

THE MAGAZINE OF THE



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

£1.00 for extra copies and to non-members

ISSUE 2/05 - April 2005

BW Pubs / VHF / River 'Licences' / MOB-H

IN THIS ISSUE

3	Editorial	The Editor
4	Chairman's Column	The Chairman
6	BW Pub Partnership	(from BW press release)
8	Cut Crime - Where am I?	Stuart Sampson
10	Getting the Right Licence	Stephen Peters
11	In The Post	Gen Sec
12	BW Corridor Issues Meeting	The Chairman
14	Marine Band VHF - Update	Stephen Peters
16	NWAF - update	The Chairman
16	Diving - safety issues	Stephen Peters
17	Notices	
18	Rivers - BW a Raw Deal?	The River Users Co-ordinator
19	Rivers - EA T&W Order update	The Chairman
20	Red Diesel - Contact your MP	
22	The Return of MOB-H	Drifter
25	Fly on the Wall	Fly
26	Letters	Yourselves
29	NABO Guidance Papers	
30	NABO supplies	
31	Council and contacts	

2005 CALENDAR

Council meeting	Copy date
Apr 23rd	Apr 30th
June 4th	June 11th
July 16th	July 23rd
Sept 17th	Sept 24th
Nov 19th A.G.M.	
Nov 26th	Dec 3th

EDITORIAL

It's a long time since much was said about this magazine as such, so perhaps it is time for some comments from the editor.

In the email column of the website *narrowboatworld.com* someone complained about the incomprehensibility of the EA articles (It's a shame they didn't share it with us). The narrowboat world is extending into EA waters more and more, and the issue will have a great bearing on whether being narrow will affect the fees you pay, even though at this stage it's more about whether boaters get a say in it at all. We have a duty to keep members informed, and not to shy away from trying to explain an issue just because it is complex or political.

Readers who think it won't affect them may be pleased to know that the third episode of the EA saga has been relegated to the Rivers section, where perhaps it should belong, but that is not to say the matter is un-newsworthy, far from it! Taking over its prominent position is an item about BW Pub Partnership. Let's hope this has a bit wider appeal.

With Dot tapering off towards the end of the alphabet, the magazine will need another strand. A series of profiles of 'prominent' people in the waterways arena, such as our Council members and senior staff in the navigation authorities, has been suggested. A sort of 'Who's Under That Hat (or those hats!)'. Would you like to know more about those who are just names in the waterway news? Did you know Eugene Baston goes off trekking in South America looking for evidence of ancient cultures, or that our Midlands Secretary spends much of this season bringing lambs into the world?

If you do, this will take the author some time to research, so, in the next issue, something the editor prepared earlier, over twenty years ago in fact. In 1982 he was involved, front of camera, in making a series of five television programmes about travelling from the Irish Sea to the North Sea by water, and wrote up his experiences. If you regard the inclusion of this sort of trivia in this periodical as an intolerable indulgence please don't keep it to yourself!

Certainly don't be afraid to suggest other articles, or even better, write them. NABO members may not be all that interested in the sort of inflated log books that are the bread and butter of cruising club magazines, where the authors are usually known to the readers. However if there is a special slant to your travels or experiences that would help others, feel free to put pen to paper, or preferably finger to keyboard, and let us see the result.

It's your magazine.

SS

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Sometimes I ask myself whether it's all worth it. I guess all volunteers think that way at times, and it's amazing how the odd compliment or criticism can have so much effect on morale. It would help just to know that more people were benefiting from our efforts. NABO must raise its public profile.

Please don't leave this to Council. The article in *Waterfront* might get a few people talking and give you a chance to answer of those questions that come up again and again, both from semi-gruntled members and people who might be thinking of joining.

'What's in it for me?'

Quite a lot more than folks get by sitting around, binning NABO News without reading it and then whinging to all and sundry except those who are in a position to do something about it. Sorry, I forgot, they won't be reading this.

Otherwise try – Cut Crime, Reports, Water Safety, Cruises, Advice, Red Diesel, Representation, even Wall Planners, and of course this magazine.

'Has NABO lost its direction?'

No and Yes.

No - NABO still stands up for the boat owner and as such has a vital role in the waterways community. Dissent on Council is history, if there really was any, but . . .

Yes - it might have lost its **original** purpose, but times have changed. There are new challenges and some that have been overcome. If they hadn't been, NABO would have been wasting its time. We have to adapt. Some may still harbour grudges due to old wounds, but we can't base our present attitude on these.



'Is NABO now in bed with BW?'

No and You Might Think So.

No - we haven't forgotten about how we were treated on the mooring matrix issue, and we are still seeking some route by which boaters can make a difference to BW policy so this sort of thing doesn't happen again. An independent regulator is one option, another is the advisory forum which we are doing our very best to ensure is independent of BW and 'has teeth'.

Yes (-ish) – we are cooperating with BW against common enemies: crime; vandalism; adverse political decisions etc. This, and our reporting boards, are earning us respect, but I wouldn't call that being in bed with BW. What it does is to give us more credibility if we do have to complain.

'Does NABO spend too much time arguing on behalf of the continuous cruisers? (or do you mean Thames boaters, or narrowboat owners, or the 'Can't-moor-here-because-it's-too-overgrown-and-too-shallow' boaters?)'

Yes - of course we do, I wish we didn't have to. If we are working on problems facing a sector you don't belong to, don't give up, it could be your turn next.

'Does NABO actually achieve anything?'

Yes - but sometimes it's a bit difficult to claim full credit for things, and

certainly a bit arrogant. However, hardly a meeting goes by without NABO putting at least two items on the agenda on boaters' behalf.

At local user group meetings, our representatives are getting a reputation for not putting up with flannel, and we are working nationally to make these meetings more effective.

At the other end of the scale we had representatives at BW's Annual Meeting. In a full lecture theatre seeded with irate marina operators, NABO still managed to get in two shots, one about BW's boater satisfaction figures and the other about regulators and consultation.

This was the meeting where Robin Evans gave his 'Veg Pledge'. Why? Because NABO had led the chorus at the previous Corridor Issues Meeting deploring the state of the towpaths.

At the Parliamentary Waterways Group we had two questions for the Under Secretary for Transport. The Grand Committee Room was packed, so we only had a chance to pose one:-

"If re-elected, will the Labour government consider the waterways community by allowing it to continue using red diesel beyond 2006 or perhaps by making biodiesel available at an equivalent cost?"

Many of our members are retired or on low incomes and have sunk much of their savings into vessels which are designed to use this inexpensive and safe fuel type for power generation and/or heating as well as propulsion. Separating the two uses, and the necessary supply infrastructure, will be costly and in some cases impossible. For instance some boats are all-electric with a combined propulsion engine and generator.

Our organisation fears that the loss of the derogation will breed unsafe practices such as heating cabins with self-contained bottled gas heaters, and, in the long run, installation of cheaper petrol engines whose fuel is extremely dangerous aboard a boat".

Not so much a question, more of a statement, but that's what you have to do in the political arena, and the questions are given to the the speakers in advance, so they are in writing and have to be thought about. You can bank on a politician's answer, but by that time NABO had made the point – one very relevant to the future for the vast majority of our members.

It is difficult to measure what we achieve, but we do give it our best shot and can only do so with your support.

To other matters - Canal Constipation?

Back to earth, or may be water, or even fire! We are trying to get 'a handle' on the new boat versus new moorings numbers and having difficulty getting figures out of BW. It would seem a simple request but even chivvying them up through the Chief Executive didn't seem to be working, with reminder messages remaining unanswered for over three weeks.

I am afraid there seems to be no lack of left hands ignorant of the doings of right hands in high places. The script writers of 'Yes, Minister' would have a field day and I just wish I could tell it like they do. Incidentally, at one meeting I attended recently, the Chairman of the AWCC (bless him - he used to work for the Ministry of Defence) started off about 'exclusive of inclusiveness' and I could just see Jim Hacker's eyes glaze over!

See you on the waterways.

BW TIES UP PUB PARTNERSHIP

According to its latest press release, British Waterways has completed its Waterside Pub Partnership with Scottish and Newcastle Pub Enterprises (Management) Ltd which will develop a nationwide pubs business at over one hundred sites across British Waterways canals and rivers.



‘Existing and future pub lessees will benefit from prime waterside locations, British Waterways skill at attracting visitors to its canals and rivers, and S&NPE's proven record of working with their lessees to develop successful and profitable businesses.’

‘Initially, the Waterside Pub Partnership's portfolio will include 30 of British Waterways' existing leased pubs and a further 20 sites that will be developed into new waterside pubs over the next three years. In addition, the Partnership will grow by developing future prime waterside pub opportunities that will arise from British Waterways' property estate and by acquiring suitable pubs and sites from the open market.’

‘Andrew Stevenson, managing director at S&NPE comments. *"The boats and history of the waterways provide a unique appeal and we will work with lessees to tailor our pubs to the location and the waterway visitors and residents that use them - from historic 'chocolate box' pubs in semi-rural locations to inner-city pubs and trendy bars."*

The following properties have been transferred to the Waterside Pub Partnership:

<i>Pub</i>	<i>Location</i>
Narrow Street Pub	Limehouse, London
Turning Point Inn	Yiewsley, Middlesex
Three Locks	Stoke Hammond, Buckinghamshire
Edwards Restaurant	Crick, Northants
Grove Lock	Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire
Old Mill House	Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire
Fosters	Gloucester Docks, Gloucester
The Greyhound	Hawkesbury Junction, Coventry
The Waterfront	Castle Wharf, Nottingham
Cuckoo Wharf	Worksop, Nottinghamshire
Union Wharf Hotel	Market Harborough, Leicestershire
Bobby Browns	Gas Street, Birmingham
Canal Club	Broad Street Wharf, Wolverhampton

James Brindley	Bridge Street, Birmingham
Shroppie Fly	Audlem, Cheshire
The Wharf	Northwich, Cheshire
The Mill House	Stanley Ferry, Wakefield
Lock, Stock & Barrel	Skipton, North Yorkshire
The Moorings	Sowerby Bridge, Halifax
Lemujin Restaurant	Sowerby Bridge, Halifax
The Cut Waterside Restaurant	Shipley, West Yorkshire
The Base	Bridge End, Leeds
The Depot	Eanam Wharf, Blackburn
The Orwell	Wigan Pier, Wigan
Inn on the Wharf	Burnley, Lancashire
The Waterside Inn	Leigh, Lancashire
Water Witch	Lancaster
The Bothy Bar	Fort Augustus
Caley Inn	Inverness

Some 20 sites currently owned by British Waterways have been identified for the potential development into new pubs over the next three years. These include:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Location</i>
The Waters Edge	Stonebridge Lock, Tottenham
Brentford Lock (two units)	Brentford, Middlesex
Foxton Locks	Foxton, Leicestershire
Leeds Blue Development	Little Neville Street, Leeds
Ducie Street	Manchester
The Falkirk Wheel site	Falkirk
Bowling Harbour Basin	Bowling, Dumbarton
Rosebank Distillery	Falkirk
Auchinstarry Basin	Auchinstarry, Kilsyth

BW takes a half of the profits from this partnership and promises to spend the money on the waterways. It can't legitimately do anything else with it, so if we all go and drink in them, would there be a reduction in licence fees? It would be a much more enjoyable way to finance BW!

Seriously, BW is looking for some way to reward the loyalty of its long standing customers, maybe a discount on a pint or a meal in one of its pubs may be an answer.

CUT CRIME

“SORRY, WE DON’T CLIMB LADDERS”

Reports the Daily Mail (11.3.05) about the very strict Health and Safety limitations of Scene of Crime officers, which could equally hamper them investigating a crime on a boat. If you get this sort of response, try, “Then send someone who does!”, after making them aware of any conceivable hazard – and please tell NABO all about it.

WHERE AM I ?

It is quite important to know, and to be able to tell somebody else, if you are reporting a crime, or have any other emergency for that matter.

We all know how difficult it can be for those 'ashore' to find those 'afloat' even on a land-locked canal. Street dwellers can use addresses and postcodes, but who knows the postcode for, say, Wrenbury visitor moorings?

What you can do is give someone your Grid Reference. With the aid of a map, a GPS kit or even a Philips Street Atlas, they can then pin your position down to somewhere within a square just a bit bigger than a football pitch. Although this might not be good enough for mountain rescue, it should get them on the right road, and there is another clue – **tell them you are on the canal!**

The most common type of Grid reference is the *OS Landranger*. It might look a bit daunting when run together as a string of letters and numbers, like **SJ406771** for the visitor moorings at Wrenbury, but, as they say, “divide and rule”. Split it into three parts.

The first two letters, **SJ**, indicate the 'sheet', which unfortunately has absolutely nothing to do with the numbers you use to order a Landranger map. It specifies a 100km square, which still isn't a lot of help – virtually the whole of the Cheshire and Four Counties Rings are also on sheet **SJ**! At least starting with two letters shows what type of grid reference you are using, as the other type of OS reference just uses numbers.

Then follow six digits. The first three, **406**, are the 'Eastings' which measure from the bottom left corner of the 'sheet', across. The last three, **771**, are the 'Northings', measuring upwards. "In the door and up the stairs" is a way to remember it. ("What are stairs?" I hear you boat dwellers cry!)

So much for the theory, but what about the practice? Somehow you have to find out what number to give, and this may be an emergency. If you are lucky, there may be a trekkers' notice nearby with the whole reference on it. It would be nice if references were displayed on moorings signs too. Failing that you can read it off a map, get out your GPS unit, or look in a guidebook. Unfortunately, although Nicholson is now showing OS mapping, with grid squares, these are not numbered. Later editions of First Mate Guides do give references for moorings near any habitations they cover.

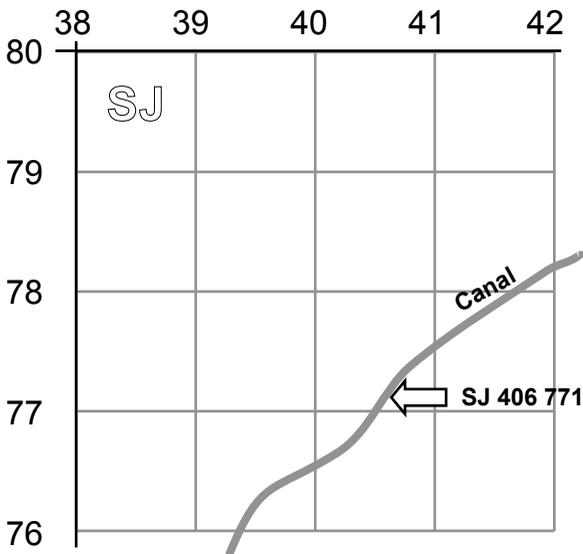
If you know where you are and want the number from a map, it may be easier to work **backwards**, 'down the stairs and out the door':-

Northings

OS maps and Philips Street Atlases have grid squares, usually one kilometre but sometimes subdivided.

From where you are, look **down** to find the nearest horizontal 1km grid line and estimate how many tenths of the kilometre square you have travelled to reach it. Write this down as the last digit of your reference and work back.

Follow the line to the nearest edge of the map where you should find a two digit number. This goes before your tenths figure to complete the Northings number.



Eastings

Returning to your position on the map, look **left** for the next vertical 1km grid line and estimate in tenths how far to reach it, then follow it to the nearest edge of the map to find its number. Use this to complete the Eastings number.

Sheet Letters

Somewhere near the corners of the OS map in blue hollow characters, or in the front of the atlas, usually with the map of postcode areas, you can find the appropriate letters.

Your complete reference is: **Sheet Eastings Northings**.

I can assure you it doesn't take as long as it seems here, especially with a little practice, and there is a chance the offenders have not gone too far by the time you have done it.

If you have a GPS unit you might well be able to switch it to 'GB OS Grid'. It may give you **five** digits for Eastings and Northings, numerically capable of specifying your position to the nearest metre. To get the standard three figures, either just use the first three digits of the five, or better, round them up by adding one if the last two digits exceed 50. e.g. if it gives 40589, the three figure version is nearer 406 than 405.

If you can't grasp it from this, get a Scout or Guide to teach you!

GETTING THE RIGHT LICENCE

The present system (if that's the right word) for obtaining a private pleasure boat licence is fraught with potential difficulties and pitfalls, so the following information might help you to obtain the correct licence to suit your cruising needs.

NABO has long supported the objective of licence harmonisation to create one national licensing system to enable boats to cruise the length and breadth of the country without having to purchase a plethora of permits and licences from different navigation authorities. But we are still waiting for a joint BW / EA licensing regime. One of the obstacles has been the fact that the Environment Agency has three incompatible registration and charging schemes which it inherited when it took control of river navigations in its three regions (actually it was its predecessor, the National Rivers Authority) from the previous regional water authorities. The EA Transport and Works Order published in late-2004 aims to simplify the situation by introducing a uniform registration charging scheme covering all EA waters.

We do now have the "Gold Licence" scheme whereby it is possible for a boat owner wishing to spend time cruising on a combination of waterways to buy a licence covering all BW and EA waterways. These include canals and rivers in England and Wales and BW Scottish waterways. However, the Gold Licence is valid for 12 months and it pays to work out whether you are

getting a good deal, or whether you would be better off having, say, just a BW licence and then obtaining EA licences for short terms when you require them. The maths can be rather complicated but you may find that the Gold Licence does not offer "best value" to use the current jargon. If you already have a licence for your home navigation you can obtain a refund on the unexpired portion when you purchase the Gold Licence. The EA does not charge VAT on its standard licences, unlike BW.

If your boat is based on BW waters you will need to buy either a licence (enabling use of the boat on all BW waterways) or a river registration certificate if you only want to use the boat on BW rivers. By law (the BW Act 1971) the cost of a river-only "licence" cannot exceed 60 per cent of the cost of a full canal and river licence. If you boat solely on BW rivers and have a small open tender with an outboard engine, you are permitted to use the tender without additional payment. But if you have opted for the more expensive canal and river licence, strictly speaking you should obtain a separate licence for the tender for use on canals and rivers. Please note! (Incidentally, open tenders with outboard engines are exempt from the BSS requirements).

BW licences and river registrations are available for private boats for durations of 3, 6 or 12 months and they term these "Long Term Licences". A long-term canal and river licence permits free passage through

the Anderton Lift, Standedge Tunnel and the Ribble Link.

Short-term licences (1 day, 1 week or 1 month) are available for all BW waterways or rivers only, and there is also a 30 Day “Explorer” Licence which permits up to 30 separate days’ use of a boat in any 12 month period, applicable to canal and river usage. One-day and Explorer licences are not available for craft moored in private marinas connected to BW waterways. BW charges VAT on all its licences and river registrations.

After lengthy representations to BW we persuaded them to allow boats with river-only licences to have free short term access into Gloucester Docks (strictly part of the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal), in addition to use of

Diglis and Stourport basins; and passage between the rivers Trent and Ouse via the Stainforth and Keadby Canal, Aire and Calder Navigation and Selby Canal at no extra charge providing they do not stay longer than 3 days on these waterways.

British Waterways Scotland issue separate licences for the Scottish canals but the 12-month licence for England and Wales also covers use of the waterways “north of the border”.

Finally, remember that a series of discounts applies to BW licences including prompt payment, restricted use on disconnected waterways, electric propulsion motors, historic boats, unpowered butties and Scottish licence holder discount.

Stephen Peters

IN THE POST

Gen Sec has received two items of interest recently:-

CROSSRAIL

Two boxes of ‘Parliamentary’ planning papers arrived to test our backs as well as our patience. The ample contents describes in detail, with plans, the predicted effects of building a new rail link east to west across London. Moorings in the Docks will be severely restricted for a five year period when the Isle of Dogs station is build under East India North Dock. There may be bridge works between Hayes and Bulls Bridge, and headroom reductions on the Bow Back rivers.

As it goes under London, some of the tunnel spoil will be moved by water.

SHIP’S CREWS

Sea Gate Ltd. is offering us qualified and competent Russian and Ukrainian crews for all types of vessels.

‘Crew members are personally selected and prospective applicants carefully screened to verify their experience, competence, fitness and comprehension of English prior to enlistment.’

Does your ship need a crew? Any takers please contact Carole.

Corridor Issues Meeting – 10 March 2005

These items have been taken from a report issued less than 30 hours after the meeting by the BW team themselves (partly due to the mention of the NABO News copy date!). They are to be congratulated.

Actions for User Groups - i.e. YOU, are underlined. Editor's comments in italics

'Veg Pledge'

- BW provided an update on progress in meeting the 'Veg Pledge' which covered a summary of work completed per waterway unit
- Simon Salem explained that some good progress had been made in most area but recognised that BW has not met 100% in all areas.
- Simon explained to the group that waterways have been allocated more money in year 2005/06 for managing offside tree growth, in addition to the ongoing programme.
- User groups provided positive feedback and also highlighted specific areas where it was felt improvements were needed. A full list of these suggestions to be circulated to waterways. More needed

Towpath 'Cutting' Guidelines

Eugene informed the group that the 'White Paper' for towpath cutting will be published by 15 April for a feedback period of six weeks for comments on the final proposals.

Installation of Towpath Furniture – e.g. signs, railings, noticeboards etc (design, placement and obstruction)

- There was an overall discussion of how insensitive installation could damage waterway heritage and compromise safety.
- Particular discussion centred on signage and the inappropriateness of some installation.
- Eugene asked Users to send examples of unnecessary or ill placed signage to Amanda Strang.
- Many users felt that it would be helpful if local staff could consult with local users before installing significant waterway furniture. Simon agreed to discuss the matter with local service managers.
- Simon has circulated guidance on railings but would like to know from the users where there are still problems. Examples to Amanda Strang.
- The AINA consultation on navigation safety signs was referred to and Peter Wade agreed he would send the document to all user groups.

Visitor Incident Reporting System

- Peter Wade reported that to date BW has received 30 report forms which involve vandalism and near misses.
- It was suggested that it would be helpful to distribute the Visitor Incident Reporting form at local user group meetings to improve awareness amongst all users. Please use them

Communication & Education of Issues Arising from User Group Meetings

- After discussion with the user groups it was agreed that important matters that arise from these meetings should be promptly circulated and understood within BW.
- Simon agreed that BW would provide a short high level summary of issues at these meetings and circulate them to Service Managers and attendees immediately after the meeting. *This is from it!*

Towpath Surfaces

- User groups raised concern at the type of material being used for towpath surfaces (e.g. crushed stone) and general specification for towpath upgrades.
- Specific examples will be highlighted in the detailed notes of this meeting.
- BW will look at these issues within the 'waterway standards' and 'customer insight programme'

Traditional Canalside environment 'v' new housing development

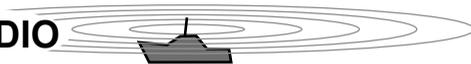
- User groups discussed the issues arising from competing pressures and needs of housing, boatyard and related services, wharves and general public access.
- It was agreed that this issue is of a strategic nature and Eugene would ask BWAF to consider this under its remit.

The main actions requested of us are to keep our eyes open and report. Photos can be sent to Amanda Strang at BW HQ. Reports in words can be placed on our Reports Board, or texted in, so please use it to notify BW and the rest of us of:-

- *Vegetation uncut after the end of March*
- * *Inappropriate signs, especially ones that would foul a horse towline!*
- *Inappropriate railings, especially ones that would foul a horse towline!*
- *Incidents - as well as using BW's forms, so NABO can assess problems too*
- * *Accidents waiting to happen*

and. of course navigation problems as usual

UPDATE ON MARINE VHF RADIO



In the "Age of the Mobile Phone" it might appear irrelevant for pleasure craft to carry and use Marine VHF radiotelephones, and it is certainly true that modern cellular mobile telephones have supplanted VHF to a large extent. This is particularly the case inland where previously a boat would use VHF to contact a lock keeper or a bridge on a commercial waterway and it is now more convenient and certain if you use your mobile.

However, using a mobile phone in place of VHF can have its downside. The first thing to consider is that when you use marine radiotelephones on a single frequency channel (such as Ch 74 on most BW commercial waterways), other vessels will be able to listen in to your conversation and glean information about your movements. You are able to do the same and this open-channel method of communicating enables you to construct a picture in your mind of who is doing what, and how your intentions will affect other vessels. By listening in to the broadcasts you can become aware of a delay at a lock, a malfunctioning lift bridge or the imminent arrival of a large gravel barge around the next bend. Safety is a key issue and vessels on the tidal Thames and other tidal waters would be well advised to carry and use marine VHF.

It is possible for mobile telephones to be used around the coast of Britain and only recently a crew were rescued after drifting in a liferaft off the North Cornwall coast and eventually making an emergency call on their mobile. But coverage is uncertain and unless you know the number of the person you are calling (and they know yours) it is not possible to establish contact; unlike using marine VHF. Marine VHF range is restricted basically to line-of-site so the higher the antenna the better, and maximum range is usually reckoned to be about 35 miles, but it can be considerably less depending upon geographical obstructions etc. All sets have two transmitter power levels and it is normal practice to use low power to avoid interference whenever possible. Use of high power does not guarantee improved coverage. Finally, all calls are free, unlike mobile phone calls.

Over the past few years the technical features of marine VHF sets have altered to accommodate Digital Selective Calling (DSC) which is a key component of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS). The new radio equipment is now available quite cheaply (Compass Watersports' cheapest set is only £115) but please remember that you need to obtain an Operator's Certificate before you can legally use VHF. A VHF-Short Range Certificate will suffice and can be gained on a one-day course run by yacht clubs, the RYA, etc.

You also require an annual licence to install marine VHF radio and this currently costs £20 p.a. from Ofcom.

Most VHF radios have up to 59 international channels and these have specified uses that must be obeyed. The march of progress has led to the demise of former coast radio stations through which ship-to-shore telephone calls could be relayed; so approximately 28 of the channels on a marine set are no longer used for that purpose. If you have an older set it may have Channels 70, 87 and 88 which can no longer be used at all. Ch 70 is reserved for digital selective calling and must not be used for voice communication. And Ch 87 and 88 have been re-configured as single frequency port operations channels. Older sets will have these latter two as two-frequency (duplex) channels and you will no longer hear a reply if you transmit on them. Their previous sister frequencies are now used for the new AIS

(automatic ship identification) system that large vessels are required to use to monitor their movements at sea. You can even buy a so-called AIS "Radar" to display nearby shipping movements on a screen - just like air traffic controllers.

Twelve channels are used for inter-ship calls and others are used for port operations, communicating with locks, etc. Channel 16 is the Distress, Safety and Calling channel and this is the one for sending Mayday calls if you or your vessel are in imminent and grave danger. In such circumstances, it is permitted for anyone to use a marine VHF radio even if they have no qualifications or operator's certificate.

Most sets have additional channels designated Ch 37 (or M) and Ch 80 and M2 for contacting marinas and yacht clubs.

POSTSCRIPT

Ofcom has announced a review of its ship radio licensing procedures in a consultation document recently received by NABO. The proposals include replacing the present annual licence fee with a free licence valid for the lifetime of the vessel, and the possibility of a self-service licensing service allowing you to print off your own licence from the website. The aim is to encourage more pleasure boaters to install VHF for the safety of life. At present only 800 British ships have compulsory radio installations and it is thought that up to 20 per cent of voluntary fit radios in pleasure and other small craft are unlicensed. It would even be possible to exempt craft from radio licensing altogether, as is the case in the USA, Australia and New Zealand. We shall be responding before May 2005 and would welcome members' views

Stephen Peters

WHAT TO DO WITH POLITICAL ANIMALS?

In the run up to an election, don't let those prospective MPs get away without challenging them:-

- **Do they think BW should be forced to concentrate on navigation, even if this means robbing it of much of its financial independence along with its property portfolio?**
- **Do they know the 'harmonisation' of fuel taxation in the EU could triple the cost of heating a boat?**

If you live in the South Staffordshire constituency, one of your candidates is our own Penny Barber - don't let her get away with it either!

N.W.A.F. – Not another body?



Just a quick update because its no longer NWAFF, it's now to be the **BWAF**, the **British** Waterways Advisory Forum.

Although this is intended to indicate that BW is the sponsor, you could still say the name change is just to tell you which nation the 'national' applied to. However it is intended to service BW's accountability needs and unless a body like the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) takes over, this is how it will start.

The previous concept of an elected Standing Committee has now been dropped, and the delegation to attend intermediate meetings with BW will be chosen by the elected chairman and vice-chairman of the Forum, according to the expected agenda and what issues are outstanding at the time .

This change was made to suit the IWA, whose chairman made it very clear that his Council could not be sold the Standing Committee idea. It does seem quite sensible, but makes it even more vital that the right sort of chairman and vice chairman come forward to be elected.

The latest draft of the constitution deals with how elections for these roles are made and how continuity is to be preserved. It goes with a Memorandum of Understanding that sets out BW's commitments.

Jeffrey Jowell will chair the first meeting of the Forum on May 11th. It will be held on 'neutral territory', a lecture hall in University College London.

SS

Diving Safety

British Waterways has appointed a new Head of Safety in the person of an ex-principal inspector from the Health & Safety Executive.

He will, no doubt, take on responsibility for ensuring that maintenance works carried out on the waterways and structures are carried out safely and in compliance with the law.

This will include diving operations which are controlled by the Diving at Work Regulations 1997 which require that commercial diving within a harbour is undertaken safely and in accordance with the Regulations.

These requirements are stringent but sensible when one considers the hostile and potentially dangerous environment in which divers carry out their work. These dangers were highlighted in late 2004 when a diver tragically lost his life as a result of an accident that occurred in Upper Lode Lock on the River Severn during a maintenance closure.

The requirements include obtaining a Diving Permit to Work, a risk assessment and appointment of a diving supervisor, rules and emergency procedures, method statement, keeping a log, names and certificates of competency , medical fitness and first aid qualifications for members of the diving team. At least four persons are required in the diving team, for obvious reasons.

SP

NOTICES

PASSWORDS

Any guidance papers tables still protected will open with password 'Branch' (Capital B)

The members-only website section has a password, which has been sent out to on-line members via the members' bulletin list.

The User ID for the members section is the word 'member'.

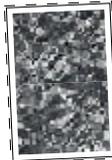
If you have not been given the new word please e-mail: **webmaster@nabo.org.uk** with your name and membership number to be given the password, and, if you want, to be put onto the bulletin list.

POST FOR NABO NEWS

For issue 3/05 the editor will be afloat so please send contributions by email to **news.editor@nabo.org.uk**

Failing that, at least one week before the copy date to

48 Old Lane, Bramhope,
Leeds LS16 9AZ



EVENTS

CRICK SHOW

STAND HELP NEEDED

May 28-30th

Anticipated sickness means we need at least one more volunteer. Please contact Aileen

SHOWERS FREE, PUMPOUTS £6.30

BW is standardising charging cards.

From April 1st. old cards won't work.

BW will exchange old cards for new ones till 1st June through offices, marinas and other outlets which deal in BW charge cards.

Text your waterway reports to:

07961 001814

07989 441674

07930 419 981

**NABO 4 BETTER
BOATING**

MEMBERS NEEDED, IDEAS NEEDED

Think of all those boaters out there who are missing out on the benefits of NABO, don't let them continue in ignorance.

NABO News now has a cover price, don't bin it, leave where another boater might find it and see it's worth something!

Don't sell your boat without a NABO information pack aboard.

Tell your mates Robin Evans is coming to the Q&A at our next AGM, but they can't challenge him unless they join!

Other ideas welcome...



RIVERS



A RAW DEAL FOR BW RIVER CRUISERS?

From time to time we receive complaints from owners of river boats who consider that they do not receive value-for-money from their BW Pleasure Boat Certificates. The British Waterways Act 1971 stipulates that river-only consents must not exceed 60 per cent of the cost of a full licence. This goes some way to recognising the fact that there are fewer BW controlled river navigations compared with the total length of canals available to full licence holders.

This arrangement would be acceptable if one were able to cruise direct from one river to another; but in most cases you cannot do so. Consider the case of a river cruiser owner based on the River Severn. He or she can only use the BW certificate (BW insists on erroneously terming them "licences" - they are not!) on that one river. It is not even possible to cruise out to sea because BW's predecessors thought fit to block the Severn at Gloucester with locks and weirs (now impassable in safety). The only safe and practical route to the sea is via the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal for which a separate licence must be purchased. It is only recently, thanks to NABO's persistence, that river craft have been permitted to enter the docks at Gloucester as a safe haven without further payment. They have always been allowed into Diglis Basin and Stourport Basin without a licence.

Take another example: a cruiser on the River Trent. BW has decided to take away resident lock keepers and impose self-operation of large locks. This has deterred many boat owners who will not accept the dangers inherent in climbing ashore to operate the locks in the absence of a full crew of fit and healthy passengers. In some respects boat owners on the Trent are luckier than those on the Severn where you are not allowed to operate the river locks out of hours at all.

We have examined the cruising opportunities available to river cruisers and this has highlighted the following shortcomings:

River Tees - totally detached from the inland waterway system and requiring a sea voyage to benefit from the BW river certificate.

River Avon - connects to Bristol Docks at one end (requiring additional fees) and impassable to most cruisers at Bath.

River Trent - free access to the tidal Trent below Newark but many cruisers cannot pass Nottingham due to size restrictions above Meadow Lane,

River Soar - height restrictions preclude average river cruisers assuming they can navigate the Upper Trent section.

River Weaver - a detached commercial navigation with Manchester Ship Canal at its seaward end. Anderton boat lift is of no benefit to cruisers.

Yorkshire waterways - river users are permitted to pass from the Trent to the Ouse via the canal network as a concession on safety grounds.

Fosdyke & Witham Navigation - a through navigation linking the tidal Trent to the Wash.

Rivers Ouse and Ure - accessible via the tidal Trent and Ouse and with connection to Ripon Canal (requires a licence).

River Lee - a London river linking the tidal Thames to the River Stort. The latter having headroom and draft restrictions. The associated Bow Back rivers and Limehouse Cut are also classed as rivers and river users are permitted to make the passage via the Regents Canal to reach Brentford in safety thus avoiding the tidal Thames.

Generally, river users in the North East appear to get the best deal from their river certificates and can make extensive cruises on a number of accessible BW navigations. Other customers can generally only use the one river on which they are based. Do you think this is fair and equitable? Should BW offer some further concessions based on isolation and size restrictions? Let us know what you think.

It is worth pointing out that the more intrepid river user with seagoing ability and plenty of time can benefit considerably from a full canal licence. Not only can you cruise all BW waterways in England and Wales. The full licence permits passage though the Scottish waterways at no extra cost. This includes the Crinan and Caledonian Canals and the Forth and Clyde canal linking the west and east coasts. Go the whole hog and purchase a Gold Licence and you can cruise all EA rivers as well!

Stephen Peters

EA, A LAW UNTO ITSELF Episode 3

Sorry! the saga continues and I am obliged to report, even though one member has resigned through lack of 'interest in the Thames'. At least this is short enough to hide in the Rivers section.

Since the last episode, yet another version of the Memorandum of Understanding arrived, with **no** explanation. So, out of curiosity, I used my computer to compare it with the previous version, the one Council agreed NABO should sign. It highlighted no less than **15**, yes - **fifteen**, changes! You don't have to be a political animal to agree that this was disgraceful.

Most of the changes were minor but there were two alterations in clauses about the consultation mechanism that effectively backtracked on the promises made in the previous version.

We had worked long and hard to ensure that national user groups would be more involved, and, through this Memorandum of Understanding, EA promised to invite us to join a Forum to be consulted about the implementation of the T&W Order. This was to be chaired by a senior EA manager and attended by a board member. It now appears that EA cannot give any extra duties to its board members, so one asks why this promise was made in the first place. There is also a new clause allowing the Forum to be disbanded '*once the implementation of the Order has been substantially achieved*'. ➡

EA's Craig Woolhouse was taken aback when I queried who would decide at what point '*the implementation of the Order has been substantially achieved*', and that I would dare suggest that, as written, it allowed the Forum to be disbanded at EA's whim. It didn't seem to occur to him that anyone could have so little faith in EA!

However he would not countenance another change in the Memorandum to satisfy us. He hoped we would just accept the board member's absence and have faith that the Forum would be allowed to be master of its own destiny. I suspect, now that Mr Woolhouse has been moved on and this issue is a bit of a hang-over for him, he isn't being given the time and/or resources to deal with it much further.

This setback leaves us in a bit of a dilemma. Should we carry on, or back out in a huff, and what good would that do us? It seems the government itself has further delayed the date by which the fate of the Order must be decided, to March 31st. If by then there are still sufficient objections unresolved then a public enquiry will be required that EA cannot afford and the whole Order is likely to be chucked out. Officially NABO still has objections registered, but we have stated we will withdraw them provided the two clauses that everyone is asking for are put in. The affair is in the hands of the Secretary of State, but it would be a shame if all the meetings and talks we have had came to nowt.

I have written to Baroness Young to underline our grievances, and also to the IWA to challenge its press release claiming to have, single-handedly, negotiated improvements in the Transport and Works Order. I will not deny it has done its bit, but there were rather more people round the table making contributions. I know, I was one of them.

Stuart Sampson

**NOW IS THE TIME TO RAISE RED DIESEL WITH YOUR MP,
or whoever might get his/her seat!**

If you are online:-

- 1/ Think up what you want to say
- 2/ Go to - **FaxYourMP.com**
- 3/ Type in your full UK postcode, then click "Go"
- 4/ Type in the letter you want to be faxed to your MP
- 5/ Click the link in the email the site will send you
- 6/ That's it! You have faxed your MP

Or write to your MP at

The House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1 0AA

THE RETURN OF MOB-H by Drifter

I can't remember where I heard it, but I had the mistaken idea that bracken would make a good mattress in a tent. In fact it's poisonous. I know now. However, due to my misinformation we became known as MOB-H [the Mystical Order of Bracken Hunters].

It began in the mid seventies with a glimpse of the old steam dredger, Perseverance, below a hump-backed bridge near Odiham. My canal curiosity levels were raised. I had to take a closer look. I parked my truck, and took a stroll along the overgrown towpath. There I nearly tripped over a lone bearded man doing something mysterious with a culvert in the long grass. He was Frank Jones, stalwart Basingstoke Canal restorer. I soon learned about the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society.

Persuasive was he. Enthusiastic was I. A few weeks later we found ourselves recruited to work on Lock 25, Curzon Bridge. We were an undisciplined, bracken-rashed bunch of lorry drivers with more interest in booze than bricklaying. However, Duncan had been a bricky in a previous existence.

"Why are we doing this?" he asked Frank's brother Peter, whilst attempting to lay another course under water in the rain.

"To restore the lock," was the reply.

"I know, but why are we restoring the lock?"

"To help get the whole canal reopened."

"But why are we trying to restore the whole canal?"

Peter knew he was being taken for a ride. "So that one day I can float up and down it in my boat with a glass of wine in my hand!" he snapped.

"That's it," said Duncan, throwing down his trowel. "I quit!"



It took several cans of beer to persuade him back to work. However, on thinking about it, Peter was right. From that time forward it became my ambition too, to one day explore the restored Basingstoke Canal in my own boat, though with a pint of cider, not a glass of wine, in my hand.

So, more than twenty-five years later, sitting on our mooring at Cassio on the Grand Union, we decided to give it a go, Mrs Drifter and I, but also to explore the River Wey whilst in the area. It proved to be an interesting journey from a licensing point of view alone.

Our BW licence covered us as far as Thames Lock, Brentford. At present no licence is required for the tidal Thames up as far as Teddington. But an Environment Agency licence is needed to get from Teddington to Shepperton, where the Wey joins the Thames.

A National Trust licence is then needed to do the Wey, and a Basingstoke licence is necessary to enter this waterway at Woodham. So, all in all, at least four separate licences are needed to complete the journey. The BW/EA Gold licence wouldn't have helped either, as it doesn't cover the Wey or the Basingstoke.

It was quite an emotional experience to be cruising along a canal that had been dry the last time I saw it. We moored below Woodham Lock One, awaiting a ranger to

unlock the gates. He was on time, even though he was hung-over after being up all night watching England beat Germany 5-1!

Just being there brought back memories of an Easter weekend many years earlier. I was driving a low-loader for a plant hire firm in Herts at the time. They were pretty easy going, and when I jokingly asked if I could borrow their brand new 360-degree Liebherr excavator and the low loader for the weekend, they agreed!

I was so surprised I borrowed a new MF 50 complete with back-acter too. We were decidedly over-weight as we passed through the new 17.5-ton weight cordon south of Windsor Park!

Malcolm, their best machine driver, also came along for the ride, dressed in a cowboy outfit, as he always was. In fact we were mob handed. Apart from the usual bunch of lorry drivers, wives and current girlfriends, we also brought a few off-duty Morris dancers with us.

In one weekend we built a dam across the cut below the lock to keep the Wey out. We drained the lock, and cleared it out completely, using the big excavator. We also attacked the brickwork with a vengeance.

At one time the dam began to collapse under the weight of the machine that was building it. The tracks were underwater, and Malcolm had quality Basingstoke Canal swilling around his cowboy boots in the cab. But he tracked the machine out like the expert he was, and repaired the damaged dam too.

We were supplied with a crate of beer to keep us going. It was only when we asked for a second one half way through the first

day that we found it was supposed to last us all weekend! Of course, this was before the days of health and safety at work.

Most of MOB-H's work had been on Lock 25, Curzon Bridge, under the watchful eye of Frank, or Peter Jones. It was early days, and we didn't really have a clue what we were doing, but we did it with a passion!

Duncan's brickwork can still be seen. However it was amusing to find, on our way up the Deepcut Flight, that Locks 25 and 26 were the hardest to work through.

Could this be because the sluices are too small on these locks? Or is

Duncan's brick-work leaking? After all, we were all on a very steep learning curve in those days.

We used to camp in the garden of the New

Inn, now known as The Waterwitch, Colt Hill. This is where the MOB-H tag came from.

I awoke early one morning to hear our lorry-driver friend Jon's raucous laughter outside. I poked my head through the tent flap. He was relieving himself against a tree.

"Hey, Drift! You've got to come and see this!" he called.

I'd seen it before, but I went to look anyway. As he peed, a duck was standing below with its beak open, making happy glugging noises! Jon was right. It was funny.

I've never eaten duck since.

Back to 2001 AD. Eventually we reached King John's Castle in our boat. It was a beautiful, sunny September day. We walked to the Fox and Goose in Greywell, past the remains of lock 30 and the tunnel portal. It was such a peaceful afternoon.



In the bar they had an American News programme on the television. It was September 11th. The contrast between the awful events in Manhattan being repeated over and over again on the screen and the stunning beauty of the canal outside was too much to bear.

On the following morning, moored by the castle, I awoke, hoping it was all a nightmare. Of course it wasn't. I sat on the back of our boat trying to make sense of it all in the sunshine. People were walking past with their dogs, wishing me a cheery 'Good morning!'. Didn't they know what had happened?, I wondered.

Then it hit me. They were right. Life must go on.

On our way back, at the Canal Centre Mytchett, we learned that the couple who operated the trip-boats were thinking of giving it up at the end of the season. We applied for the job, and got it.

So, here I am back again, a MOB-H qualified boatmaster, no less! Getting paid (just!) to travel the same canal I helped to rebuild, and giving an enthusiastic commentary to our many trippers as I do so.

I feel privileged to have done this job for the past three years. I'm certainly proud of what we all achieved in those earlier years of restoration. I have a feeling, though, that the next task is to keep what we've got.

Back pumping, access, maintenance, and fighting vandalism are the vital new causes in the face of diminishing funding. The Basingstoke **is** one of the most beautiful canals in the country. But we can't become complacent. It could so easily fall back into another phase of neglect.

The Mytchett Road Gang was chucking stones into the cut. I went over to them, and took their photograph.

"What's that for?" they wanted to know.

"Just in case something gets damaged," I told them.

"Like what?"

"We've had kids chuck stones at boats, and untie boats from their moorings here."

"It wasn't us!"

"Then why are you here at the canal centre at this time in the evening?"

"Cos we like boats."

"Have you been on one?"

"No!"

"Would you like a trip?"

"Cor, yeah!"

We took them for an evening ride on Merlin along the canal that passes through their manor. They loved it. They're not bad kids. Could these be the SHCS members, or even the MOB-H, of the future?

I do hope so. We're getting old!

Two years later their younger brothers are breaking our windows and vandalising our locks, just for the hell of it. They were given free rides on our boats too, but it didn't help.

Apart from starting a Canal Watch Scheme for protection, I really don't know how to reach them. I just hope there is a solution to the violent yob culture which is a fast-growing cancer in our land. I do hope all our efforts to restore the Basingstoke Canal were not in vain.



FLY ON THE WALL



at Council

Hi from a wall at a chilly West Midlands venue. At least the chilly participants knew each other aided by name badges! So now you'll know the helpers manning the stands at rallies too.

After the excitement of badge distribution, the meeting settled down to hear reports on other meetings attended on your behalf to state the boaters' point of view.

Your Chairman had seen red when the Environment Agency had sent him a revised Memorandum of Understanding, which had been altered without consultation and with even agreed sections omitted or changed. When calm again he wrote to Baroness Young (C.E. EA) to complain, taking the opportunity to mention a few other matters.

There was of course discussion on moorings. This time about those nice ties around the Shroppie getting 48 hour limits. Have you been affected by this policy? Do you 'weekend' your boat and therefore need to leave it longer?

And have you heard that VAT should not apparently be charged on some new boats if lived on. It would be interesting to know which criteria would apply! Beds? Cookers? What other indications of residence would differentiate it from the usual narrowboat?

Your Humber area representative, Peter Foster raised the concern of boaters on the Trent with a Rivers Only licence. Any time other than summer their boating is severely curtailed by the removal of lock keepers as an economy measure. This has made lock use on the river a Health and Safety issue. Locks are deep and have long ladders and are potentially dangerous if wet or icy and very difficult for single-handed boaters.

Boat owners are now reluctant to use the river during the unmanned season thinking it too dangerous, and this lack of use means their river licences are definitely no longer value for money!

Council agreed that now a year had passed since the economies were introduced, the decision not to man locks should be reconsidered.

Are you trapped on a waterway by such economies? Or anything other than maintenance stoppages?

BW had been asked how many new boats were on the system and how many have to have a licence without stated mooring due to the lack of moorings. BW has said that the new computer system cannot differentiate between older and newly licensed boats.

Appropriately BW have appointed a Head of Boating Development, Sally Ash, who will, among other things, be responsible for improving information on boaters. Another new post will be that of Head of Customer Service, Jonathan Bryant.

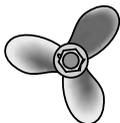
Council are wondering if you would be interested in 'life membership' of NABO maybe a one off bargain payment. It could save you and the membership administrator hassle! This is obviously a

subject for discussion at the AGM so you've plenty of time to think about it!

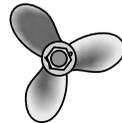
The meeting shifted to a warmer room where I could not believe my many eyes to see everyone stuffing like mad with great jollity! Information packs for interested enquirers at rallies in one corner and carrier bags as a basis for

the 'goody' bag for the Middlewich Boat and Folk gathering in another. After half hour or so of this activity the meeting broke up and I flew off until a hopefully warmer next time.

Byeeeeeee



the MAD propessor



Locks - what? Again?

Can't the editor think of giving me something else? I'm supposed to be designing crazy gadgets and all I get is questions.

All right, I guess I'd better scotch this one, but it is a bit like spoiling the fun, there has to be something inconsequential to discuss over a pint or two.

He's asking me whether a lock uses less water when there is a boat in it.

NO. That's it. Boat or no, the water needed to fill a lock is the rise times the area.

Hang on! - maybe there IS a gadget in here somewhere? I've always dreamed of making a perpetual motion machine, one where more energy comes out than goes in. If a lock uses the same amount of water to lift a boat, and the cargo of the boat is water, then somehow we are getting something for nothing - Whoopee!!!

Wait - no. You've got to look at the whole process, not just what flows through the paddles.

Start with the lock 'empty', i.e. at the lower level. Boat goes in. What happens? It squeezes its weight of water out of the tail of the lock.

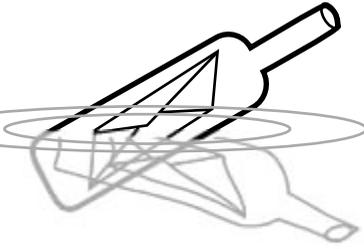
Fill the lock. In goes the area-times-the-rise as we said. Gates open, boat comes out and its displacement is sucked back into the chamber from the upper level. Empty the lock to complete the cycle and the rise-times-the-area flows out into the lower pound. How much water in total has descended from the upper level to the lower level?

Answer, the area-times-the-rise of the lock PLUS the displacement of the boat.

Shucks, boat goes up, it's weight in water comes down. Even if we could retrieve the energy from the water going through the paddles - no perpetual motion. Sob, sob, we could have made a little earner for BW and perhaps got our boating for free!

As a minor compensation, when the boat comes down it uses less water. Work it out for yourself, remembering that when a boat moves it's weight in water goes the other way.

LETTERS



Enjoying the Waterways

What a lot of sense Tony & Brenda Ilett wrote in issue 1/05. I fully agree in their comments.

As a person who has an interest in canals and narrowboats for over 35 years, I am, at last, a proud new narrowboat owner, (Still completing the inside). The only way I could achieve this was to build everything myself - Well, not quite everything! I'm not a steel worker and can't weld, so I asked a specialist firm to undertake my EXACT steel requirements.

I too, have limited funds (And I'm over 65 too!) and don't have a "Home Mooring" but I enjoy every day on the canals, moving around to change the scenery whilst working on my boat.

During my long term interest; especially now that I have my own boat, I am delighted with the camaraderie of fellow boaters and I'm just hoping that I don't conflict with bureaucracy, although I do admit to "Bending the rules a bit," regarding continually cruising by staying in about a 20 mile area throughout the winter.

My point is that I pay my Council Tax, I need an address, (Because of a part time business, which pays for my boating incidentally). I pay my Waterways licence, don't abuse any mooring

restrictions and usually prefer quiet stretches away from crowded centres. I agree that it is not "Enjoyment on the Cheap" but a dedicated effort to enjoy the canals even more than in the past and I give up many other things to achieve this aim.

Why is it then, that a certain element of society are "Gunning" for the livaboards? and/or people like me. I really don't understand. I shall be living on board within a couple of months - yippee!

What I do understand though, is that there are a few boaters, who I put in the same pot as 'Travellers' so I refer to them as 'Water Travellers', who take no notice of anything and have no respect for other people. It seems that it this very small minority, who create most of the friction, like the 'Travellers', they overstay their welcome on restricted moorings, don't have a licence, often leave rubbish around for other people to clear up and generally 'snub' the waterways officials.

I have just joined NABO and look forward to meeting fellow members in due course.

Allan Cazaly nb. Pengalanty
(K & A at the present time)

PS: I always have time to pass the time of day with other enthusiasts. Please make yourself known when passing!

Self Defence?

In Tony Haynes article in February's NABO he says that boaters should not carry defensive weapons such as baseball bats, catapults etc as they would be deemed offensive weapons by police. However the recent guidelines issued by the Lord Chancellor or Attorney General on behalf of the Government made it clear that prosecutions were extremely unlikely if reasonable force was used to defend yourself or your home. Since then I would have no hesitation in using a baseball bat (for instance) to defend either myself or my boat (my home while on it) if either were under attack. A policeman once told me that they disable an attacker by striking them on the calf. It numbs the leg and makes the person fall down. Reasonable force to avert a threat.

Dave Kennedy

Tony Haynes responds:

There is some confusion as to what is acceptable as 'reasonable force'. I put Dave Kennedy's point to our local Surrey Heath Crime Reduction Officer, Robin Wood. He replies:

"Prosecutions are unlikely if reasonable force is used in self defence. The premeditated carrying of a baseball bat IS NOT acceptable and your article appears correct.

However, if he were to use a 'weapon' on the spur of the moment, i.e. the nearest thing to hand such as a wrench, other tools, household implement, (It needs to be something that would be ordinarily carried or used by that person. There's

not much use for a baseball bat on a boat!!) then, depending on the amount of force used, that would be acceptable."

So, unpremeditated use of a windlass, boat hook, mooring pin or steering arm would be acceptable if undue force is not used. In other words, it should be a last resort, used only once, and with only sufficient force to prevent the 'attack'.

I hope, in the heat of the moment, we can all calmly remember that!

Better Drivers?

It is often stated that novices think steering a boat will be "just like driving a car" until someone reminds them that, unlike a car, a boat has no brakes!

So, the skill in driving a boat (should this be helming, piloting, navigating?) is to always think ahead and to know how the vessel will react when you want to manoeuvre.

I believe boat-handling gives a person an excellent grounding (pun not intended!) for controlling a vehicle on the highway. It teaches you to anticipate the actions of others, to travel at a speed conducive to stopping without colliding, and to be able to judge a tight situation. If you can moor a boat you should be able to park a car without difficulty.

Do fellow members agree with my hypothesis?

Stephen Peters (Advanced Motorist)

Lock Gates

Because the arguments for open gates seem sound, many boaters are now doing so but as BW's policy is to close them, confusion reigns and the situation is now

worse than when we all followed BW guidelines.

Answer - get BW to issue a new policy and, whether for open or closed, all boaters and their organisations follow this policy.

By email from website survey

Get it off your chest !

Thank you for all your efforts in NABO.

(Appreciated. Ed.)

Have you heard the proposal by an opposition government party who want to sell off BW owned property? Asset stripping I call it. That will greatly reduce BW income.

What can be done to reduce the number of 'linear' long term moorings? Many boats I have seen are an eyesore and look like floating sheds. Some are not floating, like the one in the picture seen between Br. 178 and 179 on the Grand Union near Harefield. They show a lack of respect to the environment.



Have BW lost their respect for the canals by allowing the 'sheds' to occupy water space?

Thankfully there are still many more miles of clear canal for us to enjoy. And by the way, we leave locks closed.

Please do not confuse 'continuous cruisers' with 'liveboards'. These labels describe two different types of boat use. There are those of us who do move about in boats and enjoy travelling up and down the canal system continuously. And there are those who don't.

In response to your 'fly on the wall' I wonder how many boats per mile there are on each canal. Why has the K & A got too many? Is there an upper limit set by BW? Does this figure refer to stationary boats, moving boats or all boats including visitors? It seems a shame after so much public money has been spent on that canal to then restrict it's access.

Charles Moore
NB Moore 2 Life

Canal footage?

Artsmagic Limited is endeavouring to complete in areas of transportation generally and specifically to canals and craft using those facilities for leisure or indeed transportation of materials.

If you care to look at our web site www.artsmagic.co.uk you will see that we have a considerable catalogue of special interest film programming, covering subjects such as Railways, Buses, Tubes, Trams, HGV's and even one or two on canals -region Wales (where our H.O. is based) and made with our own camera crews. We are looking to close the circle by adding more titles on this theme within our public offering and

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

rather than reinventing the wheel that other companies have already covered, we are looking for historical film footage as well as current material created by the canal user themselves. Material which they might wish to make available to others, whether they are actively involved in this pursuit or just a bystander

Therefore if any member(s) of your association would like to reach me for further discussion, then please see details below.

Michael Mercer
Artsmagic Limited
Riverbank House
1 Putney Bridge Approach
London SW6 3JD

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

NABO Publications

The first Guidance Paper was *Safe Navigation on Rivers*, which was sent to members as hard copy. Eleven more are available as downloads on the members section of the NABO website www.nabo.org.uk. Members without access to the internet can contact our admin lady or an officer of NABO for a printout.

- *right_of_nav.pdf*, which waterways have a statutory right of navigation.
- *trailing.pdf*, an introduction to trailboating
- *boat_purchase.pdf*. advice on buying a boat - Note - this one is not restricted to members!
- *vhf.pdf*, a short treatise on the use of Marine Band VHF
- *shipreg.pdf*, on ship registration.
- *crime.pdf*, on dealing with crime and vandalism.
- *acts.pdf*, a very sketchy guide to help you find the Acts of Parliament that deal with waterway matters. (revised May 04)
- *bbb.pdf* - Boats Behaving Badly, some food for thought on boat behaviour
- *GandS_Notes.pdf*, Gloucester & Sharpness Canal cruising notes.
- *Severn_notes.pdf*, Severn Estuary pilotage notes.
- *Dee_Notes.html*, cruising Notes for the River Dee.

The Editor may also be able to provide copies of NABO News pullouts, and *Skippers Guide* leaflets for the *Aire and Calder* and the *Trent Navigation*.

NOTE - these papers have been prepared in good faith and are as accurate as we can make them. NABO or their authors cannot not accept any liability for any loss or damage resulting from the information they contain. We would value any feedback, particularly if errors come to light.

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.