



NABO News

The Magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners
Issue 1 February 2019



PAUL HOWLAND RIP

CO ALARMS

WIDEBEAMS ON NARROW CANALS



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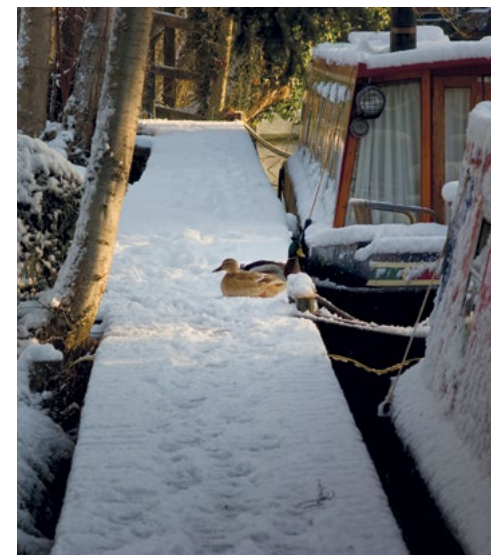
Articles, letters, cartoons and photos are most welcome. Images in JPEG format please. Please email or post your contributions by March 23rd 2018. Our email address is nabonews@nabo.org.uk



Cover photo

This month's cover photo and a few other snowy ones throughout this issue are by Gillie Rhodes

Win a year's free membership by having your photo selected for the front cover of NABO News. Please email photos as JPEG attachments, ideally portrait format with a file size of 2MB or larger



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CRT Emergency No: 0800 4799947
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Contact CRT waterway managers at canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/our-regions



We were all shocked by news of the sudden death on Boxing Day of Vice-Chair, Paul Howland, and I have included an obituary for him from his friend and colleague, Alison Tuck.

NABO's advocacy work on behalf of boaters depends entirely on income from membership fees and, although the number of members is holding steady, we can always do more to attract new people. The Council has redesigned our recruitment flyer and I have included a few copies with this issue. Please

Negative NABO?

Editor **Peter Fellows** thinks the magazine reflects the views of NABO members,

help if you can, by giving one to any neighbouring boaters who are yet to become members – personal recommendations are one of the most effective recruitment methods.

In the light of changes to BSS requirements to be introduced in April this year, I have followed up the article on carbon monoxide alarms in the last issue with further information on where to locate them on your boat, and how to prevent CO from being produced in the first place. There is also a letter from a member, Brian Holt, on his experiences with CO detectors. In Techies Corner, Tony Brooks has some good advice on checking that your batteries are charging correctly.

Mark Tizard writes about the growing issue of widebeam boats on narrow canals and David Fletcher has delved into the 1975 Fraenkel Report, which gives detailed specifi-

cations of all the canals in the system at that time, describing which are designated wide or narrow canals. David has also looked into the implications for boat stoves in light of the revised DEFRA clean air strategy and Mark suggests minimum standards for water depth at visitor moorings.

After the CRT management re-organisation and appointment of six new regional directors last year, NABO councillors and regional reps. have started a programme of regular meetings with directors to exchange views and information. In this issue, there are reports from Mike Rodd on a meeting with the Wales and the South West director and from Joan Jamieson with the East Midlands director. Howard Anguish, the Yorkshire & Humberside rep., gives notice of events in 2019 on the Pocklington and Driffield canals and Alison Tuck reports on CRT's West Midlands' annual public meeting. Several CRT people at the meetings complained about the 'negative tone' in NABO News towards the Trust. I'm pleased that they are reading NABO News and point out that the magazine reflects the views that NABO receives from its members and the wider boating community. I think it is fair to say that, for several years now, these views have become increasingly negative towards CRT, especially after last year's rebranding. The real issue is whether CRT is beginning to address boaters' concerns – NABO News is just a messenger.

Finally, my thanks to Janice Steckerl for her help with proof-reading NABO News for many years. I would be grateful to hear from you if you are able to give up a few hours in March and September to proof-read these issues.

Happy New Year, although tinged with sadness as we report the death of our Vice-Chair, Paul Howland. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him; his knowledge was always welcome and his advice given freely and always useful. This leaves a place open on NABO Council and, therefore, if you would like to volunteer, please let us know.

I have had a quiet few months, although the Trust hasn't. It announced the next lot of redundancies just before Christmas and the outcomes should be known before the start of summer. We wait to see the impact of these and how many people will opt for redundancy. But, potentially, this could result in the loss of people with decades of experience of working on the waterways. NABO realises the need for these redundancies, but we hope that the potential loss of knowledge is being captured. The meetings with the North West and North East Waterway Directors have been postponed until next month, and, although this is not ideal, we realise that people are concerned about options and jobs. However, it is encouraging that these meetings are being held and maybe it is true that the Trust wants to listen to boaters and capture the knowledge in that way.

In this issue of NABO News, there are details of the BSS announcement that CO alarms will need to be installed on boats with effect from April 2019. You need to install one, even if your BSS inspection is not due. Fit alarms that meet BS EN 50291-2, which are best suited for boats. This is to keep both the owners and other boat occupants safe.

I will attend a Canal and River Trust Council meeting in Manchester in March and the top-

ics for discussion are cyclists and shared space on towpaths, and the future of boating. Your feedback on either topic would be invaluable.

I hope that the rest of your winter is hassle-free and, for those without a home mooring, enjoy the peace of winter boating - I certainly miss snow-boating. All the best for 2019 to everyone.



Capturing knowledge

Stella Ridgway is concerned that CRT's redundancies will result in experience being lost.



Photo Gillie Rhodes at Flickr

Paul Howland

16 November 1952 to 26 December 2018

Remembered by **Alison Tuck**

It is our sad duty to inform members of the untimely death of NABO Vice-Chair, Paul Howland, who passed away suddenly on his boat at Urban Moorings, in Horseley Fields, Wolverhampton on Boxing Day.

Paul and his wife, Jennie, moved onto the waterways twelve years ago after Paul took early retirement, to fulfill their dream and fit out their own narrowboat, Panda Julienne, as a home. Paul and Jennie were a regular sight around the whole canal system; Paul making and selling fenders as they travelled and attended floating markets, accompanied by his faithful friend Patch, the Jack Russell cross.

Paul's first association with NABO was as the Roving Canal Traders' Association's trading representative. He later joined NABO as a member and, four years ago, he became a Council member for Trading and also the Regional Rep. Coordinator. In 2017, he became Joint Vice-Chair and was voted to full Vice-Chair at NABO's 2018 AGM. His contribution was invaluable in supporting the Council and he naturally slotted into the role of Vice-Chair.

A devoted family man and a fine friend, Paul was always ready with a helping hand for any



who needed it. He was a great innovator and would give his all to getting a project off the ground. His contribution to both the RCTA and NABO was as a steady hand on the helm. Paul was a founding member of the group who formed Urban Moorings, a Community Interest Company. He was instrumental in developing the ideas which underpinned this ground-breaking project to bring life back to disused areas of urban canal land. The inception of Urban Moorings has provided a template for future boaters to adopt neglected stretches of land along the canals that are owned by CRT, which is why he fought so hard to make it happen. It is an achievement he was proud of. Urban Moorings is now a living testament to Paul's life. He was a hands-on guy who excelled at making the impossible into



the completely feasible. Along with the other members, he devised an innovative proposal to slowly regenerate land at Horseley Fields back into a productive living space for boaters, and a focal point for the community. Over the last two years, the land around the boathouse and the wharf has gone from overgrown buddleia and piles of bricks, to bricked paths, conserved trees, attractive planting and boat moorings. Paul was indefatigable in shifting rubble, trimming trees and buddleia and working with the Canal and River Trust and Wolverhampton Council. Paul put all his practical knowledge and skills as a craftsman and woodworker into the project; travelling across the country to source alder for the pilings and working hard to construct the walkway that now surrounds

the island. Unsurprisingly, his second home was Screwfix.

Paul was not a man who enjoyed a fuss and, as per his wishes, there was no funeral. As a permanent memorial, we would like to create a seating area at the point of the island, for visitors to enjoy, and place a bench at its centre in his favourite spot where he liked to watch the world go by. He will be sorely missed by the whole canal community, and we extend our condolences to his wife Jennie and their family.

If you would like to make a small donation towards his memorial then please visit www.urbanmoorings.co.uk, select 'In memory of Paul Howland' and click the 'donate' button, selecting 'Paul's Memorial Fund' from the drop-down list.

Membership news

Email

We continue to have difficulty with emails sent to members using BT Internet addresses, NTL World addresses and also some personal web addresses. Emails are not being received by some of these members but we get no rejection notice and so we are unaware. We continue to talk with our ISP to resolve this, but it is likely that some members' systems are blocking them. You can help by making sure that NABO is listed in your

address book and by checking your junk folder. If you are not getting renewal emails, please get in touch so that we can both trace individual messages.

There are about 20 email addresses we hold where we have never had a response, and so we are going to delete these from the system

and only communicate by paper mail. This is not the way we want to go, but there is no point in us holding email addresses that are not responsive.

Can You Help?

NABO has some vacancies that it would like to fill: we need a Minutes Secretary and an Administrator, and also reps. for the Middle Level, Anglian Waters and the River Trent — can you help? The membership team would welcome someone who could spare half an hour, every fortnight or so, helping to maintain the membership database, and we would also welcome contact with a member who has a legal background.

New recruitment flyer

NABO Council has redesigned our recruitment flyer. Please help us to sign up new members if you can by giving one to neighbouring boaters or to boaters you chat with at locks or visitor moorings. If boaters express an interest in finding out more, please either put them in touch with Ken Hylins or send him their contact details for him to follow up. He can be contacted on 07852 911539 or kenh@nabo.org.uk. If you would like to receive more flyers, please tell us how many by email at contact_us@nabo.org or via the PO Box number.

A graphic for a NABO recruitment flyer. At the top, it says "CALLING ALL PRIVATE BOAT OWNERS AND BOAT CLUBS". Below that, it asks "Need a voice? Tired of not being listened to? Want to make a difference - today and in the future?" and then says "Then please join The National Association of Boat Owners and add your voice to ours". In the center, there is the NABO logo, which is a circular emblem with "NABO" in the middle and "NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS" around the perimeter. Below the logo, it says "FEARLESSLY INDEPENDENT STANDING UP FOR YOU RUN FOR BOATERS BY BOATERS". At the bottom, there are social media icons for "JOIN ONLINE" (www.nabo.org.uk), "EMAIL" (contact_us@nabo.org.uk), "Facebook" (@NABO_Official), and "WRITE" (NABO, PO Box 7546, Wolverhampton, WV1 9GQ).



The first Council meeting of 2019 was a teleconference, which was welcome as I didn't have to fly through the fog to attend and could listen in from the comfort of my winter bolthole. The new waterway directors are 'bedding in' to their jobs and Council members and regional reps. will be meeting them all over the coming months. During the autumn, councillors designed a flyer to attract new members and, hopefully, existing members will give them out to neighbouring boaters to help with this. There has been considerable variation in the take-up of winter moorings this year, with some areas such as the Peak Forest canal being full and others, like the Grand Union and K&A, having

Fly on the wall

Observes proceedings at the January Council

NABO calendar 2019

Council meetings are held at boat clubs in the Midlands area. Members are welcome to attend; please just let the Secretary or the Chair know in advance (contact details inside cover).

The dates for Council meetings in 2019 are as follows: March 17th, April 28th, June 23rd, September 1st, October 13th, November 17th (includes AGM).

plenty of empty moorings – perhaps boaters in some areas think there is little enforcement so why pay for a mooring.

Likewise, there is a big variation in activities by CRT volunteers: in some areas, they are painting lock gates, tidying up and keeping vegetation under control, whereas in others they only want to operate locks – provided they are not the big heavy ones. There are reports of hire-boats being helped through the Foxton and Watford flights on the Leicester Arm and then waiting forlornly for volunteers to appear at the Buckby flight. But volunteers will do what they want to do and the variations may be down to management of volunteers by the different CRT regions.

The BSS will be introducing compulsory CO alarms for boats in April and boaters should make sure they have one, whether or not they have a BSS inspection due. There were more boat fires last year compared to recent years and the BSS is also collating reports from the Fire and Rescue Service and navigation authorities to see if further preventative advice is needed.

There was another discussion of the issue of widebeams on narrow canals, such as the North Oxford canal, parts of the Grand Union and the Leicester Arm. It is expected that CRT will issue advice on this during the year, and some councillors suggested that the licensing system could also flag-up whether a boat is to be moored on a narrow home waterway when widebeam owners apply for a boat licence.

Visitor moorings came up for discussion, now that there are no longer 14-day moorings. Council members consider that the minimum requirements are an adequate water depth, rings/bollards or piling, and vegetation cut to the edge, each of which require coordination by different CRT teams.

Keep warm and byeee till the spring.



Photo Gillie Rhodes at Flickr

Around the regions with NABO's regional reps

Wales and the South West Mike Rodd



On 3rd December, Phil Goulding and I had another of our regular meetings with Richard Thomas, Director of the Wales and South West region, at Devizes. Richard had agreed to meet NABO representatives on a three-monthly basis and this again proved to be a most valuable session. It was clear that Richard has become aware of the urgent need to improve communications with waterways users and he said that he was pleased with the attendance at the recent user forum. I stressed how valuable the smaller boaters' representatives meetings are, which are held on the Mon & Brec, and the detailed information sharing that goes on at these meetings. Richard responded that he is anxious to find ways of ensuring that the knowledge and experiences of active boaters is captured by CRT. Of particular interest was his response to the serious problems that had been caused on the K&A when the winter works' closures were announced without consultation with users. In fact, an earlier notice had been sent around for comment, but those proposals were then radically changed by the CRT central staff responsible for the works' delivery – changes which had not been checked with Richard's team. I pointed out that these changes had caused major problems for the K&A Canal Trust's public boats.

Richard stressed CRT's commitment to working with schools and he was looking forward to a new appointment to take the lead for him in this area. I stressed that much work is going on in this area at Crofton, together with industrial partners, and I was sure that this work can all be done in collaboration with CRT. Phil and I were delighted to see that Richard was determined to work with the 'coalface' canal users and we look forward to the next meeting.

West Midlands Alison Tuck



I invited Ronnie Payne (Chair of Roving Canal Traders' Association) to take Paul Howland's place at CRT's West Midlands Annual Public Meeting on 10th January. John Hudson, Chair of the West Midlands Regional Advisory Board, introduced himself and was the opening speaker. In his presentation he stated that the canals provide £38bn in 'wellbeing benefit'—I have no idea how they have calculated this!—a 43% increase in cycle use on the canals around the BCN and 55 miles of canal cycle paths have been completed. The Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Stoke councils, along with the West Midlands Combined Authority, have signed a memorandum of understanding with CRT. They announced that the Icknield Port Loop and the Wolverhampton Horsley Fields housing developments are underway. They will be collaborating further with CRT to build on more brownfield sites along the canals in the West Midlands (housing seems to be the priority for the West Midlands councils). Solihull Council, covering Knowle Locks at the top end of the GU, is not interested in working with CRT at the moment, but CRT wishes to change this. Stoke on Trent Council invested £1m in improvements to towpaths and buildings facing the canal and hosted a very successful poppy display/installation at one of the bottle kilns. CRT supervised the towpath so that visitors could view the installation. The premise throughout was: if we can change peoples' environment, we can improve their wellbeing. Adnan Saif, CRT Director for the

West Midlands, presented the highlights above and then made a big speech about the boating community - to be congratulated on their passion and dedication in restoring the canals. He wants there to be a consistent, reliable basic service across the network. He is committed to the navigation and it is his top priority. He paid tribute to the CRT workers who attended and thanked them for their dedication to CRT and for their work (we all gave them a round of applause).

The Q&A session

Interestingly, I think CRT expected to be bombarded by boaters' questions and criticisms after Adnan's speech, which was top-heavy in support of boaters, but what actually happened surprised me: the questions came from towpath users from the 'ethnic' specific groups that have been introduced to the canals by local engagement officers. They wanted to know how to improve security on the towpath and make it a more open place to be. They also wanted to have more gardens (currently a large orchard is being planned by volunteers all along the BCN Main Line). The Bangladeshi group cited a project in Bangladesh where they have improved river water quality after decades of pollution and now grow food there. They wanted to do the same on the canals around the BCN and CRT could learn from that. One question was how CRT was going to increase ethnic diversity in its users and workforce; they congratulated CRT on making Adnan a director. Another comment was about the 'white nature' of canal boat-owners and how CRT can increase ethnic diversity in boat ownership.

The sailing club at Edgbaston Reservoir wanted to know what CRT was doing to maintain the levels in the reservoir. The canoe club there suggested that they back-pump from the Titford Pools' underground aquifer along the canal to maintain levels. There was only one boater's question: what is CRT doing to improve the canals outside of the city centre, as they need dredging and are full of rubbish and there is nowhere safe to stop? The answers were pretty standard to each: "we (CRT) are looking into it and will take the comments into consideration".

After the speeches and the Q&A session, there was a chance to network. I found out that IWA is heavily involved in the West Midlands



Adnan Saif

Board and has already had several meetings with Adnan. I have asked if NABO can have a meeting with him and he said: "Yes" - just email him to arrange a date and time. Richard Parry came up for a chat and said he was sorry to hear about Paul. I was with Andy Tidy and we got talking about trading. Richard also mentioned the negativity in NABO News, to which I responded that it would help if lines of communication were still open for boaters. To which he responded that they are. I disagreed. He also apologised for not getting to my question in the Q&A session. I said it was actually positive for a change! I was going to say that CRT has been very supportive of our project where boaters build their own moorings and I was going to ask if CRT can help us open up the opportunity to others to increase the use of canals around the BCN, especially in light of the previous comments about the need for security and improvements. He said he would look into it (sigh!).

I got the opportunity to speak to some of the CRT workforce that I know through my volunteering for the Trust on the BCN. I haven't seen them for a while because of Urban Moorings. Morale is low because they are still waiting to see if they have jobs - I could see the stress and I felt so sorry for them. I found out that they want to have 'volly' lockies on the Wolverhampton 21, so I volunteered to be a lock-keeper again as it's just down the way from us. Ronnie got chatting with the CRT Press Officer and I joined the conversation: he noted I was in NABO and again commented on the negative tone of NABO News. I said again that the lack of inclusion of boaters in the new wellbeing strategy is a cause of concern for us. He said the way boaters can

help CRT with the strategy, especially since they are dealing with the Government at the moment, is to not be so critical of CRT. Make of that what you will.

Further information on the West Midlands Regional Advisory Board can be found at canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/how-we-are-run/regional-advisory-boards/west-midlands-regional-advisory-board.

East Midlands Joan Jamieson



In December, Paul Howland, Alison Tuck, Gordon Jamieson and I had a meeting with Phil Mulligan in Newark. We explained that this is one of a series of meetings being undertaken by NABO reps. with CRT's regional directors to explain who we are, our aims and purpose. Phil had the most recent copy of NABO News and felt that it shows a negative attitude towards CRT. We pointed out that boaters are beginning to feel marginalised by various CRT initiatives and are disappointed that NABO's views are being ignored.

Phil did not accept that there had been a loss of experienced staff, or a lack of maintenance. We invited him to write an article for the next issue of NABO News, offering assurances that it would not be altered and he would be able to approve the finished product. He agreed to do this. When asked about methods of consultation under the new regime, he proposed to hold another meeting with us and other organisations representing boaters in the spring, but he doesn't want meetings to degenerate into people complaining about specific maintenance issues.

Yorkshire & Humberside Howard Anguish

Pocklington Canal

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society (PCAS). It



follows the enjoyable celebrations marking the bi-centenary in 2018 of the opening of this beautiful and unspoilt waterway, and the reopening of two more miles of canal, including the refurbishment of two locks to enable boats to reach the Bielby Arm. The dedicated PCAS is responsible for preventing the loss of this waterway and is now working to extend the navigable section even further. To mark this 50th anniversary, there is a busy programme of events, including a boat rally, so please put the dates in your diary.

- Sunday 17th February – National Bird Box Making Days, Melbourne Arm, Pocklington Canal. Make your own bird box. Take it home (£5) or choose a place to put it on the Melbourne Arm (free).
- Boat Trips from Melbourne: the season will start with short trips on the first Sunday in April. At Easter, PCAS will run short trips on Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday. The boat can be booked for longer trips on any day until the end of October except for Sundays and Bank Holidays, when short trips run from Melbourne.
- PCAS 50th Anniversary Dinner – Date and venue to be arranged.
- Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th May – Pocklington Canal Exhibition, Melbourne Village Hall. Also 26th May, a Heritage Open Day, Melbourne Arm, 11am to 4pm.
- Friday 6th September – Frog Racing Night, Melbourne Village Hall.
- Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th September – Boat Rally at Melbourne, evening barbecue and exhibition.

Driffield Canal

Another gem of a waterway in our region is the Driffield Canal/Navigation, which now has not one but two trip boats running during the summer. Efforts are progressing to transform a canal warehouse into a focal point for the scenic terminus of the canal in Driffield, which confusingly is called 'Riverhead'! Last year, the Driffield Navigation Trust & the Driffield Navigation Amenities Association held a very successful weekend gala event at Riverhead, which was enjoyed so much that plans are afoot to hold another event in 2019. The date is yet to be finalised, but it is hoped to be sometime in June. Watch this space.

Funding Father Thames

The Thames All-Party Parliamentary Group meeting

Peter Fellows reports.

The meeting was held on 14th November, 2018, chaired by John Howell, MP for Henley, and attended by representatives from the Thames Councils, the Port of London Authority, the EA, river user groups, Thames businesses and recreational boaters. The meeting was supported by the River Thames Alliance. The subject for the meeting was Thames funding.

The multi-faceted responsibilities on the Thames all require funding, including water supply, movement of treated sewage and waste, conservation, ecology, fisheries, recreation, navigation and tourism. It is probably one of the most managed rivers in the country. It has a mainly dry catchment, but when the river is in spate there is very little that can be done, other than opening all the weirs to let the water flow down to the sea.

There are currently three major flood prevention measures; the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme, which is now mainly funded and

currently out to planning; the Marlow Flood Plain scheme, which is virtually completed; and the Major Lower Thames Scheme, involving bypass channels and weir rebuilding below the Jubilee River. This last is currently limited to critical activities to maintain the programme while funding is secured.

During the 2014 floods, there was flooding in Somerset, and Surrey was also badly affected. The Somerset flood protection work has been completed, but in Surrey and below the Jubilee River, businesses and houses are still subject to flooding. It is essential that the entire Lower Thames Scheme is delivered. The Government expects funding to come from central Government, local authorities and partners. With a funding gap of approximately £234m at current cost levels, the involvement of insurance companies would be helpful, but they require assurances on their return on capital. A 'game change' might be a financial contribution from the development of the new runway at Heathrow and there might also be a possibility for funding from UK Highways Authority.

The economic benefits of boating tourism and recreational boating were discussed, both in London and on the non-tidal Thames. There is a combined estimated figure of £200-250m GDP for London and the Thames Valley, being £100m in revenue and £100-150m in added value. But there is a sector imbalance: recreational boating is well established on the Upper Thames, but there is very little in London.

Conversely, boating tourism is well established in London, but there is very little on the Upper Thames. This creates opportunities to bring back boat hire to the Upper Thames and to establish more marinas in London.

The major barriers stopping investment are the condition of the river (lack of infrastructure funding) and, in London, planning policy and a lack of vision. Drastic cuts in government funding have had a major impact on provision of services and on maintenance of the non-tidal Thames. After improvement some years ago, there is now a significant risk of deterioration in the Thames infrastructure.

Boaters on the Thames provide 50% of the current revenue income from their registration charges. The EA is suggesting a funding gap of circa £15-20m needed to maintain the navigations under its control, of which the most significant is the non-tidal Thames. The above-inflation increases in registration charges of 5.7% year on year from January 2018 can only have a 'sticking plaster' effect in overcoming the lack of funding.

The EA is severely limited by Thames Conservancy legislation, which prevents alternative methods of financing the Thames. Millions of people visit the Thames, which benefits their wellbeing, but they make no contribution to the cost of maintaining the river.

The Government recognises the public benefit of the waterways, and permits and enables changes to the current legislation. If the Government decides to transfer the EA waterways to CRT, sufficient government support would be likely to be provided. The challenge is to identify, from the different issues presented, which are the ones to prioritise.



Photo: Peter Fellows

Funding for the Major Lower Thames Scheme

- Grant-in-Aid funding from central Government £233m
- Pledged in the autumn 2014 budget £60m.
- Local councils, the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and Local Enterprise Partnerships £61m
- Funding gap £234m

Photo: Peter Fellows



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The Fraenkel report

David Fletcher delves into this important report on the canal infrastructure.

The report was placed in the public domain by CRT in response to a Freedom of Information request and can be downloaded in three parts from this page; www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/frankel-report-1975 note the wrong spelling.

I was at a CRT Navigation Advisory Group meeting last year, talking about the issues of widebeam boats operating on narrow canals. There was reference to a 'Frankel' report, familiar to those with longer experience than me. This 1975 report provided a reference for the canals that were considered 'suitable' for widebeams. I had never heard of it before and the moment passed. Then, when I was going through boxes of old NABO archives, I came across a paper copy of the report. Of course, the name is Fraenkel, not Frankel. It is a 300-page tome, packed with fascinating details of the canal system, in a snapshot from the early 1970s.

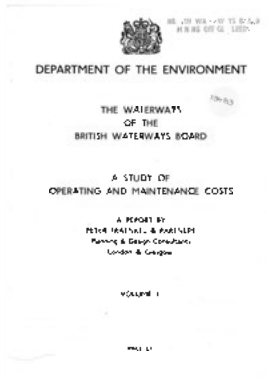
The report summarises many aspects of canal structure, usage, conditions and cost and follows on from the 1968 BW Act. There is something in this for all canal lovers, from high level summaries of issues like widebeam usage to a lot of detail of individual canals, systems and legal background.

The report, for the Department of the Environment, was a catalyst for some early projects, such as the restoration of 39 locks on the Kennet and Avon canal and the restoration of the Avoncliff aqueduct, which Peter Fraenkel and Partners carried out.

Anyone can download the report, which is divided into a number of parts. Unfortunately the pdfs are not searchable. There is an index of the parts set against the table of contents on the NABO website. Happy reading!

Peter Fraenkel

Peter Fraenkel, who died in 2010 aged 94, was a civil engineer at the heart of a movement of British consulting engineers, responsible for infrastructure all over the rapidly developing post-colonial world of the 1970s and 1980s. He built up a 160-strong practice that produced innovative, heavy engineering solutions to such problems as how to support the world's then longest cable-stayed bridge in Thailand and how to build the biggest road projects at that time through the challenging topography of Hong Kong. In the UK, he quickly made a name for himself by carrying out research that led to the regeneration of Britain's stricken canal network. Fraenkel was asked to put together teams to walk along some of the country's canals to research the feasibility of bringing them back into commercial use. Many had fallen into dereliction and it was only through the efforts of enthusiasts that the occasional pumping house or lock had been restored. The Fraenkel report argued persuasively that there was a case for restoring much of the network, aided by Central Government funding. theguardian.com/technology/2010/jan/21/peter-fraenkel-obituary



Scottish canals update

In December, the Lowland Canals Association petitioned the Scottish Parliament to appoint a Scottish waterways ombudsman. The Public Petitions Committee considered it but did not reach a conclusion. However, they acknowledged the £70m backlog of maintenance and the problems relating to the impact on tourism, and also the potential waste of £98m of public money that had been spent on the Millennium Link. They are to invite Scottish Canals to give evidence at a future meeting.

There was also news that Scottish Canals had secured £350,000 from Sustrans to repair Leamington Lift Bridge and make it operational by the summer of this year. This will reinstate the navigation to the end of the canal in Edinburgh.

Repairs to Bonnybridge and Twechar Lift Bridges on the Forth and Clyde Canal are underway, together with repairs to Lock 6 and the bascule bridge at Bard Avenue in Glasgow, which are expected to be completed by the middle of April.

These works include designing and installing a new hydraulic system and lifting cylinders, installing a bridge deck levelling and monitoring system, electrical wiring, traffic barriers and lights, and an operator kiosk with CCTV system.

Scottish Canals has also launched a 'smart canal' scheme, named the North Glasgow Integrated Water Management System. This £17m develop-



Photo: Scottish Canals

ment will use sensors and predictive weather technology to give early notice of wet weather. It will then be possible to drain rainfall from residential and business areas into the 20-mile summit pound from Glasgow to Cumbernauld. Scottish Canals believes that it could take up to 20 years to fully connect the scheme to the canal, and that £434k pa may be needed to pay for maintenance of the system and the Glasgow canal corridor.

However, the depth of this stretch of canal is currently 60cm lower than it was before the canal closed, and the canal was restored and reopened using the lowered water level. The reduction in depth affects the numbers and types of craft that are able to pass through the Forth and Clyde Canal. Some argue that funding could be used to improve the stability of the canal banks, so that the water depth can be significantly increased above the current level, while also allowing sufficient bank height to accept the flood water.

CRT sells BWML

BWML was CRT's wholly-owned marina subsidiary and the largest operator of inland marinas in the UK. It has been sold for an undisclosed price to LDC, a private equity investor that specialises in management buyouts. LDC has a portfolio of 90 businesses in a broad range of sectors across the UK.

One of its directors commented: "We are able to provide the investment to support BWML's management team in growing this established brand, in order to enrich the experience of its marina users.

With our support, the management will focus on delivering improvements across the marina sites and add new locations to further strengthen its brand and market position." Stuart Mills, CRT's chief investment officer, said that CRT "will be investing the proceeds into other income-generating assets to support our core work of caring for the nation's canals and rivers".

Established in 2004, BWML operates marinas with more than 2,500 residential and leisure moorings.

Stay safe: CO alarms

Further information is at [www.boatsafetyscheme.org/stay-safe/carbon-monoxide-\(co\)/further-information-and-links](http://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/stay-safe/carbon-monoxide-(co)/further-information-and-links).

Recommended types of CO alarms were described in NABO News, Issue 6, December 2018, p.21. nabo.org.uk/files/nabo-news/mn-2018/6.pdf

From April this year, carbon monoxide alarms, fitted in appropriate locations, will become mandatory for all boats that have accommodation spaces. NABO supports the BSS in promoting both the use of CO alarms and the careful monitoring and maintenance of equipment that risks producing CO. We take a look at installing and maintaining them and simple measures to reduce the risk of CO production.

Locating CO alarms

All boats with an engine or a fuel-burning appliance should have an alarm fitted. If there is any chance of appliances, generators or engines being used while people sleep, all sleeping cabins need their own alarm. Follow the manufacturer's installation instructions as far as the space and nature of the boat allow. If instructions are difficult to meet on your boat, use these best practice points:

- In living quarters, place the alarm between 1m and 3m (on plan view) from the fuel-burning appliance, high up on a wall, but at least 150mm from the ceiling and where the indicator lights can be seen;
- In sleeping quarters, place the alarm in the 'breathing zone' near the bed head.

If you are asleep, you will not notice CO poisoning symptoms as they develop. It is therefore essential that you position CO alarms where they can be heard while you sleep. Make sure that you can hear an alarm from any position in the boat; if you cannot, buy an additional alarm.

NB. 'Black-spot' colour-changing indicator cards are not good enough – they do not give an instant warning of dangerous CO levels and there is no alarm to wake you up.



Care of the alarm

Test the alarms when you board the boat and weekly when the boat is in use. Alarms have a replacement date marked on them; do not use an alarm beyond that date. If in any doubt, replace it earlier.

If you work on the boat with paints, solvents, degreasers or strong chemicals, cover the alarm or remove it temporarily to protect the sensor. But remember to remove the cover or replace the alarm as soon as the air clears and before you use any appliance or the engine. You can remove the alarm from a winterised boat to protect its sensor and battery from long periods of sub-zero temperatures, but remember to re-install it before using the engine or appliances after de-winterisation.

Recognise CO poisoning symptoms and act on them

Early symptoms of CO poisoning can easily be mistaken for the flu, food poisoning, a hangover or general tiredness. These can include a headache, bad temper, feeling sick, dizzy, tired or confused. The more CO there is in the air, or the longer you breathe it in, the worse the symptoms become—drowsiness, extreme tiredness, general weakness and difficulty in moving, loss of balance and sight. Very high CO levels can cause chest pains and an increased heart rate, breathing difficulties, seizures, unconsciousness and death.

If a CO alarm activates, or you suspect you have CO poisoning, you need to act fast: get all people and pets out into fresh air as quickly as possible and stay there. Leave doors and windows open to allow fresh air to flow through the boat. See a doctor or vet and tell them you may have suffered CO poisoning. Anyone with severe symptoms needs immediate hospital treatment as quickly as

BE AWARE!



- Alarms only detect CO; they cannot prevent a dangerous build-up of the gas.
- CO alarms may not fully safeguard people who have specific medical conditions.
- CO alarms do not detect fires, smoke or leakages of petrol or LPG fuel vapours.
- A CO alarm can activate if it senses hydrogen, e.g. from a boat's batteries gassing off when under charge, perhaps indicating a charging problem.

possible. CO poisoning can only be detected for a short time after exposure as its traces begin to disappear as soon as you start breathing fresh air. If CO poisoning is confirmed, find and fix the source before using appliances or the engine again.

Prevention is better than treatment

Taking a few simple steps dramatically reduces the risks.

Heating appliances:

- Ensure that all appliances are suitable for use in boats. Never use mobile gas heaters - they are not suitable. Do not leave LPG heating appliances on overnight, unless they are the room-sealed type.
- Properly install, maintain and service appliances using competent fitters. Always use proprietary replacement components – a bodged job brings risks.
- Check there are no build-ups of spiders' webs, debris or other blockages in cabin vents. Open windows when cooking, especially when using large pans on LPG hobs. Never block cabin ventila-

DANGEROUS OLDER COOKERS



The BSS is supporting Beko and Belling to find and fix dangerous older models of Beko, Flavel, Leisure, Belling and New World gas cookers that can produce potentially fatal levels of CO if used with the grill door closed. The model and serial numbers are on a plate behind the oven door.

Model numbers for Beko, Flavel or Leisure cookers are: Leisure CM10NRK, CM10NRC, AL6NDW, CM101NRCP, CM101NRKP, Flavel DCGAP5LS, AP5LDW Flavel Milano ML5NDS.

The model numbers for Belling and New World cookers are: Belling Country Chef 100G Silver (444445945) or Anthracite (444445946) Belling G755 MK2 Anthracite (50531082) or White (50531081), Belling GT 755 White (444449050), New World Vision 50TWLM SV LPG (444445698), 50WLM WH LPG (444445021), 50WLM SV LPG (444445020) and 50TWLM WH LPG (444445697).

The companies will arrange a free modification to your cooker to remove any risk. Call Beko on 0800 2943129 or Belling on 0800 1105728, 9am - 5 pm, Monday to Friday.



Generator death trap
www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-34810360

Photo: narrowboatworld

tors or the air inlet or heat outlet on an appliance.

- Check rope seals on solid-fuel stove doors. Check the stove for cracks or missing cover plates. Do not burn damp fuel or rubbish that can cause the flue to clog up. Sweep solid-fuel stove chimneys at least annually. Never run a solid-fuel stove with its doors open.

- Check flue-pipes regularly for rusting, pitting or loose connections. Look for signs of leaks—a

sooty smear at a flue-pipe joint is a bad sign.

- Use a metal ash bucket with a lid when removing hot ashes and embers. When you take it outside, keep it away from ventilators because the embers can still be producing CO.
- Make sure that the outlets to all flues or exhausts are outside covered decks, awnings or cratches. Check that vents and flue terminals on the cabin roof are not damaged or restricted by equipment, ropes or tarpaulins. Never use an appliance if you think it might be faulty or if it has a crushed flue terminal.
- Never bring cooling barbecues into a cabin or covered cockpit area—hot charcoal gives off large amounts of CO, it is only safe when stone-cold.

Engines and generators:

Exhausts from petrol engines, generators and outboard motors can produce dangerously high levels of CO, but do not underestimate the risks from diesel exhausts – these have also been linked to CO illnesses and deaths.

- Routinely service engines and check exhaust manifolds, joints, hoses, silencers and through-hull fittings for signs of leaks.
- Avoid running your engine when moored near to other boats, particularly when the air is still. Never run an engine if the exhaust outlet is restricted in any way, including when your boat is moored with the exhaust against a wall or another boat. Don't swim near boats that have their engines running—exhausts can create a toxic atmosphere at water level.
- Never run a portable generator in a covered cockpit, or on the bank if it is close to a door, open window or ventilator.

Short-term moorings

Is it time for a review?

Mark Tizard calls for a review of the visitor mooring framework policy.

CRT put a lot of time and effort into creating a short-term visitor mooring framework policy, which is available on their website. This laid down an evidence-based process behind any proposed changes to visitor moorings. The policy came to the fore in the 2016 South East visitor mooring consultation, when changes to stay times were proposed for various locations in the region. NABO was instrumental in pointing out that CRT had failed to follow its own policy. Indeed, once the evidence was gathered, many of the proposed changes were shown to be unnecessary and, to CRT's credit, these were dropped. While there are minimum standards for the grass cutting and surface level of visitor moorings, there is nothing regarding water depth. And, as many members are now discovering, this is becoming an increasing problem in getting boats safely alongside, especially for some of our disabled colleagues. Depth is also not taken into consideration when new moorings are created. New mooring rings were introduced by the winding hole at Stoke Bruerne (where even CRT's own workboat couldn't get alongside) and the new visitor moorings above Soulbury can only safely be used by shallow-drafted boats. So please CRT, can you amend the framework document to include a minimum required depth; I would

suggest one metre to allow for subsequent silting. Once this has been done, the framework process should be used to review whether existing visitor moorings are fit for purpose. Do they meet boaters' needs in terms of location, depth, length and stay times? With the current campaign to recruit volunteers in mind, this could be an ideal project for them.

There is not always an adequate depth at visitor moorings
Photo: Mark Tizard



Clean air strategy

David Fletcher looks at the options for boat stoves in the light of new regulations.

Defra has just updated its report on the Clean Air Strategy. This is all about the impact of pollution from solid-fuel stoves. Defra is telling us how it intends to tackle these (and other) sources of air pollution, making our air healthier to breathe, protecting nature and boosting the economy. Air quality is known to be the biggest environmental health risk in the UK, as it shortens lives and contributes to chronic illness. Health can be affected both by short-term, high-pollution events and by long-term exposure to lower levels.

The concerns about solid-fuel stoves are the emission of fine par-

ticulate matter in the smoke, and sulphur dioxide, the pungent smell from burning fuel. Burning wood and coal in open fires and stoves makes up 38% of the UK's emissions of fine particulate matter. To tackle this requires two things: using appropriate fuels, and designing and using the stove so that combustion is complete. The best practice for fuel is well known and nothing new: if burning wood, it must be dried out (or seasoned) before going into the stove. The water content can be checked with a simple and cheap damp-meter. Almost all problems associated with burning wood are caused by damp fuel. Taking wet logs from a roof basket to put straight onto a fire sucks the heat out of the fire and causes incomplete combustion. The smoke emissions increase (with dense white smoke), carbon monoxide goes up, and the boat next door is none too impressed. A log of fresh wood will contain about a mug of water and the steam produced when this 'burns' doesn't help the stove either. For black fuels, the use of smoke-free is best practice; house coal is full of tars and toxins and should not be used.

Defra is not suggesting changes to the best practice. It says that it will legislate to prohibit the sale of the most polluting fuels, make changes to existing smoke control legislation to make it easier to enforce, and give new powers to local authorities to take action in areas of high pollution. In general there is nothing to fear with this so long as we do what we know to be sensible when choosing fuel. If you are dependent on

wood from the canal side, then you must make the effort to store it under cover and dry it out before use. The sting in the tail is the last part concerning local authorities. It implies that, say, in London, Boroughs may decide to ban solid-fuel stoves because of extreme pollution levels in their locality.

But is there something more that can be done? The other thing that can help is the choice of flue and stove. For the flue, the aim is to increase the efficiency of burning by keeping the flue hot, because this gives the fire good draught, even when turned down, and it also aids more complete combustion. A bare flue, cast-iron roof collar or uninsulated top chimney, all have the effect of chilling the rising flue gas, and this reduces the draught in the flue, causing incomplete combustion. Insulated wall flues have been around for a while and as time goes by improved designs are coming out and prices are coming down. They are certainly proven, if costly. For stoves there is new technology: the focus is now on stoves that are referred to as 'clean burn', which are equipped with primary, secondary and tertiary air supplies. These provide better fuel efficiency and also significantly reduce emissions. Taking the standard Squirrel stove as an example, the primary air wheel is at the bottom and controls the air through the grate. The secondary air supply enters via the wheel above the glass and is often called the 'air wash' system, which ensures that the glass remains clear. The new facility is tertiary air, which enters the body of the stove at the top, through an air-box, usually at the back. The preheated tertiary air improves the secondary gas burn-off by burning, re-burning and re-igniting gases and particles created during the first burn in the grate. This has the double benefit of

improving the efficiency of burning by using less fuel for the same heat output, and also reducing the particulate content of the smoke.

We can expect greater emphasis to be placed on emissions, and these clean-burn systems are a solution that is coming down the line fast. On this issue, Defra says it will legislate to ensure that only the cleanest stoves are available for sale by 2022. It is currently giving approval for clean-burn stoves when they are intended for use in smoke control areas. So, can we expect older designs to be banned and taken off the market, or will they be allowed to be used outside cities? There has been a steady tightening of regulations for stoves for what many believe to be purely political reasons. But momentum is gathering and we can expect regulations will tighten yet further over time. As a consequence, getting a stove with Defra approval is key, especially for use in smoke control areas. A clean-burn stove and insulated flue is the only way to do this. And we cannot expect to have grandfather rights for old stoves in places like central London. They will be banned. So if you are in the market for a new stove, take care to look at one that has Defra approval. It could be an expensive mistake to buy old technology just now.



Photo Chris Reynolds licensed under Creative Commons Licence



March of the widebeams

Mark Tizard considers the implications of increasing numbers of larger craft.

If you experience any navigational issues due to widebeams, please let us know at gen@nabo.org.uk.

On my recent Christmas cruise from Foxton to Tring, I was able to see at first hand the rapid growth of widebeam boats, especially among the continuous cruising fraternity. Personally, I enjoy seeing the wide variety of boats on the system, but from Cosgrove south there was a noticeable increase in the

tailed account of the condition of the waterways under its management. The report identified 1,743km of cruising navigations and 548km of commercial waterways, with each canal described as either a wide or narrow canal.

There has been much discussion recently in the canal press and social media regarding widebeam cruising



Photo Ray T Canalworld.net

number of widebeams, especially those in the 10-12 foot beam range. Struggling to pass one near a bridge, where boats were also moored, made me think of the potential issues that may arise from this continuing growth.

First some history: in 1975, British Waterways published the Fraenkel Report, which was a de-

scribed in inappropriate areas, especially south of Birmingham where much of the growth in the number of boats is located. The Fraenkel Report makes it clear that the GU Mainline from Brentford to Napton is a wide canal (earlier copies of Nicholson's, if I recall, talked about it being from Brentford to Berkhamstead). However, the report makes it clear

that the Oxford canal north of Braunston is a narrow canal. Today there are many reports of widebeams cruising in this area, based in marinas on the North Oxford canal. Other widebeams have been reported moored in marinas on the narrow Leicester section of the Grand Union. The Fraenkel Report shows 'channel dredging dimensions' for the Oxford canal of 4.26m x 1.39m. BW dredging standards (2000) show 5.3m x 1.1m. A little research suggests that the GU was dredged to a 30-foot wide channel south of Berkhamsted and a 25-foot channel north of there, although I don't believe the channel is designed and constructed to a different standard.

Increased licence fees for widebeams

CRT is presumably aware of the growing trend of widebeam ownership, evidenced by the recent decision to increase licence fees. This in itself is not likely to slow the growth of widebeam construction, which often costs well into six figures, as the bigger ones can qualify for zero VAT - a big incentive to go large!

The increasing number of widebeams presents the Trust with two problems: the first is how to restrict widebeams to wide canals. This surely can be done via better communication and signage, with repeat offenders perhaps being offered restricted licences, or licence refusal in extreme instances.

Boats to fit the canal

The second and, in my view, the bigger challenge is to ensure that designated wide canals are fit for purpose (i.e. to ensure that two full-width widebeams can safely pass and that a full-width widebeam can pass a deep-drafted narrowboat). This



Photo: newandusedboatco.uk

has substantial cost implications. A narrow canal has a 'U-shape' profile, with a deep channel in the middle and shallow sides. Over the years, with predominantly narrowboat use, wide canals have also adopted this profile. But a wide canal now needs to have the profile of an inverted staple, with deeper water across the width of the channel to enable widebeam boats to pass. In many areas, this will entail considerable dredging and re-profiling of the navigational channel, together with much greater priority given to offside vegetation management to maintain the line of sight along the navigation. NABO believes that the great diversity of boats is very much part of the attraction to boaters and towpath visitors alike. CRT should recognise and embrace this change and adapt its canal management techniques accordingly. However, with the greater emphasis on wellbeing, I suspect it's unlikely that the additional investment will be forthcoming. Perhaps the increased widebeam licence income can be used to identify and prioritise pinch-points. The alternative is to update the Fraenkel Report with new definitions, which will no doubt open a whole new can of worms.

TECHIE'S



CORNER

Aspects of boat design, construction, equipment, facilities or maintenance

A recent discussion reminded me it's about time to raise the causes and dangers of hydrogen sulphide gas. Hydrogen sulphide is produced when faulty lead-acid batteries are being charged, or if the charging voltage is too high. It smells like rotten eggs, tarnishes copper and brass to a silvery colour and later to black, and will often set off CO alarms. If you smell it, ignore it, and



and alternators can become faulty and supply excess voltage that destroys batteries. It will also give you a tool to assess the state of charge by measuring what is known as the 'rested voltage'. While I am on about monitoring batteries, please do not trust any meter showing state of charge, percentage charged, or time left/amount of electricity left (although Smartgauge is pretty much OK). Typically, as time goes on, those readings will become larger and larger lies, thereby encouraging boaters to destroy their batteries by constant under-charging.

Any of the Amps, Volts, Amp-hours in and state-of-charge meters will be fine as long as you ignore any Amp-hours left or percentage charged. Taking voltage readings at night just before you turn in, with nothing running, will allow you to assess how discharged the batteries are – or first thing in the morning, unless you have solar that will have raised the voltage, at least for much of the year. Use the Amps to decide when the batteries are more or less fully charged. When the charging current drops to between one and two percent of battery capacity, at around 14.2V or more, the batteries will be more or less as fully charged as you can get them, but this can take very many hours. So with a 440Ah bank, you would be looking for around five to eight Amps. The reading of Amp-hours consumed will also be accurate.

Something stinks!

Can you smell rotten eggs or has your toilet tank leaked?

Tony Brooks finds an unlikely source for the smell.

the smell goes away, this is a sign that it has 'paralysed' your nose and is now getting to very dangerous concentrations. It is heavier than air and flammable so you need to vent your bilges to be safe. I know on many boats it is far more difficult than it should be, but I would urge you to regularly inspect your batteries for the initial signs of faults developing - like a hot cell, one battery hotter than the rest, or a cell or battery gassing more, all when charging. Also check for one cell or battery needing far more topping-up than the rest, or the battery case ends bowing out. If you find anything like this, on no account leave the batteries on charge when you are away from the boat or overnight. To do so is risking your health or a battery exploding as well as having to deal with the hydrogen sulphide and, potentially, sprayed acid.

Make sure that you have a method of monitoring the charging voltage regularly because chargers



Tony Brooks has offered to answer any technical enquiries that members may have. Please send your question(s) to Tony via nabonews@nabo.org.uk and I will forward them to him. Note: Tony may use the questions and his answers without further permission to advise others.

Rewind

Issue No 1, 2004

Howard Anguish explores NABO News from 15 years ago.

What's in a name? In the Chairman's Column, Stuart Sampson suggests that critics think NABO may be in disarray when we don't seem to agree on how to pronounce our own acronym. His preference was for NAYBO rather than the alternative NABBOW because it goes with SAGO and NATO (and he doesn't think that we would be mistakenly called the North Atlantic Boating Association!) I don't know about you, but I agree with him; it never sounds quite right to me to hear us described as NABBOW. What do you think? He also says we get some stick from folk who say that we ignore our members and that we are anti-BW. To dispel the first criticism, he points out that NABO has only two 'layers' – Members and Council – so direct contact with the policymakers is just one call or email away, and he urges members to contact elected Council members with any points or complaints; still valid today.

2006 – The End is Nigh? "Would it be too alarmist to say that the boating way of life will end in 2006 when EU regulations force boaters to use DERV (white diesel) instead of gas oil (dyed diesel)?" Well, that doomsday scenario fortunately didn't come to pass, but we are now entering yet another period of uncertainty about the future of red diesel, with the continuing saga about Brexit. In 2004, NABO had joined forces with IWA and RYA to fight for the retention of red diesel. Do we now need to resurrect that campaign or is it dead in the water?

Mooring issues at Oxford. "British Waterways Tackles Unauthorised Mooring at Oxford. British Waterways is beginning a drive to combat unauthorised mooring by boats on the Oxford Canal, from Isis Lock at Oxford, past Drinkwater's Lift Bridge up to Kings Bridge (known as the Oxford Mooring Zone) from Monday 12 January 2004. Oxford is a popular destination for visiting and residential boaters and canal moorings have, in recent years, become prone to overcrowding because some boats overstay on moorings or moor in prohibited areas. This discourages short-term visitors and has a detrimental effect on waterway wildlife. British Waterways' staff will be patrolling the area over the next few months." Well, that worked well, didn't it!

Waterways Dossiers. Chairman Stuart Sampson reported that Council has agreed to start implementing Waterways Dossiers, aimed at covering every waterway in detail. They would have a section for each pound, containing notes about each item needing attention – missing or broken equipment, overhanging trees, shallows etc. Each dossier would be run by a local member with help from others who could walk the lengths and report back. With regular meetings with local waterway managers it may have helped to reduce longstanding issues, and the idea may well warrant another look so that CRT can be advised of issues that they may have missed or dismissed!



NABO News back issues are available online at: nabo.org.uk/index.php/reference/nabo-news-back-issues-2

Letters to the Editor

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

Cost of volunteers

The following correspondence took place in January between Matthew Symonds, CRT's Strategy and Engagement Manager (Boating) and Alison Tuck, following her article on p.10 of Issue 6, 2018 of NABO News:

Re: the article about CRT volunteers in the December issue of NABO News, it was informative as always, but I noted a misinterpretation of the cost of volunteering in the Trust's annual report figure. The £19.7 million that you reported as the cost of volunteering is not all for volunteering, but a number of things that have been grouped together under the title 'supervision, volunteer management, training, safety, travel insurance, etc.' Of the £19.7 million, only £2.6 million relates to volunteering. This obviously greatly reduces the hourly figure for the 616,300 volunteer hours in 2017/18 to £4.21 rather than the £31.96 you quoted. The remaining £17.1 million is 'unattributed' costs in other areas of the business, where timesheets either did not record the activity (often this will be supervision, training, meetings and other times not directly spent on tasks) or timesheets that were not completed by the operative. It would be helpful if you could clarify this in the next issue of NABO News. If you have any other queries about the annual report figures (or anything else) we're happy to help answer those.

Matthew

Alison replied: "I'm happy to be corrected on the cost per hour of the volunteers. I thought it was high and just assumed it was because all the hours hadn't been logged! What would you like me to put the £17.1m down as? It just seems odd that that sum was included in that section on the report. Surely the £17.1m is support costs? I'm just trying to understand what the costs are because I don't want to put down unattributed costs. It's accountancy speak for balancing the books and the way boaters are feeling at the moment (me included) it will just sound wrong. Also

that's a massive figure for hours you can't attribute to a cost centre within other departments of CRT! Can we come up with a better statement or a breakdown with an explanation maybe?"

To which Matthew replied: "Hopefully this helps explain the figure that includes volunteering supervision in the annual report. The £19.7m relates to costs from our various waterways operations teams (customer services, direct services, engineering, operational contracts, volunteering management, asset strategy, mechanical & engineering, programme planning, length inspection, asset delivery management, programme and project management, third party works, work development, restoration, and integrated delivery). It refers to time that wasn't spent directly on operational tasks, and includes activities like management, supervision, training, and travel. It also includes insurance. Of this total, £2.6m was spent on volunteering, which includes management, materials, training and expenses. We will be re-categorising this for the next annual report to ensure that how we are spending our funds is made clearer."

CO detectors

In response to the article on faulty CO detectors in NABO News, Issue 6, December 2018, we have two CO detectors and an optical smoke detector on our boat. Although not liveboards, I always test all the detectors each and every time we visit the boat. I noticed that in the spring of last year, none of the detectors responded to the test buttons. All of them have ten-year, non-replaceable batteries. The detectors were approximately seven years old, so still within the ten-year operational lifespan. I replaced the detectors with new ones and I made sure that the CO detectors were the correct BS EN 50291-2 marked .. and I purchased ones with replaceable batteries. I now replace the batteries at the start of the season, regardless of whether they are good or not; that way I know the detectors will work. I con-

tinue to test them every time we visit the boat. My personal opinion is that the ten-year models don't last as long as the manufacturers claim ... or at least not in a winterised boat. Incidentally, we have identical ones at home and test them on the first of each month.

Thank you for reminding us.
Brian Holt, nb Simon Angel

The mills of CRT grind exceeding slow

Recently we gained a contract to use one of our boats to remove 50 tonnes of building waste from a canal side building site with the intention of transshipping to lorries at the nearest wharf. As with most canal side properties access was far easier by water than by road. A small triumph, you may think, for the canals.

The developer approached a well-known haulage firm who had experience of working near the water, all the relevant health and safety in place, risk assessments for the various wharfs and insurance to cover working from boats. Our boat was booked and ready to go.

All we needed from CRT was permission to use one of the accessible wharves and for them to unlock the gate. 'No problem' they said 'We know the contractors'. 'OK' said the developer 'we would like to proceed tomorrow'. 'Er...' said CRT 'you'll have to fill in the forms'. 'OK' said the developer 'I'll come to the office tomorrow'.

I name this boat ...

If you have spotted a boat name that made you smile, please let me have a photo to use in future issues. Here's one I spotted last year.



'Er...' said CRT 'we can't do that, we'll post them to you'. 'When will I get a decision?'. 'Er...' said CRT 'we don't know, it might take a few weeks'.

So everyone involved in this small but important job was willing to move with a couple of days notice, but not CRT. And all they have to do is open a gate!

Chris Pink

PS in the end we used a non-CRT wharf, though several miles further away.



Photo Gillie Rhodes at Flickr



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