

NEWSLETTER 02

HISWA BOAT SHOW – THE PUBLIC HAVE THEIR SAY!

Stichting Recreatietoervaart Nederland (SRN) is leading the Study reviewing the Classification of Recreational Waterways on behalf of VNE. This is clearly a detailed and quite an academic exercise drawing on data and knowledge from a wide range of interested parties throughout Europe.



It's important to make sure the General and Boating public have a say too and SRN demonstrated a real commitment to this during their attendance at the HISWA Amsterdam Boat Show which was held in Amsterdam RAI from 6th to 11th March 2007.

Manon van Meer explained SRN's approach: "We took part in the 'knowledge stand' of HISWA Association. We had our own table for promoting SRN and especially our European projects like wastewater and classification. We asked boaters to give their opinion on the waterway network (Europe and The Netherlands) because they know it very well. People were very pleased by this and said it was the first time they were given the opportunity to do this.

A lot of people took interest in the European map and we had a lot of discussions about bottlenecks on the waterway network (especially when one disagrees on the subject!).

We distributed the European maps, maps with locations of pump outs, and information of our European projects and SRN itself. Visitors could also do a small test on a laptop to check their knowledge on navigation issues and wastewater (just for fun). We never thought it would be such a success."

Wastewater legislation is due to change in the Netherlands in 2009, and SRN were also able to distribute information about these new regulations to boaters, who were able to see examples of the latest sanitary systems.

The new course taken this year by the HISWA Amsterdam Boat Show proved popular with visitors and exhibitors alike. This resulted not only in a substantial increase in the number of visitors (up by 4,084 on 2006) but also in good business for the exhibitors. The show attracted a total of 61,127 visitors and 375 exhibitors.

NEWSLETTER 02

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

VNE means the “Waterways of Europe”. We don't just concern ourselves with the canals and rivers in our own neighbourhood but look much further afield. What good practice can we share and what lessons can be learned? By Chris Barnett, British Waterways.



There's a lot for some partners to do. Our visit to the Canal de Castilla highlighted the will to make the most of this historic waterway, but also the difficulties they face with such a long and rural canal. Restoring some of the locks will take time but there are still opportunities to increase tourist visits (cyclists would find it a particularly good route) and boating. The representatives of SIRGA did a great job in ensuring they raised awareness of the Canal through our seminar in March. We hope the local population took note.

It's for the man in the street to decide if we're spending his taxes well – some would argue we should concrete over the canals and use them as roads, so we'll never please everyone. I'd say we are though, and this is why we're bothering. If we can stay organised and keep the pressure on, more funding will be found for waterway related projects. Politicians can see that such funding helps kick start regeneration of a whole area and will encourage private investment as well. Everybody wins. Even the most ardent anti-developers will admit that jobs are created when building work starts.

Waterspaces need a bit of life and boats and their crews give it that. In the UK we have our 'Gongoozlers' peering over bridges or helping open the locks. Without the boats and the activity they create our Canals are a lot less fun and they'll go elsewhere to spend their money.

To summarise, I'd say we're doing a good job in maintaining awareness of waterways and the opportunities they bring. The network we have and hope to extend and use with other projects can be very influential. Hopefully the studies made will be useful in a practical way and used by anyone interested in furthering the European Waterway Network.

The opportunities are obvious in mainland Europe. Updating the Classification will help identify where boaters come to a 'dead end'. If we can highlight where a route needs opening up or improving, more boat travel and benefits to the local economies will occur. Boating will become more attractive and we'll all benefit.

We saw a good example of what can really happen in the Interreg III B Canal Link project. The three steps Lock at Ooigem in Belgium has been restored and now smaller boats can move through this Lock to reach the River Leie and beyond. Previously they would have had to brave it in with the massive freight boats in the huge Lock alongside. Using the three step Lock saves water as well.

In our visits with VNE and other projects I've been impressed with how keen everyone is to make the most of the waterways in their area. Regeneration, restoration and the exploitation of waterways is clearly a noble cause and we're learning from each other the best ways of doing this. The VNE partnership is very diverse with some being located in built up areas, with industrial traffic whilst others feature far more rural canals and rivers. The one clear lesson is that everybody benefits from regeneration, an increase in boating, and more visitors to the area.

In Canal Link, money was spent to rebuild a Peat Harbour near the centre of Bremen. This brought life to a derelict area and is now used as a base for boat trips out of the City along the historic Peat Canals. The people of Bremen came out in force (some 10,000 attended the opening ceremony) and it was clear that the money had been well spent. There was a sense of pride in what had been created.



NEWSLETTER 02

GETTING TOGETHER

Two further meetings were held in very contrasting locations. In Norway we saw the Coastal harbours and how they linked to the Telemark Canal. In Valladolid we saw the challenges faced in revitalising the Canal de Castilla, in Northern Spain.



TELEMARK / 07–08 SEPTEMBER 2006

Third workshop
"networking"

Workshop No.3 was held in Telemark, Norway with the theme "Networking". We were introduced to the coastal waterways in Telemark by boat – visiting the harbour at Kragero which was developed as a "start harbour" through the Canal Link project. We saw how area had been developed to encourage boaters to make trips along the Telemark Canal.

These and other challenges for these coastal towns were explained at the meeting in Kragero city hall. We also heard from representatives from the cities of Porsgrunn and Skien about how they were utilising water for city centre growth.

We were then introduced to 'Norwegian Waterways' and learned how this Network aimed to work together to promote and develop tourism and recreation around the waterways. We later saw for ourselves what the Telemark Canal had to offer – the stunning scenery and spectacular sunset would have impressed anyone.

Day 2 was taken up by reports on the studies being carried out through VNE and the formal Steering Group meeting.

TELEMARK / 07–08 SEPTEMBER 2006

Third workshop
"video recording"

An interesting experiment took place at the Telemark Partner meeting. The whole event was video'd as part of Karlstad University's study on Language and Professional Interaction. The aim is to achieve a better understanding of "political and professional encounters" that are conducted in English, and to see how well (or not) they work.

A meeting such as ours with a majority of non native English speakers was considered a great example of how they are carried out. They no doubt picked up some good pointers as well as a few not so good. The findings from the study are expected to benefit private and public sector organisations participating in international arenas.

The study is being led by Erica Sandlund and Thomas Denk from the University of Karlstad and is being funded by Varmland County Administrative Board.

VALLADOLID, (CASTILLA) / 12–13 MARCH 2007

First seminar
"multifunctional use of waterways"

On Monday the VNE partners took the opportunity to visit the Canal de Castilla and met representatives of the local authorities, municipalities and county council. We visited the Canal de Castilla Interpretation Centre and were welcomed to the reconstruction site of Lock 6 by the Mayor of Medina de Rioseca. Finally we saw the dock and refurbished warehouses before boarding the "Antonio de Ulloa" for a cruise back along a stretch of the Canal. Our formal Steering Group meeting took place later that evening.

The next day at the VNE seminar "Multifunctional use of waterways" representatives from public and private bodies involved in the development and management of Castilla canals and VNE partners gave presentations concerning waterways. About 70 delegates (tourism, environment experts, professionals and the general public) attended that seminar.

VNE partners were able to offer advice on restorations that had taken place in their Regions. As a final "Thank You" for the work being carried out by VNE, Manuel Fuentes, the President of SIRGA, presented VNE Project Manager Glenn Millar with the award "Canalero De Honor 2006".

NEWSLETTER 02

LIVERPOOL'S FABULOUS FOR ...

The VNE Final Conference takes place in Liverpool on 22 – 23 November 2007. At the conference we'll be reviewing the results of work carried out through VNE and looking at the lessons learned. On top of all that we hope to give attendees a flavour of the restoration and regeneration work carried out in Liverpool and the North West of England.



Liverpool is typical of many historic European ports. A city that in former times prospered through its handling of goods and freight in and out of its docks – but is now having to find other ways to capitalise on these buildings and waterspaces.

We're holding the meeting in Albert Dock which has been right at the heart of Liverpool's dockland regeneration. Following its £100 m redevelopment it is now a mecca for shopping, museums, art galleries, loft living, bar culture, restaurants and top night spots.

The docks have the greatest concentration of Grade I listed architecture anywhere in the UK. Included among the many attractions are Tate Liverpool, the region's major centre for modern art, the Merseyside Maritime Museum (our Meeting venue), and a Beatles Museum. Also based in Albert Dock is the 'Yellow Submarine'

operating a one-hour tour of Liverpool both in and out of the water, aboard an authentic World War II amphibious vehicle.

The British Waterways led 'Liverpool Canal Link' project will see the Leeds & Liverpool Canal (which links to the rest of Britain's waterways) connected to Albert Dock by means of a new canal, just under one mile long. The waterway will include two new locks, five new bridges, and a tunnel. The aim is to generate activity by boats and people with the design allowing access for visiting canal boats, hire boats and water taxis. Work commenced in Summer 2006, and will be completed in 2008 when Liverpool becomes the European City of Culture.

Some benefits identified as a result of constructing this link are:

- / An estimated 200,000 extra visitors annually to the Liverpool Waterfront who may spend an extra £1.9 million each year.
- / Over 4,500 boat visits each year including visiting private boats, holiday hire boats, trip boats, and restaurant boats.
- / An estimated £2.2 million in expenditure annually on boating related activities.
- / Creation of nearly 200 new jobs.

At the same time, the Leeds & Liverpool Canal through Merseyside is being transformed with improved facilities and more involvement by local people. It's clear that without these 'corridor' improvements boaters won't want to travel to the heart of the City and the works there may have been wasted.

This is perhaps one of the things we'll discover in our visits. Liverpool has made huge efforts to make the waterspace come alive in the City itself. Can this vibrancy be extended to the 'hinterlands' and beyond and truly extend the Network of Europe's waterways?

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:

www.vne-waterways.eu

Glenn Millar, British Waterways
Watford, United Kingdom
Email: glenn.millar@britishwaterways.co.uk
Phone: + 44 1923 20 13 56

Chris Barnett, British Waterways
Watford, United Kingdom
Email: chris.barnett@britishwaterways.co.uk
Phone: + 44 1923 20 11 63

Assistance and Coordination

Helmut Berends
Berends-Consult, Bremen, Germany
Email: bc@berends-consult.de

Concept and Design by
GfG / Gruppe für Gestaltung GmbH
Bremen, Germany
Email: info@gfg-bremen.de