

River Trent feasibility study

The East Midlands Development Agency has commissioned a £100k feasibility study on increasing use of the River Trent to Nottingham. While the northern 81 km from the Humber Estuary of the river is tidal, the 33km above Crowell Lock to Nottingham constrains carrying capacity because the river extends through six locks of a limited size and in Newark, there are some restricting bridges

British Waterways will manage the project. The project team includes CBOA's Tim West of Wynns. As part of their brief the team will look at the possibility of developing an inland port near Nottingham.

Glenn Millar, Economic Development Manager for British Waterways, told CBOA News they would be looking at both short term and long term possibilities.

"We'll be looking at what we need to do to get more traffic and bigger vessels on the River Trent," he said.

At present there is no regular traffic on the non-tidal section from Newark to Nottingham. Most of the tidal traffic involves moving aggregates from Bestthorpe Pit, near Newark to Humberside and West Yorkshire. In 2007 this amounted to some 200,000 tonnes.

The potential for more extensive use of the River is recognised in the East Midlands Development Agency's Regional Economic Strategy and the East Midlands Regional Assembly

Freight Strategy. Increased use of the River for freight would also contribute to the aspirations of the Department of Transport's White Paper: The Future of Transport (2004). That outlines Government policy to encourage the transfer of freight from road to sea and inland waterways.

There are four inter-related objectives to the key one of seeing how feasible it would be to encourage a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport in the East Midlands. The team will investigate:

- 1 Market opportunities for moving goods on the river within the Nottingham – Gainsborough corridor, given the existing navigational constraints
- 2 Options for removing those constraints to improve navigation and allow larger vessels to reach the Nottingham area

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3 Additional market opportunities that would be opened up through enlarged navigation, particularly to and from the Humber ports

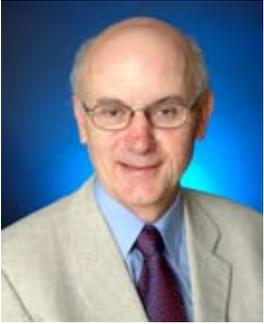
4 Locations for wharves to handle traffics for both the existing and improved waterway, including the feasibility of establishing an inland port in the Nottingham area.

They will also be looking at the potential for container traffic to and from the Humber ports.

"Obviously we hope the report will identify how we can get more freight up the river and also better serve the East Midlands," said Mr Millar, "that's what we hope will come out of it!"



From the chairman



“Play to your strengths and emphasise the positive” is good business practice and one we in CBOA must remember. So what are our strengths and how do we capitalise on them?

We know that water freight is the best ‘green’ transport mode, with capacity to spare. And recent signs that many others share these views are encouraging.

From Tesco’s use of the Manchester Ship Canal to Transport for London wanting to safeguard wharves on London’s canals; from Birmingham Council’s consultants identifying 80

Ombudsman to the rescue

When a barge operator on the River Severn feared not being able to start a contract because the River was not being maintained to a sufficient depth he turned to the Waterways Ombudsman. In a judgement worthy of Solomon the Ombudsman succeeded in satisfying both British Waterways – and ensuring the operator could win his contract.

“I saw no benefit in pressing British Waterways to dredge the river until he was ready to use it regularly (especially as I understood that it could silt up again quite quickly),” the Ombudsman said. However, when the Ombudsman asked BW to undertake to do the dredging work

waterside firms who could transfer goods from congested roads to an international logistics company seeking CBOA’s advice on moving more than 100,000 tonnes a year from West Yorkshire to the Thames by water: these show we are getting our message across. Not to mention the Olympic Lock!

CBOA is playing a significant role in this. We are part of the steering groups for the Birmingham and Trent studies. We meet senior DfT and BW officials. The Highways Agency consults us. We have close connections with many other water freight groups, including the industry-led water freight promotional group Sea and Water.

Now we must ensure planning initiatives are followed up. It is striking that Yorkshire and Humberside where the opportunities should be at their greatest does not feature in the list above. Will the Government’s forthcoming White Paper on Sustainable Transport give that extra needed push?

John Dodwell, Chairman CBOA

when required, BW was initially unwilling to commit to dredging for a suitable level for commercial traffic because of cost, despite its statutory obligation to do so. They appeared to state they would approach the Waterways Minister for an Parliamentary Order to remove their obligation.

However when pressed by the Ombudsman to give the operator the commitment he needed, BW reviewed their position “at the highest level” and told the Ombudsman they would dredge when the barge operator was ready to start regular traffic.

See also ombudsman advice on p5

Stobarts to use MSC?

Stobart Group, the logistics providers, are to return the Port of Weston to a fully functioning bulk shipping and coastal feeder port. And a spokesman told CBOA News: “We’ll be looking at a whole range of services options because the port obviously lends itself to using the Manchester Ship Canal.”

The Department of Transport made a Harbour Revision Order for the port that will come into effect at the end of February. The order also appoints Westlink Holdings Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of the group, as the statutory port authority for the Port of Weston.

Following last year’s merger with the Westbury Property Fund Ltd the group – famous for their fleet of Eddie Stobart long distance lorries - became operators of one of the UK’s largest road haulage fleets and a specialist rail freight services. The revived port will enable them to bring goods from the south by coastal ship to customers in the north. They already operate a train service with Tesco from Grangemouth to Daventry, aided by DfT grants.

“As people are getting more concerned about the environment they want to reduce road miles,” the spokesman said. “So by getting off the roads and onto rail and possibly other forms of transport we’ll be helping our customers by reducing carbon emissions.”



Proposed site for the redeveloped port

Tesco takes to the water

Tesco has become the first major UK retailer to transport freight regularly by canal. They are ferrying wine in containers by barge from Liverpool to Manchester via the Manchester Ship Canal. And the venture has proved so successful that a spokesman told CBOA News they are currently looking to move more goods by barge.

He said Irlam Wharf (on the outskirts of Manchester) is ideally situated to store and move goods to Tesco’s Middlewich depot.

Although the launch was delayed by 4 weeks – bad weather held up the arrival of the barges from Amsterdam and they had to shelter at the Isle of Wight - in the 10 weeks between launch and Christmas, Tesco delivered 30 containers a week. That is equivalent to 9.5 million 75cl bottles of wine. The move to transport wine by water took 30 heavy lorry journeys a week off Britain’s congested roads, cutting carbon emissions by 80%.

On arrival at Manchester the containers of wine from Australia, California, Chile and Argentina are then transported to a bottling site less than half a mile away. There they are packed for Tesco supermarkets across the country.

Until now Tesco’s New World wine shipments have arrived in the UK at various southern ports by ship before being driven to the Manchester bottling depot. Each 20ft container takes one truck off the road.

The scheme has won the support of Sea and Water, the independent pressure group lobbying to maximise the use of Britain’s waterways for freight transport.

The initiative resulted from a partnership between Tesco, Salford-based importers and bottlers Kingsland Wines and Spirits and the co-operation of Peel Ports who own both the Manchester Ship Canal and the Port of Liverpool.

Kingsland supply chain director Michael Forde said a corner of their production site is only 50 yards from the Manchester Ship Canal “and we wanted to explore the idea of using this great historic waterway.”

Tesco Transport Director Alex Laffey told CBOA News: “The movement from road to the ship canal has been a seamless process, maintaining the excellent service we deliver into the Irlam bottling plant.

“The ship canal has enabled Tesco to remove circa 2,500 loads off the road per year and we aim to grow

this to 3,500 loads a week during 2008.”

Meanwhile Sainsbury is also considering moving some of its goods around London by barge. Speaking on the Today programme Alison Austen, Sainsbury’s head of Environment, said they had carried out a successful trial taking products from a depot in Charlton to Wandsworth.

“We think that we could take this out to over a dozen stores in Central London from the Wandsworth wharf and that means that we could probably save 360,000 km (of road transport) every year,” she said.

Interviewer James Naughtie then went on to ask Simon Salem, Marketing director of British Waterways, about this “nice little bit of PR for the waterways”. In reply Mr Salem said the Sainsbury’s idea ticked the three main boxes of getting freight onto the waterways:

- regular traffic
- a wide waterway
- their willingness to go along with partners like the Port of London Authority to get the investment to pay extra costs.



Hanson's Canary Wharf

Hanson's floating concrete batching plant is now well established in the South Dock of West India Docks and is being supplied with aggregates by water. On average, BW Docklands is accepting 4,000 tonnes of material each week, which is above the original prediction and can be attributed to Hanson's success in obtaining concrete supply contracts in the area.

Construction materials specialist Hanson operates one of the UK's only floating concrete plants in the South Docks of West India Docks in the heart of London. The concrete batching plant supplies ready-mixed concrete to high-rise developments in Canary Wharf.

And because it is supplied with raw materials by barge along the river, it reduces significantly the number of truck mixers, cement tankers and aggregate lorries coming into the site by public roads.

The original plant was based on land but after 18 months was moved to a floating pontoon on the dock as the land was designated for building. In view of the volume of concrete needed for the development of Canary Wharf – up to 250,000 cubic metres a year at its peak – a

second plant was brought in which produced 91,000m³ in 18 months.

A further three high rise developments in the City of London were also supplied from the wharf plant, including the prestigious 42-storey Swiss Re building, designed by Sir Norman Foster

The plant was taken away for refurbishment in 2004 after supplying more than 600,000 cubic metres of concrete for high rise construction work – mainly to the Heron Quay complex. It returned to the Docks in November last year after Hanson won further contracts to supply concrete to the continuing developments at Canary Wharf.

Hanson is one of the world's largest suppliers of heavy building materials to the construction industry, producing aggregates (crushed rock, sand and gravel), ready-mixed and precast concrete, asphalt and cement-related materials and a range of building products including concrete pipes, concrete pavers, tiles and clay bricks.

The company is part of the HeidelbergCement Group, which employs 70,000 people across five continents. HeidelbergCement is the global leader in aggregates and has leading positions in cement, concrete and heavy building products.



Press watch

BBC Look North

Bill Scott's takeover of Burton Stather Wharf on the lower, tidal part of the River Trent attracted attention. The item talked about his plans for the resurgence of barge trade in the area.

Show House

This housebuilders publication carried a story on Medway based plasterboard manufacturer Knauf Drywall successfully completing a test run on the Thames to prove that building materials can be moved safely and effectively by water to the Olympics site in east London. It saved them some 1,400 road miles and the company expected to see a marked reduction in carbon dioxide emission. (Editor's note: we gather they have since been awarded a contract to supply the site. The Olympic Delivery Authority has said it wants 50% of construction materials to arrive by water or rail)

Waterways World

Transport for London is commissioning a study to identify sites that can be developed for waterborne freight in the Greater London boundary area. The study will determine the facilities needed for the various categories of water freight business, such as construction materials, aggregates, recyclables, waste, fuel and container traffic. It will involve 3 waterways authorities: the Port of London Authority for the tidal Thames below Teddington, the Environment Agency for the non-tidal Thames upstream of Teddington and British Waterways for the remainder.

Meanwhile Work is progressing well on the new Olympics lock in Prescott Channel at Bromley by Bow.

more press stories on p 6

Complaints about British Waterways

If you have a complaint about British Waterways then you need to know about the Waterways Ombudsman. Following major improvements to the Ombudsman scheme, it can now consider complaints from businesses with an annual turnover of less than £1 million.

The first thing you need to do is to use British Waterways' own formal complaints procedure. To do that you either need to write to the local general manager or to the external relations manager at their head office in Watford: there are more details on British Waterways' website. But if you are still not satisfied when you have completed both stages of British Waterways' complaints procedure you can then approach the Ombudsman.

There are some restrictions on what complaints the Ombudsman can consider: complaints must be specific, must be about maladministration or unfairness which have caused the complainant an injustice, must have been made to British Waterways within three years of the action complained about and must be made within six months of completing the complaints procedure. Full details are in the information section of the Ombudsman's website.

But if you are not sure whether the Ombudsman could consider your complaint then contact her to check. There is no charge for using the Ombudsman service, and you do not need a solicitor. If the Ombudsman thinks you have suffered because of

a failing by British Waterways she can recommend action (including compensation) to put things right and British Waterways have to act on her recommendations.

The Ombudsman makes an impartial judgement on each complaint she receives. Inevitably she does not uphold all complaints. However as a result of one recent complaint by a commercial boat owner, which she upheld, British Waterways have agreed to carry out certain dredging which previously they had refused

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IWAC calls for joined-up thinking

IWAC wants more money and joined-up thinking for inland waterways freight

The government's own advisory committee on inland waterways says more – and more publicity for – grant aid for infrastructure and craft is needed so the full potential of waterways for freight can be realised. And they are calling for improved cooperation between all relevant departments to ensure the UK and Welsh Assembly government policies for inland waterways are implemented in a coordinated way, to encourage companies to choose the water option.

The Inland Waterways Advisory Council published 'Decreasing our carbon footprint: moving more freight onto the inland waterways of England and Wales' in January. It says that encouraging companies to use waterborne freight could make a useful contribution to achieving

the Government's policy of reducing carbon emissions by 60% by 2050.

Noting a view held by others that because we can use the coastline to transport freight between ports there is little opportunity nor need to develop freight transportation on inland waterways, the report quotes researchers from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research who challenge that view. They say that moving freight by road produces emissions of 0.08 tonnes of carbon for every freight tonne-kilometres whereas moving freight by water produces only 0.02 tonnes.

"It is clear from examples of successful inland waterway traffic in the UK and elsewhere in Europe that our larger inland waterways can provide a viable and environmentally friendly means of transporting freight and that such freight operations can co-exist in harmony with other waterway uses," the

report says.

IWAC's policy states it supports the increased use of inland waterways for freight transport. It recognises the environmental advantages in terms of reduced emissions of carbon dioxide and reduced road congestion and noise nuisance. It is therefore recommending:

- better promotion of waterborne freight
- the UK and Welsh Assembly governments should make a study of the opportunities for and barriers to increasing freight by water and producing recommendations that can contribute to reducing the UK's carbon footprint
- greater adherence to existing planning policies promoting the use of waterways for freight and stronger support for waterborne freight in future planning policy statements

Press watch

Tesco's move

Tesco's decision to ferry wine by barge from Liverpool to Manchester (p3) attracted much attention from the press, ranging from the expected (IWA Waterways) to the Today programme on BBC Radio 4.

The Guardian

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs select committee is urging the government to consider introducing financial incentives for businesses to move freight by water rather than road or rail, the online Guardian reports. It reports that just 1% of domestic freight is transported on canals and rivers despite the fact that carbon dioxide emissions from coastal and inland shipping are 80% lower than those from road haulage.

While not specifically mentioning waterways, another piece in the Guardian reporting on carbon pricing said that in theory the 'shadow price for carbon' of £25.50 a carbon tonne would create a bias against roads (and carbon-emitting power stations). That price was set so the government could meet its policy to stabilise carbon emissions at between 450 and 550 parts per million carbon as recommended in review conducted for the Treasury by Sir Nicholas Stern.

Daily Telegraph

News that British Waterways had disbanded its central freight marketing team triggered a double spread feature on freight on canals in this publication. Noting that canals are the most environmentally friendly way to move goods, it quoted the dismayed reaction of several organisations and champions to BW's actions, including CBOA member Graham Thompson of Thompson River Transport. Mr Thompson highlighted

the initiative to extend a commercial freight service from Upton-upon-Severn to Gloucester being thwarted when part of the canal needed for a barge to lie along a wharf was filled in with waste from the Gloucester roadworks bypass.

International Freighting Weekly

Goole can become the UK's Duisport, says this publication. In an interview with Peter Arosin, CEO of RMS Group and MD of Danbrit Shipping, editor Martin Roebuck notes the time has come for the UK to develop its own version of Duisberg's intermodal facilities on the Rhine. Mr Arosin says Goole could be the catalyst. Despite draught limitations, (potential feeder operators want 350 teu) he sees scope for shipments of brands such as Per Una or George at Asda to come right upriver, closer to the distribution centres.

Steel Engineering is using the River Cart to transport huge steel spools, each weighing 80 tonnes, for the first leg of their 1,000km journey from Westway Industrial distribution park in Renfrew around the coast of Scotland to Newcastle-upon-Tyne. It's the first time the river has been used for commercial traffic for at least 20 years. The local council invested in lift bridge renovations so the laden barges could get past. The spools will be used by the oil industry for laying pipes.

Lloyds List

A weekly barge shuttle service between container terminals in the ports of Amsterdam and Strasbourg has begun. It's the first time such a service has been offered between Upper Rhine and Amsterdam exclusively and is operated by Barge Company Amsterdam. It leaves Amsterdam on Fridays, loads in Strasbourg on Mondays

and leaves for Amsterdam again on Wednesdays.

Coastal Shipping

The French waterways authority Voies Navigables de France (VNF) reports that coastal shipping in the Rhone-Saone basin increased by 15% last year to 1,116 million tonnes. This is despite the fact that to meet requirements for using the river, coasters must have someone aboard who speaks French and has a certificate of capacity for inland shipping. Many coasters therefore employ river pilots, who charge anything up to 7,000 euros for a trip up and down to Chalon-sur-Saone. In addition, because the Rhone is not classified as an international river (unlike the Seine), VAT has to be paid on fuel.

Locks on the Rhone are managed by the Compagnie Nationale du Rhone (CNR). They were responsible for the canalisation of the river to produce electricity.

Yorkshire Post

In its Country Week section the paper investigated whether the Leeds/Liverpool Canal – "once the M62 of northern England: - could once more transport freight to ease traffic congestion and reduce Britain's carbon emissions."

Roadtransport.com

The online version of Road Transport carried a piece quoting CBOA on the apparent watering down of the government's policy to move large, abnormal freight loads by canal in favour of road haulage (see p. . .) The FTA disagrees, arguing that any move to increase congestion on the roads would not be in the Highway Agency's interests. A Department for Transport spokesman said the consultation was aimed at clarifying how the policy was applied.

Regional roundup

Yorkshire

Barge operators working on the Lafarge aggregates traffic from Besthorpe on the Trent (north of Newark) to Whitwood (near Wakefield) suffered unusual delays last summer. Initial cause was the theft of copper cabling on the conveyor belt that brings the aggregates from the quarry to the wharf. Having been replaced, it was stolen again – and again. This resulted in a 5 week period when loading could not take place.

When this had been dealt with, there were then major floods in the rivers Aire and Calder. So when barge traffic resumed, silting on the Calder meant they could not get through at least one of the bridges and there was damage to the downstream weir from a large tree washed down by the floods. British Waterways helped out by offloading to dredging hoppers so the barges could get through and then brought in dredging equipment to provide a longer term solution.

Greater London

Transport for London is commissioning a study to identify sites that can be developed for waterborne freight in the Greater London boundary area. The study will determine the facilities needed for the various categories of water freight business, such as construction materials, aggregates, recyclables, waste, fuel and container traffic. It will involve 3 waterways authorities: the Port of London Authority for the tidal Thames below Teddington, the Environment Agency for the non-tidal Thames upstream of Teddington and British Waterways for the remainder.

Hull

Hull-based operator John Dean has bought several of the LASH barges formerly used to bring grain from the continent to Selby via the now scrapped mother ship. The Selby mill owners showed keen interest in restarting the waterborne traffic; we understand barge movements began again last year

Thames -green for go



An ex River Lee lighter set off in style on her first run by having Olympics oarsman Sir Steven Redgrave pour the traditional libation of champagne under her bows and naming her Green Heart. She's the first barge to make the inaugural run from a new six acre site at the Port of Tilbury. The site is the initiative of the Green Barge Company who have developed it to transfer freight destined for the Olympics site at Stratford by barge.

First load was eco sand and Green Heart was scheduled to return with timber for recycling. The company has already increased its fleet and now has 3 tugs.

CBOA champions members

1 East Midlands: the disbanding of BW's central freight unit and the lack of knowledge and expertise of staff in the remaining business units led to delays in Humber Barges being able to reply to a traffic enquiry about a potential 10,000 tonnes per year of imported stone from a re-opened wharf on the lower Trent to Nottingham. CBOA's David Lowe wrote 3 times to 3 different BW-nominated freight champions seeking information about unloading facilities and the toll and got no reply. However, a subsequent complaint to the chief executive worked and the information was eventually received. . . 2 months later!

2 Aire and Calder Navigation: BW and CBOA worked together to improve an issue concerning alleged water leaking into a lockside cottage caused, the owner said, by barges colliding into the lock. CBOA's Noel Tomlinson and BW's Stuart McKenzie visited the place, BW beefed up the fendering and instigated a monitoring programme, Noel reminded barge captains to take more care, BW then found the general boating skill around the lock had improved and asked Noel to thank all the barges captains for their cooperation.

3 Staffs and Worcs: Lack of dredging between Whittington and Debdale locks was causing problems but thanks to CBOA's John Jackson intervening it's now better. John got in touch with BW who said if they could find extra funding then extra work might be possible – it was – so they asked for advice on where to dredge. BW discovered that one of the problems was caused by an engine, dumped in the canal since the previous dredging.

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CBOA AGM

The Annual General Meeting was held on 17 November 2007. John Dodwell gave his chairman's review of the year and Peter Hugman, as Treasurer, presented the accounts, which were approved; subscription levels were also approved. John Jackson reported on stoppages and maintenance matters, including whether dredgings put on the bank stayed there. Nicholas Hill, Paul Ayres and Andrew Burge were re-elected to the committee. Richard Horne of Phoenix Canal Carriers asked about how British Waterways' staff liaised with planners and Rupert Smedley asked about MCA matters. At a committee meeting following the AGM, John Dodwell, David Lowe and Peter Hugman were elected as Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

We are one of the leading authorities on moving goods off the road and on to water. Our clients and contacts include industry, national, regional and local government.

- How the use of water freight, both inland and coastal, can help solve logistics problems
- How to obtain grants for the capital costs of moving freight onto water
- How to resolve cargo handling problems between land to water
- How to access difficult urban area building sites

Water freight can be cheaper than road, it beats urban congestion and is the most environmentally friendly means of bulk transport.

Shallows warning

At least one barge operator has run severely aground in the aftermath of flooding and consequent silting on the River Trent. It left a silt bar just below Cromwell Lock where barges turn round. Geoff Wheat, Operations director of Humber Barges, noted a water level of more than 8ft when he brought freight barge "FUSEDAL H" to load aggregate at Besthorpe Quarry in January. This meant that if he went empty to Cromwell to turn to go downstream to the quarry jetty, he ran a great risk of being swept past the jetty without being able to tie up. So he loaded at the jetty with the barge facing upstream, loaded and then went up to Cromwell to turn round.

Loaded to 8ft.2in. at the stern and 7ft.6in. at the bow; at which draught he normally swings loaded without any problem, with the stern adjacent to the dolphins below the lock (in the navigation channel), he ran severely aground. This was despite the fact Humber Barges had been complaining about siltation for some time.

"Until this area is dredged out and maintained," he says, "I feel that British Waterways should be quite aware that the corollary of this lack of dredging by British Waterways is to push the barge operators into a situation of much greater risk at Besthorpe Jetty."

Humber Barges have written to BW who say they will do something about this shortly.

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