

THE MAGAZINE OF THE



President: Bill O'Brien J.P. M.P.

ISSUE 6/02 - October 2002

AGM Preamble / NWF / Broads / Website

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2002 CALENDAR

Nov 23th A.G.M.

First Council meeting
early December?

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Well, I am back off my holidays, straight into the deep end and ready to go for it, amazing how a good break re-vitalizes you. This will be my last chairmans column before our AGM in November, so I hope as many of you as possible will come to the 'Bash' if only for a cuppa and a chat, the date time and place is listed with the formal notices further on in the magazine.....must be seen to be doing it right, so I hope to see you there.



It's been a long and extremely busy year, lots of meetings up and down the country mainly brought about by British Waterways throwing lots at us, by that I mean not only the ongoing saga of trying to get the Boat Safety Scheme made much simpler and cheaper which all the User Groups are adamant about.....but the sudden hike in mooring charges at Easter all around the country, abandoning the Mooring Matrix against the wishes of the User Groups and without proper consultation [I might add that even senior British Waterways officers admitted that with hindsight they did not get it right] has sent temperatures soaring, and has inundated me with letters and E-mails from boaters complaining.....

.....this is a great way to discourage new boaters from coming onto the system, so much for their motto **boating for all**. What makes this even worse is it is driving seasoned and elderly boaters away from a pleasurable pastime that they have enjoyed for years, simply because they can no longer afford it anymore, if this continues, soon it will be the pastime of the wealthy.

The final bombshell was thrown into the pot in May.....We need to review the Licencing system, consultation by 16th June all in place by October ready to come into force easter 2003 because our new computer system will be in place by then....."what"...we and the other user

groups rightly complained and we are now involved in a consultation process, but they still want it to come into force easter 2003 whats the rush, they have already had two goes at it in the last 6yrs. They say they have no intention of increasing the license fee!!!! We will wait and see.

Our job at council is to represent and if need be fight on behalf of you the boaters our members, we do attempt to discuss all these matters with the navigation agencies in a determined and reasonable way, but I have to admit that sometimes they still do things their way in spite of very strong opposition from all the user groups it seems their prime motive is business and not leisure, and that we have bottomless pockets.....they should beware, they may destroy a very british way of life 'gone boating and fishing affordable leisure.

Having said all that, the outgoing Chief Executive has really pulled British Waterways out of the dark ages into a new era, a great achievement in the business world, but I would like to have seen him do more for the boaters pockets, as I've already said they are not bottomless. Never theless on a good note I am getting lots of reports from boaters that the system is easier to get around and more pleasurable than they have ever seen it, which we consider is down to the dedication and helpfulness of the British Waterways linesmen, girls and workers on the ground floor, perhaps some of their bosses might take a leaf out of their book....."It's nice to be nice to nice people" I say.

So it's not all doom and gloom, the waterways are in better shape than they have ever been partly down to the vision of the chief executive. When it comes to restoration I am very concerned that our beloved WRG's never seem to get the proper recognition that they deserve for their achievements in the sometimes monumental tasks that they perform . . .

.....all for free and love of the waterways; if only to be overshadowed by big fundraisers who then take all the glory, with barely a mention of the year's of effort of sweat and strain, if it had not been for them we would not have nearly 200 more miles of canal to cruise.

Well, I hope you all enjoyed your summers boating on our canals and rivers, with lots

of tales to tell over a noggin or two, through the coming winter months, and serene boating to those of you who will venture out in the autumn and winter months...my favourite time..... stoppages excepted, I'm off to the pub and get some practice in.....Storytelling that is

James Mason.

Care to be on Council?

If you would like to take a more active part in supporting the NABO cause then why not fill in the nomination form on the pull-out pages of this issue?

NABO's Constitution says that the whole of Council is to be disbanded at the AGM and a new Council elected. There are no posts that are permanently filled, and there isn't any constitutional provision to preserve continuity even in jobs where it might be to NABO's advantage if there was. However the common sense of the membership and the new Council members usually prevails.

It is important to realise that when the election takes place at the AGM, candidates are only allowed to seek membership of Council, not to put themselves forward for any specific post. If you stand for Council and fancy being Chairman, or Publications Editor, or anything that takes your fancy, then theoretically, at the time of the AGM election, you stand the same chance as the present post-holder or anybody-else. You just have to convince the assembled members you are fit to be on Council, and even then that is only necessary if there are more candidates than the 16 vacancies the Constitution specifies. If you fancy being an officer you then put yourself forward for the post when the new Council adjourns to choose officers during the AGM. For other posts make your wishes known at the first meeting of the new Council following the AGM.

It is possible therefore that some posts may become vacant because their present holders are voted off Council altogether, but this is unlikely. We do know some posts that will be vacant as the present Membership Secretary, Treasurer and Public Relations/Events Officer are not standing again, and the Vice-Chairman wishes to relinquish her position even if she stays on Council. Roger Davis and Andrew Sherrey have offered to make sure the new Membership Secretary and Treasurer are not 'thrown in at the deep end'.

Note that once Council is elected, volunteers may then be co-opted onto Council to fill remaining vacancies, so ensure the new Chairman is aware of any aspirations you may have.

Voting for Council members

On pages 6 to 8 are entries about those candidates expected to be standing at the time of writing. Before you have to cast any votes you should be in possession of details of all the candidates.

Remember - *All Council members are unpaid and under no contractual obligation to provide a particular level of service. Only by using your vote or by standing yourself at the AGM can you expect to remedy any shortcomings you see in the service Council provides.*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NABO will be holding its **A.G.M.**

on the **23rd of November 2002**

at **10.55 a.m.** (arrive any time after 10.00 for coffee etc.)

in the **Bonded Warehouse, Stourbridge,**
West Midlands.

For **map and directions** refer to pullout page in the middle of this issue

**Please note that this is a historic building so
NO SMOKING is allowed inside, and there are
no special access facilities for the disabled.
Please let our General Secretary if you need assistance on the day.**

AGENDA

(As discussed at Council Meeting on 21/9/02))

1. To agree the 2001 AGM Minutes
2. To receive the Chairman's report
3. To receive the financial statements for the year ended 31/3/2002
4. To determine the annual subscription fees (This has not changed for eight years. Council will recommend those paying £10 now should pay £15 next year but Family membership should stay at £5.)
5. To agree changes to the Constitution (Council proposals are limited to minor improvements to its clarity and the substitution of 'inland and coastal waters' for 'inland waterways' to relax this limitation on our membership catchment.)
6. To elect Council members
7. To appoint the auditor

Discussion of issues and questions from the floor will follow.

Note - Any formal resolutions to be added to this agenda must reach the General Secretary two days before the meeting.

SOME PROSPECTIVE COUNCILLORS FOR 2002/2003

Note - This list is NOT definitive as nominations have not yet closed



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 16 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 Vice-chairman for the last year. 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.

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

Since joining NABO, I have continued to be impressed by the professional relationship that the Association enjoys with Government Departments, the Navigation Authorities and other representative bodies. In a world driven by "market forces", it is particularly important that the wishes of the boat-owning community have a conduit to the policy makers - NABO provides that essential service, remains focussed upon its founding aims and continues to resist the temptation to diversify into peripheral issues. Our seats on the BSS Technical and Advisory Committees and our active involvement with the ongoing licensing & mooring consultations are testimony to the pro-active nature of the organisation and bode well for the future.

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

CAIE GRAHAM

Caie was co-opted on to Council after the previous London Regional Secretary moved. He is an artist living aboard a Dutch barge on Brentford Creek.



MICHELLE HARRIS - Barrister at Law

Extract from article in Issue 2/02 :- 'I have lived aboard my boat since 1992 during which time I have cruised over 4000 lock miles in her, much of which has been single-handed. For the most part I have been in the south, changing mooring locations to suit my particular circumstances and continuously cruising when time has allowed. Presently, I have taken a fixed mooring because this fulfils my current requirements. The ability of boats to adapt to each individual's needs is the beauty of boat life but it is also the challenge because it means whatever we pursue legally or politically, we need to ensure that we protect the diverse lifestyle and pleasure choices, available to boaters.'

PAUL HERBERT

A NABO member for eight years, I joined Council a few months ago as the new Southern Region Secretary, after retiring from a long career in leisure and tourism. I have been actively involved with the inland waterways for about twenty five years.

Whilst I am one of the newest members on Council, and still have much to learn, I feel I have the depth of experience both regarding the waterways and the leisure industry to be able to make a worthwhile contribution to NABO. I am willing to continue as a Council member.



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 three years on Council, as General Secretary, Vice Chairman and then Chairman, while also sitting on the BSS Advisory and Technical committees as representative of NABO.

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.



MARK NORTHING

Mark was co-opted on to Council earlier this year as Midlands Regional Secretary. He lives afloat in Birmingham and has civil engineering expertise.



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.





TREVOR ROGERS

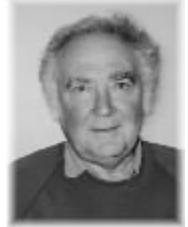
I joined the NABO council over four years ago. In that time I have acted as the Southern Region Secretary and a member of the Technical Committee.

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.

I would like to continue helping with the good work that NABO is doing on behalf of boaters.

GEOFF ROGERSON

I am pleased to offer myself for council. I am based on the K&A and owner of n.b. Pharos. My particular interest is in the long term future of the canals, particularly where they will be in 5 or 10 years time. Canals are already full with no moorings available either in marinas or on line. In addition I am very keen to keep BW etc in line as they are only too happy to try and introduce rules & regs above and beyond their powers. Hopefully this can be done whilst retaining the good relationship that we have with them. firm but not confrontational.



CAROLE SAMPSON

Since being co-opted onto Council last autumn, I have represented the boaters' interests at seven User Group meetings and the national meeting to discuss next winters' stoppages. I have been the instigator, and contributed to, the Skippers' navigation leaflets for the A&C and Trent, added my voice to the campaign for better visitor moorings in Boston, and been part of the successful campaign for the restoration of the pontoon moorings at Cromwell Lock. I seek election in order to be able to continue this work.

STUART SAMPSON

I have over 25 years boating experience. Five years ago I designed and fitted out our new n.b. Dutch Barge and since then we have cruised from Leeds to destinations all over the country, so I have an up-to-date and wide knowledge of the waterway system.

My goal is to forge closer links between Council, the members and the outside world by improving all channels of communication. I believe that getting the right information to the right people in the interests of boat owners is what NABO is all about.



PETER WHITE

Peter has just been co-opted onto Council as Anglian Regional Secretary.

Advertisement

RIVER VERSUS CANAL – A GUIDE TO USING YOUR RIVER REGISTRATION CERTIFICATES AND CANAL LICENCES

British Waterways legislation governing registration and licensing of pleasure craft is contained chiefly in the BW Acts of 1971, 1975 and 1983 with major changes within the 1995 Act which introduced the Boat Safety Scheme.

In essence, the law provides that BW may charge for a licence which permits a boat to navigate on any of its canals and rivers; alternatively, boat owners wishing to use only BW river navigations can opt to have a River Registration Certificate (or Pleasure Boat Certificate) for which BW is permitted by law to charge not more than 60% of the cost of a full licence. The distinction between the two being that since the passing of the 1968 Transport Act there is no longer any Right of Navigation on canals and you are allowed to use them only on licence from BW. In contrast, there is public Right of Navigation on BW rivers and you cannot be refused a river registration certificate providing you have a safe and insured boat. Prior to 1971, you did not have to pay to use the rivers, and lock charges were levied at each lock.

The specific waterways to which each type of consent applies were listed in the original BW Acts and can be found at the back of their current Boat Licence Conditions booklet.

As you might expect, a river registration certificate does not permit you to use canals but there are certain anomalies which are of interest. For instance, river registration also allows boats to use the section of the Nottingham and Beeston Canal which

links two sections of the river Trent; and Limehouse Cut.

River boaters in the northeast are lucky insofar as their river registration certificates allow them to use a number of interlinking river navigations whereas boats based on the river Severn, for instance, are physically unable to use any other river without entering the canal network for which they require a more expensive licence.

It is not common knowledge but river craft are also permitted on certain sections of the London canals – the Regent's and Grand Union Canals linking the Lee Navigation through to the Thames at Brentford. This is apparently "in the interests of safety" and cuts out a voyage along the busy tidal river.

It also appears that craft with river-only certificates can enter Keadby Lock and West Stockwith Lock and basin, both on canals, on payment of an extra small charge to gain "safe haven" from the tidal Trent. Likewise, river craft are permitted to travel along the Selby Canal as it is considered a safer route avoiding Trent Falls. BW has stated that it proposes to drop the additional charges as a safety measure.

BW operates a 10% discount scheme on short-term canal licences for boats that have an annual river certificate and wish to upgrade in order to use the Yorkshire canals.

Users of the river Severn may ask why they can enter the canal basins at Stourport and Diglis for no extra charge, but are banned from entering Gloucester Docks for a safe haven and

using the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal as the only viable route avoiding the treacherous tidal river. This anomaly seems very unfair and NABO intends to press for changes to the current charging regime for users on the Severn. What is sauce for the goose in London should be sauce for the gander in Gloucestershire!

There are also some locks and structures for which BW impose additional charges. At present, use of the Dee Locks at Chester incurs a charge of £18 each way because staff have to be specially deployed and the locks require de-silting after use. Passage through Marsh Locks on the river Weaver also requires payment of £20 per passage as staff have to go to the lock by special arrangement. Some

extra charges may apply at Sharpness for use of the sea lock but details are difficult to obtain from BW. In the light of BW's proposed new policy that additional navigation charges should be levied only where there is a clearly identifiable marginal cost to BW at the specific boater/customer level, we anticipate that charges for using Sharpness lock can no longer be justified. This structure is normally manned for commercial traffic and a boater can usually share the use of the lock.

We would be delighted to hear the views of river users (and canal users) on the question of paying extra to BW for the pleasure of using additional cruising waterways. *S.P.*

Advertisement

■ "The Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) recently went online with the "UK Crime Reporting Portal" to allow the public the opportunity to report low-grade historical crime (primarily vandalisms and minor crimes of dishonesty) to the Police via the Internet. The service is now available to members of the public throughout the UK.

■ The web link to the UK Crime Reporting Portal is - **www.online.police.uk**

■ Fill in personal and crime details on the website form and when submitted the data will be sent immediately to the Police Force concerned (no human interface is involved in this part of the process which operates on a 24 hour basis). A PITO crime reference number is supplied electronically to the complainer as a receipt of the information.

■ The target response for a new e-mailed crime report is within 2 working days.

■ E-mails are monitored during normal Crime Desk hours (0700 - 2300hrs daily).

■ Where Police attendance is considered appropriate, this will be arranged.

■ **Use 999 for crimes in progress**

WORRIED WOMAN of the WATERWAYS

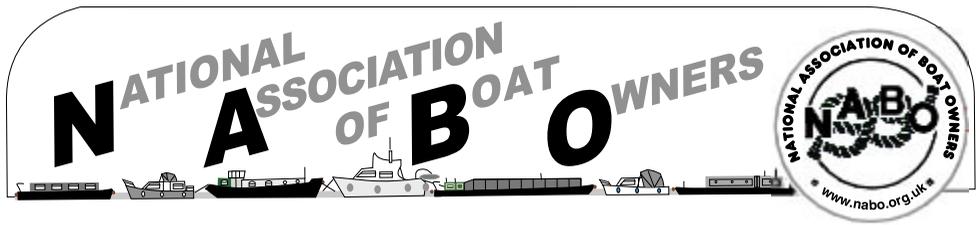
Well here **I** am enjoying cruising around in a peaceful and steady manner then my whole day gets upset because of **impatience**. Another boater in a rush, speeding past, wanting to get through locks or bridges in a hurry. They run about and I get worried there will be an accident. Frequently this hassle actually takes longer than the relaxed approach. There are two reasons for this. In shallow places going faster digs the boat into the bottom while 'tickling along' you sneak over the shallows. The other reason is, usually, the people who are taking things in a peaceful unhurried way know what they are doing! They aren't really going slowly, it is economy of movement!

Another worry is that of **ignorance**. Of course we all had to start sometime, even those born to it and learning at their mothers' 'elium. Nothing wrong in being a novice, but 'those that think they know it all, worry those of us that do'. As the old saying goes. (Oh Gosh! I'll worry that some of you thought I meant that!) Watch what others do and learn as you go. I still try to learn as I go. I confess that sometimes it involves learning to keep a straight face.

What about **instruction**? How much of this do folk who are hiring a boat get? Not enough of the practical kind, I worry. Do the hire companies check if customers have absorbed the literature and instruction that they have been given? An old boatee I know was once told he was 'doing it all wrong' (filling an empty lock by lifting all available paddles) and, "hadn't he watched the video?" Well, what did he know eh? 70 years on the cut and had never seen an instruction video? Luckily he had the sense of humour to ask to be shown how to do it. No impatience and no wish to impress with his knowledge!

How **important** to the Navigation Authorities are boaters and their needs and wishes. People give hours of their time to canal restoration then find that fishing and plant loving fanatics are given more consideration than the boaters. Signs that say 'No mooring - Conservation Area' sum up BW's attitude. Canals were built for boats. BW have said - 'We wish to encourage growth and participation in boating on our waterways.' Do we feel important or impotent? Man or mouse? Come on squeak up! Try not to worry, that's what I do!

Your friend WWW DOT



YOUR WEBSITE – www.nabo.org.uk

IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW – YOUR WEBSITE IS BACK!

If you were out cruising this summer you may have been blissfully unaware of its absence. Your 'webmaster', however, was cruising too, but he was made unblissfully aware of its absence. This was due to the second outage at the 'server farm' in two years which, this time, not only took it 'off air' but destroyed the content, the access codes, seemingly the whole hosting system, plus the webmaster's contact details and the host's support addresses. Until he returned to his office on land, the webmaster had no means to restore the site.

It is done now, and from the middle of September it has been with a new host, on a rather more expensive, but hopefully more reliable, 'Business Package'. This has opened up exciting new possibilities and, if you haven't visited recently, go and see.

The main changes are in the Members-Only area where the access has been changed to a simple password-activated 'door' and progressively the documents for members are becoming available without their own restrictions. (Any still protected will open with 'Branch')

Keep your eye on the Forum Board, where there are discussion opportunities and announcements. This should supplant the on-line 'Ask NABO' and other feedback pages and give you a chance to air your views and exchange ideas. Your News Editor will keep an eye on it too, and perhaps post letters he gets for this magazine to 'seed' discussion. He might also, with your permission, take extracts for publication, so if you do post an opinion it would be useful if you specified if you would mind it being printed.

The e-mail re-direct system has new possibilities too for improving Council communication, for instance giving the Technical Committee control of their own the mailing list tech.comm@nabo.org.uk. Use this for technical queries.

The site is for your benefit, comments to the webmaster welcome.

FREIGHT NEWS

New regulations

Just in case you think freight isn't part of NABO's remit, we welcome all boat owners, even those trying to coax a tired old leaking barge along the Trent for the next load of sand. (No offence implied to the present carriers on this run!)

Talking of them, and their colleagues carrying anything else, it seems they are now threatened with regulation concerning competence of crew, standards of vessels and hours of work. However the body in question for them is the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), and, in contrast to BW and the BSS, the MCA is actually consulting barge skippers and owners as to what regulations they think appropriate right from the start.

As far as competence is concerned, present qualifications for inland waters range from the basic RYA Helmsman's Certificate, which BW crews already have and will be expected of working narrowboat skippers too, up to Master's Certificates with all the bells and whistles needed to be allowed on to the congested Rhine. Somehow the right balance needs to be struck for UK commercial waterways and it is refreshing to see representatives from the CBOA and a new organisation, the Association of Inland Shipping Operators, being considered as knowing something about it!

We hear that, whatever is brought into force, there will be exemptions for existing operators, with skippers being granted "Grandfather rights", an interesting term if it applies to one of the Branfords who runs *Eskdale* at a ripe old age in his twenties!

From a pleasure boater's point of view, it is nice to know that there will at least be a guardian of the standards of commercial craft should one have cause for complaint. Sceptics too can take heart from knowing that, even though the existing operators may be deemed exempt, the consultation has at least required them to turn the mirror upon themselves.

Stoppages

Here we go again! – Traffic on the A&CN will be blocked for over a month in total this winter, half due to Railtrack fixing a bridge in Goole (1/3/03 - 16/3/03). Is this fair competition or are the railways trying to kill the canals again? The other closure is at Ferrybridge Lock from 6/1/02 to 26/1/02 just when the demand for heating oil is at its greatest. Why can't they do both jobs at the same time? S.S.

SWIMMING AT SALFORD QUAYS

Did you see the television coverage of the Commonwealth Games from Manchester?

The various camera shots and aerial views showed many glimpses of the network of canals around the city and the Triathlon events for men and women actually featured swimming in Huron Basin at Salford Quays.

The quays which branch off the Manchester Ship Canal used to be the epitome of decline and dereliction. The water was heavily polluted and the sediments in the basins contaminated.

So how come human beings were allowed to swim in the basin? The answer lies in a £4m scheme supervised by the Environment Agency which involves the daily pumping 30 tonnes of pure oxygen into the 3km stretch of canal along the quays to counteract the adverse effects of pollution.

S.P.

(Why didn't they try this on the Huddersfield Broad Canal before the N.W.F.? – Ed)

Another NABO year draws to a close, but, like it or loathe it, I believe NABO is here to stay. Members come, members go, our Council may seem to be faltering one month and then firing on all 18 cylinders the next, but whatever happens, the navigation authorities need us. They need a mirror. However much they might want to deny it, boat movement is still the main *raison d'être* for waterways, and so, to fulfil their obligation to consult their 'users', they need a body which can give them feedback on behalf of all boat owners. No organisation fits this role better than NABO: potentially our membership could include all licence/permit holders irrespective of cruising club membership or the waterway where they are based. The more effective we are, the more valuable we are to the navigation authorities as well as to the boaters.

One shouldn't measure effectiveness by counting members. Plain numbers don't mean much when those leaving us are muttering:-

"I resign because NABO News does nothing but whinge."

"I decided against renewing my subscription some little while ago. Why? Because I got, for want of a better expression, totally fed up with the negative attitude evident in both articles and editorials published in NABO News."

"I have become bored with the BW paranoia that seems to be a recurring thread in much of the correspondence"

Perhaps we are stronger without them. If they feel NABO News should join the other publications blowing trumpets, then why don't they send me contributions to that end? I won't refuse to print them - honest!

That brings me on to hold up the mirror myself. As editor of a magazine run by volunteers I have to strike a rather difficult balance between the three main functions of an editor, namely to collect, select and correct. I don't have the power of a newspaper editor and this obliges me to reproduce certain contributions and correspondence almost to the letter, warts and all, even if my instinct is crying out to help the contributor express themselves with a change of wording. Where I do need to wield the axe, I feel duty bound to make it clear where it has fallen and why, and it is almost unheard of for any complete item to be deliberately consigned to 'the cutting room floor' (Yes - I used to edit moving pictures once).

I have had far more positive feedback to balance the negative comments above, and have it on good authority that when this magazine arrives on the desks of those in power, as it does, the occupant is 'in an important meeting' while it is eagerly read from cover to cover. This makes me feel I am doing something worthwhile.

I feel particularly privileged to have been allowed to express my own opinions on this page. Thank you.

Stuart Sampson

Editor- NABO News, 48 Old Lane. Bramhope, Leeds LS16 9AZ

AGM Pullout

AGM Pullout

AGM Pullout

AGM Pullout

NOTICES

POST FOR NABO NEWS

The Editor is on dry land for issue 7/02 so please send contributions to
48 Old Lane, Bramhope,
Leeds LS16 9AZ

E-mail still-
news.editor@nabo.org.uk

“NABO” embroidered polo and sweatshirts for sale, sizes L and XL in stock.
Contact Sue Burchett.

NABO and Waterway Guides

NABO has been given the chance to display its logo on the front of a series of new free guides published by Alex Jenkins Associates.

Members with waterway related businesses are invited to advertise therein. Contact Gen. Secretary for details.

Password for website members access, guidance leaflets & mooring tables
= **Branch** (capital B)

THANKS

When Council previewed the accounts it was clear that members were being very generous with donations. Even if the ‘subs’ go up, donations will still be much appreciated.

“28 DAY RULE”

Remember - BW have not yet any legal powers to enforce a ban on return to a mooring within 28 days of leaving it.

If you see a sticker or any other evidence that they claim to have such powers please **PHOTOGRAPH** it in context and send the image(s) with date and location to NABO.

This is to discourage BW from exceeding its powers, it is not a recommendation that anyone overstays their welcome and behaves in an antisocial manner.



RIVERS



GLOUCESTER & SHARPNESS CANAL AND RIVER SEVERN OPENING TIMES – A PLAIN ENGLISH GUIDE

We have consulted our diaries and de-coded the opening hours for the G&S Canal and River Severn Navigation for the ensuing year to help members who find the system too complex:

Dates	N.B. Each period commences at 0800 hrs on the Friday of week number	Opening Times
Period 5 Weeks 36–43	Fri 6 September – Thurs 24 October 2002	0800 – 1730 hrs
Period 1 Week 43 – 9	Fri 25 October 2002 – Thurs 27 February 2003	0800 – 1600 hrs
N.B. All locks and bridges closed 25, 26 December 2002 and 1 January 2003		
Period 2 Weeks 9 – 13	Fri 28 February – Thurs 27 March 2003	0800 – 1730 hrs
Period 3 Weeks 13 – 28	Fri 28 March – Thurs 10 July 2003	0800 – 1830 hrs
Period 4 Weeks 28 – 36	Fri 11 July – Thurs 4 September 2003	0800 – 2000 hrs

Please note that the Winter Opening Hours dates and times for the G&S Canal and Severn Navigation given in the Stoppage Programme booklet issued by BW are WRONG

NORFOLK & SUFFOLK BROADS TO BECOME NATIONAL PARK?

Moves are afoot to change the status of the Broads into a full National Park.

Although presently treated on a par with proper national parks, the Broads are governed by their own Act of Parliament, the Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Act 1988. This reflects the unique nature of this area which contains not only many sites of national importance for nature conservation, but also encompasses a network of five major tidal rivers and associated broads.

The threat to navigation that would present itself if the Broads were to become a full National Park is a very real one given that wildlife and conservation would take precedence over navigation (the so-called Sandford Principle). We saw what can happen to boating in a National Park only a few years ago when the Windermere authorities successfully sought to ban high-speed craft.

NABO will keep a close eye on developments on the Broads and will oppose any changes in legislation that might lead to a downgrading in navigation.

A PROBLEM SOLVED (OR IT PAYS TO BE A NABO MEMBER)

A member with a boat presently based on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal recently contacted our Rivers Rep with a problem. Yes, we know the G&S is not a river but he is not a proud chap!

The member had applied to BW some 3 years ago for a permanent mooring at a particular (and very popular) site on the G&S. Then for some unknown reason the application was cancelled without reference to the customer.

Our member then re-applied nearly 2 years ago and was once again placed on the waiting list. A very long waiting list.

Up to a few days prior to our intervention the member was number 26 on the waiting list. When we made some enquiries on behalf of our member the position improved to 23rd.

When we pointed out that had the member's original application not been cancelled, the position in the list would have been even better. Give BW their due: the person with responsibility for moorings promised to investigate and we suggested that the member might have recourse to the complaints procedure on the grounds of maladministration.

We then had a phone call from BW agreeing with the facts as we had stated them. Yes, they had cancelled the original application for some unknown reason. They had reinstated the original application date and the customer's position was now 14th on the list.

Our member was pleased with the outcome and will probably not pursue a formal complaint as the situation has been rectified.

On the current rate of mooring allocation this member now has to wait only 7 more years for a mooring rather than the previous 11 years!

“How can you decline NABO?”

“Easily.”

“How?”

“Nabo. nabas, nabat, nabamus, nabatis, nabant.”

Do wolves still inhabit the frozen North?

A good question.

Well - yes! - you might have thought so if you had come to our stand at the National Waterways Festival, but I hasten to add that *Ice* is no northerner, he is our London Regional Secretary's Innuit Wolf. However for me, finding that wolves include some big softies was only part of the learning curve – I had been boating for over a quarter of a century but it was my first visit to a 'National'. Our original plan was to research the Calder and Hebble by boat before the congestion and be home in Leeds in time to commute over land to man the NABO stand. However various 'Strong Streams' and Council meetings delayed us, and so, by sheer good fortune, the event was graced with the presence of the best looking vessel on the system (letters disputing this welcome, but I might not print them!).

On the first night, if it were not for the Boaters' Welcome Pack on the table, we would not have known we were at a rally – moorings "J" were nearly in Huddersfield town and we had them to ourselves, with not another boat in sight and the festival well over a mile away. Still, we could enjoy our Aire & Calder Humbugs! It served us right for not booking in, but the Boater's Christian Fellowship fared only slightly better, having the incinerator



for company and only a mile to walk. Was it their prayers for wet retribution that opened the heavens the next morning?

Also darkening the sky were murmurings that the big banners saying "*BW and IWA Working Together*" in

fact meant "*BW taking advantage of WRG unpaid labour*", but that was not our battle to fight. Credit must be given to all the volunteers at an event like this, especially the team having to re-allocate moorings due to emanations from toxic silt, who found they had to contend with me too. In the end *n.b. Progress*, famed for its seagoing exploits, was stuck on the other side of Standedge Tunnel so we were given her mooring, still no mean stroll from the action though.

Manning the NABO stand gave us a purpose – it was a big show but not enough to occupy a visitor for four whole days. At some events NABO representatives are so tied to the stand they have no chance to see anything else, but luckily this time we had enough support to allow me to visit the other stands and meet people I knew only by name, and even accept EA's invitation to an informal reception for representatives of the waterway press. There is a lot of 'informal networking' at events like this, when those normally guarded by secretaries and PAs can go



PAs can go ‘walk-about’ at ground level, and even enter the wolf’s lair if they dare.

British Waterways are often accused of causing negative emotions amongst boaters, but the one I was least expecting was to make me to feel so ancient. It was almost as if the Waterways for Youth Campaign was actually working, attracting young folks and then putting them in waterways management! That’s the impression I got from those who came to see us.

I had few trade stands specifically marked as a must. Most of the predictable ones were there, disappointingly few had special offers, but Puffer Parts had one of the longest queues. I saw a stand selling a 5:1 geared windlass, good for the weak but, in the hands of the strong, probably capable of doing some severe damage to lock gear. Some magic powder was demonstrated that you put in a bag to soak up water from inaccessible bilges and there were also alarms that put you in touch with your boat with text messaging. A cute model Stirling-cycle motor showed off the principle of the Whisper-Gen from Victron, a £7000-ish solution to all your heat and power needs without the

antisocial din of diesel. In spite of all this I parted with so little cash I felt I had dismally failed!

However I had great satisfaction from meeting satisfied NABO members and attracting new ones, and felt I was earning my keep talking to visitors even when our more exalted representatives were locked in high power discussions at the back of the booth! Thank you to all those readers, members and others, who told me at the show that they read this magazine from cover to cover: it makes all our effort worthwhile.

Any member is welcome to come and help us at events, all you have to do is share your enthusiasm for our Association and take folks’ money!

Returning to the subject of wolves, it was really nice to see that they, or rather their distant progeny, domestic dogs, were welcome at the event. I was told that the car park entrance was emblazoned with a big sign welcoming dogs and discouraging visitors from leaving them shut up in cars. Plenty came but, during our four days on the showground, I saw not one deposit of excrement. Obviously the wolves in the frozen north know how to behave.

Stuart Sampson

Advertisement

FISHING RAGE!

Phil works for the council. He's in senior management. Nevertheless he's still a nice bloke. Leaning on the bar of our local we were discussing canals whilst slaking our thirsts.

Our pub is unique. It's a non-canalside canalside pub. Although the Grand Union Canal is at least a mile away through the woods, many boaters-in-the-know use our hostelry as a watering hole. You see, ours is still a village pub. Unlike most genuinely canalside hostelries, ours hasn't been changed into a restaurant with a watery view for the gongoozlers.

The view from our pub's window is the local roundabout, but the bar room talk is often of boats and boating. Phil was telling me about the council's problems with the canal that passes through its area. How do you balance the interests of all the different groups of people who wish to use the canal's facilities?

There's the anglers; the joggers; the cyclists; the canoeists; the industrial archaeologists; the artists; the dog-walkers; the ramblers; the twitchers; even the flashers, and, oh yes, the boaters! How do you cater for all the conflicting demands? How do all these groups ever get along with each other? I shrugged my shoulders, pursed my lips and pretended to shake my head wisely.

I fall decidedly into the boaters' bracket. Whilst I have been known to break into a trot should an emergency be dire enough, I am no jogger. I might mount my bike, which usually lies rusting on the boat's roof, for a quick wobble down a towpath, but I am no mountain bicyclist. I don't mind admiring the fine lines of a roving bridge, or watching the odd bird or two, but my skills as an artist or ornithologist are negligible. I would look very silly in a canoe, and any immodesty is purely accidental.

I am not into fishing. However, I do try to bear in mind that others, for some strange reasons of their own, are.

Live and let live. It's the only way. I slow down for canoeists and fishermen whether they like it or not! But what happens when two diverse cultures clash? How do we avoid confrontational situations when they occur? And why do they occur?

Phil could shed light here. When the rules get broken, usually, so does something else, he said, sagely. I could vouch for that. There are miles about not fishing too close to locks, for example.

We approached Kings Langley Deep Lock one morning in early November. We were a little nonplussed to find two middle-aged fishermen plying their sport just below the bottom gate. In fact, one of them had his keep-net secured to the bollard at which we needed to moor whilst Jackie set the lock.

"You're in the way, there!" she informed them, as she deftly leapt ashore at the bridgehole. There was not even the flicker of an eyelid by way of acknowledgement.

I thought that by bringing our boat very close to the bollard, they might take the hint and give us room. Wrong! Too late, I realised that they were not going to move at all. Everything was under control until I had to select reverse to stop the boat. Then things happened rapidly. There was a sudden thrashing of water 'twixt bollard and prop. The keep-net disappeared as if swallowed whole by Jaws. The engine stopped dead in a cloud of black smoke. The fisherman leapt up and down shaking his fists. Numerous small fish escaped gratefully back into home waters.



It took a good half an hour down a freezing cold weed hatch to get the remains of the keep-net off the propeller blades and shaft. In the end I had to resort to using bolt croppers under water, and ended up with a bilge full of dead and dying fish. All the while I was berated by a most angry, foul-mouthed angler.

"That net cost me £150 quid!"

"It shouldn't have been there!"

"You've got no right using a barge on our canal this time of year!"

There was no answer to that! Making up your own rules is offside. (All expletives have been removed in case this item is read before the nine o'clock watershed.)

Then there was the retired couple quietly chugging up the canal towards Bulls Bridge. On a road parallel to the towpath, a red car appeared, bouncing over the bumps at high speed. It screeched to a halt and a very large young man, the kind you wouldn't want to meet on the towpath in the dark, leapt out of the driver's seat and began to berate the crew of the passing boat.

Pointing with agitation at the bank he demanded that the crew "Get over 'ere!" Of course they had no intention of doing so. He became more and more agitated, jumping up and down and cursing the crew. They were obviously just as puzzled by his behaviour as were we. Had they stolen something from his boat? Had they sunk it?

As he shook his fists, hurling abuse because the steerer would not come alongside, another car turned up. This was the big man's friend, a much smaller man who attempted to clasp him round the waist in an effort to stop him hurling himself into the water after the disappearing boat.

We continued for half a mile, wondering what had caused all this aggression on a sunny Sunday afternoon. Then, half a mile further down the cut, there was the same large gentleman quietly fishing by a bridge outside a canalside pub! As we passed, he politely asked if we could rescue his float, which had been broken adrift by the previous passing boat.

All that anger. . . for a float?

We did as we were bid. He was grateful. He muttered his thanks amidst remarks about boats speeding through bridges before he had a chance to withdraw his rod.

So Phil is right. The rules get broken. So do other things. In these cases, it was only a keep-net and a line, but both confrontations could have been avoided. A little consideration was required. I could have held my boat back by the bridgehole at Kings Langley Lock while Jackie wielded her windlass. The retired couple could have slowed down when passing through the bridge. The fishermen could have kept the statutory 20 metres clear of the lock and the bridgehole.

But, to be fair, most fishermen are polite enough, even though very few are willing to make eye contact as we pass. As they withdraw their rods, and duck beneath their peaked caps, we often make a point of shouting a greeting, just to see what startled and confused reactions we can produce.

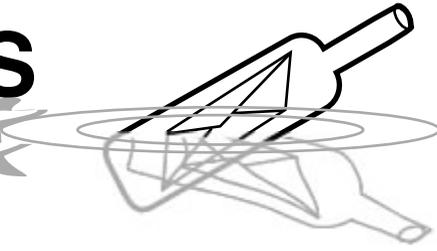
We passed a plethora of them. It was the height of winter. Squatting under umbrellas in a biting wind and freezing rain, they were drowning maggots for hour after hour in the Tring summit pound. I wondered what possible pleasure could be had by it. The old boaters' term for a fisherman; 'a mug 'n a maggit,' came to mind.

Of course, these thoughts occurred whilst freezing rain trickled down my neck, and smeared my glasses. I shivered continuously. My teeth chattered involuntarily. The chilling wind whipped the boat diagonally across the cut yet again. And lightning zapped a tree just ahead.

Now that is really having fun!

Canalman

LETTERS



Losing sight of the view

Your editorial in Issue 5/02 is prescient as I have been having a go about hedgerows and opening up views on contour canals so offering valley views whose excellence would tempt boaters to moor up for the night instead of join the obligatory queue for the line near the pubs. As you say some of us like the quiet spots and the sight of the wonderful English countryside.

There is another insidious aspect to current moorings, not just on BW waters but also the EA. The permitted length of stay is being reduced and some short stay moorings such as Thrupp which is actually due to be phased out completely. I would suggest that boaters who recognise such trends ask the question as to why such action has been taken and ask which user groups were consulted.

As far as hedgerows are concerned, boaters should look past the towpath on contour canals and see what wonderful views have been obliterated by the lack of hedgerow maintenance. The biodiversity plan issued by BW in 2000 emphasises how important the hedgerows are to the improvement of the ecology and that they are going to make not a single penny available for their maintenance. There is not a single

ecologist who does not agree that a proper set of hedgerows would benefit the canals, wildlife and surrounding agriculture. Proper hedgerows would improve a boater's lot by having more to look at and therefore encourage a reduction in speed, boat wash and bank erosion. For the traditionalist it would return the towpaths to the state and conditions that existed for the 150 years before BW stopped any hedgerow maintenance. Ramblers would benefit by a much enriched experience and even cyclists may be so impressed with the view that they might even slow down! Prime examples are the entire length of the Oxford Canal, the GU Leicester Arm, the Staff & Worcester and sections of the Shroppey to name but a few. One final point is that regularly used moorings never require very much grass cutting and edges are never given a chance to become overgrown.

Louis Jankel (Afloat)

Global Position System

The July issue which briefly described the use of a Global Position System (GPS) arrived just as I handed back just such a borrowed gizmo to its owner. Yes, it was very impressive and although it doesn't have top priority, it is now on my list of desirable items for the boat.

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

After all I can probably borrow one again should the need(?) arise.

Among the features which impressed me was the ability to download information into a computer where all matter of fascinating information could be viewed on a much larger screen. We even superimposed our journey onto an Ordnance Survey map and its accuracy was such that we didn't cross dry land once. I now accept that it could enable a steerer to retrace a previous journey in thick fog on a black night without hitting the bank once. He might hit the other fellow doing the same thing though.

My original purpose in using the thing was pure academic interest in how fast a boat was actually moving. As I suspected, on a reasonable(?), but not recently dredged, length of the Ashby Canal we were doing 3 mph without any serious disturbance in the water. This dropped to 2.8 mph on a worse stretch, while on the shallowest bit we encountered we were down to 2.7 mph. These speeds seemed to tally with the performance of other boats on the same journey and several repeat tests confirmed their validity. The interesting point about the whole exercise was that the crew's perception of our speed was very inaccurate. They agreed on the 3 mph but such was the drop in engine revs. at lower speeds that all were convinced that we were down to 2 or even less mph on the slower sections. In fact this boat was still doing 2.3 mph on tick-over. (Like a lot of boats it went far too fast at its slowest speed.) If these speeds are accurate, then it just goes to show that slowing to avoid damage to the canal and other boats loses hardly any

speed at all. It also might explain why onlookers are sometimes convinced that you haven't slowed down when you know that you have.

Perhaps someone else with access to a GPS would like to repeat this experiment. If they have the luxury of a rev. counter on the boat so much the better. They could check if the engine speed matches the hull speed and consider how much fuel is being used to pump water backwards at "high" speeds.

Ian Reid

Charging in gear

As I left the National Waterways Festival past all the boats moored along the towpath, I noticed that a fair number had their engines running in gear, presumably charging batteries. I thought this practice was against the BW byelaws and yet, aren't those moored near the showground supposed to be the ones 'in the know'?

Surely BW is right ? This practice stresses mooring lines and pins, undermines the banks, silts up the channel, wastes fuel, increases pollution, and makes it very difficult to steady a boat when trying to tie up nearby. I have even heard that there was a proposal to ban narrowboats from the Thames to avoid bank damage because they do this.

The only reasons I can see for running the propeller while tied up are to circulate water and disperse 'grey' discharges where there is no natural flow, e.g. in a marina, or for commercial craft to tighten their moorings when loading or unloading passengers or

cargo. None of these reasons would apply to pleasure boats moored on line at a rally, so maybe someone can tell me why it is done.

Puzzled (name & address supplied)

(I have heard some say it is to load the engine so the cylinder bores don't become glazed, but diesel experts tell me glazing is due to excess fuel injection or oxygen starvation rather than light loading. Opinions welcome - Ed)

Some Views of a New Member

(Extracts from a letter sent to the General Secretary).

I am a new member of NABO and am impressed with the initial literature sent me. My wife and I have been living on a narrow boat for two years now . . .

. . . Newly opened canals, restored lifts and super new rotating lifts, across the border and out of reach, are great for the public image. But our experience this year is that much BW effort was required to travel the newly opened canals. . . The Huddersfield Narrow will always be expensive to run because of the tunnel and lack of water.

Perhaps BW should be encouraged to keep open the existing canals and provide consistent facilities. BW yards and marinas should all at least provide water and waste disposal. Sewage and pump-out would be great.

We were not able to dispose of our rubbish at Hartshill or at Atherstone on the Coventry Canal and were told to go

down eleven locks to Bradley Green! It is encouraging to see some re-cycling bins, more please.

We saw some active dredging on the Shropshire Union and that is all. More please, much more, not less dredging. The Ashby deserves to be dredged but is still waiting for that 'pot of gold': it is slow going. . . Many inviting edges were difficult to get close to - like those 'Visitor Moorings' at Crick, of all places, where rocks get in the way.

We have seen many improvements over the years. Many towpaths have been surfaced, but I wish they would not use that horrible chalky grit. It gets on the boat and scratches the paint (and is nigh on impossible to remove from carpets Ed.). We prefer a grassy edge. . .

. . . I would prefer not to be referred to as a 'continuous cruiser' just because I do not have a mooring. In the two years spent on the canals so far, our engine has run for only 1500 hours. On average ten days in every month has been spent not cruising but I get 'itchy feet' so I don't overstay my welcome in one place. . . My point is that extensive use is not indicated by 'continuous cruising'.

Charles Moore

Fridge health hazard

With regard to Stephen Peter's fridge article in August's issue. I purchased a boat some ten years ago with a 12 Volt floor-standing Engel fridge fitted, it is probably of about 1990 vintage and has worked very satisfactorily. I have no reason to believe the performance of a

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modern fridge would be significantly different.

Because of the many variables such as setting, food load and ambient temperature one can only talk in general terms. After the first few hours it cycles on and off about every ten minutes, this settles down to every 20 minutes after a number of days. In summer weather it is basically on half the time. In cooler times this can be as low as 25% of the time, the off time extending but the on time remaining about the same. It's current consumption is as stated by the manufacturers about 4 amps so in the summer it uses 48 ampere hours in a 24 hour period. This equates to about two hours a day engine running just to support the fridge, as we average about four this is not an issue. We do not turn the fridge off at anytime.

I am not enthusiastic about gas and only use it for cooking and get less so the more I read about the regulations. Gas does however, provide some simple and elegant solutions to many of the requirements of a narrow boat.

I will continue using an electrical fridge in the future, but if you install one be very generous with your domestic battery capacity.

Richard Waddy.

The performance of fridges depends on the ventilation of the condenser tubes at the back. If against the hull side try removing insulation behind it below the waterline and let it draw cool air from the bilges too. Above all let it breathe - Ed.

You can't please everyone . .

My subscription is cancelled because I found it, even at £10, a total waste of money.

William Fowle, nb Hornet (London)

. . but you can some

I would like to thank all the committee for the good work they are doing and for producing a very interesting and enjoyable magazine. My particular concerns at the present time is the proposed hiking up of the "Continuous Cruising" licence which I feel should be strongly opposed.

I am also opposed to the banning of existing gas fridges which to my knowledge have not been a problem on diesel powered boats. Whilst the escalating use of electric fridges is causing more boaters to run their engine whilst moored up just to keep the batteries charged.

My final concern is "End of Garden Moorings" and if the opportunity should ever arise to challenge BW's right to charge for these then I believe NABO should back this. Keep up the good work!

Mike Boston, nb Countess (ex FMC steamer)

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