



MINUTES OF USER GROUP MEETING

HELD IN

THE GRANGE MANOR HOTEL, GRANGEMOUTH

ON SATURDAY 30 OCTOBER 2004

10.00 – 12.45 HOURS

Representing British Waterways:

Richard Millar, Waterway Manager, Lowland Canals
John Black, Engineering Operations Manager, Lowland Canals
Ronnie Simpson, Customer Service Manager, Lowland Canals
Linton McBurnie, Waterway Supervisor – Union Canal, Lowland Canals
Tommy Thomson, Waterway Supervisor, Forth & Clyde Canal - East
Yvonne Laird, Finance Administrator, Lowland Canals
Marion Paterson, Customer Service Administrator, Lowland Canals
Lorna Steele, Finance Assistant, Lowland Canals

Guest Speakers

Karen Moore, Head of Development, The Waterway Trust Scotland
Paul Colenso, Project Engineer, British Waterways Scotland
Simon Lievesley, Project Manager, British Waterways Scotland

Chairman

Professor John Hume, OBE

1.0 Welcome

Professor Hume opened the meeting at 10.00 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

2.0 Apologies

John Hume advised that there were numerous people who sent apologies and a full list of these would appear in the Minutes of this meeting as follows:-

1. David Waterston
2. Joe Holland
3. Finola Meikle
4. Tom Jamieson
5. Edith McLean
6. Bob Neill, George Heriots School
7. Mr S B Gilmore
8. Mr Hamish and Mrs Hillary Leal
9. Mr and Mrs J Lonie
10. Mr J Logan
11. Mr Tim Parker, Black Prince Holidays
12. Mr and Mrs Jamie Sime
13. Mr J Stirling

14. Mr P Simpson and Ms C Johnston, Zazou Cruises
15. Ms Janice Winning
16. Ms Amanda Durlik
17. Mr John Ellis Fisheries Manager, South East, British Waterways
18. Mr Alastair Whitelaw
19. Jan McDonald, Forth & Tay Disabled Ramblers

3.0 Minutes of previous meeting

John Hume

The Minutes of the last meeting were accepted with two matters arising which needed clarity.

Matters arising

1. Tommy Lawton, Forth & Clyde Canal Society took up the issue in 8.6 of the Minutes concerning a puffer fleet owned by British Waterways. Richard Millar, Manager, Lowland Canals, advised that there is not a plan by British Waterways at the moment to run a commercial fleet of boats. In the meantime this would be a commercial venture however we may think about this in the future if it is popular.
2. Tommy Lawton also asked about idle moorings at the Stables. He highlighted that this was discussed within the discussion groups in the User Group Meeting held in March 2004. Richard advised that this was for "dead" boats at the Stables

4.0 Lowland Canals Update

Richard Millar

Professor Hume then invited Richard Millar to give the Lowland Canals Update.

Richard opened his presentation by acknowledging that this had been the largest number of people he had welcomed to the User Group Meeting for some time and thanked everyone for coming along to what he thought was going to be a particularly interesting meeting.

- He advised that during the March User Group Meeting there were aspirations for 200 more long term moorings and confirmed that this had been achieved. Unfortunately the weather in Summer 2004 had been poor affecting the number of transits. Consequently, there were only 98 transits through the Forth & Clyde Canal during the season. We needed to advertise that the channel is deeper now.
- Richard advised that Auchinstarry will open soon.
- Charitable boats were reported as having taken 30,000 people during the last season and this year it seems that there had been a drop to 23,000 (Please find attached correct numbers updated) but still a great achievement.
- Richard felt that the discussion from the last User Group Meeting in connection with Charitable and Commercial operators was very helpful. He further advised that many business operators' businesses were beginning to develop and more staff were being employed by these ventures such as Capercaillie, Alvechurch and Thistle Hire Boats. He also reported that the Pedro Boats now had an independent operator, Albion Holidays and Ronnie Rusack's business had been nominated for the prestigious Thistle Award.
- Richard was very pleased to advise the group that the British Waterways National Waterway Length Competition had been won by the area of Netherton to Clevedon Road on the Forth & Clyde.

- Both Ronnie Simpson and John Black were introduced. Both had been with the company for six months in their respective roles. The group were reminded that John Black was responsible for engineering and specifically winter works and Ronnie Simpson was responsible for delivery of customer service on the Lowland Canals. It was pointed out that neither job was a 9 to 5 position and there were many issues which we still needed to address in these areas.
- Richard was happy to advise that there had been 12 million visits to towpath this year and there are more cyclists than ever before. Angling was developing and it was acknowledged that LCAPS was particularly important to Lowland Canals.
- In our attempt to improve customer service a single Point of Contact 0845 number has been established. Richard drew everyone's attention to the fact that some people are still using the BMK number and Sea Lock numbers. Richard asked operators to phone the 0845 number instead for the purposes of boat movements.
- Richard reported that the Scotland's Canals website would be updated gradually and access to this will soon only be through www.britishwaterways.co.uk/scotland. There will be a link to the www.waterscape.com website also
- The Disabled Access Group was now up and running and quite a few actions came out of the inaugural meeting of this group. The Freshwater and Saltwater Groups are also continuing to discuss various issues. The issues in connection with rowing in Edinburgh under the leadership of Fiona Willis has now been wound up and various procedures put into place. Richard was also happy to report that four more bicycles had been donated to the police forces along the canal corridor so adding to further security.
- In connection with weedcutting Richard reported that a warm summer caused major weed growth and clearly the weedcutter would have to be put into operation early next year at Easter.
- Lock 27 had been a security problem previously but this was now being addressed and there are plans to develop this area and put moorings in place here for transits prior to moving down to Bowling. Richard also reported that quite a lot of money had been spent on the towpath at Harrison Park. An extra 1200 metres of pontoons have also been put in place. During the stoppage period it is hoped that we will put in user operated locks in the area of Locks 17 to 20. It is hoped that there will be moorings against the Leamington wall next season.
- Developments at Edinburgh Quay continue and also Rosebank, Falkirk will start shortly. Port Dundas will be developed building a centre terminus at this location. Richard advised that Glasgow Council had invested in this venture. The Auchinstarry development has taken longer than expected however it is hoped that we will have moorings available on 18 December. The update on Grangemouth is that the demasting crane has been moved further out. This is an important navigation and talks are proceeding at the moment with the possibility of an appointment of a consultant. We will possibly look at this in greater depth at the next User Group Meeting.
- The Scottish Boat Show was another success story with the high profile arrival of the Puffer.
- The Lowland Canals Arts Strategy has been helped considerably with the involvement of Richard Demarco. Edinburgh Quay Canalscape was a success with 30 artists involved. Photos of the historical find at Leamington Basin was also shown to the group.
- This year in Marketing there have been new and updated publications produced for Lowland Canals and these are the Skippers Guide and

Tide Tables. The Photo Competition continues for a second year with more and more interest

Professor John Hume was then invited to present the winners of this year's **Photographic Competition** as follows:-

First Prize - Photo taken at Bowling Harbour

by Dr Graeme Stuart Pollock of Ayr

Second Prize -Photo taken of The Falkirk Wheel

by Mr James Gentles from Edinburgh (taken by the aid of a kite)

Third Prize - Photo taken at New Port Downie At The Falkirk Wheel
by Mr Michael Middleton from Falkirk

Commended Photos were taken by

Dr Graeme Stuart Pollock from Ayr

Dr Judy Gray from Linlithgow

Mr Colin Clark from Old Kilpatrick

Mr Middleton – third prize winner - was unable to attend so another arrangement to present him with his prize would be made.

Professor Hume advised that he was pleased to be asked to present these prizes and thanked all entrants and particularly the winners.

4.1 Questions & Comments

David Wright	Noticed that there was a dramatic increase from waterways operative to Administration staff. He remembers that 30 years ago 25 operatives to each foreman and less than a third now. He asked if there was a reason for this.
Richard	I would take issue that there are fewer bank staff. We have got new people. There has been an increase in office work and we have to sort out processes in administration. There is more focus on customer service now.
John Hume	It is a whole different ball game now from what it was 30 years ago.
Question	Puddles at Harrison Park – this seems to be a problem.
Richard	We will need a sheet piling rig – we have left only what has to be done. We are waiting to get in to do this.
Bill Purves	Sheet Piling?– will you be upgrading the slipway?
Richard	Broxburn is not secure but he wants to encourage use of this slipway. At Auchinstarry we are waiting to build a slip way and have hard standing scheduled there also. Harrison Park Slipway is needed but we need to find money for sheet piling first. We need to consider if this is the correct place for a slipway.
Bill Purves	Lochrin?
Richard	There is no space there.
Jaki	Highlighted that there had been a missed opportunity in the way of a canal festival incorporated within the Boat Show.
Richard	Canal Festival? – No – We will get feedback from you for next year. We are all constantly learning.
Jaki	Summer Splash worked well. Can we have other festivals.
John Hume	Look at encouraging a Canal Festival and more boats.
Mel Gray	Will there be a Terminus at the Lifting Bridge

- Richard No - we are looking to do this at Edinburgh Quay. This will be a vibrant place. Movement of boats in this area will take place on a regular basis.
- Ann Street Expressed concern about speeding on canal especially with the hire boat fleet approaching moored boats.
- Richard Some people unfortunately like to speed. Signage – no. – suggest that each user should try to be polite when dealing with this.
- Bev Schoffield Waterscape – new business registration. Concern that this is expensive.
- Richard Scottish Canals goes into British Waterways website now. Political situation – Waterscape is self-financing and getting a greater number of hits.

4.2 Richard asked that Ronnie Simpson should investigate the pricing situation with regard to registering with Waterscape and advise accordingly.

- Gary Clarkson Concern with weedcutting and how this affects the fish – is there an official Biologists' stance.
- Richard Olivia Lassiere is a good ambassador. If there are any enquiries please direct to Olivia.
- Jaki Asked about development at Firhill.
- Richard Successful works – completed. There will also be a slipway if time allows this to be constructed.
- Jaki Asked about pontoons
- Richard Scottish Executive may provide if they look favourably upon us.
- Guthrie Hutton Barriers on tow path - Scramblers and cars are a problem. Are you going to take these barriers away.
- Richard Certain barriers are there to stop different kinds of problems. There are different kinds of barriers. They do not stop quad bikers. Communities and police have to take ownership of this problem. We have an Access Forum at the moment which will look at this problem and try to come up with a solution.
- Tommy Lawton Firhill – concerned about policing that area. The Forth & Clyde Canal Society have an Open Day there and he expressed concern about litter.
- Richard Acknowledged there was a major problem with litter there – continue to work at this.
- Tommy Volunteers help.
- John Hume We will have to address this problem. TWTS have tried to do this also.

5.0 The Waterway Trust Update

Karen Moore

Karen opened her presentation by introducing herself to the group as Head of Development of The Waterway Trust Scotland. She highlighted the aims of TWTS and categorised them as follows:

Activity –

To create projects that inspire communities to utilize Scotland's canals for leisure, recreation and health which are accessible for all.

Visibility –

To create cultural installations on the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals through the use of art lighting and sculpture.

Conservation & Environment –

To conserve and enhance the heritage of Scotland's canals to achieve sustainable quality of life improvements for people, communities, the environment and wildlife.

Education –

To make a difference and encourage children through education and play that the canals of Scotland can be used safely for healthy activities and learning opportunities.

Under each heading Karen gave an overview of 2004 activities.

In the Area of Art Development Karen advised that permanent and temporary art work was being considered along the canal. This idea had been put to consultation by various groups and TWTS were also raising funding for this work. Key players in this area were Richard Demarco and also Ian Hamilton Finlay who have been instrumental in bringing some innovative ideas to the canal.

Richard Demarco was involved in the previously mentioned Canalscapes of Scotland at Edinburgh Quay in which 30 artists exhibited their work. This has brought a new audience and interest to the canals.

Community Access – a report is due from Amanda Durlik soon which will concentrate on aspects relating to the DDA. TWTS have been fundraising for a 2.5 year post Waterways for All project to implement the report findings. This report covers 7 local authority areas

Events – The Lowland Canals Cycle Challenge raised £7K and they are now hopeful that the Highland Hike 2006 will go ahead again. The Litter Challenge is expected to go ahead on 20 March 2005 and will run in partnership with BTCV. Wheels & Water was a very successful event and it is also hoped that this will be replicated next year.

Projects for 2005-2008 are as follows:

- WOW Arts & Education Co-ordinator.
It is hoped that funding will be found for this important position
- Clued up on Canals – Falkirk
- The Grange Centre is the location. This has stage 1 SportScotland approval. This will provide outdoor activities for the 16-24 age group.
- Art will be a major fundraising initiative
- Hedgerows – This is in partnership with the Coach House Trust steering group.
- Lambhill Stables – joint initiative with the Coach House Trust.
- Firhill Basin Water Activity Centre – Jaki of Nolly Barge and TWTS have commissioned a feasibility study on an Activity Centre here and Jaki has successfully raised funding for temporary accommodation.

5.1 Questions & Comments

Gordon Daly	Lowland Canals link beside railway – could there be a joint venture .
Karen	Yes we will take this up
Ian Hunter	Glasgow River Festival in conjunction with IWA – Boat Festival could be another dimension
Question	16-24 age group – would it not be an idea to start educating younger?
Karen	CUCP activity project has stipulated 16-24 year age group. We may do free CD rom as part of this development.
John Hume	Would an Education Boat be a good idea?
Tommy Lawton	This is about our third year of Primary 6 pupils – and changes every year. We have had 200 school children on the boats. Now we have to try to get the Education Department interested.
Comment	Councils have given good response but sometimes do not reply to enquiries
John Hume	No excuse for not replying. In connection with councillors – they are obliged to answer any questions you have
John Hume	Happy that funding opens an opportunity in the early stages.

6.0 Port Dundas Reconnection Update

Paul Colenso

Paul brought his presentation on the Port Dundas Reconnection to the User Group. Although Paul started the presentation as an informative diary of when and what kind of work will take place, it soon took the form of an interactive question and answer session whilst still showing the presentation.

6.1 Questions & Comments

Gordon Daly	Asked about depth
Paul	1.8m depth there.
A Carnduff	Forth & Clyde 2.3 in raising – why is this less?
Paul	Tight deadlines
A Carnduff	Will this inner city area have problems with shopping trolleys?
Richard	There is a reason for utilities. We will have safe mooring in this area and will be no shopping trolleys
A Carnduff	Glasgow Road Bridge is 1.5m height clearance. Strange that this should be 1.6m.
Richard	It is a long-term aim to get this deeper
Jaki	What about lock gates.
Paul	6m wide lock gates – Craighall Road diversion from November. With different kind of facilities
Richard	We have to make this somewhere that boaters want to go. It is our intention to get a Facility block, pumpout and hope this is a place people will stay.
Question	No power?
Richard	There will be nodes with facilities.
Question	Basic amenities then?
Richard	These will be spread out across the canal. Facilities are high up on the agenda. We will talk to you at a future meeting to ascertain requirements.
Ann Street	As far as bridges are concerned – we would want to know if you consulted
Richard	FW Group – consulted – small M8 Bridge/ Greendykes Road

- Gordon Daly We have made a lot of amendments during consultation
- Question Depth of Lock - 5m drop?
- Paul Some construction was split in two. Construction needs a lot of room
- Guthrie
1. Maryhill Underpass
 2. Port Dundas – scows
- Paul They are still there.
- Everything has been looked at by architect - RMJM have plans
- Guthrie Hutton There is an irony if you use this

Richard thanked everyone for their input and questions

- John Hume New locks in city centre – perhaps it would be a good idea to name those in this area e.g. Whitworth Lock, Smeaton Lock, McKell?
Perhaps Smeaton Basin

Paul Colenso advised that he had plans with him if anyone wanted to look at these after the meeting.

7.0 Union Canal Waterspace Developments Simon Lievesley

Richard advised that we would plan to break after Simon's presentation and come back into the Zetland Suite at 12.40 at the latest.

Simon opened his presentation advising that there was an estimated requirement -1 for 2000 plus moorings on Lowland Canals over the next 15 years – 40% on Forth and Clyde and 60% on the Union Canal. Two years ago the nodal strategy was developed and plans were underway for 800 new moorings on the Forth & Clyde Canal. Halcrow/Irvine Design Consultants were involved. He advised that there were plans for 1200 new moorings on the Union Canal. The Union is a popular canal and the demographics are good. Of the 1200 it is expected that there would be 1000 moorings offline because of the navigational limitations. Because the Union is a narrow canal it would thought that there would be no pontoons.

In planning they are always looking for residential property, third party locations such as Fountainbridge where Scottish & Newcastle are closing down. There are 60 additional moorings planned there and more work to be done.

Work coming up would be

- Hermiston
- Ratho – development of basin
- Winchburgh
- Park Farm Linlithgow – there may be additional residential moorings there.
- Manuel – new homes are expected to be built there which may give new business.
- Reddingmuirhead – care here because of mercury contamination.
- Edinburgh – possibly 150 moorings
- Greenbank, Falkirk – potential land there for business creation. However there may be access problems

7.1 Questions & Comments

R Hunter	Targeting waterspace Stirling/Alloa/Bo'ness areas
Comment	RYA meeting prospect in connection with planning. Falkirk Council with Bo'ness Initiative on the canal If there is a route this should go ahead.
John Hume I Campbell	This is the old line Can we have more moorings at Grangemouth Centre or west end of Tunnel
Simon S Purves	This is on line to go ahead. The bulk to be created off line Marinas may double up as caravan parks
Simon G Daly	Yes it is possible Some clubs in England build their own marinas – e.g. Rippon Motor Boat Club – can I suggest – Union Canal Co-op Society?
J Hume	Suggest that we try Scottish Executive for Infrastructure fund money
Richard	The minister advised at AGM that £2M available in 2006/7/8 then £10M. We can make a bid to Scottish Executive but a lot of this money is to allow further development of what we have at the moment.
R Rusack Simon R Rusack	On-line moorings are difficult to pass. A few areas – you can pass alright. Causewayend - dry dock and trying to get access – taken 20 years already.
J Hume Question Simon	Could we then possibly look at Compulsory Purchase? Can we have more moorings at Harrison Park That is one area we have to look at closely

8.0 Break Out into Discussion Groups – Zetland Suite/Dundas Suite and Glensburgh Suite to discuss A Vision for the Scottish Lowland Canals to 2014.

The meeting broke up at 12.06 p.m. into the various groups to discuss the vision for the canal up to 2014 and reconvened at 12.47 p.m. slightly later than anticipated.

John Hume welcomed everyone back from the discussion groups and advised that this information would be incorporated within the minutes.

9.0 Any Other Business John Hume

9.1 Matters arising – Questions & Comments

R Rusack Asked about previous meetings and suggested that no policy came out of the discussion groups within these meetings.

9.2.1 ACTION

Richard The policy was hoped to be made available however time has got the better of us. I will come back to you at next meeting with all our findings

Tommy Lawton Discussion groups – could they be a bit longer?

9.2.2 ACTION

J Hume Point taken on board

G Daly Perhaps we could have lunch

John Hume	Thanked all and especially leaders of discussion groups.
Bill Purves	Edinburgh Canal Society – we have rented place in Granton. If any Private Trailable boat owners are looking for a place to do work on their boats then please could they get in touch with us on 0131 556 4503
Advise	SIWA Annual Meeting 20th November
Richard	Open Scotland Group meeting at The Falkirk Wheel 25th November 1 pm for lunch & 2 pm – Open Forum
KG ECS	Lowland Canals Passport to be available month in advance before the start of the season.
Comment	Concern that this was not on the market until the end of the season causing missed opportunities.
J G	Could this run on into next year
Richard	2006 will be the next update of this publication We plan to get 20K out to various outlets and visitors

Professor John Hume thanked for all participants and staff in the background.

10.0 Conclusion and Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 13.05 p.m.

Date:	Saturday 12 March 2005
Time:	9.30 a.m. for 10 a.m. start This meeting will have to finish promptly Prior to 12.30 a.m.
Venue:	Grange Manor Hotel Grangemouth

**For your information –
Advance notification of provisional bookings for next
User Group Meetings all booked at
The Grange Manor Hotel and all starting at 10 a.m.
Saturday 29 October 2005
Saturday 25 March 2006
Saturday 28 October 2006**

- 11.0. FOR YOUR INFORMATION -
actions recorded/MP/November 2004
For ease of reference – items are numbered
.0 – presentation
.1 – Questions & Comments
.2 – Actions**