

INLAND NAVIGATION ISSUES, NEWS, AND VIEWS

NABO



NEWS

Note - a number of articles in this issue are missing as the original files are not available



Issue 1 February 2007

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Barry Gardiner MP at the London Boat Show



SOW Protest Cruise, London



CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



I have almost forgotten about the festive season, so much seems to have happened since then, or has it? I seemed to have been dashing up and down the country achieving not a lot, and, what with so much being done in our house and catching up with production of a certain guide, my feet don't seem to have been on the ground. Anyway, may 2007 be successful and enjoyable for you all.

The Campaign

When I say 'achieving not a lot' I mean regarding NABO specifically. The DEFRA Cuts campaign has dominated my agenda, so I have been attending various meetings, one of which was at the London Boat Show to hear the Waterways Minister' attempts to justify DEFRA's actions. I was also at the Houses of Parliament river protest as one of the representatives of the 'Unity' campaign group, the alliance of waterway interests of which NABO is a member. We invited various MP's and the Press aboard the Dunkirk veteran vessel, *m.v Kingwood*, to view the flotilla. I was there to represent NABO and be available to give answers about the boaters point of view, but there weren't any that weren't already answered by what was happening on the river! My thanks to King Cruises for donating the use of the boat. See more on Page ???

As I have said all along, the campaign is really IWA territory and, with the able assistance of Will Chapman's SOW movement, the tide is running and us with it. I think the part NABO as a body can play is even less now as boaters have made their mark afloat, but the fight must go on and we must

take the battle to the towpaths. The general public, who account for over 90% of the 300 million visits to BW waterways, must be made aware that this is not a bunch of 'middle class boaters' whingeing about lack of support from the public purse for their minority hobby, it is a threat to the nation's heritage that must be tended properly for the benefit of all.

Where NABO has had a chance to contribute specifically is through its submission to the EFRA Select Committee, which is summarised later. We have been trying to put the case for the private boater without, hopefully, appearing too selfish. I know some of you have made your own submissions and I guess the committee will have plenty to read.

The Collins Stewart London Boat Show - Who?

It seems the 'salties' go cap in hand to a different financial institution each year for sponsorship and there seemed to be more suits there than I have seen in the past. Were it not for the Waterways Minister's visit I wouldn't have gone at all. There was no EA event, no BSS open meeting, no 'waterside pub' and not one steel narrowboat or barge to be seen.

BW, EA and BSS shared a stand banished to the far end of the hall at ExCeL, almost as far as you could get from the Guinness bar. The Association of Pleasure Craft Operators (APCO), BW Marinas Ltd and various Thames, Broads and overseas hire operators had stands scattered nearby and the IWA was

there selling books. You could easily spend a day at the show and not know inland waterways existed, let alone that there was a funding crisis. Good old Sea Otter showed the only canal boats there, but maybe with a name like that they couldn't be refused!

I had tried to coax some space out of the British Marine Federation, who run the show, specifically for the campaign. Remembering how you all rallied round when NABO was at the Earls Court show I felt sure we could man it, but it was not to be. The IWA had one side of their stand displaying the arguments against the DEFRA cuts in quite some detail but no big Save-Our-Waterways style banners. 'Better late than never', I managed to knock up a few 'Save Our Waterways' badges which people on the stand wore in case any errant ministers happened to be passing.

The reason I went was because the Waterways Minister had included NABO in his list of organisations to try to placate (we call him that but really he is just a junior DEFRA minister with waterways amongst his responsibilities). The name, I'm sure you all know, is Gardiner - Barry Gardiner. At the meeting in the 'Platinum Suite', he spouted all the stuff about how important the waterways were and how we should all be grateful for what DEFRA had given BW since 2000, and, just because they were giving a bit less, what was all the fuss about? (see article of that name later). He had no answer to the question, "How much PER VISIT was BW getting from the Government compared with other public outdoor amenities?". Perhaps someone not obviously aligned to the campaign could invoke the Freedom of Information Act and find out.

After the meeting he 'did walk-about', but, allegedly due to a BMF

administrative error, the IWA was omitted from his itinerary so he never got to see the badges. He was running late and couldn't fit it in, but, with so few inland waterway exhibits to see I fail to see why. I suspect his ear was being bent by other exhibitors with more commercial agendas but I have no proof as I wasn't invited to join his entourage.

Red Diesel

At the Boat Show I also distributed cards to anyone involved in diesel propulsion to canvass for signatures on the petition we instigated on the No 10 Downing Street website. Even though the red diesel derogation battle seems to have been lost with the EU, we can still encourage the Government to mitigate the effects on the ordinary boater. The European Commission's attitude is that the UK Government was warned that the period of grace would end in 2007 and not to come whining about how difficult it would be to implement the change. It doesn't actually matter how much warning they were given, the fact remains that it will still be nigh on impossible to police. Boaters and fuel suppliers cannot be expected to fork out hundreds or maybe thousands of pounds each to purge their tanks of red dye and completely reorganise the fuel supply infrastructure, on top of paying all the extra duty.

There are two possible solutions. Change the colour of rebated fuel or raise the duty rate on all red diesel to the minimum rate acceptable to the EU for pleasure craft, and allow anyone still legally entitled to a lower rate to reclaim the difference. That would not only soften the blow for us but solve the enforcement problem and reduce the incentive to defraud. More hassle for the farmers though.

Other boating cost hikes

We are also expressing our concern about the pump-out charge hike and mooring fee increases. The pump-out problem lies with pump-outs and electricity being on the same cards. BW claims to have been drastically undercharging for electricity and, to correct this, prices have almost doubled on both services, with pathetic attempts being made to justify pump-out increases on market forces. When BW DIY pump-outs are now priced at the top of the market for all services, including attended, it makes a mockery of the market arguments.

Packet Boat Marina, a BWML site, is raising its prices by 16%. Again it brings up the same old chestnut of who is leading and who is following the market. If BWML is included, BW is still the majority supplier of moorings and a lot more work is needed to convince customers it is being fair. I have heard some quite bizarre ideas thrown about for trying to get a handle on the true worth of a mooring, but one thing is certain, it won't be long before only the middle and upper classes can afford to boat and Robin Evans's misnomer about middle class boaters becomes reality.

Dogs

Another worrying precedent is being proposed by Crewe Council to demand all dogs are kept on leads on open land where the public has access. Not only is this likely to populate the area with bad tempered and under-exercised dogs, but the proposal is aimed to cover BW property too with £75 spot fines being levied. This means you will have to be attached to your dog at all times it is ashore, or maybe even aboard, which is not exactly safe and certainly a right pain when getting on and off a slippery deck or when working locks and bridges.

Shared owners

As you know NABO has always welcomed members who part-own a boat provided they can identify which boat, i.e. we haven't opened our doors fully to timeshare owners who only own by the week on an unspecified fleet boat, e.g. Canaltime. This has been taken a stage further by the generosity of the former Shared Inland Boat User Group (Hope I have that right - SIBUG anyway) who have dissolved and passed on their assets to NABO. The least we can do is to offer free membership to any paid-up member of SIBUG up to the renewal date of their SIBUG subscription.

Further we have offered a place on Council to Howard Anguish, who will be our point of reference on any matters specific to boat share owners. Now that BW seems to have resolved the licensing criteria, with our help, I don't expect there will be many issues that won't be in common to full and sharing owners

Stuart



I'm the one with the glasses. You've heard of a handlebar moustache? These are handlebar ears. The image was taken at the last IWA National Rally at Beale Park. I was manning the NABO stand for some of the time. This year our stand, and even our corporate image is to be revamped. We

hope to present to the waterways world a more businesslike approach to what we believe and stand up for.

Beale Park was a great opportunity to speak to members and strangers about our aims. All boaters, whether cruiser owners, narrowboaters, or trailboaters share a common interest: to go boating safely, under reasonable conditions, at fair cost. Together we can do our best to achieve these aims. If you fancy a stint on the stand this year, just let our events rep know (back page). Your help would be greatly appreciated, and you will get free entry to the rally.

I have taken over editorship of NABO NEWS in order to relieve our chairman of some of the pressure he was under. He will still be a major contributor to the newsletter, but he won't have to worry about format or layout any more. That is my job. I was always a Microsoft PC man. Stuart prefers Apple Mac. So, to ease the transfer I have changed over to MAC too. I like it. But, I am still finding my way around unfamiliar programs and graphic systems. Please bear with me while I learn the ropes. I'll get there in the end.

One of my ambitions this year is to get our online Waterways Reports Forum running really well. It has the potential to be the most efficient means of reporting problems on our waterways. All reports received are automatically copied to the navigational regional office concerned. As we go to press it is pretty well up-to-date on the progress of Winter Closures. If you need information on a particular waterway it is quicker and easier to look it up on the Reports Forum where waterscape reports are collated into waterways by name, or by map. When the season begins we need your input and help to keep the reports forum running. We will be publicizing it round about Easter time. Watch out for the PR. Meanwhile why not pay it a visit at:

www.nabo.org.uk/ww_reports/

user name: waterway,

password: reports

DEFRA CUTS THREATENS BOAT SAFETY

Maggie Thatcher talked about the 'trickle down effect.' Her theory was that the richer the extremely rich got, the more those less well off would benefit. The stinking rich would have more money to spend, and thus they would boost the whole economy. The converse is certainly true. Make huge cuts in grant-in-aid to the navigational bodies and those cuts will be passed down. Guess who pays in the end? It has just been announced that neither British Waterways, nor the Environment Agency will be upholding their financial contributions to the Boat Safety Scheme this year. Their grants had already been reduced from £120,000 each to £86,000 last year. Who will have to make up the shortfall? The boaters of course.

On top of swingeing increases in licence and mooring fees and loss of red diesel derogation the boater is now faced with an increase of around £12 per BSC test, and that doesn't take into account additional increases due to possible extensions in the test regime, and having to book a CORGI registered gas engineer to demonstrate to a non-CORGI examiner that the boat is safe.

Already the BSS annual presentation at the London Boat show was cancelled this year, obviously for financial reasons. There is talk of BSS not being able to continue its support of the technical committee. This committee is hugely important. It gives the users a say in how the inspections develop. By this means our technical consultant, Trevor Rodgers was able to do a fine job in helping to considerably simplify the inspections. Without such control who can guarantee that BSS won't become more and more complex again. After all they need the money, so the more time-consuming the inspections become, the more they will earn. Like CORGI, BSS is a total monopoly. There is no competition to keep down prices. Perhaps there should be.

As a senior representative of the EA stated, "We are not a bottomless pit." Well, neither are the boaters. By its own 'trickle down effect' DEFRA is threatening boat safety and killing off the golden goose.

Tranquility

I am so grateful for the silent time.
When the morning is all mine
I love the quietness of the dawn
When there is no one else around.
The canal awakes, its misty blanket rolls away.
Whispering winds that waft across the still water.
Songbirds awakening from their nighttime slumber.
There is no greater beauty anywhere to be found.
Tranquility in this most beautiful place,
It's a beauty to behold.

From 'Seasons of the Waterway' by Jo Lodge

<http://www.lulu.com/jolodgepoetry>



SPAM, SPAM, BULLETINS OR SPAM? – NABO ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS ENDANGERED

Your Chairman/webmaster is fighting a three-front battle to keep you informed through the members' e-mail bulletin system.

On one front is Ignorance - this is excusable, you might be new to NABO or new to e-mail. To get bulletins, e-mail webmaster@nabo.org.uk with details as described below.

On another front is Apathy - your apathy, not so excusable, in not letting him know you have changed your email addresses.

The worst enemy however is SPAM, probably why you changed your e-mail addresses if you did, but SPAM also makes difficulties for all bulk e-mailing, even for bona fide users like NABO. Complete mailing systems (servers) get blacklisted and if you share one of these, all your e-mails get classed as SPAM by the likes of AOL and some SPAM filters, and so don't get through.



To reduce the chance of the server that NABO uses getting blacklisted, the provider is putting a limit on the number of people any one e-mail can be sent to. This limit is too small for our Members' Bulletin List and we are having to divide it up.

Rather than split the list meaninglessly, say alphabetically, there is a chance here to split the list into areas of interest so a few bulletins can be targeted to certain groups. We have had complaints from people who don't want to know about EA matters when they boat hundreds of miles from the EA rivers. Others on the Thames might have no interests in, say, the ban on continuous cruisers on the Lancaster Canal, so we are having separate lists for North, Midlands and South, plus a special list for those who are lucky enough to cruise the whole network. There is also a list for those in the south who confine themselves to BW waters.

WHAT TO DO TO GET FUTURE BULLETINS

1) If you have received an e-mail already telling you what to do - do it, if you haven't already.

2) If you think you should have received that e-mail but haven't, it may be because:

- it is hidden in the wrong mailbox in your computer
 - you haven't told the webmaster your new address
 - you have a junk mail filter rejecting NABO bulletins.
- Please check these out.

3) If all else fails, or you are new, please contact the webmaster on webmaster@nabo.org.uk and give him:-

- Your name
- Some proof of membership e.g. membership number or postcode
- your choice of list:-
 - North
 - Midlands
 - South BW only
 - South, including Thames, Anglian, Wey etc.
 - Roving - CCs, moving share, trailboat etc.

Rest assured, a topic will have to be very specific not be sent to all the lists. There is little point in being on more than one - all you will get most of the time is copies of the same thing.

Howard Anguish – New Council Member

I come to the Council as a relative newcomer to Nabo (I joined in 2005), but as a family we have been boating on the canals since 1978, so I hope my canal pedigree will stand scrutiny. I came to the canals rather reluctantly, having spent 20 years at sea as a navigating officer and shipmaster, and thought that these narrow waters would be too tame. Like many people, however, our first holiday on the cut in 1978 got me well and truly hooked, and the interest has been growing ever since.

After “swallowing the hook” I entered the realm of shipping management and was an operational ship manager dealing with offshore oil exploration, and deep-sea towage and salvage, before starting my own marine consultancy.

I was fortunate to become the Operations Director of a new shipping company – Hebridean Island Cruises - which developed a luxurious small cruise ship, Hebridean Princess. We specialised in weekly and fortnightly cruises around the glorious Scottish West Coast including St Kilda and the Orkney Islands. Some of you may be familiar with the ship – the Queen chartered her last year when she took her annual holiday to the West Coast of Scotland.

I had a 6 year spell managing Hull Marina, a predominantly seagoing & coastal marina, which allowed me to indulge my interest in sailing, and for the last 6 years I worked as a dock master for Associated British Ports in Hull, before retiring a year early in 2006. Retirement has given my wife Hilary and I more time to indulge our real interest – our narrowboat Rufford. We own two twelfth shares in this boat, a 58ft semi-trad presently based at Norbury junction on the Shropshire Union, and managed for us as part of the Ownerships scheme. It is our second boat in the scheme, our first being “Somnia” a name which nicely sums up the state of relaxation achieved after a very short time on board!

The career of a sailor can be very varied in this day and age and the marine industry has changed out of all recognition since the time that I first went to sea as a fresh faced cadet in 1959. I hope I can be of some assistance to Nabo Council and will endeavour to represent the views and opinions of shared boat owners, although in many respects their concerns are exactly the same as everyone else.

THREAT TO MOORINGS LIFTED

A recent enforcement notice served by Kennet District Council on BW has been quashed by the Planning Inspectorate and all costs awarded to BW. The enforcement notice was to remove the off-line moorings at Ladies Bridge on the Kennet and Avon as planning permission had not been granted. If this requirement had been upheld it could have seriously threatened all on-line moorings on BW's canals.

The Inspector decided that on-line moorings, unless used as permanent residences, could not be regarded as a change in use of the canal and its banks:-

‘Prior to the creation of the Ladies Bridge moorings, the primary use of the appeal site, as part of a planning unit comprising the whole canal, is as a canal, i.e. a waterway for the movement of boats and canal-side land used for operational purposes, including mooring of barges/boats. If the appeal site were held to be a separate planning unit, it would not, in my view, alter the primary use, which the Council accepts includes incidental mooring. If boats are not to be in perpetual motion, some mooring is clearly an essential element.’

It is a relief to know that the planning inspectorate does not expect boats to be in a state of perpetual motion, a situation that might not have been so far removed from reality had the Kennet Council's enforcement notice been upheld and copied across the country.

We must applaud BW's legal department for winning this appeal and thank member David Chorley for his contributions to this satisfactory outcome and sending NABO the text of the inspector's report.



**TARLETON WHARF
Rufford Branch, Leeds
& Liverpool Canal**

Defra rash?

VAT TRIBUNAL DECIDES ON RIVER REGISTRATIONS

It has long been a matter of contention amongst riverboat owners that they ought not to be paying VAT on their British Waterways river registrations and that they should be treated the same way as users of the rivers Thames and Medway, where the Environment Agency does not levy VAT (but they do charge it on the Anglian waterways, we are told!). The matter has now been decided by the VAT Tribunal following an appeal by a private boat owner with a motor cruiser based on the river Severn.

The appeal sought a ruling from the tribunal on whether BW is acting correctly when charging VAT on its river registration certificates, with the contention that the fee charged was merely for the act of registration (i.e. an entry in a public register) and that no services were provided by BW and hence, the transaction was not a business activity.

Prior to 1989 BW did not charge VAT on any of its river registrations or canal licences but all that changed when it elected to waive the exemption granted by the VAT taxation laws which gave them the power to tax interests in, rights over, and licences to occupy land. This meant that it could charge VAT on tolls and dues, craft licences (other than unpowered houseboats with a mooring certificate), sailing rights on reservoirs, surface water discharges, licences to cut into a canal, cycling permits and rights over and under the towpath except for access to residential property.

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Certain land and buildings were excluded from the election to waive exemption - including Ardrishaig



dock, Ellesmere Port docks, Gloucester docks, Sharpness Docks and Weston Point Docks; and other dockland and land not forming part of the BW navigation portfolio. In 1993, properties at Hyde and Uxbridge were added to the land excluded from the taxation.

The appeal was initially made against HM Revenue and Customs as respondent but they were soon joined by BW as intervener because of its involvement in the issue. After a period of 18 months, the appeal was finally heard and a decision was published some 6 weeks later.

The outcome of the case was that the appeal was dismissed and the grounds for the decision raised some interesting legal points. Four main issues were raised in the appeal and the tribunal addressed each one in clearly argued legal terms. Firstly, whether a public right of navigation exists on BW river waterways. Secondly, whether BW provides services in relation to the rivers. Thirdly, whether BW is entitled to charge for its services; and fourthly whether BW in making a charge for registration is supplying those services for a consideration.

It was agreed that a common law public right of navigation does exist on all tidal waters, because the soil is vested in the Crown. Whether or not such a right exists on non-tidal waters has kept lawyers in work for many centuries. It was agreed that a public right of navigation could arise as a result of immemorial usage, by Act of Parliament or by express grant or dedication by the landowner. In addition, if a river has been made navigable and maintained at public expense and used freely by the public for a long time, then a right of navigation will exist. BW and HMRC conceded that public

rights of navigation may exist on certain rivers under the management of BW, and the rivers Trent and Severn were cited as such examples. This was therefore not considered to be an issue in the appeal.

The tribunal found that BW does provide services in relation to its river navigations and the Transport Act 1962 empowers it to provide and make charges for services.

The tribunal examined the British Waterways Act 1971 in great detail. This is the Act that introduced registration on BW rivers.

Two elements of the Act were stressed. The first is that it is unlawful to keep or use any pleasure



CAPTION COMPETITION
From the last issue

1. (Sign) "Deep Drafted Boats should Try the Continent"
J Auger NB Saltaire
Aire & Calder

2. "Veg Pledge Bites Back!"
Anon

3. "BW entry to Chelsea Flower Show"
J Auger

tribunal.

In summary, the tribunal ruled that the charge levied by BW is for the purposes stated in the long title to

FLY ON THE WALL



A fatter post-Christmas fly clung to the wall on 3rd February and saw another new face! This belonged to Howard Anguish who has joined Council bringing with him experience of the British Marine Federation and of shared ownership boating and membership of Shared Inland Boat User Group (SIBLIG), now subsumed into NABO.

The meeting started by chewing the fat over many 'internal' items:

- ~ the 2007 AGM has been booked for the new village hall at Shipton-on-Cherwell and John Edmunds will come to speak.

- ~ who might be the new NABO president? Should there be more than one vice-president?

- ~ does the NABO logo need a

face-lift and if so to what? And the banner, pennants and stickers are probably due a make-over. Andy is working on it!

Publications were also discussed. Towpath Talk will accept a column which Council will write but would be grateful for any ideas of what you think you or other boaters would find interesting. Do contact your editor or general secretary.

The booklet 'So you're thinking of buying a boat' will be updated and, in future, sold, except to any new members who want it.

The meeting was then pleased to welcome Will Chapman from Save Our Waterways (SOW) who had come to put Council in the picture with the latest news of their doings/projects etc. He said 10-15 events were planned to draw attention to the problems caused to BW by Defra's cuts in funding. IWA were encouraging their branches to co-ordinate events with SOW. There was support too and good co-operation with the Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs (AWCC). More than 30 protests were expected in March and SOW were trying to

match the pro MPs with events taking place in their area.

The protests in November had had good press coverage and 236 MPs had shown their support and signed early day motions. With riparian MPs the total came to 400. Letters you wrote certainly had an effect.

A previous waterways MP, Tony Baldry, suggested people should ask their MP to support a constituency petition which would as a matter of course be presented to Parliament and should then make the local and hopefully national news.

Council acknowledged the difficulties of commercial companies on the waterways being able to support the projects without jeopardising their businesses.

One encouraging note was to learn that should anything happen as a result of poor maintenance or Mother Nature having a nasty turn there was a contingency fund in DEFRA that BW could bid for. A recent breach and an aqueduct being hit came to mind!

Council would still like you to send photographic evidence of deterioration that you may have noticed to back up BW's call for more maintenance funds.

Will commented on the fact that BW's annual accounts were not detailed enough to distinguish between their property portfolio and their navigational responsibilities. It was felt that more clarification was needed and that advice towards this end be sought.

And so to some old chestnuts with new price increases. LICENCES! Renew them before April 2008 to save yourselves the proposed BW increases of up to 7%.

MOORINGS! This time a 16% increase to those mooring in BW marinas. Maybe a strange way to encourage boaters to moor in their marinas rather than along the canal? RED DIESEL! The introduction of price increases can only be implemented after legislation has been passed. Hopefully this will not be a speedy process. Enjoy your cheap red diesel while ye may!
Byeeeeeee

Flyeeee

Customer Services Standards

'ASS' has had a recent revival thanks to Renault. 'BSS' has been around for a while too, so now CSS!

They used to be called 'Waterway Standards', but have been expanded, but some may say diluted, to become a document that sets out what BW intends to provide for all waterway users. Your chairman has been on a working group that started out as the 'Boating Facilities Strategy Group,' but has widened its scope to cover the whole Customer Services Standards initiative from a boaters' point of view.

This group was originally set up to advise on the customer survey that BW carried out last year and to help analyse its findings, but now Head of Boating Development is using it as a 'think tank' for various projects relating to boating services. Note, it does not deal with long-term moorings or boating related charges. BW Moorings are covered by a separate working group that Simon Robbins attends for NABO.

The Customer Service Standards (CSS) have three levels:-

- 1 - Minimum standards that must be achieved for safety
- 2 - Standards that must be met according to a contract BW is drawing up with the Government - effectively what DEFRA can expect from BW in return for the Grant-in-Aid
- 3 - The expectations of the customers.

They also have to take into account the level of use of the waterways and towpaths. There is no point demanding a water point every mile on a canal where a boat is rarely seen.

Waterways are divided into :-

- Heavy leisure use
- Light leisure use
- Mixed freight and leisure use
- Not for Navigation

Towpaths have four levels of use down to and including totally unusable, plus, for completeness, a category for non-BW towpaths.

The working group last met on January 30th to discuss the topics covered and which category they should fall into. Each standard will then have to be defined in more detail and the group is expected to be consulted on that too.

CONSTITUENCY PETITIONS

The 'cluster bomb' approach. Supportive MPs would deliver petitions individually to the House, which would occupy parliamentary time, reminding and, if necessary taxing the patience of, the government. To be permitted, the exact form or wording must be followed and the SOW organisers will provide forms with a preapproved 'prayer' customised for your constituency.



A letter would also need to be written to your MP asking her or him to present the petition and back it up with a few facts about the threat to their local waterway to put to the House. SOW can also help you with what to write.

SOW REGIONAL BULLETIN BOARD

NABO is hosting on its website a special posting board for SOW, split up into waterway lengths like the Reports Forum, to help pull it all together and keep you up to date with your local activities. You can also use this to tell the world what you can do or have already planned for the campaign. This should reduce duplication of effort and help to coordinate it.

In particular it is intended to show who your local MP is, whether they have been approached about a petition, if they have agreed to present it and what arguments they can put forward to further the cause. You can also use it to request a petition form (include the correct name for your constituency) and to tell people where to come to sign it once you have it.

THIS IS SET UP AS A DISCUSSION BOARD
SO YOUR INPUT IS WELCOME

Visit www.nabo.org.uk/sow/ or via www.saveourwaterways.org.uk

Will Chapman

BW ANNOUNCES MORE BOUNDARY CHANGES

British Waterways' 'counties' are being re-organised again. Having abandoned the 'Region' and 'Waterway' structure a few years ago in favour of 'Business Units', BW is changing boundaries again in order to rationalise the West Midlands area into a rather more sensible arrangement.

Basically the Central Shires unit is losing its name, West Midlands Waterways is losing its main offices and the two are being merged into one. At the same time the combined unit is losing some of its territory to its neighbours, Wales & Border Counties and East Midlands. So:

- The eastern Trent and Mersey between The Dove Aqueduct (Br 27A) and Derwent Mouth where it joins the Trent (essentially the bit with wide locks) is now to be under East Midlands at Newark.
- All other waterways that used to be under 'Central shires' are now to be in the new West Midlands unit, but still administered from Fazeley.
- All the Shropshire Union is now to be under Wales & Border Counties in Northwich.
- All the Trent and Mersey north of Great Haywood (more precisely Br 75) is also to be under Wales & Border Counties
- All other waterways that used to be under West Midlands are still under West Midlands and using the same telephone contacts but now to be administered from Peel's Wharf in Fazeley.
- The Customer Services office by Cambrian Wharf will stay open.

