

Mega Milk Plant proposed alongside the Aylesbury Arm

Preliminary proposals have been submitted by Arla for the construction of a major milk processing plant on a greenfield site alongside the Aylesbury Arm north of the A41 and Aston Clinton. But this is no normal dairy; it could well be the largest plant of its type in the world covering 110 acres and with some structures over 30m tall towering over the canal

Arla started as a farmers cooperative in Sweden and has grown to be one of the largest dairy companies in Europe, with brands such as Lurpak and Anchor. Its presence in the UK came about through the acquisition of Express Dairies.

Public consultation meetings were held in Buckland and Aston Clinton in December. Concerns include the potential adverse impact on the canal and the use of a greenfield location when it appears that existing industrial sites could be used.

Branch Donates £1600

Fundraising during 2010 meant that the Branch was able to make donations of £1600 to three causes in the past few months. The largest cheque for £1000 was to the Wendover Arm Trust and was presented to Roger Leishman, WAT Restoration Director, at the Chiltern Branch Christmas Party. Roger commented that this donation was particularly appreciated as the cancellation of the Wendover Festival in 2010 meant the loss of the Trust's main source of income. A donation of £500 was made to IWA's current campaign to raise funds for the restoration of the Inglesham Lock. This sum was included with the collection for Keith Hadden and will ensure that a plaque is placed as a memorial. The final cheque was made out to the Cotswold Canal Trust.

Chiltern Branch
Newsletter
Spring 2011



The Inland
Waterways
Association

Chairman's Ramblings

After our time in sunnier climes, it was a bit of a shock to face the snow and ice in December and January. We had arranged to spend New Year on our boat at Alvechurch. In spite of advice by the marina that the ice was still very thick we decided to make the trip. But on arrival, it was evident that we weren't going anywhere by boat. The ice was six inches thick and although one boat did crash its way through for a few yards, we decided to use the boat as a country cottage; and very pleasant it was with walks along and even on the canal.



Ice breaking at Alvechurch

Towards the end of last year, we took a stroll along the Hertford Union Canal and Lee Navigation to view the developments at the Olympic Park. These are most impressive and we hope that the event fulfils its promise. Yet it seems that the waterway users will not get much enjoyment if proposals are approved to close the navigation and towpath, with steel nets below the water and razor wire above it. A common sense approach needs to be adopted that permits navigation while ensuring security.

Closer to home it's been good to rejoin the team restoring the Wendover Arm. Solid progress continues and we hope that the many hours of scrub bashing put in over the winter will provide a sound base for further work in the coming months.

In January, I attended the IWA Branch Officers Meeting in Stoke-on-Trent. This was a very informative event with updates on BW's planned transition to a Waterways Charity, the key issue being whether the Environment Agency's waterways will be included. While most people feel that this would be highly advantageous, it seems that the decision could go either way. This meeting also highlighted the wide range of activities undertaken by various branches.

With the inheritance of parts of Herts Branch, our Branch is now has a significantly larger membership and we have a key stretch of the Grand Union, from Marsworth to Stocker's Lock, in our patch. So it would be good if we could do more, but we do have limited resources. However, I am very pleased to report that Carolyn Leonard has joined the committee to take on the roles of both Planning Officer and Membership Secretary. I am also delighted that we were able to sign up seven new volunteers to help out at the summer events and with other activities.

Now spring is just around the corner and we can look forward to getting out and about, whether on or by the water. There's full programme of events in our area so join us for some great days out.

Peter Winter

News

Chiltern Branch

Committee: Carolyn Leonard has been co-opted on to the committee as Planning Officer and Membership Secretary.

New members: Chiltern Branch is pleased to welcome the following new members:

Martyn Loach, Amersham
Mr D & Mrs J Harris, Berkhamsted
Josie Aldridge, High Wycombe
Gemma Bolton, Watford
Tom Bransden, Princes Risborough
James Dyson, Princes Risborough
Helena Stolle, Kings Langley
David Whitfield, High Wycombe
David Barnes, Iver
Mr R & Mrs S Battman, Borehamwood
Mr I R Cottrell & Miss P Entwistle, Iver
Mr F & Mrs S Lloyd, Hemel Hempstead
Mr C & Mrs S Smith, High Wycombe

Programme Sponsor

Following an appeal in the last issue of

Grapevine, Boatshed Grand Union has offered to sponsor production of the Chiltern Branch Programme Card, which will be mailed out with the Summer issue of *Grapevine*. Our thanks go to Phil Bassett for this generous offer.

London Region

Chelmsford Branch has completed its move from Eastern Region to London Region.

British Waterways

Marsworth Top Lock: The top gates of this lock at Bulbourne were renewed in January and the work was undertaken as part BW's series of open days.

Planning Applications

Marsworth: A decision is pending on revised plans for development of the BW yard for housing.

Berkhamsted: Demolition work has commenced in preparation for the redevelopment of the Castle Wharf site.



New Lock Gates at Bulbourne

The Marsworth Lock Ransom 2010

Carolyn Leonard gets the views of a Canine Expert

It was a Saturday morning in August and the last weekend of my holiday with Carolyn and Geoff whilst my family were away when the usual routine of a long walk after getting up and having breakfast didn't happen. I wondered what was going on? There seemed to be more than the usual activity of food preparation and then it was not eaten but put into bags. How strange, definitely not what a Labrador would do.



That's me on the Lock Gate

The car was loaded and we got in, drove off and I had a snooze. When the car eventually stopped, I surfaced from my doze and looked out of the rain-spattered window at my surroundings. Through the heavy rain I could see a car park which I hadn't been to before, how exciting, I wondered if I would be allowed to do the things dogs enjoy, like sniffing, exploring and looking for playmates? I

soon realised we were going to have lunch first, not a bad idea; especially as the rain had stopped by the time we finished.

We got out of the car, I was told to stay close, (oh the joy of being without a lead), and we walked through the car park, up some steps and then there was this water, called a canal, and all sorts of interesting things like geese, ducks and swans. I knew immediately that today was going to be different. We walked over to say 'Hello' to people who seemed very friendly, unlike the swans that hissed at me. It is very rare that I say a lot but a growl seemed to do the trick with the swans and I got on with my exploring.

Carolyn picked up a bucket and I wondered why, especially as she said we were going for a walk. We don't usually take a bucket on a walk. We left Geoff and the others playing with boats and walked a long way alongside the water and back again. Carolyn kept going up to people and talking to them and then they put money in the bucket.

When we got back I explored the lock gates. It was great fun running backwards and forwards and then I jumped into the water and had a swim. The afternoon seemed to pass very quickly as we went on collecting money until it rained hard again.

While we sheltered from the rain, I had my tea and then we cleared up before going to 'The Anglers' Retreat'. I liked it there. Everyone settled down to a meal, which they seemed to enjoy. I can vouch for the chips!



Come in - the water's lovely

On Sunday morning we repeated the ritual of Saturday, so I was really excited and hoped we were going to the canal again.

We did! When we got there I knew the ropes. First I said hello to the friends I had made on Saturday and also made friends with some different people. Then we set off with the bucket again. There were more people about as the sun was out and I enjoyed myself saying hello to all the people on the towpath and round the reservoirs. Lots of children wanted to stroke me and of course this was good as their parents gave donations in the bucket. Some of the children even wanted to give me ice cream. So all in all I had a wonderful time, licking fingers, running round over the lock gates, swimming, walking and exploring.

When Carolyn and Geoff took me back to my family that evening I was exhausted but I'd had a wonderful weekend, thanks to John who organised it and everyone else who came and helped. We even raised nearly £500 altogether.

Chuckle the Labrador

Prepare for Lock Ransom 2011

This year's Ransom will take place at Marsworth bottom lock over the weekend of 6th & 7th August. It is next to bridge 132 that carries the B489 over the canal and is close to the White Lion public house.

We are now assembling a team of volunteers for this event that is always great fun and a nice little earner for our Branch. We man the lock from 10am to 6pm on both days and run a duty roster system, although some prefer to do all day, which is fine by

us. Tasks include lock operating and bucket collections, plus we have an information stand on the towpath where we spread the word about the work we do. Previous experience is not needed, but being a team player with a sense of humour is an advantage! On Saturday evening we hold a group dinner at the Anglers Retreat in Marsworth.

To join the team or for more information, e-mail john@johnbrice.co.uk

The Rickmansworth Festival 2011

John Brice looks forward to this year's Festival which takes place on 21st and 22nd May

I can hardly believe that this will be the 19th Rickmansworth Festival, I know it's true because my wife tells me she still has one of the 1993 T-shirts that Colin Eastman had printed at the inaugural event. So one thing I can tell you is that there will be a big party there next year.

Over the years the Festival has developed into a vibrant multi-attraction event

the bar whilst listening to folk music and canal songs. Apart from music there will be a fun fair, an array of craft and food stalls and an arena for charity and environmental groups.

On the towpath step back in time with a stroll along to Batchworth. The Festival is one of the biggest gatherings of working boats. Have a chat to the boaters; they are always keen to talk about their boat. On to Batchworth Lock where a village atmosphere has developed. You can book a boat trip, learn to tie knots, visit the "Little Union Canal" a model canal with working locks, and there is a lovely little café right next to the lock where you can enjoy refreshments whilst listening to jazz or watching the Morris Men.

IWA Chiltern Branch will be there, so please come in and say hello and get an update on the world of canals.

For anyone contemplating bringing a boat to the festival, booking forms are available on the website rwt.org.uk or email me on john@johnbrice.co.uk.

The festival is open from 10am to 6pm on both days. Entry is FREE but we do encourage a donation.

There is limited car parking at the Aquadrome so we recommend parking in the town centre car parks as they are only a short walk away.



Working Boats at Ricky

catering for all ages and tastes. Entertainment has become so popular that we now have three stages in the main arena of the Aquadrome. We give encouragement and opportunity to emerging bands seeking experience to perform on the larger outdoor stage; some come from local schools whilst others are working their way up the ladder. The second stage "Owlsworld" is best for comedy acts and solo performers that benefit from the smaller stage. And if that's not enough, you can enjoy a pint in

The Wendover Canal Festival

The Wendover Arm Trust's Fundraiser is back 28th to 30th May at Boxmoor

Great news! The Wendover Canal Festival at Boxmoor, as it is now known, is back in business. The new venue near Hemel Hempstead is a good choice as it is in a better catchment area for visitors plus there is a big loyalty factor from the established Festival fraternity who can't wait to get there. So the Wendover Arm Trust should do well.

The new location is between Locks 63 and 64 on the Grand Union, with car access from the A4251 London Road.

As well as the boats, the Festival includes a host of attractions including a Trip Boat, Traction Engines, Bird of Prey Displays, Appreciating Animals, Craft Tent, Fairground, Punch & Judy, free children's attractions, Trade Stalls, the Real Ale Bar and a range of bands and entertainers.

Now for **The Chiltern Boat Jumble**. As we did not have a Jumble last year, we are effectively starting from scratch, so we need your help and your Boat Jumble. If you are a boater you are bound to have some redundant boat bits cluttering your boat, garage or shed, or worse still, indoors. You were going to do something with them someday, but someday never comes, because all boaters are hoarders and you are hanging on to it for that "just in case I need it time" which never happens!

So the best way out is to let the Chiltern

Jumble sell it for you. In the past we have sold dinghies, canoes, generators and outboard engines on a commission basis that works like this. You set a fair asking price and we put it on sale. If sold we take a commission of 25% that goes to canal restoration and you get 75%. If it does not sell (which is not very often) then you take it home. You can of course donate the whole lot to our cause, which very often happens with small items. Whichever way you choose we are grateful for your donation.

What is Boat Jumble ? Anything, especially of a nautical nature or loosely associated with boating that can easily be transported to the festival, including boats, inflatables, engines, tools, spare parts, boat furniture, ornaments, books, bicycles, tools, lawnmowers and garden equipment.

Getting the Jumble to Site. Preferably we would like you to take it to our stand at the Festival which is a good option if you are arriving by boat, or for smaller items. Collection prior to the event can be also be arranged especially for heavy or bulky items by sending an e-mail to john@johnbrice.co.uk.

The Festival is open from 12 noon on the Saturday and from 10.00am on Sunday and Monday. Admission is £6 Adult, £3 Child, £4 Concession, £15 Family. There is free parking.

Garth Allan Original Watercolours



The family of the late Mary Lillford has donated three Garth Allan original watercolour paintings to Chiltern Branch for our discretion to raise funds for waterways restoration. The paintings of “Top Lock Wolverhampton 21”, “Parkhead Locks Dudley”, and “Winter Sowing” an agricultural scene are in pristine condition mounted in matching old gold frames, measuring 21 inches x 17 inches. These are stunning pic-



tures and would grace any home. I have spoken to Garth Allan who confirmed that they were painted in 2002 and have a current valuation of £250 - £300 each.

We invite best offers of over £150 for each of these fine paintings. They can be viewed in Chalfont St Peter. If you are interested please contact John Brice in the first instance via email at john@johnbrice.co.uk

New Chiltern Branch Website

The Branch website has been revamped and is now organised within the framework of the main IWA site. As before, it includes information about our meetings and events, and in addition new facilities have been provided so that you can:

- Download copies of *Grapevine*
- Register to receive both email notifications about forthcoming events and an electronic version of *Grapevine*

- Register as a Branch Volunteer.

It's easy to navigate to the new website in the Regions & Branches section of the site. The direct address is at: www.waterways.org.uk/regions_branches/london/chiltern.

Our thanks go to Gemma Bolton at Head Office for her work in setting up the facilities. Please let us know what you think of them.

Your Views on Grapevine

Many thanks to those who responded to the request for feedback about *Grapevine*. It seems that most people like to receive the newsletter and prefer the small booklet format over stapled A4 sheets.

We didn't get much feedback on the content, although some people thought that it would suffice just to have basic information about forthcoming meetings and events.

One aspect that was requested by a number of members was that *Grapevine* be made available in electronic format by email, rather than being posted to them.

So while *Grapevine* will continue to be published in its current booklet format,

members can now opt to receive their copy by email. This facility is now available on the new branch website. Just go to the Grapevine page at www.waterways.org.uk/regions_branches/london/chiltern and register for e-News.

When you do this, your name will be removed from the traditional mailing list and instead you will receive emails both of *Grapevine* and reminders about forthcoming meetings and events. It is also planned that the 'soft' copies will include colour. We'll also post back issues of *Grapevine* on the website so that you download and catch up on what's been happening.

Weekend Away - Advance Information

Colin Bird is currently busy planning the next Chiltern Branch Weekend Away, which is scheduled for 23rd to 25th September. At this stage we can provide preliminary information about this year's tour which takes us up the Thames Valley, then on to Gloucester before returning via Didcot.

After pick ups in Amersham and High Wycombe, the first stop will be for a morning visit to the River & Rowing Museum in Henley. This will be followed by a 5½ hour cruise from Henley to Wallingford during which lunch will be taken. Afterwards the coach will take the party to the hotel in Gloucester for check in and dinner.

Day two will be spent in the company of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal Trust visiting a number of the restoration sites along the 34 mile route of the navigation. There will time for a pub lunch and dinner will be at the hotel.

The final day will include a visit to the Didcot Railway Centre, which is home to the Great Western Society and its unique collection of steam engines, coaches, wagons, buildings and a recreation of Brunel's broad gauge railway.

Full details of the confirmed itinerary, prices and booking information will be provided in the summer issue of *Grapevine*.

Keith Hadden

The sudden death last November of Branch Webmaster, Keith Hadden, was a shock to all who knew him. Keith, with his wife Pat always at his side, was a staunch supporter and user of waterways both in this country and abroad. All of us who knew him will remember his boundless enthusiasm and willingness to help.



He had a natural way with people and was always prepared to get involved. As Chairman of the Wilderness Boat Owners Club he led participation at multiple festivals and arranged numerous trips at home and especially in France. He was a persuasive campaigner for open waterways, always wanting to cruise where other boats could not go. He highlighted the need for more slipways for launching boats and was an authority on slipway

design. Through his leadership in the Wilderness Club he campaigned for more flexible licences for trail boats that only wanted to use BW waterways for short periods; subsequently BW introduced the Explorer Licence. Wherever there was a need to raise public awareness to use waterways the IWA would call on Keith and his Wilderness boats to lead the way.

The extent of his influence and the affection with which he is remembered was borne out by well over 200 friends and colleagues who came from all parts of the country to attend his funeral in Amersham. The collection for Keith is to be donated to the Inglesham Lock Appeal and a plaque in his memory will be mounted on the lockside.

Geoff Leonard

It was early December when Geoff Leonard passed away after a short illness. Geoff was a keen supporter of the waterways and of the outdoors in general. He and his wife Carolyn were regulars at Chiltern Branch meetings and enjoyed the canals on their narrowboat from its base at Cowley. Last summer he and Carolyn spent more time boating, in May on the Union Canal in Scotland where he very much enjoyed looking



at the engineering of the Falkirk Wheel and then in August and September doing the Thames Ring, taking in the National on the way round. Geoff was always ready to provide practical advice, offer help and get involved. He liked to do things 'properly' even if it did take a bit longer! In recent years he was also a restoration volunteer on the

Wendover Arm. Geoff will be missed by all who knew him.

Diary

17th March 2011

Annual General Meeting of the Chiltern Branch

The AGM will be followed by a Ploughman's Supper and social evening, which time-permitting will include some member slides.

14th April 2011

The East London Canals

Jeremy Batch

Jeremy is a highly regarded speaker and will give us a fascinating insight into the East London canals. As Lock Keeper at Limehouse Lock where the Regent's Canal and the Lee Navigation meet the Thames, he is well qualified to do so. He is also a boater, going narrow-boating and motor boating on the inland waterways, and also a sailor, mainly in the Thames Estuary.

19th April 2011

Annual General Meeting of the London Region

7.30pm at the Pirate Club, Oval Road, Camden Town, London NW1 7EA

30th April to 2nd May Canalway Cavalcade

London's own waterway festival in Little Venice, Paddington.

21st & 22nd May

Rickmansworth Festival

See Page 6.

28th to 30th May

Wendover Canal Festival at Boxmoor

See page 7.

29th to 31st July

IWA National Festival

Burton upon Trent

Meeting Venue

Evening meetings of the Chiltern Branch commence at 8.00pm and are held at the Amersham & Chiltern Rugby Club, Ash Grove, Weedon Lane, Amersham, Bucks, HP6 5QU. Tel 01494 725161. When arriving at the club, it is best to use the second entrance on the right after you have passed the club house. Directions are:

From the north:

- Follow A416 through Chesham, past 2 garages opposite each other, over a small roundabout and up the hill towards Amersham.
- At next roundabout (1½ miles) turn right at into Copperkins Lane.
- Take 2nd left (½ mile) into Weedon Lane. Take first right (¼ mile) into Ash Grove. The club is at the end of this road (100yds).

From the south:

- Take A416 from Amersham to Chesham and over roundabout (Boot and Slipper pub on corner).
- Turn left at the next small roundabout (¼ mile) into Copperkins Lane.
- Take 2nd left (½ mile) into Weedon Lane. Take first right (¼ mile) into Ash Grove. The club is at the end of this road (100yds).

The Backdoor

The IWA is a registered charity (No. 212342) whose work is supported by member's subscriptions. The IWA campaigns for development of Britain's waterways for use by all.

The IWA may not agree with the opinions expressed in this Newsletter but encourages publication as a matter of interest. Nothing printed may be construed as policy or an official announcement unless stated, otherwise the IWA accepts no liability for any matter in this Newsletter.

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This is your Branch and *Grapevine* is your newsletter. We would like to hear your views about what's happening on the waterways and on what the Branch is doing. We also welcome any suggestions for new activities.

We'd particularly like to hear more stories from you about your boating experiences. Whatever your contributions are in terms of articles, letters, photographs etc.

Please send them to:

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