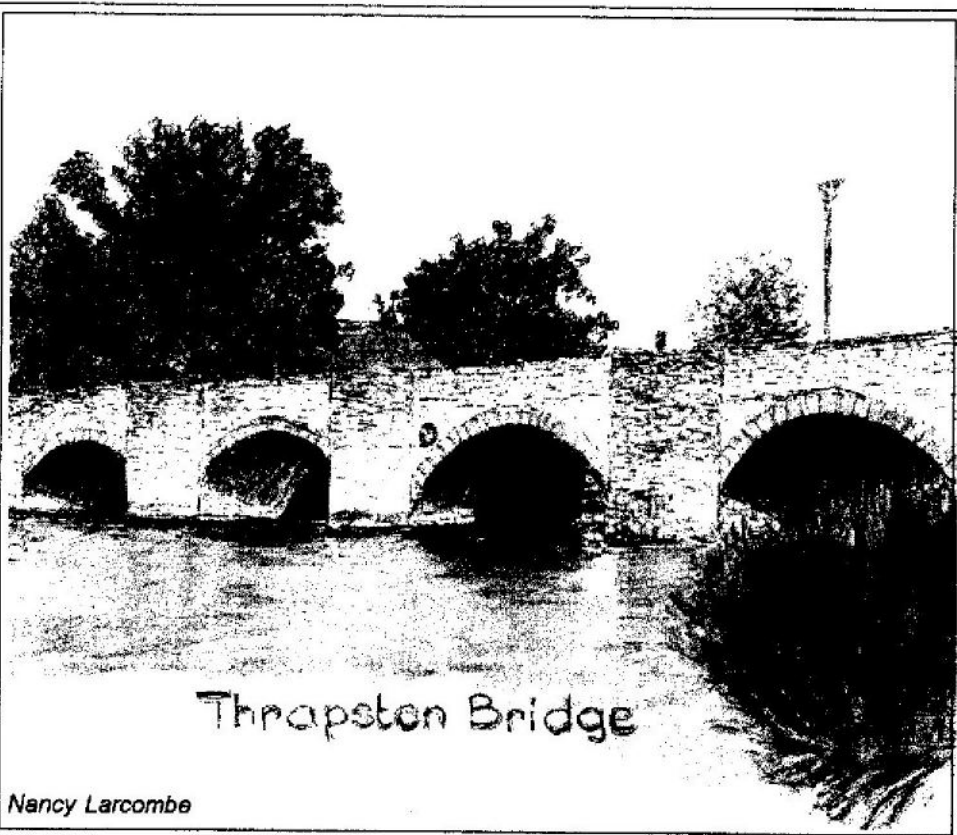




NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Issue: 3/99



Thrapston Bridge

Nancy Larcombe

NABO News

Editorial

Those of you who have been NABO members for more than 12 months will know of the diligent work done by our Membership secretary chasing up subscriptions. He frequently passes on the comments made on the forms and they make very interesting reading. Sometimes these comments alert us to new initiatives; sometimes they spur us on by the generosity of their approval. Just occasionally they give us cause for thought.

One such recently commented on the content of NABO news. We took on board the remark that "*most articles are written as though all members are familiar with the topics under discussion*" and will try to put this right in future issues.

He wished to have articles credited to the author and with the capacity in which they are writing. All un-accredited articles are written for NABO and for that reason are not

personal views and so not credited. If anyone offers an article for publication, such as that recently telling of a trip between 2 "L's", then they are always credited to the author. If any reader wishes to comment on any article they are at liberty to write to me and the letter will be published; if they wish to comment personally to the author then a letter sent to me will be forwarded on to the author without delay.

Finally, the comment "*Other 'fill-in' articles are boring in the extreme*" seemed a little unkind. All editors of newsletters have the problem of filling the oddments of pages, complete pages sometimes to reach the quota required by a printer. I had hoped that I was using these snippets to pass on information that you may have missed, or that would amuse you. If the member who wrote these comments would care to write more interesting article(s) for NABO news, then I would be very happy to consider them for publication, bearing in mind what is interesting to one member may be boring to another, and vice versa.

Happy boating

Wendy Hook

Contents

Chairman's Comment-----	3
Channel & Lock Dimensions -----	6
Boaters Rules - OK -----	9
River Review-----	10
Ombudsman's Report-----	11
Towpath Telegraph-----	13
View from Council -----	17
Letters -----	20
End Pieces -----	23
Small Ads -----	23
Council Contacts -----	24

Published by
National Association of Boat Owners

Whilst every care is taken to ensure that the contents of this newsletter are factually correct, we accept no liability for any direct or consequential loss arising from any action taken by anyone as a result of reading anything contained in this publication. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association. The products and services advertised in this publication are not necessarily endorsed by the Association.



CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT

NABO has been busy lately. Issues we've been grappling with range from moorings, towpath cycling and dredging of London's canals, through licensing of canal-side events and countering towpath aggression, to national waterway strategy and Environment Agency policy. A few examples:

John Stephens has been successful in increasing the length of stay at visitor moorings at Stourport and is trying to obtain some more visitor moorings on the Ashby. He is also working with BW and police forces to develop ways of discouraging towpath aggression and speeding up police response time when incidents do occur.

Jim Hutchinson has been meeting groups of moorers facing swingeing price hikes in the London region and helping them with their negotiations.

Geoff Rogerson has been monitoring the development of BW's policy towards cycling (difficult to do, because of all the U-turns. The latest one is based on the theory that cyclists are all

nice people who will always consider others' safety and carefully read and obey the nice new signs on the towpath. So no enforcement is necessary. And pigs fly.). He has also asked questions about the proposed underwater barriers that were supposed to discourage mooring on stretches of the K & A. They will not be built.

Sue Burchett found out that anybody wanting to hold any sort of event on the Grand Union North or Oxford Canals had to agree to a set of conditions straight out of some fascist dictatorship. You have to ask permission to put up

banners; get permission if anybody from the press, radio, or TV is coming; get permission if money is being raised for charity, and even tell BW how much was raised. If there is an angling match on that day, tough: all other events are to be rescheduled. Best of all, you have to tell the world, "This event is being held by kind permission of British Waterways". NABO told the other user groups, and now we, the AWCC and the IWA have all complained. I understand

NABO working with BW and police forces to develop ways of discouraging towpath aggression

some behind-the-scenes re-drafting may be taking place. Nigel Parkinson continues to collate the responses to our Boat Safety Scheme survey. The average cost of compliance is still running at over £400 per boat, and that's real money, not time cost. Don't believe the letters in some of the waterways press criticising our survey.

The results we are getting are real, and make appalling reading. We shall be publishing some of the best comments shortly.

I have been representing NABO at important

meetings: the National Inland Navigation Forum (of all the national navigation user groups, except the RYA who aren't interested); the Association of Inland Navigations Authorities' strategy seminar (better than it sounds); the Parliamentary Waterways Group, and the Environment Agency's National Navigation Users Forum. **The EA's Navigation Department are a pleasure to deal with, because unlike so many in BW, they accept constructive criticism and try to respond helpfully, without having to be badgered into doing so. I raised a number of issues at the latter meeting, including:**

the lack of advance warning of flood conditions on the Nene, with others, proposed changes to Bow Locks (we are working with BW on this one), and lack of consultation over a water level management plan which would affect a major restoration projects.

Don't believe the letters in some of the waterways press criticising our Boat Safety Scheme survey.

I've been able to help a moorer at Paddington Basin who was given 28 days notice to move her boats because of the building work starting there. BW were not going to offer her an alternative

mooring, which they have to do under the British Waterways Act 1995.

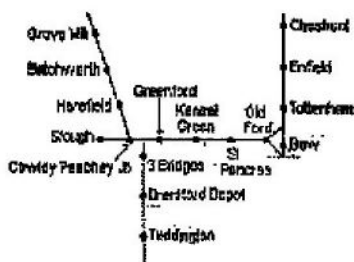
Together with representatives of the London IWA and the Dutch Barge Association, I've been trying to get information from London Region Manager Mark Bensted about his dredging plans. We want to try to agree depths and widths with him if we can. The information is slow in coming, but with patience and persuasion we seem to be getting somewhere. I've also been asked by a couple of members to look into charges for "end-of-garden" moorings (which include farmer's field moorings). **The Licence and**

Mooring Permit Conditions give BW the right to charge for these moorings in some circumstances, but the situation is not as clear cut for everybody as BW would like us to believe. We have taken some preliminary legal advice, and I hope to write an article about the issue for the next edition.

I'll be at our stand at Braunston on the Sunday of the bank holiday weekend - maybe I'll see you there!

Chris Clegg's Canal Time Map

A4 sized, laminated with over 450 named places on the 2 hour map and with 6, 8 and 10 hour summary maps as well. On the 2 hour map, just count 2, 4, 6, 8 etc. hours as you go from dot to dot, to get the approximate time it will take. See below for a sample of part of the 2 hour map for the London area.



Available by post, price £3.00 (including post and package) from:

Chris Clegg, 2 Hillmead, Graemesdyke Road, Berkhamsted, Herts HP43LN

COTSWOLD DIESEL SERVICES

Specialist in Lister Marine engines and gearboxes.

A Lister Petter Diesel centre for onsite repairs and service plus workshop major overhauls.

Re-conditioned and service exchange ST2 & 3 and Canal Star engines available.

Tele or Fax Roger Drennen
01453 545261

Taitshill Industrial Estate, Taitshill,
Dursley, Glos. GL11 6B11

FOLDING MOPEDS AND PUSH BIKES

Ever wanted to go to a town just too far to walk or push bike?

Or get back to your car after a cruise?

Then a folding moped is the answer.

Road legal. 12 x 23 x 29 inches folded

Or a folding pushbike ideal for locking ahead or going to local towns.

8 x 23 x 34 inches folded.



Ideal present

MIKE SHERWOOD
01252 329783

30% reduction on previous prices

CHANNEL & LOCK DIMENSIONS

We often take it for granted that the channel in the river or canal we are cruising is deep and wide enough for our craft, and the locks we pass through will be of the right size. However we all know there can be exceptions to this. Our boat may be a bit deeper or wider than the norm (whatever that is!), or there may be underwater obstructions or a lock may have been shortened in the past.

Last year British Waterways put before us proposals for new waterways standards, backed up by suggested depths and widths for the navigable channel in each waterway (most of these were inadequate, and some have been revised). It was agreed that the maximum size of the craft which could use each waterway would be specified, basically by reference to lock dimensions and bridge headroom, and that any "pinch points" in the waterway would be identified and excluded from these specifications. For instance, the size of a narrowboat able to use the Northern Stratford canal would be determined by the standard dimensions of the locks on the Lapworth flight, ignoring the one lock on the flight which was shortened a few years ago. We - that is, the user groups - pointed out that it would be essential to

define what we meant when we discussed channel dimensions and lock measurements.

Adrien Stott of the Dutch Barge Association has drawn up statements covering these two factors. The detail in these is based on what was agreed with BW at various times. Point 4 of the channel dimension specification, in particular, is almost exactly word for word as stated and accepted by the Chief Executive David Fletcher and Operations Director Stewart Sim. Strangely, although there is nothing unreasonable or sinister in either statement, BW now will not accept them. We are not told why.

The User Groups in the National Inland Navigation Forum considered both statements, and we think they are comprehensive and sensible. They are based on what has been agreed already. They have therefore been adopted as our position. See what you think.

Specification of Channel Dimensions

The channel dimensions of inland waterways should be specified and managed using the following conventions and measurements:

1. The gauge dimensions of each length of waterway. These are the dimensions of works which establish the greatest length, width and depth of craft which the waterway was originally built or subsequently improved to pass. Because the waterways were designed for boats, it is recognised that a rectangular solid having all these dimensions may not be able to pass along the waterway.

2. Substandard dimensions ("pinch points") on each waterway. These are works which have been built or altered since the original construction or improvement of the waterway, and which currently reduce one or more of the length, width and depth to less than its gauge measurement. Also, although air draft is not a gauge dimension due to measurement complication, the substandard dimensions table will note any clear instances of substandard air draft clearances. All these limits are to be removed in time, to return the waterway to gauge.

For each of the gauge and pinch point measurements, the table will indicate the exact location where the measurement is taken to allow (third party) confirmation or correction. A standard method for measuring locks will be agreed, to ensure consistency in determining

and reporting lock dimensions.

3. Minimum dimensions of each length of waterway. This is the minimum width and depth of (a rectangular cross-section of the open) channel for each length, which the waterway authority guarantees will always be available. This cross-section will allow convenient two-way passage by craft of full-gauge dimensions.

4. Original channel profile dimensions of each length of waterway. These are the following dimensions of the open channel as originally constructed:

- Depth of main channel
- Width of main channel at full depth
- Depth at towpath bank
- Depth at non-towpath bank
- Depth at wharves, landings, and moorings

The original profile will be recovered whenever dredging is undertaken, subject only to:

- Safety constraints on particular sites (e.g. embankment stability, nature of lining)
- Environmental constraints within SSSIs and SACs.

Measuring Locks

To avoid confusion and misunderstanding, locks should always be measured in the same way, and the same dimensions should always be quoted. The dimensions and measurement methods to be used are described below.

The following three measurements are required to specify the dimensions of a lock. All measurements should be in metric units.

1. Length

The length of the lock is the horizontal distance between the centre of the downstream edge of the top gate sill ^(a) and the centre of a line perpendicular to the lock side ^(b) at the upstream end of the fully open bottom gate(s) ^(c).

(a) If the downstream-facing surface of the sill is not vertical, the measurement should be taken from the point on the centre line of that surface which is furthest downstream but not more than the gauge draft of the waterway below water level when the lock is empty.

If, when the lock is empty, the top of the sill is more than the gauge draft of the waterway below water level, the measurement should be taken from the centre of the downstream side of the top gate(s).

(b) If the lock side is not straight enough to use as the base of the perpendicular, the measurement line should be perpendicular to the line between the outermost edges of the

top and bottom gate quoins or stops on the same side of the lock.

(c) If the upstream end of one of the open bottom gates is further upstream than that of the other, the measurement should be taken from a line perpendicular to the lock side at the former point.

2. Width

The width of the lock is the shortest horizontal distance ^(a) between the lock sides above the level of the water when the lock is empty ^(b).

(a) The measurement should be taken where sighting along the lock sides reveals that the sides are closest together.

The measurement will normally be along a line close to perpendicular to the lock sides, but may not be exactly so if the sides are irregularly shaped.

(b) Unless it is clear from inspection that the lock sides are closer together further up, the measurement should be taken at water level when the lock is empty.

3. Depth

The depth of the lock is the minimum of the depths of water over the top sill ^(a) (when the lock is full) and the bottom sill ^(a) (when the lock is empty).

(a) Where the top of the sill is not horizontal, the depth should be measured at the highest point of the sill.

BOATERS RULES - OK

With acknowledgement to Trent Talk

Avoid creating a breaking wash and don't run your propeller while moored.

Take care to position mooring pins and ropes so they are not a danger to towpath users. If possible, make them conspicuous with a marker or cover.

Don't obstruct locks, water points or turning points.

When passing anglers, unless they politely request otherwise, keep to the centre of the channel, reduce your wash but maintain a steady pace.

Slow down when passing moored or unpowered boats.

Pay heed to local signs concerning fishing matches.

Children and non-swimmers should wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid.

Be considerate to all water users.

VIRGINIA CURREN MARINE
INLAND WATERWAY SPECIALISTS



**BOATS
ALWAYS
REQUIRED**

SELLING? 100% BROKERAGE 100%

- Free collection and mooring
- No sale - no fee
- Boats purchased outright
- Craft always needed for clients
- Nationwide in-depth advertising
- West London base - UK sales
- We only sell - so we must sell.

Specialist inland waterways brokers

- Cruising and residential
- Narrowbeam and widebeam
- Twenty years broking experience
- Part exchanges taken
- Dutch and English barges
- 100 or so craft normally available

BUYING?

01753 832312

River Review

Royal Yachting Association Comments of Proposed Engine Emission Requirements

Members will be aware of the proposals emanating from the European Commission to introduce new regulations under the Recreational Craft Directive (see last NABO News for details). NABO has expressed its disquiet particularly over the aspects of the legislation which could outlaw older designs of diesel engine as installed in many traditional canal craft.

The Royal Yachting Association is also taking an interest on behalf of its members and a comment on the subject is featured in the latest edition of Cruising News which is circulated widely.

The RYA comments "There is no suggestion that retrospective legislation will be introduced but it will mean that in time the older slower revving diesels so beloved of the inland water boats will need replacing and these replacements will have to meet the newer regulations. Hopefully it will mean a cleaner atmosphere for us all."

The RYA claims to represent thousands of members with boats on the inland waterways.

New Pumpouts

A new sanitary station below Jesus Green lock in Cambridge is now open, including a pumpout facility. The new centre, costing £54,000 was paid for by Cambridge City Council with a £5,000 grant from the Environment Agency.



New pumpouts have also been installed in Ely and at Denver Sluice. All are available free to registered craft, but require the EA lock key for access.

IWA Cambs branch newsletter.

Quote of the month

BW manager to BW mooring warden:

"Those two boats are tied together!"

Mooring warden: "yes"

BW Manager: "Isn't it dangerous? Won't they sink?"

This was in Birmingham this April.

THE OMBUDSMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

The fourth Annual Report is now available. I reprint the Introduction to give a feel of the Report, which included the details of 7 cases dealt with during the period 1 April 1997 to 31 March 1998.

"Introduction

This Report covers the period from 1 April 1997 to 31 March 1998. An important change during the year was the retirement of the first Waterways Ombudsman, Lady Ponsonby of Shulbrede, on 31 August 1997. I succeeded her on the following day.

After only seven months in post, it would not be appropriate for me to offer sweeping generalisations about the work of the Waterways Ombudsman. However, I wish to reiterate firmly a point which has been made by Lady Ponsonby and which is fully accepted by British Waterways, namely, that the Ombudsman is entirely independent and impartial. I make up my own mind on each case in the light of the evidence and arguments submitted to me.

The Terms of Reference were somewhat altered in May 1997. The amended version is adequately summarised in the

copy of the latest edition of the Ombudsman leaflet, which comprises Appendix A to this Report. In the forthcoming year, I hope to assist British Waterways in considering whether any further alterations are necessary, whether as a result of new legislation or otherwise.

It may be helpful to expand on the procedure which is summarised in the section "What will the Ombudsman do?" in Appendix A. The first point is that, once the Internal Complaints Procedure has been completed and I am able to act, I am on the lookout at every stage for an opportunity to resolve the whole or part of a complaint by conciliation rather than a formal decision. My lengthy experience as an Ombudsman confirms my view that a decision imposed by me is less satisfactory to the parties than a solution to which they both agree.

Assuming that a complaint is within my jurisdiction and cannot be resolved by conciliation, the first step is to identify the central issues. These are often obscured in the copy correspondence sent to me by material which is irrelevant to them or outdated.

Once the salient points have been identified, I obtain any evidence which the complainant has to support his or her version of any disputed facts. I then submit all the papers to British Waterways, with a request for their response to the complaint.

When British Waterways' response has been received, I consider whether I have all the information necessary to enable me to decide the case. If not, I obtain it. I may also view the site concerned and/or meet the parties.

I then prepare a draft decision, which my terms of reference require me to send first to the party to be found against so as to provide an opportunity for any overlooked relevant facts to be made available to me. After that, I copy the draft decision to the successful party. Once that has been done, I finalise it.

I must express my gratitude to a number of people. The first is Lady Ponsonby, who has been unfailingly helpful in connection with the changeover last autumn. Secondly, I am delighted that Giles Baker, who served as lady Ponsonby's Technical Advisor, has agreed to assist me in the same capacity. Finally all the senior staff of British Waterways have shown

great patience in responding to my questions, which they may in some instances have considered elementary or unnecessary.

Stephen Edell"

Full copies of the report are available your local waterway office,

or from:

Customer Services
British Waterways
Willow Grange
Church Road
Watford
WD1 3QA

Tel: 01923 201120

Fax: 01923 201300

The Ombudsman can be contacted at:

Stephen Edell
The Waterways Ombudsman
PO Box 406
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH17 5GF

Tel/Fax: 01273 832624

TOWPATH TELEGRAPH

Anderton Boat Lift

Following the announcement by the Heritage Lottery fund of £3.3 million, towards the total cost of £7 million, the restoration of the boat lift seems certain. The Anderton Boat Lift Trust, which is a partnership of BW, IWA, Cheshire County Council, Vale Royal Borough Council, Trent & Mersey Canal Society and Mid Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, will be undertaking the restoration through British Waterways, who are the Boat Lift owners. BW are contributing £1.9 million and further funds are promised

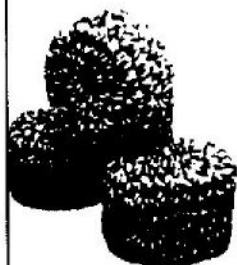
from English Heritage, Vale Royal Borough Council, Trent & Mersey Canal Society, Friends of Anderton Boat Lift, a local company - Brunner Mond, and the EU's Raphael programme. Well Done!, to everyone involved - a mammoth undertaking for the new millenium.

Manchester Ship Canal

There is a new telephone number for enquiries about the Manchester Ship Canal and the Bridgewater Canal - it is 0161 888 8200.

DEREK PEARSON

FENDER AND CHIMNEY MAKER



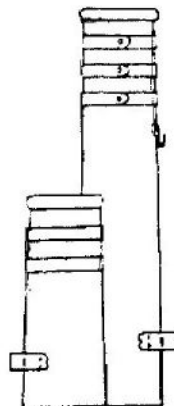
Narrowboat 'Wylo'

White Lion Wharf

Startops End

Marsworth, Tring

Herts HP23 4LJ



Telephone: 0836 242565

More Recommended Pubs

The Plough Inn at Mancetter (Bridge 36) on the Coventry Canal. Only a ten minute walk from the bridge (turn left at the church - the Plough is next to it), this pub provides excellent beer and wholesome home-cooked food. It is highly recommended.

Your Worst Nightmare!

All boat owners must sometimes have become concerned that they might have to cover the cost of engine breakdown after the manufacturer's warranty has expired. Now, thanks to the ingenuity of insurers, it is possible to purchase engine breakdown cover, a risk that previously no underwriter was prepared to consider.

At a cost of £12.50 a month, the cover can be obtained from Engine Breakdown Cover Limited - a sister company of the Basic Boat Liability Company, who have advertised in this magazine for some time. They can be contacted on 0181 741 5554 or at Royal House, 74 Dalling Road, Hammersmith, London W6 0JA.

British Waterways - Booklets

"Caring for Britain's Waterways"

This is a very interesting little booklet that only came my way recently, although I see that it was published in 1996. Designed for anyone interested in canals, it

gives details of what BW do and illustrated by colourful pictures it covers the whole gamut of information available to waterway users, of all descriptions. A useful section gives the contact details for national and regional offices, although some of these need updating - something I understand that BW are doing at the moment.

"Our Plan for the Future 1999 - 2003"

If you are interested in seeing what BW plans to do in the short-term, then this is the booklet to get. Beautifully illustrated (heaven knows what it has cost to produce), and showing all that is best on the waterways, there is a list of "Plan Pledges" under the headings of "Heritage, Environment & Traditions", "Communities" and "Navigation". These state, in broad terms, what BW think it should be doing over the next few years. They comment that as this is their first published plan they want feedback! Contact the Chief Executive, David Fletcher with your views.

To obtain a copy of either of these booklets, contact BW at:
Customer Services, British Waterways, Willow Grange, Church Road
Watford. WD1 3QA
Tel: 01923 201120
Fax: 01923 201300

Michael Stimpson & Associates

in conjunction with

Navigators and General

part of Eagle Star

are pleased to offer members of the

National Association of Boat Owners

a

10% discount

on normal terms

on craft insured through this special scheme.

All you have to do to obtain a special quotation with no obligation is to fill in the quotation request form and send it to

Michael Stimpson & Associates

6 Norfolk Road, Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 IQE

or fax the form to: 01923 721559

or phone the details through on 01923 770425.

Your new policy will include:

£1,000,000 Third Party Liability

Cover for **Personal Effects** at no increase in premium.

Monthly premium option.

Transfer of existing No claims Bonus.

No survey required on craft up to 20 years of age.

Optional Legal Protection cover.

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

N.A.B.O. Members Insurance - Quotation Request Form

Please note: This form is not a proposal and does not commit you or the insurers to a contract of insurance. A quotation will be submitted for your consideration together with a proposal. A specimen policy can be provided on request.

Name
Address
Post Code

Craft Details

Name		Type	
Age	Value	Length	Beam

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

Engine	Diesel <input type="checkbox"/>	Inboard <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Petrol <input type="checkbox"/>	Outboard <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Steam <input type="checkbox"/>		
	L.P.G. <input type="checkbox"/>		

HP. _____

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"/>		Brest/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

PSEUDONYM'S VIEW FROM THE COUNCIL

Have you noticed that the one fine Saturday in every six is when there is a Council meeting? Probably not, but we have. We sit in a room with the sun pouring through the floor to ceiling windows wishing that we were cruising whilst we wrestle with the latest bureaucracy that people who like feeling important throw at us.

Simon Greer was welcomed and is now our North-west rep.

Part of the meeting was taken up with trying to see how reps can have their concerns met without the meeting going into next week. There is just too much going on and we all want to have our say. But we also want a short meeting, so we have done the usual compromise and increased the meeting by half an hour.

One member had reported a boat breaking the BSS by having oil lamps and a bath that wasn't strapped down. They were surprised that these were not covered by the regulations. Your fire extinguishers may be the wrong colour (blue being safe for the previous certificate but now red is the only allowable hue) but oil lamps are OK. Strap down your fire, fridge and cooker but baths and other furniture are exempt.

When membership was discussed it was gratifying to note the number

of boat clubs that have joined. We have also attracted some associate members and this before we start campaigning with our stall at rallies.

A rep has started the ball rolling collecting hints and tips for a section on towpath awareness, to counteract towpath aggression. This is to be included in the next BW boaters guide. My suggestion of a big gun (deactivated), big husband (demented) and a large vicious dog (deknackered) were not to be included, but we don't have much trouble.

Jim gave a glowing report of BW management at the Docklands marina with rubbish being collected from the boats on a daily basis. This unfortunately doesn't extend to Paddington Basin where the moorers are being told to move without being offered an alternative site. They are holding to the original plan of a few historical boats (to provide colour) lots of short boats and walkways across the basin.

BW would like to allow angling on some visitor moorings during the winter months. Looks like they are still trying to close the system down in the winter.

Plans for Birmingham Old Mail Sorting Office are taking up many

organisations' time. NABO has decided to concentrate on the retention of boating facilities and leave the other aspects to IWA etc.

Cycling on the K&A is still causing a problem, likewise London. It is the mass cycling that we are against, which is incidentally against BW's own bye laws. Unfortunately in many cases it is the Council that pay for the towpath maintenance and cycling is politically correct. NABO is unanimous in wanting cyclists to have licences and pay for them, bearing in mind that boaters have their cycling licence included with their cruising licence. We are also concerned over the safety aspects. Ian White of BW has overall responsibility if you have any views on the subject.

Sadie brought up the lack of facilities on the Middle level. Having a large holding tank I think the facilities at March are more than adequate. Sadie mentioned a family with a porta pottie who had to return to March every few days. Obviously this is not satisfactory for them. It is a good job that we have a goodly mix of boaters on council so all boaters are represented.

Single handed boaters are particularly handicapped due to a lack of thought by BW. The railings at Farmers Bridge locks make it especially difficult to get on

and off a boat, also at Chemistry lock at Chester where there is nowhere to tie whilst working the locks. Any more examples?

Reciprocal licences between BW and EA were discussed. There are two options at present:

a general 2-3% increase for all, which is not popular with people who don't or can't venture onto canals as their boats are too wide or deep or those who don't wish to visit EA's rivers. Too much water going too fast.

The second option is a "golden licence" which would only be purchased if you want to use both systems. The snag is it would be very much dearer. When BW and EA have tossed a coin to see which will bring them the most money I expect we will hear. I am hoping for the first as the freedom to anywhere for any length of time is one thing I wouldn't mind paying for but it is too expensive it will be another nail in the coffin.

The Thames locks needn't be enlarged as there are now less boats using them. Price boats off the system then no improvements are needed.

We finally discussed the events that we will be attending. Braunston, Wendover, Newark and Worcester. Come and talk to us and give us your views. If you can give us a break on the stand, it will be appreciated.



Third Party Insurance

£1m from £30

0181 741 4914

(General enquiries Mon-Fri 9am-5:30pm)

Tel: 0181 477 5055 (24hr brochure request only)

LETTERS

Dear Wendy,

My neighbouring boat informs me that we may be liable to pay council tax particularly himself as he only moves to go to the pump out, once every seven days and a distance of four minutes boating.

I take the view that a narrow boat is not fixed, it has no foundations, it is not 'annexed' to the land, be the bank freehold or leasehold, and in fact the rights if any attaching to the ownership of a boat cannot extend or aspire to be more exhaustive in extent or comprehension than such basic riparian rights as would not on any examination attract a charge to tax.

I am sure I have read that the Authorities cannot seek to make an owner pay council tax. I am writing to ask if this is the view of the Association.

What has been the experience of my co-members.?

Leslie Burke
n.b. 'Camelot II'

Dear Wendy

In Issue 8/98 of NABO News you mentioned doggy waste bins at Brewood and suggested that members may well approach other councils.

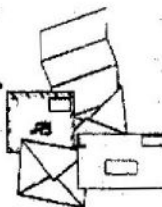
I enclose copies of the correspondence we had with Brewood Parish Council and the result was the installation of the bins. I am writing this to prove that it is possible to get things done just by pointing out problems to the authorities. I appreciate it does not work every time but when it does it gives one enormous satisfaction.

Syd and Margaret Beacroft
Alfreton.

Thank you for sending me the correspondence. It appears that your letter to Brewood Parish Council, which was passed to South Staffordshire Council, had the desired effect. It was interesting to see that a local authority is prepared to provide appropriate signs and to empty the bins for sites that meet their criteria. Congratulations to BW for agreeing to purchase the waste bins and install them. Perhaps a few more of us should contact the appropriate authorities when we see a site in need of this facility.

I would add that there are some boaters who could do with a reminder that we do not want their dogs fouling the towpaths; it is not only dog walkers that have the responsibility to keep the area clean.

Wendy



Many of you will have read the March Waterways World article on the Ombudsman's 'end of garden mooring' decision. My identify as the complainant was not published but as the complainant I can tell NABO members directly that the article does not entirely reflect the content of the correspondence between myself and Mr Edell. Without going into details the significant omission was the clear acknowledgment by Mr Edell that his decisions do not carry the authority of law. They are not therefore legally enforceable. Only a court can make such decisions and Mr Edell in his final letter to me advises me of this fact. This is very significant because it effectively make his adjudications irrelevant in any meaningful legal sense. I therefore anticipate continuing not to pay mooring fees for my boat on my own mooring on the Macclesfield canal because the Enabling Act of 1836 provides me as a freeholder with a Statutory Right so to do. I have read the Act, I have seen it in print.

I will keep NABO advised as to the outcome.

Separately I believe as a campaigning Association we have seemingly not yet fully appreciated the significance of BW's declared Intention of 'MAKING CHARGES TO THE LIMIT THE MARKET WILL BEAR. They have told me in

'BW speak' that they intend to "raise prices until the pips squeak'. That means that if we write cheques out to BW for moorings or licences or rent etc without telling them that it hurts, we guarantee, by the very act of paying without declaring distress, that those same prices will sooner or later will go up. This is a real catch 22 situation for the prompt non-complaining payer. So to let BW know they have now reached the limit of my purse, I now operate a personal strategy that I recommend to all other boaters. When my licence renewal comes, I post the prompt payment cheque off for the majority of the money, less an amount I can't cover because I don't have the cash. I explain I am not trying to avoid payment and BW will receive the balance as I can find it. I explain I am presently seeking a loan from a friend, the bank, my employer. As promised the balance follows and in the case of last year in £5 amounts over 5 weeks. I believe this approach to paying BW has 3 benefits.

- a) It demonstrated to BW that they have now reached the limit of my pocket.
- b) It says I am not a defaulter or licence dodger.

c) It addresses directly the charging issue.

d) I feel I am doing something personally to make a point about this important issue.

May I recommend it to other boaters. I recommend that NABO adopt this as an 'anti increase prices' tactic. To those lucky boaters who can afford more may I ask why should your deep pockets determine the size of my bills?

In addition I put 'out of hours' messages on the Licence Evasion Hotline Answerphone in the certain knowledge that my messages get right to the heart of BW's internal communications. eg. 'I am a dissatisfied customer. I need to advise you that your charges have now reached the limit of my pocket and are too high. Please do not increase them any more. Would you be happy if your mortgage company increased your monthly repayments to the limit someone richer than you can afford?

I'd like to make a heart felt prediction. That unless we get a grip of this single issue very quickly, boating will become the most expensive leisure activity by far and that will be to everyone's chagrin and it will be our own fault
Simon Greer

Dear Wendy

In the February edition of Canal Boat an article entitled "Fire!" quotes the insurance companies as stating that " - - , the number of fires occurring is now down to a third or better." than the figures before the BSS. I notice that BW have quoted this independent source, with some justification, as an indicator of the success of the BSS. Regarding the insurance aspect; in my simple-minded way, I would expect this huge 66% "or better" reduction in the risk of fire on boats to be reflected in a reduction in insurance premiums. By coincidence, I went through the exercise of contacting about 10 insurance companies before my own renewal last August, and there was no evidence then of any drop in premiums (amusingly, my existing insurance company advertised that they could undercut other quotes by up to one third, so I rang them anonymously and they said that there was no way that they could even match the price which had been quoted on the renewal invitation!).

It does seem to be a bit unjust that BW and boat owners have between them paid out thousands (if not millions) of pounds to make boats safer, if the insurers do not reflect this reduction in risk with a reduction in premiums. If my premiums were reduced by as little as one third, at least it would pay for the replacement of my fire extinguishers over the period between BSS tests!

Geoff Monk
Wantage

END PIECES

Warning - Boat Heaters

There is concern about the older pattern Rematron Gas Boat Heaters because of corrosion of the heat exchangers which were made of mild steel. These were replaced in later products by stainless steel but anyone with one of the older heaters should take note. Information concerning

Rematron Heaters can be obtained from: Kreguer Ltd, Kreuger House, Queensway, Unit 16, Stem Lane Industrial Estate, New Milton, Hants BH25 5NN. (Tel: 01425 619869).

Kreuger supply and repair most makes of boat heaters and are helpful with information

Small Ads

a free service to members - contact editor

Elite Furnishing armchair with storage box under seat

Covered in dark green fabric with small motive. Almost new

Surplus to requirements. £100.

Buyer collects - but it dismantles easily and will go into a car.

Ring Ken on 01234 355323

Memory Lane Samplers

Cross stitch kits of the Waterways Rings & Canals Available in 14, 16 or 18 count Aida, with Anchor threads

£12.00 each

no post or packing charge
Send for full colour brochure
3 Clare Road, Bedford
MK41 8QX

Dunton Double windlass.

Available from Christine Denton
Contact details on back page.
or call at NB "India", at Mancetter

Normal throw: **£15.00**

Longer throw: **£17.00**

p & p **£1.50 per windlass**

Cheques payable to 'NABO' please.

Red, white & Blue

BUNTING

Large triangles Excellent quality

£15.00 per 10 metre length

+ £1.50 p & p

Suitable for all special events

NABO COUNCIL MEMBERS

Sue Burchett

Secretary

Roger Davis

Membership Secretary

Sadie Dean

East Anglia rep

Christine Denton

Marketing/Rallies

John Denton

Strategic Planning

Simon Greer

NW rep

Peter Foster

NE Rep

Jim Hutchinson

London rep

Peter Lea

Chairman

Phillip Ogden

Special Projects/Disabled

Nigel Parkinson

Engineering Officer

Stephen Peters

River Users Co-ordinator

Geoffrey Rogerson

Vice Chairman/S Rep

Andrew Sherrey

Treasurer

John Stephens

Midlands rep

Editor: Wendy Hook,

Tel/Fax:

E-mail:

Designed & Typeset by Star Office Services - Tel/Fax: 01234 355323

Printed by Berrington Print - Tel/Fax: 0121 248 4099