

Norbury News

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Price hike needs to be justified by better upkeep

License increases are one of those horrible facts of boating life that are never popular with those who have to pay up - and that includes hire boat companies.

After three years of inflation-only increases at the start of the Canal & River Trust's stewardship of the waterways, boaters are facing a licence fee increase of two and a half times the current rate of inflation and the implication from the charity is that Brexit is to blame.

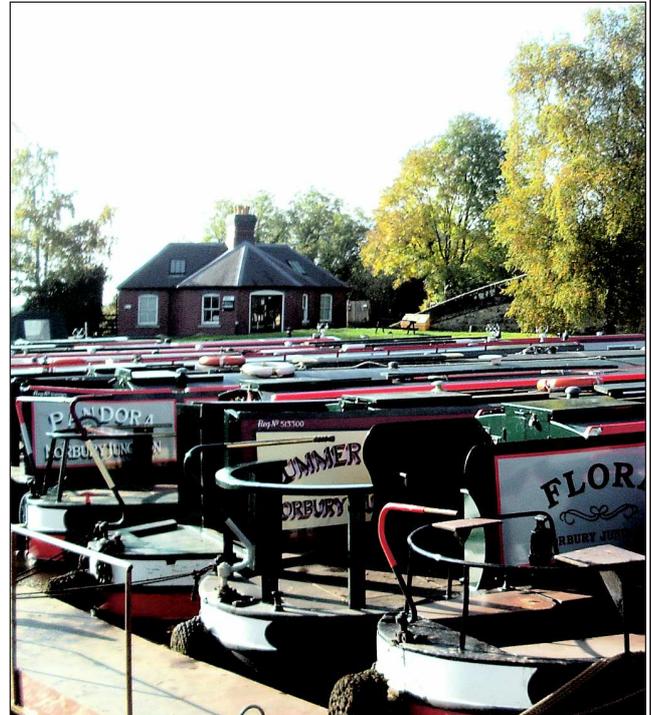
It claims the rise in private and business boat licence fees of 2.5 per cent from 1 April 2017, "anticipates next year's prevailing inflation rate which is widely forecast to rise between now and next summer."

In fact, the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics show current inflation at just one per cent based on the Consumer Prices Index (CPI), although there are some economists who predict the increased cost of imported goods due to the collapse of the pound after Brexit will push the rate up in coming months.

There will be knock-on effects for canal businesses as well as individual boaters. Simon Jenkins, managing director of Norbury Wharf, which has a fleet of hire boats on the Shropshire Union Canal, says: "We try our best to keep our hire prices keen and yet a 2.5 per cent price rise on the commercial licence for a 70 footer is a lot of money and we can't just put up the fees to match.

"We end up either absorbing the increase within our overall costs, or considering cutting the hire fleets down a little.

"This might sound like special



Part of Norbury's hire fleet - but it may have to be cut to meet the licence price hike

pleading for hire fleet owners, but when you consider the amount of money that the hire fleets contribute to the overall income for C&RT then it is important that we are able to carry on doing so, and hope that it goes to the essential maintenance of the canal system.

"I suppose as a license payer myself for the last 30 years I have come to just accept that it happens and 'that's life,' and it is certainly true that we have seen much larger above-inflation increases in the latter years of British Waterways.

"But it would be nice to see

more money spent on the core needs of the canal rather than the what appears to be the unessential periphery and seems to attract so much funding from C&RT.

"We as license holders don't benefit from fancy new offices, re-organisations of borders or the redesigning of their corporate logos and changing paint schemes of their craft - although we are led by some to believe that we do.

"Let's see more money spent on essential maintenance of the canal itself, and then we might just accept the license price rise a little better."

Bargains

DIESEL

- Our fuel is the cheapest at a commercial boatyard on the waterways - and FAME free. It can change on a weekly basis but it is now at:

59p

BATTERIES

- 110amphr batteries JUST

£64.95

each when you buy four or more in the same transaction.
£69.00 each if sold singly.

ECOFANS

The original and best fan for your stove from

£74.99

Winter hiring - cosy, peaceful, real solitude

What great about hiring a narrowboat in winter? Lack of people!

If you want to feel like you own your own boat, and your own canal come to that, then winter boating has to be on the top of your priority list.

It is a common belief that when winter arrives many people don't want to go cruising on the canals, even among many hire boat firms who shut up shop over the winter months.

However, think about it for a minute, and you realise people don't all go in to hibernation, they still go out at weekends, football matches and sporting events, shopping - so why not go boating too.

Norbury Wharf, on the Shropshire Union Canal has never subscribed to a winter shutdown.

Manager David Ray says: "We always have boats that are geared up for use in winter, with cosy solid fuel fires and everything you need to enjoy a floating haven.

"It's cheaper to hire, you can pick where you want to moor in the knowledge that it will be available, no queuing at locks and water points, the canal side pubs aren't heaving with holi-



The long pound at Audlem - empty on a clear winter's day.

day makers and have a more cosy local feel to them.

"It is a different world in winter, with the pure satisfaction of stopping at the end of the day, either settling down to a cosy solid fuel stove and a hearty meal that the galley slave should have cooked.

"Or sitting in country pub with a fire in the hearth and beer, and maybe a meal that the galley slave didn't cook!

"Winter boating is great, and providing that you take the nec-

essary precautions like plenty of warm clothes, gloves, hat, water proofs then you won't have many issues.

"If you can try and hire a boat with a 'Trad' stern as that will give you even more protection from the elements as you can stand inside the hatch way and close the doors behind you thus only really exposing the top half of your body to the elements.

"Give it a go. The canal can be a magical place in the winter!

Buy a boater something they REALLY want - and water lovers a boat trip

Boaters are the easiest people in the world to buy a present for at Christmas - they always need something either for their boat of their next trip, and that even applies to regular hirers.

The list of things that boaters need is endless, and presents can be from just a few pounds to thousands of pounds, it just depends on how generous you want to be.

From a small floating key ring, to a new boat pole, a set of fenders, or a new TV or stereo. At the top end there are items like inverters and solar panels, in the lower range, maintenance products for the boat.

Whatever it may be most chandlers are open all year around and there are many online shops too so why not think outside the box this Christmas and buy something that is really useful for a boater that you might know?

Simon Jenkins, who owns the traditional boatyard and chandlery at Norbury Wharf (as well as a taste for poor puns), said: "At Christmas time you might just get a Barge-in (bargain - geddit?) from a chandlers" He has more ideas for a really different present this Christmas: "Even if your gift recipient doesn't own their own boat but still loves messing about on water then why not consider buying them a gift voucher for a day boat, or one for a fish and chip lunch cruise or the popular fish and chip evening cruise sailing from Norbury Wharf on board the Shropshire Star?"



The Norbury Wharf chandlery - lots of choice and it is online too.

Which fuel best value for warmth

*by Simon Jenkins
managing director
Norbury Wharf Ltd*

As the external temperature drops anyone spending time on a boat suddenly needs to become a bit of an expert in keeping warm

Although there are gas and diesel powered central heating systems, for the majority of boaters that means the efficient operation of solid fuels stoves and an understanding of the merits of different fuels.

Keeping warm in the winter and getting the best value from the fuels that we choose does very much depend on what fire you have and the set up and how you want to use the fire.

Different fuels suit different lifestyles, for instance, if you only want the fire lit whilst you are awake then a fast lighting fuel such as coal may be the answer.

If you want to light the fire and keep it going all night and all day then a compressed solid fuel will be better, many people will know what suits them, but if you are new to it then usually its trial and error.

Let's look at coal, standard mined coal is about the cheapest product you can buy, great for getting a fire going quickly, it gives out good heat but as you can imagine it burns away quickly too.

Most solid fuels that you can buy are a mixture of coal dust and other ingredients that are mixed together and compressed to form an egg shaped lump, these take quite a bit



The choice of fuel is wide - you need to know which is best for your stove and your lifestyle.

more lighting and can be slower to get going, depending on the make. Some will burn very hot indeed and some much slower, some produce a lot of ash and some not so much, but if burnt with the right amount of air draft in the stove they can burn for up to 24 hours without touching the fire.

Then there is good old fashioned wood. Wood is great if you just want to have the fire lit whilst sat in front of it, but it doesn't burn for very long. The trouble with coal and logs is that they leave a quite a heavy residue in the flue and these MUST be kept clean as it can restrict the flue and may even cause a flue fire. Some flues can be narrowed to a tiny diameter by hard deposits giving a real risk of smoke and, even more dangerous carbon monoxide inside the boat.

You must always check the operating instructions of the stove to see what it is designed to burn – not all stoves can safely burn all fuels.

Before you stoke up, just check that the area that your boat is moored allows you to burn the fuel you are using. Smokeless zones often ban the use of ordinary coal, although sometimes allows wood.

Getting the best out of your stove is very much a trial and error thing, but safety is the first and most important thing so small steps to start with. Don't go rushing in and have a furnace sat in the corner, try a few different fuels and see how you get on with them. I would make a list of the different ones but I don't have a long enough piece of paper, but take advice from your supplier too as to what you want to achieve.

New form will get answers more quickly says C&RT

The Canal & River Trust doesn't have the highest reputation when it comes to answering boaters' queries and recently admitted breaching its own customer standards, but it is now claiming it is making it easier for boaters to get their enquiries answered quickly by introducing a new web contact form on its website.

It says the move will improve customer service by putting people in touch with the most appropriate team or information source at the first point of contact, speeding up the time it takes for boaters to get

information and provide a more efficient service. Caron Smith, Head of customer experience at the Canal & River Trust, said: "At the moment, our service team receive thousands of emails each month. In some cases it's not immediately clear what information customers need and the team may go back and forth several times before they're able to give the customer precisely what they're after. On many occasions the information the customer is looking for is already available on our website."

Holidays

WHY NOT JOIN US ON SHORE?

Norbury Wharf's cosy cottage sits alongside our busy wharf and is a home from home.



Special rates on day boats if booked in advance. All bookings are handled



**through
Hoseasons.**

Boats for sale

Dog on it - 45 foot, cruiser stern narrowboat built by K.Ross in 2003.

She is powered by a Mitsubishi engine which was marinised by Thornycroft. From entering at the rear of the boat is the galley, followed by the bathroom with hip bath and shower over and a Porta Potti toilet. Next comes the double bedroom with plenty of storage and finally the saloon with solid fuel stove. Hot water is provided by a Rinnai instant gas water heater and central heating to compliment the solid fuel stove is provided by an Alde gas boiler. She has been lovingly lined using ash tongue and groove. The rear deck is covered by a pram cover. Boat Safety Certificate to June 2020. Last repainted in 2015 and last docked in 2016. A hull survey from 2015 is available upon request.

Viewing by appointment. An online off-side long term mooring is also available if required at Norbury Junction. **£28,500**



Ref 10390

Flora - 57ft cruiser stern narrowboat built in 2002 by RLL boats as a hire boat.

She has been in our hire fleet here at Norbury and been maintained to the usual high standards associated with hire craft. From the large open rear deck steps take you down in to the double bedroom with a fixed bed, and plenty of storage, then there is the shower room with shower over bath, hand wash basin and pump out toilet, then the galley with fridge and freezer, sink and drainer, built in cooker and hob. Then comes a dinette which can convert in to another double bed, then the front is fairly open plan with two corner cupboards. Powered by an excellent Isuzu it has a hydraulically operated gearbox with an Aqua drive coupling. **£34950 inc VAT.**



Ref 10391

Pensieve

70 foot traditional narrow boat built by John Pinder n 2002 and powered by a Beta BD3 Tug engine in its own engine room. From the rear you enter a single bedroom with bunk to one side, then comes the engine compartment, then a large fixed double bedroom, followed by a massive bathroom. The galley has a fridge and freezer and a washing machine. A rather large open plan saloon has a solid fuel stove, and there's a Kabola diesel fired boiler, A boat with a HUGE interior.

£39,995



REF 10384

Slow n Easy

65 foot semi-trad all steel narrow boat built in 2002 by Burton Narrowboats and powered by a Beta Marine 43HP engine with twin alternators and PRM hydraulic operated gearbox. Hot water is via a twin coil calorifier, fed by the engine, gas central heating and a 240V immersion heater. From entering the boat at the rear some steps take you to the rear cabin laid out as two single bunks, that can be made in to a large double bed across the width of the boat. Then comes the shower room and pump out toilet, Forward of this is the double bed, and then comes the galley before a large saloon with L shaped seating and lots of space with bow doors leading to the front deck. **£34,999**



Ref 10381

Lady Emma Jean

60 foot Gary Gorton Traditional stern narrow boat built in 1989, and very much updated since then. Through the stern doors you come straight in to the engine compartment, a door then takes you in to bedroom area with two sets of steel opening side doors. There's a large galley, then the open plan saloon which houses a TV cupboard and a large multifuel stove. Front doors lead out on to the front deck which is covered by a cratch and cover. Powered by a modern Perkins 42 HP water cooled engine.

£29,999.



Ref 10364

Tomorrow

A 50ft all steel narrow boat built by Fernie Fabrications of Market Harborough with both semi-trad and trad stern. Fully re-plated in 2008, it has been re-engined in its recent past. It has a current boat safety certificate and was last out of the water in 2014 for blacking. It is an unusual design at the stern as it has a large sliding rear hatch cover that turns the back of the boat in to a semi traditional stern, but in that hatch it also has a smaller sliding hatch which can be opened instead to create a traditional stern. A solid fuel stove with a back boiler serves radiators throughout the boat. In need of cosmetic renovation. **£24,950**



Under Offer

REF 10379