



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE**



**TENTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE**

**7/01 - December 2001**

**Reports from Chairmen / AGM / New President**



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## **BSS Re-launch at London Boat Show**

**Will a change from blue to red be the biggest change to the 'Little Book'? - Trevor Rogers (Technical Committee) reports:-**

### **Boat Safety Scheme Review – Progress?**

By now, most of you will be aware that a review of the Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) was carried out earlier this year. During August and September, BW carried out a consultation with individual boaters and around 2000 questionnaires were returned. We now have the results, although in many cases they are confusing and it has proved difficult to draw firm conclusions.

NABO is well represented on both the BSS Advisory and Technical committees. As part of the review, advice and recommendations have been given on the Time Limited Exemptions (TLEs) as well as a number of procedural documents. Currently, we are still awaiting decisions on those recommendations from the BSS Management Committee.

The scheme is to be re-launched at the London Boat Show in January. This is not far away and we still do not have confirmation of the intentions. We are concerned that the changes may only amount to 'cosmetic tinkering' around the edges, with some minor examination items (perhaps some 90 out of about 360) being reduced to 'advisory'. It is believed that several other organisations are beginning to share our concerns.

One recommendation put forward was for the BSS to continue to be reviewed after the re-launch in a comprehensive, phased programme covering all the sections of the scheme. While care would be needed to ensure that it does not lead to continually changing examination standards, it may be the basis of a way forward.

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Hi everyone, my first report as your new Chairman will be quite short.



As you will have read in previous issues, I am very familiar with the rivers and canals of the UK, not just as a pleasure boater, but as a Marine Engineer, building and fitting out boat, operating tugs and work boats, dredging the canals, and digging out bridge holes when helping to restore lost canals. I have been a member of the Advisory and Technical Committee of the Boat Safety Scheme, so I know of the problems experienced by boaters when having their boats examined for their four-yearly certificate. I also have a good working relationship with the senior executives of British Waterways and the Environment Agency.

All of this experience is available to each and every member of the National Association of Boat Owners. Whatever I can do to help members with any of their boating problems, and further the cause of the Association, I will do to the best of my ability.

This organisation, as I was reminded by some of the founder members at the recent AGM, was formed to look after the interests of, and fight for the rights of, "the boater" because there was no other body that solely looked after their interests. That was ten years ago and today we are a respected national organisation, which is ably represented by your council at grass roots, towpath,

national, and government level. Sometimes we will be highly confrontational, but usually that only happens after long periods of in depth discussion. My personal view is that you can sort out any problem when there is a will on both sides to

succeed, and I enjoy worthwhile discussions, but if it does not work then I will fight tooth and nail with whatever means available to ensure that the rights and freedom of YOU, the boater, are protected. Having said that, we enjoy a good working relationship with British Waterways, the Environment Agency, and the Port of London Authority and try our very best to promote the good work that they do.

We have a new Editor for our NABO News who is doing a good job on brightening up the look and content of the magazines. It is not all doom and gloom, but confrontational articles are what National Association of Boat Owners is about, fighting for your rights, but we will print more articles about the good things in the boating world, write in and tell us of the successes of staff and managers of the navigation agencies in your area, it is your magazine.

Got to rush, another meeting to go to.....

*James Mason*

# The AGM and Tenth Birthday Celebrations

The Black Country Living Museum was a fitting venue for this, as it was to Dudley that eighty-odd boaters absconded from the 'National' at Windmill End ten years ago to form what is now NABO.

All seats were filled as Sue Burchett, ending her two years as chairman, began her 'monologue' by thanking the three retiring council members, then outlined how NABO started and how respected it had become in the corridors of power.

Praising the Technical Committee's continuing fight to see the Boat Safety Scheme rationalised she said *"There has only been a slight tinkering at the edges of the scheme. This is not enough and unless there are guarantees of improvements we will find it hard to support the relaunch of the Boat Safety Scheme"*

Increasing membership, improvements in communications, the website and getting all but one of Council onto e-mail were listed amongst achievements this year. Work continues on topics including crime prevention, towpath trimming, extra toll charges faced by water-borne traders, 'Fishing Only' stretches and charges for towpath mooring.

She explained NABO's opposition to BW taking over EA navigations, *"We are concerned about what would happen if British Waterways had a monopoly and we used our experience of dealing with both organisations, and we felt the Environment Agency were more honest in their dealings with us."* Although not unanimously supported by the membership, this policy has since been vindicated by a Ministerial announcement that EA should retain control of its waterways.

She ended by announcing that MP for Normanton (Yorkshire) and Chairman of The Parliamentary Waterways Group, Bill



New Chairman, James Mason and NABO's first Chairman, Dave Green, cut the birthday cake

O'Brien, has accepted NABO's invitation to become its new president to mark its tenth anniversary.

Voting for the 2001/2002 Council was deemed unnecessary as the resignation of Nigel Fountain and Sadie Dean (Secretaries for the Midlands and Anglian Regions), and Derek Hackett (Legal Advisor) meant that there were fewer nominees than posts.

After retiring briefly, the remaining Council announced that the officers would retain their roles except that James Mason was to be the new Chairman, changing places with Sue Burchett.



Michelle Harris was co-opted to Council to bring her boating rather than legal experience. She told the meeting that, as a barrister, her professional code of practice prevented her from accepting direct approach from members,

but that she would be willing to help with waterway related private cases referred to her through a solicitor. She said her main ambition was to change the law itself where it seemed biased against boaters.

NABO's first Chairman Dave Green gave an informative and amusing account of how it all began before questions from the floor which included worries that NABO was supporting BW's intention to move all long-term linear mooring to expensive marinas. These fears were allayed as NABO promised it would not pursue anything that would increase costs to boaters. The mooring matrix, flood prevention and dredging were also discussed and the Membership Secretary was asked to give more details of membership numbers. More had joined than had left, quite a few through the



The Birthday Cake, donated and decorated by member Wendy Hook

website. Of the leavers only two had resigned through disagreement with NABO policy but quite a few had been driven off the water altogether due to costs incurred by increased fees and the BSS.

After the formalities the 10th Birthday Cake, kindly provided by Wendy Hook, was ceremoniously cut and members adjourned to a buffet and enjoyed some canal related folk music from *Keepers Lock*. They were also given a chance to see a working model of the 'Diagonal Lock' brought by its originator, Terry Fogarty.



'Keepers Lock' in performance.



Model boat ascends the lock



Terry Fogarty demonstrates the principles of his Diagonal Lock



Lock almost full

# Bill O'Brien J.P. M.P. becomes NABO's first President.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

*From the office of*  
Bill O'Brien J.P. M.P.

He has kindly written this for NABO News to introduce himself:-

I have always been interested in waterways, living in the area of Ferrybridge where the River Aire is a substantial watercourse running through the village. The Aire and Calder Navigation is a waterway that has been used for the transport of coal, oil and other freight from the Humber Ports up to Leeds, Wakefield and Bradford, via Ferrybridge.

When I entered Parliament in 1983, I joined the All-Party Group on Inland Waterways, I revived the Group's activities and encouraged membership to see it become one of the largest committees meeting in the House of Commons.

Before I entered Parliament, I worked as a coal miner underground as Glasshoughton Colliery in West Yorkshire but I was also a member of the Wakefield Metropolitan District Council and a representative on the Yorkshire Water Authority when it was introduced in 1973/74. I was elected Chairman of the Amenities Committee with the Yorkshire Water Authority, which involved all kinds of activities in and around watercourses and reservoirs in the Yorkshire area. I have therefore had a connection with water-based activities including the development of disused canals in the Yorkshire area.

I wish so see the development of the waterways throughout the United Kingdom as a means of recreation and amenities for local communities, also a source of transport for freight and passengers wherever possible.

I was honoured so be invited to become president of the NABO but my involvement will be limited because of my parliamentary duties and commitment to my constituents. I would certainly wish to help in any way I possibly can to promote and assist NABO.

*Bill O'Brien*



# CURRENT ISSUES WITH BW

I will endeavour to bring you up to date on the following matters.

- Continuous mooring
- Angling only lengths
- Full canals
- Visitor mooring charges.



Geoffrey Rogerson is in overall control of NABO liaison with the navigation authorities. You, like me, may have thought all Council members talked to BW and EA. They do, but Geoff is the man 'up to speed' where it matters

Ed.

## Continuous mooring

No doubt most of you by now will have heard of the proposed 10 Km 28 day requirement from BW— ie. after 14 days a boat is required to move 10 Km and not to return to that 'place' within 28 days.

NABO have always taken the view that there is not a continuous cruising problem but a continuous mooring problem. i.e. boats overstaying on 24/48 hour visitor moorings; boats 'bridge-hopping', and boats that have been left either attended or unattended by the towpath for weeks—not just the 14 days only as required.

There is no question but that BW have a problem, however, it seems, according to BW themselves, that it revolves around 600 boats from a total of 25,000 i.e. roughly 2.4 %.

The 10Km-28day no-return proposal is we feel impractical, unworkable, unenforceable and illegal. NABO feels that already within the 1995 Act, BW have sufficient powers to deal with any continuous mooring problem in that boaters are required not to stay in any one place for more than 14 days and to "bona fide navigate" the canals.

Let us be clear. As of this date **the 10K-28day is only a proposal and not enforceable.** Accordingly there can be no penalty for not so doing.

Following earlier consultation, BW is now going to their managers and patrol officers to obtain data as to the extent of the problem and possible solutions. Following this, further talks will be held with canal user groups.

We have had meetings with BW in order to help with the problem, particularly with regard to the question of "*place*". It would undoubtedly simplify matters if *place* could be defined. "Bridges" have been suggested. We have put forward the possible re-introduction of the old parish boundary rule that used to apply- should boaters boundary hop then they would fall foul as not bona-fide navigating. However any proposal must be workable, uniform, and be seen to be legal

## Angling only lengths

There has been discussion recently over the provision of "angling only lengths ". This follows the increase in visitor moorings on many canals. The benefits or otherwise of such a proposal apart, NABO challenges the power of BW to prohibit mooring from lengths of towpath to be used exclusively by anglers. How this problem can be resolved remains to be seen. Pegged lengths for angling matches with adequate notice are fairly straightforward but casual boaters and casual anglers are a different matter. I cannot see boaters moving an angler from a visitors mooring, nor an angler moving a boater from an angling only spot! Surely a recipe for confrontation.

First come first served has always been the case. However further discussion with BW will be held and we will keep you informed.

## Full canals

On a growing number of canals throughout the system, it is apparent that all marinas are full as are the on-line moorings. Each week BW is approached by new boaters who require a mooring and they do their best to accommodate them - they also don't want to refuse new licence money!

This has implications both for water usage and queues at locks; particularly on single chamber canals like the Oxford. To have long queues at a lock to be repeated at the next lock and so on would be a source of discontent and frustration.

NABO do not have a view or policy at the moment. However we felt it would be irresponsible just to ignore the problem. We are naturally concerned for our present members but also do not wish to inhibit new boaters coming on to the canals.

A response from our members would be of help to us.

We have made BW aware of the situation and have asked them to comment and to consider their policy. No doubt they wish there were more marinas but we have this situation in 2001 – how about 5 and 10 years hence?

## Visitor mooring charges

There seems to be an increasing trend towards charging for overstaying on visitor moorings.

On some canals charges of say £2 per day for 7 days are indicated and there is a proposal on the Kennet and Avon to introduce £25 per day for 7 days and £50 per day thereafter.

It is illegal for BW to fine boaters for overstaying on a mooring as only a court of law can impose or approve of such a fine. It may however be well within BW's power to charge as mentioned above, and this then raises the question is the sum a deterrent or an income? As a source of income; to complain that a boat has overstayed on a 24 hour mooring and be told that the boat in question has paid say £2 to stay there would seem to defeat the whole point of time limited moorings. It would therefore seem logical that it was best used as a deterrent. We are then left with the age-old problem – do BW have the will, the resources and the legal backup to enforce their wishes.

*Geoffrey Rogerson – BW Liaison.*

*Advertisement*



**JUST IN - Gold Licences to rise by 2% rather than 2.5%**  
- User groups (presumably including NABO) to take the credit!





# ONCE UPON A TIME . . .



Past NABO Chairmen,  
from left to right:-

Dave Green

Jon Darlington

Sue Burchett

Peter Lea

The chronological order is 1-2-4-3 (like the firing order for a 4 cylinder diesel!) as they wouldn't stand in the correct order for the photo. In fact Dave wasn't there at all!

(Photos courtesy of Waterways World and Dave Green)

## Jon Darlington begins the NABO story

As it is now ten years since NABO was formed I thought it might interest newer members to know how its formation came about, and why.

This is a personal account which describes my part in the events. My perspective of events looking back over ten years may be coloured, but I have kept documents and letters and have referred to them to confirm the facts.

It all started for me when we (Melanie and I) had an extended cruise of the waterways from March to November of 1989, during which we became aware that there was something wrong, and, I felt, **very** wrong, which we had not noticed before. During our cruise we met a number of people living on their boats - idyllic you would think - but who appeared to be living in fear of BW; people who clearly felt that they had no rights and were at the mercy of BW's whims. The impression I came away with by the time we returned to land was that BW could do just what they wanted, and treat people just the way they wanted, and that very little could be done about it.

This apparently unassailable power of BW concerned me greatly. The way people were being intimidated was something I could not accept as right or proper, and was something I had not come across before. So during 1990 I did some research into the powers of BW. I obtained copies of all the Transport Acts and British Waterways Acts (some of which the HMSO had no record of) and bye laws. With the guidance of Halsbury's Laws of England it became clear to me that although BW had extensive powers they were sometimes using them in ways that were very probably not lawful.

At the same time that I was getting to grips with waterways law, BW announced that they would introduce boat standards to be applied to all craft in August 1991. I was amazed at what was being proposed and the short time in which they were to be implemented. A raft of onerous measures were being proposed apparently without any basis for their introduction, except that it was to improve safety - and the Marchioness disaster had frightened them. Surely, I reasoned, if each one of these standards were necessary there

would be a mass of evidence regarding accidents and injuries which made the introduction of each one of them essential. So I wrote to BW to ask what evidence existed that showed that if each of these requirements was not complied with there would be a significant risk to safety. I was unable to get a sensible response to this question (and never did) and concluded that no evidence existed. Being a member of the IWA, I took the issue up with them. I expected that they would be furious that these Standards were being forced on boaters when there was no evidence that they were required.

I had assumed that the IWA would be battling like mad with BW over this issue. I was amazed to find that they were in fact far from doing so, but actually agreed with them. I was informed in a letter in August 1990 that the Standards were inevitable, that the majority believe them to be reasonable in principle and that the IWA had no plans to oppose them. I continued my campaign with letters to BW and the IWA but to no avail. I was again told that the "great majority" of IWA members saw the need for boat standards. My letters continued but the IWA would not move. To be fair, IWA members had not made any effort to put pressure on their leaders. By the end of October 1990, I was told that I was only one of two members who had written to ask the IWA to oppose the Standards! So perhaps it is not surprising then that they did not oppose them.

At the same time that I was continuing my personal campaign for scientifically justifiable boat standards, it came to light that BW had introduced a general powers bill in the House of Lords! I got a copy of this Bill and was amazed at the contents. New powers were being introduced, new criminal offences were being created for the most trivial thing, such as not tying your boat up in a manner as directed by any BW official, existing rights included in enabling acts were being extinguished, and so on. This absolutely astonishing bill which would greatly increase BW's powers over boaters must surely be resisted and challenged. I wrote to the IWA, but again there appeared to be no

inclination to fight. They had consulted their Parliamentary agents, but that was about all. I would have expected an outraged and fierce attack, but no, nothing.

By this time it was the beginning of 1991 and I felt lonely! It seemed that I was fighting on my own. I could not believe that I was the only one that wanted to fight against these draconian measures. However it soon became apparent that I was not alone in the IWA. Some others in the IWA had been questioning the IWA policy of representing all waterway users including walking and fishing, and felt that boaters were being let down. But when in December 1990 the IWA chairman said that the IWA was "not an association solely directed towards the requirements of boaters, who through boat clubs and canal societies, have their own specific pressure groups" I realised that there was an urgent need for just such an organisation that the IWA was not, i.e. we needed an association that was solely directed towards the requirements of boaters. Local boat clubs and canal societies could not possibly take on national issues in any meaningful way. It needed to be a national association. In any case canal societies are not wholly boat oriented, and not everyone belongs to a boat club.

My mind was made up that a national association representing boaters needed to be formed urgently, and if no-one else would do it, I would try to. But because of the confusion regarding the IWA's role, particularly regarding the representation of boaters interests, the IWA had announced that it would have a "Great Debate" in February 1991 to consider whether or not they should continue with their policy of representing all waterway users. I therefore felt that I should wait till the result of the Great Debate before doing anything. I made my submission to the IWA, along with only 50 others, and waited for the outcome.

The result of the Great Debate was announced in April 1991 and not surprisingly the IWA had decided to continue their existing policy of

representing all users. I felt the way was now clear for the formation of a new national organisation to represent all boaters.

I was in the process of planning how this could be done when I read a letter in Canal & Riverboat from someone in Wolverhampton who said he had just formed the "National Association of Boat Owners"! Just the name I would have chosen! I contacted the author of the letter, Phil Bland, and explained that as what I was hoping to do he had already done, could we meet. So we did, in a pub in the Black Country which was set up like the factory I started work in when I left school, and at this meeting agreed to join forces. Phil had got a number of members but no committee or organisation. I set about drafting a constitution which we discussed at our next meeting in May.

But at about this time I happened to mention to Stephen Goldsborough that we were in the process of setting up NABO. He said he knew some people who were thinking about doing the same thing and were planning to hold a meeting at the IWA festival at Windmill End in August. The purpose of the meeting was to see if IWA members thought a separate boaters' organisation should be set up. I said I would like to meet them, and he passed my details on to them. They agreed to meet with us so in June 1991 Phil and I met with Dave Green and Syd Beacroft at Stephen Goldsborough's yard in Knowle. Syd and Dave were clearly capable people and Dave immediately impressed me as someone of exceptional ability, who could provide skills which both Phil and I lacked. Dave and Syd agreed to join forces with Phil and me. It was at this point really that NABO became a viable entity. We had a core group that could get things done. My immediate impressions about Dave quickly proved to be correct. Dave's organisational skills, clear thinking, drive and confidence were what really got us off the ground at the start. He organised the meeting at Windmill End and chaired it. The agenda was slightly different as NABO had already been

formed. The meeting was crowded, and over 80 people joined NABO on that day, adding to the 31 who had joined prior to August.

An interim committee was formed and at the first AGM in Coventry in November 1991, the first Council was elected. NABO was formed and immediately started to fight for boaters.

At the start we were often castigated by IWA people for having started NABO. We were seen as disloyal and accused of doing harm to the IWA. We were also told that we should have kept unity and formed NABO as a subgroup of the IWA. But with the best will in the world, it would not have worked. The IWA is very hierarchical in nature and committee led. I cannot see how we could have operated in that environment. Indeed I doubt we would have been allowed to. I for one am not a social type. I do not take an active role in clubs and societies, and could not have risen through the ranks to take a prominent part of an IWA based NABO. A number of the NABO Council were similar. NABO simply could not have happened in the IWA.

I may seem to criticise the IWA in this narrative, but I do not wish to. Their position was pretty much inevitable given the nature of their organisation and the lack of response from their members. But they had (and I am sure still have) very capable people who have done considerable work for all our benefit. David Stevenson, the chairman during this difficult time is a man of the highest integrity and a fair man who worked extremely hard for boaters as well as for all waterway users. Once I got to know him more I was sorry on a personal level that we had made life difficult at times for him and the IWA. But at the time it was clear that something had to be done, and we just went ahead and did it.

*Jon Darlington*

## Peter Lea continues the NABO story

Nearly two years have passed since I retired as NABO Chairman. Sue Burchett, my successor, and the whole of NABO Council have done a first class-job of running the organisation and representing the boater during that time. Sue, in particular, has established excellent links with BW spokesmen, enabling her to sort out problems swiftly behind the scenes. James, Stephen, and others put a great deal of work into their contribution to the overhaul of the Boat Safety Scheme. As always, much time has been spent in representing members at local, regional and national meetings up and down the country. More than ever, NABO is the Voice of the Boater.

There has been much progress in some areas. The Boat Safety Scheme is slowly becoming more sensible. The threats to our boating posed by early drafts of the Recreational Craft Directive have disappeared. The Waterways Trust has dramatically speeded up the restoration and re-opening of major routes, and new broad-beam links are actively promoted.

Looking at other aspects of the waterway scene, I am less happy. In my final Chairman's column, I wrote: *The cost of boating has spiralled upwards. Licence fees, moorings, the BSS and insurance have all contributed to put great pressure on many long-standing canal and river users. It used to be "Canals for All"; it's fast becoming "Canals for the Affluent". The waterways*

*themselves are overmanaged, over-signed, and over-prettified; less a linear heritage site than a linear municipal garden. Wharves are sold off for re-development; historic buildings become offices and shops; pirate galleons and Chinese junks are mysteriously incorporated into the landscape. Glossy publicity brochures, awash with photographs, and slick video presentations replace real information. Many managers still find it easier to use evasion and equivocation rather than being open, frank and co-operative. More petty rules and regulations restrict the freedom of people to enjoy the waterways. BW's management could yet ruin what it seeks to preserve and improve."*

Unfortunately the above seems to me to be as true today as when I wrote it.

There are other things that worry me. BW has effectively abandoned its commitment — made at the highest level — to dredge the track to original channel dimensions. The moorings matrix has been scrapped. Will its replacement be fair, transparent, and financially neutral? (Don't answer). A major waterway user group has "gone into partnership" with BW and is receiving financial support from it. Will this inhibit their willingness to complain to BW — in public if need be — and be seen to take a stand, as I remember them doing in the past?

More than ever, we boaters need NABO to speak for us and defend our interests.

*Peter*

*Advertisement*

# Worried Woman of the Waterways

It's me, Dot, again

Dear dear, I have so much more time for worrying when the daylight is so short and so are the distances I can get about on the cut.

As I have said **dredging** is one of my worries, well that is not strictly true, it is LACK of dredging that causes the problems!

There is nothing worse than zig-zagging along, as first the back of the boat gets caught on the mud at a bend, this causes the front to cross to the other side and go aground there. Pushing the back off, the front can then swing to the other side, though in some cases you have to go to the front to push it off and the back swings across. This is even more fun if it is windy.

Oh BW, please dredge all of the canal. Boats can be up to 70ft long, you know, and need all the room to get round corners. If a stretch of canal has bits that are too shallow for some boats (and these are never marked on maps) then the whole canal is effectively unnavigable.

It is also worrying when you can't get alongside at mooring places. Lovely mooring rings but no depth of water. I have never been good at long jump.

Then you can get stuck in bridge 'oles, though this is more often on piled up rubbish.

Side pounds, now, are they ever dredged? I was told by a BW operative that Farmer's Bridge locks had been so thoroughly dredged that the adjacent buildings were nearly falling in, yet the side pounds are so full of silt that one lock- full of water drawn off takes it all. If you follow someone who doesn't empty one lock into the next, you can soon get into trouble.

**Dangerous behaviour** is always a worry, not just the thoughtless sort (like lifting the top paddles while you are emptying the lock), or the drunken type. The biggest danger I have experienced has been from people who are trying to 'help'. Most usually this takes the form of seeing that I have entered a lock and am climbing the ladder in order to operate it, they shut the bottom gates and throw up the top paddles before I can even secure the boat. No fun in a wide lock.

Going too fast round blind bends and through blind bridges is dangerous, especially for the poor worrying soul coming the other way.

Have you got a dog? I have, and always take a 'pooper scooper' when we are out together. It is so automatic to pick it up as I leave the boat I worry that I shall have it with me when I'm NOT out with the dog!

However careful I am, it is inevitable that I step off the boat straight into something left by another dog!

**Dog mess** is a smelly business and it is the owners I blame for it getting under my feet. It is also a worry for those with toddlers believe me.

Dog owners, keep your dogs under control and clear up after them. That way both you and your dog will be popular with all.

It is always a worry to be misunderstood, and Ken Whapples in last NABO News thought I was getting at people who hire boats. That is very far from the truth, there are good and bad, considerate and inconsiderate, in ALL types of boaters.

However I have had problems with **Day Boats**. One full to overloaded with folks, who seemed to think they were playing bumper cars, rammed me in the side. No apology, and I can still recall their hysterical laughter. 'Oh,' I thought, 'Let me find where your cars are parked and boot them in the side while I have my clogs on, then you will laugh?'

I calmed down, boating is a relaxing occupation, smile and be friendly, don't let one mishap ruin your day. Perhaps it was an outing for the partially sighted.

Along comes another day boat, I smile and wave a greeting. Some of these folk smile and wave as the steerer rams me broadside. I'm too busy trying to save my dog to take details but I swear I will recognise that maniacal laugh anywhere should I hear it again!

Surely one of the crowd aboard could be taught the basics of steering. I've seen day boats in a lock with no idea what or where the windlass is, let alone how to use it.

I try to help, but I must say that now at the sight of an approaching Dayboat I want to get out the way and moor up until the coast is clear.

I'd rather be a live coward than a dead hero.

Yes they worry me. Just the memory makes me want to lie down in a darkened room.

Hope you are having a peaceful time,

www Dot

*Advertisement*



# WILL B.W. TAKE OVER E.A. RIVERS?

## NEWS FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY MIDLANDS RFERAC

At a recent meeting of the Regional Fisheries Ecology and Recreation Advisory Committee of the Environment Agency for the Midlands it was reported that the future of the Agency's responsibility for navigation in the Thames, Southern and Anglian regions was still undecided.



DEFRA Ministers Michael Meacher and Lord Whitty had met with the Chairmen and Chief Executives of both BW and the EA to discuss the prospects for their respective navigation functions and a decision was expected to be made by Secretary of State Mrs Margaret Beckett by the end of October 2001.

The decision will be made against the background of the House of Commons ETR Committee which recommended that the existing navigation remit of the EA should remain unchanged. There has also been a similar inference made in the consultation paper which has been produced as a result of the ongoing Financial, Management and Policy Review of the Agency.

It appears that there is some regret at EA Board level that they failed to express a desire to take control of all river navigations, notably the Trent and the Severn, in their submission to the ETR inquiry. This would have given further weight and conviction to their contention that navigation is an integral part of river basin management, the main thrust of the Agency's argument in favour of retaining its existing navigation functions on the Thames, Medway and East Anglian rivers.

Although navigation does not feature prominently in the RFERAC discussions the Midlands is ably served by NABO member and Upper Avon Navigation Trust council member, David Bolton, who speaks up for navigation interests at every opportunity. For example, by stressing the desirability of utilising the adjacent Staffs and Worcs Canal for conveying waste to the proposed refuse incinerator plant at Kidderminster. A very sensible suggestion.

Another contribution from a committee member emphasised the need for safety on the towpath to be included in the collaboration agreement between BW and EA.  
Stephen Peters

 **Stop Press - The Answer is 'NO'** - At 3.30p.m. on the 20th of November a Government Press Release announced that EA will retain its navigational role on the rivers it currently administers. 

*Advertisement*

In her speech at the AGM, Sue Burchett claimed as ‘an achievement’ that ‘*NABO News was still being read by those who matter*’. Irrespective of what **she** meant by that, **I** must take ‘*those who matter*’ to mean the members.

Before I was elected to Council, I heard little about NABO between reading one issue of the News and the next, and so the News was all I knew of the Association. I would pick it up and probably turn straight to the readers’ letters, where that ordinary boaters like myself expressed their opinions. The rest of the articles seemed to be full of waterway politics, committee acronyms, names I didn’t know, happenings on waterways I thought I would never reach, and the problems of Paloma water heaters. Unless a headline shouted, “**NEW TAX ON MARINE DIESEL**”, I would dismiss most articles as ‘bridges I wouldn’t go under until I came to them’.

Now I edit this magazine, I must not forget how I used to view it, but I must also bear in mind that it is the ‘face of NABO’ both to prospective members, who are given sample back-issues, and to those in positions of power or influence who are given courtesy copies. Our whole credibility could stand or fall through the impressions people get from this publication, and credibility is the name of our game.

I am in the fortunate position to have the time and facilities to give the News the attention it deserves. However, even with all the Power-Macs, graphic tablets and weeks with nothing better to do, I cannot create a magazine without a reliable core of **contributors**. Even then it can become depressing and predictable, so I am always greatly relieved when something different arrives, especially letters.

Harking back to the previous issue and beyond, I apologise if you had forgotten what NABO News looked like when Issue 6 arrived. The little boat on the spine was certainly in one ‘place’ too long, taking, as it did, more than two months to move down its statuary 25 millimeters! The August issue was in fact a week early, as we had to rush it through before our worthy Nigel, of Berrington Print, took a well-earned summer holiday, then there was the extra fortnight between Council Meetings, and the last straw for the next issue was a computer ‘outage’ at the image-setters (not a breed at Crufts – they are the ones who turn my master sheets on paper or CD-R into plates for the presses!).

If people are frustrated by the time it takes their articles and letters to appear in print then they should bear in mind that, after the ‘copy deadline’, the magazine has to go through four stages, each being accomplished by only one person, perhaps with one assistant. Each stage takes four days, interleaved with time for transport or postage. The stages are: compilation (including design, editing, proof-printing and proof-reading); image-setting; printing; and then packing. Even so we can quite often bring you news quicker than the waterway magazines, but if you want the very latest, visit our website.

*Stuart Sampson*

*Editor– NABO News, 48 Old lane, Bramhope, Leeds LS16 9AZ*

# NOTICES

## CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Whilst I am happy to hear from any member, just tell Roger Davis (Mem. Sec.) if you have changed your address.

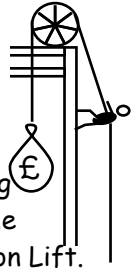
He keeps the records and supplies the address labels for mailing your News. Ed.

Ad

## REMEMBER! REPORT ALL CRIME INCIDENTS TO THE POLICE

Even if it seems futile, it creates a crime statistic which can improve future resourcing

Sue raised £437 while abseiling down the Anderton Lift. She thanks all her sponsors.



## 2002 CALENDAR

### Council meetings Copy dates

Jan 19th	Jan 26th
March 9th	March 16th
April 27th	May 4th
June 15th	June 22nd
July 20th	July 27th
Sept 21st	Sept 28th
<b>Nov 9th A.G.M.</b>	
Nov 23rd	t.b.a.

**CAUTION - Lock 9W Hudds Narrow Canal**  
When descending this lock be aware that the offside wall of it has a pronounced step about 2ft above its empty level which can catch a boat and cause it to tilt alarmingly. The lock has hydraulic paddle gear making it a long job to drop the paddles quickly. In addition, the lock leaks at a fair rate, so it is necessary to slowly readmit water from the top without delay to stop the problem worsening, and to float the boat off the obstruction.

## BOAT ENGINE MAINTENANCE COURSES

Next courses at Reading  
College early February.

Contact Tony Brooks

marine@reading-college.ac.uk.

01 8 967 5246

Mention NABO

## WEBSITE WARNING

Parts of our website, [www.nabo.org.uk](http://www.nabo.org.uk) may be put off limits to the casual visitor within the next year. How this is done is yet to be decided but will use some sort of password.

In anticipation we suggest you make a note of your **membership number**, which is on the address label of the envelope this magazine comes in, and keep at least the **two most recent issues** of the magazine by your computer.



# RIVERS



## RIVER SEVERN LOCK SAFETY

NABO Council regularly considers matters of boat safety in its broadest sense – not just the Boat Safety Scheme, but also operational safety on the waterways, over much of which individual boat owners have little control.

Recently, we have discussed safety for users of the large river locks such as those on the river Severn navigation and members may be interested to read the following information which we have received from the Gloucester & River Severn Waterway Manager at British Waterways.

All locks have a set sequence of operation with the lock keepers being required to operate the control panel at all times. Should an incident occur, the lock keeper can abort the operation and take whatever steps are required, including the refilling of the lock.

Lock keepers have unhindered sight of vessels in a lock throughout the locking process and will either become aware of an untoward incident himself or by being alerted by the crew of a boat.

All relief lock keepers are given the required level of training and supervision, often by the resident lock keeper.

In the event of an emergency occurring in a lock chamber, BW have an internal system for raising the alarm and alerting the emergency services. In addition, each lock is equipped with an emergency telephone for public use.

BW conducts exercises in conjunction with the Emergency Services but, rather strangely, it appears that these exercises have not involved the scenario of a vessel in a lock requiring assistance!

We asked the questions. Now do you feel safer?

## UPPER AVON POWER STRUGGLE RESOLVED

The reconvened AGM of the Upper Avon Navigation Trust held in early October resulted in the election, by a narrow margin, of three council members who are opposed to the possibility of BW taking over and operating the navigation between Evesham and Stratford upon Avon.

Acrimonious correspondence sent out to UANT members urging them to vote for certain candidates had made it clear that there were two distinct factions at work within the organisation. A number of retiring council members seeking re-election had been entreating BW to give its support to opening up the Higher Avon link between the present navigation limit and the Grand Union Canal at Leamington via the projected Leam and Avon link. This project had the support of the nominally independent Waterways Trust and BW would carry out the works with a view to taking control of both the Upper Avon and Lower Avon navigations.

It is known that LANT had not welcomed the prospect of being taken over by BW and this latest development should give encouragement to the membership of the Lower Avon Navigation Trust who have long aspired to merging the two trusts but had been suspicious of the motives of UANT.

## SHARPNESS TO BRISTOL NEWS

The Gloucester Harbour Trustees' latest report to the GHT User Forum highlights some matters that will interest our members and boat owners who make the tidal passage down the river Severn between Sharpness and Avonmouth.

Regular maintenance inspection of three navigation buoys originally constructed in 1961 has revealed that they remain in good condition internally and will require external attention only for the foreseeable future. Not bad eh?

Several daymarks and aids have been repainted or improved to make them more conspicuous. An additional sectored light has been installed at Chapel Rock (close to the old Severn road bridge) to reinforce the coloured sectors of the existing lantern.

Maintenance has been carried out on the Shoots Beacons that mark the channel through the Second Severn Crossing bridge. These are equipped with safety wires on the access ladders together with galleries on the superstructures.

British Admiralty chart 1166, which is absolutely essential for any vessel making the dangerous passage, will be issued in a new improved edition in early February 2002.

BNFL are considering demolishing the baffle wall at the disused Berkeley Power Station in 2002, thus removing the danger to navigation. The structure no longer serves any useful purpose and cranes and fendering have already been dismantled.

A number of Notices to Mariners have recently been published concerning the prohibition of navigation within the Narlwood tidal reservoir at Oldbury Power Station, an unmarked obstruction near Lydney and the automation of sluice gates at the Old Arm at Sharpness.

The safe navigation of small craft in the vicinity of large vessels has recently come under the spotlight. Pleasure craft are reminded that the entire fairway between Avonmouth and Sharpness Docks is classified as a narrow channel and the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea require that small vessels shall not impede the safe passage of commercial vessels which may be severely restricted by their draft and ability to take avoiding action. Pleasure craft owners should be able to recognise sound signals made by other vessels and keep well clear of large vessels.

As a result of the Government's review of Trust Ports, the User Forum is to be discontinued and will be replaced by a new Advisory Body containing representatives of the various stakeholders including sporting and leisure interest groups. NABO has requested a place on the new body in order to represent the interests and views of inland boaters who make the tidal passage between the Severn and the Bristol Avon. What we are looking for is a NABO member in the vicinity or able to travel to meetings at Gloucester so as to make full use of our place on the body. Please give this some thought and if you would like to reinforce the status of NABO at user group meetings such as this then offer your services. NABO can only be effective and respected if we participate fully on behalf of boat owners.

Stephen Peters ,River Users Co-ordinator

# TRENT RESCUE

The objective of this project is to provide three or more high speed rescue craft for use by the emergency services to protect and save lives on the rivers Trent and Yorkshire Ouse and their adjoining waterways and flood plains. The Nottinghamshire police are agreeable to extending the "blue light" emergency facilities to the project's vehicle(s). The vessels will be permanently and safely housed at locations close to Trent Bridge (non tidal Trent), West Stockwith (tidal Trent), and at a third location (to be decided) on the Yorkshire Ouse.

For flood rescue we need a boat with a shallow draught and sufficient strength to cope with underwater obstructions (barbed wire fences, steel fence posts). In addition we need a boat which can be speedily transported by road to any incident but which can, if necessary, be manhandled onto the water (since slipways on the Trent and Ouse are few and far between).

The boat which meets our specifications is the Sea Rover - which "looks like a RIB", but which is constructed out of heavy duty "plastic" underground pipes welded together and with a welded rigid "plastic" hull.

The craft has been "road tested" fitted with a 70hp Suzuki outboard - with impressive results. It planes at around 10 knots and comfortably reaches around 30 knots with a ton payload.

In order to get this project "off the ground" we have set up a charitable trust called Trent Rescue (Charity Commission - registered number 1088156) The trust is a voluntary one with no paid employees or consultants

Various boat clubs, the IWA, BW and others have already made spontaneous contributions to the project - so we have a modest amount of working capital. Before we can progress the project much further we urgently require capable, competent, self motivated people to act as directors or managers of the various component parts of the operation.

Contact details for interested volunteers - or for nominations of potential recruits - or people who may otherwise be able to help/advise/assist:

Brian Winterbottom, Trustee, Trent Rescue, 2 Erdington Way, Toton,  
NOTTINGHAM NG9 6JY.

Phone 0115 973 6252 e-mail [briwin@waitrose.com](mailto:briwin@waitrose.com)

*Advertisement*



# NABO has gone International

## International Navigation Association - PIANC Membership

In the early part of this year NABO became a corporate member of the INA or PIANC as it has been known internationally for many years.

It came about in the Autumn of 2000 when I was invited to the AGM of PIANC at the Institute of Civil Engineers in Westminster. I felt that with the EU and its RCDs having more and more impact on our boating lives, that we should become involved with navigation on an international basis as there will obviously be a lot of common ground between boaters of different nations.

PIANC is a world wide organisation of individuals, corporations and National Governments concerned with Navigation, Maritime Ports, Inland Waterways and the Environment. It has over 3000 government, corporate and individual members involving representations from over 70 countries, and our head quarters office is in Brussels

The British section of PIANC is administered through the Institute of Civil Engineers in Westminster, and in fact the British Waterways Technical Director sits on the Maritime Committee. Meetings on every subject from Pollution to Dredging and the environment go on throughout the year organised by I.C.E to which I attend the relevant ones. The Brussels Secretariat also sends me dates and venues of international meetings some of which, if necessary, I will attend, but the 30th annual congress of PIANC next year - September 2002 is in Sydney, Australia, a bit too far for me to drive - I think!

Anyone who wishes to know more about PIANC please write to me or e-mail me - [jemco@talk21.com](mailto:jemco@talk21.com) or look up the web site : [www.pianc-aipcn.org](http://www.pianc-aipcn.org). NABO is out there for you the boater.

*James Mason*



**All hands to diving stations !!**

(As seen on the River Soar near Loughborough)

# Do you need a place to worship this Christmas?



Help is at hand from the Boaters Christian Fellowship (BCF), an organisation that has grown to have over 300 members nationally.

From the beginning, a need for a list of Churches within walking distance from moorings on canals and rivers was identified. Initially members sent in data and the BCF Church Directory was born. Since then, Alan Dewhurst felt a determined and systematic collection of church data from all the waterways was needed. He undertook this task himself and spent 3 cruising seasons gathering information. The result is a jammed packed 45 page publication containing details of over 1000 churches. The locations, service times, denomination, mooring points and directions are all included. Even weekday access and contact numbers are given! Alan and other members have through the winter months, phoned every contact to ensure the information is fully up to date for the 2001 edition.

The computer age moves on enabling the database to be easily included in the latest edition of Syd Arkles' Canal Planner.

The new canal website

[www.canalsearch.net](http://www.canalsearch.net) also will carry the church data. Plans are in hand to make the information even more widely available on web sites and information offices.

The Directory is included in the Welcome pack for all who join the Boaters Christian Fellowship.

The annual membership fee is only £10 and this also includes a member's directory and a quarterly magazine *The Word*. Membership is available from Gail and Andrew Spolton, BCF Membership Secretary & Treasurer: Tel **01773-580263**

For bone fide users, a free copy of the database in Microsoft Excel is available if a floppy disk is sent to the Compiler —

**Alan Dewhurst, 23 Treasure Close, Tamworth B77 3HS,**  
or from [e.dewhurst@ntlworld.com](mailto:e.dewhurst@ntlworld.com) .

The copyright remains the property of the Boaters Christian Fellowship and no alteration to the information is allowed without written approval of the BCF. We do require that the Boaters Christian Fellowship is fully acknowledged.

## More funds needed for the Broads

A clear strategy is needed to give the Broads Authority enough funding to carry out the natural heritage and navigation duties demanded of it. There will be a new Broads Plan in 2003. 15% of the Broads budget is spent on meetings. A new committee structure will reduce the number of meetings and ensures navigation and environmental interests are no longer isolated from each other. The interim proposal of a Broads Management Committee would ensure all parties resolved issues together. Interests needed to be balanced and there must be a sufficient number of members to give breadth and knowledge

# VACANCIES

Three posts on NABO Council are available to be filled by co-option:-

## **SECRETARIES for the Anglian and Midlands Regions**

Regional Secretaries provide a point of contact for members and waterway authorities in their area and NABO Council. This includes ensuring that NABO is represented at local User Group Meetings and relevant matters arising from them are reported to Council. There are members already covering some meetings in these areas who would report to a new Regional Secretary.

Anyone who might fancy this role in other regions is welcome to make their interests known.

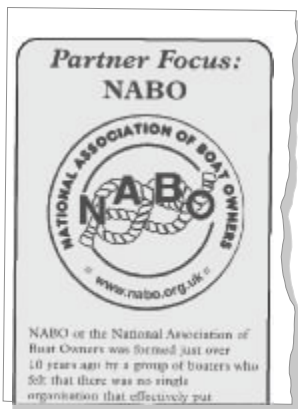
## **Marketing, Rallies and Public Relations Officer**

Someone with organising ability is needed to ensure NABO is represented at rallies and waterway events in order to recruit members and communicate with the general public. This also involves dealing with promotional products.

## **Duties of Council members.**

Council meetings are held at a public house near Birmingham (dates on Notice board P17). Expenses are paid, lunch is free and it is an excellent way of keeping up with all waterway issues. Apart from this, you'll meet other people with influence, air your views, and give something back to boating.

If you are interested, contact the Chairman (details on back cover)



## FAME AT LAST

The NABO logo, featuring here in *BW Monthly* (August 2001), may have given BW staff the dubious impression that we have joined the 'Partners Club'.

Rest assured – although negotiation and co-operation is high on our agenda, any behaviour seen as 'partnership' is strictly on our terms and we maintain the right to the occasional 'domestic' should circumstances dictate!

## **Good news from Leeds**

Leeds waterways are to have a Biffa-Boat - this is not a day-hire boat, it is a rubbish collecting vessel sponsored by Biffa Waste.

Also otters are confirmed to be inhabiting the River Aire.

*Advertisement*

# a bird's view from council



Was it an AGM or a Party or a Boaters' Gathering? Whatever it was, everyone seemed to enjoy it.

You'll be sorry if you missed it!

Nobody panicked when it was announced that the Treasurer was missing. That is because it was never suspected that the funds had gone with him, more like he was hoping that his re-election would be overlooked and he would escape another year of hard labour!

Subscriptions have been kept at £10 a year (What a bargain). This scuppered the threats made by the treasurer and the membership secretary, that they would resign if it changed.

So now there is a new council but not many new faces, the chairman and vice chairman have changed seats. Some seats are empty and will need filling. The new member, co-opted while the new council had a brief meeting, will be a great help with legal matters. Let us hope she won't be called upon too often.

Yoo-hoo - it was good to see everybody, past chairmen and council members and some of the founder members from 10 years ago and lots of more recent additions.

Interesting to hear that people are still saying the same things (mostly that NABO is too confrontational) and are

worried about the same things, mooring charges, BW having the wrong priorities, too much power and monopoly.

Good news that EA are to retain authority over navigation on many rivers. Mostly they seem to know what they are doing where there is flowing water (and floods).

Bad news to hear that nothing has been done, regarding flood control and dredging, in the Trent valley.

Will there be a waterway regulator appointed, like BT's Off-tel, and will it be called Off-Cut?

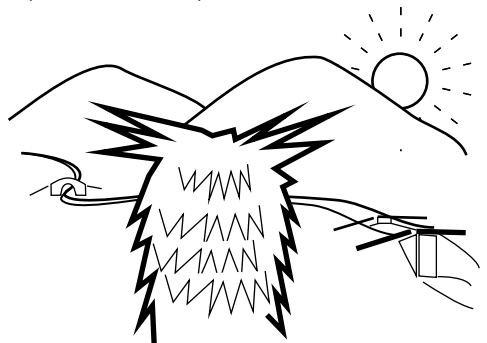
One member was of the opinion that canals belong solely to those who live on boats, what luck he was sitting next to a big noise in RBOA!

Boats and boating for all, not just the rich, was how most members would like it to be.

Lovely cake, made by Wendy, nice drink, music, interesting model of an unusual design for a lock and lots of chat by boaters about boating. Altogether a good gathering.

Me? I was doing the flapping about, what else for a bird getting ready to migrate?

Bye now, must fly.



# GONGOOZLESE

Windlass, winding hole, waterpoint.... cut, cratch, counter..., a few of the specialist words you will be familiar with on the inland waterways of Britain. On his website, Jim Shead, the waterways photographer and writer, has compiled an alphabetical glossary of boating terminology, some well known, some obscure.

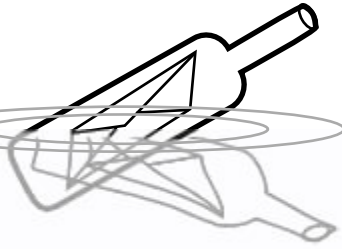
However, there is another language to be heard beside locks, in canalside pubs, and occasionally on hire boats in the early days of a first cruise. This can be confusing to the more experienced cruiser, so I offer the following short list, translated into more familiar language, to help towards better communications with other canal users:

About!	'Look, mother, an inland waterways craft!'
Banghole	Bridgehole,
Barge	Any floating vessel with a pointy bit at the front,
Blunt end	Counter, or transom; opposite to pointy bit,
Brass doofer	Tiller arm,
Buckety things	Bucky cans,
Cogs	Paddle gear,
Dingly-dangly	Fender,
Doorknocker	Mooring ring,
Driver	Steerer,
Duck	(noun) Possibly a Canada Goose; (verb) a precautionary warning cried by a driver just before entering a banghole,
To faff	To clean up; also to work through (as in locks),
Faffing the do-da	Drawing a paddle,
Fasten it	'This boat is passing you at a speed in excess of 4mph'
Flapper	Ratchet pawl,
Goose	(noun) Probably a duck or swan
Keeplocker	Lockkeeper,
Marooned	Moored,
To park	To moor, stop, or drift across the cut under the influence of current or wind with ropes dangling in the water,
Petrol	Diesel,
Pillock	Someone who does things differently, probably correctly,
Pointy bit	Stem,
Right	Possibly left. Also, 'I didn't understand your instructions at all, but I'm not going to admit it'
Seat	Balance beam,
Starboard	Gangplank,
Stool	Bollard
Swan	(noun) Probably a Canada Goose; (verb) taking one's time,
Sweat	'It is raining', or, 'I've just put my foot in it'
Tringleshoot	Winding hole,
Twerly	'Please may I stay in bed a little longer?'
Twott	'Please pass the sunblock'
Wibbling through a dibble	Faffing through a lock,
Winslet (Kate for short)	Windlass,
Was that four?	'Excuse me, but would you mind explaining the purpose of this?'
An undefined grunt	'Good morning to you too' (usually an angler's response)

Tony Haynes      canalman



# LETTERS



## Positive news

The last issue of NABO News contained a request for members to assist the Regional Secretaries. I endorse this. As a past Midlands Rep I now concentrate on the Lapworth area. I have deliberately created relationships with the managers (who come and go) and the supervisory and office staff (who tend to be more permanent). This enables a 2-way dialogue where each party explains his own concerns and listens to the other's. And BW really does listen, at least in this area. A number of successes have followed:- towpath improvements (contracts above £100,000); information sign; water tap; hedge trimming; heritage improvements; adjustments to BW's priorities and joint meetings between BW and the local authority. I have been invited to discuss my concerns with supervisors and even invited to inspect BW's successes and difficulties at the same time as being able to point out where boaters experience problems. May be not all supervisors are so receptive, but some will go out of their way to solicit, and act on, constructive criticism.

**Note** – Views expressed in readers' letters are not to be taken as those of NABO as a whole

Sometimes confrontation is necessary but a lot can be achieved by collaboration. Many of us have in-depth experience and knowledge about our local canals so I urge you to get to know your local staff and to help them to help us. And then liaise with the Regional Secretary so all can be co-ordinated. And now is an especially good time. It seems that both BW and local authorities have money to spend. All they need is to be activated to specific projects by local interest.

Dont leave it others - make it happen yourself.

Chris Boxall

## Inconsiderate boaters

Yes, I do read all of NABO news and learn from it. I write a newsletter for IWA and know how much work is involved. I over-winter in a marina on the Lee and cruise as much as 20 weeks per year, mostly between May and September. Most of the time I find things go well. I was not troubled by vegetation on the K&A but was appalled that the vegetation was head high even where the horse boat operates west of Newbury.

The horse must have been out of sight from the passenger seats!

I can cope with fishermen and 90% of cyclists on the towpath but I do get annoyed with inconsiderate boaters. Most boaters are friendly and helpful. The biggest problem for me is the inconsiderate boaters who over stay on popular moorings - with or without the licences. At Cambridge, for example, a live-board had made his home next to a water point and pump out so that only short boats could tie up on alongside the facility. Oxford is a disaster area for visiting boats. A private boater has more chance than the hire boat because he is more likely to get cooperation when wishing to breast up. I have no time for people who are not prepared to make allowances for novice hirers. BW must be watched by NABO but I find most of their staff helpful.

John Shacklock nb Jays Nest

## Stratford Lock Landings

The Southern Stratford Canal has long been criticised for the poor quality of its infrastructure. This was a consequence of tight budgets both when the canal was originally built and when it was restored in the 1960's. One of the many recent concerns has been the lack of lock landings. Well, BW has recently rectified this. The design of each new landing is different but many

use ex railway-sleepers in a way most sympathetic to the environment. Go out and see and use them. And if you like them tell the Lapworth office. Even better tell other Waterway Offices and get more of them installed around the cut. (A much better use of resources than all of the 'no fishing' signs).

Chris Boxall

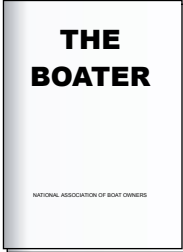
## Disservice

I did consider not renewing my membership; the reason being the depressingly negative tenor of the magazine. I know there is still need to highlight the failings of BW (having two days ago slugged along the much-in-need-of-dredging Birmingham Main Line). However, in 20 years of boating I have never known the system to be in better shape than it is now. Also, over the past few years, the attitude of BW, at all levels, has become much more positive and user friendly. I am sure that the magazine does NABO a disservice - it suggests that the Association's efforts have been ineffective. I am sure that is not the case and that NABO has been instrumental in bringing about improvements or getting BW to think again. Keep up the good work and let's see some reflection of it in the magazine!

Francis Sarre, nb Squires.

He's right, the quiet NABO beavers need to get out their trumpets. BW are good at fanfares, let's be hearing ours.  
Ed.

# PUBLICATIONS PAST & PRESENT



## THE BOATER

Thanks to Jon Darlington I have been able to travel back in time 10 years and read NABO's first magazine, THE BOATER. Although the version I have bears no date, it proudly announces that NABO is to convene its first AGM at the Godiva Hotel in Coventry at 2.30 pm. on November 23rd 1991. It gives a full account of the early NABO, its formation, constitution and aims. It features The British Waterways Bill and Houseboat Moratorium and encourages members to spread the word.

No fancy fonts or graphics in this issue, just cold hard typewritten facts, but the sentiments are the same, NABO then, as now, was a lobbying rather than a social organisation, using its newsletter to tell its members what it was doing and welcoming letters back to hear what they think, because 'meetings and get-togethers would be few and far between'.



## The new British Waterways website

Launched on 15th November, Kevin O'Malley's new website is slicker, better laid out and easier to navigate than its predecessor. You can sign up for

stoppage notification, search for details of the waterways and view maps. I found getting to the maps a bit slow, but once there, there were lots of buttons to click, zoom, pan, scroll, select layers etc. The maps were clear but perhaps a bit small for those with reasonably (or, like me, unreasonably) large screens.

The site boasts streaming video (have we a breach to report here?!), 360° degree panning views etc. which I have yet to try. For those with slow connections and those who want to get straight to the facts there is a handy 'text only' version. The comprehensive list of links has yet to be restored, but NABO is still there.

Give it time to mature, bookmark the pages you want and it should be really good – and don't be afraid to use the feedback to help it on its way.



## First Mate Guide to the Non-Tidal Thames and Southern Waterways

All I am going to say is that it's out, price £6.00 (p&p free) and covers the Thames, K&A, Wey, Basingstoke and S. Oxford. Order from Carole Sampson at my address (see P 32). It should pay for itself in mooring fees, diesel costs etc. saved. More details on [www.canalmate.co.uk](http://www.canalmate.co.uk). Ad over, remuneration is on its way to NABO funds, honest!

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