

THE MAGAZINE OF THE



President: Bill O'Brien J.P. M.P.

ISSUE 7-03 - DECEMBER 2003

AGM/Constitution/BW Complaints/REFERACS

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2004 CALENDAR

Council meeting	Copy date
Jan 24th	Jan 31st
March 6th	March 13th
April 24th	May 1st
June 5th	June 12th
July 17th	July 24th
Sept 18th	Sept 25th
<i>Nov 13th A.G.M.</i>	
Nov 27th	Dec 4th



CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Firstly may I thank everyone who came to the AGM, some from considerable distances, and your new Council for having faith in me to take the Chair. Now I must stand up and be counted on the front line, rather than lobbing mortar bombs from behind the Editor's desk!

It is also down to me to repair the damage done to NABO during the last year, win back the confidence of our members and those with whom we negotiate, and try to reinstate some stability. I must stress that, despite whatever towpath telegraph says about disunity at Council meetings, there was no disagreement about **what** we did, only about **how** we did it. On the whole, the job of representing and informing you, the members, about the issues that really matter, went on unaffected.

It may also look as though there have been mass resignations, but many of those who have chosen to leave Council have made it clear to me that they haven't abandoned working for NABO, they just want to get on with the job without the hassle of Council meetings, which involves a lot of travel and sacrifice of time, however rewarding the actual meetings may be. Even though, technically, they have sacrificed their Council voting rights, it is my aim to ensure their views are still taken into consideration, just as I would like to feel any member's

opinions will be heard. NABO is about the communication of ideas and opinions – and very little else.

When it became clear that there was unlikely to be anyone else standing for Chairman, Sue suggested I spent a day in London showing my face at EA's National Navigational Users Forum and then going on to hear Robin Evans address the Parliamentary Waterways Group. Would this be a good chance to start afresh with British Waterways?

Robin Evans was adamant that boaters should put their trust in BW. He stressed: *"I want to be very clear that we will honour our primary responsibility as a navigation authority. Waterways are about boats, and boats underlie everything we do. They bring colour, interest, vitality and all kinds of people and opportunities to the waterways. The rich and varied tradition of boats and boating is central to our vision, but it is insufficient to ensure a sustainable future."* (Extract courtesy of the PWG meeting notes)

Apart from cringing at that word 'sustainable' – almost as overused as 'partnership' these days – I really did want to forget BW's past track record and keep an open mind. So what happens? I receive my licence renewal and find amongst the latest Terms and Conditions, Para 8.4(b), that the second sentence reads: *"You may only use the Boat's engine to recharge batteries when the Boat is under way."* (Who needs a Moorings Code?)

In answer to my query on this, I was told, *"It was an oversight"*. The Licence Conditions document is supposed to be the contract the boater makes with BW – should it be allowed to contain oversights? Are there any more?

If only BW would put these things past us first – we would be only too glad to help, the frustration comes when they don't let us.

I suppose I had better say something about where I think NABO should be going, not that it should be my decision alone. In spite of the limiting wording in our Constitution, I feel NABO's remit is to counter anything under the control of mankind that can spoil the joys of private boating, and that includes bureaucracy, expense, navigational problems, antisocial behaviour and, last but not least, boaters' own fears through not being properly informed. It is especially in the latter two fields that we can improve our image as a benevolent organisation.

Our new Council is half the size of the old one, so there is bound to be some 'multi-hatting' at first but we cannot expect people to keep this up

ad infinitum. For a start I cannot commit myself to being Chairman, Publications Editor and Webmaster, especially as Carole has three hats too, if you count the membership work she has to do. Six NABO roles under one roof is just not on*, and any offers to take on the magazine would be very gratefully received.

We are also planning our regional coverage. Adrian's Waterway Dossier idea is central to this, but User Group Meetings will need attending and there are big gaps in the map. Many thanks to those who have already offered. More about that later, and don't be surprised at some direct requests for help if you live where coverage is needed.

Finally, a happy Christmas and new year to you all and enjoy your boating as much as you can.

Stuart Sampson

**Is this where I should be using the word 'sustainable'?*

EDITORIAL

Quick hat change to apologise for the lack of creativity and content in this issue. While I am chairman I won't have the time to be writing or procuring the extra material that makes the welcome relief from the serious stuff. This is a shame, because it is the part of this job I find most rewarding.

Later on is a piece about the editor's job which I hope someone, or more than one, will read and tell me they would like to have a go at it. If the job seems too onerous for one person, then perhaps the task could be shared. In the meantime I would be very grateful for any help, in the form of copy to fill those gaps.

Stuart

NABO said it wanted to be consulted on planning schemes – we asked – we got.

Fancy having to read this lot?



Subject: Mersey Tram extension
Cost to post: £43.55
Size: see 1 foot ruler on the floor!

NABO's 12th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It being NABO's aim to move the Annual General Meeting to different venues, we found ourselves at the Willow Tree pub in West Bridgford on 15th November for the first time. It was nice to see some new faces there, as well as the old stalwarts.

Sue, as retiring chairman, spoke about council members being volunteers who cannot do all the work without the help of you, the members, then mentioned all the meetings and rallies which had been attended. She commented on the campaign for a Waterways Regulator, and current issues such as business barges and EA's Transport and Works Act. Upon retirement from Council, Sue is looking forward to having time to do other things.

The morning's business was completed swiftly and efficiently, the proposed changes to the Constitution being adopted apart from one small addition. All questions were answered fully and openly.

After a buffet lunch, Sue introduced Stuart as the new Chairman. (Cheers from the floor!) He presented her with a token of NABO's gratitude, in the form of two cut-glass, engraved, wine goblets, and Geoff, the new Vice-chairman, added something to put in them!



Photo by Carole Sampson

Then Adrian Stott gave a presentation on a proposed initiative entitled 'Waterways Dossiers', a scheme whereby NABO would gain detailed information as to the state of each waterway and where work needs to be done. This will involve all members, and was enthusiastically received by all those present. He received applause at the end. Finally, there were questions from the members which led to discussion on BSS, trial Moorings Code, and BW's Charter Mark before the meeting closed at 3pm.

Generally, it was a very interesting meeting in a nice venue.

NABO Council has asked me to express thanks for the generous contributions towards the cost of the buffet, and to those who attended for the interest and enthusiasm they showed.

Carole Sampson

LICENCES TO GO UP 2.5%

In spite of NABO comment, British Waterways are still adamant they will ignore the Retail Price Index (1.7% in 2002) and base licence rises on an amalgam of three cost indices minus an 'X' factor of 0.5% to compensate for their expected improved efficiency.

Into the cauldron they expect to put 46 units of Construction index, 27 units of GB Average Earnings index and 27 units of Corporate Services Price Index, each dose having been aged for two years. Once they mix them thoroughly for 2003 and extract one unit it will measure 3%. The whole process has been approved by the wizards from the financial consultants OXERA, whose formula is based on BW's costs over the previous three years.

BW propose to use this formula until 2008, when they will review the mix and the 'X' factor.

If they don't do this they feel they will be accused of transferring funds from taxpayers to boaters and may lose Government funds. However if the overall contribution to BW's costs from boaters has to increase by 2.5%, surely the expected rise in the number of licences, estimated at 2% per annum, must nearly meet this. But then we are not accountancy wizards, what do we know?

Advertisements

The role of the NABO News Editor or Editorial Team

Importance

NABO NEWS is often the only contact the members have with their association, and so is the only way they can judge it, so the magazine, and hence its editor, is vital to the whole NABO operation. It is also read by people of great influence, and so may be just as powerful a campaigning tool as direct representation at national meetings.

Minimum Requirements for an editor

- to be literate!
- to have an understanding of, and an open mind on, boating issues
- to have access to and the ability to use a computer with word processing and/or DTP software
- to be able to access e-mail

Minimum Obligations:-

- to receive contributions
- to reject or postpone material where necessary
- to correct obvious mistakes and ensure articles make sense
- to arrange material into the magazine
- to lay out the result in a suitable format for printing
- to dispatch it to the printers

Optional tasks

- to commission articles
- to paraphrase items where necessary
- to illustrate
- to administer advertising
- to write an editorial
- to originate articles
- to report and photograph
- to liaise with the webmaster

Relationship with Council

The editor may also be a Council member, and even if not, presence at Council meetings can be valuable for reducing communication errors.

The Magazine

The present magazine runs to seven issues a year, usually tied to Council meeting dates, each averaging thirty-two A5 sides.

Minimum Contents:-

- Cover, with title and issue number
- Copy dates or calendar
- Advertisements as paid for
- Disclaimer
- Council Contacts
- Contents list
- Chairman's column
- Readers letters
- NABO FREEPOST address

Current regular strands

- Editorial
- 'Animal' view of Council proceedings
- Worried Woman of the Waterways
- Notices (+ members' small ads)
- NABO supplies
- Rivers

NABO News is also used to promulgate association notices, such as AGM dates, venues, candidate info etc. Some of this may be done by separate mailshot.

Timetable

- The copy date is usually a week after a Council meeting to give time for related reports to be written
- Repro, printing and packing can take up to a fortnight, then it's in the hands of Royal Mail
- It is desirable for the magazine to be in readers' hands more than a week before the next Council meeting so they can react to current issues

This leaves the editor with less than a week to compile the issue, but much of the work can be done before the copy date. Having a reliable and easily accessible proof-reader is a great advantage

At present, to speed the process, keep costs down and retain control of layout, the editor is responsible for 'imposing' the artwork so the order of the pages on the sheets of paper is right for assembly and folding. It also means the editor can print off a draft copy and see how the final product will look.

At present we have an excellent relationship with Berrington Print in Birmingham, and an imagesetter nearby who can work directly from Quark Express, Word, Canvas or PDF format files on CDR. Camera-ready artwork can also be accepted, i.e. high quality hard copy, but this has to be fine tuned to get the quality right on photographs.

My experiences

It has been known for me to complete an issue in two days flat, but usually I start preparing for the next issue as soon as I get responses from the previous one.

I use Deneba Canvas 8 as a DTP program, even though it is really a vector graphics package. It gives much more control of layout than a word processor, although within its text zones it has all the gizmos I need for text editing. It can also process images, but occasionally I need the services of Photoshop for fancy image work, and Textbridge for turning photographs or scans of text into editable text. I run it all on a Macintosh, but there are Windows versions of all these applications, and many alternatives.

I have produced NABO News while afloat, using a laptop, with e-mail for most contributions, a digital camera for taking pictures and scanning text, and a slimline CD writer for output. I have upgraded to a laptop with inbuilt CDR and Smartmedia adaptor, which reduces 'spaghetti', and at home I have this linked to a big monitor and better keyboard. I find a graphics tablet a great boon too, and some sort of printer to make proof reading easier.

The work is very rewarding and about the only job in NABO that produces something tangible. It is also arguably the most influential role in NABO, the 'pen' is often mightier than the tongue! I must be grateful to past Councils for trusting me with such power.

Stuart Sampson

A SIMPLER PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS

British Waterways is updating its approach to handling external grievances. The new procedure is to replace what is described in *‘Tell Us What You Think’*

You may know that it offered NABO, amongst others, the chance to comment on its *‘Openness and Accountability’* proposals. This we have done and now we have the result, which we will discuss at the National User Group meeting on 9/12/03 (unfortunately that will be history when you read this but you will have to await the next instalment).

If I read the ‘white paper’ right, what BW now proposes goes like this:-

1) You write to either the Service Manager or General Manager in your Waterway Unit or area. It doesn’t matter which, both will see it, discuss it and you should get a reply within 20 working days. This is what they call the ‘local level’.

If you are happy with this the case is closed.

2) If the reply is not forthcoming or satisfactory, your complaint goes on to the ‘corporate level’. It is not clear to whom you have to write to initiate this if the problem is lack of response – we will enquire. Your grievance will be handled by a Director, but not the one immediately above in the management chain. At this point the Chief Executive will involve himself without you having to write to him separately. Again you should hear from them within 20 working days.

If you are happy with this the case is closed.

3) If you are still not satisfied, the next step depends whether your case is within the remit of the Ombudsman. The chances are that for a specific grievance it will be, as his remit is proposed to be extended to cover ‘unfair treatment’ as well as ‘maladministration’ which itself probably covers a greater multitude of sins than you might at first believe.

BW is obliged to accept his ruling, so one way or another the case is closed.

If your complaint is about BW policy or anything else outside the sphere of the Ombudsman, the matter is referred to the proposed National Consultative Council (NCC). This is to be a new body of some forty representatives from other groups concerned with waterways, hopefully including NABO. How this body might work and who chooses its members is the subject of quite complex proposals but it is expected to have a ‘steering committee’ which is small enough to meet directly with senior BW management without the meetings becoming too unwieldy.

If there is still no agreement the matter may be referred to ministerial level.

Obviously there is much more in the 49 pages (excluding appendices) than we can put here. NABO’s contribution, for most of which we must thank Stephen Peters, looks well reasoned and certainly not out on a limb when compared with others.

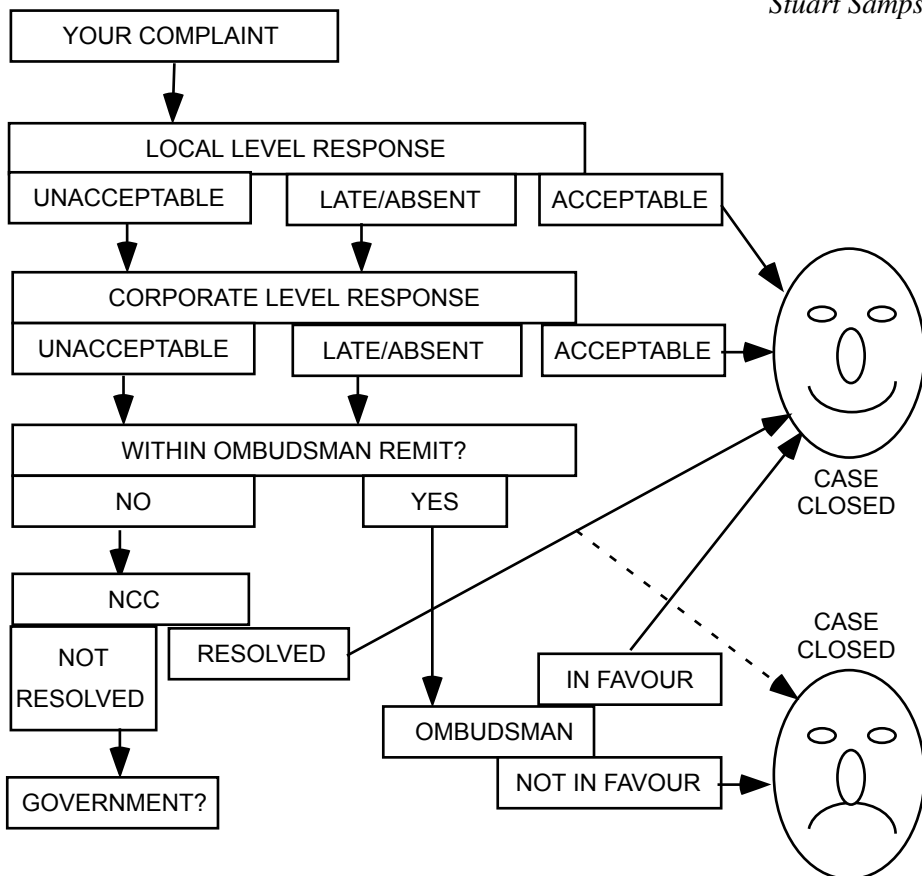
However we haven't totally abandoned our campaign for an independent regulator, which was based on three premises:-

- The Ombudsman's apparent lack of independence.
- The restriction in the types of grievance he can hear.
- His limitation to BW matters.

This document goes some way to answering these. There is to be an independent Ombudsman Committee to appoint him and provide support, but BW still want to be involved in this in spite of our opposition. Whether the NCC does turn out to be capable of dealing with matters outside the terms of reference of the Ombudsman is yet to be proven. Whether he should deal with other waterways is dismissed as a Government matter, but would also depend on whether he can take on any more work.

However it appears that our campaign has been a catalyst and drawn attention to the need for BW to revise its attitude to complaints and accountability, so perhaps we can regard it as a qualified success, lock it back in the gun cabinet and wait to see if BW's proposals work.

Stuart Sampson



SURELY YOU MUST BE INTERESTED IN YOUR FAVORITE WATERWAY? THEN YOU CAN HELP NABO HELP YOU

NABO Council 2004 consists of just eight hard-working volunteers, who physically cannot attend all the meetings that we are invited to. We need YOUR help to attend some of the local meetings. This can be near where you live, or where you keep your boat, or perhaps a favourite waterway, or one in which you are interested. The meetings are extremely interesting, and take place twice a year, usually October/November and March/April on a weekday evening (various) between 7 and 9pm. Sometimes there is a generous buffet. You meet the staff involved in operating/maintaining each waterway and fellow users.

NABO needs your help, especially in Gloucester, Worcester, Doncaster, and Wales + Border Counties. Your petrol costs will be paid.

If you think you can help, **PLEASE** contact me as soon as possible.

Carole Sampson, General Secretary
phone 0113 2842046
e-mail gen.sec@nabo.org.uk

RALLIES

NABO is not cavalcading in London this year, we are taking the stand west to the Saul Festival instead, However we will be having stalls at Crick and the National Waterway Festival which is to be in Burton-on-Trent (within staggering distance of Marstons Brewery you will be pleased to hear).

It would also be good to find an event in the North - suggestions welcome.

However this does not prevent anybody flying our banner from their boats at other events. Please contact Aileen Butler (a text or call to 07703 567764) if you are going to an event not covered and you might get NABO to help with your entry fee if you can do something to recruit some more members.

THE NEW NABO CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

The Association shall be known as the National Association of Boat Owners.

2. OBJECTS

The objects of the Association shall be as follows:

- (a) to provide effective representation for owners of vessels on Britain's inland waterways on any subject or matter which is relevant to the owners of such vessels.
- (b) to organise events, demonstrations, rallies or other activities which in the opinion of the Council will further the object in clause (a) above, but not to organise or actively engage in any event which would in the opinion of the Council bring the Association into disrepute.

3. POWERS

In furtherance of the above objects, the Association shall have the following powers:

- (a) to assist financially or otherwise any appropriate bodies whether official or otherwise;
- (b) to promote by visits, meetings, publications, exhibitions or lectures, any of the above objects;
- (c) to secure publicity for the promotion of the objects of the Association.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Classes

The Association shall have the following classes of member:

- (a) **Full** member, entitled to attend and vote at general meetings, subject to Clause 6.1 (c). Family members shall have full membership rights.
- (b) **Associated** member, entitled to attend, but not to vote at, general meetings.
- (c) **Affiliated** member, entitled to have a representative attend, but not to vote at, general meetings.

4.2 Eligibility

An applicant shall be eligible for membership of the Association only if the applicant supports the objects of the Association set out in Clause 2 and agrees to be bound by this Constitution. In addition:

- a) An applicant shall be eligible for full membership only if the applicant is a person who owns a vessel capable of use on Britain's inland waterways.
- b) An applicant shall be eligible for associated membership only if the applicant is an individual.
- c) An applicant shall be eligible for affiliated membership only if the applicant is an organisation.

4.3 Becoming a Member

A person or organisation shall become a member of the Association only by:

- a) Being admitted by the Council, having applied for membership using the application form prescribed by the Council, or being co-opted by the Council, and
- b) Paying the applicable subscription fee.

The Council shall have the power to:

- Refuse to admit any applicant as a member and need give no reason for such refusal unless a request for a reason is made by the applicant in writing.
- Decide that an organisation and its representatives shall be ineligible for membership on the grounds that the organisation's aims may be incompatible with the objects of the Association.

4.4 Information for Applicants

The Association shall provide on request to each prospective applicant for membership:

- A membership application form.
- A copy of this constitution.

4.5 Period of Membership

Membership shall continue until one of the following occurs:

- a) Fourteen months has elapsed from admission to membership or renewal of membership, whichever is more recent.
- b) The member submits his resignation from membership to the Council in writing.
- c) The membership is cancelled by the Council.

4.6 Renewal

A member may renew membership for a further year by applying to the Association and paying the required subscription fee.

5. THE COUNCIL

5.1 Composition

- a) The management of the Association shall be carried out by a Council hereinafter referred to as “the Council”.
- b) The Council shall consist of not less than four and not more than twelve full members.

5.2 Becoming a Council Member

A person shall become a member of the Council only by being eligible and being either elected at a General Meeting of the Association or co-opted by the Council.

5.3 Eligibility

- a) Only full members are eligible to be nominated for election to or to be members of the Council.
- b) Any member seeking election or re-election to the Council who is, or has at any time in the previous 12 months, held any position of influence or authority in any organisation which is involved with the inland waterways, or has any personal interest which is likely to affect their dealings with outside bodies on behalf of the Association, shall declare their interest at the time of being nominated for the Council. In the event that no such declaration of interest has been made and such an interest is subsequently found to exist then that person will be debarred from continuing to serve on the Council.
- c) Any member seeking election or re-election to the Council who is, or has been at any time in the previous six years convicted of any criminal offence, or involved in or threatened with litigation, or involved in or threatened with formal insolvency proceedings, or the subject of a formal inquiry, shall declare the full circumstances and current status at the time of being nominated for the Council. In the event that no such declaration has been made and such circumstances are subsequently found to exist then that person will be debarred from continuing to serve on the Council. If such a declaration is made and the member is elected to Council, then they shall inform Council promptly of any significant changes to their interest or the circumstances. In the event that Council considers that any of the matters disclosed are sufficiently serious they may apply the criteria and procedures set out in Clause 7(f) to exclude the member from Council or from eligibility for election to Council.

5.4 Election

- a) Members of the Council shall be elected at the AGM for a term of one year from among those nominated.
- b) Each nomination for election or re-election to the Council shall include the name of the person nominated, be signed by the nominee to indicate willingness to be nominated, be signed by a proposer and seconder who are both full members, and be received by the General Secretary not less than forty two days before the AGM.
- c) In the event of a contested election a ballot shall be taken and two tellers shall be appointed to collect and count all the votes.

5.5 Period of Being a Council Member

- a) The term of office of each member of the Council shall expire at the beginning of the succeeding AGM, or immediately upon resignation of the member from the Council, or upon the member of the Council ceasing to be a full member of the Association, or upon the member being excluded from Council.
- b) Any member of the Council absenting himself or herself for three consecutive meetings without reason acceptable to the Council shall be deemed to have resigned from the Council.

5.6 Officers

The Council shall elect the Association’s Officers who shall comprise a Chairman, Vice Chairman, General Secretary and Treasurer. An Officer’s title, e.g. “Chairman”, identifies the position, not the sex of the holder. The election shall be by secret ballot if this is requested. These elections shall take place during a formal Council meeting held as soon as practicable after the election of the Council. The General Secretary and Treasurer need not be Council members. In the event that they are not, Clauses 5.3 (b) and(c) nonetheless apply to them.

6. GENERAL MEETINGS

6.1 Annual General Meeting

a) An Annual General Meeting shall be held each calendar year to:

- Receive the Chairman's report.
- Approve audited financial statements for the previous financial year ending on 31st March.
- Determine the annual subscription rates.
- Elect the Council members.
- Appoint an auditor.
- Consider any proposed alterations to the Constitution.
- Deal with business brought forward by the Council or members' resolutions. Such resolutions duly proposed and seconded must be received by the General Secretary not less than forty two days before the meeting, and shall be distributed to all members before the meeting.

b) Council shall make arrangements for members to be able to submit postal or proxy votes in the event of an election being required under Clause 5.4 (c), or a vote under any of the sub-clauses of (a) above, if they so request.

c) Full members joining the Association less than 42 days before an Annual or Special General Meeting, or under eighteen years of age, shall not be entitled to vote at that Meeting.

d) A notice convening the AGM together with an agenda shall be sent to all members no less than twenty one days before the date of the meeting. Council shall give adequate notice of meeting dates and deadlines for motions and nominations to enable members to put them forward within this Constitution's time limits if they so wish, and provide full details to members of any proposed motions or amendments to this Constitution.

6.2 Special General Meetings

A Special General Meeting may be called by sending to the General Secretary a resolution or resolutions signed by at least twenty five full members, or by resolution of Council.

a) The Special General Meeting is to be held within fifty six days of the General Secretary receiving such a resolution or resolutions.

b) Notice convening this meeting shall be circulated to all members not less than fourteen days before the date of the meeting.

c) The meeting shall consider the resolution or resolutions referred to above but shall conduct no other business.

d) Council shall make arrangements for postal or proxy votes, as in Clause 6.1 (b).

7. COUNCIL MEETINGS, POWERS AND PROCEDURES

a) The Chairman shall call a meeting of the Council as required but not less than once every three months. A special meeting of the Council may be called on the written application of at least three of the Council members.

b) The Chairman of the Association shall be the Chairman of the Council and shall chair all Council meetings unless absent or unwilling to do so, in which case Council shall elect one of its members to chair that meeting.

c) The quorum at a meeting of the Council shall be one third of the number of the Council members holding office at that time, but shall never be less than three, and shall include one of the Association's Officers.

d) The Council may co-opt full members on to Council, subject to Clauses 5.1 (b), 5.3 and 5.5 above. No individual shall be co-opted for more than two successive years.

e) The Council may make rules of procedure not at variance with this Constitution.

f) The Council is authorised to prepare a newsletter or magazine and other publications for members' benefit.

g) The Council may exclude from membership any member if there is evidence that the actions of the member are in opposition to the objects of the Association, or are likely to bring the Association into disrepute, providing that a resolution is passed by a two thirds majority of the Council. Prior to

exclusion the member shall be informed of the intention to exclude, and shall be given the opportunity to state his or her case at the next meeting of the Council.

h) Minutes of all the Council meetings shall be taken and shall be approved as a true representation at the following meeting of the Council. All minutes shall be available for inspection by any member of the Council and by any member of the Association except for minutes involving personal matters relating to individual members or matters falling under Clauses (g) above and 5.3 (b) and (c) which shall remain confidential.

i) Notice (including an agenda) shall be given to every member of the Council, and should be at least 14 days in advance of all meetings of the Council. In special circumstances shorter notice may be necessary but shall never be less than 48 hours. Where less than 14 days notice has been given, the reasons for the short notice shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

j) Members of the Association shall be informed of the dates and venues of Council Meetings and shall have the right to attend, provided they advise the Chairman or General Secretary of their intention to do so. They may be allowed to speak, but may not vote.

8. FINANCIAL MATTERS

8.1 Bank accounts and Signatories

The Treasurer shall have charge of the funds of the Association. These shall be deposited in accounts in the Association's name with a clearing bank or other United Kingdom licensed deposit taker. Cheques or other withdrawals shall be signed or authorised by any two of the Officers of the Association. In the event that two or more Officers are related then Council shall designate alternative Council members as signatories.

8.2 Audits

The Association's financial statements shall be audited annually. The auditor shall be a member of a professional body recognised by the Companies Act 1985 as Auditors, but need not be currently registered as an Auditor. The auditor must not be an Officer of the Association or a member of the Council. Council may set the scope of the audit, but with the agreement of the auditor.

8.3 Subscriptions and Donations

The Association shall have the power to levy and collect membership subscriptions as they fall due.

The Association shall not accept donations or any other forms of benefit where such donations or benefits are given subject to conditions which would restrict the activities of the Association or where the donor may obtain influence over the Association in consequence of giving the donations or benefits.

9. GENERAL MATTERS

9.1 Alterations to the Constitution

Alterations to this Constitution can only be made at the AGM or at a Special General Meeting, notice of which must specify the proposed changes. Any alteration to the constitution must have a two thirds majority of those present voting in favour of the resolution, provided that no alteration is made to this clause, clause 2 or clause 9.3.

9.2 Honorary Officers

The Association may have an Honorary President and Vice-President(s) who shall be invited by the Council to hold office until either they or Council decide otherwise.

9.3 Winding Up

If on the winding up or dissolution of the Association there remains after the settling of all liabilities any property whatsoever, this shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the Association, but shall be given to such a registered Charity or charities established for similar charitable purposes as the Association shall decide.

Accepted at AGM 15/11/03

Business Barges

One of the last contributions Sue made as chairman was to write an article for Canal Boat and Inland Waterways about 'business barges'. There has been strong opposition to permanently moored vessels, particularly from waterway groups in London, but Sue points out that there have been boats housing businesses along the towpath for many years, and some are now missed, e.g. the earring lady that used to trade in Braunston.

Sue is concerned, however, at the lack of consultation, and claims a barge has been built by BW to house their own offices in Paddington Basin without planning permission, and that the fourteen or more such vessels set to join it should have proper planning permission and pay business rates.

Compared with the security of tenure of a residential boat, 25 years at the most, she considers the 999 year leases for business barges show BW's lack of concern for ordinary people and a tendency to favour the highest payers. She rightly adds. *"There is no difference between such an 'office' boat and filling in the canal"*



Photo - Regents Network

NABO Council has requested that any plans to moor a business barge should be brought to its attention for comment which will be based on the individual scheme's merit. Generally any invasion of navigable water space by floating business accommodation would meet with opposition unless the activity housed was of direct benefit to the waterway community. Unfortunately we are too late to stop business barges at Sturts Lock in Islington, London, where boats provide office space for an advertising agency, city finance company, and a photographic studio, hardly the sort of tenants that open their doors to visitors to the waterways.

The problem is not to be confined to London either, there are plans to block Beverley Beck in Yorkshire's East Riding with office barges, leading to the loss of the winding hole at the end.

Needless to say, the schemes British Waterways envisage don't compare in scale with the Americans as shown here, at least we truly hope not!





RIVERS



WHAT THE RFERACs ARE SAYING

The Environment Agency is required by statute to establish a number of advisory committees including a Regional Fisheries, Ecology and Recreation Advisory Committee (RFERAC) in each of its regions. (In Wales it is called a FERAC - nothing "regional" about it!). These committees include navigation matters within their remit and NABO has, in the past, attempted to have representation on them but our candidates have always been rejected. In some regions a local BW official apparently represents the navigation interests!

The following boating-related items from recent minutes caught the eye of your Rivers Secretary and he would like to share them with you:

South Region minutes July 2003 - Harmonised Boat Registration for Agency Inland Navigation - "Mr John Redmond (National Navigation Technical Adviser) presented the paper which detailed the proposals to harmonise legislation and produce a common charging scheme for the Agency's inland navigations. Mr Redmond advised that the Agency were consulting with external organisations on the draft Transport & Works Act Order, and had received total support for the proposed changes. The final draft would be submitted to Defra later in the year. Mr Redmond invited comments from Members.

Reverend Caffyn asked why the Agency required small vessels to be insured, when no insurance was required on roads for e.g. bicycles. Mr Redmond replied that insurance covered the recovery of vessels.

Mr Whitney referred to the problems of wide beam vessels and suggested that there should be some control through charging. Mr Redmond replied that harmonising of charges would be difficult and that this was something to be considered in the future.

Mrs Bullar asked whether "vessel" was an appropriate term for PWC (personal water craft) and whether "craft" would be a more suitable alternative. Mr Redmond replied that "vessel" was a legal term and covered everything that floats.

Other issues raised included the transferability between Regions and tenders on the back of vessels, and Members believed these needed to be clearer."

South Region minutes July 2003 - Navigation Charges 2004/05 - Mr Redmond presented the paper, which detailed the proposed charges for the financial year 2004/05. There remains a significant need for additional funding to achieve continued investment in capital works, maintenance and operational service and therefore the Agency's proposed increase for registration and mooring charges is 4.5%, higher than the recognised 3% inflation rate.

Members suggested that the Agency looked closely at British Waterways and also considered reduced rates for charities."

EA Wales minutes July 2003 - River Wye Byelaws - "Mr Evans advised that the River Wye Navigation Byelaws came into force on 7 July 2003. Details of the new byelaws are available on the Agency's website."

EA Wales minutes July 2003 - Harmonised Boat Registration - "Mr Evans explained that currently each region operates separate charging schemes based on different definitions of vessel sizes. He said the draft Order would put in place enabling legislation to provide for rationalisation of the charging schemes across the Agency's navigations in England and Wales. Mr Evans explained that in Wales this currently only relates to the River Wye.

Mr R Harvey commented that for small crafts this registration system would be difficult and that a registration system for the individual may be appropriate. Mr Evans replied that many larger craft could have several users, such as holiday hire craft.

The Chairman reported it was hoped that the new Wye Navigation Advisory Committee would be fully inaugurated in October. The position of Chairman to the Navigation Advisory Committee had recently been advertised."

Anglian region minutes October 2003 - Declaration of interests - "Sid Fisher declared he had become Director of a company looking to put commercial traffic on the great Ouse between Needingworth and St Ives."

Anglian region minutes October 2003 - Regional Director's report - "Mr Woodcock confirmed that an extra £800K would be made available for navigation and environmental enhancements on the River Witham.

The safety problems identified, particularly at Warmington Lock during the summer were under investigation and corrective work would be undertaken during the winter, at a cost of around £5K."

Anglian region minutes October 2003 - Fens Waterways Project - "Mr Adams confirmed that possibly 5-6 additional lock structures would be required along the preferred route. It was confirmed that sufficient water could not be guaranteed during prolonged spells of dry weather in the summer months and therefore it would be necessary to store water in the winter months."

Anglian region minutes October 2003 - Nene Navigation update - "Mr Forbes

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gave an update on the paper provided, stating that a pilot scheme to replace the existing winding handle locks with capstan wheel-type mechanism had been cautiously welcomed by users. However, it had to be emphasised that such mechanisms might not be suitable in every location."

Thames region minutes July 2003 - Purchase of stretch of River Wye - "Mr Poupard reminded Members that a query had been raised at the last meeting about the Agency's decision to assist in the purchase of a stretch of the River Wye to protect navigation interests."

Thames region minutes July 2003 - Recreation plan for the Jubilee River - "Members were concerned that no progress had been made with the production of the plan."

Thames region minutes July 2003 - Thames Navigation charges - "Mr Redmond explained the need to raise charges by 4.5%. The proposed increase had been agreed by the Thames Navigation Group. A Member said if charges were raised too much, this could lead to a reduction in the number of registrations on the river. Boating was perceived as a rich man's leisure pursuit and there was a perception that it was not for everyone."

Agendas for October 2003 RFERACs - Harmonised Boat Registration - details of the draft Order and the consultation were given to committees in July with a verbal update in Anglian, Southern and Thames regions. National User Groups had been consulted and have given their general support but have also made significant contributions to the debate around the exact wording and phraseology. Suggested amendments included: better definition of a commercial vessel; more precise definition of waterways; a check on the relationship between the proposed legislation and Merchant Shipping Part I Register; a more appropriate appeals mechanism; notice in writing to routinely inspect a vessel; consideration of "un-owned" vessels. Only 3 responses had been received from the general public. The next step is to prepare a third (and final?) draft for further consultation.

Agendas for October 2003 RFERACs - EA Customer Charter - the Agency has published a new charter called "Our commitment to you" in a smaller (8-page A5) format. Staff awareness of the charter had increased and performance monitoring introduced. 90% of telephone calls would now be answered within 15 seconds. Complaints will receive a full response within 10 working days.

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EXTRA MONEY FOR THE MILLENNIUM RIBBLE LINK

You may remember we published an announcement about £150,000 being granted to this cause, and commented that it didn't address the navigational problems that seem to be increasing on the new waterway.

In answer a British Waterways spokesman said:

"British Waterways was extremely fortunate in obtaining an additional £150,000 from the Millennium Commission Enhancement Grant for the Millennium Ribble Link. As the commission's title suggests, the money is to be used to make improvements to the navigation and its linear park to benefit all users including boaters.

Money is to be spent on a new community boat, an outdoor classroom for children at Lock 5, more visitor seating, new footbridge, wetland area for wildlife and an arts trail.

The Millennium Ribble Link is an extremely popular route, so on that basis, the grant was provided on the basis that it would enhance the experience for all visitors. The Enhancement Grant would not have been awarded had we applied for funding for dredging."

He also assured us that dredging will be carried out as part of the regular maintenance. This is good news and we hope that they can clear the mud from the bends. Let's also hope there will be no reductions in operating hours to avoid disturbing lessons!

Tip when descending the link:-

Ensure you have your crew aboard when leaving the bottom lock, there is no access to the holding pontoons by the sea gate or your boat when passing the gate itself.



Holding Pontoon



Savick Brook

FLY ON THE WALL



at Council

I was on yet another wall to watch your new slimline Council gather for the first time (my usual wall is being redecorated and I wouldn't want to be reduced to a lump under the new wallpaper!). Sadly some members had keeled over sick before getting to Oldbury, so the meeting was very slim, in fact only just quorate, but the stalwarts worked hard to cover a variety of subjects. Of course with a small Council any absence has a bigger impact.

SO Council is going to try a new system where YOU, the members, can help, off Council. Some of you said you were happy to do jobs for NABO but didn't want to be on Council. They would be happy to have you on those terms, as long as you report in.

SO volunteers wanted, please, for a few jobs:-

Can anyone take on the Membership Secretary's job and save NABO some money?

Your General Secretary and Treasurer need extra heads for their regional hats, so assistance in the north would not go amiss, and elsewhere.

That was letting you in gently! Now what

about the Editor of the Newsletter? Stuart can't do it now he's been 'upgraded' to Chairman! No hat (or head?) can be THAT big.

Everyone can help by keeping their Regional Secretary posted on problems on the bit of canal that they moor or boat along. Some secretaries have very large areas to cover and can't get to all the useful meetings. Is there a meeting near you that you could attend to help out your poor secretary? Have you no hearts?

Apart from trying to keep up with problems, the Council also wants to recruit new members at rallies and to see you there too.

The rallies that the NABO stand will attend, hopefully with a Council member or two and some of you, are; Crick in May, Saul in July and the National in Burton on Trent in August and another, perhaps in June, perhaps in the North .

If anyone is going to any event and can help for an hour, do contact Aileen Butler who will bend over backwards to accommodate you.

Talking of accommodation, I was on yet another wall at the AGM in Nottingham. Looked pretty lively and sociable from what I could see. The next one should be in Lapworth on 13th November 2004. A date for your diaries.

Are you now all paying the £15 p.a. membership fee? Council were told that some of you had yet to update your details with your banks and were still

paying the old rate of £10 but amazingly some of you are paying £15 A MONTH! You need to have stern words with your banks, or should NABO just give you a very big thank-you for all that extra money!?

Time to buzz off, but not before wishing you all the best of the seasons greetings and happy winter boating.

Byeeee!



NABO WANTS TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!

NABO is one of very few organisations which try to consult its individual members before responding to issues. This is difficult, as the time taken for NABO News to reach your doorstep, and then for Council to await feedback and formulate its responses, can be as much as three months - too long.

Your webmaster has set up an e-mailing list, and he regularly (about once a month) sends out bulletins with up-to-date information, and often requests feedback via click-on questionnaires.

We know that many more of you are on-line than we know about, and many more of you have changed ISP's to keep half a step ahead of the spammers without telling him. **WE GUARANTEE** that your details will not be passed on to any other organisation, nor can anyone else abuse the distribution system, and you will know that your views really are being counted.

It was those on this mailing list who benefitted from free entry tickets to this year's London Boat Show in return for a few hours help on our stand, and similarly, volunteers for next year's rallies will also benefit.

DON'T MISS OUT - e-mail your address to Stuart on **webmaster@nabo.org.uk**

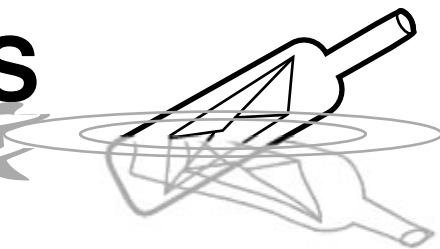
NABO NEWS VIA THE INTERNET?

It has been mooted that the whole of this magazine, like many other distributed publications these days, should be available by e-mail or placed on the website. This would certainly get the news to you quicker. It would also save NABO money if you opted out of receiving it by post.

However it would involve extra work, not only for the editor in formatting it for your screens, but also for whoever manages the distribution list, especially when, as mentioned above, folks are trying to keep ahead of the spammers.

Your opinions on this would be appreciated, along with (here we go again) any offers of assistance with the project should it be popular.

LETTERS



Mooring Exchange

I have a mooring at the top of the Caen Hill flight in Devizes on the Kennet & Avon. I hope to cruise the Trent and the Leeds & Liverpool canal next season between mid-May and mid-July with a glancing blow at the Caldon and Macclesfield canals whilst in the area. I intend to leave the boat in that area from mid-July to the end of August (the school holidays) returning in early September to bring the boat home. I am looking for someone with a mooring in the area who would like to exchange moorings with me for that period. My mooring is on a finger pontoon by the BW offices. It has electricity (on a meter) and water with refuse disposal, sanitary station and pumpout in the immediate vicinity. There is a Spar shop within a few minutes walk and the town centre is only 15 minutes walk away. The mooring could be available from late May to mid Sept; in exchange I am looking for a reasonably secure mooring on the T&M, Leeds & Liverpool, Caldon or Macclesfield canals for the school holidays. I don't need any facilities.

I would be grateful if you could publish the above appeal in the next issue of the magazine. I will be away in Australia and NZ between mid-Jan and mid-March so any offers should be made by email to jbweller@hotmail.com.

John Weller

On the road

I read with interest your last (and farewell) column in the Nabo News, and for entirely different reasons it will also be my last reading of this column as after many years I will not be renewing my membership as earlier this year I regretfully sold my narrowboat. (after 17 yrs). My reasons for selling were a combination of cost and health, the result being that it had become an expensive luxury. I have purchased a motorhome which is much easier on the back and swapped B.W. for The Caravan Club who I have found actually like their members. I now feel I am more in control of my leisure and not subject to the random whims of B.W. and a marina owner. I would be the first to admit I miss my boat, the solitude it gave is difficult to reproduce and can't be found in a traffic jam on the M25. I have, however, now seen parts of this country that I hadn't seen in my previous 66 yrs. In conclusion may I thank you for all the time you have given to NABO. and hope that you continue to enjoy your boating should you require any tips re motorhomes you know my address

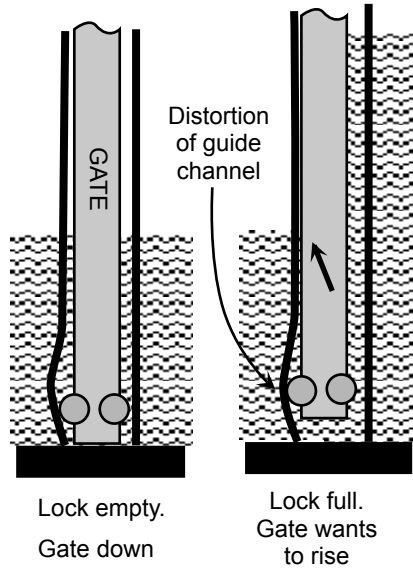
Alan Cayless

NENE GUILLOTINE PROBLEM

Major works are needed to cure a safety problem on manually wound gates on the Anglian waterways. There have been instances when, having lowered the guillotine and filled the lock, the winding handle has spun round as soon as it was released for raising the gate, striking the operator.

EA are putting this down to a dent being formed in the channel in which the guide wheels run, due to vibration of the gate in the slightly raised position as the lock is drained. The pressure of water in the full lock is forcing the gate to rise into this position when released as the wheels 'find' the dent, thus back-driving the handle.

The fault is believed to be below the water so repair is difficult.



Goblet engravings

This is the artwork engraved on the goblets presented to Sue Burchett in thanks for her sterling work for NABO over the past six years. We trust the memories they bring back to her when she uses them will be pleasant ones.



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