This year’s Eastern Region heat of the Honda RYA Youth RIB Championship attracted surprisingly few entrants. The six contestants came from four inland water clubs, the host club Stewartby, Upware Boat Club and Paxton Lakes SC, both in Cambridgeshire and North Herts and East Beds SC, based at Hitchin, Herts.

The event was held at Stewartby Water Sports Club in Bedfordshire, the site of an old brick clay workings where club members sail dinghies, water ski and power boat. The winners of the national final at Southampton in both the eight to 12 years of age and the 13 to 16 age group win a 4.5 metre Avon rib with a 40hp four-stroke Honda outboard on an Indispension trailer for their club. Worth around £15,000 the boat can be used for power boat training, as a rescue boat or as sailing support boat.

The age of the competitors ranged from 14 years down to eight and, with the exception of one contestant, none of them had wide experience of driving RIBs. Winner of the older age group was Sam Anderson of Paxton Lakes SC, while the winner in the younger age group was Heather Fox of the host club Stewartby.

Eight year old Caulum Rushby was the youngest competitor, the others were Adam Fox (Stewartby), Simon Rose (North Herts and East Beds SC) and Lizzy Wells (Upware Boat Club).
I do hope that all members have had a good Summer. Now that Christmas is almost upon us, memories of a good summer on the river usually helps to ward off the effects of the Winter weather.

GOBA has certainly had a busy period since the Summer issue of GOBA News. We have recruited some new members to the Committee - Mike Mackay has joined us with a view to taking over from Chris Grant as Membership Secretary. You may remember that we were hoping to split the moorings function into two parts and Stuart Turvey has been with us for a couple of months to deal with the upper river and has now been joined by Jim Carter for the lower river. Roy Wood will remain on the Committee and he deserves our thanks for all that he has done over the years to secure some excellent moorings. We have also been fortunate to recruit Denise Troughton as Publicity / Communications Officer to promote the profile of the Association among the wider public and various bodies. Welcome aboard to them all. Extra able bodies are always welcome as the activities seem to grow endlessly - particularly in view of the welcome news that the overall membership has recently hit a new high.

With more members, we need more moorings. Already our two Moorings Committee members are making headway with the hunt for suitable new moorings in useable areas. This is a difficult job and not all of our investigations are fruitful. Happily some are and of course when new moorings become available to members, you will be informed as soon as possible.

This is a good time to remind those who have access that the Association has a very useful web site where information can be posted as soon as it is available. See: www.goba.org.uk. There you will find information directly applicable to GOBA including an active Members’ Forum as well as links to other applicable sites.

The Bedford and Milton Keynes link project continues of which you will remember GOBA is a Project Partner and recently contributed a further £1000 to the next stage of the feasibility study. This was presented at a Committee meeting when we had the Project Manager, James Clifton of British Waterways give us a brief update on the project progress. I will not say much here as there is a piece elsewhere in this issue by Jane Wolfson of the B&MK Waterway Trust.

The Fens Waterways Link is also progressing with promise and a feasibility study was recently published for this project to the north of our cruising area. When all these links are completed we will surely have an enormous cruising range to choose from.

On a more immediate subject, I turn to the saga of St Neots lock. This structure is an important part of the infrastructure in this part of the system. Members will remember that, originally we were promised that this project would be completed by the EA over the 2002/3 winter. We all know that this did not happen. Over a period of 3-4 weeks in late Summer, in different meetings I have been told that it would require the winters of both 2003/4 and 2004/5. Then, 2 weeks later - forget that - it will be completed this (2003/4) Winter! Four days later - forget that - it will have no work at all on it this Winter! This coupled with conflicting closure notices coming out of the EA - and all from the same EA Waterway Manager! Confused? You will be, as now there is no guarantee that the work will ever be completed and the lock could stay as it is now!

GOBA of course will continue to press the EA for a satisfactory outcome - which is a user friendly lock constructed to an acceptable time scale. The EA have had problems with this project but to walk away from it or even postpone it, is not acceptable.

It’s not all bad news with EA. GOBA continues to have regular liaison meetings with the navigation managers and some of the points raised are turned into action. Alas I have to express a measure of disappointment and frustration at the time it takes to get results. Also that the answers we receive to a lot of our points are simply a list of excuses as to why things cannot be done.

Now that I have got that off my chest, I would like to thank all those Members who have returned their Direct Debit forms for their subscriptions to our Treasurer and remind those who have not yet, please to do so, if possible before Christmas so that Mike has time to process them before the new subscription year starts.

And speaking of Christmas again I would like, on behalf of myself and all the Committee, to wish you all a merry Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year with many happy hours of boating on our lovely river.

John Hodgson
Letters

Jill & Don Allison write:

We decided this year to visit the Great Ouse for the first time from our home base on the Grand Union near Milton Keynes. We bought our Gold Licence and joined GOBA. We were a little dismayed to read in the Spring GOBA News of the anti-narrow boat feelings. We were therefore somewhat wary when we reached Denver. We need not have worried. All boaters were very friendly and helpful. We were surprised to find so few boats on the move during the week in early July. There were many more boats out over the week-end, but we never had to queue for locks and we always found a mooring. Although we are longer than most river boats (42ft.) being flat bottomed and steel we are able to moor in places other boats can’t or don’t want to.

In the Spring GOBA News Mr Oxley claimed that - “narrow boats crowd out two, three or even four riverboats from locks and moorings.” This is clearly untrue. On average narrow boats are less than twice the length of riverboats. Two riverboats need space between them when mooring and in locks, and narrow boats are happy to breast up on moorings and in locks (widened ones only).

We did chat to a number of boaters about their concerns when the Milton Keynes to Bedford Waterway opens up. We are sure all these point are and will be taken up by GOBA representatives involved in the new Trust. You have such a beautiful river, surely you can’t keep it to yourselves forever? The EA will have to extend and improve their facilities, etc but there will be stronger pressure on them at high levels to do just that.

Also, most of the narrow boaters who will want to visit the Great Ouse are, like ourselves, well travelled on the waterways of Great Britain, including its other rivers, with their flow and flood conditions. Many other narrow boats will not be so adventurous and will prefer to stay within their known areas of ‘ditch crawling’.

Mr Oxley suggests few river boaters will venture through the Bedford/Milton Keynes link. When they realise they can get onto the Thames, the Kennet & Avon, the Wey Navigation, the Basingstoke, the river Lea and even up to (trumpets blare) Birmingham we think he might be surprised.

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We had a wonderful time cruising the Great Ouse and still have some areas to explore when we return. Thanks to GOBA for the great moorings they provide. We will never forget being the only boat overnight at Wicken Fen. It was magic.

P.S. Have you noticed that narrow boats make very little wash compared to riverboats!

Narrow boat - Cyrus Lily

I am appealing for a legal solution to this problem before the next boating season. So far my ideas include splitting the fuel line so that both tanks are in use, using my bus pass or acquiring a rowing boat. So, what is wrong with these or can you think of anything better?

Frank Brewer of Maverick writes:

I have discovered that a second portable fuel tank alongside the one in use can result in failure of a boat safety certificate even though they may be in what would be a perfectly acceptable ventilated locker for a single tank. You need a separate drained locker as for a gas bottle.

This might be difficult to achieve on a modest boat. Outboard tanks need to be removed from the boat for filling. A 20 litre tank is probably the weight limit. Given the difficulties of finding petrol on or near the river, without a full reserve tank you could not explore the area with any peace of mind.

Frank Brewer
Maverick (frankbrewer@onetel.net.uk)

Ed: Anyone who has the solution let frank know and better still let this magazine know so everyone can benefit.
From Di Jermyn

John and I have moved to Cornwall. We have sold “Charlie Girl 3” as there are no non-tidal, inland waterways down here on which we could go boating and we are not sea-goers - not in her, in any rate!

We have been members of GOBA since we started boating nine years ago and have always been grateful for all that you have done for river users. We have enjoyed our time on the river - the camaraderie, scenery and peacefulness have been superb, not to mention the wildlife. We have met some wonderful, helpful people. We shall miss our boating and will always have very happy memories of those times.

We shall not be renewing our membership of GOBA next season, but we wish all members well and “Happy Boating”.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Di Jermyn

From Steve Davis

The General Secretary’s Report in the spring edition of GOBA News mentioned the practice of photographing miscreants ‘in the act’ and passed on advice from the police that this practice could have issues under the Data Protection Act and human rights legislation.

I always keep a camera handy when cruising and have used it several times to photograph trouble makers. Last year I sent a batch of photographs to the police after we had trouble with children on the lift bridges on the South Yorks Navigations; the police were happy to accept the photographs and the local community policeman told me they used them when visiting the local schools.

I was surprised to hear the advice from the Cambridge Police and so contacted the Information Commissioner, who is responsible for enforcing the Data Protection Act 1998. I asked for advice as an individual using photographs to identify potential trouble makers to the police. The reply I received is as follows:

“The release of digital photographs by you to the police to assist with identifying persons engaged in illegal activities would not have Data Protection implications for yourself as the personal, family and household affairs exemption is likely to apply. However the police force in question will need to comply with the Act and ensure that the personal data (digital images) it receives are handled in compliance with the Principles of good practice, i.e. are adequate, relevant and not excessive, are kept secure and held for no longer than necessary.

If normal film images were passed across and they were held in a ‘relevant filing system’ as defined in the Act the police would still need to handle them in accordance with the Principles.”

I can see that if GOBA held such a file of photographs there may be Data Protection issues, but my reading of the reply from the Information Commissioner is that an individual can use photographic evidence without falling foul of the DP Act. I am no expert on the Human Rights Act (although being a very sad person I have read it) but suspect it would take a VERY inventive lawyer to make a Human Rights case out of photographing trouble makers. The police, like any other organisation holding personal data, will have to be registered under the Data Protection Act and the holding of photographic evidence should be ‘business as usual’ for them. I will continue to use my camera when appropriate. My experience is that pointing a camera at the trouble makers and then following it up with a fake phone call on a mobile phone causes them to do a runner in most cases. Even when they stay around, it makes them more wary and (to date!) has never made things worse. There may still be dangers in using a camera on young kids though. We recently heard of a boater who photographed some young boys who had been throwing stones; the boys responded by calling the boater a pervert and said they would report him to the police. Later that day the boater got a visit from the police who investigated him as a suspect paedophile!

Steve Davis
Narrow boat - Carpe Diem
Membership number D485

Ed: Steve has asked me to stress that he has no expertise in the legalities of the DPA or Human Rights legislation.
Has anyone any knowledge of Clotilde?

I wonder if I may enquire through GOBA News if anyone has any knowledge of a ketch by the name of Clotilde? I enclose a photo of her. She was built in Holland in the 1920s/1930s and was about 40 feet long. My uncle, James Grantham, of Cambridge, bought her in the mid 1930s and sometimes took her up the Cam as far as was possible for so large a craft. She was used round the Essex coast and was frequently sailed across to France and Holland. In 1939 my uncle intended to sail round the British Isles but on reaching the Dartmouth/Salcombe area had to abandon the voyage and Clotilde due to the outbreak of war. After the war she was brought back to Cambridge and refitted as necessary, and my uncle continued to sail her until he ran out of his source of crews - undergraduates - in the 1960s and had to sell her. Since then I have no knowledge of what happened to her. Can anyone perchance give me any information?

Philip Grantham
5 Nightingale Close, Hartford
Huntingdon, Cambs. PE29 1 SQ

From Palatino

We would like to make a response to the contribution in the summer edition from Derek Cousins, "Wild Life - Birds on the Ouse".

Because my wife and I are not ornithologists to the standard of Derek, we would like his opinion of a sighting made in late July, about 500 metres downstream of the Ferryboat pub, in thick reed beds on the left hand side of the river.

Whilst I know that it is unlikely, I am convinced that we briefly spotted a Purple Gallinule (Phorphyrio Porphyrio). The habitat was right and comparing immediately with our books size, colouring and stance all seemed to fit spot on.

We would appreciate a comment through these pages if possible.

Vic and Maureen Pinder.

News

Ruth and Ray Massey took their boat ‘Revels’ on to the Kennet and Avon Canal in the summer.

As on the Rochdale Canal and also the Trent and Mersey, 99% of users are narrow boats. It is so easy for them to moor almost anywhere on the tow path. We, having a draught of 3 feet, found a lot of places too shallow. Rather disappointing as the canals and the locks are wide and having a low air draft the bridges were no problem.

We left Reading and cruised onto the Kennet & Avon Canal. The first lock, Blakes lock, was manned, then on through the Oracle, a lovely shopping centre. Passage is controlled by lights at each end so that only one boat can pass through at a time.
The scenery on the way was very beautiful. So many bird songs, wildflowers and butterflies. It was pretty hard going so when we got to Newbury we decided to make the return journey. That was 21 locks all to be shut both ends, and 11 swing bridges, only about 4 of which were electric, the others to be operated by hand all the way to Newbury and the same coming back. The old turf locks were a nightmare with a fibre glass hull. The narrow boats just bash in and out, but as you can see by the picture, the water flowed out between the metal pieces and one couldn’t get near to get the fenders in the right places. Then there were the scalloped locks, so much metal to catch our rubbing strake. After all those things it was a great adventure, we did find some great moorings, good food at the pubs and Newbury was a good shopping centre.

The majority of the people on narrow boats were very helpful, but were rather amazed at our type of boat travelling up there.

Back to the Thames and all the locks done for us. Maybe another adventure next year, or maybe not.

A Gathering of Like Minds - or an Ensemble of Nimbi and other fine boats.

A phone call from Andrew Coe skipper of Lord Fury, a Nimbus recently brought over from Belgium, suggesting an informal get together of local Nimbus owners, led to plans being laid to B.B.Q. over an August weekend on the banks of the River Great Ouse in Cambridgeshire. Over the next few weeks the “Field” grew to include other boat owning friends from Buckden.

The weekend of August 9th arrived warm and calm, the chosen venue a GOBA meadow mooring midway between the Olde World villages of Hemingford Grey and Hemingford Abbots, each a stroll of around ten minutes either side of the mooring.

If your interest is thatched cottages and hostories with old fashioned welcomes then these villages are the spots to visit. For those of a more cerebral persuasion the villages also boast two medieval churches and the oldest inhabited farmhouse in the country dating back to the early Norman period.

Over the next few hours, including some arrivals in pitch darkness, the fleet arrived, well eight anyway, five Nimbus, a Sancerre, a Birchwood and a Sheerline. From a purely personal point of view it was great to meet other Nimbus owners and exchange ideas and tips on running these super boats.

Darkness saw the lighting up of the barbecues, and many and varied they were too, much interest was shown in Dick and Liz’s magic gas ring from Spain. Much food consumed, many wine bottles opened and shared, many stories told and much laughter until way past midnight, nobody that I could see turned into pumpkins, a great warm evening.

I suppose that inevitably along came our friends the “mozzies”, never fear, cometh the hour cometh the healing hand of Diana Grant providing soothing insect repellent wipes for the sufferers. The following day Sunday dawned bright and warm, some muzzy heads appeared. A relaxing day in prospect except for some of the younger crew members from Lord Fury who vanished to make a film in the woods. These budding stars were Melissa (with two Ss) Rebecca (with two Cs) Samantha and Chloe.

With up to four hours cruising ahead of some crews to get back to their various bases goodbyes were said, hopefully to meet up again during 2004. Our personal thanks and regards go to our fellow participants

Andrew and Sharon Coe of Lord Fury (Nimbus) (whose idea it was.)
Dick Taylor and Liz Wood of Montaraz (Nimbus)
Chris and Diana Grant of Andante (Sancerre)
Bob and Avril Curtis of Infinity (Nimbus)
Andy and Emma Curtis of Wicked Lady (Birchwood)
John and Rose Roberts of Lady Rose (Nimbus)
Stuart Nash of Chilled Spirit (Sheerline)

Good Luck to you all.

Vic and Maureen Pinder of Palatino, (Nimbus).
Bedford River Festival

The 2004 Bedford River Festival is set for the weekend of the 2nd & 3rd of July 2004. The intention is return to the festival’s roots and celebrate the opening of navigation and to have many more river/boat oriented events.

GOBA members are welcome and indeed encouraged to offer ideas and suggestions to Denise Troughton or any other committee member. Details on the back page.

The London Boat Show 2004


National Waterways Festival 2003

IWA’s 2003 National Waterways Festival, which took place at Beale Park, near Pangbourne, beside the Thames over the August Bank Holiday Weekend proved a resounding success, with attendance substantially beyond the most optimistic expectations of the organisers.

The event was blessed with sunny weather and effective local, regional and national publicity on television, radio and newspapers helped swell the crowds. The boats, waterways attractions, river trips, classic vehicles and continuous programme of entertainment and arena events proved popular for all who came for a fascinating and entertaining day out. A successful innovation this year was the series of boat maintenance and waterways arts courses that took place over each of the four days. Nearly all the courses were fully booked before the festival, some with long waiting lists, and all appear to have been well received and appreciated by those attending. It is most likely they will feature again in 2004.

One unfortunate incident left those on the site without water supplies from the Tuesday morning onwards. A caravan owner, departing at 6.30 am that day, forgot to wind in the supporting legs on his caravan, and as the vehicle left site it ripped through buried water pipes in so many places that it was impractical to reinstate the water supply in a worthwhile time.

First Aid Training

Jenny Harrod and Madeliene Cowlan have been involved in organising first aid training for boaters. Last year they held 2 very successful courses and they feel that more people might be interested in improving what is after all such an important skill.

Unfortunately due to a particularly nasty computer virus Madeliene lost the email addresses of some interested parties who said that they would like courses in the winter, and she would very much like anyone who did express an interest to get in touch with her again.

So if you or your club or marina would like to brush up your first aid skills contact can be made at:

jenny.harrod@v21mail.co.uk
or on 01353 675316

National Waterways Festival 2004

The IWA has announced that the town of Burton-on-Trent, on the edge of the Trent Valley will host the 2004 festival.

The site, which is close to the town centre, will be Shobnall Fields, between Dallow Lane Lock and Bridge 33 alongside the Trent and Mersey Canal. The setting, which is in contrast to this years’ site at Beale Park, on the River Thames, highlights the diversity of the inland waterways and continues the Association’s aim to make each festival unique. The festival will take place over the August Bank Holiday, which also represents the start of the Burton Festival.

The festival is likely to be open to the public on three, rather than four days - from Saturday 28th to Bank Holiday Monday 30th August 2004, although entertainment, a bar and activities for boaters and those resident on the campsite, including boat maintenance and waterway arts courses are likely to be available from the evening of Thursday 26th August. Booking forms for boaters and those wishing to stay on the campsite can be downloaded from IWA’s Internet site.
From the Editor

Doesn't time fly.

This is my second attempt at GOBA News and it's just like I've never been away.

Just like it used to be – I have to make a public apology for a very serious omission in the last (my first) issue. I did not include the deadline for editorial material and my telephone and email have been working overtime answering those very willing contributors who wanted to know how long they had to get their work to me. So I am chastened by the experience and to make sure that it doesn't happen in this issue I've included the date here for the Spring 2004 issue.

The deadline for editorial material for GOBA News Spring 2004 is 23rd February 2004.

I hope that you enjoyed my efforts last time, I know I had to leave out a great deal of material that had been sent to me but all that is now included in this issue. The response to some of the letters has been great and it would be nice to see some more responses and perhaps some more thought provoking contributions.

Downstream Mooring Officer

Jim Carter has taken over, from Roy Wood, responsibility for GOBA moorings downstream from St Ives. He has a wealth of knowledge of the river and of local landowners which he will put to good use in securing even more mooring places for GOBA members.

He is a member of Denver Cruising Club and moors his boat, Lady Margaret at Hilgay.

Any Member who learns of opportunities for moorings should make contact with him or indeed with Stuart Turvey for those moorings upstream of St Ives. (See back page for contact details).

Well what a summer, wall to wall sun and blue skies. It was great to see so many friends out an about on the river, but sadly the time to lay up is with us and believe it or not our thoughts should be turning towards getting our boats ready for next spring and summer. In view of the time of year it would be remiss of me not to wish all members the compliments of the season and a peaceful and enjoyable 2004.

Doesn't time fly.

The Inland Waterways Association has announced that Harry Arnold has been awarded the Richard Bird Medal.

Many members will know Harry Arnold, a renowned journalist and photographer and the editor of the IWA’s magazine Waterways. Harry has been involved with waterways for over 40 years. He has also been associated with numerous campaigns, charitable organisations and waterways committees in a voluntarily capacity and was a founder of both The Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port and of Waterway Recovery Group.

The Richard Bird Medal is awarded to members of the Association whose efforts and support are considered to have brought significant benefit to the Association over a sustained period.

Congratulations to Harry Arnold
GOBA Publicity/Communications Officer

We should offer a warm welcome to Denise Troughton who has taken on the challenging role of enhancing GOBA’s profile in the media.

Denise has worked in marketing, sales and promotion for 18 years, predominantly in the retail and logistics sector and 1991 relocated to Bedford, still continuing to travel around much of the UK and Europe.

In 2001, she made a major career change and opted to work for British Waterways at Priory Marina revitalising the Chandlery and assisting with the running of the marina and customer services. She has recently been seconded to the Events & Promotions Team within BW South East Region based at Braunston, and amongst other things, will be working on the Tring, Milton Keynes and Crick Boat Festivals.

Both Denise and her partner of 13 years, Steve Watson, are members of the Rochdale Canal Society and are the founders, and to date the only, members of the Bedford Branch!

In 2002, Denise realised a lifelong ambition by purchasing "Orchard Delight", a classic 1960’s Appleyard & Lincoln’s (Ely) wooden ten cruiser which after spending 10 months restoring she is hoping to get beyond Cardington Lock. She would welcome all offers of support and assistance in river-craft which will be very gratefully received.

Denise has asked for members to contact her if they notice articles in local papers that need a GOBA response, or if they have any contacts with, or knowledge of, local organisations, local authorities or voluntary organisations that should be included on our press release database.

Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway on the Map – Jane Wolson, Vice-Chair, Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust.

As mentioned in the last edition of GOBA News, the project to build the first entirely new broad canal for over a century now has a preferred route. The Project Partnership, made up of local authorities and organisations concerned with drainage, navigation, tourism, leisure and the environment, has chosen the route which has the most political and public support and is the most deliverable in the medium term.

The proposed Waterway will run for 29 kilometres, from a junction with the Grand Union canal at the centre of Milton Keynes, through Marston Vale to the River Great Ouse at Kempston, with work on a further 8 kilometres of river through Bedford, up to and including Cardington Lock.

Master planning, water management and other feasibility studies are being commissioned by British Waterways, who are managing the project, as funds become available. Detailed line and level plans are being fine-tuned. The Waterway requires some 39 locks to drop from west to east, of which 12 are needed to get over or under existing roads and water.

Depending on funding, it may be possible to create an ‘MK to M1’ arm, followed by an arm at the Bedford end, prior to tackling the challenges of the central section, including the M1. The Waterway is almost certain to go under the motorway close to Junction 13, where there is the opportunity to build an innovative form of boat lift to get up and down the 30m drop at Brogborough.

The aim is to secure at least 75% of funding by providing the drainage, balancing ponds, water supplies, green space and other facilities needed in sites already allocated for development; and by sharing the uplift in waterside property prices. A study for the project by Lambert Smith Hampton shows an uplift of almost 20% for residential waterside properties in Milton Keynes, which can be obtained by making small design changes that have negligible impact on cost.

The Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust, which exists to promote public involvement in the project, publishes progress updates at www.b-mkwaterway.org.uk. Until 31st December there’s a competition on the site to gather ideas for ‘The Big Drop’ at Brogborough. The Trust is keen to hear from local professionals with an interest in the project, so if you’d like to give a view, get involved, or know a local group that would enjoy a talk, contact the Trust at info@b-mkwaterway.org.uk or B&MK Waterway Trust, PO Box 3611, Newport Pagnell, Bucks MK 16 0XN.
First of Three University Boat Races

The only University Boat Race rowed away from the Thames will be celebrated next year on its sixtieth anniversary.

The present Oxford and Cambridge veteran crews will battle over a mile-and-a-half of the River Great Ouse near Ely on February 28 2004 when thousands of people are expected to line the riverbank. Among the spectators will be some of the oarsmen who rowed in the original race in 1944. They will also be invited to a post race dinner in the Monastic Barn dining hall at The King's School, Ely, where the speaker will be Olympic gold medallist Tim Foster – one of the Fab Four from Sydney in 2000.

Among the teachers at the school is Jerry Dale, who will be rowing in the Oxford veteran crew. They will be hoping to repeat the Dark Blues' three-quarters of a length victory of sixty years ago – over the stretch of river still used for training by the Light Blues from their Ely boathouse. An exhibition of 1944 photographs and memorabilia, currently on show at The River & Rowing Museum in Henley on Thames until November, will be transferred back to Ely in the run-up to the February race before going on permanent display at The Prickwillow Drainage Museum, just a short distance from the 1944 course.

The big day – organised by a group called Diamond 44 – will also include a Service of Thanksgiving in Ely Cathedral followed by a wreath-laying at the grave of former Dean of Ely, Charles Merivale, in Ely Cemetery. While a student at Cambridge University in 1829, he rowed in the first University Boat Race and it is believed he was responsible for instituting the event by challenging Oxford student Charles Wordsworth, a nephew of poet William Wordsworth.

Next year’s Boat Race – the 150th – will be rowed on the Tideway a month after the Ely encounter and a commemorative race between replica 1829 boats is planned for Henley in June to round off a very special year.

"Over five thousand people attended the 1944 race, rowed from the River Lark to Queen Adelaide bridge, and we are planning a full day of celebration for a similar number in February," said Diamond 44 secretary Jack Waterfall.

"The recontest of the 1944 race will be the highlight of the afternoon, followed by lots of hospitality around the city during the early evening and dancing to the 1940's sound of a Glenn Miller Big Band in Ely Maltings will continue into the night."

The picture of the finish of the 1944 race is by courtesy of Mr H.B. Cochrane – The 1944 Cambridge No 2
River Economy

John Pridmore recently attended a meeting about the river economy and has kindly sent us this report.

The meeting, organised by Huntingdonshire District Council in conjunction with Huntingdonshire Business Network Partnership focused on the river economy, its impact in the area and proposals for its development within the district and was intended for individuals or businesses involved in any way with the river economy. The meeting was well attended but it was interesting to note that the direct representation for the river came from only eight organisations or individuals. This included four marina operators including two from the larger marinas, two boat hirers, one cruise company – also a BSS inspector, and yours truly wearing the hat of an editor of boating publications.

What was clear throughout the meeting was the low level of knowledge and interest in the boating community and the apparent lack of communication between the EA and HDC. However, it is clear that HDC is positive in its desire to improve the waterway economy in the district. Though not a boater himself, Cllr Holley was clear that there are many opportunities, as well as problems in developing the economy, but that what was required was steady, sustainable growth. What follows are extracts from his address.

“Our focus today is to look at the potential to improve the waterway economy in Huntingdonshire. An examination of the economic benefits we can gain from harnessing the waterways identifies opportunities for new business development and tourism. We want to find ways of realising that without harm to the environment.

Studies we have commissioned have identified this part of our local economy as a big opportunity. The ways of one of our greatest natural assets and probably one of our least exploited. We want to investigate with you how we can develop it more. Ultimately from today’s discussions we want to know what you feel are the main opportunities for development and how we can work together to encourage this growth.

Our research shows that visitors’ top preferred activities are:

- Visiting historic towns
- Visiting museums and places of historical interest
- Eating out
- Visiting historic houses
- Shopping

Following close on these activities are rural pursuits such as walking, visiting gardens and country parks. Marketing of the area concentrates on the historic market towns, the natural landscape and the ease of access to a number of places of historic interest. Although waterways are an important part of our area, we feel that the full potential has yet to be exploited and that enhanced facilities would provide us with the means to exploit that potential to the full and to introduce our visitors to the delights of the Great Ouse and surrounding areas. All our market towns are situated on or near the river. We want to attract more visitors via the river and then have them visit the towns and so increase footfall in the town centres and vice versa.

It is anticipated that in the next ten years a new Bedford to Milton Keynes Canal (the first to be built for 100 years) will allow boats to travel between the Grand Union Canal and the River Great Ouse and greatly enhance the number of visitors. This and other trend information suggest possibilities to expand the role of the towns for tourists and visitors and capitalise on the business opportunities that exist here. St Ives is perhaps the town with the easiest access to the waterfront, with hotels and restaurants on both sides of the riverbank. Pedestrian areas and environmental enhancements have helped improve the attractiveness of the area.

There are opportunities here to promote the river and I believe the Town Centre Partnership is looking at ways to do this.

In Huntingdon we are considering a series of options for improving the facilities at the riverside park. The boatyard has existed since 1946 on a narrow strip of land fronting the river and is accessed from the long stay car park. It has been suggested the park could be:

- Retained as it is
- Enhanced with limited extra facilities or
- Be fully redeveloped as part of wider leisure improvements'
Welcome to the Winter Edition of "News from the Environment Agency". We have had a very successful summer this year with various projects being completed, including the opening of a new 48 hour mooring, extending the existing 48 hour mooring at the Downham Market and with extra help from the Seasonal River Inspectors meeting and listening to many of GOBA members, and providing a much better presence on the water.

Update on works taking place

Throughout the summer months we removed many of the problems caused by shoaling that had occurred from high water for long spells during the winter and spring months. The main areas where work was carried out were Brandon Lock, Castle Mills Lock and the bends on the river between Brampton and Godmanchester Locks. We also assisted GOBA by removing spoil from your moorings at both Offord and Little Paxton.

Hockwold ‘Little Ouse’ Sluice Improvements

The clear air draft at one of the two sluice gates has now been increased from 2.1m to 3.0m permitting access to the head of the Little Ouse navigation at Brandon for larger craft.

The navigation was kept open for the duration of the works with the necessary restriction being kept to an absolute minimum. The Agency wishes to thank any body affect by these works for their patience during this time and is pleased to announce that works were successfully executed within budget between the months of June and August 2003.

Downham Market 48 Hour Mooring Extension Project

The extension work to the floating mooring at Downham Market is now complete increasing the existing mooring by some 50m (164ft). Improvements were also made to the existing mooring in the form of new tubular railing and additional floatation units.
Lock Cleaning Project

The lock cleaning project started earlier in the year and has been ongoing throughout the summer months. We have received very good feedback for this work which included jet washing the lock pens, the ladders, grab chains, signs and walkways. The picture below shows the difference made at Isleham Lock, which was one of the last sites to be completed.

St Neots Lock Extension

The second phase of the St Neots Lock Extension scheme scheduled to take place during this winter (2003/04) will not take place now until winter 2004/05, due to financial constraints. The navigation closure recently issued for this winter has therefore been cancelled, however a short closure will be required in early December 2003 to undertake an inspection and carry out some remedial works. The Agency apologises for any inconvenience this may cause to the GOBA members.

Boat Licence and Enforcement Update

The Agency is pleased to report that the sale of craft registration and licences to September 2003 has shown an improvement over the previous three years. Almost 4500 craft have been registered and licensed so far this year across the Anglian Region, this compares to an average of around 4000 for the past three years. Historically, sales up to the end of September usually account for approximately 90% of the annual total licence sales.

Enforcement activity this year has also increased, largely due to the presence of our Seasonal River Inspectors who you most probably bumped into sometime throughout the summer. The table below shows the level of enforcement activity during the first half of this year increasing from around 6500 in 2002, to over 7500 for the same period in 2003. Most satisfying is the reduction in the number of offences detected during this period, down by almost 50% to around 140 offences.

Recreation

Two of the Agency’s Waterways Officers, Mervyn Day and Miriam Biran took the Agency’s display trailer to the Ely Aquafest in July, with displays and publications to promote navigation and recreation. The event was very well attended, our stand was well placed right beside the river and our officers were kept very busy answering many enquiries from boaters and other river users. The Agency’s Waterways team also provided a presence at the Bedford On Water Extravaganza, the National Trail Boat Rally, the Electric Boat show at Hartford Marina and also the Sailfish Rally organised by The Cambridge Sailing Club to mention a few.

And finally….

Farewell to the Seasonal River Inspectors for 2003.

This summer’s Seasonal River Inspectors for the Great Ouse have been cast adrift! Will Grant has returned to Sheffield University to complete his degree in Accountancy and Economics. Pip Noon has just finished her Masters in Environmental Water Management at Cranfield University, Silsoe. Roger Mungham is building a new conservatory and tweaking his narrowboat to perfection. Jim Pritchard is enjoying his retirement.

The SRIs have had a successful first season providing a presence on Anglian Waterways, assisting visitors through locks, reporting faults and keeping vandals at bay. The feedback that they have collected from you has been very positive and will be acted upon by the permanent Waterways Team. Keep an eye out next summer for the new seasonal team in their distinctive blue navigation uniforms.
As the average length of members' boats rises and opportunities for new moorings diminish the pressure on public and GOBA moorings increases. Using his experiences from the Greek Islands and The Norfolk Broads Mike Trippitt suggests the answer to the mooring problem is to get more vessels on each mooring and not just to create more moorings. In this edition's Tips and wrinkles he looks at how to achieve this by mooring stern-to.

I have been fortunate in the last ten years to have motor cruised and sailed in a number of seas, from a number of shores and along many rivers. In each location there seems to be a different way of doing things and there is no doubt that here on the Great Ouse we do things differently. Generally, we do not pay for moorings (they do on The Thames); we tip lock keepers (they don't on The Thames); our crew step off the boat as we moor (no-one else does) and we slow down passing moored craft (no-one else seems to).

However, what we do not do on The Great Ouse system is to moor stern-to or bow-to and I do not know why. Of course, some mooring spots are shallow and do not allow props and sterndrives to get too close to the bank. Likewise the transom of some craft or the stern deck furniture equally make sterning-to a problem. There however many places on the river system where this method of mooring is both possible and desirable. Surprisingly, few boaters know how to secure stern-to correctly.

In this article I want to consider two quite different techniques; a so-called stern-to mooring one might see of hire boats on the Norfolk Broads on the one hand and a true Mediterranean-style mooring on the other.

The Broads Cruiser Stern-to

Perhaps we have all seen the hire boats on the Broads at least in pictures. See photo 1. In this type of mooring we need two stern lines (one on each quarter), a fendered transom and a mud weight or anchor. The steps to effect this kind of mooring are largely self evident.

1. Approach a mooring spot from astern with the engine running astern. Keep the vessel perpendicular (90 degrees) to the bank and opposite the space. Hold the vessel position in the stream or breeze as you reverse in.

2. A crew member should be positioned on the stern to guide you in and once the vessel is in almost up to the fendering the crew can step off. Each stern line should be secured as in figure 1. Before the helmsman leaves the wheel and turns off the engines

3. Once the stern lines are secure a mud weight or anchor should be deployed at the bow. It should be positioned slightly upwind or upstream whichever is prevailing.

4. Two stern springs can be deployed to hold the stern in position as added security.
Secondly, in all but the slightest of breezes or stream the mud weight will not hold the bow in exact position. In most lines of cruisers one sees moored like this there will be various angles of movement with the risk of rubbing other craft or the rubbing of transoms on the mooring. It is for these two reasons that I do not recommend sterning-to in this fashion. Doubtless however, it does go on wholesale. Rather, a true Mediterranean mooring eliminates the two above hazards.

The Mediterranean Mooring

The tidal rise and fall on the Mediterranean is so small that for almost all purposes including mooring it is ignored. As a result the long spring lines needed in tidal waters can be dispensed with and access and egress from a vessel is easily possible via the stern or the bow. We have no tidal rise and fall on the Ouse so the Mediterranean mooring really will work.

The vital difference between a Mediterranean mooring and the sort described earlier is the deployment of an anchor well before the vessel is reversed up to the mooring. An anchor (mud weights are less effective) is at its strongest when the pull on it from the vessel is horizontal rather than vertical. This means that anchor warps and chains need to be long. In the case of a chain the length should be at least four times the depth of water and in the case of warp six times the depth of water. See figure 2. Here are the steps.

1. Get in to position opposite the mooring, stern facing the mooring and at right angles to it. Drop the anchor when the vessel is far enough into the river for the chain length to be at least four times the depth of water (six in the case of rope) when the boat is at the mooring and also to be at least two and a half times the length of the boat.
2. Reverse in to the mooring as above whilst letting out the anchor chain which will in fact lie on the bottom of river.
3. Once at the bank secure both stern quarters as above.
4. Finally, pull in any slack in the anchor chain and bring the chain under tension before making it fast. By now the boat will want to pull toward the anchor but the stern lines will prevent it from doing so. See fig. 3.
5. Under this arrangement the transom is being held off the bank by the tension on the anchor chain and the bow will not swing for the same reason. If one is really confident a transom fender can be dispensed with. Sterns springs will help hold the stern in position.

In photo 2 we can see how the anchor chain is in direct line with the bow, how the boat is sitting at 90 degrees to the mooring without any danger of rubbing on the piles. See also how the adjacent vessel has drifted off not having used an anchor. In photo 3 see how the stern lines of the yachts are tensioned.

Mooring bow-in uses the same technique. Instead of reversing in against an anchor at the bow the vessel is driven in forward against an anchor deployed from the stern. (This is known as a kedge anchor and in Sweden for example it is a mandatory requirement to carry one.) Mediterranean moorings take practice and are clearly not necessary all the time. However, when popular moorings are, or are going to be, very busy do consider sterning-to. There will then be more space for everyone because we will get more craft in the same space. This has to be the way forward in my view. After all, just as the old real estate investors used to say - land is the one thing they are not making any more of!!

Mike Trippitt is an RYA Inland Helmsman Certificate Instructor, an RYA VHF Radio Assessor, an RYA Coastal Skipper, the holder of an RYA International Certificate of Competence for sail and power and a former GOBA Committee member.
Doesn’t it go quiet when the sun comes out? Having savoured one of the best summers for many years, you have all been keeping (well most of you) a low profile. The Committee has had some feedback from members who have written to the Environment Agency and copied the letter to GOBA. This is a useful way of going about things as it enables your representatives to reinforce your complaints or suggestions.

One such suggestion recently was that the EA put a wooden rubbing strip on the metal piling at Houghton lock. A suggestion which was fully backed by the committee and will be brought up at the next GOBA/EA liaison meeting. Talking about liaison, John Adams, leader of the waterways team attended an open meeting hosted by GOBA in the autumn of 2002. In the meeting he discussed the strategy of his new team and said that it would be judged by results. He promised to come back in 18 months and give us a progress report. To this end GOBA will host another open meeting in February or March of next year.

Direct Debits
Our Treasurer Mike Costello reports that the direct debit scheme is being taken up at a very acceptable level and that almost 400 completed forms have been received back so far. The whole new financial system is working well and greatly reduces the workload for Mike as well as being highly visible and up to date. It is hoped that as many members as possible will agree to pay by direct debit so your Treasurer can spend more time out? Having savoured one of the best summers for many years, you have all been keeping (well most of you) a low profile. The Committee has had some feedback from members who have written to the Environment Agency and copied the letter to GOBA. This is a useful way of going about things as it enables your representatives to reinforce your complaints or suggestions.

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B MK Link Update
James Clifton, the leader of the Bedford to Milton Keynes Link attended a recent meeting to update us on the progress of the project. A cost review is being carried out based on the Oxford Canal. Moving spoil accounts for about 1/3 of the total construction cost and it is planned that only half of the spoil removed will go to landfill, saving £20m.

At the Milton Keynes end only 3 landowners may qualify for compensation and this is at a low level. At the Bedford end it is planned to co-ordinate the work with the road projects on the M1 which will result in further saving and duplication of effort. Bedford Flowers accept the principal of craft coming through the centre of Bedford. Railway bridges are to have a 3 metre clearance and with the co-operation of developers the waterway can be taken close to housing.

An updated paper is to be presented to the British Waterways Board in October 2003 this will contain details of the water management study. The study will lay out the plans to fill, maintain the water level and supply surplus water to consumers. It will also contain details of plans for a water treatment and sewage plant to recycle water. James Clifton will supply the GOBA committee with copies of the paper.

We know that a number of members are still concerned that GOBA’s involvement in the scheme is seen as encouraging more boats on to a waterway which does not have enough moorings or other facilities to cope. We feel that had GOBA opposed or ignored the project it would have gone ahead anyway and we would have had no influence. We have already had one success in having Cardington Lock officially included in the scheme which will enable more members’ boats to access the link. It will be at least 2 years before the first sod is cut and during this time and up until the new waterway is opened we will campaign to increase and improve all the facilities on the Great Ouse.

Little Ouse Update
Bob Wells from our Committee is involved in the consultation on plans to restore navigation on the Little Ouse. When the next written report is published we will try to put it on the GOBA web site. In some ways this project is not as certain to go ahead as the BMK project as a number of interested parties have fundamental objections or other priorities. English Nature has concerns over otters and the desmolian vole. Forestry Enterprises would like locks deepened rather than dredging. No money has been laid aside for environmental projects. Roger Valentine of the EA would like to see more partnerships with interested parties, but states that the EA priorities are with the Cathedral Link Project. Navigation is possible but at a cost. The current budget of £7m is seen as inadequate. Bob will continue to represent the navigation interests of the membership.

Moorings
Moorings are seen by the vast majority of the membership as the primary reason for the existence of GOBA and the reason people join. To recognize the importance of this area we have now 2 mooring officers as it was becoming impossible for one person to cover the whole of the navigation. Stuart Turvey will look after the top end of the river and Jim Carter the lower end. These co-options to the Committee are recently in place and we have a number of potential mooring sites for them to investigate. A piece of land has been offered to us to purchase at St Neots. This is not considered to be practical but it may be possible to rent the land. With the raising of Hockwold Sluice more boats will be encouraged to travel to Brandon and there are two opportunities for GOBA moorings there. As new mooring sites are increasingly difficult to find we are looking at existing sites to see if it is possible to extend them. We have already agreed with the landowner of the Lazy Otter mooring that it can be extended by a further 80 meters. New mooring signs have been purchased and we are beginning to replace old ones where they are missing or damaged.

By the time you read this most of you will be laid up for the winter or at least your boats will. The GOBA committee will continue to beaver away on your behalf throughout the winter.
History of the OVRC

Chapter 3
1969 - Secure for the Future

Once the lease had been renewed, the projects that had been wisely shelved were dusted off and the extension to the Club house, the new slipway and winch and the concrete drive were all set in motion. As was the proposition to dig a marina within the grounds as by this time the club boasted some 56 cruiser moorings, 17 land berths and some 38 dinghies and canoes.

First of all though a major set back: the County Council refused planning permission for the extension to the Clubhouse. The Planning Authority did indicate however that they would be willing to consider permission for the erection of a completely new structure, an idea that was put before the Membership. Finance was the major stumbling block, with the Treasurer reporting that the Club could find up to £2000 with the possibility of a further £1000 being borrowed, at an annually rising rate of interest, from the Playing Fields Association. The formation of a ‘Building Sub-Committee’ led the project forward and enquiries indicated that the most cost-effective method was to purchase a pre-fabricated building. On 9th January 1969 the contract was placed with a local company to go ahead with the building of a new Clubhouse at a cost which was not to exceed £5000. Launching and promoting a Club Building Fund enabled the Club to raise the extra finance.

Chapter 4
The Consolidating Years

Work continued as the Club grew both in size and popularity and whilst such growth was welcome it of course brought with it problems that needed to be addressed. Things like compulsory third party insurance for boats moored in the marina, newly planted trees and lawns needed the regular attention of a grounds man, low water pressure led to the Club being connected to the mains and water was laid on to the marina arms. The Clubhouse was fully decorated and boat names were hung on the crossbeams in what was the start of a long-standing tradition and in spite of considerable resistance, a telephone was installed. Member’s children, who were quite numerous then, also needed close attention; campfires were banned in the wooded area and life jackets became the norm.

The car park was levelled and surfaced and a new workshop was erected for the use of all Members but as the club continued to grow both in spirit and numbers the need for more space became a constant source of debate. An extension to the Clubhouse was again on the agenda and with the spirit that was now engendered within the Club the thorny subject of a loan from Members was put forward. The extension was estimated to cost in the region of £2,500 and the loan scheme raised a very commendable £3,300 and the larger Clubhouse was very soon a new and welcome feature. Its easy to continue to list the changes and improvements to the OVRC and give the impression that the Club was about only work in the marina and the Clubhouse.

That certainly was not the case for whilst such a venture needed much work and expenditure to keep things in good order, the main reason for the club’s existence was boating and much effort went into organising and maintaining this particularly important ethic. The association with other river organisations was maintained and this concerted approach to river and navigation matter reaped major benefits in 1978 when the Great Ouse Restoration Society was able to boast completion of its stated aim to restore navigation of the Great Ouse to the sea.
There are about 40 Birchwood boats registered to GOBA members. Most of these are Birchwood 25’s but there are others. John Pridmore, the publisher of the Birchwood newsletter, ‘Birchwood Classics’, has written the following which Members may find interesting.

Birchwood company has had a turbulent time and a variety of names. The original company was called the Birchwood Boat Co. It commenced production in the 60’s and produced boats of 17,18 and 19 feet which had day cabins and little else and were fitted with outboards of choice. One of these, a 19’ Vanguard Spectre circa 1969, was seen last year in Houghton Lock. This had been trailed from Abingdon, Oxfordshire to Bedford and was taking its owners to Ely powered by a Honda 15, 4 stroke outboard.

Since the 90’s Birchwood have concentrated on sea going boats mainly over 50’ for the Mediterranean and USA markets. Last year the company, which was bought by entrepreneur Richard Oddie in 1996, went into voluntary liquidation. It has been bought by a consortium from Birchwood’s US distributor. Although they plan some changes to the range it is not likely they will produce boats for use on our river.

The Birchwoods that we see on the Great Ouse are powered by various makes and powers of petrol and diesel engines and either have shaft or out drives. The designation for each boat signifies the length. The types we normally see are indicated below.

**Birchwood 22**
Originally called the Interceptor Junior and later either the Birchwood 22 or the Birchwood Interceptor Junior 22. Approximately 1,000 were built 1970 to 1980.
The boat sleeps four in an open-plan, dinette and two vee berths arrangement. The helm is in the cockpit, usually under a hard top shelter.

Length: 22’  Beam: 8’ 3”  Draught 2’
Hull/deck of GRP. Hull shape: medium vee.
Engines: Various makes and powers of single diesel or petrol out drives were fitted up to 170hp. The 130hp petrol Volvo was popular, driving the boat at up to 23 - 25 knots.

**Birchwood Interceptor**
The boat sleeps four in the open-plan cabin. A double from a dinette and two vee berths which can also be made into a large double. A further double can be pulled out from the settee in the cockpit. Helm is in the cockpit, usually under a hard top shelter. This is usually longer on the 25 and has a sliding wheelhouse roof.

**Birchwood 25 Executive/Deluxe** has a partition between the dinette and forward vee berths.

The reports in the boating media in November 1975, referred to this as: "a resinglass, sheltered water cruiser, majoring on accommodation.” These reports give detail of construction, hull form and engine options. The Interceptor has an all round deck.

Length: 25’  Beam: 9’ 3”  Draught: Tunnel drive: 1’ 6”; Stern drive: 2’
Hull/deck of GRP. Hull shape is shallow vee: Displacement: 5376lbs (2400 kgs) Engines: Usually 115 or 130hp petrol Volvo in the Interceptor, top speed of 12 to 20 knots with single outdrive. Several options, up to twin 225hp CMOs, speeds of 26 to 28 knots, in the 25. Many 25s were fitted with an 80hp Ford inboard petrol engine, known as the Watermota Sea Tiger, which gives speed of 10 knots.

**Birchwood 27 Countess**
This craft was designed for both river and coastal cruising, approx 100 built between 1980 and 1984. The open plan cabin provides two seating areas which convert to double berths and the settee in the cockpit pulls out to give another double berth. Cockpit is either open or an optional hard top was supplied.

Beam: 10’ 2”  Draught: 2’ 9”  Hull/deck: GRP. Hull shape: medium vee with rounded forward sections and a keel for directional stability at low (river) speeds. Engines: Wide range of single or twin, inboard or outboard, petrol or diesel, was offered. Most fitted with twin diesel out drives, or twin 140hp petrol Volvos giving top speed of 28 to 30 knots.

**Birchwood 29** (also called Senator)
Over 200 built between 1976 and 1983. Two versions, one with aft cabin with 2 berths. Without aft cabin there are four berths in the forward accommodation and a settee as a single in the enclosed wheelhouse.
Length: 29' 1"  Beam: 10' 5"  Draught: 3'  Hull/deck: GRP  Hull Shape: medium vee with three-quarter length keel. Engines: Various single and twin, diesel and petrol inboards were fitted. A pair of 170hp Volvo or BMW petrol engines provide top speed between 20 and 23 knots.

**Birchwood 31 Commodore**
Almost 100 built between 1981 and 1984. The layout is unconventional. The standard boat has main living area, with dinette and galley, in the aft cabin. The dinette converts to a double berth. The forward cabin has a double and two singles are in the wheelhouse/saloon. There is another helm position on the raised aft deck.

Length: 31’  Beam 11’  Draught: 3’  Hull/deck: GRP  Hull shape: medium vee with rounded sections forward - convex below the water line, concave above it, and a deepish three-quarter-length keel. Engines: Single or twin, diesel or petrol engines. A pair of 138hp petrol Volvos or 145hp diesel Volvos should give top speed of about 20 knots.

The following boats (which are also ‘Classics’), are not normally seen on the Great Ouse upstream from Ely, but I know of a GOBA member moored at the Pike and Eel, who has bought the hull and superstructure of a Birchwood 33 Series II. This had been in the original purchaser's garden since he bought it. I have provided copies of original brochures to assist him on the fitting out of this boat.

**Birchwood 33/GT33** (later called Viceroy)
This was originally known as the Newport 33 built by Marine & Industrial Mouldings based in Newport Pagnell. This was from a 1970 hull design by Graham Caddick. They sold out to a company called GT Marine which produced the GT33 and it was bought out by the Birchwood Boat Co in 1972. Through the 70's Birchwood continued to build the bare hull and superstructure of the GT33 for completion by other boatyards or individuals. At the 1973 London Boat Show they launched the Birchwood 33 Series II.

**Birchwood Sportsman 33**
This was introduced in 1976. It has an aft cockpit and a fly bridge and a totally different interior layout with an enclosed wheelhouse/saloon. (Only a few were built but I have seen one moored on the Yorkshire Ouse, between York and Acaster Malbis.)

**Birchwood Viceroy 33**
The 33 was succeeded in 1980 by the Viceroy 33. This was built on the same hull but with a different superstructure and layout. Over 300 built from 1973 to 1982. The GT version has an all round deck. The 33 has six berths, four forward and two in an aft cabin (either with two singles or a double).

Versions of the 33 built before 1981 have a midship, open backed wheelhouse which was restyled to give an enclosed wheelhouse and a flying bridge.

Length: 33’ 6". Beam: 11’ 2”. Draught: 2’ 9". Air draught: 8’ 6” (non-flying bridge) Hull: Medium vee, with rounded underwater sections and deepish keel. Engines: Various single and, more common, twin outboard engine installations fitted. A pair of 150hp diesels give top speed of 20 knots in a 33 and 18 in a 35.

**Birchwood 35S/Sportsman 35**
In 1978 a 35 foot boat was introduced. This was based on a stretched version of the 33. It has an enclosed wheelhouse/saloon and the option was offered of an outside helm on the raised aft deck, when it was called the 35S, or a flying bridge when it was known as a Sportsman 35. The 35 sleeps four in its aft cockpit version and six in the aft cabin version. A rear cockpit version with a six berth arrangement was also offered. About 100 were built from 1975 to 1981. Length: 35’. Beam: 11’ 2”. Draught: 3’  Air draught: 10’ 7”. Hull: Medium v, with rounded underwater sections and deepish keel. Engines: Various single and, more common, twin outboard engine installations fitted. A pair of 150hp diesels give top speed of 20 knots in a 33 and 18 in a 35.

**Birchwood 37 President**
Almost 60 were built between 1981 and 1984. Superseded by the TS37. Accommodation is for 6. Double berths in forward and aft cabins and a dinette converts into another double. Two helm positions, one in the wheelhouse/saloon and one on a flying bridge.


References: Alex McMullen, Birchwood Boats, MBM.
MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the GREAT OUSE BOATING ASSOCIATION held at the OUSE VALLEY RIVER CLUB on 27TH APRIL 2003

There were 74 persons present at the Meeting.

The meeting was opened by the Vice-Chairman, Geoff Parrish, who welcomed members to the 2003 AGM at OVRC.

Apologies for Absence:
There were 6 apologies, a list of which is attached to the attendance sheet.

Minutes of the 2002 Annual General Meeting:
The minutes had been published in GOBA News and full copies were on display in the hall. Proposed by S. Fisher, seconded by D. Smith and unanimously agreed that the minutes were accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.

Matters Arising from Minutes:
There were none.

Chairman’s Report:
The Chairman, John Hodgson, was unable to attend because of family illness. He thanked the Vice-Chairman for reading out his written comments, explaining that his report was necessarily not as full and complete as he would have liked. He thought that others would cover all important issues.

He referred to changes on the committee. John Pridmore had stood down and he welcomed back Tony Downing as the new GOBA News Editor. He announced that Clare and Mike Trippitt, Barbara Arnold and John Soanes were also standing down and, on behalf of members, thanked all of them. He made special mention of John Soanes who had served on the GOBA Committee for a selfless 22 years in most positions, including Chairman. He added his own thanks to Barbara Arnold for the help she had given to him personally over the years.

He welcomed David Mercer who would be the new Minute Secretary and assist with EA liaison.

He reported on the EA liaison meetings, details of which were published on the GOBA web site and EAs new management team led by John Adams. There were signs that they seemed to take a little more notice than the previous regime, but it was still early days. He mentioned St. Neots lock, which despite enormous problems had been opened for Easter, and thought it would be interesting to see how the final project finished up. In September, GOBA had arranged a presentation given by John Adams to GOBA and other clubs and waterways organisations when he gave his vision of the future.

The meeting was to reconvene around February next year so we could quiz him regarding progress with the many promises made.

The Bedford-Milton Keynes Link route was to be 1A, the most expensive, but passing through the centre of both towns. GOBA was continuing to monitor the project to make sure it was useable for as large a section of the boat population as possible. There had been success recently when it seemed that BW were intending to omit Cardington Lock from the project. Now, after discussions with the Project Manager and Board, Cardington improvements are formally back in the scheme.

GOBA continues to seek and obtain new moorings and details were available from Roy Wood or other Committee members. The Vice-Chairman added that any members who knew of suitable moorings should let us know. This had been the first year of colour production of GOBA News. There had been no adverse comments but JH and TD would welcome any thoughts. The Chairman encouraged members to raise any other issues during the meeting and concluded his report by sending best wishes for a pleasant boating season.

Treasurer’s Report:
Copies of the Association’s audited accounts for 2002 were available at the meeting. M. Costello explained important aspects and invited questions from the floor. There were none but the Treasurer was congratulated by members for providing such a clear and detailed report.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by R. Foote, seconded by J. Soanes and carried unanimously.

It was announced that subscriptions would increase to £15 in 2004 and to assist administration a new Direct Debit payment scheme would be introduced.

General Secretary’s Report:
The General Secretary’s report focussed on Moorings, EA Liaison, Major Projects, Use of Members’ Money, Raising Money and Vandalism.

Two new moorings this year – at Little Paxton and Reach, with possibility of another on R. Kym. Improved mooring at Isleham. Consideration for increasing capacity at existing moorings. Ongoing liaison with fishing clubs. EA Liaison Meetings continuing and discussions on moorings, locks, fallen trees, navigation hazards (of which shoaling merits special mention). Consultations on dimensions for St. Neots Lock.

GOBA represented on other organisations, RYA, AFrac, IWA & NINF and also on major projects. The Chairman sits on the B-MK Project Board and Bob Wells represents GOBA on the Little Ouse project which is at the environmental feasibility stage. GOBA have been consulted on the Nar-Great Ouse Link navigation issues and at last, work is under way at Hockwold Sluice.

GOBA contributed small sums to most major projects to help gain representation. Other major costs were moorings rental and maintenance, GOBA News and Insurance, where the Treasurer had been desperately seeking best cover at a sensible price.
To raise money, subs would be increased in 2004 and advertisements in GOBA News and on the web site had been suggested.

On vandalism and intimidation, members were advised to avoid confrontation but to report incidents to EA and the Police for investigation.

Members were asked to show courtesy by slowing down at moorings and waiting for oncoming boats at locks.

There had been representations on red diesel fuel and the phasing in of pump-outs.

GOBA’s work to increase mooring space, exert pressure on EA to improve navigation and facilities and represent members in all areas connected to the Great Ouse system would continue.

Election of Officers and Committee:
Nominations were received as follows: -

Chairman J. Hodgson proposed by B. Arnold was re-elected.
Company Secretary S. Fisher proposed by M. Trippitt was re-elected.
Treasurer M. Costello proposed by R. Wells was re-elected.
Committee J. Burton, T. Downing, C. Grant, D. Mercer, G. Parrish, A. Reid, R. Wells, R. Wood and L. Wright.

The meeting elected the above nominees ‘en-bloc’.

Appointment of Auditors:
Treasurer proposed that the current auditors be retained.
Re-appointment of the present Auditors - C. J. Dyke & Co. of St. Ives was moved by M. Costello seconded by G. Parrish and carried by the meeting.

Discussion of Topics Raised by Members:
Appreciation for the GOBA web site was expressed.
Difficulties with lock gates and slackers at various sites were noted.

Any Other Business
Barbara Arnold was presented with a cut glass vase as a token of appreciation for her work over many years. She replied that it had been hard but rewarding work which she had thoroughly enjoyed.

John Soanes was presented with a knot board on his retirement from committee after 22 years. On a proposal by S. Fisher, he was elected an Honorary Life Member of the association which he acknowledged as a great honour, much appreciated.

There being no other business, the Vice-Chairman closed the meeting at 11.46 hours.

MINUTES of the SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING of the GREAT OUSE BOATING ASSOCIATION held at the OUSE VALLEY RIVER CLUB on 27TH APRIL 2003

There were 74 persons present at the Meeting.

The meeting was opened by the Vice-Chairman, Geoff Parrish, who welcomed members to this Special General Meeting to consider and, if thought fit, pass the following as a resolution of the Association.

Resolution
That subject to the consent of the Financial Services Authority the Rules of the Association be amended in accordance with the schedule appearing below:

Schedule
The Rules shall be amended as follows:

1. Delete the existing Clause 27 and in its place insert

   The Association shall have a banking account into which all monies received on account of the Association shall be immediately paid. The Association may also have Savings Accounts for the long-term deposit of funds. The Association may use Electronic (Online) Banking for all transactions subject to the following restriction. No account of the Association amounting to £500 and upwards shall be paid except by cheque on the Association’s bankers signed by two committee members. For this purpose Committee members shall include officers.

2. After the existing Clause 63(f) insert the following new Clause 63(g)

   Any reference to the Chief Registrar, Registrar, Central Office, Assistant Registrar (for Scotland) or the Registry of Friendly Societies includes reference to the statutory successor carrying on the relevant function of any of them.

The Treasurer, M. Costello, explained to the meeting the reasons for the changes and proposed the Resolution which was seconded by A. Reid.

The Resolution was unanimously agreed.

There being no other business the Vice-Chairman closed the meeting at 11.47 hours.
Around the Clubs

Upware Boat Club

As I write this (in mid October) we are still enjoying days of unbroken sunshine at the end of what has been one of the best years for boating in memory. There have been a few down-sides, such as lack of water and too much duck-weed, but overall we have had every opportunity to make the most of the season. We at Upware Boat Club have not missed out on this and all our events have been well attended and most enjoyable – there is nothing like a relaxing evening by the river with friends, enjoying a BBQ!

One of our principle events, the trip into the Wash, is a good example. We cruised out early (very early!) into a flat calm Wash with great anticipation. As the day developed into the hottest day of the year, indeed for many years, we decided to carry on and ended up enjoying an excellent day at sea. For those who found the conditions a little too calm, a rising breeze after lunch created a nice little chop for the run back to Kings Lynn and the return journey to Denver in the evening.

A great day and typical of so many this year. Since the last edition of GOBA News we have enjoyed several other events, all of which have been equally successful.

It was good to spend time with other Clubs at the Regattas and share experiences, news and views. I thank them all for their kind and generous hospitality, which we tried to repay at our Regatta. As with all our river events, we had a good turn-out of members and it was encouraging to see new as well as long-standing members entering the competitions and doing well.

We seem to have spent a lot of time this year in the lower reaches of the Ouse as, just before the Regatta, we joined in with other boats from this and other river systems at the Denver Rally in support of the Nar-Ouse Link. Although this was a most enjoyable weekend, the real success will be if it proves to have made any impact on the decision to proceed with the project. It is to be hoped that it does, as removing the requirement to negotiate the tidal Ouse from a trip out into the Wash would eliminate what is, to my mind, the most dangerous part of the journey and thereby greatly improve safety.

More recently we celebrated the Last Night of the Proms in our traditional style, with a BBQ with fireworks finale and a sing-along. Being our last river event of the season it attracts most of the members and we had difficulty this year fitting everyone in! However, we did and it was an extremely happy and relaxed affair, finishing off with a full English breakfast on Sunday morning, cooked on the riverbank.

Our Laying up Supper took us back at the Five Miles Pub, Upware, where we started the season with the Commodore’s Welcome. And so another annual cycle is completed. We have enjoyed a very happy season and it has been particularly good to meet up with “old” friends and introduce new members to the joys of boating in company.
During the winter, being unwilling to miss any opportunity to eat, drink and make merry, we get together for our Winter Trip. This year we are considering a weekend at the coast with a day trip across the Channel and, whether this is viewed as the last event of this year or the first of next, I am sure we will all have a good time.

We are approaching our Annual General Meeting and I will have served my two years as Commodore so will be standing down to allow a fresh mind with new ideas to take over. I would like to take this opportunity to convey my sincere thanks to all who have made my term of office so enjoyable. I look forward to seeing you on the river next year and convey best wishes from the Club to all fellow boaters.

Philip Baker (Aquila)
Commodore

Around the Clubs

Ouse Valley River Club

What a summer we all have had, almost wall to wall sunshine. I am writing this on the official first day of autumn yet the sun is streaming into my office, (well back bedroom), long may our season continue.

I know that the EA takes a few brickbats from time to time but maybe this time a pat on the back for maintaining the river levels despite the drought conditions.

On the subject of the EA, early September saw John Adams the EA Waterways Manager take up an invitation to give a presentation to OVRC members and people from nearby marinas, on the subject of the progress of the repair work to the St Neots Paper Mills Lock: thank you John, a very professional presentation.

Unfortunately, since the meeting, it transpires that in the main due to financial constraints very little major work will be completed this winter. Does this mean that the repair work may take an additional twelve months to complete? Perhaps a further visit to the OVRC may be in order when the dust settles.

We at the OVRC, thanks to our hard working social team have enjoyed a super summer; our Summer BBQ and On Shore day were great successes. We were pleased once more to welcome many visitors from other clubs and “privateers” who enjoyed our hospitality and the entertainment of “Buddy Holly”, a really terrific weekend.

The Rear Commodore’s party went with a bang - a really good country night.

The OVRC this year hosted the visit of the Northampton Boat Club to Tuzzy Muzzy, home of the OVRC. Picking up at Brampton and cruising to St Neots in September sunshine for lunch and a spot of home grown hospitality made for a truly excellent day with our friends from the Nene.

Congratulations are due to Thumper and friends for once again winning the St Neots Illuminated Boat Competition.

We now launch ourselves into the winter program of Club events with Ladies Nite and Stag Weekend (whatever that is), closely followed by the Annual Ball, Laying Up supper and AGM with elections for the new committee to take our great Club into 2004 and beyond.

Swans: we see them everywhere, lovely birds, except when they are attached to large treble hooks and spinners. One such bird was in great distress just off the EA mooring downstream of Houghton Lock, obviously a good Samaritan had managed to call Swan Rescue because very shortly along came a “bag” lady on a bike. Quickly and with no fuss she efficiently tempted the swan closer with bread; a swift grab and he was trussed up like a turkey (or swan) in a special bag with just his head poking through. The swan was last seen swinging from the bikes handlebars. Let’s hope he survived the ordeal, the hooks I mean. It’s thanks to voluntary helpers such as this unknown lady that many birds survive.

In these days of mobile phones, would it be an idea if useful phone numbers such as Swan Rescue were to be shown on the GOBA and EA mooring notices. Just a thought.

Winter is not too far away now, OVRC members wish all GOBA members a very safe and pleasant “close” season.

See you on the water during 2004.
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

GOBA MOORINGS
1 Priory Marina*
2 Godlington
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 Fish and Duck
15 Dimmocks Cote
16 Wicken Fen
17 Reach Lode
18 Whittington (Wissey)
19 Isleham

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

John Hodgson "Otters Way" (Chairman), Chris Grant "Andante" (Vice-Chairman and Membership Secretary), Sid Fisher "Warrior" (Company Secretary), Alistair Reid "Miss Meva" (General Secretary), Mike Costello "Grumpy Bear Too" (Treasurer), Tony Downing "Breakaway" (Editor GOBA News), David Mercer "MBSHA" (Minute Secretary and EA Liaison), Denise Troughton "Orchard Delight" (Publicity/Communications), Roy Wood "Lalita Anne", Geoff Parrish "Spyros", John Burton "Double Brandy", Bob Wells "Shaman", Lance Wright "Happy Heron", Mike Mackay "Red Arrow", Stuart Turvey "Miss Magic", J im Carter "Lady Margaret"

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

useful contacts

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