

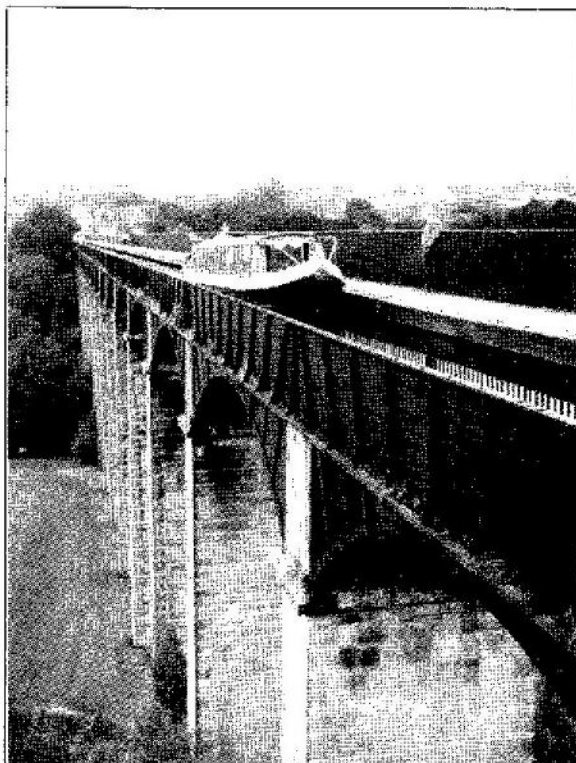


NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 96/5: August 1996

Are the waterways at risk?



BW funding crisis

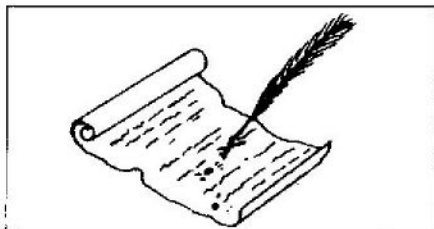
British Waterways' grant is due to be reduced next year by nearly 10%, from £51.4 million to only £47 million.

BW has warned the Government that the safety and integrity of the waterways could be put at risk as a result. See page 7.

*Pontcysyllte (can you pronounce it?)
Aqueduct: Robin Smithett.*

NEWSLETTER

Editor's comment



There was a Council meeting with a difference in late July - the Council was spreading the word on locksidcs in the Braunston area, instead of sitting indoors in Birmingham. Maybe you were lucky enough to meet some of them. If you joined on that day, welcome!

More on Boat Safety in this issue of course, and news of the Special meeting which should allow postal voting for Council members at the AGM this year. But that doesn't mean you'll be let off coming to the meeting, so keep 23rd November free. More, much more, of this anon!

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.

August 1996

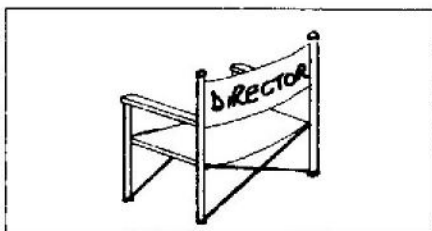
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Published by

**National Association of
Boat Owners**

NEWSLETTER

Chairman's comment



Over the last few months three incidents of intimidation have come to my knowledge, in two cases perpetrated by BW staff, and in one case by a subcontractor to BW. One of the incidents was a relatively minor one of generally loutish behaviour and swearing, but the other two were of a much more serious nature. In one case a BW employee is alleged to have made repeated threats of violence towards a boater in a bizarre series of incidents about which no more can be said at present. The third incident was where a subcontractor, who was apparently responsible for some damage to a boater's car, first denied it and then told the boater he would show him what real damage was like. He took out an iron bar and went to strike the car with it, only desisting when it was pointed out to him that he was carrying out his attack in front of

three independent witnesses.

This sort of behaviour is quite intolerable from anyone, but it is particularly extraordinary from people directing their aggression towards their employer's customers! These sort of incidents are of course rare, and most BW employees are polite and helpful.

Boaters can also be bad tempered and intolerant. We have heard of incidents of boaters behaving badly, and Canal & Riverboat's campaign to be helpful to hirers was inspired by letters they had received from people who had been upset by private boaters.

We surely must not allow selfishness and intimidation to become the norm on our waterways. The first thing we can do to help prevent that happening is to be a more tolerant of others, particularly their mistakes, be more friendly, and (perhaps particularly on the waterways) allow ourselves more time so that we are less likely to be annoyed when someone does slow us down a bit - this is certainly one source of aggravation.

NEWS

NABO Council out to meet boaters

Boaters going through Braunston, Hillmorton and Napton had an easier time on Saturday July 20, as NABO Council members helped them through the locks. Council members gave up one of their regular Council meetings to meet boaters and find out their views and any problems they encountered.

Peter Lea and Neil Walker manned Braunston bottom lock, while Neil Hutchinson, with

Christine and John Denton, was based at Hillmorton. Phillip Ogden, Nigel Parkinson and Andrew Sherrey covered Napton.

Council member Nigel Parkinson said, "A lot of people seemed very pleased to see us, and several joined NABO on the spot. It was a very worth while day."

Because the Council was out and about instead of debating around their usual table, Moley has taken a holiday!

NABO on TV and radio

NABO was asked to appear on a BBC South news item on the new Boat Safety Scheme. BBC reporter Martin Popplewell interviewed NABO member Stephen Penton and vice-chairman Peter Lea, as well as a representative from the Environment Agency.

Stephen, who has a cruiser on the Thames, believes the Boat Safety Scheme is unnecessary, and will cost boaters and taxpayers thousands of pounds. He described the scheme as a solution to a problem which doesn't exist. Peter emphasised

NABO's commitment to boat safety, but criticised the present scheme for its inflexibility and its non-essential requirements.

The story was broadcast on South East Regional News on 1 August and Southern Regional News on 7 August.

Peter also took part in a radio discussion on the Scheme which was broadcast live by BBC Radio South on 1 August. This also involved a representative from the Environment Agency and focussed on the scheme's overly bureaucratic requirements.

NEWS

Offside Moorings: Jon Darlington reports

As we reported last time, at a moorings meeting in Watford in June we were told that all new offside moorings were being banned on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal.

The criteria identified by BW and included in the Leisure and Tourism Strategy for allowing existing moorings are as follows. The mooring is acceptable as long as it does not:

- infringe any bye-law or similar regulation,
- prejudice the safety or amenity of those using the mooring or waterway,
- create navigational problems,
- impede or restrict the day to day operational management of the waterway

It is unreasonable if the same criteria are not applied to new moorings.

A blanket ban on offside moorings on a whole canal means that these criteria are not being applied and if a requested mooring would not be disqualified by these criteria, but is being denied by a general ban, then in my view this amounts to an unreasonable refusal.

A general ban prevents landowners who may reasonably wish to enjoy their land by mooring a boat to it from doing so, and it may be that landowners actually have a right to create landing places under the canal's enabling act. BW are committed in the Leisure and Tourism Strategy and in a Statement of Intent given to the RYA and IWA to take due regard to the rights of adjoining landowners and occupiers and the reasonable enjoyment of their land.

BW's claim that market forces determine the price of moorings, and the comment made on more than one occasion that BW do not apologise for charging what the market will bear are shown to be distorted truths when managers attempt to control the market directly by unreasonably restricting the availability of moorings in this way.

We have therefore asked for BW's assurance that the ban on new offside moorings on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal will be lifted and that each prospective mooring will be judged in accordance with the criteria listed above.

NEWS

Consultation is Concern at PWG Meeting

The "New Face of Consultation on the Waterways" was the topic at the Parliamentary Waterways meeting on 25th June. BW's Chief Executive David Fletcher, Dr. Geoff Mance of the Environment Agency and Mark Waitling of the Broads Authority each gave their view on the ways in which their organisations consulted users.

Dr. Fletcher in a polished speech outlined BW's consultation procedures, the system of local and regional meetings, and the various notices and phone helplines in place, and emphasised how much all this costs the Board. Dr. Mance described the Environment Agency's network of consultative committees and its newly-launched Navigation Newsletter. The Broads Authority, which oversees 13,000 boats concentrated in a small area, adopts a "parish pump" approach to consultation, which seems to be based on contacts with boatyards and hirecraft operators.

Questions from waterways representatives were mostly directed at British Waterways.

BW was taken to task over poor consultation on the Boat Safety Scheme, and for not publicising local user meetings sufficiently. National decisions were not being well communicated: waterway managers were implementing these in different ways, and many users were unable to find out what happened at national meetings (note: NABO members are kept informed through the Newsletter!). One individual present called Dr. Fletcher's speech "the usual platitudes".

There was also criticism of the decision to metricate speed limits and distances on the canals, describing it as useless and impossible to enforce. All three authorities agreed with this, but said they had to obey the instructions they were given.

Did you get your July Newsletter?

It appears that some of the Newsletters sent in July were held up in the Birmingham sorting office, and have only just been delivered. If you have not received yours, please contact Jon Darlington for another copy.

NEWS

BW Funding

British Waterways published their Accounts recently, and revealed that the Department of the Environment have decided to cut their Grant from 1996/7 onwards. Last year the Grant was £48.9 million; this year, due to exceptional maintenance requirements, it was increased to £51 million; but next year has been set for only £47 million.

BW considers this level of funding to be insufficient, and has informed the Government that without sufficient funds, the safety and integrity of the waterways network will be put at risk.

There are also major problems with the Caledonian canal, which may have to close if £20 million cannot be found over the next 4 years. BW have applied for a separate grant from the DoE for this.

Peter Lea, NABO's Vice Chairman commented that "we have informally suggested to BW that we and other user groups would be willing to do whatever we can in the way of campaigning to bring the funding problem to the attention of MPs and the Government".

Sustrans cycleways

Following our concern reported in the last Newsletter over the Sustrans cycleways use of towpaths, John and Dee West sent us a cutting from the Weekend Telegraph of 3rd August, describing the job of a new Towpath Ranger on the Kennet & Avon canal.

Neil Turner no doubt carries out a useful function on the canal, ensuring that boaters are using the locks correctly, enforcing the 4mph speed limit for boats and a 'gentle pace' for cyclists. But this is no British Waterways lengthsman. The post has been created (and funded) by Sustrans and the local authorities. They decided that the ranger "would make sure cyclists did not run rampage, and would also try to maintain order on the canal itself".

Furthermore, the other part of the ranger's job is to prepare a report on the feasibility of towpaths becoming part of the national cycle network planned by Sustrans. "Ideally, the path would have room for anglers, pedestrians and cyclists...."

And boaters? Not mentioned at all!

NEWS

Waterways Ombudsman's Annual Report 1996

The Lady Ponsonby has published her 2nd annual report on her activities as Waterways Ombudsman in respect of British Waterways operations.

The report comprehensively deals with the cases which were completed during the past year. A total of six case histories are summarised and all of them concern disputes between boat owners and BW officialdom.

Once again, many would-be complainants failed to follow the laid down procedure for pursuing their complaints through BW's internal mechanism before resorting to the Ombudsman. NABO has produced a guidance paper which members may find useful before embarking on any kind of complaint against BW.

You will recall that NABO scored a victory in its complaint to the Ombudsman over the non-availability of the Waterway Standards document. In our case, Lady Ponsonby found that BW had been guilty of maladministration. However, in none of the latest reported cases was maladministration proved against BW.

One case involved a mooring dispute in which a boat had been moved due to an obstructing craft and the owner considered that it was unreasonable for BW to charge the full annual fee for the original mooring. Lady Ponsonby considered that the complainant had contributed to the problems although a more sympathetic response from BW could have alleviated the problem.

Another two cases involved disputes over moorings - one to do with access over a third party's land and the other alleging insufficient user consultation on the Moorings Matrix formula.

Two of the other cases concerned User Group meetings and Consultation with users. The Ombudsman's conclusion was that BW could not be expected to consult every single user and that the wording of its Customer Charter document 'Caring for Britain's Waterways' should be revised to 'representatives of user groups' rather than 'representatives of users'. Note: NABO membership is important!

The final case involved a boat owner who was unhappy with the

NEWS

Waterways Ombudsman's report (continued)

way in which introduction of the Boat Safety Scheme had been mishandled by BW, with inadequate consultation with user groups. One cannot help feeling that in this one case the Ombudsman could (and should) have found BW guilty of maladministration but such a complex subject over an extended time period is very difficult for a lay customer to document and argue out with a lawyer.

An interesting development this year is that the Ombudsman herself, whilst stressing her independence from BW,

recognises that the Ombudsman should be appointed by the Secretary of State rather than direct by BW so that she (or he) is perceived to be truly independent and unbiassed. Apparently, BW also supports this view. NABO has sought this change for some considerable time and we hope that the recommendation will be heeded.

Copies of the Ombudsman's Report can be obtained free of charge from The Lady Ponsonby, The Waterways Ombudsman, 2 Paper Buildings, Temple, London, EC4Y 7ET Tel 0171 582 0377 Fax 0171 820 9429.

More from Jon Darlington on Monarch & Harecastle Tunnel

See "Put that fire out!" in May Newsletter... steam-powered Monarch was required to be towed through the Harecastle Tunnel...

The reason given for refusing passage of the boat was that the tunnel safety "regulations" prohibit naked flames on a vessel in a tunnel.

Since the incident it has come to our attention that Monarch

apparently does not have a naked flame for its steam engine, the flame for the "boiler" being in an enclosed fire box. On the question of the "regulation" regarding tunnel safety:

1. This was as far as I remember it, introduced as advisory and certainly I cannot find any indication anywhere that it is compulsory or a "regulation" as such.

NEWS

Monarch & Harecastle Tunnel (continued)

2. There is no requirement to extinguish all naked flames anyway; pilot lights are allowable.

3. The Waterways Code for Boaters gives equal status to the recommendation that boaters do not smoke, and that a torch is available to the steerer. Will BW extend prevention of the use of a tunnel because the steerer doesn't have a torch, or is smoking?

As the tunnel safety notice is not, (as far as I am aware, but if I am wrong perhaps someone could put me right) introduced under statute, nor is it a bye-law, it cannot be "enforced" as such; certainly not just because it is there.

Neither is it justifiable to claim that the order from the tunnel keeper preventing the use of the tunnel was reasonable (irrespective of any regulation) since:

a) the boiler did not have a naked flame as such,

b) even if it did, the steam installation in this vessel has, we believe, been passed for strict insurance requirements and there is no reason to believe that the vessel poses a significantly

greater risk of fire or explosion than any other vessel,

c) the boat was properly licensed,

d) the order resulted in the vessel being towed through the tunnel which: (i) greatly increased the total risk by having two vessels in the tunnel rather than one, (ii) required the two vessels to be closer than the 270 yards recommended in the Waterways Code, and (iii) presumably required the towing vessel to return through the tunnel to get back to its original location.

It was also stated by BW that tunnel keepers and lock keepers are "harbour-masters in law" and their directions must therefore be observed because of that status, and thus the tunnel keeper must in any event have been obeyed. We can find no evidence that this is so, and have asked BW to back up this statement by directing us to the legislation under which this status is conferred on BW personnel.

We have asked for BW's assurance that should Monarch wish to pass through Harecastle tunnel again, it will not be prevented from doing so under its own steam.

NEWS

Campaign for polite behaviour from Canal & Riverboat

NABO has been asked to support a campaign by Canal & Riverboat designed to welcome hirers to the waterways and to encourage private boaters to be a little more patient and helpful.

Council has given its support to this campaign, and we are sure that all our members will do so also. We probably all started as hirers - if we had been put off at that early stage, we wouldn't be NABO members now!

And not all hirers are inexperienced boaters; some have been hiring for more years than you have had your boat. Of course, some of them are less skilled than others, but then the same could be said of private boaters.... and we all get it wrong sometimes!

Private boats outnumber hire boats by about 20 to 1, so there is no danger of being swamped!

There *is* room for everyone, so let us all slow down and be more thoughtful and courteous, to hirers, to each other and to everyone who enjoys the waterways.

News in brief

The Inland Waterways Boat Listing

Are you a boat spotter? Douglas Maas is compiling a listing of all the boats on the waterways, and would like your help - and the details of your boat - for his new book. If you would like to help, and to know more, please contact Mr Maas

He will send you a questionnaire with more details of the project.

National Conference of Canal Societies

The IWA is to host a conference for waterway societies from all over the country on 30th November, at Sandwell Council House in the West Midlands. The aim is to bring together waterway societies and trusts concerned with restoration or the care, conservation and use of navigable waterways.

Black Country Festival, August Bank Holiday

NABO will be there, offering all the usual goodies for sale (you haven't seen the mugs yet!), as well as advice, chat and information. Please call in!

BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

The Boat Safety Scheme: NABO's view

Introduction

The Boat Safety Scheme will become mandatory for all boats over the next two years. NABO fully supports the principle of boat safety, and the introduction of mandatory standards, backed up by inspections, for key safety areas.

However, we believe that the Scheme as it has now stands (July 1996) is flawed in many respects, and is likely to cause considerable unnecessary problems to boat owners, surveyors and examiners, and to British Waterways itself. Inevitably the boat owner will bear the brunt of the cost.

The Standards

The standards are in many cases poorly drafted. While most apply to important safety points, many deal with points which are not truly essential to boat safety. No attempt is made to differentiate between them - all are considered to be equally important. Boats therefore have to pass every relevant point on a 320-item check list. Fail on one and you fail the inspection. NABO and other groups asked for a

core list of essential points, all of which would have to be passed, and a second list of non-essential points, on which some leeway would be allowed. This proposal was rejected.

Equally importantly, if a boat passes, there is no guarantee that it will do so next time, even if it stays exactly the same. This is because changes to the standards, or to the official interpretation of them, are retroactive (unlike MOTs for cars). Again, our concerns were overruled.

A number of the draft standards have been amended or quietly dropped following objections from us and other user groups, and others have been "reinterpreted" in the Guidance Notes. There are still areas of difference, particularly on over-rigid requirements for fire extinguishers and fuel balance pipes, but most of the individual standards are now acceptable.

A more practical problem is how the standards will be interpreted. We now have three published documents to consult on any problem: the booklet containing the standards

BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

BSS: NABO's view (continued)

themselves, the Guidance Notes, and the Technical Manual. The latter can be consulted at any Waterway Managers Office, where (at NABO's request) one can get photocopies of extracts; NABO also has a Manual. Using up-to-date editions of all three is essential, and there are sure to be ambiguities and omissions in the texts. The Examiners will be too inexperienced to offer the sort of practical guidance one could expect from a surveyor, for a year or two at least. British Waterways have promised that writing to Mr David Allison will produce a definitive answer to any technical query concerning the scheme. It remains to be seen how well this assortment of information and advice will work in practice. We are already hearing of cases where extraordinary decisions have been made based on logical but nonsensical interpretations of the rules.

BW is not carrying out any further consultation over the standards or the way they are applied, although it is possible that standards will be changed in the light of decisions of the

Appeals Panel, new legislation and regulations, and practical experience. Boat owners can also apply (to Mr Allison) for exemptions to individual standards.

The Operation of the Scheme

In the haste to get the standards published and the scheme up and running, many of its very important features were left to one side. The Appeals Procedure, which may be essential to many boat owners, is still under discussion. BW's first draft was a useful starting point, but omitted the terms of reference which the Appeals Panel would use in reaching its decisions, and some important details were missing or not clear. It also does not cover boats licenced by the Environment Agency, which controls the Thames and other waterways. NABO and other user groups are being consulted, and we hope comprehensive and satisfactory procedures will be in place shortly.

The legislation provides for a BSS Advisory Group and a BSS Technical Committee. While the Advisory Group has been active,

BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

BSS: NABO's view (continued)

the Technical Committee has so far only met once in nearly two years. NABO is concerned that the future terms of reference of both bodies are ill-defined, and has proposed changes which have so far been ignored.

What happens to a boat if it fails its BSS inspection has not yet been established. BW may refuse to licence it until it passes. But it is apparently up to each Waterway Manager to deal with any resulting problems, together with the boat's owners. At the time of writing, no guidance notes have been issued to Managers, as they have on other contentious issues.

British Waterways believes that a sufficient number of examiners will be trained and approved to meet demand, and that they will be sufficiently technically competent to carry out their inspections. Time will tell.

Consultation

BW was required under the terms of the British Waterways Act 1995 to carry out certain statutory consultation procedures before introducing the Boat Safety Standards. BW concedes that its consultation with user

groups over the BSS was not always well carried out. Most user groups would agree. NABO believes that BW has also not complied with its statutory duty to consult individual boat owners and boatyards, and is pursuing a complaint over this.

Conclusion

NABO has worked to secure constructive and sensible changes to the Boat Safety Scheme. In some areas, consultation is still under way. However, the most significant aspect of the Scheme - the standards themselves - are now in place. We will have to wait and see how the scheme operates in practice, and we hope it works well.

If any NABO member has difficulties with the scheme or with the application of individual standards to his boat, please write to Nigel Parkinson, or any Council member. Their addresses are on the back of the NABO Newsletter. We may be able to help, and we would like to get together as much information as we can on how the Scheme and the standards are being implemented.

BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

Boat Safety Scheme: Practical Update from Nigel Parkinson

Since the last major position report, we have seen a BW (non) review of the Scheme, Guidance Notes have been issued (in some cases contradicting the Standards) and training for examiners has started. A smaller than expected number of people were prepared to put £2000ish up front for the training course.

In getting to this point, NABO has made strong efforts to sort out the more obvious shortcomings, with some success. BW and the EA have conceded ground over flue spillage tests and single strand wiring whilst on things such as petrol tank balance pipes and fire extinguisher marking they flatly disagree with us and other user groups, but without providing any technical explanation of their position. There are now few areas of disagreement within the Scheme where we can hope for any quick progress, though there will be a Technical Committee meeting in August or September (only the second since the committee was formed). There are no details of the agenda as yet but more changes to the Standards or their interpretation must be on the cards.

So now we must find out how easily BW and the EA can convert their promises of a pragmatic approach into reality. Meanwhile, we are continuing with our complaint that the requirements of the British Waterways Act 1995 have not been complied with. We also have some advice for those who either need to have their boat inspected for the first time or for those who already hold certificates issued under the previous schemes.

First Timers

Read the Blue/Grey Book carefully, then check the guidance notes to make certain you think your boat complies. If you are unsure then consult the Technical Manual. This can be done without the expense of buying one (latest price £50 plus p&p) by going to a local Waterway Office or EA Regional Office. BW and EA have agreed that photocopies of small sections of the Manual may be obtained from their offices for a charge to cover the cost of copying. Nigel Parkinson cannot yet provide photocopies but will help with your problems, quoting

BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

BSS: Practical Update (continued)

the manual verbatim. Remember that there are regular changes to both the Technical Manual (on 10 Aug Change 1 is the latest) and the Guidance Notes and more must be expected as the scheme settles in and discovers all the peculiarities of the thousands of boats affected. Do not rely on other people's photocopies from the Technical Manual- they may not be up to date.

Seek any advice you need carefully. Do not rely on boat club rumours or advice unless it comes from an authoritative source (a surveyor who has completed the BW course, an examiner, or the BSS management). Ensure any guidance obtained from these sources is in writing (so you can show it to your inspector) and is not ambiguous. Any advice provided by Nigel Parkinson will be checked with the BSS management or come direct from the Technical Manual. Keep seeking advice until you are sure you understand where you stand, and why.

If you are certain your boat will pass, go ahead. Book your inspection (as one of a group to

save on travelling costs), and see what happens.

Choose your inspector carefully. There are two types:

1. Professional surveyors have satisfied marine engineering or surveying institutions of their qualifications and practical experience.
2. Examiners, trained in ten days by colleges on behalf of BW, and with no pre-requisite qualifications. The new group of examiners may have little practical experience in the early days though all are likely to be enthusiastic. Unlike the existing Surveyors they have no recognised professional competence except that provided by the ability to stick rigidly to a check list.

If you find your boat cannot pass, but do not believe the changes needed are reasonable, then apply to the BSS management for an exemption from the unreasonable bits. The procedure for doing this is to write to BW at Watford, explaining what you need to be exempt from, and why it would be unreasonable to comply. Excessive cost, the effect on an historic boat, the constraints of traditional

BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

BSS:Practical Update (continued)

construction and impact on the use to which the boat could subsequently be put are all in the BW act as good grounds for an exemption. 'Reasonable' has a legal meaning which is defined quite widely so there may be many grounds for an exemption. Again, please seek help from Nigel if you wish. In any event, please keep us informed.

If you have not passed the inspection, or if you have been refused an exemption, there is an Appeals procedure you can follow if you are not happy. This procedure has not yet been defined in detail. NABO continues to be part of the Appeals Procedure consultation process and we will let you know through the Newsletter how things develop. We are pressing for the appeal process to be free, though BW and EA want to make the cost of any independent survey fall to the 'loser'.

Renewing Certificates of Compliance

The new Standards are different from those covering Certificates of Compliance and Boat Safety Certificates already issued. Their application is also

considerably less flexible. People have already found problems, particularly with fire extinguishers, fuel pipes and ventilation. You should check these items particularly carefully against the Technical Manual, Blue/Grey book and the Guidance notes. You will probably do best to use the original surveyor for a renewal, if possible. If he will not issue a certificate you should follow the procedure above using a new inspector, or you can go straight to the Appeal process. BW's Chief Executive has indicated surprise that some people with Certificates of Compliance have failed to get Safety Certificates, but this has not produced any changes to the Guidance Notes or Technical Manual. Only by using the mechanisms of appeal will your problems become known to BSS management. Please tell them, and us, of your problems and so help other boaters.

Final word

If you cannot obtain a certificate, BW may refuse you a licence. In this case you should speak immediately to your local Waterway Manager to agree the way ahead with him.

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ADVERT PAGE

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POST CODE

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NAME

TYPE

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AGE

VALUE

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	£		
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USE OF CRAFT

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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
forwarded to you for your consideration.

NABO BUSINESS

Special General meeting for Postal Voting Resolution

Following the call for a Special General Meeting to amend the Constitution to allow postal voting for the Council at the AGM, we have enough support to call the meeting for Saturday 7th September, 1996.

Members are welcome to

attend, but as the Council are meeting on that day, they will be on hand to supply votes as necessary! The meeting is at the Friends Meeting House, Northfield, Birmingham, and starts at 2pm. For more details, please contact Jon Darlington.

National Association of Boat Owners: information

NABO is the only organisation representing the boaters' interests - your interests. It exists only to represent owners of boats on inland waterways.

NABO speaks up for the boat owner. It takes up the issues facing the boater today - boat safety requirements, mooring costs, licence charges, dredging, waterway closures. NABO will advise on individual members' problems, as well as taking up local issues and matters of national concern.

NABO was formed in 1991, by a group of boat owners who felt that none of the existing organisations adequately put forward their views to the waterways authorities. It is run by an elected Council, consisting of

up to 16 volunteers. NABO depends on members subscriptions for its income.

In its short life, NABO has gained recognition from all the major navigational authorities, other waterways organisations, and government bodies. Its arguments are listened to with respect, and it is frequently consulted on important issues.

In this bureaucratic age, all who wish to continue to enjoy boating on our canals and rivers need a united voice to maintain that freedom. Add your support by joining the Association.

NABO is needed. NABO needs you. Belong to NABO.

It costs only £10 a year.

NABO BUSINESS

Don't forget NABO's Fifth Birthday Prizes!

Are you collecting new members in order to collect your prize? If you can recruit five new members, you can claim a free NABO T-shirt or two NABO mugs.

The information on these two pages might come in handy, and you can use the membership

application form below.

If this means that you have had to donate your Newsletter to a prospective member, just contact Jon Darlington for another copy. Alternatively, contact a Council member for more forms.

Application for membership

Please enrol me as a NABO member

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Phone number: _____

Names of additional members at the same address (membership half price):

Type of boat: _____

Where boat moored: _____

Boat name: _____

Expertise which could help NABO:

1 Full mbrship @ £10.00 £10.00

Add'l mbrs @ £5.00 ea £ _____

Donation £ _____

Total £ _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please circle preferences:

Shape of free window stickers:
ROUND/LONG

Standing order form required:
YES/NO

Please make your cheque payable to NABO, and send this form to NABO

NABO BUSINESS

NABO Sweatshirts - fabulous value!

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:			

LETTERS

Chairman's progress

On 5th June we were working our way up the Leeds & Liverpool canal from Leeds. The canal was on 4-10 closures, and the lockkeeper at Leeds seemed unhappy to let a single boat use his lock (in spite of there being plenty of water running away over the sluices), but finally let us go.

Near Kirkstall a single boat passed us going down to Leeds. It was steered by the same lockkeeper. Rushing after it along the towpath were two more BW men. No other crew were in view but the boat was called "something WINE". At the next lock the reason why the BW men were chasing after the boat was apparent - the new lock gate was so stiff and unbalanced that it was impossible for my crew (her of a few thousand locks experience) to move it.

At this moment a BW van drove past. By a combination of yells, waves and curses we managed to get him to stop. He was in a tearing hurry as 'a BW bigwig is coming down and I'm the backup vehicle'. We persuaded him to push the gate and got through. Later we were told that the bigwig was the BW

Chairman, and to assist his progress he had the services of 4 BW men!

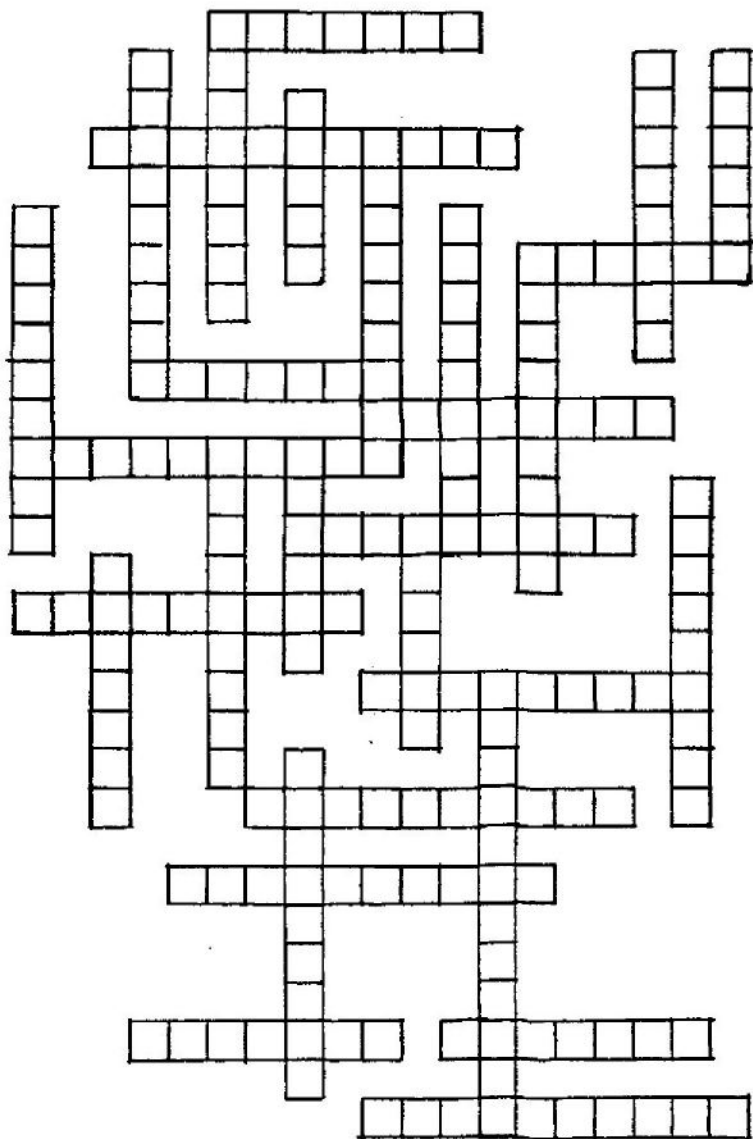
Having read that the Chairmen 'is a boater' and 'does not travel with a large flag saying 'here comes the Chairman"' (WW July 1994), it was interesting to see the reality. Of course, if he had been doing it himself, he might have learned that some of the gates are a little too stiff, and getting off to work swing bridges when they only give you a few feet of mown towpath can be dangerous, and so on.

Later in our trip we came across the Chairman's progress again. It was easy to see where he was heading, as the grass was being cut and things smartened up. The cost of this in man-hours made us wonder.

Do any other NABO members have any info on the Chairman's progress? Does he always have BW men as unpaid servants who might be better serving us (customers) if they were doing their proper jobs? Does the progress continue for much of the year or only for the odd week? I would be fascinated to know.

DHS Cragg, Oswestry

AMUSEMENT PAGE



AMUSEMENT PAGE

Tunnels grid

Can you arrange the following tunnel names in the grid on the opposite page?

Barnton

Blisworth

Brandwood

Braunston

Cookley

Coseley

Cowley

Crick

Curdworth

Drakeholes

Dudley

Foulridge

Gannow

Greywell

Harecastle

Higham

Islington

Maida Hill

Netherton

Newbold

Preston Brook

Saddington

Saltersford

Sapperton

Savernake

Shrewley

Standedge

Tardebigge

Wast Hill

Woodley

READERS INFORMATION

For Water Wheel read Water Mill...

The pub depicted on page 27 of the May Newsletter was incorrectly stated to be the Water Wheel at Kidderminster. In fact it is the Water Mill. My apologies to all concerned - O. M. Shaw.

But I'm sure you all found it -Ed.

Please do send me more information, and more photos like we had in the last issue. They do brighten up the page (and I will send them back if you ask me nicely - Ed).

NABO REPRESENTATIVES

Council members contact addresses

Penny Barber
(RBOA Liaison)

Phil Bland
(Rep for disabled)

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
(SERep)