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SEVEN REASONS WHY YOUR MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION IS VITAL

1. IWA Canal Clean-ups led by our branches keep many waterways clear of debris

2. Restoration is kept high priority through funding for the Waterway Recovery Group

3. Over 10,000 days of volunteering each year will be supported with the right training, tools and materials

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The last few months have been busy ones progressing our objective ‘speaking up for the waterways’ and you will have seen press reports on this. I have been fortunate enough to have meetings with the Waterways Minister, Dr Thérèse Coffey, the chair and CEO of the Environment Agency, as well as regular dialogue throughout Canal & River Trust. All these have substantiated IWA as an organisation that people listen to and take note of our opinions. It is still uncertain whether the transfer of EA navigations to CRT will take place in the near future, but nonetheless our campaign has been valuable in reinforcing our fundamental view that all navigation authorities must have sufficient and sustained funding to survive. We must not go back to the days when failures in the construction of tunnels resulted in several years’ closures, loss of amenity value and the ultimate large expenditure to repair them. This has recently been brought home north of the border where Scottish Canals (the government-funded body responsible for waterways there) has closed sections of the Forth & Clyde Canal because it does not have the funding to repair two road-bridges.

Coming back to our objectives, I was pleased to attend the first meeting of our Restoration Hub High Level Panel. We have recognised for some time that as well as the day-to-day work of the hub supporting restoration groups, our purpose is to promote to government and others the general benefits of waterway restoration so that all those struggling to progress their particular projects will find their path a little easier. This panel consists of a wide range of experts in the subject and has an ambitious agenda. You will read elsewhere of the concept that it is not just the finished product but also the process of restoration that is important to local communities.

I believe that the ‘Inspiring’ objective is our most challenging, and one that our regions and branches are essential in fulfilling. It is primarily at a local level that we can engage with our members, potential future members and indeed those who are not inclined to join us but still have a contribution to make. I would like to see a far more flexible and varied approach to the way in which our branches operate, as there is no prescribed or unchangeable model. So if a branch wants to focus on supporting a local restoration or other initiative, on adopting and improving a specific length of waterway or on organising walks, heritage projects or running boat rallies, all those approaches are great. The direction that a branch takes is up to its committee and members so long as their activities are branded as IWA and that, where possible, those involved gain a wider perspective of the Association.

I would like to express my thanks to all those in the staff team in Chesham; it is only since becoming chairman that I have realised the extent and variety of tasks that are carried out, many of which are essential but often invisible to members. It has been a difficult period with several changes but the team’s friendly and obliging approach has never faltered. Staff will support branches and members as much as they can but please remember that resources are limited and at times we will have to prioritise some items over others.

Looking at my diary for the year, I am beginning to understand that this post necessitates some reduction in the extent of cruising that Joan and I have undertaken in recent years but we still hope to get around between meetings. Do look out for Brandywine wherever you are afloat or on the towpath; we are always happy to stop for a chat.

Ivor Caplan
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Association’s Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 29th September 2018 at 11.30am. Full details, including the venue, will be provided in the next issue of Waterways.

Nominations to stand as an elected trustee are sought. Any member can submit a nomination for a nationally elected trustee, which should be accompanied by confirmation from the nominee that they are willing to be elected as a trustee of the Association. All nominations should include a brief biography or statement not exceeding 400 words, with a portrait-style photo, for publication as part of any ballot paper with the notice convening the AGM to be issued in the next issue of Waterways. All nominations should be received at Head Office (for attention of the company secretary or chief executive) by no later than 2pm on Friday 6th July (i.e. 85 days before the AGM). Full details of the election procedure are at waterways.org.uk/information/governing_documents/procedures_for_election_trustees.

Region chairs are now appointed (usually for terms of three years) by trustees upon recommendations made by region committees. They are no longer ex-officio trustees, but where they are not trustees they are invited to be ‘in attendance’ at trustees’ meetings on the same basis as national committee chairs who are not trustees. The following region chairperson posts are due for appointment this year: North West, South West & South Wales, and West Midlands. Full details of the procedure are available at waterways.org.uk/information/governing_documents/procedure_for_appointment_region_chairmen.

SHOW YOUR LOVE FOR THE WATERWAYS

IWA is asking its members to show their love for the waterways by displaying a newly designed sticker. The labels are the perfect size for sticking in boat or car windows, or could even be flaunted on bikes, canoes and windows at home. Why not share your creative sticker exhibits with us on social media using the hashtag #LoveYourWaterways?

Find your sticker with this issue of Waterways. New members will receive their label as part of their welcome pack.

COULD YOU CHAIR THE CAVALCADE COMMITTEE?

IWA Canalway Cavalcade is London’s biggest annual waterside festival taking place over the early May bank holiday weekend every year. This unique event is organised and run entirely by IWA volunteers and has been held at Little Venice, near Paddington, since 1983. It attracts in the region of 120 boats and more than 30,000 visitors over the three days.

There are activities for all the family to enjoy, with a themed pageant of boats, stalls, live music and entertainment, kids’ activities, competitions, Morris dancers, a real ale bar and a wide variety of delicious snacks and food.

IWA Canalway Cavalcade is organised by a core team of enthusiastic, dedicated volunteers, each of whom has a specific responsibility in the setting up of the event. The team meets every six to eight weeks in London to discuss progress and share ideas. The professionalism of the team is highly regarded by the local authority, residents and all the organisations it deals with.

The increasing success of the event means we are looking for a new chair of the committee for the 2019 event onwards. The role involves motivating the team of volunteers, acting as a spokesperson for the festival, representing the committee at meetings with stakeholders and sponsors, and developing the event in new ways while ensuring it delivers against the objectives, vision and strategy of IWA. Ideal candidates would have previous experience chairing committees or will have held a leadership role in a charitable organisation.

To be considered for this position or to find out more please contact Christine Smith, deputy chairman and publicity manager, IWA Canalway Cavalcade, by email at christine.smith@waterways.org.uk or by telephone on 01386 642577 or 07774 890750.
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BLOWERS GREEN PUMPHOUSE
As a result of campaigning by IWA Birmingham, Black Country & Worcestershire Branch, as well as other organisations and individuals, Canal & River Trust has backed down on its plans to sell off the building known as Blowers Green Pumphouse on the Dudley Canal.

The branch was among many which responded to the public notice which appeared on the building and advertised its proposed sale.

As well as confirming that it had always been their intention that the boaters’ facilities would be retained, CRT has now withdrawn the building from sale while it considers whether offering a long lease of the property, rather than disposing of its freehold interest, might be a better solution and give greater control over the future use and maintenance of the property.

IWA will be campaigning for more transparent ways for CRT to publicise proposed future sales of buildings and other assets, as well as encouraging it to retain freehold interest, particularly in historically significant buildings, wherever possible.

SALE OF BWML MARINAS
Canal & River Trust recently announced that it was looking to sell its subsidiary, British Waterways Marinas Limited.

IWA will be campaigning for a condition of the sale to include the retention of the existing boaters’ facilities at these marinas, such as water points, Elsan disposal and rubbish disposal, and for them to continue to be accessible by all boaters at all hours.

NEW PLAQUE FOR L&L
IWA Lancashire & Cumbria Branch has commissioned a new plaque for boaters who cruise the Liverpool Canal Link. Those who make it to Salthouse Dock can send a picture of their boat there as proof of passage in order to receive the plaque which features Liverpool’s Liver Bird. If necessary, confirmation of passage will be sought from Canal & River Trust.

A Trans Pennine Award plaque is also available from the branch for boaters who’ve travelled between Eldonian Village, Liverpool, and Office Lock, Leeds, (or vice versa) within a 12-month period. Copies of the relevant boat log and/or relevant photographic evidence will be accepted as proof of passage.

Plaques cost £8 each including post and packing, and cheques should be made payable to IWA Lancashire & Cumbria Branch. Proof of passage and payment should be sent to Audrey Smith at Brewery Wharf, 15 Dark Lane, Whittle-le-Woods, Chorley, Lancashire PR6 8AE. Queries can be sent to audrey@familysmith.co.uk.

DO YOU WANT TO CRUISE THE RIVER FOSS?
Castle Mills Lock on the River Foss in York is operated on request by members of IWA North Riding Branch, as a free service to all boaters. This has been agreed with the navigation authority, York City Council. All passages are subject to water levels on the River Foss.

To book a passage through Castle Mills Lock, at least two days’ notice is needed. Telephone 07588 236597 and leave a mobile number with brief details, especially the date you want to use the lock. Use the same number for any other branch query, or email: castle.mills@waterways.org.uk.

There is no overnight mooring available on the River Foss, so it is necessary to book both passages. It is, however, an attractive mile-and-a-half of secluded and interesting waterway for a return trip within the day. Larger boats are advised to turn at Wormalds Cut – a 40ft narrowboat can turn further upstream, or two narrowboats breastasted nose-to-tail can use one to drive up and the other to drive back.

Below: Beverley Beck Society barge Syntan leaving the River Foss and headed back towards the River Ouse.
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An embankment on the Middlewich Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal between Wardle and Stanthorne locks collapsed overnight on Thursday 15th March, and will be closed for the foreseeable future. Canal & River Trust emergency engineers were on site all night dealing with the breach, and engineers and operations teams spent the next few days assessing the damage and prioritising works to be carried out including undertaking a fish rescue and tree assessment.

Less than a week later CRT had installed a temporary dam on the Middlewich side of the breach site. Water was pumped from the Trent & Mersey Canal into the Middlewich Branch over the following few days to refl oat the 14 boats in the affected section and to give them access, via Wardle Lock, to the waterway system again. The boat that was between the breach site and Stanthorne Lock remains marooned.

Volunteers from local group Shropshire Union Middlewich Branch Adopters took the opportunity to remove some of the rubbish from the drained section before it was put back in water, with bicycles, mattresses, tyres and traffic cones among the rubbish collected.

The breach is bad news for CRT as well as any boaters planning to take that route in the near future. An incident at Dutton on the Trent & Mersey in September 2012 cost the charity £2.4m and took seven months to repair, while the 2009 breach of the Leek Arm of the Caldon Canal cost £500,000 and was open again after eight months.

CRT has launched an appeal for donations towards the cost of the repairs – canalrivertrust.org.uk/breach. A similar appeal in 2012 raised £22,000 to help with the repairs at Dutton.

This incident highlights the importance of sufficient funding for the waterways, as well as the importance of monitoring assets, and IWA will be raising these points in a forthcoming meeting with CRT.

Canal & River Trust has announced a reorganisation of its structure, which includes a proposal for six regions instead of the current ten.

This will have an impact on IWA’s branches working with CRT waterway teams, with some branches finding that all their waterways return to one area, while others may find them split further.

With these larger regions IWA will campaign for the continuation of local user groups and looks forward to seeing greater detail about where boundaries will fall, and where that may impact on the operation of whole waterways.

Calling All Waterways Artists
Are you a waterways artist? Would you like to see your work on an IWA Christmas card this coming festive season?

Every year we choose five or six works of art and turn them into cards that are then sold to members and help us raise much-needed funds for the Association.

If you think you might have a suitable, wintery, waterways scene and you would be happy to offer it to us for reproduction as a card we would love to hear from you. In return we would be delighted to send you 200 of the cards. Your details would be printed on the back of every card featuring your image.

Contact stephanie.pay@waterways.org.uk for more information.

Summer 2018
CAMPAIGNING WITH YOU

The effects of HS2 and the CRT licence review are among the issues we’re campaigning on with your help. Here’s how we’ve been doing on these and other affairs...

Broken bridges on the Forth & Clyde

Early in 2018 IWA was alerted to some new issues on the Scottish Lowland canals, the most alarming of which was that Scottish Canals had closed the Forth & Clyde Canal as a through-route due to two lift-bridges requiring repairs; Scottish Canals claimed it did not have the necessary funds.

IWA wrote to Andrew Thin, chairman of Scottish Canals, stating that the current indefinite closure of the coast-to-coast canal was unacceptable, and asking him to identify a budget and bring forward the repairs.

The two lift-bridges, at Twechar and Bonnybridge, are situated around the middle of the Scottish Lowlands canal, and their closure will affect all local traffic, hire-boats and any seagoing craft wishing to traverse the canal from one coast to the other.

The Forth & Clyde was restored to navigation in 2001 as a millennium project with National Lottery funding. IWA considers that in order for Scottish Canals to fulfil its statutory requirement as navigation authority to keep the restored Lowland canals in full working order, repairs to these two bridges should be carried out as a matter of urgency.

The hire-boat trade will be impacted as only one half of the Forth & Clyde will be available. Bookings are likely to be affected as many holidaymakers will wait until the whole route is reopened; while those who are planning to visit Glasgow by canal may cancel.

Any boats based between the two bridges, such as those at Auchininstarry Basin, will be trapped and unable to move until the bridges are repaired. Access to the lowland canals will also be affected as the basin has one of only two slipways, the other being at Falkirk. Even visiting trailable boats will not be able to make use of the western end of the canal.

IWA is also concerned that if the canal is closed for any significant amount of time, other structures, such as nearby locks and other moveable bridges, will deteriorate through lack of use, resulting in even more funds required for repairs in the future.

There are further issues affecting other moveable bridges at the western end of the Forth & Clyde, which along with new restrictions to the operating times and days for the locks and bridges means that access to much of the Lowland canals will be restricted this year. IWA will be taking this up with Scottish Canals.

Earlier this year, IWA wrote to Glasgow City Council objecting to a planning application by Scottish Canals which includes a proposal for a new electrically operated moveable bridge across the Glasgow Arm of the Forth & Clyde. The planning application, for the proposed regeneration of Firhill Basin and the adjacent length of the Glasgow Arm, also included residential and visitor moorings. IWA has suggested that any new or replacement moveable bridges should be of a simple manually operated design and should be capable of user operation 24 hours a day. We’ve also asked the council to place conditions on the above planning application to ensure the continued success of Glasgow as a destination.

Help keep our waterways alive

A recurring theme with many of these issues is that of powered moveable bridges which require high levels of ongoing maintenance as well as operation by Scottish Canals staff. IWA policy is to encourage navigation authorities to install manually or user-operated bridges wherever feasible to reduce ongoing maintenance costs and the likelihood of future breakdowns.

Below: Twechar Lift Bridge on the Forth & Clyde Canal – one of the new structures built as part of the restoration of the canal, and now requiring substantial repairs.

WHY CAMPAIGN WITH IWA? We work to make the waterways better for all.

12 | IWA Waterways

Summer 2018
Mitigating the effects of HS2

The Association has submitted its latest petition to the Government concerning the effects of HS2 on the waterways.

The High Speed Rail (West Midlands-Crewe) Hybrid Bill was given its second reading on 30th January, triggering a petitioning period to 26th February. IWA's petition concentrates on the main outstanding issue affecting waterways users: the impact of noise where the railway crosses or runs close to waterways and the inadequacy of the noise mitigation measures proposed so far.

In 2014, IWA's petition against the canal crossings at Woodend, Fradley, led to the route of the Handsacre Link being altered as requested. Other issues raised in this petition, along with additional matters in IWA's 2015 petition, were heard by the Commons Select Committee in 2016 and some of these were subsequently resolved. Two outstanding matters were then raised in IWA's 2016 petition to the Lords Select Committee. The realignment of Wood End Lane is still not resolved but is subject to assurances which may yet lead to a solution.

The other outstanding issue is that of noise mitigation. Most canal boats are used residentially for varying periods of time, both when moving and when moored, and on most sections of canal mooring is allowed for up to 14 days. Excessive noise from HS2 could render whole sections of canal ‘no-go’ areas for mooring and have a negative impact on the many users of the towpath. However, HS2 continues to regard all canal users as transient and seemingly not worthy of consideration for noise mitigation, except for a limited number of permanent residential moorings.

HS2 will provide noise mitigation measures, such as fencing and earth bunding, only for what it considers to be permanently occupied residential sites. Thus a marina or a popular mooring area along the canal which is used by a succession of boats, each being used residentially for varying periods, is dismissed on the grounds that it is not the same people all the time. IWA's view is that occupied boats, whether on recognised residential moorings, on permanent moorings or on visitor/casual moorings, should all be treated as residential, and therefore similar to residential buildings for the purposes of noise mitigation. Providing adequate noise protection for all areas where boats may at present moor up in the vicinity of HS2 would automatically also provide protection for towpath users and help maintain public use and enjoyment of the waterways.

The additional cost of providing adequate protection would be small. On Phase 2A some fencing is proposed at and north of Fradley Junction and at Great Haywood, but it has not so far been designed to provide sufficient protection for canal users and needs to be extended and raised in height.

IWA is asking HS2 to recognise all boats as residential and all canals as residential locations, with the provision of appropriate noise mitigation at all canal interfaces in Phase 2A, and also in previous and future phases.

Licence review is a missed opportunity

Following publication of the outcome of Canal & River Trust's licence review consultation on 6th March, IWA regrets that CRT has failed to take the opportunity to produce a modern licensing system that addresses the problems it inherited on its creation in 2012.

IWA sees this as a missed opportunity to solve some of the issues caused by the current licensing system, and in particular the effect of the continuous cruising option introduced by the British Waterways Act 1995 as an alternative to having a home mooring. After spending a significant amount of resource on a major review and consultation, it is disappointing that so little has come of it.

The review does nothing to address two of IWA's key concerns: the increasing use of wide-beam boats on inappropriate waterways to the detriment of other waterways users, and ensuring that boaters without a home mooring cruise an appropriate distance. IWA will continue campaigning for these concerns to be resolved.

In response to the detail contained in CRT proposals:

- IWA is concerned that many boaters will face a significant increase in their licence fees within two years as a result of the changes to the prompt payment discount
- IWA considers that a licence based on boat area (length x beam) would have been a fairer and simpler system than the proposed three width bands
- IWA notes the loss of the one-day visitor licence and considers that it should continue to be available online to encourage compliance by occasional users, e.g. of canoes and trailerable boats, and to encourage more people to get afloat affordably.

With your support, we can do even more. waterways.org.uk/campaigns
Since the beginning of 2018, IWA has been particularly busy with its parliamentary campaigning with meetings attended by MPs and navigation authority leaders as well as events such as IWA’s annual Parliamentarian of the Year Award dinner.

One recurring theme throughout our discussions is that of the transfer of Environment Agency navigations to Canal & River Trust, which IWA believes is the best long-term solution for the management of those waterways.

Here’s a breakdown of who we’ve been talking to and why…

**Dr Thérèse Coffey MP**

In the Spring 2018 issue of *Waterways*, we reported that Ivor Caplan, Neil Edwards and Jonathan Shaw (IWA’s parliamentary adviser) had met with DEFRA minister with responsibility for the waterways, Dr Thérèse Coffey MP, and her team. A few days after this meeting, IWA was extremely disappointed to receive an announcement from Dr Coffey that DEFRA had been unable to agree CRT’s recent proposal for taking over the navigations run by EA. IWA subsequently received confirmation from DEFRA that the Government remains receptive to a revised proposal from CRT and that the minister had offered a further meeting with CRT.

**Chairs and Chief Executives of IWA and EA**

IWA looks forward to renewed partnership working and positive benefits for all waterway users on EA’s river navigations, following a meeting with EA senior management on 19th February. The event took place at the request of IWA, and was attended by Neil Edwards, Ivor Caplan, EA’s chief executive, Sir James Bevan, and chair, Emma Howard Boyd.

General principles of mutual support and cooperation were discussed and it was clear that EA regards IWA as a supportive partner. There is much potential for greater volunteer involvement in EA waterways, both on the ground (through work parties and other activities) and in working with a wide range of partners to achieve common objectives. These could include improved funding sources, better enablement of user enjoyment, and wider community benefits.

IWA’s concern about water abstraction licences and flood defence consents, and their impact on restoration projects, was raised, and it is hoped that accommodations can be reached to mitigate some of their potential adverse effects.

Sir James, who is a boater, accepted that a transfer of EA’s navigations to CRT is the right way forward in the longer term, and recognised that there will be difficult times ahead regarding funding for all navigations. As well as practical support through volunteering, Sir James recognised the high profile that IWA has in Parliament and the ways in which IWA can promote the benefits of all waterways to national and local politicians. A follow-up meeting will take place between EA’s navigation management team and IWA where more specific waterway issues will be discussed.

**A less well-known aspect of IWA’s campaigning takes place at Westminster. We reveal what’s been going on behind palace doors**

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Campaigns Focus

Summer 2018

MIDDLE LEVEL BILL
Following the Opposed Bill Committee stage, where an IWA representative spoke on behalf of the Middle Level Commissioners, as reported in the previous issue of Waterways, the Middle Level Bill has now progressed to the House of Lords for the next stage of the Parliamentary process.

The Bill received its third reading in the House of Commons on 28th February and had its first reading in the House of Lords the following day. There will be a second hearing, with possibly an opposed Bill Committee stage after that, and Royal Assent is expected by the end of the year.

IWA welcomes the positive progress of the Bill through Parliament, as it will allow the Commissioners to generate income specifically for boating and the provision of more moorings and better facilities. It would also enable the removal of sunken, stranded and abandoned vessels and facilitate a way for the Commissioners to require boats based on its waterways to hold insurance and comply with the Boat Safety Scheme, which it is currently unable to do.

IWA supports the Commissioners’ proposal to set up a formal Navigation Advisory Committee once the Bill has been enacted, to advise the Commissioners on the exercise of its navigation functions, and welcomes its commitment to achieve at least IWA’s published minimum standards for the provision of boaters’ facilities.

IWA PARLIAMENTARIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD
IWA's Parliamentary dinner, where its Parliamentarian of the Year Award is announced, took place on Tuesday 6th March. At the event, Ivor Caplan acknowledged support for the inland waterways by Aldridge-Brownhills MP, Wendy Morton, in presenting her with the award for 2018.

Wendy Morton MP has been a great supporter of the inland waterways over a number of years, not least when IWA held its Festival of Water at Pelsall, in her constituency, in 2016, and more recently in her support for the Middle Level Bill when it returned to the Commons in October 2017.

The dinner, held at the Palace of Westminster, was hosted by John Grogan MP, chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Waterways. Those present heard Ivor Caplan call for increased funding for the publicly funded navigation authorities, and reiterate the importance of navigable waterways to the health and well-being of the UK population and the contribution they make to the UK economy through regeneration, tourism and leisure.

Emma Howard Boyd, chair of EA, also addressed the gathering, saying: “EA manages over 2,500 assets which include locks, weirs, laybys and bridges for the benefit of 26,000 boat users over 1,000km of inland waterways. These are an intrinsic part of the landscape but there are challenges ahead. We need to look at new ways of raising revenue. Our aim is to create a five-year charging plan and a charging scheme that is fit for the future. IWA is a vital champion of safe and sustainable navigations, so partnership working will help ensure waterways continue to provide an enjoyable experience for everyone.”

HOUSE OF LORDS DEBATE
Just two days later, on Thursday 8th March, a debate was held by the House of Lords on the subject of ‘the future of the UK’s inland waterways’. The Grand Committee debate had been secured by Lord German, IWA’s 2017 Parliamentarian of the Year, who opened by saying that the inland waterway network is a unique and precious national asset, which has the potential to transform places, enrich lives, improve mental and physical health, support communities and promote economic development. He mentioned that unlike National Trust properties, many waterways run through deprived communities, and he asked the Government to take action to realise the full potential of the waterways.

Support for the transfer of EA waterways to CRT was mentioned by a number of the peers who spoke, with other topics discussed including residential boating, the impact of invasive non-native species on navigable waterways, increased possibilities for the use of volunteers, pollution of the waterways and waterway tourism benefits.

Lord Trimble, who owns a narrowboat, spoke about the benefits of new waterway developments, such as the Bedford-to-Milton Keynes Waterway.

Lord Gardiner of Kimble responded on behalf of DEFRA in his role as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State. On the subject of the EA transfer, he said: “The Minister has instructed
officials in DEFRA and EA to work with CRT on a revised proposal which fully accounts for which assets could be transferred.” He concluded by agreeing that the waterways have a key role to play in the fulfilment of a better life for the people of this nation.

ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
Transfer of EA navigations, future waterway funding and residential moorings were among the topics discussed at a meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Waterways, held at Westminster on Tuesday 13th March.

John Grogan MP, chair of APPGW, opened the meeting and welcomed the first speaker, Richard Parry, chief executive of CRT, who gave an overview of the trust since it was created in 2012.

Dr Thérèse Coffey MP had been due to speak at the meeting but was unfortunately called away on urgent Parliamentary business at very short notice. In her place Rebecca Pow MP, Parliamentary Private Secretary, addressed the meeting and took away a number of questions for the minister.

On the subject of the transfer of EA navigations to CRT, the meeting heard that the minister does recognise the benefits of a transfer, and officials in DEFRA and EA have been instructed to discuss further with CRT to fully account for which assets would be moved over. A date of 26th April was set to discuss the terms of the transfer, which would have to offer the best deal for taxpayers.

Other subjects discussed included future funding of both CRT and EA navigations, volunteering, residential boating and navigation authority alignment of licensing and enforcement. Attending the meeting were representatives of a number of navigation authorities and waterway organisations, with this being the first APPGW meeting for a number of years to which waterway stakeholders had been invited.

The Secretariat for APPGW is provided by Policy Connect working on behalf of IWA. The group’s mission statement is: “To consider matters relating to navigable (and formerly navigable) rivers, canals, estuaries and lakes in the UK; including the potential social, economic and cultural impact of the regeneration of those waterways and extension of the system.”

WESTMINSTER HALL DEBATE
Through the All-Party Parliamentary Group, IWA is encouraging MPs to secure a Westminster Hall Debate about the future of the inland waterways.

Once a date has been secured, IWA members and other organisations such as restoration societies will be encouraged to write to their MPs to ask them to take part. Topics that MPs will be encouraged to raise include the transfer of EA navigations to CRT and future funding for CRT, as well as the general benefits of waterways to local communities and the wider economy.

FUNDING FOR EA NAVIGATIONS
Whether or not the transfer to CRT ever takes place, IWA considers that it is now more important than ever to identify additional funds for the waterways currently managed by EA, in order to prevent further asset deterioration and waterway closures. Only with increased funding will these navigations realise their potential through leisure, tourism, health and well-being, all of which come with associated economic benefits for the local and wider UK economy.

IWA recognises the efforts of EA to maintain its navigations within the limited government grant available to them and the lack of opportunity to attract further funding as CRT can. IWA is particularly concerned that during this entire debate there has been no indication from the Government as to how sufficient and sustainable levels of funding will be provided for EA navigations if the transfer does not progress. With increased pressure on general EA budgets and the need to prioritise other services such as flood control, the funding for navigation is likely to decrease and its navigation assets deteriorate further.

IWA believes that the outstanding issues should be capable of resolution and that a transfer of EA navigations remains the best way to ensure the future of these waterways with the minimum impact on the public purse. IWA urges DEFRA and CRT to continue negotiations towards a mutually acceptable solution and in the meantime we will focus on the matter which has always been our primary concern – the levels of funding for EA navigations.
SILVER PROPELLER CHALLENGE

DOWN THE DRAINS

Sue O’Hare takes on the Silver Propeller Challenge by exploring the Lincolnshire Fens en route to Boston

On a cruise to the Lincolnshire town of Boston, you can visit two Silver Propeller Challenge locations: the Maud Foster Windmill on the Maud Foster Drain and Boston Black Sluice on the Black Sluice Navigation. As well as the satisfaction of ticking off two locations towards the target of 20, the area has a great deal of interest including a passage through the glorious cathedral city of Lincoln – one of the most memorable inland waterways experiences.

There’s also the opportunity to collect two plaques separate from this challenge, for visiting the Maud Foster Windmill and Cobblers Lock, the current head of navigation on the River Slea Navigation. Other attractions en route include the UK’s oldest canal still in use, restored and new waterways, a complex system of navigable drains and the port of Boston – all amid the wide open skies, quietness and isolation of the Fens.
DRAINING THE FENS

The Fens (or Fenlands) are a coastal plain around the Wash extending from Lincolnshire in the north, through Cambridgeshire and the former county of Huntingdonshire, to parts of Norfolk and Suffolk in the east.

Originally this was a marshy region but it was drained over the last few centuries and is now a productive arable farming area with a system of canalised rivers, internal drainage channels and automated pumping stations. The first concerted effort to drain the land was made in the 1630s by groups of wealthy individuals (‘Gentleman Adventurers’) sponsored by King Charles I, opposed by local villagers (‘Fenland Tigers’) who feared their traditional livelihood of wildfowling, fishing and reed cutting would be lost. Opposition continued until a major breakthrough in the 1820s, when wind pumps were replaced by steam engines, which in turn were replaced with diesel-powered pumps and then the electric pumps that are still in use today.

ROUTES TO BOSTON

Most boaters will choose to take the inland route, following the tidal River Trent to Torksey and turning off south-eastwards onto the Fossdyke Navigation to Lincoln and the River Witham onwards to Boston. With careful planning, good weather and a qualified pilot, it is also possible to approach from the sea, crossing the Wash from the River Welland or the River Nene to the south. The planned Fens Waterways Link will add a third route, enabling an inland passage to be made from as far away as Bedford on the River Great Ouse.

“There is much to explore in Lincoln, and the visitor moorings there make an excellent base”
THE FOSSDYKE NAVIGATION

The Fossdyke Navigation is the oldest artificial waterway in the UK which is still navigable. The Romans engineered a transport network serving Lindum Colonia (Lincoln) around 120 AD, making the River Witham navigable inland and building the Car Dyke from the Nene at Peterborough to the Witham in Lincoln, and the Fossdyke from Lincoln to the River Trent and the Humber Estuary. Succeeding generations continued to use the navigations for transport; the Danes when they invaded England and the Normans for carrying stone to build Lincoln Cathedral. King Henry I had the Fossdyke dredged in 1121, James I transferred ownership to the Corporation of Lincoln who made further improvements, then together with the River Witham it was leased to the Great Northern Railway Company in 1846 and immediately started falling into decline.

Following nationalisation of the waterways in 1948, one of the earliest ventures into pleasure cruising by the then British Transport Waterways was a hotel-boat Water Wanderer running between Nottingham, Torksey and Boston from 1959. Today the Fossdyke and Witham navigations are established cruising waterways, albeit still with an important role in drainage during the winter months at which times water levels can change rapidly.

The Fossdyke runs from Torksey Lock into Brayford Pool, a wide expanse of water in the centre of Lincoln which was a port from Roman times onwards. The wool trade continued for centuries, with Lincoln Green and Lincoln Scarlet being popular in the Middle Ages. Gradually the warehouses and barges fell into disuse and disrepair, until regeneration of the Pool area started in the early 1990s. The University of Lincoln was a major force, creating the first new city centre campus in the UK for 25 years along side the Fossdyke and the Pool. Now the Pool has a new role as a marina and is well used by resident and city centre campus in the UK for 25 years alongside the Fossdyke and the River Witham. The University of Lincoln was a major force, creating the first new city centre campus in the UK for 25 years alongside the Fossdyke and the Pool. Now the Pool has a new role as a marina and is well used by resident and city centre campus in the UK for 25 years alongside the Fossdyke and the River Witham. The University of Lincoln was a major force, creating the first new city centre campus in the UK for 25 years alongside the Fossdyke and the Pool. Now the Pool has a new role as a marina and is well used by resident and city centre campus in the UK for 25 years alongside the Fossdyke and the River Witham.

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RIVER WITHAM

There is much to explore in Lincoln, not least the cathedral and castle high on the hill, and there are visitor moorings which make an excellent base. The cathedral is home to the Lincoln Imp, a grotesque figure which has become the symbol of the city. According to legend it was a creature sent to the cathedral by Satan to cause havoc, only to be turned into stone by an angel.

The Witham Navigation runs out of the Pool under Lincoln High Bridge, which dates from 1660 and forms the famous Glory Hole below 16th-century half-timbered houses and shops, and is the oldest bridge in the country with buildings remaining on it. Immediately afterwards the 16m-tall Millennium sculpture Empowerment by Stephen Broadbent and the Waterside shopping centre make a striking contrast.

The Witham Navigation continues through two locks to Grand Sluice Lock at Boston, where it becomes tidal and flows out into the Wash through the Haven. Visitor pontoon moorings are available at all main road bridge crossings.

For much of the way the disused Lincoln to Boston branch line of the Great Northern Railway runs along the bank, now converted into the 33-mile Water Rail Way with an accompanying sculpture trail on a Lincolnshire theme. The name is doubly apt since the shy water rail bird has been spotted here. Other features include Fiskerton Fen Nature Reserve and the nearby spa town of Woodhall Spa, with its RAF links as the home of 617 Dambusters Squadron and its Kinema in the Woods complete with Compton organ (‘flicks in the sticks’ in RAF parlance).

At Bardney Lock there are CRT visitor moorings with a facilities block and electric and water points. Through the lock there are further moorings at Bardney Heritage Centre.

Before Dogdyke the disused Horncastle Canal joins the Witham, and at Chapel Hill there is a junction with the Kyme Eau or Sleaford Navigation. Between the two is the village of Tattershall, home to Tattershall Castle and also Holy Trinity Church with the grave of Tom Thumb who was reputedly just over 1 ft tall and died in 1620 aged 101. Visitor moorings at Dogdyke are convenient to make a visit to the RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight visitor centre at RAF Coningsby (weekdays only). Hourly buses run from Dogdyke to BoBMF, or it is only 1 mile along the straight quiet road to the entrance.

Continuing onwards towards Boston the extraordinarily tall and elegant tower of St Botolph’s Church (Boston Stump) comes into view, and draws the boater on past the entrance to the Witham Navigable Drains at Anton’s Gowt to the end of the non-tidal Witham at the Boston Grand Sluice. The sluice was built to retain the river upstream at a level suitable for navigation, to exclude tidal water and silt and to enable floodwater to be sluiced away. The modern structure, including a navigation lock, is the latest in a series dating from the first in 1502, after which time a succession of engineers tackled the challenges of managing navigation, drainage and sewerage.
flooding including John Smeaton and John Rennie senior and junior.

Recently a £100m flood defence scheme, known as the Boston Barrier, has been approved to provide improved protection for Boston against tidal surges such as happened in December 2013. IWA’s concerns about the effect on navigation were noted in the Inspector’s Report to the Public Inquiry. As a result the development of a Navigation Management Plan was made a condition of approval, and both IWA Lincolnshire Branch and East Midlands Region will be involved in the process.

**Witham Navigable Drains**

Visitor moorings are provided on the Witham at all main road crossings above Boston Grand Sluice, but in order to reach the Maud Foster Windmill by boat it is necessary to turn off onto the Witham Navigable Drains at Anton’s Gowt (‘Anton’ after Sir Anthony Thomas, one of the people who helped drain the Witham Fens from 1631 onwards, and ‘gowt’ meaning a sluice or outflow and said to originate from ‘go out’).

This remarkable network of waterways was constructed to drain the Fens around Boston and is controlled by the Witham Fourth Internal Drainage Board. The board actively supports leisure uses and maintains a navigable depth in the drains from May to September, but in the winter they are emptied. The drains are below the level of the Witham and so, unusually, Anton’s Gowt Lock leads downwards from a river navigation onto a man-made waterway.

The most straightforward route to the Maud Foster Windmill is to head east from Anton’s Gowt along Frith Bank Drain to the junction at Cowbridge Lock, and then south into Boston along the Maud Foster Drain. IWA Lincolnshire Branch offers a 4in by 4in stainless steel plaque with the outline of the mill etched on it for boats mooring near the mill. The cost is £10 including p&p, with payment made to IWA Lincolnshire Branch (contact Dave Carnell at Conifer Cottage, Northend, Goxhill, North Lincs DN19 7JX).

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**MAUD FOSTER WINDMILL**

The drain and the mill take their name from the donation of land by Maud Foster in 1564 to enable Boston to be saved from flooding through the digging of a new cut. It is one of the tallest in the UK at 80ft high and has seven storeys, and provides excellent views over Boston. It was built in 1819 for the brothers Thomas and Isaac Reckitt to serve their business as millers, corn factors and bakers, and later to supply power to a bone mill and cement mill. Isaac Reckitt went on to enter the starch business in Hull, becoming Reckitt & Sons famous for laundry blue and ‘Robin’ starch, then Reckitt & Colman and eventually Reckitt Benckiser. The mill succumbed to mechanical problems in 1948, but was repaired by the Reckitt Family Charitable Trusts and again by the present owners. It is open to the public who can see the milling taking place.

There is much more to see in Boston including most obviously the Stump, which stands on the east bank of the river. It is one of the largest parish churches in England, reflecting the prosperity of Boston in medieval times owing to the wool trade. The tower is 272ft high, with views stretching for over 30 miles on clear days. Being in Boston is also a good opportunity to sample Lincolnshire Plum Bread, traditionally served with butter or cheese.
BOSTON BLACK SLUICE
The Black Sluice controls the flow of the South Forty Foot Drain or Black Sluice Navigation into the Haven. It is the latest of several structures and the original was probably the Skirbeck Sluice controlling the Earl of Lindsey’s drainage in 1635 of what was then known as the Lindsey Levels. This sluice was destroyed by local people, which is said to be the origin of the name Black Sluice.

To reach the Black Sluice from the Witham Navigation requires passage through the Boston Grand Sluice into the tidal Haven and a 10-15-minute journey downstream. The lock-keepers at the Canal & River Trust’s Grand Sluice and the Environment Agency’s Black Sluice will coordinate their actions to make this as straightforward as possible. The Black Sluice Drain was navigable until the 1960s or ‘70s, and the new lock was opened in 2009 by EA as the first phase of the Fens Waterways Link, giving access to 19 miles of the drain. Visitor moorings are available at the lock visitor centre, Hubberts Bridge pub and Swineshead Railway Station. The second phase will be to upgrade the southern section, including a link to the River Glen to enable navigation to Spalding.

RIVER SLEA NAVIGATION AND HORNCastle CANAL
Two further waterways connecting with the Witham should be included for completeness. The Horncastle Canal incorporated part of the older Tattershall Canal as well as some of the canalised River Bain. Its 11 miles and 12 broad locks required the services of both Jessop and Rennie as engineers and involved lengthy disputes with the King’s Champion. This feudal hereditary office provides a champion who rides into Westminster Hall at a coronation banquet and challenges anyone who might dispute the monarch’s title. The holders are the Dymoke family of the Manor of Scrivelsby in the parish of Horncastle, and the navigation was planned to cross their estate. Eventually the canal was completed, but by 1885 it was closed again owing to competition from the railways. There are now plans for restoration, with the support of IWA Lincolnshire Branch.

The Slea Navigation or Kyme Eau leaves the Witham at Chapel Hill and climbs south-west through seven locks to the market town of Sleaford. A commercial waterway was planned as early as 1343, but it was only in 1794 that the navigation opened. After initial success it too succumbed to the railways, but unlike the Horncastle Canal it can be explored by boat. The Sleaford Navigation Trust was formed in 1976 and has made considerable progress with restoration. Boats can enter through Taylors Lock, where a height marker can be checked for the low bridge at Half Penny Hatch beyond South Kyme, and proceed for about 8 miles through the village of South Kyme to the current head of navigation at Cobbler’s Lock. Restoration work is continuing and in the meantime the full length of the Navigation can be canoed. The Sleaford Navigation Trust offers a brass plaque showing its coat of arms for craft reaching Cobbler’s Lock. The plaque is available from Mrs Pat Taylor, Clovelly, Park Lane, Heighington, Lincoln LN4 1RF, for £10 including p&p.

To find out more about IWA’s Silver Propeller Challenge, visit waterways.org.uk/silverpropeller.

FURTHER INFORMATION
The Fossdyke and Witham Navigations are CRT waterways. The Black Sluice Drain (South Forty Foot Drain) is managed by EA, which makes a small charge. No additional licence is required for the Sleaford Navigation or the Witham Navigable Drains.

Due to works taking place on the Boston Tidal Barrier, 24 hours’ notice is required to ascertain locking times – call Grand Sluice on 01205 364864 and Black Sluice 01522 785041/07775 228323.

IWA Lincolnshire Branch provides helpful information, navigation notes and maps for the Witham Navigable Drains at waterways.org.uk/lincolnshire (under Local Waterways select Witham Navigable Drains then Map & Notes).
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Love Your Waterways

HIRE

EDUCATION

Paul and Amanda Rodgers started hiring boats in 2012 – and haven’t looked back since. As they prepare for their umpteenth holiday afloat this summer, we find out what they’ve learnt and why they love it

WHAT INSPIRED YOUR FIRST TRIP?
We were running a small company in London and had recently increased the number of staff, so we were looking for interesting team-building exercises. We wanted something away from London and that would reinforce the importance of really good communication. Hiring a narrowboat came to mind. Obviously, we had to try it ourselves first (we didn't want to show ourselves up in front of the team!) so we took out a day-boat in Guildford. It was lucky we had this trial run, in fact, as we ended up getting swept towards the edge of a weir and completely stuck! It was bad enough that there were witnesses in the nearby beer garden, but at least we were spared our employees seeing us making a hash of it. It certainly wasn't the most auspicious start to our hire-boating holidays, but definitely one of the more memorable trips. And, actually, it called for quite a bit of team-building between the two of us...

IT DIDN'T PUT YOU OFF?
Not in the slightest. We had such a fun time and the realisation that there was still so much to learn spurred us on to book another ‘proper’ holiday – a long weekend on the Llangollen. It was a pretty good place to start our education, especially going over the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

Since then we've tried to hire at least once a year. It fits in alongside our love of Formula One quite well. In 2014/15 we managed to fit in two narrowboat trips and three Grand Prix. We definitely favour the extremes, when it comes to speed!

DID YOU EVER GET ROUND TO TAKING YOUR STAFF OUT ON THE WATER?
Yes, and we found that being out of the office, with the opportunity to stop, moor up, and talk about things in a different environment was really refreshing. You quickly learn that people who might be good at one thing in the office can be completely different on water. Similarly, we found others coming out of their shells and taking the lead. Usefully, it also gave us a better idea of how to train people on something that's completely new. It made us slow the process down and think in a more structured way. Let's face it, the waterways can ultimately be a dangerous environment if you make mistakes. And it's the same with business if you're doing things in the wrong way, not complying or being careless. You need to explain these risks very clearly, even if that person isn't directly involved with activities that would expose them.

Summer 2018
 WHICH BOATING HOLIDAYS HAVE REALLY STOOD OUT OVER THE YEARS?
The London Ring was great fun. We were probably among the last hire-boaters to be allowed out on the Thames. Even though, by then, we’d hired quite a few times and felt fairly experienced, we still booked a qualified river pilot to come with us. We used to live in London and were keen mudlarkers, so we understood the tide really well, but it still felt sensible to have a professional on board on that passage from Limehouse to Brentford.

One of the things we love about the waterways is the opportunity to look at places from a completely different perspective. This was certainly the case with the London Ring. We were both surprised by how much more of the city opened up to us, even areas that we’d assumed we were already very familiar with.

We also enjoyed the Scottish canals. If you want to explore them, hiring is pretty much the only option, which is why we were so pleased to see IWA campaigning for Capercaillie Cruisers to stay open on the Lowland Canals last year. Our trip took us from Falkirk into the centre of Glasgow and back in just a long weekend. We tend to be on a well-organised mission when we hire boats – we’re used to going for eight to ten hours a day.

DID YOU HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE OF THE WATERWAYS BEFORE HIRING?
Amanda grew up around canals. She’s from Derby, so often visited Shardlow and Willington as a youngster before later moving to Greywell on the Basingstoke, right by the tunnel. The opportunity to be on the waterways at last, rather than simply walking alongside them, was quite a lure for her.

I’ve done a bit of coastal sailing in the past, but knew nothing about the inland waterways. Even though 20 years ago I lived in Banbury and was just a stone’s throw from the canal, I really wasn’t aware of it. I think there are a lot of people like that, who are living right by the waterways and who just don’t know about them. The more we can do to publicise them the better.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD HIRE-BOAT, IN YOUR OPINION?
A nice configurable layout and good access through the boat. There are always moments when one of you has to rush through to the other end for whatever reason, and that freedom of movement is vital.

It’s usually just the two of us aboard, but we tend to hire with one more double berth than we really need. We never count the dinette as a sleeping area – we always make sure we’ve got a little more space.

Because we tend to hire at the extremes of the season – early spring and late autumn – really good heating is a ‘must’.

Another thing that’s quite important to us is having wifi aboard. We run our own business so even when we’re effectively away on holiday, we still need to be able to keep in touch with what’s happening in the office. On the waterways you often find yourselves tied up in fairly remote places, so the ability to login no matter what gives us the freedom to go away in the first place.

WHAT HOLIDAY PLANS DO YOU HAVE FOR THIS SUMMER?
We’re doing our first trip with friends this year, picking a boat up at Napton. This gives us a choice of four routes really. As the friends we’re taking along are complete novices, we’ll let them decide which way based on how many locks they want to do, how rural they’d like to be etc.

We’re also hoping to fit in a two-week hire-holiday later this year to see how feasible it is to work on a boat properly. We have to move out of our house next year while some work is done to it, so we’re half thinking of moving onto a boat instead for those six months.

ARE THERE ANY WATERWAYS YOU’D LIKE TO REVISIT?
I think we’ll always have a soft spot for the Llangollen because it was our first, and it’s so varied. Amanda suffers from vertigo so crossing Pontcysyllte was an interesting life experience.

But we haven’t done any waterways more than once so far. One of the attractions of hiring is the freedom to explore as many different waterways as possible by picking a boat up exactly where you want. It becomes a bit more challenging when you own a boat and have to get it over to your preferred starting point first.

“Boating fits in alongside our love of Formula One quite well. We definitely favour the extremes, when it comes to speed!”
WHAT CANALS ARE STILL ON THE BUCKET LIST?
Amanda's long-term ambition is to do the Thames & Severn at Inglesham. We do a lot of WRG camps, so having spent years working on it, she'd like to see it completed. She'd also like to boat the Huddersfield Narrow and some of the French canals as well.

We haven't hired abroad yet but last year we spent our honeymoon in the US and seeing some of the derelict canals on the eastern side, especially around the Blue Ridge Parkway, was fascinating. I'd like to find out more. I'm not sure if they'll ever be navigable again – America doesn't seem to have as strong a restoration movement as we do – but they were interesting to see nonetheless. I'd also like to holiday around the big lakes in Canada.

DO YOU INDULGE YOUR LOVE OF THE WATERWAYS IN ANY OTHER WAY APART FROM HIRE-BOATING?
We've walked most of the Oxford Canal from Napton to Oxford (not all at once!) and we love our canalside pubs, especially the Great Western at Aynho, and the Boat at Thrupp.

HAVE YOU EVER HAD ANY NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES ON THE WATERWAYS?
Not really. We respect other boaters so we don't go tearing around upsetting people. And we're both very friendly so tend to engage positively with other waterway users.

The only negatives have come when we've got it wrong ourselves. There have been a few broken glasses from time to time, and one injury to date, when Amanda lost her grip on the windlass and it hit her in the mouth. There was a lot of blood, but fortunately no missing teeth, and we recovered in a very nice pub where she was given plenty of ice for the swelling. It happened quite late in the day and we were both pretty tired. The lesson we took from it is that there comes a point when it is far better to take a break and stop than try to press on. You forget the waterways can be dangerous and it's important to know your limits.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH IWA...
We joined in 2014 after a WRG camp that Amanda booked as a birthday present. Once we'd done the camp and found out more about IWA's work, we thought it made sense to join, given our love of the canals generally. It’s been a fairly fast track through IWA life since then. Almost straightaway I happened to mention that my background was in marketing, and was subsequently enlisted to fill a vacancy on the marketing committee in early 2016. Then in the middle of last year I was asked to join the trustees. We’re still very heavily involved with WRG and led a camp last summer at Inglesham. We’re leading another one this year, which will hopefully see the lock there completed.

YOU JUGGLE ALL THIS WITH RUNNING YOUR OWN COMPANY?
Yes, the waterways are an antidote to all the nonsense and crazy tech stuff in our business life. That can feel fairly vacuous at times, so the chance to get away and get our hands dirty doing something with tangible benefits, like the WRG camps, is really welcome.

HOW CAN IWA HELP OTHER HIRERS?
There are a number of really good resources on the website, including ‘Ten Reasons to Go Boating’, an ‘Introduction to Holiday Hiring’ and, most importantly, the ‘How to Choose a Route’ feature, which leads you through to CanalPlanAC. No one should go boating without taking a look at that website.

Hirers, especially, can have an unrealistic expectation of how far they can travel in a day. You don't necessarily factor in that locks take time! Or where to turn if you're doing a there-and-back journey.

It would be brilliant if IWA had more of a presence on hire-boats – some literature aboard, for example, that advertised the discounts you can get in pubs etc if you're a member. It would be a great drive for new membership. I'd like to be negotiating more discounts on behalf of IWA and look forward to getting further involved with that.

FINALLY, CAN YOU SHARE YOUR TOP TIPS FOR HIRERS?
Bring decent gloves for the locks, hand wipes, and jigsaws to do in the evening. And don’t forget to shop well for the most important part of narrowboating – the bacon and eggs in the morning!
Love for the Llangollen in Calendar Competition

This year’s IWA Calendar Competition saw more than 75 photographers submit over 400 images of scenes from around the system, but it was Mark Fetherstone’s atmospheric shot of Trevor Basin on the Llangollen Canal that took the top spot.

Submissions featured a broad cross section of our canals and rivers, showcasing British inland boating and wildlife at their best. The River Thames proved most popular with photographers sending in more than 50 pictures of the waterway.

With the standard of entries so high this year, producing a shortlist was no easy task for our panel of judges. The final decision, however, was made by IWA members, who voted online for their favourite scene.

Congratulations to the winner, who received a £100 voucher to spend in IWA’s online shop, and to each of the 13 finalists, who earned themselves a place in the 2019 IWA calendar.

Thank you to everyone who entered this year’s competition. Entries are now open for next year’s – please visit waterways.org.uk/photocomp for details of how to submit your photos of our inland waterways for a chance to win.

Sonnin Lock on the River Thames by Margaret Smith.

Birmingham Main Line by Martyn Losch.

Fishing on the Kennet & Avon Canal in Berkshire, by Simon.
Trevor Basin on the Llangollen Canal by Mark Fetherstone.

'Rain or Shine' – Basingstoke Canal between Frimley Lodge Park and Ash Vale in Surrey by Malc Lawes.

Winter sun setting on the Napton Summit, Oxford Canal, by Jo Lodge.
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The Quarterly Inland Waterways Heritage Magazine

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The Quarterly Inland Waterways Heritage Magazine

Summer 2018
There are some 2,000 miles of unconnected waterways in England, Scotland and Wales, on which there are a variety of ways of getting afloat, be it by canoe, hire-vessel, trailable craft or trip-boat. As a follow-up to the article ‘Costing the system’ in the Spring 2018 edition of Waterways, which looked at the licence fees for boating the connected network, I’ve taken a look at the price of exploring isolated navigations.

Yet again, the starting point for my research was IWA’s Waterway Directory, which details all navigable and previously navigable rivers and canals and is available to download free on IWA’s website. Contact details for all navigation authorities mentioned are included in the directory and further research is recommended for any trips planned.

It wasn’t possible to cover every waterway here, so a selection was picked, some featuring locations in IWA’s Silver Propeller Challenge. Some of these can be accessed from the main waterways system by tidal and estuarial passages, but inland vessels (e.g. narrowboats) require a lot of preparation for such journeys and may be unsuitable. There are, however, a number of different ways of boating on these waterways.

**CANOE** – British Canoeing’s membership licensing arrangements don’t include all waterways, but I’ve noted which ones are.

**TRAILABLE BOAT** – in order to demonstrate likely fees, I have assumed an average-sized trailable craft of 23ft (7m) long.

**HIRE-BOATS/DAY TRIPS** – I’ve indicated where holiday hire, day hire, canoe/paddleboard hire or trip-boats are available. Contact details should be easily found online for anyone planning a visit.
This little group of waterways in the East Riding of Yorkshire can be accessed by suitable boats via the Humber Estuary or by using one of several slipways for trailable boats.

The River Hull is navigable for 16 miles upstream from the Humber at Kingston-upon-Hull, and Hull City Council is the navigation and harbour authority within the city boundary. A lack of locks means the river is tidal and some large commercial vessels use the lower 4 miles on a regular basis. There are no official moorings for pleasure craft, nor any boater facilities, but Hull Marina just upstream on the Humber offers both.

Hull City Council’s harbourmaster is responsible for lifting bridges to the city boundary just above Ennerdale Bridge, a distance of about 5 miles, and they should be contacted by radio or mobile phone for any trip up the river. Lifting of Grovehill Bridge, operated by the Beverley lock-keeper, needs to be booked with 24 hours’ notice. There is a slipway operated by the Environment Agency (currently free) opposite the Old Shipyard on the River Hull.

The Driffield Navigation continues upstream for 14¼ miles from Aike on the River Hull to the original head of navigation in Driffield, with the top 2½ miles still being under restoration. There is nothing to distinguish it from the river until Struncheon Hill Lock is reached, and this stretch can be shallow and weedy, particularly in late summer. There are user-operated moveable bridges and locks up until the current limit of navigation, the fixed low bridge at Wansford. Access to the top section for very small craft is provided by the slipway at Riverhead in Driffield, and there are three other launch sites on the lower part of the river. Two branches – West Beck and Frodingham Beck – are worth exploring, the limits being the fixed bridges on both.

Beverley Beck is navigable for just 1 mile with one lock, and there are visitor moorings in the town – these need to be booked through East Riding Tourist Information which can also supply cards for electricity hook-up. Beverley Beck is accessed through Grovehill Lock, subject to 24 hours’ notice, and normally operable about two hours before high tide or three hours after. It is home to Syntan, operated and run by the Beverley Barge Preservation Society. There is no pump-out or Elsan facility anywhere on the River Hull, Beverley Beck or Driffield Navigation at present. The nearest such facilities are at Hull Marina.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miles of waterway/ navigation authority</th>
<th>Cost for accessing by canoe</th>
<th>Cost for accessing with a 23ft trailable boat</th>
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<th>Hire-boat/day trips available</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>River Hull</td>
<td>No charge</td>
<td>No charge</td>
<td>There are no locks on the River Hull to limit size of vessels. Boats may be able to pass underneath the moveable bridges, depending on air draught and the state of the tide, and there are two fixed bridges with variable clearance depending on tide of about 9-11ft (3-3.5m).</td>
<td>A company on the River Hull near Beverley offers rowing and motor-boat hire, by the hour, or for a half or full day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 miles</td>
<td>Hull City Council</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Driffield Navigation (and branches)</td>
<td>No charge</td>
<td>Driffield Navigation Trust requests that boat-owners pay an annual boat fee of £50. Small boat users are asked to pay an annual donation.</td>
<td>Length 61ft (18.5m) Beam 14ft 6in (4.4m) Air draught 9ft 6in (2.8m) Draught 4ft (1.2m)</td>
<td>Driffield Navigation Trust runs a trip-boat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 miles</td>
<td>Driffield Navigation Trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverley Beck</td>
<td>No charge</td>
<td>At least 24 hours’ notice of intended access is required via the lock-keeper.</td>
<td>Length 65ft (19.81m) Beam 17ft 6in (5.33m) Draught 5ft (1.5m)</td>
<td>Beverley Barge Preservation Society offers chartered boat trips down the Beck and onto the River Hull towards either Driffield or Hull.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 mile</td>
<td>East Riding of Yorkshire Council</td>
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</table>
**THE BROADS**

The Norfolk and Suffolk broads, an area with National Park status, has much to offer and with 125 miles of waterway to explore will warrant some return visits. History abounds, from Norwich’s castle and cathedral through to World War II airbases, and the wildlife and scenery is renowned.

Many different types of boats are to be found on the Broads, and it’s possible to hire canoes, rowing boats, day-boats, yachts and holiday cruisers. There is even still a fleet of traditional Norfolk Wherries offering chartered trips and day cruises.

The Broads Authority charges tolls for the use of its waterways. Short visit tolls are available for periods up to 28 days within any year (1st April-31st March). Slipways and launching points for trailerable and portable boats of various sizes are dotted around, and there are canoe trails with a range of distances available, details of which can be found on the British Canoeing and Broads Authority websites.

Included in IWA’s Silver Propeller Challenge are two locations on the Broads: Brograve Mill on Waxham New Cut (access restricted to boats with a maximum length of 30ft), and Norwich New Mills Yard on the River Wensum (Bishops Bridge is an alternative location for hire-boats if hire conditions limit navigation).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miles of waterway/ navigation authority</th>
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<th>Hire-boat/day trips available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>125 miles of rivers, cuts and lakes (broads)</td>
<td>Sailboards, rowing boats, punts, canoes and kayaks are charged £7.60 for up to 7 days, or £15.20 for 8-14 days. Included in British Canoeing membership</td>
<td>Short Visit Tolls are based on the length of the vessel’s hull (unlike Annual Tolls which are now charged by area) and are available for periods of 1-7, 8-14, 15-21 or 22-28 consecutive days, starting at £35.30 for powered craft or £21.90 for unpowered sailable craft.</td>
<td>There is only one lock to restrict size of vessels – Mutford Lock in Lowestoft, which is the limit of navigation for hire-craft, and is 70ft x 20ft 6in (22m x 6.5m)</td>
<td>Several companies offer holiday hire – traditional and modern cruisers and sailing yachts. Day-boats, canoes, kayaks and stand-up paddleboards are all available for hire. Trip-boats available in a number of locations, including skippered day and weekend charters on traditional Norfolk wherries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 miles Essex Waterways Ltd</td>
<td>One day £5 One week £14 One month £21 Three months £27 Not included in British Canoeing membership</td>
<td>Short-term mooring allowing use of locks: 24 hours £28 One week £54 One month £133 Trailable boats requiring use of locks: six months £156 (includes unlimited use of the Paper Mill slipway but no overnight mooring)</td>
<td>Length 58ft (17.85m) Beam 15ft (4.62m) Air draught (Paper Mill road-bridge) 6ft 3in (1.9m) Draught 2ft 6in (0.62m) – statutory minimum, though much of the waterway is deeper</td>
<td>Essex Waterways Ltd offers chartered trips on board Victoria from Paper Mill Lock near Chelmsford. Other trip-boats operate from Sandford Lock and Heybridge Basin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHELMER & BLACKWATER NAVIGATION**

The Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation runs through a largely unspoilt part of rural Essex and connects the county town of Chelmsford with the tidal estuary of the River Blackwater at Heybridge Basin. The 14-mile-long waterway has 13 locks and has remained open and independently run throughout its history. Never having been nationalised, it continued to carry commercial freight till 1972, and an increasing number of leisure users since that time.

Freeholder ownership of the navigation remains with the original Company of Proprietors of the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation; it was saved from closure by IWA which set up a subsidiary (Essex Waterways Ltd) to run the waterway in 2005 when the navigation company went into administration.

You can explore the Chelmer & Blackwater in a number of ways; canoes, paddleboards and trip-boats are available for hire and there is a slipway at Paper Mill Lock for launching trailable boats. There is a canoe trail along the length of the waterway and camping facilities at Hoe Mill Lock. Heybridge Basin is popular with visiting boats from the tidal Blackwater, and at the upstream end of the navigation can be found Chelmsford Basin, which is one of the locations for IWA’s Silver Propeller Challenge.
**RIVER MEDWAY**

The River Medway is navigable (subject to the tide) upstream from the coast at Sheerness for 25 miles to Allington Lock. There are then 19 miles upstream to Tonbridge (Lucifer Footbridge) with nine more locks, operated by EA. The most suitable site for launching trailable boats is the slipway at Allington Lock, and there is a Medway Canoe Trail between Tonbridge and Allington (medwaycanoetrail.co.uk).

The IWA Silver Propeller Challenge location on the Medway is Tonbridge Town Lock, beyond which Great Bridge restricts access to very small craft only. Journeys from the Thames to the Medway are well documented, but should only be undertaken after having carried out the necessary research and preparation to your boat.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>River Medway (non-tidal) 19 miles Environment Agency</td>
<td>One week £9.10 One month £17.20 Included in British Canoeing membership</td>
<td>One week (any seven consecutive days) £32.20 One month (any 31 consecutive days) £64.50</td>
<td>Length 80ft (24.3m) Beam 18ft 6in (5.6m) Air draught 8ft 4in (2.5m) Draught 4ft (1.2m)</td>
<td>Public and chartered boat trips are available in Maidstone. Canoe hire and guided trips are available at a number of locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Medway (tidal) 25 miles Peel Ports Medway</td>
<td>No charge</td>
<td>No charge</td>
<td>No restrictions on size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**BRIDGWATER & TAUNTON CANAL, RIVER TONE NAVIGATION AND GRAND WESTERN CANAL**

The Bridgewater & Taunton Canal, which runs from Bridgwater Docks to the River Tone Navigation at Taunton, is 14 miles long with five working locks and is one of CRT’s unconnected waterways. A short cut above Firepool Lock links the canal to the River Tone in Taunton (navigable for about 1 mile) but at present there is no connection to the River Parrett in Bridgewater. There is much of interest along the route from Taunton and Bridgewater, including museums and pubs, and a visit to Bridgewater Docks will tick another location off the IWA Silver Propeller Challenge list. There are slipways for trailable boats at YMCA headquarters in Bridgewater, at Bathpool car park just outside Taunton and at three locations in Taunton (although each has some degree of difficulty), and there is a canoe trail between Maunsell Lock and Creek St Michael.

IWA West Country Branch is campaigning for EA’s proposed tidal barrier on the River Parrett to enable enhanced navigation on the river upstream. The branch is promoting the regeneration of Bridgewater Docks and restoring the Barge Lock and a bascule bridge in order to reconnect the River Parrett with the Bridgewater & Taunton. Although derelict canal separates the two waterways these days, another IWA Silver Propeller Challenge location can be found on the Grand Western Canal at Lowdwell – the eastern end, just 13% unnavigable miles from Taunton. The canal is run by Devon County Council and is navigable for nearly 11 miles from Lowdwell to Tiverton. It can be accessed by trailable boats at Beochill Slipway, Sampford Peverill and Burlescombe, and includes one of the few navigable canal tunnels (the tiny Waytown Tunnel) not managed by CRT.

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<th>Hire-boat/day trips available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgewater &amp; Taunton Canal 14 miles</td>
<td>Canal &amp; River Trust One day £4.99* One month £14.95 Three months £24.95 30-day explorer £34.91* Included in British Canoeing membership</td>
<td>One day £16.62* One month £28.26 Three months £91.43 30-day explorer £121.39*</td>
<td>Length 55ft 2in (16.8m) Beam 12ft 6in (3.8m) Air draught 7ft 3in (2.2m) Draught 4ft 6in (1.3m)</td>
<td>Day boats, rowing boats and canoes can be hired in Tiverton. Horse-drawn trip-boat operates from Tiverton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Tone Navigation 1 mile</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Western Canal 11 miles Devon County Council</td>
<td>One day £5 One week £12 Not included in British Canoeing membership Permits are available from a number of outlets along the canal, or can be applied for in advance by post.</td>
<td>One day £15 Three days £25 One week £35 Permits for powered boats can only be bought in person from specified outlets along the canal.</td>
<td>There are no locks to limit the size of boat. Headroom is restricted to just under 2m (around 6ft).</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
MONMOUTHSHIRE & BRECON CANAL

The navigable length of the Mon & Brec is in fact two separate canals, the Monmouthshire Canal and the Brecknock & Abergavenny Canal. The latter runs for 33 miles from Brecon to Pontymoile, much of it along the edge of the hillside and all of it or adjacent to the Brecon Beacons National Park. South of Pontymoile the first 2 miles of the Monmouthshire Canal is navigable, with the limit currently at the top of the heavily locked section through Cwmbran. There are just six locks on the navigable canal – five in a delightful wooded flight at Llangynidr and a single one just downstream of Brecon. A number of lift-bridges add interest, and the scenery is spectacular for much of the route.

The navigation authority is CRT, and despite being a disconnected waterway it has the same licensing arrangements, with short-term visitor licences available. There are three slipways – Pencelli Bridge just south of Brecon, Goytre Wharf and Pontymoile Basin.

Opportunities for floating holidays are plentiful, with five hire fleets on the canal, some offering boats slightly wider than a standard narrowboat due to unusual lock dimensions. One of the companies has electrically powered boats for holiday hire and two offer day-hire craft. A trip-boat also operates from Brecon.

Few boats head south of Pontymoile, the junction of the two canals. IWA’s Silver Propeller Challenge is encouraging boaters to explore the full length of canal and head to the current limit of navigation, Five Locks Basin at Cwmbran just south of Pontypool.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Hire-boat/day trips available</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34 miles</td>
<td>One day £4.99*</td>
<td>One day £16.62*</td>
<td>Length 55ft (16.76m) Beam 8ft 6in (2.59m) Air draught 5ft 11in (1.80m) Draught 2ft 6in (0.76m)</td>
<td>Five companies offer holiday hire boats, with two also offering day hire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 mile</td>
<td>One month 14.95</td>
<td>One month £28.26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Trip-boat operates from Brecon. Canoe and kayak hire is available, with at least one company offering camping trips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torfaen Borough Council (no separate licence required)</td>
<td>Three months £24.95</td>
<td>Three months £91.43</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-day explorer £34.91*</td>
<td>30-day explorer £121.39*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Included in British Canoeing membership</td>
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*S CRT’s 30-Day Explorer licence (any 30 days in a 12-month period) is useful if you are thinking of visiting a number of different CRT waterways. IWA is disappointed that CRT has announced, as part of its recent licence consultation, that it will be discontinuing the one-day licence from April 2019.

SCOTLAND’S LOWLAND CANALS

The Forth & Clyde and Union canals were restored to navigation in 2001 following National Lottery funding as a Millennium project. The famous feature connecting the two watersways (and replacing a flight of locks lost under a housing estate) is the Falkirk Wheel, now one of Scotland’s most popular tourist attractions.

The best way for people to explore these canals is by hiring a boat from Falkirk. There are currently some restrictions on access, both in operating times of moveable bridges and lock flights, as well as a temporary closure of the Forth & Clyde as a through-route (see page 12) and so hirers are advised to check the current situation with the navigation authority, Scottish Canals, before booking. Canoes should still be able to access the whole waterway; there are slipways at Falkirk and Auchin Starr, and there is a well-mapped Glasgow to Edinburgh Canoe Trail. SC recommends that all paddlers register with it in advance, but there is no fee for paddling on its waterways.

IWA’s Silver Propeller Challenge includes two locations on Scotland’s Lowland canals – the end of the Glasgow Arm, and the end of the Union Canal in Edinburgh.

<table>
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<th>Hire-boat/day trips available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forth &amp; Clyde Canal</td>
<td>No charge but free registration with Scottish Canals is recommended.</td>
<td>Day rate of £12.50 for trailable boats includes use of Scottish Canals-owned slipways.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Holiday hire-boats are available from Falkirk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 miles</td>
<td></td>
<td>Forth &amp; Clyde Canal</td>
<td>Length 68ft 6in (20.88m) Beam 19ft 8in (5.99m) Air draught 9ft 10in (3m) Draught 6ft (1.83m)</td>
<td>Boat trips operate from the Falkirk Wheel, Broxburn, Kirkintilloch and Linlithgow. Kayaking and canoeing is available at Pinkston Watersports centre on the Glasgow Arm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Canal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Glasgow Arm</td>
<td>Length 68ft 6in (20.88m) Beam 16ft 6in (5.03m) Air draught 9ft (2.74m) Draught 4ft 6in (1.37m)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 miles</td>
<td></td>
<td>Union Canal</td>
<td>Length 70ft (21.33m) Beam 12ft 6in (3.81m) Air draught 8ft 10in (2.69m) Draught 3ft 6in (1.07m)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Canals</td>
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If your cruising plans this summer include any or all of the Cheshire Ring, an extensive IWA-led project could make mooring along the way significantly easier now. Sarah Henshaw finds out more...

It is one of the best-loved cruising routes on the network, helped in no small part by its sheer variety, breathtaking scenery and fascinating heritage. Expect to work up a sweat tackling Heartbreak Hill’s punishing series of locks, and have your heart in your mouth for Anderton’s eerie tunnels, vertiginous aqueducts, views over Cheshire’s fertile agricultural plains and plenty of urban interest too as the ring hits the bright lights of Manchester.

In total you’ll tackle 97 miles and 92 locks. An experienced crew could complete the ring in a week, averaging eight hours a day, but you can just as readily eke it out into something a little longer and less fraught. Either way, factoring in any overnight stops along the route is unavoidable and, thanks to IW A’s ongoing ‘Ringing the Ring’ mooring project, there is now more than ever to choose from.

‘80S REVIVAL

The project was conceived in 2014 and planned to tie in with the 40th anniversary of the reopening of the Cheshire Ring in 2016. It wasn’t the first time attention had been given to mooring facilities here – in the 1980s IWA Manchester Branch had worked to create new ones at numerous spots around the ring. The current Cheshire Ring Mooring Ring project (as it is officially known) was also the branch’s idea. Over time the number and quality of existing mooring rings were declining across the whole route due to weathering, vandalism, theft and general wear and tear. Manchester Branch wanted to revisit their earlier efforts, not only installing and replacing the damaged and missing rings, but also identifying new locations which would benefit from additional places to tie up.

Very quickly Manchester won the support of IWA Chester & Merseyside and IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire branches, who both agreed to get involved. Representatives from all three met with Canal & River Trust to discuss the scope and aims of the project, before carrying out surveys of the waterway through their areas, identifying where repairs were needed, where lengths of mooring could be extended or additional rings added to improve capacity, and to flag up some new sites.

PARTNERSHIP

More detailed planning meetings with CRT followed, where work plans and installation methodology was discussed and agreed. Once the work parties started, IWA members were joined by volunteers from CRT, Trent & Mersey Canal Society, and Macclesfield Canal Society to transform this into an inspirational partnership project.

IWA paid for the initial 210 mooring rings thanks to the fundraising efforts of its inaugural Restoration Raffle. It was an IWA member, too, who manufactured most of the rings at the competitive rate of 200 for £2,000 (£10 per ring). CRT supported the project by providing tools, materials, supervision and equipment, and later, due to the overwhelming success of the initiative, some extra mooring rings.

Two main methods have been used for installing the rings: drilling directly into existing concrete banks and fixing with a product called ‘kemfix’, and digging out a square hole behind piling and filling with new concrete.

IWA policy recommends a spacing of 3m between mooring rings or bollards to enable optimum use of the space, so where existing rings were more widely staggered than this, additional rings were added between them to improve mooring efficiency.

Currently the project has installed over 220 new rings on the Cheshire Ring, exceeding its original scope. Another 66 rings are planned to be installed on the Ashton, Rochdale and Bridgewater canals. The rings span eight locations and provide space for approximately 60 additional boats. So if yours is one of them this summer, spare a thought for the teamwork, tenacity and sheer brawn that went into ‘Ringing the Ring’.

DID YOU KNOW...?

- The Cheshire Ring, composed of the Macclesfield Canal and parts of the Peak Forest, Ashton, Rochdale, Bridgewater and Trent & Mersey canals, can claim to be the oldest cruising ring on the waterways.
- It was IWA that first applied the term ‘ring’ to what had previously been called the Peak Forest circular route. In July 1965, when fighting the threat of complete closure of the Rochdale Canal, IWA’s Bulletin called for “a vigorous campaign to be inaugurated immediately, for the development and complete restoration of this circuit of waterways best described by the phrase ‘Cheshire Canal Ring’”. In the next issue of Bulletin in November this was shortened to ‘Cheshire Ring’.
- The Cheshire Ring has two navigation authorities – while most of the length is CRT, the Bridgewater Canal from Preston Brook to Castlefields is managed by Peel Holdings, the owners of the Bridgewater Canal Company.
RING THE CHANGES

We’ve plotted some of the top places you can now tie-up more comfortably...

DUTTON & BARNTON

Tree felling to facilitate repair work following the breach at Dutton a few years ago has opened up beautiful views across the Weaver. Consequently, this has become an incredibly popular mooring spot. An additional 16 rings have been installed as part of this project, to add to a few that had been put in at the time of the breach repair. Meanwhile, 13 rings were installed between Barnton and Saltersford tunnels at the request of CRT, as boats were tying to traffic bollards.

MOORING HERE? DON’T MISS...

Bluebell Cottage Gardens, comprising a nursery, wildflower meadows and bluebell woods. It makes for an enjoyable half day out for keen gardeners or wildlife enthusiasts and is open between April and September. There is a small charge for admission (unless you’re an RHS member) and you should check the opening times in advance.

bluebellcottage.co.uk

ANDERTON BOAT LIFT

The Anderton Boat Lift is a popular spot for boaters to moor up and enjoy the scenery, visit the museum or wait for their turn on the boat lift. Some 32 rings were installed at 4m intervals along a 129m stretch of concrete and masonry banking to equalise the spacing between existing rings and replace damaged ones.

MOORING HERE? DON’T MISS...

The Boat Lift, of course – billed as one of the Seven Wonders of the Waterways. Together with its visitor centre, café, new play area and nearby Northwich Community Woodlands, there’s plenty to see and do. You can also book onto a “Top of the World Tour” – although it’s not for the faint hearted! Starting in the visitor centre, you’ll be guided out along the aqueduct, taken into the previously unseen control room and machine deck and finally up on top of the lift.

canalrivertrust.org.uk/places-to-visit/ anderton-boat-lift-visitor-centre

MIDDLEWICH

Thirty-five new rings have been put in here, giving a continuous run at 4-8m intervals from the Big Lock up to the start of the Andersen private moorings, interrupted only by the winding hole, the road bridge and a short section where sandstone copings mean that drilled-in rings cannot be used. Existing rings obscured by grass and mud were also cleared.

MOORING HERE? DON’T MISS...

Middlewich Folk & Boat Festival, from the 15th-17th June. Peter Hook, founding member of Joy Division and New Order will be headlining and there’ll be the usual contingent of narrowboats and roving traders along the canal.

middlewich.org.uk/middlewich-fab-festival/

WHEELOCK

A popular overnight mooring with good access to shops and pubs, Wheelock has had six new rings installed to increase mooring capacity. The site has also been identified as having potential for installing ten new concrete mooring rings in the future.

MOORING HERE? DON’T MISS...

Wheelock Hall Farm, boasting a farm shop, tea room, garden centre and large outdoor play area. By ‘play area’, we’re talking some serious kit for kids: an assault course, go karts and ride-on tractors, for starters. And don’t forget the main event – the farm itself. You can buy bags of feed for 50p and treat the animals to a well-deserved snack while you stroke them.

wheelockhallfarm.co.uk

LEFT: Volunteers make a difference to Middlewich’s mooring provision.


**Top of Bosley Locks**
You’ll find two new rings here – a site identified as in need of additional moorings because of its popularity and facilities. Installing them provided the opportunity to train IWA and CRT volunteers on how to concrete them in to CRT standards.

**Fools Nook**
IWAs most recent Cheshire Ring Mooring Project work party took place at Fools Nook on the Macclesfield Canal in November last year. Some 12 volunteers – including a pair visiting from Scotland – helped install six new rings next to the old Fools Nook pub.

**Congleton Wharf**
Over two days 12 volunteers dug out and installed six rings here. The site boasts great access to local facilities and is a favourite with boaters looking to resupply and take a break.

**Rode Heath**
Volunteers from both IWA and CRT have installed 30 mooring rings here and cleared overgrowth from existing rings. This has provided a new 150m length of mooring opposite the Broughton Arms, which it is hoped will also give an economic boost to the immediate area.

**MOORING HERE? DON’T MISS...**
Gawsworth Hall, a stunning example of Cheshire black-and-white architecture. It was built in 1480 and was home to Mary Fitton, Dark Lady of Shakespeare’s sonnets and maid of honour to Elizabeth I. You can tour its fine paintings, sculptures and stained glass between May and September, but check the website for opening times first. Look out, too, for performances in the Hall’s garden theatre, which has been putting on comedy, music, drama and opera since 1969. gawsworthhall.com

**MOORING HERE? DON’T MISS...**
The Cloud (also called Bosley Cloud) which, at 1,125 ft, is one of the highest hills in the area. There’s a circular 2 ½ mile walk right up to the top, offering stunning views over the Cheshire Plain. In clear weather you might also be able to witness the astro-geographical phenomenon of the Cloud’s ‘double sunset’, whereby the sun sets on the summit of the hill, partially reappears from The Cloud’s steep northern slope, before setting for a second (and final) time on the horizon. visitcheshire.com/things-to-do/bosley-cloud-p183911

**MOORING HERE? DON’T MISS...**
The Just So Festival at Rode Hall, if the dates coincide with your trip. This annual weekend-long camping festival for children and their families serves up a broad range of musical, theatrical and visual performances, workshops and installations in glorious woodland surrounds. This year it’s taking place between 17th-19th August. justsofestival.org.uk
Nervous of navigating after dark? Don’t be, writes Alison Smedley – done safely, it can be a thoroughly enjoyable boating experience.

Summer nights are synonymous with sundowners on the back deck and a late barbecue on the towpath. However the warmer evenings also offer a great opportunity to keep cruising for longer, even past twilight and into the pitch black.

The principle of being able to navigate at night is something that IWA has long championed, so don’t let the odd tut-tut or twitching curtain from moored boats put you off if it’s something you’d like to try.

What will determine whether you can or can’t, however, is the relevant navigation authority. Boating at night is permissible in many but not all waterway by-laws. Although for commercially operated boats it is often a necessity, there are some places where it is prohibited, for example the Middle Level, River Wey and Chelmer & Blackwater navigations. Best to check before heading off into the sunset...

Similarly, if you’re a hirer you should always read the terms and conditions in your paperwork first. Most hire-boat companies prohibit boating at night. In winter this can often be a bit of a headache as you’ll need to make sure your schedule allows for mooring up before it gets dark. Boat owners, meanwhile, should check the particulars of their insurance.
**TURN ON THE LIGHTS**

There are many reasons why a boater may find themselves having to boat at night. It could be due to illness or an emergency, such as a crew member becoming unwell or needing to get your boat past a short-notice stoppage. It could be due to the timing of a tidal passage, or it could be through miscalculation of the time needed to reach a mooring. Or it may simply be through choice.

There are a few things that boaters should bear in mind, especially if you’ve not been boating in the dark before. Firstly, ensure your boat has a good headlight, particularly on narrow waterways where you may need it to see where you are going and to avoid damage to your own or other craft. Bear in mind though that headlights are intended for use in tunnels and can easily dazzle oncoming boaters or towpath users.

Although carrying a headlight alone is okay for narrowboats on the narrow canal system, for larger craft and on larger waterways, rivers and freight waterways, navigation lights are required. These should consist of a white masthead light (not a headlight), a red side light on the port side and a green side light on the starboard side (neither of which should be visible from behind), along with a white stern light.

You should have these navigation lights fitted if you are cruising on any of these waterways, even if you do not intend to boat at night, as you may find you have to use them in the event of a breakdown, if your plans change once you are on the waterway, if you need to make a tidal passage late in the day or early in the morning, or you suddenly find visibility is reduced (for example, due to fog) and there is nowhere safe to moor nearby.

More detailed information, including requirements for vessels of different lengths and for different waterways, can be found on the IWA website: [waterways.org.uk/boating/navigating_your_boat/vhf/navigation_lights](http://waterways.org.uk/boating/navigating_your_boat/vhf/navigation_lights).

**CONSIDERATE BOATING**

When boating in the dark try to consider moored boats and the people who may be on board – especially if boating late into the evening, through the night or very early in the morning. Sound travels on the water, so avoid having to shout to your crew, and slow well down past moored boats (pass even more slowly than you would during the day) to minimise disturbance.

Make sure that your instruments are visible in the dark. Head torches are great inventions and extremely useful when boating after hours, especially when operating locks or mooring; however, be careful not to dazzle others by inadvertently shining the beam in their eyes. Having a handheld torch close to the steering position can also be a good idea – but bear in mind that bright lights will affect your night vision.

Make sure that you are familiar with your route, and have appropriate maps, guidebooks or navigation charts to hand, so that you know when to expect junctions, locks, bridges and bends. Take particular care at these places, especially if operating locks at night (where this is permitted). If you are boating single-handed, give serious consideration to the risks.

**OBSTACLES AND ANCHORS**

Beware of overhanging bankside vegetation, on cloudy or moonless nights in particular, and look out for floating objects, especially on rivers. Depending on the surface material, towpaths or river banks may show up more clearly at night than the actual water around you. As such, it is often handy to use them as visual aids when you need help steering, such as around bends. Night boating on rivers or larger waterways can bring other challenges and you will need to be on the lookout for weir signs and navigation channels that may not be so obvious in the dark.

Make sure someone else knows where you are going, have some form of reliable communication on board (preferably marine band VHF radio on larger waterways where this is in use) and have an anchor ready for deployment in an emergency (and know how to use it!). Even if you don’t wear a lifejacket the rest of the time, it can be a good idea when boating at night or in very low temperatures (immersion in very cold water is more likely to lead to life-threatening situations). IWA advises against boating in the dark during inclement weather or floods.

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**The principle of being able to navigate at night is something that IWA has long championed**

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**SUMMER 2018**

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*The principle of being able to navigate at night is something that IWA has long championed.*

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**Boating at night**

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In low lighting the riverbank can help outline the route ahead.

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After hours on the River Weaver.

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Take extra care at locks.
IWA Festival of Water
Comes to St Neots
August Bank Holiday Weekend
Saturday to Monday

Classic Cars
Firework Display
Over 80 Colourful Boats
Live Music  Real Ale Bar
Children’s Rides  Boat Trips
Novelty Dog Show  Children’s Trail

WWW.WATERWAYS.ORG.UK/FESTIVALOFWATER
Regatta Meadow, Riverside Park, St Neots PE19 7AB - Free Parking
If you are out for a walk along a waterway this summer, look out for Himalayan balsam. Growing to heights of over 3m, the plant is a highly destructive and invasive species which crowds out native plants and causes erosion.

Some people defend the plant as its flowers attract bees and can actually look quite attractive on the canal or river bank. However, if bees are drawn to the swaths of Himalayan balsam flowers, pollination of native species decreases; the knock-on effect is a reduction in native plants, which results in less food and habitat for local wildlife.

So whether you are walking the dog or out with family and friends, everyone can help control the spread by pulling up a few plants when you see them. It’s essential to do this before the seeds have started to develop, and to make sure that the landowners are happy, of course!

**IDENTIFICATION GUIDE**

In the spring, the hollow stems of Himalayan balsam are pinky red with green, shiny lance-shaped leaves. The sweet-scented flowers appear in June and continue until October after which its explosive seed pods burst, sending seeds in all directions. The blooms are slipper- or bonnet-shaped, on long stalks, and range from pale pink (or almost white) to deep purplish pink in colour. It prefers damp ground, and its seeds are often transported by water and washed ashore to form new colonies, hence its prevalence along our canals and rivers.
HELP STEM THE SPREAD
Use the hashtag #PullSnapStomp to help you remember what to do when tackling Himalayan balsam.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO:
PULL – Check our Himalayan balsam identification guide to be certain that you’ve got the right plant and then pull up individual stems – it uproots easily
SNAP – Break off the root below the lowest growing node
STOMP – Put the stems into a small pile to rot down, away from the path. Bigger piles can be stamped on to assist the rotting process – small children love doing this and it makes a great sound!

That’s all there is to it, but here are a few further things to be aware of:
• If the seeds have already developed then please don’t pull the Himalayan balsam as there is no benefit and you could spread it to new locations
• Himalayan balsam is non-toxic, but it is still advisable to wash your hands after carrying out this activity (and before eating) due to animal-carried diseases such as Weil’s disease
• Be aware of the water’s edge or any steep drops, and leave any plants that you can’t safely reach
• Don’t trespass onto private land beyond the towpath or bank, and if anyone asks what you are doing, refer them to IWA’s campaign and website.

You can find out loads more about Himalayan balsam and other invasive species on the IWA website waterways.org.uk/invasivespecies.

Up to 800 seeds per plant are released explosively from the seed pods and can travel for up to 7m

Organise a work party to tackle Himalayan balsam on your local waterway.
BACKGROUND TO IWA’S HIMALAYAN BALSAM CAMPAIGN

This invasive plant (botanical name Impatiens glandulifera) was introduced to Britain in the mid 19th century by Victorian gardeners, and it is the tallest annual plant in the UK. Himalayan balsam crowds out native plants and can take over whole areas of river and canal bank. The seeds, up to 800 per plant, are released explosively from the seed pods and can travel for up to 7m from the plant. If the seeds land in a stream, river or canal they will be taken downstream where they will start a new colony; this is one of the reasons this plant is so difficult to control.

The plant prefers damp locations making waterway banks an ideal habitat. Himalayan balsam grows in dense clumps and crowds out native plants before dying back in the winter. This can cause problems on waterway banks as they are left bare and susceptible to erosion. This in turn can cause navigation problems for boaters due to increased dredging requirements and can damage waterway habitats such as fish spawning beds.

Over the last ten years this plant has become more established on many of our waterways. As an annual plant, however, it can be controlled by pulling it up before the seeds develop.

Since 2012, work parties to help control the spread of Himalayan balsam along navigable waterways (and on restoration projects) have been organised by IWA branches across the system. Events have been held by Lancashire & Cumbria Branch in the North West, East Riding Branch in the North East, Chelmsford Branch in the South East and West Country Branch in the South West, as well as many others across the Midlands and elsewhere.

If you are interested in getting involved in one of these work parties, follow our step-by-step guide, or if you know of an area of waterway that would benefit from a Himalayan balsam bashing session, please contact your local branch. A number of IWA branches are planning work parties this year in locations as far and wide as Lancashire, Worcestershire and Somerset. Check the events details on the website for these and more – waterways.org.uk/iwa/calendar.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO ORGANISING A HIMALAYAN BALSAM #PULLSNAPSTOMP WORK PARTY

If you’ve identified Himalayan balsam on a waterway near you, why not organise a work party to tackle it? Here’s how to plan a balsam bash:

1. Contact the relevant landowner and/or navigation authority for permission.
2. Agree a date, start time and meeting point with everyone. The best time of year for pulling up Himalayan balsam is during June and July, although this can vary from year to year.
3. Publicise the event – a poster template is available on our website waterways.org.uk/invasivespecies. Put posters up in the area, tell your local press and invite groups to join in.
4. Advise the Campaign Team at IWA so that your event can be included in the list of Himalayan balsam bashes going on around the country.
5. Agree the method to be used – if there are large expanses of just Himalayan balsam then it may be useful to slash, strim or cut it. Where it is growing in among other native plants, pulling it up is the best way.
6. Agree locations, ideally off the main towpath, where the pulled-up plants will be left to rot, or have a chat with the landowner and try to arrange an alternative method (e.g. putting it all into empty builders’ sacks to rot down – a particularly good idea if the seeds have already started to develop).
7. Look at the Himalayan balsam pulling work party risk assessment (there’s one available on our website) and adapt it to take into account specific considerations for your site.
8. Encourage volunteers to turn up on the day and spend a couple of hours in the fresh air by their local waterway. Being outdoors is great for your physical and mental well-being, and balsam bashing is a hugely satisfying task.
9. Tell everyone about it – including the local press – and don’t forget to send photos and a write-up to IWA’s Campaign Team so that it can be included in a round-up of Himalayan balsam work parties on the waterways this summer.

You can find a wide range of resources, including contact details for IWA’s campaign team, on our website waterways.org.uk/invasivespecies.
Webtherm Marine Spray Foam Insulation
Polyurethane sprayed foam insulation is now the number one choice for boat insulation, especially amongst canal boat owners and enthusiasts. The Webtherm spray foam system goes onto surfaces in a liquid form, and then expands within seconds to the required thickness, setting rapidly into a rigid foam form - filling all gaps, eliminating draughts and condensation.

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Email: info@webstersinsulation.com Tel: 0800 581247 or 01405 812682
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RESTORATION HUB: WRG’s beauty spots

RIVER WAVENEY
14th-21st and 21st-28th July
After the great progress made in 2017, volunteers will be returning to Geldeston Lock in Norfolk for two weeks to remove damaged brickwork and make vital repairs to secure the structure’s long-term future. Volunteers from WRG and the River Waveney Trust spent over 600 hours in just one week dismantling and beginning the rebuild of the lock last year. Unlike most restoration sites, Geldeston Lock is on an active waterway and you’ll be undertaking most of the work from the river, using either scaffolding or a work-boat. After a long day’s work, you can hop over the River Waveney to the Locks Inn pub to admire progress made and plan the next day’s tasks.

CHELMER & BLACKWATER NAVIGATION
28th July-4th August
An unsung gem, relished by the people of Essex, the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation is set in beautiful countryside between Chelmsford and Heybridge Basin. This week-long camp has something for everyone, as the varied tasks include repairing brickwork at Barnes Lock, refurbishing a footbridge and resurfacing the towpath. Between making practical improvements to the canal you can try and fit in a bit of birdwatching, take a walk or just relax in the sun. The accommodation for this camp is provided on a converted barge, moored on the tidal estuary of the River Blackwater.

MONMOUTHSHIRE CANAL
11th-18th and 18th-25th August
Efforts on the Monmouthshire Canal this year will continue the archaeological work begun in 2017 to uncover the industrial heritage hidden just below the surface of this scenic waterway. Volunteers will help to recover historic artefacts, catalogue them and help piece together the interesting history of the Ty Coch Lock Flight. You can also get involved in the restoration work on this flight of locks between Newport and Cwmbran in South Wales, with a fantastic opportunity to learn traditional heritage techniques.

Modern Day Navvy
Will Collins attended his first WRG Canal Camp in 2014 on the Somerset waterways. He was just 18 years old and volunteering with WRG went towards completing his Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. Since then he has been an assistant leader on several Canal Camps. We asked Will what keeps him coming back: “My favourite parts of the week are the times when we can get properly muddy. I would definitely recommend that you tell everyone you know about WRG Canal Camps. I’d say wholeheartedly to anyone who is considering taking part to give it go!”

If you reckon that a Canal Camp is something you, your friends or family would like to take part in, you can find out more at wrg.org.uk. Alternatively, give us a call on 01494 783453 (ext 610) or email enquiries@wrg.org.uk.

This year Waterway Recovery Group is working on 13 restoration sites across England and Wales, many of which are little-known beauty spots. So why not persuade your friends and relatives to join you and WRG on a week-long Canal Camp working holiday and experience these gems from a different perspective?
GELDESTON 'BRIDGE'

On reading about the Waterway Recovery Group working at Geldeston Lock on the River Waveney, I was reminded of my only experience of the lock back in 1968.

I had just left school and a friend who had recently passed his driving test asked if I wanted a holiday, his parents having just bought a barn on an island in the Waveney and converting it into a retirement home.

When up in Geldeston, we asked a local ageing resident to recommend a pub. We duly set off driving across reed beds, following his instructions to find the Geldeston Lock Inn and not realising the significance of his little chuckle.

Having seemingly driven for an age on rough and flooded tracks that several times forked, with no indication of the correct route, in the failing light, we had all but given up hope when we eventually came to the river. We found the remains of the lock and a row of derelict lock cottages with collapsed roofs, but no sign of the pub. Just as we were getting back in the car to leave, my friend noticed a candle burning in the cottage’s window and we walked across to find ‘Geldeston Lock Inn’ written over the door.

The landlady, Susan, was very welcoming and invited us into her front room. There was no bar and the choice of drinks was limited to light or brown ale. She entertained us by showing us all the algae lines on the walls from the floods that she had endured.

On asking us what boat we had come over in, she seemed quite distraught to discover that we had driven and she hoped we hadn’t come over the 'bridge' at the back, which she claimed was highly dangerous. Little did she know that my friend, dripping in testosterone and keen to show off his driving prowess, had shot over it at about 40mph.

She walked back with us and used a torch to view the danger. The bridge was merely a few rusting scaffold pieces and some very rotten boards – a pedestrian would have thought twice.

Our return journey started with us laying the best rotten boards down and beckoning my friend in the car across at less than 1mph with him worrying the whole time about what he would tell his parents of the fate of the family car in the worst case scenario.

We lived to tell the tale but the memory of Susan stayed with me and I later discovered she was an iconic character on the waterway circuit.

Best wishes to WRG; the work they do is fantastic and they deserve all the support they can get.

PAUL HEADLEY, KENT

FORMED IN THE '50S

I enjoy receiving Waterways magazine – it certainly helps keep me in touch and up-to-date with waterways events which have been so much a part of my life since my teens.

However, I was somewhat taken aback by the article on the Chester & Merseyside Branch in the Winter 2017 issue suggesting that IWA interest in the immediate area of Chester and the North West only dated from the mid ’80s (1986). My long memory recalls activities dating back to the late ’40s/early ’50s no less!

Mr Grundy (senior) came on to the River Dee (with Heron) at this time and told a group of us – including my father, of the very serious concern of a certain Robert Aickman over the future of many waterways. We were urged to join the newly formed IWA and participate in saving the Llangollen Canal, among others!

A North West Branch was formed with the considerable help of Messrs Stan Offley, Ray Slack and others (including my father). Dr Cyril Boucher was also heavily involved. This all led to the organising of rallies in a concerted effort to help save some of our local heritage. As such, rallies at Llangollen (1951), Macclesfield (1953) and Chester (1939) were organised and widely applauded. Stoke-on-Trent rally was also in this period.

While I recall many of our committee meetings taking place in Nantwich, our social functions at the time included our annual dinner-dance at Bollands in Chester. We used to invite the area waterways chief and his assistant (he controlled the North West carrying fleet); Robert Aickman also attended – but not usually at the same time!

The Dee river/canal access (including the swing-bridge) were kept in working order (to some degree) by the passage of several passenger vessels and a few private boats (including our own launch) wintering over at J.H. Taylor’s yard on the Shroprie in Chester. The present unnavigable state of this vital link is most regretted.

I hope that the above is of interest and creates some responses.

JOHN R. ALDERSON, IWA HONORARY LIFE MEMBER

WRG’s work at Geldeston Lock brought back memories of a visit to the ‘pub’ there for one reader.
MILESTONE MEMBERSHIPS

A small but important ceremony took place at the Shrewsbury District and North Wales AGM on Saturday 17th March when Robin Dean was presented with his 50-year membership plaque. Robin lives in a care home in Malpas and was unfortunately not able to travel to the meeting, so IWA came to him. Branch chairman Michael Haig and Ivor Caplan were entertained by Robin’s reminiscences of his family’s boats taking grain from Ellesmere Port. Robin joined the committee of the first IWA Welsh Branch, later becoming branch chairman, and boated extensively around the Welsh canals.

My memories of the Shropshire Union Canal go back to pre-war days, as my father’s family business was based in Chester where they had working boats operating on the main line; grain from Ellesmere Port to Chester, where it was milled, then sent on to the Black Country, and, in return, cargoes of cheeses from Audlem and Nantwich onwards to Liverpool and Manchester.

I do remember the boats being smartly turned out in LMS red with straw lining, signwritten Edward Dean & Sons. Sadly, I do not remember what names they carried, if any. However, I do remember working boats passing through Chester on their way to Ellesmere Port during the war years.

It wasn’t until the early ’50s, staying with my mother’s parents who happened to live at Pontesbury outside Shrewsbury, equipped with my trusty Rudge cycle and later by car that I managed to explore the Welsh Arm of the Shropshire Union. On one of those excursions I found the rotting remains of the pair of boats trapped by the breach which closed the Newtown length of the Welsh Arm. I shall gladly present a plaque I have from one of these boats to the branch. If my memory is correct, it is a cast iron plate with a BCN number.

When I lived in South Wales in the early 1960s, I helped to form the Mon & Brec branch. That branch was soon split up into the Newport Canal Society and Neath & Swansea Society, and we got embroiled in the closure of the most southern end of that lovely canal when the highway authorities culverted one of the bridges. Thankfully that has now been rectified and boats will eventually reach Newport through Cwmbran. If there is a will there is always a way.

ROBIN DEAN

I am writing to thank you for my recently arrived plaque signifying over 50 years’ continuous membership. It obviously generated reminiscences from the early days, in particular Robert Ackman’s sometimes vitriolic Bulletin, and my own early involvement.

My first memory is of converting half a BCN day-boat hull (the stern half!) for pleasure hire usage, launching it on the River Wey and having it reviewed by Motor Boat and Yachting – the only journal interested in powered inland cruising craft then.

I subsequently purchased from British Waterways two River Class Butties, Axe and Ant, on separate occasions and converted one to a motor. I leased first one, then both, to Union Canal Carriers at Braunston as camper boats and occasionally skippered them myself.

Ant was converted into an exhibition narrowboat and I recruited a skipper to cruise the whole system for several years, visiting fixed destinations where guests were invited to view and use handling products, made by my company, in a congenial buffet/cruise environment.

I then acquired various (three in total) trip-boats, two narrow-beam and one wide-beam (a barge from Holland), which I operated on the River Weaver and the Trent & Mersey from Northwich/Anderton. All these ventures made reasonable profits and provided work for several, usually enthusiastic, staff.

In addition, I served as a committee member of the Trent & Mersey Canal Society and the Friends of the Anderton Boat Lift and also became a trustee of the Anderton Boat Lift Trust until its final dissolution. I have also been a committee member of the River Weaver Navigation Society since its inception and chaired it for the last ten years. Having just stepped aside, I’ve been appointed president.

I do, to a degree, apologise for this eulogy, but I do so to highlight the fact that IWA was the catalyst that enabled all this to happen. It made it easy for me to find like-minded individuals who were knowledgeable and with whom I could work, and who certainly facilitated what I wished to accomplish.

All this is a small side issue to the mighty IWA achievements elsewhere.

As I see it, IWA is a tremendously worthwhile organisation that can add so much to the lives of those who wish to embrace its aims. The committee should take heart from what it has helped me and many others, I am sure, achieve for the benefit of the waterways. Long may it flourish!

JOHN TACKLEY

Ivor Caplan presents Robin Dean with his 50-year membership plaque.

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IWA waterways | 49
In 1768, 250 years ago, the Droitwich Barge Canal Act was passed and building of the waterway commenced to be completed just three years later. An increase in Droitwich’s salt production required better transportation and engineer James Brindley was employed by the town’s council to construct the canal; it was one of just a few of his projects to have been finished in his lifetime.

The year 1854 saw the construction of the Droitwich Junction Canal to connect the Barge Canal in Droitwich to the Worcester & Birmingham Canal at Hanbury in an effort to keep the Barge Canal alive in the face of the growing railways. The two canals were abandoned in 1939, but in 1972, after years of campaigning, the Droitwich Canals Trust was formed and granted long-term leases for restoration to progress.

By 2011 both the Droitwich Barge and Junction canals had reopened to navigation. WRG volunteers carried out much of the restoration work of the eastern three locks of the Junction Canal near Hanbury Wharf with work completing in 2001, and on the Barge Canal in the mid-1990s WRG’s weekend groups, London WRG and KESCRG worked on the Barge Canal as part of ‘Dig Deep’ – an initiative that encouraged a more coordinated approach to restoration projects.
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