

Lichfield Lines

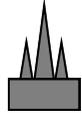


Presentation of donation to L&HCRT at Huddlesford (see page 12)

The newsletter of IWA Lichfield Branch

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

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Branch Chairman's Report - October 2013

Firstly, congratulations are due. At the IWA national AGM, held at the end of September, it was announced that two of our branch members Margaret Beardsmore and John Stockland were awarded Richard Bird Medals. These are presented to members of the Association whose efforts and support are considered to have brought significant benefit to the Association over a sustained period. Congratulations also to Harry Arnold for being awarded the prestigious Cyril Styring Trophy (see details later).

Democracy was shown to work at the AGM when the members present decided that in order to help to retain existing members and attract new recruits we should maintain all subscription rates at the current levels for at least another year rather than increase them in line with inflation. The importance for the Association of maintaining membership levels was recognized as very important to enable us to maintain our good negotiating position with the government and navigation authorities. With inflation running at near to 3%, the 'no increase' decision represents a reduction in real terms in the costs for members.

Winter is upon us and our thoughts (when not pre-occupied by Christmas preparations) turn towards planning next year's holidays. Where shall we go? If we plan to cruise the canals, will we explore new waters or re-visit old favourites? Some of us like to weave festivals and rallies into our cruising pattern. There are several significant anniversaries coming up next year especially involving the Southern Stratford Canal and the Upper Avon Navigation. The Stratford River Festival (first weekend in July) is an important event to support. Whilst it will not be classified as an IWA National Festival, it will be strongly supported by IWA and we hope to prominently publicise IWA's achievements there. With my IWA Promotions & Communications committee hat on, I give advance warning that I will be asking for assistance at this event. One month earlier, Chester & Merseyside branch of IWA will host the IWA National Campaign Rally at Tower Wharf, Chester. The annual IWA Canalway Cavalcade at Little Venice in London will be held, as usual, at the beginning of May. All these events are likely to be great fun and I would urge you to try to attend at least one of them (by boat or otherwise) to show your support for IWA.

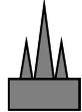
Meanwhile, our normal branch activities will continue throughout the winter with work-parties, walks, talks and the Christmas meal. Do come and join in! We try to find something that will appeal to each of our members. We are a friendly bunch and we try hard to welcome everyone who takes part in our activities. I feel personally responsible if anyone feels left out so please feel free to corner me at any event if you feel ignored! The walk on New Year's Day is usually a particularly sociable event. Bring any friends or family who may be staying with you! The fresh air will do you the world of good.

Early in the New Year, our meetings organiser will be putting the new programme together. Do you know of an interesting speaker or is there a topic that we have not covered recently which you feel could be the basis for a good meeting? Please do let us know by either emailing us on lichfield@waterways.org.uk or suggesting it to me at one of the meetings.

I hope that it is not too early to wish you Seasons Greetings.

Helen Whitehouse

18/10/2013



Forthcoming Events

Tuesday 5th November 2013

Morning Walk at Kingsbury Water Park. A gentle stroll around the Water Park and along the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal. Meet at the Dog & Doublet Inn, Dog Lane, Bodymoore Heath, Sutton Coldfield, B76 9JD at 10.15 for a 10.30am start. Optional lunch afterwards at the pub. Easy going and fairly level. Dogs on leads welcome. Leader Derek Beardsmore. Further information from Margaret Beardsmore on 07581 794111 or email margaret.beardsmore@waterways.org.uk

Friday 8th November 2013 – Work Party at Brindley Bank, Rugeley.

Volunteers needed to help continue the improvements to the Brindley Bank area by the Trent & Mersey Canal.

Work will include mowing/strimming training and practice; continuing to rebuild the tramway wharf wall using reclaimed bricks and lime mortar; finishing re-laying the footpath at the bottom of the steps. All equipment provided, but you do need heavy duty boots.

Meet at the bottom of the steps by the aqueduct, accessed along the renovated footpath between Albany Drive and the pumping station, off Wolseley Road, Rugeley, WS15 2HP.

10.00 am start till no later than 4.00 pm. – you are more than welcome to come for just an hour, but if you plan to turn up in the afternoon only please arrive by 1.30 pm.

Tea, coffee and biscuits provided. If you are planning to come all day there will be sandwiches at lunch time if you let me know you are coming.

Further information from Margaret Beardsmore on 07581 794111 or email margaret.beardsmore@waterways.org.uk

Wednesday 20th November 2013

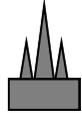
Illustrated talk on 'Restoration Progress on the Grantham Canal' by Mike Stone, Chairman of the Grantham Canal Restoration Trust. 7.30 for 7.45 pm at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, WS13 8AY

Wednesday 11th December 2013

Branch Christmas Dinner & Social. 7.00 for 7.30 pm at "Oddfellows in the Boat", The Boat, Walsall Road, Summerhill, near Muckley Corner, Lichfield, Staffs. WS14 0BU. (Map and directions at www.oddfellowsintheboat.com/find.php). Menu and ticket details see Page 4

Wednesday 1st January 2014

Pools and Passageways of Lichfield. Join us for this New Year's Day stroll around Lichfield to walk off all that turkey! 10.15 for a 10.30am start. Meet at The Gatehouse, 1 Bird Street, Lichfield, Staffs. WS13 6PW. This is the white painted Wetherspoons pub with the wall sign Lloyds No 1 Café Bar, at the junction of Bird Street with The Friary. Car parking off Swan Road, free on New Year's Day. The walk is about 2 hours, followed by an optional lunch at the pub. Leader Denis Cooper. Further information from Pat Barton on 07947 337491 or email pat.barton@waterways.org.uk



Wednesday 15th January 2014

Illustrated talk on 'The Natural History of the West Midlands Canals' by Paul Wilkinson of the Canal & River Trust. 7.30 for 7.45 pm at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, WS13 8AY

Wednesday 19th February 2014

Illustrated talk on 'Wrecks and Ruins' (A photographic essay of the old and decaying; boats, buildings and even trees that add character to our waterways) by Mike Beech, Foxton Canal Museum Keeper. 7.30 for 7.45 pm at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, WS13 8AY

Tuesday 4th March 2014

Walk around Alvecote and the Coventry Canal. Led by Clive Walker. Details t.b.a.

Saturday 15th March 2014

Jumble Sale at Peace Memorial Hall, Pinfold Lane, Penkridge. 10am - noon. Set-up and jumble donations from 8.30am. Clothes, household goods, books, CDs, games, toys, small furniture, crockery, glassware, etc. Refreshments available. Admission 30p. (Held jointly with Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust). Donations of jumble can be brought to Branch meetings or to Penkridge early on the day, or it may be possible to arrange prior collection - contact the Chairman (see Committee Page 18).

Wednesday 19th March 2014

Annual General Meeting. Followed by an illustrated talk on 'Progress on the Ashby Canal' by Geoff Pursglove, Ashby Canal Restoration Partnership Project Officer. 7.30 for 7.45 pm at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, WS13 8AY

Wednesday 16th April 2014

Illustrated talk on Irish Waterways by Brian J Goggin. 7.30 for 7.45 pm at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, WS13 8AY

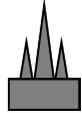
Adjacent Branches

The other three branches in the West Midlands region also hold regular meetings, walks and other events. Please see the Branch websites for specific details.

The Birmingham, Black Country and Worcestershire Branch usually hold their meetings on the third Monday of the month at Coombeswood Canal Trust, Hawne Basin, Herewood Rise, Halesowen B62 8AW.

The Warwickshire Branch usually hold their meetings on the second Wednesday of the month at Sports Connexion Leisure Club, Leamington Road, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Coventry, CV8 3FL.

The North Staffs and South Cheshire Branch usually hold their meetings on the second Friday of the month at Stoke on Trent Boat Club, Endon Wharf, Post Lane, Endon, Stoke on Trent ST9 9DT.



IWA LICHFIELD BRANCH – CHRISTMAS DINNER

ODDFELLOWS IN THE BOAT, WALSALL ROAD, LICHFIELD WS14 0BU

WEDNESDAY 11th DECEMBER 2013 – 7.00PM FOR 7.30PM

Choice of one from each of the following:



STARTERS

Chestnut, roasted butternut squash and Bramley apple soup

Honey glazed figs with prosciutto and Roquefort

Pan fried Pigeon breast with haggis mash and whisky sauce

Trio of smoked and marinated fish served on warm blinis and dill crème fraiche

Potted pork with juniper, thyme and apple

MAINS – these dishes are served with Potatoes and Vegetables

Turkey escalope with lemon and herb stuffing wrapped in puff pastry

Spiced beef with pot roasted root vegetables and fondant potato

Crispy belly pork with apple and sage mash, cider cream sauce

Baked salmon and crab filo parcel with chive butter sauce

Shallot tart tatin with roasted cherry tomatoes, goats cheese and rocket salad

HOMEMADE PUDDINGS

Christmas pudding with brandy butter

Panattone bread & butter pudding

White chocolate and sour cherry cheesecake

Mincemeat and apple frangipane

Blackcurrant and cassis sorbet with lemon biscuits

Cheese platter with biscuits (at extra cost of £6.25)

COFFEE

PRICE TO INCLUDE COFFEE £25.00 per head

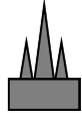
To book your place, please contact **Pat Barton, Mobile 07947 337491** or email:

pat.barton@waterways.org.uk

Orders and payment (cheque payable to IWA LICHFIELD)

MUST BE RECEIVED BY 1ST DECEMBER 2013





Lichfield Members win the Robert Aickman Trophy at Cassiobury Park **Article and Photos - Mike and Denise Bending**

We were very pleased to be awarded the Robert Aickman Trophy for the most enterprising continuous journey to the IWA Waterways Festival at Cassiobury this summer, particularly as the trophy was first awarded in 1951, presumably at the first ever National Rally in Market Harborough.

Our journey started when we left Kings Bromley Marina on our narrowboat *Densie* during the cold and windy weather of late May. We cruised south on the Coventry, Birmingham & Fazeley and Oxford canals to reach Oxford after a leisurely journey of 3 weeks during which there had been little improvement in the weather.

After joining the Thames at Dukes Cut we turned right to travel upstream. For the first few miles the cruising was easy as the river flows gently through attractive wetland countryside well away from any sign of habitation. Soon its character changes as the river begins a series of hairpin meanders. Decreasing river width and depth increased the flow and travel became hard work as the engine struggled to push us forward and the tiller felt very heavy.

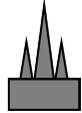
Everything improved as we approached Lechlade, even the weather. Carrying on upstream the following day we soon reached the end of navigation for powered boats. There is a winding area but it is very restricted by a large mudbank on which we were stuck securely for some time before being helped off by another boat.



Mike and Denise Bending being presented with the Robert Aickman Trophy



The journey downstream towards London was a real joy as *Densie* cruised quietly with the flow in the hot sunny weather, so hot that we only travelled in the morning, mooring up for the day at lunchtime so that we could get off the boat and explore the interesting towns and lovely countryside along the river. It was becoming clear that we were too early to make for our intended destination of the IWA National Rally at Cassiobury near Watford. At such times ones thoughts naturally turn to Basingstoke or rather the Basingstoke Canal.



We remembered that the canal had been reopened a few months previously after being closed for several years but was blocked 5 miles before the end by a landslip. Restrictions on the locks mean that one can only spend whole weeks on the canal, but in one week we should be able to reach the landslip and get to Cassiobury on time.

The journey proved to be a wonderful experience. As a canal the Basingstoke has everything a boater could wish for - mature woodland



Basingstoke Canal

scenery, an impressive flight of locks, a deep cutting, swing bridges, plentiful wildlife, pubs, a good towpath, interesting moorings and very friendly locals delighted to see the boats returning. It is also very quiet because of the restrictions – that week we were one of only perhaps 6 visiting boats on the whole 30 miles of canal.

Just before we started the canal management office phoned to tell us that the landslip had been made safe so we could reach the end of navigation. The tree lined lake that forms the end of navigation on the Basingstoke is one of the most beautiful places we have ever visited

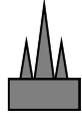
on the canals. There are large numbers of dragonflies and the water is so crystal clear that one can see the pebbles on the bottom, fish swimming around the boat and the whole of the rudder and propeller. Trying to capture this on a photograph was difficult as Denise almost looked to be floating in mid air.

We found we still had a few days in hand so we returned up the Thames to Windsor. We were delighted to see the brilliant white and gold Royal Barge Gloriana moored in bright sunshine on the riverside in the private lands that surround Windsor Castle. We

subsequently discovered that the Queen had been out for a day trip with the Countess of Wessex. I have this picture in my mind of Her Majesty sat serene in a lock with the Royal boatmen holding on to the ropes surrounded by narrowboats and river cruisers gently descending to continue on her way.

Unfortunately it never happened. Then on to Cassiobury. After leaving Teddington on the 7am tide we had a superb journey travelling in line with some 10 other boats down the Thames to the Grand Union at Brentford. And then back to the reality of the less scenic parts of West London to arrive at the Festival after a journey of 375 miles and 214 locks in 56 days,





Local Awards at The IWA AGM

At the National AGM in September two of our Branch members were awarded the prestigious Richard Bird Medals for services to the waterways.

John Stockland

John has been a member of IWA for just 40 years, joining in 1973. He attended the inaugural meeting of the Lichfield Branch, and has been a Branch member ever since. He has been a member of the committee for at least 30 years, starting as Meetings secretary. After a few years John became Publicity Officer and then Branch Secretary for about 2 years before returning to publicity, a role that he continues to hold to the present day. For the last two years he has also been a member of West Midlands Region committee. John's first involvement with National Waterways Festivals was as an assistant harbourmaster at Hawkesbury Junction. At the next festival at Windmill End he joined the publicity team. The following year at Henley on Thames he was Waterspace Manager and later Director. He continued as Waterspace Director for the next 9 years and retired from the office after the Preston Brook festival when at age 72 he says he felt that it was a job for a younger person. Amidst all that for many years he helped on the IWA stand at the NEC.



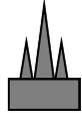
John Receiving his award from Les Etheridge at the AGM. Also Harry Arnold receiving the Cyril Styring Award

Margaret Beardsmore

Margaret was the Lichfield Branch Chairman during the 2006-2008 period when the Defra Cuts were in many minds. She worked tirelessly to promote local waterways, organising various boat gatherings to demonstrate the Branch's feelings about the cuts, resulting in good publicity for the National cause. She also chaired the Branch meetings with enthusiasm and fairness during this time.

In 2009 she initiated, and still leads, a branch programme of monthly walks. In 2010, she implemented the Rugeley Project which has been an instrument of major change. It started as a small litter picking session and has since grown into a well organised, community spirited project involving local groups, Rugeley Lions, Rugeley Town Council, Staffordshire County Council, Rugeley Traders Association, The LANDOR Local History Society, Armitage Cubs, Rugeley Open Spaces and Rugeley Rugby Club.

The project is based on the Rugeley canal side covering the line from Brindley Bank Aqueduct through to the Brereton Border at the other end of town. Over the last year "The Bloody Steps" area has been the main focus of the work parties and Margaret has gained considerable funding from Rugeley Council, the Traders' Association and others to facilitate this work. It is normal for over 20 people to turn up for a day's volunteering. With dogged determination she gained considerable help from CRT with the installation of new visitor moorings just north of



Brindley Bank Aqueduct. That same determination has elicited from CRT a promise for a sanitary station at St. Augustine's Field, where work has recently been started on the canal offside, and where it is hoped to provide other facilities and winter moorings. The outcome of all Margaret's hard work is that the Rugeley Project has won two CRT Waterways Renaissance Awards at the final in May. In 2010 and 2012 the branch was similarly awarded BW/CRT Volunteer Awards. Margaret was instrumental in the provision of information boxes and town guides on the approaches to the town to publicise the attractions. All this work has given the town of Rugeley a real boost from canal users and it is now an attractive place to visit.

Further Awards

Also at the AGM local member Harry Arnold MBE received the premier award - the Cyril Styring Trophy (see photo on previous page).

Harry started photographing traffic on the Bridgewater Canal over fifty years ago when he lived in Warrington, joined IWA in 1961 and became professionally involved part-time with the waterways, then full-time, when he ran a hire boat firm at Norbury Junction. Harry has been involved with a number of major IWA campaigns such as for the reopening of the Ashton & Peak Forest and Montgomery canals. He was Marketing Director of Festivals for a number of years, but his biggest contribution to IWA was his editing of Waterways magazine from 1992 to 2007 during which time he raised the profile and immediacy of the magazine. Harry is also a vice-president of the Association and lives in Alrewas.

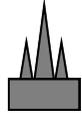
Recent Walks

Hopwas Walk - Tuesday 1st October 2013

Just 8 of us, and a dog, met at The Tame Otter in Hopwas for this 3 mile canal and woodland walk on a pleasantly mild morning at the start of October. From Lichfield Road Bridge we headed north along the towpath of what is generally thought of as the Coventry Canal, but is actually an outpost of the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal due to historic accident.

At Hopwas Wood Bridge we entered the old military firing range area, thankfully now disused, and climbed steadily along a track through the extensive Hopwas Hays Wood.





Sticking to the official bridle paths, the walk descended and ascended again as we followed a triangular route through a variety of natural and plantations areas, each with different species of conifer and broadleaf trees. After a final descent we arrived back at the canal bridge and retraced our steps along the towpath to the Inn, where some of us enjoyed a pleasant lunch. Thanks to Clive Walker for researching and leading this walk.

Alrewas & Fradley Walk - Tuesday 3rd September 2013

A dozen members and friends enjoyed this 6 mile stroll through the flat farmland of the Tame Valley. From Alrewas we crossed over the A38 and then followed a conveyor carrying gravel from the local quarries across the fields. This took us to Ridget Lane, Barley Green Lane and then Stockford Lane, all quiet back roads carrying little traffic. Taking to the fields again the walk led through Brookhay Wood which was pleasantly shaded on this warm and sunny day. Joining the Coventry Canal near Brookhay Bridge we paused for the traditional group photo before following the towpath to Heath Gap and Fradley village. A pleasant path between the houses brought us out by some picturesque thatched cottages. The route back to Alrewas was along Cowhill Lane and across fields to Daisy Lane and our starting point by the cricket ground.



Refreshments and a pleasant lunch were then enjoyed at the William IV pub in the centre of the village. Thanks to Ed Rule for researching and leading this walk.

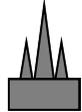
Recent Meetings

A River Cruise - Bourgogne to the Mediterranean Wednesday 18th September

A fascinating talk by Patrick Marks about a cruise down the rivers Soane and Rhone in some very awkward conditions. There was some spectacular scenery and some members, who were obviously contemplating a similar adventure, were very interested in the details.

Canal Boats and Barges - From Tub Boats to Trows Wednesday 16th October

Tony Condor, who gave this talk, is a former curator of the Gloucester Waterways Museum and as such has a wealth of knowledge of boats of all descriptions. He gave us a very interesting talk on boats from all corners of the country from seagoing Thames Barges to the smallest Tub Boats from the Shropshire canals.



Central Shires User Group Forum 10/10/2013 - Phil Sharpe

Two members of Lichfield Branch committee attended the Canal & River Trust's User Group Forum for the Central Shires Waterway at Rugeley on 10th October.

Charlotte Atkins, chair of the Central Shires Waterway Partnership summarised their recently published Strategic Waterway Plan, which sets out a vision, priorities and action plans for the next 10 years, and several of the other partnership members were present.

CRT Waterway Manager Darren Green gave a Business Update and details of the works programme after which several members of his staff gave presentations on reservoir works, water control, tree management and volunteering. Over the break there was an opportunity to talk informally to staff in more detail about current issues before a short feedback session ended the meeting. Richard Parry, the new Chief Executive of CRT was also present in the audience and was very willing to discuss a variety of matters with people in the break and after the meeting.

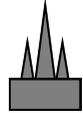
Some of the points noted in the presentations that affect the canals in Lichfield Branch area include:

- Additional funding for offside tree control this winter, as part of a planned 5 year control cycle;
- Repair works this winter include Trent & Mersey Canal locks at Branston, Bagnall, Common and Woodend, several of the Atherstone locks, canal walls and sideponds, and fixing a leak on the Ashby Canal at Gopsall embankment;
- The following winter will see work on the 'Quarter Mile' bridge on the river section at Alrewas, re-decking the footbridge at Huddlesford Junction and various canal washwall repairs;
- Public Open days are being held at Atherstone Locks on the weekend of 7/8 December 2013;
- Dredging is planned for 2014/15 between Great Haywood and Colwich and on the Ashby Canal;
- Recycling will be introduced at rubbish disposal points under a new waste contract;
- Volunteer lock keepers are again working at Fradley and Atherstone;
- Regular volunteer work party groups are now established at Fradley, Tamworth, and North Warwickshire (Atherstone & Nuneaton).

The full details of all the presentations can be seen on the CRT website at <http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/library/4517.pdf> (12MB)

We had also pre-submitted some questions which were answered partly in writing and at the meeting. An ongoing issue is the mooring situation at Fradley Junction and the problem of freeing up space below Middle Lock for a lock landing mooring is yet to be resolved. We also learned that the recently installed mooring jetty near the workshops is to be repositioned nearer the bank. There is already a commercial boat on the jetty and the other moorings are now in the on-line auction system.

The next Central Shires UGF for our area will be held on 3rd April 2014 and members are invited to forward any questions or concerns they have to the Branch at least 2 weeks before that date.



Work Party Brindley Bank Rugeley – Friday October 18

Margaret Beardsmore - Work Party Coordinator.

We had two main priorities for our Friday work party – to make progress re-laying the path at the bottom of the ‘Bloody Steps’ and to begin work rebuilding the canal wall by the Heritage Tramway.

In addition, Derek did his usual strimming and mowing, helped by Richard C in the afternoon.

Phil, Pete, and Richard B made steady progress all day with the path laying. Another day should see this task complete, though it is looking a great deal better already.

The re-building of the canal wall was a journey into the unknown. Luckily we had Tom Woodcock from the Heritage Division of CRT to train us and supervise, as we had

to use lime mortar and heritage bricks. Work speeded up considerably when we finally persuaded the concrete mixer to work! The task was slow and painstaking, made difficult because the canal bank had to be built up by sandbags at one end. Stuart, Ed and Terry are our new experts..... This was never going to be finished in one day, or probably even two, so we hope for decent weather at our next attempts.



Our day was brightened considerably with the appearance of two new volunteers from Tesco. Becky and Jo (and later, Jo’s son, Brett) were a breath of fresh air and smiled as they shovelled aggregate all afternoon, then helped to cart bricks about at the end of the day.

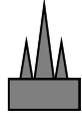
All in all, a good day’s work, enjoyed by all – especially thanks to Pat for the excellent fruit cake, of which there wasn’t even one piece left by 4pm.

The Rugeley Project - Plans for the Future

Frustrations and Optimism

These last few months have proved very challenging for our Rugeley Regeneration Project. CRT’s charitable status brings many benefits, and greater emphasis and resources for volunteers must be advantageous in the longer term.

Short-term, however, we have had training and organisational hiccups which has led to delays in planning and carrying out work. Our local CRT Managers have been very helpful and supportive in trying to resolve these issues and I am hopeful that the worst problems have now been sorted out.



Future Works

Leathermill Lane Area

Area around Leathermill Lane and towards Station Road, Rugeley (Bridges 66 and 67 T & M): This area is due to benefit from £55,000 as a result of S106 money from the Tesco development. Improvements are needed to the canal access, Leathermill Lane appearance, towpath and mooring rings. However, a more serious concern is the state of the canal bank between the two bridges, where the canal wall is collapsing into the cut! We have made a case to CRT that we use volunteers to do as much of the work as possible, leaving the £55,000 to go towards piling the canal bank, and now await CRT's decision.

Boater's Facilities, St Augustine's Field

We now have the basis of a plan with CRT on how to proceed with this work, but this will take further meetings before we can begin to do more than clear the site.

Brindley Bank, by the Aqueduct

We will be continuing our work in this area over the short-term, and hope in due course to improve the towpath on the offside (by the new boater's moorings). We now have a plan on how to proceed, but the implementation will depend on the timing of the Leathermill Lane works.

New volunteers and visitors to the work parties are very welcome at any time. We don't just need people for heavy duty work – additional help with the tea and cake making would be much appreciated! Details of future work parties are on the website, but if you would like to be added to the monthly email list please contact me – details on the Committee List (Page 18).

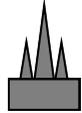
IWA Donation to Lichfield Canal Restoration - Sunday 22nd September 2013

IWA Lichfield Branch has donated £300 towards the continuing restoration of the Lichfield Canal.

Barbara Hodgson, treasurer of Lichfield Branch, presented the cheque to Brian Kingshott, chairman of the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust (L&HCRT) at the Huddlesford Heritage Gathering. This very successful event, organised jointly by the Trust and Lichfield Cruising Club, was held over the weekend of 21-22 September at Huddlesford Junction where the Lichfield Canal joins the Coventry Canal. IWA had a sales and promotion marquee at the Gathering and also organised WoW (Wild over Waterways) activities for the youngsters.



In the photo, left to right, are Bob Williams, Finance Director of L&HCRT, Peter Buck, Engineering Director of L&HCRT, Brian Kingshott, Chairman of L&HCRT, and Barbara Hodgson, Treasurer of Lichfield Branch of the Inland Waterways Association.
(Photo by Paul Marshall)



IWA Meeting with Waterways Manager

Helen Whitehouse 18/10/2013

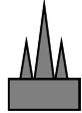
Dean Davies, CRT Waterways Manager for the West Midlands Waterways hosted a meeting with IWA officers responsible for the waterways within his area at which we were able to have detailed discussions about some of our concerns. We discussed the state of navigation on the West Midlands Waterways, in particular the encroachment of vegetation on the channel on both the Birmingham & Fazeley canal and the Staffordshire & Worcestershire canal, the subsidence of the towpath along Tixall Wide and (out of our area) the state of the locks on the BCN and the Delph and Stourbridge Flights of locks. The meeting was very useful with Ian Lane, Waterway Engineer, also being present. They have a 5 year plan for cutting back off-side vegetation on each waterway but will look at areas that we have pin-pointed as being particular areas of encroachment and will deal with these accordingly.

We heard that lock 5 on the Aston flight where a boat recently got stuck causing CRT to have to remove the coping stones and demolish the lock wall in order to release the boat was the widest lock in the flight. We do not know yet what caused this problem. The cost of this operation including rebuilding the lock is likely to be in the region of £10,000 not to mention the fact that the boater involved must have spent an uncomfortable and worrying 2-3 nights guarding the boat.



We were concerned about an unsightly paint spill at Fazeley junction and were reassured that it was not caused by CRT employees or volunteers. It should have been cleared up by the time you read this. CRT welcomes members of the public reporting potential problems on the waterways and we have asked whether it might be possible to have some sort of reporting process whereby one can text details to one number on discovering a non-urgent problem.

We are very grateful to Dean for meeting with us as it enabled us to have full and frank discussions.



Planning Matters - Phil Sharpe, Planning Officer

Over the last three months more than 70 planning applications, local plan consultations and other planning matters have been dealt with, which are all summarised in the monthly notes on the Planning page of our Branch website. Some of the more significant ones are as follows.

On the Trent & Mersey Canal at Rugeley the new Tesco store has now opened and a small success was getting the canalside signage reduced from 7 to 2 metres high, quite large enough to be seen from a boat! An unusual application at Fradley Junction was to replace the pipeline crossing on the downstream side of the listed Keepers Lock Bridge by a new one tunnelled under the canal. As the pipe is being removed we consider that the ugly concrete block supports should also be removed. A site between Common Lock and Alrewas is proposed for sand and gravel extraction followed by use as a 300 berth marina, which we feel could only exacerbate congestion at the locks at Fradley Junction.



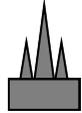
Hedge at Cross Green Bridge

On the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal we objected to a terrace of 5 houses just south of Cross Green Bridge which would have required complete removal of the towpath hedge and the plans have now been amended to 3 houses set further back with the hedge retained. We also asked that the M6 Managed Motorway Project, which involves using the hard shoulder as a running lane, should include noise fencing where it runs closely parallel to the canal between Rodbaston and Otherton, but this has so far been refused by the Highways Agency.

In Lichfield, restoration of the Lichfield Canal may be assisted or handicapped by the proposed 450 house development south of Shortbutts Lane. The submission of amended plans gave another opportunity to press for fuller provision of the essential canal infrastructure to be included, with additional benefits to site drainage and residential amenity.

On the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal at Hademore, south of Whittington, the proposed large wind turbine that we objected to was refused due to landscape and visual impacts but has gone to Appeal. Further along the canal near Curdworth, a large hotel extension is proposed at The Kingsley.

On the Ashby Canal the development of industrial units opposite Trinity Marina continues but is conditional on keeping the high towpath hedge as screening. Permission to sell an extended range of goods in the canalside farm shop at Higham Lane, Stoke Golding was supported and has now been agreed. Land south of The Globe Inn at Snaresstone proposed as a camping and caravan site is well screened from the canal.



The HS2 High Speed Rail project is still creating a lot of work for us. Despite earlier promises HS2 Ltd refused to hold any more Forum or bilateral meetings between April and September and it has been difficult to get any meaningful responses from them. After much pressure, a plan was finally produced of our proposed alternative route avoiding the double crossings of the canal at Woodend, Fradley some 6 months after it had been drawn, and we have since questioned its deficiencies. Consequently, a decision was taken by IWA Trustees to fund a consultancy feasibility report on our proposals and this is now likely to be done in partnership with CRT. A consultation on the Phase 2 routes to Manchester and Leeds is now underway until next January and a draft response has been prepared. Site visits have been made and meetings have been held with Staffordshire County Council and Warwickshire County Council officers to help co-ordinate our mitigation proposals

Whither Navigation? (the region magazine)

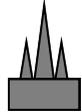
Alan Gilbert, a former Lichfield IWA branch chairman, has recently stood down as the editor of *Navigation* having performed that role for over 10 years for which we thank him. During that time a lot of changes have taken place. Technology has become more accessible to the "man in the street". More of us have computers, websites have developed and it has become much easier for branches to produce their own magazines or newsletters. It was therefore decided at the last region meeting that (as Brian Kingshott, region secretary, and a former editor of *Navigation* so succinctly said) "It has served its purpose" and the region will no longer produce its own magazine. Details of Lichfield branch activities will appear in our own magazine *Lichfield Lines* and where space permits activities and meetings of neighbouring branches will be listed. We hope that Lichfield branch members will also continue to follow and join in the activities of our adjoining branches by going to the region and branches web-page https://www.waterways.org.uk/branches_regions/branches_regions and looking through the web pages of adjacent branches.

Those of you who prefer paper communications to computers can be assured that for the foreseeable future the branch intends to continue to publish and to improve *Lichfield Lines*. This is your branch magazine, Please feel free to contribute comments, letters and articles to the editor. The press date for the next edition is 24th January 2014.

What do the Regions do?

The primary function of a region committee is to ensure that there is a regional focus on the decision making process within IWA. The region committee is made up of the chairman from each branch plus other members who are elected at the Region AGM. Elected members serve for three years. They can then stand for re-election. The region chairman is a trustee of the Association having normally been elected by region members by postal ballot. If there is only one candidate for the post, an election will not be held. A region chairman serves for a three year term.

The region chairman usually represents his region at meetings of IWA's Navigation Committee. However, where the region chairman may have a conflicting role, as in the case of West Midlands Region where the chairman is also the chairman of IWA's Restoration Committee,



the region committee can appoint someone else to sit on the Navigation Committee to raise matters which either cannot be resolved locally and/or are considered to be of national importance.

You are probably aware that one of the key functions of the IWA branches is to deal with local planning matters where they affect the waterways, including planning applications.

Each local planning authority also has to plan how their area develops over the longer term. Because our boundaries rarely coincide with those of the local authorities the region committee may determine which branch is best placed to write the response on behalf of IWA. The Region also deals with other regional based consultations.

Other roles include keeping branches fully informed regarding the Association's campaigns and other activities and to represent their, and thus the members, views to the Trustees and national committees. Don't forget that, if you wish to discuss any concerns that you may have regarding the waterways in your area, the best opportunity to do so is at the local branch members' meeting. Officers there can then raise your concerns at the appropriate level within CRT and/or IWA.

Notice of IWA West Midlands Region Annual General Meeting

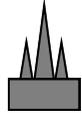
The 2014 Annual General Meeting of West Midlands Region will take place at 8.00PM on Monday, 17th March 2014 at Coombeswood Canal Trust, Hawne Basin, Hereward Rise, Halesowen, West Midlands, B62 8AW and will follow the Annual General Meeting of the Birmingham, Black Country and Worcestershire Branch (which is scheduled to start at 7:30PM)

A G E N D A

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

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

Region officers (other than the chairman) will be elected at the next region committee meeting after the AGM.



IWA LICHFIELD BRANCH

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 19th MARCH 2014 at 7:45pm

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

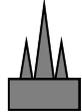
AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the minutes of the 2013 AGM and any matters arising from these minutes
3. Report from the Branch Chairman
4. Financial report from the Treasurer
5. Elections to the committee
 - a) Members completing 3 years in post and eligible for re-election:
Kaye Harrison
 - b) Members co-opted since the previous AGM:
None
 - c) Any other candidates
6. Any resolutions requested by members of the Branch (provided the Branch Chairman was notified in writing of the item at least six weeks prior to the AGM)*

Notes:

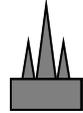
- Candidates for election to the committee must be current members of Lichfield Branch and should indicate their willingness to stand.
- The Branch committee officers (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) are elected by the committee from its membership at their first meeting following the AGM.
- Current members of the committee are: Helen Whitehouse Chairman; Pat Barton Vice-Chairman; Kaye Harrison Secretary; Barbara Hodgson, Treasurer; Margaret Beardsmore; Pete Gurney; Neil Hodgson; Phil Sharpe; John Stockland.

* Item 6: Please put any resolutions in writing and address them to the Chairman c/o 1 Blue House Barns, Chetwynd Road, Newport, Shropshire. TF10 7UE by 5th February 2014



Your Committee

<p>Chairman, Sales and External Talks Helen Whitehouse Virginia Cottage, Brook End, London,</p>	<p>Tel: 01543 491161 Email: helen.whitehouse@waterways.org.uk</p>
<p>Secretary Kaye Harrison 1 Blue House Barns, Chetwynd Road, Newport, Shrops TF10 7UE</p>	<p>Tel: 07973 281728 Email: kaye.harrison@waterways.org.uk</p>
<p>Treasurer Barbara Hodgson 12 Hempits Grove, Acton Trussell, Stafford ST17 0SL</p>	<p>Tel: 01785 716806 Email: barbara.hodgson@waterways.org.uk</p>
<p>Deputy Chairman & Speaker Liaison Pat Barton 38 Waterside Court, Gnosall, Staffs ST20 6AR</p>	<p>Tel: 07947 337491 Email: pat.barton@waterways.org.uk</p>
<p>Planning & Website Philip Sharpe 34 Old Eaton Road, Rugeley, Staffs WS15 2EZ</p>	<p>Tel: 01889 583330 Email: phil.sharpe@waterways.org.uk</p>
<p>Publicity John Stockland 203 Tamworth Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 6DX</p>	<p>Tel: 0121 308 0293 Email: john.stockland@waterways.org.uk</p>
<p>Membership Neil Hodgson 12 Hempits Grove, Acton Trussell, Stafford ST17 0SL</p>	<p>Tel: 01785 716806 Email: neil.hodgson@waterways.org.uk</p>
<p>Newsletter Editor and Posters Pete Gurney 5 Bracken Close, Stafford ST16 1SG</p>	<p>Tel: 01785 255101 Email: pete.gurney@waterways.org.uk</p>
<p>Rugeley Project Margaret Beardsmore 6 Rishworth Avenue, Rugeley, Staffs WS15 2ER</p>	<p>Tel: 07581 794111 Email: margaret.beardsmore@waterways.org.uk</p>
<p>Ex Officio: Region Chairman Vaughan Welch 3 Beach Close, Northfield, Birmingham B31 3DB</p>	<p>Tel: 0121 477 9782 Mob: 07971 202406 Email: vaughan.welch@waterways.org.uk</p>



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