

HISTORIC NARROW BOAT CLUB
Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 11.00 am on Saturday 3 October 2015
at Gloucester Waterways Museum, Llanthony Warehouse, The Docks GL1 2EH

PRESENT: Phil Prettyman (Chairman), Clair Butler, Sue Cawson, Mike Harrison, Paul Hunter, David Lowe, Iain MacTavish, Norman Mitchell, Ros Prettyman, Val Roberts, Alison Smedley, Rupert Smedley with Peter Smedley, Laura Sturrock, James Tidy, Amy-Alys Tillson. In attendance: Martin Brian, Curator of the Waterways Museum. The Smedley family left the meeting at 4.30pm.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Richard Booth, George Boyle, David Daines, Sarah Edgson, Nick Grundy, Bernard Hales, Daniel Mawdsley, Michael Pinnock.

2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 August 2015 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting, with the following correction:

6.8 CRT Head of Boating – delete “was himself a boat owner” and insert “had been a boat owner”

3 2016 GATHERINGS

3.1 HNBC 50th Anniversary Gathering at Basingstoke

Phil had circulated a report of the meeting held on 29 September 2015 and Laura and Sue agreed it was an accurate record of the discussions. Phil commented that a public dimension to the gathering was needed in order to bring in support from Woking Borough Council.

- **Mooring pontoons** might be needed after all. David L commented that he had had a very expensive quote for a job in Leeds and he would be interested in a cheaper quotation. Sue to investigate.
- **Insurance on pontoons** – Laura to check HNBC insurance for cover for public access to boats from pontoons.
- **Price of visitor/transit licences** – Phil to include information in next newsletter (press date 1 November 2015).
- **Mooring en-route** – an invitation received from Chris Coburn for HNBC boaters to stay at his island on the R Thames.
- **Guests** – Clair suggested inviting Mike Grimes (CRT Head of Boating) as well as Richard Parry (CRT CEO) and also to ask BCS to invite representatives from the National Trust (R Wey authority).
- **Organ recital** – David L stated that there was a Wurlitzer in a Council building in Woking and he would investigate further. Phil would ask Woking BC’s Arran Henderson if he knew its location. It was pointed out that timing of any recital would be different at the Gathering as the dates chosen fell on an ordinary weekend and not a bank holiday, so the usual Monday option might not suit.
- **Budget** - During the Treasurer’s report, it was agreed to set a budget for outlay for the gathering with a target of £1,500 and a maximum of £2,000.
- **Anniversary Plaque** – Sue suggested asking Sandra Green if she would produce a design, as she had done for Foxton 2014, and Paul would ask her. Clair and Iain confirmed that they could organise production of the plaques.

Val commented that the working party had done a good job in finding out so much information, and Mike proposed a vote of thanks to them. Agreed.

3.2 Easter Gatherings

2017 Easter Gathering (Item 3.2, August 2015) – if Pelsall were not suitable as a venue, James suggested Wellingborough to commemorate the end of the grain traffic. It was noted that IWA Northampton used Stoke Breurne as a back-up venue if the river levels caused a problem at Wellingborough.

4 CRT COUNCIL ELECTIONS

It was agreed that Phil would put forward his name for one of the four Private Boater places on the Council. Ros would investigate and change their boat’s licence to ensure Phil was listed as a licence holder, Laura would contact potential sponsors to ensure their logins worked. Closing date for nominations 14 October 2015.

5 CLUB MEETINGS

5.1 November 2015 Social - arrangements for speakers

- Paul would contact Dr Della Sadler Moore to find out what equipment she would need for the presentation, and to discuss a separate stall to sell the accompanying book. [Post meeting note: Laura had found out that Della Sadler Moore might not attend, but that Lorna York and Chris Jones would speak at the meeting.]
- As backup, Paul would ask David D if he could bring a film of the Basingstoke Canal, and James would ask for interesting films available from the London Canal Museum.
- Iain would liaise with Richard to ensure that the AV equipment was working correctly and that all pieces of the equipment were in place.
- James would assist with correct packing away of AV kit at the end of the meeting.
- It was believed that David D had experienced some problems with the lapel mic, and this needed to be followed up.

5.2 AGM March 2016

- After some discussion, it was agreed that Phil would invite Mike Grimes, CRT Head of Boating, to speak at the AGM 2016. It was thought that Graham Boxer, Head of Museums, might be an interesting speaker for November Social 2016.
- Paul would produce a list of committee posts due for election at the AGM, and it was suggested that it would be very helpful if anyone intending to stand down after a 3-year term could give the committee plenty of warning. Paul would ensure that the election of the South Wales & Severn Area Rep was normalised.

5.3 Hall bookings

Laura had booked and paid for Lapworth for the November Social 2015 and for AGM March 2016. It was agreed that she should also book the Lapworth hall for our November Social 2016, the preferred date being 19 November with 12th or 26th as alternatives.

6 PUBLICATIONS

6.1 Weaver Book

Mike had brought some copies of the newly printed Weaver Book to the meeting and he was heartily congratulated by the committee for the hours of work that he and Val had put in to scanning, cataloguing and arranging printing. Mike in turn offered his thanks to Peter Oates for the wonderful maps of the BCN that he had created.

- It was re-confirmed that the selling price would be £12.00 + £1.50 postage and packing.
- Mike had already sent review copies to Hugh Potter (Waterways World) and Harry Arnold (Towpath Talk).
- Clair would send review copies to Martin Ludgate (Canal Boat), Martin O’Keefe (President of BCNS), Editor of Boundary Post (BCNS), Cath Turpin (Re:Port, Boat Museum Society) and The Black Country Society.
- Clair would send complimentary copies to Richard Parry (CEO, CRT), Sir Neil Cossons (Chair CRT Heritage Group), Ian Lane (CRT Area Manager West Midlands), Peter Matthews (Chair West Midlands Partnership).
- Paul would register the book with ISBN and arrange for a copy to be sent to the British Library,
- Publicity – information in newsletter 2015/4, club’s website and Facebook page.
- On sale at its launch at the November 2015 Social, thereafter via usual outlets after Christmas (The Port, Audlem, BCLM, Stoke Bruerne etc). BCNS wholesale price agreed at 1/3, £8.00.

6.2 **Book Stock Storage**– Clair reported that storage for the club’s stock had been arranged at CRT Norbury.

6.3 **Leslie Morton’s “The Long Wake: from tall ships to narrow boats”** had been published in 1968. Ros had met two of his great-nephews at Braunston and had passed their details to Paul. They appeared to be more interested in Leslie Morton’s early life rather than his canal years. Paul had had sight of Part II of his autobiography which he considered was not publishable in its present state – it might however contain snippets of interest to canal boaters.

6.4 **Recordings** – Norman had had a conversation with a contact on the Sharpness Canal who had recordings of old boat people talking about their working life. He would follow this up.

6.5 **Narrow Boat LP** – now out of production but perhaps it could be re-issued?

7 **WRITTEN REPORTS** had been submitted from the following committee members, and are contained in the Appendix to these Minutes. These were taken as read; the topics covered are listed below, with any decisions or further discussion topics shown as bullet points.

7.1 **Chairman** (Phil Prettyman) – see item 3.1, Basingstoke Gathering.

- Phil reported that he had attended the CRT National Users' Forum at Birmingham where 3 main issues had been raised: poor experience of customer service by some members, the state of boats at museums and the state of the southern Grand Union.
- Navigation problems on the southern Grand Union were discussed further and it was suggested that Phil send extracts from the committee email thread on the problems encountered to Julie Sharman (CRT Head of Asset Management & Performance), with a copy to Vicky Martin (CRT Waterways Manager South East)

7.2 **Secretary** - (Paul Hunter) – IWA bulletins; discount difficulties at Midland Chandlers resolved; Peacock update.

- Paul again advocated support for the restoration work on the Peacock, on the basis that it was the least amended, most original ex-FMC boat, as well as being the one owned and operated by John Hemelryk. Some money had been found for its repainting, but more was now needed for new shutts. David L suggested setting up a system similar to that used for the President, which seemed to work well. Phil and Paul would liaise to discuss ways forward and how the club could help, short of donating club funds to the boat, as agreed at the last meeting. A strategy was needed that could be applied to all boats seeking funding. Paul commented that the new curator at BCLM was keen to work on the problem.
- David L commented that the Transport Trust had funds to allocate and that he had forwarded the information to the curator at BCLM.
- There was a general discussion about the problems associated with maintaining non-private boats and the fact that grants were easier to obtain for restoration than for on-going maintenance (James). As an example, the Birchills, after all the funds spent on restoration, was not being looked after (Sue) and the Stour was in a poorer state (Sue), whereas boats in private hands were often better cared for (Iain).

7.3 **Treasurer** (Laura Sturrock) – bank balances.

- Expenses - Laura reminded committee members that the club's year-end was 30 November and that she needed to receive all claims by the next meeting.
- Donations Policy - Laura suggested setting up a small working party to produce guidelines for consideration by the whole committee. James, David L, Alison and Paul put their names forward and Laura would set up the sub-group.

7.4 **Membership Secretary** (Sarah Edgson) - new members; list of outstanding renewals.

- New members who had joined since the previous committee meeting were noted:

Lee Wilshire and Natalie Simmons	Barnet	1801
Hugh Potter	Birdswood	1804
Graham and Paula Fuller	Foxdale	1805
Colin Bigmore	Arabia	1806
Martyn Webster	n/a	1807
Steve and Jane Beckett	Greenlaw	1808

Alison reported that she had passed the names of potential new members in the East to James and Amy, who would follow up. Rupert reported that the new owners of the Lyra were potential new members.

- Sue commented that she had liked the letter thanking her for renewing her membership, and the new-style membership card.
- Late renewals list – committee members would follow up with those on the list where they could, but it was noted that some were notoriously late. It was suggested that a letter to those members who failed to renew following the sale of their boat would be a good idea, explaining that club membership was not restricted to boat owners. Paul pointed out that the club needed to move to on-line payment and Ros would check when this could be done.

- Phil reported a disturbing comment that other boaters felt they were being “cold shouldered” by some HNBC members out and about on their historic boats. He emphasised that it was essential for historic boats to have the goodwill of the wider boating community and that it was incumbent on all of us to be polite and friendly to other boaters. He would comment on this in the next newsletter, also at the November Social and the AGM.

7.5 **Archivist** (Richard Booth) – no report

7.6 **Newsletter Editor** (Val Roberts) – delays sending last newsletter; next press date 1 Nov '15; date labels required plus list of inserts needed; invitation to Maritime Heritage Trust AGM; Weaver books sent out.

- Maritime Heritage Trust – 2 day conference 19-20 October 2015. It was assumed that Bernard would attend as an MHT member, and that he would represent the views of HNBC as well. Rupert said that he might be able to attend.
- Val had received nothing further from Peter Thomson about the status of his business. She would contact him again to ask if he wished to publish a clarifying statement in the next newsletter.
- Val explained that she always set aside 2 weeks after the press date for the printing and distribution of each newsletter. This had extended to 3 weeks for the last edition, resulting in late posting and an incursion into Val's time. The press date for the next edition was Sunday 1 November and **it was essential that Val received the printed labels by Thursday 5 November at the very latest.**
- Laura explained that bank statements were issued for the 1st of each month, received by her several days later for forwarding to Sarah to check who had paid and who would receive a newsletter. It was agreed that there would have to be a cut-off date for the printing of labels, allowing late payers 3 months' grace after their renewal date, in effect 4 months' grace since receiving the invitation-to-renew letter.

Renewal date	Invitation to renew	Reminder letter	Cut-off date	Bank statement
1 January	Newsletter No 4 Winter edition	Newsletter No 1 Spring edition	End March (3 months' grace)	1 April
1 July	Newsletter No 2 Summer edition	Newsletter No 3 Autumn edition	End September (3 months' grace)	1 October

- Val re-stated her requirements for the 3 groupings of the printed labels:
 - Overseas
 - members in alphabetical order
 - complimentary copies (not necessary for the latter to be in alphabetical order).
- Paul emphasised the importance of moving to provide the facility of on-line payments. Ros would check again with Steve and a target date of 1 January 2016 was recommended.

7.7 **Club Shop** (Clair Butler) – sales at Whitchurch rally; sales at Aylesbury celebrations; postal sales; Airfix-type kits of narrowboats.

- Paul is registered PayPal “owner”. He would change this to Clair's name.
- Clair showed a donated plate, suggested for a raffle. It was agreed to keep it until the AGM.
- Clair had uncovered a potentially valuable (£200?) map, among some donated items, showing the 300ft contour canal planned during WWII to link various waterways. Clair would investigate if it was still in copyright and might call on Richard for help. Decision deferred on whether to sell it or add to the club's archive.
- £65 had been made on donated maritime books, some sold to sea-shanty groups at Ellesmere Port, the remainder sold to a bookshop in Devon.

7.8 **Navigation** (Sue Cawson) verbal report on feedback from CRT:

- Ratchet pawls** – a press release from CRT was expected soon. New ones would not be fitted to existing gates although some new gates, fresh from the workshops, might have them initially. Existing restrictors would be removed as work was done on a lock. Emphasis would have to be placed on correct operation and by flipping pawls back on.
- Lock ladders** – 23 being renewed during this winter's stoppage programme.

- **Windlass spindles** – CRT’s aim was to have 1 size of spindle and 1 size of windlass. Volunteers were supplied with windlasses but some chose to use their own. Skelton windlasses do damage to the spindles and were not recommended.
- **Winding holes** – 714 listed on CRT’s asset database. CRT will add information from IWA’s and HNBC’s lists and all winding holes will eventually be marked. Many on the Shropshire Union were privately owned rather than CRT’s.
- **Dimensions** document – corrected data to go to Julie Sharman (CRT) and it was hoped that the correct information would be available on CRT’s website.
- There would be a long stoppage on the **Bridgewater Canal** so engineers could check for movement. Stop gates going in soon.
- **Lock gate replacements** – procedure was for managers to place the order, gates produced by one of CRT’s two workshops at Bradley or Stanley Ferry who worked to recorded dimensions from old records. Gates were delivered and fitted locally. Norman commented that the workshops aimed to produce like-for-like but sometimes the dimensions were from 1960s designs and were wrong. Sue commented that an accident at one of the Montgomery locks was because the lock beams were too long and overhung the quadrant.
- **CRT Volunteer training** – Sue, Michael and Alison had attended a very productive meeting. It had been agreed to produce a series of video clips and/or a longer video, to raise awareness of boat handling and lock procedures. Each clip would contain a snippet of archive material as well as modern boating. Nick Lake (associated with Nutfield & Raymond) would do the filming in early Spring 2016. Phil commented that he was very pleased the project was going ahead.

7.9 **Press Officer & Social Media** (Amy-Alys Tillson) – enquiry from a film company; NarrowBoat column thanks; future topics sought.

- NarrowBoat column ideas - Amy was asked to re-send the existing list of topics to the committee, but in the meantime suggestions were: the Basingstoke Canal; the lower GU (seek information from David D); Winding Holes as historic places (why they are where they are); Donations (to whom and why). Press date end of November.
- Followers on social media – 654 Facebook, 303 Twitter.

7.10 **Awards** (Bernard Hales) – no entries for Awards to date; update on progress on the Peacock; thanks to individuals who had pledged money.

- Phil asked to remind members of the imminent closing date (30 November) at November Social.
- Val would bring a supply of entry forms to the Social.
- Alison commented that awards were not always given every year if insufficient entries were received (eg Alfred Ritchie trophy at IWA National)

7.11 **Website** (Ros Prettyman) - minutes available on website; updated Shop information on books; guidelines on sharing members’ data added to Members’ Area; queries received via website and replies sent.

- A recent enquiry about how to buy an historic narrow boat – suggestions for reply to be circulated to committee for comment

7.12 **IWA Liaison** (Alison Smedley) – verbal report

- IWA – Festival of Water to be staged at Pelsall on August bank holiday 2016
- Heritage Alliance - a heritage group with a section that dealt solely with transport interests rather than the built heritage, Alison had attended a meeting and suggested the Alliance would be appropriate for the club to join. The club was already a quasi-member through its membership of Maritime Heritage Trust, but Phil proposed and Clair seconded that the club should join in its own right. Agreed. Membership subscription £120pa. Alison would send details to Laura.

7.12 **Area Reps**

Central Shires (Rupert Smedley)

- CRT user group meeting coming up in next few weeks.

East (James Tidy) – Friends of R Nene moorings; changes to mooring at Ely on R Gt Ouse.

- Marmont Priory lock to be closed for 3 months for re-build
- Cam Conservators plan to update licence laws, may take 2 years
- EA lock furniture and moorings falling into disrepair
- EA Vegetation sight lines poor

- EA Signage for shoals poor, and buoys drifting off-site
- IWA rep had attended EA user group with list of problems for waterways in East Anglia and considered that an approach from H&S viewpoint was likely to be more effective.

East Midlands (Mike Harrison) – grant of £700K for terraced cottages Beeston lock; forthcoming dates for user CRT group meeting, open weekend at Newark Town lock, Heritage Boat Gathering; injury to HNBC member at Junction Lock on R Soar.

- Hoping to be able to attend User Group meeting at West Bridgford on 20 October

Kennet & Avon (Nick Grundy) – advice sought for winter mooring

London (Michael Pinnock) – more boats in London and no increase in moorings; positive meeting with CRT about extra training for volunteers.

Manchester & Pennine (George Boyle) – Marple aqueduct fencing

North East (David Lowe) – 2016 bicentenary of Leeds & Liverpool canal; Leeds Waterfront Festival success; Port of Leeds project moving forward; sudden withdrawal from service of Humber Princess; historic boat owners on A&CN forming new informal association; signage on visitor moorings; forthcoming user group meeting; re-appointment to NE Partnership.

North Wales & Borders (Iain MacTavish) – Hurleston bottom lock meeting; trip on Plover through Hurleston with CRT managers; trip on Plover for volunteers and for Partnership Chair.

North West (Daniel Mawdsley) – no report

South East & Thames (David Daines) – framed map of old line of Oxford Canal at Braunston

South Wales & Severn (Norman Mitchell)

Had not be able to attend the last User Group meeting. Nothing to report

West Midlands (Sarah Edgson) – no report

8 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ACTION LIST (not already covered in other items above)**

- 8.1 Deepstore (Item 6.5 August 2015) – Iain reported that further investigations were needed into the minimum cost. He also needed an idea of the volume of material to be stored. Mike estimated the Weaver photographs and other archive materials would be less than 1 cubic metre but he would contact Iain with more information. There was now also the Alan Brown material to consider for storage.

9 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 9.1 David L had heard rumours that the floor of Netherton Tunnel might be rising, although its lack of depth could also be due to accumulated rubbish.
- 9.2 Norman reported that the museum at Ellesmere Port might close for part of the winter.
- 9.3 David L and Sue had attended the memorial for Tim Leach. Val asked who might write an obituary for the newsletter. Tony Lewery or John Yates were suggested and Sue agreed to ask.

10 **NEXT MEETINGS**

28 November 2015	11am	Lapworth Village Hall, prior to Social
9 January 2016	11am	Samuel Barlow, Alvecote
5 March 2016	10am	Lapworth Village Hall, prior to AGM at 2.00pm

The meeting closed at 4.50pm.

Phil Prettyman

Chairman