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Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 6DD
5. Agenda
The column of the National Chairman

8. News
The latest from within IWA and beyond

16. Navigational Aid
How Navigation Committee is standing up for boaters’ rights

22. Mr Fix It
IWA campaigner John Baylis talks restoration and rallies

26. Branch Walks
London leads the way

29. Fun-raising
Innovative ways our members are raising money

34. Wash to Welland
Campaign cruising through Fulney Lock

38. IWA Insurance
An unexpected benefit for corporate members

40. Creative Cruising Logs
The pictorial diary of a summer afloat

42. IWA at Work
What’s been happening around the branches

45. WRG
A round-up of restoration work

47. Inbox
Latest letters from our readers

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AGENDA
The Column of the National Chairman

The summer sees a lot of festivals around the system, many of which attract the general public in large numbers. I have recently attended three IWA festivals: Canalway Cavalcade at Little Venice on the Paddington Arm of the Grand Union in central London, the National Trailboat Festival at Staveley on the Chesterfield Canal, and our Campaign Festival in Liverpool on the Leeds & Liverpool.

All these events pulled large crowds and were very successful. Afterwards, I reflected on the very different locations in which the festivals were held, and how the three canals have played their part in the development of them.

Little Venice is situated in one of London’s most desirable residential areas, but when I first boated there a trip down the final yards of the Paddington Arm was not encouraged – the towpath was blocked by a locked gate, with Alsatian guard dogs making it very clear the public were not welcome. How things have changed now, with secure moorings for boaters and new offices, shops and flats lining the arm.

Meanwhile, the Trailboat Festival coincided with the reopening of Staveley Town Lock (pictured below). Seeing the vicinity of the basin and lock filled with people enjoying themselves, it was difficult to imagine that, after the canal had become derelict, open cast mining had taken place on the site. Now, with the canal back in water, the area is a credit to Staveley, although there remains more work to be done.

Finally, Eldonian Village at the Liverpool end of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal was for years considered a ‘no-go’ area for boaters. The Stanley lock flight, giving access to the River Mersey, was barely useable and only intrepid boaters took up the challenge of reaching Liverpool. The presence of nearly a hundred boats at the Campaign Festival illustrated just how much things have changed. The local community embraced the event, putting up their own bunting and arranging street parties alongside the boats. Here again, an old industrial area has been transformed, with the possibility of even further improvement, as the docks themselves have great potential for positive development as well as providing a link, rich in industrial heritage, to superb moorings in Salthouse Dock in the centre of the city. You can read more about the history of Eldonian Village and its canal in our News Focus on p12.

All three festival sites have benefitted from their waterways in the past and are doing so again today, with former industrial areas being transformed into vibrant living and leisure spaces where families can enjoy the many attractions canals can offer. None of this, of course, happened by accident. Volunteers have been promoting and supporting our inland waterways for 70 years, ever since IWA was formed in 1946. The long-term vision and commitment of so many volunteers has made all this progress possible, and IWA and the many canal societies involved can be very proud of what has been achieved.

There are still many more miles to restore and existing waterways to enhance, so please help us to continue and extend our work and encourage others to do likewise. Supporting one of our branch work parties, going on a WRG camp or helping to recruit new members are just some of the ways you can make a difference. Our canal and river navigations are a fantastic asset for all of us and we must ensure that IWA’s work to protect and restore them endures in the years ahead.

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Line-up announced for Pelsall festival

Classic cars, a fairground organ and a miniature steam engine offering rides around the show are just some of the attractions visitors to IWA’s Festival of Water in Pelsall can look forward to this year.

The event, which takes place at Pelsall Junction on the underused Wyrley & Essington Canal over the August Bank Holiday weekend (27th-29th), is expected to draw over a hundred boats, some 20 of which will arrive as part of a BCNS Explorer Cruise.

Musical entertainment will be provided by both local and nationally renowned artists, including: Chase Jazz Band, Harvesters, Somerville Gentlemen, Duchess and the Dukes, Dave Fry and Braunston Pickle. Bagpipers will also be playing, and there will be performances by two local dance troupes too.

Children, meanwhile, will be treated to water zorbing, birds of prey, and the chance to drive a digger or build a wall with WRG.

Traders (both allot and on land) will be selling everything from jewellery and clothing to cards and dog treats, with plenty of food choices and a real ale bar when the shopping becomes thirsty work.

There will also be historic narrowboats and the opportunity to learn about local and national waterway projects, including the Lichfield & Hatherton canals restoration.

The main festival site will be on Pelsall North Common and admission and parking are free. Mooring or camping for the weekend costs just £35, which includes wristband access to the evening entertainment. This runs throughout all three days from 10am to 6pm on Saturday and Sunday, and 10am to 4pm on Monday, and on into the evening for boaters and campers.

New legacy fund open for bids

Following a bequest from former IWA consultant engineer and trustee, Tony Harrison, IWA has announced a new fund which waterway projects around the country will be able to bid for.

Tony, who was an expert in hydraulics and hydrology in his professional life, served on IWA’s Restoration Committee for 20 years and chaired it for five years.

Throughout his long association with IWA, many restoration projects benefited from his advice and expertise, and it is hoped that Tony’s legacy will continue thanks to the £200,000 he bequeathed.

The criteria for the award of funds will be the maximum amount of good that can be achieved for the inland waterways, and applications are therefore invited from any organisation proposing to spend the funds in a way that meets this broad remit, consistent with IWA’s charitable objectives.

Les Etheridge, IWA national chairman, said: “I hope that applications will be of very broad scope, reflecting the wide range of Tony Harrison’s interests that included restoration, engineering standards, boating, hydraulics, and economics.”

Applications, which should be received by noon on Monday 31st October 2016, can be for any amount up to £200,000 and there could be more than one recipient. Further information about how to bid for the fund, including guidance about how outline bids should be prepared, is available at waterways.org.uk/pdf/restoration/guidance_to_applicants_2016.
IWA Raffle 2016

IWA has launched its 2016 Waterways Restoration Raffle following the huge success of last year’s event, when over £14,000 was raised to support 25 restoration societies and their projects across the UK.

As well as helping good causes, buying a raffle ticket gives you the chance to win a range of fantastic prizes including:

**FIRST PRIZE:** £1,000 cash.

**SECOND PRIZE:** a one-week boating holiday on a six-berth narrowboat donated by the Wyvern Shipping Company and worth up to £1,500.

**Other prizes include:** a weekend boating holiday for four people with Canal Cruising Company worth £590, a weekend boat trip for four with Calcutt Boats worth £300, a two-hour Thames cruise with Bow Boats, £100 of vouchers from Midland Chandlers, two tickets for the London Boat Show, a 20L dry bag from OverBoard Ltd and a traditional painted jug from the Stone Boat Building Chandlery.

Tickets, costing £2 each, are now on sale and can be found in this issue of Waterways magazine. They are also available via IWA’s website (waterways.org.uk/raffle), by telephoning 01494 783453 ext. 611, and through some of the restoration groups hoping to gain support this year.

The raffle gives you a choice of which project to support with every ticket you purchase – simply write the name on each ticket stub. Projects with more than 25 nominations will receive a portion of the raffle profits based on the percentage of nominations received.

The raffle will be drawn on 16th December 2016 at IWA’s head office in Chesham, so we will need to receive your ticket stubs by this date.

For more information on raffle prizes, eligible restoration projects and the terms and conditions, visit waterways.org.uk/raffle.

IWA would like to thank Wyvern Shipping Company, Canal Cruising Company, Bow Boat Company, Calcutt Boats, Midland Chandlers, Stone Boat Building Chandlery, British Marine and OverBoard for their generous prize donations.

Last year’s raffle money helped to fund a variety of good causes, like the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust’s Wappenshall Wharf appeal.

IWA chairmen meet Waterways Minister

The transfer of EA navigations to CRT was among the main topics of discussion when representatives from IWA met Waterways Minister Rory Stewart MP in April.

Les Etheridge, IWA national chairman, along with Gren Messham, chairman of Navigation Committee, and IWA’s Parliamentary Advisor Jonathan Shaw, found the Minister enthusiastic about exploring different options for funding, while understanding the issues and merits of the transfer.

Les thanked him for setting up the EA/CRT working group and assured him that IWA would be assisting the group in providing as much information and advice as possible.

The IWA representatives were also able to reassure the Minister of the excellent work being done by EA staff in difficult conditions and were pleased to see the Minister give a clear indication of how keen he is to find a workable solution for the transfer. The meeting represents real progress for IWA’s EA transfer campaign, and was an opportunity to reaffirm the Association’s standing as a long-established and respected organisation at a Parliamentary level.

EA transfer talks continue

Following his meeting with the Waterways Minister (above), IWA national chairman Les Etheridge joined Sir James Bevan, chief executive of EA, and Richard Parry, chief executive of CRT, at Islip Lock on the River Nene and St Ives Lock on the River Great Ouse in April.

The outing formed part of an EA Navigations Transfer Project – Chief Executives Familiarisation Visit. While a possible transfer of EA navigations to CRT was discussed further, the group also enjoyed seeing St Ives Lock reversed (as happens in flood conditions) during the site visit.
Colourful Cavalcade among best yet

The crowds turned out in force for IWA’s Canalway Cavalcade in May, attracted by a packed schedule and excellent advance media coverage.

_Time Out_ highlighted the Little Venice festival, now in its 34th year, as a ‘Pick of the Week’ and 130 boats made the journey, some taking as many as three weeks to arrive.

The Cavalcade was opened by Councillor Judith Warner, Lord Mayor Locum Tenens (Deputy) of Westminster, who praised IWA volunteers for their skills in organising the event and for bringing such colour to Paddington and Westminster. She was joined by John Edmonds, vice president of London Region IWA, Les Etheridge, chairman of IWA, and Richard Parry, chief executive CRT, who all made opening remarks.

This year the customary pageant of boats carried the theme ‘Canals Alive’, with more entrants than ever before. Among the imaginative displays were a Noah’s Ark, a shark (an unfortunate person being munched in its jaws) and a mallard duck complete with ducklings. The winning boat cleverly incorporated a medley of popular on- and off-water pursuits.

As is now traditional at the festival, the waters were blessed by the Bishop of London, who also cruised past the assembled boats aboard _Lady Mildmay_, blessing them as he went.

Awards were presented on the Monday afternoon for a range of competitions including best decorated boat, boat handling and best illuminated boat.

Historic boats bring in the crowds at Braunston

Despite poor weather, a total of 67 historic narrowboats and some 7,000 visitors attended the 14th Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally in July, the largest rally of these narrowboats anywhere on the system.

The festival was formally opened by IWA chairman Les Etheridge, who sportingly donned traditional working boatman costume at the helm of _Nutfield_ – 80 years old this July. He towed butty _Raymond_ (steered by CRT chief executive Richard Parry) from the Grand Union Canal into the marina to the sound of church bells and celebratory music from Daventry Brass.

Shore-side attractions included a trade marquee and the now well-established canal artists’ tent, with a special exhibition of the works of legendary Braunston canal boat painter Ron Hough, who died last year. A commemorative plaque to Ron was unveiled by Les Etheridge in the presence of Ron’s wife Yvonne and daughter Angela.

All profits from the rally, which exceeded £6,000, were donated, as usual, to canal causes. The main recipient was the Friends of Raymond, which received £2,000 for its important restoration maintenance of the _Nutfield_ and _Raymond_. A number of other donations were made to canal societies attending the rally, including £1,000 to the Friends of the National Waterways Museum, Stoke Bruerne, whose narrowboat _Sculptor_ has recently undergone major restoration.

500 people download new Waterways Directory

Following its launch in the Summer issue of _Waterways_, some 500 people have downloaded IWA’s new directory revealing the condition of Britain’s 6,500 miles of rivers and canals.

The searchable spreadsheet, which is freely available online, includes both the 4,700 miles of navigable inland waterways in mainland Britain, as well as those that are either derelict or unnavigable.

Compiled by John Pomfret, the directory also details each waterway’s condition and the body (or bodies) responsible for it.

He said: “The Directory is conceived as a dynamic, evolving reference work that can be updated as the condition of our waterways change. So we’re encouraging users of the publication and those with expert knowledge of even the remotest reaches of the network to help us keep the Directory as accurate and current as possible.”

To access IWA’s Waterways Directory visit _waterways.org.uk/waterwaysdirectory_.

Boats and bunting.
Two vans for WRG

Thanks to the success of its ongoing fundraising appeal, IWA’s Waterway Recovery Group has two new vans in time for this summer’s Canal Camps.

The WRG Van Appeal, which aims to raise a total £120,000 for four new vans, reached its halfway target during 2015, enabling the first two vans to be ordered. The new red vehicles, which are nine-seater minibuses, were collected in June and have since been prepared for use by WRG, including signwriting and fitting out the interior to keep contents safe while on the move.

WRG vans play a vital role transporting volunteers, equipment and tools on week-long Canal Camps and weekend digs, and travel a total of over 44,000 miles each year. Without them WRG couldn’t continue to support canal restoration across England and Wales.

Mike Palmer, chairman of WRG, said: “Thank you to everyone who has donated to the WRG Van Appeal, and to everyone who has taken part in the amazing fundraising activities around the country, from the Vantastic Fudge at Canalway Cavalcade to the barn dance and sponsored walks, and the large number of individuals doing weird and wonderful things in the name of WRG.”

With £13,000 still left to raise, WRG hopes to have the other two vans in time for 2017, so look out for further fundraising activities.

Chesterfield Trailboat Festival celebrates lock opening

With just hours to spare, Chesterfield Canal Trust and Waterway Recovery Group volunteers put finishing touches to Staveley Town Lock ahead of IWA’s National Trailboat Festival there.

Nineteen trailboats, five trip-boats, and CCT’s workboat Python made the event one of the busiest for many years, with an estimated 10,000 visitors over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend. Spread over 5 miles of restored waterway, it was also one of the largest festivals. The opening of the lock – and a further 300 yards of canal beyond – was the culmination of almost five years’ work by CCT and WRG, and an estimated 10,000 hours of volunteer effort.

The festival started with the official opening of the new lock by councillor Anne Western, the leader of Derbyshire County Council, which owns the length of the Chesterfield Canal within the county. She was aboard John Varley II, the Trust’s brand new trip-boat, partially paid for by the local police’s ‘proceeds of crime’ fund.

One of the most spectacular events was the parade of illuminated boats on the Saturday night, which was particularly well-attended.

A flotilla of boats on the final day cruised the full 5 miles to Tapton Lock and back, probably the longest trailboat length so far. Some of the boats reached the River Rother at St Helena’s, near where the canal will eventually terminate in the new Chesterfield Waterside development.

“This created great excitement among towpath users, who usually only catch a glimpse of an occasional canoe or trip-boat here,” said Rod Auton of CCT. The event as a whole was considered a great success.

Paddleboarding debuts in Waterways Triathlon

Stand-up paddleboarders will, for the first time, be able to compete in IWA’s Waterways Triathlon in Essex this September.

They’ll be invited to use their boards in the first stage of the event, alongside canoeists, before completing the rest of the 50km or 30km route by cycling and running. Last year several participants competed alongside their dogs, and organisers are keen to stress that athletic canines will be welcome this September too.

More than 60 participants took part in the 2015 event, which raises money for Essex Waterways, who manage and maintain the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation.

This year’s race will take place on Sunday 25th September at Hoe Mill Lock near Maldon, with Essex Waterways hoping to use funds to carry out vital towpath restoration work along the canal.

Places are still available at £35 per participant by visiting waterways.org.uk/triathlon and all entrants will be sent a full fundraising pack with details of how monies raised will make a huge difference to this beautiful waterway.

Paddle, pedal and run the IWA Waterways Triathlon.
If IWA’s recent National Campaign Festival in Eldonian Village is anything to go by, the secret to solidly engaging a community with their local canal lies in a basic combination of RESTORATION, REGENERATION and, last but by no means least, having a REALLY GOOD TIME. We take a closer look at the Three Rs...

Restoration

Eldonian Village is located at the end of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, off a main arterial route out of Liverpool city centre and close to the city’s northern docks. 1968 saw the IWA National Rally held on the very same site to highlight the fact that the waterway from Aintree to Liverpool Docks and the Mersey had been left out of the British Waterways list of ‘cruise ways’ that were going to be left open. This could mean only one thing – permanent closure – and in fact BW had already removed this part of the L&L from its waterways maps.

Some 170 craft attended from all over the country, including working boats, large seagoing vessels and smaller leisure craft. A steam rally was also hosted on the site, and one of the highlights of the event was a boat tug-of-war. Organisers commented at the time that “never has a threatened waterway been closed to navigation following an IWA National Rally taking place in the area” and the words proved prophetic. Despite all the improvements to the waterway since then, IWA is still campaigning, nearly 50 years later, to improve facilities for boaters making the journey down into the docks, as well as encouraging CRT to increase the numbers of craft that can navigate the link. That aim has already been achieved, with CRT recently announcing it intends to double the numbers passing through the Liverpool Link locks – so a good start. IWA also hopes to leave a legacy of new moorings rings and interpretation boards as well as updated sanitary facilities, although it may take a little longer for these to be put in place.
Regeneration

The inner-city Vauxhall area of Liverpool was largely populated by Irish immigrants fleeing the potato famine in the 1840s. Victorian slums were eventually replaced with tenements, which by the late 1970s were overcrowded and crumbling. The area had the largest proportion of low-demand housing stock of any UK city. Unemployment soared as major employers in the area closed down – the docks went into decline and the sugar and tobacco factories closed their doors and moved away.

Despite it all, a strong community flourished. So when the local council sought to demolish the neighbourhood, its residents decided to stand together and fight. Despite the appalling poverty and industrial dereliction, the area was their home. Taking their name from Eldon Street, which housed the local church, the Eldonians were born.

Future site for Eldonian Village once Tate & Lyle had been demolished.

In 1981 Tate & Lyle sugar refinery closed leaving behind a large but highly contaminated piece of land. What many saw as a blight, the Eldonians saw as an opportunity and the vision of an Eldonian Village housing the local community was born. With government funding, the site was cleared and Phase 1 of the Village, which comprised 145 houses and bungalows, was completed in 1989, quickly followed by a further 150 houses, a village hall, nursery and sports hall in 1994.

Phase 2 of the village is situated at the end of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, which the Eldonians decided to make a feature of, despite its poor condition at the time. They canvassed to have the canal cleared, decontaminated and landscaped, so that it could be brought back into use. Today this stretch of the canal is completely different from its industrial past. Wildlife thrives in the area and narrowboats have started to return and use the Eldonian Basin as a base when visiting Liverpool and the North West.

The Eldonian Village is a pioneering urban development that has helped change the way people think about regeneration. In recognition of their achievements, the Eldonians were awarded the United Nations-sponsored World Habitat Award in 2004 and still receive visitors from all over the world keen to see what can be achieved when a community works together.

...and a Really Good Time

The success of Eldonian Village and the canal that runs through it was something celebrated at IWA’s National Campaign Festival for 2016, which took place here over the weekend of 11th-12th June.

Thousands turned out to enjoy the event. With over 80 boats stretching down the canal, past Stanley Locks, the bright paintwork and fluttering bunting proved an irresistible sight.

Children were able to ‘Get Afloat’ on free canoes provided by Canal & River Trust, while families queued to have a ride down the moorings on the free trip-boat, funded by IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch.

Live music played throughout the afternoon too, and the performances of contemporary dance and Old Time Music Hall routines by Trinity Primary School on the Saturday drew a huge crowd. Another local dance group, Vogue Academy, who performed on the Sunday, were applauded for their incredibly energetic street-style routines. Visitors also made full use of the catering stands and other stalls around the site, while the face painter was overwhelmed on Saturday and brought two more staff with her on the Sunday.

IWA’s own Wild over Waterways (WOW) activities were extremely popular and Shreck, the festival’s much-patted boat horse, became something of a local celebrity. While the event celebrated the bicentenary of the L&L and promoted IWA’s campaign aims of increasing boat numbers visiting Liverpool and encouraging investment in the area around Eldonian Village, there were other motives too. Organisers hoped that the waterside weekend would underline something they already secretly suspected – that here was a community truly engaged with the canal it lived, worked and played around every day.

To this end, IWA volunteers worked with local schools well before the festival took place, exploring the history of canals and providing other resources. Meanwhile, IWA’s WOW co-ordinator and John Ellis, CRT’s national fisheries & angling manager, co-funded angling taster sessions for kids with Peter Henery, the junior development officer with the Prince Albert Angling Society. The local response, all claimed, exceeded every expectation.

Boats arrived in Liverpool from all over the country, their bunting creating a carnival atmosphere.

Thanks to Martin Clark at Pennine Waterways (penninewaterways.co.uk) and YO! Liverpool (yliverpool.com) for the use of their photos.
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IWA’s Navigation Committee is constantly campaigning on behalf of boaters and other inland waterway users. While much of this work is carried out behind the scenes, recent successes are certainly worth shouting about...

Put simply, Navigation Committee is a group of 12 members from around the system who meet regularly to monitor and respond to any matters concerning the use, protection, development and maintenance of our navigable inland waterways. They liaise with other organisations (everyone from navigation authorities to central government), and lend a hand to the real people too, encouraging boaters to raise individual concerns and providing them with advice in turn, as well as other IWA committees, boat clubs, waterway societies and more.

For a flavour of its recent campaigns, we’ve highlighted four areas where the committee has made a tangible difference to the way we navigate the network and access its amenities.

1) CAN’T SEE THE WATERWAY FOR THE TREES...

In the Spring issue of Waterways we alluded to Navigation Committee’s recent efforts to bring EA to account over its management (or lack) of overhanging vegetation on its rivers. But IWA is also taking this issue to CRT waterways too. Representatives of Navigation Committee have held meetings with the Trust at a national level, detailing concerns over vegetation management generally and, more specifically, hedges and fallen trees in cuttings where access is problematic.

IWA’s position is clear: “Where hedges are not being allowed to grow for the purposes of hedge laying, and excluding specimen or single trees, towpath boundary hedges should be regularly cut so that views are not obscured.” The clarification was born over committee fears that hedges were no longer being maintained, leading to stretches of canal becoming ‘green tunnels’ and losing interest and context as a consequence.

CRT is now resurveying all of its hedges over the next six to 12 months to identify the standards at which they should be maintained and their role in the local ecosystem. In general, this should result in hedges being re-established at manageable height. As part of the surveying process, CRT waterway managers will be consulting with local interested groups, including IWA branches, to identify specific issues, for example sightlines around bridges. Once objectives are clear, CRT says, contractors may well be able to bring in new plant to safely and more effectively manage the problem.

Excess vegetation on the Grand Union. IWA campaigns for the maintenance of a navigable channel and removal of hazards to boaters where vegetation growth causes obstructions to sightlines.
Cuttings and overhanging trees
IWA was also concerned at the apparent increasing incidence of short-term closure due to trees falling across the canal in cuttings. Tree growth close to the water level seemed to exceed sensible or safe guidelines (certainly exceeding IWA’s policy recommendations) and trees were damaging cutting banks. Moreover, the ‘reactive’ response favoured by CRT, while serving to clear passage within a short space of time, seemed an expensive way of doing things.

Of course, it’s not entirely the Trust’s fault. Before it took over, there had been no planned large-scale felling for years, so the Trust inherited something of a backlog. IWA maintained CRT should prioritise the worst canal cuttings, and consider a programme of significant felling, cutting by cutting, to reduce the number of navigation closures because of fallen trees in a more cost-effective way.

As a result of IWA’s campaign, CRT has agreed to survey cuttings to identify and manage trees that pose a risk. The Trust already had embankments on their ‘watch list’ where falling trees could lead to canal bursts, and will now add cuttings to this. As with hedges, there will an opportunity for discussion to ensure users’ opinions are known, understood and prioritised alongside engineering concerns.

2) THE TURNING POINT

In 2014 – following a series of comments and queries from members – Navigation Committee asked for feedback on any problems or limitations experienced at winding holes around the system. At about the same time, the Historic Narrow Boat Club was having similar concerns about the loss of winding facilities for full-length boats – either through neglect, or deliberate change of use. Navigation Committee launched a joint survey, which found that members experienced problems at some 110 locations – of which about half were believed to be ‘official’ winding holes. (Obviously IWA hopes to ‘officialise’ as many of these locations as possible – within limits imposed by legal/riparian issues and other CRT priorities.)

It was quickly acknowledged that the issues the survey had thrown up could not be resolved centrally, but rather on a canal-by-canal basis at a local level. The results were taken to CRT so that it could make local management aware of what each has by way of ‘official’ winding facilities on its patch, and also the total/national results of IWA’s survey. Results were also circulated to IWA branches who, in conjunction with experienced HNBC members and relevant local canal societies, were encouraged to contact the appropriate, local CRT management and kickstart a three-phase project:

**Phase one:** To check and confirm all ‘official’ winding locations (per area) on the existing CRT asset list, and to ensure that access and use problems (such as excess vegetation and not enough dredging) are progressively dealt with so that full-length boats (for that canal) can use them.

**Phase two:** Local groups to feed to CRT asset management and work towards ‘officialising’ as many informal winding holes in each area as possible. Once achieved, they should then

In the beginning was Bollington...
One of the catalysts for the joint IWA/HNBC winding hole survey was the brouhaha at Bollington on the Macclesfield Canal where a mooring pontoon had been installed in the winding hole, thus changing its use. Following campaigning here by IWA, HNBC and other individuals, the pontoon was removed and the winding hole tested by a 70ft boat. Very soon afterwards there was a breach on the Macclesfield Canal in the vicinity of this winding hole. Had the pontoon not been removed, boats would have been unable to turn during the stoppage.
be ‘badged’ as such – to the maximum realistic capacity possible (50ft, 60ft, 70ft etc).

**Phase three:** To determine where additional facilities could be established to meet 21st century conditions. This obviously longer-term (and to some extent ‘open-ended’) project will benefit both CRT (by reducing water and other asset use) and boaters (by reducing unnecessary travel and increasing cruising pattern options).

Navigation Committee was pleased to note that CRT recently launched its own winding hole initiative, very much as a result of the joint IWA/ Historic Narrow Boat Club winding hole survey and the discussions that have followed.

CRT will consider and establish common network-wide criteria for winding hole frequency, location, design and maintenance in conjunction with the National Advisory Group – Operations (NAG-Ops). IWA has representation on this group, as do others, which will ensure experienced users have an input.

The Trust is also keen to complete its asset register for winding holes as soon as possible. As Navigation Committee found, the list of ‘official’ winding holes is shorter than those in existence, and it is everyone’s interests to compile a single, definitive list as soon as possible to help set up a programme of maintenance to bring winding holes ‘up to standard’. To give some idea of what those ‘standards’ might be, IWA has also released guidance notes describing the basic minimum requirements, including dimensions and signage.

### 3) FIGHTING FOR FACILITIES

Navigation Committee campaigns tirelessly on a wide range of issues relating to boaters’ facilities, including water point design, recycling provision and identifying areas where more facilities are needed.

One recent success relates to Elsan disposal points. Around two years ago, the majority of the small lengths of flexible hose fixed to the rinse taps – located above, or near, the ‘bowl’ of CRT chemical toilet (Elsan) disposal facilities at sanitary stations – were removed. This was ostensibly to meet water supply regulations. Since then, as predicted by many users, the overall cleanliness of these facilities has deteriorated.

What’s more, hire-boat crews have been observed filling their water tanks from these rinse taps. It’s an understandable mistake for inexperienced crews to make when they see that the BSP fitting on their water hose fits directly onto a ‘vacant’ BSP fitting on the toilet rinse tap.

Pressure from Navigation Committee – in particular, the reporting of potential health hazards to unsuspecting hirers – has made CRT rethink its policy. Rinse hoses are to be re-introduced. There is, however, one small, and not unreasonable, proviso: the hose lengths must be such that they terminate 150mm (6”) above the ‘spill-over level’ of the bowl.

It is hoped this will be the first of
a number of moves leading to improvements and greater standardisation in Elsan disposal and pump-out facilities at sanitary stations.

More generally, Navigation Committee has helped to shape a document outlining IWA's views on the provision of boaters' facilities along the waterways, including the basic demand that water points, rubbish and sewage disposal, toilets, showers, laundry, recycling etc should be accessible on a suitably frequent basis, in working order, and that any costs should reflect the current market rate. It has also set out minimum standards for the provision of boaters' facilities across the waterways network, regardless of the navigation authority or landowner. These range from guidelines suggesting facilities be spaced within five hours of cruising (pump-out facilities at intervals that can be covered in no more than 10 hours' cruising), to an assumption that facilities are adequately protected from vandalism with appropriate systems in place to deal with their breakdown in a timely fashion.

4) PAWLS FOR THOUGHT

Last year Navigation Committee successfully campaigned to halt CRT's proposed changes to paddle pawls on safety grounds. While welcoming the Trust's efforts to replace damaged spindles and repair broken paddle pawls, IWA had significant concerns over its plans to install stops that would prevent the paddle pawl from being completely moved out of the way while a paddle was being wound down.

While on many canals having only one hand to wind down a paddle would not be a problem, there are certain situations when both hands are necessary. These could arise when the person lowering the paddle is a child or someone frail or with disabilities, when the paddle gear is particularly stiff, or when lowering the paddle in an emergency because someone has fallen in or a boat has got stuck.

The issue had been raised locally by IWA branches and nationally through boating forums, yet CRT still included the paddle pawl stops in a 2015 trial of proposed new designs. Navigation Committee representatives subsequently attended a meeting with CRT to discuss the issue. After outlining IWA's fears that, in rolling out the new stops without a full assessment, numerous new hazards had been created, the talks went on to consider wider issues of paddle gear design, use of different types of windlasses, spindle conditions and the inherent problem of the stored energy present in a raised paddle.

The discussion was a useful combination of CRT's concern of the harm caused by windlasses spinning off spindles, and IWA's understanding from its experienced boater members of individual needs, which might not have been recognised by the trust. IWA argued that better education of boaters about use of the correct windlass hole, and not leaving windlasses on spindles once the paddle is wound up, would do more to prevent the accidents that CRT was worried about.

As a result, CRT agreed to keep IWA fully involved in any future proposals and confirmed that it had stopped rolling out the installation of further paddle pawls stops. It has also released an educational video, which is available to watch via IWA's website.

Did you know?

IWA has a range of briefing notes on a wide variety of topics. As well as boaters' facilities and vegetation management, other subjects include cycling on towpaths, dredging, moorings, pinch points, and using small boats and canoes. Briefing notes can be viewed online at waterways.org.uk/briefingnotes or downloaded as a pdf.
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MR FIX IT

With 2017’s Festival of Water taking place in Ilkeston on the Erewash Canal, we meet IWA campaigner JOHN BAYLIS, who championed the venue and has been instrumental in organising rallies and restoration projects across the network for years.

“I’m quite a good acquirer, like Sgt Bilko,” jokes John Baylis some 15 minutes into our interview on the 60ft trad narrowboat he shares with his wife, Christine. He’s talking about his natural talent for events organising, which has seen him help out at dozens of IWA and local rallies and festivals over the years.

What John modestly doesn’t concede, however, is that he’s equally good at giving back. His long services to the waterways have earned him a British Empire Medal, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Transport Trust and the IWA Cyril Styring trophy too.

Not content to rest on his laurels, he continues to work ceaselessly to promote the waterways. And on no stretch is this more obvious than the one that’s closest to his heart – the Erewash Canal. John’s been working with the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association – an organisation that formed in the late ‘60s in response to the British Waterways Board’s threat of closure – for more than four decades. Measuring just 11.75 miles long, the waterway runs from Langley Mill (where it has a junction with the Cromford and Nottingham canals) to Long Eaton, a course that’s roughly parallel to the river Erewash and takes in next year’s newly-announced Festival of Water site, at Ilkeston.

But John’s waterways CV extends to other corners of the country too, from the Montgomery, where we meet him one glorious morning in mid-June, to his first taste of hire-boating on the Thames in 1968. At the top of Frankton Locks he tells us more...

Explain, firstly, why this particular spot holds so much significance for you as a boater and long-time IWA campaigner?

Well, we were the first boat to go down when Frankton Locks were finally restored in 1987. I took on the project in 1979 at Graham Palmer’s [founder of the Waterway Recovery Group] request. He was trying to look after the project from London and that wasn’t working very well. I brought the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association work party over one weekend to do some brickwork and Graham was impressed. He said: “If you can look after it for a while, then please do.” “A while” ended up being five or six years. IWA had a legacy and we used a lot of that money to do the rebuilding work on Frankton, which in those days was something like £100,000. It was largely spent on bricks and concrete. We rebuilt one side of Lock 3, we completely rebuilt Lock 1 at the top of the staircase, and we did quite a bit of work on Locks 2 and 4 as well.

What initially sparked your interest in canals?

In the early 1960s our local vicar decided to build himself a 16ft plywood boat – but he couldn’t drive. So he encouraged his parishioners (and others) to take him to the boat in return for a ride on it. That was the carrot that was dangled. We used to take him out to the Chesterfield Canal fairly often and we’d do trips on there. That got us interested and soon after we booked our first hire-boat holiday.
Boat ownership naturally followed – tell us a bit about your current one?
This is our third boat but we’ve had it 34 years. It was built in 1982 and the National Rally in Titford, Birmingham that year was the first trip we made on it. We originally had a 36ft Springer, which we fitted out ourselves and used to cruise most of the Midlands canals. We launched it in 1972. There was a test match going on in Nottingham that day and I think somewhere in the archives there’s footage of our boat going in, because it was spotted by the TV cameras filming the cricket.

I suppose you’ve seen a lot of the network in that time?
Yes, we’ve been practically everywhere, most of it several times. Of course, there are still several stretches we haven’t done, but quite frankly I’m not going to bother with those now. The Kennet & Avon is one, the Rochdale the other. We’re getting a bit lock-weary these days! Although we’ve been up and down the Grand Union fairly recently, we’ve got time on our hands now so don’t mind waiting for others boats to double up and help with the locks.

At the moment we’re heading towards the Pelsall festival, and after that we’ll aim to be back home by late September or early October.

On the subject of Pelsall, I know you’ve been something of an events organiser for these rallies. Can you explain the enduring appeal of them?
For many years, beginning in 1974 I think, I was involved with IWA national rallies on the installation of water and toilet systems. After a few years’ break I became a three-week worker and site tractor driver at Huddersfield from 2002. Three years later I took over as festival quartermaster, transferring to the new ‘Tardis’ at the Runcorn National. I’ve also helped to organise several trailboat and campaign rallies in the East Midlands.

I like helping out with events. I can keep an eye on things and I’m quite a good acquirer, like Sgt Bilko. I know who to go to when things need doing, and I’m quite handy with mechanical stuff too.

How much work goes into a festival like next year’s in Ilkeston?
These events used to be about three weeks’ work. You’d be on site a fortnight before and it usually took until the Friday of the week leading up to the festival to sort everything out. If the festival finished on Monday, you’d usually work Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and hopefully get everything off site by Friday.

With the new system it’s about a week, perhaps a little more. There’s not so much to set up and it can all be erected and dismantled more easily. Things are also on a smaller scale these days.

What makes a rally successful, in your opinion? Are there any key ingredients?
A lot of people and good weather. I also think there’s such a thing as a maximum number of boats. It becomes too congested and there aren’t too many places on the system these days that can accommodate big numbers of craft. Boats are getting bigger too, and what used to be available space is getting used for other things. I’ve been harbourmaster for several Erewash rallies, which are every five years, at Langley Mill and there we reckon 100-120 boats is the most. Beyond that it becomes hard work.

When did you become involved with IWA?
We used to go touring in our car during holidays, but I managed to write it off in Scotland one year so we thought we’d have a change! My brother had been on his honeymoon on the Thames in 1967 and had quite a good time, so we decided to follow his lead. After that we hired on the Leeds & Liverpool for a fortnight and, to escape a downpour, we took shelter in a pub up there one afternoon. That’s where I met someone from the Chesterfield Canal. We got talking and he told me he was a member of IWA’s Sheffield branch. He sold it to us really, and we decided to join. A few weeks later a man knocked on the door. He’d seen my name listed as a new member in the bulletin newsletter. He offered...
to share lifts to some of the IWA events in Sheffield and it wasn’t long before we both got involved with the committee. I think the first big thing we did was the Sheffield rally in 1971.

When IWA reorganised to form more branches we joined the new East Midlands region and left Sheffield. I was treasurer in those days, and then became region chairman when there was nobody else to do the job. I offered to take it on “for the time being”, and “the time being” was 30 years. I quite enjoyed it. I became chairman of Navigation Committee too for 12 years.

What were your big successes with Navigation Committee?
It was mainly a case of keeping up with things and liaising with British Waterways. The committee was the main contact between IWA and British Waterways.

I was also involved, almost from the start, with BW’s implementation of the Boat Safety Scheme. It had been there for hire-boats from, I think, 1978. As our boat was fitted out by a firm that also did hire-boats, it met those standards already and so I knew quite a lot about the scheme. I was probably one of the very few who did, in those days. I wasn’t a professional, but I could argue from the boater’s side instead.

How was the scheme initially received?
It varied. The original plan was a damn good idea, but it got modified and made more technical to stop arguments about what was and wasn’t adequate. BW didn’t want to leave it to individual surveyors to interpret and implement – they wanted it made more exact so it could be taken over by others.

Tell us a bit about your restoration work. What drew you to that area in particular?
I was a chemist originally, but I’d been involved with engineering on and off, both at work and at home (my father ran a transport business), which is helpful on waterway restoration projects.

In 1974 I became involved with a joint IWA and Retford & Worksop Boat Club initiative to restore Morse Lock on the Chesterfield Canal, creating a winding hole above Worksop. BW was opposed to this restoration and built a large piled winding hole below Morse Lock. If we’d been allowed to restore the lock from the start, we may well have all gone away afterwards and thought nothing more of the Chesterfield Canal, but BW wouldn’t back down and the Chesterfield Canal Society was formed.

I also joined the committee of the Waterway Recovery Group, on Graham Palmer’s invitation. It had been set up a year or two before, but by that time they were working on the first Stratford blitz and I was involved with machine driving and other odd jobs there. It all stemmed from those experiences, I suppose.

Is there one restoration project you feel more affinity with than others?
I have to say the Erewash, really. I’ve been with them on and off for 40 years. We did up a derelict building as a workshop – a joint ECP&DA and WRG project – and I’ve been involved with running that. We do quite a lot of mechanical and engineering work for other projects too, like the piling for Inglesham and quite a good line in selling mooring rings and grappling hooks.

You’re busy! How much time do you have left for boating these days?
Probably three or four months each summer. We go to the boat every third weekend in the winter too, just to stay on it for a few days. The advantage of being moored at Langley Mill is that it’s adjacent to the workshop we’ve got there, so I can do jobs that I don’t get done on work parties. That’s handy.

IWA’s Festival of Water 2017 will take place over the August Bank Holiday weekend in Ilkeston on the Erewash Canal. Booking forms will be available from September 2016.
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In the second of our series exploring IWA branch walks, Roger Wilkinson leads us along the Regent’s Canal from LITTLE VENICE TO CAMDEN ahead of the bicentenary of its opening this August...

Head south from Warwick Avenue station along Warwick Avenue, then right along Warwick Place. Continue past the Warwick Castle pub, left at Blomfield Road, then right into Westbourne Terrace Road, across the bridge. Turn left, and left again, onto the Horse Turnover Bridge.

We are now overlooking Browning’s Pool, Little Venice. This is the junction between the Paddington Branch of the Grand Junction Canal (GJC) and the Regent’s Canal. To the west, the Delamere Terrace Toll House (GJC) is now CRT’s area office.

The first use of the name ‘Little Venice’, to our knowledge, was in author and local resident Margery Allingham’s detective novel Death of a Ghost (1934). One of her characters lived in a house bearing that name, overlooking the canal. Poet Robert Browning lived in Warwick Crescent, beside what is now known as Browning’s Pool and Browning’s Island.

Walk along the north side of the Pool, underneath Warwick Avenue Bridge, and past the Regent’s Canal Toll House. This leads onto Blomfield Road, a very appealing setting, similar to parts of Amsterdam. Notable residents include John Julius Norwich (the historian), while Ringo Starr and Joan Collins have also lived here formerly. Along the other bank, Maida Avenue has been home to John Masefield (poet laureate), Lily Langtry (actress), Michael Bond (creator of Paddington Bear), and Arthur Lowe, the actor.

Maida Hill Tunnel has no towpath, so we follow the barge horses’ route. The boats were ‘legged’ through the tunnel for many years. Construction spoil from it was used to surface Lord’s.

Cross over Maida Vale (once, Roman Watling Street). Boudicca passed this way in 60 AD, after destroying London. Walk along Aberdeen Place. The former Crocker’s Folly pub, now a restaurant, was built by Mr Crocker. He believed the new Great Central Railway would terminate here, but it went instead to Marylebone Station.

Continue down the iron steps (if the gate is unlocked) to the towpath, at the tunnel mouth.

(Alternative route: After crossing Lisson Grove, follow the path along the offside of Lisson Wide, past Lisson Green Estate, crossing the steel bridge to rejoin the towpath after Lisson Wide moorings.)

Eyre’s Tunnel (53yds) passes under Lisson Grove. Above the canal is the former lengthman’s house, called the ‘Upside Down House’ as the living rooms are on top at street level. Lisson Wide served the former Great Central Railway Goods Yard (on the offside), with goods transferred between railway and barges.
Roger Wilkinson organises a team of guides who regularly lead waterside walks in London in association with London Walks, with proceeds going to IWA London Region. For more details go to waterways.org.uk/iwa/calendar or email roger.wilkinson@waterways.org.uk.

London Zoo was founded by Sir Stamford Raffles and designed by Decimus Burton. The striking structure on your left is the Aviary, designed by Lord Snowdon.

Cumberland Turn is the sharp left bend. The route was originally to go straight through the park, but the Prince changed his mind when he realised that it would be carrying barges, so Nash diverted it round a bend and into a cutting around the edge of the park. Ahead, Cumberland Basin is what remains of the branch to Cumberland Hay Market, near Euston Road. The Feng Shang Chinese Restaurant was constructed in sections at Bulls Bridge and carried here by barge.

The indentation in the towpath is a horse ramp, one of about 20 still existing on this canal. They were usually sited near railways or other points of disturbance, where horses might be startled and fall into the cut. Horses could be quickly brought back up the ramp, onto the towpath.

Crossing the canal here, the London & Birmingham Railway was the first main line into London. Designed by Robert Stephenson, it was one of the world’s first long-distance inter-city lines.

Camden

The distinctive Pirate Castle is home to a charity that has been providing adventurous outdoor recreation and training opportunities for children, young people and disability groups of all ages for the last 50 years.

Cross over on the Diagonal Bridge, an 80ft span built at an angle to avoid the entrances to canal basins on the left-hand side. One of these is the former Dingwall’s timber wharf, one of the canal’s last commercial customers. It’s now part of Camden Lock Market, and a berth of London Waterbus Co.

Hampstead Road Lock was built to 80ft x 14ft 6in to take Thames lighters. All the locks were originally built in pairs. After cargo carrying ceased, one lock of each pair was converted to an automatic weir. This one is the former Dingwall’s time wharf, one of the canal’s last commercial customers. It’s now part of Camden Lock Market, and a berth of London Waterbus Co.

Chalbert Street Footbridge contains the aqueduct of the River Tyburn, one of London’s ‘lost’ rivers.

Macclesfield Bridge is named after the canal company’s first chairman. It is often called ‘Blow-up Bridge’, following an accident here in 1874 when a barge carrying gunpowder and petroleum products blew up. Three boatmen were killed and the bridge collapsed. This disaster led to the 1875 Explosives Act, regulating the transport of explosives.

Regent’s Park

The idea of a canal going around London and joining the Thames at Limehouse was revived when Thomas Homer met John Nash, who was redeveloping Marylebone Park for the Prince Regent (later George IV) as Regent’s Park. Nash was enthusiastic and became a driving force for the canal company. In 1812, the Regent’s Canal was approved by Parliament, though the Act changed the route, to go around the edge of the Park.

The canal was built on one level until Camden, then dropped by 12 locks to Regent’s Canal Dock (now Limehouse Basin), designed for trans-shipment between seagoing and canal vessels.

Regent’s Park was intended initially to be home to some of the Prince Regent’s friends, and a few houses were built and have survived. Grove House (on your left), was architect Decimus Burton’s first commission. Hanover Lodge (right) was built in John Nash’s time, to his design. Admiral Thomas Cochrane lived here (famous in Napoleon’s time; inspiration for the character Horatio Hornblower). It was also home to Admiral Beatty (of Battle of Jutland fame). Six more villas (right) have been built recently by the architect Quinlan Terry, in line with Nash’s original concept.

Chalbert Street Footbridge contains the aqueduct of the River Tyburn, one of London’s ‘lost’ rivers.

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The Inland Waterways Association
FUN-RAISING

As IWA launches its new fundraising pack, we look at some of the creative ways members are making a monetary difference

Its charitable status means IWA relies on donations large and small to support its campaigning activities. Money left in legacies, or from sales of waterways merchandise from its shop, also form part of the Association’s financial strategy. However, for a large number of members fundraising is about much more than scribbling out a cheque – it’s about having buckets of fun in the process. Here are just a handful of examples of the blue-sky thinking behind some brilliant contributions recently. And remember, if you’re eyeing your own fundraising event, there are plenty of ideas and tips in our brand new pack, available to view online at waterway.org.uk/fundraising.

UN-LOCKING POTENTIAL

Fancy an extra pair of hands working the locks for you this summer? Well you can – but at a price. A number of IWA branches use lock-winds to drum up financial support from passing boaters, most of whom are more than pleased to sit out a particularly arduous staircase. Lock-winds can also be extraordinarily sociable – a chance to catch up with branch colleagues as well as chat to those coming through the locks or walking the towpath.

Over the May Bank Holiday weekend, Milton Keynes Branch was involved in a lock-wind as part of a bigger ‘Rock on the Locks’ event run by a local pub, while last year Chiltern Branch left no stone unturned when it raised £385 from a lock-wind at Marsworth, signing up two new members in the process.

Shrewsbury and North Wales Branch is also getting in on the action. Its annual lock-wind takes place in August at Hurleston and last year raised £400, with 20 or so members turning up to help work the whole flight as well as sell jam, pickles, jelly and biscuits. Over the weekend some 100 boats were seen safely on their way, with one being pulled through when water levels dropped.

A SPORTING CHANCE

Seeking sponsorship for personal challenges is a great way to raise money. Most large amateur sporting events in this country offer charity places to competitors, which are usually fairly straightforward to apply for. They are designed to test the limits of an individual’s endurance and, as well as being financially rewarding for IWA, are often a huge confidence boost for the people taking part, most of whom have trained for months before walking up to the start line.

In July 2015 Liz Chase successfully completed the 10km course of the Race for Life at Heaton Park in Manchester. As one of the catering team for WRG North West, she donated the funds she raised, £275 in total, to the WRG Van Appeal.

Another notable effort was Sharon Linacre’s completion of the Chester Half-Marathon in 2011, raising £175 for IWA through Virgin Money Giving in the process, Sharon’s training involved weeks of preparation, including running and cycling along the towpaths of the Trent & Mersey and Shropshire Union canals. Her target of 2 hours 20 minutes was smashed on the day when Sharon ran a personal best of 2 hours 12 minutes.

More recently, in April this year David Edwards-May ran the 2016 London Marathon and raised over £3,000 for the Association. There is an IWA place available in next year’s event, so if you think you could raise at least £2,000 and are interested in bidding for the job, please contact Sarah Frayne at sarah.frayne@waterways.org.uk.

Shrewsbury & North Wales Branch members pull in some welcome funds on their annual Hurleston lock wind.

David Edwards-May in training for this year’s London Marathon.

Sharon Linacre powered through a half-marathon to make some money for IWA.
It’s not all about working up a sweat in lycra running shorts, however. Sartorial supporters of IWA’s Lichfield Branch reckon looking good and loosening the purse strings can go together. To date, the creative committee has organised two fundraising fashion shows, the first in 2014 and the most recent in March this year. Supported by Edinburgh Woollen Mill and hosted at a local garden centre café, they also managed to attract other customers to strut their stuff on the catwalk.

Audience members were offered 20% off the retailer’s latest range during the show, and Edinburgh Woollen Mill also provided prizes for the raffle (as did the branch). Around £140 was raised by the fashion-forward event.

A target of £120,000 to allow Waterway Recovery Group to buy four new vans looked a bit steep at one stage. But for a plucky team of five volunteers and head office staff the figure wasn’t insurmountable. They decided to take on the Welsh 3000s challenge, climbing 15 peaks in Wales, including Snowdon, that are all over 3,000ft.

As if the multiple climbs weren’t ambitious enough, the team piled still more pressure on themselves by vowing to complete the feat in less than 24 hours, as one member wanted to be home in time to celebrate her 25th birthday. It was a test of endurance, navigation skills and fitness as they travelled 30 miles and climbed a total of 9,786ft before they reached the finish. They raised over £1,500 for the Van Appeal in the process.

Boaters tackling the Grand Union Canal during Easter 2014 may have done a double take at the sight of four larger-than-life ducklings sharing their waterway. In fact, the feathered friends were four costumed volunteers who had pledged to cycle, paddle and run 50 miles of the canal in just under 11 hours to raise money for a new excavator for WRG.

The first stretch involved cycling 40 miles from Harefield to Tinkers Bridge, Milton Keynes. Here, cheese scones, cake and tea were supplied by Chiltern Branch. Suitably refreshed, the group then ran 6 miles further to the Black Horse at Great Linford. The final stretch was a hard paddle of 3.5 miles to the finish at the Galleon pub in Wolverton, where the four exhausted participants enjoyed a warm welcome from Milton Keynes Branch, along with a free pub meal. The gruelling activity raised a brilliant total of £13,000.

They must be quackers: Jenny Black and Gemma Bolton prepare to take on the GU challenge.
TOWPATH TRUDGING

In February 2015, IWA head office and Warwickshire Branch organised an 8-mile sponsored walk along the Stratford and Grand Union canals. Despite heavy rain, 35 keen walkers, including IWA chairman Les Etheridge and his wife, took part and raised £2,000. Four particularly keen participants did four laps of the route while dressed in morph suits!

This towpath trek had a precedent. In 2011, Shrewsbury & North Wales Branch organised a similar sponsored walk to raise money for the branch and IWA’s Inglesham Lock Appeal. Twenty-five canal enthusiasts joined ‘IWAlk’, which took in the route of the Montgomery Canal to check up on WRG work camp progress along the way. Further on, walkers visited a stretch of the restored canal that had been rewatered but wasn’t yet open to boats, before reaching the final, navigable section. The event raised over £400 using the Virgin Money Giving website and sponsorship forms, and was an inspired way to promote restoration work on the Montgomery Canal.

Meanwhile, the IWA Towpath Walks Society, in partnership with London Walks, has been delivering a series of regular guided walks along London’s canals since 1977. There are currently five volunteer guides covering over 19 different routes each year, with the most popular ones walked more than once per year. The guides are chued up on canal-side history and local attractions, but nevertheless offer their services for free. Since they began, over 15,000 walkers have helped IWA raise nearly £40,000. Walks take place twice-monthly on Sundays, starting at a tube or DLR station. There is no booking system but those interested can find more information at either waterways.org.uk/iwa/calendar or walks.com. Alternatively, turn back to p26 for a sneak preview of one of the routes you might be tackling – a Regent’s Canal ramble from Little Venice to Camden is the focus of this issue’s Branch Walks feature.

BEST OF THE REST

Not all fundraising has to be about pushing yourself physically. A lot of cash can be raised through rather more traditional raffles and sales too, like Chiltern Branch’s jumble stall or Middlesex’s Christmas card, jam and second-hand book sales, which recently netted £150. And, of course, don’t forget IWA’s Restoration Raffle either, further details of which can be found in the news pages of this issue of Waterways.

MONEY FOR OLD ROPE

Have you had your Weetabix this morning? Those taking part in Chesterfield Canal Trust’s barge-pulling fundraiser certainly needed a bowl or two before pairs were harnessed to a length of rope to drag a 10-tonne boat down the waterway. The test of brawn was organised by the Trust over a two-week period to permit charitable groups to raise money. Two teams from WRG and teams from IWA branches took on the challenge, and both IWA general funds and the WRG Van Appeal benefitted.

The money was hard-won, however. Each team had to pull the Trust’s Cuckoo boat, Dawn Rose, a distance of approximately 3 miles each.

Putting in some miles in morph suits.
Christmas Cards & Gifts

Working boat on Grand Union
Code X105 - £3.25
From an original painting by Alan Firth.

The Packet House, Worsley
Code X107 - £3.25
From an original painting by Dave Gardham.

Stoke Bruerne in Winter
Code X008 - £2.95
From an original painting by Michele Field.

Berkhamsted Lock, on the Grand Union Canal
Code X106 - £3.25
From an original painting by Alan Firth.

Hungerford Church, Kennet & Avon Canal
Code X108 - £3.25
Photo by Gillie Rhodes.

Upper Heyford on the Oxford Canal in Winter
Code X014 - £2.95
From an original painting by Michele Field.

Message inside Christmas cards: “With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year”.

Lots more designs available – see www.iwashop.com

Christmas Gifts

The Canals of Harley Crossley
Code AM01 - £19.99
This book compiles, and pays homage to, some of the best canal art by Harley Crossley who was a professional artist for over forty years. Harley painted designs for many IWA christmas cards over a long period and they are all beautifully reproduced in this high quality collection from his lifetime’s work.

Shrophire Union Fly Boats -The Jack Roberts Story
Code AU12 - £16.95
Jack Roberts’ autobiography, describes canal carrying over 100 years ago. An important historical record that will appeal to working boat and transport history enthusiasts as well as people interested in the lives of canal boaters.

New 2017 Calendar
Code X035 - £3.95
One month to view with space for daily notes. Twelve months from January to December 2017, each illustrated with a waterway scene in a detachable postcard format. 320mm x 172mm (12.5” x 7”) approximately.

Calendar Envelope (separate)
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New Designs for 2016

Christmas Cards - £3.60 Per Pack
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Designs taken from original paintings and photographs are the copyright of the artist or photographer. Message inside reads “With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year”.

Code X110: Sutton Stop, Coventry Canal
From an original painting by Nigel Street

Code X111: Horseboating at Sunset
From an original painting by Alan Firth

Code X112: Kidderminster Church
From an original painting by Dave Gardham

Code X113: Chequers Bridge, Basingstoke Canal
Photograph by Roger Cansdale

Code X114: Whiteley Green, Macclesfield Canal
Photograph by Andy Hilliker

Bargain Packs
All bargain packs consist of a mixture of designs from previous years. With envelopes.

Bargain Pack A  Code X025 - £13.95
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Bargain Pack B  Code X026 - £9.50
40 Christmas Cards. Five cards each of eight traditional paintings.

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25 Christmas Cards. Five cards each of five traditional paintings.

Designs may vary from those illustrated.

Postage rates: UK Postage Costs £3.25. Free postage when you spend over £30. Different postage costs apply for Europe and Overseas. See website for details.

The Inland Waterways Association, Island House, Moor Road, Chesham, HP5 1WA

Buy at www.iwashop.com or call 01494 783453
With Fulney Lock navigable at last, intrepid boater DAVID PULLEN braved the Wash for a rip-roaring river cruise from Boston to Spalding.

The twice-cancelled IWA cruise to Spalding in support of the Fens Waterways Link finally took place from 20th-24th May following pressure by IWA for the Environment Agency to re-open Fulney Lock on the River Welland.

Two boats made the trip; Bouncin Brass, a 25ft cruiser skippered by IWA member David Collin, and my own 55ft narrowboat Rhoda Ellen.

The window for the cruise had to be carefully timed to use a period of ‘spring’ high tides of sufficient height to make a level of 3.1m at Fulney Lock on the outskirts of Spalding. The ‘springs’ occur every two weeks in cycle with the low ‘neaps’ tides.

We left Boston Grand Sluice on the first level tide at 4.25pm on Friday 20th May. It was an interesting trip down the Haven River (the Witham outfall), sharing the water as we were with Elisabeth S, a 2,000 tonne Dutch-registered ship carrying general cargoes into and out of Boston on a regular basis. Keeping in touch with Port of Boston and the ship’s pilot on VHF, we passed her with plenty of room about a mile inland from Tabs Head. Ten days later we were interested to learn Elisabeth S was in Belgium inbound for Liège.

Tabs Head is the fixed marker beacon that

The cruise had to carefully timed to use a period of ‘spring’ high tides of sufficient height to make a level of 3.1m at Fulney Lock.
denotes and separates the Haven and Welland channels. It requires a near-180° turn to starboard. A pilot is therefore not required if the journey is made on the top of the tide, as both channels are fully marked by green (to starboard, upstream) and red (to port) markers. Conditions in the Haven were favourable, with less than a force two (stiff breeze) from the south-west. However, as we turned up the Welland channel the breeze was coming straight down the river and we had a small swell to deal with for about five minutes.

The rest of the trip up to Fosdyke Bridge Yacht Haven was uneventful, although the final 2 miles were against the ebbing tide. We moored at Fosdyke at 7.35pm. The 15-mile trip had taken 3hrs 10 mins at an average speed of 4.73mph. Later, liquid refreshment was taken in the Ship Inn, a delightfully restored wayside pub on the A17, which really benefits from the Yacht Haven and friendly marine atmosphere since the old port has been converted for leisure boating services.

**Navigation notes**

The journey around Tabs Head on the high tides is regularly made by leisure craft from the Boston area that are transiting to Fosdyke for boatyard services. The difference with this cruise is that it had to be done on ‘springs’ in order to get the required tide level at Fulney.

The alternative is to make the trip around Tabs Head on the falling tide and anchor just off the Haven outfall, to go aground over low tide. This may necessitate using a pilot and would increase the time in transit by about eight hours, although the trip up the Welland to Fulney could then be made with the tide in one run, rather than waiting at Fosdyke.

Tabs Head is the fixed marker beacon that denotes and separates the Haven and Welland channels. It requires a near-180° turn to starboard.

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Rounding Tabs Head.

Moored at Fosdyke Yacht Haven.
To Spalding and beyond

The morning tide started running at about 5am but we delayed leaving until 6.20am, making 6.25mph for most of the way. Approaching Fulney on the level rising tide, we were delighted to see that EA staff had the outer lock gates open and ready for us to steer straight in. This 6½ mile leg took 1hr 20min at an average speed of 4.9mph. On reflection, we should have left Fosdyke about an hour earlier and waited for the tide level in the Fulney approach channel.

From Fulney Lock it was a clear run into Spalding, where we were welcomed by IWA member Richard Fairman and Gill Houston on nb Alcedo, which is permanently moored in the town. Bouncin Brass, with higher superstructure than Rhoda Ellen, only just made it under West Elloe Footbridge (2.24m). We tied up in Spalding at 8.25am on the excellent moorings immediately upstream of the town centre.

Low headroom at Balmoral Avenue Footbridge (1.85m) and Little London Bridge (2.01m) meant that Bouncin Brass was unable to continue the trip further than Spalding, but the next morning Rhoda Ellen, accompanied by Alcedo, pressed on up the Welland to the head of navigation at Peakirk, stopping for Sunday lunch at the Old Bridge at Crowland. Directly next to the pub is an excellent recently constructed slipway (a Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership project). We moored on the southern bank opposite the pub on new moorings (also LWP funded). The Welland upstream of Spalding is an extremely pleasant, wide and deep fenland river with low flood banks allowing excellent views across the Fens. The river is wide enough to turn anywhere along this

Fulney Lock: the story so far...

David’s successful passage through Fulney Lock to Spalding marked IWA’s third attempt to cruise this waterway. In May 2015 Lincolnshire Branch had to cancel its Boston-to-Spalding campaign trip because of the Environment Agency’s failure to maintain Fulney Lock in a navigable condition. It couldn’t be operated due to a build-up of silt in the lock gate recesses.

On that occasion IWA had planned to assemble a flotilla of up to eight boats, which would moor in Spalding to demonstrate the unrealised potential for tourism and economic development that recreational boating will bring when the Fens Waterways Link is completed.

A similar cruise was planned in 2012 but failed for the same reason. Until May this year, it was not clear whether navigation had been possible since 2012. As recently as 2001, however, the lock was navigable, having been documented by a group of boaters known as the ‘Tuesday Night Club’.

The River Welland is a historic navigation stretching back to the time when the river was tidal up to and beyond Spalding. Fulney Lock acts as a flood defence structure for the town, but EA operating procedures specify that the structure is available for navigation when tides are level with the normal retained height of water through Spalding. The historic statutory navigation rights extend back to when the town was a significant trading port.

The 2016 cruise described here highlights recent improvements to the River Welland, funded by the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership as part of the Fens Waterways Link project. Fosdyke, Spalding and Crowland are now very worthwhile destinations for slightly more intrepid boaters, ahead of the rest of the Fens Waterways Link being completed. Once the Black Sluice Navigation to River Glen connection is in place, access will be even easier.

There are several slipways already available on the Fens Waterways Link route for trailable boats: at Hubbert’s Bridge on the Black Sluice Navigation, at Fosdyke and Crowland on the River Welland and on the River Glen at Surfleet.

We were delighted to see that EA staff had the outer lock gates open and ready for us to steer straight in.
length, making it an ideal day-trip. At Four Mile Bar we passed under the new footbridge, which replaced a previous low concrete structure – another IWP project.

**Back to Boston**

Our return trip commenced early on Monday evening, passing through Fulney Lock at 8pm and down to Fosdyke to moor at 9.20pm. The tide was ebbing fast and both boats had to turn beyond the pontoons and come onto them by stemming against the flow. All that hard work tying up naturally merited another visit to the Ship Inn...

The following day we departed Fosdyke at 7.45am, running against the last of the flood tide in order to make the turn at Tabs Head on high water. It was a beautiful clear morning with high pressure and a light northerly breeze (force two). Unfortunately, by the time we reached Tabs Head the wind had stiffened to a moderate breeze (force four) and changed direction. This wind cutting across the increased expanse of clear water between the Haven channel and the Welland at high tide caused about 15 minutes of rough water immediately before making the 180° turn to port to enter the Haven.

Back inland the water was much calmer and we enjoyed an uneventful trip up to Boston. A de-rigged fishing vessel also made the voyage round from Fosdyke, leaving later than us but passing about 2 miles up the Haven. Although Imray’s shipping map app had shown two ships waiting in the Wash to enter Port of Boston, these were long gone by the time we appeared and we failed to raise port officials on the radio – they had obviously docked both vessels and gone for their breakfasts!

We were aiming for the second level tide at Boston at approximately 10.25am, but the effect of the high pressure and the NNE wind delayed it and we eventually passed back onto the non-tidal Witham at 11.05am instead. We had arrived at Grand Sluice at 10.40am, making the return leg a very similar duration to the outward journey.

I should add that this cruise would not have happened without the help and support of people behind the scenes. Thanks are due to David Parkinson at Fosdyke Yacht Haven, Paul Styles and Ian Cook (EA operatives at Fulney Lock), and Irven Forbes and Sue Cant (EA waterways managers) for their encouragement in planning and completing the cruise. Also, a special thank you to Lincolnshire County Council’s (and IWA member) Richard Fairman for his enthusiasm for the project.

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*Autumn 2016*
Maybe it won’t surprise you to learn that, many years ago, IWA and most other waterway organisations didn’t have any insurance cover at all. Perhaps it will come as a bigger surprise that some waterway organisations still don’t? Over the years, boat club-houses have caught fire, ferocious floods have swept away all in their path, valuable equipment has been stolen and people have injured themselves in all sorts of silly ways and then dashed to their solicitors to make outrageous claims.

Running a waterway organisation, whether that’s a restoration society, a boat club, youth group, museum or community boat, can be hard enough work without having to worry about all the terrible things that might just happen and risking claims against you, personally.

Identifying the need for insurance is only half the problem, however. Finding an insurer or broker with the specialist experience to tailor a policy to a waterway organisation’s unique and specific needs is another matter entirely. Which is why IWA unexpectedly stepped into the frame more than four decades ago. A strange marriage, insurance and the inland waterways, but IWA has hundreds of local, non-profit groups signed up as corporate members, and making sure they’re all properly protected if the worst were to happen is a priority.

It all started with some of the early work parties that eventually led to the formation of Waterway Recovery Group. Fortunately, a prominent early member of the Association, Ted Hill, worked in the insurance industry and was able to take steps to build up a scheme that would benefit IWA and the waterway restoration groups. Gradually this service has expanded to be available to all IWA corporate members. But the same principle still applies – the service is there to ensure proper protection for everyone working for the benefit of the waterways, and IWA provides the service entirely free of charge.

This is mainly achieved through large policies in the name of IWA and its participating corporate members. The size of these policies and an excellent low-claims record over many years enables IWA to negotiate reduced premium rates – something individual organisations would struggle to match. The long relationship with insurers also enables cover to be extended for a range of activities for which insurers would usually be reluctant to provide cover without substantially pricier premiums. Volunteer use of mechanised plant, chainsaws and motor vehicle arrangements are just a few obvious examples.

WHO BENEFITS?
There are currently around 200 participant organisations that IWA arranges insurance for, ranging geographically from Scotland to Cornwall. Corporate members covered include nearly every waterway society in the country, many boat clubs, community boating organisations, navigation authorities, national waterway user groups, and a range of other educational and heritage organisations and event organisers.

Most of these have opted for IWA to arrange all their insurance needs, including an annual review of their requirements, assistance with claims management, and advice on insurance matters generally. This is done through a formal

"The Cotswold Canals Trust has placed all its insurances through IWA for many years. We find the premiums very competitive and attach great importance to the sound advice given by Neil Edwards, IWA chief executive. Claims procedures are easy and we have been very satisfied by the outcomes." Jack Telling, company secretary, Cotswold Canals Trust
delegation of authority from IWA’s principal insurers, which allows the Association, within agreed parameters, to act on behalf of insurers and to issue certain documentation. IWA is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Once corporate members have taken out a policy, they simply need to let IWA know when a circumstance arises that looks like it might lead to an insurance claim. There will be a simple form to complete, and then the claim will be looked after by claims specialists, who will provide guidance and negotiate with insurers to get the matter resolved speedily with the best result for the policyholder.

POLICIES ON OFFER
Insurance can be tailored to individual organisations’ needs, but most groups will require at least the ‘public liability insurance package’. This provides cover to individuals acting on behalf of the insured too – crucial for voluntary organisations, as it protects those working on behalf of the organisation if a claim is made against them personally.

INCLUDED, AT NO EXTRA COST, with the public liability package are:
• Employers Liability
• Contingent Marine Liability
• Personal Accident Insurance
• Cash Losses
• Contract Works

IWA can also arrange a basic policy for small groups from as little as £65 per annum.

OTHER INSURANCES that can be arranged include:
• Trustee Indemnity Insurance
• Professional Risk Insurance
• Property Insurance
• Owned and Hired Plant Insurance
• Motor Policy covers
• Insurance for work boats
• All types of passenger vessel insurance
• Business Interruption covers
• Event Cancellation covers

Find out more...
For further information about IWA arranged insurance, contact Neil Edwards (neil@waterways.org.uk or tel: 01494 783453).

Summer 2016

“[Following] disheartening burglary attacks causing damage to property and theft of equipment, IWA reacted quickly with guidance and claim formalities, which enabled the Trust to be re-equipped with little delay in continuing work on site.”

Garry Dockerty, chairman, North Cheshire Cruising Club

CASE STUDY:
The Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust

The Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust suffered a setback in 2013 when thieves stole around £10,000 of construction equipment in a raid on the security compound near Darnford Park, the site of the project they were then working on.

The theft came at a devastating time for the Trust, just as it was gearing up for a busy summer at this location, and it brought work to a temporary standstill. Among the critical items taken was a generator that provided electricity for almost everything else on the site.

Fortunately, the Trust’s worries were short-lived. After putting in a claim to replace the stolen items, work was soon underway again. Bob Williams, LHCR’s finance director, says: “We have found insurance [arrangements] by IWA over many years to be very functional, easily managed and immediately responsive at all times in meeting our needs and relationship with insurers.

“[Following] disheartening burglary attacks causing damage to property and theft of equipment, IWA reacted quickly with guidance and claim formalities, which enabled the Trust to be re-equipped with little delay in continuing work on site.”

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The Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust

The Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust suffered a setback in 2013 when thieves stole around £10,000 of construction equipment in a raid on the security compound near Darnford Park, the site of the project they were then working on.

The theft came at a devastating time for the Trust, just as it was gearing up for a busy summer at this location, and it brought work to a temporary standstill. Among the critical items taken was a generator that provided electricity for almost everything else on the site.

Fortunately, the Trust’s worries were short-lived. After putting in a claim to replace the stolen items, work was soon underway again. Bob Williams, LHCR’s finance director, says: “We have found insurance [arrangements] by IWA over many years to be very functional, easily managed and immediately responsive at all times in meeting our needs and relationship with insurers.

“[Following] disheartening burglary attacks causing damage to property and theft of equipment, IWA reacted quickly with guidance and claim formalities, which enabled the Trust to be re-equipped with little delay in continuing work on site.”

Garry Dockerty, chairman, North Cheshire Cruising Club
There’s no denying the utility of a well-kept log book aboard. Not only a handy reminder of your travels, they can also serve as an invaluable record of engine use and other technical details that are so easily forgotten. For one woman, however, a boating diary affords the chance to get a little more creative too. Linda Charles has been keeping a record of her travels aboard 62ft Weyward Lass, a replica BCN tug, for years. But it was only when planning her 2016 cruising route that she figured packing a box of colouring pencils and small sketchbook might be a way of adding something new to the accounts of places moored and locks tackled. Since setting off from Walsham Lock Weir (where her husband, Arthur, is a relief weir-keeper for nine months of the year), she’s been drawing waterside scenes along the way – sometimes as often as twice daily – alongside a sentence or two describing why the subject seemed so significant.

Pictorial diary
“Basically, it’s a pictorial diary of the things I find interesting along our route,” Linda explains. “I mainly work off photos I’ve taken earlier that day, but if we’re moored next to something that’s particularly worth sketching, I’ll happily sit in front of the hatch windows and copy down that view too. It’s a much more satisfying souvenir, I’m finding, than simply looking back through a pile of old photographs.”

When it comes to seeking inspiration, Linda doesn’t restrict herself to pretty landscapes, waterside wildlife or canal...
architecture. Moored in Alrewas on the Trent & Mersey during the Somme centenary events, she visited the nearby National Memorial Arboretum and was moved to jot down a model she saw there of two bronze hands reaching out to each other across barbed wire. Funny things that happen to the couple during cruising often kickstart the creative urge too. Linda recalls an incident on the Leicester Line after yet another visit down the weed hatch to remove objects that had fouled the propeller. “On this occasion it was a load of old sacks and saris which had wrapped around it. Arthur was pulling them out and lying them temporarily on the button fender, and I just thought it made such a comical, lovely picture.”

Quick work
Although this is the first year that Linda has combined sketching with her voyages around the system, she’s always enjoyed indulging her artistic side. Both her father and grandfather were talented painters, and her own efforts were encouraged from a young age. Art classes followed, alongside a career in one of BT’s drawing offices, where she credits working on drafts with improving her technical drawing. The cruising logs, of course, are a much more informal style. Predominantly using coloured pencils (“so much easier to work with and use on a boat than other mediums”) she has also experimented with pen and ink and is looking forward to trying watercolours too. “They’re not technically brilliant pictures,” Linda insists. “It’s more about capturing a moment. They’re quite quick to produce too. If I have to labour over it I generally lose interest.”

As well as a chance to get creative on the cut, there’s another reason why Linda likes keeping her log. The couple’s extended cruising, which has taken in the Thames, Grand Union, Coventry Canal, BCN, Staffs & Worcs, Stratford, Worcester & Birmingham and Oxford canals this summer alone, means they’re constantly on the move, exploring new areas and adapting to different weather conditions and challenges along the way. By contrast, Linda’s sketching has become one of the few constants in her life, offering a welcome dose of the ‘routine’ between all their waterways adventures. “It’s a discipline, really,” she says. “It’s something I make myself sit down and do as soon as we’ve tied up and the engine’s off, before we have dinner or do anything else. I really like that regularity. It’s important when you’re always on the go, as we are at the moment.”

‘Roses & Castles’
And there’s another way Linda has used art to offset her itinerant lifestyle. The couple’s boat, Weyward Lass, is covered with her idiosyncratic take on traditional roses and castles, but using real-life scenes and wild flowers from their usual mooring on the River Wey. It’s a charming way of bringing a piece of ‘home’ with them on their travels, from the ruins of Newark Priory that adorn a door panel, to the painted figurehead on the side of the boat, whose hair is made up of the willow tree branches that follow the river’s course through Guildford’s meadows. The couple don’t plan to be back down south until early autumn. Until then, Linda’s pictures will continue to provide a link to the life they’ve left behind, and a lasting memento of the one they’re currently enjoying.
The West Riding Branch covers some of our North East waterways, changing in character from the eastern, Pennine crossings of the Huddersfield Narrow, Rochdale and Leeds & Liverpool, to the commercial thoroughfares of the Aire & Calder and Sheffield & South Yorkshire Navigations. Our locks range from the familiar 70ft x 7ft to those almost three times as long and wide, not forgetting the short-but-wide ones. Asked for advice by a new full-size narrowboater keen to cruise from Huddersfield to Sheffield, he was informed: “The shortest route is over 260 miles via Manchester, Nottingham and the tidal Trent Falls, and even then you can’t get up Tinsley Flight; but it’s only 30 miles to return for the car.”

The potential waterway restoration partially in our area is the Barnsley, Dearne and Dove canals that run from Swinton, near Rotherham, to Wakefield. Using much of the original line of the Barnsley Canal and a mostly new line to replace the largely lost Dearn & Dove Canal, the restoration would potentially link the waterways of South and West Yorkshire, forming a Yorkshire waterways cruising ring. Although WRG has done some work on Elsecar Basin, there has not been much progress recently, but we are hopeful and give what support we can. After all, they said the Huddersfield Narrow was an impossible restoration, and look at it now.

From Christmas flooding to birthday celebrations on the Leeds & Liverpool, West Riding branch is certainly having a rollercoaster of a year. Its chairman, Elaine Scott, explains more.
BRANCH AT A GLANCE

Formed: 1974

Local waterways: Aire & Calder, Calder & Hebble, Huddersfield Broad, Huddersfield Narrow, Leeds & Liverpool, Rochdale, Selby

Membership: 410

Claim to fame: West Riding branch boasts a World Heritage Site at Saltaire and one of the ‘Seven Wonders of the Waterways’ in Bingley Five-Rise Locks. It also has unique handspikes (paddle-opening) on the Calder & Hebble locks and has welcomed the return of freight to its waterways.

Find out more: www.waterways.org.uk/westriding

DATES FOR THE DIARY

The branch’s next meeting is a joint event with Leeds & Liverpool Canal Society and CRT on 14th October at Dock 29, Leeds Dock to celebrate the L&L boat *Kennet*’s recreation of the 1816 inaugural passage along the canal for its bicentenary (starting on 15th October). Canal historian Mike Clarke will be speaking.

Membership

Our members reflect the diversity of the branch’s catchment area, with some hailing from as far afield as Scotland. Over the years we have found that fewer volunteers have been able to participate in our branch activities, but we work hard to plug the gaps. We are lucky that South Pennine Boat Club offers us an excellent venue for our meetings and we hold three get-togethers each year. We rely on the incredible support of a committed band of people to carry out branch activities and *MilePost* keeps our members in touch with what we are able to do.

We have been working with the CRT North East Partnership, two of whose members are also in the West Riding branch, on some joint navigation projects. Destination Leeds aims to create more moorings in Leeds and improve its boater-friendliness. We want better signage, for example, to highlight the best places to moor to visit the city’s many attractions. Our efforts were set back by the floods, with the pontoons outside CRT’s Fears Wharf offices in Leeds washed away, while the moorings below Kirkstall locks became unusable.

A busy calendar

May Day bank holiday is busy with Cavalcade in London. In the north, however, our branch stand starts an annual round at South Pennine’s biennial open day: last time with a ‘Cowboys and Indians’ theme including a pantomime horse-and-cow race. On the other side of the branch, the simultaneous Skipton Water Festival is based around the junction of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal and its Springs Branch. We erected a gazebo and stand there, but the wind had other ideas and the gazebo was consigned to the waste bin while the stall moved into the main marquee.

In June, Thwaite Mills Industrial Museum has a family day as part of the Leeds Waterfront Festival. Here our stall shares a space with the International Guild of Knot Tyers and Geoff Auty runs a crazy golf activity to boost branch funds. A smaller version of the stand also went to the CRT open day at Bingley Three-Rise this year.

Other activities

Our small band of volunteers will never be short of waterway meetings to attend, with three CRT Waterway Forums, various local canalling initiatives including the City Connect Off-Highway Workshop, the preparation of a Destination Management Plan for Bingley Five-Rise and IWA-organised events. As a branch we seem to be covering a good range of possible activities and we relish the challenge of planning a succession to the next generation of enthusiastic waterway campaigners.

We encourage our members to partake in as many activities as they have the time and energy for. We have a used-postage stamp collector who is still in school, while Alastair, our most recent telephone correspondent, did the job into his late 80s! As he was fond of saying, he couldn’t clear a towpath but he could always answer the phone. In my experience, the enjoyment of our branch gatherings is enhanced by the friendships forged there. And the beauty for those wishing to get involved is that the only qualification needed is a love of the waterways.

“The beauty for those wishing to get involved is that the only qualification needed is a love of the waterways”
Round-up of IWA branch activity

Here are just some of the recent activities carried out by IWA branches around the country. If your event isn’t included here, do let the Branch Campaign Team at Head Office know (contact details below), ideally in advance so that they can assist with publicity and planning.

CLEAN-UPS

Elsewhere, general canal clean-ups have been as popular as ever. WARWICKSHIRE BRANCH concentrated on the Oxford Canal in Brownsover, Rugby, where a diverse group of 36 volunteers used grappling hooks to haul over 30 shopping trolleys, bicycles, two motorbikes, a patio gas lamp and a sundry mixture of metal and plastic from the water.

IWA MILTON KEYNES held its bi-annual clean-up in April, working on the Grand Union from Fenny Stratford to Old Wolverton. Boaters moored on the stretch were even offered a one-off chance to put out rubbish for collection. Items retrieved included a fridge, microwave, wheelchair, sledge, car battery, and assorted timber and other refuse amounting to an estimated six tons.

Other canal clean-ups included IWA MIDDLESEX supporting Friends of Slough Canal, while SOUTH YORKS & DUKERIES BRANCH worked on the Sheffield & Tinsley Canal, attracting 40 volunteers from IWA and other local groups.

OTHER WORK

IWA MANCHESTER volunteers have recently adopted part of the Ashton Canal, between Locks 4 and 11. In addition to the hedgerow they planted in the spring and the wildflower seeds they have spread, they’ve also been clearing vegetation in preparation for an Incredible Edible vegetable plot, providing fresh produce for the local community. At one work party they also provided baby pea plants for volunteers and local people to grow and harvest at home.

Meanwhile, NORTH STAFFS & SOUTH CHESHIRE BRANCH’s monthly work party on the Cheshire Locks has been progressing well. Lock 43 and the extensive railing around it have received a new coat of paint, and the garden by the Red Bull offices continues to be developed.

Finally, IWA NORTHAMPTON has hosted a party of volunteers from the Nationwide Building Society. The group spent their day litter picking alongside the River Nene, while a smaller group, using strimmers, a mower and a litter picker, continued the never-ending job of vegetation clearance at Lock 17.

BALSAM BASHEES

In the last issue of Waterways we looked at how IWA is tackling invasive species, so it’s gratifying to report how branches have been getting stuck in to rid the system of one of the more prevalent ones – Himalayan Balsam.

IWA SOUTH YORKS & DUKERIES tackled Hexthorpe Park, Doncaster in June, after members’ concerns that the view of the River Don was being completely obliterated by the tall, pink-flowered plants. In some areas it had eradicated other flora. The group worked for about three hours and cleared a reasonable area, but there is about 90% more balsam still to clear. The day, however, was an enjoyable one and it was encouraging that passing walkers appreciated the efforts of volunteers.

Meanwhile, IWA WEST COUNTRY held two balsam bashes in June, the second with a group of local schoolchildren who learned about the invasive plant and helped to remove it from the banks of the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal.
WRG’s summer season of canal restoration kicked off on the 2nd July with 60 volunteers spending the week working on three different projects: the Grantham Canal in Nottinghamshire, the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal in South Wales and the Wey & Arun Canal near Guildford.

Some 22 Canal Camps were scheduled for the summer, with volunteers invited to get their hands dirty and try something completely different on their holidays. Some of the tasks lined up for them included the rebuilding and restoration of Inglesham Lock on the Cotswold Canals near Lechlade, and relining a section of the Shrewsbury and Newport Canal near Meretown. Those with an industrial archaeology bent, meanwhile, were focused on the Stover Canal in a bid to uncover Ventiford Basin and a granite tramway.

WRG camps offer volunteers a fantastic chance to learn new skills such as bricklaying, stone walling, machine operation and other restoration techniques. Last year participants spent nearly 2,400 volunteer days helping to restore the canals of England and Wales on these summer sorties. With more volunteering opportunities on offer this year, WRG hopes that even greater progress can be made.

WRG camps offer volunteers a fantastic chance to learn new skills such as bricklaying, stone walling, machine operation and other restoration techniques.

Interested in lending a hand? There are still a few spaces left on WRG’s end-of-summer Canal Camps...

ASHBY CANAL CAMP
6th-13th August
Cost: £63
Working in partnership with CRT and the Ashby Canal Association, volunteers will be helping the Lapal Canal Trust restore Harborne Wharf. In 2015 the Trust, working in partnership with Careys, removed large amounts of soil to expose the wharf walls and the main task for the Canal Camp is to repair about 40 metres of these walls. Volunteers will help strengthen the existing foundations and repair damaged brickwork.

LAPAL CANAL CAMP
6th-13th August
Cost: £63
This year WRG volunteers will be helping the Lapal Canal Trust restore Harborne Wharf. In 2015 the Trust, working in partnership with Careys, removed large amounts of soil to expose the wharf walls and the main task for the Canal Camp is to repair about 40 metres of these walls. Volunteers will help strengthen the existing foundations and repair damaged brickwork.

INGLESHAM LOCK CANAL
10th-17th September
Cost: £63
WRG has five Canal Camps running at Inglesham Lock this summer, this being the final one. By this stage it is hoped volunteers will be able to start work rebuilding the lock chamber.

Looking ahead to autumn...
The shorts may be replaced by trousers, but WRG doesn’t stop its canal restoration work once the summer sun has gone. In October WRG will be running a Canal Camp on the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation (22nd-29th October) carrying out towpath improvement work, and over the winter break (26th December-1st January 2017) WRG will be holding its annual Christmas Canal Camp with lots of warming fires and scrub bashing!

For more details please contact the WRG head office team on 01494 783453 ext 604, email enquiries@wrg.org.uk or visit the WRG website: wrg.org.uk.
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Aickman article
The article about Robert Aickman in the Spring issue of Waterways was illuminating. However, I thought the caption “Boats cruising during the Market Harborough Rally. The crowds came too” to the picture on page 41 could have been expanded.

The picture shows the Grand Parade to close the rally, with John Knill’s boat Kenelm and the Leicester Caledonian Pipe Band leading the slipper launch carrying the Rally Queen and her two maids. The crowds are obvious and amazing. I have attached two of the pictures I took on that day for readers’ interest.

Colin Scrévener, via email

Since writing my article on Robert Aickman and his Gower Street home (‘Launch Pad’ – Waterways, Spring 2016), my ever-resourceful researcher Jenny has continued to follow up on corners of this fascinating man’s life. In particular, his strange relationship with his wife Ray, and what became of her.

Her maiden name was Edith Ray Gregorson, and she was married to Aickman in 1941. While the marriage was well and truly over by about 1946, the Aickmans continued to live in the flat at 11 Gower Street, and were both on the electoral register here until 1958. So they were living together until much later than I thought, by which time Aickman had long-since parted with his lover Elizabeth Jane Howard, former wife of Aickman’s friend Peter Scott – the artist and writer and son of Scott of the Antarctic. The Aickmans’ divorce came in 1957, so they seem to have continued living together even after that.

Jenny found that Ray wrote children’s books, illustrated by Peter Scott (so another involvement there). Following her divorce, Ray (to the surprise of everyone) entered a High Anglican convent in Hertfordshire and took the name of Benedicta. She apparently worked with ‘fallen women’ and died of cancer in a convent in Oxford in 1983 – two years after Aickman’s death. Her death is recorded in her maiden name of Gregorson.

Rolt’s first wife Angela also received rather rough treatment from her husband, who was certainly involved in an adulterous relationship with Sonia by 1949, much of it going on at Gower Street, in sleepovers following IWA meetings. Angela left him in 1951 to work for Billy Smart’s Circus. Historian David Blagrove remembers seeing her in the ticket office when the circus visited Newbury in about 1962. Although her family had vowed to cut her off for marrying Tom, they eventually relented. She moved to the Dordogne in France with the money, where she eventually died. In about 1971, Tom and Sonia visited her during a motoring holiday in France and they were all reconciled.

Tim Coghlan, via email

Let’s be clear about crayfish
In the last Waterways magazine there was an article on ‘Alien Invaders’, including signal crayfish. While they were described and a suggestion given that they could be eaten, there was no real advice on what to do if you caught one when fishing. I would not like to eat one from the cut having seen what people put in there.

There is a vague “record them” or report them to the appropriate landowner, but what is needed is a clear statement that it is illegal to return them to the water. In my opinion, the best course of action is to kill them, by whatever means to hand. Please do not be squeamish – it’s important to let boaters know how to deal with them. Many fish in the cut and must be told what to do when they catch a signal crayfish.

I have heard that you can also put them in a freezer to let them die slowly and painlessly but who, on a narrowboat, has space in a freezer?

I have found many signal crayfish around the Cosgrove area and I have caught them near Weedon.

Brian Lake, nb Widdy II
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