

Head Office Bulletin – October 2007 – Issue 129

Head Office Bulletin is available in pdf format on IWA's Internet site, along with a wide range of information about the Association and the inland waterways. www.waterways.org.uk should be the first place to look for any information that you need. You can also subscribe to receive Head Office Bulletin in text form by e-mail as soon as it is published each month. Additional e-mail mailing lists (news@waterways.org.uk and pressrelease@waterways.org.uk) provide more frequent mailings of timely news, which enable the Association to keep members and other supporters more up-to-date with all that the Association is doing, but all the news is reported at the end of each month, updated where appropriate. If you wish to make any changes to the mailings that you receive, please contact Vicky Clark at IWA Head Office.

Index

- 1 About People
- 2 Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak in Surrey
- 2 Freight on Water – Abnormal Indivisible Loads
- 2 Hosting visits from MPs
- 3 IWA National Festival 2008
- 3 Ministerial Visit to the Waterways
- 3 Safety on the Waterways
- 4 Solid Fuel Stoves on Boats
- 4 Winter Stoppages
- 4 Basingstoke Canal
- 5 Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway
- 5 Birmingham Canal Navigations
- 5 Cotswold Canals
- 5 Slough Arm to Thames Link
- 6 New Publications
- 7 Current Consultations

About People

At the Association's Annual General Meeting, held in Norwich on 29th September, **Liz Payne** retired as a member of Council, including service as a deputy national chairman for nearly nine years. Liz also retires as chairman of Sales & Promotions divisions of IWA's subsidiary company Inland Waterways Enterprises Ltd at the end of December when the division will cease to operate. **Gillian Smith** has been appointed as chairman of the new Promotions and Communications Committee, which will take on much of the former Sales & Promotions division's work. At the AGM, **Ian West** and **Vaughan Welch** were re-elected to Council and **Paul Strudwick** elected, all for terms of three years.

At its September meeting, Council appointed **Les Etheridge** and **Clive Henderson** as deputy national

chairmen, subject to endorsement at Council's November meeting. **Roger Squires** continues as a deputy national chairman, and **John Fletcher** remains national chairman. All appointments are for one year.

Nigel Baker and **David King** have retired from the committee of IWA Festivals, and **Peter Payne** has retired from the committee of Sales & Promotions.

We are saddened to record the death of **Don Thomas**, long-time former chairman of IWA's South Wales Branch, where he led IWA's activities in the area throughout the 1990s. He had been active with the branch for much of its existence. Don was a strong supporter of restoration of the Monmouthshire Canal, and was IWA's representative on the Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canals Trust.

We are also saddened to record the death of **Dave Young**, of IWA's South London Branch, who was a notable fund raiser for IWA London Region, and other causes, over many years. He was perhaps best known for his fairground equipment, including his unique swings decorated as canal boats in the livery of the Croydon Canal Company. He and his wife Gina were regular supporters of IWA Events, where his fairground equipment always raised a crowd and especially gave young children much enjoyment.

Three new members have been appointed to the Board of British Waterways by Jonathan Shaw, the Waterways Minister. The three are: **Prodaman 'Pommy' Sarwal**, (financial adviser and non-executive board member of the Port of London Authority and the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust), **Eric Prescott**, (former president and managing director of Alstom UK and other infrastructure companies), and **Maggie Carver**, (former financier and a non-executive Director of the RDF Media Group PLC and Satellite Information

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Services Ltd). The new Board members were appointed on the merits of their specialist expertise in civil engineering, asset management and finance. They are due start in October 2007, following BW's Annual Meeting on 17th October.

Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak in Surrey

Following the outbreak of Foot & Mouth Disease near Egham, in Surrey, The Department for Environment Food Rural Affairs has established a Protection Zone that includes the Thames between Walton and Runnymede. The towing path has been closed between Dumsey Meads and Chertsey Bridge. No public access is allowed in accordance with the Department's access restrictions. The northern end of the river Wey Navigation (from Weybridge to Send) and eastern end of the Basingstoke Canal (from the junction with the Wey to Woking) are also in the Zone. Boating can continue at present, but boaters are instructed not to stop or moor in the above-mentioned, closed area.

Outside the Protection Zone, a wider Surveillance Zone has been established which includes the Thames between just downstream of Boveney Lock and Thames Ditton, the Wey south of Guildford to Shalford and the Basingstoke Canal from Woking to beyond Brookwood. There are no navigation restrictions in place, the towing path remains open and boating can continue as normal.

Across the whole of the Protection and Surveillance Zones there is encouragement for people to moor in urban areas and to avoid visiting land with livestock if they disembark. The Environment Agency has prepared posters to put up at lock sites giving essential information as well as handouts for boaters.

Freight on Water – Abnormal Indivisible Loads

IWA has joined the Commercial Boat Operators Association in urging Government not to dilute its current policy of preferring the use of water transport to move large abnormal indivisible loads and so avoid clogging up the roads. Abnormal Indivisible Loads are any cargo that cannot be broken up, but is either over 150 tonnes in weight or over 30 metres long or over 5 metres wide. Currently all such loads require specific approval to use the roads. A recent consultation by the Highways Agency has proposed that if the financial

cost of using water is more than 20% of the value of such loads, then road use should be allowed – even if the cost of road transport is also over 20% of the load's value. IWA and the Commercial Boat Operators Association have challenged this because the value of the load should be irrelevant in assessing the environmental, congestion avoidance, removal of traffic disruption and other benefits of not using the roads. In 2002, the Government invested about £8 million to enable two specialist craft to be built to operate around the coasts and on the larger waterways to carry such loads, and these remain available for use.

IWA believes that all large freight loads should be moved by water unless there are overwhelming reasons not to. IWA's call follows its recently launched waterborne freight promotional leaflet - *Waterways Freight* in which IWA urges government to promote the switch from road to water by incentivising waterborne freight, utilising green taxes if necessary. IWA's leaflet also calls on government to capitalise on the environmental benefits of moving freight by water and to recognise the need for a properly constituted government body to oversee its development and management.

Hosting visits from MPs

In recent months, individual waterway supporters, IWA branches and other waterway groups have made strong links with their local MPs and this has resulted in new relationships and a better understanding of the inland waterways by key decision makers. These developing relations will undoubtedly do a great deal to help the canals and river navigations, and IWA strongly encourages the maintenance of such links. The guidelines offered below should help to ensure the best of relations where MPs and others are hosted on visits to the waterways:

- Despite media suggestions to the contrary, most MPs and other key decision makers struggle to fit all their invitations and meetings into a day. Diaries are crammed and most receive hundreds of letters and emails every day so it is important to work carefully with such people.
- If a two-hour trip on a waterway is planned, this timing should be kept to, and not extended beyond what has been agreed. On a few occasions enthusiasm



for the canals has resulted in keeping MPs for more than the agreed time – this will not win friends for the waterways in the future!

- Agree where, when and for how long the event will last.
- Plan the visit or meeting within the time frame – and leave a little space for the MP being late.
- Agree which media should, or should not, be invited and who will invite them.
- Agree who will make contact with, and brief, the media.
- Keep to the agreement!

By keeping a few rules in how we engage with MPs, politicians and other dignitaries, they will have confidence in waterway supporters, and hopefully will be happy to engage and support us, and take up future invitations.

IWA National Festival 2008

The inaugural team meeting for 2008 National Festival, to be held at Atherley Junction, is to be held on Wednesday, 17th October 2007 at 7.30 pm at the Wulfrun Hall, (Mitre Fold) North Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1RQ. Anyone who is interested to support the team organising the event is welcome to attend. A location map is available at www.waterways.org.uk/Events/IWANationalFestival08

Ministerial Visit to the Waterways

The Waterways Minister, Jonathan Shaw MP, visited Birmingham's waterways on 12th September. His programme comprised a briefing with BW chief executive and others at Cambrian Wharf, a tour by boat of a prospective waterway development around Icknield Port Loop and a 30-minute discussion with a small invited group of waterway user representatives, including John Fletcher, IWA national chairman, and Vaughan Welch, chairman of IWA's Birmingham Black Country & Worcestershire Branch, at Gas Street Basin. The two-hour event was the minister's first meeting with Robin Evans, BW's chief executive and an opportunity for waterway user representatives to brief the minister on concerns.

Safety on the Waterways

British Waterways' North West office, based at Wigan, has reported a high number of boating incidents in the area this year, and has appealed to boaters to take additional care. Some reports of incidents included:

- A narrow boat ascending a narrow lock was not secured using the bollards. As the lock filled the boat moved forward in the lock and the bow got caught underneath a gate cross beam. The boat began to list stern to bow.
- A boat ascending a narrow lock became caught beneath a cross beam on the gate as the lock filled. The boat began to sink. The boater tried to correct this by opening the tailgate paddles, this caused the boat to come back into trim and the force lifted the head-gate out of its pot, snapping the collar and damaging the anchor plates.
- A narrow boat descending a broad lock was not secured using the bollards. The boat began to drift backwards in the lock. As the lock began to empty the rudder caught on the cill and the boat began to list stern to bow. Water pouring onto the boat, displaced the boat from the cill causing the boat to rock violently within the lock and the helmsman was thrown into the water.
- A narrow boat ascending a broad lock used ropes around the bollards but did not keep them taut enough to steady the boat. The boat twisted within the lock and became caught up within the chamber at three different points. As the lock filled the boat began to sink. On this occasion, the emergency services had to attend the scene to free the boat with the assistance of British Waterways staff.

BW advises that there have been several other reported near misses, particularly of boat rudders getting caught or scraping on cills, and of other cases of damage being caused to lock gates by boaters, which have not been reported to BW, but have caused problems for other waterway users.

Information about boat safety is included within the Boaters Handbook, which provides good practice guidance on boating on canals. Printed copies of the Handbook are available from most BW offices and online at www.waterscape.com and www.waterways.org.uk/Waterways/UsefulInformation.

Solid Fuel Stoves on Boats

The Boat Safety Scheme has urged boat owners with solid fuel stoves to check that they are safe following a number of dangerous incidents. Such stoves are thought to have contributed to the deaths by carbon monoxide poisoning of a boater in August 2006 and two deaths in 2004. Stoves have also been linked to six recorded fires so far in 2007 in which three boaters were injured seriously and one died. With support from the Solid Fuel Association, the Scheme has reworked its March 2007 article on its web site to help people to spot potential problems early, and thus keep safe and keep using solid fuel stoves. This article is available at www.boatsafetyscheme.com/downloads/KeepingSafeWithSolidFuelStovesMarch%202007.pdf

The cause of problems with solid fuel stoves varies, ranging from dangerous installations, poor maintenance, risky operation and bad fuel choice and often a mixture of all or some of these. Key points include:

- take note before lighting the appliance for the first time
- ensure that flues and chimneys are clean and unobstructed
- check that flue terminals have not been crushed or damaged
- check ventilation has not become blocked
- check that soft furnishings or airing laundry items are not too close to the stove or flue
- don't plan to leave the boat with the stove lit and its door open
- fit suitable smoke alarms and test them routinely

The Boat Safety Scheme has also reported that there have been five gas explosions so far in 2007. Two resulted in no injury, although in one the boat caught fire and was totally destroyed and in the other the owner used an extinguisher to knock down the fire. One small gas explosion early in September left an examiner with minor injuries. There have been two large explosions, one on the South coast (August) and one on Loch Lomond (June), which left four people seriously injured and the craft have major damage.

Winter Stoppages

Both British Waterways and Thames region of the Environment Agency have published their plans for winter maintenance work and winter stoppages. Printed copies of BW's stoppage programme can be obtained from enquiries.hq@britishwaterways.co.uk or ☎ 01923 201120 or viewed online at www.waterscape.com/images/British_Waterways_Stoppage_Programme_2007_2008.pdf. Waterways users can also sign up to receive up-to-the-minute stoppages and restrictions online, for all navigation authorities, at www.waterscape.com, and can check the stoppages from mobile phones at: www.waterscape.com/mobile (this last address is only usable through WAP enabled mobile phones).

Basingstoke Canal

The Basingstoke Canal Authority fitted two sets of new upper gates on the Woodham Flight during September. This brought the total number of gates replaced this year to ten (five sets). Whilst fitting the new gates has caused stoppages in the summer, the renewed commitment of the Authority to tackle the huge backlog of maintenance on the Canal, with local authority support, has been welcomed by local waterway users. The Deepcut Flight remains closed to incoming and exiting boating, with only limited downstream navigation as far as Lock 25 for Galleon Marine hire-boats. A new set of upper gates is now being made for Lock 18, which are due to be installed in October. The Flight is likely to remain mostly closed until early February, whilst the Authority undertakes a series of works over the winter. Bridge work is also due to take place at Ash Vale Rail Station from late October by Network Rail and its contractors Edmund Nuttall Limited. Repair and restoration work to the breach at Double Bridge Farm, land slips at Malthouse Bridge and Coxmoor Wood are also due to be undertaken shortly by Hampshire County Council. This will entail temporary local closure to navigation whilst works are carried out.

Work at King John's Castle began in September with bank protection, an improved landing stage and towpath restoration. Marginal habitat alongside the canal is to be improved with planting of native aquatic species, and there are to be new interpretation boards and signage. Work on the Castle to repair and restore its principal features is also due to start soon. The towing path in this area will be closed to public access with barrier diversion in place for much of the winter.

Further information on all the closures and work in progress is available from the Canal Centre ☎ 01252 370073

Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway

Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterways Trust has published a short video that it has made as part of its bid to Big Lottery Fund for funding for the proposed Milton Keynes Waterway Park, which would form the western section of the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway. The video is available to view at www.youtube.com/MKWP.

Birmingham Canal Navigations

British Waterways has re-opened the towing path through Netherton Tunnel to pedestrians following three months of repairs. BW's contractor Morrison Construction undertook the £125,000 works programme, including resurfacing 2.7km of the eastern towing path and installation of over 200 metres of drainage to cope with the large inflows of ground water. Extensive repairs to towing path-edge copings and the metalwork handrail were also carried out. The work was completed on budget despite the very wet summer weather leading to increased inflows of water into the tunnel. Motorcycle barriers, with disabled access, have been installed at either end of the tunnel to ensure that only pedestrians can use the resurfaced towing path. The tunnel towing path had been closed following concern over visitor safety.

Cotswold Canals

British Waterways has locally announced the start of works at Oil Mills. This is a step towards the start of the main works of National Lottery supported major restoration. There has been some concern that the restoration programme was in jeopardy owing to BW's board becoming increasingly concerned at the level of unfunded risk that it might have to bear. However, it now appears that BW has accepted a higher level of risk than it originally intended and Stroud District Council has (subject to formal documentation) taken on a significant element of risk that would otherwise have fallen to BW. In order to allow the rest of the major restoration works to start announcements are awaited to confirm the agreements between Stroud District Council and British Waterways for the Council to take on the restoration and development at

Brimscombe Port (via a private developer) and for the handover of the land from Gloucestershire County Council to BW.

The work at Oil Mills covers the £1.3 million restoration of a 650-metre stretch of the Stroudwater Navigation and the restoration of Oil Mills Bridge. The original hump-backed bridge on the site was removed as part of a road improvement scheme. It will be replaced by a new bridge echoing original designs but able to carry modern traffic levels, using what remains of the original bridge under the road.

The National Lottery supported restoration work is likely to cost £24.2million and is itself part of a wider regeneration funding package of £37million. The work includes the full restoration of a 6½-mile (9½-kilometre) stretch from Brimscombe Port to Stonehouse and a further 4-mile (6km) multi-user path to Saul Junction, due for completion in two years. The work is to be project managed by British Waterways and undertaken by its contractor Morrison Construction. Excavation work is expected to be completed in November, followed by the bridge in March 2008. The Cotswold Canals Partnership expects to hear later this autumn about its £24million Big Lottery Fund bid which would take the restoration a further 4 miles (six kilometres) from The Ocean to Saul Junction.

Slough Arm to Thames Link

Proposals to link the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal to the river Thames are being promoted afresh, and have gained some support within Slough Council. The idea of a navigable link between the Slough Arm and the Thames has been put forward at various times over the past forty years or so. Recent proposals owe their origin to Viscount St Davids and Neville New in the 1960s, and envisaged a line to the east of Slough town centre, over a strip of land then largely undeveloped, which also offered the shortest route between the two waterways, of about two miles.

Since then, the concept of a link has become sufficiently 'official' to appear in various publications from government-backed waterway bodies, including British Waterways. However, during this time, building around Slough has continued apace, and parts of the line identified in the 1960s proposals have since been built on. A more recent assessment by British Waterways suggested a provisional cost of at least £28

million to build the Link. Mike Timms (✉ 14 The Ridings, Iver, SL0 9DU ☎ 01753 651975), member of Friends of Slough Canal and IWA's Middlesex Branch

is looking at the viability of pursuing proposals further and would welcome support from interested members.

Recent Publications

Cabinet Office

Helping out: a national survey of volunteering and charitable giving

People's views and experiences of participation in voluntary activity and charitable giving. The survey finds that of the 2705 people interviewed, more than half (58%) had both volunteered and donated to charity in the last 12 months, and most (81%) had given to a charity within the last four weeks. The most common reasons for volunteering were 'to improve things or help people' (53%), 'because the cause was important' (41%) or 'because they had spare time' (41%). When it came to giving to charity, the importance of the charity's work topped the list of reasons for those surveyed (52%), closely followed by a belief that it is the right thing to do (41%).

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/documents/research_statistics/helping_out_national_survey_2007.pdf

Commission on the Future of Volunteering

Making sense of volunteering: literature review

The author, Colin Rochester, draws on the growing research interest in volunteering both in the UK and internationally to explore the nature of the volunteering phenomenon. He contrasts 'classic' volunteerism with 'new' volunteerism. He presents key facts and figures (by ethnic origin, by age, by motivation, by activity) from the 2005 Citizenship survey. He goes on to identify key changes in our society that are likely to affect future patterns of involvement - an ageing population, changes in perspectives on retirement, communities of place, the virtual society - against developments in public and social policy. He sees a growth in episodic and employer supported volunteering, looks at virtual volunteering and gap years. The final chapter compares two differing perceptions of volunteering - the more traditional volunteering industry and the more inclusive concept of voluntary action.

www.volcomm.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/6EF238B5-0425-4F99-930E-E7665CAAEEC6/0/Making_sense_of_volunteering.pdf

English Heritage

Technical advice note: flooding and historic buildings

Technical advice note designed for those concerned with flood damaged buildings and their contents but particularly those which are of historic interest - whether statutorily listed or lying within conservation areas. Although the guidance has been specifically tailored to their needs, and with particular emphasis on older houses and small business premises, many of the measures will be applicable to the general building stock constructed before 1914. The note offers guidance on preventative measures, health and safety, cleaning up and drying out. It suggests sources of specialist help to inspect, conserve, repair or restore historic property with sources of further information and practical help listed at the end. The text concentrates on general principles so it points out that information on specific historic buildings and guidance on whether remedial treatments and repairs require consent should always be sought from the Conservation Officer in the local planning authority.

www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/Flooding_and_Historic_Buildings_Technical_Advice_Note_2004.pdf

Environment Agency

Spotlight on business environmental performance in 2006 – putting the brakes on climate change

The Agency's ninth annual report on environmental performance. It welcomes the many improvements in environmental performance across a range of business sectors. Serious pollution incidents are the lowest on record and breaches of permits and licences are down. However, businesses need to put the brakes on climate change faster and de-couple emissions from growth. The Agency urges them to act on their commitment to green credentials and follow the evidence that good environmental performance reduces business risk and can increase the bottom line. The report expresses concern that greenhouse gas emissions have started to creep up again as the economy grows.

Energy use is also increasing although at a slower rate than the economy. Businesses are producing about the same amount of waste as last year but the proportion that is reused or recycled has fallen. The Agency is pleased to see that the courts are taking environmental offences more seriously in 2006 with companies paying £3.5 million in fines. Twenty nine company directors were prosecuted, two of whom received custodial sentences totaling 14 months.

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Planning Inspectorate

Guidance on procedures for considering objections to definitive map and public path orders in England – September 2007

Explanation of how the Planning Inspectorate will be processing orders that are received by them on or after 1st October 2007, when the new 'Rights of Way (Hearing and Inquiry Procedure) (England) Rules 2007' and the new procedures for 'Written Representations' come into force.

www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk

South West Planning Aid

Planning 'Jargon Buster'

A glossary of technical terms used in town and country (or spatial) planning

www.planningaid.rpi.org.uk/SITE/UPLOAD/DOCUMENT/SW%20documents/TownPlanningBooklet-Glossary.pdf

Current Consultations

Department for Communities and Local Government

Longer Time Limits for Prosecution of Breaches of Building Regulations

The consultation has been published to explain, and to seek views on proposals to take powers to lengthen the time limits during which local authorities can take prosecutions for breaches of building regulations. The proposals would seek to achieve better compliance with building regulations by providing a better deterrent to non-compliance, creating no new burdens for fully compliant businesses.

www.communities.gov.uk

Closing date for comments: 23rd October 2007

Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs Pesticides Safety Directorate

Consultation on the proposed consolidation of plant protection and pesticide legislation: inclusion of regulation on record keeping in draft regulations

The consultation seeks views on the consolidation of four sets of pesticides regulations into one, and a new provision in these regulations to make it a legal requirement for all professional users to keep a record of pesticide treatments that they carry out.

www.pesticides.gov.uk

Closing date for comments: 30th November 2007

Environment Agency

Water abstraction charges scheme – third consultation

Since the second consultation, the Agency has been reviewing other possible ways of recovering compensation costs to fund changes to abstractions that are damaging the environment. Government and the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) have now agreed that the Price Review 2009 can be used to fund changes to water company abstractions to meet the needs of the Habitats Directive. The Agency is now consulting for a third time on its proposals to recover the remaining compensation costs.

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Closing date for comments: 7th December 2007

Environment Agency

Water for people and the environment

In 2001 the Agency produced "Water Resources for the Future: A Strategy for England and Wales". It is now developing a new strategy. The consultation document shows the pressures on water resources now and in the future and sets out the many challenges in a changing world. Proposing some principles, aims and targets, the Agency would welcome views on what issues the new strategy should address.

<http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/GEHO0707BMXQ-e-e.pdf>

Closing date for comments: 31st October 2007

Environment Agency

Summary of significant water management issues

Consultation on the best ways to tackle significant water management issues, such as diffuse pollution and river flows and abstraction, in an effort to further protect and improve rivers, lakes and groundwater.

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/wfd

Closing date for comments: 24th January 2008

House of Commons Transport Committee

Freight Inquiry

The Transport Committee's Report on the Ports Industry in England and Wales recommended that the Government develop an integrated freight plan. The Committee has decided to focus on this aspect of transport policy in a forthcoming inquiry. The Department for Transport sees its role within freight transport as ensuring that goods can be moved freely, reliably and efficiently, while minimising the impact of doing so. The Transport Committee will examine how successfully the Department is fulfilling its responsibility to facilitate free movement of goods while limiting harmful impacts and will examine whether the Department's responsibilities should be extended, to developing and implementing an integrated freight plan, for example. The committee seeks submissions on various aspects of freight including what more can be done to promote modal shift from road and air freight to inland waterway, shipping and rail.

www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ctteepnslst.cfm

Closing date for comments: 9th October 2007

H M Revenue and Customs

Energy Products Directive – Expiry of the Derogation for Private Pleasure Boats

This consultation document seeks views on the possible options for complying with the Energy Products Directive following the expiry of the derogations permitting the application of reduced rates on fuel (i.e. red diesel) used by private pleasure boats.

www.hmrc.gov.uk/consultations/ (click 'current consultations')

Closing date for comments: 31st October 2007

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