



SUMMER 2005

GOBA NEWS



Before – mostly sloping bank and overgrown

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The deadline for the Winter 2005 issue of GOBA News is 1st November 2005.

A First for GOBA

On Saturday 4th June 2005 the first GOBA work party swung into action. The site chosen was the GOBA mooring just upstream of the Pike & Eel near Needingworth. The objectives of the day were to remove any rubbish from the mooring, clear the bank to a distance of approximately 4 metres from the river side and trim the trees growing from the bank over the river. Clearing the bank to twice the distance usually cut by the contractors meant that there would be a level area the full length of the mooring which could be used and trimming the trees increased

the bank side available for mooring without spoiling the seclusion created by the individual clumps of trees.

That's the plan so off you go. Oh no you don't! To attempt a venture like this you need to be covered by insurance and the current GOBA insurance does not include cover for work parties. ENCAMS to the rescue! ENCAMS, which stands for ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGNS, now runs the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign and, after we had informed them of our intentions, were prepared to give us the insurance and backing we needed. A further requirement was the production of a risk assessment

which was professionally completed by Denise Troughton, our publicity officer. We could now proceed with the work using the risk assessment as a guide.

Around midday on the Saturday the work party assembled on the mooring. The party was made up of eleven including Primrose a narrow boat owned by Chris and Liz Thompson. Primrose proved invaluable in reaching the parts others could not reach. The work was to be carried out using only tools normally used for garden work. So no JCBs and no chainsaws.

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Stuart polishing his spark plug

Before the work commenced the objectives of the day were set out in order of importance: SAFETY, FUN, and WORK. A number of items were found to be invaluable: a motorised hover mower supplied and operated in the main by Stuart Turvey, who did sterling work in trimming the full length of the mooring; a long handled lopper with a saw blade attachment supplied by David Mercer, without which we would have been unable to trim the trees overhanging the water; a pot bellied BBQ supplied by our Chairman Chris Grant, which enabled those of us able to stay overnight to be comfortable and warm well into the evening. Graham and Debbie Dale with Silver Link were able to stay overnight and Graham provided one of the essential elements of a successful work party namely his enthusiasm. It's not that the rest of us lacked enthusiasm, just that I feel Graham deserves special mention in this area. The remainder of the tools consisted of pruners, rakes and ropes.

Andrew Walters from ENCAMS spent the afternoon with us and both he and his girlfriend Debbie had brought along their working clothes to work alongside us. I asked Andrew at the end of the afternoon when we had completed the work if he felt that it was a suitable project to receive the backing of ENCAMS. He agreed that it was and that we had achieved a balance between the needs of boaters and that of the environment.



New signs have now been put up

Determination and brute force is the only way

It was agreed by the majority before the work started that as our Chairman had the largest boat it should be used as the skip to remove the litter from the site. All credit to the GOBA membership that we collected only one bag of rubbish and a car wheel which was the only material removed from the site. Debbie even checked the branches removed from under the water and returned a number of fresh water mussels to the river.

Rubbish removed



After – enough room to sit out and enjoy a glass or two

The work element was completed just before 5pm leaving us to enjoy a barbeque and a very pleasant evening. When the Chairman's wife Diana joined us, her skills as an intensive care nurse were completely redundant as we had had no accidents, not even a cut finger. The clearing operation has left us with room for three more cruisers on a mooring which is tidy and has a useable flat area on the bank for most of its length. Stuart will ask the contractors who trim the moorings to maintain the area we cleared.

The question is did we all enjoy ourselves. Although she has not openly admitted it to me, I have heard my wife Thelma tell a number of people that it was fun. I think everyone present had an enjoyable afternoon and felt that we had achieved something. We should now look forward to the next work party, the site of which could be nominated by a member or members of GOBA.

Alistair Reid

the helm

from the helm



Chris Grant

Firstly, a very warm welcome to Karen Bayliss, our new editor who has saved the day by answering my plea in the Spring issue. As you can see, Karen has stepped straight in at the deep end and produced her first issue with excellent results. Karen runs her

own IT training consultancy and she and her husband Brian have a Freeman 24 at Crosshall. Please continue to send in your letters and articles to Karen whose contact details can be found on the back page.

By the time you read this, GOBA will have been asked at the Regional Navigation Forum meeting to support an EA paper recommending an 8.5% increase in the licence fee for 2006/7 followed by a similar increase in 2007/8. This amounts to 6% over and above the current Retail Price Index - Inflation. For a 7-10m boat this will mean an increase of £21.53 per year not forgetting that this year we have already been hit with a 5% increase. In practice, the licence money from our boats is a small proportion of the total funding needed to keep the waterway running, the rest being funded from government. The formula is, the more we pay the more the EA get from Government to spend 'on our behalf'. You might argue that many of us spend £20 on food and drink in one evening on a river bank so what's the fuss. Well the crux of the problem for me is that almost 90% of all the spending is on health and safety improvements which while necessary to make up for past neglect and to cover the agency against liability, make little visible difference to the quality of our boating. Many costly exercises such as the painting of white lines, erection of copious warning signs and removal of lock handles (see letters page) seem to serve little other than to satisfy overbearing HSE inspectors. Should we, the licence payer be made to fund removal of all the dangers apparently waiting for us at every lock? Unfortunately, GOBA's participation in the Regional Navigation Forum is often a rubber stamping exercise under the guise of 'consultation' and for all our efforts we are not in a position to refuse to accept such an increase. What we would like to see is the 90/10% Safety/Improvements ratio become more balanced in return for such steep increases in licence.

On a positive note, St Neots lock is undoubtedly a major success and so too will be the new landing stages at Godmanchester and Offord but many much-needed facilities such as pump-outs, moorings and water points are still long overdue.

My wife Diana and I have just returned from a fabulous week cruising on the river Meuse from Namur in Belgium to Sedan in France. We passed through more than 40 locks, all manned or TV zapper style radio controlled - yes really. The equivalent French VNF licence for a year is £150 (225 Euros) and covers around 8,000km of at least 5m wide by 3m high top class navigable waterway. That works out at 1.8p / km. Our Great Ouse licence costs £250 and covers about 350km if you stretch it to Bedford town and include the other Anglian waters although the low Nene bridge heights mean our boat is excluded. That works out at 71p / km or 39 times as expensive. We may have just celebrated Nelson and Trafalgar but when it comes to waterways and value for money, the government and authorities in whose hands we have placed our waterway heritage have a lot to learn from the continent and a very long way to go.

The opening of St Neots Lock on 29th April happened exactly on time and many congratulations to the EA Waterways team and Halcrow / Jackson the contractor. We were honoured to be asked by the EA to lead the first boats into the lock and a great day was had by all. More on this and pictures in 'News from the EA' in this issue. As you will have read on the front page, we had a great weekend at the first GOBA Work Party sorting out the Pike and Eel mooring. Many thanks to all who participated.

On the Harmonisation issue we have written again to the EA continuing our case for proper representation on the National Forum and to-date have not had a reply. We recently met up with our fellow boaters from the Nene and agreed to join forces on the issue with another 400 boaters belonging to the Association of Nene River Clubs. As if the 8.5% isn't bad enough news, a further increase as a result of harmonisation with the Thames would be the final straw for many of us and with no seat around the table to fight our corner.

Unfortunately we have just heard that the GOBA mooring at the Fish and Duck will no longer be available to us as the owner has decided to make it into permanent moorings. Our thanks to the landlady Sue Kiernan for the several years that we have been able to rent this spot - we are sorry to lose it but of course business prevails. We will of course try to find an alternative as soon as possible but in the meantime the nearest moorings are the EA Little Thetford around the corner or GOBA Dimmocks Cote on the Cam.

Enjoy the rest of the Summer.

Chairman

A Big Hello from your New Editor



Karen Bayliss

Having read the Spring issue of GOBA news, my husband Brian said to me "GOBA are looking for an Editor, you would be good at that". I took the copy of the newsletter from him and read over the plea from Chris Grant and started mulling the opportunity over

in my mind. I certainly enjoy reading the newsletter and I am passionate about trying to retain the English language as it should be used and not as most of our children use it today, e.g. how r u, 2nite, l8r. For those of you who do not have young children or grandchildren who text each other every minute of the day but don't seem able to speak to one another, in plain English the words/phrases are how are you, tonight and see you later. I also felt that I wanted to give something back to the river as we both gain so much from it, so I emailed my application over and hoped for the best. I did not dare to think that the opportunity could be realised but on 21 April 2005 I presented myself and my experience to the GOBA committee and was duly elected Editor.

I cannot say that I have always been a fan of boats but my husband has been keen to buy a boat for several years. One beautiful sunny day towards the end of May last year he persuaded me to go to St Ives to have a look at the boats for sale. Now bearing in mind that I could not walk on a pier without feeling sick and giddy, trying to manoeuvre myself along a narrow landing stage and on to boats that were extremely rocky was filling me with dread. Nevertheless, I acquiesced and we drove out to St Ives. I don't really know what the people there must have thought when they saw this hapless soul hanging on for dear life to the poles which supported the landing stage, but it must have looked very strange. Trying to board the boats was exceptionally difficult for me and I found myself clinging desperately to railings and guide rails as I made my way tentatively down the side of the boats. One particular brand of boat rocked so much as Brian got on it that I refused to even attempt to follow him.

We were unsuccessful in finding a suitable craft in the marina so we came out of the sales area to have a look around the chandlery. As we passed the moorings to the front of the chandlery we saw a beautiful old wooden boat which Brian pointed out as being "just the sort of thing I had in mind". We had a quick peek on board but there was nobody about, "why don't we ask in the sales office or chandlery if somebody knows what type of boat that is?" I suggested.

It was a busy day and nobody was free for a good while and in the meantime the owners of the boat had returned to their vessel. "Excuse us for intruding, but could you tell us what type of boat this is please. We are looking for a boat and yours is exactly what we are looking for." "Certainly" said the skipper "climb on board and have a closer look". The boat was an Elysian and was fitted out extremely well with shower, wardrobes, cooking facilities, fridge etc, - a far cry from my vision of a tent on the river. Brian was in deep discussion with the owners but then looked up and asked "Brian and Adele have asked if we would like to go out for a quick ride on Solstice – do you fancy that?" "If it's not too much trouble that would be great" I replied.

Well what happened next has been told to each and every one of our friends that have been out on our boat. Whilst Brian was explaining the ins and outs of the boat and the river, Adele asked if we would like a glass of wine. Sitting safely, and I must say very comfortably, at the rear of the boat I accepted gratefully; the rigours of the morning on the landing stage had taken their toll. Sipping cold white wine, enjoying the sunshine and the slow meandering of Solstice up the river was extremely relaxing "I could get used to this" I said. Brian knew then that he had me hooked and he wasn't going to let me off easily. Solstice was moored at Crosshall Marine in St Neots and Brian suggested that we have a look around there to see if there were any craft that took our fancy. They did indeed have an Elysian but when we spoke to Julie at Crosshall I told her that I would want the whole inside ripped out and rebuilt before I would use it. Julie then suggested another couple of boats that were for sale and gave us the keys to look them over. As soon as we saw Precious Lady we both fell in love with her. She wasn't as old and classic as Solstice but she still had character. Within an hour of being at the marina we had put in an offer and were waiting on tenterhooks to receive the acceptance from the owners. By June 8th we were the proud owners of Precious Lady and, under the guidance of our boating neighbours, took her out for our first journey.

Since that day we have not looked back – every available weekend we disappear to the boat and cruise the Ouse! I have overcome my fear of bridges, piers and gantries but still need a bit of courage to jump onto the new steps at St Neots lock. Practice will make perfect.

I hope that through my position as Editor of GOBA News I can bring more and more topical and interesting articles to your attention but if there is something that you want me to say or investigate please let me know and I will do my best to accommodate all requests. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the GOBA committee who made me so very welcome from the minute I met them and for the support that they have all given me for this, my first edition of the GOBA News.

Karen Bayliss, Editor

Book Review

The Restoration and Development of the Bedford Ouse by W B Carter

ISBN: 1-904136-25-7

Price: £7.95

The back cover of Brian Carter's book states "This is not a guidebook in the usual sense of the word, but describes boating in the early days." And it does exactly what it says on the tin! I was fascinated to read about the characters and places on the river in the early days – the lock keeper at Brownhill whose lunch hour was changed to avoid the pub opening hours, the lock keeper at Denver Sluice who seemed to put in a great deal of overtime hours at his post, but who was soon to be found also spending most of this overtime in the pub! Having been on the river for just on a year now

I marvelled at the old pictures of locks which have since been restored and places which have seen huge marina developments. It would be easy for anyone to take this book with them on a trip down the river and see exactly what used to exist at key points. In particular the old St Neots marina and the now newly refurbished St Neots lock in its former years. Bearing in mind this was first built around the 1800s it is amazing that it survived this long.

Brian Carter has poured his knowledge of the Bedford Ouse into this book and, like his other publication D-day 60th Anniversary - Normandy Landings: A 19-year-old's Diary with Unique Photos, it is a very personal and moving insight to the river's history. I will certainly be ordering my copy to keep on the boat and feel sure that other Great Ouse boaters would appreciate and enjoy it too.

Editor

Rafting Up – What to do and How to do it

Last season we were sat on the riverbank having a glass of wine, as you do, when I overheard a conversation along the lines of, "the trouble with the new relief channel is that only 12 boats can stay in it overnight". Now that surprised me somewhat, because I recall mooring up at "The Heron" with 13 boats on one pontoon. It occurred to me that the reason for this remark was an unwillingness or inability to raft up to another boat – or both. What seems straightforward and natural to many of us, holds fears and trepidation for others for many reasons. Mooring up to a total stranger, whatever next?

Those brought up on or near the coast who visit sea-based marinas know that rafting up is not only common but also absolutely essential. It is one of the first skills a novice cruising sailor is taught. Nowadays you cannot get into a coastal marina without sharing the moorings. Not only that, but you get little or no choice since the harbour master will direct visitors where to go and who to moor up against. So rafting up is the norm at sea and the day is not far off when it will be just as essential, and common, on the inland waterways.

Rafting up brings certain responsibilities both in terms of etiquette and boat handling. So let's first look at the etiquette. Even if directed to moor up along side



Boats moored at "The Heron" in the Denver Relief Channel

another boat, if it is occupied it is courteous to first hail the boat and ask if it's ok to come along side; this is essential on the river where we are choosing where to moor. The answer should be a cheery "of course". You might then check what time the other boat is leaving so that you do not get a rude awakening early in the morning.

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Grumpy Bear tied alongside Mr Wiggly at Great Barford showing springs and bow line with a shoreline



So having chosen the boat to moor alongside, more of which later, do not anticipate or expect any help from those aboard; your arrival should not affect or disturb them in any way. Indeed, since you have no idea whatsoever as to their skill (you may be talking to the

owner's visitors) it is often better to decline such offers. You should spend as little time as possible on their boat whilst mooring, and it is traditional to have all your spare warp (tying up rope) on your boat. So prepare a bow and stern line with a loop in each (bowline or splice) in advance, so that you can simply slip it over a suitable cleat, and return to your boat. Be very careful to avoid stepping into another cockpit. This is an absolute no-no unless invited. Similarly, be careful not to look down through open doors or coach-roof skylights. Later, when we need to get ashore, always walk the long way around the front of their bow; do not go through their cockpit or take a short cut across the coach-roof. It is perfectly straightforward to moor alongside another boat without disturbing their privacy. If they do not want to talk, then so be it. So preserve the peace and do not start making lots of noise on your boat.

So much for the etiquette, what about the practicalities? The aim is to get your boat, without any drama, safely tied to another without causing any damage or injuring anybody. This is a manoeuvre carried out slowly and under control. It is best to moor alongside a boat slightly larger or a similar size but certainly not much shorter than your own length. Before you approach ensure you have fenders suitably placed and warps prepared with a loop in one end. Rig them out through the bow and stern fairleads and back over any guardrails so that when your crew step over on to the other boat they do not get in a tangle. Irrespective of which way the other boat is pointing you should approach into current (if there is no current, then into wind) so that you have full control at slow speed. So you may need to moor up bow to stern. Approach at an angle of about 30 degrees and, as you get close, steer off the drift slightly so that you come alongside straight and with no speed relative to the other boat using reverse if necessary. (In a strong current you will still have power on and be moving through the water).

Your crew should STEP across to the other boat, attach bow and stern lines by dropping the loops over suitable cleats and step back. The slack is then taken in on your boat and tied off to a cleat. But this is not the end. The key to good rafting up is "Springs". These are lines that cross over going from the bow of one boat to the stern (or centre) of the other and vice versa. These are essential to prevent fore and aft movement relative to each other, particularly in a strong wind or current. With the fore and aft springs properly set the bow and stern lines should be slightly loose. This is quite normal. Again, remember loops on the other boat, with all the spare warp on your boat. Then check that all the fenders are suitably positioned.

We are not yet finished because at this stage we have no idea whatsoever what is holding us to the bank!!! The boat we have tied up to could be moored up with old frayed rope tied to 6-inch nails. It is essential to put our own shorelines to the bank. Getting the line across their bow to the bank is straightforward. We walk right around the front of the other boat and step off being careful not to rock it. We put in our own stake if necessary (do not use the other boat's stake) and tie our line taking up the slack on our boat. The line across their stern is slightly trickier. If the other boat is occupied, ask politely if it is ok to take your line through their cockpit. Even if this is agreed, be careful not to look down below through an open door. Otherwise, you may have to throw the line to a crewmember ashore. Shorelines should not be tight.

Just as with your bow and stern lines, and springs, it is courteous to have the shoreline tied with a bowline or round turn and 2 half hitches to the stake/bollard/cleat ashore and have all the spare warp on your boat. How many times have you come to tie up to a bollard, which is covered in a mess of spaghetti with rope all around on the floor? This is simply bad manners.

What if the boat you choose to raft against is not occupied? Well, you moor up to it as discussed above. However, it would be wise to stay aboard, or nearby, so that if the returning crew wishes to depart immediately then you can cast off to let them out. On the other hand if you return to your boat and find another rafted up to it, make your neighbours welcome and certainly do not get upset. The rivers and moorings are there for us all to enjoy and we must make best use of what we have got.

Rafting up to another boat is straightforward and need not be stressful for either party. With the increasing level of boating on our system we must share our valuable moorings and GOBA has always encouraged rafting up. Following the etiquette will ensure a pleasurable time for all, and you may well make new and lasting friends.

Next time you want to stay in the relief channel – just do it.

Mike Costello

(Mike Costello is an RYA/MCA Yachtmaster and RYA Cruising Instructor)

AGM Annual General Meeting 2005

MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
held at the OUSE VALLEY RIVER CLUB on 24th APRIL 2005

There were 74 persons present at the Meeting.

The meeting was opened by the Chairman, Chris Grant, who welcomed members to the Ouse Valley River Club and thanked their committee for hosting the event.

1. **Apologies for Absence:**

There were 8 apologies.

2. **Minutes of the 2004 Annual General Meeting on 25th April 2004:**

The minutes had been published in GOBA News and full copies were on display in the hall. Proposed by T. Downing, seconded by J. Carter and unanimously agreed that the minutes represented a true and correct record of the meeting.

3. **Matters Arising from Minutes:**

There were none.

4. **Chairman's Report:**

The Chairman, Chris Grant, remarked that there were just five days to go before St Neots lock would be reopened. GOBA had been heavily involved with input into the £1.5m. project which would result in a great improvement on this central stretch of river. We would continue to campaign for improvements to the road and bridge in order to reap the full benefit. The Environment Agency was seeking legislation to harmonise management and licensing across its waterways. GOBA was not against the principle but had lodged an objection on the grounds that, as we represented over 3,000 licence paying individuals on the Anglian waters, more than any other organisation, we should have been allowed direct representation on the consultative harmonisation forum to protect the interests of Anglian boaters. Membership had reached a record 1,950 boats in 2004, ably managed by our new membership secretary, Mike Mackay. The financial position was very strong but collecting certain subscriptions from forgetful members added to the already enormous workload of Mike and Fiona Costello and Mike and Jane Mackay. Moorings officers, Stuart Turvey and Jim Carter have continued their hard and sometimes muddy work to improve our moorings and find and negotiate for new sites. GOBA's first 'work party' will be in June at the Pike and Eel mooring. Our EA liaison meetings continued and there was increasingly healthy co-operation with the local waterways team. The committee had surveyed every lock on the system and passed detailed drawings and recommendations to the EA. Bob Wells had been active on both the Nar Link project, to create a safe passage to Kings Lynn and beyond, and the Little Ouse scheme to open up a route from Brandon to Santon Downham.



Our publicity officer, Denise Troughton, had developed ideas to raise the profile of GOBA beyond the membership. Thanks were due to all members of the committee and also to the many GOBA members who gave their valuable time in furthering the GOBA cause. Chris was happy to announce that a new and knowledgeable editor for GOBA News had answered his plea. Karen Bayliss would produce the summer issue and contributions from members would be welcomed. Previous editor, Tony Downing, who had been dragged back for a second term, was thanked for his work and presented with a specially commissioned "oil painting" of a certain bird.



5. Honorary Treasurer's Report:

Mike Costello presented the 2004 audited accounts, explaining that as Fiona Costello was legally the Hon. Treasurer during this period, he was reporting on her behalf. The auditors had confirmed that the accounts, copies of which were distributed, gave a true and fair view of the association's state of affairs as at 31st December 2004 and had been prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation. Total income from subscriptions, donations and sales was £26,727. Expenses were £22,794, with the bulk going to GOBA News and moorings rent and maintenance. A donation of £1,000 had been made to the Kings Lynn Marina Trust towards the Nar Link project. With £456 of interest, the net surplus for the year was £4,389. The 2004 subscription increase would leave the finances in good stead for some years. The bulk of subscriptions were now paid by direct debit. There were no questions on the accounts but the Treasurer was thanked for producing a clear and concise document and report. Adoption of the accounts was proposed by J. Soanes, seconded by R. Foote and approved unanimously.

6. Honorary General Secretary's Report:

Alistair Reid apologised for being unable to attend and his report was read by the Chairman. The committee had spent a great deal of time filling in questionnaires and surveys on waterway projects and in lobbying other organisations. Responses had been made to EA over lock standards and the Great Ouse plan, the Cam mooring proposals, where an objection had been lodged to a proposal to charge £10 for 48-hours, and Huntingdon Riverside development. We had now been asked to participate in future planning consultations in Huntingdon. There had been lobbying on the Boat Safety Scheme changes. On the Red Diesel tax derogation issue, we wrote to all local Members of Parliament and received responses forwarded from the Treasury. Lobbying continues on EA Harmonisation which also has the potential to cause us financial pain. St Neots lock was an example of where GOBA's views had been taken into account. The Nar Link project also has our considerable involvement. We shall attend the 2005 Ely Aquafest and 2006 Bedford River Festival with a higher profile. We have been approached to participate in the organisation of this year's St Neots Waterways Festival and St Ives Waterside Gala. Committee members also worked with nine other organisations for the good of the membership. There are now twenty mooring sites with new ones on the Wissey and Little Ouse, but we have lost the Whittington site after failing to reach agreement with the owner. New moorings are becoming difficult to find and extending existing moorings is a way forward.

7. Election of Officers and Committee:

Nominations were received as follows: -

Chairman – Chris Grant, who was elected unanimously.

Honorary Treasurer – Mike Costello, who was elected unanimously.

Company Secretary – Sid Fisher, who was elected unanimously.

Committee Members – Karen Bayliss, John Burton, Jim Carter, Fiona Costello, John Hodgson, Mike Mackay, David Mercer, Geoff Parrish, Alistair Reid, Denise Troughton, Stuart Turvey, Bob Wells, Roy Wood and Lance Wright, who were elected unanimously en-bloc.

8. Appointment of Auditors:

Re-appointment of the present Auditors –

C. J. Dyke & Co. of St. Ives was proposed by

S. Fisher, seconded by G. Parrish and approved unanimously.

9. Discussion of Topics Raised by Members:

Members who raised questions on water depth in the Old West River were requested to advise D. Mercer of the precise location of problem areas so that it could be taken up with the EA. Dredging was not an option in some areas where no machinery was allowed on the riverbank. Asked about the condition of some GOBA moorings, the Chairman confirmed that contractors would be employed to make improvements where funds were available. The Isleham site continued to be a problem and a deputation would visit next week. Improvements at Nobles Field had been set back because of one local objection. There was concern over the mooring situation in Cambridge, where it was suggested that the City Council had allowed the situation to get out of hand and it could become a no-go area for cruisers. GOBA continued to support the EA's moves to manage the St Ives Waits moorings more effectively.

10. Any Other Business

The Chairman expressed thanks to Ouse Valley River Club for use of their delightful venue and to John Burton, Sid Fisher and Denise Troughton for organising the meeting.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 11.57 hours.

AGM Questionnaire

At this year's AGM visitors were asked to complete a brief questionnaire to ascertain certain information to enable GOBA to operate the AGM as efficiently as possible and give members what they want. This was the first time a feedback opportunity had been given to members regarding the AGM and it was positively encouraged – with several members seeking out representatives to ask for forms.

The feedback form was a self completion format and consisted of an A4 sheet of paper with 7 questions related to the AGM; this was a tick box layout with the opportunity to elaborate on most answers if needed.

Overview

From the overall results and the anecdotal verbal comments, the opportunity to give feedback was welcomed. The general consensus was positive with a few areas that we need to address – these being

- Better publicity/notification prior to AGM
- Welcoming people on the door
- Understanding that the social aspect of the AGM is a significant motivator for attendees
- The opportunity for a GOBA representative to attend meetings/socials should be fully evaluated

We would like to thank Denise for her efforts in compiling the questionnaire and subsequential results, as well as all members who participated.

Letters

The Tender Trap?

At the weekend, a friend of mine mentioned that he thought the licence fee for a tender was excessive, and he might not be able to afford to re-license it this year. It transpired that his tender has been licensed under Tariff Class 30 viz "mechanically propelled boat under 5m" with engine up to 4.00HP - cost £47 (ish) pounds. Whereas our tender is licensed under Tariff Class 10 viz "manually propelled boat under 5m" with auxiliary engine up to 4.00HP - cost £15 (ish). This is clearly correct for an inflatable dinghy with oars. Our friend's tender is also a Zodiac Inflatable with an outboard.

Following our conversation, my friend contacted his local EA office and was told, "Well it comes under both classes". No it doesn't. A tender is a manually

propelled boat with an auxiliary engine ie an outboard. How many others I wonder have been overcharged for tenders?

Name and address supplied

Editor: If your boat has a tender (up to 5m.) with or without an auxiliary engine (up to 4 hp) it should be licensed at Tariff Class 10, current rate £15. No separate £2 registration fee is payable. A GOBA member recently found that he was paying a Class 30 licence fee of £43.50 (which refers to a powered boat under 5 metres not manually propelled).

Cowabunga!!

Thank goodness the departing editor took his infamous Purple Gallinule with him!! But what will we do without it; what can replace it? I present the Eaton Socon Ninja Turtle. These beasts are often seen basking in the sunshine above Eaton Socon Lock. But what, why and how?... the truth is out there...

Mike Costello

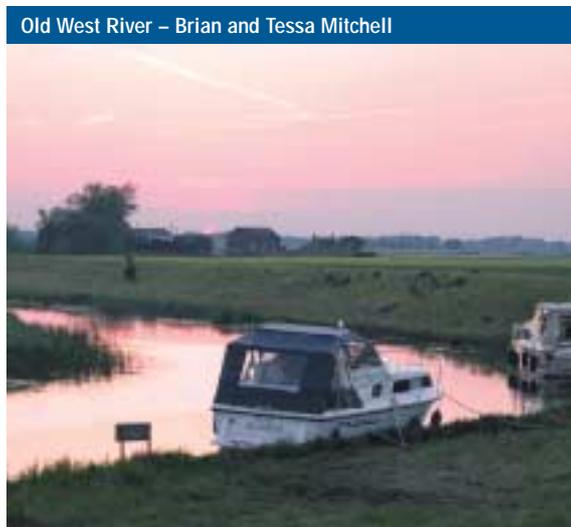


Editor: Thanks Mike, I suppose that as new editor I expected that I would have to have something weird and wonderful to deal with. Following Tony's Purple Gallinule will be difficult. You could have made it the Grey Warbler family that we both saw whilst at Offord Lock but didn't know what it was! At least I am old enough to remember what the Ninja Turtles were all about.

Old Man River

I thought your readers might enjoy our recent view of the sunset over our Birchwood 25 'Nimue' (furthest from camera) and 'Kids Inheritance' moored on the Old West River at the GOBA mooring on the evening of Friday 27th May. This was our first overnight on the boat and a more peaceful mooring and delightful evening we could not have wished for.

Brian and Tessa Mitchell



Editor: Many thanks Brian and Tessa, may you, and all our other GOBA members, continue to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of a night on the river.

Spring Issues

In the Spring issue of GOBA News, G D Betts asked why the EA keeps biting the hand that feeds it by putting up the licence fee every time it needs a fix? Mr Betts raised several issues including the weed on the banks, which the EA had not cut in places where it would be nice to stop for a while. Of course, what is weed to Mr Betts is a natural habitat to a variety of flora and fauna, and the bank he mentioned was almost certainly privately owned. Any cutting of trees and vegetation must be carried out with the permission of the landowner who may not want boats moored up on their land anyway. So the EA will not cut vegetation on the bank unless there is a need. This is why both the EA and GOBA spend so much effort negotiating with landowners for moorings, and why GOBA spends a considerable amount of money each year on rent for moorings. We do not have a general "right to moor" anywhere we like, and must be very careful as boaters not to alienate the landowners.

Regarding chemical toilets and rubbish, I am not sure where Mr Betts keeps his boat, but we have a chemical toilet on Grumpy Bear, and have no difficulty emptying it anywhere on the system. But I accept that after several years exploring the Great Ouse system we know where all the chemical disposal and rubbish points are; we will publish these on the GOBA website. But that is not to say that we do not need more facilities on the River; we do. That is why GOBA meets monthly with the EA to put forward the views of boaters so that the limited funding is targeted in the right direction.

Lastly, to answer Mr Burlingham's point about GOBA's 50th anniversary, I have a copy of the very first edition of "The Windmill" (which later became GOBA News) dated November 1959 which starts by stating, "It is just about a year since the meeting was held at St Ives at which the suggestion for the formation of our Association was put forward". Does anyone have the exact date of that meeting?

Mike Costello

Bedford 'Wheel of misfortune'

We went both ways through Bedford Lock on Tuesday last. The new Capstan Wheel is almost as painful and uncomfortable to use as those on the R. Nene. I don't know what was there before; a fixed winding handle? If so, would that have been more likely to cause injury than a windlass used stupidly? The Nene wheels used to have a fist sized handle on them to make them easier to turn but apparently someone let go and it came round and hit them! So because of someone's stupidity the handles were removed and we all suffer. Truly Nanny State!

Adrian & Gillian Padfield, nb Atropos

Editor: Following several complaints last year from Nene users over the new wheels fitted onto all of their locks, GOBA objected to the EA Waterways team about a proposal to fit the same capstan device to the three manual locks on the Great Ouse - particularly Godmanchester which gets a lot of use. As a result, a compromise was informally agreed that it would be 'tested' at Bedford before any decision was made to change Godmanchester and Brandon. Your experience reinforces our opinion that this 'capstan' replacement design is an unnecessary interference with what is a tried and tested and perfectly safe handle used on the Great Ouse and hundreds of other locks on other EA and BW waterways throughout the UK. We will pass on your comments at the next liaison meeting but suggest you also write to the EA waterways team and voice your concern.

Red Diesel

If you haven't already had your say on the Red Diesel issue, you can still lobby your local MP to take your views forward. You can contact your local MP via www.parliament.uk/directories/hciolists/alcm.cfm

News

A Voice on the River (courtesy of Camboaters)

We can look forward to the development of Cambridge City's long awaited mooring policy. Representatives from the Camboaters Community Association along with other interested parties have met with Council members responsible for implementing the policy. Work in this area is progressing positively; understandably the schedule and strategy will evolve in time as proactive communications continue to take place between the authorities in charge. Some of you may be anxious about an uncertain future. Be patient as the wheels of bureaucracy sometimes turn slowly, however we have been reassured that we will be consulted every step of the way. For those of you who haven't been kept up to date with the latest bulletins, the Cam Conservators have kindly deferred the seasonal ban on mooring on Midsummer Common until 1st October 2007. Hopefully by this time the City Council will have established its Mooring Policy.

Other projects to be aware of which would benefit boating life and continue the beautification process on the river Cam are:

- The Cam Conservators proposal to the Cambridge Local Plan to develop their field at Fen road, it is just downstream of the railway bridge (off the Halingway) for off-river moorings. This is a step in the right direction, it could be exactly what our community

needs to house the overspill of live-aboards and potentially provide many additional facilities the boating community requires.

For more information please visit

www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/policy-and-projects/omission-sites.en or find details on the Camboaters Community notice board in the Fort St George pub, Midsummer Common.

- Cambridge Sporting Lakes – a proposal to develop a 220-acre outdoor sports centre and park located only 4.5km from the centre of Cambridge. It will be one of the country's largest purpose-built sports facilities and competition venues for rowing, triathlon & cycling. An essential green space with 100 acres of undulating wooded parkland, a lake stocked with fish, and ten miles of bank habitat with free access on foot or cycle. For more information please visit www.cambridgerowinglake.org.uk or find details on the Camboaters Community notice board in the Fort St. George pub, Midsummer Common.
- CamToo Project is an innovative road-river-rail proposal to utilise Cambridge's oldest transport artery, the River Cam, to help solve the City's 21st Century transport problems. It will provide two 'missing links' in the transport infrastructure for northern Cambridge, a dedicated route for buses from the Science Park to the City Centre and extra tracks for a Cambridge Parkway Station on Chesterton Sidings. This will turn Stourbridge Common and Ditton Meadows into an island, protecting the wildlife already there and preventing further 'urbanisation' of the nature currently being carried out.

Not in our back gardens!

The proposed new route of the A14 had villagers in Offord Cluny organising large protests where children as young as eight could be seen waving banners and chanting outside the bendy bus exhibition organised by The Highways Agency recently. 'Say NO to A14' could be heard ringing out across the village as more than 250 residents turned out to protest against the new proposals. They say the plans will mean the road will be developed half a mile from their homes and would then pass south of the Buckden Landfill site before crossing the Great Ouse very close to the GOBA mooring at Mailers Meadow and the East Coast Main Line railway on an elevated viaduct to the north of Buckden Marina and the village of Offord Cluny. From here the new road would have three lanes in each direction and would re-join the existing A14 at a new

junction just south of Fen Drayton. Many local boaters are obviously worried about the subsequent impact on the river of the new proposal.

Gary Mardlin, chairman of the Offord A14 action group and pub landlord, told reporters that "We are united in opposing the developing the A14 to close to Offord Cluny. We want to know what happened to the alternative sites and why they haven't been considered? All they keep saying is that it's the orange route or no route at all. We are ready for a long-haul battle and we are prepared to fight it to the bitter end. We won't let this go, we will fight it all the way."

Mike Povey, The Highways Agency project manager said: "This protest has shown how engaged the villagers are in the consultation process and we support that. The organisers of the protest have made this a family friendly occasion and it is definitely the biggest protest on the new proposals to date. More than 2,000 people have already responded to the new A14 proposals. The details of its development are not fixed. The consultation period finished on June 30.

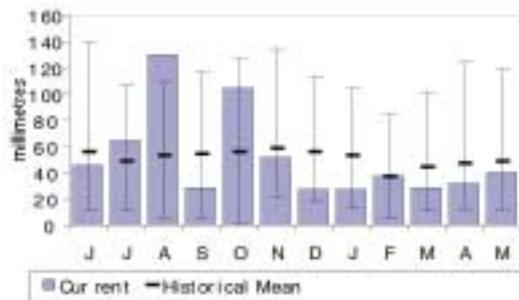
To find out more or to have your say phone 08457 504030, email A14EllingtonFenDitton@highways.gsi.gov.uk or visit www.offordsa14actiongroup.co.uk and www.highways.gov.uk/A14EllingtonFenDitton.

I wish it would rain

Let's hope I have not jinxed the season with this Nancy Griffith song title for this little snippet of news, but everywhere I go gardeners, boaters and farmers are praying for a little more rain – but of the right type. Unfortunately all we seem to be getting is heavy downpours which run straight off the earth and drain away without draining into the soil.

According to the Environment Agency's latest report, rainfall in May across the area was below average for the seventh month in a row. River flows continue to fall and are below the long term average everywhere. They are particularly low in the Cam and Ivel catchments. Elsewhere flows are low though not unusually so. Groundwater levels continue to decline, though they are generally healthy apart from in the catchments mentioned above. Soil moisture deficits are now very high, so there will not be any recharge until

the autumn. Rivers may respond to intense rainfall events but otherwise all levels will decline until autumn.



Average Monthly rainfall

(source – Environmental Agency)

St Neots bridge campaign

Now that the new lock is in place at St Neots, GOBA will start its campaign for the new bridge to be built to "finish off" the project. Look out for progress reports in the Winter edition of GOBA News.

Boating Lore for Beginners



1. Casting off is optional; mooring up sometime later is preferably not.
2. Push the throttle forward, the bow goes up and you go faster. Push the throttle all the way forward, the bow goes up further, and the boat stops suddenly when you hit whatever it was you couldn't see because the bow was in the way.
3. Getting on a boat isn't dangerous. Leaving it unexpectedly is.
4. It's always better to be on land wishing you were out there, rather than being out there wishing you were back on land.
5. The only time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.
6. The propeller is just a big weed cutter to help the Environment Agency keep the river navigable.
7. There are no reliably documented cases of being able to push-start a boat (except in Ireland).
8. A 'good' mooring-up is one from which you can walk away. A 'great' mooring-up is one when you can use the boat again, without being ashamed of the damage incurred.
9. You know you've run aground if it takes full power to make the situation worse.
10. It's usually preferable to keep the pointy end in front of you.



11. Never let a boat take you somewhere your brain didn't get to at least five minutes earlier.
12. Boats don't sink, but are sometimes susceptible to uncontrollable flooding.
13. Always try to keep the number of your arrivals equal to the number of your departures.
14. You start with a bag full of luck and an empty bag of experience. It's best to fill the bag of experience before you empty the bag of luck.
15. Good judgment comes from experience. Unfortunately experience comes as a direct result of bad judgment.
16. Boats have no brakes, just an ability to bump into things. The trick is to make it happen gently.
17. **Port** - excellent with Stilton cheese
Heads - side of a coin, which always comes up when you call "Tails"
Cat o' nine tails - feline with no comprehension of the laws of chance
Marina - that Spanish girl that made your holiday in Spain such fun all those years ago



Doug Lock (Lady Bird)

Events

Ely Aquafest

Another great year for the Ely Aquafest and it was a wonderful venue for GOBA members to meet with committee members who attended. Denise Troughton, John Hodgson, Mike Mackay, Mike and Fiona Costello were available to offer help and listen to comments, complaints and/or concerns. The Committee believes that it is a good way for us to advertise the job that GOBA is doing in representing river users, whilst at the same time providing information to potential new members as well as supporting our existing members.

Activities at the AquaFest included:

- many different stalls selling bric-a-brac, plants etc
- a real beer tent
- fun fair Cake Walk, bouncy castle and coconut slide
- scouts making and trying to sail rafts (one sank, one went in the wrong direction)
- brass band from Wicken
- Soham Majorettes
- a group called Synopsis
- a Seagull outboard powered boat race
- the Raft Race, home built rafts representing major fenland firms, all greeted with the usual flour and water treatment!

The next Ely Aquafest is 2nd July 2006 and again, GOBA will be there. It would be fantastic to see as many members as possible, in particular those arriving by boat.



Little Ouse Regatta

The Little Ouse Group have 2 days of excitement and fun planned for all of you - the young and not so young. Junior Dragon Boat Races will take place on Saturday 13th August. Entry details and forms from Alan Cox **01842 810793**. There will also be a Flatwater Slalom you can enter on the Day. Fun starts at 12 noon until 5 pm. Canoes and kayaks will be on hire by the hour. On Sunday 14th August - 10am till 5pm - Dragon Boat Races will take place 10 to a boat, details and entry forms from Peter Barratt on **01842 827227**. There will be a funfair, beer tent, hot food, ice cream, prize draw and other diversions, plus community and trade stalls. Boats are welcome and moorings will be provided - please try and arrive before 12 noon Saturday. Ring Mooring Officer Mark Stamp on **01842 813916 / 07711511358** or keep a look out on the river for Peter on Southpoint or Mark on Lota Lota.

Events in and around Cambridge

Sunday 7th August – Jesus Green Lock hosts the Cambridge Boat Open Day and the River Festival. More on www.camboaters.co.uk.

On Sunday 11th September Cambridge '99 RC are holding their Autumn Regatta on the Cam from the Railway Bridge to Ditton Corner/Ditton Meadows.

Other Boating Events

12th to 14th August – Scottish Boat Show, Falkirk Wheel

27th to 29th August – National IWA Festival & Boat Show, Preston Brook, Bridgewater Canal

16th to 25th September – Southampton Boat Show, Southampton

St Ives Riverside Gala - 23rd July

From midday to the early evening in the meadow by the Dolphin Hotel there will be a continuous programme of events including a fun inflatable boat race, live music, a Brazilian Drumming Band, dancing, refreshments and fun and games.

Winter GOBA news The deadline for sending copy for the Winter issue is 1st November 2005.

Unless handwritten or photographic prints, PLEASE help us by sending all items for publication in PC electronic format as MS word .doc and images as .jpg files at a resolution of 300dpi preferably by email to editor@goba.org.uk or CD or floppy disk to GOBA Editor, PO Box 244, Huntingdon, PE29 6FE. Many thanks for your contributions.

moorings Update

We are now well in to the season and I hope enjoying summer weather. We continue to look for new moorings which are suitable for all boaters. The new mooring at Mailers Meadow has recovered well, after the dredging. Considering I only seeded it at the beginning of April, the grass is lush (well, the geese like it) and the bank has firmed up. The moorings on the Little Ouse and Wissey have proved popular. The Wissey mooring has been increased by 25 metres.

Some of the committee and member volunteers formed a work party on Saturday 4th June to clear and extend the mooring at the Pike and Eel. There is now over 150 metres of bank side and we managed to clear enough for tables and chairs to be to be accommodated comfortably, without the threat of sliding into the water. My thanks go to members for their hard work and hope that the wine and beer was appropriate recompense.

My thanks also to members who have suggested proposed sites for moorings. These will be followed up. Some have proved unsuitable because of bank side conditions, i.e. too steep or insecure or landowners reluctant to lease their land. Please keep the suggestions coming either by telephoning or e-mailing Jim or myself.

I hope you will have noticed the new signage at most of the moorings. They are much bigger and hopefully promote GOBA in a more professional manner. Could I ask that if any member thinks a mooring is becoming unusable to please let me know. We employ contractors who cut the bank side grass and generally maintain moorings once a month. It may be, at some sites, that this is insufficient. This system does not apply to all moorings due to inaccessibility and position, so keep that pair of shears handy. Have a successful season.

Stuart Turvey

The GOBA moorings on the River Wissey have been extended also at Aldreth Drain on the Old West. The Moorings at Isleham have now been cut and cleaned up. The bank here is rather steep and therefore a mooring plank would be an advantage.

Thanks goes to Peter Barrett for keeping the Little Ouse GOBA mooring cut and to Mark Stamp for helping out on the Wissey mooring.

There are new EA moorings on the Lark, just past the existing Padnel Fen Mooring, on the opposite bank and also on the Great Ouse at Brandon Creek. These are just upstream of the Ship Inn moorings.

We are always looking for new sites. If anyone knows of any suitable bank for a mooring please let the mooring officers know, giving a map reference and a contact name or telephone number.

Jim Carter



Little Ouse – J Carter



River Wissey – J Carter

STOP PRESS!!!!

As you may have read in Chris Grant's piece, unfortunately the GOBA mooring at the Fish and Duck will no longer be available to us as the owner has decided to make it into permanent moorings. We will of course try to find an alternative as soon as possible but in the meantime the nearest moorings are the EA Little Thetford around the corner or GOBA Dimmocks Cote on the Cam.

Secretary's Report

The AGM has come and gone and once again we have enjoyed the facilities and the hospitality of OVRC. One GOBA committee member attending their first AGM wondered what the chances were of building such a wonderful place if you were starting today from scratch. Just in case anyone thinks we are biased, the same could be said of Cambridge Motor Boat Club. (We do wish to return in 2006).

After our concerted effort in lobbying the local MPs to retain the derogation on red diesel a number of other issues have received some attention from the committee.

River Cam Mooring Policy

GOBA did send an objection to Cambridge City Council regarding the £10 charge for 48 hours mooring, however we now understand that any decisions on the new policy will be delayed until October 2006. There is also a proposal to build a marina in Cambridge which we support although again we understand that it would only be moorings and not the other chandlery and repair services normally associated with a marina.

Harmonisation

We have still failed to persuade the powers that be that we should have GOBA representation on the EA Harmonisation Forum which is the primary consultation group on harmonisation. We have now written again to the newly appointed EA Head of Navigation Julia Simpson, once again stating our case for direct involvement in the forum.

Third Party Insurance

Since the last company we had third party insurance with ceased to issue the type of policy we required, we have had great difficulty in finding an alternative source

of cover. We are apparently not alone in this situation as a number of similar organisations to our own have also had problems. It has been suggested that the IWA may be able to provide or facilitate a suitable policy and at the June committee meeting it was decided that GOBA should apply through the Cambridge branch of the IWA to become corporate members. If accepted we would arrange the third party insurance ASAP. It was also mentioned at the meeting that it would be beneficial to both ourselves and the IWA if we were associate members as we are working more closely with them on a number of issues.

Nar/Great Ouse link

It now transpires that EU funding could be available for the construction of the marina at Kings Lynn. Good news on the face of it, but worrying that this funding is only for the marina and not the link of the two rivers. GOBA consider that it is essential that the two parts of the project are progressed and we will be lobbying for that to happen. The full potential and maximum economic benefit will not be achieved for the area if only the marina is constructed. It would deny inland boaters the opportunity to visit Kings Lynn by a safe route without going in to the Wash and conversely deny boaters visiting Kings Lynn from the sea a safe passage into Great Ouse. It had been reported that English Partnership had withdrawn funding for the project, however they are now believed to be back on board.

St Neots Lock road bridge

Now that St Neots lock is open again the GOBA committee feel that it is now appropriate that we shift our attention to the road bridge at the lock. This bridge is narrow and dangerous and needs improving. We will discuss at the next meeting what action we can take to achieve a safer bridge. At the time of writing no date has been notified for the official opening of the lock.

News from the Environment Agency

Welcome to the latest edition of "News from the Environment Agency". Summer is upon us and we've already had some beautiful boating days to enjoy in the region. In preparation for a blissful sunny season the Waterways team has been hard at work throughout the Spring to make boating on the Great Ouse a pleasure for all. Our staff continue to work tirelessly to develop and improve its service to the regions waterways and its boaters.

As many of you will no doubt be aware we have recently opened our new flagship lock at St Neots (Little Paxton). This great new lock is the result of some incredible work by our engineering team. In particular we would like to thank Andy Bennison and Pete Cowie for their hard work and countless hours spent working towards making the project such a great success. The Waterways team would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who were involved with the design and construction of the lock and also to the local sub group of boaters and GOBA for their valuable input to the project.

Other works that have been undertaken in the build up to the season include the construction of three new 48hr visitor moorings at Eaton Socon, Brandon Creek and at Tom's Hole farm near Prickwillow. Godmanchester lock has also been extensively refurbished (see article) and the pump-out facilities at Denver and Ely have now been upgraded. In addition to these works our staff have been involved in litter clean up campaigns throughout the Great Ouse catchment.

The Waterways team would like to wish boaters a fantastic Summer on the river in 2005.

As ever we hope you find this article useful and enjoy reading the Summer edition of News from the Environment Agency. If you have any comments or suggestions then please contact Richard Burgess, The Environment Agency, Waterway Team, Kingfisher House, Goldhay Way, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5ZR

ST NEOTS LOCK OPENING



This is how St Neots Lock used to look before the rebuild began



Construction recommences on site in October 2004. Its incredible that it took just 6 months to get from this stage to the lock that we have today



Chairman Chris Grant christens the new lock by leading the first group of boats into the pen





The picture (above) demonstrates the impressive capacity of the new lock. Five cruisers are in the pen with room to spare!



On April 29th 2005 the Environment Agency opened the newly refurbished St Neots Lock to the public. As was hoped we were blessed with wonderful weather as a large number of boaters arrived to use the lock and test out the new facilities. On hand to be the first to navigate the lock was a whole host of GOBA members with Chairman Chris Grant leading the way. The opening of the lock had been anticipated for many months and the fine weather produced a large crowd of boaters and members of the public onto the site to witness the first boats travelling through the lock.

It's interesting to note that the original plan for St Neots lock was to simply extend the lock pen rather than create a new lock. The lock extension project had already begun when due to various issues with the existing lock structure the Environment Agency successfully secured extra funding to completely rebuild the lock. What you see today is a completely new structure and one that is greatly superior to the old design.

Boaters using the lock can now enjoy a wide range of benefits from the site. The lock is now much safer and easier to use thanks to enhancements including the new slacker arrangement, grab chains and bollards fitted in strategic positions along the lock and two new stairways to give boaters another option for getting on and off their craft. To alleviate the obvious dangers of boaters having to cross the road bridge we have also installed a new bridge at the upstream end of the lock.

The new slacker design on St Neots lock means that when opened the water enters the lock under the cill rather than through the V doors. This means that the water enters the lock pen in a much safer manner. The amazing thing is that despite the fact that the lock pen has nearly doubled in size the new slackers have allowed the lock pen to actually fill quicker than the old lock!

An official opening for St Neots lock is planned for the month of August and GOBA will be invited to attend the short ceremony. The Waterways team is also planning to bury a time capsule on the on site before the official opening.

Memorial Bench

The Waterways Team is currently working with GOBA to install a memorial bench next to St Neots lock in memory of Cliff Roberts who passed away on New Years Day 1999. Cliff was a dedicated member of the GOBA committee for many years and played a major part in the campaign to improve St Neots Lock. He also lived in Little Paxton near the lock and was a keen boater on the Great Ouse system.

NEW MOORING AT EATON SOCON



GOBA members that remember the days of the NRA may also recall that we used to have a mooring near the town of Eaton Socon.

This mooring has been out of operation for many years but as the demand for new moorings increases the Waterways team has decided to recommission it as part of our extensive improvements program. As an additional note for budding map readers the National Grid Reference for the mooring is TL 176 585.

GODMANCHESTER LOCK REFURBISHMENTS



As many of you may have noticed there has been a hive of activity down at Godmanchester Lock over the last few months. Our contractors have been carrying out a number of maintenance works

and improvements. Works to the site have included raising the sunken tarmac around the lock pen and the addition of treadmill bricks to ease operation of the vee doors. Attractive cobbles have been set into the concrete beside the footbridge.

Fencing has been added to demarcate the lock area from the footpath and to provide more security for boats using the 48 hr landing stage beside the lock. Additional grab chains have been provided inside the lock pen. New signage for the site will be in accordance with national Health & Safety guidelines. Electrification of the guillotine gate is being planned for the near future and ducting has been installed beside the gate in readiness for the supply of power to the site. In addition to the refurbishments the Agency has also constructed new landing stages both upstream and downstream of the lock.

There has also been extensive 'pollarding' carried out on the mature willow trees near the lock. Although the surgery looks harsh this 'pollarding' technique will actually ensure the long-term survival of the trees and the growth will soon spring back again. All works were undertaken in consultation with conservation and ornithological advisors.

PUMP-OUT REFURBISHMENT AT DENVER & ELY

The Waterways team are happy to announce that the Pump-out facilities at both Denver and Ely are receiving the Agency's attention. A new pump has been fitted to the Ely facility to increase its working capacity, the Denver pump will hopefully be refurbished by the time you read this article.

Please be aware that although sometimes mistaken for an Environment Agency pump-out, the facility at the Black Horse mooring is an asset managed by East Cambs District Council and the Black Horse Public House.

WATER 'SAFETY ZONE' TRAINING FOR LOCAL CHILDREN

Our river inspector Pip Noon has been playing a key role in helping to promote and encourage safety in and around water with local children by attending Water 'Safety Zone' meetings in the Great Ouse Catchment area. The Waterways Team is active in raising awareness of water safety and rescue techniques through 'Safety Zone'. These sessions utilise a number of teaching methods to help children to understand the dangers associated with swimming in rivers and lakes. This also includes lessons about Weils Disease and cold shock.

The Ivo Centre in St Ives hosted the most recent safety zone during the week of the 20th of June and the event will soon be 'hitting the road' and inviting schools to attend these sessions in Wisbech, Ely and Ramsey.

The Environment Agency has been working closely with design consultants Cyber 42 to produce an interactive CD ROM to help teach kids about Water Safety. This new CD even features an animated River Inspector in the form of the now retired Joe Crilly. This excellent new learning tool will really help to raise the issue of safety around water to local children. The CD is currently being distributed to primary and middle schools throughout Anglian region

SPEED RESTRICTIONS REMINDER



Speed limits on the Great Ouse are marked at key points along the river such as locks and bridges. These limits in most locations will either be 4 or 7mph. There is however

one location where you will see 15mph speed limits and that is on the Hundred Foot tidal river. It may be difficult for some boats to determine how fast they are travelling. However, we would like to advise boaters to limit their speed wherever possible. In recent months our river inspectors have spotted several boaters travelling many times over the limit. Travelling at high speed causes a huge amount of bank erosion and disturbance to moored craft. Slowing down really does make a difference.

BLACK HORSE & SANDHILLS MOORINGS DRAWING A CROWD



Boaters on the Ely Ouse have already been making the most of our 48hr visitor moorings at Littleport. Our river inspector Mervyn Day has reported that both the Black Horse and Sandhills moorings have been very popular. The feedback that he's received from the boaters has been very positive and its great to see that the moorings are getting so much use.



LITTERING OUR RIVER BANKS

This rubbish was collected after only 15 minutes of scouring the undergrowth adjacent to the Agency's 48-hour grass bank mooring at Great Barford Old Mills. Our River Inspectors often find rubbish like

this dumped on or near our moorings and it takes a lot of time and effort, that could've been better spent elsewhere, to keep the moorings clean.

Whilst many boaters demonstrate a shining example and leave moorings without a trace there are still a minority that do not clear up after themselves and ruin it for the rest of us. Please, please take your litter home with you when you leave or deposit it in one of the many rubbish bins provided by the Environment Agency. The riverside should be a clean, idyllic place and it's a tragedy to see it despoiled by our domestic waste.

The Environment Agency provides wheelie bins for your convenience at Hermitage Lock, Westview Marina, St Ives Lock, Hemingford Grey, Offord Lock, St Neots Lock, Hilgay Moorings and three within the Denver Complex.

RIVER CLEAN-UP WORKS ON THE GREAT OUSE



Pip Noon & Paul Separovic litter picking near St Neots town centre

As part of an on-going strategy by the Waterways team we have been carrying out regular litter clean-up days on the Great Ouse. The objective of the clean up days has been to target the areas of the river that are suffering from a build up of rubbish. Our first clean-up of 2005 on a chilly February day targeted the Cardington Navigation channel after we received reports that the amount of litter was becoming quite considerable. That day we managed to fill our boat so high with rubbish that when we finally cruised back into Priory Marina that evening it was level with the roof of the cabin and there was barely enough room for the crew!

In the last few months we have also carried out extensive clean-up operations from Little Paxton up to St Neots Marina also downstream between the new St Neots Lock and Offord lock. The Waterways team has also been working closely with Bedford Borough Council and ENCAMS to organise and take part in some major litter clean-up days along the stretches through Bedford town centre.

Whilst all of our litter clearing days on the river have been a complete success our staff have been amazed and saddened by the amount of rubbish we have had to remove from the river. It is such a shame that some people just don't realise what effect their careless littering and tipping has on our natural river systems.

The Waterways team would also like to commend GOBA on its recent litter clear-up day at the Pike & Eel mooring. We hope that in the future we will continue to work together to make our river a cleaner place for all.

Recreation Officers Richard Burgess and Paul Separovic presenting the rubbish collected in just one day during a clean up operation near Cardington



NEW MOORING AT TOM'S HOLE FARM (NEAR PRICKWILLOW)



The new Tom's Hole mooring just upstream from Prickwillow is the first of five new 48hr visitor moorings that are being planned for the River Lark. The new mooring is reasonably remote, being situated about a quarter of a mile upstream of the confluence of the Great Ouse. The mooring will certainly offer boaters a bit of escapism from the hustle and bustle of life and a pleasant break in a peaceful area of the Great Ouse system.

The new moorings on the Lark are all being planned at the time of going to press and we look forward to opening them throughout the season and over the winter months. Watch this space for details.

RIVER LARK BUSHING WORKS



The River Lark looking very tidy and picturesque after the bushing works

When you think of spring cleaning you don't really imagine it to be by the side of the river. Well that's exactly what our Waterways team has been doing throughout the Great Ouse system. The River Lark in particular was suffering from congestion due to some overhanging trees so we sent our workforce in to carry out some bushing works. As you can see from the pictures it has greatly improved the ease of navigation along that stretch.

NEW MOORING – THE SHIP (NEAR BRANDON CREEK)



Yet another Environment Agency mooring has been opened recently next to the Ship Public House at Brandon Creek. This excellent new mooring is over 40 feet long and is located roughly 100 metres upstream of the confluence of the Great Ouse and Little Ouse.

LOST & FOUND



This escaped dinghy was found wedged in Brampton Lock on 18 April and was retrieved by a passing boater. It has no registration and no licence so we can't trace its owner. There is a painter and mooring peg attached but no other distinguishing features. The boat is being held at the Agency's depot in Bedford so if you're the owner then please contact the Waterways Team on 07808 506506

NEW SECURITY LOCK ON BRANDON GUILLOTINE GATE

In an attempt to combat vandalism and increase security at Brandon Lock we have recently fitted a new lock system onto the slacker arrangement. To operate the guillotine gate you must firstly use a navigation key to turn the lock, this will then release a metal button on the cabinet. Once the button has released the gearing engages making it possible to operate the gate in the usual manner. Once you have finished with the slackers simply push the button back in, remove your key and the mechanism will lock making it secure once more.



NEW SEASONAL RIVER INSPECTORS



Jana & Jeremy hard at work on one of the St Ives litter clean up days

As the summer season begins its time once again to welcome our seasonal river inspectors to the team. This year we have been joined once again by Roger Mungham and by newcomers Jana Moravcova and Jeremy Sharp. Please make them feel welcome as usual and feel free to approach them with any navigation issues you may have.

Club News news

Feeling Hot, Hot, Hot

The Pike & Eel Boat Club held their annual Regatta over the weekend of the 11th and 12th June 2005. We had a record number of people attending with visiting Commodores and guests from Upware Boat Club and Denver Cruising Club. We also welcomed several new PEBC members to their first event of the season.

Saturday commenced with the usual Fire Extinguisher checks, Ship Shape Competition, Ladies Fender Throwing and the Twin and Single Engine Boat Handling competitions. After that it was time to get ready for the HOT HOT HOT in Hawaii Fancy Dress and Hog Roast. It was good to see so many people brave the cold weather and dress up in their bikinis, grass skirts, shorts and brightly coloured shirts (although with the weather the way it was I think thermal underwear and woolly jumpers would have been more appropriate).

Club members had worked hard during the afternoon and had superbly decorated the marquee; this gave a real feeling of being in Hawaii. After the Hog Roast the evening continued with a disco and dancing went on late into the night. Sunday began with a Boat Jumble and was followed by a Schooner race against the Pike & Eel Hotel Staff. Both male and female races were won by the hotel, I think some of the PEBC team were still suffering from the night before! It was then time for the challenge from Upware Boat Club for the It's a Knockout Trophy. The UBC, who were the current holders of the trophy, decided to play their Joker on the first game. This ended in a draw, but the PEBC were triumphant in the tiebreaker. UBC came back strong in the next game,

but the PEBC saved their Joker until the end which proved to be most successful and they came away victorious. At last the trophy was back where it belonged.

Sunday afternoon our Commodore led the boat procession decorated in all its bunting. It was then onto the final event of the weekend, the Prize Giving, where a few glasses of champagne were drunk by the winning members. I would like to say a big thank you to everybody that gave up their time to help out at the Regatta and also to all those who attended the event. The weekend would not have been the success it was without you.

If anyone would like to become a member of the PEBC please contact me on **01480 819392** or email anne@guerrier135.fsnet.co.uk for the details. New members are always very welcome.

Anne Guerrier, Honorary Secretary, PEBC



Ouse Valley River Club

Mid June already and well into the 2005 boating season, so far so good weather wise, hopefully this good start will continue into the summer proper. It seems like only yesterday that I was preparing the contribution for the Spring edition and noting the snow and sleet on the window and here we are with the longest day and midsummer just around the corner. Our social program continues to be well supported with members and guests enjoying good food and entertainment, in particular should be mentioned the St George's theme evening when the club was invaded by serving wenches, varlets, crusading knights and their fair ladies, plus a number of lords of the manor and their ladies. Not to mention a number of codpieces, whatever they are, sorry, I said not to mention them.

The Commodore's sail past was once again very well supported, over thirty club boats sailed by with individual crews saluting the commodore and his lady in their various ways. Martin, resplendent in regalia, was, as always, outshone by Claire. An excellent lunch was provided and served to all members by our social team, many thanks to them for their hard work. Who said "there's no such thing as a free lunch"? This is our Commodore's last year in office and our thanks should go to him for leading the Club over the last two years in such a professional manner.

Our traditional cruising weekend held once again at Hartford Marina was blessed with good weather;

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members enjoyed home-grown entertainment and the enlarged Club marquee. Our thanks to our hard working Rear Commodore and his team of willing helpers. Our particular thanks to Scott for once again hosting a super weekend, it is very much appreciated by OVRC members. Early June saw our annual Club Competition day, this very traditional event in our calendar is one that taxes the boating skills and ingenuity of members to the limit, however it is also one that tests the innovative thinking of our intrepid Rear Commodore and team. Well done to the winners and keep those Cups gleaming.

By the time this edition is distributed to members we will have enjoyed our annual Summer BBQ and On

Upware Boat Club

Commodore's Report; Upware Boat Club
June 2005

Dear GOBA readers

The Upware Boat Club is having a fantastic time so far with our action packed programme of Events for the season, all our events have been well supported by the enthusiastic Club membership of a healthy 44 boats.

I am pleased to report that we have encouraged Club members to take part in the RYA's Inland Waterways Helmsman's Certificate. Also, at the same time, take the written test for the RYA International Certificate of Competence (ICC) known as CEVNI, which is a now a legal necessity in many parts of Europe. The courses run by Mike Kirk of Norfolk Yacht Agency Training were excellent. Mike made sure that those who attended understood every aspect of the courses in an enjoyable and efficient manner. Apart from the satisfaction of receiving Certification, we all came away with some greater knowledge on European Waterway Navigation, Boat Handling/Rope-work as well as being well educated by Mike in matters of Boat Safety.

Since my last GOBA report we have had some very enjoyable events: we had an Easter weekend in Ely with a Treasure Hunt, meal in The Cutter, Ten Pin Bowling Tournament and various quizzes. A week later "The Commodore's Welcome" held at the Five Miles, Upware, was the first time that we were hosted by the new landlord and landlady - Jerry & Linda Cody, who looked after us very well.

Shore day, fingers crossed for good weather and a good crowd of visitors.

St Neots Lock - it's open, not only on time but looking good. Time for a big Thank You to the Environment Agency from all OVRC members and I am sure from all GOBA members too. This is very tangible evidence how our licence fee is being spent. Apparently around one third of the 2004/2005 capital budget was invested into this long overdue and worthwhile project. Now the river is open, we at the OVRC hope to see other Club members as they pass through St Neots - drop in and visit you will be most welcome. As always we at the OVRC wish all GOBA members and all boaters a very safe and pleasant 2005 summer season.

Vic Pinder



On the May Day Bank Holiday, the Club organised a weekend in Downham Market taking advantage of the extended mooring facility down the New Cut. Several of us met for a superb meal at The Castle Hotel on the Saturday evening, then on Sunday we had a short stroll to a place called "Collectors World". Possibly Norfolk's greatest eccentric and prolific collector, the original Mr 'Norfolk Punch' himself, Eric St John-Foti has displayed his extraordinary lifetime collections, which are open to the public all year round. You could spend all day there!

Whitsun Bank Holiday was spent at Judes Ferry; this is always a pleasant upstream cruise of the Lark and there are now refurbished moorings at the pub. We had our usual fun of quizzes and games etc and meals in the pub. A day trip by coach to Wroxham was organised and, would you believe it, we then all hired day boats!

As I write this we are looking forward to a fun filled BBQ, Sports and Games weekend on 18th & 19th June at "The Lazy Otter"; the weather forecast is 28C so sun tan lotion at the ready!

The main event of the season is our Annual Regatta Weekend (this year July 2nd – 3rd), which is held at The Five Miles public house, Upware. We have boat handling competitions and games etc. throughout the weekend; on the Saturday evening we are provided with a BBQ and entertained with live music in a marquee.

At the recent Pike & Eel Boat Club Regatta, we were hosted and entertained throughout their weekend very well. Our thanks to their Commodore John, his wife Claire and PEBC members who made us feel most welcome. Unfortunately, this year PEBC won back their "It's a Knockout Competition". My excuse is that three of our youngest "A-team" did not get back in time from a late night elsewhere. However, Wendy (Topaz) did win the Ladies Fender Throwing competition!

We still have several events left on our Boating Calendar, which I am very much looking forward to, no doubt you will hear about them in the next issue. If you are a boat owner who would like to experience one of our events and meet like-minded boaters, please contact myself, or alternatively approach any member flying the Upware Boat Club Flag, we will do our best to accommodate and make you feel welcome. Our events list can be viewed on our website:
www.upwareboatclub.info

See you on the River

Gary Hartwig
Commodore Upware Boat Club (Liziana)

Tel 01353 676033 or email gary@packwell.co.uk

Cambridge Motor Boat Club

On St. George's Day in April we celebrated this important event in our usual manner with a hearty roast beef and Yorkshire pud dinner, after which there were some loud renderings by members of various patriotic songs!

On 8th May, 80 members celebrated the 60th Anniversary of VE Day with a 'wartime' lunch in our clubhouse, with appropriate songs being sung! After lunch several decorated boats cruised from the club to the neighbouring village of Horningsea where a display had been set up in the church, with short talks given by some of the villagers on their wartime experiences. We were then treated to an excellent cream tea!

Our first club cruise of the season was over the May Bank Holiday weekend when 17 club boats assembled at Stretham pool and, in spite of a high wind on the Saturday, we were able to set up our barbecue and enjoy a convivial evening. The weather on the Sunday was warm and pleasant and, after the excesses of the previous evening, we were able to relax in the sunshine.

We are now looking forward to our Summer Ball on 18th June when we will have set up a large marquee for dining and will be dancing to the music of a six-piece band. This is one of the highlights of our club year and is always a memorable occasion. The next day we will have a 'summer tea' accompanied by music played by a Salvation Army brass band. Further musical entertainment will take place on 2nd July when we will have an outdoor picnic and concert evening with music by the Ouse Valley Jazz Band. We have been lucky with the weather in the past, so let us hope for another most enjoyable evening!

Bob Foote

Denver Cruising Club

Following our AGM in May our new Commodore is Pauline Carter (Double Brandy) and our new Hon Secretary is Catherine Oakes "Kate" (Lovely Lady).

The plans are still ongoing for our new Clubhouse. Our new barge is now completed and we await delivery. Detailed planning to comply with Health and Safety has been approved and a dedicated team is now working on the dismantling of the old clubhouse.

Unfortunately, due to the fact that our Southery site is a designated "building site", our August Bank Holiday

rally this year will be held at our Hilgay moorings on the River Wissey. We appreciate that a few of the larger boats will not be able to negotiate the two Hilgay bridges max air draft 2.5.mts. However, those that can make it are promised a fun packed weekend.

We would like to thank all our friends at the other clubs who have offered help and support during this difficult time and look forward to seeing them all again soon.

Pauline Carter Commodore

Our River

LOCKS

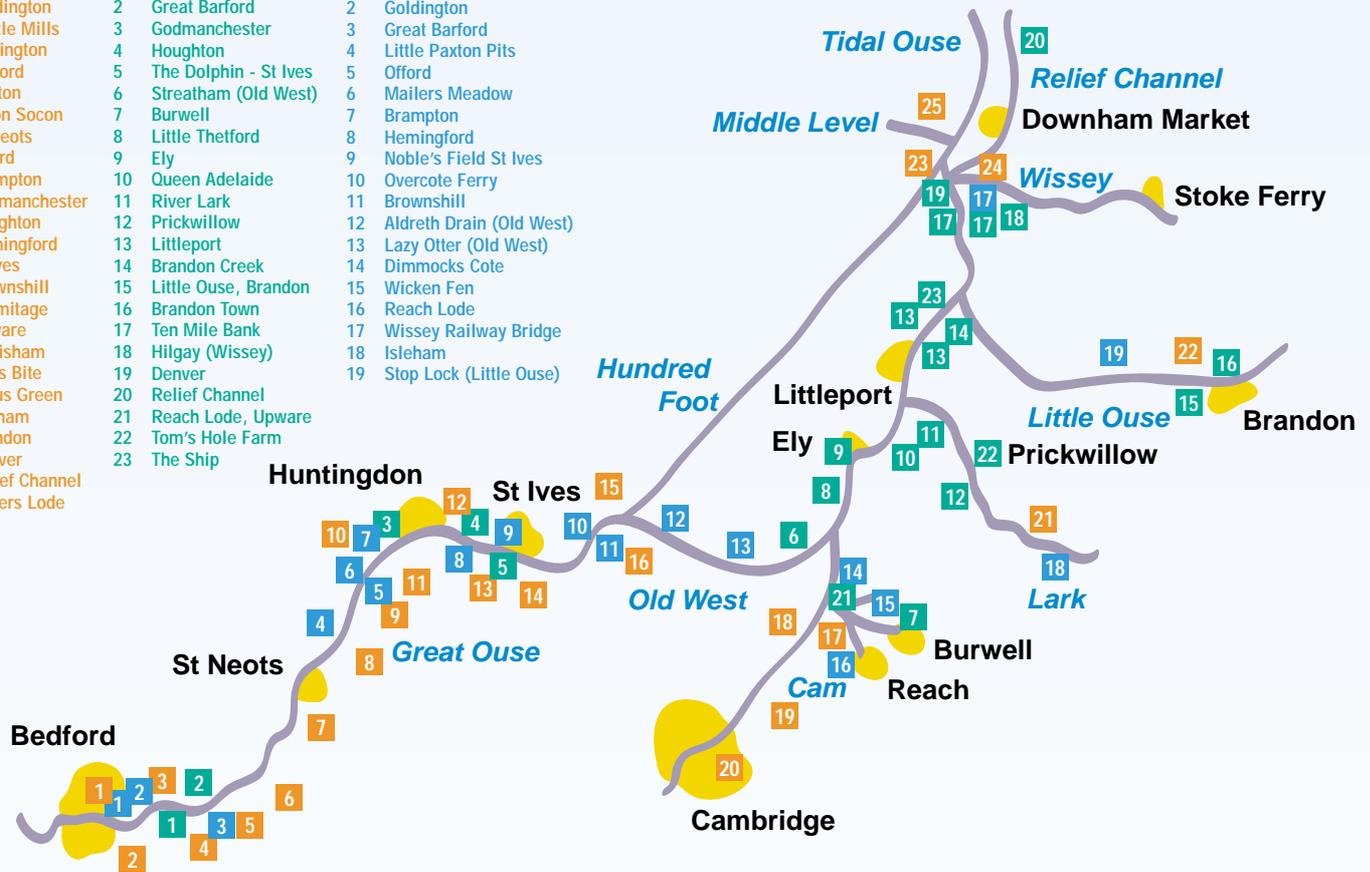
- 1 Bedford
- 2 Cardington
- 3 Castle Mills
- 4 Willington
- 5 Barford
- 6 Roxton
- 7 Eaton Socon
- 8 St Neots
- 9 Offord
- 10 Brampton
- 11 Godmanchester
- 12 Houghton
- 13 Hemingford
- 14 St Ives
- 15 Brownshill
- 16 Hermitage
- 17 Upware
- 18 Bottisham
- 19 Baits Bite
- 20 Jesus Green
- 21 Isleham
- 22 Brandon
- 23 Denver
- 24 Relief Channel
- 25 Salters Lode

EA MOORINGS

- 1 Old Mills
- 2 Great Barford
- 3 Godmanchester
- 4 Houghton
- 5 The Dolphin - St Ives
- 6 Streatham (Old West)
- 7 Burwell
- 8 Little Thetford
- 9 Ely
- 10 Queen Adelaide
- 11 River Lark
- 12 Prickwillow
- 13 Littleport
- 14 Brandon Creek
- 15 Little Ouse, Brandon
- 16 Brandon Town
- 17 Ten Mile Bank
- 18 Hilgay (Wissey)
- 19 Denver
- 20 Relief Channel
- 21 Reach Lode, Upware
- 22 Tom's Hole Farm
- 23 The Ship

GOBA MOORINGS

- 1 Priory Marina*
- 2 Goldington
- 3 Great Barford
- 4 Little Paxton Pits
- 5 Offord
- 6 Mailers Meadow
- 7 Brampton
- 8 Hemingford
- 9 Noble's Field St Ives
- 10 Overcote Ferry
- 11 Brownshill
- 12 Aldreth Drain (Old West)
- 13 Lazy Otter (Old West)
- 14 Dimmocks Cote
- 15 Wicken Fen
- 16 Reach Lode
- 17 Wissey Railway Bridge
- 18 Isleham
- 19 Stop Lock (Little Ouse)



* 1 One night's free mooring.

GOBA MOORING CODE: Mooring takes priority over fishing at all GOBA moorings; Please do not light ground fires; keep dogs with owners and away from grazing animals; pick up litter and dog mess; keep gaps between boats as close as possible; be prepared to close up gaps if boats leave and others arrive and use good practice and courtesy to raft on to others; MAXIMUM stay of 48 hours. Use of GOBA moorings is at 'OWN RISK' and users are advised to have third party liability insurance.

Your Committee

Chris Grant "Andante" (Chairman), Geoff Parrish "Spyros" (Vice Chairman), Sid Fisher "Warrior" (Company Secretary), Alistair Reid "Firefly" (General Secretary), Mike Costello "Grumpy Bear Too" (Treasurer), David Mercer "Keisha" (Minute Secretary and EA Liaison), Denise Troughton "Orchard Delight" (Publicity/Communications), Mike Mackay "Red Arrow" (Membership Secretary), Roy Wood "Laila Anne", John Hodgson "Otters Way", John Burton, Fiona Costello "Grumpy Bear Too", Bob Wells "Shaman", Lance Wright "Happy Heron", Stuart Turvey "Miss Magic" (Moorings Officer), Jim Carter "Double Brandy" (Moorings Officer), Karen Bayliss "Precious Lady" (Editor).

All committee members can be emailed using firstname.surname@goba.org.uk

useful contacts

General Secretary & for general enquiries - Alistair Reid 01480 493830 alistair.reid@goba.org.uk 15 Willow Green, Needingworth, Huntingdon, Cambs PE27 4SW.

Membership - Mike Mackay 01353 664229 mike.mackay@goba.org.uk

Moorings - Moorings upstream from St. Ives - Stuart Turvey 01234 303589 stuart.turvey@goba.org.uk

Moorings downstream from St. Ives - Jim Carter 01366 382090 jim.carter@goba.org.uk

GOBA News Editor - Karen Bayliss 01234 766332 editor@goba.org.uk, PO Box 244, Huntingdon, PE19 6EF

Publicity - Denise Troughton 01234 831201 denise.troughton@goba.org.uk

Navigation problems - David Mercer (EA Liaison) 01480 469046 david.mercer@goba.org.uk

River situation - EA at Brampton 01480 414581 Floodline - 0845 9881188

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Opinions and statements of contributors published in GOBA News are not necessarily supported by the GOBA committee.

Application forms for membership can be obtained at most marinas on the Great Ouse, from our website www.goba.org.uk

or: PO BOX 244, Huntingdon, PE29 6FE or e-mail: membership@goba.org.uk