



# NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners  
Issue 3 June 2014

**LEGAL REVIEW SUPPLEMENT**  
**BRIARS ON BOARD**  
**IS OVERSTAYING A PROBLEM?**



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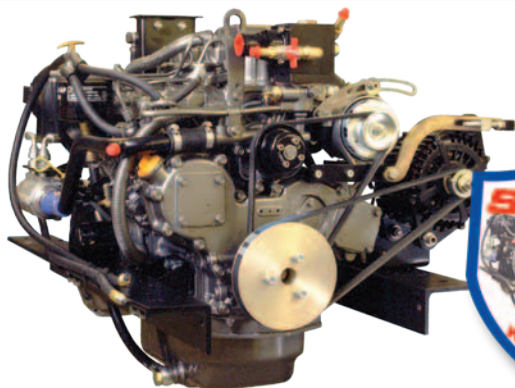
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Issue 3 June 2014

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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 June, 2014**

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## Front Cover Photo

Thanks to Julie Nolan for this month's cover photo showing summer boating on the Ripon Canal at Nicholson's bridge.



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## NABO Calendar 2014

Dates for Council Meetings in 2014: 14th June, 26th July (if needed), 6th September, 18th October, 15th November (AGM), 22nd November.

Council meetings will now be held at boat clubs in the Midlands area. The venue for the June meeting is to be confirmed—see the website for details. Remember that members are welcome to attend meetings— just let the Secretary or Chairman know in advance (contact details overleaf).

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# Membership is Everything

Peter Fellows

In this issue NABO Council has included a legal supplement, in which Geoffrey Rogerson sets out the legal advice that NABO has received on CRT's powers and how it should be using them. For many boaters, this is a 'dry' subject, the detail of which is of little interest. However, it goes to the heart of what NABO is doing to support boaters and their chosen ways of cruising—it also highlights one of NABO's problems in getting new members. Unlike the IWA's excellent Waterway Recovery Group and the Association's support for canal restoration work, which give it a high profile to attract the support of boaters (although I take issue with its current campaign saying 'No other organisation does more for boaters'), much of NABO's work goes on behind the scenes at meetings with navigation authorities and on other committees. Two examples of this in this issue: David Fletcher reports on the Boat Safety Scheme, where NABO reps have been able to lobby for BSS checks to be advisory rather than regulatory and more generally for common sense to prevail—one such example was heading off a proposal that solid fuel stoves should be extinguished before a boat moves! Secondly, following NABO's meetings with CRT, it abandoned plans for roving mooring permits and accepts that a £25 fine for overstaying on a mooring is illegal. But NABO's support for boaters goes largely unnoticed, even among many members, and certainly does not have a high profile to attract new members. So what to do? Well, Mark Tizard has been generating a lot of interest in the online boating community

with contributions on our Facebook page and other waterway blogs. His ongoing survey of members' views on overstaying at visitor moorings has had a very good response and we intend to use the results as part of a recruitment campaign later in the year.

A number of letters in this issue identify what many boaters feel is important about the waterways: Simon Greer's views on boaters' requirements ("we are easily satisfied with adequate water depth, working locks, sufficient casual moorings and minimum micro-management") will resonate with the majority of us and Robert Hamilton's view that "CRT 'fines' are unreasonable and a totally foreign concept to the relaxed and tolerant ethos of the canals" will also strike a chord. Indeed, I have been banging on about no-return rules and the like in almost every recent issue. But feedback from members is essential to enable NABO to continue lobbying and advising navigation authorities on behalf of boaters—and to rephrase the IWA, 'No other organisation does this for boaters'. I therefore welcome views and comments from all readers (and also more photos too please!). But should members also do more to engage fellow boaters, extol NABO's virtues and recruit new members? If each member recruited one more, we would obviously double our membership—and don't forget the free year's membership if you recruit three new members. I have included a membership application form for you to present to potential new members when chatting as a lock fills, after an evening pint, or to neighbours at your mooring.



## Thank

My sincere thanks to Peter Gregory, a proof-reader for NABO News, who has reluctantly had to give up his contribution.

If any readers are able to take his place and proof read the magazine, please let me know.



# Boater Representation

—a work in progress

Chairman **Mike Rodd** on relations between boaters, CRT, EA and the law

**T**his is a very important edition of NABO News. Over many years Council has, very correctly, spent a significant amount of money obtaining authoritative legal opinions on topics such as mooring regulations. We have always appreciated that the Acts under which BW (and now CRT) have had to operate are somewhat vaguely stated and are therefore inevitably open to interpretation. However, we have been consistently concerned in the past that BW was exceeding its powers and introducing regulations that could (and often did) lead to expensive, often inconclusive court cases. In order for us to represent you and speak with authority, we obviously need to be well-informed. Having obtained the best possible legal advice over the years (and accepting that no two lawyers will ever agree anyway!) we fed the information back to BW management—who invariably ignored it!

However this attitude has significantly changed with the arrival of Richard Parry as CEO and we have been greatly encouraged by his willingness to discuss with us the legal advice that we have received. It appears that many of the recent changes in CRT's moorings policies have been influenced by these exchanges. Therefore, having made CRT aware of our intentions, we have decided to pass on the advice we have received. **This legal advice has not been fully tested in court and there are several issues on which we and CRT do not agree.** To be fair, therefore, we have also published CRT's invited responses. I believe that this demon-

strates the constructive and robust relationship that we are developing with CRT. We are very clear that we see our role as a 'critical friend' and I passionately believe that this is what is required—especially as Richard Parry sets about the huge task of transforming CRT from a bureaucratic authoritarian civil servant-driven organisation into an independent customer-focused modern charity. We commend Richard for what he has already achieved, but as this legal supplement demonstrates, we will vigorously continue to ensure that CRT acts fairly and legally, and always in the best interest of its prime customers—boaters and the boating industry.

## Better communication

On the theme of working with CRT, we have also constantly told them that we feel BW's communications with us 'mere' boaters were poor, with the result that most of us felt increasingly estranged from BW. In contrast, when the recent breach on 'my' canal (the Mon & Brec) occurred, I was personally delighted that NABO was immediately consulted about how to work with users in South Wales in handling the problem. I have to say that the resulting communications have been excellent. We were all impacted, the hire boat companies especially, but we all knew what the issues were and were only too grateful that they were being addressed. And the promised completion dates were actually met, so CRT has some very happy boaters down that way! Well done to all involved. But elsewhere CRT's com-

munications with its principal customers, boaters, remains work in progress.

### Boat Safety Scheme

Less well publicised is NABO involvement in all aspects of the Boat Safety Scheme (BSS). We are very well represented at all levels by people with relevant technical expertise and have had significant inputs into the new BSS requirements for private boats. Now we are actively engaged in addressing the requirements for hire boats. Our input is critical and as David shows, we have an important role to play in ensuring that these are proportionate affordable and, quite frankly, sensible!. I was shocked to find that, for example, some hire boat companies would even query the need for CO and smoke alarms on their boats—would you sleep in a holiday cottage without a smoke alarm? I should add that we are also well-represented on the related British Standards Institute. Having recently fitted a solid-fuel stove to my 'new' ex-hireboat, I was initially concerned by the new BSI Code of Practice. But having heard the original proposals—*thou shalt fully extinguish thy stove before moving thy vessel*—I am extremely grateful for the input of our representative in dealing with exactly this sort of nonsense.

We are also trying to ensure that we have reps at as many User Forums as possible. A worrying observation, though, is that while some (such as those on the K&A) are excellent platforms for serious contributions from the various user groups, too many are still being dominated by lengthy, carefully prepared CRT presentations with little time left for free-flowing 'user' input. Also any slightly uncomfortable comments from the floor tend to be diverted by: "Well, we'll get back to you on that."

### EA representation

Things on EA navigations continue to get murkier by the day. The effects of budget cuts are now starting to become very evident: a layer of management has been taken out with many 'retirements' and relocated personnel. On the Thames the determination to reduce the number of lockkeepers is clearly proceeding apace. A claim in an Oxford newspaper that manned locks have more reported incidents than un-manned ones is hilariously stupid (since the lockkeepers are the ones who report all incidents), it will undoubtedly be used to support the planned reductions! The more I see of EA navigations, with their very different problems and the increasingly obvious reductions in funding, the more convinced I am that NABO's opposition to these waterways being taken over by CRT is correct, at least for the immediate future. We are very fortunate that we have very active representatives on the Thames, and although the dynamic Louis Jankel has sadly decided to play a lesser part, I am grateful that Graham Paterson has offered to take on additional roles and we also welcome Dennis Hill who will take over some of Louis' tasks.

Finally, I am thrilled by the work that my excellent colleague, Mark Tizard, is doing in seeking input from YOU on what YOUR experiences are on issues relating to visitor moorings and CRT enforcement. The response to his request has been amazing and I can't tell you how encouraging this has been for your Council. It so validates all our discussions with CRT. Above all, what we want are clear, simple-to-understand rules that are fairly and consistently enforced, and where there are proven problems (which there are), that these should be dealt with effectively and humanely.

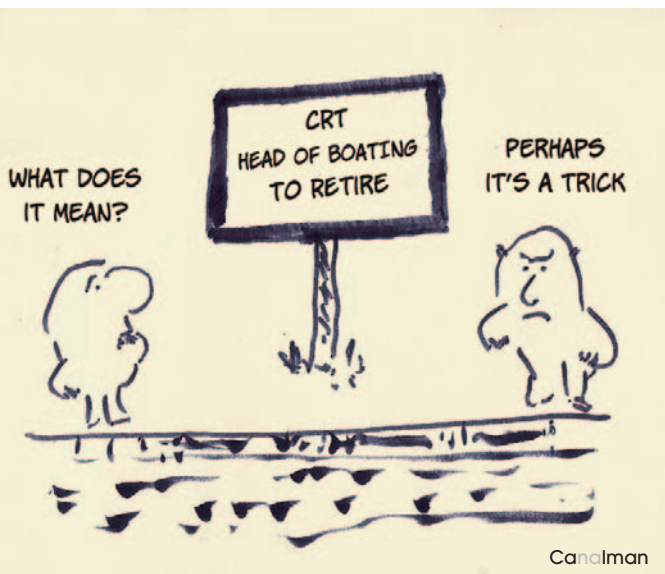
# Fly on the Wall

Observes proceedings at the last Council meeting.



The Council met at a deserted Wolverhampton Boat Club (everyone there was off on a club Bank Holiday cruise) and kicked off with a discussion of membership. Although numbers appear to have held steady after the subscription increase, there is a need to attract new members to keep the Association 'afloat'. Mark Tizard has been polling members about their views on overstaying on moorings and, as the start of a recruitment campaign, the Council will use the good response to create an article for Towpath Talk together with a membership application (as

our resident wag pointed out: "free magazines sell better than ones that cost money")! Then onto the K&A mooring trial, which began the day before. Everyone agreed that it was not just 'boats without a home mooring' that caused congestion on the western end of the canal and one Council member had counted 21 hire boats heading for Bath in a single afternoon. In general the Council view is to let the pilot go ahead, but as one put it: "it is a voluntary code of conduct that boaters must comply with" and there is scepticism about its success without proper enforcement—but there is only one patrol officer for the whole canal. While on moorings, the new definition of a 'ghost' mooring was explained: previously this was a mooring that a boater falsely claimed to have when getting a licence; but now it is a home mooring that is not used. It is widely believed that boaters who have a home mooring are effectively ignored by enforcement officers. Apparently marina owners only have to report how many yards of moored boats they have and not the number of boats or their names. In a packed agenda other matters included: CRT's towpath survey (in which boats are not mentioned) and reports of cycle clubs using towpaths for time-trials; farewell to Sally Ash at the end of June and the move by Geoff Whyatt to head of CRT's marina division, BWML; and the drastic restructuring that has taken place at the EA, with some silly newspaper report saying that 'incidents' occur more frequently at manned Thames locks than at unmanned locks! Happy summer boating. Bye....



Canalman



## Membership

The new membership arrangements are getting going now with the team on board and learning the ropes. One of the nicest things is to see the messages of appreciation that flow in with the renewals. Thank you so much, members, for all your support. But we also need help from the more than 100 members who did not update their standing orders after 1st April 2013 when we increased the subscriptions.

We have chased them up but now we need to do it again because so many have not responded. We cannot continue to print and distribute NABO News to members at a cost that is subsidised by members who have paid promptly. So please check your standing orders and let us have the balance of the subscription due.

The rates are £25 for full membership, £5 for additional family members, £20 for associate members and £25 for affiliate members.

When renewal is due, a reminder will be sent a few weeks before. Please take action and respond to this to make sure that renewals are trouble-free for us all. If you have a standing order that is wrong you will have been sent a new form. Please fill it in, adding your membership number as a reference so that payments can be identified from the bank statement, and send it to PO Box 104, Leyland, PR25 9AN.

## London Rivers (sort of) reopened

The 6 km of the Waterworks River, Old River Lea, City Mill River and Bow Back River were once lined with industries, but the decline in canal freight after World War II and a build-up of silt saw them become unnavigable and eventually closed. In preparation for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Olympic Delivery Authority and CRT created new river walls and towpaths, dredged deeper channels, refurbished disused locks and improved wild-life habitats. The rivers were handed over to the London Legacy Development Corporation in 2012 and in May the St Pancras Cruising Club organised a flotilla of boats to cruise some of the waters of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park for the first time since the rivers were restored. The event was one of a series of organised cruises to be held this summer and it is hoped that there



## Boaty Theatre Company

In conjunction with the National Waterways Museum in Ellesmere Port the Boaty Theatre Company (until recently known as The Boaty Youth Theatre, but now grown up!) will stage a production of *Much Ado about Nothing* on August 21st and 22nd. It is billed as an 'immersive, interactive and multimedia experience'. Being an outdoor performance in British summertime, bring a brolly! Tickets are £4 (£3 for children and concessions) available from the museum.

[theboatytheatrecompany.com.webs.com](http://theboatytheatrecompany.com.webs.com)  
[canalrivertrust.org.uk/national-waterways-museum](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/national-waterways-museum)

will eventually be recreational boating and tour boat trips once construction work on the park is completed. In the meantime, boaters will need to register their interest in joining future cruises by emailing [waterways@londonlegacy.co.uk](mailto:waterways@londonlegacy.co.uk).

## NABO withdraws from Charter


NABO has withdrawn its association with the 2014 EA Customer's Charter. Any Charter that is published without service levels is almost an irrelevance. If, in future years, NABO wishes to be identified with the service provisions offered by EA in the Charter, we can review our support.

NB: I have broken free and will be afloat on the Thames and available until late autumn for NABO members to contact me for whatever reason, either email [lbj@cixoffice.com](mailto:lbj@cixoffice.com), phone 07831 197171 or, if they see me, in person aboard my boat 'Madam'.

*Louis Jankel*

# Researching the Thames

A new website for anyone who wants to know more about this iconic waterway

-  [runningtheriverthames@greenwich.ac.uk](mailto:runningtheriverthames@greenwich.ac.uk)
-  @ThamesGov
-  [www.gre.ac.uk/riverthamesguide](http://www.gre.ac.uk/riverthamesguide)

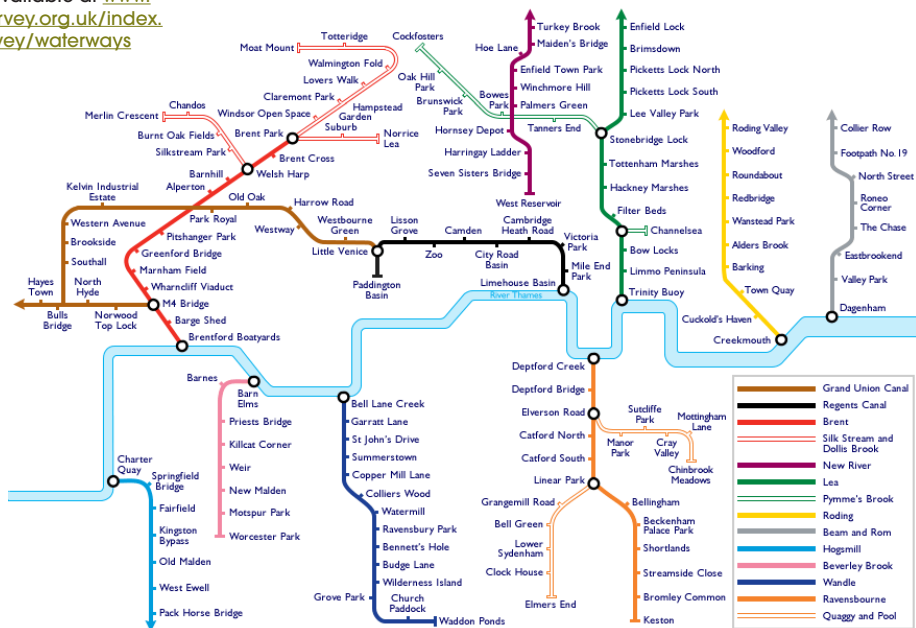
This new website has been created by the 'Running the River Thames' project at the Greenwich Maritime Institute. It is a guide for anyone interested in finding out more about the history and environment of the river with some sections covering the period back to the mid-nineteenth century. The main features of the guide include:

- A timeline for the environmental governance of the river since the 1850s, including information on legislation and key events.
- Current and historical maps of the river and river basin, including images and links.
- Historical overview of the river's functions – what has it been used

for and by whom?

- Past and present interest groups and stakeholder organisations.
- Links to historic films about the river and archive collections, including British Pathé's amazing collection of online films.
- Bibliography.

London's waterways - an auditory tribute to Harry Beck's Underground map' by the London Sound Survey, available at [www.soundsurvey.org.uk/index.php/survey/waterways](http://www.soundsurvey.org.uk/index.php/survey/waterways)



# CBOA Welcomes Freight Strategy

**T**he Commercial Boat Operators Association (CBOA), the trade association for the barge industry, has welcomed the setting up of a group to investigate greater use of the Yorkshire waterways for carrying freight. This will include a review of infrastructure improvements needed for use by larger barges enabling greater payloads and carriage of containers, exploring market potential with port operators and the availability of support or grants from the EU and local enterprise partnerships. David Lowe, CBOA chairman, said: "CBOA has for years been saying that

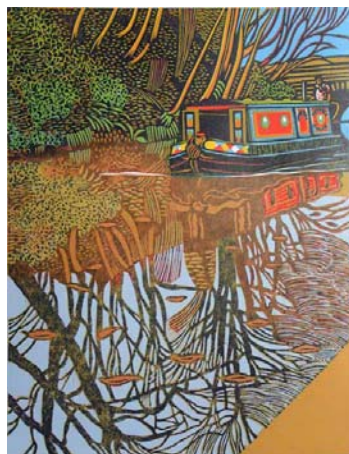
CRT should be proactive in seeking freight and not sit back and only maintain the waterways on a status quo basis. So we welcome this sign that CRT sees a possible future for freight and is planning to do something about it. Barges can offer a competitive and greener alternative to lorries, using less fuel and emitting fewer greenhouse gases." The Yorkshire waterways to be covered are the Aire and Calder main line, part of the Wakefield Branch to Wakefield Europort, the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation including the New Junction Canal, and the River Ouse.



## 70th Anniversary Edition of 'Narrow Boat'

Tom Rolt's classic book, first published in 1944, was a catalyst for the creation of the IWA and the restoration of the canal system. Seventy years later, CRT and the History Press have produced a new limited edition with over 20 previously unpublished photographs from the Rolt family archives plus 80 illustrations. The book has a new foreword by Canal Laureate Jo Bell and a cover illustration by canal artist, Eric Gaskell. The book was launched at the Hay Festival in May and can be bought from the CRT website from the end of May. Some, including film-maker Laurence Hogg, have questioned the reasoning behind the new book, the original of which has never been out of print: why a foreword from a Canal Laureate? Why the extra 80 illustrations - does it need diluting with modern artist's work? Why launch it at Hay on Wye instead of Crick or Braunston - it is only a reprint enhanced by additional Rolt photos, which will mostly appeal to boaters?

Cover design by Eric Gaskell ([www.egdesign.co.uk](http://www.egdesign.co.uk))



# BSS—an Explanation

David Fletcher on why NABO is a uniquely qualified boater's organisation.



## The general principles adopted by NABO representatives are:

- Wherever possible BSS checks should be advisory and regulation should only be used where absolutely necessary.
- Checks should be specific and not involve personal assessment or opinion by the examiner.
- If a check is introduced based on incident statistics, this must be supported by evidence.
- All information used by an examiner should also be available to the boat owner (who has to maintain the standard for the rest of the four years).
- Installations should not be outlawed on the basis that it is difficult to examine them.
- The "I can't see it, therefore it must be defective!" concept should be applied sparingly and only after rigorous consideration.
- The BSS should avoid a presumption of guilty until boaters prove themselves innocent.
- The BSS is a minimum Safety Standard and is not a Construction Standard, which is the preserve of the British Marine Federation, British Standards Institute, etc.

The Boat Safety Scheme relates to the condition, equipment and use of boats and exists to help minimise risks to all waterways visitors and the waterways' workforce and to help protect adjacent property. It is a public safety initiative owned by CRT and the EA. The governance involves three committees: the Management, the Advisory and the Technical Committees. These meet at least twice a year, with day-to-day work carried out by email. NABO is unique in that our members sit on all three committees.

The BSS Management Committee controls and monitors the safety scheme and its operation. This ensures that the scheme operates to time, to budget, within agreed policy to support its purpose, and is aligned with wider navigation authority interests. All key decisions are made by the Management Committee. These include those concerning any new BSS requirements, the need for BSS safety-awareness initiatives, the cost of certification to boaters, and determining the outcome of complaints about examiner performance. Trevor Rogers, NABO Technical Representative and former Vice-Chairman, is on this committee, representing all users.

The Management Committee receives guidance from the two support committees (BSS Advisory Committee and BSS Technical Committee). The Advisory Committee is the stakeholder committee that makes recommendations to the Management Committee on matters pertaining to the operation and impact of the safety scheme. Customer group interests, boaters, examiners and business are equally represented on the Advisory Committee and this includes NABO. Trevor Rogers is on the committee and David Fletcher also attends. The Technical Committee is the stakeholder committee that makes recommendations to the Advisory Committee concerning issues of a technical nature. NABO Chairman, Mike Rodd, is our representative and David Fletcher, NABO Webmaster and former Chairman, chairs this Committee.

So our long-serving representatives, who are all professionally qualified, make a significant contribution to the management of the Boat Safety Scheme. They are not examiners, just boaters with a technical background and a solid commitment to represent users' interests. NABO is the only boating association with representation at technical, advisory and management levels within the scheme. Over the years it has been a leading influence in securing a commitment to minimise the mandatory requirements of the safety scheme and also in securing changes to the appeals procedure.

If you need any help with BSS issues, this is what we are here for.

# How to Encourage Young Boaters

**A**lthough there are now more private powered boat licences, the age profile of owners shows that nearly a third are over 65 and only 3% under 35. Hire boating now has fewer family groups and other ways of taking up boating, such as camping boats, are largely no longer available.

In contrast, canoeing is at an all-time high with two million participants in 2013, mostly a younger age group as it is obviously far more affordable. An extensive network of canoe trails is being developed, including some on CRT waterways.

At the CRT Council meeting in March, the 'Boating Group' and representatives from the boating trades and non-powered boating interests presented a paper, followed by a

round-table discussion on how CRT could work with partner organisations to develop a new national water recreation strategy and whether there are ways of transferring the enthusiasm for canoeing to powered boating. Council members endorsed the view that CRT should promote greater diversity of participation in both powered and unpowered boating. This will include working with Chloe Donovan, the chair of the Youth Engagement Advisory Group. We would appreciate comments from boaters, particularly those involved with boat clubs, societies and trusts and from younger people about how they became involved with waterways through canoeing, hire boating, camping boating or a family-owned boat.

You can contact the boater representatives on the CRT Council

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Chloe Donovan, chair of the Youth Engagement Advisory Group



# Is Overstaying a Problem?

NABO members' views are being sought by **Mark Tizard**

**W**e will attend a meeting with CRT and other boating associations to discuss issues around overstaying on moorings and current enforcement practices. NABO would like to get a greater understanding of the scale of the problem in order to discuss ideas for improving enforcement. We would therefore like to get members' views

on moorings and enforcement and I would be grateful if you could spend a couple of minutes commenting on the following:

This is not intended to be an exhaustive survey just a quick snapshot of boaters' views. Please forward your comments to [moorings@nabo.org.uk](mailto:moorings@nabo.org.uk).

Thank you,

- 1 Do you feel there is a problem with overstaying in your current or recent cruising area? If yes, is this on visitor moorings, the general towpath, or both?
- 2 Can you give us an example of overstaying in your area (please no boat names but the location, duration etc)?
- 3 Do you feel that there are sufficient CRT patrol officers physically on the ground?
- 4 Have you seen CRT enforcement staff (not volunteer data loggers) recently in your travels and, if so, how frequently?
- 5 Do you know how to contact the enforcement team?
- 6 Given CRT's limited resources, which of these statements best match your views?

CRT should:

- a focus enforcement on boats that don't move rather than those that don't move far enough.
  - b employ more staff and ensure there are staff on the ground talking to boaters.
  - c physically move boats that don't move or overstay on visitor moorings on the basis that they are causing an obstruction.
  - d show more flexibility and consider more schemes like the pilot scheme on the Kennet and Avon canal.
- 7 Is there anything else on moorings and enforcement that you would like us to consider?

# Legal Review

Geoffrey Rogerson introduces the legal supplement

One of the problems with large organisations and government departments is that they tend to assume powers they have not got and exceed powers that they do have. Starting in 2004, extending over the next ten years, NABO sought legal advice from both our solicitors and Blackstone Chambers, Temple, London. We felt that this necessary, as over this period BW introduced various 'rules' that had no statutory basis. In this issue you will find the legal review which is a précis of Counsel's opinion.

This year we have had two meetings with Richard Parry, CEO of CRT, and Jackie Lewis, the head of their legal team. Subsequent to these meetings we are now able to update the situation regarding the six headings in the legal review.

- 1 CRT still claims it has legal authority for the no-return and limited days per month requirements. Our legal advice is quite unequivocal that these are illegal.
- 2 CRT has accepted that the £25 penalty is illegal. CRT accepts that a licence cannot be refused for outstanding non-payment of an overstaying charge.
- 3 Roving mooring permits have now been withdrawn due to 'legal difficulties'.
- 4 CRT is endeavouring to establish the legal nature of the definition of 'place' as recommended by the Kennet & Avon Partnership sub-group. This would bring about a national definition of 'place'. Our legal advice is that this would exceed CRT's powers and no doubt it would have to be eventually decided in court.

5 CRT has agreed that whatever the recommendations of the K&A sub-group, there would have to be national acceptance. CRT also accepts that it does not have the power to decide how far a boat must move in order to comply with bona fide navigating.

6 CRT has accepted that a boat does not have to complete a full 20 km journey before returning, which had been suggested.

As a result of these meetings, a closer understanding has emerged with greater willingness for NABO and CRT to work together to overcome both practical and legal difficulties.

## ... and CRT's Response

The Trust appreciates being given the opportunity to respond to the points raised by NABO in the summary of their legal review. Whilst there are still areas of disagreement, we hope that the recent meetings that have taken place are the start of a better working relationship that will enable both parties to better understand each other's point of view and the reasons behind certain decisions or courses of action.

We do not accept that the Trust, or its predecessor British Waterways, has introduced rules with 'no statutory basis' or that we have assumed powers that we do not have and exceeded powers we do have. Taking each of the numbered points in the article in turn:

- 1 Section 43 of the Transport Act 1962 states that the Trust has the power to make the use of our services and facilities subject to such terms and conditions as we see fit. We therefore maintain that we

have clear statutory authority to impose 'no return' requirements and time limited stays at visitor moorings.

2 The Trust has always accepted that it does not have the power to fine. However, as explained above, it does have the power to impose charges for extended stays under section 43 of the Transport Act 1962. The Trust accepts that a licence cannot be refused due to non-payment of an extended stay charge alone.

3 This is correct.

4 The Trust is not seeking to impose a national definition of 'place'. We have always accepted that only a court can determine what 'place' means in any particular case. However, we know that boaters want to have a working definition that they can use to remove any threat of enforcement action, and in response to requests for guidance about how the Trust interprets the statutory requirement to move from place to place, the Trust intends to publish a series of maps which divide the Trust's navigable waterways into 'places'.

Provided a boater without a home mooring has moved from one 'place'—as shown on the relevant map—to another within 14 days, this will satisfy the Trust as to compliance with this element of section 17(3)(c)(ii) of the British Waterways Act 1995.

5 How far a boat must move in order for it to be considered to be used 'bona fide for navigation' in accordance with the requirements of section 17(3)(c)(ii) of the British Waterways Act 1995 depends upon the factual circumstances of each case and ultimately only be confirmed definitively by a court. The Trust's *Guidance for Boaters without a Home Mooring* is our interpretation of what it means to bona fide navigate.

6 The Trust does not accept this statement. As explained in point 5, the pattern of boat movements required depends upon the facts of each case and can only be determined definitively by a court.

We look forward to working with NABO further in the future.

*Jackie Lewis*

## Guidance for Boaters with a Mooring

**Geoffrey Rogerson** writes to CRT

There is confusion arising among boaters with a permanent mooring following the introduction of 'no-return rules' and 'limited number of days per month on a visitor mooring'. In addition the new K&A mooring guidance has complicated matters.

Recently there have been articles in the waterways press drawing attention to a blurring of the distinctions between boats with a mooring and those without.

Accordingly I would be grateful if you would clarify CRT's position with respect to the following questions:

1. Are sections 17 (iii) (c) (i) and (ii) mutually exclusive (either/or)?
2. Under section 17 (iii) (c) (ii), does a boat have to continuously cruise throughout the entirety of the period of the licence?
3. When a boat leaves its marina mooring and enters the canal does it become a continuous cruiser?
4. If a boat leaves a marina mooring on a Friday, travels a few miles or locks, and returns on a Sunday, and does this every weekend, how is this affected by the no-return rule and the maximum days per month in a neighbourhood?
5. If a boat leaves a marina in April to spend the next 2 or 3 months cruising, is it subject to the bona fide navigation requirement (e.g. from A to B and thence to C)?
6. What is meant by a 'ghost' mooring?



# Briars on Board

The only briar pipemaker in the world crafts handmade smoking pipes on a boat on the British canals

Ian Walker of Northern Briars explains how this came about.

**M**y grandfather, George Walker, started work at Duncan Briars in 1922 and passed his skills down through his sons. As a third generation pipe-maker for 41 years, I discovered the canals in 1986 when my wife Catriona and I walked most of the towpaths in Cheshire, before hiring a boat the following year. Several boat holidays later we took the plunge and purchased a 26ft cabin cruiser, which we enjoyed every weekend in the summer months. As we always wanted a narrowboat, when an opportunity arose to purchase a 43ft ex-hire boat, we took it. Once again we used the narrowboat for weekends and holidays, more and more for four years, not wanting to go back home after the weekend. After much thought, we made the decision to make a narrowboat our home. We felt that a larger boat was needed and set about having a new 60ft trad narrowboat commissioned. It was during the lead time to the build that I had what can only be described as an inspiring moment: "Why don't we go for a 70ft narrowboat to incorporate a workshop?" The shell arrived and the fit-out began, a year later it became a home including an 11ft workshop. We set off continuously cruising as far south as Nottingham and Worcester and north as far as Burscough. All this time the briar pipes were increasing in popularity due to the fact that I started attending international pipe shows in the USA at Chicago, Richmond, Columbus, Las Vegas, and Dortmund in Germany. In 2009,

the demand meant that we had to take on a mooring on the Trent & Mersey.

All of my pipes are handmade to order from the finest Italian and Greek briar and each pipe has a hand-cut mouthpiece fashioned from the best German vulcanite rod. Pipes can be enhanced with a silver band—a skill passed down to me by my grandfather. Once a year I invite members of UK pipe clubs to what is described as a 'towpath smoke-off'. This is a slow smoking competition in which competitors fill their pipes with 3 grams of tobacco, light them in one minute and keep the pipe going without relighting. The loser is the first to go out and the winner is the last one smoking.

We're off to Chicago at the beginning of May—the Americans think it 'awesome' that pipes are made on a boat on the British canals. The people visiting our boat so far have come from as far away as Japan, Austria, the Czech Republic, the USA and Canada.

And thus the journey continues.



Ian's father Peter and Ian taken at their Altrincham workshop in 1977.

More information:

[www.northernbriars.co.uk](http://www.northernbriars.co.uk)

The pipe boat, a floating pipe-making workshop



# Cosy Toes!

Mike Rodd installs a BS8511 compliant stove

\* Heating Equipment Testing and Approval Scheme

[www.hetas.co.uk](http://www.hetas.co.uk)

A year or so ago we exchanged our ageing narrowboat for a younger one. One drawback was that, being an ex-hireboat, it had no multi-fuel stove so we had to fit one from scratch. On enquiry, my (then) insurers told me that although full compliance with the new BSI code of practice for the installation of solid fuel heating in canal boats (BS8511:2010) was not a BSS requirement, they strongly advised me to adopt it. Looking around, I found that very few companies offered fully compliant kit.

I opted in the end for the Chilli Penguin system and this was one of the best decisions I have made. One of their recommended installers, The Fire and Stove Shop (Brecon & Cardiff) installed it and did a great job.

The discussions I had with the proposed installers were interesting—they are HETAS\* approved and were fully aware of the new code. (An alternative installer I approached had no idea what I was talking about!) We debated the issues of having a full twin-wall flue system from the top of the stove through the deck collar to the chimney.

However this would have resulted in a very bulky installation with a bright silver pipe from the stove to the ceiling, so we opted instead for the alternative of a single-wall vitreous enamel pipe from the stove to the underside of the deck collar. That meant, however, that we needed to make provision for heat shields to protect any internal panelling close to the stove pipe. This was a serious task but in the end was really just a case of extending the heat shielding

that one would normally provide around the stove itself, right up to ceiling level—a fiddly job, but this did seem to be the better option. Above that came the full twin-wall installation through the roof and a twin-wall chimney.

I am as delighted with the efficient performance of the stove as I was with the installation. The stove uses about 20% less fuel than my previous Becton Bunny Arrow stove using Homefire Ovals, and is much easier to start and to keep going. I stack it up and can leave it quietly burning for up to 8 or 9 hours—and it takes little effort to get back up to full operation in the morning.

The support from Chilli Penguin has been excellent—I recently noticed that the brass on the chimney had become rather black and I couldn't polish it up. I contacted Chilli and their manager embarrassed me by suggesting that maybe the protective plastic covering on the brass had not been removed! Yep, and with a long and hard rub with steel wool the muck finally came off. I also mentioned, though, that some of the straps holding the rain hat onto its base had lost their black paint. It turns out that it is all stainless steel so painting can be tricky. No problem—a day later a replacement rain hat arrived at my front door.

The downsides: the installation costs were high and the long-term worry is that, so far, I haven't found an alternative source of chimneys—so I am locked into Chilli Penguin. However, so far, great service from a great company with a great product designed and made in Wales.



# K&A Local Plan

## Guidance for boaters without a home mooring

The western end of the Kennet & Avon between Bath and Foxhangers attracts a large number of boats and, following consultation with local boaters, the K&A Waterways Partnership and CRT have produced an interim 12-month local plan for the area aimed at reducing congestion.

From 1st May boats between Bath and Foxhangers are expected to move to a new 'neighbourhood' every 14 days and spread their mooring pattern evenly across 14 different neighbourhoods (see map) covering a range of at least 20km. CRT checkers will record the location of each boat at least once every 14 days. Boaters are also expected to moor in at least 12 of the neighbourhoods regularly over the 12-month period; going to and fro between a few neighbourhoods isn't sufficient. CRT will review all sightings of boats every three months to determine how many different neighbourhoods they have been sighted in.

CRT recommends keeping a log as evidence of movement should any disagreement arise. If there is illness or a boat breakdown that prevents compliance, CRT will normally al-

low a temporary suspension of the requirement to move until the problem has been addressed. CRT acknowledges that boaters who have a home mooring within the local plan area might use the closer neighbourhoods more frequently and requests that boats are returned to their home mooring when not cruising. Visiting boaters are asked to follow this guidance until they leave the local plan area.

***[CRT] requests that boats are returned to their home mooring when not cruising.***

Maximum stay times at visitor moorings between Bath and Foxhangers will be 48 hours from 1st May with not more than 7 days at a site during any one calendar month. An extended stay charge of £25 per day will be applied. These stay times apply to all boats except holiday hire boats which will be exempt from the '7 days in a calendar month' rule. CRT is also planning to offer winter mooring permits that allow boats to remain moored in one place from November to March inclusive (details available during August 2014).

### In case of need;

Contact Customer Services on 0303 040 4040 during working hours and ask to be connected to the K&A West Enforcement Team or email [KAMooring@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:KAMooring@canalrivertrust.org.uk) 





# Dear Richard,

## An open letter to CRT's CEO

Simon Greer puts pen to paper with ideas for improvement

**T**here is a credibility gap between the CRT 'promise' (as promoted on your website, in your literature and your PR) which is pretty wonderful and the on-the-cut reality, which is less compelling. Consequently, CRT often falls into a credibility gap of its own making—that CRT is 'boater friendly' when often it is not, or that CRT has all the answers when it clearly hasn't—thus causing discontent. Here is a selection of ideas. These are more than just my thoughts; I have solicited ideas from far and wide. I hope you find them useful.

### *Boaters do not welcome being orchestrated herded or need their hands holding....*

#### **If it ain't broken, don't fix it**

Please don't fix problems where they don't exist. Places like London, Bradford on Avon and the Llangollen do not reflect the majority of the system; they are simply busy areas. Congestion is part of the scene. Like vehicle traffic in busy towns, or the motorway through Birmingham, most boaters negotiate bottlenecks and congestion well enough, with patience and common sense and deal with it without ringing up the DVLA each time. Like at a boat rally, we happily breast up two and three deep—no problem. We get along without any of the special measures seemingly perceived by some of your management as necessary for these untypical locations.

Boaters do not welcome being orchestrated or herded or need their

hands holding. How many boats are called 'Freedom', 'Narrow Escape' and similar? Not aspirational nonsense, one of the most important USPs of the canals! Boaters don't want a charge for that which they used to get for free. They have humble requirements and are easily satisfied with adequate water depth, working locks and casual moorings. The needs of these paying customers should receive priority.

Please avoid micro-managing—CRT can't please everyone and could choose to be more laissez-faire. Refuse to take sides; ride above the nonsense. Stick to the big ideas (e.g. boaters—don't cause a wash; developers—replace moorings you take from boaters).

#### **Managed for Whom?**

Unfortunately significant bad feeling exists between many boating customers and CRT. Securing approval from CRT for canalside development/moorings is turgid, slow and contorted. This is because of inappropriate diktats (e.g. no more on-line moorings). Much has been demanded by CRT with little regard for boaters' expectations, wishes, or licence money. It's almost as if we are not customers but intruders. Being a monopoly supplier that's also a charity shouldn't mean that CRT can treat customers as milch cows or threaten them with court action for contentious non-compliance.

Should the network be administered for the 'trade' at the expense of private boaters? Certainly much current visitor mooring restriction is mostly for the benefit of hire boat-

ers. I question this. Like car parking in town, if someone already occupies a space it is accepted they got there first and we park elsewhere. Why is a short walk back to the pub a problem? Is a short walk not part of a canal holiday?

### How Do Others Manage?

Please consider how other countries run their canal networks. France operates a 'carnet' system where boaters pay only for periods of navigation, so periods of non-movement while moored are not chargeable. Boats don't require a safety certificate although insurance is required. Locks are operated for boaters throughout the system. These are not necessarily good ideas but they show that there is credible alternative management in operation. Perhaps your management team could be asked to explore similar thinking?

### Vested Interests

User groups are in constant conflict: paying moorers vs non-paying moorers; hire boaters vs private boaters; walkers vs joggers vs cyclists vs dog owners vs fishermen vs canoeists. Plastic boats vs steel boats vs dayboats vs canalside house owners vs liveaboards vs non-liveaboards and so on. This is because we are all able, with impunity, to promote our own self-interest rather than a common 'canal interest'. House owners throw their rubbish over the garden wall into the canal, boaters run generators at night next to houses, property developers think boaters get in the way of development etc. CRT doesn't encourage a common canal interest but rather fuels the flames of factionalism by taking sides—generally against the boater and in favour of the landlubber. As the main navigation authority CRT might see fit to fight the boater's corner as its first priority. We boaters



certainly feel CRT doesn't 'Bat for Boaters'. Perhaps CRT might wish to adopt the phrase?

### Waterway Law

There is much in the 1995 Waterways Act that is vague. I contributed to the Select Committee hearings and know with certainty that this vagueness was deliberately introduced by George Mudie MP and his parliamentary team as legal protection for boaters, balancing up the draconian law sought by BW. Today, outside the scrutiny of the Select Committee,

*... and don't want a charge for that which they used to get for free.*

CRT (and BW before it) spends our money trying to circumvent the protection given to us—over £1 million last year, mostly with Shoosmiths. Such spending by a charity, directed against its customers, is inappropriate. Please consider curtailing this expenditure. We argued our case in the highest forum in the land against your professional legal team and won our concessions. That should be the end of the matter. We have



French *eclusier* on the Hédé flight and his control console. All locks in France have an *eclusier*, often students.

Photo: Sylvie Amand  
[chrodoy.blogspot.fr](http://chrodoy.blogspot.fr)

to live with those sections of the law we don't like and we feel that CRT should do the same.

To assist you to 'nudge' towpath-moored boats into moving regularly consider publishing rotas, by location, of visits by your enforcement officers, posted on local noticeboards, leafleted on the towpath and on the web. Then watch the majority of boaters move in synchronicity with such rotas.

It's a myth that there are more boats today than ever before and therefore more regulation is required to manage them. Not true. Boat numbers peaked at over 100,000 at the turn of the 19th century, with 500 more miles of canal and 95% of boats permanently on the line. There was less regulation, more congestion and greater camaraderie. Contrast that with 35,000 boats today, 95% in marinas, with much more regulation and imposed expense. I recall when towpath mooring was the norm and was included in the licence fee.

*In Macclesfield, eight local wharfs have been lost to housing and not a single boater was assisted with their relocation difficulties.*

Congleton Wharf

Photo: Jonathan Kington



**Killing the Golden Goose?**

If I visit Snowdon the environment is natural; uncontrived and unspoilt. That's what I want; that's the attraction. Put in the hands of insensitive professional leisure managers and the result; Blackpool up a hill. 'Welcome to Snowdon', with a pay box here, an IKEA-type routing system there. Expensive cafes, and trinket shops, information-guided paths with sculptures and organic ice-cream booths, all in the name of progress— 'Improvements' that compromise that which was the attraction! So-called progress that is retrogressive and degrades the integrity of the resource.

CRT appears to manage the system as if it is a sort of Alton Towers on water where the visitors are corralled into paying for mooring and accept a high entrance fee. How much better if it was viewed like a National Park where there is no entrance fee and the running costs are found elsewhere. Millions of walkers and joggers along waterways have it free; it clearly can be done.

**Charity or Monopoly?**

CRT is a new charity. Please always act as such. Making boaters homeless and throwing them into the hands of hard-pressed local authorities isn't charitable. Hiding behind the phrase 'We are not a housing authority' doesn't sit comfortably when you take money for houseboat certificates and residential moorings. Indeed, as a charity, I can't see why you wouldn't wish to positively help with the nation's housing needs. I understand the previous Minister for Housing, Grant Shapps, has suggested that this should happen. As a monopoly supplier it is incumbent on CRT not to use its privileged position to strongarm customers into compliance with that which is contentious (e.g. threats to withhold li-

cences for perceived non-compliance).

I understand that the CRT property portfolio needs to be 'managed'. However, ahead of moving boaters from a site CRT wishes to develop, please find your customers alternative moorings as a prerequisite to development. Presently moorers are unceremoniously evicted and left to fend for themselves. It's a bad deal. Jericho Boatyard in Oxford is a good example of this but it continues to happen nationwide. In Macclesfield eight local wharfs have been lost to housing and not a single boater was assisted with their subsequent difficulties—loss of engineering expertise, parking, security, diesel supplies, moorings and more.

#### More Reliable Income

Many millions of gallons of fresh water currently leak from CRT reservoirs to the sea via the canal network. But CRT is broke! At the same time many thousands of new homes are to be built. Seemingly the water companies are making little or no provision for this new demand; no-one wants a new reservoir in their back garden. So here's a proposal: sell CRT reservoirs (but not the water) to the utility companies to raise capital now and use the network as the primary distribution conduit. A royalty fee for every gallon extracted and cleaned for sale could be our funding for a reliable future. Please also consider using the system more as a transport network (e.g. moving rubbish for local authorities or non-perishables for Tesco). This should be in CRT's thinking; it used to be. Reducing road journeys is green, attracts government support and helps keep the canals working.

In conclusion, in the past our waterways have been administered as if they were the private fiefdom of an anti-boater management. The hope

is that this can stop and a more inclusive new boater-friendly administration can arise. You are invited to cultivate boating interests FIRST—no other body is charged with this function. Other interests, such as walking, bird-watching, canoeing, restoration of historical buildings and housing development have their own dedicated lobby groups. We only have one and it's CRT. Putting boating needs first, I believe, will enable much else that is wanted to fall in place in a new and virtuous equilibrium. Please consider this a workable way forward. A clear sense of direction will be most welcome and promise a long and harmonious future for all who live, love, and work on the canals.

*Kind regards, Simon*

Hebden Bridge

Photo: Peter Fellows



# Sharing Towpaths

## NABO's Comments to CRT on the recent report

### Sharing Towpaths

the consultation on towpath use can be found here [canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/library/5697.pdf](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/library/5697.pdf)

It is absolutely fundamental to recognise that the prime users of towpaths are boaters who contribute around a quarter of CRT's annual income. There must be

boating facilities such as additional refuse points. NABO supports these calls for improvements and notes that other users, apart from boaters, also need access to these facilities.

NABO observes with concern that 'Principle 3' states that 'towpaths should have free access for all users who wish to walk, fish, cycle etc'. Since when has fishing been free? Also, cycling was not included in the CRT set-up rules from DEFRA and only free walking access was required to be maintained. Why is cycling given away as free now and set up as a 'principle'? Discussions need to be held with Sustrans about their code of conduct. We accept that not all cyclists are Sustrans members but many are. The conflict between high-speed and inconsiderate cyclists with other towpath users has reached serious levels and action is urgently required. In some cases the towpaths have become a race track for events or rapid access to work. Like other towpath users, cyclists need to be encouraged to take litter home. We would like to point out that BW's WUSIG (Waterway User & Special Interest Group) drew up guidance for cyclists that addresses most complaints.



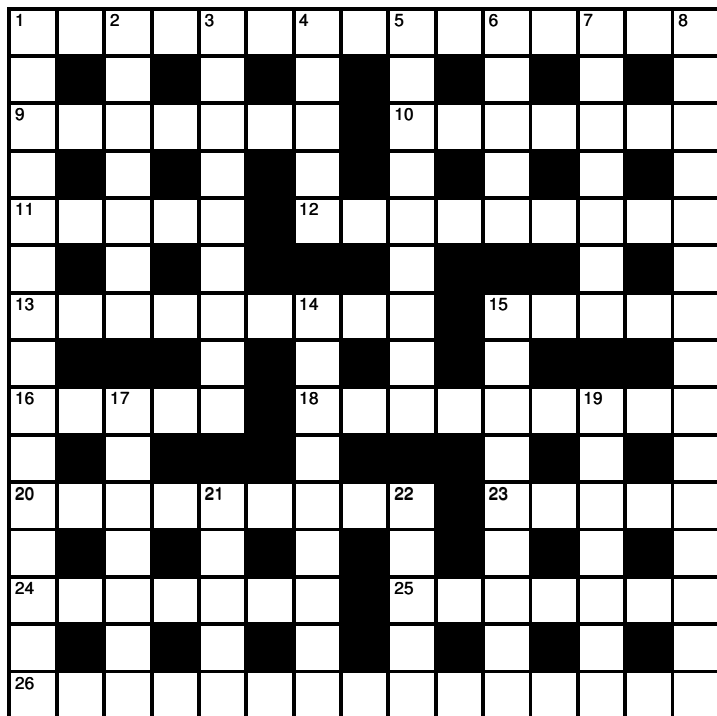
recognition in the Towpath Code of the need for other users to respect boaters and their needs. The needs of boaters should also be paramount in future towpath improvements. Boaters in the London Better Relationships Group, using the findings of the Greater London Authority review, have been pressing CRT for additional mooring rings to be installed during towpath upgrade works. They have also been pressing for other enhancements to





## NABO News Crossword N° 17

By Canaldrifter

**I name this boat ...**

If you have you spotted a boat name that made you smile, please let me have a photo. Here's one I spotted on the Macclesfield Canal last month.

**Answers to Crossword 16**

Across: 1 Peter, 4 Showboats, 9 Counter, 10 Fellows, 11 Input, 13 Widow, 15 All, 16 Kit, 17 Strap, 19 Mason, 21 Docks, 23 Ashes, 24 Tic, 25 Top, 26 Simon, 28 Servo, 29 Unaired, 31 Robbins, 33 Bandwidth, 34 Tenon.

Down: 1 Picnicked, 2 Trumpet, 3 Rat, 4 Screw, 5 Off, 6 Below, 7 Anoraks, 8 Sisal, 12 Tests, 14 Deph, 18 Realm, 19 Masts, 20 Nicholson, 22 Captain, 24 Torsion, 25 Thumb, 26 Straw, 27 North, 30 Dud, 32 Bat.

**Across**

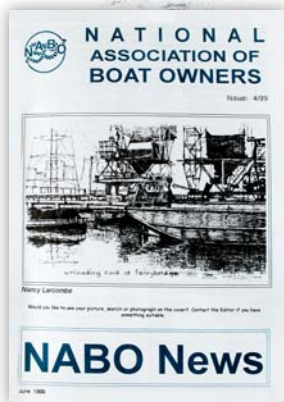
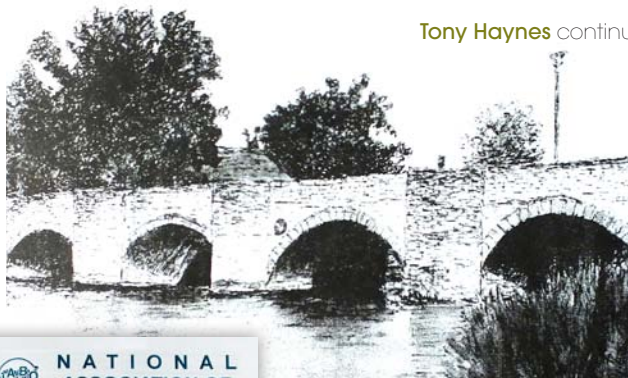
- 1 Poor Ann unloading car at the waterway (5,5,5)
- 9 Sea-goers hold victory as canal makers (7)
- 10 Add a note to a topic mix for a pudding (7)
- 11 Anger about the point of how far you can cruise? (5)
- 12 Mooring the boat in a ragged giant suit! (9)
- 13 Out of the wind, we find tangled weed at the rally (9)
- 15 Confused they take a left and find C2H5 (5)
- 16 Dense about wants (5)
- 18 Audit copy around the circle for recording on (9)
- 20 Unconventional derelict civic centre loses four (9)
- 23 Off the cuff note in bail mix up (2,3)
- 24 Switched on power in a select rowing boat (7)
- 25 Swollen glands cause goriest mess (7)
- 26 Steersmen had van crash in the Cotswolds (6,3,6)

**Down**

- 1 Entertainer's leg movement causes some curiosity (7,8)
- 2 Steer ahead with a loan (7)
- 3 View yards differently when it comes to access (9)
- 4 Touches gently at the bow, being curious (5)
- 5 Moored for too long, you stated wrongly (9)
- 6 Hold dad for tea! (5)
- 7 Hotline damaged by old tool (7)
- 8 Disorganised Galleon Inn balls held in Wales (10,5)
- 14 I heard oar break into looseness! (9)
- 15 Evoking royalty to go active about being reminiscent (9)
- 17 Create about a kiss? What a waste! (7)
- 19 Escaped a great crash at around 50? (2,5)
- 21 KNO3 fertilisers no longer inert? (5)
- 22 Note the old are contained (5)

## ReWind 15 Years

Tony Haynes continues his look back through NABO News, this time Issue 3 and 4, 1999



Front page illustrations:  
Nancy Larcombe

**Aggression:** NABO is working with BW and police forces to develop ways of discouraging towpath aggression and speeding up police response times when incidents occur.

**Cycling:** Latest BW cycling policy seems to be based on the theory that cyclists are all nice people who will always consider others' safety and carefully read and obey the nice new signs on the towpath, so no enforcement is necessary. Mass cycling is causing problems on the K&A and in London. NABO is unanimous in wanting cyclists to have licences and pay for them, bearing in mind that boaters have their cycling licence included with their cruising licence.

**K&A Mooring:** After objection from NABO, underwater barriers that were supposed to discourage mooring on stretches of the K&A will not now be built.

**Events:** Anyone wanting to hold an event on the Oxford or GU canals must get permission to put up banners, get permission if anyone from the media is coming, get permission to raise money for charity, and they must even tell BW how much was raised and tell the world that "This event is being held by kind permission of BW".

**BSS:** According to a NABO survey,

the average cost of compliance is still running at over £400 per boat.

**Engine Breakdowns:** At a cost of £12.50 per month, engine breakdown cover can be obtained from Engine Breakdown Cover Ltd, a sister company of the Basic Boat Liability Co.

**A Gold Licence:** is an option being considered by BW and the EA if you want to use both systems.

**Licence Fees:** For the third consecutive year the increase will be 7% plus inflation. NABO has asked BW to introduce discounts for young and retired boaters.

**Middle Levels:** NABO will oppose a proposal that the Middle Levels should be closed to boating for short periods for 'other activities', including fishing matches.

**Heritage:** NABO is disappointed to learn that planning guidance will not be strengthened to support canalside heritage.

**A BW Membership Scheme:** is proposed to ally it to a charitable trust. It would be an independent body managed by a board of trustees.

**EOG moorings:** BW is charging 50% of the local mooring matrix fee. The only exceptions are very long-term commercial usage rights from working boat days, or if the basin, lay-by or arm is not owned by BW.

**New BW Chairman:** Dr Greener, who takes up the position, will receive £60,000 a year for a three-day working week. His knowledge of waterways is unrecorded.

**Dredging:** The BW manager of the GU South has said, "I'm sure users would want two miles dredged to lesser depth than one mile to original profile."

# Letters to the Editor

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

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## **Overstaying—no problem! ...but suitable moorings are.**

We have been living constantly on our boat and continuously cruising the canals for about 30 years now. Throughout all this time we have never had any significant problems due to boaters who have overstayed at moorings. However we have had problems with the changes made by CRT and BW. When we moved onto our boat there were many visitor moorings around the system where boaters could stay for 7 or 14 days but in recent years there has been a steady reduction in the time allowed on visitor moorings, and a 48-hour maximum stay has now become ubiquitous. For those of us who live on our boats and are genuinely continuously cruising the canals, that reduction in the permitted length of stay has made life virtually impossible. Although we are most certainly not the sort of people who break laws or rules, we find that we are now unable to always obey the staying rules that apply. Many canals are very shallow at the edges and the only places where a boat is able to tie up is on one of the official visitor mooring sites. Two days is simply not long enough to do many of the things that are necessary in life and we are tired of chasing around 'like scalded cats' in our efforts not to break the rules.

I saw some of CRT's figures the other day which indicated that the number of boats that are registered on the system has increased by around 50% since 1995. The number of visitor moorings has not increased by anything like 50% to accommodate all those extra boats and that lack of new visitor moorings is the main reason why some people now complain about congestion. Also, when the 1995 Act was still a Bill, BW promised in writing to many of the boating organisations that wherever there was a designated 48-hour area, there would also be a designated 7-day length, and a designated 14-day length. BW nev-

er kept that promise. These are the problems; not the very few boaters who are inconsiderate, but the insufficiency of suitable visitor moorings that BW and CRT have made available.

We also have a problem with the 'fines' that CRT is threatening to levy. This is quite unreasonable and a totally foreign concept to the relaxed and tolerant ethos of the canals. It has more to do with cars and a way of thinking in our modern society that people come to the canals to get away from. Despite having spent almost three decades thoroughly enjoying our slow chugging around the canals we have recently decided that, if the threat to levy fines is shown to be legal and if CRT does indeed begin to implement them, we will sell our boat and go back to live in our house. I do apologise for getting onto my 'soap-box' about this issue but I do feel that it is important to express my opinions that there is in reality hardly any problem concerning visitor moorings, that the number of boaters who are inconsiderate is actually very, very small, and that any problems that boaters do discover when seeking a mooring are actually mostly down to BW's and now CRT's lack of provision of sufficient suitable visitor moorings. With kindest regards and assuring you of my continued support for NABO.

**Robert Hamilton**

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## **...and another angle on overstaying**

I have lived in a house on the Grand Union Canal and moored my narrowboat here since 1982. Historically there have been few problems with boats mooring opposite on the towpath but over the past two or three years my area has become a magnet for boaters who frequently overstay the fourteen days, sometimes by weeks and weeks. There are 15 houses on my side of the canal and we get the full brunt of the engine noise. Worse are boats with generators. Although my house is

quite a way back from the canal, I can hear the engines in every room, even over the radio or TV. If a boater has a particularly loud engine or generator the noise flows from the canal, over my house, hits the walls of the houses opposite me in the street and comes back! You can imagine how dreadful we residents have felt with the introduction of winter moorings. One boater came on the 7th September and left in April. He was soon joined by what appeared to be a rally of boats, all of whom stayed until the very last minute. That meant that we householders have had to suffer over seven months solid of engine noise, diesel fumes, stove smoke, power tools and dogs barking. To cap it all, a huge expanse of hedgerow has been destroyed and steps have been cut down the embankment into the field below (both in two places). One boater cut one great hole in the hedge, left the debris at the side, cut in steps and pitched a tent in the field. To crown all of that, an old Porta-Potty has been chucked in the hedge along with other rubbish and waste food.

We residents are at our wits end. We feel we have been invaded. The towpath grass verge is no more, it is puddled mud. Our area has been used and abused. It is all very well to consider boaters and their moorings but what about the residents? I might just think, "It's a nice day; I will sit in my garden." Then on comes the engine roaring away and down come the fumes. We can't up stumps and move away. We have to close the windows and go inside.

We suffer a few boats for 14 days and breathe a sigh of relief when they go as we can have our area back, but no sooner do we feel relief when more boats move in. We really do feel aggrieved over the length of the winter moorings and have asked our local CRT to meet us to discuss the problem. They promised they would be in touch and that was about four weeks ago so I will be phoning again. I have been told there is a 5-day cycle of checking but obviously this is not very successful. One of the winter moorers returned three weeks ago and only left today—so much for the 14 days. Do you think there would be any chance of CRT considering not allowing moored boats for prolonged periods in residential areas? I hope this broadens out the scope of the mooring problem from another angle.

**Name supplied**

### 'Trouble up f'North

The lock at Sutton upon Derwent, Yorkshire, has been closed to navigation by Natural England whose local branch owns the lower wooden gates. These were the oldest wooden gates still in use in the country, installed in 1972. Now they have been deemed unfit for purpose but, in reality, the nature lobby do not want boats above Sutton. The upper guillotine gate, although re-



Sutton Lock  
Photos: Tony Haynes

quiring maintenance, is still usable. This means we have just lost about six miles of navigable river up to Stamford Bridge, although we can still gain access to the Pocklington Canal via Barmby Barrage Lock. There is room to wind below Sutton Lock but nowhere to moor.

A local land-owner, who also owns moorings above the lock, has offered to buy the gates for £1 and repair or replace them himself. In April there was a closed meeting between the EA, which looks after the river (although they are not the navigational body here), the local English Nature branch and local councillors, to decide the future of navigation on the river above Sutton. Boaters were not invited. Thus the outcome seems predictable.

There is no local support/protest group of boaters. Although the Yorkshire Derwent is not part of CRT's domain nor an EA navigation, it is an interesting waterway with a navigational history. The local IWA branch is scared stiff of the nature lobby because they lost thousands in legal fees when they fought and lost on appeal the closure of the river to navigation above Stamford Bridge. Boats moored on the river are mostly unlicensed and uninsured as anarchy rules up here. But as the river has been visited by adventurous NABO members should NABO protest this closure if it becomes permanent?

**Tony Haynes.**

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### More on aggregate movements

Tony Haynes is quite right when he says that it's a backward step with aggregate movements on the River Trent and Aire & Calder Navigation having now ceased. The reasons given are not quite correct, though the effect is as stated. Lafarge had Whitwood Wharf ready-mix plant, West Yorkshire plants and Besthorpe Quarry all in one area with virtually no quarry reserves in Yorkshire. It made sense to barge from Besthorpe to Whitwood for its ready-mix plant and others in the locality and this was regarded as an internal transfer. With the merger of Lafarge and Tarmac the situation changed—the new northern region gained Whitwood and its plant while the central region inherited Besthorpe Quarry. Crucially, the northern region now had access to the former Tarmac Nosterfield Quarry (near Ripon), which could serve Whitwood directly by

an easy road journey via the A1 and M62, but not by water. There was no appreciable difference in haulage costs between Nosterfield (by road) and Whitwood (by barge) and so no incentive for the northern region director to purchase from the central region at the expense of his own quarry. In addition several Lafarge plants were sold off to Hope Construction, which is free to purchase aggregate from the market generally without being tied to one source, so this considerably reduced the demand for the Besthorpe product. Various parties are working together on a proposal to barge marine-dredged aggregate to Leeds and this project has gained momentum of late.

Turning to the carriage of oil: the 'double-skinning' requirement is nothing to do with the MCA, or CRT for that matter, or even Europe. Quite simply, it is a requirement of the major oil companies, and it is for this reason that the smaller concerns (such as Exol Lubricants) can, and do, continue to barge oil. The Rotherham movement is very successful and Exol are keen to increase tonnage which will require a second vessel in regular service.

Regrettably the Dalklia Pollington energy plant project seems to have stalled but as Tony says the Ferrybridge multi-fuel plant is going ahead and may provide some potential for water transport (although rail tends to be cheaper) depending on where the fuel is sourced. There are also proposals to build energy-from-waste plants at Kellingley Colliery (Soothmoor) and Castleford. I don't know of any firm proposals to take biomass up to Drax by ship or barge—the stumbling block is the road haul from the jetty to the power station.

On a more positive note the Canal & River Trust's freight policy is to be launched after Easter and this will envisage co-operation with port authorities to encourage use of the Aire & Calder Navigation, South Yorkshire Navigations and River Ouse (initially) for import and export traffics, and a study of what relatively modest incremental improvements could be made to allow Euro-size barges (6.6 m rather than current 6.1 m beam) to reach Leeds, thus enabling larger payloads and, with innovative ballasting where necessary, containers.

**David Lowe, CRT Freight Steering Group/NE Partnership and CBOA Chairman**

**Disillusioned with CRT**

We have been CCing for nearly 3 years; we are retired and cover more than a thousand miles each year. We were initially optimistic about the change from BW to CRT and attended several of the early 'boaters meetings' to offer our thoughts and help. In the last 12 months, we have become progressively more disillusioned and depressed with CRT and its muddled and aggressive mooring 'rules' (one couldn't call them a 'policy' as there appears to be no consistency or well thought out logic to the rules we are subjected to). In short we feel bullied and hassled by CRT and the many local canal trusts and managers that take their lead from CRT.

We find it difficult to explore Britain in the way that the 14-day rule suggested we could and upon which basis we bought our narrowboat and planned our retirement. The lack of security that results from being forced to moor in remote and unpopular rural areas whilst the more secure and popular urban areas are all turned into very short stay zones makes us virtual prisoners in our own home.

Consequently we have now bought a sailing boat and are currently in the process of reorganising our life so that we can find a happier life on off-shore waters not under the management of CRT. We love Britain's canals and rivers (our first narrowboat holiday was in 1980), we love our narrowboat and we love CCing, we just can't live with CRT.

We are particularly frustrated by this as we believe the 'problem' that CRT says it is trying to fix is not at all being addressed by the swinging mooring restrictions that are the bane of our life. What would we suggest as an alternative? Basically, keep the rules simple and make it easier for boaters to move, not more difficult.

- 1 Scrap all the over-complicated and ridiculous variety of mooring limits, take down all the unnecessarily expensive and hostile signage, go back to the single, simple 14-day rule. Push that core philosophy.
- 2 Apply limited moorings by reference to a set of well-defined criteria and make it a policy to keep them to a bare minimum, rather than the current 'take over' of anything that half resembles a convenient mooring point simply because it is just that.

- 3 Stop the knee-jerk reaction to every complaint, whether from waterway users or local residents, start acting like a grown up, confident management body, be consistent and accept you can't please everyone all the time.
- 4 Instead of wasting millions on legal fees and enforcement actions, act to prevent the problems before they arise, invest in competent employees to patrol the towpaths and engage with boaters who appear to be ignoring the rules. Data loggers are a waste of time because they don't engage with boaters and a great opportunity is missed as they walk on past a problem. Employ people with the right skills and give them a proper job. It's all very well to use volunteers and cheap labour, but not if they are totally ineffectual, counter-productive and more expensive in the long run. This short-term view seems to be endemic in CRT.
- 5 Stop the winter only maintenance stoppage programme. During this period the normal 14-day rule is unofficially relaxed to varying degrees by various waterways and areas (often for very good reasons but not always). This weakens any efforts to make the 14-day rule a habitual standard and sends the wrong message, particularly to new boaters, who are then encouraged into bad habits. In the housing industry, for example, builders have developed working practices that allow them to erect a house in a single day, there is no reason why a major lock gate change should not be possible in the same time. Longer jobs can be done in the winter; the hire companies need not be adversely affected if planned properly. The system will benefit from a happier, more efficient and cost effective maintenance department, with longer daylight and warmer working conditions. With the use of artificial lighting, there is no reason why work should not be tackled on a 24-hour 'round the clock' basis, as is common in many other maintenance industries such as the railways.

CRT has admitted that it made a mistake when, as BW, it failed to administer the 14-day rule. Is fiddling about trying to circumvent it any different; they are surely about to make the same mistake.

**Reg Whittall**

# NABO New Membership Application

Title:  Preferred Forename:

Surname:

Address:

Post Code:  Telephone: (Home)

Age\*  (Work)

Optional (Mobile)

E-Mail Address:  @

Profession/Expertise:

Additional (Family) Members at same address

1. M

2. M

## BOAT DETAILS

Type: Barge  Cruiser  Narrowboat  Commercial  Sail  Other

Name of Craft:

Other details eg length, make, style:

Home Navigation:

Mooring:

## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (Cheque payable to NABO)

One FULL MEMBER: Annual @ £25, Life @ £150 = £

Additional (Family) Members: Annual @ £5, Life @ £50 = £

Donation to NABO Funds £  .

TOTAL enclosed £  .

Please indicate your preferences:-

I would like to pay Future Annual Subscriptions by Bank Standing Order YES  NO

(if Yes, we will send you the necessary form with your welcome letter)

Please supply NABO boat/car window stickers:-

Oblong (8" x 2")  Round (3")

Signed:  Date of Application:

How/where did you learn about NABO   
If from another member please give full name

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