

CBOA NEWS

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Terra Marique navigating the Kincardine bridge (R Wynn & Sons Ltd)

It is 60 years since a cargo has been delivered via the River Forth to Alloa. **Robert Wynn and Sons Ltd's** unique heavy lift ro/ro barge Terra Marique has become the first commercial vessel to transit the river Forth through the iconic Kincardine and Clackmannanshire bridges en route to Alloa.

The 80m x 16.5m barge, specifically designed to operate on inland waterways and offload without the need for significant onsite infrastructure, has successfully carried out 5 consecutive transits of the Forth loading at Forth Ports Rosyth to the offloading site on the outskirts of Alloa. 9 pieces were carried in total, with a combined weight of 941 tonnes, with the largest piece being 56m in length, 6m in diameter and weighing 187 tonnes.

The cargoes were loaded onto specialist transport provider Mammoet's self-propelled modular trailers (SPMTs) and rolled off in an offloading operation that took less than 90 minutes to complete.

With small tidal windows available on the Forth, careful planning down to the minute was needed to ensure successful operation, to include safe passage through the Kincardine and Clackmannanshire bridges.

Robert Wynn & Sons General Manager Andy Manners coordinated the operation and said: **"While the Terra Marique is purpose built for such operations, there are a number of factors unique to this project that has meant that detailed planning and collective working was required to successfully carry out such a complex operation. Our engineers, crew and those from Kestrel, Forth Logistics, Class 1 Maritime, GSS and Coastworks all worked tirelessly together to ensure this project was delivered as planned."**

Operations like these demonstrate how large waterways can considerably reduce the road miles needed for abnormally indivisible loads (AILs) and consequently reduce the disruption and wear and tear on the road network.



Unloading on the outskirts of Alloa (R Wynn & Sons Ltd)

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From the Chairman



Most readers will be aware of the decision by the government to reduce the grant funding for the Canal & River Trust from 2027 in stages from its current level – itself effectively reduced by inflation. Although the agreement between the Trust and the government anticipated that the Trust would be self funding by 2027 a large number of unexpected challenges – many concerned with infrastructure such as reservoirs – have required a significant on-going financial investment thus leaving less funding for general maintenance. CBOA has been pleased to support and join the **Fund Britain's Waterways group with other organisations, led by the Inland Waterways Association**, calling for the government to reconsider its decision and to provide the funding necessary to support the inland waterways (not just those managed by the Trust) for leisure and commerce. (See item on the IWA Campaign Cruise on page 10).

In my last report I **noted the first movement of member MMS Work Boats' converted 600 tonne tanker MMS Off Roader** – the final trial movement of aggregates to Leeds (Knostrup wharf). We now await developments in connection with the proposed Port Leeds at Stourton; this will be a wharf capable of handling aggregates and general cargoes, with ready mix plant and recycling on site, and which has the support of Leeds City Council, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the Canal & River Trust. In the meantime we congratulate our member MMS on its partnership with Caspar Chartering Ltd to offer a through service for cargoes by ship and barge via the Humber ports. In connection with this we are pleased to report that *MMS Off Roader* made a demonstration trip in ballast up to Rotherham in early November, while Kingsferry Wharf on the River Trent has recently re-opened and operators, the MCL Group, say they can accept vessels up to 4500 tonnes capacity. (See page 12).

The Association continues to provide advice and support to members with the quest for new business opportunities; currently these include movement of aggregates and salt on the River Weaver, movement of aggregates on the Aire & Calder (main line and Wakefield branch), and large scale movement of imported steel to a newly refurbished wharf at Althorpe (Keadby) on the Trent. We also follow up enquiries for movements by narrow boat – Richard Horne leads on this for us in this very specialist area. Richard also keeps an eye on planning applications and we always follow up with advice and representation where appropriate.

CBOA continues to be well represented on key CRT groups – the Navigation Advisory Group and its sub groups for dredging and stoppages.

We have been pleased to welcome to the committee, John Spencer, Managing Director of GPS Marine Contractors (see feature on page 7 of our previous issue 32). John has recently been appointed chairman of the **Inland Waterways Association's Inland Waterways Freight Group** and we look forward to working closely with John and our partners in IWA (of which we are a corporate member). We also congratulate John on being awarded the **IWA's freight award (see page 7)** and our Vice-President, John Dodwell, likewise for his waterway award (see page 7). Our distinguished operator member Noel Tomlinson has decided to step down from his position as NE Representative after many years service. Noel and his family have been barge operators for generations and his advice and support have been hugely appreciated. We wish Noel a happy retirement but we now seek a successor. Would anyone in the Humber/Yorkshire area be willing to take over the role which is basically to act as a point of contact for the area and to keep an eye on water freight matters generally? Similarly our member Les Reid, himself a long standing barge and boat operator, is looking to stand down from the post of CBOA representative in the East Midlands. Would anyone be willing to take this on? **It's a fairly open brief** for both positions, not at all onerous. Please let Lee or Tim West know in either case.

We are pleased that we do not need to raise the level of subscriptions from next July but as reported at the AGM we cannot ignore inflationary pressures and will be seeking agreement to raise subscriptions in line with inflation in the future. As I said last time income from subscriptions only just covers our costs – Newsletter, admin, and a part **contribution in some years to attending an event. Not all members have changed their Banker's Order and some** have still renewed at the old rate. Please do check whether you have paid your subs and change as necessary!

Our AGM this year was held on 9th November at 2pm and was held on-line. Lee Wilshire and John Spencer were elected to committee, while other committee members were re-elected. Following the AGM we enjoyed presentations from James Andrews (Cory) and Michelle Gardner (Logistics UK) and our thanks are due to them for attending.

At a special committee meeting following the AGM Lee Wilshire was appointed CBOA Chairman, and all other officers were re-appointed.

This will therefore, be my last CBOA News report as CBOA Chairman – **a post I have held for some ten years. It's been a privilege to have served CBOA and the water freight industry in this capacity but I feel it's time for someone else to be given the tiller or the wheel and I am delighted that our southern representative and Commercial Manager at member Wood, Hall & Heward is willing to take over.** Not only will it be good to have a younger person at the helm **but also someone based in the south where so much of our sector's activity takes place** – although I know Lee wants **to get 'out and about' to familiarise himself with operations elsewhere on the system.** In the meantime I am happy to remain a member of the CBOA committee with a special interest in the north east. Thank you for your support, not only for me during my tenure but for Lee going forward.

David Lowe

UK News

In July, Richard Parry, Chairman of CRT reported on the sudden DEFRA announcement about CRT future funding. £52.6m is provided each year as from 2012 to CRT with no inflationary increase allowed for since 2021, until 2027.

This grant will then fall by five per cent every year until 2036/37 when it will have reached £31.5 million, with no adjustment for any inflation. It is calculated that this will be a real-term reduction of over £300 million over the ten years.

Richard acknowledges that there are some positive aspects of the announcement. There was no legal obligation on Government to continue its funding after the initial grant agreement expires and CRT has successfully demonstrated that there is a strong case for funding to continue given the scale of benefits the Trust delivers. He states that CRT has convinced Government that another long-term agreement is justified given the significant national infrastructure in their care, with Government committing to a new 10-year grant agreement, up until March 2037. Also, there is **'clear value for money' with waterways shown to deliver substantial benefits to the economy, to people and communities, and to nature and biodiversity,** but this makes the future grant levels announced even more disappointing.

Richard says they must generate income from other sources, reduce costs and manage their work efficiently and innovatively. Even so, such a steep reduction in grant will inevitably lead to a decline in the condition of the network and the alarming prospect of canal closures. Richard states that they are now campaigning for reinstatement of the full grant aid and he is asking everyone and organisations to support the Trust in this fight; there are four years before all this is to be effected, time enough to make a change. CBOA is of course supportive of any moves to persuade government to fund the waterways adequately.

A group called Fund Britain's Waterways (FBW) has been set up comprising over two dozen waterway organisations, spearheaded by the Inland Waterways Association (IWA), supporting and promoting better funding of the waterways. The outgoing IWA Chair Les Etheridge, is chairing the FBW Steering Group. See their web site www.fundbritainswaterways.org.uk

For the two grant schemes mentioned in the previous CBOA News, i.e., Modal Shift Revenue Support and Freight Grant, the application deadline for financial year 2023 to 2024 funding, is the 8th December 2023.

Two steps are required to apply for and receive funding from either scheme:

1. Originally register, to be verified by the Department for Transport (DfT) as suitable to receive journey grant funding.
2. Make individual claims for individual journeys, once registered and verified.

See web site <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-transport-delivers-more-grant-funding-to-transport-freight-by-rail/mode-shift-revenue-support-and-waterborne-freight-grant-applications-and-background-information>

Alternatively, simply search for MSRS or freight grants.

The CBOA chairman has been advised by the manager of the Government Freight Grants team that depreciation costs on capital equipment such as a loading or unloading crane can be included, although of course the capital cost cannot. These depreciation costs would be viewed in the same way as rental costs on capital equipment.

In the CBOA News a year ago, Dr. Momchil Terziev kindly wrote an article about his research to date on vessel hydrodynamics, and also how this relates to vessels in canals and rivers with a restricted channel. This posed several questions which required research to answer.

He has now produced an urban planning paper (<https://doi.org/10.17645/up.v8i3.6752>) outlining his work so far. Comparing other land transport modes where there is friction from wheels, barges have a different type of friction – with water. As Momchil says this is a complex area, but it is important to understand and to quantify this to ascertain the extent of the benefits of barge transport, in particular over road transport. Other undesirable aspects to evaluate are for example bank erosion and waste of fuel; both these can be reduced by more efficient running, and dredging producing a better channel profile.

In the paper he starts by examining the Reynolds number (where velocity, vessel size, the density of water and dynamic viscosity are factors) and the depth Froude number (where water depth, speed, gravitational acceleration are factors). He notes **that in general, significant waves are produced where there is a change in the vessel's cross-sectional area**, moving along the waterway, and then studies the effect of this change, together with change in sedimentation causing the channel shape/profile change.

The Reynolds number determines if flow is laminar or turbulent, where the former causes less friction, so therefore easier navigation. The Froude number and blockage ratio can be used to define sub-critical and transcritical flow, and approaching the latter causes an exponential increase in power requirements. (The blockage ratio is the ratio of the cross-section of the hull to the cross-sectional area of the channel at a given point). This was discovered and examined by John Scott in the late 19th century. The transcritical region being non-linear is difficult to evaluate or replicate experimentally. Momchil notes that this will occur more during times of drought on rivers with lower levels. Liquid mud (partially held in suspension perhaps) is also a problem to evaluate **as it does not follow Newton's laws of physics either!**

Erosion of the banks can cause a cantilever effect or overhanging with the banks falling in, causing further silting. As we know this causes reduction in the depth and a wider canal surface, however the blockage ratio remains approximately the same. This is shown to increase the Froude number calculation, causing more energy to be expended as waves, in effect creating a positive feedback loop, increasing bank erosion further. Hence the need to maintain an effective canal cross section up to the edge to reduce bank erosion as far as possible. Different bank materials behave with this in different ways.

Vegetation also changes silt stability and passage of water. Momchil notes that many canals in the UK were dug by hand and only just deep enough for loaded vessels to pass, and perhaps not an ideal channel shape. Using the Froude number calculation, he says that **the vessel can occupy no more than 2.5% of the canal's cross-sectional area** in order to sustain a speed of 4 mph – the limit specified on many waterways by CRT – no wonder 2.5 to 3 mph is the norm with loaded narrow boats on many of the narrow canals! Momchil says that at 2 mph, the equivalent critical blockage becomes 0.262, i.e., the vessel can occupy up to approximately 26% of the cross-sectional area.

At speeds near or above the critical boundary, large volumes of water are mobilised causing friction on the canal bed resulting in erosion, sediment resuspension, and poor water quality – all undesirable. The specific case of the Aire and Calder investigation examined by CRT can be used as an example to illustrate the effects discussed above. With a counter current to the vessel movement, limited depth and cross section exacerbates turbulent friction, suspended sediment, bank erosion and disturbing aquatic life. Deepening the canal improves these effects dramatically and Momchil quotes figures illustrating the case. The relationship between the cost and the delivered benefit must be understood to allow informed decision-making. As he says it is unlikely that a navigation authority would be able to double the depth during a dredging campaign, but as demonstrated simple calculations can give an estimate of the associated trade-offs. Although as he says conflicting goals of different waterway users must be reconciled through informed decision-making, it appears as if there is more than a bit of synergy in the need for a more effective channel section and depth, which will benefit all waterway users, CRT and also wildlife.

Finally, although Momchil has discussed the effects of blockage ratio, the effect of shape has not been examined to his knowledge. This is an area where hydrodynamics research can inform dredging practice. It is plausible that simple alterations in the shape of a canal, created during maintenance dredging, can influence the overall fuel consumption and disturbance created by a vessel and lessen the energy and burden of future dredging.

Momchil concludes by re-stating the case for water freight requiring only 17% of the energy consumed by road transport per tonne-mile; the need for all energy efficiency measures should be adopted to postpone irreversible climate change. Increasing recognition of inland waterways with their benefits including use for freight is paramount. Knowledge of the hydrodynamics governing flow behaviour can be used to devise effective measures to minimise disruption through cost effective decision making. In this context, it is particularly important to understand the trade-offs between vessel speed and depth or blockage ratio. More targeted advice, taking into account local conditions is necessary if decarbonisation of inland waterway transportation in the UK is to be optimised.

In May, Gavin Newlands Shadow SNP Spokesperson (Transport) asked the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of amending the zonal boundaries and eligibility for grant support for intra-zonal freight movements within the Mode Shift Revenue Support Scheme. Also, what discussions he has had with representatives of the European Commission on the operation of the Mode Shift Revenue Support Scheme. Richard Holden Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Transport) replied that a review of the Mode Shift Revenue Support (MSRS) scheme, which runs until 31 March 2025, will commence soon. This review will consider all aspects of the scheme, including zonal boundaries. The current scheme operates under the EU State Aid regime, so any amendments have to be made in line with this legal framework. However, the revised scheme would be governed by the **UK's independent state aid regime, enabling greater flexibility with the design of the scheme.**

Greg Knight Conservative, East Yorkshire asked the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking with Cabinet colleagues to help encourage the use of canals and rivers; and if she will make a statement. Rebecca Pow The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs replied that the waterways are a national heritage asset, with biodiversity, pleasant routes for active and sustainable travel, physical and mental health, water stewardship, recreational benefits, water-borne freight and renewable energy. The waterways networks host utilities including broadband cabling, as well as playing a key role in system-wide flood risk management, land drainage and water supply. She then quoted the Environmental Improvement Plan in January 2023, where government will "...continue to work with navigation authorities as appropriate, recognising the value of access to blue space, particularly within inner city environments. For example, announcing future funding for the Canal and River Trust **to support local access improvements and awareness.**" Well, water freight did get a mention in that reply, albeit somewhat immersed in the middle.

A partnership bid with the EA and RS Electric (part of RS Marine) and RAD propulsion has been awarded £4.1m from the Zero Emission Vessels and Infrastructure (ZEV) competition, run by the UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions (UK SHORE) and Innovate UK. This allocation will be shared across a range of academic, marine and inland waterways partners, to supply electrically-powered vessels and assist with design of vessels and to encourage innovation.

The EA said it would be trialling four electric workboats and two charging points, on the River Thames and East Anglia over the next three years. The EA say that these boats will be for enforcement, monitoring and maintenance purposes; however, it was not stated whether some of these boats will be designed and used for actual waterway maintenance or for more lighter duties.

The May issue of the *Smart Transport* magazine produced by the organisation of the same name, covered in some detail recent successful water transport operations, both on the Thames and elsewhere. As the Chair Stephen Joseph says, councillors are encouraged to re-think water transport options for freight, and to try out new ideas. Several operations were featured, including DHL parcel delivery and waste carrying by water in London, aggregate carrying on the A&CN in the North East, as well as other operations such as light electric freight vehicle delivery.

The Smart Transport team meets quarterly, connecting public sector policy with private sector solutions to achieve a digitalised and decarbonised multi-modal transport future. It promotes an ambitious collaborative agenda, working with national government, **combined regional authorities, transport agencies and private industry "Connecting Policy to Solutions" to achieve a clean, green and interconnected multi-modal transport for all.** <https://www.smarttransport.org.uk/>

Logistics UK report that as part of a recent announcement, the Department for Transport has also said it will review the Mode Shift Support and Waterborne Freight Grant to explore how to continue helping the sector decarbonise, by shifting freight from road to rail or water through the two schemes.

"Logistics UK has been calling for a review into the Mode Shift Revenue Support (MSRS) scheme for some time, which currently disproportionately benefits the rail sector," continues Ms Jennings. **"In fact, 2022 research indicated that 95% of the funding from this scheme had been allocated to rail freight.**

"While rail provides strong opportunities for modal shift and must be supported, action must be taken to prevent disadvantaging water freight, which also brings many social and economic benefits. We look forward to inputting into this review."

CBOA understands that the all-electric (or hydrogen) powered 44 tonne HGV is a major challenge to develop for long distance freight at any rate but there are still emissions/particulates from road and tyre wear, brake dust, accidents, congestion etc which is not an issue for water transport, and that this should also be taken into account.

Regional News

The Vivian Bulkeley-Johnson Salt prize is awarded this year for the first time since 2013. It is awarded to the person or **organisation who, in the opinion of Trustees, upon a recommendation from IWA's Inland Waterways Freight Group, has made an** outstanding contribution to the furtherance of commercial waterways transport in the United Kingdom. The trophy is a hall-marked solid silver salt, presented by Vivian Bulkeley-Johnson, a former IWA Treasurer from the 1950s and member of the Rothschild banking family, who financed the Willow Wren narrow boat carrying operations.

This year it goes to John Spencer who runs GPS Marine, a successful family firm engaged in a wide range of inland waterways activities (based on the Thames and Medway).

John has been running a lobbying campaign to promote inland waterways freight across the board, certainly not limiting himself to GPS's sphere of operation. He is largely responsible for the fact that pretty well all the commercial operators on the Thames are now running on HVO with the very substantial savings in emissions and particulates this represents.

Over the past couple of years, he has been extremely helpful in guiding the IWA Sustainable Boating Group with its trial work with HVO for use in inland waterways craft, and has won a wide range of freight, logistics and sustainability awards.

Subsequent to his nomination for the Salt, John has taken over as Chair of the Inland Waterways **Association's** Freight Group and will be leading an active campaign to increase the use of the waterways for freight.

GPS' portfolio comprises transport of goods by barge, marine civil engineering & construction, backhoe & plough dredging, marine & offshore demolition, international, coastal & harbour towage, diving & sub-surface engineering.

John is also a member of the CBOA Committee.

The Christopher Power Prize is awarded to a person, society or trust who has made the most significant contribution to the restoration of an inland waterway.

There is a cash prize associated with this award, which is given to a waterway restoration group associated with the winner, **where the winner is a named individual. The aims and objectives of the group must be consistent with IWA's aims and objectives.** The trophy, a carved wooden otter, was presented to the Association by Volvo Penta.

This prize was awarded to John Dodwell who has nominated the Montgomery Waterway Restoration Trust to receive the cash prize. Both the Trust and John are very deserving of this award.

John is Chair of the Montgomery Canal Partnership which brings together various groups interested in completing the restoration of the Canal, including the Montgomery Waterway Restoration Trust.

The Trust's record for accessing substantial new sources of funding is outstanding, largely thanks to John's in-depth knowledge of funders coupled with his skill in preparing bids. Funding the restoration of a canal that runs through 2 different countries – each with its own unique legislation and grant regimes, is a unique challenge.

The combination of contractors working alongside volunteers to ensure speedy delivery of new build and sympathetic restoration has proved highly effective.

The pace of progress over the past 5 years gives hope that we will see the full restoration of the Montgomery Canal achieved in the coming 5 years. As a result of his skilled leadership, the reputation of the Montgomery Waterway Restoration Trust is at an all-time high.

Other major restoration groups are quick to praise John's willingness to share his deep knowledge of SSSI's and offer support in a discreet way. John is a highly effective ambassador for the wider inland waterways restoration movement.

John has also served CBOA with distinction as Chairman having promoted its reformation nearly 2 decades ago, and then latterly as a Vice-President.

Profile: Julia Cook, Jules Fuels



We are pleased and grateful that Julia has written the profile of her and her company for us in this issue. When asked if she would do this for the last issue, it was the busy season with fuel deliveries, so it had to wait. Most of the boats she mentions in the fleet are "Town Class" – named after British towns, and built by the Grand Union Canal Carrying Co Ltd in the mid-1930s. Some built for the same company are "Star Class" named after constellations. "Northwich" refers to the ship yard J Yarwoods in Northwich, "Woolwich" refers to the ship yard Harland and Woolff at Woolwich.

Having grown up in Stoke Bruerne on the Grand Union Canal in Northamptonshire in the 1950's and 1960's, the canal and particularly the passing working boats always held a fascination for me. My father owned a pleasure boat and we spent many happy weeks every year travelling on the 'cut'.

1976 until 1982 was spent working for Foxton Boat Services in Leicestershire, a very happy time with camping boats *Coleshill* and later *Virginis*, loading cargoes of scouts and school groups in summer, and some coal for canalside deliveries in winter.

Back in Stoke Bruerne to send the children to Primary School there (the same one I attended, and now so do some of my grandchildren!) I got my working boat fix by helping out at the Canal Museum, being asked to take their motorboat *Sculptor* to various events. Working with T Morley on local boat trip boats and doing contract mowing and vegetation clearance for British Waterways.

Children having grown up and big Northwich motor boat *Towcester* bought from T Morley, Richard and I took over a local fuel boat business, delivering diesel, solid fuel and sundries to boats and homes between Stoke Bruerne and around Braunston,

renaming the company 'Jules Fuels'. We usually loaded beside the Boat Inn at Stoke Bruerne and opposite the New Inn at Buckby Top Lock. At this time 4 tonnes of coal and 2000 litres of diesel was sufficient for the trip. (Richard also had his own separate warehouse company, since closed). We operated a year or so like this until a friend asked if we would take over his similar business south of Leighton Buzzard, he having to give up due to family concerns. In order to fulfil this, we bought the big Woolwich *Bideford* to increase our capacity (she needed some restoration work), towing the *butty* when loaded on a 70' line (snubber) and breasting up to serve customers.

Our busiest times of course, were and are in the late autumn and winter months, summer being devoted to boat maintenance and until he retired, taking a run to John Jackson's yard near Wolverhampton to pick up a bulk coal load at summer rates to deliver to those who had somewhere to stock a tonne or so. Those trips frequently involved quite a few working boats travelling together and were very convivial!

Business grew, we were now operating from just south of Rugby down to Apsley near Watford. The round trip taking us almost 4 weeks. We needed another boat on the job so subcontracted the Stoke Bruerne to Rugby section out to Ryan Dimmock on his then newly acquired little Woolwich *Southern Cross*. The Milton Keynes section which had been run by a competitor became available and again we found ourselves with a full-time job. The size of the area caused difficulties, especially during the winter months when maintenance stoppages meant the boats being unable to get all the way through for weeks at a time. To overcome this problem, we purchased the big Woolwich motor *Bletchley* from Alan Buckle who had been working her on the river Nene.

As we got known, we got busier and we needed more help. Big Woolwich *butty Bordesley* was acquired to work with *Bletchley* from Bullbourne to Bulls Bridge – steered by Nick Scarcliffe and Andrew Haysom. At about this time we also purchased the big Northwich motor *Tadworth* – which was in a semi derelict condition and took several months of rebuilding (during the covid pandemic, to make life more interesting!) to make her fit for purpose. Andrew Haysom subsequently bought *Tadworth* from us and currently operates her on the southern section along with *Bordesley*.

In 2021 we decided to semi-retire (still running the company and being spare crew), Nick Scarcliffe, having bought *Bletchley* from us took over the central area with his partner Mary Hicks – working with our buddy *Bideford*.

By now the company was moving over 1000 tonnes of solid fuel and 600,000 litres of diesel a year. However, retirement seemed a bit tame so when the owners of *Dusty*, the Southern Oxford Canal fuel boat, approached us to take over that section we agreed and planned to use our motor boat *Towcester* on the round replacing their modern 60' vessel. Sadly, at around the same time Rick Cooper who operated his motor *Auriga* around the Coventry and lower Trent and Mersey canals, died. After discussions with the team, it was decided that our colleague Bob Stoner would cover the South Oxford with *Dusty* with Richard and I working the Coventry and Trent Mersey canals with *Towcester*.



The fleet underway, buitties on snubbers

The fleet now comprises *Towcester*, *Bideford*, *Bordesley*, and *Dusty* owned by Jules Fuels and *Bletchley* owned by Nick Scarcliffe, *Tadworth* owned by Andrew Haysom and *Southern Cross* owned by Ryan Dimmock. Running deliveries from Great Haywood to Shardlow, Fradley to Sutton Stop, Hillmorton and top of Stockton to Bulls Bridge with kindling, logs, smokeless coal, diesel, toilet fluids and grease.

The job of running a fuel boat is not always easy; **it's pretty much full time, usually loading at 7am** (not earlier so not to cause too much racket and upset locals). Depending on area and requirements, loads can be from 4 tonnes to 18 tonnes of coal plus up to 10,000 litres of diesel. A trip can take from 10 days in summer to 24 in winter. Loading maybe 2 or 3 times during each trip (and useable wharfs are

getting harder to find). The most we can realistically load on the boats is about 18 tonnes on each, they (except the 60' *Dusty*) could

take more but the depth of the canal limits our draught. We generally start our daily deliveries at about 8.30am, working on the principle that most folks don't want us banging about with bags of coal and gas bottles before breakfast. We try to stop before it gets too dark, then its **paperwork, texting next day's customers**, wash, cook, eat (maybe a beer) walk the dog and gratefully flop into bed. Our business has changed from being largely cash based to mostly debit/credit card payments and bank transfers. So, paperwork involves sales being entered into the accounting software in order for Richard to match payments. Paperwork

in a traditional cabin is a challenge, often done in the 'bed ole' whilst cooking is going on at the other end. However, it's not all problems. In fine weather it's a great job, out with boats we love, meeting lots of people who, for the most part, are glad to see us, we laugh a lot. What will the future bring? Challenges no doubt. We are very lucky with our colleagues, not many want to work with so small a living space in a dirty and responsible job. All of us have been boating since we were young (some of them are still young of course).

The canal system is deteriorating at an alarming rate, getting shallower, is overgrown and with locks frequently out of action. Silted canals mean we have reduced our loads and load more often which is often a headache as loading wharfs are getting rarer.

Historic boats like ours, whilst being a joy to handle, are expensive to maintain and regulations regarding them are constantly changing and becoming more stringent.

The last 17 years have been fun and challenging in equal measure, the business is constantly evolving, never a dull moment.



It's no roses and castles (all photos: Julia Cook)



Cory placed an initial order for 11 barges valued at £8.5 million with Harland & Wolff at Methil on the Firth of Forth, on 1st June. This was subsequently followed up with a second contract for a further 12 barges, taking the contract total to £18.1 million.

In August, the first barge was launched and taken by sea to Cory's lighterage site on the banks of the River Thames. It will join Cory's existing fleet of tugs and barges which are used to transport recyclable and non-recyclable waste via a series of river-based transfer stations across London. Cory is one of the largest commercial operators on the Thames, and its use of the river to transport waste removes around 100,000 truck journeys from London's roads each year.

This project has kept 115 people in active work at the Methil facility and enabled further employment, bringing the workforce up to around 150 people. Around 15 year one and year two apprentices have been able to work on this project, providing them with essential shipbuilding experience at this crucial early stage of their careers.

It was quoted as the first barge to be built at Harland & Wolff's yard in Methil, since 1856. It is also welcome to see the barge construction being kept 'in house' **for the benefit of a UK company and the country's economy as a whole.**

In the recent report "Scottish Ports: Gateways for Growth 2023", it was stated that the ports contribute an estimated £1.5bn gross added value to the Scottish economy every year, and employ 18,600 people. 70% of freight arrives or leaves the ports by road. It is recognised that funding needs to be sought in developing road, waterway and particularly rail connections to avoid road congestion, but certainly a multi modal approach is needed, the report said.

The report recognises that coastal shipping has a definitely positive environmental benefit for decarbonisation, quoting timber as an example of a Scottish coastal cargo. There would seem to be scope here for timber export via waterways to ports which CBOA News Spring/Summer 2011 reported on the front cover, that timber had been exported via the Caledonian Canal.

George Finch, Policy & Economic Analyst at the British Ports Association said: "Scottish Ports: Gateways for Growth 2023 is a testament to the remarkable breadth and significance of the Scottish ports industry. This document showcases the vital role our ports play in connecting communities, powering industries, and driving economic growth. It provides a comprehensive roadmap for the future, addressing key challenges and opportunities, from green initiatives to offshore wind projects. Together, we can ensure that Scottish ports continue to thrive and contribute to a prosperous and sustainable Scotland."

This summer the EA announced a £9.5 million investment into the non-tidal Thames over 2022/23. This to cover lock and other improvements from Windsor at Romney lock to sites above Oxford. On older style locks such as at Rushey, the timber posts are being replaced along with other necessary remedial works. Some of these locks have been rebuilt several times since their construction, mainly from the 1770s onwards. However, the first pound locks were built at Iffley, Sandford and the now redundant Swift Ditch lock on a side stream at Abingdon; these first three being built by the early Oxford – Burcot Commission in the 1630's, this organisation being followed by the Thames Commission in the 18th century, then the Thames Conservancy in the 19th.

The Thames is an almost totally underused resource for water transport with its large locks and good depth on the lower reaches. CBOA corporate member The Narrow Boat Trust faithfully continue their annual fuels delivery service to customers on the Thames, including those on the rivers Wey and Kennet.

On the 14th November, the IWA planned a campaign cruise on the Thames tideway to demonstrate against the funding cuts. The plan was to lay off the Palace of Westminster for around 10 minutes and the boats to collectively sound their horns to draw the **attention of Parliament and the general public to the need to safeguard the future of Britain's inland waterways.** A public petition has been running **calling on the Prime Minister to acknowledge the many social, economic and environmental benefits of Britain's inland waterways** and to give his assurance that the government will intervene where necessary to ensure our rivers and canals remain open, safe and accessible for all. CBOA News was going to press at the time, so the success of the cruise and petition is not known. We sincerely hope it created enough impact both with ministers and the PM to ensure sufficient future funding.

Earlier this year CBOA member Robert Wynn and Sons specialist heavy lift barge the Terra Marique was chartered to carry an electricity transformer on the river Clyde in Glasgow. The Terra Marique loaded a 197t transformer at Clydebank Port Services Ltd's Rothesay Dock (West) on the North Bank of the Clyde prior to navigating the short 3-mile distance up the river to Peel Ports' King George V Dock, Glasgow.

Seen here, it is being unloaded by Mammoet who specialise in large electrical plant moves and other heavy lift operations.



Terra Marique unloading on the Clyde (J Mosse)

In the press

An article in *Coastal Shipping* this summer announced that Coldharbour Jetty Rainham, Essex was in use and had seen a steady trade of export waste wood to Hamina, Finland. In CBOA News Spring/Summer 2019, we reported on **Land and Water's** acquiring of the jetty and refurbishing it together with dredging to increase the capacity of the wharf for shipping.

Coastal Shipping also reported that in February, the coaster *Swami* was on the Manchester Ship Canal with cement from Limerick to Premier Cement, Weaste, and the Paulin B was travelling down the canal from Premier Cement to Cardiff.

Coastal Shipping also reported that there 14 arrivals at Flixborough on the Trent during January with a variety of cargoes. *Coastal Shipping* reported there are plans to build the new power station at Flixborough called the North Lincolnshire energy Park, that will burn 750,000 tonnes of waste yearly, arriving by sea or using Flixborough's rail connection. **Gunness on the Trent** also had two calls from coaster *Mozart* with chemicals. Sutton Bridge on the river Nene has been locally contentious apparently, with resistance to the operating licence renewal, however there is benefit locally with provision of trade and jobs. Kings Lynn also received 4 ships with aggregates and salt imported from Germany and Netherlands during April and May.

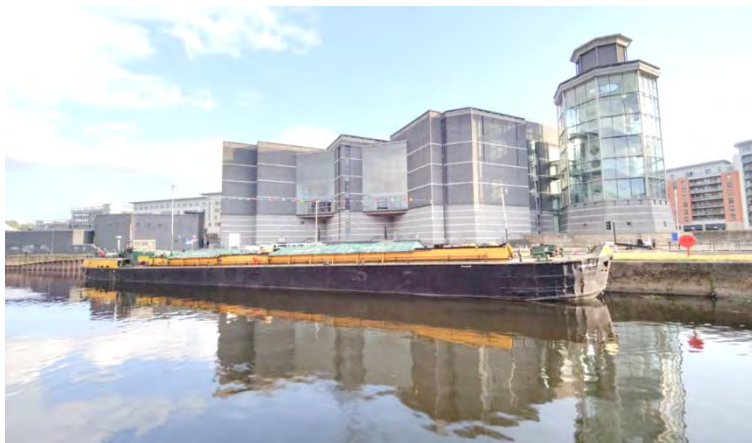
In a summer issue of *Logistics* magazine, Michelle Gardner, Deputy Director of Policy, Logistics UK outlined the extent of the present trend that the freight industry is turning to electric vehicles. However, this has not yet happened within the HGV industry. Sustainable fuels (SF) are a challenge with their availability. With 90 per cent of everything we buy arriving by sea she says, it requires onward transport inland by other means.

Currently, coastal shipping and inland waterways account for 15 per cent of UK domestic freight. For bulk commodities to be more efficient she says, a barge can replace 17 HGVs. Logistics UK is calling for appropriate grants and infrastructure investment to support these sectors as well as at major ports to improve connectivity.

Rail plays its part of course, but there is finite capacity with competing with passenger traffic and more infrastructure upgrades are required. A multi modal approach is required across for both rail and water especially for bulk cargoes; this is to ensure the logistics sector as a whole meets the 2050 net zero deadline.

In a round table meeting at the palace of Westminster in June on Decarbonising Logistics, it was highlighted that biofuels are also currently being used on inland waterways and other modes and that inland waterways – such as the Thames – also have the potential to make a sizeable contribution towards decarbonisation by taking freight off the roads. One company stated that they are moving around 4,000 containers a week by rail and are in the process of looking at options to move freight by water. The meeting was chaired by Greg Smith MP (Transport Committee member & Road Freight and Logistics APPG Chair); in attendance were Iain Stewart MP (Transport Committee Chair) and representatives from freight organisations Evri, RHA, Currys, Eddie Stobart, Airlines UK, Amey Fleet Services and DHL.

Fusedale H



Fusedale at Leeds Waterfront (L Pooley)

Humber Barges Ltd's *Fusedale H* was on display at the Leeds Waterfront Festival in June. The organisers had invited the company to display a barge at the event, reflecting the association of Canal Connections who were closely **involved in the event's organisation and** support with local barge operator Humber Barges Ltd. Leeds Lock marks the absolute limit for craft of this size – the last time a 500 tonner was here was for the IWA National Rally in August 1981 when tanker Humber Enterprise discharged at the Esso wharf just

downstream of Leeds Lock and then proceeded the few hundred yards or so to Fearn's Island/Leeds Lock for display. Many other smaller freight craft were able to pass through Leeds lock and moor near Leeds bridge at that 1981 event.

Fusedale H was one of six 500 tonne tankers built specifically (though not exclusively) to carry petroleum product from Saltend (Hull) to the Esso terminal at Leeds as part of a contract to move 2.5 million tonnes over ten years from 1967, and for which the Aire & Calder was enlarged and deepened and a new wharf and pipeline provided. (Prior to that the smaller tankers passed through Leeds lock to access Leeds New Dock to discharge). The contract was extended, finally finishing in 1982, by which time the navigation had been further enlarged to its present 600 tonne limit, with new craft of that size built. *Fusedale H* commemorated the Esso traffic by pausing at the former Esso wharf (now a visitor and services mooring) and by carrying an Esso fuel can, before moving on to Fearn's Island where over 100 visitors were able to view and board the vessel over the two days of the festival.

Thanks are due to Canal Connections for providing the services of a tug to assist arrival and departure (*Fusedale H* had to drop astern all the way down to Knostrop depot to turn), to Canal & River Trust and volunteer lock keepers for permitting and facilitating the movement, and to the Inland Waterways Association (West Riding branch) for local support and assistance.

Fusedale H is still trading on the Aire and Calder Navigation, carrying sea dredged aggregate from Hull to Leeds (see CBOA News Autumn/Winter 2022, page 9).

MMS Off Roder



MMS Off Roder at Kingsferry Wharf, Burton upon Stather, River Trent (MMS)



MMS Off Roder at AMA wharf, Rotherham (MMS)

As our chairman mentioned, the 570 tonne capacity *MMS Off Roder* seen here on the left at the MCL Group's newly refurbished Kingsferry Wharf, Burton upon Stather, River Trent in November, and on the right at the AMA Wharf in Rotherham.

Stormvogel

The *Coastal Shipping* magazine reported that the 1962 barge *Stormvogel* 1000t, has arrived on the Thames and will operate a service from the grain terminal to Erith oil works, carrying rape seed. *Stormvogel* is a Dutch word for a storm petrel, said to be a relative of the albatross.

Overseas News

With a major bottleneck of freight transport in northern France, the new Seine-Nord canal is the answer. It is claimed that 17million tonnes of freight will use it every year, with the reduction of road traffic by 1 million heavy goods vehicles. This represents a saving over 40 years, of more than 50 million tonnes of CO₂. Each of the larger Class V vessels being up to 185 x 11.4m will be capable of eliminating 220 lorries off the roads.

This wide-gauge canal will be 107 kilometres long and 54 metres wide connecting Compiègne, in the Oise, to Aubencheul-aux-Bains, in the North and is scheduled to be open by 2030. There is rumbling both on the ground with works and in political circles. The scope of the project is huge, with issues such as carving through the Western Front in some historic battlegrounds with the likelihood of finding buried soldiers (100,000 lay beneath it is believed), environmental issues (wildlife movement corridors created, three trees planted for every one felled, reforestation, wet meadows, ponds, dry meadows created), 62 road and rail bridges and 3 aqueducts. The cost? – 5.1billion Euros. Other navigable rivers such as the Seine, Oise, Lys will also see improvements together with canals in France and Belgium.

So, a large water freight route will be created between Paris, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, where currently much freight travels by road. By the 1960s the existing waterway was considered inadequate for freight needs being a narrower gauge, so 50 years ago this scheme was proposed. To supply the summit level, river water (not ground water) will be stored in a 14 million cubic metre (494 million cubic foot) reservoir being built in Allaines. This river is also being diverted. Crossing the river Somme valley will need a 1.3km aqueduct, 30m above the protected wetland below.

The project naturally has its opponents, both with the environmental lobby despite the environmental balance being created, financially and of course with disturbing the largely unidentified soldiers whose remains will now be difficult to establish the identity of with DNA testing. But the environmental credentials of the waterway with the carbon saving and reduction of road traffic seem inescapable.

The river Rhône navigation flows down to the south of France, through major towns such as Lyon and Avignon, the latter where the famous song arises from – although they actually danced *under* the bridge on the sandbanks – “*sous*” le pont. The bridge has remained broken since the mid-17th century (the bridge is correctly called Pont Saint Bénézet). Sections of the bridge were frequently washed away in floods, the mediaeval groundworks for the arches being insufficient in the soft river bed. It is now not on the main navigation either, the canalised section taking the navigation further to the west. Below Arles, a few miles from the Mediterranean, the navigation becomes much wider being an estuarial shipping waterway. A variety of cargoes are handled, aggregates, dry cargoes and container freight.



Motor container barge Guadiana, 135m x 11.45m, 3979t below Vienne on the river Rhône (R Rhone)



Two 82m x 11.4m pans 2710t each, with push tug below Vienne (R Horne)

Freight is now fairly infrequent, despite the waterway being Class V size, with most locks being 200m x 12m. As such, push tows operate with two 80m pans and a tug being able to lock through intact.



Zulu 02 operating in 2018 (Blue Line Logistics)

We have reported a few times previously in CBOA News the success of the Belgian operator Blue Line Logistics' Zulu ro-ro / pallet barge project, *Zulu 02* seen here under skipper control in 2018.

Zulu 04 has recently demonstrated the progress and feasibility of **Kongsberg's fully autonomous systems** for maritime vessels. Running unloaded under test conditions, *Zulu 04* completed a 16.5-km circuit, starting from a berth at the port of Niel on the Rupel River, passing bridges, locks, a marina and yacht club, also demonstrating berthing capabilities in the process.

The vessel had been upgraded with onboard control technology, and is linked with an onshore remote operation centre (ROC) to provide support if needed, but a human safety crew was onboard during the test run. The vessel was using **Kongsberg Maritime's Autodocking, Autocrossing and** automatic navigation systems with cloud-based communications systems and advanced simulations to provide safe and efficient operation. Each autonomous barge is reckoned to take around 7,500 truck journeys off the roads each year.

Both Kongsberg Senior Vice President Remote and Autonomous Solutions Pål André Eriksen and Zulu Associates Chief Executive Antoon Van Coillie were very pleased with the results, Antoon saying that this will help to alleviate the imminent crews shortage crisis, in addition to the carbon saving benefit with water transport. This also represents a major step forward with autonomous operation of inland waterway vessels. The navigation system is also used on the *Eidsvaag Pioneer* operating along the Norwegian coast and in the fjords.

<https://www.rivieramm.com/news-content-hub/news-content-hub/eu-autoship-second-trial-demonstrates-autonomous-technology-aboard-inland-barge-76457>

CBOA for Members

In July, 2023 as the maritime safety week drew to a close, the British Ports Association (BPA) renewed its call for the UK Government to close the two-decade-long loophole allowing non-professional mariners to navigate vessels under the influence of alcohol. The BPA used the first maritime safety week in 2018 to call for this loophole to be closed.

The Railways and Transport Safety Act became law on 10 July 2003 but the provision introducing alcohol limits for non-professional mariners was never brought into force with section 80, relating to non-professional mariners, left out of the order.

Richard Ballantyne, Chief Executive at British Ports Association said that they have seen serious and fatal accidents on the water where alcohol has been a factor in recent years. **He is not calling for a ban on alcohol on boats, but that the 'person navigating' should be subject to the law.** "It is not unreasonable to have a 'designated driver' on the water" he says.

CBOA agrees with this, as professional barge captains should not have to be subject to unpleasant or dangerous behaviour from the actions of a pleasure boat helmsman under the influence, which has been seen to produce difficult situations.

David Lowe met David Quarmby in July to present him with a framed and inscribed photograph of himself steering the former **CBOA committee member John Jackson's** coal boat *Roach*, to mark **David's** retirement as CBOA President.

He was very pleased and said that of all the projects and organisations he had been professionally involved with, his time as Chairman of the CRT Freight Advisory Group, member of the FSG and as President of CBOA was the most enjoyable. We are pleased that David has agreed to continue his association with CBOA as a Vice-President.



We are looking for candidates to fulfil the two roles above, following the departure of both Noel Tomlinson (NE) and Les Reid (EM). Please contact the chairman to discuss it, if you feel you may be able to assist in some way; we would like to have expressions of interest for these roles by the end of this year.

CRT and the EA have jointly issued five new safety films, aimed at pleasure boaters who are new to boating. You might ask why is this in a trade magazine for professional boat operators? Well, perhaps as a talking point when meeting at locks or tying up places, if it is identified that others are struggling to handle their boat or locks – hirers new to it perhaps. Sometimes people taking **holidays on boats will accept advice if it's provided in the right way.** On one occasion a pleasure boat waited for a cargo boat to pass through a lock, to see how it was done! They seemed to lack basic knowledge at all of how to go about it safely, in which case some helpful advice can be given. Reference to online courses could have been provided in this instance for them to mug up on during the evening.

CRT: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLiMbOYOeMrfJj4NZdTIBqVG0JDXjZ8LW4>

EA: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLfOeDt_9dLX3zez9MSMv1IsqsEFpNLRBH

(These can be selected when this issue of CBOA News is online)

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In the previous CBOA News Issue 32 – the article on the River Dee carrying Airbus wings, the Editor has since been advised that these wings have not been carried on the river since 2020 and the barge was sold to Sweden to Sandinge at the end of that year. The vessel can be seen on their web page <https://eng.sandinge.com/roro-vessel/>