

THE MAGAZINE OF THE



ISSUE 6/01 - October 2001

AGM & Map /Council Nominees/BSS/BW Ann. Rep.

IN THIS ISSUE

- | | | |
|----|--|-------------------------------|
| 3 | The Chairman's Column | Sue Burchett |
| 4 | NABO 2001 Annual General Meeting | Roger Davis |
| 5 | Maps and Directions | |
| 6 | Your Council Candidates | themselves |
| 7 | Leeds & Liverpool Gate Paddles | SS |
| 10 | BW Annual Report and Accounts | Stephen Peters |
| 11 | Mobile Phone Masts | from Stewart Sim |
| 12 | Worried Woman of the Waterways | www.Dot |
| 14 | Ombudsman Enquiry | Denis Smith |
| 15 | Can You Help In Your Region? | |
| 16 | Editorial | The Editor |
| 17 | Notices | |
| 18 | Rivers: Understanding Tides | Knut |
| 19 | NABO Response to the TLE 'Referendum' | |
| 21 | Mooring Overstay Stickers | Roger Davis |
| 21 | Horseboating Matters | from Sue Day |
| 22 | Propane Scheme | from Adrian Stott |
| 22 | Grand Union Announcements | from Matthew Routledge |
| 23 | Some Historical Books | Stephen Peters |
| 25 | A View from Council | A "Bird" |
| 27 | Letters | Yourselves |
| 31 | Council Contacts | |

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I hope you all filled in your BSS consultation document (the yellow questionnaire).

Apparently out of every boater sent one, just 1500 filled them in. If my entry is anything to go by (and not being tech minded I hope its not) the whole exercise is a sham. In fact the whole idea of sending out that questionnaire must call the sanity of the BSS Managers into doubt. When a member of IWAAC bins his, as had several other people representing user groups attending a recent BW meeting, it really shows contempt for the questionnaire. This fight will continue until we get a simpler Boat Safety Scheme.

Many boating organisations fell into BW's latest trap. Where would you like moorings we were asked? NABO replied we would like to moor against the towpath almost everywhere. Many others gave specific sites. BW was happy to oblige and either plan to, or have put in, mooring rings. Now the anglers have said if we can't fish on all these moorings we want fishing only places. The outcome looks like dividing the canal bank into a piece for the boaters, a piece for the anglers and don't forget a piece for the voles. How neat and tidy! We have all shared for at least 80 years (since motor boats came in) and now we are to be segregated

Just in case any of you have read the BW's internal magazine *BW Monthly*, you now know that BW considers us to be their "Partners". I would prefer to say that we work together. We tell them where we believe they are getting it wrong and they listen and tell us what compromise they will consider or not.



Having had a go at BW and the BSS (which the Environment Agency is also responsible for), I perhaps should mention that we aim to produce a document on towpath awareness/crime on the cut in conjunction with BW and our next "News" may include an article by BW on their procedures with unlicensed boats.

I am feeling demob happy. I am not standing as chairman next year. The challenge of trying to represent all of our members has been really enjoyable. I have felt especially honored to be chairman in NABO's 10th year. You are not getting rid of me, as I will be standing for Council. I have made a lot of contacts that are useful to NABO and will be backing the new Chairman. Thank you for both your support and criticisms.

We have been criticised both for being confrontational and for producing a gloomy newsletter. I am convinced that we come over as confrontational only in our magazine, which has much to do with the difficulty of reporting the 'first name terms' type discussions which go on behind the scenes. Neither British Waterways nor the Environment Agency see us that way and are always ready to discuss any issue. As for being gloomy I agree. We report issues that are going to effect our members and that we have to pursue. Maybe we should use more print to tell of our successes. My philosophy has been, "so we've won that, on to the next problem".

Come to the AGM on 10th November both to find out more about your new council and to party.

Sue Burchett

Annual General Meeting and 10th Anniversary Reception

SATURDAY 10th NOVEMBER 2001 at 10.30 am
The Black Country Museum
Tipton Road, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 4SQ

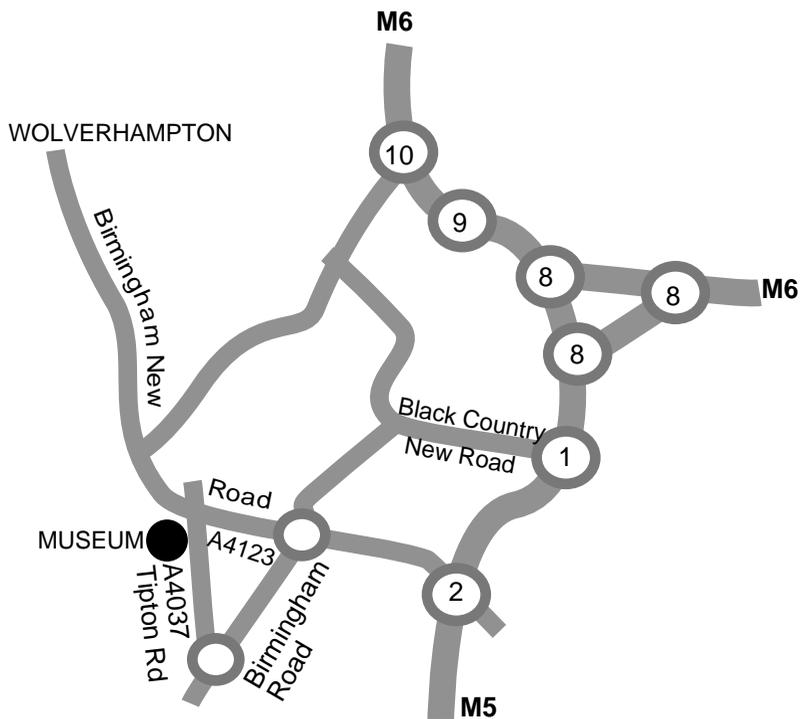
AGENDA

1. To agree the 2000 AGM Minutes
2. To receive the Chairman's report
3. To receive the financial statements for the year ended 31/3/2001
4. To determine the annual subscription fees
5. To elect Council members
6. To appoint the auditor

Discussion of issues and questions from the floor will follow

At 12 .00 there will be a short break. There will be an opportunity to inspect a working model of Terry Fogarty's novel inclined lock and music will be provided by canal folk group *Keepers Lock*

At 12.30 a Buffet Lunch will be served during which the new Council officers will be announced and the Tenth Anniversary Cake cut.



By Road

Situated on the A4037 only 3 miles from Junction 2 of the M5 Motorway, 6 miles from Junction 10 of the M6 and only 10 miles from Birmingham City Centre, the Museum is easily accessible from the Midlands Motorway network. Car and coach parking.

From Junction 2 of the M5 (Oldbury), take the A4123 dual carriageway towards Wolverhampton, up to the roundabout at Dudley, then proceed further along the same road, the A4123 dual carriageway, to the next traffic lights and crossroads, this is the A4037, Turn left at this junction and the museum is immediately on your right hand side.

By Rail

Tipton Station (1 mile away) is on the Birmingham to Wolverhampton line. Buses from the station run past the Museum. Nearest Intercity Station - Sandwell & Dudley.

Leaving Tipton station walk up towards the shops. This is Owen Street, continue along this road. Straight across at the round about to reach a T junction. Left at the junction, crossing the zebra crossing. Continue straight over at the traffic lights. The Museum is on the right, the entrance, car and coach park are further up the road.

By Canal

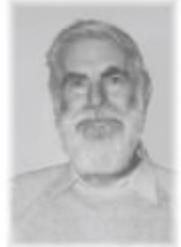
Via the Birmingham Canal Navigations - on the Tipton Branch.



SUE BURCHETT

I travel the system with my husband Roger and we have been doing this for the last twelve years. We both have been well involved, for the last 15 years, with restoration through the Waterway Recovery Group. I joined NABO at its inauguration because I believed an organisation purely for boaters was needed and got actively involved as Minutes Secretary four years ago - proving that you can be involved and cruise. I have been Chairman for the last two years. Although I am standing down from that office I am willing to continue to serve on Council. I advocate freedom to cruise without all the restrictions that are being placed on us, without increased cost and bureaucracy.

ROGER DAVIS



After five years now as Membership Secretary, this responsibility continues to be very rewarding. It also gives a special insight into the average boaters concerns and feelings. That we are needed as never before in our ten years of existence is indicated by our ever increasing membership. This now stands at an all time record and strongly justifies NABO's claim that more than ever, a truly independent organisation that owes nothing - financially or otherwise - to any statutory or other authority body is needed to safeguard the ordinary boaters reasonable interests. I am pleased to be available to continue to serve in this way if the members want me to.



PETER FOSTER

NABO is for inland waters and in the north-east they extend to a line from Spurn to Grimsby, and include estuary, tidal and non-tidal rivers, and canals. I represent owners of sea-going cruisers, Humber Keels, narrowboats, yachts, rowing craft - the lot. My own boating is mainly on the Humber and the Trent below Nottingham, on my sea-going cruiser *Mackey*, but I can get on to more restricted waters on *Rema*, an old Broom broads boat.

The waters of the north-east are mainly BW but there are also waters controlled by Associated British Ports, The EA and others. If necessary I will speak to them all on your behalf if you feel able to re-elect me to the Council.

GRAHAM FREEMAN

As a DIY-fit out owner, I am more than familiar with the vagaries of the BSS and I am determined to see a sensible, manageable and cost-effective outcome to the (protracted) BSS Review process for the benefit of the boating community at large. I strongly believe that NABO is particularly well placed to achieve these fundamental aims and offer my experience and time accordingly.

I have served on Council as the General Secretary and a member of the Technical Committee since Nov 2000. I also represent NABO on the BSi Small Craft Committee and would be most pleased to continue serving the membership in these roles.



HELEN GARDNER

I have lived on my boat in London for two years. My background is from the Waterway Recovery Group and I got press ganged by Sue before the last agm and have been a member of council for the last year. I am willing to stand again





JAMES MASON

I have been involved in the canals, rivers and seas of the British Isles for over 40 years, for pleasure and as a boat builder and marine engineer.

I have already spent two years on Council, as General Secretary and then as Vice Chairman, while also sitting on the BW Advisory and Technical committees as representative of the NABO technical committee.

I hope that we can get a much simpler and less costly BSS and preserve our members' rights of navigation and freedom from petty bureaucracy. I enjoy negotiating with the navigation authorities on your behalf.

STEPHEN PETERS

I am the longest-serving member on the Council and I am once again seeking re-election to represent all boat owners but with special emphasis on river users and matters technical. I own a Seamaster 30 motor cruiser based on the river Severn and have a minor commercial interest to declare, namely a small-scale leisure boating consultancy.

I acknowledge that Council must seek to do the right thing whilst taking care not to alienate its membership, and that this can be rather difficult.



GORDON REECE

I have been a member of Council since January 2001 representing the interests of members specifically in the North West Region where I have acted as Regional Secretary. I have liaised with other members and between us we attend the User Group/Customer Forum Meetings in the region. I have been involved in discussion with various waterways managers to safeguard and improve the boat owners rights of navigation and wish to continue this work in the next twelve months. My potted boating history was published in NABO News back in February.

TREVOR ROGERS

I joined the NABO council over two years ago. The last year I have acted as the Southern Region Secretary and a member of the Technical Committee.

I am based with my narrowboat on the Kennet and Avon canal. In addition to cruising, I am particularly interested in the DIY and Engineering aspects of boating and the freedom to maintain and customise my boat.



STUART SAMPSON

I have over 25 years boating experience. Four years ago I designed and fitted out our new n.b. Dutch Barge and since then we have cruised from Leeds to destinations various, including Sharpness, Liverpool, Cambridge, London and Bristol, so I have an up-to-date and wide knowledge of the system. Away from the helm, in my first year on Council, I have spent many happy hours writing and designing for NABO News, the website, banners and hand-outs. My goal is to forge a closer link between Council and the members.



ANDREW SHERREY

Our long-standing Treasurer is prepared to continue in this role. He is an active boater in the West Midlands

LICENCE FEE INCREASES

BW are proposing to hold licence fee rises to the rate of inflation for the next 4 years. 1.6% increase next year.

EA licences are to increase by 2.5% next year.

We have yet to learn whether Gold Licences will increase by 2.5% as originally planned or take into account the smaller proposed rise of the BW portion

Advertisement

Advertisement

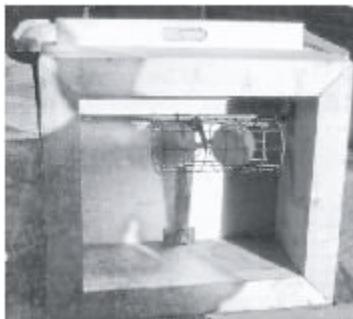
DRAW THY CLOUGH WI' CARE

In the July Issue there was a small item about someone being refused a key to open the padlocks on the top gate paddles of the Leeds & Liverpool locks. Derek Cochrane, Manager North-West, queried this and the upshot of the resulting dialogue was an explanation of the current progress on the safety of gate paddles on the L&L. I was hoping it would come as a stand-alone article but it came in a letter from Alan Bates, the Waterway Manager, so to précis:-

The issue came to a head after a boat had caught in a lock above Gargrave, and was swamped in an attempt to re-fill the chamber using the gate paddles. The boat's occupants were drowned. It was considered that the gate paddles, or gate cloughs (rhyming with 'cows') as they are locally known, along this waterway could easily flood a boat if opened before the hull was well above the apertures.

Initially to prevent this, all the mechanisms were padlocked, but boaters could be assessed and issued keys, if they were deemed fit to operate the gate cloughs safely. With this stop-gap measure in place, BW then tested baffles which would deflect the stream of water away from where a boat could be. These were fitted to many locks, including ones on other wide beam waterways where flooding was seen as a risk.

BW Engineer Aaron Farsworth has been working with 'a boater' to make an interlock mechanism to prevent premature raising of the paddle, which has been under test on lock 74 of the Wigan Flight. We have yet to learn who this innovative boater is, and how this float operated device is performing. From a picture in *BW Monthly* it seems to rely on a 'dumbbell' float using two ballcock balls.



*Interlock mechanism
(Courtesy BW Monthly)*

We wish them the best of luck in this venture, the louvred baffles now being fitted look prone to clogging and certainly restrict the flow.

What one has to remember is that even though the L & L was built for Short Boats, many of the original gate cloughs slide across rather than upwards and deflect the initial jet sideways, and so are less risky even for narrowboats. River Lock and the Bingley 5-rise are amongst few places where these survive.

However a similar mechanism fitted as a ground clough on some L&L Locks may increase the danger of a tragedy like the one at Gargrave, where fast opening of paddles is needed in an emergency to reverse the action of the lock. These are operated by a lever which is not obvious to the inexperienced, as they are horizontal when closed and low down, and, because they do not need a windlass, they are often handcuffed for security. This might well cause a panic-stricken operator to opt for the gate paddle with disastrous consequences.

It would be a shame for these lever cloughs to be replaced as they are only to be seen elsewhere on one lock on the K&A. What's more, once unfettered and operated by someone with a healthy back they are quick and easy.

A final word of warning on gate paddles came from someone on the K&A where some cills are very deep, and actually 'bounce' the stream from gate paddles upwards unless they are opened fully, so you may find winding the paddle wide open is the way to stop water arcing into the front well of a narrowboat.

Just remember— draw thy clough wi' care. SS

BW ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2000-2001

The latest annual report from BW is essential reading for anyone with an interest in how your licence fee and mooring charge money is spent.

Once again, it includes a Waterways Map insert which, this year, has been slightly modified to show the latest restoration and construction projects planned by or being considered by BW. These now include the Wey & Arun Canal, the Crumlin Branch of the Mon & Brec together with the lower section linking through to Newport and the sea, the Wilts & Berks in addition to the Thames & Severn, the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire, The Higher Avon Link, the Wendover and Buckingham Arms of the GU, the Grantham Canal (previously shown as an operational waterway), two sections of the Montgomery Canal (also previously shown as being completely operational), the Derby Canal, the lower end of the Chesterfield Canal, the top part of the Ashby Canal, the St Helens (Sankey) Canal and the Pocklington Canal (previously shown as operational). With a wish list like this BW look like being very busy over the next few years!

The insert map leaflet once again has some very interesting facts and figures in the "did you know" features. For instance, did you know that coconuts are a regular sight in the canals of West London? Apparently because local Hindus conduct religious ceremonies on the Grand Union Canal to worship the water and present gifts to Varun, the God of the Sea. These gifts include coconuts and flowers that are supposed to be swept away to sea where Varun dwells!

Examination of the nitty gritty of the report reveals that the planned Bedford to Milton Keynes link between the GU and the River Great Ouse will be a broad waterway. What a pity the Ribble Link has not been constructed to the same gauge.

BW continue to pride themselves on their marina acquisitions and developments –

they have opened the new Kings Marina at Newark creating 164 moorings with full facilities including CCTV, etc. With their other marinas including the largest at Sawley with 290 berths, BW now provide over 1500 berths nationally.

On the environment front, having re-opened the Rochdale Canal 13 miles have now been notified as an SSSI by English Nature due to the presence of Floating Water Plantain. The entire length of the Montgomery Canal is also an SSSI for the same reason. Will the recent appointment of Derek Langslow, the former Chief Executive of English Nature, to the board of BW mean that more of our waterways will become SSSIs?

Business development and private sector partnerships continue to be the main driving engine for BW. They have commenced the new telecommunications partnership with Ipsaris (formerly known as Fibreway) and Ultramast. Let us hope that this does not herald the erection of too many mobile phone masts to despoil the waterways. It might mean, of course, that your mobile phones will work better on the canals than anywhere else! Income from the joint venture with Ipsaris is recorded to have increased £4m over last year. This seems rather perverse since the notes to the accounts indicate a loss of over £14m for the year for Ipsaris in which BW holds a 10% equity stake. Is there a creative accountant out there who can explain?

In addition to further high profile developments such as the regeneration of a derelict and contaminated site at Cowley Peachey, West London which includes yet another marina, BW has continued to acquire investment properties, most notably a substantial freehold interest in London Docklands which was purchased from the Port of London Authority. A total of £32m was invested by BW in property additions during the year.

The Board of BW has seen some departures and some new faces appearing. The latter include Helen Gordon (a director of Railtrack Property), Ian Darling (a new board member with Scottish connections) and Derek Langslow who has been mentioned earlier. There are now three board members with direct interests in railway operating or infrastructure companies. The Chairman of the Waterways Trust, Sir Neil Cossons, left the board in March 2001, reducing the number of WT directors on the board to just one. Chairman George Greener received £63,000 for his services during the year, whilst other board members generally

received £10,000. The highest salary paid to senior employees was in the range £150,000 - £160,000 presumably paid to Chief Executive Dr David Fletcher?

Staff costs increased by 10% during the year which saw the headcount increase by 103 employees to a total of 1929.

Finally, the report lists the various subsidiary companies and associated undertakings in which BW is involved. Rather curiously one of these is Gloucester Dock Management Company, which is noted as being a dormant company. If this is the case, who actually manages Gloucester Docks and where do the proceeds go?

Stephen Peters

Over 1100 masts may be erected on BW land

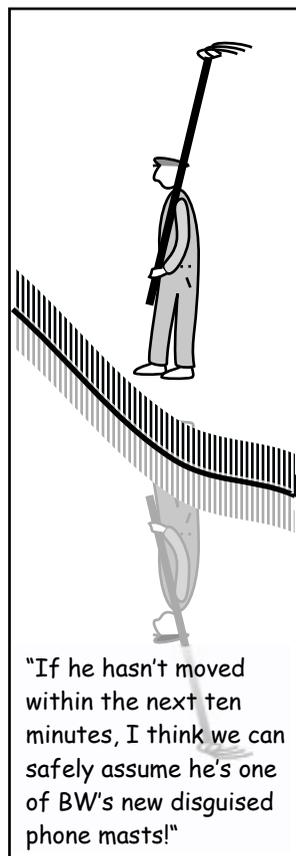
BW intends to cash in on the telecom boom by providing sites for mobile phone masts, provided they are not a visual intrusion. However a NABO member has expressed concern that they might interfere with pacemakers. Stewart Sim, BW's spokesman on this matter reassures us :-

As far as telecom masts are concerned, the advisory distances for people with pacemakers varies from 2m - 8m from the antenna, depending on the nature of the masts. Most of the small masts would be emitting the equivalent output of an 80w bulb and will be more than 2m high, so there is no concern. The larger masts with a number of antennas will be generally at 15m above ground, therefore, again no problem. It is an issue that mast operators are fully aware of because of their own staff carrying out maintenance work and it only becomes a real problem when they have to climb up the masts and then are very close to the antennas.

I hope this allays the concern of your member. If they require any further information, they could contact Richard Mercer, our Telecommunications Business Manager, on 01926 409482.

Regards

Stewart



Worried Woman of the Waterways

Hello - I'm still getting about the cut despite the worries I tell you about.

Where had I got to? Let me **C** - Many years ago a friend of mine was stopped on his way to work, by an inspector, who wanted to know where he was going and what did he think he was up to cycling along the towpath. The inspector then followed him to work to check that he was in fact a BWB employee. You **C**, not too long ago towpaths were private property and no one was allowed to cycle (or walk or fish) along them.

How things have changed! I have got used to not stepping off the boat with a rope at Fradley Junction for fear of being run over, but now I worry that this is the situation everywhere. Towpaths are being taken over by speeding **Cyclists**. Bikes have traditionally been used when lock winding, and BW issue cycle licences to boaters, but you don't get up to great speeds when locking. When the idea of creating cycleways was introduced it was for those interested in canals to have better access.

Sadly now, I worry, they are for **Commuters** to dodge the traffic and those using them are always in a rush, frequently unaware of their surroundings as, head down bum up, they speed along. Other users are at risk. It worries me that 'sustrans' and others object to 'traffic calming' methods being used, they want to go as fast as possible, proving that it is not the pleasure of the peace of the canal they are interested in. You too have cause to worry where you see 'Towpath Improvements' planned as it usually means canal narrowing and towpaths being changed into **Cycleway** 'race tracks'. We want to enjoy the slow pace of life on the canal, time to stand and stare, feed the ducks, look at the wildlife and so on, we welcome others that do too. So, cyclists, why not slow down or even get off and walk and, please, ask Father Christmas for a bell for your bike!

As you will **C**, I have other worries, for example, BW's **Charter mark** gives emphasis to **Consultation**. I used to say 'nobody asked me' but now, with the BSS questions, I worry that I can't understand what they ask and it doesn't give a chance to say what I think. Still luckily I am a member of NABO and they try to make sure we get asked, and have experts to reply and negotiate when ever **Consultation** is possible.

Then there are **Closures**. In the past repairs were done at night, if it was practicable, and always the aim was to get the canal reopened as soon as possible. Of course in those days revenue came from toll money. Now they

have your licence money if you move or not, so long periods of **Closures** are considered the norm. You pay for a licence for a year but hard luck if you want to use it all year to travel as you please, much of the canal is 'closed'. I don't think motorists would take to that attitude.

Now for the worry of **Carrying Cargo** on the Cut. Well for start offs a fully loaded boat can't get along in many places, but I will D-light you with dredging worries another time. Can you see anyone, with a timetable to keep to, waiting at a flight of locks while the people on the boat in front have a meeting to discuss opening a paddle?

No, pleasure boating and **Commercial Carrying** do not mix.

I expect you thought I was worried about the inland waterways but this time it's more like the 'seven Cs' That's all for now, **C** you on the **C**ut, all the best and try not to worry, yours

www Dot

Advertisement

Advertisement

LATEST ON DENIS SMITH'S OMBUDSMAN CASE

Following the provision in 1997 of new facilities i.e. sanitary station etc. at BW's Kinver (Staffs & Worcs canal) mooring site, the mooring matrix facility 'score' was adjusted upwards to reflect these improvements, resulting in a higher price band.

So, when in early 2000 the facilities were reduced by the withdrawal of the benefit of a 'security boat' thus reducing the 'score' to a lower price band, I waited for BW to take the logical and honourable step to reduce the price!

Twelve months later I asked the Waterway Manager why he had not done so - he replied that I was correct in theory but had no intention of reducing the price. The Regional Director demonstrated that he was not a member of the Diplomatic Corps by suggesting that I found a cheaper mooring whilst the Chief Executive suggested the mooring price to be 'modest' adding the now tiresome argument of local market forces being the ultimate determining factor when calculating mooring prices.

This left me with no alternative but to refer the matter to the Waterways Ombudsman, Stephen Edell, who in his resultant report, concluded that "the Location factor is clearly related to market forces" - a view I have consistently held. This is a very important decision because coupled with BW's previous reluctant admittance (in 1998 during another investigation by Mr Edell) that the facility score is not a guide but a true reflection of the facilities actually physically available, lays to rest once and for all BW's long standing fixation that the mooring matrix is only an indicator and is not of itself the determining factor for the charge made.

Mr Edell also concluded 'that BW's conduct in not reducing the mooring charge in accordance with (my) request constituted maladministration' going on to recommend that BW:

- a) Adjusts the mooring charge retrospectively to the time when there ceased to be a security boat at the site and make the appropriate refund to (me)
- b) provides (me) with a detailed calculation of the amount refunded
- c) makes no further upward revision of the mooring charge unless and until it has been reviewed in good faith in accordance with the procedure laid down in the mooring matrix.

(This last comment refers to an implied threat by BW that they could retrospectively set off a notional increase in the location factor against the actual decrease in the facility score caused by the lack of a security boat)

This decision with its recommendations (which BW must act upon when there is a finding of maladministration) must also affect the other thirty or so boaters moored at Kinver. It will be interesting to see whether BW do the decent thing by making the appropriate refunds to all (past and present) or wait for individual requests. Any bets?

It is interesting that BW have now issued a 'National Mooring Price' consultation paper (mentioned in the August issue of NABO News) which, under the guise of a review of existing policy, effectively abandons the mooring matrix concept by introducing a new system which at first sight certainly disadvantages the BW moorer.

As I have said on a previous occasion, a review of the mooring matrix is BW-speak for 'we are going to increase mooring charges'.

Denis R Smith

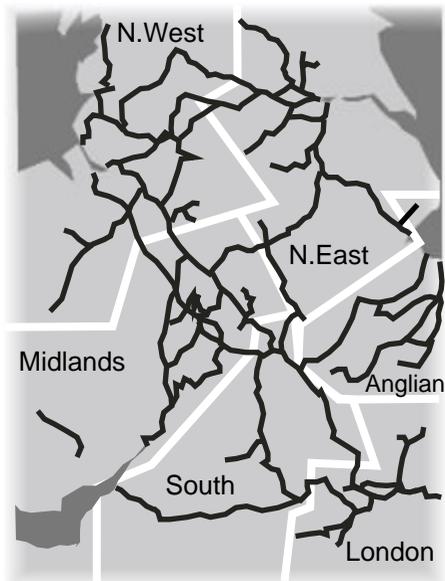
Can you help NABO with your local knowledge?

You may have noticed within the last year that the posts that used to be called Regional Reps are now being called Regional Secretaries. This is because the post holders are no longer expected to dash round attending every User Group meeting in their own patch. Instead they co-ordinate representation in their area and report back to Council on any matters that might have wider implications.

They are still the first point of contact for members on local matters, but, as far as User Group meetings are concerned, they can choose their own way of working, from going it alone to presiding over a formal regional 'committee' of their own making and getting others to attend those meetings.

In all probability they would appreciate some help from members, especially in regions like the North-East which stretches from Market Harborough to the Scottish Border. Any member, who has the time and transport to provide a NABO presence at their local meetings, is more than welcome to offer their services to their Regional Secretary.

You might stare in wonder at a map that shows the South and the North-East regions abutting at Foxton without the Midlands getting a look-in. Unfortunately



NABO has to go along with BW logic on this. If NABO divided its regions more logically then it would give BW Regional Managers a chance to 'divide and rule', so there is just one Regional Secretary to put the NABO point of view to each BW Regional Manager. Luckily few non-BW waterways cross these boundaries so their managers can also deal with a single NABO contact.

All you need to do is elect them all – then offer to help! We need folk with a good 'nose' for the *thin-end-of-the-wedge* or *foot-in-the-back-door* introduction of boater-hostile measures.

Sadly the Editorial Office is now back on dry land, and I am deprived of one of the most enjoyable aspects of having it afloat, namely meeting people on the cut. I was recognised and encouraged by a number of NABO members. This was very welcome, as are letters of support like the one on page 27.

I am now receiving copies of *BW Monthly*, and interesting reading they make. *BW* seem to be trying hard to improve their internal as well as external relationships. The latest issue has a big spread on “Empowerment”, which boils down to giving employees all the help they need to get their jobs done. They mention charge cards for purchasing, palm-top computers for field access to waterway data, training courses etc. If it improves job satisfaction, efficiency and customer care enough, who knows? – NABO might find that **resistance is futile**, and become **assimilated into the Collective** (a.k.a. “Partnership”). However, with the best will in the world, and even Empowerment, there will still be unthinking and selfish parties in any organisation whose bad influence is more easily seen from a distance.

To a different sort of publication – when waterway folk are not criticising their navigation authorities, I suspect many are cursing their navigation guides. *“That water point was taken out 25 years back... They just seem to change the covers but there is nothing new inside”* said a *BW* man to me this summer.

So at Dundas I got my chance to air my views. This unassuming chap looked at our boat, and for some reason started quizzing me about e-mailing afloat. The subject then turned to why we needed internet access, and I told him that, apart from exchanging messages, we used it to update our guidebook website. It was at that moment he was foolhardy enough to admit that he was also involved with guidebooks, as ‘Mr Nicholson (South)’

My first gripe was the illogical order of the pages, where canals are covered east to west by page, yet the maps are ‘read’ west to east. He claimed this annoyed him too, he blamed it on the cartographers, but said that would be solved in the 2003 edition. He also assured me that the man with the passion for churches has now left the team, so more practical information can be included instead. I didn’t lay it on thick about inaccuracy, I just asked him if he had seen the Unofficial Nicholson Updates website. He had, but contested the accuracy of it.

He did admit to having researched a boaters’ guide by mountain bike, but his queries about e-mail afloat stemmed from his recent acquisition of a tug, so the new edition might be researched by **boat**. The irony of it is that now they plan to cater more for the needs of the towpath cyclist!

Last word on guides – Overnight Moorings. *BW* have been bending over backwards to give me information, but I’m not working for them, I am trying to compile a **NABO** guide. Input please!

Stuart Sampson

NOTICES

TRENT LOCK LIGHTS

The Trent Lock Keepers are getting bother from boats entering locks before the traffic lights go green. Not NABO members surely!

They do have valid reasons to leave the lights red after opening the gates, please respect lights, wherever you are on the system.

Editor on dry land again -
48 Old Lane, Bramhope
Leeds, LS16 9AZ
news.editor@nabo.org.uk

Meetings

Council will meet on the following date in 2001:

Nov 24th

**AGM will be on
Nov.10th**

WHO'S FOR A BIT OF SWIRL?

If your leap across open lock gates is no longer impressing the ladies, try it in a **KILT!**

Visit www.utilikilts.com. You might need to check www.meto.govt.uk/ before you try it!

Dangle Diddle Done!

Sue Burchett successfully abseiled on the Anderton Lift, and enjoyed it!
Please make out sponsorship cheques to the "**Anderton Boat Lift Appeal**" and send to **152 Gt. Knolly's Street, Reading. RG1 7HB** so she can pay off her debt.

Sadie Dean

Is still seen

Here and there

On Straw Bear

(It hasn't been sold

As everyone thinks

*But she's also an owner
of working boat Lynx!)*

Evenings drawing in?

Get out your log book and re-live your summer cruise.

While you're at it, jot down all you remember about where you tied up and get it off to your friendly neighbourhood News Editor

Please!



RIVERS



Time and Tide Wait for No Canal Boat

Even inland vessels have to brave tidal waters if they are to have full freedom of the connected system: neither of the Rivers Ouse can be reached at present by any other means.

Each river has its own character, on the Great Ouse there are two tidal encounters, both short. The Thames, Severn and Bristol Avon have semi-tidal reaches where the water level is maintained at low tide by a weir. Perhaps the best example to take is the tidal River Trent, being the longest and fully tidal.

What we have is a channel with a gently sloping bed, fed from a weir over which 'fresh' water flows at a fairly constant rate (in terms of cubic whatever's per second) throughout the day. This we can blame on the rain. At the other end the level rises and falls roughly twice a day, which we can blame on the moon and to a lesser extent, the sun. There are times when the predicted timings vary, this can be due to high winds.

Let us start at low tide. The fresh water flows down the bed to the sea, where it can escape freely. As soon as the tide starts to rise, it blocks the exit of the fresh water and the channel starts to fill. Whilst there is enough river flow to fill the channel as fast as the sea level rises, the flow is still downstream. This is important. Only when the sea level rises faster than the rate at which the channel can be filled up by the 'fresh', does the 'flood' start, with water flowing in from the mouth.

When it is high water at the mouth, water will be flowing in to fill the whole channel, and this will continue after high water until there is enough water in the channel to be at a higher level than the receding tide. Following a period of 'slack' water, the ebb then will start and the channel will empty downstream.

A 'wave' sequence of flood-high water-slack-ebb travels upstream at a rate of about eleven m.p.h. This does not mean that the flooding water flows at this speed, it means that eleven miles further upstream the flood arrives one hour later. As the river bed slopes up and the 'wave' becomes travel-weary the rise and fall becomes less. This causes both the speed **and duration** of the inward flow to be smaller the further you are from the sea, as it has less channel to fill upstream of it.

There will be a point towards the top end of the tidal reach where there is enough fresh water flow to fill the channel even at the maximum tidal rate of rise. Upstream of this, although the level rises and falls, the flow never reverses. Where this point is depends on the relative strengths of tide and 'fresh' on that day.

From a navigator's point of view, if one can get onto the river early in the flood, and travel upstream at eleven m.p.h., theoretically one could ride the tide all the way, but this is not possible for most canal craft, nor permissible. On the Trent the journey in a narrowboat from Keadby to Cromwell usually takes 7-8 hours, the last bit against the 'fresh' seeming especially tedious. Of course this can only be done when the locks at both ends can be used in working hours and the time taken will depend on the strengths of the tide and fresh water flow. Floating pontoon moorings at Torksey and Dunham can be used to break the journey, or one can leave the tideway altogether at Torksey or West Stockwith. A stop-over is required going downstream as there is no way one can cover the whole length without meeting the flood.

Going with the tide can be exhilarating, but remember to exaggerate course corrections as you don't travel the way you are pointing, and ensure you have all the relevant safety equipment, anchor etc. plus charts so you don't go aground.

NABO reponds to Bill ‘Safety’ Schlegel on the suitability of the “TLE Referendum”

In case this is to be read by the general public, we will begin with a little background

The Boat Safety Scheme (BSS)

When the BSS was introduced, it replaced the Certificate of Compliance which was based on a set of advisory construction standards that British Waterways ‘sold’ to boat owners by giving discounts on licence fees. Although many boaters welcomed a scheme which would give them greater peace of mind and that would theoretically make their boats easier to insure and sell, as soon as it became a condition for obtaining a licence its popularity waned. It waned even further when the cost to comply was found to be hundreds or even thousands of pounds, making a mockery of the slogan “Waterways for All”.

Not only did it generate much expense and anxiety amongst the boat owning public, but, apart from the odd newsworthy incident of LPG fire or carbon monoxide poisoning, the scheme seemed little related to the risks of everyday boating, and certainly didn’t lead to a reduction in marine insurance premiums. Boaters were issued with a blue and grey booklet that was like the tip of an iceberg, whose submerged part was a ring-bound technical manual that required weight-training and a hard hat to safely lift it down from a shelf. This contained three hundred or more items, and had to be updated frequently as new measures were introduced. Not only was there no risk justification given for the measures, but some were not even related to boat safety at all: this new BSS became a vehicle for the authorities to enforce environment-related controls on boats.

The BSS Review

Pressure was put on on BW, and the Environment Agency, who had also adopted the scheme for their navigations, by a number of bodies in which NABO was prominent. This initiated the BSS Review, whose committee eventually produced an interim report which contained hopeful signs that the whole scheme was under scrutiny and that views would be sought from those who had to comply with it. While the final report was being prepared, they chose a number of checklist items which could temporarily be failed on without prejudicing the renewal of a ‘cruising licence’. The ‘time’ factor for these Time Limited Exemptions (TLEs) was extended as the final report got progressively delayed. During this period NABO stated that, although it let some boaters off the hook a little, the removal of 70 odd TLEs from the mandatory list of 300 or more items was ‘tinkering round the edge of the problem’, and was in no way the sort of full review the interim report had promised. Instead the BSS Review seemed to put far more emphasis on re-organising the administration structure of the scheme than on justifying the measures it contained.

The ‘Referendum’

Seemingly to satisfy their report’s requirement for more boat owner consultation, the Review Committee then issued a ‘referendum’ as to whether certain TLEs should become permanently advisory. To answer some of these questions required detailed knowledge of British Standards and other technical matters, even the molecular physics of combustion, which no lay boat owner could be expected to know. This was

given a somewhat urgent deadline for answers, allegedly to allow them to revise the little blue and grey booklet in time for the 2002 Boat Show, but its timing, spanning the summer holidays, also made it difficult for boat owners and User Groups to formulate their responses.

NABO response

So it was that a representative of NABO technical committee had to file a complaint. This he did as a letter to Bill Schlegel, within which he said:-

...Our fears that the TLEs would form the only tangible basis for implementation of the review have been totally vindicated and we wish to make it quite clear to you that boat owners will not regard the present situation as being an acceptable conclusion to the review in which the various groups and individuals participated in good faith.

You have now compounded the unsatisfactory situation by drafting a new organisational framework with a complex committee structure which does not simplify the operation of the scheme; quite the opposite.

Having failed to involve NABO and other groups in the review process at the post-Final Report stage, you now seek to

involve boat owners directly in consultation on checklist items, this being restricted only to the TLEs and not addressing the many other items within the BSS which need to be considered if the scheme is to become acceptable to boat owners.

You are placing boat owners in the invidious position of having to decide for themselves which of the TLEs should be made mandatory and which should remain advisory. To ask technically unqualified laymen to form a judgement on the desirability of these standards without any supporting information relating to proven risk, etc is a futile and misguided exercise.

Our understanding of the Review outcome was that a relatively small number of standards should remain mandatory and that the remainder would become advisory. We are now being consulted on approximately 70 potentially advisory items without any knowledge of how you selected these and the reason why the remainder of the published standards have not been included in the consultation.

NABO will not stop expressing its dissatisfaction with the review until a full 'bottom up' examination and justification of the standards is published.

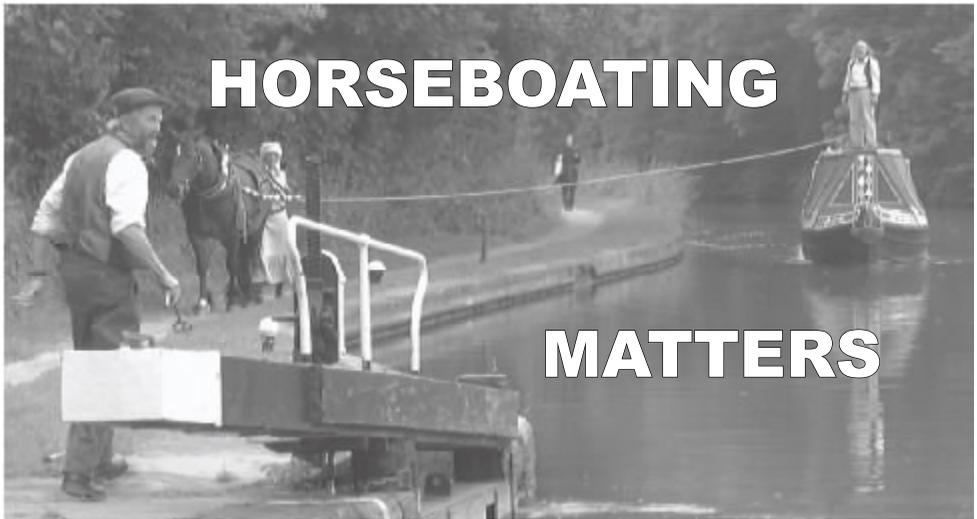
Advertisement

It has been good to learn that when, from time to time, boaters have had an emergency e.g. hospitalisations, bereavements etc., BW staff have been more than helpful in allowing boaters to stay beyond the stated maximum mooring times.

The only difficulties which have arisen have been consequent misunderstandings by other boaters, for it had appeared that either BW rules were not being applied even-handedly, or not at all.

Following a recent NABO initiative we are delighted to report that Paul Wagstaffe, BW Customer Relations Manager, has welcomed our suggestion that an official boat window notice be produced which will be available to local BW offices and issued to boaters in such emergencies. These would be suitably dated and when displayed on an affected boat would reassure other boaters that an apparent overstay had been approved and was for genuine reasons

Roger Davis.



I have been given a copy of the Horseboating Society's magazine *Horseboating Matters*, along with a letter from Sue Day, Chairperson of the Society and intrepid venturer across the Huddersfield Narrow with 'os, which was originally sent to Gordon Reece, (NABO N.V. Reg. Sec.) to be passed on to me. In her letter she said:

I was grateful for his editorial in NABO News August 2001. The overgrown towpaths are a hindrance to horseboats too. We need room to pass walkers, cyclists, anglers etc. on the towpath. Our boat's towline should run freely from the boat to the horse - not drag through vegetation or snag on trees.

She also asked me to point out that there are fewer horse drawn trip boats than at any time within the last 20 years. Even the Vixen is threatened by the proposed 'regeneration' at Foxton. They need support - from people interested in being passengers or crew on the boats, or by joining their society (£5 p.a.).

Contact: Roy Butler c/o/ 351 Mount Rd, Manchester M19 3HW (0160 221 3062)

She went on to ask if horseboaters could join NABO. The answer is of course yes, anyone with any buoyant structure that can provide transport on water is welcome to join NABO, no matter how the said structure is propelled!

> Hello,
>
> The following are the current telephone numbers for using
> the DBA propane scheme:
>
> Setting up a new account: 0800-574574.
> This connects to a voice menu system. Choose 3 for LP
> (Liquid Propane) gas. If there is any confusion or
> unfamiliarity with the DBA scheme, ask to speak to
> "National Accounts".
>
> Problems with setting up a new account: 0121-749-6040
> This is the direct (but not toll-free) line to the National
> Accounts office in Birmingham. The person currently
> administering the DBA scheme is Edwina Flannigan.
> You should be able to reach this office via the 0800
> number, but just in case ...
>
> Ordering gas once you have an account: 08457-626379
>
> As ever, please notify me of any serious difficulties.
>
> Adrian Stott

MESSAGE FROM THE WATERWAY OFFICE, G.U. SOUTH

With his reply to my request for Visitor Mooring information, Matthew Routledge asked me to put the following in the guide. I felt it would reach its audience quicker by being included here:-

Please note that at Leighton Buzzard there is no mooring opposite the boatyard of Wyvern Shipping to avoid congestion problems.

The pound between Stokers and Batchworth Locks (82 & 81) can fluctuate considerable during the winter months because of the flows in the River Colne. Therefore it is not a good place to moor in winter.

You may also wish to include a general note asking boaters to not moor immediately next to weirs as this can restrict the flow, particularly during times of flood/high water.

I would also be grateful if you could include a note to remind boaters of the importance of tying their boats up well (allowing a little slack for any water level fluctuations); we get a considerable number of call outs (some in the middle of the night) because boats have come loose and are adrift.

HISTORICAL WATERWAY BOOKS OF INTEREST

Members may be interested in the following publications and other information which have come to our attention from a variety of sources including the highly respected Railway & Canal Historical Society:

"Caradon & Looe - the canal, railways & mines" by Michael Messenger, Twelveheads Press £26

"Navigation on the Yorkshire Derwent" by P Jones, Oakwood Press £9.95

"Benjamin Outram" by R B Schofield, Merton Priory Press £24.95

"The Bude Canal - past & present" by Bill Young £6 inc p&p

"The Somersetshire Coal Canal - a pictorial journey" by R Halse & S Castens, Millstream Books £6.50

"The Gloucester & Sharpness Canal" by Hugh Conway-Jones, Tempus Publishing £9.99

"To Maintain & Improve - The History of the Lower Avon Navigation Trust" by D Burlingham, Tempus Publishing £14.99

"The Wilts and Berks Canal" third edition by L J Dalby, Oakwood Press £8.95

"Women & Children of the Cut" by Wendy Free, Atlantic Publishers £11.95

"The Military on English Waterways" by Hugh J Compton, Atlantic Publishers £9.95

"The Warwick Canals" by Alan Faulkner, Atlantic Publishers £5.95

"The Melton Mowbray Navigation" by M G Miller, Atlantic Publishers £3.95

"Gar Wood Boats - Classics of a Golden Era" by A S Mollica, MBI Publishing £19.99

"Chris-Craft" by A S Mollica, MBI Publishing £24.99

"Classic American Runabout Wood Boats 1915 -1965" by R B Duncan, MBI Publishing £24.99

"Classic Speedboats 1916-1939" by G Guetat, MBI Publishing £29.99

"Classic Speedboats 1945-1962" by G Guetat, MBI Publishing £29.99

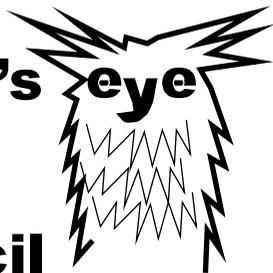
Finally, two hundred years of mapped waterways depicted on a series of synoptic maps of the inland waterways of England and Wales at 10-year intervals are covered on the web site of Mike Stevens at

<http://www.mike-stevens.co.uk/maps/index.htm>

Our River Users' Co-ordinator will provide you with further details regarding the ISBN numbers for the above, together with membership information on the R&CHS.

Advertisement

a bird's view from council



Well, my dears, it will soon be migration time, but I will keep my birdy eyes on council for you till then.

There is still difficulty seeing the canal for the weeds, and the towpath for the trees in some areas. This is because national policy on towpath cutting, as promised to NABO, is not being carried out.

The Horse Boats find it especially difficult (and they manage to overcome the impossible at times!) BW love to have pictures of horse drawn boats on their publicity but do nothing to help them get along the towpath. What IS allowed to travel the towpath? Not horses in some areas. Cyclists are encouraged along the K&A where the local authorities have financed the cycleways (towpaths we usually call them) so now they say there is no need for a licence to cycle along towpaths. Where does that put the boater?

Have you ever considered representing NABO at a user group meeting? There is sure to be one near you, and you can learn such interesting things and comment on them.

Stewart Sim SAID that details of depth of dredging would be issued to user groups. Does that mean depth of dredging that has been done or that is

proposed? If it is what is proposed then is that so users can have some input into the decisions?

Will you hear at a user group meeting about local self assessment on Waterway Standards? What are they assessing themselves on - state of canal, depth and amount of rubbish therein (seen and unseen)? condition of the locks? moorings? facilities? legibility of the graffiti?

What do they do about it all once assessed? Will they let anyone join in, or check the results? Do they do comparisons with other areas?

Sounds like lots and lots of paperwork to me, enough to make a bird's nest I should think!

Still not all the money goes on paperwork, there is to be a new moorings officer on the Lancaster Canal and FIVE new staff for the Ribble Link locks.

Are you being served? Well you will need a new ELECTRONIC key for the facilities on the Lancaster canal. That will cost you £3.50, but how they work and what exactly they make available is still a mystery that may be revealed in the fullness of time. They are introduced to curb vandalism, but who will they be made available to? Licence holders only? Will they require proof? Or will anyone calling at a BW office or marina be able to pick one up, as with the BW key? What security then, and at what cost.

Some good news - no planned closures on the K&A before next year.

Some bad news - a huge stoppage

programme on the GU. Luckily users have managed to get promises of provision of winding areas and a booking system for use of Watford locks.

No more need to worry about areas where it was to be designated 'Fishing Only', this has been changed. No, you can't moor there and fishing IS allowed but this is because of the wildlife that is affected by boaters mooring pins but not fishermen's rod stands!

If, for a legitimate reason, you have to overstay on a section of moorings, get in touch with the local BW office. They can help and soon may be able to give you a window sticker to explain to others that you have their permission for overstaying.

Now for the BSS - I know I have a bird brain but even I can see that measures intended to protect the environment don't come under safety for boats. So how come Bill Schlegel, the man who is supposed to be sorting things out, can't tell the difference?

It seems they are planning to simplify the 'blue/grey' manual that boaters get

but make no change to the huge technical manual that governs the whole thing. A bird can spot a snake in the grass!

I hope you are coming to the AGM/Birthday Party. Sounds like it will be interesting and fun. People to meet, things to look at, music, food, discussion, all about boating and in a nice place where there are good boats to be seen. I shall be keeping my birdy eye on things for my swansong.

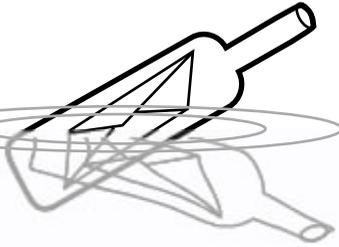
See you there, must fly.....



*A little bird knows that in one area BW spend £12 a head on a buffet for those attending user group meetings.



LETTERS



Another driven off the canals

Around the turn of the year you published as an article a letter I wrote to NABO on the subject of the BSC. Here are my latest thoughts on the subject. Do with it what you will.*

Very regretfully, I have concluded that my boating days are over. Much as I love the canals and my boat, I just cannot cope any longer with the worry and the escalating costs arising from the BSC. I hope it is permitted, as a soon-to-be non-boat owner, to continue my membership of NABO. The organization has done heroic work for us all and I hope very much that it will continue to flourish.

I wish to continue to be kept informed through NABO News of what is happening in the boating world and once I have finally disposed of my boat would like to get my claws out against 8W in a big way. I am giving thought as to the most effective way of doing this. We never hear mention of the BSC on the media for instance. I wonder if that is because only boat owners are affected, and boat owners understandably feel reluctant to draw swords too obviously against the lord and master who has jurisdiction over the water the boats sit on. All the time we are boat owners we are vulnerable and frightened,

individually, of making too much noise. BW have traded on that.

I am very keen to hear of an ideas NABO or individual members may have. Does BW have Achilles heel and if so, where or what is it?

A BERRY

*I am not including it in this issue, but BW note that, as well as on the BSS, Ann writes forcefully on 'serried ranks of £1100+/ft boats in BW owned marinas', grey water regs, diesel tax, the loss of character along the cut due to regeneration and the demise of camaraderie. I don't think Ann is one of those who think NABO too confrontational. Ed.

Aggressive stance

There has been correspondence recently about the negative aspects expressed in NABO News and the aggressive stance sometimes taken by NABO. A review of News bears this view out. However, this is not to be unexpected. NABO is a pressure group, not a club. It was specifically created to support the concerns of a specific part of the canal community (boat owners). Without the pressure exerted by NABO on BW, the virtually monopolistic administrator of the canal network, boaters would be in a less satisfactory position than we now are. The vehicle for reporting the

exercise of this pressure on problems is News. Only by exploring the issues and engaging the membership in this, can boaters expect to be considered along with the many other groups, all competing for the support of their interests from limited resources. And some of these interests are partial and in direct conflict with boating. So accept that News will sometimes be a little depressing. However, NABO is not just Council. There is scope for members to become involved and support their own particular interests. Council always has room for helpers.

There are a number of magazines available to read about all the happy things happening on the canal.

Christopher Boxall, Solihull
(ex Council member but still involved)

it is just anti-dog humans in offices who have said that the signs should be put up everywhere.

What they don't realise is that if we are on short leads it makes us feel insecure. It also stops us going to private places to do our toilet, as many of us like to do, so we have to squat where everybody walks. It is also dangerous trying to get on and off boats with humans attached. It's dangerous for them too, and also when they are trying to do locks We wouldn't want our best friends hurt.

So please, BW, take the signs down where they are not needed, no humans seem to take any notice of them anyway, and make sure that if they are really needed then we are all told why.

5 x K9

At the end of their tether

We might not be NABO members as such, but on our boat we do outnumber our human crew (who are members) by 5:2 so feel we can have our say

We are fed up with BW's stupid signs insisting that we are kept on short leads. We know it's because other animals are getting this nasty disease, although the only ones to die because of it have been killed by humans. These vets at 'MAFF' (It does begin with "M" not "N" doesn't it, and who likes vets anyway?) say that if farm animals see us running free they get together at the edge of their fields and are more likely to get the disease. We can understand that, if there are animals about and the disease is nearby, but on most canals it is not and we think

More on boating costs

I do agree with the sentiments of your article in NABO News issue 7/00, (Accentuate the Positives) and I found much more praiseworthy things to write about to BW and others than negative things last year. Furthermore, I had very positive responses in reply.

Having said that, I was irritated by your quote (presumably from another member) "- don't let a small increase in annual costs drive you away. By the way, if you think that a caravan is hassle free try it! (Yes, we did for just a year -that was enough)".

I just happened to be working on some figures of income and expenditure comparing April 1994 and April 2001. The standing charges (licence, mooring, insurance) for my 49 foot boat were

£737.39 in 1994. In 2001 the same charges amount to £1250.59. This is an increase of almost 70%. In the meantime I have spent over £1100 on gaining two BSCs. (admittedly this sum includes some welding to a rusting gas locker and suchlike, which is more fairly attributed to wear and tear, and I had to have a survey for the insurers done at the same time as the first BSC. I don't have a clear breakdown of the bill as it was all run together, but it is part of the standing costs nevertheless.) Compare this with the increase in my teachers' pension of only 17.66% over the same period, and you will see that 70% plus can't be considered to be a small annual increase in my case. (Interestingly our council tax has gone up by 76.26% over the same period; another reason why we might have to sell the boat.)

Regarding the caravan comment; by coincidence we bought and sold a motorcaravan this year to make a specific visit to some Norwegian friends. I do not think that we have had such a trouble-free purchase and sale, nor have we had an item which saved us so much money and brought us so much flexibility and freedom.

Fortunately, we do not have the parking space to keep it, as my wife would prefer to sell the boat and keep the campervan! If I wasn't so passionate about canals I would have to agree with her. And all the adverse comparisons about the standard of construction of campers compared with a boat with a BSC, are all true!

Geoff Monk

Soft banks

I have an alternative view about the hard/soft bank issue explored in last months editorial. I see the issue as less cut and dried.

In principal I agree that the biodiversity argument is inappropriate. We are only concerned about a narrow strip which must make little significance in the scheme of things where there is a much greater depth of flora on the towpath side away from the canal. However, there is an argument for retaining the margin if it is a habitat for life that cannot exist away from the edge or for visual amenity (boaters and non-boaters can benefit).

It is clear that the towpath must be cleared to the edge of the canal adjacent, and approaching, all navigational structures like lock landings, other obstructions to navigation e.g. bridge holes, narrows and where there are recognised moorings. However, I do not see the need for all towpaths to be manicured along the whole of their lengths. Where the flora is interesting and does not obstruct navigation it could be left to provide visual amenity for all canal users. Clearly uninteresting sections, like nettle and bramble banks, should be cleared. Variety is the key word here. The mooring issue is interesting. Yes, we all like to be able to moor where we wish, depth permitting. This could be accommodated by partial and selective clearance of edge growth. There is nothing to stop the boater from carrying his own clearance equipment; he will just need a

little care in the initial jump to the bank.

It should be noted that this does not absolve BW of managing the untrimmed growth. Unchecked, it will continue to grow. Some clearance or thinning will be necessary before either towpath or canal becomes obscured.

Christopher Boxall

I have no beef with some growth on the towpath side, I was illustrating a safety issue. On the K&A this year, even lock landing stages ('temporary') were overgrown with floating iris, one false step could have put you in the blades of your boat's propeller. Navigation Authorities should certainly set a minimum separation between places where you can land/moor safely and ensure no-one is forced to overnight on landing stages for fear of injury from trying to alight elsewhere - It should be a mandatory measure in the Canal Safety Scheme!

Ed

Slow down

Although I am not a member of NABO (as I can't afford to buy a boat!), I have been given several copies of your magazine to read.

In the July issue (4/01) there was an article by WWW.dot referring to people who zoom around on the waterways. This appears to be aimed at those who hire boats ... I have recently spent time on a friend's boat on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal and can agree that most of the people who tear past are indeed hirers. After screaming at the 100th boat - or so, you just give up trying.

Note – Views expressed in readers' letters are not to be taken as those of NABO as a whole

I'm not sure if the boat that roared past causing the 65 year-old butty to bang like the proverbial out-house door in a high wind was what Roger was referring to in the August edition but it certainly displayed a NABO sticker in its windows

The hire-boat companies are totally to blame for the lack of instructions to those hiring their boats, the same can't be applied to your members - can it? I realise that owning a boat, you get a boat (and all the inherent problems and pleasures), but you are not handed the font of knowledge of all things canals, but...

When I first became interested in canals (all aspects as I also spent a lot of time trying to help put back abandoned waterways too!) there was a sort of camaraderie amongst boaters. Sadly this seems to have become a thing of the past

Well that's my three ha'pence worth of moaning on the subject ...

Ken Whapples

Camaraderie, Ken, it is still there but tends to take August off!



Mike Wooding, who set up and since then has looked after our website, www.nabo.org.uk, has now bowed out, and we must all thank him for the vast amount of work he has put in. As this goes to press Council are looking for someone to take over, but, in the mean time, please address all matters concerning the site to Stuart Sampson.

NABO News is published by
National Association of Boat Owners
FREEPOST (BM8367),
Birmingham B31 2BR

Whilst every care is taken to ensure that the contents of this newsletter are factually correct, we accept no liability for any direct or consequential loss arising from any action taken by anyone as a result of reading anything contained in this publication. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association. The products and services advertised in this publication are not necessarily endorsed by the Association.