

Twenty-second Edition

GUIDE TO INLAND BOATING



Canal Boatbuilders
Association



www.thecba.org.uk



BUY WITH CONFIDENCE LOOK FOR THE LOGO

The Canal Boatbuilders Association (CBA) is a trade association, representing the inland waterways boatbuilding industry

All members of the association are involved with the building, maintenance or operation of boats, primarily those for use on canals and rivers. The association was formed in 1990 and is now a group association of the British Marine Federation (BMF).

Our friendly and knowledgeable members are committed to providing you the highest quality and best practice in boat building and associated services. All members sign up to an established Code of Practice, Health and Safety Guidelines and are required to work to up to date legislative requirements.

We have a dedicated committee, drawn from the membership, aimed at improving the service offered by, and for, our members. We also have representation on the Boat Safety Scheme Advisory and Technical Committees, along with British Standard Institute (BSI) Standards development committees.

We strive to promote the inland waterway industry to the consumer, encourage members to improve the quality of their products and to assist with sustainable business trading.

To find a member visit
www.thecba.org.uk



Boat ownership can be a daunting prospect, as it can seem like you're diving into the unknown - Where can I moor? Do I need a driving licence? What costs am I likely to face? - The list is almost endless!

Never fear, at the CBA (Canal Boatbuilders Association), being involved with boatbuilding and all that goes with it, we realise this and so have produced this little guide to assist. We're now in our 22nd edition and over the years have honed the guide to what you want to know. There are bits about:

- Boat styles – what's the difference between trad & semi-trad style?
- Rules & Regulations – what is the Boat Safety Scheme?
- Costs – how much is insurance likely to be?
- Cruising – where can I go?
- Living aboard – can I do this and how?
- Buying new or second-hand – what are my options?
- Fitting-out a boat yourself – what you need to know
- Buying from a CBA member – why this is important

Plus loads more ...

The CBA (Canal Boatbuilders Association) is an association of the British Marine Federation (BMF). All CBA members are therefore members of the BMF and adhere to a Code of Practice giving you some assurance that they are carrying out business in accordance with best practice and legal standards.

Linked to the guide is our useful website at www.thecba.org.uk, where you'll find details of all current members and what they can do for you. Indeed, we would like to thank CBA members for their contributions, including the many photographs, for this guide & website.

We're a cheerful lot and will be happy to talk about boats and boating. So give us, or our members, a call – we're happy to help.

Paul Smith,
Chairman
Canal Boatbuilders Association





Photo: Georgie Clarke Photography
Cover image: Robin Smithett

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BRITAIN'S WATERWAYS

There are now some 3,000 miles of connected waterway available to the cruising owner.

The waterway system is made up from a mix of broad canals, narrow canals and navigable rivers extending from Guildford deep in the south east to Skipton on the Yorkshire moors, and westward to Bath and Bristol. Our map clearly shows the extent of the system and an indication of the maximum craft beam for good measure.

Locks are, of course, used to raise or lower boats between levels – in effect to take boats ‘up and down the hills’. Since water is drained from a higher pound (the section between locks) and has to be replaced every time a lock is used, early canal engineers tried to remain on the same level for as long as possible.

In many places they were able to work around the contours of the land, not only building fewer locks (and saving money)

but also minimising the problems of water supply to the highest levels. For us the result is a delightful legacy of ‘contour’ canals, which connect major industrial centres, but wind through the rural countryside between.

As engineers became more skilled, the canals got straighter and faster. Locks were grouped into ‘flights’, and tunnels driven through hills.

NARROW CANALS

Early canal engineers mostly chose to build locks which were 7ft (2.13m) wide and would accept the typical 72ft (21.9m) working boat of the day.

The boats fitted snugly into the locks as you can see and soon became known as narrowboats, which is still the term we use today – even though the boats are now a couple of inches narrower. Mostly they were worked horse-drawn in the early days, and decorated in ways we now find traditional.

THE BROAD WATERWAYS

Where the landscape was more accommodating, or the engineers more ambitious, locks were sometimes built broader. Fourteen feet was a common width, so the locks could fit either one 'wide beam' boat ('beam' means width) or two narrowboats.

Though this was particularly common for navigations based on natural rivers, or those which joined them, there were 'canal motorways' too: most of the Grand Union Canal between London and Birmingham is built to the broad standard, and its engineers did not hesitate to work over (or through!) steep hills.



Grand Union Canal, Stoke Bruerne

THE SIZE OF YOUR BOAT

When choosing a boat, you need to consider the size of the locks you want to navigate through.

A modern narrowboat will have access to the whole system if it is no longer than 57ft 6in (17.62m), and not too high (to fit under low bridges). Many locks on the canal network are capable of taking a boat up to 72ft in length, but some locks are shorter, particularly in Yorkshire. Clever interior design can make a lovely cruising boat or home afloat within this compact space.

A wide beam boat can provide a home

afloat with spacious accommodation, but is restricted to the wider waterways. Consider one if you want to cruise only on the broad waterways, particularly the major rivers with their deeper water and wider locks, or you plan to cruise extensively on Continental waterways.

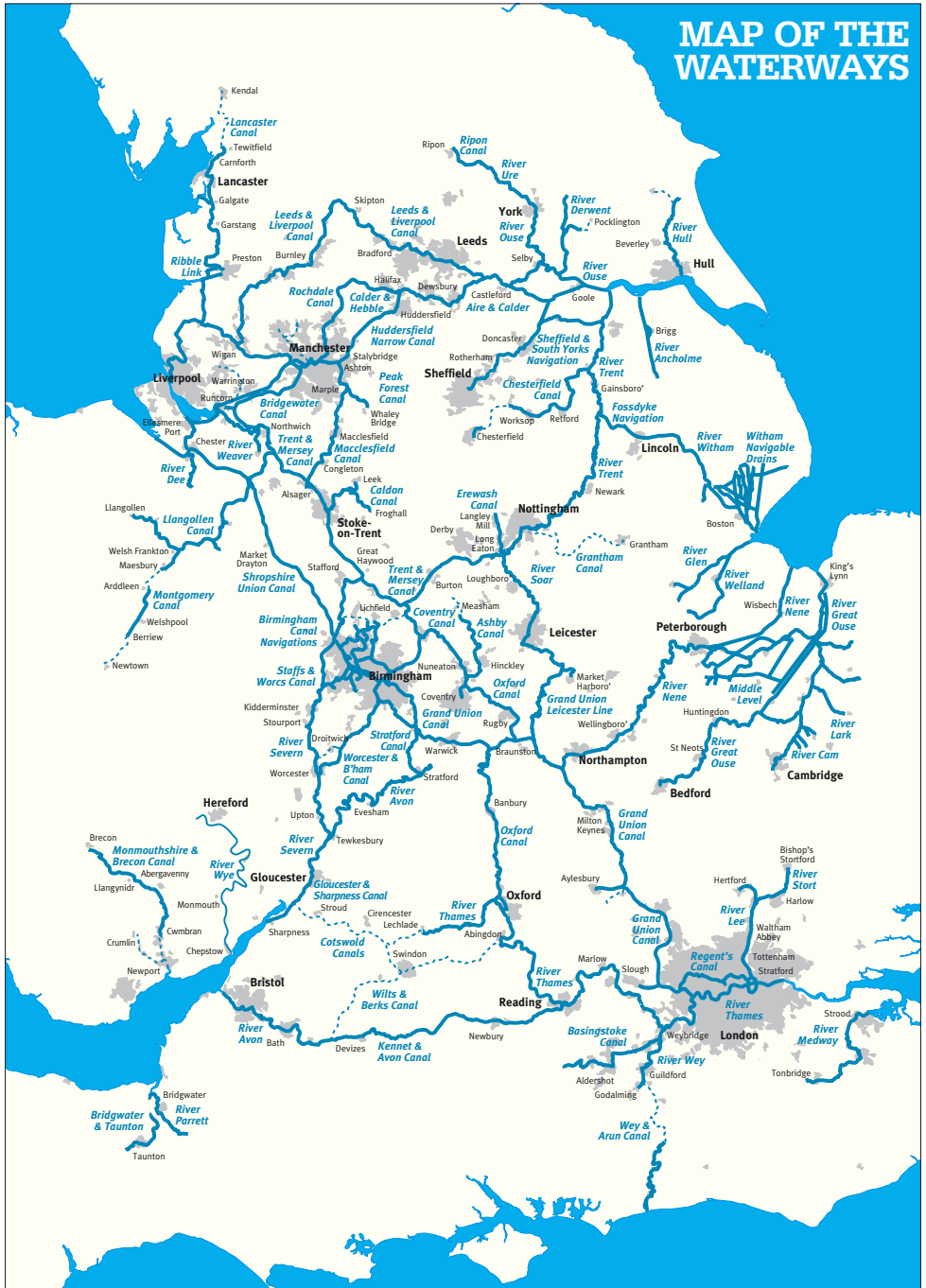
In the south, the best known waterways for wide-beam boats are the Grand Union Canal travelling north from London, the River Thames and the Kennet & Avon canal linking the Thames to the Severn. 12ft 6in beam (3.85m) is the maximum recommended for these more restricted wide beam canals, although wider is possible. Draught on these southern canals should be no more than 3ft. If your boat will have a wheelhouse, make sure it can be easily raised and lowered: you will have to travel with it lowered on some of these canals.

There is unfortunately, no wide beam link from south to north. You cannot get a wide beam boat from the Trent to the Thames, save by sea or transshipment. But when you're in the north, or Scotland or Ireland, the canals are usually larger and deeper; those in the North-East are still used commercially. The Leeds & Liverpool Canal is a famous and picturesque link from east to west.

CBA members build narrowboats in both traditional and modern styles, and a growing number also build wide beam boats. They provide a finished boat to a high standard, drawing on a lot of experience with owners up and down the system.

Most boats intended for the waterways are built in steel, or sometimes in aluminium or fibreglass. Several CBA members will provide you with a shell, often with an engine ready fitted – a 'sailaway' – so that you can fit out the interior to your own design and in your own time, or take it to a specialised fitter.

MAP OF THE WATERWAYS



Choosing your boat



WIDE BEAM WATERWAYS

This map shows the waterways of England and Wales and an indication of the maximum craft beam.

Three narrow canals prevent wide beam boats from navigating between Britain's major waterway systems:

A – Southern Stratford Canal: blocks passage between the Severn/Avon and the Grand Union

B – Grand Union Leicester Summit: blocks passage between the Trent/Soar and the Grand Union

C – Grand Union Northampton Arm: blocks passage between the Nene/ Ouse and the Grand Union

A few waterways (notably the upper Great Ouse and northern Shropshire Union) can be navigated in a boat slightly wider than a narrowboat. Bear in mind that the channel in the upper reaches of nominally wide canals may not be dredged well enough to allow two wide boats to pass.



SHORT LOCKS

This map shows the waterways of Yorkshire and the Pennines where boat length is limited by short locks. A 57ft 6in boat will be able to cruise almost anywhere; a 60ft boat can navigate with extreme care by positioning it diagonally in the locks of the Calder

& Hebble, and passing through locks backwards if necessary, but this is only recommended for the experienced boater.

A very small number of little-used navigations in East Anglia have shorter locks, as do some isolated waterways, but these are unlikely to be relevant.

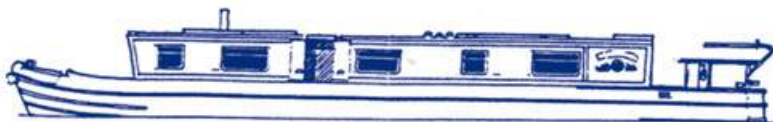
VARIOUS STYLES IN PROFILE



Trad-style with short aft deck that only gives room for one person normally. The engine room can be immediately ahead of the deck, as in this boat, or ahead of the aft cabin.



A semi-trad style, with open cockpit aft above the engine room.



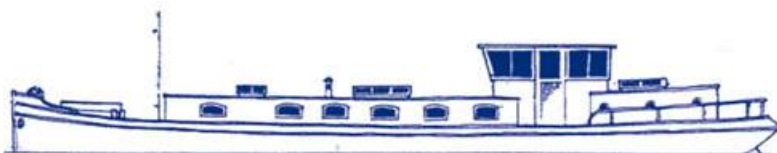
Cruiser-style, with a long aft deck, with rails around it, and the engine beneath. This style originated with hire boats but is still popular with private owners.



Tug-style. The long fore-deck is usually completely decked over, with steel plating grooved to simulate wood planking. The space underneath cannot be used for much storage.



Inspection-launch-style, with large saloon windows, and the roof extending over a long forward cockpit. It can have a variety of aft deck arrangements, and a second steering position forward.



Dutch-barge style. Here you have fully-enclosed wheelhouse aft, plus sometimes a cabin behind this, or an open deck. The wheelhouse dismantles to go under low bridges.

Drawings courtesy of Andy Burnett

NARROWBOAT STYLES

In modern canal boats we have the opportunity to reflect the best of the narrowboat tradition, drawing on the design and decoration of the original working boat, but bringing the whole completely up-to-date.

Designs have now settled down into three main styles: traditional, semi-traditional and cruiser. Let's start by looking at the outside of a narrowboat – the craft you will choose if you want to explore the entire network.

'Aft' and 'stern' both mean the back of the boat; 'fore', 'bow' and even 'stem' mean the front.

TRADITIONAL STYLE (SHORT AFT DECK)

The traditional stern looks most similar to that of the original working boats, hence its name. Here, the cabin is taken as far aft (back) as possible, as it was in the original – giving the opportunity for a 'real' boatman's cabin.

This leaves just a short rear deck. The helmsman steers the boat by standing safely in the hatchway of the aft cabin.

The minimum length of the rear deck will be about 3ft (1m). Increasing this to 3ft 6in (1.07m) or 4ft gives more room to manoeuvre, but realistically there is room for only one person at the helm whilst

the boat is underway. The rest of the crew disappears to the other end of the boat, and hand signals are needed at tea time! On the plus side the helmsman is well protected from the wind and rain, and may be warmed by a stove in the boatman's cabin by his feet.

The engine can be hidden away in the aft cabin, or on show in its own room: either immediately forward of the aft deck or forward of a boatman's cabin.

CRUISER STERN (PLENTY OF OPEN SPACE)

A cruiser stern is designed to create maximum space aft. Here, the aft deck is 8ft long (2.5m) or more, completely open, with the engine underneath the deck. Rails are usually fitted around the stern and sides for safety, and these can even be netted to keep children and pets on board.

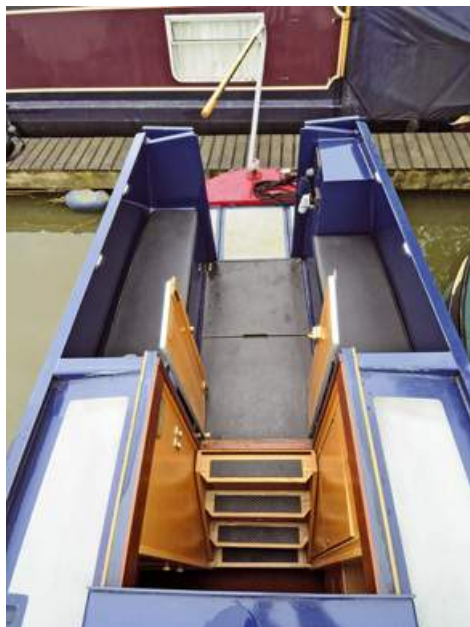
Seats can be fitted on top of the rails, or you can bring out folding chairs when you're moored. Drain channels around the floorboards help to reduce the rain which gets into the under-deck engine compartment.

SEMI-TRADITIONAL STERN (OPEN SPACE WITH A TRADITIONAL FEEL)

The semi-traditional design combines the look of a traditional stern with the space of a cruiser stern – by having sides but no roof.



Narrowbeam Dutch Barge. Photo courtesy of ABNB



Differing styles of stern: Semi trad style (left) and Trad style (above). Photos courtesy of ABNB

From a distance or from the side, the boat retains its traditional look; but the aft cabin has been moved forward and the cabin top cut away, giving room for several people. The sides carried back imitate the traditional aft cabin, and the engine will be under your feet. The space created has room for side benches with lockers underneath and stowage for mooring ropes and pins.

There is now space for the whole of the family to be together at the 'driver's end' and in bad weather they will be sheltered from the wind. A canvas cover is often fitted over the aft cockpit when the boat is not in use.

SEMI-CRUISER

This hybrid combines the space of a cruiser deck with some of the shelter provided by a semi-trad deck, by having the cabin sides extended to only the forward section of a long cruiser aft deck.

AND AT THE FRONT?

Though the main difference is at the stern, bow designs vary too.

A roll-up canopy can be rigged for evenings or wet weather and fastened to the cratch – the wooden structure which once supported the cargo covers. The canopy may incorporate flexible windows and so provide an extension to the cabin space in wet weather. Some builders make the cockpit 6ft (1.87m) long – enough to sleep visitors or children, and for al fresco eating.

'Tug-style' is a very traditional look with a long, open deck at the front. Sometimes the space underneath is used for storage accommodation or even a bed.

The shape of the bows varies greatly, and each builder has their trademark style. The Josher style is particularly popular, echoing the famous working boats of Fellows, Morton & Clayton: the name comes from Joshua Fellows. This has a more pointed 'nose' with a slight S-shaped sweep to the bows.

WIDE BEAM BOATS

Wide beam boats have grown in popularity in recent years as an alternative to Narrowboats. They certainly have more useful, usable space: the larger examples have an interior floor area akin to a medium-sized flat or small house.

They cannot go everywhere that a narrowboat can, but there are substantial stretches of broad waterway in this country which suit them – particularly the major rivers and some of the broader canals. They are also suited to the Continental waterways, and a craft designed to the right specification will be able to cross the Channel. There are fewer size restrictions on waterways in mainland Europe but If you plan to visit vessels which are over 20m long must meet The Technical Requirements for Inland Waterways Vessels (TRIWV) directive.

Similar to the RCD this directive is intended to harmonise all the EU countries regulations for inland waterways vessels over 20 metres long. Vessels that operate only on UK inland waterways will be exempt from the Directive, provided they comply with applicable UK technical and safety requirements. However, vessels that operate on the Community waterways of European Union Member States in mainland Europe will be subject to the technical requirements laid down in the Directive. To go to sea for any length of time, or to do coastal work, your boat



Inside a widebeam boat
Photo courtesy of ABNB



Inside a Narrowbeam Dutch barge
Photo courtesy of ABNB

should be built to RCD (Recreational Craft Directive) category C or even B. You should be extensively prepared for the trip, and steel boats spending any time in a sea environment should have a sea boat paint plan to avoid problems later.

Designs abound. Narrowboat-style wide boats, sometimes known simply as 'wide beams', have the utilitarian style of a narrowboat but greater floorspace. Replicas of traditional Continental styles, particularly Dutch barges, are popular and widely made in the UK; conversions of original craft exist, too. Plus there are motor yachts with a barge pedigree, Thames barges and many more. Several CBA members can offer new builds to various stages of completion from steelwork only, through sail-away stage, to fully fitted. They will be happy to discuss your ideas and give you more information.

If you are new to navigating these larger craft then we recommend that you should attend one of the several training courses which are available both here and on the Continent – particularly since you need an International Certificate of Competence (ICC) to navigate on Continental waterways. The RYA's dedicated training Department has more information.

FIT-OUT

The interior layout of the modern canal boat has settled down into tried and tested designs, immensely popular because they suit the typical lifestyle of canal boaters.

NARROWBOAT LAYOUT

In a narrowboat, the living area is long and narrow; so the interior accommodation tends to be divided into sections, one behind the other. Once, the layout was invariably (from bow to stern) saloon, then galley, bathroom, and bedroom. If anything, though, the reverse layout is now just as popular, particularly with semi-trad and cruiser-style boats.

These layouts have evolved thanks to much experience and feedback from owners. You may of course have your own ideas – but remember that these designs are popular for a reason!

WIDE BEAM LAYOUT

A wide beam boat has much more layout flexibility – but even then, some designs recur.



Photo courtesy of ABNB

Dutch barges often have wheelhouses, and these can either be near the stern – with all accommodation ahead of this – or towards the centre. If the latter, the galley, saloon, bathroom and (often) a fore-cabin will be ahead of the wheelhouse. There is a smaller cabin aft of the wheelhouse, usually a bedroom with en suite bathroom.

In a wide beam canal boat, though the layout can be exactly the same as the narrow beam equivalent, there is much more scope for variation. The design will often seek to avoid the ‘corridor effect’ common in narrowboats.

GALLEY

The galley is the boat's kitchen, commonly with a hob, grill and oven. These are normally run from LPG gas cylinders stored in a dedicated locker. If fitting these they must have flame supervision devices and they should be suitable for use on a boat.

Gas-free boats can also be found, with cooking appliances run by diesel or electric. Diesel appliances require a fuel supply, from the engine tank or a separate dedicated tank. They can be hobs, ovens or Aga-style ranges that also provide cabin heating. Electric hobs, grills & ovens need a substantial power supply and so a generator or inverter with a large battery bank may be needed.

Microwave ovens are also common, and can usually be run from the boat's batteries via an inverter.

There will be an electric fridge, usually run from the boat's batteries, and possibly a freezer. Gas fridges were once common, but they are now required to be ‘room-sealed’ (venting outside) and the only such model is no longer produced. Caravan fridges are not suitable for fitting in any craft due to their ventilation requirements.



You will also find kitchen work surfaces, with attractive cupboards and well planned storage areas. There is a real art to making the most of the space available – especially on a narrowboat.

SALOON

The saloon is the ‘day’ area, equivalent to your lounge. It is equipped with seating, occasional tables and chairs and cabinets for TV and radio. There will often be a room heater in one corner, set in a tiled surround.

Seating is sometimes built-in, or the space may be left open-plan so that the owner can put in loose furniture. Several companies now build furniture specifically for boats, often smaller in scale than at home but no less comfortable.

BATHROOM

The bathroom will include a washbasin, shower or small bath, and a toilet.

Showers are similar to those at home and can have curtains or an enclosure with a door. Smaller baths are useful for

narrowboats, but domestic baths can be fitted in the larger space in wide beam craft. Shower mixers can be the domestic type, or there are a number of simpler mixer valve units from which to choose.

For the toilet, the main distinction is between those which use a built-in holding tank, and portable units. A holding tank has to be pumped out at intervals from a deck fitting. Toilets for these are often close in appearance to domestic toilets. Some models also macerate and pump the waste into the tank.

Portable units, such as the Porta-Potti, have a removable waste tank which can be closed and carried like a suitcase to a disposal point. Cassette toilets have a permanently installed body and seat, but the waste tank withdraws via an access door. These are easier and cheaper to empty than built-in holding tanks, and many ‘live-aboard’ boaters prefer them:



Photo courtesy of ABNB

there is no need to move the boat to a pump-out station every few days. Spare cassettes kept on board ensure one need never get caught short!

BEDROOM

Boats may have up to 12 berths, and the owners will usually choose a double bed.

This can be placed lengthways or crossways. On a narrowboat, a crossways bed could stop access through the boat, so a lift-out or fold-up section is included to preserve access through the cabin. This does, of course, need making up each night.

The beds are every bit as good as at home with proper mattresses. Most bedrooms have wardrobes, dressing tables, mirrors, reading lights and somewhere for the TV and radio

HOT AND COLD WATER ON TAP

Every canal boat has hot and cold running water. Water storage tanks have sufficient capacity for a few days, and water fill-up points are widespread through the system.

Hot water can be produced in a number of ways. If your engine is water-cooled, then the waste heat produced when the engine is running can be used as a heat source. If you have a central heating boiler, this, too, can be used. The tank can also have an electric immersion heater, but this is usable only if the boat has an on-board generator or is connected to electricity 'on shore'.

The water is stored in a tank called a calorifier. Calorifiers can typically hold 10 to 15 gallons of piping hot water, and are foam-insulated to keep the contents hot for several hours. Larger units are often fitted in wide beam craft where more room is available.

INTERIOR DECORATION

Interior decoration is entirely a matter of personal choice. Most canal boat interiors feature natural wood surfaces, which may be varnished or lacquered.

The sides are sometimes carpeted to waist height, and floors are usually carpeted. However, laminate flooring, solid hardwood flooring or tiling are increasingly popular. Galleys and bathrooms will often use vinyl floor coverings.

speakers. Just as at home, larger boats even have en suite facilities.

Smaller cabins may have single or bunk berths. Living accommodation (bench-type sofas or dinettes) can sometimes be converted to a bed, giving extra flexibility for when guests stay over.

SEATING AND BEDDING

In the past the Narrowboat shape meant restricted seating and sleeping designs but now, even with traditional fixed seating in the saloon and a boatman's cabin there are a large range of foams to suit all. They can be shaped for comfort of sleeping and sitting.

Where a fixed bed is a preferred there are options of sprung, foam or memory foam mattresses all made to measure including zipped sprung for zipping together for cross beds giving extra space when not being used. It is always wise when having your bed constructed to consider your sprung mattress at the same time. Although made-to-measure are now widely available, the basic rules of the number of springs on the width and length should be considered by the mattress makers, and enough room must



be allowed to tuck in sheets. Made to measure bedding and headboards are also available.

For the boater who does not favour traditional fixed seating in the saloon there are now many styles of sofas and chairs made to measure. These can use all available space, allow for door access and fit under the unused gunwale space if required (if this is not being used for book cases or radiators). They are available for assembly once on board. They can also provide much needed storage in the base and are available to convert to beds if required. Swivel leather or fabric recliners are now available in smaller sizes than the regular domestic models.

When you have made your choice of seating the fun starts. You can choose from a large array of type and design of

fabrics which can be co-ordinated with curtains blinds and soft furnishings.

HEATING

Space heating is often provided by a traditional stove with a cast-iron body and glass-fronted door. These can burn wood or coal, and if fitted with a back boiler, can help to heat the water, too. Diesel-burning variants are now common.

Many boats will have central heating. Boilers are purpose made and either run on gas or diesel. Again, these provide both space heating (using panel or skirting-board radiators) and water heating. Diesel for heating is largely reduced duty but needs to be declared on purchase.

Heating using solid fuels is always attractive in winter time, but you should take great care that you have adequate

SOLID FUEL STOVES

Solid fuel stoves and cookers have been a feature in boats for over two hundred years, with installation practice based upon handed-down methods.

However, following several incidents, a British Standard (BS8511) has now been produced as to good practice for stove and cooker installation. As a boatowner, for new or replacement solid fuel appliances installed to the BS8511 recommendations the key items to look for are: a non-combustible hearth surface; heat protection of combustible material around the appliance and any uninsulated flue pipe (with an air gap behind the heat protection); and a twin-wall insulated chimney as a minimum through and above the roof.

Although not mandatory the use of CE marked appliances is encouraged. Evidence from incidents indicates that a large number are caused by user error and not the actual installation. So even with an appliance installed to BS8511, as a boatowner you should be confident with lighting and controlling the appliance, and follow good housekeeping practice including regular sweeping of the flue and keeping combustible materials away from the appliance when in use.

Although not mandated by BS8511, the fitting of optical smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are strongly encouraged.

ventilation. Check with your boat-builder and Boat Safety Scheme Examiner.

KEEPING WARM

Most canal boats are constructed from steel plate. In full sun, the surface of the steel can become very hot. Without insulation, this heat would transfer to the interior making life very uncomfortable indeed! Conversely, in winter the steel becomes icy cold and condensation will form.

Good insulation, coupled with good ventilation, cures both these problems. In summer, heat transmission to the interior is dramatically reduced, and in cold weather, heat loss reduced.

Popular forms of insulation include fire-resistant polystyrene, Rockwool-type mineral fibre, spray foam, and the blanket-like Thinsulate. You can discuss the options with your builder.



FITTING OUT YOURSELF

DIY building of boats remains popular. Many skilled owners will buy a sailaway boat and work from there. This includes the shell with the engine installed and holes cut for the windows – ready to ‘sail away’.

Several books are available if you choose to follow this path. You should study the Boat Safety Scheme’s Essential Guide: this contains details of all the checks your boat will be subjected to by a BSS examiner on completion, as well as guidance on the correct way to do things. You do not have to comply with the Recreational Craft Directive’s more stringent requirements

unless you intend to sell your boat within five years.

If in doubt, always ask. Fitting a boat is not the same as domestic DIY, and owners often fail to understand the special requirements, or purchase unsuitable equipment. When the time comes for their BSSC examination, they are faced with the expense and inconvenience of correcting errors, or even replacing equipment. Do visit your local chandlery to obtain parts, and seek assistance from surveyors and examiners, boatyards and chandlerys. Any extra cost is a small price to pay compared to correcting countless mistakes!



ELECTRICS

Today's canal boat has all the mod cons you expect at home – and these require a good electrical system to work.

On-board electrics are usually centred around a 12 or 24 volt system, supplied by a battery bank which is kept charged by the engine's alternator. The 12v system is perfectly adequate for basic equipment such as the boat's various pumps and lights, and for starting the engine.

But as vessels become more complex – requiring larger inverter systems – 24 volts should be used.

So how is a 240v system created in a cruising boat?

SHORE POWER

The simplest way is to connect the boat, by means of an shore connection cable, to a power socket in the marina. This provides the craft with a supply of exactly the quality you would get in your home.

The power you can draw is usually limited to 1 to 2kW, so it may not always be sufficient. It is very useful to run low-level heating to prevent frost damage over winter, and to run battery chargers to keep the 12 or 24 volt batteries topped up, but you need to be selective with appliances.

Leaving a boat permanently connected to shore power can lead to corrosion, so you should consider investing in an isolation transformer or a galvanic isolation device..

FREE-STANDING GENERATOR

Diesel engine'd 'gensets' may be fitted in addition to the main engine. Compact and normally built into a sound-deadening capsule, they are available in a wide range of outputs. They are powered by diesel, with no inherent safety dangers if they are correctly installed. (Petrol generators



Tidy, correct installation of wiring is important.
Photo: Narrowboat Surveys

should be avoided unless you are able to make very special storage arrangements – not normally possible on a narrowboat.)

These give complete independence; and if the set is large enough, it will run any domestic appliance. Their disadvantages are high cost and mechanical complexity. Although internal noise is very low, don't forget there is an outside exhaust which your neighbours will hear!

ENGINE-DRIVEN GENERATORS

These machines bolt onto the side of the engine and are belt-driven.

There are two types. The simplest is a 240v alternator, directly belt-driven off the engine. To use, you must set the engine speed exactly right to make the correct voltage and frequency – so they are not

suitable for use on the move. These types are simple, with little to go wrong.

The more complex types use an electronic box which correctly sets the voltage and frequency, irrespective of how fast the engine is spinning. These can therefore be used whilst underway, but are many times more expensive than the former, and costly to repair if they go faulty.

Anything over 3kW is likely to power all domestic appliances. It is vitally important to have properly engineered drive systems. Many engine builders now offer these as optional pre-installed fitments.

INVERTERS

Inverters draw power from a 12 or 24 volt battery, and 'invert' it into 240v mains electricity. Older units produced a square wave, giving a crude approximation of the mains current – adequate for

powering the simplest devices. The next generation machine produced a better waveform, often called a 'modified sine wave': though much better, these can produce unwanted results such as lines on a TV screen.

The latest units generate a virtually pure sine wave, and these are now the most popular. The digital controls on many modern appliances simply will not work without a pure sine wave supply.

You can use an inverter day or night, without disturbing anyone else. But they do of course drain the batteries, at a rate proportional to the size of load. Small loads such as a TV or a hi-fi are not a problem, but hairdryers, microwaves and so on draw a lot of power. Be sure not to leave TVs on stand by as this will continue to drain the batteries.

A washing machine has a heavy power draw for a long time. If run off a large

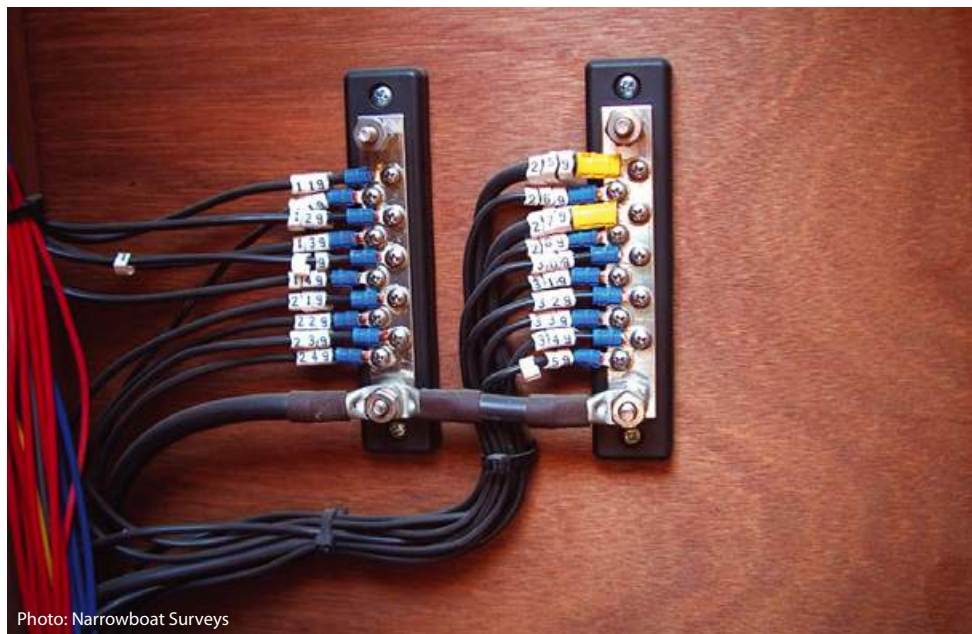


Photo: Narrowboat Surveys

inverter, it could deplete the battery. So do the washing whilst underway, and the engine alternator will provide much of the power needed by the inverter, reducing the demand on the battery. Alternatively, you could install a generator to run the washing machine. 'Combi' inverters have built-in battery chargers, which work if you hook up to shore or an on-board generator.

Big inverter systems usually need at least four batteries to be successful. Modern inverters are generally reliable, but can be expensive to repair if they do go wrong. You may need a 'mains manager' system to ensure that different supplies cannot conflict: your builder will advise. There are codes of practice for 12v and 240v marine installations, so it is better to deal with suppliers who are familiar with them and the methods of combining the different systems.



Electrical panels
Photo: ABNB



Narrowboats may have as few as two batteries – or as many as seen here!
Photo: Mark Langley

CONTRACTS

You wouldn't buy a house without making sure all the papers were in order. Fortunately there's less paperwork for a boat, but it's just as important to get the right contract. Your boat will probably be the second most expensive purchase of your life, and a good contract will protect you.

Standard contracts are produced by the British Marine Federation, to which the Canal Boatbuilders Association is affiliated.

◆ Buying a custom-built boat

If you are having a new boat built, use the *BMF Agreement for the construction of a new boat for a fixed price*.

◆ Buying a stock boat

If you are buying a new or second-hand boat from stock, use the *BMF Agreement for the*

sale of an existing new or second-hand stock boat.

◆ Buying second-hand

If you are buying a second-hand vessel through a broker, they may have their own standard Agreement or use of the *BMF Agreement for the sale and purchase of a second-hand vessel subject to survey and sea trial*. There is also the *Agreement for the unconditional sale of a second-hand vessel* – that is, without survey or trial. But it is almost always advisable to have an independent survey before buying a second-hand boat. The CBA includes surveyor members, with a list found on our website at www.thecba.org.uk.

Check with BMF Boat Retailers and Brokers Association. They produce advice on what else to look for in their guide to buying a second-hand boat.



Photo courtesy of ABNB



Once you have bought your boat, the BMF through its Yacht Harbour Association (TYHA) provides a standard Licence Agreement for Berthing and Mooring Ashore. The standard Terms of Business for the industry are used for services such as repairs, and other business transactions, but you should use a separate contract when buying a boat. (Other specialist contracts exist, such as a Listing Agreement for selling a boat through a brokerage.)

PAYING IN STAGES

Where the contract is between you and the builder, it is normal to pay the builder in stages, in order to fund the build of the boat.

Under the standard Construction Agreement, the ownership of the boat, and all materials and equipment

purchased specifically for its construction, become the customer's property upon payment of the first stage payment.

However, the builder will be entitled to have a claim over the boat, and be entitled to retain possession of the boat and any materials or equipment purchased for the construction, until they have received full payment of all the sums due to them under the agreement.

READING THE CONTRACT

You are always advised to read any contracts and agreements thoroughly before signing up to anything. Make particularly sure that you are happy with the boat specification that will be attached to the contract, and ensure that any variations to the original specification



Photo courtesy of ABNB

are recorded *in writing* and signed by yourselves and the builder. If you are concerned about any contract issues you should check with your solicitor.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Should you get into a contract dispute with a BMF member, the Federation recommends that the parties engage in some form of alternative dispute resolution before resorting to often costly and time-consuming litigation. The Academy of Experts runs a mediation scheme especially for BMF members to

deal with marine disputes; the mediators are experts in the marine field.

For further information, visit www.britishmarine.co.uk under Legal & Finance, select Dispute Resolution Scheme or call 01784 473377.

All the standard contracts are available to BMF members free of charge. For further details, ask your boat builder. You can contact the BMF directly at Marine House, Thorpe Lea Road, Egham, Surrey TW20 8BF (01784 473377; www.britishmarine.co.uk).

THE REGULATIONS

An inland boat may not need to be 'seaworthy', but it still needs to be sound, safe and reliable.

There are two types of regulations to assist. The Design and Construction Standards which includes The Recreational Craft Directive (RCD) and The Technical Requirements for Inland Waterways Vessels (TRI WV), both European Union sets of rules that set out design and construction requirements that apply when your boat is first built. The second is the Boat Safety Scheme which helps minimise the risk from fire, explosion, pollution and CO poisoning.

The Recreational Craft Directive (RCD) applies to vessels between 2.5m and 24m length, whether built by a professional boatbuilder or an amateur. It requires the boat to meet certain essential requirements – covering such things as Hull strength and vessel stability, and the installation of gas and electrical systems, along with 25 other items.

For the first four years of the life of the

boat, you can obtain a waterways licence by presenting a full RCD 'Declaration of Conformity' which has to be provided with all new vessels when first sold. After that, you will need a BSS Certificate.

BUYING A NEW COMPLETED BOAT

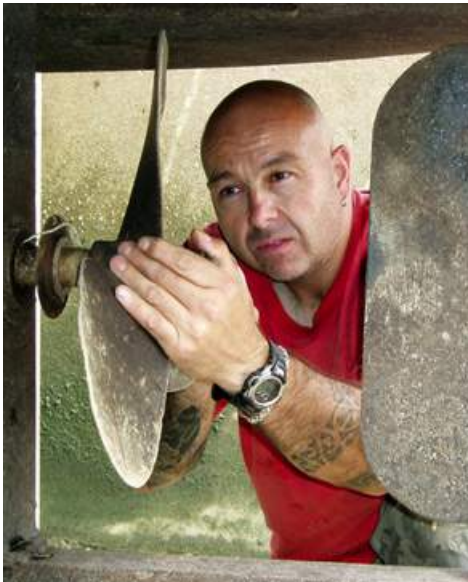
For boats bought complete, and already fitted out, the situation is straightforward. The boatbuilder will issue a Declaration of Conformity, will provide an adequate Owner's Manual, and will mark the hull permanently with a Craft Identification Number (CIN). The builder's plate will carry the 'CE' mark. Professional boatbuilders all have a three-letter Manufacturer's Identity Code. This code identifies the builder on every boat he builds, and is part of a group of numbers and letters that together make up a CIN. Care must be taken that your Certificate has a CIN number. Since 2005, engines also have to be certified (by the manufacturer) to comply with sound and emissions regulations, unless they are exempt as historic.

FITTING OUT YOURSELF

Alternatively, you might begin with a shell to which an engine has already been fitted (a 'sailaway'). Now you become the builder under the terms of the RCD, and you take responsibility for completing the boat to RCD standards.

First of all, ensure that the shell builder, or the supplier of a 'sailaway', provides you with an Annex 3a Declaration of Conformity, saying that the hull and any other work he does – perhaps an engine installation – complies with the essential safety requirements of the RCD up to that stage. This will usually suffice for one year's licence while you complete the work.

Under the requirements of the RCD, you



are able to 'self-certify' your work, boats for inland use are classified as for use in RCD category D waters and do not need to be inspected by an official body. When the vessel is completed you will have to sign the Declaration of Conformity stating that the vessel meets the Essential Requirements of the RCD which includes the provision of a builder's plate, Craft Identification Number (CIN) with a valid MIC (Manufacturers Identity Code) a Declaration of Conformity, a Technical Manual and an Owner's Manual. You will then be considered the manufacturer of the vessel.

Alternatively you may decide to have each stage overseen by a specialist, and there are CBA member companies which will prepare the Owner's Manual for you.

A third option is to have the finished vessel inspected by a Notified Body who will ensure the vessel meets the RCD standards and provide the CIN number, this process is called the Post Construction Assessment (PCA).

A DIY boat is defined as being a craft built for own use by the user and if you intend to keep the boat for more than five years from first use; then you need not comply with the RCD however remember that you are still going to need a BSS Certificate in order to obtain a Waterways Licence – and since the standards are similar, it makes good sense to work to the RCD in the first place.

There are a number of exemptions from the RCD, be sure to check that you are within the scope.

THE BOAT SAFETY SCHEME (BSS)

After four years, your boat will need to be inspected for a BSS Certificate before a licence is issued – and then every four years after that.

The Boat Safety Scheme grew out of

the need to minimise the risk of fire and explosions aboard boats, and is now required by most navigation authorities.

In one sense you can think of the scheme as an MoT for boats, but its scope is wider because it must include all the gas and electrical installations, engine and fuel lines, fire safety equipment and so forth.

The BSS website, www.boatsafetyscheme.org, carries all the relevant details, check lists and downloadable chapters of the BSS Guide. When it comes to the time for an examination, finding an examiner is the first step. Check the CBA website, the BSS website, the Boat Safety and navigation authority offices, or adverts in waterway magazines. Your BSS examination can take place up to two months before the previous certificate expires, so don't leave it until the last moment.

You may arrange for the examiner to return and extend the certificate to cover the other completed work, and you may also be able to arrange for the first fee to cover subsequent visits.

MORE INFORMATION

Boat Safety Scheme

First Floor North

Station House

500 Elder Gate

Milton Keynes

MK9 1BB

Tel: 0333 202 1000

www.boatsafetyscheme.org

Useful documents are freely available through the website of the British Marine Federation at www.britishmarine.co.uk. Follow the link to Publications, and select Technical.

THE COST OF BOATING

How much does boating cost? It's a difficult question to answer, given the enormous variety of boats and boaters and the many types of waterways, moorings and more. Here, we try to put some flesh on the bones.

LICENCE

Most canals and rivers in the UK are managed by either Canal & River Trust or the Environment Agency. A 12-month CRT Licence for its canals & rivers is around £800 for a 50ft narrowboat, and for just its rivers around £475. A Gold Licence, for all CRT and EA canals and rivers, is around £1,100 per annum for a 50ft narrowboat. You can find more licence information at www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/boating/licensing.

But what if you want to go further? For a 50ft narrowboat normally moored on CRT waters, a visitor licence might cost you around £60 for seven days on the River Thames, or £40 for a week on the Basingstoke Canal. A week on the Bridgewater Canal is free, because a reciprocal arrangement exists.

BSS CERTIFICATE

After their first four years, boats need to be tested for safety by qualified examiners every four years. The test points are identical for all boats, irrespective of size or type, though there'll be less for the examiner to look at in a gas-free boat.

The safety examination is a very black and white affair and so quite easy to budget for. Although the cost of the examination is not fixed it could cost anywhere between £100 and £200 with cost varying by region and examiner.

Most fail points can be remedied with minimal financial cost and a couple of man hours, although non-compliant gas cookers are sometimes more easily replaced than repaired.

Some examiners may make an additional charge if a second visit is required following a fail, particularly if they have any distance to travel.

INSURANCE

Like all insurance, the price is dependent on risk and the amount of cover required. Rod Daniel of Craftinsure sheds a little light on the



Photo courtesy of ABNB

dark art of boat insurance: “Value and age of the boat are key premium factors rather than the length or beam width. Other factors to consider include where the boat is based, and any additional cover you might require for boat contents. If you live aboard, you can expect to pay more.”

Avoiding tidal waterways and opting for a higher excess can reduce your insurance costs. Some insurers may ask for a condition survey if your boat is over 20 years old.

We found £190 to be a typical quote for a 57ft Narrowboat, built in 1996 and worth £50,000. A new wide beam boat, 60ft by 12ft and worth £130,000, was quoted at £500. So you can see that the value and age of the boat really do make a difference to the premium.

Third party only insurance which is the minimum cover required by most navigation authorities and marinas is much cheaper and can cost from as little as £50.

MOORINGS

After buying the boat itself, moorings are the most variable cost you'll come up against. Mooring costs are dependent on location, facilities, the size of your boat, and an ever fluctuating market. Most marinas will charge different fees if moored alone than abreast to another boat, and some differentiate between residential, frequent cruising, and infrequent usage.

Let's look at some examples. A private boat club on the northern Leeds & Liverpool Canal charges £700 per year for a 50ft Narrowboat, keeping costs low by breasting boats up next to each other, and harnessing members' enthusiasm to keep the site in good order.

A 40ft offside mooring on the southern Grand Union cost £1,300 at auction – but with no facilities, and strictly restricted to leisure use. By contrast, a residential



Heating and cooking range.
Photo courtesy of ABNB

mooring at a nearby marina was priced at £5,400 per year, with all facilities and good security. A marina mooring on the lovely River Wey, on the other side of London, is priced similarly at just under £5,000 for a full length boat – but there are no residential moorings on this river. And if you want to moor in central London, you might be paying as much as £10,000 every year for a good quality residential mooring on the Regents Canal or Paddington Arm.

UTILITIES

Utility costs vary greatly with usage. A live aboard boater will obviously spend more than a weekend-and-holidays cruiser.

Shore hook up mains supply costs for electricity can cost more than domestic house charges, as most marinas are classed as commercial customers. Electric can cost up to 15 pence per unit from a marina, but it is worth noting that as marinas are not regulated energy suppliers they cannot charge a premium to their customers and have to sell it on at the price they pay.



A solid fuel stove brings warmth to any boat.
Photo courtesy of ABNB

Gas bottles come in several sizes. Larger ones offering better value, but most boat gas lockers seem to accommodate 13kg canisters, which at the time of publication were an average of £26 each. Gas usage depends on appliances fitted and could be as much as one bottle a week.

Diesel fuel for engine propulsion, battery charging and heating is charged at different rates depending on its intended use. At the time of publication the average cost of diesel fuel for propulsion is £1.20 per litre and fuel used for heating or power generation costing an average of 90 pence per litre.

HEATING

It is recommended that the British Code of Practice BS 8511 should be consulted before installing a Solid Fuel Stove. Most boats use a multi-fuel stove for heat. The debate rages continually over which fuel is best, and boaters are usually partisan and eager to compare costs and performance. Some boats make the most of the heat produced by their stove to provide hot water and to

heat radiators via a back-burner system – an efficient way to get ‘free’ hot water during winter time.

Diesel-fuelled heaters are another option. There are several types to choose from, but running costs depend on whether you have a separate heating tank, or feed it from the main engine tank and ‘claim the tax back’ when buying diesel. Once installed, most diesel stoves have very low maintenance costs, but some types of diesel-fuelled heaters will require regular servicing. A standard service, carried out at least once every two years, will cost around £200.

FUEL

Diesel consumption is tricky to monitor, as usage and prices vary so widely. Running your engine to charge the batteries will drink fuel, too.

Although many boaters keep a log of the fuel they purchased, few keep records of engine running hours. Our panel quoted figures from 100 to over 200 litres a year, and continuous cruisers might rack up many more.

PUMP-OUTS

Pump out costs vary between £10 and £20 a time and the frequency of this depends on how much usage you toilet gets. A live aboard boater could typically need a pump-out every 2 weeks and a holiday boater only twice a year.

MAINTENANCE

How long is a piece of string? Maintaining one's boat is a major expenditure, and not only is the age and condition of your boat a factor, but the prices charged by companies providing services can differ hugely too.

Some maintenance issues creep up slowly, while breakdowns can come from

nowhere and require immediate attention. Although it is difficult to know what's around the corner, there are some constants to bear in mind when budgeting for boat maintenance: replacement batteries, water pumps and stern gland packing. Leisure batteries can cost anything from £70 each (and your boat will have several), and a new water pump will set you back around £100.

Engine servicing is usually carried out yearly to avoid breakdown expenses later. A basic service will cost around £150, a more thorough one over £250. It may be worth learning to service your engine yourself, not only to save on labour costs but also to nurture your relationship with your boat.

Hull blacking is a less frequent maintenance cost that most boaters tackle every two years and will mean getting the boat out of the water (with a crane or dry dock) before preparation and re-blacking. While the boat is out of the water, it is advisable to check sacrificial anodes and replace them if necessary. Prices range from £6 to £12 per foot with some yards charging for getting the boat out of the water on top of this, so worth shopping around.

Boating breakdown cover costs from £75 to £200 per year and is usually a sensible precaution, particularly for those new to boating.

GRAND TOTAL

How long was that piece of string again? Clearly, there is no single answer to the question "how much does it cost?" We can see, though, that running costs in excess of £4,000 are not unusual for a typical 50ft narrowboat. Occasional expenses such as a repaint or major overhaul will add more. Yet boaters are a prudent, resourceful and frugal bunch, and though boating is rarely cheap, we think it's worth it.

WATERWAY LICENCES

Almost all waterways are maintained by a waterway authority – and their work needs to be paid for. So you need a waterway licence before navigating on their waters, whether you are visiting briefly, cruising for weeks, or planning to live aboard.

The two principal waterway authorities are Canal & River Trust (CRT), which cares for about 80% of the canal system and several rivers; and the Environment Agency (EA), which looks after the non-tidal Thames, the Anglian waterways, and the Medway.

Just as you can't buy road tax without insurance or an MoT, you will need insurance, a BSS Certificate or RCD, and (on the CRT network) a home mooring (or declare as a continuous cruiser) before you can obtain a licence.

THE CANAL & RIVER TRUST

CRT runs most of the country's canals, and rivers including the Severn, Trent, Yorkshire Ouse, Lee and Stort. It offers two main types of licence: 'canals and rivers' and 'river-only'. The longer your boat, the more the licence costs.

Application forms for various CRT boat licences may be obtained from the CRT website canalrivertrust.org.uk/boating/licensing/application-forms-fees-and-useful-downloads.

You can also renew your licence online through the CRT website at canalrivertrust.org.uk, which provides lots of valuable information for new boaters. Application forms are also available at any CRT regional or local waterway office, from some lock-keepers, and from a local agent such as a marina or boat club.

All licences are processed centrally. The form will tell you whether an insurance certificate, BSS Certificate or RCD

Declaration of Conformity needs to be included. Customer Services at CRT will deal with any questions you may have.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The EA runs the non-tidal Thames, Medway, and East Anglian rivers. Each of these three regions has its own licensing (or 'registration'). On the Thames, for example, your boat's width and length are taken into account when calculating a price, whereas in East Anglia, only length matters. Visitors from one EA waterway are entitled to a short 'free stay' on the others, though.

The non-tidal Thames is the river from Lechlade, Oxfordshire, to Teddington Lock. A comprehensive website at www.visitthames.co.uk has full details of licensing. You can call the Reading headquarters on 0118 953 5650, or the Thames info line on 0845 988 1188. (BMF Thames Valley also publishes a guide to services on the river, available from 01784 473377 or www.britishmarine.co.uk/thamesvalley.)

The Anglian region administers the popular rivers Nene and Great Ouse, plus a host of smaller ones: the Ancholme, Glen, Stour, Welland, Lark, Wissey, and part of the Cam.

The River Medway in Kent is navigable and non-tidal from Allington Lock up to the Leigh Barrier in Tonbridge, though only connected to the main waterway system by a tricky coastal passage. Short-term licences are available from the offices at Allington and Yalding locks, and from a number of marinas.

For information on all of these, including downloadable forms, maps and navigation guides, see the EA website at www.environment-agency.gov.uk/navigation.

Telephone enquiries now go through a central office at 08708 506506, which

will answer your questions or pass you on to their regional offices to deal with local queries.

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK BROADS

This intricate system of rivers and broads, popular with pleasure-boaters for over a century, is run by the Broads Authority. Both navigation authority and national park, the BA issues licences, regulates boating and preserves the beauty of this special place. Licence details are available on 01603 610734 or from www.broads-authority.gov.uk.

OTHER WATERWAYS

Below Teddington Lock, the River Thames is administered by the Port of London Authority.

The PLA makes no charge and does not issue licences, but you should study its Recreational Users' Guide; the river can be strongly tidal and you will encounter commercial traffic. (01474 562200, www.pla.co.uk)

The River Avon in Warwickshire is run by the independent Avon Navigation Trust (01386 552517, www.shakespearesavon.co.uk) – not to be confused with the Bristol Avon, which is run by CRT.

The River Wey, which leaves the Thames at Weybridge, is run by the National Trust. Short-term licences are available at the first lock. There are no residential moorings (01483 561389). The Basingstoke Canal branches off the Wey, and is also run independently (01252 370073, www.basingstoke-canal.co.uk).

VISITING WATERWAYS

You will usually buy an annual licence for the waterway where your boat is moored – but what if you want to visit others?

All the navigation authorities offer short-

term licences. On the Thames you can buy one at the first lock you come to; on other waterways, where the locks are not staffed, you should apply by post or buy at a marina.

For the dedicated explorer, you can buy a Gold Licence. This covers both CRT and all EA waters, though it is more expensive than either's annual licence. It is administered by CRT (0303 040 4040, www.canalrivertrust.org.uk).

MOORINGS

Finding a mooring is an essential part of becoming a boat-owner – but one which is often overlooked. After all, as soon as your boat is complete, you will need somewhere to keep it.

The soaring popularity of inland boating in recent years led to moorings shortages in popular areas. Fortunately, a raft of new marinas have recently opened, and more

are under construction. Even so, don't leave it until the last moment to sort your mooring; get on a waiting list as soon as you can.

MARINA MOORINGS

Marina moorings are the most convenient, with high levels of service and access to the boat by way of a pontoon. They will have a convenient water supply and many also have 240v electricity hook-ups on the pontoons. Fuel will usually be available on site, and there may be workshop facilities, slipways, pump-out, and convenient secure car parking. They are also likely to have a high level of security with staff and perhaps residential boaters on site, even during the winter months.

There are a large number of marinas. Most on the inland waterways are run commercially by independent companies, but there are some group operators

GOLD ANCHOR AWARD SCHEME, categorising marinas to help boat owners find a berth which suits their needs.

The Gold Anchor Award Scheme was first established by The Yacht Harbour Association in 1994 when marina managers wanted an industry standard against which they could be measured. Since then the scheme has grown and become a means of differentiating marinas which operate to different standards. Today over 100 British Marinas participate and the scheme is operating in countries all over the world.

Marinas and Yacht Clubs are rated under a set of common quality standards agreed by The Yacht Harbour Association. The common standards make types of marina easy to understand and give you confidence that establishments can meet the standards you require.

Ratings are issued as follows:

Gold Anchor rating What this standard means

- 1** Basic marina which is fit for purpose
- 2** A courteous service which provides well maintained, facilities which are fit for purpose
- 3** Friendly welcome and a good standard of facilities with an awareness of environmental good practice
- 4** Attentive, more personalised service with excellent facilities operated to a high standard of compliance. Environmental code of practice in place
- 5** Exceptionally high standards in customer services, technical compliance with luxurious facilities

Participating marinas and a live list of vacant berths can be found at www.which-marina.com.

including CRT's own subsidiary BWML. Mooring fees vary with the level of service, with the length of your boat, and by location. They are generally more expensive in the south-east.

Most berths are let on short-term agreements, usually payable quarterly and renewable annually, although in a few cases leasehold arrangements may be in place.

Generally, you will need a waterways licence even when your boat is moored up in the marina, though this may not be the case on some non-CRT rivers, and in a very small number of marinas on CRT waters.

'LINEAR' MOORINGS

You can also choose a simpler bankside, or 'linear', mooring on suitable lengths of the waterway. On the canals these are often along the towpath, or the opposite bank (the 'offside') if the authority owns it. On rivers like the Thames, you will find them near locks. Farmers and other waterside landowners also rent out their banks for moorings – and if you're especially lucky you might have space at the end of your garden!

These moorings are less expensive but will have fewer facilities, perhaps one shared water point, and waste disposal facilities nearby. They are often in fairly rural settings and have a quiet charm of their own. The level of security is obviously lower, though some offside moorings are protected by a locked gate.

Most moorings have a fixed price, but CRT's moorings are now auctioned online in an eBay-like system. You can see vacancies at www.crtmoorings.com or call 0303 0404 040.

Boat clubs have moorings for their

members, particularly on the rivers and northern canals. You can find out more from the Association of Waterway Cruising Clubs (www.awcc.org.uk).

WHERE TO FIND A MOORING

First, talk to your boatbuilder. Some operate their own moorings, and they may well know about other local mooring opportunities.

You can also contact the authority on whose waters you intend to moor. Their websites list many of the moorings available (www.canalrivertrust.org.uk for the canals and CRT-run rivers, www.visitthames.co.uk for the Thames), and advice is available from their head offices by phone.

The Yacht Harbour Association publishes a free quarterly marina magazine 'Fore & Aft' which can be downloaded from their website www.tyha.co.uk. Their website at www.which-marina.com lists availability of berths.

The waterway magazines carry extensive advertising from marinas with vacancies, plus regular updates. You can of course also make contact directly by visiting a major boat show.

TRANSFERRING A MOORING

Obtaining a new marina mooring is no problem if unoccupied berths are available. But if you are buying an existing boat on a mooring, ensure that the owner has the right to transfer that mooring to you. Not all berths are transferred automatically to the new owner. It is also wise to check with the moorings operator that the present owner has paid his mooring fees, service charges, and any council tax up to date. You will also usually have to pay a transfer fee, from 2% to 10% of the value.

Linear moorings operated by Canal & River Trust are not transferable. Those managed by other waterway authorities may be, again on payment of a fee.

INSURANCE AND COUNCIL TAX

Insurance for a residential boat is likely to be a little more expensive than that for a boat used for cruising only a few times a year. You will need to look carefully at fire and contents insurance, since this boat is now your permanent home. Don't be tempted to gloss over your residential use: explain the circumstances to your insurer, so that your insurance is not invalidated in the event of an accident.

If you have a permanent residential mooring, you will be responsible for paying Council Tax in some form, which may vary from one local authority to another. There is more information in the Residential Boat Owners' Association's Council Tax Notes.

You will also need to budget for local and domestic services at your mooring, including, for example, mail delivery. Some services, such as a bank account, can be particularly difficult to arrange for continuous cruisers without a home address.

The Residential Boat Owners' Association is a mine of information on these issues, and publishes a comprehensive booklet, *Living Afloat*. Copies are available from RBOA at their website www.rboa.org.uk.

LIVING AFLOAT

Living on a boat is a popular way to experience the waterways.

But you should not treat it just as cheap housing. The waterways have their own character and you are likely to be disappointed if you're just looking for a cheap alternative to a flat. A narrowboat is much smaller than the house you're used to; and keeping warm in winter, emptying the toilet on rainy nights, and dealing with 12v electrics all have their own challenges.

STAYING IN ONE PLACE

Residential boaters may decide to live in one spot on a permanent residential mooring, building up a lifestyle amongst the local waterway community.

But only a minority of moorings is available for residential use, and obtaining one of these will require a good deal of research. Make sure you find a mooring first: do not buy a boat and expect to find a residential mooring in your chosen town. Demand is especially high in London, the south-east, Bath and Bristol.

Once you have identified an available mooring, you should check that the mooring is in fact a recognised residential mooring – even if it's previously been used for residential purposes. A simple question to





Photo: Harry Arnold/
Waterway Images

ask the previous occupant is “Are you paying Council Tax?” Talk to the mooring operator, whether it is a private marina or Canal & River Trust (0303 040 4040).

Don't forget that your boat still needs to have a BSS Certificate (or RCD Declaration of Conformity), third party insurance and licence. (CRT has special licences for houseboats which are not capable of moving.)

MOVING AROUND THE SYSTEM

What if you want to take fully to the waterway lifestyle, always cruising from one village to the next? In that case, you need not arrange a permanent mooring. Instead, you can declare to CRT that you are ‘continuously cruising’. This is the one exception to the need for a mooring before a licence is issued.

However, the guidelines for this are strict. CRT say that any such boat must genuinely be used for navigation throughout the period of the licence of at least 15 to 20 miles, and must not stay in the same place

for more than 14 days. It is the responsibility of the boater to satisfy CRT that the requirements are met.

Some owners negotiate a permanent residential mooring in a marina for the cold winter months, and cruise extensively during the summer. Most commercial operators are flexible in negotiating fees for a mooring of this kind. Residential boaters may sometimes find a permanent berth at a marina when space is available, because they add to the general sense of security of the marina during the off season, but this will bring duties with it.

CRT also turns some towpath visitor moorings over to ‘winter moorings’ for these boaters: your local CRT office can advise.

Continuous cruising is not an alternative to finding a permanent mooring, but a lifestyle choice in itself. It's unlikely to be an option if you are tied to a full-time job in one place, or if you have children who need to travel to school. ‘Towpath shuffling’ is increasingly being targeted by CRT and is greatly resented by most boaters.



MOORINGS IN LONDON

With 'bricks and mortar' prices so high in London, it is not surprising that the demand for residential moorings is sky-high. Most such moorings are on the canals and Docklands, managed by Canal & River Trust.

There is no waiting list for CRT moorings in London; they may be obtained only by auction. Guide prices are published on the CRT website. There is generally no right of transfer to a new owner, so don't believe an advert that claims there is.

In commercial marinas, though, moorings may be transferable for a fee when they become available. CRT's BWML subsidiary operates marinas at Limehouse Basin and Poplar Dock in Docklands, and Packet Boat Marina in west London.

There are some residential moorings on the Thames, but these are few in number because the river is tidal. The Port of London Authority administers the Thames tideway, and provides an excellent free *Recreational Users' Guide* which lists marinas and launching sites.

Upstream of Teddington, the Thames is administered by the Environment Agency. It has no residential moorings of its own, but they are available in commercial marinas. These are listed in the Thames Boating Trades Association's booklet *Boatyards, Marinas and Services on the Thames*, available from www.boatingadvice.com.

LONDON CONTACTS

Port of London Authority:

01474 562200

www.pla.co.uk

Canal & River Trust:

Customer Services 0303 040 4040

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

enquiries.london@canalrivertrust.org.uk



Photo: Mark Langley

TRAINING

In recent times there have been many newcomers to our waterways, rightly attracted to the lifestyle, the tranquillity and tradition of the canals – but with limited experience afloat.

Fortunately, help is at hand in the form of the RYA Inland Waterway Helmsman's Course. The course, introduced in 1995 by the Royal Yachting Association, is the only nationally recognised training course in inland waterway skills. It comprises up to three days of practical 'hands on' tuition. There is little theory and no examination at the end!

The aim is to teach the techniques of better and safer boating through a greater understanding of the principles involved. The course is offered nationwide by a number of RYA-recognised training centres, situated both on canals and rivers. Training centres and the instructors they employ have to be approved by the RYA and properly insured. There is a limit of three students to one instructor.

GETTING STARTED

So what are you going to learn? First, your instructor will take you through a safety briefing. You will be reminded to wear the correct clothing, particularly non-slip shoes; the need to hold on as you move around the boat ("one hand for you, one hand for the ship"); how to get on and off the boat safely; and the need to keep within the profile of the boat because of low bridges and tunnels. Even simple things such as how to stand correctly when steering are important.

Then on to the boat. On the canals this will often be a 40ft-50ft long narrowboat, with a cruiser stern so the instructor

can accompany you. Here, you will be taught what checks need to be carried out on the engine, gearbox and weed hatch prior to starting the boat. With your crew loosening the ropes and casting off, you will be off along the canal!

ON THE MOVE

During this time, you will learn how to pull away from the bank correctly and to come alongside as well. The use of ropes, both for mooring and boat handling, will be explained.

Essential skills to learn include the art of turning in a winding hole (pronounced as in windy weather, not winding as in turning a handle), and the difficult job of reversing. You will do all these activities for yourself: the instructor does not demonstrate, but rather, talks you through each manoeuvre.

This way, you feel what it's like first hand. You and your fellow students will take it in turns to be skipper; when you are not, you are the crew, so you get first-hand experience of those tasks as well.

On a narrow canal, you will learn how to pass through narrow bridges, and the techniques of passing other moored and moving boats as well. You will also learn how to avoid going aground too often.

Of course, most canals and rivers have locks, and there will be ample opportunity to practice navigating through the locks, and operating the paddles and gates correctly. There are so many ways to operate locks, and many different types around the waterways; the course explains safe operation, with plenty of time to discuss the options and understand the safety risks – from falling in to flying windlasses. You will also learn about lock etiquette to ensure that you don't waste



Photo courtesy of ABNB

water, or inadvertently jump the queue and upset someone!

THE CERTIFICATE

Having completed the course you will be much more confident in your ability to helm safely and how to look after your crew's safety. You get the RYA Inland Waterway Helmsman's Course completion certificate, which is the only officially recognised qualification for UK waters.

It is important to understand that this is not a driving test. Boating takes a lifetime to learn, and the Helmsman's Course is not the end of your learning – it is, in many ways, the beginning. Every lock and every waterway is different. Some experienced canal boaters, for example, choose to take the course on a river to broaden their experience.

But the course will give you the confidence to take to the water, and years of experience will help you learn the rest.

Having obtained the qualification, you can go on to apply for an International Certificate of Competence (or ICC) from the RYA if you wish to cruise European waterways. In mainland Europe, unlike the UK, it is necessary to have this certificate to steer a pleasure boat. To get this, you will have to pass a written test (CEVNI) based on European navigation rules. This test is available from the same training centre that did your IWHC.

MORE DETAILS

You can find out about the RYA courses, including details of your local centre, at www.rya.org.uk/training.

All queries should be directed to the RYA Training department on the RYA on tel: 02380 604100.

DIESEL FUEL AND INLAND WATERWAYS CRAFT

A new Directive introduced from 1 January 2011 made it a requirement that all gas oil (red diesel) used in “non-road mobile machinery (NRMM)”, ‘inland waterway vessels’ and recreational craft when not at sea, will have to contain no more than 10 milligrams of sulphur per kilogram of fuel (virtually ‘sulphur free’).

These regulations make it an offence to sell red diesel with a sulphur content of more than 10ppm (current level 1000ppm) for use in inland waterway craft and recreational craft that do not go to sea. This type of fuel has been sold at fuel station forecourts for many years for automotive use.

SO HOW DOES THIS AFFECT YOU?

This means that red diesel sold for use in vessels and recreational craft operating on inland waterways must be low sulphur or sulphur free. The regulations do not cover the sulphur content of diesel fuel used in sea-going vessels.

The petroleum industry advises that some suppliers use road fuel with the familiar ‘red dye’ to supply off road and marine craft fuel. However, road fuel contains up to 7% FAME (fatty acid methyl ester) or bio-fuel and may prove problematic with some, particularly older, installations and increase the risk of biological contamination or ‘diesel bug’.

The Department of Transport have completed a survey of fuel suppliers and estimate that 75% of the diesel fuel supply to the relevant sectors will be ‘sulphur free’ and will not contain FAME.

At the time of writing this article some suppliers are supplying low sulphur fuel with a bio diesel content and some are claiming to be supplying low sulphur fuel without a bio diesel content.

SO WHAT IS BIODIESEL?

Biodiesel is an alternative fuel similar to conventional or ‘fossil’ diesel. Biodiesel can be produced from straight vegetable oil, animal oil/fats, tallow and waste cooking oil. The process used to convert these oils to Biodiesel is called transesterification. This process is described in more detail below. The largest possible source of suitable oil comes from oil crops such as rapeseed, palm or soybean. In the UK rapeseed represents the greatest potential for biodiesel production. Most biodiesel produced at present is produced from waste vegetable oil sourced from restaurants, chip shops, industrial food producers such as Birdseye etc. Though oil straight from the agricultural industry represents the greatest potential source it is not being produced commercially simply because the raw oil is too expensive.

After the cost of converting it to biodiesel has been added on it is simply too expensive to compete with fossil diesel. Waste vegetable oil can often be sourced for free or sourced already treated for a small price. (The waste oil must be treated before conversion to biodiesel to remove impurities). The result is Biodiesel produced from waste vegetable oil can compete with fossil diesel.

SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

If a FAME-free supply cannot be secured then the following precautions are advised: **STORAGE:** Because of the changes in fuel quality, you will need to exercise increased care in the storage of sulphur free gas oil where this contains biodiesel. The following has been recommended by the UK petroleum industry:

Don't let CO ruin your life

We urge our boating customers to take on board that only by installing equipment in accordance with manufacturer's instructions; checking and maintaining systems routinely and keeping to the maker's usage guidelines will the risk from carbon-monoxide poisoning be minimised.

CO is a colourless, odourless gas – often dubbed the 'Silent Killer' – and can kill even in moderate concentrations when inhaled. The early symptoms of poisoning are often similar to flu or food poisoning, and can include headaches, nausea and dizziness.

Any fuel burning equipment can be a potential source of CO including stoves, gas appliances and any engine exhaust.

According to the Boat Safety Scheme (BSS), CO build-up in boat cabins can occur with any one or a mix of these factors:

- faulty, badly maintained or misused appliances
- exhaust fumes from a boat's engine or generator
- escaped flue gases from solid fuel stoves
- blocked ventilation, or short supply of air - fuels need the right amount of oxygen to burn safely

FOLLOW THE BSS 10-POINT TIP LIST ON STAYING SAFE FROM CO POISONING

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>❶ All the crew should know the symptoms of CO poisoning and how to react if it is suspected</p> <p>❷ Install fuel burning appliances properly, in-line with makers directions</p> <p>❸ Follow servicing guidelines; maintenance should be routine and competent - Don't allow bodged repairs, adjustments and adaptations</p> <p>❹ Always use appliances as per the instructions and never use cookers for space heating</p> <p>❺ Don't block ventilation – appliance fuels like gas, coal, wood, oil, paraffin, etc. need sufficient air to burn safely</p> | <p>❻ Don't bring charcoal BBQs on board, or have them near a cabin during or after use - only stone-cold charcoal is safe</p> <p>❼ Keep engine fumes out of the cabin space, never use a portable generator in or near a cabin</p> <p>❽ Learn about the danger signs, spot potential hazards before CO occurs</p> <p>❾ Deal with problems immediately, never use equipment you suspect has problems</p> <p>❿ Install a certified CO alarm (BS EN 50291-2), test it routinely and never remove the batteries</p> |
|---|---|

If you are in any doubt about what to do, visit the Boat Safety Scheme website, where you'll find the essential information on how to stay CO safe.

For more details visit www.boatsafetyscheme.org/CO

PETROL REGULATIONS

The Petroleum (Consolidation) Regulations 2014 (PCR) came into force on 1 October 2014. They apply to workplaces that store petrol where petrol is dispensed, ie retail and non retail petrol filling stations; and non-workplace premises storing petrol, for example at private homes, or at clubs/associations (or similar).

You can store up to 30 litres of petrol at home or at non-workplace premises without informing your local Petroleum Enforcement Authority (PEA). You can store it in:

- suitable portable metal or plastic containers
- one demountable fuel tank
- a combination of the above as long as no more than 30 litres is kept

For these purposes 'premises' are as defined in the Health and Safety Work Act, etc. 1974 and includes, for example, motor vehicles, boats and aircraft.

If you wish to store more than 30 litres of petrol and up to a maximum of 275 litres of petrol at your home or premises you need to follow the legal requirements for doing this, which are:

You should notify your local Petroleum Enforcement Authority in writing, giving your name and address as the occupier of the storage place or the address where the petrol is stored. This is not a new requirement but carries forward long standing requirements of the previous legislation. You can store it in:

- suitable portable metal or plastic containers;
- demountable fuel tanks; and
- a combination of the above as long as no more than 275 litres is kept.

If you are storing up to 275 litres of petrol at any of these premises then there are common storage requirements for these amounts, which can be requested from your local PEA.

- Remove all water from tanks and conduct monthly checks to ensure, as far as practical, that they remain free of water.
- Tanks that don't already have drain points for removing water are likely to need modification.
- Replace fuel filters after 2 to 3 deliveries/turnover of the new fuel.
- Ensure the content of tanks is turned over every 6 months or in any event no less often than every 12 months.

EQUIPMENT: The majority of equipment and engines supplied in the last 10 years should not have any problems with the fuel but a few precautions are recommended particularly for installations of older engines and equipment.

- Examine fuel systems following the switch

to the new fuel and ensure that any seals or pipes found to be leaking are replaced.

- If you are having older engines and equipment serviced, replace fuel seals and fuel hoses as a precaution.
- Replace fuel filters after the first 2 to 3 tank fulls of the new fuel.
- The current specification for fuel hose to meet the requirements of the Recreational Craft Directive for new craft construction is for the hose to be CE marked under the responsibility of a Notified Body. The hose is normally certified against the harmonised standard EN ISO 7840 for fire resistant hoses and EN ISO 8469 for non-fire resistant hoses. There is currently concern that these hose specifications have not been approved for use with bio-fuel and this should be checked with the hose supplier.



Photo: Robin Smithett

- Bio fuel is a very good solvent and may release accumulated sediments in fuel tanks. Although it may not be necessary to clean fuel tanks and fuel lines before using bio-fuel in the lower levels of 7% it would be good practice to monitor filter plugging and keep extra filters to hand.

- Some metals as well as rubbers and plastics are not recommended for use with bio-fuel particularly at high concentrations. Although not normally a problem at low level concentrations it is known that bio-fuel will 'pick up' metal such as copper.

USAGE: The advice on storage on board the craft is the same as for shore based tanks. However the ability to turn over the fuel contents within six months is not necessarily practical. A regular check on the condition of the fuel and fuel components is advisable.

BIOLOGICAL GROWTH (THE BUG): Due to its chemical structure FAME, and diesel blends in particular, are more susceptible to biological attack by micro-organisms.

These aerobic micro-organisms usually grow at the interface between fuel and water in tanks; anaerobic species can actively grow on tank surfaces and can contribute to metal corrosion. If microbiological growth remains undetected it will eventually cause fouling and filter plugging with the ultimate outcome of stopping your engine and possibly causing expensive damage to your engine fuel injection system.

If considering the use of fuel cleaning or biocide treatment expert advice should be sought.

CONCLUSION:

- If possible use "FAME" free fuel.
- Use a reputable supplier with a high turnover of fuel.
- Turn over fuel in your tanks every 6 months.
- Check your fuel tanks on a regular basis for signs of contamination.
- Service your engine in line with manufacturers recommendations.
- Ensure your engine has an adequate fuel filtration system fitted.

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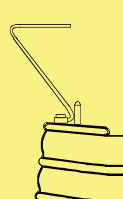
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TECHNICAL

- A wealth of technical information including health and safety, RCD and bespoke advice is available through the BMF technical team
- CBA members can opt to receive complimentary Technical Reports (worth £400) which will keep you abreast of any legislative changes
- Health & Safety guidance and updates as well

TRAINING

- Training grants are available to Members for non-legislative training, up to the value of £1000
- Members can take advantage of subsidised BMF short courses, including RCD Awareness courses, BMET Electrical courses and social media and PR courses designed to complement your business.

LEGAL

- 24-hour legal helpline and web based legal manual, as well as a marine lawyer referral scheme

- Access to a VAT advisor and VAT guidance notes
- The BMF is also able to offer a dispute resolution scheme through an external organisation
- Range of contracts worth in excess of £1000 each including standard terms of business and new build contracts.

REPRESENTATION

- Members have the opportunity to become more involved with the CBA National Committee, as well as participation in CBA activities and events.
- Representation at numerous Marine Industry and Boating user groups, as well as CBA Public Relations work to promote and raise the industry profile

COMMERCIAL BENEFITS

- A free of charge credit report service is available for Members including UK and international reports
- Members can also access money saving commercial benefits from carefully selected commercial partners, including private health care, preferential card processing rates and a free energy review
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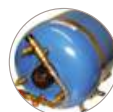
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