

HISTORIC NARROW BOAT OWNERS CLUB
Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Sunday 23rd May 2010
in the Library Room, Braunston Memorial Hall, Braunston
starting at 11.00 am

Committee members present were: Phil Prettyman (Chairman), Richard Booth, George Boyle, Sue Cawson, David Daines, Richard Frost, Sandra Green, Steve Harmer, Martin Jiggins, David Lowe, Ros Prettyman, Rupert Smedley and Alison Smedley.

Margaret Booth was in attendance.

1. Apologies and Welcome

Matt Beamish, Mike Harrison, Val Roberts, Viv Scragg, Iain MacTavish

The new committee members were welcomed. Steve Harmer was co-opted on to the committee as West Midlands Area Rep.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the committee meeting held on 6th March 2010 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

3. Chairman's Report

- 3.1 Phil reported that he had attended a BWAf meeting recently where the discussions were mainly around the third sector issue.
- 3.2 Phil and Sue Cawson attended a recent WUSIG meeting. David Lowe and Bernard Hales were also there wearing other hats. One message from the meeting was that it is important that issues get reported to BW. Agreed we need to encourage our members to tell BW when they have experienced problems, eg getting stuck somewhere. Hurleston would appear to be getting worse and is an area that needs to be tackled by the Club.
- 3.3 Chesterfield Canal (narrow locks issue) – good initial response following discussing at AGM. Mike Harrison has spoken to Sean McGinley (BW Manager, East Midlands) and has arranged to contact him when they return from their boating trip to arrange a site meeting at Stret Lock. Phil would attend if possible. Concept of volunteers doing the work to resolve the width issue on the Chesterfield was discussed. Phil suggested that Value Engineering should be adopted with a project manager to co-ordinate the work.
- 3.4 BWAf Heritage Sub Group – again HNBOC well represented with people wearing other hats as well as Phil representing the club. There is a meeting coming up with Stuart Mills, Head of Property where Marple and Marsworth are likely to be discussed.
- 3.5 Phil attended a NINF meeting at IWA Head office, to discuss IWA's paper on an Inland Waterways Conservancy. What Phil felt was missing from the document was a clear statement of why waterways are important. Phil has volunteered to write a section to be included in the document.

4. Secretary's Report

- 4.1 Alison had received the Key Award from Alec Gunner. She had arranged for it to be engraved with this year's winner and it has now been forwarded it on to Stewart Shuttleworth by post (recorded delivery).
- 4.2 There will be a new stoppage process for 2010/11 programme. Each waterway unit has published a "Stoppage Rationale" explaining the general principles of what they will do and when (eg, larger stoppages will be Jan to March as it is a longer period than Nov/Dec; they will tie in with third party works wherever possible, they will carry out overnight stoppages wherever possible where closures become necessary between April and October). Instead of the national stoppage meeting, the first draft of 2010/11 stoppage programme will be available on Waterscape for

consultation in the next few weeks. They will then take comments into account and consult again, then the 3rd and final version will be available in August as normal. The first consultation phase is now available on Waterscape. Any comments to be passed to Alison for her to respond on behalf of the club. Deadline for comments is end June.

5. Treasurer's Report

5.1 Matt had circulated a report by email on 21st May. The cash book balances are as follows:

Current A/c statement balance (Nat West) as at 28/04/10	£1,367.77
Direct Debit errors April 2010	£22.61
Uncleared cheques	£20.38
Savings A/c (Alliance & Leicester) (0.1% interest) as at 01/05/10	£12,396.94
Total funds at bank	£13,766.94

5.2 Matt reported that there had been one further fraudulent direct debit last month - the frauds continue although intensity and amounts has decreased.

5.3 The account name has now been changed to Historic Narrow Boat Owners Club. Clair had queried with Matt about new paying in books in the new name and he had confirmed that the old ones could be used for the time being and he will arrange new ones.

5.4 The committee discussed the proceeds of the auction at Coventry. Dave Prior died shortly after the event and it was agreed that the proceeds should be given to the *Sculptor* restoration fund in his memory. It was agreed that a specific item, eg top planks, would be paid for, with a brass plaque saying " donated by HNBOC in memory of Dave Prior". It was agreed that the Club should fund a full set of top planks in Dave's memory, topping up the auction proceeds from the Club funds.

5.5 AGM hall complaints dropped in response to a strong letter from Matt.

6. Membership Secretary's Report

6.1 Totals 434 current, including 4 Exchange & 2 Honorary. At time of last meeting 432 inclusive. Of paying members 272 are non SO and 155 are paid by SO (plus 6 as above).

6.2 In the end, 9 members did not renew for 2010 out of 153 January non-SO renewals. David received resignation notes from 5. Tim Collier sent a rather a vague and rambling letter. David sent out 'Last Chance' reminders to the remainder. Allan Vigor replied that they sold *France* last year and have resigned, citing age and rising costs. 4 other members have 'lapsed' with no explanation given.

6.3 The following new members were approved:

Ben & Sue Mulkern	N/A	1592
Timothy & Diane Dainty (& Kerry)	<i>Linnet</i>	1593
Richard Wood	<i>Snipe</i>	1594
Richard Goble	<i>Tipton BCN 15851</i>	1595
Tom Hill	<i>Archimedes & Ara</i>	1596
Samantha Noon	<i>Vienna</i>	1597
Malcolm & Dawn Edge	<i>Minnow</i>	1598
Mark Dixon & Jude Plouviez	<i>[Poppy]</i>	1599

6.4 Ex working boat folk. David has created an additional category in the 'Membership Type' field in the database called 'Working Boat Folk'. If selected this automatically switches 'Voting' to 'Yes', and the abbreviation 'WB' pops up in a separate field. David can now attach *this* field to the membership card, the NL posting label, the 'Boat List', and any other place it might be appropriate, it seems to fit best just after the membership number. David thanked Ros for the suggestion that led to this solution. Agreed that David needn't mention this in the newsletter.

6.5 David noted that NL 2010/2 will not be sent out until *past* the date by which many members (115 non-SO) have to renew their subscription (1st July). It was agreed that on this occasion David should send out the renewals as a separate posting. This will entail 115 second class stamps, and the same number of extra envelopes.

6.6 David had an email conversation with Michelle Hembury, owner of Barlow's boat *Hazel*. She has been refused, so far, historic licence discount and has been instructed to submit a BW application form. David has now looked at this form and noted that the 'Guidance Notes' STILL perpetuate the myth of all historic boats being built before 1948. Noted that *Hazel* has a full length conversion so its eligibility may be questionable in any case.

7. Newsletter Editor's Report

Val had submitted a written report prior to the meeting. Press date for Newsletter 2010/2 is 28th June, so please send anything which needs to be included before this date. Val has plenty of copy and would like to increase by 4 extra pages for this issue. Val will check weight of inserts before increasing. The committee agreed to extra postage costs if necessary. Noted that there won't be an insert from David this time.

Mike and Val plan to be at Braunston on 26th/27th June to assist Iain and Clair on the stand as previously arranged. They are expecting to host the next committee meeting on 3rd July at Horsley Woodhouse. Val looks forward to receiving an illustrated write up of the Middle Level/Great Ouse trip for the newsletter!

Their boating trip has not gone smoothly, with Val being ill with pneumonia. The committee send their best wishes to Val for a speedy recovery.

8. Archivist's Report

8.1 Richard Booth reported that the most pressing need is for him to go through the stuff on the website as he has noticed a few inaccuracies. He will start to draw up a definitive list of extant narrow boats. Richard will talk to Viv about starting to collect current information while he concentrates more on the historic stuff.

Richard asked committee members to let him have photos of boats taken while they are out and about on a CD with boat name, date, location, etc.

Phil reported that there are a few historic boats that were not sold in the recent bidding system, due to the offers not having been high enough. There was some discussion about this. If the restrictions (eg not being able to sell the boat for 5 years) were less onerous they might have received more sensible offers for them. It was understood that BW still want to dispose of these boats and it looks likely that they will now go to public auction. Phil will follow this up on Thursday at the BWAf heritage meeting.

9. Website

Ros reported that there had been 1300 visits to the website in one month and she had a breakdown of statistics such as how many people looked at which pages, how they found the site, which countries they were from, etc. There were 996 absolute unique visitors. Ros is planning a new feature with photos of boat parts, eg fore-ends, loobies, etc.

10. Area Representative Reports

10.1 Central Shires

Alison had attended a user group meeting on Rupert's behalf. This was the first user group meeting for the new Central Shires area. Waterway Manager, Darren Green, said that the initial budget of £4.75m for waterway unit has now been reduced to £4.2m, which will be tight. One way of making the money go further is being trialled in Stoke-on-Trent, through the Future Jobs Fund, where Groundwork will provide 2 groups of young people working 2.5 days each (the other 2.5 days they will spend at college), the two groups covering 5 working days a week. They will undertake jobs such as vegetation management and painting and will cover the T&M from Stoke-on-Trent down to Stone, and along the Caldon all the way to Froghall.

Darren is keen for 5 or 6 people from the user groups to meet with him once a quarter to discuss business planning, budgets, etc, as he feels this will be beneficial to all parties. Further to the request from Vince Moran to all waterway managers, Darren is happy to receive invitations from boaters to get him out exploring his patch.

Rob Malpass (Engineer), Andy Whitehouse (Customer Service Supervisor) and John Moran (Construction Supervisor) are now all based in a new small office at Etruria which has been equipped with internet access and phone lines.

Sally Ash, Head of Boating Development gave an overview of her new role and department (they deal with licensing, commercial trade operators, moorings). She was given a hard time over her not terribly clear explanation of how things would work! Helen Underhill, Enforcement Officer (part of the National team covering Central Shires area) was also there, and there was much discussion about reporting unlicensed boats and overstaying on moorings.

Caldon Canal - Leek Arm Breach - Presentation by the Project Manager, Alex Lee. Contract is for £500k. They are now at week 4 of a 14 week contract. The debris from the field has been removed and repairs to the field carried out. The embankment will be replaced with granular material (fine stone) which will be keyed in to the sand bank either side of the breach. The canal bed will be relined with clay. The culvert will be replaced in plastic (was brick). Still not entirely clear whether the culvert caused the problem or not. While the canal is dewatered they will also carry out a few repairs to other sections of towpath to hopefully avoid future breaches (eg where clay puddle has worn away at water level in a few places they will put in more clay). They have also identified potential problems with Hollinhay Embankment, other side of the tunnel, and a further stoppage will be carried out here for 7 weeks starting next week, to carry out preventative works. The sand embankment construction has now been identified as a risk so they have taken samples along the towpath all the way along the arm from Leek to Hazelhurst.

During the syndicate sessions for the different waterway areas Alison spoke to Michael Carrington (Coventry and Ashby) and thanked him for BW's support for the Club boat gathering in Coventry Basin over Easter. Trent & Mersey/Caldon - due to recent vandalism and pounds being drained overnight, Planet Lock (Caldon), Trentham Lock and the top lock at Stoke (Etruria) are all to be fitted with handcuff keys.

10.2 East Midlands

No report in the absence of Mike, other than the update on Chesterfield Canal covered in 3.3 above.

10.3 Kennet & Avon

Vacant. Sue Cawson will ask Julia and Peter Ivermee if they would be interested in taking this one.

10.4 London

Sandra Green had attended two BW user group meetings in London (East and West). The Slough Arm needs dredging as the wide beam educational boat doesn't fit. Slough Canal Festival will be taking place, sponsored by Dulux. Simon Bamford been replaced by John Guest. BW are going to roll out assignability of all the moorings in London. Sandra felt this ought to be subject to a national consultation as it has national implications.

Work has been carried out recently at Clitheroe Lock, resulting in heel grips in the right place. BW received complaints about quality of work carried at Victoria Park. BW is working in conjunction with Transport for London to improve the towpath for cyclists and walkers, and will be promoting it as a commuting route. There was a discussion about how to slow cyclists down. Sanda will follow this up with John Guest as she is concerned about the loss of places where mooring pins can be put in.

Use of elsan disposal points by boaters using self pump out equipment is to be banned due to blockages. Navigation in the area around the 2012 Olympics site is likely to be closed for the duration of the Olympics. Spot dredging is to be carried out on the River Stort. There are railings on the River Lee that don't comply with horseboating requirements. Sandra will look into this as it might be the issue of fencing along the towpaths under bridges. The mechanical locks on the River Lee have had new gates. There have been complaints about floating reed beds that have been put in the River Lee. An incident form for use on the Thames can be found at www.boatingonthames.co.uk.

10.5 Manchester & Pennine

George attended a user group meeting. Dredging is currently being carried out on the Macclesfield Canal – three dredgers working on three separate sites at the moment. Water conservation tests are being carried out in the area on various days during June/July involving a 6 hour stoppage in the middle of the day. This would appear to be taking place nationally. BW Red Bull offices – following reduction in staff they are reducing the amount of hours when someone would be available to talk to people. They will now be open 10 til 12 which seems to be a national policy. Needs publicising more widely so that people are aware.

Coombes Reservoir has only been 2/3rds full for many years. This is to comply with a law that states a reservoir must be able to be drained of 50% of its capacity in five days. It was stated that BW think they don't need to dredge bridgeholes as all the silt will fall out if the canal is dredged either side. George made the point that this won't work where there is rubbish in the bridgehole. The concept of waterway managers boating their patches once a year is a good one, if we can get them out on loaded working boats wherever possible. Brian McGuigan is to be asked if he could take David Baldacchino out on his patch. Two men have been sent off on a boat up the T&M to sort out problems they come across, spot dredging, etc.

Rupert attended a meeting at Marple arranged by IWA North West Region about the proposed development at Marple. The plans include retention of a sanitary station. George will keep an eye on it.

10.6 North East

David Lowe had emailed a written report on the user group meeting. The main reservoir for the Leeds & Liverpool, Winterburn Reservoir, is almost empty and BW are only allowing boats up two at a time between Leeds and Shipley (most of the locks on the L&L are manned). David said he would be happy to go to the Chesterfield/Stret lock meeting when arranged if required.

10.7 North Wales & Border

Iain MacTavish had sent a written report. He attended the user group meeting in Whitchurch on 15th April. Regarding work at the bottom lock at Hurleston during the winter, he was told that this was to remake some of the brickwork and coping near the bottom gates on the towpath side. Following the incident with *Thea*, some temporary work had been done in this area of the lock which was not very satisfactory. The recent work was to effect a 'proper' repair. In April this year *Buckden* passed up and down the locks at Hurleston but John Yates found the bottom lock tighter than on previous passages and has sent a report to Wendy Capelle, BW manager. This report as an email has been copied to HNBOC Chairman. Iain thinks it would be useful for the club to register historic boats' ability to pass through the Hurleston flight or not. We need to source concrete data to face BW with. Wendy Capelle was offered the opportunity of a trip on a working boat in her area. She expressed enthusiasm for this.

David Daines suggested compiling a database or spreadsheet on all pinch points and navigation issues. Sue suggested this could be on the website in the members only area. Ros will talk to Steve Wood about adding this to the website.

Phil suggested encouraging members to try to get in to Hurleston Bottom Lock on their way to /from Ellesmere Port for Easter next year. This would be particularly useful if these are boats who have previously been up in the past without problem.

10.8 North West

No report from Rebekah Fuller. Alison to chase Rebekah for report.

10.9 South East

Martin Jiggins reported that there is a proposal for nine new houses at Norwood Yard at Norwood Top Lock. Nothing is mentioned about the sanitary station and water point. The proposal is for refurbishment of existing cottage and construction of 9 new 4/5 bed roomed houses.

Aylesbury Canal Society move – construction work due to start in July on the new site. Martin is concerned about proposed piling in vicinity of the site. The FMC building, built in 1805, is to be demolished as part of the development of the canal basin. Martin will follow this up by talking to the person at Aylesbury Vale District Council Historic Buildings Officer. (Richard to let Martin have her name).

The crane at Ponders End is being relocated on to Mike Pinnock's site. Mark Bensted has left BW to work for Powerday.

The revised proposals for Marsworth Yard were discussed. Far from perfect but considerably better than the previous proposals. Concern about the houses backing on to main line potentially resulting in complaints about boats mooring

outside. Only a narrow strip will be retained by BW.

Richard Booth attended the SE User Group meeting at Tring on 22nd April on behalf of Martin. Only about 30 people in attendance. A lot of spouting by Jeff Whyatt, virtually no opportunity for participation from the floor. Main subjects discussed were: Third Sector Proposals & Timescales, General Works Programme (23 lock gates to replace in 2011/12), Major Works Planned (£3m), New Stoppage Communications (Online via Waterscape, comments required by end of May), Byelaw Revision, Moorings Review (Consultation on mooring policies and local mooring strategies), Enforcement Update (Evasion rate was 12.3% in SE in 2007 [10.4% nationally], now down to 5.1% in SE [5.3% nationally]), Office Opening Hours. Dredging is planned at Berkhamsted this year between bridges 143 & 145. There had been an opportunity to submit questions in advance and these were answered in writing, with no discussion at the meeting. Richard asked a question as to why some top gates had recently been replaced on the GU main line without gate paddles, and asked for users to be consulted in future where it was proposed not to install them. The response given was as follows: "The Lock in question is Lock 56 on GUS. There were technical (dimension) constraints limiting the installation of gate paddles in the judgement of the Workshop surveyor in this particular case. Going forward the most efficient way of communicating here is directly with the workshops – they both survey all prospective lock gate replacements and also review for gate paddle suitability. I am discussing how best this can be achieved with both Nigel Crowe and Anthony Stammers, it shouldn't come via User Groups in my view."

The committee felt that this attitude from a waterway manager is concerning, particularly given that Jeff Whyatt has been given responsibility for 'user group liaison'.

10.10 South Wales & Severn

Richard Frost attended a BW user forum held at Gloucester on the 27th April. There were around 25 people attending with a wide range of interests - parish councils, waterway groups, canal related businesses (marinas etc). It was the middle of three meetings that were held, the first being the South Wales section (no interest for HNBOC really), the Gloucester event and a further one at Worcester which Richard would liked to have attended but was in France.

The meeting was chaired by Nick Worthington, the Waterway Manager. He opened by introducing himself and his staff and said that this would be a 'new style' of meeting. Nick stated that his budget of £4million was about 60% of what he needed. He gave a demo of his new Facebook page for South Wales and Severn waterways.. They are also using Twitter. Nick described the vision for the move to the 3rd sector - very similar to what we heard at the AGM

The first **public speaker** was David Struckett who shared the vision of the Severn Navigation Restoration Trust and the river becoming navigable to Shrewsbury and beyond. He also outlined a fascinating plan to build a half scale trow for use on the river by school groups etc. An **ecologist** from BW then described how water voles had been found on the Gloucester & Sharpness.

Customer Services Nick explained that from now on those 'dropping into' a BW office should only do so between 10 and 12 Mon - Friday. This is apparently a national decision. Some BW offices (eg Stourport Basins) are no longer regularly manned.

There was a general discussion on the use of volunteers on the G & S as the waterway is closed for 2 days a week in the winter. IWA has suggested that bridges could be run by volunteers or operated by boaters. One of the bridgekeepers in attendance said that it would be very difficult for single handed boaters and that in fact it was sometimes the case that elderly boaters pick the G & S for the simple reason that it does not involve bridge and lock work.

It seems like BW are going to be doing some sort of Olympic celebration nationally during 2012. The meeting was deemed a success by everyone in attendance (and there certainly seemed to be some regulars at the back eating the BW provided biscuits!) and Nick was working hard at getting the new listening role polished up - Richard felt that there may have been some stormy meetings in the past; this was certainly not one of them.

10.11 West Midlands

Steve had attended a user group meeting. Dean Davies, Waterway Manager for West Midlands was very enthusiastic about his recent trip on *Roach* and has also done the Wyrley & Essington with Lawrence Hogg. There was not a very good turn out with only 9 BW employees and 6 users! An hour and a half was spent on Chasewater Reservoir. The reservoir is now completely empty. Work will be finished November this year but it will take two years to fill.

Bradley pumps are running. Restrictions on all lock flights (times available on Waterspace). A couple of events have been cancelled. BCLM event is still happening but with a reduced number of boats attending. All pumps are running at maximum capacity. They have been looking for streams and rivers to take water from. Works being carried out at Selly Oak on Worcester & Birmingham where the canal has been diverted temporarily. Some users said it wasn't navigable but Steve had passed through there with his boat with no problems.

10. Boating/Navigation Issues

Steve Harmer reported that he got stuck in the staircase at Stourbridge recently following a gate repair which had left the rubbing strip too wide but it seems to have been fixed now.

Other issues as discussed elsewhere in the meeting.

11. Matters Arising and Review of Actions

11.1 Update from David Lowe on Bridgewater – the manager has back tracked slightly - he can't stop the boat in question from going along the canal loaded but he can stop him discharging his cargo over the towpath.

11.2 Easter Rally Plaques will be ready soon. Alison & Rupert will distribute at Braunston and post any others out afterwards.

12. Any Other Business

12.1 Thanks to Ros and Phil for all the work they put into the Easter gathering which was a great success. 38 boats attended, and all fitted in the basin. Phil had sent various letters of thanks out afterwards including photos to the City Council ranger. Phil thanked the person who showed people round the warehouse and received a copy of a book by one of the local artists with the reply.

12.2 Sonia Rolt was invited to the Easter gathering but was unable to attend. There is to be a Tom Rolt exhibition in the Herbert Gallery Coventry during July and August. Agreed this should be publicised in the newsletter and on website.

12.3 David raised the issue of BW putting up notices with no date on. Phil to raise at WUSIG meeting.

12.4 David has been asked to help again organising the parades at the Braunston boat gathering. He is going to suggest that there should be three parades instead of two (boats one side of Butchers Bridge, boats in the marina, then boats the other side of Butchers Bridge). Phil suggested spacing the parades earlier and later during the day.

13. Dates and Venues of Next Meetings

Saturday 3rd July 2010 – Horsley Woodhouse, Derbyshire – directions required for new committee members.

Saturday 18th September 2010 – possibly London Canal Museum, Sandra to investigate.

Saturday 13th November 2010 – provisional, date and venue to be confirmed

The meeting closed at 4.30pm.

Alison Smedley
Secretary