

HISTORIC NARROW BOAT CLUB
Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 11.00 am on Sunday 16 October 2016
at the Samuel Barlow, Alvecote 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, Rupert Smedley, Laura Sturrock, James Tidy, Amy-Alys Tillson.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Richard Booth, Nick Grundy, Bernard Hales, David Lowe, Ian McCarthy, Daniel Mawdsley, Alison Smedley.

2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2016 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3 WOKING GATHERING, AUGUST 2016

It was agreed that the event had been a success in terms of encouraging boaters to use the Basingstoke Canal, raising awareness of the canal in the local community and putting on a good weekend's entertainment for boaters. Positive comments had been received from members (eg "the best rally I've been to") and thanks for the practical help a member had received. There had been a good reaction from local people on the towpath, and a donation of £25 by post towards club funds - it was agreed that Sarah should send them a copy of the newsletter and a year's membership.

Before leaving the site, gifts had been given to the waterways manager, the rangers and the office staff in appreciation of their help in organising the rally and facilitating the passage of boats. Phil had sent formal letters of thanks to key people in Surrey County Council and Hampshire County Council, praising the work of staff in the Basingstoke Canal Authority. Similar thanks were extended to Byfleet Boating Club for their help with tables and chairs and moorings for members boats in transit to and from the event.

For future gatherings, notes were made of the importance of having any broadcast commentary at the centre of the event, rather than on the outskirts, and of incorporating a campaigning element in the venue location and route.

4 EASTER GATHERING 2017

It was agreed that the club should organise a gathering for Easter 2017 and that it should be somewhere in the Midlands.

Locations considered:

- Pelsall Common had been suggested, Iain and Clair had been to assess the location (plenty of room, no water, no sanitation, no easy vehicle access) and Ros had contacted BCNS to enquire about hiring their marquee (size 62' x 17'6", £250 for weekend hire, £75 to hire space heater, club to supply gas).
- Titford Pumphouse had been suggested by Brenda Ward, editor BCNS's Boundary Post.
- Walsall Town Arm had been suggested by Ivor Caplan, BCNS Secretary. This was felt to be a good campaigning venue.

It was agreed that a small working party would visit Walsall and possibly Titford to assess their suitability – Clair, Iain, Sue, Sarah.

5 AUCTION 2017

Phil emphasised that the details he was about to share had to remain absolutely confidential within the committee until the brochure was produced. A printout of photographed items was shared. It was suggested that an Auction was not really within the club's remit, and that we might approach a professional auction house so that there was less risk to the club. However Phil pointed out that the vendor was very keen that the items should be offered to canal enthusiasts who would appreciate their historic significance, and that it could be seen as a service to club members. It was agreed to go ahead with the Auction as a private event for club members and their guests. Laura commented that there was a risk of flooding the market with so many similar items and that attendees at the Auction would have a finite amount to spend. Phil would make sure that the vendor was aware of this.

It had been suggested that the club could combine an Easter Gathering with the Auction, but looking at the number of Lots it was agreed that this was too complicated a venture and that it would be better to have a separate Auction on another date and at another location that offered parking, warmth, size and security. Ellesmere Port was

suggested but it was agreed that we needed somewhere more central for ease of access. Suggestions of Weston, Lapworth and Napton village halls (all already known to members for club events) were made.

There was some discussion about the amount of commission. It was agreed that there would be no Buyer's commission but that we would expect a Seller's commission of 15%, with the cost of hall hire to be split between the vendors.

A working party (Phil, Laura, Clair, Iain, Sue, Sarah and Ros) was set up to investigate and decide upon a suitable venue in February/March 2017, timeline, insurance cover, transport of items, production of the printed and the on-line version of the brochure. Ros commented that the on-line brochure we had created for Auction 2015 had been saved in outline format, ready to be populated. Phil would contact the vendors to establish agreed terms and conditions. Paul commented that he did not believe it was possible for the club to insure someone else's goods and that risk would remain with the vendor, even if the items were stored in another location.

The deadline for publicising the Auction to members was 18 November 2016, the press date for the next issue of the newsletter.

6 MEETINGS

6.1 November Social 2016

- Malcolm Braine had been booked as speaker. Ros would check if Malcolm was willing to be filmed and if Mike Askin was able to do the filming. She would also ask Richard to check that the PA system was complete. Clair would consult the checklist prepared after the committee meeting in July 2016 to find out if any additional parts needed to be bought.
- Laura had received notification that, although we had use of the committee room in the morning, the main hall had been booked for a church fete in the morning. Clair was worried that this would impact on setting up the Shop in time for members who often arrived early. It was agreed that there was little we could do to change this and that all committee members would help to carry in tables and Shop stock immediately after the morning's committee meeting.
- Meet and greet – all committee members would be on duty in the hall to welcome members as soon as the Shop was set up. Sarah would liaise with Steve Wood to produce name badges in a larger font for ease of reading.
- Refreshments at the interval – it was understood that Marg Pottinger would bring the cake, and would be happy to cut it. Phil would bring the champagne flutes purchased for Woking. James would arranged for a further 3 cases of fizz, there being 17 bottles left over from Woking from an initial supply of 36 bottles. There was also a sufficient number of boxes of orange juice and fizzy water. Ice was not thought to be a problem in November and there was a large 'fridge in the hall's kitchen. We would also offer tea and coffee.

6.2 AGM March 2017

- Paul will email a list of committee posts up for re-election at AGM 2017, including S Wales and Severn rep. Notification for the AGM would go in newsletter 2017/4, press date 18 November 2016.
- Rupert reported on the splitting up of CRT's Central Shires admin region, and thus the demise of his post.
- Sue reminded the committee of an earlier suggestion to appoint a Vice Chairman and shared her thoughts on a possible candidate.
- A speaker for the AGM had not yet been confirmed. Sue would contact Julie Sharman, CRT's Assets Manager, to enquire if she would speak at the AGM. [Post meeting note: Julie Sharman had agreed to be our speaker.]
- Alan Jones had agreed to speak and Sue was asked to invite him for the November 2017 Social.
- Norman commented that Rachel Mulherne from Gloucester Museum was an interesting speaker on conservation.

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.

Membership Secretary's report and London Area Rep's report were brought forward to the morning session as Sarah and Michael had to leave at lunchtime. Their reports are recorded here in their usual place for future ease of reference.

- 7.1 **Chairman** (Phil Prettyman) – CRT Council; new CRT trustees; Central Shires dispersal; possible EA transfer to CRT; effect on CRT of UK withdrawal from EU; CRT Historic Boats group; boating reps meeting with CRT Head of Boating (paddle and pawls video, vegetation issues, screening off of lock access)

- Phil reminded the committee that members of CRT Council, Partnerships, Advisory Groups were there in their own right, not as representatives of HNBC, but their work was invaluable for their input to CRT meetings and their feedback later.
- The CRT Historic Boat groups meeting he had attended had focused on what to do with historic boats currently held at the National Waterways Museum. It was important that, if the club sought to challenge CRT/Museum's proposals, we should be familiar with the principles outlined in *Conserving Historic Vessels* published by National Historic Ships, as that was the starting point for the Museum's approach. The options for boats were: restoration, conservation, loan to other museums, deconstruction with laser measurements for possible replica construction in the future. James wondered how many of the boats being considered for deconstruction were narrow boats and David D said he would send a list in confidence.

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

- Willow Wren - Paul had managed to see David Blagrove in July and, although he had been in good spirits shortly before his death, Paul had found little more information than was contained in David's various books. Paul hoped that Jean Blagrove might let him have sight of David's original manuscripts. He would arrange a visit.
- Members' discounts – Michael Stimpson had moved from Towergate to another insurance provider, and it had been suggested by several people that Towergate's premiums had risen. It was agreed that listing the Towergate discount on the website and the newsletter might be taken as an endorsement of the company's rates, and the list would be amended accordingly. Paul would keep a watching brief on other insurance companies that might offer a discount.
- Heritage Alliance newsletter had been received, which Paul would circulate to the committee. Phil was asked to bring copies of Boundary Post (BCN) to meetings.

7.3 **Treasurer** (Laura Sturrock) – club finances; corporation tax likely; Woking expenditure; Woking tat funds; website costs; date & location for November Social 2017.

- Woking Tat funds amounted to £348.20. Phil suggested sending the proceeds to the Basingstoke Canal Society with a request that they put it towards funding their volunteers to install fendering around the winding hole above the rally site at Woking which had been problematic for full length boats. James suggested topping the amount up to £400 and this was agreed.
- Webmaster – it was agreed to reimburse the webmaster for the past 6 years' cost of hosting the website (£120 pa), together with this year's cost, making 7 years in total.
- The club's accounting year-end was 30 November – Laura asked members to submit claims to her as soon as possible.
- The hall at Lapworth was booked for 4 March 2017. Laura would book it again for the November Social 2017.

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

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

NAME	BOAT	MEMBERSHIP NO
Lea Valley Narrowboats		1854
Mr & Mrs R Powell	Ferrous & Susan	1855
Caroline Bambridge		1856
Marcus Jennings	Mickle-A-Muckle	1857
Mr Colin Hill & Ms Cathy Stoertz		1858
Mr Ross Kinnaird & Miss Steph Poyton	Gosty Hill	1859
Mr & Mrs J Pattle	Pacific & Brentford	1860
Dudley Wells		1861
Rodney Wardlaw	Hazellnut	1862
Mr & Mrs C Harlow		1866

- It was noted that some of the non-renewers (see Appendix reports) were regular late-payers and Sarah hoped that they would renew in due course. Phil asked Sarah to send the list of non-renewers to the committee by email.
- Val asked how many newsletters should be ordered to cope with the increasing number of members. Sarah would send Val the numbers before the next print run.
- Central Shires address should be removed from the newsletter mailing list. Phil believed that CRT's Fazeley offices were up for sale and the staff expected to leave by February 2017. It was agreed to send newsletter 2016/4 to Fazeley, but to remove the address after that.
- Updated membership form – see 7.6 below.

- 7.5 **Archivist** (Richard Booth) – no report.
- 7.6 **Newsletter Editor** (Val Roberts) – reprint of membership forms; newsletter input from meetings with CRT; PR notices on canal structures; Towergate insurance; volunteer lockkeepers; copy newsletter sent to BCS chairman; print run numbers needed; Tunnel Record book decision; payment for advertisements.
- It was agreed that Val would produce a draft of an updated membership leaflet. Members were asked to send her details of information to be included.
 - Sharing information with members – referring to the comment he made about the status of club members on CRT groups (see 7.1 above) Phil said that it was not possible to produce a verbatim report of issues raised at CRT meetings because of confidentiality issues. However, he produced a summary of the club’s activities for the year for his report to the AGM, sent out with the following issue, No 2, of the newsletter each year. Sue regularly reported on Navigation issues in the newsletter. Ros pointed out that the club was more transparent now than it had been as all committee minutes, once agreed, were published on the members’ area of the website, and felt that it would make the newsletter considerably less vibrant and interesting if it were to be filled with user group reports. Phil and Sue would précis their reports to this meeting to make articles for the next newsletter, No 4, effectively making them half-yearly reports
 - Volunteer lock keepers – Val explained the problems she and Mike had had with a volunteer on the Lancaster Canal and Sue reiterated the agreed guidance from CRT that the steerer was always in charge of the boat, and volunteers were there to assist only if the steerer asked them to do so. She urged Val and Mike to report the issue.
 - Tunnel Book – It was agreed that it was an interesting project but some doubted if it would find a large enough audience to cover publishing costs. Val suggested an A4 booklet of 70 pages (140 sides). She would print some sample pages and bring to the November committee meeting. George Boyle had secured permission to publish and had photographed all the pages of the original. Norman suggested copying it to a DVD to sell, and some wondered about publishing it as a E-book, but Phil thought this was technically not feasible as text-strings were needed for this format.
- 7.7 **Club Shop** (Clair Butler) – income from: shop stand at Woking, Whitchurch, Byfleet, 2nd hand books; Woking plaques order; donation of David Blagrove’s books; query raffle at Social.
- I-spy leaflet – Clair reported a positive response from the 14 children who had completed the survey. Most said it was “about right” but 2 older children would have liked more questions. James commented that it was good that it had been free to issue, and he had not spotted any in the rubbish bins at the Woking site where it had been trialled. Phil commented that there certainly appeared to be a market and hoped that we could develop it further. James said that there was a wealth of topics to be covered (butties, tugs, motor boats, lists of liveries as well as lists of boat names to tick off). Laura commented that she believed it was a good use of club funds and should be printed in an attractive format, probably pocket book size. James and Phil would meet to produce more pages.
 - Books by David Blagrove – at David’s funeral, following his instructions, Clair had been given a large number of 2 of David’s books to sell for club funds. She proposed to sell them at £4.00 each.
 - Book from Alan Brown “Canal Memories” – Paul commented that he did not recognise it and Clair asked if it was worth considering re-publishing it. Paul wondered who had got Alan Brown’s slides and other letters – he would ask Richard if they were in the Archive.
 - Clair had a quantity of documents from Regan Milnes, which she would pass on to Richard for examination and then storage in the Archives.
 - Colours of the Cut, pub 2004 – Clair had sourced one copy of the original print in which the colours were superior to the latest re-print. Currently being offered on EBay for £65.00. It was agreed to keep it for the Auction in March 2017.
 - Clair had a number of other donated items, which she would offer as prizes for a raffle at the November Social.
- 7.8 **Navigation** (Sue Cawson) – importance of reporting incidents to CRT; NAG sub-groups (Paddles & Pawls, Vegetation, Dredging); winter stoppage programme
- Sue reiterated the importance of reporting problems to CRT – it was a numbers-game and volume of reports mattered.
 - CRT was re-scrutinising vegetation contracts with third-party contractors. Mike Carter, chair of NAG, was leading on this. James commented on the poor state of vegetation control on the EA’s River Nene.
- 7.9 **Press and Social Media** (Amy-Alys Tillson) – NarrowBoat articles; press interest in Woking; local BBC radio interview with Phil.

- NarrowBoat topic 1 – dredging and the importance of deep draughted boats for keeping navigations open. Sue commented that dredging could not be done too close to lock landings for fear of resulting bank instability.
 - NarrowBoat topic 2 – the changing use of the canals: recent innovations (lock landings), attitudes and facilities (quick fill water cans replaced by large volume water tanks), scenery (open aspect now obscured by vegetation).
- 7.10 **Awards** (Bernard Hales) – forms sent with newsletter 2016/3, no entries as yet.
- Phil would appeal for entries at the November Social, Amy would publicise the closing date via the club's Facebook page, and Ros via the club's website.
 - Phil reminded the committee that it was not wise to encourage entries for any particular boat, as this could give an erroneous impression that the committee favoured that boat in advance.
- 7.11 **Website** (Ros Prettyman) – online shop price format change and discount to members; auction template; queries received via website contact form.
- Contact from Alarum Theatre – Ros to send details to Amy who would get in touch to see if we could help with publicity.
 - Request for gathering at Bugsworth 2017 – it was agreed that, although we would be happy to publicise and support such a gathering, we should focus on a more southern/midlands based event for our members in 2017 and could not organise an event at Bugsworth. Ros to reply.
- 7.12 **IWA liaison** (Alison Smedley) – IWA Festival of Water, Pelsall 2016; 2017 Festival venue Gallow's Inn, Erewash Canal; campaign to mitigate effects of HS2; withdrawal of reciprocal licensing CRT and Bridgewater Canal; MCA consultation on its fees especially full cost recovery; reeds on Droitwich canal; new Waterways Minister, Therese Coffey MP; All Party Parliamentary Waterways Group AGM, new chairman Chris White MP
- 7.13 **Area Reps**
- Central Shires** (Rupert Smedley) – no report, Central Shires region dispersed.
- East Midlands** (Mike Harrison) – CRT user group meeting; Nottingham Canal Festival; Long Eaton lock due for early stoppage; IWA Festival 2017 to be on the Erewash; changes at Langley Mill Boatyard.
- Mike estimated that he might have the 2nd Weaver book ready for launch at the Social in November 2017.
 - Norman would investigate Weaver photos that might be held at Gloucester Museum.
 - Weaver originals – Iain would check if Richard had the storage boxes and would ask him to bring 3 to the next meeting in November.
- Fens/East** (James Tidy) – some trees down on R Nene; fault with Houghton Lock guillotine gate; Northampton Arm looking good; the Clypeus bound for mooring at Ely, the Ian at Fox Boats.
- Massive increases in fees for moorings on the Cam had been announced and a local protest campaign was underway.
- Kennet & Avon** (Nick Grundy) – boat sinking in Fobney Lock; planned dredging work on K&A; unplanned stoppages acknowledged by waterways manager.
- Sue commented that Nicospan (material used bankside with wooden stakes and backfilling) should be used on the offside only, not on the towpath side of canals as it was too vulnerable to damage.
- London** (Michael Pinnock) – verbal report at meeting:
- Michael expressed his disappointment at the lack of response and action to his various queries about the waterways in and around London – dual locks, lack of maintenance on Regent's locks where gates did not open properly, plethora of notices on southern GU. He had understood that CRT's Rapid Response Team were meant to be doing regular maintenance when not called out on emergencies, but had seen little evidence of this. Sue confirmed that she had seen very few bankside CRT staff on the southern canals, in marked contrast to the Shroppie. She would like to know the relative numbers of bankside staff in various CRT regions. Phil commented on the massive backlog of maintenance for London and the South East waterways which he believed had arisen from years of inaction under a previous watch.
 - Funding – Michael understood that funds were alleged to be tight, but in view of the number of moored boats in the area, he thought that they should be generating more income. Phil shared the data from CRT's annual report (available on-line) showing income and expenditure streams. Michael was keen to have a more detailed breakdown for the London area and asked Phil to investigate.
 - David D pointed out that the canals in the area, as built, were designed for boats in transit. They were now being used for housing but without the infrastructure (sanitation, rubbish disposal, water points) to cope. Iain agreed that much of the dissatisfaction arose from the change of use of London's canals from carrying to

housing. Phil mentioned that the legislation was based on the canals' commercial use and Iain wondered if it was time for updated legislation to reflect current practice. Val commented that she used to have to have a House Boat licence for residential use in 1970-80s.

- There had been a recent survey asking boaters if they would be prepared to pay for visitor moorings in London, and most had said that they would not wish to do so. Phil believed the eventual plan would be to have zones for visitor moorings, not just one central location, where there would be clear spaces for visitors alongside paid lengths for longer term moorers.
- Rupert suggested that CRT was not meeting its customer service standards if so many boaters were dissatisfied and it was important to make this point to CRT.

Manchester & Pennine (Ian McCarthy) – Rochdale Canal re-opened as through route; Man & Pen increased in size to absorb part of Central Shires; dredging; Caldon pinch point; Pawl restraints; confusing signage; reciprocal arrangement with Bridgewater Canal

North East (David Lowe) – funding for restoration on Pocklington Canal; progress on contract to Ferrybridge Power Station; navigation problems for the Ribble when loaded for Liverpool Bi-centenary celebrations; unresolved problem with length of Leeds Lock; dredging confirmed for route via Lemonroyd and Ferrybridge locks.

North Wales & Borders (Iain MacTavish) – CRT and Cheshire West Council dispute who has responsibility for walls of Northgate cutting, Chester; upcoming user group meetings.

- Iain asked if anyone had any background information on the cutting at Northgate, but no one did, so he would try to find out more from other sources.

North West (Daniel Mawdsley) – no report

South East & Thames (David Daines) – vegetation problems discussed at high level within CRT; work on lock gates on Stoke Bruerne flight; SE Partnership AGM discussed “art” imposed on canal structures.

- David had received information from CRT that centre paddles could not be fitted on gates where there was no recess in the wall to accommodate the paddle, but he had received confirmation of the agreement to fit centres where there was a suitable recess. Rupert had heard that Bradley workshops would always do like-for-like replacements, Sue commented that this was dependent upon the old gate being the correct pattern. Noted that Bradley specialised in gates for narrow locks, and Stanley Ferry for wide locks. Sue appealed for photos that might show lock gates in the past, to see whether they originally had centres.
- David had heard that a bankside resident at Oxford had been making persistent complaints locally about boats and had asked for diesel engines to be banned nationwide. There may be more of an issue in Oxford where some of the boats looked to be poorly maintained and could well be a health hazard. Phil wondered if the Boat Safety Scheme needed to look at whether boats were fit-for-purpose as boats, or were just tents on pontoons.

South Wales & Severn (Norman Mitchell) – few problems; upcoming user group; some dredging will be required for Tall Ships event in 2017.

- Norman had attended a meeting on the Mon & Brec. There was a user group meeting the next day.
- Two electric vehicle charging points had been installed on CRT land at Gloucester and two vans had been seen plugged in.

West Midlands (Sarah Edgson) – no report

8 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ACTION LIST

- 8.1 5.2 July 2016 - Railway and Canal Historical Society – Laura had ascertained that the Weaver book, having been reviewed in their magazine, was eligible for nomination for an award. She would do so.
- 8.2 3.2 May 2016 - Newsletter article on Museum's approach to conservation. Phil had spoken to Margaret Harrison who had promised that an article would be forthcoming.
- 8.2 6.9 March 2016 - Willow Wren photos – Mike would check if there were any in the club's Weaver collection. Phil had found a few in the CRT archive.
- Paul wondered if the Bert Dunkley collection was in the archives.
- 8.4 6.4 October 2015 – Recordings of Boat people talking about working life – Val commented that they had a recording of Mike interviewing Ike Argent and Ralph Moulds talking about horse-boating on the Soar in flood. The recording was on a cassette tape, Mike would liaise with David D to convert them to digital format.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 PR Notices on canal structures – discussions took place during the Newsletter Editors Report, and the London Area Rep’s report and are consolidated here:

Sue believed that the PR campaign by CRT had been an attempt to raise its profile with the general public by putting up startling notices. The “Danger” notices had already been removed, but “Caution” ones would remain until the end of the trial period. Reactions had been mixed, some boaters finding them akin to graffiti, others finding them quite amusing. Phil wondered why CRT had not thought to consult boating organisations in advance for the right way to go about the campaign. Rupert commented that it was part of a large scale re-branding and Norman added that he believed CRT was to be re-branded as C&RT because of confusion and complaints from an older organisation with the same initials.

James commented that, as well as signs on locks on the GU, there had been a plethora of PR signs around the Conference Centre in Birmingham at the time of the Conservative Party Conference and he wondered what the budget was for these. Phil commented that it would be necessary to drill down on CRT accounts to find this information. James would like some feedback on how effective the signs had been and if they had met their target. Phil would ask this topic to be put on the Agenda for the next Boating Reps meeting with CRT.

- 9.2 Display boards prepared for Woking – Iain asked if there was anything that should be bought to enhance exhibitions that the club put on. Ros to note for discussion as a later meeting.
- 9.3 Norman commented that there was to be a programme on BBCFour at 9.00pm on Wednesday 19 October about the Severn Bridge.
- 9.4 Val wondered if we should re-introduce the club annual dinner as had been the practice many years ago. Ros and Phil had the Binkie Bush goblets stored in their loft.

10 DATES AND TIMES OF NEXT MEETINGS

19 November 2016	10.30	Lapworth Village Hall, prior to Social (earlier start than normal)
	14.00	Social starts
	15.30	Cake and fizz celebration to mark club’s 50 th anniversary
14 January 2017	11.00	Samuel Barlow, Alvecote
4 March 2017	10.00	Lapworth Village Hall, prior to AGM at 2.00pm

The meeting closed at 5.50pm.

Phil Prettyman
Chairman