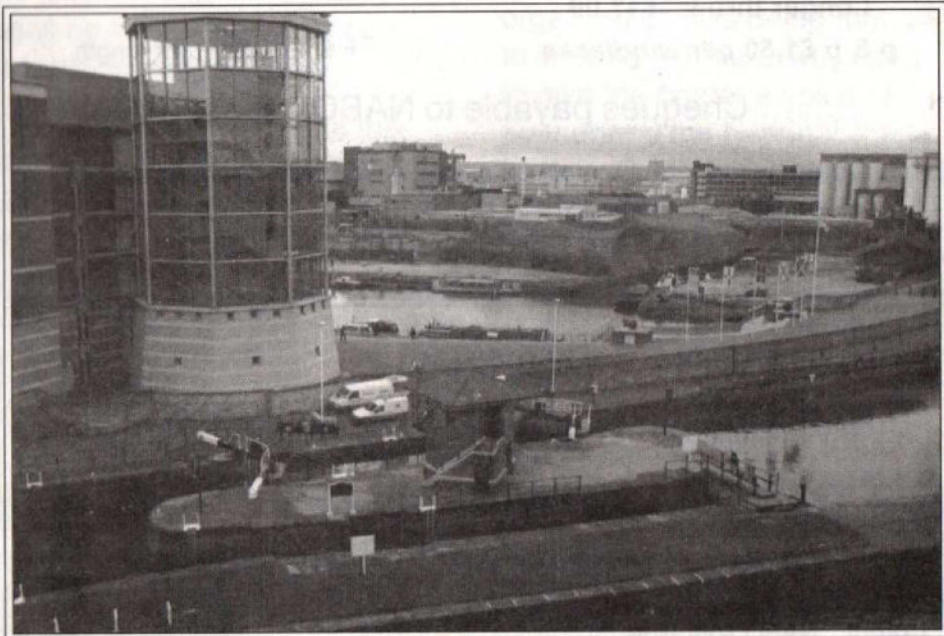




NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Issue: 7 /00



**SEASONS GREETING TO ALL OUR
MEMBERS**

NABO News

NABO SUPPLIES

Dunton Double windlass.

*The classy way to open
locks*

Normal throw: £15.00

Longer throw: £17.00

p & p £1.50 per windlass

BUNTING

Red, White & Blue

10 metre lengths

£15.00

+ £1.50 P&P per length

Cheques payable to NABO, please

Contact Christine Denton on or call at NB "India" at Mancetter.

Tel:

Fly the flag!

NABO Pennants suitable to fly on your boat

Cost : £7.50 plus 50p p&p available from Roger Davies

Size : 15inches long; 8 inches high. Complete with toggle and short cord

Colour : NABO light blue

NABO stickers. - New design

Free to members for use on boat or car.

**5" round; 3" round (the same size as Car Licence Disk) and 8" x 2"
rectangular.**

To order, contact Roger Davis,



THE CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Here's wishing you all a Happy Christmas and a very Merry New Year. I hope you enjoy your winter cruising. Council have decided that I shall be Chairman again so, hey ho, off we go again.

The AGM happened, but the North didn't seem to notice.

The accommodation was great, the food lovely, people travelled from London to get there. Where was the famous northern hospitality? Our northern members were conspicuous by their absence. I did touch on it in my speech. I believe our members by and large think we are doing a good job for them so there is no need for anyone else to get involved. We are all members of NABO and volunteers. Council works incredibly hard for the benefit of all of us. Support would be lovely.

Especially this year as we celebrate our 10th birthday. I feel very honored to be chairman this year. I remember the first meeting at Dudley. I was so excited that a new organisation was being formed to improve the waterways and to give the boater a voice, I abandoned the National

Waterways Festival and rushed to attend. I joined then and have enjoyed being a member ever since. I am a firm believer in the more you put in the more you get out.

How would you like us to celebrate our birthday?

We have received

ideas ranging from a Boat gathering to taking BW to Court.

What would you support?
When and where?
Your ideas please.

NABO is for you.

How should NABO celebrate its 10th Birthday?

NABO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AGM Notes

Having attended the AGM's of other organisations, it was with some misgivings that I found myself in Leeds (eventually, having got lost in spite of living there!) on the 18th November. British Waterways hospitality excelled itself, with friendly staff to show us to the meeting area, a welcome cup of decent coffee beforehand, plus a wonderful spread afterwards.

The meeting started on time, with just the right balance between formality and informality. Members of the 1999-2000 council were introduced, then it was last year's minutes followed by Sue's address. I became increasingly amazed at the number of meetings council members have attended on our behalf, and just how much work has gone into the development of a working relationship, based on mutual respect, with BW. The accounts showed NABO to be healthy financially, before the new council was elected. At this point we retired for more coffee while the officers were chosen, so that we could address comments from the floor to those who will be leading our organisation in 2001.

I was thankful that the majority of the meeting time was taken up with discussion of matters raised from the floor, a refreshing change from the usual unending speeches. Ian White, the BW area manager, was present throughout (I'm not sure he should

have been party to our accounts), so he heard from the grass roots what the main concerns of boaters are. Unfortunately, the pathetic turn-out for the meeting may well have given him another impression. I, for one, felt extremely embarrassed that Nabo council had made the effort to travel northwards (some had travelled a considerable distance) in order to make themselves available to the membership in the northern reaches, only to find that members couldn't be bothered to turn up. Oh well, we've had our chance, and probably spoilt it for other members in different parts of the country. But I found it extremely valuable to meet, hear from, and talk to our officers.

I left with the feeling that NABO could, and would, sort out our grievances using diplomatic channels, and that there is hope on the horizon that common sense will prevail regarding the boat safety scheme.

An ordinary member (from the north)

Chairman's Report to the AGM

This has been my first year as chairman of a major organisation and thus it is my first ever AGM as such. WRG boat club definitely doesn't come in the same league. It has been a very steep learning curve and I would like to thank Peter Lea for his patience in keeping me on track.

Like many of you I suspect, I hadn't realised quite how important NABO is. Peter soon put me right, coming with me to a meeting at the Department of Transport and the Regions, which was just us and two senior civil servants. Another meeting was with chairmen of other user groups and Lord Whitty, where we all had the opportunity to voice our concerns. Peter also introduced me to the Parliamentary Waterways Group at the House of Commons and gave me the job of asking George Greener a question before a packed room.

Peter was a chairman with a vast knowledge of the waterways, BW and EA. I knew the only way I could follow him was to become a co-ordinating chairman. I have an excellent council whose members have a lot of knowledge between them and I have relied heavily on this. I think they all have had more to do than under Peter.

Steven Peters produced our response to both the Boat Safety review and the DETR Potential of the Waterways document. Steven and James Mason both went to the BSS review panel with our submission and had an hour to put forward our view and also answer questions on the way forward. We now wait for the results.

The Potential of the waterways is to be discussed on 29th Nov.

The Boat Safety review brought all the user groups closer together and we have a close working relationship,

with meetings with all the chairmen at regular intervals. We discuss all issues affecting our waterways and if a co-ordinated response is needed, we are able to do this. If we differ we're at least able to understand each other's point of view.

Stephen with Roger's help produced the River Navigation booklet, which is free to members.

Roger Davis apart from dealing with the membership has also been our press secretary. He has made us well aware of the members that leave, very often for the most harrowing of reasons. Cost is the single most important reason for people giving up their boats; licence increases, mooring increases with boat safety certification being the final straw. Having had one safety certificate it is the straw that breaks the camel's back when our members are told that they need further work done to pass a second time.

Sadie Dean takes our minutes travelling from wherever her boat is to Peterborough to be reunited with her computer. She is our Middle Level and East Anglia expert, helped by Mike Smith who attends meetings for us.

Peter Foster, who has two reasons for not being here - a foot of water through his house and a hopefully short visit in hospital. He looks after the North East region helped by

Derek Richardson who has escaped being on council by deciding not to retire but I hope will continue to attend meetings for us.

Graham Freeman is a relative newcomer and has already made progress with the West Coast route modernisation train inquiry.

Derek Hackett is our legal brain and has given us much useful advice. He also travels the waterways and can report on what is happening on the track.

James Mason has attended, with me, most major boating events with the NABO stand waving the NABO flag, talking to members and recruiting. He has also been invited to join the Technical committee by the Boat Safety Committee. We have a presence on both that and the advisory committee. James is our London rep and attends most Environment Agency meetings.

Trevor Rogers is our Southern rep; apart from a technical background he has tackled issues in the southern area, several of which affect other areas. These include baffles on gate paddles, which we oppose; locking of gate paddles, which we feel unnecessary; and with Geoff Rogerson, a staunch opponent of the 6-mile move on regulation.

Geoff Rogerson is also involved in opposing cycling on towpaths. British Waterways have broken every byelaw in their book on this one. Their rules say no organised cycling and they have allowed races. All bikes on the towpaths should have licences but they are not prepared to enforce this. I believe that it is unfair to expect only boaters and anglers to pay to use the canals. Especially as boats are one of

the attractions for other users.

John Stephens has had a massive job covering the Midlands region although Chris Boxall ably assists him. John has assisted me with the fight to get towpath edges cut. This will be a NABO success, if Stuart Sim's edict is adhered to, and the 5ft "fringe" will be a thing of the past. John has decided to go boating next year and so is not standing for re election, although he will attend meetings in his area for us. In fact that is why he is not here now he is attending the IWA Navigation & Technical meeting

Wendy Hook continues to do sterling work producing our newsletter.

Several council members have had to leave this year and have left gaps in our organisation. I believe our members may be getting complacent. With the number that tell me what a good job we are doing, I wonder if they realise how few we are doing it with. It is a commitment being on Council but it is fun. We have had no North West rep for a year, although David & Geoff Barnett attend meetings for us and I have been to Chester meetings to put our point of view there.

Philip Ogden who is carrying on as our disabled rep and our channel dimensions consultant had to give up coming to meetings as the driving and meetings were too tiring. He is the far side of 85.

Christine Denton has correctly put family first, but we miss her expertise

in marketing. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all on your behalf.

During our next year we shall be celebrating 10 years of being. We would appreciate ideas on celebrating

this event. Of the 72 people who joined on the 25th August 1991, 31 boat owners and 8 family members are still with us. John Stevens and myself joined at that first meeting. Look where its got me!



Council Members: (from left -rt) James Mason, Helen Gardner, Sadie Dean, Graham Freeman , Derek Hackett , Roger Davis, Sue Burchett, Trevor Rogers, Geoff Reogerson

Some of the new Council members are not known to members and so their potted biographies are printed here for your information - Editor

James Mason

I am a Boat Builder with a BSc (Hons) degree in Marine Engineering, also a Coded Boilermaker Welder in A.S.M.E 8 & 9 with over 40 years' hands on experience of boating on the Sea, Rivers & Canal System

My roles on the NABO Council in 1999/2000 have been:

1. General Secretary assisting the Chairman in her duties and attending

meetings with and on her behalf as well as general duties.

2. Representing NABO on all the Boat Safety Scheme Advisory group meetings around the country .

3. Representing NABO on the Boat Safety Schemes Technical Committees

4. Representing NABO on the London Region River & Canal Users group meetings

I have also attended all the major boat exhibitions/rallies with the NABO's information stand, to help, with other council members, to make

our voice known and recruit new members to the association .

I do have my own boats which I am out and about on regularly throughout the year.

I hope I can be of more help to the associations members and ensure their rights to enjoy their boating

Helen Gardner



I first got involved with canals nearly 8 years ago when I was 16 and started working with the Waterway Recovery Group. It was really quite fun and I started to get more involved and in

due course met people who owned boats and started boating. I now live, with my two cats, at High Line Yachting Northolt on my 56' narrowboat Sussex, which I bought 18 months ago and I haven't looked back since. Although I don't move it as much as I'd like to I am keen to see canals re-opened and feel strongly that existing waterways should be maintained to a decent standard.

I decided to stand for NABO council because I have got much pleasure out of boating in the past few years and I feel it's time to put something back in.

Nigel Stephen Fountain

Boat: Alteca

I am married with 2 grown-up children. I have been a boat owner and lived aboard since 1996. Having worked for 26 years in the security

industry I am now semi-retired and am interested in environmental issues and animal welfare. I joined NABO as I believe in the rights of boaters and boat owners. I love the inland waterways. I love the boats and the way of life with that goes with them. Woe-betide anyone who tries to take them away from me!

Stuart Sampson



Oh, Him!

My better half didn't think it appropriate to abuse the privilege when it came to writing a limited number of words about her nominated

candidate for Council, but now that I have been elected I feel I can get the soap box out too!

I am no stranger to the inland waterways, I have been pottering around for quarter of a century, longer than that if rowing on the Bude canal counts. I have owned a boat for all but a year of that time. Fifteen years back I was partly to blame for a BBC North documentary called A Voyage Between Two Seas, in which I was seen skipping the presenter along the full length of the L & L in The Lady Galadriel, a boat whose fame lasted for the next ten years or more.

Since then I have worked with Carole in producing her First Mate Guides. I don't want to take advantage of my position to plug her books, I mention it because we regard it as a service which has brought us in contact with

many boating folk and their needs, through which they might remember who I am.

My other claim to fame is the vessel I designed and fitted out, a narrow beam Dutch Style boat we call m.v. Sulaskar. This featured in the July edition of Canal & Riverboat.

What can I do for you?

Obviously I believe there is a need for NABO. Some may lump it in with the IWA and say that it's purpose has been served and the big campaigns have been won, so there is no need for any more confrontation with the navigation authorities. To them I say, "Would you switch your engine off because the tide is with you on the river Trent?"

I can offer NABO three things:-

1) I live near Leeds (no - I can't help folks navigate Leeds by car, we got lost too!), so I can help with the canal aspects of the North East and eastern Leeds & Liverpool Canal

2) I studied Engineering and graduated in Electronics, but having recently designed and fitted out a highly innovative vessel I feel I have learnt a lot more, from naval architecture (designing a twin swimmid and screwed hull), the joys of working American cherry-wood, and of course complying with the dreaded BSS. So I don't think anyone can pull the wool over my eyes when it comes to matters technical.

3) From my work as a 'picture' editor working with the BBC and the resultant introduction to Macintosh

computers, graphic design and now the Internet, I feel I have something to offer regarding Council's relationship with the Media, starting of course with our own NABO News and www.nabo.org.uk

Hat, Hair & Hallo

So Council have generously given me the Public Relations Officer's hat. I don't think it quite fits, but I will try to grow into it.

For now I am more than happy for anyone to come and bend my ear about NABO matters or anything else that concerns them about having a boat. I gather there are some Council members who like to enjoy their limited cruising time without being pestered on NABO matters, but I am fortunate enough to be afloat for months on end and may be encountered anywhere on the system. Maybe there will come a time when I will cut off my flowing locks, sell Sulaskar and attempt to creep around the system incognito on hire craft, but, till then, please come and say hello!



ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE ?

One of the joys (and sorrows?) of being Membership Secretary is being first in line on NABO Council to receive your comments, criticisms and plaudits on how well you think we are performing - or not. I very much encourage such feedback when I write each year to members reminding them of their dues. (For those of you who kindly pay by Standing Order and don't get such a reminder, please don't feel excluded; we also want to hear from you whenever you feel like it!) As I say in my membership renewal letter - "if you don't tell us, we won't know".

Whatever you tell me I pass on to the next meeting of Council in a written report. Happily, I have to say we are encouraged rather than discouraged by this feedback from our members but we are also very conscious of our short comings when they are pointed out.

I am prompted to write now because we have been taken to task rather strongly of late over what is perceived to be the increasingly negative if not whinging tone of what you read in NABO News. Let me hasten to add that this is in no way a criticism of our long suffering Editor, Wendy. As has been frequently pointed out by many an editor in her position, we can only print what members write. If those who feel affronted or in some way hurt by navigation authorities or other waterways users are the ones who feel moved to write, then that is what the

rest of us will end up reading. On the other hand, if we are generally content with, or on balance accepting of, the limitations of living in an imperfect (waterways) world, then we probably won't get round to putting pen to paper or fingers to keyboard and we are all the poorer.

So in an endeavour to make for balance Council have asked me to trawl through some of the recent correspondence we have received from members (or ex-members who have resigned over the matter) which reflect a feeling that we are all too ready to indulge in, for example, "BW Bashing" or fail too often to accept that waterways are for all and not just private pleasure boaters.

Few would question that one of the most contentious issues affecting us in recent years has been the Boat Safety Scheme and particularly its administration. Our recent submission to the BSS Review (see last issue) seems to have been well received by members both for balance and objectivity and also for showing a way forward that does not deny the benefits of such a scheme. However, it has been pointed out that much that has appeared in these pages has seemed to reflect a view that any safety scheme is unwarranted intrusion into our freedoms and in any case boaters are by nature highly safety conscious and don't need regimentation of any kind. So the question is raised - are we

inclined to arrogance and dangerously false self-satisfaction? We are in an almost unique position with amateur fitting out being regarded as quite unremarkable compared to any other similar pursuit. Result – one could find before the BSS, for example, plastic fuel lines, ten year old gas joints remote from inspection and extremely hairy electrics with little realisation by complacent owners of possible consequences. To have to face external objective assessment of risk is simply to put us where the rest of the world has been for years.

Too often we apparently fail to appreciate all that BW has and is achieving on behalf of boaters. Far from wanting boaters off the system by fair means or foul (financial?), we ought to be more ready to recognise the direct benefit to us of the current spending of £30 million on restoration and £20 million on maintenance even if we reckon we could spend it better or more efficiently and with less notices proclaiming our activity. BW has operated for at least the last 30 years on the basis of a government grant which has exceeded the boaters' contribution by a factor of at least five times. One unhappy member and his wife write, "Yes, we have been subsidised by the tax paying majority – you know the hoards who have the cheek to want to trample over our quiet, secret world every weekend, to fish in it and, heaven forbid, to protect the wildlife. BW, like several heavily subsidised operations, has faced a simple 'play by our rules or

lose your main income' attitude from successive governments. It has successfully learnt to play the game and though it sometimes makes one wince, it has produced the goods – money".

There is no doubt at all that the individual boater's experience of BW and its management varies greatly and especially from region to region. Indeed one of the constant preoccupations of Council is knowing how best to respond to clear inconsistencies in administration in, for example, mooring policies in different parts of the country. We can identify very clearly where we get most complaints and where there is greatest contentment – this applies to EA as much as to BW. It is from where there is good, fair and sensible management that we get the most criticism for being critical! "BW does us proud in the NW and developments on the Huddersfield, Rochdale and Lancaster – and this combined with the very good/sympathetic Waterways Managers on the L&L, Lancaster and Llangollen make it difficult to join the whingers who dominate NABO. BW have a difficult task. NW experience is that things have improved over the last 15 years . . . we must share the facilities". In fairness I have to add that there is not universal satisfaction up north. But again from elsewhere, ". . . for 40 odd years we have cruised the rivers and canals. Memories of beamless lock gates opened by a piece of rope, of weed that make the north Oxford seem child's play. Hundred of miles of

canal that existed only as ditches and derelict buildings, no moorings, just lock approaches if you were lucky, swing bridges that took two strong men to turn. How you judge today's system depends on what you know of its past".

Then there is the often raised matter of boating being priced out of our reach. "We have a strange illogical reaction that whilst we accept that food, rent, transport etc go up steadily, we somehow don't expect our hobbies to. In the 40 years we have been cruising, house prices have gone up 20 fold and earnings even more. But so have our expectations. We started in a 16ft fibreglass boat that cost then £500 with outboard and trailer. Today that would cost £255 to licence, £50 to insure, no mooring costs plus say £25 pa towards the 4 year BSC – just £330 per year. Not bad!"

There's lots more on getting a better balance on such things as sharing facilities and costs with other users including fishermen and cyclists; BW marina policy; linear moorings; towpath and off-side cutting versus the threat posed by the green/SSSI mob; BW's perceived bureaucracy comparing favourably with that of the Inland Revenue, VAT and DHSS and so forth. "Enjoying boating is not the same as enjoying owning a boat. Buying a licence, meeting the BSC, maintaining your hull/engine/gas system/electrics – all hassle – all part of owning a boat. Boating is now easier, available over a greater range and as pleasant as it's ever been – don't let a small increase in annual

costs drive you away. By the way, if you think a caravan is hassle free – try it! (Yes, we did, for just a year – that was enough)".

I'll conclude with a personal note. In 1999 our main cruise from GU south to Bristol and back via Oxford and Braunston of some 830 lock/miles was one of the best ever and the first in over twenty years where we did not have to lift the weed hatch once! That was worth a note of appreciation to the BW managers concerned we reckoned and they seemed to appreciate it. Last year we travelled a deal further to include the Caldon, Macclesfield and Peak Forest for the first time in many years and on to new permanent moorings on the K&A. Again totally trouble free boating only pausing to speculate more than once how much BW were spending on sending their staff to Charm School, such was the friendliness and helpfulness we encountered from the men and women in green from Buckby to Caen Hill!! If anything was deteriorating it was on the Thames under the EA rather than the BW track.

Anyway, plus or minus, glad or sad, keep the letters, comments, accounts and experiences coming in – we do take notice and, where we can, try and do something about it – and Wendy might even publish them if you let her.

Roger Davis
(Membership
Secretary)



RIVER REVIEW

EA Thames Region - Navigation Levels of Service

We receive copies of agenda and minutes for all the RFERAC meetings held in the EA regions. Despite being inundated with repetitious paperwork we sometimes glean useful information from the plethora of paperwork which the EA produces (does "EA" stand for "Excess Administration" ?!)

However, try as we might we cannot persuade certain EA regions to place us on their mailing list for regular navigation updates. If anyone receives such information, please copy it to our River Users Co-ordinator.

Every cloud has a silver lining and the latest information from the Thames Region RFERAC includes a very comprehensive report on Navigation Levels of Service attained on the non-tidal River Thames.

The report includes a record of the available fairway maintained during the year. In the year 1999/2000 this was in accordance with the published criteria with one specific exception due to a building in danger of collapse.

Lock availability improved with only 4 days of closures - excluding planned closures.

The assisted lock passage target was 100% for March to October and this was very nearly attained but the figure dropped during the winter period due to staff redeployments.

Unregistered boat notices continued to

range around 900 and some £84,000 was recovered before prosecutions proceeded. Legal action was taken against only 10 persons.

Other statistics relate to availability of water, sanitary stations, refuse facilities, etc, but the most interesting figures are those showing the number of vessels using the Thames.

Visitors, hire craft and private boats all show a continuation of the decline which has been steadily taking place since 1988. There are now only two thirds of the number of vessels on the Thames compared with the 1988 total.

Traffic on the Thames has shown a similar decline. The largest number of lockages were reported in 1980 but the current figures reflect a 25% decrease in lock usage.

If the EA can produce this kind of information for its Thames Region, why does it not send us similar reports for its other regions where it has a navigation function (Southern and Anglian)?

More to the point - why does BW not have Navigation Levels of Service by which we, its customers, can monitor its performance?

Severn Boat Owners Association AGM

SeBA held its AGM in October (just before massive floods inundated the Severn valley and isolated Upton-on-Severn (the venue for the meeting).

From a promising start some 2 years ago, membership has dwindled and

the AGM was poorly attended. They have difficulty in raising a full committee and meetings take place infrequently. The important post of treasurer has been void for the greater part of the year and membership records and contact has been seriously affected. Faced with this decline in interest has the time come for SeBA to consider its future seriously, and perhaps amalgamate with NABO? We do not see ourselves and competing with them, but we do have better quality information and much closer contact with both BW and EA at a national level. Their members could help other boat owners by attending user group meetings along the Severn and Gloucester & Sharpness Canal on our behalf. Worth a thought?

River Tees now under BW Control

With effect from April 2000 the Commission for New Towns, which had been responsible for the residual functions of Teesside Development Corporation, transferred ownership of the Tees Barrage and Navigation to British Waterways, along with 9 staff and funding to the tune of 17 million pounds in respect of commuted maintenance costs.

The barrage, which was constructed in accordance with the terms of the River Tees Barrage and Crossing Act 1990, has four hydraulically controlled gates which retain the upstream river level creating a navigation 11 miles long. It also incorporates road and pedestrian bridges and a sea lock permitting

passage of boats size 25m and 6m x 2.5m draft - minimum headroom is 6m.

Our River Users' Co-ordinator has a set of guidance pamphlets and details of current charges. We understand that holders of a BWE River Registration Certificate or Pleasure Craft Licence may use the river and the lock without further payment. This is an ideal opportunity for owners of suitable craft to visit and explore this new river navigation.

River Severn Waterway Opening Times Under Review

BW at Gloucester have asked for the views of NABO on proposals to revise opening hours for locks and bridges on the River Severn and the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal to become effective from the end of March 2001.

The following benefits have been suggested by BW:

- Harmonisation of river and canal opening hours
- Timetable based on calendar weeks
- Opening hours reflecting hours of available daylight
- Elimination of meal break closures
- Additional 207 hours of cruising of the River Severn
- Additional 279 hours on the G&S canal

So far, so good. But the difficulties arise when you look at the specific

proposals (the devil is always in the detail!).

There will be 5 phases of working patterns throughout hours of daylight throughout the year. The periods will be based on week numbers for clarification. Each BW week will commence on a Friday and end on a Thursday. So, to ascertain whether a lock or bridge will be open for use, every boat owner will require access to a diary with week numbers designated in accordance with ISO standards, ie "week 1 being the first week in the New Year containing four or more days".

Opening times will remain unchanged at 0800 but closing times will vary from 1600 to 1730 to 1830 to 2000 and back again depending upon which week you are in. Quite simple really!

The objectives of the new system are stated to be to improve customer satisfaction and eliminate confusion over different opening hours.

Have BW attained their objective? Would boaters not prefer to have more easily understood later closing times throughout the usual spring and summer cruising months? Do we really require opening time to be as early as 8am?

Please let us have your views before we respond in the New Year - or should that be BW Week 1??.

River Severn Flood Inquiry

Our River Users Co-ordinator has been invited to give evidence to a

Scrutiny Panel being set up by Worcestershire County Council following the devastating floods along the River Severn in November.

This follows from a local newspaper report which gave prominence to the long-held NABO view that the River Severn needs dredging. Despite being classified as a "Commercial Waterway", the River is not adequately maintained by British Waterways in accordance with its statutory obligations. Boats of quite modest draft are known to strike the bottom at times resulting in expensive repairs to steering gear - for which BW pay compensation!

We do not suggest that dredging will completely solve the problem of flooding but it would certainly increase the capacity of the river and provide greater depths in summer when excessive abstraction reduces the navigable water to unacceptable levels.

There are also suggestions that flood relief channels and special barriers may be constructed to alleviate the persistent damage that places such as Upton-upon-Severn and Bewdley experience all too frequently.

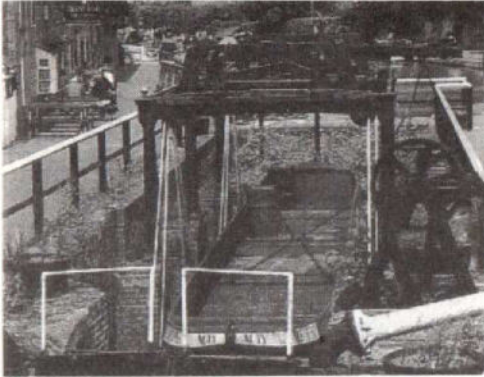
Stephen Peters

River Users" Co-ordinator

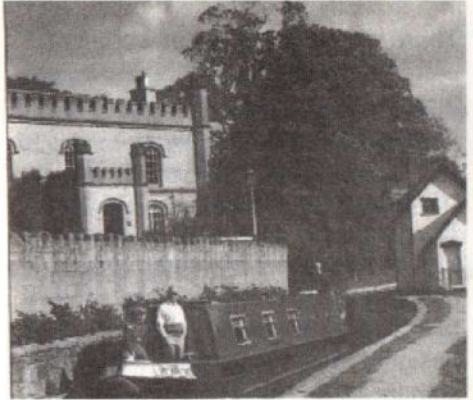


PICTURE PUZZLE

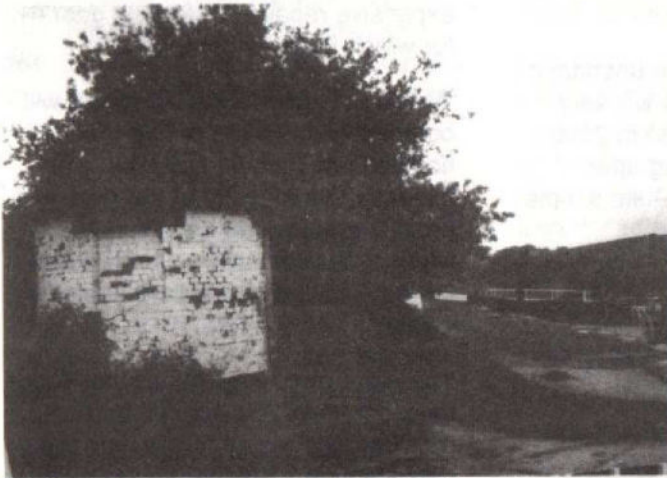
Can you identify the places illustrated?



1. *Where and what is this?*



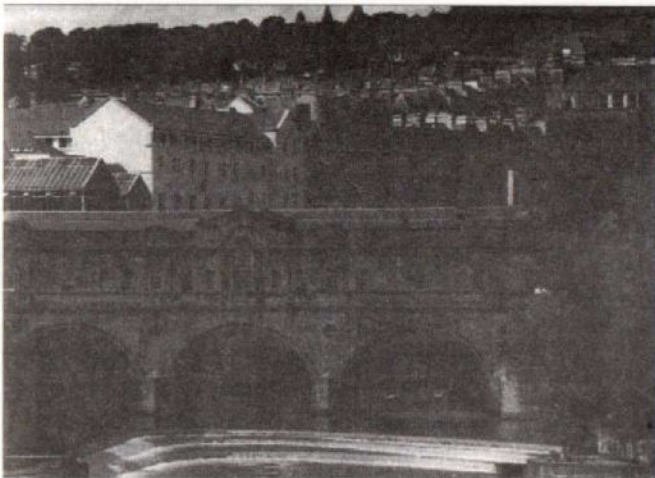
2. *Name this canal*



3. *Which canal, and what is the name of the lock.*

4. *What and where is this?
Name the canal*





5. Where is this bridge?

Which canal and which town?



6. Can you name the canal this building is on and what is it?



7. Which famous island, and what is the River?

8. An unusual bridge, but which canal is it on?

What river does it join?



Answers on page 24.

TECHNICAL MATTERS

Technical Trials of Safety Products

NABO has recently embarked upon a collaborative venture with Dicon Safety Products (UK), one of the country's largest manufacturers of domestic safety products to test a number of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

This involves the installation of the detectors in a number of different types of boat owned by Council members (the trials have to be conducted in an organised and controlled manner so we would not offer the free samples at random to our general membership). Our involvement should not be viewed in any way as implying endorsement of this company's products - our members must be free to decide which, if any, products suit their own requirements. It does enable us to reinforce the perception of NABO as a responsible, independent organisation representing the interests of boat owners in the widest possible sense.

The provision of detectors and alarms for smoke and carbon monoxide are NOT included in the Boat Safety Scheme and NABO takes the view that the merits of installation should be left to individual boat owners to decide for themselves after considering advice. Members will recall that a number of fatalities resulting from CO poisoning on boats have occurred during the past year, so it is timely for us to conduct the present exercise. We will let you know how they perform and hope to

be able to offer suitable products to our general membership at special prices in due course. Another good reason to be a NABO member.

Just When you Thought it Couldn't Get Any Worse!

Having experienced the trials and tribulations caused by changes to the requirements for LPG installations and appliances covered by the Boat Safety Scheme which became effective in January 2000, boat owners look like being faced with further changes.

A new international standard known as BS EN ISO 10239:20000 Small Craft - LPG Systems came into effect on 15 November 2000 and supercedes the present BS 5482 Part 3 1999 which we understand must be withdrawn by March 2000 at the latest.

It appears that the publication of the new standard caught many people on the hop despite representatives from the BSS office, the BMIF and RYA having seats on the committee which prepared the new standard. Users have no knowledge of the respective briefs of these people or what considerations they took into account on behalf of boat owners in the UK.

NABO is very worried about this latest development coming, as it does, less than one year after the farcical situation created by the BSS mandating BS5482 part 3. Does it mean that the BSS rules will be changed once again? The frank answer is that we do not yet know; but we have requested the urgent involvement of the BSS Technical and Advisory Committees (on which NABO

is represented) in an attempt to clarify the situation.

To date we have received no notification that any consultations within the terms of the British Waterways Act 1995 are being considered to seek the views of users and boat owners likely to be affected by any changes or proposals concerning the Boat Safety Scheme.

What a Christmas present this promises to be!

It Has Got Worse!

Boat owners are under threat once again. This time European legislation on the form of a proposed amendment to the Recreational Craft Directive has been published which would include restrictions on exhaust and noise emissions for inboard and outboard engines.

Our main concern is that the draft proposals are intended to be retroactive, in particular with respect to the replacement of old engines. This will have serious implications for boats with traditional type engines such as Russell Newbery, etc. Some relaxation regarding historic boats is expected but other boats will not be helped by the new regulations.

NABO and all the major inland boating user groups are lobbying to fight the proposals but we understand that the RYA has welcomed the new legislation because it will mean that smelly and noisy old canal boat engines will be banned!

Do members have any comments?

Stephen Peters

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TOWPATH TELEGRAPH

A little bird tells me that our Chairman's boat has a redesigned kitchen window. It is bow (as in the front of a boat) shaped and knackered. Apparently her coalman, a certain Vice President of IWA & Vice Chairman of the CBOA on Clover, was delivering her order when he got a tarpaulin on the prop as he was going round the bend at Gayton and came straight in. His comment was "Thank goodness it was you" (as they have known each other for many years!)

Council Meetings

NABO Council will meet on the following dates in 2001:

Jan 27th; March 10th; April 28th;
June 9th; July 28th; Sept 29th; Nov
24th

The AGM will be on Nov.10th

Please note that the deadline for the next issue of NABO news is Saturday 27 January

Well Done, BW!

BW have done an excellent job on the Northampton Arm the towpath is cut to the water's edge with a "fringe" of reeds in one pound. In two others the reeds at the towpath edge stop you from getting into the side and show the problems of allowing reeds to grow on the towpath side. But on the whole an excellent job.

PLEASE NOTE

IF YOU WANT A LETTER PUBLISHED IN THE NEWSLETTER BUT NO REPLY FROM A COUNCIL MEMBER SEND IT TO WENDY HOOK OUR NEWSLETTER EDITOR

IF YOU WANT TO BRING SOMETHING TO COUNCIL'S NOTICE OR YOU WANT A REPLY . PLEASE SEND IT TO THE GENERAL SECRETARY OR THE APPROPRIATE MEMBER OF COUNCIL, WHOSE ADDRESSES ARE ON THE BACK PAGE.

Useful Boater's Knots No.1



How to keep a bollard warm in winter

NABO EMAILS

I am working with Mike Wooding on a way to simplify NABO e-mail addresses so that after the @ they all end with nabo.org.uk,, like the website.

Before the @ will be a version, shortened if necessary, of the role. This will mean that addresses will be more memorable and logical. It also means that if the hat is put on a different head, or if the head changes addresses, no-one needs to change their contact lists.

You will see some of the new addresses on the Council list. The old addresses will go on working unless their owners change them, but their owners can sleep more soundly knowing their private e-mail addresses will not be being printed out by the thousand. We can also cope if two hats are worn by the same person, and even perhaps re-route messages if the hat is abandoned for whatever reason.

Some of the Council members are already up and running so please use the appropriate shortened name as follows those named:

Sue Burchett	chairman
James Mason	vice.chair
Graham Freeman	gen.sec
Andrew Sherrey	treasurer
Roger Davis	mem.sec
Helen Gardner	london.sec

legal.advisor

Trevor Rogers south.sec

Stuart Sampson public.rel

follow this with: @nabo.org.uk

We hope that other members will soon be on-line, but in the meantime, they can be contacted by post at the address shown on the back cover.

You can also contact the newsletter editor and webmaster in the same way:

Wendy Hook
news.editor@nabo.org.uk

Mike Wooding
webmaster@nabo.org.uk

Please continue to write to our representative, Philip Ogden, who assists the disabled . His address is:

Wharf Cottage, Finwood Road,
Rowington, Warwick CV35 7DH

Many members of Council are keen to use e-mail between themselves as well as welcoming messages from members and others. Hopefully this will speed communication, save a few trees, and perhaps even shorten Council Meetings!

Stuart Sampson

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW FROM COUNCIL

Hands up all who went to the AGM? Ahh, just as I suspected, far more than ever arrived. I believe that there are STILL people going 'Loopy-loo' and mumbling "junction 13" as they do yet another circuit of the Leeds Loop road. It's amazing that so many did make it to the meeting. Of course, it's always easier to get to Waterways Offices by boat, well, if it isn't then they're not worth finding is my theory.

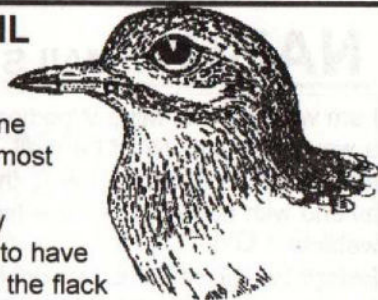
Once we were there it seemed worth the trouble. It is a very nice building and the local BW Regional Director made us very welcome and told us a bit of the history of the building and how it is used today. Should you want to hold an event there it is very nice BUT you will need excellent maps and navigators to ever find it.

The AGM was very interesting and lots of nice things were said about the work council has done in the past year on behalf of members. The new council was elected then they had a short meeting to sort out the 'top' responsible jobs. The shortest Council meeting on record. Could it be that everyone else was getting coffee?

After that there was an Open Forum.

The man from BW had been present throughout and although he is a very nice chap, should he be privy to our official business and accounts? Many of the questions were directed at him as BW's representative. Considering the way rules and customer relations are interpreted differently in the regions I think it was a bit tough on him too,

being from one of the most boater friendly areas, to have to take the flack which had been generated elsewhere.



Still for all that, it was a very useful session with Council learning more from members of what actions they want taken and where things are going right. Everyone is pleased that something is being done about the BSS. Let's hope that the end result is favourable with all the effort some Council members are putting in.

The sad thing about the AGM was that despite the policy of having it in different areas so more could come, there were VERY FEW from the NW area.

The first Council meeting was held in the Midlands, at Oldbury, just a week later and most members were able to get to it and there were even more new faces, and more to follow.

Wow, with these dynamic folk and the new organisation, Council will forge ahead in dealing with following-up problems and matters concerning new edicts from navigation authorities. Not to mention keeping a close watch for all those rules and regulations they try to introduce by stealth without

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PERHAPS WE SHOULD BE TALKING**

the promised consultation. You worry that you will wake up one morning and find they are well established.

What am I referring to? Well, for example, you can say that a little bird has told you that BW are planning to establish some areas of towpath as designated 'Anglers Only' territory!

BW are going to test cyclists and cycling. What does it all mean, I panic, drug tests? Highway/towpath code tests? NOT speed tests, please, or perhaps they will be tested for a BSC - Bike Safety Certificate - oh, that sounds more likely.

More erosion of the canal width when one Council member reported that at one site a building was allowed to encroach 18 inches, 1foot 6 inches or possibly 45 centimetres into the canal!

If you experience or witness any incidents of vandalism DO tell the police. It is essential that they get information to locate constant troublespots where they can then patrol and monitor what is going on. Only in emergency use the 999 system, otherwise contact the local police station.

However, EA and BW patrol officers are not concerned if you suffer vandalism etc. Well, don't expect knights in shining armour, but some positive reaction such as noting down details would surely help, as with the police, they should try to get an overall picture of the situation. So the Rya don't like our narrowboats having vintage diesel engines, or think such engines shouldn't be fitted into boats

unless they conform to modern standards.

Hey ho, shall we get sails like the old Fen lighters, do they realise that we go at less than 4mph (don't ask me what that is in new money).

Remember NABO is the only organisation that solely represents boaters on all Britain's waterways.

Well folks, expect my messages by pigeon post in the future, if I don't get to grips with all this techno stuff. So you may think I'm out of date, but so was an article I saw when I got my first sighting of the NABO web site. Hopefully that 'blip' has been sorted.

Picture Puzzle Answers

1. *Grand Union Canal, Stoke Bruerne. Boat Weighing Machine*
2. *Llangollen Canal*
3. *Shropshire Union Canal. Stone Lock, Beeston.*
4. *A5 Aqueduct, Brewood. Shropshire Union Canal*
5. *Bath. Kennet & Avon*
6. *Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal. Lock-keeper's office (old toll-house), Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal*
7. *Temple Island, Henley. River Thames.*
8. *Birmingham & Worcester Canal. River Severn.*

LETTERS

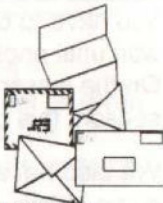
Towpath Cycling

I know that NABO have been involved with BW over the issue of cycling on the towpath, and you may be interested in my recent experience on the Union canal within the City of Edinburgh Council area.

As a permitted cyclist (one of the few!), I recently cycled from Edinburgh to Falkirk along the Union canal towpath. Whilst the section outwith the city is, generally, good, the heavily used part within the city is very poor in sections, with the available width down to as little as 600mm in places. This section has now been designated as national cycle route 75, with signs at strategic street junctions directing cyclists onto the towpath.

From the 'Pennine Link' No 134 1 note that the BW recommended minimum width for dual use towpaths is 2.5m. I have raised this serious safety issue with BW and they have replied that they intend to widen the towpath to 1.8m wherever possible'. There is some discrepancy in these figures, and I intend to raise the problem with the Health & Safety Executive before someone is injured within Edinburgh. (I have already seen a cyclist attempting to pedal his machine through an organized school party of approximately 20 children plus teachers/helpers on a nature trip'.)

*Ron Elder
Penicuik, Midlothian*

Thanks for a marvellous magazine - always a real tonic and we look forward to it immensely. How's about making it 'monthly'?! 

The recent discussions about vegetation control along towpaths raised a smile on our boat. Wow, towpaths what luxury! Where we boat, in the fens, we don't have towpaths. The vegetation by the side of the Great Ouse grows not 3 feet but 12 feet high and more in places, and on both sides and you can't cut it down because there's usually a 6 foot wide bed of reeds between you and the vegetation. If you do cut it down, you will waste your time because the field on the other side of it will be a water-logged morass that you can't walk on unless there has been no rain for 3 months at least. The nearest path will be a further 100 yards away on the flood bank and be likewise covered with impenetrable scrub because no-one ever goes there.

I know that many boaters carry a pair of shears and gardening gloves so they can cut down nettles and things on the side of the canal towpath when mooring. The fen boater needs a hard hat and a chainsaw.

In these conditions, of course, if you are unlucky enough to break down, you can't get off your boat and walk somewhere to find help.

You have to drop anchor and sit and wait until another boat comes along. On the lesser-used tributaries out of season, this could be days and days

We also have the opposite extreme in some places, long stretches of waterside where there is no scrub, no trees, no weeds, no path, no nothing in all directions for as far as the eye can see. In these places we like to see 3 foot high Ragwort because it lends colour and interest to the scene. Parts of the Old West River are so featureless that we use Ragwort clumps as markers to gauge cruising progress.

I read that BW are talking of extending their vegetation control activities either side of locks to allow more room for queuing boats. What, more than one?! Our locks have landing stages provided by our friends the EA. You can't queue on them because they're too small, nor can you wait anywhere else because you can't get close enough to the bank to get off. If you do manage to get off, there's no path - only the aforementioned impenetrable jungle or boggy morass.

Having said that, at one or two locks they are almost 50 feet long. Our boat would just fit on one of these - except that when we get to one, there always seems to be a 20 ft fibreglass cruiser tied up slap in the middle of it and with the owner no-where to be seen.

All we can do then is attempt to hold our position as the wind picks up sharply from the east and the current moves us inexorably towards the weir while we wait for him to return.

And what's all this about not being able to find places for overnight stops on the canals? In the fens, moorings are seriously scarce because the banks are either all let out to angling clubs and syndicates, fenced off with nasty barbed wire or are nothing but scrub and marsh. If you want to moor overnight at one of the 'honeypot' spots on the river in the high season you have to stake your claim as soon after breakfast as possible - even better, get there the day before....

I jest, however. With the advent of the Gold licence we have seen a huge increase in the number of visiting narrowboats making the long journey from the canal system to sample the wide open spaces of East Anglian waters. All the visitors we have met and talked to have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I hope we will see still more in the coming years. Who knows, a huge influx might stimulate the EA to provide more mooring places and longer jetties at the locks!
Stephen & Margaret Foote
Royston

Thank you for this news of the Fens - we don't often hear from boaters there. Perhaps they're still waiting to find land! Have you ever thought about coming onto the more 'civilised' parts of the network?

Thank you also for your kind comments; I don't think I could take the strain of producing a monthly newsletter, and of course, it would increase membership costs as the extra printing, postage, etc would have to be covered. Editor

Violence on the Cut

I read the letter about violence on the cut in November NABO News with particular interest, having recently suffered an air rifle attack while boating on the Northern Oxford Canal near Rugby.

In the same post as NABO News, we received our copy of Boundary Post from the BCNS. This included an updated map of their West Midlands Police Canal Boundary Map with telephone numbers for all the Police Stations. Notes included with the map suggest that 999 should be used for emergencies where there is danger to life or crime/incident still happening with persons responsible at the scene.

The incident that we suffered was of a minor nature and in fact we could not see the perpetrators. Our priority was to move ourselves and our boat out of range as quickly as possible. In retrospect, I suppose we should have got out the mobile afterwards, and called Rugby Police - having first called Directory Enquiries for their number.

I believe it would be helpful to have some system-wide guidance on what to do, and perhaps information on who to call, in the event of minor nuisance where dialling 999 is not appropriate. Perhaps this could be co-ordinated via 'Freephone Canals'?

Keep up the good work.
Marty Seymour, Bedford



I sincerely hope that Ann's beautifully-constructed letter is given wider publicity, perhaps in the National press. I wish I had written it. It echoes everything that I feel.
Roger Silvester



Thank you for the November NABO News it was very helpful regards the boat safety scheme, my boat passed the test first time round, but not this time round as the water heater needs a much taller chimney to vent hot air through the roof but if it was too tall it might not pass through the tunnels! Also the pipe clips need to be BSS standard and the vent in the cabin door needs to be another two inches bigger – the list is endless! So I was thinking of packing up, the stress and expense is not worth it as I am now 71 and disabled too. However after reading the NABO's suggested revised boat safety scheme I will not leave NABO. I will write to BW's Chairman to complain and ask him what happened to "The Boating For All" scheme? Also what about a discount on all fees for the OAP's and the disabled boater. I will let you know the results.

James Bayman "Adagio" (22ft
Dawncraft) River Weaver



What a relief it was to read Bob Corfield's cheerful letter in the last issue of NABO News. I was beginning to think that I was the only NABO member left who still enjoyed boating!

Like Bob, we had another great summer cruise, lasting four months from mid-May to mid-September. We should have continued later but we had to break off then to go boating in Ireland, which is a another story.

But, in the meantime, we travelled up the River Nene, down the South Oxford, along the Kennet and Avon, down the River Thames, up the Wey Navigation, round the Paddington Arm and back up the Grand Union to the River Nene and home. And in all that time we had nothing but praise for the BW staff we met, and for their counterparts on the Thames and Wey.

We had no trouble at all from cyclists or fishermen and generally the other boaters we met were friendly and helpful in all manner of ways. We were only shouted at once to slow down, and even then the complainant rather spoiled the effect by failing to look up before shouting.

I do not pretend that everything on the waterways is perfect. Over the years we have had the boat turned loose in the middle of the night, and we have been spat at by children on several occasions - usually in the nicest of places. And I do not doubt that other people have had very much worse experiences than us.

However I do believe that we need to keep a sense of perspective, and ask

ourselves whether the situation on the waterways is really any different from that in the rest of society. In my home town, you can complain about the Council, or the state of the roads, or the car parking, or the rubbish collection or a dozen other things. The local paper each week carries news of burglaries, muggings and worse. I do not condone any of this, and I believe everything possible should be done to protect the rights and well-being of all citizens. But it does not stop me liking the town and enjoying living here.

And so it is with the waterways. Of course there are faults and we are all delighted when NABO claims another victory over petty bureaucracy. But for Heaven's sake let us not forget that we are all there as volunteers nor lose the sense of sheer joy which comes simply from being afloat.

David Simmons , Godmanchester



While out and about on the waterways we tend to invent names for types of boaters. One type on the increase in this age of fast cars and rush and hassle are the 'Knob men'. Knob men are easy to spot as they speed past our moored boat. They are normally male (though of any age) and they steer the boat with one hand on the tiller. In the other hand they grasp their knob - in this case the knob on the end of the throttle control - a knob which they often caress with almost sexual passion.

Knob men cannot leave their throttle

control alone - they love to hold them and even more to move them about - especially in the downward direction. They pass moored boats, flicking their throttle knob up at the last possible second then, clutching hard, they begin those moments of agony - can they last - more often than not the answer is no - and long before they have gone right past they start to stroke their control knob down just a little at a time, listing with mounting anticipation to the increased engine note.

Then, when they can stand it no more, they tighten their grip and force the knob all the way down to its cruising setting, and depart, leaving us rocking in their wake while they throb down the canal still clutching their beloved knobs!

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FIRST MATE GUIDES - A REVIEW

I was delighted recently to receive a copy of the new First Mate Guide to the Grand Union. I have been a fan of these guides since I first came across them several years ago and had long wanted one covering my "home ground". This edition also covers the Regents Canal and the Lee & Stort Navigations .

From the front cover, with the delightful drawings of typical Grand Union lock gear, to the large clear maps of the various towns and villages, this guide more than lives up to the promise of previous issues. Whatever you need to complete your domestic arrangements can be found within these pages.

The details include full addresses for post offices to enable boaters to take full advantage of the Post Restante

system, nearest telephones , and locations for chemist, dentist, doctor, shops and take-aways. Knowing that the authors are dog lovers you can be sure that the information about local vets has been equally well researched.

This is the 5th book in a series including Staffs & Worcs; Trent & Mersey; Shropshire Union (inc, Llangollen & Montgomery) and the Leicester Ring (with Ashby, Erewash, Coventry and Nottingham).

These guides are available from Carole Sampson.

Cheques for £6 should be made payable to Carole Sampson. Further details can be found on their Web Site: www.canalmate.co.uk

Small Ads

a free service to members - contact editor

"Mains generator - 240 volt ac (1kw conservative O/P) and 24 volt dc. Was a former plant standby generator and has been used very little. Runs off Propane gas (orange). Need space £100.

Don Franklin
(Reading)

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CONTACT THE EDITOR!

Editorial



So, you finally found me! This is the new place for my editorial and the contents in future editions of NABO News.

Best wishes to all members. May your canals always be full throughout your cruising!

Wendy Hook

Published by
National Association of Boat Owners

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*Front Cover: Leeds & Liverpool Canal,
outside BW offices. Stuart Sampson*

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