



NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners

Issue 4—July 2012



CRT — LATEST NEWS

Keeping you up to date in changing times

LICENCING AND ENFORCEMENT

Who will guard the guardians?

THE JUBILEE PAGEANT AND THE BBC

How did they get it so wrong?

NO BIOMASS FOR DRAX?

A waterways freight opportunity lost



9 772047 211008

The NABO Council

Chairman

David S. Fletcher

72 Main Road, Hackleton, Northants NN7 2AD
01604 870107, 07719 276 659

nabochair@nabo.org.uk

Vice Chairman, Moorings

Simon Robbins

Nb Centurion, Kensal Green Moorings,
Ladbroke Grove W10 4SR

0208 9644 516

vicechair@nabo.org.uk, mooring@nabo.org.uk

General Sec. Promotion & Recruitment

Richard Carpenter

Mill House End Farm, Grape Lane, Croston,
Leyland, Lancashire PR26 9HB

07989 441674 or 01772 600886

gen@nabo.org.uk

Treasurer

Stephen Peters

325 Alcester Road, Wythall, Birmingham B47
6JG 01564 824927

hontreasurer@nabo.org.uk

Legal Affairs

Geoffrey Rogerson

51 High Path Road, Guildford, GU1 2QQ
07768 736593

legal@nabo.org.uk

Minutes Secretary

Vacant

Continuous Cruising & Webmaster

John Slee

NB Epiphany c/o Oaklea, Manor Road, Great
Bourton, Banbury OX17 1QP

07870 165 735

cc@nabo.org.uk web@nabo.org.uk

Council Member Southwest

Andy Colyer

The PO, 21-23 Holcombe Lane,
Bathampton, Bath BA2 6OL

south@nabo.org.uk

News Editor

Peter Fellows

19 High Street, Bonsall,
Derbyshire, DE4 2AS

nabonews@nabo.org.uk

Regional Representatives:

North Western Waterways:

Richard Carpenter (details left)

North East, Yorkshire and Humber

Share Owners Representative

Howard Anguish

2 Broadley Croft, Welton, Brough, East Yorks
HU15 1TD 01482 669 876

yorks@nabo.org.uk, shareowners@nabo.org.uk

London Waterways

Simon Robbins (details left)

South East

Geoff Wood

07968 491118 se@nabo.org.uk

Southern Waterways

Andy Colyer (details left)

Rivers

Stephen Peters (details left)

Midlands Waterways

David S. Fletcher (details left)

East Midlands Waterways

Joan Jamieson

60 Waddington Drive, Wilford Hill, Nottingham
NG2 7GX, 0115 981 2047

emids@nabo.org.uk

Anglian Waterways

anglian@nabo.org.uk

The Thames

Louis Jankel

07831 197171 thames@nabo.org.uk

Graham Paterson

0118 986 3959 midthames@nabo.org.uk

Additional Contacts

Assistant For The Disabled

Philip Ogden

Wharf Cottage, Finwood Road CV35 7DH
01564 782516

disability@nabo.org.uk

Administration

Melanie Darlington

111 Maas Rd, Northfield, Birmingham B31 2PP
admin@nabo.org.uk

Technical, BSS & MCA Representative

Trevor Rogers

12 Greenham Mill, Newbury, Berks RG14 5QW
07990 594221

technical@nabo.org.uk

NABO News

The magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners

Issue 4 July 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

Next NABO News Copy Date

Please email or post your contributions by
15th September 2012

Front Cover Photo Competition

This month's cover photo is of the BCN. My thanks to Helen Hutt.



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.

NABO Calendar 2012

The following are the dates for Council Meetings in the remainder of 2012:
Saturday September 8th, Saturday October 20th, Saturday November 17th (AGM), Saturday December 1st.

The Council meetings are normally 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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Water, water everywhere

Editor **Peter Fellows** rummages through a mixed bag in this issue



I'll start with a couple of negatives so that I can finish with some positives: I totally agree with Stephen Peters' comments on the Jubilee Pageant and the rightful criticism that the BBC received for its coverage of the event. To add to Stephen's examples of the dire commentary, at one point the commentator said: "In the old days they [narrowboats] were

"In the old days they were pulled by horses, which wasn't much of a problem, but nowadays they are propelled by propellers and you can't always get them round the corners"

pulled by horses, which wasn't much of a problem, but nowadays they are propelled by propellers and you can't always get them round the corners" (!—my exclamation marks).

While out on the boat last month, I noticed an increased number of signs on houses adjacent to the canals, reading 'Private, No Mooring' or similar sentiments. Surely these have no legal basis and BW/CRT should ask (tell?) the

owners to take them down. If people don't like moored boats near to their houses they have the option of finding a place to live that isn't next to a towpath. Grump over.

In this issue, David Fletcher looks forward to the CRT launch, now expected in July and summarises recent BW reports on boat movements and enforcement. He again calls for more members to help run NABO—we ask in nearly every is-

ssue of NABO News and would really like you to consider whether you can help out. Chas Moore recounts his experiences dealing with the diesel bug and there is an update on progress from the CRT Trustees. Tony Haynes continues his look back at what was happening in NABO in 1995 and also has an article on the lack of government support to enable the Drax power station, a landmark on the north-east waterways, to use more environmentally sustainable fuels. Stephen Peters offers some tips on how to reduce boating costs and Simon Robbins offers his views on BW's consultation on houseboat certificates. My apologies to Canaldrifter for putting the wrong crossword grid in the last issue; the correct one is in this issue. Also apologies to Peter Lloyd for omitting to credit his reservoir photo, again corrected in this issue.

Finally, the good news; the torrential rain over the last two months may have led to some unpleasant days afloat but it has refilled the reservoirs and the boating restrictions are now lifted. Let's now hope for a spell of proper summer weather.



Boaters say... what?

The future of the canals and the future of NABO exercises chairman **David Fletcher**.

So the launch is anticipated in July and CRT is setting up events in anticipation that Parliament will approve the move. I recognise that not everybody is as enthusiastic about this as Robin Evans and me. The main uncertainties of funding are just the same as those of the British economy and there is no obvious antidote to any of this. Just this morning a senior civil servant was on the radio speculating on 10 more years of cuts. Where would the waterways system be in ten years with less and less grant-in-aid? The money will be tight for the CRT; the grant is not generous, but it will be 'ours'. Anything extra from fundraising and volunteering is ours too and will not leak away to general taxation. It has to be better.

Keep 'em ahead

Our minds must now turn to the priorities for boaters going forward. NABO Council members discussed this at the meeting in June and their concerns were: the price of boating; CRT openness and transparency; enforcement; service levels/maintenance; and stakeholder engagement. So not much new there! There will be huge expectations of the CRT and we must make sure that it lives up to them. Taking the cost of boating and licences, the current BW business plan is for increases of inflation plus 2%. Yet the recent KPMG report on the CRT finances shows expected growth of leisure income in line with inflation. Are we now at a point of peak boats so that there will be no more income from growth? If numbers drop we could all ex-

pect to pick up the cost through increased licence fees. I will watch for new licence figures with interest. We have seen that there was little if any growth in 2011 and I suspect the impact of the disgraceful red diesel tax is blighting usage too. I think the boating market is fragile and licence increases of inflation plus 2% are not sustainable. It is in nobody's interest to quench the market with increases above inflation for licences and moorings.

Your Council were also looking ahead for next year. We really do need new faces, with new enthusiasm and new ideas to come and take part in the committee work. A couple of long-term Council members have said they were considering not to stand again in November and so more than ever we need new candidates to come forward and help. There are many ways you can help, from front line or back room, one-off projects or regular tasks. Please do get in touch and see how we can get you involved. Ladies, please speak up too: we lose credibility because of the lack of women in our representation. The next Council meeting will be in early September, probably in the K&A area.

NABO Council met with the Chairman and Secretary of The Boating Association (TBA) in June to discuss common issues and policies. TBA predominantly represents river and coastal cruising boaters in the Trent area. NABO has worked with TBA in the past and we jointly publish navigational notes for the Trent.

We concluded that our organisa-

tions are not in conflict and do not overlap to any great degree. We will continue to work together, but there is no case at the moment for anything more.

A watchful eye on the legal process

Questions under the Freedom of Information Act to BW continue to provide more understanding of the enforcement process and the thinking behind it. One thing I would like to do more is to attend Court cases for Section 8 and Section 13 cases. The problem is that unless we get prior notice, we cannot plan to at-

tend—and BW do not tell us. If you hear of cases, please do let me know.

Only by attending can we understand what is being said. We cannot rely on an enforcement agency alone to report on these matters, regardless of the rights and wrongs.

Yippee! It's raining

With all the recent rainfall, the waterways are filling up and strong stream warnings are becoming more common than padlocked gates. It is a welcome turn round, but I suspect that we have not heard the last of shortages this summer. I look forward to sharing a lock.

Rainy Day in Gas Street

Photo: Peter Fellows



Recycling developments

BW, the Waterways Trust, the IWA, Groundwork West Midlands, Stoke City Council and some marinas in the Central Shires waterway are looking at how to improve recycling on the canal network. They are developing a Big Lottery funding application, which if successful will bring £1 million to the Central Shires waterway and then roll out the lessons learned across the network so that it will be easier for all waterway users to recycle. They have conducted a survey of canal users about their current levels of recycling (you can view the survey at www.surveymonkey.com/s/YPFBDMC, although it is now closed) or contact Stephen Cook at stephen.cook@groundwork.org.uk for more information

BW lifts drought restrictions

The closures, restrictions and water-saving measures that were introduced in March have been lifted. BW also announced £700,000 of additional maintenance expenditure, bringing forward lock gate replacement to fix leaky gates to reduce water loss. But April's record rainfall improved reservoir holdings and the torrential rainfall throughout May and June has seen most reservoirs return to average for this time of year, with some now refilled completely. However boaters should still conserve water by sharing locks, ensuring paddles are closed after use and opening both gates when entering or leaving double locks to avoid damaging their watertight seal. The more water in reservoirs at the end of the summer the better equipped BW will be to deal with the possibility of another dry winter. Details of June's reservoir holdings are

published in BW's monthly Reservoir Watch at www.waterscape.com/reservoirwatch.

CRT gets corporate support

In June three major organisations announced pledges of support for the CRT. Thanks to players of the People's Postcode Lottery £1 million is being pledged towards essential conservation work across the canal and river network over the next decade through funds awarded by the Postcode Green Trust. Google is putting towpaths on Google Maps, which will include access points, bridges, locks and tunnels, so that anyone will be able to plan journeys that include canal and river towpaths. Finally a partnership with the Co-op Bank will offer its customers the option of supporting conservation work of CRT through their banking products. This will offer people a responsible option for banking and the chance to support the work of the Trust in practical ways that suit their lifestyle.



Hopefully these sights are now a thing of the past after the recent wet spell

Photo: Peter Llloyd

Ants in your tank

Diesel Bug and Tank Treatment

Chas Moore's recent experience of the dreaded bug while in Banbury

The further adventures of Chas' beasts can be found on his blog moore2life.blogspot.co.uk

Photos: Chas Moore

The first sign of a problem was when the engine was difficult to start. It was OK the day before. Once going it was noisy, running rough and issuing smoke. I had put in about 80 litres of diesel two weeks before. The water trap and fuel filter had been cleaned and replaced last October with no sign of a problem then. The engineer from Tooley's in Banbury found that the water trap was full of water and had signs of diesel bug in the form of orange gunge. The contamination had also reached the fuel filter. A small bottle of bug killer was poured into the diesel tank that would take 72 hours to do its work. The water trap and fuel filter were cleaned and replaced. It seems that the standard fuel filter had let something through because one or more injectors were blocked.

I use about 1,500 litres of diesel a year and the heater and diesel fire uses much of that. The boat is eight years old and this is the first time tank contamination has caused a problem. I had always used *Fuel Set* each time I got diesel but since bio is now in the fuel it is less effective. A Better option might be *Marine 16* that will kill the bug and keep the diesel clean.

Apart from cleaning the water trap and replacing the fuel filter, is there a case for fitting a more effective fuel filtering system? Tooley's offers a tank cleaning service so I had the tank cleaned and it is surprising what came out! The filtering system cleaned the diesel and separated out the water before returning the fuel to the tank. The process took an hour to complete.



Update from the CRT Trustees



Parliamentary Approval for the Transfer Order

The next stage is a debate on the Transfer Order in both Houses of Parliament. Once the debates have happened and the Order approved it will be signed and come into force. We expect this will happen in July.

Ed: It is possible that the CRT will be approved on the 2 July, marked by events on 12 July.

Launching the Trust and its first national appeal

We have pencilled in 12 July for a series of regional launches and we are working with Defra to have an event in London with Ministers and stakeholders. This gives us the opportunity to launch our first fundraising appeal and introduce the Trust to people across the country.

Legal documentation

We received confirmation in early April of the Trust's registration as a charity (No. 1146792). Progress is being made in completing the complex suite of legal documentation for not only the Transfer Order and Transfer Scheme but also documentation in relation to the Infrastructure Trust, grant agreement, tax neutrality, business rates and pensions.

KPMG report

In April 2011, BW commissioned KPMG to review and comment on the various models, projections and analyses prepared by the Executive for the BW Board and the Transition Trustees.

We have now published their final report incorporating the financial effects of the agreement with Government. The KPMG analysis has been useful to guide our decision making on this complex issue. A 15-year funding agreement from Government, most of which is index linked, increased commercial income, including significant new income from re-investing the proceeds from the sale of the Wood Wharf joint venture share, growing charitable income and help from volunteers will all contribute to meeting higher maintenance and repair expenditure. The level of waterway spend will increase from 82% to ap-

proximately 94% of the steady state requirements and lead to an improvement in the standard of waterway maintenance.

Although the condition of the principal assets (the largest structures like aqueducts, embankments and bridges) is forecast to decline marginally from the current condition, they will continue to be above historic condition levels (in 2003 nearly 30% of principal assets were in the two poorest condition grades D&E. In 2011 the figure was just below 17% and is projected not to get worse than 22% during the next 15 years). The report also highlights the £2m per annum contingency built into the projections. Given that most recent breaches (e.g. Caldon, Stourbridge) cost less than £1m to repair, the contingency is sufficient to cover most emergencies other than a major breach, when the Trust would redirect resources to meet these unexpected costs

The full report can be read at waterscape.com/media/documents/24974.

Council

The Council meets on 4 July in Birmingham. The agenda includes a presentation on water resources, how our waterways fit within the regulatory

Mooring Vacancy

For more information please contact:

Mooring Manager

T 07917 585011

or visit: www.bwmooringvacancies.com

 Canal & River Trust

The new CRT logo now appearing on BW noticeboards

News: CRT Watch

framework and where the risks and opportunities lie. There is also discussion on frequency and location of meetings, press attendance, induction and site visits and arrangements for the establishment of the Council and Trustee Appointments Committee that will make recommendations on the appointment of new trustee and council members.

Annual Public Meeting

On 27 September the autumn Council Meeting will take place in the morning and a Public Meeting in the afternoon to thank key friends, supporters and stakeholders.

Waterway Partnerships

All Partnerships have now appointed their first members and most have had their first meeting. Some excellent stories are emerging of new ideas and new initiatives involving people and organisations not previously involved in the waterways.

Advisory Committees

The chairs of three new advisory groups are:

- **Heritage**—Sir Neil Cossons (Chair of English Heritage, Director of the Science Museum);
- **Volunteering**—Dr Justin Davis Smith (Chief Executive of Volunteering England and former Director of the Institute of Volunteering Research);
- **Environment**—Professor Penny Anderson (consultant ecologist and member of the National Trust's Nature Conservation Panel and President of the Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management).

Waterways Ombudsman Scheme

Arrangements are in hand to adapt the scheme for the Trust and Hilary Bainbridge, the existing Ombudsman, has agreed to remain in office during the period of transition.

Publicising the Trust

The PR team is planning the launch stories and a number of pre-launch announcements. During June, around 100 volunteers put up vinyls with new logos, contact details etc. on existing signs at 40 busy sites. The website is www.canalriver-trust.org.uk and material is being prepared to promote donations and volunteering.

Lock tail bridges

A statement by the Trustees

We are aware that the new handrails on 29 bridges on the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal have caused some debate. The joint BW/Trust policy is that safety is our number one priority and we will always seek to minimise the risk of serious injury to our staff, visitors, volunteers, contractors and neighbours. This is morally right and we also have a legal duty under the Health & Safety Act. It also makes business sense as injuries cost us money in lost time, compensation and sometimes heavy fines.

Every addition and alteration to our historic structures requires judgement to balance safety, cost, historic integrity, use and aesthetics. It is the management who have to make the decisions because they have the responsibility and accountability.

In this instance they had the benefit of advice from the HNBC and the West Midlands Waterway Partnership. We are fully supportive of their actions. We know not every solution was perfect, but they never are. We do know that we have reduced yet further the chances of a fatality or major injury happening on our waterways.



New rails on a lock tail bridge at Penkridge as reported last issue.

Photo: Fiona Slee

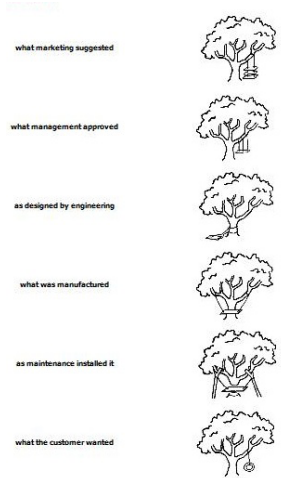
A bridge too far?

David Fetcher ponders the management of some recent projects

The changes to tail bridges continue to attract comment from boaters and heritage lovers. The justification for the changes is as much an issue as the installed modifications to the historic and listed structures. It is better not to enter into too much comment on the rights and wrongs of the specific case when we understand the Health & Safety Executive is still considering the accident at Stourport.

So taking another angle, let us just think about the duty of any project manager organising any new work. Page 1 Rule 1, is to get agreement from stakeholders on the scope of the project. It matters not whether the project is new paint on a wall, an aircraft carrier or bollards on a lock side; if agreement is not achieved before money is spent, the project manager is heading for trouble. Egg on face from stakeholders, rework to put things right and inevitable cost blow out. And 'urgency' is no justification for getting it wrong: more haste and less speed apply absolutely.

The last unfortunate installation that NABO has been involved with is the improvements to the lock landing below Isis Lock. These were complete when consultation was arranged and, lo and behold, as installed they did not work for boaters. The proper solution would have cost no more, had it been done first time. It is a classic project management failure. I don't need to draw the connection to bollards. NABO has correspondence on record with Robin Evans on this subject, volunteering to assist with project development. But it does not happen. Why? Hopefully all these new committees will help. After all that is what we all want, to offer our experience and save money by getting it right first time. Easy.



Red Wheel plaques

The historical importance of some of the most significant canal structures and landmarks has been formally recognised with 'Red Wheel' plaques. These were unveiled by the Transport Trust to mark the important role of Britain's inland waterways in the development of transport and the Industrial Revolution. From 1760 to 1840, the transport arteries were constructed; at its greatest extent the waterway network stretched to over 5,000 miles and carried 30 million tonnes of goods and raw materials every year. Almost all the major cities and towns had a canal.

In addition to the Hatton Flight (pictured), another five Red Wheel plaques are being unveiled at Edstone Aqueduct, a Grade II* listed cast-iron trough aqueduct on the Stratford Canal, which is England's longest of the type, Gas Street Basin, Braunston canal village and boat-building centre,

Burnley Embankment on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal and the Grade I listed scheduled monument, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, on the Llangollen Canal. In total 17 of the most important sites will be highlighted.



Red Wheel plaque unveiled at Hatton Locks. Left to right Tony Hales of BW, Sir William McAlpine, president and Peter Stone, trustee of The Transport Trust.

What do they know?

BW release boat movement data

A call for more routine transparency by **David Fletcher**

The reports can be read at: www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/boating_management_and_consultat#incoming-281372

BW has recently released a number of management reports concerning enforcement and boating activities. This is a result of a Freedom of Information Act (FOI) request by Nick Brown of the National Bargee Travellers Association.

The reports are monthly and are heavy going and somewhat repetitive, but a few useful points come out of them. They cover a multitude of activities in management of the waterways and not just the obvious cut and thrust of enforcement. It is apparent that licence evasion is under control and levels of evasion are meeting targets. Numbers of unlicensed boats are regularly removed and disposed off. The boat checking report says 31,000 boats have been logged.

In June 2011 the enforcement report identified for the first time a performance criteria of 'All boats not moving at least 30km during their contract period to be within enforcement process'. No data was reported at that time. The significance of 30km is not apparent. BW tells me that this criteria was set before the boat sighting data was available. (I think it reasonable that BW sets internal criteria so that they can prioritise cases, but do not understand the significance of 30km). Additionally it does not say 'all boats without a home mooring'. There is no requirement for all boats to move at all if they are on an approved mooring. The canals would be gridlocked if they did. So this is not very clear.

In October 2011 the report first gave data for this criteria, stating '.. analysis shows that there are 1000 bts (boats) not moving more than 5 km, over 2000 not moving more than 10km.' The March 2012 report repeats this data. BW tells me that 1000 are moving less than 5km and another 1000 are moving 5km but not more than 10km, so the total is 2000, not 3000. Presumably the numbers are coming from the increase in boat checking activities and that BW does have a breakdown by area. These details are redacted in the release. Just for clarity I have asked for confirmation that these are '*without a home mooring*' because that is very relevant.

Evidence needs data

One of the NABO concerns about the mooring consultations on the K&A and River Lee was the lack of evidence from BW of the extent of the problem and then solutions based on the evidence. Hopefully we are getting nearer to some data. I can feel another FOI coming on. But at last we get some idea of the size of this problem and taking this data at face value it is clear that there is a lot to be done to get any level of control on this issue. We set out our views on this in the April edition of NABO News.

So what is the significance of the 30km benchmark (or indeed 5 or 10km)? Is this a legal pointer or just a management benchmark? Of course it has to be the latter. I struggle with 30km as an absolute criteria for continuous cruising. Just dashing

up the cut for day and then coming back the next does not constitute CCing and takes no account of 14-day maximums, 'places' and waterway complexity like locks. So I don't think that we have to read anything into that. And we know that the law does not give guidance on this. That is for the courts to determine in the circumstances and distance is but one of those.

More transparency

I call on the CRT to publish regular data on the enforcement process so that we can all see what is going on. We shouldn't have to drag it out through FOI requests.



Licensing & Enforcement Report – for work carried out in March 2012

Milestones

Enforcement & Mooring Control		
Consistent and rigorous application of licencing policy	Unidentified and unlicensed boats not in process accounting for less than 3% of boats on enforceable areas <i>2% of evaders were not in process at Sept check</i>	September 2011
	Unidentified and unlicensed boats not in process accounting for less than 2.5% of boats on enforceable areas <i>0.8% of boats which were evaders were not in process</i>	March 2012
	100 non-compliant boats removed from waterway <i>64 boats seized (80 last year), but 62 have been destroyed in total and 32 sold. Milestone for future years being adjusted to reflect this work.</i>	March 2012
	All boats not moving at least 30km during their contract period to be within enforcement process <i>GIS analysis shows that there are 1000 bts not moving more than 5 km, over 2000 not moving more than 10km</i>	March 2012
	Extended stay/transient permit charging regimes in place <i>Test system for Ranger system with Thrupp Canal Cruising club – due to go live Apr / May</i>	March 2012

Himalayan Balsam Alert

Himalayan Balsam is the tallest annual plant in the UK, growing to a height of over three metres. It is problematic because it crowds out native plants and can take over whole areas of river and canal bank. Up to 800 seeds per plant are released explosively from the seed pods and can travel for up to seven metres from the plant. If the seeds land in a waterway, they are taken downstream to start a new colony, which is one of the reasons this plant is so difficult to control. If you see it growing when you are on the towpath this summer, please pull up the plants and put them on the side of the towpath to die back naturally. If this can be done before the seed pods have developed, we will have a few less plants next year. The flowers appear in June and continue until October. These are purplish pink to very pale pink and are slipper shaped on long stalks. Volunteering events are being arranged in July on certain waterways to tackle the problem before the plants flower and release seeds. The work parties involve cutting the plants back to ground level or pulling them up and creating compost piles. If you are interested in getting involved, or know of an area of waterway that would benefit from a Himalayan Balsam bashing session, please contact Alison Smedley, IWA Branch Campaign Officer at alison.smedley@waterways.org.uk.

Boaters fined for flouting registration laws

Four River Thames boaters without valid registrations have been convicted by magistrates after prosecutions brought by the EA. Slawek Szkupinski of Greenford, Middlesex, pleaded guilty by post that his unlicensed vessel was kept in the Harleyford Marina with a failed engine. Mr Szkupinski was fined a total £913.48. James Watkins of Middleton Stoney, was charged after an EA officer found his boat against the Trout Inn car park without a valid registration. Mr Watkins was prosecuted in his absence and was fined a total of £672.26. Derek Wilby of Stanton Harcourt



Photo: Peter Barr

pleaded guilty by post and was fined £512.92 for not registering his boat after being caught on the River Thames near Northmoor. Brian Crook living onboard at Tims Boat Yard, Staines was found without a valid registration and was found guilty in his absence and fined £628.86.

Matt Carter, Waterways Operations Manager, said: 'Owners have a responsibility to ensure their boats are registered even if they are moored in a marina or boatyard or don't move and we regularly challenge people using boats without registration plates displayed. In response to customer feedback, we continue to do routine patrols and marina and lockside checks. In addition we carry out targeted enforcement exercises and these prosecutions are a direct result of such action. The income we raise from boat registration contributes directly to maintaining waterway structures, as well as providing facilities like visitor moorings, water points, rubbish and sewage disposal and electric boat charging hook-ups.'

New committee to oversee growth in volunteering

Dr1 Justin Davis Smith CBE, chief executive of Volunteering England, has agreed to give his time to chair the Volunteering Advisory Committee for the CRT. The news comes as figures are released that show that the amount of time volunteers have given to BW over the past year has increased 62% to 38,862 days (24,000 days in 2010-11). Since 2008 volunteering for BW has increased by 550% and the CRT aims to increase this further to be regarded as an established and trusted volunteering charity. By 2022, it hopes to attract and retain over 10,000 regular volunteers who will contribute over 120,000 days to waterway management, conservation, promotion and restoration. Head of community engagement, Caroline Killeavy, said: 'The continued growth in volunteering is a clear indication of the goodwill that exists towards the waterways amongst the general public. Volunteering activities can range from moving historic boats, carrying out wildlife and engineering surveys, being a volunteer lock keeper or practical improvements to the stretch of canal on your doorstep.' To find out more about waterways volunteering, see www.water-scape.com/volunteering.

Olympic clean-up

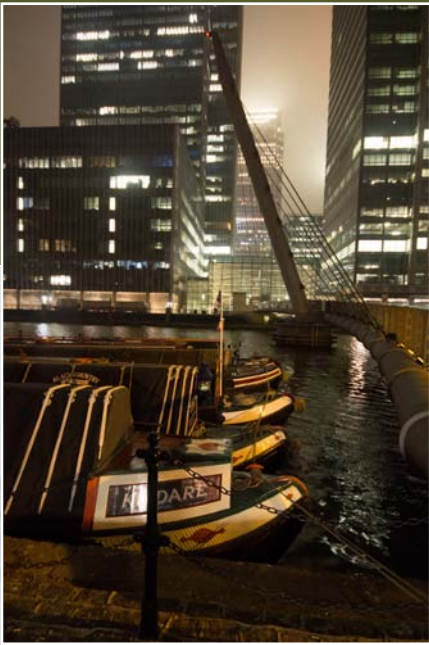
The rivers and canals in East London will form a backdrop to the Olympic Games and in May BW, with funding of £300,000 from the EA, launched a weed harvester and a weed boat. Over £60 million has been invested in regenerating East London's waterways and after the games local volunteer groups are expected to play a leading role, working alongside BW, in operating the weed boats and maintaining the health of waterways. In addition, the Olympic Delivery Authority has provided funding for dredging and to clean up the waterways within the Olympic Park. The clean-up campaign aims to involve at least 4000 Londoners in more than 80 events at over 50 waterway locations along 30km of rivers and canals by July.

All change at Waterways World

Richard Fairhurst has stepped down as editor after six and a half years to become editor at large. He is replaced by Bobby Cowling with Keith Goss the new deputy editor.



Photo: BW



The Jubilee Pageant

Photos by Tim Lewis

More of Tim's pageant photos and others can be found at timlewis.smugmug.com



Transfer Order: British Waterways Board

Extract of a statement recorded in Hansard, 19 Jun 2012, by Richard Benyon, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Natural Environment and Fisheries, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs:

The full statement can be read here; www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/120619-wms0001.htm#12061958000091

// If Parliament approves the transfer of functions order, it will transfer the statutory functions of the British Waterways Board (BWB) in England and Wales to the Canal & River Trust (CRT). It will divide and transfer the property, rights and liabilities of the BWB between the CRT, the CRT Community Interest Company—Canal & River Trading CIC—and the BWB as it continues to operate in Scotland. The BWB, operating solely in Scotland, will receive all of the property, rights and liabilities relating to the activities of the BWB in Scotland as well as a portion of the BWB's cross-border contracts. The Scottish Parliament gave its consent to the draft transfer order on 9 May 2012.

In England and Wales, the transfer scheme will transfer the heritage infrastructure to the CRT to be held as permanent endowment in a specially created trust, the Waterways Infrastructure Trust. The CRT will be charged with safeguarding the infrastructure of the waterways on behalf of the nation. The canals, towpaths, locks and other parts of the waterways are to be looked after for the benefit of future generations and the Waterways Infrastructure Trust will ensure this happens. This means that the CRT will not be able to sell any part of the infrastructure property without gaining the Secretary of State's and in some cases the Charity Commission's prior consent. Before granting such consent, the Secretary



Waterways Minister Richard Benyon

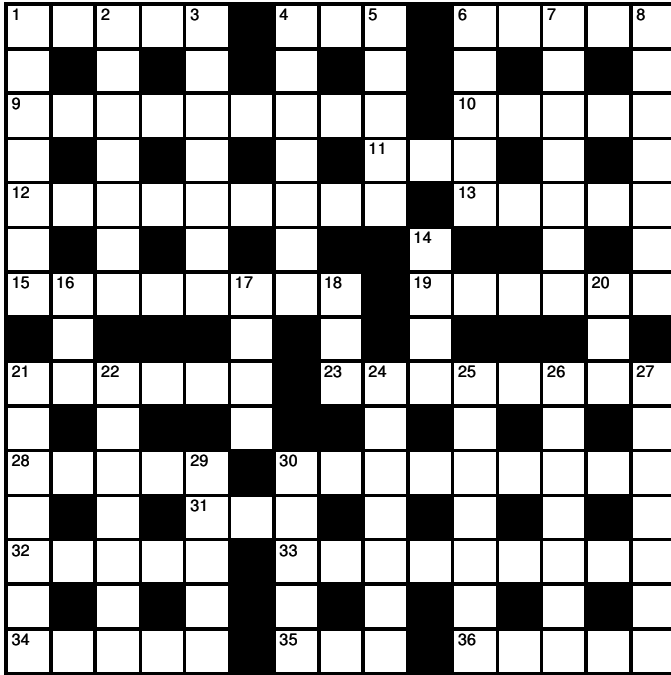
of State will hold a public consultation. The trust settlement also requires the CRT to grant free pedestrian access to the towpath except in certain very tightly defined circumstances and again with the prior consent of the Secretary of State, following public consultation.

Under the transfer scheme, certain assets will be moved directly to the CRT Trading CIC. It will receive the property, rights and liabilities for its trading activities which, under charity law, have to be kept in a separate vehicle from the charity itself.'

The Transfer Order gained unopposed Parliamentary Approval on 27th June 2012

NABO NEWS CROSSWORD N° 6

By Canaldrifter



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. this one was spotted on the B'ham. & Worcs. canal.

Our sincere apologies to Canaldrifter's devotees for printing the wrong crossword grid in the last issue.... so here is NABO News Crossword 6 again, with the right grid this time. At least you've had a whole two months to think about the answers.

Across

- 1 1, 4, 6 and 32 across. Initially we could all be on the wagon (5) (3) (5) (5)
- 4 see 1 across (3)
- 6 see 1 across (5)
- 9 Confused as elderly could be at canal junction (9)
- 10 Dealt badly with confluence (5)
- 11 Peer through a sail? (3)
- 12 Was not contrariwise about reference point (9)
- 13 Floated and I found a Hindu (5)
- 15 Regret is about boat list (8)
- 19 Tough when current is fast? (6)
- 21 and 36. BSS headman screws up rag in bad current (6) (5)
- 23 Splashing around making a long hiss (8)
- 28 Rowed about (5)
- 30 Can cure be offered to pirate? (9)
- 31 Roger has pride when going astern (3)
- 32 see 1 across (5)
- 33 Eddy with a very fast cue! (9)
- 34 Cried about beverage (5)
- 35 Chase gear (3)
- 36 see 21 across (5)

Down

- 1 High Court appearance cut short by risk-taker (7)
- 2 Coming alongside gently? (7)
- 3 Readers, not writers, online (7)
- 4 Everything let go up to the maximum (3-4)
- 5 Skipper with a desire to be active (5)
- 6 Goes boating and dries out (5)
- 7 Small mass can end with nothing on active mountain (7)
- 8 Thames location about a ring? (7)
- 14 Norwegian port almost stands alone (4)
- 16 Wander off course, in doubt? (3)
- 17 Caulk, thanks to a politician? (4)
- 18 Filling up of busy ships, shortly? (3)
- 20 Woman head of Coventry canal town offered seconds? (3)
- 21 Being spiritual when costing wrongly (7)
- 22 No longer afloat on a field (7)
- 24 Securing passage through the flight (7)
- 25 Pig runs around building where boat can go 22 down! (7)
- 26 Old rocker comes out in winter? (3-4)
- 27 Sounds made by wrecked luggers! (7)
- 29 Slow about Ted returning (5)
- 30 Bent stem? (5)

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 1995.



February

National Navigation Forum: The first meeting was held, including reps from all major waterway user organisations as a means of communication between user groups.

Mr Finch: If you moor your boat in the Midlands you have probably heard of Mr Finch. He is an accomplished thief who breaks into boats. A reward of £100 is offered by BW and Daventry

Police for info leading to his arrest.

March

Basingstoke canal: An SSSI has been slapped on the canal restricting boat movements to 1300 per annum including local trip boats. (In fact the canal never ever achieved this figure.)

Waterway Standards: The ombudsman states, 'I have come to the conclusion that BW is guilty of maladministration by not making the base document, 'Waterway Standards' freely available to any user who requests a copy.'

Craft Licensing: BW's aim is to 'produce a system that is acceptable, fair and easy to understand for users.' NABO continue to fight for more consultation.

Mr Finch again: A letter from a member states that their boat has been broken into by Mr Finch five times. 'He will walk along the tow-path, drunk, only when he wants to get caught. Now and again he prefers a warm dry cell and regular hot food—and knows how to get it!'

May

Residential Boating Code of Practice: has been developed with the RBOA. 'We believe that BW should recognise the right of an individual to live on his or her boat.'

A roving mooring permit and designated roving moorings are suggested. Unoccupied permanent moorings should be used as roving moorings.

End-of-garden moorings: The manager of East Midlands and South Yorkshire Navigations stated that he has entered into a consultation process on whether he should terminate all such moorings (to resolve angler/boater issues). NABO responds 'We object to any general ban on any type of legitimate mooring. And will oppose any such ban in the most strenuous and vociferous manner.'

Consultation: NABO's battle for sensible consultation procedures results in BW issuing principles that include the statements: 'To help us make good decisions we need to know what our users want.' BW is committed to 'openly discussing plans and choices for the future.'

BSS: After some secrecy BW announces that boats built after Dec. 1970 will have to produce a BSC from 1st Jan 1997 when applying for

a licence renewal. BW refuse to set an upper limit on cost.

Fibre Optic cables: are due to be laid in a huge 'figure of eight' over the whole country and canal tow-paths provide the ideal route.

Letter from a hirer on the Llangollen: 'Boat owners are a collection of the most xenophobic, unhelpful, unsociable, scowling people it has ever been our misfortune to meet. (This provoked a heated exchange in the letters columns on boaters' behaviour. Failing to slow down past moored boats being the main topic.)

August

Dudley Tunnel: a new purpose-built tunnel tug provides a towing service for the weak-kneed.

Stone throwing: A boater returned to his boat to find his newly polished porthole being used for target practice. He dialled 999 and six youths were apprehended within the hour! Occurrences of violence and unsociable behaviour continue to be colated.

The Birmingham Northern Relief Road: will cross canals in five places. Navigable bridges are not proposed for crossing the Lichfield, Hatherton and Cannock extension canals.

Stolen hire boat: A couple who stole an Alvechurch 65ft narrow-boat, who stripped out the inside, refitted and repainted it, received only 160 hours Community Service with £46 costs!

September

Free licence: An unsolicited three-month licence extension has been granted to a member moored near Lapworth as compensation for the delayed reopening of Lapworth Flight.

Licence fees: are increased by 3.5% in line with inflation.

Land grab: BW is claiming to own

a strip of land from 4-15 feet wide along the canal edge. In two cases this has been challenged by buyers through solicitors and so far BW has not been able to provide legal proof to back up claims.

Licence fee charges: suggestions to charge by smart card at locks or charge varying rates for different canals were rejected by BW. Introduction of a continuous cruising licence is unlikely because, as NABO points out, the current licence allows for continuous cruising. The current system is deemed workable.

Mobile phone (letter): "I believe that a mobile phone is an essential item for the boater." (This is the first mention of a mobile phone)

October

Volunteer wardens: "Is something we are approaching with trepidation" Stewart Sim, BW M&SW manager. "They have no authority, do not carry ID and are only eyes and ears."

Crick: A new marina is being built at Crick.

Otters on the Stratford: One was seen on a BW workboat. It was pointed out that they like quiet places!

December

BSS: There are over 300 points on the new BSS check list. There is just one sheet of A4 for a car MOT. Can anyone explain why the BSS has to be so complicated? A cynical contributor suggests keeping all the gas fittings, fuel supply pipes etc. that you have just replaced for your BSC, for use next time when the regulations have changed back again!

Tooley's: The historical boatyard in Banbury is to form part of a million pound joint heritage centre with the town museum.

NABO (letter): "Nabo is the Portuguese word for 'turnip'!"

BOAT: Bring On Another Thousand

Boating on a Budget

Who better to advise than NABO Treasurer **Stephen Peters**?

These are just a few ideas on how to cut the cost of boat ownership and we would be delighted to hear from members with other useful tips from their own experiences.

Someone (thoroughly endorsed by me) once described boat ownership as 'a hole in the water into which you throw money'. While it can be an expensive pastime, it is always sobering to compare it with, say, membership of a golf club; or a static caravan on a coastal site. These alternative hobbies or holidays might be considered poor investments compared with the flexibility and independence offered by a boat. If you have decided to own a boat this may have been a step that you took many years ago and now that financial times have worsened you may find your craft a strain on your pocket. Certainly, NABO members who resign their membership often cite cost as the main reasons for giving up boat ownership.

To many of us, boating is a way of life that we would not wish to relinquish and we can lessen the cost by careful forethought and planning. For instance, with the cost of road fuel being prohibitive it might make more sense to moor your boat closer to home and not be faced with a lengthy journey from one end of the country to the other.

Mooring Costs

After the initial cost of purchasing the boat, the next major expenditure is finding somewhere to legally keep it. If you frequent BW canals you must expect to pay mooring fees, even if you moor at the end of your own garden and your craft must also have a valid licence. On the other hand, keeping your boat on a riv-

er will only incur mooring charges imposed by the riparian land owner and if you are lucky enough to have riverside property you will be able to moor free of charge. You will still require a licence or river registration unless you find a marina off the river where BW's remit does not reach. So, if you shop around you may be able to avoid the need for a full 12-month licence if you do not intend to leave the marina during the winter period. This will save you some money.

Insurance

On virtually all waterways you are required to insure your boat as a minimum to cover third party claims. Most of us take out comprehensive cover but if you consider the risk of malicious damage or theft from your boat is small, you can certainly save money by having only basic insurance. Some companies specialise in such business.

Boat Safety Certificate

Most navigation authorities now insist on a boat having a valid Boat Safety Certificate which entails having the vessel examined every four years. New boats with a CE mark are exempt from the inspection for the initial four years after purchase. If you ask fellow boat owners you will soon discover that there are two kinds of BSS examiner—those who will find the tiniest of faults (ideal if you are buying a boat) and those who are more lenient (some would say, more sensible). It makes sense to find a BSS examiner whom oth-

er boaters recommend, who knows your type of boat and will not require expensive rectification work before passing the boat as safe. Most examiners charge about £120–150 but always shop around for the best price. If you can arrange for a group of boats to be inspected you may be able to negotiate a discount. If your boat has previously passed its examination let the examiner know that you expect it to pass this time too! Show him the previous paperwork and BSS certificate to assist him through the process. Ideally, use the same person as he will be familiar with your boat and is unlikely to fail an item that he previously passed.

Fuel Costs

Fuel costs have soared over recent years, adding to the imposition of higher duty on red diesel and in some locations it is actually cheaper to buy road fuel at a supermarket than at the waterside. If you only require small quantities of red diesel for cooking or heating or battery charging you may find that outlets who serve builders and industrial users will be prepared to fill your fuel cans without serious questioning as to the intended use. This avoids the self-declaration of the ratio to be used for propulsion which applies only when fuel is delivered direct into a boat tank; but if you use the fuel for propulsion you will fall foul of the law.

If you have a separate tank you might like to consider using paraffin instead of red diesel for hot air heaters and avoid the expensive mechanical failures that many sophisticated heaters tend to suffer when operating on red diesel.

Cheaper Hot water

Hot water on board is no longer a luxury and if you install a calorifier

to utilise waste engine heat this will save you money and provide additional water storage capacity. You will find that the engine coolant will heat the domestic water to near-scalding and for safety's sake a thermostatic mixer is recommended in the system.

However, so long as you are aware of the danger, it will save water if you run your hot tap in the knowledge that the initial cold flow will dilute the very hot water without wasteful running off of the cooler water. It always makes sense to use surplus hot water from your kettle (perhaps heated as a by-product of using the grill on your cooker) for washing up rather than drawing off from your tank.

Maintenance

Basic boat maintenance should always be undertaken by the owner rather than paying hefty boatyard charges, so long as you are confident and have the time. Regular jobs such as engine oil changes and filter renewal can be easily performed by a competent owner and will save you many pounds.

If you obtain equivalent products instead of manufacturer's proprietary spares you will also save money. If your engine requires a low grade API-CC oil try B&Q rather than Halfords or Volvo Penta.

Batteries

Boat battery failures have been in the news recently and you should carefully weigh up whether it might be cheaper to buy less expensive batteries from caravan shops more frequently rather than high-tech marine products with long warranties that may not be honoured by the manufacturers, who quote 'wear and tear' to avoid their obligations if they fail after only a short period of use.

Careful what you ask for...

BW Consultation: changes to houseboat contract terms

Simon Robbins offers a personal view.

No big secret that I'm the complainant who started this off. I should be happy but I'm not. I've been asking BW for nearly a decade to provide comprehensive written terms and conditions for residential moorings and houseboat certificates and finally we have a public consultation on the matter. The point I've been pursuing for the last decade is a simple one: the right to a comprehensive written contract for my mooring, which in this case is also my home. But as ever BW seems intent on making the prospect of a resolution divisive.

Of course BW is, in my book, obsessed with finding any opportunity to extract more money from boaters, so no surprise that the consultation is littered with devices to pursue that aim! Only three lines into their consultation document BW moots the idea that they might start (well actually, though they don't admit it, the word should be 'revert') to a differentially higher charge for houseboat certificates. It is particularly ironic then that the preceding sentence reads: 'In almost all practical respects, the terms and conditions of these two types of licence are the same.' If that's really true, how do you justify the suggestion that there should be a differential charge, BW?

In the next line BW goes on to claim: 'The reason why some people prefer to have a houseboat certificate is because it carries some ability to assign the mooring permit upon sale of the boat.' They make no mention of the other reasons some of us want a houseboat certificate: because it

gives us marginally better mooring rights including basic protections against being arbitrarily thrown off our moorings and being made homeless. This reason (my reason) for supporting houseboat certificates is clearly non-existent in BW's mind and not something it wishes to draw people's attention to during the consultation.

Protections in the 1995 Act

The 1995 Act preceded more recent human rights legislation and the protection in the Act only came about because petitioners to the Waterways Bill demonstrated that BW had an aggressive and irresponsible attitude towards residential mooring customers and were at the time threatening some boaters with homelessness to pursue property development schemes. It should be borne in mind that these boaters were only asking for their existing rights to be honoured. The House of Lords Select Committee was in fact so unimpressed by BW's conduct, based on the evidence it heard, that it not only affirmed protective rights but strengthened them.

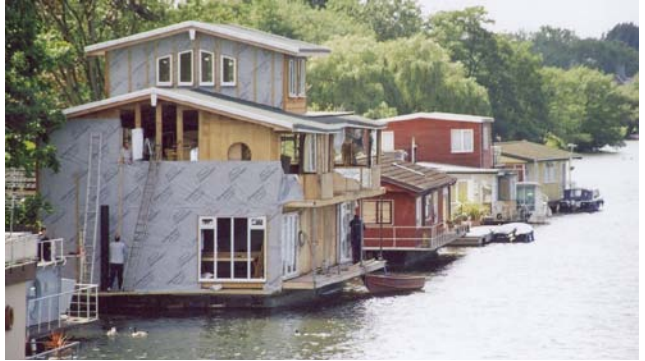
I have consistently said that the unfettered right to assign BW moorings is wrong and dangerous and if it must exist, it should be regulated, probably at the least under a model similar to the mobile homes legislation, where the pitch owner gets a proportion of the sale value. This is not unreasonable and is the basis on which many marinas in part operate their boat brokerage services. The reason that this never got set out

in the 1995 Act was in fact because BW was too greedy about what its share should be, so the Committee, in exasperation I recall, responded by saying, if you can't agree something proportionate with your customers, you get nothing.

Proposal for two tier licences

Next we come to the trump card in divisiveness: BW is in effect proposing to introduce a two-tier system for houseboat certificates; one for those of us who have fought to retain the system and had certificates before Summer 2010 and a different system for those who apply for houseboat certificates now. In effect BW is proposing to make the right to assign effectively worthless for new applicants. I have no problem with that in monetary terms because I didn't buy into my mooring; I got it off a waiting list—remember them? The problem is withdrawing the right to assign completely would of course financially disenfranchise those people who have in good faith and often with BW's encouragement, bought a boat and mooring together through the assignment right.

Altogether BW's two tier approach seems to me to be another blatant attempt at doing a bit of 'them and us' with boaters, specifically among BW's residential moorings customers, though I'm sure others will join in! The question people have started asking me of course is how should we respond to the consultation? Well I'm not going to tell you (or am I?). The fact is that I keep all the rights I've fought for under this proposal so I would be perfectly entitled to sit back and say very little. What you have to decide for yourselves is whether it is fair that new applicants for houseboat certificates should get lesser rights than those of



us who have fought for them for the last decade and longer? Of course I also say this whole problem is of BW's making in the first case, arising from:

- the long perpetuated lie, only recently fully conceded, that if your boat can and does cruise from time to time you might still be entitled to a houseboat certificate and
- being too greedy during the Waterways Bill to agree a fair rate for an assignment fee between themselves and residential boaters, (thereby also forgoing many thousands of pounds of potential income to BW over the last decade or so), purely to save face.

This consultation doesn't do much resolve to those two problems and perversely tends more towards attempts to embed them permanently into the licensing regime. I hope fellow boaters will accept the need for terms and conditions to be properly documented. I do not trust BW's word—didn't then and don't now. I want it in writing as Parliament intended. Is that too much to ask for? But I also hope boaters will recognise that BW is trying to make my objective conditional on its divisive proposal to introduce of a two tier system for houseboat certificates in the future.

Do you need a two tier licence for this houseboat?

Photo: Jason King

Off with their heads

Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant

A personal view of the TV coverage (and flags) by Stephen Peters

What did you think about the flotilla of more than 1000 vessels that formed the centre-piece of the pageant on the River Thames to commemorate Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee? If you were lucky (what, in the pouring rain?) you may have witnessed the sail-past in person and savoured the joyful atmosphere. More likely, like me you watched the television coverage arranged by the BBC or Sky on 3rd June.

The visual presentation from the BBC was brilliant and no doubt cost many millions of pounds, but it was money well-spent for this once-in-a-lifetime event. The commentary and presentation style was the disappointing aspect of the day-long feature and I was heartened to hear and read the criticism on Radio 4 and in the national press. My own views were echoed by no fewer than 2,500 complaints to the BBC from disgruntled viewers.

As a keenly interested boat owner and flag enthusiast, I thought the dumbed down nature of the coverage was a serious miscalculation by the Beeb. I did not expect a detailed documentary with continuous commentary, but I had expected more information to explain the key features of the event. Did they not understand

what great effort had been put in by the participants? Some of the boats and crews had travelled from the other side of the globe to take part. When the New Zealand contingent paddled by the Royal Barge the only comment involved an irrelevant reference to the All Blacks performing the haka on the rugby field!

As the procession made its way down river no explanation was given as to the significance of the inclusion of the Dunkirk Little Ships. We were correctly told that they have the privilege to fly the flag of St George from the jack-staff at the bows but many younger and not-so-young, viewers will have had no understanding of the events in 1940. On passing the Royal Festival Hall, there was a display of semaphore signalling and the commentator was at a total loss as to its purpose and suggested that the Duke of Edinburgh himself might be best-placed to interpret what it meant!

On several occasions we were shown the group of canal narrow-boats but no one thought to mention that nb. President with its clouds of steam and smoke was the only such steam-powered vessel still in commission. Many of the other narrow-boats and small craft were also of national importance and feature in the National Register of Historic Craft

The commentator alluded to the inland waterway network and suggested that it is maintained by some sort of "Inland Waterways Authority", or so he understood. A well-informed presenter would probably have got the facts right and

Photo: Tim Lewis



maybe mentioned that the fledgling Canal & River Trust is about to receive a dowry of nearly 1 billion pounds to ensure the future of the canal infrastructure.

There were experts at hand to assist in explaining the event and we were told that Tom Cunliffe was in the studio. Why was he not contributing to the commentary to convey his wide boating knowledge to the viewers? Rather perversely, the presenter on board the rowing barge *Gloriana* was a horse-racing expert, Clare Balding, who told us nothing about the unique vessel and its accommodation, concentrating instead on interviewing the rowers.

If the BBC did not want to convey a stuffy, dated image they could have involved personalities such as Alan Titchmarsh or Griff Rhys-Jones who are also keen boaters. Or one of the Dimbleby brothers who have grown up with boats since the late and great Richard Dimbleby had his Dutch barge *Vabel* on the Thames in the 1950s.

As a flag anorak I observed many

of the boats displaying Union flags or St George's flags even though this is a punishable offence unless you are a warship at anchor or an admiral. They can be excused on this occasion and the flags added immeasurably to the overall spectacle. I also noted that the moored warship dressed overall had its signal flags in the correct order as instructed but one would expect nothing less from the Royal Navy.

Towards the end of the afternoon, *HMS Belfast* gave a gun-salute which Sky presenter Eamonn Holmes said had almost deafened him. The BBC missed the event entirely.

All in all this was an historic river pageant which is not likely to be repeated but it was let down by the BBC production. My lasting memory will be the sight of the Royal Family jiggling up and down to the orchestral horn-pipe music (but not the Queen who remained unemotional and un-moved. God Bless Her).

And I really must learn the words to the second verse of the National Anthem!

Photo: Tim Lewis



Drax, foiled again!

No Biomass for Drax Power Station

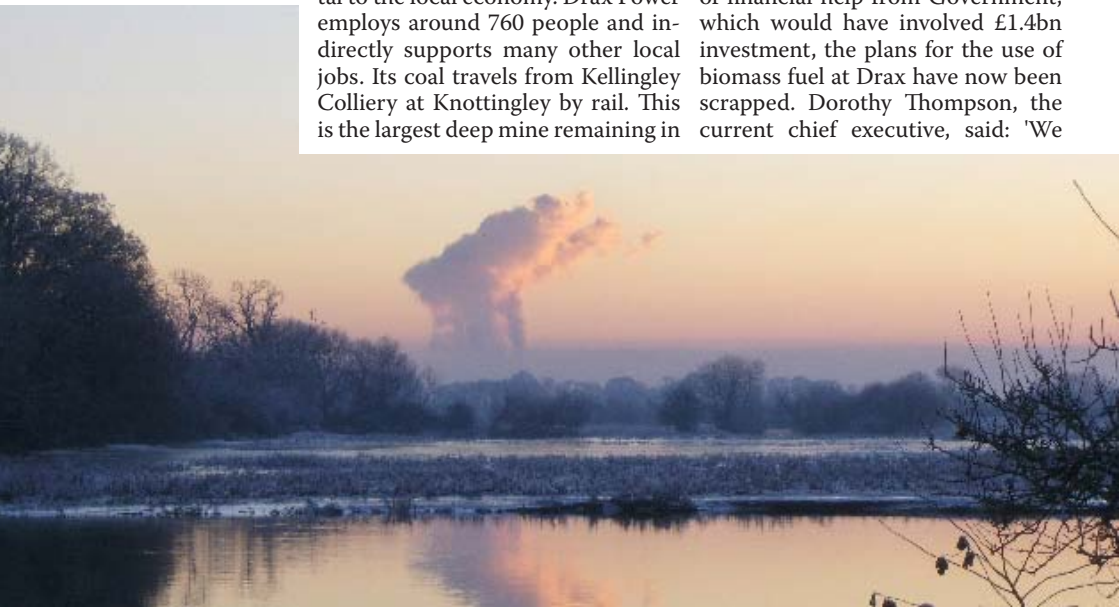
Tony Haynes reports on the (lack of) environmental developments at the landmark power station on the North-East's waterways.

One landmark that is nearly always in view when boating anywhere on the Ouse, Yorkshire Derwent, Selby Canal, River Aire and the Aire & Calder Canal is Long Drax power station. You can cruise for almost a hundred miles and not lose sight of it. It isn't the only power station in the area, but it is by far the biggest. It is situated on the banks of the Ouse almost opposite Barmby Barrage and the entrance to the River Derwent. Its six generators have an output capacity of 4,000 megawatts (MW), making it almost twice the size of the next largest coal-fired power station in the UK. It currently provides enough power to meet 7% of the UK's electricity needs.

As well as being an important strategic asset nationally, Drax is also vital to the local economy. Drax Power employs around 760 people and indirectly supports many other local jobs. Its coal travels from Kellingley Colliery at Knottingley by rail. This is the largest deep mine remaining in

Yorkshire and has a life expectancy to 2019. But what happens when the coal runs out? In 2008, Drax announced a proposal to develop 900 MW of biomass-fired generation with Siemens Project Ventures. They intended to build, own and operate three 300 MW dedicated biomass plants in the UK. In his statement for 2011 the then CEO of Drax Group plc. stated: 'Preparation for our biomass expansion is now well advanced. We completed extensive combustion trials in 2011 and are now confident in our technical ability to be predominantly biomass fuelled. However, it is important to note that moving ahead with our plans remains dependent on securing appropriate regulatory support and a strong investment case.' However, due to lack of financial help from Government, which would have involved £1.4bn investment, the plans for the use of biomass fuel at Drax have now been scrapped. Dorothy Thompson, the current chief executive, said: 'We

Drax on a cold morning from Sutton upon Derwent, 16 miles away
Photo: Tony Haynes



have expressed disappointment with the proposed level of support for this technology.'

Biomass is produced from sustainable wood destined for landfill and reclaiming life-expired wood originally used as packaging, furniture or construction. Unlike coal it is carbon neutral and has net zero CO₂ emissions. No trees are directly felled for biomass fuel. Drax is ideally situated for bulk transfer of biomass by barge on the Humber and Ouse, from a proposed production plant at Immingham. This decision by the Government would appear to be a set-back for proposed commercial traffic on north eastern rivers and canals. The last time the Drax jetty was used for a fuel delivery was in 2004. This was a delivery of 'tall oil', a resin product from the processing of coniferous wood that can be used in power station startup procedures. In 2004, Drax PR stated: 'Burning tall oil and other biomass fuels at Drax Power Station will make a significant contribution to the use of renewables in electricity generation by helping towards meeting the Government's target of 10% of electricity supplies coming from renewables by the year 2010.' In 2004 a team of engineers restored the jetty and its associated equipment on the River Ouse to allow river transportation. It was hoped that delivery by barge would bring further environmental and local benefits and it would remove approximately 4,000 tankers from the local roads.

In the same year, commenting on tall oil, Gerald Wingrove, then Chief Executive of Drax Power said: 'Drax is continually looking for ways to improve its business and environmental performance. Over the last 18 months we have successfully developed the capability to burn biomass materials and now these form an in-



tegral part of our fuel mix with tremendous environmental benefits.'

Kellingley Colliery with pans about to be scrapped

Photo: Tony Haynes

Existing biomass transport

At present, biomass transportation is still being planned for the Humber and Aire & Calder canals. Dalkia, Europe's leading energy management group, has planning permission to build a new processing plant at Pollington. At a cost of £120m the site will create 200 construction jobs and 60 long term operational jobs. All of the waste wood feedstock for the energy plant will be transported from a new transshipment dock at Immingham along the Humber and the Aire-Calder canal to a new wharf connected by a private link road to the site. The fuel will eventually be used at a new biomass power station that has received approval at Ferrybridge. This will require 800,000 tonnes a year, burning solid recovered fuel (approximately 300,000 tonnes per year); fuel from processed commercial and industrial waste (approximately 300,000 tonnes per year); and waste wood, but excluding hazardous (impregnated) waste of approximately 200,000 tonnes per year. A new jetty to replace the old barge wharf at Ferrybridge will have to be built. Unless, of course, the Government withdraws financial support for this project too.

Members' Offer

Black oil everywhere? Engine on the blink?

Nationwide breakdown and recovery on all UK inland waterways.

Retainer Cover

Registers the boat as the Member and therefore all users of the vessel are covered. Entitles you to same level of service and priority but pay on use. Breakdown and assistance charged at a flat rate of £40 per callout. No Replacement Parts Cover. Recovery is charged at £35 per hour. We will attend location of breakdown, assess and clarify the problem, rectify and repair the cause if possible. If the breakdown is terminal or requires extensive repair, the owners will be offered the opportunity to be towed to the nearest recommended marina or one of their own choice within two hours cruising time.

Cost £55

Bronze Cover

Breakdown assistance and recovery for registered boat and member only—member must be onboard during a breakdown. If the repair of an outboard motor is not possible, RCR provide a pick up and drop off service to take the outboard to a specialist for repairs. Maximum of 4 call-outs in any 1 year. No crew conveyance. Replacement Parts Cover. **Cost £130**

Silver Cover

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Letters to the Editor

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

Elecsol: is their warranty all it claims to be?

I read with interest the item in NABO News (Issue 3, May 2012) about members experiencing failures by battery suppliers to honour warranties. Three years ago I purchased and installed a set of four 220Ah 'maintenance-free' batteries from Elecsol with a 5 year warranty. From then until April last year, just under two years, my supposed 880Ah of battery capacity reduced to around 40-50Ah of usable capacity with an inverter before appearing to be fully discharged. Since then I have been attempting to exercise the warranty without success and eventually gave up, purchasing a new set of batteries from a different supplier and manufacturer.

The boat was used very infrequently during this period, perhaps 3 or 4 weekend outings, less than 10 partial cycles of the batteries. Elecsol's website states that they're good for 1,000 cycles. The rest of the time the batteries remained on intelligent "float" charge, supplied by a marina landline connection.

When I first contacted Elecsol a year ago I was met with the 'wear and tear' argument. When I pointed out that the batteries had been cycled no more than 10 times they changed their tune, suggesting that leaving them on charge and not using them was the cause of problem! (most likely sulphation, according to the electrical experts I have consulted). It seems you can't win either way. I have since been asked to provide an expert report on their condition, which I don't feel is my responsibility for a warranty claim, told to attempt equalisation, which for 'sealed' batteries is dangerous and not guaranteed to work. I was treated rudely and abruptly by the owner.

Anyway, I'd like to know if other members have had similar experiences with Elecsol and which Trading Standards office they have complained to. I'm unclear whether I should contact my local TSA or the TSA office nearest to Elecsol's business address. If others have done the same then I suspect the latter would be the more effective

course of action.

Andy Greener, nb. Whisper

Re: The article on the barriers on lock bridges.

The code on cycling on the waterways is 'dismount at locks', so why was this young lad riding his bike over a lock bridge. Why should normal people have to suffer because a few idiots think they can do as they like.

I feel sorry for the death of this young lad, but if he followed the rules he would still be alive. I bet the Waterways did not charge for removing his bike from the lock, which may have focussed his parents and others on their responsibilities for their children.

John Ogden, nb. Pen Gladnest

Re: UMBEG in the last issue:

They just don't get it do they? The statement by Tony Swatton highlights the fact that continuous moorers simply do not think they are doing anything wrong! They do not understand, or at least accept, that the licence confers the ability to navigate and moor anywhere they like within the rules. It does NOT confer the rights to any stretch of bank indefinitely! By mooring as they do it prevents others from using the benefits of the facilities and services nearby. They certainly don't moor in the middle of nowhere indefinitely; if they did then I doubt there would be many complaints about their selfish actions.

Forcing 'boaters' off their moorings and making them homeless causes me no more concern than forcing squatters out of property they have no rights to! I believe that, as with squatters, most continuous moorers have made a lifestyle choice that has nothing to do with affordability. They choose to do what they do because they simply do not want to pay for something if they can get away with it!

Mick Joy, nb. Holly

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