



The Inland
Waterways
Association

**Newsletter of IWA Lee & Stort Branch
December 2010**

Metamorphosis of British Waterways

Time For Optimism

IWA welcomed the Government's announcement that British Waterways will be handing over responsibility to a new Waterways Charity not unlike the now successful National Trust. This will be the most significant change to the management of our waterways since 1948. At the time of preparing this newsletter the latest information follows a November meeting between DEFRA and IWA. The target date for the change would be April 2012 but BW would stay involved with the new organisation for a year afterwards to ensure a smooth handover.

There are no immediate plans to include the Thames and the other navigations currently controlled by the Environment Agency but this inclusion is favoured by IWA and remains under discussion in Government.

An important change is that the Government's portion of the funding would be fixed for a number of years instead of changes annually which makes planning so difficult. Any cuts inflicted on the new organisation would be no more than the cuts which would have been inflicted on British Waterways before the change over! The greater part of BW's property portfolio would be transferred intact to continue to help finance the waterways.

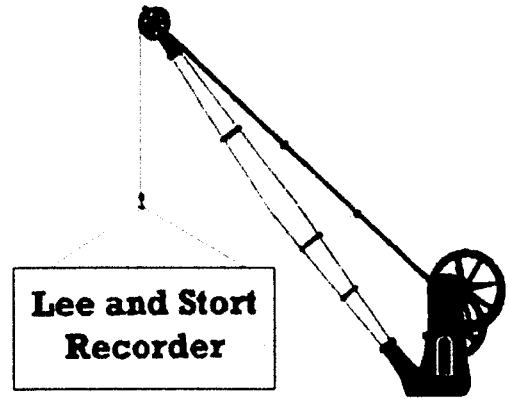
In the new organisation stakeholders would have more control and these include boaters, canoeists, anglers, walkers, cyclists etc. Some of us may be wary that non-navigation groups could play a dominant role as seems to have happened on the Basingstoke Canal. IWA input will still be very important not only to safeguard adequate funding but to ensure that 'Waterways For All' definitely includes those who believe that the use of the waterways includes Navigation.

Demise of Overnight Boats For Hire.

Since November 2010 it has no longer been possible to cruise the length of the Lee and Stort from the hire base at Broxbourne. Only day boats are now available but there will be more of them. Longer-term hire boats have been available on the Lee for at least 30 years and many will regret the end of this opportunity for newcomers to really experience life afloat.

Vacancy For Newsletter Editor

This post was offered 12 months ago but with no response. Four Prime Ministers have been in office since the last time the editor's job changed hands. Reading some of the obscure items in this edition suggests that it is time for new blood. Is anyone willing to take over please?



E-mailing Members

Our Vice Chairman, Les Hunt, regularly sends e-mails to members to keep them up to date with our activities which is impracticable to do with a conventional newsletter. If you haven't been receiving them this means that he doesn't have your current e-mail address. If you DO wish to be added to our e-mailing list please send an e-mail to Les at les.hunt@waterways.org.uk Similarly if you already receive these messages but DO NOT wish to continue please e-mail at the above address.

Inglesham Lock Appeal

At a Branch Committee Meeting in October a decision was made for the Branch to donate £250 from our Branch funds to the IWA Inglesham Lock Appeal. This is the derelict lock which has been donated to the IWA as an important step in the restoration of the Thames and Severn Canal.

Have Your Say

Immediately following on from our AGM in March 2011 we will be holding a short General Meeting to discuss the future organisation of the Branch in view of the increased membership to the west of our extended area. Roydon, Essex is no longer a central point so should we try to meet at another location? Is there a practical place to hold some or all of our meetings with adequate parking and not expensive? Please come and let us know what you think.



Brindley at Coventry Basin

Dates for your Diary

Mon 10th Jan 2011	Ostend to Dunkirk	Roger Squires
Mon 14th Feb	London's Important River	Jeremy Batch
Mon 14th March	Branch AGM & Buffet	All
Mon 11th April	Members Contributions	All
Tues 19th April	London Region AGM	Camden Town
30th April - 2nd May	Canalway Cavalcade	Little Venice
1st -3rd July	Ware Boat Festival	Ware
29th-31st July	IWA National Boat Festival	Burton on Trent
Sun 4th Sept	Angel Festival	Islington

All Monday meetings are held at the New Inn Roydon. CM19 5EE, starting at 8 p.m.



Past Events

Canalway Cavalcade -May 2010

Usually a good way to start the cruising season but it was rather cold this year. Nevertheless several Branch members enjoyed the long weekend at Little Venice together with our Human Fruit Machine.

Ware Boat Festival July- 2010

For the weekend 2-4 July we were once again blessed with excellent 'barbecue' weather. Of the 55 boats that booked in, 25 took part in the boat parade for which the theme was 'All creatures great and small'. Narrowboat 'Golden Ivy' won best boat within the theme and 'Dunkleys of the Folly' was judged best boat regardless of the theme. To ensure impartiality the customers of the Saracens Head were invited to judge for us. (FIFA would do well to study our methods !)

Over the years we have increased the number of fibreglass cruisers to 13 and more are expected next year from the Lee & Stort Cruising Club. We were also pleased to welcome a Dutch Barge, another wide-beamed boat and the Herts Boat Rescue Service. The Friday barbecue, supported with live music, was very popular and the general public were able to take boat trips run by the Canal Boat Project from Harlow. Craig Haslam ran the Saturday Quiz at which Sue Banyard and Margaret 'Not Normal' managed to raise an astonishing £200 by selling raffle tickets. Thanks are due to Bob Dunkley and Terry Stenbridge as Harbourmasters, Banny for publicity, Frank Wallder for the IWA information gazebo, Carol Beeton for the boat bookings and food purchase and Les Hunt for overseeing the whole organisation. Thanks are also due to the several volunteers, not named above, especially from the visiting boats. And Craig was quite useful too.

Perhaps we did not give enough warning when we requested a vehicle to transport the barbecue and tables at the start and close of this Festival. The problem arises because most of our regular volunteers are involved with boats or other duties. However we are very grateful to Mr Laurie Atkinson who responded to our request and drove over on the Thursday and Monday all the way from Sidcup in Kent. Surely there is somebody with a vehicle who lives locally who could help next year?

IWA National Waterways Festival at Beale Park

A joint booking of 18 boats made the trip from the Lee and Stort and most of these were Branch members. Our group included old friends now living in France and others from South Africa. It was a delightful long weekend but in spite of the sunshine it was disappointing to greet fewer members of the public than in previous years on this very pleasant site.

At our October meeting at the New Inn, Roydon, Essex Banny entertained us with a vintage film starring Mae West. The very remote justification for this deviation from waterways matters was that boaters sometimes wear life jackets!

At our November meeting at Roydon we once again welcomed John Merrill who has devoted much of his life to walking and writing about his travels. He is featured in the Guinness Book of Records for his walk right round the 7000 mile coastline of the Great Britain. His excellent illustrated topic for our meeting was walking the waterways of London and the Chelmer Navigation.

Future Events

10th January 2011. Waterways guru Roger Squires will enlighten us about the canals Ostend to Dunkirk.

14th February 2011. Jeremy Batch is probably known to some of you as the Lock-keeper at Limehouse Basin. He is also an authority on waterways and their history particularly the Thames. His talk is entitled London's Important River.

14th March 2011. Branch Annual General Meeting and General Meeting followed by buffet.

11th April 2011. Members are invited to bring along photos, videos etc. to share with all.

Ware Boat Festival 2011

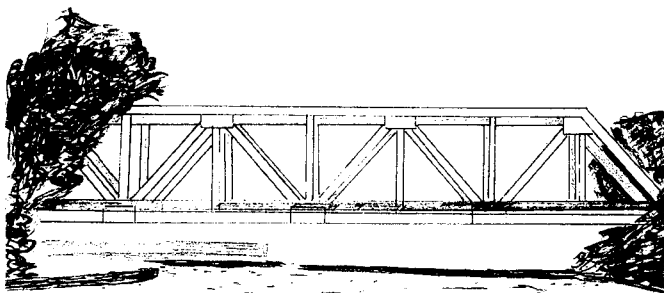
The theme for the Ware Carnival and Boat Parade is 'Science Fiction'. A Boat Entry Form is included with this newsletter.

Bridge Gazing

Travellers on rivers and canals are very well placed to study bridges and traditionally bridge numbers are more practical for navigation than a sextant and a compass. Boaters also get opportunities, denied to motorists, to operate swinging and lifting bridges and some of them are massive structures. With the start of the canal age there was an overwhelming requirement for new bridges and this need was boosted even further with the arrival of the railways.

When Cruising on the Lee or Stort it is prudent to pay attention to bridges even if only to avoid a bumped head. Some of them are very low. But what a pity that the prettiest stretches of these navigations are blighted by some of the plainest bridges. Most of them are functional but featureless structures thrown up in an unromantic age by the Lee Conservancy using slabs of concrete and steel girders. Of course there are exceptions such as the attractive road bridge over the Stort at Roydon Station and a similar balustraded road bridge built in 1925 at Stanstead Abbots. But these were the responsibility of a County Council which presumably controlled a larger budget than the Lee Conservancy. The Lee's bridges contrast unfavourably with the handsomely curved bridges on the Grand Union Canal.

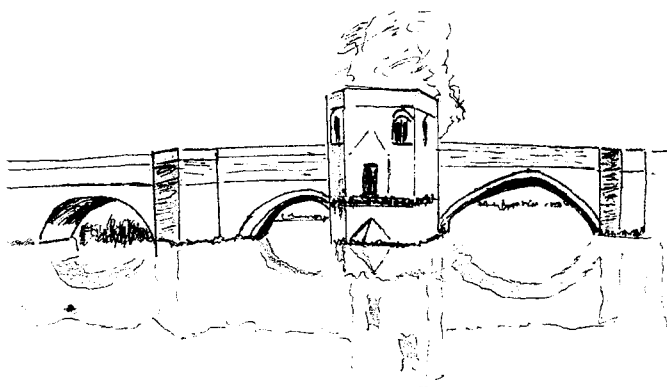
Perhaps the most impressive bridge over the Lee is 'Meccano-like' structure which carries the railway over the Lee at Rye House. Legend has it that it was erected so quickly, maybe in one day, that it earned the nickname the 'Mushroom Bridge'. However, like many railway bridges over navigations in other areas the now rusty Mushroom Bridge badly needs care and attention especially a protective coat of paint. According to one source of information the funds for maintenance have to come from a central source in Europe. Now there's a worry!



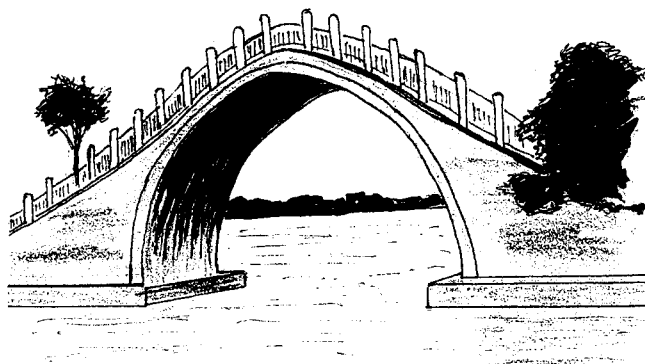
It would be rewarding to look at bridges further a-field than the Lee and Stort and the GU and to look back in time. Travel up the Thames from Limehouse and observe a rich variety of bridge designs starting with what must be the most-photographed lifting bridge in the World (1894). We are blessed with many beautiful medieval stone bridges on our rivers and some, over 500 hundred years old, are standing up well to heavy modern traffic never envisaged when they were built.

Some European bridges were built as a public service by monks and hence the existence still of bridge chapels at Monmouth (13th century), Wakefield (1356) and St Ives

(1425). Old London Bridge also included a chapel as well as houses, a drawbridge and a watermill.

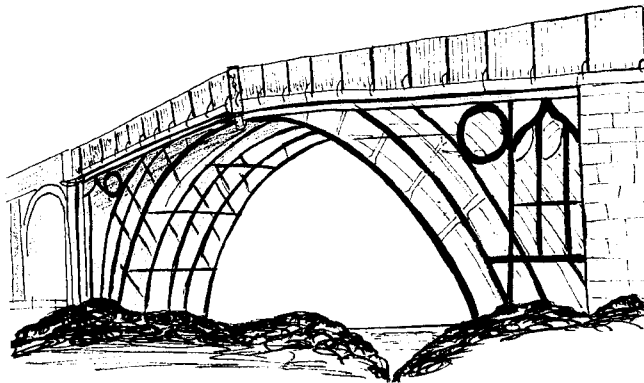


The idea of building a stone arch to support a bridge goes back thousands of years but it was the Romans who perfected the semicircular arch which is so well demonstrated in the Coliseum in Rome and several enormous and still surviving aqueducts. In a classic stone Roman bridge the width of the supporting columns was about half the width of the spans. Later builders favoured pointed 'ecclesiastical' arches which required less skill to construct than a semicircle or arc. With more experience stone bridge builders progressively experimented with lighter, wider spans and shallower arches. This reduced costs, offered less obstruction to the current and less impediment to navigation. Old London Bridge, with its many bulky piers, concentrated the tidal flow so much that it was notoriously difficult to navigate. Building shallower arches meant that the bridge did not need to hump so much making it easier for horse-drawn vehicles and pedestrians to cross. The ultimate in perfection of a high and slender hump-back bridge (18th century) can be seen at the Summer Palace at Peking and we saw other examples in the recent presentation at Roydon on China's Grand Canal by Liam D'Arcy-Brown.



On the Thames, just downstream of Maidenhead, stands the magnificent, high, twin-arches of Brunel's railway bridge constructed in brick. This is an outstanding example of Brunel's pioneering work. At the time this bridge was built most engineers, other than Brunel, doubted whether the massive brick arches would stand firm but they have now stood the test of 150 years.

Stone is fine to withstand compression but does not stand up to tension (stretching). This put a limit on span width with the exception of suspension bridges. Tension is at a maximum along the lower edge of a wooden plank or stone slab. Major advances came with iron, then steel and subsequently with pre-stressed concrete. Metal offered many options to bridge designers such as the arch under the carriageway on Iron Bridge (1779) over the Severn in Shropshire, an arch over the carriageway as over Sydney Harbour (1932), or huge tubular supports as in the Tamar (1859) and Forth (1889) railway bridges.

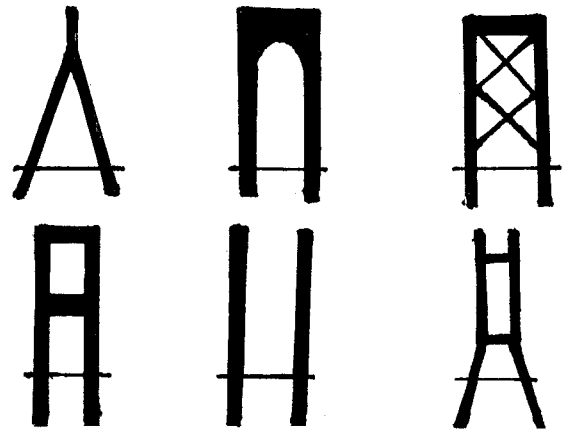


The development of steel made building bridges easier, cheaper and quicker to construct especially with prefabricated parts. There is a modern pre-fabricated 'temporary' bridge, over the Stort above Hunsdon Lock, which looks very much like, and may even be, a Bailey military bridge. Such bridges had to be erected very, very quickly indeed.

The most impressive transverse structure on British Waterways is the 330 feet wide Barton Swing Aqueduct (1893). When it is opened to allow large vessels to navigate the Manchester Ship Canal, 1450 tons are swung through 90 degrees and this includes 800 tons of canal water.

Bridge builders and architects are prone to aim for the biggest, widest or tallest ever in the quest for fame. Nowhere is this more obvious than with a modern suspension bridge and the obsession to build the lightest and widest span between supporting towers. When the Humber Bridge was completed (1981) for several years it held the record for the widest span at 4,626 feet. Since then engineers have moved on and one giant on the drawing board, to link Sicily with mainland Italy will need towers 1,234 feet tall. That would be about 250 feet taller than the Eiffel Tower! Much nearer home we can admire the QE2 Bridge (1991), on the M25 at Dartford. This was designed as a very graceful structure but the navigation authorities insisted that it was built with very robust 'elephant' legs to safeguard against a colliding ship. Have a look next time you approach the tunnel from the South. Mind you not everyone is happy about this bridge. Banny tells me that the carriageway is not high enough and never again will tall sailing ships be able to reach Greenwich.

There are many different designs for the towers of suspension bridges and a recent-trend is for asymmetry- a point-scoring deviation for architects.



Marlow's chain-link, suspension, road bridge (1832) upstream of Marlow Lock is very graceful and the builder used the same design, but on a much greater scale, to traverse the Danube at Budapest (1849). No tourist brochure of Marlow or Budapest is complete without a photograph of one of these masterpieces.

Bridges in the future could have incredibly wide spans if it became economical to construct with lightweight materials reinforced with aramid (Kelvar) or carbon fibres. Even the Straits of Gibraltar, which is 8.5 miles wide at its narrowest point, might be conquered with a single span.
JS

Monkey Boats, 'Animals', Long Boats and Woosers

Monkey boat is a nickname sometimes given to a working narrowboat. One might have thought that it referred to the boatman balancing along the gunnel or leaping from one boat's deck to another. The true reason is that the man associated with designing the first commercial narrowboat was Thomas Monk of Tipton in the Black Country.

On some navigations a donkey, referred to as an '**animal**', took the place of a horse for towing a narrowboat. An '**animal**', being smaller than a horse, could be persuaded to climb aboard when the boat reached a tunnel without a towpath. In America, where everything is done on a grand scale, there were canal boats large enough to carry a horse and a stable. One horse, of a pair, rested in the stable whilst its companion was busy towing. (Nothing to do with canals, as I fly off at a tangent, there is an expression 'to work like a horse' and another 'to work like a Trojan'. I once overheard a conversation when a lady said that her husband "worked like a Trojan Horse").

When a gongoozler refers to a narrowboat as a long boat one is inclined to reply that longboats or longships were sailed by Vikings. Although the latter is true it should be remembered that in the West of England and on the Severn, narrowboats were known as **Long Boats**. In the South Midlands a narrowboat was strangely called a **Wooser**.

Packet Boats

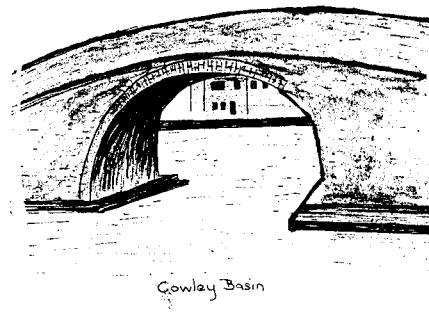
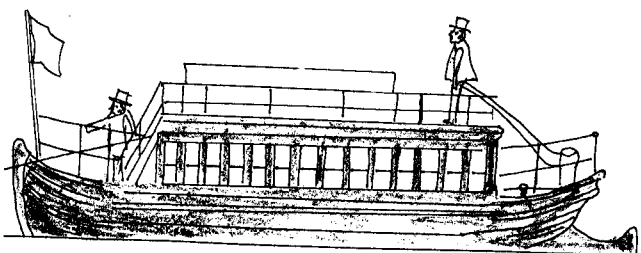
At the start of the Slough Arm near Uxbridge, British Waterways opened Packet Boat Marina with a blaze of publicity just a few years ago. At the time I wondered what the name could mean. Obviously marinas are for boats and one definition of a packet is a 'small collection'. If the new marina was only small, why all the publicity and fuss? We have since moored there for a few days and confirm that it is definitely not small and is in a very pleasant location. I was motivated to enquire further about Packet Boats and what better place to start than the 'Packet Boat' public house at Cowley.

The first recorded reference to a packet boat was in 1641 which clearly predates the canal age. The dictionary definition of a 'packet boat' is 'a boat or vessel plying at regular intervals between two ports for the conveyance of mails, also of goods and passengers: a mail-boat'. Travelling by water was more comfortable and safer than the alternative of a wagon on a bumpy and rutted road. So very soon in the canal age passenger boats were introduced and to be viable they needed to travel as fast as the navigation would allow which called for galloping or cantering horses. These authorised 'fly-boats' had to have priority. On the Bridgwater Canal it is recorded that some passenger boats were fitted with a curved, sharp blade at the bow. Its purpose was to cut through the tow-rope of any craft unwilling or unable to let the passenger boat overtake. (Craig will confirm that life is tougher up North and pussyfooting is not the norm.) In the nineteenth century packet boats operated in many places such as the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal, between Bradford-on-Avon and Bath, between Lincoln and Boston and between Leeds and Goole. (Who knows England who knows not Goole?)

Travelling by packet boat was often quite a treat with coffee and other refreshments at all hours and even sleeping accommodation. One canal packet boat even boasted a string band. Our London packet boat was quite up-market and operated the 14 or so miles between Cowley and Paddington. (Perhaps that is where the former public house at Little Venice, 'The Paddington Stop' acquired its name). The service was first licensed in 1804 just three years after the Paddington Arm was opened. The crews were noted for their smart blue uniforms with yellow capes and yellow buttons. Early on the service ran with wide-beamed boats but after six-month it was decided to switch to narrowboats to reduce the problem of scouring the navigation.

When travelling up the Grand Union Canal, shortly upstream of the junction with the Slough Arm, look out for the place where the towpath rises over a humped bridge. This is the entrance to a small basin which was presumably the former terminus of the Paddington Packet Boat.

JS



Planning Matters

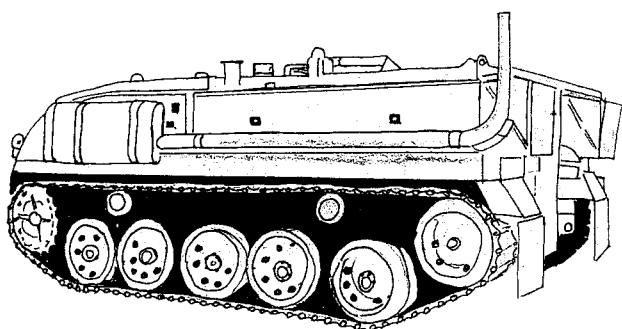
The Olympic sites at Waltham Cross and in East London are making good progress which can now be viewed very well from the towpath. Let us hope that plenty of money is left over to invest in the promised 'Legacy'. Concern has been raised over the effect of security measures on the passage of boats before and during the Olympic Games 2012. No problem is anticipated at Waltham Cross because the site is a safe distance from the navigation but at the East London site boat passages will probably have to be pre-booked and with a Police escort. However whatever arrangements British Waterways can negotiate with DEFRA they could be overruled by the Home Office in the event of a heightened security alert.

The 300-boat marina at Roydon Mill is all but complete at the time of writing. It has been set up on an existing gravel-extraction lake which is 80 centimetres below the level of the Brick Lock-Lower Lock pound on the River Stort and this has necessitated the construction of a new access lock. There is certainly a need for more moorings but precautions must be taken to ensure that the water level is maintained in the Navigation.

On 'our' visitor mooring below Ware Bridge an attractive fixed picnic table with fixed seats has been installed. This is unexpected and it remains to be seen how it was funded.

At Rye House, next to the Power Station, a plan has been submitted to build an incinerator and an anaerobic digester plant. If planning permission is granted a massive tonnage of waste material will have to be transported by road, rail or waterway. Part of the plan includes a new wharf on the towpath side but the towpath will remain accessible to boaters and the general public. IWA's policy has always been to support the use of the navigation for freight as long as this is done responsibly, especially with hazardous waste. Although there might eventually be an unloading wharf at Rye House there is a crying need for loading wharfs elsewhere on the Lee.

Even Faster Than Narrowboats



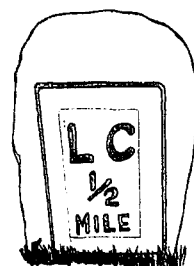
When returning from a recent cruise we had just passed the junction of the Lee and Stort and were expecting to hear Go Carts racing at Rye House. Instead of this familiar sound we heard the unmistakable, high-pitched squealing associated with the tracks of a military vehicle. There to our surprise, an Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) could be seen rumbling along the bank past the parked Go Karts and in the direction of the River Stort. An APC patrolling the Go Kart track called for an explanation so I phoned up to enquire. Was management aware of this highly unusual activity? I am glad that I did make contact and spoke to Mr John Ruff who knew all about it. I explained my interest in the River Lee and all activities afloat or along the bank.

It transpired that the APC had been purchased legitimately as a visitor attraction which may be joined by other retired military vehicles in due course. The organisation is not just about Go Karts but is aiming to provide complementary attractions for families and other visitors. To my surprise and delight John Ruff said that boaters would be very welcome to moor up alongside their racetrack for a visit. The best time is the second Sunday in the month but visitors are welcome on other occasions when the site is open. There is no charge for spectators but there is a modest charge to play on their crazy golf course. Even more exiting there will soon be the opportunity to take part in LaserTAG in a building behind where the APC is parked. What is LaserTAG? you must be wondering. This is a 'not-to-be-missed' chance for visitors to shoot each other with laser guns and I believe that smoke is provided at no extra charge to enhance the experience. What's more you are welcome to pick up some of those delightful, worn, Go Kart tyres which make excellent fenders. If you don't believe what you have read here John Ruff will be pleased to speak to you. Tel 01992 460895 ext 2

Missing Mileposts

A few years ago there was a very successful campaign to re-install mileposts on the Grand Union Canal and the former Hertfordshire Branch raised a considerable sum of money for this cause. They are magnificent tall structures which each state the mileage to Brentford and Braunston. The question has since been raised-what about the rivers Lee and Stort? Canal historian, Richard Thomas, drew attention to a surviving structure opposite the boathouse of Broxbourne

Rowing Club. However at a height of eleven inches it is so small that it can easily be lost in tall grass and now crouches behind a wire fence. I was told by a walker that he has located two similar 'pygmy posts' between Broxbourne and Cheshunt. Subsequently another pygmy post has been located beside The Barge at Hertford. These posts consist of a crude block of concrete supporting a small metal plate which bears a simple inscription 'Half Mile LC'. Presumably 'LC' stands for Lee Conservancy. There is no indication of distance to the head of navigation and perhaps this information was given on the absent mileposts. Were they, perhaps, removed when unessential metal was rounded up for use in WW2? Alternatively were they stolen when the price for scrap was high? It looks as though our pygmy posts weren't worth the bother. Has any reader more information to share?



More About Canal Boats

Joshers, Joey Boats, the Shroppie Fly and Rodney Boats

The name **Josher** has been brought back into common use of late and now seems to refer to a new leisure boat with a shapely prow. However there are two widely different origins of the name Josher. When motorised narrowboats were introduced a boat with an engine was paired up with an engine-less boat, or 'Butty' which had started life as a wooden horse-drawn boat. The paired boats were collectively known as 'Joshers'. In the Black Country 'josher' is boaters' slang for old pals or comrades. Once many boats were operated by the haulage company Fellows Moreton & Clayton (FMC) and they were sometimes also known as 'Joshers'. They were so named after Joshua Clayton who was one of the founders of the company.

Joey boat was a name given to horse-drawn day boats which mainly worked short trips on the Birmingham Canal Navigations (BCN). Many were pointed at both ends so that the rudder could be changed to the other end in the absence of a convenient winding hole.

The **Shroppie Fly** boats, as the name implies, were built for speed. They were round-bilged, streamlined and only 6 feet wide by 2 feet deep. These wooden boats were towed by two horses in tandem which galloped at well over 10mph and worked in relays. They were controlled by young single men and were used to transport perishable goods along the Shropshire Union Canal.

Rodney Boats. Most boating families kept their craft in immaculate condition with lace plates, roses and castles and ornamental cords and knots scrubbed whiter than white. However 'there were a few craft known as Rodney boats or floating slums, usually in the hands of people new to the waterways, shunned by the long-established and often clannish canal families of tradition'. Well just fancy that!

Branch Funds

At our next AGM there is an Agenda item to consider the future use of £1984 in Branch funds which is currently ring-fenced to be spent only on the Lee & Stort. This money was transferred in 1999 from, and raised by, the former Lee & Stort Rivers Society. We have previously used ring-fenced money for plaques on Lee & Stort bridges. Should this money now be released so that the Branch can spend it without this restriction? There are arguments for and against. At present this money is held on our behalf by Head Office and the interest earned goes into IWA's general funds.

Traditional Boating Names

Members new to this Branch might fear that folk isolated on the Lee and Stort are unaware of the much grander GU to the west of our patch. The following record of boaters' names for some of the GU locks might stimulate wider interest or at least curiosity:

Lock 23 at Stoke Hammond- 'Talbots', Lock 30 at Slapton- 'Neils', Lock 31- 'Pools', Locks 32-33 at Ivanhoe- 'Corketts Two', Locks 34-36 at Seabrook- 'Nag's Head Three', Locks 37-38 at bottom of Marsworth flight- 'Peter's Two', Locks 47-48 at Dudwell- 'Dodwell Two', Locks 51-52 at Northwich- 'Gas Two', Locks 54-55 at Berkhamsted- 'Sweeps Two', Lock 62 at Boxmoor- 'Saulter', Locks 75-76 at Cassiobury- 'Alberts Two', Lock 80 at Lot's Mead- 'Walkers'.

Rickmansworth was known as 'Ricky', Berkhamsted as 'Berko', Marsworth as 'Maffers', Fenny Stratford as 'Finny' and Newbold as 'Noble'.

Elsewhere:

Locks on BCN at Daw End- 'Mosher's Two' and at Farmers' Bridge- 'Old Thirteen'.

'Cabbage Turn'- a sharp corner on the Oxford Canal between Marston Doles and Wörmleighton.

'Ippy Cut' is the Wilts and Berks Canal.

And finally a badly leaking boat was a 'Watercress Bed'.

Boaters also had quaint names for each other:

A 'Numbe One'- a skipper who owns the boat he operates.

A 'Greasy Ocker'- a boater on an FMC boat.

'Mud Heelers'- Boaters who worked the North Oxford Canal.

'Bread & Larder'- Boaters who worked the South Oxford Canal!

A 'Hobbler'- A casual worker who assists passage through a lock flight.

'Reed Wobblers' a contemptuous term used by tidal Thames lightermen to describe boaters upstream of Teddington Lock.

Speedy Service

At the Greyhound Inn at Sutton's Stop near Coventry there is a sign from the 'good old days'. It advertises that canal boats could get to Limehouse and back within a week. Presumably this includes loading /unloading. Even Bannny couldn't do that.



Not The Front Page

Thinking Outside the Planet

Having recently suffered the consequences of a very high tide on the Thames, I began to wonder how high the tide might rise on the Moon. Given that the Earth has 80 times the mass of the Moon the highest lunar tide should be 80 times as high as the highest tide on Earth. This means that a typical 20 foot spring tide range on the Thames would be comparable to a 1600-foot tide range on the Moon. Now that's 230 times more spectacular than the Severn Bore. This is all pointless conjecture because the same side of the Moon always faces Earth, thus preventing any tidal movement, and in any case the lunar 'seas' contain no water.

You might like to note that the Moon is drifting away from us at the astonishing speed of 3.8 cm per year and this is linked with the length of our day which is increasing by a staggering two thousandths of a second each century. When the Moon was born the Earth spun much faster so that Sun rose over the horizon every six hours. I take my hat off to the scientists who can work out such things but I raise it even higher to the person who finds this information even remotely useful.

Would You Believe

In Singapore there is currently a civil engineer, of high standing, who rejoices in the name of 'Oh Lock Soon'. With a name like that I would hesitate before joining a Wergy working party.

The Darker Side

Craig Haslam, our Branch Chairman has a reputation as a motivator with a healthy, positive outlook. But that is not the whole story. In a recent sad e-mail he referred to the End of the World when human kind would be consumed by a great plague. Even worse all the waterways might be filled in with concrete very soon. However there is hope. He sees the possibility of a lesser happening. He might get run over by a bus, be rushed to a casualty unit only to find it shut due to cut-backs and in any case realise that he is not ready with clean undergarments. Craig, get well soon but keep taking the pills.



IWA Lee & Stort Branch – Committee Members December 2010

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*Welcome to John Barfoot who has been co-opted onto the Committee. Mick Clark who moved away, has since resigned.

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