

President

Mike Hammond

Commodore

Jennifer Westby

Vice Commodore

Jane Askam

Rear Commodore

Glenis Hulme

Honorary Secretary

Helen Taylor

Honorary Treasurer

Jane Askam

Moorings Officer & Field Co-ordinator

Philip Stafford

Membership Secretary

Dianne Bishop

Editor “Soar Points”

John Storton 0116 2395009

John McKay 0116 2412357

Soar Boating Club Magazine

Soar Points



Will it ever stop raining! January 2013

Photo by Frank Hulme

Spring
2013

**SOAR BOATING CLUB EVENTS CALENDAR
for 2013**

April Sat 6th St George & the Pageant (talk & video by Eric Brook)

May Sat 4th to Mon 6th May Day Weekend with the Village

Fri 24th to Mon 27th Erewash Canal Rally

June Sun 16th 60th Birthday Weekend

Mon 17th to Fri 21st Commodore's Cruise

Fri 21st to Mon 24th Classic Motor Boat Association Weekend Visit

July To be arranged

August Sat 24th to Mon 26th Bank Holiday Cruise?

Sept Sat 21st Quiz Night

Oct Sat 12th Sun 13th Working Weekend

Nov Sat 2nd Laying up Supper/ Bonfire Celebration

Sat 30th Dinner Dance

Dec Sun 15th Carol Service St James' Church at 6.00 pm

Jan 2014 Sat 25th Burns Night Supper

There may be additional events throughout the year

SOAR POINTS

**I am always looking for material for your club
magazine Soar Points.**

AN INTERESTING STORY

A CRUISE YOU HAVE DONE

ADVICE FOR NEW BOATERS

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

CHILDREN DON'T FORGET

YOU CAN WRITE A STORY

TELL US ABOUT A HOLIDAY

THE CLOSING DATE FOR THE AUTUMN EDITION

IS OCTOBER 31ST 2013

All entries To John Storton at:- johnstorton@talktalk.net

or any member of the committee

BOAT GATHERING
AT
LANGLEY MILL
24th - 27th May 2013

To celebrate 45 years of the Association & the 40th Anniversary of the re-opening of Great Northern Basin

Boat / Caravan Entry £15.00 for 2 adults

(Additional Crew members £5.00 per person)

A plaque will be awarded to all craft

entering and attending the Rally

Further enquiries to Mrs Christine Baylis

Tel: 01623 201208 Mob: 07889 444190

Application forms for the event can be obtained from the website
<http://erewashcanalpreservationanddevelopmentassoc.org.uk/>

President's Message

I think it is appropriate that I should begin by referring to the sad events that have beset the club over the last few months with the loss of some of our members. Keith Broughton had been involved in boating and had been a member of this club for many years. He had served on the committee, had been treasurer and was appointed Commodore at the AGM last year.

Keith passed away on 16th December last year and the AWCC recognised Keith by observing one minutes silence in his memory at its meeting in Coventry on 12th January.

On 13th January this year another of our committee members, Anthony Whittington, known to all of us as Dick, also passed away. He was a regular attendee at committee meetings and the year before last was one of only two who attended every meeting.

The funerals of these two gentlemen took place at St. James' Church here in Normanton-on-Soar and the club was pleased to host the gathering both before and after the service and I know that this was appreciated by both families.

Then on 1st February this year, Ron Pike the father of Linda Hopper, passed away. Although not a member of the club Ron was a regular visitor with Paul and Linda to club events and will be remembered by many of us.

We have also heard that two of the club's ex-members passed away last year, Jill Trolley in June and Roy Landyman on 28th October.

It is now twelve months since I was honoured to be elected as your President.

One of the first things that I decided that I needed to do was to become more involved within the club whilst trying not to interfere.

I decided that I would like to attend committee meetings at which Keith Broughton made me very welcome.

It seemed sensible that I should simply listen and learn and get to know the personalities of the committee members. It soon became clear that the committee members all had a voice and a role to play in the management of the club.

Over 26 years I have attended many club events all of which ran very smoothly but it is only when you hear and see what goes on at a committee meeting that you begin to appreciate how much hard work goes into the planning and preparation, be it catering arrangements, the bar, the moorings, the field and club room maintenance there has always been a team of well organised members behind the scenes. I take this opportunity to thank all of the committee members and others for their hard work and efforts over the last year.

Normanton on Soar Village Shop

(Main Street, rear of village Hall, opposite the Church)

Opening Hours

Monday to Friday
10.00. AM TO 1.00. PM

Saturday
10.00. AM TO 1.00. PM

2.00. PM TO 5.00. PM

Local Baked Breads and Cakes

Local Organic Milk & Free Range Eggs

Duck Eggs when available

Local Jams, Chutneys & Hand Made Chocolates

Range of Meats from Local Butcher

Selection of Wines and Local Beers

Emergency Medical Cabinet

Toiletries & General Groceries

Greetings Cards & Postage Stamps

Hand Made Jewellery & Accessories

Harlequin Dry Cleaning Agents

Come and have a Hot or Cold Drink and a slice of Cake

Orders can be made up and be ready for you to collect

It is also important to remember that there are other people working behind the scenes so added to those thanks I would like to include John Storton who puts together our "Soar Points" magazine and Ed Pickering who had been responsible for dealing with the boat licences which produces additional revenue for the club. As with every organisation there occurs the odd ripple which needs attention and the committee has I know done its best to ensure the smooth running of the club. Some of you are members of other boat clubs but it has been good to see that you continue to support the Soar Boating Club by attending events such as the May Day Weekend, the Birthday Weekend, the working parties and more recently the Burn's Night celebration.

Soon after my appointment I took it upon myself to have a re-read of the rules. This club has an excellent set of rules that are comprehensive and well written but every now and again things change so I am pleased that the committee has agreed that the rules should be regularly reviewed to ensure that the club is up to date with all legislation and communication systems which are constantly changing in this modern era.

One section of our rules refers to the club Trustees and I soon found out that not all members were aware that the club had Trustees, and some of those that did know could not name the Trustees.

I obtained a copy of the current Trust Deed which is dated 23rd July 1962 and signed by the original Trustees.

The committee has agreed that a new Trust Deed is required which will be signed by the current Trustees.

Paul Sharpe has undertaken to arrange this and I accompanied Paul to a meeting with a local firm of Solicitors who will draw up the necessary documents.

At the same time the Solicitors will get the land registered at the Land Registry.

Some work was done on this fairly recently but was not finalised at the time.

Last month I met with the four Trustees who are appointed for life and I am pleased that they have all indicated that they are prepared to continue.

I am also pleased that the committee has agreed that the Trustees should have a higher profile and to this end their names will appear on the club notice board and in club publications where appropriate.

Ahead of this I can tell you that the four Trustees are Arthur Kenney who was first appointed in 1999, David Gassor and Robert Pickering who were first appointed in 2000, and Stan Sidorowicz who was first appointed in 2001, all of whom have been Commodores.

Tel. 01509 64 64 64

e-mail: chris.brian.pheasant@btinternet.com



Introducing the most significant changes to the boat safety scheme examination – January 2013

1st January 2013 has brought about various small changes to the Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) Examination Checking Procedures for privately owned and privately managed boats.

1. One new mandatory check has been introduced concerning portable fuel tanks in inboard engine spaces.
2. Five new 'advice' checks concerning a.c. electrical systems have been introduced.
3. There is a new 'advice' check for solid fuel appliances.
4. 15 existing checks are amended to introduce an enhanced technical requirement.
5. Some checks have been withdrawn and replaced; some have amended allowances;
6. Some checks have increased options or withdrawn requirements;
7. Some editorial clarifications have been introduced.

Please note this further advice concerning examination preparation which the BSS is emphasising.

Boaters are asked to help themselves (and their examiner) stay safe by:

- Making available for examination the shore power, battery charging and other power source leads for examination of type and condition.
- Providing information about the location of the a.c. consumer unit to the examiner in advance of the BSS examination.
- Where practicable and safe to do so, boat owners should disconnect shore-power, battery charging and other power sources in readiness for the BSS examination.

The most significant changes to the BSS can be found at under the box titled The BSS Examination you will find a link, "Revised checks" and another, "the link".

Happy Boating
Gary Askam

I discussed with the Trustees the proposed rule change that did not get sufficient support to be approved at the AGM last year and they all agreed that in the best interests of the club that this rule ought to be changed so that the club returns to being a mutual trading members' club.

I did try to get a proposal in place for this AGM but unfortunately was not able to do so in accordance with the club rules so it is something to be borne in mind for next year together with any other changes which need to be considered.

Another clause within the existing Trust Deed made it the responsibility of the Trustees to have the premises insured in the names of the Trustees. This is already covered in the existing insurance policy but clearly needs to be reworded in the new Trust Deed.

Insurance was another item that I examined earlier last year and I am now pleased that Nick Taylor, who has experience of insurance, has agreed to take responsibility for the insurance cover needed for this club.

Those four items - the constitution / rules of the club, the Trust Deed, the registering of the land and the insurance policy when revised and update will, I believe, add to the strong backcloth that the club currently enjoys.

Finally, may I say a personal thank you to all those members who have given me generous help, advice and support in my first year as President.

Mike Hammond

SOAR BOATING CLUB **Club field**

As you know we are always looking for help and we wonder if you could spare some of your spare time by helping with the mowing of the club field?

Full training will be given to all helpers.

If you are interested could you please contact George Bishop.

Tel.07710 855224 E-mail:- soarboatingclub@talktalk.net

Commodore's Message

I would like to take this opportunity to say how proud I am to be Commodore of the Soar Boating Club in the year of its 60th Birthday and do this with my family name of Westby on the board. This makes it extra special for me as my family have been active members of the club for many years, not only in the usual way of attending events, cruises and many working weekends, but my Father has gone the extra mile by cutting the grass for years before the days of rotas, but also earned the reputation of the phrase "don't stand still otherwise Ron will paint you".

This is the year of Girl Power too with not only myself but Vice Commodore Jane Askam, Rear Commodore Glenis Hulme, Honorary Treasurer Jane Askam, and Honorary Secretary Helen Taylor all being ladies.

We have already had our first event of this year's calendar with a very successful Working Weekend, with over 50 people turning up to help over 3 days, so a big thank you to you all.

This year's Birthday Weekend will be 15th and 16th June, with the traditional Church Service and buffet at the club on Sunday 16th June. With this being a very special year in the club's history we would love to see you all there.

We have also had to make a change to the Commodore's Cruise. With the offer of a boat for myself and Glen we are now planning to leave the club on Monday 17th June, after the Birthday Weekend, with a trip up the River Soar to Watermead Country Park and return on Friday 21st June, in time for the visit of the Classic Motor Boat Association.

Keep an eye on your emails as we will send out all event information, which will also go on the notice board in the clubhouse, but don't hesitate to contact Glenis or myself if you need more information.

Have a great year and it would be fantastic to see you all

Jennifer Westby and Glen Gee

CLUB SALES

Club Merchandise with the S.B.C. Motive embroidered on.

POLO SHIRTS ADULTS £9.25

Sizes - XS - 34 - 36 S - 36 - 38 M - 40 - 42 L - 42 - 44
XL - 44 - 46 2XL - 48 - 50 3XL - 50 - 52 4XL - 52 - 54
5XL - 54 - 56 6XL - 56 - 58 7XL - 58 - 60

COLOURS - White, Black, Sports Grey, Red, Navy, Burgundy, Bottle Green, Sunflower, Sky Blue, Royal Blue, Emerald, Purple, Charcoal, Orange.

SWEATSHIRTS ADULTS £11.75

SIZES - S - 34 - 36 M - 38 - 40 L - 42 - 44 XL - 46 - 48
2XL - 50 - 52

COLOURS - Sports Grey, Burgundy, Red, Bottle Green, Black, Navy, Royal Blue, Sunflower.

TEE SHIRTS

ADULTS £6.75

SIZES - MEN'S - S 36" M 38" L 40" XL 42" 2XL 44" 3XL 46"
LADIES - S 32"/34" M 34"/37" L 37"/40" XL 40"/43"

COLOURS - Black, Royal Blue, Navy, Red, Bottle Green, White, Charcoal, Maroon.

FLEECES

ADULTS £17.25

SIZES - XS 36" - S 38" M 40" L 42"/44" XL 46" 2XL 48"
3XL 50"/52" 4XL 54"

COLOURS - Black, Navy, Royal Blue, Red, Bottle Green, Charcoal, Maroon.

CAPS - ADULT £7.75 CHILDREN'S £7.25

Colours - Royal Blue, Black, Red, Navy.

I HAVE JUST STARTED A NEW ORDER SO IF YOU ARE INTERESTED
PLEASE CONTACT J. STORTON A.S.A.P.

e-mail johnstorton@talktalk.net tel. 0116 2395009

We are now in Montgiscard. Nothing here really, just a water tap. No free Wifi here but I did get it last year. The orange network was left open when I went through. All the single locks are now automated but there are lock keepers on the doubles. They are now slow in operation. A single now takes as long as a double, about 20 minutes.

We should be in Toulouse tomorrow and our adventure will soon be over. That leaves next year virtually untouched and it starts with our new dog, Coco.

Barry Askam.

The End

CRUISING ON THE RIVER THAMES THIS YEAR?

WEIR DANGER

Boat users navigating the River Thames should be aware that power - generating devices being fitted to the weirs on the river are causing a disturbance to the water flow. This disturbance from the hydro schemes has the potential to draw small craft into the weirs.

The Environment Agency will be putting signs in place to warn boat owners of the danger. In the meantime, boat users should use additional caution when navigating close to the weirs.



**SOAR BOATING CLUB BURGEES TO
FLY ON YOUR BOAT OR CARAVAN**

£20.00.

PLEASE CONTACT DIANNE BISHOP

RIVER CANAL RESCUE

If you are a new member to Soar Boating Club and thinking of joining River Canal Rescue, you are entitled to a discount of 20% off any level of cover when you initially join, and then discounts off your renewals thereafter. If you are already a member of River Canal Rescue and a member of Soar Boating Club don't forget that if you have no claims you are entitled to a discount of 5% when you renew your membership, and if you pay by direct debit or debit card you will receive another 5% discount. All you have to do is to say that you are a member of Soar Boating Club and then quote our club code no. SBC 2011.

SOAR BOATING CLUB

As you are aware we are always looking for ideas to raise money for your club, so if any member has any unwanted gifts etc and would like to donate them to Soar Boating Club for Raffle Prizes it would be gratefully appreciated. If you do have a donation could you please contact Glenis Hulme Social Secretary .

2012 RACE NIGHT

The Race Night that the late Keith Broughton, last year's Commodore, organized was a tremendous success by raising £500.00 for Rainbows Children's Hospice and another £500.00 for TS Venomous.

Rainbows was opened in the Spring of 1994 by H.R.H. Prince Charles. Originally Rainbows had 8 beds but later the building was extended and now they have a total of 14 beds. It caters for 250 registered families with a minimum of 16 nights stay per year spread over 3 to 4 night breaks. Rainbows are having an open day on Saturday 14th September, so why not pop along to it?

TS Venomous is the headquarters for Loughborough Sea Scouts and is based on the River Soar at Loughborough. Early last year their headquarters was destroyed by fire caused by an electrical fault. Loughborough Sea Scouts have took part in many fund raising events to rebuild their clubhouse and buy new equipment. The money that was raised by Soar Boating Club Members was much appreciated by the Scouts and their organizers who would like to thank you all once again for your generous donation.

Many thanks to all involved at Soar Boating Club.

CANAL & RIVER TRUST BOAT LICENCES

You can renew your licence or buy a short term canal licence through the boat club.

Please contact:- Jo Sharpe
5 Far Lane
Normanton on Soar
Leicestershire
LE11 5HA

Tel. 01509 769102 Mobile 07788 144465
e-mail :- paul@sharpeandcoaccountants.co.uk

You can send your completed renewal form with cheque, made payable to River & Canal Trust, to Jo and she will send it off for you or issue you with a short term licence. The SBC receives commission for every licence renewed this way. This all helps with your club funds.

CAR PARKING

If you are going out on your boat and there is an event due at the Clubhouse could you please park your car near the gates.

If you unload your car near your boat could you please return it to the car park as soon as possible. This will then leave the roads clear for other members to access their boats without driving on the grass.

SECURITY

Could all club members remember to close and lock the main gates to the club field at all times and don't to forget to bring your club keys with you!

RUBBISH

Could you please take as much rubbish home with you as possible.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We are pleased to welcome New Members:-

Paul and Carole Gilbey SILVER DAWN
Keith and Val Hollingworth KUMPEL

Resignations:-

Sean and Irene Cayless KAROLIEN
Carol Kirk THE BLUE POPPY
Barrie and Fiona Cook DAYDREAMER
Paul and Wendy Ticer TELFORD
Mark and Jean Langley ARDANZA
Dave and Sylvia Everett LARK

problem and returned after a few minutes with the goods. Ten euro's changed hands and I was much relieved. I will get a spare impeller and a cover plate this winter. I wonder if they do them in stainless steel. A quick test run and we are ship-shape again.

Thursday 29th September.

Happy birthday Gary, It seems so short a time ago when he arrived.

The forward cabin toilet is getting on a bit now and has been acting up. It was failing to empty and needing several flushes. I had more or less decided to change it next year. It is a 24-volt Sanimarine I fitted when we built the boat 11 years ago. I have had to dismantle it a couple of times before to clear debris from the internal screen. The blockage seemed to be a chopped up plastic bag, so I think we will have to be more circumspect about unwrapping our food before we eat it. That however was a red herring. The real problem was calcification on one of the outlet bends. The rubber hose had not been removed before, as it had a single use clamp on it where it needed a Jubilee clip. With the hose removed I could see it half reduced the pipe in diameter. While I sorted that out I let the whole pump unit stand fizzing, full of de-calcifying toilet cleaner and water. It now performs like a new one and is a joy to behold. At £600 odd pounds each for a replacement relief now comes two ways. Does anyone know where all the calcium comes from? It must be from us I suppose but it is a killer for electric toilets

Friday 30th September.

I spent the morning changing a drinking water pump. The pump pressure switch governs the pressure on the system. I have found the cheap Jabsco pumps work fine but do not regulate very well. They cut out high and cut in very low and when having a shower it is either just a trickle or blasting your delicate areas. I can hardly wait to have a shower now.

Taking the rubbish to the bins is one of life's less interesting jobs. It does provide exercise and provides an opportunity to see any new arrivals. I decided to walk along the port, up into town and down back to the boat. I was pleasantly surprised to find the Mairie had set up a stage outside the Halle Du Grains. A South Pacific style band was playing and a dance team had everyone's attention. The delightful young girls had grass skirts and could make them shake in a most amusing way. One came over and asked me to join in with her but I had to refuse. My right knee was aching a little after all that walking but some of the audience joined in. They had great fun but could not shake it like the Hawaiian girls did. In this life you have to be in the right place at the right time and yes I did manage to get the grin off my face.

9th October 2011 The last 3 nights we spent in Port Lauragaise. We had free electricity and water on a calm secure mooring. I could even get free Wifi from my boat with my Wifi power booster.

We are now in Castelnaudary for a few days. It was a smooth run up either on our own or with one other boat. From Villepinte we shared with a French couple and all went smoothly. We were doing a flight of four locks in just over half an hour but rapid progress is very tiring with the scramble up the lock steps to hook on the ropes. We rope from the front to a bollard halfway down the lock and push gently on the engine to hold position. I hold the back rope on a bollard but it is only to comply with French regulations. It doesn't do much at all.

This morning the train to Carcassonne and bus to Trebes went well and we now have the car here. We are planning a trip to the beach now as the weather is still hot. Wednesday 14th September.

Yesterday we went to Narbonne Plage. It took one hour fifteen minutes at 80 mph for most of the way but the sea and beach were beautiful. The sea was 25 degrees C and clear.

No trouble finding a car park, as the French holiday season is now over. It is now left to old fogies like us to enjoy in peace.

Our mobile Fritterrie was closed up but there was a beach café open so we did not starve. The drive home seemed special, as the low sun angle lit up the trees and rocks, showing us different colours and contrasts. We came to thinking we had stolen an extra summer's day from the autumn.

Wednesday 28th September

Last night Adrian and Lorna invited me next door for a drink on their boat, Ariana. Ariana is a similar boat to Balestra but a little bit bigger. Built in Tewksbury I believe. They are a New Zealand couple and live on their boat. They have a caravan and go down to Spain when it gets really cold. It was a very pleasant evening chatting about our experiences. They were off early this morning, heading towards Carcassonne for their winter mooring.

I notice the blogs are stretching out a bit now, just like the summer. The temperature gets up to 26C at 2 o'clock but drops down to a comfortable 21C in the evening. I found a broken engine mounting bracket a couple of days ago and managed to bodge it up with a piece of timber, so I can still run the engine for power and hot water. I phoned Lansing Marine and they are sending me a replacement. I have always found them most helpful. Margaret will bring it when she comes. While I was down in the engine room, I decided to change the cooling water impeller. A simple task but it revealed the cover plate to be badly worn. I could not just turn it over as I had done that trick last time, so it was badly worn both sides. I thought I would have to sand it down flat again, or make a new plate. Luckily I curbed my usual enthusiasm and went up and made a cup of tea. I then thought of all the hire boats that must have this same problem and the "Le Boat" boat yard is a quick bike ride from this mooring. I have barely adequate French nowadays but the engineer could see the

YOUR NEW FLAG OFFICERS for 2013 and THE TRUSTEES of your Club

May we welcome your new Flag Officers for 2013 and give them all our best wishes for the coming year.

Commodore

Jennifer Westby e-mail - westby.jennifer924@googlemail.com
Mobile 07803 935621

Honorary Secretary

Helen Taylor e-mail - helen@thebarsby.co.uk
Tel. 01509 843310 Mobile 07828 597585

Honorary Treasurer

Jane Askam e-mail - jane.askam@btinternet.com
Mobile 07973 445123

Membership Secretary

Dianne Bishop e-mail - soarboatingclub@talktalk.net
Mobile 07850 266972

Social Events

Glenis Hulme

Boat Licensing

Jo Sharpe e-mail - paul@sharpeandcoaccountants.co.uk
Mobile 07788 144465

Amenities

George Bishop e-mail- soarboatingclub@talktalk.net Mobile 07710 855224
Amenities Assistants – Ian Hutchinson and Philip Stafford

Diesel - Philip Stafford , Peter Toon when on site.

Also the committee would like to remind you once again of the Trustees of Soar Boating Club - Mr. Arthur Kenney, Mr. David Gassor, Mr. Robert Pickering, Mr. Stan Sidorowicz,

May I also remind you that there are a lot of club members who take an active part in the running of our club and club field. We as club members must thank them for all their time and effort which is very much appreciated.

BALESTRA BUMBLINGS

Continued

26th August 2011.

This morning I awoke at 5 o'clock for my usual bathroom visit and noticed a street light shining in from the wrong side of the boat. I found we had been cast adrift. Luckily the pins were still attached to the lines and were retrieved. The gang plank is tied on in position and as the boat was blown round it fell into the water and dug into the canal bottom. This stopped the boat being blown into the bridge or onto our neighbours boats. The Gendarmes car stopped but they saw I had it under control and carried on their patrol. Later that morning we took the boat back to the other side and re-did the mooring up. No damage or casualties.

Yesterday we had our usual swim and I took the fridge thermometer into the sea. The water temperature was 27 degrees C. The air temperature was 31 degrees C. It is a bit too warm now.

We are now thinking of the journey back up the Du Midi. I will take the car up to Capestang and see if Lawrence our Dutch friend will bring me back to the boat. If he can't, we will arrange a day when he can. Then we fill up with water. As they have removed all the free water points at Beziers, it is a bit like bricking the camel but we do hold 2400 litres so it is not a real problem for us.

Last Monday 29th, I went up to Capestang with the car and Lawrence brought me back to the boat. We were lucky to meet him as he and Jannie have arranged to look after a friend's house and five cats. If I had come a week later he would not have been there. Quite a few of us have our cars here, so lifts are not too difficult to arrange.

It was half eleven before we set off on what is usually a two day run to Capestang. It was one of those runs when all goes well. The locks were waiting for us and we locked through with a pleasant English group on a hire boat. We often have to moor below the Fonserannes flight and ascend the next day but we were beckoned in by a competent eclusier. There are seven locks with bollards placed to be of the least possible use. The locks are filled with a flushing action like those old multi seat toilets. As the chamber fills the boats move forward into the next chamber, the gates close behind and the filling continues.

The way we work, is for Margaret to drive and I walk up with a boat hook, to hook the line from the front and put it on the bollard. Then I take the rope from Margaret, hook it on the bollard and back to her. I then control the front and Margaret the back. The locks are lined with hundreds of disbelieving tourists waiting for us to cock it up.

The gates in front are open to start with, except the topmost of course.

The operators seem to have a competition between them for the fastest ascent time. Safety and consideration are not part of their training programme. This is contrasted by the majority of eclusiers on the rest of the system.

We planned to moor at the top but all the places were taken by hotel boats and hire boats so we continued on to Capestang. We moored up for 20.45hrs and had the TV up and running in time for Emmerdale Farm and Corrie. A hot tiring day.

Tuesday 30th August.

After a light lunch we took off for Narbonne Plage. It is the end of season here now and we parked easily. It was a perfect day, 27 degrees air temperature and 23 degrees in the sea. Most people here now are our age, some with families. Not quite so many young people. We could not resist sharing a portion of chips with sauce from the mobile Fritterie before returning for our dinner. I have stopped losing weight now for some reason. One of life's mysteries I think.

Friday 2nd September.

We left Capestang, having taken the car to Trebes and being brought back by Lawrence. What a convenience that is. Our first port of call, Roubia. This is a nice little town and the restaurant doubles as a supermarket. We have always passed through before and I am pleased to know better now. Sunday it was the picturesque Homps, with free electricity and water for one day.

Monday we were in Puicheric, very quiet rural setting, till 06.00hrs that is. Then tractors and trailers come rattling over the bridge to fetch in the grape harvest. Harvest time can be very noisy in the morning, as white grapes have to be picked before dawn for some reason. Lawrence is a mine of such information.

This run up to Trebes is through vast vineyards, with spectacular views to our right, over the valley. Every few kilometres we gain a few metres in height and they add to give a delightful vista as we twist and turn our way round. From Puicheric, the locks come in two's and three's but we were sharing with a German group and had no difficulty at all.

Thursday 8th September.

I have been catching up on paint repairs and brightening up the paintwork generally and on a boat this size, that is a lot of hard work, so this afternoon we took the car up into the hills. We usually go out, get lost and rely on the satnav to get us home. It was a bit different this time as I missed the turn I wanted and was lost straight away. Our luck held as normally and we had a lovely trip. We went out to Villar-En-Val, Villetritouls, Taurize, Servies-En-Val, Arquettes-En-Val, Fajac-En-Val and a few places I didn't catch the names of and were rewarded with spectacular views. This summer is going far too quickly.

Tuesday 13th September.