

Bradford Out & About Barge Association

Duties and responsibilities of Skippers

Any prospective Skipper for the Out & About canal boat must read this information. You should be happy that you understand this information before you sign the booking form.

As Skipper you are in charge of the boat, and must accept responsibility for the safe operation of the boat during the hire period. Safe operation of the boat is not just about the physical handling of it; it is also about managing the crew safely. You must read the Skipper's Manual that is made available to each hirer on board the boat; this contains details of all the boat's systems and guidance notes for navigating the boat safely. The purpose of this document is to ensure that anybody who acts as a Skipper has a clear understanding of his or her responsibilities. Serious accidents are very rare but even one is too many, especially if it involves you - we aim to avoid all accidents. What follows are extracts from the Skipper's Manual:

The first thing to say about boat handling is that it's not particularly difficult! That's not to say it can't go wrong, but the main point to bear in mind is that if you keep your speed down and take things slowly it is MUCH easier to get it right (and much less drastic if things do go wrong...). There is a blanket speed limit of just 4 miles per hour on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal - and this is often too fast with a boat as large as the Out & About, you must take care not to produce a breaking wash. It is always best to think of canal boats as SLOW boats. This is the key to good boat handling...

...It is essential that all your crew understand who is in command; they must respect the authority of the Skipper. It is important that you give a safety briefing to all crew (including adults) as soon as possible after you board the boat and certainly before you set off. This should include: use of buoyancy aids and man overboard procedure, procedure in the event of a fire on board, gas safety and a reminder that the interior of the boat is a no smoking area...

...If you are unlucky enough to have a serious accident, then stop and keep calm. Deal with any personal injuries first. Exchange names and addresses with anyone else involved, make notes about what happened and take photographs. Do NOT admit liability or even say sorry - that is a condition of our insurance. Report the incident to the boatyard and proceed only if they authorise it.

A few 'Points to Remember':

Don't allow untrained people to help - keep them clear
Go from end to end through the cabin
Don't throw the back rope if the engine is in gear

No cruising after dark
Don't jump off moving boat
Don't drink and drive

Man overboard:

Falling in not funny; no swimming
Throw lifebelt near, but not at, person in water

Keep boat away especially while engine in gear
Person will need help out of the water

Locks:

Anything wrong, sound horn, drop all paddles
Teamwork; BUT: beware helpers
Take boat in and out slowly; don't stop with rope
Gate versus ground paddles
Don't let windlass slip, and don't leave unattended
Leave all gates and paddles shut
Take great care when using top gate paddles

Don't waste water; check all paddles shut
Keep away from lock side & balance beam
Don't snag boat or tiller on lock walls
Safety catch on when raising paddles
Doors shut against spray
Close anti-vandal locks
Keep boat from footboards & gate beams

Gas:

Changing gas bottles; main gas shut-off
Don't leave cooker unattended when lit
Fire extinguishers and blanket

Lighting and operating gas appliances
Don't block fixed ventilators
Water and shower pumps;

Drinking water - fill tank daily
Horn and tunnel light
Charging batteries (5 hours minimum)
Weed hatch - use & replacement

Using the toilets, only soft paper
Engine controls
Daily checks: greaser & bilge pump