



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Issue No. 97/6: September 1997

NABO NEWS

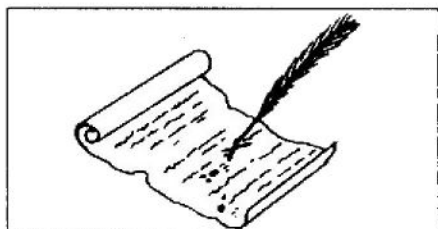
NABO raffle drawn at Henley by Audrey Smith



The NABO raffle was drawn at the Henley Waterways Festival on Monday 25th August by Audrey Smith, Chairman of the IWA. Congratulations to the winner, Tony Theakston from Glen Parva.

NEWSLETTER

Editor's comment



Lots of fun and games at Henley, which was reported to have a lovely atmosphere, even in the very early hours of the morning! Whether our Chairman was part of the high jinks I do not know, but his weekend resulted in a damaged Achilles tendon, and he now sports a peg leg. But don't worry, NABO business as usual at the top!

Plans are laid for the 1997 AGM on 22nd November, so we hope to see you there. Not all the present incumbents of the Council are re-standing for election, so we need some new volunteers - could you help?

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September 1997

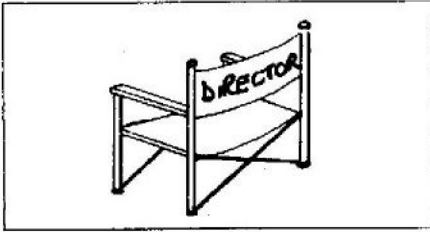
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Published by

**National Association of
Boat Owners**

NEWSLETTER

Chairman's comment



Licence fee increases

As reported elsewhere, BW intend to increase licence fees by 13.3% next year (10% plus inflation of 3.3%). They say that "experience from the licence fee increases in 1997 suggests that licences issued have not declined significantly". This, even if correct, is irrelevant, as it tells nothing about the number of boats sold on because of rising costs.

We have made representations to BW's Chief Executive on three occasions as to the impact of rapidly rising costs on our members. We have pointed to examples of people selling their boats for this reason. I am extremely disappointed that BW have disregarded our requests and warnings. I have responded to formal consultation on the increases by saying we regard them as unacceptable.

New Ombudsman

I am pleased to see that the new Waterways Ombudsman brings a wealth of experience to the job. His previous role as Ombudsman to the Personal Investment Authority means that he will be accustomed to being in "the hot seat" and will be well able to resist any behind-the-scenes pressure from BW - very necessary attributes in that position.

I understand that, despite their protestations to the contrary, BW have tampered with the powers of the Ombudsman. They have inserted a clause in his terms of reference which prevents him from considering any matter which involves legal interpretation. This would have prevented our complaint over the introduction of the BSS from being considered. With a bit of imagination, it could be extended to cover many of the decisions made by the last Ombudsman.

BW have also changed the rules by stipulating that, if a decision goes against them, the Ombudsman must send them a draft for comment before it is

NEWSLETTER

Chairman's comment (continued)

published. This will work both ways, in that unsuccessful complainants will get a first draft as well, but it gives BW a further opportunity to find - or perhaps manufacture - additional evidence to try to change the decision.

BW's top brass appears to be so incensed by the handful of decisions against them (two of which were won by NABO) that they are prepared to go to great lengths to stop it happening again. As they seem unable to understand that an unfettered, independent Ombudsman is to their advantage, it is high time Angela Eagle (Minister responsible for BW) gave responsibility for the Waterways Ombudsman to the Department of the Environment. Now there is something our licence fees could be used for.

Henley and the EA

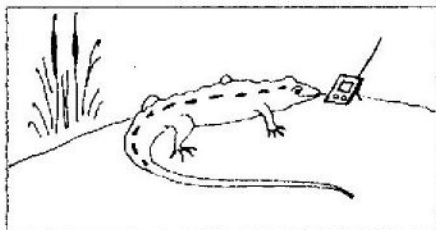
The National Festival at Henley was excellent - praise to its organisers. Praise too to the Environment Agency, who accommodated about 600 of those strange long metal boats on the Thames. The lock-keepers were very helpful and courteous, even in the face of lengthy queues.

One personal gripe: the lock-keepers don't seem to know that some narrowboats have vintage engines which have to be stopped (and re-started) from the engine room (this is completely acceptable under the BSS). On two separate occasions, a lock-keeper instructed me to turn off my engine, and then started to let water into or out of the lock while I was in the engine room and unable to control my stern line. Both situations had potentially dangerous consequences. I hope the EA will circulate a reminder to lock-keepers on this, but meanwhile urge anyone with a similar set-up to be wary!

I hear that the EA may feel unable to extend the reciprocal licencing arrangements in future. Apparently very few EA registered boats have been able to take up their 15 day entitlement to visit BW waters, so most of the traffic has been one-way. This has led to complaints from the Thames users. It would be a great shame if the scheme were to be discontinued, as it has won the EA many friends over the last year.

NEWS

View from the Council meeting held on 6 September, 1997



From my screen I see the Chair was taken by Nigel Parkinson, the Chairman having been laid low at the National.

A motley collection of matters to be dealt with. Some informal meetings with BW were reported upon. NABO and others are being wooed over BW's new plans for the future as reported in the National Press. Wisely, and greatly to the credit of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, we have already made our views on the subject known to the Minister soon after the first kite appeared over Watford. Council agreed that this is likely to be the hot topic in the future. It was reported that the Minister would like any changes made to have the blessing of the User Organisations. NABO has said it will support a fresh look at Waterways Management, and will participate fully in any

process which leads to better managed waterways with a secure future but which remain accessible to everyone.

Whether the current BW proposals fit the bill remains to be seen. Also, is it likely that all User Groups will agree on the way forward? Watch this space.

Council expressed their disappointment at not being included in the BW Chairman's list of "responsible organisations" in his recently published report. However, an exchange of correspondence has produced an expression of appreciation of NABO's efforts and a denial of any inference by omission that NABO is anything other than responsible.

The new Ombudsman's appointment was discussed. He would appear to have a good deal of "Ombudsmanning" experience. But have his terms of reference been changed from Lady Ponsonby's to exclude matters requiring legal interpretation?

Denis Smith reported on the Stourport Saga. Yet another exercise in BW's lack of proper and prior consultation it would seem.

NEWS

View from the Council meeting (continued)

John Griffiths has sadly had to give up his NABO work. Council are now concerned to find a replacement for John at the NW User Group Meetings.

The Boat Safety Scheme produced its usual shock horror. According to the present results of our survey, Boaters report an average of £400 spent on work which has had to be done at the behest of this scheme. It would also not appear to be being uniformly applied. As one member put it succinctly, "there is a limit to what I and others can bear and much more costs and that limit will have been reached!"

BW Licences

British Waterways have announced an increase in licence fees for 1998 of 13.3%, that is 10% plus inflation, as threatened last year and in spite of the howls of protest from all the User Groups.

However, BW are reviewing the new Licence and Mooring conditions, about which there was also much protest. They have issued a new draft, which takes into account many of the comments made.

With the AGM fast approaching, Council is looking for resolutions to debate and volunteers for Council. If you feel strongly about any boating matters including the BSS now is the time to stand up and be counted.

On a final note it was reported to Council that a new sheep dip replacing organo-phosphates was now in use. Whilst being more farmer friendly it is apparently fatal to fish, if you will pardon the alliteration. No throwing sheep into the cut please.

The sun has gone and I'm off indoors - Monitor.

New Ombudsman

The new Ombudsman, with effect from 1st September, is Stephen Edell.

Mr Edell is a solicitor and has just retired as Principal Ombudsman with the Personal Investment Authority. Prior to that he was the Building Societies Ombudsman. He has been a Law Commissioner and a member of the Council of Oxfam.

The appointment is for three years, subject to yearly review.

NEWS

BSS Appeals Procedure published at last

Despite the Boat Safety Scheme having been in operation from 1 January 1997 the essential Appeals Procedure did not see the light of day until early July after a lot of cajoling (it is actually dated April 1997).

The newly issued "Complaints and Appeals Procedure" reiterates the complaints procedure set out in the "blue/grey" booklet and then explains what happens if you are still dissatisfied. An Appeals Panel comprising 5 members (2 appointed by BW and 1 each from IWAAC, BMIF and

IWA or RYA) will consider the appeal after receiving submissions in writing. There appears to be no provision for a personal hearing or for legal arguments to be presented and the decision will be advised in writing.

If the Panel commissions an independent examination of the vessel and you lose the appeal, guess who pays the cost? YOU! A disincentive if ever there was.

Copies of the BSS Complaints and Appeals Procedure can be obtained from BW at Watford or from the Environment Agency.

BW fined for over-abstraction

British Waterways has been fined £18,000 for allowing a company to take water illegally from the Trent and Mersey canal during last summer's drought.

The firm, Trent Valley Growers, was fined £3,900 plus costs for taking more water than permitted. Derby magistrates were told that BW had allowed its licence for pumping to be exceeded in 1995 and had been sent a warning by the Environment Agency, which brought the prosecutions. A routine invest-

igation last September revealed six instances of over-abstraction.

The court was told that Trent Valley Growers told BW that it required more water than it was permitted to take and asked for its licence to be extended but got no response. The magistrates said they were appalled that BW appeared to have condoned the continuing abstraction and had failed to answer the company's request. Both firms admitted the charges.

Info via the Telegraph & Internet.

NEWS

Visiting craft and the Boat Safety Scheme: Stephen Peters

The BSS has recently issued an information pack on the subject of visiting, passage and short term licences. The information is contained within a sealed envelope which can be handed to craft upon arrival and includes "Tips for Boaters" on fuel, gas, fire extinguishers and how to get a Boat Safety Certificate. There is also a leaflet explaining the procedures that BW and the EA will adopt in respect of visiting boats and passage waterways.

With effect from 1 January 1998, owners wishing to obtain a licence to use BW waterways for a short period (e.g. trail boats) will need a Safety Certificate and evidence that they have cover for third party liabilities in Great Britain of at least £1 million.

Vessels wishing to use so-called "passage waterways" (links between waters not managed by BW) will NOT require a BSC but will require the third party insurance. In these cases BW will expect the boat to pass a free "dangerous boat" spot check carried out by a person authorized by BW. The boat will be checked to see that there is no leaking fuel, leaking gas, damage

to electrical cables, or imminent danger of capsize or sinking.

Owners can have up to 56 days of short term licences in any 12 month period under this arrangement and BW will offer haven in a quarantined area when there is inclement weather for boats that do not have a BSC or fail the dangerous boat spot check. They will also allow boats that fail the spot check up to 48 hours to effect repairs or to make ready for departure.

In contrast, the Environment Agency will expect all boats on their waterways to meet BSS standards at all times whether they are visitors or not. Visitors will have to sign a declaration that their boat complies with the BSS and spot checks may also take place. This requirement seems absurd. How can an unsuspecting visitor be expected to know the BSS requirements and then be competent to declare that his boat complies? Have the EA forgotten that examiners have to undergo a training course before they can certify that a boat complies? And yet they expect a lay person to be able to self certify his craft. We shall be

NEWS

Visiting boats and the BSS (continued)

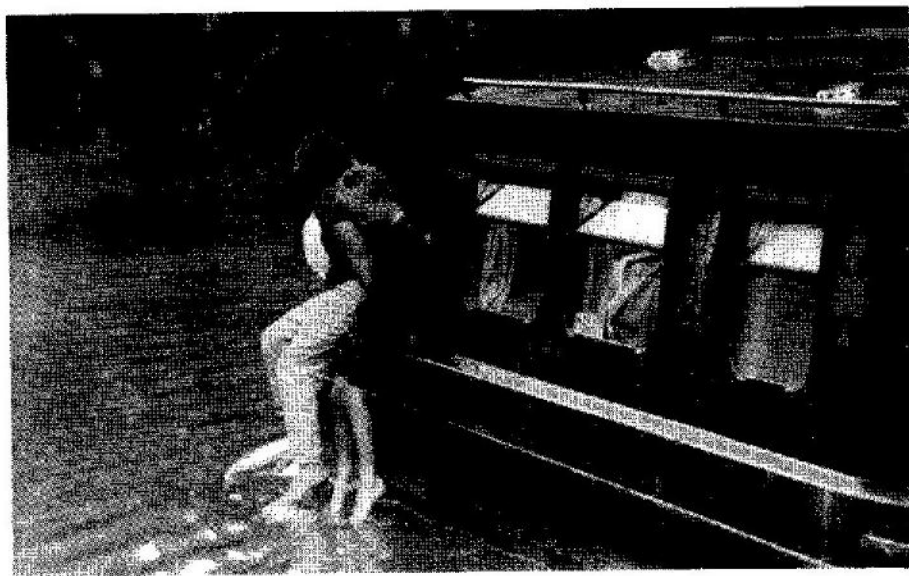
interested to hear of any problems that boat owners have with this new edict from the EA.

We believe BW still have a lot of explaining to do and have not, for example, properly thought through how the passage boat criteria will apply to craft which only winter in a private marina on the River Trent or Severn. How will an owner be able to obtain a short term licence when

first entering BW waters directly from another non-BW waterway or private mooring place? And how will the arrangements affect users of the Crinan and Caledonian Canals in Scotland? (The BSS does not apply to the Scottish Lochs forming the Caledonian Canal). How will short term visitors to Limehouse Basin be accommodated? Boat owners need the answers now!

Boat Safety?

No matter how safe a boat is, boaters will always put themselves in danger. Photo: Robert Coles



NEWS

Mooring rearrangement at Stourport Basin: Denis Smith

NABO has received an apology from local Waterways Manager Roger Herrington for the lack of consultation regarding his proposals for the permanent mooring rearrangement for Stourport Upper Basin.

We now have his assurance that the proposed configuration (which in effect would eliminate visitor moorings in the basin with the alternative being above York Street lock or on the River) is not a *fait accompli* although no alternative proposals are yet in evidence. We are informed that the pontoons which were delivered to Stourport some months ago are of a standard design and were purchased on the same basis as steel piling, i.e.

suitable for use at a number of places. Apparently they are only being stored at Stourport while a number of projects are considered - we have requested details of these projects.

It is pleasing to report that "the possibility of reopening Mart Lane Basin is still most certainly on the agenda" - we look forward to further details in due course.

BW are currently reviewing the Visitor Mooring situation on the River Severn "to assist both north and south bound traffic" and we are being asked for views/thoughts on this matter. Members can forward these either through me or direct to Roger Herrington at Norbury.

Has anyone phoned to ask you if you own a boat?

One of our members, who lives in Warwick, was telephoned in July by a lady who said her name was Mandy Freeman, and asked some questions about his attitude to the environment. Out of the blue, she then asked him to confirm that he was the owner of a powered boat. Immediately suspicious, he asked her for her source of information, which she

declined to give. She claimed she worked for a company called "Dialogue".

Have any other members received such phone calls, perhaps in the Warwick area? Can anyone shed any light on the source of the boat-owning information? Please contact Peter Lea if you can help.

NEWS

Customer Care Survey



NOP are carrying out an extensive "customer care" survey at selected points around the system.

The boater appears to be pleased enough, or perhaps he was amused at the questions being asked!

ADVERT HALF PAGE

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PERHAPS WE SHOULD BE TALKING

NABO BUSINESS

NABO Raffle success: Christine Denton

A big thank you to all our members who sold raffle tickets. We do not yet know how much money we raised - our treasurer is still doing his sums. The draw took place at the Waterways Festival at Henley on August Bank Holiday Monday. Audrey Smith, IWA Chairman made the draw in the Entertainments Marquee in the presence of our chairman (See front page photo).

The winner was Tony Theakston from Glen Parva. He has yet to decide whether he has the £200 cash or the hot air balloon ride - we'll keep you posted.

The raffle was not only intended as a fund raising exercise, but also to promote NABO. I think it was successful on both counts. Again many thanks to you all.

Henley Waterways Festival: Christine Denton

This year the Waterways Festival was held over 4 days from the Friday to Monday, August Bank Holiday. Working boat Plover was loaded with all NABO stand material and NABO tent. She was also carrying anchors and rope for NABO members Tradline Fenders. Plover did not arrive until Friday evening, due to unforeseen circumstances. Our chairman and his wife did, however, put together a makeshift stand on Friday. When Plover made her appearance on Friday evening the relief was evident.

The stand is coming together well and looking more

professional. Alan and Sarah Padwick, NABO members, displayed and sold their hand drawn black & white notelets of canal scenes on the NABO stand and donated 20% of their takings to NABO. Thank you Alan and Sarah.

We recruited many new members and would like to take this opportunity to welcome them. What was especially good was the number of new members moored on the Thames.

The Dunton Doubles are a great success and good value for money. Thanks to Colin & Freda Rees, Chris & Gill Webber, and Deborah Denton for volunteering to help man our stand. Also

NABO BUSINESS

Henley (continued)

thanks to NABO Council Members who took their turn.

We're on our way back from Henley now - down the Thames to Brentford, up the Grand Union, Northern Oxford and then Coventry Canal to our moorings at Mancetter. If you're passing us do call, you might want an application form for someone you know who wants to join NABO. Alternatively, contact me on

for an application form. If every member recruited one new member, then what an influence we would have!

Hope to see you or speak to you soon.

Dunton DoubleWindlasses

We now have in stock the Dunton Double +. This has a slightly longer throw and is £16.50 plus postage. The ordinary Dunton Double is £15.00 plus postage. If you want 2 or more there is a small discount of £1.00. Ring Christine Denton on

to place your order. They make ideal thank-you, Christmas, or Birthday presents to your boating friends and family.

Important! Countdown to the AGM (again)

Another reminder that this year's Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 22nd November 1997, starting at 10.30am at Hockley Port in Birmingham. 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 the Secretary to arrive before the 11th October 1997. All resolutions received will then be published in the Newsletter before the AGM.

Council Nominations

The Secretary 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 AGM (continued)

Action!

Please remember that 11th October is the latest date by which we must have your resolutions and nominations.

If you are concerned about our waterways and your enjoyment of them, their future, and you

want to know what's going on, then please volunteer for Council. We can find a proposer and seconder if required.

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 _____

Secunder _____

Address _____

.....

Secunder's signature _____

P.T.O.

NABO BUSINESS

Sweatshirt supply pegs out

After a number of recent problems with the supply of NABO sweatshirts and T-Shirts, Council has reluctantly decided to find a new source for these items, and we regret that we are therefore unable to supply these for the moment.

We are very sorry indeed for

the inconvenience members have endured. We think all outstanding orders have either been met or money refunded, but if this is not the case, please contact Penny Barber. We are looking hard for a replacement supplier, and as soon as normal service can be resumed we will let you know.

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:

NABO BUSINESS

John Griffiths: NW representative

John has had to resign from the NABO Council, due to a very serious illness.

John was elected to Council in November 1995 and became our Midlands representative. Following re-election in 1996, he agreed to become our North-Western representative, although this involved considerably longer journeys for him.

John's style was never

talkative or flashy. His quiet, no-nonsense, common-sense approach won him friends and respect among Council. He did his job competently and without fuss and was always there when he was needed.

We shall miss him, and we hope he will recover from his illness. We wish him and his family all the best.

Boat Safety Scheme Survey: results so far

We have now processed the replies so far received in the Boat Safety Scheme survey. Thank you to all those who have replied and to Roger Davis for putting together the magic which gives reasonably easy answers.

As you can see from the table below, the costs of the scheme are far in excess of what BW have told Parliament, and another burden on an already hard pressed boater (about £13 million to BW boaters alone). Several members have said that this was the final straw and they must now give up boating.

We shall be using the costs to press BW for compensating reductions in charges to boaters; it can be in no-one's interests to drive people away from the waterways of which we as taxpayers are the owners.

BSS OVERALL

From 154 valid responses:

Average total cost of obtaining a Safety Certificate ... £417

Av cost of Fire Equipment ... £89

Av cost of an Examiner ... £61

Average cost of a Surveyor ... £76

NABO BUSINESS

BSS Survey (continued)

BOATS WHICH ALREADY HAD A C OF C

From 74 responses:

Average Total Cost ... £341

Av Cost for Fire Equipment ... £86

AVERAGE TOTAL COSTS BY AGE OF BOAT

Built before 1980 ... £568

Built 1981 - 1990 ... £382

Built 1991 - 1993 ... £364

Built since 1993 ... £242

The costs for employing a surveyor are similar to those for employing an examiner, which is probably a tribute to the power of competition, particularly since surveyor costs include about 4 responses giving charges for a full survey. As expected, the bill for compliance appears to decrease as the boat gets newer. The average bill for boats built since 1993 is a big surprise. The Standards in use today were supposedly published in 1993 and the responses indicated that the great majority of these boats were not DIY projects. An inability by the Trade to comply with the Standards set says

something about either the Trade, or the Standards!

The other issue of major concern is the response to the questions "Was your examiner/surveyor fair?" and "Do you think the BSS is being uniformly applied?" Over 97% said their examiner or surveyor was fair but 94% answered NO or DON'T KNOW to the other question.

At last, BW and the EA have employed one of the surveyors to conduct a Quality Assurance programme. He is initially going round with inspectors to see how they do their job. After that he will be asking to look at boats which have recently been examined to check that the result was right. He is also still doing examinations as a surveyor member of the scheme and (as of July) BW had no plans to cross check their QA man! This was a big issue at the last meeting of the Advisory Group and will be on the Agenda at the next.

If this is not resolved (NABO has made some suggestions), the problem of perceived inconsistency will continue, to the detriment of the scheme.

TALES FROM THE TOWPATH

A French Experience

NABO member Ian McDonald together with fellow member Evelyn Stevens spent their summer cruising the French canals aboard Ian's Luxemotor Dutch Barge NELLY. After a hairy channel crossing, Ian had the choice of taking his boat around Lands End or the inland route via the Thames and the Kennet & Avon canal to reach his mooring on the Gloucester & Sharpness canal. He chose the canal route and is pictured in Bath prior to navigating the

Severn Estuary. With the shortage of water the passage through the K&A was not all that easy for the 3ft3in draught boat, and Ian expressed his praise for the help he was given by BW staff.

It is worth comparing the annual licence cost for NELLY in France, around £200, with that charged by BW, nearly £390. Ian was also impressed that many of the small French canalside towns provided free facilities, electricity and water, in order to attract business to their towns.

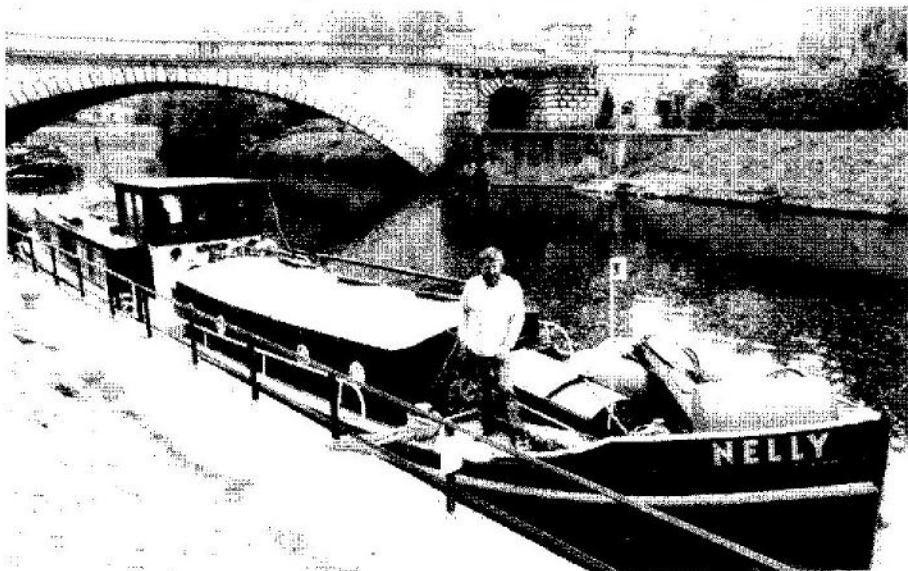
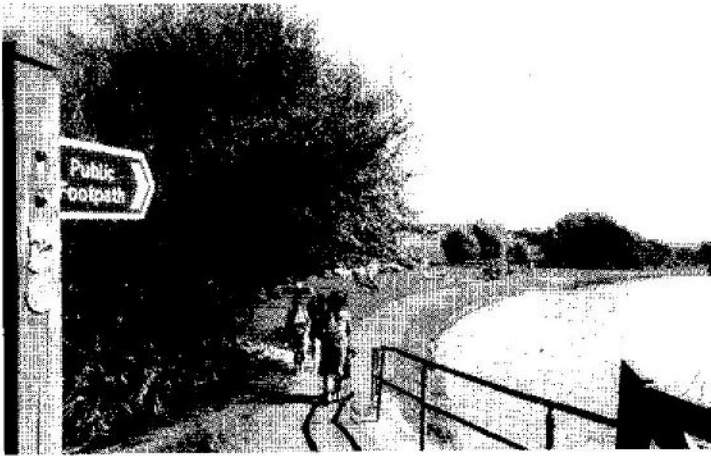


Photo: Robert Coles

COMMENT

Signs of the Times

Photos
by
Robert
Coles



A holidaying NABO member was struck by the lack of signs at the start of

the footpath along the Bude canal - just a footpath sign and a couple of small discs prohibiting cycling and horse riding.

BW signs at Bradford on Avon (left) are, however, more numerous and somewhat confusing.

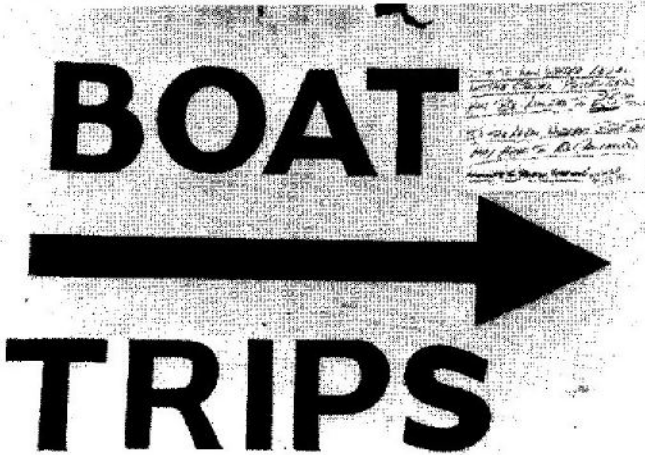
This one at Stourport (below) also stretches the imagination.



COMMENT

More signs of the times

The Stourbridge canal

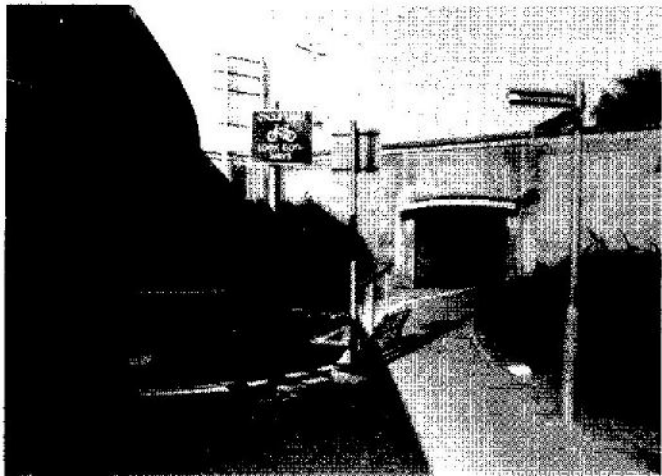


Trip boat notice
at Stourbridge

*The hand-written
addition reads:*

Due to low water
level in the canal,
passengers will be
limited to 25 per
cruise. If the water
level worsens boat
trips may have to
be cancelled. Com-
plaints to British
Waterways!

The Stour-
bridge Arm Cycle
Path includes a
length of towpath
from Wordsley
junction towards
Stourbridge.
However, where
the cycle path
enters Stourbridge
town, the path
shares a pedes-
trian tunnel under
a road. The path is
segregated by rail-
ings and a contrasting surface with "ample" signs. Could this be the
future of our towpaths? Shortly after this picture was taken, a cyclist
peddled out of the pedestrian side of the tunnel!



LETTERS

Canals and Conservation

I feel the time has come to curb the power and actions of English Nature and its equivalent body in Wales, the Countryside Council of Wales.

I, like our Chairman, have been fearful of the threats to our inland waterway network as the ever creeping SSSI designation covers everywhere.

I wonder if NABO could try to build up a national report on the various interferences of EN and CCW to our waterways. I think the Montgomery Canal restoration costs and project times have been much increased by the negative attitude of these conservation for conservation's sake bodies. Remember, their huge staff would be out of work if they cannot keep finding new

places to designate and restrict access to favoured ...ologists.

Perhaps in your next newsletter you could ask for all members to report on problems and then maybe we can make a concerted approach to Government. I wonder if British Waterways have any views about their relationship with these bodies.

I much enjoy your newsletters, keep up the good work.

Bob Powell, Haverfordwest

NABO agrees with you, Mr Powell. At the July Council meeting it was agreed that NABO and the RBOA would form a joint working party to collect views and information and to present our case. So any contributions would be most welcome, please contact Peter Lea.

Built-in generators

Having read the recent correspondence by the NABO Generator Haters I was reassured to know that others share our views on these anti-social things. But now the bad news, I wonder how many members have read a review in Waterways World of a

new hire boat built at Alvechurch Boat Centres?

This boat - a real donation to canal serenity - features a drive system that produces the same engine noise no matter what speed the boat travels at, allowing us (moored) to think

LETTERS

Built-in generators (continued)

that it has not slowed as it passes us (with no change of engine note) even if the hirer has throttled right back!

There are many other features like an Eco-Bow (these seem to reduce wash but not drag) and bow thrusters (which equals 3 weed-hatches in all), but the real gem of the boat's design is a generator which, it seems, starts and stops as the power is needed for the kettle, dishwasher, microwave and all the rest of the onboard systems.

Unfortunately the boat does not fly a yellow quarantine flag,

nor is it restricted to mooring at least a mile away from other boats. As for the noise of the generator, the tester says he would not advise mooring near this hire boat if you want a quiet night!

For those on the boat we are told that it is very quiet inside with the generator running, and in its first year of hire it has top bookings of any boat in the fleet. With this in mind - and if you like peaceful moorings - watch out - they may well build more of these horrors.

David H S Cragg, Oswestry

Worcester generator: the last word

I cannot let J Hobson get away with his self-serving defence of Mr Simmonds. I am sure this man's warning was well-intentioned, but such events can happen anywhere. One cannot, however, escape the fact that Mr Simmond's letter inevitably attracted criticism of his own conduct.

Not a single letter mentioned air pollution. If anyone is wittering on it is J Hobson with

his or her fatuous comments about horse-drawn boats. The point is noise pollution. I know these moorings well, and there most certainly is housing within a mile, although I fail to see the relevance. However quiet J Hobson thinks this machinery was, it is fact that noise carries some considerable distance over water at night. This is nothing to do with Nimby (Not in my back yard); it is Niaby (Not in anyones's back yard). Running

LETTERS

Worcester generator: the last word (continued)

generators and engines while stationary at night is anti-social. It is perfectly possible to watch the box without them. "Live and let live" is a tedious and well-worn cliché. I'm quite sure J Hobson's *laissez-faire* attitude would not extend to a neighbouring boat holding a rave party, although even my granddaughters' dreadful *The Chemical Brothers* CD probably has the edge over the relentless chug of a marine diesel! The 8pm - 10am restriction by BW on their long term moorings (which I cannot believe is meant to apply to a boat departing the moorings)

is an excellent idea. Why can this sensible regulation not be extended to all moorings, when we live in a world increasingly plagued by noise? Where is the hypocrisy in desiring peace and quiet on a riverside mooring, even if J Hobson does think this to be "ecological", in his language mangling description? Is there something wrong with caring about the environment, and advocating due consideration not just of our immediate neighbours, but of more distant ones too?

Major Henry Dickinson, Ret'd.
Uley, Gloucestershire

A tale of the Boat Safety Scheme

I had obtained a Certificate of Compliance for my boat, so when the BSC was due, I thought that with some small additions to the ventilation, everything would be all right. I asked the same surveyor to do the BSC, but he recommended an inspector, telling me they were much cheaper and he thought my boat would pass without much trouble. The inspector charged £45, plus £5 if and when he

issued a pass certificate. He failed the boat on ventilation, fire extinguishers and a test point for the gas. Both the new cooker and water heater are supposed to have test points integral with them, and the surveyor had been satisfied. The fire extinguishers had been approved by the surveyor before I bought them, three reputable extinguishers at £57 each. But, they lacked a kite mark and had to go. The

LETTERS

A tale of the BSS (continued)

inspector was not interested in the current C of C, saying everything was now changed.

While I looked around for new fire extinguishers and carried out the work required, BW issued a new licence on the C of C and insurance policy. Shortly after this the insurance became due, and I received a letter from the company stating they would not accept a BSC unless the inspection had been carried out by a qualified surveyor who belonged to a recognised professional body, and as the boat was over 25 years old, they wanted part two (hull inspection) carried out as well.

A surveyor passed the boat, both parts, for £70. After a lot of bargaining, the original inspector gave me a discount for some new fire extinguishers in lieu of my money back. They were approved by the surveyor. All the other work done at the inspector's request was deemed unnecessary by the surveyor. This makes me wonder what use inspectors are if insurance companies are not prepared to accept their findings. After this experience, neither am I. There is still one job to be done

before the year 2000, a dam in the engine bilge, but I do not think I will be able to afford this and will have to sell the boat and leave the canals, so ending a hobby dating from 1962 or before.

BW are pricing me out, and many others as well, I suspect; not only with these ever varying safety schemes, but also with swingeing licence increases and excessive rises in mooring fees. It will not be long before the humble cut will become the exclusive preserve of the floating mansions of millionnaires and overpriced hire boats.

There must be many like my wife and myself: pensioners, with very limited income, which does not increase by leaps and bounds every year. Who, in order to keep a boat, go without many of the things others think essential. Very tight budgeting is needed. For myself, all the money set aside for the last few years, to pay for dry docking, bottom cleaning and fitting the bilge dam has been spent in unneeded and often detrimental modifications to a perfectly safe and satisfactory vessel.

S M Fauvel-St. Claire, Sandbach

AMUSEMENT PAGES

Eurlish

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the EU rather than German - the other possibility. However, as part of the negotiations Her Majesty's Government was forced to concede that inconsistencies and anomalies in English spelling would be rationalised during a 5-year phasing-in period, leading to what will be known as "Euroenglish" or "Eurlish".

YEAR 1 - The 's' will replace the soft 'c'. Certainly, this will make the sivil servants jump with joy. The hard 'c' will be dropped in favour of the 'k'. This kould klear up konsiderable konfusion.

YEAR 2 - Growing publik enthusiasm is antisipated in this sekond year when the troublesome 'ph' will be replased with the 'f'. This will make words like 'fotograf' 20% shorter.

YEAR 3 - Publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expected to reach the stage where more komplikated changes become possible. Governments will enkorage the removal of double leters which have always ben a

deterent to akurate speling. Also al wil agre that the horrible mes of the silent 'e' in the languag is disgraseful and it be removed.

YEAR 4 - Peopl wil now hav bekom reseptiv to steps such as replasing 'th' with 'z' and 'w' with 'v'.

YEAR 5 - During zis fifz yer ze unesesary 'o' kan be dropd from vords kontaining 'ou' and similar changes vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters.

ZE FUTUR - After ziz fifz yer ve vil develop a rali sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor truble or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu understand ech ozer.

ZE DREM OV INGLICH AZ
ZE UROPIN TUNG VIL FINALI
HAV KUM TRU!!

*Internet info from Bob Conduct, nb
Tantalus, GU*

AMUSEMENT PAGES

Denis Smith, or DY7 6YW?



British Waterways

Waterway Manager.

Mr D R Smith
N.A.B.O.

Date as postmark

-Dear

Re: User Group Meeting (Autumn 97)

We are arranging a User Group meeting on 22nd
October, at 5.00pm, at the Warehouse, F

This merely confirms what I already suspected - I AM just a number!

NABO REPRESENTATIVES

Council members contact addresses

Penny Barber
(RBOA Liaison)

Phil Bland
(Rep for Disabled)

Roger Davis
(Membership Secretary)

Christine Denton
(Marketing & rallies)

Peter M Foster
(NE Rep)

Peter Lea
(Chairman)

Philip Ogden

Nigel Parkinson
(Vice Chairman/Eng Officer)

Stephen Peters
(River Users Co-ordinator)

Denis Smith
(Midlands Rep)

Andrew Sherrey
(Treasurer)

Nikki Timbrell
(Newsletter Editor)

Neil Walker
(Southern rep/Secretary
and Newsletter Adverts)