

**INLAND NAVIGATION ISSUES, NEWS, AND VIEWS**

**NABO**



**NEWS**

- **Mooring Tenders - why you should care**
- **First Impressions of Council**
- **The CC debate goes on**



**Issue 5 – August 2008**

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## Editor's Notes

I would much rather be boating!

## Articles

Sorry, a thin issue again, maybe because, as I say, boating is preferable to writing. More articles welcome, especially from non-political folk. Humour, practical tips - need more.

## Photos

Colour isn't needed so you can send it as a greyscale image if it saves you time or hassle .

The subject part of a pictures doesn't need to be any bigger than 1500 pixels wide so you might want to crop or reduce the definition of a shot before you send it.

## 2008 CALENDAR

Council meeting	NN Copy date
6th Sept	13th Sept
22nd Nov AGM	
29th Nov	6th Dec

## LET'S START WITH SOME DEBATE!

### 'Connection' charge for continuous cruisers?

The standard pleasure licence allows a boater to cruise all the year round without any regard to how much advantage they take of this, but there is a groundswell of opinion that continuous cruisers should pay a little more. What may be some sort of justification is BW's loss of money from continuous cruisers as they don't contribute towards marina connection charges, or the equivalent bit of the BW mooring fee that is inherent in pricing according to the 'market'. This 'stealth tax', a tidy sum which BW enjoys with little publicity, is paid indirectly by boaters with moorings and amounts to between 9% and 10% of their mooring fee, so, on a £1600 mooring fee that would be close to £150. Would that be a reasonable level for a continuous cruising surcharge to 'level the playing field'?

One cannot argue that boaters get any specific service for the connection charge that continuous cruisers don't enjoy too, so in the interests of fairness there is an argument for charging those without a permanent mooring the equivalent of a connection charge. However a higher charge, maybe up to half an end-of-garden fee, is more debatable, as the justification for the latter is suspect and revolves around 'reserved waterspace' rental.

**Your views please.**

### Congestion charge for continuous moorers?

Should BW legalise 'bridge hopping' – for a fee? NABO has severe doubts as to whether it could accord with the 1995 BW enabling Act, Section 17(3) [see extract below] as it would have to: either make any public mooring in a specific stretch a legal place to leave a boat in mentioned in (c) (i); or redefine 'navigation' in (c) (ii). NABO insists you can't change the Law just for those who pay.

However, if it could be done legally, would this be a useful source of income to improve the waterways, or will it just exacerbate the problem?

**Your views please.**

*3) Notwithstanding anything in any enactment but subject to subsection (7) below, the Board may refuse a relevant consent in respect of any vessel unless—*

*(a) the applicant for the relevant consent satisfies the Board that the vessel complies with the standards applicable to that vessel;*

*(b) an insurance policy is in force in respect of the vessel and a copy of the policy, or evidence that it exists and is in force, has been produced to the Board; and*

*(c) either— (i) the Board are satisfied that a **mooring or other place where the vessel can reasonably be kept and may lawfully be left** will be available for the vessel, whether on an inland waterway or elsewhere; or*

*(ii) the applicant for the relevant consent satisfies the Board that the vessel to which the application relates will be used bona fide for **navigation** throughout the period for which the consent is valid without remaining continuously in any one place for more than 14 days or such longer period as is reasonable in the circumstances.*

## **Never mind the length, feel the width**

Why should narrow and wide beam boats of the same length be paying the same licence fee? If size matters why shouldn't it apply to width as well? Could there be a flat rate surcharge of, say, £50 for wide beam boats?

Unfortunately BW is poorly equipped to 'model' the potential income from wide beam supplements in any detail as it does not have reliable beam information for all boats. Although there is a box for 'beam' on the licence form, licences have not been refused to those who have left it blank, so statistics are unreliable.

**Your views please**

## **Simplify the Discounts?**

BW gives the impression of being unable to handle its discount scheme and wants to simplify it.

Rivers Only registrations, Electric and Historic Boat allowances and limited area discounts are all debatable. Should Historic boats get a grant rather than a discount? Should other boats that enhance the waterway scene get grants too? Should '*reduced fossil fuel footprint*' boats that use renewal energy (wind, sun, logs etc.) get an 'environmentally friendly' discount along with electric boats?

Luckily Prompt Payment and Late Payment adjustments seem to have your seal of approval from the last consultation. For the record there is a month's grace before the Late Payment charge would be invoked.

**Your views please**

## **POUNDS FOR POINTS?**

Loyalty and OAP discounts promoted in the last consultation are either too easily abused or difficult to verify in the absence of archive records. Instead, as a possible recognition of the contributions of waterway stalwarts, User Groups have been invited to make suggestions for 'volunteer points' to offset licence fees. Who should deserve them and for doing what?

**Keep your comments coming in**

I think the following verse, which I read a couple of years ago on one of the waterway web sites, will strike a chord with many members!

‘I love a little narrowboat, I love the old canal,  
Imagining the tales these ancient waterways could tell,  
I love to work the locks, with oaken gates so firm and strong,  
With know-all's up above to tell you what you're doing wrong!

*Howard Anguish*

# MOORINGS TENDERING CONSULTATION

## **- and why YOU should get involved**

OK, you've got a mooring, either in a privately owned marina or with BW on-line. You've no plans to move, so you think the fuss over tendering for moorings doesn't concern you. Read on.

BW has been told by government that it must charge market rates for its products and services. Also, private mooring operators have long complained of unfair competition when BW has appeared to undercut the prices they have to charge to gain a return on their not inconsiderable investment. BW's problem has been to find a way of measuring the market rate. Hence the reason for a tendering trial.

NABO does not believe that this method achieves the desired result. It shows what the most well off or the most desperate are prepared to pay. It is elitist and divisive. Market rate can only be truly measured when supply and demand are equal. In this case, it isn't.

BW has adopted a policy of reducing permanent on-line moorings. Whenever a new marina opens, BW will reduce its on-line moorings by one berth for every ten in the marina. In effect therefore, BW is reducing the mooring supply, which is manipulating the market and market fixing. This, then, will ultimately have a direct influence on what private operators will charge.

A mooring won by tender will have a fixed contract for three years with price rises pegged to inflation. We have not been told what will happen on 1st November, nor what will happen to the fees of other moorers at the same site. Your Council tries not to second-guess BW, but we suspect the other moorers will be faced with increases over the next three-year period so that by the end of three years, they will be paying the same as the person who won the tender.

User groups and individuals are being asked to comment by 20th August, even though the trial does not finish until the end of October. You are urged to look at the consultation document on:-

[www.britishwaterways.co.uk/accountability/consultations/present\\_consultations.html](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/accountability/consultations/present_consultations.html)  
or by requesting a copy from Watford. The document is very readable, but can be considered to be misleading. The vacant moorings which received no bids were withdrawn, and do not feature in the statistics given. Furthermore, the 'results' (only partway through the trial) are based on an average of 2.8 bids per vacancy.

Of the five options suggested by BW as ways forward, your Council is opting for a waiting list scheme. It believes that boaters want a system which is transparent and fair, and, if organised and run properly and efficiently, it feels this would meet those criteria. Council does not feel that such a system has been properly tried before, and will be outlining to BW how this could be done effectively. It is felt that BW can now set mooring fees as a result of information gained from tendering, so there is no longer any need to continue tendering.

Your Councillors urge you not to underestimate the importance of this issue. Having read the arguments, please respond as you see fit, and Council would be pleased to know which option you have preferred.

*Carole Sampson*

## FUNCTIONAL TEAMS

### *Do they work? One member thinks not*

Having just returned from our spring troll round the waterways from Llangollen down to Oxford, over to Tewkesbury and back I have just received and have been reading NABO news.

In the mag, page 19 June 08, you report on a visit from the West Midland Manager and how you were impressed by the quality of care his unit offers. As we too travelled the Oxford, complete with its North Oxford 14 day moorings staffed by permanent 'fers', and with both North and South Oxford canals sporting their 'thou shalt not moor' vegetation, we know the problems there. However - even with that lot and the Grand Union from Napton to Birmingham - which is turning into a one boat width canal in many places (including opposite moorings) we still would give our award for the worst Unit for neglect and sheer determination to turn their whole canal area in to a linear pond with weeds along the edges - especially on the towpath side - while neglecting their duty to boaters and others - to the Fazeley mob under Mr Harvey.

Had you turned up the Birmingham & Fazeley, gone up to Curdworth bottom, wined and returned you would have seen the latest manifestation of this. Lots of people do this side trip to moor for the night as there are nice moorings and lots of metal to moor on. But BW Fazeley obviously feel metal 'ain't eco' so last winter they spent maybe £100,000 (?) buying that coir stuff and attaching it to the metal on the towpath side. This (Fazeley) lot did a similar job down on the Stratford canal where, over a number of years, they have achieved solid coverage of weeds on the towpath side for miles with only minimum mooring cuts at locks, so we wait for the next load of weeds on the B&F and so on until the metal is covered and another nice country mooring is lost.

Fazeley love their weeds - they own the Worcester & Birmingham and the Staffs & Worcester! I know you have commented on the W&B and we get the impression they want a similar effect on the S&W and are some way to achieving it. Only a year or so back, on the south S&W, a system of realigning (and often narrowing) this canal on the offside, using soft edging then dredging and dumping behind it, was carried out. Coming up the canal this year we noticed a lot of plants, bushes and willows (which seem to be planted along the edge) were growing nicely and already narrowing the canal. Not only that - the dredged part, now narrower than before and with roots pushing out of the soft edging to hold the silt, was already shallow - about at the same level as before the dredging. We actually met a fisherman who blamed us boaters for the edging which, he said, had ruined the fishing as it lacked all the holes and hollows that fish like. I suggested he complain to BW but not to hold his breath as they did as they fancied without asking anyone. And, more good news for us and the fisherman - I met a man at Compton who was out site-checking under a new contract for 'temporary soft edging' near there!

On the subject of writing to Fazeley with suggestions, more than one person has said they tried it without response or (rarely) with a 'we know best' answer. As I am a bloke who gives a dog more than one chance, while I have suffered both

these things, I did send them a letter about lack of sanitary facilities along their canals in some places where people might spend a few days and need to empty their elsans. In it I specifically mentioned, with reasons, that new free WRS facilities at Compton (S&W) and Rugeley (T&M) would plug a couple of holes in their system. Amazingly I got a response. This somewhat smug document (signed by Mr Harvey) informed me that these and other gaps were serviced by private operators who, Mr Harvey appreciates, '*will only do this if it covers their costs*'. So here we have BW telling us that they won't provide adequate facilities (which I believe we do pay for in our licence) and as they don't - hard luck mate - pay someone else to provide them.

As to using their staff - Fazeley's uses fascinate us. On the B&F near base we have seen staff litter picking for example. The method is unique for its stupidity. The man in gloves and with picker drags a large plastic bag with collar along. For each bit of litter he opens the collar, drops it in, closes the collar then drags the bag on. Of course, being plastic the dragging makes holes in the bottom of the bag so some litter was already escaping. Back at the BW depot (just beyond HQ) we had noticed unused wheelbarrows so one might think it is not beyond the wit of BW to wheel the bag in one of the barrows.

Back at headquarters one BW man was trimming the hedges. We had to climb round him as we wanted to empty the elsan and had pulled in the back end of the boat on a corner to do the job, for the mooring (which we have suggested to Tony Harvey be made rubbish and elsan only, as there are other waterpoints nearby - but he says no as the convenience of boats only having to stop once for WRS rather than twice is important to him - and anyway the point is normally empty!) had two boats double moored for water in the space provided.

[Editor's note - we had to work round a training boat there, seemingly all having breakfast, when we wanted to use it, the downside of having all office staff given RYA helmsmen's certificates I assume]

Meanwhile, up at Fradley there were 3 or 4 BW men cutting the grass round the shop and in the car park. One - racing along the towpath on his non cutting cutter past 6 foot weeds - nearly took the wife out given the cut width.

Then there are the men who tick structures. One was ticking a lock, but when we suggested he checked it worked by working it, he said that was not the idea at all. He also explained that although there did not seem to be any bollards to tie to below the lock, they did in fact exist as they had been delivered to the local lock man a year back and were stored in his shed, so they got a tick too.

That tick bit was on the W&B last year, but back on the S&W this year, a lot of tree branches had blown down. One was half blocking the lock mooring below Stewponey when we arrived there at lunch time the next day, so we waited for the BW bod to get off his phone - he being in the depot by the lock - and report it. Stewponey has more equipment and trucks than Thunderbirds - they must spend a lot of time cleaning them and lining them up to look pretty. They even have a work boat. What they don't seem to have is the will to move any of this along the canal and get out trees, for example, so the man told us he knew and it would be dealt with later.

How much later later is might be interesting given the complete tree that, we found and were later told, fell down and is now jammed floating in the Stratford on Avon canal. It has been there for weeks we were told and it was reported on the day it fell but no sign of BW yet. Meanwhile boaters have forced a passage through BW's beautiful soft edging round it. Which brings me neatly back to where I started!

*David H.S. Cragg*

P.S. Having slated Fazeley as a unit, they don't get our award for the worst maintained and looked after canal we know of. This goes - by a country mile - to THE LLANGOLLEN - where lock walls are left to collapse, lock islands subside, bridges get repaired over a number of years or are left with telegraph poles chained under their arches narrowing the channel to protect from more damage. (One has now been covered in plastic?) As for the miles of Defra rash on display, some bits are so old that the tape is disintegrating in the sun. (This canal even has Yellow rash in places!) Meanwhile the metal lock mooring edging is being smashed to pieces yet it just sprouts more rash... and so on and so on.

## A LITTLE CHALLENGE

### ***How much do you know about your waterway heritage?***

Through the ages, boating, like many other pursuits, has generated its own unique and sometimes obscure terminology. Some of these words have remained in common usage up to the present day, while others have faded away with the demise of the old working boatmen and women. It would be a great shame if these echoes of a heritage, now a dim memory for most people, is lost and so here is a small quiz to while away a few minutes to see how many of the terms you recognise. There are no prizes – it's just for fun. Try to answer as many as you can before looking up the answer – try not to Google - (and no, to 'Google' is not a waterway term!)

Bore or Aegir	Chalico	Clough, Clew, or Jack Clough)
Freshet	Gongoozler	Gauging
Horse Marine	Invert	Jebus
Keb	Loodel	Pen
Quoin	Rimers	Slat or Slacker
Staith (or Staithe)	Stank	Steering Pole
Strap	Tom Pudding	Tying Point
Wherry	Windlass (1)	Windlass (2)
Wings	Winning Place (or winning Hole)	Working Turns

(Answers on page 18)

*Howard Anguish*



# FIRST REACTIONS TO A NABO COUNCIL MEETING

## *David Fletcher's views*

I had expressed an interest at the last AGM in helping with some of the NABO workload. I was invited to attend a Council Meeting; apparently all members are allowed to do this.

So off I went for a day out, just on the serious business of boats on water. The event was held in a street corner pub in West Birmingham, a slightly Dickensian setting, an upstairs room via the back stairs. I am assured the lunch is good. The seats are hard though.

The meeting gathered, about ten there, and I find that I am not the only newcomer, others are dipping their toes in the water too. A nice warm welcome for all and we launch off into a long day of business, part about the operation and way forward for NABO, and part about the challenges working with BW, EA and the waterways stake holders. General Secretary supplies chocolate biscuits.

This is all good stuff. Lots of debate around the table, all input listened too and welcomed, no bossy chair ruling the roost, and very high quality debate. Quite some history here. I recall, "We tried that in Two thousand and something and it didn't work then. Can we think of a new approach?" And best of all, no "Power Point" presentations!

For the organisational matters, this is passionate material. Just where is the organisation going? How can we support members? Do they know what is being done? Can we attract more? I get an appreciation that NABO, though not a large group, has the benefit of short lines of communication, and can and does influence – nationally.

As for the main business of interaction with BW, EA, IWA et al, this is serious and very real to boating. Just what is NABO's policy to be about this matter or that matter? Are we ready to decide or is there more work to do? How should we react to the latest consultation on mooring tenders? Chairman is going to a meeting next week on licensing, what will he say?

And I got a real sense of significance. The issues covered were all the current ones. I had input on a few, and it was listened to, I was silent on others and learnt a good deal. It was clear to me there is a chance to represent the boat owners in difficult times and influence the way things are going.

So we finished at four o'clock – a long session, and no wasted time. A useful day, and good company. I will be back again. I could get addicted.

## GHUMSTON AND SLAWIT?

### *Two more names not said as they are spelt*

#### **Cogenhoe**

is pronounced "Cook-no". It is the spelling that has changed from a name that originally derived from a high vantage point'.

#### **Nene**

Pronounced 'Nenn' or 'Neen' according to where you are.

# CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



This time last year we were stuck on the Thames due to flooding and our Council meeting had to be abandoned, as even the roads and railways were inundated. This year finds us on EA waters again, this time the Great Ouse where conditions are definitely less traumatic and, with the help of Harvey and Ellen Schorr, NABO members from the US of A who dog-minded for us, and David Fletcher of Hackington, who very kindly gave us a lift to Oldbury, we managed to attend a worthwhile meeting this July.

I must say the EA's Anglian Waters have improved since we last came, with more moorings, more electrification and expanded locks. Boaters are paying for this with far higher visitor permits than on the Thames, but at least EA is honest about it.

We moored on an EA mooring just a few hundred yards from the 'Five Miles Away From Anywhere' pub and despite the total lack of road access, the grass was cut!

There is even promise of a certain guidebook for the area so it's even more worth a future visit! (For those in the know and panicking because a certain website was down for too long, don't!)

I suppose being on Fenland waters this year leads me neatly into the next theme:-

## **Being somewhere else**

To my mind this is the essence of boating, however it is a privilege shared by most of life on Earth except plants and prisoners. For boaters, not only they, but their whole domicile, can be somewhere else on a daily, or even hourly, basis, and that is to me the main attraction. With the right sort of boat in this country, that *somewhere else* can be anywhere from Tonbridge to Tewitfield.

This freedom really lies at the root of all the issues that concern us. Have we the motive energy required for our



**Nicely maintained public moorings on the Great Ouse**

boat to be somewhere else? Can we afford it? Will the navigation be open so we can be somewhere else? Will there be any chance of tying up at our chosen somewhere else? Will it be an acceptable somewhere else to be? On the other hand if we don't want to be somewhere else, is that possible?

Everyone is different and somehow we have to accommodate as many different interpretations of the desire to be somewhere else as we can. The difference between 'continuous cruisers' and 'continuous moorers' is a prime example. Legally 'bridge hopping' is a no-go, but even BWAf have recognised the desire of some people to reject the restrictions of a fixed berth mooring even though they are still tied to a place of work or school for their offspring. Why? Because they want to be somewhere else. I know of people with marina moorings who 'bridge hop' in the locality just to be somewhere else. What a waste of mooring resources is that?

However I can sympathise. What is the point of living in something sharp at one end with an engine at the other that floats on water unless you want it to be somewhere else on occasions?

I have used the phrase 'Being somewhere else' rather than 'cruising' as the process of navigating can be the means to that end or an end in itself, but to me it is only part of the way of life I enjoy. In the last year or so I feel boaters have had more issues with mooring than navigation and the adage I have to keep on repeating: '*every night, every boat needs somewhere to tie up*', remains ever poignant.

Space to tie up, whether it is reserved, how much it costs, whether it is wasted etc exercises more minds than I care to mention. The words '*Moorings Matters*' after Simon Robbins's name

on the back page of this magazine is far from a casual role title because we couldn't think of anything else for him to do, he probably fields more comments from members than the rest of us put together and his experience in housing associations and local government is worth every penny he doesn't get paid. His skills are essential to help us advise the authorities how to match people to accommodation for their boats.

### **Next Year's Council**

That brings me on to the nomination form in this magazine. As you know Carole and I are not standing as officers next year, even though we might stay in the background to ease new people in. Elsewhere in this issue you will be reading pleas to volunteer – again, and I will just ask you to consider what you can do. It really isn't any more onerous than you want it to be. If you like to thrash out your boating concerns over a pint and get things off your chest, why not do it in the Waggon and Horses with people of like mind who are in a position to do something? Soon you will find you can do something yourself.

NABO Council is not a collection of stuffed shirts who revel in their self importance. You wouldn't know there was a Cunard Captain amongst them. They are just people with a knowledge of inland boating, and a wealth of other life experience, plus a sense of humour, trying to give the waterway community something back. I have found working with them satisfying, pleasurable and fun, and so might you if you joined them.

*Stuart*

## A POINT TO PONDER

Caution - opinions expressed here will remain anonymous, are independent of NABO official policy, and statements herein have not been verified as true fact.

### BW RULES OK

Unlike the EA and other public authorities, BW cannot get you arrested and start criminal proceedings for contravening its regulations, unless you assault its staff, steal or damage its property or commit other offences under common law. However if you are a boat owner, don't underestimate BW's powers to inconvenience you, as it can easily put a stop to your being a boat owner by confiscating your boat.

Under its 1983 Act Section 8, BW has the power to remove a boat from its waterways that does not have its consent to be there. '*Consent*' is the legal term for having a licence or river registration, so by refusing this consent, BW can inflict a penalty which can be just as serious to you as any fine, or perhaps more severe punishment.

The much quoted 1995 Act sets out the limitations of BW's powers to withdraw consent. If you have valid insurance, and an approved safety certificate, and abide by one or other of the two mooring conditions, BW cannot withdraw consent. This Act doesn't mention payment which is covered by previous legislation.

However the Act **does not force** BW to withdraw consent if these conditions are **not** met. BW can still legally licence a boat that is breaking the rules, however to do so weakens its case against anybody else that does break them.

The mooring behaviour conditions are contentious as they include the words '*satisfy the Board that...*'. This gives BW the ability to be satisfied with any level of compliance and opens up

plenty of scope for favouritism and victimisation.

The crunch comes if BW's withdrawal of consent is challenged in the Courts. If BW is using the conditions of the 1995 Act to justify its actions, then the wording needs to be interpreted correctly. In the case of the 2003 'Moorings Code', BW attempted to clamp down on Continuous 'Cruisers' by making people believe that the 1995 Act specified how far they needed to cruise to comply. The Act does not specify this and so the Code was deemed by legal Counsel to be '*ultra vires*', i.e. outside the Law.

However the wording of the Act leaves itself open to other opportunities for misinterpretation and will provide a living for lawyers for years to come. What is deemed to be satisfactory as '*a mooring or other place where the vessel can reasonably be kept and may lawfully be left*' is one. Does a winter mooring count? The word '*place*,' where one mustn't stay for more than 14 days, is another. Perhaps a winter mooring is a place where one can stay a '*longer period as is reasonable in the circumstances*', as if you have one you are certainly not using your vessel '*bona fide for navigation throughout the period for which the consent is valid*' if that consent is by way of a full 12 month licence.

What BW must not do is assume those living on boats on the edge of 'legality' are dumb ignorant drop-outs. There are plenty they wouldn't recognise in a suit and tie who can give their legal department a right run for their money!

## TALE NOT FROM THE RIVERBANK

### *Harmony on the river?*

It promises to be a fine weekend and four families are lugging their charcoal, burgers and generator petrol down to their cruisers for a weekend on the river together. With dinghies, fishing tackle and kids suitably stowed, they set off in convoy for their favourite set of visitor moorings where they hope the children will be free to play, fish or potter about on the river while the adults prepare to barbecue and sink a tinny or two.

As they round the last bend they discover that access to their chosen mooring is blocked by an impenetrable barrier of dark painted steel and there is no way they can gain access to the riverbank. Three narrowboats are moored there nose to tail, sheeted fore and aft with not even a grab rail to attach a mooring line to, and the occupants are either off to work or shopping in the nearby town. The party would only need the length of one of them to raft up the whole flotilla and maybe up to a dozen people could enjoy a weekend out.

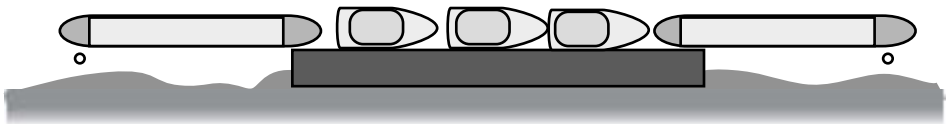
Imagine the frustration and you can understand why narrowboat/cruiser conflict is rife. Is there a solution?

The Great Ouse has one, Great Ouse Boating Association moorings, and some other rivers like the Medway have cruising club 'away' moorings. V-bottomed cruisers can take advantage of moorings which are shallower at the edge and the bank is less straight. GOBA have managed to obtain land for their members' use and have a membership system that is not conducive to visiting craft, so there is somewhere for the more gregarious week-ending cruisers. This should relieve the pressure on visiting narrowboats who can use the EA or local council moorings.

Unfortunately there is a third category of boat, namely the 'Live-aboard', and even advertised as such on the Cam. This covers a range of straight-sided steel vessels that present the same sort of problems as the 'bridge hoppers' on the canals. Some have no mooring, some have, but prefer not to use them, oscillating between EA's 48 hour moorings but travelling little. These fuel the conflict.

There is a potential physical solution. If you go back to basics and think what a boat actually needs from a mooring, in most cases it is just two attachment points to the bank, and barely a metre of access is essential to disembark. Lying alongside the rest of the prepared edge of a mooring is only needed for those occasions when one needs to clean or attend to one's boat, so on rivers, when most of the bank is in private ownership and prepared edge is at a premium, much of the mooring is wasted when a long craft lays alongside.

Most narrowboats only need access at one end, so if a fendered post with a ring or cleat was provided beyond each end of a mooring, or even a lock landing, and the length suitably dredged, new mooring spaces could be provided for very little cost. The occupants could enjoy views of the natural riverbank on both sides and a greater privacy, yet still able to disembark at the end of the mooring 'proper'.



## EFRA COMMITTEE - BW FOLLOW-UP

British Waterways should not be expected to bear most of the financial risk for the restoration of canals, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee concludes.

It says that canal restoration can produce knock-on benefits such as more jobs and visitor income. But the risks have to be spread more widely among the public sector instead of just BW, which often gets little immediate direct benefit from such work.

The Government needs to develop a mechanism to score and prioritise public investment in canal restoration according to the external benefits created, and decide how the financial risks of such projects should be borne.

The inquiry was prompted by BW's decision in February to withdraw from the partnership to restore the Cotswold Canals because of the financial risk involved.

The Committee also followed up some of the issues raised in its report on BW last year. It welcomes the clear improvement since then in relations between BW and its sponsoring Department, and the greater clarity about Defra's priorities for the canal network and BW's autonomy to manage itself.

It concluded that the grant settlement from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) up to 2011 is acceptable, but that Defra and BW need to decide how to keep the canal network in good condition when BW's property income is likely to fall.

"We are very pleased that the Department and British Waterways have clarified their roles and mended their relationship. This has allowed BW to receive a grant settlement that was as good as it could have expected in the circumstances," said the Chairman of the Committee, the Rt Hon Michael Jack MP.

"But British Waterways is still having to bear most of the risk of restoration schemes which are of greater short term benefit to others than to itself. At the same time the Government is asking BW to concentrate on maintaining its existing network. If the public sector wants to obtain the benefits of canal restoration work, it needs to share the risk among the public bodies whose purposes the restoration serves. Government also needs to prioritise the schemes according to the public benefits they provide."

On the Cotswold Canals restoration, the Committee concludes BW should have consulted its partners about its withdrawal earlier, so that they could have had a chance to see if alternative funding was available. It also believes that BW should not be spending up to £600,000 on consultants to advise on its future structure when it is so obviously short of money.

## CARE FOR TWO MOMENTS OF GLORY A YEAR?

### *- and help the boating cause?*

Imagine the satisfaction of telling their right hand what their left hand is doing. That is something NABO's regional representatives find themselves doing for the navigation authorities at many local meetings. If you are a boater who travels beyond the boundaries of your region, and you keep in touch with the national scene, e.g. through this magazine, you might well be better informed than the local management and other local representatives.

Caution, it may be addictive, but you could let yourself in gently by only going to two meetings a year. All we ask is a report on what could be significant for the national perspective or giving ammunition for others to use at their meetings.

The meetings still available are:-

<b>Waterway</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>
<b>BW East Midlands</b>		
Northern User group	15th Oct	TBC
<b>EA Thames</b>		
WWG Meeting (EA)	3rd March 1000-1400	Kings Meadow, Kings Meadow Rd Reading
<b>BW Scotland</b>		
Lowland Canals	26th Oct 1000	The Park Hotel, Falkirk
<b>BW South East</b>		
Banbury Area User Group	7th Oct	Mill Arts Centre, Banbury
Foxton Area User Group	9th Oct	Foxton Village Hall, Foxton
<b>BW South West</b>		
K & A Canal Meeting	8th Oct	Reading - exact venue TBC
G & S Canal/River Severn	8th Oct	TBC
Bridgewater & Taunton	9th Oct @ 1900	Canal centre Maunsell Banklands Nth Newton Bridgewater
<b>BW Wales &amp; Border Counties</b>		
Yet to be published		
<b>BW West Midlands</b>		
Southern Area	11th Nov.	TBC
Northern Area	13th Nov.	TBC

## BOAT HAVENS - A NEGLECTED MOORING SOLUTION?

### *Ian Fletcher rues BW's apathy*

Despite the creation of many hundreds of additional boat-moorings in both new and extended marinas around the network over the last few years, we are still plagued by many semi-official and unofficial 'encampments' - spoiling the *delight* of the waterways. Many of the 'rule-breakers' would like to abide, but are finding it increasingly difficult (expensive) to do so. These 'have-nots' need help.

All interested parties agree that off-line moorings are preferable to on-line. Such facilities, however, are not cheap to create. The larger the marina the more attractive it becomes for a developer. But large marinas beget large car parking areas and extensive 'service' facilities, and in turn require extensive landscaping and screening. The land-take is high and this all has to be paid for by the moorer. Annual mooring fees well into 'four figures' are required, and increasingly, these can only be met by the more affluent members of society.

Compared with many other pastimes, one of the attractions of boating on our inland waterways has to-date been its classlessness. There is of course a need for 'top-notch' facilities, but there is a need for so much more. There is a parallel requirement for many smaller, more widely scattered, more modest facilities to meet wider social, economic and environmental needs. The idea of simple, low-cost mooring basins or 'boat-havens' should be developed.

A standardised or modular specification for such facilities will also help to reduce both pre-construction and construction costs. The 'package' could be offered to farmers to prevent the spread of off-side linear moorings, as seen on so many canals – such as the 'Shroppie'. These should be for a minimum of, say, six but a maximum of, say, twelve boats moored 'end-on' / perpendicular to the line of the canal. They should also be a certain minimum cruising distance apart. (but obviously this need be nowhere near as far as for larger marinas).

Farmers could dig rectangular basins directly back into the offside bank for a distance of, say, 70-80' / 20-25m. Obviously the topography and geology must be 'right'. Being part of the canal they will increase the volume of the pound, and – by way of incentive - should not incur a connection charge. Being of standardised dimensions, standard kits of piling could be used by BW to 'stank-off' the workings until complete, and then that piling kit could move off to the next site.

The minimum facility should comprise a water tap, a simple open-air/brick plinth type Elsan disposal point (or be no more than about a 10 minute cruise of such BW facilities with adjacent winding hole), parking for 6 -12 cars, a piled or hard edge at the rear, and some screening. In a 'de-luxe' package one or two intermediate pontoons, an extra tap, and a power-point or two could be considered to reduce boat-engine or 'genny' noise/pollution.

Such an idea would only work if BW took a positive/supportive attitude towards it. However, the break-even cost per mooring provided would for sure be considerably less than for a 'fully-fledged' marina, and a more affordable facility would be created for a wider spectrum of boaters – (improving BW's social credentials). In addition it would help a wider range of farmers to diversify, rather than just a fortunate few with land at the right locations.



## QUIZ ANSWERS

### *To questions on page 8*

**Bore or Aegir** - A tidal wave known as a bore on the Severn & Aegir on the Trent. Caused at or near spring flood tides by large volumes of water being confined as the river progressively narrows

**Chalico** – A strange mixture of tar, cow hair & horse dung, heated and used to fill gaps in wooden boats!

**Clough (or Clew) (or Jack Clough)** – another term for a lock paddle, still widely used on the Leeds & Liverpool and elsewhere

**Freshet** – The increase in a river flow due to rain falling upstream

**Gongoozler** – We're all guilty of being one of these, I think! Originally, someone who stands and stares at anything unusual, now used specifically for those who watch you struggling while using a lock

**Gauging** – A method of measuring a cargo boat to determine the toll to be paid by measuring the draught of a boat and by consulting on a table specific to that boat the quantity of cargo could be found

**Horse Marine** – contractors, [particularly on the Yorkshire waterways, who provided horses to tow the sailing barges on the upper reaches of navigations

**Invert** – An inverted arch of brickwork or stonework forming the bottom of a lock or tunnel

**Jebus** – A false bow at the front of a chain of compartment boats (see Tom Pudding) to reduce the resistance of the chain of boats.

**Keb** – a large iron rake used to fish out debris from canals.

**Loodel** – A vertical extension to a barge tiller when loaded with high loads such as hay or straw to assist the steerer.

**Pen** – Another term for a lock still in common use in certain places. Also in phrases such as 'to pen' or 'penning' through a lock.

**Quoin** – the hollow recess in which the heel of a lock gate revolves

**Rimers** – posts on weirs on the upper Thames against which weir paddles are placed, to control the river levels

**Slat or Slacker** – other terms for paddles

**Staih (or Staithe)** – a wharf where cargo (mainly coal) is loaded into boats

**Stank** – A temporary dam to allow work to be carried out to underwater structures

**Steering Pole** – a pole at the bow of the second barge in a train of barges on the Fens to allow the whole train to be steered

**Strap** – a rope used for stopping a boat, using a post on the side of a lock.

**Tom Pudding** – another name for a compartment boat in South Yorkshire which were combined in long ‘trains’ towed by one tug (see Jebus)

**Tying Point** – the shallowest point in a navigation which is the limiting factor in how deep a boat can load to reach anywhere on that navigation

**Wherry** – a wide beam sailing barge found on the Norfolk Broads and nearby rivers

**Windlass (1)** – sometimes called a lock key, or a crank. The handle which is used to operate a lock paddle

**Windlass (2)** – a winch on boats used to control anchors and mooring ropes

**Wings** – boards rigged on each side of a narrow boat used by ‘leggers’ to walk a boat through a tunnel when the tunnel is too wide to reach the walls by lying on the deck

**Winning Place (Winning Hole)** – another name for a ‘winding hole’ which is a widening of the canal to allow a boat to turn round

**Working Turns-** waiting at a lock for a boat coming in the opposite direction to make best use of a limited water supply in dry weather.



Is this a good opportunity to get your boat out of the water?



Modelling swimwear on an EA Lock ladder - WRONG MESSAGE!

### Waste?

I have just read the item by Simon Robbins in Narrowboat World about the EFRA Committee report on BW and also the item by Stuart Sampson in Towpath Telegraph. It does seem that BW are being seen as inefficient with public funds and lacking in communication skills with users and user groups.

The waterway navigation system was created and largely restored by private enterprise and volunteer effort. BW are required to maintain canal navigations and keep it safe for public use. Clearly they have not done this. In fact they have let it deteriorate. BW should be made to stop restoration and concentrate on maintenance of the existing canal navigations. This includes DREDGING, TOWPATHS, LOCK SYSTEMS and VEGETATION. I am not a little concerned about the state of various structures like bridges, tunnels, aqueducts etc.

I am currently travelling on rivers maintained by EA. The difference is startling. There are many well maintained moorings, the majority of lock systems are electrified and facilities like pump outs are free.

NABO committee members are not wasting their time. It is BW that is wasting their time and public money.

*Charles Moore*

### Another leaver

Sadly I will be resigning my membership of NABO. This has nothing to do with my view of NABO; on the contrary I have enjoyed being a member for the last 12 years and

admired what you have done for boat owners. My reasons are partly to do with the increased costs of boating, partly to do with the greatly increased (and still increasing) costs of road transport (I live 240 miles from my mooring) and partly to do with my looking for a change after 12 great years as a narrowboat owner on the English canals and rivers

The changed finances of boating are still a big factor in the decision though. I told Robin Evans at a meeting in Leeds at the back end of last year that I would probably be selling my boat because of the increased charges and here I am, doing exactly as I predicted. Like many retired people I am disadvantaged by the much worsened pension scene; I have to allow myself a wry grin when I hear the moans of public and private sector workers that their pay increases aren't high enough to cope with inflation. My pension is fixed in money terms with no change in sight so it will be the same in ten years as it is now! In other words, in real terms it's going down and as inflation worsens it goes down all the quicker! Most public sector workers have bullet-proof RPI linking of their pensions and don't realise how lucky they are.

Away from the personal, I fear for the future of private canal boating (as I told Robin at that meeting). I'm not as gloomy as "Grumpy Old Man of the River" in June NABO News, but I think the activity will shrink significantly and will change for the worse, becoming much less socially inclusive and essentially the province of the richer end of the middle classes. Let's hope one of them buys my boat!

## **Barton downturns**

I have just received my invoice for quarterly moorings at Barton Turns Marina near Burton-on-Trent and it is for £487.50, an annual equivalent of £1,950.00 – ok, so what is the story? Last year I paid £1,404.00 for the year (paid July 07), this is a massive and totally unjustified 39% increase.

Interestingly the marina has just undergone development work creating a pub, shop units etc – I rather feel the boaters are paying for this.

Add this to the 30% increase in license fees from BW and the increase in duty on red diesel and suddenly I face an increase of circa £1,000 per year.

Needless to say I have written to complain, I will let you know the response, in the meantime it may be worth putting this out to other members.

*Kerry Neath*

## **Across the Channel**

Having just received a load of post I have been catching up with the NABO News, and see that Carole and Stuart are leaving England for the continent - I hope they won't make the mistake of thinking only about France as there is a lot more than that.

We made this move in 2006 - until 2004 we had a yellow and beige narrowboat called Nordic Dream and thoroughly enjoyed our time as continual cruisers on the English waterways but decided to come to mainland Europe while we were still fit enough.

We actually didn't want to bring our narrowboat over so in 2004 we sold it and bought a Broom sea going cruiser,

the 2 years getting it ready to come across were spent in Yorkshire.

As we were on a very strict budget, rather than make our way down south and then across the Channel and possibly get caught in very expensive marinas (we have been told some charge as much as £100 a day) waiting for a weather window, we chose a rather more adventurous route that only needed a 2 day window.

Day 1 was from our base in Goole, down the Humber and then to Great Yarmouth where we knew we could moor for free, then day 2 straight across the North Sea to Ijmuiden in Holland. Like most people our original thought was to make our way down to France but we fell in love both with the Dutch people and their incredible system of waterways and over 2 years later we are still here having made a few forays into Belgium which is also nice.

We have now changed our boat again as we have no wish to go back to England and have bought a Dutch steel cruiser called Liberty.

I do wish both Carole and Stuart the best of luck and hope they will enjoy their boating over here, also hopefully we may meet them again as we did in the past.

Despite having been in Holland for the last two years we are still paying our NABO dues and are always interested to see what's happening over there.

*Pat and David Viner*

Thanks both for the good wishes. If we ever get our house sold and the little ship started it might be built in Gdansk which will expand our horizons well beyond France!

*Stuart*

## They should pay more

I'd like to chuck my two penn'oth in regarding the licence fee for continuous cruisers:

My feeling is that they should pay extra for the following reason, if no other: since they are continuously cruising, they presumably don't have another home apart from the boat, therefore they are not paying any council tax. However, I am sure that they still expect services that are paid for from the council tax, i.e. police action if they experience crime, fire brigade to

attend if their boat should unfortunately catch fire, street lighting in the towns they visit etc.

My suggestion is that all continuous cruisers should pay an additional sum equivalent to council tax. This should be distributed to all the local authorities that provide facilities for boaters. This would have the secondary effect of encouraging local authorities to make more provision for boats.

*Geoff Butcher  
nb Heron*

## LOCK BOTHER ON THE NENE

The swan won't scare them away. Youths at Cogenoe Lock, one on top of the guillotine, another trying to pick the control box lock, the rest waiting for their 'swimming pool' to be filled. Perhaps the bicycle is why you can't escape bother even in rural areas. There is now 24 hour surveillance at Godmanchester where jobs used to spoil a picturesque and delightful setting on the Great Ouse.



## WATCH OUT - DIESEL THIEVES ABOUT

One member reported finding his engine wouldn't start, and after hours of investigation found a recently filled fuel tank totally empty. Secure your fuel cap

NABO News is published by  
National Association of Boat Owners  
FREEPOST (BM8367),  
Birmingham B31 2BR

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