

Hillingdon Narrowboats Association

Spirit Handover Manual

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Welcome!

On behalf of Hillingdon Narrowboats Association, I'd like to thank you for choosing to hire Spirit one of our boats. No matter which boat you've hired, or the length of your trip, we're sure that you'll have a fantastic time exploring the waterways around this part of the country.

Before we confirmed your booking, we'll have made sure that you are competent to steer a narrowboat: this may have been as part of our training scheme, or, if you already have boating experience, we may have asked you to spend an hour or two with us to so that we be sure of your skills whilst afloat. Alternatively, you may have chosen to have an HNA-certificated steerer come with you, either for all, or just part, of your trip.

Please take the time to read this short manual, which covers everything we'll have told you during the handover process. We do realise that you probably want to get straight onto boating, but spending 20-30 minutes just to familiarise yourself with the boat, and the immediate area, is time well spent.

If you have any problems during your hire period, please do contact us using the details in the 'Get in Touch' section. Many problems can be resolved very quickly, or we might be able to offer advice for events outside of our control. Whatever, if you have any queries at all, please do get in touch quickly, so we can have you on your way again as quickly as possible.

Depending on the route you take, look out for the Hanging Monkey, just north of our boathouse; see also if you can spot Spiderman if you head into Little Venice. You might see the floating Chinese Restaurant, an abundance of coconuts, and – if you go through the Islington tunnel - absolutely nothing but pitch darkness!

Thanks again for choosing Hillingdon Narrowboats. All that remains is for me to wish you a safe and pleasant trip, as you begin your journey on the water.

Best wishes

Dave

Dave Wright

Project Manager, Hillingdon Narrowboats

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If You Read Nothing Else...

...please read this section. It covers the basics you really need to know.

Water

The boat has a large tank of potable water. This water is safe to drink, but may have a slightly unusual taste. It's safe to drink, to brush teeth with, and for cooking. For trips of more than a day, we would suggest you top up with water once a day: the basic rule of thumb is to top up when you can, not when you have to. A fully empty tank can take 30-45 minutes to refill completely. Water refill inlet is on the top of the boat; the Nicholson's Guide on the boat will identify the location of water points along the canal.

Diesel

Prior to your trip, the boat will have been refilled with diesel. For cruises of more than 4-5 days, we'd recommend checking the amount of fuel remaining using the dip stick, which has the EMPTY level clearly marked. A good guide is a consumption of one inch of fuel per day.

Gas

There are three gas bottles on board, stored at the gas locker in the very front of the boat. Two bottles are connected: the third is spare. If one bottles runs out, the automatic changeover will switch to the other. If both bottles are empty, you should connect the spare bottle. Remember to turn off the old bottle before disconnecting it, and to turn on the new bottle after it's connected. **Gas bottles have a LEFT-HAND thread**, and a spanner can be found in the gas locker. Do not overtighten the connection.

In the event of a gas leak, turn off both bottles, open doors and windows and do not operate any light switches, either off or on. Move to boat to the bank, moor it safely and switch off the engine, and turn off the power isolators in the engine compartment. Ventilate the boat, and investigate the cause of the leak. Contact HNA for further advice.

Waste Water

Sink and shower water is discharged into the canal. Toilet waste is collected in tanks in the bottom of the boat, and should be of sufficient capacity for a trip of less than a week. An indication of a full toilet tank would be waste water in the bottom of the toilet bowl. Use the other toilet until you can obtain a pump out (HNA will reimburse, with receipts) one pump out per hire.

Fire

Fire extinguishers and blankets are on the boat. Familiarise yourself with their locations and operating instruction. HNA's advice is to only fight fire if you can safely do so easily. Your priority should be to get yourself and passengers to safety – at least 3-4 boat lengths away - before giving any consideration to extinguishing the fire.

Starting and Stopping.

To cold-start the boat:

1. Ensure the 4 battery isolators are turned on two on each side under floor boards. These would only normally be in the off position when you pick up your boat.
2. With the key in your pocket, to prevent accidental starting, perform the daily checks:
 - a. Fan belt tension
 - b. Engine coolant level
 - c. Oil level
 - d. Prop shaft rotation
 - e. Weed hatch
 - f. Tighten stern-gland greaser as necessary
3. Apply some throttle, making sure that you disengage the gears first by pressing the square black button on the morse control.
4. Insert the ignition key, push the PRE-HEAT switch position for 6-8 seconds, then turning to the START position until the engine has started. Release to key back to the RUN position.
5. Slowly take the engine to full revs, and then back to tickover. Check for excessive engine smoke.

To warm-start the boat (after, perhaps, a brief stop):

1. Apply some throttle, making sure that you disengage the gears first Insert the ignition key, turning to the start position until the engine has started. Release to key back to the RUN position.
2. Slowly take the engine to full revs, and then back to tickover. Check for excessive engine smoke.

To stop the boat:

1. Ensure the boat is secured, front a rear, with ropes.
2. Turn the key to stop position the engine stop button, as appropriate.
3. Turn the ignition to OFF

If you are stopping the boat for the day, check the stern-glad greaser and tighten as necessary.

Steering

You will have been assessed as competent by HNA prior to your hire. However, it's worth reinforcing a few basics:

Keep to the centre of the canal, moving to the right when an oncoming boat is approaching. You should pass left-side to left-side.

Familiarise yourself with the pivot point of the boat shortly after departure, so you can better estimate when to commence a turn. Remember, a short blast of full power during a turn will make the boat turn sharper, without increasing forward speed.

Steering in reverse is ineffective. It's often best, when reversing, to give short blasts of forward throttle, with the tiller in the appropriate position, to correct your direction.

If you run aground, the best advice is to try to reverse off of the obstruction, and get the back of your boat into deeper water. Use boat poles to push the boat off. In the case of serious grounding, contact HNA for advice before considering asking a passing boat to tow you off.

Do not attempt to overtake unless the boat in front indicates that he wishes you to do so. Regardless, don't overtake under bridges, on bends, in shallow water, or when passing moored boats.

Be courteous to other waterway users. Take your turn at locks, and close gates and paddles unless another boat is approaching or signs direct you otherwise.

The maximum speed on the canal system should be considered to be 4mph. In practice, it'll often be slower than this. You should avoid creating a breaking wash, going at moored boats and fishermen faster than tickover, and be conscious that it is possible to dislodge boats poorly moored with excessive speed. Slow down to tickover when passing moored boats, at least 3-4 boat lengths before you get to them.

To stop, or to slow down quickly, use a burst of reverse until the boat comes to a stop. Note that this may cause the boat to veer off course slightly. Steering ability is significantly reduced when moving forward in neutral, when, for example, slowing gradually.

Safety

Locks

At locks, pay close attention to use of the windlass on the paddle spindles: keep tight hold of it when raising or lowering paddles, remember the use of the safety catch, and never leave a windlass on a spindle.

In the event of a man overboard in a lock, drop all paddles immediately, and seek to recover the casualty.

Be aware of the location of the cill when lowering the boat in a lock, and keep well forward. If the back of the boat does get caught, immediately close the lower paddles, and add water by opening the upper paddles to refloat the boat.

Man Overboard

If anyone should fall overboard, immediately put the engine into neutral. Talk to the casualty, and if possible, instruct him to stand up and walk to the bank. Never attempt to recover the person onto the boat unless there are no alternatives, and only then, do so at the rear of the boat. Ensure anyone who does fall in showers as soon as possible, and keep them warm. Advise them to visit their doctor if they exhibit any flu-like symptoms in the following 3-4 weeks, and to tell their doctor they have been exposed to canal water, due to the risks of Weil's disease.

Accidents and Emergencies

In the event of needing medical attention, use the Nicholson's Guide to identify your location and nearest point of access, and relay this to the 999 operator.

Life Jackets

HNA will make available life jackets for you upon request. The decision to wear these rests with the hirer and his/her passengers. Life jackets, if worn, should not be covered by coats, jackets, etc, and should always be the outermost item of clothing worn. HNA will charge for any life jacket inflations caused by anything other than a person overboard.

Security

Ensure the boat is locked – front and rear – and any side hatches are also secured, windows closed, curtains drawn and any valuables removed with you when leaving the boat.

Mooring

As a reminder, you shouldn't moor in the following places:

- Under bridges
- Across weirs
- In locks or on lock moorings
- On water points or facilities moorings
- In winding holes
- On corners
- Anywhere other than the tow-path side, unless signs indicate you can.

When mooring, use ropes front and back, leading away from the boat at approximately 45 degrees. It's often best to bring the rope back to the boat and secure it to a t-stud on the boat with a secure hitch, preferably the boatmans' hitch.

When mooring overnight, in less-salubrious areas, remove any loose items from the roof, and ensure windows on the tow-path side are closed.

If you moor using mooring pins, ensure that these are driven in using a mallet at an angle of 45 degrees. Pins and ropes should not obstruct the tow path. It is often useful to lead the rope through the ring on the mooring pin, so that if it does work loose, it won't be lost.

Use of lifts...

Only HNA trained crew and Skippers should operate the front and rear lifts.

If possible run the engine whilst using the lifts.

In an emergency there is a red safety button on the outside and inside near the lift.

The inside button requires a key to unlock after use.

When using the lifts keep an eye for feet getting trapped under the lift when descending, there is a safety cut off but this should not be relied upon.

Never reach under a raised lift without propping up.

Never exceed the Safe Working Load of the lifts a notice is attached to each lift to indicate the SWL.

Make sure all wheelchairs on the lift have the breaks on whilst ascending or descending.

If possible close the front or rear doors when the lifts are in use.

Normally only two people should be on the lift at any time.

If Things go Wrong...

Accidents

In the event of an accident involving another boat, **do not admit liability**. Remain calm and polite and obtain the following information:

- a) The name of the other boat and its registration number.
- b) The owner's name and address.
- c) The skipper's name and address.
- d) The names and addresses of any witnesses.
- e) The date, time and location of the incident.

Contact HNA immediately for further advice.

Breakdown

The most common problem you'll encounter is an obstruction of the propeller (blade). Moor up, stop the engine and remove the key, and then proceed to remove any debris around the blade. On some sections of the canal, this can need doing with monotonous regularity.

In the event of engine failure, moor up, and contact HNA. Most problems can be rectified easily.

Loss or Damage

Again, contact HNA at the earliest opportunity. In some instances, we may need to make a police report, and this may require a witness statement. Wilful damage caused by you or your party will normally be chargeable.

Summary

You are **not permitted** to cruise on tidal waters, without the express permission of HNA, and agreed in advance of your hire.

Night cruising is **not permitted without the express permission** of the Chairman or Project Manager of HNA. Permission may be granted taking into account your experience, the section of canal you're on, weather conditions, your familiarity with the section of canal, the numbers and age of your passengers, and whether you need to pass through any locks.

Keep your speed down. All boats carry HNA's name and phone number, and we do receive reports of speeding boats. Repeated reports of a group speeding may result in early termination of your hire.

Dispose of all rubbish in approved waste facilities, or retain it on board to dispose of back at HNA.

You are expected **to return your boat in the same clean and tidy condition** in which you took over it. A boat in a dirty condition will attract an additional cleaning charge.

Ensure all crew and passengers are given **HNA's Safety Briefing** before departure. This is for everyone's benefit, even those who have used our boats before.

Treat other boaters as you would wish to be treated yourself. **Show courtesy and consideration**, and remember that voices or music travel great distances over water, especially at night.

Canal Glossary

<u>Term</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Aft / stern	Back of a boat.
Air draft	The height of the boat taken from the waterline to the highest fixed point on the boat (so you won't hit a low bridge).
Beam	A boat's width.
Bow	Pointed front of the boat.
Breasted pair	Two boats moored together.
Butty boat	A narrowboat without an engine, usually towed behind or alongside a powered narrowboat, has an open hold to carry cargo.
BWB key watermate key	Opens sanitary stations, waterpoints and some swing bridges and locks.
Cill	Doorsteps inside the lock, on which the lock gates sit.
Counter	Flat area below the water line above the swim.
Cut	Another term for a canal: workers cut the ditches to make the canals.
Draft	The depth of a boat / how deep it is under water.
Elsan disposal	Place to empty disposable toilets.
Galley	A boat's kitchen.
Gangplank	A plank used for getting on and off when the boat won't quite reach the bank.
Gunwale	The top edge of the hull where it joins the cabin side, pronounced 'gunnel' as tunnel.
Hull	The main body of a boat, not including the cabin.
Junction	Where two or more canals meet.
Keel cooled	A closed system, a slab tank (narrow & baffled) is welded to the inside (normally) of the swim, engine cooling water is then circulated through it. (does the same job as the radiator on a car).
Linear moorings	Moorings along the canal where the boat is tied parallel to the towpath.
Lock gates	The mechanism that lets a boat into and out of a lock and also holds the water back
Navigation lights	Used in poor visibility on rivers to show other boats where you are and what direction you are going in. White lights – front and back; green light - right hand side; red light - left hand side.
Offline moorings	Moorings in a basin / marina etc, i.e. Not along the actual canal.
Online moorings	Moorings along the canal.
Paddles	Trapdoors in the lock gate or side of the wall of the lock which let water in and out of the lock (Also known as a sluice).
Port or Port side	Left-hand side when standing at the stern facing forward (towards the frontend)
Pound	A section of waterway between locks.
Pump out	The facility to empty toilets that have a fixed holding tank.
Raw water cooled	Canal water is drawn in via a mud box (normally a watertight container large enough to allow the incoming water time to settle) before being pumped around the engine to cool it then returned to the canal.

<u>Term</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Restriction	When maintenance work is carried out on a waterway, but the navigation doesn't have to be closed. Boaters may need to follow special instructions, or be delayed for a certain amount of time etc.
Rudder	Used to steer the boat, it is attached to the back of a boat and into the water.
Screw	The propeller which makes the boat go.
Skeg	A steel horizontal bar welded to the base plate (normally in channel form) protruding from the stern to carry the lower end of the rudder post and bearing, it also gives some protection to the propeller.
Skipper	The captain or person in charge of the boat.
Sluice	Trapdoors in the lock gate or side of the wall of the lock which let water in and out of the lock (Also known as paddles).
Stake	Known as mooring pins, you hammer into the ground to tie to tie the boat to the bank (used when there are no mooring rings).
Starboard or starboard side	Right-hand side when standing at the stern facing forward (towards the frontend)
Stern	The back of a boat.
Stern-gear	The propeller, propeller shaft, sterntube, sterntube bearing, and stuffing box or packing gland (an adjustable gland to help keep water out of the engine space bilge).
Stern-gland Greaser	Tube full of grease which is packed around the sterntube to prevent water seeping into the boat. Checked twice daily.
Stoppages	When work/maintenance is taking place on a waterway, a section of it may need to be closed to boaters for a certain length of time
Summit	The highest section of a canal above the top lock.
Swans neck	The S shaped steel bar welded to the rudder post to which the tiller bar is fitted (the brass shinny stick with a wooden handle on the end) on a motor boat.
Swim	The after (back) underwater part of the hull that goes to a point to allow a cleaner flow of water over the propeller.
Tiller	Attached to the rudder to control steerage through the rudder.
Transom	The normally rounded after (back) part of the boat above the water where the steerer stands.
Tumblehome	The amount a cabin side slopes inwards (to give more bridge clearance).
Tunnel light	Large beam, like a car headlight, for use in tunnels to see the way and to be seen by on-coming boats.
Waterline	The line on the boats hull where it floats.
Weir	An artificial waterfall often built so the river or canal can run around a lock.
Winding hole	A place on the water broad enough to turn the boat around.
Windlass	A spanner-like tool used to open lock paddles or sluices.
Windlass or lock key	A cranked handle for opening and closing lock paddles.

Get in Touch

- Hillingdon Narrowboats Association
 - Web: www.hna.org.uk
 - Tel: 01895 823 582 (office hours) or 07860 857 877 (out of hours)

- Canal & River Trust
 - Web: www.canalrivertrust.org.uk
 - Tel: 0800 47 999 47 (Emergencies, damaged locks/bridge/tunnel, trapped boats)

- Thames Barrier Navigation (London VTS)
 - Tel: 0208 855 0315
 - VHF: Channel 14, call sign "London VTS"

- Thames Lock, Limehouse
 - Tel: 0207 308 9930
 - VHF: Channel 80, call sign "Limehouse Marina"

- Thames Lock, Brentford
 - Tel: 0208 568 2779

- Thames Lock, Teddington
 - Tel: 0208 940 8723