Erewash Canal to Langley Mill on Sunday morning. The last time the journey was made by a working boat like **Starlight** was as long ago as 1948 and the object of the Society was to prove that it was still possible for a boat of this size to navigate the canal, also as a protest against the proposal by the British Transport Commission to close the 5 mile stretch from Ilkeston to Langley Mill.

I decided to walk along the canalside and meet the boat, and on passing under the bridge against the former Anchor Inn the scenery on the winding curves of the canalside must rank as equal to any in England. As I passed I heard the faint noise of **Starlight's** engine, and eventually she came





into view at a steady walking pace. Near the Anchor Inn I boarded the barge, and was introduced to Mrs P J Bunker, Hon Sec of the Society. She told me that although only 3 people had spent the night on the barge at Cotmanhay, upwards of 40 people had been on the boat at different stages of the voyage, in the pouring rain with no protection. Mrs Bunker added that throughout the 11 mile voyage co-operation with the staff of the British Transport Commission had been excellent, and they had very little trouble apart from going aground at New Eastwood and Shipley Gate and a bit of trouble winding at Langley Mill.

Mrs Bunker said that the Society was putting up a tremendous fight against the higher ups of the British Transport Commission, who were trying to close canals wherever possible. The Society was looking for support from local councils and private individuals. It was the Society's aim to establish a working inland waterway from Leeds to London. Pointing to Messrs Vic Hallam's factory, Mrs Bunker said that here was a classic example of a large firm situated right at the side of a canal, but having to use other methods to bring in their timber. *Starlight* eventually reached the head of the Erewash Canal and as the lock gates were opened passed into the first lock on the Cromford Canal, which is the farthest point that a boat can now reach.

Among the many members of the public waiting to greet the *Starlight*, were members of Eastwood Council, which is a corporate member of the Society, and after a few minutes rest the *Starlight* set out on her return journey to Trent Lock.

### Rickmansworth Canal Festival

15th & 16th May

Richard Booth writes:

I only report on this event as a brief visitor on Saturday afternoon. If the number of cars and people are anything to judge by, then it was a very popular event. I decided to approach from the Harefield direction in the hope of finding a street parking place but every conceivable verge and roadside space was already



Photo: Tim Lewis

taken and there was a long queue for the aquadrome car park. I eventually found a space over half a mile away! The towpath from Batchworth lock almost to the aquadrome bridge was lined with historic boats up to 4 abreast. Sadly however despite appeals for wooden boats, only 3 attended. It was good to see *Mimas* looking very smart after its recent rebuild, surely a candidate for the Keay Award. An attractive guide booklet was available for £1.

Boats noted were: ***Archimedes & Ara, Baldock, Banstead, Baron, BCN 108, Bream, Caldly, Clover & Fazeley, Colonel, Corona, Dove, Indus 2, Jaguar, Kangaroo & Australia, Kestrel & Vienna, Lupin, Mimas, Nautilus, Nutfield & Raymond, Pisces, President & Kildare, Roger, Stafford, Victoria, Bantam Tug Ilda***



## TUGS IN ACTION AT TIPTON

Steve Bingham writes:



Photo: Steve Bingham

During the May Day Bank Holiday Weekend 2010 the BCLM hosted its bi-annual tug gathering. Up to 15 historic tugs were in attendance over the three days, lining both towpaths along the historic Lord Ward's Arm. Weather didn't deter the hardened British, as they came through to witness the entrance to a gathering of these historic tugs in action, as they demonstrated the skilled art of towing

trains of joey boats along and around the very tight canal bends of the BCN. Meanwhile two vintage lorries were unloading their cargo of packing cases, using the wharf crane (hand cranked) to load up the waiting joey boat. Canal demonstrations were also taking place in the form of traditional signwriting, fender making and rag rug pegging, while boatman's belts were being made inside the rolling mills shed.

During the night time activities we all had fish & chips for tea then strolled into the Bottle & Glass pub for a well earned pint or two (or three !) with John Hadley tickling the ivories under candle light. We all joined in with the 1930s sing a long, things were going well until a large rumble was heard and a flash of lightning lit up the whole village! Rain came down like stair rods. So as we couldn't get back to our boats, (shame), it was time for another round of drinks! Eventually the rain eased off and at 10pm Debbie was shouting "Okay, drink up you 'orrible lot, haven't you got any homes to go to?"....."Sorry I meant BOATS!"

The next morning, it felt like the middle of January rather than May! I jumped into the joey, **Flying Scott** to get across to the towpath and found I was up to my ankles in water from the night before. In went the pump whilst the kettle was put on. Later on we loaded the joey up with packing cases using the crane. Then it was time to call on the tug **Tardebigge** to have a turn at towing the **Flying Scott**, whilst **Bittell** (built in 1934) hooked up the ice boat **Ross** (built in 1847) for a tow. The two boats had a combined age of 239 years! The ice boat **Ross** had just undergone a full restoration job which was completed at Brinklow, where **Enterprise No 1** tug started the long tow on the Wednesday before the event, arriving at the Museum on Saturday morning to lots of cheers and camera clicking. As **Bittell** was towing I was very impressed how **Ross** handled, it seemed to swim well but was very heavy compared to the **Flying Scott**. It did have a habit of running into the back of the tug when slowing down for bridge holes, so a long tow line was required to string the ice boat out to prevent any damage occurring.

Sunday night saw thirty of us crammed into the little cinema, with John Pattle giving us a very interesting talk and DVD show on the rebuilding and restoration of **Pacific**. This was followed by Peter Freakley showing us a film of the last working warehouse in Broad St, Wolverhampton just before it was turned into a night club! The next film was also very interesting being of the last coal run from Anglesey basin in Cannock, with Joe Hollingshead showing his towing skills using



**Enterprise No 1** as the tug, and pulling 3 fully laden joey boats along the Wryley and Essington Canal which took around two days to complete until they arrived into the BCLM to unload.

As bank holiday Monday dawned the Lions and Baboons in Dudley Zoo could be heard shouting for their breakfast! With the smell of dense smoke coming out of the boat chimneys and the sizzling smell of eggs and bacon cooking, it was our turn to be fed. As people were walking over Broad Street Bridge, things were starting to happen again around the canalside and we were off on another busy day of towing and shunting boats around.

Tugs attending were: **Atlantic, Bittell No.5, Coventry, Caggy, Enterprise No.1, Governor, James Loader, Nansen 2, Oxford No.1, Pacific No.4, Sickie, Sandbach, Sharpness, Tardebigge, Vesta No. 3,** and **Joanna.**



Harry Arnold sends this cracking pic of David Lowe on **Swallow** crossing the River Mersey, from Liverpool Docks to Eastham and on into Ellesmere Port. The only working boat among the convoy of some 30 craft.

### **Beatty on the Rochdale Canal**

Nick Grundy informs:

**Beatty** has recently successfully completed a return trip over the Rochdale Canal. This follows on from David Lowe's trip with **Swallow** last year (see HNBOC Newsletter 2009/4). This involved negotiating 91 wide locks each way, many of which are heavy and difficult to work; we had a crew of four on the outward journey and five on the return.

Passage up the Manchester 18 locks has to be booked with British Waterways, as does the summit level. Manchester was a bit lumpy and shallow, with its share of rubbish, but no worse than parts of the BCN. The canal engineering is magnificent - all stonework, hardly a brick to be seen. The engineering solutions to get under motorways and other major roads are quite remarkable achievements. From Littleborough onwards the scenery is dramatic - well worth the effort of all those locks; it certainly helped to have the glorious spring weather which we have been enjoying recently. We took **Beatty** to Salterhebble, the first locks on the Calder and Hebble; disappointingly she would not go all the way into the top lock, despite our best efforts! In eight days we saw fewer than a dozen moving boats. At this time of year there is no water shortage, in fact, quite the opposite; the water was running down the bywashes and pouring over the top gates of many of the locks. This canal deserves to see more boats; on our return down the Manchester 18 locks we were the only boat that day. I would strongly encourage others to make this trip.



Michael Askin continues his boating trip along the big waters of the North East:















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## Some Snippets Regarding the Extremely Narrow Locks on the Chesterfield Canal

### Stret lock to Norwood tunnel and Shireoaks Middle Lock

BW Issued the following notice: Tuesday 25 May 2010 until further notice

We would like to advise boaters that following correspondence from several users, we are working with boating organisations to investigate and define the maximum craft dimensions for boats from Stret Lock to Norwood Tunnel. It is apparent that some boats that are within the publicised 6' 10" beam and 2' 6" draught are unable to navigate through Stret Lock or find it extremely difficult and have similar problems at Shireoaks Middle Lock. Whilst we complete our investigations, please contact the Newark office for up to date information.

Enquiries: 01636 704481

Then from Pete Ramsell of the Chesterfield Canal Trust who lease **Python** from BW

Friday 11th June saw **Python** negotiate the 23 locks up to Norwood Tunnel with no problems at all, proving that Stret, Shireoaks, and Morse Locks are at fault not the width of **Python**. This trip was achieved with Sean McGinley, BW East Midlands Manager and Stuart Gadsby Maintenance Officer on board, who had to agree with us about lock widths, however plans to rebuild are not forthcoming as finances are very stretched at the moment.

The plan is that every time **Python** needs to move south we will have to call BW out to help us through said locks by raising water levels, the first time being this July for our Festival in Worksop. Plans are being drawn up to move **Python** more frequently whilst being restored, causing BW to be called upon more often.

I should know more shortly about the planned Historic Boat Festival at Retford in 2011, currently we are seeking funding which is looking favourable, and a date, but it should be early August 2011. **Python** should be fully operational and restored by spring 2011 in time for Braunston that year. This year 4 representatives from **Python** attended, me being one of them.



## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S NOTES

by David Daines



### TAKE A BW EMPLOYEE ON A TRIP

BW would like their local staff to be taken on our members' boats to experience the state of the waterway and find out where the problems are. The Club is encouraging members to co-operate and indeed take the initiative! When you have done this, I would like a write up of the response and findings to put in the newsletter.

**Laurence Hogg has written:**

First cruise on the BCN for 2010 was from Norton Canes Docks on the Cannock Extension Canal to Broad St depot in Wolverhampton. Crewing with us was Dean Davies, local BW waterway manager.

The journey was completed in 4.25 hours. We also nosed into the cleared Holly Bank basin and stopped off at the United Kingdom mooring at Lane Head. BW's spot dredging, tree cutting and weed eradication has transformed the Wyrley & Essington. **Barnet** was drawing 3ft 3ins under way and we had no need to go down the weedhatch even once!

The W&E is a fully useable waterway without any of the former problems so often reported. Along the route there are a number of good pubs, good overnight moorings at Lane Head and a surprising lack of boats! We saw not one other boat moving. There is no reason for any boater to worry about navigating this stretch of canal now, it is in better condition than some more well used canals. Holly Bank basin is superb and surely must be a candidate for a marina or moorings. There are also many other sites which could well become moorings with a little foresight. Holly Bank is also once again an inviting rally site.



## Stoppages - Lost Practices

The following was posted on an email forum by David, from Llangollen and is reproduced here with his permission:

Along with those of boatmen, warehousemen and toll clerks, are those of maintenance - and the methodology of efficiency.

A few years back I was chatting to a chap who worked on the Stratford on Avon Canal when the National Trust ran it and then when it transferred (with a £1 million dowry?) to BW. He was amazed at BW work practices and how they wasted money. Under the Trust they had little dosh and a few staff with WRG doing lots of work each winter. They did everything on a shoestring and if they had had a million to do the needed work it would have got done very quickly and with money to spare. Still, with no money if the canal closed (under the Trust) and few staff to fix things the small band of workers figured out quick, cheap but solid solutions to fix bits that regularly broke.

One bit that was always breaking was the headboards (that boats use to ride up with the front fender on them) at locks. To make the fixing of this a quick easy job the men had moved the screw holes on the fixed gate portion to a standard position on every lock and back at base had a pile of boards ready with holes pre-drilled in the right places plus a DIY kit of bits you might need to change the board. This meant that, when the men who patrolled the canal regularly looking for problems and collecting fees for using the canal or a boater using it reported a broken board a crew - made up of most of the few men on the canal - would collect board and kit, including shearlegs and head off by road. Knowing all the places to get near the locks they would get the board and shearlegs to it, set up, plank, drain, shearlegs in, board off and board on in a few hours - timed when traffic was sparse as boats were money.

When BW took over on the first day the old boys were lined up in front of their new BW fellow workers and told by a stentorian supervisor that now 'the professionals' had the canal everything would be different.

And it was. The patrols stopped and when a headboard was reported broken someone in the supervisors office filled in a chit rather than sending a crew to fix it. On the first occasion this happened the old boys were amazed. They were even more amazed with what followed. A few days after the chit went off to Hatton, our lad was ordered to transport a carpenter due from Hatton from Lapworth to the lock. They were to travel - not by one of the nice shiny new Landrovers that BW had just brought - but by boat. Not only that but, when the old boys went to load a headboard on the boat they were told off. The boat would carry the carpenter and his tools only. Arriving on site the carpenter started measuring up! Our chap suggested that headboards were available at the yard, to be told that BW did not work like that. The carpenter would measure, then return to Hatton and put in a chit. When the chit reached the top of the pile a board would be made. When the board was made a carpenter (when available) and a full team to do the heavy work would come and do the job for which, as the boards often did not fit, a number of days might be expended. In fact by the time the board was finally replaced a few more had failed so there was plenty more work.

As the man said, the BW canal manager was not interested in speeding the work or saving money - he had his own priorities and as BW didn't make money directly from the canal (as the Trust had and as the waterways companies had back in the old days) there was no reason to rush a job or do it cheaply by working out better more efficient systems than were being used. Nor was there any reason for one area to suggest a better method to another as managers were in competition for promotion.

Given this, it is no wonder stoppages take so long these days and cost so much.

### **FREE TO A GOOD HOME!**

The Friends of Raymond have two spare top-planks on offer - back o' the mast and middle planks from a Barlows wooden butty. Sound but will need refinishing and collecting from Braunston.  
Call Steve (Captain) on 07792 497116.



## OLGA'S BOAT SONG

### Part 1

Tim Coghlan looks at the truly remarkable life of the former 'Idle Woman' Olga Kevelos, whose brief obituary was in the last issue. She began her working life as an astronomer, became a working boatwoman during the war, then went on to become an international motor cycle racing champion, a publican, and finally a Mastermind challenger, and serial TV quiz star. And despite all of this, she never lost her femininity, remaining glamorous to the end.

My first encounter with Olga was at the unveiling of the plaque to the 'Idle Women' outside the entrance to the Canal Museum at Stoke Bruerne, Northamptonshire, during the first 'Stoke Bruerne at War Weekend' in September, 2008. She was one of only four survivors able to attend the ceremony, from the thirty or so young girls, who had volunteered to become boatwomen during the war, and had also seen it through – there were many more who had hardly survived beyond the six week initial training. It was a poignant occasion indeed,



Photo: John Watts-Robertson

Four of the original 30 or so *Idle Women* were re-united at the Stoke Bruerne War Weekend. Left to right: Jean Peters, Emma Smith, Sonia Rolt and Olga Kevelos



The plaque at Stoke Bruerne, incorporating the IW badge. Kit Gayford had given her badge to the museum, Olga's was accidentally lost when it was thrown away with the pullover that it was pinned to by her mother who thought it was too disgusting to be washed

David Blagrove, Chairman of the Friends of Stoke Bruerne Canal Museum, knew a little more – 'After the war, she got involved in motor racing, and then retired to run a pub with her brother at Kings Sutton, near Banbury, but I don't know much more than that.' I took the opportunity to photograph her a couple of times, and had meant to follow up on all of this, but never did. Then of late, I heard sad news that she had died on 28th October 2009, following a stroke at the relatively young age of 85 for what appeared to be a fit and healthy woman. After all, I thought, Sonia had turned 90 this year, and was still firing the shots, including another attendance at our Historic Narrow Boat Rally, where she once again rather took over. I was determined to find out

perhaps underlined by the two non-attendees who through sudden ill-health, had cried off at the last moment. Of those four who came, I knew Sonia Rolt very well – she was a frequent attendee at our Braunston Historic Narrow Boat rallies, amongst other things. I certainly knew of authoress Emma Smith, having read her classic account of her war years in her book *Maiden's Trip*; and I had heard mention of Jean Peters, who had joined the IWs towards the end of the war.

But who was Olga? I knew nothing of her. I asked Sonia discreetly, but she was most unhelpful, 'I never really met her and knew nothing about her. I thought she was quite strange - and those high cheek bones, that's what I really do remember.'



what I could about Olga, and the more the story unfolded the more fascinating it became. Hers was no 'idle life,' and I was reminded of that saying of the 18th century German poet Goethe, 'He only earns his freedom, who takes each day by storm.' Olga certainly earned hers.

Olga's story begins with her Greek father, who was born in a mountainous village in the Peloponnese, near Sparta to a middle class medical family. He was well educated, but did not want to do medicine, and instead set off on his travels, first to America and then to England where he studied English at the Pitman College in London, after which he worked for a trading company in Sierra Leone. In Nice, he met and married an English widow, and moved to the well-to-do suburb of Edgbaston in Birmingham, where he became a stockbroker on the Birmingham Stock Exchange and there spent the remainder of his working life. As his son Raymond put it, 'Wherever you plant a Greek, he will put down roots!' His wife's first husband was an Indian Army doctor who was gassed in 1915 on the Western Front at Ypres, from which he later contracted TB and died. Olga was the first of three children to the new marriage. She was born in 1923, followed two years later by a brother Victor, and then seven years after by Raymond in 1932.

Olga was well educated at the George Dixon Grammar School for Girls, in which she took some pride. This was shown by the several of her exercise books that survived in her possessions, including her 'Astronomy Notes etc', where in a well formed hand are tabulated amongst other celestial facts, 'Calendar of Good Nights for Observation of Meteor Showers.' The study of astronomy was to feature twice again in her life. Another hint of her future path was the unauthorized roller-skate race she organised in the school hall, for which she was severely censured by the headmistress. One of the subjects Olga had studied was metallurgy, and after leaving school, and with the country now at war, she worked for a time at the laboratories of William Mills, manufacturers of the famous Mills Bomb. But with her passion for astronomy, she was lured to London by the offer of a job at the Royal Observatory at Greenwich. Unfortunately, air raids forced the closure of the observatory soon after her arrival and caused its evacuation to the Admiralty in Bath.

Her arrival here dismayed at least one member of the senior staff, Donald Sadler, who later wrote in his memoirs that 'Olga Kevelos....could not do arithmetic and terrified people by stalking around with a large knife in her belt...Most (members of the clerical staff) were reasonably competent and one or two were exceptionally good, but a few were hopeless – Olga Kevelos could not add plus and minus signs together.' However he did observe that '...she seemed an interesting woman, and after the war, became a motor-cycle racing champion!'

Olga did not enjoy her time in Bath, where there was no star-gazing, and instead just daily mountains of clerical work to climb. Then one day in early 1943, she read Kitty Gayford's famous advertisement in *The Times*, which attracted so many others - including Sonia Rolt. The advertisement was placed under the name of the Department of War Transport, calling for women volunteers to become boatmen for a minimum weekly wage of £3 - £2 during training - with the caution that 'only women of robust constitution and good health should enter this employment.' The need arose because the canal fleet operators Grand Union Canal Carrying Company and Fellows Morton & Clayton were laying up boats for lack of crews, due to the men being called up.

Olga applied, and persuaded two friends to join her – the scheme calling for 'a crew consisting of three women, there being no objection to friends going together.' Of Olga's original three, one was the daughter of a Harley Street doctor, a family friend. Details of the other are now lost, as are the names of both of them. For all three, it was their long-sought ticket to freedom. As Olga later recalled, 'I give thanks for the war, otherwise I would never have escaped from home. Although I loved it, I wanted to live in the outside world.' Her feelings were shared by many others of volunteers. The 19 year old Emma Smith, who was working for the War Office in a hut in the grounds of Blenheim Palace, later wrote in her canal memoirs *Maidens' Trip*, 'I didn't want to be in uniform! (The IWs provided their own clothes). My sister (in the WAAF) was all brass buttons and saluting, and she horrified me. I was grateful to be liberated from my upbringing. If anything I feel guilty for enjoying my war so much.....I was one of the original hippies, in bare



feet and dungarees, cut off below the knee because we always wanted to be respectable. We didn't want to shock the traditional boat people whose women wore long black skirts.' As to Olga's attire, according to Margaret Cornish's book *Troubled Waters* - where there are occasional references to her - She 'took the biscuit. She was the youngest of the recruits and wore strange and erotic gear. She was a flamboyant person with colourful trousers and a Mexican-type hat... In the forties we were an alien race - women who wore trousers! Scandalous!'

As to Olga's canal-working days, very little is actually known, apart from what odd comments were recorded here and there. She never kept a diary, no letters to parents, family or friends survive, and it is questionable whether there is even one photograph of her - she certainly had none in her possession when she died, as the author can confirm from a recent search of her papers with her surviving brother. All of this is in dramatic contrast to her days as a champion motor cycle racing driver, where there are endless press and magazine articles on her, and hundreds of photographs, as she caught the imagination of the nation, beating the men hands down.

We know that Olga was trained by Kitty Gayford, whom Emma Smith described as 'very hoppity-skippity on and off boats, but had no swankiness about her at all.' Olga would probably

have had at least one 3 week round-trip of training from Bulls Bridge to Birmingham carrying goods from Limehouse Docks, and then to the Warwickshire Coalfields above Coventry to load for the run south to London. Sometimes the training went to two trips, after which the girls were on their own. Margaret commented on the challenge 'to sustain and survive the rigours of the work and not to be one of the many drop-outs who did not survive even the six weeks of training....What had we been trying to prove to ourselves? Was there over compensation for past failure?...



Photo: Waterways Trust

According to Margaret Cornish, Olga is on the far left, with Daphne French just behind, although Sonia Rolt believes that to be herself. Emma Smith is second from the right.

She continues elsewhere, 'There was the story of the trainee who lost the butty in Braunston tunnel. The light on the butty had failed - another loose connection? - and the steerer on the motor failed to realize the butty was no longer in attendance until she emerged from the tunnel. We secretly thought that the steerer must have been somewhat unobservant not to have missed the pull of the butty.' Margaret later learned at a reunion of 'bargees' in Bad Salzuflen of all places that 'Olga was on the butty. She was terrified.'

That three-week round trip experienced on training was then basically the canal the girls travelled thereafter. Margaret lamented, 'Our boats never explored the extensive network north of Brummagen and Coventry. We often wished to go exploring but that pleasure was delayed for me for almost another twenty years....We came to know every bridge 'ole where the lockwheeler would step off from the narrow gunwale, bicycle in hand, to go shopping in a nearby village store; the water depths at every tie-up where we could moor the boats either breasted up or singled out, loaded or empty, we were soon able to gauge to a nicety. Every twist and turn of the channel, kept open by the constant passage of boats, was recognised; to deviate from the channel was to get embedded in the pile-up of mud at the sides of the canal or on the inside of the bend.'



Photo: Waterways Trust

A back load for Brum. Trainees at Bulls Bridge.

The butty in the foreground is loaded with aluminium bars.

Jean Peters and Emma Smith, aboard the Stoke Bruerne Museum's historic Narrow Boat **Sculptor**. In it she commented in her strong Brummy accent, which despite her good education, never left her:

You had to tie the boats in tight to the shute. (This was probably at Longford, just north of Coventry) Then they wound up the shutters and all of a sudden you had about thirty tons of nutty slack come BANG down into the hold. It was up to you to trim it and we had to get shovels to shovel it from one side to another until the boats was riding in a balanced fashion. You remember the nice bits. You remember the lovely summer days when you could sit there and play your recorders as we went along very ostentatiously. That was mostly in Paddington and Regents Park. They was the posh bits, when everyone came along to have a look.'

In an interview with the Northampton Chronicle & Echo following the plaque unveiling at Stoke Bruerne in 2008, Olga commented, 'It was nice that they thought about us before it was too late, in order to remember the people and the efforts made. Idleness was something there wasn't time for; we were very busy. The days were 18 hours long and you just had to keep moving. It was a life-defining thing to do.'

*Tim will continue his narration about the extraordinary life of Olga Kevelos in the next issue.*

### Transport Trust Awards

From Peter Stone

Recently, I was down in London at the Transport Trust Awards Ceremony at Camden Roundhouse where, amongst others, Peter Oates & Laura Sturrock collected an award for their restoration of **Stanton**.

The TT awards aren't large - they're typically worth £250 - £500, but the money often comes at a critical time and the subsequent certificates are presented by HRH Prince Michael of Kent, who is extremely interested in transport conservation and restoration. Many recipients find the awards particularly good for their morale!

I thought that I would drop you this note to say that applications for this year's TT awards (for presentation in a year's time) haven't quite closed. HNBOC members can find details of the awards - and download an application form - from the TT website at [www.transporttrust.com](http://www.transporttrust.com) or by contacting the Trust at 202 Lambeth Road, London SE1 7JW, Tel. 020 7928 6464. The deadline for applications is the end of June

*[To late for this year now, but could be useful for next Ed.]*



## Responses to Mystery Pics in last issue

Well, once again, I've not quite defeated you! But response this time took longer.....

Sue Day rang to identify the location as The Erie Canal Village, in Rome, New York State

Chris Clegg emailed:

During our conversation at Braunston last Saturday, you asked me to email you where I thought the mystery photo was in Issue 2010/1

1. Before you told me that I had the wrong continent: Lincoln

2. After you told me that I had the wrong continent: Erie Canal

I did find a similar picture on Google images; try Erie Canal horse drawn boat

Martin O'Keeffe emailed:

I would think this is on the Erie Canal at Rome in New York state.

It looks very much like the Erie Canal Village see: <http://www.eriecanalvillage.net/>

### The Erie Canal Village

From the sketchy captions on Mr Weaver's photos and much internet research after prompts from Sue, Chris and Martin, I have confirmed (I think) that the location of last time's pics is the Erie Canal Village at Rome in New York State, USA. You could say an American version of the Black Country Museum.

The Erie Canal was the most famous and successful of America's early towpath canals and was able to breach the barrier of the Appalachian Mountains and link Lake Erie with the Hudson River. The Erie Canal was also an integral part of a larger system of New York state canals which bound together the Hudson River with Lake Champlain and the Canadian canals that flowed to the St. Lawrence River. Branches of this New York State Canal also linked the Finger Lakes and reached the Susquehanna River System.

Proposed in 1808 and completed in 1825, the canal links the waters of Lake Erie in the west to the Hudson River in the east. An engineering marvel when it was built, some called it the Eighth Wonder of the World.

In order to open the country west of the Appalachian Mountains to settlers and to offer a cheap and safe way to carry produce to a market, the construction of a canal was proposed as early as 1768. However, those early proposals would connect the Hudson River with Lake Ontario near Oswego. It was not until 1808 that the state legislature funded a survey for a canal that would connect to Lake Erie. Finally, on July 4, 1817, Governor Dewitt Clinton broke ground for the construction of the canal. In those early days, it was often sarcastically referred to as "Clinton's Big Ditch". When finally completed on October 26, 1825, it was the engineering marvel of its day. The waterway runs for some 363 miles from Albany, New York on the Hudson River to Buffalo, New York at Lake Erie, completing a navigable water route from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes it included 18 aqueducts to carry the canal over ravines and rivers, and 83 locks, with a rise of 568 feet from the Hudson River to Lake Erie. It was 4 feet deep and 40 feet wide, and floated boats carrying 30 tons of freight. A ten foot wide towpath was built along the bank of the canal for horses, mules and oxen led by a boy boat driver or "hoggee."

The Erie Canal Village is an outdoor living history museum. It is a reconstructed 19th century settlement on the site where, on July 4, 1817, the first shovelful of earth was turned for the construction of the original Erie Canal. Relax as our mule drawn Packet Boat plies a section of the enlarged canal giving visitors a taste of early 19th century water travel. Then board our narrow gauge steam train excursion and travel as you would have during the late 19th century

*Perhaps these pics weren't really fair to you, but I included them as they intrigued me, and showed how widely Mr Weaver had followed the smell of cut water!*

Right then, its back to the BCN for this issue, I'm standing by!!



## LETTERS

Bryan Nicoll writes:

Lock Distance Posts. Not wishing to put a “spanner in the works” I hope my small contribution will be of some interest.

The first sentence of Alan Faulkner’s reply was of some interest, somewhere in the past I had actually paced out certain posts from the appropriate lock. To be more accurate I have consulted my copy of sheets from the 1893 Chain Survey through Cassiobury and Grove Parks. As a result, the distance post at Lady Capel’s Bridge No. 163 is located 200.5 yards from the bottom gate heel post of Lock No. 78.

In the case of the memo dated 22 November 1943 to Engineer, Watford, it is of interest to note Harvey-Taylor’s boats **Albert** (with no mention of name of butty) in the charge of A Wallington. Alan Faulkner’s article in Winter issue 2008/9 of NarrowBoat on page 22, last sentence states **Albert** was paired with **Daisy** “but from 1938 under James Peasland. On Sunday 21/11/43, Wallington is recorded as being in charge of Harvey-Taylor’s boats “being loaded with grain for Brentford” this seems strange as “bags of wheat into the boats at Brentford destined for Aylesbury” as per second paragraph first sentence on page 24 of same article would appear to be the more likely direction for moving grain/wheat. Possibly different in 1943.

In the case of GUCCCo’s boats No.148 **Hawkesbury** and presumably No. 252 **Cheam** this pair would have been in the charge of A Barnett Senior. Logic and common sense should have prevailed with the first pair working through 75 and also 76 if Lock Keeper Albert Evans had the lock outside his cottage full, bearing in mind Wallington was two handed. At these two locks, there is one distance post **above** 75 and the next **below** 76.

David Daines notes:

Aha! I reclaim the title of 'Pedant in Chief' for the Club. I spotted it, I wonder how many others have, it shews the detail I read the NL with! The 2010/1 Newsletter has a piece about the Braunston gathering on the 'Events' page. The text for this was clearly copied from Braunston's own 'flyer' publicising the event. This announces that this year the so called 'Star' classes of the GUCC Co. boats will be especially featured. It goes on to say that 88 of these boats were built of which 66 survive. Whoops. In fact of course 88 PAIRS of these boats were built, 176 boats in all. (8 pairs were Middle Northwiches) Sadly I doubt 88 butties survive, I wonder just how many have been cut in half and made into 2 boats, and I bet not many of the wooden butties have survived. It could be a whole study on its own, but I don't have the time to do it.

Richard Booth responds:

Well, I guess the archive ought to be able to come up with the answers to your questions – but I can't (yet) without spending an excessive amount of time on the subject which I don't have right now. However, I am aware of the following:

**Star class butties chopped and made into two boats:**

**Canis** (Canis & Canis Major)

**Dodona** (Dodona & Dodona)

**Dubhe** (Dubhe & Dubhe)

**Indus** (Indus & Indus Too)

**Juno** (Juno & Juno II)

**Lepus** (Lead Us & Lepus)

**Marcellus** (Marcellus & Marcellus)

**Satellite** (Satellite & Ganymede)

**Toucan** (Toucan & Toucan, stern not strictly a boat as it has no bow, on the bank at Malcolm Braine’s house)

**Uranus** (Uranus & Hinderoa)

**Vela** (Vela & Vela)

**Star class motors chopped and made into two boats:**

**Antony** (Antony & Antony)

**Antlia** (two halves now reunited)

**Gemini** (two halves now reunited)

If anyone can think of any more, I would be pleased to hear from you.



Bryan Nicoll comments on the new enhanced edition of **The George & The Mary**:

The front cover shows **George & Mary** have been 'breasted up' from photos on pages 4 and 5 of the earlier edition published in 1973. Complete with a cranberry juice wash which with the other blue lettering gives, presumably, the patriotic livery of 'red white and blue' adopted for the Coronation year in 1937. The new pages 4&5 whilst showing interestingly different photographs near Cotton End, Northampton, sadly show a distinctly darker view of **George** from the Waterways Archives, Gloucester.

Page 1 has the caption 'An unidentified GUCCC pair.....' this pair, I can confirm is of **Arcturus & Sirius** in a photograph, which was one of a number of publicity shots taken for the GUCCC. following the Royal Opening of the locks at Hatton on 30th October 1934. This pair was present to represent the Company following their maiden trip from Rickmansworth. The photo shows Mrs Alice Merchant in charge of the pair whilst her husband Isaac is seen closing the gate, with their dog on the lockside. Again on page 7 the caption indicates 'with another pair ahead of them'. This shows Mrs Alice Merchant, this time seen standing in the well deck of **Sirius** and alongside **Arcturus**. The remaining pair being **Venus & Saturn** showing the distinctive H&W exhaust funnel on the motor.

With the help of modern English usage several transpositions of the text have been noted in this new edition and on page 47 I have taken 'main' to read 'initial' disposal. 'Subsequent history' in the case of **Arcturus**, gives a date for sale by A Wander Ltd., but unlike the other craft indicating new owners, **Arcturus** did not become a trip boat until the early summer of 1959. In the Rickmansworth Register the new owners were to be seen as amendments written in against Owner with the name and address and dated with the previous owner and address 'ruled through'. New registrations began with No 202 for **Warbler** on 26th May 1954 when this document notes "old boat for which previous registration was lost". This had been originally for the motor **Libra** No. 548 at Brentford on 9.11.35. The Rickmansworth Register continued to No 226 for **Lyn** on 5.12.61 for BTC (BW)

**YARWOODS  
BASIN**

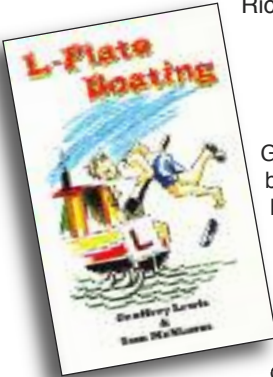
**Moorings Available  
For Narrowboats**

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Richard Booth writes:



## L-Plate Boating

by Geoffrey Lewis & Tom McManus  
Published SGM Publishing, priced at £6.99

Geoffrey Lewis has become well respected for his historical novels based on or around the canals. However, the present volume, which he has co-written with a friend, is completely different. As its title implies, it comprises a series of anecdotes involving the antics of novice boaters (and some of the disasters that can befall anyone whether experienced or not).

I have to say this is not a book I would buy - or even read unless somebody were to give me a copy (which of course they did) - and found it somewhat short on substance. Nevertheless, it kept me amused for an evening and reminded me (as I am certain it will any HNBOC member) of similar experiences of my own.

I am not entirely certain at what sort of readership this book is aimed. A non-boater or novice will probably fail to comprehend much of the content, despite the useful Glossary, while the experienced boater will find it rather frivolous and some of the explanation simplistic and unnecessary. I was, however, pleased to see the Glossary draws the correct distinction between a cratch and deck board, and between a Buckby can and a water can.

I am left thoroughly confused as to how many locks there are in the Buckby flight. A passage is described in company with a particularly hopeless case, the events at the first 2 locks being described in some detail. We are then told "we worked up the next few locks"- which I take to mean at least 3 - following which the passage through the next lock is described in some detail. The writer then feigned illness in order to avoid having to work through the rest of the flight with this boat - yet by my reckoning there could be no more than one left so was it such a big deal?

In his next book, Geoffrey will return to more familiar territory, being set on Thomas Clayton oil boats. Although aimed at (older) children, I am sure it will be most interesting and, as usual, portray the boating life accurately. Don't bother waiting for the review, just buy it!

**For Sale: Ben.** A unique 70' Harris Bros motor boat. New footings and bottom. Wooden back cabin. Lister CE, unconverted with an extended cabin. Hold decked over with lift off covers. Small fore cabin. £28,000 ono. Phone Rupert Smedley: 01538 385388 or 07973 538690



R.Fuller

## STERN-END

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Members are reminded that all are welcome to attend committee meetings as observers. Please phone secretary to confirm date and venue as these meetings are projected a long way in advance

#### Next meetings are:

Saturday 18th September - to be held at The London Canal Museum - 11.00am  
**Members' Meeting - Saturday 13th November at Braunston Village Hall at 2.30pm**  
**Bob May will be showing a selection of his waterway pictures**

This will be preceded by the Committee Meeting to be held in the library at Braunston Village hall commencing at 10.00am

**Press date for 2010/3 is September 6th and for 2010/4 is November 24th**



The Club Christmas Cards.  
new designs for 2010

1  
Enterprise, Thea and  
Themis  
in broken ice at  
Nether Heyford



2  
Grimsby fast in the Ice

All cards may be viewed  
in full colour on the  
Club Website

3  
Grindley Brook bottom lock  
Langollen Canal

The new Tom Foxon Book  
**Following the Trade**  
will be available from the  
Club Stand at Beale Park  
and possibly even the  
revised FMC book too!



Greeting inside all cards is:

*With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year*

MIXED PACKS INCLUDING DESIGNS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE

**Pack of 10 cards and envelopes £3.00 per pack**  
from the sales stand at various events throughout the year,  
or by post from the Club Shop, add £1.00 p&p per pack.



## ADVERTISEMENTS

Members' private Sales and Wanted ads. are inserted here, free of charge.

Trade Advertisements, particularly from our own Members offering appropriate services, are welcome at the following rates which will be set against the cost of production.

This currently runs to 600 copies per issue:

Members Trade, (up to 10 lines), 4 issues:	£5.00
Bona fide trade, (up to 10 lines), 1 issue:	£5.00
All, half page display, with/without artwork, 1 issue:	£15.00

Please remit cheques payable to HNBC with your copy to the Editor. Thank you.

**For Sale: Darley & Alperon.** Pair of Grand Union town class boats. (Motor & butty)  
Both boats have been re-bottomed. Price: £77,000. ono. Tel: 01538 722162. Evenings

**Superb on line mooring** for rent on the lower Grand Union near Watford. Ideally we want another vintage or classic boat up to 60ft. All facilities on site with reasonable fees and possibility of residential use.  
All enquiries to macdonaldcassio@yahoo.co.uk or phone 07860 613449.

**For Sale:** 5 off Lister Freedom - FR2 cylinder heads. One is new, three are in good condition, one is cracked but all have varying amounts of valve gear and change over valves. Make me an offer or swap for a Gardner 2LW head or any other LW bits.  
macdonaldmarine@yahoo.co.uk or phone 07860 613449.

**For Sale:** the middle section of **Starling**. Bow and stern added in 1960s. Three year old steel cabin.  
BMC 1.5 engine. £6,500 ono. Contact Richard Booth who will put you in touch with the owner.

### Morris Lubricants have kindly offered a 10% discount on their various products to Club members

Login to the Members' Area on the website, then look under Commercial Services and Engines for Morris Oils contact details.

The discount code is shown on the banner



**Ovation Boat Services**  
Go Boating Stay Safe

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Boat Safety Examiner  
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www.ovationboatservices.co.uk

**Yarwoods Basin**

Mike Carter advises that there are moorings reserved for visiting historic craft and that subject to availability members' boats are welcome to moor by arrangement free of charge for up to one month in the former Yarwoods basin off the River Weaver - if required at discounted rates for a second month.

Contact Mike on: 07831 184495

**Renaissance / Peak Forest Canal Carrying Co.**

Mainly operating on the summit level of the Macclesfield and Peak Forest Canals

Suppliers of solid fuel, traditional fenders, rope, diesel, pumpout, gas and many other boat related items

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Email: nbalton102@yahoo.co.uk

To find our movements: <http://furnessvale.blogspot.com>

**Rupert Smedley BSc. MIEE. MABSE**  
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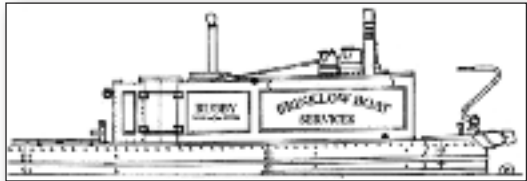
New boat replicas built to order.

Engine installation and repairs, woodwork and boat painting are also available on site.

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Phone: 01926 814441 email: [sddpearce@supanet.com](mailto:sddpearce@supanet.com).

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Full fitouts, painting, graining and signwriting.

We also have a floating dry dock and can now offer pressure washing and blacking, or D.I.Y. use at competitive rates.

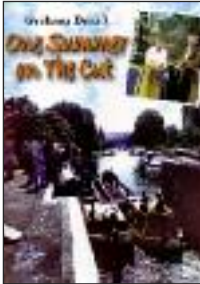
Phone Steve Priest and Simon Wain on 01788 833331  
or Rex Wain on 01788 833789.

Brinklow Boat Services, Units 2 & 4, The Wharf,  
Stretton - under - Fosse, Rugby, CV23 OPR

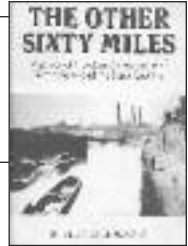
# THE CLUB SHOP



**NBOC Brass Plaque** (For eligible boats) £8.00. plus £2.00 p&p



**The Other Sixty Miles**  
by Richard Chester-Browne  
A survey of the abandoned canals of Birmingham and the Black Country. £4.95 plus £1.00 p&p



**One Summer on the Cut** By Graham Beard  
£7.99 plus £1.70 p&p

**A Range of Clothing with the Club Logo**  
has been re-introduced

T Shirts.....£10.00 Polo Shirts.....£12.00  
Sweatshirts.....£15.00 Fleece Jackets.....£21.00  
All garments unembroidered with the Club logo and name or  
boat name can be added at no extra charge  
Supplied in black, navy or sport light grey.  
Sizes: S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL, 4XL

These items are not kept in stock and will be sent direct to your address  
from the supplier. Please allow 2 - 3 weeks delivery



Iain models the sweatshirt

Back copies of the Club's Newsletter are available - Donations welcome

Orders and enquiries for the above items should be directed to

CLUB SHOP: CLAIR BUTLER & IAIN MACTAVISH

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Cheque with order please payable to **"Historic Narrow Boat Owners Club"**

## AIMS of the HISTORIC NARROW BOAT OWNERS CLUB

To encourage the preservation, restoration and use of  
working and ex-working narrow boats.

To represent the interests of the users of such boats  
in their dealings with all waterway authorities.

To promote the maintenance of the waterways system to a standard  
suitable to facilitate the navigation of such boats throughout the year.

To campaign for the retention and/or reinstatement of  
appropriate traditional and historical waterway furniture and features.

To establish and maintain a narrow boat archive.

In furtherance of these aims the Club has membership of:



Patron  
of the  
Anderton  
Boat Lift



Associate Member  
**PWG**  
Parliamentary  
Waterways Group



Heritage Afloat  
The Association for  
Ship and Boat  
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Organisations

Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the HNBOC, its Chairman or  
Committee. Publication is encouraged to raise points of interest and to invite comment



