

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

## NEWSLETTER JULY 1993

### NEWS FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING...

... held on 3rd July, 1993 at Hockley Port on the Birmingham Canal Navigations.

The Council first welcomed Roger Hancock, a member newly co-opted to the Council whose legal experience as a Solicitor, and general advice will undoubtedly be very useful in NABO activities. Roger has in the past helped us on a number of legal questions for which we are grateful. An updated list of Council members is on the back page.

As it is not long since the last meeting, not much has changed concerning the financial or membership situations. The total number of members now stands at 1034.

The questionnaire sent out with the Boater had produced a fantastic response - 49 replies in the first 4 days and two hundred and eighty as we go to print! Many thanks to everyone who has returned a completed questionnaire - if yours is still waiting for attention, why not fill it in now? The more responses we have, the better we can represent you. An initial response to the questionnaire is included on page 2.

Plans are proceeding for the NABO presence at the Peterborough Waterways Festival. Space has been booked, and a splendid little blue and white marquee ordered. We hope to recruit lots of new members, but it will also be an opportunity for existing members to meet some of the Council.

Due to popular demand, Penny Barber is looking into producing a NABO pennant. We hope to have these ready in time for Peterborough.

Dave Green, Jon Darlington and Peter Lea reported on their last meeting with BW about the Bill, which resulted in NABO being able to withdraw its petition. Copies of the changes to the Bill, legally binding agreements and statements of intent, signed by BW, were circulated to all Council members. Dave Green explained that these concessions were offered to NABO as a package, conditional on the withdrawal of the petition. If NABO had not withdrawn, the points would have had to be argued all over again with the House of Commons Committee, and the results almost certainly would not have been so good. For the latest progress on the Bill see Page 4.

Following our request in the June Boater, the Council are still seeking a representative for boat owners on the Broads. Can you help? See also page 5 for a report on a lively Broads user meeting re boat standards.

BW have sent NABO a draft of the latest version of the Customer Charter, together with an analysis of all the comments made on the first version. See page 4.

Plans are being laid for the third NABO AGM in November. It has been booked for the 27th November 1993 at Dr Johnson House, Bull St, Birmingham (Same venue as last year).

Next Council meeting is on the 14th August 1993 at Hockley Port. Members are welcome to attend (but not participate in (unless requested to do so)) Council meetings. If you wish to attend please contact a Council member beforehand.

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## QUESTIONNAIRE: AN INITIAL RESPONSE

We have now had over 270 replies to the questionnaire. A full report on the results will be issued at a later date when they have been analysed.

We still await the 700 odd that haven't been sent back yet! Remember if you don't let us know what concerns you we can't try and do anything about it.

The council would like to thank all those who have made such favourable comments for NABO's achievements so far, it makes all the hard work worthwhile knowing that it is appreciated by most of our members.

We would also thank those who have sent the few adverse comments we have received. Without these we cannot improve the service to our members. We shall be looking at these to see if they are justified and should be acted upon.

#### OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM QUESTIONNAIRE.

To all those members who wrote and require answers, please bear with us. We will reply as soon as we can.

To the member who asked us to stop sending mail for female members to "MR" because it is sexist and infuriating, I would suggest that a letter to the membership secretary giving corrected details of names etc would stop any annoyance!

To the member who only joined NABO because "they fancied the editor's wife" - It made my day, but not the Editor's!

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#### SHARED BOATS - BW LICENSING

Following a case of a member being asked to pay for two cruising licences by the Board, because the boat was in joint ownership, we would offer the following advice.

Where 2 or 3 households share a boat, one normal cruising licence in the joint name can be issued. The actual printing of names on the licence may be restricted by space.

If BW consider that an arrangement is more in the nature of a timeshare - perhaps where four or more households are sharing a vessel, you may be asked to have a multiuser licence. A multi user licence is considerably more expensive than a cruising licence but priced below the hire boat rate. It is a condition of issue that the boat is operated on a non-profit making basis. The multi-user licence aims to reflect the increased usage of the system that the increased number of users indicates.

If you feel you have been incorrectly licensed, base your argument to BW on the amount of usage of the vessel. As far as we are aware there are no formal measure of what is considered normal "single user" usage of a boat - both BW and the Boater must resort to common sense.

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## **BW BILL - LATEST**

The Bill is still in the Committee stage. Minor changes have been made regarding access over land and the role of Trinity House, which do not affect us, but BW's Parliamentary Agent informed us last week that one clause (36A) is being removed from the Bill which does affect us potentially.

Clause 36A stated "Where by any provision of this Act the Board are required to consult organisations appearing to the Board to represent the builders, owners or operators of vessels, or of vessels of a particular kind, the Board shall have regard to any advice given to them by IWAAC as regards which organisations are representative of such persons"

By losing this clause, BW can again unilaterally decide with whom they consult - which we objected to in our petition. Although we obtained this concession before the latest IWAAC appointments were made (which might cause some to think boaters will not be so sympathetically viewed by IWAAC as before) we have to consider the long term effect of losing such a clause.

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## **CUSTOMER CHARTER**

The new "Customer Charter" text is a fundamentally different document from the draft used for consultation with users. We are disappointed to see that its approach appears to have changed from being a charter of commitments, albeit limited, to what some might regard as little more than a marketing document - which seems to regard boating as anything but central to BW's activities. This would be in line with the perceived widening of BW's marketing aim and general role apparently promoted by the DoE.

We are also concerned that the new approach does not appear to reflect the results of the conscientious and extensive consultation with users.

It is expected that The Board will publish the "Charter" later this month.

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## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING ON BOAT STANDARDS - BROADS AUTHORITY.**

The following report by Harry Winter was inadvertently omitted from the last Boater. This meeting was for many the first time Boat Standards had been discussed, and illustrates the need for boaters to be more positively represented on the Broads:

A meeting on Boat Standards was attended at Acle with some of the Broads Navigation Authorities and users on the 14th May 1993.

About 70 people attended and the overall consensus summed up by one owner was "throw the ruddy thing out". A proposal was put forward and voted on that mandatory third party insurance and a code of conduct be formulated to address certain safety matters.

The Chairman agreed to take the feeling of the meeting back to the full Broads Navigation Committee, but could not guarantee the meeting's views would be listened to. This caused considerable concern in view of the votes that had just been taken.

In concluding this report, I am of the opinion that the Broads is in a unique situation and cannot be compared with the canals and rivers as administered by British Waterways and the NRA. In order to do justice to our title, a person or persons is required to act as a NABO representative, who not only knows the Broads and its history, but also uses them and has a full understanding of the problems.

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## **BW - NEWS RELEASES**

### **The waterway environment and Development Plans.**

BW launched a new document on the 9th July entitled "British Waterways: The Waterway Environment and Development Plans"

The document illustrates the guiding principles that underwrite British Waterways' position on development plans and its responsibility for the conservation of the waterway environment. This was in response to a consultative document published in 1991. BW said that the "overall response to the

document was very positive, with much support for the concept of corridor planning studies; the environmental benefits of waterways as a transport route. (Cycling, walking, water buses etc) and their potential for "green chains" through urban areas".

BW Chairman David Ingman said that "After 200 years the network is now a unique combination of waterway environment and industrial heritage. This is becoming increasingly attractive and valuable for the many diverse activities taking place on and alongside the water. Hence change continues to challenge us. BW task is to manage that change, to constantly increase the value of the network and preserve the waterway environment to the benefit of the present and future generations".

The BW head of Environmental Design & Planning - Judith Grice said that the Plan explains BWs' aims and relationship with their Sponsors - The Department of the Environment, and how important it is that their waterways are integrated fully within the development plan framework. Great emphasis is placed on the relationship of the canal system to transportation, energy use and communications.

"British Waterways - The Waterway Environment and Development Plans" is available from Waterway Environment Services, The Locks, Hillmorton, Rugby CV21 4PP

### Engineering Director Appointed by British Waterways.

Mr Tim Noble, aged 47 has joined British Waterways, as Director of Engineering.

A chartered Civil Engineer, MR Noble previously Managing Director of the Process Contracting Division of the Costain Group plc.

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## WHO REPRESENTS NABO?

NAME/POSITION ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE

Penny Barber, C/O  
(Treasurer/Midland Rep)

Phil Bland.

Jon Darlington, (Vice  
Chairman/Boater Editor)

Melanie Darlington.  
(Production/Distribution)

Dave Green  
(Chairman)

Roger Hancock

Thomas Hartney.  
(NW Rep)

Neil Hutchinson,  
(Newsletter/Boater Editor)

Peter Lea.

Stephen Peters.  
(River Users Coordinator)

Christine Potter.  
(Membership Secty/PR)

Pete Sterry,  
(NE Rep/Publicity)

Nikki Timbrell,  
(Secty/Editorial Team)

Harry Winter.  
(Engineering Officer/  
S/E Rep)