



Canal & River Trust

Making life better by water

Boaters' Update 29 June 2018

Welcome to the latest edition and thanks to everyone who got in touch with environmentally friendly tips after the last one. And what an environment it's been over the last week – wall-to-wall sunshine and an idyllic time to be on or by the water.

What I noticed most this week was what seemed like an explosion in butterflies. I'd be interested to know what's caught your eye since this lovely warm weather started. Even better, take a snap of it! Either way [do let me know](#) what's been your heatwave highlight and made your life better by water.

So, what can you read about in this edition? As well as the usual news roundup, events and summary of this weekend's major stoppages, there's an update on the breach of the Middlewich Branch, we continue the environmental theme with a report of your most-suggested tips, and there's news of our strategy for boating in London.

I hope you get time to read, and enjoy, it before heading to the cut for a gorgeously glorious weekend of boating,

Damian

PS If there's a particular topic you'd like to see in a future edition then please [drop me a line](#).

In this edition:

- [News round-up](#) and [the fortnight ahead](#)
- Middlewich Branch [breach update](#)
- [Our commitment to maintaining navigation](#)
- [London Mooring Strategy](#) – new facilities planned
- Environmentally friendly boating – [your feedback](#)
- More ways for you to [get involved](#)
- [Maintenance, repair and restoration work](#) affecting cruising this weekend
- [Bits and bobs](#)

News round-up and the fortnight ahead

Over the last couple of weeks you may have heard, or seen, that:

- 21 June – A peculiar phenomenon is appearing on London's canals as a spreading carpet of weed attempts to turn hundreds of metres of water green: [our special 'weed-eater'](#) boats have been out on the water to scoop up millions of pieces of the floating duckweed.
- 21 June – We have [rescued over 7,000](#) fish following a collapsed culvert beneath the Leeds & Liverpool Canal at Melling.



Canal & River Trust

Making life better by water

- 25 June – A formerly derelict lock on the Grantham Canal has [received its first lock gates for nearly 60 years](#) after hard-working volunteers spent three years painstakingly bringing it back to life.
- 25 June – We are inviting the public to take a rare [behind-the-scenes look](#) at a £4 million project to restore a section of the Montgomery Canal on the Shropshire Welsh border.

Below I've picked out some highlights to see and do over the next fortnight. Of course, there are plenty of other activities and volunteering opportunities around the network: visit the [events section of the website](#) to find the perfect one for you.

- 30 June & 1 July – Head to the [Chesterfield Canal Festival](#) for a wide range of attractions including trip boats, an entertainment marquee, children's rides, birds of prey, a brass band, street theatre, Morris dancing, canoeing, canal ware, model boats, plus food stalls and a real ale bar. Oh, and parking is free too!
- 1 July – Families are invited to join a free mini-beast safari and discover the bugs, beetles and insects living around them at [Fradley Junction's brilliant bugs event](#).
- 3 & 10 Jul – There are only a couple more '[Learning at Lunchtime](#)' opportunities at the National Waterways Museum Gloucester so pop along to find out about waterway history and the lives of those who lived and worked on them.
- 7 & 8 July – With the weather being so glorious lately there's not much that will have been shivering so why not head along to Cheshire's 'Cathedral of the Canals', Anderton Boat Lift, for an [action-packed weekend of family-friendly fun](#) where your timbers can get shivered with the UK's leading pirates; 'The Pirate Brethren'.

Middlewich Branch breach update

Before getting in to the update, you'll be pleased to know that we've now recovered the last boat stranded by the breach on the Shropshire Union Canal, Middlewich Branch.

A few days after the embankment collapse about 15 boats were re-floated and relocated, but the location of this final narrowboat, only a few metres from a giant 70 metre hole, was more challenging. Contractors working with us had to construct a special temporary access road along the canal bed to reach the stranded boat and the breach site.

A week ago, on Friday 22 June, a specialist low loader, equipped with a crane, drove into the canal bed, lifted out the boat, and took it to a nearby marina.

Preparatory work to repair the canal breach is progressing well. The main repair project is expected to start in mid-July and last until the end of the year.

Andy Johnson, the Trust's project manager, said: "We have made good progress with a whole host of essential tasks both on and off site. Behind the scenes, specialists have been ensuring the ecology, heritage and environment around the breach is safe-guarded and



engineers have been working on the complex design plans required to repair the embankment.

“A temporary access road along the canal bed will soon reach the breach site and will then be extended down to the River Wheelock and across the breach itself, allowing contractors to work on all of the devastated sections. As well as the reconstruction of the canal and embankment, we will also be reinstating the river to its original width and repairing the aqueduct.

“Inevitably there will be an increase in local traffic around Middlewich and Stanthorne as vehicles bring materials to site and remove unwanted debris. Rest assured we will be working hard to finish the vital emergency repairs as quickly as possible.”

The Trust, which cares for 2,000 miles of canals, has launched an emergency appeal towards the repair costs which are expected to be in the region of nearly £3 million. Over £30,000 has been raised so far.

For more information about becoming a Friend of the Trust or donating to the Emergency Appeal, please go to www.canalrivertrust.org.uk or alternatively text LEAK515 to 70070 to donate £5. All donations go directly to repairing the canal.

Our commitment to maintaining navigation

At the Trust, we see our role as stewards of the waterways in our care in perpetuity, with boats and navigation at the heart of what the Trust is for, and central to what we do. Our annual expenditure is close to £150m per annum, to keep the waterways open and safe for navigation. There will always be faults to fix, repairs to make, and emergencies to respond to: our rising expenditure and evolving longer term strategic approach to managing our assets means that the resources are being applied in the most effective way.

We want waterways to be navigable for generations of boaters to come. Our new branding and positioning speaks to that too. By mobilising the support of those who have waterways on their doorstep, and yielding benefits to them as well, we can ensure that what might otherwise be seen as a minority interest for enthusiasts becomes instead a mass movement with millions of supporters. Crucially, this will give us the greatest chance of securing the future funding we need to care for the waterways for years to come.

Many of you will have seen that Scottish Canals has released its Asset Management Strategy in a more challenging context; they are having to confront the challenge of delivering the sustained investment that a working waterway requires. The Trust offers all of us, south of the border, a different proposition, one in which the commitment to supporting navigation right across our 2,000 mile network can and will continue. By working with boaters, as well as all the other existing and future supporters, we can deliver a more secure and optimistic future for our waterways.



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Making life better by water

London Mooring Strategy – new facilities planned

Anyone who's boated in London will have noticed that the capital's waterways are more popular than ever. In fact, the number of boats has grown by 76% since 2012. In response we've announced a raft of initiatives that will benefit boaters and help manage the strain placed on the 200-year old network.

The London Mooring Strategy has been developed in consultation with boaters, boating groups, and local authorities, amongst others. Initiatives include managing the increasing demand for mooring spaces, improving facilities, and fairly balancing the needs of everyone who uses the capital's waters.

In 2018/19, we will be making the following improvements:

- Water points:
 - New taps at Harlesden, Sturt's Lock (Shoreditch), Bow Locks, Alperton
 - Improve water pressure at Paddington Basin
 - Relocate tap from Old Ford to Sweetwater (Olympic Park)
- Waste facilities:
 - New compounds at Harlesden, Feildes Weir (Hoddesdon), Stonebridge Lock
- Elsan (toilet) facilities:
 - Carry out feasibility work to open an Elsan to the public on the Regent's Canal
- Working with boaters and volunteers to install additional mooring rings
- Residential moorings developed at Millwall Outer Dock and Hayes
- Pre-bookable moorings developed in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on St Thomas's Creek (up to two berths), and on the Lee Navigation adjacent to the Park (three berths)
- Clear signage for 'watersports zones' at Broxbourne and on the Lower Lee Navigation
- Improved information at noticeboards, welcome stations and front-of-house

Customer priorities for which we hope to secure funding in future years include:

- Development of 1800m of new long-term offside moorings, the majority of which, subject to planning permission, will be for residential use
- More mooring rings to increase 14-day mooring capacity
- Changes to short-term moorings to ensure the fairer use of space
- New facilities to meet growing customer demand, and improvement of existing sites
- Working with boaters to provide boating information and advice, as well as working with police to address concerns about towpath safety
- Creation of opportunities for boating businesses in key visitor destinations
- The introduction of further new pre-bookable visitor mooring sites following a review of demand, and a free pre-bookable eco-mooring zone

Matthew Symonds, boating strategy and engagement manager at the Trust, said: "What used to be the capital's best kept secret has gained popular appeal, and London's canals are busier than at any time in recent history."



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Making life better by water

"There are fantastic opportunities for water-based businesses, myriad ways to enjoy leisure time, and they are a place that many people call home. The resulting boom in boat numbers has caused an enormous amount of pressure on what is, after all, a finite space.

"The London Mooring Strategy is the result of our collaborative work with boaters, boating groups, local authorities, developers, and other stakeholders such as rowing groups. There's been a good level of support for the proposals and, following an extensive consultation, we've listened to feedback and made changes as a result. Now we'll work with boaters and other stakeholders to put the improvements into place and make things better for boaters and sustainable for our canals and rivers."

To develop the London Mooring Strategy, the Trust held various workshops, consultation meetings, and engagement events, as well as conducting a wide-ranging survey of boaters in the London region. These helped shape a comprehensive strategy that identified detailed plans for each different London 'character area'. In autumn 2017 the Trust conducted an open survey consultation on the proposals. The consultation closed in January 2018 having received over 1,200 responses.

The full report, with a detailed breakdown of the improvements, [can be found online](#).

As a slight aside, but also in London, Waterway Chaplains from around the country [met in the Tower of London](#) for a 10th anniversary celebration service with a focus on this growing movement...

Environmentally friendly boating – your feedback

As mentioned in the introduction many of you got in touch to share your environmentally friendly boating tips - thank you!

Even more of you took part in the poll that asked, 'With the Government already committed to banning new petrol or diesel cars in 2040, should it be the same for inland waterway boats too?' Over three quarters (78%) said no, it shouldn't be the same – it'd be great if you could [let us know](#) why you think this.

Rather than list all your tips and comments in response to the [last article](#), I've highlighted a few of the ones that I think you'll find most interesting and that were suggested more than once. For those of you who want to read the full list, you'll [find it here](#). If you've got any more to add then please do [drop me a line](#).

- Composting toilets - no chemicals, no water being wasted in the waste. Would be even better if there was a compost collection system to carry on the process and use the resulting compost for fertiliser! Do you already have one? If so, [let us know](#) how easy you find it compared to other options.
- Oil drips leaking from engine that are held between the bearers - pour cat litter on them which absorbs the oil and water. I then use my wet/dry vacuum to suck it all up



Canal & River Trust

Making life better by water

and this can then be disposed of as oil contaminated waste. Better still, if your drip tray catches all the oil then just pop along to your nearest [oil bank](#) and dispose of safely.

- I have heard of some washing liquid (for clothes) that only uses a tiny amount and doesn't need rinsing but, of course, I didn't write it down at the time and have forgotten the name (do let us know if you know [which one it is!](#))
- One of the issues most damaging to the local and global environment is emissions from engines. I have lost count of the times that I have followed narrow boats belching black diesel fumes, or have been tied up for a picnic, only to be engulfed in the same filthy smoke. Share your [top tips for reducing engine smoke](#).

While we're on the subject of the environment, one boater wrote in saying: "All too often have I seen dog owners flicking their doggy doos in the canal, some of whom are boat dwellers. You wouldn't put you own poo in the canal so why do these people think it is ok to dispose of their dog's poo there?"

In three words, it's not ok. Here's what our national water quality scientist, Sara James, has to say about it: "Throwing dog poo into our waterways can negatively impact on the water quality. Studies have shown that dog poo has higher than average concentrations of faecal coliform bacteria (found in poo) and other harmful parasites, which could be passed on and harm other waterway users (canoers, paddleboarders, boaters and anglers).

"The dog poo will also add nutrients to the canal, in the form of phosphorous and nitrogen, adding to our already nutrient rich waters. Waters suffering from high nutrient levels, will encourage excessive growth of algae/water plants, which can impact on the water system in a number of ways:

- uses up dissolved oxygen within the water body, which can lead to fish stress/fish death
- floating water plants can minimise the oxygen that reaches the water body, again reducing the amount of available dissolved oxygen for fish and other aquatic organisms
- obstructing boat movement and other waterway users"

So, there you go. If your dog leaves their calling card on or by the towpath, don't 'stick and flick' just pick and bin.

More ways for you to get involved

Many boaters go the extra mile in helping to keep canals and rivers in good condition by [volunteering](#) or [donating](#). As you're such an integral part of what makes waterways so wonderful I thought you'd like to know about other ways you can get involved:

- Are you a proud owner of a wide beam boat? If so, do [please get in touch](#) and let me know just what is so great about having a wide beam – we'd love to run a feature on



Canal & River Trust

Making life better by water

the pros and cons of being a wide beam boater to help others decide if they should go big...

Maintenance, repair and restoration work affecting cruising this weekend

As someone who's out, or by, the water more often than most you'll know that there are times when we need to fix things that unexpectedly break. So, below, you'll find a list of anything that's happening that may affect you if you're planning on a cruise this weekend.

Before looking for any in your area, and especially if you're on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, please note that due to the continued warm weather and low levels of rainfall, the reservoir holdings for the Leeds & Liverpool are very low. To manage the water resources over the coming months, starting today (29 June 2018), overnight restrictions will be in place.

Locks will be open to navigation from 10am to 6pm daily. The lock flights will be padlocked closed at 6pm. Please ensure that you enter the lock flight with sufficient time to get through, noting the last passage commencement times. Moorings are available at the top and bottom of the flights.

We will continue to monitor the water resources and updates will be issued should the situation change. For details of which flights are affected and for the last passage commencement times please see the restrictions [dedicated webpage](#).

- [Bridge 10 \(Holmes Swing Bridge\) to Stanley Lock Flight / Eldonian Village - Leeds & Liverpool Canal](#)
- [Lock 11 Peak Forest Canal, Marple](#)
- [Lock 4, Aston, Birmingham & Fazeley Canal](#)
- [Marsh Lock, Weaver Navigation/Manchester Ship Canal](#)
- [Stainton Aqueduct - Lancaster Canal](#)
- [Standthorne Lock to Wardle Lock, Middlewich Branch, Shropshire Union](#)
- [Teeces Bridge \(Stoney Lane Little Bloxwich\) Wyrley & Essington Canal](#)
- [Three Mills Lock, Prescott Channel](#)
- [Bridge 46 Bevans Lane Bridge, Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal](#)

When any restrictions to navigation happen, we get them up on to our website as soon as we can – always best to [have a scan](#) before you set off for a cruise. If you have any questions about a specific closure then you'll find the email addresses for our regional offices [on our contacts page](#).

Bits and bobs

- At this time of year hundreds of boats around the country are festooned with flowers, and we want people to spread the word. We're encouraging everyone to set out on a voyage of discovery and help celebrate the nation's most beautiful blooming boats. If you come across a blossoming boat that takes your breath away – or are the proud owner of one! –



Canal & River Trust

Making life better by water

do take a photo and share it on the Trust's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages, with the hashtag #boatsinbloom.