

Lichfield Lines



Fashion Show "volunteers" see Page 3

The newsletter of IWA Lichfield Branch

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Branch Chairman's Report April 2016

As the new chairman for Lichfield Branch I would like to thank Helen Whitehouse for the invaluable work she has done as our retiring Chairman. Under her leadership the branch won the prestigious Branch Achievement Award last year. I am sure that she will be very good in her new role as the Caretaker Chairman for the Region. Helen will still be responsible for branch sales, so I am sure we will still be seeing her at some of our meetings.

I have been secretary for the branch for the last three years, so I am a relative newcomer to the committee. However there is a very good team around me and I am sure that they will keep me going in the right direction. My husband, Mike, and I have been members of the IWA for some years, joining before we retired and bought our own narrowboat. Prior to that we had hired on and off for about 30 years. We have volunteered at a lot of events, both locally and nationally, but do like to spend the summer months out and about enjoying our wonderful waterways and countryside.

At the AGM Helen reported on what we had done during the last year – this included the walks that are held regularly, our monthly meetings which cover a variety of subjects and our fund raising activities and the work parties. These are planned to continue.

During March a boat trip was arranged for Cannock Chase MP, Amanda Milling, and Staffordshire County Councillor, Mark Winnington. We took them along the Trent and Mersey Canal from Armitage to Brindley Bank which enabled them to see what the volunteers had achieved and to highlight areas where more work is required.

Summer is nearly upon us, so there will be no indoor meetings until September, from when we have a range of speakers planned for the next season of talks. Over the August Bank Holiday weekend, August 27th – 29th, the annual IWA Festival of Water is coming to Pelsall Common on the Wyrley and Essington Canal. It should be a great event and well worth visiting. If you have some spare time please consider volunteering as we always require lots of help at these events. Working at a Festival is great fun and is a very good way of getting to meet other people interested in the waterways. More details are included later in the magazine or on the IWA website www.waterways.org.uk/events_festivals/festival_water/IWA_festival_water_2016_pelsall.

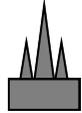
Talking of volunteers we need more people to come and join us on the Committee. There are several roles available, including Minutes Secretary, so if you feel that you can help out in any capacity please contact myself or any other committee member.

I look forward to meeting you all at one of our future events.



Our new Chairman in action at the Fashion Show (see page 3 For article)

Denise Bending April 2016



Forthcoming Events

Posters for our upcoming events may be found at www.waterways.org.uk/lichfield
If you can download these and help to publicise our events it would be very helpful.

Walk—Tuesday 10th May 2016

Calke Park and the Ticknall Tramway Walk. This is a pleasant 6 mile walk through a landscaped estate with 8 dog-friendly stiles. Leaving the village pub car park we soon join the line of the Ticknall Tramway (built as an extension of the Ashby Canal) which we follow southwards for about a mile. Turning left after a tunnel we head through parkland towards Calke Abbey. Although we will not have time to visit the interior, we pass the front of the house and its church and proceed towards Staunton Harold reservoir. Traversing its south-western borders we head slightly uphill at first in the direction of the limeyards. We return to our starting point through a further tramway tunnel (mind your heads!). There is then a chance of refreshment at the pub. Meet 10:00 for a 10:15 start in the car park of The Staff Of Life country pub, 7 High Street, Ticknall, Derbyshire DE73 7JH. Contact Clive Walker on 07866 201873 or clive.walker@waterways.org.uk

Festival—Pelsall Festival of Water, Pelsall Junction 27th to 29th August 2016

The IWA's Festival of Water comes to our area this year! Held at Pelsall Junction where the Cannock Extension canal meets the Wyrley and Essington canal near Walsall. See poster on Page 12 and the IWA web site for further details. Details of the volunteering opportunities and a volunteers booking form may be found on page 13.

Meeting—Wednesday 21st September 2016

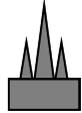
"Joys, Joshers and James" Our new season of meetings starts with an illustrated talk by Phil Clayton about the history of the BCN (Birmingham Canal Navigations). 7.15 for 7.30 pm at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, Staffs. WS13 8AY

Saturday 15th October 2016 - Skittles Evening

Skittles Evening & Supper at Stafford Boat Club. A social evening with games of skittles and a supper. 7.30 pm at Stafford Boat Club, off Maple Wood, Wildwood, Stafford, ST17 4SG. The evening will include a Fish & Chip supper and pud. Full details will be published in the next issue and on the Branch web page when available.

This is an informal inter-Branch competition between members from IWA Lichfield Branch, North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch and Shrewsbury & North Wales Branch. Teams can represent Lichfield Branch, or friends and family can be recruited to make up your own team of 4 or more,





Recent Activities

Fund-Raising Fashion Show - Tuesday 1st March 2016

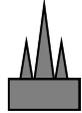
Following the success of our fashion show in November 2014 at the Edinburgh Woollen Mill shop in Byrkley Park Garden Centre another event was organised on the 1st March. This time we benefited from the use of an area in the restaurant which gave much more space for the event and even attracted some members of the public to attend. We also had the advantage of four models, three committee members (Denise Bending, Pat Barton and Pete



The brave “volunteers” along with the EWM Manager Catherine (centre

Gurney) plus a non IWA member, Linda, who had bravely “volunteered”. This meant that the modelling and changing were not quite so rushed and the audience had more time to admire the outfits provided by EWM.

A fun time was had by all, including the models, and many attendees took advantage of the 20% discount offered on the day by EWM. A raffle was also held with prizes provided by the branch and EWM. An enjoyable afternoon raised a total of around £140 for Branch funds.



Many thanks to all who organised and took part in the afternoon.

(Report by Pete Gurney, photos by Sue Gurney)

Walk—Great Saredon and Hatherton Canal - Tuesday 8th March 2016

The weather was overcast but dry as fifteen walkers gathered just across the road from Tumbledown Farm, our lunchtime stop. We had decided to park 100 yards away in the village of Four Crosses rather than the pub car park because of the difficulty of traversing the busy A5. Fortunately one of our party, Dennis Cooper, knew where to obtain a key to the village hall and we moved our vehicles to the hall's car park in order to avoid parking on the street. We set off at a brisk pace and were expecting to have to wade through a flooded dip in the road after a couple of minutes. Fortune was on our side again; we were passed by a vehicle from Severn Trent Water who had been sent to unblock the flooded culvert and we proceeded across with dry feet. The OS map shows several footpaths in the vicinity but they are all impassable and so we walked along the narrow hedged road slightly uphill to the village of Great Saredon. The village contains several listed buildings and a number of our party recalled that there used to be an impressive windmill nearby, but sadly nothing remains. A Victorian census shows that the windmill played an important part in village life because amongst the inhabitants were no less than *4 corn millers, a maltster and a thrashing machine owner*. At the top of the village we looked down on the M6 ahead of us and we walked downhill to pass underneath it at Malthouse Lane, from where we entered the pleasant suburb of Calf Heath. We posed for a group photograph on Hatherton Junction Bridge where Phil Sharpe explained the history of the Hatherton Branch Canal from its junction with the mainline of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal.

We crossed under the M6 again on Straight Mile Road, pausing to look back at where the bed of





the canal disappears into a culvert and turned left to pick up the towpath of the Hatherton Branch at Scrawpers End Bridge on Oak Lane. A feeder branches off here towards Gailey Lower Reservoir. Unusually this channel flows into, rather than out of, the reservoir; the supply of water to the reservoirs and to the main line at Calf Heath has ensured the continued existence of this part of the canal as a water channel.

The canal was abandoned in 1955 and over the years the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust has carried out various work parties on this section of the towpath to bring it up to a high standard, and now CRT have partly taken over that mantle. Another group photo was taken at Saredon Mill Bridge 4 and Phil pointed out the location of the mill and the repairs done to the bridge by volunteers. The next bridge - Cross Bridge - has been lowered with a flat deck and we had to cross over the road to pick up the towpath on the other side. A considerable volume of traffic uses Cross Bridge and over the years various vehicles have failed to negotiate the bends in the road with the result that the bridge is covered in a patchwork of brick colours.

We left the Hatherton Branch at the culverted Cat's (or Catch) Bridge and retired to the pub for a hearty and efficiently-served lunch.
(Report and photos by Clive Walker)

Wednesday 16th March 2016—Branch AGM

At our March meeting our Branch AGM was held followed by a social evening with members slides and films. The formal business of the AGM was soon over with our Branch Chairman, Helen Whitehouse, standing down to take over the role of Caretaker Region Chairman to be succeeded by Denise Bending. Helen gave a Chairman's Report summing up the year with our Treasurer Barbara Hodgson giving a Financial Report. Full details of these may be found on the Lichfield Branch website at www.waterways.org.uk/lichfield/agm

The social evening was a lively affair with some interesting pictures being brought along by branch members. It also gave the attendees time to socialise and chat. This is the first time for a few years that this sort of evening has been arranged and it proved a resounding success.

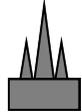
Friday 8th April 2016—VIP Boat Trip at Rugeley

IWA Lichfield Branch members recently took Cannock Chase MP Amanda Milling and Staffordshire County Councillor & Cabinet Member Mark Winnington on a narrowboat trip along the Trent & Mersey Canal from Armitage, through Brereton to the northern end of Rugeley near to Brindley Bank Aqueduct. The purpose of the trip was to introduce the VIPs to some of the volunteers who have worked so hard to improve the canal environment through Rugeley, and to see and discuss future possibilities for improved access, 'green' corridors and the potential for tourism.

Along the way we noted several recent and current housing developments that benefit from an attractive canal-side setting, where IWA has contributed to improving the original plans.

At a brief stop around Leathermill Lane, the damage to the bridge caused by misdirected lorries could be seen, and the difficulty faced by the disabled trying to access the towpath was also noted.

At the former Rugeley town centre moorings just north of Leathermill Lane Bridge, many boats



are now unable to moor there because of bank erosion. This has been a concern for some years as tourist income from hire boats is a good boost to local shops during the summer months. The average spend from each person on a hire boat is £10 per day. With some hire boats being shared by over 8 people that could be over £80 per day lost by each boat unable to moor in the town.



Amanda Milling MP (right) with Councillor Mark Winnington (second right) with Lichfield Branch members

The environmental impact of

HS2 on the Trent & Mersey Canal near Fradley Junction was also discussed.

Everyone had an enjoyable morning viewing the canal at a gentle pace, especially when the sky brightened and the cake came out!

Our thanks to Anglo Welsh at Great Haywood who kindly provided their day hire boat free of charge for us. Thanks also to Margaret for organizing the trip and catering, Terry for collecting, returning and steering the day boat, Margaret & Derek for bringing their boat as back up, and to several other Branch members for their assistance.

Report and photo Margaret Beardsmore,

Wednesday 20th April 2016—Meeting

Our last meeting of the winter season was a fascinating illustrated presentation by River Canal Rescue, the company that provides breakdown and rescue facilities for the waterways. After a short overview of the company one of their engineers gave a presentation of some of the common problems they find and the preventative maintenance that can be performed to try and minimise problems. This was followed by a lively question and answer session where the boat owners present discussed their particular problems.

Planning Matters **Phil Sharpe, Planning Officer**

This report covers the most significant of nearly 70 planning matters dealt with between mid January and mid April 2016. All of them are summarised in the monthly notes on our website Planning page, but if anyone would like further information please contact me.



On the **Trent & Mersey Canal** at Great Haywood the withdrawn application to convert The Lock House Restaurant to a 5 bedroom house with side extensions, a large conservatory covering the rear courtyard and a triple garage at the front, has been resubmitted. We have again objected to the loss of this popular canalside café/restaurant and the damage to the historic buildings and canal environment in the Conservation Area. At Barton Marina further changes have been made to the plans for a development of 54 apartments overlooking the lake, behind the marina basin.

The **Coventry Canal** at Fradley Park borders part of the old airfield which is to be developed for housing and the first phase of this, although away from the canal, includes landscape planting along the canal frontage. The broad woodland zone backed up with meadows and paths is welcomed but should be extended to better screen proposed extensions to the remaining industrial units.

The **Birmingham & Fazeley Canal** locks at Curdworth are an attractive flight and both Cheatles Farm Bridge and Lock 9 at Bodymoor Heath are Listed Buildings. We were therefore



concerned by an application to put an unattractive agricultural shed very close to the bridge and the offside bank of the canal. After much correspondence the building has been moved back a bit, will be partly clad in brick and partly screened by new planting. Coincidentally, at the lock itself CRT has applied for Listed Building Consent to put a grill screen across the by-wash culvert.

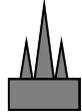
Cheatles Farm Bridge and Lock 9

On the **Ashby Canal**, Bosworth Marina's proposal to use the first floor of their

new facilities building as a café has been approved. Meanwhile at Hinckley the application for a large warehouse opposite The Lime Kilns Inn has been withdrawn.

The **Wyrley & Essington Canal** at Goscote will benefit from the progressive redevelopment of former run down housing areas. Plans for the adjacent 'Swannies Field' include access and towpath improvements and disabled fishing platforms, although we have suggested that one of these should be moved further from Hildick's Bridge to avoid disturbance from manoeuvring boats.

The **Lichfield Canal** restoration work at Tamworth Road has included provision for an entrance to a small marina and the plans for this submitted by the adjacent land owner show 54



berths, parking and a facilities building. In the medium term, pending more restoration of the canal and its connection to the national system, it will be used as a 'community water activity centre' with canoe storage, catering, office and a function room. Whilst welcoming all this we asked for some design changes to the external appearance of the building to better reflect traditional canal architecture, resulting in amended plans which have replaced stone facing with red brickwork.

HS2 High Speed Rail Update—April 2016
Phil Sharpe, Planning Officer

On 4th February I attended the House of Commons HS2 Select Committee hearing at Westminster where IWA's Trustee Gren Messham presented our case on outstanding issues with Phase 1 and Additional Provisions 2. We requested residential standard noise mitigation measures for all affected sections of canals, and an alternative route for the Wood End Lane diversion keeping it away from the Trent & Mersey Canal. CRT also presented evidence in the same session asking for an extended viaduct over Curdworth Locks to better maintain open views of the attractive countryside setting of the canal. Our appearances together before the committee had been co-ordinated but delayed whilst CRT sought to finalise various Assurances and their Side Agreement with HS2 Ltd, and this was in fact the last session of the last day after 18 months of hearings. Whilst this might have worked in our favour by our evidence being fresh in their minds when they wrote their report, in practice the committee seemed 'demob happy' that day and not paying full attention to the presentations.

On 22nd February the Select Committee published its Second Special Report with its final comments and recommendations which included: a brief comment on the Wood End Lane diversion saying that IWA's alternative alignment is being considered, which is covered by a late stage agreement with CRT; a rather loosely worded comment on Lichfield Cruising Club facilities, but saying that the Club's requests for provision of alternatives are reasonable; and a comment that the design of the Curdworth viaduct should be sympathetic to the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal.

There were also references to an improved design for the Wormleighton viaduct over the Oxford Canal, and the Colne Valley viaduct over the Grand Union Canal, and praise for CRT's design principles; plus the affect of a deep cutting on the springs that supply the Wendover Arm and Grand Union Canal reservoirs is to be addressed by urgent hydrogeological surveying; and they criticised the failure to consider the impact of the Heathrow Express Depot alongside the Slough Arm on canal boat residents, who may need to be re-housed during construction. However, there was no mention of the need for better noise mitigation for all affected canals, and an assurance given to CRT is only for low level noise fencing to screen wheel noise and not pantograph or aerodynamic noise effects.

On 10th March the Promoter's Response to the Select Committee's Second Special Report was published and includes agreement to fund the design and contract costs for relocation of the Lichfield Cruising Club slipway and dry dock. This Department for Transport response document also: confirmed that a hydrogeological investigation of the Wendover springs has started; agreed that canal boat residents at Langley on the Slough Arm Canal will be treated as a



special case for noise insulation and temporary re-housing, and canal-side trees will be retained or replaced; gave assurance that further noise assessment will be carried out along the Grand Union Canal around the Colne Valley Viaduct; and is in agreement that the design of viaducts and bridges should maintain the local environment and amenity. But there was no specific response to the committee's comments on CRT's design principles for canal crossings or on the Wood End Lane diversion, although a review of the road alignment is included in CRT's Side Agreement.

On 23 March the Third Reading debate was held and the Bill was passed by a large majority. It was then referred to the House of Lords with a petition period starting the same day. IWA Trustees have since agreed to petition the Lords on our outstanding issues of noise protection and the Wood End Lane diversion which were not fully resolved by the Commons Select Committee. The petition was due to be deposited by 18th April and the Lords Select Committee hearings are expected to start in mid May.

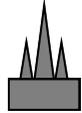
A Story from the Archives **So You Want To Go To The National (As it was then)**

That year's cruise to the National was regarded with a feeling of adventure. We had booked to cross the Pennines on the Rochdale Canal and to return through Standedge tunnel on the Huddersfield. Having boated for twenty-eight years the prospect of these unknown waters was quite exciting. We had plenty of time so we could spend a few days in all the little towns along the way, Todmorden, Hebden Bridge, Elland and Sowerby Bridge.

Setting off in June, with Rojane's PJ2 popping along nicely, we reached Stoke on Trent. Visited a couple of potteries and then on to Middlewich and a visit to the Lion salt works. A look at the Anderton Lift and then on to Manchester where we found a nice mooring at Castlefield. Here we met up with our partners, Geoff and Dianne on Merlin, for the trip across the Rochdale. Having negotiated the nine locks through the city centre on the previous evening, we started on the next eighteen on July 1st, just 10 days after the reopening of the canal. As expected it was shallow and even with the help of BW it was hard going. Half way along PJ2 went on strike. The fuel system was bled and off we went again for a couple of hours and then again it stopped. This pattern was repeated time and again but finding no cause for it, we struggled on.

A few locks short of the Littleborough flight, my wife, my entire crew, jumped off to work the lock. She slipped, landed on her elbow and was in acute pain. A taxi ride to Rochdale Hospital kindly accompanied by Dianne, revealed a broken arm near the shoulder where it could not be plastered. The decision was made to carry on to the summit and there to leave Rojane and go home. Half way up the flight, the two boats jammed in a lock and Rojane started to tilt. Dashing to the tail of the lock it was found that only one paddle was working and it took longer than normal to empty by which time several gallons of water were sloshing around inside Rojane.

The boat was watched over by the very friendly and helpful lockkeeper at the summit for three weeks, during which time a new fuel filter element was fitted. When David Caunt and family arrived, I joined up with them for the rest of the trip. I was very grateful for their help. PJ2 behaved and the cruise was very pleasant until we reached lock no.3 on the Huddersfield Broad Canal. In the lock with his engine running and in gear, David slipped and fell off the back of his



boat. He managed, with a struggle, to climb out: his only injury being a bruise on the side of his foot through his shoe, which can only have been caused by the propeller. Too close for comfort! Whilst our only concern was getting David out, the boats drifted forward and Rojane's bow wedged firmly between the top beam and the main part of the gate and gently lifted it off its hinges.

The Festival was excellent.

Surely the journey home can't be as bad. I finally got around to reading the details of passage through Standedge Tunnel only to find that Rojane is too high, so it was plan B.

Plan B was to join with my friends from IWA Lichfield Branch and go up the Trent.

Six boats set off together and all went well until shortly before Keadby, PJ2 started to play up again. In the evening before leaving Keadby the oil and water were checked and a pile of weed was removed from the prop. It was decided that it would be a wise precaution to breast-up with Quercus. As we went out of the lock, a few extra revs to combat the tide resulted in a puff of black smoke as PJ2 seized solid depositing most of her oil into the bilge.

Quercus took me up to Torksey and from then on I relied on the Russel Newbury of Kyle to take me all the way to safe haven and very prompt attention from MCC at Stenson. The only problem on the latter part of the journey was 30 ft of rope wrapped firmly round Kyle's prop. I had made it thanks to the help of my friends. Friendship, that's part of what the National is all about I shall certainly remember Huddersfield 2002.

Would I be at the Festival next year? Of course I was. The crew had recovered, PJ2 had been rebuilt and Beale Park was terrific.

Article by John Stockland, photo Alison Smedley



The Huddersfield National 2002



Editorial Notice

Lichfield Lines is the newsletter of IWA Lichfield Branch, it is produced 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, Peter 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 15th July 2016, for publication in August.

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.

The IWA has a range of corporate members some of whom offer discounts to members. The discount details can be found on the IWA website at www.waterways.org.uk/support_us/corporates.

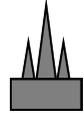
Corporate members in our area are—

Lichfield Cruising Club
Stafford Boat Club Ltd
Truman Enterprise Narrowboat Trust
Ashby Canal Trust
Lichfield & Hatherton Canals
Restoration Trust
Canal Transport Services Ltd
River Canal Rescue Ltd
Midland Chandlers

Russel Newbury Register
Ashby Canal Association
Tamworth Cruising Club
Ash Tree Boat Club
Countrywide Cruisers (Brewood) Ltd
Elite Furnishings
Birmingham and Midland Marine Services
Waterways World Ltd

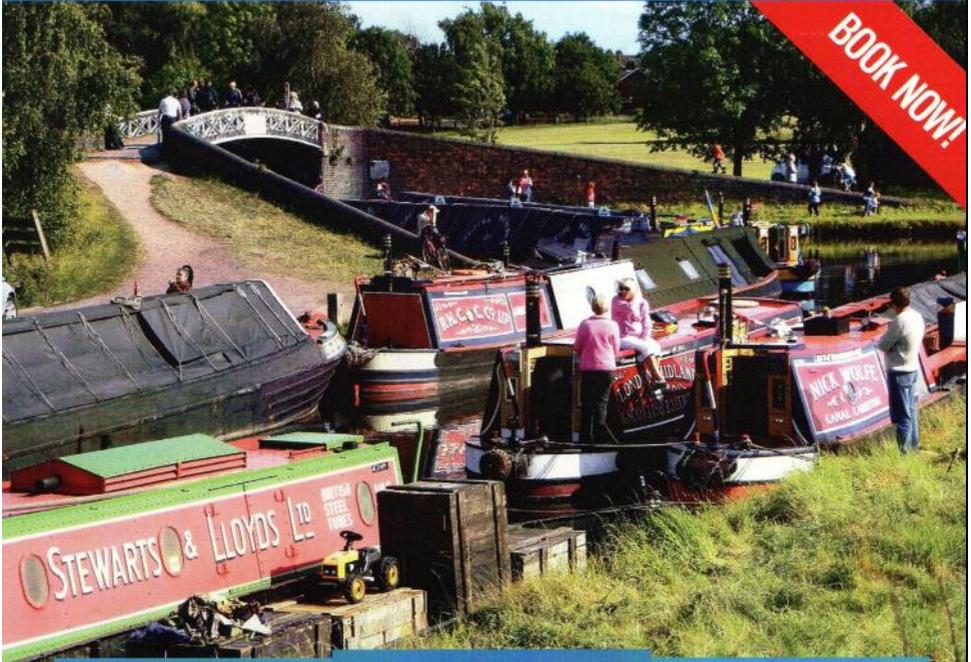
A new addition to this list is the Fingerpost Pub in Pelsall (formerly the Royal Oak) which is offering 10% discount to IWA members on food purchases. The Fingerpost is canal-side on the Wyrley and Essington Canal on the road between Pelsall and Norton Canes.

Please mention the IWA when contacting any of these Corporate Members.



Pelsall Festival of Water

27th – 29th August 2016 | Pelsall Junction, West Midlands



Pelsall Junction

There will be attractions for all the family and boats lining the canal at Pelsall Junction on the Birmingham Canal Navigations.

Fun for All the Family!

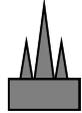
Contact

General Enquiries
07811 253 242
event.enquiries@waterways.org.uk

Trade enquiries
event.trade@waterways.org.uk

Get involved
event.volunteer@waterways.org.uk





IWA Festival of Water—Pelsall 27th to 29th August 2016

Pelsall Junction, Norton road, Pelsall WS3 5AU

FORM FOR VOLUNTEERS

Name

Email Address

Phone numbers:

Home

Mobile

Work

Preference on job you would like to volunteer for

.....

.....

.....

(Tell us which job you would like to do and we will do our best to meet your preference)

Your availability: Date(s) & Times

Before the festival.....

During the festival.....

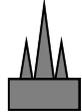
After the festival.....

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SITE WILL BE ACTIVE FROM WEDNESDAY 25TH AUGUST TO WEDNESDAY 31ST AUGUST AND IT IS WITHIN THIS TIMESCALE THAT VOLUNTEERS WILL BE NEEDED.

Please complete and return to Pat Barton, pat.barton@waterways.org.uk or

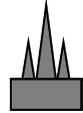
post to Pat Barton at 38 Waterside Court, Gnosall, Stafford ST20 0AR

For any further information please phone Pat on 07947 337491



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Planning & Website Tel: 01889 583330 Email: phil.sharpe@waterways.org.uk	Philip Sharpe
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Minutes Secretary	Position Vacant
Navigation Officer Tel: 01283 761971 Email: mike.bending@waterways.org.uk	Mike Bending
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Walks Coordinator (non-committee post) Tel: 01827 282298 Email: clive.walker@waterways.org.uk	Clive Walker
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