

dolphin and porpoise survey carried out at specific sites. All volunteers attend an initial training session so that each 10 minute Shorewatch is carried out the same way and can be compared with other watches and sites. Everything is completely flexible. You could do a Shorewatch once a week, once a month or every once in a while. Perhaps you pass one of the sites regularly or would like to make a day of it in the area; how you get involved and how often is completely up to you. There will be plenty of support to help you build your knowledge of marine mammals and cetacean ID. Over time we hope to build up enough watches to reliably note when cetaceans are changing, how they're using the sites and how the data gathered will be used to influence policy and ensure better protection for these incredible animals. If you would like to know more about the marine mammal species seen around Llyn and learn how to complete a Shorewatch survey, so that you can contribute to the project, why not join them at one of the following sessions:

Online: 7-8.30pm Thursday 12/06/2025

In person: 10am-noon Saturday 14/06/2025, Nefyn Golf Club, Morfa Nefyn (followed by a guided Shorewatch at Porthdinllaen in the afternoon).

Canal closures

Following a breach near Bosley, the Macclesfield Canal has been closed for repairs. Those could be ongoing until late June.

A New Year breach of the Bridgewater Canal at Dunham Massey replicated one there in 1971 and will take until Christmas 2026 to repair.

However, a breach of the Lancaster Canal at Hollowfirth Aqueduct has been repaired and the canal reopened.

Problems with Tardebigge top lock mean the country's longest lock flight will be closed until the end of August.

Some 526t of sludge contaminated with 4m³ of toxic sodium and zinc cyanides last August in the Pleck area of the Walsall Canal has been removed and the canal reopened. Nearly 2km of canal was closed and devoid of all life.

In May several geese were found dead along the Walsall Canal, suspected of being victims of poison scattered along the towpath. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme led by Natural England.

Little progress in two decades

This May marks the 20th anniversary of a meeting Paddlers International held at Stoke Bruerne with British Waterways to discuss a number of safety and similar issues. BW chairman George Greener was unable



New for Keswick Mountain Festival this year were accessible canoeing sessions. Open canoes were fitted with outriggers and with seats fitted with back supports and mobile hoist if required. Participants, whether disabled or not, were met, fitted with safety gear and given a short paddling safety lesson before being taken to explore Derwentwater down to Herbert Island where a wood burning kettle was used for a brew before paddling back.

to attend at the last minute but the heads of safety, engineering and the southeast region were present. We were invited to take along other interested parties and invited the Canoe-Camping Club and BCU. Many of these issues, not least tunnels and portages, required firsthand knowledge and I didn't need others less well informed to speak my words.

We prepared a fairly extensive agenda with many points to be investigated. There were no replies although we were aware that one issue was discussed with the BCU alone, discourteous at best. Each time we reminded BW we were asked by a receptionist what the meeting was about. Repeatedly we sent the agenda and heard nothing further.

When Robin Evans was appointed to head BW he undertook a nationwide consultation tour. We raised our concerns. He sent details of a use agreement with a school rowing group on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, of little relevance. At a Crick Boat Show consultation around 2010 we asked what was the point of such meetings if there was no action taken on them. Host Vince Moran agreed to investigate but did not do so, even after reminders.

Finally, Tony Stammers of CRT, as they had now become, suggested we needed to start again and we had a two hour meeting in Devizes, with nobody else involved, just the two of us. Available with this issue are my list of concerns to be addressed and minutes, mostly showing action to follow on some of the topics, generally awaiting further responses although there were no further replies.

When problems were addressed, you would expect CRT to desire maximum publicity to benefit from the credit. The difficult portage on the Liverpool Link involved having to drop a kayak or canoe well over a metre down a wall onto deep water and then dropping into it. There was no way back up, of course. It was rumoured that this had been dealt with although CRT's press office were unable to confirm this. Eventually I had to make a journey there to check for myself. It had, indeed, been made safe, resulting in PI advising the CRT press office rather than the other way round.

Since then other issues have arisen. Included has been the dangerous free online CRT book for beginners, now thankfully removed. Bevere on the Severn has been made unsafe recently and inspection of the fouled weir chute prevented. Different embargo dates for different publications are another topic that has been another problem that has surfaced.

The 2013 meeting considered again the issues raised in 2005. Available to download here are issues that were to be considered in 2013 and minutes as recalled by CRT and PI, also a platform design requested for use at portage points that would be usable by all canoeists and wildlife, not just marathon racers. Many issues have not been resolved, issues which also feature in canal and river navigation books for all users as well as for canoeists.

Note Tony Stammer's comment about the BCU buying a place at the table, not that it has done much for addressing the issues. At last year's CRT AGM a question was asked about this and it was stated that CRT made more money from selling compulsory licences to BCU members at a reduced rate, regardless of whether they needed them or not, than they would from selling licences at full price only to those who needed them.

Reservoir trials started

Regardless of their financial state, Thames Water have begun trial digging for their South East Strategic Reservoir Option, a huge new reservoir near Abingdon, bigger than all the other proposed new reservoirs added together. Various amenity carrots are on offer, including a K1 in use in their latest update. The location is centred on the line of the Wilts & Berks Canal, being restored, but the current offer is only to leave space round the outside, falling well short of the original offer, when they were seeking support, to build the emergency drawdown channel to canal dimensions and to take it

Intruder arrested

An American influencer has been arrested for breaching a 5km exclusion zone around the Sentinel Islands in the Indian Ocean. There are thought to be about 200 members of the Sentinelese tribe, who have no protection against outside diseases. The 24 year old American had made two previous attempts to visit, last October using an inflatable kayak. A 27 year old visited in 2018 but was shot and killed with bows and arrows.

Scottish floods

SEPA have introduced a new flood forecast. This one advises on watercourses which risk being in flood longterm, including small burns. This is static advice, unlike Floodline which gives live notification when floods are expected. Perhaps of most use for paddlers is the Scottish Flood Forecast, which gives daily flood information for the next three days, showing which watercourses are likely to be in spate and when.

Home from home law

The MCA have carried out a consultation on new laws that might be applied to seafarers from this year. One suggestion is that those on the water might be required to have internet access in order to keep contact with friends and family. Another is that they must have a balanced diet with a varied mix of carbohydrates, protein, fat, vitamins and minerals. Should some of this be suggested as education rather than legal requirements? Will the same requirements apply for tanker crews as for wave skis? Do you remember when they were going to require every boat afloat to have sufficient boats aboard to carry all those aboard in the event of a capsize, including rafts on white water?