BOATING THE SYSTEM
How much does it cost to travel the connected network?

SILVER propeller challenge
Why you should explore our far-flung waterways

NAVIGATION COMMITTEE
Interview with new chairman Steve Warwicker

PLUS
PREVIEWS OF 2018’S FESTIVAL OF WATER AND CANALWAY CAVALCADE
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Bowbridge Lock

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The Association has started the New Year in a strong position thanks to the efforts led by my predecessor Les Etheridge, which have brought us to a key point with our vision and objectives supported by the rebranding. Following good coverage in the last edition of *Waterways*, I have received many positive comments and a real understanding that we must move forward. However, this is just a start and I am well aware that members will rightly judge our success on the way that we achieve the objectives that we have set for this year and for the longer term. Through *Waterways* and our other communications, we intend to keep members informed about how this progresses. Some objectives should have relatively easy wins, while others will need concerted efforts over many years.

‘Speaking for the waterways’ is the part of our vision that supports all waterways users and we are already making a considerable impact at the highest level. I am impressed by the number of MPs who have supported our continuing campaign for the transfer of Environment Agency navigations to Canal & River Trust and our more recent support for the Middle Level Bill, which will give these waterways the same navigation rights and responsibilities as others. IWA is building up a strong rapport with members of both Houses, both formally through the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Waterways and informally on more specific localised issues.

In terms of ‘protecting’ the waterways, a glance at the items occupying our Navigation Committee indicates the breadth of our involvement to make canals and rivers better for everyone, whether on the water or the towpath. From vegetation management to canoeing in tunnels, from ensuring that the impact of HS2 is minimised to problems with paddle pawl stops, IWA is playing a key role to bring about real improvements. Gren Messham’s retirement as chairman of that committee will be a loss but his place is ably taken by Steve Warwicker, whose boating interests include an enthusiasm for canoeing.

A different challenge that we must meet in 2018 is to continue to engage with our branches and members in taking our vision for the waterways forward. I realise that not all members will be fully onboard with our plans, so my fellow trustees and I will visit branches to discuss what our plans really mean to them and how we can work together to make them happen. As part of this, you will read about a series of regional events for branch committees and volunteers. If now is the time for you to volunteer in any capacity, do come along to one of these events.

Our forthcoming Festival of Water at St Neots over the August bank holiday weekend will be important in supporting several initiatives: our campaign for a sustainable future for EA navigations, the Middle Level Bill, the Fens Link and the Bedford-to-Milton Keynes Link. Do consider booking in, especially if you have not cruised these waterways before as they have so much to offer.

This is the time of year when boaters are planning their cruising itinerary and as part of our ‘inspiring’ objective, you will read in *Waterways* about the launch of our Silver Propeller Challenge to encourage members with any form of craft, including hire-boats and canoes, to visit those parts not regularly reached. This is a return to the type of campaigning that members tell me we should be doing, so do take part, and have a good 2018, whether cruising our canals and rivers or enjoying them in other ways.

**Ivor Caplan**
NAVIGATION AUTHORITIES CONSULT ON LICENSING CHARGES

IWA responded to consultations from the two largest navigation authorities about craft licensing during the last few weeks of 2017.

CANAL & RIVER TRUST: licensing consultation

Canal & River Trust’s lengthy consultation on its craft licensing structure had reached its third stage, where licence holders, organisations and other individuals were invited to take part in an online survey.

CRT stated that the aim of the consultation was to identify an approach to licensing that was more simple and administratively less burdensome than the current system, as well as being robust, workable and balanced in regards to pricing and affordability.

IWA’s response was based on its submission to CRT during the first phase of the consultation and included a preference for charging by area rather than length, and for retaining certain discounts such as for electric and historic boats and for boats on disconnected waterways. Regarding a question about how licensing might take mooring status into account, IWA’s view was that there should be a single licence fee for craft with or without a home mooring. (Mooring enforcement is a separate issue which should be tackled accordingly.)

IWA encouraged all holders of CRT licences to take part in the survey through reminders in Bulletin. The outcome of the trust’s consultation is due to be announced early in 2018.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY: 2018/19 navigation charges

The Environment Agency consulted on its 2018/19 navigation charges, following which it announced that it would be implementing its original proposals despite objections from many, including IWA, at the above-inflation increases.

EA’s proposal is to increase charges across all users by an extra £430,000 to generate a total income of £7.2m, representing an average 6.35% increase. IWA disagreed with the size of this increase, along with EA’s proposal to differentiate its registration charges between its three waterway management areas, with the increases ranging from 5.7% on the Thames, to 7.5% in the Anglian area and 10% on the Medway. IWA believes the level of increase should be Consumer Price Index across the board.

IWA wants EA to continue its work on establishing a sound cost base for navigation services based on work carried out to support other activities, such as flood defence, which share and require the performance of assets that have been moved into the Navigation Services area. EA also needs to pursue Defra for Grant in Aid to fund any asset investment needed to raise the condition of these structures, to carry out their joint function safely and reliably.

IWA continues to be a supporter of the proposed transfer of EA navigations to CRT, together with a suitable investment programme to bring necessary assets up to a sustainable ‘steady state’ condition. IWA believes this remains a better solution than the present situation, where the government is pushing EA to engage in asset stripping on Defra’s behalf, and failing to meet its legal obligations as a navigation authority.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY: charge proposals from April 2018

The Environment Agency subsequently announced, towards the end of the year, that it was consulting on how it would charge for its wider activities from April 2018. The proposals, which will only apply in England, include charges for consents and permissions relating to environmental regulations, marine licences, waste, water discharges and flood risk. It also includes proposals for longer-term changes to the way EA will charge for navigation boat registrations, as well as charges for abstraction licensing amendments.

Consultees were asked what factors should determine how boat registration charges are calculated and what should be included within a revised scheme. The consultation also asked participants to rate certain elements of service, such as channel dredging, tree and vegetation clearance, assisted passage, routine patrolling by staff, compliance and enforcement checks, and provision of facilities.

The proposed changes may also affect restoration schemes, and IWA’s response put forward arguments for limiting any increase in cost or scope of charges as being an unreasonable burden on the voluntary sector.

IWA’s responses to all these consultations, and many more, can be found on the campaigns area of IWA’s website.
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NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR IWA NATIONAL AWARDS

Readers of Waterways are reminded that nominations for IWA’s National Awards are now open. Nominations can be made by individual members or branch and region committees, and should be submitted by 31st March by post to Awards Panel c/o Head Office, Island House, Moor Road, Chesham HP5 IWA, or by email to awards@waterways.org.uk.

The winners of IWA’s National Annual Awards for 2018 will be announced at the Association’s Annual General Meeting on Saturday 29th September.

The awards are presented each year as a way of recognising the amazing amount of work carried out by IWA volunteers throughout the year, and over many years, and members are encouraged to think about who they might wish to nominate.

CYRIL STYRING TROPHY – this is the Association’s premier award and is presented to a member who has made an outstanding contribution in furthering an IWA campaign.

JOHN HEAP SALVER – the Association’s major fundraising award, the John Heap Salver, is given to an IWA member who has made an outstanding contribution to raising money for the organisation.

CHRISTOPHER POWER PRIZE – this prize is awarded to the person, society or trust who has made the most significant contribution to the restoration of an inland waterway.

RICHARD BIRD MEDALS – these medals are awarded to members whose efforts and support are considered to have brought significant benefit to the Association over a sustained period of time.

IWA SECURES MEETING WITH WATERWAYS MINISTER

On 22nd January, IWA’s national chairman Ivor Caplan and chief executive Neil Edwards, along with Jonathan Shaw (the Association’s parliamentary adviser), met the Defra Minister with responsibility for the Waterways, Dr Thérèse Coffey MP and her team. This was a good opportunity to explain the achievements of IWA and our vision for the future of the waterways.

Dr Coffey showed particular interest and was impressed that we were running a successful waterway, the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation. The proposed transfer of EA navigations to CRT was discussed and Dr Coffey confirmed that she was still open to this despite certain issues which needed to be resolved.

She was hopeful that discussions could be held with CRT to open to this despite certain issues which needed to be resolved.

The Inspector’s Report to the Public Inquiry noted IWA’s concerns and recommended that a Navigation Management Plan should be added as a condition, which has been incorporated in the TWAO. Other issues raised by IWA have also been included in the Inspector’s Report. IWA Lincolnshire Branch and East Midlands Region will be involved locally in the development of the Navigation Management Plan.

Construction was due to begin in the Haven (the tidal stretch of the River Witham) in January 2018, and will better protect against tidal surges, such as was seen in December 2013, when over 800 homes and businesses in the Boston area were flooded.

RESTORATION RAFFLE RAISES £10,000

The popular Restoration Raffle has had another successful year, raising over £10,000 to support IWA’s Restoration Hub.

In a slight change to the format this year, the raffle was dedicated entirely to this one cause, demonstrating IWA’s commitment to successfully delivering the service. One lucky entrant from Ilkeston received the top prize of £1,000, and all winners have now been contacted.

All restoration groups will be able to benefit from the Restoration Hub if they need advice or guidance with any aspect of their project. Over 50 groups have already received support from the Hub in the last year on topics ranging from the Water Framework Directive to fundraising and even slipway design. IWA staff members and consultant engineers have also conducted over ten site visits around the country. Even more is planned for 2018, with free training events and other sessions already in the calendar. For more information about the Restoration Hub, visit waterways.org.uk/restorationhub.

BOSTON BARRIER GETS GO-AHEAD

The Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) for the Boston Barrier received approval early in December, giving the Environment Agency the go-ahead to proceed with the construction and operation of the £100m flood defence scheme to protect Boston’s homes and businesses from the risk of tidal flooding.

The Order was approved following a public inquiry during which IWA raised a number of concerns including the adverse impact to navigation in the Haven, and missed opportunities to improve and extend navigation in the wider area.

The Inspector’s Report to the Public Inquiry noted IWA’s concerns and recommended that a Navigation Management Plan should be added as a condition, which has been incorporated in the TWAO. Other issues raised by IWA have also been included in the Inspector’s Report. IWA Lincolnshire Branch and East Midlands Region will be involved locally in the development of the Navigation Management Plan.

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70x12ft Jupiter Barge
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DUE SOON – Sail Away 60x12ft Euro Cruiser Live Aboard POA
This is a library picture of same boat but it will be in Oxford Blue & will be ready to fit out – with port holes and windows – approx 75gal diesel tank 200gal water tank – windows and portholes – Canal Line 54hp engine – Vetus Bow 95kg bow Thruster – vented gas locker – self draining desks – ballast – insulation – fitted 18mm ply floor – stern twin steel doors and sliding hatch – bow hardwood double doors with windows – anodes fitted – tiller steering with ext and tiller pin.

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**IWA’S TRAILBOAT FESTIVAL 2019**

To mark the bicentenary of the opening of the Lancaster Canal next year, IWA Lancashire & Cumbria Branch plans to host the 2019 IWA Trailboat Festival as a highlight of the waterway’s celebrations.

Trailboaters will be invited to cruise the newly restored ‘first furlong’ over the weekend of 1st and 2nd June 2019, and admire the work of Lancaster Canal Trust and Lancaster Canal Regeneration Partnership. It’s anticipated the event will raise the profile of the current and future regeneration of the Northern Reaches and promote the benefits of the inland waterways corridor to the wider community.

The festival will be held alongside Country Fest, organised by Westmorland County Agricultural Society at its showground in Crooklands, which last year attracted 16,000 people. Trailboaters will benefit from all the activities organised for the show, while Country Fest attendees will see their local canal filled with boats. To book, go to waterways.org.uk/trailboat.

**ELY RIVER FRONTAGE SECURED BY COUNCIL**

IWA’s campaign to stop the Environment Agency from selling off river frontage in Ely to private bidders has achieved a successful result, with the news that the local council will be buying the land.

While IWA would have preferred the land to remain in the ownership of EA, for future navigation income and legacy, the purchase by East Cambridgeshire District Council means that it will remain in public ownership.

IWA welcomes this announcement and hopes that this will bring a more secure future to the three waterway-related businesses based at the site: Bridge Boatyard, which has been operating for over 40 years and is now the only holiday hire-boat company on the River Great Ouse, hotel barge Water Nimf, and The Boat Yard boat restoration business.

The three plots of land, amounting to over 300m of river frontage in total, had been offered for sale by private auction last summer. IWA considered that this was extremely short-sighted given that the businesses and moorings at this location bring in an income to EA as the navigation authority, and wrote to EA, the Waterway Minister, MPs and local councillors to raise concerns. As a result of the number of representations received, EA confirmed to IWA several weeks after the closing date for bids that it was reviewing the situation.

After an uncertain few months for the businesses based at the site, the announcement in January in a letter from EA to IWA, stating that the land would remain in public ownership through its sale to the council, was welcomed.

Bridge Boatyard brings between 2,000 and 2,500 people onto the river each year on its hire boats, the loss of which would have had a serious effect on the tourism of the area and consequently on the economy of Ely and other nearby towns and villages.

IWA Eastern Region chairman, Chris Howes, said: “East Cambridgeshire District Council is to be congratulated on its acquisition and stepping in to keep the waterside businesses going. We understand that the council has ambitions for the regeneration of this part of the city of Ely and hope that in developing this area the current navigation and leisure activities will be preserved and encouraged.”
BRITISH CANOEING ENDORSES IWA ADVICE

British Canoeing has endorsed advice from IWA on using small unpowered craft on the inland waterways and the safe passage of canal tunnels by all types of craft.

Taking a boat through a tunnel can be an exciting element of any canal journey but it comes with inherent dangers of which people need to be aware. IWA’s new Briefing Note Navigating Canal Tunnels Safely is intended to highlight some of these issues and contains advice for users of powered and unpowered craft, as well as recommendations for navigation authorities.

Small boats, such as rowing boats, dinghies, canoes or stand-up paddleboards, are a brilliant and affordable way to get afloat. IWA has updated its Briefing Note Using Canoes and Small Unpowered Craft and would encourage everyone (even experienced boaters of other types of craft) to consider trying new ways of getting afloat. It’s a fantastic way to introduce children and young people to different sports and the great outdoors, and the Briefing Note contains lots of information to help you get started.

Both briefing notes can be found on IWA’s website waterways.org.uk/news_campaigns/campaigns/briefing_notes.

IWA is grateful to British Canoeing for endorsing these two Briefing Notes and looks forward to working with them in partnership over other issues of joint interest in the future.

NO WATER FOR BCN FROM CHASEWATER RESERVOIR

IWA has raised concerns with Canal & River Trust after being advised that water from Chasewater Reservoir, which is a major water supply to the Birmingham Canal Navigations, was terminated by the owners, Staffordshire County Council, early in 2017 and that no water has been available to CRT’s canal network from the reservoir since.

On a regular inspection by the council’s reservoir engineer, the valve which controls the water feed into the Anglesey Branch was declared unsafe to use in April 2017, cutting off the main water supply to the BCN. For historical reasons, the reservoir is owned by Staffordshire County Council and managed as part of the Chasewater Country Park, although CRT has rights to the water.

On further enquiry, it has come to light that the valve that should be used to control the water has been inoperable for a number of years. The valve that is now closed is intended to be used only for the emergency drawdown of the water from Chasewater. Staffordshire County Council is in continued discussion with CRT to develop a temporary alternative form of water extraction from Chasewater into the canal network that provides both a solution for the canal system but also allows the reservoir to operate at a level that does not impinge on it as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Meanwhile, CRT has virtually emptied Rotten Park Reservoir, which was already low after a dry winter, as well as increasing pumping from the Bradley borehole and using back-pumping at Titford, in order to maintain water levels.

Chasewater Reservoir was created as a canal feeder reservoir in 1797 to directly supply the Wyrley & Essington Canal, and later to maintain levels in the 160-mile BCN network. The reservoir is now a popular public amenity with activities such as water-skiing, sailing, wakeboarding and cycling. It is the third largest reservoir by volume in the county of Staffordshire and the largest canal feeder reservoir in the West Midlands.

In 2010 major works were carried out to the reservoir and in May 2011 ownership of the reservoir passed to Staffordshire County Council. The £5.5m repairs were completed in April 2012.

CRT has informed IWA that work is ongoing with Staffordshire County Council and Natural England to resolve the current issues.

IWA’s Briefing Notes provide lots of useful information on getting afloat in small and unpowered craft.

TAKE YOUR PARTNER

WRG’s fundraising Barn Dance is once again taking over Rowington Village Hall in Warwickshire on Saturday 10th March. All IWA members, supporters and WRGies are invited to come along. Dancing will be led by local Ceilidh band 5 Minutes to Midnight, featuring a familiar WRGie face. Booking is now open, so come and show your support. All monies raised will help pay for WRG activities across 2018. Tickets cost £15, which includes food, and can be purchased online at wrg.cloudvenue.co.uk/barndance2018.
INLAND WATERWAYS FEATURE AT THE LONDON BOAT SHOW

The London Boat Show 2018, which took place at the Excel Exhibition Centre from 10th to 14th January, featured an inland waterways area, with a much-increased presence of inland waterway craft from recent previous years.

IWA’s stand was there as usual (as it has been since the show first started in 1954) with a wide range of canal books and waterway guides on sale, as well as IWA volunteers on hand to answer questions about inland boating and to promote the work of the Association.

A number of hire companies had boats on display, with cruisers, day craft and narrowboats promoting days out and holidays around the UK’s waterways, from the Midland’s canals to the Norfolk Broads.

A lock and waterside pub provided the central focus to the inland waterway area, with historic tug LMS Sandbach representing the history and heritage of the canals. Sandbach is owned by IWA members who had made the boat available for the event, and was adorned with IWA bunting and flags to promote the Association’s nearby stand.

EA INVESTS IN ANGLIAN WATERWAYS

The Environment Agency announced an investment of £1.4m on the Anglian rivers this winter. As well as eight lock refurbishments, new lock landing stages will be installed and much-needed de-shoaling work will be carried out – issues IWA has been campaigning about in recent years.

The locks are at Wadenhoe, Woodford, Titchmarsh, Orton, Cotterstock and Ashton on the River Nene, and Eaton Socon and Brandon on the rivers Great Ouse and Little Ouse respectively. These are among the busiest locks on the Anglian Waterways network, with up to 7,000 boats passing through them annually.

De-shoaling will take place on the rivers Great Ouse and Nene to remove underwater gravel that builds up naturally and can hamper navigation.

Included in the programme of works are investigations into improving the Nene’s landing stages, where boaters can disembark, and the upgrading of control panels at the locks, making them consistent and easier to use and maintain across the region.

EA has also installed three new landing stages on the River Great Ouse. The floating moorings replace ones on the relief channels at Stowbridge, Wiggenhall St Mary and the Denver Complex, and are expected to last at least 50 years.

The programme of works will be completed in time for the cruising season and will be of benefit to the hundred or more boats expected to travel to St Neots in August for the Festival of Water.
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Spring 2018
CAMPAIGNING WITH YOU

The transfer of EA navigations to CRT and the removal of paddle pawl stops are among the issues we’re campaigning on with your help. Here’s how we’ve been doing on these and other affairs...

Middle Level Bill to proceed

The Middle Level Bill, which ran out of time in the last Parliament, was given the go-ahead to continue through the parliamentary process, with both the House of Commons and House of Lords voting for it to proceed during debates towards the end of last year. Due to issues raised by a small number of MPs, the Bill then went before an Opposed Bill Committee in January, for consideration of some remaining objections. The Committee concluded that, subject to amendments to meet some of the objections, the Bill should now proceed back to the Commons.

The Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) is the navigation authority for the Middle Level Navigations, which comprises 100 miles of navigable waterways in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. The Middle Level Bill would update the legal framework which currently governs its navigation function.

IWA welcomes the revival of this Bill, which would bring MLC into line with other navigation authorities by enabling better waterway management powers and increased provision of facilities in connection with their navigation function. Among other powers, it would enable the Commissioners to levy charges in respect of vessels using the Middle Level waterways, including the ability to charge where vessels overstay time limits in force at a mooring place, and make possible the removal of sunken, stranded and abandoned craft. It would also make it mandatory for all vessels using MLC’s waterways to have insurance and a Boat Safety Scheme certificate (BSS certificates can only currently be inspected for visiting boats, as there is no Middle Level licence stipulating them as a requirement).

The Middle Level is an important part of the East Anglian waterways, and IWA’s view is that MLC needs these powers in order to continue to run its navigation effectively. Subject to any charges imposed being reasonable, IWA believes that the Bill’s implementation would be beneficial for all who use these waterways. MLC would be able to spend money on facilities and moorings for boaters, which it is currently unable to do, the value of the waterways to the local economy through tourism would increase, there would be better provision of leisure opportunities for the local population, and conditions will be made safer for boats currently on the system.

IWA members and supporters are encouraged to write to their MPs to express their support for the Bill when it is debated in the Commons. A list of bullet points to assist in letter writing is available on IWA’s website or from Alison Smedley, campaigns officer, at alison.smedley@waterways.org.uk.
Boater facilities feedback

Following the article about boaters’ facilities in the last issue of Waterways, IWA would like to thank the many readers who made contact in response to the appeal for information. As well as receiving a number of reports of places and areas where facilities were missing or damaged, across several navigation authorities, we also received suggestions for further issues that should be included in IWA’s campaign for better facilities for boaters. Several of these have now been incorporated into a new IWA policy on boaters’ facilities which will be launched early in 2018. The reports will be added to other information received and will assist us in getting a clearer picture of where there are gaps in the provision of facilities around the system. IWA will then use this information to campaign with the various navigation authorities as appropriate for increased facilities.

Any further comments regarding facilities on the navigable waterways should be directed to Alison Smedley, campaigns officer, at alison.smedley@waterways.org.uk.

Paddle pawl stops

For some time IWA has argued against Canal & River Trust’s policy of installing paddle pawl stops that prevent the paddle pawl from being completely moved out of the way while a paddle is being wound down, because of the hazards this creates. Even where paddle pawl stops may have been fitted some time ago, IWA believes that these should be removed, and that educating boaters to replace paddle pawls after winding a paddle down is a safer solution to not being able to wind a paddle down with two hands.

Following the announcement in 2015 that CRT would cease fitting any more stops to paddle pawls, IWA asked CRT to remove those already in place. The issue has recently been raised again as there are a number of locations where paddle pawl stops remain in place. IWA has asked CRT to take action and arrange for them to be removed. In the meantime there are occasional reports of boaters taking matters into their own hands and removing the metal stops with hacksaws! However, this sort of independent action is not something that IWA either agrees with or condones.

CRT Defra Submission

IWA has welcomed the news that Canal & River Trust has now made a formal submission to Defra for the transfer of the Environment Agency’s navigation responsibilities. IWA National Chairman, Ivor Caplan, wrote to the Waterway Minister, Dr Thérèse Coffey MP, to assure her of IWA’s support for the proposal. Transfer of these navigations to CRT would allow the waterways to benefit from improved maintenance, third-party funding opportunities, and the economies of scale gained from being part of a larger navigation authority.

IWA also wrote to over 100 MPs to ask them to write to the minister with their support, including all MPs who have EA navigations in their constituencies, all members of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Waterways, and other MPs who have previously indicated their support for the transfer. By the end of the year 20 of these MPs had responded positively, confirming that they would contact the minister with their support for the transfer.

Help keep our waterways alive

With your support, we can do even more. waterways.org.uk/campaigns
OUSE OFF TO ST NEOTS?
All you need to know about 2018’s Festival of Water

With several months left to go still, this year’s IWA Festival of Water is already shaping up to be a fantastic weekend of fun for boaters, campers and all who love spending time by the water. The event will take place on the banks of the River Great Ouse on Regatta Meadow in the heart of St Neots over the summer bank holiday weekend from Saturday 25th until Monday 27th August.

Up to 100 boats are expected to make the journey east to the festival where boaters, campers and local visitors can enjoy a weekend of music and entertainment. Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterways Trust will be offering rides aboard its trip-boat John Bunyan, and there will be many more waterborne activities for children and families to experience. Visitors can also expect fairground rides, food and drink outlets and plenty of stalls selling arts and crafts on the Regatta Meadow showground. And on the Sunday night, visitors will be treated to a spectacular firework display (courtesy of St Neots Town Council), before being awed by the procession of illuminated craft.

Tickets for moorings and camping pitches cost just £30 and include exclusive evening entertainment accessible to wristband holders only.

FREE CRUISING GUIDES
Chris Howes, chair of IWA’s Eastern Region and author of the ‘Go East’ article published in the Winter 2017 issue of Waterways, has written four cruising guides to help you on your way to St Neots. Titled Upper Nene, Lower Nene, Middle Level and Great Ouse, the guides contain essential information such as where to find water points, moorings, diesel, gas, pubs and local shops. Go to waterways.org.uk/festivalofwater to download them for free.
BOOKINGS
Moorings and campsite pitches cost just £30 (including evening entertainment). You can book these online at waterways.org.uk/festivalofwater or by telephone on 01494 783453.

If you are interested in a trader’s space call 07817 004807 or email event.trade@waterways.org.uk.

There are lots of volunteer opportunities and the committee that organises the festival is also looking for new team members. Call 01635 414567 or take a look at the volunteer section of the festival website.

EA OFFER
If you don’t already have a licence that covers Environment Agency waterways, EA is offering an exclusive two-for-one deal for boats booked in for the 2018 IWA Festival of Water. For example you can have a four-week registration for the price of two weeks! Take up this offer when making your booking.

FAVOURITE MOORINGS:
• Great Ouse Boating Association’s ‘railway bridge’ moorings a few hundred yards up the River Wissey from the junction with the Great Ouse.
• Wicken Fen at the head of Wicken Lode.

TOP PUBS:
• The Ship Inn, Brandon Creek
• The Cutter, Ely
• The Dolphin, St Ives

BEST PHOTO OPPORTUNITY:
• Ely Cathedral as you approach the city.

HIDDEN GEMS:
• The pretty villages of Hemingford Grey and Hemingford Abbots.

DON’T MISS:
• Historic Ely.
• Visiting the Great Ouse tributaries (the rivers Wissey, Little Ouse and Lark) and the Cambridgeshire Lodes (Wicken, Burwell and Reach). They all wind through sparsely populated open countryside that abounds with wildlife. Although they may appear to be rather narrow in places, don’t be afraid to enter them as you can turn around at the head of each navigation. If you intend to explore the River Cam and visit Cambridge, be aware that moorings in the city centre are very limited.

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT:
• An EA key to access facilities and operate the guillotine locks.
• A Great Ouse windlass.
• The Imray guide: The River Great Ouse and Tributaries.

BEST TIPS FOR EA WATERWAYS BEGINNERS:
• There are generally no towpaths and you therefore need to moor at designated sites. It is well worth joining the Great Ouse Boating Association (GOBA) as its many private moorings supplement those provided by EA, local authorities, marinas and pubs.
• Be aware that water levels can rise rapidly after heavy rain. EA has a system to warn boaters of when ‘strong stream’ conditions apply and navigation is not advised. Boaters may wish to register with EA to receive such warnings by email or telephone.

Local Knowledge
We quizzed Keith Alderton, chair of IWA’s Great Ouse Branch, about places to moor, equipment to bring and, of course, the top pubs to visit en route to the Festival of Water in St Neots.
Canalway Cavalcade, London’s biggest and brightest annual waterside festival, takes place in Little Venice from 5th to 7th May this year. This unique waterway and community event, organised entirely by IWA volunteers, has taken place annually over the early May bank holiday since 1983, and attracts tens of thousands of visitors across the three days.

As always, the festival boasts activities for everyone to enjoy. Stalls lining the canal around Little Venice will be selling a multitude of items from Peruvian hats to flavoured sausages, and crowds will be entertained by live music in Brownings Pool and the amphitheatre in Sheldon Square. There’ll also be morris dancers, kids’ activities including Punch & Judy and creepy crawly shows, refreshments provided in the real ale bar and a wide variety of food and drink outlets.

The decorated boats lining Brownings Pool are always a wonderful attraction, many of them festooned with colourful bunting or dressed according to the annual theme – this year it’s ‘Canal Builders’. Saturday afternoon will see the pageant of decorated boats, on Sunday evening illuminated craft will provide a stunning visual display after dark, and on Monday afternoon a procession of historic and working vessels will close the show. Visitors will also be able to watch the best boat-handlers at the festival showcase their skills along a specially designed course in a competition which takes place on Sunday and Monday.

**Festival Facts**

**OPENING TIMES**
- Saturday 5th May 10am-6pm
- Sunday 6th May 10am-6pm and 9pm-10.30pm
- Monday 7th May 10am-5pm

**LOCATION**
Little Venice, London
The nearest railway station, Paddington, is less than 5 minutes’ walk away, as are both Paddington and Warwick Avenue tube stations. The location is also well served by buses. All parts of the site are accessible by wheelchairs and buggies.

**SHOW HIGHLIGHTS**

**SATURDAY**
- 2.00pm Opening ceremony
- 2.30pm Pageant of decorated boats

**SUNDAY**
- 11.00am Boat-handling competition
- 12.45pm Blessing of the waters, boats and boaters
- 3.00pm Teddy bears’ picnic
- 9.00pm Procession of illuminated boats accompanied by music

**MONDAY**
- 10.30am Boat-handling competition
- 1.00pm Awards ceremony
- 3.00pm Procession of historic and working boats

**FIND OUT MORE**
For details of what’s on, directions, how to book your moorings, and a full list of food and drink, crafts and other stalls, visit [waterways.org.uk/cavalcade](http://waterways.org.uk/cavalcade).

**VOLUNTEER**
IWA Canalway Cavalcade is organised and run by volunteers and the team is looking for new members to join in the fun of running this colourful spectacle every year. You don’t need previous experience, just a few hours of your time every month – as well as the three event days in May. Roles include: assistant publicity and social media manager, assistant commercial manager, assistant site and services manager, sponsorship manager and administration coordinator.

To volunteer, or find out more, contact Jerry Sanders on 01283 766558 or 07970 835323, or email jerry.sanders@waterways.org.uk. Additional information about the roles is also available on the website [waterways.org.uk/cavalcade](http://waterways.org.uk/cavalcade).
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*EVERY YEAR YOUR DIRECT DEBIT SUBSCRIPTION CONTINUES. UK PRICE ONLY - CALL FOR OVERSEAS RATES
We talk to the newly appointed chair of the Navigation Committee, Steve Warwicker, about his waterways interests and initial thoughts on the role

HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE NAVIGATION COMMITTEE?
I’m from the South West & South Wales Region and the Avon & Wiltshire Branch and have been an IWA member for 20-odd years. Until a few years ago I had a full-time job and didn’t really have the capacity to get very involved. However, just over a year ago the region needed a representative for the Navigation Committee and I put my hand up. I was then appointed chair in December 2017.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHAT THE NAVIGATION COMMITTEE IS AND HOW IT FITS INTO THE STRUCTURE OF IWA?
The board of trustees oversees the Association and the Navigation Committee is one of several national-level committees. It looks at navigation issues on all the navigable waterways, and takes on campaigns for the benefit of everyone who uses them. Issues include moorings, access to water, lock maintenance and boater facilities. It also considers modern infrastructure planning, for example where roads and rail (such as HS2) cross the waterways. While we mostly deal with things at a national level, we also give advice to branches and organisations that have similar matters of local interest.

IWA’s heritage is traditional canal boats, but the Navigation Committee’s aim is to improve the waterways for all users. With that in mind, we’ve started to form relationships with other organisations, such as British Canoeing, that have a common interest in the canals and rivers.

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NAVIGATION COMMITTEE?
Over the years, the campaign to recover the canal and river system has been very successful and I think everyone will agree that it’s a fabulous national asset that needs to be maintained. IWA’s vision for the future and the Canal & River Trust’s recent campaigns have put the emphasis on ‘waterways for all’, so we need to embrace all the potential users of the canals and rivers.

If you look back at their history, the canals were a massive innovation when people needed to move heavy cargo. After they got overtaken by the railways and went into decline, it was only due to a few stalwarts, including the IWA’s founders, that the potential value of the canals was recognised. They were innovators and did a lot of work to restore the waterways to navigation. Now that we’ve got a successful network, we don’t want it to decline again. So the Navigation Committee is playing a part in encouraging the health of these waterways and continuing to adapt them to something that is of value to an ever-changing society. The more value they’ve got, the more effort people will put into maintaining them and they will continue to be a rich national treasure for, hopefully, many hundreds of years.
WHAT CAN YOU BRING TO THE NAVIGATION COMMITTEE?

Hopefully I can bring a slightly different perspective. I'm a canoeist and don't own a narrowboat – although I do have an inland helmsman certificate which I first achieved many years ago and redid last year on the Kennet & Avon Canal. I also go sailing and power-boating. When I retired, I moved to Portishead on the Severn Estuary where I got involved in disability sailing and canoeing, so I have experience of encouraging a wide range of people to make use of the waterways.

“I’m keen to pursue and develop new relationships with outside organisations. There are many hundreds of societies and businesses that have an interest in, or are connected to, the waterways.”

GREN MESSHAM

Gren Messham stepped down from the role of chairman of the Navigation Committee on 25th November 2017 and also resigned from the role of trustee and Deputy Chairman of IWA. During his three years as chair of the Navigation Committee, and even longer leading the campaign to mitigate the effects of HS2 as chair of High Speed 2 Campaign and Communications Group, he has been responsible for leading one of IWA's most prominent and successful recent campaigns. Gren has offered support to Lincolnshire Branch over the Boston Barrier, including attending the public inquiry, and West Country Branch over the proposed Bridgwater Barrier, and while the success of these local activities has been impacted by Treasury and Defra funding cuts on ‘what counts’ for flood management funding, IWA has raised its profile to a national level. Gren has assisted in building IWA's parliamentary standing in conjunction with former national chairman Les Etheridge, and as deputy chair worked closely with Les on the development of IWA's new vision and five-year objectives. His considerable specialist knowledge will be sorely missed as will his sense of humour and we wish Gren the very best as he spends more time with his family.
DO YOU HAVE ANY PERSONAL AMBITIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE WHILE YOU ARE CHAIR?
It’s really early days, as I was only appointed in December and the new IWA strategy came out in November. But I’m keen to pursue and develop new relationships with outside organisations. There are many hundreds of societies and businesses that have an interest in, or are connected to, the waterways, but I think we can work alongside a few key partners without being overambitious.

I’d also like to make the Navigation Committee more accessible to people as not everyone can commit to travelling every four or five weeks to the Midlands. There’s a lot of knowledge and expertise out there so we need look at how we can involve people without them having to become a formal committee member. We can utilise newer methods of communication, including IT, but I don’t want to frighten anyone. I understand that some people are tech savvy, but some aren’t, and lots of people live on boats without high-speed internet access. We’ll have to judge what’s appropriate. It will, however, be a positive evolution, rather than a revolution.

WHEN AND HOW DID YOU FIRST BECOME INVOLVED WITH IWA?
I joined in the 1990s because I supported its aims, but I wasn’t an active member until a couple of years ago. I can’t remember signing up – it was probably at an event somewhere. I’m not a typical boater, like lots of members, so I bring a different perspective to the Association and the Navigation Committee. One thing I respect, though, is that narrowboaters have done such an awful lot for the inland waterways and IWA over many years.

WHEN DID YOU START CANOEING AND WHERE DID YOUR INTEREST COME FROM?
It was about 15 years ago. I’ve lived near canals all my life and always had an interest in the waterways. I began canoeing in my late 40s, so was a late starter. Before then I had a young family so didn’t have the money or time available. I tend to canoe on the inland waterways, but I recently sailed on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, which is quite unusual.

HAVE YOU GOT A FAVOURITE WATERWAY?
I like to spend time on the Bristol Avon, Kennet & Avon Canal, Gloucester & Sharpness Canal and Bridgwater & Taunton Canal. They’re all ones that are within easy reach of my home.

WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED MOST ABOUT BEING A MEMBER OF IWA?
Being able to contribute to some of the heritage of the country and access what I feel is a very valuable resource for lots of people.
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COSTING THE SYSTEM

With 19 navigation authorities and ten different licences, there’s lots to consider when planning a cruise along the 2,500 miles of connected inland waterways. Alison Smedley does the maths for the ultimate boating bucket list.
The UK’s inland waterways have so much to offer – from the Midlands canal network steeped in its industrial history, to the river navigations with their wildlife and millstreams. A journey of several months can include so much variety, and there are over 2,500 miles connected together.

One of IWA's long-held, long-term aspirations, dating back to co-founder Robert Aickman’s time, is for a National Waterways Conservancy to look after the navigation function of all canals and navigable rivers in the country. The creation of Canal & River Trust and IWA's campaign to see the waterways currently managed by Environment Agency to be transferred to CRT are the first steps towards this.

In the meantime, in order to navigate every single mile of the main connected system, you have to travel on the waterways of 19 different navigation authorities, most of which will charge a registration or licence fee.

The starting point for researching this article was IWA’s Waterway Directory, which identifies 6,300 miles of waterways in mainland Britain, of which 4,700 miles are currently navigable. Rather more than half of those (2,627 miles) are connected as part of the main inland waterway network of England and Wales.

The table (see pages 26-27) setting out the findings of this research assumes that a boat has an annual Gold Licence allowing unlimited access to all CRT and EA navigations, with licences for smaller navigation authorities being purchased as required for the length of time necessary for the relevant waterway.

In terms of defining what the ‘connected system’ is, for the purpose of this exercise I have taken it to include the main connected system of inland waterways of England and North Wales, excluding private arms and any tidal waterways, except those used to connect two non-tidal waterways. Note that the carriage of marine band VHF by powered craft is compulsory on some tidal waterways, including all those operated by ABP (see waterways.org.uk/boating/navigating_your_boat/vhf/vhf_guidance). Whatever type of boat you are using, you must check it is suitable for all the waterways you intend to navigate and that your insurance covers you for the proposed passages.

For the purpose of working out the costs of boating all these waterways, three different scenarios have been considered. Firstly, two different-sized powered boats of 7ft or less beam, as anything wider cannot access the narrow canals of the Midlands. A 50ft boat was assumed as the maximum length that can comfortably go almost anywhere on the connected system, while a 40ft narrow-beam boat really can go anywhere!

But of course, you don't have to use a powered boat for cruising the connected system – it can all be done cheaply by unpowered boats too. All the various navigation authorities have licence categories for small unpowered craft, and membership of British Canoeing includes the carriage of marine band VHF by powered canoes. Y ou can obtain your copy via the IWA website: waterways.org.uk/waterways/iwa_inland_waterways_directory.

---

CATCHING THE TIDE

In order to access all parts of the network, the following tidal passages have been included:

- Great Ouse between Salters Lode and Hermitage Lock
- River Trent between Trent Falls and Cromwell Lock
- Yorkshire Derwent (partially tidal) and the Yorkshire Ouse
- Bow Back Rivers (but not Bow Creek)
- River Thames between Limehouse and Teddington
- River Dee upstream from Crane Wharf
- Rivers Douglas and Ribble to access the Ribble Link
- River Humber upstream of South Ferriby Lock (allowing access to the River Ancholme) and upstream to Trent Falls
- River Witham between Grand Sluice and Tabs Head
- River Welland between Tabs Head and Fulney Lock and Surfleet Seas End
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Navigation authority</th>
<th>Waterways</th>
<th>Miles of waterway</th>
<th>Duration of licence required and explanatory notes</th>
<th>Licence cost</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40ft narrow-beam boat</td>
<td>56ft narrow-beam boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canal &amp; River Trust</td>
<td>Most canals and some rivers in England and Wales</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>Annual licence fees up to 31st March 2018. Figure includes prompt payment discount of 10%.</td>
<td>£697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Agency</td>
<td>Thames Region</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>2018 annual licence fees</td>
<td>£509.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Agency</td>
<td>Anglian Region – Great Ouse and its tributaries, River Nene, River Welland, River Slea</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>Annual licence fees up to 31st March 2018.</td>
<td>£654.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRT/EA Gold Licence</td>
<td>All EA and CRT navigations</td>
<td>2,161</td>
<td>The annual Gold Licence replaces the need for separate licences from those two authorities and covers all CRT and EA navigations.</td>
<td>£965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Canoeing membership</td>
<td>Membership includes access to some navigation authorities waterways</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Adult membership (family membership from £65 and youth membership £27).</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated British Ports (Humber)</td>
<td>River Humber (Trent Falls to South Ferriby), River Ouse (Hook to Trent Falls), River Trent (Trent Falls to Gainsborough)</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>No charge for tidal waterways. Free penning period for pleasure craft using Goole Locks (2½ hours before predicted high water and 1½ hours after). Any penning operations performed outside of the free penning period and also outside of normal working hours, by prior arrangement with the Dock Master, will be charged the applicable penning fee (£31.87 and £51.56 at 2017 fees).</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avon Navigation Trust</td>
<td>Warwickshire Avon</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>Seven-day ‘through’ licence</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basingstoke Canal Authority</td>
<td>Basingstoke Canal</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Two weeks. (One-week licence is available but unlikely to be long enough due to lock flights only being available on certain days because of water restrictions.)</td>
<td>£60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgewater Canal Co Ltd (part of Peel Group)</td>
<td>Bridgewater Canal and arms</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>CRT/Gold Licence holders may spend seven consecutive days on the canal without charge. A short-term Bridgewater Canal Licence costs £40 for seven consecutive days for any longer or return visits. For canoes, individual licences are not available and membership of BC is required.</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol City Council</td>
<td>Floating Harbour, Bristol</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Fees for ‘navigation and berthing of craft’ at £1.85 for 24 hours (alternatively £3.10 per metre for 48 hours). Prices up until 1st April 2018.</td>
<td>£23.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire West and Chester Council</td>
<td>River Dee from Chester weir to Farndon and Winsford Bottom Flash</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>River Dee – assuming access from Dee Branch is possible. Licences available for one day and one week – tidal access suggests one week would be required. No licence required for unpowered craft. Winsford Bottom Flash – accessed from the top end of the River Weaver (CRT) – no separate licence fee. The flash is notoriously shallow and local advice should be sought before proceeding in all but the smallest craft.</td>
<td>£58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservators of the River Cam</td>
<td>River Cam upstream of Bottisham Lock.Powered boats may navigate as far upstream as Jesus Green all year round, and as far as the Mill Pool with permission between 1st October and 31st March only.</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Gold (or EA) Licence holders can purchase a Cam premium option for 5% (or 3% if you buy with your annual renewal – 5% assumed for these calculations). Licences for non-Gold/EA Licence holders cost £32/£46.18 for up to 90 days. Canoe licence is for full year, short-term licences are not available for powered or unpowered craft.</td>
<td>£19.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Costing the system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Navigation authority</th>
<th>Waterways</th>
<th>Miles of waterway</th>
<th>Duration of licence required and explanatory notes</th>
<th>Licence cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment Agency (Midlands Region)</td>
<td>River Idle</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Although there is no navigation authority for the River Idle, access to the river at West Stockwith is controlled by a tidal sluice gate operated by EA, which requests a minimum of one months’ notice of intention to pass through. The fee could be shared by a convoy of boats.</td>
<td>£138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester Ship Canal Co (Peel Ports)</td>
<td>Manchester Ship Canal from Eastham to Manchester. Includes parts of the rivers Irwell and Weaver.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Boat-owners must seek permission to use the canal from the Manchester Ship Canal Company, proving that their boat is seaworthy, insured and has the required safety equipment on board. Price is for Eastham Lock to Manchester. Other charges, eg certificate of seaworthiness, will be incurred.</td>
<td>£199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Level Commissioners</td>
<td>Middle Level Navigations</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>Currently no legislation in place that allows them to charge a fee for boats to use these old rivers and navigable drains which connect the Great Ouse to the Nene (both EA navigations).</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Trust</td>
<td>River Wey and Godalming Navigations</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Although the River Wey can easily be done in three days, boaters may prefer to pay a little more for a seven-day licence (£69, £84 and £20 respectively). NT members get 10% discount.</td>
<td>£34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Trust</td>
<td>River Wey – transit licence</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Assuming up to two weeks is spent on the Basingstoke, a River Wey Transit Licence will be required for one of the journeys between Thames Lock and Pyrford.</td>
<td>£8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources Wales/Port of Mostyn</td>
<td>Crane Wharf, Chester, to Old Dee Bridge, Chester.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>This is the short section of the River Dee from the Dee Branch to the weir in Chester. See note on page 29 under campaigns. Neither authority charges a fee for pleasure craft for this short section.</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port of Boston Ltd</td>
<td>River Witham (tidal)</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>No charge for pleasure craft.</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port of London Authority</td>
<td>River Thames (downstream of Teddington Lock).</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>If timed carefully, any journey between Teddington and Brentford or Limehouse should avoid using Richmond half-tide lock, which is charged at £7.50 for all classes of vessel (2017 charges).</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleaford Navigation Trust</td>
<td>Sleaford Navigation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Currently 8 of the 13 miles are open to full navigation although the whole length can be canoed. An additional boat licence is not required.</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witham 4th District Internal Drainage Board</td>
<td>Witham Navigable Drains</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>The drains are maintained at a navigable depth from May to September inclusive. It is advisable to notify the Board of your presence on the system but a licence is not required.</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York City Council</td>
<td>River Foss</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Castle Mills Lock in York is operated on request by members of IWA as a free service to all boaters.</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| No navigation authority | Westbridge Arm (Northampton), River Ribble, River Swale, River Tame, River Wharfe, River Witham (Old), River WIssey upstream of Stoke Ferry Bridge, River Derwent | 40 | No licence fees | £0 | £0 | £0 |

**Totals** | 2,627 | £1,554.32 | £1,832.46 | £133.20 |
Starting down in the South East, exploring the Berkshire, Surrey and Hampshire waterways might be expensive, requiring four separate licences, but is well worth it for the variety it brings. Delightful river boating is to be had on the Wey and Godalming navigations (National Trust). The Basingstoke Canal (run by the Basingstoke Canal Authority on behalf of the two county councils who own the navigation) is largely in a tree-lined world of its own, but make sure you allow plenty of time as water supply issues mean that there are usually restrictions in place for which days lock flights can be used. Head up the River Thames (EA) to the Kennet & Avon Canal (CRT) for a different waterway feel again – the canal section is sandwiched between two river navigations. At the western end of the K&A, Bristol’s Floating Harbour is well worth a visit. The navigation charge from Bristol City Council includes a mooring fee, and it makes a great base for exploring the city. The River Avon in Warwickshire was restored and managed by the separate Upper and Lower Avon Navigation Trusts, which used to offer a combined licence, but they merged into the Avon Navigation Trust in 2009. This is another delightful river navigation with wide, open countryside and historic towns to visit.

For some slightly more adventurous boating you might want to venture on to the Lancaster Canal, previously isolated other than from the sea at Glasson, but now connected to the rest of the system by the Ribble Link, a new waterway opened in 2000, and the rivers Douglas and Ribble. The river section is tidal and you will need to get advice about timings from the navigation authority, CRT. Advance booking is required. The historic city of York, and the rivers and canals on the way to and beyond it, is well worth a visit. The Yorkshire Ouse leads to the River Ure and Ripon Canal above York, and on the way there you can explore the River Wharfe. The Yorkshire Derwent and what’s been restored so far of the Pocklington Canal are further downstream, accessed from the tidal Ouse via Barnby Barrage (see campaigning note on page 29 about Elvington Lock on the River Derwent).

While tackling the tidal River Trent, there are a number of worthwhile and interesting detours. The River Idle joins the Trent just downstream of the Chesterfield Canal at West Stockwith. Although there is no navigation authority for the River Idle, access to the river at West Stockwith is controlled by a tidal sluice gate operated by EA, which requires 48 hours’ advance notice of intended passage and payment of a substantial fee.

After heading down the Fossdyke to Lincoln (it’s worth mooring up in Brayford Pool) and the River Witham down to Boston, you can also explore, free of charge, the Witham Navigable Drains and the Sleaford Navigation. The Witham Navigable Drains are a complex system of drains that connect to the River Witham at Anton’s Gowt Lock. Navigation is only possible during the summer (May to September), as the drains are emptied in winter. The Sleaford Navigation, the first section of which is also known as Kyme Eau, was originally 12 miles long, with 8 miles having been restored to navigation by Sleaford Navigation Trust. Further downstream, the tidal River Witham gives access to the newly restored entrance lock to the South Forty Foot Drain, while passage round Tabs Head into the River Welland gives access to Spalding and Surfleet.

The River Cam is expensive for its 7.5 miles and two locks, but well worth it for the delight of mooring up near Jesus Lock and perhaps hiring a punt to do a little bit more of the connected system. If you happen to be there in the winter you can apply for permission between 1st October and 31st March to take powered craft further upstream, up ‘The Backs’ as far as the Mill Pool.

**EXTRA CHARGE**

On CRT waterways there are some additional charges for using certain structures:

- **Anderton Boat Lift**: Free of charge if taking the next available slot on the day. Advance booking fees apply to all other passage times – £5 one way, £10 return.
- **Ribble Link**: Access is only available from Easter to the end of October. It’s free to CRT/Gold Licence holders but passage must be booked in advance.
- **Liverpool Link**: Access is only available from Easter to the end of October and has to be booked in advance. It’s free of charge but a £20 administration fee applies for cancellation or change of date.
- **Standedge Tunnel**: Access is only available from Easter to the end of October. It’s free to CRT/Gold Licence holders but passage must be booked in advance.
Campaigning across the network

Some navigation and licensing issues that have been the focus of recent IWA efforts

**GOOLE LOCKS**
Associated British Ports (Humber) consulted users during 2017 on the removal of the free locking period either side of high tide for use of the locks at Goole, as well as a number of other changes that would affect commercial traffic. Following representations by both IWA East Yorkshire Branch and IWA’s Inland Waterways Freight Group, Associated British Ports at Goole backed down over the proposals and have confirmed that the free penning period for pleasure craft using Goole locks shall remain in force (2½ hours before predicted high water and 1½ hours after).

**BRIDGEWATER CANAL**
CRT/Gold Licence holders may spend seven consecutive days on the canal without charge as part of a reciprocal arrangement between CRT and Bridgewater Canal Company. However, a short-term Bridgewater Canal Licence costs £40 for an additional seven consecutive days for longer or return visits. BCC used to allow CRT/Gold Licence holders a return passage without additional charge, and IWA has been campaigning for this to be reinstated.

**MIDDLE LEVEL NAVIGATIONS**
IWA is supporting the Middle Level Commissioners in its Private Members Bill as it passes through the parliamentary process. The Middle Level Commissioners is the navigation authority for the Middle Level Navigations, which comprises 100 miles of navigable waterways in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. See page 14 for an update on how IWA has been campaigning on this issue.

**CASTLE MILLS LOCK AND THE RIVER FOSS, YORK**
For many years, York City Council, the navigation authority for the River Foss, operated Castle Mills Lock for a hefty fee, but they came to an agreement with IWA North Riding Branch a few years ago to allow trained volunteers to operate the lock on request, as a free service to all boaters. To book passage through the lock, two days’ notice is needed and all passages are subject to the water levels in the River Foss. There are no overnight moorings available on the River Foss, so it is necessary to book both passages, but it is an attractive 1½ miles of secluded waterway and well worth the detour.

**ELVINGTON LOCK, RIVER DERWENT**
Elvington Lock (also known as Sutton Lock) on the River Derwent in Yorkshire is currently closed to navigation following a temporary closure notice issued by EA back in February 2014. This has cut off part of the system from the national network and stranded a number of boats upstream. IWA is campaigning for navigation up to Stamford Bridge to be reinstated.

**DEE BRANCH AND THE RIVER DEE, CHESTER**
Currently, the bottom lock on the Dee Branch, giving access on to the River Dee, is not fully operational. IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch is campaigning for improved links between the canal and river (a detailed report is available on the website waterways.org.uk/waterways/canals_rivers/river_dee/dee_links_feasibility_notes). The branch has had a tidal gauge made and installed as part of this campaign. Once on the river, there is a weirgate in the weir at Old Dee Bridge, Chester, which can be used by shorter boats. Passage over the weir is possible on a limited number of suitable tides each year. Local expert advice is required.

Next issue
Look out for the second article in this series about the costs of boating the isolated and unconnected waterways of England, Scotland and Wales – the other 2,073 miles not covered here – and some of the different ways of boating on them, be it by canoe, hire-craft or trailable boat...
The Inland Waterways Association was formed over 70 years ago in 1946, and while our founders are no longer with us, some of our members have supported us continually for many decades. In 2017, it was decided by the IWA trustees that those people who had joined over 60 years ago deserved some sort of recognition for their long-held commitment to the Association. Eighteen members were invited to the AGM on 30th September 2017 at Langley Mill, Derbyshire, of which three ended, and each was awarded Honorary Life Membership. In responding to the event invitation, some of our most senior members shared with us their memories of the early days of IWA.

**MALCOLM BRAINE WAS JUST 15 WHEN HE JOINED THE ASSOCIATION NEARLY 70 YEARS AGO**

“Your letter made me think back to the time I joined IWA. It was in 1948 and I was starting a canal holiday with my parents and brother aboard a boat from Canal Cruising Co’s wharf at Stone. While I had started to get the ‘bug’ at the age of 11, in 1944, this was to be my first pleasure-boat trip. My parents thought it might advance my knowledge of the waterways beyond all the murky canals of the BCN, the area where I was brought up. With petrol rationing still in force, Market Drayton was as far as we were allowed to travel.

“While waiting about, two men walked down the wharf, one holding a sheaf of papers, and the other came over to me and said something like: ‘You’d be better have one of these, we need young people. Ask your father if he will join too.’ I had been given an IWA application form, and I joined on that same day. I later learned the two people were Rendell Wyatt, founder of Canal Cruising Co, and IWA co-founder Tom Rolt, of whom I had heard but never seen.

“Things have moved on a lot since then. I had a career in, on and around our inland waterways, including 25 years with my own dockyard and 25-plus years as a marine surveyor. I’ve always remained a keen advocate of, and supported, IWA, even in times when internal politics threatened to close it down. My days of working parties had to finish a while ago, but I have some great memories to look back on. It was good fun and I wouldn’t have missed it all for anything.”

**OVER FIFTIES**

The celebrations also included our quinquagenarians. Over 30 of our members have been supporting us for more than 30 years and they are each being sent a commemorative plaque.

**Mr P.J. Ransom Recalled an Earlier IWA AGM**

“I feel greatly honoured to be appointed an Honorary Life Member, and much appreciate this. I shall be unable to attend the annual meeting at Langley Mill, but here is a memory from an earlier AGM, which I did attend soon after I joined IWA in the late 1950s. It was chaired by Sir Alan Herbert, and it was at a time when there were numerous dissenting factions within the Association. The arguments became more and more heated, until one member got to his feet to say that the discussion seemed to be getting a long way from the point at issue. Responded the chairman: ‘If you’d been in the House of Commons for as long as I have...’ And the rest was lost in a gale of laughter! Order, if not peace, was restored.”

Thankfully the 2017 AGM was a much less contentious affair!
Tell us about your boat...

Sunseeker is a 58ft semi-trad narrowboat built in 1996 by Pat Buckle in Stibbington on the River Nene for OwnerShips. It was originally sold in one-twelfth shares, but we are now down to a syndicate of five. Over the years it has been well used and loved by several generations of owners. One of the things we treasure most is the collection of diaries which go all the way back to its commission, when the first owners on board had to unpack big boxes from Ikea containing all the saucepans, crockery and cutlery.

At first we took Sunseeker’s comfortable and spacious layout for granted, but we have gradually come to appreciate just how much thought went into the design of the OwnerShips boats. We can boast an ensuite and wardrobe for the main bedroom, where the bed extends to king-size. In the bathroom there is a corner bath with shower over, followed by a U-shaped galley with generous cupboards and then an L-shaped dinette with seating for six. Next comes the second wardrobe opposite the stove, and lastly two armchairs that fold out into beds. It can sleep six so is luxurious for two, which is how we usually cruise.

How did you get into boating?

I grew up by the Ribble Estuary in Lytham so boats and ships were always part of my life. My parents suggested I read Arthur Ransome’s Swallows and Amazons series and I was duly hooked. I must have been quite persuasive because they took the family sailing on a yacht on the Norfolk Broads for a week and we enjoyed it so much that we repeated the experience for the next three years.

However, it was a long way from Lancashire to Norfolk so we embarked on our first canal holiday in the mid-1970s from Whaley Bridge at the end of the beautiful Peak Forest Canal in Derbyshire. Being naturally curious, we decided to go into Manchester rather than explore the further scenic beauties of the Macclesfield Canal. The Ashton Canal must have only just reopened, but we were blissfully unaware and enjoyed our unusual cruise in the rain past the Robertson’s jam factory, the chemical works and the building sites down to Piccadilly Basin. We had to call out the boatyard every day except one to fix the leaking hydraulic drive, and on the other day we had to get British Waterways to remove the shopping trolleys behind a lock gate.

Before we were married, my husband John got the sailing bug from a work colleague, qualified as an RYA Coastal Skipper and bought a 28ft classic Twister yacht. It was beautiful but because it was moored first in Plymouth and later Poole and we were living in the Midlands, we really didn’t make enough use of it and decided with much regret to sell it.
WHAT MADE YOU GO DOWN THE SHARED-OWNERSHIP ROUTE?
John and I had a couple of wonderful canal holidays on hireboats and we really enjoyed the freedom of being able to go almost anywhere we chose. However, hiring was expensive and each time we had to get used to a different boat. We did think about buying our own craft, but were very conscious of not having enough free time to make enough use of it, and I wasn’t keen on the expense and potential hassle. So when I found out about shared-ownership I thought it might be an ideal compromise, with a management company having all the responsibility and doing the hard work.

YOU STARTED OUT WITH A TWELFTH SHARE OF SUNSEEKER, BUT NOW OWN A FIFTH. HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?
The management company OwnerShips went into administration in 2010. I still remember the very bitter creditors’ meeting in Stevenage, attended by hundreds of angry share-owners. It’s a shame it ended that way, because it seemed clear that the managing director did vastly more good than harm, and enabled thousands of people to get a taste of inland boating.

As a syndicate we were faced with the decision on how to proceed. Rather than going for one of the other companies making offers, we decided that between us we had all the skills we needed to embark on self-management. This was a long way from what I (and most of the other owners) had originally envisaged, but despite the inevitable hiccups and small irritations it has worked.

At the time of OwnerShips’ demise, two of the shares in Sunseeker had been bought by the company for resale. It took us a couple of years to get these back from the receiver, although we decided not to sell them on. However, at the 2016 Annual General Meeting, it became clear that there were two camps among the owners: those who thought the boat was getting old and wanted to sell it, and those who wanted to carry on. The owners were split evenly, and, to cut a long and rather painful story short, the five who wanted to carry on bought out the others. We are now a select group of owners whose motivations and ideas are much more closely aligned than before.

DOES HAVING A SHARED BOAT LIMIT WHERE YOU CAN GO?
Ultimately yes, because the owners have to agree the mooring base as a group. However, it is sometimes possible to negotiate a handover between owners elsewhere, and we can move the base around the system relatively easily. We started at Blisworth, then moved to Great Haywood, which we particularly liked because of the wide choice of possible routes, then moved further north to Swanley Bridge on the Llangollen, then down to Droitwich and then back north to our current base at Overwater Marina near Audlem on the Shropshire Union.

HOW MUCH OF THE SYSTEM HAVE YOU MANAGED TO EXPLORE?
We’ve covered a reasonable proportion of the connected network, from the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal in the south-west to the River Nene in the east, Tarleton on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal at the southern end of the Ribble Link in the north-west, and the Rochdale and Huddersfield Narrow canals in the north-east. There is still lots to do though. I’m particularly keen to get Sunseeker back to its birthplace on the Nene, explore the Lancaster Canal close to the scenes of my childhood, and do the Leeds & Liverpool Canal in its entirety.
What’s your favourite waterway?

I love the peace and scenic grandeur of the Pennine waterways, though they are not the easiest to navigate. The Caldon Canal comes close; this was a completely unexpected discovery as we hadn’t really known anything about it before we first tried it. On the other hand the BCN is endlessly fascinating, the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal is another favourite for its scenery, the Llangollen Canal is spectacular, and we enjoy the sense of wonder on the Bridgewater Canal as although it was the first to be built, it’s engineered on a much grander scale than many later canals. We find interest and enjoyment in most places!

What is your involvement with IWA?

I was a member for several years before deciding during an unexpected period of unemployment that I wanted to get more involved. I responded to an advert on the website for a volunteer writer position to support the Navigation Committee, and joined as a corresponding member of the committee in June 2016. I was subsequently invited to become a full member of the committee and was formally appointed in February 2017 for a three-year term.

I have found the committee meetings fascinating; it’s also humbling to meet people who know so much more about the waterways than I do. It is a wonderful learning opportunity, and I have also enjoyed writing documents, which can include lots of things from policies to blogs.

As a syndicate boater, how does being part of IWA benefit you?

IWA provides the opportunity to mix with all kinds of waterways users and understand their different perspectives and needs. I also really value being able to learn more about their history, as well as the technical side of waterways operation and restoration. It would be quite easy as a syndicate boater to just turn up and enjoy the holidays, but being part of IWA enables you to get behind the scenes and feel much more involved.

What does ‘Love Your Waterways’ mean to you?

It’s loving spending time on or by the waterways, writing about them and getting involved with them through IWA. More importantly, it’s about helping others to enjoy them as much as I do. This might be by ‘treading lightly’ as I use the waterways – trying to improve the environment for others and having as little impact as possible by keeping our speed down to avoid eroding banks, minimising the noise we make in quiet areas, and generally being sensitive to other users. Or it might be through my writing, helping to explain things to people and enthuse them. Ultimately it’s about doing what we can to pass on the waterways to succeeding generations in the best state possible.
SILVER PROPELLER CHALLENGE

Your challenge, should you choose to accept, is to visit as many of the nation’s underused waterways as you can. Why? You’ll not only get to visit some stunning, yet quieter, parts of the network, but you’ll also be in with a chance of receiving IWA’s new Silver Propeller Challenge plaque.

There are over 100,000 boats registered on the inland waterways of England, Scotland and Wales, and in 2016 more than 672,000 people enjoyed the pastime of inland boating. IWA’s aim is to see those boats and people spread out across all of our wonderful canals and rivers. Most parts of our waterways are vibrant, busy places enjoyed by millions of people every year but there are still many locations where you would be lucky to see even one boat in a week, let alone in a day. Gongoozling is a favoured pastime of many walkers and cyclists, but if there are no boats, whole sections of waterways will lose their charm and appeal for everyone. This new challenge aims to encourage our members and others to visit and use those places that aren’t reached as often as others.

Sit awhile at Saul Junction on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal.
READY, SET, CRUISE
The great thing about the Silver Propeller Challenge is that you get to choose where you want to go from our list of urban and rural locations across the country. Traverse the wild moors of the Pennines at the summit of the Huddersfield and Rochdale canals or venture into the great cities of Liverpool, Norwich and Sheffield. You can also visit the highest, longest and deepest canal tunnel in Britain at Standedge, or acquaint yourself with the current terminus of the northern-most canal in England. Perhaps you would prefer to cruise through the picturesque Welsh Marches or visit one of the largest operating windmills in England? In accepting our challenge you can do all these and more. Accessing these waterways is a great way for boaters, canoeists, rowers and paddleboarders to explore some of the UK’s finest scenery and far-flung locations. And we would be delighted if the challenge led to more people hiring boats for their holidays this year.

The places to visit fall into three categories:
CRUISE IT OR LOSE IT
These are places on waterways which see very few visiting boats and are located in many instances at the end of the navigation. We’re looking to encourage visits along the entire length of these canals and rivers. Some of these waterways can have as few as one boat a month using them! Let’s change that now.

KNOCKING ON THE DOOR
These locations are where navigable waterways meet restoration works, proposed link projects and currently unnavigable sections. It’s hoped that in the future we will be able to remove these spots from the challenge as they become increasingly used.

MOOR PLEASE
These places are on restored sections of canals. We want to support the restorations by encouraging waterway users to get afloat and experience first-hand all that’s being achieved.

AIMS
One of IWA’s stated objectives for 2018 encompasses the improvement of facilities for waterway users across the network. We hope that the Silver Propeller Challenge, in encouraging usage of underused waterways, will help us to obtain the fullest picture of the issues across the whole country. We are looking for insight into the current gaps in provision between waterway areas or navigation authorities, where previous facilities have been taken out of use and not replaced, where broken equipment has not been repaired, or any other issues concerning boaters’ facilities which participants feel may be relevant. Email our campaigns officer, Alison Smedley, with your feedback on facilities – alison.smedley@waterways.org.uk.

Furthermore, while none of the ‘cruise it or lose it’ waterways are under threat at the moment, we would be hard pressed to defend them on usage grounds if they were to be threatened by a major development, such as a new motorway.
Where to go

Tick 20 or more of the locations off these lists to receive your Silver Propeller Challenge plaque.

**PLACES ACCESSIBLE TO ALL CRAFT KEPT ON THE CONNECTED INLAND WATERWAYS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>NAVIGATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alveston Weir</td>
<td>River Avon (Warwickshire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedford</td>
<td>River Great Ouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston Black Sluice</td>
<td>Black Sluice Navigation (EA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coombeswood Basin</td>
<td>Dudley Canal No 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fens Branch</td>
<td>Stourbridge Canal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gronwyn Bridge winding hole, Maesbury</td>
<td>Montgomery Canal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of navigation</td>
<td>Ashby Canal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holme</td>
<td>Middle Level (New Dyke)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horseway Lock, or junction of Vermundens Drain and Sixteen Foot Drain</td>
<td>Middle Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inglesham Junction of the River Thames with the Thames &amp; Severn Canal</td>
<td>River Thames</td>
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<tr>
<td>King John’s Castle, Odiham</td>
<td>Basingstoke Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Langley Mill Basin</td>
<td>Erewash Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leek Branch canal terminus</td>
<td>Celdon Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liverpool Docks</td>
<td>Leeds &amp; Liverpool Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manor Road winding hole</td>
<td>Chesterfield Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maud Foster Windmill, Boston</td>
<td>Maud Foster Drain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melbourne Basin</td>
<td>Pocklington Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norton Canes</td>
<td>Cannock Extension Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ripon Basin</td>
<td>Ripon Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>River Dee Branch</td>
<td>Off the Shropshire Union Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saul Junction</td>
<td>Gloucester &amp; Sharpness Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheffield Basin</td>
<td>Sheffield &amp; Tinsley Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern portal of the Dudley Tunnel (above Park Head locks)</td>
<td>Dudley Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Springs Branch head of navigation</td>
<td>Leeds &amp; Liverpool Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standedge Tunnel and Visitor Centre</td>
<td>Huddersfield Narrow Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanton Downham Bridge</td>
<td>Little Ouse or Brandon Creek</td>
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<td>Terminus of the Wendover Arm</td>
<td>Grand Union Canal, Wendover Arm</td>
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<td>Tewitfield Marina</td>
<td>Lancaster Canal</td>
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<td>Tatford Pools</td>
<td>Birmingham Canal Navigations</td>
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<td>Uttoxeter Basin, Froghall</td>
<td>Uttoxeter Canal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walsall Town Basin</td>
<td>Walsall Canal</td>
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<td>Welches Dam Lock</td>
<td>Old Bedford River</td>
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<td>West Summit Lock</td>
<td>Rochdale Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winsford Bridge</td>
<td>River Weaver</td>
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</tbody>
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**PLACES ONLY ACCESSIBLE BY LOCAL, PORTABLE AND TRAILABLE CRAFT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>NAVIGATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bridgewater Dock</td>
<td>Bridgewater &amp; Taunton Canal</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Northan Broads Waxham Cut</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chelmsford Basin</td>
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<td>Chesterfield</td>
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<td>Norwich New Mills Yard</td>
<td>River Wensum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pontypool</td>
<td>Monmouthshire Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spalding/Crowland</td>
<td>River Welland</td>
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*Please note* that the inclusion of a location on a list does not necessarily mean that the waterway is fully navigable for all types and sizes of craft. Visit our website to check restrictions on boat sizes, navigation authorities and for any other useful information.

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**TAKING PART**

Getting involved couldn’t be simpler. Visit 20 different places on our list, take a photograph of you and your mode of transport (any type of boat, canoe or paddleboard) at each location, and save all your photos to submit once you’re done. Just ensure your pictures make the location easy to identify.

Everyone who completes the challenge will receive a Silver Propeller Challenge plaque to attach to their vessel. The challenge opened on 1st January 2018 and covers all visits from that date onwards – your snaps from the 1980s, or even last year, won’t be counted. We want to see evidence of these waterways being used today.

For full terms and conditions go to waterways.org.uk/silverpropeller.

---

**#SILVERPROPELLER**

We’d love to hear from you while you’re on the way to meeting the challenge. You can post your pictures to our UK waterways Flickr group, or tag your images on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook with #silverpropeller.

- Twitter: @IWA_UK
- Instagram: @iwa_uk
- Facebook: facebook.com/inlandwaterwaysassociation

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Spring 2018
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RESTORATION HUB:
High Level Panel

STRATEGIC WORK: BEFORE THE WATER
Formed nearly two years ago, the Restoration Hub's aim for 2018 is focussed around strategic objective delivery. This includes the formation of the High Level Panel and the promotion of restoration projects through the publication of the Restoration Vision Report. The report investigates the value of a restoration before the point of water being added.

The High Level Panel is a key component of the Hub's work to champion restoration at a national level through encouraging, promoting and enabling waterway projects to galvanise the attention and support of the media, influential politicians and other key stakeholders. A small team of individuals – who each have a wide range of experience of waterway restoration at a senior or directional level – has now been recruited and will meet for the first time in February 2018. The team will work together to discuss key barriers facing the waterway restoration movement in order to give feedback and strategic direction to IWA trustees on how the Association can best support projects. During 2018 they will look at some of the barriers to restoration and how they could be addressed at a national level. These include:

**PLANNING** – looking at the issues around land ownership and what can be done to safeguard the routes of restoration schemes.

**FUNDING** – researching and evaluating the effects of Brexit and other recent changes on current funding, and recommending strategies to maximise funding.

**ENVIRONMENT** – considering the impacts of imminent legislation changes, and putting forward practical steps to address the issues.

THE TEAM
The High Level Panel comprises of individuals from across the waterways sector:

**MIKE PALMER** – WRG chair/IWA trustee

**NEIL EDWARDS** – IWA chief executive

**JOHN DODWELL** – Montgomery Canal Partnership chair

**GEORGE ROGERS** – Friends of the Cromford Canal – Strategic Restoration Committee chair

**CHRIS MADGE** – Derby & Sandiacre Canal Trust director

**TERRY CAVENDER** – Buckingham Canal Society executive officer and trustee

**KEN OLIVER** – Wiltshire Council countryside officer

**MARTIN LUDGATE** – Editor of Navettes magazine/WRG volunteer

**NIGEL CROWE** – Canal & River Trust national heritage manager

**ROBIN STONEBRIDGE** – Chesterfield Canal Trust chair

**SAM ANDERSON-BROWN** – Canal & River Trust restoration manager

**JOHN POMFRET** – Essex Waterways director and environmental advisor to IWA

The level of knowledge and experience offered by these individuals across all aspects of restoration will allow for the broadest consideration and most thoughtful recommended solutions to some of the issues the movement faces in the regeneration of our waterways. Their advice, in conjunction with the subsequent action of the Hub and all groups involved in restoration, should see the enhancement of the sector's profile and ideally an increase in financial support.

---

**Waterway Recovery Group**
Hands on practical support through Canal Camps and weekend digs.
Training on plant.

**National Restoration Group**
Working with Canal & River Trust to organise training events, workshops and guidance.

**Trusts & Societies**

**High Level Panel**
Focused on providing high level strategic support to restoration groups. Voice at a national level.

**Technical Advice & Support**
Providing up-to-date guidance on fundraising, engineering, environmental issues, project management etc. Tracking trends and sharing best practice.

**Insurance Advice & Cover**
IWA arranges insurance policies for restoration societies that have been tailor-made, over many years.
RESTORATION HUB:
Technical advice and support

SPRING FOCUS: ENVIRONMENT MATTERS
There is more to a restoration project than getting muddy, rebuilding structures, relining canals and opening up waterways. Projects can involve months, or even years, of planning, fundraising and managing the risk to the environment – and all this must happen before the first volunteer or contractor sets to work on site.

Managing the risks to the environment from waterway restorations has become an integral part of project planning for restoration groups. As with any construction project, the potential impact upon the environment must be investigated to help avoid, minimise or reduce the possible risks to people, flora, fauna and land within a proposed site. Over the years restoration groups have been working to alleviate the negative environmental impacts through adoption of the ‘mitigation hierarchy’. This outlines steps to alleviate negative environmental impacts through avoidance, minimisation (or reduction) and restoration. This key concept has been adopted through public and private domains to ensure compliance with UK and EU law.

MINIMISATION OR REDUCTION
Over the years, restorations have also taken the environment into consideration by designing methods to reduce the impact the project has on the surrounding environment. One example can be found on the Cotswold Canals Restoration Project where the derelict Wallbridge Lower Lock acted as a major barrier to fish migration, so a bypass channel was installed to allow free passage of aquatic life.

RESTORATION
Environmental restoration measures are intended to alter an area to re-establish a habitat or ecosystem to its original state, or return the site to the state of health it was before any disturbance caused by the project. Restorations can also extend to actually improving the state of the environment pre-disturbance. Such measures can be seen where hardstanding banks have been turned into soft banks, trees have been planted to cover an area equal to, or larger than, the size lost, or new ponds have been created. One example of this technique can be found on the Montgomery Canal where Aston Lock Nature Reserve has been established.

AVOIDANCE
In the environmental impact mitigation hierarchy, the first step is avoidance – adjusting your plans, location, and/or timing of the project. Waterway Recovery Group’s Forestry Team uses this technique when undertaking clearance work for restoration groups.
How the Hub can help

The Restoration Hub is able to offer preliminary environmental and ecological advice to canal restoration societies on ensuring sustainable outcomes, assist with gaining planning consent, and help manage the impacts on the local ecology. We aim to provide an array of services for some of the more common ecological concerns within the construction industry. In 2017, the Hub undertook several ecological surveys for restoration groups.

BREEDING BIRD SURVEY

Supporting Stroud District Council, our ecological advisor Alex Melson conducted a breeding bird survey of a 200m (656ft) length of canal from Griffin Mill to Stanton’s Bridge near Brimscombe Port. The work involved dredging 200m of inundation/marginal vegetation habitat in the canal through to Bowbridge Lock. In advance of the proposed work, the survey was conducted alongside an ecological appraisal of the site to ensure the project could progress in line with environmental legislation during the autumn months. The results indicated that no bird species would be severely impacted upon during the works.

BADGER SURVEY

Working with Cotswold Canals Trust, preliminary surveys were undertaken to investigate the presence and impact of badgers on a derelict bridge. Development proposals planned to stabilise and then restore the bridge. Early indications suggested that badgers were using the ramparts of the structure for setts, utilising the south side for dens and the north side for foraging and latrines. The results indicated that a phased approach for the works should be incorporated with repairs to the north side first and restricted access over the bridge to the area. These actions should be followed by an application to Natural England for permission to exclude badgers from the worksite and create a new main sett for them of equal size and scope elsewhere. Further recommendations were to complete a full survey within 1km (0.6 miles) of the original sett, only utilise hand tools within 10m (32ft) of any sett, and to provide an Ecological Clerk of Works during operations.

TREE SAFETY SURVEY

In order to assess the risks of trees to users of the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation in Essex, 14 miles of towpath were surveyed. Essex Waterways Ltd asked the Restoration Hub for advice on dangerous trees, as well as liability and risk to the company. A qualified surveyor spent five days walking the length of the navigation and inspected each tree on the towpath side. The risks were analysed and recorded onto a map along with details such as the level of risk posed by each tree and recommended management actions. The surveyor looked for risks such as: diseases, root structure, lean, overhanging branches, rot, fungi, size, structure and canopy health.

Our ecological advisors can support projects by carrying out surveys for a range of wildlife including bats, badgers and breeding birds, as well as undertaking Phase 1 Habitat Surveys and Preliminary Ecological Appraisals. For more details please contact Alex Melson by email at alex.melson@waterways.org.uk, or telephone on 01494 783453 ext 604.

TRAINING AND EVENTS

The Restoration Hub is running a series of workshops this year to provide support for waterway projects. Full details and booking information for all events can be found online at waterways.org.uk/restorationhubevents.

Spring

WORKSHOP: Working with young people and safeguarding
Date: London: Saturday 3rd February 2018, Manchester: Saturday 24th February 2018
The day will look at how we work with young people and shape our volunteering offer so that we can attract and inspire the next generation of waterways enthusiasts. We are running this event in different locations so as many people as possible can attend.

WORKSHOP: Annual restoration workshop
Date: Saturday 14th April 2018
Our main training event of the year is offered in conjunction with Canal & River Trust at South Bilston Academy in Wolverhampton, and focusses on ‘Restoring Confidence’ in the restoration sector. More information and the full agenda for the day are now online.

WEBINAR: GDPR – are you ready?
Date: Tuesday 20th February 2018 (8pm)
In this online course, run by Neil Edwards (IWA’s chief executive) and Alicen Stenner (IWA’s marketing manager), the changes to data protection coming into force in May will be explained as well as the steps organisations need to think about taking in order to be compliant.

TRAINING: One-day first aid course
Date: Saturday 10th March 2018
This one-day first aid course is for restoration group site leaders and working party organisers and will take place at Rowington Village Hall, Warwickshire. It’s free (lunch included) but limited to 14 people.

Autumn

WORKSHOP: Governance
Date: Friday 14th September 2018
More details about this workshop, which takes place at the Canal & River Trust offices in Hatton, Warwickshire, will be released on our website later in the year. It will be led by Neil Edwards.

WORKSHOP: Safety focus: keeping your volunteers safe
Date: Friday 16th November 2018
More details about this workshop, which takes place at the Canal & River Trust offices in Hatton, Warwickshire, will be released on our website later in the year. It will be run by Mike Palmer and Tony Stammers.
RESTORATION HUB: WRG Working Holidays

WRG has launched an exciting programme of working holidays for 2018, which includes 28 residencies across 13 different waterways. Our week-long and weekend working holidays offer unique volunteering opportunities for individuals and families on Britain’s amazing canals and rivers.

The aim of the programme is to support the admirable work being carried out by local canal restoration groups to help return even more waterways back to navigation. Four of the projects close to completion are Borrowash Bottom Lock on the Derby Canal, Fosseway Heath on the Lichfield Canal, the Montgomery Canal between Redwith and Pryces Bridge, and the ‘first furlong’ of the Lancaster Canal.

Once finished, a total of 950m of canal will be returned to water.

Across the projects WRG volunteers will have the chance to learn new skills, meet new people and get stuck into tasks such as restoring locks, re-lining canals, creating towpaths, removing vegetation and uncovering archaeological artefacts.

Following the success of our first family volunteering camp in 2017, we’ve planned three further weekends in 2018, which will take place on the Grantham Canal, Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation and Uttoxeter Canal. Families with children aged between eight and 14 years old will have the opportunity to experience canal restoration first hand.

Mike Palmer, WRG chairman, says: “2018 is set to be an exciting year for us.” Find out why and how you can get involved...

DERBY CANAL, DERBYSHIRE
Dates: 21st-28th July
This summer volunteers will be working on the partially restored Borrowash Bottom Lock, undertaking technical restoration tasks from reinstating the coping stones to rebuilding the stone gate recesses and wing walls. It’s part of a larger project by Derby & Sandiacre Canal Trust, supported by Derby & Sandiacre Canal Society, which plans to restore the 15-mile-long Derby Canal via a new connection from the Trent & Mersey at Swarkestone along the original line to Wilmorton. While the canal land was originally gifted to the local councils when it was abandoned, they have agreed to transfer it back to the trust for restoration. In recent years, significant progress has been made thanks to a group of highly motivated local volunteers. It’s hoped that by the end of 2018 the lock will be fully functioning and form a focal point for the remaining restoration work.

LICHFIELD CANAL, STAFFORDSHIRE
Dates: 28th July-4th August
WRG volunteers will be based at Fosseway Heath Nature Reserve where the week’s tasks will be to build a new retaining wall and create a towpath, with funding from the People’s Postcode Lottery. Despite the Government’s attempts to block the canal with the building of the M6 Toll road in the 1990s, the restoration of the Lichfield Canal has continued to gather pace. The waterway was historically a part of the Wyrley & Essington Canal, running for 7 miles and descending 30 locks from Ogley Junction at Brownhills on the northern Birmingham Canal Navigations to Huddlesford Junction on the Coventry Canal. It was officially abandoned in 1954. Once restored, the Lichfield and Hatherton canals will form a natural wildlife corridor from Huddlesford to Hatherton, becoming a valuable amenity for walkers, cyclists and boaters. Ultimately, it will also provide additional access to the presently underused northern BCN.

MONTGOMERY CANAL, SHROPSHIRE
Dates: 31st March-7th April, 7th-14th July, 14th-21st July
The Montgomery Canal runs for 35 miles from Frankton Junction near Ellesmere to Newtown in Powys. Formerly part of the Shropshire Union Canal network, it was abandoned after a breach in 1936. Over the years, this restoration has received significant support from WRG and we’ll be returning for three week-long camps this year to repair a leaking section of the recently restored canal. Over Easter, volunteers will remove the existing waterproof liner and wall before pouring new foundations and starting rebuilding work. In the summer volunteers will then re-lay the waterproof liner and build up a protective layer of blocks. With the help of volunteers, this canal is expected to be extended by another 1¼ miles by 2020 thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. Once repaired this section of the canal will be used by a horseboat to promote the restoration.

LANCASTER CANAL, LANCASHIRE
Dates: 31st March-7th April, 7th-14th April
The Lancaster Canal runs for 57 miles from Kendal through to its terminus at Preston, where it joins with the Leeds & Liverpool Canal; however, the northern part of the route was cut off by the building of the M6 motorway. The Lancaster Canal Trust’s main objective is to restore and open the canal to full navigation from Tewitfield, just north of Carnforth to Kendal. This Easter WRG volunteers will be returning to Stainton to reline a leaking section of the canal known as the ‘first furlong’. Once repairs are completed, the section will be re-watered and reconnected to a part of the canal that the trust currently uses for its trip-boats. Volunteers will also be involved in clearance work around Hincaster Tunnel to remove brambles and small trees.
Save The Date

Here’s the full list of WRG Canal Camps for 2018:

SPRING
10th-17th February
Shrewsbury & Newport Canal
24th-25th March
BCN Clean-up 2018
31st March-7th April
Montgomery Canal
Lancaster Canal
7th-14th April
Lancaster Canal
12th May
Leaders and cooks training day
23rd-24th June
Training weekend 2018

SUMMER
7th-14th July
Inglesham Lock (KESCRG)
Wey & Arun Canal (NWPG)
Montgomery Canal
14th-21st July
Inglesham Lock (Cotswolds)
River Waveney
Montgomery Canal
21st-28th July
Inglesham Lock (Cotswolds)
River Waveney
Derby Canal
28th July-4th August
Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation
Lichfield Canal
4th-11th August
Swansea Canal
11th-18th August
Inglesham Lock (Cotswolds)
Grantham Canal
Monmouthshire Canal
18th-25th August
Inglesham Lock (Cotswolds)
Grantham Canal
Monmouthshire Canal
25th August-1st September
Inglesham Lock (Cotswolds)
Grantham Canal

AUTUMN/WINTER
20th-27th October
Grantham Canal
Wey & Arun Canal
3rd-4th November
Bonfire Bash 2018
26th December 2018-1st January 2019
Christmas Camp

To book onto a Canal Camp, or request a 2018 brochure, please visit WRG’s website wrg.org.uk. Alternatively, you can call WRG head office on 01494 783453 ext 604, or email enquiries@wrg.org.uk.

My First Canal Camp
Name: Sarah Lewis  Age: 51
Occupation: Family support officer

What was your first Canal Camp?
It was in 2017 at Inglesham Lock. We spent the week placing coping stones, repairing lock walls and getting stuck in with other jobs.

What did you enjoy about it?
I enjoyed everything! I loved being outdoors and being so physical, and I even loved the fact that I ached after my week because it made me feel like I had achieved something. I loved meeting new people, the social events, and, of course, all the laughter.

What was the most useful thing you learned on the camp?
The most useful thing was learning that no matter what your age, background, gender or personality, there is a place for everyone. We’re all able to bring our own level of skill or energy to the camp.

Final thoughts?
It was the most amazing experience! New skills, new people, laughter, great food, and the transformation of the lock. I was particularly impressed with WRG as an organisation as I felt they had considered everything. All I can say is thank you for the experience... and you will be seeing me again.
MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

We’re changing the way we charge for memberships and how we keep in touch with you. Here’s everything you need to know...

In the first change to our membership rates in five years, IWA is making the move towards a system that gives you – our supporters – the option of choosing your own level of membership, or donation rate. In line with what many other charitable organisations are doing, the Association’s trustees decided that IWA should standardise the various different, and at times quite confusing, membership rates into one simple offering. This will mean all memberships will be charged at a flat rate of £36 annually, which is just £3 per month, with the option to top this up with further voluntary donations.

NEW YEAR, NEW RATE
This will affect existing members in different ways depending on the membership type they have. For those with a single membership or joint concessionary membership this will mean an increase, though it’s worth noting that this is the first change to membership rates in five years. For our many members on joint subscriptions, the new rates will in fact represent a slight decrease, and we hope that these members especially will want to ‘top up’ their membership with voluntary donations. Those members on single concessionary rates will change to £30 from April 2018 renewals and to £36 the following year.

Before January 2013, IWA used to increase its membership rates annually. However, we would much rather only increase the amount we charge our members when absolutely necessary. This is why we have chosen to standardise all memberships at a simple £36 per year and encourage members to give whatever else they can if they support and care for our causes.

DONATIONS
IWA seeks to be a visible and highly effective campaigning organisation, and our membership surveys have revealed that is what most of our members want too. For example, we aim to:
- See an end to plastics being dumped in our canals and rivers because there are no bins on the towpath
- Open a Fens Waterway Link and re-open Welches Dam
- Try and eradicate invasive species like Himalayan Balsam from our waterways
- Campaign for improvements to boater facilities across the network
- Provide the best possible help, advice and support for the waterway restoration movement

To be able to run these and other campaigns effectively, as well as to support our invaluable network of branches, we need to ask our members to think about donating more than the minimum needed to administer their membership and to encourage donations from all other possible sources.

THE RATES
New members
From 2nd January 2018, the membership rate for all new members changed to £36 annually, or £3 per month, with the option of further voluntary donations to ‘top up’ the basic subscription.

Existing members
All membership types will change to the minimum flat rate of £36 annually, or £3 per month, as we move through the renewals year from April 2018 onwards.

KEEPING IN TOUCH ON YOUR TERMS
In May this year, a new Data Protection law comes into force and as a result we want you to be sure that the membership information we hold about you is correct. For us to be able to continue sending IWA’s campaign news and other updates, we need your express permission for us to stay in touch on your terms. We will be asking you to choose how you would like to hear from us – by post, email and/or phone. If you would like to give your permission now, go to waterways.org.uk/yes and let us know how you would like to hear from us. Alternatively call us on 01494 783453 or complete the form on the back of the address sheet used to mail your copy of Waterways and return it in the enclosed Freepost envelope.

QUESTIONS?
We hope that this has explained our move to the new membership rate model but if you have any further questions about the changes, please email Joni Duncan, membership officer at joni.duncan@waterways.org.uk. As a member, you will receive details of the changes in your renewal pack which will be sent out one month before your renewal date.
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 Volunteer Team at Head Office know (contact details below), ideally in advance so that they can assist with publicity and planning.

THE NUMBERS ARE IN FROM...

...WEST COUNTRY BRANCH

Over the last eight months, IWA West Country Branch volunteers have worked 3,500 hours to improve the canal between Bridgwater Docks and the village of Fordgate and from Creech St Michael to Taunton. Their work ensures the waterway stays attractive for visitors and boaters and has included trimming hedges, picking up litter and repainting lock-gates.

Two dogs and 36 people took part in the New Year’s Day walk on the Grand Western Canal organised by West Country Branch. Starting at the Globe Inn at Sampford Peverell, the route passed through quiet Devon countryside to reach the site of the 2012 offside breach where the group stopped to view a series of photographs of the disaster. The walk ended a little way beyond Swing Bridge, a structure that today is made of steel and crosses the canal at a high level. At the time of the breach an intact Brindley stop-gate was discovered buried in the mud. Returning to Sampford Peverell, some walkers repaired to the pub while others continued along the towpath to see the slipway adjacent to Boehill Bridge, built by Waterway Recovery Group in 2003, and still in excellent condition for use by trailboaters.

Members of West Country Branch also celebrated their win of the Branch Achievement Award in Bridgwater Docks alongside members of the local council and other invited guests. The Mayor of Bridgwater, Graham Granter, was there to thank volunteers for their contribution to the town. The branch has been working with Bridgwater Town Council on the regeneration of the former docks and also on the Tidal Barrier Campaign. Guests were invited on a tour of the docks by committee member Mike Slade who briefed them on IWA’s aspirations for the regeneration of the docks, which includes restoration of Newtown Lock, the Barge Lock, and the 1841 heritage bascule bridge across the docks to re-establish navigation between the River Parrett and the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal.

... LICHFIELD BRANCH

£1,000 was presented to the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust chair, Christine Bull, by IWA Lichfield Branch chair, Phil Sharpe, at their meeting on 15th November 2017. Over the past 30 years the branch has donated £44,000 to waterway restoration projects, including £23,000 to Lichfield & Hatherton. Christine said the donation will be put towards the trust’s Tunnel Vision Appeal.

... NORTH STAFFS & SOUTH CHESHIRE BRANCH

Over two months in late 2017, volunteers contributed nearly 150 hours to work parties on the Trent & Mersey Canal and other waterways in Cheshire. The biggest chunks of time were targeted to the painting of Church Locks (47 and 48) at Church Lawton and clearing overhanging vegetation on a 10-mile length of canal from Hardings Wood Junction to just past Wheelock. The branch is now holding monthly work parties in three locations, as well as additional projects, so wherever you live in the branch area there will be a work party near you.

... AND NORTHAMPTON BRANCH

Twenty-four volunteers, including a group from Cummings Power Systems, joined IWA Northampton Branch on Friday 3rd November 2017 to plant 2,000 bulbs alongside six locks on the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union Canal.

Details of all IWA branch events can be found on the IWA website events calendar. If you would like to get involved or have any suggestions for future work parties please contact Judith Pope, volunteer engagement officer, on 07985 450138 or judith.pope@waterways.org.uk.
NOTES ON ST NEOTS

A few comments on the Go East article in the Winter issue of Waterways magazine.

Unless it has only recently been fitted, the bottom lock of the Rotherthorpe flight does not need an Environment Agency key. It may, however, need a Canal & River Trust key if the water conservation lock has been repaired. Northampton Marina will sell you a key and the required EA licence. If taking your time on the Nene, don’t pass a water tap without filling your tank – they are few and far between.

The windlass required for the Middle Level can be bought from Tina at Stanground Lock, as can the Yale key needed to open the gate for Ashline Lock and the sanitary station at March. This windlass is a better fit on the Great Ouse locks than the normal canal one. Tina will also give you a free guide to the Middle Level showing the bridge heights.

Those boaters hoping to moor at Ramsey might be a tad disappointed. The moorings were badly broken on our last visit two years ago and there were large lumps of concrete in the water making it difficult to get near the edge. We managed to place a plank across the large gap, enabling us to get on the bank, but we then moved back up the Lode to moor on the lock landing at the top. Huntingdon District Council has plans to install new moorings but as these date back ten years I wouldn’t hold your breath. Perhaps another worthwhile job for Peterborough Branch.

Although you state the Chatteris is only a short distance from the Forty Foot Navigation, there are no easy moorings. In fact, for the most part, the banks of the Middle Level are tall, steep and in many places, overgrown. Having said that, there is a length of piling nearby that might suffice.

The Abloy key you bought for the Nene is the same as required on the Great Ouse. There are plenty of water points on the lower Great Ouse but not on the upper part. Most boatyards seem happy for you to use their facilities with no charge. Try to make time to cruise the Wissey, Little Ouse and Lark while on the Ouse.

You mention the Cam but not the requirement for a different licence. Many boaters now moor at St Ives and use the guided bus to access the city, but they are missing out on mooring in a wonderful city. The licence is not expensive; I recall it was £27 for our 58ft boat for 90 days of use in the year, so it’s good value compared to many other visitor licences. St Ives hasn’t had a railway station for a great many years. A useful Waitrose now occupies the site.

As you mention, the Imray guides are the only ones other than those published by EA, but you really need both to have full information. Alternatively, these resources are available online: noproblem.org.uk/blog/nene and livingonanarrowboat.co.uk/ narrowboat-forum/cruising-guides/the-anglian-navigations-a-roundup-and-update.

PETE EARLEY, NB JOANIE M

In response

The 17th and bottom lock in the Rothersthorpe flight does indeed require a CRT key, not an EA key. You could think of it as CRT’s last ditch attempt to keep the boater on their navigation before escaping onto the clear flowing waters of the River Nene! You will, however, need the EA Abloy key at the very next lock.

During its Easter Cruise in 2017, Peterborough Branch managed to moor nine boats at Ramsey moorings and up the Lode, albeit with a bit of juggling to turn and ‘breasting’ up. Historic Ramsey is well worth a visit and I think it quite rewards the detour from the ‘link route’. We are currently chasing up what’s happened (or, more accurately, hasn’t happened) to the new moorings.

Chatteris Town Council intends to provide moorings on the Forty Foot Navigation, but I’m not sure that the mention in Waterways has done anything to encourage it bringing forward those plans in time for the 2018 Festival of Water.

Pete is absolutely spot on in recommending visiting the River Cam. Give me half a chance and I’d wax lyrical about its charms, along with those of the rivers Wissey, Lark and Little Ouse. And don’t forget the River Great Ouse above St Neots. The head of navigation is Bedford, and that’s well worth a visit too.

He’s also right about St Ives not having a railway station. Its link to Cambridge via the guided bus is brilliant, but the main line railway stations on the Ouse are at Ely, Huntingdon, St Neots and Bedford.

Pete recommends obtaining the Imray guides, all three of which are excellent. He also mentions the Middle Level Commissioners’ free booklet, which you can obtain at Stanground Lock. IWA Peterborough Branch has also produced its own free cruising guides to the Nene, Middle Level and Great Ouse up to St Neots. These list both short-term and overnight moorings, water points and other facilities, and can be downloaded from waterways.org.uk/festivalofwater. EA publishes cruising maps of both the rivers Nene and Great Ouse.

Full marks to Pete for his eagle-eyed observations and useful suggestions – there’s definitely a pint for him at the Festival of Water’s infamous beer tent! I’m getting increasingly excited about the event and look forward to welcoming the many boaters who will have travelled to St Neots through the eastern region’s breathtaking waters.

CHRIS HOWES, PETERBOROUGH BRANCH AND EASTERN REGION CHAIR
RESEARCHING THE REGENT’S

I’m an IWA member of many years and a waterways enthusiast and I’m currently researching the development of the City Road Basin on the Regent’s Canal in London. The reason for writing is that although there are pictures of the basin in the 1820s and 1830s and of its decline in the 1960s, I have not been able to trace any drawings, engravings, pictures or photographs for the period 1840 to 1960. I was wondering if any of your readers would be able to assist.

City Road Basin was established as a major transhipment depot for canal carriers transporting goods on fly-boats around the country. The railways fairly quickly put an end to that, and the basin developed increasingly as an industrial zone, with canal transport taking a more secondary role over the years. Pickfords’ large canal transport base was turned into a lorry depot and although rubbish continued to be transported from here and timber carried up from the London docks, by the 20th century this appears to have been pretty minimal.

Much of the basin was taken over by the British Drug House and when this ceased trading in the late 1950s, the area was already becoming derelict. A campaign in the 1970s, and a 1973 rally with which IWA was involved, fought the proposal to fill in large parts of what remained of the basin. It is now overshadowed by high-rise apartment blocks.

An early pioneering trip by IWA is illustrated in the above picture from May 1950 taken in the mouth of the basin below City Road Lock. Robert Aickman was involved although I have not identified him on board.

GILES EYRE, LONDON (gilesreyre@btinternet.com)

STOURPORT IN ’60

I noticed in the Winter 2017 issue of Waterways that the cover picture of the Summer 2017 issue is to be on the front of the 2018 IWA calendar. The picture of the Stourbridge Canal locks overlooking the 'shed' with the Glass Cone beyond is truly iconic.

My picture (right), taken in 1960, is an almost identical view, but shows the then shabby condition of the locks. I took the photo at the time enthusiasts were fighting for the future of the whole canal network. My wife and I tackled the near-derelict Stourbridge Canal soon after Robert Aickman and David Hutchings had shown the way by insisting on the ‘right of navigation’, which existed at the time. We passed through the locks on 29th September 1960 in Water Rat, a small cruiser hired from Abbots of Stourport, near the end of our fortnight journey which circled the Midlands.

Also below are two other photos. One is of our passage through Delph Locks as we neared the Stourbridge Canal, and the other taken after going through the Stourbridge 16 and shows the helpers, including those from British Waterways, who shovelled ashes etc into holes in the gates and leaky paddles to get the locks to work. From left to right, are Mr Bishop (BW), my wife Janet, the Union Man (BW), another BW worker, Mr Wood Jr (BW), and Don Gray. Mr Gray was a canal enthusiast who kept his boat Bladys at the bottom of Delph Locks. He had witnessed the earlier passage of Aickman and Hutchings.

After 1960, canal restoration spread gradually across the nation’s waterways system, with IWA at the forefront of the campaign. Soon the Stourbridge Canal was restored and the Southern Stratford Canal reopened leading the way to the waterways system as it exists today.

DR BRIAN BEAGLEY, BY EMAIL
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Bowbridge Lock on the Thames & Severn Canal has been filled with water for the first time in 90 years. The lock was rewatered for an evaluation cruise by Heritage Lottery Fund Monitors team on Friday 10th November 2017.

IWA’s Waterway Recovery Group volunteers spent over 4,000 hours supporting the Cotswold Canals Trust project to restore Bowbridge and Wallbridge locks through its Canal Camp working holidays. Volunteer hours include planning and construction.

This is another milestone for the CCT project to reopen the Stroudwater Navigation and the Thames & Severn Canal, which comprise 36 miles of navigable waterway from the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal at Saul Junction to the River Thames at Lechlade.
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