

Branch makes Largest ever Donation

Following a year of significant success in its fundraising activities, Chiltern Branch was able to make the largest single donation in its history to the Wendover Arm Trust. John Brice, who leads our fundraising endeavours, presented the cheque to Roger Leishman at this year's Christmas Party on 14th December at the Amersham & Chiltern Rugby Club. It was particularly fitting that the Trust should receive this donation as a considerable proportion of funds were raised by the Chiltern Boat Jumble at the Boxmoor Festival. In thanking John for the donation Roger, who is Vice-Chairman and Restoration Director for the Trust, commented that Chiltern



John Brice presents the cheque to Roger Leishman
Branch had made a substantial contribution to the work of the Trust over many years. Not only had the restoration project benefited from many thousands of pounds of financial support, but many of the volunteers who give so freely of their time are also Branch members.

Canal & River Trust Strikes Deal with DEFRA

An improved contract has been agreed with DEFRA for the Canal & River Trust. The funding remains at £39m per annum, but the contract is longer at 15 years and is index linked from 2015/16. There is also an additional performance linked grant of £10m per annum from 2015/16 and a one-off grant of £25m for pension liabilities.

Chiltern Branch
Newsletter
Winter 2012



The Inland
Waterways
Association

Chairman's Ramblings



Autumn Sunshine on the N Stratford

I like boating in the 'off' season. The waterways are quiet and you seem to get better weather than you anticipate. This has been the case on our last two forays on the water. In November we took *NB Adderbury* from her base at Alvechurch for a cruise to Stratford-upon-Avon and back. Conditions were ideal with warm sunshine, no wind and hardly a drop of rain. We also spent Christmas and New Year on board, and this time we headed south down the Tardebigge flight and on to the newly restored Droitwich Canals, where we attracted plenty of attention from the Boxing Day walkers. While in Droitwich, we heard that the Severn was in flood so after a couple of nights, we back-tracked to Hanbury Junction and on to Worcester. By the time we reached Worcester, the river had subsided and we could book a passage through Bevere lock and so make the short trip upstream to enter the Droitwich Barge Canal from the Severn at Hawford. It is a lovely canal and the cruise back to the Droitwich basin was a real pleasure.

I am sorry that Ron Probert, our Treasurer of the last thirteen years, has had to step down and I am sure that you will join me in wishing Ron and Jean all the best. Losing

Ron might have been a bit of crisis, but our luck was in and we were able to secure the services of Ken Aylmer to take on the role. Nevertheless, it highlights once again that while the Branch continues to be successful, it relies on a small committee that is in need of some more members. Getting involved isn't a big commitment, but the rewards can be very fulfilling.

In the last issue, I expressed my relief that having our evening meetings on a Wednesday seemed to be acceptable. In fact, based on the latest events, it is very popular with more than 60 people coming along to hear Roddy McKee's talk about the last two paddle steamers in the UK.



In Droitwich Basin

I hope that the strong attendances will continue at the AGM at the end of March, when BW Chief Executive, Robin Evans, will join us. After completion of the formal business and the ploughman's supper, he will talk about the transition to the Canal & River Trust. It should be another good evening so I hope to see you there.

Peter Winter

News

Chiltern Branch

Committee: Ron Probert has resigned as Treasurer (see page 8). Ken Aylmer has joined the committee as the new Treasurer. Further details in the next issue.

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

Mr B Eastley, Mr & Mrs D Henson, Mr & Mrs J West, Mr S Corkill, Mr & Mrs R Golland, Mr M Kerin, Mr & Mrs J Fisher, Mr J Jenkins, Mr S Prior.

London Region

Newsletter: It has been agreed that the IWA will continue to provide support for up to four newsletters per year. There will, however, be no London Region Newsletter this year.

Olympics closures: Concern continues over the closure of Commercial Road Lock during the Olympics and further representations are being made to BW.

British Waterways

Tring Summit Level: Low rainfall means that reservoir holdings are currently only 47% of capacity, so the Tring summit level has been lowered by about 300mm to reduce losses and the canal is closed to navigation. This is saving about 25 million litres per week. It is anticipated that the restrictions will remain in place until at least the end of February.

Robin Evans to speak at Branch AGM

Robin Evans, Chief Executive of British Waterways has agreed to give a presentation to members at the Branch AGM on Wednesday 28th March. He will share his thoughts with us about the challenges that have faced British Waterways and the opportunities that are foreseen for the Canal & River Trust. Robin will speak after the business of the AGM has been concluded.

Robin Evans was appointed Chief Executive of British Waterways in December 2002. Before that he was Commercial Director for three years. He was previously Palaces Director at Historic Royal Palaces, who manage the five unoccupied royal palaces in London, including The Tower of London and Hampton Court Palace. He was also Chief Executive of The Landmark Trust, and Land Agent at The National Trust.

Canal & River Trust Council Elections

The IWA does not have a reserved seat on the C&RT Council, so IWA members who are also holders of BW boat licences are urged to vote for Ivor Caplan, Clive Henderson, Paul Roper, or Vaughan Welch.

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.

From the Region Chairman

At the time of writing, news of the funding deal between C&RT and the government is just coming in. At first sight the deal looks much better than we were expecting. Well done to all of you who responded to the 'call to arms' and wrote to your MP. - You have helped IWA successfully campaign for more cash, a longer time on the funding deal, indexation and more cash for pension liabilities.



All boat owners with a 12 month license will be eligible to vote for boaters representatives on the new Canal & River Trust Council, which will be the guardian of the long-term values and purposes of the C&RT. It will also shape policy, raise and debate issues, and provide guidance, perspective and act as a sounding board for the Trust's Trustees.

The IWA is officially supporting four candidates Ivor Caplan, Clive Henderson, Paul Roper, and Vaughan Welch. If you have a vote please support our candidates because if we do not act together and get the maximum support for the IWA there is a risk well organised special interest groups will take all the boaters seats on the Trust's Council.

Being your Region Chairman, as well as sitting on the Board of Trustees, I represent you on two of IWA's main committees, Navigation Committee and Promotions Committee. I thought it might be of interest to tell you a little about the work of these committees as they help steer the organisation into the future. This time I am going to look at some of the work of the

Navigation Committee (Nav-com). Hopefully I can give you an idea of what the other committees do at a future date. Nav-com as its name suggests focuses on navigation issues across the country. This includes not only BW and EA waterways, although they are obviously the most important, but all the other navigation authorities like, the Basingstoke Canal. Several other committees report to Nav-com such as the Inland Shipping Group, which recently produced a revised Freight policy which will be published soon. The review had been undertaken in response to the change of BW to C&RT.

In London we have the on-going threat of the closure of Commercial Road Lock for most of this summer. Nav-com is supporting our efforts and is helping by writing to senior members of BW in support of your local efforts. I have personally written to BW raising the Region's concerns about the safety issues surrounding the closure. I am still awaiting a formal response but understand that BW is trying to arrange a meeting with all interested parties to discuss the situation.

Finally in this ever changing situation the Association wants to keep you fully informed about what is going on. If you don't already get the IWA Bulletin and other electronic communications please subscribe at www.waterways.org.uk/em-signup. It's the easy and most cost-effective way to keep up to date.

Paul Strudwick

Volunteering Page

Getting involved is fun and rewarding

The future well-being of the IWA, Chiltern Branch, and BW/C&RT depends increasingly on your involvement. By joining one of the volunteer teams, you will have the opportunity to participate in rewarding and enjoyable activities, while playing a hands-on role in keeping the waterways alive.

Chiltern Branch is participating in a number of **events** over the summer and we need volunteers to help at:

Rickmansworth Festival, 19-20 May

Boxmoor Festival, 3-5 June

Marsworth Lock Ransom, August

If you can assist at any of these events, please contact John Brice on

07740 733241 or

john.brice@waterways.org.uk.

We are also planning to establish a regular **workparty** to work with the new Canal & River Trust. If you are interested, contact Peter Winter on peter.winter@waterways.org.uk or call 01494 819065.

There are also opportunities to get involved as Newsletter Editor, Website Editor or Publicity Officer.

British Waterways has a range of opportunities as it seeks to increase volunteer involvement in preparation for the transition to the Canal & River Trust. In the Chiltern Branch area these include:

Toppath Tidy and Canal Clean Up at Kings Langley on 23rd February.

Volunteer Lock Keepers are being sought for the Marsworth flight, but BW is also keen to have Lock Keepers on any Lock, so you can volunteer at a lock

close to where you live. Working alongside staff and other volunteers you will talk to visitors, assist them through locks and ensure people get correct information as they pass through. You also help preserve water by ensuring gates and paddles are left correctly and do small practical tasks as the opportunity arises.

BW needs friendly people who are willing to help others and ideally available at least one day a week. You don't need to be a canal expert as training is provided.

Tug Drivers and Boat Crews are needed to help move work boats to where they need to be for the Spring program of works. If you are interested BW can send details of which boat needs to be where by when and you can let us know which (if any) dates you would be able to help us on. There always needs to be at least two people in a boat, one of whom needs to have a boating qualification (such as RYA helmsman).

In the South East Area, there are also volunteer opportunities with:

Bankside Teams doing practical works

Engineering Records administration

Volunteering Events publicity.

For all BW opportunities contact Karen Fishwick on 07917424590 or email Karen.fishwick@britishwaterway.co.uk.

John Brice looks forward to Ricky...

This year's Rickmansworth Festival on the 19th and 20th May will be the 20th since the first Rickmansworth Canal Festival was held in 1993, so there are extra reasons to come along for the anniversary celebration that takes place on the Grand Union Canal and in the Aquadrome.

If you are planning to visit by boat, entry forms and an information letter are available on line to download at rwt.org.uk, or if you do not have access to a printer you can request a hard copy by emailing rickyfestivalboats@gmail.com or call 07740 733241.

The good news is that there is no increase this year in the price for boat entries. But since Ricky has become one of the most enjoyable and popular events, we are running out of mooring space. We have broken records for the past two years with 104 boats in 2011. The absolute maximum capacity is 110 to 115 boats which could happen this year. It appears that despite all the financial woes of our time, boaters still like their festivals as a means of getting away from it all, so the message is, if you are thinking of bringing your boat, book early or you may be disappointed.

As usual there are a number of boating competitions including boat decorations. This year, the theme will centre on our 20th birthday with prizes for the best decorated boat.

Rickmansworth has become one of the biggest and most diverse waterways festivals in the UK, catering for all cultures and interests and with an entertainment schedule second to none. Four stages offer music, drama and magic; on the canal there are boat trips, tug-o-war competitions and many historic working boats. There's also jazz and the Phoenix Morris at Batchworth lock.

In the Aquadrome, there's an environmental fair, craft and trade stalls to browse, plus a fun fair and climbing wall to keep the kids entertained. If after all this you are you are feeling hungry there are English, modern European and ethnic food stalls plus the beer tent.

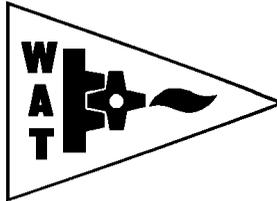
Over recent years Chiltern Branch has been taking a more prominent role at the Rickmansworth Festival. Our canalside marquee hosts the Harbour Master and the boater's information desk as well as providing displays about the work of the IWA in general and of the Chiltern Branch in particular. This year we expect to have a more comprehensive set of displays provided by IWA's Promotions & Communications team.

Ricky offers a full day's entertainment for the whole family. Admission is by donation and at least £2 per person is requested to cover costs, support the work of the Trust and secure the future of this outstanding event.



... and to the Boxmoor Festival

As a fundraising event the Boxmoor Canal Festival, organised by the Wendover Arm Trust, is the most important for the Chiltern Branch. This year's festival takes place from Sunday 3rd June to Tuesday 5th June. The Chiltern Boat Jumble is run by volunteers from our Branch with all proceeds donated to the Branch for the prime purpose of helping waterway restoration projects such as the Wendover Arm.



Last year we raised more than £1800, which was a fantastic achievement for all those involved in the event. All the volunteers told me how much they enjoyed helping on the stand and most will be back this year. However, we still have plenty of opportunities so if you like working in a team doing a variety of tasks, erecting our pitch, displaying the sales goods, serving the general public and talking about the work of the IWA then I would like to hear from you.

Of course, we need things to sell, and it amazes me what turns up on the day. However we still need more goods. When we started doing these jumbles it was very much boating only, and we turned much away. Over time we relaxed the rules so we will now have a go at selling anything that can be related to a boat. It is easier to tell you what we don't want; so no electrical appliances, no dangerous liquids, or opened tins of paint, furniture that is not designed for a

boat, and carpets. That leaves a plenty of scope, but if in doubt please contact me. Last year somebody donated some classy gowns and jackets that we displayed on a professional hanger rail; we were amazed at the interest and we made good sales, so if you have some nice unwanted clothes that can be displayed on hangers, please can we have them?

To encourage sales of more valuable jumble we operate our 75% - 25%

scheme. It works like this. For goods that are worth over £20 the seller states the selling price and if we sell it they get 75% of the final sale price, if we don't, they take it away.

If you have jumble to offer there are various ways to get it to us:

- you can bring it direct to the festival,
- we can collect it 3 weeks before the festival, or
- you may deliver it to my residence by appointment.

Even if you don't have any jumble we and the Wendover Arm Trust would still like to see you at the festival. It's a great day out with a full programme of displays, entertainments and activities throughout each day.

John Brice

Fundraising & Waterway Events

john.brice@waterways.org.uk

Mob: 07740 733241

Ron Probert steps down

John Brice thanks our retiring Treasurer

Our treasurer has decided to hang up his boots. Ron Probert joined the IWA in 1984, was elected to the Chiltern Branch Committee in 1996 and was Treasurer from 1998. He held this post until other commitments forced him to step down at the end of 2011. Throughout these 15 years of service to the Branch, Ron has been exemplary in the management of our finances, and an enthusiastic volunteer helping out at meetings and events. His excellent managerial qualities and ability to keep a cool head when debates were getting heated has been a quality appreciated by his colleagues.

I have known Ron longer than anyone on the committee, and I can't let the occasion pass without a few words. I first met Ron at a Slough Arm Canal Festival in 1995 when I was the Harbour Master. Ron approached me saying that he was retiring and was now looking for a canal related voluntary job and offered his services to our committee.

Ron had a distinguished career with British Gas, joining them as a graduate trainee in 1957, working his way up from a chemist, then seconded to the natural gas conversion division, promoted to become Service Manager and on into marketing. He was appointed to the board as Marketing Director and held several other positions including a active role in the privatisation to British Gas plc. Subsequently Ron was awarded The Freedom of the



City of London for services to the natural gas industry

Ron bought his first boat in 1981. It was a wooden ex-hire 30 footer called *Pagham*, and believe it or not it had six berths; my, how things have changed! Ron loved it, but his wife Jean disliked the boat because being a V hull cruiser it rocked around, and so it had to go.

So next was *Growl Tiger* a 42 foot narrowboat, not to be confused with Bridgewater Boats *Growl Tiger*. Ron's was the first, although every time he cruised past their boatyard on the GU the owner Lindy Foster would come out and say "That's my boat's name!".

In 1987 in his quest for a bigger and better boat, Ron commissioned Peter Nicholls to build a 54 foot narrowboat *Jenor*. And a lovely boat it was too, but Ron was already planning ahead for an even larger and more luxurious boat. Jean, however, was not so sure and tried to put the brakes on Ron's ambitions. But Ron reasoned through and Jean reluctantly agreed saying "OK but this is it, the last one". Ron promptly placed the order for a 67 foot trad style narrowboat with Peter Nicholls, and when it was launched in 1991 it was appropriately named *This is it*.

All of us on the committee thank Ron for his service and commitment to the branch, his friendship, not forgetting his sense of humour and above all we wish him and Jean a happy retirement.

John Brice

Chiltern Branch AGM

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Chiltern Branch of the Inland Waterways Association will be held on Wednesday 28th March 2012 at the, Amersham & Chiltern Rugby Club, Ash Grove, Weedon Lane, Amersham, Bucks HP6 5QU. commencing at 8.00pm

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Approval of the minutes of the AGM held on 17th March 2011
3. Matters Arising
4. Report of the Branch Chairman
5. Report of the Branch Secretary
6. Report of the Branch Hon. Treasurer and presentation of Accounts
7. Adoption of Accounts
8. Business of the meeting notified under byelaw 1.3*
9. Election of Committee members
10. Address on behalf of the IWA Trustees
11. Any Other Business

* **Note:** *Byelaw 1.3 provides that any member of a region or branch may propose business to appear on the agenda of an AGM of their region or branch, provided that notice of such business is delivered in writing to the Chairman of the region or branch at least six weeks before that meeting.*

Elizabeth Norris, Hon. Secretary, IWA Chiltern Branch.

Nominations for election to the Chiltern Branch Committee must be deposited with the Hon. Secretary (Elizabeth Norris) 6 Tillers Link, Shephall, Stevenage, Herts SG2 9BA by 7th March 2012 at the latest. Nominations must be made in writing, in the format below, signed by the proposer, seconder and the nominee (all of whom must be paid-up members of the Association).

(Name)..... is proposed as a committee member of the Chiltern Branch of the Inland Waterways Association for election at the Branch AGM on Wednesday 28th March 2012.

Proposed by..... Seconded by

I agree to my nomination as a committee member

The AGM will be followed by a Ploughman's Supper and by an address by:

Robin Evans, Chief Executive, British Waterways
on
His Perspectives on the Canal & River Trust

London Region AGM

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meetings of the London Region of the Inland Waterways Association will take place on Monday 12th March 2012 at The New Inn, 90 High Street, Roydon, Essex CM19 5EE.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the Minutes of the 2011 AGM plus Matters Arising
3. Report from the Chairman
4. Presentation of accounts
5. Business of the meeting notified under byelaw 1.3 *
6. Election to fill posts on the Committee
7. Questions from the floor

***NOTE:** Byelaw 1.3 provides that any member of a region or branch may propose business to appear on the agenda of an AGM of their region or branch, provided that notice of such business is delivered in writing to the Chairman of the region or branch at least six weeks before that meeting.

The London Region AGM will take place immediately after the Annual General Meeting of the Lee & Stort Branch.

Chiltern Branch 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

22nd February 2012 at 8.00pm

Haunted Canals

Allan Scott-Davies

Allan is a past owner of NB 'The Great Western' which he used as home and office whilst working for BW. He came across a number of ghost stories – and indeed had a couple of spooky visits at Lapworth and through West Hill Tunnel. It is his interest in ghosts and haunting that has led to many published books and which resulted in the History Press asking him to write two waterway based books, 'Shadows on the Waterways' and the latest 'Death on the Waterways'. Allan has also been involved with the restoration of the Moira end of the Ashby Canal, the Droitwich Canal and restoration projects along 100 miles of canal.

23rd February

Towpath Tidy at Kings Langley

Organised by BW. See page 5.

12th March at 8.00pm

London Region

Annual General Meeting

At Roydon, Essex. See page 10.

28th March 2012 at 8.00pm

Chiltern Branch

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM (see page 9) will be followed by a ploughman's supper and a presentation by Robin Evans, Chief Executive of British Waterways (see page 3).

25th April 2012 at 8.00pm

The Story of London Docks

Jeremy Batch

We welcome a return visit from Jeremy, who will give us a presentation on the docks of London. Those who were present for his talk in April 2011 will remember the exceptional quality of his presentation and particularly, the excellence of his visual interpretation of the subject. This will be a meeting not to be missed. Jeremy is a Lock Keeper at Limehouse Lock; he lectures widely on the waterways of London and is well qualified to do so. He is also a boater, going narrowboating and motor boating on the inland waterways, and also a sailor, mainly in the Thames Estuary.

5th to 7th May

Canalway Cavalcade

London's festival in Little Venice.

19th & 20th May

Rickmansworth Festival

See Page 6.

26th May

Trip on the Kingswear Castle

See enclosed leaflet.

3rd June

Diamond Jubilee Pageant

Battersea Bridge to Tower Bridge.

3rd to 5th June

Boxmoor Canal Festival

See page 7.

18th & 19th August

Marsworth Lock Ransom

21st to 23rd September

Chiltern Branch Weekend Away

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 Donation Rates

*Single Three
Issue Issues*

- 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:

Peter Winter

Grove Cottage, Church Road

Penn, High Wycombe

HP10 8NX

Tel: 01494 819065; Mob: 07722 184117

Email: peter.winter@waterways.org.uk

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