

The  
**Steerer**

The Magazine of The Narrow Boat Trust Ltd – Autumn 2025



Suggested donation £2  
Free to Narrow Boat Trust members



Registered office:  
23 Redway Drive  
Twickenham TW2 7NT

[www.narrowboattrust.org.uk](http://www.narrowboattrust.org.uk)  
Company No. 01724935  
Charity No. 288243

**CHAIR**

**Kirk Martin**

**[kirknbt@outlook.com](mailto:kirknbt@outlook.com)**

**SECRETARY**

**Charlotte Fleming**

**[secretarynbt@gmail.com](mailto:secretarynbt@gmail.com)**

**TREASURER**

**Henry Rayment**

**[henry@stricklandestate.co.uk](mailto:henry@stricklandestate.co.uk)**

**CREWING CO-ORDINATOR**

**Barry Adams**

**[sefac1@btinternet.com](mailto:sefac1@btinternet.com)**

**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

**Ian Johnson**

**[nbtmemb@gmail.com](mailto:nbtmemb@gmail.com)**

**STEERER EDITOR**

**Charlotte Fleming**

**[charlotte.fleming@btinternet.com](mailto:charlotte.fleming@btinternet.com)**

***Front cover: Delivering at Southcote Moorings (photo Keith Norfolk)***

# Message from the Chair

Kirk Martin

As always, I would like to thank all members who took part in working parties and trips in 2025, whether on the boats attending rallies or our annual “coal run” to the Thames, Wey and Kennet. I would also like to thank all those who carry out the essential work behind the scenes, whether on our website and social media, archives, crewing schedules, membership records or the administration of the coal purchase and delivery, and also our trustees for all their good work – and, of course, all of you for your membership and support.

The year began with dropping Brighton off at Brinklow for Dave Ross to replace a substantial section of the hull, in a similar way to the work completed on Nuneaton five years ago. It is thanks to the two legacies left to us by members John Stevens (Nuneaton) and Peter Lovett (Brighton) that we now have the pair in a better condition than they have been for many years.

Thanks to those members who helped Rich Greenhall get the boats ready for the season. Tim Coghlan kindly let us make use of the dry dock at Braunston Marina for work on Nuneaton during May, when we also repainted the cabin sides and had the lettering on them done.

We had to increase our membership rates in 2025, but they had remained at the same level since 2018/19 and inflation since then had risen by 34%. Many thanks to all those members who adjusted their payments in good time.

During June we attended the IWA’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the very first Festival of Boats and Arts, held at Market Harborough in 1950, and also the Historic Boat Rally at Braunston which was opened by Sir David Suchet and Sheila Ferris (Lady Suchet), who were on board Nuneaton and Brighton for the opening event and the parade. This ever-popular rally was brought to us by Tim Coghlan, owner of Braunston Marina and our Patron. Further events we expected to attend were the Gnosall Festival and Audlem Festival in July and the events at Brownhills and Alvecote in August. However, a lack of crew and later the severe drought meant we were unable to attend these events.

An exciting development this year has been cooperation with the Molson Group in arranging crewing opportunities with some of their employees. More on this by Colin Wilks later in this issue.

We also were unable to load at Braunston for the coal run due to the lack of water. As you will all know, we travelled empty to Brentford just before the locks were closed on 26<sup>th</sup> August and then EA told us we were unable to load at Walton. so we returned to a wharf near Cowley where we loaded, with thanks to High Line Yachting. The deliveries were completed, although we could not continue to the upper Thames due to the need to return to Alvecote via Brentford and the Grand Union.

After the floods of 2024 we have faced the drought of 2025, but have done what we can to keep narrow boat carrying alive on the waterways of Britain. Let us hope for a trouble-free 2026.



*Nuneaton & Brighton delivering smokeless fuel on the Thames (photo: Keith Norfolk)*

## Work parties

The year started with Nuneaton docking at Braunston for repainting, before returning to Alvecote to collect Brighton and deliver her to Brinklow for Dave Ross to re-bottom her.

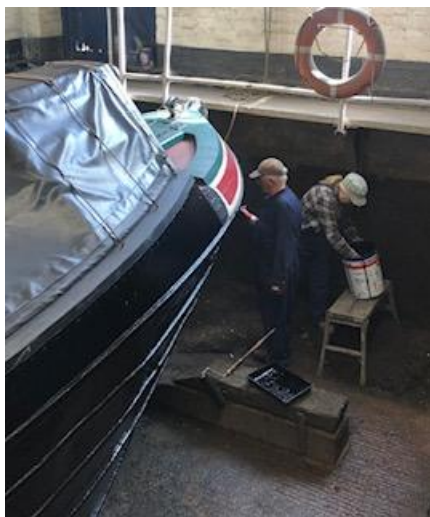
Tim Coghlan, the Trust's patron and owner of Braunston Marina, had kindly offered us the use of their dry dock for a week, 28<sup>th</sup> April-2<sup>nd</sup> May, and Rich Greenhall, Maintenance Manager, took full advantage of the facilities. There was a good turnout of willing members to help; many thanks to Trevor Winterbottom, Colin Wilks, Barry Adams, Peter Thompsett, Geoff Radford, Paul Harrison, Stephanie Goodacre, and Andy Leadbetter for their hard work. Will Hewitt then did the sign-writing on the cabin sides.

Once Dave Ross had finished working on Brighton, Rich and Steve Smith blacked the new steel before she went back in the water, and the shuts, tent and other equipment were returned to the boat at another work party on 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> May, when Rich was assisted by Peter Thompsett and Paul Harrison.

These photos were taken by Rich at Braunston.



*Before, looking a bit tired*



*Starting to look better*



*After, ready for signwriting*

# Four Trips and a Poem

Stephanie Goodacre

I've had a busy year, but managed to join Nuneaton and Brighton briefly on four occasions.

Firstly, to help crew Nuneaton at the Foxton boat festival in June. This year was a special event celebrating 75 years since the inception of the IWA at a festival of boats in Market Harborough basin. Surprisingly, my husband John announced that he was there with his father at the original rally in 1950. Not on a boat, but there nevertheless at the age of 11. He remembers it being crowded and exciting with so many boats in attendance.

I was also an extra crew member at the Braunston Historic Boat Rally. Great to see Charlotte receiving a large cheque donation from Braunston Marina alongside David Suchet and his wife.



*Charlotte, Sir David Suchet, Sheila Ferris and our Patron, Tim Coghlan of Braunston Marina.*

*Photo courtesy of Tim Coghlan*

Next, I steered the pair down the Stoke Bruerne flight, crewing as far as Cosgrove to beat the premature lock closures in late August due to the drought. Finally, lock-wheeling at Atherstone, including bow-hauling the butty and crewing the return to Alvecote for the winter along with Peter, Petra and Richard.

## **Foxton Locks to Market Harborough June 2025**

This is a slow-manoeuvring poem, a forward and reverse fluctuating poem glissading with momentum of an otter no faster than a thought on water one that wanders on a flow towards white willow's overhanging limbs leaning to be brushed aside by hands upon the tiller of a heavy-draughted floater a poem of over twenty metres long, pondering underneath redundant bridges past factories crumbling bricks and moorhen's hidden den amongst the rushes no rush, the sullen cut dictates the pace, this poem is not a race. It swims.

If this poem were a stroll it would stop, look up at red kites wheeling overhead if it were a breeze, there would be rhythmic whispers shaking hands with trees if this poem were a fish, its tempo a glissando, combined with sudden swishes but this poem is the rudder of a heavy booty boat. A slower motion poem taking note of echoes under bridge 'oles, of gongoozlers' eyes devising dreams bemused by back-turned gardeners busy mowing slopes of other people's riches.

This is a long and winding cavalcade, a propelling poem from Foxton's bustling Junction

a meaningful meander of historic painted vessels. Of passing portside in slow motion

carrying three quarters of a century to the memories of a gathering.

This poem is a long slow journey back in time to 1950 Market Harborough basin filled with fired-up boaters proclaiming ways of saving inland waters for the nation.

# Braunston Rally

Charlotte Fleming

Colin Wilks, Steve Morgan and I brought the boats back from Foxton to Braunston in one day, tying up for the night above the Admiral Nelson, and tootled down to find our mooring for the rally the following day.

As I had never done the rally route before, Colin and I did a couple of trial runs around it so I wouldn't be too nervous with our VIPs on board, then settled down to polish and fettle.

Sir David Suchet and Tim Coghlan, on Nuneaton, and Sheila Ferris (Lady Suchet), on Brighton with Colin Wilks and Steve Smith, joined us to open the rally on the Saturday. The restored bridge over the marina entrance was getting its grand opening, so the breasted pair had to be held still, as nearly underneath the bridge as possible, while Tim made a speech, Sir David read a poem and the band played a hymn. We then singled out before weaving our way through the marina, out through the ladder bridge and down to the Stop House, where we dropped off the VIPs and continued to the turn. The reverse was reasonably successful, and we returned to our mooring in good order.

Rich Greenhall skippered the route on the Sunday, and I had a much more relaxing time on the butty tiller!



*Braunston Rally 2025 grand opening: Sir David Suchet and Tim Coghlan on Nuneaton (photo courtesy of Tim Coghlan)*

## Summer Social

The 6<sup>th</sup> July saw another gathering of members, this time for a joint summer social with Friends of Raymond. The Narrow Boat Trust were celebrating Brighton's restoration, and the Friends of Raymond 25 years since Raymond's. The well-attended event was held at the Boat House pub in Braunston, followed by a boat trip with both pairs up to Dunchurch Pools marina and back to Braunston.

The first photo is by Christine Thompson, the remainder by Joy Rayment.



*Lunch at the Boat House*



*Embarking for the boat trip*



*On the way out*



*Both pairs  
breasted for  
winding at  
Dunchurch  
Pools*

# The Coal Run Starts... Slowly

Charlotte Fleming

The coal run started almost as usual, with the run from Alvecote to Braunston. But the drought was beginning to make movement difficult on the cut, with many lock flights on reduced hours, so it was felt better to leave early for Braunston, rather than attending the Brownhills or Alvecote events, and on 11<sup>th</sup> August I set off with Barry Adams and Will and Alix, two Molson volunteers (see Colin Wilks' article further on for background).



*Barry and Will (photos Charlotte Fleming)*



*Alix on Brighton*

We had the earliest mid-trip stop of my NBT career on the Atherstone flight – we were in the pub at the bottom of the upper 5 locks by 3.30 pm – as the locks were padlocked behind and in front of us. We coped somehow.

The following morning saw a lazy start, as the lockies only opened up at 10, just as Barry, Will and Alix got back from breakfast. The third day was very slow: with the pound right down between Hillmorton and Braunston we

crawled along. I had damaged my back before we got to Hillmorton, so I was unable to help either there or when we got stemmed up just outside Braunston, when another boat decided to pass us on the wrong side and pushed Nuneaton onto the mud. Luckily a third boat, Kolinsky, overtook us and offered us a snatch, which got us moving again, for which we were very grateful, and avoided any further injuries.



*Barry picks up the snatch, and Nuneaton is pulled off the mud*

*(photos Ellie Coupar, on Kolinsky)*



## 2025 Coal Run

Barry Adams

This year's coal run was fraught with problems. The lack of rain gave us a real headache and we had to make a decision to move the boats to Brentford early, with lock flights closing behind us.

Then came the problem with loading at Molesey public loading wharf (Walton Wharf), which the environment agency had blocked off with heavy planters to stop it being used. At first we were offered a couple of other places to load but they were then withdrawn.

We managed to find a very helpful boatyard (High Line Yachting) at Cowley Peachey, where the Slough arm goes off, who let us use their wharf for loading. So we then had to get the boats back there from Brentford ready to load.

Three lorries from our coal merchants arrived, and with a good turnout of members loading was completed quite quickly. With our passage through Thames lock already booked, we returned to Brentford ready to lock out on Friday afternoon. A brisk run upstream with the tide made for an easy journey to the first drop on Saturday morning, then came the big delivery which went really well and was done in time for us to head up to the next big drop, ready to start on Sunday morning.

With our band of customers all pitching in, this major drop was soon done. I decided to leave the wood chip transport delivery until we could do it on the return run, as I was a bit short handed crewing-wise.

Next was a single drop at D'Oyly Carte Island; there is a second one there, but again I decided to do it on the way back.

Onto the Wey next, and as we had no orders above where the Basingstoke goes off we only needed a 24-hour pass. All went well at first, but we then had a major accident with one of members falling into the empty hold. He said that he had a badly sprained ankle, so a cold compress was put on and he was got into the tent to lay down. We did the early deliveries and when we got to the last one, which is just before the Basingstoke junction, we asked our injured member how he was and if he wanted to go to hospital. The answer was yes so, with a lot of help from our customer, an ambulance was called.

The paramedic arrived first and looked at the situation, and soon a team arrived to get Paul out of the tent and then to the ambulance. It was the first time the paramedics and ambulance people had had to remove a person from a boat, so was also good training for them. I regret to write that the sprained ankle was in fact a broken tibia and fibula. Paul has been operated on and is now home, making, I hope, a full recovery.

Now two-handed, we did the delivery with help from our customer, and then made our way back to the Thames to continue upstream for the Kennet and Avon drops. These were all done with considerable help from our customers. Back down to the Thames and then the run back to Brentford, with the couple of drops to do on the way back. With a spring tide it was quite a job to get in at Brentford but we managed it through Thames lock, and the volunteer lock-keeper at the gauging lock had stayed on to see us through. We tied up in Brentford and the following day cleaned the boats and had a tidy up, low-clothed them and left for home.



*Delivering at Southcote Moorings (photo Keith Norfolk)*

# An exciting development

Colin Wilks

Most of the membership will be aware that the number of active members, and particularly those prepared to crew the coal run, is becoming a problem for us.

Our member Robin Powell's Molson Group are the UK's largest independent new and used plant equipment dealer. They have a very active presence across many charitable sectors, which now includes the Narrow Boat Trust.

Robin commented "*Having had a lifelong passion for Great Britain's Historic canal network, Molson's engagement with the Narrow Boat Trust resonates deeply on many levels.*

*The straightforward, hardworking life of a pair of historic narrow boats - Brighton and Nuneaton - working along one of the jewels in Britain's industrial heritage, the canal network, perfectly reflects our own industry's values: a practical approach to problem-solving, often in challenging environmental and climatic conditions.*

*Real people doing real things, frequently asking themselves, How can we do this? How can we help? - that's what Molson values are all about.*

*Having spent over fifty years on the canal network, I'm reminded that this same attitude and approach to overcoming challenges has been fundamental in building our business. Whether it's pouring rain, a jammed lock, or a struggling engine - who knows what the day will bring? It's all part of the experience. Outdoor work, teamwork, and problem-solving: it's what we do best. And really, what could be better?"*

The practical assistance they have started to provide this year is to encourage workshop engineering staff to volunteer a few days on the boats to learn what we do and help hump the coal about. We have had three runs this year, each with two people from Molson joining us. Two short runs between Braunston and Alvecote (see earlier article) gave four of their people a good introduction to boat handling and locking.

The coal run schedule had to be chopped and changed at very short notice due to the closure of the GU in August, and consequently crewing it was harder to organise than usual.

The first two runs had gone well and the word had gone round at Molson that the boats were comfortable enough and the experience had been a good one, so four people volunteered to help with the coal deliveries, split into pairs doing three days each, with a changeover mid-week.

Vince and Dan arrived at Reading early on Monday morning and we set off for Hurley Lock, where we had to wait to be allowed to pass Temple Footbridge, which was closed for engineering works.

A few drops done and all we had left were the bags of pellets for the “wood chip job” at Ash Island. Gary and Alan met us there on Wednesday lunch time so we were mob-handed for the awkward delivery, which involves taking barrows across two moored boats and up a muddy track into a compound.

We said farewell to Vince and Dan, who did a complicated shuffle to retrieve their van from Reading and leave Gary and Alan’s van at a Molson depot in Brentford before once again heading for home in Bristol.



*Barry and Colin with Garry, Vince, Dan and Alan from Molson Group at Ash Island (photo Kirk Martin)*

The boats were now empty and we gave our guests a run up the Thames to The Anglers at Walton, where the Environment Agency has tried to make certain they deny the public its use of the loading wharf by blocking the entrance with large planters. Apparently there is some doubt about the wharf’s ability to support a large wagon, so the cheap and miserable way is for EA to close it off. No doubt legal action might force them to preserve it for its statutory use, but in the short term we must look for an alternative site, preferably on the Thames.

Teddington Lock was closed during the week for major engineering works, but we had a two-hour window on Thursday afternoon which would allow us to get through to Brentford, which we did, arriving in the Six Bells that evening. The Six Bells is on the bridge opposite the gauging lock and is where the boatmen would wait for orders for the return journey north. No more orders for us and so we clothed the boats on Friday morning and said goodbye to Gary and Alan.

The trust really values its relationship with Molson. Their ability to provide some cheerful and willing volunteers to help with the coal run is invaluable, and perhaps we have managed to introduce a whole new generation to the joys of working boats, and the country's canal system. Long may our association with Molson continue!



*Tied up at Brentford (photo Colin Wilks)*

# Entering Brentford from the River Thames.

Colin Wilks

Due to the scheduled works in the lock we had cleared Teddington only at 4:10pm and passed Richmond half tide lock dead on high water at 5:00pm, so the tide was falling as we passed Isleworth Ait and approached the entry to the River Brent and Thames Lock at 5:30 or so.

The turn in when heading down stream is almost a full 180°. I stayed in the centre of the river until about 50 yards back from the junction and then began to turn the boats hard. As you become perpendicular to the bank the flow makes turning harder and you start to move downstream quite fast whilst heading across the current. There is a calmer stretch in the lee of the brickwork at the mouth of the Brent, and this allows you to complete your turn and start making headway against the flow and into the river.

For a nasty moment I felt we were going to be swept beyond the entrance as the boat didn't seem to have enough power to keep turning and punch the tide at that point. In the end we swept majestically into the river mouth and all was safe.

Things to bear in mind if you need to make this manoeuvre yourself:

1. Ensure the motor is well ballasted so that there is very little gap between uxtter plate and water line. You really need the prop to bite.
2. Try and arrive at the Brent during high water slack, or whilst the tide is still coming in. Richmond Flood Lock is clear two hours either side of high water, so that should not be difficult to arrange.
3. Do not be tempted to cut the corner at the entrance, since you may meet a boat coming out and you will most likely ram the moored craft on the northern bank of the river. You need to get the boat fully round whilst still on the Thames.

## The Run Home

Kirk Martin and others

Although I was skipper on part of the outward coal run, I only managed to get along for two days of the return trip as a lock-wheeler. Peter Clutterbuck joined the boats as skipper on Saturday 18 October. This was later than planned as we were supposed to return to Alvecote, via the Oxford Canal, on 13 October, and we had crew for this trip. Sadly, the drought and lock closures meant we were returning via Brentford and the Grand Union. Peter was joined by Nigel Hollis for the run all the way to Braunston, and Colin Mendel-Lion was on for two days. After Colin left, Martin Sach was on until Friday, and Petra Ashton was on all the way to Alvecote but had to return home for a couple of days during the trip. Peter was joined by Charles Harmer from Braunston and Petra, returning to the boats, was joined by Stephanie Goodacre for the last part of the run; Stephanie and Petra were Peter's crew on the last leg to Alvecote.

*Andy & Mandy  
Curtis on the  
Buckby flight  
(photo Kirk  
Martin)*



Andy Curtis, his wife Mandy and I were lock wheeling for Buckby and Braunston, and I came out for Atherstone Locks. Several of the crew have written accounts of this rather cold and wet run up the Grand Union, Oxford and Coventry canals:

**Nigel Hollis** says: Seeing Barry's crew list for the return leg and having the time, as I am usually too busy being involved in a small family motor racing team (Citroen 2cv's - motto Big Thrills/Small bills), I thought I would put

my name forward. Originally it was to be Stoke Bruerne to Alvecote but various factors meant it got put back to joining at Brentford and leaving at Braunston.

*Nigel Hollis on the  
Buckby flight (photo Kirk  
Martin)*



Bearing in mind I am not 21 anymore, my first thought was, would the knees stand the trip up and over the Chilterns, but I left the boats feeling fitter than when I started. Yes, it can be a hard route in the cold and wet, but getting a team working well together is very satisfying and good distances can be achieved, as when I worked 'Towcester' up and down numerous times loaded with coal or gravel or just towing jobs.

Amazing distances were travelled then, especially by The Brays and The Whitlocks working the Jam'ole coal run to Bulls Bridge - something that I fear will never be seen again. 'Towcester', by the way, was one of many motors and butties including 'Nuneaton' dumped in the Wendover Arm by British Waterways for disposal. Not one was fit for working and they were a sorry sight, with bits removed by souvenir hunters and rusting with rain water. A winning tender was around £450 for motors and £100 for butties with the stipulation that craft were not sold on but put back in trade.

So what are my thoughts on the trip compared with fifty-odd years ago? Nowhere did I see any maintenance going on, particularly with regard to offside trees - does the Canal & River Trust have no powers to make landowners do some cutting back? Now that the boats are back at Alvecote they can be got ready for 2026 and, hopefully, a full season of trips plus another coal run, which is essential to uphold the phrase 'Use it or lose it'.

Martin Sach notes: The run was a bit later than planned and it was pouring with rain when I stepped onto the towpath near Watford, making it very difficult to use Google Maps to help me find the boats! However, I found them. Things didn't get off to the best of starts as we were aground and had to enlist a favour from a passing boat to help us get under way. The run to the midlands along the Grand Union main line is not especially scenic but it is mostly rural and we were soon out in the country, doing lock after lock. The crew of three expanded to four and we were generally kept busy most of the time. Boating on the pair is quite different from leisure boating.



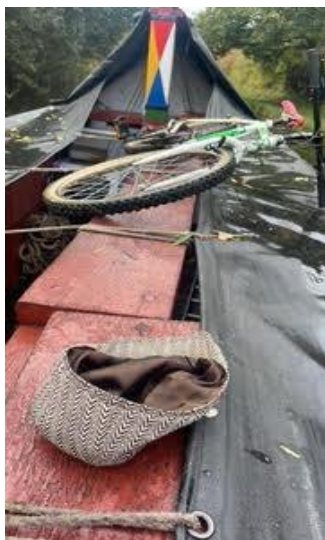
*The pair tied up at Tring  
(photo Martin Sach)*

Apart from the techniques associated with working a pair, there is the spartan accommodation, which reminds us of how hard life was for the families who used to work boats like this commercially. The cooking facilities on board are rudimentary to say the least, so we ate ashore each night. One night we nearly starved but for the willingness of a landlord to have a takeaway delivered to the bar. Perhaps the most vital thing to take with you on a trip like this is a torch - the towpath can be pitch black at night and you may find yourself moored in the midst of nowhere, as we did, although able to walk to a pub. I had fortunately bought a winter-grade sleeping bag as there is no heating in the accommodation tents and the weather was really cold as well as wet.

Perhaps the highlight was the passage through Blisworth Tunnel - and our skipper Peter managed to avoid touching the side more than once, which wasn't bad given that it is over 3000 yards long. Blisworth was the end of the trip for me and a smaller crew was enough after that as there were not so many locks ahead for a while. Blisworth has an infrequent bus service but a

service nonetheless and was a convenient end-point as I had to get home for commitments the next day.

[Petra Ashton](#) writes: Armed with my trusty Canal Companion book, the Open Canal App on my phone at the ready, and a link from Peter, to find the historic pair somewhere on the Grand Union Canal, I alighted the train at Apsley. I wandered with my rucksack and sleeping bag along the towpath featuring as a blue blob on my app, trying to locate a green 'P' pin on Peter's link - old school and modern technology colliding. It wasn't long before I saw the wonderful sight of the pair breasted up and could hear the familiar chug chug of that Lister engine. No time to waste, a quick 'hello' to new crew and it's hands-on straight away.



*Ready for lock-wheeling  
(photo Petra Ashton)*

I'd been enlisted to the Narrow Boat Trust along the towpath of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal the previous year by Helen and Charlotte - a chance meeting while I was pulling in my own boat in the middle of nowhere led to all of this! I hadn't managed any volunteering this year so had jumped at the chance of the Grand Union during school (where I work) half term and it was good to be back. However, I had to return home for a couple of days later in the trip. When I re-joined the pair on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October, they were ahead of schedule so had taken a little diversion down to Coventry. I jumped on at Coventry Basin and, after helping Peter to wind the pair with Charles, we set off. We moored up that evening near Marston junction and by the Tuesday evening we had been joined by Stephanie. Kirk came out on

the penultimate day and we managed to go through Atherstone locks, to moor up at Bradley Green. The following morning we got to Alvecote in the rain, having been joined en route by Rich.

*Peter, Petra and Stephanie at Atherstone locks (photo Kirk Martin)*



*The pair tied at Braunston on a frosty morning (photo Charles Harmer)*

[Charles Harmer](#) adds: Braunston is a lovely spot. A pretty high street and down by the canal the Lord Nelson pub. All surrounded by rolling Northamptonshire countryside. You could not ask for more. Well you could add two historic narrow boats, Nuneaton and Brighton, to make it perfect!

It is a privilege to join these boats. After the locks the rest of the crew disperses. For the next two days there is a crew of two, Peter and me. It's a cold evening so we have dinner in the busy Lord Nelson pub. The night was cold, in the morning there is frost on the covers and steam rising from the canal. Warmly wrapped, with Peter on the motor and me on the butty, we head along the Oxford canal to Hilmorton locks. These locks are busy! The busiest flight in the country apparently. We arrived at the same time as lots of other boats. We took the butty down first, letting others pass, and then went back for the motor. By the time we had finished the other boats had disappeared and the flight was deserted.

We continue along the autumnal canal and as dusk starts to fall we manage to find a long enough stretch of bank to moor the two boats. It's at Stretton, where there is no pub, so it's macaroni cheese on board Brighton for dinner.

The next day we have more cruising in the cold including a side trip to Coventry. The canal seems narrower here and there are some sharp turns and narrow bridges. Peter does a great job of steering. On the return journey along the Coventry arm we are joined by Petra. She takes the butty and I'm steering the motor. Some of the bends and bridges are not taken quite so expertly! But what an amazing experience to steer a pair of historic boats along the wonderful Midland canals!



*Turning left at  
Suttons (photo  
Charles Harmer)*

# Financial Review and Accounts

Henry Rayment, Treasurer

The operations of the Trust in the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 produced a deficit of £14,823 (2024 surplus of £24,369). This was entirely to be expected as during the year the bulk of the major work on Brighton was carried out although this was only completed in the following financial year. As reported previously, this was funded principally by the very generous legacy of £25,000 from Peter Lovett and the Trust was very grateful to receive some further donations during the year which funded the balance.

Tonnage (37.86 tonnes) carried on the single coal run in 2024 was 4% up on the previous year. The cost of the fuel we purchase fell slightly and savings were not all passed on. Consequently, profit was up 12%. The results would have been better if the boats had not been stuck at Bourne End as a result of flood conditions which led to additional cost being incurred through having to deliver to the Kennet & Avon and Upper Thames customers by road. The flood conditions also meant the allowance for casual sales was not fully taken up, but our Patron, Tim Coghlan of Braunston Marina, very kindly acquired our surplus stock at cost.

Subscription income reduced slightly compared with the previous year but Gift Aid recovery held up well, partly as a result of it being recoverable on some donations. There were no new life members and interest receivable was comparable to the previous year. We are very grateful for all other donations received during the year.

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 maintained.

The Accounts have been checked and approved by an Independent Examiner, as usual, and appear in the following pages.

**The Narrow Boat Trust Limited**

**Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account)  
For year ending 31 March 2025**

	2025	2024
	Total	Total
	un-restricted	un-restricted
	funds	funds
	£	£
<b>Incoming resources</b>		
Coal sales	25,036	25,981
Subscriptions	1,637	2,021
Donations	3,275	26,093
Gift aid	520	521
Interest receivable	476	460
Sundry Income	10	20
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>30,954</b>	<b>55,096</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>		
Coal purchases	19,643	21,110
Repairs and maintenance	21,215	1,724
Boat running costs	707	1,414
Hire of Motors	0	0
Tolls and licences	902	849
Insurance	1,880	1,822
Travel costs	0	0
Training	0	0
Independent examination of accounts	100	100
Postage and stationery	0	0
Steerer printing and postage	321	610
Web site	0	0
IWA, CBOA, Zoom & Mojo subscriptions	330	321
Sundry expenses	679	2,777
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>45,777</b>	<b>30,727</b>
Net movement in funds	-14,823	24,369
Balance transferred to unrestricted funds	<u>-14,823</u>	<u>24,369</u>
Balance funds brought forward	39,249	14,880
Balance unrestricted funds carried forward	24,426	39,249

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 2025**

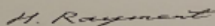
		2025		2024	
		£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>	<b>Notes</b>				
Tangible assets	5		2		2
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Stock	6	0		0	
Debtors and prepayments	7	3,137		2,249	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>21,952</u>		<u>37,820</u>	
		25,089		40,069	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	8	0		0	
<b>Net current assets</b>			25,089		40,069
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			25,091		40,071
<b>Provision for liabilities</b>	9		(665)		(822)
<b>Net assets</b>			<u>24,426</u>		<u>39,249</u>
Financed by:					
<b>The funds of the Charity</b>					
Funds brought forward		39,249		14,880	
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		<u>-14,823</u>		<u>24,369</u>	
Unrestricted funds carried forward		24,426		39,249	
<b>Accumulated funds</b>			<u>24,426</u>		<u>39,249</u>

The directors consider that the charitable company is entitled to exemption from the requirement to have an audit under the provisions of section 477(1) of the Companies Act 2006.

Members have not required the company, under section 476(1) of the Companies Act 2006, to obtain an audit for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The directors acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 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 2025 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of section 394, 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 8<sup>th</sup> October 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Henry Rayment, Treasurer

## **The Narrow Boat Trust Limited**

### **Notes to the financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2025**

#### **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. (2024 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.

## The Narrow Boat Trust Limited

### Notes to the financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2025

#### 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.

#### 5 Tangible fixed assets

	Narrow Boats		Total
	Brighton	Nuneaton	
Cost	£	£	£
As at 1 April 2024	7,739	9,428	17,167
Additions			
As at 31 March 2025	7,739	9,428	17,167
<b>Depreciation</b>			
As at 1 April 2024	7,738	9,427	17,165
Charge for the year			
As at 31 March 2025	7,738	9,427	17,165
<b>Net book value</b>			
At 31 March 2024	1	1	2
At 31 March 2025	1	1	2

#### 6 Stock

	2025	2024
	£	£
Coal for re-sale	0	0

#### 7 Debtors and Prepayments

VAT	1,100	35
Prepayments	2,037	2,214
Coal sales debtors	0	0
	<u>3,137</u>	<u>2,249</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	665	822
--	-----	-----

#### 10 Company limited by guarantee

The company is limited by guarantee and consequently does not have share capital. At 31 March 2025 131 members (family members are counted as one member) had guaranteed £1 each in the event of the winding up of the company.

## Membership matters

Ian Johnson, Narrow Boat Trust Membership Secretary

Membership rates are £16 for senior members (over 60) and unwaged; £29 standard annual membership; family membership £44 for two adults, and juniors living at the same address, although children under 18 are not allowed to crew for insurance purposes; life membership is now £365. Rates were increased last year but a number of members have not increased their standing order.

**If you pay by standing order or online banking could you please check the amount and amend payment details in line with the new rates if you have not already done so.**

Yes, membership does matter: your subscriptions help fund the running of the boats and cover the cost of producing this magazine. Being a member also gives us a database of people who might be able to assist with crewing the boats, and - importantly - you need to be a member to be insured when crewing.

Our membership year runs from May 1<sup>st</sup> until April 30<sup>th</sup> and subs are due on 1<sup>st</sup> May each year. As a small society we are not able to operate a Direct Debit system as some larger organisations do; however, a number of members pay by Standing Order or by a regular payment via online banking. Paying this way makes life a lot easier for our treasurer. With the advent of online banking, setting up a regular payment is very easy, so I would ask anyone who is a member to consider doing this. The details you need to do this are

Account name: The Narrow Boat Trust Limited

Sort code: 60-50-00

Account number: 84693029.

If setting up a regular payment, please use your surname and initial as a reference so that we can identify payments, and set payment date to 1<sup>st</sup> May annually.

All members can access the details we hold regarding them via Membermojo, an online membership management system that we use. If you wish to see these details go to [www.membermojo.co.uk](http://www.membermojo.co.uk) - you can sign in without a password. If you get a screen that requires a password to be entered, just select 'Sign In without password', then select 'Sign In with

email'. You will then receive an email containing a link that will allow you to access your details. Members can only access their details, not those of other members, and all data is held securely and complies with GDPR requirements.

Should you have any questions regarding membership please contact me at [nbtmemb@gmail.com](mailto:nbtmemb@gmail.com) or 01483 591756.



*Preparing to  
wind at  
Dunchurch  
Pools during  
the social  
event run  
(photo: Joy  
Raynt)*

*A lock on the Göta  
Canal (photo  
Stephanie  
Goodacre)*



# A Journey across Sweden by Water, July 2025

Text and photos by Stephanie Goodacre

I have been fascinated by the waterways of Sweden since the late 1980s after reading an article in the *Waterways World* called 'Cuckoo on a Nest'. At the time I was project manager and skipper on a community narrowboat project called *Leicester Kids Afloat* (1984-1993). The 'Cuckoo' in question referred to a magnificent triple-decked ungainly inland passenger boat called *Juno*, shown towering above the locks on a modest canal which appeared not unlike the *Grand Union* in dimensions.



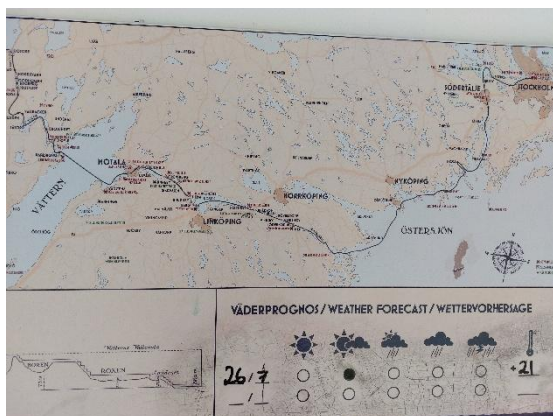
*Juno*

*Juno*, originally steam powered, was built in Motala, Sweden in 1874 as a cargo vessel for trade on the inland waterway commonly known as the Göta Canal, which links the North Sea to the Gulf of Bothnia. It was conceived and built to avoid taxes imposed by Denmark for traders plying the Kattegat, but the construction took many years to overcome the greatest challenge at Trollhättan. Progress of canal cutting by the military finally started in 1800. Today, *Juno* enjoys the luxury of being the oldest and grandest passenger vessel still making the journey across Sweden between Stockholm and Gothenberg offering overnight cruises in 29 luxury, although 'bijou', cabins, complete with polished wood and brass-work. The cruises are very classy, serving Michelin star fine dining on linen tablecloths adorned with fresh flowers. *Juno* also boasts a library, a sheltered viewing deck and a well-stocked bar.

We had originally considered this canal trip as a family holiday about 20 years ago, but the company had an embargo on children - rightly so, as three times round the deck with no further options for playful entertainment would not make a relaxing cruise. So finally, this year - 2025, when our 'child', aged 28, was getting married to his Swedish girlfriend in Dalarna - we booked the classic cruise on Juno. Our son's wedding was a delight, full of colourful local traditional costumes, wild flowers and folk music. The weather was warmer than expected for Sweden, going on for 30 degrees and the evenings were long and light. After the celebrations, our newlyweds headed off to Italy and we boarded Juno in Stockholm for the 4-day, almost non-stop, journey east to west. We were in a minority, the only English people on board. Most of the other 35 passengers were from Germany, plus couples from Australia, USA, Norway and a family from Switzerland. The crew were all fluent in English and there was a cruise-host who explained the necessities in three languages.

Earlier this year I had been fortunate enough to buy a book from the Friends of Raymond book stall at the Braunston Historic Boat Rally called 'Small Boat through Sweden', written in 1961 by Roger Pilkington. I avidly read up on the Göta canal's inception, construction and history as well as his quirky passage on board the Commodore. This served me well and painted a portrait of a landscape and waterway which seemed little changed.

The beauty of the navigation across Sweden is in the contrast between the sea level archipelago and narrow canal linked by a several open lakes, the two largest being Vättern and Vänern. The latter feeds the Trollhättan ship canal and the wide Göta river. There is a rise of 300 feet above sea level to the summit level at lake Viken and passage through 58 locks. The landscape is a constant source of wonder from open views above the placid water of the narrow canal, the upper sections only just deep enough for Juno. Swing and lift bridges link farmsteads and villages with the typical red ochre



wooden buildings. Out onto choppy wide-open lakes, panoramic views of cloudscapes and sunsets surround the open decks. The continuous nature of the trip meant crawling into my bunk at twilight was a pleasure, watching the night time view idle past beyond the porthole. Given that this was just after midsummer, the days were long and light. We were given timings of the Carlsborg flight and were up at 5am in bright daylight to watch the crew and take a towpath walk.

Juno is a historic boat, built in 1874 to the dimensions of the newly constructed canal, which owes its inception, in part, to the influence of Thomas Telford, as well as its founder Baltzar von Platen. Juno, along with sister ships Diana and Wilhelm Tham, are about 32m by 7m and with a draught just over 2.7m.



Because of the changing and often challenging weather conditions the trip boats encounter across the open lakes, they require powerful engines. Juno has 2 Volvo-Penta 6-cylinder engines powering a variable pitch propeller. We were given a tour of the engine room and provided with essential ear protectors, I was impressed

by how clean and well maintained the engines were, yet not surprised that their maintenance was a full-time job.

The crew were welcoming and friendly, with time to answer my myriad



questions when not otherwise busy navigating, guiding into locks with a series of hand signals, replacing the splintered wooden fenders which hang from the gunwales and help buffer the



boat in the snug locks. I had wondered why piles of larch logs appeared by some locks with 2” holes already drilled through them -replacement fenders in a land where wood is plentiful. All the locks but two were electrically operated and most often lock ‘guards’ were around to manage them and signal our approach to the next lock, making the passage and rise of over 300 feet less onerous. For my part it was rather frustrating not to be one of the crew and not being actively engaged in the work; my ambition would be to return as a trainee, as they take 2 on board along with 12 regular crew members.

The trip was not all ‘plain sailing’ and as we approached Motala, the halfway point, Juno was clearly having difficulties along some narrow stretches with very little water to draw. The Captain was struggling to keep a straight line through open bridge holes and the engine seemed to lack power and thrust. We struggled on slowly to our next official mooring at Motala, arriving several hours later than scheduled. Juno was due to spend just a couple of hours there before an overnight crossing of lake Vättern. However, because of the fouled prop and other technical problems we ended up stopping overnight, with a long wait for the engineer who eventually reached us the next day. The variable pitch propellor needed resetting plus adjustments to the equivalent of its stern gland/gear box. All of this had been relayed automatically between the ship and a computer at the company’s base in Gothenberg.

Because of the delay, we were offered a coach trip to Karlsborg Castle and benefitted by a relaxing afternoon to explore Motala, with its history as the birthplace of the Göta canal, including a plaque commemorating Thomas Telford’s involvement.



Motala also has a quirky motor museum, cafes and ice-cream kiosks. Because of the inopportune stopover and being delayed for almost a day, our voyage terminated in the town of Sjötorp which is the limit of the Göta Canal on the shore of lake Vänneren. Sjötorp is home to another fascinating canal museum in an old waterside warehouse, showing how the canal was constructed. So our cruise had come to an end, but as compensation we were offered a coach trip to Trollhättan on the way to our hotel in the centre of Gothenberg.

The history of Trollhättan has been well documented by Roger Pilkington as he journeyed north eastwards along the wide commercial Göta river towards the narrow granite gorge at Trollhättan. This was the greatest natural obstacle to navigation because of a fierce cataract gushing through a narrow gorge of solid granite rock. Much of the flow now serves an underground hydro plant, with a dam holding back the torrent apart from occasional releases. Our visit to the area was by coach rather than boat, but we appreciated the visitors centre museum and well mapped canal trail none the less. We were able to peer down the line of the older canal channels constructed in 1800 by Baltzar von Platen, very steep with the workings long gone. They were eventually sidelined by a 'new' flight built by Nils Ericson in 1844. These abandoned locks looked like they could still be operated today. Both channels were bypassed by a flight of six wider and much deeper ship locks which have been in operation since 1916 and would have been part of our cruise if we had not been delayed.

Before saying goodbye to Juno and her crew we were issued with certificates to show that we had completed the passage of the Göta Canal which technically is from the first lock leaving Stockholm's archipelago at Mem all the way to Sjötorp. Not a complete coast to coast journey as we expected, but not all canal schedules go to plan, do they?

All more reason to go back again? I hope so.



*Coming up Buckby locks (photo Andy Curtis)*



*Peter Clutterbuck & Stephanie Goodacre bowhauling at Atherstone (photo Kirk Martin)*