



**British
Waterways**

Notes of the River Trent User Group Meeting – 26 October 2006

Coddington Community Centre, Coddington, Newark

Present

British Waterways:

Richard Noble (RN)	Customer Operations Manager, Chairman
Neil Harvey (NH)	Engineering and Asset Manager
Julian Rasen (JR)	River Trent Team Leader
Helen Edwards (HE)	Planner
Allan Linley (AL)	Patrol Officer
Debbie Mclardy	Customer Operations Supervisor
Steven Tupper (ST)	Recreation Manager, Environment Agency
M Straw	Mansfield & District Angling Association
W M Brown	Lincoln & District Angling Association
Mike Harrison	HNBOC
J W Baylis	IWA
Terence Balchin	AWCC & DMBC
J Rawlinson	Environment Agency Fisheries
Peter Adams	St John Ambulance & British Canoe Union
Les Reid	Newark Crusader
Peter Foster	NABO
David Birkett	Newark Crusader
John Morley	Marnham Ski Club & SBC
Gordon Sztejer	Trent Power Boat & Ski Club
Terry Pearce	Sheffield Boat Club
Barry Gatford	Nottingham Crusader
Carol Gatford	Nottingham Crusader
David Frost	Marnham Boat Club
Jonathan Frost	Marnham Boat Club
Dave Johnson	IWA Notts & Derbys
Nancy Johnson	IWA Notts & Derbys (Chairman)
Roy Nettleship	RYA
Ruth Nettleship	Nottingham Sailing Club
Mike Storey	Scunthorpe Angling Association
Barry Sweet	Scunthorpe Angling Association
David Dunning	TBA
Mike Bools	TBA
Nigel Mayglothling	Amateur Rowing Association
Kim Dale	British Waterways Business Development Manager
Rob Fitzsimons	British Waterways Trent Vale Project Officer
Simon Hopkinson	British Waterways Marketing Manager
Vanda Colman	British Waterways Customer Operations Assistant
Rachal Winter	British Waterways Customer Operations Assistant

Apologies

Margaret Smith	AWCC
Rex Waldren	RBOA
Beryl McDowall	RBOA

1) Notes from the last meeting

The notes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record, subject to the following amendments:

Mike Straw was missing from the apologies

Item 2 h) Poplar Arm Development – Notes should read that BW felt that Nottingham, not Newark, was missing out on an opportunity

2) Matters Arising

a. Torksey directional signs. Richard Noble (RN) informed the meeting that these will be installed and he is awaiting a date from the maintenance supervisor

b. Land outside Britannia Inn, Farndon. Steven Tupper (ST) will check the ownership of this land and confirm the legal rights of anglers and boaters. RN asked him to liaise with Marc Ballard, British Waterways Estates Surveyor.

c. Problems with Torksey Flood Gate. Peter Reilly from the EA has not contacted Peter Foster about this problem. ST said he would ensure this was done (Post meeting information – information from EA is attached to these notes at Enclosure 1, Peter Foster has been contacted)

d. Access steps at Newark Floodgates. RN informed the meeting that these works are being withheld at present

e. Electricity at The Kiln moorings. RN confirmed that the vandalized electricity points have been replaced

f. Floating Pennywort. Neil Harvey explained that BW were going to start digging out Pennywort in the Soar – it is nearly impossible to remove if not dealt with early enough

Post meeting note from Steven Tupper:

Please find attached a fact sheet on this issue (Enclosure 2). The Environment Agency and other interested parties have reviewed the approach to tackling Floating Pennywort. The Environment Agency is only removing floating pennywort where we feel it presents a real risk of causing flooding.

However we are able to advise and promote how to control the invasive species and to stop it spreading. I have asked the flood defence manager for the River Soar to give me an update on this, however he is currently on holiday.

g. Winter Lock opening hours at West Stockwith. The lock will be manned for 3 hours before and 3 hours after high water, as stated in the tide book, during hours of daylight between 7am and 5pm. No user self operation is available and bookings will not be taken outside of these hours. Exact daily times can be obtained from the lock keeper up to two weeks in advance.

h. BW Dry dock, Newark. Mike Harrison asked about the future of the dry dock. RN replied that a project team are considering potential uses for the whole area but there was nothing confirmed at the moment. BW have allowed trip boats to use it and BW operational craft are currently in the dock, but it is not likely to be available for general public use.

3) Maintenance Update

Julian Rasen (JR) provided his maintenance update and a copy is attached to these notes (Enclosure 3). Several issues were raised:

Nancy Johnson said that there is a damaged riser wire at Holme Lock, also trees are blocking the lights approaching Stoke (up river, right hand side) JR will take action

David Dunning mentioned that some of the timber edging on the lock wall at Holme Lock is missing. Julian has ordered replacement timber that will be fitted by next season

JR and David Dunning are to meet at Cromwell Lock to measure the 2nd pen depth marker. Dredging is due to be done below Cromwell in the summer

The entrance to West Stockwith is silted. JR noted this but said this work may not be done this winter

Depth indicator at Torksey – The lock wall depth indicator cannot be seen by boat. RN said that there is another indicator on the first pile when you enter the cut

John Baylis asked for confirmation that commercial boats should use bollards, not riser wires. It was confirmed that this was correct

Nigel Mayglothing asked for confirmation that there were no planned freight movements on the Trent as there was an event planned in Dec 06. JR replied no freight was planned

Peter Foster asked for confirmation that tree cutting is being done this winter. Julian said that he would be reviewing all trees on the Trent, particularly those around signs

4) British Waterways update

a. Trent Basin and Colwick Wharf. Helen Edwards provided the following update:

Trent Lane Basin

An application for outline planning permission for a mixed use scheme is expected to be submitted by ISIS and English Partnerships at the end of Oct 2006. To help inform the strategy for use of the waterspace and the river frontage two workshops were held in the summer. These were attended by representatives of a number of boating groups. The EA have confirmed that they will not accept T moorings at this location for operational reasons.

Post meeting information:

The EA will not accept T Bone moorings at this location; on this they were adamant, because of operational issues at this location. The operational issues are that the river itself is quite restricted in this location and it is the outside of a bend. They agreed to the 2m wide pontoon, against the wall, with mooring on the river side only

This applies to the right of the basin (looking at the basin from the river – in front of Phase B) and for the 'service' moorings just to the left of the basin. The EA do not want moorings along the soft bank area in front of Phase D – the waterside townhouses because of ecology issues. Please note, the moorings in front of Phase D were in any case only shown as being potential river moorings.

Colwick Wharf

In June 2006 BW submitted a planning application to extend the use of the wharf at Colwick to include a general purpose wharf. The application is being considered by Nottinghamshire County Council's Planning and Licensing Committee on 31 October 2006. The case officer is recommending approval subject to conditions.

b. Trent Vale update. Rob Fitzsimons, Trent Vale Project Officer, introduced himself to the meeting and provided an overview of the Trent Vale partnership. BW and the EA are two of the key partners in a £2 million project, due to last 3 years. The partnership aims to increase awareness about the river, its surrounding lands and its heritage, and to improve access for people to the river. Rob welcomes any ideas and feedback from user group members. He can be contacted The Kiln office at Newark or on 01636 675760. His email address is Robert.fitzsimons@britishwaterways.co.uk. Further information about the project can be found at www.ontrent.org.uk/youcando/trentvale. There will be consultation meetings held at Gainsborough Old Hall on 18th Nov 06 and Newark Town Hall on 22nd Nov 06 and user group members are welcome to attend.

c. DEFRA cuts. RN explained that BW's grant has been cut by DEFRA and this will result in 180 redundancies nationally. Peter Foster urged user group members to write to their MP to complain about the cuts, John Baylis supported this. It was also mentioned that a website, <http://www.saveourwaterways.org.uk> has been set up. ST added that the DEFRA cuts have also had an impact on the planned activities of the Environment Agency. In addition to these cuts the Midlands region is currently being restructured, taking it down from 4 areas to 3.

d. Volunteer safety on-site. RN said that BW is asking potential volunteers to contact BW prior to doing works on BW land. Permission will be granted if H&S requirements are met. RN confirmed this did not mean that there would be no volunteer work at all, just that they would need to liaise with BW

5) Issues raised by User Group Members.

RN asked for user group members to fully explain what information they wanted when submitting an item, this will assist BW to research the answers required

a. Trent Basin, Nottingham (Peter Foster). Peter said he was impressed with that he has seen, although disappointed with the EA. He has copies of BW's plan if anyone would like to see it.

b. Sunken boats/navigation hazards (Peter Foster) Peter asked what plans had been made to raise 'Helvik', a sunken craft between Newark and Farndon. BW are reviewing the best process for its safe removal and will resolve this prior to any great rise in water levels. Peter Adams asked why didn't BW introduce an insurance clause stating that underwriters would have to pay for the removal of a boat in these sorts of situations. RN replied that although BW stipulate that boats need to be insured there are always people who break the rules. AL added that BW policy requires a minimum 3rd party insurance cover, and some companies will in fact pay for the removal. BW can always pass the costs of removal onto the owner. AL confirmed that a Section 8 removal notice had been served on 'Helvik' and it is not currently seen as a navigation hazard.

c. Shallow channel/dredging (Peter Foster) Peter had received complaints about the lack of dredging in the Hazelford area. JR replied that he would always visit and check a site when he receives reports of craft hitting the bottom of the navigation

d. Water level boards on River Trent locks (John Baylis) John asked about reinstating water level boards. These had been removed when lock gates had been replaced over the years. RN replied that it had been agreed that these boards could now be reinstated. JR added that boaters can always ask the lock keeper if in doubt. Les Reid said that the upside down boards give you an indication of headroom which was more use at certain locations. Neil Harvey (NH) said that there were merits to both types of markers and he would had a look at both sorts

e. Commercial vessels (John Baylis) John said that there were a number of commercial and BW vessels moored on leisure moorings, eg. at Meadow Lane. He asked where BW would be mooring their craft in future now they have sold places like Trent Wharf and Whitehouse. NH replied that he is reviewing the mooring requirements for all BW workboats and he will take the appropriate action if private operators are seen mooring in unauthorised locations. AL said that mooring at Meadow Lane is very restricted because of limited access to the bollards. Peter Foster asked if it is safe to moor operational craft behind lock islands – RN replied that he had not received any reports of any problems and that these boats are securely chained.

6) AOB

RN said that he would cover AOB at this meeting but in future, he would prefer questions and feedback to be raised as agenda items

a. Land ownership at Farndon. Peter Adams asked the EA about an area of unregistered land at Farndon. The present ownership is not clearly known, although the EA mow the grass. He had been told that this arrangement was under review. ST said that he would look into this

Post meeting note from Steven Tupper:

I have begun my investigations into the land at Farndon. All Environment Agency records show that the land is not owned by the Environment Agency. I have received correspondence from a number of attendees at the meeting regarding the issue. In light of all the evidence I have collated so far I have applied for a land search for the piece of land in question, including the fishing rights to obtain who owns the land. This will identify who owns the land and we can progress the issue from there.

b. Powerboats and skiing. Gordon Szejter said that there is an ongoing problem with boats launching at Farndon and Hazelford and skiing outside the authorised zones. These boats are not in the Trent Powerboat and Ski Club but are old club boats with the numbers still on them. AL replied that he has liaised with Farndon and Britannia over a number of years and made visits at weekends to catch the offending boats, he has dealt with at least four this year. AL will follow up every incident that is reported to him, although he cannot stop them launching as it is not BW land.

c. Speed limit signs outside Farndon Marina. David Dunning asked if anything had been done about erecting a speed limit sign outside the marina. AL had been to visit the owner to discuss this but he cannot enforce the installation of the signs. A sign has been erected at Trent Villas and another will be installed near the slipway at the Britannia Inn

d. Hazelford Moorings. RN confirmed that the moorings at Hazelford Ferry had been sold at auction and had been bought by a private bidder.

e. Road access to Nether Lock. Les Reid from the Newark Crusader asked about the locked gate at Nether Lock. Helen Edwards replied that Marc Ballard, British Waterways Estate Surveyor, had been looking into this and she would ask Marc to give him a call about it. It was also mentioned that willows are growing around the stonework at Elbow Bridge. NH replied that he was not aware of any problems but will arrange for this to be looked at

f. Asian funerals. Mike Straw asked BW's rules regarding Asian funerals. RN replied that the EA are responsible for what is put into the river. John Baylis added that it must be ashes only, no personal clothing etc. The EA have spoken to a boat operator on the Soar and advised him of the most suitable location for the disposal of ashes. John Baylis advised that the County Hall and Suspension Bridge are the best locations for the Nottingham area. The EA have issued guidelines about the disposal of ashes

7) Date & Time of Next Meeting

The next user group will be held in the conference room at the Environment Agency Offices in West Bridgford on Thursday 8th March at 7pm.

From: Neil Whitehead [neil.whitehead@environment-agency.gov.uk]
Sent: 30 October 2006 15:31
To: Steven Tupper
Cc: Peter Reilly
Subject: Re: Fosdyke flood gates

Hi Steven,

I have been asked by Pete Reilly to reply to your email.

At Torksey doors, there are 3 flood defence doors which are maintained and operated by the Agency with British Waterways assistance where needed. All of the doors are manually opened and closed.

The first set of doors are facing into the River Trent (no 1). The no 1 gates are shut when the Trent is rising above 5.2 metres. No 2 gates which are located just under the road bridge are operated as back up gates in case any gates fail. No 3 gates are located in the lock area.

These gates are the ones that are mostly closed for flood events. The No 3 gates will be closed when the River Trent is at 4.2 metres and rising.

The level in the Lock area is maintained at 4.4 metres.

In addition to the above, stop logs must be installed outside the Keepers house and public toilets when any of the above gates are closed.

The doors are closed when Bench levels are reached on the Trent or are expected. When the need to close the doors has been reached, The Duty Officer will phone the Lock Keeper at Torksey to inform them of what is happening. If No 3 gates are been closed, the Lock Keepers can open and close them at there own risk to let boats through.

If No 1 gates are to be closed, this must be done by Agency staff. Agency staff will work with the Lock Keeper and British Waterways staff at Newark to make sure no or very little disruption is caused to the boaters. The Agency will open the gates as soon as possible.

After all that, in a major flood the lock can still function in an emergency to let boats in or out as the lock has been set up as double penning gates.

The bench levels and method for closing the doors was set up by a working party with the Agency staff at Gainsborough and British Waterways.

All of the above is esstenal to protect the surrounding land and Lincoln City from Major flooding.

Sorry for the long email, but the Lock's at Torksey are complex.

If you need any more information please let me know.

With thanks

Neil

Neil Whitehead
Operations Delivery, Technical Support Engineer

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>>> Steven Tupper 10/30/06 02:29PM >>>
Peter,

I have received an enquiry about the operation of the Torksey lock flood gates and the impacts on the navigation of the Trent and the Fossdyke navigation. Please can you respond to the questions below and I will forward the responses onto the Peter Foster who made the enquiry.

1, What warning if any is given to boaters when the flood gates are closed / opened.

2, Are the flood gates automatic and linked to the gauging stations or do they have to be operated manually.

Regards

Steven

Steven Tupper

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Floating pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*) key facts



Trend: Increasing

What is it?

Floating pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*) is originally from North America and was brought to Britain in the 1980s as a plant for tropical aquaria and garden ponds. However by 1991 it had become present in the wild. It has circular or kidney-shaped, deeply lobed leaves, up to 180mm across. The stem is horizontal with a fleshy appearance and has leaf stalks and roots every 0.2-0.3m. It has no flowers and can double its weight in as little as 3 days.

Where does it occur?



Distribution map of Floating pennywort in the UK. Source : Biological records centre 2003.

The plant is relatively restricted in its extent in the UK, reported in about 35 sites in the south of England and south Wales, its existence a likely result of release from aquaria and garden ponds. It is very likely to spread around UK watercourses and become a major nuisance in the future.

Why is it a nuisance?

Floating pennywort grows in shallow, slow-flowing eutrophic water bodies and forms dense interwoven mats of vegetation that extend up to 40cm above the water surface and up to 50cm below. These mats will quickly cover the water surface and can grow 20cm per day, resulting in a growth of up to 15m from the bank in a single

season. This mat starves the waterbody of light, nutrients and oxygen which kills many of the species living in it and also increases the risk of flooding by blocking the waterway.

What is our role?

We can advise and promote how to control Floating pennywort and to stop it spreading.

What are we doing?

The Environment Agency in collaboration with English Nature, NFU and the Centre for Aquatic Plant Management are investigating options for controlling this invasive plant.

We are removing Floating pennywort where we feel it presents a real risk of causing flooding.

Floating pennywort is sold in starter packs of pond plants in garden centres. English Nature and the Environment Agency are strongly advising that this plant be banned from sale altogether.

Environment Agency contact: Trevor Renals 724 5033

Useful Links:

http://www.plantlife.org.uk/html/influencing_change/influencing_change_campaigns_alien.htm

<http://www.english-nature.org.uk/news/story.asp?ID=75>

RIVER TRENT REPORT

OCTOBER 26TH 2006

FREIGHT

As the season comes to an end a reminder to all users that commercial vessels still use the River Trent Navigation. At the moment no barges are operating from the Gunthorpe site, this will change when another operator is found to move the gravel. The barges use VHF channel 74 on the non tidal section between Gunthorpe and Cromwell and then will move on to channel 6 on the tidal stretch.

Again a small reminder that larger gravel barges which use the tidal navigation may want to turn below Cromwell Lock, also a turning area has been made for the smaller barges to turn just above the loading jetty at Besthorpe. Please be aware of this operation when travelling upstream. When penning out of Cromwell the lock keeper will check for Barge movements. The Barge operators use channel 6 on VHF.

GWP

Routine works

Spot dredging on the navigation is an ongoing process, lock sites and specific areas known to be a problem have been concentrated on. Crane barges and tugs will carry out the operation. The vessel Trendis will be used for emptying the hoppers when in the Torksey Castle and potteries area. Please contact BW vessels on channel 6 in tidal waters and on Channel 74 topside of Cromwell Lock when you approach these works.

Rise and fall wires have been checked on a regular basis, if you find one that has been damaged then please inform Newark Office or a member of the River Trent Team.

Annual Maintenance works at all lock sites is ongoing, please be aware in the winter period whilst staff undertake maintenance the lock will not be on user operation. Please seek a member of staff if this is the case, they will normally penn you through as soon as possible.

Removal of vegetation in front of Navigational signs to be undertaken ASAP.

Non Routine works up to date

Corporate Sign replacement at Lock sites – Is ongoing

Works on Gunthorpe island to stop bank erosion – Before end of this financial year.

Access steps leading down to Newark flood gates – This has been deferred until the future of the Workshops is known. The area has been cut back and strimmed.

Nether, Averham & Gunthorpe weir inspections – This could take place before the end of the financial year depending on water levels.

Install safety steps to Dunham moorings – This will take place now the season has come to an end.

Mooring refurbish on lock approach downstream of Gunthorpe Lock - Before end of this financial year.

Proposal of Commercial mooring below Cromwell lock – Plans have been drawn up and a meeting with the commercial operators spokes person has taken place.

Wall repairs at Cromwell have been finished.

IF THE ABOVE WORKS ARE GOING TO CAUSE ANY DELAY, LOCK STAFF AND MAINTENANCE TEAM WILL INFORM USERS OF THE TIMESCALE – THIS SHOULD ONLY BE A SHORT DELAY.

FORTHCOMING WORKS FOR 07/08 - These will be discussed at the March 07 meeting

