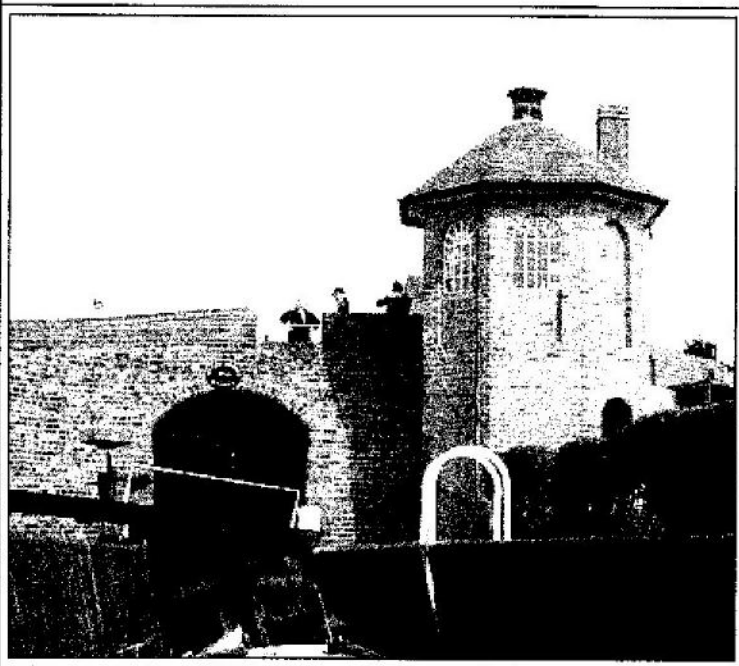




# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Issue: 4/98

**NABO NEWS**



Brache Locks,  
Staffs & Worcester Canal

May 1998

# Editorial

I'm having to eat my words about security this edition!

Sometime between 19 and 30 April "Thurzaway" was broken into. She is moored in a marina that we thought very secure, with people around all day and several permanent residents. According to the Police, new boats are often targeted.

Entry was accomplished by forcing the side hatch roof up, completely breaking the 1/2" bolt on one side (pieces of the brass plate were found all over the inside of the boat). It was only finding one of these pieces of brass on the galley floor, that made us look around to see where it had come from. There was no other sign of the burglary.

We suspect a "gentleman" of the road, as he cleared out our alcohol supply, including the bottle opener, and took a couple of tins of meat. Nothing else was taken; although I had foolishly forgotten to take my purse home, it was still on the shelf in the bedroom! We suspect that he went no further than the galley.

This couldn't have been the infamous Mr Finch as the Police told us he was arrested on 19 April, when we were still on our boat, and has been inside a Northamptonshire cell since then. I have no information as to the expected date of his release.

I suppose we were lucky that it was a clean break-in and hasn't left a bad feeling, but I will still feel apprehensive when next I open up the doors and enter.

*Wendy Hook*

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Published by

**National Association of Boat Owners**

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## CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT

Canal and river navigable channel sizes are still a major topic for discussion.

Nigel and I have had a useful meeting with BW Director of Operations, Stewart Sim, and Customer Relations Manager, Paul Wagstaffe. We've resolved several issues, but the all-important ones - the minimum depth and width channels will be allowed to reach before they're re-dredged - are still being negotiated.

Some boating organisations have said they would settle for a minimum depth of 1.1 metres on most canals (that's 3' 7" to you and me). True, this is more than we've got now on lots of stretches, but we don't think it's enough, especially for deeper drafted boats - and remember how quickly levels go off in summer. And we certainly don't think BW's proposed river channels are big enough for the boats using those rivers now - a point glossed over in some user groups' submissions. We know BW hasn't consulted the Environment Agency (who are statutorily responsible for flood control) or English Nature over the possible effects of their planned cuts in dredging.

### Outrageous proposal

Meanwhile, BW have come out with yet another outrageous proposal. It seems they think people with continuous cruising licences are behaving dishonestly by not having a permanent mooring. Now, although a few people may be staying in one place while claiming to be continuously cruising, the majority are doing exactly what they say. Except of course in winter, when BW closes the canals and nobody can move.

So BW plan a "high intensity user" licence to replace the existing continuous cruising licence. The cost? The same as for a hire boat - 2.5 times the normal annual cruising licence. When? From 1st August - a month or so away.

BW chooses to ignore the many people with continuously cruising licences who are genuinely cruising the system. Often they are retired. They move slowly from place to place, and of course travel as much in the spring and autumn as the summer - when reservoirs are fuller, fewer people are using locks, and there isn't the demand on water supplies and moorings. They are more experienced boaters, and aren't rushing to complete "rings" or get boats back to base, so they "wear"

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the system much less than many hire boaters. They are mostly on fixed incomes - but BW doesn't care about that.

BW has tarred everybody with the same brush. Its says "We .... feel that the majority are being seen by law abiding customers as flouting the rules without penalty, causing mooring congestion and clogging of popular visitor mooring sites and causing a significant, costly enforcement issue locally." I can only describe these views as arrogant and offensive.

Certainly, staying in one place or moving a mile or so in either direction is not continuously cruising, and several BW managers have served formal notices on boaters who have been doing this, so they have to find moorings if they want their licences renewed. This shows there are ways to enforce the rules without penalising bona fide users.

It is ironical that that the Residential Boat Owners Association has been trying for months to get BW to sit down and discuss the question of continuous cruising, in order to establish some ground rules. But BW, surprise, surprise, didn't listen.

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**N.A.B.O. to lobby parliament if BW don't agree to significant changes.**

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We and other organisations are calling on BW to postpone the introduction of this measure and to thoroughly discuss all aspects of the issue. If they don't agree to significant changes, NABO will lobby government, including M.P.'s, and campaign in the press to make them do so. I am sure newspapers such as "The Daily Telegraph" would like to hear that BW

discriminates against retired people.

I suggest you all to write to BW Chairman Bernard Henderson at Watford (British Waterways, Willow Grange, Church Road, Watford WD1 3QA) to let him know what you think of his staff's ideas.

**East Anglian waterways**  
BW have also sent us four large booklets containing their proposals for taking over as waterway authority for the Nene and the Ouse. The last conservative minister, Robert Jones, had asked for these as part of the DETR's review of navigation, and the present minister allowed the process to continue. NABO's local representative, Mike Smith, and

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I are examining the proposals carefully to see whether this would benefit our members.

### **E A meeting**

Meanwhile, the Environment Agency National Navigation Users Forum met in London on 22nd April. We discussed reciprocal and national licences, the EA's response to BW's East Anglia proposals (they're against them), the EA's budget for next year and their backlog of capital expenditure, the Easter flooding on the Nene, water supplies generally (back to normal), and a draft policy on residential boats on their waters.

We ended with the EA's proposals to abandon the coarse fishing close season. They were left in no doubt as to everybody's strong views on this. I asked how their Fisheries Officer could consider our consultation responses impartially when his press release and the interview on the TV show "Watchdog" made it clear he had already decided to abolish the close season next year, regardless. As he had already decided the arguments against abolition were irrelevant, he should be sidelined from the consultation process.

This sort of "exchange of views" doesn't occur often at EA meetings: their proposals and positions tend to be better thought out and much more even-handed than some others', and they always back them up with detailed written information and explanations. The mishandling of

this issue is exceptional.

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## **Please help N.A.B.O. to help you.**

**Call Christine**

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### **Closer to Home**

Closer to home, we badly need your help. NABO is committed to attending a number of rallies and events around the

country between now and September, and we are desperately short of people. Some who have offered help in the past always seem to be busy when we call them, and it's always the same few who end up doing all the work.

All we ask for is a two-hour stint, manning our stand or canvassing boaters. It doesn't seem a lot of time to give up out of the whole summer, now does it? Won't you help us to represent you?

The details of where we'll be are set out in the newsletter (*page 23*). If you are able to spare us just two hours one weekend, please give Christine a phone call.

## From the Editor's Chair

Firstly, I must give my sincere apologies to Mr Paul Wagstaffe, Customer Relations Manager at British Waterways, for giving him the wrong surname in the article about disabled moorings in the last edition of NABO News. Mr Wagstaffe is well-known to many people on the cut and they must have wondered who had taken his job! Mr Wagstaffe, I'm sorry and I promise not to do it again.

Secondly, I do know how to spell "diesel", but on occasion my fingers suffer from Dyslexia and my proof reading was not up to standard this edition. No excuses - just apologies to all readers.

### Copy deadlines

Contributions, of any kind, are welcome. Articles or photographs may be held until there is space but they will all be acknowledged.

Copy deadlines for the rest of the year are as follows:

Copy Date	Publication Date
15 June	29 June
27 July	10 August
12 October	26 October
7 December	21 December

Publication dates may be subject to alteration due to circumstances beyond my control.

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# FROM THE GLOUCESTER & SHARPNESS CANAL

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Proposals have been unveiled for a new swing-bridge to be constructed across the G&S Canal near Gloucester in the latter half of 1998. The bridge will carry the new South West by-pass over the waterway and NABO has obtained engineering drawings detailing the new structure and associated civil engineering works.

The site of the new bridge is at "Two mile bend" and a new navigation channel will be constructed to cut across the bend thus improving visibility at this point. The new bridge will be built on the diversion route before the old section is filled in so there will be no interruption to navigation. Quite a cleverly thought out scheme really.

Boat owners will be pleased to learn that the width of waterway will be 12m and the clear headroom of the new bridge will be 4.70m, high enough to permit many craft to pass under without the bridge

having to be opened. This is just as well because the new road will be a major arterial route and bridge opening times will be regulated to avoid disruption to road traffic. Our River User's Co-ordinator has all the construction details if anyone requires further information.

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**A cleverly thought out  
scheme - no  
interruption to  
navigation !**

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**But, oh those charges !**

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BW's proposal to charge for the use of the sea lock at Sharpness has received widespread condemnation from

boating organisations including NABO. They intend to levy a lockage charge on vessels with short term licences and also restrict the number of free lockages for holders of longer term licences. It appears that the suggested figure of £50 will be "per lock" not per vessel, so it will be interesting to see how the lock keeper calculates the charge when a number of vessels with different licences occupy the lock at the same time. It will probably cost BW £50 just to administer the scheme!

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## A NATIONAL WIDE BEAM INLAND NAVIGATION NETWORK

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We came very close to achieving a national wide-beam network during the waterways' commercial days. However, a combination of shortage of financing, lack of cooperation among navigation companies, and eventually railway competition, stopped development in this direction before the final wide links were built.

The system suffered badly from this. Being forced to depend for long distance traffic on the narrow boat with its small payload surely hastened the demise of carrying. But the logic of a national wide network is just as strong today for leisure use. It is an objective we should now start pursuing actively.

### **Retention, Restoration, Enhancement.**

The waterways movement is passing through stages.

The initial focus in the late 1940s was to avoid the imminent loss of large parts of the network. Although this is even now occasionally still a concern for some routes, and proper maintenance is a worry in many places, attention had turned by the 1970s to

reinstating derelict waterways. This has been very successful, with restoration of most routes now complete, under way, or being planned.

In time, though, we will simply run out of waterways to reopen. But surely that won't be the end of the story. The present interest in the waterways and the energy available is much too valuable to waste. The obvious use for it as the restoration stage ends is to enhance the network.

How could the system be enhanced? A couple of approaches come to mind: Building new routes, and enlarging gauges. Putting them together, you get the national wide beam network as an objective.

### **Getting Away from the Narrow Boat.**

Many do not realise that some two-thirds of the national system is wide beam. It is easy to overlook this, because most people rule out owning a wide craft due to its limitation to a regional cruising range. Narrow boats and cruisers are so much the craft of choice that



it is easy to slip into thinking that the network is almost all narrow.

Although it is almost heresy to point it out, the dominance of narrow craft is actually quite unfortunate. Of course, narrow boats are elegant and atmospheric craft with a notable heritage, and travelling on one on a narrow canal is a wonderful experience. But we tend to forget, or even deny, that they have a lot of drawbacks.

Even with the very clever designs and layouts now seen, you have to admit that staying on a narrow boat is like living in a corridor. And the total space available, even in a full-length

boat, is really quite limited. Worse, a craft approaching full-length is daunting to handle, for a beginner for sure but even for the more experienced in many cases. A vessel half as long and twice as wide, for example, would have much more usable space in the same plan area, have a lot less hull to maintain, be cheaper to build, and be easier to control. It would take less mooring space along the bank, too.

Many people would inevitably choose wider craft if not for the cruising range restriction (although there would still be plenty of narrow boats, for the

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many narrow canals which will never change their gauge). Overall convenience and comfort for boaters would improve; the attractiveness to hirers of a (wide) boating holiday would increase; boat building trade would boom. We, and the system, would be much better off.

### **Achieving a Wide National Network.**

At present, there are several wide regional networks:

- **North.** The Cheshire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire waterways, the Trent and Soar, etc.
- **West.** The Severn and Stratford Avon.
- **South.** The Kennet & Avon, Thames, Grand Union, Lee, Wey, etc.
- **East.** The Nene, Great Ouse, and Fens.
- **Broads.**

All except the Broads are linked, but by narrow beam waterways.

There has been progress in making wide connections between some of these.

The Kennet & Avon might be called the connection from

**South to West**, but in fact the need to use the tidal and treacherous Bristol Channel to get from Avonmouth to Sharpness means the job isn't really done yet. The now almost-certain restoration of the Thames & Severn will provide a non-tidal link, but it will have a maximum beam of only 3.8m. For a full-width connection we will probably have to wait for the very desirable Leam/Avon route from the Grand Union at Leamington to Stratford, which sadly is by no means a sure thing yet.

Joining the others has got little beyond the thinking stage in most cases.

For **North to South** there are several possibilities. The easiest may be the Grand Union Leicester line. It is already all wide except for the locks at Foxton and Watford (the summit level between them was built wide). Planning for a replacement inclined plane at Foxton is well advanced. All that would then be needed is a lift at Watford, and (a fair amount of) dredging between the two. Another scheme is to reopen the Ashby Canal to Moira, and then to extend it to

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the Trent. This would require quite a lot of new canal with a major flight of locks, and widening of the channel of the Ashby and from Marston junction to Braunston including the three Hillmorton Locks.

There is a third possible route, from Boston on the Witham via the (currently closed) Black Sluice Drain navigation, the (partially closed) Rivers Glenn and Welland, and a relatively short new canal from the upper Welland to the Nene near Peterborough.

The final part of this last route would also form a **South to East** connection, through widening or duplicating the seventeen Rothersthorpe locks on the Grand Union's Northampton Arm. It might also be possible to join the upper Great Ouse to the Grand Union. Rather less likely but very desirable would be to build the London & Cambridge Junction Canal, still authorised by an Act of Parliament to run from Bishops Stortford at the top of the River Stort to the River Cam at Cambridge.

Finally, an **East to Broads** link could use an idea proposed as

early as the 17th century. It would involve reopening the upper lengths of the Rivers Little Ouse and Waveney, and a short new canal between them.

Although some of these projects may be rather ambitious, others would involve substantially less work and expense than a number of restorations already carried out. These at least certainly appear to be feasible and reasonable, while the appearance of lottery funding makes it possible at last to consider getting them started.

### **The Need for a Vision.**

It would be a shame for the momentum of the waterways movement to be allowed to peter out as the restoration phase comes to its inevitable end in a few years time. But to avoid that, we need a new goal for the movement to rally behind. The national wide network can be that goal. However, it should be adopted now so that the transition to enhancement can be smooth.

Can you share this vision?



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# River Review

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## River Trent Pontoon Moorings

Pontoons are used for Trent moorings because the river rises and falls quite a lot at certain times of the year. Below Cromwell Lock a few weeks ago it was 17 feet higher than most of you will have seen, on the non-tidal it also rises a lot, for example the wall below Hazelford has been under water this year about 12 feet.

There are not enough pontoons (or Floaters) on the trent and B.W. have agreed this and say they are looking for sites. We have been telling them we need some at Fiskerton but land owners there can't agree to let B.W. do so without money being involved. Now here is the crux of the problem, money. Pontoons have been put in to benefit boaters (Gunthorpe) but they have been put in at Famdon to benefit B.W. I understand the Britannia pay £2000 per year for the pontoon at Famdon. Is this right? The landowners have agreed to B.W. putting in a pontoon but the landowners can't possibly benefit from it, it takes a lot of profit to be able to finance £2000 expenditure yearly, that's why they are charging for overnight moorings. But boaters won't stay now even though there are the benefits of shopping and post office in the

village, they can go and fill up at other places instead.



Come on B.W. there is a marvellous site at Famdon where you could double the moorings by coming out into the very wide river. It could be an H set up. The landowner will not charge you for giving us the boater and licence payer a good facility. I'm afraid that unless the current situation is re-negotiated the pontoon will become surplus to requirements and will upset us all.

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## Use of VHF Channel 74 on River Severn

Many boaters have been annoyed to say the least to receive no reply to their radio calls on Channel 74 particularly from the lock-keepers above Worcester on the River Severn. This annoyance is compounded when the lock-keeper states that he has been instructed not to reply or "they" will remove BW's licence to operate. This situation was confirmed by BW Manager for the River Severn, David Tyrrell. Fortunately, we have an excellent representative who attends the Gloucester and

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Sharpness Canal Users Forum. His name is Tommy Gough and he recently took up this matter with the Radiocommunications Agency (RA) who are responsible for issuing all types of radio operators' licences, including Marine Band. They expressed astonishment and undertook to look into the problem.

This they duly did; Messrs Fonseka and Lee from the RA carried out an exhaustive search and could find no record of an apparent instruction from them to BW concerning the non-use of Channel 74. The only letter they could find concerned BW's illegal use of Channel 74 from bridge to bridge!

The RA has now confirmed to us in a letter (copied to BW) that Channel 74 has been assigned to BW and that "the internationally recognised use of Channel 74 is for TWO-WAY communications concerning ship movement and port operations. Consequently, it is available for use both by BW and by licensed ship stations".

We hope this has clarified the situation once and for all because the problem has been around for a number of years on the River Severn, and yet BW correctly use VHF radio for the

benefit of vessels on their other commercial waterways.

#### To sum up:

- ♦ All calls from private pleasure craft to lock and bridge keepers should be answered. If they are not, we need to be told, but bear in mind that lock-keepers have other duties and may miss the odd call.
- ♦ Channel 74 should be used for operational calls between the boater and lock or bridge keeper and NOT for general chat between boats - there are other channels available for this but you should never make unnecessary calls in any case.
- ♦ You may not need to call each lock or bridge keeper particularly on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal. One call to the first radio-equipped bridge should suffice until you moor up because they follow and report your progress to each other.
- ♦ Although Channel 16 (the "Distress" and general calling channel) is monitored by BW, boaters should not use this channel on the inland waterways unless in an emergency - even then, Channel 74 is more likely to receive a response.

*continued at bottom of page 23*

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# TOWPATH TELEGRAPH

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## Forthcoming Events

Cheshire County Council are organising an **Anderton Boat Lift Extravaganza** at Anderton Nature Park (beside the lift) on **Sunday 31 May**. It is hoped to attract many people with an emphasis on countryside management and to boost support for the Lift's restoration.

On Sunday 7 June, the annual **Montgomery Dinghy Dawdle** takes place. This event has, in the past, been instrumental in getting blockages removed. Details from Colin Venus

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*continued from page 22*

Remember, calls made on your VHF radio could interfere with calls at sea, which you cannot hear due to atmospheric conditions.

Finally, we feel that a vote of thanks is due from boat owners and BW to the officers of the Radiocommunications Agency for their diligent work in clarifying what has been an unnecessary source of annoyance for many years.

And thanks to Tommy Gough for his efforts, too.

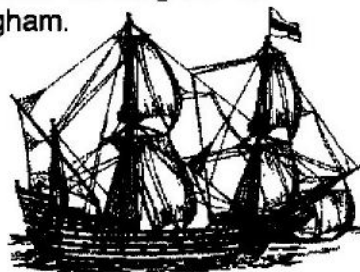
## After the Junk ..... !!

A Planning application has been submitted to Peterborough City Council for a floating restaurant, (of a similar size to the infamous junk), in the style of an Elizabethan Galleon to be moored on the Embankment of the River Nene at Peterborough,

The application has been made by private developers, Messrs Calitri & Bianchi. Moored between an existing floating restaurant and Key Ferry at the northeast side of the Town Bridge, the proposed structure would dominate the river landscape.

The local IWA branch has submitted a strong objection stating that the vessel would be completely out of keeping with the landscape and would result in a sacrifice of public amenity to private commercial gain.

It is to be hoped that the Peterborough City planners are as besieged with objections as were their colleagues in Birmingham.



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## **PSEUDONYM'S View from the Council**

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*Meeting held on 25 April*

Again nearly all our Council members turned up. I have been really heartened by the large turn out for these meetings. The amount of work that goes into fighting for boaters is incredible, especially as BW seems to have unlimited funds to spend on paperwork. Are they trying to bury us in paper?

B.W. also seems to have the funds to try a take over of the Environment Agency. We saw the pile of paperwork that has been put out to support their bid. E.A.'s reply was minuscule by comparison, a point very much in E.A.'s favour. Is this a legitimate use of our money? One publicly owned company fighting another; it seems to me that we end up paying twice for nothing.

The optimistic note of my last offering has not lasted long. B.W. have attacked short term licences with swinging increases now it is the continuous cruisers turn, with

increases of TWO AND A HALF times the present charge as from August this year-this is being slipped in with the consultation for 1999 licence charges. B.W. have obviously decided in their wisdom that if you can cruise all the year round you are wealthy. They have also decided that you don't really want to cruise all the year round because they are generously offering a winter mooring FREE at locations agreed by a Waterway Manager. I hope this is your also your choice! Are they being generous so that they can close the canals completely for winter maintenance? If you accept a winter mooring do you cease to be a continuous cruiser?

Channel dimensions are causing a lot of work for the members who stayed awake during the technical discussions. Peter and Nigel have formulated our response so we now await the outcome.



### ADVANCE NOTICE

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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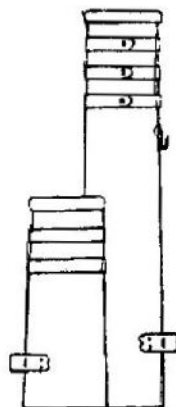
Narrowboat 'Wylo'

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Startops End

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# ENVIRONMENT AGENCY RFERACs

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We are continuing to monitor the proceedings of the Regional Fisheries Advisory Committees that exist in each region of the EA and whose remit includes navigation (although you would not have guessed from their title!).

The latest news is that the RFACs are now to be called RFERACs (the new acronym for Regional Fisheries Ecology and Recreation Advisory Committees), a title which is intended to reflect more fully the range of issues that the committees cover. But still no mention of navigation.

However, Thames region RFERAC does concern itself with navigation matters as one would expect and has recently been briefed on other navigations existing within its geographical area including the rivers Lee, Stort and Wey and canals including the Basingstoke. It is heartening to see this committee widening its horizons beyond its own back yard.

Midlands region has received reports concerning prosecutions arising from the Agency's regulatory role and surprise, surprise BW was successfully prosecuted twice last year for breaches of water abstraction licences. We reported one of

these occurrences last year when BW was fined no less than £30,000. Now it appears that they were also fined £18,000 for a similar offence in the Trent valley. Now we know why our boat licence fees keep increasing!

All regions have been placed on a war footing to rebuff the proposals of BW to take over control of navigation on the Anglian rivers. The Agency has produced a spirited defence to the BW report and has sought support from all available quarters to retain control of the Nene and Great Ouse navigations.

Thames and Anglian region RFERACs have been briefed on a new experimental method of oxygenating polluted waters - using hydrogen peroxide which rapidly breaks down into its harmless constituents of water and oxygen. It is apparently a very useful remedy for low dissolved oxygen levels in rivers. Watch out for lots of blonde-haired EA workers!

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<b>Address</b>
Post Code

### Craft Details

<b>Name</b>		<b>Type</b>	
Age	Value	Length	Beam

<b>Hull Construction:</b>	Steel <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Use of Craft:</b>	Private Pleasure <input type="checkbox"/>
	G.R.P. <input type="checkbox"/>		Residential <input type="checkbox"/>
	Wood <input type="checkbox"/>		Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Engine</b>	Diesel <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>HP.</b>	<input type="text"/>
	Petrol <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/>
	Steam <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/>
	L.P.G. <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/>

Maximum speed of craft (M.P.H.)

Normal Mooring

Cruising range required: inland non tidal <input type="checkbox"/>	U.K. Coastal <input type="checkbox"/>
inland with coastal use <input type="checkbox"/>	Breste/Elbe <input type="checkbox"/>

### No Claims Discount

What percentage No Claims Discount are you able to transfer?  %

**In the past five years have you sustained any losses or had a proposal or renewal for marine insurance rejected? YES / NO**

Please return this form to:

**Michael Stimpson and Associates**  
**6 Norfolk Road, Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 1QE**

and your quotation will be forwarded to you for your consideration

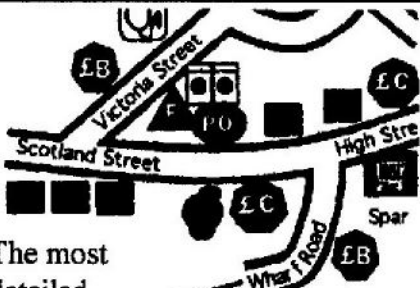
We received a pie chart and summary of what we do for NABO. Should we spend more time doing less or less time doing more? Similar discussions also took place but they did help us to become more focused.

Christine has done sterling work sorting rotas for the stand at various rallies and festivals. NABO will be well represented around the country this year and I hope this will lead to an increase in our membership. Come and see your stall and the new goodies on offer.

The Stourport Marina is now complete and no longer looks like the historical basin that it should be. IWA is fighting this by invoking the powers of the Council Ombudsman and NABO by going to the Waterways Ombudsman. This will be our chance to see if the latter has been left with any powers. Stratford basin seems to be the next on the list for "modernisation". Watch this space.

Route 4 is the cycleway along the Kennet and Avon. Numbers on posts are now decorating the route. So the cyclists don't get lost maybe? Please watch out for and let us know about railings being put in tunnels and under bridges for cyclists safety as they can be very inconvenient for us. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. IWA now has a River Section.

## FIRST MATE GUIDES



The most detailed boatperson's shopping and services guide yet.

Staffs & Wor.	£2.85
Trent & Me.	£3.80
S.U. System	£4.30
(Incl Lian. & Mont)	_____
All 3	£10.00

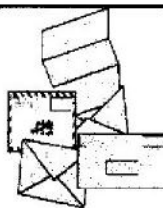
Post free from Carole Sampson,



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# LETTERS

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Dear Editor,

It is not possible for me to sit back and remain silent having read the Chairman's Comment or should I perhaps say character assassination of British Waterways manager Roger Herrington.

Having heard Roger Herrington discuss a number of these allegations at a local user group meeting on April 2nd. I must say that I would question the interpretation of "appears to have fallen out with ....."

As for suggesting that he be moved to a job without any contact with the public or media, I take great issue. As Commodore of a Boat Club in his area I would like to record the fact that in all my dealings with him, he has been more than helpful and has always shown interest and concern for our needs.

*E John Mountfort  
Stafford*

Dear Editor

## **BOAT SAFETY**

We were asked in February's Nabo News for suggestions how the waterways can be made safer I think you will find that more people drown in their baths than in

canals (source: ROSPA), so navigable waterways are very safe anyway; and that most of the general public who do so drown have entered the water of their own volition, or fell in while drunk, about which little can be done. So there is no case for railings under bridges (which make landing crew dangerous) or around locks to stop people falling in, which only make working the lock more difficult and dangerous for the boater

Towpaths overgrown at the water's edge make landing hazardous because we cannot see what is underneath: often dangerous holes. Imagine a lone boater, tying up at night in a quiet place, who breaks a leg. (Long grass here also encourages fouling by dogs, whereas if it is kept short they will tend to use the hedge side, not ideal but much better for boaters).

Lack of tree-cutting was mentioned and I fully agree with this. If this task is not done regularly, "conservationists" will object to it, as happened on the Aylesbury Arm.

*R Bingham  
Welling, Kent*

## END PIECES

Remember the letter about **Frankton Locks** at the junction of the Llangollen. BW must have seen it, as passage times have been revised. Instead of booking in advance, there are now fixed times as follows:

**9- 10.00 am and 2.30 - 3.30 pm weekdays, Saturday mornings & Sunday afternoons during the summer**

A lock-keeper will be there until all boats waiting within those times are through.

The locks are being manned to avoid the flooding of local properties resulting from getting the levels wrong.

It is hoped the problem will be resolved allowing self operation.

## Boat Festivals and Volunteers

NABO will be attending the following events and would be grateful for help; erecting or demolishing the stall, talking to people about NABO, selling fundraising items, - an hour or two would make all the difference.

**Braunston Show: 23 - 25 May**

**Northern BCN Campaign Rally, Pelsall: 23 - 25 May**

**National Trail Boat Festival Wootton Bassett: 23 - 25 May**

**Foxton Festival:**

**National Waterways Festival, Salford Quays: 28 - 31 August**

Please ring Christine Denton on

## Small Ads

a free service to members - contact editor

### Sofa Bed and Matching Storage Stool

Two seater (custom made for boats) mid green pattmed Drayton metal action bed frame with mattress. Very good condition.  
**£300.**

Barbara & Geoff Pearson

### Be Ready for the Festival

NABO has found a supplier for bunting to aid the well-dressed boat.

Red, white & blue bunting  
**£15.00 per 10' length**

Available from Christine Denton,

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# **NABO REPRESENTATIVES**

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## **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**