

Notes from Hi Ya Meeting 3rd July 2024

The meeting was attended by 18 of our volunteers.

Throttle

Throttle malfunctions are still occurring. Mechanism has been taken apart, cleaned and reassembled but is still giving problems. Ortomarine have identified a replacement unit which is compatible and should be better to operate. This will be fitted when it becomes available.

Security

There have been instances where the boat has not been properly locked up, in particular not all the bolts were secured. It is essential that all bolts are done up before leaving the boat. See the User Guide for further information.

Inverter

A reminder that the inverter should not be left on when the boat is closed down except when charging from the mains. Solar panel readings are now appearing on the control panel screen.

Ropes

The mooring ropes are showing signs of fraying where they rub against brickwork on the bank. Although they are still serviceable, it isn't a good look so they will be replaced. Plastic sheathing has been fitted to the bank to prevent further damage.

Motor

Wisps of smoke have been reported coming from the control panel when the motor is under extreme load. The cause is unknown but the cooling fan is functioning correctly and there is no smell of burning. The maintenance team will join a training trip to investigate the cause.

Control Panel

Loss of internet connection can be rectified by turning the control panel off and on. Ortomarine are to investigate why this is happening. It was suggested that corrections, tricks & tips such as these be used to create a 'Troubleshooting' section in the User Guide so that everyone can be informed.

Switches

Bilge pump switch on the control panel has sometimes accidentally been turned off. Please ensure at closedown that Bilge Pump and Control System switches stay ON. At startup, although the coolbox is no longer in use, the Coolbox switch should still be turned ON as it also controls the fan circuit. This will have no detrimental effect on the Coolbox circuit.

Gas Changeover

A reminder that in the event of gas failure due to an empty bottle, move the changeover switch across to point to the other bottle. Do not leave it in the neutral position. The yellow switch should be used as usual to control the supply of gas to the appliances on the boat. See the User Guide for more details. Be sure to inform the maintenance team that the bottle is empty.

Pumpout

An electric pump has been purchased to assist with pumpouts at the yard. It has been tested for operation but we are awaiting an opportunity to do a live test when there is sufficient material in the boat's waste tank.

Monitoring and pumping out will be included in the regular Sunday morning maintenance routine.

Fenders

New slimline fenders have been fitted which should be more durable and less likely to snag than the old ones. Remember to lift out and place inboard prior to entering locks. Leave the front fenders in the deck area for ease of access when next needed.

Extra tyres have been fitted to the yard mooring, courtesy of Malvern Tyres.

Reed Cutters

More reed cutting has been carried out, but unfortunately there has been some cutting without collecting due to failure of the collection boat. The remaining boat has attempted to cut and collect but inevitably this has led to a large volume of material floating on the canal. Reeds in the water put extra strain on the motor by (1) fouling the propeller and (2) collecting in a mass at the bows and has led to excessive use of the weed hatch in recent weeks. When steering, try to avoid the reeds if possible, or drift in neutral past the worst clumps.

Training

A number of taster trips have taken place recently resulting in four new volunteers joining the group, all extremely competent and looking forward to getting trained and involved in our activities. We are also pleased to welcome a new skipper. Other new volunteers are at various stages of qualification, four or five should be fully qualified in September.

Monthly Training Tip:- when turning at the winding hole above lock 6 on a windy day, use the lock jaws to assist entry, going very slowly and carefully and with guidance from the bank crew stationed on the lock. For a fuller explanation, see Paul Mobey.

Bookings

Bookings are starting to reduce to less than five per week which was the self-imposed limit for the busiest times. Enquiries have been coming in from the website contact form but not many of these result in firm bookings. Telephone enquiries are still the most productive.

Crewing

Situation has improved with more volunteers available. Some trips have been over-subscribed with not enough places on the boat for some of the new volunteers. More skippers will improve the situation further.

Saltfest

We will be running short trips at Saltfest over Friday 30th, Saturday 31st August and Sunday 1st September although some festival activities will start on the Wednesday. Trips will not be used as an opportunity for new volunteer training as it is expected to be very busy. Passengers will board at Bridge 17 and walk-on cash-only arrangements will be in place as per the last festival. Manning list to be organised closer to the date.

There will be a duck race on the Sunday. Tickets will be available on the boat for sale to passengers. Volunteers can contact Margaret Rowley if they wish to sell some themselves, or see Margaret at the next HiYa meeting.

Environment

Paul Wilkinson (CRT Senior Ecologist) will be taking a fact-finding trip on the Pamela May.

AOB

- Fish & Chip Trips.
 - o Crew must let Sarah know a week in advance if they want fish & chips on the trip.
 - o Our policy with customers is that fish & chips will not be ordered until the trip is fully paid for. Our pricing for private hire trips depends on having 10 orders and there are no reductions for customers not wanting fish & chips.
 - o Looking at other groups around the country running similar trips, our prices appear to be very competitive.
- The yard lease is due for renewal. Term is for five years @ £1 per year. The lease documents are based on an old plan which does not include car parking or recognise our maintenance of the site. Permissions for passenger boarding and customer car parking need to be checked and formally agreed.
- Pictures from recent trips are requested for publication on Facebook and the website. Permission should be sought from any persons identifiable in the pictures.
- A question was asked about whether it was possible to turn Pamela May 2 at the yard. It was assumed not to be possible but worth giving it a try sometime.