



Birmingham Canal Navigations Society

50th ANNIVERSARY YEAR

BCN

MARATHON
CHALLENGE

Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th May 2018

INFORMATION & RULES

Introduction

The Canal and River Trust have asked that boats do not navigate the section of the Wednesbury Old Canal from Ryders Green Junction towards the Ridgeacre Stub because of excessive pollution. At the time of revising these rules it is not possible to navigate to the winding hole

At their height, the Birmingham Canal Navigations (BCN) extended for approximately 160 miles with numerous private branches, arms & basins to serve the industries of the region. Over the last 100 years this total has been reduced to approximately 100 miles. Unfortunately, much of this is under used. With at least one section being impossible to navigate at the present time, the BCN Marathon Challenge was reintroduced in an effort to increase traffic on the lesser used parts of the BCN. The BCNS gratefully acknowledge the previous work of the IWA which has been extremely useful in the preparation of this document.

In view of continuous cuts to funding it is possible that maintenance work on lesser used canals will suffer. It is, therefore, more important than ever to “use it or lose it”. It is hoped that the Challenge, together with the BCNS Explorer Cruises, will increase the use of the BCN and that all waterways users will continue to use this unique network, in all seasons.

Eligibility

The event is open to everyone with a boat licensed for use on Canal and River Trust waterways. Other users, e.g. anglers, bird watchers, canoeists, cyclists, naturalists and walkers etc are very welcome to participate in any way which enhances the spirit of the event and the organisers would be very pleased to receive constructive suggestions from such groups on how this may be achieved.

Maintenance Benefits

Participants are requested to record any difficulties or problems experienced with the canals or their infrastructure e.g. broken paddle gear, shallow or obstructed bridge holes or lengths, badly leaking lock gates etc. The details should be passed on to the organisers with the completed log who will submit a combined report to Canal and River Trust with a request for the defects to be rectified. Any serious problems e.g. total failure of lock gates or paddle gear should be reported to Canal and River Trust immediately.

Health & Safety, Emergency Advice and Contacts

Contact numbers and emergency advice is given towards the end of this document.

Rubbish

Any rubbish picked up by propeller MUST NOT be returned into the canal or deposited on the canal side, but should be retained until it can be placed into skips or bins at approved disposal sites. Failure to observe this requirement WILL result in a points deduction at the discretion of the organisers, whose decision is final

Commemorative Plaques and Notification of Winner

All entrants will receive a commemorative plaque. In addition, the winner will receive a winner's shield. The results will be published shortly after the event and presentations will take place at a future event (to be announced). In all cases of interpretation of the rules and declaration of the winner the decision of the organisers will be final and no correspondence will be entered into. Additional plaques are available at a nominal cost but must be ordered in advance

Cruise Logs

Cruise logs will be available from 1st April 2018 onwards

The cruise log, which will include questions on features encountered en route, will be included in a sealed envelope. Participants are "on their honour" not to open this envelope before 7.55 am on Saturday 26th May 2018

RULES OF THE CHALLENGE

The rules have been revised with the following aims:

- To encourage the use of lesser used BCN Waterways
 - To simplify the rules for both participants and organisers
 - To try and achieve a better balance between full length boats and short, more manoeuvrable craft. This is ongoing and may favour different boats on occasions
 - To reduce the need to "police" the event
 - To speed up declaration of results
 - To retain the interest introduced by previous treasure hunt events
 - To retain and improve on the spirit of camaraderie among the entrants
1. To create a spirit of adventure and competition, a winning shield will be awarded to the boat crew who accrue the greatest number of points during the Challenge. Bonus points will be awarded for navigating lesser used waterways and points will be awarded for correctly answered questions at certain places. In the event of a tie the winner will be the boat crew who cruise the greater distance on the bonus rated sections. Entrants are reminded that although competitiveness is normal, the primary aim of the event is not to find 'a winner' but to encourage the use of the BCN.
 2. The Challenge will start at 8.00am on Saturday and finish at 2.00pm on Sunday. Participants may navigate for as long as they like during the 30 hour period up to a maximum of 24 hours. It is the responsibility of all boat crews to navigate safely and to ensure that the members of the crew operating the boat do not become overtired and remain competent to navigate their craft.
 3. The route cruised must be continuous. It is not acceptable for any craft to "jump" any sections by cruising during non-qualifying hours, i.e. the six hour rest period.
 4. All waterways by laws, rules and regulations governing the use of boats on canals must be adhered to at all times, including the correct use of locks and **observance of speed limits**.

5. The average speed of powered craft will be calculated. Entrants whose average speed is in excess of 4 miles per hour or show inconsiderate cruising **WILL** have their points total reduced or be disqualified. Speed **must always** be reduced significantly when in the vicinity of other boats and when approaching junctions or bends. Speed **must always** be appropriate to the circumstances
6. Participants should be courteous and considerate to other canal users, whether or not they are participating in the Challenge and should save water wherever possible by waiting their turn at locks.
7. All boats should complete the cruise log included with the entry pack showing starting place and time, route covered, number of crew etc. Logs which are incomplete or incorrectly completed may not be included. The boat log should be handed to the organisers within 2 hours of the finish of the event or sent by post to Roy Kenn at the address given below. Logs received later than one week after the event will not be included.
8. Many lock flights are fitted with anti vandal locks. Participating crews must re-lock the anti vandal locks after passing through unless there is another boat waiting or approaching. Do not loan any lock working equipment to any non-boaters.
9. It is reasonable to expect slower boats to give way to faster ones that are following. The faster boat must wait to be called through before attempting to overtake.
10. Listed canals only will score points.
11. All boats should have their names and registration number clearly visible. If possible, participating craft should be decorated to show that they are taking part in the Challenge. This will assist participating craft to recognise each other.
12. If an entrant encounters a craft in difficulty, whether a participant or not, then assistance should be offered wherever possible. Boats in difficulty may be towed if the craft are suitably insured and the crews are competent to do so. Those who give assistance to other craft may, at the discretion of the organisers, be awarded up to 30 additional points. The number of points awarded will depend on the nature and duration of the help given. The organisers' decision will be final. Please include full details of aid given or received with your log book. Both log books must record the help before points will be considered
13. The designated finish point this year is Oldbury Top Lock on the Titford Canal.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Starting and Finishing

The Marathon Challenge will start at 8.00am on Saturday.

Entrants may start at any point on the BCN

All boats should finish at the designated finish, although this is not always possible

The event will finish at 2.00pm on Sunday.

Entrants must report their arrival to the finishing marshals on NB Placidus who will record the time of their arrival.

Boats will not accrue cruising points after 2.00pm on Sunday or after 24 hours cruising has been completed.

If a boat does not reach the designated finish by the 2.00pm deadline, finishing points will be treated as the nearest bridge or lock to the actual location of the boat at the end of its cruise at 2.00pm on Sunday, whether or not 24 hours of cruising has been completed.

Allocation of Points

Basic mileage points will be calculated this year with the following formula:-

Boats up to 30' – 1 point per mile

Boats 31' – 49' – 1.05 points per mile

Boats 50' upwards – 1.1 points per mile

Entrants can cruise sections as often as they choose. However, points will only be awarded for one passage unless otherwise shown in the log.

Lesser used waterways will be awarded bonus points for both miles and locks as detailed in the route planner.

Certain sections along your route will require a “treasure hunt” style question to be answered correctly in order to be awarded bonus points. The questions will be listed in the cruising log in the relevant section of the canal. Answering questions not on your chosen route will not be scored. Permanently open stop locks will not qualify for lock points.

Photographic evidence will be required at specific places, to be received or viewed by the organisers within one week after the event

Certain arms that are used for residential moorings will not qualify for points. Obviously, the organisers cannot stop boats navigating these arms but in an effort to discourage navigation no points will be awarded.

Paired boats

Paired boats with a combined length greater than 70 foot, will be awarded 1 additional point for each full 15 miles cruised.

Paired boats must be operated as a pair in order to qualify for additional points; it is acceptable however for butties to be detached at the following points only without any loss of points

- Park Head Top Lock
- The Pump house on the Titford Canal (if navigating to the pools)

- Caponfield Wides (if navigating the Bradley Arm)
- Engine Arm Junction (if navigating the Engine Arm)
- Walsall Junction (if navigating the Town Arm)
- Stewarts and Lloyds wides (if navigating to Hawne Basin)

Butties can also be disconnected if navigating into the photographic bonus areas listed in the route planner.

Walkers will receive 1.5 points for each full mile walked.

Crew Size

Additional points will be scored by boats with small crews as follows:

Single Handed with no remote control and no lock crew	2.5 points per lock
Single Handed with remote control but no lock crew	2 points per lock
2 crew (including steerer)	1.5 points per lock
3 crew (including steerer)	1.25 points per lock
4 crew or more (including steerer)	standard points per lock

Paired boats with 1 or 2 crew will receive one basic point for each lock worked by each boat.

Paired boats with 3 or 4 crew will receive 1.5 basic points for each lock worked by both boats.

Paired boats with 5 or more crew will receive one basic point for each lock worked by both boats plus one bonus basic point for each full lock flight worked.

Crew numbers refer to the **maximum** number of crew members who have been on the boat **at any time during the Challenge**. Eg If a boat starts with a crew of 2 but 4 more people arrive later to help the boat down a flight of locks then the crew number will be 6 for the whole event

Single handed boaters will also be given a bonus of 3 points for every full 10 miles that they complete to reflect the increased difficulty that they have when mooring for locks, looking for clues, having a warm drink etc

Bonus Points

Bonus points will be awarded to boats that navigate to designated places and correctly answer the questions in the cruising log. The number of points for each location will vary to encourage the use of certain sections of the BCN.

Entrants **MUST** submit photographic evidence of visits during the Challenge to Special Locations listed on page 3 of the Route Planner. Photographs must clearly show the location and the boat in order to qualify for the bonus points. Again the organisers decision is final.

Decorated boats

The best decorated boat on arrival at the designated finish before 2.00pm on Sunday 27th May will receive a bonus of 5 points. The theme for the occasion should be 'BNC Society'. The organisers decision will be final.

Special Bonus Points – Dudley Tunnel

Special Bonus Points will be awarded for the passage of Dudley Tunnel, either by legging or being towed by a tunnel tug. (see route planner)

Dudley Tunnel is of restricted dimensions and boats wishing to make this passage should check that their boat will pass through prior to the Marathon Challenge.

The passage MUST be booked in advance. Tel: 0121 557 4018 or 01384 236275

The escorting boat skipper should sign the cruise log as confirmation. Please remember the assistance given by Dudley Canal Trust in enabling the passage through the tunnel. The organisers wish to thank Dudley Canal Trust for their support.

Finishing Bonus

A bonus of 15 points will be awarded to those whose Challenge ends at the designated finish before 2.00pm

A bonus of 7 points will be awarded to those who arrive at the designated finish between 2.00pm and 3.00pm

A bonus of 3 points will be awarded to those who arrive at the designated finish between 3.00pm and 4.00pm

A bonus of 5 points will be awarded for those who hand their completed logs to the organisers at the designated finish before 2.10pm on Sunday.

A bonus of 3 points will be awarded to those who hand in their logs before 3.00pm and a bonus of 2 points will be awarded to those who hand in their logs before 4.00pm.

Advice on Completing Logs

Each section of the BCN is entered on the cruising log by the name of the canal. Enter the miles and locks completed in each section, together with the times and answer any questions that may be set for that section of canal. It will be much easier if the log is completed as you go along. Individual short section distances and times have been included for your convenience when planning your route. When on the Challenge, to avoid constant time checks there is no need to record time into and out of each short section. You can record the time into the first short section and the time out of a conveniently sited section to give you a total time for a longer length of canal.

Please record in the relevant column the sections cruised in the order that you cruise them. i.e No 1 for the first section cruised, then No 2 and so on. The highest number should be at the finish of your Challenge

Return of Logs

All logs and other relevant papers should be handed to the organisers on NB Placidus at the designated finish by 4.00pm on the Sunday of the Challenge. Late return of logs due to volume of traffic or accident will not be penalised providing the organisers have been notified. However, the

decision of the organisers will be final in this matter. In any event all logs and papers must reach the organisers by post within one week of the finish of the event.

Send to: Mr R Kenn, 14 Hollemeadow Avenue, Walsall, West Midlands, WS3 1JQ.

Tie Breaker

In the event of a tie the winner will be the boat which has cruised the greatest distance on the bonus rated sections

DISCLAIMERS

It is a condition of entry that the boat has a current Canal and River Trust licence, a valid Boat Safety Certificate and third party liability insurance for a minimum of £1million, in accordance with Canal and River Trust licensing rules. Additional hull or other insurance is at the discretion of the boat owner.

The organisers accept no responsibility for damage occasioned to or loss from boats and boat crews participating in the event or for damage caused by participating boats or boat crews, howsoever the loss or damage may be caused.

Boats and crews are responsible for their own safety while participating in the event.

In the event of a breakdown, the organisers will endeavour to render assistance if possible. However, this cannot be guaranteed. Entrants should make contingency plans for breakdown or other unforeseen circumstance as they would when undertaking any cruise on the canal.

Access for boats to certain sections of canal may need to be clarified with Canal and River Trust before and during the event. If a canal or section of canal is closed as a result of a planned or emergency stoppage, no points will be awarded for that canal or section until re opening.

The BCNS cannot guarantee that any section of the canal will be open or navigable for this event.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION AND CONTACT NUMBERS

In a serious emergency or serious incidence of antisocial behaviour telephone the emergency services: 112 (preferred from a mobile phone) or **999**

Be prepared to give your location – nearest bridge, lock, public house or other landmark.

If possible, try and photograph the individuals involved with antisocial behaviour incidents if this can be done without aggravating the incident further.

Organisers mobile phone 07813 529 015. This phone is located on N B Placidus and will be manned throughout the Challenge.

In case of difficulty phone the above number and every effort will be made to provide advice and/or assistance.

Please inform the event organiser on NB Placidus of any adverse incident

Back Up Mobile Phone No: **07968 824 694**

Canal and River Trust

Canal and River Trust
Peels Wharf, Lichfield Street
Fazeley
Tamworth Staffs
B78 3QZ

0303 0404040

Email: enquiries.westmidlands@canalrivertrust.org.uk

In emergencies dial: 0800 47 999 47

Health & Safety Information

Keep life saving equipment to hand in case of an emergency. Crews, especially non swimmers, are advised to wear life jackets.

Be aware of members of the public when cruising, especially when working through locks. Be prepared to give them advice about the dangers associated with locks. Take special care when cruising in the twilight, especially when negotiating locks & bridges. Switch on the boat headlight and consider the use of high visibility clothing.

Keep within the speed limit. Keep a lookout for other boats, especially on blind corners. Use the horn when necessary to alert other canal users to your presence.

Take care when moving about the boat and lock areas, especially if you are navigating in twilight. Be aware of the risk of fire. Ensure that all crew members know the location of fire extinguishers and fire blankets.

When navigating remainder waterways, be aware of the greater risk of running aground on silt or other obstruction and the increased risk of debris and weed fouling the propeller. Proceed slowly. Take greater care when clearing propellers. The use of heavy purpose rubber gloves is recommended when probing underwater. All cuts and abrasions should be adequately protected with waterproof dressings.

Beware of the danger of slips, trips and falls

Vessels becoming 'stuck tight' on an underwater obstruction should contact Canal and River Trust and also inform the Event Organisers.

Do not loan windlasses or anti vandal keys to any non boaters.

Infection Risks

Leptospirosis & Hepatitis

Although the risk of contracting either disease is very small, you should be aware of the dangers from waterborne diseases particularly Weil's disease and Hepatitis:

Unlike tap water, the water in canals, rivers and reservoirs is untreated and harmful micro-organisms may be present. However, although the risk of contracting illness (including the much publicised but rare condition Weil's Disease) is extremely small, sensible precautions should be taken as follows:

- Avoid full immersion in water
- Cover all cuts and abrasions with waterproof dressings before contact with the water
- Wash all exposed skin after contact with water and before eating.
- Do not put wet ropes, fishing lines or other objects in your mouth.

Should any illness occur within 2 weeks of contact, you should obtain medical advice. Inform your Doctor that you have been in contact with untreated canal water.

Refuse

Avoid contact as far as possible. Do not handle hypodermic needles and inform Canal and River Trust of their location. In the event of a needle stick injury the injured person should attend the nearest A&E department. **Please inform the event organiser.** Do not return rubbish into the canal or on to the side of the canal. Skips are available at most service stations

Carcases, including Dead Birds

Avoid contact as far as possible. Small carcasses (mice, rats and small birds) should be left where they are to decompose naturally. Inform Canal and River Trust of the location of larger carcasses. In the event of an outbreak of Avian 'Flu, inform Canal and River Trust of the location of any bird carcasses. Seek medical advice if you inadvertently handle a carcass during an outbreak. **Please inform the event organiser.**

Accident and Emergency Hospital Facilities

A&E Facilities are available at

- Walsall Manor Hospital - Moat Road
Walsall
West Midlands
WS2 9PS
01922 721172
- Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Mindelsohn Way
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2WB
0121 627 2000
- Birmingham City Hospital
Dudley Road
Birmingham
West Midlands
B18 7QH
0121 554 3801

- Sandwell General Hospital
Lyndon
West Bromwich
West Midlands
B71 4HJ
0121 553 1831
- Birmingham Heartlands Hospital
Bordesley Green East
Birmingham
B9 5SS
0121 424 2000
- Birmingham Children's Hospital
Saint Chad's Queensway Birmingham,
West Midlands B4 6NH
0121 333 8506
- Good Hope Hospital
Rectory Road,
Sutton Coldfield,
Birmingham,
B75 7RR
0121 424 2000
- Solihull Hospital
Lode Lane
Solihull
West Midlands
B91 2JL
0121 424 2000
- New Cross Hospital,
Wednesfield Road,
Wolverhampton, WV10 0QP
01902 307999
- Russells Hall Hospital
Pensnett Road
Dudley
West Midlands DY1 2HQ
01384 456111

Other Information

The BCN Society have confirmed that the Burger Bar and drinks will be available at the Pump House.

There is a small café on the corner of Engine Street and Tat Bank Road and another café near to the bridge at Lock 5.

Shops and other facilities are available at Langley and Oldbury which are both approximately 20 minutes' walk from the Pump House.

Due to water conservation needs it would be extremely useful if entrants could stagger leaving times wherever possible.

This year the organisers have decided to restrict the number of entries to a maximum of 50. This will help CRT to maintain water levels above the locks.

Numbers already booked will be available from bcnschallenge@gmail.com

A reserve list will be kept and entrants are asked to notify the organisers promptly if for any reason they are unable to take part.