



Responses to mooring article 10 Feb 2017

Overtaking is a signal event. If a slower moving boat fails to give way to a faster one that should be regarded as obstruction. There is a penalty for obstructing the Queen's Highway and there should be one for obstructing the Queen's Waterway. I acknowledge that on occasion the faster boat should incur a greater penalty for causing breaking waves, breaking banks, etc. The most important point is that canals have locks: if the flow of boats towards locks is impeded that causes unnecessary crowding at locks and slows all traffic down. Being overtaken by another boat on the immediate approach to a lock is a different matter. Having competence, discretion, judgement about when and where, is a fundamental part of canal boating. Exercising those mental capacities need not take the fun from the activity.

Regarding overtaking while cruising, this probably comes under the heading 'boater etiquette'. No two boats will ever want to cruise at the exact same speed, a slight adjustment to the throttle is usually enough to stop any conflict. Only once in the last year have I been seriously inconvenienced by a slower boat when I had to travel out of gear much of the time to stay astern, the guy in front blissfully unaware of my presence as he didn't look behind once. My dilemma was solved by a working boat who caught me up, I allowed him to pass and he proceeded to intimidate the slowcoach until he made way for us both to overtake. Not etiquette but effective nonetheless.

You asked for comments on mooring, again it comes down to consideration for others. My pet hate is the boater who insists in leaving a 10 foot or more gap between his boat and the next one (the same boater no doubt who always complains the popular moorings are full). I always tie to the same ring or bollard as the boat in front thus maximising the number of boats that can get in the available space. Obviously out in the sticks if there are few boats about then it is courteous to give the other boat some privacy.

I think that having stickers to invite others to moor alongside is a good idea.

Think this is a good idea. In areas where there are a lot of boats along the path and no empty spot it would be nice to know that even if someone isn't aboard they would still welcome us to moor alongside.

I've had one of those EA "welcome to moor alongside" stickers in my boat window for at five years or more and only one or two people have ever taken up the offer!

The problem with breasting up narrow boats is the positioning of their windows. As a sailing Yachtmaster I am used to breasting up yachts that have small windows that are difficult to see in and are often at varying heights. However, narrow boats usually have large windows at similar heights ending up opposite one another enabling the crews to see in to each other's boats. No one wants to spend a mooring with their curtains drawn so this severely limits the desirability and willingness for folks to breast up. I think the most desirable solution is more official mooring sites (especially on the Kennet and Avon which is notoriously bad for mooring).



I always allow faster boats to pass me, but only under certain conditions:

1. It must be a safe place for both boats, preferably a reasonably straight stretch
2. There are NO moored boats

Then I would slow my boat, move to one side, and raise my arm to wave the other boat through. Most people seem to understand, and go past with a wave. Once the boat is past my bow I can then increase speed.

Your article on mooring prompted me to once more look into how to get a "Welcome To Moor Alongside" sticker but I couldn't find any online (I think they get given away with the EA licenses?) so I made my own up. This is what I have been playing with. The original batch were the "Classic" designs. Then I realised that it was easy to make modifications. As today the weather was rubbish and I had spare time on my hands, I did...

My idea is to make these freely available for boaters to print their own. Personally, to affix them inside my windows I'll use some of that transparent sticky-backed film they cover books etc. with (I already do that for my yearly license).

If anyone is more demanding of quality I also have the classic designs in vectorised formats (SVG and EPS). That way people can play with them themselves, even make GIANT versions!

Now I guess I should do something constructive!



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As for the overtaking signal, I've always used distance.

If a boat has moved up to within a couple of boat lengths, he probably wants to overtake. On the other hand if a boat behind me stays five or six lengths behind me, he is probably happy with the speed I'm going, even if, initially, he was going slightly faster.

I do the same: if I turn a corner and there's a boat in front of me I give it a couple of minutes to see what progress he's making. If he's leaving me behind then the question is moot, and if I'm happy with his speed I'll back off the throttle to keep pace, leaving at least five boat lengths so the guy in front doesn't feel crowded. However, if he seems to be going everywhere on tick-over I'll move up to within a couple of boat lengths and wait for him to signal me to pass. If, after ten minutes or so, he hasn't got the message, I'll wait for a clear section and move over to pass. At that point even those who didn't know the etiquette get the idea and allow passage. This has worked very amicably, with no angry words, for years.

Re mooring there is a major problem that my wife and I have to deal with. Our boat is 70ft long which means we need a significant space available to moor. So often we arrive at visitor mooring to find moored boats with a large space between them, often in the order of 20ft. Combined with this we find there is nowhere for us to more whereas if the boats had moored bow to stern there would have been enough room for more boats to moor and maybe even ours. I know it is a human tendency to want to have a decent amount of personal space but in peak times this can cause inconvenience to others.



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It is particularly difficult for us since my wife is disabled and therefore we need to moor close to services such as shops to allow her to walk there. We cannot moor a long way off since she simply cannot walk far. For our car we have a blue badge which allows us to find convenient, preferred parking but there is no such system on the canals. Many times we have reached our destination, not been able to moor close to services and therefore had to continue to the next community etc. until we could find a mooring ending in an overly long day.

One community we passed had a 2 hour or so mooring restriction outside the Tesco supermarket which was perfect for us enabling us to stock up then carry on to a remote mooring. Increased usage of such a system would be perfect if implemented by bridges close to shops and such - as long as boaters comply by the rules of course.

I will also pass on a complaint from a friend. He bought a winter mooring permit for his boat which cost him over £1000 which he was ok with. What he found though was that there were several other boaters who moored up in the winter mooring area without a permit, which they are allowed to do but then stayed for many weeks which they are not. It makes a mockery of the winter permit system if my friend pays his money but neighbours do not and there is no controlling of the moorers. This is on the Macclesfield Canal so it is not in an out of the way place.

Without a waterways equivalent of 'Debrett's New Guide to Etiquette and Modern Manners' - Now this is a tricky one, if unsure I take a slight glance and if there seems likely to be a friendly response follow with a wave, other times it is obvious if the occupants are up for a friendly exchange, always avoid continuing looking if they are eating or engaged in personal tasks ie hair brushing. looking forward to reading others comments.

Schedule 5, clause 4(e), of your licence Terms & Conditions - I think you are being 'moor' than generous in saying "looks like one or two boaters may have 'forgotten' this clause", the towing paths are littered with boaters' belongings from bikes to log sawing stands, storage boxes, motorcycles (how do they get then from road to boat without riding

them?) and of course materials for fitting out a boat (the boat being fitted out usually unlicensed). Not everywhere mind you but in very many places. Indeed on several occasions in the past I have reported such occurrences, but one gets weary of doing so, in one case (and I have seen others) arc welding with no means of screening from public gaze, I am sure you will know the danger of arc eye, but many of the general public will not, especially children.

Breasting Up - I have written to you in the past when this had been a topical subject. OK in some circumstances, but ability to get on and off boat, dogs (cats?) on board, loss of view and many other reasons. If signs welcoming such are used then others may be stigmatised and seen unsociable for not displaying one, even if a home made sign is displayed one should always still requested consent from the occupiers.

It should not become the norm but the exception and CRT should be providing more visitor moorings and catch up with the increased number of boats using the system.

Generators - Should also have been mentioned, if in an isolated spot and another boat moors up nearby, to enjoy the isolated spot also, and it is out of hours turn the generator/engine off!



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I have read your article in the newsletter regarding etiquette when mooring on the tow path. Having experienced long stay 'live aboards' on the Kennet and Avon canal, some of whom are guilty of doing everything that has been shown as things you should not do. At some time or another I have experienced all of these unforgivable, and in most cases, intentional, acts of anti social behaviour that has caused problems to those who wish to enjoy the otherwise beautiful countryside, tow paths and cruising.

Would it not be helpful to employ someone to patrol the tow paths to engage and educate boaters to these precise points of etiquette, thereby making it a pleasant experience for all – other boaters, holiday cruisers, walkers and those that live alongside the canal.

We often come across inconsiderate moorers who have left excessive 'privacy gaps' on moorings - most frustratingly on pontoon moorings on rivers, where there is room for at least another boat, but the incumbent boats are taking up that space with large gaps between them.

Conversely, we usually prefer to moor in secluded spots out on the cut, but all too often, especially in high season, we have been alone for no more than half an hour before someone turns up and moors behind us - often ending up in a terrace of boats on what was, before we arrived, a nice quiet empty towpath.

The major bug-bear however is boats moored at service points - stopped for water & Elsan, perhaps, but then retreating inside to have lunch or a cup of tea before moving on.

Your comments on the need for signals etc to indicate the wish to overtake another vessel are of interest. While I accept the vast majority of your readers/users of the system are narrow boaters there are a few of us who operate motor vessels of various types. Of those a reasonable percentage only use the river network to access the coast.

We already have, internationally recognised marine signals that cover overtaking, and I would suggest that rather than introduce a "narrow boat system" you use the existing international marine signals.

It would make good sense to publish these signals in some future publication. On far too many occasions while approaching a slower vessel on the tidal Trent it is obvious that the international signals when used are just not understood. This leads to confusion and I would expect concern on the part of the narrow boat.

Hope this is of some help.

Great idea I have no problem it, I have always found if the boater on the other boat introduces yourself and usually everybody is happy, the only time there might be an issue is if they are made of GRP and poorly maintained and have about as much strength as a matchbox, a steel narrow can be a heavy.



I would welcome a recognised signal that means I am asking if I may pass you. Two short plus one long tone on the horn might be a way. It would then be up to the boat being followed to acknowledge this and indicate appropriate action.

I travel about six months in a year I do not want to rush everywhere but on occasion have met people who see me but continue at tick over which is slower than the necessary setting of mine, or steadfastly ignore my presence. A stop and tea is the answer but I sometimes wonder as to the politeness of some.

The very short article last month failed to mention the most common reason for experienced, responsible boaters wanting to overtake another vessel.

Every boat/engine combination has one or more 'sweet points' in terms of engine revs at which it runs most comfortably and, more significantly in terms of the occasional need to overtake, one or more 'sour points' where it has a tendency to rattle itself to bits. On my own boat (50 ft NB with BMC diesel engine) I can run the engine at 1000 revs or below without vibration or at 1,300 revs or more. However, at somewhere between 1,100 and 1,200 revs the whole boat rattles like roller skates going down a cobbled street. If I come up behind a boat travelling at precisely this speed, to avoid the boat self-destructing I either have to slow right down to a crawl or overtake so that I can just put on the extra revs needed to hit a new 'sweet point'. It has nothing to do with haring about the canal system at high speed - it's just the simple fact that every boat/engine combination is different. One would hope that all experienced boaters would be aware of this and be happy to allow those whose 'sweet point' is a little faster than theirs to pass at the earliest opportunity.

To answer the question you posed this month, yes - a signal does already exist, at least on every other Inland Waterway system in Europe. It is specified in the CEVNI (European Code for Inland Waterways) Regulations as follows: (See <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2010/sc3wp3/ECE-TRANS-SC3-115r4e.pdf>)

Article 6.10 – Overtaking

1. As a general rule, the overtaking vessel shall pass to port of the vessel being overtaken. When overtaking is possible without danger of a collision, the overtaking vessel is allowed to pass also on starboard side of the vessel being overtaken. If overtaking is possible without the vessel being overtaken changing its course or speed, the overtaking vessel need give no sound signal.
2. When overtaking is impossible without the vessel being overtaken changing course, or when it appears that the vessel being overtaken may not have noticed the intention to overtake and that this may cause a danger of collision, the overtaking vessel shall sound:
 - (a) Two long blasts followed by two short blasts if it wishes to pass to port;
 - (b) Two long blasts followed by one short blast if it wishes to pass to starboard.
3. If the vessel being overtaken can grant this request by the overtaking vessel, it shall leave the necessary space on the side requested, moving over towards the other side if necessary, and sound:
 - (a) One short blast when it is to be overtaken to port;
 - (b) Two short blasts when it is to be overtaken to starboard.



4. When overtaking is not possible on the side requested by the overtaking vessel, but possible on the other side, the vessel being overtaken shall sound:

- (a) One short blast when overtaking is possible to port;
- (b) Two short blasts when overtaking is possible to starboard.

If the overtaking vessel still wishes to pass, it shall then sound two short blasts in case (a) or one short blast in case (b). The vessel being overtaken shall then leave the necessary space on the side on which it is to be overtaken, moving over to the other side if necessary.

5. When overtaking is impossible without danger of a collision, the vessel being overtaken shall sound five short blasts.

6. In the case of two sailing vessels, the overtaking vessel shall as a general rule pass on the side on which the vessel being overtaken has the wind. This provision shall not apply to a small sailing craft which is overtaken by another sailing vessel. When a vessel is being overtaken by a sailing vessel, it shall facilitate overtaking on the side on which the overtaking craft has the wind. This provision shall not apply to a small sailing craft overtaking another vessel.

In your newsletter you talk about hand signals (in relation to overtaking).

On a few occasions I've thought it would be useful to have a comprehensive hand signalling system (as was the case before indicators on cars) This could include the "downward waving" for I'm slowing down or moving left.

I think one short toot and a sideways wave for move over so I can pass would only come across as offensive if it wasn't the recognised hand signage.

We use a removable sign (fixed to the window with "BluTak") as there are some moorings where it is too narrow to breast-up and some where we don't want other boats to breast-up.

We use a printed sign though if we had stickers I would stick them on a piece of perspex to put up and take down as necessary.

I would like to see a pair of these stickers sent out with every licence renewal. Boaters should be reminded that, on our crowded waterways, this is just good neighbourliness - next time it could be you desperately looking for a mooring spot!

When passing moored boats I look (not stare) at the boat I am passing especially if I think it is occupied. Most often, if it is occupied, the person on board will wave (I like to think that they appreciate me passing at tick-over speed) and I will wave back or doff my cap.



When boats pass us when we are moored I like to give a 'thumbs up' to those passing slowly. I find that those skippers who stare straight ahead are most usually those who are going too fast. If someone is passing too fast and does happen to look my way I smile and gesture to them to slow down.

Definitely wave, or at least smile, when passing moored boats!!

My wife and I enjoy a linier long term mooring on the Stainforth & Keadby Canal and we welcome a cheery wave from slowly passing boaters.

Ohhh, come on now.... cruising passed moored boats. This is no different to passing anyone (everyone)!

We are great wavers. We wave at everyone. The only difference is the 'size' of the wave. So who gets a wave?

- Anglers who have to lift their rods out of the way - they get a verbal thank you as well.
- Moored boaters who look out of their window - a small acknowledgement to them for not shouting at us as some seem to love (Grumpy ones) - they can get a chat as well.
- Walkers, hikers, runners, cyclists, mums and prams / children on the towpath and chat sometimes. Some though are heads down, earphones in, no attention, silent ones. Boaters travelling in the opposite direction.
- Boats we overtake
- Boats who overtake us.
- Drunken holiday boat hirers and a chat to ask if they're having fun? (then watch fall in...)
- We even wave at stupid helmsmen who are out in atrocious weather - just like us!

Have I left anyone out? Ah, a big chat with volunteer lock keepers etc. Surely waving is what boating is all about.

I've seen a lot of these stickers on the canals and they are a great idea, particularly at busy spots or where mooring is restricted.

It might be as well to charge 50p a sticker, and with it give some points of etiquette, such as what to do if returning to the boat late, how to slip moorings if you're on the inside, etc.

We'll always look at the other boat, without staring into their windows. Canals are friendly, laid back places and it's good to acknowledge others and maybe even pass the time of day.

Also, if you don't look at other boats, how are you to know if your wake is affecting them adversely - you'll have slowed down to pass, obviously, but was it enough?



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Overtaking boats – people know one moment there's nothing astern and then a boat appears and it gets closer and closer – just slow and let them pass on your port side and get on with their trip and yours - they'll beat you to the next set of locks or tunnel, so what...

In popular spots where there is limited mooring, I tend to moor up to the boat in front and if possible share my front rope on his rear rope ring. Too many people leave a polite 10-foot gap, but if six boats do that in a row, then a 60ft space has been lost. In the past some people have felt uncomfortable being moored closely, but in my view it is helping us all share a popular mooring overnight.

A general acknowledgement when passing moored boats is best, morning, afternoon etc., if someone doesn't want to interact they usually disappear.

Most boaters who actually do move have no problem. One way is as long as you can catch the other boater's attention is point to yourself and then the direction you wish to pass on. Sometimes though it is difficult to decide what the boater coming towards you intends to do, in that case if you can slow down and pull over and wait for them to pass you then hopefully your boat will survive.

Maximise mooring opportunity at busy mooring places by not leaving half boat lengths between you and next boat. Get cosy with your neighbour and leave as much space as possible for others. Also, be willing to shuffle closer to make space for another boat, which may arrive later. Basically, be considerate of others.

We live aboard on an online mooring. We have no objection what so ever with passers-by looking in. Who wouldn't it's human nature. In fact, we like to acknowledge those fellow boaters passing by. But if the passer by does look in please wave. It seems extremely rude to stare and stare and then not have the courtesy to wave once those on board see the passer by looking in.

You ask whether an overtaking signal exists. Of course it does!

Given by any means (typically by horn), M is the request to overtake, followed by E or I for a request to pass on the starboard side or port side respectively (E and I are of course the usual horn signals for turning to starboard or port).

Permission can be given either by the vessel to be overtaken sending C

(yes) or indicating with E or I that it is moving over to starboard or port respectively. A clear refusal (clearer than mere non-response) can be given by X ("stop carrying out your intentions").

Signalling to a vessel astern of oneself by horn can be difficult, as horns usually point ahead: for this reason, I normally keep code flags for C, S ("my engines are running astern") and X to hand by the tiller so I can hold them up. Or, when appropriate, a vessel may give a cautious permission with CD



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("Yes; I am a vessel constrained by draft"... in other words, please don't fly past and drag the water from under me).

The codes are all set out in the International Regulations for Prevention of Collision at Sea which (the codes themselves say) apply to all navigable waters connected thereto. And most CRT waters are connected to the sea and are navigable by (small) sea-going vessels, such as cabin cruisers. Of course many of the signals are copied explicitly into the BW 1965 bylaws, under which CRT still operates as far as I understand (the Bylaws describe sound signals in detail - eg '3 short blasts' rather than assuming that the reader knows that S in Morse is 3 short blasts).

Absolutely. Mooring alongside would help enormously. Most people are ok about it. Let's distribute stickers. I have been looking for one for ages but no-one seems to know where to get them.

Mooring alongside the towpath does not imply that you can store any items either on the towpath or on the land adjacent to it. Mooring pins and the ropes securing the boat are the only items allowed.
