

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

**NABO**



**NEWS**

- **NABO at the Crossroads?**
- **Member Survey**
- **Car Rental Discount**



**Issue 1 – February 2008**

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## Editor's Notes

'You Say' in this issue takes comments from the rich pickings from the CSS survey. Thank you.

## Photos

Just to say that if you send photos to NABO News, unless you think it would help the editor's understanding of the picture, colour isn't needed and you can send it as a greyscale image, which might save you time or hassle .

The important part of a pictures doesn't need to be any bigger than 1500 pixels wide either so you might want to crop or reduce the definition of a shot before you send it.

Keep them coming!

<b>2008 CALENDAR</b>	
<b>Council meeting</b>	<b>NN Copy date</b>
<b>8th Mar</b>	<b>15th Mar</b>
<b>19th Apr</b>	<b>26th Apr</b>
<b>7th June</b>	<b>14th June</b>
<b>12th July</b>	<b>19th July</b>
<b>6th Sept</b>	<b>13th Sept</b>
<b>22nd Nov</b>	<b>AGM</b>
<b>29th Nov</b>	<b>6th Dec</b>

# NABO AT THE CROSSROADS?

## *Asks NABO's Vice-chairman*

This is the first NABO News for 2008, so may I wish everyone good cruising in the coming year and hope that the dreadful weather and flooding of 2007 is not repeated.

As an organisation, NABO is the only one which is set up exclusively to look after the interests of Boat Owners and is run totally by boat owners. We now find ourselves facing the need to look closely at how we can best remain focussed in looking after the interests of our members, and whether we need to concentrate our efforts with the limited resources available in terms of member input. There are many issues which beset the Waterways and Rivers in these interesting times, and we may well have to decide which we have to give urgent attention to and which we will have to defer until we are more capable of tackling them properly. It's not so much a case of Council deciding which issues to concentrate on. We would much rather let you, the members, give us your feedback about where we need to direct our efforts.

The Chairman, in his latest Members Email Bulletin (excerpt on Page 4), has pointed out in stark terms how we need to take drastic measures to make sure that we can continue to work on your behalf and retain our place as an important part of the boating scene. His words "Use it or loose it" hit the nail on the head and so we are seeking your help to find out how we can best fulfil your wishes in the coming years. Elsewhere in this issue you will find a plea for your ideas and thoughts on where best your Council should proceed in the coming months. Please take a little time to let us know what you want and, if possible, how you may be able to help – either by thinking about joining Council, or by volunteering your services in any way you can. Your contribution would be very gratefully appreciated.

It might be worthwhile pointing out that the Constitution allows for up to 12 Council members, but there has to be a minimum of 4. Since the AGM in November last year, we are now down to 7 council members, and with the news that both Carole and Stuart Sampson will be stepping down so that they can concentrate on the building of their new boat, with the eventual aim of cruising extensively in Europe. Unless we can get some new blood onto Council we could find ourselves with only 5 Council members – a dangerously low number!

The combined input into the day-to-day administration of NABO by Stuart and Carole has been huge and they will be a hard act to follow. However, on a positive note they have indicated that they may continue to play some part in Council work – Stuart for example has indicated that he would like to continue as editor of NABO News for at least another year which will give us a chance to look at all the other aspects of what we do and consult extensively with you, the members.

Rest assured, however, that NABO will continue to be active and influential in the boating scene, fighting for the best interests of all boat owners, and with your help we can go from strength to strength.

*Howard Anguish*

## NABO seeks your help

You will have seen that we face a challenging year in 2008. Council are very conscious of the fact that we might have to take drastic action in the coming months to continue in our role as an active and vital part of the boating community - the only association devoted to being the voice of boat owners.

We would urge you to spare a few minutes by reading the following questions and, even more importantly, to let us have your opinions and ideas. NABO is YOUR Association- please help us to help you; it's only by consulting with members in this way that we can continue to be effective and prominent in representing your views to the men in suits!

Ideally we would appreciate your replies/input by the end of February at the latest, so that they can be considered at the next Council meeting which is on 8th March.

Many thanks for your time.

For convenience, Howard will act as first point of contact and collate all responses to present to Council. Please let him have your views, either by post, by e-mail, or you can telephone if you prefer.

**HOWARD ANGUISH** 2 Broadley Croft, Welton, Brough, East Yorks HU15 1TD  
Tel 01482 669 876 **vice.08@nabo.org.uk**

For those who do not benefit from Members' Email Bulletins, here is the text Howard refers to from the bulletin distributed on the day after the January Council meeting:-

*"The first topic covered by a somewhat diminished Council was 'Where do we go from here?'. With only seven elected members, reduced yesterday to five due to prior commitments and travelling difficulties, there was much discussion about the future consequences of losing two more, namely Carole and myself, at the end of the NABO year. Despite having come very close to 'throwing in the towel' recently due to seeming lack of support in certain areas, I am committed to remaining chairman till the 2008 AGM, after which I may or may not stand for another year as an ordinary Council member depending on the rate of progress of new projects.*

*Unless there is a vast improvement in the number standing for election in 2008/9, the only alternative would seem to be to curtail and prioritise the activities of NABO so a smaller nucleus of volunteers could handle it. Various activities were considered for 'the chop', including NABO's online services, events, merchandising and even NABO News (I could carry on with this, maybe in a leaner form, even if I left Council, but it might be difficult beyond the shores of the UK.).*

*Having received notice that Charles Moore no longer wants to service the website - thanks for what you have done so far, Charles - the nether reaches of the site could easily be pruned, e.g. the Members Only section. Services designed to attract more members like the moorings list, 'Ask NABO', Crime reporting etc have had very little input so could go. Online surveys and even the Waterway Reports Forum were discussed.*

*I guess the well known adage 'Use Them or Lose Them' is applicable here".*

## NABO MEMBERS SURVEY - 2008

- 1 What issues do you think we should concentrate on in the coming months – including any new issues which you might wish us to take up on behalf of members?
- 2 What issues (if any) are we presently pursuing which you think could be put on the 'back burner'?
- 3 Are there any services which you regard as 'redundant'?
- 4 Is there anything else you would wish us to provide as part of your membership?
- 5 Have you any other comments/ suggestions or ideas which you would like us to consider? (e.g. regarding relationships with other voluntary bodies)



6 Would you be willing to consider putting your name forward for Council?

7 Can you offer any help or advice with the production of NABO News?

8 NABO's website needs someone to run it on a day to day basis to keep it up to date – do you have the skills and are you willing to help?

9 After November we may need someone to take on the role of General Secretary – this does not necessarily have to be a Council member. Are you interested?

10 Have you any other skills which you think may help NABO?

11 Last but not least - your name please.



# BW CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

## THE ONLINE SURVEY

### Thank you!

I want to thank everybody who has responded so far. Overall, you thought about and clicked some 12.000 buttons for us, and wrote comments in many cases too. You took your chance to have your say about the things that matter to you, but those who haven't yet still can.

The survey remains open on [www.nabo.org.uk/survey.html](http://www.nabo.org.uk/survey.html) (notice we have simplified the address but the old one still works)

### More please

Statisticians, and those who want an excuse to ignore the results, will say there still aren't enough responses to make the results representative and meaningful.

However, very important decisions are often made in this world by amalgamating the opinions of far fewer people than have responded to this survey, so it would be wrong to dismiss the findings so far as totally invalid. Imprecise maybe to a degree, but the margin of error only halves when you double the number of responses – it is a law of diminishing returns. Diminishing maybe, but don't let that put you off.

### Surprises?

We can't nit-pick about priorities or performance to the nearest one percent at this point, but certain things are becoming very clear.

The requirement to communicate in Welsh trails way behind with a score of just ten percent for importance to you generally, and only seven percent in Wales and Border Counties! Is that requirement only there just for for political correctness? (What about Gaelic? I saw a fascinating programme about Thomas Telford in Gaelic over Christmas, with English subtitles I hasten to add)

Predictably, 'Welcome' signs don't rate highly in your priorities either, but standards involving hazard and strong stream warnings do.

As for performance, it is no surprise that items concerning vegetation are near the bottom of the ratings, as are standards concerning depth. Perhaps the only one that rates higher than the anecdotal evidence would suggest is the 'Canalphone'. I have heard this service much maligned but in the returns you rate its performance quite highly, so maybe this survey is giving a voice to the otherwise silent majority.

### The 'Peter and Paul' Graph

I have plotted a quick visual aid to the results so far for my own benefit, but have been advised not to broadcast it to the world at large until we can be sure that every boater who wants to has responded.

On this graph, the further to the left an item is, the less important you feel it is. The higher up it is, the better BW is seen to be achieving it. So from BW's point of view, standards near the top left are unimportant things they are doing well.

Perhaps they are the 'Peters' that could be robbed to pay the 'Pauls' down to the bottom right. They are the things that you see as important but badly done.

It may not be possible to divert resources from one aspect of the service to another but it is our duty to tell BW how we would like them to spend their limited funds – that's what NABO is about.

I don't think many of these findings will surprise BW. They have been hearing about vegetation from your representatives for years now and have even adopted the catchphrase 'Veg Pledge' which was originally coined in this magazine. What this survey is intended to do is to convince them that your representatives really are representative. Will they take notice? Only time will tell.

## YOU SAY



"Surely MOST standards for People and Performance should be achievable immediately? How much is it going to cost to count performance against all these standards?"

"Clarify: standards for dredging"

"No mention is made anywhere of any facilities for disabled boaters. If there are no standards some should be produced, and acted upon."

"Bank staff and those on the ground are Good. However management are often disingenuous and make promises to the future that they invariably don't keep!"

"Our experience as long time boaters is that "field" staff are generally excellent within their abilities whilst "office" staff are often less knowledgable/helpful/friendly. Inexperience generally (employment practice?) seems to be progressively degrading staff performance."

"Regarding uniform, It needs to add 'identifiable'. Present BW work-wear is not distinctive enough from a distance amongst crowds also wearing blue."

"How can BW expect their staff to promote their company in a positive manner when both their staff and customers both know that BW has not got a clue about their customers needs?"

"Voice mail greetings should be kept to a minimum by staffing telephones to the levels required, and I would like to see the criterion: 'and unfailingly return the call within 24 hours' added to this standard!"

"Here we go again, you cannot welcome somebody with a sign. If you look the word up in a dictionary you find that welcomes and greetings are personal and therefore cannot be made by a sign."

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO STIRLING?

### *Stuart Sampson unearths some forgotten papers*

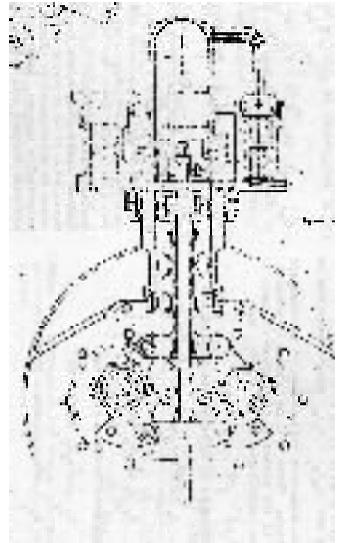
When you have to downsize your chattels with the prospect of life afloat, you are bound to make some discoveries. Turning out the drawers of a late 17th century cabinet that really wouldn't suit life on a little ship, I discovered that, back in the 20th century (early 80s to be precise) before I even knew Carole, I had whiled away some hours gathering information on the 'Stirling Cycle Machine' and the prospect of really quiet propulsion on a canal boat.

It seemed so promising at the time, with papers from the engineering faculties of Cambridge University, King's College London and the Royal Naval Engineering College, and, slightly less academic, a Swedish firm called United Stirling, which seemed to be manufacturing usable engines. Attempts to find them now on Google keep throwing up a Scottish football team!

The naval college project was exactly what I was wanting, a study of the pros and cons of Stirling engines for narrow boats, but, before I tell you what they concluded, a little background that I hope won't remind you too much of the dust from blackboard chalk. Back in 1816 an Ayrshire cleric, after whom the machine was named, created a piston engine that managed to work without introducing any nasty fire or drippy steamy stuff into the cylinders. A trapped slug of dry gas was shunted alternately from a hot zone to a cold zone and back, expanding and contracting and so driving the piston down and up.

Wonderfully simple, particularly if the gas was common-or-garden air. You can get a working model using air from Nauticalia. Stirling's engine has no valves to clatter, no explosive sounding orifices, and silky smooth torque. Nor does it have any boiler feed or condenser vacuum pumps and water gauges to check. All it needs is a source of heat and a source of cool. Cool is no problem in a boat surrounded by water and the heat can be from anything, but to compete with a diesel, that heat must be hot enough to at least make things glow red.

But there are snags and we need a little more science to explain. That torque comes from pressure on the piston(s) which depends how much hotter the 'hot' is relative to the 'cold'. This difference is multiplied by the static gas pressure and hereby lies the problem. To get enough power out of a sensible sized engine you need the working gas under a lot of pressure and you have to heat it to red heat in a heat exchanger with minimum 'dead' volume and plenty of surface area, hence thin walls are needed made of a material that is strong at 600° C or higher. No chance of good performance with cast iron or aluminum then, modern metallurgy





### ***I REMEMBER THE GOOD OLD DAYS says Grumpy Old Man of the River***

Maybe I have grown more cynical in my old age but it seems to me that a lot of the fun has gone out of boating.

When I was a lad people with boats were either wealthy (the minority) or enthusiastic tyros (there's a word you don't see much nowadays) of more modest means. This was way back in the 1960's when private pleasure boating was just beginning to be taken seriously. Canal craft at that time were generally either traditional wooden cabin cruisers, ships' lifeboat conversions or converted working boats which were plentiful when trading ceased. River boats were of wooden construction, many of them having been built by long-established boat builders using well-proven techniques. Steel was not a material that found favour and narrow boats were a rarity on the rivers. Most certainly, canal hire boats rarely ventured on to moving water and the few river hire craft that were in use were basically the same design as the privately owned craft. Engines were of two basic types – either smelly 2-stroke outboards with an incredible thirst for petrol or inboard petrol engines based on popular family car engines. They used simple technology – side valves, carburettors and the like. Sea-going craft frequently employed diesel engines which again were fairly basic and mainly derived from industrial applications. Maintenance of boat and engine would be an ongoing labour of love but not an expensive prospect even if craftsmen were employed. Fuel costs were certainly very low – diesel was on sale at the equivalent of 6p per gallon and petrol was readily available at the waterside at an affordable price.

Then came the revolutionary new material that we called fibreglass. Now more commonly known as GRP. It was heralded with a promise of low maintenance and virtual indestructibility. No one suspected that these new hulls would actually absorb water, suffer from osmosis or burn uncontrollably in the event of a fire.

The traditional river boats were soon outnumbered by plastic clones lacking the style and variety of wooden boats. But everyone wanted the modern technology and new gadgets such as colour televisions. Boat ownership had suddenly become more complicated and expensive. Officialdom now began to rear its ugly head. Previously free passage through locks now required payment and boats had to be registered on the rivers. Rules and regulations were introduced where previously none had existed or had been enforced. And it has got progressively worse ever since. We now have to contend with byelaws, boat safety initiatives, compulsory insurance, a shortage of places to keep our boats and having to pay through the nose for the privilege with higher costs for every aspect of our pastime and yet more restrictions on enjoying it. They are killing all the fun.

## FACILITY -

This may be old news but there is a lot of sense in digging it out again.

Once upon a time there was a Boating Facility Working Group, and a Mooring Contracts Working Group.

Simon Robbins, who was NABO's representative on the latter, announced to Council that he thought both groups' work had ground to a halt. Perhaps we should refresh our minds.

The last meeting of the Facility Group was more about Customer Service Standards, but they also asked for members' views on whether there should be a formal definition of a facility and what qualified it for inclusion in the Boaters' Guides.

NABO Council did a lot of work on this and even if BW isn't interested, you might be, so here is a condensed version of our response.

FACILITY	MINIMUM INFO FOR BOATERS GUIDES
'Formal' Visitor Moorings	Length, What there is to be visited
Secure Visitor Moorings	Length. Access provision for boaters
Boatyards	Services offered. Contact details
Information Boards	
Crane	State crane's purpose and capabilities
Dry dock	Size/capacity, cover. DIY? Operators' contact details,
Electric hook-up	Payment system in use, Water?
Elsan emptying	Any restrictions on toilet fluids
Fuel	Fuels supplied, name of LPG supplier
Info about boater facilities	
Stoppage Info	
Laundry	Payment method. Details of operator
Pump-out	DIY?, payment method. Operator
Rubbish Disposal	What is acceptable, recycling?
Water Points	Number of outlets useable together

## OR NO FACILITY?

<b>MINIMUM STANDARD</b>	<b>OTHER DESIRABLES</b>
Attachments for mooring lines no more than 5m apart. Gauge depth of waterway to within 400mm of bank. At least 700mm at the bank. Vegetation <100mm high. Signs to show extent and time limits legible from a boat mid-channel looking over moored boats.	Lines can be secured back on boat, 1m+ gap between boats and cycles/cars. Grass for dogs
No public access within 4m of boats. Fencing unscalable, unless there is 24/7 security service, plus above	No opportunity for missile throwing at boats. Boater lockable gate
Weather/vandal resistant, Placed at Locks and Visitor moorings where boaters can land to read them. Updated weekly. Stoppage information, BW facilities nearby. Local office contacts. Special navigation advice.	Local amenities if at Visitor Moorings
Safely: Lift out and move to hardstanding; Lift out to low-loader; lift partially for stern gear repair.	
Drain or fill in less than an hour and provide adequate support for any vessel using it. Enough working space. Safe access steps. Waterway pollution prevention	Mains power and water Protection from rain.
RCD and overcurrent protection. 15A capacity. Display of used or unused units. Within 5m of mooring	Water tap
Designed for no splash back. Trap level > 500mm below rim. Unobstructed outlet > 100mm dia Rinse water from short hose clear of fouling. Place for cassette cap so it doesn't fall in hopper. Adequate flush. Hand washing facilities.	Privacy and weather protection. Well signed.
(note, different suppliers' bottles cannot be exchanged)	
Accurate, up to date, on notice boards and at all offices. Signs at facilities points to show cruising hours to adjacent points PLUS faults or recent removal.	
Instantly recognisable notices at all junctions where a diversionary route can be taken and at the last turning point before stoppage. Also on all boards within the Unit and neighbouring Units. Updated or removed quickly.	Scheduled stoppage plans available as at present.
Washer and drier operated by coins or cards.	Iron and board?
Mooring so outlet within hose reach. Enough vacuum and time to drain all tanks. Water available	Not to obstruct towpath and towlines. Off-side
Collection rate suitable for demand. No vermin, wasp and health hazards. Usable by all.	Access possible carrying several bags of rubbish.
Recognisable from mid channel. Potable water. Mooring for gauge size boat and waiting space. Pressure to feed 20 Litres per minute through a lay-flat hose with all outlets in use. Good seal to standard 'HoseLock' fittings.	Tap(s) within 10m of both ends of mooring. Shut-off when access closed to stop dripping

# CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



I wish you all the very best for the rest of 2008. I dare not use the word 'prosperous' in a New Year greeting to boaters, however belated, but we can always hope! Nor will I say any more about the future of NABO in this column, that is covered in other articles, and, more importantly, by other people.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have responded in their various ways to BW's Licensing consultation. I am sure everybody who has read the document will have all thought long and hard about it. There are some truths in there. The waterways do need more spent on them to keep them in good shape and the Pleasure Craft Licence is good value – or is it?

It might seem so on the face of it. For what you, as one person, might spend on a summer holiday, your whole family and friends can be afloat all the year round. Not only can you visit those marvels of engineering that make the waterways of this country so special, but you can actually use them. You can drift along that seemingly unsupported silvery ribbon stretched by Thomas Telford from Fron to Trevor across the Dee valley. You can run off two year's worth of water for a household each time you step down through the stunning scenery of Airedale or Calderdale. You can stroll back to your own bed after a concert at Birmingham Symphony Hall, or tie up closer to historic cities like Chester or Bath than the pricey hotels where American tourists are relieved of their dollars. You can enjoy a different view from your galley window each day and you can help yourself to drinking water, chemical toilet and rubbish disposal.

But – note – the word 'can' appears in every sentence. Licences allow, but they don't actually guarantee any return. A BW licence **allows** you to float your boat on waters under BW's jurisdiction.

That's all.

The benefits I listed are not part of BW's contract with you – they just happen, many of them are due to the efforts made by Brindley, Telford and their colleagues, or just by being in this green and pleasant land.

However it seems as though boaters are still happy with the licence as a means of paying BW, but many would like to see a firmer commitment to value if the cost of a licence is going to rise as steeply as threatened. There are stirrings in this respect. When we invited Simon Salem, BW's Marketing Director, aboard our boat last summer he almost took the words out of our mouths on the subject of boaters wanting more in return for increased fees. Now, even though eight years late, BW has unveiled Customer Service Standards. Also I have been asked if I would act as a point of contact for a research project at Cranfield University on modelling waterway facility 'Gap Analysis'. Should we be saying, "*Better late than never*", or something to do with horses and stable doors?

It would be wrong, however, to take a blinkered perspective by considering the value of licences in isolation. It would be like falling for those free holiday voucher offers where you find you have to pay extra, at full price, for travel – and meals – and excursions –

and unpaid leave because the timing doesn't suit.

Most boaters have to find somewhere to leave their boat when not in use and reserving even a length of indifferent towpath for this purpose can cost up to three times as much as the licence fee. Then there is insurance – and maintenance – and fuel – and BSS – all of which are costing more each year.

So, if the licence is such a small part of this, what is the problem with an over-inflation rise? The problem is cumulative – camels and straws. Just how far can BW push a licence increase before the whole inland boating economy collapses and we have canals strewn with abandoned boats and marinas turning into

graveyards like the Cheshire flashes became after the demise of cargo carrying? Will this happen anyway? Can the situation be saved by having a licence **reduction**, or will we need a reduction in the price of moorings too?

BW's Chief Executive admits that setting the licence fee is a matter of judgement rather than having any economic basis. He is in command of what could well be a sinking ship, but will he be the last to leave it? I am sorry but I have every intention of leaving before him, hopefully to cruise Continental waters.

Funny that – I hear that there is move afoot to see how other countries afford their waterways. Another "*Better late than never*"?

*Stuart*



Well maintained 'Edge Veg' and water depth on the Canal Lateral à la Marne. If the French can do it...? [Photo courtesy of David Beaumont]

# STOP PRESS

## CAR RENTAL DISCOUNT

Your enterprising General Secretary has negotiated a discount on car rental with – you guessed – Enterprise Rent-a-Car. They are the ones who come to wherever you are, take you to their nearest base and return you when you have finished with the car. Ideal for boaters.

The small print on the advert below reads:- *Discounts valid at all UK locations. Terms and conditions apply. Normal rental qualifications apply. Availability is limited and other restrictions apply. Please ask for full details.*

Sorry, we can't give you numbers, you will have to ring quoting **8UA4015** to find out what the discounted rate is for your requirements. We believe the discount is the same as offered to the Caravan Club.

### Exclusive discounted rates for all NABO Members



Call your local branch  
now for more details on  
**0870 350 3000**

Just quote **8UA4015**



Discounts valid at all UK locations. Terms and conditions apply. Normal rental qualifications apply. Availability is limited and other restrictions apply. Please call for full details.

## YOU SAY



"BW should have responsibility to clear a suitable navigational width in the canal to allow two boats of that canal's dimensions to pass, except in exceptional circumstances. The summit pound of the Kennet & Avon has heavy growth of rushes that restricts width and causes safety problems, especially with wide boats.."

*RCR Advert*

### ***I REMEMBER THE GOOD OLD DAYS says Grumpy Old Man of the River***

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When I was a lad people with boats were either wealthy (the minority) or enthusiastic tyros (there's a word you don't see much nowadays) of more modest means. This was way back in the 1960's when private pleasure boating was just beginning to be taken seriously. Canal craft at that time were generally either traditional wooden cabin cruisers, ships' lifeboat conversions or converted working boats which were plentiful when trading ceased. River boats were of wooden construction, many of them having been built by long-established boat builders using well-proven techniques. Steel was not a material that found favour and narrow boats were a rarity on the rivers. Most certainly, canal hire boats rarely ventured on to moving water and the few river hire craft that were in use were basically the same design as the privately owned craft. Engines were of two basic types – either smelly 2-stroke outboards with an incredible thirst for petrol or inboard petrol engines based on popular family car engines. They used simple technology – side valves, carburettors and the like. Sea-going craft frequently employed diesel engines which again were fairly basic and mainly derived from industrial applications. Maintenance of boat and engine would be an ongoing labour of love but not an expensive prospect even if craftsmen were employed. Fuel costs were certainly very low – diesel was on sale at the equivalent of 6p per gallon and petrol was readily available at the waterside at an affordable price.

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## BROADS and RIVERS

### WHITE IS SO YESTERDAY!

We are given to believe by the GreenBlue that there is a pollution problem on the Norfolk Broads due to anti-fouling. Prior to 1976, the favoured coating to prevent marine growth on the underside of boats contained a nasty substance called TriButyl Tin (TBT). When this was banned, 'marine' life in the Broads began to recover, but there are still layers of sediment contaminated with this stuff.

The first question asked is – what can be used instead? There seem to be three alternatives: copper (or more specifically cuprous) based anti-fouling, slippery paints or self eroding paints.

It seems the copper is not as much of a problem as 'heavy metal-phobes' think, as copper in small doses is actually needed by underwater life (and the rest of us!). Slippery paints, using Teflon or PTFE, i.e. non-stick, is easily washed down to remove growth but has to be applied to a suitably smooth hull to work and even GRP gel coats are not smooth enough. Self eroding paints do, by definition, call for regular re-application. One of the problems with copper salts is that by nature they are not white, or certainly don't stay that way if they are doing their job.

On the Broads you can have any colour boat, as long as it is white. Below the waterline, boats left in the water cease to be white, so, to keep them white, either don't leave them in, or anti-foul them regularly, preferably with white anti-fouling. However the white pigment (titanium dioxide) tends to smother the cuprous salts and reduce their efficiency.

This is great for the paint traders, but even they are getting alarmed at the quantity they sell being lost into the aquatic environment. One possible solution, that may be required of any boat maintenance yard, is to trap and filter the wash-down water. If nothing else, laying a wide loop of thick rope across the slipway to catch the paint particles, and a good sweep up when it is dry, is reckoned to be about 70% efficient. Complex filtering is preferred with boats being done over a shallow pan to catch the wash water and perhaps recycle it.

But why is anti-fouling being used on the Broads but not, it appears, in fresh water waterways elsewhere? Barnacles don't grow in fresh water. You might get a few Zebra Mussels but the risk is minimal on the navigable parts. Is it just fashion or are the Broads the refuge of seafaring folk looking for more sheltered cruising whose habits die hard?

Perhaps the answer is to change the fashion. Why do cruisers have to be white? How about spreading the message that the 2008 colour is slime green and white is so 'yesterday'?

*Note – This article was based on a seminar held at the London Boat Show by the Green Blue, the organisation promoting environmentally friendly practices in boating, and the Broads Authority. There was a BW representative there who asked about canal related aspects and was reassured that coatings used for steel craft were not seen as anything like as injurious to wildlife if used sensibly and according to manufacturers instructions. Catching and disposing of wash-down sediment was still regarded as worthwhile, however, wherever possible.*

## SOME SUSTAINABLE THOUGHTS

Welcome to the second article on sustainable boating. In this article I will look at some of the things we can all do to make our boating a little more efficient, and hopefully make our lives easier too. Firstly though, I have discovered there is now a company starting to print solar panels! They are only aimed at the commercial market of now, but it is happening!

An efficient boat is becoming increasingly important for many boaters, from liveaboards to weekend cruisers. This is because boats are using more and more power, and diesel is getting more and more expensive, as is the range of technologies we have on board. Reducing our costs and/or our impact on the environment is very relevant to most of us but we do not want to lose any of our home comforts. This is where efficiency comes in.

### **Heating**

How efficient the heating is in the boat will depend on the type of stove/boiler and how well insulated our boats are. A well insulated boat reduces the need for excess heating. This is obviously easier to change when designing and building the boat. We have to stay within BSS restrictions, so our options are limited.

Sprayfoam is definitely the most common insulation at the moment. It has replaced polystyrene and rockwool. The ease of application and thermal properties make it popular, especially as it sticks to the steel work and stops condensation. It is however not very environmentally friendly. The Thinsulate insulation is supposed to be better in this department, but it is pricey.

I have also come across, and seen, thermal paint. It is made using small plastic beads in the paint. It is best used as an interior paint as it is textured. Sound too good to be true? My experience is that it is!

Spreading heat around the boat is also important. Radiators up and down the boat are very beneficial. I prefer gravity fed/thermo-siphon systems. These use basic principles of physics to circulate heat. The system depends on a slight rise from the stove/boiler to the radiators, usually in 22-28mm copper pipe. It costs more than pumped systems initially, but over time it pays off. There is no need to depend on a supply of electricity or vulnerable noisy circulation pumps just to light the fire and be warm, this is a big positive! I get my hot water in winter from this system. Free hot water!

For those who already have a system installed, but would like to improve things a little more, I can really recommend the Eco fan. A very clever way of moving the air about, and spreading the heat.

### **Electric**

This can be a much easier area in which to make changes. Well maintained circuits, suitable wire size to reduce voltage drop (I always use thicker wire), and efficient equipment is key. Running things off 12volt rather than through inverters is a big help. (Inverters are roughly 90% efficient).

It is worth thinking about what we use the most, and seeing if we can reduce their power consumption.

**Fridges:** 12 volt fridges are getting more efficient, and are often replacing gas. Safety concerns and Boat Safety requirements have encouraged sales. Allowing good ventilation around the fridge, including holes in the floor at the back of the fridge, enabling cool air from the bilges is a great help. Good for the bilges too!

**Television:** If we like to admit it or not, many of us watch television regularly. TVs have moved on massively in the last few years. LCD televisions are increasingly common, cheap, and often 12 volt. They are also flat and take less than half the power of the older style. So, 12 volt, low power, cheap and more room in the boat. Brilliant!

**Lighting:** Many types of light bulbs can be swapped for more efficient ones. Most “bus bulbs”/ filament bulbs can have halogen replacements, using half the power, and give the same amount of light. I have been experimenting with the new led bulbs that fit into MR11 and MR16 fittings. They use very little power (2-4 watts per bulb) and give out up to 20 watts of light. To achieve this light there are 2 types. “Clusters”, which are collections of up to 48 individual LEDs. There is also a new breed of LEDs, called Luxeon. They have only one LED, and are set in an attractive aluminium case.

LED lights come in a variety of colours, from UV, to yellow, red green, and more importantly white. As with the older strip lights, there is a choice between cool white and warm white. I have some of the warm versions of the clusters and the Luxeon. I find them a bit too yellow. I am yet to try the cooler white bulbs. The clusters are roughly £5 each and the Luxeons are nearer £20!! The



angle of beam varies a lot too. I am keen for them to be better than they are. I am more likely to reduce my 20 watt bulbs for 10w for now and wait for things to move on again. With filament bulbs being phased out over the next 5 or so years, there will be improvements.

I have been using 12volt compact fluorescents. These are just like the environmentally friendly bulbs that are used in houses, but made to run off 12 volt. They use 7 watts, and give out 40 watts of light. They fit into normal traditional house type fittings. Although they are hard to position because of head height issues in boats, I think they are a fantastic option. The light is great, and the amount of power they use is minimal. Made by Steca, they are just under £10 each. As with all these things, the Internet is the best way to find out more.



### **Hot water**

There are all sorts' ways to get hot water on a boat. Many older boats, and some newer ones use "Paloma" style instantaneous gas water heater. There are also other ways such as using the engine or back boiler on a stove. The later systems can be great ways to use that spare heat. I will just quickly share an idea I am putting into my new boat. As it was a new build, we installed a matrix of copper piping under roof. This is a solar water heater. From the outside of the boat, you cannot tell it is there. It is also not visible from inside. It is about half a meter by just over a meter, and hidden under a removable panel. This is connected to the triple coiled calorifier, via a small circulation pump. The pump has it's own little solar panel. There is no battery. The pump only works when it is sunny- which is when the water gets hot.

So, that was some thoughts on more efficient boating. There are obviously more things we can do. Hopefully they can make our lives a little simpler, quieter, cheaper and easier in ways we can see and ways that we can't.

*Andy Colyer*

"The Chairman & Council? – graceful on the surface but paddling like hell underneath!"

Courtesy of Howard Anguish



### In support of “Holding back on subs”

Boaters, and I must add, mainly private and shared ownership, are by far the worst, having a total disregard for all other boaters. “It’s my boat and I do as I like!!”

British Waterways Bye Laws 1965, Section 14 (c) States that the maximum speed over the bed of the Canals is 4 mph.

I have been boating for 16 years and was told by an old boater – use your boat to see the country side and wildlife, wise words which I have tried to live up to, NO BOATER should be in a hurry, roads are for speed, canals are for relaxation.

Let’s lose the Motorway mentality on the canals,

Thought for Boaters: ‘ If I can do it tomorrow, it will wait until the day after.’

*John Ogden*

### Increasing Cost of Boating

It looks as though boating costs for the private boater are set to double within next 3 years. The effects on the private boat owning community will be profound so it is salutary to understand where these extra costs are coming from. Egalitarian it is not.

Three separate costs are involved. Licences, moorings and diesel.

**Licence costs** are set to increase, although until the current consultation is complete we do not know the exact effect. However, it was made very clear in the consultation document that the bulk of the increase will fall upon the private boat owner. BW has already given the hire boat community an assurance that their licence increase will be in line with the past because hire companies were struggling last summer and will be in even more trouble this summer. Other canal users will

be largely unaffected. As before, walkers and cyclists pay nothing, and fishermen pay little more than BW’s costs in administering fishing.

Why must BW resource more funds from licences? Government declines to increase overall funding and DEFRA has reduced its contribution. Government’s spending faces ever more towards the EU. DEFRA’s reduction would appear in some part in response to the fine levied on DEFRA by the EU, in addition to its own incompetence. The fine was in consequence of DEFRA’s incompetence in managing the British farming industry and had nothing to do with waterways. A fine levied by the EU on a government body can only have one consequence – increased costs to the citizen.

In short, private boater’s licences are to double within 3 years, in significant part as a consequence of our membership of the EU.

**Moorings costs.** Last year BW introduced silent auctions for the rent of its moorings as berths become available. It appears that some moorings have gone for three times the guide price. From discussions with private marinas, it seems inevitable that costs for non-BW moorings will double within a few years. This will probably also lead to increased charges for those already moored on BW moorings (and therefore not directly involved in auctions). Why the sudden change in BW’s moorings policy. Impossible to be certain, but it is probably part of the mechanism to recover from DEFRA’s reduced funding. So the EU is behind the increase in mooring charges as well.

**Diesel.** Ever since we can remember there has been only minimal duty levied on the red diesel that we use. After all duty on fuel is to pay for the provision and maintenance of the road network (to some

paying separately to use the canals. However, the EU has decided that this is anti competitive. One might ponder 'uncompetitive with what?' – presumably the boating industry in other European countries! Again, the increase falls only on the private boater as hire companies will be able to reclaim their duty. Hiring customers will not experience any additional charge.

Again, the increase is likely to double the cost of diesel from 2009.

### Could costs increase even further?

Possibly. The likely situation is that costs will continue to increase until the revenue stream is impacted by private boat owners refusing to play. Of course the private boat owner is captive because to refuse to play he must sell his boat. The die is already cast and I have, for the first time, found myself questioning the cost/benefit of boat ownership. A casualty of our membership of the EU.

*Chris Boxall (cruiser Cambrian)*

### To all of you faithful volunteers

I feel somewhat helpless as we are NABO members from the US, but are only on our narrowboat in the UK for about 6 months each year. We are as guilty as many others in allowing you all to do all the "heavy lifting" in the effort to maintain a cruising lifestyle in the UK that we love and appreciate. Fortunately we have you, and especially Stuart, to tirelessly promote our agenda. Unfortunately we all tend to take advantage of the very people who constantly do all the work. So, thank you, and while I can't hold an actual position at NABO, I will try to help in any way I can.

The sad part of this is that I sense a feeling of defeat in the boating community. Virtually everything seems to be going against us and that is causing a feeling of desperation. Long term boaters are getting out of boating, or at least talking about it. I must admit that we are investigating moving our boat to France or Ireland, or the possibility of hiring our boat to others in the months we're back in the US. Our retirement dream is turning into a VERY expensive way of life (not helped by the exchange rate).

I'm not smart enough to know what the answer is, but somehow we need that fighting spirit back.

Thanks for everything you do,

*John and Ann Glaves  
nb Rhapsody*

### The Vote for CCs

After years of disenfranchised cruising, I saw a notice in the Barge, Honey St, saying that if you live aboard and move around you can still have a vote. Just complete and sign a *Declaration of Connection* to the area where you spend most time, and, if possible, but not essential, give an address in that area where election mail can be sent.

I now have a postal vote so can be anywhere on the system at election time.

*Jill Levick*

### Nearly didn't renew

I nearly made a 'conscious decision' not to renew, but who else would I turn to? Why not? 'Cos you seem to have swallowed too much of the BW line. More stern independence of view, please.

*Les*

## YOU SAY



'All vegetation that could hinder navigation should be kept trimmed.'

'When dredging (if ever!) BW fail to acknowledge that some people do have 70 ft boats!'

"All water depth should be adequate for navigation.!"

## POINTS TO PONDER

### ***A column for controversy***

[Caution - opinions expressed here will remain anonymous, are independent of NABO official policy, and statements herein have not been verified as true fact.

Feel free to challenge anything said.

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2008, a new year, new resolutions, new optimism, and a time for looking forward. So what do we see ahead for boaters and boating? Bills, hassle, worry and stress, congestion, boat rage, weeds, nettles, and bureaucracy. It's all depressing stuff, and many of the old school, recognising that boating ain't what it used to be, are selling up and taking to motor homes. Who can blame them? We will be

paying more than anywhere else in Europe for the privilege of navigating an ever shallower ditch, with poorly maintained facilities, overgrown towpaths, and, it seems, a growing number of anti-social types.

So what's the solution? Mebbe we should ask Carole to organise a Challenging Cruise to France, one-way of course.

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Isn't it time the IWA was relieved of representing boaters?

on boating issues and too much duplication of volunteer effort.

Then they could get on with campaigning for the waterways without trying to outdo NABO and other boating groups on moorings, licences, diesel and the like.

Why can't boaters bury the hatchets, forget historical differences and membership numbers, and get together as a recognised combined voice whether their boats are horse drawn, historical, live-aboard, Dutch, club, river or just plain narrow?

There are far too many boating groups without the IWA getting their oar in

## GHUMSTON AND SLAWIT?

### ***The real sound of place names***

**EVESHAM** - Having been born a few miles away and lived there for the next 20 years as a country bumkin we always referred to the place as ASUM [pronounced 'Aysum']. I believe there may even be a local publication called 'Asum Grammer' and the local Journal used to run a column in this unintelligible dialect. My recent returns to the area after 50 years though show that not many of the current locals understand my second language...a typical change in the rural population now predominately retired 'townies'.

*Dave T*

**WOUGHTON** - If boaters come through Milton Keynes they may be stumped with the pronunciation of WOUGHTON on the Green (near Peartree Bridge & Milton Keynes Marina). It is pronounced WOOF TON.

The proposed Milton Keynes to Bedford Canal runs by BROUGHTON Brook & BROUGHTON village. Contrarily it is pronounced BROUGHT ON.

*Libby Culshaw*

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