



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 96/2: March 1996

Know any good lift bridges?

Do you know this bridge? Is it an easy one to lift?

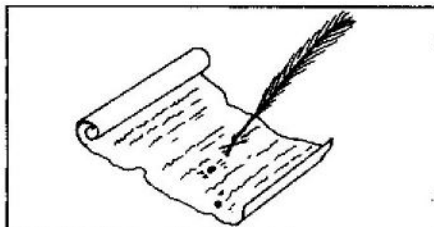
We are looking for tips and information from our readers - things that will be of use to other boaters around the waterways. For more details, see page 18.

Meanwhile, this photo of Robin Smithett's evokes thoughts of cruising again in warm weather - hurray!



NEWSLETTER

Editor's comment



Do you remember the yellow questionnaire which arrived with the last issue? Did you send it back? Many thanks to all who have responded and a gentle reminder to those who haven't yet.

As ever, NABO needs the help and co-operation of its members, and there are plenty of opportunities mentioned in this Newsletter. Please send us pictures, cartoons, amusing tales, puzzles, hints and useful information to brighten up the Newsletter, as well as your letters. And start recruiting new members ready to claim the prizes on offer on page 17!

Whilst every care is taken to ensure that the contents of the 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.

March 1996

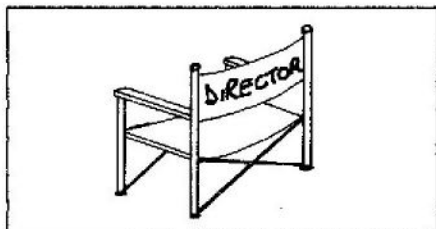
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Published by

**National Association of
Boat Owners**

NEWSLETTER

Chairman's comment



It has been an interesting time recently with NABO taking the initiative on the Boat Safety Scheme. The major boating user groups had made it clear that in their opinion that the Boat Safety Scheme should be left to run and that the faults would have to be sorted out as they arose. The RYA asked for all opposition to the standards to cease.

When I attended the RYA Inland Waters Panel last December, I pointed out that it was very important to try and get the scheme right before it was introduced, and that their acceptance of what was a shambles was wrong. All our members would be taking the brunt of the problems as they arose which was quite unacceptable. I have been removed from the panel as a result of my opposition.

I suppose if you don't like what you hear, one answer is to

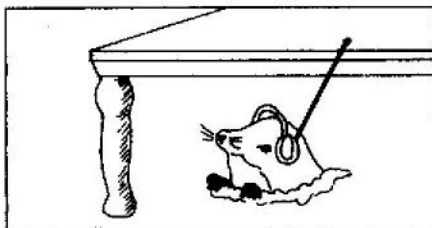
stick you fingers in your ears! At the next meeting I was told that I could not take an opposing view at one meeting and then come to the next one as if nothing had happened. I was also told that NABO was wrong because the RYA has 88,000 members compared to our 1,500! Strangely enough I do not consider this a very convincing argument; I'm not sure why. Could it be because it is illogical nonsense?

However, it seems the RYA members themselves are as wrong as we are and have been inundating the RYA with complaints about their handling of the Boat Safety Scheme. Perhaps it is not a surprise therefore that at the next Boat Safety Advisory Group meeting (reported elsewhere in this Newsletter) the RYA were laying into the Boat Safety Scheme like Mike Tyson and I have just heard that the RYA and IWA laid into BW at the National User Group meeting in a similar fashion. They are now saying the same things that we have been saying consistently all along as if nothing had happened.

Well, such is life!

NEWS

View from the Council meeting held on 2nd March, 1996



Moley calling. Do you like my picture? Very flattering I call it.

The meeting spent much of its time examining its navel, trying to improve the efficiency of the way they do things. Not before time I would say! They're not a bad bunch of people, but do often stray from the point to worry about details, which makes Moley's life difficult when trying to report. You can't really just say they spent 5 hours discussing nothing, can you?

So this time the future of IWAAC was discussed as well as a letter from the Environment Agency which was taken to mean a request for guidance on how they should develop a strategy for navigation in the long term, rather than an attempt to preempt the DOE review. It appears they have no long term strategy as yet. NABO will concentrate on preserving the existing rights of

navigation and trying to extend and enlarge them. The first test of this will be over the River Wye where NRA are trying to remove the public right of navigation.

Boat Standards continue to take up much time. There are reports already of problems: one boater having done work for a Certificate of Compliance on the old standards has been refused a Certificate under the new ones. BW have said that the new ones do not impose any greater requirements than the old ones. This seems unlikely in the light of this problem, and if so why bother to change them at all?

Another boater has had his wiring referred to BW by his surveyor. Solid wire problems are not in the Standards and if they are in the Technical Manual (not available yet) or are being introduced by the back door can they be enforced anyway?

Improved marketing was also discussed. You all have an opportunity to do something about this. Fill in the survey form in the last Newsletter and tell us how you can help. Volunteers are desperately needed to further NABO's work.

NEWS

Boat Safety Scheme slammed at BW National User Group meeting on 21st March, 1996

User groups joined in condemning the implementation of the Boat Safety Scheme at British Waterways National User Group meeting. Representatives of the national groups attending the meeting in London on 21 March criticised BW's handling of the introduction of the scheme as "flawed" and "inept", and said it was being too inflexibly applied. BW was also accused of failing to reply to some letters and telephone calls concerning the scheme, and of giving ambiguous replies in other cases. The Board was told that major changes needed to be made for the scheme to be workable and to have the support of the users and the boating industry.

Ian Valder, Commercial Director of British Waterways, told senior BW personnel and representatives of user groups and the boating industry that the Board had had major problems with the sudden death of Neil Fraser, the principal architect of the scheme, last year, and that negotiations with CORGI, the gas industry regulators, had been exceptionally difficult. These had

only just been concluded. He accepted that the Board had not communicated with interested parties as well as it should.

Bernard Henderson, BW Chairman, said the scheme had to go ahead as planned, but clearly things weren't right and BW had to deal with the problems. He announced that David Fletcher, the new Chief Executive, who was present, was being given immediate responsibility for getting together the scheme's architects and putting matters right. Mr. Fletcher, who had earlier been introduced to the meeting, has an engineering background and has owned a narrowboat for twenty years.

It was agreed that a national meeting involving all interested bodies would be held, probably in May, to resolve outstanding issues.

The meeting also discussed the operation of the Moorings Matrix. Problems had arisen at some sites because managers were levying charges above the levels set out in the matrix, or re-grading sites for facilities which

NEWS

BW National meeting (cont)

were either not there or not effective. It was agreed that a meeting would be arranged to discuss the implementation of the scheme, and to consider specific cases. NABO members who think their moorings might fall into one of these categories should contact Jon Darlington or Peter Lea with details.

Other topics covered at the meeting were the water supply situation and the ongoing restrictions on northern waterways, the bid by Sustrans to create paved cycleways on about 200 miles of waterway towpath around the country, the ongoing review of craft licensing, the re-drafting of BW's code for anglers, and the abolition of the closed fishing season in the North East.

1996 BCN Marathon Challenge

This year the IWA BCN Marathon Challenge is being held over the weekend of 3rd and 4th August. Its proximity to the Windmill End Event should encourage more entries. The rules have changed so that large boats are no longer handicapped by their length.

News in brief

Drought problems this summer

The NRA Southern region is warning that the low winter rainfall and failure to replenish water resources could have serious consequences this summer. The situation is equally serious in other parts of the country, especially in the Pennines. At least last year we started with full reservoirs...

Deep lock at Worksop restored

BW have completely restored Deep lock on the Chesterfield canal, and the gates were due to be fitted in the last week of March. This is the first of 7 locks currently being restored on the canal. BW will be holding a Boat Rally on 8-9 June to celebrate the restoration of Morse lock.

Jubilee Jigsaw Journey

The IWA are organising a giant Jubilee jigsaw which will be assembled at the World Canals Conference in Birmingham on 26-28 June. Over 35 jigsaw pieces will be travelling from all parts of the country by all sorts of boats - including a WRG wheelbarrow!

NEWS

More on Houseboat Certificate renewal from Jon Darlington

The problem

On about 8th December 1995 two members were verbally warned that they were not going to be allowed to renew their houseboat certificates when they expired at the end of the month. As you can imagine, they were somewhat perturbed at the prospect of losing their residential moorings almost immediately after Christmas. One of the boats had been moored on the site for 6 years.

They contacted NABO and asked for our help. I said that it would not be a problem for them to have their certificates renewed as we had, during the passage of the BW Bill, obtained a legally binding undertaking that a minimum of 6 months notice would be given for non renewal of houseboat certificates.

I spoke to the BW Managers concerned and there was what I now think might have been some disbelief that the undertaking was genuine. I faxed them a copy of the undertaking, but neither this nor a number of phonecalls seemed to impress them very much, nor even a Solicitor's letter. There was just silence, but

when the boaters applied to Watford they were still told they could not be issued with the certificate!

The complaint

By mid January they had still not heard anything from BW, despite my request before Christmas that some assurance be given to them that their certificates would be renewed. Therefore the following complaints were issued, i.e. that:

1. The Board or their employees have refused to renew our members' houseboat certificates without formal notice of any kind despite an undertaking by the Board given in June 1993 that a minimum of 6 months notice would be given for non renewal of houseboat certificates, and
2. The Board or their employees have caused undue stress to our members by informing them in early December 1995 that they should remove their vessels (and homes) from the site by the end of the year and despite requests from me that they be reassured that this would not in fact happen, no such reassurance was received by 11th January 1996.

NEWS

Houseboat Certificate Renewal (continued)

The outcome

Eventually, after a certain amount of confusion, BW agreed that they would renew the houseboat certificates and claimed that they had never actually refused to renew them; they had just been waiting till things were sorted out before they did renew them!

We were assured that the fact that BW had been negotiating with a businessman who wanted to lease the site that the boats were moored on, and who wanted the boats off the site, had nothing at all to do with the "non renewal" of the certificates. And why should it be? Constant vigilance at all times is required!

New Design Guidelines for Boats: Jon Darlington

It has recently come to our attention that the London Borough of Hounslow are indulging in bureaucratic interference by applying Design Guidelines for permanently moored boats at Corney Reach on the Thames.

We are particularly concerned at what we consider to be unreasonable rules being applied at this site, in particular the requirement for boats to keep their decks clear and be kept in good decorative order.

Of course it would be nice if all people kept their property tidy and in good decorative order; how much nicer the environment would be if every factory, house

and garden was properly kept. But fortunately in this country we also still enjoy a certain freedom of choice and that is, I believe, far more important to preserve than the decorative order of private property. I therefore strongly object to the Councils' unwarranted interference in boaters' private affairs by demanding what they shall put on their decks and whether they shall keep the vessel in good decorative order.

If Councils start to tell people who live in houses to keep their gardens clear and demand that the house must be kept in good decorative order there would no doubt be a revolution - and a good thing too.

NEWS

New Design Guidelines for Boats (continued)

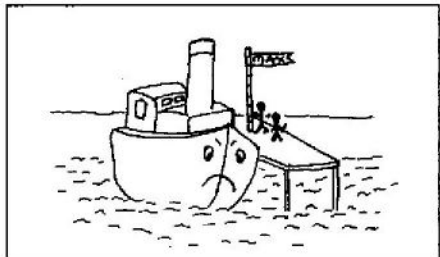
I can understand to some extent setting maximum dimensions and possibly setting criteria like boats being able to navigate under their own power, but such criteria should only be applied to new vessels on the site and there should be clear overwhelming reasons why such criteria are necessary.

I would therefore expect existing boats to be left unmolested and be allowed to continue on the site.

In the case of one boat which was refused planning permission, it appears to meet all the design specifications except it is 4'4" too tall! Surely when a boat has already been on the site for some years and it meets all but one of the design guidelines, it could be given planning permission. By not doing so the Council really do seem to be acting in a most petty and unreasonably restrictive way. I suppose the boater concerned could take a hack-saw to the funnel and wheelhouse to accommodate the Council House dictators, but what are we coming to when this sort of nonsense is being proposed!

We are very concerned that

such Design Guidelines are not used elsewhere and would be interested if anyone has come across anything similar.



ADVERT SLOT

VIRGINIA CURREN MARINE INLAND WATERWAY SPECIALISTS

NARROWBOATS ALWAYS REQUIRED

We offer a selection of narrowboats for sale, mainly in Southern England. Please telephone for an up-to-date list or to discuss your requirements. All narrowboats offered have been inspected by us and full details are available. Assistance can also be given with finance (subject to status), insurance, etc.

We are always seeking quality narrowboats for brokerage, if you have a narrowboat to sell, give us a ring (free moorings are offered on the Southern Grand Union for suitable craft). We also purchase outright, quick decisions made.

Dutch barges and residential craft also available.

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Fax: (01753) 830130.



BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

Boats Safety Scheme Advisory group meeting on 20th March

Technical manuals

Some things never change! We yet again asked why the technical manual was not available to the Advisory group. There was a marked reluctance on the part of BW and NRA to make it available. When we were told that the training schemes for examiners are starting in April, I pointed out that the technical manual must be available to the colleges. To the question on how it was that the technical manual is STILL not available to the Advisory group, the answer came that it would be derived from the teaching material. But surely the teaching material should be developed FROM the technical manual. You should decide WHAT you want to teach first, then decide HOW to teach it. It was pointed out in very strong terms that it is intolerable that the Technical Committee set up to advise BW & NRA on technical matters has only met ONCE and the technical manual which is vital for the proper interpretation of the Standards has never been put before this Committee!

Single core wiring

On the question of single core

wiring, it has now been decided that this would be all right as long as the wiring system complied with the Standards in all other respects. It was pointed out that from our point of view this "one minute it's banned, one minute it's OK" approach is wholly unacceptable. Where a standard requires interpretation to be practically applied, and that interpretation is provided by the technical manual, then that part of the technical manual must effectively form part of the standard and be subject to the provisions of the BW Act on consultation and the interpretation be fixed. In this case it appears that the interpretation is being provided by the British Marine Electronics Association's Code of Practice. Being subject to the whims of these external bodies is quite unacceptable, but our point was not accepted.

Fire extinguishers

On the question of allowing fire extinguishers which do not have a Kitemark or EN3 marking but nevertheless claim to be built to the British Standard and are within their expiry date and are not known to be substandard, BW

BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

BSS Advisory group (continued)

and NRA would make no exceptions. These would all fail. On pointing out that boaters were taking the brunt of the fiasco of fire extinguishers, John Redmond of the NRA clearly had no sympathy at all and said boaters' "ignorance of the law" was no excuse and they had to pay!! Extraordinary stuff! Another cracking comment was that a small portable picnic gas stove was very dangerous in an open canoe and could explode and blow someone's head off! If you see any headless canoeists, at least you'll know what has happened to them.

Information

What was also clear on a number of occasions was that the Advisory Group was not getting vital information necessary for the proper understanding of what was happening and without which they would not be able to advise BW and NRA! It seems, for example, that surveyors are being issued with statements by BW but these are not being sent to the Advisory Group. As BW and NRA gave absolutely no indication at any stage that they were willing to seriously consider

any of the points raised by the Group, perhaps this lack of information does not matter! My impression was certainly that the Group was a complete sham and that there is no willingness on the part of BW and NRA to alter one jot or tittle of what they had already decided would be the case. The Advisory Group is clearly set up for BW and NRA to advise the users, surveyors and boatbuilders of what they are doing rather than vice-versa. This situation needs to be corrected as a matter of urgency and we will attempt to ensure that changes are made.

Examiner training courses

We were also informed at this meeting that there are 463 people registered to go on the examiner training courses and that the colleges pay £700 per trainee examiner to BW, giving BW an estimated income, assuming the trainees pay up, of £324,100! It is no wonder the 10 day course costs around £1500! This is yet another example of the Advisory Group being kept in the dark. The £700 charge by BW was made known to the group in response to my asking the

BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

BSS Advisory group (continued)

question if it was true that up to half the college fees are paid to BW.

BSC failure concessions?

The British Marine Industries Federation had proposed that consideration be given to allowing boats to get a certificate even if they did not pass every item on the 320 point check-list as long as they failed on items that were not significant. It was pointed out that it was possible that boats could fail on one item and have to pay for a fail certificate as well as pay for the examiner to attend for a retest and produce a pass certificate.

Whilst it is clearly right for the fail certificates to be recorded so that monitoring of inspectors could be achieved, and a statistical analysis of problem areas be produced, it is clearly a nonsense that such a rigid system should be imposed when some of the points on the checklist are of minimal safety value. The suggestion that some degree of flexibility be introduced was supported by users, the surveyors and the BMIF but was categorically turned down by the RYA and BW. Flexibility? You've

got to be joking!!

If BW and the NRA are going to continue to refuse to budge on each and every point that is raised there is absolutely no point in having an advisory group at all.

Servicing your Catalytic Heater: advice from Nigel Parkinson

The Boat Safety Scheme Management are keen to see that catalytic heaters are serviced and we recommended in the last newsletter that this be done. Contact with Mr Bob Buckingham in the Calor Gas technical department indicates that no special equipment is required and that an owner can do the necessary checks.

We gleaned the following information:

Heaters which are not marked with BS5258 (Part 11) may contain asbestos and are unlikely to be safe. They will certainly fail the BSS examination. Marked models use a rock wool bed.

Heaters may be expected to last 10-15 years as there is not

BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

Catalytic heaters (continued)

much to go wrong apart from the flame failure device. Heaters should be examined regularly to ensure that the bed is not damaged, that it burns evenly and there are no hot spots. Check also that any flue is not obstructed nor damaged, particularly where it goes to the outside.

If in any doubt, or the heater shows any signs of faults, makes strange smells or has a change in performance it is time to call in a professional. It could be your life!

The other thing to check is the proper functioning of the pilot light. It should burn evenly and the flame failure device should work as advertised. You may need to have this replaced periodically; Calor suggest you consider replacing it every 5 years.

The exact position on Catalytic heaters is confused. The Standards (at 8.3) do not require evidence of servicing, but the pilot course for examiners did. The Advisory Group was told that the matter would be taken up with LPGA. If a common sense approach does not prevail we will take up this issue too.

Getting a Boat Safety Certificate

Taking a few simple steps can help with getting a Boat Safety Certificate:

1. Go through the blue/grey book and checklist and compare the Standards with your boat. If in any doubt, obtain free advice from BW. Address below. If you think its safe but does not comply, again, ask BW. Once you think you can pass move to the next step.
2. Find a Surveyor - try the waterways press or contact BW for the latest list. It will be cheaper if you can get a group together. Make it quite clear that you only want a BSS examination, not a full survey.
3. Agree the price with your selected surveyor, including travel costs, certificate charge and any other extras. You want to know an all-in price, so if you can't get one, go elsewhere. If there is no-one willing to do your certificate for an acceptable price, or no-one local, then complain to BW. Address below.
4. Prepare your boat for the survey. Ideally it will be ready to cruise. Open all doors and

BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

Getting a Boat Safety Certificate (continued)

lockers. Remove any access panels and make sure you know where things like fuses, master switches and gas valves are in case the surveyor asks. Ensure the water tank and gas bottles are full as the surveyor will need gas to test the system and may need to run your water heater for 10 minutes. Empty all the extra bits and pieces from the gas locker. Hide the gas locker/gas bottles padlock until after the survey.

5. Check your fire extinguishers for the kitemark, or an approval to EN3 with a European approval agency's mark. I do not know what these look like though BW have promised to print them all in the Technical Manual. Statements like 'made to BSxxxx' by themselves are not acceptable. Check also that your extinguishers have a fire rating and that the ratings add up to enough to cover the requirements of the blue book. BW have agreed that extinguishers which met the requirements of any previous set of Standards will be acceptable. Unfortunately, many of these were 'lifer' and any which are past their life expiry

date will need to be replaced. Again, these extinguishers also had to be approved by the Fire Offices Committee (FOC) or covered by the British Approvals Scheme for Fire Extinguishers (BAFE). Full details are supposed to be in the Technical manual.

6. Be there on the appointed day and go round with the surveyor. Ask the surveyor to tell you immediately if he finds something wrong. You may be able to correct it quickly and save the expense of a failure. If you cannot correct it make sure you know exactly why it fails and what the surveyor suggests you need to do. If you do not agree with him, or a correction will cost too much, complain to BW, even if you are on an NRA waterway. BW run the scheme for NRA. Give full details of the problem and send photos, sketches etc. Schedule 2 Part 2 of the BW Act 1995 allows for exemptions for vessels "which cannot reasonably be expected to be altered or adapted or otherwise made to comply". Individual boat owners can apply for such exemptions.

7. Ensure you receive a completed checklist, a correctly

BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

Getting a Boat Safety Certificate (continued)

completed Safety Certificate or Failure certificate and a written explanation of any points you don't understand. Some surveyors are reluctant to provide a failure certificate. These are essential to provide statistics about failures and thus support rule changes. Together with the number of pass certificates, they also give evidence of how many boats are trying to get into the BSS. If your Surveyor won't provide a failure certificate, tell BW.

8. Deduct £20 from your BW licence renewal until the first renewal after the scheme becomes compulsory for your boat. Any suggestion that the discount has been withdrawn is incorrect. BW tried, but were reminded of their promises and changed their minds (again)! Send a copy of the certificate to your insurer.

9. CONTACTS: NABO point of contact is Nigel Parkinson at the address on the back of this Newsletter. The BW Scheme Manager and point of contact is David Allison at British Waterways, Willow Grange, Church Road, Watford WD1 3QA. Telephone queries can be tried

on 01923 226422. From our experience, he is difficult to contact by phone and slower than the ideal at answering letters. Mr Jim Kelly at the same address is the man to write to to stir up some action. If all else fails, try Mr Ian Valder, also at the same address.

BSS: the Economic Consequences

We know that the organisers of the BSS never undertook a Compliance Cost Assessment before introducing the scheme and we are already starting to receive an indication of the potentially serious consequences of the BSS.

Older craft without a Boat Safety Certificate are becoming increasingly difficult to sell. Apparently boat sales companies on the Thames have always valued Broads boats at up to 20% less than Thames craft simply because of the expenditure needed to bring them up to Thames Launch standards. The same trend is now starting to occur on other waterways where

BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

Getting a BSC (cont)

boats are being offered for sale without a BSC.

The end result could be a lot of owners out-of-pocket or, worse still, in some cases saddled with unsaleable craft which will be classed as "unsafe" simply because of their age and design.

Owners of boats on rivers who feel it is impractical or unreasonable to alter their craft to comply with the BSS have decided to take their boats to coastal marinas. A mass exodus of larger craft could lead to lower mooring prices at inland sites but what will be the financial effect on boatyards and marinas?

If the number of craft using the inland waterways diminishes then logic dictates that those remaining will have to pay increased licence fees. And remember, someone has got to pay for administering the BSS bureaucracy itself. Guess who?

Whilst we agree that a Boat Safety scheme would be beneficial, it must be sensible and be able to accommodate the boats which already exist. At present this seems not to be the case.

BSS: other options

We are receiving a steady flow of complaints from bewildered boat owners expressing their disgust with the way that BW (and NRA) are imposing the BSS on existing craft.

If you are one of the many disillusioned boat owners who is fed up with being ridden over rough-shod by the joint organisers the following perfectly legitimate ways of mitigating the worst effects of the BSS have been suggested:

Remove your boat from BW/NRA waters altogether, to places such as the Broads or River Medway or Lake Windermere. Defer the compliance date by taking out a new 12 month BW licence from November or December 1996. Move from BW to NRA water for the 1997 season if your boat was built in 1971 or after. Move your boat to a coastal marina. Move your boat overseas to Northern Ireland or another EC country. Even scrap your boat and take up another hobby such as knitting or crochet!

Alternatively, if none of the above suggestions appeals to you, COMPLAIN to everyone you can think of!

NABO BUSINESS

FIVE IS THE MAGIC NUMBER!!

5

NABO is five this year. Like any healthy five year old, it should grow much larger

over the next few years. To help it along, and as part of the celebrations, the Council has decided to give

PRIZES!! to all members who sign up five or more new members.

5

If you recruit five new members, you can claim your free NABO tee shirt,

or two NABO mugs. Ten new members? Two prizes! And the member who signs up the most new members over ten will receive a valuable first edition canal book.

Simply keep a note of the names of the people you recruit, and make sure they enter your name on their membership application form. When you've reached five, write to John Glock, our

5

membership secretary, to claim your prize. Don't forget to tell him which you want, and if you choose the tee shirt, the size and colour. At

the end of the year (which will run to 31 March 1997), let him know how many members you've signed up, and you'll be in

the running for the canal book.

To make it easier for you, Council members and our Recruitment Officer are not eligible for the prizes.

Help NABO grow, and good luck with the prizes!

5

Boring rules:

Family membership counts as one new member - sorry.

All claims for prizes must be received by 30 April 1997.

Claims are liable to be checked against membership application forms received.

In the event of a draw for first prize, or any dispute, the editor's decision shall be final.

NABO BUSINESS

Welcome to our New Members

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the many new members who have joined NABO since the New Year.

A particularly warm welcome is extended by our River users' Co-ordinator to owners of boats based on river navigations. You appear to be the most severely affected by the Boat Safety

Scheme and have realised that "NABO IS THE ONLY NATIONAL ORGANISATION WITH RIVER USERS IN MIND".

We hope you will spread the word among your friends and colleagues along the rivers and we look forward to recruiting many more of you in the coming months.

New feature for future Newsletters!

Readers Information

Do you have any useful information about good products, good service, hints or tips from around the waterways? We would like you to write in and tell us about your favourite pub, fish and chip shop or boatyard. Anything you think may be of use or interest to your fellow NABO members. To start the ball rolling, Stephen Peters has a new toy!!

RADIO-CONTROLLED CLOCKS

Fed up with missing the shipping forecast? Over-sleeping and losing your turn at the lock? Want to buy a new toy for your boat?

Space-age technology means that it is now possible to purchase (for around £20-£30) a self-contained alarm clock which keeps time to split-second

accuracy by using the atomic clock radio transmissions from Rugby.

Various types of clock are available and Stephen Peters has one on board his Seamaster 30. He reports 100% accuracy (what else?) and can confirm that the Greenwich time signal is spot-on!! He will be pleased to give you more details.

NABO BUSINESS

NABO Sweatshirts - treat yourself for the summer

As reported in previous Newsletters, the NABO sweatshirt is now available with an embroidered logo and your boat name, as well as with printed logo (large or small). T-shirts and pennants are also available. They are good value, as the quality of T-shirts and sweatshirts used by the manufacturer is very good, and they wash and wear well!

T-SHIRTS

Heavyweight cotton, only **£8.00** each.

Colours: white, red, sunflower, navy, black, grey, bottle green, emerald.

Sizes: small (36"-38"), medium (40"), large (44"), X-large (46"-48").

SWEATSHIRTS

Heavyweight polycotton with either raglan or drop shoulder (please specify), only **£13.50** each, or **£17.50 with embroidered logo and boat name** of up to 15 letters.

Colours: white, red, sunflower, navy, black, royal, bottle green, charcoal, heather grey.

Sizes: small (36"-38"), med (40"), large (44"), X-large (48"-50").

LOGOS

Logo available on both in either black or white. Please state preference for large (full chest) or small (pocket size, printed on left).

Embroidered logo (small) + boat name available on sweatshirts only.

PENNANTS

Pennants with rope and toggle - only **£8.00**

Pale blue with black logo.

Please turn over for order form

NABO BUSINESS

NABO Sweatshirt order form

Please send completed order form, together with a cheque made payable to the National Association of Boat Owners, to Penny Barber,

Item type			
Item colour			
Item size			
Logo type			
Logo colour			
Logo size			
Boat name			
Price			
Total Price:			
Your name, address and phone number:			

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Michael Stimpson & Associates

In conjunction with

Navigators and General

part of the Eagle Star Group

are pleased to offer members of the

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS

10 % DISCOUNT

on normal terms

on craft insured through this special scheme

All you have to do to obtain a special quotation with no obligation is to fill in the quotation request form on the back of this leaflet and send it to

Michael Stimpson & Associates
6 Norfolk Road, Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 1QE
or Fax the form to 01923 721559
or phone the details through on
01923 770425

Your new policy will include:
£1,000,000 Third Party Liability
Cover for PERSONAL EFFECTS at no increase in premium
Monthly premium option
Transfer of existing No Claims Bonus
No survey required on craft up to 20 years of age
Optional LEGAL PROTECTION cover

**For the right protection for your boat
PERHAPS WE SHOULD BE TALKING**

ADVERT PAGE

N.A.B.O. Members Insurance Quotation Request Form

PLEASE NOTE This form is not a proposal and does not commit you or the Insurers to a contract of insurance. A quotation will be submitted to you for your consideration together with a proposal. A specimen policy can be provided on request.

NAME

--

ADDRESS

POST CODE

CRAFT DETAILS

NAME

TYPE

--	--

AGE

VALUE

LENGTH

BEAM

	£		
--	---	--	--

HULL CONSTRUCTION	Steel	[]	USE OF CRAFT	Private Pleasure	[]
	G.R.P.	[]		Residential	[]
	Wood	[]		Commercial	[]
ENGINE	Diesel	[]		Inboard	[]
	Petrol	[]		Outboard	[]
	Steam	[]		H.P.
	L.P.G.	[]			

MAXIMUM SPEED OF CRAFT IN K.P.H.

NORMAL MOORING

CRUISING RANGE REQUIRED

	Inland Non Tidal	[]
	Inland with coastal use	[]
	U.K. Coastal	[]
	Brest / Elbe	[]

NO CLAIMS DISCOUNT
What percentage No Claims Discount are you able to transfer ?%

IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS, HAVE YOU SUSTAINED ANY LOSSES OR HAD A PROPOSAL OR RENEWAL FOR MARINE INSURANCE REJECTED YES / NO OR SUBJECTED TO SPECIAL TERMS.

Please return this form to MICHAEL STIMPSON and ASSOCIATES at 6 NORFOLK ROAD, RICKMANSWORTH HERTS. WD3 1QE and your quotation will be forwarded to you for your consideration.

REPORTS

Aire & Calder User Group meeting on 26th February, 1996

Water Levels

Concern was expressed at the wide fluctuations of water levels and damage caused by flooding at Goole, Ferrybridge, Whitley/Pollington, and Knottingley.

Mike Harrison, the BW Manager, suggested that a small committee be set up, consisting of a member of each boat-club, and other user-groups, to work directly with the BW engineers, so that immediate action can be taken whenever problems arise, rather than leaving it to the half-yearly meetings. This idea was accepted by the meeting.

Lock-manning

BW reported that the locks would be manned during the week, and at weekends they would be user-operated. In the last few years, following considerable pressure from boaters, the locks in this region have been converted to user-operation. Lock-keepers are still required to prepare the locks for commercial traffic, but now when they go off duty the canals do not come to a standstill. Boats which use these waters on a regular basis should be equipped with two-way radios in case of problems.

Engineering

The failure of the canal bank at Knottingley resulted in some local damage, and was repaired at a cost of £0.5 million. As a result, this area has been made very attractive, and although it is a busy commercial waterway, it has become a great benefit to the local environment. In Leeds £0.25 million has been spent at the Armories, and this, too, has become a very attractive city centre waterside feature.

Goole

Over £0.5 million has been raised from a Challenge Fund to improve the waterfront at Goole. Every £3 raised privately has been matched by a £1 from a Government grant. Sobriety, a waterside community centre, is one of the beneficiaries, but visitors are deterred by the poor access road. However, BW have no money for repairs.

BW state that the hosepipe ban in this region does not apply to boats taking on water for domestic use. And finally, it is reported for the benefit of birdwatchers that Bohemian Waxwings have migrated to Goole, instead of the USA!

REPORTS

Don Valley User Group meeting, 4th March, 1996

The BW Manager, Richard Mercer, gave a report on matters which were happening throughout his region. The mechanisation of Keadby Lock has been deferred indefinitely, through lack of funding. This is now the only lock in this region which cannot be user-operated, but, as use of this lock is dependent upon variable tidal and current conditions, there will always be a need for a lockkeeper. Boaters wishing to use this lock are asked to give the lockkeeper 48 hours notice.

Torksey Lock is being doubled in size, and this work will incorporate flood protection for Lincoln. There will be a four-month stoppage this winter, from November to February.

The warehouse at Newark, which was damaged by fire three years ago, is being repaired at a cost of £1.8m, with help from English Heritage. There will also be a stoppage at Newark Lock in October and November, when the Trent is usually running low.

A 3 week stoppage was proposed for work on the Don Aqueduct, to take place in May 1997. The longer daylight hours would enable the work to be

completed quickly, but after protests from many of the boaters it was decided to defer this work until September, even though it would increase the costs.

A considerable amount of dredging has been carried out on the S&SYN, with the spoil being used to repair the towpaths

Keadby Railway Bridge

This unique structure carries the railway across the canal just above water level. At the height of the summer last year, for some reason the system failed to operate, causing a considerable amount of inconvenience, and in some cases loss of money, to a number of boaters. Complaints and requests for compensation were made to BW, who pointed out that the bridge was owned and operated by RailTrack, to whom the complaints should be addressed. RailTrack chose to ignore these complaints, and so BW agreed to complain to RailTrack on their behalf, having, in theory, the bigger voice. A letter was sent to RailTrack in November, and this, too, has been ignored. BW has now placed the matter in the hands of their solicitors.

LETTERS

Waterways Code for Anglers

Having read the Chairman's comments on this matter in your February issue I felt compelled to take up the invitation to respond, which I do in the capacity as both a keen angler and an even keener boater. I fully support the view about not fishing on lock landings and in my area I have noticed a massive improvement in this over the last few years

I do however have great difficulty with the 50' rule and your view that it should apply across the canal and not just along it. The difficulty for anglers is that lock landings and the area around a moored boat on the offside are two of the most productive areas for fishing, so your wish to see the 50' rule apply across the canal would deprive anglers of many of the best pegs. Personally I can see no problem with anglers fishing opposite a moored boat; many offside moored boats are empty anyway. If the boat is occupied the continual movement of the boat will frighten the fish so it would not be an attractive spot. But even if an angler does set up opposite is this such a big issue? I find most anglers to be far too

intent on their float to be the slightest bit interested in the activities of the boat's occupant.

I would also argue that the 50' rule is excessive anyway. Take a walk along the towpath on a summers evening at popular locations, the line of moored boats goes on and on (in my area anyway). Are we really to restrict the freedom of anglers yet again simply because there has been an explosion in the amount of boats in recent years?

It is also apparent that many of these boats sprout fishing rods (as does mine); does the 50' rule apply to them or is it all right if you're in a boat?

I really begin to wonder why fishing is such an issue. As secretary of a local boatclub with offside moorings, we are frequently visited by anglers fishing opposite, but have yet to receive a complaint from members.

Of course, I fully accept that occasionally boaters do have justified complaints about the behaviour of anglers, as I have done, but it is important to keep these in context. On balance, I've

LETTERS

Waterways Code for Anglers (continued)

had more cause to complain, as a boater, about the behaviour of fellow boaters than anglers.

Surely with a degree of common sense we can all live

together amicably and enjoy our common love of the waterways without the need for endless regulation and codes of practice.

David Brewin, Aston on Trent

Leicester City Centre

There seems to be an ill-founded impression that Leicester is a no-go area for boaters and as a local resident and boat owner I am trying to put the matter right.

In my experience over the past ten years, Leicester is no worse than any other large town. There are certainly rowdy people, but with sensible precautions and basic diplomacy most situations can be overcome.

The City Council now has a Friends of the Riverside Group which apart from council staff includes IWA and rowing club members, also naturalists and birdwatchers. (0116) 252 7297 or 252 7293 for information.

Together with BW, the Council has plans for visitor moorings, to include a live-aboard boat at Memory Lane wharf (near Lime Kiln lock) also more near Kings lock. Mooring rings will be put in

along the Straight Mile. In several areas, such as Watermead Park and Aylestone the NRA are already cutting back overhanging trees. Council Rangers patrol the towpaths and canalside parks. Chicanes will discourage speeding cyclists.

BW are rooting out weeds but point out that they grow back with the sun shining through clear water. Only boats passing along the cut will inhibit the re-growth. Apart from Council staff picking out rubbish, there are monthly cleaning events by volunteers and days with schools and other groups on BW boats.

Free leaflets with maps and comprehensive tourist information are available (ring the above number). Leicester is a lively and attractive town for any visitor, whether you come by land or water!

Ernest Bailey, Leicester

AMUSEMENT PAGE

Trackword for March

E	H	E
R	T	N
T	O	N

How many words of three letters or more can you find by tracking from one square to the next, going up, down, or diagonally in order? You may not go through the same letter again in any one word. Proper nouns or foreign words are not allowed.

Not all the words need be canal related, but the hidden nine-letter word should keep you in the dark for a while!

We reckon 30 words is a good score - happy hunting!

Memo faxed to NABO recently from the Portuguese Trade and Tourism Office

We would be grateful if you would inform us of any members you may have on file who may wish to import "Screw Plugs (in plastic) to let water out of pleasure boats". A portuguese manufacturer has designed this type of screw plug and is interested in marketing it in the UK. On the other hand, should you have any manufacturers of pleasure boats, maybe they may be interested in importing this product.

Any takers?

If you have anything amusing to report, please let the Editor know. Not everything in this Newsletter has to be deadly serious....

Solution to the February canal names puzzle

Pauline Mitchell enjoyed the puzzle in the last issue, and kindly sent me her solution to the 27 hidden canal names:

Iver, Bingley, Soar, Reading, Hebdon, Nene, Wigan, Hatton, Ware, Stort, Caldon, Regents canal, Lea, Rugby, Brewood,

Stockton, Kennet, Anwell, Tardebigge, Weaver, Chirk, Marple, The Wash, Lapworth, Wendover, Selby, Foxton.

Other possibilities include Isis, Hanwell, Pencelli and Bittell, so there were more than 27 names after all!

NABO REPRESENTATIVES

Council members contact addresses

Penny Barber
(R B O A Liaison)

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
(NE Rep/Publicity)

Nikki Timbrell
(Newsletter Editor)

Neil Walker
(SE Rep)