

SOMETHING IN THE AIR

The Environment Act 2021, which became law on 9th November, will remove the partial exemption for vessels from the Clean Air Act 1993.

Local authorities will now have the power to apply their Smoke Control Areas to vessels moored within the areas, under Section 73 and Schedule 12 of the Act.

CRT and other navigation authorities have been asked to provide contact information for boat owners to local authorities where they need it to enforce Smoke Control Areas. There is an exemption for smoke which is created to propel the vessel or to generate electricity. There is no exemption for heating. Local authorities can now impose fines of at least £175 for breaches of Smoke Control regulations.

There is a danger that this will be used as a tool to remove boats from areas where the local authorities are opposed to boat dwellers, or where local residents are hostile to liveaboard boaters.

Tower Hamlets Council have already started harassing boaters. Notices from the council have been issued to boaters about their engines which go much further than is stated in the new Act. NBTA London has sent a complaint to the council, telling them they are going further than new Act gives them ability to do.

The new Act has opened the door to more attacks on our community. We must stand together. Please get involved in NBTA; more people involved means we can do more to defend our way of life.

AROUND THE BEND

Canal and River Trust (CRT) are attempting to bring in yet another restriction to all boaters, including boat dwellers without a home mooring, which will prohibit mooring nationwide on any bends or near bridges, regardless of whether it blocks navigation or not.

This proposal has not gone through any consultation process, but has been underhandedly tagged on to CRT's "No Mooring" strategy that we are currently experiencing predominantly on the River Lee.

The new restriction of no mooring on bends or near bridges refuses to take in to account the safe mooring on the bends of wide waterways such as the River Lee and parts of the Grand Union Canal.

It is the view of NBTA London that if safe navigation is not impeded by mooring on a bend or near a bridge, then to restrict mooring is simply reducing the possibility of liveaboard and leisure boaters alike from stopping in an available and perfectly feasible mooring.

Banning boaters from perfectly safe casual moorings on the bends of wide waterways begs the question of whether already existing, online long term moorings, located on bends or under bridges, and from which CRT derives income, will be removed. Of course this won't happen. Just another example of CRT's hypocrisy when it comes to attacking our community.



THE SCREWS CONTINUE TO BE TIGHTENED ON OUR COMMUNITY

Canal River and Trust (CRT) is trying to further marginalise us by bringing in more reduced mooring times on the Grand Union, attempting to ban boats from 295 no mooring spaces in 'safety' zones on the River Lee, and introducing more mooring restrictions and a total of 1.1 kilometres of new chargeable moorings in Central London.

With the Clean Air Act putting boats under the same clean air zone restrictions as houses, the Government has made it harder for many of us to heat our homes and has opened us up to more harassment from land based NIMBYs.

We must stand together and continue to defend our nomadic way of life. A way of life that has been on the firing line for some time. Some older members of the community will still remember when British Waterways (BW) put forward their Bill to government in 1989, they tried to make it a criminal offence to have a boat without a home mooring on most UK waterways.

Due to action by some great individuals that particular attack was defeated and the Bill was made into the British Waterways Act 1995, where the right for us to have a boat without a home mooring, as long as we use them for navigation and not stay continuously longer than 14 days in one place, unless reasonable, was enshrined in law.

We are in a different time from then and we need more than great individuals; we need collective action. The resistance to 'safety' zones on the River Lea is great example of how we can defend our way life.

Let's come together to march on CRT Little Venice office on Saturday 26th March and using the press, make it heard that **Boats are Homes!**



CAN'T PAY? GO AWAY!

Canal and River Trust (CRT) are planning to change visitor moorings in central London into paid, pre-bookable moorings.

They are proposing ten locations, totalling 1.1 kilometres of towpath between Kensal and Vicity Park, where moorings that are currently free 7 or 14 day moorings will become 7 day moorings costing £10 to £12 per night. The fees that are being asked for would equal between £70 and £84 per week with no mention of how CRT will manage late arrivals, cancelled bookings, or over-stayers.

The proposals would mean for many boaters who cannot afford these significant fees a very long run from Kings Cross to Willesden that may well cause a lot of stress. It is another attempt by CRT to push out poorer boaters from central London. This is nothing less than social cleansing of the waterways.

CRT are also planning to make it an 'improper mooring' offence to moor a widebeam and a narrowbeam next to each other, no matter how wide the river or canal is. While we understand that this may be sensible where the waterway is narrow, such a blanket rule is unnecessary and unfair, especially given their plans to further reduce free mooring spaces in London.

CRT are consulting with boaters and have a survey on their website:

<https://bit.ly/CRTSURVEYCHARGEABLEMOOR> It closes on 25th March 2022.

NBTA London encourages people to complete the survey.

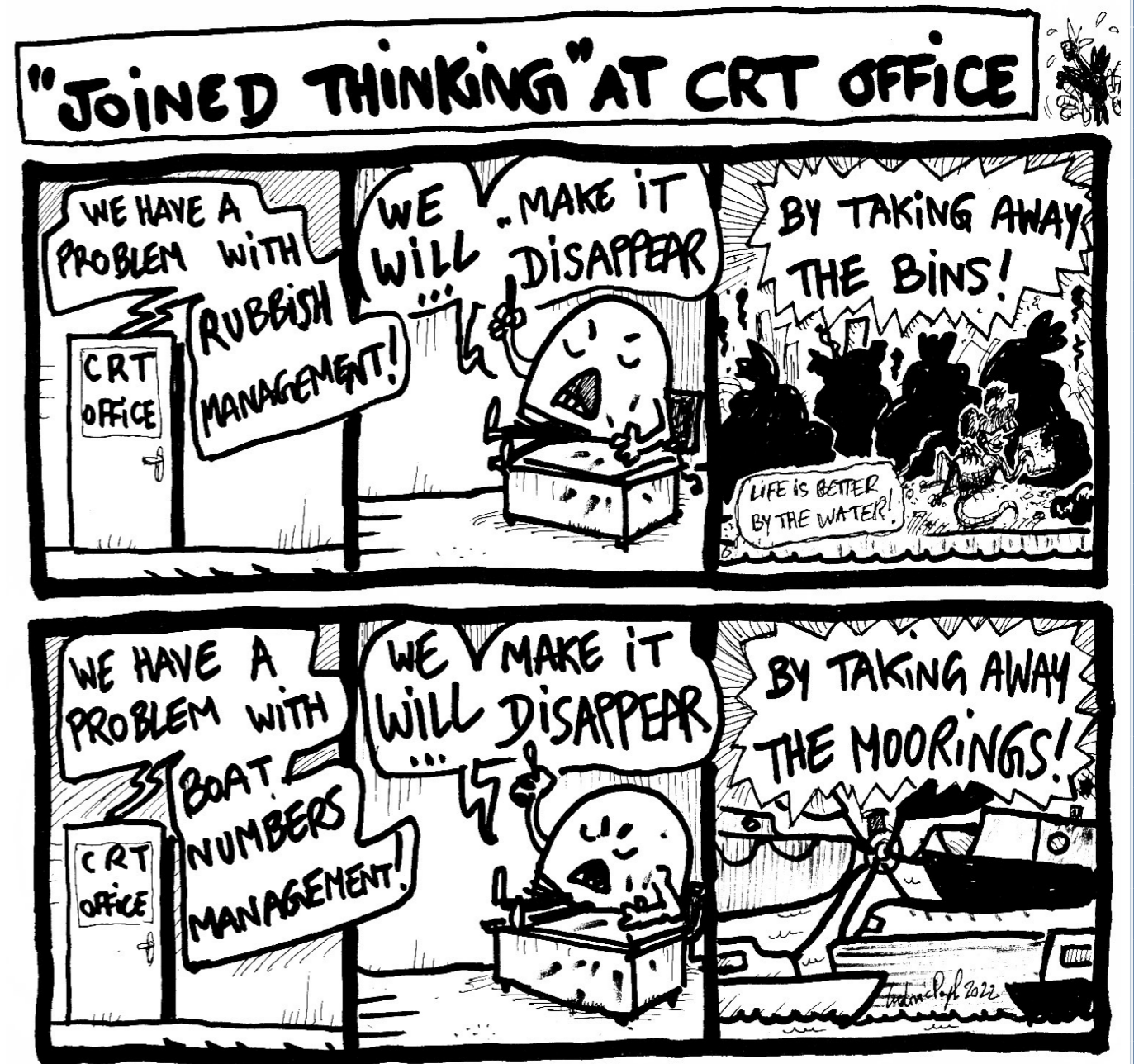
VISITORS WELCOME (BUT NOT FOR LONG)

While the boating community quite rightly pushes back against the Canal and River Trust's (CRT) more deranged big ideas such as the "safety" zones, the Trust continues to use other avenues at their disposal to make the lives of boaters without a home mooring more difficult and which come under less scrutiny.

One of these avenues is the introduction of time limited (i.e. less than 14 days) "visitor" moorings. While the Trust say that the point of visitor moorings is to free up moorings for boaters travelling through very popular locations, the actual effect – and some would say the actual aim – is to deter boaters without a home mooring from staying in these popular areas.

A recent example is the "Milton Keynes Visitor Mooring Project" where CRT now has 450m of 48 hour visitor moorings over an 8½ mile stretch of canal. These moorings are generally in the places where services and transport links are easily accessible. The result is that boaters without a home mooring can find themselves being forced to stay away from this easy access, in the more isolated parts of the area.

Visitor mooring are a national characteristic of CRT waters – according to an FOI request made by NBTA London, there are currently a total of 558 restricted stay visitor mooring locations nationally. Of these, 491 have a 48 hour or less limit. **Despite CRT paying lip service to what we bring to the waterways, that's 558 ways they are telling us that we do not belong.**



We are the London branch of the **National Barge Travellers Association (NBTA)**, an organization open to all but run by boaters without a home mooring. We campaign for the rights of boat dwellers.

We hold a monthly meeting on the last Sunday of the month at 4pm. The meetings are held on line, with phone access if you prefer. **Everyone welcome!**

Joining details: <https://8x8.vc/nbta/nbta>

Alternatively, you can use the dial in details: +44 330 808 1706 PIN: 45925961#

Worried about possible eviction or only being granted a restricted licence? **Don't panic!** Contact the Caseworker Team:

E-mail: nbta.london.caseworker@gmail.com

Phone: 01615431698 **NEW!**



SCRAPING THE BOTTOM

The Canal and River Trust (CRT) is preparing to launch an assault on the rights of boaters.

Specifically, their rights to moor on large stretches of the historic River Lea, a river which has been populated by boat owners of all flavours dating back to the Bronze Age. They are pursuing this strategy in the name of safety; they claim moored boats are a hazard to the users of the waterway. We do not agree.

In fact, it is CRT themselves who are allowing the River Lea to become a dangerous place. They are allowing it to become dangerous through a lack of care, a lack of investment and a lack of sense. There are too many places which are too shallow, which make it impossible to moor close to the bank or even moor at all, in some places it even makes it hard to navigate.

The Lea has not been properly dredged for many years, 11 to be precise and that was just the Lower Lea. Waltham Town Lock to Kings Weir hasn't been done since 2009 and doesn't even have a record of when above Waltham Town Lock has been done last.

And why, 11 years ago was the cost of dredging the Lower Lea deemed acceptable? The answer is simple, the City of London and by extension British Waterways did not want important, international visitors to the Olympic park to have to contend with the putrid smells and depressing sights of the nearby river which had been neglected.

At the time, Simon Bamford, General Manager of British Waterways (BW) in London, is quoted as saying '[water] quality on the River Lee Navigation has been an issue of concern for many years, affecting local residents, wildlife, boaters and other waterway users'.

The reason for the poor quality? To put it quite simply, a deluge of raw sewage overflows brought down from Deephams Sewage Works in north London. 11 years later and that issue has not gone away! Along with 2018 Lower Lea river oil spill is once again the Lower Lea is becoming a toxic mess that is hazardous not only to the humans that spend time within its proximity, but also the animals that call it home.

If safety was a real issue for CRT, rather than removing places where we can moor, they should be looking at positive actions which would get wide support, like dredging.



ABSOLUTELY SHAMELESS

Oh look, an (allegedly senior) member of Lea Rowing Club (LRC) taking an angle grinder to the grab bars which can help people who have fallen into the river get out safely.

LRC has been unapologetic in pushing for CRT's implementation of the "safety zones" - in fact they were the ones who came up with the deranged scheme in the first place. But actually useful pieces of safety infrastructure there to help everyone don't seem to matter to these overly entitled hypocrites.

Could it be that their interest in "safety" has more to do with their desire to not share the river with other users?

MEET THE BOATERS

DEFYING THE NEW NO MOORING SIGNS

CRT tells us that they have started to enforce the new nomooring areas that are part of the 'water safety zones' on the lower Lea and in Broxbourne. Nevertheless, hundreds of boaters have ignored the new 'no mooring' signs since they first went up. We went to chat to some of them to find out why. Here and over the next two pages is what we found out...

Ali (pictured below) was moored at Daubeney Fields. She works for a food and farming charity which advocates for land redistribution and community grow projects. Ali has been on the water for three years.

"I've been involved in the protest movement against the new CRT restrictions for about a year and a half now, since the safety zones campaign started. I consciously seek out places where the new no mooring locations are. I speak to my neighbours about the restrictions, so that everyone in the community knows about them. And I think it's important to show up physically against CRT's attempts to gentrify the waterways even more. These are perfectly great moorings and the idea that they could become paid for or private moorings is really shocking. It's been a hard year for everyone and the fact that space and land access is going to be restricted is really disgusting."



DIRECT ACTION OR LEGAL ACTION

When NBTA London sent in a complaint about 'no mooring' sites on the River Lee, to our surprise CRT wrote back to say...

"The area of policy falls outside of the Trust's complaints so this will not be considered as a formal complaint."

This is a new low for CRT. It means if you want to complain about CRT's policies, of which there are many to complain about, you can't. This leaves us with the only official channel to take being through the courts. So along with encouraging direct action by defying the new no mooring rules, that is exactly what we are going to do.

DEFYING THE NEW NO MOORING RESTRICTIONS

Dee, Michelle and their son Io were moored offside at Daubeney fields. They have been on the water for just over a year. Mychelle is a baker. Dee is a gardener and has been clearing up the bankside where they are moored to make a lovely space for their son and other children to play.

“It is a good spot to moor and it doesn’t cause any obstruction to anybody; there’s no reason for it not to be moored on. It’s a good spot to be.”

“The fact that it is a no mooring spot hasn’t really changed our minds about mooring here to be honest. If there was a real reason, like if it felt dangerous, then we wouldn’t moor here, obviously. But there’s no reason. Usually, families moor along here and our son will hopefully start school locally too.”



Marcus (pictured left) was moored by the electricity bridge on the offside. He is home schooler and plumber and has lived on the water for 10 years.

“Over the years Canal and River Trust has been taking places where it has been possible to moor away.”

“We must take a stand to protect our way of life or they will do everything they can to get rid of it.”

Lud (pictured below left).

“I work in a cleaning and maintenance job on a dock restoration site by the river. I've been on the water since 2016 and I fell in love with boating life and its people. I'm resisting the 'no mooring zones' because I think they are not fair to boaters who live on their boats and there's nothing to justify them.”



Ben and Pru were moored at Matchmaker’s Wharf. They have been on the water for about three years.

“We got a notice from the enforcement guy saying that we are wrongfully moored – there are no signs to tell us that we shouldn’t moor here and we haven’t received an email updating us about where we can and can’t moor.”

“CRT tried to put a load of water safety zones in and then realised that they hadn’t consulted anyone apart from the rowing groups. In a few years it will be impossible to moor in London and it will become just a rich city for rich people. It’s a subtle cultural genocide. They want to take us away.”

Matthew was moored on the bend just above the *Princess of Wales*. He is a musician and he fits out sailaways to sell on.

“I love the river and I love the people on it. I think (the safety zones) are absolutely ridiculous really. Boaters made the canal and rivers habitable again, haven’t we? We have a lot to do with the regeneration of the canals in London. The rowers don’t own the river. This is our life, for them it’s just a hobby. It’s really backward thinking and there’s a definite disconnect between us and CRT.”

Jay was moored near a bridge on the Filter Beds. Jay works in theatre, but has just quit his job and is going to cruise to Bristol at some point soon.

“I didn’t realise that I was on a no mooring section. I’ve not heard anything, and I’ve been here a week.”

I think its just CRT saying that boaters are creating a problem, but we’re not. It’s kind of bullshit isn’t it? I don’t think mooring here makes any difference compared to mooring there, or mooring there (pointing to mooring spaces nearby).”

Amy was moored near a bridge on the filter beds.

“I don’t think (the safety zones) are needed. I think it is an unnecessary crackdown on numbers of boats in some of the widest parts of the river. The restrictions are unnecessary and I plan to ignore them for as long as possible.”



Jade and Ted (pictured left) were moored by the Green Bridge (Mandeville St).

“There is no logic to what CRT are trying to implement. What they say it is about and what it is actually about are two different things. Safety is important, but this is nothing to do with safety”