

Worcester Bar

The Newsletter of the
Birmingham, Black Country & Worcestershire Branch,
Inland Waterways Association

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From the Helm

Autumn is here it seems – hope you all had some interesting waterway experiences during our rather better Summer! Now it's time perhaps for those brisk walks or boating chores to prepare for colder times. There's lots to do, as usual, including work-parties, checking out progress with our navigations re-organisation, and attending to boats in the case of owners, let's all keep busy – after all, it's good for your health!

Whilst there have been worries about C&RT's failure to consider the wider implications of their decisions regarding the moorings on the Severn and revision of commercial licence conditions; praise is also due 'on the ground'. The completion of repairs (almost a complete rebuild it seems) of a lock in the Wolverhampton flight damaged by vandals, in a relatively short time, deserves our thanks – well done.

The system works – if only all their employees understood their jobs!

You will read elsewhere that we have a good programme of talks at our monthly meetings, (including C&RT Chief Executive Richard Parry), – do come, and bring a friend if you like. Also some work-parties will be painting, clearing, and plant-pulling at various times – do join in if you can.

Meanwhile, we hear news of revisions at Selly Oak – we wait with anticipation for improved plans for the restoration of the canal

link here – well done to the Lapal Canal Trust AND C&RT for applying concerted pressure on this matter.

Good boating – of any sort – and keep in touch.

David



IWA Branch Planning Officers

Each branch of the IWA has one or more designated planning officers who volunteer to monitor local planning authority web-sites to identify proposals which may have an impact on inland waterways and submitting comments on them to the planning authority.

This role, which requires no qualifications or experience, (but one or the other or both are advantageous), not only includes reviewing planning applications but also responding to draft documents of a strategic nature, issued by the planning authority, e.g. as a result of changes to planning laws. You will have seen from the committee contact list on the back page that the Birmingham, Black Country and Worcestershire Branch has four planning officers, each of whom monitors specific planning authorities.

In the West Midlands, where canals are ubiquitous and former industrial sites and closed public houses endemic, applications are frequently seen for significant sized residential developments abutting a canal. Many of these proposals include a range of buildings, detached houses, town houses and light industrial units. From time to time, IWA planning officers attend site meetings to discuss proposals with the applicant and this will often be in conjunction with representatives from other boating organisations.

The aim is to influence councillors, planners, and applicants by working together to ensure that planning proposals are not detrimental to canals and their environs. Developers can be influenced, especially when they learn of the "extra value" to be gained from including the canal vista in a housing development rather than having the development fenced off from a canal.

You will see elsewhere in this issue how such persistence can pay off.

A proposal which integrates an existing or former canal is undoubtedly preferable to an abandoned and derelict industrial site. If we can influence all parties to this effect, everybody wins.

Bob Fox

Branch Input into The Watford National

The Birmingham, Black Country and Worcestershire Branch was well represented at Watford with members undertaking a number of organisational and operational roles, several of which were extremely demanding in terms of time and effort.

John Butler acted as Administration Director which, after several months of preparation, became a full time job in the run-up to the event and continued for some time afterwards. He fondly remembers preparing 130 pages of risk assessments, 14 department manuals and a premises licence application that eventually resembled a small book. He was ably assisted and sometimes organised by Sheila Campbell (and also by Val!). Pat Campbell too was heavily involved with communications as a member of the site team.

Freddie Cooke was responsible for arranging the caterers, encouraging outside caterers to tender, check their credentials, review the bids and let the contracts.

Kate Pashley worked on ticket sales and her husband Alan who undertook a number of varied tasks as and when requested.

Dave Pearson acted as South Harbour Master, helped, without going swimming, to build and subsequently demolish landing stages.

Dave's domestic line manager, Marjorie Marchant spent nine days making somewhere in excess of 1000 sandwiches and went on to win the best cake baked at the rally award, (as reported elsewhere in this edition).

Bob Fox worked on the gate, checking tickets and responding to questions from the public.

For all their efforts, many thanks.
David Struckett

Emergency Stoppages

The recent closures of the Wolverhampton 21 due a failure of the wall of lock 20 and the flight at Minworth were major at the height of the boating season could not have occurred at a more inconvenient time.

Given the complexities of the repairs, managers staff and contractors of Canal and River Trust are to be congratulated for the speedy response to both situations, the good communications about the repairs and time scales and then getting the jobs done and the canals re-opened.

Many thanks, your efforts are much appreciated.

Dudley No 2 Canal at Selly Oak

The Battery Park saga rolls on, with smoke and mirrors hiding the true intentions of the developers, The Harvest Partnership, who are being pressured by several groups including the IWA, Lapal Canal Trust and Community Partnerships for Selly Oak (CP4SO).

Members will recall the interest and enthusiasm generated some years ago, by Sainsbury's planning application, as part of their Battery Park, Selly Oak project to restore a couple of hundred yards of the Dudley No 2 Canal at Selly Oak across Battery Park, from a re-established junction with Worcester & Birmingham Canal to the edge of Selly Oak Park. This would have used the Harborne Lane bridge, recently re-developed by Birmingham City Council at considerable cost. You may be aware that late last year, Sainsbury's withdrew the original proposal and submitted a new application to Birmingham City Council involving the development of a Life Sciences building. This proposal no longer provides for a viable restoration of the Dudley No2 Canal.

At a meeting in December 2012, Land Securities explained that a route for the canal did exist in the modified proposal, with the Worcester & Birmingham Canal junction now situated immediately adjacent to Bristol Road bridge. This would make it very difficult for longer boats to turn into the restored line. It then runs down the side of Sainsbury's, underneath its service yard, through a concrete tunnel and proceeds along the perimeter of the site to meet up with the Harborne Lane bridge. not ideal but on the positive side, not in the centre of the retail area so no "pinch points" caused by lift-bridges or time restrictions.

Serious concerns were expressed when it became clear that because the overall retail site had been reduced in size to allow for the Life Sciences Building, Birmingham City Council had agreed that the Section 106 requirement could be reduced and the developer has been allowed, having had pre-submission discussions with the City (an admittance made in the Design and Access Statement) to submit an application that blatantly disregards the fundamental planning requirements for the site.

The BBC&W branch sent a strongly worded objection to the proposal, citing amongst other points the fact that the proposal ran counter to BCC's Local Action Plan. This objection added

weight to the large amount of public pressure being brought to bear to have the canal included in the scheme as originally envisaged.

As of the end of August, the situation was as follows:

Most of the site was sold to Roundheath Properties (a subsidiary of Sainsburys) in October last year. It is now proposed to sheet pile both sides of the canal from Harborne Lane to the concrete tunnel, leaving the earth in the centre for subsequent removal for concrete lining the channel, and after pressure virtually up to the junction on the other side.

There are now two planning applications in regarding (a) the Battery Park site remodeling, submitted by The Harvest Partnership and (b) the adjacent former B&Q site, which will include a set of stairs between the two sites. Both sites border the canal and so pressure will be applied to see if we can get, by means of representations from IWA, Lapal Trust, CP4SO and other interested parties, some section 106 money out of the developers for the canal.

According to the CP4SO web-site, the latest news is that on 5th September, Councillors voted unanimously to defer the decision on the Battery site which would have otherwise left some of the Lapal Canal high and dry as a pedestrian greenway.

By the middle of September it seems that the prospects of a fully restored canal crossing Battery Park may have taken a significant step closer to becoming a reality. After carefully measured speeches from Dr Andrew Schofield representing 11 community liaison groups and Dr Peter Best representing the Lapal Canal Trust, together with a timely snippet added in by David Wheeler on behalf of the West Midlands Canals Partnership, the Councillors then began their polite but ruthless rebuttal of some aspects of the Harvest Plan. As with any big scheme there are significant and long-overdue elements, elements which can be welcomed by all parties onto the site of this multi-use development, such as the provision of a prestigious medical science park - surely a feather in Birmingham's cap, eventually?

It would not have made sense to reject the outline plan as most people want to see a development of the site along the lines suggested, but at the same time approving the plan, even in outline, would

Continued from page 3

have given a green light to the detail of the plan as well as the outline aspects. So this deferral sends a message to the developers to try harder without rejecting the proposal outright.

At a more detailed level, the layout and purpose of some of the other proposed structures caused one Councillor to remark "it's the same old, same old" and "just not good enough" (for Birmingham).

Such remarks appear to have served good purpose as the Harvest team, for Sainsbury's and Land Securities, later agreed to meet again with the Lapal Canal Trust to explore ways to reduce the costs of restoration and so deliver a fully watered canal where they had previously left it as a dry greenway. The ensuing meeting was amicable and resulted in Harvest agreeing to investigate a new hi-tech polymer and its accompanying restoration detail, which is now being pioneered by a company 'on our doorstep' in Tipton.

"This could have a serious impact on the budget for canals in the Selly Oak rejuvenation scheme and result in a two-canal attraction, after all" said Peter . If the evidence now emerging from Droitwich could be repeated here, we might well see a supermarket becoming a dual attraction which includes the weekly food-shopping followed by a gentle stroll for some boat gongoozling, all in a one-stop visit?" he mused.

The residents of Selly Oak are hugely supportive of the canal restoration through Battery Park as part of the Sainsbury's development. The pressure will be maintained on both developers and planners until a satisfactory outcome is reached.
Bob Fox.

Upton upon Severn Moorings

After our representations to Upton Town Council, permission for the trip boat to moor on the public mooring pontoons was rescinded. Following a meeting between the Town Council and the Environment Agency the rocks dumped in the river adjacent to the Swan hotel. These visitor moorings are now fully operational.

There is more good news! The Upton Town Clerk has confirmed in a letter to the IWA, that following discussions with Tingdene Upton Marina, The council has obtained an agreement that Tingdene Upton Marina will provide complementary mooring passes for up to 48 hours. The passes are available from Upton Tourist Information Centre, the Swan Hotel, The Plough Inn, the Kings Head and the Anchor pubs as well as Seans News and Upton Newsagents in the High Street.

The Town Council expressed their gratitude to Tingdene and confirmed that they will be leading the process of raising funds to construct additional visitor moorings on the Upton side of the river.

Himalayan Balsam

In late June, we held a successful, if small, working party clearing Himalayan Balsam from the Falling sands viaduct area of the S&W Canal on Friday. Steve from CRT, Alison, David and Liz, and four others - quite an intensive operation in that much pulling was done, trying to clear an area, leaving the plants in large piles in unobtrusive spots. We also found a sort of tank in the undergrowth, with large wheel and gearing - most mysterious. There will be some 'follow up' work at Falling Sands to check on the effectiveness of our efforts.

It is clear that this process will need to be repeated annually over three or four years to bring the spread under control. The main route of transmission being water borne along river banks whilst along the canals, it spread tends to be by birds or animals.

Invasive Species of Plants

Readers will have noted from the summer activities that one of the tasks was to remove Himalayan Balsam adjacent to Falling Sands lock on the Staffs & Worcester canal.

Himalayan or Indian balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was introduced to Britain in 1839. It escaped from gardens and rapidly colonised riverbanks and areas of damp ground. It is the tallest annual plant in Britain, growing up to 3m high. The characteristic purplish-pink slipper shaped flowers appear in June. When the seed pods mature, they explode when touched, scattering the seed up to 7 metres away. Seeds are also spread by water and they may remain viable for up to two years. Hence the dense stands of the weed along the banks of some rivers.

Himalayan balsam plants grow in dense stands that suppress the growth of native grasses and other flora. In autumn the plants die back, leaving the banks bare of vegetation, and therefore liable to erosion.

Control measures should aim to prevent flowering, and are best carried out before June for maximum effectiveness. Pulling as we have been doing, needs to be on a regular basis over about three years to be effective and may even eradicate the plant from isolated sites. Fortunately the plants are easy to pull from the ground and readily rot down without re-growing.

Another invasive plant, which is as yet less widespread, is Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) which spreads through its crown, rhizome (underground stem) and stem segments, rather than its seeds.

Listed by the World Conservation Union as one of the world's 100 worst invasive species, the weed can grow a metre in a month and can cause heave below concrete and tarmac, coming up through the resulting cracks and damaging structures such as buildings, bridges and roads. Studies have shown that a 1cm section of rhizome can produce a new plant in 10 days. Rhizome segments can remain dormant in soil for twenty years before producing new plants.

The Environment Agency provide advice on the destruction of Japanese knotweed via a code of practice but it is not straightforward and may require the employment of specialist contractors. If the weed is buried, it has to be a minimum of 5 metres deep! Not so easily done when compared with removing Himalayan Balsam!

Bob Fox.

Crossword Solution

	N	O	I	N	U		D	N	A	R	G	
E	R	I	T			I			N	E	E	T
N		S	S	E	N	R	E	V	N	I		P
O	B	S	A		E	E	D		A	N	T	E
T		A		A	Y	B	L			E		D
S	O	C		M			R			D	D	A
	O		D	R	O	F	T	A	W		O	
E	C	A		A				N		D	N	A
T		K		K	C	I	T	S		R		I
A	V	E	N		E	R	U		S	A	L	I
D		R	E	T	S	E	C	R	O	W		E
O	R	U	E			B			B	O	O	B
T	N	E	S	B	A		R	O	H	C	N	A

Unwanted Canal Books & Maps?

If you have any publications relating to our canals which are in reasonable or better condition and you no longer want, would you kindly donate them to us so that they may be used for branch fund-raising activities. All offerings welcome.

McDougalls Flour Challenge Trophy

Having produced more sandwiches than she could shake a (bread?) stick at over the days leading up to the festival, Marjorie Marchant went back to Nb Constable to carry on cooking, and proceeded to win the Mc Doug alls Flour Challenge Trophy for the best cake cooked at the rally, she didn't stop grinning for ages!! Congratulations Marjorie!!



The Winning Cake

Marjorie, (L) and the Sarnie Team



A Little Light Relief (1)

As the train rolled out of the station, a man sitting in the Quiet Zone carriage pulled out his mobile phone, dialled and started speaking in a loud voice:

"Hi sweetheart, it's Eric, I'm on the train."

"Yes, I know it's the six thirty and not the four thirty, but I had a long meeting."

"No, honey, not with that blonde from the accounts office, it was with the boss."

"No sweetheart, you're the only one in my life."

"Yes, I'm sure, cross my heart."

Fifteen minutes later, he was still talking loudly. When the young woman sitting next to him had enough, she leaned over and said into the phone, "Eric, hang up the phone and come back to bed."

Eric doesn't use his mobile phone in public any longer.

email addresses

Distribution of this Newsletter in hard copy format costs several hundred pounds per year. This money would otherwise be spent on direct activities associated with the IWA core functions. To minimise administration costs, the Branch will distribute "Worcester Bar" by email.

If you received this edition via Royal Mail, would you please take a moment to ensure that the IWA is aware of your up-to-date email address by contacting either Tracy Higgin at membership@waterways.org.uk or Michael Smith-Keary at sk63@btinternet.com as soon as possible.

Your support is greatly appreciated.

A Little Light Relief (2)

Male Logic

Woman: Do you drink beer?

Man: Yes.

Woman: How many beers a day?

Man: Usually about 3.

Woman: How much do you pay per beer?

Man: £4.00 which includes a tip.

Woman: And how long have you been drinking?

Man: About 20 years, I suppose.

Woman: So a beer costs £4 and you have 3 beers a day which puts your spending each month at £360. In one year, it would be approximately £4,400, correct?

Man: Correct.

Woman: If in one year you spend £4,400, not accounting for inflation, the past 20 years puts your spending at £88,000, correct?

Man: Correct.

Woman: Do you know that if you didn't drink so much beer, that money could have been put in an interest savings account and after accounting for compound interest for the past 20 years, you could have now bought a Ferrari?

Man: Do you drink beer?

Woman: No.

Man: So, where's your Ferrari?

New Members

Mr H & Mrs I Humphreys Birmingham
 Mr S & Mrs & V Dowding Worcester
 Mr R Baines & Mrs J Young Wolverhampton
 Mr D McIntosh Worcester
 Mr P G Tooker & Ms A M Moon Solihull
 Mr V M Andrews Birmingham
 Mrs J Nicholls & Mr M Plant Stourbridge
 Mr K Moody Yeovil
 Mr J & Mrs S Flood Stourport-on-Severn
 Mr P & Mrs I Rash Halesowen
 Mr T Goss Droitwich

Mrs S Birch Kidderminster
 Mr A Oldfield Kidderminster
 Mr G & Mrs T Finch Redditch
 Mr R J & Mrs S Topley Stourport-on-Severn
 Mr & Mrs A & S Coppin Worcester

Welcome to the IWA Birmingham Black Country & Worcester Branch. We look forward to meeting you at our social evenings or on our working parties. If you would like to help please contact any committee member to discuss.
 Bob Fox
 Editor

Crossword No.2.

Compiled by John Butler.
 Answers on page 5

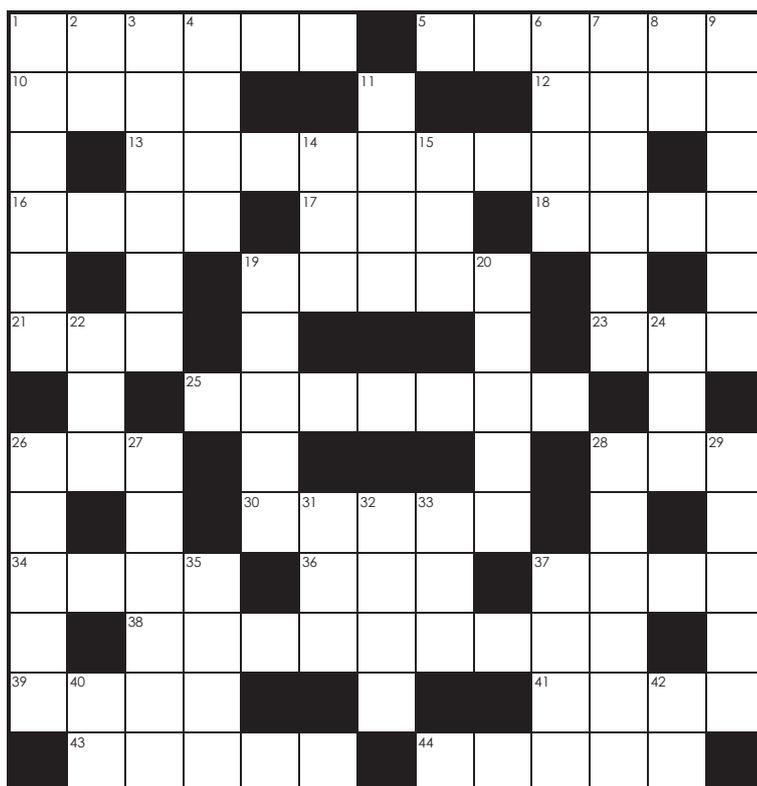
Across

- 1 Reason to stop at High Offley, and a means of staying put?
- 5 Away boating? The sailor was told to go!
- 10 Reversing error?
- 12 About eighty-four pence, but variable.
- 13 A bar in Birmingham, found on the Severn
- 16 Find a blue one on the Stockton flight?
- 17 Sounds like you are a North Yorkshire waterway.
- 18 Waterway found (very rarely?) in Leningrad.
- 19 Often used with carrot. Can be persuasive.
- 21 Conjunction from Andorra?
- 23 Untouchable service
- 25 National venue.
- 26 What 21 tells you to do.
- 28 Cost of sale for a salad item?
- 30 Liberal affirmative for North African country?
- 34 Before it turns round, a volcano.
- 36 Afon Dyfrdwy
- 37 Old boy's self-assessment comes around to encourage better behaviour.
- 38 Caledonian Thistle and Caledonian Canal both found here.
- 39 Knows everything, still not quite twenty
- 41 Wear out here, but can be over-inflated in the States!
- 43 Half cut
- 44 The other half

Down

- 1 A relative of honeysuckle
- 2 Negative doctor?
- 3 Is Noel scared?
- 4 You can bank on this (1,1,1,1)
- 6 Observed, visually
- 7 I've got it!
- 8 No reply from Norwich postcode.
- 9 Until now (4,2)

- 11 & 32 Caused by a thiamine deficiency. Twice?
- 14 Half of this is too much, especially afloat.
- 15 A dry tippie to drink very quickly!
- 19 Heavy traffic causes one of these to go up!
- 20 It's fate when a limb falls into the Kennet & Avon
- 22 South Yorkshire waterway flows uphill to indicate agreement
- 24 Sound coming from a pigeon box?
- 26 A department is competent
- 27 Someone unwilling to believe in textile yarn measurement?
- 28 Local name for a Watford park.
- 29 Architectural material on the Trent & Mersey?
- 31 Devon village, seen more than once in March!
- 32 See 11
- 33 Desirable currency.
- 35 Karenina reverses into Kournikova!
- 37 It's a turn-up for a sparkling result.
- 40 A good example of an egg deficiency
- 42 The Senior Service – back from Norwich



Winter Programme 2013/2014

IWA meetings at: Coombeswood Canal Trust, Hawne Basin, Hereward Rise, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 8AW
Starting at 7.15 for 7.30pm.

Date	Subject	Speaker
21.10.13	The Hereford & Gloucester Canal	Dick Skeet
18.11.13	The Thames Tideway	Andrew Pheasey
16.12.13	Christmas Buffet & Photos	
20.1.14	The Grand Canal of China	Liam D'Arcy Brown, Author
17.2.14	Moving Forward with CaRT	Richard Parry Chief Executive of Canal & River Trust
17.3.14	AGM followed by Members' slides, etc.	
21.4.14	Taking IWA Forward	Les Etheridge National Chairman IWA
19.5.14	Taking a Narrowboat to France	Chris Clegg

For further information, contact Chris Osborn (details below).

Members are very welcome to bring guests to any of these meetings.

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