

January 2011

Grantham Canal News Sheet

This latest issue of the Electronic News Sheet is for **anyone** who would like to be updated on GCS activities and progress. If this is the first issue you have received and you would like future monthly issues, please send an email to: Membership@granthamcanal.com stating your name, confirming your e-mail address and indicating that you wish to receive the News Sheet. Future copies will not be sent without your permission. You do not have to be a member but please consider joining. Details on the "Contact Us" page on our website: www.granthamcanal.com

1. The A46 Road Improvements

Although not directly involving the Canal you may be interested to see the time lapse film of the new railway bridge being moved into place over the Christmas period at Bingham. It comes courtesy of the Newark Advertiser but I have no idea how long it will be available to view. Thanks to Colin Bryan for sending this in.

<http://www.newarkadvertiser.co.uk/articles/news/A46-railway-work-completed-on-time>

2. The Trip-boat:

An engineer from Oxfordshire Narrowboats has not made a further visit to fit modifications yet but we are preparing for the 2011 season with Skipper and Crew training in the next 6 - 8 weeks subject to favourable weather conditions. If you are interested please email Mike Oliver - michaeloliver31@aol.com or if you prefer please ring him on 0163 681 4348. Following the success of last season we are now faced with increased fuel costs and VAT and it is with regret that we will have to increase our charges for 2011. Further details when available. All trips will start at Woolsthorpe and be either 2 or 4 hour duration.

Please telephone **01949 850 999** to book trips.

3. Notts & Derby IWA Branch.

Colin Bryan has again been asked by the Branch Secretary to organize a walk for the Notts & Derby IWA Branch. The planned route is from The Mucky Duck at Woolsthorpe with a walk around and up as far as the Bridle Bridge, then back along the towpath.

The walk will start at 7pm from the Mucky Duck on Friday the 17th June. Everyone is invited of course, for a donation to IWA funds.

4. Workparties

It is with regret that Leigh Hood feels that his time as Restoration Leader is encroaching on his gliding instruction and competition work, plus, as a new narrowboat owner there just isn't enough time to do everything. We thank Leigh for all his effort in the past and will take him up on his offer to attend workparties whenever he can. You will always be very welcome Leigh. Many thanks, from the workparty team.

Ralph Poore gave our new Power Pole Pruner some exercise on a bitterly cold 27th Jan. With Jim, Tony and Mike, our plan was to work from Harlaxton toward Casthorpe but someone had been there before us and the whole towpath looked superb. We moved on to the A1 end, removing the small trees growing rapidly at the water's edge and later met up with The Groundwork Trust who had been working on the Denton to the A1 section and what a brilliant standard they have set us. Many thanks to the two Groundworks groups involved.

The large tree that has fallen into the canal at Harlaxton is still there but in a couple of weeks or so we hope to pull it onto the bank for cutting up.

NB. Next workparty date is early in the month, on Thursday 3rd Feb, plus a few odd dates in between, weather permitting, then Thurs 24th Feb & Sat 26th Feb. 2011.



One of the little tasks we may get the chance to get our teeth into is the Lengthsman's Hut at Bottesford. As you will see it needs a bit of remedial work but we have our expert on hand if and when we get the go ahead.

5. RED DIESEL

Sorry if this seems a bit deep but this IS going to affect those of us with Narrowboats and that includes GCS

*As you may already know the new European directive concerning **Red Diesel** imposed a requirement to move to biofuel which is not compatible with low volume usage (as per most boats) and has a 'shelf-life' of only six months. Hence there is a (theoretical) need to empty and clean tanks regularly to ensure clean fuel.*

Below is a copy of an article which appeared in Narrowboatworld on Monday, 24 January 2011 This update offers some hope to boaters.

Latest on Biofuel as it affects narrowboats

IT MIGHT not be a 'eureka' moment but at least some light is beginning to dawn in respect of the addition of bio-fuel to our diesel, write Pam Pickett.

I do though have to say more questions remain, not only in respect of the do we/don't we add this damaging stuff, but with regard to the questionable intelligence of those who come up with these ideas, and the incredible stupidity of those who, without any thought whatsoever as to the practicality or expense of such a move so easily roll over to enforce such a European decree!

Doesn't compute

However, a little background on the subject of bio-fuel. It appears one organisation at least is standing in we boaters corner with regard to this bio-fuel, the British Marine Federation. And music to my ears I believe our government might just have been requested to be a little more robust in dealing with European decrees like the Quality Fuel Directive that doesn't compute with British transport and would, as with other decrees in the past, cost us billions! The purpose of the bio-fuel might be to reduce emissions but its entry into our tanks is again a badly thought out 'one size fits all'.

In the eyes of Europe it seems the tanks on our narrowboats are equivalent in size to those of commercial carriers plying their trade on huge European rivers. Those tanks are large enough to be walked into for cleaning! There is some similarity here with a restaurant boat on the Macclesfield Canal being required to carry a hugely expensive life ring that can be picked up by satellite should that boat sink, in water sometimes less than three feet deep, or even dafter a mandatory sight line on British Waterways work boats that doesn't take into consideration our twisting canals!

Rise in cost

To further clarify here there are major differences for both boaters and suppliers when using biofuel, hence the possible reluctance of some suppliers to stock this. As Rod Grant of British Waterways Marinas Ltd explained to me its not only the cost and inconvenience of changing pipes and filters to accommodate biofuel with its added percentage of fatty acid methyl ester, its also the problem of ensuring sufficient fuel is in the tanks to cover a reduced number of boats cruising during the winter that has been worrying BWML.

Given biofuel has an expected shelf-life of six months before it may begin to break down, an obvious concern here is not only the cost of possible wastage but the cost of then cleaning the tanks, and the requirement for regular filter changes etc. to avoid either clogging or leakage.

Will mix

However, the positives here are that given the prohibitive cost of replacing tanks, pipes and filters to accommodate the new biodiesel, British Waterways Marinas Ltd overall will be selling FAME (Fatty Acid Ethyl Ester) free fuel that will mix with existing stocks. Not altogether good news though when an additive will probably be required for this also virtually sulphur free fuel, and when the additional cost of the fuel is set to rise between two and four pence per litre.

Something that applies to our tanks, too and if like me you like to top up your tank when over wintering the boat and call it 'job done' this is something that will no longer apply if you find yourself with no choice other than to use biofuel. The FAME free alternative might cause grumbles from some with regard to some loss of power, but as I see it better this than a lot of possible expense and I will certainly be sourcing my own supply from BWML at Sawley Marina.

Although I've previously been able to obtain fuel from my own moorings I'm told this is no longer the case as the cost of replacing the tanks, filters and pipes plus the headache of regularly cleaning the tank would have made what has never for the proprietors been a particularly profitable option, totally untenable.

Whether this is likely to change now that the FAME free fuel has become available, I don't know, what I do know is that I worry others may quickly follow suit with those on my moorings if the 75% of Fame free fuel I'm told is currently coming into a Hull terminal isn't obtainable in their area. If diesel is required whilst cruising we'll now certainly need to ask what type of diesel is being supplied even though I understand a list of areas where the fuel is to be available is to be published.

Could this unwelcome?

The Quality Fuel Directive (for our purposes) applies to ships 'not at sea' has been split into categories. It is therefore not only our narrowboats and cruisers that are subject to the minimising of sulphur in our fuel, it also applies to boats on our lakes and deep lochs. Here speedboats come to mind and I suspect for this type of craft even the low sulphur FAME free fuel will not be welcomed if as has been suggested it could reduce their speed by some 10mph!

If diesel is required whilst cruising we'll now certainly need to ask what type of diesel is being supplied even though I understand a list of areas where the fuel is to be available is to be published by the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers.

If FAME free can't be found

The 'rule of thumb' for the pernicious bio stuff appears to be not to keep it in your tank for more than six months to avoid it clogging up pipes and filters. Diesel has of course always been subject to 'diesel bug' but never more so than if FAME free diesel can't be sourced and biodiesel has of necessity to be used. There is now a great deal of information on the British Marine Federation's own

website, and for those of you who may be left with questions this may be the source to find the answers—as much as they've been ascertained, so far!

Concerns

For those without access to a computer I will though mention a concern with regard to a possible addition by some suppliers of a red marker to road diesel that does contain up to 7% of biodiesel.

It might be best to be aware therefore that it isn't only our marine industry affected by the required reduction of sulphur in our fuel, it's our red diesel used in construction, horticultural and agricultural industry, too. I think the message here might just be to be careful where you source!

Compatibility issues

Biodiesel concerns have arisen not only with regard to compatibility issues with copper, brass, bronze tin and zinc but also with Elastomers such as Nitrile rubber, Neoprene, Chloroprene, Natural rubber, Hypalon, Styrene-Butadiene rubber plus Butadiene rubber. Also on the 'Not Recommended' list for biofuel are Polymers such as Polyethylene, Polypropylene, Polyurethane and Polyvinylchloride. Easy I think to appreciate why some suppliers might be loathe to serve biofuel, and why some boaters may well be reluctant to use it bringing with it as it does for boaters the expensive necessity for regular filter changes plus an added requirement to frequently check pipes for clogging, this apart from a necessity for tanks to be cleaned. Incidentally on the list of recommended metals for biofuel use are stainless steel, carbon steel or aluminum with Fluorocarbon, Nylon, Teflon and Viton for Elastomers, Carbon filled acetal for Polymers and with Fibreglass listed as 'others'.

ED. Having spoken to a couple of local suppliers it appears that they are finding the situation equally difficult and telling everybody (including farmers) to leave their fuel tanks empty until the machines are ready for use again. This is not really practical for the seasonal boater or resident boater who only uses Diesel for heating and charging batteries!

6. Alan Herd

The promised article from Alan has not materialised yet but he is a very busy man so we will have to be patient.

7. GCS Event Stand

The Notts & Lincs Boat Jumble at Newark Showground NG24 2NY on Sunday 13th February 10.00 - 3.00 Adults 3.50 Children free. This will be the first outing for the GCS event stand of 2011 with a revamped display. As always volunteers to help will be most welcome or just come along and say hello.

We don't usually run adverts but the Crick Boat Show is always excellent and not too far from the Grantham Canal.

I have been sent 50 fliers with booking details on the back. Drop me (editor) an email and we will discuss how we can get one or more to you or as they are A5 size I can email both sides on 1 sheet of A4. Presume that will be acceptable. There is a discount for advance tickets.

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British Waterways
www.britishwaterways.co.uk

Waterways World
www.waterwaysworld.com

Photos : Ian Wakefield unless credited otherwise

If you spot anything new or unusual on the Grantham, please contact the editor with photos if possible. Any questions and I will try to find answers.

The editor can be contacted at: ian.wakefield@granthamcanal.com