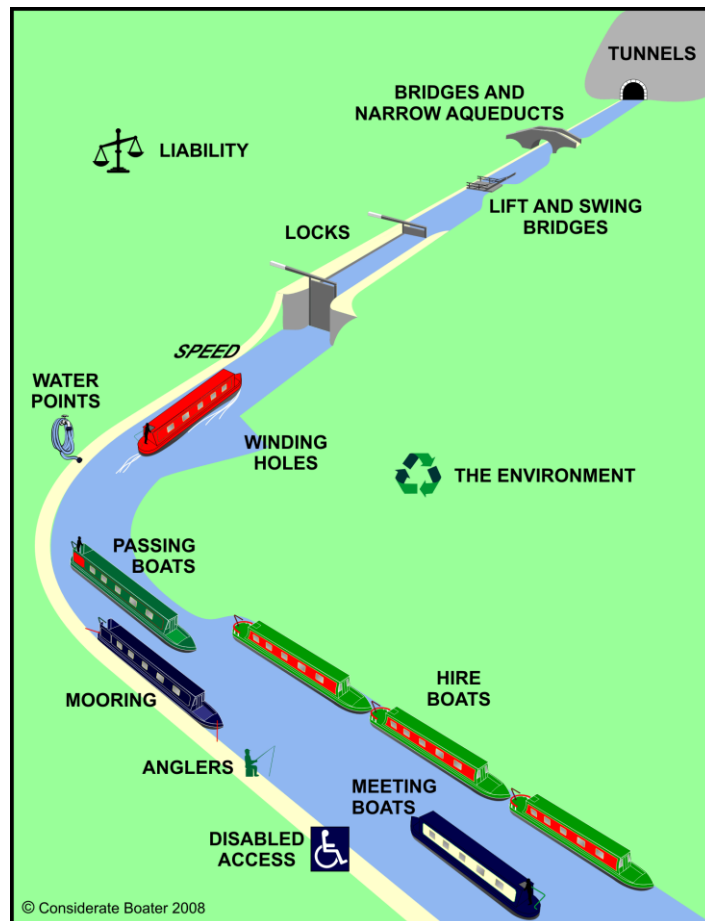


# CONSIDERATE BOATER MANUAL

A guide to boating etiquette  
on the UK inland waterways



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## INTRODUCTION

There are a number of guides\* to help newcomers get to grips with boat handling and safety but there are relatively few ways that people new to boating can learn about boating etiquette.

The “Considerate Boater Manual” is a guide to help understand what is generally considered to be good conduct on the UK inland waterways.

Visit our website [www.ConsiderateBoater.com](http://www.ConsiderateBoater.com) for more information.

Considerate boating can usually be attributed to either "Education" or "Attitude".

### Education

This manual can help to educate boaters by sharing examples of what are seen as considerate actions. Such as helping others at locks and mooring in places where others will not be inconvenienced.

The manual is divided into sections covering each of the waterway features that the boater will come across such as locks, bridges and what to do when meeting other boaters.

Each section includes “Masterclass Tips” and “Avoidance Tips”.

Masterclass Tips represent advanced techniques and attitudes. Some may require more expertise than every day boating, so take care before practising all the guidelines.

Avoidance Tips are the things to avoid if you want to be welcomed by the boating world, especially the more experienced boater.

### Attitude

There is not much we can do to influence attitude in the short term except to lead by example and reward those that show due consideration to us with kind words. That fellow boater who helps us moor up on a rainy night, the engineer that comes out to fix our boat at midnight and the British Waterways employee that goes beyond the call of duty.

Being a Considerate Boater is simple. Think of others in everything you do. Treat every situation with a smile and a cheery wave. If you have an aggressive nature, then leave it at home!

\*The British Waterways and Environment Agency’s “Boater’s Handbook” is an excellent publication for beginners and a good reminder for the more experienced. It can be downloaded on-line at [www.waterscape.com/boatershandbook](http://www.waterscape.com/boatershandbook).

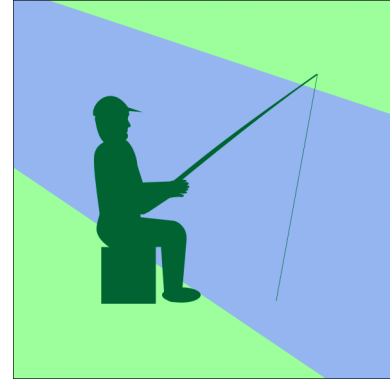
## ANGLERS

Anglers deserve their own mention in the role of the Considerate Boater.

As one of the more prolific users of the inland waterway system, boaters regularly meet and occasionally come into conflict with people enjoying this very popular activity.

The answer when coming across anglers, especially a fishing competition on the bank, is to treat them with the same respect as any other waterway user that has a legitimate right to be there.

The occasional angler might feel that boaters are the intruders and the only way to change their view, (albeit with time), is to be as considerate as possible when meeting them.



After all, many anglers are also boaters.

### Masterclass Tips

Slow down to engine tick over, as you would when passing a moored boat, and stick to the middle of the waterway, unless the anglers indicate otherwise. Don't increase your engine revs until you are at least a boat length beyond the angler.

When you have done this, have a look over your shoulder and you will almost certainly see the last angler giving you acknowledgement of your consideration.

If the angler is landing a big fish as you approach then stop! He/she will be grateful and it will be interesting to watch.

### Avoidance Tips

If you are about to moor up on a Friday or Saturday night and you can see fishing club markers on the towing path, you might be well advised to moor somewhere else. If there is a fishing competition the following day then you might get an early alarm call as they set up their equipment and also find your boat surrounded by anglers.

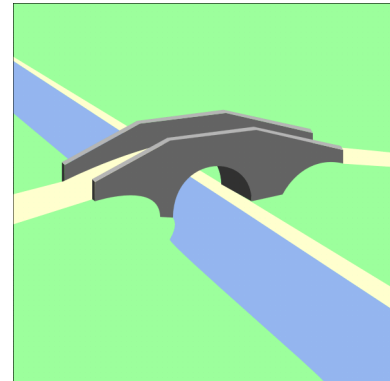
Avoid such quips as "Have you got any chips to go with your fish". Some anglers are serious about their sport and they have probably heard all the "humour" before.

## BRIDGES

It is an unwritten rule of the waterways that if you are going to meet another boat then it will be at a narrow section such as a bridge hole or an aqueduct.

Protocol says that the one closer to the narrowing has priority but consider other elements such as the position of moored boats and whether they make it easier or harder for either of you to manoeuvre.

It is also usually easier for the boat going upstream on a river or the boat nearest the towing path, (many people say towpath), on a canal to give way. If you think it is easier for you to give way first then do so, even though you might normally have priority.



If you are in a convoy, or are meeting a convoy of boats, then take it in turn to pass through the restriction. There might be exceptions to this, like the Pontcysyllte aqueduct, where local rules may apply.

When giving a signal for the other boat to come through wave with your arm out to the side so the other boater will be able to see your silhouette. If you hold your hand out in front of you and draw your hand toward your face then even the best sighted helmsmen may have difficulty seeing your signal.

If you think the other helmsman may not be watching then give a flash of your headlight to attract attention. Use of the horn is discouraged in this sort of situation because it could be misinterpreted. For more information about how to use your horn correctly, see "Sound Signals" in the Environment Agency's Boater's Handbook.

### Masterclass Tips

Make your decisions early and consider the wind effect on your boat and the approaching boat when you are deciding who is going to have priority.

If the wind is blowing against you then, just like a river flow, you will have greater manoeuvrability and you should give way even if you are closer to the narrowing.

Also look to see if the other boat will be subject to cross wind. It might be that if he stops to wait for you then he will be blown across the waterway and block your path anyway.

If the towing path is on your right and a strong wind is blowing you that way then don't fight it. Allow it to push you to the towing path then wait for the other boat to pass. Take great care if you have to get off the boat to move off, consider getting the crew to use the boat pole.

## Avoidance Tips

Don't try increasing your speed to beat the other boat to the narrowing. He/she might be doing the same thing and you could end up with a collision and both of you getting jammed in a bridge hole.

There are many scars on boats and bridges to prove that some do try. Imagine the embarrassment of closing the canal because of a damaged bridge support just because you tried to save a few seconds. It may take hours for the authorities to extract you and during that time you will be sure to attract a wide audience of other boaters and towing path users, all of whom will be making judgement on you!

## DISABLED ACCESS

Whilst on the increase, there are not enough facilities for the disabled boater or for the boater with a disabled person on board on the inland waterways.

Disabled mooring facilities can make the difference between a wonderful overnight stop, (with a pleasant evening trip off the boat), or just another night trapped on-board. If you see a disabled access mooring and do not have a right to use the facility, then please stay away even if you only want to moor for the shortest of time. It can make a big difference.

Sometimes the moorings have clear signs but sometimes it is just a small badge in the centre of the mooring bollard. If all the other moorings are full then question why this one is empty!



It is difficult to say specifically how the Considerate Boater might help the disabled boater, just be understanding and look for opportunities to help.

One more thing, don't be too quick to criticise the "seemingly" solo boater when you see a head popping up in the cabin. They could be disabled, even if only temporarily due to a fall at the last lock.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

There are many waterway related environmental statements and reports available throughout the web. Start with the Environment Agency at [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk).

It is sufficient to say that we are most fortunate to have a much improved environment and surroundings in which to enjoy our boating.

The Considerate Boater will constantly be aware of his/her surroundings and show due consideration by minimising the impact that their boating has on the environment.

Avoid running engines, generators or heaters unnecessarily. Turn your engine off whilst waiting in the queue at locks. It will also save money.

Don't spill anything into the water or land that might harm the environment such as oil, fuel or effluent and report any spillages to the appropriate water authority.

Don't fill your fuel tank to the brim in warm weather especially when you are about to moor up for a long period. The fuel may expand as it warms up and possibly overflow into the waterway.

Take your rubbish to the appropriate collection point and use the recycling facilities when available.

Leave the countryside as you found it.

Close gates after you and report any loose livestock.

Clean up after your dog.

Use environmentally friendly cleaning products.

Consider using a more environmentally friendly product in your pump out tank rather than the more prevalent formaldehyde based fluid. Don't even dream of pumping your tank contents directly into the waterway.



## HIRE BOATS

Hirers are not pirates! Hiring a boat is the way that many of us start and probably the place that many of us make our mistakes due to our inexperience.

The briefings that hire boat operators give are usually very good but half an hour, or even an hour's tuition, will never make you an expert helmsman, especially since you are probably in a hurry to get on with your two-week holiday.

So novices are going to make mistakes. The mark of the Considerate Boater is to expect that and to make allowances and to politely help wherever you can. (Take care with the last bit as few of us like being given advice).



Some private boaters fail to realise that if it wasn't for hire boats and the income that they bring then the waterways as we know them would slip back into decline.

### Masterclass Tips

Many hirers are new to boating. Try to help where you can without interfering.

There are plenty of places you can covertly offer help:

- By offering to catch their line when they are coming in to moor on a windy day.
- When they are going through their first locks especially when you are waiting to go through after them.
- Try such phrases as "we always found it tricky until we tried....."
- When the occasional crash occurs politely say that we have all done it and it was the reason you bought a steel-hulled boat.

But remember: Don't assume that every hirer is new to boating. Some hirers have years of experience and many private boaters go back to hiring after they have sold their own boat. Conversely, not every private boat is being operated by experienced hands. Some are borrowed by family and friends and it might be their first time out. The latter is a potentially dangerous practise and many considerations are often overlooked by the lender and borrower such as insurance, liability and tuition.

### Avoidance Tips

Don't treat hirers like second class citizens. They have every right to be on the waterways as you do.

Avoid acting like a school teacher or police officer. If you really think their conduct is wrong then call the hire company and let them sort it out. If they are potentially damaging the boat, (like the crew we saw with a lit disposable barbeque placed directly on the roof), the hire company will be pleased to hear from you.

## LOCKS

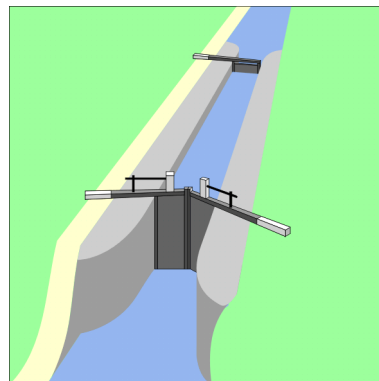
Locks are wonderful places to meet people and to be considerate to others. This is even truer in wide locks.

In being considerate to other boaters there is often an opportunity to be considerate to the environment by saving precious water.

When approaching a lock, first of all consider whether there is a queue. It is sometimes difficult to see where overnight mooring ends and the queue for the lock begins. Ask anyone on the towing path as you pass or send a crew member to find out.

Before operating a lock, check if there is a lock keeper in charge and if so, always follow his/her instructions.

If not then check for anyone coming the other direction and judge if the lock is set more in their favour. If it is 50-50 then be a Considerate Boater and turn it to their advantage.



If you find yourself in a queue then get the crew to go and OFFER help to other boaters. Not everyone will want your help so don't be offended if they ask you not to get involved, (although help with opening a heavy gate is never refused). Your help will be appreciated by novices and it will speed up your own progress in the end.

Remember to respect the crew of the other boat and the way they operate locks and only do as they tell you since it is their boat that will be affected by your actions.

If you have a large crew then consider sending someone ahead to set the locks for you or those ahead of you. Setting locks in the right way can save water.

Leave room for other boaters on the lock mooring or even offer to let them breast up while you both wait.

If you come across a solo boater then offer to help. Once again it will help them and help your progress in the long run.

There are lots of opportunities to show due consideration to others at locks by allowing the crew to get back on board and finishing the lock off for them, (especially at the last lock in a flight).

Give extra consideration when sharing a wide lock with a more fragile boat such as a fibreglass cruiser.

## Masterclass Tips

Using wide locks can sometimes be frustrating. The phrase "damned if you do, damned if you don't" regularly passes your lips.

You know the situation, you arrive at the lock on your own and just as you are about to close the gates a boat appears in the distance. You decide to do the decent thing and wait for them but only to find that they turn into the marina just below the lock or they decide to stop and moor up for a cup of tea.

There is no easy answer to this except to try to signal the other boat. Usually, starting to close the gate will get a blast of their horn. If no one is waiting to come through the lock in the opposite direction then the Considerate Boater always waits. If there are others coming in the opposite direction then have the crew go and explain why you are waiting. They will understand.

If you have already started a flight of wide locks when another boat starts to climb then how about waiting for them at the next lock?

## Avoidance Tips

If your offer of help with a lock is accepted then advise the other crew that you will only do what they tell you to do. There is a safety and liability issue here. If you were to open a paddle inadvertently and the boat was damaged or sank, you could be held to blame. See the Liability section for further guidance.

Never steal a lock, (queue jump for the uninitiated), and never turn a lock in your favour if a boat is coming in the opposite direction and the water level suits their passage not yours.

If you are in that much of a hurry then what are you doing boating?

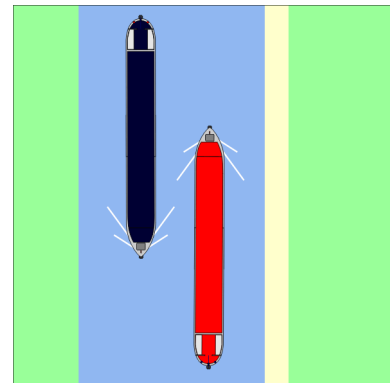
Never moor on a lock mooring, even for a short time.

## MEETING BOATS

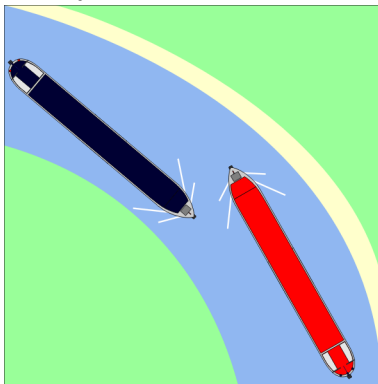
Meeting other boaters should be a pleasurable experience. Always saying hello with a cheery wave and smile is standard procedure on the waterways.

The normal practice when meeting boats is to slow down a little to reduce the bow wave and pass port side, (left), to port side.

However, don't be afraid to pass on the other side if conditions demand such as when leaving locks or when one boat is having difficulty maintaining control. Ensure that signals are given and both parties understand.



Priority will depend on the nature of the bend or hazard, the effect of wind and water flow and the size of the boat you are meeting. In any event, a Considerate Boater will be the first to give way.



Conflict can be avoided completely by approaching all hazards at a speed that allows you to come to a controlled stop without having to use maximum power in reverse.

On approaching blind bends and bridges use your horn to give a long warning blast. Do not give a "toot" as you may be mistaken for a car on a road or the bridge. See "Sound Signals" in the Boater's Handbook.

### Masterclass Tips

Generally, it is easier to give way if the flow of wind or water is against you and it is usually easier for the person who is on the inside of the bend to give way because boats normally meet port side to port side and because of the nature of the boat steering about the mid-point.

Look out for heavily laden working boats. They are going to need all the depth of water they can get so be prepared to move well over or even pull over to the towing path if necessary. They may also be less manoeuvrable than you.

### Avoidance Tips

Avoid having to do "emergency stops" by approaching all hazards at the appropriate speed. The rule when driving a motor vehicle is that you should be able to stop comfortably within the distance you can see ahead and there is no reason why this approach should not be adopted on the waterways.

In any case, having a boat disappear in a cloud of exhaust gasses when applying full reverse is not the mark of a boater in full control of his/her vessel.

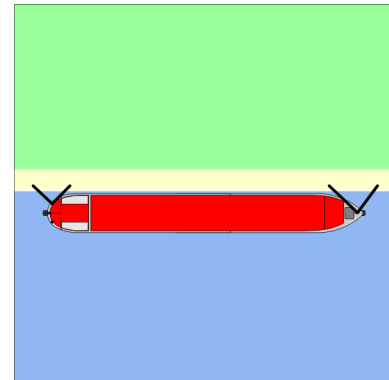
## MOORING

Inconsiderate mooring can be very annoying whereas considerate mooring can bring people together at the end of the day.

River mooring is normally more structured but many of the following canal considerations still apply.

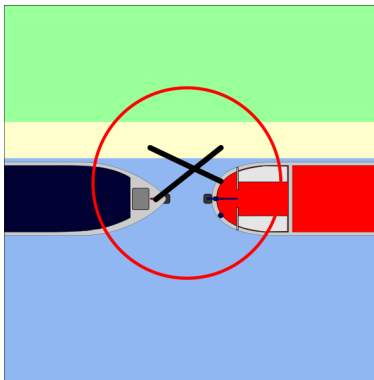
Always moor away from bridges, water points, winding holes, bends, lock approaches, opposite marina entrances and anywhere else where there are signs forbidding mooring.

Use “springer” lines and fenders to minimise the effects of passing boats. Avoid wet ground when using spikes, especially if you intend to leave the boat. Your boat could become a navigation hazard if it breaks free.



Mooring facilities for the disabled are sparse. Please stay off these moorings if you are not entitled. Sometimes, the only sign that it is a disabled mooring is a small badge in the middle of the bollard.

When staying at popular mooring points, try to make the best use of the space available by keeping close to other boats and even crossing over mooring ropes to reduce the required space. The other boater won't bite! (Hopefully).



If you are feeling particularly friendly, and the channel is wide enough, then allow others to breast up, (this is almost essential practice on some rivers).

If you want more solitude then moor further into the countryside.

If you are using mooring spikes then make sure they are well marked. This is a good way to give white plastic bags a new life or use a torn up reflective vest.

Think of others, including people living close to the towing path, when running engines, playing music and even running a noisy heating system! BW Byelaws say that engines and generators must not be run between 8.00pm and 8.00am.

## Masterclass Tips

If you come across another boat moored alone in the countryside, it might be that they want peace and quiet so stay away from them. It might also be that they have a baby on board and want to give others peace and quiet.

Many of us on holiday like to lie in a little later than usual but don't get annoyed if someone's cabin heater or engine starts up at one minute past eight in the morning. It is legal to run it at this time and it might be that it is their only form of heating and it has been a cold night or they need hot water.

If you are on the towing path and see another boat coming in to moor then offer to catch their mooring line. The offer, even if not accepted, will be much appreciated, (especially on a windy day), and will instantly give you a friendly, considerate neighbour.

At the end of the day when you are snug and warm in your own boat be on the alert for late arrivals who are struggling to find a mooring. If it is starting to get dark then the fear of never finding a mooring might be starting to set in. They might be inexperienced and by going on further they might get into difficulty. Perhaps offer to let them breast up or move your boat around to fit them in.

### Avoidance Tips

Don't ever run your mooring line across the towing path and tie off to trees and fences. In fact, keep the towing path completely clear of your belongings including the barbeque. You never know where and when that cyclist will appear. You could land yourself in Court.

Avoid taking up more than one mooring space.

Don't assume that the person already moored left inconsiderate gaps. It could be that when they moored there were other boats around them and they have now moved on. If you are in luck, it will be a Considerate Boater who will see you coming and offer to move his/her boat.

NEVER consider moving someone else's boat to make room for your own. See the Liability Section.

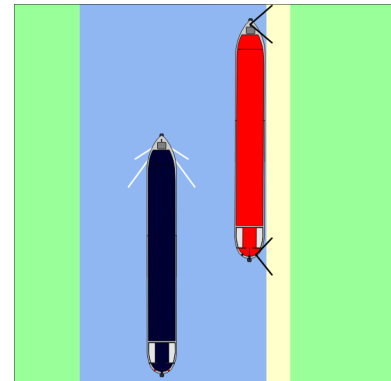
When you leave the mooring, don't move off just as another boat is approaching, especially when locks are imminent!

## PASSING BOATS

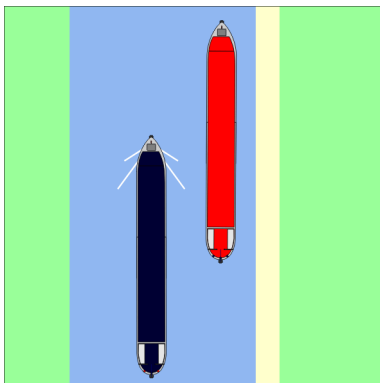
Passing moored boats is easy. JUST SLOW DOWN.

Yes it is true that it is the responsibility of the moored boat to tie up correctly and it is true that many don't. But, regardless of that, if the passing boat slows down to engine tick over then it almost won't matter how well the boat is secured.

Keep well clear of the other boat. There might be reasons why you can't give a wide berth such as shallow areas or overhanging trees or perhaps because there is another boat coming in the opposite direction. But the more room you can give then the better.



Passing moving boats can be just as easy with a little consideration.



If you are the boat in front then recognise that some people want to make more progress than you and allow them to pass as soon as you can. Pick a clear and wide bit of the waterway and signal the other boater by waving your arm. Move over to the right, (but not too close to the bank) and keep enough power for steerage. Be aware that the overtaking boat will draw your boat towards them as they pass.

If you are the boat that wants to pass then be patient and don't attempt to pass until the leading boat has signalled. Then pass as slowly as possible but as quickly as necessary.

### Masterclass Tips

Slowing to engine tick over is the way to pass moored boats but if you don't slow the engine down until you are on top of the other boat, then you will still be travelling too fast. As a general rule, (and there are many factors involved), if you are cruising at a steady walking pace, then it will take at two to three boat lengths to slow down sufficiently.

Slowing the boat down early will also give you the opportunity to use engine power/prop speed to have greater manoeuvrability if a gust of wind should make passing difficult.

If you come across a boat that has come adrift from its moorings then consider stopping and having a crew member secure the drifting boat. There are legal implications of moving someone else's boat so take care. See the Liability Section.

### Avoidance Tips

Avoid getting annoyed if a boat is passing your moored boat at speed when conditions are windy. It might be the only way they can get past with control. If they are Considerate Boaters then they will have slowed the boat down well before trying to pass you and it will only be the engine speed that is high in order to maintain rudder control.

Note: With some boats, engine speed doesn't necessarily equate to boat speed.

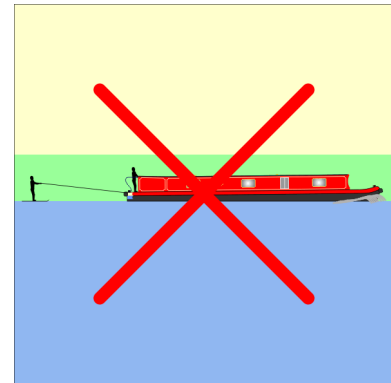
## SPEED

There is a saying which quotes:

"As slow as possible and as fast as necessary".

There are times when a bit of speed is essential but most of the time the slowest speed possible is the order of the day.

After all, why did you buy a boat? For many, the idea of owning a boat is to get away from the high speed motorway driving and slow down to a pace that is relaxing and gives you time to think and look at your surroundings.



### Masterclass Tips

There are speed limits on most inland waterways. They are there to prevent damage to the channel and to ensure everyone's safety and enjoyment.

On canals, the speed limit is 4 mph which is a steady walking pace.

There are times for a bit of "umph" but often people confuse power and/or prop speed with boat speed. Use of power and prop speed may help to get you out of trouble on a windy day or help you make a tight manoeuvre but it will be more effective if you get the boat speed down first.

It is a good helmsman that sees where he/she will need to make a tight turn in advance and slows the boat down first.

### Avoidance Tips

Going faster often means slower on shallow canals.

Attempting to cruise too fast will actually slow your boat down and make it more difficult to handle as water struggles to get round your hull in the restricted channel. You are wasting engine fuel and damaging the environment.

A breaking wave is a sure sign that you are going too fast and causes much damage to the unprotected banks and habitats.

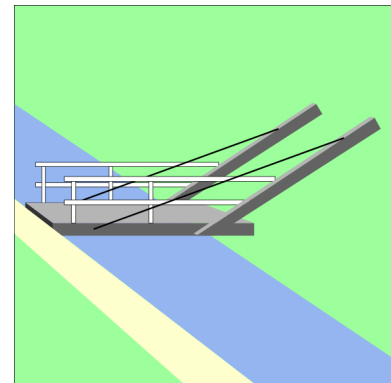
## LIFT AND SWING BRIDGES

Operating a lift or swing bridge is another good opportunity to practise considerate boating.

Before you operate a bridge that restricts foot or vehicular traffic, have a good look to see if another boat is approaching. If there is, then operate the bridge in such a way that it is kept open for the minimum amount of time.

In any event, be ready to keep the bridge open for the other boat and wave them through either before or after your own boat depending on the timing of their arrival.

Some bridges are particularly difficult or heavy to operate and if you are the second boat to arrive at the bridge be ready to despatch your own crew to help.



### Masterclass Tips

If you are operating a bridge and you keep the bridge open for a following boat then the other boat will get ahead of you. Don't be concerned by this. It is not a race. Let them go on and if experience is anything to go by, they will get to the next bridge before you and do the same for you.

If you are the one who has been allowed to get ahead then as you pass and thank the other boater, ask them if they would prefer to overtake you after the bridge. Or if you know that the next restriction is another lift or swing bridge then tell them that if they remain in sight of you then you will operate the bridge for them in return.

If you are the one who has been allowed to get ahead and your next stop is a lock, water point or similar "queuing" restriction then wave the other boat ahead of you to allow them to use the lock first. You never know, they might decline your offer and allow you to go first.

### Avoidance Tips

Don't assume the approaching boat is also going through the bridge. If you leave the bridge open and hop back onto your boat from the off-side and the other boat turns into a marina or simply moors up then the bridge could be left in an inconsiderate or even dangerous state.

Even if the other boat is going through, they might not be as fit as you and may be unable to get off on the off-side. They might also think that the bridge should be left open having found it open on arrival.

Don't be tempted to leave lift bridges open by wedging them open with a branch or the like. If your boat, or another boat starts to go under and the bridge falls there could be an expensive repair to deal with or even personal injury!

## TUNNELS

There are wide tunnels, narrow tunnels and low tunnels all requiring different attention. Just like bridges and narrow sections they represent a hazard where you might come into conflict with other boats.

Signs should tell you whether it is possible to pass another boat coming in the opposite direction safely in the tunnel. The many waterway guides are also useful for this information.

If you do meet another boat then slow down to engine tick over well before you meet. If you do touch either the other boat or the side of the tunnel the damage will be much reduced at low speed.

### Masterclass Tips

Tunnels can be quite threatening for the novice as they do their best to steer down what appears to be a very narrow, (even seemingly impossible), gap between the tunnel side and an oncoming boat. It isn't helped when they cannot see anything in front because they are being blinded by the headlight of the approaching boat.

Considerate Boaters use headlights with just enough power to see their way through tunnels and avoid fitting a million candlepower lamp which will melt the paint of an oncoming boat. Considerate Boaters also angle their headlights up and to the right so they get a good view of tunnel side and reduce the forward glare.

Use the same rules as for Meeting Boats but slow down to engine tick over and slow down early so you can use a little power to give better steering when you are very close to the other boat.

If you are steering a steel hulled boat through a tunnel then give special consideration when meeting a less substantial hulled boat such as a fibreglass cruiser.

### Avoidance Tips

Avoid entering a tunnel, (which is wide enough for boats to pass), if an oncoming boat is close to your end. It doesn't make sense to force a passing manoeuvre 200 foot inside the tunnel just to save a few seconds and it may even save a collision.

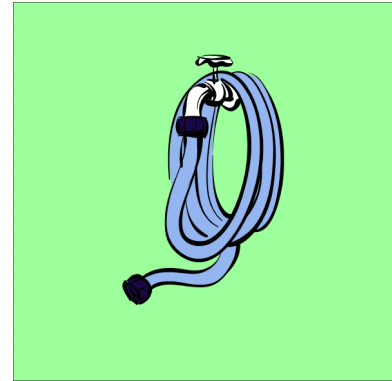
Keep clear of the boat ahead of you and don't even think of overtaking no matter how slow they might be going.

## WATER POINTS

Water is essential to life and we all need a regular supply. Sadly, access to water points isn't quite as regular as we need it to be sometimes. It is essential therefore that we consider others when we are using water points.

Only moor at the water point for the minimum length of time possible.

Try to moor in such a way that makes the best use of the available space and allows other boats to tie up. Even if they can't reach the tap, at least they will be able to wait for you to finish. This is especially useful if it is windy.



Be aware as you approach the water point that there might be a queue of boats waiting to use it. If your boat is in the queue then stand by the side of your boat so you can inform others and avoid embarrassment or conflict.

### Masterclass Tips

Although there might be two taps at a water point, there is often only one supply feeding them and this can sometimes be a poor supply.

If two boats connect at the same time the flow can sometimes be down to a dribble and it will take ages to fill your tank.

If someone else is already connected to the tap when you arrive and you see that the flow through your hose is very low then consider turning your tap off until they have finished. Let the other boat crew know what you are doing. They will be pleased and they will probably wrap their kit up quicker to reward your action.

### Avoidance Tips

Don't leave your boat on the water point after you have filled your tank to have lunch or a cup of tea.

Don't leave your boat to go shopping, (by the way, we are not fooled by the limp hose leading from the tap to your tank).

Don't wash your boat at the water point. If you feel you must have pressure fed water then moor up in the countryside and connect a hose to your on-board system. Having said that, canal water is okay for a lot of boat cleaning.

## WINDING HOLES

Whether you pronounce "winding" as if it refers to the "wind" as in the blowing variety or "wind" as in winding a clock, it is a place for turning round. The former seems to have more votes than the latter but it makes little difference.

Winding holes are another opportunity for the Considerate Boater to give due consideration by signalling to other boaters of their intentions. There are horn signals that can be given, see "Sound Signals" in the Boater's Handbook. However, be aware that many will not be familiar with the signal for turning.



In this case, a hand being rotated in the air above your head seems to get the message across.

If the boat ahead of you is the one doing the turning then stay well clear. It may be a novice boater trying it for the first time. Many hirers do not get a lot of practice, especially if they are following a ring route.

### Masterclass Tips

Know where the winding holes are situated and plan ahead.

If you are the one doing the turning then signal others as early as possible. If there is a boat close behind or coming toward you then consider if it is possible to let them pass before you start your turn. If you are mid turn and a boat appears then consider holding your bow up against the head of the winding hole and letting them through.

If you are following another boat toward a winding hole then remember that they might need to turn and stay clear as you approach the hole. It could save you being trapped mid-stream with the wind blowing you sideways.

### Avoidance Tips

Often, opposite and inside winding holes, there can be the only length of canal-side piling for miles. Do not moor on the piling. It is there to maintain the turning area. You will get no sympathy from the working boater as he/she arrives to turn their working 70 foot boat and butty.

Never try to "slip" past the other boat mid-turn unless they clearly wave you through.

Don't use marina entrances or moorings to turn unless it is a recognised winding point. It is so easy to get it wrong when the wind from the marina hits your bow.

## LIABILITY

We live in a litigious society and the Considerate Boater needs to be aware of the potential risks associated with his/her actions. A good boater will be constantly risk assessing the surroundings and on the alert for a potential incident.

The list below is not exhaustive but might remind you of some of the potential risk areas.

Putting the law to one side however, none of us want to be responsible for the damage or injury to a third party or their property so think twice before doing anything out of the ordinary.

Avoid jumping on the litigious band wagon yourself. If someone runs into your steel hulled boat and scratches the blacking, just put it down to "one of those things" and get the paint brush out.

Helping someone at a lock is good practice but what if you open a paddle too much and the boat sinks? Offer help, but don't force it on someone. Ask the other crew to tell you what they want you to do and when to do it.

Never move someone's boat without their permission. No matter how good your knots are, if you tie a boat up and the boat breaks free, you may be liable.

Keep the towing path clear of your ropes and belongings to avoid falls by other users.

If you invite friends onto your boat make them aware of the potential dangers and brief them on exactly what you want them to do and what you don't want them to do.

Don't allow strangers, especially children, to travel on your boat.

With the best will in the world, we all make errors of judgement and you should check that your insurance is valid for the current use and that it covers third party liability.



## **CONSIDERATE BOATER DISCLAIMER**

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