

## **The Ditchcrawler – Winter 2022**



The NCCC Arm 13<sup>th</sup> November 2022. Many of us have walked past this tree a countless number of times without realising what it is, or that it is not a species which is native to the United Kingdom. For more information on this see Pages 6 and 7.



**THE NCCC BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS WOULD LIKE TO  
EXPRESS THEIR GRATITUDE TO  
ALL VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE  
ENABLED OUR CLUB TO FUNCTION  
THROUGH THESE CHALLENGING  
TIMES AND TO WISH ALL  
MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES A  
VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS & A  
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.**



## CHAIRMAN – COMMODORES LETTER

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who sent cards to me, visited me, or 'phoned to enquire about my condition during my recent couple of months in hospital, I am home but definitely not up and running (or walking as yet).

On a brighter note, the Laying Up Supper seemed to go well. I have had some feedback which mostly seemed positive. I hope you all enjoy the Christmas Party. We have a good number of people attending so I hope it goes well. I am very grateful to all those people who have helped in any way to organise both these functions. Thank you to you all.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Best wishes to you all.

**John Fenton, Chairman & Commodore**

*Thank you for these kind words John. I'm sure that the club membership will join me in wishing you a speedy recovery. Ed.*

## MEMBERSHIP SERVICES NEWS

### Membership Services Director's Report

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members to the NCCC:

#### **New Members**

Michael Dempsey

Mike Hodgkinson

Val Lipworth

#### **Boat name**

Moomin

Bliss

#### **'Newish' Members**

Ken and Andrew Bellis

Philip Chadwick

Edward & Henry Doust

Chris & Deborah Kelly

Ron & Kathryn Moores

Alan Stabler

'Castaway'

'Sandpiper'

'Hirondelle'

'Sandpiper 1' **N.B. this is a different boat to 'Sandpiper'**

'Winnies Destiny'

The Club is remaining open each Friday Evening, thereby offering our new members the opportunity to meet with the other Club members over a 'drink and a chat'. Please note, there is a New Members Evening scheduled for Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**Pam Russell, Membership Services Director.**

### **A message from Club Member Ruth Sellars**

I would like to offer a big **Thank You** to two Ladies namely Sheila Barlow and Pam Russell for all they do for the Club, for example:

Sheila remains very active in fund raising, organising, running, and attending Club events when her husband Bob is not well at this time requiring him to be in and out of hospital.

Pam is doing what she can to support her partner John in his Chairman and Commodore roles during and following his prolonged stay in hospital.

**Ruth**

*Well said Ruth, I'm certain that the Club Membership and myself included heartily endorse your views. Ed*

## Laying Up Supper

This event took place on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022, featuring entertainment from Carl Dee Rome an accomplished vocalist who joined us for the evening from Blackpool. In addition, the fifty members and their guests in attendance (see below) were treated to a selection of sandwiches and cakes followed by a raffle offering numerous prizes.

There was some dancing from the 'usual suspects' plus Eric and a 'singalong', always an indication of the artiste being 'well received'.

All in all, a good event enjoyed by all who sought to support the Club in this manner. Thanks to all who helped during the Saturday Afternoon before and during the Sunday Morning afterwards. Thanks also to Bryan Roberts for photographing the event.

## Mo and Ian Spooner



Happy revellers, all 'imbibing'!



**Order now please, the 'Artiste' is about to perform!**

*For a ten pounds admission charge, this event represents excellent value for money in comparison with what you get were you to 'venture out elsewhere' currently. Ed.*

## **The Robinia Pseudoacacia (False Acacia or Black Locust) Tree overlooking the Arm**

Recently, a clear November day offered the opportunity to photograph the False Acacia or Black Locust tree at the end of one of the rear gardens on Norwood Avenue near to the club slipway. When in bloom, its dark green compound leaves with a contrasting lighter underside give this tree a beautiful appearance in the wind and contributes to its grace. It is in fact native to the eastern United States where it may be found in two areas. One centred around the Appalachian Mountains from Pennsylvania to northern Georgia, the other located further west within parts of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Missouri centred around the Ouachita Mountains and the Ozark Plateau where Roy Rogers the 'King of Cowboys' (a cult figure in the 1950's) once rode the range!



**The Tree viewed from the southwest**

If one drives west from St Louis along what was Route 66 (now five different freeways) upon reaching the town of Springfield Missouri, the Ozark plateau is south of here. Between St Louis and Springfield, the terrain consists of rolling hills with limestone outcrops, not unlike the Derbyshire White Peak, though on a considerably larger scale. The similarity doesn't end there, as beneath the hills there are extensive cave systems. Many years ago, the notorious James brothers sought refuge in one of the caves when pursued by the authorities, who waited at the entrance expecting them to emerge subsequently. Jesse and his brother, who were well acquainted with the geography of the caves descended to a pool deep into the cave from which they swam underwater to a neighbouring cave with its own egress, whereafter they escaped!



**The Tree viewed from the west**

Originally, it was identified by British Colonists at Jamestown in 1607, who used the timber to build houses, no doubt taking advantage of its hardness, durability, and resistance to rot. Introduced to Britain in 1636 it grows to between forty and a hundred feet, having a diameter of two to four feet. As may be seen above more than one main trunk may emerge during growth.

*Thanks to Timothy Smith (narrowboat Sunbeam) our budding arborologist (no pun intended!) for bringing this to my attention. Ed.*

**Winter Edition Brain Teaser**

The canal builder James Brindley served an apprenticeship in a workshop close by what is now the Macclesfield Canal, which didn't exist during his lifetime. Where is it located?

**Solution to Autumn Edition Brain Teaser**

The Coates family reside at Ramsdell Hall (alongside the Macclesfield Canal near Kent Green) and Peter Coates who was born in nearby Goldenhill is the Chairman and owner of Stoke City Football Club, who play at the Britannia Stadium which is located beside the Trent and Mersey Canal between Stoke and Trentham. *Ed*

**NCCC Christmas Party, Saturday December 3rd, 2022**

Many Club members enjoyed a hearty meal and were entertained by 'Jean' our guest vocalist for the evening. Here are a few 'Candid Camera' shots (no offence intended) !



**Thanks to all those volunteers involved in decorating our Club Room**



**Our Bar staff Jane, Lyndsay & Shirley**



**Vocalist Jean, the 'Belle of Bolton',**



**The impromptu 'back up' Bar Staff enjoying one of Jean's numbers, 'go for it' lads!**



**Mike's so much into the 'Christmas Spirit' Pam, Ruth and Linda have joined in!**



**Revellers enjoying the post meal 'ambiance'**



**Revellers enjoying some post pandemic 'camaraderie'**



**Well decorated tables, good food a plenty, entertainment, who could ask for more!**



**Jean delivers a number in front of a festive backdrop**

*An uplifting night enjoyed by all in attendance, with good food and quality entertainment, in short, a fitting post-pandemic 'pick me up'! Thanks to Club Member and ex Commodore Bryan Roberts for sharing some excellent photographs. Ed.*

Flower Display Evening Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022





The above photographs hardly do justice to the work involved in these displays. Thanks to Sheila Barlow and all involved with arranging and running this event which offers a fitting uplift to a cold December evening. *Ed.*

## **Annual General Meeting Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

The AGM took place on what was a very cold day with snow underfoot and the canal frozen over. In the absence of our Chairman John Fenton who was too unwell to attend, Eric Roberts deputised. Each Director offered the following brief reports:

### **Chairman's Report**

Sadly, during this year, we have lost several longstanding Club members and more recently a well-known past Club member.

Our Finance Director, Bar Director, a Director without Portfolio, and our Food Safety Officer have stood down, each of whom have been replaced.

### **Secretary's Report**

The Secretary reminded members of her duties which were listed in the minutes which were handed out prior to the meeting. Later, after they were 'voted in' by those present, she thanked the new Bar and Finance Directors for volunteering their services, as they both represented the younger section of our membership.

### **Finance Director's Report**

The Club is slowly recovering from the pandemic. However, we are incurring losses of £10k per annum in respect of unused mooring footage which is awaiting piling.

### **Land and Water Space Directors Report**

Bank piling, dredging and boathouse dismantling work has progressed well during the year.

Both the Slipway and Crane Fees continue to generate revenue as follows:

Slipway: £3760 up to end of June 2022; £1790 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 to date.

Crane Fees: £3700 up to end of June 2022; £1710 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 to date.

If possible, we would endeavour to complete the Piling work to coincide with the Clubs 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary which occurs on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

### **Membership Director's Report**

Currently, the Club Membership numbers 175 (94 Boats). The two Charity Boats who ply the Club waters, 'New Horizons' and 'Mary Sunley', each continue to hold honorary membership.

### **Premises Director's Report**

During the time, the Club premises have been brought back into use following the pandemic, the Central Heating Boiler, Emergency Fire Systems, and the Electrical circuits have been inspected and serviced where required. Over 100 portable appliance items have been successfully (PAT) tested.

### **Bar Directors Report**

An ongoing programme of improvements has been undertaken within the Bar Area.

Recently, social events including 'Willies Canal Themed Evening', a Quiz and a Meat Raffle have been staged with some success. New ideas are invited.

### **Commodore's Report**

A programme of events for the new year is being prepared and will be distributed shortly.

### **Director Without Portfolio's Report**

Due to a house move the DWP had decided to step down. And wished the Club well. Her replacement was voted in unanimously by those in attendance.

After the replacement Food Safety Officer was voted in, the meeting ended within the hour and those present bid their farewells and departed.



**AWCC News, including a Summary of the AWCC N.W. meeting, held at the Watch House C.C. Stretford, on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and meeting with CRT on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022 .**



The AWCC NW regional Meeting was attended by sixteen people, representing twelve of the seventeen North West Region Boat Clubs, apologies being received from one person. This, the second meeting held following the summer recess is summarised as follows:

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed Jenny Budworth, the new Rep for Lymm Cruising Club.

1. **Apologies from:** Bryan Pollard
2. **Minutes of the last Meeting** - Agreed
3. **Chairman's Report**

The matters to be discussed at the forthcoming with C&RT were reviewed, these forming the Agenda sent to Liam Cooper, C&RT Boating Manager NW.

4. **Secretary's Report**

- Poolstock Lock 2 will be closed for 'emergency work' (severe leak through the gates and mitre posts, as said by the Chairman at the June meeting with C&RT) from 21 November to 5 December.
- Worsley Toilet Block remains closed despite efforts to resolve problems.
- Montgomery Canal. The rebuilding of School House Bridge, the last major obstacle to re-open the canal to the Welsh border, is scheduled for 2023. The Montgomery Canal Restoration Appeal raised £0.5m, with a donation of £250 from AWCC NW.
- Anderton Lift. The leading engineer expects the Lift to be back in operation at the end of March 2023. The prolonged closure (18 months) schedule to commence in Autumn 2024 is dependent on Heritage Lottery funding.
- Weaver Flood Control. Following the Section 19 Report by CW&C Council, there is concern as to the potential for more flooding in Northwich and along the River. A petition is ongoing and a list of promises made by C&RT have not been implemented.
- British Canoeing – Paddlers Code – video on Boaters Update 21 October 2022.  
'Keep our groups small and discreet where possible.' (52 craft passing through Chirk Tunnel !)  
'Leave others plenty of space'. 'Pass on the righthand side'. (how about meeting a 60ft boat on a narrow sharp corner?)  
'Having the correct waterways licence, helps to preserve our precious rivers and canals.'

- 5 **Treasurers Report**

**Total Balance** £5163 (including Club National Subscriptions). AWCC subscription renewals have been sent out to the NW clubs. Closures of local bank branches is causing a problem, so action is being undertaken to gain access to online banking

- 6 **C&RT Boaters Census**

Four of those in attendance have completed the census.

7. **Matters for AWCC NEC**

It was suggested that the recent Waterways World article, 'Join the Club' needs discussion.

## **8 Joint Meeting of FBCC & AWCC with Bridgewater Canal Co.**

Phyllis Greenough, Chair of FBCC has proposed that a joint meeting of FBCC and AWCC be held with Peter Parkinson to discuss issues of common concern. Items for the agenda include:

- Overhanging trees
- Walton Towpath
- Visitor Moorings (including the Ye Old Number 3)
- Wide beam boats
- Paddleboarders – insurance cover and licensing
- Toilet Blocks at Worsley, Preston Brook Marina, and Butts Basin.

## **9. Guest Speakers at AWCC Meetings**

John Suggitt raised the concern regarding the increasing difficulty in getting guest speakers for meetings and suggested that we gather a list of suitable speakers.

## **10. 'Join the Club' article in Waterways World**

The article does have the financial benefits as the prime reason for joining a club but does speak of friendship and support provided by many club members to other members in need.

## **11. Meeting with C&RT NW**

The meeting is set for Friday 18 November at Anderton Lift. The Weaver User Group had plenty of promises made by C&RT but hardly any action

## **12. Any Other Business**

Bridgewater Canal Co. has a new website but there remain some issues to resolve. More mooring space in Castlefield is promised. New direction signs will be put in place for various boaters' facilities on the Bridgewater. There has been a change in the enforcement officer on the Bridgewater.

The FBCC Rally will be held at Worsley from 26 to 29 May 2023. For details search [www.worsleycruisingclub.co.uk/fed-rally](http://www.worsleycruisingclub.co.uk/fed-rally)

The Chairman wished everyone a Happy Christmas then closed the meeting at 21-30 hrs.

## **Date of next AWCC Meeting Thursday 12<sup>h</sup> January 2023-7.30pm at WHCC Stretford**

**The following notes were made at meeting with C&RT at Anderton on the afternoon of Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022. These may be of interest to all of those who navigate N.W. waters regularly. CRT Staff present were Liam Cooper Steve Ballard and Dave Tarpey.**

### **1. Unpowered Craft (Canoes/Paddleboarders) in tunnels**

This matter remains unresolved, and it is proposed that during early 2023 CRT staff travel by boat provided by an AWCC member through Barnton and Saltersford Tunnels (neither have a clear line of sight).

### **2. Wide beam Boats on Narrow Canals**

This is an ever-increasing problem on the Trent and Mersey Canal South of Wincham Wharf, thus the Boat Builders are obligated to advise purchasers that they must comply with CRT regulations.

### **3 Weaver Flood Control**

In answer to our concerns C&RT advised that this is the responsibility of the Environmental Agency, and Cheshire West & Chester Council.

### **4. Lock restrictions on the Leeds Liverpool Canal**

Contractors are on site at Poolstock Lock No.2 as from 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022, moving to Wigan Dry Dock in December 2022 and Henhurst January 2023.

## **5. Bridge 18 Lydiate, Leeds and Liverpool Canal**

Contractors are working in cutting No 1 in the vicinity of the Bridge to remove obstacles to navigation during January/February 2023.

## **6. Swing Bridges within North-West region with poor signage**

A description of any poor signage accompanied with photographs is required by Liam Cooper via AWCC NW Secretary Nick Culliford.

## **7. Vegetation Control**

Surface water weed and overgrown bank vegetation is widespread within the North-West Region. C&RT are mindful of the costs required to combat these issues which could escalate up to £10k per week. A novel method of weed control being attempted is the use of weevils!

## **8. Dean Lock Leeds and Liverpool Canal**

No progress on the new bollards required to ensure safe passage of boats.

## **9. Water shortages**

Whilst these are being suffered by all the Pennine waterways within the North-West Region, there is some heartening news for all boaters. Bosley Reservoir is now back in service and was 60% full on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The feeder main from Coombs Reservoir to the Peak Forest Canal having been successfully repaired, developed a further leak on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022, which C&RT are investigating. Regarding Todbrook Reservoir, C&RT are not permitted to divert the water flowing along the bypass channel into the supply main from the dam feeding the Peak Forest Canal at the 'cross over' point.

## **10. Boaters ascending Bosley bottom lock (Lock 12) solely to wind their craft above it.**

To avoid this unnecessary waste of water, in future boaters will be encouraged (using signage) to wind at Havannah Straight.

## **11. Boaters' Facilities**

The checking and servicing of these is frequently delayed/hampered by abuse in the form of items of clothing being disposed of in toilets and 'fly tipping' in waste skips.

## **12. The Shropshire Union Canal River Dee Branch**

In the absence of cooperation from the Environmental Agency and Cheshire West and Chester Council, C&RT are not maintaining the bottom two Locks on the Branch.

## **13. Access to The Manchester Bolton and Bury Canal**

This access is currently denied apparently due to intransigence on the part of Peel Holdings.

## **14. Anderton Lift availability & the Unlock Runcorn Project**

C&RT were unable to confirm that restrictions will not apply to the use of marsh Lock as a River Weaver egress at times when the Anderton Lift is unavailable., which may apply if and when the Runcorn lock flight is restored.

## **15. Anderton Lift**

This is expected to be open by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. Subject to funding availability there may be a prolonged (18 month?) closure commencing Autumn 2024.

## **16. Access through Ellesmere Port Locks**

C&RT were unable to confirm arrangements for craft having egressed the Weaver and navigated westward down the Ship Canal.

## **17. Delays in emergency repairs due to lack of Banksmen to staff Weaver Locks**

C&RT were unable to answer this complaint

## **18. C&RT meetings with Local User Groups**

C&RT regretted not being available to attend the inaugural meeting of the Macclesfield and Peak Forest Canals User Group scheduled in August 2022, but remain interested in future meetings in this respect.

**Next CRT-AWCC meeting Early May 2023, Next CRT User Forum March 2023**

**John Suggitt, Vice Chair AWCC North-West, AWCC Rep. for NCCC, N/B Evenlode**

**N.C.C.C.LTD. - FEES FOR OCTOBER 2022 TO OCTOBER 2023**

Moorings.....	£2-45 per foot per month
Winter Moorings.....	£3-00 per foot per month
Hardstanding up to 30 feet.....	£18-50 per week
Hardstanding over 30 feet (or wide beam).....	£37-00 per week

**Slipway Charges**

1 week (Members).....	£65-00 (including use of pressure washer & Poly Tunnel)
1 week (Members under 12 months)....	£130-00 (inc. use of press. washer & Poly Tunnel)
2 <sup>nd</sup> week on Slipway (only if available).....	£65-00
1 week on Slipway (Non-Members).....	£350-00

**In and Out Slipway Charges**

Members (within one day).....	£25-00
Non-Members (within one day).....	£200-00

**All Boats using the slipway must be under their own propulsion**

**Crane Charges (Wharf usage)**

Members £50-00; New-Members (under 12 months) £100-00;  
Non-Members £240-00

**Paint Shed Charges**

Members 2 weeks free then £30-00 per week if available  
New-Members (under 12 months) £50-00 per week (if available)  
Members (2 free weeks) only once in any 12 month period

***By the order of the Board of Directors***

**FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK**

Moorings within the Arm may be coming available. Please contact our Moorings Officer Dave Hood, telephone number 07825 335146 / 07837 542115.

When re-licensing your boat, would you kindly do so through the Club as we will benefit financially. For further information on the current procedure, please contact our Licensing Officer Jaqui Kilburn, telephone number 0161 442 6353 / 07714 352991

	<b>YOUR</b>	
	<b>Ditchcrawler</b>	
	<b>NEEDS YOU!</b>	

Our hardy piling/dredging/boathouse dismantling team have made much progress during 2022. To date around 70% of the piling has been completed and the Arm is looking far better than in recent times.



**Mike, Ian and Eric all hard at work on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022, a bitterly cold day**



**The 70th anniversary memorial hand crafted by Club member Ian Spooner in 2013**

Next year heralds the eightieth anniversary of the NCCC! Come the 11<sup>th</sup> September, the date coinciding with the inaugural meeting, piling may well be completed. Let's hope so!

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