

INLAND NAVIGATION ISSUES, NEWS, AND VIEWS

NABO



NEWS

- **BW Mooring fees up**
- **NN goes online**
- **Exec Directors forgo bonuses**
- **Boating cost survey**
- **Stove safety**



Issue 2 – April 2009

IN THIS ISSUE

3	Moorings go up	BW & Simon Robbins
4	Cost of Boating Survey	John Slee
5	BW Directors forgo bonuses	
5	NABO News goes on-line	The Editor
6	Chairman's Column	David Fletcher
8	Solid Fuel Stove Safety	Trevor Rogers
10	Not yet extinct	Stuart Sampson
11	NABO Handbook	The Editor
12	Editor's Page	Stuart Sampson
13	To conform to the latest rules...	David Fletcher
14	Been whacked by your windlass?	Stuart Sampson
15	Index to past issues (pull-out)	
19	Rivers - Severn & G&S opening hours	Stephen Peters
	River Thames moorings	Simon Robbins
20	Liverpool update	Richard Carpenter
21	Your Letters	Your Good Selves
24	Can you recruit more members?	Richard Carpenter
25	Outside looking in	Geoff Wood
26	A New Continuous Cruising Rep.	John Slee
27	RCR Discounts	RCR
28	Brummy Bug	Another life-form
30	Contacts and Council	
32	Navigation Office Contacts Map	

2009 CALENDAR

Council meeting*	NN Copy date
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.*

BW ANNOUNCES: MOORINGS UP BY 6.1%

"BW leisure moorings prices are to increase by an average of 6.1%, which equates to 3.8% taking into account the 2008 reduction in VAT. About half will see an increase of less than 5% (2.7% after VAT reduction).

Residential fees are to increase by 9% or more for about half of BW's customers (6.7% after VAT reduction) 'reflecting the high demand for a limited number of residential berths'.

Customers at the 133 sites scheduled for increases of more than 7% (4.7% after VAT reduction) will see price increases capped at 7% until the end of June to give greater notice of the full increases applicable from July 2009."

Simon Robbins, Mooring Matters, comments

At the time of going to press I am still trying to get my head round the details of BW's Mooring price increases. Despite the promise that as your Moorings rep I should be 'among the first to know' I have had no direct communication from one Sally Ash or anyone else in BW, not even the press release!

There has at least been copious written justification produced on-line this year and those so minded can work their way through it from:

<http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/our-work/boating/bws-long-term-moorings>.

I would recommend all readers who are BW mooring customers to get hold of the Market Area Report for your mooring because it seems to include detailed justifications for the increases on individual moorings. The only one I have examined so far is the London one and let's just say that the local moorings team is likely to be getting a letter in the not too distant future! I would urge others to see what is being claimed for their mooring to see if you think that what's been used to justify your increase is reasonable. If not ...

If anyone is desperate for a paper copy, I suggest you write to your local waterways office and ask for the 'Market Area Report' for your mooring to be sent by post. Given the levels of increase announced, BW and not NABO can pay for the copying and postage! I think this is doubly justified because it also appears that BW have decided not to write customers giving individual notice of price increases. Customer service? BW will doubtless say (again) that spending money giving their customers accurate information about what we are paying for is 'uneconomic'? (Is 'mushroom theory' a phrase that is familiar...?)

However the fact remains that few BW customers will be impressed with inflation busting price increases and it seems residential customers are in for special treatment.

End of Garden Moorings

I noticed today there is a document now posted on Waterscape called '*Conditions for BW mooring permits where the mooring is against private land*'. As far as I can make out this is actually the terms and conditions for End of Garden Moorings.

Some of you may want to have a look at that. This is of course something the Ombudsman pointed at being a gap in BW's paperwork in her last report. We are not aware of any detailed consultation on this so if you are not happy please let NABO and BW know why. Online - Select info on moorings on

<http://www.waterscape.com/things-to-do/boating/useful-downloads>

BOATING - WHAT IS IT COSTING YOU?

A NABO survey set up by John Slee

Up, up, **Up**: mooring fees, licences, insurance, fuel, heating costs seem to be increasing above inflation year on year. With the credit crunch a reality, many boaters are asking how much harder our pockets can be squeezed.

NABO Council believes it important that we monitor the rate of increase of boaters' costs so that we can speak from knowledge, when speaking on your behalf to government departments, BW, EA etc.

In order to do this, we are asking NABO members to complete our simple internet-based **Cost of Boating Survey 2009**. Among the questions we ask are the actual costs of your Licence, Moorings, Insurance and BSS Certificate (if relevant) for the past 12 months.

We also invite you to enter amounts, or estimates, of fuel, gas, coal and routine maintenance costs; also, enforced extraordinary expenditure such as bottom blacking and major engine repairs.

Because this is our first Cost of Boating Survey, it would be helpful if you could enter the previous year's figures as well (if available).

Gathering this information together beforehand will make it easier for you to complete the survey. The on-line survey could then take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Members should enter the following link in their browser:
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/NABOCoBS2009>

To prevent spurious entries, the survey requires a password:
CoventryBasin (without a space).

If you would like to help us, but don't have access to the Internet, you can obtain a printed version of the survey from the General Secretary.

The closing date for completion of the Survey is **30th April 2009**.

A summary of the results will be published in a future edition of NABO News.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://www.surveymonkey.com/NABOCoBS2009>. The page title is "NABO Cost of Boating Survey 2009". The main heading is "Your Boat's Details". Below this, there is a paragraph: "Welcome to the NABO Questionnaire. Your answers will help us to represent you more effectively. The first page asks you to tell us about your boat - something you might enjoy doing! Important questions are marked with a *".

Question 1: "What sort of boat do you own? (If you have more than one, choose the one you use most.)" with radio buttons for "Large", "Cruiser", "Hobbyboat", and "Sail", and a text input field for "Other (please specify)".

Question 2: "What is the name of your boat? (optional)" with a text input field.

Question 3: "To all the questions on this page, we would like you to enter your boat's dimensions in Imperial measurements in feet and inches. (Approximately this is still used!) If you need it, click here for a conversion calculator (opens in a new window or tab)." Below this, there are two text input fields labeled "Length" and "Beam".

Question 4: "How would you like you to be more precise. What length is your boat?" with text input fields for "Feet" and "Inches".

NEWS JUST IN

BW Executive Directors to forgo bonuses

Towpath Talk reports that, 'due to the economic down-turn', the money for director's bonuses is now to be spent on network maintenance.

One member comments "*It's the most decent thing I've ever known BW to do*", but another asks, "*Isn't it just a face saver to attempt some damage limitation to the deep embarrassment of being forced to publicise what little they get their bonuses for in the first place?*"

NABO NEWS GOES ON-LINE

A long awaited improvement to member services

It has been on the cards for some years now, but your editor has been reluctant to commit himself to publishing this magazine on the Internet due to the extra work involved and finding out what format to use. However, with a new webmaster to help and fewer other commitments for the editor, the process has begun and a format found which hopefully doesn't rule out those with mobile connections, yet provides a reasonable rendition of the printed version.

Each issue is available as Adobe Acrobat PDF file, in the Member's Zone of the NABO Website: www.nabo.org.uk

Follow the links to the Members Zone, type in the access words* and you will see a list of issues stretching back to 2007. If you are looking for something specific, there is a brief contents list for each issue to save you downloading the full file to see whether it has what you want. There is also a table of articles grouped by subject, which we feel might be easier to use than a simple alphabetical list of titles, as some titles are more 'creative' than others! (See pages 15 to 18)

The downloads vary from 700Kb to 1.5 Mb. To squeeze a whole magazine into this space we have omitted repeat pages like adverts and contact pages. These are common to all issues and we don't feel obliged to run the adverts online, nor is there any sense in providing out-of-date contact lists or past nomination forms and pull-outs. Current contact details are available in the 'About NABO' section on the NABO website. To see what we have left out, these items are 'greyed out' in the original contents pages within the PDF versions.

In the interests of those with slow connections we have also reproduced the pictures in low definition and adjusted the PDF conversion for screen viewing to maximise the download speed. This has meant that the whole online magazine fits into the same file size as we would use to send one print quality two-page spread!

The aim in future is to bring you the current issue one week after the copy date, but I make no promises! That may be up to two weeks before the paper version reaches you, and even longer if you are 'postally challenged'.

It will also provide you with a way to archive back issues and the advantage of being able to use your Acrobat reader to search them.

Enjoy!

* ID = member, for password, email news.09@nabo.org.uk

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



I wrote last month about moorings and, surprise, surprise, it's that same subject this month. BW have just announced another shocking cost increase, miles above inflation. The full details are reported elsewhere in this edition.

We know the cash contribution that moorings make to the overall income of BW is small, £5m in £220m. We also know that the average BW mooring cost is £800 or so, and that reflects the position and level of services which is often less than a commercial marina. So what can the possible justification be for increases on the lower cost end of the market? This is hardly a pot of gold. Pure opportunity greed, in my view. And our Robin has the cheek to say "...we will be able to quickly respond to reflect the changes in local markets". I wonder which script writer produced that gem? So one might conclude that if we tell BW to get lost, will they drop the prices? Hmm. Don't hold your breath.

But how this pricing regime ties in with the auctions is beyond me. Separately, we know BW are thinking about terms and conditions for their moorings, and NABO thinks that is generally a good thing. If you have a mooring and you are paying a lot of cash for it, you are entitled to know what you are getting for it and the cost relates to the services provided. We hear of cases where services are denied, perhaps because some costly repair is required and there is no budget to complete the repair. But the mooring fee carries on as if nothing has happened. Mooring fees must have two sides to the deal like any service contract.

On the other hand BW are still silent on the roving mooring permits, and any solution to the continuous mooring problem. Wouldn't it be better to keep mooring costs down, to attract more

boats into a permanent mooring situation and avoid all the cost of evasion policing. The income on moorings might be less, but the total of mooring and licence evasion cost might well show an improvement. Or is it just me? The fact is that this situation on the lower K&A is untenable at the moment and something must be done.

NABO and all the other groups are still against the moorings auctions but nobody in Watford is listening. The moorings increase gives a good opportunity to write to BW so I will do so and add something about auctions too.

Boating costs are dear to all our hearts, so I am pleased that we are to undertake a survey. I hope that we can get enough data to track year on year costs for a range of boat user types. This is useful for ourselves, but also in the politics of the waterways, because this is the only way we can demonstrate the increasing cost burden that we are carrying. John Slee has prepared a survey and I would ask you all to take part. The analysed results will be available, and hopefully we can think about an RPI for boating. As an aside, I wonder what extra revenue the Government is getting from red diesel on the canals, and whether they are giving it back in grants? Or just pocketed it to pay for another bank. No, no, I don't wonder very long.

Talking of John, I am pleased to say that he was co-opted onto NABO Council at the meeting in March, and his remit is as Continuous Cruiser representative. Please give him your support and give him the feedback we all need to represent you.

Returning to our Robin, he was on Radio 4 this week and no match for John Humphreys. Humphreys referred to the British Waterways Association (if only it was so), and Robin did not correct him. It was a pretty lame affair on our Robin's part, and a missed opportunity to get support for the canals. We should bear in mind that Robin's real job is be nice to us, but to support the canals and to get the best from political masters of DEFRA and the Local Authorities. This interview should have been well prepared and scripted. If this is the best he and his team can make of prime national coverage, then we do all have a problem. He had a cough and spluttered in the interview; perhaps he should have delegated to someone who could speak clearly. On the content, when challenged, he is entitled to defend the commercialisation of the BW work, after all it is paying for our canals when the Government does not. But he did not do that. Unfortunately, he left unchallenged the statement that it is cheaper to live on the canals than on the land. We all suspect that this is true only when avoiding boaters' proper contributions, and one of the causes of continuous mooring clusters on the K&A, GU and the Lee & Stort. But he did say that he loves residential boaters. Yes! Result!

Your Council have been considering for some time, a number of legal issues about the Parliamentary Acts which govern the way in which BW can manage their part of the waterways. Our feeling is that the time has come to update the legal advice we have taken in the past, and consider some of the newer information that BW have published in 2008. This was discussed at the last AGM and a decision now is part of the ongoing work. So I expect that some

significant expenditure will need to be made in the coming months to get this advice.

I would like to thank all those members who have sent to Council the details of the correspondence that they have had with BW. These issues around the Acts may appear daunting, but in fact are not complex. They are all about the behaviours on the towpath, what BW can and cannot do, what they can charge for and what not. So do keep these coming in, in confidence if you wish. They are invaluable to build a picture of real life. We do see inconsistencies between the BW regions. Watford have told us that they are working hard to improve this, but still we see the evidence of local warlords operating their own areas. The objective is not that NABO fights your battles, or provides legal advice, but we can, by acting together, be better informed, and use the contacts, complaints systems, ombudsman etc to keep the boater interests in view. Historians tell me this is where NABO started.

To close, I am going to ask again for support increasing the membership. Please go out and do some recruiting for us. If we are to maintain the respect of the Navigation authorities alongside the likes of IWA, RYA and AWCC, we need a strong membership. Richard Carpenter has done good work preparing materials and we need to make use of that this year. But please approach your mooring neighbour, and get him to sign up. The form is in NN and the cost is very modest. If a group of you would like to get together and invite a regional rep, or Council member to come and talk about the current issues, please ask. We would be delighted to do it. It is a good story, and we need the numbers.

David

SOLID FUEL STOVES

Trevor Rogers explores the implications of a new draft British Standard

Recently, BSI British Standards have released for public comment a draft Code of Practice (CoP) for the installation of solid fuel heating appliances on boats. This includes solid fuel cookers and stoves with back boilers. The Code covers the construction and installation of new solid fuel stoves to be fitted on boats.

It defines the design, siting, and securing of the stove. In particular, it provides tables of distances from combustible materials and requirements for hearths, flue/chimneys and ventilation, plus recommendation for the fitting of smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors. Additionally, it gives warnings and operating instructions for the user.

Until now, boat builders have not had specific directions on solid fuel stove installation for boats and the provision of a standard is well intentioned and should help to improve safety.

The problem with a Code which has to apply to a wide range of vessels is being able to make allowances for the thousands of different designs and layouts.

As with all BSI standards, it is expected that it will only apply to new builds or vessels fitting a new stove. Hopefully, the Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) will not want to apply it, wholly or partly, to existing stoves! If it does, **chaos and costs will follow**.

I won't go into the detail of how the stove and hearth should be located and minimum distances away from combustible and non-combustible material. It's pretty boring stuff. Notably, one recommendation is that the stove location should be sited away from a stepped entrance and that a central position is preferable. If this is on the grounds of burns from touching the stove as well as a clear escape route, it may be they will be transferring the problem elsewhere.

The draft Code proposes that, whenever possible, the chimney be insulated along its whole length. This helps to keep the exhaust gases warm and lifts them up the chimney and away from the cabin. To aid this, the minimum chimney height is proposed as 2 metres (6ft 6inch) above the top of the stove. At least 600mm (2ft) will have to be above cabin roof level. We have sampled this on a number of boats with a stove already fitted in the main cabin and most were within 300mm of total required length. However, it is expected that with some layouts this won't be achievable.

Traditionally, the chimney (within in the boat) has always helped the stove give out its heat. Without it, to get the same heating, the stove may have to be larger. If not, it leads to a safety concern that there may be a temptation to stoke the fire up leading to "overfiring".

We must also accept that the beloved boatman's cabin stove installed in the traditional position is likely to be a thing of the past. Not only the required chimney height but the hearth dimensions will make safe entry into the cabin more difficult.

Other general proposals are that installations can only be installed by a "competent person" who is trained and usually an employee appointed from within a company. Not unusual for a trade standard, but it does not specify what level of training is required.

Note - This article is not an April Fool joke

Oh!... and you will also need a permanent label, warning you to keep the stove door closed when in use and a further label to warn you to open closeable ventilators before use! The one label which appears to be missing is to warn of back problems when lifting off/on the heavy factory-made stainless steel insulated roof chimney at each bridge!

The proposed operating instructions bring some other challenges. These include:-

- Never leave the craft unattended when the solid fuel stove is in use.
- Never refuel the stove when retiring for the night.
- Never replace the gas bottles when the stove is in use.

Of course, you have to add the standard requirement that the stove should never be alight when travelling through a tunnel or navigating in other than sheltered waters.

We could not find a specific instruction prohibiting the stove to be lit with the chimney lowered but it is implied. It may be that the writers assume that chimneys will be lowered immediately before and re-erected immediately after each bridge. With bridges sometimes occurring every few hundred yards this is clearly not practical and potentially very dangerous. Also, when negotiating flights of locks, the chimney often has to be lowered for lengthy periods.

If you interpret the term “in use” to mean that the stove is alight, you could be putting out and re-lighting at frequent intervals. It is at these times that incomplete combustion occurs, resulting in the production increased levels of polluting and poisonous gases. Surely, not something we should be encouraging.

Many regard the solid fuel stove as an important traditional element of boating, as well as a practical and efficient form of heating. Unmodified, this Code of Practice may result in it not being worth lighting the stove at all and over time lead to its general demise.

From available published accident and examination failure figures, it suggests that the largest problem is inadequate/failure of the boat ventilation. Boat Safety Certificate Examiners already check for evidence of scorching, blistering and heat damage from fuel-burning appliances with very few being failed.

We must remember that this is a draft document which is in public consultation and hopefully, it is exactly these sorts of comments which the authors will find constructive and we can look for ways to make the Code of Practice workable, while still improving our overall safety.

NABO on your behalf will be formally responding to the public consultation and making representation at BSS and BSI committees.

According to figures from the BSS, 43% of boat fires were set deliberately

If you think a boat is unlicensed, look up its index number on www.britishwaterways.co.uk/license-it/license-it-or-lose-it/online-boat-checker

THEY ARE NOT EXTINCT - THAT'S OFFICIAL

Stuart Sampson has good news to report

The species *maculosus tractus hominum redactum* is not officially extinct in Britain, even though examples are rare and you can only expect see one once a month and then only in habitats near slow moving water. The plumage is blue or black with a small white arch shape on the chest surrounded by even smaller white markings. Normally they are seen on the bank, but one sighting in three might be on the water. The main distinguishing feature is the carrying of a clipboard or electronic note-taking device and an obvious curiosity towards man-made artifacts around the watercourse.

By now you should realise we are referring to BW's Length Inspectors who would probably prefer not to be classified as 'Lesser Spotted'. Proof they exist comes from the fact that the author is in possession of a copy of their handbook, although his first hand sightings over the last few years have been even less frequent than encountering teams of BW staff out inspecting specific assets.

To become Length Inspectors, BW employees have to undertake a day of formal training and assessment. This qualifies them to take a monthly walk along the towpath mainly looking for change. Inspection of less accessible parts, such as the offside, may require special arrangements such as the use of boats (!), and is carried out once in three months. 'Exceptionally', inspectors may need to operate some equipment during an inspection but is recommended to observe somebody else operating it.

Fuller inspections are carried out less frequently. A 'principle asset' is inspected at least once in ten years by a Chartered Engineer and at least once in between by an accredited Asset Engineer. Every six months normal length inspections are overseen by the Maintenance Supervisor. In the introduction to the Handbook, BW says, "*Inspections are important to ensure the continuing integrity of a 200-year-old man made system often retaining water above ground level. The consequences of neglect can mean expensive claims. British Waterways owes a duty of care to the public who are invited on to the system. Failure leads to loss of confidence in British Waterways by the public, our partners and Government.*"



Clearly, it would be irresponsible for BW not to have any form of inspection regime, but, apart from on really poorly used lengths in the depths of winter, boaters will have a vastly greater collective familiarity with the 'assets' than can ever be gained by one person pacing the towpath once a month. The only

drawback is that boaters may not be in such a good position to detect change, and may not be looking for the right things, such as neighbouring developers digging away at a canal embankment.

The handbook then continues with a table to grade the condition of various things according to the 5-point scale from 'As New' to 'Unsafe'.

For example a 'poor' (grade 4) towpath has a *'stone or grass surface largely broken up, many pot holes, deeply eroded edges with much ponding, suitable only for wellingtons or walking boots'*.

Operating Equipment graded as 'Fair' (3) is *'still working but showing significant wear and tear with minor failures. Bearing and gland wear, minor oil leaks, corrosion of metal components becoming evident'*.

Finally there is a comprehensive checklist, even down to 'pissers' in lock walls (their words!)

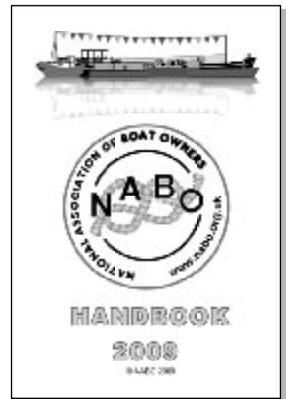
The question is, would Mark Twain liken a length inspection to golf – “A good walk spoiled?” It would certainly seem there is potential for boaters to complement this regime. If they had a copy of the check list to hand, could they fill in between the monthly inspections with valuable input? Could the waterway reporting initiatives be improved? Would BW want it?

ANOTHER HANDBOOK

Your publications team has been updating the NABO Handbook. Members may not know that NABO has a handbook, but one was created in 2003 to help regional representatives with contacts and policy, and it grew into a more comprehensive reference for NABO activists.

Now it has been updated to an extent and a PDF version is available for members in the Members Zone of the NABO website. It contains:-

- Council Contacts
- Regional Secretary Contacts
- Electronic Communication
- About NABO News
- NABO Policy
- Advice to Regional Secretaries
- BW policy on Stoppages and Dredging
- BW Complaints Procedure
- BW Undertakings and Statements of Intent
- 1995 BW Act 17(3) extract
- Navigation Authority Contacts
- NABO Constitution
- Waterways Organisations Who's Who
- Acronyms & Abbreviations
- Workings of the Waterway Reports Forum





I am really beginning to feel the relief of not being chairman now that David is has his hand on the tiller. The authorities are going to notice the difference too, but I expect any relief for them will be short-lived! David is a professional and the sort of character who doesn't suffer fools gladly. What's more, with his vastly greater experience in engineering management, and business practice generally, he will have no difficulty knowing a fool when he sees one.

For me, I can now concentrate on matters that have been left on the back burner or let slip. With the able assistance of Brian Rowland we are putting NABO News online and I am helping him work through the NABO website. Richard is getting to grips with publicity and recruitment, and John Slee has taken on a big survey. I am delighted to see people rallying round to help and you should be too. If you see a 'one-man-band' kit on eBay, it might have been mine!

Maybe it is undue optimism, but my aim is still to tie off loose ends so I won't feel guilty if the lights ever go green on our continental barge plans. It is such a shame we didn't start two years ago.

In the meantime we battle on – mainly against **ignorance**.

This is NABO's main challenge. Most people understand *ignorance* as an unintentional lack of knowledge, but the word is based on the word *ignore*, which is far from meaning unintentional. Our duty is to dispel ignorance,

particularly amongst those who don't want to know. We inform people: the powers-that-be about the needs of boaters; and boaters about the doings of the powers-that-be. Some of this is high profile, with NABO chairmen meeting ministers etc. Much of it is behind the scenes but no less valuable, with the likes of Trevor Rogers and David (S for safety!) Fletcher trying to keep ignorance and greed out of the Boat Safety Scheme. With the denial of funding from BW, the BSS is ever more vulnerable to those who might like to line their purses by expanding the checklist at the expense of the boat owner.

Of course we cannot fight ignorance if we are ourselves ignorant. This is where you come in. Preparing back issues of NABO News for the website has been a bit nostalgic for me, but one thing that seems to be a recurring theme is requests for you, the 'rank and file' members, to become involved. Yes, such pleas are the stuff of any club or society journal – "Come and help fix the clubhouse roof", "*Volunteers needed for the pig roast*". NABO doesn't have a clubhouse, and we tend to roast 'suits' rather than pigs. All we usually ask of you is your opinions, something you can give us without having to commit yourself to time and place, or even leaving your chair. Is this too much to ask?

Information is NABO's life-blood – and the corpuscles of that should be your views and concerns.

Stuart

TO CONFORM WITH THE LATEST RULES

David Fletcher rues the consequences

The British Standards Institute (BSI) have recently issue a draft code for the installation of solid fuel stoves. BSI, good British stuff, founded on the industrial revolution, the Empire and all that. Must be good I thought. So I went ahead and adapted *Water Avens* to conform. And what a benefit!

The new code is all about getting efficient combustion, and pushing all that hot waste gas out at high level so that we don't get CO poisoning. A little drawback is that there is less heat in the cabin, but never mind, I just added a second stove. You will see in the photograph that there are four chimney stacks; how so when there are only two stoves? Well I got a job lot on e-bay, modelled on the Titanic; quite appropriate don't you think? The spare two are bunkers for fuel, they are a good size and I can get plenty of logs in there. I think I will patent it and then BSI cannot pinch the idea and put it in their standards, and make everybody do it.

The stack height is a bit of a problem. The standard says 2 feet minimum above the roof, but I went for a bit more. BW were very helpful. They said that they would cut slots in all the bridges and make it essential safety work, and pop them in just next to the bridge number plates. Isn't that good of them? I think they wanted something useful to do after all those bollards. I queried the tunnels, but they couldn't help so easily, but they have promised to lower the water levels, in line with global warming, so that's all right then.

Inside the stoves have to sit on a slab of concrete. The preference is for a suspended slab, but I couldn't swing this, let alone build it. So I just ripped up the floor and ordered some ready mix. It went in from the truck very easily through the big hole in the roof for the chimney. She floats a bit lower in the water now; that will help with the tunnels. I fitted holding down bolts and they are a comfort now that the stove cannot move by itself if I am not there to check. It is so considerate for BSI to provide such a nice piece of art work to hang in my saloon, just to remind me to close the stove doors. Some friends came by and thought we were carrying nuclear waste. Never mind, it fits well between the horse brasses and the Leonardo mural. I think I might ask to change the font to gothic script, a nice touch don't you think?

I quite like the metal heat protection panels all around the walls. I had never thought of using sheet steel inside the cabin as well as on the outside. Such a good idea! It gives that warm enclosed feeling that you get when cleaning out the fresh water tank. I looked hard at how to fit a stove in the boatman's cabin. No can do. I think the only way is to convert the whole cabin to be the stove.

Boatman's stoves have been fitted for 200 years. Am I missing something here?

And those insulated chimneys are great. They do keep the gases really hot. Unfortunately the flue pipe doesn't give off any heat in the cabin, so that was one reason that I had to put in a second stove. I suppose we should be pleased that we don't have to insulate the stove itself, after all, somebody might get burnt with all that hot metal. Perhaps we shouldn't mention this, after all it is only a draft standard as yet. The chimney stacks on the roof have to have extra protection. I'm not sure if this is for incoming missiles from ashore or those bridges, but never mind, they catch the wind nicely. The factory made flues are a worry, but my garage looks like a factory. It just does short runs. And I am a competent

person, I am an engineer, so it must be all right then.

I worried about the air ventilation for a bit. There has to be a number of square mm (I thought they were round and chocolate sweets), and there a lots of noughts. I couldn't work it out so I just made a big hole in the side. It whistles a bit, and not too much water comes in. I just keep the bilge pump running. It is handy for feeding the ducks and I can do that without leaving the stove unattended which is a risk.

I found the instructions a bit of a challenge. I cannot get the knack of turning the stove on and off so quickly when I slip out to drive the boat between 14 day moorings. It says that I should not fuel the stove when retiring for the night, but I'm retired during the day as well, so I have to work out when I can fuel the stove. It keeps going out, It's all such a worry.

But overall I do have to thank the BSI and the Empire for their recommendations. I'm absolutely certain they will keep the chandlers in business for years to come, and there may even be a film version to follow. If I get suck in a tunnel, please go by and no laughing. This is serious stuff.



BEEN WHACKED BY YOUR WINDLASS?

The Customer Services Standards Advisory Panel is helping the BW safety team to make paddle gear safer. However, sitting in their workshops and offices the team can only imagine the pain of being hit by a windlass flying round when propelled by the unchecked weight of the mechanism.



We want real facts to create realistic solutions – remember the bollards?

Has this happened to you? (It has happened to most of us at some time).

Why did it happen? Was it your carelessness?

Was the pawl worn or not lined up with the rack teeth?

Had you forgotten to engage the pawl?

Would it help having a stop to prevent the pawl being left off?

Would having to use both hands to lower a paddle create other risks?

...or did you get whacked when you were lowering the paddle, or about to?

Should BW invent a device to slow the paddle descent, or do you think straight-forward maintenance to be enough? What about heritage?

Your experiences please - direct to me, thanks. *Stuart.*

'INDEX' FOR PREVIOUS ISSUES

"I'm sure I have read about that in NABO News"

If it was since 1st Jan 2008 this table might help you find it.

Most articles and many letters and opinion columns in NABO News cover one or more of the topics listed, even though the titles may not reflect this

Political covers parliamentary and regulatory matters

Top BW covers BW management and policy issues

Top EA covers EA management and policy issues

Licensing covers anything involving navigation fees

Mooring covers policy and regulation of moorings

Safety covers all safety matters and customer service standards

Technical covers practical and engineering matters

NABO covers internal affairs of the association

Boat Gen includes boating matters of more general interest

Rivers covers river and Broads related articles

Fuel includes anything about diesel, LPG and other fuels

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Article</i>	<i>Author</i>
Political	2008	2	23	Save Our Waterways Reforms	Will Chapman
	2008	3	3	BW Admits Duty to Boat Owners	
	2008	4	3	DEFRA Meeting	The Chairman
	2008	4	13	Save Our Waterways	Will Chapman
	2008	5	3	Let's start with some debate	The Chairman
	2008	5	14	EFRA Committee Reports on BW	(EFRA Com)
	2008	6	5	Ombudsman's Report	S.P. & S.R.
	2008	7	20	Robin Evans's Six Challenges	BWAF Rep
	2009	1	4	Chairman's Column	David Fletcher
Top BW	2008	3	3	BW Admits Duty to Boat Owners	
	2008	3	4	WUSIG Meeting	H. Anguish
	2008	4	3	DEFRA Meeting	The Chairman
	2008	4	5	Customer Services Latest	Stuart Sampson
	2008	4	19	Functional Teams	Stuart Sampson
	2008	5	6	Functional Teams Don't work?	David Cragg
	2008	5	12	A Point to Ponder	Anon
	2008	6	7	Memorials to Boater Priority	Stuart Sampson
	2008	6	10	Chairman's Column	The Chairman
	2008	6	11	BW Annual Meeting	
	2008	6	16	A Point to Ponder	Anon
	2008	6	17	Holding Points on Hold (CSS)	Stuart Sampson
	2008	6	18	Your Letters	Yourselves
	2008	7	3	BW 2009 Licence Rate Press Release	BW
	2008	7	5	The Anatomy of a Consultation	Stuart Sampson
	2008	7	10	Roving Mooring Permits	Sally Ash(BW)

Topic	Year	Issue	Page	Article	Author
Top BW cont	2008	7	18	A Point to Ponder	Anon
	2008	7	20	Robin Evans's Six Challenges	BWAF Rep
	2008	7	21	To Fix it Now or Not To Fix it Now	Stuart Sampson
	2009	1	20	A Point to Ponder	Anon
	2009	2	5	Directors forgo bonuses	
Top EA	2008	3	16	Thames Lock Houses for Sale?	Louis Jankel
	2008	4	3	DEFRA Meeting	The Chairman
Licensing	2008	1	14	Chairman's Column	The Chairman
	2008	1	23	Letters	Yourselves
	2008	2	9	Advice on Renewing Licences	Simon Robbins
	2008	3	19	Other Issues	
	2008	4	8	BW Licences - The Future?	The Chairman
	2008	5	3	Let's start with some debate	The Chairman
	2008	6	3	Licences Latest	Geoff Rogerson
	2008	6	13	Broads Registrations	Stephen Peters
	2008	6	18	Your Letters	Yourselves
	2008	7	3	BW 2009 Licence Rate Press Release	BW
	2008	7	5	The Anatomy of a Consultation	Stuart Sampson
	2008	7	12	Chairman's Column	The Chairman
	2009	1	22	Replies to Sally Ash	Yourselves
Mooring	2008	1	23	Letters	Yourselves
	2008	2	10	Moorings Trial Consultation Timetable	(BW)
	2008	2	11	A Point to Ponder	Anon
	2008	2	24	Letters	Yourselves
	2008	3	6	BW Visitor Moorings Policy	Simon Robbins
	2008	3	11	Mooring Wardens BeWare	Simon Robbins
	2008	5	3	Let's start with some debate	The Chairman
	2008	5	5	Tenders - why you should care	Carole Sampson
	2008	5	13	Tales not from the Riverbank	Grumpy 2
	2008	5	16	Boat Havens	Ian Fletcher
	2008	7	10	Roving Mooring Permits	Sally Ash (BW)
	2009	1	4	Chairman's Column	David Fletcher
	2009	1	22	Replies to Sally Ash	Yourselves
	2009	2	3	Moorings go up	Simon Robbins
	Safety & Cust Serv.	2008	1	7	CSS Survey - Thanks
2008		3	10	A Point to Ponder	Anon
2008		3	14	CSS Survey 'Scatter' Graph	Stuart Sampson
2008		4	5	Customer Services Latest	Stuart Sampson
2008		4	10	Chairman's Column	The Chairman
2008		6	17	Holding Points on Hold (CSS)	Stuart Sampson
2009		1	6	The Battle of the Bollards	Stuart Sampson
2009		1	9	Why newer boats are failing BSS	David Fletcher

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Article</i>	<i>Author</i>
	2009	1	13	MCA regs threat to share owners?	H. Anguish
	2009	2	8 (& 13)	Solid Fuel Stoves	Trevor Rogers
	2009	2	14	Been Whacked by your Windlass?	Stuart Sampson
	2009	2	10	Not Yet Extinct	Stuart Sampson
Technical	2008	1	9	Whatever happened to Stirling?	Stuart Sampson
	2008	1	19	Broads - White is so 'Yesterday'	The Chairman
	2008	1	20	Some Sustainable Thoughts, Part 2	Andy Colyer
	2008	3	22	Grid-locked	Stuart Sampson
	2008	4	14	Hang on to Your Fenders	Stephen Peters
	2008	7	26	Getting Tied Up	Stuart Sampson
	2009	1	19	Propeller Revolution?	Stuart Sampson
NABO	2008	1	3	NABO at the Crossroads?	H. Anguish
	2008	1	5	Member Survey	(cut out page)
	2008	1	11	Travelling Expenses and Hotel Costs	H. Anguish
	2008	1	16	Discount on Car Rental for NABO members	
	2008	1	23	Letters	Yourselves
	2008	2	4	Member Survey - Findings so far	H. Anguish
	2008	2	7	Recruiting Members	Hon. Treasurer
	2008	2	12	Chairman's Column	The Chairman
	2008	3	12	Chairman's Column	The Chairman
	2008	3	20	New Members, Recruitment and Hi!	R. Carpenter
	2008	4	10	Chairman's Column	The Chairman
	2008	4	21	Your Letters	Yourselves
	2008	5	9	First Impressions of Council	David Fletcher
	2008	5	10	Chairman's Column	The Chairman
	2008	5	15	Two moments of Glory	Council
	2008	7	3	New Chairman	
	2008	7	6	NABO's Annual Refresh	AGM report
	2008	7	9	New Year Message	The Treasurer
	2008	7	12	Chairman's Column	The Chairman
	2008	7	14	User Group Meetings	Regions Co-ord'r
	2008	7	18	Email Bulletin List - D. I. Y.	Stuart Sampson
	2009	1	8	Member Enquiries	Council
	2009	1	18	AGM Debrief	H. Anguish
	2009	2	5	NABO News goes online	The Editor
	2009	2	24	Can you recruit more members?	R. Carpenter
Surveys	2008	1	5	Member Survey	(cut out page)
	2008	1	7	CSS Survey - Thanks	Web Admin'r
	2008	2	5	Survey Form - 2nd chance	(cut out page)
	2008	3	14	CSS Survey 'Scatter' Graph	Stuart Sampson
	2009	2	4	Cost of Boating	John Slee

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Article</i>	<i>Author</i>
Boat Gen	2008	1	12	Facility or No Facility?	Stuart Sampson
	2008	1	25	A Point to Ponder	Anon
	2008	2	22	BCN Explorer Cruise	BCNS
	2008	3	9	Liverpool Next Year?	Rich. Carpenter
	2008	3	17	Rivers - Severn, Winter manning	Stephen Peters
	2008	3	18	Rivers - Ribble, help for the scared	Rich. Carpenter
	2008	3	25	Your Letters	Yourselves
	2008	4	16	Liverpool latest	Rich. Carpenter
	2008	4	17	Winter Stoppages	David Lowe
	2008	4	20	What a Give-away!	Overstayers Anon
	2008	5	10	Chairman's Column	The Chairman
	2008	6	7	Memorials to Boater Priority	Stuart Sampson
	2008	7	26	Getting Tied Up	Stuart Sampson
	2009	1	10	London Boat Show	Andrew Colyer
	2009	2	20	Liverpool Update	R. Carpenter
Rivers	2008	1	18	Grumpy Old Man of the River	Stephen Peters
	2008	1	19	Broads - White is so 'Yesterday'	The Chairman
	2008	2	16	Trent Lock Manning resolved	Stephen Peters
	2008	2	17	Thames Meetings (EA & PLA)	Simon Robbins
	2008	2	19	A Window on the Wash	Ian Fletcher
	2008	3	16	Thames Lock Houses for Sale?	Louis Jankel
	2008	3	17	Rivers - Severn, Winter manning	Stephen Peters
	2008	3	18	Rivers - Ribble, help for the scared	Rich. Carpenter
	2008	3	19	Other Issues	
	2008	4	4	Mersey Gateway	Rich. Carpenter
	2008	4	14	Hang on to Your Fenders	Stephen Peters
	2008	4	15	Rivers - The End of Boating?	G.O.M.O.T.R.
	2008	5	10	Chairman's Column	The Chairman
	2008	5	13	Tales not from the Riverbank	Grumpy 2
	2008	6	13	Broads Registrations	Stephen Peters
	2008	6	14	Severn Winter Opening	Rivers Co-ord'r
	2008	6	16	A Point to Ponder	Anon
	2008	7	16	'Sometimes they get it right'	Louis Jankel
	2009	2	19	Severn/G&S Hours	Stephen Peters
	2009	2	19	Thames Moorings	Simon Robbins
Fuel	2008	2	3	Other Latest	Stuart Sampson
	2008	3	4	Diesel Latest	Simon Robbins
	2008	7	8	Diesel - The Very Latest	Stephen Peters
	2009	1	21	Your Letters	Yourselves



Trolley Hotline - 01923 201120

RIVERS

More changes on the G&S Canal and River Severn

Apart from the changes to winter manning arrangements, which have been reported to our members over the past couple of years, users may have encountered the confusing practice that British Waterways adopted in 2008 whereby traffic lights at bridges along the canal were no longer used.

This caused considerable confusion and now common-sense has prevailed (aided by a Health & Safety audit) and the red and green traffic signals were brought back into use with effect from the beginning of March 2009. The special Gloucester & Sharpness Canal and River Severn Byelaws 1962, Bye-law 25 governs their use and boaters are reminded that a red light means stop; a flashing red light means wait; and a green light gives you the go ahead to proceed. Quite simple really. If a bridge is unmanned (as many are during the winter period), no light will be shown and the bridge will not be opened. However, a number of the bridges have adequate headroom clearance for smaller craft and narrowboats and you must proceed with caution when approaching and moving through bridge-holes.

Winter operating hours, when locks and bridges are manned or passage may be booked Thursday to Monday, will cease on 24 March 2009 and all structures will be available as normal until November, when the winter regime resumes.

The replacement of Patch bridge was delayed owing to bad weather earlier in 2009 and consequently, the temporary bridge was not due to be removed until 16 March when limited boat movements could be booked for that one day, and works were programmed to be finally completed to allow re-opening of the canal in time for Good Friday, 10 April 2009.

Stephen Peters

River Thames Alliance Moorings Group

The River Thames Alliance (RTA) held a second meeting of its Moorings Group in February. Reports from Louis and Graham who represented NABO have been very encouraging. We are still working through all that and between the three of us will hopefully write something more substantive for the next NABO News. Please get in touch in the meantime if you go boating on Thames EA waters and would like to know more before then.

There is lots of positive work afoot to improve access to, and availability of, visitors' and longer term moorings. Thanks to all those concerned for their ongoing work on this, at the Environment Agency, the various local authority reps and many more, too many to name, but especially Mike Shefras the RTA chairman. If only we could get this sort of positive open dialogue with BW!

Simon Robbins

PS - Simon says "Thank you..."

To all of you who get in touch letting me know of your local difficulties and issues - it's invaluable to hear of concrete examples of where there are problems and issues and please keep them coming."

LIVERPOOL DOCKS LINK UPDATE

Richard Carpenter reports

Lots happening and open on time - the contractors have handed over to BW NW for final fitting etc! The BW Board officially open the final stages down into the docks on 24th March and some lucky local boaters have been recruited to test the timings and planning for the stewardship of the passage this year during late March and early April.

BW plan to open officially during mid April. Full details of timings and plans will appear on Waterscape, however they have employed staff for the full cruising season at this stage who will accompany boats through. Boaters wishing to do so have first to register and book a passage with BW via the northern office on 01942 405700. They have over 100 already! The aim is to lock down and lock back 6 boats per day escorted – three lock full's – they are standard length L&L wide locks. Our information is that there are 50 standard 60 ft moorings in the Dock and these are subject to a maximum 14 day stay. They have water and electricity points. The passages will be 7 days a week right through. Boaters will be required to wear life jackets for the passage – this is because part of it is through full size existing docks which are very deep.

The plan is to assist passage on the L&L from Bridge 9 into the Eldonian Village secure moorings where boaters will moor overnight before undertaking the locking down into the dock the next day. Details are sketchy but will be on the BW website soon.

The local Merseyside and West Lancs IWA have prepared a welcome leaflet which covers the area from Wigan into Liverpool, as well as the Rufford Branch (down to the Ribble Link). We gather that Nicolson's have published an updated version for the North West, however the IWA one covers much more up to date detail in terms of points of interest per bridge, local facilities, farm shops and a bit of history. Its free but donations to the IWA would be gratefully received I am told! Copies will be held by the Hon Sec at NABO (telephone numbers elsewhere) who is local and is happy to meet members making the trip as they pass through Burscough. The IWA have boating members along the length and the leaflets should be available at several points.

As part of a local volunteering initiative with BW NW, NABO is hoping to encourage boaters to the north west who plan to go into Liverpool and/or across the Ribble Link by helping to man lock sections through Wigan at certain times throughout the season. These will be down the Wigan Flight, and through the towns other locked sections which have a pretty much underserved reputation.

We also have a small team of experienced boaters who will assist members who plan to do the Ribble, either as extra crew or by providing road transport for nervous crew members. Its such a pity to miss out on the beautiful Lancaster Canal because a crew person is a bit unsure of crossing the Douglas and Ribble? Again just contact the Secretary who can even lend anchors and flares!

Please do check with BW on the final arrangements for the passage down to Liverpool!

Them and us?

The debate on continuous cruisers, non-cruisers and moorings goes on. 'Them and us' - some would say 'divide and rule' - or keeping the spotlight off a looming problem?

Each year the backlog of maintenance work and safety work increases, with the network held together with bits of wood and puddle clay!

Looking into the future I see the network fragmented into short sections by 'Closed until further notice' due to parts of the system collapsing, breaching or becoming unsafe, leaving the boater with short lengths of waterway to sail on. Fortunately for BW there will be no loss of revenue even if the boater has only a mile of canal to navigate they will still have to pay for a permit to sail and a permit to moor. 'Remember there is no right of navigation'

As to the continuous cruisers, it will be: 'Bingo!, we have them stuck at a long-term stoppage and unable to move after 28 days. We will be able to charge them a roving mooring!'

Alan Holden, M. T. Anna

VAT on Boat Licences

As everyone knows, the VAT rate for goods and services in the UK was reduced on 1st December 2008 from 17.5% to 15%.

It so happened that the BW licence for my 50ft. boat became due for renewal on 1st December. Wishing to qualify each year for the Prompt Payment discount, I have a Direct Debit facility

set up enabling BW to take the requisite amount each year on or just before the date on which the licence falls due.

This year the sum of £567.50 was deducted from my bank account on 1st December. Around the same time the two licence discs arrived in the post from BW, accompanied by their invoice clearly showing the cost of the licence plus VAT at 17.5%. The VAT element is shown as £84.52.

I have since e-mailed BW twice, pointing out that as my licence is effective for one year from the date on which the VAT rate was reduced by 2.5%, VAT on my new licence should have been charged at 15% and I am therefore entitled to a reduction of around £11 on the VAT element of the sum paid for my licence, as shown on their invoice.

Perhaps predictably, in view of BW's less than excellent standard of customer service, I have not had the courtesy of any sort of response from BW – not even an acknowledgment that my communication is receiving attention.

Have other boaters and NABO members taken up this matter with BW? If so, what has been BW's response? Many of us pay for our licences for one year in advance, and many of us have, therefore, also paid in advance a VAT rate of 17.5% on a licence fee, when the VAT rate has now been reduced. Consequently BW is currently in receipt of a lot of money that ought to be refunded to boaters.

I am not an unreasonable individual and am ready to concede that, modern computer and accounting systems notwithstanding, it may take BW some time to work out how much they currently owe every licence holder and to make the appropriate refunds. I would, though, appreciate an acknowledgment from them that they have this matter in hand and that we can all anticipate receiving refunds some time in the future, either as a cheque, or a refund direct into our bank accounts, or in the form of a reduction on next year's licence. (If the latter, I would expect an additional element to be included in respect of interest earned by BW on money that is rightfully mine.)

The view of politicians is that the reduction of 2.5% in VAT on UK goods and services across the board has had little appreciable effect upon the UK consumer. This may well be so on small purchases, the cost of which tends to vary anyway, but in the case of a cruising licence, the average cost of which is in the region of anything between £400 and £800 per annum, depending upon boat length, the amount involved is significant.

British Waterways currently owes me about £11. Without doubt they also owe thousands of fellow boaters significant amounts of money in VAT overpayments. If they are currently working out a way of refunding these amounts to me and my fellow boaters, then that is fine by me but I would like them have the courtesy, in the interim, to tell me so.

I do not intend to let this matter rest. I suppose e-mails are all too easily overlooked as, allegedly, never having been received, so my next step will

have to be a letter, sent Recorded Delivery, with a copy to the Waterways' Ombudsman.

Ann Berry

Double the licence fee?

Once again the perennial subject of Licence fees, Mooring charges, and so called 'Continuous Cruisers', who really cause a problem only when they patently are not doing just that, prompts such responses that even BW must surely realise how exercised so many of us are about it. First of all, we are ALL 'Continuous Cruisers', that is what our licence is for, it is what we pay for, even if many are tied up much of the time and stoppages limit our potential boating. We must never let BW trick us into speaking of a 'Boating Season', as they so often try to suggest.

I am about to make myself almost universally unpopular with boaters from all sides, (What is new in that!) you had better hide my identity, but I urge you, dear reader, not to throw a brick at the writer until you read on.

Now, don't breathe a word to BW, but in reality we do get quite a lot for our Licence Fee. We get the navigation, that's the track, the water to fill the track, the sani stations, refuse disposal and so on. Most boaters pay their licence fees, and BW is slowly getting to grips with those who attempt to evade paying. Many of us also pay BW directly for our moorings, I pay BW three to four times my licence charge, for my mooring. Many more pay a marina, which then pays BW a large slice of this payment, the so-called 'Connection Fee', generally based on a charge of so much per mooring space, in other words a 'tax' for each boat.

Even those folk who moor their boat at the bottom of their own garden pay a mooring fee, effectively paying BW twice for the space their boat occupies in the water, surely that's immoral, but the courts said it was correct so it must be (!?) So just about all those of us with official moorings pay BW an extra charge, over and above our licence fee, for our boating. In fact, all of us with a mooring pay an extra 'Tax' for our boating. What is more, most of us paying BW for a mooring get just about nothing for it, and they are able to raise this charge as much as they like without all the hoo-ha putting up licence fees triggers. Certainly on my mooring, despite having one of the highest mooring charges on the system, we get nothing, BW don't even cut the grass. What happened to the instruction from government, BW are quick to quote, that "Users should pay for services provided" – What services? In a marina, people do get extra services from the marina owner, but that's what they pay the marina for. What is fundamental, and this is where the so-called 'Continuous Cruisers' will throw their bricks at me, is that their boating is subsidised by just about all boaters holding a mooring. Sorry, you won't want to agree with that, but is incontrovertibly true.

Right, a solution, but you won't like it. I propose that BW doubles all licence fees! (OK, throw the bricks now, but please read on.) BUT, in return BW should halve all mooring fees, abolish marina connection charges and abolish the dubiously moral end of garden mooring fees. Big problem, could we trust BW and the marina owners to cut their fees proportionately? Well, I am on record as saying 'never trust BW', and certainly their past actions reinforce my

doubts. I cannot suggest a way of ensuring fairness, but I'm sure a means could be devised. By this proposal ALL licence holders would pay a more realistic charge. There are many more licence payers than mooring fee payers so if the actual adjustment proportions were carefully calculated, BW should not lose out on revenue and equally most boaters with a mooring should not end up paying more, just paying for something they actually get, rather than for nothing, as they do now.

Could it ever happen? Well, of course not. BW are scared stiff of upsetting the relatively militant continuous cruisers, much easier to continue to soak disproportionately the browbeaten, and readily compliant, marina berth or mooring holder, but all the time this inequity and unfairness continues, there will be rumblings of discontent, and suggestions that an increased licence fee should be imposed on so-called continuous cruisers.

Name supplied

Please replace like for like

I wonder how many of our members have noticed that a number of lock top gates, replaced recently on the Southern Grand Union, have been made without the gate or centre paddles that the gates they are replacing had.

This directly contravenes a promise given by BW some years ago, and repeated to representatives of a number of organisations, specifically to me when I was Chairman of HNBOC, that all new top gates would have gate or centre paddles fitted when made.

I have heard arguments made that the longer time filling a lock “Does not matter because these days we should be relaxing on the canal and not rushing around as the working boat folk had to do.” I’m sorry, that argument is just not appropriate. Anyone who has experienced for instance the long delays on flights such as Braunston or Buckby during the summer will regret the lack of these paddles on some of

the top gates, at least one set of gates has been fitted on Braunston recently, lacking centre paddles where the set they have replaced had them.

Well, it’s not the first time that BW has reneged on a promise made, I’m sure it will not be the last. Just remember. Never, never, never trust BW, is that clear, never trust BW.

David Daines

CAN YOU HELP GET MORE MEMBERS?

Richard Carpenter explains the latest drive

Geoff Wood is another example of a member who has discovered what NABO can and needs to do for boaters, see next page, and we need more.

Rather than working from a stall at events where the same old faces walk by, we want exposure round the network where the ordinary boater can see what we have to offer.

We are making about thirty light-weight roof displays which fold flat for storage and assemble to just over 3 foot by 1 foot. Each only needs something heavy placed inside to hold it down and has a showerproof holder for leaflets.

If you would like to have one of these to help spread the word, please contact me. Don’t forget, if you fill in your name in the ‘Introduced by’ box on all the leaflets you only need three takers a year to get your subscription to NABO free!



OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

Geoff Wood takes in a free-lunch NABO Council meeting

After recently retiring from working in a paper mill for 30 odd years, I have been a NABO member for the last four since buying our narrowboat. Now, having more time, I responded to Howard's invitation on requiring more feedback from boaters. From this, Howard invited my wife and I to the next council meeting. What would the people be like? Will they make us welcome? What sort of jolly will it be?

Arriving outside the Waggon & Horses, a magnificent old Victorian pub, we were met by David Fletcher and immediately made welcome by the rest of the council. Were we going to have the meeting outside in the street as the pub was closed? Eventually bolts were heard being drawn and we were let in by an apologetic landlord, Andrew, mumbling that he hadn't overlaid honestly. We went upstairs to a fairly dim room at the top of the building. Coffee was on hand immediately. Eventually the rest of the council turned up, all but a sick Howard. We began with David presenting the agenda, this obviously wasn't a jolly as it was serious and important business. An eye opener to the outsider.

The items under discussion came and went with lengthy debates on mooring matters, technical issues, web site image, cost of boating and NABO promotion.

If you end up having to run your solid fuel stove with the flu insulated, with a tall chimney with stays and guys that won't go under bridges, having to put out the stove when going through tunnels and other laughable ideas, it won't be because NABO haven't fought against it.

Time flew by and it was soon lunch time, with food provided to stem the flow of hunger. Soon back to matters in hand attempting to finish at 3.30, but it did not finish until 4.00.

We would like to say that the NABO Council is a very dedicated, hard working bunch and would like to thank them on our and other boaters behalf for all they do for us.

*Britain's
waterways get a
little antipodean
support*



Welcome aboard, John Slee

You'll see from the flag we fly aboard Epiphany that I have Cornish roots. Although some of my ancestors were fishermen and lifeboatmen, my family were involved in business in Newquay, so our holidays were always "out of season". Apart from the boating lake, like so many we began our boating on the Norfolk Broads and River Thames, mainly in the autumn. Then I caught the canals bug when I was old enough to be independent.

I had a varied career including computer programming and systems analysis, running an Ice Cream Parlour in Newquay, and as a Church of England parish priest. Most years Fiona and I hired boats for our family holidays. Then we saw an advert for share boats in one of the canal magazines. As a result we had 5 happy years as part owners of n.b. Twelfth Night, based at Gailey on the Staffs and Worcs Canal. That served to confirm the feasibility of our dream of one day becoming liveaboards. (The one thing we didn't experience was summer cruising.)

In 2006 we commissioned our own 57 foot narrowboat, built by Colecraft and fitted out by Bath Narrowboats. We moved aboard Epiphany in 2007, with a home mooring in Devizes marina on the Kennet and Avon and then were fortunate to find an on-line mooring at Pewsey Wharf. At the end of August 2008, Fiona and I could both retire, so began continuous cruising and we adore the life.

I am proud to have been on the committee of Save our Waterways following the iniquitous DEFRA cuts, helping to coordinate the spontaneous boaters' protests. In December last year, Richard Carpenter invited me to consider joining NABO Council to represent continuous cruisers, and I have gladly accepted.

Over recent months, British Waterways has been considering charging continuous cruisers a premium for what I consider is a right. Although they have not done so yet, they do not appear to have discarded the idea. We must stay vigilant. Many cc-ers are on a fixed income, and with all the other increases in boating costs (see the article about NABO's Cost of Boating Survey elsewhere in this issue of NABO News) even small increases could cause serious hardship. One of the current dangers is that dealing with the so-called continuous moorers issue will have a negative side effect on genuine continuous cruisers.

I will be writing again on the subject in future editions. But my main concern is that I am truly your representative. Not all boaters, even those on your Council, understand what continual cruising entails. I admit to being a relative newcomer myself. So please feel free to contact me with any concerns or suggestions. My details are on the back pages. Fiona tells me I spend too much time on the computer – but at least that means your emails will be read, and replied to promptly! Our website <http://nbepiphany.co.uk> shows our location – Look out for us!



RCR Advert



Another life-form eavesdrops from under the Council table

Its not the most modern of rooms in terms of decoration, or natural light. It's seen many years of meetings of local Lions, Buffs and other more furtive Groups round its mixture of traditional square pub tables all put together to create a Committee Room. It has a magnificent high backed throne with crests and carvings that some say is sacred and can only be used by people who bring biscuits!

For more years than I can remember it has had a visit every six weeks or so from a real wide ranging mixture of bods from all over the waterway system.

I have recently crawled through the floorboards and skirting boards from a newsagents, and via a hardware store in Oldbury to get here where I feed quite well on the crumbs dropped from the tables.

They are all shapes and sizes (not the crumbs - I'll come to those later!) but the bods. Some have funny accents, strange hairstyles and a wide range of ideas in apparel but boy are they passionate about boats! Do you know they talked pretty much non stop for 5 hours about boats? *(Except for a period when they provided me with crumbs - as I said I'll come back to those later!)* Seems that just owning a boat throws up all sorts of issues - I just thought you pointed it, pulled back the throttle and let it go? From what I know of canals is that they are not very wide and are pretty straight - what could be simpler?

But no! One of the bods spent 30 minutes going on about new rules being discussed for solid fuel heating - it seems that if they came into force the people on the boat would have to sleep outside 'cos they wouldn't be allowed near it inside. They couldn't go under bridges neither 'cos they'd have to have factory tall chimneys wrapped in foil so that the smoke entered the atmosphere well above everybody's heads! Well, the other bods got quite restless at all this and are gathering up to take on the elfensaitfee people - whoever they are?

A bit later on another bod, big bloke you wouldn't argue with, told everyone about the problems he was having getting BW to take any notice of him on how they dealt with licences for boaters, moorings for boaters, facilities for boaters and he was getting fed up. *(They must be pretty thick to take this big bloke on - I'd let him have whatever he wants!)* It seems that all the other bods were also fed up with this BW fella too and are pretty determined to get him to listen whichever way they can!

They all then started to give examples of things their members were telling them about this BW's enforcement people (*he sounds a bit of a rum 'un, this BW*) when it comes to what these licences and permits allow.

It seems that in the Marple area boaters not allowed anything on the roof of a boat, in Birmingham once you visit you can't come back for a year, in Lancaster you cant use the pump out 'cos this BW's tokens don't work in his mate's facilities - someone called BWML? Seems to me that this BW fella needs to get some people working for him that knows how to chat to customers in some parts 'cos there were loads more examples. Something about the wrong bollards kept coming up too! It seems that this BW bloke never thinks to ask his customers what's best - bet he's tied up with the government?

Oh, the other thing about these NABO bods mind is the language they talk in - its all letters!!!! One's going to a WUSIG meet to talk about this BW, and his mate (yes he does seem to have one) DEFRA on issues like the CSSAP, CM's, MM's and they'll meet IWA, RBOA, AWCC, and HBS while he is there. I fell asleep for a while but woke up when another bod started talking about pigs and SOW's - well I lost the will after that!

Well, to get back to the point, the reason I crawled in was in the hope of getting fed - and boy was that a good move. The first part of their meeting was a scramble to get some dinner sorted - it seems that the man in the kitchen never has enough fish so its first come first served! The list they passed round meant that the last one to add their choice squeezed it in above all the others to be sure of being top! The new bod they had there, big tall bloke and one of the CCers mentioned above, was most bemused but seemed to catch on quite quick although he ended up with a faggot! It meant I met my objective and got some scraps anyway - think I'll make sure I come back the next time they come - if they don't step on me before!

One thing for certain though - whoever these bod's represent, be sure that they are keen, detailed and professional and know their stuff! Till the next time?



NABO News is published by
National Association of Boat Owners
FREEPOST (BM8367), Birmingham B31 2BR

Whilst every care is taken to ensure that the contents of this newsletter are factually correct, we accept no liability for any direct or consequential loss arising from any action taken by anyone as a result of reading anything contained in this publication. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association. The products and services advertised in this publication are not necessarily endorsed by the Association.