

INLAND NAVIGATION ISSUES, NEWS, AND VIEWS

NABO



NEWS

- **User groups issue joint statement**
- **How safe is your hook-up?**
- **BW Mooring Consultation**



Issue 5 – August 2009

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2009 CALENDAR

Council meeting*	NN Copy date
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5th Sep	10th Oct
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21st Nov	AGM
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28th Nov	5th Dec
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**Members are entitled to go to these meetings.*

Please arrange with Chairman or Gen. Sec.

USER GROUPS ISSUE JOINT POSITION STATEMENT

Several leading inland waterway and boating representative organisations have issued a joint position statement to promote the inland waterways by:

- encouraging a modern, integrated and sustainable approach to the use of inland waterways.
- protecting, conserving and improving inland waterways as a vital part of our national heritage.
- maximising the opportunities that inland waterways offer for leisure, recreation, business enterprise and freight transport.
- securing sustainable funding arrangements.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Joint Statement demands that:-

1. there should be a comprehensive overhaul of inland waterways legislation, to facilitate effective management of the existing inland waterways network.
2. navigation authorities should identify new ways of working and new opportunities to sustain the waterways in order to safeguard the environmental, social and economic value of the waterways for the future.
3. the importance of maintaining the inland waterways network for leisure and recreation, tourism, sport for all, public health, business enterprise and freight transportation should be recognised throughout central Government and devolved administrations.
4. inland waterways should actively be promoted to a wider public by the provision of increased opportunities for leisure and recreation, including waterborne activities and non-boating activities such as walking and cycling.
5. the Government should clarify its expectations of navigation authorities in respect of their many environmental obligations, specifying priorities and timetables, identifying additional costs and how these should be funded.
6. the Government, navigation authorities and other public agencies should make funds available for the restoration of existing derelict, abandoned and unusable waterways where there is a strong business case establishing social, economic or environmental benefits, and the construction where necessary of new waterways, in order to provide public benefits through opportunities for greater public and commercial access and use.
7. in partnership with IWAC and AINA, the Government should use the current review of its June 2000 publication “Waterways for Tomorrow” to produce a policy statement for the sustainable maintenance and development of the inland waterways that contains clear Key Performance Indicators, timescales for delivery and an appropriate funding strategy.

Signatories to the statement include:

IWA, AWCC, NABO, BCU, RYA, BMF, Scottish IWA, DBA, SOW

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



Will there be a good tomorrow for the Waterways?

Just at the moment, our Government is not spending too much time worrying about the future of the waterways. They have other things like wars, budgets and elections to think about. What can we do to raise the profile? I think we are nearing the time for some agitation. There has been a plan in place for the waterways since 2000 called *Waterways for Tomorrow*. It is a good document, and if only we had done all that is in it, then the waterways would be a better place.

The Ministry responsible for the waterways, DEFRA, is arranging a rewrite of this in the course of 2009, and user groups are involved. At a recent users meeting it was concluded that users should make the position statement, you will have seen on on the previous page, about the waterways and the future. IWA used their publishing power to distribute this and you may also have seen it in their HO letter. It is a good statement and NABO is pleased to be associated with it. It covers many areas where we do not campaign, but for me there are two main issues.

Firstly, the call for new legislation. Your Council have long known that the BW Acts are worded vaguely, some say deliberately in an attempt to favour users, in a manner which leaves much open to interpretation. What we now see is that this is encouraging BW to make up the rules as it goes along. Because the barriers to challenge are so high, High Court or Judicial review, case law is not established to challenge this and BW is unchecked. We always have seen in our interactions a

dismissive stance to any challenge as to what they do. NABO does believe in effective controls on the waterways and we do support BW in some of their actions to address the widespread licensing and mooring problems which need strong action. But BW does not make the law and we will be challenging them in these areas. But the real fix is new legislation. But don't get too excited, EA have been working for 14 years on their update. Things go slowly on the waterways, and also in Westminster!

Secondly, the call for funding. The British Waterways Acts place an obligation on them to maintain the waterways in a usable condition. There is no obligation to spend money on opening new or reopening old sections, although many of us do support these activities in other ways. It is the maintenance obligation that worries me, because it is DEFRA grant cuts in the last years that have been the primary funding shortfall. So it is Government's own action that is preventing their own body, BW, fulfilling their legal responsibility. And who is to bring them to order? Clearly BW is not succeeding. They have a cosy agreement with DEFRA that the condition of the waterways is "manageable for a few years". So, is the next Government going to give them a few hundred million to sort out the backlog? I wish, but I think this will not be done without some kind of crisis.

So what to do about this? I think it is a Parliamentary issue now. One of the

very supportive MPs, Charlotte Atkins, has taken up this user group position statement and made it an Early Day Motion in Parliament, and called upon all MPs to add their support. We know of a group who we can depend to put their names to this, but this is not enough in isolation. I feel that with the elections coming up, we have an opportunity to get a waterways message across. Of course no Government is flush with funding in these times, and promises of returning grants for the levels of 3-4 years ago will not be easily won. But if we fail in this, then the waterways will see 10 years of declining funding and decay. We must not let DEFRA rewrite Waterways for Tomorrow as a woolly excuse for denying their legal responsibilities. The user groups will act together using the good friends that we have in and around Westminster, but this battle has to get nasty if it is to be won and your support is and will be needed by using every opportunity to raise the issues with Councillors, MPs and Parliamentary candidates.

So now I ask for help. Your Council and regional representatives are constantly juggling with the workload needed to represent you. We are limited in the work we can do by the manpower and generosity of the few who give up day after day of their time. There is a lot to do and never enough time, and Council have to consider carefully whether we can successfully take on new initiatives and who is going to do the work. There are many types of activities to do, from the routine, to one off research projects, to attending meetings, regional representatives,

authorship, recruitment, etc etc. The objective is to spread the work thinly, and find more members a job that they like and enjoy. Then we can all go boating too. Please do come forward to me or any of the Council and regional representatives. NABO is doing good work and we need more members to share some of the tasks. Remember that all members are entitled to attend Council and this is a good low stress way to get a feel of what is going on. It is also important and good fun. Can you help please?

The AGM date and place are fixed for 21 November at the Wolverhampton Boat Club. This year our guest speaker is Richard Fairhurst from Waterways World. Please put it in your diary and come and support NABO.

Just to close, I heard a story on the canal last week. The subject was the new wooden block bollards, much loved by elf and safety. Apparently it is not unknown in the Midlands for these to be cut off and used for fire wood. Of course I would never condone vandalism of this kind, wasting even more of our licence fee money. But I could not help thinking that a boater has expressed a view on the value of these useless ornaments. Wrong type, wrong place and wrong thinking.

David

ANOTHER TWIST TO THE BOATING COST SURVEY

John Slee takes a further look at his results

I brought my mathematical brain to the boat survey to try and get some more data for you.

Statistically, we don't have enough numbers for great reliance to be placed on the outcomes, but I think a bit of a picture emerges in what narrowboat owners spend. I hear the groan of restricted vision, but I cannot statistically analyse data for the one cruiser and the one barge owner that sent in data.

There are two groups of boats 40-50ft narrowboats, and 50-60ft narrowboats where there is some volume of data that can help.

Licence costs

This is a bit of a waste of time, because the rates are published year by year, and we know what the annual increase is. Some owners buy the gold licences and some are EA customers, and others with BW. For this data I have not included the gold license costs, as this distorts the result.

40- 50ft nb average expense £534, range £495-590, annual increase 7.9%

50- 60ft nb average expense £608, range £567-668, annual increase 5.9%

This can be compared with the headline increase from BW of 7.5%. The data is not aligned in time, so it cannot be expected that owners cost returns reflect exactly the same increase, but it does give an indication that our data is meaningful, if not absolutely accurate.

Insurance costs

There is a reasonable amount of data here, but there is quite a wide range in the numbers. This makes me think that some returns include the costs of boat contents. This will be somewhat higher for live aboards. I have not tried to adjust this, and next year we will be more specific to separate this. Most owners pay around £200, and then there are a few with low costs and a few with high costs. The annual increase is worked out mathematically, but it is only indicative. I have looked at individuals cost increases and they show a few %s in the year. If your costs have jumped much more, and you are paying more than the average, you should get another quote. And there is little difference between 40 and 60ft boats. For my 70ft boat, I am paying less than the average.

40- 50ft nb average expense £224, range £140-362, annual increase 3%

50- 60ft nb average expense £229, range £120-325, annual increase 4.1%

Moorings

Again there is a reasonable amount of data here, but there is quite a wide range in the numbers. One is a marina mooring on the Thames. I have not adjusted this for the first analysis. The lower costs for 50-60ft boats are for end of garden moorings. I have taken out winter mooring costs for continuous cruisers, which are typically £200-300

40- 50ft nb average expense £1994, range £1600-4750, annual increase 10%

50- 60ft nb average expense £1572, range £420-3059, annual increase 6.2%

Taking out this one data point for the Thames marina, the small boats look like this.

40- 50ft nb average expense £1729, range £1600-1800, annual increase 13.8%

The low costs in the 50-60ft group are for end of garden moorings, and this pulls down the average. If these are removed, then the average is in line with the smaller boats. The data is not really accurate enough to be clear, but I suspect that boats in the 40ft region are paying for a longer mooring than they need as the cost averages do not reflect the actual lengths. I know that it is policy in some marinas for a minimum of 60ft. Looking at increases of individual mooring costs, these appear in the 10-15% range. Some have gone down, so there is room to shop around, and find a mooring that suits the length of your boat.

BSS certificate costs

There is not enough data on this to split between the boat sizes. This does not include the cost of any repairs. We don't know if the high numbers include re-examination, but I suspect so.

Average expense £135, range £100-180, annual increase 15%

Diesel costs

This is very much a case of 'how long is a piece of string?'.

There is a reasonable amount of data here, but there is quite a wide range in the numbers. Obviously the high users are continuous cruisers. Owners usage goes up and down, so we are dependent of average data to assess annual increases. The bulk of this has been Duty, but the oil price is all over the place, so the whole thing is very subjective. I have worked out increases mathematically, but it is not very meaningful. It has just gone up a lot, 25-50% depending on your usage and duty % paid.

40- 50ft nb average expense £378, range £130-1065, annual increase 55.6%

50- 60ft nb average expense £476, range £91-1360, annual increase 29%

Blacking

There is a reasonable amount of data here. Owners do not black every year, so there are nil costs quoted, so have not used them in the averages. The data is for blacking when it is done, and not an annual cost, which applies to all the other data here. I am assuming that the cost of dry dock is included, and I guess that the lower end of the range is a DIY job, and there is no labour. If an owner quoted a few pounds, I have assumed that was touch up and excluded the number.

40- 50ft nb average expense £389, range £325-800, annual increase no data

50- 60ft nb average expense £547, range £200-703, annual increase 6%

Other costs

Then there are some miscellaneous data.

Gas average expense £53, range £18-163, annual increase 23%

Coal average expense £103, range £9-582, annual increase 24%

Routine maintenance average expense £267, range £100-687.

I hope you find this data useful, and that it will enable you to budget, and shop around for the best deals. Of course we are all horrified with the cost increases which just go on and on.

After publication, in NN, I will send this to Robin Evans. Please write to me and give me some ammunition. He says he is worried about the cost of boating on the canals. He needs to be.

LOCKS - CAN WE MAKE THEM IDIOT-PROOF?

Stuart with the latest from Customer Standards

Considering the number of locks and how many times they are used, the number of accidents and sinkings is pretty minimal, but every one is one too many. This was the main issue facing the latest meeting of the Customer Services Standards Advisory Panel in the middle of June.

If you think back to the first time you encountered this device for overcoming hills, I suspect there was some trepidation. The chances are that you would have only just mastered making a boat move horizontally according to your desires, but vertically..!

If you are going down, you are faced with a void beyond a seemingly flimsy barrier across the channel. If going up, a spitting, damp enclosure welcomes you and all who ride with you, often trying to enjoy the trip but a lot nearer the apparent danger than you are, in the bows.

So, the gut instinct is to stay back, but were you made aware of the dangers that lurk behind you: cills when going down or walkways across the lock when going up?

How much instruction did you have? Was there anybody on the spot to advise you? Did you see a video or a model? How long ago was that? – or had you been left to work it out for yourself?

No wonder there is potential for disaster and BW say that locks are the most dangerous parts of the waterway system they put at your disposal. Frankly I would say swing bridges come a close second, but locks are what we discussed.

The issue of bollards at narrow locks is old news now. BW may look at the position of some, but they are a 'done deal' and they are there if you have need of them. BW safety people have no intention of insisting they be used or how they should be used.

Cill markers are another issue. The new standards insist the position of the cills is marked and a notice telling boaters to keep forward of them is affixed where the

steerer can see it. Fine, but now with 'U' shaped cills the marking has been moved to show the worst case scenario – where the cill meets the lock wall. This is causing some boaters to go too far forward and hook up their fenders on the bottom gates! Theoretically this reduces the length of the lock and even makes it impossible for some vessels to navigate it safely, in the eyes of potential insurers! This signage is being reviewed.

Coupled to that was the issue of boat fenders and how they are fitted. There is little BW can do about whether a boat's fender mounting is designed to yield if trapped and prevent the boat sinking. It is well outside the remit of the BSS and only education will help here. BW can fender the locks and it is a requirement of the Minimum Safety Standards, but just as with a boat, it isn't practical to protect every surface and you have to account also for heritage and other functions of the lock, e.g. 'weirage'.

The message I have been asked to pass on to you from the Advisory Panel is:

PLEASE REPORT NEAR MISSES

- and, of course, any accident. Only then will we have a chance to concentrate BW's limited resources on what matters, rather than on what office people might have second-hand nightmares about.

MORE ON SAFETY - BSS

Over to David...

Old fire extinguishers

Last month I talked about old fire extinguishers and choices about replacement and overhaul. As I promised, I got my local trader in Yellow Pages to look at my three 2 kg powder units.

They are date stamped 1996 on the bottom and had never been overhauled. At 13 years old this is rather more than the British Standard recommendation of 5 years.

The trader gulped and recommended a discharge test and refilling at £20 plus vat each. He did this in a couple of days. He put a record sticker on the side of each one, and provided a document confirming that they had been overhauled, and recommended to bring them back in five years for the same treatment. He also said that they should be visually checked for damage, leakage, corrosion and pressure annually. This last bit is basically what the BSS examiner does every four years. He also recommended turning the units upside down from time to time to disturb the powder.

The cost of the overhaul was half the cost of a new unit, so overall a saving from just buying new. If you are at the IWA National you might be able to get it done a bit cheaper by the man there. The prices he quoted for new and overhaul at the Crick Show were less than my trader.

I also took a smaller 1kg unit that we have at home in the kitchen, to the trader. This has a plastic head screwed onto the steel body. The trader could do nothing with it and it cannot be overhauled. There is no choice but to throw it away.

So I would suggest buying quality units that can be overhauled, and expect to spend money from time to time on overhauls. If yours are old and unchecked like mine were, or there is damage, get something done about it immediately.

No doubt the BSS team will deliberate in due course over whether there should be a specific overhaul frequency and what it should be, five or some other number of years. I will keep you informed.

Shore hook-up connections.



There is a concern over risk of the exposed male pins of the boat end of shore hook-up connections becoming live, and then a risk to life and injury to anybody who touches the pins. This can occur if a boat is equipped with two connections, say one at the bow and one at the stern. The unused socket is back fed with power from the other end of the boat. Alternatively the boat hook-up wiring within the boat may be connected to an internal power source like a generator or inverter.

The usual blue three pin round sockets fixed to the bulkhead of the boat have exposed brass pins and are not designed to be safe when energised without a plug in place. The pins are shrouded, but it is still easy for the pins to be touched. The male sockets and plugs can have covers or flaps, but these get broken or are not used.

It gets worse of course. If you have a long lead plugged into the boat and this is back-energised say from your onboard inverter, the shore end socket has live pins. It has been known for domestic 13 amp plugs to be fitted to these leads, where they will have been used for a supply from a towpath generator. So it is possible for the internal boat supplies to energise exposed male plugs lying on the towpath for any unsuspecting person/child to pick up. And yes it has happened.

So what to do? If you have damaged sockets or covers are missing, get them replaced. At least get a spare sealed female plug with no wire and put it in the socket to shield the male pins, as a temporary fix.

Then there should be a 2-way 2-pole switch within the boat where power can be directed to the consumer circuits, from either of the sources of shore hook-up or inverter, and not both. This protects from the risk of human error of connecting both circuits at the same time, which will do damage, and it prevents back feeding from internal power to the exposed shore line plugs. If there are two points for shore hook-up, substituting a 3-way 2-pole switch enables a selection from say bow power or stern power or inverter and avoids all back feeding. If you cannot find a 3-way switch, a duplicate 2-way switch could be used to select bow or stern power.

The usual caveats apply here. You should get advice from a qualified electrician. This is all 240v and it is dangerous if you do not know what you are doing..

"IT'S YOUR OPEN AIR GYM", proclaims his van as the Aire & Calder lock-keeper rushes off to get ahead of a third of a kiloton of sand heading for Whitwood and to perform a full thumb workout at the next lock.

Certainly the manual barge-sized locks in Yorkshire do provide sufficient exercise equipment in the open air for boaters, but I don't think we are the audience BW wants to reach with that slogan on the side of its vans!

It's good to be back boating in 'God's Own County' and seeing waterways being used for what they were designed for, rather than the host of 'public benefits' that waterway supporters are having to resort to keep the network funded, but it is sad to see the state of Castleford Flood Lock, where wash from departing barges has undermined the wash wall and reduced the structure to grade E4. I had grim images of the pollution disaster that might have happened if this had collapsed under a bad flood and washed away the Hickson chemical works, but with mixed feelings I also see after four years away that those works have gone anyway.

On the bright side, the gravel traffic seems to be running despite the recession and most of the barges look

smart and cared for. In fact, judging by the stockpiles where the barges are being unloaded, Yorkshire is acquiring quite a lot of Lincolnshire!

There is even oil being taken up the SSYN, and an old acquaintance of mine, the Whitaker tanker barge *Humber Princess*, is looking a lot smarter than when she was used for filming 'A Voyage Between Two Seas' in 1981. It was a serious threat that this navigation, one of the most recently modernised in the UK, was gradually silting up and becoming a fishing pond and there is no excuse to be complacent now.

I think all serious boaters should try to spend some time on these navigations. It certainly teaches you the value of spring lines when mooring up! Even if the 'track' is sometimes straight, boring and featureless, the variety of vessels makes up for it. Not restrained by the narrow locks and low bridges, all manner of boats ply these waters. Conversions abound, and the inventiveness of man shows no bounds! Even the dreaded 'wide-narrowboat' looks less out of place, especially with proper wheelhouses and varying degrees of 'Dutch' styling. As far as narrowboats are concerned, there are a few around and hoodies abound. Everyone to their own!



The **18th Annual General Meeting** of the **National Association of Boat Owners** will take place on Saturday **21st November 2009** at Wolverhampton Boat Club, Staffs.

(Formal notice and directions will be in the next 'News')

Invited guest: Richard Fairhurst, Editor of Waterways World

Joining Council

Now is the time for you to stand for Council 2009-2010 and have even more say in what NABO does. Council meets approximately seven times per year. The work is enjoyable, not overly onerous, occasionally frustrating, but nonetheless rewarding, and interesting, and you'll learn what goes on behind the scenes and make new friends into the bargain. If you feel out of your depth, worry not, someone will act as your mentor to help you discover the few formalities.

If you are interested in joining the dedicated souls that make up NABO Council, don't be shy! Please complete the nomination form opposite and return it to Richard, General Secretary, by Saturday 10th October. If you don't have anyone to propose and second you, don't worry, just have a word with someone on Council and we can sort that for you.

Please note: In relation to nominations, the NABO Constitution states:-

- *Only full members are eligible to be nominated for election to or to be members of the Council.*
- *Any member seeking election or re-election to the Council who is, or has at any time in the previous 12 months, held any position of influence or authority in any organisation which is involved with the inland waterways, or has any personal interest which is likely to affect their dealings with outside bodies on behalf of the Association, shall declare their interest at the time of being nominated for the Council. ...*
- *Any member seeking election or re-election to the Council who is, or has been at any time in the previous six years convicted of any criminal offence, or involved in or threatened with litigation, or involved in or threatened with formal insolvency proceedings, or the subject of a formal inquiry, shall declare the full circumstances and current status at the time of being nominated for the Council. ...*

Please use the second space on the back of the nomination form for such declarations, or include an attached sheet.

Resolutions

In addition, by the 10th of October, please send the General Secretary any resolutions you wish put before the meeting, also with names of proposer and seconder.



NOMINATION FORM FOR NABO COUNCIL

NOMINEE

Name

Address

Tel

E-mail

Boat name

Signature
& Date

PROPOSER

Name

Address

Tel

SECONDER

Name

Address

Tel

Send to :- **RICHARD CARPENTER, Mill House End Farm,
Grape Lane, CROSTON ,Leyland, Lancashire, PR26 9HB**
to arrive by Saturday 10/10/ 09



Please, in 80 or less words, tell our readers why they should elect you on to NABO Council:-

(Guidance: 16 lines x 5 words per line)

Any declarations required by the Constitution

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RIVERS

Gloucester Dock Safe Haven Complaint Response

We reported to members on the unilateral decision taken by British Waterways earlier this year to abolish the Safe Haven status for river boats using the River Severn at Gloucester, where the only practical place to moor is within the dock area after locking up into the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal.

We obtained this concession some years ago and it was agreed by BW that because the river at this location is tidal and can be dangerous to users and because similar arrangements already existed at both Stourport Basin and Diglis Basin at Worcester, it was logical for the same concession to be applied to Gloucester Docks.

Unfortunately, BW says that craft abused the 48 hr mooring permission and ventured beyond the first bridge and proceeded to cruise the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal. We still contend that this is a management and enforcement issue and that all river users should not be penalised for the transgressions of others.

Having received unsatisfactory responses to our Stage One Complaint on the failure of BW to properly consult prior to taking the decision, of which many boaters were unaware, we asked for the matter to be reconsidered as a Second Level complaint. This was conducted by Steve Dunlop, BW Director for Scotland who has apologised for the lack of prior consultation but still reiterates the problem of abuse by river only registration holders venturing further along the G&S Canal. BW seems to think that the only way to combat its inability to properly manage its waterway is to penalise river users.

The response does concede that the Gloucester & Sharpness and River Severn Users Forum would have been the ideal vehicle for discussing the change before implementation but this never happened. BW has now been recommended to put the issue on the agenda for the next User Forum. This highlights the need for NABO to have representation on the forum and if any member is able to fulfil this role please let us know so that we can properly monitor and influence the situation for everybody's benefit

EA CONTACT NUMBER

"For our general enquiry line (08708 506 506) the number to call to get through on a landline is **01709 389 201**. Please share this with your colleagues/friends/fellow boaters."

Collision on the Tidal Trent

Just before going to press we heard that a narrowboat was hit by a gravel barge near Laneham on the Trent Tideway and was said to have sunk. There were no injuries and the Marine Accident Investigation Board is gathering evidence.

David Lowe of Humber Barges has been in the freight carrying business around these waters for over thirty years and this is the first accident of this nature he has heard of, so please don't be put off reading the next article and, with sensible precautions, don't be put off venturing on to these waters.

RIVERS - TALES OF THE TRENT TIDEWAY

Stuart tries not to put you off using this vital cruising link

All stations - All stations. Heather Rose stopped at Normanton Stakes, downgates"!?!"

Should a layman hear this on Channel 6 on Marine Band, it might not mean a lot. Why should all stations want to hear that a particular lady was visiting a steak house? And - what on earth does 'downgates' mean?

In point of fact it could be quite serious. *Heather Rose* may be a lady, but not of the human kind, but rather a gravel barge of some size. 'Stopped' is a euphemism for going aground – a not-unheard-of state for a fully laden vessel trying to negotiate the tricky bends on the tidal Trent on its way towards the mouth of the river, a journey that carries on up the Yorkshire Ouse to Goole and thence to be unloaded on the Calder. Depending on how she grounded she might be broadside across the channel and present quite an obstruction for other traffic.

'Upgates' and 'downgates' are words which are rarely heard outside the realm of the barge skippers on the Humber-connected waterways and presumably have the same Viking origin as the street names including 'gate', meaning 'way' in the north of England, so *downgates* means *on the way down*.

As well as having its own language, the tidal Trent is the longest stretch of river normally included in what the insurers call 'tidal access' and does in fact give access to the non-tidal waterway system at four points, or seven if you join it up with the Yorkshire Ouse. It should be treated with respect and has its own dangers, but then there are dangers associated with locks, weirs or tunnels, which you are spared on the tideway. Yes, the water moves and changes level, which can catch out the unwary, ill prepared and those without any sort of chart showing sandbanks. The distances are long, opportunities for landing are few and far apart, and having to go against the flow at times adds to the tedium. Parts of it are big and wide so it can get rough in bad weather, which does justify donning the life jackets if you are perched on the back of a narrowboat, but the risk of being knocked off the back of a narrowboat doesn't only exist on tideways.

There are all sizes of vessel on the tideway, from coasters and barges to people riding planks at speed. It pays to be able to hear VHF Marine Band if not speak on it.

"Torksey Lock, Torksey Lock, this is Divocean. Over".

"Divocean, Torksey Lock receiving. Over".

"Torksey Lock, Divocean. Two cruisers would like to pen down. Over".

"Where are you bound? Over".

"Grimsby. Over".

"Divocean, the lock is ready for you, come straight in. Torksey out".

"Thanks. Divocean out".

Cruisers are probably the most frequent source of rough water on the river, particularly ones big and powerful enough to reach Grimsby and beyond. The barges too can travel faster than narrowboats and small cruisers so if you are in a slower craft keep a lookout behind.

Power and speed aren't as important as reliability, but it is important to realise that keeping to time is vital on the journey from Torksey to Keadby as you end up going with the ebb, i.e. falling water, and there is a sand bar at Keadby Lock that limits how late you can get in. To begin with however, on this journey, you will have to go against the 'flood' for an hour or so, and every extra mile-an-hour your boat can achieve makes far more difference to your progress than it does when the tide turns and helps you along.

It's simple arithmetic. If you do 4 m.p.h. against a 3 m.p.h. tide then, over the ground, you only achieve 1 m.p.h. Increase your water speed to 5 m.p.h. and the difference is 2 m.p.h., covering twice the distance while stemming the flood and, in fact, shortening the time you have to fight it as well.

Going from Keadby up river is done with the flood and is quite exhilarating. The flood surge 'travels' up river at 11 m.p.h. That is not to say the water actually travels this fast, but the flood starts an hour later for every 11 miles further upstream. If you could manage 11 m.p.h. over the ground you could 'ride the flood' all the way, but the power of the flood dies as you go, getting shorter in duration and reducing in flow as the bed of the river rises and the effect of the 'fresh' water from the weir at Cromwell takes its toll. By the time you reach Cromwell the tide just alters the level rather than the rate of flow, so the main hazard on the upper stretches is going aground rather than being swept along by the current, unless, of course, the whole river is in flood from rainfall.

Beware Dunham Rack - this is where most folk hit bottom. I did once when my charts blew off the roof. Downstream from the bridge pier is an unmarked sandbank in the centre of the river, not a place you would expect.

The rulebook governing at what state of tide you set off for these various journeys tends to be a carefully guarded secret of the Lock Keepers. It might be a useful exercise to gather all this expertise from all tidal locks around the country in a table for boaters to help plan ahead, but it would only be approximate as best timings depend on river conditions, the weather and the sort of boat you are in, in spite of the predictability of the moon and sun. You should always take their advice at the time by phoning in advance.

NABO is working with The (Trent) Boating Association, the Commercial Boat Operators' Association and BW to update information for skippers on the Trent. In BW's present financial state this will not be a fancy document but printed off on demand from a page on Waterscape. Make sure you get the latest information and, if possible, the TBA charts for the Trent before setting out on tidal waters. Respect the advice of the 'lockies' and this 'M1' of the network can open up boating destinations that make the effort well worth while.



LINGOLNSHIRE WATERWAYS

David Fletcher - impressed again!

I was at waterways meeting recently and heard a speaker from the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership (LWP) describing what is happening in that county.

The LWP was formed in 2003 by Lincolnshire County Council, BW and EA to regenerate Lincolnshire's rivers, canals and drains (746 miles). It works to a vision and strategy that was developed by partners from the local, regional and voluntary sectors.

Their strategy is providing the guidelines for a programme of work over 10 years. It takes an holistic view of the waterways, trying to develop them as a leisure resource, and provide new facilities for local communities and to support the new businesses.

The County Council acts as overall project manager and handles all the funding applications but the actual work is divided amongst the partners, based on who is best placed to deliver the particular project, with the LWP meeting monthly to discuss progress. They have spent something like £16m over a number of years.

Some examples of projects have been:-

- Regeneration of Saxilby Village Moorings
- 9-mile Multi-user Riverside Path
- Creation of a new Nature Reserve at Fiskerton Fen
- Creation of a new Slipway at Brandy Wharf, River Ancholme
- New Visitor Moorings at Bardney and Torksey
- Inclusive Angling Pegs provided at Five Mile Bridge
- 'Have a Go' Angling Events during Summer 2006

And very recently they have completed the new Boston Lock which forms phase 1 of the Fens Waterways Link, opening up a navigation that has been closed for 60 years.

I was very impressed.

It seems to me that this is a really good example of organisations coming together to transform the waterways for all types of users. We know that boaters cannot pay for the canals alone, but we do have the right to demand a positive attitude from councils and navigation authorities and take advantage of other sources of funding. The Lincolnshire way should be the normal way. What is happening in your county, and can you put pressure on them to get something going?

www.fenswaterways.com/BostonLink/tabid/63/Default.aspx

New Visitor Moorings at
Anton's Gowt near Boston



PROPOSED BW MOORINGS CONSULTATION

'Time to organise the troops?' asks Simon Robbins

As we have mentioned in recent NN items, Council has been poring over various pre-consultation documents from BW about what we hope will shortly become a public consultation paper later this year.

It seems likely that the paper will be fairly wide ranging and we welcome the opportunity for some formal public debate on the key issues, after many years of boaters feeling collectively that they have been denied the opportunity. Many of the items likely to appear in the consultation are topics that have lacked a proper open debate between BW and its boating customers for many years. The proposals we have seen finally attempt to deal publicly with some of the most controversial and potentially divisive issue boaters debate, including,

- Overstaying and what if any effective sanctions can or should be taken to reduce this perceived/actual problem
- Availability and management of visitors moorings generally
- 'Continuous cruising'
- (Lack of) supply of residential moorings
- What, if any, action it might be appropriate to take against customers living on their boats on non-residential moorings

Those of you with slightly longer memories may also recall a thing called the Moorings Contracts Working Group which floundered a couple of years ago when BW dropped the bombshell of the Moorings tenders trial policy into the meeting.

During those discussions I put it to BW that if they were serious about finding some long term solutions to the many disparate and long standing grumbles, they should consider doing some surveys or even a few small focus groups among existing BW moorings customers about mooring terms and conditions. This was particularly so if they intended to pursue an aggressive pricing policy over mooring fees. It seems reasonable that the most directly effected should be targeted for their comments and input into the policy process. Trying to spot solutions to these issues without a clear dialogue with the boaters concerned is an obvious and oft repeated recipe for failure.

In the meantime and due to a prolonged reticence from BW to have those sort of detailed consultations I would like to ask for some help to rectify this from some of you.

What Council needs to better inform our representations on your behalf, is some volunteers from among your good selves who may be prepared to offer some more active feedback on the key issues as and when they arise.

To this effect I am asking anyone who is prepared to spend some time over the coming months to let me have their details so that we can try to form three loose discussion groups within NABO. I have printer and stamps so those of you not hooked up to the web are more than welcome to get involved. I also have a

prejudice against a lot of the web-based forums as I find that too many responses are reactionary rather than thought through - the immediacy of the web for communication has its disadvantages too!

The idea is that when debate comes up on a particular issue, Council can have a sounding board made up of members with a declared interest in certain subject areas who we can bounce ideas off and receive some concrete feedback and direction from. Council has also been looking at whether we should get out more and have some informal gatherings and meetings around the country and this exercise might well provide a good reason to get that organised. (If people are interested in hosting events in your boat club, at your mooring or wherever there is a space in your community and where you feel you might be able to muster fellow boaters let me know. We are also very amenable to joining in your events if you want us to come along? As ever, the more notice the better.)

For ease of reference I offer the following as loose titles for the three groups. They are purposely mutually exclusive.

- BW Leisure Mooring Customers
- BW Residential Mooring Customers
- Continuous Cruisers

There is of course a fourth and probably majority constituency which all the above are members of – everyone who cruises a boat on BW waters from a private mooring or from berths off BW water. We will be looking for more feedback from you on the visitor moorings issues and to some extent your perceptions on the three headings above. Our former Secretary Carole was of course a great champion for the case of better management of visitor moorings, despite consistent obfuscation from BW. At last it appears there is an opportunity to do something more positive building on the work she did on this in recent years, this time it seems with some greater enthusiasm from BW.

Anyway to see if this idea of having these in formal focus groups/members panels, call them what you will, is at all a go-er, I need your initial responses as to whether a few of you would be willing and able to contribute your thoughts on these issues.

More practically even if this just provides a mailing list, it means I can let all you of you know direct when the consultation paper is launched and forward links or hard copies to you early on.

Finally I would also like to extend this invitation to boaters who are not NABO members, particularly those who are not members of any of the 'usual suspect' national user groups and associations. NABO already works closely with other main user groups. However it is the silent majority that we would like to try and engage a little more with, not just the usual suspects.

My contact details are on the back of NABO news and please get in touch by your preferred format. If there is a short delay getting back to you, that is because I am going cruising this summer, but I will be checking in at least weekly. Do stop and say hello if you are out on the cut too.

Gas fridges

I have an Electrolux gas fridge on my boat. It has given me many years of sterling service although from time to time the jet has failed and against this contingency I have always carried a few spares. The part is about half the size of my little finger nail, costs about £2.50 and takes about 5 minutes to replace.

Needing replacements for stock my supplier tells me that under new regulations he cannot help me unless I am 'Gas' qualified which I am not.

The new regulations mean that if the fridge fails in the middle of nowhere, as they do, I have to call out a qualified person to do a job which I have done many times before for myself. Alternatively I have to struggle on with the fridge contents steadily deteriorating until I reach a boatyard which may or may not employ a suitably qualified person.

Is there any way round this problem? If not, is NABO prepared to make representations seeking the restoration of common sense?

I have long suspected that the real agenda is a restrictive practice benefiting qualified people rather than the advancement of gas safety.

Keith Noble

Facility Gaps (F.A.R.T)

With reference to your article on page 6 of the May 2009 NABO News, I would like to make the following nominations for the Facility And Replenishment Transit award.

1. Fradley to Penkridge. 23 Miles and 12 Locks from the BW yard below Junction Lock Fradley, to Penkridge Basin. 35 Lock-Miles @ 3/hr = 11 hr 40 min
2. Penkridge to Stone. 20 Miles and 12 Locks from Penkridge basin to Newcastle Road sanitary station, Stone. 32 Lock-Miles @ 3/hr = 10 hr 40 min.
3. Stone to Fradley. 23 Miles and 12 Locks from Newcastle Road sanitary station Stone, to the BW yard below Junction Lock Fradley. 35 Lock-Miles @ 3/hr = 11 hr 40 min

All the above routes have water points and rubbish disposal at intervals, but NO sanitary stations. The only elsan disposal on any of these routes is at the Anglo Welsh boatyard at Great Haywood. I have not counted this because 1) It is not free - £1 per dump, and 2) It is only available during office hours - it is locked at all other times. I think that the office hours are :- 8:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Saturday, 9:am to 5:30pm Sundays. Out of season, these hours are probably curtailed.

A BW facility is badly needed at Great Haywood. This is a very busy area. Sadly, I have seen some evidence of perhaps desperate boaters taking the easy option!!

Phil Allso

Pondering on

The one big problem that the July "Ponderer" fails to consider is that not all "Places" are created equal!! Some boaters block all the "Places" that everyone wants to moor at some time or other, for example near access

points for roads/shops, water points, etc. The network is FULL of (potential) mooring points it is just that some cannot be used because of silt, Long Term Moorings (always in the most popular places), vegetation, etc.

Mick Joy

BOATYARDS PRESERVED

In spite of the pressure to build even more flats in West London, the future for the MSO Marine boatyard in Brentford has been assured. The land whose freehold is owned by British Waterways and leased through a property developer, was subject to a change-of-use application to Hounslow Council.

The boatyard now has a 50 year direct lease and is a conservation area.

Also, one of the graving docks in Leeds at 'Granary Wharf' has been saved as a working dry dock within the new development, thanks in many respects to Carole Sampson's hard work on behalf of NABO.

Hopefully we will have more on these success stories in the next issue

LOCK GATES OR HABITATS?

Which navigation authority would leave a lock in this condition?

Sad to say that: the vegetation includes invasive species; it obscures the strong stream indicator; and, in common with the average for this waterway, only 60% of the paddles work.

Guess which waterway.



Graffiti opposite an anglers' car park near Kirk Sandall on the SSYN



RCR Advertisement

BRUMMY BUG



eavesdrops from under the Council table

Well, he would if he had been there, but he must have eaten something that disagreed with him - elsewhere, we should hasten to add! We wish him a speedy recovery.

MAKE UP YOUR MINDS!

When we went through West Haddesley Flood Lock from the River Aire on to the Selby Canal we saw this notice and thought it was a load of 'Bow Locks'.

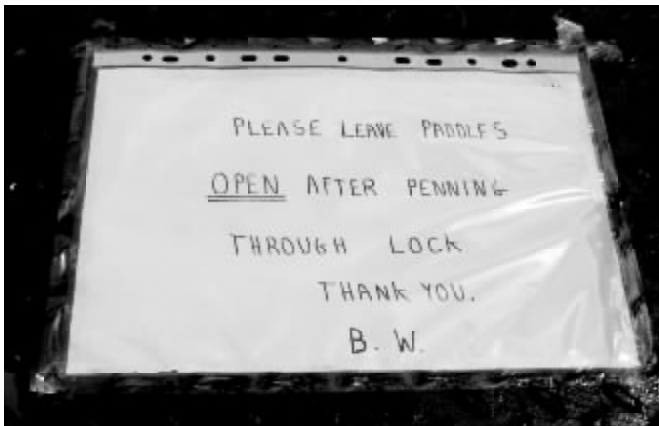
If there was water to be conserved it would be the water in the canal, but this lock's gates point to keep excess water from the Aire out of the canal!

If the sign said, "*In the interests of flood defence and safety*", then we might respect it.



Anyway, when we returned we found a notice on the balance beam asking for paddles to be left open! Perhaps being one of those who obeyed the main sign we had starved the canal of water!

This is just another example of where it would be a good idea to have an accepted location for 'special instructions and hazards' for each lock, maybe in the style of a small notice board if the instructions change from day to day. Ed.



HOW ABOUT BEING A COUNCILLOR?

It's that time of year when the call goes out to the faithful asking for support, see nomination form in the middle of this magazine.

We try to represent all types of boat owner on the inland waterways and by rights they could be boating in anything from one of these ->



to one of these ->



and all sorts in between.

If you feel we don't succeed then here is your chance to rectify the situation – join Council and make sure your kind of boating gets its share of the attention.

HOW ABOUT BEING AN EDITOR?

It's that time of year when the call goes out to the faithful asking for support...

But this time we are asking for someone vaguely literate to take over the (or one of the!) most influential jobs in NABO – in the gunnery control of NABO's most powerful weapon, its news magazine.

This magazine has the power to lob bombshells into the deepest defences of Watford, Millbank and even Parliament. If you feel you are in touch with the waterways, have the skills and equipment, and the will to use it for the good of the boating community, then please let us know.

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