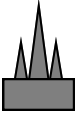




**INLAND
WATERWAYS**
ASSOCIATION

Issue 29



Lichfield Branch
www.waterways.org.uk/lichfield

Autumn 2019

Lichfield Lines



Pat Barton at the Fashion Show in 2016 (see sad news Page 4)

The newsletter of IWA Lichfield Branch

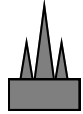
The Inland Waterways Association is a membership charity that works to protect and restore the country's 6,500 miles of canals and navigable rivers.

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 - October 2019

I commented six months ago on some of the problems arising from CRT's long-winded reorganisation, and at the West Midlands User Forum at Endon in October we finally got some answers about who does what and which areas they cover. We may now even get copies of their organisation charts that we were promised at the last meeting in April.

One recurring theme at the Forum was inadequate vegetation control, not only on the offside but in places by some of CRT's contractors allowing saplings to take root between the towpath and the canal. We are doing our bit in Lichfield Branch to tackle this with resumption of the joint IWA/CRT Offside Vegetation weekly work parties in October, this time working down the Coventry Canal.

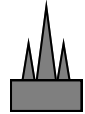
But the problems we have in the Midlands were put in perspective for me by a recent trip on the southern end of the Oxford Canal and the Upper Thames. The canal was

more like a jungle stream in places and the thickness of trees growing out of the wash walls and behind piling shows that the promised annual full width towpath cut hasn't been done for many years. On the Upper Thames the Environment Agency's locks were immaculate but the river in between was so overhung by willows and other trees that visibility round the many very tight bends was non-existent. Dukes Cut that connects the two was totally overgrown, the towpath was underwater, and it's lined throughout with tatty live-aboard cruisers; thankfully a problem we don't have here (yet). Goodness knows what foreign visitors think about the standards of maintenance of these two of our premier navigations.



Live aboard boats on Duke's Cut

Meanwhile, nearer to home, we also try to keep the canal tidy along our adopted length through Rugeley, and have just held a litter pick in conjunction with a local community group. Although the summer period is less active as many of our members are away boating, in the past few months we have helped Shrewsbury Branch with their stand at Gnosall C-Fest, had a walk on the Coventry Canal from Shuttington, and taken our stand to the Huddlesford Gathering. Unfortunately, the planned Lock Wind was a victim of too much rain on the day, although an impromptu



Lichfield Branch

social in Helen's boat and kitchen ensured the sausages and cake didn't go to waste !

Our new season of monthly public meetings started in September with a return visit from John Lower, by popular demand. John's easy and informative style of speaking helped dispel some myths about narrow boating on the River Trent, tidal and non-tidal, and his recently published book is a 'must' for anyone tempted to go that way ("Narrowboat on The Trent", obtainable from Chesterfield Canal Trust at <http://www.chesterfield-canal-trust.org.uk/product-category/merchandise/>)

In October we heard from George Rogers about progress and plans for restoring the Cromford Canal. Taking us on a trip down the canal from Cromford in pictures old and new, George highlighted the various sites of past restoration activity, ending with their current project at Langley Mill. The Beggarlee Extension will restore the canal through a new two-rise staircase lock and under a disused road bridge for a kilometre north from the existing head of navigation. A planning application has been submitted and the number of plans and reports needed to satisfy various authorities and potential objectors these days is a challenge for restoration schemes, but the Friends of the Cromford Canal seem well organised to meet it. See more at <http://www.cromfordcanal.info/> .

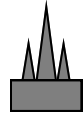
Other interesting subjects for talks we have lined up include the South Staffordshire Railway's canal connections, the heritage narrowboats Raymond and Nutfield, and the Ribble Link and Lancaster Canal (details below). Our next walk is in November from Curdworth and may be a last chance to see the countryside around Peddimore before it disappears under an industrial estate.

Finally, you are all welcome to join us for our Christmas Lunch at Chapters Restaurant in The Close at Lichfield, although with numbers limited to 40 this time early booking is advised. This, and the thought that our next Newsletter will not be until January, prompts me to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year ! Perhaps you might join us on our traditional New Year's Day Walk, finishing at a pub for lunch of course, as usual.

Phil Sharpe

Forthcoming Events

Thursday 14th November 2019 - Curdworth and Birmingham & Fazeley Canal Walk. This is an easy 5½ mile walk across farmland, on footpaths, quiet country lanes and the canal towing path. There are no stiles. Meet 10:15 for a 10:30 am start in the car park of The White Horse, Kingsbury Road, Curdworth, Sutton Coldfield, B76 9DS. Leaving the car park we walk in a westerly direction as far as Broad Bulk Bridge, at which point we leave the canal and head slightly uphill towards Wiggan Hill Cottages. We follow the quiet road towards Over Green. Passing the



Lichfield Branch

Cock Inn, we continue in a northerly direction towards Grove End, where we pick up a route towards the pretty village of Wishaw. A kissing gate near Rookery Cottages leads us to a footpath that will take us back to the canal at Baylis's Bridge. Walking on historic ridged brick horse treads we pass through the short tunnel at Curdworth and return to the pub for refreshment. Contact Clive Walker on 07866 201873 or clive.walker@waterways.org.uk



Curdworth Tunnel—East Portal

Wednesday 20th November 2019 – “Connections: South Staffordshire Railway, Rail and Canals”. An illustrated talk by Ian Pell, who has extensively researched the connections between this local railway and the canals. 7.15 for 7.30 pm at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, WS13 8AY.

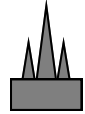
Sunday 8th December 2019 – Branch Christmas Lunch

This years Branch Christmas lunch will be held at Chapters restaurant in the Cathedral precincts Lichfield. The details and menu are in the centre of the magazine.

There is a maximum of 40 places so please get your booking in early. Latest date 30th November. Bookings to Lynn Evans or Pete Gurney at Branch events, or email lynn.evans@waterways.org.uk or phone 07933 236785.



Wednesday 1st January 2020 - New Year's Day Walk: Alrewas and the Trent & Mersey Canal. This is an easy 4 ½ mile walk on level ground, with no stiles. Meet 10:30 for a 10:45 am start in the car park of The Crown Inn, 7 Post Office Road, Alrewas, Staffs. DE13 7BS. Leaving the pub car park we walk through the pretty village of Alrewas and cross the A513 with care. Close to the site of the village's annual country show we pick up a footpath that leads us towards Fradley. Here we turn west and at the end of a quiet residential street we walk across open farmland to a road junction. We proceed along Hay End Road for a short distance and then join the Trent & Mersey Canal at Keeper's Lock. From there we return along the wide towpath, past three locks, back to our starting point. Contact Clive Walker on 07866 201873 or clive.walker@waterways.org.uk



Lichfield Branch



Wednesday 15th January 2020 – “Raymond and Nutfield”. An illustrated talk by Christopher Jones and Nick Lake of the Friends of Raymond charity about the history, restoration and travels of these historic working narrowboats. 7.15 for 7.30 pm at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, WS13 8AY.

Wednesday 19th February 2020 – “The Ribble Link and Lancaster Canal”. An illustrated talk by our member Neil Barnett, who recently ventured down the tidal River Douglas and up the Ribble estuary to the calmer waters of the Lancaster Canal and back. His photos and recollections show how different this is to a normal narrowboat voyage and the challenges it poses. 7.15 for 7.30 pm at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, WS13 8AY.

Wednesday 18th March 2020 – Annual General Meeting and Social Evening. Details t.b.a. 7.15 for 7.30 pm at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, WS13 8AY.

Sad News

It is with great sadness that we need to record the passing of our committee member and friend Pat Barton (Patricia Perry Barton) on 21st October after a short illness, just after her 81st birthday. A full appreciation of Pat will be included in the next edition of Lichfield Lines. The funeral will be at Stafford Crematorium on 18th November at 1PM.

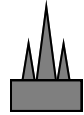
Pat at the Volunteers Day
in April 2018



Recent Activities

Saturday 19th October—Brereton Litter Pick

We were approached by a local community group, Brereton Millions, who wanted to do a litter pick which included the canal area around Brereton. As we needed to get CRT's support and litter picking kit, it seemed sensible to ask for IWA volunteers to join in and extend the litter picking area to include Rugeley.



Lichfield Branch

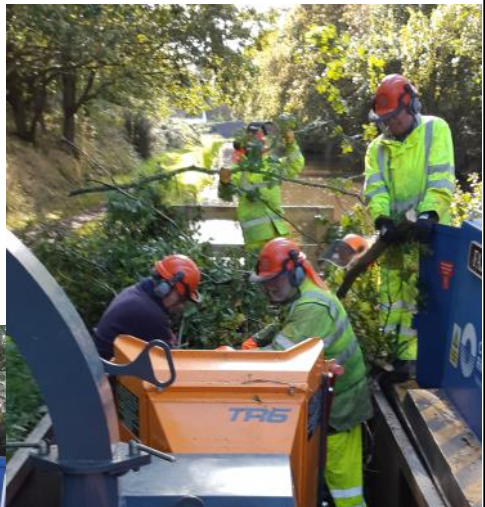


Although there were only four of us on the day, this supplemented the other volunteers. Between us we had a lovely morning as the weather was glorious. Most of the litter was in the Brereton area just off the canal towpath as there had been a community litter pick in Rugeley recently, plus visits on a regular basis from the Community Payback group.

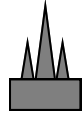
The result of all this activity means that the towpath area around Rugeley and Brereton has never looked more litter free. Long live community involvement!

Friday 4th October 2019 and onwards— Offside Veg Project

Friday 4th October saw the start of the 3rd year of the IWA & CRT joint Offside Veg Clearance Project. Using the CRT workboat “Fazeley” and a hopper with the chipper in we started from Fradley Junction and headed down the Coventry canal. The first section as far as the A38 bridge was partially cleared by dredging contractors a couple of years ago but there is still some clearing to do. Beyond



the A38 the overhanging trees are very bad especially along the stretch before Streethay where the canal is close to the A38. The first few weeks have seen great progress with the IWA group operating on Fridays and a group of CRT volunteers based at Fradley doing their bit on Tuesdays. We have received some much



Lichfield Branch

appreciated compliments from passing boaters which makes the hard work definitely worthwhile.

As you can see it is not all hard work, we do stop for tea breaks and lunch! All the equipment is provided by CRT and we are all trained on various pieces of the power tools to make sure it is a safe working environment.

(Report by Pete Gurney, photos by Derek Beardsmore)

IWA Stand at Huddlesford Gathering - Saturday & Sunday 21-22 September 2019

Lichfield Branch again had an information, sales and recruitment stand at this very popular bi-annual event organised jointly by Lichfield Cruising Club and Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust. With good weather on the Saturday our sales of Christmas cards, calendars, tea towels, books and much more got off to a rapid start then settled down to a steady stream of customers, somewhat curtailed by rain on Sunday afternoon. Helen as usual was the organising genius, and Lynn's revival of the narrowboat game proved very popular. A successful and enjoyable weekend with takings of over £350 and good publicity for IWA, with thanks to all our members that helped on the stand.

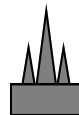


(Report by Phil Sharpe photo by Clive Walker)

Shuttington and Coventry Canal Walk - Thursday 5th September 2019

A lucky thirteen IWA members and friends enjoyed a sunny circular stroll through 5 miles of glorious countryside around Shuttington and the Anker valley, including the towpath of the Coventry Canal at Amington, just east of Tamworth. The car park of The Wolferstan Arms at Shuttington was the assembly point for this walk. The pub enjoys a commanding view of the countryside north of Tamworth, and we headed off in a south-westerly direction towards the suburb of Amington. We traversed the river Anker at the single track Shuttington bridge, making use of the refuges to get out of the way of the traffic. We then picked up a path that took us through the Alvecote Pools Nature Reserve and across arable land towards the mining village of Alvecote. After a short diversion to see the ruins of Alvecote Priory, we joined the Coventry Canal which we followed in a westerly direction past The Samuel Barlow PH and Alvecote Marina where many historic boats are berthed and repaired. We continued

Continued on Page 9



**BRANCH CHRISTMAS
DINNER**

AT

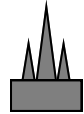
**“CHAPTERS”
CATHEDRAL CLOSE LICHFIELD
WS13 7LD**

**SUNDAY
8th DECEMBER 2019**

12:30PM FOR 1:00PM

BOOK THIS DATE

**See Lynn Evans or Pete Gurney at
meetings or contact Lynn on
lynn.evans@waterways.org.uk or
07933236785**



Lichfield Branch

Chapters

The Café in The Close

Christmas at Chapters

Homemade Parsnip, Carrot and Cumin Soup (v)(gf)(ve)
Smoked Applewood and Pear Chutney Soufflé (v)
Chicken Liver Parfait with a Spiced Redcurrant Cordial
Smoked Haddock Florentine Fishcake (gf)

.....

Roast Turkey Breast served with Sage and Onion
Seasoning and a Sausage and Bacon Roll
Braised Beef served with a Port and Stilton Sauce
Poached Supreme of Salmon served with a Hollandaise
Sauce (gf)
Vegetable and Red Lentil Nut Roast topped with Goats
Cheese (v)(gf)

.....

Homemade Christmas Pudding and Brandy Sauce
Raspberry and Gin Cheesecake (v)(gf)
Chocolate Mousse with a Black Cherry Compote
Toffee Apple and Cinnamon Sponge (v)

1 course £13.95

2 course £17.95

3 course £20.95



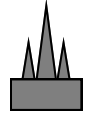
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LICHFIELD
CATHEDRAL



past the remains of Alvecote Colliery Basin and along the towpath towards Askew Bridge at Amington, on a section of canal lined with weeping willow trees.

Leaving the canal, we turned north towards Amington Hall Farm. Reaching the river Anker for a

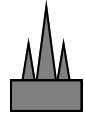


second time, we paused for a group photo on the footbridge. A wide farm track crosses fertile farmland and around half an hour later we arrived at Statfold Barn Farm. This is also the home of the Statfold Barn Railway, which over the last fifteen years has grown to become one of the

most significant collections of narrow gauge locomotives in the UK. There are regular public open and enthusiast days, and it is well worth a visit. Following the asphalted track, which marks the boundary between Staffordshire and Warwickshire, we were able to glimpse some of the track, but sadly no trains.

With a lake to our left, caused by mining subsidence, we reached a point marked on the OS map intriguingly as "Laundry Cottages", but the cottages are long gone. From there we walked back into Warwickshire and proceeded through the long grass gently uphill to our starting point, where we enjoyed refreshment and prompt service at The Wolferstan Arms.

(Report by Clive Walker, photos by Phil Sharpe)



Lichfield Branch

News From Local Restoration Societies

Stafford Riverway Link

At our public meeting on 16th October, Lichfield Branch Chairman Phil Sharpe presented a cheque for £200 to John Potter, work party organiser for Stafford Riverway Link. John had updated members on recent progress with the project to restore the link into Stafford from the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal at Baswich. This includes a recent aerial survey, being granted a long term lease on the site of the basin by helpful



landowners, and discussions with CRT engineers about plans to connect it back to the canal. Work on the first phase of reconstructing the basin walls was on display at two Open Days held in early September. Impressive progress has been made by a small but dedicated team of volunteers, and the donation will go towards materials

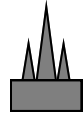
needed to continue building the walls on the other side of the basin. Ultimately, a lock will connect the basin down into the River Sow which will once again be made navigable for just over a mile into Stafford town centre.

Planning Matters

Phil Sharpe, Planning Officer

This report covers some highlights of over 50 planning matters dealt with from mid-July to mid-October 2019. They are all summarised in monthly notes on the website Planning page.

On the **Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal** at Teddesley basin we supported an application to extend the existing boatyard paint shop to provide an office, store and toilets, but suggested a red brick frontage instead of metal sheeting facing the Conservation Area. Meanwhile, after final submissions, the West Midlands



Interchange Examination closed in August and the inspector's report is due in late November.

Alongside the **Coventry Canal** at Fradley, the large development of housing, care homes, retail, etc. on green fields around the Pig Farm that we had opposed has now been refused as contrary to the Local Plan and harmful to the setting of the canal. The holiday lodges development at Huddlesford that had been refused was appealed and I attended the Informal Hearing in Lichfield to re-iterate our concerns about its effects on the canal.

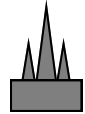
On the **Birmingham & Fazeley Canal** at Bodymoor Heath we objected to yet another unattractive steel clad barn being sited close to the listed Cheatles Farm Bridge by Curdworth Lock 9 and visible from the Dog and Doublet, and the application was subsequently withdrawn. But at Peddimore the massive industrial development on Green Belt land north of the canal that we have long opposed now has Outline approval, although we will continue to seek better design and screening from the canal at the Reserved Matters stage.



Curdworth Lock 9 and Cheatles Farm Bridge

On the **Ashby Canal** at Hinckley, the two planned employment buildings opposite The Lime Kilns were approved but with a 2m acoustic fence and additional planting to protect the canal. At Trinity Marina the development of apartment blocks to the north, along with a marina facilities building, have been approved. On the restoration route at Donisthorpe changes to the conditions on a previous consent for a dog exercise site require a wooden shed on the canal line to be removed within 6 months of permission being given for the canal restoration. Also on the original canal route at Oakthorpe, we objected to an access road to four new houses being built along the infilled canal route, which is protected in the Local Plan. Amendments now provide a different access but the housing still partly intrudes on the original width of the channel.

The **Lichfield Canal** restoration route between the Southern Bypass extension south



Lichfield Branch

of Shortbutts Lane and the Persimmon housing site at St. Johns is now secured. The approved amended plans and sections show details of the two canal bridges to be provided, appropriate ground levels with the canal channel to be partly excavated by the developer, and site drainage into the canal, all as we requested. At Darnford Park, Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust's own application to build the new section of canal with a tunnel under the A51 and 2 locks down to a future A38 crossing has finally been approved, so the stalled works there can now resume.

HS2 High Speed Rail Update – October 2019

Phil Sharpe, Planning Officer

On 21 August the Government announced a comprehensive review of the whole HS2 High Speed Rail project, to consider “whether and how to proceed”.

Independent Review of HS2

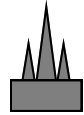
The review is chaired by Douglas Oakervee, with 9 other members. The Terms of Reference are to consider its affordability, deliverability, benefits, scope, phasing, and its relationship with Northern Powerhouse Rail. Scope includes speed, making Old Oak Common the terminus, building only Phase 1, combining Phases 1 and 2a, and different choices for Phase 2b. Consideration of cost includes the costs of reprioritising, cancelling or de-scoping the project.

Only 6 weeks has been allowed for the panel's review, with a written report suitable for publication to be submitted in the “autumn”. A decision by Government is then expected in December.

HS2 Chairman's Stocktake Report

On 3 September the Government released the HS2 Chairman's Stocktake Report. Although heavily redacted, it revealed that the estimated costs had risen substantially and the timetable had slipped back. The 2015 budget of £55.7bn is now £72-78bn, or £81-88bn at 2019 prices. The Phase 1 completion date of 2026 is now expected to be between 2028 and 2031, and phased with Euston station being opened later than Old Oak Common. Phase 2a which was due in 2027 now has the same timescale. Phase 2b completion would be delayed from 2033 to between 2035 and 2040. On Phase 2b, the report recommends reviewing the strategy and greater integration with plans for the North and Midlands, and delivery “in smaller and more manageable sections”. It says that estimating work is incomplete, and this is an opportune time to review its scope.

Clearly, the future of the whole project is now in doubt, with Phase 2b particularly likely to be scrapped. Some may say not before time, that the whole scheme was misconceived from the start, has been badly specified, poorly designed and incompetently administered; but I could not possibly comment !



Its fate may be known before this appears in print, or soon after, or decisions could be delayed by all the current political turmoil around Brexit.

Meanwhile, various preparatory works continue, including archaeology, demolitions and utility diversions, Phase 2a has progressed to a Select Committee in the House of Lords, and changes to Phase 2b have been announced.

Phase 2b Design Refinement Consultation

As mentioned last time, the HS2 Phase 2b (Crewe to Manchester and West Midlands to Leeds) Design Refinement consultation proposes 11 major changes or additions to the route or infrastructure, and I submitted IWA's national response to it in early September.

The proposed changes affect the Coventry Canal at Polesworth, the Erewash Canal at Sandiacre and Stanton Gate, the unrestored Nottingham Canal, and the Aire & Calder Navigation near Fishpond Lock. Although there are some benefits for the waterways from these changes, there are additional impacts and several earlier concerns remain unresolved.

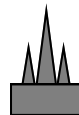
At Polesworth an access road is now proposed close to the Coventry Canal and the moorings at Pooley Country Park. We have asked for it to be set back, access to the moorings maintained, and re-iterated the need for more noise fencing on the viaduct and embankment.

At Stanton Gate a change of route to avoid diverting the M1 means the motorway bridge over the Erewash Canal will no longer need to be demolished and replaced, saving much disruption. However, there will be a new road bridge at Stanton Gate, an auto-transformer station needs screening, and concerns about the height of the viaduct, the design of its two very skew canal crossings and the need for noise protection for the canal remain.

The Nottingham Canal at Trowell, although abandoned, is part of a long distance footpath and a local nature reserve, and could be restored back to Langley Mill. But the new HS2 route would sever it with a deep cutting and we have asked for an aqueduct to maintain the continuity of the towpath and the water supply.

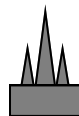
The Aire & Calder Navigation will be affected by moving the route onto a viaduct from Woodlesford passed Fishpond Lock to Rodhill Corner. We have asked that the viaduct piers should not narrow this commercial navigation, for more information on the design and visual impact, and for noise barriers to protect recreational canal users.

For a fuller description of the changes and concerns at each of these locations, see the September HS2 Update report on the News page of our website, where you can also download the full text of IWA's response.



Lichfield Branch

<u>Your Committee</u>	
Chairman and Acting Secretary Tel: 01889 583330 Email: phil.sharpe@waterways.org.uk	Philip Sharpe
Treasurer Tel: 01785 255101 Email: pete.gurney@waterways.org.uk	Pete Gurney
Planning & Website Tel: 01889 583330 Email: phil.sharpe@waterways.org.uk	Philip Sharpe
Newsletter Editor Tel: 01785 255101 Email: pete.gurney@waterways.org.uk	Pete Gurney
Volunteer Coordinator Tel: 07581 794111 Email: margaret.beardsmore@waterways.org.uk	Margaret Beardsmore
Speakers Secretary Tel: Email:	Vacant
Navigation Officer Tel: 07847 470112 Email: derek.beardsmore@waterways.org.uk	Derek Beardsmore
Membership Secretary Tel: 0121 308 0293 Email: john.stockland@waterways.org.uk	John Stockland
Publicity—Press & Magazines Tel: 07808 846434 Email: neil.barnett@waterways.org.uk	Neil Barnett
Minutes Secretary Tel: 07933 236785 Email: lynn.evans@waterways.org.uk	Lynn Evans
Ex Officio: Region Chairman Branch Sales and External Talks (non-committee posts) Email: helen.whitehouse@waterways.org.uk	Helen Whitehouse
Walks Coordinator (non-committee post) Tel: 07866 201873 Email: clive.walker@waterways.org.uk	Clive Walker
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