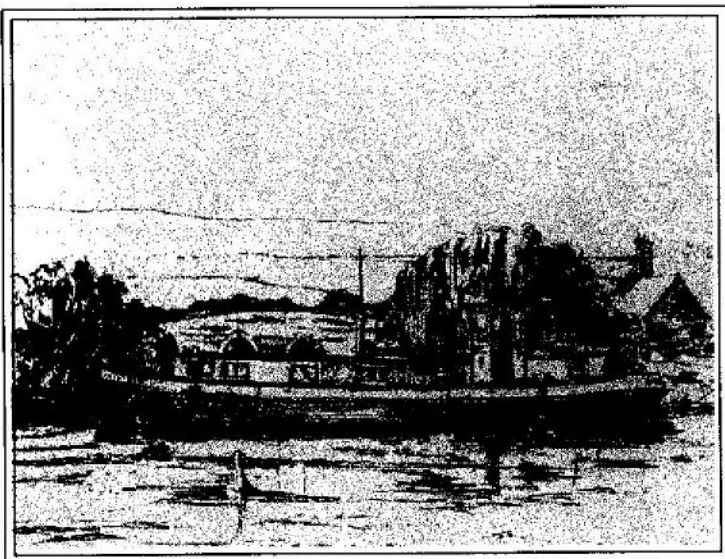




NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Issue: 3/98

NABO NEWS



Alexander R Prowse

Mel Henry's Dutch Barge on the Upper Thames

Editorial

Thank you for your letters, I'm delighted to receive them.

I have heard from narrowboat 'Hedgepig' warning us that Mr Finch is currently active in the West Midlands. Sometime during the week ending 28 February 'Hedgepig' was broken into on the Staffs and Worcs on the long term moorings at Stewponey Wharf. At least one other boat at the same site suffered the same fate and both break-ins had all Mr Finch's hallmarks in so far as little damage was done gaining entry and only waterproof clothing and food was taken.

Boaters in the West Midlands should be on their guard.

I have heard more heartening news from the Grand Union, near Norton Junction, where it seems

that the Police have apprehended someone for breaking into narrowboats. The villain has asked for 80 similar offences to be taken into consideration! That is one criminal that I hope gets a sentence and not just community service or probation.

If anyone has any good ideas for improving security, then let me know and I'll share them with you all.

'Thurzaway' has stable doors at the front and we have a steel bar that padlocks across the opening to stop it being forced open at that point. More details available to anyone interested. Also, the cratch cover has clear 'windows' set in the canvas, so that no-one can hide inside, taking their time unseen, to break in.

Wendy Hook

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National Association of Boat Owners

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CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT

A Question of Values

Two proposed changes to important historic canal sites have featured in the news lately. The junk at Gas Street Basin was scuttled by the local Council's planning committee, who unanimously decided it was unacceptable on heritage grounds. BW's detailed plans were also condemned as unsafe by the council fire officer.

Nevertheless, we hear that BW, undeterred are preparing revised plans. At Stourport, Roger Herrington is pressing ahead with his piers (he calls them pontoons, but they don't float) in the teeth of objections by English Heritage, the local civic society, and local and national boating organisations.

These two cases are similar. They show a total insensitivity to heritage values and an eagerness (in these two cases) to press ahead without consultation or regard for anyone else's views.

It really comes down to the values adopted by the organisation. These of course come from the top: they are part of the new business environment developed and propagated by the Board Directors in Watford. But are these values really those best suited to a customer-, leisure-, and heritage-

based business like BW? Or should the Board be encouraged to reconsider the balance between priorities?

Another question. If BW is prepared to be this unaccountable, insensitive, and inflexible, and has so little understanding or concern for what is appropriate at key locations, while under government control, and when important decisions on its future are being made, what would it be like if it were an independent trust? There is some oversight now: ministers in successive governments have told BW to consult their users, and Parliament and the civil service exercise some degree of scrutiny. All this would disappear. Who then would be able to bring BW to account, and how? We need to be told.

Cruising channel dimensions

Our response to BW's consultation over minimum open channel dimensions tied to their proposals to reclassify some remainder waterways has now gone in. Our views were outlined in my last column, but the full reply ran to four single-spaced pages and was accompanied by two appendices listing canal and river dimensions. When we discussed the issues at the last

National Inland Navigation Forum, we found that many other user groups had broadly similar views and had come to similar conclusions.

We thought that many of the minimum dimensions put to us were inadequate; that the proposals for the major river navigations had potentially very serious consequences and detailed studies on their impact were needed; that the plan was not "cost neutral", and could prove more expensive than deeper standards on the existing commercial and cruiseway network. Although there is universal support for the principle of reclassifying remainder waterways, it was generally felt the proposed linkage of the two plans was extremely unlikely to work in practise.

Facilities for the Disabled

NABO surveyed all BW waterways managers two years ago to find out what facilities were available for the disabled on each canal and river. We got back a lot of useful information.

However it soon became clear that the facilities and the criteria used for evaluating them, varied widely from waterway to waterway and from manager to manager. Many

of the "facilities" were not marked as such, and would be quite difficult for, say, a wheelchair bound person to use without a great deal of help.

Legislation requires large organisations, such as BW, to provide adequate facilities, and lays down minimum standards. NABO is concerned that disabled boaters' needs are not being adequately met across the canal and river network. As always, we strongly support maximum access to the waterways for all. We therefore have written to BW and the EA asking them to establish appropriate standards for facilities for the disabled; to audit existing facilities in the light of those standards and current legislation; and to publish the results. As BW is busy re-defining waterways standards at present, they could include these standards.



We are also asking both BW and EA what steps they are taking to make boating on

the waterways they administer more available to a wider public, who for a variety of reasons are unable to use the waterways at present or are not aware of the facilities available.

Short Term Licences

BW have recently issued revised proposals for short term licences. Readers of NABO News will remember that they consulted on their ideas last September. These included the abolition of all short-term licences for trailboats and other motorised craft because they

were "cherry-picking the system", and charges for certain locks giving access to tidal waters. This was justified on the grounds that they were being used by some sea-going

boats which, because they were moored in off-line marinas outside BW's jurisdiction, were not licenced and therefore were not paying anything to use the system. Fair enough to charge those boats, maybe, but the charges were to be imposed on craft holding six and three month licences as well - and they are paying to use the system.

BW have taken note of our objections, and made a few concessions in their latest package - at a price. They propose to re-introduce weekly licences (which we all agreed during the Licencing Review two years ago we didn't want) at a cost of 40% of a monthly licence. Daily licences would only be available from agents with slipways on the day of use, and would be restricted to

smaller craft. This means most trail boats would have to buy a weekly licence if they wanted to use their boats for a weekend. The cost of this licence for a two day weekend is roughly **three times as great as two days' licences at current rates!!** A 300% increase is unparalleled in BW's

long history of swingeing increases. It will certainly encourage evasion and will seriously discourage new boaters from coming on to the waterways (because trail boats

are an economical option). An increase of this magnitude will lose customers, revenue and user support.

Lock charges are to be introduced at Sharpness (£50 a time!) and Marsh Lock on the Weaver (£20). Charges will be payable on licences of less than three months, but longer-term licence holders will be restricted in the number of free lockages they can have - four every three months is proposed. A passage licence from Selby or Goole to Keadby is also to be re-introduced for boats with river registrations.

We think this could be the thin end of the wedge, and the principle will be applied to other locks as well. Charges could be introduced at

Swingeing increases proposed by BW for weekly licences..... 300% increase

Brentford and Limehouse, at Stourport, the various locks to the Trent, and so on. Yet this is exactly what our licence fees are supposed to pay for - the right to roam the waterways. The alternative approach to charges based on use was considered and unanimously rejected as part of the Licence Review two years ago. Now it looks as if we are getting it anyway, on top, by the back door.

Our request for a "top-up" licence to allow craft with river registrations to use the broad beam canals was also rejected, on the grounds that it might encourage boaters to switch to

river mooring and save in licence costs. The possibility of BW losing some income (although the paper admits it is almost impossible to predict the effect in advance) clearly far outweighs any question of fairness or encouragement to the boater.

For people with a supposedly commercial approach, BW brass seem unable to grasp the simple principle that retail and leisure enterprises employ all the time - price reductions at well chosen times and places to encourage customers and increase revenue. BW should be looking at ways to do this, rather than price us off the water.

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PSEUDONYM'S View from the Council

Held on 14 March 1998

The news from Stourport is that Denis is on holiday and work has started. Is this a coincidence or were BW waiting for his departure? English Heritage are reported to be unhappy that the attitude seems to be :- if you can't see it you can alter it or destroy it. The saga will continue.

The good news is that there will be a closed season for fishing this year. I hope the fish, birds and other wild life including boaters and cyclists enjoy this. Also the Junk has been scuppered. I'm zigzagging up the canal with glee!

Red diesel is still on the burner so to speak. This one will need monitoring for a long time and will also need all your help if we are not to be swamped by more expense. How this will be monitored remains to be seen, as if you don't do a lot of boating a tank of red diesel may last years.

During a discussion on channel dimensions I learnt that BW help deep draughted boats, so if you get stuck, ring them. They will also remove mattresses from props. Silting on the Trent is causing problems, as the speed of the water can be faster than the limit which makes legal navigation interesting.

John certainly got us focused with his report on how council works. Most of our work seems to be administration and the gathering of information. We need to find a more efficient way of dealing with the data gathered and we are putting on our thinking caps to bring ideas to the next meeting.

During a discussion on the river Wey LEAP we learnt that our river Wey rep is to give up boating as his boat has failed its safety certification. I find this so sad, another friend lost to us.

Geoffrey is making his mark on the Kennet and Avon and getting BW to soften their attitude to moorers. Would you like to buy the K & A ? The Kennet and Avon Canal Trust are raising money by asking people to adopt a piece of canal for £2.50 per metre. Details are available from the canal trust.

We are taking up the cause of disabled moorers. There are so many places that disabled people cannot get off their boats and if they do they can't get anywhere else. We all like to go to the local village or pub and more can be done to help the less agile or wheelchair confined.

Membership is still growing which

is more good news. We are also working towards improving this and will be at more Rallies this year flying the flag. Wendy is working hard on the NABO NEWS and you should shortly see some exciting additions so we hope this will continue to be a membership raising asset. Also look out for the new polo shirts and sweat shirts which will shortly be available.

The news from council this month is mostly cheerful. Spring is on the way, the flowers are blooming on my boat and cruising is getting more pleasant although there are some cold winds. I'm going cruising - See you on the cut .

ADVANCE NOTICE (very !!)

The NABO Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 14 November 1998 in the Activity Room, Waterways Museum Gloucester, commencing at 11am.

More details nearer the time.

BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

If you have had to obtain a boat safety certificate, please complete the questionnaire sent to all members earlier this year and return it to Roger Davis (address on back page). Duplicates obtainable from Roger if you have lost yours!

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Moorings for People with Disabilities

Those of you with long memories may recall that we promised you a list of moorings with easy access from boat to bank and good access to local facilities after disembarking. I've inherited the results of Phil Bland's correspondence with British Waterways local offices.

I picked up the file with the intention of collating the details into a useful table to distribute to any member on request. Sadly, this proved to be an impossible task. It is quite clear that many managers failed to understand the question. The answers were far too subjective to risk passing on to members as accurate advice. Examples of common types of reply include:-

"We do not have any moorings... that are specifically designed... for the use of persons with disabilities"

"We have not had any demand for such facilities"

"Some bridges have good access points"

"...we have a number of disabled people but, I have to say, not very many wheelchair bound."

"...their needs will be dealt with on a case by case basis."

"...we have been improving all our sites to a standard whereby a hard surfaced path exists with level access to the canal edge, suitable for all users."

Most letters are topped and tailed by warm remarks. There are offers to consider the 'problem' in the future and apologies for the delay in replying due to the difficulty of obtaining the information. Several suggested that if such customers wished to cruise, they contacted the office and staff would be more than pleased to make individual arrangements.

It's pretty clear that the free and easy cruising that is a major attraction for many of us is denied to boaters with disabilities. Elaborate planning and 'phoning and checking seems to be demanded and a "does he take sugar" attitude endured. There is no good reason why boaters should not expect at least one, signed in advance, orange topped bollard at every visitor mooring - backed up by all the facilities there being useable by all visitors and access to the wider world beyond the towpath at a gentle gradient. It is a disgrace that these relatively recent waterway facilities have not been designed for all users.

I personally couldn't care less if

this were a "minority issue", for me it's basic human rights. However, if you are one of the dinosaurs who'd like to dismiss this as politically correct, expensive nonsense, time will wither your muscles and fade your sight and hearing. In the meantime, I'd be happy to arrange for your legs to be broken.

We are asking British Waterways to carry out an access audit and act on the results to improve access to the waterways. We're also requesting awareness training for their staff.

Penny Barber



B W's Response

I joined British Waterways in November. My predecessor, Jim Kelly, and some other Bw Managers in November and staff had been involved with the Fieldfare trust in carrying out

reviews and practical provision of the facilities for people with disabilities. We are now working on comprehensive plans to put in operation a national "Access for All" programme.

As part of this process, the Fieldfare Trust are contracted to develop and pilot an "Access for All" Training course for a cross section of BW staff, commencing in the Southern Region.

The programme will go on to include the access audit which NABO are seeking and then to develop practical ways in which facilities can be provided or improved across the whole BW system as part of our normal programme of works.

We are seeking external funding for this positive project so that the money raised will be additional to our grant aid.

Paul Metcalf British Waterways

SPRING IS HERE !! Must get a Dunton Double windlass.

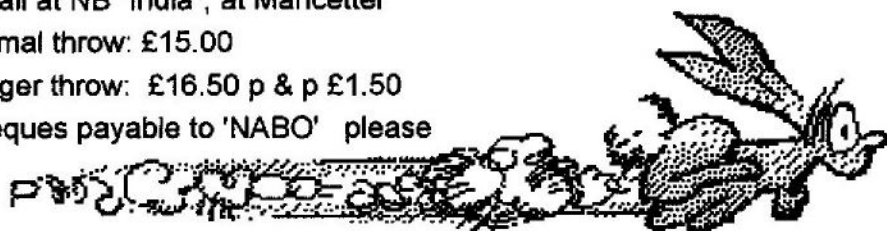
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**For the right protection for your boat
PERHAPS WE SHOULD BE TALKING**

TOWPATH TELEGRAPH

Day Star Theatre

Your Council have, for the second year running, decided to sponsor the Day Star Theatre Group.

Two performances will be sponsored, one at the Braunston Show and another at the National Festival at Salford Quays.

Council feel that Day Star do a superb job of educating people about our waterways and are pleased to help them continue with their work. If you haven't seen one of their performances you have missed a treat!

Volunteers (still) Wanted

Any shape, size, age, sex

to help on our stands at Braunston, Pelsall, Nottingham and Salford Quays. The more that volunteer, the less you'll have to do, as we run the stand on a rota basis. Please contact Christine Denton, if you can help in any way.

Could you do a maildrop of our "WHY N.A.B.O." leaflet in your marina? Ring Christine, and sh'ell send you some leaflets.

N.A.B.O. RAFFLE

Many of you helped last year to make the raffle an outstanding success. Council would like to thank all who participated in any way - you helped to raise a wonderful profit of £1,800 - all of which will be used to further NABO's campaigning, etc, through the country.



Following my appeal in the last issue, we now have two illustrators; thank you for your offer Nancy Larcombe - I'll be contacting you again very shortly!

The second, Alex Prowse, drew the cover picture for this issue. Alex studied at Harrow School of Art under the tutorship of eminent Royal Academicians. He is a member of the Royal Miniature Society and the Pastel Society and has exhibited at major shows, including the Royal Portrait Society.

His paintings of the Inland Waterways form part of many private collections throughout the world and an exhibition of work can be seen aboard his floating studio, a converted Regent's Canal barge, moored in the pool at Little Venice London.

PICTURE PARADE



A licencing challenge ! Bike or boat, photographed below Bradford-on-Avon lock on the Kennet & Avon

Many thanks to
Coles of Bradford-on-Avon for the
photograph of the
Kennet & Avon

Does anyone
contribute to the
canal?

Contact the
lock keeper



Tony Loasby, Lock keeper on the Crofton and Wootton Rivers flight on the Kennet & Avon Canal, has been voted Britain's Best by Hotel Boat Operators within APCO. Tony was given his own engraved windlass and plaque for the year. He is pictured at Devizes on the day of the presentation (6 February 1998)



Deep water on the Kennet & Avon; surely not - they must have very special toilets in Bath.



Thanks to Robert
Bath for all these
bits of life on the
Avon.

Does anyone else want to
contribute to this page?

Editor.

It was learnt from "Inland Waterways Boat Listing" by Douglas Maas, that the boat in the background "Fir, was built by the Bristol firm, Charles Hill, in 1935. She was one of a batch of 8 boats - the first all steel welded narrowboats, They were all named after trees. "Fir" worked on the River Severn until 1960.



Mid February, with the thermometer reading 67° F. but with only 1 mile of canal open and the Bath flight closed for five months - all this boater could do on the western end of the Kennet & Avon, was sunbathe!

River Review

New Severn Boatowners Association Formed

At a meeting held in Upton-upon-Severn in mid-March, attended by approximately 150 people, it was agreed that a new association should be formed to represent the interests of boat owners based on the River Severn and associated waterways.

The meeting was the culmination of work by a steering committee set up in response to concerns about threats to navigation and the imposition of swingeing licence fee increases. Speakers voiced dissatisfaction with the way in which British Waterways had failed to give "value for money" - maintenance and dredging where licence holders were being exploited, all compounded by the high cost of complying with the Boat Safety Scheme.

The possible downgrading of the river from its present Commercial waterway classification would remove the statutory obligation to dredge and maintain the navigation and could result in larger craft being unable to use the river.

There were audible gasps from the audience when the new BW proposed licence charges for short term licences were revealed. The

shortest duration for a licence would be one month at an inordinate cost and boats wishing to cruise via Sharpness would also be faced with having to pay for use of the sea lock. Owners who had a river registration certificate rather than an annual licence to use all BW waterways would be hardest hit, including those based on the River Avon and wishing to visit the Severn.

Members of the new association signed up enthusiastically and gave support to the new committee to participate in consultations with BW and other parties to obtain fairer treatment for boat owners.

The new association has won the support of the major national user bodies and NABO has also expressed its support for the Severn Boatowners Association and has offered to work closely with it for the benefit of all boat owners. There is undoubtedly strength in numbers but the new committee is likely to find its task an onerous and frustrating one. We wish them well!

Footnote: BW has announced that the minimum short term licence period for craft not



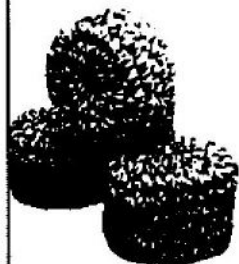
holding a full annual licence is to be ONE month (with the exception of daily licences for trailable craft). There will also be charges imposed at Sharpness and on the River Weaver for use of the sea locks. The swingeing increases in charges will deter many owners from venturing away from their home waters. It appears that BW does not want boats that are not licensed for 12 month periods despite the fact that river craft cannot be used on narrow canals or on rivers when flooded.

**Don't forget to check our
Web page**



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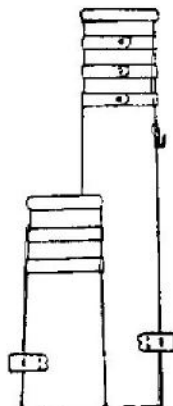
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THE TRENT : Nottingham to Cromwell

When you venture onto the Trent below Nottingham you need to be properly equipped and so does your vessel. The following items are worthy of consideration:-

Lights

Full navigation lights are needed if you want to move later than 1 hour before sunset to 1 hour after sunrise. Do not use a tunnel light.

Horn

You must be able to be heard and capable of making sound signals.

1 blast - I'm turning to starboard (right)

2 blasts - I'm turning to port (left).

3 blasts - My engine is running astern (to stop/go backwards).

4 blasts - I'm out of control

Anchor

You need to be able to prevent yourself from going over a weir if you have engine failure. The anchor must be of sufficient size for your vessel - mud weights won't do - and chain/rope must be long enough (say 30ft min.).

Ropes

Long ropes are needed for mooring up at places where there are no pontoons. When you moor up, go to the end of the space, not in the middle. Moor close to others - there is a dire shortage of space at most places in the summer and others also need to tie up. On a pontoon mooring, go in the back if you are narrow enough, leaving the room outside for wide beam boats. Remember the river is not like a canal and you can't readily tie up at any bit of bank - its mostly privately owned.

Life Jackets

You need them, especially in windy, bad weather when you are on an exposed deck.

Engines

A minimum of 40 hp is needed, so narrow boaters tell me, to be able to do 7 knots to be sure of making way upstream if the river has 'a fresh on and is running'.

Speed

There is a speed limit of 6mph upstream and 8 mph downstream, based on overland speed. If you have a speed log, then through water speed of 7 knots either way will not be far off, taking into account the flow of the river in normal circumstances of 1 - 2 knots. Be warned, the river can run at more than twice this speed when it is up following rain in Derbyshire, Leicestershire and the West Midlands.

The limit on the Newark branch of the river is 4mph over-land both ways - a totally illogical down-stream figure on a flowing river.

Remember, when passing moored boats, to slow down to reduce your wash. People have been scalded, had their dinner in their laps or broken limbs when a show-off passed making big waves.

Radio

VHF is handy to have as all the locks use it and you can let them know you are coming so that the locks can be made ready. However, the rules MUST be observed - do not leave the channel open (broadcasts radio 2 !) when you've finished. The locks are on channel 74. Boat to boat, and to

marinas, is channel 6 on this stretch of river. In emergencies you can call on lock on VHF 74 and they will call '999' for you.

Mobile phones can never replace VHF but they are useful for the police or emergency services.

'Red to Red'

Or 'port to port' - the usual way to pass. But if a larger vessel asks you go 'green to green' - do it! This will be because of draught and the position of deep water,

Navigation

Generally to right of centre. On blind bends keep right. You may not be visible from far ahead due to bank height, bushes or trees but beware as some banks are shallow on the very inside. Do not creep round a bend on the wrong side to cut a corner. Currents on the river to Cromwell are a bit swirly in places but as they all go 'downhill' they are not so much trouble.

Bridge Heights

This will not be a problem to most boats, but watch it at Newark and Nether. Many an aerial has a splint to prove lack of judgement.

Commercial Traffic

Large barges can be encountered (120ft x 15ft x 6ft), either under their own steam or 'pans' being pulled or pushed by tugs. There can be rafts of pans involved with a size of 200 x 30 plus tug or pusher. Don't fear, the crews are good at their job, just give them space. BW also have large crane barges for dredging etc.

Trip Boats

These run from Nottingham to Newark and if it is windy can be a navigational risk. Do not go too close to them. Due

to their underwater shape they can 'pull a lot of water out' and throw it back when passed!

Crew Safety

Avoid falling into the water and use life jackets. The Trent is dangerous and swimming is illegal in this river. Do not jump off your boat with a rope in one hand and a prayer in the other - the gap will be bigger than you thought, or the rope will be shorter or will snag. Get the boat alongside and 'rope the mooring' by deft wrist action.

Locks

There are traffic lights at the locks.

Red - stay clear and let them what's in get clear

Green - you can go in

Amber - lock is self-operational.

Red/green - lock will soon be in your favour.

Locks have wires down the side to moor to. Do not use these to stop your vessel; the Trent bye-laws say to use two ropes at least - bow and stern. A centre rope off the roof will not stop you moving about and will damage the wire for someone else. Engines should not be kept running because verbal warnings cannot be heard - if anyone survives the CO² fumes!. The locks are big in area and quite deep.

Leaving the Boat

Do not leave your boat unattended in a non-pontoon mooring for more than 24 hours unless you really know the river. Don't leave your boat on a pontoon beyond the 48 hour limit - especially at Gunthorpe.

If at a lock, make sure the keeper can

move it if necessary - talk to him. Boats have been known to sink because of water levels rising rapidly and the boat not rising due to short ropes. The insurers tend to consider this method of sinking as self-inflicted, like scuttling. Lock keepers have in the past put themselves at risk to save the boat of a non-thinker. I'm not being biased, but the culprits are nearly always narrowboaters tying up 'till next weekend'. Don't do it, you may regret it. If you need to leave a narrowboat for a while, try Farndon Harbour, near Newark.

Nottingham to Cromwell

Notable parts are the steps at County Hall, Nottingham; from Nottingham to



Newark Castle

Holme Lock, the mile just upstream of Stoke Lock; the Gunthorpe to Hazelford stretch; the Castle ruins at Newark.

The Newark branch, known as Newark Dyke, includes a man-made cut of about 100 yards, near the Newark Marina. This was dug about 100 years ago to increase the water flow for the mills that then existed in and around Newark. This cut, together with a causeway, resulted in the Newark branch being diverted along the original course of the River Devon, through what is now Newark basin. The old Trent still exists, but only for drainage.

There are University rowing clubs at Nottingham to contend with, there are fishermen in season and there are water-ski boats at various places (just keep a steady course and they will miss you). Down towards Newark there are canoes and rowers on the narrow Dyke - keep to the correct side and go slow. The inside of the bends on the Dyke are not a problem 10 feet from the bank, so don't go from side to side on the various left/right bends.

The Trent Boating Association publish a chart of the non-tidal river. Contact their chairman, Peter Foster (address etc on rear cover) for details.

I hope that you will enjoy the Trent, but please treat it with respect

MIDLAND NEWS

Members will no doubt be pleased with the news that BW's Gas Street Basin Junk proposal has been turned down by the Birmingham City Planners but how disturbing that this issue arose anyway.

At the biannual User Group Meeting of the Birmingham and Black Country Canals area held twelve months ago, the subject was raised by Waterways Manager, David Green, on the basis "what do you think?" - and so he was told. The subject was not raised at the next meeting held some six months later so we were somewhat surprised when, a short time later, BW applied for planning permission on behalf of a developer. Not only that, but it appears that BW had placed the idea of the junk out to tender and had actually prepared all the plans and drawing necessary for the application the costs of which they absorbed.

Word has it that whilst BW will not be appealing against the planners decision they are loathe to lose the projected substantial income and are therefore presently preparing an alternative scheme to accommodate the reasons why the previous application failed the planning requirements. Let's hope a little more 'openness' (one of the

7 principles listed in BW's internal Code of Conduct) is demonstrated this time.

Another planning issue is BW's controversial proposal to install mooring pontoons in the historic Grade II listed Basin which, at the time of writing (end March) is being implemented. Since the original publication last July, these proposals have been the subject of objections from national and local organisations of repute, such as ourselves, IWA, the local Canal Society, Stourport Yacht Club and the Civic Society. Importantly, it is the opinion of English Heritage that Listed Buildings Consent is required and additionally the 1995 BW Act required conservation of the nation's waterways heritage.

It is inexplicable therefore that BW with apparent co-operation of the local authority has been so determined to proceed - despite representations made direct to the Chairman and Chief Executive who have chosen to close ranks in support of local Waterways Manager, Roger Herrington, responsible for this ill-conceived plan. NABO has not had any response from BW in reply to the open letter in the last edition of NABO News - it can only be assumed that they do not have any answers. It is also noteworthy that the Basin stopping notice was issued by BW during ongoing

negotiations between them and the local authority as to whether Listed Building Consent was required - BW were obviously phisic; supremely confident; or

The whole situation is a complete and utter farce and it appears that it has even been suggested in the corridors of power at Watford that it is a PR disaster. We would not argue with this statement but how sad that it has been allowed to develop to such an extent when a common sense and consultative approach from **all** levels of BW management (and this includes the Chairman) could have resolved the matter to the satisfaction of the objectors and the existing moorers in the Basin who want the additional security and safety,

The co-operation and exchange of correspondence and information between the objectors to this proposal is worthy of mention, particularly between ourselves and the IWA (in the guise of the local branch chairman, Vaughan Welch) - it just proves that we can gel to good effect when necessary and appropriate.

Again in the midlands, yet another BW cock-up has had to be resolved and will be of interest to our residential boat members with BW moorings. BW had stated that the legal document entitled 'Site Conditions', which is signed by all

BW residential moorers was in **addition** to the newly published 'Boat Licence and Permit Conditions' despite the fact that both documents had broadly similar clauses but with different wording. On enquiry Waterways Manager, Roger Herrington, stated that in the event of a dispute between the documents, then common sense would prevail. As it would appear that this commodity is in short supply in BW's current assets, this explanation was deemed unacceptable. Fortunately, further representation resulted in somebody in Watford finally ruling that the 'Site Conditions' will apply **instead** of the national 'Mooring Permit Conditions' with the 'Licence Conditions' applying when the boat is being used for cruising.

These are just three examples of 'Experiences' (and there must be many, many more nationwide) which must surely pose the question whether this is the sort of competency/trust/secretcy we can expect from the officials of any future BW Trust. Makes you think a bit, doesn't it.

LETTERS

Dear Sir,

TOWPATH CYCLING

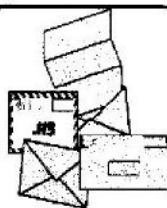
I read with interest your article on the proposed cycle way from Rea Bridge to Sharpness. Having spent the last three winters cruising the Gloucester to Sharpness Canal I await, with dread, this proposition coming to fruition.

Your objection to the bridge at Sharpness is well founded, if it were to span the 'Old Arm' as proposed, it would limit the boatyard to a few narrow boats and small river craft. At present it has at least 70% of boats above 2M, many of them being high masted sailing ships!

The Gloucester Sharpness Canal towpaths, like most other canal towpaths, are totally unsuitable for large numbers of cyclists. There are many sections where the Severn estuary and the canal run side by side, which are of outstanding natural beauty hosting numerous forms of water fowl and wildlife, the banks being neatly cropped by rabbits. These are enjoyed by boater and walker alike. The peace, solitude and slow pace of life being of paramount importance.

If a cycle way is installed it will mean the destruction of all these natural banks so that a track of

hard-core and impacted grit can be laid to minimise bank pathway erosion. This is not only unsightly and expensive, but also not very unpleasant to walk on, and as for boaters, the grit always finds its way on board!



The whole subject of cycling being allowed on tow paths needs re-addressing. If an example of the unsuitability of these 'mushrooming' plans is needed, try spending a few days moored above Bratch Locks on the Staffs & Worcester Canal, where car type Rumble Strips, made of concrete have, been installed to slow down speeding cyclists! What next, Traffic Lights!

We stopped a lock above Bratch, in wonderful peaceful wooded surroundings - yes there was a gritty towpath, but that aside we were well pleased with our choice of mooring; not for long though, as the first of literally scores of cyclists flashed by, many in professional' gear and in large groups. Very few even bothered to slow down. Mooring anywhere along that particular stretch of canal is now a nightmare.

The whole purpose of a boating

holiday, or boating in general, is to escape from the high speed hustle and bustle of modern life to parts of the countryside which used to be too remote and too difficult for most other pursuits to reach. I have no objection to cyclists, indeed I used to be a keen cyclist myself, but surely there are still numerous other alternatives such as old railway tracks (Beeching Era) which are far more suitable for Sustrans to be looking at.

I was saddened by "NABO supporting the principal of multiuse of our waterways system" even with the next statement "that it depends on satisfactory accommodation of all legitimate users". We already have all the Legitimate Users that a waterway can accommodate. Quite apart from the annoyance of continually passing cyclists, there is the safety factor. There have already been a number of accidents, how long before there is a fatality of a pet, child or older less able person unable to avoid, or often even hear, the approach of the cyclists. I would ask NABO to get out and about and see for themselves the folly of allowing our canals to be ruined by yet another intrusion. Many boaters I know, myself included, are now seriously thinking of quitting B.W. for pastures new, or even of quitting boating altogether! The massive

and continuing increase in the licence fees (coupled with decreasing facilities), the ridiculous Boat Safety Scheme, possible EU imposition of Derv and of course the cycling lobby are all contributing to the permanent loss of a very valuable resource.

J Hobson

Dear Editor

Please may I reply to Mr Fletcher's comments about my so called 'malicious and misguided allegations' regarding the BW Secret Senior Management Bonus Scheme being a shareout of the unspent annual budget. His carefully worded rebuttal is noted. It astounds me. Here's why.

The original information that a Secret Senior Management Bonus Scheme existed and how it worked was given to me first-hand from a BW employee. He was, in my judgement, piqued that he was not on the gravy train. Subsequently, when I raised the perceived unsavoury nature of the scheme at the Select Committee hearings, July 94, (as petitioner against the Bill) BW were very quick to cut me short and to reiterate the secret nature of the scheme arguing it was information that neither belonged in the public domain nor was it relevant to my objections to the Bill. Interestingly

BW did not deny the existence of their Senior Management Bonus Scheme!

So whilst I must accept that there is not a 'share out of the unspent budget' because Mr Fletcher tells me so, I am entitled to ask that if I have got it so wrong, then what is the true nature of the Senior Management extra remuneration scheme, even if its not actually called a Bonus Scheme?

It is certainly heartening to be advised that the BW accounts are 'independently audited by outside companies'. We expect nothing less. I ask the question therefore... "Does a 'Senior Management performance enhancement payment' or similar exist,?" My point is that nothing is mentioned in the accounts. For the average reader such an omission effectively makes such payments secret! We still need clarification please. In today's market place most Senior Managers receive extra for meeting pre-determined performance targets? In this context" performance" might mean increasing the % of annual income that is generated from non Treasury sources such as boat licence fees. This might explain BW's very aggressive drive to increase boating costs. I

invite Mr Fletcher to please advise us positively (rather than negatively by denial) of the current position regarding any such payments. We are entitled to know!

I accept Mr Fletcher's accuracy of the number of boaters on the Board but he has clearly missed the sentiment felt when I proposed the slogan 'We want Boaters on the Board'.

I now amend it to 'We want **Ordinary** Boaters on the Board' OR 'We want **Real** Boaters on the Board' OR possibly best of all- 'We want more understanding Boaters on the Board'.

Finally and on a different subject may I offer my fullest support for F.A.Clarke's proposals for his type of Trust. I agree with every word he wrote.

Simon Greer
Macclesfield.

Dear Editor

Where can I get one of those snazzy sweatshirt and polo shirts with the N.A.B.O. Logo on the front?

Mr Editor

Watch this space! Full details will be available in the next issue - and at Braunston, Pelsall, etc! They will be in royal blue, red, grey or bottle green with a contrasting logo. Prices available soon. Don't you have a birthday soon ? Heavy hint ?
Mrs Editor

PUZZLE PAGE - Answers

I was speaking to Mr Mitchel Merrow in a **boat** belonging to canal critic Rick Jones but he had a **grouse** about it. **So are you ready?**

It is a sublime **houseboat** called "Tropical Donkey" but it appears he has to stand on a **box** for driving the boat. My heart **bleeds** for him! It's all **well and good** but one never knows if the box is to put his **glass on**.

Rick recently took his **new ark** to a rally **with ample** time to find **deep** water and have a meal in "**Eve's Hamper**".

Unfortunately, he was turned away by an official named Vernon and told "The most **our port** can hold is decreed by the **Cam Bridge Water Company** or other people"

"They are not **anti-boating** and are making a **bid for dredging** the canal".

Rick's wife asked if they could use their dinghy but the official retorted "There will be no **rowing tonight**".

Then he noticed her bandaged finger and felt sorry. "And how did **Anna burn** her hand?" he asked. "On the **hob?**"

"Well," replied Rick you see that **ring** on her finger?" Anna was smoking whilst steering. The breeze was strong and turned my boat **broadside** on. Face the **wind, lass**, I cried. Just then the cigarette flared up and scorched the ring causing her to trap her **thumb** erroneously under the tiller".

Sorry to hear that" said the official.

That's a poor response, **Vern**" said Rick.

Sorry" replied Vern. I owe you a quiet **nap** tonight and tomorrow I'll buy some of your merchandise".

"Unfortunately, I don't have my **stock with me**" Rick replied. Now let me count a **flock** of sheep. Goodnight!"

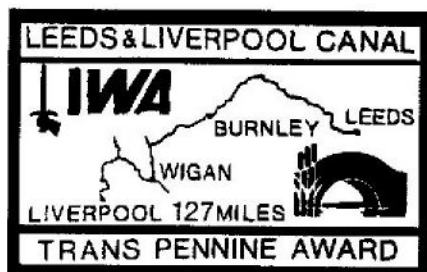
With apologies from your Editor for not checking - there are only 37 according to the compiler. (Actually, I couldn't find more than 12! - Ed)

END PIECES

Ever wondered exactly what the National Association of Boat Owners stands for? It is summed up in the N.A.B.O. Mission Statement:

"N.A.B.O. is dedicated to promoting the interests and concerns of boaters on Britain's Canals and Rivers. We work to ensure the Boater's voice is heard when decisions are being made which affect our boating. N.A.B.O. will always challenge injustice where necessary at the highest level."

Your Council will always endeavour to live up this standard.



IWA and BW have got together to award a specially designed plaque (see above) to boaters making the 127 mile trans-Pennine crossing from

Liverpool's Stanley Dock to the River Lock in Leeds. Boaters need to get a log sheet which is filled in during the crossing as proof of passage. These sheets and further details can be obtained by sending an s.a.e. to Graham Eastwood, 61 School Lane, Leylabd, Preston PR5 1TU.

The solid brass plaque is approximately 125mm x 60 mm.

Small Ads

a free service to members - contact editor

Copies of:

Waterways World

Bound 1986 - 1993

Unbound 1994 - 1996

Canal & Riverboat

Bound 1988 - 1993

Unbound 1994 - 1996

Offers, to

Your unwanted odds and ends
could just be the treasure that
someone is seeking.

Advertise here - free to
members

NABO REPRESENTATIVES

Council Members - contact addresses

Penny Barber

RBOA Liaison/Disabled

Geoffrey Barnett

N W Rep

Sue Burchett

Secretary

Roger Davis

Membership Secretary

Christine Denton

Marketing/Rallies

John Denton

Strategic Planning

Peter Foster

N E Rep

Peter Lea

Chairman

Phillip Ogden

Special Projects

Nigel Parkinson

Vice Chairman/Eng. Officer

Stephen Peters

River Users Co-ordinator

Geoffrey Rogerson

S Rep

Denis Smith

Midland rep

Andrew Sherrey

Treasurer

Nikki Timbrell

RED DIESEL THREAT

In the last issue of NABO News, you were alerted to the threat to the use of red diesel in boats. Your Council decided at the last Council meeting that it is important that the concern of all involved with the waterways should be made known to our M.E.P.s - the only people who can fight on our behalf.

THIS IS WHERE YOU COME IN !

It is a well-know fact that all politicians are influenced by the opinions of their constituents, but they are not going to do anything if they don't know those views. If you are concerned about this threat, then write to your M.E.P. (the name and address for your region are listed on the next pages) and tell him/her **WHY** you are concerned. The points you might wish to make, as written in the last issue, are listed below for your convenience:

- If marine diesel became subjected to the same taxation as road fuel, boat owners would be tempted to obtain their fuel in cans from local garages. Worse still, some might be tempted to obtain duty free fuel from "unofficial" sources. What controls and checking procedures would there be? And who would pay?
- Boatyards would be unable to compete on price with the larger outlets and diesel fuel could become more difficult to obtain on the inland waterways. The availability of petrol on our waterways is already becoming restricted due to stricter safety regulations and zero profit margins.
- If boat owners obtained diesel fuel in cans this would lead to pollution of our waterways as a result of inevitable spillages and leakages.
- The running cost of boats with diesel engines would increase and make ownership of such craft less attractive. The use of petrol as a fuel would increase, bringing with it greater risk of fire and explosions. At present petrol engined craft are generally cheaper to buy than their diesel-powered counterparts but the situation could be reversed if fuel prices were to be equalized. Diesel engined craft could become devalued and difficult to sell and the marine trade would soon feel the effects.

PLEASE WRITE

and, if you can, send us a copy of your letter.

This is one way in which we all can help.

Bedfordshire & Milton Keynes Ms Eryl McNally, Langley,	Abbots	Dorset & Devon East Bryan Cassidy,	Bournemouth
Birmingham East: Christine Crawley, Birmingham		Durham Stephen Hughes, Durham	
Birmingham West: John Tomlinson, Walsall \		Essex North & Suffolk South Anne McIntosh, Saffron Walden,	
Bristol Ian White, Bristol .		Essex South Richard Howitt,	Basildon
Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire East: James Elles, Aylesbury		Essex West & Hertfordshire East Hugh Kerr,	Harlow,
Cambridgeshire Robert Sturdy, Cambridge r		Greater Manchester Central Eddie Newman, Manchester	
Cheshire East Brian Simpson, \	Warrington \	Greater Manchester East Glyn Ford,	Mossley, Lancs
Cheshire West & Wirral Lyndon Harrison, Chester		Greater Manchester West Gary Titey,	Radcliffe
Cleveland & Richmond David Bowe,	Middlesborough	Hampshire North & Oxford Graham Mather,	London
Cornwall & Plymouth West Robin Teverson, Cornwall .		Herefordshire & Shropshire David Hallam,	Tridgnorth,
Cotswolds Lord Plumb,	Warwicks .	Hertfordshire Dr Peter Truscott, Welwyn Garden City,	
Coventry & Warwick North Christine Oddy, Coventry		Humberside Peter Crampton,	Hull
Cumbria & Lancashire North Tony Cunningham,	Workington	Itchen, Test & Avon Edward Kellett-Bowman Christchurch,	
Devon & Plymouth East Giles Chichester, 3SR	Exeter r	Kent East Mark Watts,	Maidstone

Kent West Peter Skinner, Dartford	London South West Anita Pollock, London
Lancashire Central Mark Hendrick, Blackpool,	London West Michael Elliott, Ealing,
Lancashire South Michael Hindley, Accrington,	Merseyside East & Wigan Terry Wynn, St Helens
Leeds Michael McGowan Leeds	Merseyside West Richard Corbett Liverpool
Leicester Sue Waddington, Leicester	Midlands West Simon Murphy, Wolverhampton
Lincolnshire & Humberside South Veronica Hardstaff, Lincoln	Norfolk Clive Needle, Norwich
London Central Stan Newens London	Northamptonshire & Blaby Angela Billingham, Northampton
London East Carole Tongue, Ilford	Northumbria Dr Gordon Adam, Tyne & Wear
London North Pauline Green Edmonton,	Nottingham & Leicester Northwest Ms Mel Read Coalville,
London Northeast Alf Lomas, Stratford	Nottinghamshires North & Chesterfield Ken Coates, Mansfield
London Northwest Robert Evans Wembley	Peak District Arlene McCarthy Glossop,
London South & Surrey East James Moorhouse, London	Sheffield Roger Barton, Burgess Street,
London Southeast Shaun Spiers, Exleyheath,	Somerset & Devon North Graham Watson, Somerset
London South Inner Richard Balfe, London	South Downs West James Provan, Horsham, West Sussex

South Wales Central

Wayne David,
Cardiff

South Wales East

Glenys Kinnoch,
Ynysddi, Newport, I

South Wales West

Rev David Morris,
Swansea

Staffordshire East & Derby

Phillip Whitehead,
Staffs,

Staffordshire West & Congleton

Michael Tappin,
Stoke on Trent

Suffolk & Norfolk Southwest

David Thomas,
Bungay

Surrey

Tom Spencer,
Surrey

Sussex East & Kent South

Sir Jack Stewart-Clark,
Cowden

Sussex South & Crawley

Brendan Donnelly,
Brighton,

Thames Valley

John Stevens,
London

Tyne & Wear

Alan Donnelly,
Jarrow

Wales Mid & West

Eluned Morgan,
Dyfed

Wales North

Joe Wilson,
Clwyd

Wight & Hampshire South

Roy Perry,
Romsey,

Wiltshire North & Bath

Dr Caroline Jackson,
Swindon

Worcestershire & Warwickshire South

John Corrie,
Worcestershire

Yorkshire North

Edward McMillan-Scott,
North Yorkshire

Yorkshire South

Norman West,
Barnsley

Yorkshire South West

Tom Megahy,
Wakefield

Yorkshire West

Dr Barry Seal,
Bradford

Dear Editor

Your article on the possible demise of Red Diesel prompts me to remark that some domestic central heating systems and boat heating systems use this fuel as opposed to the more conventional kerosene burning oil.

Assuming that Red Diesel continues to be available for heating purposes, the abolition of its use in engines would mean that extensive modifications would be required to boats where the boiler currently draws its diesel from the same tank as the engine.

Robert Laws

Narrowboat St Kilda, Cambridge