MINUTES OF THE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE
LICHFIELD BRANCH
OF THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION
HELD AT COLLEGE HALL, THE CLOSE, LICHFIELD
ON 16TH MARCH 2011

Present:
Phil Sharpe (Chairman), Kaye Harrison (Minutes Secretary), Barbara Hodgson (Treasurer), Neil Hodgson, Pat Barton, Mike Moorise, John Stockland, Helen Whitehouse, Barry Parkes, Ann Parkes, Eric Wood, Doreen Wood, Audrey Fryer, Neville Upton, Allan Gilbert, Lynda Gilbert, Pam McLellan, Diana Salomonson, Nicholas Bostock, Gordon Blackmore, Heather Blackmore, Jerry Sanders, George Simonczyk, Sue Gurney, Pete Gurney, Brian Winhall, Jean Winhall, Dave Moore, Margaret Hille, Barbara Haydon and Ray Haydon.

Dave Pearson (Birmingham branch), Brian Kingshott (Birmingham branch), John Taplin (Birmingham branch), Julie Arnold (Stoke on Trent branch), Harry Arnold (Stoke on Trent branch), Alison Smedley Stoke on Trent branch), Ian Fletcher (Warwickshire branch), Anthony Davies (Warwickshire branch),

Apologies:
Margaret Beardsmore, Derek Beardsmore, Denis Cooper, Carole Cooper, Trish Humphries.

Minutes of the 2010 AGM:
Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on 17th March 2010 were circulated and approved without amendment.
Proposed by John Stockland and seconded by Jerry Sanders.

Matters Arising:
None

Report of the Branch Chairman:
Although the Financial Report, which you will hear shortly, covers the calendar year 2010 my Branch Chairman’s report is for the 12 months since our last AGM. In that period your Branch has organised 8 indoor meetings, 7 walks, 3 work parties, 3 exhibition stands, a boat trip, a garden party, a Christmas Dinner and a jumble sale. But all these activities don’t just happen without a lot of hard work behind the scenes, and I would like to thank the committee and everyone else who has contributed to this continuing success of Lichfield Branch.

Our indoor meetings this year have seen illustrated talks on a wide range of waterways, from the local Ashby Canal via the Droitwich and Ribble Link to the waterways of North America and China, and on topics including Tom Rolt, volunteering with BW, and canal transport techniques in the 1950s. The meetings at College Hall have been very well attended, averaging over 40 people, although the last 2 meetings have seen this room almost bulging at the seams, so we must be doing something right !

For much of the success of our meetings we must thank Peter Chandler who, although retired from the committee, continues to research and recruit interesting new speakers for us. Pat Barton also assists by liaising with the speakers on access, equipment and expenses, and we must not forget our many willing helpers who serve the refreshments, organise the raffle and encourage visitors to return and to join IWA.

But arranging meetings would be of limited effect without good publicity to encourage members and potential members to attend. So thanks to John Stockland for his efforts in keeping the local press and the waterways magazines informed about all our activities. We also produce and distribute posters and must thank Trish Humphries for her earlier help with this. Latterly, several people have shared...
this duty and thanks go to members including Peter Lee, Ann & Barry Parkes and George for helping distribute the posters, although this is an area where we would welcome some more assistance.

Our walks this year have been a notable success, with thanks to the organisers including Mike Moorse, Tim Burgin, Denis Cooper, Ivor Caplan and Brenda Ward, but especially to Margaret Beardsmore who has arranged several of them and co-ordinated most of the others. The walks have proved a good way of attracting potential new members, as indeed have many of our evening meetings, and we try our best to welcome new faces and encourage them to consider joining IWA.

Margaret has also been busy arranging work parties on the canal at Rugeley, which have needed a lot of planning to engage local support and BW back-up. This is also part of a wider initiative to help regenerate the canal through the town and improve the Brindley Bank area and we must thank Margaret for her initiative and determination in taking this project forward.

We had a stand at the Moira Festival this year thanks to Helen Whitehouse who continues to boost Branch funds by running our Branch Sales operation at the public meetings, and also in conjunction with the external talks she gives to various local groups to help spread the word about the waterways and about IWA. Helen like many of our Branch members is heavily involved with national committee activities in IWA and the crossover knowledge is of great benefit to us.

Among the other social activities I listed at the beginning, thanks are due to John Stockland for organising the very successful boat trip through Dudley Tunnel with the meal at ‘Ma Pardoes’ in Netherton. Mike Moorse ably hosted a well organised Garden Party for us at Hopwas, which was also the venue for an enjoyable Christmas Dinner this year, again arranged by Mike. And finally, thanks to everybody that contributed to our very successful Jumble Sale this year, again held jointly with the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust.

I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable support given by Barbara and Neil Hodgson to our committee. Barbara, as Treasurer, keeps all our finances in good order and satisfies Head Office with quarterly returns. Neil maintains records of our membership and also a non-members list which enable us to email both members and potential members with updates on our ever evolving events programme. Neil also sends welcome letters to new members and tries to gently persuade any overdue members not to let their membership lapse.

As Chairman, I have the job of ensuring that all these efforts on your behalf are co-ordinated, and I have also continued to respond to the many planning application and development plan consultations that may affect the waterways in our area. Another of my hobbies is keeping the Branch pages of the website up-to-date and I hope that many of you will find this a useful source of information on Lichfield Branch and our activities.

I cannot end without mentioning ‘Lichfield Lines’, the first edition of our Branch Newsletter which we issued in November. The reasons for producing this were explained in its Introduction and we hope that you found it attractive and informative. Ours is a very active Branch and the publication delays and content restrictions of the Region magazine have often handicapped us in keeping our members fully informed about the many events we arrange.

However, I would like to finish with a request. Notwithstanding the success of our Branch, there are always some areas where we could do better with a little more help, and I would like you all to consider if you could assist us in some way. Could you perhaps volunteer to receive our posters by email, print off a few copies and display them for us in prominent public places locally ? This would be only about 2 posters a month on average. Or perhaps you could volunteer to take our display boards to spread the word at one or more local events, such as Brownhills, Moira, Pelsall or Huddlesford ?
You don’t have to join the committee to do these things, although of course we are always looking for new committee members to share some of the workload and enable us to do even more to promote the waterways. There is far more that we do as a committee than time available to describe it tonight, but we represent your interests at many meetings with British Waterways and other bodies, engage with local politicians, support local restoration projects, attend seminars and contribute to Regional and National activities, debates, consultations, etc. There is a great opportunity for you to volunteer tonight, but we can always co-opt committee members at any time, so please do consider it.

One of those who has volunteered is Kaye Harrison who was recently co-opted as our Minutes Secretary and is recording the proceedings here tonight, so thanks to Kaye for sticking her head above the parapet.

Unfortunately, committee members do retire as well as joining, and I would like to pay tribute to Trish Humphries who has been on our committee for the past 4 years, part of that time as Social Secretary, but has been involved in Branch activities for much longer than that. Trish has not been in the best of health lately and finds getting around difficult, so I would like to thank Trish for all her contributions over the years and wish her all the best for the future.

Well, I am sure you have heard enough from me now, so unless there are any immediate questions, it’s over to Barbara to present the financial report. We will of course all be happy to answer any other questions at the end of the formal business.

Philip Sharpe, Chairman

**Treasurers Report for 2010:**
2010 has been a good year and we were able to give the following donations to canal restoration funds:
- £50 to the Steam Tug Kearne Preservation Society
- £100 to The Cotswold Canals Trust
- £40 to the Daniel Adamson Preservation Society
- £50 to the Macclesfield Canal Society

Making a total of £240

This has meant that we have made a loss on the year of £9.86. Our aim is keep approximately £2000 in our bank accounts, to cover any unforeseen events, and then anything over is used to provide donations to Canal Trusts or restorations, who have sought our help. At the end of 2010 we had £2096.26 in our bank accounts.

Our monthly meeting costs, room hire and speaker expenses are being covered by the raffle, teas and donations and I would like to thank you all for your contributions.

Donations of £91 have been received, the majority from Helen Whitehouse’s talks to different groups. I would like to thank Helen for all she has done.

The income from fundraising this year was £316.00, the largest contributions being:
- £142.54 from the Jumble Sale
- £134.76 from the Garden Party
- £ 60.50 from Games at Moira

Against that we spent £21.80 on raffle prizes. Our thanks go to members who kindly donated raffle prizes during the year.

The proceeds from the tombola at the Christmas dinner cleared £19.00. This was after taking into account the tip to the hotel staff and the purchase of quiz prizes.
The expenses incurred during 2010 were:

- £58.00 for the printing of the programme cards
- £186.69 for the printing and postage of one copy of Lichfield Lines.
- £40.00 for 1 person to attend a Hygiene Cert Course. This is a requirement for us to do our own catering.
- £50.55 in VIP entertainment for an outing for local MPs and councillors on a committee member’s narrowboat.
- £85 for the Committee meeting room hire and finally
- £135.60 in total for all officers’ expenses.

The sales stand has provided a profit of £312.43 in 2010. Our receipts of £771.02 have more than covered our outlay of £458.59 and we held stock with a retail value of approximately £850.00 as at 31st December 2010. Everyone wins from this. The profits increase our funds for donations to worthy causes, and we can all get the IWA products without having to pay for postage and packaging. These accounts are a subset of those for national accounts and they asked that we didn’t show the stock we hold as assets in order to keep the accounts simple.

We received £26.63 interest from our bank accounts.

Hopefully 2011 will be even more successful.

Barbara Hodgson, Treasurer

Questions arising:
Q. The Branch seems to attract a good rate of interest on the accounts. How is this achieved?
A. Most of our money is in a deposit account held with Barclays, arranged through Head Office.

Q. The Branch has a policy of holding a large balance for rainy days. Why is this and what sort of rainy days are you anticipating?
A. We have assessed unavoidable income and expenditure at needing a balance of about £1000. In addition we are anticipating purchasing a digital projector for talks at open meetings as many speakers now use this media and we are not always able to borrow the equipment. We also like to respond to unexpected requests to help and so we decided on holding a balance of between £1500 and £2000. We have just made a number of donations which will reduce our current balance to this level.

Items Requested by Members and Notified in Advance:
None

Mr E. Wood proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman for his clear and informative report and to the Treasurer for her detailed report and accounts. This action was carried unanimously.

Election of Committee Members:
a) Members completing 3 years in post and eligible for re-election: Mike Moorse and Trish Humphries

Mike Moorse was re-elected.
Proposed by Helen Whitehouse, seconded by Eric Wood, approved unanimously.

Trish Humphries was not seeking re-election. She was thanked for her long and dedicated service to the branch.

b) Members co-opted since the previous AGM: Kaye Harrison
Kaye Harrison was elected.
Proposed by Phil Sharpe, seconded by Barbara Hodgson, approved unanimously.

c) Other candidates: None

**Any Other Business**
The Chairman invited questions on issues concerning the branch.
Q: Is Navigation now defunct and is the branch receiving the capitation?
A: Navigation is not defunct but this question would be better asked at the Region AGM which follows this meeting. No capitation payments are received by the Branch.

There were no other questions and the meeting closed at 8.07pm