



INFORMATION FOR GROUPS

Please find below some information that you may find useful. This includes our contact details, joining arrangements, safety matters, and catering and other information.

The crew (a qualified skipper aided by a trained volunteer crew member) is responsible for the boat and its safe handling. Groups are responsible for their own catering, and the conduct of parties from school and other organisations must be properly supervised by appropriate staff. We are delighted if passengers want to help with working the locks but they must be supervised by a crew member. Children must also be supervised by a teacher/supporter.

1 CONTACTING CHARITY

If you need to contact us about a booking please ring **the Booking Co-ordinator on 01538 710566** or the **Chairman on 07734 106546 (leave voice mail and send text if no answer)**. If you need to cancel or postpone a run please let us know as early as possible, before we have to incur expense. The Beatrice Charity reserves the right to invoice users for a run which has been cancelled on the morning of the run (that is, after crew can be stood down). If you need to contact the Chairman on any other matter his land-line is **01538 386820**, email beatricecharity@talktalk.net.

2 JOINING ARRANGEMENTS

Beatrice is moored adjacent to the **A520 at Cheddleton** :

- at the bottom of the hill, follow the brown sign pointing to the **Cheddleton Flint Mill** (if coming from the Potteries, Stone or Stafford, *turn left*; if coming from Leek *turn right*);
- the turning is *opposite* Bateman's factory - **ST13 7HN**.
- follow the narrow track adjacent to the canal, and the car park is beyond the Flint Mill: cars should be parked on the left, nose into the wall and minibuses should park at the far end of the car park – the disabled parking space is reserved for mill visitors.

The car park also serves the Mill and is needed by their volunteers and visitors: please limit the number of vehicles that you bring to Beatrice. If the gate is locked a member of the crew will be on the boat, with the key. Cruises normally start between 10 o'clock and 10:30. The route will be arranged with the Skipper depending on when you wish to get back to Cheddleton and on which direction you wish to go. **If you expect to be later than 10:30** please inform the Bookings Co-ordinator.

3 FACILITIES

Catering - The Charity does not provide food or drink, but there is a kettle, and a small fridge and a small microwave, for your use. You are welcome to bring your own food and drink on board (we have mugs and some plates and cutlery). The water supply is kept in a large tank and, while perfectly good for hot drinks, you may wish to bring bottled drinking water.

The toilet is large and suitable for people with disabilities but, as it is obviously not on mains sewerage, it uses a macerator. Please do not put any cloth or other material down the toilet as it will stop the toilet from working. Sorting this out is a time consuming and very unpleasant task. There is a fold down shelf for use with passengers who need assistance.

Rubbish We do not have access to rubbish bins, so could you please take your rubbish home with you?

The electric lift from the fore deck to the cabin is suitable for most wheel-chairs but not for large electric ones. Three people seated in wheel-chairs can be accommodated in the cabin, but this may reduce the overall capacity of the cabin. The lift will only be used when the boat is stopped and securely moored. Please let the Booking Co-ordinator know **if you expect to seat wheel-chair passengers** in the cabin, and how many, if possible.

4 CONDUCT OF PARTIES

For the benefit of all passengers, group leaders are asked to manage their children (and adults), and the boat will be stopped and the party spoken to if a party is disruptive. If improvement is not forthcoming the skipper may terminate the trip and ask the party to make its own way back to its transport, or that the party be collected. The skipper will make a written report to the Chairman, who, if appropriate, will write to the organisation asking for improved behaviour, at the risk of losing future bookings.

5 SAFETY MATTERS - Beatrice holds a Safety Certificate which expires in June 2022

See the Risk Assessment below.

The Charity has been successfully running cruises for over 40 years. The Charity will, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that passengers are not exposed to risks to their health and safety whilst boarding, disembarking or on-board Beatrice. Passengers, guided if appropriate by their group leaders, are expected to

- take reasonable care to avoid injury to themselves and to others and to co-operate with the Charity in meeting those requirements;
- ensure that they do not interfere with or misuse anything provided for their health and safety;
- move about calmly within the boat and avoid unbalancing it by having too many people on one side;
- comply with any reasonable request by the Charity with regard to health, safety, environment and welfare;
- wear any personal protective equipment that has been provided by the crew and that they have been instructed to wear, and they shall take care of such equipment. In particular children helping with locks should wear buoyancy aids that meet regulations set down for their age-group;
- if intending to use the towing path (eg helping with the locks) passengers should bring and wear shoes and coats suitable for wet and muddy conditions.

There are certain rules that must be observed to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience:

- in the event of an accident all passengers should **REMAIN CALM**, if possible remain seated, and always **follow the instructions given by the crew**;

- **children** helping with locks must wear the **buoyancy aid** given to them;
- when instructed to do so, passengers should use the **emergency exits** which are situated at the front and rear of the boat. In extreme circumstances the roof hatch forward of the toilets may be needed, using the brass folding footholds positioned under it;
- In the **event of a fire** passengers should raise the alarm, move to the end of the boat and, when safe to do so, leave by one of the exits. The crew will use one of the **fire extinguishers** (situated at the front of the cabin, at the rear, by the sink, and outside the toilet door);
- **no one should run on the towing path, or ride on the cabin roof;**
- all parts of the of **your body must be kept within the boat**, and in particular;
 - do not touch lock walls or bridge walls/roofs
 - or grasp hold of branches.
- should someone **fall in the water** you should alert the crew, who will put the engine into neutral and will instruct the person to stand up: in normal cruising the water is shallow enough for most people to touch the bottom;
 - In **deeper water**, or in a lock, a life ring (located on the forward and rear hatches) will be thrown by the crew but other passengers must not dive into the water or attempt to pull the person from the water. The crew will help the person to the canal side where s/he can easily be lifted from the water.

Helping with the locks

If, on a school run (or a party designed for children) no teacher/teaching assistant/support worker is willing to assist with the locks, standing with one of the children, then no child may help with the locks. This is because children must be supervised at all times. As crew members are not DBS checked, they must interact with children only under supervision.

Help in an emergency

The crew is responsible for summoning assistance in the event of an emergency (passengers may be asked to provide mobile phones if the service used by the boat proves out of reception range). At the start of the run the leader of the group will be asked for contact number to summon assistance for passengers in, for instance, getting back home.

6 RISK ASSESSMENT

Note that the assessed levels of risk shown below are based on over 30 years' operation. Levels used in this assessment are:

 **Very Low** (of which there are eight); **Low, Medium, High, Very High** (all none).

Activity To offer day cruises along the canal system, normally in Staffordshire, to parties of both children and adults, many of whom may be disabled.

Beatrice is purpose built to facilitate the stated activity and is certified to the required safety standards currently in place. The boat is owned and operated by the Charity.

Beatrice is operated by a qualified volunteer Skipper. The Skipper is assisted by a volunteer Crew Member. All persons who work on Beatrice have been properly trained.

Group Leader is the person taking responsibility for the conduct of members of a party: this may be a teacher for a school party or a support worker or for family groups, a parent.

Who is at Risk? – Crew and passengers. The maximum load is 12 passengers plus crew.

What are the Risks? Falling into water; injury from lock walls and gates or from low bridges or other overhead hazards; injury whilst operating lock mechanism; injury in the kitchen area from hot water; boat sinking or catching fire; danger from hazardous substances; danger from electrical sockets; and danger that children are out of control.

Control to Minimise Risk

Safety instructions are given to all schools at the school booking meeting are available for other groups on the web-site. Safety briefing will be given by the Skipper before the boat departs the mooring. The risks identified by the Charity are:

- **Falling into water – assessed risk VERY LOW**

No passengers will embark/disembark until cleared to do so by the Skipper, and they will use the exit/entrance as directed. No passenger will walk down the exterior of the boat or enter the roof area. No passengers are permitted on the aft deck or the galley, unless specifically authorised by the Skipper, or any area of the boat outside the rails. Buoyancy aids are available on board and will be worn by passengers at the discretion of the group leader or as ordered by the Skipper. When helping with the locks all children will wear buoyancy aids and will have one-to-one supervision, either by a crew member or by a group leader who is observed by a crew member and the Skipper.

- **Injury from lock walls and gates or from low bridges or other overhead hazards – assessed risk VERY LOW**

Group leaders are to ensure that passengers in their care do not put limbs or heads outside the external lines of the boat when passing through locks or bridges or passing close to moored boats.

- **Injury from operating lock mechanism – assessed risk VERY LOW**

Locks will be operated by the crew. When appropriate, passengers may help with locks but only at the discretion of the Skipper if s/he deems it to be safe for them to do so.

With regard to this risk:

- **there should, at most, be only two children operating the paddles, both accompanied by an adult, one a member of the crew, the other a member of the group (eg parent or teaching staff);**
- **children are not allowed to lower the mechanical lock paddles (they may lower the hydraulic paddles).**

- **Injury in the kitchen area from hot water – assessed risk VERY LOW**

The kitchen is out of bounds to children. Group leaders may use the kitchen facilities at their own risk. The hot tap is clearly marked as being "Very Hot". Normal care should be exercised in using the electric kettle. There is a safe microwave. There is no gas supply to the boat.

- **Boat sinking or catching fire – assessed risk VERY LOW**

The safe operation of the boat is the responsibility of the Skipper. S/he ensures that all crew members are briefed and competent to assist, especially in lock operation and in emergency response to potential hazards. The boat carries fire-fighting equipment, a First Aid kit and a mobile telephone. The boat has exits at both front and rear and there is a roof hatch with foothold fittings near the rear of the saloon (which can be opened from either inside or outside). In the event of an emergency, the Skipper and crew will direct evacuation and group leaders will be responsible for those in their care. In the event of a fire the crew will operate the fire extinguishers and, if appropriate, the fire blanket.

- **Danger from hazardous substances – assessed risk VERY LOW**

Hazardous materials for operating the boat (eg diesel, grease, oil) are stored in locked lockers external to the cabin. Domestic cleaning materials are kept in a designated box in a locker in the galley area. This area is out of bounds to children (group leaders may use the galley facilities at their own risk). The only cleaning materials used are commercially available products that are normally found in the home (bleach in particular is not kept on the boat).

- **Danger from electrical sockets – assessed risk VERY LOW**

Electrical sockets in the cabin are protected with socket covers.

- **Danger that children are out of control – assessed risk VERY LOW**

It is the group leader's responsibility to ensure that there are sufficient adults for the number of children in the party, **and it is the responsibility of these adults to manage the children safely.**

- Ⓢ **Smoking, including e-cigarettes, is not allowed in the boat. Crew are not allowed to smoke (or e-smoke) within sight of children.**