



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Issue: 3/00

**BOAT SAFETY  
STANDARD  
SPECIAL !!**

# NABO News

# Editorial

(or The Travels of Thurzaway)

Setting out on Good Friday, we have been to Stratford (and back as the Avon was closed to navigation due to the heavy rain), Worcester, Stourport, Nantwich, Chester and back to our base on the Leicester Arm. I think the only sort of weather that we didn't encounter was snow - but then again, that storm that Wednesday was very cold!

We have met many NABO members and have spread the

word to other boaters handing out a few membership forms to those most interested.

Among the interesting people we spoke to were a founder member who threatens to be carried from his boat feet first before he'll give up boating; a most helpful reverend gentleman in Diglis Basin; those who greeted me as "Mrs NABO"; and those who didn't remember where they'd heard of Thurzaway until we'd passed them and who then shouted out good wishes - you all made a very good break all the better!

Now it's your turn - I would welcome any (short) articles about your travels on the cut this summer. Let me know where you're going, or have been and I'll print as many as possible. I hope my postman has a strong back!

*Wendy*

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## THE CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

I will start with a little bit of good news. NABO has gained a concession on the

renewal of the Boat Safety Certificate. If you get your boat tested two months before the due date you will now have two months to do any work needed. The new Boat Safety Certificate will then run from the end of your last Boat Safety Certificate. A small concession but a useful one.

British Waterways are likening the Boat Safety Certificate to the M.O.T. I have told British Waterways that the big difference is that if your car fails it may be very inconvenient, but the car can sit in a garage or even on a piece of waste land until a repair can be effected. A boat that fails may not easily be moved to an area where a BSC is not required. Marinas, especially those run by BW, require boats have to have a valid licence. No certificate. No licence! Where are the boats that fail going? The Boat Safety Scheme figures are that 18706 failure certificates have been issued, 4,152 have still not passed.

The Boat Safety Scheme desperately needs sorting which is why 7 user group chairmen got together and wrote to Dr Greener asking for an independent review.

The reply was that BW & EA would have a review. Dr Fletcher had one three years ago and the result is still with us. We next asked for an independent chairman and a user group representative to be on the panel. The reply, two IWACC members can act as "advisors". To keep you informed we have printed the letters in full elsewhere in the magazine (see page 11). NABO asked Lord Whitty (the Minister responsible for canals) at the Parliamentary Waterways Group. Again it was turned down. Tony Ellis of the RYA then said that the signatories would withdraw from the review, and a press release has been issued. We feel it is a waste of all our time to take part in a whitewash. The saga will be continued in the next issue.

What has happened to safety on the towpath? After being told last year by Roger Herrington that a way would be found to control stinging nettles we can see no improvement. The tow path edges are still not being cut, although I have noticed in some areas that the weeds are cut right into the hedge. Members are complaining about the dangers of stepping off their boats; dog mess is hidden in the long vegetation; legs and hands are being scratched & stung, when attempting to get off

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the boat or hunting for hidden mooring rings; tree stumps hiding in the undergrowth are damaging expensive paintwork.

Meanwhile vast sums are being spent on marketing. BW is going into the pub trade, the Greyhound

at Hawkesbury. The number of BW festivals are growing. Marinas are being bought, even on waterways not controlled by them. They are organising their own volunteers. BW is taking over everything. Is this what we want?

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## **Bear Essentials: View from Council 6 May 2000**

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Old boaters don't die - they get choked by BSS Bureaucracy and can't afford the treatment. That's what the membership is telling us, on the letters from those not renewing membership.

Some who moored on rivers are going to sea to escape. Here however it seems that the Merchant and Navy ships wouldn't pass the BSS!

After a grand united effort with all the interested groups asking for an independent review of the BSS we now find that the independent bit needs fighting for and the 'united' bit is falling by the wayside as groups are entering into separate talks. Is the old divide and rule tactic being used?

We need to have the whole BSS thing reviewed and simplified. Where has the idea of 'messaging about in boats' gone. Can't we relax with our hobby?

NO! not if Sustrans get their estimated quarter of a million cyclists out and whizzing about on their cyclathon.

How long are you intending to carry on living? For ever? Or perhaps not quite that long. It could be worth your while to take up life membership of NABO.

It seems that you might feel like you are living that long if you are going to the festival at Crick. There are long delays from queues at Watford Locks on a 'normal' weekend. How will they cope with the numbers attending and wanting to arrive in time or make a quick escape. Why not use the time telling people about NABO - they will all be boaters.

What is the difference between IWF and NWF? Are the organisers of Canal 2000 calling it IWF to try to confuse us? Remember that much restoration

is financed from profit from NWF. This year's is at Waltham Abbey. NABO will be at all those festivals and Wendover and Child Beale on the Thames. You should be able to get our new smaller round and oblong stickers by then.

Canal users are frequently unaware of how different things are when boating on rivers. Stephen Peters has been working on a very useful information leaflet, which Roger has been putting together. It includes input from those with local knowledge. Altogether it will be a great help to us adventuring onto the flowing waterways and I'm looking forward to getting my hands on the finished article for reference purposes.

More on mooring - We don't agree with boaters "bridge hopping" nor with those who continually move between two close moorings, but we would like to be consulted before new legislation is introduced and for its interpretation to be the same in all regions.

One flight of locks on the Shropshire Union is being painted grey and white instead of the usual black and white. BW want our opinions on this. Oh how nice that they will (maybe) take users views into consideration on the really important waterway issues!

## What is "Backlog of Maintenance"

A user group meeting with BW brought home to me the meaning of 'backlog of maintenance'. It seemed that because of it, many jobs done in the winter created more work. For example, when wanting to drain a section of the canal it is frequently found that the stop plant grooves are unusable so the canal has to be dammed off using membranes and clay. This should be brought to the site by water but when there are craft available that are suitable for bringing it, then there isn't one fitted with the right equipment to unload and place it. TYPO

This means diggers etc have to be brought in by road and get access to the site via the towpath. Towpaths weren't designed for this and some aren't in a state to take this traffic or show up weaknesses once used so more work is created.

Part of the work to be done includes reinstatement of the stop plant grooves and creation of new ones to make things easier in the future. Then of course all the dams and related materials must be removed and the canal and towpath made good.

A straightforward job made difficult because of the 'Backlog of Maintenance'.

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# RIVER REVIEW

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Bogus ICCs have been issued at £3.00 each. The real ICC is available only from the RYA at a cost of £26.00 to non-members and free to members. The only difference is that you need to take an exam. Don't get caught out.

In the North-east area NABO has been represented at nearly all user meetings. My thanks to all the members who attend on my behalf. What we now need is more members so BW know they have a strong "boaters only" pressure group looking after only the interests of boaters. Fly the flag, or at least display the sticker.

Torksey lock now has another 40m of moorings. Fishermen are not happy and try to prevent mooring. Contact the lock-keepers if you have a problem. We now need further mooring extensions on the Trent to cope with the increased in the number of boats (BW figures) and the further increase when BW's new marina is built in Newark. All boaters should moor up as close to each other as possible. There must be better use of the available space.

If you are on the Trent, remember that Power Boats are legal in (marked) areas for the water-ski clubs. It is up to you to make sure you don't get water in your boat

from their wash. Cover up.

Swimming in the Trent is illegal. There have been prosecutions. Report swimming to the lock-keeper.

Speeding causes problems to other boaters, but it is really the wash and wave patterns that actually causes the problems. Watch your wash, especially if your boat is not designed for slow river speeds, as these boats make a lot of wash at low speeds.

If navigating at night, or in poor visibility, use navigation lights to be seen. Towing boats should have white front, red back. The ARA are addressing the issue.

If you feel threatened or under attack from missiles, phone 999 and use the key words and the Police have to attend.

August Bank Holiday sees the new railway bridge going in on the East Coast Main Line over the Trent at Newark. There will be closures to navigation. Contact the Lock-keeper at Newark Nether lock for information.

BW have done a lot of repair/improvement work at locks in the north-east. Automatic (user) operation is being installed and all locks will eventually be set up with

the same programme. Trent users are not happy. It will slow down locking and there will be no way to fast fill an empty lock. A backward step BW!

Have you seen a Honda generator number 1459434. A friend of mine had it removed from her boat recently. Information should be passed to Alan Linley, Patrol Officer c/o The Kiln at Newark.

BW are looking into a "Silver licence". A bit below a Gold but allowing river licence holders to go onto Environment Agency water in the same way as the boats with a full BW licence. This is a good thing especially for the Trent/Witham/Wash users going into/ from East Anglia. Hope you agree it all soon with the EA.

Someone fell off a narrowboat down the Trent near Keadby. She was very lucky as she was in the water at least 10 minutes. Basic cause seemed to be navigating across the current in tidal waters and fetching up broadside against a bridge pillar. No life jacket was visible. Rivers are dangerous !!

If you have problems with small boats being hired out let the local BW manager know. There have been problems in the past on the Soar and Witham. Also, tell NABO.

BW are hoping to develop areas of

Leeds near the Armouries. Good luck to them - it's a mess now!

The new offices in Leeds are good and have resulted in 3 other sites being brought together thus saving money and also generating income in time from the old Dock Street Offices. At last BW seems to be being run as a proper business, at any rate in the north-east. Income and savings have already been achieved in Newark, with possibly more to come - but don't forget the little dry dock. Further moves in this direction elsewhere could make it possible for BW to reduce the licence fees so we can afford the increased costs caused by BSS changes.

BW now run the Tees. Keith Boswell at Naburn is the manager. I'm told on good authority that there are marked improvements relating to zoning and timing for different conflicted water related activities. Now we want NABO members from there. Anyone out there? We also need a local rep, as it is a long way to Newark.

Finally, Derek Richardson (your new additional rep in the north-east) and I think it may be useful to hold a NABO meeting to meet members and have a general chat. We are looking for a venue in a central location in the NE BW area and will let you know in due course. Anyone got a venue?

## **NABO Guidance Papers**

The newly compiled NABO booklet "Safe Navigation on Rivers" has now rolled off the presses and will be of particular interest to narrowboat owners venturing on to rivers where special precautions will be needed and unfamiliar conditions will be encountered. This new booklet is free to members and can be purchased for a small fee by non-members.

In addition, guidance papers on Marine VHF radio, Ship Registration and Buying a Boat have been updated and re-issued.

Ask our River Users' Co-ordinator for details of these unique services to NABO members.

## **Windermere 10 M.P.H. By-law**

A Public Inquiry was held in 1994 and the Inspector's report submitted to the then Secretary of State early in 1996, concerning the application made by the Lake District Special Planning Board for a 10 mph speed limit to be imposed on the entire area of Lake Windermere.

After many years of delay Environment Minister Chris Mullin has recently approved the introduction of the new regulations which will apply from 2005. The

effect of the speed limit will be to ban water skiers and jet-ski enthusiasts as well as the many speed boats and high powered leisure craft presently based on or using the lake.

The decision has been welcomed by environmental groups and residents and other lake users but may not be such good news for a number of boating companies and marinas who derive their income from catering for the needs of the owners of sports cruisers. We have a full copy of the Inspector's Report in which one objector could not understand why anyone would wish to travel at high speed in a boat without a purpose. But is not the ability to travel at speed the reason why many people purchase such craft? It was argued that these boats would be able to use the open seas around the coast but this could jeopardise boat owners who were not familiar with the ways of the sea and the adverse conditions which they may encounter.

No doubt the implications of this new bylaw will take some time to become apparent but it is feasible that owners of boats wishing to travel at high speed or to tow skiers will be seeking alternative



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inland waters for their pastime. A short stretch of the River Nene below Peterborough is already set aside for unrestricted speeding and water-skiing and similar activities also take place on Oulton Broad in a regulated fashion. However, unregulated high speed boating occurs at other locations such as the River Severn upstream from Stourport (beyond the jurisdiction of BW!) and no doubt pressure will arise on other rivers and lakes as a result of the Windermere decision.

### **Time Gentlemen Please!**

The Government has recently issued a White Paper setting out proposals for a new system for licensing and controlling the sale and supply of alcohol. The new regulations have received extensive media publicity but little has been made of the implications for boats on inland waterways.

Following the Thames Safety Inquiry it is now intended to license the sale of alcohol on boats travelling within England & Wales for the first time. Previously, trip boats and the like were exempt from licensing laws once they cast off from the shore and this has been an undoubted attraction for the clients of disco-parties and passenger boats on canals and rivers. It also greatly assists with the funding of

commercial trip boats operated by charities and trusts.

Like all good things, this freedom to consume intoxicating liquor on inland waterways will now be subject to stringent licensing, which is intended to be a new function to be assigned to local councils rather than licensing magistrates as at present. A named crew member would have to obtain a licence and be present on board before alcohol could be legally sold on board and in the event of misconduct occurring on board it would be possible for a police officer to order the boat to return to its operating base.

### **You Can't See it,**

#### **You Can't Smell it .....**

There has been considerable press publicity in recent concerning the lethal danger of carbon monoxide poisoning, following the tragic death of an inexperienced boat owner who left his outboard engine running with the engine cover into the cabin incompletely closed.

NABO has received offers of special rates for CO detectors, gas detectors and smoke alarms from a number of supportive firms and if you would like to compare prices and items available, our Technical Representative Stephen Peters has the details.

# **Selling your narrowboat?**

**Do it fast and cheap  
through the Internet!**

Two photographs - the outside and inside of your narrowboat - together with a full description in a big display advertisement for either £25 for a month or £50 until sold.

**Quote your NABO membership number  
and get a THIRD off!**

That's just £16.75 a month or £33.50 until sold!

Log on to **narrowboatworld.com** and be surprised ...

The site contains numerous pages including: news, columns, cruises, bandits, stoppages, letters, societies, boat building, boat equipment, boat sales and boat hire.

e-mail: [narrowboatworld@3springswood.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:narrowboatworld@3springswood.freeserve.co.uk)

narrowboatworld, Unit 3 Sutton Springs Wood,  
Chesterfield, S44 5XF

Telephone: 01246 854495

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# BOAT SAFETY SCHEME - SPECIAL

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*The following press release was issued jointly by NABO and the other boating organisations to express their concerns regarding the attitude of British Waterways over the Boat Safety Scheme review. It is printed here in full for your information and is followed by copies of the letters sent to British Waterways Chairman and the replies received from him and from British Waterways Chief Executive.*

*These letters are followed by general information about the Boat Safety Scheme collected by NABO's Technical Representative, Stephen Peters. NABO trust that this information will be useful to all members.*

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## Press Release

### **BSS Review Not Independent, say Major User Groups**

Boating user groups today expressed their concern that the internal review of the Boat Safety Scheme set up jointly by British Waterways and Environment Agency will have neither an independent chairman nor user representation. The review panel consists of just two people - a BW technical officer and an Environment Agency health and safety officer.

All the major navigation bodies - the RYA, IWA, AWCC, NABO and RBOA - had asked Waterways Minister Lord Whitty to set up an independent, impartial inquiry into the much-criticised scheme at their meeting with him in March. Representatives told the Minister the scheme was over burdensome, over regulated and rapidly becoming unworkable.

Len Walton, Chairman of the RYA's Inland Waters Panel, comments: "User groups are disappointed that their requests for an independent inquiry and a meeting with BW's Chairman have been turned down. They are also concerned that the review is not an independent inquiry, and its conclusions and recommendations are likely to be influenced by others within BW and the EA.

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The AWCC's Technical Officer, David Smith, adds: "We fear the review's scope will be limited and it may not consider more global issues, such as the overall approach of the Scheme, its relevance to the safety of boaters, its responsiveness to complaints, and the impact on it of other legislation. These are areas where serious criticisms have been levelled."

Boating organisations are at pains to point out that they intend no criticism of the persons appointed to carry out the review, wither from BW or the EA, or as advisors. But, says the IWA's former Chairman, David Stevenson, "the rejection by Dr Fletcher of both an independent inquiry and an independent chairman will lead most boaters and others involved in the Scheme to conclude that the review is not intended to produce the essential far-reaching reforms the Scheme needs."

Notes for Editors:

1. The RYA, IWA, AWCC, NABO and RBOA plus the BMIF and TBA wrote to BW Chairman Dr George Greener in March calling for a meeting to air their concerns and asking for an independent inquiry. Dr Greener declined to meet them and referred the issue to BW Chief Executive David Fletcher. Dr Fletcher's response was to set up an internal review to consider changes to the BSS, made up of a BW Technical Officer and an Environment Agency health and safety officer.

2. Users then asked that the review have an independent chairman, putting forward the name of IWAAC member Tony Hirst, as well as a representative from the User Groups. Dr Fletcher refused these requests, but agreed to appoint two members of IWAAC, including Mr Hirst, as 'advisors' to the review team. No details of the terms of reference of the review team or the role and scope of the 'advisors' have been issued.

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Dr George Greener  
Chairman  
British Waterways  
Willow Grange  
Church Road  
Watford WD1 3QA

Please reply to Legal & Government Affairs  
Division at RYA Eastleigh (above)

12th March 2000

Dear Dr Greener

The undersigned organisations represent a high percentage of boat users and the boating industry in the United Kingdom and, despite our fears over the future development of the Boat Safety Scheme we remain committed to safety afloat. Most of us had deep concerns about the scheme during the passage of the original Bill through Parliament and only agreed to withdraw our opposition on the strength of reassurances over such issues as its application to older vessels and on the question of cost. In the intervening years there has been a gathering ground swell of concern by members of all our organisations, many of whom are now concerned that what began as a sound idea has grown in both cost and complexity, with little apparent gain in safety afloat.

Our broad support for boat safety is evident when you consider how representatives from our respective organisations have - so far - spent many hours in committee sessions and other meetings with British Waterways and Environment Agency staff on BSS issues. We do not wish to see this effort wasted and it is with regret that we now feel it necessary to air our frustration with the current situation

With the advent of the Recreational Craft Directive (RCD) -which offers a number of parallel (but simpler) provisions - we consider it timely for a fundamental and independent review of the Boat Safety Scheme. Such a review might include.

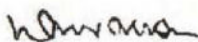
- a thorough assessment of its effectiveness (including a detailed cost/benefit analysis);

- a study of the business case - and whether it might be better outsourced;
- a detailed consideration of its current complexity and the resultant impact on both customer and the boating industry;
- an urgent study as to the harmonisation of the BSS and the RCD

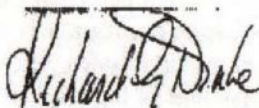
We are not advocating the total dismantling of what, with some sound pruning and redrafting, could become a useful adjunct to safe and practical boat building and use in this country. Instead, we see that the BSS could well evolve to become a form of 'waterbourne MOT test' for the assessment of CE marked craft after the 4-year period. This would also overcome the looming clash of jurisdiction in 2002 given our understanding as to the pre-eminence of the RCD, based as it is on European Law.

We would welcome the opportunity of meeting with you - as Chairman of the BSS administrative body - in order that we can express our serious concerns and discuss how best to take the matter forward in a constructive manner.

Yours sincerely



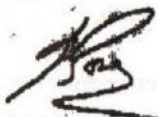
Len Walton  
Chairman  
RYA  
Inland Waters Panel



Richard Drake  
Chairman  
Inland Waterways Association



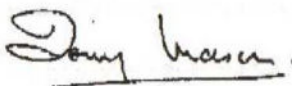
Howard Pridding  
Executive Director  
BMIF



John Ross  
Chairman  
Residential Boat  
Owners Association



Sue Burchett  
Chairman  
National Association  
of Boat Owners



Tony Mason  
Chairman  
Association of  
Waterway Cruising  
Clubs



Tony Henshaw  
Chairman  
Trent Boating  
Association



## British Waterways

Chairman  
George P. Greener

Ms S Burchett  
Chairman  
National Association of Boat Owners

21 March 2000

Dear Ms.Burchett

I appreciate and accept your concerns. I was not entirely surprised to receive your letter following what I thought was an excellent meeting with Mr Henshaw and his colleagues.

Those of you who already know me will know that I am more than happy to meet to discuss important and sometimes difficult and contentious issues. In this case I do not think that a meeting is yet necessary in order to take matters forward.

I believe that the chief executive officers of the joint sponsors of the Scheme should review your request as a matter of urgency. I have talked with Dave Fletcher who has willingly agreed to action this and include Ed Gallagher in the process. I will make sure that I am kept in the picture.

I acknowledge your commitment to safety and thank you for your support for the Boat Safety Scheme. I note that you are not advocating that it should be dismantled and that there is, therefore, a good base from which Dave and Ed can address matters.

*Yours sincerely,*

*George Greener*

George Greener  
Chairman



## **British Waterways**

**Chief Executive  
Dr David J Fletcher**

Ms. Sue Burchett,  
Chairman,  
National Association of Boat Owners

29th March, 2000.

Dear Ms. Burchett,

Your letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> March to Dr. Qreener has been passed to Mr. Gallagher and myself for our consideration, as chief executives of the joint sponsoring bodies of the Boat Safety Scheme

In the light of your request and other developments, we have now directed a review of the progress to date and the future development of the Scheme be conducted by Mr. Schlegel, Technical Director of BW, and Mr. Andy Crilly, National Health & Safety Adviser of the Environment Agency.

It is our understanding that you have a number of specific concerns relating to the Scheme. It would be most helpful to the new review if you could write to me detailing your concerns, which will then be considered as part of the review

When we have received your responses, we suggest a meeting between us would be useful to clarify views and to set a timetable for completion of the review.

We believe that the Boat Safety Scheme represents an enormous and much needed step forward which has, in large part, been achieved by cooperation with many other bodies, including yourselves. We seek to continue that cooperation and thus welcome this new opportunity to conduct a review with your support

Yours sincerely,

D.J.FLETCHER  
Chief Executive



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## **Boat Safety Scheme Committees**

The BSS has a number of committees on which representatives sit to safeguard the interests of boat owners.

### **The Advisory Group:**

2 members appointed by the BSS Management Committee - David Allison & John Redmond

3 members from BMIF - Messrs Pridding, Wallace & Mitchell

IWA - John Baylis

RYA - Dr Mark Warner

AWCC - David Smith

NABO - James Mason

MCA - David Ralph

RINA - John Pope

I Mar E - Peter Hopley

YDSA - Roger Lorenz

Assn of BS Examiners - Brian Hayes

SCMS - Norman Finley

### **The Technical Committee:**

2 members appointed by the BSS Management Committee - John Ackhurst & Graham Watts

1 BMIF Technical Manager - Tom Nighy

1 User Rep from Advisory Group - John Baylis (IWA)

1 Surveyor Rep from Advisory Group - P Mitchell

1 Examiner Rep - Roger Page

2 co-optees - Nigel Parkinson (NABO) & David Fuller BSS QA Surveyor

### **The Management Committee comprises:**

Dr David Fletcher - BW Chief Executive

Bill Schlegel - BW Technical Director

Ian White - BW

David Allison - BSS

John Redmond - EA

Eileen McKeever - EA

David Smith - AWCC

Dr Mark Warner - RYA

### **More BSS Facts & Figures**

HM Customs & Excise are involved in a dispute with BW over the application of VAT on BSCs watch out for yet another price increase!

BW Research Department monitors safety on its waterways by means of sample surveys of its customers. In 1997 (the most recent year for which the figures have been published) a 40% response rate involving 1600 customers reported 216 boating-related incidents - the majority involved falling overboard or tripping over some object or the craft hitting an obstruction in the water. "Very few of the incidents involved matters touching the BSS" according to David Allison, Manager of the Boat Safety Scheme.

Bill Schelgel, BW Technical Director, has recently been appointed as a permanent member of the BSS Management Committee.

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The Trent Boating Association is currently pursuing a BSS Appeal involving non-metallic spills rails on diesel engines - a major headache over the past 4 years.

BW have confirmed that it is permissible for a non-CORGI registered BSS Examiner to conduct gas soundness tests on PRIVATE craft because they are not subject to the Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations. However, commercial and residential boats are a different case because they are covered by the GSIUR and, except for an existing bubble tester, a soundness test can only be carried out by a CORGI registered competent person.

The BSS Management Committee is rather sensitive to the recent adverse press publicity the scheme has received and has resolved to establish a PR system to promote the BSS positively. We understand that a recent Press Release promotes the fact that both BSA and EA are spending money to subsidise the BSS in order to keep costs to the boating public down. That's very good of them!

### **BSS Technical Manual**

Now that the latest amendments have been incorporated into the complimentary copies of the Technical Manual held by NABO it

is well worth describing the key features of the weighty tomes, copies of which are held by Stephen Peters, James Mason and Nigel Parkinson (who is still willing to give advice to members - thank you Nigel).

Items include:

The BSS is a self-financing scheme - well it is meant to be funded from training courses and sales of certificates amongst other things but will have to be subsidised by BW and EA until 2004!

All boats with navigation lights require a BSC whether powered or not.

Boats with Dept of Transport certificates (including passenger certificates and MCA certificates for commercial charter craft) do NOT require a BSC.

CE marked craft, covered by the Recreational Craft Directive, and having a Declaration of Conformity, may use the Declaration in lieu of a BSC for the first 4 years. Thereafter, they have to be examined to ensure that they still conform.

Commercial vessels on commercial waterways do not need to comply with the Boat Safety standards

A navigation authority may act upon information received from BSS - beware Big Brother is watching you!

Short term BSCs are not available for partly-built or unfinished boats.

The Technical Manual has now been revised to take into account changes to LPG installations and appliances which became effective on 3 January 2000. However, the updated sections for the manual were not distributed until early April 2000 - 4 months after the new standards were introduced. How, you may ask, can any examiner have conducted a BSS examination if he (we don't know of any "she" examiners) did not have the technical back-up?

The astounding answer is that the new requirements of Parts 7 & 8 are NOT being applied until July 2000 at the earliest - so your boat cannot fail if its passed 4 years ago?

### **BSS Statistics**

Until March 2000 the Total Number of Failure Certificates issued was nearly 19,000. This represents an overall failure rate of approximately 42%.

Just over 40,000 Pass Certificates have been issued to date including 28,000 on BW waters and 5,500 on the Thames.

Up to 10% of boats still have outstanding failure certificates.

The approximate overall failure rates for individual navigation authorities calculated from the available figures are shown below: They have been adjusted to take into account outstanding failures.

Broads	43% Fail
UANT	57% Fail
LANT	60% Fail
MSC	35% Fail
River Wey	30% Fail
Basingstoke Canal	13% Fail
EA Thames	41% Fail
Anglian	50% Fail
Medway	79% Fail
BW	41% Fail
Port of Bristol	75% Fail
Middle Level	42% Fail

We understand that approximately 15,000 boats are predicted to be due for a BSC in the current year. (5,000 each on BW, Thames & Anglian waterways)

### **BSS Examiners**

It is interesting to see how the number of trained Examiners and Surveyors listed by the BSS has waxed and waned since the inception of the scheme:

	Surveyors	Examiners	Total
April 1996	79	0	79
Sept 1996	75	63	138

Oct 1996	73	89	162
Feb 1997	73	185	258
Mar 1997	73	205	278
Dec 1997 (report in Waterways News)			356
Jan 1998	70	239	309
June 1999	62	213	275
Feb 2000	42	149	191

The above figures, obtained from the published lists of examiners and surveyors issued to the public, indicate that the total availability of examiners and surveyors has fallen by nearly 50% since the peak period in 1997 and the number of surveyors has dropped continuously, again by nearly 50% in the past 4 years. The number of examiners has decreased by 30% in the past 12 months.

These figures reflect the downturn in demand for BSS examinations and the increasing costs being imposed on the personnel. It is rather worrying because the promised competition is being slowly eroded and this does not bode well for the cost of future BSS examinations.

We understand that the BSS plans for a figure of 200 examiners and

surveyors being registered this year and the total for February 2000 appears to support this assumption.

Apparently, 114 examiners and surveyors have left the BSS since August 1996. The largest numbers giving reasons cited the cost of the scheme and not enough work!

### **Security of Gas Cylinders**

A request from a member in the last edition of NABO News raised the question of how LPG cylinders should be secured to comply with the Boat Safety Scheme.

Inspection of the Technical Manual shows that cylinders must be installed in an upright position and secured so that no damage can occur to the cylinders, regulators, hoses or pipework. In addition, cylinders shall be accessible and removable in an emergency.

If a cylinder falls over it is possible for high pressure liquid gas to burst the regulator and rupture the low pressure pipework. The liquid will expand to 250 times its volume of gas when it vaporises.

All cylinders (whether full or empty, stowed in lockers or housings or shelters) must be restrained by means of metal straps and clamps, fabric straps and clamp or buckle or chains. Generally, cylinders must have no sideways movement exceeding 50mm.

It is important to ensure that whatever method of restraint is employed, it must be possible to turn off, disconnect and remove LPG cylinders in case of emergency or fire (if it is safe to do so). This would suggest that they should not be padlocked to the vessel when in use and, similarly, gas lockers should be kept unlocked when you are on board so that you have unhindered access to the main valve.

A survey conducted by the BMIF at the London International Boat Show in January 2000 examined 146 listed marine diesel engines from 9 HP to 3000 HP.

Only 38% of these met the BSS requirements as standard. A further 16% could be built to comply with the BSS by special order. In other words, 62% of new marine engines would fail the BSS even though they have a satisfactory safety record, are sold world-wide and are fitted in new craft complying with the Recreational Craft Directive!

The main points of non-compliance included use of non-approved pipes and hoses, pipe clamps and spill rails.

### **NABO MEMBERS' BOAT SAFETY SCHEME QUESTIONNAIRE**

At last! The results of the only survey to enquire into the actual cost of complying with the BSS have finally been analysed.

NABO initiated a survey of its members when the BSS was introduced in 1996 in order to ascertain the level of expenditure our members were having to face as a result of compliance with the scheme.

Nearly 600 questionnaires were returned - and a few continue to trickle in to the present day.

The information received indicates that the true cost of meeting the requirements of the boat safety standards has increased steadily since day one:

Year of BSC Examination	Average Cost to Comply
1995	194
1996	378
1997	432
1998	446
1999	481

And it does not stop there, because those boats which obtained a Boat Safety Certificate in 1996 are due for renewal in the year 2000. This year!

And will members find that there boats sail through the next examination? Well, we don't think so. And our members are telling

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us that their boats are being failed even though they passed without major problems four years ago.

Is this simply a case of the "goal posts being moved" ? This may be true in part because as we all know the standards are subject to constant revision and the major changes to the rules for LPG installations and appliances will undoubtedly hit some boat owners very hard. But the BSS are not applying the new gas standards at present, whilst examiners are being re-trained. So why are we receiving anguished calls from our members whose boats are being failed when re-examined?

It appears the major problem is inconsistency. One examiner could pass a boat 4 years ago, but a different examiner can fail the same boat in the same condition this time around. And it appears that many are doing precisely that. This is causing annoyance and exasperation to boat owners who spent hundreds or, in some cases thousands, of pounds to comply last time and are now faced with further unwarranted expenditure. And there is no longer a 6 months period of grace for failures.

We want to know if you have problems when your boat comes up for its BSC renewal. We also intend to repeat the questionnaire exercise so that the facts and

figures are not lost in the propaganda from Watford

### **NEW BSS BOOKLETS**

Following the introduction of revised boat standards relating to gas installations and appliances the BSS office has produced revised blue/grey booklets which all boat owners will require to comply with the scheme.

The new booklets are marked "Edition 2 October 1999" and previous editions are now obsolete.

The complete set of information comprises the Boat Safety Scheme standards booklet together with Guidance Notes and Checklist. Unfortunately, the average boat owner will be unable to comprehend the precise requirements without consulting the BSS Technical Manual. This can be inspected at offices of BW and the EA or you can seek assistance from the Association - copies of the manual are presently held by Stephen Peters, James Mason and Nigel Parkinson (ex-officio!).

Copies of the new BSS booklets can be obtained from Boat Safety Scheme, Willow Grange, Church Road, Watford WD1 3QA

Tel 01923 201278 Fax 01923 201240

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### **BW & People Problems**

Canals and related structures get damaged through normal wear and tear and old age, but have you considered how people can create unnecessary problems that take up time and resources.

Some examples from a recent user group meeting.

A bridge parapet was half demolished by a badly driven Metro car. Had I not been told, I would have put the damage down to a Metro train, (or passing tank!). Not only did the bridge have to be repaired but the masonry, including very large capping stones, recovered from the canal bed.

Somebody removed the stop boards from the side of a feeder channel and diverted the water to flood a farmer's land rather than fill the reservoir.

In response to requests a foot board was fitted to the gate at Hall Green stop lock on the Macclesfield canal. Three weeks and four days later it was smashed and split by a boat. Those responsible must have tried real hard as they are pretty sturdy structures.

I have seen the damage caused

by vandals draining down the pounds on the Wolverhampton flight. It had been done three nights in succession. The night before I encountered the damage, ten pounds had been drained, wasting goodness knows how much water. The towpath had been flooded and parts of it washed away. BW operatives had to be taken from other work to rewater the flight and effect repairs. Please remember this when using the 'handcuff' key for the extra security locks now being fitted, there is a good reason for them.

Then there are the fanatics - you know the sort, who take over meetings and you feel that they will throw themselves in front of the strimmer if anyone dares to cut the vegetation on the towpath edge. They loudly shout down reasonable discussion and align themselves with any group that backs their views, totally ignoring the needs of canal users and the safety aspect. All a great comfort to boaters in difficulty making a leap for the unknown, usually where the boat can't get into the side. The urgency of the moment made into a disaster if they break an ankle or worse.



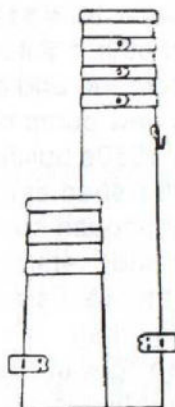
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cover for contact details.

## **Gloucester and Sharpness Canal Users Forum - April 2000**

Forum members visited the new water pump at West Quay at Gloucester Docks which will pump water into the docks to supply Gloucester and Sharpness locks, and others. All should be complete before the end of the year. When the new pump house is complete the 1960s building will be demolished and the listed 1948 pumphouse converted into a wine bar and restaurant. The spare land on the west side of the docks is earmarked for a high building, in keeping with the existing warehouses, containing high quality apartments. The towpath between Llantony and Monks Meadow should be complete by the end of June.

The Corridor Study on the G&S should be out soon but Fretherne bridge is posing problems. The County has offered to rebuild it but the Parishes want a navigable height under it to reduce the number of opening times at an additional cost of £300,000 for the bridge and £200,000 for a new road layout.

The Severn depth and tides were discussed including the problems associated with over-extraction of water higher up the river which reduces water flow and clearance of silt lower down. The new lock and bridge opening hours will be

discussed with staff unions and the new arrangements should be in place next season. The holding cables in Gloucester dock that have been requested by NABO and other users will be installed this winter. Sims bridge will be powered by mid-summer and visitor moorings at Sharpness and Patch will be improved.

Revised copies of the Waterways Code for Boaters on the G&S were handed out including VHF radio details. Forward any comments regarding the use of Marine Band radio on the G&S or River Severn to the BW office at Gloucester.

I was held up recently for 3½ hours as bridge keepers had been allowed to leave their posts to attend a late colleague's funeral.. The Waterways Manager said that following complaints of this happening two years ago, he had "pass men" in place to travel up and down the canal system to keep traffic flowing. Unfortunately, due to communication difficulties, this system had fallen down. BW apologised and said a lot of lessons had been learned which would be applied in future.

If anyone has any points on the waterway between Sharpness and Upper Lode lock (Tewkesbury) drop me a line:  
Tommy Gough 123 Flaxpits Lane,  
Winterbourne, Bristol BS36 1L B

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## **BCN Old Main Line Closure at Smethwick**

A fuller report to follow the brief note in the last issue of NABO News

The closure is required to repair 11 concrete motorway deck beams on the elevated section of the M5 over or adjacent to the canal. The beams need repair because salt from winter gritting has caused the surfaces to crumble and expose the steel reinforcing that is now rusting away. In order to support the motorway during the repairs steel support beams, fitted in two sections and weighting 60 tons have to be craned into position on temporary foundations alongside each crossbeam. Three support beams will be used to complete the 11 crossbeam repairs during the 18 month stoppage. When the beams are in place high pressure water jets will be used to remove the damaged concrete. The corroded steel will be cut away and new sections welded in. The concrete surfaces will be reconstructed and salt protection treatments applied.

The worksite section of the canal will dammed and drained. The canal bed will be protected with a liner and stone infill. Large diameter pipes will be installed within the stone infill to maintain

water level to Smethwick locks. The channel dimensions will be recorded along the full length of the pound prior to commencement of the work and restored on completion of the work. The towing path on the site is reported to be unsatisfactory at present and it will be reinstated to a high standard on completion of the work.

The work required is well defined and the 18 month closure schedule realistic. With 108.000 vehicles on average using the motorway each day and no other practical way to place the supports under the motorway there appears to have been little choice but to close the canal. The original design for elevated motorways allowed surface water, with its winter salt, to run onto the crossbeams. It is now drained away. A little more thought 30 years ago would have saved a great deal of expense and inconvenience.

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**Dear Wendy**  
**L & L Meeting**

I feel that I would like to add one or two comments with regards to the aftermath of the Gargrave tragedy. We, my wife and I, passed through this lock some two weeks prior to the fatal incident.

Firstly, the locking of top gate paddles could cause more problems than it solves, as it will increase the filling time for the lock considerably, thus increasing the loss of concentration syndrome - thoughts wander, when accidents are more likely to happen.

Secondly, the pivotal ground paddles on Gargrave Locks are exceptionally heavy to use and might well be beyond the capacity of some of the older or less strong crew(s). This is also the case on other locks on the L & L Canal.

Thirdly, if top gate paddles are a danger, then what happens where there are no ground paddles? As at say. Middlewich?

Fourthly, what about the danger in the habit of not unlocking vandal locks on ground paddles when descending locks, if prompt action is required - first find the key then unlock the paddle and only then take the action required.

Fifthly, Fenders, and there lies a problem, bow and stern fenders fitted too firmly to the boat so if they hang up the boat hangs up. Surely there should be something

in the Boat Safety Standards about a "fail-safe" link. On our boat we only use one shackle to secure the fender, the other fastenings are either 's' hooks which will straighten under load, or plastic electrician's ties, the heavier ones, which will break. Of course, a piece of codline or thick string would fulfill the same function but it will rot. The only shackle is to ensure that we don't lose a fender if the fail-safe has to function.

And now for something completely different, but still on boat safety. Here in Wigan, we recently had an inquest into the death of a man from fumes - the fumes of his neighbour" solid fuel boiler seeping through the chimney brickwork of the house. So if 'fridge with their little flame should be room sealed, then what about solid fuel fires?

Hope this gives some food for thought. Me, yes I have been about in boats of all sorts for a long time, fifty years, man and boy.

Stanley Whitfield (known as Lee)  
Wigan.

Wendy

Congratulations, on being chosen, again for NABO News Editor.

Your Editorial, was weird to say the least. Perhaps I should

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explain.

We were on our Spring cruise, starting from our home mooring at Napton, on Good Friday morning, destination Stratford-upon Avon.

The Canals were quite busy, especially the Stratford. The weather was a mixed bag of sunshine and showers for the first few days. Just as well we have the stove to dry things out !

We had never tried the Stratford before, we had attended a talk at the Amersham IWA a couple of months ago, on the Stratford, It looked pretty interesting, indeed it was an 'interesting' experience in the flesh, so to speak !

Our first port of call was the Sanitary Station at Kingswood junction to fill the water tank and empty the loo.

It must have been the lowest pressure in all Warwickshire. Knowing that water points are few and far between made us fill to the top at every opportunity.

The locks on the Stratford had a character all of their own. Even relatively new gates leaked badly and the lock structures themselves looked too fragile to be safe. The bridges very quaint to look at, I thought were downright dangerous!

Our boat doesn't have that much draft, However that did not prevent us going aground several times at Wootton Wawen, not through lack

of water, it just needed dredging urgently !

Eventually we ended up in Bancroft Basin, Stratford.

This was an absolute delight, the Basin was fairly full with boats tied to each other..

We were hoping to get onto the Avon, but a notice was placed on the lock by the EA, stating that the River was too dangerous and their advice was to stay put in the basin, this we duly did. We found Stratford to be a very pleasant town.

It was embarrassing to be asked to smile when carrying two very full carrier bags of groceries in the pouring rain as the Americans wanted to take my picture boarding our boat ! Anything to oblige!!

We soon found ourselves on our way back up the Canal.

At the first Lock/Bridge a mallard and her fluffy chicks decided to join in the action in front of the bottom gate. They would not move past the boat despite me desperately holding the boat against the wall to allow them to get through the 5" gap. I had to do this through the whole operation to prevent the boat from crushing them, which made progress through the lock very slow and following boaters came to see what all the fuss was all about.

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We moored at Wilmcote to have visit Mary Arden's House and for the night.

Among the the few boats that were moored there, was a very smart dark green boat ' THURZAWAY ' I remembered reading about this boat a few years ago and was curious to have a closer look without being nosy, The occupants looked contented and cosy, so we strolled back to our boat. As we were taking it easy we did not get away until about ten. By this time 'THURZAWAY' had gone.

The penny didn't drop until we got home and I read the latest NABO News.

Only then I remembered about 'THURZAWAY' If only we realised we could have had quite a chin wag.

Simon & Jeanette Angel

*I'm sorry you didn't knock Simon - we were always ready to chat to members - and the kettle is usually full! We had a good trip to Stratford without any of the troubles you had. We like the Wilmcote moorings and have stayed there before - the Mary Arden Inn in the village, only ten minutes walk at the most, has very good meals at most reasonable prices and we have enjoyed our meals there.*

Wendy,  
Comments in the latest NABO News on BW's acquisition of marinas and on their awareness that 'a good relationship is the way forward' prompted me to bring our boat club's problems to your attention.

We have been negotiating a new lease with BW for about 2 years. As a result of complaints from a small minority of local residents, BW seem to want us to give up our 60 year old practice of craning out boats for painting etc.

BW have recently carried out a survey of the local residents on their attitude to the boat club. The first we heard about it was when some of the results were reported in the local Press. The results appear to indicate that most local residents are in favour of the club and that only a small minority have any problems with it. The local BW waterways manager has however refused to let us see the results of the survey.

All the above point to a hidden agenda. Do BW want to take over the moorings directly or do they intend to sell them off for housing development? Or are we simply becoming paranoid?

David

## Magazine Dates

The editor welcomes articles, letters or snippets for inclusion in NABO News. Please forward anything to Editor, NABO NEWS,

### Copy Deadline Dates are as follows:

22 July

9 September

14 October

25 November

## Proposed Water Village Edinburgh

Water of Leith 2000 plans to develop a floating village providing residential and holiday accommodation, offices, cafes, bars and shops along the lower stretches of the Water of Leith.

We would be interested in hearing from people who have experience of living and working in any similar schemes or are interested in taking accommodation in the development.

Please contact:

[alexa.murray@ryden.co.uk](mailto:alexa.murray@ryden.co.uk)

or telephone 0131 473 3328

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Philip Ogden is still the representative for disabled boating and boaters and he can be contacted at