

INLAND NAVIGATION ISSUES, NEWS, AND VIEWS



Bumper Christmas Issue

- **NABO** - AGM, New chair • **EA** - Floods, Lockhouses
- **BW** Licences, Roving Permits, 6 Challenges, Steady State



Issue 7 – December 2008

SEASON'S GREETINGS TO YOU ALL

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Contributions

Articles, letters, cartoons and photos are always welcome. Readers find two pages, or three with photos, usually long enough, which runs to about 800 to 1000 words. The Editor uses Mac, but Word formats are OK, or plain text.

All copy is re-formatted before use, but if lists, tables or emphasis are beneficial to your articles, we will do our best to reflect the styles.

Letters or articles on paper also welcome, typed if possible. Please ensure we can read your name!

Pictures and illustrations

Colour isn't needed so you can send it as a greyscale JPEG if it saves you time or hassle. Please contact the editor if you wish to send other artwork electronically.

2009 CALENDAR

Council meeting*	NN Copy date
24th Jan	31st Jan
7th Mar	14th Mar
18th Apr	25th Apr
6th June	13th June
11th July	18th July
5th Sep	10th Oct
21st Nov	AGM
28th Nov	5th Dec

**Members are entitled to go to these meetings. Please arrange with Chairman or Gen. Sec.*

NEW CHAIRMAN FOR NABO

NABO Council chose David Fletcher as its new chairman as of the 29th November 2008. Not to be confused with BW's previous Chief Executive, David will keep the waterway movement's trajectory straight by ensuring there is at least one Fletcher involved at high level after the departure of John, the IWA National chairman!

Although only elected to Council this year, David's experience in the oil industry gives him skills to delegate, which he can use to good effect with a strong Council behind him, and skills in management, a firm base from which to launch an assault on the inadequacies of the navigation authorities if need be.

He still intends to continue on the BSS Technical Committee where his engineering background is up to the test of any of the 'boffins' and their unrealistic safety measures.

He introduces himself on page 12.



David, photo courtesy of Val Fletcher

BW ANNOUNCES NEW RATES FOR 2009

BW Licences press release

The decision is informed by the recent period of review and consultation, including recommendations from the British Waterways Advisory Forum (BWAFF), which represents national boating groups and advises BW on strategic issues.

The great majority of those responding to the final phase of consultation (primarily national boating organisations) were opposed to any redistribution of licence fee increases between wide and narrow boats or between those with home moorings and those without. BW has therefore decided not to accept in their entirety the BWAFF proposals.

The decision also has regard to the deteriorating economic climate which could weaken demand for boat licences in 2009. Fees will therefore rise by less than the 11.2% increase previously outlined for most boaters.

The net (excluding VAT) price of BW's boat licences in England and Wales will increase by the following amounts from 1 April 2009. Figures in brackets show the effective increase for individual boaters after taking account of the reduction in the VAT rate just announced.

- Leisure business licences - 7.5%
- Gold licences - 8.2% (5.9%)
- All other licences - 8.5% (6.2%)



British Waterways' marketing and customer services director, Simon Salem comments: *"We are shelving plans to introduce a higher fee for wide beamed boats and for seeking government support for the abolition of the rivers only licence fee. However, we continue to support the view expressed by many boaters in the 2007 consultation that it is unfair that continuous cruisers do not make a contribution to the cost of maintaining the waterways that is commensurate with those who take a home mooring.*

"We appreciate that this is a difficult issue and not all boaters agree on either the extent of the problem or on the solution. Sales of continuous cruising licences [what are they? - Ed.] have been growing significantly and, despite the terms and conditions of the licence, there is evidence that a growing number choose to remain on temporary moorings in relatively narrow geographic areas. The risk of congestion on particularly popular waterways therefore presents a management challenge that we must address.

"BW is therefore considering workable policies to implement during 2009/2010 that will encourage the proportion of boaters without a home mooring but who wish to remain within a specific area of the network to choose an appropriate mooring option. The option of a 'roving mooring permit' could cater for those who like to have no fixed base and cruise short distances between temporary moorings within easy reach of their work or other land-based commitment. By purchasing such a permit, they would no longer be classified as continuous cruisers."

Alongside proposals for a 'roving mooring permit' BW will continue to examine alternative options relating to the structure and pricing of continuous cruising licences. Any proposals, which will seek to avoid penalising those who genuinely cruise extensively around the network, will be discussed with BWA and other representatives of national boating organisations. They will also take account of any relevant market research. At present, no further formal public consultation on the matter has been planned.

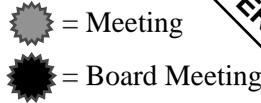
Boat licence fees for Scotland are currently being consulted upon with a proposed 6.3% licence fee increase from April 2009. Transit licences are due to be held at 2008 prices.

NABO Vice-chairman comments on the outcome of an issue he has been heavily involved with: *"It is good that BW has avoided having to sting minorities to make the 'headline rate' fall below the psychological barrier of 10%, but I don't feel genuine continuous cruisers will sleep soundly even with Mr Salem's reassurances.*

"As regards Roving Mooring Permits we have yet to see the details, but we will be keeping an eye on whether they will relieve mooring congestion or just be seen as legalising bridge hopping for money. One concern is how BW determines the size of the zones without creating ultra vires definitions under the 1995 Act and whether bona fide continuous cruisers get victimised for passing through the trial areas without a permit. Our goal is not to destroy the concept but to test it to ensure it doesn't destroy itself under legal scrutiny."

ANATOMY OF A CONSULTATION

This is an attempt to set out diagrammatically the process by which the licence fees for 2009, as just described were set. If nothing else it shows how complex the process is.



2007 - British Waterways sets up written public consultation to set 2008 Licence fees in face of Government Grant cuts.

Robin Evans takes a fact-finding 'road show' around the country.

NABO response calls for better service and 'user champion' on BW Board in return for above-inflation rise.

2008 - Responses collated and rates set. Promise to put responses and suggestions to the British Waterways Advisory Forum. (BWAf) to advise on 2009 rates and structure.

BWAf sub-committee set up to examine licence structure in the light of submissions to 2007 consultation. Boating group members of BWAf invited to nominate representatives.

Committee meets. BW present but contact with 'parent' boating groups discouraged.

Committee passes 'recommendations' to BW.

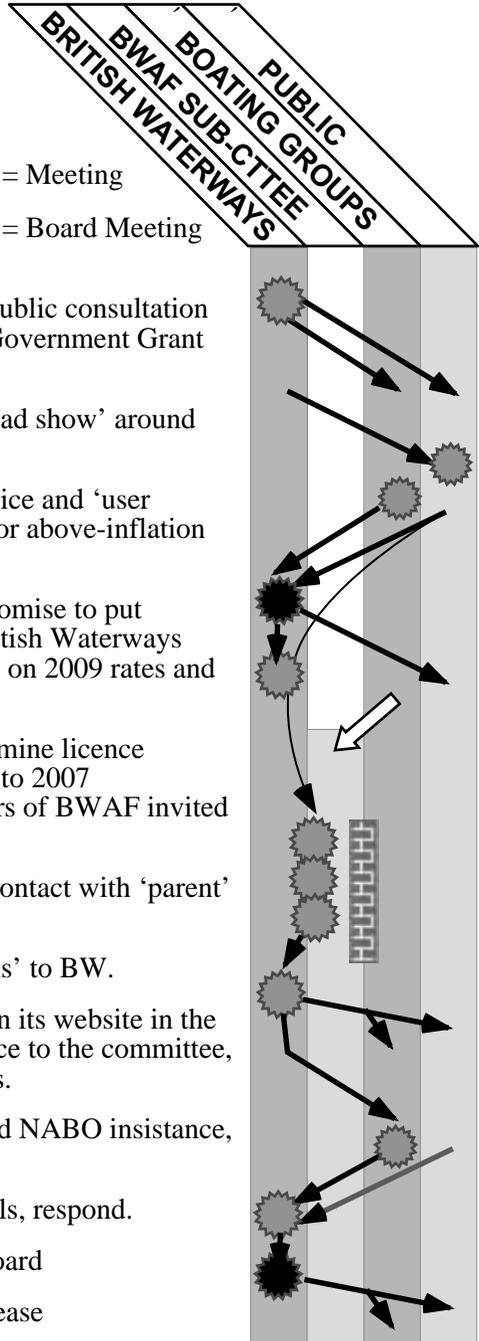
BW posts them, with its response, on its website in the public domain without prior reference to the committee, BWAf as a whole or boating groups.

BW, on BWAf recommendation and NABO insistence, consults boating groups.

Boating groups, and some individuals, respond.

BW collates responses and briefs Board

Nov - Board sets rates and issues press release



NABO'S ANNUAL REFRESH

Not a suit to be seen at the AGM!

True to his promises to a number of members, the outgoing chairman arrived at Stafford Boat Club to chair his last Annual General Meeting clad in a white 'Jacobite' style shirt and a kilt in a lesser known Stuart tartan. Beside him, resplendent in a red frock, was his spouse, the outgoing General Secretary.

The tone was set for a meeting lacking the stuffiness people tend to associate with AGMs. In his 'report', Stuart dispensed with re-iterating the year's events to allow more time for members' questions later, but chose to preempt two likely questions.



The answer to the first was, '*Yes, because it's decidedly cold today*', and to the second – why he was retiring from the chair – he explained that: he had passed his 'use-by' date after five years; that he didn't want to let the members down by going suddenly if his plans to move got the green light; and that the buttons were falling off his blazer and he was no good at sewing! He pointed out that there was no bad feeling driving this change of chairman as had happened in the past, and he promised to continue with NABO News and stay to support his successor.

He thanked everybody who had come and acknowledged the good work of Council and other NABO supporters. A vote of thanks was proposed for him and warmly applauded, and he extended the courtesy to Carole, encouraging more heart-felt applause.

The formal agenda was then followed with little impediment. NABO's financial state was seen to be steady and healthy, with just a few minor questions from the floor concerning advertising revenue – answer: there was none, due to reciprocal arrangements with RCR and Enterprise Car Rental – and donations – answer: £500 given to SOW in the previous year as mandated at an AGM. Annual subscriptions remain unchanged, as does the auditor.

Members were then given the option to vote for the new council en-bloc, which they took, so the Council for 2008/9 would comprise nine members:-

Howard Anguish,	Richard Carpenter,	Andy Colyer,
David Fletcher,	Stephen Peters,	Simon Robbins,
Geoffrey Rogerson,	Brian Rowland,	Stuart Sampson,

- leaving up to three posts vacant for co-options.

The main debate once the meeting had been opened up to the floor was how much of NABO's considerable reserve should be spent legally defending minorities against unjust discrimination. In this case, again, the minority in question was boaters without home moorings, but it was pointed out that it could be another group in the future. There was also useful discussion about improving NABO's public appeal.

The meeting then adjourned to enjoy Stafford Boat Club's excellent hospitality.

Pictures courtesy of Richard Carpenter



During the break the new Council gathered to elect its officers with Geoffrey Rogerson taking the chair as 'elder statesman'. There being no nomination for the office of chairman, the post remained vacant, although some interest was shown by a new Council member.

Stuart Sampson was chosen as Vice-chairman to ensure future continuity, Richard Carpenter added General Secretary to his role as promotions expert and Stephen Peters was re-elected as treasurer.

The afternoon was a chance to grill BW's Customer Operations Director, Vince Moran.

Vince spoke about his role within BW. He liaises between the General Managers of the business units and Robin Evans, and is also responsible for controlling BW expenditure. To achieve a steady state on the waterways, BW needs £125 million. This year, and similarly for the next two years, BW has £95 million. This is not enough to satisfy people's aspirations. The criteria for prioritising expenditure are safety, customer service, and efficiency.

Utilities - fibre optic cabling, water sales, canal crossings (pipes etc.) - yields £20 million. The possibilities of hydro-electric schemes on weirs, and wind farms (or in BW's case, wind allotments) are being explored, as well as trying to obtain funding from local authorities to maintain their local towpaths.



Vince Moran

There was then the opportunity for questions from the floor.

Asked how BW might deal with 10, 000 more boats on the system, he granted there would be more income but possibly unacceptable congestion, but he was not aware of any plans to deal with it.

On the subject of evasion he accepted the problem arose from inaction in the past and it was now up to 10% last year. A boat count was in progress and more boaters were going to offices to licence their craft. A member suggested more rather than less canalside offices might help reduce evasion, or at least better publicity as to where licences could be obtained.

Moorings tenderings – All user groups advised against adopting this system, would BW take any notice? 'You'll be disappointed. BW listened, but has decisions to make'. The strength of feeling against the scheme was transmitted.

The lack of a Customer Service Standard on the frequency of sanitary stations was raised, as was volunteering. Health and Safety, BW's 'screwing as much money as possible out of boaters', and inopportune spending on bollards and 'silly signs' were seen as disincentives.

How BW bonuses were decided was questioned. Directors' bonuses are set by a remuneration committee made up of 4 or 5 non-executive BW Board members.

Vince was thanked and presented with a bottle of Balvenie for giving up his time, and went away with a sheaf of completed questionnaires prepared by member, Graham Lambden, expressing members' dissatisfaction with certain aspects of BW.

DIESEL – THE VERY LATEST NEWS

And it is quite good news for boat owners and suppliers alike.

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have published guidance in the form of Revenue & Customs Brief 49/08 and this explains how the new duty pricing structure will work for pleasure craft with effect from 1 November 2008.

The good news for boaters is that, despite the previous assumptions, we are only required to pay the reduced rate of 5 % VAT on all the red diesel we purchase – irrespective of whether it is for propulsion or domestic heating and lighting.

The good news for boatyards is that they will only have to account for the extra duty they have levied on propulsion fuel after the first 12 months of operating the new scheme, so that should help their cash flow.

The use of rebated fuel (i.e. that with the lowest rate of duty) will only be allowed for commercial craft. This excludes hire boats. The rest of us will have to declare at the point of purchase what proportion of the fuel we intend to use for propulsion. We will then be charged additional duty just on that portion. Any fuel intended for domestic use such as running the engine to charge batteries or fuelling oil-burning stoves or heaters will not attract the extra duty so, in theory, there should be no increase in the price you pay for it.

The retailer will ask you to sign a declaration confirming the percentage of fuel that will be used for propelling a private pleasure craft. They will also need to know your name and address if you are not already a customer. You will need to be honest in your declaration because HMRC may check on you at some future date and if the retailer suspects you are being untruthful they may simply refuse to serve you!

To calculate how much you should be paying you need to know that the current rebated duty is 9.69 pence per litre and the current full rate duty is 50.35 pence per litre. This means the additional duty that must be charged on propulsion fuel is 40.66 pence per litre before VAT is added. The overall additional cost will amount to about 43p per litre.

We have reports that suppliers are baulking at accepting anything other than the 60/40 split regarded as the ‘default’ by HMRC and the British Marine Federation. The chairman of the hire trade body, APCO, of which many canalside suppliers are members, claimed that profit margins are so low that boaters should be grateful that there are any boatyards prepared to sell diesel at all, given the new administrative burden. However an independent supplier is aghast at this attitude, reckoning he will spend perhaps 20 minutes a month on the extra paperwork and software can be bought for under £40 to handle any ratio of propulsion to domestic use that a customer declares. Certainly the price differential round the system shows some retailers must be making a healthy profit.

Whether it should be NABO’s role to publish a ‘white-list’ of suppliers prepared to accept ‘non-standard’ declarations is really up to member’s wishes. Possibly discovery of a helpful supplier should be accepted as a Waterway Report!

Please let us know how the new pricing scheme works for you and if you experience any problems.

A NEW YEAR MESSAGE FROM YOUR TREASURER

For those members who were not present at the AGM in November, I was re-elected as your Hon Treasurer. Thank you to those who attended and voted.

My re-election was preceded, as convention has established, by my threat to resign if membership fees were increased – mainly because of the horrendous administrative burden that any change in subscription places on our able Administrator and the associated cost and effort in re-paying incorrect standing orders. Also, of course, the Association does not presently have any need for additional income. We have healthy balances that we are prepared to expend on important issues as and when the need arises.

Can I now remind existing members to make a conscious effort to check that they are paying the correct annual subscription just once per annum and that their standing order instructions are being correctly interpreted by their banks and building societies?

Finally, and most importantly, NABO needs more members. And you can help by recruiting just one additional boat owner during 2009. There is a membership form in the centre of most newsletters and those of you not on Council are entitled to claim a £5 refund for every new recruit. Three new members and your basic annual subscription is effectively paid for you. Can't be bad!

Happy New Year to all boat owning members – present and future. *Stephen Peters*

MEETINGS - MEETINGS - MEETINGS

Having been rightly evicted from the Chairman's Column I just have a couple of past 'chairmany' things to relate. November is the meeting fatigue month and I am not sure whether it is a good thing to have our AGM at the end of it or not. At least it doesn't land the new chairman right in the deep end.

BW and DEFRA celebrated the 40th Anniversary of Royal Assent of the 1968 Transport Act that effectively began the leisure revolution for the waterways. I was invited to this 'bun fight' on the 6th of November in a permanent marquee on the terraces of the Houses of Parliament, as seen when you cruise the tidal Thames. A cake was cut by the new waterways minister Huw Irranca-Davies, with a 'wide-beam' in icing on the top.

I met the minister again at the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities conference but a few days later. This was high level stuff about waterway funding, local authority involvement and very nearly 'Death by Powerpoint', but another good networking opportunity. It is a shame David has to re-invent all these contacts but NABO stays on the map.

Stuart Sampson



Cake cutting by
BW chairman,
Waterways Minister
and IWAC chairman



Minister with Stuart

Top picture courtesy of BW, Lower picture courtesy of Richard Fairhurst

Some reflections by Sally Ash, BW's head of boating development

Continuous cruisers account for about one in ten of all boats on our waterways, a number that has doubled since 2005/6. Within this group, there appears to be a particular increase in people living afloat but not navigating extensively around the network.

During the summer, an expert group of boaters and boating business representatives nominated by BW's advisory group (BWAf) spent hours analysing and debating proposals submitted by boaters for improving the fairness of BW's licensing system. The latest proposal that continuous cruisers should pay a little more for their licence was developed by this group.

So why does the subject keep coming up?

The answer isn't to do with the waterways' well-publicised need for additional funding. Nor is it because BW has some strange vendetta against continuous cruisers (we think they're a good thing, when they follow the guidelines). BWAf linked the issue to licensing fairness, but in my mind, it's perhaps more to do with questions like *'Are the waterways for boats that move, or for boats that stay put most of the time?'* or *'How many boats can the waterways accommodate without damaging their tranquillity and scenic value?'*

Law makers of the second half of the last century were sensibly cautious about restricting the freedom of people to use the waterways – after all, there had been a bitter battle in the lead up to the 1968 Transport Act about the loss of a public right of navigation on the canals. The 1995 Act is very specific about the circumstances under which BW may refuse to licence a boat – for example, if it is unsafe, or it has no insurance; and the boat must have a home mooring (somewhere where the boat may lawfully be kept when not being used for cruising), unless it *'will be used bona fide for navigation throughout the period of the licence'* The Act also says that when navigating, the boat must not stop *'in any one place'* for more than 14 days. *'Place'* was not defined, but BW's legal team developed guidelines in 2004 which are published on our website at www.britishwaterways.co.uk/mooringguidance

The problem is not with the genuine continuous cruiser but with those who want to live afloat whilst remaining in a particular area without a home mooring. BW has no duty to provide low cost housing, but it is responsible for ensuring that the waterways provide widest public benefit. Colonies of people living aboard boats



that just shuffle occasionally can generate spill over effects on local communities, and where they occupy popular mooring spots, they diminish the enjoyment of boating holiday-makers (some of whom we depend on to become tomorrow's boat owners.)

So what, if anything, should BW be doing about this? Enforcement is obviously necessary, and now that we're close to breaking the back of licence evasion, we should soon be able switch more patrol effort into mooring overstays. However, the associated costs are substantial and no additional income results. For every case where the boat is someone's home, we must budget time and money for obtaining a court order to remove it from the waterway, and before we do this, we must establish beyond reasonable doubt that the boat has 'stayed in the same place' for more than 14 days.

Providing more residential moorings is another no-brainer, until you factor in the need for local authority planning consent. This is an important challenge that we are working with the Residential Boat Owners Association to find a way of tackling.

Another option is to make continuous mooring more expensive (and therefore less attractive) by means of a 'roving mooring permit'. We are still considering this. We must avoid the risk of it enticing marina occupants out into a cheap online alternative. Their number in any area would need to be restricted, acceptable temporary mooring locations defined, and of course, there would still be the question of what to do about those who don't sign up for one of the permits.

Also still under review is the alternative of a higher licence fee for continuous moorers. We are researching simple and reliable means of differentiating these people from continuous cruisers.

No firm proposal to our board on either of these options has yet been made. The devil is in the detail and we are starting to tackle this through a work programme to include market research as well as continued public debate. At present the position remains as published in our 2009 licence price press release (go to www.britishwaterways.co.uk/licenceconsultation08 for a link).

What are your views? Do you think on-line moorings should be permitted to grow indefinitely? If not, how should they be controlled? Are continuous moorers a problem? If so, what's your recommended solution?

Sally Ash

In spite of the lack of letters in this issue, NABO has not put a stop to hearing from readers on this topic, and would be grateful to be 'copied in' on any views you might wish to pass on directly to Sally <sally.ash@britishwaterways.co.uk> or other people in BW.

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



Well this is a shock!

I went for a quiet AGM to think about BSS and User Group Meetings, and got asked to be Chairman for the coming year. I took a week out to think about it and talked at length with Stuart before saying yes. I am very honoured to have been elected by your Council at the follow up meeting, and I will try and give the role the energy it deserves. Our previous chairman had big boots, and they will be tough to fill. He has promised to help me into the role, and maintain continuity. We all owe Stuart and Carole a big thank you for the work they have done over the years.

Me?

So who is this David Fletcher? I will start with who I am not; I am not the ex CE of British Waterways, and I am not related to John, ex chair of IWA. I am a fellow boater, recently retired from a career in the management of oil refinery construction. I continue to work part time as a consultant, but have hopes to spend some time on the canal system. Grown up children and grandchildren also pay a big part in our lives.

Val, my wife, and I have a narrowboat called *Water Avens* which we keep in a marina near Napton on the GU. We have owned her since 2000, and had a period of living aboard, but we currently have a home in Northampton. We have been inveterate boaters for all our lives, having owned a ski boat, canoes, sailing dinghies, and a shared narrowboat, all at different times. We have also taken many hire boat holidays on the coast, Broads, canals and rivers. At one time or another we have been BCU and RYA members, but now are members of the IWA, RBOA and NABO. So together we have a little experience around the system, but like

everybody who has a house, we wish we spent more time on the water!

An overview

So what are my views about the current issues for boaters? Clearly the costs of everything that we touch dominates at the moment, and will do so for the foreseeable future. The Red Diesel, the licence fees, the mooring auctions all stem from the general issue of how the Nation funds the waterways, and to what extent the boater will end up carrying the cost. In these days of credit crunch and Government borrowing, there will be little appetite for higher grants, and more pressure for initiatives that self fund. But I struggle a bit with the billions and billions being passed around buying banks, and giving back VAT, with a label of "no choice", when a few tens of millions a year would set the navigations up on a sustainable footing. Then EA and BW could concentrate on the core business doing what they need to do for the Nation and our assets, instead of wringing the last penny out of licences, moorings, and continuous cruisers.

Of course there will never be enough money for everything. We will all have to make compromises and we depend on sound judgement on how to prioritise the available resources. The navigation authorities clearly need help on this and NABO will continue to play its part. The recent saga of the BW bollards is a good illustration of where, one might say, there is room for improvement. The recent news that there is money to spend putting right the first attempt, makes me groan

aloud. In this case, did BW ask boaters for advice on where to put the bollards, and if not, why not?

BW Licences

The big news last week was the announcement of BW's increases for the licence in 2009. There is good news, bad news, and very bad news. The good news is that BW have set aside the plans for surcharging wide beam boats, stopping the rivers-only discount, and promised not to try and charge for continuous cruisers. Our Council have engaged on these issues at length, and we should be pleased that BW are following the advice given. The bad news is that the licence is to go up by a good deal more than the cost of living. This is a tough one and will be a cause of concern for all. (Of course the new cash goes nowhere in the overall shortage of funding for the waterways.)

The very bad news is that BW still persist in wanting to trial a roving mooring permit scheme. Your editor has asked BW to write a piece for NN to describe how this might work. We shall see. My own view is that complicated rules need lots of policing, and that any charge made will not be enough to cover these costs, and worst of all, doesn't tackle the root causes of the issue which are insufficient residential moorings, and poor policing in the past. Many members may say, "Nothing to do with me, I have a mooring". But if you attended a user group meeting in October, as I did, and found out just how much of our licence fee is spent on evasion, then you might think again. We must not end up with a complex solution that is not cost

effective to control. All boaters will pay again. The legality of BW's intentions is also of concern to us. Your Council will consider what has to be done on this occasion, as they have done in the past.

NABO

The Association continues to have health of membership, but we do lose friends from time to time. We know that this is usually because they give up boating, and cost is often the reason given. But we do need new members. This year we are fortunate to have Richard Carpenter on Council, and he is to lead a number of initiatives to boost recruitment. Please give him your support, and if you do only one thing for NABO this year, go out and find some enthusiastic boaters, and sign them up. There is no competition between NABO and the other boating groups. We all have our specialities and I will promote cooperation with them during this year. But the fact is that NABO is fortunate in three special ways. We aim to be a broad church of boaters, though it is true we tend to be rather narrowboat focused. We have hard won representation on navigation authority working groups, so we can represent members. And we are small enough for communication to be quick and responsive. Please do encourage other boaters to join us.

So to close,

On behalf of Val and I, and your Council, I wish you a very happy Christmas, and happy boating New Year .

And I look forward to meeting many of you on the canals.

David

WATCH OUT - DIESEL THIEVES ABOUT

Visit www.fuelock.co.uk

How you can help

Local User Group Meetings

It is vitally important that NABO is represented at as many National and Regional meetings where waterways matters are discussed. An important aspect of this presence is attendance at local User Group Meetings where in addition to some national issues of general interest, the main focus is on local issues of concern to boaters.

NABO is grateful for the continuing support we have from members who give up their time to go to these meetings, but it is inevitable that from time to time we have to appeal for more volunteers who might wish to spend an evening with like minded boaters, keeping a watching brief. It isn't a very onerous task – at the most two meetings during the year – usually one in the spring and one in the autumn – and all we ask is that you let us have a brief note of anything that might be of a more general interest to boaters as a whole.

If you feel you may be able to help please let me know and I will put your name on the list of possible attendees and of course give further details of what might be involved. NABO will, of course, pay reasonable travel costs incurred in attending these meetings.

Regional Secretaries

As you will see from the appropriate section at the back of NABO News we have a team of Regional Secretaries who act as a first point of contact for members within their region and also coordinate attendance at User Group Meetings and other unscheduled meetings with BW or EA. We presently have two vacancies which we would like to fill so that we can give full national coverage to members. The regions in question are Midlands and Anglian – their respective boundaries can be seen in the map in the Regional and River Representatives section in this edition.

I would be very grateful if you feel that you could offer your services so that we can fill these important gaps in our services to members – my contact details are:

Howard Anguish, Regions Co-ordinator.

Tel No 01482 669876 E-mail yorks.09@nabo.org.uk



A customer ordered some coffee in a cafe. The waitress arrived with the coffee and placed it on the table. After a few moments, the customer called for the waitress "Waitress," he said, "there's dirt in my coffee!". "That's not surprising, sir, replied the waitress, "It was ground only half an hour ago."

Book - *Waterside Pubs*

This Waterways World guide by Mike Lucas was sent to us to review. It is priced at £14.99.

Mike has cruised widely with the Mikron Theatre Company and has therefore an extensive knowledge of waterside hostelrys. Around 150 of his favourites are mentioned in this book, most with full colour photos, inside and out; fascinating histories and current details of the landlord; food and ales; serving times; nearest moorings and contact details.

The entries within the 150 pages are grouped by region then waterway in alphabetical order. Each waterway is mapped to show the pubs' locations.

It is a well presented paperback with clear pictures and maps in a handy size for a boat (234 x 156mm). Certainly the sort of book your guests will home in on if you ask where they would like to go. If any criticism could be levelled it is that the main text is a bit 'spidery' for older eyes, but this should only be a problem after visiting the subject matter, not before!

ISBN: 978 1870002097. For more details contact: Catherine Martin, Waterways World Ltd, 151 Station Street, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, DE14 1BG.
Email: c.martin@wvonline.co.uk Telephone: 01283 742950



Equipment - *Binoculars with Digital Camera*



By rights a pair of 10 x 'recording binos' with still and movie capabilities would seem the ideal means to collect evidence of miscreants and wildlife along the waterways, and at £9.99, even with £8 P&P on the TV shopping channels, it would seem a bargain.

However not so. The binoculars are pretty basic with colour fringing round the image and the camera switches itself off while you are focussing. The only response to pressing the 'Take' button is a few beeps you won't hear over a boat engine. There is no way to see what the pictures are like at the time and they are lost if the batteries (2 x AAA Alkaline supplied) run out. The only way to use the shots is to download them to PC - (Windows only, must use driver supplied). The picture quality is not up to recognising faces so, as evidence, they are of little use. Don't waste your money!

RIVERS

Sometimes They Get It Right - admits Louis Jankel



The Environment Agency (EA) has listened. Following the Thames floods of 2007, the navigation management gathered a wide selection of views from river users. They spoke to many directly.

A number of initiatives were suggested and, of many adopted, included a reappraisal of www.visitthames.co.uk web site. In late November they launched a new page www.visitthames.co.uk/riverconditions. It is excellent and will be updated at least twice a day. Remember to bring your laptop with you. Most areas on the River have a 3G signal available and a GPRS where not. Vodafone and Orange have the best coverage.

Most visiting boats from off the canals find the River Thames a challenge. It is - but an easily manageable one. Here are some simple rules to follow.

1. When moving upstream keep well over to starboard/right. This keeps you out of much of the stream and reduces fuel consumption. Conversely keep just to starboard/right of the centre of the river when cruising down stream.
2. Look behind you regularly. Keep a good eye on other boats. Most will know what they are doing but presume they do not. Give way – it is always safer. If a passenger boat hoots four times it is turning round. The extra hoots tell you which way – two means to his port and one to his starboard.
3. Only moor facing upstream. It's easier, safer and you don't get rubbish washed into your sterngear. This means that when going downstream you need to turn round onto your mooring.
4. Moor closely to other boats to make as much space available on the moorings. Be prepared to breast up/moor along side. This is a practice the EA recommend and is to be made a condition of using EA moorings. Observe the mooring restrictions. Adverse conditions override these restrictions. You will need to pay for moorings at Windsor and Henley but in most other spots you should be able to find free mooring.
5. Remember to follow exactly what a lock keeper asks of you. His/her concern is for your safety. They know a lot more about cruising on the River Thames than you do. The EA people you will meet want you to relax and enjoy their river. They are rightly very proud of the River Thames.

6. Remember that everyone who uses Environment Agency waters has an equal right to be there and you are expected to respect their rights. We all share the river – even with fishermen.
7. Novices to rivers should not consider cruising the Tideway. All boats need a VHF set and licence to move between Brentford and Limehouse. Go to the St Pancras Cruising Club web site for help and information:

www.stpancrascc.co.uk.



...and on Lock Houses

Good news here too. We have heard that EA are only planning now to sell the five properties that are remote from the river. The riverside lock houses are to stay in EA ownership occupied by their staff.

Hopefully this will restore staff morale and sense of humour – and you might see more signs like this one along the river.



Jim was speeding along the road one fine day when the local policeman, a friend of his, pulled him over. "What's wrong, Eric?" Jim asked. "Well didn't you know, Jim, that your wife fell out of the car about five miles back?" said Eric. "Ah, praise God!" he replied with relief. "I thought I'd gone deaf!"

A POINT TO PONDER

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

BW has a new buzz word: 'volunteers'. They are to be the panacea for all ills, and they will bridge the gap in BW's funding. They, or should I say we, will be the eyes and ears on the 'track', and could even end up in BW's offices (if you can find one) stuffing envelopes. I wait with baited breath for a definitive list of what 'work' BW has to offer these public spirited individuals. BW has realised that organisations such as the National Trust and the RSPB have thousands of members who help them in such ways: why therefore shouldn't BW's 'stakeholders' similarly help BW?

To start with, the other organisations consider their members as a valued asset and treat them with respect.

Does BW treat boat owners this way? NO. We are a pain in the bum. We actually inconvenience BW by actually expecting to use the waterways, and then have the nerve to complain when we're not satisfied. We're there for as much money as possible to be screwed out of us. BW much prefers to favour the hire boater who doesn't complain, and who may eventually buy a boat, thus becoming part of the first group and available for money screwing. Now we're expected to volunteer.

Wake up BW. You need to earn the respect of the boaters who have generally been loyal to you for many many years before you stand a hope in hell's chance of being viewed sympathetically.

EMAIL BULLETIN LIST - IT'S D.I.Y.

A New Year's Resolution?

We know email addresses change, ISP's founder and mail boxes go over quota, but please would members please visit:-

www.nabo.org.uk/bulletin.html

- and unsubscribe old or erroneous addresses and subscribe your new one.

This would vastly reduce work for NABO volunteers.

If any of these addresses belonged to you, please get rountooit!

rojean.nbadagio@3mail.com

mike.blackmore@ntlworld.com

david.wilsod@tesco.net

mpbennett@beeb.net

c.gordon@dial.pipex.com

gus@brodie43.fsnet.co.uk

peter@withert.freemove.co.uk

narrowboater@blueyonder.co.uk

bill@wood4000.freemove.co.uk

Sorry - You ain't rid of me yet!

Yes, we have a new chairman, and a good one I will wager. He has his column but the editor has always had space for a few words and now I can speak my mind without it being seen as NABO policy.

There have been serious allegations that Simon Salem has 'adapted' consultation results to ensure a full personal bonus. Having worked with him over the past six years or so, I would be loathe to go along with that. However the auctions decision seemed so contrary to advice given during consultation, that it is no wonder people are concerned that their views are not being properly taken into account.

In a Letter dated 11th May 1993 from BW to the RYA, which summarises the Statements of Intent it made in conjunction to the 1995 Act, BW stated:-

"2 (1) British waterways recognises that the views of users need to be heard and taken into account at all levels within its organisation. It is committed to effective consultation and will seek to develop new means where appropriate to enhance effective dialogue and give users full confidence that their opinions and interests receive full and proper consideration"

Clearly there is doubt that BW is honouring this promise, even though some fears may have been allayed by the results of the licensing consultation.

After BW's Openness and Accountability initiative in 2003, the British Waterways Advisory Forum was created to give users and stake-holders better access to the BW Board. This was good in theory but how much its meetings improve non-executive directors' understanding of users' concerns I wouldn't know. Attendance by 'non-execs' is voluntary and has been very poor until recently, but, in any case, there is no user representation or even observation of what goes on behind closed doors when the Board meets. So there is no way we know how the feedback from consultations is presented to the Board, and certainly no opportunity to argue the customers' case when decisions are debated.

However the Government and powers-that-be are satisfied that the independence of non-exec directors will ensure fair play, and NABO's campaign for a Regulator has always been dismissed as unnecessary. Anyway it would be much better to have influence on the decision-making process first time round rather than a regulator who would have to make the Board go back and think again.

I therefore suggest that there should be user representatives or 'champions' at Board meetings. As a minimum they should be able to monitor how consultation results are presented. Better they should be able to challenge the presentation if in doubt, but ideally they should be full voting Board members.

I would suggest two, one preferably with a private boating background as representing the largest group of paying customers. The other could be the Chairman of BWAf. I hesitate to commit the current chairman as he was elected without such responsibilities and commitments as part of the job, and I acknowledge that finding a willing chairman last time was difficult without adding extra burden. However the logic prevails that the chairman of BWAf is elected by the user groups so that side of the process would be democratic.

Would that silence the critics?



ROBIN EVANS'S SIX CHALLENGES

Stuart goes 'strategic'

Last autumn, at BW's 2007 Annual Meeting, Robin Evans claimed he was facing six challenges, and those did not include sorting out boat owners so it should have been seven!

This autumn, BWAF, the BW Advisory Forum, tried to give him some answers, and I will attempt to give you a flavour of what was said:-

1. How to achieve an affordable comprehensive maintenance programme

Before just saying, 'You can't as things stand', it was helpful to know what an 'affordable comprehensive programme' was, and Robin Evans attempted to define 'Steady State' in the absence of Jim Stirling, Technical Director. I have since contacted Jim and he has given me a fuller explanation which I will summarise in the accompanying article, but keeping with what Robin said:-

Principle assets, i.e. identifiable structures like locks, aqueducts and reservoirs, have been surveyed by engineers and graded according to condition, from **A** = As-New, to **E** = Bad, i.e. failed or in imminent danger of failure. The assets are also graded according to Consequences of Failure, from **1** = Insignificant, to **5** = Disastrous.

BW's 'Steady State' allows a certain number of assets to be **E4** or **D5**, but immediate action is required if any asset should become **E5**, disastrous failure or in imminent danger of causing a disaster. Collapse of a reservoir dam with a heavily populated area downstream being a prime example.

Just how bad other assets are allowed to get, and how bad 'non-principle' assets are, e.g. lengths of towpath, has been the subject of a lot of research, argument and soul searching. Much of this work was stimulated by the investigation of the EFRA Select Committee, and BW's attempts to explain the process to a panel of enquiring non-specialists was probably very beneficial. However the net result is that BW is only getting about 80% of the funding required to sustain what it regards as an acceptable state for the waterways.

There is debate on how much of the shortfall could be solved by engaging voluntary labour. Certainly general length inspecting and reporting could be supplemented, BW has over 2000 miles of waterway and claims to inspect all of this once a month from the land but only once every three months by water. BW was slightly hesitant as to how much could be achieved using untrained labour but accepted in principle the idea should be followed up. Help with general manual work, such as litter clearance, is always welcome, especially by self-managing groups who 'adopt' a length.

2. How do we increase our earnings to pay for the network?

Robin's current mantra is: 'Get the beneficiary to pay'. The trend now is to turn to local and regional authorities and explain the public benefits of the waterways, from cycle commuting through to land drainage and flood relief. Value added to waterside properties is perhaps less promising due to the property market, but 'green' benefits are on the ascendant.

3. How big should the network be?

'Regeneration' is still king and BW is still keen to fulfil an enabling role as restoration seeds regeneration. However BW is cautious about how much extra maintenance it will have to take on.

4. How do we retain the attraction of the waterways as a catalyst for regeneration?

BW needs to keep plugging away at the economics arguments as BWAf hasn't a lot of expertise in this field. At the AINA Conference, Robin claimed that money invested in the waterways brought many times that in terms of value to the community and achievement of the Government's goals.

5. How do we grow public support and use of the waterways?

The meeting was keen to emphasise engaging children and young people through leadership from volunteers, with improved guidance coordinated by Ed Moss, BW's volunteering guru. There might also be information packs available for people who give talks to social groups and clubs to promote the waterways.

6. How do we develop our workforce for the future?

This had already been covered regarding voluntary effort. There was a suggestion that if all member groups of BWAf were to organise a percentage of their membership to undertake some voluntary work for the waterways - not specifically BW - then things might improve. Examples were cited of the huge voluntary effort given to the National Trust, RSPB etc. This work does not need to be litter picking, there is a need for 'clean shoes' work too, organising, publicity, web design etc can all help if directed properly, but is BW capable of that? If they can't, who can?

TO FIX NOW or NOT TO FIX NOW!

In the previous article, '*Robin's Six Challenges*', I said Robin had simplified 'Steady State' maintenance into a grading assets using a basic letter and number code. The actual process of deciding priorities is a lot more comprehensive and uses a spreadsheet to give a score to each job, or prospective job, which can be anywhere between 0 and 22,500. The higher the score the higher the priority.



The first factor is to decide a 'discount' according to what sort of asset it is and its importance to BW's core business. A tunnel scores 100% but the likes of bridges and dredging tips scores are discounted to 70%, the lowest weighting.

Step 2 applies a further 'discount' according to condition, 100% for 'E', 80% for 'D' and 70% for 'A' to 'C'.

These factors are multiplied, so a bridge in good condition only scores 49% of the total 'criticality' score that would be given to a tunnel or lock in bad condition.

Step 3 gets down to the nitty gritty. Six 'criticality' scores, each having five levels of consequences for not fixing the asset, are added together:-

- **Failure Criticality** - scores up to 5000 for whichever is worst out of:-
 - Risk to life or injury - from None through serious injury to Multiple Deaths
 - Flood Effect - None to Major
 - Prosecution - None, through Fines to Director Prosecution
 - Claims - None, through £ thousands to £ millions

- + **Customer Criticality** - adds up to 4000 for whichever is worst out of:-
 - Number of affected customers - 'less than 5' through to 'over 50'
 - Effect on customer business - None, through £ thousands to £ millions
 - Duration of effect on customers - None, through to 'more than 2 years'
 - Type of customer affected - None, Users (including boaters), Utilities, Marinas, Partnerships, National

- + **Impact Criticality** - adds up to 4500 for whichever is worst out of:-
 - Environmental - None, through EA standards up to SSSI and EU standards
 - Heritage - None, through to 'Grade 1/Ancient Monument'
 - Duty Breach - None, through various standards up to Minimum Safety and Statutory
 - Image, where the headlines would be - None through local papers to National Front Page.

- + **Business Criticality** - adds up to 3500 for whichever is worst out of:-
 - How much of BW is affected - None, through Business Unit to the whole of BW
 - Impact on BW business - None, through £ thousands to £ million
 - Use of asset - None, through Moderate to Multi-use
 - Type of business affected - None, through Commercial to National

- + **Service Criticality** - adds up to 3000 for whichever is worst out of:-
 - Navigational Usage - None, through 'Low Seasonal' to 'High Annual'
 - Capacity - From 'Above Future Maximum' to 'Fails Current Minimum'
 - Current Breach of Duty or Obligation - None, through 'Waterway Standard' to 'Statutory'
 - Service Value - None, through 'Water Management' to 'Track Supporting'

- + **Neighbour Criticality** - adds up to 2500 for whichever is worst out of:-
 - Number of Neighbours with no contractual link with BW - 'less than 5' through to 'over 50'
 - Financial (insurance claims etc.) - None, through £ thousands to £ millions
 - Type of neighbour - None, through 'Residents' to 'National'

Of course however high the job scores, whether it gets done depends on whether there is any money!



1st Eskimo: Where did your mother come from?

2nd Eskimo: Alaska

1st Eskimo: Don't bother, I'll ask her myself!

Why did the bald man paint rabbits on his head?

Because from a distance they looked like hares!

NEWS FROM THE BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

David Fletcher dons his Technical Committee coat

I attended a BSS Technical Committee last month for NABO. This committee assists the BSS management team on the technical matters that arise in the day to day business of running the scheme. Issues come up for various reasons, but most often from feedback from examiners and owners after inspections. Incidents on the waterways and sometimes changes in National or International regulations are also discussed. NABO is also represented on the BSS Advisory Committee by Trevor Rogers so there are two boaters from NABO trying to keep the scheme in perspective.

This month there were a couple of items raised that are of general interest.

Engine exhaust system insulation.

In the BSS, there is a requirement for all parts of the exhaust system to be insulated except flexible connections and the engine manifold. The two main reasons for insulation are to prevent charring or ignition of parts or contents of the boat, and to prevent personal injury from inadvertent contact with the hot surfaces. There is plenty of evidence that these incidents do happen.

The first reason is common sense. Worryingly, examiners do report finding damage and also potentially flammable items stored up against exhaust systems. Do have a look around and see that all is well, and ask yourself what do you store in your engine space, and can it fall against the exhaust system?

The second judgement is rather subjective. In a below deck engine space, nobody is going to touch the exhaust easily, and it could be argued that insulation for personal protection is only needed if you are likely to rub against hot parts when, for example, accessing the weed hatch. So, is it right to fail a boat because an inaccessible part of the exhaust that causes no risk to the boat structure and stores is left exposed? BSS staff are considering this.

There is another anomaly in the lack of a requirement for insulation on flexible parts. This was intended to cover a short bellows piece installed to provide a connection between the engine and the rigid exhaust. These days it is possible to buy flexible metal hose for this job and use it for most of the exhaust system. Should this be insulated? Common sense says yes, but this is not what is written.

The common sense thing to do is to insulate your system, (short flexible sections and engine manifolds excepted), make sure that there is no evidence of charring of woodwork nearby, and nothing stored close enough to melt or catch fire.

There have been issues around the new type of hospital silencers, that have some internal insulation and are difficult to insulate externally in some areas. The makers of these do recommend external insulation, and tests carried out by BSS indicate that the un-insulated surface temperature is still high enough to give serious burns. So you cannot rely on internal insulation in these to prevent damage and or personal injury.

If you have problems with insulation requirements, or other feedback, please let me know.

Gas locker condition

You may have read news from the BSS in the canal press about a number of narrowboat sinkings in recent years due to water in gas lockers leaking into the bilges.

It has been a feature of 70's and 80's narrow boats for the locker to be open to the canal. The locker bulkheads become part of the hull structure keeping the water out from the boat. Leaks have arisen due to corrosion through the plate, that may not be the same thickness as the main part of the hull.

Because the locker is flooded except when the boat is docked, it is not readily possible to inspect and maintain them. For the BSS, examiners are required to check for no obviously visible holes in the locker, in case gas leaks into the hull. If the bottom of the locker is covered in water the examiner may assume that if the boat is afloat, then there is no hole. (and anyway a hole below the waterline cannot let gas into the boat). This does not mean that the locker is sound and fit for continued use. This is an issue for survey and not BSS examination.

Other hull corrosion

Examiners tell us that they are also seeing failure of other parts of the hulls, not readily inspected during docking, that also need to be water tight. These are the gas lockers already mentioned, around the weed hatch, bow thruster tubes, and stern gear riser tubes. These can be neglected when the hulls are blacked, but the vulnerability to rusting through is the same as all the rest of the hull, and maybe more so if the metal thickness is less.

Please do think about whether these areas are sound on your boat.

CAPTION COMPETITION!



EA can do silly signs too!



A WATERWAYS GLOSSARY FOR NEW MEMBERS

- SOW – Save Our Waterworks – an organisation dedicated to the preservation of old pumping stations
- Lock gate – an instruction to a forgetful person (similar to close the door; put the cat out, etc.)
- BWB – British Waterways Bored – a situation often experienced by teenagers on a boating holiday
- NABO – North American BOxing Association; North Atlantic Biocultural Organisation; Newfoundland Association of Basketball Officials; North American Basque Organizations; or a hip hop recording artiste
- Stuart Sampson – pseudonym for any mad half-Scotsman who wears a kilt
- Crick – a pain in the neck
- BWAF – Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation; Black Women’s Arts Festival
Not to be confused with G-BWAF – a Hawker Hunter F6A at Bournemouth Aviation Museum
- Breasting up – a fitness exercise for women
- NABO AGM – a type of battery used by boat owners
- Red diesel – fuel imported from the Soviet Bloc
- IWAC – the Isle of Wight Athletic Club
- IWAAC – the previous name for IWAC
- Many of the above definitions were obtained using Google and the Internet, so they must be correct

Mr Bean

A serious version is planned for a future magazine

Your Letters

Note - Opinions expressed here are independent of NABO policy and statements made have not been verified as true

Sob :- (

Nobody has written to the editor for this issue - but he doesn't mind. Plenty did for the last issue.

'Guess who' on a much loved topic

Why should anyone write an article on such a mundane subject as mooring up, especially in a magazine read by experienced practitioners in said art? The answer is that there are also readers not so experienced in said art, including some with minimal experience but considerable influence.

Choosing a spot

I am not just covering the physical procedure of tying the boat to the bank – the process starts with choosing where to stop, right through to the final 'fettle' before retiring aboard or beginning activities ashore. I have been boating since 1975 and am still finding new places to stop, and revising my opinions of places I thought I knew. With each of these goes a different challenge as to how to tie up to achieve an undisturbed stay. This is one of the real joys of boating for me, and, I assume, many other boaters, and is something the custodians of the waterways need to appreciate.

Luckily there are a variety of attitudes to the subject. If there weren't, everybody would be jostling for the same locations.

At the end of the day, beginners, especially holiday boaters, just want to park their boat, possibly with some reluctance, as it means putting a stop to cruising, and wish it was as simple as applying the handbrake in a pub car park. 'Any old how' will do providing they find their night's accommodation is where they left it on return from the local hostelry. The chances are they won't be very aware of the qualities of their mooring location as they will be off the next day as soon as they can.

More experienced boaters, however, are more self-sufficient and will limit

the use of a 'visitor' mooring to when there is something to visit, and they can afford to visit it! Many will prefer to experience the peace and quiet of a rural location, so may even scour the maps to see how to avoid railway lines and motorways, and even the contours to see where higher ground may shield them from noise. They don't need fancy edging, bollards and signs, or even access to roads and civilisation. All they need is somewhere to step ashore, if only to secure their lines, so depth at the edge is important, and the bankside vegetation should be penetrable. Piling helps, as does a towpath either wide enough or poor enough to keep cyclists and nosy pedestrians at a distance. In many cases they can take care of vegetation themselves and evidence of a good mooring spot can often be seen from amateur attempts at vegetation control.

Luckily, or perhaps through our campaigning, BW and EA are becoming aware of boaters' broader needs and how congestion can be relieved at 'honeypot' sites by inexpensive tending of less formal lengths. However much I deplore the hazards to visibility caused by excess reed beds and 'jungle' on, say, the Leicester Line, there are stretches which have obviously been cleared for boaters to moor. (By the way, BW, if English Nature limits your freedom to manage this vegetation, why not be open and positive about it with boaters. Tell them where the SSSIs are, why and even what they might see in the way of special wildlife.)

The EA has also taken the wider needs of the boater into account on the Anglian rivers with their 'Grass Bank' moorings, where all that is provided is



a sign to give permission to moor, as river banks are often private. They have also created some better equipped moorings away from civilisation for a quiet night's stop.

How to tie up

The differing opinions of where to tie up are matched by the differing opinions about how to tie up.

"One rope each end" is how they were taught to do it, but there are many deviations, from: "Why use two when one in the middle will do?", right through to some people who attach their boat to the bank so rigidly that you would think they are playing carpet bowls inside for serious money. There are others who seem afraid that the bollards will suffer cold in the night, or perhaps have no faith in their hitches. Then those who, either have no faith in the strength of their ropes, or insist that every foot of them must be engaged in gainful employment, and those who believe every ring or bollard within reach should be somehow utilised.

Second prize must go to boats I've seen with a series of ropes from the grab rails running vertically down to rings in the piling. Are they more used to tethering an airship?

First prize must go to the boater whose network of ropes ends up securing the rings or bollards together without improving the security of the boat!

It is a great shame when you see these excesses and yet the boat still moves. This is usually due to the 'parallel rope syndrome' and a lack of thought about the principles of diagonal bracing or the use of 'springs'. I wouldn't walk under their scaffolding! Even worse, when they moor this way on long-term moorings and then castigate passing boaters when their unfendered boat bangs against the bank or neighbouring boats.

Of course there is no universal answer as boats are different and every location offers different opportunities, or lack of, for securing ropes. Different places also require different degrees of attention to security. The prime objective is that the boat stays put, so some appreciation of what might cause it to move is required, be it malevolent humans, wash from passing boats or barges, or elemental forces such as wind, river flow or tides.

Another challenge facing the boater during the process of tying up is one of crew relations. It is far easier to tie up a boat that has stopped moving, and preferably the water around it has stopped moving too. "It was tight my end when I tied it off" is often heard in response to expletives from the other end as knots have to be undone and re-tied after a long days cruising and a frantic effort to grab a spot before the boat coming the other way does. Swirling muddy eddies, screaming engines and heel gouges in the grass from the person on the centre rope are all testimony to deviations from the spirit of boating - do it slowly - and think!



Did you hear what happened to the tortoise?
It got mugged by three snails

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