

GOBA

Great Ouse Boating Association



news

Summer 2021



IN THIS ISSUE



CROSSWATER STAUNCH



**AUDIBLE NAVIGATION
SIGNALS**



OUSE ON BOARD

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From the Helm

Roger Lill: GOBA Chairman

I don't think it would be an understatement to suggest that the last 4 months have been a trying time for your committee, choppy waters in fact.

The overriding problem has been banking and the treasurer's role, to which you all deserve an explanation. When the role was passed to John Frankham in October last year things were running smoothly with bills being paid, invoices raised and updates to software being made. That was until we went to draw down the direct debits; the bank examined the mandate which had not been changed for years and withdrew it because there was no name on the mandate that was on the current committee. It then took 4 months of heartache to set up a new mandate; full COVID protocols meant that all had to be done remotely on the telephone, invariably waiting for 40 minutes without a reply, new signatures addresses required every time there was a query, Ed Buttfield and myself dashing everywhere with important papers, etc. Eventually we had the new mandate but John's health had deteriorated so much so that he decided to resign. Phil Thane stepped up to the plate and took on the role of temporary treasurer and has done an amazing job since then at getting the show back on the road. As at the time of writing we expect the direct debits to go through this week. So, yes, we are looking for a new treasurer.

At the last AGM the new committee decided to take on the long overdue task of reform, new website, more moorings, and better feedback to EA developments.

A culture of "if it aint broke don't fix it" had resulted in a crashed website, a database in bits, and a failed mandate. This has been a struggle and Greg Veit and Phil Thane have done a splendid job with these updates and I think most people would agree we have achieved a much better product. That is not forgetting the other committee members who have done sterling service in updating their areas, magazine, advertising, moorings, legal... its been a busy spring, and most of it using Zoom.

In March, we withdrew from the bidding process for a new mooring opposite the Five Miles pub at Upware. The mooring needed large sums spent on it to cover the asbestos piling, to backfill and to pollard the trees, and it was the wrong side of the river! The price was exorbitant and known costs would have exceeded £40,000. We continue to look for new mooring opportunities and are hopeful of a new mooring near Tempsford though this will take time.

The committee decided that GOBA needs a new permanent address as we are receiving mail at the old Hermitage Lock address, Flegg Green and the PO Box, all of which are now closed. Our new address is: 26, Common Lane, Hemingford Abbots, Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE28 9AN.

At the end of May we at last held a committee meeting in the village hall, the first for 15 months. It was full attendance and a wonderful opportunity to catch up on gossip, activities and where we are boating this year. Back to normal? I really do hope so. 📍

Roger Lill

From the Engine room

Claire Davies: GOBA News Editor



At last, we have some nice weather and have managed to get out on our boats. I do hope it lasts.

I would really like to thank all the

contributors in the Summer edition and I hope you enjoy all the updates and stories. 📍

Happy Boating and Stay Safe.

Copy deadline for the Winter 2021 GOBA News is Monday 20th September. Send stories, comments or questions to editor@goba.org.uk

Notice of the 2021 Annual General Meeting and subsequent Special General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Great Ouse Boating Association Ltd will be held at the Cambridge Motor Boat Club, Clayhithe Road, Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire CB25 9HZ on Sunday 12th September 2021 at 11am.

AGM Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the AGM held on Sunday 20th September 2020
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. To receive Chairman's report
5. To receive Hon Treasurer's report
6. To receive the Hon Secretary's report
7. To elect Officers and Committee
8. To vote on rule 45 (a) whether to appoint an Accounts Examiner or Auditor
9. To appoint an Accounts Examiner or Auditor
10. To discuss topics raised by members
11. Any other business

This will be followed by a Special General Meeting – 12 (c) subscription renewal, proposed rule change.

1. Presentation by the committee on the need for the change
2. Discussion and vote.



Travel and refreshment information

1. Coffee and biscuits will be available from 10.30 am
2. There is ample car parking at the club and the map above shows its location
3. A licensed bar will be available after the meeting.

We look forwards to seeing as many members as possible, and would like to thank CMBC in advance for letting us use their facilities.

Notes

1. Nominations for the committee, duly proposed and seconded, and with the nominee's consent must be received at least 48 hours before the meeting. There are currently 3 vacancies. Post to GOBA Ltd, 26, Common Lane, Hemingford Abbots, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 9AN
2. Any member entitled to attend and vote at the AGM is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote in their stead. Forms for appointment for a proxy are available from the Secretary or at the above address.
3. COVID 19 if you wish to attend please bring your membership number with you and check the GOBA website and/or Facebook the day before for any announcement on changes to venue or covid protocols.

GOBA Special Meeting 12th September 2021

Motion proposed by Phil Thane, Membership Secretary

"Rule 12 (c) Subscriptions shall be payable in advance on the 1st January. Any member whose annual subscription shall be unpaid on the 31st December shall cease to be a member of the Association..."

This is the rule that currently applies. For many years most members have paid by Direct Debit and have often set these up between January - April so that for a period each year they have technically been ex-members.

For reasons of administrative convenience previous membership secretaries/treasurers (often the same person) have accepted late payments and drawn down Direct Debit (DD) payments on or around 15th February each year. All members who had set up a DD prior to this date (or soon after) would receive the Spring copy of GOBA News with a window sticker for their boat. Members whose payment came in after that date would miss out on the

bulk mailing and have to be sent magazines and stickers individually at a later date. This has two effects; GOBA was unable to benefit from discount postage and packing rates available from specialist mailing companies, and the membership secretary has a lot of extra admin and postage to deal with each spring when the majority of members (re)join.

Members will be aware that the committee has created a new website. Behind the new website is a new database and a whole new system of administering membership processes, designed to make it simpler for future membership secretaries and treasurers. The new system encourages members to join/renew via the website and all the membership data is available via a website dashboard to the treasurer, membership secretary and web administrator. As with the vast majority of online subscription systems (TV Licence, insurance, streaming services etc) the website

is configured to assume that membership lasts for 12 calendar months from the date of joining GOBA, or from the last renewal. Thus members who set up a recurring payment via a DD or online bank transfer will remain members with no break on 31st December. Such a system will enable members to access the Members Only pages of the website all year rather than being locked out each January until their payments were processed.

Proposal

That rule 12(c) is removed and replaced by:

Members may join GOBA on any date and membership will remain valid for 12 calendar months from that date. If a member fails to renew their membership by the anniversary of that date, membership will expire but can be renewed at any time on payment of the normal fee. Subsequent renewal will be due 12 calendar months from the date of the previous renewal. [↗](#)



Mooring Matters

Geoff Sutcliffe: Moorings upstream • Mary Pryor: Moorings downstream

Upstream Mooring Matters – Geoff Sutcliffe

The start of the season was slow, with restrictions on accessing our boats, then an exceptionally cold April followed by a very wet May, surely we are due a really great summer?

Fortunately, due to close attention to river management by the EA and vigilance by Marina owners and other bodies, the damage along the river caused by the winter flooding was minimal. However the fast flows has caused increased silting, erosion and floating debris at the beginning of the season, all adding to the challenges of navigation, but that is all part of the fun of boating, until it becomes an expensive encounter!

Now we are at the height of the season and with an increase in the number of boaters we will be experiencing a high demand on all moorings along the river. We remind members to abide by the GOBA rules for use of our moorings and to show consideration for other users and the landowners.

Maintaining moorings in a good usable condition is an ongoing challenge especially after such a wet winter and resulting bank erosion. We ask all boaters when using mooring pins or ground anchors, to site the pins as far from the bank edge as is practicable. Repeated use close to the bank edge effectively 'perforates' the ground often causing it to fall away into the river, accelerating bank erosion.

One GOBA mooring that has suffered considerably decay is the popular Hemingford mooring.

This mooring was significantly modified by the EA when the flood defences were improved over 12 years ago. The type of revetment used had a limited life and



those who know the mooring will know that several areas had collapsed resulting in areas that were unusable. The EA evaluated what action could be taken and in consultation with the riparian owner agreed that the revetment was not needed as part of the flood defence requirement and for safety reasons the revetment should be removed (scheduled for June 2021). The mooring therefore reverts to a natural bank, as are most of the GOBA moorings. Time will tell if it remains stable and usable!

Another popular mooring that has been affected is at Godmanchester Park (local council mooring). Part of the mooring was cordoned off in May. When contacted HDC said they were 'exploring options for funding and repair' I do hope that by the

time of this publication progress has been made.

GOBA has received a request to remind boaters to observe the rivers navigation signs and ensure they are travelling along the official navigation channels. An example where this is not always observed is when exiting Hemingford Lock travelling downstream. Boaters have been observed travelling to the right of the island. Apart from the risk of grounding on a shallow bank the wildlife is affected by boats. The Navigation channel is clearly indicated to the left of the island.

We are all fortunate to have our beautiful river available to us, I hope you are able to get out there and enjoy it, who needs to go abroad? 🇬🇧

Downstream Mooring Matters – Mary Pryor

After such wet weather and navigation difficulties, such a pleasure to have sun and long evenings to enjoy.

- Denver toilet block is now finished but not open, so emptying toilet cassettes is a problem.. A different key and a need to monitor possible vandalism I suspect is the reason. The Jenyns Arms is still closed but The Heron pub on the Relief Channel is open and tidal water to Salters Lock

has been dredged with the new landing stage a welcome improvement.

- On the Wissey - The Railway Bridge mooring – the first one downstream - has had bad bank slippage with very low grass level behind the piling making it unsafe getting off your boat. I have put barrier tape around the area and reported it to the EA but suspect they won't get to it this season. The remaining stretches are fine although one sign is





take care as some of my barrier tape poles have disappeared. The pub is open inside and out.

- Some boaters have been using the Pike and Eel marina for parking cars, using facilities and not being patrons of the pub. This has upset the owner as it is his private land and has nothing to do with the moorings and maintains if you want to eat there he has a robust landing stage to enable it. This activity may not be GOBA members but I will be erecting a sign denoting private land to deter entry. If this fails the owner will fence off the swamp area where boaters have gained access to the pub.
- The Ferry Boat mooring has suffered some bank erosion as the soil is sandy and the flows have been very strong. It's important that members put their mooring pins at least one and half metres from the river edge and please do not tie up on our signs which in some cases are now close to the water.



I do hope members have a good season and feel free to contact us on river issues if you think it appropriate; you are our roving eyes and it's up to all of us to ensure a lovely boating experience. 📍

missing, cut grass makes it clear where the mooring starts and finishes. A member reported having a poor reception from an employee at the Whittington mooring in the Stoke Ferry area regarding GOBA membership. Having contacted the owner, who was not aware, I was promised it would not happen again. If members experience any difficulties please contact me.

- Having negotiated with Forestry England on the Little Ouse for allowing another mooring, that I had researched two years ago, this was finally rejected because 'it is an absolute haven for wildlife providing important habitat for Otters, and so are afforded the highest level of protection from habitat loss & disturbance'. Fallen trees within the watercourse provide this habitat so cannot be removed aiding among other wildlife water voles. I recommend mooring at Brandon and walking the tow path or through the forest on the other side to Santon Downham where there are toilets, picnic benches, and by the bridge, very clear shallow water.
- The River Lark has had low water levels but some dredging has taken place at the Isleham end and the new Prickwillow mooring water point is operational.
- Good news however about the consultation on establishing more

railings on the water front in Ely, which threatened to cut down mooring space. The project has been abandoned.

- Cawdle Fen mooring is getting more grass than reeds and will improve over time.
- The new Anglian pass has affected members based on the Cam, Great Ouse and Middle Level not so much for narrow boat owners but more for the cruiser community who don't have complete access to all waterways because of air draft. I brought this up again at the last AWG meeting to fully reflect the strength of opposition by our members, plus having to pay more to moor at our Waterbeach site just past Bottisham Lock. Cam Conservancy do not have a visitor's pass scheme as available on our other waterways. Representatives from all the range of boating fraternity were very fulsomely in favour of the pass and thought it good value against charges levied by the Canal Trust and it was made clear that Cam Conservancy have it written in Parliamentary Statutes 1922 that visitors passes were not allowed and maintaining navigation costs are borne by the trust alone with no government support. There has been substantial take up of the pass and it will be reviewed next year.
- The New Lazy Otter mooring still has some gaps behind the piling so please

Crosswater Staunch

by Ivan Cane



In Mary Pryor's fascinating interview with Ben ("Ben's Tales from the Riverbank", *GOBA News*, Summer 2020), Mary asked Ben the origin of the name Stoplock on the Little Ouse. In reply, he said there had been a lock at that site. This is followed by an Editor's note, in which Phil Thane asks why a river should have a stop lock.

Our first encounter with the Stoplock was amidst a thunderstorm in 2006, when we were trying to find the GOBA Stoplock mooring. It was very wet, and, half an hour later, we found the mooring way upstream and now more helpfully labelled "Hockwold Fen". The

next day, we investigated and cruised through the remains of the Stoplock. Mind you, it is not a lock, but the remains of Crosswater Staunch.

The Little Ouse had been navigable from Brandon Creek up to Thetford for centuries – with the effect of the tide extending to Wilton Lode – but the

construction of Denver Sluice in 1651 adversely impacted its upper reaches. This led to an Act of Parliament in 1670, which empowered Thetford Corporation to restore the navigation from White House at Hockwold Ferry, some fourteen miles up to Thetford. The work of straightening and deepening was undertaken by the Earl of Arlington of Euston Hall. Following the Earl's death, the rights were transferred back to Thetford Corporation by his daughter in 1696.

By 1742, the river condition had deteriorated so much that the Corporation was forced to erect a staunch a little below Thetford. A second Act, passed in 1751, allowed a further six staunches to be built at Abbey Heath (Thetford Middle), Turfpool, Croxton, Santon, Brandon and Sheepwash. There are no records of how the first staunches were constructed.

In the late 1820s, the Thetford Corporation's Navigation Committee was faced with the reality that the staunches were too dilapidated to consider further repair. By 1835, the seven staunches had been replaced with new ones. Four were built by Burrell & Son, two by J & W Gathergood and one by Beeton.

These seven staunches were distinctive



features of the navigation. The river was usually divided into three channels by two islands; on the navigation channel stood the vertical lift gate, supported by two twelve-inch square uprights; the other two contained a series of, variously, fixed and moveable weirs. The gate uprights were braced at the top by an oak cross member giving sixteen feet of headroom above the brickwork.

Below the cross brace was an octagonal winding barrel, 9½ inches across, on which the chains, raising the 14 x 5½ foot gate, were attached. The barrel was then connected by sets of gears to a large sixteen-spoke wheel, 13' 2" diameter. A ladder allowed access to the wheel, which was turned by the operator standing on the spokes where they entered the rim. There were no ratchets or pawls fitted, and the door was held up by a hook placed around one of the spokes. (Croxtan Stauch was operated by a handle, with the lighterman standing on a platform, and an extra set of gears).

Because the Little Ouse had no mills, except at Thetford, there was never any competition between navigators and millowners. Therefore, the staunches were built for navigation, either to hold up the water level – allowing enough depth for the

lighters to reach the next staunch – or to help a downstream lighter pass over the shallows immediately below, on a “flash” of water. The difference in levels at each

staunch would be around two to four foot, but it is likely – when the water was high enough – that the staunches were left open.

However, these details do not cover the Stoplock or Crosswater Staunch, as this was outside the jurisdiction of the Thetford Corporation's Navigation Committee. Crosswater is close to the junction of the Old Lakenheath Lode near Botany Bay. It is thought that this staunch was built by the South Level Drainage and Navigation Commissioners (created under an Act of 1827), but Priestley (1831) lists the tolls mentioned in the 1810 Act as “The Rates to be paid between Whitehouse and the Sluice called the Cross Gravel Haunch”, which suggests that a staunch may have been constructed there around the same time as the first

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set of seven upstream. However, the SDL&NC probably rebuilt Crosswater in the 1830s, but to a completely different design inasmuch as they used a pair of

mitre gates – similar to those used on the River Lark staunches – rather than a guillotine. Perhaps this is one reason it was known as the Stoplock? However, by 1908, the gates

had been replaced with a guillotine structure, similar to Croxtan, in that it was worked with a crank handle. The ladders and footbridge were also well used by anglers wishing to cross from the north bank to the Green Dragon Public House on the south bank. This new staunch was short-lived, reportedly being demolished by 1917.

Another possible source for the tracing of the name Stoplock comes from maps and guide books. The 1881 25-inch OS map shows the Stanch (sic) by the Green Dragon Public House, as do other maps through to the 1961 one inch. Lincoln's 1965 map, Imray's 1967 map and Carter's 1970s Guide to the Great Ouse all show “Catchwater Staunch (Disused)”, with Carter illustrating the navigation on a new channel “to the left going upstream”.



Sadly, I've misplaced my Fens Book, so we come forward some thirty years to Blair's 2006 The River Great Ouse Guide, in which Blair captions the map (p.74) with “Cross Water Staunch: Site of old Stop Lock”.

GOBA described their moorings as “Stop Lock” from at least as early as 2006, when I was searching for them. The EA, probably following GOBA's lead, uses that term on their current Great Ouse Map.

My searches through my bookshelves have garnered no answers, only more questions! Do please share any other thoughts you may have. ⚓

Ivan Cane

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Faulkner, A.H. (October 1999) “The Little Ouse River” (The Easterling, Journal of the East Anglian Waterways Association, pp.7–12)

Lewis, M.J.T., et. al. (August 1969) “Flashlocks on English Waterways” (Industrial Archaeology, Vol. 6:3, pp.209–253)

Priestley, J. (1831) Navigable Rivers, Canals, and Railways of Great Britain (pp.495–497) 1907



Inboards to Outboard

Peter Swinson updates on the story of "Estelle's" conversion.



Tim & Julie pictured with their new engine.



Close-up of the 50hp Honda outboard.

Believed to be the first Fairline Mirage to be converted to Outboard

2020 was not a good year in so many ways. For Tim and Julie of "Estelle", a Fairline Mirage aft cockpit, the year was further marred, on a beautiful summer's day on the Great Ouse, by the total failure of one of their engines.

Tim said, "It was then that we decided to replace the engines, but with what? We have no intention of going to sea and we are happy to just cruise the river systems of the UK. We considered a single more efficient inboard, but wondered whether the Mirage would perform well with an outboard engine."

So, Tim consulted with Ben & Martin of Jones Boatyard at St Ives, Cambridgeshire, who suggested that they fit a 50HP Honda Outboard Model BF50 DK4LRT to a custom built transom structure. Jones Boatyard confirmed that they could handle the conversion and discussed with Tim the work involved.

During early 2021, Jones Boatyard's team of Martin, Richard and Tim removed the inboard engines, outdrives, bathing platform and trim tab system. Tim ("Estelle") also asked that the large stainless steel fuel tank be removed. The outdrive apertures and other holes left in the transom were filled and gel coated to provide a clean quality look to the stern of the Mirage.

Meanwhile, Martin approached

Shetland Boats to supply a suitable transom platform that would fit the Fairline Mirage and take the Honda 50hp Outboard. Shetland delivered a platform in January 2021. Indeed, Jones Boatyard purchased 2 additional such transom platforms as they see a strong possibility that others may wish to convert their vessel to outboard operation.

Covid restrictions

Tim ("Estelle") had wished to do quite a bit of the work himself; however Covid restrictions prevented him from visiting the boatyard, so most of the work was carried by the team over the winter and early spring. Martin, Richard, Tim and Chris of Jones Boatyard prepared Estelle to take the new platform and outboard.

The engine, steering and control system installation was completed by late February and it was then a matter of waiting until Covid restrictions were lifted, so that "Estelle's" Tim could build and fit a new steering and instrument panel.

Of course, having removed the inboard engines and replaced them with a 50HP outboard, Tim and Julie had reduced the capacity to generate sufficient power to keep the batteries fully charged while cruising. Additionally, there was no longer an engine cooling system to feed a calorifier hot water tank. However, under the cockpit floor there were now two great voids, one where the engines had been removed and the other where the 115

gallon fuel tank had been taken out.

This enabled Tim and Julie to treat "Estelle" to a suitably sized 240V AC petrol generator stored in the void left by the engines and moved to the river bank during operation. The generator supplies more than enough power, over a short period, to charge batteries through a 240V AC to 12V DC charging system, as well as heating the water tank via an immersion heater.

For now, Tim ("Estelle") has also fitted the Honda outboard petrol tank in the same area, but intends to fit a larger tank in the void left by the removal of the Fairline fuel tank. Tim also fitted a new diesel fuel tank to supply the hot air heating system.

In April, "Estelle" was launched and a trial run by Martin and Richard proved very successful. At this time, the Mirage was down at the bow due to the massive reduction in weight at the stern after the inboard engines were removed. This was re-trimmed by adding ½ tonne of ballast shared between the transom area and the void left by the fuel tank removal.

Complete success

Now "Estelle" was riding level and Tim and Julie ventured out on their first voyage. On their return they proclaimed it a complete success. Julie said, "I am amazed how quiet it is in the cockpit, virtually no noise, we can practically whisper to each other!"

They already had a bow thruster which could assist with steering in tight situations, but Tim was delighted by the fact that "Estelle" now "turns within its own length and appears more manoeuvrable than with the twin inboards, all without using the bow thruster"

"Estelle" now has more cruises under her belt and Tim and Julie have noted a great improvement in fuel economy; they are also pleased that "we can still achieve about 10 knots if needed"

"Estelle" is, as far as can be established, the first Fairline Mirage to have been

converted to outboard engine operation. It will be interesting to see whether Tim and Julie have started a trend, as there are many Fairline Mirages that probably never go near tidal waters and therefore could lend themselves to such conversion.

Martin of Jones Boatyard was asked whether they would do anything differently the next time they performed this type of conversion. He said "No, not really. We would of course design a new cockpit console, as "Estelle's" owner Tim designed his own for his boat"

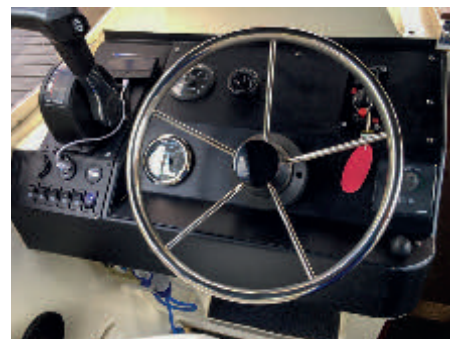
Asked how he felt the initial trials went, Martin said "They went very well,

she turns on a sixpence and we don't even think a bow thruster is needed". Asked how long it would take to perform a similar conversion, Martin reckoned it would have to be an over-winter project, as the Jones team are kept busy during the boating season, looking after the 200-odd boats at the marina.

So, keep an eye out for Tim and Julie. Their Mirage, "Estelle", is at the moment, we believe, unique in its method of propulsion. No doubt many Great Ouse Fairline Mirage boaters will be asking Tim and Julie about their experience during the season. [↕](#)



Lots of space in the old engine bay.



The new steering and instrument panel.



Estelle now more manoeuvrable than with twin inboards.

A reminder – carbon monoxide poisoning

Every season we hear sad stories about the boaters sadly dying as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning. This can come about through exhaust fumes filling the cabin space or via carbon-fuelled heating systems where lethal amounts of toxic carbon monoxide (CO) are pumped into the cabin.

CO is the silent killer as it can't be smelt or tasted and in high concentrations can kill without warning. Any carbon-fuel burning

appliance or engine can cause CO including diesel, petrol, gas, coal, wood and charcoal.

So remember to protect yourself and your family by getting an alarm, and if you have one please remember to test or replace your batteries.

You can read more about what you need to do to protect yourself and your crew from the risk of being poisoned by CO on the BSS website at www.boatsafetyscheme.org/CO.



At the time of writing (End of May 2021) we are on the cusp, the cusp of a number of things. Hopefully the cusp of transition in the weather from the over winter floods, to a dry April but soggy cool May. It looks like there has now been a shift and better weather is going to be with us at least for the next couple of weeks anyway! We are also on the cusp of exiting and easing from the countries Coronavirus restrictions come late June, provided everything remains on track with the roadmap and new variants don't hamper efforts. Our latest advice is available on the web links below.

That said we are still taking a cautious approach so our assisted passage lock sites for the time being will remain operating with Covid secure measures in place, so help us to help you and stay on board your boats at these locks and follow lock keepers

directions to get you through these sites. Please also continue to take precautions of your own, carry hand sanitiser and wash hands regularly, especially after using common touch points at lock sites and other on river facilities.

It has been an extremely busy year and a bit since the start of the Pandemic for the team, firstly with Coronavirus and keeping navigation going during lockdown 1.0 for those who live on the river or had 'essential' journeys and, keeping others off it or dealing with those swimming within the waterways. This immediately went into a short lockdown 2.0 just after the summer before going into the winter period where we likely saw some of the worst high levels, flows and subsequent flooding since 1998. It didn't quite reach the same level but got pretty close to it at times. The team are still busy clearing the aftermath of the flooding and the issues it brings for navigation, and

will likely be well into this season.

From winter flooding the team went straight into preparation for the Varsity Boat Race which took a great deal of preparing. Staff worked over the Easter weekend (many had also lost their Christmas at home due to the flooding) to ensure the event went smoothly, which thankfully it did.

However all said and done, whilst a few issues remain such as some shoaling and tree work that is now an endless task (100's now removed since March 2020), we hope you get out and enjoy the river once again and we welcome you back to it. Our news features in this edition highlight some of the work and things we have been doing and we hope you find it informative and useful.

As ever you can keep in touch and up to date with what is happening via our social media channels on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook and via our web sites or our TeamUp shared Calendars: [📍](#)



Twitter Account: www.twitter.com/Ang_WaterwaysEA



Instagram Accounts: www.instagram.com/ang_waterwaysea/ & www.instagram.com/anglianwaterways/



Facebook Waterways Manager Account: <https://www.facebook.com/VisitAnglianWaterways>

Facebook Page Anglian Waterways: <https://www.facebook.com/AnglianWaterwaysEA>

Facebook Page Denver complex: <https://www.facebook.com/DenverComplexEA>



River Great Ouse Notices Calendar: <https://teamup.com/ks7f3fcbc3e94ed8f0>

River Advice for Boaters Calendar: <https://teamup.com/ks95856e13ff0fd3b1>

Tidal R. Gt. Ouse Crossing & Gates Denver Calendar: <https://teamup.com/ksyf1tr1gzsf2vppn>

Pump-out status checker calendar: <https://teamup.com/kshyb2hfdye2mj1uuf>



Gov.uk web pages: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency

Local Anglian Waterways Web Site: www.visitanglianwaterways.org/

Northampton Marina Web Site: www.northamptonmarina.co.uk/





Waterways capital major works: forward, present and backward look

Usually over the winter months, major works to our waterways structures are undertaken and over the previous winter, works were undertaken at Great Barford Lock, Godmanchester and St Ives Lock which all had dewater inspections and below waterline repairs. Hermitage Lock also had some works undertaken but unfortunately as with some other sites, due to the weather conditions and knock on effects of these, some sites have slipped on the list and the works deferred to this coming winter including work at Hermitage and Cardington for example.

Much has been done in the form of de-silting works and tree works on the River since the New Year, much of this in response to winter flooding and storms. As soon as problems became evident we instructed

contractors to mobilise and clear siltation that had formed at Brandon Lock on the Little Ouse on the Lock Cut and some of the most significant silt deposits seen at Denver and Salters Lode Locks. These have now been cleared but we will need to return to Brandon Lock as the siltation extended much beyond just the lock cut and up and downstream at Brandon which was not apparent when the initial dredging took place.

Contractors are being lined up and are due to mobilise imminently to work on the shoals that have formed on the Bedford Ouse River, especially at Castle Mill Lock and downstream of Godmanchester Lock by the Canoe Portage. These will be the priority sites to tackle which is likely to start within a couple of weeks. Also on the radar are Hemingford, St Ives reach and the Old West Twenty Pence Area. Some

major tree works and removals have also been undertaken and are still planned in as well as reacting to incidents where trees are involved.

Looking ahead the Capital settlement with government was much improved this year and much higher than in the previous decade and indications are that this may continue in future years on the horizon. As a result the Capital Programme for the coming winter is much more ambitious and although it must be stressed it is only outline at present works are planned for Bedford, Cardington, Eaton Socon, Godmanchester, Houghton, Hemingford, Brownhill, and Hermitage Locks. Many other sites are also in the Programme Pipeline being developed for future years such as at Denver, Bottisham, and Isleham Locks. We will provide updates again in the future. [↴](#)

Floating Pennywort (and other invasive species) Update

Our most prolific and current problematic invasive species in terms of navigation on the Great Ouse System is Floating Pennywort. However there are many others present, Zebra Mussel, Giant Hogweed, Chinese Mitten Crab, Azolla, Himalayan Balsam, Mink to mention just a few, some of which also pose human health issues alongside environmental problems. Although the focus here is on Floating Pennywort the main message to take away is that with the wider range of biosecurity threats present we all have a role to play in protecting the river we love and want to use, so please practice bio-security or simplified just Check, Clean, Dry, your boat, equipment and clothing after each use.

If you find anything suspicious you should remove it and leave it at the waterbody where it was found, preferably on the bank as high up and away from the river as possible and safe to do.

A huge amount of investment and time has been spent on Floating Pennywort Control over the past financial year totalling around £200k on the River Great Ouse system as a whole. The river is split over two areas, the Bedford Ouse Floating Pennywort strategy is well established and

progressed and a further approximate £60k was spent on this section of the river last year and the Floating Pennywort is well under control. The Ely Ouse saw £140k's worth of investment under an initial year of a new approach where a 50/50 split of Waterways and Flood Risk Capital funding (£70k each) totalling £140k was spent and will be repeated again this year. This means that we will have teams out throughout the year monitoring, surveying, spraying, hand picking and undertaking mechanical removal where necessary.

We hope you also notice the difference out on the river with much, much less visible Floating Pennywort present. Also with teams deployed throughout the year we will be much more able to respond to reports of Floating Pennywort sightings as they come in. This doesn't mean that resources will be deployed to every reported sighting but with collating reports we can best target and focus our efforts. This is where you can really assist us throughout this coming year and I would encourage anyone who spots or suspects that they have spotted Floating Pennywort to report it via the link in the accompanying images; www.bit.ly/ousepennywort [↴](#)

Lock Keeper of the Year award

The Award (also known as the Esme Dowling Award in memory of Esme Dowling, a Lock Keeper at Napton Locks



on the Oxford Canal from 1957-1988) is presented annually to navigation authority staff or volunteers who have gone the extra mile in delivering excellent customer service on the UK's inland waterways network. The award is open not only to Lock Keepers, but to all waterways staff who have offered outstanding assistance to waterways users.

We are pleased to announce that this year our Denver Lock keepers Dan Pollard and Ben Di Guilio have in conjunction with Salters Lode Lock Keeper Paul Grodkiewicz on the Middle Levels received runners-up awards, much to their surprise after being nominated by Fox Boats.

A certificate presentation will take place and we hope to bring you an update and accompanying photo in a future issue, but our congratulations to all three lock keepers. [↴](#)

Return of Anglian Waterways Volunteers

Covid 19 has meant that our Anglian Waterways Volunteering Programme was paused. Thankfully since the road map out of lockdown became known we re-engaged with Cambs ACRE and re-started the volunteering programme by looking at how they could safely return. Provided the current road map dates materialise we will be looking to reintroduce volunteers once

again after final restrictions are lifted in late June.

The plan will be to more or less pick up where we left off and have volunteer assistance available at a number of locks on the river including St Ives and Houghton to assist boaters through if they want it.

We are also looking at developing more volunteer roles and locations so if you are

interested in giving up some of your time and would be interested please make contact with Rachael Brown at CAMBS ACRE either via phone: 01353 865 037 or by e-mail rachael.brown@cambsacre.org.uk to register your interest. Further information can also be found online at:

www.anglianwaterwaysvolunteerscheme.wordpress.com/ 





Waterways Workforce

The Waterways Workforce undertakes the vast majority of the grass cutting out on our sites but also a whole lot more as the day job, including painting, cleaning, vegetation control and many minor repairs that could have otherwise closed facilities.

Previously we've shared some of the team's activities such as wild seed planting. The team have been busy over the winter months introducing numerous other wild seed areas. This has two benefits in that it means there is less intensive management required of grass areas and then the

obvious environmental benefits that wild flowers bring. You'll likely see some of the prepared areas on your travels this year. They have also been hedge planting on a number of our sites and introduced bat/bird boxes to increase their appeal to wildlife.

You will see some examples in the photo's provided where the team have made a noticeable difference – such as at Hermitage Lock where a previously recovered boat has been converted into a planter and is a welcoming sight upstream. At a number of other locations including Houghton Visitor Mooring and the

Dolphin in St Ives metal BBQ stands have been fabricated and a number placed out on sites for your use. Please note however that the stands are intended for use with a disposable BBQ on top. We have already had reports where they have been used with the charcoal briquettes directly on the trays which is not their intended purpose.

We hope you notice the improvements being made and efforts the team are going to, to make your trips out on the river that much more enjoyable and safer. ⚓



Ouse on Board?

Chris Beale tells us about how he came to boating and how his boat "Ouse on Board" has become the RYA training centre for the Inland Waterways Helmsman Certificate and Crew Course

Out on the water training.

It all started many years ago as a child when my parents took us all on a family narrowboat holiday. My wife regularly tells me that I can never remember the important things in my life but always the obscure. I beg to differ, I feel ones first narrowboat trip is a very important memory. There were seven of us on the boat which we collected from Nuneaton from a company called Valley Cruisers if I remember correctly. Ten year old me, mum and dad, my sister, grandparents and cousin all set out on what was to be a very relaxed week on the Warwickshire ring which would be the start of a life long love of the waterways. I have memories of my Gran standing at the front sticking her arms out at every bend to let whoever was steering know which way the canal went and the obligatory shout if there was another boat coming. This was also my Dad's first use of the phrase "it wasn't my fault" after judging a bend badly and wiping out a fisherman and his keep net. This phrase would make regular appearances in future boating holidays including getting a mud weight wrapped around the propellor on the Norfolk Broads not 30 minutes after leaving the boatyard which resulted in a visit from a diver in full frogman regalia, and flooding the front of a narrow boat (making the carpet a little damp) on the Ashton Canal due to getting a little too close to some rather leaky lock gates.

Scouts go boating

Moving forward a few years to 2013 and I was a Scout Leader in a local group, looking to expand my skill set. After a bit of research I discovered that it was possible to take

Scouts narrow-boating, a little more research and I was booked onto an RYA helmsman course with two other leaders on a boat in Cambridge. The boat's name was Rosie and operated by Peter at Camboats, I think the instructor was called Hugh. This was a new first for me, operating a boat on a stretch of river with some new hazards; rowers! These quick, silent athletes present a challenge at the best of times, let alone when you are under training and trying to carry out a winding manoeuvre on one of the few straight sections where they want to go quickly, and the instructor has chosen that precise spot for you to block the whole river. Thankfully we all passed and it wasn't long before Peter let us borrow Rosie and we were taking Scouts out on the river. In

return I would help him out with some of his river trips and developed my skills even more, including giving commentary about the history of the river and Cambridge. This continued for a few years until someone (and I'm really sorry I can't remember who) pointed me in the direction of the 3rd Thetford Scout Group, who owned their own boat on the River Wissey.

I met Steve at the mooring of Harboro' Adventure II in Stoke Ferry and got a tour of the boat and a brief history of her life. Starting out as a brickies boat based at Fazeley Wharf in 1936 she was purchased by Steve and a Scout group in Aylesbury in 1986 where the Venture Scouts would start the conversion process. The first job was to move her to a more suitable home, so with



Steve at the helm in 1986.

the help of some ropes, a small outboard and some volunteers they set out on the journey to Aylesbury. Once there it was all hands to the deck, teaching the young people basic steel work including cutting and welding. The hull was re-shaped and a cabin built on top. Once the heavier work was done, some of the younger children of the group were able to get involved with the interior, painting and insulating. Steve moved up to Thetford in 1990 and the boat came too, not river worthy yet so loaded on a trailer and moved to a farmyard close to Thetford where work would continue with a new set of recruits. Over the years, weekends would be spend continuing with the build, the exterior now completed the internal fit-out commenced including the sourcing and fitting of the engine which involved a minibus trip to the factory, a small tour for all the Scouts finishing with an engine being loaded onto a trailer for their journey home. A few more years went by, then in 2011 it was time for the big launch. The hard work of over 100 Scouts over 25 years had finally paid off as she was lowered into the water for the first time.

Camping but on the water

I had many fantastic trips out on Harboro' Adventure II (named II because the name Harboro' Adventure was already taken by a cottage in the Peak District also acquired, maintained and run by Steve and the Scout Group) with the Scouts. She was a basic boat, no fancy electrics or heating, just beds, toilet and shower and a simple galley; It was like camping, but on the water. Enough space to sleep 12 at a squeeze; it was fantastic seeing the young people experience something new, developing their skills as useful crew members. Some managed to successfully moor up without assistance from any adults, whilst others required the assistance from 100m of bank and the opinion of every other Scout on board! For 4 years I used the boat, often taking it to Ely's Aquafest each summer, providing short trips for the Scouts, and a riverside viewing platform for the raft races. Then in 2019 the Scout Group decided they no longer wished to keep the boat and there was an opportunity to buy it. After first approaching the various Scout Groups I was involved in and getting turned down it was clear this was going to be a little trickier than I first imagined.

Community asset

Steve expressed that his wish would be for the boat to stay as a community asset, rather than falling into private hands so the effort that had been put in over the years wasn't wiped out in one quick sale. After some researching and a few emails back and forth



Removing the old cabin.



New Cabin sides!

the decision was made, let's start our own charity. So we did. We got some sponsorship, the ownership of the boat was transferred, we joined GOBA, and on 13th February 2020 we moved the boat from her old home on the Wissey to a new base at Denver, the new adventure begun, then stopped. The bookings we had were cancelled and the year looked bleak, but the lack of use had its advantages. We were able to utilise the time to carry out some refurbishments, starting with a simple lick of paint on the inside and a good clean. A few favours from friends and new seat covers were made by Elaine and when the weather started to improve the exterior work could begin. There was nothing wrong with the paint on the outside, it was a bit faded but had lasted well, trying to sand it back proved just how well it had been applied originally, probably by over enthusiastic teenagers getting more on them than the boat. With the primer and undercoat complete we got word that a slot had become available for hull blacking, something that had been delayed due to Covid earlier

in the year. Grabbing my wife and a few sandwiches we made the one day journey over to March in a bright white boat. If you've never ventured onto the Middle Levels, I can't recommend it enough, it has everything the big-boy canals have; locks, tunnels (a long low bridge) aqueducts and tight bends. Sadly my wife, a seasoned boater herself, wasn't available for the return trip. I contemplated doing the journey myself but felt an extra pair of hands is always a bonus, so I turned to someone who I had been boating with in the past, my Dad. Not twenty minutes out of the boatyard and he had a file in his hand trying to make the aft doors opened a little easier (he's always had a penchant to occupy himself and tinker). It's useful when there are those awkward jobs you don't want to do, just drop the hint and he's away. He later insisted on climbing into the engine bay to clean it out, not a light clean but a dustpan and brush job then a mop and cloth until all the muck was gone. People have since commented on what a clean engine bay we have, anyway I digress.

continued over...

...from previous page

One day, that's all we needed to get home without incident, one day. Could we manage it? Thankfully yes.

As the summer months passed we managed to carry out some training to various Scout leaders who planned to use the boat when the time allowed and completed the exterior paint work. I made sure Steve was still involved with the boat, his experience and knowledge is invaluable and he is fantastic at teaching others and sharing his stories about the boat. If you ever get the chance to meet him, make a cuppa, pull up a chair and put a few hours aside, it's worth it.

We decided to rename the boat the same as the charity, Ouse On Board, to enable us to move away from purely Scouting but knew we didn't want to forget the past, so there are still elements on board to remind people of the history of the boat including old photos and information about the work that has been put into her over the years by the community, for the community. Autumn came and I was lucky enough to get myself onto an RYA instructor course. I had always wanted to teach others the skills of boating and now was my chance. A cold weekend trip down to Bath and I managed to complete the course, learning some new skills along the way. We were now in a position to move to the next stage of development.

RYA training centre

It took a few months, lots of paperwork, an inspection visit and some minor modifications to the boat but in January 2021 Ouse On Board became an RYA training centre for the Inland Waterways Helmsman Certificate and Crew Course with two qualified volunteer instructors, something that is currently lacking in this area. We are now able to train people to operate our boat



Launch Day 2011.

so various schools, youth, and community groups can use our boat safely and confidently as well as training others to build on their skills or refresh the basics for their own boats. We don't do private hire (there are enough companies around for that) and we don't make a profit, everything goes back into the running of the boat and charity.

We just want to get more people out on the water, enjoying what our rivers have to offer and maybe one day another ten year old will come along and get the boating bug themselves.

For more information please visit www.ouseonboard.org.uk or email ouseonboard@gmail.com &

River Trivia

In this section we will share with you fun facts about our river system.

Which pub on the Great Ouse is considered the most haunted in Cambridgeshire?

The ghost of Juliet Tewsley is reputed to walk each year on the anniversary of her suicide in 1050.

Answer: If you don't recognise the pub it's the Old Ferryboat Inn at Holywell



NEWS FLASH

St Ives Illuminated Boat Parade

The organisers of the St Ives Illuminated Boat Parade are running this very popular event in October 2021 with a Halloween theme!



Photos: SBOReeves@gmail.com

To enter the 2021 parade, please go to www.stivesboatparade.co.uk

16th October 2021



The People you Meet on the River

by *Helen Dawson*

When we have guests aboard who've never boated before, we tell them 'Boating is a bit like a time hop back to the 1950s.' In our experience, when you're on the river, everyone says hello, everyone helps each other, passers-by wave a cheery 'Hi!' as they let their dogs paddle in the river as you go by.

We see our boating trips as stepping out of rushed, modern times where everyone has their face in their phone and never look up to speak to their neighbour. It's a dose of old-fashioned community spirit.

In our years of boating, firstly on the River Nene and now on the River Great Ouse, we've met lifelong friends...

Moored at Oundle Marina Village, we were sat with our BBQ in the sunshine, whilst a lovely couple worked tirelessly bringing a Norman 20 boat back to life. We called them over for a burger, my husband has never been backward in wanting to chat to everyone! We sat and talked about their boat, offered our experience on a few things and soon became friends. A year later, they'd bought a Fairline Sunfury and moved to Buckden Marina. I remember their excited phone call to us "We're at Buckden and there's a mooring space next to us, will you join us?" Many holidays later, and a boat change for us too, we're all still there and loving our holidays together.

One overnight stop in Ely saw us meet another couple. We'd put venetian blinds in our Viking 26WB, and a couple who owned a Viking 26NB stopped to admire them. The husband of the partnership beckoned to us to ask about them. Of course, they were invited onboard for a closer inspection of the fixings over a cuppa. Everyone gets invited aboard for a look round don't they! The wife of the partnership had just had a knee operation and so couldn't get onboard but was also acutely embarrassed by her husband's glee and enthusiasm as he hastily jumped aboard! They lived in March and so we were invited to stop off to visit on our way across the Middle Level – by the time we saw them at home a week later, their blinds were purchased and already part fitted!

Many years ago, a stop off at Great Barford saw us meet a lovely couple. We were in the pub with friends and a chap saw our floating keyring on the table. He came over and asked which one was our boat, as he'd been admiring a Viking 26 moored by the bridge. "Oh that's ours!" exclaimed my husband proudly. The chap explained how they were



out looking at various Vikings as they wanted to buy one. I stayed in the pub whilst my husband showed this couple round our boat, talking to them about what they should look for in a boat, what to avoid etc. I distinctly remember my last words to him as he left the pub were "Don't sell OUR boat!"

So... one thing led to another, they made us an offer we couldn't refuse, and by the end of that holiday we were packing her up, cleaning and polishing and handing her over. Then it was our turn to look for a new boat!

We love the fact we've made these, and other, life-long friends while boating.

Boating really is the best place to meet new friends, a common interest coupled with a need for advice or the requirement of a boating favour brings people together.

I'm sure there should be a saying about people who boat together stay together... and next time you're on the Great Ouse keep an eye out for Enterprise and give us a wave! [↓](#)

Audible Navigation Signals

by Phil Thane

My boat has a horn, I daresay yours does too, but how do you use it? Most of us I think use it like a car horn, sometimes to warn other boaters of impending disaster, more commonly to give vent after someone has done something we don't like, or to attract the attention of friends so we can wave at them as we pass. But did you know that for boats, unlike cars, there are official audible warning signals we could use?

The signals are used by commercial traffic on estuaries and rivers, in ports or crowded sea lanes. Even though most craft have radar, GPS and VHF radio they cannot always be sure that every other boat in the vicinity is equally well equipped, or is paying attention, so an audible signal is still a useful way of telling other boats what you are doing, or about to do. If you've ever wondered what was happening at the approach to a lock on a busy bank holiday weekend, with boats entering, leaving, dropping or collecting crew, queuing mid stream because the landing stages are full whilst others are turning round because it all looks like too much trouble, then you can imagine how it might help to have some simple signals.

There's a problem though, if you start tooting the code for 'I am turning right round' or 'I am going astern' will anybody know what you mean or just assume you're an arrogant idiot expressing your irritation at the situation? There are quite a few river boaters that have spent time on sea-going boats and may well have Yacht Master certificates, they certainly should know the codes, but with maybe half a dozen boats manoeuvring outside a lock would anyone know who was signalling what to whom?

And the rest of us? I have a crib sheet taped to a bulkhead by the helm in case I ever hear what sounds like a proper signal but I haven't needed it yet. Maybe one day I'll take Seren on to one of the major rivers with commercial traffic, but until then I'll stick to the occasional 'beep' and a cheery wave.

Beep Beep!



= one blast



= one long blast

	I am altering my course to STARBOARD
	I am altering my course to PORT
	I am going ASTERN
	I am turning fully round to STARBOARD
	I am turning fully round to PORT
	I do not understand your intentions – keep clear – I doubt whether you are taking sufficient action to avoid a collision
	I am about to get underway, enter the fairway or I am approaching a blind bend
	I am unable to manoeuvre – not under command
	I intend to overtake you on YOUR STARBOARD side
	I intend to overtake you on YOUR PORT side
	I agree to be overtaken

Riverboat Ramblings

Rick Avern reflects on some of his experiences on the river

Most of us have suffered a longer than normal “non-season” due to the dreaded virus, and it occurred to me during our enforced absence from our love on the river that maybe there were some things I could be getting on with.

Every marina and club always has a few well versed boating geeks who not only seem to know everything about all things that float, but also they somehow appear to have the incredible ability to see what’s in store for us in the future. They’re always called something like Trevor or Eric or some upmarket name.

I mean would it have been so difficult for me to have bought the outboard motor and the generator home? I could then have serviced them both at leisure. When I mentioned this I was told by them that knew rather smugly that they had of course done just this. So how did you check the outboard? I stupidly asked. Well in our wheelie bin I was told.

Having got let out for the Summer last year, sort of COVID free, we managed to get to the boat. Clean like maniacs, get everything working that has packed up. It’s weird how so many things on a boat seem to emulate a lot of my bygone Christmases. Fairy lights that get boxed away working, come out and there’s not a glimmer of light. Somehow, at least 5 things that did work the last time we were aboard now don’t! We got up and running and off we went.

Now during that short season we did manage to travel from Ely to Great Barford. And we did enjoy it mostly, but it wasn’t the best of trips.

The GOBA mooring at Barford was unusually full, so we moored the other side nearest the pub. The day following, due to

the fine weather it turned into Barford on Sea. It was good to see everyone enjoying the river, but boy was it noisy. There were a few things missing, that otherwise could have turned it into an on-sea town, but not many if you don’t count the sea itself!

We carry the usual amount of fenders on each side of our boat as most folk, but we do have a fat buoy each side as well. How sorry we were that we forgot to lift these fat buoys before entering Offord lock. Oh how we got stuck. Oh how the air was blue.

No going forward and no going back. We only extricated ourselves by deflating and dragging the two of(fenders) sorry! up onto the deck.



Just like a cork in a bottle at Offord – Even the other boat crew had head in hands!

On our trip back down the Old West we inadvertently helped with the low river levels. Whilst relaxing in the sun as we trundled along, with repeated comments from me about how tranquil this was and how beautiful life was in the sun, we had become aware of a slightly perturbing metallic rattle from the port engine. We did what all good experienced sailors do. We poured another drink, and turned up the radio a little. It wasn’t until we got to the really narrow twiddly bit just prior to the Lazy Otter that the senior housekeeper announced we had no water.

That was a puzzle as we had filled up at Earith, and even our two thirsty Labradors who can drink like camels couldn’t possibly have got through 50 gallons in a couple of hours.



Who’s he calling camels!

On arrival at the Lazy Otter, an inspection of places I try not to get down to too often revealed that the hot pipe had vibrated loose and come completely off the tap behind the sink. I was so excited on realizing that the water tank had emptied its entire contents via the automatic bilge.... I mean, when do any of us actually check that this is working? The excitement however was somewhat short lived as I was swiftly reminded that we now had no water at all. A hot day plus two Labradors who strangely suddenly looked very thirsty.

Of course the Lazy Otter would come to the rescue and they found me a water pipe just inside the fencing on the marina side. It was just a shame that our flipping hose wasn’t long enough!

We managed to fill a couple of plastic flagons that the more sensible one of us carries on board (just in case of such emergencies)!

Then later, just as I was just musing on the fact that these things happen don’t they? A hire boat came in, just in front of us. A gust of wind caught it and their stern took a chunk of fiberglass out of our hull.

Our arrival back into the marina was followed by an engine check to discover we had a piston breaking up. Oh well, what’s a new engine when we’ve been having such fun on the river?

continued over...



Before the sun and crowds came out.



...from previous page

Who were these people that kept telling us boat ownership would be a relaxing and a cheap way of enjoying time away?

So, while the boat was marooned having it's refurbishment, I did an Eric and Trevor and looked ahead. I brought the generator and the outboard home for their much needed service and clean.

No problem with the generator, but the outboard proved something else, not, strangely because of any technical issues, but how the hell was I going to test it out properly afterwards? Ahh, and then I remembered the smug response of "use a wheelie bin". Oh yes. We have several.

Sensibly I thought, I picked the emptiest. It took me the best part of an hour to completely clean it out. I then had to find the right sized timber to be able to mount the engine. Another hour in the garage, a couple of saw cuts, then after

manhandling the outboard over my head, which was like a couple of rounds with Mike Tyson, it was finally in place.

So, there we were, all I had to do was fill the wheelie bin and we could test. Having left the hose in the bin filling nicely while going inside to put the kettle on, imagine my surprise at seeing about 8 different spouts of water emanating from all around the bin. It looked like Al Capone had been using it as target practice. Whist I stood there speechless and gaping, my nearest and dearest was in tears of laughter. I was so pleased that Eric and Trevor weren't there.

So there we are. One engine rebuild later and with another release from another lockdown, another season begins. I wonder if we should just stay in the marina this year...it may be safer! But where would be the adventure in that? And why is that light not working? It was fine last year! ⚓

Who causes the litter? *by Claire Davies*

One of my biggest hates is litter which I think stems from a school outing when I was a little girl around the age of 6. My classroom was taken on a trip to the local wood and told about all the damage to wildlife dropping litter can cause.

Wherever we go, we either take our rubbish home or dispose of it in the proper bins, which is what everyone should do. And believe me when I can say, there are a number of stories I can relate on this subject particularly around "encouraging" others to do the same.

After all the winter storms, have you ever noticed how you see very odd things floating in the river? A couple of years ago, we were sitting on the GOBA mooring outside Buckden and managed to hook a large garden compost bin out of the river.

It was plastic and looked a bit like this one, with no lid and no bottom, and could cause damage to boats if it continued to float aimlessly in the river. I assume it had ended up in the river as a result of either flooding or wind – and no-one had deliberately chucked it in.

So what to do with it... ..it was a bit too big to put on our boat, so we decided to leave it, thinking that maybe the owner

might just be looking for it on the towpath. And here is where we made our mistake. Having picked it up, we left it hidden in the hedgerow.

A couple of weeks later we went past the same mooring and spotting some friends, decided to stop for a spontaneous catch up. To our amazement, some sad soul had decided

to pull it out of it's hidden refuge and decided to use it as a bin. This had been added to by the various dog walkers for their dog's waste as well.

It was clear we needed a plan to remove it; if you know this spot, you'll know exactly how unlikely it is for any council to come and pick it up, and it was already over-flowing – which would mean all the rubbish would undoubtedly end up in the river. On top of this a boater who had moored overnight and was heading upstream, was asked to take her rubbish to the next lock which is Offord (where there is a proper bin) refused point blankly and she decided to use "our" bin. So there was only one thing left to do – with our good friends who also hate litter, we emptied the content. Our friends managed to squeeze the compost bin on to their bathing platform, while we squeezed all the rubbish (including all the doggie poo bags) onto our bathing platform. I'm pleased to say that on returning to our base, both the bin and all the contents were disposed of in the proper manner.

So Ladies and Gentlemen, my message to you all is to think about our environment and how lovely the river is, and dispose of your waste properly. ⚓



21

Wildlife on our River

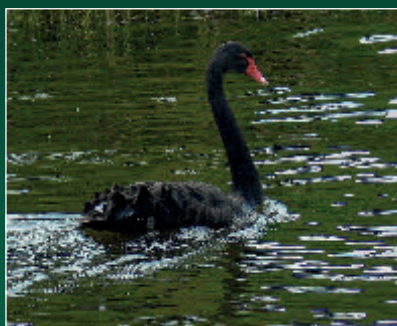


One of the joys of boating to me is seeing all the wildlife on the river as you slowly meander by, or when you are moored up watching the day go by. I have seen all sorts of wildlife since I've been boating on the Great Ouse from snakes, minks, otters, terrapins, and it looks like I'm not the only one given the pictures that have been sent in.

It's just unfortunate that it's one of those things when sometimes you just don't have your camera ready or you know the animal will move if you move to get it. This is just a small sample and thank you to those who have sent your pictures in.

Rita and Peter Swinson (Lizzy B) sent in a picture of a Purple Gallinule (top left) which used to reside about half a mile downstream of the Ferryboat on the north bank. This photo was taken in April 2006.

Jean Cornell sent in the picture of the seal following their boat Little Nairana at Earith.



Cambridge Motor Boat Club



I'm delighted to say that the Club is beginning to come back to life with the easing of lockdown and most of us having had our vaccinations.

In May, we celebrated 110 years of the Club's existence. On

17 May, the actual anniversary of the founding, members met outside in the marquee for afternoon tea to mark the occasion. The grounds and chalets were decorated with flags and bunting, and it was a lovely start to getting back to normal. The celebrations continued on the following weekend, with an outdoor (in gazebos) musical evening, which was well-attended. It was a very enjoyable evening and so nice to be able to chat to so many people. During the day, Chris Rolfe kept members amused with rides around the grounds in his vintage Cadillac, and on the river in his steam boat.

Our fortnightly coffee mornings will be starting again at the beginning of June,



Evening light.

and I'm sure they will be well attended - although we've met via Zoom chats over the past year or so, it's not the same as chatting face-to-face.

Our opening up will be slow, at least for the time being, and our next event planned is an open-air evening in August - but our boaters have already been out and about and will continue to do so. We just hope that summer will finally arrive before too long ...

We are looking forward to meeting some of you over the summer and to being back to a full events programme by the end of the year.

Jane Moorman



Chris and his car.



Flags flying!

Denver Cruising Club



At long last we can get back to our boats again. After this winters lockdown, we all came out of hibernation, boats were cleaned inside and out, repairs made good after the winter winds and changing water levels. Its great just being able to sit on our boat and enjoy the feeling of being back on the water, seeing all our friends at the mooring, catching up will all the news.

Two of our boats braved it the other weekend and journeyed down to Kings Lynn for a overnight stay. They reported that the channel was better than last year. Most members have been going to Ely for the weekend or staying local.

Last weekend on our way back from Denver we came under the bridge at 10 Mile Bank and on the left hand side was a large seal laying on the EA 48 hour moorings by the water tap. This is the first

time in 2 years that we have seen a seal on this bank. We have had them at the club mooring laying on one of our jetties in the past. This might mean that things are getting back to normal.

As our club house is quite small, we cannot implement all the required regulations to operate fully within the COVID-19 rules. Our club house was built on top of a floating barge shell 60' x 18', and a lot of members put hard work into this over a number of years. It's like Doctor Who's tardis with a door to the entrance lobby at the north end of the building, leading off this is the dining hall where you can sit approximately 50 people, with a bar just inside the door. Toilets and shower room off the lobby with a fully fitted kitchen at the south end. The club house will remain locked up until the COVID-19 regulations

improve - and then it will have a deep clean with a lick of paint before we open up. We do have some work to do outside like painting plus repairing some moorings, but this can be done over the summer months by our members.

We are trying to make the most of our boats while we can, so let's hope the weather is good to us this year.

A happy boating season to you all.
Stay safe

Carol Warburton.
warburtcar@aol.com



Upware-Boat-Club



The 2021 UBC season has, at last, started with a bank holiday "Sports Weekend". It is clear that members were itching to get back into social events on the river as we had a record number of people attend (second only

to a typical regatta event), taking us right up to the maximum permitted under current Covid restrictions.

As ever with a UBC Sports Weekend, athletic prowess was not required and silly games were the order of the day. The venue this year was the Commodore's back garden in Ten Mile Bank and games such as knock out the MP/scientist with the virus, Contain the Corona and infect the faces without masks brought out the competitive spirit in members. The club party tent was erected and its barbecue dusted off as a weekend of games, karaoke, cruising, eating, drinking and, of course, a lot of



conversing got underway. A "20% chance of rain" did manifest itself as a downpour, just at the barbecues were lit, but one wet evening aside, the weather was glorious and a trip up the river Wissey to Hilgay on tenders and boats with a suitable air-draft offered a very pleasant change of scenery on a cloud-free Sunday.

Boats headed off on the Monday morning with members having had more than their fill of barbecue and drink, with all agreeing that it was fantastic to be able to meet in person again.

Other events planned for the year include a weekend at Brandon Creek,

the Regatta, a summer cruise from the Lazy Otter to the Heron at Stowbridge, a themed weekend at Denver, two "Musters" (an invitation from the Commodore to meet for an informal evening at a pub on the river) and a "Late Winter Cruise" to the Isle of Wight in September, as well as the Laying Up Supper and AGM.

Let's hope that our small spikey friend gives us all the freedom to enjoy such events and I look forward to seeing many of you afloat.

Steve Crosson Smith (*Après-Ski*)
Commodore

IWA-Great-Ouse-Branch



It's now the end of May (at the time of writing) and the start of the new season and the situation has improved since the last report written in January. We are now allowed to resume boating albeit with some restrictions in place although these are not especially limiting. It is to be hoped that this progress continues with the continued successful vaccinations programme and the demise of the virus and its variants.

The branch functions for last year were lost and this continued at the start of 2021. Both the February and March events were cancelled although the AGM, which would have been part of the latter meeting, was held virtually on zoom as was a deferred 2020 AGM. In both cases the AGM business was concluded in the usual rapid manner and was followed by

a general chat about boating matters. Of course, the traditional post AGM updates from the Environment Agency could not be presented. The usual outside visit usually arranged for this time of year has, again, not been possible – surely that will be able to be re-instated next Spring.

For now we are hoping that the meetings for the rest of the year will be possible. These are scheduled for 28 October and 25 November. At the moment no bookings have been possible regarding the topics of these meetings but information on these will be found either in the members' branch newsletter "Ouse News" or on the IWA website www.waterways.org.uk which carries this and a range of other information both local and national. The website has recently been re-designed and has much more content

than previously and a more appealing look so I commend a visit to it where you can follow the links to find items of individual interest. All the branch indoor meetings are held at North Lodge, North Lodge Park, Milton (post code CB24 6UD) commencing at 8.00 pm. We hope that we will be able to meet in October and November so please do check the web site as the information there is more up to date than is possible in a publication such as GOBA News. Although all meetings and events are open to members and non-members alike I would urge those of you who are not members to join and the website will provide details of how to do just that – it's well worthwhile.

John Hodgson
greatouse@waterways.org.uk



Ouse Valley River Club



Well, despite the pandemic OVRC's boating season has started albeit slowly. Throughout April and May members have had their boats out for antifouling, cleaning, polishing, and repairing their pride and joys ready for what we all hope will be another great summer boating season.

We are delighted to have a brand-new boat trolley for pulling boats out, this one has the hydraulic rams and self-centering which matches our slightly older trolley and replaces one that did not have the self-centering facility. The older replaced trolley (shown in the photo below) is still very usable and available for any club or marina that might have a need and is prepared to offer us a sensible figure.



The Open Cruiser Meeting was held via Zoom this year where over 80 members joined, which was amazing. This is a chance for the members to understand what we have in store for them in terms of social

and boating events, plus a chance for new members to get to know the membership. The meeting was slightly different this year in that it became an EGM as well because we could not hold our AGM last year due to Covid. There we were last year thinking that next year would be different and we would all be able to meet in the club house again in 2021, which clearly was not possible yet again. We had our usual spring work party in March (all socially distant of course), cleaning up after the flood, trimming hedges, repairing the access road, chopping down falling trees, and general maintenance so that we can all enjoy our boats. We have had a small group of the committee re-laying our front patio area which was getting dangerous with trip hazards; this will be a great place to sit when completed with a beer or a Pimm's!

In terms of social events, once again so much has had to be cancelled, sadly we have now postponed our 70th Anniversary Ball indefinitely as the moment has gone. We would normally be holding our annual cruising weekend for the end of May bank holiday, this again has been cancelled but we held an outdoor event at the club for the members instead. A Pétanque



competition followed by a Fish and Chip supper and music provided by our resident DJ Clive Russell and his set up 'Rok the Boat'. Folks were in socially distant groups under their own gazebos etc but also there was a marquee up for a limited number should the weather be poor. Further to this we also had a dinghy run up to Eaton Socon Lock for a very few, followed by a bit of a session in the local pubs before returning. And there was a roast pork meal laid on by Claire Battle on the Sunday, which was all very welcome, thanks Claire.

Later in the year we have our On-Shore Day involving BBQ, Commodore's Sail past and outdoor live entertainment.

Finally, a very special message of thanks goes out to Viv for organising such great events and Zoom catch ups throughout the pandemic and under such difficult conditions.

We look forward to seeing you all down river this year.

Happy Boating All and if you are up this way drop us a line via the website and pop in and see us!!

Phil Armstrong & Viv McIntosh

Vice Commodore & Rear Commodore Team

OVRC welcomes all membership enquiries please view www.ovrc.co.uk or e-mail <mailto:info@ovrc.co.uk> for more information.



Pike and Eel Boat Club



After the winter floods the marina dried out quite nicely and river levels evened out so just another heatwave please.

Our "club house" survived the "Floods" but had about 50mm of silt deposited inside so the Pike and Eel had it professionally cleaned and fumigated and it looks just like our beloved club house again.

We have, in recent weeks, acquired 16 new members, which is encouraging. Boating seems to be getting more popular. To introduce them to us old hands we had a "social distancing" Soirée last Saturday which was successful, despite the cold.

Our first event this year will be our Commodore's Welcome Party which will be held in the "Events Room" at the Pike on the evening of 10th July. Invitations will be sent out shortly to members. There will be live music and scrummy food as always.

Our next event will be in September, which is our Regatta. Dates are 17th to the 19th Sept. On the Friday (17th) we will have the Commodore's Cocktail Party with (maybe) a theme hosted by our Commodore, John Hughes. There is a theme for the Saturday evening which is "South Pacific" very loosely based on the film of the 50's. Hosted by myself, Fred Allen. Apparently Netflix are not interested!!

Finally, on Spring Bank Holiday, the Summer has arrived. Three beautiful fun and sun filled days where cricket, croquet and bowls somehow mixed with barbeques and drinks and generally chilling out!

On Saturday afternoon the 3rd July we will celebrate 76 years since VE Day with optional dressing up. On Friday 30th July there will be a Summer cruise to 5 Miles from Anywhere.

On Saturday 30th October will be our Halloween Evening with Fancy Dress, and on Saturday 13th November we will host our Laying Up Supper.

The Pike and Eel have invested a lot of money in updating the moorings at the marina and the visitor moorings are really looking modern and safe. It's worth visiting the marina because they have a new chef and the menu should be pretty good - as always awaiting the official opening day of course.



Bedford Boat Club



Following on from the flooding over the Christmas period, we have now managed to finish the mini-refurb of the clubhouse with a complete new coat of paint everywhere (many thanks go to our "Goddess of Paint" Tania for a cracking job!) and new carpet tiles.

AT LAST! After what seems a huge wait we have been able to finally hold a Boat Club social event. A spring bank holiday weekend club cruise to Great Barford. Perfect for social distancing outside. A good turnout considering the

situation with 13 boats in attendance, some arriving from Thursday onwards. This presented its own problems with strong stream caution still on and the river flow was still quite a bit above normal. There were also a large amount of fallen and overhanging branches along the route.

With lovely hot weather all over the weekend, a very enjoyable time was had by all with the usual flying displays from our secretary Mick Jamieson and his "boy's toys". A quiz for our usual trophy was enjoyed on Sunday afternoon. Hopefully with things a

little bit nearer normal we can all now look forward to lots more social events.

Happy boating, stay safe

Paul How

Chairman BBC





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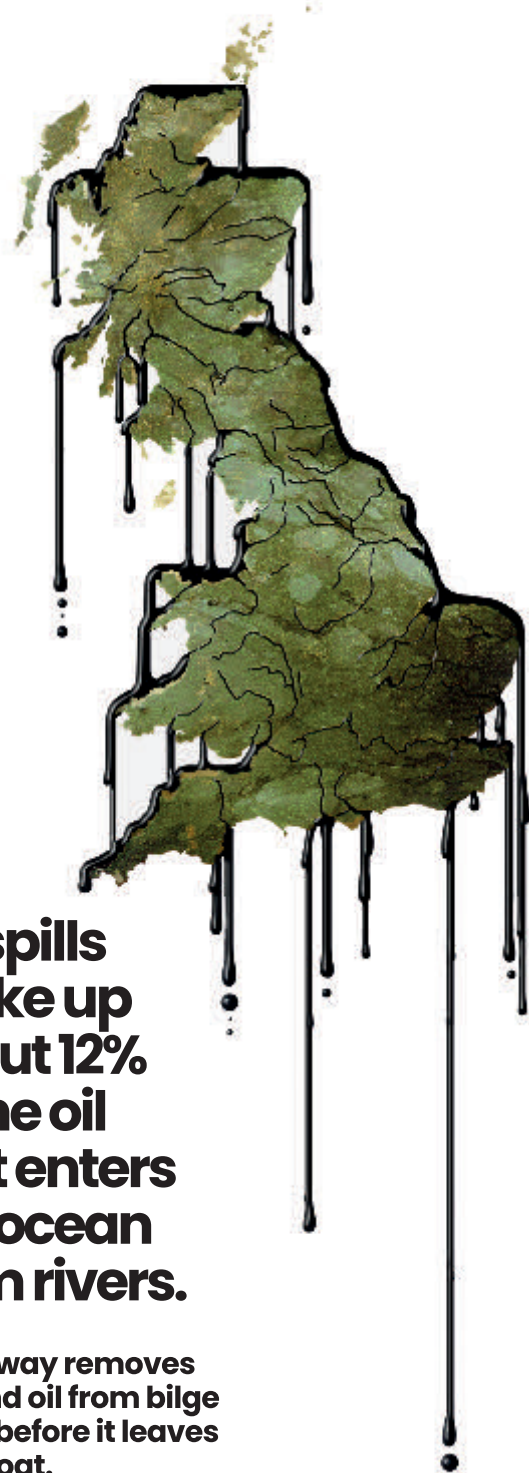
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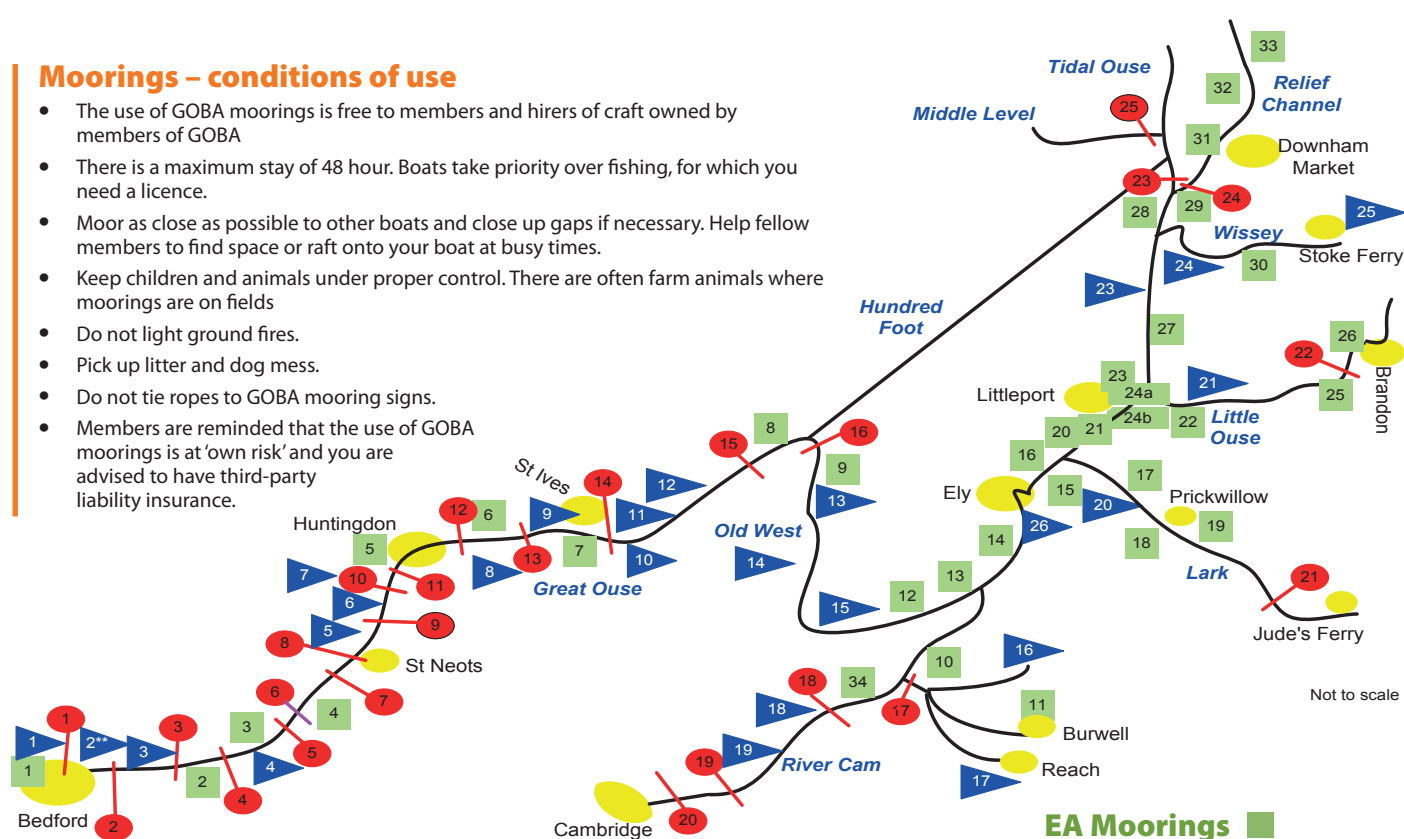
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- The use of GOBA moorings is free to members and hirers of craft owned by members of GOBA
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- Moor as close as possible to other boats and close up gaps if necessary. Help fellow members to find space or raft onto your boat at busy times.
- Keep children and animals under proper control. There are often farm animals where moorings are on fields
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- Pick up litter and dog mess.
- Do not tie ropes to GOBA mooring signs.
- Members are reminded that the use of GOBA moorings is at 'own risk' and you are advised to have third-party liability insurance.



Locks

1	Bedford
2	Cardington
3	Castle Mills
4	Willington
5	Barford
6	Roxton
7	Eaton Socon
8	St Neots
9	Offord
10	Brampton
11	Godmanchester
12	Houghton
13	Hemingford
14	St Ives
15	Brownshill
16	Hermitage
17	Upware
18	Bottisham
19	Baits Bite
20	Jesus Green
21	Isleham
22	Brandon
23	Denver
24	Relief Channel
25	Salters Lode

GOBA Moorings

1	Fenlake Meadow	52 07'51. 57"N	0 26'47. 03"W
2	Priory Marina**	52 07'52. 13"N	0 26'22. 22"W
3	Goldington	52 08'23. 25"N	0 25'16. 55"W
4	Great Barford	52 09'04. 36"N	0 20'33. 38"W
5	Little Paxton Pits	52 15'33. 69"N	0 14'18. 87"W
6	Mailers Meadow	52 17'52. 38"N	0 13'07. 85"W
7	Brampton	52 19'13. 48"N	0 12'06. 63"W
8	Hemingford	52 19'12. 48"N	0 06'39. 50"W
9	Noble's Field	52 19'38. 50"N	0 05'06. 24"W
10	Ferryboat	52 18'59. 95"N	0 01'40. 12"W
11	One Pound	52 18'56. 97"N	0 00'37. 70"W
12	Pike & Eel	52 19'15. 37"N	0 00'19. 26"W
13	Aldreth Drain	52 19'49. 50"N	0 06'10. 31"E
14	NEW Lazy Otter	52 19'38. 35"N	0 12'13. 96"E
15	Stretham	52 20'02. 48"N	0 13'22. 63"E
16	Wicken Fen	52 18'26. 78"N	0 17'13. 57"E
17	Reach Lode	52 16'26. 78"N	0 17'31. 79"E
18	Waterbeach	52 15'57. 41"N	0 12'28. 15"E
19	Baits Bite mooring	52 14'35. 23"N	0 11'01. 73"E
20	Padnal Fen	52 25'50. 57"N	0 19'17. 55"E
21	Hockwold Fen	52 26'56. 83"N	0 26' 56. 04"E
22	(unassigned)		
23	10 Mile Bank	52 31'20. 78"N	0 22'00. 96"E
24	Railway Bridge	52 33'52. 22"N	0 21'17. 83"E
25	Whittington	52 33'56. 85"N	0 31'36. 74"E
26	Cawdle Fen	52.3864827	0.2674706

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6	Houghton
7	The Dolphin, St Ives
8	Earith
9	Hermitage
10	Reach Lode (Upware)
11	Burwell Lode
12	Hundred Acre
13	Goldsmere
14	Little Thetford
15	Queen Adelaide
16	Diamond 44
17	Toms Hole Farm
18	Prickwillow
19	Mill End Farm
20	Sandhills, Littleport
21	Black Horse, Littleport
22	Brandon Creek
23	Station Road, Littleport
24a	Little Ouse Brandon
24b	The Ship
25	Brandon Lock
26	Brandon Town
27	Windmill
28	Denver complex
29	Silt Fen Farm
30	Hilgay
31	Downham Market
32	Stowbridge
33	Wiggenhall St Mary
34	Fidwell Fen

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Useful Contacts

Secretary & for general enquiries:

Ed Buttfeld, secretary@goba.org.uk

Membership:

Phil Thane, membership@goba.org.uk

Moorings upstream from St Ives

Geoff Sutcliffe, upstream@goba.org.uk

Moorings downstream of St Ives:

Mary Pryor, downstream@goba.org.uk

Navigation problems and liaison with EA:

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