

CBOA NEWS

Commercial Boat Operators Association
Newsletter issue 4 · Spring 2009

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New Olympic barges for London

A barge that can carry 85te of cargo on London's canals – some 25% more than normal yet without any increase in labour costs – has been designed and built by the Land and Water group. The key is the use of light-weight metal that enables cargo capacity to be increased within the same water depth.

The light-weight hull and single skin floor design of the Olympic class barge has a bow and stern that creates minimal wash and disturbance on the waterway. And certified as In-Class for navigation on the tidal Thames, they can be rafted together in groups of up to six, eliminating the need for expensive transshipment and creating options for multi-modal and multi-material transport.

What's more Land and Water has designed the hold to carry ISO container boxes, making the

carrying possibilities even greater.

"It's the long-term potential that really excites us," says Land and Water director James Maclean.

The new design is based on lessons learned from vessels entering the Panama Canal and from the Denham-West Drayton freight contract, for which Land and Water operate the barges. There heavily laden commercial barges displace more water than leisure craft and can suffer from restricted water syndrome. That causes the barge to squat on the waterway bed because water cannot reach the propulsion at the stern.

Olympic class barges are already docking at Powerday's new Park Royal recycling centre on the Grand Union canal to load and unload waste materials. Land and Water is partnering Powerday in jointly marketing and developing multi-

David Suchet honoured



Canal enthusiast and supporter David Suchet was recently awarded two special freedoms on the same day.

The first was the Freedom of the Company of Watermen and Lightermen. The Guild was established by Act of Parliament in 1555, the only one to be so formed and controlled 'to regulate watermen and wherryman carrying passengers by boat under oars on the River Thames'.

He then proceeded to London's Guildhall to be made a Freeman of the City where, it was observed, he took his oath with great gusto. This entitles him to drive a flock of sheep over London Bridge.



Thames watermen © NMM



An 85te load is delivered for reprocessing by Powerday

From the chairman



At a time when it is difficult for CBOA members and their customers in the construction trade to feel positive about the economy we have – by serendipity and not design – a surprising amount of good news in this issue.

The new Olympic class barges, built by Land and Water, the dredging being carried out – at last –

Olympic gold cont.

modal and sustainable solutions for waste streams and building materials in central and west London.

“The combination of a custom-designed barge and waterside recycling plant has made the concept of canal transport a genuine commercial option,” says Maclean.

In addition Land and Water is partnering towage specialists GPS Marine Contractors for tidal vessel movements on the Thames and S. Walsh and Sons (landfill and recycling operators in the East Thames Corridor) and landfill operators in that area to provide a one-stop shop for east London and Thames-side projects.

The Grand Union passes through the heart of London and joins up with the Olympic site in east London:

above the Olympic lock and craft conversion to handle traffics on the Severn are all good developments. And read the Braford profile - ‘the economic crisis won’t last’.

However the inability of various authorities to co-ordinate themselves so the dredging at Olympic Lock was done earlier has been immensely frustrating. There are those who say the Lock will come into full use too late because so much construction material has already been moved. Nevertheless, this lock was built not only to service the Olympics construction work. There is the exciting prospect of 15 years’ construction activity at Stratford City, north east of the Olympic site. We are pressing the London Development Agency to ensure there will be space for wharves.

Molasses to Ellesmere Port, steel to Leeds, and gypsum to Ferrybridge continue the good news. The joint

appointment by Transport for London and British Waterways London of a well known London water freight person to promote freight is welcome. And CBOA officials are making effective contributions to Department for Transport and British Waterways activities.

We have also updated the CBOA logo and are revamping our website (www.cboa.org.uk).

Economic downturns create opportunities. ‘Green’ infrastructure improvements are favoured by Government and create employment – witness the canal improvements of the 1930s. By the time you read this the East Midlands Development Agency’s commissioned report on increased trade prospects on the Trent should be out – and we shall be pressing for its recommendations to be implemented.

John Dodwell
Chairman, CBOA

Keeping your end up?

How is the recession affecting you? CBOA is conducting a survey to find out how the use of freight by water is being affected by the recession. It takes only a few minutes of your time to complete the - mainly tick box – questions and answers: answers are anonymous.

To take part, just go to the CBOA website: www.cboa.org.uk and look for the link to the survey.

We’ll publish the results in the next issue of CBOA News.



Land and Water has just won the contract to dredge the tidal Bow Creek and above Prescott Lock. Starting this April they will use three of the new Olympic class barges (plus four conventional barges, excavators on pontoons equipped with GPS and various tugs and land-based heavy plant for sediment treatment) to improve navigation to the new materials handling wharf being constructed in the Olympic Park.

“We are exceptionally pleased to have been selected for this project,” says Maclean. “It’s a final step to unlocking the Olympic Park for bigger vessels and thus greater opportunities for freight traffic. It’s testimony to a commitment to use the waterways not only before, but after the Games.”

New boat on sand traffic

Last year a 'new' boat started work on the Denham to West Drayton aggregate traffic. The 1883 Birmingham Joey boat BCN No.108 carried its first load of 25.59 tonnes of sharp sand, towed by motor Arundel. The pair of boats loaded from the conveyor at Lea Pit and delivered to the newly rebuilt unloading wharf at Hanson's West Drayton depot.

The new boat dates back 125 years to 1883, and had a varied life, and length. Shortened by 15 feet, it worked as a maintenance craft on the Grand Union, and was restored at that length by Eva and Piers Bull. In 2007, Pete Boyce acquired it to replace Betelgeuse on the sand traffic, as a more suitable boat for the short haul daytime work. No 108 was taken to Lyons Boatyard near Birmingham and lengthened to its original 71 feet. This was done by adding three more plates each side

to match the original rivetted iron construction, with replica knees being constructed and hot rivets used to join the plates. Lyons Yard provided labour and fabrication skills, and Ian Kemp advised and managed the rivetting. Below the waterline, welded steel footings and bottom plates matched those added in BWB days. The hold was reinforced with a steel angle 'hopper' edge, so that the hold would be unobstructed for unloading by grab. A new rudder and a wooden lining were made by Pete Boyce. The lining provides a clean square space for the grab to operate in. This has speeded up unloading time by half an hour by greatly reducing shovelling of the residual sand.



The boat also has a large enclosed foredeck with flush deck, which balances the bouyancy of the enlarged cabin area and provides a safer platform than the fore end of a traditional butty.

Arundel is operated by Richard Horne of Phoenix Canal Carriers. No.108 is operated by Peter Boyce of Phobox Ltd.

News in brief

News from DfT

Two new publications from the Department for Transport:

1 Freight Facilities Grants outlines how FFGs can help by offering cash incentives for businesses to take freight off congested roads and move it by rail or water.

Contact details:

The Freight Grants Team
Department for Transport
Zone 2/16, Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR
Tel: 020 7944 6848
Email: FFG@dft.gsi.gov.uk
www.dft.gov.uk/freight/grants

2 Choosing and Developing a Multi-modal Transport Solution. This 40-page best practice guide aims to explain to freight transport providers

and users of transport services how to approach a consideration of the use of rail or water transport as part of their supply chains in the UK.

With the help of pertinent case studies it explains the water and rail freight sectors, shows examples of where rail or water services can be used successfully, helps business make a decision on modal shift for a particular transport leg and explains the availability of financial assistance such as grant funding.

Appendices include a map of port locations and main inland waterways, the rail freight network and recent grants awarded.

This publication is free. Call the hotline on 0845 877 0877 or download it (and other Freight Best Practice publications) from www.freightbestpractice.org.uk.

All in a day's work

Telephone rings:

Consultant: "Hello. I work for a consultancy. Our clients are proposing to install a tidal energy device in the Humber. Does your Association cover estuaries as well as inland waters?"

CBOA: "Yes. Whereabouts?"

Consultant: "At Kingston-on Hull. West of the River Hull. Near one of the docks."

CBOA: "How close? Don't want to find it affects the navigation channel."

Consultant: "Well, looking at this map, it's west of Albert Dock; in fact, just west of William Wright Dock – looks as if it might be close to a lock into the Humber. Shall I send you papers?"

CBOA: Yes please. We need to make sure it won't be in the way."

CBOA (thinking): "Good to know they think CBOA's views are worth having."

CBOA for members

CBOA calls for dedicated minister

Government should appoint a dedicated freight minister, set up a dedicated freight desk and create a central water freight authority like the Strategic Rail Authority.

That was the message CBOA chairman John Dodwell gave shadow Environment minister Anne McIntosh at a meeting organised by Will Chapman, chairman of the pressure group Save our Waterways, in January.

He said that given British Waterways lack of funding for maintaining commercial waterways – and DEFRA's lack of interest – the Department for Transport should provide funds, as the House of Commons transport committee on freight transport had recommended last year.

Citing reasons why this made good commercial sense he pointed out that one man can move more by a modern barge than by lorry in the same time. Using waterways for freight also, importantly, cuts the UK's carbon footprint.

He said government should provide funds for Regional Development Authorities to look at enlarging commercial waterways so they can carry container-carrying barges. The French are proposing to do this and the Belgians already have done

Annual general meeting

At the annual general meeting last autumn the chairman gave a report, the accounts were approved and committee members were elected. The committee now comprises John Dodwell (from Rolandon Water and Sea Freight Advisory Services), David Lowe (Humber Barges), Pete Hugman (Barge Consult), Tim West (Robert Wynn and Sons), John

Jackson (Roach fuel supplies), Ian Braine (Canal and River Services), Richard Horne (Phoenix Canal Carriers), Noel Tomlinson (Lincoln and Hull Marine Contractors), Paul Ayres (Colne Valley Carriers), Keith Mahonney and Nick Hill.

A London sub-committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Keith Mahonney. Other members are Gerry Heward (Wood Hall and Heward), Richard Horne and Paul Ayres. Noel Tomlinson runs our Northern sub-committee in conjunction with David Lowe.

In order to make the AGM more interesting, the Committee is considering holding it at different places, enabling members to see various operations/facilities. This could be in conjunction with CBOA officers meeting local logistics and planning people.

Trolley hotline

A trolley hotline scheme has been launched to help members of the public report abandoned shopping trolleys in canals and rivers.

British Waterways, which is organising the scheme, estimates 3,000 are dumped annually, and that fishing them out of its network costs £150,000 each year. It says the hotline will be used to help recover trolleys, and name the supermarkets which own them.

British Waterways is concerned that 320 supermarkets located close to their canals and rivers are not doing enough, and whilst some chains had 'cleaned up their act', they are concerned that others are happy to write off the loss of their trolleys instead of tackling the issue.

IWA is supporting the initiative as it considers trolley dumping to be a significant impediment to navigation

and a risk to wildlife.

The Trolley Hotline can be contacted on 01923 291120, and members of the public can report abandoned trolleys by visiting

www.britishwaterways.co.uk/trolley

IWA's subsidiary management company Essex Waterways has resolved this problem on the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation following pressure on Tesco. The company has now employed a sub contractor to remove trolleys from watercourses close to a number of its stores, and this sub-contractor in turn now pays Essex Waterways Ltd a fixed monthly fee for keeping the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation clear of Tesco trolleys. The arrangement seems to suit all parties, covers costs and keeps the waterway clear.

DfT visits Yorkshire waterways

In a joint exercise CBOA and BW arranged for two senior policy officials from the Department for Transport's Freight and Logistics Division to visit parts of Yorkshire's waterways in March, believed to be the first such visit for many years. They were welcomed by CBOA secretary David Lowe, CBOA treasurer Pete Hugman, John and Jonathan Branford from Branford Barges (see profile this issue) and Geoff Wheat from Humber Barges.

The two civil servants were first taken to the Lafarge unloading wharf at Whitwood, near Wakefield where they were met by Lafarge officials. They observed Lafarge's barge 'Battlestone' arriving and unloading 450 tonnes of aggregate. After a visit to Castleford Lock, where CBOA explained the threat being caused by instability problems, the group went on to Leeds to view the wharf used

CBOA for members

by ASD metal services for trials last year and which they wish to bring into permanent use.

CBOA has invited the DfT officials to make similar visits to the North West and the South East waterways.

CBOA meets BW management

CBOA chairman John Dodwell and secretary David Lowe had a constructive meeting early in March with Robin Evans, BW's chief executive and BW's communications director Simon Salem. Among the topics raised were:

- prospects for use of the Olympic Lock
- getting the aggregate traffic to Gloucester started
- dredging on the Sheffield and South Yorkshire
- maintenance on Midlands canals and stoppages for marina connections
- freight promotion
- possible DfT funding for freight waterways
- and BW's three year corporate plan.

It was agreed that CBOA should address a group of senior BW operations managers about how to react to freight enquiries, including those via planning applications.

CBOA meets Waterways Minister

CBOA chairman John Dodwell raised the issue of slow dredging of the channel above the new Olympic Lock in London when he and officers from other waterways groups met DEFRA's (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) new Waterways minister, Hugh Iranca-Davies. The Minister had recently visited the lock but knew nothing of the problem, without which

the lock would be of limited value.

The minister demonstrated his enthusiasm for waterways by saying he and his family were going to have a canal boat holiday. He also announced an additional £2m aggregate sustainability grant for the Olympic Lock costs and a further £1m generally for BW – welcome but a drop in the ocean, bearing in mind BW's annual £28m maintenance budget gap.

CBOA also participated in a stakeholders' meeting organised by DEFRA to help them update the definitive Government waterways policy document: *Waterways for Tomorrow*. CBOA has been told there will be a separate chapter on water freight. In addition, CBOA and Freight by Water had a one-to-one session with DEFRA officials.

CBOA was represented by its chairman and secretary at last autumn's BW Annual Meeting. The opportunity was taken to ask about dredging arrears.

Multi-Modal 2009

CBOA will be represented at the Multi-Modal 2009 trade exhibition at Birmingham on April 28-30, in addition to the Seaworks trade exhibition in Southampton later in the year. This is part of a concerted effort to raise the profile of water freight in trade circles.

Leeds steel trial

The decision of Leeds-based ASD metal services to use barges as a trial to move steel inland from Scunthorpe to Leeds has been warmly welcomed by the CBOA, who facilitated the project. ASD metal services, the UK's largest independent multi-metal stockholder and distributor, transports more

than 60,000 tonnes of structural steel sections a year. They have now piloted bringing structural steel sections directly into Leeds by barge rather than lorry from the Humber ports.



Inland Navigator with steel travelling to Leeds

When they reviewed their supply chain arrangements they decided to establish a 8.65 acre storage site beside the Aire and Calder Navigation at Stourton Point on the outskirts of Leeds; cheaper storage costs and the ability to use barges to cut transport costs were two of the main influences.

CBOA's secretary David Lowe worked closely with ASD and Stuart McKenzie, the British Waterways Leeds-based Freight Champion, to facilitate ASD hiring a barge suitable for this specialised cargo. CBOA then arranged for barge skipper Peter Hugman to captain the barge.

David Cox, ASD's Group Operations manager, said: "Bringing our structural steel sections directly into Leeds by barge offers a much more environmentally friendly solution – Greener Steel!"

Adds Peter Hugman: "We were gratified by the unsolicited, positive response from everyone we met on our way. The stevedores who loaded the barge, towpath walkers and pleasure boat owners were all keen to know what the cargo was and how many tonnes we were taking off the roads."

Profile: Branford Barge Owners



John Branford traces his family connection with the waterways back the best part of 200 years. His great grandfather – also a John Branford, son of a mariner – rose from being an indentured carpenter to building vessels for the inland navigation trade in the 1860s. He owned the shipyard at Knottingley and had 30 barges and two lots of stables. It was from that yard in 1893 that he launched its first screw steamer, Message, fitted out to carry Portland stone from the south coast to the Firth of Forth and the Spurn lighthouse at the mouth of the Humber.

Since then an unbroken line of Branfords has carried goods on the inland waterways. Captain of his first barge the 90te B32 at the age of 15, John Branford is now owner

and operator of three 500te barges. Like his father Cyril, John began by carrying coal from Hatfield Colliery on the Stainforth and Keadby Canal for delivery to Bagley's glassworks at Knottingley.

When gas began replacing coal John had to look for other work. He bought his first barge Adamant from G D Holmes in 1966 with the £450 earmarked for his marriage. Childhood sweetheart and wife Pat was more than understanding: she became the mate.

"I was encouraged because there was a storage place for commodities at Rawcliffe Bridge on the Aire and Calder. Whitakers - the previous carrier - put their prices up so Tennant Trading came to me!"

The business thrived thanks to John's ability to deliver. Single-handedly he could offload 130te in a day (mainly zircon sand) and sail back to Hull with his wife that same night, ready to load the next day. If there was no barge work he worked in the warehouse driving anything the company required. By managing not just his barge but others as well, John was able to pay back the money for Adamant within the year.

Then Tennant Trading moved to Selby. "They wanted me to be wharf

manager but my father wanted me back for Bagleys at Knottingley - if Bagleys had a job we had a job because my grandfather had sold them the land in 1876."

Rockware took over Bagleys in 1972 and spent £8.5 million making the site the most modern bottle glass plant in Europe. John helped design a fast loading jetty with a gantry stretching 90ft over the river at East Butterwick on the Trent so full loads could be delivered even on the smallest tides. He formed a new partnership with his father, J. T. and C. Branford, a year later.

They moved 2,000 tonnes of Messingham sand (for making green and brown glass bottles) a week to Knottingley, each delivery all on the one tide. For this John bought his first large capacity barge, the 275te Mossdale, to complement his father's 290te sister barge Eskdale and the pair then rescued and refurbished their third barge, the 350te Cordale.

"You've got to keep moving with the times."

Some 20 years later John was handed a radio from a vessel that had sunk. Despite his misgivings he fitted it to Cordale. That night, on a river in full flood, she too sank and John and his mate had to be helicoptered off – the only time he has sunk. When Cyril Branford died in 1981 the trading name changed from J.T. and C. Branford to Branford Barge Owners.

Two years later John bought three lighters and named them after his children - Jonathan, Claire and Alison - to move and store imported Belgian sand for Rockware for 'white' glass. While sand had been brought into Goole for more than 100 years it was now loaded at Wharton's on the Trent.

In 1984 he bought the 320te Baysdale. He got a new job moving 600te a week of Messingham sand to Beatson Clark in Rotherham on the South Yorkshire canal. And pushing a lighter with Cordale he could take



500te in one go and save time.

Then competition from foreign glass started to kill the English industry. In 1987 John took a certificate of competence to be a haulage manager and Class One driver. He bought two wagons, subcontracted six others and delivered by road to Rockware and Beatson Clark.

“If I could get the barge to the factory I’d win hands down but the cost advantage disappeared with handling - Beatson Clark was half a mile from the wharf where we unloaded.”

When an Australian company took over Rockware John decided it was time to go back to his first love. Cordale, Eskdale, Mossdale and Baysdale were put to work transporting aggregates from Rampton to Knottingley for Steetley’s (later taken over by Redland). He acquired the 250te Humber Trader (now a floating dentist!) as a bad debt and bought the 500te Humber Renown, the first oil tanker conversion to carry aggregates right into Leeds city centre.

When in turn Lafarge took over Redland, Branford Barge Owners successfully bid for a Freight Facilities Grant (FFG) in 2005. John had bought two out-of-service tankers, Fossdale and Farndale and the grant helped with the cost of converting them into 500te capacity aggregate barges. The deal with the FFG was to carry 250,000te in five years. After less than four years he has already carried more than 200,000te.

Despite the recession he is positive about the future.

“You’ve just got to sit back and ride the storm. I think it’s got to come

back – whatever happens you’ve got to start building homes again and doing things to kick start the economy. It’s just a matter of waiting.”

The Branford tradition continues with John’s son Jonathan. He started working with his father 10 years ago, was captain of Eskdale at 19 when he helped build the new marina at Newark and has been captain of Farndale since she was converted in 2005.



Left: 1893 - the first screw steamer built in Branford's yard
Above: 1963 - loading silica sand for Knottingley glass works
Below: 2007, Grimsby dock



“And,” says John, “I have two grandsons, and two granddaughters...”



2005 - Humber Renown travels toward the sunrise through the Humber Bridge

Press watch



Soaring fuel prices and green pressures herald comeback for Britain's waterways ran the headline in a major feature in the **Independent on Sunday**. Illustrated by a photograph of the Peel Ports – Manchester shuttle barge carrying Tesco's containerised wines from the new world, and with a map showing Britain's networks of canals, it told how Eddie Stobart, Tesco, Sainsbury's and Lafarge have switched thousands of tonnes of freight onto ships and barges.

"Britain's waterways are on the brink of an astonishing revival," reported Hannah Godfrey. "The UK's long-neglected latticework of canals and rivers, which once helped to jumpstart the industrial revolution, are posed for a renaissance."

But she added that industry experts were frustrated by lack of planning and imagination by the government, local authorities and British Waterways.

She quoted CBOA chairman John Dodwell and Francis Power, of Freight by Water on the need for government action to help companies make the shift to water.

"In cases where it would cost £11 per tonne to transport some cargo by road and £10 per tonne to transport it by water," John Dodwell said, "companies often stick with road because it's the tried and tested option."

Tidal Thames, the Port of London Authority's magazine, reports that more and more firms are asking them about moving freight by river,

from containers to petroleum products, aggregates and recyclables to food.

"But our biggest battle isn't on the water," says PLA's head of Planning and Partnerships Jim Trimmer, "it's on the shore."

They are working with the Mayor of London, the Greater London Authority, the London Development Agency and Transport for London to safeguard and reactivate wharves for cargo handling. He said protecting the river's infrastructure was crucial, "because there's little point moving freight by water if there's nowhere to bring it ashore."

In the same issue they report the government has given the go-ahead to build the Thames Tideway Tunnel. This will be a massive intercepting sewer running from Hammersmith in west London to Beckton in the east. Contractors will use river barges to transport excavated material.

More good news: Lower Wharf, which serves Pitsea landfill site in Essex, has re-opened after 12,000 cubic metres of silt were removed. The PLA worked closely with Veolia who run the berth, Natural England and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to ensure dredging and new barge traffic did not damage the environmentally sensitive Holehaven Creek, and has now drawn up an operational management plan for tug and barge operators using it.

Chris Partridge of **The Times** writes that the canals are beginning to discover their roots as carriers of freight, and contributing to reducing Britain's carbon footprint in the process (January 28). He notes that barges have always been good for moving huge quantities of material with very little energy, and cites

the new wharf, the first on the Grand Union canal for 150 years, for the Powerday recycling plant at Willesden in west London.

Where are the policy initiatives to promote waterway logistics? asks a headline in the letters column of **Lloyds List**. CBOA's Tim West of Robert Wynn and Sons wrote that it seemed the government had "consistently ignored" the suggestions of those who serve on both the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Transport Select Committees, who have championed the cause of waterborne freight carriage.

He says that for waterways to play a significant role in an integrated and sustainable transport network, responsibility for waterways should be transferred from Defra to the Department of Transport.

DHL, the international express courier service experts, have turned to the waterways to help offset their carbon footprint. **International Freight Weekly** reports they have floated a distribution centre on the canals of Amsterdam.

Their *Hollands Glorie* uses four sorting staff – and 20 bicycle couriers – to deliver express parcels across the city. It is working so well the company has now launched a second service, in Venice, using a cargo gondola.

No comment

DfT tell us that regional transport initiatives should largely be funded at regional and local level.

The DfT is providing an extra £64m towards a £79m extension of the East London railway line (to Clapham Junction).

That's about 80%!

Foreign news

France

In an example of joined up thinking, the Port of Paris Authority is advertising far and wide - at least, in the British

press - to rent (not sell) land in the Ile-de-France region to companies wishing to relocate. Candidates wishing to use fluvial transport (sic) will be favoured.

Benelux

In February International Freight Weekly carried comments from Maira van Helvoirt, managing secretary of the barge operators association CBRB. She argued that digital infrastructure was as important as physical infrastructure, with IT information that could speed up barge handling at container terminals. They are also engaged in an IT pilot scheme to speed up lock use efficiency in the Westerscheldt area of Holland leading to the ports of Flushing, Terneuzen and Antwerp.

Once the Maasvlakte II Rotterdam extension is complete, inland navigation is targeted to get a 45% share of the modal split by 2035, rather than the current 40% because the state-owned Port of Rotterdam Authority demands a modal shift split for containers.

She also noted some consolidation of barge operators and that large barge firms such as those owned by the British logistics company Wincanton hire in other craft and crew as needed.

Germany

Contargo, one of the main barge operators, is planning to develop

more terminals on the Rhine at least 150km from the sea ports with a minimum 500,000 teu capacity; one could be at Cologne. One reason is that they are fed up with sea port congestion. In 2007 their fleet spent 57% of the time waiting in sea ports and only 43% on the move. "In one case, we had to wait 120 hours for a barge to be handled." In addition, the world economic problems with a massive reduction in container traffic from the Far East is leading to a reduction in container barge traffic, reversing a steady 10% pa growth since 1990.

River Danube

The Austrian Government plans to double traffic on the Danube. They believe the river is a ready made transport artery with vast potential. Through the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal there are connections with Rotterdam, Antwerp and Amsterdam in one direction and with Constanza in the other direction on the Black Sea. Along the Austrian part of the River alone there are eight ports.

Via Danube, the Austrian government group that deals with the upkeep of the river ports and water freight promotion, plan to double the

existing 12m tonnes a year by 2015. This is part of the National Action Plan which includes removing two shallow water bottlenecks.

Because of the 60 locks needed by barges from North West Europe, Via Danube is looking east for increased traffic flows. Constanza was due to have completed a €25m barge terminal by the end of 2008. A Via Danube-commissioned survey found it could be 23% cheaper to import from Shanghai to Austria using Constanza than using Hamburg. But the MD of freight forwarder Panalpina believes using Adriatic ports is better.

However a Dutch shipbroker who in 2006 set up Danube Express Container Line using coupled Seine vessels to take 124teu has reported problems with running a scheduled service. Unlike the Rhine which runs through two countries well used to river traffic, the Danube runs through 10 countries with different ideas on infrastructure improvement and traffic flows and methods. CBOA considers patience is needed to get customers used to new methods and the completion of the new Constanza barge terminal should help.



Regional news

Ferrybridge gypsum trial success

Lafarge Plasterboard's new £35 million facility has taken delivery of its first load of synthetic gypsum by barge. Synthetic gypsum is a by-product of the power stations' exhaust chimney 'scrubbing' process and can be used instead of natural gypsum.

Located at Ferrybridge, adjacent to the FGD plant of the 'C' power station, the plant will take all the gypsum produced by the power station. However storage and rail capacity constrain the tonnage from other power stations.



The plan now is to deliver some 25,000t a year by barge to the site from Cottam power station on the Trent, loading via the existing (but now disused) aggregate wharf at Rampton, by the power station

Humber Barges Ltd on behalf of Norec carried out a trial trip using Fusedale H, loading just over 300 tonnes (due to the light weight of the material), and delivered to the works via Kellingley Colliery wharf and a short road haul because the power station wharf was not available. The trial was deemed a success, with some relatively minor changes required to the loading facility at Rampton. It is anticipated that the regular movements will commence in summer 2009.

Collecting the bathwater

When Nigel Bowker took delivery of Seaport Alpha the last thing he

expected was that he'd shortly be using it to help out the Ark Royal. He had bought her as a standby tug for his Mersey Tanker Lighterage business, moving edible oil by tanker barge in Liverpool Docks and the Mersey.



But then the Navy's flagship vessel paid a four-day civic visit to Liverpool. As it was a civic visit she had to moor at the cruise liner terminal. And there simply wasn't enough space at there for road vehicles to come and take away the crew's bathwater...

Now Seaport Alpha is being refitted – but not before Nigel secured some more Navy business.



Seaport Alpha coming alongside HMS Ark Royal at Liverpool's Cruise Liner Terminal in June 2008

BW praised

British Waterways announced a stoppage just before Christmas when an electrical component on one of the New Junction Canal swing-bridges in Yorkshire failed. Due to a delay in getting spare parts, the stoppage was longer than expected. In the meantime, BW operated the swing-bridge manually to ensure that commercial craft could continue their vital service uninterrupted. Thanks, BW.

Castleford Lock repairs

CBOA's Northern Committee was asked by British Waterways for our views on when a three week stoppage for remedial works should be carried out on Castleford Lock on Yorkshire's Aire and Calder Navigation later this year. Having consulted members and other firms including those in the oil trades and pleasure boat interests we suggested that the work be done as soon as possible, during the lull in traffic caused by less construction activity.

ACN locks – weekend charges

CBOA has made representations to BW against proposed charges for weekend locks working, bearing in mind pleasure boats can use the locks without extra payment.

Midlands maintenance success

Following letters from CBOA's vice-chairman John Jackson to BW, spot dredging has been carried out on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal top level. Special attention was paid to the "narrows" under two railway bridges where the canal section size makes it difficult for water to pass boats. In addition, BW is to dredge each channel beside the old toll house stops on the BCN Main Line. Both issues had made it notoriously difficult for deep drafted boats to pass and BW's work is appreciated.

A further satisfactory development from John Jackson's letters has been a commitment to carry out remedial work next winter at Braunston where part of the tunnel cutting side slipped in 2007, partially blocking the navigation and permitting only narrow beam craft to pass. Over the 2008-9 winter, the condition of even that reduced width channel deteriorated and BW agreed

Regional news

to carry out short term repairs to allow CBOA members' boats and others to pass.

In each case, CBOA was supported by other user organisations and their support is much appreciated.

River Severn

CBOA member Thompsons River Transport have motorised a former mud hopper to push a dumb barge. The combination was used to deliver blue clay to Worcester from Upton-on-Severn and is likely to be used when the aggregate trade to Gloucester starts.

London

Transport for London and British Waterways London have made a joint appointment of a water freight promotion executive. He is Capt. Kim Milnes, well known on London waterways circles. At one time Capt. Milnes was in charge of the Cory's barge fleet, which takes 750,000 tonnes a year of domestic waste residue down the Thames. Since then his work has included advising the Park Royal Partnership (Powerdays' Willesden wharf is in their area) and assisting DHL in their assessment of the role waterways can play in the Crossrail construction project.

Doncaster

Dredging has finally been arranged to remove the Doncaster shallows, caused by the summer 2007 floods. The delay has been a major cause of concern to CBOA whose members E V Waddingtons and Whitaker Tankers each use this part of the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation. Considerable pressure has been exerted by our members and by CBOA: the matter was raised in Parliament and made the subject of

MPs letters to the relevant Minister. Waddington's carrying capacity was reduced by 75% - at one time they were forced to suspend their operations.

Because of contamination concerns, the Environment Agency was most particular about where the dredged material could be put. Eventually agreement was reached that dried out dredgings from the closed Long Sandall tip could be taken to Heck on the Aire and Calder Navigation (where the banks needed building up because of coal subsidence) and the new dredged material could be put in the now vacant space.



The method devised for this work won an award for the consulting engineers and saved BW £1.5m. And using their own craft to move the 100,000 cm³ of dried sediment avoided 10,000 lorry movements.

During these efforts CBOA officials held a meeting with senior British Waterways staff in Leeds and a series of six monthly meetings has now been arranged. At last autumn's meeting, CBOA was promised that the dredging would be done by the end of March 2009.

Leeds

The potential planning problems highlighted in the last edition remain: the planners still wish to see this area designated for housing in

the long term. Given Government planning policy guidance on transport, the fact that the area is in the flood plain and that a vast decontamination bill would be incurred to make the land fit for homes, CBOA has made it clear that it will oppose Leeds on this matter, if necessary at a public inquiry. CBOA secretary David Lowe is handling this issue, supported by the Inland Waterways Association's local branch and others.

North West

The barge shuttling containers of Tesco's New World wines from Liverpool to a Manchester bottling plant had made an extra 'green' bus stop at Ellesmere Port to discharge an initial 50 containers of Paraguayan organic liquid molasses, before sailing on up the canal to Irlam container terminal with the Tesco wines.

The molasses are being shipped from Paraguay to the UK by the Organic Division of Uren Food Group Ltd for distribution as livestock feed to organically certified farms. Founder James Uren says the waterborne movement fits well with their organic ethos and provides the most economic and environmentally friendly method of inland transport.

Quality Freight (UK) unloaded the molasses with their new £1m Liebherr 150 mobile crane in just one hour. Managing director Sebastian Gardiner says they expect to repeat this on a regular basis not just for molasses but other cargoes bound for the north of England.

"Quality Freight is working with Peel Ports to grow the volume of freight moved by barge," he said, "and reduce the road miles and carbon footprint of the logistics industry."

CBOA officer contacts

Chairman

John Dodwell
P O Box 38479, London SE16 4WX
Email: j.dodwell@cboa.org.uk
Tel: 07802 961485

Vice chairman, stoppages and maintenance matters

John Jackson
PO Box 4939
Trysull, Wolverhampton WV5 7WY
Email: j.jackson@cboa.org.uk
Tel 07885 284812

Secretary

David Lowe
7 Carlton Court
Ossett, West Yorks WF5 9DH
Email: d.lowe@cboa.org.uk
Tel: 01924 261870

Treasurer

Peter Hugman
49 Hendre Street
Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 2HY
Email: p.hugman@cboa.org.uk
Tel: 01286 678571

Parliamentary, regional and local government matters

Tim West
2 High Street
Eccleshall, Stafford ST21 6BZ
Email: t.west@cboa.org.uk
Tel: 01785 850411

Northern Region chairman

Noel Tomlinson
100 Lime St
Hull, North Humberside
HU8 7AR
Email: n.tomlinson@cboa.org.uk
Tel: 01482 320727

CBOA news

Editor: Pamela Mounter
Design: Greendown House
Printer: Ghost Creations
Published three times per year.

If you would like to advertise in CBOA News please contact the chairman John Dodwell for rates.

2007 freight statistics

Department for Transport 2007 statistics were published late in 2008. It is a much under-publicised fact that traffic on UK domestic waters accounted for 20% of all goods moved in 2007, that is, taking account of the distances travelled as well as the actual tonnage. By contrast the rail percentage is 8%. In the last 10 years the figure for water has increased by 6%. Some 67% of the 2007 figure was coastal movements; 30% was one port traffic (e.g. to/from offshore oil and sea –dredged aggregate deposits); with 3% within inland waters (including ships coming up estuaries).

Purely inland waters tonnage moved increased by 4% on 2006 to 1.7 billion tonne-kilometres. In terms of actual inland waters tonnage in 2007, there was a 2% increase to 52m tonnes. Some 22m tonnes of this was on the Thames, 8m tonnes on the Forth, 13m tonnes on the Manchester Ship Canal/Mersey, 6m tonnes in the Humber and the rest elsewhere.

In Europe Germany's 59m tonnes were about the same as 10 years ago but France showed a 24% increase over the same period to 33m tonnes. The 2007 figures for Holland and Belgium were not available; those for 2006 showed Holland 10% down over nine years to 90m tonnes but Belgium increased 48% over that period to

37m tonnes. Romanian figures have been provided in recent years and 23m tonnes were carried in 2007.

DfT's "Delivering a sustainable transport system"

Following last November's publication of this document, freight was boosted in the following month by the issue of "DASTS: The Logistics Perspective". Notable aspects include

- HGVs and vans together account for 35% of the UK domestic transport CO2 emissions
- The challenge of managing freight is likely to grow. Regional and local government should develop regional transport strategies, local transport plans and build up links with industry via freight quality partnerships
- When planning new developments, how goods and services are to be delivered should be thought through, including the construction stage
- Help will be needed to enhance sustainable distribution – such as modal shift to rail and water

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Tel | Fax: 020 7231 6247
john.dodwell@rolandon.com

Rolandon Water and Sea Freight
Advisory Services
P O Box 38479 London SE16 4WX

AGM

The Annual General Meeting will be held on 24 October 2009 - time and venue to be confirmed. All members are welcome. Formal details will be sent out later. Nominations for committee members should be sent to David Lowe, see details left.