

Sou'Wester

Issue 170 August – December, 2015
IWA South West Region



South West Region Committees

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Region Chairman

I am writing this on a warm summer day, just the right day to enjoy the waterways in whatever way you can.

Branches continue to work hard in order to make a difference in all areas. The South Wales branch are involved in a new group Swansea Bay Inland Water Partnership whose aim is to improve the profile of the waterways in the area and try to achieve more navigation on the Neath and Tennant Canals and also carry on the good work on the Swansea Canal.

In Gloucester the branch is involved in the proposed new procedure for operating the bridges on the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal. This is important in that the new scheme will be rolled out nationally if it is successful. Locally it will mean that navigation will hopefully be available on the G/S canal 365 days a year from 8am to dusk.

In Avon and Wilts there is still the problem of continuous moorers (continuous cruisers who do not move sufficiently) on the K and A. CRT are taking action which does appear to be having some effect. It is a long term project which will show results eventually. On a happier note this year is the 25th anniversary of the opening of Caen Hill Locks and various celebrations are planned.

West Country branch are still campaigning to achieve some form of navigation in the proposed tidal barrier at Bridgwater and thus improve access to the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal. Which if achieved will make more of the waterways in the area navigable. I attended a very successful event in Bridgwater which showcased the Dock.

The HLF bid which is being made later this year, by the Cotswold Canal Trust, is fully supported by IWA and the local branch chair is fully involved in preparing the bid.

I attended the opening of a landing stage in Swindon recently which was opened by HRH Duchess of Cornwall, a fervent supporter of the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust. The weather was not kind and she had to use an umbrella nevertheless it was an event that highlighted the Trust and raised its profile. I understand that the next person to use the landing stage will be a portly gentleman with a red cloak and large beard in December.

There are plans for tidal lagoons to generate electricity at Swansea, Newport, Cardiff and Bridgwater Bay, which could be a benefit to navigation. The local branches are monitoring the situation and have already met with the proposers.

Nationally there is still concern over the use of cycles on towpaths and it is felt that a policy of education in order that all canal users respects the needs of others. Unfortunately going very fast is encouraged by phone apps where riders can enter their times over selected routes and see how their times compare with others.

As you can see the various branches are very active but they are facing the problem of not having enough committee members. I would urge you think hard about joining your local committee where you would be most welcome. Why not ring your local chair to discuss it.

The IWA national AGM is being held near this region on the Droitwich Canal and I would urge you all to attend if possible to find out how the Association is organised and maybe how you can play your part.

Finally this is the first edition prepared by our new editor Joyce and I am sure members will give her every help and encouragement in her task

Roger Holmes

Notices

CRT Waterway Forums

Canal & River Trust (CRT) has announced the following 2015 Waterway Forum dates (all meetings are from 6.30 – 8.30pm):

Tuesday, 3rd November, Swansea

Pontardawe Arts Centre, Herbert St, Pontadawe, SA8 4ED

Tuesday, 10th November, Gloucestershire (Please note change of date)

The Dock Office, Commercial Rd, Gloucester, GL1 2EB

IWA Avon and Wilts Branch 100 Club

The winners of the July draw for the Branch 100 club were:

1st prize:	Vivienne Hook of Bristol	£31=50
2nd prize:	Laurie Gibney of Nailsea	£18=90
3rd prize:	Douglas Ware of The Isle of Wight	£12=60

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday 26th September,

Salwarpe Village Hall, near Droitwich from 10.30am:

IWA's Annual Members' Meeting will follow a different format from previous AGMs with two short presentations on the theme of IWA initiatives on non-CRT Waterways, followed by the AGM. There will then be an opportunity to discuss members' topics with trustees followed by the Annual Awards Ceremony.

Further details will be available in the August edition of *Waterways* magazine.

Roger Holmes

News

21st Anniversary Celebration at Bridgwater Docks



A fun-day was held at Bridgwater Docks on Sunday 28th June to celebrate amongst other things the 21st anniversary of the reopening to navigation of the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal. The fun-day was organised by the Friends of Bridgwater Docks, including our members Pat Robinson and Sara Evans and was supported on the day by other members

of the IWA West Country Branch. The Region Chairman, Roger Holmes, also attended.

A number of boats made the journey up from Taunton to Bridgwater for the event including the trip boat operated by the Somerset Waterways Development Trust which was used initially to take the Mayor of Bridgwater and other Councillors on a trip along the Canal and around the Docks and subsequently to run a number of trips for visitors.

Many Bridgwater families took advantage of the fair weather to come along to the event and there were plenty of attractions and events for them to enjoy. It was good to see the Docks come alive for a day and there is no doubt that the fun-day was a great success. A number of suggestions have already been made that this to become an annual event in the future.

Thanks to Ray Alexander for providing this report and to Jana Branecka for the photo.

Flatner Boat Launch



A highlight of the annual Langport Festival took place on Saturday 6 June with the launch of a replica Flatner boat onto the River Parrett at Bow Bridge.

The replica Flatner was designed and built by artists Jethro Brice and Seila Fernandez Arconada as part of the Some:when art project.

Watched by a crowd of some 40 people and accompanied by 4 canoes and 2 other boats the Flatner made a lovely sight being rowed downstream, on part of the River Parrett which has only occasional boating activity.

Thanks to Ray Alexander for providing this report and photo.

Help keep WRG on the Move – £120,000 Appeal



Since WRG first purchased the set of vans around eight years ago, they have been driven a total of **400,000 miles**. This is the equivalent of travelling around the world sixteen times! WRG's vans play a vital role transporting volunteers, equipment and tools on WRG's week-long Canal Camps and weekend digs

across England and Wales, and without them WRG couldn't continue to support canal restoration. The current fleet of four much-loved Transit vans needs to be retired and it is time to find new sets of wheels for the next generation of volunteers.

IWA has launched an appeal to help WRG raise £120,000 to purchase the four vans with the aim of buying two vans in 2015 and a further two in 2016. The appeal has already reached halfway and, at the time of writing, currently stands at **£66,486** which is enough to purchase the first two vans!

We can't do this without you. The appeal needs the support of people like you that are passionate about waterways restoration to help reach the target. If you would like to help WRG get the essential equipment for restoring canals then please make a donation or get involved in one or more of the many exciting events and activities that will take place throughout the appeal.

Ways to Donate

Online: See www.wrg.org.uk/wrgvanappeal for how to donate via the Virgin Money Giving appeal page.

Cheque: Make cheques payable to The Inland Waterways Association and send them to WRG Van Appeal, Island House, Moor Road, Chesham, HP5 1WA. If you would like any further information on the appeal visit www.wrg.org.uk/wrgvanappeal or contact Toby Gomm at 01494 783453 ext. 611.

Thanks to Toby Gomm for providing this report and photo.

Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal: Launch of H & G C T Trust's 225 Anniversary Campaign at Eastnor Castle, Ledbury



The launch of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust's 225 Anniversary Campaign took place on Thursday 2 July 2015 at Eastnor Castle.

Over 180 guests were invited to the family home of James and Lucy Hervey-Bathurst to celebrate 225 years since the birth of the original Canal company.

James, a Vice President of the H&G CT, and Lucy co-hosted the event with Dame Janet Trotter DBE, Lord-Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, and Christopher James OBE DL, Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Herefordshire. The Countess of Darnley, Lord-Lieutenant of Herefordshire, sent a message of support to the H&G Canal Trust:

"This is an exciting and ambitious project, which will benefit the two counties whilst it is being developed and for many years to come. It deserves full support from across our two counties."

The event, held at no cost to the Canal Trust, was anonymously sponsored and generously supported by Tanners Wines and Emma & Clive's Distinctive Catering Limited as well as Eastnor Castle and SoGlos Publishing.

Richard Parry, Chief Executive of the Canal & River Trust, addressing the assembled company, spoke of the benefits and values waterways provide nationally and outlined the values which the rebuilt H&G Canal will provide:

- economic: a British Waterways survey in 2009 showed a rebuilt H&G Canal would bring benefits worth £20million per year to the local economy, and 500 new full-time-equivalent jobs; in addition numerous precedents show an increase in property values in the vicinity of canals;
- water management: in partnership with the Environment Agency and local bodies, H&G CT has a major role in Hereford's surface water management and in the proposed scheme for river improvement and flood relief in Gloucester;

- community: the rebuilt H&G Canal will be a shared, open-access community resource, a green corridor supporting a rich and varied ecology, enhanced by the restoration and maintenance of numerous heritage features.

“Living waterways transform places and enrich lives” Richard Parry said. “Now a major resource for leisure and tourism nationally, waterways are an important part of our heritage.”

The H&G CT’s approach is unusual in combining restoration activity with securing local sources of income to sustain indefinite maintenance of rebuilt sections of Canal and future operational requirements and improvements.

The major challenge H&G CT faces is acquiring the land needed to rebuild the Canal, which was sold long ago to over 100 landowners along the route. The 225 Anniversary Campaign seeks to raise substantial funds to meet this challenge, in the form of donations and loans.

Thanks to Carolyn Pascall for providing this report and Photoglow Photography Ltd for the photograph

Branch Reports

IWA Avon & Wiltshire Branch Report

I can quite appreciate that, although this issue of “Sou’Wester” may fall on your doormat during early August, you may not be reading it for a few weeks or longer, if you are able to enjoy the summer aboard your boat, or someone else’s, and stay away from home for the duration.

Nevertheless, I’m writing on the assumption that someone, or perhaps more than one person, will be perusing these pages reasonably shortly after the contributions have been turned into the printed page and bound together to form the 170th issue of the title.

I’ll start near to home, in Bristol. The 44th Bristol Harbour Festival took place last weekend, but most unfortunately, due to other commitments, I wasn’t able to get down there and see what the attendances on the water looked like. Monday’s paper extolled the fact that something like a quarter of a million people had been there – over the whole weekend – but I say again

what I've said before, that regrettably the boats, whether sea-going, river cruisers, or canal narrowboats, or any other category, tend to be positioned to be the backdrop to everything else that goes on in the course of 48 hours.

I mentioned the proposed plan to bridge the harbour waters for pedestrians and cyclists at Finzel's Reach, just above Bristol Bridge, last time. Although the plan was accepted by the Development Committee, despite much objection, I was able to gather at a meeting of the Bristol Harbour Recreational Users' Group last month that discussions between the developers and various bodies and individuals representing users of the waters are still continuing with, as I understand, the object of ensuring that as much clearance for all forms of water-based traffic as possible is created. River and canal boats are very much in the same category as the ferry boats and trip vessels based in the Harbour, and the owners and managers of those businesses have plenty to say, so I will bide my time until it's essentially necessary to start up our artillery.

Before I leave Bristol, I would be interested to know how many, if any, of our members, of this Branch, or any others, have a boat moored in the centre of Bristol, under the eye of the Harbour Master. If you have such a mooring, or in fact, one up river beyond Netham Lock, even as far upstream as Newbridge Marina, please do contact me and tell me. My email address is john.gornall@waterways.org.uk or my mobile phone is 07720 324830.

Outside Bristol, our concerns are either to do with navigation (the Kennet & Avon Canal) or with restoration (the Wilts & Berks and North Wilts Canals, and the Somersetshire Coal Canal). In the latter instance, a planned festival at or near Paulton Basin had most unfortunately to be cancelled, due to various problems which had arisen. We hope there will be better success for a future attempt to celebrate the restoration progress of the canal, perhaps next year.



On the Wilts & Berks Canal restoration progress continues, I understand, at various locations, but a very recent highlight was the presence of the Trust's Patron, HRH the Duchess of Cornwall, on the edge of Swindon, to inaugurate the recently built landing stage beside a new branch of Waitrose in the new locality of West Wichel. The weather wasn't Royal but the Duchess's attendance increases

the opportunities for the work of the Trust to grow through the activities of its trip boat, “Dragonfly”. Congratulations are also due to the Trust, one of our Corporate Members, on the recent appointments of both a new Trust President and a Trust Chairman. These two appointments very much strengthen the leadership of the Trust and its objectives, and also relieve the pressure on the two Vice-Chairmen during the past couple of years.

A quick glance at Wiltshire Council’s planning portal appears to show that the planning application for the Melksham Link scheme is not yet determined, three years after the original application was lodged. No doubt there are ongoing processes behind the scenes, but it will be good to report eventually that the green light for this restoration has at last been given, bringing closer the eventual likelihood of real boats being seen once again in Chippenham or Calne, Royal Wootton Bassett and Swindon.

As a final item, can I steer your eyes and minds to the information elsewhere in this issue, put together by Geoff Harman, our Branch’s Social Events Organiser, regarding the monthly social gatherings we will be providing this coming autumn and winter. Despite the hiccups of earlier this year, we’re back to the pub venue in Saltford, on the main A4, so very easy to locate. The details will also be shown under Events on the main IWA website, and on the Branch web page. I do hope that you’ll come and support these evenings each month.

John Gornall

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Branch Chairman

IWA Gloucestershire & Herefordshire Branch Report

AS you would expect at this time of year things can be a little slow but some important things are going on in the Gloucester area.

Gloucester and Sharpness Canal Bridges

The proposal by CRT to automate the bridges on the canal are by and far the most important thing to happen on the canal for a long time as it affects all boaters and everyone living in the immediate area of the canal. The canals bridges are currently operated by Bridge-keepers as they have been since the

inception of the waterway in the 1820's, 200 years of tradition will change or will it? The IWA have been invited by CRT to participate in the consultation and contribute ideas to the proposed operation of the Bridges.

As you would expect a dilemma exists a much loved waterway with wonderful Bridge keepers who give excellent service adding character to the system, for a change to a remote controlled system. Our emotions say no let us keep it that way but on the other hand we have been complaining that in the winter we do not have full operation and even in summer the use of the canal is limited compared to most of the network. CRT though do not have the money to keep bridges open for long periods in the winter season when perhaps two or three boats use them in a day. Plus in the summer they have to employ large numbers of temporary staff. Unfortunately the numbers do not add up and I think we have to accept change. We do hope though that the existing full time staff are given alternative work, a large number are required to maintain the bridges each day seven days a week and be in attendance for the larger boats/ships etc which use the canal. WE are sure that staff can be re deployed without too much difficulty.

The IWA have been accused of fully supporting the changes, this is not necessarily so we realise the requirement to change and welcome being asked to assist. This does not mean we agree with everything, we are after a compromise that will suit all, boat users and locals plus those who need access to the area west of the canal which is an island. CRT have a difficult job satisfying all!

I have attended the main meetings with Parish Councils and user groups. Members have taken boat trips to access the situation. The proposed system has been installed at Sandfield Bridge at Saul Junction operated by the Bridge Keeper for some months. Several thousand bridge movements being made as the bugs were sorted out. The system uses lasers (as used by Network Rail) to sense any movement on the bridge and the canal. The boater uses a smart phone with app, that uses the Wi Fi element to contact the bridge Wi Fi. The boater operates the app and after the laser system has indicated the bridge is clear, the traffic barriers etc are put into action, the bridge opened, the boats (s) pass through and the bridge closes after the detection system indicates every boat is clear. If the boater does not have a smart phone an alternative method is available, phone, the VHF network or intercom at the bridge. These may be used as the whole network will be monitored by a central control

which will be manned all the time. For more information look at www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

Only 60% of the population currently have Smart phones, many boaters do not wish to take them away with them sometimes just taking a simple phone. Concerns have been expressed by our members over this mode of operation and many have suggested a system used on the continent where a remote control unit is used to operate the bridges. CRT say that within a few years all phones will be Smart phones so not really an issue, so we will see what happens. I can assure you that the IWA will be keeping in close contact re this and other issues associated with the application of the operating systems.

The major advantage of the system: we will have seven day a week operation, throughout the winter period, and open for longer hours in the summer. The IWA would like Dawn till Dusk opening. All of this will get over the current position where effectively the canal is unusable in the winter and restricted compared to main network in the summer. Locals living nearby are concerned that they will be isolated if the operation of the bridges is not controlled. They are concerned that they could be isolated for long periods, we will though work together to get a sensible compromise for both users needs.

The IWA is also concerned about automatic operation at the busy hot spots such as Saul Junction again this has been a major question from boaters and locals. Currently we feel that at Saul in busy periods the bridges should be manned.

There are other issues, so please contact me if you wish to talk further.

Cotswold Canals HLF bid

The Cotswold Canals Trust is busily preparing for the HLF bid in November. The IWA is represented on the group and is a core member on what is the most exciting canal project in the country. In a few years the Stroudwater Navigation and Stroud will be connected to the main network at Saul.

We have discussed how the branch may support the HLF bid. A new Community project is being set up on the restored canal called Cotswold Boatmobility, where boats are provide for the people in need and the disabled to experience the water by canoeing and using special boats to give trips on the water - where the passengers participate. This shows a community effort and the effect the restoration is having. It becomes part of the bid so we are

contributing the money raised at the recent Tall Ships event in Gloucester docks to the new organisation, £540.00.

We may be a small area but my goodness we have more canal action than anywhere else in the country!

The Branch

Our branch has a very successful record of liaison with various authorities and continues that, our social evenings are good and will now be held at The Warehouse, Parliament Street in Gloucester. We used this venue this spring and it was deemed a success, we have a Bar, Café and excellent facilities, the free parking is 70m away in Bristol Road. So come along and support us on the first Thursday of each month.

We do though need help, people move on and we need new blood on our committee so could you volunteer? Secretarial work; event's organiser; Treasurer; are all need at present plus anyone with ideas. So think about it and come along.

Martin Turner

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Branch Chairman

IWA South Wales Branch Report

Neath Port Talbot LDP Hearing: Final report from the inspector is anticipated to be a compromise which will go some way to satisfy our requirements and give some protection to the canal stretches concerned. This is not an entirely satisfactory result as we have not achieved all our objectives, however it is probably the best we can expect for the moment and pursuing the SBIW Partnership (see below) will bolster the chances of longer term success.

Mon & Brec Crumlin Arm Event: The Pontywaun Festival went ahead on Saturday 18th July and was very successful. Both the Islwyn Canal Association's trip boat and the Mon & Brec trip boat were in use providing entertainment for the first time in many years on this stretch of the canal.

Swansea Bay Inland Waterway (SBIW) Partnership: The inaugural meeting of the partnership was held on 22nd June, attended by representatives from Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Councils, CRT, Swansea Canal Society, Neath & Tennant Canal Trust, Sustrans, Mon & Brec and IWA (Pat Cleary and Roger Holmes). The Mon & Brec were there to offer advice as their Partnership with their local councils is being used as a model. All made a commitment to collaborate to further the concept in principle and to proceed to a further meeting to setup a structure to that end. Pat Cleary, IWA South Wales branch Chair, has been asked to chair that meeting to be held on 29th July.

Branch Gazebo: At our 16th June Branch Meeting a decision was made to invest in a gazebo to house our displays at events. It was anticipated that about £100 would purchase an appropriate unit. A member recommended a particular brand available on the internet which was subsequently purchased for the princely sum of £45 delivered. All agreed that this was a sound investment which would serve the branch well for many years. See below for its first outing.

Making Waves Festival at Welshpool 4/5th July: First outing for our new gazebo. Pat and Sue Cleary arrived at the event site on the evening of 3rd July and, with help from the IWA Shrewsbury and North Wales Branch folks who were located next door, the gazebo went up. Problem 1: too flimsy. A brisk wind indicated that perhaps the quality of our new acquisition was not necessarily up to the job. Problem 2: too low. Our banners wouldn't fit fully extended. This and other sundry problems meant that the South Wales Branch image was not quite as we had hoped ... Back to the drawing board. However, the Saturday was a success with a steady flow of interested folk.

Pat Cleary

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Branch Chairman

IWA West Country Branch Report

There lots happening down in the West Country, but what's different!?

Some of our committee are to attend an open meeting organised by Exeter Civic Society, probably on the 29th September in Exeter, where some fairly major changes are planned in the governance of Exeter Canal. We have also been in touch with their Canal Users Group to support some of their aspirations plus met some of them to discuss the benefits of joining this Branch/IWA in the hope that we may attract new members as to date we do not have many members in that County. We are also planning our own membership meeting in Exeter on 20th October but at time of writing do not yet have an appropriate speaker. Watch out for further info on the Web Site.

We have been invited to attend the CRT's 25th Anniversary event to commemorate the reopening of the Caen Hill Flight on the K&A (which is the 'sister' waterway to our own B&T within CRTs area) on 7th Aug. Some of us will be going to represent our Volunteers and since we have now formally adopted 3 parts of the B&T Canal suddenly it's like the lights have switched on and we are now seen to exist. Some of our bodies in attendance should help cement relationships. We have now received approval to use their B&T Workboat 'Usk Valley' after its major refit but ironically its difficult to move it because of the current low water and blanket weed problems.

The Himalayan (or Japanese) Balsam pulling volunteers work party were kept busy on 4th July at the Taunton end of the Canal where we had a good turnout including Stefanie from Head Office and we thank everyone involved for their efforts. Fortunately, we did not encounter the feared 'Triffid' giant hogweed which is to be avoided at all costs and if seen must be reported to the local council for them to deal with.

On 28th June a successful Gala/Fun day event in and around the Bridgwater Dock was organised by the newly formed 'Friends of Bridgwater Dock & Canal' with Town Council approval. I'm pleased to report that it coincided with our very own 21st anniversary of the reopening of the B&T Canal which was spearheaded by this Branch of the IWA in 1994. We staffed a branch marquee and were kept busy all day. Boat movements along the canal over that weekend period, not least of all by our own Workboat 'Somerset Dream', were somewhat limited due to the aforesaid weed problem but the day was declared a big success by all concerned and it could well be a precursor of thing to come.

Following repeated requests over almost 2 years to meet with a CRT Engineers and Management to discuss several issues and ideas relating to improving the Canal and Docks, we finally met our new CRT manager, Mark Evans and some of his team at the Bridgwater dock on both 6th May and 1st June. This is a step in the right direction to help achieve a better working understanding of each other for the future. We await some positive feedback from the proposals we have mooted some of which will be difficult but not impossible. We still await the go ahead to paint the Historical dock crane at the Docks which seems to be a continuing problem

On Sunday 19th July, our very active Volunteers Coordinator Mike Slade organised a social event with a luxury coach transporting volunteers, members, families and friends to the Mon & Brec Canal for an excellent cruise and cream tea on the good ship "N.B. Dragonfly". Many thanks to our hosts and I would recommend the event to anyone. There are already calls for another so watch this space!

There is still much effort being expended by Ray and myself regarding the proposed River Parrett Tidal Barrier which is to be constructed to help avoid a repeat of the disastrous flooding on the Somerset level a year and a half ago. This is undoubtedly a long term commitment for us but as we now have full IWA Regional and National backing as well as the services of Roy Sutton, I.W.A.'s Honorary Consultant Engineer we are confident that our input will be to the benefit of the Boating fraternity in due course. We have had several meetings with all the Authorities involved in this huge project to explain our plans and to encourage their support in order to ensure the right to navigation is not lost and also how it could be improved for all users and to encourage more tourism and recreational visitors to the Bridgwater area.

The above project is not to be confused with the recent proposals for a Bridgwater Bay Lagoon which is much different in its concept as it is aimed at generating renewable energy in the Bristol Channel. This committee recently attended a meeting with its promoters who are also leading the initiative for the first one to be installed at Swansea; however it seems that ours would be the largest, and the last.

Bob Abbott

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Branch Chairman

IWA Avon & Wiltshire Branch Salisbury Group

At the April meeting we welcomed Gareth Jones who gave us a detailed account of his trip along the Panama Canal which was included in the itinerary of his recent cruise holiday.

In the first half he gave us a very detailed history of the canal including the reasons why it had to be built. The canal which is 48 miles in length enabled vessels to avoid the 7060 mile trip around Cape Horn.

The first crossing that was suggested was by land in 1534 which involved transporting goods by mule train. Following this there were various ideas suggested, including in 1698 an overland trade route proposed by the Scots which came to nothing. The discovery of gold led to the construction of the Panama Railway opened in 1855 and this is still in use today for the transportation of containers. The next idea was to build the canal at sea level but this idea was not practical as it involved a 17 mile long canal tunnel through unstable land.

The present canal was opened on 15th August 1914 and the building of it resulted in a great loss of life mainly due to disease brought about by the working and climatic conditions. There is a staircase of 3 locks at each end which are 1050ft long, 110ft wide and allows boats with draft restrictions of 41.2ft with a total rise of 85ft.

In the second half Gareth then showed us photos taken from his cruise ship of large container vessels passing through the locks. He explained that although the vessels moved under their own power they were guided by 3 pilots and manoeuvred by tugs. Whilst the boats are in the locks mechanical mules on each side of the lock keep the ships in position by the use of two control lines from each mule. Each lock takes 26 million gallons of water.

We were amazed to see the enormous size of the container ships which only had a few inches of clearance on each side, a charge of 72 dollars per container is charged to pass through the canal. There are many ships that are too large to travel along this canal so new locks are now being built alongside the present ones to enable the modern vessels to pass through.

As a final thought Gareth made the point that the Panama Canal is now financed by the Chinese!

At the May meeting we welcomed back Richard Thomas to tell us about the work carried out by the Cory Tug "General V111" which was one of a fleet of

seven vessels engaged in the movement of refuse lighters disposing of London's waste.

The tug was built in 1968 and has a draught of 10ft 6ins with an engine of 1,200 HP; it has a capacity of 4,500 gallons of fuel and a massive prop, 7ft in diameter.

The tug towed three lighters with a 50 ton breaking strain tow rope 50ft in length made of polypropylene, each one lasting only the maximum of three weeks.

The lighters carried rubbish containers from Wandsworth to Mucking in Essex; there a retainer barge took the moored barges into Mucking so the containers could be craned out. Each of the three lighters carried thirty containers each one holding sixteen tons of rubbish. One million tons of rubbish was disposed of in this manner.

“General V111” started work at 6am and continued until 10.30pm every other day, four crew members would be on board and they were all great tea drinkers!

Mucking closed in 2012 due to the majority of waste now being incinerated. “General V111” and the other tugs have now been replaced with five new tugs that fulfil a similar purpose.

Ron & Myra Glover have been trailing their small cruisers around the UK and to France since the early 1970s and at the June meeting they gave us an illustrated talk about some of their adventures.

The advantage about trail boating is that they can travel on waterways that are closed to the full canal system. During this talk they introduced us to the two boats that they have used since 1976, towing vehicles, trailers and various types of slipways.

The talk covered their participation in various National Trail Boat Festivals beginning with the first ever which was held at Pewsey in 1985 on the 15 mile pond before the Devizes and Wootton Rivers flights were opened. Ron was proud that at this rally he won the prize for the best home built boat “Egnaro” that he built as his final college project.

Other waterways visited were the Basingstoke (1985 & 1987), Bridgewater & Taunton (1982), Chelmer & Blackwater (1993) and a visit to the festival at Clamecy on the Canal du Nivernais (1997).

More recent visits were made to the Neath & Tennant Canal (2011), Cotswold Canal at Stroud (2012), River Rother on the Kent/Sussex border (2013), Grand Western (2014) and the most recent, the northern reaches of the Lancaster Canal where they attended the festival just two weeks before this talk (2015).

For each waterway visited, Ron & Myra gave plenty of information always including the history of the waterway and details of the restoration project as well as the activities taking places at these festivals.

For the majority of boaters who travel on the main canal system, it was quite an eye opener to find out what parts of the system still remain out of reach for narrowboats.

BOULES & BBQ

The weather stayed warm and fine once again for the annual summer social event.

Twenty three members of the Salisbury IWA Group enjoyed a magnificent BBQ cooked and served by Geoff the landlord of the Green Dragon Alderbury.

Even after this sumptuous meal our members were able to participate in the boules tournament with competitive vigour under the strict eye of our resident French judge Jacques.

At the conclusion of this enjoyable evening a raffle was held and it was decided to send the proceeds on this occasion to “The Bruce Trust”.

Ron & Myra Glover

ron.glover@waterways.org.uk

myra.glover@waterways.org.uk

Forthcoming Events

IWA Avon & Wiltshire Branch Programme

Venue, unless otherwise indicated: The Crown, Saltford. BS31 3HJ

The Crown is on the A4 between Bristol and Bath and all Bristol to Bath buses stop at the door.

DATES:

Thursday 8th October 2015 at 7.30pm

“Barging on the North East Waterways” by Nick Grundy

Nick will describe his experiences of crewing gravel barges on the River Trent and the Yorkshire waterways.

Thursday 12th November 2015 at 7.30pm

“Didcot Railway Centre” by Martin Baker of the Great Western Society

Thursday December 10th 2015 at 7.30pm

A quiz set by Tim Wheeldon followed by Christmas refreshments. Entry £10 for a team of four.

January 2016 meeting – TBD

Thursday 11th February 2016 at 7.30pm

“Idle Women” by Vince Williams.

The story of the women working on the canals in the second world war.

All enquiries or bookings to Geoff Harman on 0117 9623812 or at geoff.harman@waterways.org.uk

IWA Avon & Wiltshire Branch Salisbury Group Programme

Venue: The Green Dragon, Old Road, Alderbury, Salisbury, SP5 3AR

Thursday, 15th October, 7.30pm

"Joeys, Joshers and James"

Phil Clayton is travelling from Wolverhampton to talk to us about a "Birmingham Canals Miscellany". This will cover the beginnings, growth, working years, decline and revival of the BCN together with the work of the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society.

Thursday, 19th November, 7.30pm

"Anything that Float"

Elaine Kirby, archivist of the Kennet & Avon Trust, is returning to tell us about "Anything that Floats". In her work Elaine has discovered photos of a large variety of craft that have plied the K&A since 1887. Included are trading boats, leisure boats, house boats, tar boats and other odd boats.

Thursday, 10th December, 7.30pm

Xmas dinner

Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Branch Social meetings

Venue: The Warehouse, Parliament St, Gloucester, GL1 1HY,
just by the docks – free parking nearby.

Thursday, 3rd September, 7.30pm

Neath and Tennant Canal Mike Jones

Thursday, 1st October,

Lydney Canal and Harbour Kathy Kilbey

Thursday, 5th November, 7.30pm

Somerset Waterways Ray Alexander

Thursday, 10th December, 7.30pm

Christmas Event

Next Issue of *Sou'Wester*

The next issue of *Sou'Wester* is due out in January, 2016.

Any content should be sent to the Editor at souwester@waterways.org.uk by **Tuesday, 1st December, 2015.**

NEW EDITOR



I'd like to introduce myself – my name is Joyce Potts. I'm married to Mike, we live near Hereford.

I joined the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Society (now a Trust) in 1990 of which I was a Director of the Trading Company for 6 years.

My husband was a founder member of the H & G and before that he did a little bit of work on the Stroudwater Canal. We are both now armchair members.

Currently, we are both group tour organisers

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Stefanie Preston at IWA Head Office, and past Editors – Peter Kelly & John Gornall for all their help in settling me in with the *Sou'Wester*.

Front cover image: Sandfield Bridge on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal (Nick Worthington).

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of IWA.

The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) is a non-profit distribution company limited by guarantee. Registered Office: Island House, Moor Road, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 1WA. Tel. 01494 783453

Registered in England no. 612245.

Registered as a Charity no 212343.

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FREE Admission

OVER FESTIVAL

on the canal 2015

*Beer, cider and perry festival
Tapas on the Terrace*

Over Basin near Gloucester

**Sat. 22 – Sun. 23 August,
11am – 5pm**

Saturday evening **5 till late**
the Beer Festival continues on
the River Terrace with live music ...

- Model boats
- Produce stalls
- Boat trips
- Craft stands
- Fun on the water
- Music
- Children's activities
- Canoeing and kayaking
- Heritage boat processions
- Treasure hunts
- Fire Brigade displays

H & G
CANAL TRUST

Directions:

turn off the A40 at traffic lights 250 yards west of Over
Roundabout (Junction of A40/A417). GR SO 816197