



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Issue No. 97/7: October 1997

## NABO NEWS

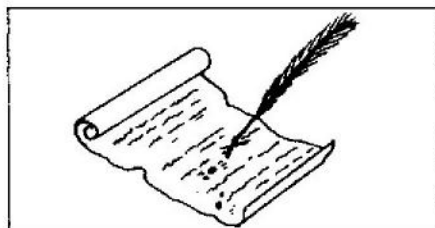
### NABO Recruitment success at Bradford-on-Avon



Roger Davis, NABO membership secretary, signs up the President of the Canal Taverners Boats Club, Geoffrey Rogerson. Photo: Robert Coles.

# NEWSLETTER

## Editor's comment



Council met on 11th October for an exchange of views and cold viruses! This could explain why production of my last NABO News has been such a chaotic experience... Anyway, thank you for all your support over the last four years - yes, your comments do reach me!

The AGM promises to be interesting, with a discussion of BW's plans for the future. If you have views on this, please do come on 22nd November. There will not be an election for the Council this time, but there should be plenty of other excitement....

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## October 1997

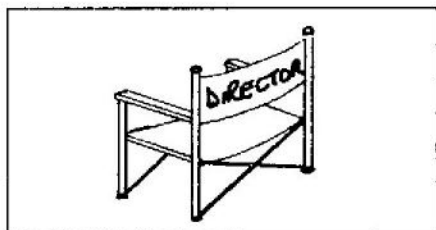
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**National Association of  
Boat Owners**

# NEWSLETTER

## Chairman's comment



First of all, I must report with great sadness the death of John Griffiths, who was a Council member and Regional Representative for the north west until recently. I understand he was boating on the Mon and Brec until a few days before he passed away, so at least he was able to enjoy life. We extend our sympathy to his family.

I would also like to record Council's thanks and appreciation to Nikki Timbrell, who has edited NABO News for the last four years. During that time, she has transformed the appearance and content of our newsletter beyond recognition. Those of you who remember "The Boater" will know what this has entailed. She feels it is time somebody else took on the burden (and she has a rest from it!). This is her last issue, and we wish her and Malcolm all the very best in future.

Neil Walker, our Secretary and Southern Region Representative, is also standing down, for family reasons. He has worked extremely hard for NABO during his years on Council, often taking on special projects in addition to his "normal" duties. He could also be counted on for sardonic, common sense opinions, which got right to the heart of the issues being discussed. Council will miss him.

Nigel Parkinson and I had a useful and interesting meeting with Angela Eagle, Under-Secretary of State at the DETR with responsibility for British Waterways. The Minister is dynamic, and quite outspoken. It is clear she backs reform for BW and is prepared to consider any option which will improve the waterways. At the same time, she is not someone who keeps quiet if she thinks something is wrong. She certainly left us in no doubt as to her reactions to the points we discussed!

The proposals for the future of British Waterways are at the top of everybody's agenda just now. I hope everybody who can will

# NEWSLETTER

## Chairman's comment (continued)

come to the AGM to discuss BW's ideas. One thing is certain: these issues are far too important to rush into any of the choices. It is vital that BW and the users together get the details right before a decision is taken to go ahead.

BW's concession on our licence fee increases gives us a reduction of 3% on the previously announced increases in 1998 and 6.5% (because of the compounding effect) in 1999. This is clawed back from 2000 onwards at the rate of 1.5% a year, and eventually produces more revenue for BW. NABO members might feel underwhelmed by the Board's generosity. In fact, a mean gesture.

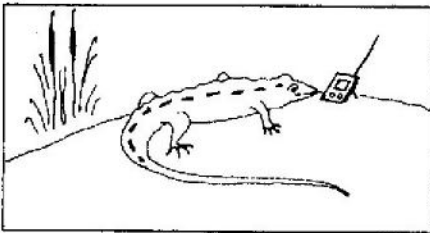
However, I would like to end my column - my last as this year's chairman - with some unstinting praise for BW. You will remember the Licence and Mooring Permit Conditions which were issued without consultation last year. They contained some very unfair clauses (you were responsible for any accident, no matter how caused), and some howlers (you

couldn't start your engine before 10 a.m.). After a lot of pressure from NABO (and other user groups), BW agreed to revise the Conditions and asked for users' views. BW's Carl Legge spent most of the summer absorbing all our comments, summarising them by clause, and adding their replies. He also redrafted the Conditions, changing them to take account of most of the objections. The fresh draft and the summary were then circulated to user groups for consideration. Carl and I met on 19 September, and after a very constructive discussion agreed a few final amendments.

The final draft is a much better set of regulations than last year's version. It is fairer, more clearly set out, and shows the hard work that Carl put into it. The whole exercise has been a shining example of how well consultation can work when both sides want it to. I urge BW to adopt it as a model for the future.

# NEWS

**View from the Council meeting held on 11th October, 1997**



The days are getting shorter, the end of the cruising season and stoppages are in sight, and also soon the departure of Monitor for warmer climes. In the meantime, those kites over Watford heralding a new dawn have been replaced by the hoisting of flags.

Chairman reported on his meeting with the Minister which was considered by Council as being "very good value indeed". Our suggestions were considered carefully and positively.

The re-organization of BW was, so to speak, the main filler in the Council Meeting sandwich. The proposals put forward by BW for it's future were mulled over and it was generally agreed that more detail was required before boaters could really consider the proposals properly.

The various meetings attended were reported upon, including the BW National User Group

meeting. Here it was reported that the Anglers haven't seen the new Code yet, the Cycling scheme is, to paraphrase, chaotic, and the new licence fees now represent a real increase of 22.5% over three years instead of 21% over two. Think positive!

On to arrangements for the AGM. The number of volunteers for Council this coming year means that no election will now be necessary. Council approved the arrangements for Hockley Port on the 22nd, hoping to see many members there. The Chairman considered that the re-organization of BW and what we should say about it will be, as forecast, the hot topic, so make an effort to be there if you can.

The Stourport basin affair rumbles on with Denis Smith doing a sterling job. English Heritage are now involved: the Basin walls and bottom are listed and therefore sacrosanct; watch this space for further developments but not in the Basin please!

I would write more but Monitor is struck low by a severe cold, rather like the Chairman's, and my deadline is long past. Good luck.

# NEWS

## BW's plans for the future

BW unveiled its plans for the future at the National User Group meeting on 2nd October.

The proposals, heralded in August's NABO News, have as their centre piece the creation of a charitable trust, British Waterways Trust (BWT). The alternative options are for BW to continue as it is, with increased financial flexibility, or to start a membership scheme while remaining a nationalised industry. BW is also consulting users on major changes to maintenance standards for the waterways.

The BW Trust would be a registered charity with statutory obligations, supervised by the Charity Commissioners. It would hold waterways "in trust for the Nation". It would not receive grant-in-aid from government, but would have a rolling contract to provide maintenance and other services. It would have a membership scheme, although members would not be allowed a vote. BW claims the benefits include:

- # Formalising BW's obligations for conservation and heritage
- # Membership scheme gives

benefits and widens participation

- # Open competition for a balanced range of trustees. Users to have a say in waterway management as some trustees would be users

- # Ability to borrow money to eliminate the maintenance backlog by 2004/5, launch the membership scheme, and invest to generate future income

- # Charitable status will allow tax advantages, freeing more money for investment

- # Up to date legislation will "protect the future of the waterways for many years to come"

- # Long term contract with government will "improve service quality and infrastructure standards by improving efficiency"

It would also permit more commercial and financial flexibility than the Treasury would allow a nationalised industry, particularly to roll funds forward from one year to the next, borrow money, and engage in property development ventures.

# NEWS

## BW's plans for the future (continued)

BW claims the disadvantages are:

- # Takes at least 2-3 years to set up as primary legislation is needed
- # BW would no longer be underwritten by government
- # A "partial" public sector monopoly becomes a "partial" charitable sector monopoly

Also, the periodic renegotiations of the service contract could result in reductions in income.

BW says that the current consultation procedure and the Waterways Ombudsman would continue to be available "to provide consumer protection". The procedure for appointment of trustees "requires further detailed work". It warns that BW would no longer be underwritten by government, and that there is some financial risk inherent in commercial borrowing.

BW's maintenance proposals are nearly as revolutionary. It wants to reclassify 400 km of navigable remainder waterways to cruising status. The clauses in the 1968 Transport Act relating to

the minimum dimensions of Cruising and Commercial waterways by implication would disappear.

The present waterway maintenance standards would be replaced by a four part standard which would classify each waterway in terms of navigation use, environs (surroundings), channel available, and towpath quality. Minimum open channel dimensions (depth and width) are proposed for each waterway (often sections of waterway). BW is actively seeking comment on these dimensions. These proposals are independent of the options for the future of BW.

These plans were described as the most far-reaching and visionary to emerge from BW or its predecessors for the last 40 years. They are certainly that, and we congratulate the Board on its initiative. However, the Trust proposals in particular are only an outline, and much work has to be done, and information given to users. BW recognise this, saying "further discussion with user groups as well as a wider audience ... is necessary and

## NEWS

### BW's plans for the future (continued)

desirable". Issues which need to be considered and resolved include:

- # The terms of the trust deed; BWT's objects, duties and responsibilities
- # The accountability and supervision of the Trust (the Charity Commissioners are only concerned with ensuring charity law is complied with)
- # The terms and duration of the rolling contract with government, and the extent to which adequate funding will be assured
- # How major structural failures and associated public liability will be dealt with (probably insurance), and how and when the backlog of urgent maintenance will be cleared
- # How trustees are to be selected, and by whom, and how (and to what extent) the various interests will be represented
- # Whether and to what extent the trust should be answerable to its members

BW assure us that they have drawn up a detailed business plan on the viability of a Trust, which has been scrutinised by a

merchant bank, their auditors, the Charity Commissioners and marketing consultants. All say the plan is viable. We have asked if we can study a copy of the plan, but not had a positive reply.

NABO Council is considering the proposals carefully; however, support will clearly depend on how these matters are dealt with. We have to respond by 2nd December at the latest, and Council would like to hear members' views at the Annual General Meeting on 22nd November.

The new maintenance standards are also being looked at with care. They do not appear at this stage to be as comprehensive as user groups would like, and the detailed figures will need some changes and amplification. More importantly, they are minimum figures, not targets.

The proposals also imply abandoning the safeguards of channel dimensions set out in the 1968 Transport Act, although it must be said these are rather theoretical now.



## NEWS

### Minister meets NABO representatives

Chairman Peter Lea and Vice Chairman Nigel Parkinson were among the first waterway user representatives to have a meeting with the new waterways Minister Ms Angela Eagle. The talks covered many issues of interest to members, from funding and charges to the BW proposals for a new charitable status.

Ms Eagle was open about the difficulty of securing extra funds for waterways from taxpayers but expressed satisfaction that fresh thinking was being applied to waterway management. She explained that with a continuing commitment to Government expenditure under all the new proposals put forward by BW, any future arrangement would have to remain accountable to Ministers and to Parliament.

We expressed our support for a fresh approach and outlined the areas where we see potential for development of these ideas. The Minister gave us her views on the next steps in the process. It seems that much more information and detail will be needed before any decisions will be taken in Whitehall.

We represented our concern about the oversight of BW and the undue pressure that had been applied to Lady Ponsonby as Ombudsman. The Minister explained that oversight of BW was part of her job and she was taking an active interest in the doings of BW.

She confirmed her commitment to an independent and impartial Ombudsman, supported by practical Terms of Reference. Mr Edell (current Ombudsman) would have access to the Minister to report any instances of unfair pressure and Ms Eagle asked that users report any instances where the Ombudsman's revised Terms of Reference had prevented the resolution of a legitimate complaint. To strengthen user involvement with waterway management Ms Eagle is also considering the appointment of a user representative to the BW Board.

We explained our regret at occasional difficulties in communicating with BW management and received support for our view that

## NEWS

### Minister meets NABO representatives (continued)

consultation should be meaningful and constructive, with reasonable access to the information which underlies the BW proposal. The Minister agreed the need to make sure that users were informed and undertook to pass on our views, including our requests for specific items, such as BW's corporate plan, while recognising that the commercially confidential parts would have to be restricted.

Ms Eagle expressed her interest in widening access to the Waterways and broadening the BW customer base. We regretted that recent price increases had combined with the high cost of Boat Safety Certificates to hit older boaters and those on fixed incomes. We were also worried that the average age of boat owners is increasing and new boaters are not coming onto the waterways. Ms Eagle reminded us that users contribute only 10% of BW income and asked for proposals to increase access for those unable to afford a boat and encourage younger boat owners.

Finally, we discussed BW's proposals to reclassify some

Remainder Waterways and thus allow more efforts to develop their use and waterside business. Whilst the 1968 Transport Act allows the Minister to do this, it is apparently not as easy as it appears. Ms Eagle explained some of the difficulties and said that it would not be a quick process. This ties in with the NABO view that more work will need to be done on the new waterway standards before we can give anything more than support in principle to this idea.

We are grateful to the minister for nearly an hour of her busy programme and pleased with the outcome of our talks. Our fears over BW management and its relationship with the Ombudsman have been largely allayed and we were cheered by the obvious desire to escape from the cycle of underfunding, poor management and deterioration. Much work remains to be done but we are happy that the voice of the boater will be listened to and encouraged during the next steps. To this end we were pleased to be asked to maintain contacts with the appropriate officials.

# NEWS

## BW National Users Meeting

The Board held its first national consultation meeting in nearly a year on 2nd October. The morning was devoted to a presentation of BW's consultation paper on its plans for the future (covered in a separate article), and answering our questions on it. Lady Knollys (Chairman of IWAAC) and Sean Bodkin (DETR civil servant responsible for BW) were present as observers.

Major items covered in the afternoon session included:

### Licence Fee Increases

As a "concession" to users, BW has decided to replace the 1998 and 1999 increases of 10% + RPI by increases of 7% + RPI in 1998, 1999 and 2000. They would try to follow this by 2 years of increases of RPI only, but this would be dependent on further funding and was not a commitment. Astute readers will notice this represents a real increase of 22.5% over three years rather than 21% over two.

Hire, trip, hotel and multi-user boat licences would rise to 2.5 times pleasure craft licences by 1999. Houseboat and cargo carrying licences would be the

same as pleasure licences. Working boats and historic boats would get a 10% discount on pleasure licence rates.

BW says 98% of licence renewal applications have been returned. It accepts there has been a loss of boaters, but they are being replaced by new boaters coming in. There has been a large increase in multi-user boats. BW's income from licences is on target overall.

There was no mention of mooring fees. Are we likely to see swingeing increases?

### Maintenance

Stewart Sim gave a slide show of maintenance work carried out during the last year. It included the special work on the Caledonian canal, Harecastle tunnel, and the Peak Forest embankment. Only 35 km of cruiseway canals were dredged last year, but 322,000 tons of spoil were removed from commercial waterways. Next year's projects include the repair of Preston Brook and Islington tunnels, increasing the capacity of the Napton back pumps, buying more telemetry equipment, and

# NEWS

## **BW National Users Meeting (continued)**

dredging the Coventry Canal (Hopwas to Fazeley) and the Braunston to Napton length.

### **Boat Safety Scheme**

18,949 pass certificates and 3,230 failure certificates had been issued by 24 September. 1,241 of the failures had now passed. There had been 63 refusals. BW says the average cost of the examination fee is £88; the average cost of remedial work is £280 - £360. This is less than our survey of NABO members (£400 average).

### **Licence Evasion Hotline**

BW is introducing a licence evasion hotline, which people can phone to report unlicensed boats. We are told the calls will be entirely confidential. Information will be checked on a computer database while the caller is on the phone, and if the boat is in fact unlicensed details will be passed to the local waterway office for action. A summary of results will be published regularly in the waterways press.

### **K & A Cycling Pilot Scheme**

BW is claiming the scheme was a success despite a) lots of

bad publicity; b) only 1,606 licences were applied for, compared with over 10,000 the previous year when they were free; c) they have decided to make the two part-time rangers redundant because of cost. Interestingly, Sustrans were in favour of the scheme. The Board is committed to extending it, but can't say when. Users thought the rangers should be retained.

### **Ombudsman's Terms of Reference**

The new terms of reference incorporating the unannounced changes (see last NABO News) have been agreed by both the government and Mr Edell, the new Ombudsman. David Fletcher assured us that none of the cases dealt with by the last Ombudsman would have been excluded under the new terms of reference. Bernard Henderson said (for the third time, at least) that he thought the Ombudsman should be paid for by the DOE or IWAAC and his remit extended to other waterways. Giles Baker will continue to assist the Ombudsman on technical matters.

# NEWS

## BW National Users Meeting (continued)

### Code for Anglers

It emerged that none of the fishing groups represented had seen the new draft code. They found the prohibition on fishing opposite moored boats unacceptable and unenforceable. Further negotiation - probably

directly between boaters and anglers - will be necessary.

### Stoppages

Users urged that BW liaise more closely with other waterway authorities, especially the EA, over proposed stoppages.

### Inland WaterwayBooks offers a £500 prize for a waterways project

Douglas Maas, publisher of the 'Inland Waterways Boat Listing', has set up a competition for any UK club, society, branch trust etc with a waterway or boating interest and a project (own or one supported) towards which the prize would be used. To enter, send details of how you would use the money to benefit the waterways - a panel of judges will determine the winner. In addition, copies of the 'Boat Listing' are to be made available at (almost) cost price, and profits from sales can also benefit your cause. Details from Dougl's Maas at 8 Clover Close, Narborough, Leicester LE9 5FT, telephone 0116 275 0746.

### John Griffiths

We were shocked and saddened to learn of the sudden death of John Griffiths, until recently our NW rep. He resigned from the Council in August after liver cancer was diagnosed.

John had been a boat owner for many years, and initiated his whole family into the waterways cause. He cruised extensively with his second wife Ruth in their boat 'April Love', indeed in his CV for Council last year he said "I have tended to cruise further afield than most". He lived in a bungalow which he built alongside the Staffs and Worcester canal at Tettenhall.

NABO and the waterways have lost a good friend.

# NEWS

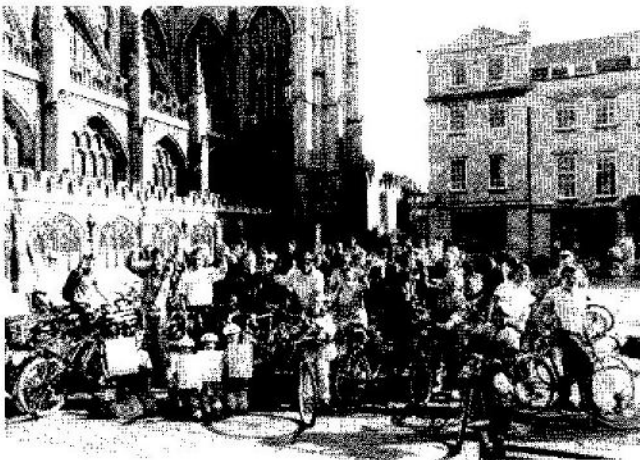
## Second cycle protest on K & A

A second "mass trespass" by cyclists in protest at the permit charge for the Kennet & Avon towpath took place on Sunday 5th October. On the previous occasion BW had declared the day of protest to be a permit free day. This time, however, Patrol Officer Bob Hawke and his assistant Dennis Sealey were waiting at Dundas basin for the 80 or so cyclists as they peddled from Bath to Avoncliffe. The BW patrol staff stopped cyclists in the cavalcade at random, and if no permit could be produced they were told why the charge was being made and the advantages of having the permit. The cyclists

were then allowed to continue on their way. It must be said that Bob and Dennis handled the situation extremely well: to confront a large party with views contrary to the official line whilst standing so close to the canal was not without risk! For their part the protestors, although firmly putting their case, also behaved well and the whole event was very gentlemanly.

There was a heavy media presence: TV, national and local newspapers both along the route and at the start in the Abbey churchyard in Bath. BW was obviously taking the event very seriously as Simon Salem, Head

of Marketing and Communications, had travelled from Watford to put BW's view to the press. Conflicting views were aired on Radio 4's "You and Yours" the following day with Terry Kemp, Project Manager K & A, putting BW's case.



# **NABO BUSINESS**

## **The 1997 NABO Annual General Meeting**

The AGM will be held at the Community Centre at Hockley Port, All Saints Street, Birmingham at 10.30am on Saturday 22nd November.

By car, the best way is via the A38 Aston Expressway, see map on centre pages. By public transport: catch bus 101 from New Street Station to All Saints Street. There are maps of the bus stops at the station. By boat: Hockley Port is an arm off the Soho Loop off the BCN main line. Call 0121 507 0477 to book a mooring.

After the meeting, there will be a cash bar and sandwiches available at cost.

### **Agenda**

1. To agree the 1996 AGM minutes.
2. To receive the Chairman's report.
3. To receive the financial statements for the year ended 31/3/97.
4. To consider proposed resolutions.
5. To determine the annual subscription rates.
6. To elect Council members.
7. To appoint the Auditor.

After the formal business there will be a presentation and discussion on BW's proposals for the future. If time permits, this will be followed by a discussion of other issues of interest to members.

### **Nominations for the NABO Council 1997/8**

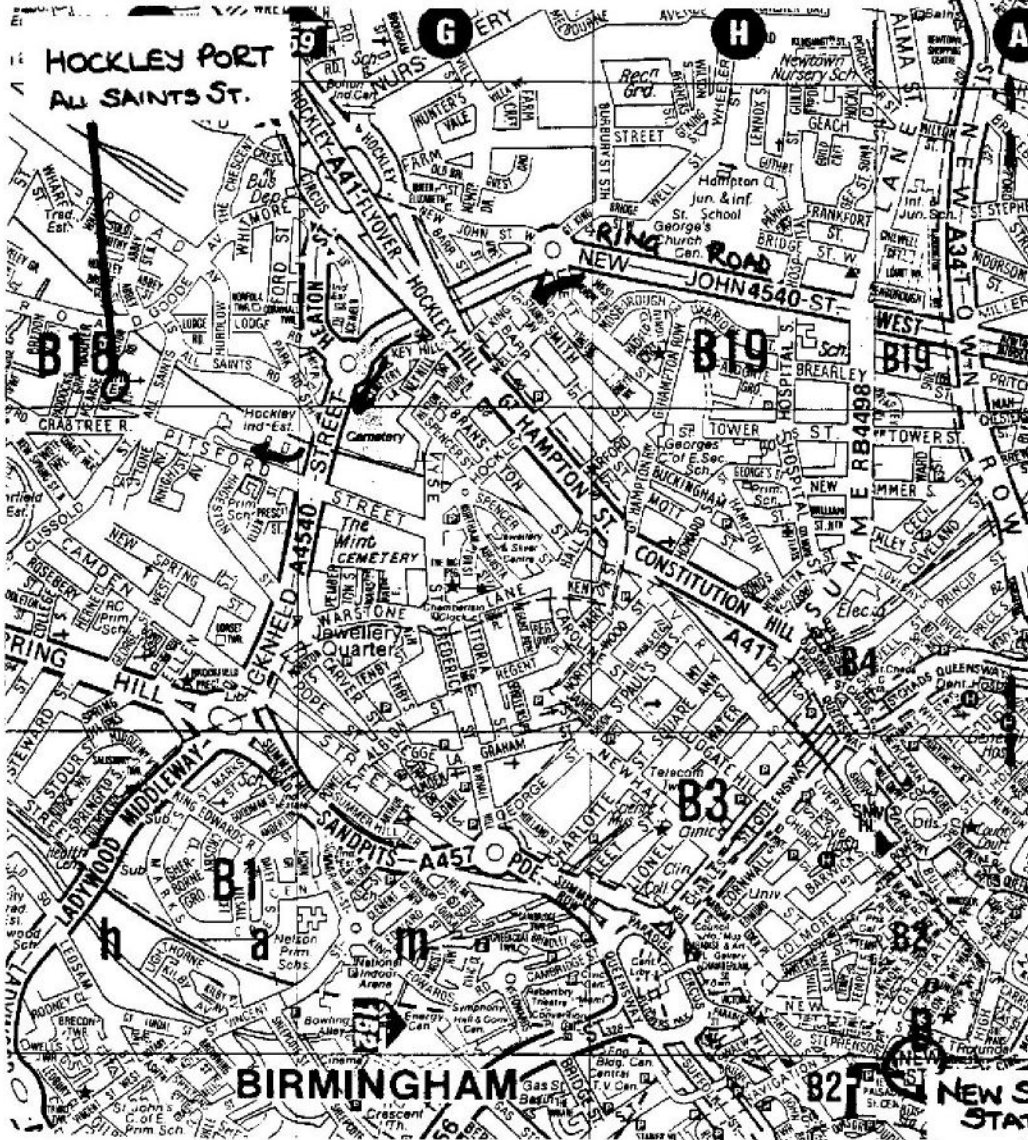
Penny Barber  
Geoff Barnett  
Roger Davis  
Peter Foster  
Peter Lea  
Philip Ogden

Nigel Parkinson  
Stephen Peters  
Geoffrey Rogerson  
Andrew Sherrey  
Denis Smith  
Nikki Timbrell



# NABO BUSINESS

How to find the Community Centre at Hockley Port





## NABO BUSINESS



### To find Hockley Port by car

The easiest way is to approach Birmingham via the A38 Aston Expressway (joins the M6 at Spaghetti junction), signed Birmingham City Centre.

Leave the A38 at Dartmouth Circus, signed International Convention Centre and National Indoor Arena. Follow the Ring Road, filter right at Pitsford Street. If you miss this turning, come back on yourself at the next island!

Turn right into All Saints Street, and immediately left into the access road to Hockley Port.

## NABO BUSINESS

### Resolution to be considered at the 1997 AGM

Resolution proposed by Stephen Peters and seconded by Peter Foster:

"Owners of broad beam river cruisers and sea going boats are under-represented within the Association. We urge Council to establish a "river craft" section within the Association for members who are not interested in canals and narrowboats."

### Details of nominations for the Council 1997/8

**Penelope Jane Barber, of Hockley, Birmingham**

I'm here because I'm here because I'm here because I'm here..... I'm the last of the original members of Council and have the occasional use as a relic! My main areas of work are liveaboard boating generally and mooring agreements. My time is quite limited, but I'd like to continue helping out when I can. Declared interest: Chair, Residential Boat Owners Association.

**Geoff Barnett, of Preston, Lancs**

Owner of NB "Erskine May" since 1983. Average annual summer travel since then of 500 miles. Familiar with all (most) Northern and Midland waterways. Chartered Engineer,

MIMechE, formerly lecturer and Assistant Principal; currently Estates Manager of Runshaw College, Leyland, Lancs. Age 57. Wife Julia also keen boater - Geographer, Geologist and Environmental Scientist.

**Roger Davis, of Wells, Somerset**

An enlightening and enjoyable first year on Council - although not much boating. There could be a connection, but I'll risk it for another year! At least as Membership Sec. you get to know what people frankly think.

**Peter M Foster, of Newark**

I am standing for re-election to seek a mandate to continue to look after boat owners' interests on the waterways of this country, particularly on the rivers.

## NABO BUSINESS

### Details of nominations for the Council 1997/8 (continued)

I do not wish to fight BW which seems to be the norm. I wish to see boaters respected by ALL navigation authorities and wish to deal with problems which occur on waters controlled by the Environment Agency, Associated Ports (yes.-.lower Trent, Ouse & Humber etc.), the Broads Authority and other smaller organisations. The canals and BW are only part of the total navigation. We must not lose sight of the rest if we are to really be a National body, as our title says.

I want full co-operation with BW and the other bodies so that we the boater get what we need. Boating is our interest and we should do all we can to help ourselves, both locally and nationally, by being constructive and not always carping about BW - let's carp about the others too, with well planned action to bring benefits to all our members.

I would like to see more members with boats that are sea going, but who also use the rivers. Unless we set out to do something for these boaters, this won't happen.

I wish to see NABO have more influence. If you do, then please support me at the AGM.

P.S. If you want more info about me, please refer to the Newsletter 96/7 October 1996, the only thing that has changed is my age!

#### **Peter Lea of Berkhamsted**

I have been a boat owner for over 17 years. I owned a wooden butty, "Gertrude", for 6 years; I now own a 70' narrow boat, "Wessex". I cruise the canals extensively and belong to several canal societies.

I joined NABO Council in 1992, and took part in the negotiations over BW's Bill and our submission to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. I have been Chairman for a year, Vice Chairman for three years and was Southern Region representative for two years, and have represented NABO at meetings of the Parliamentary Waterways Group, the National Inland Navigation Forum, the IWA's Navigation, Technical and Amenity Committee, and at BW consultation meetings at a

## NABO BUSINESS

### Details of nominations for the Council 1997/8 (continued)

national and regional level. I have also been involved in NABO's marketing and recruitment drives.

I will work towards:

- 1) Ensuring that BW and the EA take boat owners' interests fully into account;
- 2) Critically monitoring proposed changes to BW's structure and way of running the waterways;
- 3) Improving liaison and co-operation with other user groups;
- 4) Increasing NABO's profile on the waterways;
- 5) Ensuring the voice of the boater is heard in relevant government bodies.

#### **Philip Ogden, of Rowington, Warwick**

I am a retired Chartered Civil and Water Engineer. I have had an interest in Inland Waterways for very many years, and have cruised some 5000 miles to date over most of the system.

For many years I was the Hon Civil Engineer to the IWA, and also the Kennet and Avon Trust where I took part in the first

negotiations with BWB which led to the eventual restoration of the canal.

I offered my services to NABO three years ago as an Hon. Consultant, and last year I was co-opted onto the Council.

I would like to continue to serve on the Council, so that I can assist in dealing with the problems of water supply and waterway standards, as and when they arise, as well as any other tasks which I may be given, where my experience can benefit the members of NABO.

#### **Nigel Parkinson of Charlton Adam, Somerset**

A Chartered Marine Engineer, I have been a Council member since 1993, as Engineering member and Vice Chairman. I have also sat as a user representative on the Boat Safety Scheme technical committee and Advisory Group, though without the success I would have liked. My wife, Rosemary, and I travel as extensively as possible both in and out of the 'season' in our boat 'JARRAH'. I would be glad to continue to serve on Council.

## NABO BUSINESS

### Details of nominations for the Council 1997/8 (continued)

**Stephen R Peters, of Wythall, Birmingham**

I am standing for re-election in order to seek a mandate from the members to put the association back on track to do what it was set up for. TO REPRESENT OWNERS OF BOATS.

Not to be just another "waterways body" getting involved in anything and everything to do with waterways politics, petty point scoring, and endless rounds of futile consultations. NABO must concentrate on providing a first class unique service to boat owners - narrow and broad beam, river and canal.

We need more members, less talking, fewer and shorter Council meetings and more positive, well planned action to bring direct benefits to present and future members. If you support my ideals please vote for me.

**Geoffrey Rogerson, of Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts**

Owner NB "Bristol", large Woolwich built 1936. President

Canal Taverner Boat Club. Boating since 1986. Travelled Llangollen, Grand Union, Oxford, Leicester Arm, Leeds & Liverpool. Brought boat from Birmingham to K & A via Severn and Bristol Channel. CTBC rep. on local BW User Group.

**Andrew Sherrey of Clent**

I am a Chartered Accountant in general practice working from home. I have in conjunction with my wife Margaret been cruising the canals for the last 11 years, firstly in hire boats and since 1992 in our own 20 year old 44' narrowboat "Magwitch" which we moor on linear moorings at Kinver on the Staffs and Worcester canal.

I have been the Treasurer of NABO for the last two years.

**Denis Smith, of Kinver, Stourbridge**

A boat owner since 1986, I have lived on a narrowboat for the past 7 years being moored at the southern end of the Staffs & Worcs canal. I have served on Council for the past two years

## NABO BUSINESS

### Details of nominations for the Council 1997/8 (continued)

and I am presently your Midlands Representative. This 'experience' has most certainly consolidated my view of the need for a 'watchdog' group such as NABO, which is vital in any monopoly situation.

I believe that boaters face a great challenge in trying to enjoy the peace of the waterways in the face of ever increasing, unnecessary and interfering bureaucracy from whatever source. I offer myself for re-election to the Council so that I may continue to represent boaters' interests.

**Nikki Timbrell of Blisworth, Northants**

I have been persuaded to stand for Council again, but after 4 years have relinquished the NABO News editor's job to a worthy successor.

I hope my experience will be useful to Council, even if my business prevents me from attending many meetings. At least I can represent those members with commercial interests, and ensure that women are not ignored in the world of boat owning!

### New NABO News Editor, Wendy Hook

Wendy Hook is to be the NABO News editor, starting with the next issue. She will not be standing for Council, although she will of course be closely involved with all the activities of the Association.

Wendy has been boating for 15 years, first on hire boats, and then on a shared ownership boat. Finally, in August, she and her husband took delivery of their dream narrowboat "Thurzaway". You may have seen this gleaming

new boat at Henley, or featured in the November issue of 'Canal Boat'. Being new to exclusive boat ownership, she is a relatively new NABO member too.

Wendy runs her own desk top publishing business from home or from her boat when cruising. She can be contacted at 3 Clare Road, Putnoe, Bedford MK41 8QX, tel/fax 01234 355323, e-mail starhook @ cix.compulink.co.uk. Unlike the previous editor, she has technology at her fingertips!

## ADVERTS PAGE

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## ADVERTS PAGE

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## REPORTS

### Roger Davis visits the Canal Taverners Boat Club

It was with some trepidation that I responded earlier this year to the Chairman's request to be a speaker on behalf of NABO. This had been prompted by an invitation from The Canal Taverners Boat Club on the Kennet & Avon to send someone from Council to talk about the Association. As geographically I was the nearest, evidently in the Chairman's view this made me ideally qualified. As newest member of Council I wasn't so convinced! However, since joining Council in January I have learnt quite a lot about what makes NABO tick and the multifarious activities of its officers and representatives around the country (quite how any of them find time to earn a living, I am not quite sure). Being now retired I could hardly plead lack of time and from previous personal knowledge the Chairman knew I had some experience of getting on my hind legs in public.

So in late September I made my way from deepest Somerset to Bradford-on-Avon and successfully located The Gongoozler on the K&A, the present comfortably

appointed regular meeting place of the CTBC. I could not have been made more welcome by Ian Tanner, the club's "No.1" and the rest of the Taverners. It turned out that I was not the only guest. Over from the US of A and out cruising for yet another season on the UK waterways were Harvey and Ellen Schorr. They just happened to be passing and an ordinary night's stop turned into an occasion for them thanks to the Taverners hospitality (and NABO got another overseas member!). They too are trying to restore a local canal - the Blackstone - back home near Boston and were clearly taking heart from what had been done on the K&A.

After the usual Club preliminaries of minutes, matters arising and reports it was on to me. I have to say I was heard with great courtesy. I don't think this was because of any hidden threats from those members who were already signed up members of NABO. Clearly some sort of chord was struck as the aspirations of NABO and of these boaters clearly coincided, many of whom had for years been in

## REPORTS

### Roger Davis visits the Canal Taverners Boat Club (cont)

the thick of all the trials and tribulations of the great restoration and all that is now flowing from that, both benefits and problems. No, I won't say anything about cyclists.....or water supplies.....or long term closures.....or efficient use of resources..... By the end of a very pleasant evening in which NABO gained a number of new recruits and possibly a new member of Council, it became very clear to me that whilst most boaters have by now heard of us, it still needs some sort of personal contact to encourage actual signing up. Many who have been thinking about joining, perhaps for some years, just need that opportunity to hear first

hand about our activities, available expertise, contacts and plans for the future to realise that in terms of investing in their boating it is hard to find a better way of spending £10.

So from the experience I conclude that this is an excellent way of getting to know more boaters, to hear first hand about their particular and local situation and to persuade them of the benefits of membership of such a national organisation as ours. Thank you very much Taverners for your welcome, enthusiasm and encouragement to do it again for another club or society, if anyone out there is brave enough to ask us.



*Photographer Robert Coles recorded the events of the evening with Roger Davis at CTBC.*

*Here regular visitors to the canals, Ellen & Harvey Schorr from Boston with their friend Cindy from San Francisco, are persuaded of the merits of NABO.*

## REPORTS

### Water supply on the Basingstoke canal

*Alan Padwick attended the annual liaison group meeting on the Basingstoke, and sent this report:*

Is the Basingstoke "Britain's most beautiful canal"? That is what they claim on their literature. For those of us who moor elsewhere and would like to go and check for ourselves there is a significant difficulty. It seems to be closed for most of the cruising season due to lack of water!

It was therefore particularly interesting to find that the topic of the annual liaison group meeting on 17th September was to explain this lack of water and to describe the bid for lottery funding which might alleviate part of the problem.

The Basingstoke Canal has never had an adequate supply according to Tony Harmsworth, the first speaker. Right from the start, due to heavy opposition from surrounding land and mill owners, the enabling Act of Parliament forbade the canal builders to draw water from the River Loddon or its tributaries. That ruled out two thirds of the canal. Even now it is very frustrating to stand by Odiham (King John's) Castle and watch

the fast, clear water of the River Whitewater surging through culverts just below the starved canal. Although the Army seized this source to allow plentiful boat traffic during the Great War, they had to restore it after the emergency was over. In its commercial days, only about five barges a week used the canal as far as the Basingstoke area. Much of the eastern end of the canal crosses the sandy waterless soil of the Aldershot area, where it can be difficult to stop the water soaking away, let alone find some to put in it.

When the canal was first completed there was a wind pump at Basingstoke, making a small contribution. It is now somewhere under the bus station that covers the old terminal basin. The tunnel at Greywell seemed a superb supply at first. When tunnelers first broke through the clay that completely covers the chalk mound of the hill, water poured forth. Unfortunately the hill was like a meat pie brimming with gravy. As soon as the crust was broken the fluid gushed out but when, after 2 years it levelled off, the flow reduced to a trickle.

## REPORTS

### Water supply on the Basingstoke canal (continued)

There are some further springs at Odiham feeding the Broad Oak stream. The stream was tapped by a leat that is still the main source of water for the upper section of the canal. It used to flow reliably from November to August. However rainfall in the area was 28" a year in the 1960's. It is now down to 14". In addition each new housing estate built in North Hampshire reduces the flow to the canal. The flow today is just 20% of the 1929 figure. Consequently the leat now only flows between January and May.

Another source of water is a stream which came close to connection with some MOD reservoirs. It may have been the end of the cold war increasing the number of soldiers in Aldershot, but the MOD decided that the reservoirs were needed after all. However, they would have added just 2 lockfulls of water per day.

Extraction from greensand in the Blackwater valley was explored, but it would have involved 13 pumps, each costing £6000 per year to run, greatly stretching available finances. Furthermore the water was very acid. It would have drastically

changed the environment of the otherwise very chalky water and environmentalists were strongly opposed.

Aldershot produces huge quantities of water on a rainy day, draining from the roads into the canal. But it all arrives too suddenly and is difficult to retain for future use. Below lock 15 a fairly good supply becomes available from ducts drawing water off Bisley Common. In Woking the road drains are very useful on rainy days. There is also a ditch below canal level draining Woking Common that has been used for a poor quality pumped supply since 1992.

One other large source is from a big pump at Frimley. This raises water 54 ft from a railway cutting that opened up some springs. It gives 200,000 gallons of water per day, which sounds impressive. Unfortunately the beauty of this canal derives mostly from the thousands of trees that crowd in on its banks - and one mature oak tree transpires 150 gallons of water per day. The water consumption of the lovely green tunnel of trees virtually cancels out the Frimley pump output.

## REPORTS

### Water supply on the Basingstoke canal (continued)

All in all, I was convinced. The Basingstoke definitely has water supply problems.

Mr Paddy Field then described the Basingstoke canal lottery bid. A vast document was displayed, which aims to secure a grant of £1.28 million. As at least £4 to £5 million could easily be spent on essential works the obvious question was why not ask for more? The problem lies in the rules for lottery funding, which require a proportion of the required sum to be raised by the bidders. The Basingstoke Canal Society can raise £427,000 with the help of surrounding councils. It is also able to invest £110,000 of its own capital. With this total, the lottery fund might be expected to raise the figure to a total of £1.7 million altogether.

If the lottery can be persuaded to part with the cash, it will be spent on a back pumping scheme to raise water from the River Wey level up six locks to the Woking level. The rest of the money will be used to move the lock gate workshops from their current inconvenient site in a secure military area to an old school swimming pool beside the

Mychett headquarters of the canal authority. There they will be arranged so that the public can watch ongoing work as an additional tourist attraction. There will also be a small 25 boat mooring basin by the Centre.

When the back pumping is in being, there will be unrestricted access from the River Wey as far as Woking, although the rest of the canal will be available only when there is enough water above Deepcut. As an outsider, I asked if access to Woking only would be offered at a much reduced licence fee. They promised to consider this.

Overall, this meeting was very interesting, re-emphasising that this apparently up and running canal has some critical problems which must be solved. Speaking from experience, I found this is a lovely canal to cruise once we were west of Woking (though some may challenge the "most beautiful in Britain" claim). Visits must be booked in advance through the canal authority. Whether you will be tempted to pay an extra licence fee just to visit Woking once back pumping is installed is a matter for you.

## LETTERS

### Could you help create a floating community in Leicester?

We are a couple with two children, aged 5 and 1. We've been living on a narrowboat for six and a half years (but don't tell anyone!) and have not yet found the ideal mooring. What we'd really like is something along the lines of a group of people on boats sharing a site on a co-operative basis, working together but not living in each others pockets.

There is a possible site in Leicester where the City Council are keen to "regenerate" an old marina. It has lots of potential but needs the right group to get it together and make a go of it.

We're into environmental stuff and the Council would be keen for there to be an environmental angle to the site. It's in the watermeadows so surrounded by greenery, but near the City Centre, close to museums, parks, some good pubs etc.... It would be a good place for a visitor centre or school centre with exhibitions about the history and wildlife of the canal. There are some good projects about in different places doing this sort of thing which we could learn from,

there might even be some opportunities for work here!

Between us we have a range of skills like gardening, building, joinery, teaching, organising.... but this project needs more people to make it work. Leicester is a good city with a fair bit going on - a bit of a music scene, a gay scene, a permaculture network, a socialist choir, a multi-cultural community and schools, to name a few!

So we're looking for some like-minded people - living or planning to live on boats, to help us create a floating community! If you're interested and have some ideas then get in touch so that we can talk. If you know of someone else who might be interested then copy this letter and pass it on.

Hoping to hear from you!

Louise Hall & Pete Goffin  
Willow,  
Foxton Boat Services,

## LETTERS

### Do you have any information about Enfield diesel engines?

I am in the process of researching the history and use of Enfield Diesel engines on the waterways and rivers of Great Britain and Europe.

Any information on supplies of spares, handbooks or photographs of the boats which had these engines installed, whether in use or not, would be gratefully received.

I would appreciate correspondence from any former or current owners of these Enfield engine powered craft. You can be assured of a warm welcome from the Royal Enfield Owners Club by writing to Mr C A Ludlow "Rabbit Hall", 18 Brunstane Road North, Joppa, Edinburgh, Lothian, Scotland, EH15 2DN.

Chris Ludlow



### Low bridge at Newbury Wharf

Having cruised the full length of the Kennet and Avon Canal this Summer we are well aware of the height restriction of the so-called 'temporary' bridge at Newbury Wharf. Our cockpit roof had to be adapted so that it could be lowered more easily.

We read now that, far from replacing this bridge with a more suitable and higher structure, Newbury Council are intending to widen the existing one. It seems ridiculous to spend £29 million restoring the Kennet and Avon Canal only to find that one bridge can prevent its use by so many cruisers.

May we count on your representations to Newbury Council that any 'improvement' to this notorious bridge would result in a minimum headroom of 7'6" as on other waterways.

Derek & Jill Godwin  
Chippenham, Wilts

*The Chairman is looking into this, and will make appropriate representations about this bridge.*

# 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)