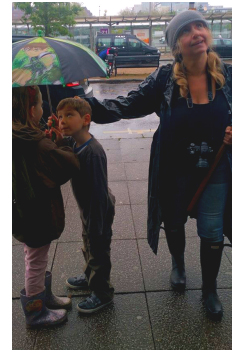
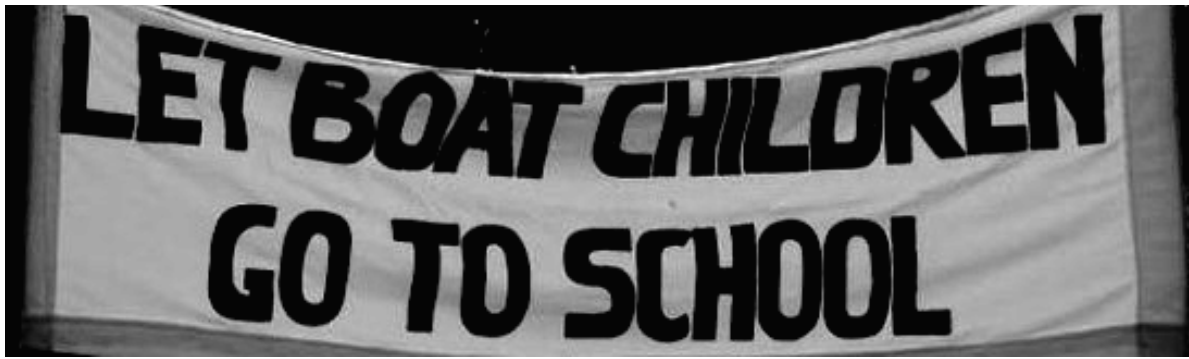


NBTA LONDON

NEWSLETTER

For the community and rights of boat dwellers



A petition written by some members of the NBTA are calling upon Canal & River Trust to stop its distance requirement, which makes it much harder for children who live on boats to get to school.

In the 19th Century, the authorities took steps to ensure that children of canal boat families could go to school, by passing the Canal Boats Acts of 1877 and 1884. Yet the Canal & River Trust's recently imposed policy, which forces boaters without permanent moorings to travel at least 20 miles a year, if not more, is effectively

preventing many children who live on boats from attending school. If the parents are unable to travel that far, they risk losing their home.

Please sign this petition to demand equal access to education for children on boats:

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/boat-children-deserve-equal-access-to-education>

To read more on this see:

<https://boatchildren.wordpress.com/>

APRIL 8TH 2017

NBTA LONDON DEMO

National Barge Travellers Association

Stop the CRT from pushing us off the water. Demand more.

Starting point: Victoria Embankment Gardens, Villiers St, London WC2N 6NS

Assembly Time: 12 noon

Move off time: 1pm

Via: Downing Street

Destination: Defra office in Smith Square

Boats are homes demonstration

This is a demonstration to demand that Canal & River Trust (CRT) stops evicting or threatening to evict boat dwellers without permanent moorings based on their distance or pattern of travel. The right to use and live on a boat without a permanent mooring on CRT waterways is enshrined in the British Waterways Act 1995. CRT's 'rules' are not supported by the law: the law does not state a minimum distance that must be travelled to prevent CRT seizing your home.

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

We also demand that CRT stops the imposition of mooring time limits of less than 14 days; abandons its plan for chargeable bookable moorings and stops selling off our

waterways. We want proper maintenance of locks, bridges and waterway banks; more mooring rings; more water taps and more sanitary facilities. **Join us in defending the boat dweller community!**



MORE 14 DAY MOORINGS OUT OF USE

CRT has taken another 14 day mooring away from general use.



The offside mooring near Broadway Market (in East London) owned by CRT has been fenced off and signs saying 'no mooring' have been put up.

Even though the offside area has been used for years as 14 days moorings with permission of CRT, CRT is now planning to turn it into permanent moorings.

In an area which is as popular as East London on the Regent's Canal, CRT should be making more places to moor for 14 days not take them away.

NBTA London demands that CRT brings the offside near Broadway Market back to general use.

CRT owns the offside moorings at Broadway Market and there is no reason why they can't keep it 14 days mooring for all. NBTA London has been talking to CRT over this issue and however they seem adamant that this mooring space becomes permanent moorings. Possibly because, with CRT's mooring auctioning scheme, CRT can make a lot more money out permanent moorings than they can from 14 day moorings.



NBTA London and The Forage For Facilities

In 2015, NBTA London set its sights on getting more facilities and mooring rings. We believed, and still believe, that our community should have facilities and mooring rings to suit our needs. So we pushed this demand for facilities and mooring rings and we got Canal and River Trust (CRT) to reopen the toilet at Vicky Park.

This was a start... but it was not enough. We put on an action called 'Forage for Facilities' where some boats got together and went looking for facilities in West London. We didn't find any on that trip, but it made a great press story. At a time when the press was talking about the increase of people on boats in London, we highlighted the significant decrease in facilities.

The fact is that there are a considerable lack of facilities on the waterways; and a lot less now despite the increase in boats on the waterways. This pointed to the mismanagement of the waterways by the Canal and River Trust (CRT) and British Waterways (BW) before them.

After years of CRT/BW refusing to talk to the NBTA, our actions forced the CRT to talk to us. At the end of 2015 we had organised a public meeting for CRT to answer for its failure to meet our needs. It was a lively meeting and CRT made promises to increase facilities and mooring rings. Some have been brought in, such as the bin at Angel and the new Elsan and pump-out in East London. However, we are still waiting on some of the promises.

Then in the first part of 2016, CRT shut down and restricted some facilities. They knocked down the facility block at Waltham Cross, turned off a tap at Harlow and restricted the use of the showers and toilets at Stonebridge. This put added pressure on the remaining

facilities. We were in talks with CRT all the way through this but they didn't tell us about these restrictions and closures. They only told us they were doing it when we pushed them to. With Waltham Cross they even lied to our faces in a meeting when they said they would not knock down the facility block there.

At Stonebridge, we heard that CRT was not just planning to restrict the facilities but to shut it down. We took a stand by organising a protest/community event at Stonebridge against the restrictions and in defence of the facilities there. CRT did in the end restrict the showers and toilets but the Stonebridge facilities are still there, for now.

Not long after the Stonebridge event, CRT and the London Waterways Partnership stated that they were launching the London Mooring Strategy, which they said would partly look into the lack of mooring rings and facilities in the London area. At this time we were regularly meeting with the CRT. In one of these meetings CRT promised that they would provide the equivalent of 300 meters of mooring rings and three brand new combined sanitary stations with water taps and bin points. However, CRT said that these promises were not part of the London Mooring Strategy.

We didn't just work on CRT to get facilities and mooring rings. After 7 years of campaigning we got the requirement for councils to access the needs of boat dwellers added on to government legislation, in the Housing and Planning Act 2016. We also tried to make sure any property developments included demands to keep the towpath open for everyone and for more facilities. We have attended meetings with MPs, Councilors and Developers. We have pushed for mooring rings and facilities at these meetings... and succeeded; at the Old Oak Common development we have promises to protect the towpath and to install a tap and a full facility site at Kensal.

However, rather than just opportunistically getting facilities and mooring rings, we need to plan and co-design the development and installation of facilities for the needs of our community. To start us off, we issued a survey to find out what things boaters want and where. The survey is now closed. But from the people that filled in the survey 91% said that facilities are still lacking on the waterways. 92% wanted more bins, 84% wanted more water points, 77% wanted more mooring rings, 69% wanted more elsan points and 46% wanted more pump-outs. A full statistic report will be out soon.

After all the efforts and campaigning we have done, discussions of facilities and mooring rings has been on the agenda of every organisation on the CRT waterways. Even the Inland Waterway

Association now talks about the need for more facilities and mooring rings.

We have got a few more facilities and a lot more promises, however if we want to make sure promises are kept, we need to work hard to hold CRT and the other waterway authorities to account. Also, we can't just have them update, replace and install services in one breath, and then demolish, close down and cordon off facilities, in the next.

Overall, to get what we want doesn't just take telling the 'right' people, it takes us keeping up the pressure. To do this, we need to call for more boaters to join forces and more people to get involved. NBTA London holds regular meetings and if you want to get involved and know more please get in touch. Contact details at the bottom.

MISOGYNY DOESN'T FLOAT OUR BOAT

On 21st January NBTA joined London's Boat Women



"We are far more united and have far more in common with each other than things that divide us" - Jo Cox MP

As part of the Women's Marches across the world, London Boat Women and the NBTA joined the London Women's March to the US Embassy. It is estimated that 100,000 people joined to march at Trafalgar Square on the US President's first day in office.

"The Women's March on London is a women-led movement that brought together people of all genders, ages, races, cultures, political affiliations and backgrounds on January 21, 2017, to affirm

our shared humanity and pronounce our bold message of resistance and self-determination. Our liberation is bound in each other's. The Women's March on London includes organisations and communities that have been building the foundation for social progress for generations."

www.womensmarchlondon.com

As for sexism well, it most certainly does not float our boat!

WHAT HAS CRT GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Got to do with it?

For some the increase in boaters on London's waterways might be a bit of a sore point, for others the change of scene and of neighbours has brought life to our doors. It truly is a relief when your neighbour rocks up with the exact ratchet needed to remove a spark plug. We rest assured for now those feelings of community are a certainty. But in a world where market rates set the bench mark and investors pour into every redevelopment, it could be said; that the concept of community is becoming somewhat of a relic reserved for the margins of society. So whilst the Canal and River Trust enforces us, quizzes us and holds meetings as we march, go to court, write letters and sign the petitions that shape and protect our rights and future as a community, we must accept we have hit a crisis point We must be grateful The Canal and River Trust is on its way to accepting its responsibility to those people who find their way onto the rivers. After all, it's not like they can do anything about the housing crisis otherwise, right?.



Wrong! In actual fact, there are ways that the Trust could be assisting the local communities of land lovers, who also contend with being priced out of London. The Canal and River Trust have a direct impact on other communities as it builds accommodation adjacent to the rivers and canals in order to raise revenue for CRT.

Take Hale Wharf, which is a cross venture between the Canal and River Trust and Muse to develop 3 sites. The Tottenham Area Action Plan states that a target of 5,000 homes should be met, however

Hale Wharf is entirely unnecessary and far outstretches the target by a further 405. This development will be delivered in 3 phases, and the first two will provide only 34 homes considered affordable housing. This can't be doing much to sustain the local community of those who were born and raised here. Many private sale units have been bought by investors such as Bellway, who price two bedroom apartments at Hale Village in excess of £515,000, which completely prices out the local community. They offer private rent at a minimum of £1,250 per month for a one bedroom apartment. If investors are exceeding targets then this build should surely take an entirely different approach, staying well away from agents like Allies and Morrison (who notoriously hunt out investors over local buyers) and should be steered away from a solely profitable agenda. Thanks to the campaigners of Our Tottenham, and all those who raised objections during consultation from the surrounding estates, the 21 storey building plans were rejected by seven votes to one, including councillors Lorna Reith, John Bevan and Reg Rice.

"Tottenham is no longer a pushover. Haringey must now work with the community on a better way forward to secure development of this site." (62 year old Quentin Given, of Ferry Lane)

Whilst I am sure the income generated from these properties by the CRT would in some way be re-invested directly into the maintenance and upkeep of the Trust's network of waterways, should be listening to their communities both on land and on the water. They need to provide real affordable housing and an infrastructure that meets the needs of all of us by providing us with much needed facilities (at minimal cost on their part, let it be said) and taking the care and consideration to protect local environment from which everyone benefits. Let's learn from our own success and that of others that we have an ability to influence the political sphere and change things for the better. **Join NBT London today and fight for our right to the city.**

SECTION 8

A legal case brought against the CRT by a boater based on the River Trent has forced the Trust to clarify its position on how it uses its powers to recover outstanding costs.

Section 8 of the British Waterways Act 1983 permits the Trust, after giving at least 28 days notice, to remove a craft which is sunk, stranded, abandoned or unlawfully moored on CRT waters. The Trust is allowed to recover the costs of removing, storing or destroying the boat however several people have become concerned that CRT have also been using this process to recover additional costs owed to it, including outstanding licence fees.

Having a Section 8 served against you is a stressful experience with the fear of eviction hanging over the boater, and so it is vital that CRT do not try to stretch an already significant power. Boater Leigh Ravenscroft has taken CRT to court, in part to clarify that CRT should not use their Section 8 powers to recover 'outstanding costs'. Mr Ravenscroft himself had his boat removed from the River Trent by CRT and it was only returned to him when he had paid CRT outstanding licence fees. Since the case was brought against them by Mr Ravenscroft, the CRT have changed



Canal & River MisTrust

their website to remove a reference to recovering outstanding fees from their 'Licence it or Lose it' page. Responding to a Freedom of Information Request, the Trust state that "there hasn't been and isn't a policy to recover mooring and licence fees via our Section 8 powers". As for Mr Ravenscroft, the Trust went on to say that "it has already been conceded by the Trust that it did incorrectly refer to arrears of licence fees as part of its Section 8 costs".

Of course, if money is owed to the Trust then it can still look to recover this via the usual legal processes.

What the recent disclosures from the Trust make clear is that it cannot use its Section 8 powers to do this - effectively holding a boat ransom. In the case of Mr Ravenscroft, the Trust did this, but since have claimed it was a mistake. We shall be keeping an eye on whether making such mistakes becomes a habit.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Next NBTA London Meeting

Monday 6th of March 2017, 7pm

The next NBTA London meeting will take place at 7pm on Monday 6 February in the Studio Room, upstairs at the Star of Kings, 126 York Way, London N1 0AX

This meeting is to discuss any actions that NBTA London should do and to organise things we are doing.

All are welcome.

Next National Committee meeting:

This meeting discusses NBTA's overall strategy, policy and feed backs from local struggles across the UK.

Sunday 26 of March

2pm - 5pm

Starbucks, basement room

34 High Street

Watford

WD17 1ED

The Boats are Homes, National Demonstration

Saturday 8 April 2017, 12 noon