

# The Steerer

The magazine of the Narrow Boat Trust

Autumn 2023



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FREE TO MEMBERS



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*Front cover: Peter Lovett, Kirk Martin, Howard Williams & Helen MacGregor at Rickmansworth Festival, 2019. See "Summer Social" on page 4.*

# Easter Gathering at Ellesmere Port

Text and photos by Charlotte Fleming

The pair's first trip of the year was up to Ellesmere Port, for the Easter gathering of historic boats. Nuneaton and Brighton had a straightforward run up there, with me as skipper, Helen MacGregor and, from Fradley Junction onwards, Colin Wilks.



The boats gather in Chester

Plenty of people came out to watch the procession of historic boats from Chester to the Port: photographers up and down the towpath, whole families on bridges – the place was buzzing.

At the Port Colin winded the pair, which were then hauled backwards separately into the upper basin, as were all the other boats: front and back ropes passed from person around the dock as the boats progressed to their final positions. The final line-up was very impressive – over 50 historic boats in the two basins (but only two butties).



Boats in the upper and lower basins at Ellesmere Port

There was an excellent turnout of visitors, too, and we

chatted to them, showed them round the cabin, and encouraged them to join the Trust.

Over the weekend, we had the opportunity to visit the CRT warehouse at Rossmore, where boats that can't be on show at the Port for one reason or another are stored. It's a fascinating collection: boats and bits of boats of all ages, shapes, sizes and construction types, from wood to concrete, in various stages of (dis)repair. Below are two examples.



On Monday morning the roping procedure was reversed as the boats left the basin and headed home, stopping in Chester to pick up the new skipper, Howard Williams, for the return journey.

Nuneaton's engine had been losing power and the pair stopped in Audlem most of a day while Dave Ross came out to do a temporary fix, sufficient to get them back to Alvecote on schedule on Sunday evening.

## NBT Social 17<sup>th</sup> June 2023 – Braunston Boat House

by Tracey Little

I have now been a member of the NBT for over a year and have had the opportunity to attend the first social in recent years, parade the boats at the Braunston 2023 festival, appear in Towpath Talk, help to load the boats for this year's fuel run to Limehouse, appear in a YouTube video (courtesy of David Johns – Cruising the Cut vlog) AND crew for part of the coal run: quite a busy year.



General view.  
Photo: Kirk Martin

I must choose one to talk about – the NBT Social 17<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at Braunston's Boat House pub. The day was warm and sunny with patchy cloud and a gentle breeze

– ideal conditions for what had been planned. As I mentioned at the start,

there hadn't been a social for a long time. This one was especially important, as the NBT wanted to celebrate the late Peter Lovett's contribution to the trust, both as an enthusiastic member of



Howard Williams talking to members of Peter Lovett's family. Photo: Tracey Little



the crew and as a generous donor, leaving a legacy of £25,000 to the NBT. Peter's family joined the members at the Boat



Stan Lovett presenting Peter's cheque to Kirk Martin and receiving the photo of Peter. Photo: Nick Lake

House for a presentation, meal and boat trip on the Nuneaton and Brighton. A photo of Peter on the boats at Rickmansworth was presented to his family.

After the meal and presentation, it was time for the boat trip. With Nuneaton towing Brighton on cross straps, members and Peter's family boarded. Colin Wilks was the skipper for the trip and those of us who wanted a



Michael (Mouse) Daltry and Keith Norfolk. Photo: Tracey Little

turn at steering got the chance. We also got a master class in



Embarking at the Boat House. Photo: Kirk Martin

breasting up, winding and singling out when we got to Shuckburgh in order to make our way back to the Boat House. The trip lasted about 3 hours and was a chance for old



Breasting up before winding  
at Shuckburgh. Photo:  
Christopher Rushton

friends and new to catch up in person – this included a cup of tea made on the butty, which I’m sure Colin brought across the planks to the motor, but I don’t

have photographic evidence of him walking the planks! The tea

was much appreciated.

I enjoyed the (in person) summer social as I was able to put names to faces and have group conversations, which is much harder to achieve via electronic means. As a new member, not quite sure what to expect, I appreciated the friendly reception.



A welcome cup of tea. L-R  
Mouse Daltry, Christine  
Thompson, Colin Wilks,  
John Jaap, Pete Harrison  
(back to camera), Andy  
Ledbetter.  
Photo: Tracey Little

Thank you to all those involved in arranging the event, as well as those who attended.

# **Steady As She Goes For The 2023 Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally**

by Tim Coghlan

Despite the cost of living crisis, this year's Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally - held in its traditional slot over the last weekend in June - remained as popular as ever. A total of 82 historic narrowboats attended, versus 81 last year, with the boats coming from all corners of the waterways. And the numbers would have been much higher but for mechanical problems, perhaps to be expected with these old canal leviathans.

Most disappointing for this year was the absence of President, the last surviving steam narrowboat, where the problem of building a new steam boiler to modern standards continues. President, with its buttie Kildare, were to have been the stars of the Rally, leading the opening parade. By way of 'Plan B',



Photo: Tim Coghlan

Kildare did come, and was towed in the opening parade by the replica steam canal tunnel tug Hasty, with music legend and steam enthusiast Pete Waterman at the helm.



The pair entered the marina from the canal, under the famous Horsley Ironworks bridge, to a peal of bells from Braunston Church – ‘the Cathedral of the Canals.’ And serenading the pageant was fine music from Daventry Brass.

Following Hasty and Kildare were the Braunston-based historic pair, the Nutfield & Raymond. In their holds were a number of celebrity guests, including actor and canal



enthusiast ‘Poirot’ – Sir David Suchet, with his wife Lady Sheila, both Vice Presidents of the IWA (*left - photo: Tim Coghlan*). Also Richard Parry, CEO of the Canal

& River Trust, and Tony Hales OBE, retired Chairman of the Canal & River Trust. Tony continues his passion for the waterways and has attended every Rally since 2009; he hopes to continue doing so for as long as he can.



Tracey Little steers Nuneaton into Braunston marina with Howard Williams. Photo: Tim Coghlan

The winning historic narrowboat for this year’s ‘Nurser Award Buckby Can for the Best in Show as voted by the historic narrowboat owners’, was David Ross and his partner Tracy Pear Pearce’s magnificently re-restored Dory,

with its Bolinder engine. The 70 foot boat was built by Yarwoods of Northwich in 1934 for Fellows, Morton & Clayton. As well as that Buckby can, to be held for a year, Pete and Tracy received £250-worth of Midland Chandelers



Cheque presentation. L-R: Pete Waterman, Tim Coghlan, Howard, Tracey. Photo: Simon Ainley

vouchers, generously sponsored by them.

Ten members of The Guild of Waterways Artists had their works on display, including the great Dusty Miller, who

was also signing his new book on his life as a waterways' artist. Leo McNeir, novelist and canal crime writer, also signed copies of his latest book, *Ivory Tower*, the 14<sup>th</sup> in the Marnie Walker series. A number of canal societies shared a marquee; more were outside.



Packed to the gunnels: parading boats in orderly chaos at Braunston. Photo: Tim Coghlan

The Rally is also a canal festival, and entertainments included the canal-travelling Alarum

Theatre, with their new play, 'Rats, Ropes & Revolution', billed as 'A woman's story of the Boatmen's Strike', a mini-Glastonbury of music, and Professor Diamond's *Punch & Judy Show*.

Braunston Marina will be hosting the Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally again next year on the last weekend in June, 2024, with David Suchet opening it - hopefully on the restored President.

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The boats returned to Alvecote after the Rally.

Nuneaton & Brighton  
in Hillmorton top lock.  
Photo: Frankie Morini



Howard Williams steers  
the pair round the turn at  
Suttons. Photo: Frankie  
Morini.

## A Volunteer's Summer by Andy Ledbetter

I have never owned a boat myself, but have experience as both boat and crew manager running Python, originally built by Yarwoods in 1929 for Fellows, Morton and Clayton. Passing into BWB ownership in 1949, she was shortened to 53' and worked as a tug/workboat on the Regents Canal in London. Python is now owned by The Chesterfield Canal Trust (CCT) and resides on the Chesterfield Canal, working as a volunteer-run maintenance boat along the canal's current 27 mile length from its junction with the River Trent at West Stockwith to Kiveton Park.

Python at work on the Chesterfield canal (photo borrowed from the Chesterfield Canal Trust's website).



Having been denied the

opportunity to join the crew for the Coal Run last year (2022) due to lack of water after a long dry summer, I was determined to make up for lost time this year, and put myself forward to crew for a total of 28 days over four separate journeys, including one group of sixteen consecutive days. My role as crew manager for Python was going to be handled by another CCT volunteer whilst I was crewing with the NBT but that plan went out the window and so I continued

in the role whilst on Brighton, working via phone and email several times a day to organise crews.



Nuneaton and Brighton outside the Mailbox in central Birmingham for the Fund Britain's Waterways rally, August 2023. Photo: Charlotte Fleming

I joined Barry (skipper), Trevor and the boats in central Birmingham on Sunday 13th August for the trip to Alvecote following their appearance at the Fund Britain's Waterways festival, and we made steady progress down Farmers and Aston Locks, working late into the evening. The first of many good learning experiences. Day two was far more conventional with the boats on cross straps for the journey out to and down Curdworth flight, ending at a perfect mooring outside the back door of the Dog and Doublet at Bodymoore Heath. Excellent food! Day three was a short run to Alvecote where the boats were going to be attending the festival over the bank holiday weekend.

One of my projects for 2023 was to climb the UK Three Peaks (Ben Nevis, Sca Fell and Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa)) with my daughter and grandson. Having had to cancel an attempt earlier in the summer due to very unseasonal storm, we took



advantage of some better weather in late August to get the project done on August 24<sup>th</sup>, and got home just in time to head back to Alvecote for the festival. The winding competition on the Saturday of the festival allowed Nuneaton and Brighton, with Howard at the helm and a good crew on board, to display some real boating skills. There is an excellent video of the event on YouTube that is well worth a watch.

The boats needed to be at Braunston to load up for coal run and so I joined Charlotte (skipper) and Rich at Alvecote on September 3rd for the three-day trip. Another good opportunity to learn new skills, and from a different skipper and crew member.

With a day to spare in the internet black hole that is Braunston I decided to get the train back home to Chesterfield in Derbyshire to catch up with work and my Python duties, before heading back to Braunston for loading day. A nice sunny, dry day for loading the 20 tonnes of coal. It took around four hours to empty the three coal trucks into

the two boats.



Loading at Braunston. Photo: David Johns (a still from his YouTube vlog, Cruising the Cut, episode 315).

Everything was now ready for the trip down

to Brentford and onto the Thames. Skipper Colin arrived right on time at 15.00 and we set off up Braunston locks with the aid of a supporter, Keith, and then through the tunnel before mooring up at Buckby Top and a good meal in the New Inn. Steve joined the crew next morning after breakfast at Whilton Marina and we set up a comfortable run down to Blisworth Tunnel.

Sunday through Milton Keynes started out as a slow crawl through very long lines of moored boats but it livened up very quickly as a massive storm blew up, sweeping pub furniture into the canal and dropping a very large branch on to a boat in front of us. Adrian Thompson joined the crew for a couple of days as we carried on down the Grand Union, arriving a little ahead of our scheduled time in Brentford. With 24 hours to spare before we could lock out onto the Thames, I took the opportunity to jump ship for one night to visit my daughter and grandsons in London and get a hot shower.



Above Apsley top lock. Photo: Andrew Haysom

The following day (Friday), Mouse (Michael Daltry) joined Colin and me aboard the boats in Brentford, ready to lock out from the Canal and River Trust waters on to the Environment Agency-

managed Thames at 14.00 and catch the incoming tide, travelling upstream to Walton breasted up.

Barry also joined us and the real task of coal deliveries could now begin, unloading to boaters and marinas on various islands along this stretch of the Thames. One of the many regular drops was at Eel Pie Island, but as the venue was hosting skip races that day we carried on through the locks up to Hampton Court to moor overnight. We returned the following day to drop 160 bags of coal then headed back upstream to Shepperton for an overnight mooring before entering the Wey Navigation.

The Wey Navigation is owned and managed by the National Trust and the entrance lock to the canal has a lock keeper who controls it and takes navigation payments.

Navigations predate canals by some one hundred years and were a simple but largely successful attempt to make rivers navigable. The Wey navigation also has lengthsman who manage each section of the navigation. This proved helpful to us when we went to the head of the navigation, at Godalming, to deliver coal. At a particularly low bridge we had to leave the butty as it was too high to go under. The motor only just passed under and on the return journey and after unloading it was definitely too high, but the lengthsman very kindly lowered the level of the water in the section we were in to allow us to get back under the bridge and pick up the butty. Of course the butty was still pointed up stream

where we had left it, and the motor was pointing downstream as we had winded in Godalming. How we turned the butty on the Wey Navigation is a whole other story...

We made multiple coal delivers on the Wey, which left both motor and butty empty, so we returned to the Thames and moored up at Walton for a delivery of coal. Once the coal was loaded it was time for me to leave the boats and hand over to a fresh crew member, as I headed home for a good hot shower after a 21 day trip.



Nick Lake, Andy Ledbetter, Frankie Morini and Howard Williams (skipper). Photo Howard Williams

To finish the year, I joined Howard, Frankie and Nick to bring the boats back from Oxford to Braunston.

High water levels on the Thames made for a very slow first day but once safely off the Thames and onto the South Oxford canal the journey became a fairly uneventful trip, travelling from dawn to dusk to catch up some of the time we had lost on the first day. The sunny days were enjoyable but they inevitably led to frosty mornings, and the stoves were burning all day on both boats. With rain forecast, we made it back to Braunston just as the first drops were falling, which was good timing.

I am back on board Python now, organising crew, fixing things that are broken and hopefully keeping the Chesterfield Canal navigable and litter free.



Brighton in Somerton Deep lock, Oxford Canal. Frankie Morini waits at the top with Nuneaton. Photo: Nick Lake



## **Brentford to Walton on Thames and The Wey Navigation** by Barry Adams

I joined the boats at Brentford, just below the gauging lock, and once Mouse had arrived (Colin and Andy were still on board, having brought the boats down from loading at Braunston) we set off to wait at Thames lock to be let out onto the river and make our way upstream.

When the lock keeper arrived, we were let out on a rising tide to make our way upstream with the current, and progress was swift.

As the tide was high it was decided to do one drop at Eel Pie Island and carry on up to Ash Island for the major delivery there. The butty was left just above the lock and, with the help of our customers, the motor was very carefully taken onto the slipway, all secured, and unloading started. John Fevyer, our coal sales chief, was on hand with the delivery information for each customer, and very soon there were numerous stacks of various solid fuels all lined up on the quayside.

Although it's hard work, with help from our customers we were soon done, and could get cleaned up and retire to the pub for a well-earned pint. We were OK to moor on the offside of the lock overnight and in the morning set off back downstream to do the major drop at Eel Pie. Having very carefully brought the boats into position, and the lighter

brought alongside, it was time to start lifting the bags over the side. Again our customers joined in to help, and the first three loads were soon winging their way ashore courtesy of Mark and the crane. When there were no more builders' one-tonne bags or pallets available, the rest of the orders were placed in the lighter.

Once more we headed back upstream and onwards to do the Wey Navigation deliveries. We did our usual one to the entrance lock cottage and then the two at Pelican wharf. Once these were done, it was time to get a move on to reach the fish and chip shop just along from the Harrow pub in time. This was achieved with time to spare and we all retired to the pub for a well-earned pint.

The following day was the run to the top, with one drop on the way up and one at the very top; with all these done it was back to the Harrow. The following day we returned to Walton, but we still had two big drops to do. One of the

customers moved his boat over so we could get right to where the two drops



Leaving Bull's lock on the Kennet. Photo: Martin Haysom

were. This was an enormous help and saved us a lot of work. We arrived back at Walton and got the boats and loading wharf ready for the reload the following morning.

All too soon it was out of bed, and at seven a.m. the lorry arrived. First things first: tea and coffee all round and



then, with one of our long planks in place and Andrew Haysom working like a trojan in the hold, the lorry was soon empty and all stowed on Nuneaton.

The wharf at Walton.  
Photo: Mouse Daltry



Reloading at  
Walton. Photo:  
Mouse Daltry

We then had to wait for the second delivery, of

wood pellets destined for Ash Island. A bit later the driver arrived to inspect where he had to get to and said, "I won't bring the artic down here; I'll bring them down on a pallet truck." I thought, 'This is going to be interesting,' but it was an electric-powered one, so all went well. As the pellets are in ten kilo bags we had them on in no time at all, and soon set off for Ash Island again. With no need to get in to the slipway, we moored where the delivery was to be made, and Colin, Andy and Mouse soon made short work of the wheelbarrowing. We also did two more drops at the island as we had reloaded the products required. A quick run back to Walton to tidy the boats ready for the oncoming crew.

We had decided to have a meal out that evening and I had invited someone I had not seen for more than 35 years to come along. Our paths first crossed at the national rally on the Lee when she was the NBT membership secretary; her name then was Wendy Browning and her parents were Trust members as well. I waited on the boats until she arrived and after inspecting the cabin of Brighton we went along to join the others. John Fevyer had also come along and Wendy and John spent most of the evening catching up. Soon it was time for bed so, saying goodbye to Wendy and John, we returned to the boats.

The oncoming captain was nice and early, so it was time to leave the boats and go home, but we had decided to visit one of our members who lives on the outskirts of Brighton.

We all arrived at Ray's house and were offered a very welcome shower. Once cleaned up, an evening of eating and drinking followed - in my case, as driver, very little drinking, I hasten to add. I had arranged for Colin and Mouse to stay at my place and I would then take them to the station on Sunday



morning. All-in-all an excellent run and everything accomplished.

Nuneaton after reloading at Walton. Photo: Mouse Daltry

## Reloading at Walton on Thames

by Colin Wilks

The wharf in front of the Anglers at Walton on Thames is ancient and used to see a great deal of commercial traffic moving goods up and down the river. Nowadays it is split between being a car park and accommodating drinkers at the pub's many tables, which stand on the cobbles almost down to the water's edge.



Using all our persuasive charm, we managed to create space for the large curtain-sided wagon we were expecting at 7.00 a.m. the next day. Car spaces were roped off as they became vacant and the landlord of the pub agreed for us to shift half a dozen tables out of the way on condition everything was put back by opening time.

The wagon, with twelve tonnes of mixed fuels, arrived on the dot of 7.00 and the driver and his lad fed the bags down a top plank directly into the butty's hold. 600 bags sounds a lot but with five of us helping, we had the lot on board within about 90 minutes.

Many thanks to Andrew Haysom, who arrived just after dawn in order to help with the loading, although we did slow the pace down a bit as it was vital that every bag was the right way round and the right way up. You can't argue with a real coal boater!

Graham Roberts  
and John Mills on  
the Upper Thames.  
Photo: Nick Lake



# **Oxford – Lechlade – Oxford**

by Barry Adams

We all joined the boats at Osney mooring, which is just a little way from the railway station.

I was very happy to have returning members John Mills and Graham Roberts, along with Nick Lake, with me for this run on the Upper Thames. As I had travelled to Oxford by car, I had done a lot of the shopping for food so we did not have to wait to go shopping; once the handover had been done, we were free to get going.

We made very good progress and soon cleared the mouth of Duke's Cut and then through King's lock. We were very high in the water and had Brighton alongside, which made getting from one boat to the other easy.

As the previous captain had had some spare time to fill, he had gone ahead and done the first two drops.

We motored steadily on until it started to get towards where to stop in the evening. The Ferry Boat pub was the chosen stopping place, and we found a good mooring just a few yards above the pub. I had done the evening meal and once that had been eaten we all moved to the pub for a comfortable sit down and a few pints, along with good conversation.

All too soon it was time to turn in for the night and I had the great pleasure of sleeping in one of the new tents. I found it to be really comfortable and had a superb night's sleep.

Up reasonably early the next day and we let go and carried on. If you think Sutton Stop is difficult, then try the Upper Thames: it is full of bends that take a lot of tiller-pushing to get round and all of us took a turn at steering that day.

We had two drops to do, and we did one on the way up, leaving one to do on the return.



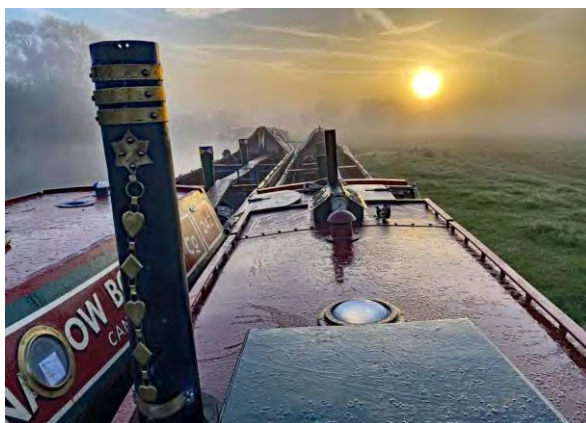
Barry at St Johns lock with the mended coal box. Photo: Nick Lake

When loading at Braunston we had been filmed for a YouTube channel [*Cruising the Cut*; the vlog went live on Friday 3rd November 2023] and the photographer, David Johns, wanted to film us unloading. He could not

make it to be with us on Monday so we stayed at Lechlade for the day, but made good use of it by having a clear-out of the junk we accumulate, and a new bottom was put into Nuneaton's coal box.

I had arranged to meet David at the second lock down; we got there on time and were filmed unloading and doing the delivery.

Once all that was done we carried on to the pub at Bablock Hythe where we had stopped on the way up, but this time, with the stream running with us, I had the butty on cross straps and that aided getting round the serpentine bends. Once at The Ferry Boat, I had made a terrible mistake as the pub does not open on Tuesday - but we had some beers and wine on board so made do with those instead.



Sunrise at Lechlade.  
Photo: Nick Lake

The next day was the run back to Osney moorings, as I had two deliveries to

do by car on the following two days. John and I did the first one, to Mapledurham, which was far from easy as it was about a half mile from the nearest road to the delivery place. We did manage it and returned to the boats.

Friday came around and as I needed to be home by the early afternoon we loaded another 12 bags into my car and I set off for D'Oyly Carte Island to do the second missed delivery. The track leading from the road to the Island was well hidden and it took me a few goes to find it. Once found, I drove down and was greeted by a footbridge which was

steps up, then a shallow arch, and steps down. With no wheelbarrow, just a small sack barrow, the drop across the far side, and a very slippery path to it, I was not looking forward to getting the fuel to the customer. However, there were two young lads moving what I think were crates of soft drinks from a storage shed in the island car park into a small boat. The somewhat older one said, “We’ll take them round for you”; he knew our customer, so it was with considerable relief that I slid the bags down to their boat and they were taken round and stacked for our customer.

With that done, it was time to drive home and get ready to go to Belgium on Saturday for a bicycle jumble on the Sunday.



Ducking under Osney Bridge on the return trip; Howard Williams on Nuneaton, Frankie Morini on Brighton. Photo: Nick Lake

## **Membership update** by Ian Johnson

As Membership Secretary, I feel it is time to make a report in the Steerer. I joined the Trust back in 2011 and at the time we didn't have a Membership Secretary and it took quite a bit of effort to join. Having struggled to join, I took on the role of Membership Secretary. I hope the system is easier now; however we do not have on-line payment system due to the Trust being a very small organisation.

Membership remains fairly static at around 120-130 members, with an annual turnover of about 10 members. Quite a few members are Life members and we have a number of Honorary Life members who are awarded this status for services to the Trust.

We use an on-line membership platform called MemberMojo. Any member with internet access can find their membership details held by the Trust and update anything that requires it. MemberMojo is fully GDPR compliant and members can only see their own data, unless they are approved officers of the Trust. I would urge members to have a look at the Narrow Boat Trust area of MemberMojo and check their details.

One problem we have is members who pay by standing order but have not updated their standing orders despite efforts to chase them. Could I ask that any member who pays



by standing order checks their payment is correct? Current membership rates are:

- Standard Single Adult Annual Membership: £22
- Unwaged Single Adult Annual Membership (in receipt of benefit): £12
- Joint Family Annual Membership (Two adults, and juniors living at the same address): £33
- Senior Citizen Annual Membership - 60 years old or over: £12
- Individual Life Membership (one-off payment): £275

Members are welcome to contact me at [nbtmemb@gmail.com](mailto:nbtmemb@gmail.com) or telephone 01483 591756.



The pair near  
Claydon  
locks on their  
return up the  
Oxford.  
Photo: Kev  
Masin

## **From The Archives by Alison Cannon**

This year, I became custodian of the NBT archives. Not an onerous job – it only runs to a few boxes – but fascinating to look through paperwork from the past fifty years or so.

Particularly interesting to look at are past copies of The Steerer, or the Narrow Boat Trust News as it used to be called. It would be good to have a complete set in the archives, so I'll start by listing the copies we are missing:

No. 26 (1982/83), No. 28 (1984), No. 29 (1984). There is a big gap between Nov 1984 and Dec 1999 – I think it may have been replaced with a chairman's letter in some if not all of those years. After that, it appears to be twice yearly until 2016, but I only have one for each of the years 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013. Possibly that is because only one was produced.

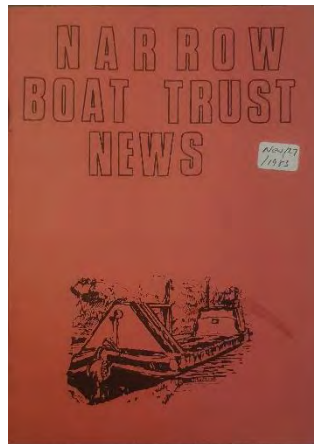
If you have any old copies lying around anywhere that might fill the gaps, please let me know! Alison Cannon (aecannon@virginmedia.com)

But a list of dates does not make for interesting reading, so here are a few very short extracts, taken from some of our 'back numbers' at ten-yearly intervals.

### 1973 – Narrow Boat Trust News

FILM "THE 200 ROBBERY" NOW SHOWING. This is the film, made exclusively for children, which stars [NBT

boat] ALTON and CHISWICK. Need I remind any of you about last year's mad rush to get our boat tarted up for her starring role, and delivered to the set on time? Now all our junior members, their friends, members' children, and any adults who can talk their way round their local cinema manager, can go and see this exciting adventure film. Contact your local cinema manager and ask when it is to be shown, and urge them to book it if it is not on their schedule.



### 1983 – Narrow Boat Trust News

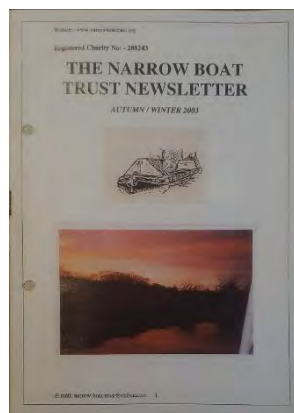
Who else noticed the full page advert in the Daily Telegraph last month? The BWB asking for more commercial use of the waterways system. Well, over the last few weeks the NBT Ltd have certainly done their best, but with the utmost difficulty.

You name it and we have run into or onto it. Metal stillages well over a metre cube, oil drums, old tyres, domestic baths and endless dead tree trunks, not to mention the almost overwhelming piles of household rubbish. The ad man should be invited to come on our next coaling run!!

### 1993 – Chairman’s Letter

I had intended to start this letter by saying that 1993 had been a difficult year. On reflection though, this is in fact true of the last few years and is perhaps indicative of the situation in which the Trust finds itself. The market for solid fuel on the River Thames has declined in line with national trends, but in spite of this, in association with Ashby Canal Transport, we continued to service our regular clients. A major blow was the installation of a gas supply on Ham Haugh Island at Shepperton. We experimented for the first time with pre-packed fuel. This worked well, but will in future require an adjustment to prices in order to maintain a reasonable profit.

### 2003 – The Narrow Boat Trust Newsletter



# TIME TO PICK YOUR BRAINS

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
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BRIGHTON  
 ELLUM  
 BUCKBY CAN  
 SLIDE  
 MUSHROOM VENT  
 COALBOX  
 RANGE  
 HULL  
 TURKSHED  
 SHEETS  
 BILGES  
 CROSS STRAPS  
 SNUBBER  
 BOWHAULING  
 CHIMNEY  
 PORTHOLE  
 LACE  
 BUTTON  
 ROSE  
 CASTLE  
 BRASS  
 BULLSEYE  
 DIAMOND  
 TUNNELHOOK  
 SHAFT

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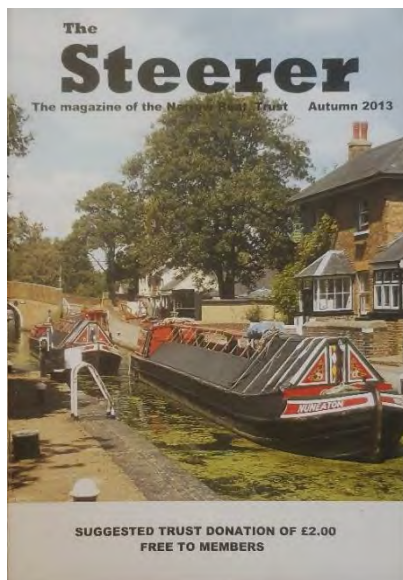
## 2013– The Steerer

Once again The Steerer rises from the ashes like the Phoenix and your editors aim to keep it alive with news,

views and pictures from you, members of the Narrow Boat Trust...

*An extract from Ray Oakhill's account of the Etruria Festival:*

The motor was held back to the gate in the tail of the lock with a line whilst this was being done and all had been fine, until we got to the Stone locks, when the full lock overflowed the bottom gate and began to fill the cabin – MY CABIN! Fortunately, I was able to release the line and pull the motor forward away from the Niagara Falls, but not before several gallons had come aboard. All this was watched by a gongoozler from an adjoining bridge, who said not a word! Luckily, only the carpet and side bed got a drenching, although the coal box had to be pumped out.





# **Annual Report for the year 2022-23**

## **Achievements and performance**

The 2022/23 season has been broadly very successful. However, the Trust had to react to a number of challenges, particularly relating to low water levels, which led to several changes in plans.

Two very successful and well attended work party weekends to continue the maintenance of the boats were held in April and May. Much was achieved, the old and rotten camping pod on Brighton was removed and subsequently this was replaced with a new tent. A new silencer was also fitted.

Later in May the boats attended both the Rickmansworth Festival and the Festival in London hosted by The Historic Narrowboat Club, which gave opportunities to both show the boats off to the public and offer access to them.

The Historic Boat Rally at Braunston was attended again in late May, with the boats making their traditional appearance in the processions, which again gave us the chance to demonstrate two working boats to the public. Sadly, planned trips to the Audlem and Alvecote Festivals had to be cancelled because of water shortages and the perceived risk of the boats becoming stranded, which would have impacted on our ability to complete the autumn coal run.

During September and October approximately 37 tonnes of solid fuel were delivered by volunteer crews to customers on the Grand Union canal and on the Rivers Thames, Kennet and Wey.

Over the course of the year, a total of 344 volunteer days were contributed by 30 members, on work parties (33 days) and crewing (311 days), for which grateful thanks is given. Thanks are also extended to those who are unable to be involved but support the Trust through membership and donations.

The work of trustees and officers included the management of the trust by the council of trustees, bookkeeping and preparation of report and accounts, management of boats and maintenance, membership record-keeping, securing sales orders, coordination of volunteers and crewing, communication, publicity, and fundraising. Substantial time, around 200 days, was devoted during the year to ensuring the good governance of the Trust, and its ability to fulfil its aims efficiently and effectively.

Overall, the Trust provided benefits by maintaining and enhancing both boats, providing opportunities for the public to visit and learn about the boats and canal carrying, and upholding the aims of the Trust by continuing the carriage of goods on inland waterways.

## **Financial Review**

The operations of the Trust produced a surplus of £2,534 this year (2022: loss of £7,747). This was entirely as anticipated as, following the restoration of Nuneaton, the operation of the Trust reverted to a more normal pattern of income and expenditure.

Tonnage carried on the single coal run was 11.5% down on the previous year but as a result of economic conditions, profit was 18.3% up. This was regarded as a satisfactory position.

Subscription income was very similar to the previous year, but the level of donations was less. This reflected the fact that in the previous year there had been a number of particularly generous donations. There were no new life members.

Gift aid was recovered where appropriate. However, whereas in the previous year there had been the opportunity to recover some tax from earlier years and because donations were down overall, the amount of gift aid recovered was reduced.

Expenses were broadly as anticipated; however, an investment was made in the training budget which resulted in two skippers obtaining Voluntary Towing Endorsements, which are needed for work on the Thames.

All current reserves are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees/Council of Management, and we aim to maintain those reserves at a level which will enable the Trust to pay for any unexpected repairs so that the activities of the Trust can be continued.



Brighton in the dry dock at Braunston for her survey after the coal run. An emergency patch was fitted before the return journey to Alvecote and further work will be required in due course. Photo: Rich Greenhall

In accordance with the accounting policy that has been adopted for many years, Nuneaton and Brighton are included in the balance sheet at cost less depreciation, and both Nuneaton and Brighton have had a book value of £1 each since 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. The Council of Management have considered including the boats at valuation in the balance sheet but have decided against doing so, due to the cost of obtaining formal valuations that could be used for accounting purposes. However, the boats were revalued in 2021 at £87,000 for insurance purposes and this is considered to be appropriate.

**Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account)**  
**For year ending 31 March 2023**

|                                            | 2023          | 2022          |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
|                                            | Total         | Total         |
|                                            | un-restricted | un-restricted |
|                                            | funds         | funds         |
|                                            | £             | £             |
| <b>Incoming resources</b>                  |               |               |
| Coal sales                                 | 28,340        | 21,545        |
| Subscriptions                              | 1,920         | 1,972         |
| Donations                                  | 1,731         | 3,646         |
| Gift aid                                   | 458           | 1,501         |
| Interest receivable                        | 30            | 1             |
| Sundry Income                              | 0             | 717           |
| <b>Total incoming resources</b>            | <b>30,479</b> | <b>29,382</b> |
| <b>Resources expended</b>                  |               |               |
| Coal purchases                             | 20,998        | 17,031        |
| Repairs and maintenance                    | 418           | 14,931        |
| Boat running costs                         | 2,077         | 1,547         |
| Hire of Motors                             | 0             | 0             |
| Tolls and licences                         | 705           | 484           |
| Insurance                                  | 1,778         | 1,684         |
| Travel costs                               | 0             | 0             |
| Training                                   | 580           | 174           |
| Independent examination of accounts        | 100           | 100           |
| Postage and stationery                     | 0             | 167           |
| Steerer printing and postage               | 397           | 322           |
| Web site                                   | 0             | 0             |
| IWA, CBOA, Zoom & Mojo subscriptions       | 306           | 296           |
| Sundry expenses                            | 586           | 393           |
| <b>Total resources expended</b>            | <b>27,945</b> | <b>37,129</b> |
| <b>Net movement in funds</b>               | <b>2,534</b>  | <b>-7,747</b> |
| Balance transferred to unrestricted funds  | <u>2,534</u>  | <u>-7,747</u> |
| Balance funds brought forward              | 12,346        | 20,093        |
| Balance unrestricted funds carried forward | 14,880        | 12,346        |

The notes on pages 8 - 9 form part of these financial statements

**The Narrow Boat Trust Limited**  
 Company Number 1724935  
**Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023**

|                                                       | Notes | 2023          |               | 2022           |               |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
|                                                       |       | £             | £             | £              | £             |
| <b>Fixed assets</b>                                   |       |               |               |                |               |
| Freehold premises                                     | 5     |               | 2             |                | 1             |
| <b>Current Assets</b>                                 |       |               |               |                |               |
| Stock                                                 | 6     | 0             |               | 0              |               |
| Debtors and prepayments                               | 7     | 1,536         |               | 1,591          |               |
| Cash at bank and in hand                              |       | <u>14,222</u> |               | <u>11,800</u>  |               |
|                                                       |       | 15,758        |               | 13,391         |               |
| <b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b> | 8     | 0             |               | 0              |               |
| <b>Net current assets</b>                             |       |               | 15,758        |                | 13,391        |
| <b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>          |       |               | <u>15,758</u> |                | <u>13,391</u> |
| <b>Provision for liabilities</b>                      | 9     |               | (330)         |                | (1,147)       |
| <b>Net assets</b>                                     |       |               | <u>14,880</u> |                | <u>12,244</u> |
| <b>Financed by:</b>                                   |       |               |               |                |               |
| <b>The funds of the Charity</b>                       |       |               |               |                |               |
| Funds brought forward                                 |       | 12,346        |               | 10,061         |               |
| Surplus/(Deficit) for the year                        |       | <u>2,494</u>  |               | <u>(1,347)</u> |               |
| Unrestricted funds carried forward                    |       | 14,880        |               | 12,346         |               |
| <b>Accumulated funds</b>                              |       |               | <u>14,880</u> |                | <u>12,346</u> |

The directors consider that the charitable company is entitled to exemption from the requirement to have an audit under the provisions of section 474(1) of the Companies Act 2006.

Members resolved, required the company, under section 476(1) of the Companies Act 2006, to obtain an audit for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The directors acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with section 385 of the Companies Act 2006, and for preparing accounts which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at 31 March 2023 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of section 354, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to the accounts so far as applicable to the company.

The financial statements which have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and were approved by the Council of Management on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



Harry Raymond, Treasurer



## **Notes to the financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2023**

### **1 Accounting policies**

The principal accounting policies are summarized below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year and in the preceding year

#### **1.1 Basis of accounting**

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective January 2015), the Companies Act 2006, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) and the Charities Act 2011.

#### **1.2 Fund Accounting**

All funds are unrestricted and are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.

#### **1.3 Incoming resources**

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Coal sales exclude VAT and are recognized after the coal has been delivered.

Annual subscriptions and one off donations are included on a cash received basis. Life subscriptions are amortized over a period of 10 years.

Gift aid is recognized on a cash received basis due to the fact that the amount of gift aid receivable is uncertain until the claim had been prepared and submitted to HMRC for each year.

#### **1.4 Resources expended**

Expenditure is recognized on an accruals basis as the liability is incurred.

#### **1.5 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation**

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Narrow Boats - 5% per annum straight line basis.

#### **1.6 Stocks**

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realizable value.

### **2 Staff costs**

No staff were employed during the year. (2022 nil)

### **3 Trustee remuneration and related party transactions**

No trustee received any remuneration during the year.

No trustee or other person related to the charity had any personal interest in any contract or transaction entered into by the charity during the year.

#### **4 Taxation**

As a charity the company is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the Charity.



The boats start the return journey from Braunston to Alvecote, with Howard Williams on Brighton and Nick Lake on Nuneaton. Photo: Tim Coghlan

## 5 Tangible fixed assets

|                     | Narrow Boats |          |        |
|---------------------|--------------|----------|--------|
|                     | Brighton     | Nuneaton | Total  |
| Cost                | £            | £        | £      |
| As at 1 April 2022  | 7,739        | 9,428    | 17,167 |
| Additions           |              |          |        |
| As at 31 March 2023 | 7,739        | 9,428    | 17,167 |
| Depreciation        |              |          |        |
| As at 1 April 2022  | 7,738        | 9,427    | 17,165 |
| Charge for the year |              |          |        |
| As at 31 March 2023 | 7,738        | 9,427    | 17,165 |
| Net book value      |              |          |        |
| At 31 March 2022    | 1            | 1        | 2      |
| At 31 March 2023    | 1            | 1        | 2      |

## 6 Stock

|                  | 2023 | 2022 |
|------------------|------|------|
|                  | £    | £    |
| Coal for re-sale | 0    | 0    |

## 7 Debtors and Prepayments

|                    |              |              |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| VAT                | 40           | 35           |
| Prepayments        | 1,596        | 1,556        |
| Coal sales debtors | 0            | 0            |
|                    | <u>1,636</u> | <u>1,591</u> |

## 8 Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

|                 |          |          |
|-----------------|----------|----------|
| Trade Creditors | 0        | 0        |
| Accruals        | 0        | 0        |
|                 | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |

## 9 Provisions for liabilities

|                                          |     |              |
|------------------------------------------|-----|--------------|
| Balance of life membership subscriptions | 980 | <u>1,137</u> |
|------------------------------------------|-----|--------------|

## 10 Company limited by guarantee

The company is limited by guarantee and consequently does not have share capital.

At 31 March 2023 138 members had guaranteed £1 each in the event of the winding up of the company.

# **Member's Participation Survey**

## **by Charlotte Fleming**

Way back in April 2023, the Trustees sent out an email inviting members to complete a survey about their participation or otherwise in crewing the boats. If you are one of the people who replied, thank you. The responses made for interesting reading.

The main comments concerned the accommodation and facilities, the length of trips and/or days, and how we treat new members. There were also some useful ideas for how to promote the Trust.

Accommodation: since the questionnaire was sent out, the accommodation has been improved, with a new, bigger tent on Nuneaton and better facilities in both tents. They now each have a folding bed (generally agreed to be “surprisingly comfortable”), a large plastic storage box to keep clothes dry, a folding chair, a rechargeable lantern and lino on the floor. Sadly, the tongue-in-cheek suggestion of a chandelier in each tent proved unworkable, as did fitting a shower!

Crewing: you will probably have seen from the crewing schedule that several people signed up to crew for 2-3 days this year, rather than the traditional week. This is something that several people who replied to the survey wished was allowed – well, it is. Crew can sign up for however long they can manage, whether that's a day, a weekend or a month. Other people mentioned the length of the working day, and this is harder to arrange, especially on the coal run – though

it is worth mentioning that spring and late autumn trips inevitably have shorter days.

Training: the Trustees are currently discussing appointing a training manager. Our insurers are likely to want to see a paper-trail for training in the event of an accident, and training/taster days are also under discussion for new and current members alike, so it makes sense to have someone coordinating all that.

Promoting the Trust: I hope you managed to watch David Johns' "Cruising the Cut" vlog on the coal run (if you missed it, search online for "Cruising the Cut YouTube" and then episode 315, "You Can Make Me Coal again"). Several people have joined the Trust as a result of it, from as far away as Canada. Paul Woloschuk has also started his "Throwback Thursday" slot on Facebook again and Rich Greenhall has taken on the NBT Instagram account, so the Trust can be found on social media; the more members engage with what is posted, the wider the influence will spread.

In 2024, we are aiming to take Nuneaton and Brighton to events aimed at leisure boaters rather than working boat fanciers, something that several people suggested in their survey replies. As these often happen during the holiday months, they may provide crewing opportunities for those who cannot choose when they go on holiday.

Meanwhile, if you have any more comments or suggestions, please don't wait to be asked! You can email or phone us any time: our contact details are on page 1 of this magazine.





The boats at Claydon on the Oxford Canal. Photo: Kev Maslin



Final drop at Buscot Lock. L-R: Unknown helper, Nick Lake, John Mills.  
Photo: David Johns (screen shot from his video)