

HISTORIC NARROW BOAT OWNERS CLUB
Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Saturday 3rd March 2012
at The Village Hall, Napton-on-the-Hill, Warwickshire, starting at 10.00 am

PRESENT WERE: Phil Prettyman (Chairman), Richard Booth, Sue Cawson, Jim Cook, David Daines, Rebekah Fuller, Mike Harrison, David Lowe, Iain MacTavish, Norman Mitchell, Val Roberts, Alison Smedley, Rupert Smedley and Ros Prettyman (until item 6.4)

In Attendance were: Margaret Booth, Clair Butler, Sarah Hale (until item 6.4)

1. Apologies and Welcome

Apologies had been received from George Boyle, Sandra Green, Steve Harmer, Martin Jiggins, Viv Scragg and Laura Sturrock. (Laura Sturrock, Ros Prettyman and Sarah Hale were involved in taking transitional trustees of the Canal and River Trust on a boat trip nearby.) Apologies had also been received from Bernard Hales who would have been in attendance.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th January 2012 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Chairman's Report

3.1 Phil reported that there was a BWAFF meeting called on 1st February which due to short notice Phil wasn't able to attend. David Lowe attended and had circulated a report.

3.2 Although the basic funding for the Canal and River Trust remains at £39m per annum, there have been a number of other concessions which have satisfied the Transitional Trustees and agreement to the funding package has now been agreed and announced.

3.3 Phil had received an invitation to attend a conference entitled "The New Vision for Waterways Museums" to be held on Wednesday 16 May 2012, 10.00am to 3.15pm at the Boat Museum, Ellesmere Port. Rebekah will attend representing the Young Boaters. Rupert will attend representing HNBOC and Sue will attend representing Saturn.

4. Secretary's Report

4.1 Alison had received the IWA Insurance certificate for 2012 and had emailed a scanned copy to those who need it (Ros, Laura, Clair and Val).

4.2 Alison had received an invitation to respond to the Government's Red Tape Challenge, specifically regarding the Inland Waterways. Looking at the comments on the website it seems to be whole can of worms and not clear what the point is of Government carrying out this consultation at this stage? It was agreed not to respond to this.

5. Treasurer's Report

5.1 Laura reported that the account balances stood as follows:

£12,569.61	Santander
£ 4,168.41	Natwest Current account
£16,738.02	Balance at the two banks

6. AGM Arrangements/ Keay and Hemelryk Awards

- 6.1 It was noted that the Keay Award had been presented to Adrian Polglaze for the restoration of *Walton* at its launch on 18th February. The Hemelryk Award will be presented at the AGM this afternoon to Michael Pinnock for the work carried out on *Emu*. Both awards had been retrieved from the previous year's recipients and concern had been expressed over the condition of both awards.
- 6.2 Alison had arranged the engraving of the small keepsake plaques, the one for *Walton* will need to be passed on to Adrian Polglaze (via the Prettymans) and the one for *Emu* will be presented with the trophy this afternoon.
- 6.3 Committee elections to take place at the AGM were discussed. It was noted that Martin Jiggins is not standing again – Phil will write letter to thank him for all his years on the committee. Assistant Archivist, as a committee post, will disappear by default, but if Viv wishes to carry out another task she could be co-opted (assuming the new constitution is adopted this afternoon).
- 6.4 David Daines had prepared an accurate list of members who were eligible to vote on the name change and constitution and will be handing out pink slips for constitutional votes and green for everyone else. Rupert and Norman offered to act as tellers to count votes. Alison noted that several proxy votes, for and against the name change and the revised constitution, had been received and these would be taken into account in the voting.
- 6.5 Regarding the proposed amendment to the constitution received from Jim Macdonald, it was agreed that this would be considered at the AGM (despite not having been submitted with the required number of supporting members). Jim's proposed amendment is the addition of a further sentence to clause 4.2 "The Officers and Committee Members shall comprise not less than 75% owning a boat eligible for inclusion in the club's archive as defined under item 6.". The committee was not in favour of the amendment for a number of reasons, and these reasons would be put to the membership after Jim has had his say.

7. Easter Gathering, Droitwich, 6th to 9th April 2012

- 7.1 Ros had circulated copies of agreements with BW and Wychavon District Council and had also emailed a list of tasks that needed to be carried out. 1000 litre elsan disposal tank ordered (£125 plus vat), location agreed with Wychavon District Council. £200 is the fee for hire of working mens club for all events listed. Beer organized has been organized, to be sold at £2.50 pint. Mike has received 21 boat bookings so far. 45 boats should fit in easily. The best looking working boats will be moored on the main line. One of the few things still outstanding was the use of the compound by motor caravans. People will be offered the opportunity to sign up for a plaque over the weekend, pay £5 and Rupert will organize afterwards.
- 7.2 Another speaker is still required for the Friday evening. Alison will contact Ivor Caplan, who was involved in the Droitwich Canals Trust and the more recent phase of the restoration. If he is not available, other possible speakers suggested were: Jack Heggerty, South Wales and Severn Canal and River Trust Chairman and Chief Exec of Wychavon District Council, Ed Fox of BW or Mike Palmer of WRG.
- 7.3 BW has asked for arrival and departure times to be staggered, given the water shortages anticipated for the spring/summer. They are also encouraging use of the side ponds on the Hanbury flight.
- 7.4 David Lowe mentioned that there is a plan afoot for involvement of historic working boats at the launch of CRT. David Lowe will keep us informed.

7.5 A contact had been received from the BBC who were looking for a boat to use for filming for a documentary about war time use of boats. This could be a good publicity opportunity and a number of members' boats were suggested.

8. Newsletter Editor's Report

8.1 Val had emailed a report. 2012/1 has gone out (again with 4 extra pages) together with the Droitwich Gathering booking form. Total cost was £567.00 for printing 600 copies. Press date for 2012/2 is yet to be decided. Val suggested that the Freebie list will need to be revised before the next issue is despatched.

8.2 Val has received a cheque for £50.00 from Braunston Marina for back cover advert and has purchased 3000 2nd class stamps as requested. Val has had 4000 Christmas cards produced in conjunction with Friends of Cromford Canal as before (8000 in all) and will pass to Clair with envelopes and cello bags. Val noted that she had 300 membership forms left in stock.

8.3 Val noted that she has no "Know Your Committee" articles in stock. Left over are: Steve Harmer, Norman Mitchell, Sandra Green and Sarah Hale.

8.4 Val suggested that the IWA's Inglesham Lock Appeal should benefit from the proceeds of the Tat Auction. (This was later agreed by email).

9. Membership Secretary's Report

9.1 David Daines had emailed a report. As at 2nd March, there are 474 members, including 5 Exchange & 2 Honorary. At time of last meeting 471 inclusive. Of paying members 304 are non SO and 163 are paid by SO. So far, as at 2nd March, out of about 144 January renewals originally due, there are 23 still outstanding. David has sent out e-mail reminders and has received a number of 'promises to pay up'.

9.2 The following new members were approved:

Dawn Tigwell	Canis Major	1579	Re-joined
Paul Morris	N/A	1659	
Robert Jones	N/A	1660	
Innes Catto	Gort	1661	

10. Publicity Report

10.1 Sarah was thanked for doing the press release on *Walton*. As a general principle Sarah was asked to circulate any press releases to committee before sending.

11. Website

11.1 Ros had circulated a report on website visitor statistics for the year January to December 2011. The average weekly number of unique visitors has remained pretty steady throughout the year. Although there was a slight dip to 197 visitors in December 2011, the number rose again to 322 in January 2012. They spent about 3 minutes on site and viewed 6 or 7 pages each time. The highest proportion of visits came from the UK (1,478), but there have been regular monthly viewings and occasional visitors from other parts of the world:

11.2 Contact Form – good - Several people have used the Form to ask about historic boats or to enquire about family history. These enquiries have been passed to Val and were included in the 2012/1 newsletter. Others have sent details/corrections about boats – these have been passed to Richard for Archive checking before being included on the website.

- 11.3 Contact Form – not so good - Ros received a notification alleging criminal misconduct by a person involved in the boat trade, the ruling on which was subject to Crown Court reporting restrictions. Ros checked what action to take with a senior police officer who advised her to contact the Crown Court in question. When she did so, with the IP address of the sender of the Form, she was informed that the named person was not on their records. So, it could have been gossip, malicious or possibly true – either way, Ros was concerned to keep the club out of trouble with the law.
- 11.4 Revamp - The potential name change provides an opportunity to freshen up the visual appearance of the website. Steve, Sandra and Ros are putting their heads together, but all suggestions welcome.

12. Club Shop

- 12.1 Clair reported that she had only received two orders since the last report (George & Mary book and one for clothing). The current clothing supplier, Smudgeonline ceased trading at the end of February but have passed on details of another company that they recommend, Linela Embroidery. They seem to be very helpful and were happy to fulfil the recent order.
- 12.2 Clair and Ian will not be able to take the shop to Braunston as they are going to the gathering at Northwich. Several other committee members will be at Braunston and offered to run the stand.
- 12.3 Clair has updated the list of second hand books with quite a few more titles. Clair is still unsure how to price George Smith's Our canal population and she has upped the price of Idle Women. All the secondhand books will be on sale this afternoon. Phil will mention the shop and Christmas cards to the members at the AGM.

13. Archivist's Report

- 13.1 Richard had nothing to report.

14. Boating Issues

- 14.1 Staffs and Worcester Tail Bridges – since the last committee meeting Alison had been in contact with BW Central Shires and West Midlands regarding the design of the proposed railings on the tail bridges. Communications with Tom Woodcock, Heritage Advisor for Central Shires was satisfactory, and he seemed to be thinking along the right lines. Ian Lane, Engineer for West Midlands, had submitted various plans and drawings for proposed handrails, which include open ends for catching ropes on. Following consultation with the committee, Alison had forwarded comments along with Mike Harrison's drawing of a much simpler handrail that would be cheaper and more in keeping.
- 14.2 Water levels. David reported that level of Tring summit is back to normal at the moment. Marsworth and Cowroast locks are to be locked until later in March with 5 hour openings after that. Aylesbury Arm is closed except for certain dates. Water shortage situation is looking quite bad in the South and the South East for the Spring and Summer, with restrictions likely to be place from the Spring onwards.
- 14.3 David Lowe mentioned that he and Rebekah Fuller are liaising over the loss of historic paddle gear on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal at Bingley Five Rise.

15. Area Representative Report

- 15.1 **South East** – no report.

- 15.2 **South Wales & Severn** – Norman Mitchell had reported that he understands that BW Manager Nick Worthington will be reporting on matters regarding operations on the Gloucester & Sharpness. This may concern the opening hours and length of winter closures (BW weekends Tues & Wed). The reports are due later in the year, possibly after the CRT inauguration date.
- 15.3 **West Midlands** – West Mids User Group meeting 7.00 pm on Weds 25 April at Bonded Warehouse, Stourbridge – Steve Harmer is due back from Canada before then so he will go to the meeting.
- 15.4 **Central Shires** – Rupert had nothing to report.
- 15.5 **East Midlands** – Mike Harrison had nothing to report.
- 15.6 **Fens** – Jim Cook reported that a BW gold license will allow boaters to navigate the Cam. All others will have to pay a premium of around £130. This came out of a meeting between the Cam Boaters and the Cam Conservancy. The Bedford-Milton Keynes Link is back under the spotlight with the commitment by Milton Keynes Council with the support of the County council it include the link as a priority within the Local Strategic Plan. This means that medium/long term planning should always include the Link in any discussions. This is a very positive (small) step and has been greatly welcomed but it does not mean that any action is imminent. Charlie Fox, who was very active in keeping the Fens waterways open, died recently.
- 15.7 **Kennet & Avon** – no report (no area rep in place).
- 15.8 **London** – no report.
- 15.9 **Manchester & Pennine** - George Boyle had reported by email that he will be attending a user group meeting in April.
- 15.10 **North East** – David Lowe had nothing to report.
- 15.11 **North Wales & Border** – Iain MacTavish reported that the Shroppie has been dredged between Audlem and Adderley lock flights in response to requests. They have not tested the channel yet or checked our whether there has been any other areas tackled further south of Norbury Junction. Clair and Iain will attend the North Wales & Border User Forum on 26 April.
- 15.12 **North West** – Rebekah reported that she is no longer based in the North West. She is happy to carry on as North West Rep in the short term, but the Club will need to find a replacement. Phil will put out an appeal at the AGM.
- 16. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings not already covered**
- 16.1 Phil noted that the launch of CRT has been put back to end of June. He felt that everyone really must support the launch of the charity. David Lowe reported that we have been specifically asked to provide historic boats at events to help launch CRT. The main launch is likely to be in Birmingham, followed by other events around the country.
- 16.2 Mike Harrison mentioned that BW have been experimenting with aluminium stop planks at Aston Lock on the east end of the Trent and Mersey Canal.
- 17. Any Other Business**

- 17.1 The committee was sorry to hear that Norman Briggs, former South West Rep for many years, had been in touch to give his apologies to the AGM as he was unwell.
- 17.2 Norman Mitchell mentioned that he had heard that BW considering putting K&A gearing on to the Tardebigge flight.

18. Date and Venue of Next Committee Meetings

- 12th May – 11am – Hazelhurst Cottage, Denford
- 14th July – 11am – Farnham
- 15th September – 11am – Horsley Woodhouse
- 3rd or 17th November – 10am – Napton or Braunston (Braunston booked for 17 November and Napton booked for 3 November 2012)

The meeting closed at 5.30pm.

Alison Smedley
Secretary