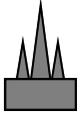




The Inland
Waterways
Association

Issue 10



Lichfield Branch

www.waterways.org.uk/lichfield

Winter 2015

Lichfield Lines

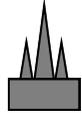


November Fashion
Show—See Page 8

The newsletter of IWA Lichfield Branch

The IWA may not agree with opinions expressed in this magazine but encourages publication as a matter of interest. Nothing printed may be construed as policy, or as an official pronouncement, unless specifically identified as such.

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Branch Chairman's Report

Firstly I wish you a belated Happy New Year. The start of the year allows us to look forward to the Spring and another year of enjoying our beautiful waterways. This is the season of anticipation and planning. The evenings are still dark and cheerless so don't forget to bring a little happiness into your life by attending our branch meetings for inspiration and friendship. In February we have a talk on the Droitwich Canal – well worth a visit if you haven't already done so.

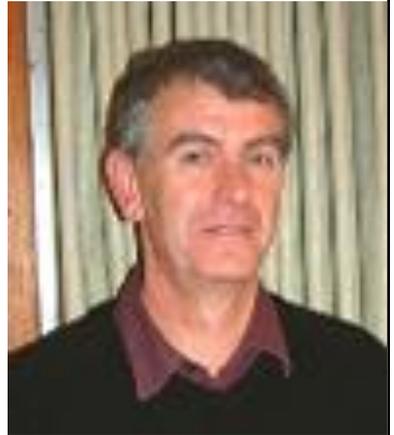
Our branch AGM will be on 18th March. This year we host the IWA West Midland region AGM on the same evening. We have invited Les Etheridge, IWA's national chairman, to come to our meeting and talk to us on the subject of "Taking IWA Forward". It is a great honour that he has accepted our invitation and so I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend the meeting to hear his vision and ensure that his visit to Lichfield is worthwhile.

Several of our branch committee members have come to the end of their term of office. Some will stand for re-election but others will be retiring firm in the knowledge that they have done their bit for the waterways. We hope to recruit some new people onto the committee. It is only by this healthy renewal process that IWA can ensure our important work continues into the future. The jobs of speakers' secretary, fund raiser, sales stand organiser and deputy work party organiser are up for grabs. We provide support and training on the job.

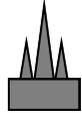
Several of these positions can be done without having to be on the committee but if one is working on behalf of the IWA, one might as well take advantage of the camaraderie and cake that one enjoys as a committee member. Please telephone or email me if you would like to know more about any of the jobs or joining the committee. If you are interested you can even come along to a committee meeting before the AGM to find out what we do. My contact details are on page 18.

We are very fortunate that Mike Bending, who joined the branch committee at the last AGM has offered to take on the role of Navigation Officer for the branch. This basically involves keeping an eye on what is happening on the navigations within the branch area and ensuring that CRT perform their duties to a high standard. See Mike's report on page 14. If you do have cause to write to CRT about a navigational problem, please send Mike a copy of your correspondence or if you wish IWA to take up any matter up on your behalf, please let him know and we will see what we can do.

Some of you may have seen criticism in the national waterways press which, far from congratulating IWA about its achievement with regard to HS2 in Woodend/Fradley area, has criticised us for not opposing the whole scheme and preventing HS2 from being built in the first place. You may have wondered why no-one from IWA has replied to this. We believe that most sensible people will understand that this is a rather unfair but flattering criticism. Unfair, because as IWA is a waterways charity, opposing HS2 completely is not covered by our



Les Etheridge
IWA National Chairman



charitable aims and flattering because anyone who thinks that IWA is likely to have any influence which could prevent a major, government sponsored transport link from going ahead has somewhat overestimated our powers. That of course does not prevent any of us as private individuals adding our voices to those organisations working specifically against HS2 if that is what we think is best for our country. I have discovered that whilst IWA members fall into three categories as far as HS2 goes (the pros, the antis and the don't knows) we can all agree that if the scheme goes ahead we have to ensure that it has the least worst possible effect on the waterways. Be reassured that IWA is continuing to work nationally and locally to achieve this aim.

Helen Whitehouse 20/01/2015

Forthcoming Events

All Lichfield Branch meetings are held at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane, (off Walsall Road), Lichfield WS13 8AY 7:15 for 7:30pm

Wednesday, 18th February 2015—Branch Meeting

“The History and Restoration of the Droitwich Canals”, an illustrated talk by the Droitwich Waterways Trust Vice Chairman, Margaret Rowley.

Tuesday 3rd March 2015—Walk

A Waterway Walk: "Alrewas Hayes, Orgreave Hall and the Trent and Mersey Canal". An easy 5.7 mile walk that passes in front of two exclusive country houses (and a view of a third) along level farm tracks, green lanes and quiet country roads, before rejoining the towpath at Alrewas to return to the start. There is one stile, but no climbs. The walk will take approximately 2.5 hours. Meet 10:00 for a 10:15 start in the car park of The Swan Inn, Fradley Junction DE13 7DN. Contact Clive Walker on 01827 282298 or clive.walker@waterways.org.uk

Saturday 14th March 2014—Table Top Sale

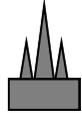
Penkridge Table Top Sale. At Peace Memorial Hall, Pinfold Lane, Penkridge, ST19 5AP from 10am - noon. Set-up and donations from 8.30am. Clothes, household goods, books, CDs, games, toys, small furniture, crockery, glassware, etc. Refreshments available. Admission 30p. (Organised by Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust, supported by IWA Lichfield Branch). Volunteers needed, contact David Moore 01543 432718. See the LHCR website for details.

Wednesday, 18th March 2015—Branch Meeting

Lichfield Branch AGM plus the West Midlands Region AGM followed by a presentation by the IWA National Chairman Les Etheridge on “Taking IWA Forward”. Branch AGM Agenda may be found on Page 16.

Friday 20th March to Tuesday 23rd March 2015—Work Party

Path completion work party at Brindley Bank, Rugeley. Finishing off re-laying the canalside path we started in November, between the aqueduct and the bypass bridge. CRT will again be funding the roadstone and machinery but we need the volunteers to do the work. If you can help it would be very much appreciated, either for a day or for just a few hours. We will be



working from 9.30 am to 4 pm each day (weather permitting). Lunch, hot drinks and cake will be provided. Meet at the bottom of the steps by the aqueduct, accessed along the footpath between Albany Drive and the pumping station, off Wolseley Road, Rugeley, WS15 2QY. We will again be moving the stone in motorised barrows, laying it on the path, and levelling the ground along the moorings. No experience needed but please wear stout boots and old clothes. We also need volunteers to help with providing refreshments. Please let Margaret Beardsmore know if you can help by phone on 07581 794111 or email at margaret.beardsmore@waterways.org.uk

Wednesday, 15th April 2015—Branch Meeting

“Canal & River Trust; Current Events and the Future” a talk by Canal & River Trust Trustee John Dodwell.

Adjacent Branches Calendar

The **Birmingham, Black Country and Worcestershire Branch** hold their meetings at Coombeswood Canal Trust, Hawne Basin, Herewood Rise, Halesowen B62 8AW 7:15 for 7:30pm

Monday 16th February 2015

Derby & Sandiacre Canal Restoration—Chris Madge, Chairman, Derby & Sandiacre Canal Society
Branch AGM

Monday 16th March 2015

Monday 20th April 2015

Monday 18th May 2015

Idle Women—Wartime Canal Workers—Vince Williams
Worcestershire Carriers before the Railways—
Richard Churchley

The **Warwickshire Branch** hold their meetings at the Sports Connexion Leisure Club, Leamington Road, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Coventry, CV8 3FL. 7:30pm

Wednesday 11th February 2015

Wednesday 11th March 2015

Wednesday 8th April 2015

Wednesday 13th May 2015

The Rhodes Thomas Collection—Ian Fletcher
Branch AGM followed by 'A look back at the Stratford
Waterways celebrations: 1964, 1974 & 2014'
'Conserving Waterways Heritage'
Nigel Crowe, Head of Heritage at Canal and River Trust.
'Restoration of the Northern Reaches of Lancaster
Canal' by Frank Sanderson of Lancaster Canal Trust.

The **North Staffs and South Cheshire Branch** hold their meetings at Stoke on Trent Boat Club, Endon Wharf, Post Lane, Endon, Stoke on Trent ST9 9DT. 7:45 for 8pm

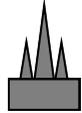
Friday 13th February 2015

Friday 13th March 2015

Friday 10th April 2015

Friday 8th May 2015

Branch AGM
Branch Annual Dinner
There will be a repeat showing, by popular demand, of
the Historic Films about the Caldon Canal which were
first shown during the Caldon 40 weekend.
Peter Scott—Spot the Locks



Recent Activities

Ashby Canal Restoration Walk Thursday 1st January 2015

An overcast but dry and blustery morning greeted the 35 or so walkers who met in the car park of The Globe Inn, Snarestone on New Year's Day. The 3 mile walk was a joint venture between IWA Lichfield and the Ashby Canal Association. Around a third of the walkers came from the IWA, a similar percentage were members of the ACA, and the remainder had heard of the walk through the ACA Friends Facebook page or by word of mouth.



The aim was to view the restoration progress between Snarestone and the proposed aqueduct across the Gilwiskaw Brook, and to return from there via a circular route that took in the unrestored line of the canal and a public footpath.

After half a mile and a group photo on turnover bridge 61, we reached Snarestone Wharf where we paused briefly to view the pile of oversized bricks, known as Wilkes's Gobs*.

These have been retrieved from the canal bed and will be used as original facing for the reconstruction of Bridge 62. We then progressed along the

350 metres of pristine canal towards the new bund, that marks the site of Bridge 62 and a small 17 metre winding hole. Work on this will be completed in the Spring of this year.

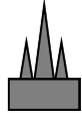
Pausing briefly to feel the weight of one of these oversized bricks we found by the towpath, we then walked a further half a mile along the line of the unrestored canal northwards towards the Gilwiskaw Brook. The contours of the land here are deceptive. It looks as if the canal has been built on an embankment, whereas in fact the surrounding land has subsided and the canal bed is raised because it has been backfilled with pit waste.

At the site of the proposed aqueduct we could look across the brook towards what will be a full-sized winding hole at the site of the old lloft's Wharf, where the coal from Measham was once loaded. From there the canal will veer from its original route, running parallel to the existing Bosworth Road towards Measham. The restoration is being funded by the successors of UK Coal, who are making regeneration payments to Leicestershire County Council, the owners of the canal route.

We then headed back to Bridge 62, where we joined a public bridleway that runs parallel to the canal on its way towards Snarestone. In parts this little-used footpath resembled a set for a WWI film, and several walkers remarked that the going "was good for the calves and the thighs". Refreshments followed in The Globe Inn, Snarestone.

* Joseph Wilkes was an 18th century Measham industrialist and supporter of the Ashby Canal construction. When a tax was introduced based on the number of bricks used in a building, he simply made his bricks bigger than average.

Report Clive Walker Photo Margaret Beardsmore



Work Party Friday 7th to Friday 14th November 2014



Local Volunteers have helped IWA Lichfield Branch lay a complete new canal-side path in Rugeley, for which the Canal and River Trust kindly provided the equipment in the form of a mini digger and powered wheelbarrows, plus three lorry loads of aggregate. The newly surfaced path runs between Brindley Bank Aqueduct on the Trent & Mersey Canal as far as the Rugeley Bypass Bridge, some 200 metres. This is part of a popular circular walk for Rugeley residents but previously became very muddy during the winter.

A total of 27 volunteers put in 340 hours labour, sometimes in appalling wet weather. Some came for the week, some for a day or two, and some fit in a few hours between paid work or babysitting, but everyone worked extremely hard to get the task finished. The workers were fortified by excellent hot food and plentiful supplies of cake and tea along the way.

The new path has now been lined and one layer of aggregate has been laid and compacted. The final layer will be installed in early Spring, when hopefully the weather will be better.

(Report and Photos by Margaret Beardsmore)



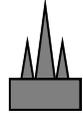
A very muddy volunteer

Salt & Sandon Park Walk - Tuesday 4th November 2014

The car park of the Holly Bush Inn at Salt was the meeting point for our walk, led by the Beardsmores with Derek in the lead and Margaret in a nominally supporting role. We had a fine calm autumn day with some cloud and plenty of clear sky, and only sparse muddy patches on the towpath; just right for the season. We totalled 11 walkers with two, apparently appreciative, dogs swelling our ranks.

We headed roughly north up the lane out of the village and soon came to the Trent and Mersey Canal where we joined the footpath at the start of the main part of the walk, a big clockwise circuit. Turning left, we immediately stopped to view the canal bridge, listed in 1968 and of interest as the original arch of the humpbacked bridge of the canal, completed along this stretch in 1777, had been massively built on with successive arches laid on each other when the level of the road above had to be raised to accommodate the road crossing of the new railway just a little further down the lane in 1849. After a group photo by the bridge we carried on along the towpath.

At Sandon lock we were able to view the works being done there and chat to the workmen. Both gates were off with a dam across the top which accounted for why we had seen no traffic on the canal. A little further up we could also view the old lime kiln by the side of the canal. We turned back to cross the canal by the lock bridge and walked up the lane towards



Sandon. The old building of the station, closed in 1947, was the cause for some comment, having expensive patterned brickwork and tall Tudor style chimneys built with a lot of Victorian pride. We crossed the main road and into a country lane leading uphill and over a cattle grid as we were now entering the very pastoral part of our walk. The old school was by the side of the lane and so up we went to what appeared to be the top of our walk, the church of All Saints. There has been a church here since at least 1130, with major rebuilding in 1310 and many improvements in the 1920s. The clear day helped us to appreciate the location of the church as the views out over Staffordshire to the SW were very fine, and the party was inspired to walk through the churchyard and around the building and soak up the spirit of this seemingly isolated ancient site.....but it was not isolated when it was built. Nearby the land is all folded with dips

and hummocks, the site of the old village of Sandon which was removed when the first Baron Harrowby, who had recently acquired the area, laid out his great park, still about 400 acres, in 1777.....for we were on the estate of Sandon Hall, the home of the Earls of Harrowby. The second Baron was raised to being the first Earl, and later Viscount Sandon in 1809.

We followed the track down past the abandoned village site and over a watercourse with farm buildings on our left and an

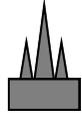


intriguing large wet old excavation to our right with a footbridge across it. Our leaders informed us that this was the old moat of the manor house and a local lady came over the bridge on cue for further discussion of the matter. The moat, though distinctly soggy looking, is now short of water as the stream feeding it is being extracted further up for farming. The moat seemed to be large and wide and roughly square shaped, in woodland, and was the site of the original moated manor house which became Sandon Hall. Here the first and second Barons would have lived after buying the estate in the 18th Century.

1848 was a year of tumult across Europe.....and so too in little Sandon on its quiet hillside. An unguarded moment by a workman up on the roof, just an instant of carelessness with a blow torch, and the fire had started which burnt the hall down.

A new hall had to be built, which was done a good mile away, and the current fine Jacobean revival style mansion was completed in 1854 (those Victorians knew how to get on with their projects). We only glimpsed the back of it later in the walk. A sort of summer house was built on the moated site, we could glimpse something on the island in the wood; it looked damp and forlorn to me.

The church had not been the top of the walk. The track now carried on up and we came to a fine, tall stone building near the top of the hill, the quite incongruous architecture apparently being due to its having been built at the same time as the new hall, itself done in an anachronistic style, appropriately called Stonehouse Farm. At this point bearings were taken, and going through a gate by the track we entered open grassy parkland and headed up hill again with



woods to our right. The parkland rolled up and over the hill top which proved to be the real highest point of the walk, with superb views over Staffordshire for miles and in satisfyingly different directions than those from the church. The group in its little clusters ambled down the wide pasture land dotted with grazing sheep, guided fixedly onward by the distant vaporous vision of Rugeley Power Station.

Passing a corner of a wood to our right, the parkland opened up a view and in it...what is this? There, quite unannounced, as if dropped from outer space, was a large and curious square building of arches supporting a flat platform with balustrades and broken ones at that. There appeared no access onto it or up within it; a construction entirely without function in a useless situation and a great surprise to behold....a supreme example of what a Folly should be.

The Folly had previous history. It was the highest point of the great stately home that was Trentham Hall, where it rose up above the roofline in the middle of the two big wings of the



hall as a decorative belvedere in the style of a campanile, a lookout and a focus for the eye viewing the hall. When the mansion at Trentham was demolished in 1912 the 5th Earl of Harrowby purchased it for £100, and my thanks to him.

The Folly then formed the backdrop for a group photo opportunity.

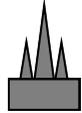
Our amble down the hillside brought us to another track where we turned right and we carried on in beautiful November sunshine over a

cattle grid with a farewell to the sheep and up into a wood, with a really nice autumn feel as we moved through the trees, dry golden leaves rustling underfoot as they should.

The top of the wooded hill was to our right. There was a trackway in a cutting through it and over the track the arch of a large grey stone bridge. Another surprise, seemingly out of place, and if you had been crossing the bridge you would have come to what we saw to our left rising out of the trees on the hill....a great Doric column with an urn on top.

This was erected in honour of the great statesman who, having seen the country safely through the first part of the Napoleonic wars, died early in 1806....William Pitt the Younger. The memorial was put up in the same year by his friend Dudley Ryder the second Baron (and later the 1st Earl) Harrowby. Dudley Ryder had been a second to Pitt in his 1798 duel with his political rival, Tierney, and Pitt's duelling pistols are still in Sandon Hall. For all concerned it was lucky that he had not needed to erect his column 8 years earlier than he did....both men in the duel fired 2 shots, all four missed, at which point it was called off, the seconds deeming that honour had been satisfied.

We left the pleasures of a wood in autumn and passed down a grassy meadow from where the back of the hall could be glimpsed and we arrived at the track leading right to Home Farm and left to the lodge and the entrance from the main road. We crossed the main road and were



now back on the lane leading over the railway and the canal to Salt. At the bridge over the canal, a James Brindley contour canal and part of the earliest section of his Grand Cross scheme to open in Staffordshire, we met the route we had started about 2 hours previously and made our way back to the Holly Bush Inn.

The fresh air seemed to have had a beneficial effect on our appetites as the entire group headed into the pub for lunch and good conversation.

Although there was so much of interest on the walk we had not lingered too much due to pressure caused by the pub's 'no booking' lunches so there are many good reasons to go back. A thoroughly enjoyable autumn walk was appreciated by all, including our four-legged friends, and thanks go to the Beardsmores for their organisation and information.

Report John Parry, Photos Phil Sharpe

Fashion Show November 12th 2014



As an unusual addition to the normal program of events the branch organised a pre-Christmas Fashion Show in conjunction with Edinburgh Woollen Mill (EWM) at Byrkley Garden Centre near Burton on the 12th November. Over 30 branch members and guests paid to attend and were delighted to see two Branch Committee members, Lichfield Lines editor Pete Gurney and Branch Secretary Denise Bending (on the left) plus one of the EWM Staff members, modelling a range of clothes supplied by EWM. The company provided festive nibbles and generously contributed a hamper as one of the prizes for the raffle. After the event many attendees took advantage of the specially discounted rate at the EWM shop. As well as providing a very entertaining and enjoyable afternoon the event raised some £150 for branch funds. Many thanks to Christine Watkins for coming up with the idea and

making the arrangements with EWM.

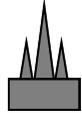
Report Denise Bending Photo Sue Gurney

Skittles Evening Saturday October 25th 2014

Teams from the Lichfield Branch, Shrewsbury and North Wales Branch and the North Staffs and South Cheshire Branch gathered at Stafford Boat Club for a fun evening.. We entered two teams in the skittles competition and a great time was had by all but the less said about the standard of the Branch skittles is probably better.

Excellent food was provided by Stafford Boat Club with the bar being open all





evening.

If there are any star skittles players out there perhaps we can pip the other branches and win the trophy next time.

Report Pete Gurney Photo Julie Arnold

Auction of Maureen Shaw's Plates

Many people will still fondly remember Maureen as they pass through Wardle Lock in Middlewich, whether they knew her or not. There is memorial interpretation board by the towpath for us all to refer to as we pass by.

Most of Maureen's possessions have been redistributed or kept in the family. The last items are mainly her plates plus a few other decorative items and it was thought that some of her friends and acquaintances from the waterways might like to have something of their own to remember her by. To this end an auction has been arranged and it will take place on Maureen's birthday in 2015:

Date: 28TH March 2015

Time: 1pm to 3pm

Location: Middleport Pottery, Port Street, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 3PE

www.princes-regeneration.org/middleport-pottery

Tel: 01782 577866



Middleport pottery has recently benefited from restoration through the Prince's Trust and was reopened on 1st July 2014. It offers guided tours, pottery sales and a canal-side café serving beverages, snacks and meals, Maureen liked her food and would have been in her element here, in more ways than one. It was felt to be a fitting location for the auction as it is in the heart of the Staffordshire Potteries by the Trent and Mersey Canal, which was one of the many waterways that Maureen travelled when she was growing up and after she married.

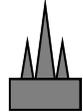
There are 70 lots in the auction, the sale will be cash only to avoid additional administration and you can view the items and see the descriptions by visiting www.tamcs.org.uk/auction

It is hoped that this will be an occasion when many likeminded people come together and renew old friendships, recall old times and remember the old boaters who have shared their experiences with us.

Lichfield Branch Donation to Ashby Canal Restoration

The Ashby Canal is being steadily extended from near Snarestone, which was the terminus for many years after the abandonment of the northern section, towards Measham.

One obstacle blocking the passage to Measham is the Gilwiskaw Brook. The canal formerly crossed the brook on an aqueduct but this was demolished in the 1960s. The Ashby Canal



Association is raising funds to build a new aqueduct to a design approved by Natural England respecting the brook's designation as a Special Area of Conservation. The Lichfield Branch Committee has decided that the branch will contribute £100 to the ACA's "buy a brick" campaign, a gift that will be recorded by a brick inscribed with the branch name forming part of the external brickwork of the aqueduct.

Your Help Wanted Please!

Our work party commitments have increased substantially over the last couple of years, and it is now clear that I need some help.

In particular, we need someone who is prepared to give up a few hours in late June or early July to organise a small group of volunteers to tackle Himalayan Balsam in the area. This is a key area of volunteering for IWA but unfortunately not one I will be able to do.

In addition, is there anyone who would take home and wash the high viz gear after a workparty, and generally help tidy up afterwards?

We also need someone to check that the volunteer sign in sheets are completed, copied and the hours passed on to various people.

It would also be good if somebody would write a short report for the website and Lichfield Lines.

And last but not least; our next work party in Rugeley starts on the 20th March and will last for up to a week till the work is done. Is there anyone who would like to make a casserole or cake for the volunteers or help out with the catering on one of the days?

Please contact me with any offer of help,

Margaret Beardsmore,
Work Party Coordinator, IWA Lichfield Branch
07581 794111
Email: margaretbeardsmore@gmail.org.uk

Safe and Happy Locking—Number Two in a Series of Boat Handling Articles

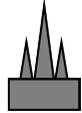
First published in and reproduced by kind permission of Canal Boat Magazine

Words by Terry Robertson of TR Boat Handling.

Pictures by Martin Ludgate of Canal Boat Magazine.

Operating locks on canals and rivers is very much part of the boating experience and can be both enjoyable and hard work, but also very sociable – it is probably where the “towpath telegraph” is most prevalent. It is also where accidents and disasters most frequently occur – the most common of these being the stern of the boat gets “stuck” on the cill when going down the lock. This and many of the accidents could be avoided by abiding by a few simple rules saving a lot of anguish and money.

The majority of boaters have “crew” whether it is one or several and the golden rule is “whoever is on the stern of the boat is responsible for the stern – whoever is operating the lock is responsible for the bow” – so keep eye contact with each other. Boating is very sociable



at locks and it is easy for the person on the stern to start chatting to someone on the side of the lock and the boat has moved backwards possibly getting stuck on the cill whilst the water is going out. This could be because the throttle was not in neutral meaning that the gear box was just in reverse, or a strong headwind had pushed the boat back in the lock. Cills are now marked with 2 white lines on each side of the lock, but the deeper the lock the higher the cill, so the steeper the angle of the boat.

When positioning the boat in the lock, make sure that the gear is in neutral, and then put the tiller hard over to one side so when the boat is descending and goes backwards, the rudder is well to the side and the stern fender will protect the rudder and skeg.

Similarly the crew member operating the bottom paddles could be talking to another boater or crew member who is operating the other side of the lock, not noticing that the boat moves forward getting the bow fender stuck on the bottom gate with the stern still going down.

Depending on the length of the boat there could be anything from 20 to 70ft between the steerer and the crew and with the noise of water, and possibly nearby traffic you will not hear each other giving instructions – it is better to adopt hand signals which are understood by both. Never operate the paddle until the steerer signals.



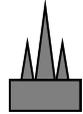
When operating the paddle gear make sure you are using the correct size of hole on the windlass for the size of spindle – eg: the small hole for the tapered spindle, the larger square one for the square spindle – the Dunton windlass is useful as it is designed so that the one hole fits both spindles correctly.



When winding the paddle up make sure the ratchet catch is on so you hear the “click click” as the paddle is raised. When you are raising the paddle it can be quite heavy and the windlass could slip off quickly and hit you across the forehead, the mouth or wrist. Once you have wound the paddle up, ensure the ratchet catch is secure and remove your windlass from the spindle. When winding the paddle down hold the ratchet catch just above the cog then if the windlass comes off you can let the ratchet catch drop to stop the paddle crashing down and avoiding

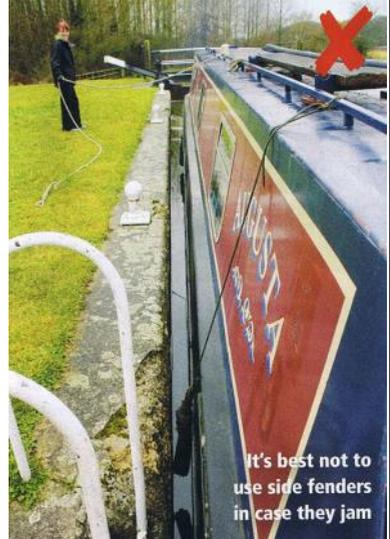
injury to yourself and damage to the paddle gear. When holding your windlass keep the thumb on top of the handle rather than under – again if the windlass comes off the spindle you are less likely to have a sprained or broken thumb.

With just one crew member or you are single-handed, on narrow locks, if one of the bottom gates is open and the other closed it is tempting to cross over the open gate to the closed one – a distance of about 3feet – many people do it.. There is always the possibility of slipping from one gate to the other and falling into the water. If you are single-handed and this happens there may not be anyone around to help you. I think it is far better and therefore safer to take the extra 40-45 seconds to go over the closed top gate and walk down the side of the lock to close the bottom gate.



During winter months lots of us still boat and obviously wear heavier clothing including body warmers, fleeces and wet weather jackets. I frequently see boaters wearing these, but do not zip them up, leaving them “flapping around”. The garment can get caught up - on the throttle, or become tangled in a door handle, or caught in the paddle gear. Scarves should always be tucked in when operating paddles so there are no loose ends to get caught up. This probably sounds very fussy, but accidents can happen in the most simple situations – I once saw a young lady operating a paddle and her long hair became caught in the cog fortunately she was winding the paddle up and only lost a few hairs – if she had been winding it down and the windlass had slipped off it could have been much worse.

Slightly controversial with some boaters is the use of side fenders in locks hanging down the sides. – some are quite large and some thin. Particularly in the narrow locks where the walls might taper inwards as you descend the lock, with fenders down the boat could get wedged between the side walls. Also at some locks you may find that the gates do not open fully and again with fenders down you could get stuck in the lock opening or lose your fender by it being ripped off. It is my recommendation when travelling through narrow locks always take side fenders up just in case! It does give you just a bit more space. As an example going from the Shropshire Union Canal onto the Llangollen at Hurleston Lock the width of boat is 6.10ins and the lock is 6.11ins!

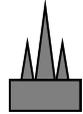


Similarly at double locks with two boats in the lock both with side fenders down on each side the boats could be “locked” together by the fenders. That is why some hire boat companies do not provide side fenders.

These examples are not the only reason why boats get stuck in locks – it could be an obstruction in the water such as a block of wood. I and several other boaters waited in a queue for 2 hours once whilst the boater and BW operatives tried to find the obstruction. The boat in the lock did not have side fenders down and eventually the obstruction was found and removed – a piece of sawn timber 6 x 12ins. If you do see an obstruction in a lock try to remove it by hand or using a boat hook – it probably will not be just pushed away by the boat.

12 tips for locking:

- Keep eye contact between steerer and crew
- Check throttle is in neutral
- Tiller fully across
- Use hand signals to each other – understandable ones!
- Use windlasses correctly and appropriate spindle hole
- Keep ratchet catch on when winding paddle up



- Hold ratchet catch just above cog when winding paddle down
- Do you really need to step across bottom gates?
- Make sure outer garments are zipped up properly
- Long hair tied back
- Put side fenders up
- Check for any obstructions in the lock and remove them

Happy boating and locking and as usual remember the only way to go fast is to go slowly.

Planning Matters

Phil Sharpe, Planning Officer

From mid October to mid January I have again dealt with about 70 planning applications, local plan consultations and other planning matters, and this report highlights just some of the more notable ones. They are all summarised in the monthly notes on the Planning page of our website but if anybody would like further information don't hesitate to contact me.

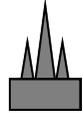
On the **Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal** two of the many gypsy and traveller caravan



Staffs & Worcs Canal at Four Ashes with redundant road and pipe bridges

sites being proposed are canalside at Coven Heath and Slade Heath. Both these existing sites have inadequate screening and their expansion would impact the canal Conservation Area. At Four Ashes development of the former chemical works site on the offside of the canal for warehousing, given outline permission in 2008 but never built, has been revived but with the proposed canalside earth bunding we objected to replaced by retention and reinforcement of the existing woodland fringe. We have asked that consent be also conditional on removal of the 3 redundant road, pipe and foot bridges over the canal.

On the **Trent & Mersey Canal** another much delayed development at Armitage Road, Rugeley has changed from a mixed commercial, retail and residential scheme around a small canal basin to now a wholly residential proposal for 72 houses, on both sides of the canal west of the bypass bridge. The plans retain the Ash Tree Boat Club moorings and seem generally acceptable apart from a few houses being too close to the canal. At Alrewas the area around Bagnall Lock is affected by two current applications; one for conversion of the Jaipur restaurant, formerly the Old Boat public house, into apartments with a barn conversion and 2 new houses, which would have only limited visibility from the canal; but the other for 10 houses in the field adjoining the towpath above the lock would damage the historic setting of the lock, bridge and wharf and block views into and out of the Conservation Area. At Burton on Trent we criticised plans for 300 houses on the Pirelli factory site as uninspiring in layout and objected to a 3 storey apartment block as being too close to the canal towpath. The plans have subsequently been



amended to remove the apartments and improve the layout but concerns remain about an apparent drainage swale along the canal frontage.

Along the **Coventry Canal** at Huddlesford a proposed small joinery workshop and store for boat fitting in a small field opposite The Plough PH was supported, but with concerns about suitability of the site for continuing fuel sales, boat hire and maintenance. These activities have apparently now been excluded from the amended application. At Hay End Lane in Fradley we have objected to an application for 70 houses proposed in a field alongside the canal adjacent to the new road bridge as being unnecessary to meet the Local Plan housing allocation and premature as that plan has not yet been approved. In Nuneaton the delayed application for housing behind Star Line Boats has been submitted but with insufficient changes to answer our concerns about loss of operational land for the boatyard and the effectiveness of noise fencing in preventing complaints from future residents.

On the **Birmingham & Fazeley Canal** the proposed designation of a large part of Hopwas Wood for gravel extraction caused widespread objections and was quickly withdrawn. Changes to the Tamworth Local Plan have revived proposals for a large housing development at Dunstall Lane which was rejected by Inquiry reports in 1999 and 2005. We have objected to this proposed 'urban extension' of at least 723 houses which would be an incongruous and isolated finger of development protruding into the rural landscape between the canal and Green Belt on one side and the Tame valley on the other.

Along the **Wyrley & Essington Canal** the latest plans for a new road bridge alongside York's Bridge at Pelsall include an access path to the canal towpath that we had asked for, but ending short of the roadside. At Brownhills the Apex Road metal recycling facility plans have been amended to reduce the height of the boundary wall and include replanting gaps in the towpath hedge, as we suggested.

The **HS2** High Speed Rail Bill for Phase 1 is still being considered by a House of Commons Select Committee but the expected report on the Phase 2 consultation responses and announcement of the preferred route has been put back to after the general election. Meanwhile, a consultation on 'safeguarding' part of the Phase 2 route between Fradley and Crewe amounts to putting the cart before the horse. It takes no account of the decision to amend the route at Fradley or of our representations on the need for changes at Great Haywood Marina. The second report from HS2 Chairman Sir David Higgins in October again advocated earlier completion to Crewe but cast doubt on most of the station locations in Phase 2 and thereby significant parts of the route, whilst indulging in a flight of fancy about so-called HS3 across the Pennines, quoting journey time reductions without even having any suggested route, construction standards or cost estimates!

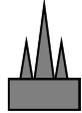
Navigation Matters

Mike Bending, Navigation Officer

Having recently taken on the role of Navigation Officer for Lichfield IWA this is my first report in Lichfield Lines.

West Midlands Waterways User Forum

Each of CRT's regions, known as "Waterways", holds regular User Forums to inform organisations with an interest in the local canals on what is happening in the area and to discuss



any concerns. The West Midlands Waterway held a Forum in December, Lichfield IWA being represented as we have oversight of the northern Birmingham canals for the IWA.

Birmingham Cycleway

This is the topic that caused most discussion at the Forum.

The Cycleway is a Birmingham Council project to construct cycle track “spokes” from the Birmingham suburbs into the centre with the aim of encouraging cycling and taking cyclists off the busy main roads. Much of the Cycleway is being constructed on canal towpaths by CRT funded by the project. The area overseen by the Lichfield Branch is not affected but many Branch members will use the Birmingham canals and so we will maintain an interest in the project.

For the most part, major construction works are not required as only the existing top layer of the towpath is being replaced. Existing mooring rings will be maintained, but it does not seem that any opportunity will be taken to construct new moorings. There will be some loss of grass areas between the existing towpaths and the canal edge but in general such areas are not suitable for mooring spikes as the grass is merely covering stonework.

The wider use of the canal system must be welcomed but it is not clear how speeding cyclists can share the towpath safely with boaters, walkers, anglers etc. CRT do not have a national strategy on controlling excessive speeds and have not specified any measures to be adopted on the Birmingham Cycleway. Signs are seen as ineffective and physical barriers can cause problems for prams and wheelchairs. “Rumble strips” or sections of cobbles seem to be the favoured solution. IWA will need to continue campaigning on this issue.

Fradley Footbridge

The last issue of Lichfield Lines talked about CRT's intention to require the use of a CRT key to open the footbridge at the start of the Coventry Canal at Fradley. This concerns us as delays in passage could cause queues adding to congestion on the Trent & Mersey Canal in front of the Swan Inn which is already a problem during the holiday season. CRT accept this is an issue and have put implementation on hold pending a review. However they will need to do something before April as recent reports of children playing on the bridge have raised Health and Safety concerns which they cannot ignore.



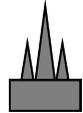
Enforcement

Until recently CRT's main aim was to reduce the number of unlicensed boats on the waterways. They are now estimated to comprise less than 4% of the total and so the focus of enforcement has moved towards those boats which remain too long on public moorings.

On average the towpaths are inspected every two weeks. Although the intention is to resolve problems by mutual agreement, as a last resort an overstayer's licence can be withdrawn and the boat then treated as unlicensed.

Unpowered boats in tunnels

The right of unpowered boats to pass through a surprising number of longer tunnels, as noted



in the last issue of Lichfield Lines, was discussed at the Forum. The list was apparently a surprise to both CRT management who have set up a review of the situation, and to the canoeists who were also represented at the Forum. The canoeists have no desire to make use of their rights.

And finally....

Can I ask for your help in improving our local canals. In particular please can you let me know of any specific improvements that can usefully be made. I am not talking about major faults, which of course should be reported directly to CRT, but rather “annoyances” such as vegetation constricting the waterway or obstructing sight lines, areas which should be dredged, gates which are difficult to operate etc. Any information can be mailed to me at the address given on the Committee page at the end of this newsletter. I will maintain a Lichfield Branch list of issues and will raise them with CRT, informing the Branch on progress.

IWA LICHFIELD BRANCH

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 18th MARCH 2015, at 7.30 PM

To be held at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, WS13 8AY

AGENDA

- 1) Apologies for absence
- 2) Approval of the minutes of the 2014 AGM and any matters arising from these minutes
- 3) Report from the Branch Chairman
- 4) Financial Report from the Treasurer
- 5) Elections to the Committee
Members completing 3 years in post and eligible for re-election
Pete Gurney, Neil Hodgson, John Stockland
Members co-opted since last AGM
Christine Watkins
- Any other candidates
- 6) Any resolutions requested by members of the Branch (provided the Branch Chairman was notified in writing of the item at least 6 weeks prior to the AGM)
- 7) Any Other Business

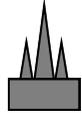
Notes:

Candidates for election to the committee must be current members of the Lichfield Branch and should indicate their willingness to stand.

The Branch committee officers (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) are elected by the committee from its members at their first meeting after the AGM.

Current members of the Committee are: Helen Whitehouse(Chairman), Pat Barton(Vice-Chairman), Denise Bending (Secretary), Barbara Hodgson(Treasurer), Margaret Beardsmore, Mike Bending, Pete Gurney, Neil Hodgson, Philip Sharpe, John Stockland, Christine Watkins

*Item 6: Please put any resolutions in writing and address them to the Chairman at Virginia Cottage, Brook End, Longdon, Rugeley, Staffs. WS15 4PD by 4th February 2014.



Notice of IWA West Midlands Region Annual General Meeting

The 2015 Annual General Meeting of West Midlands Region will take place at 8:00pm on Wednesday March 18th 2015 at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, WS13 8AY and will follow the Lichfield Branch AGM scheduled to start at 7:30pm

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of minutes of the last AGM and any matters arising from these minutes
3. Report from the Region Chairman
4. Financial Report
5. Election of members of the committee
6. Any items requested by members of the region provided the Region Chairman was notified in writing of the item at least 6 weeks prior to the AGM.

Any member who feels they can contribute to the work of the region is welcome to volunteer for election. This can either be done in advance of the meeting (by contacting the Chairman or Secretary) or at the start of the item dealing with the election of the committee when the Chairman may seek interest from the floor. No formal nominations are required in either case. Region officers (other than the Chairman) will be elected at the next region committee meeting after the AGM.

Lichfield Lines is the newsletter of IWA Lichfield Branch. We aim to produce it 4 times a year to keep members informed about our forthcoming public meetings, walks, work parties and other activities, to provide reports on recent meetings and events, and to include articles of general interest to our members.

The editor, Pete Gurney, welcomes articles, letters or photographs of waterway activities in our Branch area which can be emailed to pete.gurney@waterways.org.uk (Please note there is a 10MB limit for emails with photos as attachments sent via this address).

The copy date for the next newsletter is 17th April 2015, for publication in May.

Advertising

Lichfield Lines is posted or emailed to about 300 addresses covering about 440 Branch members. It can also be read and downloaded by anyone from the Branch website pages.

If you would like to publicise your waterway related business to our members, and others that read the newsletter online, we can offer advertising space at the following rates:

Full Page - £20 per issue

Half Page - £10 per issue

Please contact the editor to discuss artwork and layout.

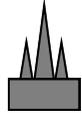
By advertising you will help to sponsor IWA's charitable activities and reach potential customers who are all committed to the waterways.

Email Copies

If you currently receive Lichfield Lines by post but would be happy to have future copies sent instead by email link, please inform our Membership Secretary at

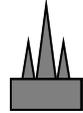
neil.hodgson@waterways.org.uk

This saves IWA printing and postage costs and enables the Branch to do more to support local waterways.



Your Committee

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