



The perfect boat needs dedication

It is one of the rules of boating that, no matter what boat you buy – even a brand new one – you will find after a few months that there are little things you want to change, just to make it perfect.

You will sometimes hear boat owners, faced with another repair bill, complain that BOAT stands for Bring Out Another Thousand; but tailoring a boat to be exactly what you want can be part of the fun of ownership.

The experts at Norbury Wharf, on the Shropshire Union, can do most things boaty, from paint to steelwork, engines to interiors and they often find themselves making the adjustments necessary for the owners to feel they have the perfect boat.

Not every list of improvements is as comprehensive as those required by boaters Chris and Wendy Robinson when they turned up at Norbury a couple of years ago, as boatyard boss Simon Jenkins explained: "It all started when a lovely couple bought their 57 foot boat to us for a repaint some time ago. "As in many cases, it went from a simple paint job to 'while you are at it' just replace the windows, modify the heating oil tank, change the pipe work. "While you are at it' change the engine, sound proof the engine bay, fit a new coupling, and the list went on. "Well all that was sorted and off they went cruising. They had a trouble free season and that led them to drop back in and it all



Making it their own - Chris and Wendy's boat at Norbury and, inset, work on their back cabin.

started again. "Their boat is a very nicely finished and has been built to a good standard. They love the layout and now it has the engine of their choice and a fresh paint job it seems that the next logical step, for Chris and Wendy is for them to carry on with the upgrades and some finer fettling. "So after several meetings, a bit of head scratching and bouncing ideas back and forth the boat duly arrived at the end of last year's boating season and is due to be collected at the beginning on March for their first outing this year. "The list of works is impressive

and the upgrades will make boating just that bit nicer. To date this includes a refitted rear cabin, to include new wardrobes, new control panels, cupboards, flooring, roof and wall linings, wet hanging spaces, new steps. "It has all been done using solid wood, no ply wood and MDF in here. Chris And Wendy have a keen eye for detail and want it to be 'just so' and our carpenter Mick knows just how to make it 'just so'. "As well as the partial refit, they have also requested an upgraded bow thruster and new tube

with better electrics, new battery management system and control system to list just a few more of the upgrades. "All these jobs are nearing completion and by the time this article reaches you we will be on the final snagging list, if you see Ben Cruachan out and about give Chris and Wendy a wave, and ask them what's in store for next winter?"

A DAY OUT AT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR

The tearoom at Norbury Wharf - somewhere you can relax and soak up the unique and friendly canal atmosphere while enjoying anything from a traditional breakfast, to a hearty lunch with a glass of beer or wine or some amazing cakes for afternoon tea. More on Page 3



Bargains

DIESEL

- Our fuel is the cheapest at a commercial boatyard on the waterways - and FAME free. It can change on a weekly basis but it is now at:

69.9p

BATTERIES

- 110amphr batteries JUST

£64.95

each when you buy four or more in the same transaction. £69.00 each if sold singly.

ECOFANS

The original and best fan for your stove just

£114.50

What do they do in winter?

NOWHERE near as many people see Norbury Wharf in the depths of winter as pop in during the sunnier months - so do they all hibernate in front of a nice warm fire in the cosy tearoom?

That suggestion brings a snort of derision from Norbury Manager David Ray. "Unlike some places, we are open seven days a week virtually all year," he said.

"The tearoom and chandlery is open every day and we are always here to serve diesel and coal and other essentials to winter boaters and passing landlubbers." Managing Director Simon Jenkins spells it out: "People often say to me at this time of year 'I bet its



Bottom checking is essential

customers that we normally see during the rest of the year, however, that doesn't mean we sit around with our feet up, regardless of what people

might think. "We have over 20 boats, some of which are our hire fleet and some shared owned boats to get ready for the upcoming season and the list of works for each boat is massive. "They all get a look in at the wet dock for some much-needed paint work TLC from Lee, our resident painter. They all get their bottoms gone over, this includes a thorough inspection of everything underwa-

ter, including the hull, the prop, shaft and rudder gear, and the hull gets a coat or two of bitumen paint. "Then the boat has a full overhaul of its internal equipment, this list goes on a bit as you can imagine, then all of the gas equipment is serviced, then a comes a landlord safety check and subsequent certificate, and finally the boat gets a full interior spring clean. "Once complete the boat



Bernard servicing an engine

gets checked over and is then ready for hire, all this takes the whole of the winter to do, and sometimes if the weather isn't too kind, it can take some of the spring time to finish off. "We are lucky this year as the weather has been kind to us, but in 2010 we were breaking ice nearly a foot thick to get boats in and out of the docks, so as you can see we don't sit around with our feet up!"



Painter Lee- plenty of winter work

quiet for you now?' and that couldn't be further from the truth.

"Yes, we don't see anywhere near the amount of

bottoms gone over, this includes a thorough inspection of everything underwa-

Canal comms better by water?

NORBURY'S planned online chandlery hasn't gone live as yet, despite initial plans to have it up and running by now. David Ray said "We were led to believe that it would be live at the beginning of the year but due to technical issues it has been delayed by the IT support team in charge of merging our websites etc.

"We should laugh at this really, when you consider that back in the day Norbury was at the centre of what was considered a major communication route where goods could be carried from as far away as London and beyond right up to Goole or Leeds, or Liverpool and



beyond.

"Now in the 21st we cant even get the internet to do what we want in a time scale we want it in, welcome to the world of modern communication!"

More than a tearoom

Where cyclists and walkers go for history, good food and good beer

A tearoom is just a tearoom – right? Steamed up windows, elderly shoppers filling their time with weak tea and anaemic toasted teacakes?

Venture a little way down country roads and you can discover a tearoom that is much more, not only does it attract cyclists, but walkers, trekking along the beautiful Shropshire Union Canal as well as passing boaters.

Set inside an historic canalside building on a busy canal wharf, there is more to see here than steamed-up windows.

The interior is something of a mini-museum adorned with traditional canalware, painted Buckby cans, traditional ropework, ribbon plates, jugs, even a tiller and boat models.

Norbury Wharf's tearoom offers more than tea and toast. The full



breakfast often tempts city cyclists who make the tearoom their first port or call, an hour or two out of Wolverhampton or Stafford on a day's ride.

Lunch, from a salad to fish pie can be accompanied by real ale or wine and for dessert or afternoon tea there is a full range of home-made cakes to go with fresh coffee or tea.

There's free wi-fi for those in need but the real attraction is the location – inside the chandlery and on the wharfside of a busy boatyard.

Even in winter there are passing narrowboats, many moored ves-

sels and a regular flow of people seeking esoteric items of boat ware and many tearoom visitors browse the chandlery for unusual gifts to take home. If you really get the canal bug you can hire a day-boat for the day or even book a canal holiday on the spot.

At weekends a 42-seater passenger trip boat offers public cruises at weekends from outside the tearoom door.

In winter the tearoom opens 10.00 till 3.00pm during the week and 8.30 till 5.00pm weekends, in Summer the weekend opening times apply all week.

Pandora joins the fleet

MEET Pandora, the latest addition to the Norbury Wharf hire fleet and named after the first woman created by the Greek gods who was given 'unique gifts'.

The gift she will be giving over the coming months and years is a top quality canal holiday for two small families or one large one.

She has a semi-traditional style stern with seating in front of the steerer. The interior of the boat has all the comforts of home and externally has just been repainted in Norbury's colours, giving a smart appearance, while maintaining a traditional feel. Pandora has two double beds converted at night from the dinette areas and four single beds in pairs of bunks in four



Pandora getting the finishing touches in dry dock

separate sleeping areas. She also has a second toilet as well as the main bathroom which has a toilet, washbasin and shower. With fitted carpets in the bed-

rooms, a fully-equipped kitchen, full central heating, a colour television/DVD and radio/CD player, Pandora is already popular with bookings for 2015 growing daily.

Diesel on downward slide?

WITH petrol selling at less than £1 a litre down the road in Walsall, everyone knows the wholesale price of all oil-based fuels has been coming down – but will it continue to drop?

Norbury Manager David Ray said: "The wholesale price of fuel has been coming down for some while now, which is

unusual in the winter months, as demand is usually higher, which helps drive the price up. "Now we are seeing a drop in prices, due to global factors such as American fracking and demand in economies like China not growing as much as before.

"Whatever the reason we are not complaining. We wish that the prices would come down

further which would definitely encourage more people to go out and use their boats.

"We try to be the most competitive fuel supplier in the country, (at a commercial boat yard) and we do react to price changes, which is why our price dropped to under 70p a litre for the first time for many years, recently and may well go lower."

Mooring spots open up - but soon go

FANCY mooring your boat at one of the prettiest and most fascinating parts of the canal system?

Moorings at Norbury only become available now and again, because boaters appreciate having a proper working boatyard and their highly skilled staff immediately to hand, to

say nothing of a spot at the heart of the lovely Shropshire Union Canal.

This year there is some minor movement with just a couple of moorers heading for pastures new so one mooring spot will be available now and another at the end of the month. Call the office to check on the details.



Get afloat and try the fun of boating
Take a trip on Victory, Defiant, Bounty - our day boats for 10 people.
You can enjoy up to 17 miles of the beautiful Shropshire Union canal with no locks and 6 pubs!



Or stay ashore in our cosy cottage home from home



Boats for sale

TUG
 - 20ft 'Bantam style' pusher tug. Powered by a three cylinder air cooled Deutz engine. Hydraulic drive - motor recently serviced. Two winches and ropes to the front which are in excellent condition. Docked and blacked.



REF: 10297

£9,999.



REF: 10340

Ichthus - 57ft semi trad stern built by Cheshire boat company, powered by a Vetus diesel, professionally repainted in 2007, docked in 2012 for blacking. **£26,999**



REF: 10347

The Merry Pippin
 A semi-traditional stern narrow boat built in 2002 by RLL boats. Powered by a reliable four-cylinder Isuzu marine diesel engine. There are four berths - one fixed double and two single beds. From entering at the rear of the boat down a set of wooden steps are the two single beds; one each side of the cabin. Forward of this is a small cabin housing a pumpout toilet and hand wash basin. Next is the double bedroom, followed by the bathroom complete with bath (with shower over), wash hand basin and pumpout toilet. Forward of this is the galley with stainless sink/drainer, new full sized cooker, fridge and microwave. The large saloon is at the front of the cabin and is fitted with a solid fuel stove, television cabinet and plenty of shelving. A large two seater sofa and armchair complement the saloon. There is ample storage throughout the boat in the form of full-sized hanging wardrobes, drawers and over-bed cupboards. This boat has central heating throughout provided by an Alde gas boiler and a combined inverter/charger. The Merry Pippin has been upgraded significantly during the past 18 months including a full repaint, solid wood flooring throughout, galvanic isolator, new curtains and blinds, cratch and cover, rear cover. Complete new stern gear, a replacement propeller and four anodes were fitted when the boat was docked and blacked with International Intertuf 16 in November 2014. This is an ideal live aboard or spacious cruising boat that is ready to use.

£35,500



REF: 10339

Maid of Avoca - 23ft all steel cruiser built by Springer engineering, powered by an inboard twin cylinder diesel engine, does require some work internally. **£6,500**



REF: 10346

Duchess
 A 47ft all steel cruiser stern narrowboat built by Wessex Narrowboats in 2000. She is powered by a three cylinder Barrus engine with PRIM150 hydraulically operated gearbox which was fitted new in 2008. From entering the cabin at the stern is the fixed double bed with wardrobes at the foot of the bed. Next comes the shower room with full sized shower, pump out toilet and vanity basin. Following this is the galley which is fitted with a four ring gas burner, grill/oven, stainless steel sink and drainer and 12v fridge. At the front of the cabin is the saloon with a fixed seat on each side which can be used as two single beds or converted to one large double. Heating is provided by a Webastodiesel heater which feeds the radiators throughout the cabin. This boat has been well maintained and is ready to cruise.

£29,950

Lacewing - 50 foot traditional stern narrowboat built by the renowned builder Jonathon Wilson in 1988. She is powered by a BMC 1.8 which has been rebuilt by Calcutt boats.



ReF 10344

£29,999

Crew:
 36ft unpowered welfare/work boat. Cabin at rear with bench seating, worktop with sink and space for a multifuel stove. Toilet compartment and tool store. Large open hold. The hull of this boat has been over-plated.



REF: 10296

£4,999

William
 A 56 foot cruiser built by Hancock and Lane. The rear cabin has a double bed, wardrobe space, and plenty of storage under the bed. The shower compartment has a pump out toilet, shower and handbasin. The galley has the usual appliances and a large 12 volt fridge and freezer. The large open plan saloon, has front doors leading out onto the front deck and the boat is heated via a solid fuel stove with back boiler as well as a Alde gas boiler. There is a 240 volt external hook up, an inverter, and battery charger. The boat is powered by an excellent running 3 cylinder Lister air cooled marine diesel engine which was removed in 2010 and rebuilt, last serviced in August 2014, the boat comes with documented service history since 2007. Last hull survey 2007.



REF: 10337

£25,500.00