

## Responses to 'Mooring properly – your views' [Boaters' Update 15 Jan 2016](#)

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Sensible speed, if your boat is causing a wash on the banks then you are going too fast.  
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Tick over in some situations does not provide sufficient steerage way, making the boat difficult to manoeuvre, especially on bends with boats moored on one side. In these situations I will increase the engine revs and look at the wake produced. If, with sufficient steerage way, the wake will move moored boats then once the manoeuvre is complete I drop the revs back to tick over.

If tick over is not sufficient to give steerage way then I gauge the minimum speed that generates the least wake. I wouldn't advocate cruising closely past moored boats in neutral as the water flow tends to suck the boats together, the revs and wake produced to take avoiding action are worse than if you had passed at tick over.

P.S. I'm a RYA helmsman and steer narrow and broad beam boats  
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My solution to using mooring pins in soft ground is as follows. I have had my own narrow boat since 2000 and developed it after being woken one morning on the south Oxford with a queue of boats and me stuck right across the canal. If you must use mooring pins and for me it is the last option then hammer the pins right down so that the loop of iron is touching the ground. Place them in a 45 degree angle to bow and stern.

The pins don't bend with the strain of passing boats. Your boat hardly moves with the passing boat traffic irrespective of their speed. This way the strain of the mooring rope is not to bend and dislodge the pins but is through the mud and two foot of mud soil and grass keep it in place.  
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I have read the article and comments on moorings and passing speed with interest. In my opinion pins, in any type of banking, are for emergency use only. When cruising I try to use dedicated visitor areas with rings/bollards etc. or choose a section of bank which is protected by pilings, then use chains run behind the back support bar, I don't like 'Piling Hooks' – too easy to unhook.

As my home mooring is on line, is close to a winding hole and has fluctuating water levels due to locks less than a mile away I have put wire springs and chain



extensions (right) on my lines which with good fenders allows the boat to move within limits. It

seems to me that it is only courtesy to slow to around 2 - 3 mph when passing any moored boat, although I do appreciate the frustration felt by boaters when faced with 50 or 60 boats on some sets of moorings, or even 5 miles of fishing contest!

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I have read the various messages sent to you regarding mooring of boats, and the sensible measure of using 'Springs' to limit the extent of movement of moored boats caused by the passage of other boats. I'm sorry to say that some of the statements made are nonsense, and I have written the explanation below (Bernoulli's Formula), which I assure you I have investigated in great depth with my background in aeronautical engineering, air being of course, just another fluid behaving in accordance with the same 'rules' as water.

I readily acknowledge that the piece is far too long for you to use in your bulletin, but I ask you to read it carefully, refer its contents to any scientists you know for verification, and keep it for reference in future discussions of boats moving past moored boats. Maybe you could ask boaters to observe closely and carefully the actual movement of the water past their moving boat, and the actual water level change as they travel, when the truth of my explanation will be demonstrated.

#### [Bernoulli's Formula](#)

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There needs to be an understanding of the hull designs, some are efficient, others are not. To understand your own boat, using a simple gps device that can record slow speeds; set you boat at 3mph on an average width canal, reduce your rpm to tick over and time how long, or what distance it takes to reduce your speed to 2mph or less. You will be surprised. My experience is that it takes my boat a considerable distance.

It is not always possible to reduce your 'speed' adequately to pass a moored boat given the contours and obstructions to your line of sight whilst underway. Therefore the responsibility has to be with moorer as to how and where they moor their vessel should they wish to reduce their disturbance and there seems to be plenty of advice as to how to do this.

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The article on mooring was excellent. There are those who rant because the Sea Otter engines run fast (the boat will still move slowly). Coming through Banbury I had passed thirty boats, all speaking or waving when I came across a boat where the skipper said I was cruising far too fast .(I was actually on tickover). He was ranting and swearing. I ignored him and had pleasant chats/ comments from the next 20 boats in the same mooring!

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Reading your recent article on mooring, it mentioned tying up with a centre line only. This reminded me of a problem which occurs on a regular basis, and that is when in a lock on any river it is very important to tie up both fore and aft in a double width lock, and it even tells us on most locks. I am very concerned about this as a cruiser owner, as there have been many instances (on a daily basis), when I have encountered narrow boats who only use the centre rope. Most of these are hire boats

and when talking to the crews I regularly get told that this is what they have been instructed to do by the hire company. One family of six had tied the centre line to a bollard.

Five of them were on the lock side while the dad was in the boat and as they were going up, the rope got slack and the wind blew the boat all over the place. I explained what they should be doing and they were very grateful. I then went back on my boat (which was not in the lock) and after some time went back to find out why they weren't coming out, only to find they hadn't fully closed the bottom sluices. On one occasion with an experienced boat owner I asked them if they would tie up back and front before I entered and was told "no we never do that and we have been boating a long time", as if to say you're talking rubbish. Hence we waited for the next time.

They don't seem to be aware that some rules for rivers are different from canals. I know this is a minority but it may be worth a reminder to those few who either don't know the rules of the rivers or maybe don't care. A note to the hire companies for better instructions would maybe help as well.

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Having been involved in canals since the 1970's the rule was always to pass moored boats at tick over and this was what we passed on to our hirers. I am very capable of mooring a boat up correctly and am RYA Helmsman trained. The suggestion that boats assess whether a bank is soft or not is unrealistic, especially since by moving the goalposts to steady speed past boats will result in people misinterpreting steady speed. Tick over is tick over there is no misunderstanding with that.

There are implications of boat design with some designs causing more wash than others at the same speed, and heavy full length, slow moving boats dragging boats incorrectly moored. Having very long linear moorings can also cause frustration resulting in more speed, which should really mean that these form of moorings should really be discouraged. Please don't encourage people to assess their own speed limit.

While I would never run a red light, these unfortunately are increasing despite the consequences. How many times have you sat at 70 miles per hour on the motorway, only to be passed by everyone else? The difference with speed on the water is the impact on the banks from wash and also from mooring pins being ripped up.

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2mph which I judge using a sat nav, otherwise its depth versus rpm. Unless a boat is mooring and the crew have lines in their hands when it is tick over and neutral. Having been screamed at on the K&A when in neutral some continuous moorers will never be satisfied. Canals are for navigation not for residence, Crossed pins and springs fore and aft work. i.e. 8 pins and 4 ropes as a minimum on a busy waterway.

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Just read the article on mooring and have to say that although I agree with the expressed observations, there seems to be a lack of interest in the rate at which many people consider normal. Boats pulling waves over the towpath are commonplace, and the fact that they are doing so means that bank erosion IS taking place. As well as mooring advice I would like to see some consideration given to the eventual cost of reparations to the towpaths and banks. People using their two weeks a

year racing around this or that ring would be an example of how not to enjoy the peace and serenity of the canal system!

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Last year we found a private mooring, when it rained the pitch went to soft wet ground, our mooring pins were in the ground and were very secure, what we found was when the water levels rose and dropped, there was a lock a short distance away, and so when the water rose we started to bob and drift slightly when boats came past, but when the water level went down a bit, back to a normal depth, our ropes were tight and secure again and when boats came past we hardly felt anything.

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Your article on how to moor was great, as a moving boater I shouldn't travel too fast, but when I or anyone moors it is equally our responsibility to moor properly and securely so that moving boats don't have to slow to a crawl past single boats or lines of moored boats.

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Great article full of good sense, it would have been better still had it contained a photo and diagram of good mooring practice. Your upcoming video sounds like a good idea.

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ON THE SUBJECT OF REPLACING THE WORD TICKOVER: My suggestion is "no wake". This is used in many coastal marinas. Wash from the propeller is the turbulence behind the boat. The wake is a feature of the bow-wave which is what makes moored boats move. I generally look at the bow wave to assess the right speed to pass moored boats; minimising the bow wave usually minimises the effect on moored boats.

Fully agree with Nick's comments. "Tick-over" as a general practice is inappropriate. Canals were and are primarily designed for moving boats; not mooring boats. We should slow down for moored boats but there is a real onus on moored boats to properly moor and the use of springs is fundamental to correct mooring; how rarely we see them though! An excellent article by Nick; missed it in December but pleased to catch up via the references this month.

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A prudent deckhand will use whatever strong fixings, rings, bollards, posts, etc are available in preference to mooring pins. Pins can always be 'backed' or 'doubled' to prevent pulling out. However it is all about getting the angles right. Lines roughly at right angles to the bank are useless. As other contributors have said if 20 tons of boat goes one way then actually more than 20 tons goes the other way. On Continental and other larger waterways that can be 1000 tons of water or so and they won't slow down, they are earning a living! I have used the below many times at talks and as Avon Navigation Trust publicity, please feel free to make use of them if you wish.

## **HOW TO TIE YOUR BOAT SECURELY**

It is easy to moor your boat so that it will not move around or be disturbed by passing craft.

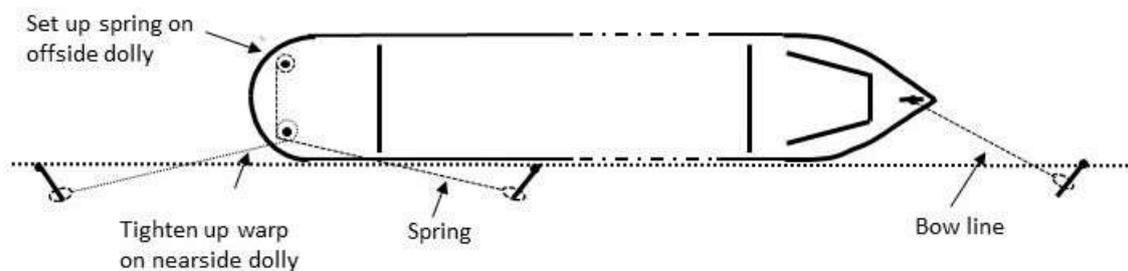
Use three lines, two at the stern and one at the bow

Take one stern line well aft (a warp) and the other well forward (a spring). Set these two lines up good and tight and they will effectively prevent movement.

The bow may be held in by one line at any angle to the bank.

It is best to take the loop end of the lines to the bank and leave the working end to be adjusted on board. You don't have to go ashore to adjust a line and the ropes will stay cleaner. Setting up ropes tightly means they last longer since they will not chafe and wear.

Recommended sequence is to temporarily hold the boat in place with the roof line. Then set up the spring, then the warp, and finally the bow line. The roof line, which should never be used for a permanent mooring can then be stowed.



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