



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 96/1: February 1996

NABO IS 5 IN 1996!



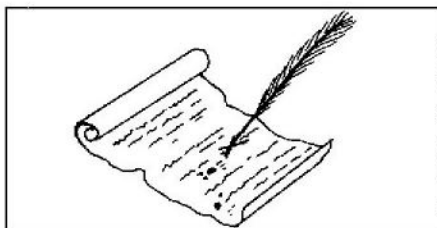
NABO will be celebrating its 5th birthday later in the year.

The Association has plenty of achievements to be proud of in its short life. Its first Chairman, Dave Green, took the Association forward from its first big meeting at Windmill End in 1991, making NABO a force to be reckoned with. Under the leadership of Jon Darlington, NABO has continued to be recognised as an influential user group.

1996 is a good year for birthdays. The IWA has a Golden Jubilee, and Longwood Boat Club is marking 25 years. Do you know of any others?

NEWSLETTER

Editor's comment



WYE spelt WEY in OBAN Newsletter! Oops, very sorry to all who were misled. It has earned me the title of "our Wayward Editor"!

Wayward Editor makes changes to Newsletter layout! We are trying to make it more readable, a bit less technical, a bit more fun. We would like to put a picture on the front each time, so if you have anything topical, please send it in. We would also like to publish information on canalside facilities, such as really good pubs, friendly and helpful boatyards or where to get the best pump-out. Could you think up a puzzle or draw a cartoon? Has anything amusing happened to you? Please let me know your reaction to the changes so far, and send me all your ideas!

Have you filled in the survey form? Please stop reading and do it now - it will be so useful to us!

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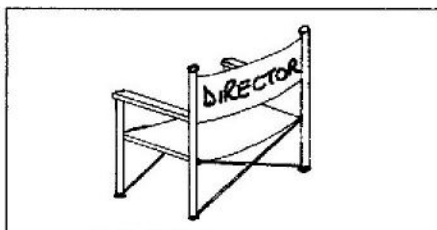
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Published by

**National Association of
Boat Owners**

NEWSLETTER

Chairman's comment



BW are currently going through the early stages of revising the Waterways Code for Anglers.

Since NABO came into existence a recurring theme has been perceived problems with fishermen. The two areas which seem to have been most often reported are fishing at locks or on other navigation sites, and fishing opposite moored boats. The latter has become a sticking point. The waterways code asks that fishing should not occur within 50' of a moored boat because "people aboard a moored boat appreciate their privacy", yet fishermen often sit directly opposite moored boats. We have been told that the 50 foot rule only applies to fishing on the same side. We clearly do not agree and the Code does not either. Furthermore on most BW offside mooring sites, the moorers are charged for a reasonable degree of privacy,

which they most certainly are not getting if there is someone sitting 30 feet away staring at them.

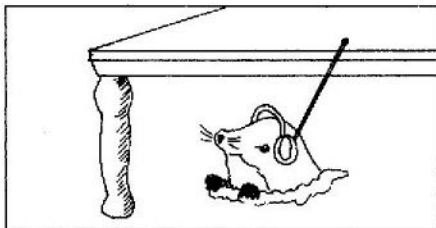
I am sure that part of the problem is the question of charging. In many cases BW are charging the fishing clubs for a length of towpath which includes sections opposite boats. Sometimes they even lease out the moorings themselves to fishing clubs as well as to the moorers. I believe fishing ought to be banned opposite boats but that suitable compensation should be given to the fishing clubs for the loss of the amenity.

What do you think? I would be interested to have your views.

On another subject: a retired farmer contacted me about a problem he recently encountered. He used outboard 2-stroke oil in a strimmer and found that two weeks later it would not start. On checking the petrol he found it to be slimy. It turned out that the 2-stroke oil was bio-degradable. The manufacturer recommended that after using a machine, unused petrol should be tipped out because it would degrade in a matter of days. Has anyone else had the same experience?

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View from the Council meeting held on 27th January, 1996



Happy new Moleyear!

U turns are in! The Government have accepted the arguments of NABO, BMIF and others over the Landfill tax announced in the Budget. Dredgings are to be excluded from the tax (which could have cost a fortune). The amendment put forward by Winston Churchill MP to do so was withdrawn after the Government agreed to propose their own amendment. Peter Lea's letter on NABO's behalf was quoted in the House and appears for posterity in Hansard.

How about BW joining in? There seems to be an impression that NABO is trying to scotch the Boat Safety Scheme. Not only at BW but also at the Inland Navigation Forum and the RYA. This is not so.

However talking of Standards generally, Moley thinks it would

be a good thing if they were adopted in their widest sense, and some reasonable dialogue should be followed. Standards ought to promote the quality of life by adding to safety but not impose conformity and greyness (much beloved by the Politically correct) on everyone. Individuality used to be prized as a British virtue, now it is seemingly unacceptable. How are the owners of the 8 Amphicars left in existence ever going to comply with BSS? Why should a boat have to pass over twice the number of checks than a motor caravan to obtain an MOT? The risks are much greater on the roads.

In the same vein why should the RYA claim to speak for all boaters just because they have a membership of 40,000? How many of these are dinghy sailors confined to lakes? How many cruise on canals? It is easy to comply with BSS when your boat is so large that it cannot navigate very far up the Thames but not so easy when confined to a space 7 feet wide and 20 feet long.

NABO will continue to try to improve standards for all and to

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Council meeting view (cont)

make them accessible and understandable. Moley finds the present information impossible. There are definitions missing which are essential in order to have some hope of understanding what is meant. These explanations are only available if you pay (not that you can get them yet). Is this a reasonable standard of service from BW? They also say apparently that the issue of a grey and black booklet in 1993 amounted to consultation with the public. How can that be when Moley, for one, never had one?

Apparently one part of BW is saying that examiners will not have any discretion on whether to pass or fail a boat, whereas another part is saying that surveyors can use theirs and are to be told only to fail those boats BW wants to get rid of. Further double standards? Will you get a pass if you employ a surveyor at a cost likely to exceed £100, and a fail if you use an examiner who might be cheaper? At the moment there are not enough surveyors to do the job in the timescale anyway, so what will happen in practice? Watch this space.

News in brief

IWA Launch their Golden Jubilee Appeal at Boat Show

Robert Jones, Minister for State responsible for BW (as well as for Construction, Planning and Energy Efficiency) launched the IWA Jubilee Appeal on 11th January. The IWA aim to raise £50,000 to help fund canal restoration into the next century. In particular, WRG urgently require a new excavator.

National Waterways Festival

The IWA August Bank holiday festival will again be at Windmill End, as in 1991. If you are at loose end that weekend, NABO and/or the IWA would like to hear from you - see page 11.

Wheel it to Welshpool

The 1996 IWA National Trailboat Festival will take place at Grungrog, near Welshpool on the "Monty" over the weekend of 1st/2nd June. Attractions include worm charming (yes, Welshpool Worms add Fun to Festival!), and the fantastic background scenery. Six or seven years to a fully restored canal?

NEWS

More news in brief

Fees for overstaying on Visitor Moorings on the BCN

BW are proposing to introduce a penalty fee of £5 per day for boats overstaying on Birmingham City Centre moorings.

Hérons on scaffolding at Gailey

BW have allegedly constructed scaffolding towers for nesting herons to use temporarily while they are waiting for new trees to grow on the island at Gailey reservoir near Cannock. Apparently BW cut the herons' trees down in 1994 in an attempt to control the cormorants.

Grand Union South budget

GU South budget for 1996/7 will be reduced to £2.65 million, compared with £2.88 million for 1995/6. £200,000 was spent on dredging in 1995/6, from the regional budget.

BSS - Tips for Boaters

Could the BW leaflet "Tips for Boaters" be a list of locations where you could dispose of craft which fail the examination? No - there would not be enough room!

Landfill Tax Success

NABO welcomed the recent announcement by Mr. Heathcoat-Amory MP in the House of Commons that the Government intends to exempt canal and river dredgings from the Landfill Tax. The announcement followed a blitz campaign by NABO and other waterway-related organisations, who helped the Construction Industry Research and Information Association ("CIRIA") put together a study supporting the exemption, and followed it up with letters to MPs.

The campaign started when the Finance Bill was tabled in the House of Commons on 4th January. As we feared, the sections bringing in the new Landfill Tax made no exemption for dredging. Industry estimated that the tax could in some cases add 50% to the cost of dredging.

BW responded by commissioning the CIRIA study, while the British Marine Industries Federation briefed parliamentary agents to draft an amendment to the Bill, exempting dredgings from the tax. NABO's Peter Lea and IWA Chairman Audrey Smith joined representatives from the BMIF, BW, the NRA, the

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Landfill Tax Success (continued)

Manchester Ship Canal and the Broads at CIRIA's offices to help with their report.

While the finished study was being circulated to MPs, the BMIF was meeting Customs and Excise to press the case for dredging. The National Inland Navigation Forum, NABO, and other groups were hard at work lobbying MPs. Winston Churchill MP introduced our amendment on 23rd January, and several MPs made speeches supporting it. Mr. Andrew Miller, MP for Ellesmere Port and Neston, said, "The National Association of Boatowners often writes to me on issues relating to narrow boats because of the presence of a canal in my constituency. It has been drawn to my attention a study undertaken by the Construction Industry Research and Information Association in consultation with waterways organisations and English Nature, which reported that dredgings are natural materials which do not arise from any polluting activity, or industrial or commercial process. They are not waste in the conventional sense, and the operator

disposing of them does not create them. The tax would not result in a reduction in the amount of material created. They are therefore not the operators, nor are the operators the polluters, at which the tax is aimed."

Happily, the government accepted the force of our arguments. We now await their official amendment to the tax. We have been told they will consult users on its wording, which should cover canal restoration as well as navigable waterways.

A welcome victory for the waterways!

Undertaking for renewal of Houseboat Certificates

We have been concerned at a situation that occurred in London in December where two houseboats with houseboat certificates were told that they would not have their certificates renewed in the new year and would have to move from their site. It appears that BW wanted to lease the stretch of moorings

NEWS

Houseboat certificates (cont)

to a private operator and the boats were in the way of their plans. Needless to say the residents were very concerned just before Christmas that they would have to find alternative moorings in the new year. One of the boats had been lived on for 6 years.

When we were made aware of the situation we immediately reminded the Managers concerned that BW had given a legally binding undertaking to NABO (as part of a package of measures given to get us to drop our opposition to the BW Bill) that they would not give less than 6 months notice of refusal to renew a houseboat certificate.

Despite assurances from BW that they are sympathetic to the boaters, and would not remove them, and would comply with the undertaking, and despite our requests that verbal assurances given to us be passed on to the boaters, so far no-one has written to them to actually give them those assurances.

We are monitoring the situation, but what is clear is that we must be vigilant at all times.

Caveat Emptor (buyer beware!): BSS latest

The recent announcement of the date for compulsory introduction of the Boat Safety Scheme has highlighted the necessity for certain items of boat equipment to comply with specific requirements. Unfortunately, it can sometimes be quite difficult to obtain items of the required specification, so here are a few snippets to help you to educate your chandler!

Fire Extinguishers

The BSS 'grey book' stipulates the size and fire rating of the necessary extinguishers for your boat but it is important to stress that they must bear one of the approval markings, notably the BS "Kite Mark" or "EN3". Many extinguishers do not comply with the BSS and the words "Manufactured to BS so-and-so" will not suffice.

The message is that you must clearly specify that you require extinguishers which satisfy the BSS requirements. Make it a distinct condition of purchase and take the items back to your retailer if they are "not fit for the purpose".

NEWS

BSS latest (continued)

However, one promising piece of news is that owners of 'Firemaster' extinguishers can obtain suitable Kite-marked replacement extinguishers at a concessionary price direct from the makers. The relevant model numbers are DPS1 (fire rating 5A/34B) and DPS2 (fire rating 13A/70B). The address is Firemaster Extinguisher Ltd, 174-176, Hither Green Lane, London, SE13 6QB Tel 0181 852 8585.

Flexible tubing

A similar proviso applies to other items such as flexible fuel and gas pipes. Make sure they comply with the standards set out in the 'grey book'.

Catalytic heaters

It appears that these heaters are not quite the panacea that everyone believed when they were first introduced. The inert matrix on which combustion takes place can break down in damp atmospheres and lead to unburnt gas being discharged.

If you buy a new catalytic heater make sure it bears the current BS5258 Part 11 designation and have it regularly serviced thereafter. There is still

some confusion about who can undertake the servicing and the easiest answer may be either to renew your catalytic heater periodically or to change to some other form of heating.

Visiting craft

Craft based on waterways not participating in the BSS will not require a BSC for short-term visits to NRA and BW waterways. However, all such craft must still comply in all respects with BSS requirements and owners will be required to sign an undertaking to the effect that their craft does comply when buying a licence.

We can foresee problems with this procedure. Will these regulations deter boat owners from cruising to other areas and exploring unknown waterways?

It follows that sea-going craft based at locations such as the Scottish sea canal basins and Limehouse Basin in London will also require a BSC if they wish to remain on BW waters. The Royal Yachting Association says it does not expect any problems with craft complying with the scheme. NABO does not share the optimism of the RYA.

ADVERT PAGE

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PERHAPS WE SHOULD BE TALKING**

NABO BUSINESS

Join the Recruitment drive: help Christine Denton

I have volunteered to help NABO with their recruitment drive. We have to get more members. More members means more influence in our negotiations with BW.

A few words about me. My name is Christine Denton and with my husband John, I have been boating for some years. We own narrowboats India and Plover, India is a Roger Fuller 70ft tug and Plover is an old Josher, unconverted. I am a director of a company in Nuneaton and am told I am good at organising. I have also been told I am bossy! I admit it, I am bossy but I do have a good sense of humour.

Will you help me please? The more volunteers the easier the job will be. It will not involve committee meetings - honest.

I have a few ideas of my own - for instance getting our literature into rally packs at local rallies, asking all NABO members to recruit one other member, write to all boat clubs asking them to support us, generally saturating the market place with information about NABO - but I need your ideas and help.

Please contact me at home on
- leave a message
on the answering machine if I'm
not in and I'll ring you back.

I look forward to hearing from
you.

Other opportunities

Nottingham and Braunston

NABO will be attending the events at both these locations (last two weekends in May). Are you intending to go? Could you help in any way?

Please contact our rally co-ordinator, Denis Smith, by letter or phone (see back page).

What have you done in the last 50 years?

Have you ever wished that you could tell people where to go, or what to do with their car?

If so, you can fulfill your wish by volunteering 2 hours to be a car park marshall at Windmill End in August. Contact Ron Cousens on [redacted] or John Bailey on [redacted]

Perhaps you prefer handling cash to handling people! Find out more from Mrs Pat Pritchard on [redacted]

REPORTS

IWAAC Reception, attended by Jon Darlington on 13/12/95

A reception was held for the chairpersons of user groups and other selected individuals (some stranger than others). This was essentially an opportunity to meet the IWAAC Council who seemed to be there in force. As a means of renewing communication with IWAAC and other waterways people the event was useful.

A wine glass holder which you clip to a plate (thus freeing a hand for better things than holding wine glasses) was demonstrated to me in an unusual way by one of the guests who was quite enthusiastic about it until it sprung off her plate complete with full wine glass and covered my fawn coloured suit and approximately 6 other people as well with red wine on the way. To clear the red stains liberal quantities of white wine were then applied to all concerned. To anyone that is interested, this is a useful tip if you don't mind looking like you've wet yourself and smelling like an alcoholic for the rest of the day. Still, it was entertaining. Now seriously...

IWAAC's view of the Future

IWAAC used their reception on 13th December to present

their long awaited paper on the future strategy of British Waterways. This is a 47 page document with a number of supplementary papers. NABO have been invited to submit written comments by a date still to be specified.

In 1993 IWAAC was asked to develop long term thinking as a basis for their advice. The decision to refocus IWAAC's work away from the more complaints orientated "watchdog" arena was taken against a background of a radically changed BW with its customer complaints mechanism and the appointment of an Ombudsman. We were disappointed at the time and saw IWAAC moving away from its navigation based approach. They were asked to examine ways in which BW could broaden their customer base and produce more revenue in order to conserve and secure its heritage, and to advise on criteria for deciding on strategic objectives.

IWAAC considered that it would be unrealistic to look at BW in isolation and intended to start with a report on the whole inland waterway scene.

REPORTS

IWAAC Reception (continued)

In 1994, as a focus for their work, they adopted the following vision statement:

"The Inland Waterways, as a major national heritage asset, are maintained, and as necessary restored, to develop the maximum potential for promoting and accommodating the navigation, recreation and tourism, sporting and working activities of the public generally and of present users and special interests; and to promote positively educational, communication and awareness programmes aimed at users and potential users; and that, in support, the energy and resources of the private and public sectors, national and local government and the European Union be engaged."

This seems a fairly complex vision and had the potential to become more of a nightmare than a vision, but they go on to say:

"Our central theme is that Britain's system of inland waterways is a national asset of unique and outstanding quality. It exists not just to provide pleasure and profit for today's citizens; we are trustees of a splendid though

undervalued inheritance. The nation should cherish and conserve it, restore and improve it, so that, in another 200 years, future generations may also enjoy and benefit from it and say approvingly - "they looked after it well!"

This is a more manageable statement and shows a more sympathetic approach

IWAAC's report

The report summary makes a number of very important points and some very positive statements. For example:

"The system is not a museum; it is a useable asset; its heritage a living one. Parts of it carry commercial freight. Parts of it play a vital role in land drainage and water supply. Parts of it are being used for new telecommunication routes. But its dominant function is a resource of increasing importance for leisure, tourism, sport and recreation. It is capable, given the right policies and investment, of adding to the quality of life of millions in our highly urbanised country.

Not nearly enough is being done to give our waterways the

REPORTS

IWAAC Reception (continued)

support they need to make this contribution. The structure within which the whole system is managed is fundamentally unbusinesslike. The pattern of ownership is too fragmented; the incidence of funding too uneven; the services to businesses and customers too haphazard; the ambitions for use and development too low key; the attitudes to protection and conservation too short term."

The message of the report is a call for action on three broad and interrelated fronts:

- * a higher status for our waterways at international, national and local level so as to promote

- * more money coming into the system in order to preserve

- * its long term value by shaping development and use to conservation-based objectives through sustainable partnership management.

Although this latter seems like a bit of newspeak business jargon their heart seems to be in the right place.

Their overall conclusion is that our inland waterways have now reached a stage where significant

structural and policy changes are required to ensure their effective long term conservation and the cost effective development of their substantial economic and social potential.

In this context, IWAAC expressed clear support for the creation of a new national statutory body for all BW and NRA navigations.

Conclusion

Overall this report is positive, will probably benefit the waterways and should be welcomed, although it does not come out as strongly pro navigation as we would have liked.

Festival at Wakefield

A gathering of boats to be held on 7th, 8th & 9th June 1996 at Stanley Ferry, Wakefield, West Yorkshire. Organised by the White Rose Boat Club.

Beer tent and entertainment, good time guaranteed. Entry fee £6-00, including plaque. Contact: David Walker,

or telephone
(evenings) for an entry form.

ADVERT PAGE

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Moira Downie or Mervyn Stutter on (also fax)

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LETTERS

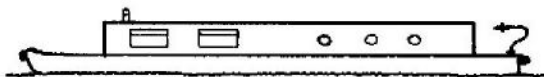
Poetry from Florian

I would like to dedicate the following to David Saady who, according to December's newsletter, thinks "most boats are blue - with bored females and taciturn men steering".

When you see us on our boat -
By far the prettiest one afloat,
Smile and wave and say "Hello"
You're bound to get one back you know.
We are not blue - we're green and red -
(More like maroon, it must be said)
Decked with flowers all Summer through,
We are a very friendly crew.
All day you'll find us on the back -
Apart from the occasional snack.
(I know it's a "stern" but that didn't rhyme!)

No sitting in the bow for me
From the stern there's more to see.
We'll wave to all, on land or boat,
Even passing lorries toot!
How can you say we're dour and glum?
We love our floating second home!

Margot and Terry Stroud, nb Florian



LETTERS

Pump Out Prejudice

In reply to Mr David Saady of Newbury. We admit to being the owners of a bad style, dark blue NB, 2 windows on each side etc. etc. But with 2 happy Airdale Terriers and a green parrot on the front! A NABO sticker in the window, steered by a man or woman in a KIA/NABO sweat-shirt.

We spend from April to October on the canal system helping others (hirers usually). Like the crew we met on the G.U., having raced around a 4 counties ring and Llangollen in 1 week, who said, "We can never buy a pint of milk or a loaf of bread" and remarked "How do you manage?"

Our main complaint is PUMP-OUT PREJUDICE! We have our own hand pump-out equipment. Recently we have experienced a growing number of "THIS IS NOT A PUMP-OUT", these being BWB signs.

David and Pam Bracey

NB James Brindley, Horton Bridge, Devises

For Wey read Wye

I must add my name to what I'm sure will be the vast number of your readers, especially those from the West of England and Wales, who will be pointing out the glaring misprint in the heading at the top of page 11 of your December '95 issue. (*Wayward Editor apologises again.*)

It is worth remembering that the River Avon (U.A.N.T.) now embraces some of the finest fishing water in the country. This is a direct result of the restoration of that part of the river to navigation. I know that river extremely well and was a council member for many years.

Tom Higgs, Bath

More comments on Cut Behaviour

David Saady's and other writers comments on speed and behaviour when passing moored boats once more highlights an increasing problem.

Years ago there were a few offenders but now the few have become the majority. Maybe

LETTERS

Cut Behaviour (continued)

boaters should have a vote for us all either slowing right down or all adopting a semi "blow you" and just doing our own thing!

We have always understood that dead slow passing moored boats means - slowing well before reaching the boat, passing on tickover and not putting the power on again until well beyond the moored boat. For most people this seems to be too much of a tall order. However, if the majority do favour slowing down may I suggest two actions which in the long term might ease the problem. These are to reduce the canals speed limit of 4 mph to 2.5 mph (or 4 kph as BW love to be metric) and, linked to this, to change the most commonly used tool for estimating canal travel (3 mph or 6 locks ph) to a more stately 2.5 miles, 3 wide locks or 5 narrow locks per hour (and making sure this is used for all future printed maps, guides and route planners).

Reducing the speed limit falls in with modern thinking (which people bring from the roads) that a speed limit is not a top limit but something to achieve and exceed.

As for the estimating system, for years books, charts and even hire boat brochures have used the (3/6) system to help people estimate journey time. On our shallow canals to even maintain 3 mph without slowing for moored boats is often difficult. So, to keep to schedule, the majority adopt the token slow down, which bangs moored boats about, while losing little time for the passing boat.

There is no simple system of estimating canal travel times - they depend on conditions (try the Oxford summit in flood and drought), but a change to a 2.5 mph speed limit and/or a less fraught estimating system will give boaters more time to relax and think of others (slowing right down passing moored boats).

Most people use canals as an escape from the modern world, so why bring it with you? Let's lose the tight schedules, the "must get there" attitude, and immerse ourselves in modern canalling - a slow chug through beautiful Britain.

D H S Cragg, Oswestry

AMUSEMENT PAGE

Find the hidden names!

Here's a little amusement for a dark evening. Answers in the next issue, and comments to the Editor (who hasn't found 27 yet!).

CANAL NAMES

Concealed in the following passage are 27 waterways or places with waterways connections e.g. 'Should he tell the staff or do it himself?'

Preparations were well underway for the Summer Garden Party. "I very much hope that this will be the best ever", said Mrs Bingle, yet again the organiser. "So are all the bread ingredients here for the competition?" she asked Mrs Hebdon. One never knew what ideas the committee would come up with next. Then she scurried off to deliver the costume, wig and hat to Nigel, otherwise known as Professor Wareham West, or the Comical Don, who was providing the childrens entertainment.

"Right, the opening ceremony" announced Mrs Bingle "This is where gents can all lend a hand, there is furniture to be moved." The table and microphone were put on a rug by the sombre

wooden statue, and then several rows of chairs were arranged facing them. The stalls were all set up now, cakes and crafts, produce and plants, piled high with stock to near bursting point.

At last it was time for the official opening. Dr Kenneth Anwell from Westarde, biggest, and most famous university in the area, stood up and cleared his throat. "It gives me great pleasure to be here today on the occasion of your garden party. We owe a very great deal to Mrs Bingle and her committee. There is so much behind-the-scenes work to arrange the stalls, competitions, catering etc. not forgetting the washing-up, which irksome task is performed by the W.I. Mrs Fulmar, please thank the ladies very much. Let's give them all a clap worthy of their efforts. I now declare this garden party open". Cellist Owen Dover started to play, and the garden party swung into action.

"What shall we do next year Mrs Bingle?" asked Miss Elby much later in the afternoon, when things had calmed down a bit. "Tell you what, let's discuss it at the "Dog and Fox" tonight."

NABO REPRESENTATIVES

Council members contact addresses

Penny Barber
(RBOA Liason)

Phil Bland
(Rep for disabled)

Chris Boxall
(Navigation research)

Jon Darlington
(Chairman)

John Glock
(Membership Secretary)

John Griffiths
(Midlands Rep)

Roger Hancock
(Secretary)

Neil Hutchinson
(Navigation Officer/NW Rep)

Peter Lea
(Vice Chairman/Marketing)

Nigel Parkinson
(Engineering Officer)

Stephen Peters
(River Users Co-ordinator)

Denis Smith
(Rally Co-ordinator)

Andrew Sherrey
(Treasurer)

Peter Sterry
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Nikki Timbrell
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