



WINTER NEWSLETTER

October 2007

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Key concerns for Broads navigators

- *Dredging is needed throughout the Broads*
- *Moorings continue to be lost or fall into disrepair*
- *Methods being used by the Flood Alleviation Project are depriving navigators of many informal moorings*
- *Banks and staithes need maintenance*
- *Broads Authority needs to find money to maintain and improve the navigation from sources other than river tolls*
- *Broads Authority needs to listen to local opinion*

Slow Progress on BA Private Bill

The Commons Opposed Bill Committee sat for two days in mid July. It considered representations from the BA, Defra and four petitioners against the Bill together with their parliamentary agent and decided that the Bill should proceed. The report from the committee recommended that the Bill be allowed to proceed with the following caveats:

Amendments proposed by the BA to take account of objections raised should be incorporated;

Powers to license rescue boats should be removed;

Amendments proposed by

Defra should be incorporated.

The committee was concerned about the status of the agreements entered into by the BA with other parties concerning the provisions of the Bill and how the additional powers contained therein would be exercised. They recommended that the BA and the other parties should reconsider the agreements and the extent to which matters should be incorporated into the Bill itself.

The committee commented on the relationship between the Authority and local interests and expressed the view that the Authority

and the area would benefit if local interests were directly represented on the Authority.

Since then we have seen little progress. NSBA have urged the BA to include the contents of the agreements within the body of the Bill. We also share the committee's concerns about the growing divide between the Authority and local interests. Recent appointments to the Broads Authority have ignored candidates backed by navigation interests and we note with concern recent moves by the Authority to alter the basis on which appointments to the Navigation Committee are made.

Broads Authority allows wakeboarding on the Broads

The three year trial of management arrangements for waterskiing on the Broads ended at the beginning of this year. The Authority set up a panel of interested parties to review the arrangements and decide whether to recommend continuation of the sport on the Broads. Both the RYA and NSBA were represented on the review panel.

NSBA policy is that we will not oppose waterskiing on

the Broads carried out within the requirements of the Byelaws but that wakeboarding is not an appropriate activity on the Broads on grounds of safety and excessive wash.

Water skiing organisations maintained that the difference between waterskiing and wakeboarding was confined to the equipment used.

The Broads Society took a

similar line to the NSBA but the Authority decided to allow waterskiing to continue and wakeboarding to have a twelve month trial period.

If you encounter problems on the river provide a report to River Control (01692 678459). If you also let Phil Ollier know of the timing and circumstances of your report, he will follow it up with the BA.

Green Book

The closing date for alterations to the Green Book is 31st December. If there is an inaccuracy in the information published about you in the list of individual members please let Phil Ollier know.

If there is an inaccuracy in one of the class boat lists please inform the class secretary.

We do our best to be accurate, but with your help we will do better.

Revision to NSBA Rules

Your committee has spent a part of their time this year reviewing the Association's rules. Concern has been felt for some time that there was a lack of precision leading to potential difficulties in conducting an orderly AGM.

Some of the problems arise because of the two types of NSBA membership—individual and affiliated organisation. It would be difficult for the chairman of the AGM to identify who was voting in their own right and who was casting votes on behalf of an affil-

ated organisation. Indeed, in the latter case, the chairman could not be sure that the voter had a mandate from the affiliated organisation.

There were a number of other places where, though the intention of the rules appeared clear, the mechanism for effecting them was not.

The committee has been fortunate in having two lawyers as members, Simon Whipp and Professor Richard Card. Simon has shouldered the burden of redraft-

ing the rules with frequent recourse to advice from Richard and to the whole committee for agreement and guidance.

The intention has been to preserve the aims of the existing rules, clarifying them where necessary and ensuring that the processes for compliance are clearly laid out and identified.

The full text of the proposed revisions is included with the AGM notice.

NSBA sees this as an attempt to negate the effect of changes won during negotiations over Navigation Committee powers under the Private Bill

Appointments to the Navigation Committee

The 1988 Broads Act laid down clear procedures for appointing members to the Navigation Committee; six members from the Broads Authority, one from the Great Yarmouth Port Authority, two representing hire boat operators, one representing national private boat owners, one representing local private boat owners, two representing

commercial shipping and one representing other navigation users.

At the September BA meeting, a paper proposed that positions other than the BA members should be advertised and applicants should, after short listing (by an unidentified procedure), be appointed by a panel. Consideration was deferred to

allow consultation.

The NSBA sees this as an attempt to negate the effect of changes won during the negotiations over Navigation Committee powers under the Private Bill. It is watching the situation closely and will seek to maintain the toll payers' voice, particularly at a time of major toll increases.

NSBA Regattas

The Ramuz Trophy was staged by Rollesby Broad Sailing Club and won by Horning Sailing Club

The Broadland Youth Regatta was staged by Norfolk Broads Yacht Club. The Centenary Trophy was won by Hickling Broad Sailing Club and the Lady Mayhew Trophy went to Harriet Waring of NBYC.

NSBA thanks the Clubs for hosting the contests and the competitors for entering into the spirit of the events.

BA buy May Gurney Dredging Resources

Dredging is a topic that arises constantly on the Broads. For many years there has been only one large contractor based on the Broads; May Gurney. Earlier this year they made it known to the Broads Authority that they wished to dispose of their dredging operation.

That faced the Authority with a dilemma. Most public bodies are outsourcing more and more of their ac-

tivities. Should the BA buck the trend and take dredging in house?

It was something of an open secret but, following negotiations, the BA has taken over the base, plant and staff of the May Gurney dredging operation.

NSBA takes the view that, if the Authority's projected amounts of dredging can be achieved for the projected costs, then the takeover will have been worthwhile.

However, we do have concerns that promises of increased dredging (often associated with toll increases) over the last ten years have never been delivered and we will be looking closely at both the dredging output figures and the associated costs.

We believe that the major constraint on output will lie in finding disposal sites and obtaining the associated regulatory approvals.

Upper Thurne Working Group

The UTWG, whose Chairman is Professor Tim O’Riordan, was formed some five years ago and consists of representatives from the locality, recreational and commercial users of the navigation, conservation interests and the BA. Richard Baguley is the NSBA representative.

In April 2007, the UTWG conducted a survey of usage and reed margin on Hickling Broad from which a number of points arose.

The reed margin is dying back and in places root systems seem to have been destroyed. The Broad is almost bereft of plant life while a number of small islands have disappeared

and are navigation hazards.

HBSC is happy with attempts to recover the reed margin but needs room to start races into the west bay. HBSC confirmed that the entire broad was used for racing whilst cruising members sometimes moor in out of the way areas (as do other users) and wish to continue. HBSC opposes any increase in winter bird refuges. These points are supported by NSBA.

It was clear from group discussion that new Natural England risk assessment policy may limit future funding for reed margin recreation at Hickling but plans for extended local wetlands will reduce pressure on the broad allowing

greater management flexibility with benefits for recreation, restoration of lost islands and even dredging policy. NSBA welcomes these proposals and awaits further developments.

Prof. O’Riordan, says, “*The Upper Thurne Working Group has created a common vision of the whole of this complicated and exhilarating landscape. It works to share a common understanding of its future. It binds together public, private and citizen sectors in a common endeavour, joined by fine science and a collective will to succeed.*”

NSBA supports the UTWG mission to facilitate balanced and fair resolution of the issues that arise in this part of the Broads.

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Broads Flood Alleviation Project (BFAP)

Broadland Environmental Services Limited (BESL) are now 6 years into the 20 year long term contract to improve and maintain the flood defences in Broadland. In the past year the proposals for a further five compartments, out of the total of 40 have come forward for consultation (in which NSBA is involved), planning permission, and the construction of “setback”, “roll-back” and strengthened flood banks on site.

Site works were completed at Upton and South Walsham marshes, works started on the Stokesby to Mautby section of the Bure, and at Cantley on the Yare, and between Beccles and

Geldeston on the Waveney. Work is expected to start soon on the Limpenhoe Marshes between Cantley and Reedham, and is programmed for the South side of the Bure between Acle and Yarmouth in the period Spring 2008 to 2012, with Oby to Stokesby programmed for 2009.

NSBA has periodic discussions with BESL staff to raise concerns about navigation issues, especially possible loss of moorings, in addition to responding to the pre-planning consultations that are invited as each compartment comes forward.

Following our earlier scepticism about BESL’s proposals, we are now reasonably

content that their technique for “set-back” is proving satisfactory on the middle and upper reaches of the Yare, Bure, Waveney and Thurne from a navigation point of view. Problems at the New Cut have dogged the project. We continue to be concerned by the loss of informal moorings where sheet piling is removed following “set-back” and by the problems of providing suitable scour prevention where old, un-serviceable sheet steel piling is removed on the more tidal lower Bure and Yare. These issues are under ongoing scrutiny.

Brian Wilkins leads this work for NSBA.

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From the Chairman

While being interviewed recently on TV when the RSPB decided to tell us all that the Broads are still in decline, I found myself in the unusual situation of defending the Broads Authority. I make no comment here about the RSPB arguments but it brings into focus the forces behind the scenes pressuring the BA to ignore its navigation responsibilities. We are supporters of the natural conservation aspects of the Broads but believe strongly that the balance must be maintained.

To fight our corner as a political force NSBA needs as many members as possible. It is easy to say that your sailing club is already a member and for you to think that that is enough. It is not. Please continue your

personal membership and persuade the people in the next berths to you to join as well. The more we are and the more united we are the more we will be able to achieve.

Although dealt with elsewhere in this newsletter, I must point out that the Broads Authority Private Bill is taking a very long time to become law! Frustratingly so when practically everything in the Bill has been agreed; but it has yet to reach the House of Lords. The Commons Committee questioned the legality of the side agreement with the RYA/IWA/BMF and the delay is only benefiting lawyers. I note that it is likely that a further £50k will be charged to the Navigation account as a result.

NSBA's main concern is to pro-

- **The NSBA has a voice on the Broads Authority but needs more information and support from representative boat-owners.**
- **The NSBA supports the Broadland joint interests of recreation and conservation with navigation but urges balance and fairness by all.**
- **The NSBA is lobbying for improvements on issues including: dredging; moorings; river work and funding for navigation priorities.**
- **The NSBA stands firm against threats to close any part of the Broads navigation.**
- **The NSBA represents 43 affiliated organisations and more than 1000 individual members.**

tect the interests of private boaters and I can tell you that this is no sinecure! Your committee is hardworking and very closely involved in every aspect of Broadland. Each member has a role to play; some are old hands and some are just playing themselves in. I thank them all on your behalf for their dedication.

Finally, I thank Rollesby Broad Sailing Club and the Norfolk Broads Yacht Club for running the Ramuz Trophy and the Youth Regatta so well. It's great to have this sort of support.