



# The Inland Waterways Association

## Ouse News - Autumn 2013

The Great Ouse Branch Newsletter  
covering the Great Ouse and tributaries



*Photo: Carole Alderton*

Campaigning for the conservation,  
use, maintenance, restoration and  
development of the Inland  
Waterways.

### Contents:

Branch Committee	p3
Chairman's Corner	p4
Book Review	p6
RSPB	p8
Festival 2013	p12
Arachne's Travels	p14
Security	p17
Navigate the <i>Backs</i>	p17
Branch News	p18
The 'Legend'	p20
Branch Dinner 2014	p22
The Bulbous Bow	p22

*The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Inland Waterways Association or of the Great Ouse Branch. They are, however, published as being of interest to our members and readers.*



# Ely Boat Changers

**Come and see us or look online!**  
(21 Waterside, Ely, Cambs, CB7 4AU)



Suzuki Outboard Engines



Honda Outboard Engines



Propex LPG Heaters



Solid Fuel Stoves & Parts



Marine Diesel Heating Systems



Outboard Servicing & Spares



12 Volt Fridge Freezers



Marine Paints & Antifouling

[www.elyboatchargers.com](http://www.elyboatchargers.com)

Tel: (01353) 663095 email: [sales@elyboatchargers.com](mailto:sales@elyboatchargers.com)

## Branch Committee

### Chairman:

Keith Alderton  
Holly Cottage, 57 Globe Street  
Methwold  
Thetford, IP26 4PQ  
Tel. 01366 727236  
e-mail: keithalderton@sky.com

### Secretary:

John Hodgson  
9 Beaufort Way, Brickhill  
Bedford, MK41 7XQ  
Tel 01234 344884  
e-mail: jhodgson@rivouse.fsnet.co.uk

### Treasurer:

Enid Hodgson  
9 Beaufort Way, Brickhill  
Bedford, MK41 7XQ  
Tel 01234 344884  
e-mail: jhodgson@rivouse.fsnet.co.uk

### Ouse News Editor:

Carole Alderton  
Holly Cottage, 57 Globe Street  
Methwold  
Thetford, IP26 4PQ  
Tel. 01366 727236  
e-mail: carolealderton@sky.com

### Sales Officer:

David Anderson  
21 Cambridge Street  
St Neots  
PE19 1JL  
Tel 01480 477227  
e-mail: david.anderson@uwclub.net

### Membership Officer:

Peter Webb  
35 Norfolk Road  
Ely, CB6 3EJ  
Tel 01353 658581  
e-mail: peter.c.webb@tesco.net

### Member:

Stephen Foote  
14 High Street, Chrishall  
Royston, SG8 8RP  
Tel 01763 838936  
e-mail: g4foh@tambourine.org.uk

### Member:

Derek Bradley  
24 Witchford Road  
Ely, CB6 3DP  
Tel 01353 661601  
e-mail: bradleyd@waitrose.com

---

## The Boat Yard

Ely



A friendly, traditional & affordable family run business, for all aspects of boat repair, maintenance & modifications – electrical, mechanical, plumbing, carpentry & more.

At the footbridge by The Boathouse Restaurant

Tel. Garf : **0777 585 7878.**

**01353 668551**

[www.the-boat-yard.co.uk](http://www.the-boat-yard.co.uk)

---

### Chairman's Corner

At long last, we have been blessed with a decent summer, despite the forecasters stating in June that 'the cold weather will continue until September'. That was about as accurate as the forecast for 'a barbeque summer' last year!

Having been thwarted by both floods and drought last year, we finally managed to move our boat to its new base at Blisworth on the GU in June. This gave us the opportunity to cruise the full length of the Nene for the first time, which proved to be a thoroughly enjoyable experience despite an occasional shot-blasting by gale force winds laced with rain and hail. At times, I almost wished that I was tucked up under a warm cruiser canopy rather than standing out on the back deck of a narrowboat! Blisworth proved to be a good place from which to travel down to Cassiobury Park at Watford for the IWA National Festival in July – more about that later.

On the national scene, the big story is the decision to defer the transfer of the navigations currently under the control of the Environment Agency to the Canal and River Trust beyond the original 2015/16 target date. This decision, combined with an impending 10% cut in the money DEFRA receives from central government puts the long term funding of our local waterways in doubt once again. This is exactly the situation the transfer of the waterways to a charitable trust was meant to avoid.

On the positive side, we are lucky that the infrastructure of the local EA navigations is already in far better condition than is generally found on the canal system and it must be remembered that the CRT has yet to prove that it can generate adequate funds to maintain the waterways currently under its jurisdiction when the finite period of government support finally comes to an end. The one sure thing is that in the current financial circumstances funding is bound to be in short supply whatever transpires.

Locally, there have been some worrying incidents on the river:

---

On 23<sup>rd</sup> July, a crane employed by a customer of the Fish & Duck Marina to lift two Dutch barges fell into the water, damaging a section of bankside. Fortunately, nobody was injured and neither boats nor vehicles were involved in the incident. According to the marina owners, the incident was caused by the crane driver failing to use the correct temporary protection when accessing the site. It is anticipated that repairs will be carried out quickly to the newly refurbished marina.

On 8<sup>th</sup> August, a fire totally destroyed the Hartford Mill Pub at Hartford Marina. The marina owners have reported that the operation of the marina has not been affected and all normal services are being provided as usual.

Recently, a member of the Bedford Boat Club suffered serious injuries when his cruiser caught fire as he was refuelling a generator with petrol in the cockpit of his boat. It is thought that petrol vapour was ignited by the pilot light on a gas fridge. Luckily the owner managed to get off of the burning boat, but sustained severe burns and had to be airlifted to hospital. This incident amply demonstrates how a few thoughtless moments can cause life threatening injuries. The Boat Safety Scheme has produced a very useful leaflet entitled 'Avoiding Fire Afloat – Safe Use of Petrol', copies of which can be obtained from BSS (or I can send you one if you give me a call). The publication provides much good advice and states that portable tanks, generators or containers should be removed ashore for filling, ideally at least 13 feet away from any opening into the boat.

I must admit that I was very reluctant to part with the old gas fridge on my boat and replace it with a 12-volt electric model when the former became unreliable, but I am now glad that I have done so. However, like many older boats, it is still fitted with an instantaneous water heater that provides as much hot water as you want for as long as you need it without having to run the engine. Food for thought though!

Enjoy your autumn boating, have fun, but please take care and stay safe.

*Keith Alderton*

---

*Book Review*  
by *Stephen Foote*



**Colin Edmondson's 'Going It Alone'**

The front cover of this little book sums it up - 'A boater's guide to working a narrow-boat single-handed'. The author sports some impressive credentials; he has been cruising a 55-foot narrowboat on broad and narrow canals, rivers and tide-ways for almost twenty years; much of that time with a small 'workshop boat' in tow as well.

He approaches his subject in a logical and orderly manner; starting first with safety aspects, followed by a discussion of the extra equipment a 'single-hander' should have aboard. Quite a few of his suggestions would, I think, be equally applicable to anyone handling a narrowboat, whether single-handed or not. As a result of reading this section, my first 'boaty' job next spring is to replace all my ropes...!

Moving on, he discusses clothing and also the things that a single-hander should have available at the helm before starting off, to save constant ducking into the boat to get the things that were forgotten.

Leaving the bank and coming into the bank are dealt with in detail and some useful tips here as well. However, the long sections about working up and down narrow locks single-handed are over-complicated. There were several parts where I simply couldn't understand what the author was getting at. Later on there is a discussion of some of the variants you might encounter - locks without steps at the tail, or a bridge across the tail, locks with steps up both sides at the tail, and several others, including wide locks.

---

Again, I found some of the descriptions complicated and quite hard to follow – and for the advice to be of use, the reader needs to be able to easily visualise the procedures being described. Unfortunately in several instances I just gave up.

In summary – a bit of a curate’s egg: good in parts - but with some worthwhile ideas. However I thought that the cover price - £4 for a 32-page A5-sized booklet – was a bit steep.

*“Going It Alone” by Colin Edmondson (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2008)*

*No ISBN number but can be purchased from the mail order shop at IWA Head Office at £4.00. Postage and packing is free of charge.*

*Or from the author directly, on 07721 620747*

---

### Traditional English Pub



Sunday Roasts,  
Homecooked Food,  
Real Ales,  
Quiz Night Tuesday,  
Large Beer Garden  
with Play Area,  
Pool Table

### Axe & Compass

High Street, Hemingford Abbots,  
Huntingdon, PE28 9AH  
01480 463605

Facebook: The Axe & Compass, Hemingford Abbots

Twitter: @axeandcompass

*Only a short walk from the moorings at  
Hemingford Grey or Houghton*

---

## *A good home for a bittern*

Some of you may know that the reedbeds at RSPB Lakenheath Fen have been planted over the last 17 years specifically to give bitterns an additional home in the Fens. They have now nested here for the last five years. We were all slightly disheartened last year when the cold and wet weather meant that there was only one successful nest on the reserve. However, defeat is only temporary as they say and they have bounced back this year. The warmer and drier weather meant that there were three successful nests this year, which is an encouraging sign.

A lot of hard work goes into ensuring that the reserve remains in tip-top condition for them to nest in. I thought I would take this opportunity to provide a bit of an outline as to how we try to make Lakenheath Fen an ideal home for bitterns.

The most important element by far is the water levels. Bitterns are very 'picky' so the levels have to be just right for them to be happy. They like the reedbeds nice and wet, with lots of reedy edge, so that their prey of small fish is easily available to them as they stalk the edges of pools and ditches. This can occasionally be a problem in the winter, especially if we get a prolonged cold spell and all the reedbed pools are frozen! If this happens, they may resort to feeding out in the open, on the riverbank for example. We give them a helping hand too, by putting out small fish on the ice, just to give them an extra boost.

In terms of breeding, it is extremely important to get the water levels up to an appropriate level as early as possible in the spring. This is because bitterns are looking for good nest sites as early as March, and good nest sites need to be up to a metre in depth! This is not usually a problem but it was last year. The drought in February and March meant that for the first time in six years, we had to pump some water in from the river. Of course, once we'd got our water levels up by the end of March, it rained almost solidly for about a month. Typical! It did however mean that the levels were good enough for six booming males to be attracted to the site.

---

This year has been completely different. The extremely wet and snowy conditions at the beginning of the year meant that the levels were just right nice and early in the year. The high water levels attracted our earliest boomer ever, at the beginning of March. It was really rather bizarre, as one particular individual could be heard booming in the snow. Crazy bird! As the spring went on, we eventually found four booming males and the rest is history as they say!

I hope this has given you a small insight into how we try to make Lakenheath Fen an ideal home for bitterns. If you would like to find out how you can help to give bitterns a home in the UK, please visit the *Giving Nature a Home* website: <http://homes.rspb.org.uk/>

**David White**  
**Information Officer**  
**RSPB Lakenheath Fen**



*Photo by Dave Rogers*

---

### *Advice from the Environment Agency*

**To find out if Strong Stream Advice has been issued or cancelled, you can ...**

... call our 24 hour Strong Stream Advice hotline on 0845 988 1188. Choose option 1 and listen to the pre-recorded information, followed by one of these quick dial codes:

**Nene – 032112**

**Great Ouse (Bedford to Earith) – 033211**

**Ancholme - 031212**

... or visit our Strong Stream Advice website page at <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/SSAandClosures/>

---



## The Ship Inn Brandon Creek Open 7 Days A Week

Join us for a range of events this Autumn including

Songwriters, Music, Poetry & Blues - first Wednesday every Month from 8pm

**Saturday 19th October 'Up The Creek' Festival Returns**

With Real Music, Real Ale and Real Food

Including 'The Barefoot Doctors' funk and Soul Band & Ouse Washes Molly Dancers

Friday 20th December Phil Crawford & The Scruffy Dogs

Live Music Every Friday

Check out everything that's going on at our website or find us on Facebook

The Ship Inn, Brandon Creek, Downham Market, Norfolk PO38 0PP. Tel 01353 676228

A Warm Welcome, Great Food, Real Ale, Live Music.

Menus and further details at - [www.theshipbrandoncreek.co.uk](http://www.theshipbrandoncreek.co.uk)

## Little Ouse Moorings

Peaceful alongside moorings  
in a rural setting

~ FACILITIES & SERVICES ~

Diesel ~ Gas ~ Water

Elsan Disposal

Gated Car Parking

~ FULLY SERVICED DRY DOCK ~

Narrowboat Painting & Decoration

Hull Blacking ~ Welding ~ Surveys

On the junction with the

Great Ouse and Little Ouse at

Brandon Creek, Nr Littleport,

PE38 0PR

Telephone: 07713 465791

[www.littleousemoorings.co.uk](http://www.littleousemoorings.co.uk)

## Ouse News Advertising

- Do you want to contact boating enthusiasts?
- Circulation 350 within 30 miles of Cambridge
- Adverts cost £30 (+ VAT) per half page for a year
- Three editions a year
- *Contact The Editor*

*(carolealderton  
@sky.com)*

# ST. IVES ENGINE SERVICES

Suppliers of quality components · Federal Mogul Pistons & Rings · Payen Gaskets & Seals · A Bearings

CRANK REGRINDING · VALVE CUTTING · REBORING  
SURFACE GRINDING

ENGINE RECONDITIONERS Specialists in Petrol & Diesel engine rebuilds for marine, car & commercial applications, including cylinder head refurbishment, crack & pressure testing



Monsal Works, Somersham Road, St Ives, Cambs PE27 3LY · Tel 01480 462111



## FOX NARROWBOATS

**Full Narrowboat Services at the heart of the Middle Level Navigations**

Anti-fouling, Bottom Plating, Calor Gas, Diesel, Electrics, Hire Fleet, Gas Safe Registered work, Day Hire, Insurance, Jet wash, Blacking, Life jackets, Moorings, Narrowboat building, Pump-Out, Painting, Quality assured hire fleet, Repairs, Servicing, Travel Hoist, Lifebuoys, Varnish, Wet Dock, PRM Gear Box Technicians, Narrow boat

Chandlery, Magnesium Zinc Anodes

10, Marina Drive, March, Cambs. PE15 0AU

tel. 01354 652770 [www.foxboats.co.uk](http://www.foxboats.co.uk)

***National Waterways Festival***

It is great fun earning your living from a waterways business, but doing so greatly diminishes the chance to do some boating yourself. This year however for the first time in a decade we finally managed to get away for long enough to attend the National Waterways Festival. The event was held in the excellent setting of Cassiobury Park on the GU at Watford from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> of July.

We were accompanied on our journey south from Blisworth by Stephen & Meg Foote on their narrowboat *Tambourine*. The Grand Union is a very attractive waterway, although it can be hard work at times as the frequency of locks intensifies the nearer you get to London. However, breasting up in the broad locks makes life easier as it enables the men to chat and drink beer together on the back decks whilst the ladies get their exercise operating the locks. Not at all a bad way of spending a hot summer's day! We had to achieve twenty lock-miles a day for six days on the outward journey and therefore had to keep up a steady pace. This still left plenty of time to moor up under the shade of a tree for lunch and to eat out in the evening a couple of times during the week.

***Grand Union Crosses the River Great  
Ouse near Cosgrove***



The festival itself was not very well attended, despite being readily accessible from both the Midland and the Southern waterways. All in all, it was a very pleasant, but rather low key affair, with no arena events, a limited number of trade stands and little to attract the general public. The festival



site was right next to excellent free play facilities for the kids and far too few families were tempted to pay the entrance fee to come our side of the fence. However, the festival excelled at what it does best by providing a great opportunity for boaters to meet old friends, attend some interesting talks and enjoy the food, drink and evening entertainment. Long may the

festival continue to be an annual event!



We were able to enjoy a more leisurely pace on the way back, taking time to explore the pretty Wendover Arm, spending a couple of peaceful nights in the terminal basin, surrounded by rolling cornfields. Work is now well

under way to restore the canal further towards Wendover, which will make this little navigation even more worth visiting. We also paid a visit to the Waterways Museum at Stoke Bruerne which provides a very well presented exhibition outlining the history of the canal. **Keith Alderton**

---

### *Arachne's Travels 2013*

In the last few years we have helped at the IWA National Festivals, so that has decided our routes; but having been previously informed that this year's festival was going to be at Newbury we planned for Jean to go to a Mothers' Union conference in Bath in early June. The National venue was changed to Watford so we had to miss that as it would have meant rushing the K & A. In the event it seems that the Festival was disappointing, but we missed the camaraderie of working with the other volunteers.

We had to move swiftly up the River Nene reaching Earls Barton lock on a warm sunny Bank Holiday; the lock area was swarming with young people swimming and lazing around with a few BBQs going. We stopped for the night, so later that evening we walked back to the lock expecting to find bottles, cans etc. BUT the area was litter free – so well done to the youth of the area.

At Northampton the old EA facilities had had the mooring stages removed but the signs on the building were still there. As they have been relocated to the Marina we asked about the signs to be told 'not our problem – belongs to council'!!!

The Grand Union and South Oxford canals were mainly cold and wet. Once on the River Thames we moored at Osney, with a very strong flow we moored okay, but others coming downstream had to be careful if mooring between boats. Downstream on the flow we moved quickly but, entering the Kennet & Avon canal we were definitely against the flow.

The K & A was eventful! We had a four day wait at Newbury as the top lock gate had been damaged by a hire boat. A willow tree fell down one night across a 48hr mooring about 100 metres behind us, luckily only smashing an anchor of a wide beam boat.



A hotel boat pair got jammed in the entrance throat of a lock for 7hrs. There were also the usual swing bridge breakdown delays. Thank goodness that we had the CRT email update service and a smart phone.

We then found that the locks at Bath were going to be closed for the 10 days when Jean needed to be in Bath; so we got through before this and went down the River Avon to Bristol. A new mooring opposite the SS Great Britain was ideal for us; one night we sat on the back watching all the activity in the harbour.



*SS Great Britain*

The K&A has limited moorings. Some of the official ones, even when fitted with rings, had not been cut and were covered with nettles and weeds. Also on the way down a lot of live-aboards took up the 48hr moorings,



even near Poultney Weir where signs said £10 per night – it seemed better on our return in late June, hopefully they had been moved on. We made a more leisurely return up the K & A enjoying Newbury (again) and other villages.

*K & A Turf Lock*

---

Our arrival back at the Thames coincided with the fine weather, and our 16 year old grandson spent the next 10 days with us. In the end we were on the Thames for 6 weeks going to Lechlade twice and down as far as Cliveden Reach. What a good year we picked to visit the Thames!! Some days we had to find shade, but we also cooled down by swimming in the river. Most moorings we used were free. Others were about £4 per night but a nice field at Medmenham is now £6, and if we had stayed in the park at Marlow it would have been £11! Wallingford moorings near the swimming pool are £5 but include use of showers at the camp site. EA is changing its charging system – free first night then £5 for next two nights – fair enough if it keeps over-stayers away.



*Marlow Rainbow*

Our most memorable spot is above Day's Lock – a remote mooring with good walks and near the excellent Dorchester-on-Thames Abbey Tea Room with home-made cakes. (We went there 4 times!). We were disappointed to find the alpaca farm near Whitchurch has “No Mooring” signs now.

All that time on the Thames make one lazy so it was good to do the locks on Oxford and GU canals on the way home - at least it made amends for all that cake!

*Peter & Jean Webb*

---

### *Keep your boat and its contents safe*

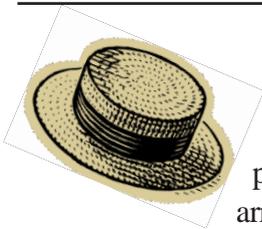
It is important that you take the security of your boat as seriously as you would the security of your home. Thieves are attracted to all kinds of things on your boat, with outboard engines currently being the main target to steal by offenders. It is advised that you purchase a good quality outboard engine lock. Visibly mark the engine to identify it as belonging to you, using your home postcode and house number decreasing the value to a thief. You should also:

- Keep records of all serial numbers
- Lock anything valuable out of sight in a strong locker using a strong padlock
- Keep your curtains closed or use net curtaining so that no-one can see inside
- Keep unused rope, fenders and other equipment out of sight
- Do not leave any personal paperwork on board

If you hear any useful information, rumour or gossip which you feel may assist the police investigations and prevent further offences please contact the Police on 101 (Non emergency number). If you suspect you are observing a crime happening call 999.

*Nathan Arnold*  
*Environment Agency*

---



### *Navigate the 'Backs'*

Between October and March, powered boats are permitted to navigate the Cambridge 'Backs', by arrangement with the Conservancy. Camboaters (in collaboration with the Conservancy) has produced a comprehensive guide to navigating the 'Backs' in a powered boat, which can be downloaded or read online:

<http://www.camboaters.co.uk/2013/09/guide-to-cambridge-backs.html>

---

---

## **Branch News**

**Winter Meetings**  
are at 8 pm on Thursday evenings at the Cole's Road Community Centre, Milton (North Cambridge) CB24 6BL.

**Members & Visitors welcome.**

---

**THURSDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2013**

Our October meeting will be an illustrated talk by Roy Chandler, on the '*The Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation*'.

---

**THURSDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2013**

Our November meeting will be an illustrated talk by Richard Thomas, on '*Waterways Wonders*' - engineering marvels!

---

**FRIDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2014**

*Potential* Branch Dinner at the Pike & Eel Hotel, near St. Ives!

*See page 22 for more details.*

---

**THURSDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2014**

Our February meeting will be a 'fish & chip supper' together with a waterways themed quiz.

*Please note the change of date for quiz!*

---

**THURSDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2014**

Our March meeting will be our AGM and update from the river managers of the Environment Agency.



*We welcome the following new members to the branch. We hope you will introduce yourselves to us when coming to an event or meeting:*

John & Janice Frankham,  
Burwell, Cambridgeshire

Tony & Susan Estall,  
Burwell, Cambridgeshire

Anthony & Naomi Marris,  
Wimpole, Royston

Miss Di Weir, Ely,  
Cambridgeshire

Dr Sheila Withams,  
Warboys, Huntingdon

Fran & David Eyre,  
Biddenham, Bedford

Ms C Starmar, Isleham,  
Cambridgeshire

***Members who have moved to branch:***

Paul & Gillian Taylor,  
Great Gransden, Bedfordshire

---

## Boat Safety Scheme Examiner



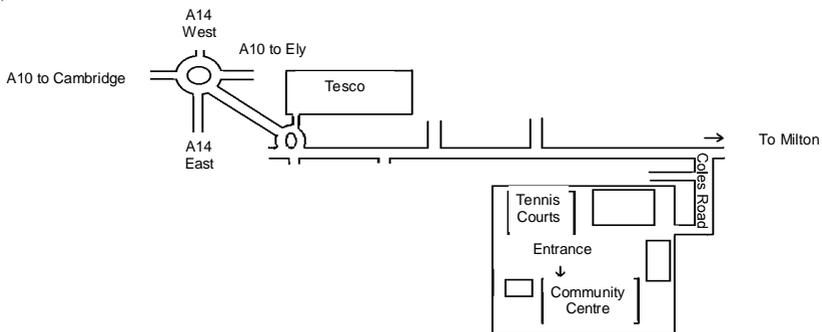
**Keith Alderton**  
Holly Cottage  
57 Globe Street  
Methwold, Thetford  
IP26 4PQ

Tel: 01366 727236  
Mob: 07518 036807  
Email: keithalderton@sky.com

**(Authorised to examine all private boats and in addition, residential boats provided they are fitted with a gas bubble tester)**

**Additional contact no:  
Ely Boat Chandlers - 01353 663095**

***Why not come along to our next meeting on Thursday 24th October 2013. We have an illustrated talk by Roy Chandler, Director & Chairman of Essex Waterways: 'The Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation'***



*Details of more meetings are on Page 18 and the map above should help you to find the exact location in Milton! (If you have a problem finding us please phone Stephen Foote on 07774 613557)*

### *The passing of a 'legend'*

With sadness I write of the passing of a legend of modern boat design and manufacture. The man behind those iconic boats I have heard described as the 'Rolls Royce of the river' *John Freeman*, passed away on 26<sup>th</sup> July peacefully at his home in Devon, just two days before what would have been his 96<sup>th</sup> birthday.

As a boy he was a keen woodworker and at 12 years of age he was making poultry houses to help to supplement the family income as farmers, so it was only natural that he would carry on in this vein and started building wooden framed caravans at 17. After war service in the RAF he returned to his caravans. Polyester resin was still not available commercially but he experimented with it. Fortunately for us it was too heavy for caravans and so he abandoned this idea and turned his attention to using GRP to build boats and he developed the first production line for cruisers in 1957. Thus the fabulous Freeman marque was born with the introduction of the classic Freeman 22 at the London Motor Show. The construction of a Freeman is very special as we all know. The highest quality workmanship and materials were used from the beginning. Even the veneer throughout each vessel was carefully matched by buying a tree and using the same grain from it throughout the boat. John Freeman even designed and made his own fittings. He had to, there were none being made as this was an embryonic time for this part of the boatbuilding industry, so there was nobody else yet focussed on it. The last Freeman (a 27ft) was made in the mid 1980s marking the end of an era which saw the production of over 6500 vessels covering 27 models ranging from the 22ft to the 41ft. There is, to this day, a Freeman Owners' Club based on the River Thames at Sheridan Marine at Moulsoford, Oxfordshire and the original Freeman fittings and other spares are still available and so that famous name can live on.

John Freeman will be greatly missed, but his marvellous legacy will live on for a very long time to come and he will be fondly remembered especially by those of us fortunate enough to own one of his creations. *John Hodgson*

---

# **WARNING**

## **CONTAMINATED DIESEL CAN COST YOU UNFORSEEN EXPENCE!**

**We can eliminate Diesel Bug caused by  
water and debris in fuel systems.**

**By cleaning your fuel tank, recycling  
the contents of the tank insitu &  
treating with Chemical Biocide**

**On-site service available to any diesel system**

**Suitable for:**

**MARINE - BUSES - LORRIES/TRUCKS  
AGRICULTURAL - PLANT  
INDUSTRIAL MACHINES**

# **ST. IVES ENGINE SERVICES LTD**

**Engine Reconditioners**

**Crank Regrinding - Valve Cutting - Reboring - Surface Grinding  
Suppliers of Federal Mogul Pistons and Rings - Payen Gaskets - Bearings**

**Monsal Works, Somersham Road, St Ives, Cambs PE27 3LY**

**Tel (01480) 462111 Fax: (01480) 462111**

**Email: [siesltd@btconnect.com](mailto:siesltd@btconnect.com)**

---

### **Branch Dinner 2014**

*Why not escape the winter blues and join other members of the IWA Great Ouse Branch for a riverside supper? The Committee is planning a dinner for members and their guests at the beautiful Pike and Eel Hotel on the Great Ouse near St. Ives, towards the end of February.*



*We would like to get an early indication of interest and an idea of likely numbers so we can start discussions with the hotel management. Please contact Stephen Foote either on 01763 838936 or by e-mail at [stephen@tambourine.org.uk](mailto:stephen@tambourine.org.uk) if you think you would like to attend and further details will be circulated to respondents near the time.*

***We look forward to meeting you there!***

---

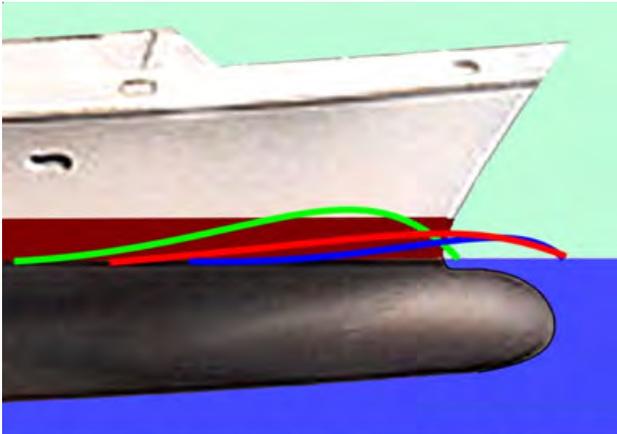
### **Why do ships have a bulbous bow?**

I was doing one of my stints as doctor on a cruise liner and my wife, Deannie, and I were standing on the bridge chatting to the captain as we left Stockholm, a beautiful city built on many interconnecting islands. We had anchored right by the Old Town and it was time to sail off to Copenhagen.

Looking around at other ships, I was reminded of that horrible great bulge that has appeared on the bow of many ships at, or just below, sea-level. I had always assumed that the bulb was some sort of stabiliser but that is only part of the case. The captain explained that the bulb increases the buoyancy of the front of the ship, thus reducing the pitching of the vessel (important to Deannie and me because our cabin is in the hospital at the front of the ship, at sea-level). More importantly, as the ship moves through the water, the bulbous bow modifies the flow of water around the hull, reducing drag, increasing speed and improving fuel economy. The fuel saving can be as much as 12% to 15%, a phenomenal amount when you consider that these cruise liners and most other ships actually spend most of their time at sea. The bulb works best when vessels are longer than 50 feet and traverse large volumes of water at a speed somewhere near their maximum speed. Our ships have a maximum speed of about 23 knots and travel most of the time between 18 and 20 knots, so it applies.

---

Modelled, perhaps, on the ramming bows of the ancient Greek triremes, the first modern bulbous bow was fitted to USS Delaware, launched in 1910. Since then, much work has been carried out on the theory of hydrodynamics and, from 1935, almost every US Navy ship carried a Taylor Bulb, which did not extend beyond the fore-perpendicular. The Japanese Navy used them from about 1940 and, as improvements have occurred in the study of hydrodynamics and computer modelling, the bulb has become larger and one of the most recent developments is the gooseneck bulb that has its tip quite far ahead of the ship and almost at the waterline. It is this change in design (driven by computer modelling) which has made these bulbs so much more prominent and, in my opinion, ugly, as time has progressed.



The green line represents the natural bow wave of the hull. The blue line represents the wave created by the bulb. The red line is the sum of these two. The height of the bow wave is substantially reduced, which reduces the hull drag associated with the bow wave. This improves fuel economy, and increases range.

I asked how it actually worked and the captain became a bit technical! It is all down to the “form effect”. On a conventionally shaped bow, the bow wave is generated just in front of the bow and it is the bow wave which is the greatest force impeding the vessel’s forward motion. At the same time, a stern wave is generated at the stern of the vessel. The ship consumes

energy in the production of these waves. A bulb placed in front of the bow and below the water forces water to flow up over the bulb, creating a trough which partially cancels out the bow wave, reducing the wake. The pressure distribution along the hull changes, reducing wave resistance – this is the form effect. Of course, the addition of a bulb does increase the ship’s wetted area. As wetted area increases, so does drag. For this reason, the bulb is only efficient at higher speeds, when the benefit from the reduction of bow wave and the form effect far outweigh the increased drag.

---

In 1935, the French superliner *Normandie* had a bulb (based on a design by Vladimir Yourkevich, an Imperial Russian Navy designer) and the *Queen Mary* did not. Both vessels managed equivalent speeds across the Atlantic but the *Normandie* did it with 30% less engine power than *Queen Mary* and with a corresponding reduction in fuel use.

### **Are Bulbous Bows about to disappear?**

As ships increase in size, “slow steaming”, which greatly reduces fuel consumption and emissions, has become much more common. These enormous ships no longer need to travel fast as their attraction is the enormous amount of cargo they can shift.



At slow speed, the bulbous bow is a hindrance. Maersk are removing bulbs from ten of its ships and the

Chinese are now building large bulk carriers without bulbous bows. Maersk’s latest ship (Maersk Mc-Kinney Moller) is a quarter of a mile long, 195ft wide (the same as an 8-lane motorway) and 240 ft high. It carries up to 165,000 tons (18,000 containers) and its two slow burning engines will use £750,000 less in fuel on one trip between Shanghai and Rotterdam than a conventional ship.

So, enormous, slow, fuel-efficient vessels with low emissions will not have bulbs in future. However, vessels which are smaller and require speed as well as efficiency will still benefit from a bulbous bow, so these ugly monstrosities are probably here to stay!

*Dr Ian G Nisbet*

---

The Inland Waterways Association is a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee. Registered in England no 612245 Registered as a charity no 212342 Registered Office: Island House, Moor Rd, Chesham, HP5 1WA. Phone 01494 783453