



NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners

Issue 4 – July 2010

WHERE'S ALL THE WATER GONE?
Problems in the Pennines

ELECTRICITY ON YOUR BOAT
The essentials demystified

BW RESPONDS TO NABO'S
WATERWAYS CONDITION SURVEY

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NABO News

Issue 4 – July 2010

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Low Warehouse Lock, Gargrave on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal

NABO Calendar 2010

AGM: 27th November at Wolverhampton Boat Club (as last year), the confirmed guest speaker will be Simon Salem, Marketing and Customer Service Director of British Waterways.

Council meetings*: Sep 4th. Further dates will be set at the AGM.

NABO News Copy dates: 17th July, 9th Oct, 4th Dec

*Members are entitled to go to these meetings. Please arrange this with the Chairman or General Secretary, contact details on page 24.

Contributions

Articles, letters cartoons and photos are most welcome, copy dates in the calendar right Images and photos in JPEG format please

Contributions to nabonews@nabo.org.uk

Front Cover Photo Competition

Win yourself a year's free membership by sending us your idea for the front cover of the new NABO News! We like the picture to reflect the Inland Waterways, of course, and perhaps link to boat ownership – not just Narrowboats!

Send us your own favourite, we like portrait shape as we have to fit the usual stuff on the cover. We also need you to indicate that you give permission for it to be published – any we choose and we sort out your membership subscription next time for free!!

Only digital pictures in JPEG format can be considered and should be available at least 1750 pixels wide - though in the first instance send us something a little smaller than this.

Editor's column

Richard Carpenter

Doing this guest editor bit is harder than it seems! But, determined to follow on with our aim of presenting NABO with a new image I hope our members and readers (we send copies to as many people in Government, BW, the EA and other user groups as we can) like our attempts?

As General Secretary my role is to try and ensure we have a smooth running organisation bearing in mind that all our Council, Regional Representatives and advisers give up a lot of free time and energy working on behalf of all members and indeed all boat owners. I get to see all those who apply to join us and also read letters from those who leave. We are steadily increasing our numbers and hopefully our new efforts to promote ourselves are helping with that. Most leavers are as a result of boat sales and each one has written with much regret and sadness to be leaving. Worryingly over the past 18 months the reasons seem to be increasingly due, in part, to rising costs and the fear of more to come. However we always seem to be encouraged by leavers to keep up NABO's efforts to ensure boat owning voices are heard at all levels within the Inland Waterways and to do battle when its needed.

I did have one letter from a resigning member this month however who said he didn't like the way NABO continually knocked BW in particular, that we should get behind them more and not support those continuous cruisers and itinerants who give the system a bad name! I need his permission to publish his letter but hope to do so in the next issue of NABO News together with a more detailed response. But for now I want to assure all our members,(and our readers from BW and others), that all our efforts go into helping



and advising on boat owning issues. This will mean

- that we will be critical when we have to be
- that we consult widely with boat owners of all sorts,
- that we are very well balanced at Council in terms of our range of ownerships and cruising patterns,
- that all owners are represented throughout the country at BW User groups - our representatives are leading in working with BW on local issues and advisory forums.

In addition we are very instrumental in developing a network of volunteers who will be needed in the future however our inland waterways structure ends up. However it is vital to us that we do have feedback – even a chat on the phone will do - to ensure we are concentrating on the issues you want us to – and that applies to boat owners who are not members too!

Only a flea bite?

David Fletcher

So the election is over and we are now facing the wait to see what consideration our canals and rivers will deserve in these constrained times. There has been a good start with the new DEFRA and Waterways Ministers having been selected from waterways constituencies and who have knowledge of the issues. The Prime Minister is asking for input as to where the cost cutting has to take place, and we all have to contribute to making the case. Please do press your own MPs before the summer recess.

There is also a general theme about Government doing less, and local initiative taking ownership. This could be interpreted as de nationalising the waterways, but I suspect in our case it could and would be interpreted as general support for BW's initiative of the third sector. I do think that long term influence from Government and specifically the Treasury will never work, as it never did for British Railways. BR were another child of the 1962 Transport Act, and always suffered because the question was never asked, "what railway system does the Country need" and "how much do we need to spend". It was always ended up as "how can we save money by doing things for the bare minimum", and then it went wrong. We ended up with the railways years behind

the Continent. The sooner we get BW away from Government the better.

But I did laugh the other day when the Lib Dems commented on the funds raised from the last Government's "Non Doms" tax. It was said to be around £130 million, and described as "only a flea bite". Well if it's only a flea bite, can we have it for the waterways please? It will do nicely! Nick Clegg voted against DEFRA cuts when in opposition. What will he do now?

Val and I had an interesting cruise on the Leicester ring, going to and returning from Crick. I am pleased to say that we had no major issues with the condition of these waterways,



John Slee, David Fletcher and Richard Carpenter on the NABO stand at the Crick Boat Show. Picture by Fiona Slee.

but there were as always some problems. The Leicester Arm and the Soar were quiet and very pretty, but some parts are so overgrown that they give the impression of the African Queen. I am particularly sensitive about offside overhanging trees and brambles. The boat was painted in the winter and we have no wish for heavy scratches just now. There were plenty of moorings and there was water under the boat, though I acknowledge that our draft does not make this an objective test. And there are still too many boats out there with no licences, including one workboat from BW. It highlighted again for me the importance of being clear about maintenance priorities as we boaters see it, and then telling BW. If we don't tell them, they will just do what they think best. As John is closing out the waterways condition survey results, I get the feeling that one of the main benefits to BW of this survey work, is this prioritisation. There might well be easier ways to achieve this result. What are your priorities?

Talking of licences, BW have announced the fee increases for 2010-11, and there is a report elsewhere. I regard this as a good result. There is a small evenly distributed contribution for upkeep which meets BW current business plan, and many other aspects are in agreement with our wishes. I would like to see a longer term commitment to a formula for increases as I feel that boaters, a large percentage of whom are on fixed and low incomes, should be able to plan ahead without the fear of budget busting increases. The new fees will not come into place until August, which is late. BW have been slow in finalising their plans. Whilst for some boaters this is nice, as they will avoid the increases until next year, it represents a loss of revenue for BW. As they constantly tell us there is so much they cannot do for lack of funding, I find the delay inexplicable.

I very much enjoyed talking to members and other boaters at Crick, and I would like to thank all those who attended and contributed. All the stand team came away with sore throats and tired legs but a good feeling about getting our presence out there with boaters, and talking boating all day. Richard Carpenter has worked hard to produce impressive display materials and we particularly owe him a big "thank you". Council want to take the stand to other shows, particularly the smaller ones. Many of the boaters we spoke to at Crick had not heard of NABO, and were immediately interested in what we do when visiting the stand. So I conclude that we need to keep up our profile. Please do recruit for us whilst you are out there on the water.

I wish you good boating in the summer months.



Laplander, 1830s steam powered ice breaker at Crick. Photo by David Merrett.

BW Consultation on Winter Stoppages

BW Public Consultation on Winter Stoppages Planning 2010 – 2011

This year, for the first time, BW is encouraging more active involvement of waterway users in planning the timetable of works. They are inviting you to review the provisional plans prepared by their local works planners and to help them spot opportunities for better coordination to minimise disruption.

There are two phases of consultation. The first was from late April until the end of May; the second will be for about three weeks starting at the end of June. Between these periods, their works planners will review user

comments and make adjustments “where it’s sensible and practical to do so”. They will also, during this period, have been working with the external contractors to pin down the stoppage periods more precisely than was reflected in the first provisional plan.

The final version of the plan will be published in mid August and BW will also publish a digest of comments received and our response to them. At this point, the required stoppages and restrictions will be transferred to the live stoppage system.

For more details, see www.waterscape.com/things-to-do/boating/proposed-stoppage

Tidal Thames/Port of London Authority – Harbour Revision Order

Simon Robbins

The NABO Council is considering whether and if so how we should respond to the current Port of London Authority consultation on a new Harbour Revision Order. We have had no direct queries from members on this so far but other boaters have raised some concerns about the detailed implications for private boaters moored on the PLA. Details of the consultation are available on the PLA website: www.pla.co.uk/display_fixedpage.cfm/id/4001/site/pla

Although the consultation may have ended by the time you receive NABO News, we are also in contact with colleagues from the Barge Association who have a much more active representation structure on the PLA and will offer whatever support we can to the Barge Association in this matter. Can any members who wish to raise matters through

Council contact Simon Robbins who will be coordinating our work on this, both as Council Member for Moorings Matters and as London Regional Rep.

Avon Navigation Trust

Following the recent merger of the Lower and Upper Avon navigation trusts covering Shakespeare’s Avon you may wish to note that the new controlling body is called the Avon Navigation Trust Ltd.

The address is

Mill Wharf, Mill Lane, Wyre Piddle,

Pershore, Worcs. WR10 2JF

Telephone 01386 552517

Fax 01386 556881

Navigation incident hotline 0300 999 2010

Waterways Wanderers — guarded response from NABO!

Details have been published of the new arrangements which open up new stretches for fishing not previously let on BW Canals. A couple of the guidelines do not sit well with NABO who are starting a dialogue with BW for clarification.

A full copy of the Scheme and the Canals affected can be found on the NABO web site and on BW's.

The guidelines make it clear where people can fish from - for example, not within 25 metres of a lock approach, swing bridge or water point, or between boats on permanent towing path moorings or at visitor moorings where so signed. The contentious point is that BW indicate that a fisherman can fish on visitor moorings where there is no sign prohibiting them but with boaters having priority during the "boating season"; at other times access will be on a first come first served basis.

Our point is that, quite apart from a potential for personal conflict with our angling friends, the term "boating season" contradicts the terms of a 12-month licence and is anathema to our continuous cruising members, who require visitor moorings at all times. Turning up at a mooring during the colder, wetter part of the year and then having to debate with a fisherman about who has first rights is not a nice prospect.

We have been pressing for a change to give all boaters priority on visitor "moorings" at all times! In addition we pressed for a clearer definition of 25 metres – we believe this should be of a lock, swing bridge or water point "landing" – not just the structure itself. We are assured by BW that these issues will be addressed.

No Nothing Allowed Nowhere

This from Barrowford on the Leeds and Liverpool – with so little water they have just room at the bottom for a sign saying "No Boating"!



Electricity on Board

the first of a series of articles by Chas Moore on boat electrics

We know that most of our members and readers are experienced and practical but as at least one of your Editors read this article and realised that many may be like him, basically not very clued up! There will be a lot of crew members who might find this short series helpful in at least understanding what the Cap'n might be going on about! We are always happy to receive items like this that perhaps simplifies practical boating so if you have some experience - get writing! Thanks also to Trevor Fellows for helping us to break down one complete article into a small series.

I have lived on a boat for many years since retiring from a career in electronic engineering and I realise that there are many misunderstandings about electricity. I think it is important to have at least a basic understanding of your electrical system so that you can keep it operating at its designed output, stay safe, and even be able to identify the cause of a problem or rectify a fault.

First the basics:

You can think of electricity as water flowing through a system: the voltage (measured in Volts) is akin to the water pressure in pipes, and the current (measured in Amps) is the flow of water from a tap. Power (measured in Watts) is the product of pressure and flowrate. Mains power from a landline is supplied as an 'alternating current' (AC) at a 'pressure' of 240 V. An alternator on the engine supplies power as 'direct current' (DC) at a 'pressure' of 14 V (or sometimes 28 V) to charge batteries. DC power is safe because the voltage is low, but 240 V power is dangerous because of the current it can push through your body. On some boats there are also alternators or inverters that supply 240 V AC. Alternators only generate power when the engine is running, whereas inverters supply power whether the engine is running or not. Inverters do not generate power but they convert DC power from the batteries to 240VAC. Likewise, batteries do not generate electricity; they are used to store it: think of them as a container full of energy that needs topping up as the energy is used.

Electrical equipment

Onboard electrical and electronic equipment consumes power, and is rated in either Watts or kilowatts (kW). A kilowatt is a thousand Watts and a kW hour is one unit of mains electricity. The power required by a piece of equipment is shown on the label as the voltage and current. It is of course important to supply the correct voltage to appliances, and 240VAC equipment will not work with a DC power supply and vice versa. The higher the power of equipment the more current it consumes, and the higher the price you will have to pay to generate that power - either in engine fuel for driving an alternator or for electricity consumed from a landline. If the power comes from the batteries, they will need charging more often.

If you don't have a landline, it is recommended to run the engine to meet a power requirement above 250W because using the batteries on their own will cause them to discharge too rapidly. Figure 1 gives you an idea of how much power may be required on a boat. Run the engine for the following 240VAC appliances:

Fig 1: 240VAC power requirements

	Power (W)
Kettle	900–2000
Microwave	600–1000
Vacuum cleaner	700–1000
Washing machine	~1300

Figure 2: Domestic Low Voltage Energy Audit (12V)

	Power (W)	Time Used	Watt Hours	Amp Hours (WH/13V)
Bath pump	104	15 min	26	2
Boiler pump	26	2 hours	52	4
Colour TV	60	5 hours	300	23
Computer	100	4 hours	400	31
Fridge *	26	24 hours	624	48
Lights **	10	8 hours x 2	160	12.3
Loo pump	52	15 min	13	1
Printer	60	30 min	30	2.3
Radio	13	8 hours	104	8
Reading lamp **	11	4 hours	44	3.4
Video	30	1 hour	30	2.3
Water pump	52	30 min	26	2

* The fridge or freezer is 'on' all the time but draws 4 Amps while the motor is running.

** See note on lighting below.

The alternator and inverter must be capable of delivering the power for the equipment and if it is not sufficient you will have to rely on shore power.

The energy audit in Figure 2 above is only a rough guide and you will need to work out your own data, but in practice my boat uses about 60 Amp Hours (AH) per day.

A note on lighting

Incandescent lights are power hungry and it is preferable to use fluorescent lights, which use 80% less power. A single-tube lamp is 8W, which draws 0.6Amps and a double-tube will provide sufficient white light to read by. Mains voltage low energy lights are similar to fluorescent and a 16W input provides 100 W light output. 10W halogen lights are efficient and last longer. Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) are the most efficient: a 1.8W cluster of 9 LEDs produces a similar amount of light to a fluorescent tube, but although their power requirement is very low they need a voltage regulator circuit as they are voltage sensitive.



There is a good choice of lighting available for boats

Batteries

Batteries store energy using a chemical reaction between acid and lead plates, which needs time to react during charging and discharging. Sealed Absorbent Glass Mat (AGM) batteries have the acid absorbed and immobilized by fine fibreglass mats between the plates. This allows a faster reaction between the acid and lead plates. The method of construction also enables purer lead to be used in the plates because, unlike traditional lead-acid batteries, they do not need to support their own weight. The purer lead has an extremely low internal electrical resistance, which combined with faster acid migration, allows AGM batteries to deliver and absorb higher rates of current than other batteries during discharging and charging. Also, because they are completely sealed they can't spill, do not need periodic topping up with distilled water, and emit no corrosive fumes.



AGM batteries have several advantages over traditional lead-acid types

Battery capacity is rated as Amp-Hours (AH). For example, a fully charged 100AH battery can deliver 5 Amps for 20 hours before it is drained. However, it is not as simple as that: batteries generally cannot charge above 80% capacity and you must not discharge them below 50% capacity or you will damage the battery. Therefore, you can only use 30% of the stated capacity. So for a 100AH battery

there is only 30 AH available, or 5 Amps for 6 hours. If you discharge at 10 Amps the battery will last for 3 hours or less.

Boats have two types of battery: an engine starter battery has a large number of thin plates and can deliver bursts of energy with the high current needed to start an engine, but it has lower capacity. Domestic batteries run the appliances on board and have a small number of thick plates that are designed to deliver a lower current for a longer period of time. The thick plates are high in capacity but require more time to deliver and accept current. For most domestic batteries, this requires running the engine for 2-4 hours per day to keep them charged.

The electrolyte level in each cell of traditional lead-acid batteries should be checked occasionally (say four times per year), and if necessary topped up with distilled water (never tap water). They are designed to charge/discharge about 300 times, and as batteries get older you find they need charging for longer to maintain the voltage. If they are persistently dry, use a multimeter to check that the charging voltage is not too high (between 14.0 and 14.4V). If it is correct then the batteries may need replacing. It is best to replace all the domestic batteries at the same time because one 'bad' battery will become a load on the others, like leaving a light on all the time.

In the next issue I will look at battery charging and battery management. If you have any questions or comments on your own experience with different batteries or appliances, NABO News would be pleased to hear from you. There are many good books on boat electrics, but one I find easy to understand is *Practical Boat Owner's Electrics Afloat: A Complete Step by Step Guide for Boat Owners*, by Alastair Garrod, published by Adlard Coles Nautical (www.adlardcoles.co.uk) at around £20. I will give a more comprehensive list of sources of information on boat electrics at the end of the series.

Leeds and Liverpool Canal – serious water problems

Tony Haynes, NB Dreamcatcher

We are trying to provide NABO members the opportunity to have their own say on issues and whilst, at Council level, our dealings with the people who run our waterways have to be more tactful perhaps than Tony is here, his views are heard and quite widely supported by many boaters – what do you think?

I write from the summit pound of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. The level is slowly sinking.

Why? For one reason. But that reason is evidenced by three contributory factors. Firstly, the canal leaks like a sieve. Secondly, there is a great lack of ongoing maintenance. Thirdly, we have inadequate reservoirs.

What do I believe is the core reason for these factors? Instead of using funding sensibly, BW has spent the money on building up a property portfolio which is now next to useless due to the recession. I still vividly remember Executive Director Robin Evans, some years ago, addressing a National Association of Boat Owners Annual General Meeting with the incredulous idea that the waterways should become self funding by 2012.

Our hearts sank then. They are still sinking. Although this policy is now evident to all as a load of old rubbish British Waterways senior management are now trying to head up a new Waterways Trust.

Do we trust 'em?

However BW, why should we trust you? You have made a right pig's ear of our waterway system. BW senior executives have also paid themselves a lot of money, plus bonuses, at our expense. Quite frankly, were they worth it?

BW keep issuing Press releases telling us how good the waterways are. You know what? I really resent that impertinence! They take our money but they also take us boaters for fools if they think we will believe their rhetoric spindrift. They state that we are trouble-makers when our concern for our waterways leads us to question their judgement.

We all know the system is collapsing around our fenders because they have misspent our money on ludicrous policies. Spin is actually lies, and when they state to MPs that the waterway system is in good shape, aren't they just telling lies?

Resign!

The best thing that could happen would be for BW's Board to resign en bloc, and to leave the organisation of a Waterways Trust to those who actually care about canals. That's us, the boaters and the ground staff who have been replaced, over the years, by temporary seasonal workers, agency personnel and sub-contractors.

Let's look again at the current drought situation. Our reservoirs are inadequate, evidenced by the fact that not three months ago, our rivers were in flood. All that water was lost to the sea. Leakage is the main problem as illustrated here on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, due to poor investment in maintenance.

The photographs show broken paddle gear, collapsing banks and worn, leaking lock gates that should have been replaced. I coined the expression 'Defra Rash' three years ago around hazardous situations and for the most part its still there, with weeds growing through it in profusion.

It is ugly. It ruins the beautiful aspect of the Pennine waterways. It ought to be subject to planning permission, it has been there so long. Why haven't the problems it surrounds been fixed? It is also very vulnerable to vandals. Get Defra Rash wrapped around your prop and you will be down the weed-

hatch for a very long time. The only way of controlling water shortage is for BW to issue restrictions on boat movements. It costs us a fortune to licence, moor and fuel our boats nowadays. And what are we getting for our money? Increased restrictions!

A disgrace

Lock usage has been limited to between 0900 and 1630 daily This does not save water. It merely concentrates boat passages. Okay, so maybe a couple more boats might share a lock, but that could have been done anyway. Without time limitations boaters might just wait until another boat comes along in the same direction, but by restricting times of operation, they won't. They will be rushing about to try to get through locks before they close, and hurrying causes accidents, sometimes very bad ones.

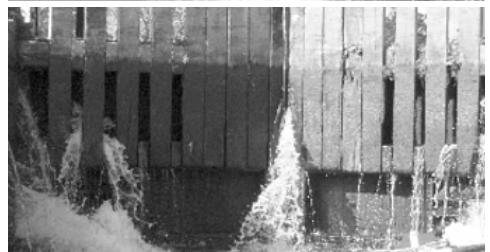
And what is all this about Barrowford locks on the Leeds & Liverpool being closed over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend because cement was unavailable? Does that mean that BW don't store cement any more, anywhere in the country? If not, why not? Mistaken policies again?

I do hope that a new Waterways Trust is not mismanaged by the same people who have made our waterways what they are today. Except for one or two honey pot locations, tarted up for the public, they are a disgrace.

I live more in hope than expectation.

Since this was written the water problems have increased considerably – at the time of going to press locking was probably going to be reduced to only three days of open locks per week. Check with BW Northwest before planning journeys up the Wigan Flight and across to Leeds or the other way of course – restrictions are going to be pretty tight we hear!

This is an edited version of an article published by narrowboatworld.com and the photographs are reproduced with permission.



Lack of essential maintenance on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal between Gargrave and Greenberfield. Broken paddle gear, collapsing banks and worn, leaking lock gates that should have been replaced.

NABO Waterways Condition Survey: BW Respond

John Slee

Jeff Whyatt, BW SE Waterways Unit manager and national user group liaison officer, invited me to BW's Milton Keynes office to discuss his review of last year's survey. He also explained the way each unit deals with defect notifications and plans rectification works within budgetary constraints – but more of that later.

Each waterway unit was given the task of responding to NABO members' fault reports and Jeff then produced a summary report. Table 1 shows how each region assessed its

When I looked at the detailed responses, I felt that the category “Disagree/no plans for action” was a little ambiguous. For example, one report for the Montgomery Canal highlighted the “Pound between Frankton Locks and Graham Palmer Lock” and the report said “apparent leak – will keep monitoring”. In fact I saw some of this monitoring taking place when we were on the Monty in April, so I thought Jeff was a bit harsh. Similarly, “To be Investigated” also implies positive action is being or will be

Table 1: Responses from the NABO Survey; 'Urgent Attention required'

	Completed	In hand 2010	In hand 2011 or later	To be investigated	Disagree: No plans for action	Total
SW & S	2	0	0	1	2	5
Southeast	15	18	1	12	6	52
NW & B*	1	15	0	5	1	22
London**	2	7	0	0	2	11
M & P	2	4	0	2	3	11
K & A	–	–	–	–	–	–
West Midlands	2	6	3	11	2	24
East Midlands	3	4	0	0	0	7
CS	2	8	2	22	3	37
Northwest	2	8	0	2	2	14
NE	1	5	1	1	0	8
Total	32	75	7	56	21	191
% of Total	17	39	4	29	11	100
	⌘	60% done or in hand	⌘			

* includes all category of priority ** includes medium priority

responses to matters considered urgent. The details are available on our website under Issues/Surveys, if you would like to check how BW responded to your report.

Several things need clarification. The most obvious is the lack of report from the K&A. Jeff said that the K&A unit didn't have a Works Planner/maintenance manager at the time of pulling together the summaries, but they have taken notice of the issues and followed up appropriately since then.

taken, in order to resolve the problem, rather than “we still need to get around to looking at this.”

The table only shows the urgent cases. That doesn't mean that the medium and long-term issues were ignored. In fact, I have seen some of the detailed reports from individual areas and it appears that each fault has been looked at, analysed and annotated with necessary actions, where possible.

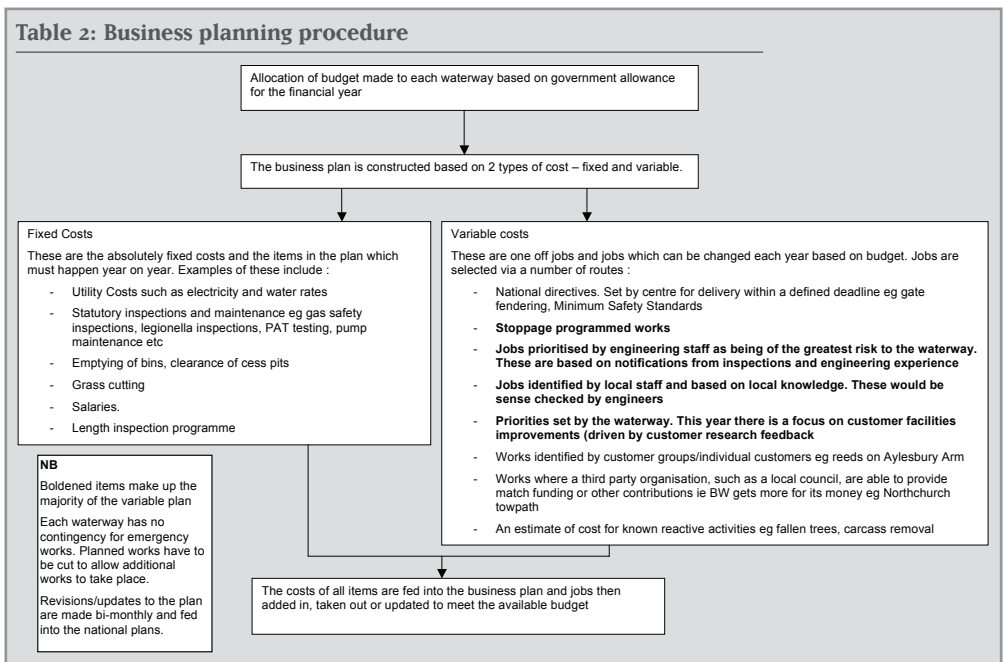
So it appears the survey has been a very useful tool for making BW aware of boaters' concerns. I was asked if we would be repeating the survey annually. We have decided not to do so for several reasons – the amount of work it took NABO to analyse the responses was greater than we anticipated; to survey again this year would probably produce a lot of similar results to last year, which would be wasteful of BW's resources to check. That is not to say that we won't repeat the exercise in the future, if it was felt to be beneficial.

However, what the survey has highlighted is that the boater's viewpoint is valuable. Jeff encourages all users to ring the relevant area office or the national customer services number 01923 201120 to report problems. They will be dealt with. Until recently, NABO had its own waterway problem reporting system on its website. Sadly, not enough use was made of it and we reluctantly withdrew it. We still believe there is a need for an internet-based system that will enable boaters to

report problems. What would be ideal would be a system that lists known problems, shows what action and urgency has been attributed to each by BW (and/or other navigation authorities) and allows for new problems to be flagged.

In the second part of our meeting, Jeff and two of his staff members, explained how the monthly walking inspections are used to update BW's asset condition database. Defects are noted on handheld computers, which show existing problems for status comparison, and then analysed and prioritised through a series of reviews back at the offices. This seemed a highly efficient process, with checks and balances to ensure a safe system while working within the budgetary constraints that we have become all too accustomed to. Jeff confirmed that operability of locks is either observed if boats are using them, or the BW operative may empty and fill a lock to check. It seemed a far cry from the day when the linesman was

Table 2: Business planning procedure



responsible for his stretch of canal and could fix things there and then.

Having fed all this into the system, it becomes part of the Business Planning procedure. Helen Sime, SE area planning engineer, produced the flowchart (Table 2 on Page 15) demonstrating how the business plan is created.

So where do we go from here? NABO will continue discussions with BW on how we can build on this open relationship. Jeff has suggested that each of our area representatives review BW's response and hopefully flesh out

some of the survey respondents' insufficiently defined comments.

I have said that we would be willing to do follow up surveys where BW feel they would be beneficial. I hope we can work toward a transparent system where users know what problems or weaknesses BW have already identified and can supplement these in real-time.

None of this is simple, but given the open channels of communication, it should be worth it to maintain the waterway system we use and love in a fit-for-purpose condition.

Peter Fellows observes his first NABO Council meeting

A not very active member of NABO for several years, I attended my first Council meeting at Oldbury in June. On the map, the venue at the Waggon and Horses appeared to be in the middle of a network of roads that resembled a bowl of spaghetti, but I managed to negotiate them arriving just before the meeting started. The six council members who were able to attend greeted me very warmly and straight away made me feel at home – incidentally, the Waggon and Horses is an absolute gem, a traditional Victorian town pub, not hard to see why it has been home to NABO meetings for as long as anyone could remember.

Chairman David Fletcher kicked off and genially guided the discussions towards the agenda. The range of topics was vast, and without stealing the thunder from Pseudonym elsewhere in this issue, they included individual problems faced by NABO members, legal proceedings, the IWA, and inevitably quite a bit about BW, positive where it was merited and 'could do better' if not. Being an ordinary boater for 30 years or so, I thought I knew a bit about the waterways, but I was amazed at the breadth and depth of knowledge of council members, not only of boats and the waterway system, but also the nuances of different waterway organisations and the personalities in each. Council members were discussing problems I didn't know could even exist.

Two things quickly became clear as they chewed the fat on a succession of issues: first, their overriding and genuine enthusiasm to protect the waterways and boaters' interests, and a quiet satisfaction in making a difference; secondly, the huge amount of work that council members put in 'under the surface', not always apparent from reading NABO News: representation at dozens of meetings, innumerable letters, e-mails and phone calls to deal with the issues of current concern, writing reports and commenting on a succession of position papers and draft documents on all types of boating-related topics – definitely worth every penny of my £15 per year.

I am no great fan of committee meetings (hence the title), having been bored rigid by too many in my professional life, but the NABO council was different. There was plenty of good humour and banter among councillors, and respect for each other's views, although by no means universal agreement. It was for me an enjoyable and informative day at what councillors said was a typical meeting, gaining an insight into what NABO is all about and getting to know some of the people who are running it – Oh yes, and I now know that I should pronounce it 'Naybo' and not 'Nabo'!

Editors' note: Any member is welcome at Council meetings - just let the Secretary know in advance.

Notes from the Council Meeting

Pseudonym

Hooray! Success! A member decided to come to this Council meeting. I think he enjoyed himself. He stayed to the end of the meeting and left muttering "What a lot of work they do". Council enjoyed his company and comments.

The NABO website is making a difference to the meetings with more discussion taking place out of the meeting. It is keeping the meetings shorter and they could be shorter still if the people kept to the subject on the agenda!!!! After apologies the next discussion was stories of the birth of council members' children! It was appropriate as one of the absent Council Members is about to be a father.

Moorings consultation

John gave a report on a Moorings consultation meeting, which was to discuss the report produced by volunteers. It is an impressive document but the content was barely touched on. It was noted that BW is failing to keep to the deadlines that they set. It was remarked that User Group comments were the opposite of individual comments. Probably because User Groups are more representative of all boaters whilst individuals with mooring problems reply. Individuals with no problems don't tend to respond to the consultations. It was interesting to see that EA's document on moorings was 2 pieces of A4. It doesn't matter what ideas are put forward if BW can't enforce the results.

Salvage bond

Boats sinking and the owners walking away are a headache, so BW is considering a 'salvage bond'. Now that could work out either expensive or useless.

Prompt Payment Discount and another licence hike

Councils comments on the stopping of the prompt payment discount has borne fruit and this is being kept but licences are increasing by 1% in August. What happened to the April deadline?

NABO website news

The NABO website is expanding and Members are urged to use RSS feeds. John is to write an article explaining these, which could be helpful to the non technical of us, including most of Council.

There is also a useful web link facility with a direct link to both waterscape and the British Waterway site.

NABO at the Crick Show

NABO's stand at Crick was a great success. David, Richard and John reported that they had enjoyed the whole experience. Loads of literature was given out and both members and prospective members spoken to. Dunton doubles were sold and networking carried out. The next thing proposed are workshops coming to various marinas in the winter.

New format NABO News

Councils comments on the new NABO News were very favourable although one member thought the type was too small (query does he need new glasses?) and hopefully the white pages get filled this time. What do you think?

NABO is also offering a free membership subscription to anyone who submits a front cover picture for NABO News, so fame and fortune could be yours. See page 3 for details.

Black oil everywhere? Engine on the blink?

Help is at hand, and cheaper, with this exclusive deal for NABO members.

River Canal Rescue are offering NABO members **20% off** joining fee* and then on renewal;

5% off Bronze £76
Was £80, you save £4

10% off Silver £94.50
Was £105, you save £10.50

15% off Gold £136
Was £160, you save £24
(More than your membership subscription!)

* on all levels except the £55 Retainer level.

When applying, write 'NABO offer' and your membership number in the white box on the back of the application form or online application.

Benefits include

Bronze – Breakdown assistance & recovery for vessel and member only. (Maximum 4 call-outs per year). Outboard motor loan.

Silver – As Bronze *plus* Homestart for registered vessel for member and one other user. (Maximum 7 call-outs per year). Conveyance of crew to home address or marina. (Maximum of two relays per year)

Gold – As Silver *plus* your vessel covered for any user and you are covered on any other vessel. (Unlimited call-outs for member or vessel). Annual inspection of registered vessel, engine and electrical system.

For full details and terms and conditions of this offer visit the RCR website or phone on 0870 2008021 (geographic number 01785 785680).

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Medical matters afloat

Fiona Slee

When we first considered continuous cruising we had to ask ourselves if it was practical to do this with my continuing medical needs. I have a chronic disease, with other related problems, and I had a lung transplant in 1996.

Managing these health needs requires regular blood tests, large repeat prescriptions and hospital visits. After reading other people's experiences and thinking through the logistics, we decided to give the idea a try. A few hints and tips from our experiences might help and encourage others trying to decide if living on a boat and cruising is possible for them.

On our website; www.nbepiphany.co.uk, we have sections on places where I have had blood tests, where I have taken my repeat prescriptions, our lessons learned about what to do in emergencies and tips on living on a boat with diabetes.

I have had blood tests taken at general hospitals (forms are needed from a GP or consultant) or at local surgeries signed on as a "Visitor". A letter from my understanding consultant explaining what I require is very helpful.

When I request a repeat prescription from my "home" surgery, I include an SAE addressed to the pharmacy in the area we plan to be. A phone call to the chosen pharmacy will confirm receipt and when the prescription will be ready.

We do the vast majority of our journeys to hospitals, surgeries and pharmacies by a combination of "shanks pony", buses and trains. A very useful website for planning these trips is www.transportdirect.co.uk; it gives all the journey options and stages.

We have both needed to call an ambulance while cruising the UK's Inland Waterways.



On both occasions getting the paramedics to the boat was not as straightforward as if we had needed to call them to a house.

There are a few things to remember:

- Always make sure mobile phones are charged. If there is no signal modern phones allow emergency calls in SOS mode which connects with the nearest cell, regardless of service provider.
- Each time you moor up for the night write down your location, nearest road and landmark and if possible a postcode (from a local pub or landmark) or map coordinates.
- If still cruising, get to a bridge with a road before calling the emergency services.
- Call 999 (112 on a mobile) and have a precise description of the problem and your location. Remember that an ambulance navigates by road, not canal.

More details of how we do all the above can be found in the "emergency" section of our website. Please do contact us if you would like any more information or have any more tips you would like to share. You can email us from our website or phone using the mobile number for John in NABO News.

Axiom Propellers

Stuart Sampson

New products and ideas are always being presented to us and we have resisted in the past giving endorsements however we have said that we would be happy for members comments or do trials so here's one from Stuart Sampson.

Last Friday the new Axiom propellers on MV Sulaskar were wetted for the first time and had the task of backing her out of the dry dock. My first impression was that they had 'good bite' and she came out readily on tick-over.

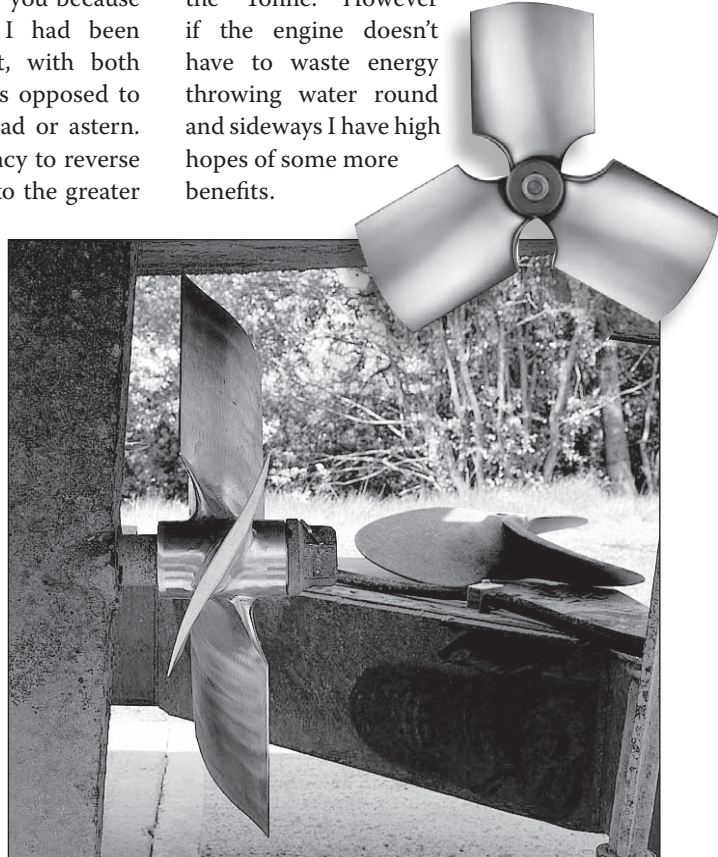
I then had to turn her and back into a mooring in Shobnall Basin, without damaging the new hull paint! I found that the turning effect of opposed props was markedly reduced. Bad news for me but good news for you because it demonstrated how much I had been relying on paddlewheel effect, with both props rotating the same way as opposed to opposite ways when going ahead or astern. There was also a greater tendency to reverse in this mode, presumably due to the greater effectiveness of the reversing propeller whose stream is not impeded by the rudder. This change is not unexpected and they do 'what it says in the tin'. I will just have to get used to it, and did, turning her again in the confines of the basin for the signwriter to do the other side.

The next morning I had to take her from Burton to Barton single handed in the wind and rain along the narrow, shallow and novice infested Trent and Mersey.

Sadly these weren't ideal controlled conditions for a sea trial but she was certainly better mannered in shallow

water and sounded smoother. She responded well to an emergency stop and seemed to produce less stern suction.

Sadly much of the bad behaviour that the Axiom would cure on a single screwed vessel has already been removed by Sulaskar's twin screw design. I have yet to discover how she performs on wider and deeper waters, which won't be till she plies the Yonne. However if the engine doesn't have to waste energy throwing water round and sideways I have high hopes of some more benefits.



Your letters

Opinions expressed here are independent of NABO policy and statements made have not been verified as true.

Speeding Boats

After all these years it still rankles!

Moored overnight here just north of Rugeley on one of the most heavily used stretches of the system, it is interesting to note that the speed at which boats pass seems to ease off after breakfast. Is it because early boats are early because they have need of making progress and don't want to cruise past casual moorings at tick-over? Or is it because they don't experience other boats passing them before they cast off and so don't appreciate what happens to occupied temporarily moored boats? Private boats are no better than hire boats it seems in this respect.

Yes, the onus is on us to moor up defensively but sadly there are still some boaters that seem to stare straight ahead and forget any relationship between moored boats and their speed levers.

Twin Screw

A view on the New NABO News from our old editor – we think he cautiously approves – the change in typeface makes it look smaller in content – yet the words are about the same number Stuart!

Not Yet in France

We are still in England as everybody around the T&M will testify – we took the boat out for a short trip as a relief from living with packing cases and should have made up a big notice to save having to repeat ourselves telling folks why! That is not to say we weren't touched by all the enquiries, interest and kind words from those who know us on the cut.

The truth is that we are still awaiting some action from lawyers, mortgage brokers and

others in suits sitting behind desks (you know what I think of them!) engaged by the other parties involved in our house move and it is dragging interminably on.

On our return to the house of boxes, we found the new NABO news. The cover looks good and obviously some serious design has gone into it thanks to Chris, and some serious lobbying to get the expenditure for full colour approved! I trust the photo used will change issue to issue and readers will contribute some images, as one fellow member remarked of the current one, "It does shout 'narrowboat'".

The pages within look clear, and although it is a bit skimpy for content, it is the first issue by the new team and with readers' help I am sure it will flesh out a bit. I will try to help here as much as I can. I thank the team for the tribute, if only it could be true!

Stuart Sampson

Take a look at our photo competition on Page 3 and win a year's membership subs

A very expensive Tap

Having read the latest blurb on waterscape about costs I have to report something the likes of which makes my blood boil.

Water tap at Stourport basin yesterday (21st May) was leaking badly due to a failed tap. 24 hours later a "contractor" appears to fit a new tap. How much does this sort of thing cost BW. There is a BW lengthsmen on site!!!, and for nothing I would have fitted the damned thing myself, carefully. Surely this is a small example of where some of the money goes, other than in the pockets of the directors..... oh hush my mouth.....

Paul Teale

Your letters

Opinions expressed here are independent of NABO policy and statements made have not been verified as true.

Underwater obstructions at Marple

I thought you might like to see a letter I sent to BW – needless to say so far no reply!

Dear Mr. Evans. Having watched the contractors repairing the moorings at Marple over the last few months, I decided to pull in to do some shopping. The overall impression is wonderful. Mooring rings, new edging and the promise of growing grass make it look most attractive.

Imagine our surprise as approaching close to the bank, we were abruptly stopped when we ran into submerged masonry blocks. Forced to moor away from the bank we were unable to get alongside (see pics). At the same time another boat attempted to pull in and only got his stern within 5ft of the bank. He eventually gave up and moved off!

Why didn't the contractors remove all the submerged stones when they had the lifting gear on site and were using it to lay new masonry? Why didn't BW check the depth before sign off and paying the contractors? Why was no one available in the nearby offices when I went to complain? Why do BW continue to squander our licence money on apparently unsupervised ventures such as the above?

Marple is an attractive and very useful town to boating visitors, it is a pity there are only moorings for about 4 boats there. Even the orange netting which originally festooned all the crumbling banks has disintegrated with age! I was very impressed when BW lopped off overhanging trees along the Macclesfield Canal but should have realised it was all part of the "cunning plan" (as Baldrick would say), to make the visual impact favourable. Even

Baldrick would have realised canals are for boats to float on and not crash aground.

Graham Lambden, NB Penny Peace



Simon Peters – A Personal Profile

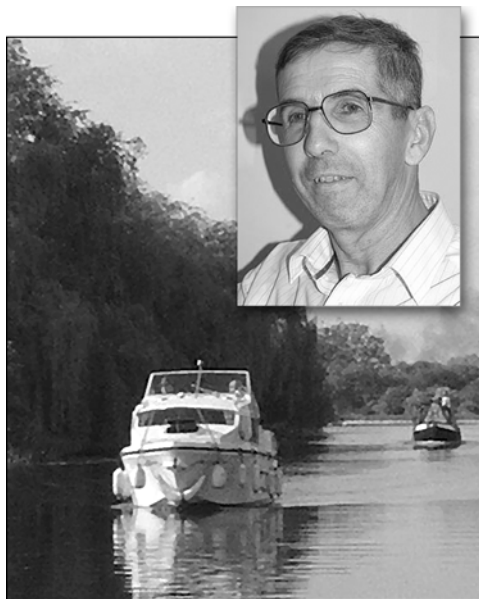
The current NABO Hon Treasurer is Stephen Peters, who also serves as the Rivers Representative.

They always say that to get a job done you should give it to a busy man – and Stephen certainly has plenty to keep himself occupied these days. In addition, to his voluntary work for the Association, he also finds time to be a parish councillor, district councillor and county councillor covering his home area of Wythall, in north east Worcestershire, just outside the Birmingham city boundary.

He is a boat owner, of course, and has owned a series of motor cruisers based on the River Severn. His boat is a 30 foot Seamaster 30 six-berth single screw diesel cruiser called “Nattajack”. The boat is registered as a British Ship on the Part I register and this enables the wearing of the privileged defaced blue ensign of the Cruising Association which Stephen originally joined in 1970.

He started boating at the tender age of 13 back in 1964 and was the proud owner of a Moonfleet inboard powered speedboat at the age of 14; and his family owned a succession of boats starting with a 17 foot Brensal Princess outboard-engined cruiser and progressing through a 26 foot inboard petrol cruiser to a 32 foot TSDY (twin screw diesel yacht) and finally to a 42 foot TSDY named “Jacamanda” which Stephen owned in partnership with his parents.

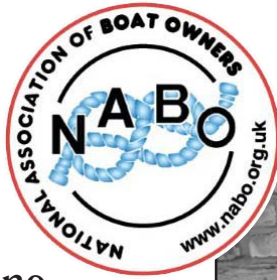
His speedboat had been owned by the son of the boatyard owner at Tewkesbury who subsequently gained notoriety by murdering four members of his family, to be followed some years later by his lady friend and his own suicide!



The River Severn, Stephen's cruising ground.
photo: nbepiphany.co.uk

Happy boating days in the late 60's and early 70's included voyages from the River Avon out into the Bristol Channel, as far as Milford Haven at a time prior to the development of marinas, so safe havens were taken in Swansea dock, Avonmouth and Bristol. Local cruises were enjoyed on Shakespeare's Avon and on the river Severn before lock charges and registration were introduced. Oh for the Good Old Days!

The last few years of family boating included taking the 42 footer round Land's End to a new base on the River Dart from where she was eventually sold. Stephen became a boat owner again in 1989 and joined NABO soon after its formation. He is the longest serving member of Council with something like 18 years of continuous involvement and re-election



NEW

NABO and Smudgeonline have teamed up to bring you a fabulous range of NABO clothing, all with a stylish woven NABO logo.



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Sizes are approximate and the model shows Large size.

Chest size; S 34–36,
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XL 44–46, 2XL 50, 3XL 52,
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All items are available in Light Blue, Black, Navy Blue, Bottle Green, Classic Red or Royal Blue

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Sizes are approximate and the model shows Large size.

Chest size; S 34-36, M 37-38, L 39-43, XL 44-46, 2XL 50, 3XL 52, 4XL 54, 5XL 56, 6XL 58

All items are available in Light Blue, Black, Navy Blue, Bottle Green, Classic Red or Royal Blue

Smudgeonline will also quote for baseball caps and other clothing from their extensive ranges and all can have the woven NABO logo applied.



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