

INLAND NAVIGATION ISSUES, NEWS, AND VIEWS

# NABO



# NEWS

- Survey on Waterways Condition
- NABO uses legal advice
- Contemplations - Nene and Liverpool



Issue 6 – October 2009

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## Editor's Apologies

It has been pointed out to me that top lines of some articles are going missing, or perhaps being printed as white on white. Unfortunately I get paper copies rather late when cruising and only glance at the pages, so had to have it pointed out to me. I will follow this up with the printers. The online version seems OK and is derived from the same artwork, so, to use a BBC engineering expression - "It's all right leaving me!"



### 2009 CALENDAR

<b>Council meeting*</b>	<b>NN Copy date</b>
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<b>21st Nov</b>	<b>AGM</b>
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<b>28th Nov</b>	<b>5th Dec</b>
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*\*Members are entitled to go to these meetings. Please arrange with Chairman or Gen. Sec.*

*Scene on the Rochdale - worth visiting*

## FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE?

### ***An Invitation to take part in NABO Waterways Condition Surveys 2009***

Despite the fact that, in order to maintain a steady state, BW should be spending £30 million more than it does, DEFRA has cut its 2010/2011 budget by a further £4.6 million.

At the beginning of the year, Robin Evans, British Waterways Chief Executive, said "*Recent investment by British Waterways means that the network is now in better shape than at any time in decades.*"

After a summer's cruising, we want to know if you agree, so if you have boated on BW waters this year, as a boat owner or hirer, we invite you to complete the NABO British Waterways network condition survey. It should take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

Use this link: **<http://www.surveymk.com/NABObw09>**

You will be asked to enter a password, which is: **Navigation09**

(without a space before zero nine).

If you have boated on non-BW waters, we would be grateful if you would complete the NABO Other Agencies Waterways Condition survey, to create a comparison.

Use this link: **<http://www.surveymk.com/NABOoa09>**

You will be asked to enter the password, which is also: **Navigation09**

In a spirit of concerned cooperation, this invitation has gone out to members of NABO (National Association of Boat Owners), RBOA (Residential Boat Owners Association), IWA (Inland Waterways Association), DBA (Barge Association) and SOW (Save Our Waterways). It has also appeared on various websites and on-line forums.

We have had a good response so far, with a consistency of views, but we still need more. Please complete both surveys if you have boated on both BW and other agencies' waterways in 2009. If, for any reason, you cannot complete a survey in one sitting, you can return to complete it later, as long as it is before the 15th November.

An analysis of the results of the Survey will be posted on our website and published in NABO News. After analysing the survey, NABO will report our findings to BW and other waterways agencies and in the national press.

Thank you for your help in recording your experiences and expressing your opinions.

*John Slee*



*Ply and foam patched  
lock gate*

# CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



## The law, campaigns and 2020

In previous issues I have written about the need to take legal advice over a variety of BW licence conditions. We went ahead and spent a considerable sum on this during the summer. The legal team have now given us some 20 pages of close-typed wisdom, which will help us to understand the Acts and gain an insight as to what a senior Court might say. It has been very revealing and not surprisingly, there is a range of opinion that does not match up with the interpretation by BW over very many issues. So what to do next? The benefit of such advice is not gained by publishing it all. The issues are opinion and in any future court case or discussion with BW it does not help if we show our hand. BW has a lot at stake with this and can be expected to try and outgun us with legal teams all paid for, at least in part, with licence money. So we have to be a bit more subtle. We made a start by making a formal complaint to BW over four well-known licensing issues. BW have interpreted these in their licence conditions when common sense says that they are wide of what is reasonable, and our legal advice is that, in their opinion, is not in accordance with the law. The letter is included elsewhere in this edition. As I write, we have just received their response. Have they rolled over and agreed with us? Of course not, and we will have to take it further. In summary, they say that the Transport Act of 1962 gives them wide discretionary powers and they can do as they think fit with licence conditions, notwithstanding the wording of later Acts. I wonder why Parliament bothered with Acts such as 83 and 95? They might just as well have left it all to BW. Oh dear, we are going to be unpopular again.

More generally on licence and moorings issues, BW is taking action on the K & A in a major way. And about time too many will say. Some cases are very clear, but others less so and of course there are innocents caught up in the excitement. Council members have been involved to try and understand what is happening and ensure that members have the necessary knowledge to respond to BW, to correct them when they are clearly in the wrong, and present their own information when this has not been taken into account. This is NABO at its best, and the legal opinion helps Council to better understand the law, where it is hard, and where it is opinion. BW would have us believe that its opinion is the law, but in fact this can only be tested in court. I think this is really important for all boat owners. BW cannot manage the waterways on the basis of its own legal opinion.

The IWA launched its SOS campaign at the National Festival in August. Details are sketchy at the moment, but NABO, alongside many other boating organisations, is pleased to be associated with the campaign, and our logo appears on some of the publicity material. In these things it is important to stand together with other organisations, because the strength of the message is greater that way. For the first time, IWA have raised the issue of **our** safety on the waterways, implying that the cost threats may put us at risk. BW is adamant that this will not happen, and that it will close waterways before putting us at risk. As an engineer, I agree with this. But we can help too. Major failures in engineering don't usually happen

without warning. Maybe the warnings are not understood, or not acted on, but they are there, and as experienced boaters we can see them as well as anybody else. Our contribution is to report these quickly.

In the summer, John Slee proposed to Council that we run a survey of the opinion of members on the condition of the waterways. This was quickly agreed, and was launched without prior knowledge of the SOS campaign. The survey quickly gained momentum, and we have been offered support in publicity by our friends in RBOA, TBA, DBA, CBOA, AWCC and the waterways press. The uptake has been very good and we are approaching 300 replies. But we need more to really be statistically meaningful. We have extended the closing date to November 15th, so that you can participate after you have read this in November. Please do help and take part. There are some interim results available and they will be published elsewhere in this edition, and will be discussed at the AGM. Please, please do take part.

I wrote to the Waterways Minister last month to comment about the DEFRA cuts to BW in next year's budget. Many said that I was wasting my time, but I felt that we should make some point. There has been no reply of course, which is rude in itself. I am really upset that BW told us in the last round of licence increases that they absolutely had to have the extra money from boaters or the world would end. I would like to have been a fly on the wall when DEFRA told Robin Evans that he was losing £5m next year. Yes Minister, no Minister, of course we can manage with less money, after all the licence fees go up again next year. Maybe he should just have resigned. After all it is his job to get the money, be it from Grant or the wider business, and not take it from us

to give back to DEFRA to fund something else.

This was all brought into focus for me at the BW Annual Meeting this week. I will report on this separately but of course, all the issues of money, benefit of the waterways to the country at large and best way to maintain the waterways are there and talked about. BW's main theme was the 2020 way forward. There were a couple of consultants there, and they spoke well, and were questioned by the audience on aspects of moving to the Third Sector. Robin Evans spoke passionately about a few issues, one being the difficulty of funding canals in a political environment, another about the commitment from BW staff to preserve the waterways. So we are being led down a path, with some marginal cost savings, and more sharing of the workload on the waterways. NABO is keen on closer co-operation with Navigation Authorities, and moving BW towards the Third Sector is one obvious way to help this. Our legal discussions don't quite fit into this pattern so we have a way to go yet. But a cuddly relationship is not always best. There are merits in dealing with a tough even-handed navigation authority with clear rules and good dialogue. And there are other alternatives for the organisation of authorities. We still hear talk of BW being stripped of its property portfolio and there are benefits to us in this option as well. You only have to read the Board Minutes to see that the main discussion is about the commercial business, and customer service issues hardly get a mention. BW's fascination with the commercial arm because of its dependence on the money, leads to a behaviour which is not that friendly to boaters. BW's current reorganisation will help this, as the region area managers are now to focus on waterway management, and the distractions of the commercial

operation will be largely centralised. Full marks for that move; just don't talk about U turns. For me, if BW is to retain a commercial operation then it must demonstrate a compelling case that the synergy of navigation authority and commercial business is a winner to all and they can manage the behaviours. If this cannot be done, then we would be better off moving navigation issues to EA, where there is obvious synergy of drainage and waterway management, and privatise the commercial business. That implies that the bulk cost of the waterways will fall back on the Grant in Aid which is one of the very difficult issues that we are currently experiencing. But Governments and Ministries come and go, as do BW directors, so maybe new teams in the future can manage what now seems

impossible. The EA budget is £900m so an extra £150 m is not an overwhelming change for them to manage. Even the Treasury must realise that if they take away the commercial business, the money has to come from somewhere. There is much more to come on this, so do let us know what you think.

To close, I must remind you that we have our AGM in November. This is an important meeting, and one of the times when you can come and question your Council over issues and give your views. I think your Council do great work and welcome your input. But it would be even better if we had some more boaters come forward to share the workload. I look forward to meeting you there.

*David*

## **NABO CHALLENGES BW'S LEGAL POWERS**

### ***A letter to BW - speaks for itself***

Dear Sirs,

#### **GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR BOAT LICENCES**

#### **Formal complaint re British Waterways exceeding their powers under existing legislation**

Following the revision to General Terms and Conditions for Boat Licences in October 2008, NABO has received questions and complaints from the membership about aspects of the document which appear to be at variance with the written law.

Accordingly we have sought legal guidance through our solicitor, Shakespeare Putsman, and legal Counsel. We list below the key issues of our complaint.

1. British Waterways may not legally deny or withhold a licence if a boater breaches the continuous cruising guidelines which do not have the force of law but are stated as a requirement in the Terms and Conditions.
2. Boats with a permanent mooring under BW Act 1995 section 17 iii (c) (i) contrary to the wording of the Terms and conditions are not bound by, or subject to, the 14 day rule.

3. BW do not have general authority to remove boats over-staying mooring time limits under the 1983 Act s 8 (5) nor can such boats be regarded as an obstruction to navigation.

4. BW do not have general powers to interpret the law, and specifically not in the case of BW Act 1995 s 17 (c) (ii) to define navigation.

NABO considers that BW does not have the freedom to introduce changes to the terms and conditions including the moorings guidelines and thus the way in which the law may be applied to boat owners. In consultation, BW staff have stated to NABO that BW have additional rights as a land owner which are over and above the conditions governed by Act of Parliament. NABO understands, following legal advice, that BW's powers are limited and conditioned by its statutory powers and there are no other special powers available.

NABO has always been entirely supportive of strong and well understood licence terms and conditions, underwritten by legislation, to support the current critical situation on the towpath.

NABO observes that British Waterways:

- Fails to acknowledge the written law.
- Takes upon itself to interpret the law.
- Takes action against users with interpretations masquerading as law.
- Makes no effort to remedy the situation by introducing legislation to empower the management of the waterways.

This is an unsatisfactory situation, unclear and unfair to boaters, and open to misinterpretation by enforcement staff and the courts.

Please record that as a formal complaint in your procedure. We look forward to your reply within 21 days. Any response should be to the writer at the above address or email address.

Yours faithfully,

*Geoffrey Rogerson*

for and on behalf of the council of the National Association of Boat Owners.

Geoffrey Rogerson, Council member.

NABO has just had a response to this letter from Jackie Lewis, BW's 'Legal Head', claiming BW has powers under the 1962 BW Act Section 43(3) to set conditions '*as it thinks fit*'. NABO will investigate further as to how a Court of Law might accept these powers.

## Continuous Cruising on BW waters and NABO

### *Simon Robbins explains*

We know this is a controversial and potentially divisive issue so feel it's doubly important that we keep you up-to-date on the subject. Council remains committed to the position that your standard BW craft licence should be universal, allowing the boater to travel around the network (or the river they are based on in the case of River Registration) as much or as little as they wish. Introducing a supplementary charge for continuous cruisers is inappropriate and unjustified.

Yes, we spent some time considering the alternative when BW and others proposed it last year. After a little thought we rejected the concept of an extra charge on several grounds. The 'Universal Licence' principal above was the main one.

Another important ground was that we could find no evidence that genuine continuous cruisers had more financial impact on the waterways than any other boater. When we asked BW to give numerical evidence of this assertion they did not offer anything in response. I can't find the full attribution to this, but someone senior in BW was also recently reported as admitting that maintenance costs are NOT significantly changed by the numbers of boats or the amount they use the network. Wear and tear is a minor factor in the whole and BW's repairing liabilities are fairly constant whether lots of people navigate or none. Deterioration by the age of an asset is apparently a much more significant factor than the amount it is used.

There is still an ongoing question about whether there are more effective methods by which BW can take stronger enforcement action around overstaying and there is much written in the web forums that implies that continuous cruisers are the root of all evil on this one!

The evidence we have is that continuous cruisers are no more or less guilty on that front than boaters with moorings. For instance we did some rough analysis of BW patrol activity and calculated that even if BW were only giving patrol notices to people registered as continuous cruisers, the totals showed that 80% of CCR's could never have received a patrol notice. Given the possibility that some boats would get more than one notice, the actual percentage where BW had no record of cases ever coming to the attention of the patrol teams was probably higher.

If you then considered the 'not continuous cruiser' balance, those who had received notices but had home moorings registered with BW, the maths showed that boats with long term moorings were only a few percent less likely to overstay that those without moorings.

To date BW have not refuted this analysis and there is an open invitation from me at least to BW to provide evidence to the contrary.

Hence, we currently take the view that targeting continuous cruisers more strongly than other boaters is pure and simple prejudice, based on hearsay (as opposed to solid evidence) and is more about BW attempting to raise more funds than seek compensation for any genuine financial impact.

Let's also remind ourselves that it is a very small minority of boaters as a whole who overstay. Why should the misbehaviour of a small minority be a valid excuse to financially penalise the majority of Continuous Cruisers but not those with long term moorings? That proposition seems arbitrary to say the least.



The other consideration in all this was that administratively it would be a nightmare to have two licence bands and we have huge doubts about whether it could be applied fairly, even if it was desirable. (We also have severe doubts whether effectively creating a new class of licence is legislatively permissible.)

Many continuous cruisers pay for longer stay moorings when they have the desire or need to be in one place for a little longer. Most commonly people will stop in two or three paying places over winter months, in boatyards, marinas, clubs or on BW designated winter moorings. That's at least the feedback we seem to get from you the members? If you had the higher charge system in place, should their licence fees for those weeks be reduced to standard rate for the period the boater is paying for a mooring?

What about people who moor off BW water? When they are on BW waters they are continuously cruising. Should they pay the higher or the lower rate?

I hope these comments will dismiss any suggestion (as recently appeared on one Internet site) that NABO presently supports the introduction of a higher charge for continuous cruisers. Our considered view is that it is unnecessary, unjustified and more practically, unworkable.

Members may also like to consider the report of the senior consultative body in BW, the British Waterways Advisory Forum, on all this : [www.britishwaterways.co.uk/media/documents/BWAF\\_boat\\_licence\\_report\\_Aug08.pdf](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/media/documents/BWAF_boat_licence_report_Aug08.pdf) (I can post a copy onto anyone who can't get on-line)

It came to no firm conclusion on this point and instead noted four potential options, but also noting widespread opposition to one of those options from most of the main boating user groups, i.e. the option to impose a surcharge on CC'rs.

The closing statement in our Press Release earlier in the year sums up our current thinking. (See: [http://www.nabo.org.uk/current/continuous\\_cruisers.htm](http://www.nabo.org.uk/current/continuous_cruisers.htm))

*"Continuous Cruising is an important right of navigation that is worth cherishing not penalising."*

We are still in discussions with BW about making enforcement activity fairer and more transparent to all and think that issue should be pursued as a greater priority. We receive a small but steady stream of complaints about instances where boaters do not feel the existing system is being applied fairly or consistently and think BW should get that right first. Only then perhaps will we and BW obtain some concrete data on who is using versus who is abusing the current moorings and continuous cruising policy. After that maybe we can go onto the question of what, if any, appropriate new sanctions may be needed beyond those already available.

Much of the recent work we and other groups have done on this with BW has happened at their request behind closed doors. We therefore hope the planned public consultation on moorings policy will go ahead very shortly so that the whole boating community can comment openly on the latest BW proposals on this front.

In the meantime we remain determined not to endorse the implementation of any new financial costs being imposed on any individual group of boaters without seeing some evidence to justify it.

If members disagree with this stance, please let us know. Your feedback on what is working well and what is not is essential to all this.

### **The end is nigh!**

These are my last words speaking as a member of NABO Council after all these years. It seems very strange.

I have been very heartened by the support you have given me over the time I have been editing and in the chair. My only regret is that some of the constructive things I have tried to do haven't taken off, but the apathy of navigation agencies is just as much to blame for that as lack of take-up from boaters.

David has taken over the Chair without giving me any cause for concern and NABO seems to be in good hands, so I feel I can leave Council without guilt. That doesn't mean I won't still be providing the navigation authorities with a little feedback from time to time!

### **Positive Feedback**

At last, BW has realised it was being taken for a ride by its landscaping contractors, after all our harping on about the Veg Pledge. The 'canal corridor' now looks a lot better above the surface, which is good value for money as it should please most 'users'. Will it last?

### **The other side of the coin**

Below the waterline, including general dredging, underwater obstructions and lock gear, things seem worse, but, as far as the general public and non-boating management is concerned – out of sight = out of mind.

Talking of non-boating management, my 'term in office' has roughly coincided with that of Robin Evans, and at first we all wondered about having a non-boater at the helm of BW. I was prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt, as I try to give everybody.

He claimed to be '*passionate about waterways*' and is a self proclaimed optimist. In my book optimists are people who like the world to believe they can build houses before seeing to their foundations. Some can, having done their homework behind the scenes. Many can't, they just rely on luck and everyone else to get them out of trouble, but sooner or later the house collapses, like today's economy.

In spite of telling everybody what they want to hear, will this happen to the BW network with R.E. as CEO?

### **Maintenance – 251 stoppages!**

Since the beginning of March up to now, the 10th October, I counted 251 'in season' stoppage notifications and 219 navigation restriction notices for BW waters, not counting amendments. With that many emergency stoppages no wonder they can't commit themselves to a planned schedule – the waterways are just falling apart. Bodedged fixing, or '*fudging and mudging along*' to quote BW's chairman, is coming home to roost.

### **More turmoil**

Things are not helped by endless upset being foisted upon the operational management by Robin Evans's re-organisations. His 'people' don't even know if the maintenance they plan for their patch will still be in their patch when it comes to doing it.

There are so many issues we have been trying to resolve, such as safety standards and lack of facilities, that seem to be at a standstill because nobody knows where or if they will be working for BW next week. It is no good keeping all the bank staff when they don't seem to be being told what to do or when they should use their initiative.

The office staff are seeing delay upon delay and getting decidedly p\*\*\*\*ed off with it. Is this capable management?

The question is: Who are the senior management answerable to? Who has the power to sack them if they make a complete balls of it? BW has a board of part-time industrialists and business tycoons, with little to lose if the waterways become unnavigable.

Would the Minister and the three civil servants responsible for waterways in DEFRA have power to wield the axe? If pay means power then no chance, even the PM earns less than BW's CE. So it looks like he is still pretty safe.

### **Boater on the Board**

Now that BW no longer has a boating Chief Executive there isn't even an informal link to the people to whom BW's executive should be answerable, namely its paying customers, i.e. the 100,000 or so family members who have a stake in boats on BW's waters, plus the waterways businesses, and those who pay indirectly through the hire operators. **It is high time boating customers had a representative on the Board with voting powers.**

I fought very hard to get tighter links between customers and the Board

through BWA but sadly it never got the respect it deserved from Robin Evans. He is reported to have said it was too boater orientated! Shame.

Maybe an answer would be for the BW executives to find out first hand what boating is about – pushing that balance beam that might have left muck on the tailored suits during the photo-shoot, emptying the toilet, heaving a recalcitrant paddle, but above all, not just a short break but long enough to appreciate properly what their waterways have to offer and what there is to lose. That would be one way to get boating interests on the board and we might then believe statements like '*I am passionate about waterways*'.

### **On the personal front**

We are still looking to sell our house, but we may end up trucking *m.v. Sulaskar* to France. In the meantime I will carry on with NABO News but you will need a replacement very soon and please don't take my continuance for granted.

Make the best of your boating while you still can, and please find the time to come to the AGM.

*Stuart Sampson*

Soon to Leave  
British Waters



## STOPPAGES

### *“Where's my winter stoppages list this year?“, asks John Slee, NABO's Continuous Cruising Rep*

“Has BW run out of money for winter repairs?”

Continuous Cruisers may be wondering why the usual printed list of winter stoppages did not drop through their remote letter box at the end of August.

I often get asked, where do you moor up for the winter? The answer is, we don't. For us there is no 'cruising season'. As far as possible, we continue our progressive journey twelve months of the year. But, come November 2nd, BW begin their winter programme of repairs which continues until March 12th 2010 with a planned break from 19th December until 3rd January, and this year, thankfully, is no exception.

In recent years, BW produced their printed stoppage list at the end of August, sending it out automatically to those boaters who requested it. This gave us plenty of time to devise our cruising itinerary to ensure we wouldn't be land-locked (or should it be lock-locked?!). This year they decided, apparently after consultation, that they would not send the list out but would post their plans on the Waterscape.com website, and would do so at the end of September, so that there would be less chance of changes. Unfortunately they didn't invite NABO to their consultation, and many boaters were not aware that they would have to contact BW if they wanted to obtain a printed list. Listening to cc-ers, I believe the late availability is an issue that hopefully will be reversed next year. We are having to get used to BW's emergency stoppages year-round, so late changes to the winter programme can be relatively easily taken in our stride too.

Presumably all boaters are aware of the on-line stoppages facility on Waterscape.com? For those who have internet access - an invaluable tool for those of us who live afloat, as well as land dwellers - the stoppages lists are available either as emails as they occur, or as a list, by waterway from the website. From the end of September, they include the winter stoppages. (They are also uploaded by Tony Haynes onto the NABO website's Waterway Reports).

However, at the Ellesmere Port consultation meeting, I raised the subject of confusing stoppage notices. Some amendments to existing stoppages were added to the top of the notice, some to the bottom. Sometimes it was difficult to tell which was the update, and which the initial announcement. Sally Ash, BW's Head of Boating Development, said she would follow this up, and I have been in contact with the Waterscape staff as a result. They acknowledged the problem and have been trying to improve things.

If you find any stoppage notices confusing or misleading, don't hesitate to let Waterscape know at [feedback@waterscape.com](mailto:feedback@waterscape.com). I would find it helpful to my ongoing dialogue if you send me a copy too.

## 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.*

It should be a sackable offence.

Whoever is responsible for the decision to remove the vast majority of spindles from offside top ground paddles (there being no gate paddles at all) needs, at best, to go on a water management course, at worst, to be given a redundancy notice. I have been told that there are to be new ones. In the meantime, bottom gates leaking badly, and only one paddle to fill a lock, means that at times, it has been impossible to equalise the water level.

I sat for well over half an hour in one lock before I realised that the lower leakage had equalised with the best that the one top paddle could supply, SIX INCHES below what was needed to open the top gates. And, of course, it was 5p.m. on a Friday afternoon, and I

wasn't in a salubrious area. The only thing I could do was to ram the top gates twice before crew could hold the gate open sufficiently for the water to rush in. This went against the grain for me: I've never had to do such a thing before, and strained muscles apart, I lost sleep through being so upset at having had to do this.

The waterway concerned can lay claim to being the one with the least amount of water. Passages have to be booked to give better use of the frugal supply, never enough for boating needs. The wastage through waiting for locks to equalise on one paddle far outstrips whatever boaters can save, and I feel furious at being pressured to do this when BW wilfully wastes far more.

Why should I be made to feel bad?

## LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

### ***Some advice to the Navigation Authorities - or pigs might fly!***

Think about it – most landlubbers can count the number of times they have had to find somewhere new to live on the fingers of one hand. Boaters may do it every day! This fact is generally beyond the comprehension of the suits behind desks who decide where, if at all, new moorings should be created.

It is true that making the choice of a new location is less stressful for boaters than house dwellers, as they are more used to it and can pull up stakes and move if they think they have made the wrong choice, assuming, of course, there is somewhere better to go to.

However the stress is not absent altogether, it is a balance of risks and rewards and the rewards can be great – having a different view from yesterday's when washing up the dishes is one of the great joys of boating.

The factors that influence the choice of location are much the same as finding a new house.

Quietness is important, away from roads, railways, flight paths, factories, crowds, or even early morning joggers whose footfall transmit through the water, or pedestrians whose faith in their mobile phones seems not to remove the need to shout. The general public is unaware that boats are used for sleeping on and the notices asking boaters not to run engines near habitations should be matched with requests to return the favour by being good neighbours.

Crime and anti-social behaviour black spots are best avoided, bearing in mind you may be leaving your home unattended within arm's reach of a public thoroughfare which is becoming increasingly public as the 'Waterways For All' and 'Open-Air Gym' philosophies are promoted. This might be a good or bad thing.

Access to local amenities and public transport may be important too, just as when living ashore. Some people may want to leapfrog with a car as they cruise, or have medical, educational or employment commitments – as they say – waterways for all.

Taking these factors into account is one sure way to increase the level of 'boater satisfaction'. It is not just a case of banging in a few signs to limit the stay where mooring seems too popular, it is a question of making mooring possible where people might want to stay where they can't at present, either due to inadequate depth, poor bank condition or boats already moored there on a long-term unoccupied basis. A study of an Ordnance Survey map will soon tell you where you will be wasting your effort as regards transport noise. Better still get out there with ears and eyes. If there are visiting boats already there, or evidence of amateur vegetation management, that is a good indication that the location is good. If they are having to use gangplanks or are at varying angles of tilt, it shows that the location is worth that inconvenience and some localised dredging or bank improvement would help.

There are reasons relating to cruising which are beyond those which would occur to a house dweller for placing overnight moorings, particularly of the transit type. Some navigation obstacles, such as tideways, lock flights, tunnels and other structures can take a significant part of a day to traverse and so people arriving without sufficient of the day left will need to overnight nearby. Others may want to rest after completing them. Lines of towpath permit-holder moorings either side of lock flights, e.g. on the western Leeds & Liverpool, are a great source of frustration after a heavy day's cruising.

One has to bear in mind that the canals were built for transport not leisure, and casual mooring was not on the engineer's mind during the design. Access to the bank was at wharves and the rest of the channel was for making progress, so, to adapt them to modern needs could be very expensive and possibly be destructive of heritage, but there must be places where mooring opportunities – note, not moorings as such – could be improved without undue expenditure.

BW has profile measuring equipment. It would be an interesting exercise to compare lengths where it would be feasible to achieve, say, 800 mm depth within 300 mm of the bank, against a 'desirability map' created by boaters and see where things could be improved.

# RIVERS

## NABO updates Trent Guidance

Working with the northern section of the Commercial Boat Operators Association, representing the barge operators, and The Boating Association, which had its origins on the Trent, we have presented BW with a revised version of the Skippers Guides to both the Trent and the Aire and Calder Navigations, for BW to distribute to all users of these waterways, particularly novices. These place special emphasis on the relationship between pleasure boaters and the commercial craft and should alleviate the concern when canal skippers have to use these bigger waterways.

The guides are also available on the NABO website for members and much of the content will also be in the First Mate Guide to the Northeast when it is revised next year.

BW Yorkshire manager, Laurence Morgan, welcomes this co-operative venture and sees it as the first steps in the 'volunteer culture' that he sees as the future of BW.



BW being given the first batch of leaflets by representatives from NABO and TBA

The map from the Trent guide. The original is of course bigger and in colour



## 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.

### *The River Nene is a contemplative waterway, muses Louis Jankel*

Over the years reputation has saddled the Nene with the sobriquet of ‘different’; ‘hard work’; dangerous and just ‘avoidable’. Well that has all changed. So why contemplative? The infrastructure gives you plenty of time to consider the profundities of life. You are required at most locks to stand with your finger on a button as the guillotine gate closes and opens for what seems an age. Be sure the six locks where the gates are operated by a large wheel translates the wait on the powered locks absolutely no burden, in fact it is these six locks that suggests the time with your finger getting numb on the button is best spent contemplating the important things in life such as how credible the String/M Theory may be, and if we are but one Universe among an infinite number of Universes (the Multiverse) or what to do for supper! Don’t worry there is plenty of time for all of these as each electrified lock needs the gates dropped and raised each time.

Otherwise, the River Nene is quite the loveliest waterway in England.

Most boaters I have met feel a real concern about taking their boat onto a river. The image of boats stranded on a bank with the water running a couple of meters above the normal level and their beloved in danger of sinking or worse wandering off in the torrent to end up ‘beached’ in a field, fifty yards away from the river. I suspect this image is about as likely as ending up on the bottom of a calamitously dewatered canal. In my long number of years cruising rivers and I do so for three months at least each year, I have been forced to tie up for longer than three days but twice. Once three years ago during the famous floods on the Thames when I spent three weeks at Abingdon, much of the time in a boozy haze with a number of fellow boaters having a great time. The other time at Eynsham two years ago where I was able to bus into the village or Whitney each day and had a very enjoyable sojourn watching a barn owl frantically trying to feed an obviously very demanding nest.

The Nene is indeed potentially a very dangerous river. Nobody is more aware of that than the navigation responsibility vested in the Environment Agency. Every precaution is taken to safeguard every boater. The likelihood of a flooded Nene during the popular cruising months is small.

Anything after passing down the British Waterways Northampton flight of locks will be exceptional. Visiting Northampton is not exciting but the shops are pleasant enough and Morrisons close at hand. The first Environment Agency lock after the flight makes the point most poetically that there can be no case for plunging all waterways down into the depths of dereliction practised by British Waterways. In just one year, the salary of a single British Waterway’s director would make such a difference to the Northampton flight with the added benefit that with the loss of any of the directors, there would be one less set of unfathomable policy edicts. Think what the money available could then do for year two and three!

At the other end of the River Nene is Peterborough and no better nor worse than Northampton. So the River Nene is nothing to do with destinations but is exclusively about the ‘getting there’.



This is not a travelogue; this is simply a suggestion to expand your travel plans and explore another way to enjoy your boat. To cruise a river is nothing like a canal. You have the simple topographical difference. Canals are built around contours and as often as not have a very limited horizon. Or they are built along a flattish landscape with cuts and viaducts but again no great horizons. Rivers are in valleys and the trip down the Nene is along a wide and gentle landscape with wonderful skies. Flow is generally gentle and no worse than that on the Llangollen arm of the Shropshire Canal. Banks are soft and the variety of wildlife is so much greater than a canal, as long as you look. Villages are plentiful and most have a pub if not a shop. Mooring is available and almost all free. The only exception was that I paid £3 at Fotheringhay but was able to buy a newspaper for the following morning from the warden – now is that civilised? I had direct experience of two local boating clubs, The Northampton Boat club and the Middle Nene Boat club. They are just delightful people, most welcoming and happy to offer help and advice.

Just one word of caution, victualling at Oundle is a fair walk from the boat while the Tesco at Wellingborough means you have to stop at the town moorings, which are not nice! Also make sure you have plenty of gas. Oundle Marina managed to have only two 6 kilo cylinders when I called in during the first week in August and they are the only stockists on the river!

Two small points; a downside - below Islip lock is a low bridge where you need to clear your roof (2 meters 15cm). The upside is that Environment Agency pumpouts are scarce but FREE.

The round trip is about 75 engine hours. You can take as long as you like and I suggest the longer the better, and then you can let me know if you subscribe to the Multiverse or are content with just a Universe.

Think about next year and drop down onto the Nene – sadly some of us have to go to the “National”.



### *Andy Colyer reviews some more publications*

Following my last article on sustainable boating, and looking through the book “Handmade Houseboats” by Russell Condor, I realised I have acquired quite a selection of boating books; largely focused on boat interiors. It is some of this collection that I will review over the next few issues of Nabo News.

Firstly I will look at three American books. They have all allowed me to find out about a fascinating boating community in Sausalito, near San Francisco. It is well established, having grown similar to its present form since the 1950s. It now consists of a collection of marinas and harbours. There have been many changes over the years, with much of it being destroyed at various times. It still manages to exist with a reasonably strong resemblance to its origins: a Bohemian place for people to live closer to the sea and .....

There is a different style to the UK boat building, with many of the boats being either set into or built on floating concrete platforms. This often gives a new lease of life to old boats that would otherwise never float on their own again.

**Water Squatters** (1975) by Beverly Dubin is a 128-page book of black and white photos and text reflecting on the area at the time. There are some really quirky bits, including recipes and quotes from some of the inhabitants as well as advice for those considering living in a houseboat. As Sausalito is coastal, the advice often reflects this, from concerns over getting fresh water, to the effects of the tides and, of course, what to do with your waste!

Most of the photos are quite grainy, but the content is very interesting. It represents the Sausalito community at the peak of its diversity. Very much a “anything goes” time, with a real care free hippy lifestyle! Many of the boats look so precarious, it is amazing that they float! Many of them would give BW or the EA heart attacks!!! As it says in the introduction “Some are simple A frames on a barge; others are elaborate hand built artistic architectural statements that float...”. I am not convinced many would pass their Boat Safety! The book shows a peaceful existence for those living at Sausalito.

The community continued with many ups and downs. By 2007 Kathy Shaffer had written a book dedicated to the place and those who live there.

**Houseboats Aquatic Architecture of Sausalito** is a grand 208 page coffee table book of lovely photos and a lot of writing. The text details and celebrates the history of the place, from the selling off of the underwater lots in the mid 1800s (when it still belonged to Mexico!) to the building of a new yacht marina 150 years later.

I am pleased to see that some of the boats from Water Squatters still survive – quite a feat! There is also a new wave of fantastical boats more solid and well built than the ones before. One even looks just like the Taj Mahal! It is obvious it is a desirable place to live, with prices rivalling those of houses on land, going for over 1 million dollars! The book gives much attention to the houseboats, with a fascinating amount of time dedicated to the interiors of these inspirational craft. There must be over a thousand different boats throughout the area, from arks (houses on stilts) to the marina based houseboats and those permanently at anchor.

It is hard to fully explain the variety of boats to be seen in Sausalito. Both of these books have made me want to go and visit the place. It is exciting to see

such a vibrant community openly celebrating their association with water.

Finally I will mention **The Houseboat Book**. In many ways this is my favourite book. It is a very manageable size, and looks at boat dwelling worldwide, and then concentrates on the interiors and exteriors of some houseboats from all over America. Many of the boats are seen in Kathy Shaffer's book, including the boat on the front cover "The Train Wreck". The pictures are excellent. There is also a lot of detail about each houseboat.

At the end of the book there is a view to the future, with serious consideration of using lakes and rivers etc for off grid sustainable living.

## WUSIG

### ***BW Mooring consultations go to press in October***

Although it's been a long time coming, British Waterways have announced that the consultation documents for the review of BW's Online Mooring Policy together with a separate but equally important consultation on their Residential Mooring Policy will be launched before mid October.

Sally Ash and her colleagues have redrafted these documents a number of times after listening to input from a number of boating organisations in a pre-consultation exercise which started after the initiative was announced at the April WUSIG meeting. A major alteration has been the separation of the consultation into two separate papers – one for online moorings and one covering residential mooring issues.

Once issued, the consultation is expected to take around 12 weeks so please look out for the documents and let BW know your views. Sally Ash has said that she would like to move forward with implementation of any changes as soon as possible, once the new boating team structure is in place, an exercise which is taking place as I write and is part of the BW policy to cut out a tier of middle management.

*Howard Anguish.*

## OVERHEARD ON THE TOWPATH

"I wouldn't mind living on one of those barges, but I don't think I could cope with all those water rats"

## CAROLE'S CONTRASTS

### ***From the ridiculous.....***

We all know that you can please some of the people some of the time, and so on. 2009 seems to be the year when BW have the mowing sorted: we've cruised the East Midlands, Yorkshire, and Northwest areas, and spoken to friends cruising the West Midlands and South regions, and, excluding the Selby Canal, everywhere looks neat and tidy, with grass cut to the edge. We even saw mowing taking place when it didn't look as if it needed doing! As a result, the canal corridor looks an attractive place to visit, and people were doing just that.

BUT, and there has to be a but, what a sad and sorry state the locks are in, especially on the Calder and Hebble Navigation and the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. I can count on two hands (and I think I'm being generous) the number of locks which have all paddles working - it was not unusual to find three out of four top paddles out of action. The locks themselves have not been scoured out, previously part of the annual maintenance programme, they leak dreadfully (BW's own literature calls these pissers!), and relatively new gates, supposed to last for twentyfive years, give the impression that they don't fit properly as the leakage is so bad. BW aware only adds to frustration. levels. Then there's the DEFRA rash, that stuff with holes in which guards anything from a collapsed bit of towpath to a non-working paddle. In its pristine state, it is bright orange, most of it these days is pale pink, testament to the amount of time it's been there without any repairs being done. I ask myself whether such deterioration can really have happened over the last couple of years since the DEFRA grant cuts, or whether a bad maintenance programme over many years is responsible.

### ***..... to the sublime***

West of Wigan, on the once remainder section of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, it is a different story. The locks appear to be better cared for, the waterway is wide and deep, trees and bushes growing out from the bank have been cut down and treated to prevent regrowth, and a boat can actually get along. Even the stretch into Liverpool, although by no means perfect, is an awful lot better than it used to be. And if you haven't been to Liverpool this year, **YOU MUST GO!** It is a destination not to be missed. By the time we had tied up the boat in Salthouse Dock, I felt humbled, that such a lot of money has been spent (grants etc.) to enable me to get there, then to moor in a prime location so close to Liverpool One and its retail opportunities, for free, with BW staff wanting to offer a service to boaters so that we just sat on our boats and enjoyed the trip, being welcomed by the Harbourmaster. In this instance, boats and boaters have been put first, and all the hard work getting to Wigan in the first place disappeared from memory (give or take the writing of this article!). It brought tears to my eyes.

More of this please.



### Assessing the costs

I - and I'm sure many other members - appreciated, if not actually enjoyed, reading John Slee's analysis of boating costs in the July edition of NABO NEWS. I'm also sure that - as often happens with such surveys - most of us were keen to check how 'normal' we were, by comparing with others in our category; but in this case I guess that many of us were, at the same time, more than a bit embarrassed that we'd not actually submitted our own data in the first place. Lets all promise to do better next time, because the bigger the sample the more meaningful the data will be.

Having categorised our boat (if not actual boating) 'profile' as somewhere between N/B A, and N/B B on Johns chart, I was surprised to see how much more expensive some people find their boating than we do ours. I don't think that items such as blacking or a BSS certificate should be regarded as an annual cost; I think they need dividing by a 'frequency factor': but this is a relatively 'small beer' saving. In cost terms the 'big-un' is obviously 'moorings', and here those of us who are members of AWCC clubs do benefit considerably - as also do those of us who do DIY maintenance.

To my mind the costs involved in boating are only one side of the coin. For more than 30 years I have kept detailed logs of not just costs but also benefits - in terms of cruising data [both on our original (second-hand) boat and our 'new' boat (now 12 years old)]. Our boating style has always been predominantly 'weekending'.

However, on our original boat - due to full time working and other attractions at the time - we only averaged 31 days of use per year. This meant that our operating costs [excluding purchase price, sale price (at a profit) and many man-weeks of maintenance time] equated to £52.50 per day, or £11.65 per hour, or £4.77 per mile - whereas, now that we are (in theory) retired, we average some 63 to 64 days per year on our 'new' boat. This means that our annual costs (excluding capital, and its cost) for the period 1997 - 2008 now average out at £31.00 per day, £7.90 per hour, or £3.60 per mile. I rate this as a significant improvement - particularly in view of the massive cost increases that have taken place over the years (We used to buy diesel at around 50p per gallon, and now its more than that per litre before tax !). Our average days cruising time has dropped from 4.5 hours to 4.0 hours, and our average speed from 3.2 LM/hr to 2.9 LM/hr - with consequent improvements in both fuel consumption and appreciation of our surroundings.

We are all a bit different - thank goodness ! But nevertheless I think that we should all feed all our differing data 'into the pot' (sorry John but I think you're going to have a much more 'interesting' job to do next year). Despite all our differences - involving boat type, boating style, boat utilisation etc. I'm sure that this exercise confirms one thing that many of us have in common, and have suspected (or subconsciously accepted) for a long time: and that is a belief in what I contend is the best definition of my kind of boat :-

< n\_ \_rrow \_boat: a depression in a canal, lined with steel – that absorbs money. >.

*Ian Fletcher.*  
*Nb. 'API.Wanderer.'*

## **The state of the waterways**

As we travel around the system we are bound to see the deterioration. Soft edges, muddy waters, broken bridges, suspect structures..... In many places the waterway is narrowed by excessive vegetation reaching out to scratch the boat. Been like it for many years with no real sign of maintenance. Some of the old brick arched bridges are in a near state of collapse.

This year several canals have been closed and some undergone emergency repair during their summer use. Even some of the facilities for boaters are 'on the edge' of closing. At one place near Milton Keynes the water was off for a while and the waste disposal suspended due to fly tipping. Some Elsan drains have been left blocked for some time. Since the end of August we have noticed more bags of rubbish dumped in the hedgerows.

So it seems there is plenty to do to keep our valuable waterways open, clean and tidy. But does our government have the will to do so? Their own laws and regulations say they should. What must our foreign tourists think of our dirty untidy country side? Will they come again?

Perhaps we should be encouraging those groups of people who do have the will to look after our waterways and countryside. Like the various Trust organisations associated with the waterways and countryside.

Charles Moore

## **To the Editor**

Bit strange to write to the Editor about the Editor but wanted to say on behalf of all the members of NABO and your Council Colleagues over the past ten years how much your work and efforts ( and those of Carole) have been appreciated. I have been privileged to be able to help for the past couple of years and have been impressed by the respect you and other members of Council receive from the Government, BW, EA and other Waterways Organisations and Groups. I am sure boat owners who are not members of NABO fail to realise how much effort goes in to representing their interests and how much they perhaps benefit. Please join with me in thanking Stuart Sampson for his time and many hours of effort on our behalf over the past ten years and wish him well in following his and Carole's dream of touring Europe (delayed by this flaming recession!).

*Richard Carpenter*  
*General Secretary*  
*n.b. Elysium Rufford*

PS. Its worth noting we still have two members of Council who have served for even longer: Stephen and Geoffrey – and they plan to stand again!

## **The Gap Analysis initiative?**

Just in case you're putting something in NN about this, have you added diesel gap analysis? I think NABO should be starting to lobby about this. Maybe this is something that we should be talking to our partner associations about, particularly RBOA, who had an article and letter in their latest copy of *Soundings*.

I have noticed several people on forums etc commenting on the

decreasing number of boatyards that are selling diesel - or is it the increasing number of boatyards that are stopping selling diesel? More of them seem to be selling at one price: 60/40. Was it IWA and RYA that got us into this mess originally by agreeing that a 60/40 split was typical? I wonder if IWA are now ready to go back to HMRC and explain the effect that split pricing is having? I wonder what BW think - and if they are aware of the deteriorating availability? Maybe if the boating organisations thrash this out soon among themselves and then talk to HMRC, we can avoid HMRC saying that only 60/40 is going to be allowed?

I realise that a single price of 60/40 would be unpopular - particularly with continuous cruisers and residential boaters. So here is a suggestion, just to get the debate up and running.

Would a two-price arrangement would be better? Add 5% tax to the current 0% domestic price and allow registered continuous cruisers and residential boaters to pay at that rate, by showing an HMRC-approved card, obtained through BW/EA at licensing time. All other boaters pay at the 60%/40% price. That would probably maintain HMRC's income but reduce the paperwork for boatyards, who claim they don't make money on diesel, and speed the paying process. This is bound to be unpopular with some people, understandably so, but if we are to keep diesel on the cut and prevent the need to lug jerry cans to the nearest garage, with the risk of spillage at the boat, maybe this is something we have to put up with.

Of course, the other option for boatyards is to put the price up so that they do make a bit on fuel sales? Why don't they think of that? If they don't

service the boaters there won't be any boaters to service.

*John Slee*

### **Stuart adds:**

I wasn't going to say anything about Facility Gap Analysis because it seemed a dead duck, however now John mentions it ...

As an individual I did tender a first level complaint this year about the lack of refuse disposal between Litherland (Liverpool) and Castlefields in Manchester. (Yes, there is an unmarked door at Burscough and something at Moss Bridge (35) that we missed). As part of that complaint I bemoaned the demise of the Facility Gap Analysis project that Sally Ash was overseeing a few years ago. Sally took it up:-

*'This question has come up at at least one WUSIG meeting over the past couple of years where I think you were present.'* [Howard Anguish has been the NABO rep at these for some years now, but nonetheless...] *'We have explained that other priorities prevent us doing further work on this at present. However, in the spirit of greater user engagement, I'd be very happy for NABO or any other group to collect the necessary data, which could then be mapped and integrated into our local plans. Let me know if you'd be interested in leading this initiative.'*

### **Anyone up for it?**

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*Penalty  
Legal?*



*RCR Advert*





## *eavesdrops from under the Council table*

All the bods were back, and there was a ladybod (no not a misprint!!) – they must have been reading my comments after all! This ladybod was not the cuddly bear she was billed as but a feisty thing with a mission! As I settled into my little spot I could feel the growing anger amongst them all and knew it was going to be a serious few hours.

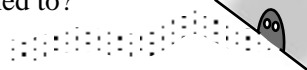
It turned out to be seven altogether and you felt they would have gone on longer if they had been allowed, cos they are getting fired up over their old rival BW - big time! He continues to fail to provide facilities he should in return for their licence money and he's now hounding the wrong people over the way he sorts out moorings, the pricing of them and how they see people who continuously cruise, particularly those that cruise the smaller unconnected waterways. From them trying to be helpful and consulting all the time I got the impression they may get a bit more difficult with BW in the future.

The legal advice they have been getting (all discussed in low voices to try and make sure BW didn't get to hear) is pretty damning it seems. (Hmm! as I know what they were talking about – a promise of limitless supplies of food might persuade me to spill the beans? BW?. Nah, perhaps not, I'd be stepped on by the big bod in a second when they next come here, I suspect!).

I've watched these bods now for nearly a year and I continue to be amazed by their knowledge and depth of the Inland Waterways and their passion for the future. Whilst it's about boats and facilities for them first and foremost, its more than that – they really care about the waterway systems and their future heritage – most of their comments point to the fact that their mate- this BW fella – is not the bloke to take proper care of them – confidence is very low! They are really worried (as are some of their mates in other waterways support organisations) that poor management, vested interests and a fear of upsetting their government paymasters will result in a serious breakdown of the canal infrastructure. (Big words for a bug eh? I must admit – I just heard one of them say them!).

At the end they were a bit sad, my bods, cos a couple of them were leaving and one in particular who has a propensity to show his knees from time to time has been doing a lot of the jobs for years! They have to go through some sort of election in order to come here every six weeks to get their lunch so I hope all their electors turn out at their AGM to support them – remember without them I don't get the quality of scraps I have become accustomed to?

I'm off to my little crevasse till the next time!



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# NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AGM  
PULL OUT

The 18th Annual General Meeting of the National Association of Boat Owners will be held on Saturday 21st November 2009 at Wolverhampton Boat Club commencing at 10.45 a.m. (Coffee at 10.15 a.m.)

The agenda will be as follows:-

1. Apologies for absence
2. To agree the minutes of the 2008 AGM
3. To receive the Chairman's report
4. To receive the financial statements for the year ended 31/3/2009
5. To determine the annual subscription fees
6. To appoint the auditor
7. To elect Council members for the year 2009-2010
8. Questions from the floor to the new Council.

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A buffet lunch will be provided, donations for same will be gratefully received.

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9. Open meeting with **Richard Fairhurst, Editor, Waterways World**
- 

## CANDIDATES' ELECTION STATEMENTS:-

### HOWARD ANGUISH

I would welcome the opportunity to continue to represent boaters and share boaters in particular in general in the coming year, which promises to be challenging.

### SUE BURCHETT

There is a lack of female representation on Council so someone is needed to keep them in order! I am no feminist or even "PC"! Having been on Council ( a former Chairman) before I have a rough idea what I am letting myself in for and so I hope you will elect me.

### RICHARD CARPENTER

62 year old businessman with 30 years experience in Avertising and Marketing. Hired narrowboats since the mid 70's, owned his own since 2002. Passionate about our Canals Heritage and keen to continue to support the talented and knowledgeable people that work on NABO Council. Gen Secretary for the past year.

### ANDY COLLIER

I have enjoyed being on council for the last few years. I am happy to continue using my experience of boating and boat building to help NABO represent boat owners. I have a particular interest in continuous cruising and issues in the South West.

## **DAVID FLETCHER**

I offer some time and experience to NABO, having recently retired from a technical career in the oil industry. I feel that there is a real and urgent need for boaters' interests to be represented to the navigation authorities.

I am particularly interested in the Boat Safety Scheme, and hope I can contribute to the workings of that. I have owned all sorts of small craft for more than 25 years, and happy to share that experience. I have been a NABO member since 2000, and attended two council meetings in 2008 prior to joining Council.

## **STEPHEN PETERS**

If members wish to re elect me I would be delighted to continue to serve as Treasurer of the Association. I will represent the interests of all boat owners including those like myself with craft based on Rivers. Membership of NABO represents excellent value for money – we are lucky to have talented, hard working council members who are prepared to fight to safeguard and promote our investments in our pastimes.

## **SIMON ROBBINS**

Despite another deeply frustrating year and feeling that so much of what we say to BW on your behalf rarely impacts on what I often feel is their pre-determined agenda, I'm still up for trying for another year to persuade them of the benefits of listening harder to their boating customers.

## **GEOFFREY ROGERSON**

My prime contribution to NABO is ensuring all restrictions placed on boaters are legally sound, and I am keen to carry on in this role. I also have an interest in the long term future of the waterways in view of the number of new boats being built over the next 10 years and the lack of new marinas or moorings.

## **JOHN SLEE**

Having navigated the inland waterways for 46 years, continuously cruising for the past 13 months, I am well aware of the wonderful variety of canals and rivers available. Having seen the canals restored, I am saddened by the recent DEFRA cuts in funding and am determined to help reverse the trend. As a continuous cruiser, as defined by the BW guidelines, I support the rights to enjoy the waterways without additional licence charges. I have served as a co-opted member of Council for the past 8 months and seek full election this time.

# Finding Wolverhampton Boat Club

**Postcode = WV8 1RS      Landranger grid = SJ 889 028**

## BY RAIL

Bilbrook station is 6 minutes away by train from Wolverhampton. Trains are hourly on Saturdays leaving at 25 minutes past the hour. From there either use a taxi or contact Richard (Gen Sec) to see if a lift can be arranged

## BY ROAD

### From the Northwest

From **M6 J10A** go **right** on to the **M54**

### From the South and East

Using the **M42, M40** or **M6**, head for **M6 J10A**

Go **left** onto the **M54**

### From the Northeast

From the **M1** use the **A38** to Lichfield

Go **right** on to the **A5** towards Cannock and **left** on the **A460** then **right** onto to the **M54**

### From the Southwest

Follow the **A449** through Kidderminster to Wolverhampton or turn off the **M5** at **J2** to join the **A449** at Wolverhampton. 3 miles after leaving the Wolverhampton ring road Turn **left** at the roundabout - Wobaston Rd

Turn **left** off **M54** at **J2** on to the **A449** heading South

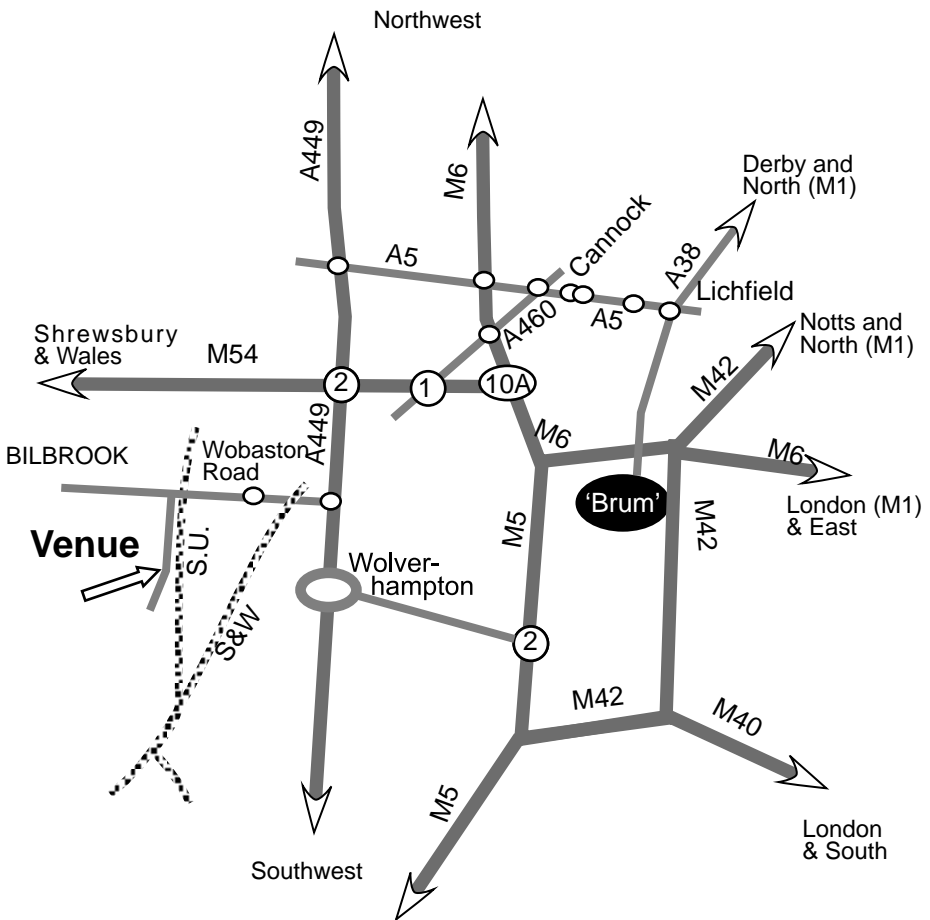
Turn **right** at the next roundabout - Wobaston Road

Head west along Wobaston Road about 2 miles crossing the Staffs & Worcs, one roundabout and then the Shropshire Union. Immediately turn **left** into Barnhurst Lane beside the canal to venue

## BY WATER

Wolverhampton Boat Club is on the Shropshire Union Canal north of Pendeford, between bridges 3 and 4. If you plan to come by boat we suggest you ring Peter Wood to arrange a berth on

**01588 672643 or 07890 209217**



# NAVIGATION OFFICE PHONE NUMBER MAP

