

INLAND NAVIGATION ISSUES, NEWS, AND VIEWS

NABO



NEWS

- **BW Moorings Tender Trial**
- **Shared Ownership Explained**
- **NABO Boats Reach Medway**



Issue 4 June 2007

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 First Come? - By Auction? - By Tender?
6 Standedge Tunnel Latest Carole Sampson
6 Crick Thanks Aileen Butler
7 Shared Ownership Howard Anguish
10 Chairman's Column The chairman
12 Rosie & Jims to Rochester Stuart Sampson
14 Accolade for NABO News
14 NABO Image Carole Sampson
15 Assorted Pix
16 Functional Teams Yorks Sec and BW West Mids
18 Fly on the wall at Council Said insect
19 What is The Green Blue?
20 Member's Email Ellen Dexter
20 Overheard
21 RCR Information RCR
22 NABO supplies
23 Council and contacts

Various pages - YOU SAY

This is a collection of boaters' comments on a featured aspect of the waterways, this time water points. Any short and preferably humorous comments on other subjects would be much appreciated for future issues.

2007 CALENDAR

Council meeting	NN Copy date
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21st July	28th July
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15th Sept	6th Oct
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AGM 17th Nov

24th Nov	1st Dec
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FIRST COME? - BY AUCTION? - or BY TENDER?

British Waterways is planning to suspend waiting lists for its directly managed moorings and try out a tendering system. NABO has been told that previous auction proposals, where competing bids would appear in real time on the Waterscape website, have been disbanded in favour of a 'sealed' tender system.

The website page explains the process as follows:-

Looking for a British Waterways' mooring?

In late August 2007 British Waterways (BW) will begin the trial of a new process for allocating vacant BW long-term moorings – by tender.

During the 12 month trial, there will be no waiting lists, so anyone has an opportunity to secure a BW mooring, even if you don't own a boat yet.

If you're looking for a BW mooring you can register where you'd like to moor and what facilities you'd like. Then sit back and BW will let you know when a suitable BW vacancy arises. You can then tender for the mooring – by stating the annual mooring fee you'd be prepared to pay. After a month, the mooring is allocated to the person offering the highest tender.

Step 1. Register, tell BW what you want and where you want it

Step 2. BW tell you when a suitable vacancy arises

Step 3. You submit a tender

Step 4. The person who submits the highest tender secures the mooring

How will it work?

You will be able to register, specify your mooring preferences, receive details of vacancies and submit a tender, either here on Waterscape.com or by post.

Using Waterscape.com, it will be free. You will be able to search and filter current and completed vacancies using a range of criteria, receive emails of vacancies matching your preferences or simply browse when you want, download information and submit a tender.

Want to know more? Send us your contact details:

Simply enter your email address in the box below and BW will send you more details as they become available.

Email address:

Alternatively you can use the postal option by writing to us at the address below or calling 01923 201120 and giving your name and postal address.

By post, BW will send you an information pack, register your preferences and send you details of matching vacancies as they arise, plus a quarterly summary of completed tenders. You submit your tender to us by post. There is a £10 charge payable on full registration to cover administration.

BW will email or post you more information nearer the time and expect the first vacancies to be offered for tender by late August 2007.

*BW Mooring Tenders,
Willow Grange,
Church Road,
Watford
WD17 4QA*

History of NABO Involvement

- BW set up the Moorings Contracts Workshop and invited boating groups to nominate representatives. NABO nominated Simon Robbins, its moorings specialist as its original remit was to consider residential issues, security of tenure, durations of contracts, sale of boats with moorings and other matters generally unrelated to price setting. In the Workshop's 'terms of reference', its members were asked to keep discussions to themselves so that contentious proposals could be raised without causing public alarm.
- The group was then presented with a proposal to assess market rates through auction. NABO's representative felt he couldn't speak for NABO on that subject without guidance from NABO Council. He returned to the next workshop meeting with Council's mandate to oppose the idea in principle, which he found was in accord with most other representatives.
- In spite of general consensus from the Workshop, BW announced at the next Boating Issues Meeting, where representatives from boating groups were under no obligation of confidentiality, that trial auctions would take place and that BW had no obligation to act on advice from users or their representatives regarding their mooring berth provision activities.
- At this meeting the IWA representative insisted the IWA would not condone any trial without postal sealed tenders being part of it. Most other group representatives expressed general opposition to any process where a mooring is let to the highest bidder, rather than through waiting lists.
- To accommodate this, BW sent out an invitation to boating group officers to take part in a different workshop in which it was made clear, to quote from the invitation message, that: *'the purpose of the workshop is not to debate the merits of postal tenders vs. online auctions, but to develop a potential postal tender process.'*
- Since this was not regarded as a forum at which NABO's views on the principles could be expressed, NABO Council resolved at its next meeting that its chairman should decline the invitation, lest acceptance was construed as support. (This was a difficult decision as current NABO policy is to talk things through wherever possible.)

- Subsequently to this it appears that the IWA Navigation Committee met and also briefed its representative to oppose the principle of letting moorings to the highest bidder.
- Because the Moorings Contracts Workshop's terms of reference stated that any proposals made in said forum would be put to public consultation before implementation, NABO wrote to the chairman of the BW Board to complain that said conditions were being flouted and no public consultation was to take place before implementation of the 'trial'. This complaint has been passed down and is now subject to BW's Internal Complaints Procedure and we await a response.
- Since then BW has abandoned the open auction in which bidders can track the highest bid (like eBay) and now refers to the process as 'Tender', with all offers sealed until the day of reckoning. Those looking for a mooring can register online or by post, the latter attracting a £10 handling fee. Those on existing waiting lists have been informed individually by post and the procedure publicised.
- At the Crick Show, NABO was informed by BW that it should not use the word 'Auction' and that to do so was tantamount to scare-mongering. NABO's display was duly amended. The fact that NABO was unaware of the change of emphasis was put down to NABO's refusal to be involved.

The arguments rest on what is a 'trial' (The US exploded its trial atom bomb on a Pacific atoll where it couldn't hurt anybody!) and what is 'consultation' (BW is obliged under the 1995 Act to consult its customers and they should be confident that their views are taken into account).

Details of the trial can be found on www.waterscape.com/bwmooringtenders

Those who feel strongly can visit <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/moorings/>

YOU SAY



"It took me two hours to fill up with water."

"You turn the lever one way, and the water comes out the other side!"

STANDEGE TUNNEL

It seems that the time has come for the regular inspection of tunnels, which this time, will also include the operational aspect of the Standedge Tunnel. The business of providing escorted, propelled passages through it is an expensive one, needing up to ten personnel per trip. Sometimes, a passage has to be made with no boats as there are bookings in the other direction. Initially, passages were available on seven days per week from April until October, but this has since been reduced to five, then three, now two days per week.

The operational procedures have been agreed between BW, the Marine and Coastguard Agency (MCA), the emergency services and tunnel rescue teams, and British Rail. Tugs and pods have to be licensed and inspected annually by the MCA: BW check them daily. Records have to be kept, which are audited annually. The tugs are lifted out twice in five years for a full inspection. Seasonally hired staff undergo training. They have to be MCA licensed, have medicals, trained in first aid, guiding, fire-fighting, tunnel guidance, and shadowing. Two emergency evacuation drills have been simulated, one a train derailment, the other a roof fall, and the possibilities of sabotage and terrorism have been looked into. Passages through the tunnel are timed, and if a convoy takes too long, then the emergency procedures are triggered.

The numbers of boats using this route are steadily increasing - 2006 saw an increase of 100 from 2005, although there were also 33 cancellations or no shows. (I hope none were NABO members! Be warned, records are being kept!) Laurence Morgan, the Yorkshire general manager, has promised me that if there should be greater demand, extra passages will be laid on, so please tell Howard Anguish if you find you have to wait for over a week before a slot is available.

And speaking of Howard, he has kindly agreed to take over from me as Yorkshire Secretary, I wish him well, and I hope he will enjoy the role as much as I have. Feel free to contact him if you have any concerns or worries.

Carole Sampson

CRICK SHOW

A big 'thank you' to all you who helped with the NABO stand at Crick this year:

- to Simon Robbins for transporting the gear especially as he had to come from London to do it,
- to John Russell who helped set up the stand and man it,
- to Richard Carpenter, Dean Hawkey, David Schweizer (and his good lady), Mike Smith and 'even' your chairman Stuart for helping to man the stand, and closer to home, Shady Johns for helping me man the stand and pack up at the end of the show.

Maybe because of the poor weather the stand was visited by mainly serious boaters and would-be boaters, not only to buy and join but also to talk about their problems and worries and BW's latest policies (sometimes a cause of these). It was good to see all who visited us. Life would have been dull without you!

Happy boating!

Aileen

SHARED OWNERSHIPS - What's that all about?

Howard Anguish explains

For those of us who are growing long in the tooth in the boating scene, we have recently seen an upsurge in a new breed of boat owners. This new breed are boaters who, for whatever reason, have decided to share their boating experience with a group of like-minded owners, rather than take the plunge and buy a boat outright. I refer, of course, to Shared Boat Owners; a term which is now bandied about by boating enthusiasts without sometimes understanding what is entailed in this new but rapidly growing aspect of the waterway scene.

One thing I think needs saying right at the outset is that shared ownership is **NOT TIMESHARE!** Timeshare is a totally different concept where there is no element of "ownership" involved in a boat; rather a holiday experience is purchased for a period of one or two weeks each year and that is the end of the matter. The boat or flat in Marbella etc remains in the ownership of a company which also manages the whole holiday experience.

Shared Ownership, however, is as it describes, total ownership of a specific boat shared between a small syndicate of boating enthusiasts, who together have exclusive right to use the boat, and who make all decisions about how the boat is maintained and where it is based – in fact every aspect of running and maintaining it. I should say right away that there are a number of variations within this broad concept of the many shared ownership schemes. I am an owner of a couple of shares in one of them – Ownerships- which I think I am right in saying is far and away the largest scheme in this country and its founder – Allen Matthews – can rightly be described as one of the pioneers in this field. My wife and I have been enthusiastic owners in this scheme since 1999, starting off with a share in a boat launched in 1999 - "Somnia" - and now owning two shares in a newer boat – "Rufford" launched in 2005. The following is very much slanted to our own experience and I'm sure owners in other schemes will spot the differences – other shared ownerships schemes are available!



Somnia

Why would anybody want to share a boat rather than own it outright? Well, there are as many reasons as owners but I think our experience is typical of many shared owners. Firstly, many have been hiring boats for many years so already have a love and knowledge of the canals and rivers. In our case we had decided many years ago that because of work constraints we couldn't justify buying a boat outright, knowing that we wouldn't be able to use it for more than a couple of weeks in the year. Our long term plan was that when we approached retirement we would buy a boat and set off into the wide blue yonder. Some 8 or 9 years before retiring we investigated various possibilities and concluded that to buy a share would be an economical alternative to hiring until that magic day when we would be ready to buy our own and set off down the cut. This proved to be accurate and we found the savings as opposed to hiring were significant. As the time to retire approached we gradually changed our opinion and eventually decided that although we could buy a boat of our own, we preferred to buy another share in our boat when it became available and this allowed us to use the capital sum saved for other things. This has worked out very well and our two shares in Rufford gives us 6-8 weeks boating time each year.

Of course, this type of boating doesn't suit everyone so what are the pros and cons of shared ownership? We are all aware that like many things in life, anything to do with boating frequently involves an element of compromise. Ideally, we would like a Rolls Royce of a boat, with all our personal fads and fancies taken into account, and of course this boat should be cheap. In reality, of course, we have to sacrifice some things in order to achieve others. In shared ownership you have the opportunity to own a piece of a high specification, quality built boat, well equipped with fittings and gadgets that you might otherwise not be able to consider, and at a price that is within the reach of most people. The numbers of owners in a particular boat can vary from scheme to scheme but I think it is safe to say that the norm is 12 shares per boat. So, taking current prices for building a high specification 57ft 4-6 berth boat at around £100,000, each twelfth share costs around £8,500. Additionally, the cost of any repair, addition or modification to the boat is also divided by 12, making it much easier to indulge in upgrading and titivation! It is also worth pointing out that a share is yours for life until you wish to sell, and over the last 10 years or so, shares have held their prices very well.

On one level, joining such a scheme is like joining a club where one can find people with a common interest, although this aspect is relatively low key and joining in or not is very much a personal thing. There are a couple of web sites where those who wish may exchange views and ask for guidance, knowing that they are speaking to like minded people. In the early days when this method of boat owning was less common, it was common to meet up with fellow owners for occasional social events although as the schemes have grown, inevitably these get togethers have become less common, although in Ownerships we do have an

annual boat show at Braunston, always held over the first weekend in February which is very popular and which acts both as an introduction to shared ownership for potential new owners, but also as a get together for existing members.

Our main meetings, however, are held in the autumn when individual syndicates get together in a centrally located hotel where all aspects of the running of the boat are discussed, instructions given to the management company with regard to what maintenance and renovation work should be carried out over the winter, and most importantly where the boat will be located for the following year. All arrangements to carry out these decisions are made by Ownerships who are able to do the best deal possible with regard to costs, because of the number of boats in the scheme (in excess of 100 in 2007). The payment for this work is taken from a fund to which all owners contribute each year. This fund is rather unfortunately called the sinking fund!

Another important task carried out on our behalf is the administration of the booking scheme when arranging holidays. Unlike hire boats, our craft are in use throughout the year, and as can be imagined, individual holiday requirements differ widely. Over the years a booking system has been devised which entails fairness and which allows all owners to take their turn in having priority of choice which varies from year to year. The system works very well but is quite complicated to describe in a few words!

So, to sum up this brief description of shared ownership, it certainly doesn't suit everyone, but for those who don't wish to commit to boating at the exclusion of other interests and hobbies, and as a "half way house" between hiring and owning, it is hard to beat.

Howard



Rufford, our present boat

YOU SAY



"Water taps with pressure would be nice."

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



Our frantic rush south to catch the beginning of the tidal window at Bow Locks to reach the Medway hasn't given me too much time to brood on my frustration with BW management. In the end we have made it, but the wind is force 4-5, too much, and so we must wait. At least that gives me a chance to work on this.

BW's latest

Despite the assurances we received after the High/Low Band licensing issue, BW has 'gone and done it again'! At a special meeting with the Marketing Director, we were promised any controversial scheme would be put to us, and other groups, for discussion, **before** raising the hackles of the boating community. That was supposed to put an end to the cycle where: BW announces to the world something they know will be unpopular; NABO leads the opposition and gets accused of BW bashing; BW then backs off a bit and starts meaningful discussions; and in the end a mutually acceptable compromise is reached. I say – again – that if BW were to come to us with an idea at an **early stage** and say, "*We have this new idea that might not go down too well with boaters, how do you think we could make it acceptable to them?*", a great deal of bad feeling and aggravation could be avoided. That is, after all, what NABO is for.

This time I talk of the 'Highest Bidder Moorings Trial'. To give them their due, BW people did mention it to user group nominees at a 'workshop' session, but then they went totally against the majority reaction and hammered on. "*We are in the moorings provision business and have no obligation to*

consult. Private berth providers don't consult so why should we?" – as if to say we should consider ourselves privileged even to be told about it at all before customers get to suffer.

"Yippee!", cheers the boat building business, "*Our customers can buy their way out of waiting lists and get a berth straightaway for their spanking new boat*", or along comes wealthy Mr Executive with whatever boat, who would find it awfully convenient to have a pied-a-terra in New-job-here-ton without first having to join a waiting list and then see retired Mr Bloggs with his modest Springer get the next vacant berth. Whatever happened to *Waterways for All?*

I think this brings up yet again the perennial problem with BW – commercialism. Generally boaters would like to think of the navigation authority as a body which looks after the waterways, to which they are prepared to pay a fixed fee for the privilege of access to its waters, to cover the maintenance. They accept a fixed fee even if they do little cruising, almost as a charitable donation towards the future of the waterways they love. These are the sort of people who turn out en masse to support the SOW campaign. What they then baulk at is the same navigation authority finding every other possible avenue to squeeze more money out of them.

"*Don't blame us, blame the government*", BW says. It wouldn't be deliberately trying to antagonise everyone so it can turn its mooring provision business over to private operators and put the blame on users?

EA too?

Certainly BW isn't the only one who could be blaming the fate of a preposterous proposal on the users. The EA has been trying to find a 'harmonised' charging regime to simplify the 2000 plus licensing bands it has inherited from the previous authorities that ran its various rivers. After numerous 'models' to find something fair, simple and with potential to be linked to BW and other authorities' methods, it ended up with a scheme that had multitudinous discounts (making it nearly as complicated as before), based on area rather than length (and so incompatible with everyone else), and then disadvantaged narrowboats by charging them as though they were all over 8 feet wide!

That seems to have succeeded in alienating everybody. Each region's boating groups thought their members would be subsidising other regions, and the national user groups, who have more narrowboater members, also had good grounds to cry "foul". So, despite a lot of effort wasted by both EA and the consulted groups, the fee 'harmonisation' has ended in total discord and been abandoned. However fate of the rest of the Order, which includes powers to hold registers, insist on insurance and construction safety schemes and more, is still in the hands of DEFRA lawyers. Anything to do with DEFRA these days seems to be bad news – even more so, lawyers!

On a more personal note

I have been having thoughts about my own position and where NABO is going. I think it is only fair to say that I

have been in the chair longer, as far as I know, than any other chairman of NABO. Simultaneously I have also been webmaster, newsletter editor and issuer of bulletins. Understandably people think this is too much, for too long and even that I have become a control freak, or even that my wife is the control freak! Perhaps then it is time to consider quitting at the next AGM.

NABO has to compete with, and deal with, organisations with proper premises, professional internal communications systems and personnel who have something to lose if they don't pull their weight. To keep up, at least one person in NABO has to give it their all and make it their number one priority, even over boating itself. If my attempts at this are now being seen as a dictatorship then it obviously calls for a new hand at the helm.

Thanks

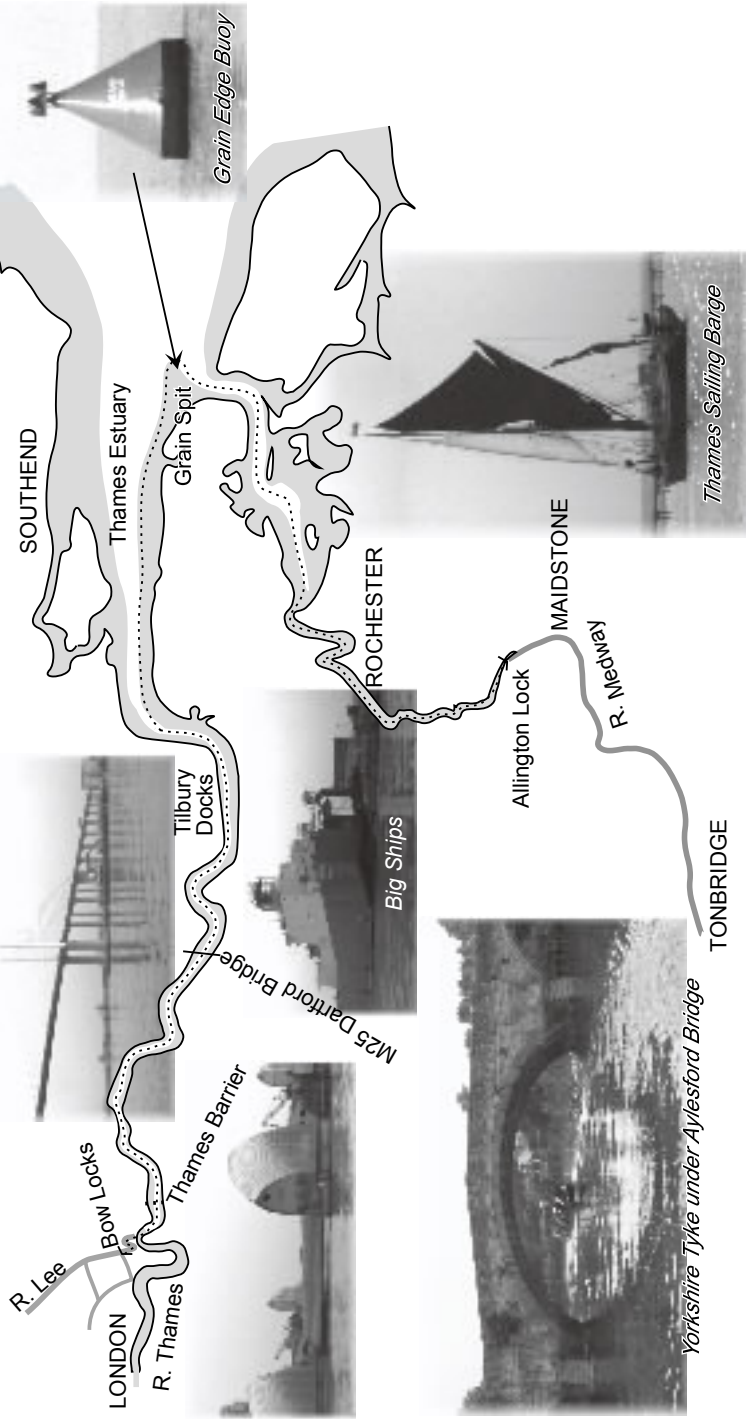
However I am not single-handed and I would like to end by thanking a few people - on behalf of NABO that is, for their recent endeavours. They include Charles Moore, who is helping revamp the NABO website, and all those who, in foul or fair weather, gave NABO a presence at the Crick Show. Simon Robbins stepped into the breach to transport the gear. John Russell picked me up from Whilton and we set it all up on the Friday. Thanks to another lift from John I was there for the first day. We had plenty of enquiries, some of their own volition and some hunted down by Mike Smith and Shadie. Good work by all those who helped.

Stuart

'ROBIE-LAND-JUNKS' TO ROCHESTER

(...and beyond) - in the eyes of one joker on Medway Radio's marine band channel!

The news is that the NABO convoy of four narrowboats and one narrow-beam Dutch Barge reached Allington Lock around 7.30 p.m. on the 9th of June, having waited at Bow Locks for only two days for suitably calm conditions. The only misfortune on the 66 miles of tidal waters being suffered by one narrowboat shipping some of the wake of an antisocial speedboat on the Medway Estuary, resulting in some wet carpet tiles.



After an extremely warm welcome from the EA lockkeeper at Allington Lock, where the boats caused great interest, the flotilla has split up to enjoy 19 miles of the freshwater Medway before it has to assemble half a lunar month (14 days) later to catch the right tides for the return voyage, weather permitting.

Reactions to the trip as a whole should appear in the next issue.

Double page spread, see page 12

ACCOLADE FOR NABO NEWS FROM BW CHAIRMAN

After the second evidence session by British Waterways to the EFRA Subcommittee, Tony Hales, Chairman of the BW Board, went out of his way to talk to NABO's chairman who had been in the public seating to hear the session. Mr Hales wanted to praise Issue 2-07 for explaining so succinctly the problems faced by BW with the maintenance of its assets, and he asked how widely it had been circulated.

He was told that the article in question had been made available to the Select Committee as background reading, but was not acceptable as formal written evidence as it had already been offered for publication in NABO News and Towpath Talk.

There is some hope that it may have reached high enough places to improve the general understanding of the issue by those who found the highly detailed paper from BW too 'opaque'

NABO IMAGE

Council has been looking at NABO's image. The round blue stickers are now considered to be 'old hat', and are being replaced. The introduction of the new style rectangular ones, with a clear background and smart lettering, has been a great success. They are more visible, more easily readable at a greater distance, and the design cannot be confused with the round blue ones of other organisations. They look smart, classy and professional (and block less light!).

So, now the round ones are to be replaced. With this copy of NABO News, you should find two stickers - please replace the old style ones with these. However, you will be exempted if you like old style AA badges, and similarly wish to keep the original NABO ones as a sign of your long-term status within our organisation! Better still, put the new ones up as well!

You may notice that on these, as well as elsewhere, the name of the Association round the 'roundel', has been rotated so the words 'Boat Owners' are at the top and also emphasised, so as to make our purpose clearer and further counter the misconception that we are only for narrowboat owners.

YOU SAY



"I like the ones where you put your key in and it goes round and round and round."

"You could return to Cambrian Wharf after a Mahler concert and still find your tank filling"

ASSORTED PIX



Seen at Fradley Nature Reserve



NABO at Crick



River Ouzel invades GU near Leighton Buzzard after May rain

All ages volunteer for SOW!



Recognise him?



Moored at Barton Turns - Note BW registration plate

FUNCTIONAL TEAMS - BW's new way of working

Your Yorkshire Secretary was enlightened at a recent User Group Meeting:-

“Following the recent sacking of 180 staff, BW has adopted the lean, mean machine approach. Bank staff have been organised into teams of ten to twelve operatives, which may vary in different regions, as follows:

- *construction team - painting, minor repairs*
- *rapid response team - emergencies*
- *customer services - lock-keeping, grass cutting, sanitary station cleaning (!)*
- *dredging and piling*
- *and, in Yorkshire - Standedge tunnel*

Sadly, this presumably means that the lesser spotted lengthsman will have mutated into the even lesser spotted lengthsman, and, rather like buses, BW staff will be found in groups. Hopefully, there'll be enough mowers to go around, and it won't be a case of one working while the others !

..and, what are the rapid response teams doing when they are not rapidly responding?”

Tony Harvey, General Manager West Midlands, extols the virtues:-

- **Productivity up** – experience from our earlier trial on part of the waterway demonstrated a significant increase in the delivery of planned and programmed repairs. Supervisors estimated that under the old maintenance system only around 50% of the tasks completed in the first month or so would have been carried out because of the intervention of reactive and/or unplanned works. Even if this estimate is optimistic, it is clear there is still a significant improvement.
- **Planned work completed/not delayed** – projects are being completed that would have been postponed when reactive works came in. We believe this will help in our relationships with customers.
- **Use of skills improved** – developing skills internally now allows us to carry out work that would have otherwise gone to a contractor. For example, following a storm a large tree fell across the canal, which was dealt with by the new vegetation management team within the scope of their planned works. The supervisor believes that he would not have had the skills in his old team to undertake this work and the job would have gone out to contract at a cost to the business and probable delays for the customers. It also enabled the reactive task to be undertaken quickly, thus minimizing disruption for everyone.

- **Reconciling reactive versus planned customer-facing work** – with the volume of reactive work for the Customer Service diminishing at the shoulder periods of the cruising season, it provides the opportunity to undertake more planned work within the customer service team. This is clearly a bonus in identifying when we can plan works in the future and should also assist budget phasing.
- **Consistency and quality of works improved** – even though it is still relatively early days, the best use of skills within the trial and the improved levels of supervision is bringing an improvement in standards of work and productivity. For example, the construction team has re-fenced three side ponds on the Atherstone flight. Not only is the quality of work there, the supervisor and the team is discerning how long these jobs should take – without the former distractions – which will inform and improve future work programmes. It also helped in managing the team’s productivity and even improving their outputs with no distractions for the team. Completing three in a row should improve their ability to finish safer, sooner and better.
- **Greater Support for business to business (B2B)** – the ability to focus the customer service team at key times or scenarios has clearly improved our ability to manage B2B customers. For example, we have a busy location at Sutton Cheney (Ashby Canal) that has high demands from business customers and the public. The customer service team has been able to manage these demands better than under the previous regime. This builds better relationships with our B2B customers and greater confidence that we will deliver what is needed when it is needed.
- **Local knowledge retained** – it is pleasing to note we have not seen evidence of loss of local knowledge or associated “ownership” of a section. This issue was raised and addressed when we first started to look at the system in 2004 and it is good to see that it is not a major concern today. Although we have retained lock keepers in certain flights so that their knowledge and customer service is not affected, all the teams are clear that the same standards should apply wherever you work and team members have had no major problems with the changes. This is a reflection of the collaborative way we have introduced the system and a tribute to everyone’s efforts.

On actual results, perhaps the most interesting figure is the 266 reactive tasks attended to in April. Dean Davies (West Midlands Customer Operations Manager) has pointed out that we have all been impressed by the number of enquiries we actually received and managed. For the first time we have an accurate number of the calls we are attending to. Whilst a number of the calls result in no action, the majority involve some work and all involve at least some time from the supervisor.

Finally, please note that all the jobs undertaken and completed are 100% compliant with all our procedures and safety requirements.

Dean Davies and all of his team members deserve credit for making this major change so successful.

FLY ON THE WALL



I'm on that wall again ready, as usual to be the private eye on the Council meeting and to bring to you what was said.

There was a nasty rash noticeable in Council - of sick Council members not making it to the meeting, but half a dozen stalwarts were there to discuss issues which could affect you.

They started with BW's new policy of using sealed tenders for moorings. Look elsewhere in the News for why NABO acted as it did on this policy. It was agreed that BW should have consulted before introducing the new policy, and not after the year's trial during which normal mooring arrangements will be suspended.

It was pointed out that the competition, private landowners, published their prices, so surely BW would have to make the price of successful bids known so that other moorers had an idea of prices.

Council was sad to hear that Tony had decided to give up being your News Editor. It seems that due to ill-health he wanted to spend his time boating while he still could. Can you blame him?

Is there anyone out there who could do any part of the job? Even helping with the mechanics/logistics of getting a publication together?

Your chairman represents NABO on BW Advisory Forum and feels the meetings are not as productive as they could be. He is considering, with Council's blessing, taking on a more responsible role in these biannual proceedings.

The Environment Agency could apparently not agree on harmonising its own navigation charges, let alone with BW, so fee harmonisation is now a dead duck. Another policy alive and looking well is the 'no licence, no passage' which has been introduced on the Trent and connecting waterways. Will it spread? Can it not?

Wherever you're boating this summer have fun!

Byeeeee,

Flyeeeeee.

WHAT IS 'THE GREEN BLUE'

It is **not** toxic algae! According to its own literature:

'The Green Blue is an exciting environmental awareness initiative by the British Marine Federation and the Royal Yachting Association.

The Green Blue is for everyone who enjoys getting out on the water, or whose livelihood depends on boats and watersports. By working towards an environmentally sustainable boating community, we can save money, avoid red tape and safeguard the waterways and habitats we enjoy for the future.

Find out more at www.thegreenblue.org.uk'

We mention it here because a NABO representative attended a workshop to help acquaint the organisers, who were more au fait with coastal waters, with the environmental conflicts of inland waterways. They wanted to know what we felt were the main problems and how to adapt their marine code of conduct.

Generally it was felt that regulations dealt with most pollution issues, but some education was needed in terms of rubbish, both in terms of in the water, stuff round propellers etc, and disposing and recycling boaters' waste.

In a nutshell, their inland waterways 'code of conduct' goes:-

Waste

We dispose of waste responsibly
We reduce, reuse, recycle where possible

Staying Clean

We use environmentally friendly products

Navigation

We navigate carefully, keeping wash to a minimum

Oil & Fuel

We don't discharge oil & fuel overboard
We know how to deal with spills

YOU SAY



"There was a new facility at Castleford. Boats were stopping, unrolling their hoses, only to find the thread was the wrong size, so they couldn't attach their hoses to it. Presumably some sort of water conservation ploy."

Member's E-mail

Regarding the Mooring Tender debacle, I noticed somewhere that BW intend to use some 'average' of the bids they get for each site to set the future rate. (They have certainly publicly denied that they will use the winning bid to determine the future rate).

The winning bid on most of the moorings will undoubtedly be high, as will a lot of the losing bids especially on nice, popular sites with waiting lists. However when it comes to using all of the bid data for setting future rates, 'average' can be defined in several different ways (mode, median and mean I understand, but I'm sure there's plenty of other statistical ones I don't understand). I'm sure BW will use the one most to their advantage, and I'm equally sure they will discount all the obvious '99p' etc protest bids etc so not as to skew their average downwards. However I think that if enough people were to bid at the low end of sensible for each mooring, then the 'average' would also end up at the low end of sensible. Wouldn't it be nice if their own trial came up with the conclusion that the current rates are the correct 'market rates', or even too high?

The bloody-minded in me would quite like to see a mass boaters protest against this latest Sally Ash debacle which has been foisted on us despite universal opposition by user groups. I'm not even on a waiting list, but those who are must be absolutely furious. Lets have a campaign to bombard the trial with bids just high enough not to be ignored as frivolous, but not high enough to win.

Ellen Dexter.

Overheard

At a Fradley lock where painting was taking place:

New, young, enthusiastic BW employee - "Shall we finish this lock before we go off to lunch?"

Old hat supervisor - "You can if you like, but you'll lose the time. We're supposed to go to lunch at twelve, so we go to lunch at twelve."

Needless to say, that lock didn't get finished until after lunch.

EA employee:

"My background is horticulture but they won't even let me strim round unless I go on a course. Instead of sending me on one they get in a contractor. I am very frustrated as I can't use my skills "

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