

Branch raises over £2000 at Spring Festivals

The sunshine brought out the crowds to the spring canal festivals. A busy period started with Canalway Cavalcade in London's Little Venice over the May Day weekend. Over 140 boats made this event a colourful spectacle.

Many of those boats were also to be seen later in the month at the Rickmansworth Festival and then at the Boxmoor Canal Festival over the late Spring Bank Holiday weekend. There was a massive attendance at Rickmansworth and it was good to see the Wendover Arm Trust's fundraiser back in action at Boxmoor.

Chiltern Branch was prominent at both Ricky and Boxmoor with the twin objectives of boosting awareness about the IWA and raising funds for waterway causes. The events were most successful with several new members joining and with well over £2000 raised.

It's Waterway Wednesdays for Chiltern Branch Meetings

The move to hold our evening meetings at the Amersham & Chiltern Rugby Club has been largely successful with its excellent facilities and easy parking. Indeed average attendances since the beginning of this year have risen to well over 40. Yet it has been evident that the noise from the members bar can be somewhat distracting. So we have held extensive discussions with the Rugby Club, considered other venues nearby and consulted with members. As a result we have decided to stay at the Rugby Club but will switch our meetings to the fourth Wednesday of the month. This is a quiet night for club members so our meetings should be undisturbed. No doubt, this will not be so convenient for some and we will keep the matter under review.

Chiltern Branch
Newsletter
Summer 2011



The Inland
Waterways
Association

Chairman's Ramblings

It's been a wonderful spring, but thank goodness we've now had some rain, otherwise we could well be seeing a number of waterway closures this summer. As I pen these notes, it is good to look back over the past few months which have been incredibly busy and very successful for the Branch. Our evening lecture meetings are becoming increasingly popular thanks to the excellent speakers arranged by Colin Bird.

The canal festivals during May are an intensely hectic period, especially for John Brice who managed the waterspace at Ricky and then organised the Chiltern Boat Jumble just five days later at Boxmoor. Both events went remarkably well and Chiltern Branch's activities were boosted by assistance from our expanded band of volunteers. Their help was invaluable and set the foundation for our success. We also enlisted some help from IWA's Promotions and Communications Committee who provided a marquee to provide more space and some large banners to raise our profile to the public.

In between Canalway Cavalcade and the Rickmansworth Festival, Hilary and I

managed to squeeze in a couple of weeks on our shared narrowboat *Adderbury* to revisit the Warwickshire Ring. The last time that we did this trip was over 25 years ago, when our children were too small to help, but we completed the circuit within a week on a hire boat. This time we took the full two weeks to do the ring but it was still active enough for us.

We included a diversion into Coventry, where the basin was carefully restored in the 1980s. While it is a good place to stay for a visit, it can't be said that it is a hive of activity; commercial properties around the basin are mostly unoccupied or closed.

The basin cries out for a lively restaurant and waterside café, and while it is close to the centre, it seems that it is on the wrong side of town to attract such businesses. We were the only boat moored so may be it just needs a lot more of us to make the trip so that the regeneration can fulfil its potential. After all there's lots to see in Coventry.

Whatever you do, have a safe and pleasant time on or by our waterways over the summer.

Peter Winter



Little to disturb Brindley and Adderbury in the Coventry Basin

News

Chiltern Branch

Committee: Following elections at the Branch AGM on 17th March, the committee members agreed to continue in their existing posts as listed on the back page of this issue of *Grapevine*.

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

Mr A Kruzycki & Ms M Brennan; Mr M Roberts; Mr D Simpson; Mr G & Mrs S Hillman; Mr J Boswell; Mr L J & Mrs A P Kibble; Mr A Pritchard; Rev W F Mason; Mr C Fletcher & Ms S Baker; Mr D & Mrs J Turner; Mr A H Lloyd-Lawrence; Mr C Clarke.

London Region

Following the Region AGM on 19th April the officers were agreed as:

Acting Region Chairman: Roger Squires

Region Secretary: Robin Bishop

Region Treasurer: Carole Beeton

Regional Representative on the National

Navigation Committee: Paul Strudwick

Waterways Chaplaincy

Jenny Dibsall is leading a chaplaincy network to help people on the canals in our area. She can be contacted by email Jenny.Dibsall@salvationarmy.org.uk or call 07717 813682.

British Waterways

New Waterways Charity: Indications are that arrangements for transition to Trust status are on track for April 2012. IWA has responded to the DEFRA Consultation document.

License Evasion: BW's crackdown on license evaders has had good results. In

the South East Area evasion has been reduced from 12.3% to 2.8%. Nationally the improvement is from 10.4% down to 4.9%.

Moorings: More effective management of moorings and dealing with the problems caused by overstaying moorers are recognized as issues of increasing concern. New systems of regular patrols are being introduced at key visitor mooring sites such as Marsworth, Cowroast, Berkhamsted, Batchworth and the Wendover Arm. Penalties will apply to overstayers.

Olympic Moorings: It is planned that various sites close to railway/tube stations will be designated as Olympic Visitor Moorings. Charges of £10 to £20 per day will apply and moorings will need to be booked in advance. These moorings are at Tring, Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead, Apsley, Kings Langley, Cassiobury Park, Croxley Green

Planning Applications

Arla Milk Processing Plant: Outline planning applications have been lodged with Aylesbury Vale District Council for this huge plant. There has also been initial meeting between Arla and BW, who have expressed concern over the impact of the structures on the waterway and towpath and on the visual aspect towards Wendover Woods and the Chilterns. It is understood that if the plans were to proceed, then it is expected that improvements to the canal and its environment would need to be included.

Record Rickmansworth Festival



Working Boats at dawn before the action

The nineteenth Rickmansworth Festival was blessed by near perfect weather over the weekend of May 21st and 22nd which contributed to a massive attendance by people from all over the country. The Festival is organised by volunteers from the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust in partnership with Three Rivers District Council to raise funds to support the Trust's award winning education programme, Learning at the Lock. In addition, IWA members run the boating operations led by Waterspace Manager John Brice. It takes place every year on the third weekend in May between Batchworth and Stockers Locks on the Grand Union Canal and in the Aquadrome in Rickmansworth. It incorporates the traditional Canal Festival with an Environment Fair, live music and a Community Festival.

A record number of 104 narrow boats

attended, including 38 traditional boats making this the biggest attendance since the Festival began. Boats were moored up to 4 deep along the towpath, with many decorated for the weekend, creating a fantastic spectacle for the visiting public. A regular trip boat service carried visitors past all the boats allowing them to see all the narrowboats from an alternative perspective.

The traditional boat tug of war attracted huge crowds and was hotly contested as usual with the prize going to Ben Jacobs with his traditional boat Caldys that he works for a living.



An impromptu concert



Having a good time Ricky style!

Live music was a key feature as usual with four performance areas including the main stage in the Aquadrome, lock side at Batchworth, and also the beer tent and the Owlsworld marquees. The objective of Clive Fennel, the team's entertainment manager, is to cater to all tastes and that was certainly achieved this year. Music ranged from folk, rock, the massed voices of Rock Choir and the sensational sounds of Watford Boys Grammar School's Big Band who closed the main stage on Sunday afternoon. The audience filling the main entertainment area did not want them to finish!

The only disappointment was that the strong winds on the Sunday prevented a fly past by the Lancaster from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight – hopefully better luck next year. With over 70 trade and craft stalls, a funfair, children's farm, shire horses, the Environment Fair and businesses from Rickmansworth Chamber of Commerce the weekend had something for everyone. Chiltern Branch played a more prominent role at Ricky this year with a large marquee on

the towpath below Batchworth Lock. This hosted the Waterspace Office, a range of displays about local IWA activities and the traditional boaters raffle which raised £200. Several new members were signed up at the event.

If you missed all the fun this year book the date for 2012 in you diary now. The 20th Rickmansworth Festival will be held on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th May 2012. Booking information for attendees will be available on the Trust website from mid January 2012. Contact Batchworth Lock Centre, 01923 778382 or www.rwt.org.uk for further details.

Sign up for IWA Chiltern e-News

Have you looked at the new Chiltern Branch website? It contains all the latest information and includes facilities sign up for Chiltern e-News, so that you can receive an enhanced version of *Grapevine* by email as well as regular bulletins about what's going on. This means that you get a better service while reducing costs. That has to be good, so sign up at:

www.waterways.org.uk/regions_branches/london/chiltern.

Boxmoor Canal Festival

The Wendover Arm Trust's Fundraiser makes a welcome return at a new venue



Enjoying the Festival at Boxmoor

The cancellation of last year's festival was a major setback to the Wendover Arm Trust, which relies heavily on this event to raise much needed funds to support the restoration work. So it was a relief that a new venue at Boxmoor near Hemel Hempstead had been arranged so that the festival could resume.

While the Boxmoor site isn't on the Wendover Arm, it is nevertheless canalside by the Grand Union and a good number of boats were moored alongside to add character and colour to the event. Many of them had made the short trip up following their participation at Rickmansworth.

The new site offers a good level area and a bridge across the River Bulbourne provided easy access from the car park. The weather was reasonably favourable on the first two days although the final

afternoon was a little damp. It seemed that the attendance was somewhat lower than had been the norm at Tring. It may be that the citizens of Hemel Hempstead hadn't tuned into the attractions of the event and hopefully the word will spread so that more people come next year.

Most of the usual attractions were there with huge marquees for the beer tent and for teas and craft stalls. The layout meant that the arena was smaller than at previous events, which constrained the dog displays and the birds of prey shows. A good range of entertainment was provided and the evening entertainment for the boaters and traders was outstanding.

For Chiltern Branch the event was a massive success. We supported the Chiltern Boat Jumble organised by John Brice and made use of the large marquee loaned from IWA Promotions and Communications Committee to display a very large and diverse range of wares. These included donations and items offered on a commission basis. Sales got off to a flying start with a canoe being sold in the first minute of action! Business continued at a steady pace throughout the event, especially as we were ably supported by a team of

Boxmoor Festival (continued)

enthusiastic volunteers, so that almost everything had been sold by the close.

The bottom line was that well over £2000 was taken, resulting in almost £1800 being added to Branch funds for waterway causes. Our thanks go to all those who donated goods and offered items for sale.

Early indications are that the Festival itself will have made a reasonable profit for the Wendover Arm Trust and once the event is established at its new

location we can anticipate even better results in future years.



The Chiltern Boat Jumble was popular

Wendover Arm Walk

On the 9th June a band of 17 met up in the British Waterways car park in Marsworth to take a walk around the reservoirs and along the Wendover Arm. This gentle ramble was led by Jenny Brice who took the group along some pleasant footpaths to join the Arm by Little Tringford bridge. From there the group took the towpath stopping at Whitehouses to view remnants of the old pumping station and then on past Bridge 4A to witness a restoration workparty, led by Pete Bowers, busy on one of the new mooring bays.

The fine spring weather has resulted in remarkably dry conditions along the canal bed instead of the usual clinging mud, and the walkers were able to witness how much progress has been made

over recent months. One mooring bay has almost been almost completed and another is well on the way. In addition pipe capping for the whole of the current stage is in place. This means that work can now proceed with bank profiling and an excavator was at busy on this task which needs to be done ahead of installation of the Bentomat waterproof lining and associated block laying.

After an inspection of the current works, the party made its way back to see the section that had been rewatered in 2005, and then on to the Anglers Retreat in Marsworth where a pub lunch was enjoyed in the garden.

Everyone agreed that it been a very pleasant and instructive walk. Many thanks to Jenny and John.

Mary Rose Trip

Barbara Hodgkinson reports on the recent visit to Portsmouth

First we had the fascinating presentation in 2010 by Ted Sutton of the Mary Rose Trust which led to an invitation to visit the Museum. Well it was an offer we couldn't refuse so on the 5th June, twenty of us boarded the coach to Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard. On arrival at the museum we were welcomed with coffee and delighted to see our old friend, Mel Errington, who had played no small part in assisting the excavation project and who ensured we got VIP treatment for this visit. After an introductory film, we were hosted by Professor Mark Jones, Head of Collections, who gave us a rare glimpse of treasures held in store out of public view. It was a real privilege to handle gold coins, look at tiny dice and see perfectly preserved pairs of shoes. Afterwards



*A nice pair of shoes
only 450 years old*

we had ample time to look round the museum.

The Mary Rose was a truly historic ship that had seen much active service between its launch in 1511 and its sudden sinking in 1545. Many will recall watching the 1982 raising of the hull, which has since been kept under various types of spray. A new purpose built museum will open next year to show the hull and many of the artefacts in striking displays. I suspect another trip might be called for.

After an excellent visit, it was time to leave. But the excitement wasn't over yet! Our coach developed a few problems and had to be left in Portsmouth with its gallant driver. Meanwhile a replacement coach was arranged to bring us safely home.

Lock Ransom 2011

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

We are 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 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 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.

More information from John Brice 07740 733241, john.brice@waterways.org.uk.

Join the Weekend Away

Henley, The Thames, Gloucester Canals and Didcot

This year's weekend away takes in the River & Rowing Museum in Henley, a five and half hour cruise up the Thames to Wallingford, visits to the Gloucester & Hereford Canal, a cruise on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal and a visit to the Great Western Railway Museum at Didcot. The full itinerary is:

Friday 23rd September

- 08:30 Depart Chesham
- 09:00 Depart Amersham
- 09:30 Depart High Wycombe
- 10:00 Arrive Henley for a visit to the acclaimed River and Rowing Museum. On display here is the story of the Thames and the leisure and commercial activities that have established themselves on the River. A unique interpretation of the River from source to sea. Amongst the items on display is a 'Wind in the Willows' exhibition.
- 11:00 Morning coffee in the Museum cafeteria.
- 12:00 Embark on a Salters motor vessel for a five-and-a-half hour cruise upstream to Wallingford.
- 13:00 Lunch aboard ship. A drinks pay-bar is available throughout the cruise.
- 17:30 Arrive Wallingford and rejoin our coach for the journey to the Holiday Inn Gloucester
- 20:00 Dinner in the Hotel.

Saturday 24th September

- 09:30 Depart for Yarkhill, guided by a member of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust. See the restoration up to Barr's Lock.
- 12:00 Arrive Aylestone Park to view work undertaken on the Canal bordering the Park area.
- 13:00 A pub lunch.
- 14:30 Arrive Oxenhall to visit one of the most interesting lengths of the waterway. The Oxenhall Tunnel at 2192 yards is one of the longest in the UK and was completed in 1798. South of the tunnel is the unique 'Leggers Rest' recess. Other points of interest are a series of locks, an aqueduct and a surviving lock keepers cottage.
- 15:30 Arrive at Over Basin on the west bank of the Severn. Close to the outskirts of Gloucester, its restoration was completed in 2000 to become one of the first successful projects on the Canal. It was the subject of a Case Study at the 2000 World Canals Conference in New York
- 16.15 Afternoon tea in the Wharf House.
- 17:00 Rejoin the coach and return to the Hotel.
- 20:00 Dinner in the Hotel

Weekend Away (continued)

Sunday 25th September

- 09:00 Depart for Gloucester Docks.
- 09:30 Board the Gloucester Waterway Museum's trip boat for a two hour 'Coffee Morning' cruise along the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal.
- 11:45 Rejoin coach for the drive to the Didcot Railway Centre, home of the Great Western Society.
- 13:00 Snack lunch in the Centre's Refreshment Room.
- 14:00 View the unique collection of GWR steam locomotives, coaches, wagons, buildings and small relics, and a recreation of Brunel's Broad Gauge Railway.
- 16:15 Board coach for the return journey home.

Costs & Booking

The cost of the excursion is **£235** per person, based on two sharing a twin or double room. The single room supplement is **£30**.

The cost includes:

- All coach travel.
- Two nights half board accommodation at the Holiday Inn, Gloucester.
- Entry to the River and Rowing Museum at Henley.
- A 5½ hour cruise on the River Thames from Henley to Wallingford.
- Lunch aboard the Thames trip boat'.
- A 2 hour 'Coffee Morning' cruise on the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal.
- Entry to the Didcot Railway Centre.
- Coach Driver's gratuity.

Download a booking form from the Branch website or contact Colin Bird, Tel 01932 248178, colin.bird@waterways.org.uk.

Meeting Venue

Evening meetings of the Chiltern Branch are now held on **Wednesdays** commencing at 8.00pm 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).

Diary

29th to 31st July

IWA National Festival

Burton upon Trent

6th & 7th August

Marsworth Lock Ransom

See Page 8.

23rd to 25th September

Branch Weekend Away

See Page 9.

28th September 2011

The Narrowboat 'Progress' and Waterway Politics

Chris Coburn

Chris and his narrowboat 'Progress' have traversed much of our inland waterway system and a good bit of the British coastline too. He will relate his travels to us, and discuss the politics that influence his perspective of our waterways future. Chris is a Vice President of the IWA and also of the The Cotswold Canal Trust. He is a Patron of the Lichfield and Hatherton Canal Trust and Chairman of Lee Sanitation. He was made MBE for his services to the waterways.

26th October 2011

Loophead to Liverpool

Brian Goggin

Where's Loophead, you ask. Well, it's in the west of Ireland, and Brian will combine a discourse on the waterways of the Emerald Isle with a commentary on how commerce used the rivers and canals of

Ireland to bring goods by horse-drawn and steamer-drawn 'Lumber Boats' from the west of the country to the River Liffey, the Irish Sea and thus to Liverpool. Brian began inland boating aboard sailing dinghy in 1970 and has graduated to his present 100 year old steel tug-barge 'Knocknagow'. He has been involved with IWA and edited their 'Inland Waterway News'. He is a self employed writer and editor, currently writing a book about inland steam navigation.

23rd November 2011

The Grand Canal of China

Liam D'Arcy-Brown

One of the longest, if not the longest, of man made waterways, the Grand Canal of China has a fascinating history and geography. Liam will give us a presentation on this most interesting of waterways, which for centuries, was an artery of commerce. He is well qualified for the task having graduated from Oxford University with a degree in mandarin and ancient Chinese languages. He has travelled widely and written extensively about China. Indeed, he has a couple of books to his credit.

14th December 2011

Chiltern Branch Christmas Party

Our usual Christmastide event at which convivial company will be enhanced with mulled wine, excellent victuals, and a game or two.

Note that Chiltern Branch Evening Meetings are now held on the fourth Wednesday of the month (except December)

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.

Advertising Rates

	<i>Single</i>	<i>Three</i>
	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Issues</i>
• Full Page A5	£40	£100
• Half Page A5	£25	£65
• 1/4 Page A5	£15	£40

Members small ads £1 for 12 words. Extra words 10p. Send payment with the advertisement to the Editor.

This is your Branch and *Grapevine* is your newsletter. We 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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