

NEWS LETTER –Autumn 2015

What a lovely autumn we are having thus far. The sun is still making the odd appearance, always a bonus for those heating bills! Hot chocolates have been made, fallen leaves have been kicked, apples, sloes and rosehips have been picked and processed into delicious edible fayre. This has to be my favourite time of year (apart from the distinct lack of boating going on!). The crew have all departed to their various winter activities and John has been busy since season end getting the boats looking spick and span for next season.

Season 2015 by numbers

I don't think I've done this for a while, but just in case anyone was wondering... this is the 2015 season by numbers...

145 guests stayed with us a total of 1150 nights and were served in the region of 6900 cups of tea and ate 132 cakes! The boats travelled around 1275 miles and went through 1260 locks in a season which lasted 25 weeks.

Highlights

An obvious highlight of this summer's cruising has to be our arrival into the very heart of Liverpool City Centre, through the docklands complex and down to The Marina. A rare chance for our boats to be seen in close proximity with one of the most prestigious Cruise liners in the world, The Queen Mary II. They had the easiest run up the Rochdale 18 in Manchester and made it to the end of days mooring a whopping 90mins ahead of usual. A not so enjoyable experience was fishing shopping trolleys out from the Ashton Canal by the National Velodrome in order to get through, but still something that sticks in the mind. Ex-crew girl Hannah's wedding festival may not have been a highlight for guests on board, but for Debbie and I it stands out as a weekend to remember. An evening of shooting stars and duvets on the towpath (for the crew at least). The elaborate DIY winch rigged up to retrieve the butty elm from the bottom of a lock, when it accidentally got dislodged by a rocky outcrop on the cill. The pleasant evening tied in front of fellow Hotelboat Tranquil Rose on Osney Island, Oxford and watching the horseboat from Kintbury on the Kennet & Avon as it made the tricky task of winding ahead of us. All in all a good season! What were your favourite moments?

[Charters available for 2016](#)

Do you have a big celebration coming up or an excuse to gather family and friends? We can offer a few options for charters at the start and the end of the season in 2015 so if this is something that you have been considering then do get in touch to discuss what we can offer. We could do just a few nights or a week, we can cater entirely to your preferences and requests.

In addition to a bespoke cruise we also have availability to offer our cruise 6 from Stoke to Northwich as a charter cruise. This route offers a wonderful opportunity to experience locks aplenty at the Cheshire Locks as well as a more relaxed meandering exploration of the River Weaver and The impressive Anderton Boat Lift. A thoroughly enjoyable cruise for a group of family or friends.

[Newsletter Subscription](#)

I know I keep mentioning it but the HTML newsletter was very well received in the summer. Not only does signing up for the e-version mean we have to use less paper, but we have decided not to include colour photos in the printed version as this adds significantly to the cost and time it takes to publish. The e-version not only has lots of colour photos but additional news and updates which we don't necessarily have space for in the printed one, and as both the printed and emailed version are sent at the same time, you will get the e-version a few days earlier! The subscription form is up on the website so if you aren't already receiving these, do go and register.

[Availability 2016](#)

As usual cabins have been filling up ever since we released the schedule in August, and we are currently standing at 60% occupancy. Not to be too 'the glass is half empty' but that does mean there are still 40% of the cabins remaining so here comes the hard sell on those you're currently missing out on... Cruise 1, Banbury to Banbury, offers a leisurely shorter experience for those that may be new to hotelboating. Stopping short of Oxford this is a peaceful, rural cruise with the convenience of secure car parking at Banbury Rail station. Cruise 4, Worcester to Stoke, featuring the entire length of The Staffordshire & Worcester Canal. Much under-appreciated, this canal is simply stunning in places, the northern section of which hasn't featured in our itinerary since 2009! Well overdue a visit then! Cruise 7, Northwich to Liverpool may be low on locks but its high on wow, as our guests from 2015 will testify to and Cruise 12, Oxford to Newbury will likely be the last time we include the Upper Thames for several years and is the first time since 2008 we have offered it going downstream.

Latest availability is shown overleaf, however things do change a little (last season we had 10 cancellations (8 of which I was successful in filling!) so, even if the cruise you want isn't available, do still let me know the one you'd like and I can add you to a waiting list.

NB Date changes

Following the release of the schedule outline there have been one or two small changes. If you had booked one of those affected then you should have been notified, however please be sure to check the descriptions booklet for the correct dates for any cruises you are interested in and then your confirmation when you receive it after booking. We're sorry if this may have caused some confusion. Changes to the way the Liverpool Canal Link is operated enabled us to make slight alterations for the benefit of guest travel arrangements and crew time off.

Back to Back cruising

Each year we have a few guests who choose to do 2 cruises back to back which is wonderful. As you may have noticed in 2016 though we have spoiled the crew by scheduling a day off after each cruise (lucky things!) so this does mean that any back to back cruising will require a night off the boats in between. We apologise if this causes any inconvenience for those interested in 2 consecutive cruises, but hopefully you will understand that without a refreshed and happy crew our holidays would not be as successful and enjoyable as they are and having worked so hard, they really do deserve a little time to relax, run personal errands and generally recuperate after all their hard work, ready to provide each group of guests with just as lovely a holiday each time.

Crew

Those of you who holidayed with us this year would have met the terrific trio of Debs, Ellie and Mike who have all worked super hard this summer, alongside John, to offer our guests the best holidays. We are very pleased to say that all 3 seem to be rather keen on returning next year. Debbie to take up her place as cook and work yet more magic in the galley and Ellie and Mike will be splitting the season and doing half each. We will spend the winter trawling through applications and searching for the perfect 4th member to join the team and add 'hotelboat crew' to their CV!

Moorland Rover

Many of you already know that Hanna's father operates driver guide touring holidays. Off the beaten track with expert local knowledge of various regions of Britain, all of them stunning and incredibly interesting. I know several of our guests already travel the backlanes and byways with him so if you'd be interested in receiving some information about his tours, please give him a call on 07971 303416. With nearly 50 years experience in small group holidays (including hotelboating!) he is expert at providing enjoyable and memorable holidays in some of the UK's most beautiful corners.

Have a great winter and remember, Spring and a whole new boating season is only a few months away!

Hanna, John and Alex