

CBOA NEWS

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Caledonian freight once more

The freight was transported as part of exploratory works which will be carried out at the site of what would be the UK's first large-scale pumped storage scheme to be developed over 30 years at Loch Lochy in the Great Glen in the Scottish Highlands.

Setting off at Corpach Sea Lock, Fort William on the Caledonian Canal the load comprised of various equipment including excavators. The findings of the exploratory works will be used to inform the final design of the project and will be an important consideration in SSE Renewables' final decision on whether to proceed with the Coire Glas project.

Scottish Canals Interim Chief Executive Officer Richard Millar said: "This is a real landmark moment for the Caledonian Canal and made even more memorable as this year we were able to celebrate the Caledonian Canal's 200th birthday. The canal is an important heritage asset that has stood the test of time; providing important transport routes, bolstering the local and national economy and helping to put Scotland on the map as experts in engineering and innovation. These latest freight movements will also go a long way in our commitment to supporting Scotland's journey to Net Zero and we are always open to working in partnerships in this area."

SSE Renewables' Project Director for Coire Glas Ian Innes said: "Coire Glas is one of the most significant engineering projects to take place in the UK for decades and the commencement of these exploratory works is a great milestone for everyone on the Coire Glas Project Team and at SSE Renewables. As a great feat of engineering, it is fitting that in its 200th year that we can celebrate the role the Caledonian Canal has provided by transporting freight to the Coire Glas project site. The canal has made a vital contribution in the first steps to creating a pumped storage scheme, which in itself is expected to become an historic achievement in engineering an indispensable part of the UK and Scotland's renewable energy infrastructure."

At CBOA, we certainly endorse these statements and sincerely hope that the canal can be used in the future for further carriage of equipment and materials to the Coire Glas site.



Freight rising up Neptune's stair case locks, Fort William (photo: Scottish Canals)

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From the Chairman



Dredging of the Knottingley/Ferrybridge canal section, also below Lemonroyd and at Swillington on the Aire & Calder Navigation has, we understand, been completed, and all that prevents fully loaded craft proceeding all the way to Leeds is the presence of some boats moored on the outside of the sharp bend above Skelton Road Bridge – just where a 200 ft long vessel needs to navigate. Hopefully this restriction will be resolved soon. In February we were delighted to witness the first trial movement of member MMS Work Boats' converted tanker *MMS Off Roader* up to Leeds – the largest vessel to navigate right into Leeds since oil deliveries to Hunslet ceased in about 1990. This movement attracted welcome media attention but for the aggregate traffic to Leeds to continue and reach its ultimate potential the Canal & River Trust needs to make more space available at Knotstrop by re-locating a non-water freight user currently occupying the safeguarded wharf. We have made strong representations to the Trust and

understand that discussions continue between the parties. Dredging of the Wakefield section of the Aire & Calder was also taking place during March in readiness for the new aggregate movements from the proposed Birkwood quarry near Stanley ferry, though the destination is not, as yet, known.

The Association's Scottish representative (Jonathan Mosse) is keeping an eye on the Scottish waterways and, with Tim West, has had fruitful meetings with Scottish Canals regarding the potential of the Crinan and Caledonian Canals for freight. It's good to know of potential future movements along the Caledonian in connection with a proposed pump storage facility. Tim and Jonathan are also engaging with local authorities to encourage greater use of the River Clyde. The Association continues its dialogue with Transport for the North and with Midlands Connect.

We continue to engage with Strathclyde University in connection with potential research projects and our Research Officer, Chris Poole, has compiled the results from the trade survey we conducted a little while ago. Thanks to all members who took part. While on this subject I cannot emphasise enough the value of having up to date statistics to 'prove our point' to decision makers, and we urge members to always respond with information on traffics whether to CBOA or to DfT etc when asked to provide it.

Over the last 12 months CBOA member GPS Marine have been funding a Water Freight Awareness Campaign. This work has been supported by the CBOA and it has been very successful in raising the profile of the inland waterway freight sector with a variety of important stakeholders. Following discussions with GPS, the CBOA committee agreed to write to our commercial members to seek expressions of interest in joining as individual companies the "Water freight awareness campaign."

GPS and the CBOA is hoping that our commercial members and other businesses / organisations currently involved in freight carriage by water on the UK's rivers and waterways will come together to share the burden to promote their sector and ensure that politicians, policy makers and civil servants stop ignoring the UK's rivers and waterways. At the time of writing, we have had five positive responses from our trade members and we hope that with all those operating commercially, even on a small scale, we feel able to make a contribution appropriate to their means.

We have partnered with Logistics UK in assisting the Thames Estuary Growth Board with its research into opportunities for movement of light freight on the Thames (see page 6).

Members will be aware that the Canal & River Trust is still waiting for the government to confirm the level of grant which will be made available when the current grant period ends in 2027. Chief Executive Richard Parry kindly addressed our AGM on this and other issues and we await the outcome of the negotiations with interest. No one is expecting the grant to increase, but on the other hand we've not been given any information which suggests that there will be no grant – contrary to some speculation – that would be untenable anyway.

Our current President, Dr David Quarmbay, has served in that role for rather longer than he'd envisaged and has advised that he would like to step down at the earliest opportunity. We are immensely grateful to David for his leadership and wise counsel. The President is usually elected at an AGM but in this instance, we will be calling an EGM to consider this and any other important matters. David and CBOA Committee are very pleased to say that distinguished transport academic Mike Garratt, of MDS Transmodal, has agreed to act as President in succession to David. I have known Mike personally for some 40 years or so and his enthusiasm for and knowledge of the water freight sector has always been very apparent. I am sure he will be a great asset to CBOA going forward. On that topic – would operator members (in particular) please give consideration to joining the committee? (For more information, please see page 18). The workload grows and is handled by a relatively small team – new blood is always welcome bringing fresh ideas, skills and enthusiasm! Speaking of which, we have appointed Lee Wilshire who is taking over from Gerry Heward as Southern Representative. Lee is Commercial Manager with Wood, Hall & Heward. We are pleased that Gerry remains a committee member. Les Reid has asked if anyone can take over as East Midlands Representative. Any offers?

We were sorry to have had to raise the level of subscriptions from 1st July. Income from subscriptions only just covers our costs – Newsletter, admin, and a part contribution in some years to attending an event. Not all members had changed their Banker's Order and some had renewed at the old rate. Please do check and change as necessary!

Our AGM this year will be on 10th November. Having the event on-line does reduce our costs considerably, and enable members to attend who otherwise couldn't do so, perhaps because of distance to travel. Last year, however, the number of members attending was significantly lower than usual despite being on-line. Please let us have your thoughts as to whether meeting on-line or in person is preferable.

Thank you all for your continued support.

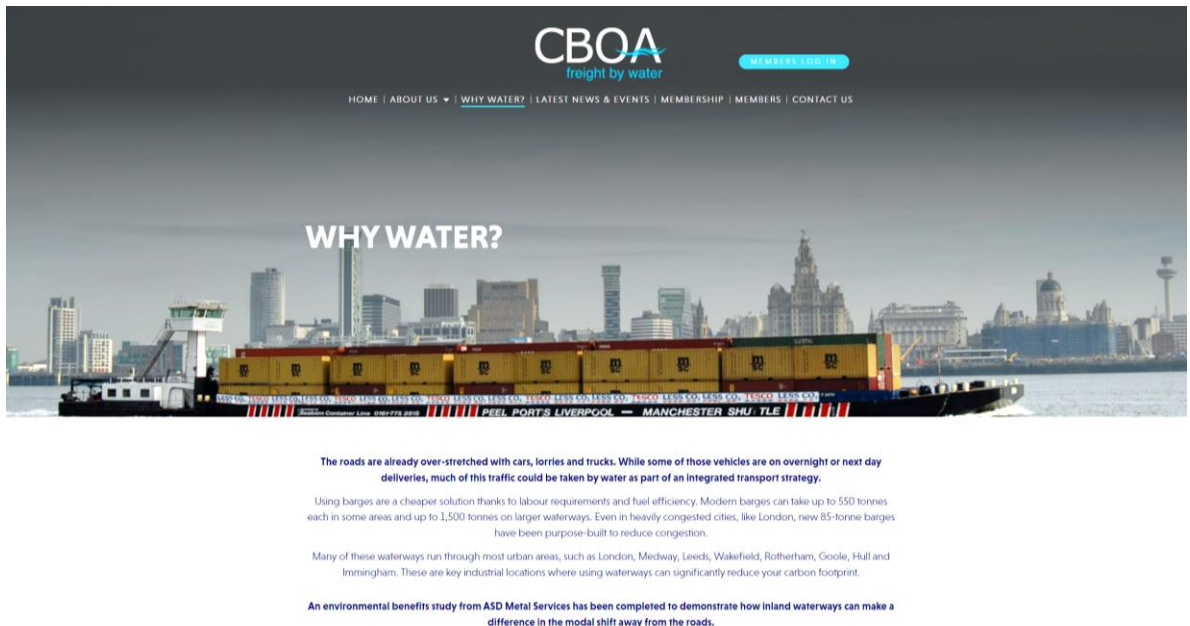
David Lowe

UK News

CBOA revised web site

Mercury-web have recently revised our web site to create an up-to-date appearance and presentation. It will create an improved image of our organisation and it is proposed to put this new version online soon. The same web address will be used, <http://www.cboa.org.uk>

An example page is shown below, which we hope will be beneficial to both our members and potential users of water transport.



Government answers

After an amicable and somewhat lengthy exchange of views of some 13,000 words in the Commons in November by several ministers about various aspects of the waterways – how wonderful they are, great for walking, boating, how glorious it is outside the Mucky Duck (formerly The Swan at Fradley) watching the aquatic antics of the ducks, swans and humans at the junction, and even an “ugly bucket” can be turned into a thing of beauty with canal art, sadly there was only one reference to freight carriage, from Michael Fabricant (Cons, Litchfield) stating amongst other uses that they are “...still playing a vital economic role for freight and other commercial uses.”

Water supply was also discussed and the proposal to use some canals to transfer water to southern parts of the country, and the increasingly impecunious state of the Canal and River Trust was also discussed. The earlier lengthy interchanges of views by ministers seemingly were as a backdrop to perhaps justify that the Canal and River Trust needed more financial support for the excellent environment, they caretake.

Steven Bonnar (Shadow SNP Spokesperson) outlined the waterways in Scotland and the benefits they provide but did not mention the freight capability of the larger canals such as the Crinan or the Caledonian canals. It seemed like an opportunity missed in parliament for the promotion of waterways nationally for freight use together with the inherent benefits outlined.

On the contrary, in an exchange in November in the Lords, that started with the non-swinging swing bridge at Faversham, Kent, Baroness Randerson (Lib Dem Lords Spokesperson, Transport) managed to swing the debate to commercial use of the waterways highlighting the benefit of water freight with the Crossrail project on the Thames and the benefit of taking thousands of lorry trips off the roads with the consequent reduction of the carbon footprint. Yet as she said, “the Government’s Maritime 2050 Strategy ignored the contribution of inland waterways to the reduction of carbon emissions and the issue of freight costs. What will the Government do to address that omission in departmental planning and strategy?”

Baroness Vere of Norbiton (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Transport) replied that it is (at the) “top of my mind” and that her department has a fund that exists solely to encourage freight off the roads and on to waterways and, “If it is not in the Maritime Strategy, that is not because it is not a priority; perhaps it simply did not fit.” Lord Watts (Lab) asked if there was a fund available to encourage traffic off roads and onto water to which the Baroness replied yes, about £20m (unstated, but therefore Modal Shift Revenue Support), to encourage road freight to rail and water but she would need to clarify this.

Baroness Randerson Liberal Democrat Lords Spokesperson (Transport) asked “...what plans the Government has for the Thames Freeport project to give preference to freight transport of spoil and building materials via the river between the three sites at Dagenham, Tilbury Dock and London Gateway; and what plans they have to ensure permanently improved waterway links from those sites?” Baroness Scott of Bybrook Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) responded “The Thames Freeport has significant opportunities to move freight (including e-commerce), waste, goods and spoil in and out of central London by the river – from the deep-sea terminals in the East to the population centre and industrial base in the West. The greater use of the tidal Thames for moving materials and goods in and out of central London will help reduce congestion, air pollution and emissions. Work is underway to develop and scale up pilot projects, with the Thames Freeport playing a key role.”

However, in another debate Michael Fabricant redeemed the water freight situation in the Commons by asking “What steps are being taken to encourage the use of navigable waterways for freight traffic? The All-Party Waterways Group, of which I have also the honour to chair, has identified that there are something like 1,500 miles of waterways out of the 5,000 miles of navigable waterways that we have, which are suitable for freight. I wonder whether any thought has been given to maybe reintroducing the Freight Facility Grants for wharves and handling facilities?”

Rebecca Pow, Under-Secretary of State for Domestic Environment, said the Government was “really interested” in exploring alternative ways to move freight. “The Government is providing £20 million through the Department of Transport’s Modal Shift Freight Grant Scheme in 2021/22 to support rail and water freight services on routes where they deliver environmental benefits over road haulage, but are more expensive to operate. “It’s actually the Department of Transport that this comes under – they don’t have any plans as such to reinstate the Freight Facilities Grant in England, but obviously the Government is really interested in the shift of getting freight transported in other ways. The fund I mentioned earlier has gone mostly to rail, because the case has to be made for whether it’s better to do it by water.”

Another question was asked about Minimum Service Levels for freight as there were for trains and as a “dabble” with buses (as quoted), but the response was there were none intended for freight.

DfT Future of Freight plan

In June the Government issued the Future of Freight plan, in which the relevant statements in the executive summary are listed here:

1. We will identify a National Freight Network (NFN) across road, rail, maritime, aviation, inland waterway and warehouse infrastructure. Our long-term aim will be to remove the barriers which prevent the seamless flow of freight.
5. Finally, by connecting the sector to innovators via a dedicated £7m Freight Innovation Fund, we will maximise the use of technology and data across freight and logistics.

In section 3.28: **Identifying a National Freight Network (NFN)**: Working together the Freight Council and the government will develop a fuller understanding of the domestic freight network across road, rail, maritime, aviation, inland waterway and warehouse infrastructure. This will be a complex process starting with developing a stronger data and strategic picture of the network before exploring how this could be consolidated into a NFN.

We commend the inclusion of inland waterways and the £7m fund, but we need to ensure in the future this is followed through with results for inland waterways.

Thames Estuary - Light Freight Steering Group

Logistics UK, the business trade organisation that supports all freight types, are promoting better use of the Thames for freight. The Light Freight Steering Group is the outcome of the former discussions between the Department for Transport and the wider industry of operators and service providers using the River Thames. The Thames Estuary Growth Board Waterborne Light Freight Steering Group supports the river freight industry in the discussions with Central Government to utilise the opportunities around the Thames better and help to divert traffic from the road to the river.

Logistics UK, on behalf of the Steering Group issued the following questions: -

1. Have you considered to use the Thames to complement and support your delivery network? If yes, what works for you and what doesn't? If no, why haven't you considered it?
2. Are you aware of solutions that links delivery networks and the river that helps greening the supply chain and easing congestions in cities?
3. What do you think, what are the main barriers and challenges to use the Thames for light freight transportation?
4. What do you think the future looks like for light freight movements on the Thames?

It is hoped this will encourage more use of the river for freight.

UK domestic water transport evidence review

Dr. Bart Wiegman of the Delft University of Technology carried out an academic study in 2018 with an outlook towards 2040 for the UK Government, to answer the question: "What benefits/opportunities could the transport system of the future provide and what are the implications for Government and society?"

Amongst his conclusions were that there will likely be benefits with the following:

- Coordination between the different transport modes and to improve connections between water, rail and road networks; policy options should be identified, perhaps drawing on successful policies implemented in other countries;
- Joint approaches may be beneficial with other countries where waterways play a successful role, Belgium and Netherlands for example;
- Offshore wind plants are suitable for use of inland water transport;
- A proactive role from the Government is needed to oversee and ensure best practices are followed for example with sea to inland connections;
- Improvements in the standardisation and coordination of ICT use, perhaps tailored, again with Government coordination;
- In the short term the focus might be placed on local or regional projects that have proven themselves in other countries (or UK specific projects might be developed) as the impacts on future trading relationships remain unclear.

Committee Profile – Lee Wilshire, Southern Representative



Lee is Commercial Manager at Wood Hall & Heward, where he manages the company's work in supporting civil engineering projects on and adjacent to the canal, as well as their ongoing freight transport on London's waterway network.

With interests in waterways heritage and planning, Lee's role at WHH offers him the perfect opportunity to combine his personal and professional interests. He is responsible for developing and managing commercial relationships with clients, as well as ensuring that the company's work complies with all relevant regulations.

Lee has over 15 years of experience in the industry and is a passionate advocate for the continued use of inland waterways for freight transport. He believes that canals can play a vital role in reducing the environmental impact of freight transportation, and is committed to working with businesses and the government to promote commercial use of canals.

Additionally, Lee is a member of CRT's Navigation Advisory Group and is also on the Logistics UK's Water Freight Council.

Outside of work, Lee and his partner own two historic Grand Union Canal Carrying Company motor boats *Barnet* and *Cantley*. *Barnet* is in working trim while *Cantley* is currently being refitted as a home on their mooring at Rickmansworth.

Regional News

CRT dredging in Newbury

In a video about CRT's dredging where 6000m³ was dredged from the canal, Peter Birch, Dredging Asset Manager said that it is the feedback nationally from their customers that determine which areas need dredging the most. CRT will then sometimes ask for more information to better ascertain the extent of the problem. This will also determine whether an extensive dredging programme needs to be undertaken or whether more localised or spot dredging is needed.

Proper disposal is important, after initial chemical analysis to check suitability, the silt in this instance been taken away by lorries and spread locally on fields with the farmer's consent, putting back into the soil valuable nutrient which has flowed off the land into the canal or river in the first place, after being "sieved" by a large machine to remove solid material. The dredging was carried out by Land and Water who specialise in long-reach excavators, ably assisted by Mick's Tug Services shunting the pans around.

Thames Cross River Freight Partnership – Pilot Case Study: Summer 2022

The pilot case study on river freight took place over six weeks during July and August last year, the pilot operated one delivery per week, for six weeks and aimed to make the case for expanding river freight into London. The pilot formed part of the Defra funded Clean Air Villages 4 (CAV4) and Clean Air Logistics for London (CALL) projects.

Emissions savings when projected over one year showed a saving of over 3 kg of NO₂ and over three tonnes of CO₂. It was admitted that costs were difficult to calculate, as it varied depending on the vessel used, including its size, the loading method and the charge for the piers used.

The pilot was more challenging than originally thought, however everyone involved was enthusiastic in and making it happen. Removing waste by water was found to be more challenging than other transportation. Contractual obligations made switching to water difficult or impossible and some businesses were not able to participate. But preparation beforehand was essential so any problems found can be resolved quickly. Lines of communication are essential for this reason. The pilot needs expanding widely to encourage the greatest use of transfer to water transport. Any issues need to be shared with the stakeholder as soon as they occur. The vessel tended to arrive early so departures and arrivals should be phoned ahead to make the process more efficient.

Many companies were very positive about the pilot, keen to promote environmental sustainability and pleased to be part of the project to achieve this, senior people in many organisations realising that lessons were being learnt for the benefit of future operations. James Trimmer, Director of Planning And Development, Port of London Authority reported that a lot of effort went into this pilot more so than with some others, and that good communications when things sometimes go wrong e.g. a crane breakdown, are vital to keep the process running.

For more information, please contact CRP Programme Manager Fiona Coull: fionacoull@crossriverpartnership.org

GPS Marine wins Logistics UK's Water Business of the Year

CBOA member GPS Marine Contractors Ltd has won the trophy for Water Business of the Year from Logistics UK, and was highly commended for Logistics Partner of the Year. Other shortlisted entrants working across all freight sectors were recognised for their outstanding commitment, knowledge and expertise. GPS Marine is the largest multi cargo intra port barge operator on the River Thames and Medway. Based in Upnor, Kent, they have served the maritime industry for more than 50 years. They are prime contractors for barge transport for freight on the Thames and Medway, undertake coastal and international shipments of project cargo, and operate in ports and harbours in Europe.

Chief executive John Spencer has this year spearheaded a campaign to cut congestion on roads and pollution in urban centres by getting freight off roads and on to waterways. Accepting the award, he said: "The award is a tribute to my team – but we need government muscle to do more to cut pollution and congestion. We call on government to lean on intransigent local planners so they release wharves to be used for water freight rather than housing."

He also wants government to adopt more positive and coherent policies to promote the use of more environmentally friendly transitional fuels, which are already available, and can make an immediate impact on emissions. Last year GPS Marine won their second Green Apple environmental award for their work on the Thames Tideway Tunnel central section, where they reduced emissions from their Thames tug fleet by changing to 100% renewable fuel. The change significantly reduced NO_x and particulate emissions, eliminated SO_x emissions and reduced carbon dioxide emissions by more than 90%. "It just doesn't make sense to force operators to return to diesel, due to fuel taxes, at a time when pollution is a major issue in urban centres."

John Spencer also said "Riverside wharves should be opened up as logistics hubs. Wharves should be utilised as logistics hubs for construction and demolition materials, and where possible, have unitised light freight capacity built into them.



Above: GPS Marine tug and barge with 1750 tonnes of spoil from the Tideway Tunnel Project. Right: GPS MD John Spencer. (GPS Marine)

This is especially important on the many 'protected wharves' on the river Thames which are at present sitting idle."

He outlined his vision for the future of freight on water and to celebrate, with colleagues and business partners, the acquisition of Alan C Bennett and Sons Ltd.

What turned round the demise of Thames water freight at the end of the 20th century with the consequential loss of jobs was developing an integrated approach to water freight that made moving cargo by water easy and cost effective. He convinced clients that water freight works. He said that GPS Marine's ability to undertake marine civil engineering and dredging work, coupled with a willingness to fund or part fund infrastructure work, made changing to water freight less daunting for potential clients. More recently, the business has benefitted from its fleet modernisation programme and embracing an effective, independently audited, safety management system compliant with the International Maritime Organisation's International Safety Management Code.



Last summer GPS Marine was involved in a significant light freight trial for Cross River Partnerships (see page 7) to inform how, in future, light freight might be developed on the Thames to facilitate it becoming significant in reducing pollution and traffic congestion in London.

PLA report on the Thames Port growth

The Port of London Authority reported in January that trade had reached its highest level in more than two decades last year, with 54.9 million tonnes handled. Although aggregates and cement volumes fell by five per cent to 12.4 million tonnes probably due to the slowdown in the construction industry, containers and unitized cargo was up by four per cent to 24.2 million tonnes. Oil products increased by a massive 27% to 11.7 million tonnes.

The PLA expects growth to continue along with investment in terminals along the river. Construction of the London Gateway Port Berth 4 is under way and is costing £300m.

Scope for new canal?

The proposal for a Grand Contour Canal by J F Pownall in 1943 was perhaps somewhat ambitious, linking most of the major ports and cities in England via a canal running at a 300-foot level throughout the country, with vertical locks/lifts at or near ports. The barge size proposed was the continental 300 tonne or 'Freycinet' size, but perhaps Euro class II (500-650 tonnes) or higher might be more economic now. (Charles de Freycinet was a rather single minded and not always popular 19th century French civil engineer and Minister of Public Works, who foresightedly pushed through the upgrade of many French waterways to the 39 x 5 metre gauge – 300 tonne capacity).

It is interesting to conjecture the scope for a scheme that on a more limited basis would take small ships or large barges from London up at least to the Midlands, in a similar way perhaps to the rail freight terminal at Daventry (DIRFT – Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal). With the railways becoming increasingly busy with both passengers and freight trains a large canal from major ports might ease congestion, taking freight by water further inland nearer to destinations.

Other ports such as Southampton are busy with freight, where an inland canal might be an advantage. A significant part of this freight travels on the branch line between Basingstoke and Reading to and from the Midlands, quoted as the busiest branch line in the country. Freight, local passenger and Crosscountry passenger trains are sometimes held up waiting for a path. Major complex junctions with busy main lines at both places add to the problem.

CBOA would welcome such a study scoping a large canal inland from major ports. Water supply to the drier south east could also benefit from a new canal.

New inland terminal for London

Modifications to Berth 3 at Coldharbour jetty will now enable the jetty to take short sea coastal vessels. This is part of the ongoing commitment by the PLA towards supporting cargo deliveries in and out of London.

Coldharbour Jetty is a marine logistics centre for shipping and barging operations, acting as an intermodal transport hub for materials and cargoes to be imported and exported. It also handles waste spoils from construction works in central London destined for reuse at Land & Water's Habitat Creation Scheme at Rainham Marshes. The scheme, which Land & Water will be operating until 2040, will see up to eight million tonnes of wet and dry spoil material being used to create an oasis for birds and wildlife whilst encouraging greater areas of greenery along the Thames corridor.

The berth was designed by Hewson Consulting, the works carried out by Land and Water Services. David Allsop, Deputy Harbour Master at the Port of London Authority, said: "It's exciting to see the Thames' potential being utilised to introduce a new export service. This project is another boost for the *Thames Vision 2050*, which we launched last year, with the aim of maximising the long-term economic, environmental and social potential of the river from Teddington in south west London to the North Sea." Land and Water are similarly keen and pleased to be involved with this project to both provide an upgrade in the city's supply chain capability and to harness the Thames as a sustainable transport system.

Freeports promoted – Thames and Humber

Being a gateway for London, the Thames Freeport is poised for future business growth. It consists of three sites: London Gateway, Tilbury and Ford's Dagenham plant. With global shipping connections and onward connection via road, rail and river there is excellent scope for shipping of goods to and from wharves upriver. The Government are saying that with planned expansion this should double the ports' capacity. Business parks and commercial spaces in the Thames estuary area can well make use of the port facility.

Being located on the Thames super highway, we should promote full use of onward shipping up the Thames as far as possible to reduce shipment by road.

For further information see: <https://www.great.gov.uk/international/content/investment/opportunities/thames-freeport/>

The Humber also boasts 3 Freeports: Able Marine Energy Park and Immingham, Hull East centred on the Saltend Chemical Park, and Goole adjacent to the Siemens Mobility rail plant. Combined, they handle around 17% of the nation's trade, states the Department of Business and Trade. There are opportunities with the growth in offshore wind generation, chemicals manufacturing and processing and opportunities with technologies in the growing green transport sector and decarbonisation, including the UK rail network.

As well as good connections to road, rail and air the Humber also has excellent large gauge inland waterway connections of course. As for the Thames we should promote increased use of onward shipment inland via the waterways.

See <https://www.great.gov.uk/international/content/investment/opportunities/humber-freeport/> for more information. The other Freeports promoted with some inland waterway connections are Plymouth and South Devon Freeport, Solent Freeport, Liverpool City Region Freeport and Teesside Freeport; the East Midlands Freeport also perhaps, for one site at Ratcliffe-on-Soar, although being a smaller waterway, a light freight service may be possible.

Recent news (January) is that Edinburgh has gained Freeport status, with Glasgow currently in the bidding process. Inverness has gained Freeport status with its Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport, with its access to the superb Caledonian Canal.

Midlands Connect looking at alternatives

Richard Bradley, head of strategy at Midlands Connect said "we are evolving leading the way goods are transferred around the region or country. This isn't about taking a step back in history, but using all the infrastructure we have and finding new ways and new plans to use everything we have." To get freight off the roads, reduce pollution and the carbon footprint and increase health is their aim.

On their website he admitted that "Think of the Midlands and transporting goods on water does not generally come to mind. With a trend towards larger ferries shifting major UK freight paths from north-south to east-west over time, the Humber ports at Immingham and Grimsby come into play – and so could smaller ports like Boston. Excitingly, transporting goods by ferry has the potential to decarbonise even faster than rail."

The Government Modal Shift Revenue Support (MSRS) scheme could accelerate this trend, with helping with the running costs with the transition to water or rail, thus reducing lorry movements.

MMS Off-roader ready for action

The web site of the Associated British Ports (ABP) is announcing the availability of the *MMS Off-Roader*. The 500-tonne barge has been carrying marine aggregate from ABPs Humber Albert dock to Knostrop (this new traffic was reported in the previous issue of CBOA News, with the benefit of reducing numerous lorry journeys).



MMS Off-Roader (ABP)

Rob Langton, MMS Managing Director, said: “As a key part of the local marine industry MMS are very happy to get this ship underway with what we hope is the first of a regular trade for the building industry of West Yorkshire. It is a shipment that takes heavy good vehicles off our pressurised road network, a win for logistics and the wider environment.”

Simon Bird, ABP Humber Director, said: “Operating commercial vessels across the region’s waterways will bring huge benefits to the area. Along with a reduction in emissions, taking heavy goods vehicles off the roads will also help reduce road congestion and improve safety. Congratulations to MMS Workboats of Hull and the wider team involved with this project.”

David Lowe, Chairman of CBOA echoed these sentiments and is pleased that traffic is returning to the Aire and Calder navigation, the waterways being in a underused asset for freight transport, able to deliver heavy goods in a quiet efficient way reduces dependence on lorry transport. He celebrates the run of *MMS Off-Roader* to Leeds and it is the largest vessel to reach central Leeds in 30 years he says. It is hoped that this will encourage similar traffic to other destinations.

The vessel was converted from being a tanker, named *Humber Princess*. Part of the conversion was to create superior on board facilities for the crew, necessary for longer journeys. Rob Langton added: “We are keen to encourage young people to consider a career in shipping. The safety and welfare of our team is of paramount importance to us, and it was key that we ensured all the comforts of home could be provided to those working the barge.”

Tees gets more trade with driver shortages

A new partnership with the Port of Rotterdam was announced in February 2021 to digitise transport solutions and support the future growth of the River Tees. A ro-ro service has now been launched between Rotterdam and Teesport during March between the Luxembourg-based ferry operator CLdN and PD Ports with four sailings a week.

With driver shortages experienced and congestion in southeast, CLdN say there is more demand for European ferries to call in the northeast, where the final destination is closer to the port.

Tim Weekes, CLdN’s spokesman said “We’ve had a lot of support from customers and, as we have a freight forwarding business too, we can help them with the details around importing and exporting.” Labour shortages generally, most notably drivers and with truck drivers sometimes unwilling to cross borders or cover long distances, when local deliveries can be made with trailers relayed to their destinations.

If the onward delivery from a port that is geographically nearer, inland by waterways closer to the destination that would be a preferable solution to the use of lorries running up and down motorways from the south east.

In the PRESS

Hinckley Point gets reactor pressure steam vessel by water



Reactor vessel arriving at Combwich wharf, R Parrett (EDF)

At the end of February, the BBC reported that Hinckley C power station received its first reactor pressure vessel, which will produce the heat for turbine steam production. Arriving at Avonmouth docks from France, it then transferred to barge to be taken up the river Parrett to Combwich wharf, at a high tide. Weighing 500 tonnes and 30 metres high, it is the first to reactors to provide low carbon electricity for three million homes.



The final road journey leg (EDF)

However, the last leg of the journey had to be by road from Combwich wharf taking 5 hours by road transporter to do the four miles to the power station site. It is estimated that over 410 loads will be taken up the River Parrett over the next 2-4 years, which highlights the benefit of using water transport as far as possible to minimize the road miles. This is a good example of the planning system and government policy driving the use of inland waterways.

The BBC reported that 8,000 people are working on site and power generation is expected to be operational in June 2027.

River Dee to lose wings

The web site www.deeside.com posted an article in January on the carriage of the Airbus wings. With the decision to stop manufacturing Airbus A380 wings at Broughton in Cheshire, the last scheduled barge load to be carried from the factory at Broughton to Toulouse final assembly, took place in January. The Wings have been carried by a special purpose barge to the port of Mostyn on the estuary for onward shipment. Weighing 25 tonnes and 48 metres long, but wings are too large and heavy together with the 100-tonne transport jig to be airfreighted, it was reported. The trip down the River Dee needs careful planning, having to negotiate tides and other conditions including lack of depth, also ensuring enough headroom under the bridges.

However, this may not mean the end of the carriage of future wings from the wharf. Airbus have stated that there is a "likely prospect of Airbus re-purposing the Dee River Craft for other future wing variant transport logistics, it is considered that condition 6 of the original planning permission should be deleted." This condition called for removal of equipment and re-instatement of the wharf following no further use of it. Local councillors fully backed the proposal to keep the wharf for future use, this to be determined by Flintshire planners.

Thames "Flowing with Potential" reports CILT

In the September of the magazine of The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), it states that the Thames has enormous untapped potential for handling light freight. It would also provide for new jobs and ease congestion and air pollution; it can also assist towards the nation's net zero goal.

With the city's notorious reputation for making deliveries with the predicted continued growth of delivery vans, use of the river has enormous potential together with keeping down road transport. CILT is aware of the history of freight carriage on the Thames from the 16th century, however of course the river has been used in this way since time immemorial. But in the 21st century the large scale ambition of the Thames Estuary Growth Board is to ensure that the river is a viable competitive alternative to road transportation of freight, CILT reported. CILT's The Green Blue action plan sets out the objective of delivering the world's greenest most productive estuary, including the use of the river for freight.

CILT acknowledges that the precedent has already been set with multiple trials on the river including Guys and saint Thomas's NHS Trust, CEVA, Livetts and DHL. The stakeholders engaged include port operators, river users, government at all levels potential end user customers, together with operators. Transfer of freight involves extra cost, however it is thought that economies of scale with higher volumes of freight can keep extra costs down. The wider environmental and social benefits are recognized as significant. Use of Modal Shift Revenue Support (MSRS) can also assist with operating costs. Investment is also required to make wharves, piers and vessels fit for purpose in handling small freight.

Perry Glading FCILT, deputy chair of the Thames Estuary Growth Board said that they are now inviting businesses to come and talk to them and explore the possibilities river light freight can offer, to encourage a real shift from road to water. As an active member of CILT, he believes that their network, in collaboration, has the knowledge and knowhow to make a long-term, viable solution a reality.

Government levelling up?

In a recent editorial of *Coastal Shipping*, the Editor Iain McCall puts forward the point of view that the government's levelling up is not what you might think it is. What about the 'levelling up' to make a fairer playing field between the road industry with its massive government subsidies and water transport which potentially has huge environmental benefits? He says that with containerisation transshipment to barge must be easier to accomplish, Rotterdam being a good example of this. So 'levelling up' should mean that water transport gets more focus.

There was also good coverage in *Coastal Shipping* of use of inland ports for freight; Thames – Dagenham/Barking, Docklands wharf, Peruvian wharf. Littlehampton with 10 coaster visits during 2020, Southampton with imported equipment, bricks, stone and cement with exports of grain.

In November and December on the Manchester Ship Canal two trips were made by the tanker *Gale* but several delays were caused due to fog and frozen water pipes which operate swing bridges. The *Strami* loaded with scrap at Irwell Park wharf was stuck for a day at Barton locks due to a chain snapping on the gate. But at Howendyke on the Humber there were only two ships in November and again in December. However, 61 vessels arrived at Goole during November and December. 32 vessels arrived at Kings Lynn during October and November before poor tides limited shipping movements.

Overseas News

Interview with Antoon van Coillie – Zulu Associates

Nieuwsblad Transport, the Dutch transport and logistics media company, interviewed Antoon van Coillie in the Autumn, the video of this is on their web site with English subtitles.

Antoon was introduced as a marine innovator, as we well know from his presentation to us at a previous AGM and liaison with CBOA. He proposes smaller, more manoeuvrable vessels and also autonomous operation. Acknowledging the immediate issues currently facing inland vessel operation in Europe (queues, increased traffic due to the recent ramp-up of coal demand, low water, broken locks etc), he said there are three main underlying issues.

Firstly, climate change; ships need to do “less damage to the climate” as he put it. At times of low water, climate change is reducing levels further. Some types of vessels cannot operate with these low levels and being deeper drafted, they cannot navigate the turns. Climate resilient water transport is needed.

Secondly crews shortages; in 2013 a study showed the average age was between 50 and 55; a decade later it will be around 60. So, over the next decade, there will be far fewer crews still working.

Thirdly, Antoon explained that in commerce he has to maximise yield and minimise cost, the negative consequences of this being passed on to society; but society will no longer accept this, especially the younger generation who do not accept that they should suffer from it. As an example, take the Euro Stage II diesel engine. Up until last year it was still legally sold. But now people no longer want to work with fossil fuels, so these engines are lost investments. Digital social media reveals that if something is wrong, it is immediately reported – companies that are “greenwashing” (claiming that their operations are considerably “greener” than they actually are) will be vilified.

So, for the first issue, ships must be converted and their engines replaced. The larger the ship and the smaller the canal, the energy usage rises by 60, 70 or perhaps 80% compared to open water. So larger vessels are not suitable for smaller canals. Battery power or hydrogen are more expensive, so this competing technology is difficult. 70% of the Dutch fleet of round 10,000 vessels are on average 44 years old, so the hull is obsolete! We have to replace them. New vessels must be more slender with a smaller block coefficient to reduce energy use. This means less cargo carried, but in the end the amount of energy and tonne-kilometre fuel usage is more important than the size of your cargo.

Another phenomenon is that the larger ships sail less often; they spend more time being loaded and unloaded than they are sailing! This also increases the congestion in ports, so smaller vessels are faster both travelling and delivering goods, which means you can compete better with trucks. Larger vessels are effectively then storage on water instead of moving! So, a different model is needed. A Euro 85m Class IV ship can be used on almost all European waterways, but they are big enough to navigate the larger waterways.

But will captains and companies realise this? It will be much harder for the captains of existing large ships, but being realistic in 10 years many will not be operating. It's a problem for retiring captains who will need compensating for the scrapping of their ship. Antoon said he deeply respects the senior captains or crew, many who are top professionals, but the world is changing.

So, more ships will be needed not just because they are smaller but also to handle more freight. The future ship captain will be more technically minded and able to work with monitors and remote control systems etc. In Norway they are training people to operate with autonomous ships and more women are going for this. The smaller 85m ship still requires plenty of crew, so overall more crews will be needed for the increased number of ships.

Smaller ships mean fewer infrastructural works. But we need to digitise the infrastructure and we won't need to dredge as much. Deepening and straightening the Rhine for example means that water retention is reduced and there is a stronger current, so low river levels are reached quicker. Studies showing that Rivers need re-wilding. Several smaller locks are needed to save water.

Antoon realises that his ideas are not popular and are against the current economic model. But some people are thinking his way and concrete discussions are in hand. These ships must be built in Europe and not in China (for example) and the issue has to be part of the European economic strategy and governments need to be involved. Better time scheduling is needed for both loading and travelling, so there is not waiting time at locks and wharves. If everything is better planned and executed, then efficiencies are gained all round.

Antoon says we must be honest, intellectually honest so our business is morally acceptable, by acknowledging all the costs, socially and environmentally together with the direct costs and profit; the fast moving containerised consumer goods companies are prepared to pay more in this respect.

This interview can be found at <https://vimeo.com/745295528/d65b136dd5>

River Seine News

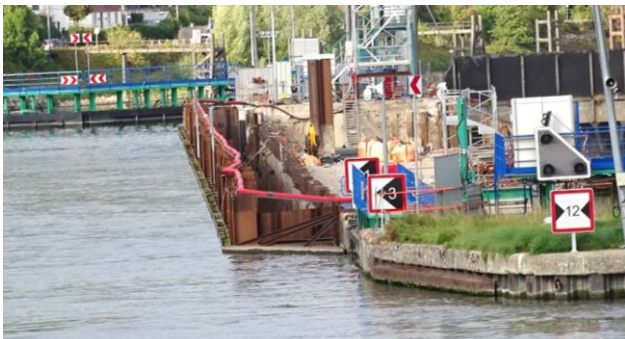


So, how do you rebuild lock walls with the traffic still going through the lock?

Well, the French engineers have the answer; you build a tough steel coffer dam wall in the lock chamber which then allows the lock wall to be rebuilt behind it. At Méricourt lock where there has been movement of the lock walls, this is possible because the chamber is wide, so still providing a 12-metre minimum width for the maximum size Class V barges. The second lock is currently unusable with what looks like aggregate in the chamber to stabilize it. Analysis has been carried out on the effect of flow rates from sluices with filling and emptying times and the force applied by vessels to the lockside bollards. From photographs there seems to be a history of periodic major work needed at this lock. Two barges can normally fit

into the wide lock side by side, but this is now restricted to one. Locking through a building site is an odd experience.

With traffic not too heavy on the Seine, the 15 minute or so locking time does not cause too much of a hold up. A variety of barge size is seen together with a variety of cargoes; scrap, waste, coal, aggregate and covered over dry goods. A common size is from 600 to 1200 tonnes, with some as small as 350 tonnes or less, the larger as two-pan push tows as well as single motor barges. The smaller vessels most likely go onto the smaller waterways above Paris, i.e. to the south and east of the city. The smaller barges being equally well maintained and smart as their larger brethren, proving perhaps they can still be economic. But there was a worry amongst the boating community, operators and organisations, that the captains and crews are an ageing population. Many of the barges of all sizes are husband and wife or family operated, the children can attend weekly boarding school whilst their parents get on with delivering their cargoes during the week.



Méricourt lock under re-construction, showing the temporary dam on the right wall, with the empty *Barendsz* exiting the lock in the above photo (R Horne)

The well turned out small barge *Necta* in Paris, 38m x 5.09m, 339t max (R Horne)



India inland waterways trials

India has always used its navigable waterways for transport in a variety of vessel sizes with some quite small, but now there is a new pilot plan to run 4 trials to inland East India using Bangladeshi ports as a transit point to and from East India, so reports the freight journal website *The Loadstar*. It reports the trials were successful, the Danish Company Maersk now being in discussions with potential customers.

The Loadstar reported that the project was led by Kolkata Port (SMPK) under the “government-to-government inland water transit and trade protocol”; this included partnership arrangements with Maersk Line (India) and Gurugram-based CJ Darcl Logistics. It also included trials with back loads which also had good results. Maersk is now progressing with improvement of the landside infrastructure including warehousing in Bangladesh.

Vikash Agarwal, Maersk MD for South Asia, told *The Loadstar*: “Inland waterways exist in several countries around the world, and Maersk moves cargo regularly on those routes, and while some basic learnings can be applied from those solutions, the *modus operandi* is generally different in different geographies and not replicable in entirety everywhere.”

Angshuman Mustafi, head of Maersk in Bangladesh, said: “With the barge movements between India and Bangladesh and between India’s mainland and north-east India via Bangladesh, we have established processes and solutions that will help our customers with a more predictable and cost-efficient service.”

“The use of Chattogram and Mongla ports in Bangladesh for the movement of goods to and from the north-eastern region is a significant step in India’s Act East policy. Developments in connectivity are imperative for transforming India’s eastern and north-eastern states.”

It appears that the barges used are reasonably large and perhaps it is also a case where there is a definite benefit of using the assistance of government coordination to achieve a more cohesive, effective water freight distribution system. (See also the UK domestic water transport evidence review page 6)

CBOA for Members

Chairman’s AGM report

Welcome from me to another ‘virtual’ AGM of the Association. As usual my report will cover the period from the last AGM to this so as to be up to date.

We have continued with our work of promoting the carriage of freight by inland waterway and generally representing the best interests of our varied membership.

A significant challenge this year on the major waterways has been the effective closure of the Aire & Calder Navigation for freight traffic (due to a draft restriction) just after the breach at Goole had been repaired. This was due to fish mortality following passage of laden craft through Knottingley. After consideration the Trust decided that dredging was the answer. That was completed recently and barge traffic resumed at an increased draft but cannot yet load fully up to Leeds as one or two bits of spot dredging remain to be done. Demand for sea dredged aggregate continues such that opportunities for movement to other destinations are being actively pursued and a recent trial passage in ballast was made to the Tarmac wharf at Whitwood for example. We continue assisting with another proposed aggregate movement on the Aire & Calder Wakefield branch from Stanley Ferry and are working closely with the Inland Waterways Association at regional and branch level.

All this will require investment in refurbished or new craft, and we are pleased that members are doing just that along with recruitment and training of crews.

On the smaller waterways we continue to work with the Trust and others to encourage more movement of materials in connection with waterside re-development and waterway engineering work as well as responding to enquiries.

On the larger waterways the Thames continues to be very busy with established and new traffics including trial of light freight. On the River Severn our member Thompson River Transport continues to move substantial tonnages of aggregate and we have been pleased to support a successful application to extend the life of the Ryall North quarry. In Hull Mainmast craft remain busy moving base oil between Hull and Rotherham each week, while the company’s other tankers move vegetable oils and other liquids to and from the River Hull but these traffics are likely to cease following closure of the factories being served at the end of the year.

In the North West we continue to encourage development of potential traffics while our Scotland representative Jonathan Mosse keeps an eye on waterway matters north of the border, developing a welcome relationship with Scottish Canals.

On the leisure waterways, our narrow boat operator members offer coal, fuel and other items to waterside dwellers and boat owners – a service which is much appreciated.

We continue to respond to other enquiries which come our way either directly or (often) via the Canal & River Trust.

As I say every year all these boat movements – on large or small waterways – add colour, interest and spectacle all the year round as well as contributing to combating congestion, noise and pollution on the roads.

Richard Horne continues to keep an eye on planning matters as well as editing the CBOA News to a very high standard. Chris Poole has been active as research officer – in particular initiating and collating a survey which shows that our members move nearly five million tonnes a year including around 10,000 tonnes on the leisure waterways. Thanks to all our members who responded to the request for information. We hope to repeat the survey every year or two.

We attended the Recycling & Waste Exhibition at the NEC this year, and while attendance was less than previous years, we had a large number of serious enquiries this time including one for moving very large tonnages of gas on the Aire & Calder, and another for movement of significant tonnages of waste on pallets to proposed small scale energy from waste plans, canalside in Stoke-on-Trent. We are actively assisting with this last venture.

We have had fruitful discussions with Transport for the North, Midlands Connect and the National Infrastructure Commission and are working with CRT, IWA and others to do all we can to support the Trust as it argues the case for continued government support for the inland waterways, and freight in particular. The government's 'Future of freight Strategy Report' was short on detail but did mention water freight and included a proposal to set up a National Freight Network which specifically includes inland waterways. There is a renewed focus on freight and logistics and its importance in the post Brexit and post Covid environment. We have a lot of positive feedback to give to policy makers including the investment our members are making in barges and freight handling facilities. Work continues to consider how we can decarbonise our operations with some good examples of this on the Thames. We are very much looking forward to continuing to highlight the role that the waterway network can play in reaching the government's targets.

In terms of CBOA officers and committee Les Reid had asked to stand down as East Midland Representative. We have not yet found a successor – any offers? Maik Brown has stood down as Freight Development Officer (North). We thank him for his work and are pleased to note that he is professionally involved in water freight and still keen to assist CBOA. As you all know John Dodwell stood down as an officer and member of the committee this year after many years of outstanding service to CBOA, for a period as Chairman and for the water transport cause generally. We are very grateful to John and in recognition of this will be recommending him be appointed as Vice-President of the Association later in this meeting.

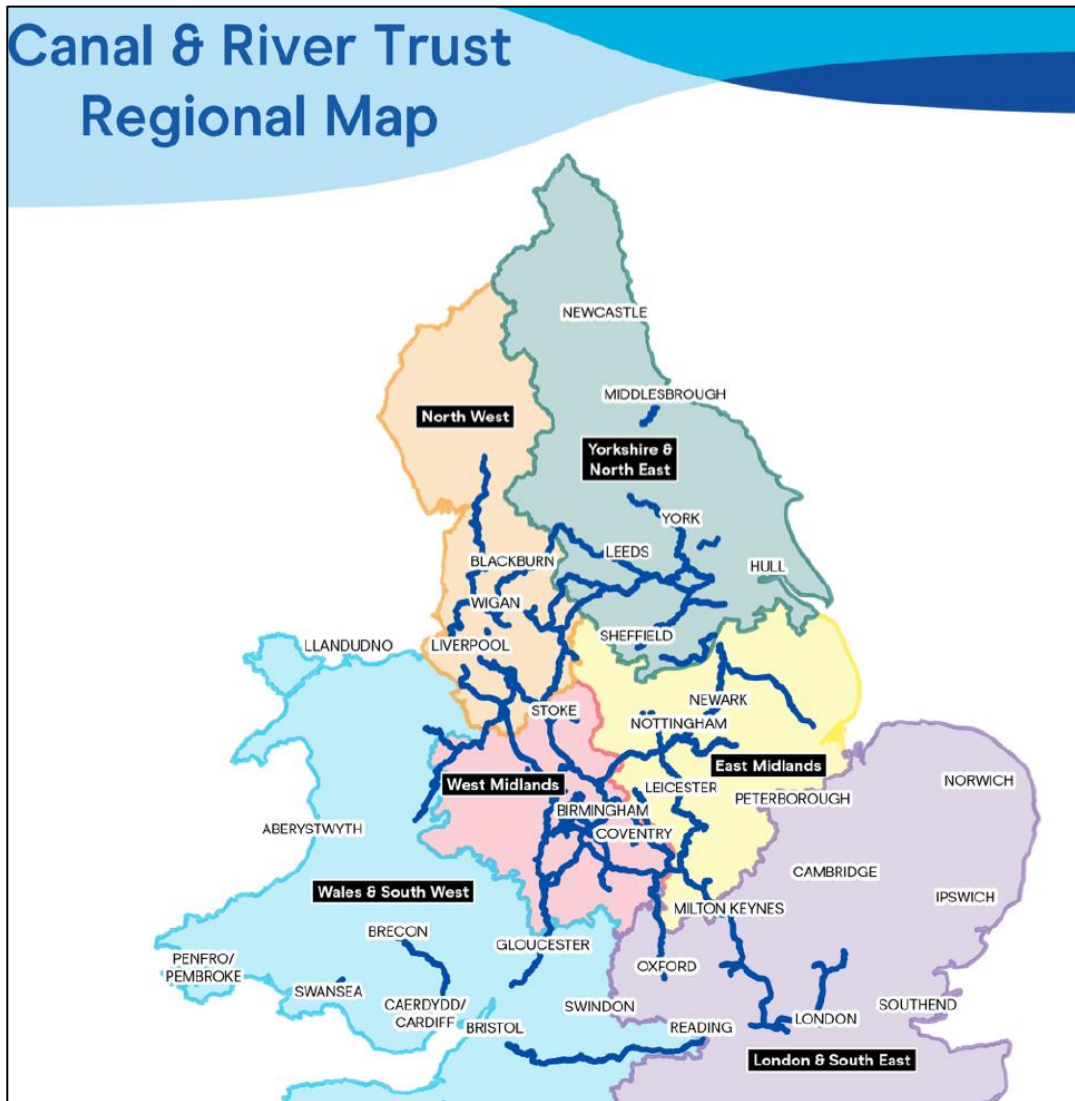
We are still looking at changing the status of the Association from being an unincorporated organisation with little or no protection for its officers and members to an incorporated body limited by guarantee. We've not been able to progress this as quickly as hoped, but will keep it in mind and work towards resolution as soon as possible. We will keep membership advised of course. The increase in membership subscriptions implemented seems to have been accepted by members with very little attrition.

Your committee has continued to meet 'on line' and this does seem to work well and offers a small saving in costs. I conclude, as last year, by thanking my colleagues, and our officers in the regions, membership etc, and Becky and Louise in the 'back office' for their hard work, and to you all for your support and interest.

It was asked if WHH contributed to the 10,000 tonnes figure on leisure waterways with their carrying on the London canals; Lee Wilshire replied most likely, recycling tonnages would have been also included. Some discussion occurred about the A&CN – David said they are limited to about 7'7" draft. Passage of boats assists in improving channel. Road haulage rates seemed to have not gone up, despite increase in fuel costs.

Reporting navigational issues to the Canal and River Trust

CBOA encourages everyone to advise navigational hazards or problems to CRT as soon as possible, whether as Trade members or Associates. The recent initiative from the Historic Narrow Boat Owners Club (HNBC) has promoted this, also encouraging everyone to provide a precise location using the ///what3words app – this is especially useful for identifying submerged objects, overhanging trees in the channel or where spot dredging is needed.



(Canal and River Trust)

CRT's email contacts are as follows:

East Midlands - enquiries.eastmidlands@canalrivertrust.org.uk

London and South East - enquiries.londonsoutheast@canalrivertrust.org.uk

North West - enquiries.northwest@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Wales and South West - enquiries.walesouthwest@canalrivertrust.org.uk

West Midlands - enquiries.westmidlands@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Yorkshire and North East - enquiries.yorkshirenortheast@canalrivertrust.org.uk

CRT's general contact phone number is 03030 40 40 40, their emergencies number is 0800 479 9947.

This information is replicated on the HNBC web site at <https://hnbc.org.uk/crt-regions-email-contacts>, without member login.

CRT have always said that the more a particular problem gets reported, the higher chance there is of that resolution.

Freight grant schemes

In addition to the Modal Shift Revenue Support (MSRS) which assists with running costs with inland transport when shifting freight from road to rail or water, in a similar way the Water Freight Grant (WFG) assists with operating coastal and short sea shipping. This might apply to some estuarial and port work, instead of the MSRS.

The WFG is a one-off payment to cover a maximum of three years, on condition that the service would be economically viable without grant support after that period.

Information about both grant types is on the Government's web site, the documentation produced by the DfT.

Have you thought of joining the CBOA Committee?

We are inviting people to become committee members, particularly Trade members but also Associates. Potential new members need to have a strong interest generally in promoting and sustaining water transport, not necessarily in their local area but more widely across the UK. Having said that, local involvement in terms of representing your local area would also be an advantage, as CBOA could benefit from more local representation in some areas. Representation of other organisations, e.g. government, shipping, ports, navigation authorities and consultancies would also be welcome.

The current committee represents a variety of people, both Trade and Associate members with different backgrounds and involvements with the waterways, which greatly adds to the overall positive achievement of CBOA's work. Quarterly committee meetings are held on-line and consist of a variety of different subjects in different areas of the industry and also involvement with navigation authorities, government and other organisations, with the promotion of water transport, and support of our Trade members.

So, please give it some thought and by all means contact the Chairman to discuss it, if you feel you have something to offer! In return, you will gain a better insight into the operation of water transport in the UK.

Membership renewals and form

Would all members please check that they have paid the correct membership fee for this year; a number of standing orders have not been updated this year to the current membership fee – see details overleaf.

The membership form is enclosed opposite for existing members to encourage others to join, and also for others who either receive the CBOA News or gain sight of it.



Commercial Boat Operators Association

2 High Street, Eccleshall, Stafford, ST21 6BZ
www.cboa.org.uk info@cboa.org.uk 07923 255086

MEMBERSHIP FORM

We wish to join / renew* membership of the CBOA and agree to abide by its rules.

* Delete as applicable

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Telephone(s).....

E-mail.....Website.....

CBOA Annual Subscription Levels – subscription year runs from 1st July each year

Trade: £450 for firms with more than 5 craft
 £200 for firms with up to and including 5 craft
 £70 for firms using craft on narrow canals / other commercial
 £200 for waterway maintenance/barge yards/consultancy/surveying/wharves

Associate: £30

Payment



We have authorised a Standing Order/made a BACS payment using the details below:-

Commercial Boat Operators Association

Account no: 00158084

Sort Code: 30-18-83

Lloyds Bank Towcester

OR



We enclose a cheque made payable to Commercial Boat Operators Association for our subscription

Please send this form and your cheque to CBOA c/o Robert Wynn & Sons, 2 High Street, Eccleshall, Staffs, ST21 6BZ or email it to info@cboa.org.uk if paying by Standing Order.

Data Protection / GDPR

Your membership details will be held on a computerised database under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulations. Your details will not be disclosed to other members or to parties outside the Association without your express permission.

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www.cboa.org.uk

Issues of CBOA News, either printed or PDF file can be obtained by members or non-members on request from info@cboa.org.uk

General Data Protection Regulations 2018

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Erratum.

In the previous issue of CBOA News Autumn/Winter 2022, the Northern Carrying Activities article on page 10, we apologise that no mention was made that the owners of the vessel *Exol Pride* are Mainmast Ltd.

With the loss of the Hull oil traffic due to closure of the mill, Andy Sanders, Director of Mainmast Ltd reports that the company is consolidating its remaining businesses in Hull and on the Mersey and is looking at potential new possibilities on the rivers and canals.

President: Dr. David Quarmby CBE Vice President: John Dodwell