

ALERT

NEWSLETTER

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COMING SOON!

**THE EVENT
OF THE
YEAR!**

**IT'S THE AWCC 50th
ANNIVERSARY RALLY**

11 - 12 -13th of July

THE CELEBRATION YOU HAVE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR!

**BEING HELD AT BLACK BUOY CRUISING CLUB AT KNOWLE ON THE
GRAND UNION.**

**IT IS STILL NOT TOO LATE TO ENTER THIS MAJOR EVENT
CONTACT ANN BANKS OR GO TO THE AWCC WEB SITE FOR ENTRY
DETAILS**

Will all those members still holding raffle tickets for this event please return the stubs along with the cash and unsold tickets to Brian Rich as soon as possible. Thank you.

NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

Dear Fellow Members of AWCC,

The National AGM held two weeks ago confirmed another year of tenure for all current officers and specialist members of the NEC. It seems appropriate to reflect on the past and to consider the future.

Our association was born fifty year ago out of a need for assistance and cooperation between fellow club boaters. That need has lead to the organisation of around one hundred clubs with a total of six thousand members we enjoy today. From the early days membership of AWCC has provided a route towards secure and enjoyable cruising allowing it's members a peace of mind to enjoy our pastime to the full. Our clubs have always been a source of security and goodwill for the social visit and perhaps more importantly, refuge in times of emergency or crisis where comfort and help are always freely given. From the outset AWCC realised that it should campaign for the rights of boaters and, in particular, members of it's clubs. Much was achieved allowing the advantages that perhaps we are inclined to take for granted today.

It is my belief that those ideals, aims and advantages of AWCC are as relevant today as in the pioneering days of the sixties. Our waterways are set to experience a change that will, in my opinion, compare with nationalisation. We will be expected to share the waterspace and towpaths as never before as CRT, quite rightly, moves towards fulfilling it's charitable aims and obligations. CRT will enjoy business opportunities and partnerships that were not open to BW resulting in different use and development of waterside property and facilities. The delay in a decision on the future of EA navigations is very unhelpful for all concerned as the Agency's budgets are cut year on year with flood control foremost in it's priorities. We must ensure that whatever the outcome, navigation is maintained and improved.

We must continue to ensure that member clubs are protected in their location, leasing agreements where applicable, and financial arrangements with Navigation Authorities. I will do my best to ensure that AWCC Clubs continue to be regarded as a special.

It has always been a basic premise that AWCC exists for the common good of it's member clubs with an aim to promote goodwill through a mutual understanding. Clubs vary widely in size, real estate and income in a world where smaller organisations often find survival very challenging. It is with that thought that our treasurer proposed a system of tiered subscriptions in order to assist the smaller clubs that are so important to our association. This change has been accepted member clubs in a way that typifies the AWCC approach to a reasoned and thoughtful solution to a problem.

I would like to acknowledge the help and advice given to me by so many members of AWCC and particular to the late Tony Mason for his early encouragement and to David Pearce for his advice always so freely given. I appreciate the welcome from AWCC clubs and their members during my time as your chairman; it is a privilege to be in post as we move into our golden anniversary year; thank you all. For the future I hope AWCC will continue to provide a safe and secure umbrella

NATIONAL CHAIRMAN CONT

organisation for clubs and their members that ensures the future of family boating and help through mutual understanding and concern.

Last, but by no means least, on behalf of AWCC I would like to thank the Commodore and members of Stafford Boat Club for their hospitality in hosting our National AGM for many years.

Paul Le Blique
14 June 2014

NATIONAL PRESIDENT

National President's Opening Address

Dear Friends and colleagues, it is with much regret that I am unable to attend the AGM today due to another long-standing commitment abroad. It would have been my 25th as an NEC member and I believe it to be the first one missed in all that time.

As we approach the celebrations for our Golden Jubilee, it is worth reflecting on what AWCC has achieved in those 50 years. We started as a self-help organisation and then naturally progressed to a social body as well. The legend has it that the idea was born when the Commodore of St Pancras broke down outside the Dunstable club. Uxbridge and Lee and Stort joined the embryo AWCC, but from that small beginning, we developed in our aims and ambitions into a truly national body. It was back in the 1970s when Sir Frank Price spotted that we were a capable collection of people, held together by the social glue of belonging to boats clubs, and asked us to be his chief negotiating body for boaters.

Much has changed since then, but we still have a unique quality in that we really are the only boating organisation that looks after clubs. We understand clubs, what they have done for the waterways in the past and what they can contribute in this exciting new era. Sir Frank also recognised that we were able to put forward capable people, with the insight and vision, who could look to the future and not always be hankering after the past. We had the ability to be both quietly confident and pragmatic, and to give advice that he and his colleague could digest and run with. In that, little has changed today.

And so we have continued. I found it a great pleasure to work with Tony Mason and to take over from him as National Chairman and to continue in his fashion. Paul Le Blique has continued most ably along the same path since I retired. The ability to have a one to one contact with Chairman or Chief Executive of CRT continues to pay dividends and I would urge you all to support Paul in these efforts.

It is worth adding that AWCC cannot have a real influence on every day operational matters unless we can attract the confidence of those in charge of CRT. This is what we have done over many years and we must not let it slip in these days of great change in the running of the waterways. It may not be immediately obvious to

NATIONAL PRESIDENT CON'T

members that this is what we do, but over the years, it has given our members much benefit. It is worth repeating – we are the only organisation that directly looks after the club boater.

As President, my vision for AWCC for the next 50 years is that we will remain the leading national organisation for all club boaters, and all others who support our aims, and that our influence should be exercised at the highest level so that we may call upon support from the CRT executive when it is most needed.

My thanks today specifically go to two very long-term NEC members – to David Butcher, President of South and West, for presenting my words, and to Trevor Gillam, President of London Region, not only for getting me into all this 25 years ago, but also for running the elections later on. Do have a good meeting and I look forward to seeing you all at our anniversary rally in July.

David Pearce
National President
2014

10 March

AGM SPEAKER JOHN DODWELL



The AGM attendees were given a very comprehensive talk by Canal and River Trustee John Dodwell. John mentioned the 50 years since AWCC was formed - the same year the southern Stratford-on-Avon Canal was restored and how this was a key turning point in post 1945 waterways history. He spoke of the strong links between AWCC and C&RT. Other topic included the People's Postcode Lottery having named the Trust as their Charity of the Year. Richard Parry's well attended meetings with boaters. The Trust's actions on cutting back trees and on dredging, having listened to what users say and details of the planned Major Works £26m programme next year with £30m planned in each of the two following years, a reminder of the Trust's sources of income, expected to be £165m in the current year. The full transcript of Johns talk can be accessed on the AWCC Web Site.

REGIONAL REPORTS

London Region

Report to the A.G.M. at Stafford Boat Club on 15th March 2014

At the February regional A.G.M. the existing committee were elected en bloc
Most clubs reported that their moorings were full and they were thriving.

Consultations

Representatives from our clubs have attended meetings of Association of Thames Yacht Clubs, London Waterways Commission, National Inland Navigation Forum, Canal & River Trust during the year.

Canal & River Trust

There have been many meetings to try to find a amicable solution to the London Mooring problems. Canal & River Trust have appointed Sorwah Ahmed to the new Post of 'Boater Liaison Manager'. He is very enthusiastic and wants to resolve the problem. SORWAH recently published new proposals to trial moorings along the Paddington arm adjacent to St. Mary's Hospital, also some in Little Venice. I hope Some of the schemes are successful, however there are very few vacant moorings in the region.

Moorings and Track

It was very disappointing to hear that the dredging of the Slough Arm has been cancelled again this makes it very difficult to get boats to the Slough Festival.

The money set aside for the dredging was used for emergency bridge and embankment Repairs.

Carpenters Road Lock on the Olympic Park Waterways did not get the lottery Funding to make it navigable so it will remain as a radial gated flood control lock

London Borough of Ealing have carried a comprehensive survey of the canal towpaths And access points within the borough the works in the schedule will cost in the region of £1.5 million.

Social Events

Our spring visit to Bristol and Bath was a very successful weekend with 24 people present

The annual gathering of boats was again held at Willowtree Park on the first weekend of June.

Our autumn social was held at my club West London Motor Cruising Club a very enjoyable evening.

Lastly, My thanks to Terry Ariss my vice chairman who now serves on the Canal & River Trust London Region Panel.

My thanks also go my committee and the regional representatives for their hard work and loyal support.

TERRY GILLAM

REGIONAL REPORTS

NORTH EAST

Report to National A.G.M. March 2014.

During the past year we have arranged our Regional meetings to follow NEC meetings by a few days, as reported to the 2013 AGM, so as to be able to report locally on discussions held at National level.

We have held 4 meetings, at Hull Bridge Boat Club, West Stockwith Yacht Club, Tinsley Boat Club, and our AGM last month, at Strawberry Island Boat Club.

Surprisingly, all officers were re-elected unopposed and unanimously at the AGM.

The Hull Bridge meeting in June was arranged to try and encourage absentee clubs from the remoter North and East of the Region, to take a more active part in AWCC - in the event, only 4 clubs were represented, a disappointing result.

The other 3 meetings have been better attended, averaging 9 clubs represented out of 17 total in the Region.

It is also immensely disappointing that despite numerous attempts by our Regional Secretary to whip up universal enthusiasm for the work of AWCC, there remains a hardcore of 6 or 7 clubs which never turn up at our meetings, or even send in a club report.

On renewal of membership this year, we have been unable to elicit any response whatsoever from Rotherham & Sheffield Canal Association, so they are regarded as having left the Association.

In addition, Aire & Calder Cruising Club is now down to a handful of members, and will take a decision at its AGM later this month, whether to disband or not.

Jean & I have attended User Group / Customer Forum meetings at the 3 Waterways Offices which cover North-East AWCC Region - North West in Wigan, North East in Leeds, and Manchester & Pennine in Dukinfield.

Perhaps as a result of having asked many questions at the Leeds User Forums, I have also been invited as AWCC Regional Chairman to attend a series of very compact discussions with the North East Waterway Manager Jon Horsfall, along with only 4 others, who represent the Partnership, Calder Navigation Society, NABO, and a canal trader. 2 meetings have occurred so far, the first one shortly before Christmas when we shared a CRT mince pie and covered a wide spectrum of Boater topics.

No decisions have yet emerged, but we live in hope. I suspect that CRT's stated aim of getting to know customers better may be the rationale for this series of meetings.

GARTH ROBINSON

REGIONAL REPORTS

SOUTH EAST

Report for AWCC AGM, March 2014.

As the region is made up of a mixture of both river and canal clubs there was some disappointment when the EA did not make the transfer to C&RT. The EA has made it clear at its Regional Navigation Meetings that there is no funding for navigation improvements as priority must be given to flood control and maintenance of locks. This has an impact on river clubs who have to supply most of the facilities to visiting boaters. We now have links with the River Nene Regional Park Directive who are keen to develop the river and its local environment with support from local authorities, businesses and the clubs. The organisation is keen to support the initiative of adding to boater facilities.

The region has a new Treasurer who is working efficiently to organise region finances. We are happy to donate £150 to the rally Raffle. Unfortunately it seems that most clubs had not received their raffle tickets. Most clubs have paid their dues with just one club with its subs outstanding.

Aylesbury Canal Society have now moved to their new site and Middle Level Watermens Club now has a new home and last August celebrated their 50th birthday with a Rally Weekend.

Several new partnerships have been set up in our region on C&RT waters with Blisworth Council, Stoke Bruerne Council and Northampton IWA. Notable improvements have been made in the areas in which they have taken responsibility. It has been interesting to note that social issues amongst live-aboard boaters is becoming a concern and the Salvation Army is one of the organisations who are playing a role in giving support along with the Boaters Christian Fellowship.

At our region meetings we have attendance from about half of club reps so it would be good to have more. Some clubs who are not in attendance keep in regular touch. We have lost a valued rep from Lionhearts Cruising Club due to illness but expect to welcome a new rep who has shown he is keen to attend. Sadly Taverners Boat Club lost their longstanding Commodore, Jim Hunt and Dunstable and District lost their President, Richard Sherry Sherwood. He is to be remembered at the Celebration Rally.

RALPH & JENNY SULLIVAN

REGIONAL REPORTS

NORTH WEST

Report to National AGM March 2014

Over the last 12 months we have held 4 Regional meetings with an average of 13 clubs being represented.

The number of clubs in the Region has reduced by 2 to 19 clubs. Preston Brook Boat Owners Association was disbanded following problems at the marina and the Association of Cruising Enthusiasts has resigned due to reduced boat numbers and an aging membership.

Dutton Breech

The major breach at Dutton on the Trent & Mersey canal was completed ahead of schedule in May at a cost of £2.1M. There were several issues from stranded boaters about the support received from CRT to help them return to their home moorings.

River Weaver

The restoration of Sutton Road Bridge started in June, navigation is still possible with a reduced air draft and width restrictions. The centre of Northwich has a new marina as part of the Waitrose development, no additional visitor moorings have been provided.

Reciprocal Agreement CRT & Bridgewater Canal

The existing reciprocal agreement has now been extended as a result of action by the Region, this permits Bridgewater boats to travel to Liverpool using the Liverpool Link.

CRT User Groups

Representations are made at the 3 User Groups that impact the Region.

Major concerns have been raised about vegetation control on towpaths and the maintenance of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. There have been above average stoppages and failures with another boat sinking during the summer.

40th Anniversary of AWCC NW

In June the Region celebrated its 40th Anniversary with a social event which included honoured guests.

AWCC Finance and Perception

The November 2013 and January 2014 Regional meetings were dominated by issues raised at the National Executive meetings relating to club subscriptions and how club members view what AWCC has to offer. A questionnaire was developed and used by several clubs to canvass their members. There was unanimous objection to a subscription per boat system. There is much work to do to promote what AWCC should offer clubs at a cost that it can afford and what clubs are prepared to pay. There is a high probability that large Clubs, based on the Bridgewater Canal will leave the Association if the subscriptions exceed the perceived value of being members.

BRYAN POLLARD

REGIONAL REPORTS

SOUTH AND WEST

Report to National AGM March 2014

I can't believe this is now my third report to the National AGM; it seems such a short time ago when I was first approached with the idea of reinstating this Region. I must thank Brian and David for their support and of course Dick who died last year.

David, our Region's President made contact with the previous Treasurer of the Region in order to try and get some idea of income and expenditure in the past. It took a long time but earlier this year he turned up on my doorstep with a box and black bin liner! Not only did we have the Treasurer's information but some old stock – so if anybody wants a tie, hat, small sweatshirt you know where to come!

Unfortunately, our Treasurer had to stand down due to the ill health of her husband. At our last AGM David did ask for somebody to volunteer for the position of Development Officer but no takers so far, we will ask again this year.

I continue to despair with regard to Alert – such a good magazine but how can I persuade anybody to read it!

I would like to thank Paul Le Blique for attending my own Boat Club's AGM and talking about the work of AWCC, I hope it will have done the trick and next time the Alert is issued perhaps it will be read at Pewsey Wharf Boat Club.

CRT – we have few meetings with our Local Waterways Manager now; there used to be regular meetings. The one called last November was rather different in that it just pre-empted a meeting called by the Local Waterways Partnership – so I heard it twice! The LWP meeting was held in a hotel near Newbury and was billed as

“The Kennet & Avon Waterway Partnership would like to invite you to an Annual Public Meeting where you can hear all about our achievements over the past year and what our plans are for the future. This is an opportunity for you to express your thoughts about our work.”

Our Clubs

Burghfield Island Boat Club – we had one of our meetings there in their new Club House on a beautiful sunny day. Due to the recent rainfall the towpath opposite them is currently closed.

Canal Taverners Boat Club – did much to try and stop the siting of a permanent Trading Boat mooring on the Visitor Moorings, unfortunately they were unsuccessful.

Cotswold Cruising Club have more members now and hope to increase this year. They were awarded the Offley Slack Propeller at the last IWA Festival. There are plans this year to cross the Wash and cruise the River Nene, Middle Levels and River Great Ouse.

Pewsey Wharf Boat Club – reduced number of members this year and very little movement off of the Long Pound.

REGIONAL REPORTS

Somerset Navigators Boat Club – very doubtful that this club will remain AWCC. It was only due to their Rep that the subscriptions were paid before their own AGM took place.

Thrupp Canal Cruising Club – continues to work closely with CRT. They are currently discussing visitor signage; actively involved with groups on the proposed developments in Banbury and Jericho (Oxford).

Wilderness Boat Owners Club – just rejoined the Region and we look forward to meeting them in the near future.

CRT have just published its final decision on the Towpath Mooring plan for the K&A between Bath Top Lock and Lower Foxhangers. They still ignore the problem east of Foxhangers.

I would like to thank the S&W Region members for their willingness to travel long distances to attend our meetings which this year have been held in Bradford on Avon, Pewsey and Burghfield.

PAULINE KING

MIDLANDS

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO NEC AGM MARCH 2014

Midlands Region continues to be totally supportive of the AWCC, with good attendance at the four Regional meetings – a little up on the previous year. Two club secretaries have stood down after many years of loyal service, and for these, and all other posts, replacement volunteers have come forward. Our thanks to all who serve member clubs, and Midlands Region. Clubs have shown great commitment not only to the Region but to the NEC across the board, with subscriptions paid on time, enabling Midlands to be the first and - at the time of the February NEC meeting - only Region to have its subs paid to the National Treasurer. The Reps as always are the lynchpin between the Region and their clubs, a task undertaken with enthusiasm and dedication. I am most grateful for the support of you all. Nationally, it was felt that perhaps Reps were not sufficiently briefed before taking on the role, and Erica has been tasked with this project. Her work is ongoing.

The Region remains financially buoyant, enabling Regional Treasurer Graham Churton to give Midlands clubs a 'regional subscription holiday' for this year. This is thanks partly to Graham's careful husbandry of regional resources, and Midlands Secretary, Erica Martin's widespread use of electronic communications. Successful, despite a few glitches thanks to a new laptop and software.

The question of AWCC finances took considerable meeting time, with input from all Reps, including feedback from those unable to attend meetings. Graham offered clubs a range of options for increasing subscriptions to ensure the continued viability of the AWCC. A lively and constructive discussion took place and whilst there

REGIONAL REPORTS

was general support for the concept of increasing revenue, the suggestion of a tiered subscription rate was thought to be more acceptable to clubs than the idea of a per capita [boat] basis. A stepped sub has been introduced for this year, and it is felt that something similar will continue in the future. This has benefitted those very small clubs by not increasing their rates, those clubs with most boats paying the top rate, and those in the middle paying a small increase on last year.

The online database was not available for use until mid-November, due to changes in software by Communications Officer, Brian Rich. This created a considerable workload for Midlands Secretary, Erica, as nearly a year's updates for 27 clubs had to be completed in a few weeks, but it was achieved within Brian's deadline, thanks to the co-operation of the club Reps and Secretaries.

Following pressure from Midlands on the NEC, Des Barnard from Lichfield CC was co-opted to the NEC to serve on the IWA-lead committee to ensure that HS2's effects on the waterways was understood and steps taken to moderate the difficulties faced by boaters, and the damage to the environment by HS2. Des has been working extremely hard on this, and his contribution is much appreciated. We should remember that boaters from across the network could be affected by HS2 if/when they cruise into an area blighted by HS2.

Overall, a good year for Midlands with no major problems, lots of hard work by Reps and regional Officers. My thanks to all concerned.

Ian Wood

CLUB NEWS



Picture by Barbara Wells of S oT B C shows Erica having just managed to reach up to place the chain of office on Graham

Midlands Treasurer and Secretary swapped roles at the end of November, but there's no need to worry that Erica might be in charge of Midlands' finances! Graham Churton took over the role of Commodore of Stoke on Trent Boat Club from Erica at the club's recent AGM. Graham had served three years as Rear Commodore, and Erica – as is the usual practice – was elected a Vice President. Asked the following morning what it was like, sleeping with a Vice President, Erica's husband Brian commented that he'd seen no evidence of vice at all!

CLUB NEWS



CINDERELLA WITH A TWIST

That's what was promised to members of Stoke on Trent BC by the 'Glee Club' providing the New Year's Eve entertainment. A twist indeed! Cinderella was expertly played by 6ft tall past Commodore and recently elected club Trustee, Jason Burnham, resplendent in a long blonde wig. The fairy godmother was portrayed by no less a personage than former Lord Mayor of Stoke on Trent, and current Vice Commodore, Denver Tolley, in a white tutu. Other parts were played by members of the club with

Jane Marek writing the script and Kath Price making costumes. Props were made by members of the cast. The audience was literally rolling in the aisles, and demanding another panto next year. Picture Erica Martin

Stoke on Trent Boat Club has a Burn-up



The Laird of Endon telling members about the life of Robbie Burns.

Put another way, they held a Burns Night supper, with Scots member, Ian Wilson created the Laird of Endon for the night. 40 members gathered to enjoy a traditional Burns supper of Cock-a-leekie soup followed by haggis with neeps and tatties, rounded off with Scottish oatcakes and cheese, as well as Scottish shortbread. Chef Brian Martin paraded the haggis around the room accompanied by the Laird, pursued by a posse of 'serving wenches'. Commodore Graham Churton said the Selkirk Grace, and addressed the haggis with the time-honoured words, before stabbing it with the Laird's dirk when everyone toasted the haggis. After dinner, the Laird told members some of Burns' life-story, also that Ian himself comes from the same village as Burns, even attending the same school. Tommy Swindale proposed the toast 'To the Lassies' with Erica Martin replying for the Lassies. Graham Myatt provided some Scots humour, then everyone joined hands to sing Auld Lang Syne to round off a very enjoyable evening.

Chesterfield Canal Festival 2014



The Chesterfield Canal Trust are holding a Festival on 28th and 29th June 2014 at Staveley Town Basin. Go to <http://www.chesterfield-canal-trust.org.uk/index.php/events/festival> for further information or call Rod Auton, Chesterfield Canal Trust. 01246 434762.

COAL and the ASHBY CANAL

A SPECIAL event at 2.00 pm on 17th April 2014 at Snarestone Cut-End

- Presentation of a Cheque for £250,000 by UK Coal to Leicester County Council for the restoration of the Ashby Canal, the third payment towards the total of £1,280,000 which UK Coal are donation towards the Canal's restoration.
- Ceremonial commencement of the restoration of the next section north from Snarestone to Bridge 62.
- To celebrate the departure of motor "Aquarius" and butty "Ilford" each loaded with 18 tons of coal. After traveling south along the Ashby they will then tour the system to highlight the restoration of the Ashby Canal. This will recreate the spectacle of commercial coal carrying which ended in the early 1970's on the Ashby Canal.
- Further information about the association and their plans to restore the canal to Measham is available by following the following link.
http://www.ashbycanal.org.uk/ashby_canal_restoration.html

COMMUNICATIONS

Report to AGM 2014, Stafford Boat Club

AWCC Website

The website continues to attract a steady stream of visitors, averaging about 300 visitors per month.

We would like to put much more information about Club events and other items of interest to AWCC member on the website. If you have anything you would like to appear on the site, or have suggestions for new information that could be added to the website, please contact me.

In the members area of the website – for Club Officers only – the most recent version of the AWCC Handbook is available as PDF file. If your designated Club Officer has lost access to this area, please contact me at the email address below and I will help you access the site.

Receiving ALERT Electronically

The ALERT service has functioned reliably and from the statistics the majority of subscribers successfully download the PDF version of the magazines. If you don't get a copy of your own, you can sign up via the AWCC website to get your personal notification when a new edition of ALERT is published.

Club Information Database/Handbook

Please do make sure that your Club Secretary informs your Regional Secretary of changes in your Club's officers or facilities so these can be included in the AWCC Handbook.

Having held the price of the printed handbook at £2 for a number of years, we had to increase the cover price to £2.15 this year as demand for the paper version was about 15% less than 2013. I will be producing an updated version of the handbook around the end of this month. This will be available only as a PDF file which will be passed to Regional Secretaries for onward distribution, and also placed in the members area of the AWCC website.

For security reasons, I closed down the online version of the information database, as it was becoming too expensive to maintain this as an on-line service. I have since redeveloped it so Regional Secretaries now hold a local copy which is synchronised with the master version when needed. (This database is entirely different from the members area on the website and access is strictly limited to AWCC Officers.)

Interested in helping?

If you are interested in helping maintain or develop the AWCC communications services, please let me know.

Brian Rich
Communications Officer
eMail: communications@awcc.org.uk

15th March 2014

EDITORS PAGE

Readers perhaps notice a slight difference to the layout of the latest issue of Alert newsletter. This is because readers have been explaining that when they read the newsletter on an electronic device such as smart phone or Kindle etc, that having two or three columns makes it awkward to read with the need to scroll up and down each page. I have now put everything into a single column, however this may not suit everyone, especially those who print off a copy for their fellow member. Please bear with us as we are trying to find an application which will give us both a printer friendly and device friendly publication.

My thanks go to those who sent in articles for this issue especially Erica Martin, can I please have some items from other clubs, I am sure there must be lots going on around the regions that would be of interest to other club members, my contact details are on the last page.

ALERT INTER-CLUB COMPETITION

The winner of this years Alert Interclub Award for best club Magazine/Newsletter was Hilary Foster, editor of the Bridgewater Chat, the club mag of the Bridgewater Motor Boat Club. Hilary has been producing the Chat 4 times a year for the past 20 or so years



Hilary Foster Editor of the Bridgewater Chat receives the INTERCLUB TROPHY for best club magazine/newsletter for 2013. Presenting the trophy on behalf of the National President is regional President David Butcher

and has previously been a runner up in the competition. Hilary produces the magazine after having taught herself computer skills which she now passes on to other club members through the pages of the mag. Other regular features included are "Letters from Lynda" where the adventures of two of our former members, now travelling extensively on the continental waterways is serialised, this along with tips and hints plus terrible jokes makes the magazines appearance eagerly awaited. Hilary and her husband Rob were able to attend the AGM in March to receive the award. My sincere thanks go to the panel of judges from Byfleet Boat Club (last years winners) for judging the entries and also to all those editors who took the trouble to send issues in for judging. Please continue

to send both hard copy and electronic versions to the address on the last page.

ALERT INTER-CLUB COMPETITION



Pictured left receiving her award from David is Theresa Jollands the editor of the Paddlepost the magazine of the Stoke on Trent Boat Club which was this years **Runner Up**. The Judges described the difficulty of the decision in choosing between the final two. Well done to Theresa and also to the Editor of the Wheelton Flyer, John Roberts, who again won the best online version of the competition.

THE BLUEBELL TROPHY

HOWARD SMITH



HOWARD SMITH WINNER OF THIS YEARS BLUEBELL TROPHY FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO AWCC

This years deserving winner of the BLUEBELL TROPHY for outstanding service to the AWCC was awarded to Midlands Region President and long time Regional Chairman Howard Smith.

Howard has been involved with the Association at both national and regional level for very many years. His passion for the Erewash Canal Preservation Society has been an inspiration to many who work with him. Often forthright and outspoken Howard has always ensured that British Waterways and now C & R.T are fully informed of any actions which he feels are not in the very best interest of our waterways. As Roland Dotchin said when proposing Howard for the award "Every good organisation needs a Howard"
Ed

HARRY SYKES AWARD



DAVID BUTCHER PRESENTS THE HARRY SYKES AWARD TO MALCOLM HOLBROOK AND TO PAULINE KING WHO RECEIVED IT ON BEHALF OF DAVID EVANS

The Harry Sykes award is presented for “Safety and Efficiency Afloat” and at this years A.G.M. in Stafford it was awarded jointly to two members who had been involved with separate incidents while boating. **Malcolm Holbrook** from Crooke C.C. was in the Salthouse docks at Liverpool when the yellow DUWK amphibious vehicle fully laden with tourists got into serious difficulties and began to rapidly sink. He and another boat were quickly on the scene but by then the DUWK was disappearing below the surface

and there were many people in the water. Malcolm was able to offer assistance and the two boats pulled several victims aboard. The emergency services were quickly on the scene and used the rear of Malcolm's boat to effect further rescue. The incident was captured by several people and video footage of the incident was shown on both national and local news TV broadcasts.

David Evans from Pewsey Wharf B.C. was on the club moorings when a fellow member, a lady who needs the use of an electric scooter, ended up accidentally entering the canal. Fortunately David heard her shouts for assistance and did not hesitate to enter the water and with some considerable difficulty was able release her from the scooter seat belt and get her out of the water. Fortunately in both instances described there was no loss of life or serious injury sustained but without the prompt actions of both Malcolm and David things may have turned out very differently.

FEATURE ARTICLE BY MALCOLM HOLBROOK

At the recent AWCC AGM in Stafford, mention was made about the Emergency Box I keep on my narrowboat. After the meeting I was approached by a number of club reps. about its contents. So for the benefit of all AWCC members I am submitting it to ‘Alert’. The list is by no-means comprehensive and I am sure other members will have suggestions for improvements.

The box is a 35 litre plastic box with a clip-on lid. Ideally it should be clear so the contents can be visualised. Most large supermarkets and DIY chains stock suitable boxes. The box is clearly labelled and has a list of contents stuck to the top.

The contents and some of the reasoning behind their use are:

- A wind-up torch – no flat batteries.
- A serrated knife or cutters – to cut ropes, bindings etc. in an emergency.
- Two pairs of vinyl gloves – vinyl is better than latex as some people are allergic to latex and vinyl is not degraded by diesel, oil or petrol.

- I have a resuscitation mask – this is optional and is only of benefit if you have been trained in its use.
- A roll of cling film – Because it is heat extruded when it is manufactured, cling film is sterile apart from the first few inches on the outside. It is useful as a dressing to cover burns, grazes and large wounds. It makes a clear non-adherent slip resistant dressing. Caution must however be taken when using it as it does not stretch easily so do not put it on tight as it can act as a tourniquet if the limb or digit should swell as the result of the injury. Injured limbs should be elevated if that is possible. Cling-film can also be used to reduce evaporation from wet clothes.
- A small foam kneeler – as used by gardeners. This can be used as a soft head-rest for a patient. If there is any suggestion of a neck or spinal injury do NOT MOVE the patients head but hold it straight. It can also be used for you to kneel on, and wrapped round a limb and held with cling-film or a loose cable tie it can act as a temporary splint.
- A survival bag – this is a long thick polythene bag that can be used on the ground for a person to lie on. See the note above regarding NOT moving people with possible back or neck injuries. An uninjured wet person can be put in the bag to protect them from the wind and reduce evaporation and the chances of hypothermia.
- A foil space blanket – this reflects heat and can be used to maintain core body temperature. It is easily blown away so use inside the survival bag, or another use for the cling-film.
- A large high-visibility waistcoat so you or another rescuer can be easily seen by the emergency rescue services.
- A ladder – I have a folding rope ladder with plastic treads as this can be tied to the boat, or to a tree on the bank. A hooked aluminium ladder is however best for use on the boat.
- A clean towel in a polythene bag - Apart from the obvious use it can also be used rolled-up to support an injured limb.
- A small note-book and pencil – not a biro as they often will not work if they have been stored for a while or it is cold, and gel pens are often not waterproof. These are used to make notes of times etc. I.e. time the accident happened, periods of unconsciousness, resuscitation, fits etc. Names of witnesses.
- A waterproof permanent marker – so times, notes etc. can be written on the persons arm (if not injured) for the Emergency Services and Hospital staff to see.
- Re-usable cable ties – these are always useful.
- A second laminated list of the contents of the box.

In addition I have an inflatable horse-shoe life belt. This is small and comes in a tin. When the tin is opened there is a bag containing the belt and a small sea anchor so it is not blown by the wind. When it hits the water it inflates using the same technology as an automatic life-jacket. It is a much better alternative to the standard DOT life-ring, which is heavy to throw, and almost impossible to put on in the water. A compromise is to use a foam horse-shoe life ring, which is lighter, easier to put on and cheaper than both the above. A mud weight is almost as good as an anchor and is much more easily used. It should be used temporarily to prevent a boat drifting in the wind or in a mild weir-stream. In any emergency your safety comes first, then that of the other person. Do NOT take any undue risks. Put on your life-jacket before undertaking any rescue and if there is any chance of you getting into difficulties as well, await the Emergency Services. Remember they are trained and equipped for such events.

Malcolm Holbrook AWCC rep. Crooke Cruising Club, Wigan.

OBITUARY ROY GARLAND



Roy died of a heart attack in hospital 13th Dec 2013

Roy had had a hip replacement a couple of years previous that had caused him great pain at times . Hence his hospital stay.

Roy with his wife Joan was a Member of Lichfield Cruising Club for many years getting quite involved in some Club projects, Roy and Joan cruised extensively in their narrowboat Lorna Joan including journeys along the Thames to London and the Trent to Lincoln.

Roy was a forceful character and that made him an ideal candidate for the voluntary positions that he held on the AWCC negotiating panels , locally , regionally and nationally.

In the earlier days Roy also helped on the Committee for the restoration of the Lower Avon, teaching himself diving at Lichfield Swimming Baths, he had a divers suit made to measure, 40chest 40 waist, 40 hips.and he used a library book as his instructor.

He learned to dive in order to help retrieve the many lost Lock Operating Keys from Evesham Lock and then resell them again for restoration funds. another useful dive was to successfully retrieve the Pershore Bridge Bronze plaque. He was eventually recognised in this capacity, unblocking jammed lock gates and once retrieving a body in Tewkesbury Lock.

Roy and Joan gave up canal cruising reluctantly when Roy was finding it difficult to handle ropes and windlasses due to arthritis in his hands. although he still managed to use his wood turning lathe to produce polished rose bowls, "pet" mice, burgee masts etc. He used to sell these on Club open days for Club funds.

Joan still lives at their bungalow in Bassetts Pole, Now wheelchair bound Joan would love to hear from her old friends. Detail sourced by Bryan Ralph from Joan and some of Roy and Joans friendswith thanks.

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