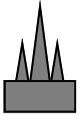




The Inland
Waterways
Association

Issue 3



Lichfield Branch

www.waterways.org.uk/lichfield

Spring 2013

Lichfield



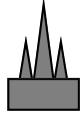
Scrub Bashing at St
Augustine's Field
Rugeley

Lines

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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Extracts from Chairman's Report at the branch AGM—Mike Moore Outgoing Chairman

Since my last Chairman's report my personal circumstances have changed and I need to stand down as both your Chairman and as a committee member of Lichfield Branch IWA. I will, however, still be actively involved with the IWA both at Canalway Cavalcade and the National Waterways Festival and remain as a member of the Lichfield Branch and hope to see you all at some future Branch meetings.

Throughout last year your branch has held its monthly programme of public meetings with a varied menu of canal related talks. We have also continued with our monthly walks programme. Our programme of work parties in connection with the Rugeley Regeneration Project continues. The Rugeley Project has been nominated for a Waterways Renaissance award and we have received notification that the project has now moved to the next stage of the judging. Thanks must go to Margaret Beardsmore for her commitment and the work she has put into this project. One of our main achievements over the last year was the provision of visitor mooring rings on Brindley Embankment.

The recent jumble sale made a profit of just over £500 which we shared with the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust. We hope to repeat the event next year, providing LHCRTR continue as willing partners.

2012 saw the publication of the branch newsletter, Lichfield Lines to be published three times a year whilst Navigation, the West Midlands Region magazine will be published just once a year. We intend to carry advertisements in our newsletter, to help offset costs. The adverts will be priced at £20 for a one page advert per issue. Please contact the editor for details.

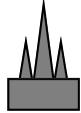
Finally, I must thank the other committee members of Lichfield Branch who have supported me so well during my time as first a committee member and then as Chairman. Without their help and guidance I would not have been able to carry out my duties. **Mike Moore, March 2013**

Introducing our new Branch Chairman-Helen Whitehouse

Let me introduce myself as the new Lichfield Branch chairman. I am no stranger to the chairman's role having held this position for six years in the early 1990s. I return to the role with the same enthusiasm as then, even if I do not feel quite as energetic! I anticipate that my job will be less onerous by having such an active and supportive committee who say they are all right behind me –whatever that might mean!

My priority is to keep the branch members active and enthusiastic. IWA is as relevant today as it ever was. I have heard people say that with the advent of CRT, IWA is no longer needed. Les Etheridge (National Chairman) has succinctly described our relationship with CRT as that of a tenants' association with the landlord. In addition, IWA still has an important role to play campaigning for the future of all our precious waterways because many are not under CRT's management. Each branch plays an important role working alongside our national committees. The Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) is part of IWA and part of your subscription to IWA helps to finance their activities. The IWA Restoration Committee provides grants and technical know-how to virtually every canal restoration society in the country and we have been instrumental in ensuring that hundreds more miles of waterways are now available for cruising or walking than when IWA was formed in 1946. Much work is done behind the scenes by our trustees and the other national committees but we are not so good at publicising this.

Contd.



A very useful document 'IWA, who we are and what we campaign for' is now available to view and download at https://www.waterways.org.uk/news_campaigns/campaigns/campaigns Please do look it up or contact me for details. To learn more about IWA's work, you can also request receipt of the IWA Bulletin electronically by registering online at www.waterways.org.uk If you do have any technical difficulties logging in, email gemma.bolton@waterways.org.uk who will be pleased to help you.

Of course our own branch news can be viewed online at www.waterways.org.uk/lichfield and details of our branch meetings, walks, outings, planning responses and work parties are also there. We perform tasks not necessarily considered essential by CRT. We also respond to planning applications likely to affect the waterways. Of current concern is the High Speed Rail link (HS2). I have been assured by our national chairman that the IWA national response to Phase 2 is in hand and further actions are being considered. In due course we will know more so prepare for action! Meanwhile, it will do no harm for you to contact your local MP (as a concerned voter) and let him or her know how worried you are about the damage this could cause to the waterway environment.

Space limits this report. Summer is coming soon – enjoy it!

Helen Whitehouse, April 2013

Forthcoming Events

Friday 26th April 2013

Skittles Evening & Supper. A social evening with games of skittles and a hot supper, held at Stafford Boat Club from 7.30 pm. £7.50 each. An informal inter-Branch competition with IWA North Staffordshire and South Cheshire Branch and Shrewsbury & North Wales Branch members. If you would like to join a team representing Lichfield Branch, or can recruit friends or family to make up your own team of 4 or more, then please contact Pete Gurney on 01785 255101 or email pete.gurney@waterways.org.uk

Sunday & Monday 5-6th May 2013

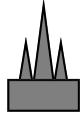
Bank Holiday Charity Market at Wolseley Bridge Garden Centre. At Wolseley Bridge, Staffordshire, ST17 0YA – about 1 mile north of Rugeley on A51. 10.30 am to 4.30 pm. Organised by Rugeley & District Lions Club. If you can help us on our Branch promotion and sales stall for an hour or two on either day, please contact Phil Sharpe on 01889 583330 or email phil.sharpe@waterways.org.uk

Wednesday 15th May 2013

Chasewater Walk. A gentle evening walk around Chasewater Reservoir and Country Park. Meet outside the Visitor/Innovation Centre car park at Chasewater Country Park, Pool Road, Brownhills, Staffs. WS8 7NL (signposted off the A5) for a 6.30 pm start. About 3 miles of level walking. Well behaved dogs welcome. Finishing about 7:30 pm with an optional meal afterwards at The Turf Lodge (Toby Carvery) on the A5. Led by Denis & Carole Cooper. Further information from Pat Barton on 07947 337491 or email pat.barton@waterways.org.uk

Saturday & Sunday 15-16th June 2013

Pelsall Canal Festival. Organised by Birmingham Canal Navigations Society (BCNS) with support from IWA. See BCNS website at www.bcn-society.co.uk for details. If you can help us on our Branch sales and recruitment stand or with WoW activities for the kids please contact Helen Whitehouse on 01543 491161 or email helen.whitehouse@waterways.org.uk



Wednesday 19th June 2013

River Severn Cruise. A passenger boat trip on the River Severn from Upton-on-Severn to Tewkesbury and return. Departs 11am from Upton for a relaxing 1¼ hour cruise on the river. Time in Tewkesbury for lunch and to visit the Abbey, the town and the busy market, a short stroll from the river. The return cruise leaves at 2.45pm arriving back at Upton for 4pm. Fares are £11 adult and £6.50 child (4-14 years). For more information see Severn Leisure Cruises website at www.severnleisurecruises.co.uk. We expect to use personal transport to Upton, although we may be able to suggest car-sharing arrangements. To book a place please contact John Stockland on 0121 308 0293 or email john.stockland@waterways.org.uk

Saturday & Sunday 21st-22nd September 2013

Branch stand at the Huddlesford Gathering. Organised by Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust. See LHCRT website at www.lhcrt.org.uk for details. If you can help us on our Branch stand please contact Helen Whitehouse on 01543 491161 or email helen.whitehouse@waterways.org.uk

Nearly Forty Years Ago

In 1973 most of my time was spent working for the NHS, playing hockey and serving in the Territorial Army. I felt that it was time that we had a leisure activity which involved the whole family.

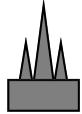
We took a couple of trips to Wales, looking at caravans and cottages but decided that we didn't like caravan sites nor did we like the prospect of having a second garden to look after and nor did we fancy driving a hundred miles every weekend.



I had a friend who had a boat on the River Severn. How about a boat? After much research, I decided that a boat on the canals was worth a try. Fibre glass was in the ascendency at that time and so I bought a 25ft Dawncraft cruiser.

I well remember driving home and thinking to myself. "You have spent well over a thousand pounds on a boat. You know nothing about boats and nothing about canals. You must be mad". A few weeks later we took delivery of the boat,

'Rojane'. It was tied up to a jetty at Kinver. We went on board and the salesman was pointing out the various features, when I noticed that my wife, Billie, was looking very pale. She was feeling seasick. We were still tied up. What had I done? Fortunately she soon got over it. We set out on our first weekend with three small children and a large dog. All seemed to go quite well after I had worked out the difference between steering a car and steering a boat. Late in the afternoon we came upon a boat gathering and barbecue organised by the Staffs and Worcs Canal Society. We were invited to join in and were made very welcome. All had a good time, including the dog. Next morning we set off for home but as I was trying to manoeuvre between the moored boats, the dog decided to stay and dived overboard. This was followed by screams and shouts from the children and a shameful demonstration of my ineptitude at boat handling.



Nearly Forty Years Ago—contd

Eventually, we got Hector (the dog) back on board and set off for home. After a while there was a clunk as the propeller hit something under water and though the engine was still running, the propeller was no longer rotating. I had vaguely heard about shear pins but of course we had no spares. The owner of a very nice narrowboat kindly offered to give us a tow as far as Stourton junction where he was turning onto the Stourbridge Canal. We proceeded into the first lock and unfortunately the narrowboat moved backwards and Rojane forwards so that her bow hit the beautiful swan's neck and that and the highly polished brass boss fell into the canal. How embarrassing!

The bits were retrieved and thereafter steering was effected with a rope passing through the hole in the rudder. We were duly abandoned near Stewpony and arrived back at our mooring, completely exhausted having bowhauled for about two miles.

The following day, I rang the boatyard and received an abject apology for not having told me about the six spare shear pins located under the engine cover.

Our next trip out also had its exciting moments. It was a windy day and when the wind became really strong, we decided to head for home. Shortly we came upon a large tree which had blown down across the canal. A number of boaters were there trying to work out what to do, (No mobile phones in those days). All sorts of suggestions were being put forward; all fairly impractical. I had a sneaking feeling that we could just about get between



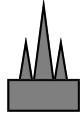
the roots of the tree and the bank if we trimmed off some of the roots. This we did and carried on cruising. This however was not the end of our problems for we shortly encountered two more trees down across the canal.

This time they were not very thick. There was one boat already in attendance. Its owner assured us that he would soon have it sorted. He got out his axe and proceeded to chop away at the first tree. There was nothing that we could do to help so my pal and I sat on the bank and watched. Suddenly the axe head flew off the handle into the water. "Not to worry" said our axe man and he collected his magnet on a piece of string and started fishing. Finally locating it, he hauled in his piece of string only to find that the magnet had fallen off the end. Needless to say, my pal and I were hard put to control our hilarity

Despite all these set backs we decided on a two week holiday cruise. When I was telling a few fellow moorers at Kinver of our plans to go onto the Severn and do the ring involving the Avon, the Stratford Canal the Birmingham Main Line, the Dudley canals and the Stourbridge, they all thought we were mad. Most of them had never ventured onto a river.

We sailed down the Severn, stopping at the Cider House for a jar on the way and at Tewksbury; we locked up onto the Avon. We soon found a very nice mooring. I didn't know that the adjacent flour mill worked all night so we had little sleep. I had wondered why no one else was moored nearby. Had I studied Nicholson I would have known.

Contd.



Nearly Forty Years Ago—contd

It was a very hot summer and having no fridge, I attached four bottles of lager to a rope and dropped it overboard to keep them cool. The only problem that we had on the Avon was when something cut my lager adrift.

Arriving at Stratford it was somewhat daunting to find about two hundred people waiting to watch us lock up into the basin.

Passage along the Stratford Canal was pleasant and we soon found ourselves following another cruiser. The bridge holes are narrow but even so the guy in front was bashing from side to side at every one of them. Both boats moored up at the Fleur de Lys, a pub famous for chicken and mushroom pies which I remembered from my student days. At the bar I chatted to the other owner. He told me of his plans to go via the River Nene to the Wash and up the coast to the Humber. Seeing my amazement he explained that he was a Trent River pilot but was used to a much bigger boat and a lot more water.

The rest of our journey was uneventful apart from a dead cow, a few dead dogs and weed, all fairly normal in those days. We did come across a car in the canal with only the roof showing which of course caused the children to speculate as to whether there were bodies inside.

I kept Rojane for two years but I had soon realised that steel was much more suited to the canals. I sold her on brokerage. She was sold in a matter of days but it was six months before I received my money from the brokerage firm. Six months of promises and cheques that were either predated or which bounced. Seller beware.

Words and Pictures—John Stockland

Storage Space—A Plea

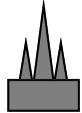
Lichfield Branch currently has various small items of equipment stored in the National IWA container at Barton Turns. Our use of this is now becoming impractical due to the extra equipment being stored there. We can't really complain too much as this wasn't really our storage space in the first place.

We desperately need about one cubic yard of storage space not too far from Lichfield. This needs to be dry and reasonable secure and will be accessed infrequently. If anybody can help please contact any committee member. Thanks in advance!

Newsletter Distribution

The escalating cost of postage means that Lichfield Branch increasingly relies on email to keep members informed of events and news affecting our area. Would members therefore please ensure that the IWA is aware of their up-to-date email addresses by contacting either Tracy Higgins at membershipofficers@waterways.org.uk or Neil Hodgson at neil.hodgson@waterways.org.uk as soon as possible.

If you are also happy to receive future copies of Lichfield Lines by email rather than post, please tell Neil.



Recent Walks

New Year's Day Walk at Lichfield - Tuesday 1st January 2013

We had a lovely bright morning for our annual New Year Walk, with twenty six walkers



turning out for an exploration of the Lichfield Canal restoration works. David Dixon of the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust led us on an interesting tour which took in the lift bridge at Darnford Lane before we went to see the new excavations in Darnford Park.

LHCRT have recently done extensive work in Darnford Park, where they need to build a new staircase lock to take the canal under the A38. We also went to the Tamworth Road site where David showed us the re-watered part of the canal, the restored lock chambers and the unique circular bywash. The walk then took us

through to Streethay and down to the Coventry Canal, where we made our way to the Plough Inn at Huddlesford for lunch.

Wolseley Bridge Walk - Thursday 7th February 2013

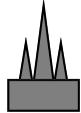
10 people and 3 dogs enjoyed a 4.5 mile walk around the outskirts of Rugeley on a bright and pleasant morning. Starting at the Wolseley

Arms we crossed over the A513 and went up a steep lane through the Wolseley Estate and over a part of Cannock Chase. The lane was well fenced and the dogs enjoyed a good run.

Pausing briefly to take a photograph, and negotiate a stile, we finally turned right onto a public footpath that led through woods and across fields to Etchinghill. Using the road we then headed down to Rugeley, so reaching The Bloody Steps and the towpath of the Trent and Mersey Canal. We paused there to hear the tale of the murder of Christina Collins and examine closely the work that has been done by IWA Lichfield work parties to clear the area and install mooring rings.



Setting off again we walked over the aqueduct and carried on along the towpath back to Wolseley Bridge and our starting point. The party then enjoyed a good lunch in the pub. Thank you to Derek Beardsmore for leading the party, in the absence of Margaret who has broken her collar bone. Fortunately, though, Margaret felt well enough to join us for the lunch.



Yoxall & Wychnor Walk – Thursday 7th March 2013



The threatened rain held off but an overcast sky didn't do justice to the pleasant scenery on this 6 mile walk around Wychnor Park. The long metalled track to the Hall kept our boots clean initially before we descended into the valley of the River Swarbourn, and on to the navigable section of the Trent between Alrewas and Wychnor Church. From there we returned via the park to the cars, and a short drive north of Yoxall for a convivial pub lunch.

Lichfield Branch 'Scrub Bash' Work Party – 16/17 February 2013

Report & Photos Margaret Beardsmore

Over the weekend of the 16/17 February, 34 volunteers had a major scrub bash on the offside of the Trent and Mersey Canal in Rugeley.

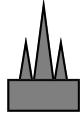
The glorious weather (plus homemade cake) encouraged the volunteers who made a huge effort to clear many years of brambles, scrub and litter on the edge of St. Augustine's Field.

The weekend's work was made very pleasant by the Rugby club letting us use their clubhouse facilities and helping to 'tackle' the work.

St. Augustine's Field was bought by public donations some years ago to stop any development on the field and to preserve it as a sports field for Rugeley Residents. It is administered by Rugeley Open Spaces Association (ROSA) and used by Rugeley Rugby Club who have recently renovated their club house on the field.

The scrub bash by the canal is the first part of a long-term project to provide much needed boaters facilities and also winter moorings. General agreement has been reached by all parties involved so now we need to plan the work and find the money!





Path Widening Work Party - Friday 1st March 2013

A select band of volunteers assembled at fairly short notice for this work party at Rugeley. The location was the footpath between Wolseley Road and the top of the 'Bloody Steps', leading to the Trent & Mersey Canal. The task was to remove several small trees, bushes and old tree stumps to widen the path, in preparation for levelling and resurfacing later in the month.

After a cold start the day was mild and dry, ideal weather for some outdoor exercise. Judicious applications of bowsaws, loppers, mattocks and spades saw the job completed by early afternoon, including two welcome breaks for refreshments. Working on a weekday meant fewer interruptions for passing pedestrians, but the path was still well used by walkers, dog walkers, joggers, families and even someone going to work across the valley, who were all appreciative of the improvements being made.



Community Volunteer Litter Pick & Tree Planting

Sunday 17th March 2013

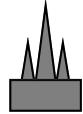
On a very cold but dry morning, seventeen volunteers held a canal 'Spring Clean' along the Trent & Mersey Canal through Rugeley. Twenty one bags of litter were collected, graffiti removed from a canal bridge, and over 300 tree saplings planted to fill gaps in the towpath hedge.

The Spring Clean is a joint event which is run by Inland Waterways Association, Rugeley Lions and the Canal and River Trust. All the volunteers were local to Rugeley, including families who brought their children along for the morning. A big thank you to everyone, you really made a difference!

During the event CRT Central Shires Maintenance Manager Will Burnish presented a Volunteer Organisation Recognition Award to IWA Workparty Co-ordinator Margaret Beardsmore as a thank-you to Lichfield Branch for the time the team has given in 2012 to transform the canal in Rugeley through regular maintenance and improvements.



Details of our next work party will be on our IWA webpage shortly, or you can ring Margaret on 07581 794111 or email margaret.beardsmore@waterways.org.uk and ask to be put on the email list for all details of future events.



Brindley Trail, Rugeley – Improvement Works 18 – 22 March

During the week a badly overgrown and narrow footpath in Rugeley was completely transformed by community volunteers.

The footpath leads from Wolseley Road, down past the South Staffs Waterworks near Albany Drive, and then down the ‘Bloody Steps’ to the Trent and Mersey Canal and Brindley Bank Aqueduct. For many years it has been difficult to negotiate without getting stung by nettles or



brambles, but in the current economic climate was not a priority for the Highways Department to improve.

The Lichfield Branch of the IWA decided to ask local volunteers to help upgrade the path so that canal walks are more accessible to families. Over the week, 21 volunteers turned out to help – some for a couple of hours, some for the week. A total of 293 volunteer hours was put in at this work party, which doesn’t include three previous clearance work parties at the site.

It was backbreaking work, hauling wheelbarrows full of hardcore in bitterly cold weather, but with a huge effort the footpath was completed a day ahead of schedule and thankfully before the snow came! As the picture shows the path is a dramatic improvement, all achieved by the hard work of the volunteers. The footpath will be the keystone of a circular historic walk entitled ‘The Brindley Trail’. This

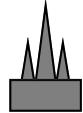
will be available as a booklet and online, and will promote the history of the Trent and Mersey Canal around Rugeley.

Finance for the project was provided by funds allocated to the Lichfield Branch by the IWA from the Burton Festival in 2011, with contributions from Staffordshire County Council, Rugeley Town Council and Rugeley Traders.

The footpath starts at the Wolseley Road in Rugeley and along by the Historic Brindley Bank Pumping Station before descending the ‘Bloody Steps’ down to Brindley Bank. A left turn at the Trent and Mersey Canal takes you across the Brindley Aqueduct. The path carries on under the Rugeley Bypass Bridge until it reaches the next ‘proper’ canal bridge where it crosses the canal to return towards Rugeley.

(n.b. If the walker carries on along the path without crossing the canal at the bridge, it leads on to Wolseley Bridge about 2 miles along the canal footpath).





The walk then follows the canal towpath back over the Aqueduct, following the River Trent for some way until bridge 67 is reached at Station Road. It leaves the canal at this point and re-crosses over the canal where it turns right into the Old Chancel Churchyard and through to the far entrance on Wolseley Road. The walk carries on alongside the main road until the start is reached by the Pumping Station.

Recent Meetings

The first meeting at our new venue of Martin Heath Hall in January was a talk on the Norbury to Newport Canal. Unusually, it was presented by several speakers, reflecting the fact that there are now two organisations involved in this restoration scheme.

First on was Dianne Maxfield, Chair of the Norbury to Newport Canal Restoration CIC. Dianne explained that this Community Interest Company was set up by local residents around Norbury who wanted to see the original canal line to Newport restored along with its locks, rather than the new route with an inclined plane being proposed at that time by the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Restoration Trust. The CIC now has over 200 members and, following a change of policy by S&NCRT, the two bodies are working well together to progress the scheme as a true restoration project.

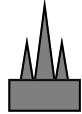
Bernie Jones, Chairman of Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Restoration Trust then took us on an illustrated tour of some of the highlights of the canals' route. Starting from Shrewsbury, the canal served the historic Ditherington Flax Mill, which as the world's first iron-framed building is the precursor of all today's skyscrapers, and there are hopes of restoring this section of canal in conjunction with the mill. Outside Shrewsbury, the Berwick Tunnel was one of the earliest canal tunnels to have a towpath and still survives, as does the pioneering cast-iron aqueduct at Longdon-on Tern, although the aqueduct at Rodington was unfortunately demolished. The Shrewsbury Canal was later joined by the Newport Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal at Wappenshall Junction which is the focus of the Trust's current activities. The two historic warehouses here have been purchased by Telford & Wrekin Council and leased back to



Wappenshall Warehouses (Photo Phil Sharpe)

the Trust for a nominal amount, with the intention of obtaining heritage and other grants to restore and reuse them as a heritage centre. Bernie also outlined the recent history of the two canals which were closed in 1944 and sold off from the 1960's onwards. After earlier restoration initiatives stalled, the Trust was formed in 2000 and a study by Atkins in 2004 found that restoration was feasible at a cost of £86m, although this may be reduced by voluntary work. S&NCRT now has over 1,000 members with local groups active at Shrewsbury, Telford and Newport and is working closely with the Norbury to Newport CIC on a joint restoration strategy.

Contd.



January Meeting Continued

The third speaker was John Heather for the Norbury to Newport Canal Restoration CIC. John was a Civil Engineer with Atkins and explained some of the engineering challenges and possible solutions. The Newport Branch Canal was authorised in 1827 and finished in 1835, towards the end of the canal era, and Telford used standardised designs and good quality sandstone for the locks and bridges, although the local puddle clay available was not so good and most of the channel will need relining or restoration. As most of the land was sold off, or just given away, parts of the channel and many of the locks were infilled, some of the bridges were demolished and the Newport Bypass built across the line, although many original structures survive in good condition.



After the successful heritage restoration of Moss Pool Bridge parapet last summer, the listed aqueduct and skew bridge at Forton are planned to be the next main restoration site, costing up to £100k and with voluntary work by WRG starting in February.

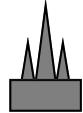
February Meeting

For our February talk former IWA national chairman Audrey Smith took us to China with some contrasting pictures of the Yangtze River and its famous Three Gorges, taken on trips

both before and after the river level was raised by construction of a massive dam. Whole cities have been rebuilt on higher ground and numerous farms and historic sites submerged to provide the hydro-electric power and flood control that the dam will provide, although the many environmental impacts have proved very controversial. Numerous new bridges have been built to reconnect old and new communities along the river but many of the attractive traditional buildings have been replaced by grey concrete tower blocks and apartments, looking even greyer in the polluted air and perpetual smog hanging over many of the cities.



It was fascinating to see a country and a society so different from our own, and the new navigation structures on an unimaginable scale. The double 5 rise locks alongside the Three Gorges Dam may resemble Foxton in theory, but at a vastly larger size. The commercial shipping traffic is so heavy that one staircase is permanently dedicated to upstream traffic with the other for downstream lockage. It is also planned to build a ship lift to speed up passage for the many passenger ships now cruising on the river. If China can solve its pollution problems and avoid further damage to its historic sites it will continue to attract boating tourists despite the submergence of some of the more spectacular river gorges.



Planning Matters

Our Branch Planning Officer, Phil Sharpe, writes:

Over the last five months I have dealt with more than 90 planning applications, local plan consultations and other planning matters, and some of the more significant ones are mentioned below. More comprehensive monthly summary notes can be seen on the Planning page of our Branch website.

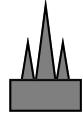
There have been a number of major applications affecting the Trent & Mersey Canal between Burton on Trent and Barton under Needwood. On the edge of Burton, the Lawns Farm proposal, mentioned last time, has now progressed to an outline application for 2,500 houses, industrial units, retail, pub, school, hotel, etc. affecting all the agricultural land on both sides of the canal around Branston Lock. We have objected in principle to the destruction of the rural canalside environment, but should it be approved we want a much wider canalside corridor of landscaped public open space, sports and amenity areas. Towards Barton, a large extension to Newbold Quarry would be very visible from the canal unless a landscaped screening bund is included. However, south of the village at Efflinch Lane, our comment that proposed canalside earth mounds would be better relocated nearer to the 130 house development, in order to preserve open views from the canal, appears to have been accepted. Another potentially massive development along the Trent valley has been proposed for land east of the A38 between Barton, Alrewas and Fradley. The so-called Brookhay Village & Twin Rivers Park would include 5,000 houses and 3 million sq ft of commercial premises, requiring a diversion of the Trent & Mersey Canal at Wychnor and extending near to the Coventry Canal at Brookhay. However, this is not yet a formal application and is contrary to the emerging local plans. Somewhat less contentious was an extension to the Kingfisher Café at Fradley Junction that has now been approved.

On the Coventry Canal, plans for housing on the site of the demolished Park Inn near Tamworth Cruising Club were approved, with new hedge planting to compensate for the loss of some canalside trees on CRT land.

Along the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal, construction of flood defences for the Environment Agency will include flood walls around the cottages at Curdworth Bottom Lock and a long earth embankment on the east side of the canal northwards from the lock, to protect the canal from flooding by the River Tame. Further up the flight, an extension will replace the temporary marquee at Marston Farm Hotel. Between Curdworth and Minworth the canalside green fields are threatened by one of the options for large scale developments in the Green Belt around Sutton Coldfield in The Birmingham Plan to which we have objected.

On the Wyrley & Essington Canal, the towers for a planned cable tow 'wakeboarding' system behind the dam on Chasewater Reservoir should hardly be visible from Anglesey Basin. However, the proposed 40 metre high wind turbine at College Farm by the Daw End Branch Canal would have been very prominent in the Green Belt countryside, and too close to the canal and footpath for safety, so we are pleased that it has been refused again on Appeal.

On the Ashby Canal we have objected to preliminary plans for a 'solar farm' with thousands of solar panels covering 17 fields on both sides of the canal at Hydes Lane just south of the A5. Meanwhile, the large canalside housing development at Market Bosworth that we objected to has been approved.



Planning Matters—contd.

Affecting several canals, parts of the Trent & Mersey, Staffs & Worcs and Shropshire Union, a late addition to The Plan for Stafford Borough would effectively ban any residential moorings at new marinas which is contrary to Government policy, so we have objected to this as 'unsound', along with CRT and RBOA.

High Speed Rail—HS2

Also affecting the T&M, Coventry and Ashby canals is the recently announced route for Phase 2 of High Speed Rail, known as HS2. The line to Leeds would cross the Coventry Canal at Polesworth, slicing through the canalside Pooley Fields Heritage Centre and bridging over the canal and mooring basin. Further along it crosses the line of the Ashby Canal at Measham and cuts through a proposed housing area that was set to fund restoration of this section. The other line to Manchester would cross the Trent & Mersey Canal at Great Haywood right alongside the marina, and adds a third bridge between Shadehouse and Woodend locks at Fradley to the two already proposed as part of the Phase 1 line. We have suggested an alternative route avoiding these two crossings and are promised a decision about this and other alternative alignments affecting the Lichfield Canal at Cappers Lane by early May. Numerous alternative alignments were considered at the planning stage and are detailed in the documents now released. A public consultation on the preferred options is promised during 2013. IWA will seek to minimise the visual and noise impact of the three new canal crossings and to ensure proper provision for the Ashby Canal restoration. We also continue to challenge the alignment of the Phase 1 WCML link with its 2 avoidable crossings of the canal, which threaten destruction of the lock cottage at Wood End Lock and would seriously damage the historic canal environment.

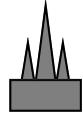


Branch AGM 20th March 2013

Our Branch AGM took place at Martin Heath Hall on March 20th. Unfortunately our Chairman-Mike Moorse-has resigned for personal reasons but the 5 existing committee members standing again were re-elected. Full details including the Minutes, full Chairmen's Report and the Financial Report can be found at www.waterways.org.uk/lichfield/agm. This was followed by a fascinating presentation by Steve Bicknell about the role of volunteers in the new CRT which provoked some lively discussion.

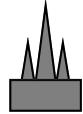
The Friends at The Lea—Walsall

A group has been formed to help preserve and enhance this canalside area of Goscote in Walsall that has been saved from development by a local residents campaign. Any members local to the area who would be willing to help would be most welcome. Please contact Helen Whitehouse in the first instance.



Your New Committee

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