

THE MAGAZINE OF THE



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

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ISSUE 3/05 - May 2005

RCR Deal / Boating Issues / Signs

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2005 CALENDAR

Council meeting	Copy date
June 4th	June 11th
July 16th	July 23rd
Sept 17th	Sept 24th
<i>Nov 19th A.G.M.</i>	
Nov 26th	Dec 3th



CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Things are looking up

Some of the people who have had the misfortune to see my face in BW's recent *Waterfront* have actually joined NABO! To them a very warm welcome and I sincerely hope there are no more shocks in store.

We do have a surprise however – it's good news for all our members. Our 'rooky Councillor', Tony Haynes, has negotiated some excellent discounts from **River Canal Rescue**, which will more than pay for your NABO sub if you are on the Gold Plan. Now you can guard against engine problems and get protection from the authorities free!

No, seriously, I don't think the authorities mean to be a threat, it is just that they don't always see things from a boating point of view. It's NABO's job to keep reminding them and that's why it is worth being a member. We have representatives at most of the meetings that matter and even if you just help pay for their travel you are aiding the boating cause. It's a shame everybody who benefits doesn't join.

As a recent example: when the plans for Leeds Canal Basin were presented to 'user groups', no mention was made of boats at all in the prospectus and the developers are 50% owned by British Waterways! Immediately the NABO representative queried why the listed dry-docks were not to be available for their proper purpose and a consultation meeting was hastily arranged.

Instant BW Meeting Notes?

When I was chosen as Chairman I resolved to report to Council on each meeting I attended, as I felt this was something, with all due respects, that my predecessors had not done too well.

British Waterways has made that job a lot easier for me by providing almost instant summaries of the last two national meetings, within 36 hours for the Corridor Issues and **23 hours** with the latest Boating Issues. I say 'instant' because in the days of old it used to be that many **days** before you got any records of proceedings.

I just needed to pop in a few personal observations and - Hey Presto! - the report was done - and fresh enough to be relevant to you. In fact the one from the Boating Issues meeting in this magazine encapsulates just about every issue you need to know about, so I might as well stop now and go boating!

... *Whoa! - not so fast!*

There is a wider picture to consider, but talking of boating, we did manage a long week over Easter and it brought me down to earth with a bump. After the winter I was losing sight of why I was doing all this work, and so slipping the moorings and chugging off restored a bit of motivation.

Still overgrown

Was it fate that we chose a stretch of waterway whose banks had yet to hear of the Veg Pledge? So, out with the camera and off go the pictures to Robin Evans as soon as we got back home. He asked for them, he got them.

Sky blue for danger

Another aspect of the eastern T&M that arrived back in my memory, with another bump, or two, was Canaltime. "Sorry, I wasn't concentrating." At least he apologised – and in English.

I have heard that passing boats are doing the instruction for Canaltime nowadays. Who says the goodwill of the private boater is dead?

On the way to the Forums

In spite of what I said earlier there is more work to be done improving consultation.

At local level, some BW managers still think they go to meetings to impart information rather than acquire it.

At national level, on consecutive days in May we are supposed to have two inaugural meetings, one is of the *British Waterways Advisory Forum (BWAf)* and the other is of the *EA Harmony Forum*. Not everything is going to plan with these, with the deadline for EA's T&W Order now further delayed till June, and BW stretching everybody's goodwill by the late issue of its invitation papers.

In the twelve days between receiving the paperwork and the deadline for returns, all national waterway interest bodies were expected to:

- examine BWAf's draft constitution and other papers;
- decide whether to join;
- choose a representative;
- choose their 'interest constituency';
- gather nominations for a BWAf chairman and vice chairman and;
- ensure those were willing to serve.

We have to remind BW's top brass and 'legal eagles' that national voluntary organisations tend to have

committee members spread all over the country, sometimes afloat in the middle of nowhere. They cannot be expected to make important decisions to a tight deadline, especially when BW staff, enjoying the luxury of salaries, central premises and instant communications, seem unable to do so.

Grumble over, and we don't want to delay the process by making an issue of by-gones, but let's see proof of both authorities' commitments to consultation through deed as well as word.

Board (or bored?) Moderators

Finally, just a quick word about the website Waterways Reporting Boards. I must thank Richard Carpenter and Tony Haynes for the work they have put in clearing out dead topics and chasing up those outstanding. They are helping me as 'Moderators' for north and south respectively and are authorised to edit and delete the postings.

Your help would be appreciated checking up on anything still on the boards that you pass by water, as it is quite possible some faults have gone away without anyone saying goodbye.

Well, I'll say goodbye now and wish you the best of boating.

Stuart Sampson

PLEASE DON'T BIN YOUR ENVELOPE

The label gives your membership number and may be needed as evidence of membership when applying for discounts (e.g on page 16) or to access the members-only Website pages.

CUT CRIME

WATCHING THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL

The 'Basy' has been under attack. Increasing vandalism and unacceptable behaviour from children has threatened a peaceful place where local folks walk the dog or go fishing, jogging, cycling or boating.

For this reason the **Basingstoke Canal Watch Scheme** was launched in March, in time for the Easter school holidays, with extensive coverage on local radio, Meridian Television News, and in several local papers. The scheme is similar to Neighbourhood Watch in that it encourages local people to keep an eye on their canal and to report any anti-social behaviour or crime. Bob Potter OBE (of Lakeside World Darts fame) is the patron of the scheme, which will cover the entire Surrey length of the canal. Partners also include the Surrey Police, the Basingstoke Canal Authority, local users and NABO.

Notices showing telephone numbers and locational references will be posted along the towpath and leaflets giving advice and seeking help have been produced for free distribution.

Within two weeks it had its first success.

At 1230 on 5th April 2005, *Merlin*, the public trip boat with 23 passengers aboard, including small children, was passing under a bridge in Frimley Green when a glass bottle and stones were dropped on to it by two children.

The police were contacted, and a good description given. Just 15 minutes later the two eleven year old culprits were caught up a tree by the local community policeman in Frimley Lodge Park. They admitted the offence, and were given a severe lecture about the possible consequences of their mindless action.

They were then taken home and their mothers informed. It was decided that no prosecution would take place if the boys were brought to the Canal Centre and apologised to the boat's owner for their dangerous behaviour.

It is hoped that similar success will soon follow in the Ash Aqueduct area, where children had been reported to police for taking bricks from a council work boat and throwing them into the canal and at a passing boat. There is also evidence that they were dropping bricks off the aqueduct on to a busy road below.

Yobs who caused trouble by stone throwing have been told that although the police don't have powers to pull in under-age children for fingerprinting, they do for DNA testing. With the latest techniques it is now possible to get DNA from just two tiny flecks of skin and even thrown stones could be used as evidence to identify them. So far, it seems to have worked. All is now quieter close to the canal centre.

Boating Issues Meeting – 7th April 2005

These items have been taken from a report issued less than 24 hours after the meeting had ended by the BW team themselves, even quicker than last time!
NABO comments in italics

Matters Arising

‘Veg Pledge’

- General discussions took place. Users acknowledged that a significant improvement had been achieved.
- Users were encouraged to provide specific examples of poor vegetation management to Amanda Strang (with images and locations) also where it has been managed well, to compare best practice. *(Your chairman had already done this for the T&M from Shardlow to Swarkestone, see his column)*
- Discussion took place on vegetation management to wash walls. BW to ask Peter Beckwith to recirculate the guidance note. *(These relate to killing the stumps for good)*
- The Users *(NABO - Gen Sec’s idea!)* suggested that BW could leave suitable waste from vegetation management for boaters to take away for use as fuel.

Pump-out Cards Electricity

- BW to ensure Boaters Directory includes the different types of electricity bollard and their location. *(NABO asked whether old cards could be used for hook-up points. BW said yes on some bollards, so don’t trade them all in yet.)*
- BW to investigate if value of pump-out cards can be printed on them.
- BW reported that the Boaters Directory will include list of where pump-out cards can be purchased.

BW Work Boats

- Discussion took place on people using BW work boats as rubbish tip.
- BW to consider using signs to deter rubbish placement on work boats.
- Comments were made that BW staff should clear BW Boats after use to deter people dumping rubbish

Red Diesel

- Users discussed the current derogation on and grading of red diesel.
- Scott Deverell (TYHA) to raise with BMF and fellow council members the possibilities for encouraging BMF members to clearly display type and price of diesel available. *(It seems you can get a better grade of fuel at some yards)*

Licence Evasion / Overstaying on Moorings

- Discussions took place on new boats on the network registering as continuous cruiser as a result of lack of mooring availability *(NABO’s question)*.

- Simon (*Salem - BW Communications Director - in the chair*) specifically informed the group that BW is currently implementing a process to automatically identify boats where licences are not being renewed. (*We asked, 'What about those who didn't have licences to renew?'*) This process should be in place by the autumn, allowing patrol staff to concentrate on persistent evaders.
- Sam Clarke (APCO) commented that marinas used to receive reports from BW on boats recorded as having a marina home mooring, for checking against the actual situation. This no longer happens. BW to report back to APCO on this matter. (*Your chairman had already raised the issue with BW of why live-aboards are leaving marinas this Spring for life on the towpath*)
- BW to advise the percentage of boats who have taken a temporary mooring on the Kennet & Avon.
- Overall discussions took place on the methodology for monitoring overstay and implementing overstay charges.
- Eugene advised that all new licence holders now have to declare their home mooring. If they don't have one then they are sent guidance on continuous cruising, thereby giving the message that BW is not responsible for finding boaters moorings.
- Simon informed the group of the marina prospectus and explained how it may encourage action to help to alleviate the problem of moorings and overstay.
- A number of users believed that boat builders should have greater responsibility for making new users aware of the need to seek a mooring and guidance on continuously cruising.

Visitor Moorings

Historic Boat Harbours

- A discussion took place on historic boat harbours (areas where historic boats can moor in interim periods whilst travelling round the network and will provide a point of interest to visitors).
- BW to ensure that mooring sites and their status are updated regularly in the Boaters Directory.

Time Limited Moorings Proposal

- General discussion took place over when and how time limited moorings should be implemented. (*BW admitted 48 hours was applied by default as it was easier to relax rather than tighten restrictions - but does it ever happen?*)
- Debbie Lumb provided an overview on how North West tackle overstay discrepancies. (*Debbie was the first Services Manager invited to these meetings*)
- BW to encourage customers where they cannot meet the rules to contact the local waterway unit to agree an extended stay. BW would be sympathetic to genuine difficulties. (*Your chairman pointed out that, as a sector of society, boaters tended to be more conscientious and many would suffer rather than ask. BW accepted this.*)

- It was generally felt that where moorings are to be charged, the first 24hrs should be free. (*Adrian Stott had suggested parking meters at 'honeypot' sites. IWA and NABO opposed strongly any charging for first 24 hours on any towpath mooring*)

Marina Locations

- General discussions took place on marina locations and congestion on the canal system. Simon explained how the marina prospectus would encourage marinas to be developed in the most suitable locations.
- Debbie Lumb confirmed David Pearce's assumption that local authorities prefer expansion of current marinas rather than new builds.
- There was concern at the lack of training for crews of Canaltime Boats (*after being hit twice in a week over Easter - guess who brought that one up! The context was the effect of ignorant boaters on congestion and lock waiting times.*) Simon agreed to talk to BWML about user concern for Canaltime at Sawley and asked if Sam (APCO) could take this matter up with BMF.
- Users suggested that BW considers talking to property developers to encourage moorings to be provided at canalside developments.
- A discussion took place that old, and now disused, canal arms (particularly in London) can be brought back into use for new moorings.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- Discussions took place on troubled areas around the North West in which Debbie Lumb was able to provide information on what BW is doing to address these issues.
- A 'Waterway Awareness' meeting is due to take place on 8 April 2005.

Dimensions

- Users asked for an update on the 'dimensions' project.
- The first stage of the project was to provide maximum dimensions of length 'v' beam and a consultation of this took place and details, based on Richard Booth's original work is published on BW's website. This document will also be in the Boaters Directory.
- Richard Booth (*Historic Narrowboats*) explained to the group the second stage of the project and the identification of pinch-points. Simon responded, and at this stage there is no further commitment to produce further work. (*This goes against promises made at previous meetings.*)
- BW assured the group that where restoration or repair takes place it will be done to the original dimension.
- Further discussion took place on the reduction of 'gauge' and was suggest that this could be considered as an item for BWAf.

Boaters Directory Update

- Eugene updated the group on the Boaters Directory current position which will go out to the User Groups for comment on accuracy. (*This is a Waterscape website initiative but boaters could request a fresh printout for the route they intended to take*)
- Simon apologised for the project running late but stressed the importance of the information in the guide being correct.
- Users requested that paper versions are dated and when amendments to the online directory take place, these are made clear on an update page.

Dredging

The following areas were discussed about dredging:

- Confirmation of BW's ongoing commitment to dredge to 'original profile' .
- Report on progress towards 'steady state' budgeting with respect to maintenance. BW responded that Jim Stirling is taking the lead on 'steady state' and this will evolve over the next 18months.
- Discussion of separation of BW's budget of backlog from maintenance dredging and of BW's plans for the eliminating the remaining backlog. Simon confirmed that the plans were that by 2012 the whole canal would be dredged to original profile.
- Discussion of the methodology for setting priorities for lengths to be dredged, within the list of lengths on which depths have degraded past the dredging 'trigger' points. BW to circulate breakdown on dredging spend per waterway.
- Users were concerned that dredging and dimensions were not being included in the new waterway standards. BW to provide clarification.

BW Market Research Presentation

- Simon presented to the group the results of BW's customer research.
- Simon to provide definition of a 'visit' to the group. (*The paper listed the number of visits from various types of user. Dog walking won hands down but your chairman queried whether the low figure for boating was because six months afloat counted as one visit.*)

Visitor Incident Report Form Presentation

- Peter Wade (*Safety*) presented to the group results of the number of 'visitor incident report forms' returned to BW.
- Users suggested encouraging use of forms in their respective magazines. (*No sooner done than said!*)

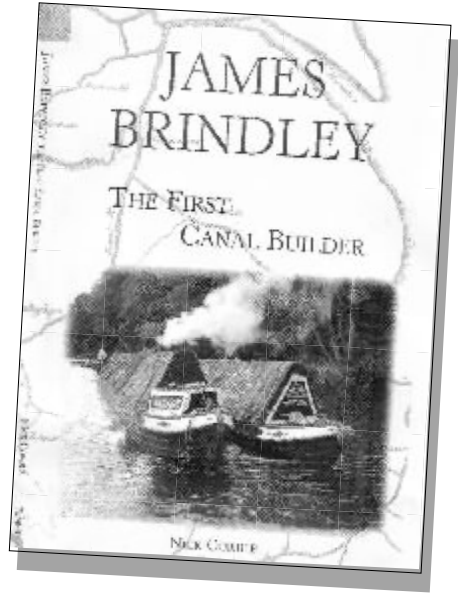
A FRESH LOOK AT JAMES BRINDLEY

Why is it that the exploits of Stephenson and Brunel are part of the history curriculum while the name of the man who laid down the basis for the first national transport system, James Brindley, is largely unknown?

A new biography written by Nick Corble attempts to redress this imbalance. Published by Tempus Publishing, and called 'James Brindley: The First Canal Engineer' the book takes a fresh look at Brindley's achievements and asks the bigger question of what might have happened if Brindley hadn't come along.

While most boat owners probably know about the more obvious examples of Brindley's legacy, the bridges, the aversion to locks, the triumphs of Barton and Harecastle, perhaps less of us are aware of how close he came to failure. Nick describes the ups and downs of Brindley's career almost as if he was writing a thriller. He also focuses on Brindley's very human tale - how he was born into poverty, how he was barely literate and how he rose above all this to do things no one else thought were even possible.

Nick's previous book 'Walking on Water' about a journey down the spine of the waterways network established him as a fresh voice on the canals, and his work features regularly in Canal and Riverboat and other publications.



This book is a 'must read' for anyone with an interest in how the canal system came about and is illustrated with dozens of original photos, many of them in colour. The book is available from your local bookshop at £18.99 but Nick points out that Amazon are offering a 30% discount. Alternatively you can buy online through the publisher at

www.tempus-publishing.com

where the book is also offered at a discount.

Nick Corble

A PLEA FROM THE HEART

As you can imagine, servicing a list containing hundreds of email addresses can be very time consuming. Every time I send out a bulletin I get a deluge of returning delivery failures. I try to sort them but when I think I've cracked it, I get a host of new ones:-

Some are automatic '*out of office*' messages – annoying but understandable.

Some are folks who have died – mustn't speak ill of them.

Some are folks who have left – If you intend to leave (or die), please don't. If you must, please unsubscribe yourself as described below first.

Some are '*over quota*' or '*mailbox full*' – I get error messages every 24 hours until it 'times out'. Please either collect, or unsubscribe if you can't be bothered any more.

Some are still members but have changed addresses - please also unsubscribe and then let us know your new address. Among those are:-

sirwilliam@quista.net

rasoper@waitrose.com

rojean@lineone.net

adrian-maureen@tilly2.freemove.co.uk

clive@shirethatch.freemove.co.uk

PARKINSN@VECMAN.COM

TO UNSUBSCRIBE

- 1) Go to the NABO website (www.nabo.org.uk)
- 2) Click the **MEMBERS THIS WAY** button
- 3) Scroll down the '**News & Info**' page till you reach an item called '**Not getting your bulletin?**'
- 4) Click the last word of 'unsubscribe **here**'
- 5) You will get the simplest of forms, just fill in the email address you want off the list and click **Remove**

If you think that's complicated then spare me a thought for the procedure I have to go through to send each bulletin. I have to go through a number of password protected pages on the website control panel to unlock the bulletin list, send the bulletin, check my mail every few minutes till it comes back to me so I know it has got through, and then lock the list again so worms and viruses don't use the list to spread themselves into your computers. This takes time, particularly when I am afloat and isn't helped by a flurry of error messages that could easily be avoided.

Thanks - *Stuart*

TO JOIN OR NOT TO JOIN?

No, we're not talking about joining NABO, the chances are you have made that decision that already! We are talking about the **Boaters' Phone Company's Data Club**. I suppose it is a bit like joining NABO – your money is not in exchange for a tangible product, but even if you think your money is better spent buying something you can hold in the hand, say a T-shirt, you might still end up hating it and never wear it!

What you do get is a guidance through the minefield that lies between the average person and the luxury of internet access when afloat. To me this goal is more than a luxury, it is an essential requirement for bringing this magazine to you from the boat, servicing NABO's website and the various chairman chores. I am sure there are many of you who need it for just as important reasons.

I have crossed that minefield on my own, but looking at their advice now with hindsight, I could well have trodden on a mine and had more money blown away than that required to join. It is like an insurance policy – do you want to take the risk? In spite of my technical grounding, I have certainly learnt a lot about using mobile phones to connect computers to the internet, and I shall certainly use it to see if I can get a faster, more reliable and hopefully cheaper connection.

The first packet of advice comes on a CD-ROM (complete with reader software in case you can't display it). There are nearly forty illustrated pages of clear explanation of the terminology, how all the different transmission systems compare, a detailed list of current phones with advice on their suitability for data connection, a very rough guide to their costs, and even a special little section for Mac users, all with remarkably little 'techno-babble'.



The advice is based on experience as well as manufacturers' blurb, and this is where the 'club' bit comes in. The latest '3G' might be the in-thing for rich urban teenagers sending fatuous pictures of their dubious doings to absent mates, but does it help you browse websites after nightfall has obscured the beauty of Tixall Wide? The only people who can tell you are those who have tried it, and the BPC Data Club is one of the few places where such knowledge can be shared.

One slight criticism is that it doesn't say why you need it all when the telly is showing 'Centrino' ads with totally unencumbered laptops connecting to the world from a shopping plaza bench seat. Thereby lies the clue, you have to be seated in one of those 'hotspots', where there is just as much chance of your

laptop being whisked into real space by a thief as being whisked into cyberspace by Intel technology.

There are exceptions, Trinity Marina is one, where 'UKCanal.com' is trying to start a so called 'Wifi' internet service on the canals, but a year has passed since it featured in this magazine and there seems to have been no further expansion. So it seems for the foreseeable future that the mobile phone is an essential ingredient and the Boaters Phone Company an essential source of advice.

The CD costs £35 along with an initial period of membership, from: the Boaters Phone Company, 10 Griffe Gardens, Oakworth, Keighley, BD22 7PL

Tel: 07970 459638 email: boatersphonecompany@orange.net

www.boatersphone.co.uk

CONTENT OF BPC GUIDANCE

1. CONNECT PAGES . . .

- The Benefits - What Equipment? - Computer - Handset - Antenna - Connection - Software

2. SPEED PAGES . . .

- How Quickly Can I Send And Receive Data? - Bits & Bytes -
- Data Methods - CSD - HSCSD - GPRS
- Faster Connections - EDGE - WCDMA - HSDPA
- Hints & Tips - Onspeed - The Long-term Future

3. COSTS . . .

- Data Types
- CSD - HSCSD 14.4 - HSCSD 28.8 - GPRS - EDGE - WCDMA - HSDPA

4. HANDSETS . . .

- Ericssons - LGs - Motorola - Nokias - 02s - Oranges - Samsungs - Sharps
- Siemens - Sony Ericssons - Ericsson FCTs - Options - Sierras

5. SIGNALS . . .

- Signal Strength - More Obvious Blockages to a Steady Signal - Dual and Triple Band
- What is a Carrier Wave? - What Interrupts the Transmission and Reception of Data?
- What Is An External Antenna and How Does It Work? - What is a Ground Plane?
- Problems with 3G and Some Solutions

6. 3G DATA . . .

- 3G CONS -3G PROS - UMTS/WCDMA - 3MAIL -4G?!

7. INFORMATION FOR APPLE MAC USERS . . .

- Macs and Mobiles - 1) USB and Mac OS - 2) Infrared - 3) Bluetooth - 4) PCMCIA cards

APPENDIX

8. FIXED CELLULAR TERMINALS (FCTs) . . .

- FCTs - NOKIA PREMICELL and NOKIA 22/30/32 - ERICSSON F221m and F251m FCTs. - SIEMENS TC35I - TELULAR SX5E

9. UPDATING . . .

- How to keep up with the latest info

WWW Dot Xtra (with Y Nott? & ZBD)

The **X** worry is mostly about spelling. (What! an old witch like you worrying about spelling?) Well, all those worrying words that sound as though they begin with **x**, such as: -

Xtortion: concerning mooring charges and EA licence increases.

Xtrems of paperwork required before any action is taken.

Xpertise of lock keepers giving advice to boaters on our rivers, such as the in**X**perienced new lock keepers on the tidal Trent.

Xcetera

My worries are about **xenophobia** (which does begin with **x** but sounds as though it begins with **z**). Xenophobia: a deep dislike for foreigners, stangers, those from a different race.

How many boat owners think people who hire boats are 'different'? Of course they aren't, other than in the way that we all differ. There are people who prefer to hire boats year after year as they have limited holiday time and like to cover a different part of the system each time. Often they are more experienced than many boat owners.

People with steel boats refer to others as 'tupperware jobbies' while the owners of those boats call steel boats 'painted buckets' or 'floating tin baths'.

It worries me how some folk like to pigeon-hole others and generate bad feeling.

Some(?) boaters hate fishermen, and some(??) fishermen can't stand boaters, while cyclists plough through the lot and unite all in their anger against them. Waterways for all I agree, it's just that some should stick to lakes and shallow steams or rivers. Of course I show no bias when I point out, 'Who were the canals built for anyway?'

Did you now that in the past BWB referred to us as 'pleasure-craft tourists' because to call us 'boaters' would have been considered a terrible insult? Boatmen were a race apart and considered lower working class. Hence my worries concerning **xenophobia**.

It is only recently that they have achieved the respect they deserve, for working long hours in all weathers and under such poor conditions, and that for 364/5 days every year! They didn't think they were hard done by at the time because, as a friend **X**plained, 'We only knew that way of life.'

However when carrying on the cut was finished, many of them kept quiet about their past because of the attitudes they encountered from those on the land.

Thank goodness things have changed and now we all appreciate what they did. Although you still get folk who think it must have been a great life 'all that fresh air and countryside' etc, (working locks in the pitch dark in ice and snow, that sort of fresh air) and those cosy little cabins to live in (have you ever sat in one? there is no comfort in them at all, but then the boatman and family were expected to work, not be comfortable!)

Hard for you to believe but I have spent some time in my life worrying about **xylene**. I had my boat sand-blasted and primed. I knew nothing of paints and proceeded to undercoat and gloss coat it, like you do.

However when all that was done and dried, to my horror it peeled off like those cling-film type coatings they put on new electric goods. It seems this was because the primer was a **xylene** based paint and the other layers weren't. I am now a bit obsessive about reading paint tins and sniffing the contents before I use them. (That Xplains a lot! - Ed.) Do learn from my mistake and read the small print, albeit on paint tins!

Is it **Ys** to spend time looking at the past?

It is depressing that **yesterday** the canals were in a better state than they are now. Of course because of my great age my **yesterdays** probably go back further than **yours**. As carrying on the canals declined so did the state of the waterways.

To give credit, things are better on all waterways now than they were twenty **years** ago, but not as good as they were fifty **years** ago.

The fabric of the waterways is deteriorating, we all notice it and know that those who are responsible for maintaining it have little idea. They don't walk and look, they certainly don't see the canal walls from the canal or from a boat in tunnels and locks. They don't work the paddles, or notice the cracks and falling brickwork. Naturally I worry, but that is not enough, we need to keep Waterways informed about that state of things.

In some areas I have noticed a bit of effort is being made to cut back sapling growth from behind the piling, but far more places where nothing (**Zilch?**) is being done, despite assurances. **Y Nott?** I want to know.

If you have ever enjoyed/suffered a user group meeting (those who have made the effort to attend enjoy it, but please, EA & BW, presentations are NOT what they are about), you will know what a '**Yes**' man is. Whatever is discussed, they just make notes and nod. 'Oh! we mustn't upset those in authority' they importune.

Y Nott? I worriedly ask again.

Have you noticed BWs **YoYo** like operations? A few big offices, a lot of smaller offices, a few big offices, a few smaller offices and lots of workers on maintenance. Oh well! the last one was a flight of fantasy.

We can all worry that **Zilch** is getting done but maybe I have **Zed** enough, 'Time for bed' (said **ZBD**)....**ZZzzzz**

Goodnight for now

Your worried friend

Dot

This page would be the RCR advertisement but to save space and download we are using it for the intro to the Signs Quiz which was a pull-out. The quiz is 'on its side' on the next un-numbered page.

PULL-OUT

'YOUR PICTURE STARTER FOR TEN!'

AINA (Associations of Inland Navigation Authorities) is working on a standard set of navigation signs to replace any existing signs in the UK that need it, and for new signs only where absolutely necessary.

NABO has been given a draft of the set and would like to test the proposals on you, in the hope of finding out whether the symbols have clear meanings and how they compare with the European standard.

On the next pages we have chosen the symbol part of some of the proposed AINA signs and mixed them up with signs used on Continental waters (CEVNI), which some people think should be adopted instead. Opposite them is a list of possible meanings. We would like you to match them up by writing the letter for the meaning you choose in the left hand box below each picture. In the right hand box please score, out of ten, how clear you think the meaning is. (Shame on you, or the sign, if you think it is obvious and then get it wrong!)

Note that some of the meanings may be red herrings and some of the CEVNI symbols have the same meaning as AINA ones, so you can't cheat by using the process of elimination!

DON'T PANIC!

AINA intends to put the meaning in English below the signs, unlike CEVNI which has to cater for many languages so uses no words and has to rely on your knowledge or intuition. (AINA has yet to decide about Welsh and Gaelic)

When you have finished please return this page to:-

**National Association of Boat Owners
FREEPOST (BM8367),
Birmingham B31 2BR**

We will get a measure of how clear the signs are from your accuracy and your assessments, pass it on to AINA and try to keep you informed as to the outcome.

Your comments:-

SIGNS QUIZ

How would you cope with metres etc on signs rather than miles, feet and inches?

No problem
 I could try
 No way

Name (optional)

POSSIBLE MEANINGS

a - No berthing within the indicated distance of this sign

b - No berthing here

c - Depth restriction

d - Keep to port/left of channel

e - Sound horn

f - Keep left (port)

g - No turning (winding)

h - Keep a sharp look out

i - Navigation closed ahead

j - Dry dock

k - Electricity available

l - Priority over oncoming vessels

m - Steer with care

n - Motorised craft permitted

o - Speed limit

p - Boat tour

q - Rowing coaching

r - Navigation restrictions - make enquiries

s - Boat lift

t - No unpowered craft

u - Beware outfall

v - No pump out here

w - Beware strong currents

x - Chandlery

y - Weir

z - Boat club



If you want to check your answers then the European signs are in the RYA's European Waterways Regulations book which comes with the CEVNI addition to the RYA Helmsman's courses.

Alternatively look on the page following the Letters in this issue.

NOTICES

PASSWORDS

Any guidance papers tables still protected will open with password 'Branch' (Capital B)

The members-only website section has a password, which has been sent out to on-line members via the members' bulletin list.

The User ID for the members section is the word 'member'.

If you have not been given the new word please e-mail: webmaster@nabo.org.uk with your name and membership number to be given the password, and, if you want, to be put onto the bulletin list.

POST FOR NABO NEWS

For issue 4/05 the editor will be afloat so please send contributions by email to news.editor@nabo.org.uk

Failing that, at least one week before the copy date to

48 Old Lane, Bramhope,
Leeds LS16 9AZ



EVENTS

CRICK SHOW

STAND HELP NEEDED

May 28-30th

Even if you can only manage an hour or two it must be worth a free ticket. Please contact Aileen on 0770 3567764

DBA LPG scheme

Flogas prices have increased 3 p/kg. due to increases in the world market prices for oil-derived products.

So, under the scheme, the prices now are:

19 kg £13.88

11 kg £8.88

Text your waterway reports to:

07930 419 981

07961 001814

07989 441674

REMINDER

EA STRONG STREAM LINES

Call **0845 988 1188**

then, when prompted, Dial 1
then 'quickdial':-

011131 for Thames

032112 for Nene

03321 for G. Ouse

Also **011132** for Thames works



RIVERS



NABO steps up Trent lock-keeper campaign

At a Parliamentary Waterways group meeting last year, NABO's chairman challenged Robin Evans about the safety aspects of BW's withdrawal of permanent lock-keepers on the River Trent. He was assured safety would not be compromised.

However Peter Foster, NABO's Humber and Lincolnshire Rivers representative and committee member of The (Trent) Boating Association, has severe doubts and has expressed them in the local press.

In remote locations like Hazleford, the lock-keeper's houses lie abandoned and, throughout the winter and in off-peak hours during the summer, the locks are set to 'user operation'. However putting crew ashore involves ladders which can be treacherous. There is a proviso that assistance can be booked in advance, but less than a dozen bookings were made last winter. Even when locks are manned, BW is now using seasonal staff with questionable experience.

Peter claims that the reason this policy appears to work is because boaters are not prepared to commit themselves. From his house over-looking Newark Dyke, he has seen a marked drop in traffic, and he also hears first hand the fears of river users. "We no longer have the freedom to cast off on a fine winter's day for fear of ending up in difficulties in a deep river lock with nobody around to help. We feel we are getting poor value from our river licences because we are not only restricted as to where we can cruise but also when we can cruise in safety".

The only way to convince BW is to ensure those incidents or near misses that do happen are reported, preferably both to BW, using an Incident Report Form, and on the NABO Reports Board.



New Head of Navigation for EA

EA has chosen Julia Simpson to replace David Lawrence as Head of Navigation and Recreation.

She has come from the National Trust where she worked as Area Manager for Oxon, Berkshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Thames Alliance - We all want your views

Go see www.visitthames.co.uk/twp and tell us what you think

EA targets registration dodgers

According to its press release: “... *This is the Environment Agency’s message in a new campaign to tackle illegal river users. The campaign comes after 715 boats were found using the River Thames last year without a licence.*”

The new poster campaign features Mr Toad from *The Wind in the Willows* exhibition at the River & Rowing Museum in Henley-on-Thames. The posters are being distributed to boat clubs, marinas and locks along the length of the Thames.

Peter McConnell, Sales and Marketing Manager for the River & Rowing Museum, said: “Mr Toad is renowned for his rebellious antics in *“The Wind in the Willows”* and is a well-known figure synonymous with the River. It’s very easy to imagine him not registering his boat which makes him the perfect culprit for this campaign.”

Eileen McKeever, the Environment Agency’s Thames Waterway Manager, said: “*Boat registration fees are a valuable source of income and contribute to maintaining the river so millions can enjoy it every year. Those who do not register their boats create a lot of extra administration work, costing us time and money. The registration system also promotes boat safety and we only issue licences to those that comply with boat safety regulations. The new posters remind users to get their boats registered which will cut down on our time spent chasing the ‘Toads’ who don’t!*”

To register your boat call the Craft Registration team on 0118 953 5650, see **www.visitthames.co.uk/forms** or speak to your local lock keeper for more information.

Remember that even if you keep your boat in a marina or backwaters adjacent to the Thames you may be obliged to be registered, and certainly will be if the new EA Transport and Works Order comes into force.



Thames speeding warning

The owner of a private motor boat has been formally cautioned by the Port of London Authority after driving his boat on the river Thames at excessive speed and causing a dangerous wash that damaged a houseboat. The owner of the 'Malibu', Mr Roy Hudson, from Essex was on his boat with two companions travelling from Gallions Point Marina in Newham up the river to Teddington.

After a comprehensive investigation the owner was interviewed under caution at a London Police station. As a result Mr Hudson admitted driving his boat "without due care and attention" on the river Thames and accepted a formal caution from the Harbourmaster.

THE MAKING OF "A VOYAGE BETWEEN TWO SEAS"

- A PERSONAL VIEW by Stuart Sampson

BAR TALK AND BARGE TALK

I am not alone in taking credit for the idea of "Voyage", my real claim to fame was being able to do something about it. I did work for the BBC, which put me in the right building, but in 1981 my job had little to do with making this sort of film, and nothing to do with appearing in it. I did however own a 40 foot narrowboat, and it was berthed on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

I had written a proposal for a simple half-hour canal film and tendered it to the Regional Television Manager. You could do that sort of thing on a small site like BBC North in Leeds, even if you worked on the technical side. It made a topic for discussion when we crossed paths, usually in the BBC Club bar, but it remained dormant until a certain Pete Morgan, professional poet and presenter, also suggested filming some sort of Pennine crossing. Add another staff idea to cover commercial water transport, and the project took off.

Leigh was considered as a starting point, being Pete's birth place, but the canal at Leigh cannot claim to be the best opening to a film, so the full voyage from the Irish to the North Sea became the

objective. It was to be a series of four half-hour films, the first two taking us to Leeds, the next to Goole, and the final one through tidal waters to the mouth of the Humber. This was how my humble little idea bounced back to me the next time I was involved, plus a request that I should be skipper from Liverpool to Leeds.



Pete Morgan at the junction with the Leigh Branch (1982)

This was in February, and still not definite. The *Lady Galadriel* lay alone with frosts boring into every crannie of her imperfect paintwork. When the weather and rosters allowed I visited her to pump the bilges, otherwise our heroine-to-be led a neglected life, just too far from Skipton Courts to file a case of desertion.

Then it was confirmed. Would I be skipper, either an the *Lady*, or a hired narrow boat, to bring Pete from Liverpool Docks to Leeds Canal Basin? Filming was to start

in the middle of May and I had less than two months to prepare, and still do my normal job. Her Ladyship gave me the answer, her engine fired up first go, as if to say "YES" and she won the approval of the producer even without her make-up on. She had to appear in Liverpool Salisbury Dock for the 17th of May, with pristine paintwork, dependable mechanics and in every way shipshape for her TV debut.



The *Lady* in Burnley

A week in a dry dock and a frantic "paint-in" followed, interspersed with sessions in the production office discussing logistics. We went to Liverpool and toured the docks by car to see what we were up against. My main concern was whether to get road transport for her to Liverpool, or sail her there. Costs were compared and my department released me early so I could take her by water. In fact by a magnificent personpower juggling exercise I was also found crew and cook to cover the whole period.

My log reads: "*Sunday 9th May - Victualled and departed from Skipton mid-morning, lunched on the move and arrived E. Marton in the evening. Changed crew, 16 miles, 14 locks.*"

The journey out was in its way as much of an adventure as the filming. Canal voyages would be no fun if they were totally predictable, but they never are. There was a CB radio conversation in the Colne Valley when we learnt of 'Arry of Ossy. How we paid him a visit in his 13th century monastery, and saw the lath-and-wattle walls, and the ledges on the chimneys so the witches could rest on there way to Pendle without disturbing the monks. There was the wind which drove us into the bank near Burscough and split a weld in the engine cooling tube. We had to use the Burscough Junction dry-dock - if only the camera could have seen us!

IN AT THE DEEP END

Let us take up the narrative in Liverpool on the 17th of May, a fine cool morning. We will look back on the outward journey as the people and places remind us.

The smell of salt water and tar filled my nostrils as I examined the paintwork for flaws in the morning light. I had been touching up on the signwriting the previous night, and then gone

up to the riverside to see shipping slice through reflected fire of the setting sun. We were moored to a great pontoon, which used to act as a floating landing-stage for passenger vessels at the river-front. In front of us was a Waterwitch, a floating "bulldozer" which is alleged to turn turtle if the mesh scoop is raised fully! We had been led by this extraordinary craft last night through the docks, and bade goodnight by her BWB skipper in broad Scouse.



In Liverpool Docks

I will be the first to admit that I was not at my best that morning, the day before was the nearest I had been to abandoning ship in seven years of cruising. There are four locks taking the canal down to the docks, and a Manpower Services team had been landscaping the area. The chamber of the bottom lock was as deep as the docks when empty, and seven feet or so deeper when full. As we came down the lock-keeper was having trouble closing the bottom gates of this lock fully, but to try

to get us down in time for the filming, had managed to fill the lock.

As we approached, the water level was being depleted by the leaking gates, and going down visibly. We were almost into the chamber, but the *Lady*, being deeper at the stern, grounded on the sill before she cleared the top gates. This meant that the rest of her was floating over unplumbed depths, and as the level sank, her bow dropped and she threatened to dive into the chamber. It took everyone in the area, with ropes and body-weight, and the propeller thrashing half out of the water, to drag her grinding across the sill. As she settled to an even keel and descended the lock, I looked anxiously into the bilge for signs of damage. We hadn't come all this way to film a wreck under Stanley Dock, nor a story about three deaths by drowning in the night.

I was still a bit shaken when the first cars arrived and the crew poured out. There was Keith Massey, cameraman, Ken Evans, sound recordist, and Andrew Dearden, assistant cameraman. By this time I had brought the *Lady* up to the embarking point chosen more for its pictorial value than convenience of boarding. This was close to the Salisbury clock tower, where the quayside is strewn with lumps of sticky tar. Avoiding

these, the crew had offloaded a pile of dimpled aluminium boxes, blimps, boards and booms. The producer, Doug Smith, and Pete Morgan also had arrived.

Against the grey stone quayside that separated us from the tidal Mersey, the *Lady Galadriel's* new paint did look rather good. Keith and Doug explored for good camera angles, while Pete and I prepared to be filmed. I then realised I had a speaking part; there I was in Liverpool Docks without an Equity card! More than once Pete introduced and boarded the *Lady*, and exchanged greetings with me. Before each 'take' the sound of the clapperboard echoed among the old tobacco warehouses, and I could just hear Pete's voice as he approached over the quay.

"..and her skipper is Stuart Sampson. Good morning, Stuart, are we set to go?" My heart was, but the butterflies in my stomach were not, somehow I managed to introduce the idea that Pete should cast off the bow rope, something that seemed to take them all by surprise. With a brave effort he tiptoed along the narrow gunwale and was filmed removing the rope from round a bollard that dwarfed a forty foot narrow boat. We were off - or were we?

No, we were not. As soon as we left frame we had to turn and

repeat the whole exercise, being shot from a different angle. Again we did it, narrowly missing an ocean-going tug that surged through the docks. Then we waited, as Keith and crew risked life and limb, not to mention over fifteen thousand pounds worth of gear, climbing the dank iron ladders in the clock tower to look down on us. The walkie-talkie barked a command and off we went again, this time going so far before being called back that I really thought the journey had begun.

Then the whole film unit boarded us and proceeded to dig in. I even think the ship's rat felt the end had come. Off we went again, being filmed from the cabin door, and expected to hold a meaningful conversation. So I told Pete what I had learnt from our scouse friend about a long stainless steel pipe slung on gantries that led from a fenced-in quay to one of the warehouses. Apparently this carries rum into bonded store, replacing barrels, which had a habit of going absent without leave. After thinking how clever I was to find something new to work into the film, Ken told me that the engine had drowned out everything we had said.

So, at last, we were under way.

FLY ON THE WALL



at Council

Until that tall grey-bearded bloke turned up, I was the only six-footer in Council.

They seem a very harmonizzzzed lot nowadays. They get on well together, and get things done. There is lots of laughter too. Nobody' stormed off in a huff for ages, except the pub cat, who got thrown out last time for interfurring....and remembered.

The new Basingstoke Canal Watch launch went well. [I think they mean the 'introduction', not a new police boat]. It wazzzz featured on Meridian TV News, and BBC Southern Counties Radio breakfast show. This is obviously no fly-b'night venture.

I thought a press release meant getting caught, then escaping again. Apparently not. It is something sent round to the papers. Recent PRs from NABO on Cut Crime, unmanned Trent locks, and an invitation to trail-boaters to join NABO have been well received by the www.narrowboatworld.com website

[I do hate that term... website!],

magazzzzines, and local papers. I should now. I nearly got swotted by one, rolled up!

Council have negotiated reductions in costs for NABO memberzzzz joining River Canal Rescue, the very successful AA of the Waterways. In return new members of RCR will be offered free NABO membership for the first year, but without voting rights. This seems sensible. One keeps the boats going and t'other duzzzzz the same for the boaters.

They nominated someone for the Ombudzzzzman Committee. Representation on various committees was on the agenda just below where I settled for a bit. Have no fear. NABO is well represented all over the place. You can find'em putting your point of view at the new British Waterways Advisory Forum, at User Group Meetings, and at the BSS and even the MCA. They flit all over the place, but they could still use extra help in your area, if you're interested in getting involved.

Internet communications afloat wazzzz discussed at length. They're going to try out a new system from Vodafone so that the chairman, webmaster [ugh] and NN editor can stay in touch, not with each other becauzzzz they are one and the same person, but with everyone else.

Council members' travelling expenses were also picked over. These

folks give a lot of their time to NABO freely, yet they are still out-of-pocket when buzzzzing about in their cars. Will it be brought up at the next AGM? Pity they can't fly like me.... though the chairman does sometimes.

Reports and buzzzzes from all cornerzzzz of the land came in on what is happening waterway wizzze. NABO really duzzz have its finger on the pulse nowadayzzzz.

New NABO stickers and anti-dog fouling stickers are going to be produced. I hope they don't think of making fly-stickers!

They're also going to produce NABO pens. Ones that write! Hope they lend one to the chairman. It might stop him from having to borrow everyone else's.

The new European signage system was swotted over too. Good grief! Even I, with all my many eyes, can see these proposals would be a terrible eyesore! They wouldn't suite the traditional environs of the waterways at all! I hope they don't settle on them. I wouldn't!

The treasurer got his statement in before he had to buzzzz off early.

It wazzzz a good useful meeting. Lots of things are getting done. There's no flies on Council now, it seems....apart from me of course.



Greener on the other side of the fence for BW?

Well, he soon will be.

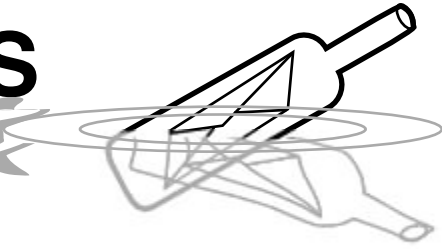
On the 9th of July George Greener retires as BW Chairman and Tony Hales (right) takes over. Previously Chief Executive of Allied Domecq and non-executive chairman of NAAFI, he should have no problem keeping the pub partnership in order, so they say.

NABO hopes to meet him soon.



Picture courtesy of BW Monthly

LETTERS



Where am I?

Two years ago on THAT very hot Sunday late afternoon in August having dropped my crew off as I left the Thames at Reading I was informed by the lockkeepers at Blakes Lock (on the K&A) that some boats passing through had reported a crowd of youths at Fobney Lock who were using the Lock and surroundings as their own country club and that it appeared some had been drinking. I took the trouble of looking up the Grid Reference of the lock and set off, long accustomed to boating single handed. On reaching the lock I announced cheerfully that it wasn't my intention to spoil their day and that I would lock through as quickly as I could.

Too late I realised the 20 - 30 louts were totally out of control; amongst other things using a windlass they had acquired to open both upper gate paddles before I had secured the boat in the lock in spite of my telling them not to when I saw what was about to happen (I was too slow and they wanted their pool back). To cut a long story short I finally ended up calling 999 when threatened with violence (the emergency operator even heard me being threatened with the windlass during our conversation). The dialogue below is the gist of part of our telephone conversation.

999: Where are you?

Me: At Fobney Lock on the K&A canal on the south side of Reading.

999: Where is that?

Me: (Dragging scrap of paper out of pocket, the map left on boat): I can give you the Grid Reference - XX123456.

999: Is that a map reference?

Me: Yes, a national grid reference as shown on OS maps.

999: Is there a road nearby so we can tell our car how to get to you?

Me: I can't see one, I came by boat on the canal.

999: Is there a pub nearby?

Me: I don't know. Look up the grid reference or tell a police helicopter, I'm sure (being a pilot) they carry OS maps of the area.

999: We don't use grid references...

The conversation continued along the same lines for a little longer but by this time the lock was full, the youths had spotted an approaching boat and had disengaged a little, so I pushed open a gate and jumped aboard and set off, warning the other heavily crewed boat of trouble ahead and that I had called the Police but didn't have any confidence in them showing up.

As far as I know they never did. I hope they now know how to pass grid references on and read maps; I learnt to do both as a 13 year old Army cadet at school.

Now, where was I? I know...

Keep attacking!

Brian Farrant NB Ansty Rose

Mail forwarding

Please could you inform me, if possible, of a forwarding address system for boaters. Does NABO provide such a service?

H Babbington
c/o Priory Marina

Would anyone like to think about a service for boaters? I am sure it would be well used and NABO would publicise it. Ed

Locks-what? Again,

If you follow uk.rec.waterways you will know this point has been argued over time and time again, but you may care to waste some time considering my whitterings below.

The Falkirk Wheel behaves slightly different to a normal lock with respect to water movement. If you only have boats coming down and none going up you actually pump water up.

Consider the Gondola is at the top and full of water, two fifteen tonne narrowboats enter the gondola and 30 tonnes of water is displaced into the approach caisson. The gondola doors close and the boats travel down. When the gondola reaches the bottom the 2 boats leave 30 tonnes of water flows in.

If there are still boats to come down the gondola with no boats in it returns to the top where the waiting boats again enter the gondola and displaces their weight in water to the caisson.

what happens to this water, it falls 115 foot to the lake below. Now I don't know how much work 30 tonnes of water falling 115 feet can do, but I bet its just wasted and when you consider how little energy is used to turn the wheel it makes you wonder if it could be close to perpetual motion, not true perpetual motion of course because the boats are moving the water in and out of the gondolas as they enter and leave the wheel.

Think about it

Brian Harnser

Seeing Red

I've got the RYA/BMF/IWA "Seeing Red"

It's OK as far as it goes but never mentioned how much red diesel is used illegally nor the source of illegally used red diesel. The Treasury is now our major enemy and they think boat red diesel is the problem behind illegal usage. I think they are wrong.

Alan Moody

Response to NABO Bulletin - RCR

Having had dealings with RCR we can thoroughly recommend them. Excellent service, particularly when the skipper knows zilch about engines. We will be renewing again - with the added benefit of NABO discount.

Anne & Bill Sibley

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

Heresy?

I am deliberately writing this under the letters disclaimer because the last time thoughts like these were expressed from the NABO Chair there was a storm of protest.

NABO is barely in its teens, yet from its name it should, by rights, be the parent body lording over the all the specialised boat owner organisations. Instead it is thought of by many as the 'National All-the-other Boat-owners' Organisation' as, when it was formed, there were already groups representing private boaters who were in cruising clubs, or lived aboard, or boated on the Trent etc. Many of those who were left were canal folk in narrowboats who found the IWA had too wide a remit to represent them properly on purely boating issues.

Ever since, NABO has had an uphill battle to convince private boaters that it can offer something the specialist groups cannot, especially now the big issue at the time of NABO's foundation, the BSS, is very much less of a problem than it was then. NABO has another problem, its constitution prevents it changing its name, so it cannot become the British Boating Federation and try to assimilate all the specialist groups. In spite of what we may think of James Mason in other respects, we cannot deny there was a certain logic to this and NABO was well placed to achieve it.

On the other hand, the present name is a great strength. The authorities would dearly love NABO to 'do exactly what it says on the tin' and be the prime source

of collective boat-owner opinion. It is, isn't it?

There are two reasons I started this line of thought.

One is that the Trent Boating Association, with which James wanted NABO to merge, has now changed its name to The Boating Association to get national recognition. Its chairman, a lapsed NABO member, assured me it was not wanting to poach our members and would confine its activities to river and estuarial boaters, but this implies NABO is all 'ditch crawlers' - wrong! The TBA has been expanding by assimilating local groups from other rivers.

The second reason concerns shared ownerships. NABO's constitution allows boat owners to join, but what about syndicate owners who either own part of their boat all the time, or all their boat part of the time? They badly need representation and many of their issues are ours too. Last year they tried to set up a specialist group but there are not enough of them to make it work.

Can we help them?

Should our next AGM consider 'shared membership for shared boats'?

Or would this be the start of NABO creating specialist sub-groups?































Would expansion foul up the minimalist hierarchy that makes NABO such an effective route for grass-root members to be heard at the highest levels?

Food for thought - Eh!

Stuart Sampson

QUIZ ANSWERS - View in a mirror

European signs are marked with a *

					
j	o	* b	c	k	* s
					
* c	n	b	* p	p	x
					
l	* n	j	f	e	* d
					
e	* r	u	d	* o	* y
					
y	* e	* f	s	q	w

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