

HISTORIC NARROW BOAT OWNERS CLUB
Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Saturday 14th May 2011
on board “Severn”, Leeds & Liverpool Canal, Wigan
starting at 11.00 am

PRESENT WERE: Phil Prettyman (Chairman), George Boyle, Sue Cawson, Mike Harrison, Martin Jiggins, David Lowe, Iain MacTavish, Norman Mitchell, Ros Prettyman, Val Roberts, Alison Smedley, Rupert Smedley and Laura Sturrock.

Clair Butler was in attendance.

1. Apologies and Welcome

Apologies had been received from Richard Booth, Jim Cook, David Daines, Sandra Green, Sarah Hale, Steve Harmer and Viv Scragg.

Phil welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked the owners of short boat *Severn* for hosting the meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting

4.3 The third convoy was due to take place on 3rd May not 30th April
12.3 delete “northern”.

With the above corrections the minutes of the committee meeting held on 5th March 2011 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

3. Chairman’s Report

3.1 Easter Gathering

Phil reported that the Easter Gathering at Ellesmere Port had been very successful. It had made quite an impact and there was lots of interest from locals. The Maundy Thursday gathering in Chester had the biggest turnout ever of historic boats and Ray Buss’s talk about the Chester Canal had been well received. The visitors from IWA Ireland (Newry and Portadown branch) enjoyed their visit and have invited the Club to visit Ireland. IWA Chester Branch who were hosting their visit have passed on their thanks and report that the Irish visitors were very enthusiastic about their morning with the historic boats.

3.2 Mersey Crossings/Liverpool Spring on the Waterfront

The Mersey crossings went well, with 2 convoys instead of 3 due to bad weather forecast later on. Everyone had a tremendous time in Liverpool. On departure, the Club pushed the boundaries of the number of boats using the Liverpool Link. A photo appeared in the local press during the week that the boats were moored in Burscough.

3.3 Hurleston Campaign

The campaign for as many boats as possible to attempt to get in to Hurleston Bottom Lock before/after Easter was successful and Iain is still collating all the information. Iain will convey the results to BW. Phil spoke to Wendy Capelle at Ellesmere Port who was very positive about it and wants to receive the evidence. Current estimate is that approximately three quarters of historic boats cannot get into the lock. A meeting is to be held soon with BW Wales & Border Counties to talk about solutions. Phil and Iain will both attend.

3.4 New Waterways Charity - update

Phil has attended numerous meetings including BWAF. Despite reservations, the consensus is that a charity is the best option and there is concern that if the charity does not go ahead the situation will be much worse. Phil has suggested that there should be a Navigation Advisory Group which if it goes ahead he will propose that Sue Cawson should be our representative on it. All BWAF organisations agreed to support a petition in support of the new charity. Phil got 200 signatures at Ellesmere Port/Liverpool. The Waterway Minister seemed genuinely enthusiastic. Phil had an opportunity to speak to Tony Hales who mentioned that it would be good to get historic boats present at the Olympics in London in 2012. Phil will follow this up with him, mentioning

Liverpool as an example. Phil has put himself forward for the West Midlands trial local partnership and he has an interview next week. The Chairs of that board and the North West trial board have recently been announced. It was suggested that it would be a good idea to get the Waterways Minister (Richard Benyon MP) out on an historic boat.

3.5 DEFRA Consultation on proposed New Waterway Charity

A consultation consisting of three downloadable documents is now available. Deadline for responses is 30th June. Some of the issues were discussed (eg remainder waterways – no mention in consultation documents, TUPE transfer of directors and exec management yet 90 employees being made redundant prior to transfer – any redundancies of exec management/directors should take place before transfer so that liability does not fall on NWC. Dredging is not commercially viable on any waterway so why should it be used as an argument for downgrading commercial waterways to cruiseways. Option 2 of the freight options was favoured). Alison will compile the Club's response – All to email any comments to Alison by 19th June for her to circulate prior to submitting to DEFRA by 30th June.

4. Secretary's Report

4.1 A reprint of the Weil's Disease leaflet was discussed. Although Annie on *Eli* had offered to get some printed at no cost to the Club, it was felt that at this time that Val should arrange for the usual printers to supply 3000 copies. It was suggested that the leaflets should be offered to WRG for canal camps and IWA Festivals for boats attending the National Waterways Festival. Alison will approach WRG and IWA Festivals.

4.2 Alison had received, forwarded by Bernard Hales, The Heritage Alliance's short questionnaire on the "Contribution of Heritage Organisations to Civil Society" which she had completed on behalf of the Club.

4.3 Alison had recently given a talk on Historic Narrow Boats to IWA Stoke-on-Trent Branch and has been booked by a couple of other IWA branches to give the same talk.

4.4 Correspondence received (and circulated for information): IWA *Waterways* magazine, Mikron dates list, and details of a new award to recognise volunteers run by the National Historic Ships Register.

5. Treasurer's Report

5.1 Laura reported that Club funds stood at £15,218.

5.2 It was resolved that the Authorised Signatories in the current mandate for both the current and the deposit accounts should be changed from Matt Beamish to Laura Sturrock. Other signatories to remain in place.

5.3 Laura raised the issue of Corporation Tax. If trading with the outside world (ie other than members) the Club would need to pay corporation tax on any profits over £500. One way round it is keep the shop accounts separately and for all trading to be done through those accounts including costs of attending events. This should get the profit right down to below the £500 limit. It was agreed that this was the most sensible way forward and Laura will organise the accounts accordingly. It was agreed that the recently purchased display boards and reprint of Weils Disease leaflets would come out of the shop accounts.

5.4 It was agreed to increase the mileage rate to 25pm with effect from, and including, this meeting.

5.5 It was agreed to change the accounting year from ending on 31st October to ending on 30th November, if this will be okay with Dave Turner who checks the accounts. Laura will check with him.

6. Area Representative Reports

6.1 **Fens** - Jim Cook had advised the Secretary that he no longer had a boat in the Fens. He is happy to continue as Fens Rep unless another volunteer comes forward who has more day to day contact with the area, and is happy to be the link between some "eyes on the ground" in the form of new members Amy Tillson & James Tidy, residential boaters on the Cam in Cambridge. Everyone was more than happy with this arrangement.

6.2 **Kennet & Avon** - No area rep. Nothing to report.

6.3 **London** – Sandra Green had circulated a report by email on a recent user group meeting.

- 6.4 Manchester & Pennine** – George reported that he had attended the Standedge Tunnel bicentenary event. There are obstructions in Hyde Bank Tunnel on the Peak Forest Canal which have been reported to BW. George has not heard anything from BW since submitting paperwork for an event in Wigan. It was agreed that this was a real missed opportunity due to lack of co-operation from BW.
- 6.5 North East** – David Lowe had nothing to report.
- 6.6 North Wales & Border** – Iain had circulated by email a report of a recent user group meeting. Iain noted that the first phase of next winters stoppage programme consultation is on Waterscape. Woodseaves cutting is now clear and reopened following rock fall earlier in the year.
- 6.7 North West** – Rebekah had circulated by email a report on a recent user group meeting.
- 6.8 South East** – Richard Booth had attended a user group meeting and had circulated a report. Martin Jiggins reported that BW are planning to dredge the Aylesbury Arm.
- 6.9 South Wales & Severn** – Norman had circulated by email a report on a recent user group meeting. River Severn had been on drought alert with restrictions at Gloucester but this was lifted in the last couple of days following some rain. Last winter trip boats were unable to run on the Gloucester & Sharpness as BW have nothing to break the ice despite it being a commercial waterway. Surveys of culverts under the Gloucester & Sharpness are being planned – there might be short stoppages while the culverts are inspected.
- 6.10 West Midlands** – Steve Harmer had circulated by email a report on a recent user group meeting.
- 6.11 Central Shires** – Rupert Smedley had circulated a report by email on a recent user group meeting.
- 6.12 East Midlands** – Mike had contacted Sean McGinley about Stret Lock who said he had still not got the results back from the laser survey carried out in March. The working boat rally in Retford 10th & 11th September has only 9 boats booked in so far.

7. Membership Secretary's Report

7.1 David Daines had emailed a report. As at 12th May, 452, including 5 Exchange & 2 Honorary. At time of last meeting 453 inclusive. Of paying members 285 are non SO and 160 are paid by SO. 10 did not renew at 1st January and have not responded to reminders and personal letters.

7.2 The following new members were approved:

Steve Pike	Keay Award winner	<i>Mimas, Progress & Others</i>	1628
Nicholas & Helena Bazley		<i>Dane & Clara</i>	1629
Robert & Cathy Francis		<i>Actis</i>	1630
Peter & Jane Shaw		<i>Alcor</i>	1631
Andrew Watts		<i>Lindsay & Keppel</i>	1632
Elizabeth Skinner		<i>Indus & Pictor</i>	1633
James Cook		<i>Chertsey</i>	1634
Lawrence Williams		`N/A	1635
Amy Tillson		`N/A	1636

7.3 David had received a grateful letter of acceptance from Steve Pike for his Keay Award membership. He says he will renew next year and he has updated David with regard to his boat ownership and other details.

7.4 The following members have not yet renewed and are now lapsed:

1343	Mr M Ballinger.	N/A
1272	Mr & Mrs D J Carver.	<i>Fern</i> (David is led to believe they wish to renew)
1583	Mr J Holman.	<i>Finch</i>
1581	Mr D Hutchinson.	[<i>Emily Anne</i>]
1507	Mr S R Prendergast.	<i>Oakley</i>
1274	Mr C Shenton.	<i>Alcor, Dabchick</i>
1505	Mr K Taylor & Ms F Benson.	<i>Mallard</i>
1579	Miss D Tigwell.	N/A
943	Mr C W Groves.	N/A

7.5 Christopher Groves (943) had written to David indicating his wish to resign, but he included a £20 cheque as a donation. David has thanked him and arranged for him to continue to receive the newsletter for this year.

7.6 David had written an item for the newsletter about the members address and boats lists to get a view from the membership about its usefulness and how it should be formatted and distributed (ie paper or electronically) in the future.

8. Newsletter Editor's Report

8.1 Val reported that the revised press date for 2011/2 is 15th May. Malcolm Braine is lined up to give Part 2 of his talk at the November meeting but a date and venue needed to be arranged and need to go in this newsletter. After some discussion about alternative venues it was agreed to stick with Braunston for the November meeting. **Post meeting note: Clair contacted the bookings clerk and subsequently confirmed that it was available for Saturday 19th November. Laura will follow up with payment and booking paperwork.**

9. Archivist's Report

Richard Booth had reported by email that there were two main projects ongoing on Archive front. Firstly the historic boat list, which he has been compiling with the help of photographs from David Williams and Nick Grundy, is almost ready to go on the website. He will write something for the next newsletter to tell members about it. There are 810 boats on the list so far. Secondly, Richard has been trying to tie up the loose ends with respect to the Yarwoods-built LMS boats, with the assistance of Ed Mortimer and input from Pete Harrison. The main conclusion so far is that the two boats which became BW butties *Exeter* and *Hereford* were almost certainly originally *Mull* and *Tom* (but can't tell which became which).

10. Boating Issues

10.1 **Dee Branch** – apparently the wooden floor of the bottom lock needs sorting before new gates (which are made and ready) can be installed. The branch needs dredging below the first lock. No boats took the opportunity of going down on the way to Ellesmere Port although one resident boat came up the top lock while the gathering was taking place.

10.2 **Stratford Canal** – *Flamingo* and *Renfrew* recently got stuck at Wolvercote. More info required. Locks 44 and 47 are known to be tight, but this is further up the flight. When *Flamingo* got stuck a BW representative said the canal was 6'11". Sue suggested gathering information from members.

10.3 **Liverpool** – Sue will draft a report to local BW with recommendations to encourage more boats to go to Liverpool and use the link.

10.4 **Dredging** – David Lowe attended a WUSIG meeting where BW's Head of Dredging gave a presentation. A suggestion was made for occasional planned summer stoppages (where an alternative route existed) which would enable great savings to be had compared to doing the same work in the winter. An recent overnight lock gate replacement had been trialed.

11. Website

Ros reported that the numbers of visitors to the website have dropped slightly from January but are still more than September to December. The most popular section is the boats pages. Steve is looking at alternative ways of putting photos on.

12. Club Shop

12.1 Clair reported that she had sold £800 of stock at Ellesmere Port. She and Iain had bought new boards at a cost of £300. The old boards would be kept and used at events where it was useful to have two sets of boards, or boards at different events the same weekend. Clair suggested that it would be a good idea to replace the Weaver photographs on the boards at some point in the future.

12.2 Clair had got hold of some copies of a pamphlet style book about Yarwoods written by Clive Guthrie and published by Northwich & District Heritage Society. These had sold well over Easter. The full book about Yarwoods which was unfinished at the time of Clive's death was discussed. The main task to finish it would be identifying and obtaining photographs to illustrate it.

13. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings not already covered

- 13.1 Weaver Collection – this still needs to be followed up further with The Boat Museum. They would hold it for us, the Club would retain ownership. People would be able to access the photos for individual research. If anyone wanted to publish a photo or profit from it they would need to come to the club for permission (and payment of a fee if club felt appropriate).
- 13.2 On the Cut CDs – no progress. Iain still to follow up with Steve Wood.

14. Any Other Business

- 14.1 David Lowe raised the issue of the proliferation of hi viz clothing across the network, particularly with volunteers now being issued with hi viz clothing for tasks such as litter picking and painting. It was felt that the club should object to the increased use of hi viz in non-worksite situations as the more it is worn the less effective it becomes. Having some sort of identifying clothing is understandable, and can see why t shirts for example would be less practical than a waistcoat that can be worn by any volunteer and would not need washing each time. An alternative would be a waistcoat or tabard as they are using, but in a non hi-viz material. Phil suggested raising this through the BWAF volunteers advisory group and/or writing to Caroline Killeavy. Alison to draft a letter for David/Phil to comment on.
- 14.2 Phil suggested that the Club should facilitate boating on other waterways, eg hiring a short boat to travel the Leeds & Liverpool, hiring a boat in Ireland, etc.

15. Dates and Venues of Next Meetings

- 16th July – Hazelhurst Cottage, Denford, near Leek, 11am
- 17th September – Horsley Woodhouse, Derbyshire, 11am
- 12th November – special meeting to discuss the Constitution
- 19th November – Braunston Memorial Hall (10am with members meeting 2.30pm)

The meeting closed at 3.30pm.

Alison Smedley
Secretary