

**Gloucester – Sharpness Canal
& River Severn Users Form**

**Minutes of Meeting
Held on the “Oliver Cromwell”, Bakers Quay
Gloucester on 13th April 2005**

Present:

Clive Field (CF)	Chairman/Saul Junction Boat Owners Club
Alan Crowhurst (AC)	Sharpness Marine
Michelle Crowther (MC)	British Waterways
Wally Dewsnip (WD)	Gloucester Disabled Anglers
Gil Smith (GS)	Gloucester Disabled Anglers
Ian Jarvis (IJ)	British Waterways
John Laverick (JL)	British Waterways
Eliza Botham (EB)	British Waterways
Tina Martin (TM)	British Waterways
Bruce Hall (BH)	Cotswold Canal Trust
Mike Taylor (MT)	A.D.J. Canoe Club
Richard Clements (RC)	English Holiday Cruises
Martin Phillips (MP)	On-line moorer
Julie Hones (JH)	Worcestershire Waterways User Forum/IWA
Paul Hooper (PH)	IWA
Lea Rea (LR)	Gloucester Yacht Club
Miriam Bubb (MB)	Gloucester Yacht Club
Ken Stothard (KS)	Gloucester Yacht Club
Pat Stothard (PS)	Gloucester Yacht Club
Jim Macdonald (JM)	Gloucester & District Model Boat Club
Martin Ludgate (ML)	“Canal Boat” Magazine
Dave Starkey (DS)	Gloucester Yacht Club
Mike Johnson (MJ)	Gloucester Harbour Trustees
Caroline Cheeseman (CC)	Slimbridge Boat Station
Roger Coates (RCo)	Slimbridge Boat Station
Graham Evans (GE)	English Holiday Cruises
Terry Farley (TF)	English Holiday Cruises
William Alexander (WA)	Frampton-on-Severn Parish Council
Paul Symons (PSy)	Big Fish Narrowboats Ltd.
Tim Davis (TD)	Big Fish Narrowboats Ltd.
Hugh Conway-Jones (HCJ)	Canal Historian
Chris Hayes (CH)	National Waterways Museum
Doreen Davies (DD)	National Waterways Museum
Tommi Nielsen (TN)	T. Nielsen & Co.
Richard Trelfa (RT)	Gloucester Shopmobility
Meyrick Brentnall (MBr)	Gloucester City Council
Judith Clements (JC)	English Holiday Cruises
Jay Clements (JCI)	English Holiday Cruises
Nigel Bishop (NB)	Saul Junction Boat Owners Club

1. Introductions and Welcomes

CF thanked Les Rea for being the instigator of the venue for the meeting and Richard Clements and his family for welcoming us all aboard the “Oliver Cromwell”.

2. Apologies

Ted Horsfield	Avon Sailing Club
Steve Arber	Walton Marine
John Chard	Stokie Fuel Afloat
Brioni Sharman	Stokie Fuel Afloat
Liz Rowland	Willow Trust
Don Stockwell	Ramblers Association
Brian Williams	Sharpness Marina
Diane Bailey-Parsons	Gloucester Disabled Anglers
Bob Hinton	Gloucester & District Model Boat Club
Rupert Charley	Gloucester Rowing Club
Rollo Clifford	Frampton Estate
Colin Wattam	Slimbridge Boat Station
Tony Crook	Treasurer/RNL I

3. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th January 2005

Accepted as a true record.

4. Matters arising

None.

5. The member's Presentation : Richard Clements – English Holiday Cruises

RC told the meeting that his family had just taken over the largest river vessel in the country at 42 metres long with 4 decks and 24 cabins captained by Terry Farley, as well as the second largest, the "Edward Elgar" at 27 metres long with 3 decks and 11 cabins captained by Graham Evans.

They have changed the logo to be more representative of the boat.

He introduced his family; his wife Judith who would be in charge of bookings and was also an interior designer, and explained that she had already made a start of refurbishing the vessel and all cabins would be refurbished within the next few weeks.

His Son, Jay was the Cruise Manager whose background was in hospitality. They are professional, friendly and experienced with over 40 years experience in boating and 55 in catering.

EHH carried out a survey among several hundred customers as to why they cruise with EHH and the answer was it was a unique experience, calm and relaxing, interesting places to stop off, and full service at reasonable prices and RC quoted £109 for a fully catered two-day cruise.

They ran 2 day cruises from Gloucester to Sharpness, 4 days from Gloucester to Worcester and 6 days from Sharpness to Worcester. Edward Edgar also did Gloucester to Worcester with coach trips to the Severn Valley Railway and Bewdley.

RC explained they were hoping to increase the season to late October with the canal cruises during weekday and to hire out for functions at weekends. They hoped to increase the number they could carry on board from 52 to 99 and hold weddings, board meetings, team building sessions, Christmas parties etc. They also hoped to provide extra accommodation for the Saul Festival next year, as they did for the Cheltenham Festival this year.

RC was asked if they would be doing evening cruises, and he explained they would not be cruising during the dark.

RC was asked if they would be using local produce and in principle they said they would like to but often this was more expensive, but they currently used a butcher in Cheltenham.

RC handed out brochures.

6. Members Reports

6.1 Julia Hones

JH said that the Gloucester & Hereford Branch of the IWA was re-launched on 3rd April at the Museum. John Fletcher answered questions and 35 people attended. She was elected new Committee Chairman.

JH told the meeting that the IWA originally started in 1946 to conserve, use, maintain and restore inland waterways for the benefit of everyone. They have 17½ thousand members. The IWA granted £15,000 to CCT restoration of Pipe Bridge. JH advised that a monthly bulletin is available on the internet. The IWA liaises with Local Council and British Waterways on working together and moving forward.

6.2 Gil Smith

GS referred to the new fishing pegs which had been installed for disabled anglers, which he said were brilliant with holes for brollys etc. and curbing to prevent wheelchairs enter the canal, also the car park to the rear. He wanted to thank Paul Griffin who had made a bid for MAD money to carry out this work. He understood Kent Daniels was arranging an official opening.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Richard Trelfa

RT referred to a Trent & Mersey stile which has appeared at the entrance to Roman's Quay which allows wheelchairs through but not bikes. He wondered if this was a trial.

RT also mentioned that there was nowhere to moor up to other than the Sanitary Station while waiting to pass through Llanthony Bridge and this could be a problem if it was windy.

7.2 Bruce Hall

BH advised that work to restore Pipe Bridge was underway which was one obstacle in the link to Saul Junction. Not included in the section covered by the lottery money. IWA had made a grant and it was hoped the finish by the end of July. Plans were going well for the Saul Festival.

7.3 Tina Martin

TM mentioned that British Waterways would have 3 shops within the West Quay Development which should be available for letting about August.

7.4 Mike Taylor

MT stated that membership had increased to 60. Risk assessments were being carried out which had proved quite useful. Thanked British Waterways for the launch point at Purton and asked if British Waterways could continue to look at parking around the Docks.

7.5 Eliza Botham

EB stated that several members of staff including herself had undertaken a Helmsman's course.

The Duty Manager's role had commenced on the Bank Holiday weekend and every weekend during the season a Manager would be on duty somewhere in the Business Unit. They would call in at any events which were taking place to see everything was in order. The Duty Manager's telephone number is 07710 175117. EB also stated that during the summer season the Office would be open at weekends.

EB stated that Kent Daniels, the Marketing Manager was leaving mid July. It was hoped he would be replaced in time to cover coming events.

EB stated that there were staff shortages in the Patrol section who were trying to deal with unlicensed boats and continuous cruisers but interviews were being carried out for a new Patrol Officer within the next couple of days.

Kent Daniels had obtained Waterscape Pods, which were like mini mobile computers and these could be used at various events such as Saul Festival.

7.6 John Laverick

JL advised that Upper Lode was now open. He apologised on behalf of British Waterways for the long delay, but this had been out of their control.

The first phase of the works to Llanthony Bridge had been carried out but until the second phase in the Autumn it will continue to be monitored. The time schedule has been lifted, but on one day over the Bank Holiday the bridge had been lifted 39 times, and it was felt the bridge could not sustain this kind of usage at this stage. Phase 2 would require a road closure.

7.8 Hugh Conway-Jones

HCJ stated he had been trying to get information about events, but had been unable to do so. He understood there was a list but because not all the events on the list had been confirmed, he was refused a copy. He was advised that the events should be on Waterscape, but he said he had been unable to find anything.

7.9 Ian Jarvis

IJ stated and BH confirmed that sections of the Stroudwater Canal had now been taken over by British Waterways on a 999 year Lease. This did not include several sections which were in private ownership. There were two teams involved, one dealing with the maintenance and the other dealing with restoration works. Ryeford sluices did not form part of the Lease.

IJ stated that Liz Rowland had entered the Willow Trust into the Waterway Renaissance Competition and although had not won, received a commendation. However they scooped the star prize which was the Partnership Award. Liz Rowland was planning a celebration to mark the 100,000 guest and Robin Evans had been invited to attend. IJ state that the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust had won the award last year and he would like to make it 3 in a row.

Victoria Basin had now been transferred to British Waterways Marinas Ltd. of which Derek Newton was the Chairman. This did not, however, include the swing bridge as they did not have the staff to man it.

Dredging in the parting as been delayed due to RMC delaying their operation to bring aggregate south. This will not commence until early next year. There is a slot for dredging between end of January and March, but much depends on RMC and British Waterways did not want to waste the £300,000 it would cost dredge by doing it too early.

7.10 Miriam Bubb

MB stated that because Victoria Swing Bridge was only opened at certain times, when some of their craft came into the main basin they could not moor anywhere as narrowboats were moored against the finger pontoons singly which left no room for their boats.

7.11 Doreen Davies

Asked about how many times Victoria Swing Bridge would be swung as she did not want this to interfere with the 45 minute boat trips.

7.12 Tommi Nielsen

TN asked if there were any plans for dredging the Dock. JL stated it would be done when necessary but did not envisage the problems suffered last year when pumping had to be done at times when silt was most prevalent. This should not happen this year.

7.13 Nigel Bishop

NB stated that he kept having people referred to him for moorings. He explained that the Club had a full membership, full associate membership and 18 people on the waiting list for a mooring. IJ state that pontoons were being installed in Monk Meadow Dock by the end of May. He was asked about security and advised that there would be security fencing as a temporary measure.

NB stated that the footpath at Saul was the most used part on the canal and they were waiting to British Waterways to do something about it.

7.14 Chris Hayes

He advised the numbers at the NWM were down 30% due to the works being carried out which was having a impact on their revenue, but they were using it as an opportunity to have a critical look at what they did and make some changes.

The QBII was behind time as they had a delay in obtaining the necessary ballast but should be ready mid May.

7.15 Hugh Conway-Jones

HCJ stated he had received 300 visits to his website.

7.16 Paul Symons

PS stated that himself and Tim Davis of Big Fish Narrowboats with premises near Llanthony bridge. They stated that they brought in a lot of people who then visited the museum and they were launching two boats at the Crick Festival. They were appealing for assistance in find alternative premises in Gloucester if possible, as their premises formed part of the Gloucester Quays development site. They were asked if at any alternative premises they had craneage facilities to lift boats in and out of the water, would this facility be available to the public, and they confirmed it would. RT suggest that Sparrows Wharf might be suitable.

7.17 William Alexander

WA wanted to warn people about a spate of vandalism that was occurring in Frampton at the moment, particularly between the hours of 6 pm and 10 pm. He said this sort of thing occurred every 7 years and the police were almost powerless to do anything.

7.18 Mike Johnson

Voiced his concern about boaters navigational 'prowess' or lack of it as within the last 6 months there had been four occasions where there could have been a nasty accident.

Asked about the pilots, he advised that one had died 18 months ago, who had been replaced. Another has retired. They have 3 pilots and were hoping to recruit a 4th.

7.19 Martin Ludgate

He was pleased to say that by attending the Forums he had gained stories the other magazines had not.

7.20 Jim MacDonald

JM again expressed his concern about parking and stated that the boarding around the construction site did not leave much room. IJ state that this was out of his control and suggested he contact Ian Knight of the South West Regional Development Agency

7.21 Julia Hones

JH stated that the last AGM of the Worcester User forum was very successful with a presentation by the Droitwich Canal Trust. Next meeting was in June.

JH asked about progress on North Warehouse. IJ stated British Waterways were due to report by 1st May.

7.22 Martin Phillips

MP stated that if someone fell off a boat moored on the finger pontoons in the main basin it was difficult to get out and suggested ladders be put on the end of the pontoons, although there were objections from Gloucester Yacht Club to this as they were a hazard to their boats.

MB asked when the southern section of the South West Bypass would be completed and was told that the funding for this section was due to be paid by Eastchurch Development Co. but they were only liable to pay on sale of a certain number of houses which could be some time. SWRDA were, therefore, trying to obtain a bridging loan from the Government as the Contractors tender price expired in approx. 6 months and they did not want to have to go out to tender again. English Partnerships had £6 million earmarked for British Waterways to complete inner ring road. Meeting on 27th April. WD stated that he used to be Chairman of Quedgeley Parish Council when the planning for the housing development was going on, and he thought it would be 2 to 3 years before Eastchurch would be in a position to pay over this money. MB stated that there were a lot of issues but did not think it would be as long as 2 to 3 years.

7.23 Clive Field

CF informed the meeting about an article in next month's "Waterways World" regarding the approach to Gloucester which features Michelle Crowther. He also stated that she appeared on a poster and was the face of Saul Festival.

CF asked about signage at the partings in view of the large freight craft which would soon be coming to Gloucester. IJ stated that Keith Badsey, the Sharpness Harbour Master would be looking into this issue and there should be new navigational signs around June.

CF advised that the Saul Heritage Centre had 11,443 people through the doors between April 2004 and March 2005. It was hoped that new signage for "Saul Junction" would soon be obtained.

CCT trip boat "Perseverance" attracted people at weekends, and was for hire during the week for functions. This boat can carry 12 passengers.

Website of the month for May – www.junctionevents.org.uk.

Reminded everybody that subs were due.

8. Date of next meeting

13th July at a venue to be arranged.