



Boating Basics

By

Clive Edwards, MNI and Captain Chris Woods

An introduction to renting and handling motorboats on inland waterways with particular reference to those of the UK and France

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“Boating Basics”



Introduction

This publication has been produced by the Merchant Navy Association Boat Club with the aim of providing basic information for anyone venturing onto the water for the first time. The idea is to help make the experience more enjoyable and safer, both for you the reader and for other users of the waterways.

As we anticipate that most of those likely to benefit will be planning to hire a boat on inland waterways, rather than taking to the sea, we have concentrated on how to handle a boat on rivers, canals, lakes, the Broads etc. but many of the practices we describe would apply equally when taking to the sea

The Merchant Navy Association Boat Club is a group of present or former professional seafarers who are members of the Merchant Navy Association and interested in boating, contributing to maritime safety and sharing information. The Club is affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and the Norfolk & Suffolk Boating Association (NSBA) and has links with The Coastguard Association, the Sea Safety Group, the National Coastwatch, the Maritime Volunteer Service, the Nautical Institute and several other maritime organisations.

The objectives of the Club are to facilitate and promote the safe participation and enjoyment of boating activities on oceans, seas, lakes and inland waterways. We also seek to facilitate the training of prospective younger members and promote opportunities for careers in the leisure sector.

The authors are both former professional mariners with many years experience of operating a variety of craft, including fast rescue boats, as can be seen from these brief biographies:

Clive Edwards



Para Handy

A yachtmaster instructor and a member of HM Coastguard for many years, including several years as patrol boat skipper, Clive was chief rescue officer for the Yacht Clubs of Weymouth, a rescue officer and rescue boat operator for the RYA British Olympic Sailing Team, and more recently he was the NCI Lyme Bay National Coastwatch station manager. He is a member of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners, the RYA, the

Coastguard Association, and the Nautical Institute and is currently Commodore of the Merchant Navy Association Boat Club.

Captain Chris Woods



Borato

Chris is a tanker man through and through with a full Masters Foreign Going Certificate. In 1980, after 18 years deep sea with BP, he was invited to transfer to their offshore fleet supporting BP Exploration, mainly in the North Sea but also the Med. and Canada. His first three years were with their mid-N.S. sector disaster ship, the converted tanker Forties Kiwi, during which Chris had professional training with Fast Rescue craft and their remarkable ability to be handled in extreme conditions for rescuing rig/platform personnel from the water, plus co-ordination with commercial SaR helicopters and Nimrod search aircraft. He then transferred to their more challenging but rewarding offshore support vessels where he remained as Master until retirement in 1999. Since then Chris has sailed and cruised the Norfolk Broads, is a member of the Norfolk & Suffolk Boating Association and a Governor of the RNL. His role as the Merchant Navy Association Boat Club's Vice-Commodore includes liaison with the NSBA

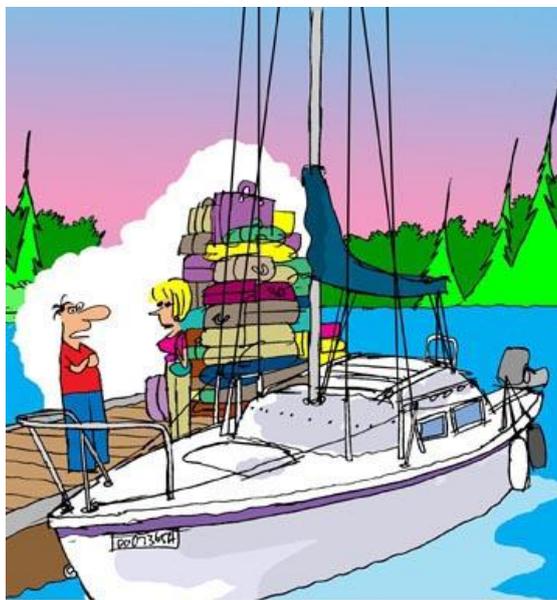
Chapter 1 Before you leave home

Your hire-cruiser operator will normally have provided you with a list of all the equipment that you will find on-board when you collect your boat from the base, but this will obviously not include items such as personal clothing, footwear etc., so the following is a guide as to what you should take with you:

Bags: Hard suitcases are certainly not ideal on a boat, so you should try to pack your things in soft bags

Clothing: Clothing should be practical, comfortable and easy to clean, even though you may want to take some "smart-casual" clothes for evenings out etc. Don't forget that it can rain or turn chilly on occasions, even in the South of France or on the Canal du Midi, so packing a warm sweater and lightweight wet-weather gear is advisable. Shoes – Non-slip "deck-shoes" (identifiable by their razor-cut soles) are ideal, but trainers will probably do – high heels and slippery-soled smart shoes are definitely unsuitable! Gloves, especially the high-grip type available from builders merchants, are useful for handling anchor warps and mooring ropes. Caps are also very useful as a protection against the glare of the sun and UV sunglasses are almost essential for the driver (helmsman) A high-viz jacket or tabard is useful if sailing in the dark or semi-darkness..





“Yes, I do think you overpacked. After all, we’re sailing around the bay for a few hours.”

Toiletries: Boats do not generally have electric razor sockets, or sockets for 240 volt hair dryers! Water reflects and intensifies sunlight, so don’t forget the sun-glasses (UV lenses are a must to avoid eye damage in strong sunlight over the water), the sun-tan lotion and the after-sun!

Maps & Guides: Maps used on the water are usually called “charts” and you’ll definitely need to have an appropriate one together with a local waterways guide. Together they will prove invaluable for identifying such things as:

- The location, opening hours and distances between locks
- Where you can find moorings and other crucial information
- The nature and location of tourist attractions, restaurants etc.

Other publications worth considering are:

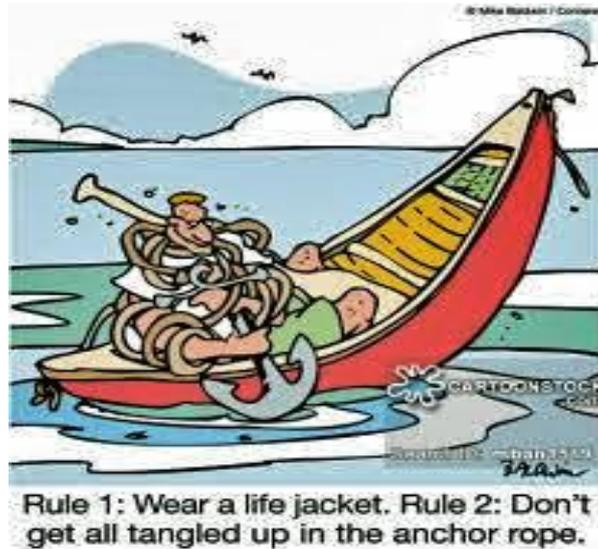
- Pilot Guides to the principal inland waterways in the UK such as The River Thames
- The Norfolk & Suffolk Boating Association’s (NSBA) “Green Book”, (for the Broads)
- The Royal Yachting Association’s (RYA) Inland Waterways Handbook
- A large scale Ordnance Survey map for exploring ashore.
- For the French inland waterways, the multi-language “Guides Fluvial” series

If you’re a keen angler you’ll know what to take in terms of tackle, but don’t forget you’ll probably need a permit – in France these are available from fishing tackle shops and some “tabacs”



Children & Pets: At sea and on most rivers we recommend that everybody wears a life jacket whilst on deck even though on most canals and smaller inland waterways they are not a legal requirement. We also strongly recommend the continual use of lifejackets or “buoyancy aids” for all young children and/or non-swimmers – do make sure to use ones that are “age appropriate” and fitted with a whistle. You can even get buoyancy aids

for dogs these days too! However, you might also think about using a harness for your dog which can be useful if you need to use a boat-hook to haul it out of the water – you don't want to strangle him or her by trying to lift by the collar! It is preferable not to let your pet go swimming in the first place, especially in rivers where Green Algae and weed are serious hazards and only too easy to get entangled in. They are responsible for more loss of human and canine life than any other cause on inland waterways.



Books and some games will help to stop kids becoming bored once the novelty of being afloat begins to wear off. If you're taking dog(s) with you don't forget the pet food, their beds, leads and food/water bowls.

Bicycles: Some hire-cruiser operators offer bicycle hire as well and these will certainly add to your enjoyment and be useful for shopping expeditions. If you are taking your own bikes don't forget to make sure they are insured.

Barbecues: Handy when you are ashore but not normally allowed to be used on board unless securely fixed on the outside of handrails.

Bin-Bags: These are useful for depositing rubbish into the bins provided at most locks and official mooring places.

Documentation: In the UK no qualifications are required when hiring a boat on our inland waterways but anyone operating a boat on continental waterways requires a Certificate of Competence (i.e. a licence). Many hire-cruiser operators actually advertise "no licence required" which in effect means that they will give you a temporary licence when you collect your boat from their base but be sure to check this when you book. Cruiser operations on the inland waterways of Europe are governed by a set of quite complicated regulations, rather like the Highway Code. Your hire-cruiser operator will normally provide you with a summary of these regulations illustrating the more important points you will need to comply with. If you are going boating in tidal waters you will need to buy a local tide table – these are sold by ship's chandlers, newsagents, yacht-brokers and even petrol stations in areas where there is any significant boating activity

If you are interested in knowing more about the above or other aspects of boat craft, see the list of recommended publications in Appendix A.



Chapter 2

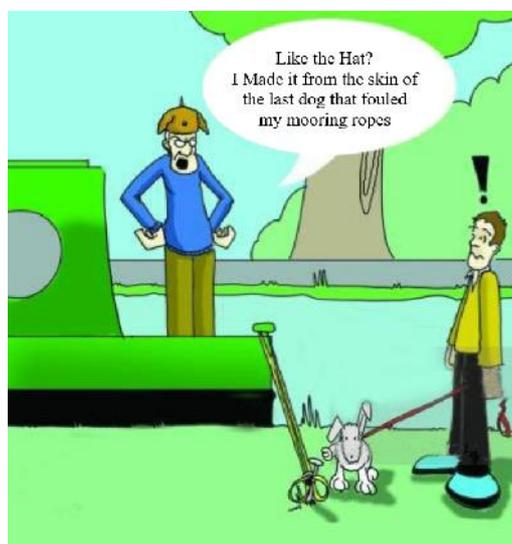
Before you leave the base

Most hire-cruiser operators will take you carefully through the operation of your hire cruiser and all its equipment before you leave port. It is important to make sure you have understood everything and are familiar with the operation of things like the engine, fuel, drinking water, gas, shower, toilets, heating, lighting, the cooker and the 'fridge before you set off. Make sure that everyone on-board is conversant with the advice and instruction given - not just the skipper! In addition the following points are worth bearing in mind

Try to stow all your personal belongings away tidily – there is nothing worse than trying to operate a boat with things, including children's toys, strewn all over the place and it can be positively dangerous even to try!

Fenders: Never try to fend off using your arms or legs so, whenever you intend to moor up to anything like a quay or a wall, make sure you have fenders ready on a line and in the correct position to cushion the impact. It is a useful idea to have two or three fenders on a line that can be held over the side in the case of an impending collision!

Mooring Ropes: You will be using these a lot, so a few words of advice before you leave the base are worthwhile. Firstly make sure you have mooring ropes securely attached to the boat at both the bow (the front end of the boat) and stern (the back end). Make sure that they are neatly coiled up (practice first to see which way the rope coils naturally) and that they can't fall off and trail in the water where they can foul the propeller. It can literally take hours to free a rope that is wrapped round your propeller, it can cause damage to the engine, you will get very wet indeed untangling it and, if the stern has to be lifted by a crane to clear the rope from round your prop, that's going to be very expensive as well as hugely embarrassing!



The simplest way of mooring, in gentle winds and with little tide or current, is to simply have one rope leading forward and another one leading aft.

If there is a reasonably strong current or tide, or a strong wind, then you will need more ropes and the most useful are ones called “springs”. These are fixed to prevent your boat surging backwards and forwards which it would tend to do if you only have a bow line (i.e. a line at the front) and a stern line (i.e. behind). To add springs you should take a line from towards the stern of the boat and run this forward to a mooring post ashore some little way ahead of your boat, and another line from near your boat’s bow to a mooring post ashore a little way astern your boat. You should also make sure that your stern mooring line is secured to a post or ring not too far behind your boat so that the wash from passing traffic can’t drag your boat too far away from the side.

Remember to pass your mooring ropes UNDER any guard-rails around the boat to avoid damaging them and make sure you avoid having the ropes snagging any obstructions such as stanchions (these are the up-right posts that support the guard-rails). In other words make sure your mooring ropes have an unimpeded run.



If you’re in tidal waters and you intend to leave your boat for more than a short time (e.g. half an hour or more) you will need to consult your tide table to ascertain the state of the tide and how much it is likely to rise or fall while you are away. When you return to the boat you don’t want to find that you have used far too much rope and your boat has now drifted into the middle of the stream or, worse still, that you have used too little length of rope and your boat is now suspended well above the water or even tipped over!

The most common use for a rope on board will be making fast to a post and the surest way of doing this is to take a couple of turns round the mooring post and then feed the rope back on board and secure it to a cleat - this doubles the strength of the mooring and makes for easier letting-go

It is quite possible you may at some stage need to throw a rope to someone ashore or to someone on another boat. Most people who are not used to using ropes make a mess of this and end up with the rope in the water! The correct way to throw a rope is firstly to attach one end to something secure and then to coil the rope neatly. If it is a long rope divide the coil into two with one half in your throwing hand and the other half in the other hand. Swing your throwing arm smoothly and let go of the first coil then allow the remainder of the rope coiled in your other hand to follow. It’s worth practicing this and you’ll be surprised just how far you can actually throw a line!

Knots: Although not essential, it is useful to know how to tie the most common knots used in boating and the correct way to attach a rope to a cleat (a piece of equipment found on deck at either end of the boat specifically designed for attaching ropes).

Let us start with the **Clove Hitch**, as illustrated below. This is a simple knot, quick and easy to tie, and very useful when mooring to a post for a short time, but it’s not a particularly secure knot and should only be used while someone is in attendance to make sure that it doesn’t start to slip



Perhaps the most useful knot of all is the **Round Turn & Two Half-Hitches** which can be safely used in lots of situations where your boat is to be left unattended as it is not prone to slipping.



There may be occasions when you need to join two ropes together to make one longer rope. When doing this you should use a knot called a **Sheet Bend**, as illustrated below:



Finally it's quite important to know the correct way to attach your ropes to the cleats on-board your boat! The following picture illustrates the correct way to do this:



Chapter 3 Under Way

Handling the boat: Start the engine, keep it in neutral and allow some time for it to warm up before you move off. During that period you and your crew should use the time to take a good look up and downstream for other traffic. Even if the river is twisty you may still be able to see masts or sails “round the bend” through the trees or vegetation. Once you and your crew know that it is safe to move (and you know where to find the switch for the horn!), untie the bow (front) and stern (back) mooring ropes from the bank leaving them tied to the boat, coiled and ready for use. Don’t forget to stow the mooring stakes and mallet. On rivers the general rule is to untie the downstream rope first.

Before you leave your mooring, you need to ensure that you know which way the water is moving! In tidal areas, such as Reedham on the Norfolk Broads, it’s quite possible that the water may be moving in the opposite direction to that which you’d expect i.e. up-stream instead of downstream. You should check by looking at the water flowing past posts, piles, buoys or whatever

Because the boat steers from the stern, you can’t drive away from the bank as in a car. Making sure your ropes can’t trail in the water and get caught in the propeller, use the flow of the water to help you to manoeuvre away from the bank – worth thinking about this before you let go! Check again that the area is clear of boat traffic then push the boat away from the bank so that you can make a clean getaway, with your propeller in deep water.

In shallow water, push the back of the boat out and reverse away until there is room to straighten up. When the boat is straight, go into forward gear and accelerate gently to cruising speed. Bear in mind that for most boats stern power is less effective than forward thrust due to the shape of the boat, so full astern is only about as effective as half-ahead.



Turning round: A general guide to handling a boat is that successful turning in a small space depends on correct use of the vessel’s momentum. To turn around in a restricted area give the boat a kick of (say) half

ahead with the helm hard over in the direction you wish to turn. As soon as the bow is seen to be swinging in the direction you want, go full astern (to stop any ahead movement). (some mariners will put their helm amidships while stopping this ahead motion - I don't bother and leave the helm hard over until the manoeuvre is complete).

Once the bow stops swinging, go 1/2 ahead again to resume the swing, then full astern for the duration of that swing; and so on until the manoeuvre is complete. With practice, a boat can thus be turned almost in her own length. It is all to do with momentum and this should be considered one of the most important and earliest bits of boat handling to be learnt.

Bow & stern thrusters are often fitted to the larger hire boats. These are only effective when moving slowly through the water and should not be used for anything other than mooring and un-mooring. Even when fitted it is far better to learn how to handle the boat confidently without them, keeping them only for emergencies.

Speed: Be well aware of local speed limits and respect them otherwise your wash will damage the river banks and the environment you came to enjoy. Some areas on the Broads are limited to 3 knots. Rangers have speed guns and can, as a last resort, prosecute you for repeated excessive speeding. If in doubt look astern and see if you are creating a big wash which could damage natural river banks.

Excessive speeding can also be dangerous for other boat users - causing a boat to rock may make someone fall in and possibly drown. Always have regard to other boat users and their safety and, if not used to handling boats, particularly large vessels. Remember they don't slow down like a car and that just going astern is not always as effective as expected.



Wind & Weather: Note that some parts of a boat's structure may act as a sail when the wind is coming from the side and can make handling difficult. Take this into consideration when choosing a mooring. Better to find an alternative than have a wind blowing onto the berth which could make mooring and letting-go difficult, hazardous and sometimes impossible.

Rules of the Road: The two most important things to remember are to **KEEP** to the **RIGHT HAND SIDE** (the starboard side) of the channel, and watch your speed – the limit is normally 8 kph (5 knots in nautical terms) in the canals, and 10 kph (6 knots) in rivers. As the operator of a pleasure craft you are required keep clear of, or give way to, all commercial craft - ou are on holiday, they are at work!

Navigating on tidal rivers and estuaries: The channel along which you should steer is likely to be marked by **BUOYS**.



If you are travelling **upstream** the can-shaped **RED** marker buoys should be passed on your left-hand (**PORT**) side and the conical shaped **GREEN** buoys on your right-hand (**STARBOARD**) side



When travelling **downstream** the reverse applies i.e. the **RED** buoys should be on the right-hand side and the **GREEN** buoys on your left-hand side

Tidal Areas: Note that tide tables are only a theoretical guide. It is possible that tide times and range can be dramatically affected by weather conditions. For example, a strong onshore wind can prevent river water exiting to sea, causing a build-up of water and no drop in level until the wind abates. Prolonged heavy rain or melting snow up river can cause an excess of river water which not only increases the speed of the current but can raise the water level.

In both cases, tide times will become irrelevant so boat owners should always keep a close eye on the flow of water and make their own judgement on when the tides peak.

As a general rule tides rise and fall very quickly midway between high and low water and much more slowly when they get near to the high water and low water times – there is in fact something called the 12ths Rule whereby the speed of rise and fall of the tide goes like this: 1 hour after High Water (HW) the tide drops $1/12^{\text{th}}$ in the second hour after HW it drops $2/12^{\text{ths}}$, in the third hour it drops $3/12^{\text{ths}}$, in the fourth hour it drops a further $3/12^{\text{ths}}$ in the fifth hour $2/12^{\text{ths}}$ and in the sixth hour $1/12^{\text{th}}$ when it reaches Low Water – exactly the same hourly process then applies to the tide whilst it rises again during the following six hours.

Where possible, moor and unmoor with the bow facing the flow of water. This allows much more control of the vessel during these manoeuvres.

In a tidal area, the flow of water will normally change direction every 6.25 hours \pm . The strongest flow (ebb tide) will always be down river to the sea. The weakest flow is the flood tide where water is being pushed up river against the natural down flow so this should always be taken into account.



If likely to depart your mooring during the ebb and your vessel is moored facing down stream, the last rope let go should be the forward backspring. This should be hand held on board, with the engine running astern sufficient to counter the ebb tide. Push the stern into the flow of water using the backspring to prevent the boat creeping ahead until clear of the bank and any other vessels moored there. Once clear, put the helm over sufficient to guide the vessel into mid-stream and let go the backspring as the engine is put ahead.

In areas of high rise and fall of the tide there is a risk of the deck getting caught under the quay heading causing the boat to tilt and, in extreme cases, turn over. To avoid this, use your spare fenders (those fitted with lanyards) and rig them at a different level to the fitted fenders so that they can guide the boat clear of this hazard as the tide rises. In areas of particularly large rise and fall, such as Great Yarmouth, it is recommended that the moorings and position of the boat in relation to the quay are checked every couple of hours.

Generally speaking navigating a boat on inland waterways, both in the UK and in France, is a question of common sense, but you will undoubtedly encounter situations, strange signs etc., for which you may be unprepared. In most cases reference to the navigational notes provided by your hire cruiser operator, or to the CEVNI guide if you have one, will soon make things clear.

In France especially you should pay particular attention to any signs bordered by a red square. These are either prohibitory (usually with a red diagonal line across telling you something you must not do), mandatory (telling you something you must do) or restrictive (telling you what restrictions apply)

Etiquette: Be polite, for example by slowing down when passing moored boats, especially if the crew is eating a meal and try also not to upset anglers by creating a large wash or cutting their fishing lines.

Mooring: On French inland waterways you can normally moor wherever you like along most canal towpaths unless a “no mooring” sign forbids it. However, you should take care not to obstruct the towpath by running your mooring ropes across it.. On waterways in the UK there are a lot more private parts of the riverbank where mooring without permission risks a confrontation with the landowner!

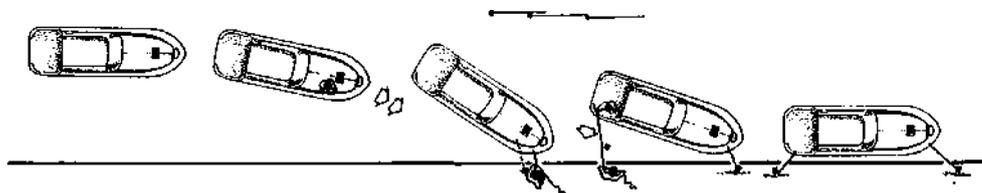


Before you can moor-up you need to come alongside the bank which is not as easy as it sounds, especially if there's a fresh breeze blowing or a strong current running. Remember that leaping ashore can be hazardous, so make sure there isn't a big drop from deck level to the quay. Always try to wait until the bow of the vessel is resting alongside the bank before stepping ashore

You should always approach the bank at very slow speed, as reverse gear is your only brake. If there is a wind blowing, or a strong current running, you should approach facing into the wind or against the current, as these will help to slow you down. What happens if the wind and current are in opposite directions you ask? Well the answer is that you have to guess which is likely to have the greatest effect on your boat, which isn't always easy to tell – sometimes just a question of trial and error.

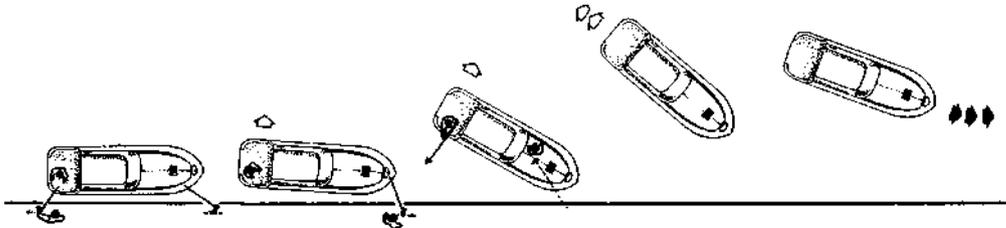
Motor towards the bank at a shallow angle and at low speed until you reach your intended mooring spot then turn your wheel sharply towards the bank and go gently into reverse gear. This will have the effect of both stopping the boat and dragging the stern in towards the bank. Once you are safely alongside, put the gear into neutral but don't switch off your engine until your mooring lines are secured in case the wash from another boat, or a gust of wind, means you need to manoeuvre a bit more.

In any event you should normally tie the bow first, with a crewman detailed to jump ashore with the bow-rope which he or she should secure before you throw them the stern rope. The ropes should be taken and secured several metres forward of the boat at the bow end and several metres behind the boat at the stern. The easiest way to moor on many canals is to take your mooring ropes around a tree or post on the bank then lead them back on board and secure them to one of your own mooring cleats. This makes casting-off when you leave much easier as it can probably all be done from on-board.





Unmooring: Leaving a mooring on canals such as the Canal du Midi can be quite tricky, especially if there are tree-roots protruding into the water which could damage your propeller. Normally the best way to leave a mooring is to untie the stern rope first then push the stern of the boat out from the bank whilst one of your crew stays on the bank holding the bow line, keeping the bow of the boat close enough to the bank for him or her to step aboard, with the rope at the appropriate moment at the same time pushing the bows out into the stream. If you untie the bow line first you will almost certainly have a problem with the propeller hitting tree roots so, unless there are really unusual circumstances preventing you from doing so, you should normally release the stern first and the bow afterwards.

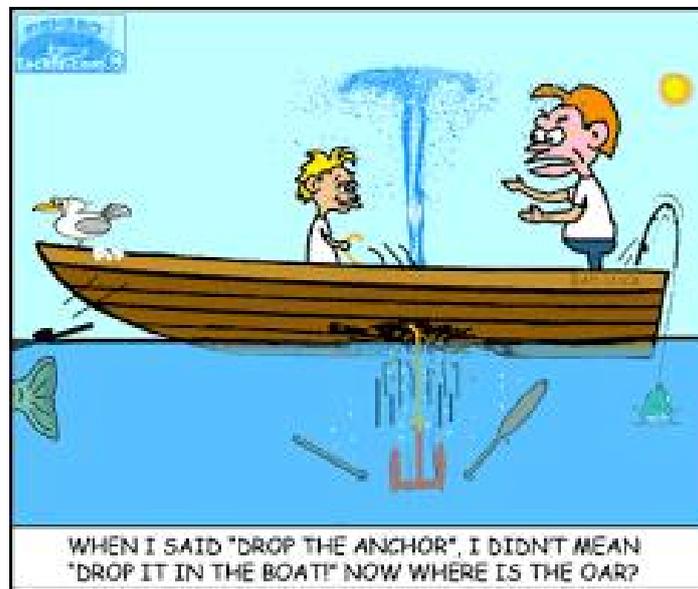


On canals and non-tidal rivers, unless the wind is blowing really hard, a bow-rope and a stern-rope is normally sufficient to secure a boat safely. Remember not to pull the ropes too tight as this makes letting-go more difficult. For instance, any knots or windings onto the mooring cleats will be difficult to undo.

As previously mentioned, on tidal rivers, or if there's a strong wind blowing, it may be necessary to use more than two mooring ropes to secure your boat safely. The best way to do this is to have two extra ropes, known as "springs" with one of these secured to the bow of the boat and running aft (i.e. backwards) to a mooring point ashore somewhere astern of the boat and another rope from the stern of the boat leading forward to a mooring point ahead of the boat.

The best advice on mooring is to approach everything slowly and methodically. Use the wind and current to help you rather than try to fight them! Keep calm, don't panic and you'll soon get the hang of it.

Most hire boats are equipped with an anchor but this is essentially for emergency use and NOT for mooring! The anchor is attached to a length of chain then to a rope which should be firmly secured to the boat (it's worth checking this is all correct before you leave the base). In the unlikely event of encountering an emergency situation as a result of engine failure, or through trying to manoeuvre too near a dam or weir, you should throw the anchor out over the bow and allow all the chain and some of the rope to run out before securing the remaining line to a cleat in the bows. This should hold you securely while you sort out the problem or call for assistance.



Should you have to anchor for any reason when you are at sea then you should ensure that there is at least three times as much anchor warp (chain & rope) as the water is deep – in other words if you anchor in ten feet of water then you will need to pay out at least thirty feet of anchor warp.

Locks: Locking should be a pleasant and interesting experience, but many newcomers are understandably somewhat daunted by what appears to be a complicated process. In fact it is all quite simple provided you follow a few basic rules.

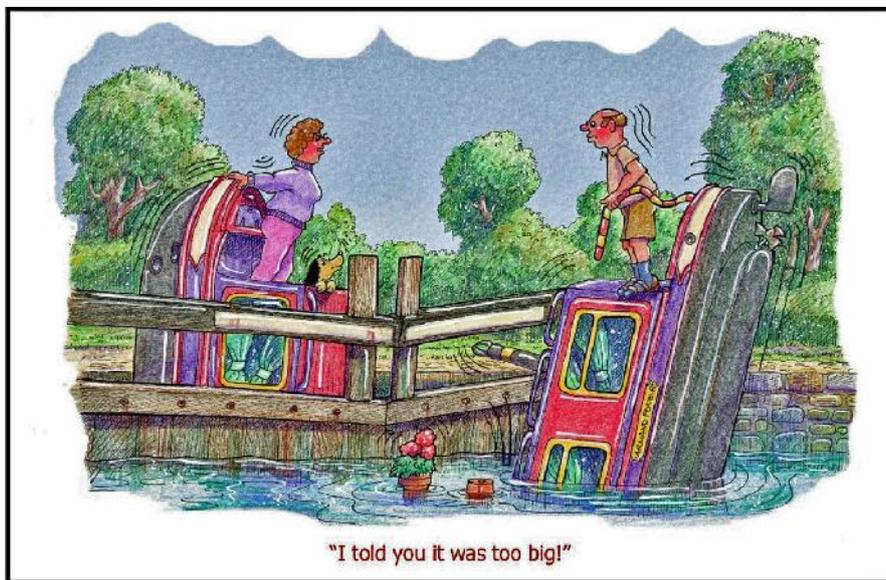
Bear in mind that locks work to a timetable, that the lock-keeper has a job to do and is normally very experienced. Always follow his advice or instructions and respect the fact that he's required to give priority to commercial craft, so please be patient. Quite often, especially at busy times, the lock keeper will want to group several boats together before operating the lock. Passage through locks is normally free of charge but, if a lock-keeper has been particularly helpful, a tip will be appreciated and if he or his wife has produce for sale alongside the lock they'll appreciate your patronage!

In some cases lock-keepers will telephone ahead to the next lock to alert them to expect your arrival so if you plan to moor up for some time between this lock and the next one please tell the lock keeper.



When approaching a lock you should reduce speed when you're about 150 metres from it and announce your arrival with a blast of your horn. If the lock gates are open when you arrive you can normally go straight in and tie up. If there is a boat in the lock and/or if the gates are closed you should moor up and wait about 100 metres short of the entrance, making sure that you don't impede the passage of other vessels.

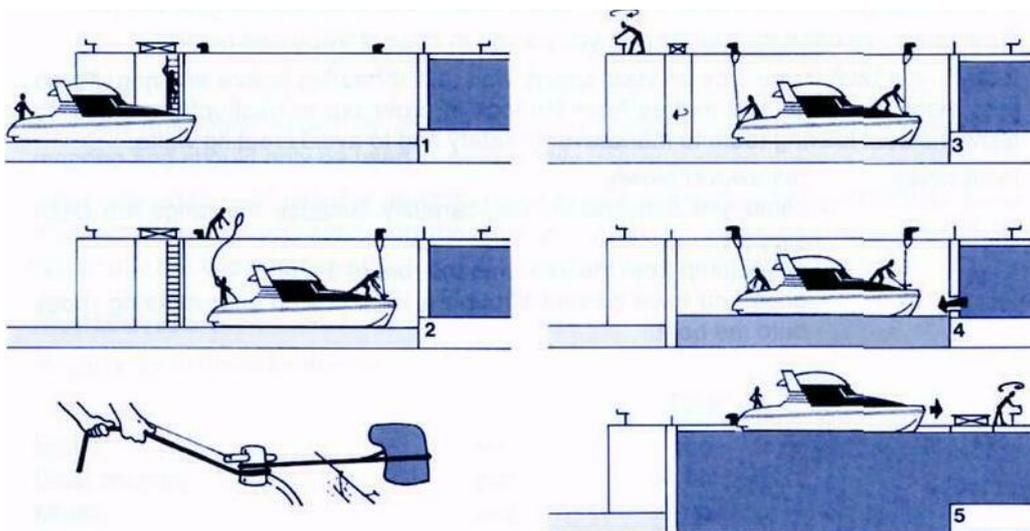
Always remember to manoeuvre slowly, be careful climbing ladders which are often slippery, never to jump off the lock onto your cabin roof and to coil your ropes away tidily once you've cleared the lock.



Locking Up-Stream: (i.e. an ascending lock). Approach the lower level (downstream) gate very slowly and drop-off one or two of your crew either onto the bank or via the ladder normally situated just inside the lock. It may be possible for these crew members to take your mooring lines ashore with them but, if not, once fully inside the lock you need to throw your mooring lines up to them. To do this make a coil of the rope and throw it in a similar manner to bowling a cricket ball. The crew ashore should loop the ropes around the mooring bollards provided, without tying them, and throw the end of the ropes back to the crew member(s) on board.

Once your boat is secured alongside, the lock keeper will close the downstream gates behind you. Some locks are operated manually, in which case the lock keeper may appreciate some help from your crew members ashore. Once the downstream gates are closed, the lock-keeper will open the up-stream sluices to fill the lock. Make sure you keep your boat snugly alongside the lock wall while the lock fills, which means that the crew on board must constantly tighten the ropes to reduce the slack in the mooring lines as the boat rises..

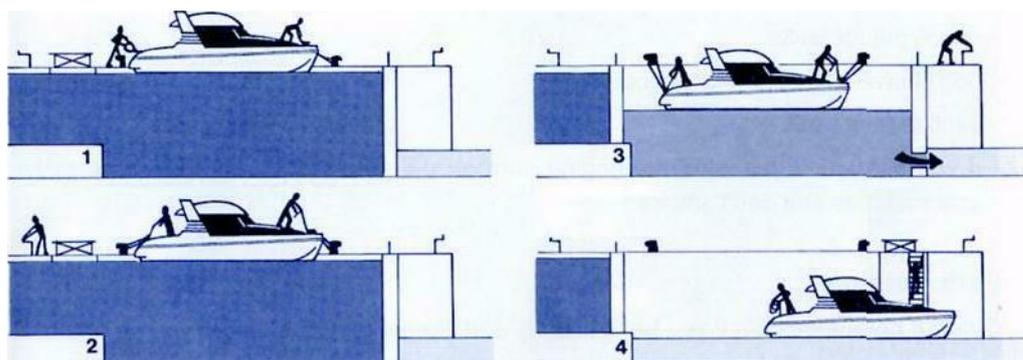
When the water level in the lock is equal to that in the canal ahead the gates are opened, you can untie your mooring ropes, coil them neatly, pick up your crew and move slowly ahead. It's really all quite simple!



Locking Down-Stream: (i.e. a descending lock) Providing the up-stream lock gate (called the crown gate) is open you should enter the lock slowly and carefully and drop one or two crew members off onto the bank taking ropes with them. These ropes should be looped around the bollards provided on the lock-side, without tying them, before throwing them back on board **leaving plenty of slack.** (at least 3-4 metres)

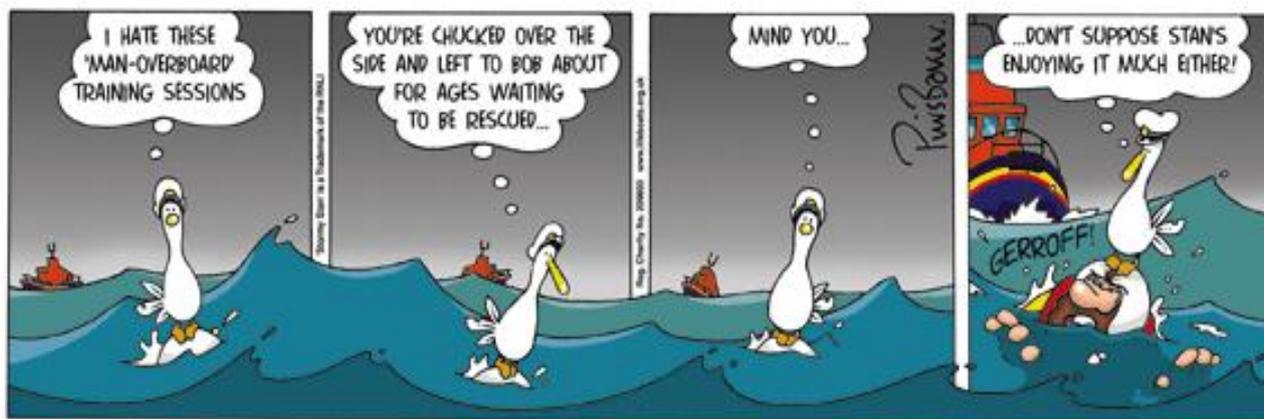
The lock keeper will now close the crown gate and open the sluices ahead of you to allow the water in the lock to fall while you and you crew adjust the slack in the mooring ropes.

Once the level of water in the lock and that in the canal ahead are equal the gates ahead of you will be opened, and you can coil your mooring ropes, pick up your crew-members and proceed on your way.



Emergencies: Hopefully there won't be any! - boating ought to be fun, but you'll enjoy it more if you try to do things the correct way and to look "seamanlike" by keeping calm and running a "tidy ship" Always try to keep ropes coiled and not leave things lying about, particularly on deck, where members of the crew can trip over them. Observe sensible precautions, particularly where gas and re-fuelling are concerned. Don't smoke whilst changing gas bottles or when re-fuelling! Be careful when going forward along the decks. Watch out for low bridges especially if you're on the cabin roof for some reason. If someone is unfortunate enough to fall in don't panic

You should always know where to find your emergency contact details. Your first call may well be to your hire company but these are often closed on Sundays and out of office hours so you should know in advance where to call in the event of an emergency. An emergency involving injury to anyone would warrant a 999 call in the UK or a "Mayday" call on VHF Channel 16 if you're at sea.



Man Overboard! A man-overboard situation at sea is always dangerous and most marine Global Positioning Systems (GPS) have a "man overboard" button which, if pressed immediately when someone falls overboard, logs the exact location. It is not quite so dangerous if someone falls into a canal, although falling into a tidal river is potentially just as hazardous as falling in the sea.

There are tried and tested procedures for re-covering someone who has fallen overboard at sea and some of those procedures could apply equally well on the river or on a canal, so it is worth running very briefly through them.

Firstly don't lose sight of the person in the water, which can easily happen at sea when there are even moderately large waves, but it could also happen on a river in misty conditions. The standard advice is to tell a crew member to keep watching the person in the water while the skipper manoeuvres the boat.

Secondly, and just as importantly, remember that anyone in the water is very vulnerable to being severely cut by your propeller, so whatever you do keep the stern of the boat well clear of them

It is usually best to approach the person in the water SLOWLY in an up-wind direction so that the boat can more easily be stopped, and the engine put into neutral (to stop the propeller from turning) when you are alongside them. If you have enough crew aboard then you should consider anchoring and switching your engine off once you are close enough to the casualty to use paddles or a bow thruster to get alongside the person in the water. Remember too that it is not easy for anyone in the water, who will be wet and probably cold, to clamber up the side of a boat, so a rope over the side with a loop in it, into which they can place a foot, will certainly help.



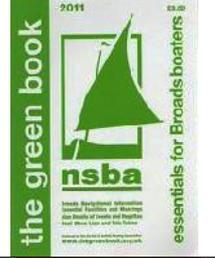
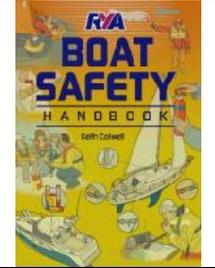
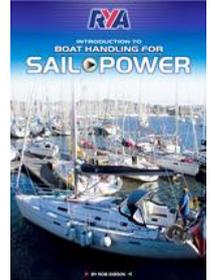
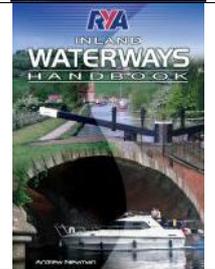
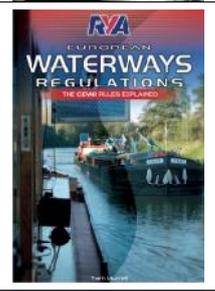
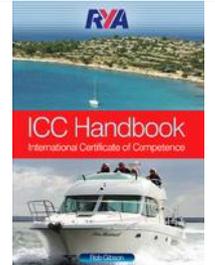
Hopefully your boating experiences will all be uneventful in terms of emergencies but it's well worthwhile actually practicing recovering something such as a large buoy or lifebelt from the water – it's not as easy as you might think!

All that remains is for us to wish you "Bonnes Voyages"

Clive Edwards, MNI,
Captain Chris Woods

Appendix A Recommended Publications

If you wish to extend your knowledge beyond that contained in this guide, the following publications are recommended.

	<p>The Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association (NSBA) exists to serve, protect and promote the interests of private users of pleasure craft on the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads. It has over 1,100 individual members and 47 affiliated clubs and associations, altogether representing the majority of those who use private craft on the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads. The Broads are an extensive inland waterway system of 190 km of navigable, lock-free rivers and permanently open broads. Navigation is subject to the Broads Authority, a statutory authority with regulatory powers.</p>
	<p>**The RYA Boat Safety Handbook provides essential information to ensure that your boat has the necessary safety equipment. Illustrated throughout in full colour, it is written by Keith Colwell, an RNLI Divisional Sea Safety Manager and RYA Instructor. This is a vital book for sailors both old and new who are concerned with the safety of themselves and others. Chapters include - Lifejackets and Buoyancy aids, Man Overboard prevention and recovery, Calling for Help and Dealing with Fire</p>
	<p>**Most boaters agree that "take offs and landings" are the most difficult and stressful areas of boating but that once the general principles and rules are mastered you are soon able to deal safely and confidently with most common situations. The object of RYA Boat Handling for Sail and Power is to help you gain a fuller understanding of boat handling by dealing with a wide variety of situations in a thoughtful and logical way. Expert advice in easy to follow text combined with in-depth colour illustrations make this title an essential tool to everyone who takes a boat out on the water.</p>
	<p>**RYA Inland Waterways Handbook accompanies the RYA Inland Waterways Helmsman's Course and chapters include types of boat; rope handling; rules of the road; steerable power; turning; reversing, and propeller and wind effect. Revised and updated to keep abreast of any changes in the inland waterways regulations. Written and updated by Andrew Newman, Principal of a RYA Training Centre which runs courses applicable to the inland waterways and the types of boats used thereon.</p>
	<p>**RYA European Waterways Regulations is essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the CEVNI code which was devised by the United Nations in 1985 and governs navigation on all interconnected European inland waterways. It was established to enable boatmen of all nationalities to communicate and understand what is going on without the need to speak each other's language. Key chapters include: Visual Signs and Rules of the Road (particularly blue boarding). Author Tam Murrell has been boating for business and pleasure since the late 1950s ranging from working narrow boats and barges on UK inland waters to small coasters in and around the Thames estuary and Northern Europe.</p>
	<p>**It is a requirement in most European countries that boaters hold the International Certificate of Competence, (or the ICC as it is more commonly known), when using both the coastal and inland waterways. It is essentially the nearest we have to an international driving licence for boaters. The RYA ICC Handbook explains the ICC in great detail- what it is, why it came about, who it applies to and the requirements for all boaters to obtain one. The International Regulations to Prevent Collisions at Sea are briefly touched on and the content of the ICC test is explained in depth. Expertly written by Rob Gibson, author of the popular RYA Boat Handling for Sail & Power</p>

Books marked ** are also available as e-books which makes them easier to carry around and refer to when on board.

Besides the above, the RYA publishes many more books covering every aspect of boating. For more information visit their website <http://www.rya.org.uk/shop/>