

HISTORIC NARROW BOAT CLUB

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 11.00am on Saturday 4 October 2014

at 30A Toyse Lane, Burwell, Cambridge CB25 0DF

PRESENT: Phil Prettyman (Chairman), Richard Booth, Clair Butler, Sue Cawson, David Daines, Nick Grundy, Mike Harrison, Paul Hunter, Iain MacTavish, Norman Mitchell, Ros Prettyman, Val Roberts, Laura Sturrock, Amy-Alys Tillson. James Tidy was in attendance.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from George Boyle, Sarah Edgson, Sarah Hale, Bernard Hales, David Lowe, Daniel Mawdsley, Michael Pinnock, Alison Smedley, Rupert Smedley.

2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 August 2014 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (Lapworth Village Hall, 7 March 2015 at 2.00pm)

3.1 Committee Elections at AGM

Posts due for election were:

- Treasurer, Archivist, North East Rep, Navigation, Press Officer – elected at AGM 2012 for 3 years.
- Kennet & Avon Rep, West Midlands Rep – appointed by the committee during the year.
- Shop – previously, this had not been an elected post, but it was agreed that the Shop was such an integral part of the club's presence at waterways events, that it should become an elected position. Clair Butler was appointed at the meeting, for election at the AGM.

3.2 AGM Speaker

Paul reported that Bob May felt unable to give any further talks and had given all his slides to the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society (BCNS). However, Phil Clayton (having catalogued the collection) would be available to show Bob's slides. It was agreed that Paul would confirm the date with Phil Clayton and liaise regarding transport and projection facilities required.

3.3 Other matters - AGM

Mic – David D reported on the options he had researched and it was agreed that he would purchase the most appropriate model.

Richard would bring the club's projector, screen and PA system.

Nomination slips and notice of meeting would go out with the 2014/4 Newsletter (press date 3 November 2014).

The running order was agreed:

- AGM
- Presentation of Keay & Hemelryk awards
- Refreshments
- Speaker

4 KEAY & HEMELRYK AWARDS

Nomination forms had gone out with Newsletter 2014/3, with a closing date of 30 November 2014, entries to be sent to Bernard. It was agreed that:

- Phil would remind members of the closing date at the November Social.
- Paul's slide show of photographs of the winning entries had been appreciated at AGM 2014 and had reassured members of the quality of the work completed. He agreed to produce a similar show for 2015.

- 6.4 **Membership Secretary** (Paul Hunter) – membership numbers; new members; lapsed members; deadline for implementation of new database; proportion of membership that owned historic boats.
- 7 new memberships (5 joint and 2 individual) were approved by the committee (as required under Constitution rule 3d) and would be listed in the newsletter.
 - 15 memberships had lapsed, although it was thought that 3 or 4 of them would eventually be renewed.
 - Paul reported that at this time last year there had been 548 members, but membership had now increased to 614, of whom 355 owned historic craft, the balance being enthusiasts and supporters of the club's aims.
 - Paul reported that he was waiting for his permissions to be set up so that he could upload member and boat lists to the website. He would continue to send these by email to the committee.
- 6.5 **Archivist** (Richard Booth) – processing of photographic collections; identifying boats; consolidated list of boats + photos; checking and supplementing data on club website.
- Richard noted that in the course of processing the large number of photographs for the Archive, he was grateful for the help he had received by email from committee members to identify River class boats, and that he expected to be issuing further appeals for help over the winter months. BCN dayboats were a particular problem.
 - Richard confirmed that he did not want direct access to the website, preferring to send photos to Ros, but he would like a reminder of the preferred resolution for the website.
 - Phil commented that a definitive list of boats would assist the club to help the National Historic Ships Register, whose cataloguing of boats was currently dependent upon the information supplied by their owners.
- 6.6 **Newsletter Editor** (Val Roberts) – press date 3 Nov; know your committee request; sale of lock cottages; quote for Weaver book.
- It was agreed to continue with the all-colour version of the newsletter (see Minute 5.6 of 16 August 2014).
 - Val again asked for Know Your Committee articles from Daniel, Bernard and Michael, together with ones from new committee members Sarah E and Nick (the latter, being at the meeting, agreed to write one soon).
- 6.7 **Club Shop** (Clair Butler) – takings from recent rallies; postal sales; donation of teapot for auction; supplies of Disappearing Heritage booklet.
- Val had 3 or 4 boxes of stock of Disappearing Heritage and would bring a box to the November meeting.
 - Clair had not yet received a reply from the Museum at the Port re Christmas cards as the contact there was absent on compassionate leave.
 - Clair hoped to have some brand new books supplied by Chas & Lindy Hardern and was awaiting prices. There would also be new stock available for members at the November Social.
 - “Measham” teapot – it was agreed to auction it for club funds at the next appropriate opportunity (see also Auction under 9.5 Any Other Business). It was suggested that Evelyn Booth might be able to offer some expert advice on its age/value and Clair would ask. Ros to forward donor's contact details to Clair.
- 6.8 **Navigation** (Sue Cawson) – NAG meeting at Gloucester; site visits to Saul (remote bridge operation) and Hanbury (active strong stream warning system); winter stoppages list; reporting problems to CRT; Llangollen dredging.
- Sue commented that the maps accompanying the stoppages list on CRT's website were better presented than last year.
 - Grand Union lock 69 – contractors working on the lock had closed off 2 sets of steps with scaffolding, making the lock hazardous for boaters, and had provided neither signs nor a banksman to help. Sue was following this up with CRT. The committee wondered if CRT was compiling a list of contractors who had failed similarly or who had produced shoddy work. (See also David D's SE&T report in the Appendix, 6.13.)
 - Narrow locks – Nick reported that, having successfully negotiated Stret lock on the Chesterfield, the *Beatty* had then stuck in Deep lock. He had reported the matter to CRT and was in correspondence with Sue about it. Mike commented that the problem with Stret was that it had been re-built too narrow by poorly monitored contractors, although BW/CRT did not accept this view.
 - CRT Consultation on Water Resources – Sue urged all committee members to respond to the consultation.
- 6.9 **Press Officer** (Sarah Hale) – article for WW on moonlit boating and club's response.
- Phil commented that the confusion around the supply of photos of moonlit boating lay squarely at Waterways World's door. Sarah H had received a WW request for photos which she had circulated, not knowing that Rupert was writing the article and would have preferred it not to be publicised. Rupert could

not be expected to inform the committee of articles he was preparing. Phil believed this was just an unfortunate set of circumstances.

6.10 **Social Media** (Amy-Alys Tillson)

- Following Sarah H's request for moonlit boating photos, Amy had further circulated the request on FaceBook. Michael, by email between meetings and in his report (6.13 in the Appendix), was worried that, in the light of some adverse comments on social media about the conduct of steerers of historic boats, it would not be helpful to have photos of historic boats out at night as this might add fuel to the fire. Better, he thought, to show modern cabin boats out after sunset.
- Amy would continue to circulate 'ordinary' information in order to raise the club's profile, but would inform the committee about anything contentious before publicising it.

6.11 **Website** (Ros Prettyman) – verbal report at meeting

- On the club's Yahoo mailing list, Ros had circulated a request, received via the website from the owner of the *Hardy*. A club member had taken the text verbatim and had posted it to CanalWorldForum, but without the owner's contact details. Ros had subsequently received a query from another club member about whether the owner's privacy had been sufficiently protected. After discussion, the committee believed that as the owner's contact details had not been passed on to the wider CanalWorldForum community, there had been no breach of confidentiality or privacy. The owner was not a club member but had asked for the information to be circulated, which had been done at no charge in order to be helpful.
- In future, Ros would first reply to such requests offering various options of publicity before passing on the information. She would also add a rider when requests were passed on, that personal details should not be included.
- Ros would reply to the club member with the committee's decision and would also contact the owner explaining what publicity we had been able to offer.

6.12 **IWA Liaison** – (Alison Smedley) – forthcoming IWA canal clean-ups; winding hole campaign; historic blogs on IWA website; future talks.

6.13 **Area Reps**

Central Shires (Rupert Smedley) – Caldon 40th anniversary; Caldon spot dredging; next User Group.

East (Amy-Alys Tillson) – Friends of the Nene; Cam fees 2015; Northampton arm winter work.

East Midlands (Mike Harrison) – verbal report at meeting:

- Poor state of gate paddles on Erewash, 10% out of order, also some ground paddles. Mike will report it to Sean McGinley, area manager.
- User Group next week – Mike would not be able to attend but would receive reports from others.
- Birdswood's first year on the Cromford had been successful with good bookings, which would be a helpful contribution towards the cost of its biennial out-of-water survey. An inspection of paperwork by MCA (Maritime and Coastguard Agency) had resulted in an excellent report.

Kennet & Avon (Nick Grundy) – unofficial residential moorings; suspension of moorings Widcombe Locks to Pulteney Weir.

- Phil welcomed Nick as a new committee member.
- Worry that local council's attempt to deal with live-aboard problem would cause severe mooring restrictions for everyone else (see also 9.3 Any Other Business).

London (Michael Pinnock) – unofficial residential moorings (see 9.3); chicanes for cyclists; Islington best practice guide; mooring rings; gas holders at Actons Lock; shanty town on R Lee; postings to social media (see 6.10 above).

Manchester & Pennine (George Boyle) – nothing to report.

North East (David Lowe) – Leeds lock, lack of depth.

North Wales & Borders (Iain MacTavish) – Hurleston bottom lock; Maesbury & Whitchurch rallies; Partnership annual public meeting.

- Richard commented that he had had problems in the past getting the Dane through the 2nd lock up at Hurleston.

North West (Daniel Mawdsley) – all quiet, nothing to report.

South East & Thames (David Daines) – forthcoming meeting Milton Keynes with Richard Parry; live-aboard problems (see 9.3 below); overstaying on visitor moorings; Lock 69 Hemel Hempstead (see also 6.8 above); leave lock empty notices; residential boats moved on from EA land.

- David reported CRT Chairman Tony Hales' attendance at the recent Stoke Bruerne event and his evident enjoyment.
- CRT had promised to review their practice of attaching Leave Lock Empty notices.

South Wales & Severn (Norman Mitchell) – Walt Disney filming; East Channel overhanging vegetation; CRT's Museum & Attractions group split; lack of volunteers at museum; Wetherspoons' lease on old museum.

- Norman regretted that the acting head of CRT Museums & Attractions, Wendy Capelle, was due to return to her area manager role in November 2014, and hoped that her replacement would prove as effective.

West Midlands (Sarah Edgson) – BCN rallies; HS2 changes; Lichfield & Hatherton grant; dates for West Mids Forum, and Richard Parry Open Meeting; Walsall Museum exhibition; Bramble restoration project, Stourport.

- Changes to the route for HS2 were welcomed as Fradley would now be spared and the restoration of Lichfield & Hatherton could go ahead. It was hoped that the change of plan for Fradley might set a precedent for other canal areas similarly blighted by HS2 proposals (Chesterfield, Ashby). The alternative HS2 route proposed by CRT and IWA had also saved money on the development, probably a significant factor in its acceptance.

7 EMAIL DISCUSSIONS/DECISIONS SINCE LAST MEETING

- 7.1 **Drop Pins at Fradley** - photos had been circulated of drop pins attached to the bottom gates at Fradley junction lock, similar to those used on the Leeds & Liverpool canal. Sue had ascertained that these had only been installed at Fradley and at Alrewas to cope with some particular gates swinging open, and were not being deployed elsewhere.
- 7.2 **Sale of the *Pearl* and the *Lyra*** - both boats were now lying at Saul, the *Lyra* for sale through CRT.
- 7.3 **REACH asbestos proposals** - the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs, FBHVC, had suggested a joint campaign to secure exemption of historic vehicles and vessels from a ruling preventing the sale of vehicles containing asbestos. David D and Bernard had pointed out that the rulings only applied to new installations and to exposed asbestos. Ros to check with Bernard if he had responded to FBHVC and, if he had not already done so, to send a reply containing his and David's comments.
- 7.4 **Boat Museum's archives** – the museum had digitised its archives and made them available on-line to the public. There had been some on-line criticism of the quality of the photographs but it seemed obvious that low-resolution versions had been posted deliberately to avoid stealing, and that copies were available to buy from the museum. There were some errors in captions, also criticised, but the committee believed this was an opportunity to work with the museum to offer help. Phil would contact Wendy Capelle before she relinquished her Museums & Attractions role in November, to discuss the best way forward (see Minute 6.1, May 2014).

8 MATTERS ARISING

- 8.1 **Basingstoke 2016** (Minute 5.1 August 2014) It was agreed to ask for interest by a show of hands (one per boat) at the November Social instead of arranging a poll on entry to the meeting. Only half-a-dozen people had expressed an interest to date, and at least 30 boats were needed to make it a viable location for a gathering.
- 8.2 **Small windlass** (Minute 5.4a August 2014) Paul had obtained the patterns, which the club could use free of charge on a non-commercial basis. He would obtain a price for production.
- 8.3 **Painted panels and roundel** (Minute 6.2 August 2014) Iain reported that [REDACTED] would like them to be auctioned for club funds.
- 8.4 **Wide boats** (Minute 6.1 May 2014) Sue commented that some of the issues around the licensing of narrow boats and wide boats might be resolved when CRT merged with the Environment Agency in 2018. David D believed that primary legislation would be needed for the merger to take place, and that it might be an opportunity for the club to exert some influence. It was important that the club be represented at the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Waterways, to which the chairman had been invited in the past, but no recent invitation to attend had been received. Amy was asked to find out if there was a subscription to be paid, and the name of the chairperson, so that the club could apply/re-apply to attend. It was believed that John Dodwell and/or David Lowe attended the APPGW.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 **November Social** – Ros had supplies of tea and coffee, Sue would buy cakes and milk, Richard would bring the club's projector, screen and PA system, David D would try to purchase the new mic in time for the meeting.

9.2 **Sale of lock cottages**

- Val had heard that CRT had a list of 75 cottages to be retained and preserved, their restoration being funded from the sales proceeds of other 'unwanted' cottages. General dismay was expressed at the potential loss of, or detrimental changes to, such canal-side structures, although it was recognised that some were in a poor state and did not meet current living expectations.
- It was agreed that Phil would write to Nigel Crowe (CRT Heritage) to ask for a copy of the list of cottages, to urge CRT to consider the potential damage to the canal scene, to consider alternative uses for such properties (citing Scottish waterways' successful venture in renting out lock-side cottages as holiday homes), and to promote the whole canal system as a heritage conservation area.

9.3 **Unofficial residential moorings – "live-aboards"**

- Following Nick's report (see 6.13 above) on the situation on the Avon, it was recognised that, as this problem had been allowed to develop over many years, it would take a long time to fix, bearing in mind resulting problems of homelessness. Also that live-aboards were a side effect of the housing crisis in urban areas and that CRT had almost become a housing authority by default. CRT was getting tougher, however, by issuing stronger warnings when issuing continuous cruiser licences and by employing active new enforcement officers. Phil reported that, from his conversation with Richard Parry at the NUF, he was well aware of the situation and that it needed to be resolved.
- Iain reported the opposing view of another club member, that young live-aboards might well become the passionate defenders of the canal system in the future.
- David D added that the rate of addition of purpose-designed new live-aboard boats exceeded the rate of the scrapping of old boats from the system.
- David D was due to attend a meeting on Monday to talk about mooring problems in the south east.

9.4 **CRT Volunteers**

- It was clear from various reports that CRT's training and provision of volunteers was patchy – some were unhelpful and a hindrance, others knowledgeable and useful. Sue commented that it helped volunteers to gain an insight into how to work boats through locks if owners would take them on board and explain why things were done in a certain way.
- Sue reminded the meeting that volunteers' role was only to assist, and that the skipper was always in charge of a boat.
- There had been a proposal that the club would produce a training video (Minute 5.2, August 2013) about working practices, but after some initial meetings no further progress had been made.
- Further strategies were agreed:
 - Clair and Iain would seek ideas from their local volunteer leader for the best approach, and Norman would do the same with his contact at Gloucester. Following this, perhaps the club should approach CRT's national volunteer co-ordinator to explore working together or how the club could help.
 - As volunteering was organised regionally, Area reps to ask if they could join in a volunteers' training session to find out its content.
 - An article in the newsletter on the role of volunteers and how club members could help by following Sue's strategy outlined above.
 - David D wondered if Chris Deuchar would allow us to re-print his booklet in the newsletter. Phil to ask.
 - Ask Alison to find out IWA members' experience of working with volunteers.
 - After information gathering outlined above, perhaps a series of articles in Towpath Talk that could later be collated into a booklet to be issued free of charge to volunteers, in a similar way to the club's Weil's Disease cards.

9.5 **Auction to dispose of various items of narrow boat ware**

[REDACTED]

- Paul suggested organising an auction as part of the AGM, but it was agreed that, as it was an afternoon meeting with other AGM business, there would be insufficient time.
- Having agreed that the committee would be willing to help, the following options were discussed:
 1. use a professional auction house
 2. engage a professional auctioneer, but the club would hire a hall and staff it with members
 3. the club would run the auction completely in-house
- It was agreed to follow Option 3.
- Next actions:
 - An early date in February was preferred by [REDACTED], but the committee thought that Saturday 14 March 2015 was more realistic, being between the AGM and the Easter Gathering and giving sufficient time for publicity and organisation.
 - Iain would contact [REDACTED] to arrange a viewing date for a small working party (Clair, Sue, Iain, Phil, Ros, Laura) to assess the items and arrange for photographs to be taken.
 - Initial publicity would be via newsletter 2015/1 and the website. Also possibly Narrow Boat and Towpath Talk, but it was important to remember [REDACTED] desire that the goods should not be sold on by dealers at inflated prices. Initial confidentiality was very important.
 - Two venues were suggested for the working party to investigate – Wheaton Aston (village hall or cricket club) and Weston (village hall).
 - Norman would approach well known auctioneer Philip Serrell of Worcester for advice about the legal implications of running a public auction.
 - Fees – [REDACTED] had suggested a fee of 15% to HNBC plus expenses, and he estimated the value of the items might be in the region of £7K.
 - Payment – Paul was in the process of applying for HNBC PayPal account, and would investigate payment systems.
 - The working party would consider the practical details of the auction and produce briefing notes.

9.6 **Keeping History Afloat** – Clair wondered if Phil had received an invitation to attend this event at Ellesmere Port on 25 September. Phil had not received an invitation. Sue had received feedback from a representative from SUFBRS (Saturn).

9.7 **Working Boat People** – Norman reported that Lucy Waldron was hoping to convene a group of former working boat people at the Easter Gathering at the Port to collect information on the last history of working boats.

10 Date and place of next meetings

22 November 2014	11 am	Lapworth Village Hall prior to the Members' Social
10 January 2015	11 am	Stoke Bruerne, Museum School Room. Lunch at the Navigation.
28 November 2015	Social	Laura to check availability of Lapworth Village Hall 2 nd choice of date - 14 November 2015.

Future locations – it was noted that the next West Midlands Waterways Forum was due to be held at the Chasewater Visitor Centre. Ros would ask Sarah E to assess whether it was a suitable size/cost for future committee meetings.

The meeting closed at 5.45 pm

Phil Prettyman
Chairman