

**INLAND NAVIGATION ISSUES, NEWS, AND VIEWS**

**NABO**



**NEWS**

- **BW Licensing - Putting the clock back?**
- **Bird Flu - Don't Panic!**
- **Diesel Campaign - first salvo launched**



**Issue 2 April 2006**

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## 2006 CALENDAR

Council meeting	Copy date
Apr 22nd	Apr 29th
June 3rd	June 10th
July 15th	July 22nd
Sept 16th	<i>Oct 7th</i>
<b>Nov 18th</b>	<b>AGM</b>
Nov 25th	Dec 7th

# CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



May I take this opportunity to welcome new members and hope that, whatever made you join, you will like what you see. We try to combine the negotiating power of a national user group with the personal touch, and we are all boaters ourselves.

This is why people have to believe that what NABO says is what boat owners actually feel.

## **BW listening at last? – Will it last?**

I hope I am not speaking too soon but I am beginning to feel BW is taking notice of our pleas to talk before any consultation is put on paper.

NABO exists to help boat owners, and if that means helping navigation authorities to help boat owners, then that is exactly what we should be allowed to do. BW's recent failure to accept that offer gracefully, especially when it came to its licence review, caused some unrestrained and perhaps regrettable things being said – out of sheer frustration.

Since then we have had some very frank face-to-face discussions at director level and, as a result, BW staff are ensuring we hear the words '*early involvement*' at every opportunity. There is even talk of involving users in setting next year's mooring fees!

## **Poacher to gamekeeper?**

There are two 'downsides' to this trend though, if we are honest. One is whether user representatives will fail under 'consultation overload'. The other is whether, having been involved in BW policy-making, and EA's too, we will have to share the blame if the results go pear-shaped. It is actually quite easy to hurl abuse from beyond the touchline, but to be called on to the

pitch to take part is another matter.

Whatever happens it will increase our workload. We will have even greater need to be sure of your views and more support generally.

## **Congestion**

One of the subjects BW wants to consult on is 'congestion', and I believe this is at the root of a lot of the recent troubles. Lock queues are an obvious symptom, but scarcity of overnight moorings is perhaps more important. The EA is tackling this problem head-on after direct complaints from cruiser owners about narrowboats, but rafting out is far from a 'cure-all' on the canals. Here the conflict is between three different factions, the ecologists, the holiday hirers and the private boaters.

I can understand the hirers' point of view. They have spent a lot of money on a holiday and so put in long days to get the best value, only to find private boats on all the visitor moorings, especially near the eating places they need. They want to be boating rather than cooking or walking miles to find a meal. Few of them have anybody to represent those concerns. Their only recourse is to complain to the hire company, thence through APCO and thence to BW who run off to Oxera rather than talk to us.

Somewhere in this chain the blame has been concentrated on 'continuous cruisers', but in fact anyone with enough time on their hands to moor up early or not move on at all during the day is equally 'to blame'. I wouldn't mind if BW did reserve a few mooring

spaces for hirers, as has been mooted, but only if equivalent space was created, perhaps away from habitation, for the more self-sufficient private boaters. However here we come head to head with the ecologists.

It is a difficult balancing act, BW, let's get talking about it.

### **Red Diesel**

You will remember, if you read it in the last issue, that the Government is making a case to the European Commission to give pleasure boaters another five years' use of red diesel. Seeing the full range of the arguments that they are using is quite enlightening, especially regarding the effects that losing the derogation would have on the trade.

I am in communication with those at the sharp end in Customs and Revenue and making more offers of support. If nothing else, our association has a convincing sounding name when added to the list of plaintiffs. More later.

### **Playground for the Rich?**

One of the arguments being made to the EC to keep red diesel is that boaters, and the businesses that service their needs, are not brimming over with disposable income. It would be nice if this message pervaded other areas of government, particularly DEFRA, and public opinion generally.

When a big Broom cruiser ties up at Hampton Court, there are still people who would still expect to see a tycoon step ashore in a gold buttoned Saville Row blazer, so it comes as quite a surprise to them when the occupants are actually a normal family in jeans with a couple of school age children. The tycoons have long since spurned the Royal River in favour of Cannes or the Bahamas. However the misconception lives on and is fuelling

DEFRA's insistence that boaters pay for 40% of the EA's recreation budget.

The perception that 'boaters can afford it' is understandable on the canals too, especially when a smartly painted narrowboat cruises by bristling with satellite dishes and all the latest gizmos. It wouldn't occur to a member of the public that someone had given up a house, no posher than their own, to pay for that boat, nor that what lay within that gleaming exterior may well be the result of years of graft by the owner's own hands.

Unfortunately, in this case, our name doesn't do us any favours. To a complete layman, the National Association of Boat Owners doesn't sound convincing in the poverty pleading stakes and so we have an uphill struggle on our hands. Boating will inevitably become more expensive in real terms now the tide of Government and Lottery support for the waterways is ebbing.

Will the Basingstoke be the first canal to close and mark the end of the second canal boom? Will the Anglian rivers follow as the EA is starved of funds and forced to concentrate its efforts on the water feature that does provide the back-drop for the estates of the rich and famous?

Worrying times lie ahead, but we must not lie down and be trampled. Let's try to swell our numbers and become an even bigger force to be reckoned with.

### **Finally**

We would like to thank Bill O'Brien for being our President. Now he has left Parliament and is not so healthy he feels he cannot do the position justice. We wish him a speedy recovery and all the best in his retirement.

*Stuart*

# BW LICENSING BACK TO SQUARE ZERO?

At the Boating Issues Meeting on the 11th of March, User Group representatives were asked how they would feel if the clock was put back to before all this licence upheaval began, i.e. before Stephen Edell, the previous ombudsman, ruled in favour of an Ownerships customer that her share-owned boat should not be licensed at business rate.

The owner in question would then be encouraged to re-submit the complaint, which would be fast tracked through the Internal Complaints Procedure to the new Waterways Ombudsman. She has already stated that if this happened she would review the issue in the light of the evidence and not take account of the previous ruling. This is the only way the current system would allow the matter to be brought within her remit and give BW the chance of a second opinion to resolve the stalemate.

Most boating group representatives accepted this course of action, as the state of affairs before the complaint was definitely a lesser evil than how things are now. Certainly it would satisfy NABO's requirements that the bands would return to 'business' and 'pleasure' and Continuous Cruisers and informal co-ownerships would be on the private rate. If Hilary Bainbridge can make a ruling acceptable to both sides then peace can return to waterway licensing for the time being. We are sure she has already thought long and hard about it.

BW still has a bigger review on the horizon, along with the desire to harmonise with the EA and other authorities, so keep those survey results coming in.

## EDITORIAL

Apologise for the late arrival of the last issue, especially to those who had to rush their deliberations regarding this year's NABO Cruise.

The problem lay in the extras and the packing. I had the artwork away to the printers a day or so earlier than usual and so was even more annoyed that the extra effort had been in vain. We will be taking steps to improve communication down the chain, and maybe remuneration, to try to stop it happening again.

In particular I wanted to see how the new cover looked on paper. We will try a stronger colour this time.

Please remember we want letters and articles from you. It is not intended to be all Council stuff, but no 'travelogs' please unless they have a novel slant that sets them aside from the sort of thing that cruising clubs publish where much of the value comes from knowing the author.

A little gentle satire wouldn't come amiss – if there is a 'Reg of Rickmansworth' type out there prepared to lighten up NABO News please make yourself known.

# THUMBS DOWN TO USAGE CHARGING

We are very grateful to those who have replied so far to our fee survey. We still welcome returns, especially from EA users concerned whether area, length or some other means of charging is best. We have enough entries from BW licence holders to see the trends, but weight of numbers will consolidate their credibility.

The results so far have really reinforced our stance against intensity-of-use charging and come up with some very interesting facts. The written comments ranged from the opinionated to the bizarre.

Was someone serious about charging by the amount of brassware and flowers on a boat? Does someone really think congestion would be solved if boats under 35 feet in length were charged half price because they can share narrow locks? How long would they be clogging up a landing stage waiting for another boat short enough to share with?

Yes, there was some humour and some muddled thinking, but on the whole a great deal of consistency. We can process the responses crudely as they come in and the percentage saying 'no' to usage intensity charging settled after the first twenty entries to 87% and rarely budged 2% either way. In other words, for every boater in favour of '*use more - pay more*', seven were against. Even amongst the holiday and short term users, the results were over 80% against.

Some cynics may argue that questionnaire was designed to get that response. We admit it is good to know that we are reading the opinions of boaters right, but it takes more skill than we have got to achieve that result by foul means!

Boaters want simplicity. They want to pay for one fixed licence to use the waterways and then forget about it. No thinking: "Can we afford to go out today?" or, "Will it cost too much to reach Ripon?"

On other matters, charging by length was best supported, although taking beam into account too was also quite popular. Congestion charging was not, and for every one of you wanting fees for specific structures brought back, two did not. Opinion was more divided on shared ownership by those who were not sharing, needless to say less sharers thought a surcharge was fair.

Generally speaking, the only charge folks wanted for visitor moorings was for overstay, and the questions about discounts and facilities gave the message, 'leave as they are'. Many spotted the deliberate error – electricity, showers and laundry were missing from the list. Nice to see someone was paying attention in class!

## More details

The survey had, at the time of writing in mid March, collected 295 responses of which 100 were from non-members, 123 from members via the website and 74 from NABO News forms. Comparing these groups showed small variations even though the web survey could be open to abuse from people sending multiple entries, so it proves boaters can be trusted! There has been less time to collect paper entries but they are valuable to validate the web survey as they are much harder to abuse, and they reflect the views of those who have no internet access, generally older boaters and those afloat at this time of year.

We will analyse according to category of user when we get more postal entries. The figures here are the number of people choosing each option as a *percentage of the total number of responses* (rounded down, so they may not total 100!):-

### About the respondents:-

<b>Licenses:</b>	%	<b>Cruising Pattern</b>	%	<b>Vessel Types</b>	%
BW Full	64	Continuous	6	Outboard	4
BW Shared	10	Over 7 months	9	River cruiser	5
BW Rivers only	3	2 - 7 months	32	Narrow beam	86
EA/BW Gold	11	Holidays	48	Barge	3
EA and other	10	Weekends or less	3	Other	1

### What they thought was fair for a Navigation Authority (NA) to charge:-

<b>Standing Charge</b>	%	<b>Size supplement</b>	%	<b>Business</b>	%
None	7	None	11	No extra for hireboats	7
Go anywhere	42	Length	50	Fixed Supplement	18
Flat rate within NA	24	Length x beam (area)	24	Extra percentage	75
BW full+ rivers rate	18	Square root of area	5	No extra for trade	18
BW+ rivers + broad	3	Floor area	3	Fixed Supplement	17
Zoned	6	Number of berths	1	Extra percentage	64
		Engine power	4		
		Other:	1		

<b>Shared Ownership</b>	%	<b>Intensity of use</b>	%
No extra for sharing	26	No charge	87
Fixed charge for sharing	2	By declared cruising pattern	2
Extra Percentage for sharing	28	By absence from 'home' mooring	1
Extra charge per owner	2	By checkpoint passage	2
Extra percentage per owner	17	By tracker	3
Charge just for managed schemes	5	By Option Plans	3
Percent just for managed schemes	18	By other means	2

<b>Congestion</b>	%	<b>Structures</b>	%
No charge	89	No charge	63

<b>Visitor Moorings</b>	%	<b>Discounts (percent off or rebate)</b>	%
No charge	23	Prompt payment	94
Overstay	67	Historic boats	71
After 24 hours	8	Electric boats	60
Any time	1	Charity boats	82

<b>Facilities</b>	%		%
Refuse	3	Isolated waterways	77
Elsan	11	Club rebate	53
Pump-out	86	Loyalty	27
Water	5	Senior citizens	45

# FOR YOUR SAFETY

## - WHILE WORKING ON YOUR BOAT

If you plan to work on your boat out of the water then BW has produced some free booklets that should help you do it more safely. You are expected to study them if you are planning to use a BW owned site but much of the advice they offer is useful anywhere.

Three are available now:-

- Lifting Craft on British Waterways Property
- Working on Craft in Dry Docks
- Working on Craft in Dry Storage

All three are obtainable in PDF format from the BW website at:

[www.britishwaterways.co.uk/downloads/craft\\_information/index.html](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/downloads/craft_information/index.html)

They are also available as hard copies from local BW offices or BW Marinas which manage dry docks, dry storage areas, or places where craft lifting is carried out. Each includes an application form which should be completed and forwarded so BW can understand the work which is planned and how any risks will be managed by the applicant. The Dry Docks and Dry Storage documents also include examples of the forms used by BW:

- To confirm acceptance or to request further information and
- A Handover Checklist to be used at dry docks and/or dry storage areas

BW is also preparing a document which will cover working on craft both in dry docks and dry storage and will also include safety guidance and BW requirements for working on craft "in the water". This is still at an early stage and will not be introduced for some months.

A BW Slipway Users Guide will be released in April, to provide safety guidance to owners wishing to use BW/BWML Slipways and new (hopefully simple) terms & conditions for use of BW slipways are also being prepared.



## - WHILE CRUISING NEW WATERS

AINA, the advisory body to all navigation authorities, has published its standards for waterway signs. You may remember we tried some of them on you last year. Ian White, AINA Chairman, expects they will help users and visitors to enjoy the waterways in greater safety 'without the need for formal training'. The designs, many of which are in use already, will be used where signs need replacing or there is a good case for a new one. There is no intention to replace all signs, and account will be taken of styles individual to the waterway.

For more, look on [www.aina.org.uk](http://www.aina.org.uk) or contact Wendy Jones on 0113 2432125

# NABO ONLINE GET CONNECTED

For new members (welcome!) and longer standing members who have recently embraced the internet, this is by way of a reminder of what NABO has to offer.

Getting online while afloat is becoming cheaper and less hassle every year, with new laptops, 'Wifi Hotspots', 'datacards' and mobile phones capable of infra-red and Bluetooth connections, not to mention external aerials, advice and other goodies offered by the likes of the Boaters Phone Company. Add to that a modicum of 'silver surfer' training for those old dogs who can learn new tricks and it makes the services we offer even more worthwhile.

## Keep up to date with NABO Email Bulletins

News, invitations to online surveys and other announcements are broadcast 'fresh off the keyboard' when there is something to report, usually once or twice a month. The messages are in plain text to save your connection time and bills.

To join 'those in the know', send your email address to the webmaster on [webmaster@nabo.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@nabo.org.uk), along with your membership number (on the address label of the envelope this magazine came in), or some other details to help him check you are a real member. Fear not, if you don't like the service, you can take yourself off the list using a form on the members-only pages of the website (see below). Just type your address into the form and click the button.

If you change email address please use this form to opt out the old one and let the webmaster know the new one.

## The NABO Website

[www.nabo.org.uk](http://www.nabo.org.uk) also keeps you informed of issues that affect you. It has pages specifically for members where guidance papers and other goodies can be found. While applying for the bulletin list, ask the webmaster to send you the username and password to enter the portal to these pages.

## Waterway Reports Board

This contains postings about the state of specific waterways and any incidents on them. It can be used by anyone but, as a member, you can elect to be sent e-mail notice of postings for regions you choose on the members-only website pages.

NABO is working with the navigation authorities to make this one of the most powerful fault reporting and logging systems ever.

### Not getting bulletins?

If you think you should be, look in your junk mail. Some mail systems may be black-listing anything from the [nabo.org.uk](http://www.nabo.org.uk) domain if they detect the same email leaving it addressed to several hundred destinations. There is not much we can do about this.

# DEEP CUTS ON THE BASY?



The poor old Basingstoke Canal is again threatened by reduced funding. This time it's an owner, Surrey County Council, who have announced their proposal to cut £50,000 off the annual budget this year, and next year too. With continuing cuts from half the riparian borough councils, this would seriously threaten the future of the navigation.

At a time when canals are being restored, one already restored might have to be closed to navigation through lack of funding. When I think of all those muddy weekends spent patching up Deepcut Locks back in the 70's and 80's I am furious!

Final decisions are being made as we go to press. A media campaign was fast-tracked by the Basingstoke Canal Watch Scheme and the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society. We hit the local press, and had a report included on ITV's Meridian News. Our NABO chairman wrote to the council.

All this resulted in Surrey CC's Executive for the Environment, Cllr David Munro, making a statement that the Council would back-track on the cuts provided that money can also be sourced from elsewhere to tackle the backlog of work their previous under-funding had caused! To facilitate that, the Basingstoke Canal Authority may have to become a trust.

## At last!

Your 'sarfern correspondent' has been advocating that idea for about three years. The Basy needs private money if it is to survive, and there are those out there who may be willing to help. Mind you, extra money from elsewhere must not give the riparian councils an excuse to continue shirking their responsibilities towards the canal's upkeep.

**When other canals are being restored, will one already restored have to be closed through lack of funding?**

This move would be 'as well as', not 'instead of'.

One good piece of news; the Basingstoke now has a new Canal Director. Ian Brown is an early retired high-ranking hospital manager. He came to us originally as a part-time maintenance man, then quickly rose through the ranks to become Head Ranger, and now Director.

He learns quickly and is entirely dedicated to the canal's future. He has no career ambitions within the County Council to distract him either. He can be outspoken and enthusiastically practical. Above all he is utterly honest and sincere. We all love him.

Perhaps a future contender for the award mentioned in Counterpoints?

*Canal Drifter*

## **Stephen Peters examines BRITISH WATERWAYS SCRUTINY**

The Board of BW comprises a Chairman and Vice-Chairman and seven other non-executive members\* all of whom are appointed by the Secretary of State in Defra and Scottish Ministers who are responsible for the appointment of two board members. The Government determines their remuneration.

Executive Directors numbering 11\* report to the Board and are responsible for the operations and management of the organisation. A Remuneration Committee of the Board determines the rewards of the executives.

Board members are appointed in accordance with guidance issued by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments i.e. on merit and against objective criteria. In the UK as a whole there are between 10,000 and 14,000 such Ministerial appointments and approximately 33,000 public appointments in total.

The role of the non-exec in the public sector is to bring experience and independence of mind to the deliberations of the board and to always act in the public interest. The board sets the overall strategic objectives, considers major issues and holds the executive directors to account. That, at least, is what happens in theory. A major role for the board is to establish governance criteria and accountability and ensure transparency. But who scrutinises the Board?

In the public sector and within nationalised industries there are a number of different agencies scrutinising the activities of the boards and service providers. These range from consumer councils and audit bodies through to Ombudsmen and Parliamentary Committees. Many of these will investigate complaints and recommend corrective action, whilst others may simply instigate an inquiry to look at a snapshot of the organisation. Many industries and monopoly providers are also subject to the control of a Regulator.

BW has none of these controls to protect the public and its consumers. The Waterways Ombudsman service can only handle individual complaints and is funded by BW itself. There is no waterways regulator to prevent excessive price rises in licence fees or moorings. And, although the British Waterways Advisory Forum (BWAFF) has been set up following the BW openness and transparency consultation, it is merely an advisory forum and not a watchdog.

All actions of BW staff, consultation procedures, etc are carried out in the name of the Board but do the board members really understand what is being done in their name? They may technically be non-executive appointments but they carry the responsibility of the executives who report to the Board but are not actually members of it. Large public companies usually have a mixture of executive and non-executive directors on their boards and quite often the non-execs are termed "independent directors" to reflect what they do rather than what they do not do. This would not be possible within the structure of BW because the actions of the corporate body are done in the name of the full "Board". There is therefore no high level scrutiny of the (part-time) board members and the Board as a whole.

So the question remains - who should scrutinise British Waterways?

*[\*Information obtained from the 2004/2005 Annual Report of BW]*

# THE RED DIESEL CAMPAIGN

NABO has been sent the latest draft of the PARTIAL REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (RIA) being prepared by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to present to the European Commission (EC).

## **Credit where credit is due**

Although NABO has been active wherever able, we certainly must acknowledge and thank the British Marine Federation (BMF), the Inland Waterways Association (IWA), the Royal Yachting Association (RYA), the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers (FPS), John Healy MP from the Treasury and Michael Lyttle and his team at HMRC for collecting the evidence and preparing the document.

## **EC Policy - the enemy**

The current EC policy is that, unless Member States can show that renewal of the derogation is *'in the interest of reducing distortion of competition, promoting the better operation of a single market or protecting the environment'*, it should not be renewed.

## **The first salvo**

The purpose of the RIA is to *'gauge the regulatory impact of charging the full rate of excise duty on diesel used to power private pleasure boats. The UK currently allows rebated gas oil ("red diesel) to be used in pleasure boats, and this bears a reduced rate of duty of 6.44 pence per litre compared with 47.10 pence per litre for unrebated diesel (ultra-low sulphur diesel – ULSD – or sulphur-free diesel – SFD) used on the roads.'*

It goes on to say:-

*'Most stakeholders have expressed support for the retention of the derogation and hundreds of private boat owners have written to Ministers supporting retention of the derogation. . . .'*

*'A few individuals have, however, responded in favour of removing the derogation, arguing that allowing the use of red diesel is an unjustified subsidy for a hobby, which encourages the use of high horse power, deep displacement craft with high fuel consumption.'*

It then compares the two options, letting the derogation lapse or renewing it.

If it were to lapse, the Treasury could get £10m more revenue, assuming there is no truth in the RYA survey's prediction that 54% of diesel using boaters would give up. However: *'Under this option, the Government believes that the compliance costs from ending the derogation would be likely to be an unacceptable burden on three groups due to:*

- *costs to pleasure boat users;*
- *costs to the fuel suppliers; and*
- *costs in administration and enforcement for HMRC.*

Analysing the costs, it quotes figures from the BMF of boat numbers - some 349,00 having motors. Most of these are in salt water, but inland boats deserved a detailed section on the problems of dual fuel tanks to allow rebated fuel for domestic purposes. Cost of fitting, assuming it is possible, being estimated at £750 per boat. It then quotes, *'A sample survey by the British Waterways Board, to which 1769 boat owners replied in 2004, showed that the majority of boat owners with continuous cruisers earned less than £15,000 a year before tax, while the majority of boat owners with moorings lived below the average household income rate'*

The cost to fuel suppliers was analysed according to whether they:-

- opted to supply gas oil only, thereby losing all trade from pleasure boaters.
- supplied ULSD as well, costing about £20,000 to install an extra tank and pump, plus losing the income from the previous use of the extra space required.
- converted to ULSD, requiring between £1,000 and £2,500 to clean the red dye out of the system.

The issue of the dye was also considered for boat fuel systems and it was estimated it might cost £500 per boat to purge a system, and even then HMRC were concerned that the marker dye might never be removed enough to pass inspection so fraud detection would become a nightmare. This would be made even worse when boats could cross to the Channel Islands and buy more red diesel legitimately, or change use from commercial to pleasure according to whether it was hired out with or without crew.

Fraud and security was also a worry for fuel suppliers, with a potentially more desirable fuel in stock.

To allay the environmental arguments, much was made of the extra distance boats would have to travel and the extra weight of fuel they would have to carry if coastal suppliers were scarcer, taking the west coast of Scotland as an example.

Some points we have made were relegated to an annex as being less convincing.

The increased use of petrol was not considered to become a significant safety problem within the five years' grace sought by this appeal. The cost of replacing the engine was unlikely to offset the extra duty involved if the derogation was lost, and the RIA said the issue could be overcome by 'regulation' but didn't say how.

The technical advantages of gas oil were played down – the reduced lubricant effect of ULSD on vintage engines might still become a problem even if gas oil remains available, as the EC also wants to reduce its sulphur content. There is also a move to introduce a component of biodiesel into gas oil, which could affect all boat owners as biodiesel absorbs more moisture which could separate out in the tank and stop the engine.

This is only a brief summary of a comprehensive and detailed document. If you have any comments or want more details please contact a member of Council.

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Does your boat have an amusing or peculiar name? Did you name the boat yourself or just inherit the name? How did the name come about?

It might never be possible to know the full story behind a boat's name but observation of those that you see as you cruise around might tell you more about the owner than the craft!

A cursory glance through the names of craft registered or licensed with BW reveals the wealth of different names that people assign to their vessels and although many names are repeated it is surprising how many are unique or distinctive. Puns and plays on words seem to abound on the waterways. Here are a few to ponder over:

MUDDY WATERS - a truism?

GONGOOZLERS REST - so that is what happens to them!

ARGY BARGY - don't mention the war!

ARSENIC & OLD LACE

FATE AMENABLE TO CHANGE

SAMSABODE - a houseboat; wonder whose?

DIRECT SAILS

ME-AND-ER - get it? (meander)

UNSPELLABUL

THIS WAY UP - just in case they forget

SEA ABOVE SKY BELOW - they obviously did!

WYSIWYG - buyers beware

SAIL-A-VEE - think about it

PUERTO POLLENSA - memories of a foreign holiday?

BRUISER THE CRUISER

JELLIMOULD - an appropriate name for a plastic cruiser!

BETA BLOCKER - boats are good for relaxing

DE-STRESSING - thinking along the same lines

NIRVANA - ultimate heaven

Some owners appear to lack inspiration at the critical moment their boat is named. For example:

THE BOAT - not very imaginative

NO NAME - even less so

WATTSANAME

QUEUE-E-TOO - who are they kidding?

THISTLEDOUS - know the feeling when you have seen so many?

Other people like to show off their mastery of Latin or other foreign languages:

ALLEGRO MAN NON TROPPO - remember the speed limit

HAKUNA MATATA - a number of boats have this name

FESTINA LENTE - more haste, less speed (how true) - a popular name

CARPE DIEM - capture the day, and enjoy every minute

VOX STELLARUM - noisy stars?

QUO VADIS - better consult your Nicholson's guide

TEMPUS FUGIT - how true

NYCTICORAX - one for the ornithologists (the Night Heron)

TY DDEWI - Welsh in case you were in any doubt (David's House)

The following names give away their owner's fondness for a wee dram afloat:

SHIRAZ

CHARDONNAY

CHABLIS

TORTUGA RUM

1 DRINK 2 MANY - and you get a DRUNKEN SAILOR

Finally, a few clever names that might make you chuckle:

EFF N ERN - Ethel and Ernest perhaps?

WEATHER OR KNOT

SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND - not continuous cruisers

CANALITY J'AIME

MR E OWL - too subtle for you?

But the most innovative must be:

DIDYABRINGYABEERALONG

*The above article was not spell-checked!*

*Stephen Peters*

**Editor's Caveat** - remember when choosing a name that you might have to spell it phonetically on Marine Band radio.

Imagine:-

*"Riversway Control, Riversway Control, this is Didyabringyabeeralong"*

*"Station calling Riversway Control, please spell out your call sign."*

*"Riversway Control, Riversway Control, this is Delta india delta yankee alpha bravo romeo india november golf yankee alpha bravo echo echo romeo alpha lima oscar november golf."*

*"Station calling Riversway Control, please say again." . . .*

*RCR Advert*

## NOTICES

Getting bored with this board?

Tired of the same old stuff?

It's your board, send us something to put on it - e.g.

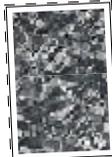
**small ads**

### POST FOR NABO NEWS

For issue 3/06 the editor will be at home so please send contributions by email to [news.editor@nabo.org.uk](mailto:news.editor@nabo.org.uk)

Failing that by post to:-

48 Old Lane, Bramhope,  
Leeds LS16 9AZ



The new address for the BW Wigan Office is:  
Waterside House  
Waterside Drive  
Wigan  
WN3 5AZ

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TAKE OUT  
MEMBERSHIP  
FOR LIFE**

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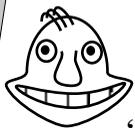
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'family member'**

**£5 OFF YOUR SUB**

Money back for you when a new member joins up having put

**your name in the 'introduced by' box on his or her application form (up to a maximum of 3)**

See page 7



**'VOYAGE' Article**

I have been asked if I could supply the whole story of 'The Making of a Voyage Between Two Seas' as one publication. If more than five people would like a copy, and would be happy to make a £3 or more donation to NABO for it, I would be happy to oblige. Drop me a line or email. S.S.

**Text your waterway reports to:**

**07930 419 981**

**07961 001814**

**07989 441674**

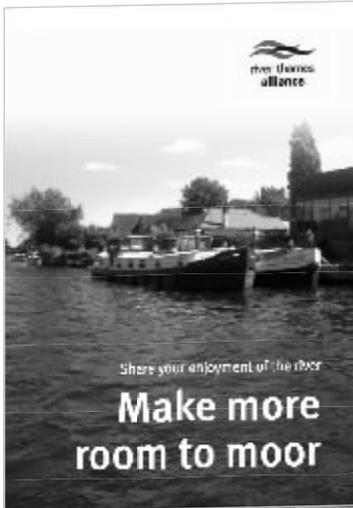


# RIVERS



## THAMES ‘MOOR ALONGSIDE’ CAMPAIGN

Contrary to what we said in the last issue, we are not distributing stickers for the EA as readers not visiting the river would only throw them away. Stickers and the pamphlet ‘Make More Room To Moor’ will be available at Thames locks and will be sent to all those already registered on the river. Anyone wanting them in advance should ring the EA on 0845 601 5336 or email [visithames@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:visithames@environment-agency.gov.uk)



### The pamphlet says:-

At busy times, particularly the height of the season, public 24-hour moorings can fill up quickly. We are launching a scheme encouraging boaters to make best use of public moorings on the River Thames.

We are inviting all those who cruise the River Thames to follow a new mooring code. Also known as ‘rafting out’, ‘trotting out’ or ‘breasting up’, ‘mooring alongside’ increases the capacity of public moorings on the river.

Around the coast, and particularly on public moorings in Europe, it is the custom for boats to moor alongside each other. Friends travelling together often moor alongside each other, and it’s a great way to make new friends. It works with the

cooperation of all parties and there is an accepted code of conduct on how to go about making the most of moorings.

### How does this scheme work?

Mooring alongside is not currently common practice on the River Thames so we are introducing a welcome sticker for boat owners to display. Visible from a distance, it aims to encourage other boaters to moor alongside moored boats, even if there is no-one aboard. Boaters should feel able to approach a boat without a sticker, but will know they are particularly welcome if a moored boat is displaying it.

It is normal for boats of a similar construction and size to moor alongside each other so where possible approach a boat similar to your own.

When approaching a mooring it is best to turn into the flow or prevailing wind. Make sure your fenders are in the correct position and move gently alongside. Place your mooring lines (ropes) around cleats on the host boat to hold your boat steady alongside before mooring to the bank. Ask the host which way to cross their boat

and send a crew member with a mooring line across the host boat and onto the bank (or the host might help you).

Fasten your own line to any rings or posts provided or, if using mooring stakes or pins, position your own to avoid the host's mooring line. Tie another line (spring) diagonally across from your boat to the host boat to stop it moving independently (sometimes two are needed). The direction of the current will decide which way to tie this line – discuss this with the host boat. If the 'trot' is made up of all narrowboats, this line might not be required.

Discuss practical issues with the other crew. You should know when host boat(s) wish to leave and be prepared to allow them out easily and be able to adjust your mooring lines accordingly.

## **GLOUCESTER & RIVER SEVERN INFORMATION 2006**

### **Waterway Opening Hours**

Locks and bridges will be working to the usual schedule, giving an unbroken summer period of 19 weeks and a brief autumn period of slightly longer hours than the winter schedule.

Dates	Week No	Times
1 January - 23 March	1 - 13	0800 - 1600
24 March - 18 May	13 - 21	0800 - 1800
19 May - 28 September	21 - 40	0800 - 1900
29 Sept - 19 October	40 - 43	0800 - 1800
20 Oct - 31 December	43 - 53	0800 - 1600

### **Additional charges on Gloucester & Sharpness Canal and River Severn**

Out of hours lock and bridge charges: £20 per hour + VAT (15 mins = £5 + VAT).

Sharpness Sea Lock: £20 per craft single passage and £40 return passage for short-term licence holders, irrespective of type (River only or Canal & River).

Holders of long term licences or river registration certificates (i.e. 3, 6 or 12 months) will not have to pay extra to use the sea lock.

### **Safe Havens**

Holders of River Registration certificates (as opposed to Canal and River licences) are permitted to enter and moor in Stourport Basins and Diglis Basin. River craft are also permitted to enter Gloucester Docks from the river and to stay for up to 14 days. Usual mooring charges will apply after 48 hours.

### **Signal Lights**

Red light means stop. Flashing red light means the lock or bridge keeper is aware of your presence - please wait. Green light means you may proceed.

# SEVERN TIDINGS



All boaters know that the Severn Estuary is renowned for its large tidal range and strong currents that must be treated with respect at all times and used to advantage whenever possible. The times of tides govern departure and arrival schedules for the sea lock at Sharpness, where the placid inland waterway system meets seawater.

All vessels should carry a copy of tide tables for their cruising area. The locally published tables for the Bristol Channel are those produced by Arrowsmith's of Bristol. They give daily tide times and heights for a number of ports including Sharpness and include useful navigation information and notes on the Severn Bore. Be aware that times are all GMT and you must add 1 hour when required for British Summer Time.

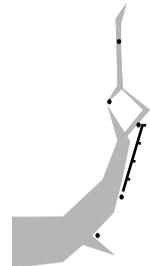
Avonmouth is the standard port for tidal data and the times of high and low water at other minor ports can be deduced by applying tabulated time differences. The highest tides (spring tides) occur on a fortnightly cycle – the highest at Avonmouth having a rise of approximately 14.5m. That's a lot of water!

High Water at Sharpness occurs roughly 40 minutes after Avonmouth and the largest tides have a rise of about 10m. Times of Low Water do not follow the same pattern.

It may not have occurred to you but the tides have an influence on the river as far inland as Worcester when the highest spring tides can raise the water level by about 0.3m (this effect is termed a quarrage). Any boat venturing below Upper Lode lock may encounter a tidal effect and the lock keeper will always advise on safe navigation. The effect of a large outgoing tide flowing down the East Channel below the Partings is another factor to consider when entering Gloucester Lock.

The following table gives the tide times for the largest spring tides:

LOCATION	Approx. Time Difference on High Water at Avonmouth	Appr Rise (m)
Upton –upon-Severn	+4 hr 30 min	
Upper Lode	+3 hr 45 min	
Wainlode (Limit of reverse of river flow)	+3 hr 15 min	1.2
Gloucester (Llanthony Weir)	+2 hr 45 min	1.2 to 2.1
Sharpness	+ 40 min	10.0
Avonmouth	0 min	14.5



Please note that the predicted times for viewing the Severn Bore at Minsterworth coincide with the time of High Water at Sharpness. Times are correspondingly later for viewing points further upstream. The Environment Agency produces a very informative leaflet about the Severn Bore giving predicted times and height expectations.

# THE MAKING OF "A VOYAGE BETWEEN TWO SEAS"

## Part 7 of A PERSONAL VIEW by Stuart Sampson

In the last episode our author had finished his part in this BBC North film shot in the early 1980s, but, determined to complete the Voyage himself, he stowed away on a tanker barge from Leeds to Goole. Although tidal, the Ouse could not be classed as a sea so he made the last leg aboard the Humber Keel 'Comrade':

### 11 THE OLD AND THE NEW

August saw me walking along the riverside at Goole carrying a camera tripod, or "legs" as they are called in the trade, in an attempt to be a slightly useful stowaway. We had come from the Lowther Hotel, where we had parked the cars, past the great tidal lock as a Russian ship with a cargo of timber eased itself in from the river. Another coaster was holding position against the swirling tide as we approached, and came in to the quayside to wait for the lock. You could see the water boiling up under her stern as the current rounded the outside of the great bend in the Ouse where Goole makes one of the most inland ports in England.

We found "Comrade" moored a bit further upstream, with her skipper and crew preparing for the tide to turn and our voyage to begin. Comrade is a Humber Keel that has been restored to full sailing condition by the Humber Keel and Sloop Preservation Society. Much smaller than today's oil barges, her bluff bows and wide beam made her look comfortable on the water, water that vessels of her type used to ply in the

days before petroleum, before steam, using either wind or manpower. The sails were unfurled, partly for our camera, partly for her crew to get back into the swing of handling the complex array of sheets and tablines that control the great squares of canvas.

Having loaded the accessories we set off along the quay to shoot some wide perspective shots as Comrade cast off and hoisted sail in midstream. She was a fine sight on that clear day, out in the flood tide. It was an opportunity we had to take as there would be few others when we could film her from afar. She came alongside and we boarded, and we were off.

Manoeuvring out under engine, we started to run with the tide, which had turned and was ebbing now quite strongly. Soon we were clear of the shore, away from the shipping and heading downstream. The skipper, Fred Schofield, gave the order for the sails to go up again and the engine was cut. A remarkable silence fell, which was to characterise this voyage all the way down the Humber. The wind was behind us, gently filling the great sails and softly lifting the water into ripples that ran beside us, barely daring to slop around the rudder. The tide was carrying us on, but the sensation was of utter stillness, broken now and then by a command to the crew and the rattle of winches.

Fred's father had worked the Comrade under sail, and the skills he had handed down were as much a subject

for preservation as the craft herself. The Main and Topsails were the sort of rig the Vikings had brought, with an array of ropes whose names were doomed to oblivion had the Society not reconstructed the vessel and revived the art of sailing her.

Filming was going apace when the quiet was gradually eroded by an approaching rumble. Keith swung the camera round to see Humber Princess surging down river leaving a dark cloud of fumes. Greetings waved, she soon overtook us and peace descended, that being until we tried to film Whitgift church.

It was then we realised just how fast we were travelling. Closing in on the bank as near as Fred would dare, we shot past before Keith could be sure of having a good shot to show the 'XIII' marking noon on the clock. With a great flurry of activity, swinging booms and snaking ropes the sails were down and the engine restarted. Fred swung her to face the current and for over ten minutes we motored against the tide to backtrack only a hundred yards to retake the shot. Only when he was sure Keith was ready did we go about and repeat the pass.

Backtoft pier was the next objective, we were to land the crew to film this lonely jetty, a refuge for craft making for Goole or Selby that could not make it on a single tide. There was a strange emptiness in the countryside, a pier with no port, no obvious purpose, and our only company, a passing coaster flying the Hammer and Sickle. Sails down, Fred turned her on the engine and approached facing the current, coming alongside

skillfully. The crew disembarked on the steps leading up the pier, Doug Smith sliding dangerously on the silt left by the ebbing water.

It was good to get under way again, rounding the bend to Trent Falls, where a desolate lighthouse marks the confluence of Ouse and Trent to form the Humber. The Yorkshire Ouse has no mouth as such, it has no proper source either, but eastwards lies the great estuary, an expanse of shifting sands and channels. Fred seemed to feel where we were as the shoreline receded and we resigned ourselves to the feeling of being becalmed. Slowly the shoreline changed, then suddenly a marker buoy would surge busily by, throwing a bow-wave from its little boat hull as though it had some important business in Goole. In fact it was an illusion, it was still, we and the water were moving.

The estuary curves round, and slowly revealed in all its glory was the delicate tracery of the Humber Bridge. Gradually the roar of traffic became audible, rising in a long crescendo above the gentle rustle of the rigging and cries of sea birds. The great towers began to loom over us and we passed beneath the graceful roadway. It was the first time I had seen the bridge complete, and there I was, looking at this latest civil engineering achievement through rigging with origins in Viking times. Going under it, under sail was an experience I shall treasure all my days.

We deviated towards the southern shore, pointing towards Immingham, where the Humber Princess was no doubt taking on a fresh cargo. Then rounding north, we gingerly

approached our destination, Hull. There was a spit of sand barring our way to the mouth of the river Hull, and we proceeded under engine with a crew member sounding with a pole to see where we could cross. We found a channel and drew close to the river Hull, now a muddy trickle at low water. There was no alternative but to tie up under the fish dock, and I spent the smelliest hour of my life waiting for enough water to make the mooring amongst the barges in the river.

When we got under way the mast had to be stepped to clear the bridges, so this process was duly filmed. The mast which had stood proudly like a cat's tail now lay dejected as the Comrade slunk upstream through the narrow gap separating rafts of disused barges,

until a space was found. Our day was over, we manhandled the filming gear from barge to barge until we found a precarious ladder up the quayside. Using ropes from the Comrade the gear was raised to road level and we stood by Wilberforce House waiting for a taxi to take us back to Goole.

It was a private celebration for me to have travelled from Liverpool to Hull by water, from port to port, from one side of England to the other. For the others, more filming lay ahead, using Comrade, filming from the shore and on the water, and out on the pilot boat to Spurn Head. For me this was it, I had the satisfaction of being the only one of the team to have done the voyage between two seas.

Stuart Sampson

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## **NEWS FROM NORTH OF THE BORDER**

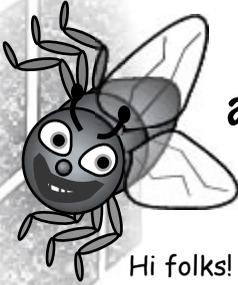
Boaters on inland waterways in England and Wales tend to forget the opportunities that exist for boating in Scotland.

If you have a 12-month BW canal licence you are able to use BW's Scottish waterways without extra charge, so that is something to consider if you have a transportable boat and are looking for new cruising grounds in the coming year. The lowland canals have been restored and you are now able to make a voyage along the Forth & Clyde Canal and Union Canal linking Glasgow with Edinburgh via the magnificent Falkirk Wheel. The highland canals will appeal to owners of cruisers and sea-going craft wishing to explore the Caledonian Canal and Loch Ness, or the Crinan Canal which is really a small ship canal by-passing a long sea passage on the west coast.

Loch Lomond continues to attract boating activity on a large scale. Statistics show that nearly 6,000 boat registrations were taken out in 2005. A third of these were speedboats taking advantage of the absence of a speed limit over most of the loch. Other boat users include fishing boats, jetskis, motor cruisers and sailing craft. You may also encounter the odd seaplane. This broad spectrum of users has led to proposed additional by-laws to regulate activity and make the water safer for everyone. And you can enjoy the sight of ospreys, otters and other wildlife whilst you are afloat!

*Stephen Peters*

# FLY ON THE WALL



## at Council

Hi folks! - from a warm wall! It's down to the new heating system, not improved weather, or even hot air from your Council - they just had positive and lively discussion.

Your Chairman was pleased to report a productive meeting with BW which resulted in an agreement that they would work in a different way and ensure that they consulted interested groups before any documents were issued. This seems to be known as 'pre-consultation discussion' and is in accordance with Cabinet Office Guidelines!

Did you see the article in the Daily Telegraph about the fate of the Oxford boatyard? Your moorings man, Simon gave the reporter his personal view which was not on behalf of NABO, but some felt it was confusing and was not made clear by the reporter. Good article though!

Council was told about the Mayor's (London's mayor) London Waterways Commission. This is a forum which keeps its eye (s?) on London's canals and rivers, trying to protect moorings, ensuring BW deliver what it should, looking at the future of

freight in the area, and of course, development for the Olympics.

This led to a discussion on BW neglecting its responsibility to navigation by closing yards and there then being no facilities, not only for leisure boaters but working boats too. Your Council decided NABO should push for facilities such as rubbish disposal, water, BW offices and slipways to be installed nearby BEFORE closing existing ones. Some promises of new facilities have never been fulfilled. Local examples were given but it was acknowledged that this was a national problem.

The Environment Agency (EA) has been told by the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) that the boaters on their waterways should take more responsibility for the upkeep of their waterways. Another way of saying more money please! This could mean that to raise the money, EA needs a minimum of an extra 25% from its licences, 3 years of double figure increases for their boaters. EA do consult boaters at an early stage and it was found that most boaters would not leave EA waters if the increase were less than 10%. Their waters have different percentage grants, so its more likely to affect, for example, boaters in East Anglia or on the Medway, whose grant is 85% to their contribution of 15%, than the Thames with a grant ratio of 70/30%. For representation to have more clout there should be a united voice, perhaps a national user group? If the increase IS NOT

acceptable to boaters, where would they go? Would there be a migration to BW waters? Would the small boats be pulled out and large boats go to the coast or abroad?

The difficulties of keeping the Basingstoke Canal open were discussed. The local councils which own them want to reduce their funding, which in any case is too low to keep the canal maintained. One thought is to try to make the Canal Authority into a Trust which means that finance would be available from the public and others. Other funding may be available to create certain positive development to bring income into the area, such as a new pub, a nearby sports centre, marinas etc. This would still leave the current water problem. Not enough! The Thames valley water table used to top up the canal, but now it's so low that the canal is doing the topping up!

BUT - Note a couple of events there. At Easter there will be a sponsored raft race. NABO will add a little to the funds. The second May Bank Holiday is currently scheduled for the 'keep it open' campaign cruise. Enough water should be organised for the event!

If you don't make that, will you get to Crick? NABO will be there. Anyone who can help on the stand for a short time please contact Aileen Butler on 07703 567764. She would also like to know whether any of you are taking your boat to Saul

this year. NABO will not have a stand there but would like someone to give out some information and application forms.

How about the fact that the Fire Brigade is being reorganised into large groups? Yes, this could affect you! It means that safety equipment which was kept by the rivers now has to be kept central to the new area, i.e. where rivers aren't! It will therefore take more time to get to a problem on a river. You have been warned!

Points on the policy of increasing the price of red diesel have been passed from the Treasury to Customs. They asked whether NABO was aware that the Government assumes that people who own boats are rich. Reminder of a previous Government who put the 'luxury' VAT rate of 25% on boats?! Perhaps they only see the gin palaces. NABO wants to prove otherwise.

A strange sight met my eyes after the meeting when everyone stayed and stuffed envelopes! These are information packs to give to rally visitors, but if you want any to hand out tell a member of the Council.

Till next time...

Byebye



## **BIRD FLU - DON'T PANIC**

There shouldn't be any closures. DEFRA has answered concerns about countryside access on its website by saying that, even if avian flu comes to the UK, there will be no value in restricting the movement of anything with feet or wheels, as was required to contain Foot and Mouth Disease.

From what we can gather, the VERY LOW risk to boaters **if** the virus infects waterfowl in this country can be reduced even further by washing your hands thoroughly if you come into contact with bird droppings, e.g. off ropes, and avoid touching your face. This is something you should do anyway to avoid infection from salmonella and other nasty bugs birds can carry. Also there is a very remote chance water could be infected, but it is even less likely than Weil's disease and the precautions you take to avoid that, by covering broken skin before clearing propellers and thorough washing afterwards, should certainly suffice.

### **DON'T FORGET, BIRD FLU ISN'T HERE YET !**

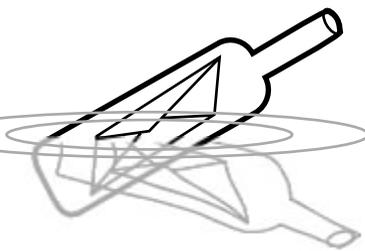
On the positive side, boaters are in an ideal position to look out for dead waterfowl and could make a valuable contribution to containing an outbreak. If you find one or more dead swans/wild fowl (ducks and geese), more than 3 dead birds of the same species or more than 5 dead birds of different species, in the same place, you should contact the Defra Helpline **08459 33 55 77**



NABO boats come up the Avon Gorge

*Thanks to Alan Jeffrey for the photo*

# LETTERS



## A definitive answer

Just a note concerning the pronunciation of N.A.B.O.

The comparison with the name Bath, as made in January's Newsletter, is not valid. NABO is an acronym, not a name. As such, the 'A' must be sounded as in the word it represents - Association.

Thus the correct pronunciation must surely be 'Nabbo'

Daeve Hook  
nb Midnight

## Another sorry tale

Regretfully, we have decided to sell the boat. This is due to a number of reasons, the main one being the physical effort needed. Since my operation I find working the locks very tiring. Another factor is the rising cost of boating. For example, our marina is now charging us nearly £2,500 per year for mooring. I am also very disillusioned with BW's attitude to the boater as a ready source of income. It seems to be all take and very little give on behalf of BW in this area. More and more bank is being taken up as linear moorings with the minimum of expenditure on behalf of BW. Despite promises, the locks are just as hard to work now as they were 20 years ago. The Buckby flight is a prime example.

The attitude of boaters is also changing for the worse. In the old days you felt

as though you and fellow boaters were part of a pioneering spirit and were courteous and helpful towards each other. You would always assist another boater with a lock or if they were in any difficulty. Nowadays, I regret that the motorway mentality is creeping into boating with little eye contact, no courtesy and certainly very little help at the locks!

John Russell  
Poacher's Moon

[John has been a stalwart NABO helper at Crick but thankfully we may not lose him altogether - he intends to keep boating by sharing - Ed]

## You can't please them all . .

Despite the efforts of some to rescue NABO from the brink, Mr Sampson appears determined to use his role as "spokesman" to peddle his personal anti-BW stance to the NABO membership.

He seems incapable of understanding that a spokesman should put forward the views of the membership. Instead he rants about just how dreadful "X" of BW is.

There is no process of consultation with the membership, and Mr Sampson seems to believe that anybody who doesn't actually object to his stated views is obviously in support of them.

Now, we are told that we mustn't tell non-members what Mr Sampson is saying.

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

He is an arrogant fool, and NABO will continue to lose members who find that they have no wish to bankroll his extremism any longer.

Dave Mayall  
from UK Rec Waterways Newsgroup

**. . . but you can some.**

Dear Carole

We are so impressed by the work you and Stuart do for NABO and offer our grateful thanks.

We thoroughly enjoy the magazine and all that it reveals of the important role which NABO plays in representing the interests of boaters.

The proposed Manchester Canal trip is another example of a great organisation

Clive and Jacky Taylor  
nb Cleo

### **Stuart replies**

I am sorry Mr Mayall feels there is no consultation with members. Unlike other associations' magazines, NABO News has a letters column which is always open for observations and would be a much better way to communicate with NABO and

myself than a public internet chat line, but he obviously hasn't the bottle to tackle NABO direct so I have done it for him.

My contact details are plain enough on the back page and if anybody shares his views please get in touch. I would also ask anybody who thinks there is a better way to consult members to come forward.

I can assure you I do not have a personal anti-BW attitude half as bad as many of the members who do make the effort to contact me, and I expend a lot of effort trying to give BW the benefit of the doubt when discussing matters with them. However when speaking on their behalf I feel obliged to reflect their views and maybe my mistake is getting too involved.

I would dearly love to be relieved of that part of my duties and get on with constructive things like positive dialogue, surveys, reports boards and making this magazine informative - work that is all the more satisfying when the likes of Clive and Jacky express their appreciation.

## **STOP PRESS - EU Inland Craft Safety Directive**

Our esteemed London Secretary has discovered that vessels over 20 metres long (65 feet in old money), or 100 m<sup>3</sup> length x beam x draught, may be required to reach standards more suited to navigating the Rhine than the BCN

Amongst the requirements is a 'navigation test' showing the vessel can attain at least 13 Km/h (about 8 m.p.h.), that it has a collision bulkhead, an anchor of a specified mass connected via a chain of specified tensile strength, and gas tight bulkheads between engine room and accommodation, and more.

NABO will do all that it can to see that realism prevails.

*This is not an April Fools joke.*

# COUNTERPOINTS



Views from the  
tiller 'dahn sarf'  
by Canaldrifter

British Waterways has taken their promise to hold 'Pre-consultation Discussions' with users, to heart. They seem to be consulting on everything at the moment. This might give us a lot more work to do, but it's worth it. I'd much rather be working **with** BW in dealing with current problems than working **against** them.

The Environmental Agency are doing the same thing, especially regarding the Thames. They have been very cooperative in supporting a Navigational User Group Workshop investigating ways of meeting rising costs. They have also invented 'Bowow'; a self-sniffing campaign to find 'Better Ways of Working'. I am glad of this too, and I hereby award the first *Counterpoints Medal for Services to NABO Beyond Reasonable Expectations* to member Louis Jankel.

On our behalf, and his, he is a veritable bull-dog on various Thames committees, including Bowow, putting the boater's point of view to the EA with dogged enthusiasm and humour. He is also due to have heart surgery, so we wish you well Louis. You have a big heart. It deserves looking after. Have an official pat on the head.

So, BW and the EA are both facing Grant-in-aid cuts and Surrey County Council has had half a million shaved off its government grant (see article on

the 'Basy'). Being a conspiracy theorist, it makes me wonder if the treasury is diverting money away from everywhere else and into the military budget.

A spokesperson from Defra has stated that boaters must pay more, and they probably will have to do just that. Government seem to think all boaters are rich. It's time the national user groups got together to present a united voice to parliament to put them right, and NABO is trying to organise this.

Maybe such a coalition could also address the mish-mash of 'safety' regulations that are being heaped upon us from all over the place. Isn't it time we had a dedicated Inland Waterways Safety Executive manned by users and the navigational authorities?

BW want us to address this issue through the existing AINA route and the MCA. I personally think that the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's powers should stop at the coast. It's in the name. It would take an Act of Parliament to change things, but change they should.

By the way, have you noticed that ducks landing on ice don't have reverse thrust? Could this be a future evolutionary development?

(Sounds more like an MCA safety issue to me. Ed.)

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