



# NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners  
Issue 2 — March 2012

**LOW POUNDS THIS YEAR?**  
A summer of water shortages?

**POCKLINGTON UPDATE**  
Good news from a lovely Yorkshire bywater

**MOORING PERMIT PRICE REVIEW**  
Are BW turning the screw too far?

**CONTINUOUS CRUISING AND MOORING**  
NABO's policy explained



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Byline

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# NABO News

The magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners

**Issue 2 March 2012**

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## Contributions

Articles, letters, cartoons and photos are most welcome. Images and photos in JPEG format please.

Contributions to [nabonews@nabo.org.uk](mailto:nabonews@nabo.org.uk)

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## Next NABO News Copy Date

Please email or post your contributions by 21st April 2012

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## Front Cover Photo Competition



**Stop Plank Crane**—thanks to Steve Barrett. Let's hope the stop planks are not required this year and water supplies hold out.

Win yourself a year's free membership by sending us an image for the front cover of the new NABO News! In the first instance please send a low resolution JPEG by email. The photo should ideally be portrait format with the main action in the centre so that we can print text at the top and bottom, with a width of at least 1800 pixels.

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## NABO Calendar 2012

The following are the proposed dates for Council Meetings in 2012;

Saturday April 14th, Wednesday May 30th, Saturday July 7th, Wednesday September 5th, Saturday October 20th, Saturday November 17th (AGM), Saturday December 1st.

The Council meetings are at the Waggon and Horses, Church St., Oldbury, West Midlands B69 3AD. Remember that members are welcome to attend meetings—just let the Secretary or Chairman know in advance, contact details opposite.

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## Plus ça change

Editor **Peter Fellows** sees waterways history repeating itself

**F**irst, welcome to Geoff Wood, who is not only NABO's new SE rep, but has also sent two articles on the impending water shortages and renovation of the 'iron trunk' on the Grand Union. Thanks also to members who have sent me photos, both for the cover and boat names—keep them coming along with any amusing sights or snippets you come across.

Some things don't change: Tony

Haynes' extracts from 1993 show that moorings and licences were an issue then. Fast-forward 20 years and we have a NABO policy statement on continuous cruising/moor-ing as well as a report on BW vs Nigel Moore and a letter from Peter Brookes. David Fletcher believes the latest licence fee price hikes are 'bad timing, bad business and bad politics'. Solid fuel stoves were a safety issue then and they still are:

four boat fires in a month last winter. Also in 1993, there were fears of BW being privatised; in 2012 we have the CRT. Geoffrey Rogerson recalled an episode of 'Yes, Minister' at the last Council meeting: Minister: "Humphrey, how do we cut the number of civil servants?" Humphrey: "Oh, that's easy, Minister, we just change the Department to a Trust!"

But other things do change and in 1993 the BW Bill required BW to take advice from IWAAC, whereas in this issue David Fletcher mourns the impending abolition of its successor, IWAC.

In other articles, Howard Anguish has sent an update on what's happening on the Pocklington Canal, boatman Alan Holden recalls his days shipping corn to Kellogg's factory on the Bridgewater Canal

At this time of year, sharp-eyed readers may be looking for an April Fool's article: there are a few possible contenders, but are they all true? Happy cruising now that the warmer weather has arrived and please use the enclosed membership form to recruit new members while you are out and about—a year's free membership if you sign up three people.

End of garden moorings were an issue in 1993



# CRT, NABO and the EA

As the government of the waterways shifts, **David Fletcher** looks to the changing relationships of the months ahead.

**L**ast month I got carried away, so this is short and sweet.

As I write, the all important boaters' election for the CRT Council is in the hands of the Gods, with the outcome to be announced late in March. There were 33 candidates to choose from and we have not the slightest idea of how the vote will go, or even how many have voted. We watch with interest. I hope we have done enough for Stephen Peter's campaign, but whatever the outcome, NABO will work with the elected council members to support and guide the work of the CRT, subject to retaining our much valued independence. Defra has recently published the transfer order document for the CRT that has to be approved by Parliamentary Committees. This is one of the remaining issues before the launch, and probably the critical time factor in setting the date of the launch. This is still targeted at June. You can find the documents on the NABO website.

Peter Brooks writes this month with his view on boating without a home mooring and the rules that surround the lifestyle. It is good to keep this debate alive because to my mind, it is not getting enough attention. The last two years of undigested NWC/CRT issues have to come to an end, and now we should return to these basic and unresolved boating issues. Elsewhere in this issue, we have set out the NABO view on continuous cruising and mooring. Most of this is old country for us so it is good to revisit the words and make a statement. Do let us know what you think. CRT will quickly have to form a view on all this, and it is important that boaters present a common view that respects everyone's rights and responsibilities.

On the Thames, I understand that the EA are continuing their plans, at least in the short term, to let out the lock keepers' cottages on seven locks and operate them with itinerant keepers. There is widespread opposition to these plans from many groups, including NABO. The EA on the Thames have enjoyed widespread user support for many years and this has been swept away over trivial cost issues and a marked intransigence over lock service. We expect better from the EA.

I welcome Geoff Wood who has agreed to join us as South East representative. He has already attended a meeting for us on the all important issue of BW water resources for 2012 and has written about it too. Last year the South East was one of the hardest hit areas and a repeat is likely in 2012. If you are boating in this area, do get in touch and support him. Thank you Geoff!

## Stop Press: Results of the CRT Council elections

### Private Boating (four to elect):

|                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| CAPLAN, Ivor Henry,   | 1244 |
| WELCH, Keith Vaughan, | 1186 |
| HENDERSON, Clive,     | 1180 |
| FARRELL, Ann,         | 1152 |

(Number of eligible voters: 28,805, total number of valid votes counted: 7,556, turnout: 26.4%) NABO's candidate, Stephen Peters got through to the 21st round of voting out of the 29 rounds)

### Business Boating (two to elect):

|                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| STEVENS, Nigel, | 139 |
| MATTS, Anthony, | 132 |

(Number of eligible voters: 1,036, total number of valid votes counted: 386, turnout: 37.4%)

### Employees (1 to elect)

BAILEY, Christopher Alan, 329

Number of eligible voters: 1,751, total number of valid votes to be counted: 692, turnout: 44.0%

## News Updates

## Thames Lock keepers

Louis Jankel gives an update.

Last October 7th, the Navigation Board of the River Thames (NBRT) decided on an aggressive policy of not filling full-time riverside staff vacancies and, where this involves lock residencies, to let the cottages to the public on annual leases. It took a little time, but eventually after a meeting with Lord Smith, the Chairman of the Environment Agency, Professor Ruth Hall, the board member for Waterways, and Lady Susanne Warner, the board member for the South East region, the issue was referred back to the main EA board. In February, the main board instructed the South East Regional management to set the policy into a project to evaluate the proposal and see if their claims can be substantiated. The project board will report back to the EA board in April 2013. The project has been reduced in scope to assess just five lock sites and see how they manage with no resident staff. This will mean the two locks with vacant residencies that are not in the project should have resident appointments made.

Lord Smith has invited the Thames User Group (navigation) (TUGn) to participate in assessing the project and we understand that the GMB union, which represents the majority of the lockside staff, has also been asked to participate. It has proved rather obvious that not everyone within the NBRT is keen on the project; we hope the powers-that-be can control and neutralise this small but active minority, who seem hell-bent on subverting the current policy. If this is not handled satisfactorily, TUGn will write to Lord Smith to explain why we are unable to progress his proposal. Then, as soon as the terms of the project are established, TUGn will decide if they are happy to accept Lord Smith's invitation to participate.

## Oxford clamps down on illegal mooring—boaters form a new group

Oxford City Council, the EA and BW are planning to tackle illegally moored boats on the Thames and the Oxford Canal. The City Council paid £44,000 towards work by the Unlawfully Moored Boats Enforcement Group (UMBEG), which also includes representatives from Thames Valley Police and landowners. This has prompted

the formation of a new boaters' group amid fears that a clampdown will force boats from the city. Mike Hamblett, who lives on a narrowboat in the city centre, told the Oxford Mail: "Now that UMBEG is being funded by the council I think more 'no mooring' signs will go up and boaters will be forced to move on much more often." Reactions on the newspaper's website were variously pro- and anti-enforcement: "A very underhand way of dealing with a small problem. There are already so many no-mooring signs on the Thames that people are giving up"; and "I have worked on the river for 50 years, living on it for 20, but I deplore the rise in numbers of live-aboards. As an engineer I have been called out to boats I would not board for health reasons."

*Waterway Watcher on March 5th, 2012*

## LILO Gathering

On 13th—15th April, near Pewsey on the K&A. Workshops and skill-shares will include building a photovoltaic solar panel from scrap, boat handling, carpentry, foraging and herbal medicine walks, mending your bicycle, maintaining your diesel engine, understanding electrics, and advice on BW and the law. You can bring your boat, camp at the gathering site (tents, caravans, live in vehicles)—and there's a B&B. The gathering is about meeting other boaters, networking and sharing skills and ideas. It's free to attend, but donations to help cover costs are appreciated. The campsite costs £4 per person per night or £10 per vehicle. See [www.lilo.org.uk/gathering](http://www.lilo.org.uk/gathering) or contact [lilouk@riseup.net](mailto:lilouk@riseup.net). Flyers and posters available at [www.lilo.org.uk/gatheringposter](http://www.lilo.org.uk/gatheringposter)

## Oops!

### Front cover correction

Fiona Slee has let me know that the location of the cover photo in the last issue was Hopwood on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal—not Great Heywood.

### Isis Lock: correction

In the December issue, I mistakenly said that the boat moored at Isis Lock was located downstream of the boom. John Slee has written to put this right and, as shown in the photo opposite, it was above the boom. John says the boat has now sunk.

## Membership News

### NABO Cost of boating survey

It's the time of year when we would be preparing the annual NABO Cost of Boating Survey. However, I am very busy working on the online Membership System and won't have time to do it this year. So we are looking for a volunteer who would be willing to take it on. We use the 'SurveyMonkey.com' site and last year's survey should be still available to base this year's survey on. If you're up for it, please contact me, John Slee, through the website. I'll pass on the necessary details and, of course, be available to answer any questions.

### NABO Membership

Please let us know your up-to-date e mail address via the website.

## Dredging the Cromford

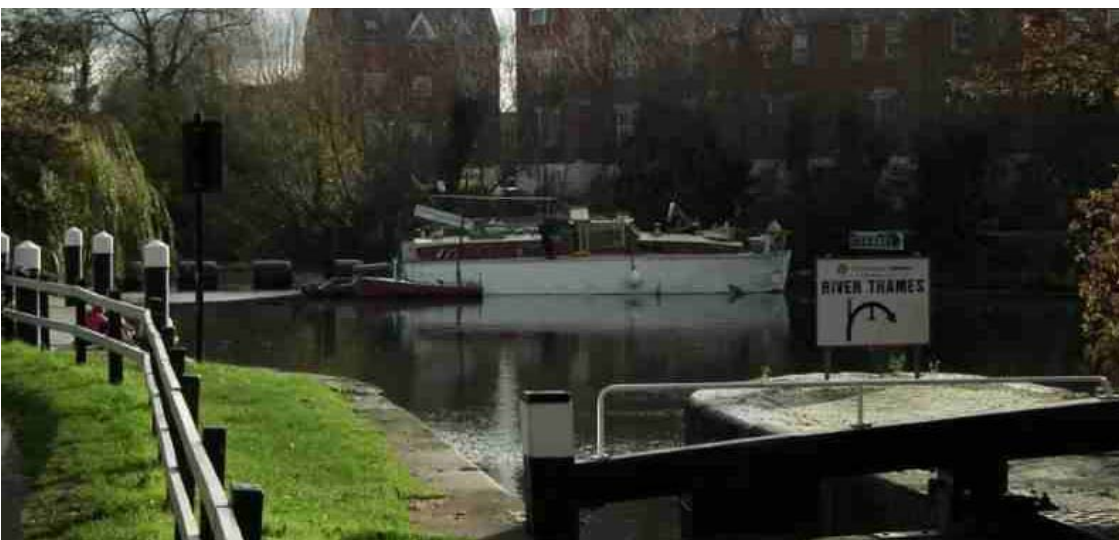
Derbyshire County Council has agreed £300,000 to dredge 1.3 miles of the Cromford Canal, between Cromford Wharf and Leewood Pump House (now restored to full operation, pumping water from the River Derwent to the canal above). The work is likely to take place next winter, and may allow a new trip boat operation to be established. This follows work in December 2011, in which DCC undertook repairs on the 163-year old aqueduct, a scheduled ancient monument that carries the canal over the Derby to Matlock

railway. The Friends of the Cromford Canal is campaigning to fully restore the waterway. The Waterway Recovery Group will be holding two week-long Canal Camps on the Cromford between August 4th and 18th. Volunteers will be working on the Derwent-side spill weir, the watered section of the canal in the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site. There will also be the chance to work on the Gauging Narrows at Sawmills, continuing rebuilding work on the stone walls started by WRG in 2011. For further information contact the Friends of the Cromford Canal at [www.cromfordcanal.info/index.htm](http://www.cromfordcanal.info/index.htm)



## I name this boat ...

Have you spotted a boat name that made you smile? If so please let me have a photo to use in future issues. Our thanks to Helen Hutt who kindly sent in this one.





# NABO's mooring

## The position on continuous cruising and mooring

**David Fletcher** sets out NABO's views on this controversial issue on behalf of the NABO Council.

**O**ne of the most important current issues on the inland waterways is the management of moorings. The continued growth of the boating population and the lack of low-cost residential moorings have exacerbated the situation. In recent issues of NABO News, there have been letters from two sides of the boating factions: Simon Greer is supportive of his right to cruise without a home mooring, whereas David Peck is critical of those who contribute less because some part of a mooring fee usually goes to the navigation authority. So where is NABO on all this? On the fence or in the putty? You be the judge, because below we have set out our position. Nothing new here of course, but it is a good opportunity to put the record straight, as we are often misunderstood and misquoted.

### **The 1995 BW Act**

The 1995 Act is not perfect, but it is what we have. There is a hard-fought for provision within the Act for both those with, and those without, a home mooring to hold the same licence. This principle of a universal licence is one NABO has supported since its inception. The principle of one class of licence is very important for many reasons: equal access to the whole waterway system for all being the core issue. We believe this should be an important factor for unity amongst boaters. If we have one licence for home moorings, one for continuous cruisers and another for roving mooring permits (RMPs), what comes next? Stick together: one licence for a full service.

There is also no provision in the Act for other types of licence such as

RMPs. The 1995 Act provides for a single licence for those with a home mooring and those without, nothing more, nothing less. There is consequently no legal basis for those without a home mooring to be charged a higher licence fee, and to attempt to do this would arguably conflict with the '95 Act. A mooring fee is a payment for the right to keep your boat in one place for an extended period. It's the majority option but it is just that: optional. It's also not the case that all moorings providers pay a part of their turnover to BW. Some do, some don't.

### ***Stick together: one licence for a full service.***

NABO dislikes BW's interpretation and use of the 1962 'general powers' and its recent attempts to try to 'fill in' what BW claims are 'gaps' in subsequent legislation. BW claims it can do this 'as it sees fit'. We disagree. In many cases those 'gaps' are there for a reason, often because BW failed to make or win the relevant case at the time. The 1962 Act cannot reasonably be applied just to short-circuit subsequent due process. BW consistently refuses to countenance the obvious alternative of seeking new legislation.

### **Continuous Cruising**

Boaters are legally entitled to move the minimum amount as specified by the law. The trouble is that the law does not say how far, and this requires interpretation. The Bristol court case said cruising between Bath and Bradford on Avon (10 miles) is not enough in the circum-



***Boaters are legally entitled to move the minimum amount as specified by the law. The trouble is that the law does not say how far, and this requires interpretation.***

stances. The declared lack of intent was the problem, not the distance. NABO agrees, but would not like to see a defined minimum distance, as this is arbitrary and would not take individual circumstances into account, as the 1995 Act requires.

Boaters have to consider for themselves whether they are acting in good faith and have the intention to cruise, moving from place to place at least every 14 days, etc. Ultimately they will have to answer to the Courts to justify their actions.

NABO has campaigned for many years that BW's terms and conditions were too prescriptive, based on BW's interpretations, and not tested in Court. In 2011, following NABO

complaints and the Bristol court case, BW modified its terms and conditions to a form more closely related to the 'bona fide' definition of navigation. Subject to BW formally consulting on these, NABO broadly supports them and would like to see proactive enforcement.

NABO does not support a 'no return within X days' rule, as this precludes consideration of individual circumstances, which is a boater's right, and there is no power in the '95 Act to do this. But boaters have to act in good faith: if they have to be in one geographical area for any reason, they have to make provision for transport from wherever they moor their boat. NABO suggests that each new Waterway Partnership, and the CRT nationally, should consult locally and produce A-B-C place guidance for their area, based on a carefully considered national guidance framework. NABO would be prepared to be involved in drawing up the framework.

NABO deplores past attempts to single out live-aboard boaters when there is no evidence that they cause a disproportionate problem. We have checked this carefully over a number of years from BW's own

Moored boats  
Photo: Val Fletcher



***NABO deplores past attempts to single out live-aboard boaters when there is no evidence that they cause a disproportionate problem.***

figures on enforcement activities and the outcome remains consistent. Overstaying is not confined to live-aboard boaters, but occurs at roughly the same rate as for those who simply keep their boats on the canals and have home moorings.

**Enforcement**

All boaters have rights and, as we have said, there are provisions in the 1995 Act for individual circumstances to be taken into consideration. But they have to be balanced against responsibility for the waterways and unselfish use—what is sometimes called the ‘common good’. Ultimately it is for the Courts to decide the balance, case by case, if the parties cannot agree. To the extent that mankind is inclined to selfishness, NABO supports proportional enforcement to encourage unselfish behaviour based on the current laws and byelaws. Any boater at threat of losing his or her boat home

should, if they wish, have the right to a day in court, and to representation. NABO supports BW in the use of the courts where necessary, but does question the proportionality of some of the actions BW has used in some of the cases we have observed.

Although a central enforcement team is beneficial, if it includes the ability to move staff resources to problem areas, NABO understands that different areas of the waterways may need different solutions (e.g. K&A, BCN, London). Based on its own figures, BW’s enforcement action is mainly for licence evasion and late payment of their own mooring fees, and not for overstaying. The heat and light generated seems disproportionate to the actual measured problem.

BW has under-funded enforcement and this amounts to a dereliction of duty. Boater licence increases above the Consumer Price Index should in part go to fund the restoration of the posts on enforcement teams that have been lost over the last few years. To be credible and defensible, enforcement must be undertaken with an even hand, based on hard facts, case by case, not on innuendo and unsubstantiated complaint.

Blocking of visitor or service moorings is an enforcement issue that can and should be tackled under the existing rules. It is BW’s absolute duty to undertake enforcement and, if it is not doing so, this is bound to restrict the enjoyment of the waterways by others.

**Overstay mooring charges**

In principle, NABO is against a general policy of charging for the use of facilities, which we consider are paid for in the licence fee. There should always be provision for some free mooring time. Mooring charges should not become a commercialised means of fundraising from boaters. NABO believes that charges for overstaying on moorings with a time limit are inherently divisive and legitimises selfish behaviour.

Visitor moorings on the Kennet and Avon  
Photo: Val Fletcher



However, a strictly controlled and limited scheme to have overstay-ing permit fees at designated areas of high congestion is acceptable, but only if it is well-controlled and policed. But we have yet to see evidence that BW is capable of applying this fairly, consistently or accurately. Failing to do so fundamentally undermines principles of reasonable-

*All boaters have rights...but they have to be balanced against responsibility for the waterways and unselfish use... NABO supports proportional enforcement to discourage selfish behaviour based on the current laws and byelaws*

ness, fairness and transparency.

BW may charge for a service but it does not have the powers to fine; and any charges could be interpreted as such, particularly punitive escalating charges. NABO believes that BW should have the option of refusing to renew the licence of persistent over-stayers and calls for this to be tested in court. There should always be provision for some free mooring time. NABO supports proportionate charges for overstay-ing and the use of the small claims court to ensure payment is appropriate.

### **Mooring charges**

Licences are relatively less expensive than moorings. The fact is that a home mooring often costs at least as much as the annual licence or registration fee, and may cost very much more. This is because the cost of moorings is currently benchmarked by the capital cost of new marinas and BW's aggressive pursuit of mooring fee increases. We have

a distorted price structure and little opportunity to do anything about it. Such a structure needs a driver to make it work: that driver is enforcement.

NABO is against the use of auctions for allocating moorings. This has not increased BW's revenue; the process has cost BW money and it has restricted take up of low-cost moorings.

Houseboat licence holders are entitled to a fair contract with BW, in the same way as any commercial service relationship. NABO is working with BW to address this issue.

### **Déjà vu?**

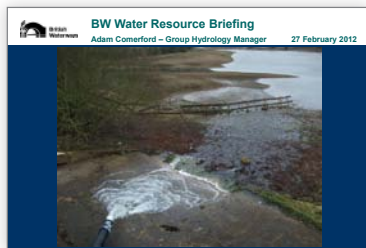
NABO News readers last month may have noticed that this very issue was mentioned nearly 21 years ago as a subject of active concern when NABO was first formed. You may also recall the frustrations expressed in the last newsletter over BW's failure to complete the latest consultation on the same subject on the Kennet & Avon. This suggests to us that there is a persistent underlying lack of skill or will (or both) within BW to find a lasting solution to these issues. One can only speculate as to why BW has not managed to find some workable solution to all this in twenty years.

To summarise, the continuous mooring debate is divisive; boaters should stick together. Boaters all have a responsibility to use the waterways unselfishly and, where a boater is shown to be not bona fide navigating, NABO supports proportional and even-handed enforcement to encourage unselfish behaviour. The issue is that BW is not enforcing the basic rules. Under-funding is a poor excuse: where there is a clear need, then it is a necessary expense.

NABO would like to see these long-standing issues high on the list of CRT priorities and on the CRT Council agenda as soon as possible. They need to be resolved within a set timescale, with clear terms of reference that can lead to a workable and widely supported conclusion.

# Low pounds this year?

Geoff Wood reports on BW's plans if the rain doesn't arrive



BW Water Resource Briefing

Adam Comerford - Group Hydrology Manager

27 February 2012

Who remembers the drought years of 1975-76 and 1995-96? In 1976 the Oxford summit was open for only one day a week, on a Thursday I think, and I can definitely remember in 1996 Claydon and Marston Doles locks being very heavily restricted. Well 2012 could be even worse, as rainfall in 2011 was even less than the above years. At the beginning of March, BW's Group Hydrology Manager, Adam Comerford, briefed representatives of AWCC, IWA, NABO and RBOA on the implications of drought conditions for navigation over the coming months. Whatever data you look at, we are all in for a tough year in the South East and the Midlands, with rainfall well down, reservoir levels well down, ground water not refilling and a large soil moisture deficit. Initially, BW is thinking of concentrating navigation through vulnerable areas between 10 am and 3 pm to maximise the efficient of water use. Volunteer lock keepers are being recruited and will be trained to assist boaters through locks, but overall lock availability will be reduced and boaters will be encouraged to give careful thought to their cruising plans. It is possible that the opening 'windows' will need to be shortened if there is no significant rainfall. BW will give boaters as much advance warning as possible of any new or changed restrictions. This will be done by issuing monthly updates from the Water Management team and Waterway Units. It will give boaters an overview of the water resource position and any restrictions in place at that time. It is worth noting that last year's restrictions produced a saving

of about 45% on water use.

£700K has been set aside for 28 water improvement programmes to help alleviate problems this year. These will include improving back pumping, improving reservoir feeders, leak reduction and temporary abstraction programmes. Although the 10 am to 3 pm restrictions may seem severe, it is better to have a starting point, which can then be changed as the conditions allow. So what should we boaters do? NABO suggests the following:

- Keep in touch for updates on the NABO website [www.nabo.org.uk](http://www.nabo.org.uk) and BW Waterscape. [www.waterscape.com/things-to-do/boating/stoppages](http://www.waterscape.com/things-to-do/boating/stoppages)
- For boaters who have not registered with BW for automatic stoppage update, now is the time to do it.
- Plan your cruising well in advance and try to stay away from the low water areas.
- Be prepared to queue at locks, use good boating practice (i.e. one up, one down), do not turn around a lock if another boat is in sight.
- Be prepared to wait for at least 40 minutes at double locks for another boat to come.
- If a single boat has to use a double lock because of no other traffic, open both sets of gates, to minimise gate damage when entering and leaving the lock.

Have a good season cruising, and don't forget a regular rain dance!

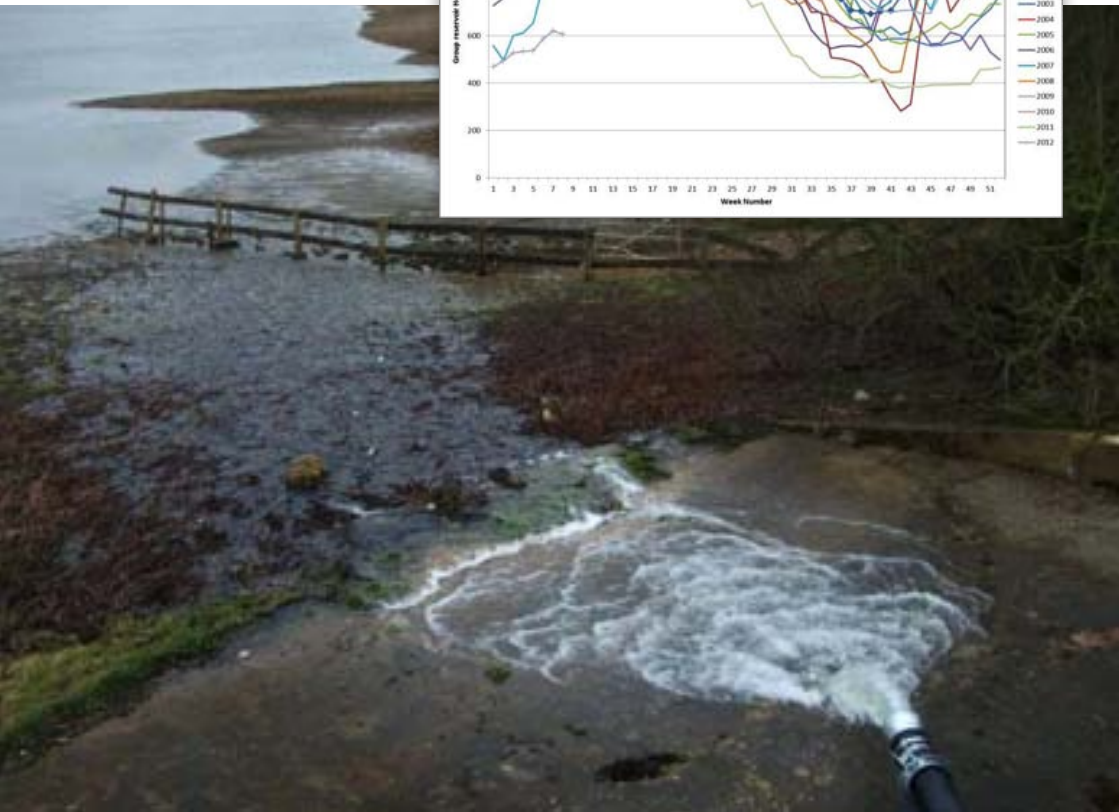
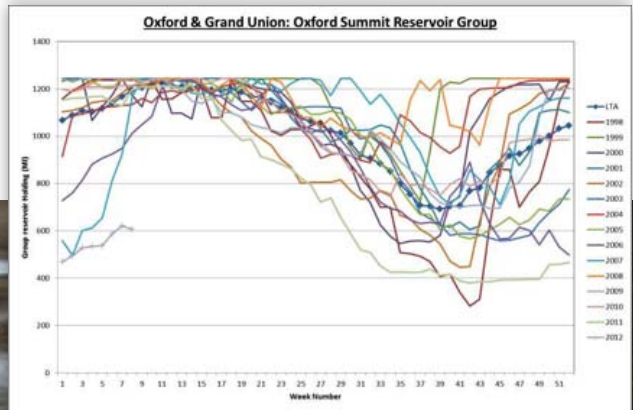
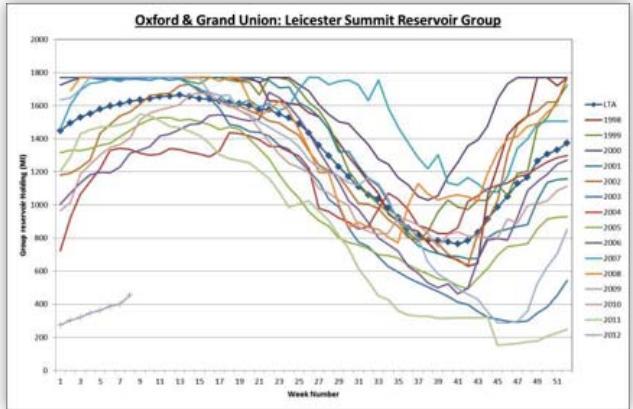
## Editor's Update

The water situation is evolving fast and since Geoff wrote his article there have been more developments: parts of the Grand Union, especially the Tring summit (locks 39-49), which is badly affected with water levels a foot below normal,



and deep-drafted boats are being advised 'they might have problems'. There will be new red, amber and green routes to persuade boaters to avoid waterways that are short of water. Boats will not be allowed to proceed if a section is denoted as red, with caution if amber and no restrictions on green routes. A single boat will not be allowed to use a broad lock, but must wait until another boat is available to share, and lock keepers and/or volunteer lock keepers will rigorously enforce this. The restrictions are likely to be in force at a minimum of 10 key points in the South East region. Please let NABO know if you experience problems in your area.

Many people have already commented that it is not just lack of rainfall, but lack of maintenance, with leaking canals, lock gates and lack of dredging all combining to exacerbate the problem.



# Fire Kills!

**Boat electrical fires are consistently in the top three types of incidents reported in the BSS boat incident reports.**

Manager of the Boat Safety Scheme, **Graham Watts**, reminds us of some home truths.

## More Information

[www.boatsafetyscheme.com](http://www.boatsafetyscheme.com)

Twitter: [@BSS\\_BoatSafety](https://twitter.com/BSS_BoatSafety)

In light of this disturbing statistic NABO are joining in the 'Fire Kills' campaign of Electrical Fire Safety Week using social media to help get the BSS messages across. We will be using BW's 'Boaters Update' to alert people to new posts on the Waterscape Blog and hopefully Waterscape's homepage and/or weekly newsletter will also make references to this.

The BSS has also joined Twitter as [@BSS\\_BoatSafety](https://twitter.com/BSS_BoatSafety), which we are using to provide timely single-focus messages to catch the attention of boaters, the fire services and others. The BSS and Waterscape will

## Fire precautions—5 NABO tips:

1. Know your location so that you can tell the emergency services.
2. Locate fire extinguishers near doors where they are easy to grab on your way out and that you know how to use them.
3. Check that the route to the nearest door is clear of obstructions before going to bed.
4. Have keys for lockable doors to hand or leave them in the lock.
5. Keep a working torch in the bedroom.

also be 'tweeting' to alert other Twitter members to the Waterscape blogs. Organisations are welcome to monitor these new social media and/or point their members to the appropriate websites (thank you BMF, RYA and NABO for already 'following'). So far this year, two Waterscape blogs have been developed: one on solid fuel stove care and maintenance, posted the week that the fourth stove-related boat fire happened in January; and the second linked to the first National Electrical Fire Safety Week.

Note: A narrowboat at Pewsey Wharf escaped serious damage after its fire alarm went off and was heard by customers at a nearby bistro. When the bistro owner investigated, he found the cabin side too hot to touch and called 999. The fire brigade believe that a solid fuel stove ignited a nearby stack of logs and clothing, resulting in scorching to the cabin wall panel.



## Attention: Boat business licence holders

BW is changing the way it authorises commercial or non-private use of boats on its waterways. These boats currently have a Business Licence and some operators have a supplementary Trading Agreement. BW intends to transfer all boats to a standard boat licence and issue anyone using a boat for commercial use with a separate Operator Agreement. Roving traders' boats currently have Trading Craft Licences. As a result of this project, BW now has two kinds of Roving Traders: Low-Risk Roving Traders (LRRT) and Regulated Traders. Low-Risk Roving Traders are those that meet the following criteria:

- They only trade when securely moored up at places with firm, safe pedestrian access to the boat and
- Customers do not board the vessel and
- The combined weight of the goods, materials and tools necessary for the trade is less than one tonne and
- They do not sell or carry fuel, waste or any other hazardous substance and do not carry out boat maintenance works or tow other boats as part of the trade.

If the activity does not meet all of the above, the operator is classified as a Regulated Trader. These typically sell diesel, coal, bottled gas and pump out services or offer towing, engineering or boat repairs. However, everyone who trades from a variety of different places around the network who doesn't meet the criteria for the Low-Risk Roving Trader authorisation is defined as a Regulated Trader. Low-Risk Roving Traders will have a standard boat licence and be authorised to trade using a Self-Declaration Form. The cost of the LRRT Self-Declaration authorisation will be £67.86, plus VAT, per boat. The Regulated Trader Operator Fee will be £135.72, plus VAT. One Operator Fee covers a butty that always travels with its motor, but both boats will need a standard licence.

BW is also preparing revised proposals and a draft agreement for charitable boats and boats offering scheduled or chartered trips, water buses, café and gallery boats and roving hotel boats. For the time being, these boats will continue to be authorised via the Business Licence.

Contact Susie Mercer, Boating Trade Manager (Operator Agreement Project) on 01452 318012.

## Cable cars for the Pontcysyllte?

A public meeting in February of the Plas Kynaston Canal Group heard plans to reinstate this canal. The proposed developments will include a new tourist information centre and better signposting to encourage up to 300,000 tourists annually to visit the World Heritage Site, which includes the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Trevor Basin, Cefn Mawr and surrounding villages. These numbers will provide a valid business case for Phase II—the construction of a cable car system. The cars will cross a disused chemical site, giving passengers views of both the rebuilding work and the Vale of Llangollen. The Plas Kynaston canal will be built as the chemical works is cleared away.

*From Towpath Talk, March*

## BW boat owners' survey

Every few years, BW conducts a survey of boat owners' attitudes to give a measure of customers' satisfaction. The survey is sent to a random sample of 5,000 licence holders, and the results, which are monitored closely by the BW Board, influence spending priorities around the network. Over time, the survey reveals trends in boating that can help with planning and management. Helen Boddy, Research Manager, said: 'Boaters' opinions are greatly valued; the findings are completely anonymous and cannot be traced back to individuals. We're emailing the sample of boaters with a link to the online survey that can only be used once and only from that email address.

To ensure the results are as accurate as possible, it's important that only those who receive the email actually carry out the survey. The results will be analysed by an independent research agency and their report will be published in early summer.

## Crick Boat Show

This year's show, again organised by Waterways World in partnership with BW and Crick Marina, will be an extended four-day event from 2nd to 5th June to coincide with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. For more information about visiting the show go to [www.crickboatshow.com](http://www.crickboatshow.com) or call 01283 742972.

## More Waterways Partnership Chairs appointed

The CRT announced the appointment of five new Waterways Partnership Chairs in March.

Lynne Berry, Trustee and member of the Transition Appointments Committee, explained: 'Following an open and extensive recruitment process, we have recruited five excellent candidates who possess business leadership skills and are experienced influencers and negotiators. Each will sit on the National Council and will bring a wealth of experience in a number of important areas including regeneration and planning, partnership building and community engagement, water management and operations, customer service and education and learning as well as in-depth knowledge of local, national and European government.'

The appointed chairs are:

- Central Shires: Charlotte Atkins—former MP
- East Midlands: Danny Brennan—Company Director
- London: Brian Fender—previously Chief Executive, Higher Education Funding Council for England
- North East: Mark Penny—previously Yorkshire Water Director of Customer Service and Networks
- South East: John Best—former Chief Executive, Milton Keynes Council

The Chairs will shortly begin recruiting members for their Waterways Partnerships. Twelve of the thirteen chairs have now been appointed. Applications are currently being sought for the post of All-Wales Waterways Partnership Chair. A written record of all meetings will be publicly available on-line. All positions on the Waterways Partnerships will be unpaid, agreed expenses will be reimbursed.

## Waterway events in April

Waterways Festival and giant boat jumble sale, organised by Friends of Gloucester Waterways Museum. Thousands of new and used boating bargains, live music, free entry to the Waterways Museum and demonstrations of traditional crafts. Public admission is £3.50, with accompanied children under 14 free. 1st April, 10 am—3 pm, Waterways Museum, Gloucester Docks, GL1 2EH.

The Easter boat gathering at the National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port, is set to be a spectacular celebration of narrowboat culture. The four-day event runs from April 6—9 and events include demonstrations of traditional crafts, lectures, children's activities, real ale festival and more. Shanty singers will be performing around the site during the day and will also be holding concerts in the evenings. There are free moorings at the museum over the Easter weekend for visiting boats. Registrations for boats on 0151 355 5017.

## BW Transfer Order Laid before Parliament

The draft Order for the transfer of functions of BW to the CRT was laid before Parliament on 29th February. The draft Order will undergo scrutiny by committees of both Houses. The House of Lords Merits of Statutory Instruments Select Committee will consider the matter on 13th March and is expected to report two days later. The Upper House will then debate the proposals. The Environment, Food & Rural Affairs Select Committee of the House of Commons will scrutinise the draft Order at a date to be confirmed. The Order is therefore unlikely to be approved before the beginning of May. The Secretary of State will then make the Order and it will become effective on the following day.

The draft Order to abolish the Inland Waterways Advisory Council (IWAC) has also been laid before Parliament. It requires one consequential amendment to the British Waterways Act 1995 in respect of the make-up of the (boat safety) Standards Appeal Panel.

## HMRC announces changes to use of red diesel

On 21st February, the Revenue and Customs (HMRC) issued draft legislation to take effect from 1st April, 2012, which it describes as follows: 'The measure provides that red diesel for use as fuel for propelling private pleasure craft can only be used in UK waters. All purchasers of red diesel ..... will be required to sign a declaration to that effect. All purchasers will be made aware that if they travel outside UK waters they will be subject to the restrictions and prohibitions of other Member States.'



This change has arisen because the European Commission has challenged the UK practice of allowing red diesel to propel private pleasure craft. The proposed legislation is an attempt to reduce the likelihood of infraction proceedings against the UK Government in relation to its implementation of the Energy Products Directive and/or the Marking Directive (which sets out the rules for the marking of diesel fuel). HMRC has negotiated a position with the EU that maintains the continued use of red diesel at the rebated rate for lighting and heating purposes. HMRC has been concerned that if the dispute had been allowed to escalate, it could not rule out an adverse ruling by the European Courts so that the UK would be required to ensure that white diesel is used in private pleasure craft.

The proposed legislation should have no effect on boaters who do not leave UK waters, but there has been some misunderstanding of what it means for craft that do leave UK waters. Since the legislation only applies to UK waters, it has no effect in other countries. Craft that leave UK waters for the continent with red diesel in their tanks risk the possibility of fines being imposed by other EU Member States that do not allow it under their laws. So far only Belgium is imposing fines, but if you are thinking of taking your boat abroad (even on a low-loader) and need further advice, contact the Excise and Customs Helpline on 0845 00 900.

## APCO Hire Boat Survey 2011

A survey was conducted of Association of Pleasure Craft Operators (APCO) members and others known to be involved in boat hire across the inland waterways. It aimed to establish a total boat count, estimates of demand, boat-nights available and used, and determine future expectations. The following data were obtained from 135 companies:

Boat hire numbers are up very slightly: 1,006 in 2011, up from 990 in 2010 (a 1.6% increase). Previous years' boat hire numbers were 992 in 2009, 938 in 2008, 975 in 2007 and 1,017 in 2006.

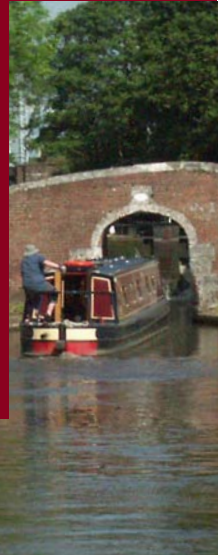
Berth numbers: 58 hire boat operators operate 1,284 boats of the 1,819 total boats. Within these, 7,145 berths are available (an average of 5.6 berths per boat).

Occupancy: 29 hire boat operators operate 1,090 boats of the 1,819 total, and have 6,182

### Overall boat hire numbers:

In total, 1,819 hire boats are operated by 92 companies within the following areas:

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| North West        | 201   |
| North East        | 1     |
| Yorkshire         | 47    |
| East Midlands     | 62    |
| West Midlands     | 383   |
| East of England   | 720   |
| South East/London | 195   |
| South West        | 79    |
| Scotland          | 42    |
| Wales             | 89    |
| Total             | 1,819 |



berths available. The average number of hire weeks achieved by these 29 operators in 2011 was 22.41 weeks. The average percentage use of all hire boats was 73.4% and the usage of their berths was 66.9%. This equates to 112,282 individual boating days from the 162,589 days available (69% occupancy). Usage of the 6,182 available berths equates to 615,494 individual bed-nights from the 916,832 available (67% occupancy).

Other boat types: 135 day boats were reported by the 19 day hire boat operators (79 in the East of England, 36 in South East/London, 7 in the North West, 5 in both the South West and Wales, and 3 in the West Midlands). Other areas had no day boats. Twenty-four trip/ passenger boats were reported by 11 companies and six hotel boats were reported by five companies.

Expectations for 2012: These are perceived as average for the majority of the 33 hire boat operators answering this question. The mean score was 6 out of 10, where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent. Scores recorded were as follows: 4 (14%), 5 (29%), 6 (17%), 7 (14%), 8 (23%), 10 (3%). The number of hire boats expected to operate in the 2012 season is the same as last year for 54% of respondents, more for 29% and fewer for 17%.

# Good News for the Pocklington

An update from **Howard Anguish** on this beautiful and unspoilt canal

**R**egular readers of NABO News may remember an article written by Fi Slee about one of my favourite canals—the Pocklington. Not a canal visited by many boats because of its location at the fringe of the canal network. Nevertheless, it is well worth making the effort to pay a visit to one of the most attractive and unspoilt waterways in England.

Abandoned for navigation in 1932, the canal quietly sank into dereliction over the years. It was only saved from total extinction by a dedicated

band of volunteers who formed the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society (PCAS) in 1969. Since then it has slowly come back to life as locks and bridges are being restored, while keeping its rural and unspoilt character. Today the canal is recognised as an important haven for wildlife. The canal is entirely rural and, although it is 9 miles long from where it branches off the Derwent to the terminal basin at Canal Head near Pocklington, it doesn't pass through any villages and it is only crossed by four road bridges.





The canal is a remainder canal within the BW/CRT network and any development is closely monitored by Natural England and English Heritage, working closely with a Liaison Committee which includes PCAS and other interested organisations. Because of its entirely rural location and unspoilt nature—indeed nearly the entire length of the canal incorporates three separate Sites of Special Scientific Interest—any development has to be carried out very sensitively with great regard to the special nature of the canal. This may explain why total restoration of the canal has made slow progress. At present, the canal is navigable for half its length; with the present head of navigation in the small arm at Melbourne, where there is a small group of moorings for local boats together with a visitor mooring, sanitary station and water point.

In 2011, British Waterways commissioned a study to see how the canal could be sensitively restored while at the same time retaining all the character of this superb Yorkshire canal. Paid for by a grant from Leader funding, this study with the catchy title of the 'Pocklington Canal Audience, Conservation and Interpretation Plan' or ACIP, has now been completed. After an enormous amount of work and research, it is going to be the basis for a major Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) application which British Waterways/CRT will be progressing in the next few months. Work has already started on the initial approach to HLF and it is very encouraging to see that BW/CRT are keen to bring this beautiful canal back to life for the benefit of local residents and visitors to the area.

The initial scheme will look at improving the water flows within the upper reaches of the canal to improve the sustainability of the many species of aquatic plants found in the canal. Extending the navigation—initially to the small arm at Bielby with the long term aim of total restora-

tion to Canal Head—will be high on the agenda and PCAS will be playing its part in this latest effort to restore the canal.

The full report can be found on the BW website, for anyone who is unfamiliar with the canal or those who would like to know more about either the canal or PCAS, please have a look at what we do and if you feel that you would like to help, why not consider joining the society? Details can be found on the website. You may also like to visit the canal, and if you come to Melbourne on any Sunday or Bank Holiday, you can take a short trip along a section of the canal in our trip boat 'New Horizons'.

**More information:**

Pocklington Canal Report at [www.britishwaterways.co.uk/media/documents/Pocklington\\_Report.pdf](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/media/documents/Pocklington_Report.pdf)

Pocklington Canal Amenity Society at [www.pcas.karoo.net/index.html](http://www.pcas.karoo.net/index.html)

Pictured opposite: Above Hagg Bridge

Top: The restored Coates Lock

Bottom: Passengers for trip boat New Horizons at Melbourne



## Nigel Moore v British Waterways Board

The full judgement is available at [www.waterscape.com/media/documents/24895.pdf](http://www.waterscape.com/media/documents/24895.pdf)

**B**W has issued a statement welcoming the judgment of Mr Justice Hildyard in the High Court of Justice on 16th February in which he declared that the vessel owned by Nigel Moore was unlawfully moored. The judge conducted what was, in the eyes of one legal commentator, a ‘massively detailed and scrupulous analysis of the source of the British Waterways Board’s powers’, which resulted in BW winning on all the claims before the Court. Mr Moore was ordered to move his boat from BW waterways by May and not to return to the specified stretch of the Grand Union Canal, other than at a lawful mooring or to cruise lawfully. Mr Moore was ordered to contribute to BW’s legal costs. Mr Justice Hildyard ruled that a riparian owner has no entitlement, simply by owning the land, to moor a vessel alongside that land other than temporarily to facilitate access or for loading and unload-

ing. A vessel moored on any of BW’s navigations requires a valid boat licence and needs to comply with the terms and conditions of that licence. BW accepts that it failed to adhere to its own internal procedures in 2007, when enforcement staff did not issue advance warning letters before serving legitimate notices to remove vessels under the British Waterways Act 1983. At the time, enforcement officers did not believe the vessel was being used as a home and so issued the notice without prior warning letters, as would normally have been the practice. BW accepts that this action was premature and the enforcement officers should have made more enquiries into the situation. Since the event, BW has reinforced its internal processes and procedures. No remedy was required as this procedural mistake had no consequences; as Mr Moore had embarked on a course of litigation, the notice was never acted upon.

## Plans for River Nene upgrade

Details are available on the EA website at [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/recreation/136129.aspx](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/recreation/136129.aspx)

**T**he EA has announced plans to rejuvenate the River Nene in Peterborough to increase commercial and leisure uses and to improve links from the waterway into the city centre.

The key features include:

- A new marina
- New moorings along stretches of the river
- Construction of an education and research base at Ferry Meadows Country Park
- Building a riverside heritage wharf
- Installation of several hydro-power devices
- Creation of space for an event and festival arena downstream towards Whittlesey

The Peterborough Waterspace Strategy also envisages linking Peterborough to Boston and Lincoln

and on to Ely via the Fens Waterways Link. NABO Member, Sadie Dean adds: The River Nene is now fully reopened after winter maintenance closures. The Great Ouse continues to be closed at St Ives Lock, where major works are taking place. It is hoped these works will be completed before Easter. The facilities at March are now closed. This means there are now no public facilities for boaters on the whole of the Middle Level. There are facilities available at Foxes Marina—for a charge. I have been in touch with Fenland District Council, who provided the facilities at March. It seems that there are no plans to reopen them. At present there are public facilities on Peterborough embankment and I would advise NABO members to make use of these before entering the Middle Level system.



# Hearing voices

**Wiltshire Voices is a new project to monitor how boaters interact with local services.**

## What is it?

Hearing Voices is a series of projects across Wiltshire focusing on hidden voices in different parts of the county to help public service organisations gain a more complete understanding of Wiltshire's communities. To improve the places we live and the services we provide, we need to listen to the stories and understand the needs of people we do not often hear from in the liveaboard boating community.

A greater understanding will enable service providers and elected councillors to be better informed and able to help services meet the needs identified. A key element is that we produce a true, unbiased summary of what we are told. This will include facts, figures and contacts, a short magazine featuring people we talked to, and a short video of boaters telling their own stories.

## Why the Boating Community?

There is a limited understanding of the specific needs of those who choose to live on the K&A. It is recognised that this is a growing community that has specific challenges, including permanent moorings and access to services such as schooling and medical care. The project aims to enhance our knowledge and increase mutual understanding.

It is already clear that there is not one community, but several. It is hoped that the project will provide a forum to articulate and explore common concerns as well as any tensions. The project will specifically **not** address the needs of those who use the canal for leisure and tourism.

## How will we do this?

We will look for one or two project leads from the live-aboard boating community. This is vital, as we

need the advice of those who know the community and the issues well. We will then work together to identify people who we want to listen to. An initial launch event will be held to identify the key needs and issues for exploration. These will be taken forward through discussion groups and further conversations. It is recognised that some people may be reluctant to speak out. While we can offer anonymity, we do hope that people will feel that they are able to be open and honest with us so that we can achieve a richer picture of their community. We are able to offer remuneration for the work of project leads and expenses for participation in discussion groups. It is hoped that this 'Boaters Voices' project will be completed by Summer 2012 and the programme will be completed by the end of 2012.

## Contacts

Community Area Managers responsible for areas along the K&A: Peter Dunford (Bradford on Avon), Email: [Peter.Dunford@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Peter.Dunford@wiltshire.gov.uk) or Richard Rogers (Devizes), Email: [Richard.Rogers@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.Rogers@wiltshire.gov.uk)



**Boaters' Voices**  
 Monday 27th February 2012—6.30pm until 8.30pm  
 Wessex Room, Corn Exchange, Devizes

The Boaters' Voices project is part of a wider programme of work to engage with under-represented groups and hidden voices across Wiltshire.

You are invited to the launch because you are.....

- A live-aboard boater on the Kennet and Avon Canal
- A user of the Council, NHS, Police and other public services
- Interested in giving a stronger voice to the boating community

The focus of the project will be on improving services to, and communication with, the live-aboard boater community in Wiltshire. We would like to use your knowledge, expertise and experience to help us to:

- Understand and explore the key issues facing live-aboard boaters
- Identify good practice and share learning to influence the delivery of key public services for the future
- Tell your stories to a wider audience

Please come along and find out more - a hot supper will be provided!

# Don't look down

## Iron Trunk Aqueduct is 200 years old

**Geoff Wood** crosses this historic structure with his eyes open

**T**he Iron Trunk Aqueduct is a magnificent Georgian structure, which carries the Grand Union Canal over the River Great Ouse. Built in 1811 by Leighton Buzzard-based canal engineer Benjamin Bevan, following the collapse of the earlier brick-built structure, the aqueduct stands at an impressive 10.8 metres high and connects Wolverton with Cosgrove village. In December 1799, before the aqueduct was constructed, boaters had to navigate a series of temporary locks that lowered the canal down to the river. They then crossed the river and ascended a second flight of locks to rejoin the canal. This was time-consuming, used a lot of water and was difficult to navigate when the river was in flood. William Jessop, the canal company's engineer, designed a three-arch brick viaduct so that the canal could cross at a higher level, reducing the water loss and delay in locking down to river level. His structure was

opened on 26th August 1805, but a section of the canal embankment collapsed in January 1806. The damage was repaired, but the aqueduct structure itself collapsed in February 1808, severing the canal.

Although Jessop is sometimes blamed for the failure of the first structure, the collapse actually led to a legal dispute with the original contractor. The issue went to trial, with damages eventually being awarded to the Grand Junction Company for the cost of the replacement aqueduct and for loss of trade while the canal was out of service.

To carry the substantial additional loading imposed by a wide canal, Bevan designed arched floor sections for the new aqueduct. In addition, arched ribs were built into the side plates of the trough to increase the shear strength. The towpath is cantilevered from one side and supported by diagonal struts. There is a cattle creep—a small field-to-field access opening for farm animals, and in this case, pedestrians—in the embankment on either side of the main structure. When the aqueduct opened, it generated an income of £400 a month (equivalent to £13,500 today) by charging for the extra amount of cargo that the canal was able to carry.

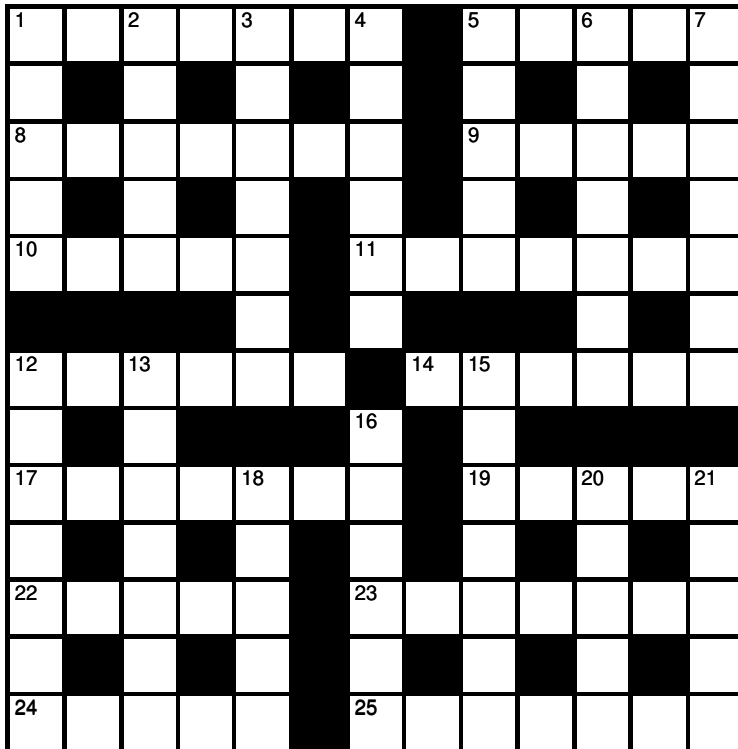
In 2011, the Iron Trunk Aqueduct celebrated its bicentenary with a £300,000 programme of improvement works, which have been carried over into this year. These works include refurbishing the aqueduct and restoring it to its original colours. The project is being funded by British Waterways and a number of local organisations including the Peoples Millions, Wolverton Town Council and WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental).

Engineers examine Benjamin Bevan's aqueduct crossing the Great Ouse at Wolverton  
Photos Geoff Wood



# NABO NEWS CROSSWORD N° 5

By Canaldrifter



**Across**

- 1 Associates of the NABO News Editor (7)
- 5 Rat is back with strings attached! (5)
- 8 Insects not returned to Trent canal (7)
- 9 Eric's on tick-over (5)
- 10 Facility for rough lanes? (5)
- 11 Lee Lock in a greenfield site (7)
- 12 Railway Company gets direction to tie? (6)
- 14 Sailor worked with the badly treated (6)
- 17 Historical French boat (7)
- 19 Fish uncooked in the middle (5)
- 22 Takes on water (5)
- 23 Object to a degree in swimming (7)
- 24 Dash by a gate we hear? (5)
- 25 NABO Vice Chairman confuses CRT CEO about boat safety? (7)

**Down**

- 1 Brief about moral quality (5)
- 2 Southern navigation in a Yorkshire city? (5)
- 3 Boat trips perhaps, not in NE flood plains (7)
- 4 Sneaky about a Brook (6)
- 5 Small boat owned by music group? (5)
- 6 Diggers afloat? (7)
- 7 Derides those who lived aboard perhaps (7)
- 12 Inside out raindrops, perhaps! (7)
- 13 A surety about coastal water (7)
- 15 Old boaters' nickname for a leaking boat (7)
- 16 Type of keel (6)
- 18 Come about (5)
- 20 Witness, confused diabolic, loses fish (5)
- 21 Godly emblems? (5)

**Answers to Crossword N° 4**

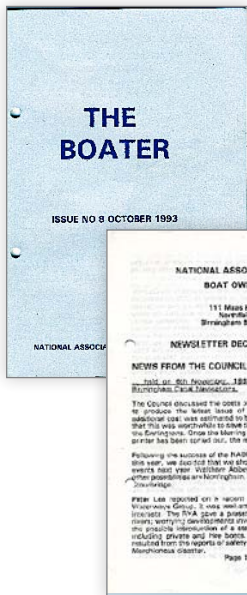
**Across:** 1 Carpenter, 6 Amp, 8 Elm, 9 Maelstrom, 10 Issue, 11 ect, 13 Ordinary, 17 Adds, 19 Brae, 21 Linslade, 26 Fen, 27 Aggro, 28 Small ship, 29 ess, 30 Sir, 31 Endurance.

**Down:** 1 Come to, 2 Reefed, 3 Ensign, 4 Turner, 5 Remit, 6 Amused, 7 Peters, 12 Cyan, 14 RCR, 15 Ice, 16 Able, 17 Ail, 18 Dud, 19 Boards, 20 Angler, 22 Inland, 23 Sailor, 24 Afghan, 25 Elopse, 26 Fosse.

NABO celebrates 21 years

# Snippets from NABO News

As NABO approaches its 21st anniversary, **Tony Haynes** has gone back through old editions of newsletters and edited and abridged some quotations. Here he looks at issues in 1993.



## NABO Ltd ?

Council has decided that NABO will not become a limited company, as this would not protect individuals against proceedings for libel or slander, nor against insolvency.

## Extract from NABO's response to the DoE regarding the BW Bill

We believe that navigation is a primary function of the waterways network; indeed it is the presence of boats that provides variety and interest and attracts many visitors. We therefore maintain that the navigation function is crucial and should be properly protected. The network was originally built for navigation but can now support multi-user activity. Without navigation, however, its interest would rapidly decline.

The clause that allowed BW to sell off subsidiary companies, which some thought was to allow back door privatisation, has gone in its entirety. This may be considered a victory for waterway user interests.

## CARE

Car Accident Roadside Services Ltd advise us that they have recently been awarded Auto Express's Knights of the Road Award for recovery services to motorists and they aim to provide the same quality service to boat owners.

## Houseboat licences

After a case in Birmingham Magistrates Court, it is now clear that to live on a boat continuously and have no other residence, one does not require anything more than a pleasure craft licence as long as the

vessel is used bona fide for navigation. If the vessel is cruised continuously neither is a mooring required. A houseboat certificate applies to a PLACE or particular MOORING, not the vessel alone.

## End of garden moorings

A member reports that invoices for end-of-garden moorings are appearing without warning in the Midlands region, accompanied by threats that licences will not be renewed unless they are paid. There is no basis in law for these threats and NABO is taking this up with BW.

## PLA VHF

After much campaigning, The Port of London Authority have announced a relaxation of the rules requiring full length narrowboats to carry VHF radio on the tidal Thames between Brentford and Teddington. Only one boat in a convoy need carry VHF.

## June '93 The Boater

### Chairman's Comment by Dave Green

"I am absolutely delighted with the outcome of our petitioning against the BW Bill. We have successfully negotiated a package of changes that protect boat owners' interests.... Of the 30 points contained in our petition, we decided to withdraw three. The Board have substantially met us on one and have met us fully on the remaining 26. I hope that non-members will recognise the value of what has been achieved and will join us.

## BW Bill consultation

The Board has inserted a new clause (36A) that requires them to take account of any advice given to them by IWAAC.



**Mooring**

BW has inserted an amendment that disbars them from refusing consent to a vessel that does not have a permanent mooring provided that it does not remain in any one place continuously for more than 14 days or such longer period as may be agreed by the Board.

An amendment allows BW to establish short-term visitor moorings at 'honeypot' sites but not at other places where such restrictions are not justified. It will be the Board's practice to provide where there is a demand, a mix of moorings of different durations.

**Criminality**

Except in the case of persistent offences, or in other unusual circumstances, warnings are normally given in the event of contraventions and, if these are heeded, no court proceedings are brought.

**Pump-outs**

NABO has been asked to support a member who is having an argument with BW about pumping out into BW sanitary stations. It appears that volume is the problem at stations that empty into holding tanks, so we are trying to obtain a list of sanitary stations with main drainage.

**Solid fuel stoves—Safety warning!**

His stove, as far as a boater was concerned, was out before he left the boat. Thinking it was safe; he didn't close the draft vents or cap the chimney. Unfortunately this allowed a flow of air that caused the still hot soot to catch light. The chimney glowed white hot and in turn caught the roof alight. As can be imagined, a lot of costly damage was the result.

October '93 The Boater

Membership is now 1147

**APWG**

NABO has joined the All Parties Waterways Group, a group of MPs who meet six times a year to discuss waterways issues.

**Stolen boat**

A boat stolen from the Caldon was recovered near Oxford within a week, thanks to NABO members' vigilance.

**Aground**

During a Midlands and SW User Group meeting a boat trip was organised, but the boat went aground on something big and metallic. Someone waded to the bank and phoned Canalphone for assistance, only to be told that all senior management was at a user group meeting so they couldn't offer any authoritative advice....

**Results from the NABO questionnaire**

94% of respondents think NABO is doing a great job. More than half joined to gain representation. Less popular reasons were that NABO is the only organisation for boaters. One tenth singled out a need to oppose BW.

Issues of concern are permanent waterway closures, support of restoration, lack of dredging, lack of maintenance, cost of licences and moorings, mooring restrictions. Less than half were concerned about the introduction of BSCs.

# Bad business, bad politics

## 2012 mooring permit price review

**David Fletcher** is concerned about the latest price hikes.

**B**W has just announced the completion of their 3 yearly review of mooring prices. Not surprisingly, and from their figures, leisure sites will face increases averaging 1.6% and residential sites will face increases averaging 4%. In London, where demand is strongest, the average increase will be 8%. Of 370 sites, about half will have no change and most of the others will see an increase of less than the rate of inflation. About 50 will see a rise above inflation. A very few will see either a decrease, or an increase of more than 10%. NABO very much regrets the increases at this time of critical funding for boat owners, which echoes the fears of many, that the future CRT will fail in its ability to manage its financial resources and resort to just taking more and more from boaters.

There is a clue in the press release: Jenny Whitehall, BW's National Moorings Manager, explains: "Our regional mooring teams have spent a lot of time researching their local moorings market and understanding the price trends of tendered vacancies." So we should be clear, this is about raising money from boaters. It is not about BW being unable to absorb cost increases through internal improvement. It is not about passing on reasonable cost increases to valued customers or providing a better service. It is just about money-grabbing from boaters who already contribute the most and have few other options. BW unhelpfully says that they have no duty or obligation to subsidise low-cost moorings and we should support that principle. But there is no suggestion that these increases are to make good losses. They are justified under a policy of fair trade. Fair to whom? Fair to the marina trade or to boaters? My view

is that it merely provides the opportunity for a further ratcheting up of the market for moorings. And fair trade rules are for Government bodies? We are a matter of weeks away from the launch of the new world of the CRT, so is this a last smash-and-grab before the old rules are gone?

### The law of unintended consequences

We all know that the cost of mooring is a significant factor in boaters choosing not to take up permanent or winter moorings, and the important contribution that lower-cost moorings make to this. Boaters can and do elect to store their boats on the waterway and play tag with the enforcement team. You can play a lot of tag for the cost of a mooring. But we all know that is well under control: nobody can get away with that at the moment can they...?

Not to get started on the mooring auctions and the occupancy of moorings, because we all know that the current system does not result in full occupancy of the moorings stock and this is a loss for BW. There is more money to be made here though better efficiency than '1.6% average', so why not go after that? Would cutting prices to achieve this be considered not 'fair'? And not 'fair' to whom? I am supportive of the overall strategy of managing the canalside stock of moorings for the benefit of all, but the enforcement side of things has to be demonstrably under control too, or boats will simply move to the towpath. Increasing mooring fees just makes it worse and using the pretext of fair trading just rubs salt in. This is bad timing, bad business and bad politics. We expect much better from the CRT at this critical time.

# The end of IWAC?

**David Fletcher** gives his views on the proposed abolition of a well respected and appreciated waterways organisation.

In January, Defra confirmed that it is to proceed with the abolition of the much respected Inland Waterways Advisory Council (IWAC).

The overall powers do this were included in the recently enacted Public Bodies Act. The Waterways Minister recently announced the final piece of secondary legislation required to complete the abolition. Defra consulted last year on the matter and reported back in February 2012. NABO responded to the consultation on your behalf, and recommended retention of the Council. Overall, Defra said that a majority of respondents thought IWAC should be retained and of those, half thought that IWAC should be retained for a limited period. Reasons given for retaining IWAC included the knowledge, expertise and experience of the members of IWAC and their high quality advice, and the importance of independent and objective advice to Government. Some respondents considered that the CRT could not provide this as it is not its role and there could be a conflict of interest.

## The Government's response:

The Government noted the arguments put forward in favour of not abolishing IWAC and noted also the comparatively low level of interest in the consultation. However, it is of the view that the creation of CRT (still subject to Parliamentary consent) means that a statutory advisory body is no longer required to provide advice on policy. The proposed charity's constitution and model of operation would take account of its need to seek views from representative stakeholders and other experts. The Government believes that the

use of ad hoc advisory bodies more generally provides far greater flexibility to obtain specialist expertise to deal with particular problems over a defined period.

## My comment:

IWAC is a victim of the perceived 'cull of the quangos.' This has not had much success overall and IWAC is an easy target. We expected nothing less. Defra's comment about the low level of interest in the consultation is a reminder of how important these matters are, and that we should always endeavour to respond, both as NABO and as individuals. It is surprising that a consultation outcome should be contrary to an overwhelming opinion of responses. One might ask, why bother to ask in the first place if they are not interested in the opinion? Never heard of this before? Now just wait a minute, something comes to mind!

It is a shame that a low-cost and respected body is set aside just at the time when CRT is setting up and is in need of continuity and guidance. NABO will assist CRT and Defra in anyway that it can. You would expect nothing less.

The DEFRA documents can be read at [www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2011/08/22/waterways-advisory/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2011/08/22/waterways-advisory/). The IWAC website still exists and can be found at [www.iwac.org.uk/about/](http://www.iwac.org.uk/about/)



IWAC is a cross-border body that has provided advice to Government and other interested persons on matters considered appropriate and relevant to Britain's inland waterways. IWAC is an independent, advisory non-departmental public body established by Sections 110-110C of the Transport Act 1968. These sections were inserted by Sections 74-77 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Section 73 of that Act provided that IWAC's predecessor body, the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (created under the original provisions of the Transport Act 1968 to give advice on the amenity and recreational use of canals and rivers managed by British Waterways), was to become IWAC, and did so from April 2007.

# Corn to Kellogg's

North West Boatman **Alan Holden** recalls his time on the Bridgewater Dukers

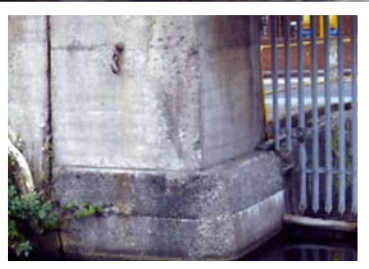


**O**n the 30th March 1974 the last commercial traffic on the Bridgewater Canal saw the end of deliveries to Kellogg's factory at Trafford Park, Manchester. Over the years, thousands of tons of corn had been delivered to Kellogg's by canal from Liverpool, Ellesmere Port and the Salford Docks. When the factory was first built along with its own arm, a short branch canal, the craft of the Bridgewater Department, always known as 'Dukers', were all

that all craft should work the locks by manpower. At the top of the Runcorn flight, the craft were then towed to Manchester by canal tugs known as 'little packets' that were originally steam-powered, but later converted to diesel Widdop engines.

In the late 1940s, with most of the wooden flats coming to the end of their lives, new iron flats and packets were ordered from both Yarwoods and Pimbolts at Northwich on the River Weaver. Also the canal from Hulme Locks in Manchester to the Kellogg's factory was deepened so that the flats could load to a five-foot draught (80 tons or 70 tons in the packets). From then on, all loads from Liverpool, Birkenhead or Ellesmere Port came up the Ship Canal to Salford Docks, then up the River Irwell to Hulme locks and along the top cut to Kellogg's.

The Kellogg's traffic was a 24-hour, seven days per week job: loading, say, in Liverpool, going up the Ship Canal, discharging at the factory, and back down to Liverpool for another load. Alternatively, we sometimes went to Ellesmere Port to lighten a ship loaded with corn that had arrived at Eastham Lock (at the entrance to the Ship Canal) with too deep a draught to get up to Salford Docks. When this happened, all the craft of the Bridgewater Dept., along with by-traders, would go down to Ellesmere Port. When a ship arrived at Salford, it was all go: loading during the day and discharging at Kellogg's during the night. I was mate with narrowboatman, John Sidwell, on the flat 'Oakmere'. John always said that we started work when everyone else was going home. We hung about all day waiting to load and then in the evening, we made our way up Hulme Locks and



The Arm to the Kelloggs Factory showing the hook used to winch the flat into the arm.

Photos: Alan Holden

wooden dumb boats, referred to as 'flats' (the term 'butty' is narrowboat terminology). When these flats were loaded at Liverpool or Birkenhead, they came up the River Mersey behind a tug, locking into the Ship

Canal at Runcorn and then winching themselves up the Runcorn flight of locks. They used barrel lines (long ropes about the thickness of a thumb), which wound around a wooden roller on the winch that all the flats had on their bow deck. It was a Bridgewater Company byelaw



out to Kellogg's.

Arriving at the factory, we weighed up how the discharging of the flats already there was going, then got a good feed and got our heads down for a few hours. When a flat or packet had finished discharging under the suckers, they would give us a knock as they came out of 'the Hole' (the branch arm of the canal) and we would be out of bed and up quick. Then taking the barrel line from the winch to the hook on the wall at the entrance to the arm (see photo), we would start winching the flat ahead. Once the flat had got some way on her and the bow had come up to the arm entrance, we gave her a good push off the wall so that the bow sheared across the canal. At the same time, we pulled a long length of slack on the barrel line and passed it down the starboard side of the boat, walking along the deck to the stern end. By this time the bow was almost across to the offside and, waiting until the stern was level with the entrance to the arm, we put a turn with the barrel line around the stern timberhead (bollard) to stop the forward motion. This caused the stern to twitch itself into the arm entrance. Then taking the barrel line off the timberhead, we walked to the bow with the line still attached to the hook and the slack in the water. Taking the line around the outside of the forward starboard timberhead, we started taking up the slack on the winch. We could now winch the bow across so the flat would start to go stern-first into the arm. Once we'd got some way on, the flat could be left on its own, which gave us a chance to take the hatches off, ready for discharging. We then dropped behind the boat that was finishing discharging and, taking the barrel line again, we tied it to a bollard on top of the wall ahead of the other boat. When they had finished discharging, we winched ourselves forward under the sucker pipes.

When I was on British Transport's Leeds and Liverpool boats, I thought I was fairly competent in boat steer-

ing, working locks and using a strap rope, but Dukering was another story: the Duker 'Mon' (man) was a race apart and I would say on a par with the Yorkshire men below Leeds who worked the tidal Yorkshire rivers. When he came out of Liverpool or Birkenhead, onto the River Mersey in a Force 7 wind, it was deck under stuff like being at sea—he was a seaman. And when the River Irwell and Medlock were in flood, trying to winch a flat into Hulme Locks, he was a riverman. And winching a flat into Kellogg's hole on a cold windy night, he was a canalman.

The Kellogg's traffic came to an end, not because of the boats, but because ships of a size that could get up to Salford Docks were becoming fewer. So Kellogg's decided to build a plant in Liverpool, part-process the corn there, and send the grits by road to Manchester. There was some talk of using the packets and flats to do this, but the problem was that the craft were all getting thin and would need to be re-plated. Also the men with the boating background were getting thin on the ground, and we had the health and safety legislation coming into force. When we were out on the River Mersey with no life jackets, just clogs and a big top coat, if you made a mistake, then that was it—so you learned not to make mistakes! The old men I worked with were damned good and what I learned then I still use today. Next time you cruise past Kellogg's, think of all the thousands of tons of corn that have hung on that hook!

### More Kellogg's memories

There are recollections of similar work taking grain to Kellogg's aboard Bigmere, a sister boat to Oakmere, by Jake Abram in his book **Tugs, Barges & Me**

Available for £5 from the Manchester Bolton & Bury Canal Society, c/o Mavis Charnock, 17 Conway Avenue, Bolton, BL1 6AZ  
[www.mbbcs.org.uk/society](http://www.mbbcs.org.uk/society)

Bigmere, sister ship to Oakmere at Ellesmere Port Boat Museum

Photo: Chester & District Radio Society  
[www.chesterdars.org.uk](http://www.chesterdars.org.uk)



Have Your Say

# Letters to the Editor

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

## Continuous debaters

I have been reading with interest the letters from David Peck and response by Simon Greer in the last three issues of NABO News, and I am concerned that many NABO members may have failed to understand that the term 'Continuous Cruiser' covers quite a wide range of people, all of whom have different reasons for taking out this type of licence, and that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a 'one size fits all' answer to the supposed problem, which is in any case in my view only caused by a small minority of people.

In my case, I do not have a 12-month mooring, but as I do not cruise the system for more than seven months each year, and spend the remaining five months on a paid mooring on a marina, I can see no point in paying for moorings for the time I am away cruising. Unlike many leisure boaters, who even in retirement seem to have a greater income than I had when I was working, I have to manage on around £10,000 a year. I found that this did not permit me to continue running even a small boat, while at the same time meeting the expense of living in a fairly small flat, with the ever increasing costs of electricity, gas, water etc. So I took the decision to sell my flat and live on my boat, as the most economic way to be able to continue to keep my boat. But BW made no provision for people like me, spending winter on paid moorings and cruising in the summer, so becoming a Continuous Cruiser was the only option available to me. As boat licences of every kind allow the licensee to travel and moor anywhere on the system, I do not see why I should have to pay extra for that privilege simply because I do not wish to have a 12-month mooring.

While the present Continuous Cruising rules do not fully meet the many and varied needs of those who have no permanent moorings, I believe they are a reasonable compromise, and as such should be respected by those on both sides of the fence. Allowing us to occupy moorings for up to 14-days (except of course in exceptional circumstances, such as breakdown or illness, when a longer period may be required) is



Cartoon: Geoffrey Rogerson

adequate provision for the needs of the genuine Continuous Cruiser. Of course when on moorings with a lesser length of time permitted, (i.e. most Visitor Moorings), this should not be abused; there are plenty of places around the system where one can moor for the full 14 days without getting in the way of other boaters, and I can see no justification for David Peck's suggestion that all moorings should be limited to five days. In my situation this would make life impossible, as for around one week each month I need to leave my boat somewhere to travel to my old home town for such things as attending meetings of various canal societies and keeping medical appointments. But I always choose somewhere well away from places where other boaters need to moor while I am away, even if this means that I have to walk some distance to access public transport for my journey.

As for the suggestion that I pay an additional fee for the privilege of mooring each night, how would this be administered; would someone come round, each night to collect my fee? I think not. The cost of collecting this would outweigh the amount received, unless of course the ubiquitous 'volunteer' is used for this purpose rather than for more useful things. Maybe the amount could be added to my annual licence; but then I would be paying BW/CRT for a full 12 months, even though I spend around 40% of the year on moorings I have already paid for. Perhaps I could have a 'Hybrid' licence, in which I pay for seven

months cruising and five months mooring, but as everyone's circumstances are different, this would involve more administration costs, in allocating the proportion of the year required by each individual boater. And don't forget, of course, that for every extra pound collected in mooring fees, a further 20p would be taken from the boater by the Treasury in VAT charges, and would not be available towards the needs of the navigation authority.

No, the present system works reasonably well, and treats all boaters equally fairly when applied properly. As for those who abuse the system, there are provisions for dealing with this, which only need to be enforced. If this does not satisfy Mr. Peck, then tough luck. He should remember that by stigmatising one particular group of boaters, he is opening the door to further additional fees being charged, for example, to those with boats above a certain age, or below a certain value, or based in a particular area of the country. As the saying goes: "First they came for the Jews, but I wasn't bothered; then they came for the Gypsies, the Christians, the Homosexuals etc.

but I wasn't bothered. Then they came for me... and there was no-one left to be bothered about me". We boaters need to stick together, this is what NABO was formed for (I was one of the first members), and we need to resist anything of a 'divide and rule' nature.

**Peter Brookes, NB Thingvellir**

#### **MOB rule**

I've just read the article by Stuart Sampson on being knocked off the boat by the tiller, and I think this problem is more common than a lot might think on 'trad' style boats. My boat has tried, but thankfully failed, to dislodge me and I've now fitted a kill switch to the engine stop circuit. This is the same as that found on jet-skis, with a slightly extended line. I've also a folding 'man overboard' ladder (rope and plastic type) on the counter as I boat with a disabled partner and would have to help myself back on board. I think the problem may get worse with the lack of dredging, especially when winding or reversing.

**Dave Hughes**



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