



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Issue No. 97/5: August 1997

NABO NEWS

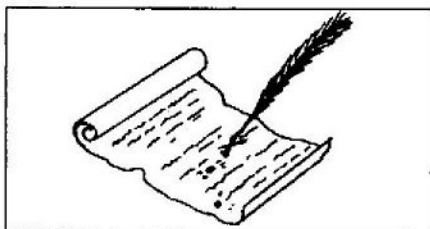
Being a lock volunteer can be fun,
and was profitable for NABO



Fiona Carter Smith of the NABO team persuades Elaine Flack of "Eagle" from Alvecote that she should join NABO. "I will have to join now to see the photo", said Elaine - well, here it is! Photo by Robert Coles.

NEWSLETTER

Editor's comment



You have all been very quiet recently, which I assume means you are out and about enjoying your boats and the better weather - perhaps going to Henley to give a hand, or win the raffle?

The NABO Council tried out the BW lock volunteers scheme at Stourport, and NABO member Robert Coles took some splendid photos which you can see on pages 14 and 15. Stourport is certainly a centre of attention this year, first with the proposed restoration/infilling of Mart Lane basin, and now a change of use of the basin moorings (page 13) - so what will be the next story?

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August 1997

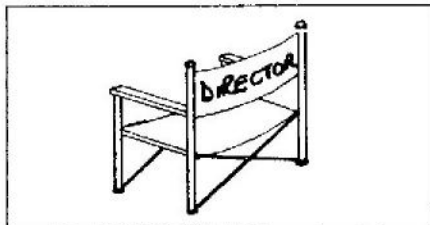
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Published by

**National Association of
Boat Owners**

NEWSLETTER

Chairman's comment



English Nature and the Pocklington Canal

The Pocklington Canal is little known to most boaters. "Somewhere in Yorkshire, isn't it?" was the reaction of one member to whom I talked about it. Yet this short and underused waterway is likely to be the next major battleground between those who love canals and the radical "environment at any cost" lobby.

The "Pocklington Canal Management Plan" was published earlier this year. Although it was prepared for BW and English Nature jointly, it is clear from a superficial review of the Plan who is in the driving seat. Most of the Plan (which is a draft for consultation) is devoted to aquatic plants and insects, and bird life. Navigation on the currently restored section would be allowed to continue, grudgingly and under sufferance.

Any new restoration would face almost insuperable obstacles, and is clearly regarded as undesirable. Boaters are mentioned in passing; no effort was made to establish the number of boats actually cruising the canal, this being unimportant. A study by Professor Eaton of Liverpool University proving boat movements do not harm canal life was ignored, while "facts" of dubious relevance and accuracy were quoted.

NABO has of course responded appropriately to the draft plan. However, English Nature claims that the maximum number of boat movements a year compatible with "high biological diversity" in the canals is under 1,000. This, if imposed generally, would effectively close down the canal system for boating. Through a defect in legislation, English Nature seems able to declare SSSI's and restrict boat movements without consulting all those affected, and there is no mechanism for appeal. It is clear that unbalanced pressure from English Nature and "eco-warriors" is possibly the biggest threats facing canals today.

NEWSLETTER

Chairman's comment (continued)

NABO and the RBOA have agreed to prepare a joint position paper on the effect of boating on the canal environment, taking into account current research. We will be happy to have members' input - constructive, please!

A Waterways Trust?

BW Chief Executive David Fletcher has presented some ideas on how the waterways should be run in future. They involve hiving off management to a Charitable Trust, with powers to carry out commercial activity. It would have a "rolling contract" with government in place of grant-in-aid, which could all be invested in the waterways instead of any surplus reverting to the Treasury at the end of the financial year. The distinction between Cruising and Remainder waterways would be abolished. BW claims it would lead to a "reinforced enterprise ethic", improved service quality and a reduced call on public funding!

We believe that constructive thought and proposals on the future of the waterways are always welcome. Of course we will want to see full details of

how such a trust would be set up and operate. We have written to Angela Eagle, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State responsible for British Waterways, setting out what we see as the key issues which need to be addressed and asking to be involved in the development of concrete proposals.

Cycling Permits

Cycling groups have whipped themselves into a frenzy over the introduction of cycling permits (at a paltry £12.50 a year when booked in advance) on the Kennet & Avon. There has been a mass cycle-in, and articles have appeared in the quality dailies, mainly covering cyclists' views.

I am 100% behind British Waterways on this issue. Cyclists sometimes inconvenience other users, and bicycle tyres wear out towpaths. Wardens are needed to control cyclists who speed or behave irresponsibly. Why shouldn't cyclists contribute to the cost of maintaining the towpaths and paying the wardens? £12.50 is a bargain, when compared to what we pay - and it includes 3rd party insurance.

NEWSLETTER

Chairman's comment

I think everybody who benefits from our waterways should contribute to the cost of maintaining them. Or they should be free to all users (but the Treasury will never agree!). I have written to about a dozen MP's with K & A constituencies supporting the new scheme.

Christmas Stoppages

I am extremely disappointed to see that stoppages over Christmas and New Year appear to be widespread this year. In past years BW has always maintained a 2-3 week "window" to allow us to cruise at Christmas. This year closures are planned on the Leeds & Liverpool, Worcester & Birmingham, Southern GU (in Cassiobury Park and at Marsworth), Aylesbury Arm, and Stourbridge.

I understand only three user representatives (including NABO!) attended the meeting on June 12th at which the winter stoppage programme was discussed, and that opposition to the closures over Christmas was muted. I have also heard some comments from BW personnel to the effect that not that many boats were on the move over the

last Christmas period.

If boaters don't want the canals open over the Christmas holidays, fair enough. But I suspect most do; they just can't be bothered to say so. So let's hear your views: how many of you want a Christmas opening in the "closed season"? And how many of you are going to use it if it's there? Or are we to pay more and more licence fee for less and less cruising time? "Use it or lose it" applies here as well!

Cruising the Nene

Peterborough City Council are interested in attracting more boaters to the town. They recently called a meeting to discuss ways of doing this, with representatives from the Environment Agency to explain the EA's development plans and myself to present the boater's view. It was an extremely useful opportunity to urge support for more boating on the Nene. The EA concedes the river is under-used, and are keen to create plans with local authorities to encourage more use of the river without losing its character or quality. That's something we can all support.

NEWS

View from the Council meeting held on 19th July, 1997

Council met at Northfield in beautiful boating weather; such dedication! My screen shows a wide-ranging selection of topics consisting of some old faithfuls, together with a few rising stars. The Ombudsman appointment and the consequences of Lady Ponsonby's departure took up plenty of airtime. Incidentally, we learnt that she has ruled against NABO on our last four complaints; nevertheless Council will be sad to see her go.

A prospective meeting with the Minister was considered and what should be said at same. The apparent change in scope and stature of the Ombudsman will be high on the list as well as the Customer Charter and its similar fate. It was said that a report in the national press indicated that the present government was keen on tightening up the provisions of so called Citizens Charters, so perhaps we shall have a sympathetic ear. Other matters hoped to be discussed with the Minister include old faithfuls, such as our problems with consultation, increased charges, and also any proposed changes to BW's legal structure or the

Transport Act. Should fill a few moments of the Ministers time.

The Pocklington Canal and its problems drew the attention of Council to what has been, and what is now becoming a more widespread problem; namely the conflicts that can arise between environmentalists and boating interests. Council discussed the latest IWA Bulletin on the matter in which the Environment Agency stand accused of not being as even handed in these matters as we believe they should. The RBOA and NABO hold similar views and it was agreed a joint approach would be formulated.

At this meeting Council was addressed by Michael Handford who gave a presentation on his belief for the need for changes in Waterways Group Activity and representation to Government. He thought that important developments were in the offing and that for interested groups to take the fullest advantage offered by change, a complete re-vamping of the way Waterway Interests were represented was necessary. Council listened to what he had to say and will

NEWS

View from the Council meeting (continued)

watch any future developments closely.

After this presentation, the Chairman reported kites flying over Watford where David Fletcher had been floating his ideas about how BW could be changed to Charitable Trust status. Many descriptions of BW have I heard at Council meetings and the word 'charitable' has not figured very much so far.

The hard working membership secretary reported on the first results of the 'how much did your BSS cost?' questionnaire. This has produced some horrific answers. Of 140 returns received so far, the average has been over £400 with a top figure of over

£3000. Undoubtedly, much more of this later. In the meantime, Council are writing to BW suggesting some redress would be in order.

Philip Ogden's work on Water Supply problems and their consequences was discussed. Council were particularly exercised about the patchy and inconsistent notices advertising stoppages.

The Draw at the National has been mentioned before. Audrey Smith of the IWA has agreed to make the draw in case there are any Tarzan fans out there.

And that, for the moment, is that. I think a spell in the shade is indicated.

BW Chairman praises NABO

In a letter to Peter Lea, the BW Chairman Bernard Henderson has praised the 'considerable efforts which NABO has made recently to help BW in its pleas to Government over funding and on other issues'. The letter follows comment on the omission of NABO's name from the list of 'responsible user organisations'

in the Chairman's Statement from the latest BW Annual Report. Bernard Henderson has now made it clear that he did not intend anyone to infer that NABO was 'anything other than a responsible organisation, with the interests of its members at heart'.

NABO continues to campaign for extra funding via MPs.

NEWS

Ombudsman decides on BSS complaints

The Ombudsman, Lady Ponsonby, has recently published her decisions on the four complaints which NABO took to her in November and December 1996. The complaints relate to the introduction of the Boat Safety Scheme, the consultation process which took place at that time, the withdrawal by BW of the £20 licence fee discount which used to be given to holders of Certificates of Compliance, and some correspondence with BW's Chief Executive.

Although she has not found British Waterways guilty of maladministration in any of the cases, her detailed findings contain several telling criticisms and a vital reminder of the procedure BW must follow when future changes are made to Boat Safety Scheme requirements.

The Boat Safety Scheme

The first complaint was that BW did not follow the procedure laid down by the British Waterways Act 1995. This says that, before "prescribing or amending standards", BW must not only consult IWAAC and organisations representing

builders, owners and operators of boats who may be affected by them, but must also take further steps to bring those standards to the attention of individuals (members of the public) and to consider any representations they may make concerning them.

NABO said that the standards referred to in the Act were the 1995 standards (blue/grey book) and that they were different from the 1993 standards as they contained new requirements (sections 2.13, 7.1(b), and 7.1(c) for the technically minded). They therefore should have been brought to the public's attention as laid down in the Act, but this never happened.

BW argued that the standards in question were the 1993 standards (grey book) and that there was therefore ample time for the public to be aware of them and make comments. They claimed the three changes to the standards were relaxations of the requirements - clearly nonsense, which anyone can see by comparing the two versions.

The Ombudsman found that the standards referred to in the

NEWS

Ombudsman decides on BSS complaints (continued)

British Waterways Act were the 1993 standards, and they had therefore been consulted on in accordance with the Act. Although she agreed that the three changes were a tightening of the standards, she considered they arose out of the consultation process which took place in 1995, and therefore did not require yet further consultation.

However the Ombudsman said, "I fully understand your concern and I would draw the attention of British Waterways to the necessity of complying with the Act when considering future amendments to the Boat Safety Standards" and, later in her decision, "I would again emphasise that, before prescribing, revoking or amending any standards in the future, British Waterways are bound to comply with their 1995 Act." We regard this as one of the most important points to come out of her decision.

Consultation

NABO's second complaint was that British Waterways did not complete the consultation with organisations required

under the Act, as a number of points raised by NABO and the hNBOC (historic Narrow Boat Owners Club) remained unanswered and because BW failed to comply with the standards set out in the Customer Charter when replying to letters from consultees. The Ombudsman accepted that BW had not replied to letters as they should. However, she found clear evidence that BW had consulted as required by the Act and had given full consideration to our representations.

Broken Promise - £20 discount

NABO's third complaint was that BW broke its undertaking to continue the £20 licence discount to boaters holding a Certificate of Compliance or Boat Safety Certificate each year until the first licence renewal after the mandatory introduction of the BSS. This promise was given in a letter to all boaters dated 9 July 1992, and repeated at various meetings (where it was minuted). BW unilaterally withdrew their commitment with effect from 1st January 1996, although it should have continued until the first licence renewal after 1st January

NEWS

Ombudsman decides on BSS complaints (continued)

1997 (or after 1st January 1998 in the case of boats built before 1971).

The Ombudsman agreed with us, but said, "the wording in the documents appears to be in the nature of a promise rather than a commitment it was an inducement or encouragement for voluntary compliance, offered by British Waterways prior to the announcement of the formal start date of the scheme. A promise can be withdrawn at any time and British Waterways did so in a peremptory fashion on 18th May 1995 without any explanation whatsoever." She goes on to say that the unilateral withdrawal of a promise cannot amount to maladministration. However, she notes that "a promise can be enforced if a party has acted on it to his or her detriment, in the belief that the promise made will be fulfilled". She adds "anyone wishing to claim the discount should do so by way of an application to the Small Claims Court".

Replies to Letters

The final complaint related to the way in which BW's Chief

Executive replied to letters sent to him by NABO Chairman Jon Darlington. Jon's first, detailed, letter related to the introduction of the "dangerous boat" criteria in October 1996. It was answered by an acknowledgement and a statement that the contents of the letter were noted. Jon's second letter, a request for a full reply within 21 days, was answered with the statement that the first reply was the full reply. It then went on to say that the views of users and others were being fully considered.

The Ombudsman has drawn a distinction between responses to consultation and responses to general correspondence. She stated: "As a matter of practice, British Waterways should always acknowledge receipt of communications from consultees, however a full letter in response is not always essential. This is not, of course, to imply that representations should not be properly considered. In responding to general correspondence British Waterways must adhere to the commitment in paragraph 16 of "Caring for Britain's Waterways"."

NEWS

Ombudsman decides on BSS complaints (continued)

She then decided that Jon's original letter was a response to consultation and therefore did not require a full reply. However, she said: "I consider that Dr Fletcher's response of 18th October 1996 was insufficient. Its brevity amounted to brusqueness and it would not have given you confidence that your views were being properly considered." She added: "Dr Fletcher makes it clear in his response to me that he finds it time consuming to deal with pressure groups such as NABO. However, he has to accept that pressure groups are a fact of

life and they exist to champion the interests of their members. He may find this irritating but he has a responsibility not to let his irritation show."

Conclusion

We are pleased that we have cleared up the above matters by asking the Ombudsman to decide on them. We of course fully and unreservedly accept her decisions.

We expect British Waterways to comply with the 1995 Act in full when making any changes to the BSS standards in future.

Navigable Culvert for Latton bypass

After many months of campaigning, it has been announced that a navigable culvert is to be provided for the Thames & Severn canal underneath the new A419 Latton bypass. This victory represents a turning point in achieving the full restoration of the Thames & Severn canal.

Supporters of the Cotswold Canals Trust have written many letters in support of the restoration, and this has impressed the new roads minister,

Baroness Hayman. Gloucestershire County Council have also supported the Trust by providing finance for most of the costs involved.

Good news for the Thames & Severn! I was recently saddened to witness the short-sightedness of the builders of the new Derby ring road, which cuts off the Derby & Sandi-acre canal near its junction with the T & M. Let's hope the new roads minister is enlightened enough to prevent any more like this. - Ed.

NEWS

Winter stoppages 1997/8: news from Denis Smith

NABO was represented at a national users group meeting to discuss the forthcoming winter stoppage programme - held at Fazeley in mid June and very poorly attended by other user groups. The main stoppage period is November 3rd to December 19th and January 5th to March 13th. Most canals will remain open over the Christmas/New Year period but a few with major works will remain closed. These include:

Tardebigge on Worcester & Birmingham (lock rebuilding).

Stourbridge (rebuilding lock sides).

Chirk Cutting on Llangollen (bank stabilisation).

Hazelhurst Aqueduct on Caldon (channel lining).

The draft closure list also included complete winter closure (i.e. without windows) of the Southern Grand Union (Bridge 163 and Marsworth Locks 37-45 plus bridge 13 of the Aylesbury Arm) and the Leeds & Liverpool (Johnson Hill and Wigan Flights) but BW have been asked to have a further look at these with a view to opening for a limited Christmas period. It is intended that the final listing will be posted to boaters in September.

The NABO view on Water Supply

Philip Ogden recently met with Stuart Sim of BW to discuss ideas for conserving the supplies of water to the canals.

One suggestion is an alternative method of calculating lock usage, using "locks full" rather than time restrictions. Calculate the maximum daily usage from the reservoir, feeder and back pump capacity divided by length of "season", and enforce

"working turns". Properly organised, this could save large quantities of water.

Other suggestions include concentrating on curing leaking lock gates, education and information (special stoppage info boards, free Canalphone, "Oracle" instead of "Ceefax"), restoration of side ponds and dredging summit pounds to their original depths for water storage.

NEWS

Mooring Re-arrangement at Stourport basin: Denis Smith

Plans have now been released by BW giving details of the proposed new long term mooring arrangements in Stourport Basin.

Initial examination indicates that visitor moorings have been eliminated in the basin itself with BW suggesting that there is ample visitor mooring above York Street lock - despite the fact that last year these were designated winter residential moorings. In any event there is an agreed principle that a mix of moorings should be available at such a location.

The plan also shows residential moorings across the entrance to the former Mart Lane

Basin - further indication of BW's reluctance to restore this basin.

The lack of consultation is again alarming - a notice posted up in the basin office in early July inviting comments by 14th July - somewhat academic bearing in mind that the new mooring pontoons have been manufactured and are presently being stored in the basin pending installation.

We are awaiting a reply to a letter sent to Roger Herrington, local Waterways Manager, expressing our concerns, which we understand are shared by the I.W.A. and Stourport Civic Society.

Mooring and Navigation at the Henley Festival

The National Waterway Festival is being held alongside the towpath between Hambledon lock and Henley Bridge. The Environment Agency has issued a notice to remind boaters to take due care and to travel slowly past moored boats. The navigation channel has been designated on the Bucks/Oxon (north west) side of the river to segregate passing

boats from other events.

Casual mooring will be possible at Fawley Meadows (for a fee!) and a ferry service will run from there to the Boat Show site. Casual moorings may also be available at the Henley Town Council's site at Mill Meadows upstream of Henley Bridge, and a water bus will operate from Hobbs Station Road Boatyard.

NEWS

NABO Team at Stourport, 3rd August, 1997

NABO Council members Denis Smith (left) and Andrew Sherrey (middle) with helpers Ian, Rita, Margaret and Fiona spent Sunday 3rd August helping boaters through the locks at Stourport.

They recruited 4 new members (welcome!) and sold plenty of raffle tickets. ➔



Boaters Joe and Betty Leadbetter from Ashwood marina pressed the team to accept beers from their impressive stocks. Joe claimed the multitude of cans carried below decks was his ballast. It was not a large boat, but it must have had a considerable draft!

NEWS



Rita Evans introduces Josh Miles to the joys of boat spotting using the Inland Waterways Boat Listing by NABO member Douglas Maas. ▼

While the wife of the Treasurer works the lock, boaters enjoy their drink. It was later learnt that the boaters were on their Honeymoon, three of them!! It was explained that the steerer was the bride's brother; we expect he slept on the roof!

Photos by Robert Coles

Young Joe Mount helped his parents through the flight, and although not quite man enough for all of the gear he was heard to give his mother precise instructions on what to do next! ▼



NABO BUSINESS

Carbon Monoxide and LPG gas detectors

More than a year ago we brought you news of a special offer to members on Carbon Monoxide and LPG gas detectors, available as battery-operated models, ideal for use on your boat. A mains version of the CO detector is also available for use at home.

These detectors can be purchased at bargain prices from a company in Lichfield, through NABO. For details, please contact either Peter Lea on or Denis Smith on

We believe the prices remain as competitive as ever:

Prices to NABO members

Battery CO detector
£28.25 (£10.70 reduction)

Mains CO detector
£43.95 (£11.00 reduction)

Battery LPG detector
£34.50 (£11.45 reduction)

IMPORTANT! Countdown to the Annual General Meeting

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held on the 22nd November 1997. Now is the time to start thinking of resolutions, and nominations for Council. This is the timetable:

Resolutions

Must be duly proposed and seconded and sent to me to arrive before the 11th October 1997. All resolutions received will then be published in the Newsletter before the AGM.

Council Nominations

I must receive these before the 11th October 1997. All Council members are elected annually, including the present incumbents. Details of all candidates will also be published before the AGM. Members will be informed about how to vote by post at the same time. Please note that postal voting only applies to the election of Council members, and not to resolutions.

NABO BUSINESS

Countdown to the Annual General Meeting (continued)

Action!

Please remember that the 11th October is the latest date by which I must have your proposals, the earlier the better!

And finally - if you are concerned about our waterways and your enjoyment of them,

their future, and you want to know what's going on, then put up for Council.

Nominations and resolutions should be sent to the Secretary:
Neil Walker

Nomination form

Proposed candidate _____

Address _____

.....

Telephone _____

I am willing to stand for election to the NABO Council

Signed _____

Proposer _____

Address _____

.....

Proposer's signature _____

Seconder _____

Address _____

.....

Seconder's signature _____

P.T.O.

NABO BUSINESS

BW still need lock volunteers

BW is still looking for volunteers to assist in the manning of selected locks during the summer, with the aim of helping to minimise the use of water.

The NABO Council spent a day at the Stourport locks (see

report elsewhere), and had a lot of fun, as well as keeping an eye on the use of water through the staircase locks.

If you would like to volunteer, Philip Ogden has the details. He can be contacted on

Nomination form: brief details of candidate

Please include a few words about yourself, your experience and why you would like to stand for the NABO Council:

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NABO BUSINESS

Henley - August Bank Holiday Weekend

Do come and see us on our stand at Henley, it is always busy. We want to recruit lots of new members.

If you feel inclined we would like some help - an hour on the stand, or folding raffle ticket stubs! All volunteers welcome.

DUNTON DOUBLES 1997

Dunton Double Windlasses will be for sale at Henley. £15.00

each - they make excellent birthday, thank-you, Christmas presents.

RAFFLE

The raffle draw will take place on Bank Holiday Monday at Henley - we do not have details of the time yet, so be sure to read your programme and listen for the announcement.

Christine Denton

What does the NABO River-Users' Co-ordinator do?

Members will know that our Council member, Stephen Peters, has special responsibility for river boating (he owns a 30' Seamaster cruiser based on the River Severn), but what does his job entail?

Stephen writes:

Despite the job title, the topics that concern me often have equal significance for narrowboat owners and even sea-going motor yachts. For instance, I have been involved with various aspects of of the Boat Safety Scheme, including its introduction on the Scottish sea canals and its implications for visitors to our country from overseas.

I represent NABO in consultations with the Gloucester Harbour Trustees. They are planning to introduce new byelaws covering the River Severn from Sharpness to Avonmouth. Not really of any significance to canal boats? Don't you believe it! The proposed byelaws regard small craft, i.e. those not exceeding 20 metres in length - and how long is a 72 foot narrowboat? Canal boats making the voyage from the Severn to the Thames via Bristol will be subject to the same rules as large sea-going ships!

I monitor proceedings in

NABO BUSINESS

River Users' Co-ordinator (continued)

Parliament for NABO. Careful scrutiny in the past has, for example, revealed the possibility that diesel fuel for boats may become subject to the full rate of duty and VAT. A careful watch needs to be kept on planned legislation including public and private Bills and Transport & Works Orders which can all have far reaching consequences for navigation.

I also receive copies of all agendas and minutes of the Environment Agency Regional Fisheries Advisory Committees, and I examine them in detail for matters concerning navigation. The output of documents from the agency is causing some problems, including strategies for navigation, recreation, conservation, water management and fisheries. In addition the planned byelaw changes in Anglian and Southern Regions need to be constantly watched so that boat owners are not disadvantaged. We have given our views to the agency on its new Customer Charter and how we would like the RFAC committees to give fairer representation to navigation interests, even in

regions where the Agency is not the navigation authority. After all, it has powers of control and regulation over dredging and water supplies and has a remit to consider and promote navigation and leisure use of all rivers.

Another topic of interest to me is Licence charges. I monitor the charges levied by all navigation authorities annually and produce comparisons to assist our members.

I have also produced technical guidance papers covering topics such as VHF radio, fire safety, and how to complain. Please contact me direct for any assistance, including help with locating manufacturers and suppliers of equipment - I have a large library of old technical brochures, etc dating back to the early 1970's.

Together with attending the EA National Navigation Users Forum and local user groups covering the Rivers Severn and Avon these are just a few of the items that I cover as a part-time voluntary service for boat owners. Part-time? THIS IS A FULL TIME TASK!

AN ADVERT PAGE

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or Fax the form to 01923 721559
or phone the details through on
01923 770425

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Monthly premium option
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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**

NABO BUSINESS

NABO Sweatshirts - available at Henley!

The NABO sweatshirt is 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! Get one from our stand at Henley or by mail from Penny Barber

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

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LETTERS

British Waterways Licence Conditions

I am concerned at the implications of clause 23 in BW's 'Boat Licence & Permit Conditions' booklet.

I telephoned BW's Customer Services Dept. who basically said "You can trust us". I wonder why this worried me?

May I suggest that everybody renewing their licence writes to BW refusing to accept this clause. May I also suggest that NABO bring pressure to bear on BW to

either rewrite this clause on more equitable terms or to delete it altogether.

M Smith, Maidenhead

Clause 23 states that "... you will be responsible for any damage to property that happens because of dangers caused by the condition of our property, however this happens. By issuing a licence we are not saying or implying our property is safe."

Stuck on the Llangollen?

In early June we had experience of a stoppage caused by a hire boat being stuck fast in the lower portals of a lock. This was the second lock of the Hurleston flight. The boat had attempted to enter the empty lock and was clamped between the hinged ends of the bottom gates. The gates were fully open. British Waterways staff had been trying for more than an hour to free the boat. We assisted for half an hour by using our 50 foot boat as a tug before the boat was reversed out of its predicament. The cause was well known to the men on the scene. Black Prince have taken

taken delivery of new boats built to a nominal 7 foot beam. This one appeared to exceed this vital dimension at the point where the gunnel is dipped to allow the large front windows to be fitted.

We promptly abandoned our whim to proceed up the Llangollen. The thought that we could be stuck between oversized craft stuck in the notoriously narrow Llangollen locks was no encouragement to us. We learnt later that stories of this problem have percolated around BW staff as far as Birmingham.

Harry & Nina Marsland, Oundle

LETTERS

Comment from Mr Simmonds' neighbour in Worcester

At the risk of initiating a never-ending 'ping-pong' over Mr Simmonds letter (Issue 97/3) and the massive number of replies (Issue 97/4), I feel that I must write in and ask that you publish just one more response. The reason being that I was that 'neighbour' oft referred to in most of the replies.

The bigoted assumption that most of the repliers made, was that Mr Simmonds was disturbing other boaters or the local populace, this shows a singular lack of knowledge of the mooring described (there are no houses within a mile of the moorings) and assumes, quite wrongly, that he hadn't consulted with his neighbouring boaters.

It is a great shame that most of the respondents missed the point of the letter totally and used it as a vehicle for their ill-informed opinions of boats with generators. The reason for the letter was a well meaning attempt to warn other boaters of potential hazards, specifically theft, in a most unlikely area.

I would like to state that Mr Simmonds had asked me whether

it would disturb me if he ran his appliances, and that I had made no objection. Also the particular generator referred to is extremely quiet and could hardly be heard a boats length away.

I must assume that most of the ecological replies from boaters wittering on about pollution of the atmosphere, have horse-drawn boats, or row or punt their craft along the waterways, they couldn't possibly have an atmosphere polluting diesel engine, could they?

It seems to me that the 'live and let live' attitude of genuine boaters is being replaced by NIMBYs (not in my back yard), and I would ask your respondents to please try and look at the main reason for the letter, such as the one from Mr Simmonds, as being a timely and friendly warning to others, and not to use it for their own hypocritical rhetoric.

J Hobson, Cheltenham

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AMUSEMENT

Footnote from the Internet

More Internet silliness: the ether must be full of this!

Something to do with mixed metaphors... "to do otherwise is to become ostrich-like, cutting off one's nose to spite one's face", followed by other mixes... "too many rolling stones spoil the broth", "when the cat's away elephant's never forget", "all that glitters has a silver lining"...

And then, "Hesitant as I

always am to be pedantic, I feel it should be drawn to our readers' attention that whereas "the gaggle of narrowboats snaked into the marina" is a mixed metaphor, combining as it does allusions of collections of waterfowl with reptilian imagery, "don't spoil the ship by flogging a dead horse" is mixed up phrase or saying with no metaphorical content."

We leave the rest to you!

NABO REPRESENTATIVES

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Roger Davis
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Christine Denton
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