



Greetings everyone...and welcome to the inaugural issue of the revived ALERT. Contributions to this are not only welcome, they are compulsory as 'no contributions = no Alert'. Simple as that. I do hope you will enjoy reading it, but feedback is very welcome.

### Hello, welcome to the first issue of ALERT

I'm Hazel, a seasoned inland waterways enthusiast with over 20 years of experience navigating our beautiful water systems. Having made Strawberry Island my home base in the North East of the waterways system, I have explored and cruised a magnificent portion of the inland waterways, becoming well-versed in their intricacies and hidden gems.

It is my love for these waterways that led to my involvement with the Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs [AWCC], where I currently hold the esteemed position of National Chair. Subsequently becoming involved in the Fund Britain's Waterways Campaign, advocating for proper funding and resources to ensure the preservation and enhancement of our cherished waterways. Currently we are on our boat Rum'a'Gin heading for the IWA Cavalcade and the Campaign Cruise to the Palace of Westminster.

If AWCC Members haven't already done so, please sign the Fund Britain's Waterways petition and share with friends to enable them to sign. Please don't donate as any donations go to the page that is hosting the petition and not to our cause.

Follow the flotilla and our escapades on our Facebook page Fund Britain's Waterways – cruises 2025.

### A flotilla message from Hazel

Thank you to our AWCC Clubs who have hosted us on our cruise to the capital. We had an excellent weekend at Soar Boat Club with the clubhouse being opened as we arrived on the Friday in glorious sunshine. We spent Friday and Saturday making new friends and swapping boating tales, on Sunday lunchtime we were treated to an excellent carvery lunch and desserts. Our next host club was Taverners who must be one of our smallest clubs with around 10 boats and 20 members providing us with Chilli and Jackets and some absolutely gorgeous desserts, scrumptious cakes that seemed never-ending.



Members of FBW Flotilla enjoy tea and cakes with members at Taverners Boat Club



CRT Volunteers at Kilby Bridge also provided tea and cake as we cruised past

### Our national Secretary, Anne Clarke



Anne Clarke is really a 'buy-one, get-one-free', as husband Brian is our IT Officer. They have been boaters for about fifteen years. Their first cruise was on the Leeds and Liverpool canal and having cruised most of the canal system, the L&L remains their favourite. The views at the top of Bank Newton are just stunning. Their boat is black and is called Andante. They both thoroughly enjoy retirement having spent their working years in contrasting fields, Anne a primary school teacher and Brian having his own IT company. Anne's first year as

secretary of the AWCC has been very enjoyable, mainly because the other members of the national executive committee are a 'friendly and supportive bunch' [Anne's words!] and she is sure Brian will enjoy his new role as IT Officer.

### The Bluebell Trophy

This trophy is in recognition of long and devoted service to AWCC, and this year's winner is Jon Jones, recently stood down as Chairman of Midlands Region, after nine years of loyal service. It is not goodbye, however, as Jon will continue as Rep for Coombeswood Canal Trust. Many thanks, Jon, for your support, friendship and much valued contribution to AWCC Midlands.



### Editor – Erica Martin

Erica and Brian were novice boaters in 1980, hiring, borrowing, sharing and finally owning in 2001. After thirty years as professional photographers, they retired, joined SOTBC. Erica was editor of their magazine and AWCC Rep, then Midlands Secretary for ten years. They cruised widely until when Brian was suffering from chronic heart and kidney failure and with failing sight, she stood down. Only to be recalled after Brian passed away, she is now doing a job she enjoys.

## Magazine Competition



After being runner-up twice, it was third time lucky for Mike Gutersohn, Editor of Paddle Post, SOTBC's magazine. Well done, Mike. The number of entries is fairly low, so if your club produces a magazine or newsletter, why not enter next year. Details will be issued probably in the new year, but you will need three issues to submit, so start working on it now. [SOTBC Commodore, Jayne presenting the trophy]

## Flotilla – emails from Soar Boating Club and Hazel

‘We welcomed 8 boats at the weekend and enjoyed perfect weather with good company. The weekend culminated with one of members Vicky and Dave Barlow's fabulous carvery lunches. We wish the team an enjoyable and productive trip’. John, Soar Rep  
‘Thanks Emma, we all had a brilliant weekend.’ Hazel, National Chaiman

## Some early flotilla photos



## Transatlantic Supporter



This is Dr Jeneene Brengelman from Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, a seasoned boater, coming here for twenty years until covid. We had a funding crisis years ago, when she contacted our then PM, asking for support of our waterways, a heritage older than her country. Aware of our latest crisis, she emailed Sir Keir Starmer, with the same message. She made a flying visit to the UK in April, enjoyed a short cruise on the beautiful Caldon Canal, and called in at Stoke on Trent Boat Club.

Tell Alert of any similar fund-raising heroes in your area?



FBW issue regular press releases and other information. [./.]

Do you subscribe? They issued a statement for the English and mayoral elections on 1 May, pointing out that 80% of local authorities have a navigable or restorable waterway in their area. I sent that statement to my MP. Have you contacted your MP, and if so, with what result? I'm afraid my MP doesn't seem to respond very promptly. Does yours?

## HVO - is it safe in my boat?

You will have seen and/or heard much about HVO, but probably what boaters most want to know, is it safe in MY boat. The presentation at the AGM was clear on this, but I was most convinced by Rupert Smedley, who owns an historic boat, Skylark, and is one of the experts at Waterways World. He is also a member of my boat club, whose expertise is much valued. Make up your own mind!

## What's next?

This issue will be presented to the NEC meeting on 26 April.

It is up to the NEC to decide if we continue with Alert. If I am given the go-ahead for a further issue, it will be out at the end of June. So, if you wish Alert it to continue, please email contributions to [alert@awcc.org.uk](mailto:alert@awcc.org.uk). I hope you enjoy reading this issue as much I have enjoyed compiling it. Please forward it to clubs in your Region and ask them to forward to their members. The end readers will be members of all clubs and Regions. Thank you for reading. I wish all readers an enjoyable and safe cruising season. And good luck with the Flotilla wherever you are!

*Erica*

# Competition!

Help us rename Alert

and

Win a **£100** gift voucher for boating equipment.

AWCC members are invited to submit suggestions for a new name for our newsletter.

Submissions should be sent to

Erica Martin [alert@awcc.org.uk](mailto:alert@awcc.org.uk)

by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025

