

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REVIEW

The Inland Waterways Association has become increasingly concerned about the loss of small buildings, structures and artefacts connected with the inland waterways. With this in mind, the Association launched a Historic Structures Review to help safeguard what remains.

Discussions have been held with IWA region and branch officers who have agreed to record structures in their area with the help of members and volunteers. This will enable an initial list to be compiled to see what exists, and especially to identify anything in danger. Once this initial data has been compiled, further supporting details, such as photographs and grid references, can be added. Some branches have started work and IWA is gearing up its efforts, identifying small features that have often been overlooked in earlier surveys. A pilot review is taking place in the north west with the intention of looking at how feasible it will be for branches to consider the information, looking at what has been lost and what might be.

A list of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings on British Waterways' navigations was already in existence. Details from this list have been made available to relevant IWA regions and branches and provided a starting point for branches to compile data for their area. Similar data does not appear to be available for areas covered by other navigation authorities.

IWA has in many ways prompted BW to do more. BW has launched its 'Heritage First' exercise and a report 'State of the waterways heritage'. BW has an archive of 20,000 photos currently being digitised and a disc is being created for each canal. IWA hopes to obtain a disc for each branch. BW has started preliminary review work on the Birmingham Canal Navigations and Central Shires.

The Association's Historic Structures Review plans to encompass all inland navigations, identifying features that may be in danger of disappearing, especially where they are not officially listed elsewhere, such as being recorded as a Scheduled Ancient Monument or a Listed Building. Local waterways societies may already hold some of the information sought by the Review. Co-operation is encouraged to share information and widen involvement. IWA has also been pressing the EA to record its artefacts. Many waterways have no navigation authority, in which case it is for IWA branches to identify what artefacts exist. It is a harder task but hopefully some of the guidelines from other waterways will be helpful.

The monuments record had been superseded by a statutory requirement to record heritage and local authorities are keen to receive this information via their website.

The Association aims for the Historic Structures Review information to be available for the use of everyone and accessible on the Association's Web site. This should be an activity that waterway supporters of all ages, and with varying levels of time to commit to the Review, can become involved in.

If you would like to take part in the Historic Structures Review, please contact your local IWA branch, details of which are on IWA's website: www.waterways.org.uk/region/index.htm or Tony Hirst, who has taken over as co-ordinator of the project. Tony Hirst will keep interested volunteers in touch and they should contact him by email – tony@thenterprises.co.uk.

Further information:
[Historic Structures Review - Notes From Brian Collings](#)
[Historic Structures Review - Drawing](#)

Historic Narrow Boat Owners Club's publication 'Our disappearing heritage'

Contact David Daines, Membership Secretary,
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The Horseboating Society's 'Preserving our waterways heritage'.
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English Heritage's Images of England initiative
<http://viewfinder.english-heritage.org.uk/>