

HISTORIC NARROW BOAT CLUB
Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 10.00 am on Saturday 7 May 2016
at Samuel Barlow, Alvecote, Staffs B78 1AS

PRESENT: Phil Prettyman (Chairman), Clair Butler, Sue Cawson, David Daines, Sarah Edgson, Mike Harrison, Paul Hunter, Iain MacTavish, Norman Mitchell, Michael Pinnock, Ros Prettyman, Val Roberts, Alison Smedley, Rupert Smedley.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Richard Booth, Nick Grundy, Bernard Hales, David Lowe, Ian McCarthy, Daniel Mawdsley, Laura Sturrock, James Tidy, Amy-Alys Tillson.

2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2016 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - REVIEW

- 3.1 **Motion and Elections** - It was felt that the AGM had been reasonably successful with a good turnout of about 20% of the membership. The motion to amend the Constitution (to permit rolling membership renewals) had been passed nem con and Ros had already updated the downloadable version on the website to reflect this change. All committee posts had been filled and all those standing had been elected nem con.
- 3.2 **The talk from Graham Boxer** (CRT Head of Museums) had been mainly well received. He acknowledged the poor state of many of the boats in the Museum's care and outlined the Museum's strategies to deal with them. However, his comments about wooden boats being taken out of the water were not well received, and perhaps he had not been aware of many club members' strong feelings on this. In private conversations after the meeting, he was able to explain the Museum's approaches to restoration and conservation, and it was hoped that he would provide an article for the newsletter so that this information could be disseminated to a wider club audience. Sue reported that he was due to talk at a meeting of the North Wales and Border Counties Partnership soon, and she would remind him about the next deadline for the newsletter. Phil commented that there had been a poor turnout by club members at a talk on conservation/restoration at the recent Easter gathering at the Port: a missed opportunity to question the Museum team more thoroughly on their approaches.
- 3.3 **Admin** – Iain commented that it had been difficult to hear speakers from the back of the hall, and it was important to have the mic and loudspeakers working correctly. There was some worry that not all bits of the kit were present in the box containing the PA system and that it was difficult to check at the end of any meeting that all the parts were packed away. It was suggested that a checklist be compiled and numbered labels attached to each part so that anyone packing away could be certain that nothing had been missed. Richard would be asked to bring all the equipment to the meeting at Marsworth, and Clair would provide labels.
- 4 WOKING AUGUST 2016**
- 4.1 **Information for members** - Phil had circulated a report on the planning meeting held at Mychett Canal Centre on 27 April 2016 (see appendix). He had also prepared a briefing note for the newsletter outlining how to apply for a licence and reserve lock passage, costs for the Basingstoke Canal, the River Wey and the River Thames transit licence, as well as an idea of journey times. Val also had an article on navigating the Thames covering EA registration, moorings, navigation lights, and engines and lines in locks, so it was hoped that club members would be well prepared.
- 4.2 **The boater's pack** would be sent out after the closing date and in advance of the gathering, rather than being issued on arrival at the site, so that members knew their locking times. If they were on the move after the closing date, details of their locking times could be sent by text or email. Mike commented that he had mobile numbers for nearly all the entrants.
- 4.3 **Bookings** - Mike reported that although he had more than 40 boats on his list of potential attendees, at the time of the meeting only 13 forms had been received by BCA, with a further 6 from BCS members.
- 4.4 **Drinking water** - Phil reported that the local water company had not been helpful in supplying a standpipe for fresh drinking water, and it had been suggested that the club pay for a water bowser at a cost of £250. This was agreed.
- 4.5 **Navigation** – David D commented that Lock 1 on the Basingstoke might not take a pair of full length boats, especially if both were GUCCC. Sue reported that the landslip further up the canal from the festival site was about

100 yards long. It would not affect the gathering, but would affect boats wishing to explore the upper reaches. David added that there was a winding hole just before the landslip.

4.6 **Moorings** – Phil reported that boats would have to be given a designated mooring spot in order to fit them all in. Mike would borrow a pedometer and Iain would buy a non-permanent spray marker so that allocated spots could be marked on the towpath. BCA had still not dealt with a tree on the offside and Phil would follow this up with them. Sue reported that Finch and Tug No 1, both deep draughted, had been able to get quite close to the bank.

4.7 **Visitor access to boats** – Youngman boards would have to be ordered, it was thought worth checking HSS website for prices and it was noted that handrails for some needed to be ordered separately. It was thought that these boards would need to be provided for the Swallow and one other boat.

4.8 **Insurance** – Norman pointed out that risks to boaters using their own planks from their boat to the towpath would be under their own insurance, but that risks to people using the Youngman boards supplied by the club would have to be covered by the club's insurance. Paul would double-check with IWA about HNBC's public liability and insurance cover, and would also increase cover for the value of the Shop stock. Clair would complete a risk assessment for the operation of the Shop on the site, based on one drawn up by IWA.

4.9 **Next meeting** at Mytchett was booked for 12 July. Mike would try to attend to view and pace out the moorings, but Sue agreed to deputise for him if necessary. Clair would send the Shop risk assessment to Phil in time for the meeting.

5 AUCTION

5.1 **Lots** – Clair reported that she had not yet booked Weston hall as she and Iain were waiting to hear how many lots there were likely to be. Iain commented that there would probably in the region of 50-60 and we needed double that number to make any auction worthwhile/profitable for the club. Phil had written about the auction in his Chairman's Notes in the latest newsletter, suggesting lots could be added by other members. Iain reminded the meeting of an approach by Robert Jones last year concerning the disposal of various engine parts; Iain had tried to get in touch again without success but would try again. Val commented that there was an advertisement in the newsletter from someone wanting to dispose of various items, and perhaps these might be added to the auction.

5.2 **Decision on Auction or alternative** – it was agreed that we would need a confirmed list of items from [REDACTED] in time for the next committee meeting on 3 July. We could then take a final decision on whether to go ahead. As an alternative, Alison suggested issuing a Supplement to the newsletter, listing all the items and asking bidders to send sealed bids to the vendors. This was agreed. Michael suggested that a separate working party should be set up to deal with the Auction, so as not to intrude upon committee time.

6 PUBLICATIONS

6.1 [REDACTED]

6.2 [REDACTED]

6.3 **Weaver book** – Clair reported sales of 254 copies, plus 62 trade orders and 19 complimentary copies. About 140 were stored at Mike & Val's house but this was not a problem. Michael commented that there was no reason to worry about a slow down in sales, as the "rally season" was about to start. Mike reported that he had started to work on book 2, but that it would not be ready until 2017.

6.4 **Interviews** – Phil commented that it would be sensible to try to build a bank of stories and reminiscences from ex-working boatmen and boatwomen who had worked the boats up to the demise of widespread commercial carrying. Sue suggested putting together a team who could do the interviews, possibly recorded if that was not too off-putting to the interviewees, and Paul said he would make a start. Names suggested were David Blagrove, Henry & Phyllis Johnson, Ron Withy, Roger Hatchard, Nick Hill, Joe and Henry Hollinshead, Maurice Peasland, John Blunn, Brian Collins, Laura Carter. Michael wondered if getting two or three people together might be more effective in encouraging chat instead of a one-to-one interview. Clair commented that the chair of North Wales & Borders Partnership, Brenda Harvey, had expressed an interest.

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) – AGM comments; Auction appeal; Tess Wharf letter of support; CRT Council and Appointments committee; Council boating reps meeting.

- Current round of Trustee appointments underway. In 2017 posts of other Trustees who have served 2 terms will be up for election and it will be very important to try to find someone with boating experience.
- At the Boating representatives' meeting at Fazeley, Mike Grimes (CRT Head of Boating) had delivered a very robust defence of CRT's approach to non-compliant moorers. It was unfortunate that NBTAs were able to exert undue influence, having achieved a degree of sympathy in the media for the "plight" of continuous moorers without a home mooring being required to move on, despite that being in the terms of their licence. While it was felt that CRT were becoming more effective in enforcement, there needed to be more publicity about the lack of payment of local taxes by non-compliant boaters who nevertheless used local services. It was suggested that we might urge CRT to increase the licence costs of non-compliant boaters to reflect the additional cost. It was also noted that EA calculated licence charges by boat-area rather than by length, so that wide boats paid a proportionally higher fee than narrow boats of a similar length. EA's charging rules were enshrined in legislation, which would have a bearing on any future merger between CRT and EA. It was agreed to ask for a meeting with the Boaters' Representatives and CRT Licensing department. Also to ask for feedback about the composition of the Licensing Advisory Group and the advice it was offering to CRT.

7.2 **Secretary** (Paul Hunter) – verbal report at meeting.

- Usual correspondence had been received, among it information from Heritage Alliance. Alison suggested that Paul forward their emails to the committee for interest. Paul would do so.
- Sue reported that Ian McCarthy had not received invitations to attend the User Group in his area. Paul would make sure that Manchester & Pennine office knew his contact details.

7.3 **Treasurer** (Laura Sturrock) – bank balances; amendment to item 5.2 on Minutes 7 March 2016 [amended before the meeting and included in the signed copy].

- Phil commented that it was extremely useful to have Laura at the Woking planning meetings and he was very grateful for her input.

7.4 **Membership Secretary** (Sarah Edgson) – verbal report at meeting.

- Sarah reported that about 23 members, due for renewal in December 2015, had still not renewed, but she was waiting for the latest bank statement to check recent payments. Sarah did not have on-line access to the bank account. Ros would ask Laura if Sarah could have this facility.
- Val would like to know total membership numbers for the newsletter print run. Sarah to advise.
- Phil would check with Ian McCarthy if Spey's membership had been renewed.
- Ros would check that the membership form on the website was up-to-date.
- **New members**, who had joined since the previous meeting, were noted:

Rex Wain	Sextans	1836
Claire Cormack	Star	1837
Stuart & Jackie Spencer	Hawkesbury	1838
John Ainley		1839
Roger Dunbar		1840
Simon Russ		1841
Wayne & Angela Attwood		1842
Richard & Sue Powell	Tawny Owl	1843
Meg & Paul Bartlett	Tawny Pippet II	1844
Nik Lambert	Bolli	1845

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

- 7.6 **Newsletter Editor** (Val Roberts) – Check email-only copy of newsletter; date mailing labels required; ad for canal artefacts; speaker for November meeting; film *The Rose Revived*.
- Sarah confirmed that the labels for the newsletter posting would be available by 11 May.
 - Speakers for meeting – it was agreed to have a break from CRT speakers and in any case to reserve them for AGM meetings. Suggestions were:
 - November 2016 - Malcolm Braine – Sarah to ask Steve Wood about the number of slides available and a likely time scale for their preparation.
 - March 2017 - Alan Jones on camping boats – Sue to ask Judith S then talk to Alan
 - November 2017 - Nick Hill – Paul to ask
 - It was agreed that Ros would ask Mike Askin if he would arrange to record the talks.
- 7.7 **Club Shop** (Clair Butler) – discount for members on-line and at the shop; further honorarium for website development; takings at Lapworth and the Port; book storage at CRT Norbury; sales of Weaver book; donation of models and print for club funds.
- It was agreed to offer a 10% discount to members when buying on-line and at the shop. Ros would liaise with Steve to arrange the technical aspects of the on-line discount.
 - Just as the club paid for professional printing of the newsletter, it was agreed to establish a yearly budget for the development of the website, as well as the yearly maintenance charge, rather than ad hoc donations. Ros to ask Laura for details of recent payments.
 - Model and print – it was agreed to hold back these items until we knew whether we would organise an auction. If the auction did not take place, they could be offered for sale separately.
 - Harley Crossley book – due to be published in June 2016, Val had asked for a review copy and Clair would order 6 to have them available at the Shop at Braunston.
- 7.8 **Navigation** (Sue Cawson) – non-compliant spindles at Buckby; problems with SE region reporting system; NAG film about paddles and pawls, more modules to follow; NAG dredging sub-group established, vegetation sub-group to be set up; spot dredging on Staffs & Worcs; helpful talks with local manager re B'ham & Fazeley dredging; survey and recording of all facilities for boaters; training film for SE or national project on boat handling, separate from traditional techniques.
- Congratulation on Paddles and Pawls film – short, informative and interesting. Good to hear that NAG has other similar modules in mind on working locks safely (sinkings and cills).
 - It would be appropriate for the club to lead on a module on traditional techniques, with support from CRT. Sue to investigate further with a view to obtaining funding.
- 7.9 **Press and Social Media** (Amy-Alys Tillson) – subjects for next two editions of *Narrow Boat*.
- Amy's suggestion of the History of the club (to coincide with 50th anniversary) and then a write up of the Woking Gathering, was agreed.
- 7.10 **Website** (Ros Prettyman) – nothing to report other than the work to offer a 10% discount (see Shop).
- 7.11 **External organisations.** Sue reported on the work of the North Wales & Borders Partnership:
- We are beginning to make progress with local communities and have several adoptions in the pipe line. Much of these adoptions are very much to improve the towpaths and environment for local communities as you will appreciate the towpaths have been dire this winter. We are also looking how we can improve the use by boaters of the section between Chester and Ellesmere Port. The whole partnership group is broken into small manageable areas, I am working mainly with Market Drayton and Audlem.
- 7.12 **IWA Liaison** (Alison Smedley) – verbal report at meeting:
- IWA had just launched a Waterways Directory – a definitive list of all canals ever built, some 6,500 miles, of which 4,700 were navigable.

7.13 Area Reps

Central Shires (Rupert Smedley) – poor attendance at drop-in User Group and little feedback; interim waterways manager arrangements

- Since the meetings, Rupert had heard that the drop-in format would not be continued
- Problems with the winding hole at southern end of Harecastle tunnel, possibly reduced to 50ft, badly silted.

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

- Belmont, ex-Blue Line butty at now-defunct Snibston Discovery Museum, Leics. Mike had been informed that Leicestershire County Council had no plans to dispose of the butty. It was still in a very poor state, as it had been when first sited at the Museum in the 1970s. Some rumours that it may go to Braunston.
- User Group meeting had not been very productive, mostly discussions between anglers' groups.

Fens/East (James Tidy) – success of moorings fees in Ely and other locations; St Neots guillotine gate fixed; EA starting volunteers scheme.

- News about improved moorings scheme welcomed.
- St Neots - Rupert commented that the crane was inaccessible as it had been built around.
- Phil mentioned that the next meeting of EA National User Group would be on Monday 16 May at Horseferry Road.

Kennet & Avon (Nick Grundy) – costs of winter maintenance programme; continuing closure of moorings below Pulteney Weir in Bath; towpath improvements between Bath & Bathampton; Reading Waterfest June 2016.

London (Michael Pinnock) – new facilities installed across capital's waterways; re-opening of Olympic waterways summer 2016; busy event at Canalway Cavalcade, May Day bank holiday weekend.

Manchester & Pennine (Ian McCarthy) – progress in repairing flood damage on Rochdale canal; antisocial behaviour still a problem on Manchester 9 and Ashton; re-pointing on Ashton lock chambers; dredging on Huddersfield Narrow; urgent need for dredging on Lower Peak Forest; spot dredging needed on Upper Peak and Macc; spot dredging needed at bridge holes on T&M and some longer pounds at Wheelock.

North East (David Lowe) – oil deliveries from Hull to Rotherham on Exol Pride; grain barges to Runcorn; plans for Port of Leeds at Stourton; ready-mix and aggregate company at former oil wharf at Fleet; huge response to CRT's flood appeal and repair works underway; Saltaire visitor moorings problem; L&L bicentenary celebrations with the short boats Kennet and Ribble.

- Phil commented that the North East's PR person had been very effective in communicating with users during the flood. Sue added that the area covered by the floods was very extensive and the resulting damage would take time to repair.

North Wales & Borders (Iain MacTavish) – Spring User Forum; impact of flooding on budgets; customer service review; Port, work on large lock gates; winter stoppages programme; more boaters encouraged onto R Weaver; community engagement in Chester; Shroppe Woodeaves Cutting bank stabilisation; veg spots cleared; refurbished Elsan disposal points; depth mostly acceptable; towpath improvement at Market Drayton; Hurleston update awaited.

- **User Groups** had been held at different times (afternoons instead of evenings) and the format had been changed to presentations followed by break-out groups. This had been successful and Iain would email local Waterways Manager with positive comments.

North West (Daniel Mawdsley) – no report

South East & Thames (David Daines) – remedial works planned for locks on S GU; mooring rings on strip of CRT land in front of Marsworth houses; development at Bulbourne to go ahead; length of stay at moorings at Marsworth and Berkhamstead unchanged.

- Despite problems on lower GU, David had travelled up successfully.
- Michael reported that replacement gates, without gate paddles, had been installed at Kings Langley lock. It appeared that the interim style of gate had been replicated, whereas we had been assured that new gates would conform to the original style with gate paddles. David to follow up.

South Wales & Severn (Norman Mitchell) – Spring Forum meeting; expenditure; dog waste bins; Purton hulks; Diglis Oil Basin; dredging East channel and some spot dredging.

West Midlands (Sarah Edgson) – verbal report at meeting

- Aston locks to be closed for a month, also Rushall locks after the IWA festival at Pelsall.

8 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ACTION LIST

- 8.1 **Plaque for Woking** – to date 17 people had asked for a plaque. Iain reported that costs would be £4-£5 each regardless of the number ordered, there being no reduction for quantity. He would order them once the closing date for entries had passed.
- 8.2 **Dust jacket for Ken Keay book** – Paul had had little success with the first printer approached. He would investigate further with other printers.
- 8.3 **Friends of Peacock** – Paul had discussed issues with Irene de Boo at the AGM and advised no further action for the moment until she had finalised discussions with Birmingham Science Museum (Peacock's owners).
- 8.4 **Archive materials in storage** – Iain reported that there did not appear to be much material to store. Val & Mike commented that 3 or 4 boxes would take the material they held at their house. Iain reported that we needed to fill 10 or 12 boxes as a minimum to make it worthwhile. The facility's standard storage boxes measured approximately 18" x 12" x 24". Iain was asked to look into purchasing boxes to be filled next Autumn.
- 8.5 **Maps at CRT offices** at Braunston and Ocker Hill. Phil would ask Nigel Crowe (CRT Heritage) for permission to go and photograph the maps, possibly copying in Graham Boxer and Margaret Harrison (CRT Head of Museums and Collections Manager).

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 Hartley Arms, Wheaton Aston – Iain reported that historic boats would be welcome at the Beer, Boat & Burger Festival to be held on 12-14 August 2016.
- 9.2 Weaver photos in the CRT Archive – Mike had noticed that photographs from the CRT Archive had been posted on a closed Facebook page, but about 10 of them appeared to be from our Weaver collection and he wondered how CRT had them. Norman said he believed there were Weaver photographs in the museum at Gloucester and he would investigate.

10 DATES AND TIMES OF NEXT MEETINGS

After some discussion about the possibility of using meeting rooms in Community Fire Stations, it was agreed that Sue would check if the Samuel Barlow room was available for the 14 January 2017 meeting, Tamworth being an easy location if the weather were bad.

3 July 2016	11am	Marsworth Village Hall
8 October 2016	11am	Samuel Barlow, Alvecote
19 November 2016	11am	Lapworth Village Hall, prior to Social
14 January 2017	11am	Samuel Barlow, Alvecote
4 March 2017	10am	Lapworth Village Hall, prior to AGM at 2.00pm

The meeting closed at 4.15pm.

Phil Prettyman
Chairman