

Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs.

AWARE

Formally Alert

Awareness of the Waterways, to include Activities, Reports and Events.

April 2010.

Why you should read their manifestos ?



I made the comment in my report to the AWCC AGM that I believe that the waterways' movement is facing a major crossroad, maybe the first really major one since the 50s and 60s. The consultant's report, 'Setting a Course' put forward the options to BW. The option of becoming a full-blown charity to run the inland waterways has been chosen, so it is now a distinct possibility. If it is sympathetically implemented, it could be of great advantage to the many thousands of people who appreciate the inland waterways. It will allow us, the users to have a positive say in the way the waterways are run, via a Board of Trustees.

Will it become a reality? I have met with the politicians and all three major parties appear to be signed up. In the run up to an election many things are said and promises made. After the big day, reality then strikes home with those that have won. I can well imagine that matters of inland waterways will not be at the top of the political agenda – it never is, but there is every reason why we must try, and try hard, to ratchet it upwards.

The party manifestos are all in draft and will be published as soon the election date is confirmed. My advice to all members is to make sure you read what they say about waterways and then quiz them when they come knocking on your door. If enough people do this, they might just get the message that it is important to a lot of people who may just vote for them.

What are the main political issues? Funding remains the matter of key importance and a change to charity status does not rectify that overnight. However, charity status does create a more liberal tax regime and with a greater emphasis on volunteering, improvements can be expected.

What is essential is that the Government of the day continues to provide their grant, as this is effectively the contribution from the non-boaters who can only pay for the waterways via their tax contributions.

Of equal importance is that the new charity must have a substantial endowment. This has to be the current BW property portfolio. All national user group chairmen have fought hard on this one. You may recall that I got a personal assurance from Gerry Grimstone on the matter a year ago, but a new government with other financial problems may be persuaded by a recalcitrant Treasury to take it away. This would be extremely short sighted.

I am asking you the membership to get out there and lobby:

- Read their manifestos,
- Talk to them on the door step and in the meeting place,
- Send them letters and emails.

Get the assurance that they will, when they get to Westminster:

- Support the charity proposal,
- Not cut the Grant in Aid,
- Give the new charity the property portfolio as an endowment.

You know it makes sense!

David Pearce.
National Chairman.

Presidential Address for AGM 2010

Following on from last year's AGM, you may remember the hastily contrived changes to our Constitution were withdrawn further to input received. I am pleased to say that this has served well to initiate a sub-Committee, led by our Vice Chairman Paul LeBlique, to take a thorough look at the whole document, with a view to an all encompassing update, bringing in additional items relating to liabilities and possibly health and safety.

David Pearce, our Chairman, represents us at many meetings and committees. David took the chair some seven years ago, and over those years the

frequency and intensity of his external responsibilities to the National Committee has increased immensely. He may well have reached saturation point.

It would be very unfair for us to expect this situation to continue without some action to alleviate this heavy workload, hence Paul, our Vice Chairman, will be sharing more of the work, so he is well placed to succeed David in the near future.

The National Committee cannot operate without support from yourselves. I would therefore like to formally recognise all the hard work put in by the extensive network of

Regional Officers and Club representatives, who together provide the necessary backbone for the Association to be able to function effectively.

Thank you all for your efforts and please continue to encourage others to do likewise.

"Keith Noble retired from the NEC this year, having held various positions both nationally and regionally for the last 28 years or more. His, contribution, clear thinking and wealth of knowledge will be greatly missed. "

John Baggs
National President.

NE Region Report

Roland Dotchin, Chairman.

Sadness in the NW Region with the death of another of our elder statesmen,

Terry Tomlinson. Terry served our waterways for many years, leaving as part of his legacy the Ribble Link, due to his work on the Ribble Link Trust.

Sale Cruising Club celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Liverpool Link was officially opened. The Liverpool Link was enjoyed and recommended by the many boaters who visited. There have been some problems with BW organisation of boats travelling to Liverpool.

There was a limit of 6 boats per day each way with an overnight stop over at the end of the L&L before boats could descend into Liverpool docks. This meant that club cruises would be limited to 6 boats or else have to stage their visit to

Liverpool. We lobbied BW and they increased the number to 8, so now 8 one way one day then 8 the other way next day. BW promised to look favourably at accommodating club cruises but the results have been mixed.

There will be no stopover at Eldonian junction. Boats clubs in the area can accommodate stopovers with prior notice, book early.

Self steering through Stannedge tunnel seemed to be successful. It was however curtailed by a stoppage caused by breach on Huddersfield Narrow, (Yorkshire side of course.)

Marple wharf development is still under consultation The Service Station is on BW property which BW wants to sell for development. There was no provision for replacement services. BW has said that there now will be replacement services, but not pump out.

Midlands Region Report

Graham Myatt, Chairman.

Midlands Region gained one club during the year: Friendship Cruising Club. The club has no clubhouse and is based around the River Trent and River Soar junctions.

The Region also saw the retirement of rep from two clubs, Tony Collins of Coventry Canal Society and George and Margaret Darmody from Mid Warwickshire Yacht Club. George and Margaret have been reps for many years.

The Region Secretary Erica Martin has been kept busy persuading clubs to receive information on line where possible.

The Region also gained a new Treasurer, Heather Booth. Heather is a retired accountant and has offered to assist clubs if they are in need of some financial advice.

Are the National Executive Council (NEC) value for money?

I posed the question at the AGM because I think it is important that member organisations know where their money goes and should be in a position to judge if they think it is being spent effectively. I highlighted the cost of travel as being our largest single expenditure item. Travel is essentially to attend meetings of the National Executive Committee or to represent AWCC at external meetings such as BWAFF (British Waterways Advisory Forum), BSS (Boat Safety Scheme), negotiations with BW, EA, Government, etc.

An NEC meeting costs about £600. As well as receiving reports from officers - Regional Chairmen, National Chairman, technical etc., the NEC debates what should be the view of AWCC on key issues. The debate is significantly informed by regional views collected by the Regional Chairmen and the personal views of others around the table - Vice Presidents etc. 30 people are entitled to attend,

including three from each Region. Luckily, for the sake of orderly and effective discussion, there are rarely more than 15 or 17, but even that you may think is a bit over the top.

The constitution is being reviewed at the moment; now might be a good time for you to ask the question above and give us some answers.

Insurance for events

Many clubs are corporate members of IWA and use their insurance policy. Some clubs seem to use IWA and have another policy - it might be worth finding out if this is wise. AWCC nationally is also a corporate member of IWA and uses that insurance - currently about £400pa. The national membership, and therefore insurance, covers national and regional activities; importantly it gives us public liability cover at meetings, social gatherings etc and covers activities such as

rallies and fireworks events, but at **Regional or National** level only. This year it is covering three Regional events, a rally at Willowtree on the Grand Union, one on the Basingstoke and a fireworks display at St. Pancras which is a Regional event. Other Regional events could be covered simply by notifying me before they happen - preferably in November before the year starts so I can include them in the initial paperwork. Clubs that invite other clubs or complete non members to their events would be well advised to check with their insurers (if IWA ring or email Neil Edwards who is a mine of information) to make sure they are covered for non-club-specific events. If in doubt, or if other clubs are involved, why not make it a Regional event...Regional rallies held at a host club might be covered by the host club insurance - has this been checked?

Geoff Ashton.
National Treasurer.

Editorial

Welcome ladies and gentlemen to your newly styled and renamed AWCC magazine. My name is Margaret Smith, ex Midland Region Secretary and current member of the Communications Team. Behind the scenes I have been listening, with the other members of the Communications Team, to members' comments regarding the old style newsletter. We have therefore decided to try a different approach.

The "Alert" name will not disappear, it is being re assigned to use with email. The "Alert" name will be used when we need you to read or act on something with greater urgency than a printed quarterly newsletter will permit.

One of the Midland Region members, Pam McLellan, gave us the new name, so now we have a starting block. In future newsletter editions, the Communications Team would like to focus on giving the reader more information about the way in which AWCC operates. With that in mind I ask you to help by contacting Brian Rich, Terence Balchin or myself, with questions you would like answered, topics you would like covered in articles or comments on the way the newsletter is heading.

Margaret Smith.

Editor.

Constitution Sub Group

AWCC has been in existence for over forty years and we are all aware that our waterways and world in general have changed significantly over that time. The pressures on the boater and clubs are greater than ever with legal, financial and safety constraints taking an increasingly important role.

A proposal to consider an amended constitution aimed at allowing a new Affiliate class of AWCC Membership was discussed and approved from the floor at the AGM two years ago.

On reflection, the constitution needed revision beyond that originally proposed.

It was against this background that the NEC decided to form a new sub-group to examine the wider detail of the constitution. The intention is to ensure that the original aims, ideals and standards of the association are retained whilst ensuring the society and its member clubs are properly cared for in the future.

It is essential that the constitution should, in addition to the normal aspects of aim and

management, have the ability to protect the association and officers in terms of legal and financial implication. The group will be seeking legal guidance on these topics.

The group aims to complete the task in time for an initial draft, scheduled for May, to include notes for guidance on all aspects of the revision and will invite feedback. Revisions to be presented to the National AGM in 2011 for ratification.

Paul LeBlique.

National Vice Chairman.

NE Region Report.

Ken Wild, Chairman.

On the cruising side of things we have been notified officially by BW of reduced air draught at Heck Bridge due to mining subsidence. The official height is now below 3.4metres i.e. much less than the 12 feet in old money, which it is supposed to be. Several cruisers with either flying bridges and or radar arches can no longer clear this bridge without lowering gear etc. However on the plus side we are reliably informed that BW have increased the size of the bye

wash at Pollington Lock which should stabilise levels on our pound, and prevent the frequent overtopping we have been experiencing over the past 2 to 3 years.

The Victoria Basin at Sheffield has been taken over by an individual intending to develop the moorings there. This has resulted in the loss of some overnight moorings for visitors. Visitors to the area are welcome at Tinsley Boat club (which is very close to the Meadowhall shopping centre) and Strawberry Island Boat Club. It is advised

that you contact either club to arrange overnight moorings and allow two days either way if you intend to visit Sheffield.

The River Ouse is to be closed to river traffic on 21st April and 2nd June whilst gun salutes are fired to celebrate the Queens's Birthday and Coronation Anniversary respectively.

At the Regions latest meeting (the AGM), both the Secretary Dave Dix and myself (Ken Wild) as Chair wanted to stand down. Unfortunately there were no offers.

London Region .

Trevor Gillam, Chairman.

At our regional AGM the committee were elected en bloc, with the exception of Maurice Eldridge, our secretary; who had served for eight years. We presented him with some nice glassware and some single malt to christen them.

I attended a meeting of the National Inland Navigation Forum in September 09. These

meetings are held twice a year. N.I.N.F. is an important lobbying group comprising of AWCC, HNBOC (Historical Narrow Boat Owners Club), IWA, NABO, RBOA (Residential Boat Owners Association), RYA, and many other interested parties all of which work together to speak with one voice in support of our waterways.

The Basingstoke Canal will be closed west of the Deepcut Flight of 14 locks. Canal Director Ian

Brown said despite large cash injection by Surrey and Hampshire County Councils of nearly a million pounds, a further 2 million has been promised for 2011 –2014 to bring the canals 29 locks, bridges and earthworks up to a safe standard.

The Environment Agency has decided not to sell their lockside cottages on the River Thames. It is our opinion that this is a good decision, as each lock will be manned, which is the best solution for user safety.

Communication Officers Report.

2009-2010

I've spent much of the past year putting the background systems together try and ensure we hold up-to-date information about AWCC Clubs and their officers.

We now have a single secure online database which means that National and Regional officers can manage and update Club information as soon as they are aware of changes. Data is now drawn directly from the database to publish the AWCC Club Handbook. The 2010 handbook is probably the most accurate we have produced in recent years.

The database also provides a means for Clubs to say who should receive their copy of the AWCC newsletter AWARE. We are aware that this magazine has not been reaching the "right" person at the Club. Clubs can now nominate who should receive it on behalf of the Club.

In addition, the latest version of the newsletter will now be available for download directly from the AWCC website in electronic format, shortly after the paper version has been sent out.

Club secretaries will have received details of how to log into the "members only" area of the website, where they can find a new "online" version of the handbook. The "members only" area is not accessible to the public, and logins are only available through the Communication Officer – it is NOT possible to register online to obtain a login.

The online version differs from the "classic" handbook in that it has one club per age instead of two. Both copies are designed for filing in an A5 ring binder.

In the "members only" area, there are individual handbook pages for each Club, plus ancillary pages for regional and national officer's contact details and also indexes of Clubs by Region and by Waterway. There is also available, an up-to-date version of the Clubfinder Map.

All of these pages are designed as Adobe Acrobat PDF documents that can be downloaded to a computer for printing. The information used to create these pages is drawn directly and automatically from the database with almost no intervention on our part. The database is "aware" when changes are made – if these changes require an update to the online handbook page – will then upload changes directly to the website. Hence the website provides access to the most recent handbook information.

It is important to emphasise that all software development work has been carried out by National and Regional Officers on a voluntary basis. The AWCC has incurred no costs other than the hosting charges for the new website. We intend that any future development work should be continued on the same basis.

Next Year: 2010 - 2011

In the coming year, I hope to

1. Extend the development of the national database so that Club Officers can update information directly. The database – and the related online handbook pages – will then be accurate and up to the minute.
2. Investigate how Club Members can be allowed to access these pages directly. I will need to ensure that access to these handbook pages is only offered to bona fide AWCC Club Members.
3. We will be making more of the AWCC website, as a way of informing other AWCC members of about individual Clubs, their upcoming social events, what they have been doing etc. The aim is to prompt AWCC Clubs and their events to a wider audience.

Brian Rich.

National Communication Officer.

Inter Club Magazine Competition

The Inter Club Magazine competition winner right.

1st South Pennine Boat Club for Handspike

2nd Wilderness Boat Club for Wilderness News

3rd Boaters Christian Fellowship for The Word.

The competition is run on an annual basis, with the winning entry named at the AGM each year.

Your Club can enter their Magazine or Newsletter simply by send a regular copy of your publication to this newsletter editor "AWARE" at the contact address listed on the back page.



Heather Bearpark (Handspike, Editor) receiving the Inter Club award from David Pearce, AWCC National Chairman, at the 2010 AGM.

SE Region Report.

Ralph Sullivan,
Vice Chairman.

Paul Le Blique stood down as our Region Chairman this year to concentrate on his work as Vice Chairman of the AWCC National Executive Committee. John Brown has now been elected as the SE Chairman. John a member of Northampton Boat Club and is Captain of the Association of Nene River Clubs (ANRC), so will be providing river based reports. Ralph Sullivan has been elected as SE Vice-Chairman. Ralph will give more of a canal based report and will represent the region at AWCC NEC meetings.

ANRC Rally, Northampton Boat Gathering, Crick Boat Show, AWCC have a stand at all these events. Thank you to SE Region members that have manned the stands.

A new Marina has been given the go ahead at Northampton Town Lock, River Nene. It is on the backwater part towards the weir.

Northampton Arm bottom four locks (Locks 14 – 17) have been fitted with antivandal locks. BW Key is required to operate the locking system.

East Northamptonshire Tourism Strategy 2010 – 2015. It has

been put forward for discussion to improve the River Nene facilities with the expected increase in river movements when the Bedford – Milton Keynes Link opens. Plans for four new proposed Marina sites on the River Nene are seeking planning permission. One is for Lilford Lodge Farm, Barnwell. This will take five years to develop by extracting Gravel then building the marina, if permission is given.

Sadly we had the Rep. Alan Ross, resign as the Thrupp Canal Cruising Club's rep. Hopefully a new one will be take his place before too long.

Quartermasters Report.

Terence Balchin.

After the success of the Calendar project in 2009, the 2011 Calendar is under preparation for the. Pictures are always required and these should be sent to Geoff Ashton geoff-i.ashton@ntlworld.com He will say how he wants them sent and in which format.

We now have a new supplier of Flags and Burgees. They can provide very competitive prices for small quantities, they are www.flagpoleexpress.co.uk

We can now provide the large AWCC Club Flag for only £20 each and Burgees for around £12 each.

Handbooks for 2010 are now available at only £2.00 in A5

loose leaf ring binder version, by popular demand (Ring binder not supplied), just like it used to be..

Don't forget to renew your Membership Card for this year; cards are renewable on an annual basis.

All these items are available from your Region Quartermaster or in case of difficulty direct from National Quartermaster.

Boat Safety Scheme Certificate Price Increase!

Boat Safety Scheme Certificate Price Increase!

In 2007 The Boat Safety Scheme was asked by its owners British Waterways and the Environment Agency to become self-funding. Having held the price of its Certificate for three years, the Boat Safety Scheme is to increase the price that BSS Examiners pay by £5 from April, but the new price will be frozen for four years until April 2014.

From April, the Certificates will cost BSS examiners £29 plus VAT each. Certificate sales represent almost 90% of the BSS income all of which is used to cover the costs the work underpinning the BSS examination service, risk research and review and the promotion of boat safety advice. In 2010 2011 it is hoped to achieve an income of £426, 000 from certificates and Examiners Registration Fees

[Fom BSS Website, Graham Watts the BSS Manager explained: 'We managed to freeze the price of BSS Certificates for the last three years, but having looked at all the options, the price change cannot be avoided.

He said, 'We recognise that this is an additional cost to boaters who are already facing other financial pressures, so we hope that freezing the price for four years will be of help. BSS income being squeezed so we intend to 'invest to save' in order to help stem prices beyond 2014.']

Review of Examination Checking Procedures (ECP)

A review of Examination Checking Procedures is underway, the current version being 5-years old. The aim is to ensure consistency of application by examiners and only essential changes will be made. The full list of proposals will be categorized as "essential" and "desirable." Rather than changes to ECP, if not essential, then examiner training, technical updates and additions to the technical manual will be considered to determine the best method of addressing the proposals. It is anticipated that the process will be completed in Apr 10.

(The current "BSS Essential Guide" for privately owned or privately managed craft is available by post from Boat Safety Scheme, 64 Clarendon Road, Watford, Herts, WD17 1DA.

Tel: 01923 201278
Fax: 01923 201420
www.boatsafetyscheme.com

It will take you step-by-step through the Boat Safety Scheme, identifying hazards, offering risk reduction tips and explaining the minimum legal requirements and beyond to best practice.

There's more information on routine DIY safety checks, booking and preparing for a BSS examination, and the national and international standards for marine installations.

This package includes the new sturdy polypropylene folder with compressor bar and clear plastic wallet for receipts/records).

Carbon Monoxide Alarms – Safety Alert

In Jan this year BSS published a safety alert containing details of two CO alarms that may not detect (and alarm) at certain concentrations of CO.

The models are: Lloytron B822 and PowerPlus BWK034C/Ref 6167.

The advice is to return the alarm to the place of purchase for a refund or further information.

Smoke Alarms

In recent years four people have died in boat fires at night, or when asleep, a functioning smoke alarm may well have helped them escape. The latest Fire Kills campaign says that in just two or three breaths of toxic smoke a person could become unconscious. Details of the preferred type and standard of alarm may be found on the BSS website.

Bubble Tester Procedure.

Many examiners report bubbles appearing after the 10 second test period, in some instances up to a minute later, (length of gas supply pipe could influence this) indicating a leak in the system.

Alde agrees that a longer test period may be warranted on boat installations. If you have a bubble tester and use it, then consider keeping the button depressed for up to a minute.

**Andrew Phasey,
Technical Officer.**

What's On 2010

April 30th-May 3rd	Skipton Waterways Festival
April 30th-May 3rd.	Northampton Boat Gathering. (Organised by IWA Northampton Branch).
May 1st- 2nd	Loughborough Water Festival
May 1st-3rd	IWA Cavalcade Little Venice
May 22nd-23rd	Moirra trail-boat rally call 01530 273956
May 28th-31st	Soar Boating Club Rally. Contact pat@gassor.com for rally form or club web page. Cost £20
May 28th-31st	Association of Nene River Clubs Annual Rally at Middle Level Watermen's Club, March.
May 29th-31st	Crick Boat Show
June 5th-6th	Leicester Riverside Festival Call 0116 2385082
June 11th-13th	Stafford Boat Club Gathering of Boats. Contact Secretary for rally form. Cost £14
July 3rd-4th	Guildford Boat Gathering – River Wye
August 7th-8th	Nottingham Riverside Festival
August 6th-8th	Tamworth Cruising Club Boaters Weekend. Contact Secretary for rally form. Cost £10
August 28th-30th	IWA National Festival and Boat Show Beale Park.
September 11th-12th	Black Country Boating Festival.
October 16th-17th	Stourbridge Festival

2010 Handbook Corrections.



Middle Nene Cruising Club were inadvertently omitted from the Handbook, apologies to them, they are current members.
Secretary Tel. 07790 907902.

Ask your Region Secretary to print details from the national database.

Geoff Ashton, National Treasurer, e mail should be geoff-I.ashton@ntlworld.com

Preston Brook Boat Owners Association, Secretary, Robert Brown,
sales@prestonbrookmarina.co.uk
01928 719081.

Coventry Canal Society, Secretary Tony Mann, should read, anthonymann@aol.com

Stort Boat Club, Secretary, Mrs Janine Strudwick, 40, Fifth Avenue, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 4HD. Tel: 01245 358342 email: janine0152@btinternet.com

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e mail: editor@awcc.org.uk or inkers@btopenworld.com

Next issue July 2010

What is AWCC

AWCC represents the particular interests of inland waterways club boaters as one of the larger user groups in the UK. We foster the principles of self help in the creation of club moorings and other facilities, including all the other social aspects of boating, and extend a warm welcoming hand to all like minded boaters. We join with other associations to campaign for a better future for the inland waterways.

Other contacts

Chairman	David Pearce	chairman@awcc.org.uk
Communication	Brian Rich	communications@awcc.org.uk
Webmaster	Brian Rich	communications@awcc.org.uk

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