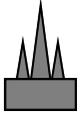




The Inland
Waterways
Association

Issue 7



Lichfield Branch

www.waterways.org.uk/lichfield

Spring 2014

Lichfield Lines

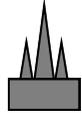


A slightly drier walk than New Year! A Touch of Gold Leaf at Alvecote.

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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Lichfield Branch Chairman's Report for Lichfield Lines – April 2014

My report in this edition will be brief. This always seems to be a busy time of year. The branch AGM was well attended and we were fortunate that one of the IWA Trustees, Gren Messham was able to join us and give us a brief description of what IWA has achieved during the course of the last year. I am delighted to welcome three new committee members. Christine Watkins is our new Minutes Secretary, Denise Bending the new Secretary and Mike Bending is pondering his role! The sales tables have been brought in from my garage to be used at committee meetings because the kitchen table is now too small.....but I am not complaining! Traditionally branch activities are fewer during the summer months when a lot of members are away but whilst we will take a break from more formal meetings from May to August, work parties and walks will continue. Some things cannot be confirmed in time to announce them in Lichfield Lines so please do keep an eye on our web pages www.waterways.org.uk/lichfield . Planning matters will still be monitored and the committee will continue to meet regularly to avoid “taking our eye off the ball” and missing something that has slipped through because it is the “cruising season”.

Phil Sharpe and I recently attended the CRT Central Shires User Group Forum and you will find a report on page 9. I will be going to the West Midlands User Group meeting later this month and hope to report on that in the next magazine.

As no one disagreed with me, we have booked a trip boat for a cruise on the truncated section of the Chesterfield canal. See page 3. Places are limited but if there is sufficient demand, we can always book the boat for a second trip on another day.

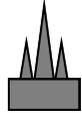
The Himalayan Balsam bash will occur in July. This should be great fun. We will be concentrating on the river navigation section between Alrewas and Wychnor and hope to be able to use CRT's small aluminium boat for this. One evening we may have an HBB walk along the canal through Hopwas woods to deal with the small clumps there. Would anyone who keeps their boat near here volunteer to bring it along to tackle clumps on the non-towpath side, please? Please contact me if you would like to join in.

If you are out walking anywhere else and you see the odd plant growing pull it up by the roots and stamp on it - a perfect antidote if you have had a bad week at work!

I have saved the good news for last. In February, we were one of the charities for whom the public voted in Waitrose Community Matters and have received a cheque for £302 from them. Thank you Waitrose!



Himalayan Balsam



This money will go some way towards replenishing the coffers after our recent donations to the various restoration projects in the branch area. We have also given £200 to the staff at Head Office who took part in the gruelling Acheman challenge in order to raise funds for the new excavator for the Waterway Recovery Group. We are fortunate to have such dedicated young staff who are willing to push themselves to the limit to raise funds for the cause. Have a good summer!

Helen Whitehouse 11/04/14

Forthcoming Events

Our April meeting on the 16th was our last meeting of the season until we restart in September. Before then we have a couple of walks in our area and a boat trip in August on the Chesterfield Canal.

Friday 16th May 2014

Our next work party at Brindley Bank—see Page 4 for details

Sunday 18th May 2014

Coventry Canal Walk. Meet at 10:30 am at the Samuel Barlow car park, by the marina, off Robeys Lane, Alvecote, B78 1AS. Arranged by Warwickshire Branch.

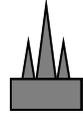
See www.waterways.org.uk/warwickshire/walks for details.

Sunday 8th June 2014

Ashby Canal Walk. A circular walk along the restored section of the Ashby Canal from Donisthorpe past Moira Furnace to Bath Yard Basin at the National Forest Centre (“Conkers”), returning by footpaths through Donisthorpe Woodlands Park. About 4 miles, mostly level. Children and dogs on leads welcome. Meet at Donisthorpe Woodlands Centre, Church Street, Donisthorpe, DE12 7PY at 10.15am for a 10.30 start. The walk is about 2 hours or so with an optional lunch afterwards at a local pub/restaurant. Led by Geoff Pursglove, Ashby Canal Project Officer. Further information from Geoff on 01530 273956 (work) or email lichfield@waterways.org.uk

Wednesday 17th September 2014

Our first speaker of the new season will be Tony Gregory with an illustrated talk on “60 Years of the Wolverhampton Canals”. This will be at our usual venue of Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield WS13 8AY but please note that this season we are starting at the slightly earlier time of 7:15 for 7:30pm.



Boat Trip!

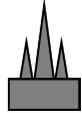
Saturday August 9th 2014

Join us for a private trip on the restored section of the Chesterfield Canal. This will be a full day trip on the 12 seater boat "John Varley"



The cost is £20 per head with numbers limited to 12 so book early!

Further Information please contact Helen Whitehouse on 01543 491161 or helen.whitehouse@waterways.org.uk



Adjacent Branches—End of Season Meetings

The **Birmingham, Black Country and Worcestershire Branch** hold their meetings at Coombeswood Canal Trust, Hawne Basin, Herewood Rise, Halesowen B62 8AW.

May 19th Taking a Narrowboat to France—Chris Clegg

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

May 14th Historic Narrowboats, A Boat Spotting Guide—Alison Smedley MBE

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

May 9th A talk from Steve Wood - The canals of North Staffordshire and South Cheshire.

Volunteering Update April 2104

The sun is shining, the grass is growing, and hopefully all our volunteers can't wait for some work parties!

There has been a lull in volunteering activities during the past couple of months as we have had some organisational difficulties. We now think we have a way forward, and so are beginning to plan the months ahead.

Our next Work Party will be at Brindley Bank, Rugeley on May 16th off Wolseley Road. The nearest post code is for the Pumping Station WS15 2QY

Meet at the base of the Bloody Steps, by the aqueduct 9.30 am. The work party will continue until approx 3 pm but please feel free to come along for just a couple of hours if that's all the time you have. If turning up just for the afternoon please arrive at about 1 pm and it would be helpful if you let me know in advance.

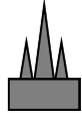
If you are staying all day we will feed you at lunchtime, and there will be the usual tea/coffee/ cake etc.

Heavy duty footwear, tatty clothing and a smile are all you need to bring!

We are continuing our work to re-build the canal wall by the historic wharf; also the aqueduct railings need a repaint. The grass and weeds will need cutting and if there are enough volunteers it would be good to level up some of the steps, paint the handrails and scrub bash by the side of the steps.

Other Volunteering Activities

The Chancel Junior School, which is near the canal in Rugeley, have had a small narrow boat built and put on their land, which is going to be used as a library for the children. Teachers and



parents have put a lot of work into getting the project off the ground, and at the moment are fitting out the inside of the boat, which will remain land based, with landscaping round it. In order to further engage the children with the waterways, we are planning two short walks for them. The first one is a 'treasure hunt' type walk for the little ones on the 1st May, with a bigger walk for the 10 year olds on the 22nd May where we will talk about the local canal history around Rugeley.

I would very much welcome some help on the 22nd May walk – it would just involve reading some background material (supplied) and answering any questions. Please give me a ring on 07581 794111 if you would like to help (It is not possible to just turn up on the day!).

As mentioned in the Chairman's Report we are hoping to have a couple of Balsam Bashing Work Parties in July – a small one at Hopwas and a bigger one to tackle the pesky stuff on the river section in Alrewas. We are currently trying to arrange dates with CRT as we will need the use of CRT's aluminium boat and skipper for the Alrewas work party. You can download a leaflet about Himalayan Balsam from the IWA website:

https://www.waterways.org.uk/news_campaigns/campaigns/himalayan_balsam/himalayan_balsam_leaflet

Further work party dates will be on the website and via email. If you are not on the work party email list and would like to be included, please contact me on margaretbeardsmore@gmail.com. Look forward to seeing some of you soon,

Margaret Beardsmore

Volunteer Coordinator, IWA Lichfield 07581 794111

Recent Work Parties

Saturday 22nd February 2014—Leathermill Lane, Rugeley

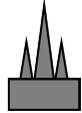
We had an excellent turnout for our Saturday work party on the 22nd February, with seventeen people attending on a fine bright morning.

We cleaned all the CRT signs throughout Rugeley, plus the notice boards, but unfortunately could not complete the re-badging work from British Waterways to the Canal & River Trust because of shortage of labels.

However, our volunteers did manage to clean round all the mooring rings in the town, which made a big difference, and we also painted out the graffiti at the Brereton end of the Rugeley towpath. Our cakes, as usual, were excellent, and a good morning's work was enjoyed by all.

Friday 14th February 2014 - St Augustine's Field, Rugeley

Valentine's Day must have been one of the soggiest on record for our work party at St Augustine's Field in Rugeley. Nevertheless a small but intrepid band of volunteers duly arrived



and worked hard all morning.

We had two main tasks to complete:

- Cleaning the canal-side decking and laying down chicken wire to make it safe to walk on.
- Litter picking and scrub clearance next to the canal.

By lunchtime we had completed our objectives, so decided to have lunch and call it a day!

Well done to all who braved the weather, and big thanks to our cake makers and tea suppliers.

(Report and Photos Margaret Beardsmore)



Recent Activities

Saturday 15th March 2014 - Jumble Sale & Cheque Presentation

Another successful jumble sale organised jointly by IWA Lichfield Branch and the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust was held at the Peace Memorial Hall in Penkridge on 15th



March. Masses of clothing, crockery, glassware, bric-a-brac, books, toys, games, shoes and even a kitchen sink were assembled for the discerning inhabitants of Penkridge to peruse and buy.

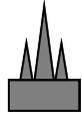
A surge of customers when the doors opened at ten-o'clock soon filled the hall as bargains were sought and haggled over. The first hour was the busiest but by then weary punters were making good use of our café facility to sit down with a

cup of tea and cake before resuming the fray.

When the doors closed the hard working volunteers who had set it all up soon had the remnants boxed up again for future sales opportunities and the cash counted. The takings of nearly £400 were shared between the two parties, somewhat down on last year but a good morning's work nevertheless.

To further boost the funds for restoring the canal at Lichfield, IWA took advantage of the occasion to make a donation of £500 to L&HCRT from the proceeds of our other fund-raising activities. This will go towards the Trust's Feet of Clay Appeal to clay line and re-water another section of the canal (see www.lhcrt.org.uk/clay.htm).

(Report & photo by Phil Sharpe)



Tuesday 4th March 2014 - Alvecote Walk

An interesting route and some decent weather made this 4½ mile walk very enjoyable for the 19 participating members and friends. Starting from the car park of the Samuel Barlow at Alvecote Marina we followed a figure of 8 route taking in countryside, mining history, modern sculpture, medieval monuments and the Coventry Canal.



We first crossed the canal to the boatyard at Alvecote where the Narrowboat Heritage Foundation is restoring the old wooden narrowboat 'Dane' which has been given a new bottom and stem post. Our walk then followed a well made track through woodland and between attractive pools formed by subsidence from the old Alvecote Colliery.

The conical pit mound has been reclaimed and a track winds round it to the top where the striking modern 'Gold Leaf: Buried Sunlight' sculpture was much admired. A slim golden tower standing 45 feet high it is variously described as representing a stack of birch leaves, a sundial, fossilized sunlight, or the trunk of a Lepidodendron tree from the Carboniferous forest; take your pick! Indisputable are the fine long-distant views from the summit which were seen at their best on this sunny day.

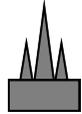
Returning to ground level we crossed the canal into Pooley Country Park, the future of which is threatened by the HS2 High Speed Rail proposals. But for now it still provides a handy loo and picnic stop although the café is not open weekdays in winter. From the park Pooley Lane took us past the war memorial to Polesworth and onto the Coventry Canal towpath, with a fine view of Cl 16th Pooley Hall. We followed the well surfaced towpath of



the canal back to Alvecote but, after a recent change of ownership, the Samuel Barlow was not open for lunch so we retired to the Pretty Pigs Inn for a very good value carvery lunch.

Thanks to Clive Walker for researching and leading this excellent walk.

(Report and photos by Phil Sharpe)



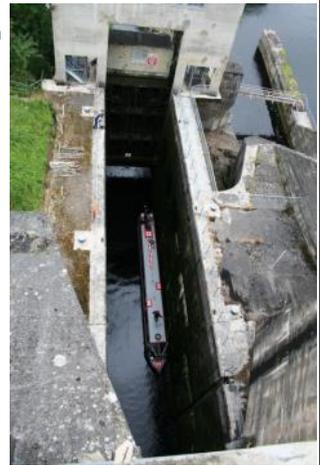
Meeting Wednesday April 16th 2014

Our April meeting was “Steam, the Shannon and the Great British Breakfast” by Brian Goggin who had kindly arranged his holidays to come over from Ireland to give us a fascinating and entertaining talk.

The history of Irish waterways was shaped by geography with its main waterway the Grand Canal connecting Dublin to the Shannon. But this wide river with its many lakes was difficult to navigate as horse haulage could not be used and sailing depended on favourable winds. The advent of steam power from

about 1825 made a huge difference as large steam tugs were able to tow barges along the river and across the lakes whilst on the canal sections the tow would be taken over by horses.

An entrepreneurial Dublin-man, Charles Wye Williams, set up a steamer service across the Irish Sea and put steamers on the river and the Shannon Estuary. A farmer on the west coast of Ireland could put a firkin of butter on board a steamer and have it conveyed up the estuary to Limerick, thence by horse-drawn barge to Killaloe, a steamer tow as far as Shannon Harbour, and then a horse would tow the same barge, without transhipment, to Dublin. From Dublin the firkin would be placed on board a seagoing steamer and carried to Liverpool, with the entire journey of three to four days, extraordinarily fast by the standards of the time, being handled by one company on a five-stage journey that treated the Irish Sea as an extension of the inland waterways.



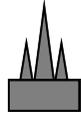
Narrowboat in Ardnacrusha Lock

The basis of the trade was that Britain was not at the time self-sufficient in food. Although many people in Ireland lived in dire poverty it produced a surplus for export to Britain. The cargoes included grain, flour, eggs, cattle, sheep and pigs. At one point one third of the eggs and much of the bacon consumed in Britain came from Ireland, hence the Great British Breakfast.

This inland waterway’s carrying trade developed because of a particular combination of factors; geographical, economic, political, technological and entrepreneurial; that all came together for a period of about twenty-five years before the railways took over much of the trade from about 1850 onwards.

Brian illustrated this with a large number of historical drawings, maps, graphs and photographs which gave us all a new insight into this remarkable period on the Irish waterways and the close links between the Irish and British economies that resulted from the application of steam technology.

(Report by Phil Sharpe from notes by Brian Goggin)



Canal & River Trust Central Shires User Group Forum 3rd April 2014

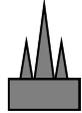
On behalf of the Lichfield Branch Helen Whitehouse and Phil Sharpe attended this User Group Meeting at Rugeley. These forums are a valuable tool for raising navigation and other issues direct with the appropriate CRT Staff and the following notes detail the discussion that took place.

Waterway Manager Darren Green welcomed us with CRT's new slogan "Living waterways transform places and enrich lives" which we will no doubt see a lot more of in future. He paid tribute to IWA's help in working together to commission the Hyder report on an alternative for the HS2 rail route at Woodend, Fradley which would minimise the disruption and impact to the canal. CRT will be having a stand at several waterway events this year including Moira and Shackerstone in our area which will come out of a small publicity budget within their overall £4.7m allocation for 2014-15 which is only marginally down on last year.

Andrew Morris, the new Maintenance Manager updated us on works completed last year which include offside tree control as part of a 3 year cycle and regular inspections of locks, bridges, aqueducts, culverts, weirs, etc. He requested users to report any problems to them on the new national telephone number (0 30 30 40 40 40) or by email to enquiries.centralshires@canalrivertrust.org.uk or the equivalent for other waterways. There followed a lively discussion about how well known this number was, how many users know where the waterway management boundaries are, and how to encourage more reporting.

John Moran, the Works Planner then summarised the work programme for this year which in Lichfield Branch area includes dredging on the Trent & Mersey Canal from Great Haywood Lock to Colwich Lock and the Ashby Canal from Bridge 5 to 6. The decking of the footbridge at Huddlesford Junction will be replaced and canal wall repairs are planned on the T&M near Salt Bridge 82. Bank protection work using 'nicospan' is scheduled for the Coventry Canal near Bridge 28 north of Springwood Haven, from bridges 52 to 54 at Polesworth, and on the Ashby between bridges 19 and 21 west of Hinckley. This is work that can be done during the boating season and the winter stoppage programme is still being compiled but is likely to include new lock gates at Sandon top, Hoo Mill top and bottom, Atherstone Lock 10 bottom and several gate repairs and refits at Atherstone and Fradley. Other stoppage work includes bank repairs at Hopwas, landing stages at Wychnor, Common and Hunts locks and towpath repairs under Bridge 56 south of Handsacre.

Tom Freeland, the Volunteering Co-ordinator showed us photos of some of the work done by volunteers including towpath surfacing, building access steps, vegetation control, painting and litter removal. There are a variety of groups involved including Towpath Taskforce groups working regularly at Fradley, Tamworth and in North Warwickshire, partner groups including



IWA Lichfield Branch at Rugeley, one-off projects such as the Atherstone Advent Action, and adoption projects including Molson Coors at Burton-on-Trent. Volunteer lock keepers are again assisting boaters at Fradley and Atherstone and a 'welcome station' at Atherstone will provide them with a base and the public with information.

Time only allowed a brief discussion on the Sharing Towpaths paper which is out for consultation and can be seen on the CRT website where comments can be made. Staff members were then on hand to deal with individual enquiries. We had also pre-submitted two questions, one of which concerned the recent blocking of a towpath access point alongside the 'Cat Gallows' footbridge over the Coventry Canal north of Boot Wharf in Nuneaton. This has apparently

been a site of anti-social and criminal activity and after local consultation the area under the bridge approach ramps which gave shelter to gangs of youths has been sealed off. However this also cut off access to the towpath and many local people are upset at losing this when the next nearest access points are 1km away in either direction. A local petition was started which brought it to our attention. We suggested that blocking access to law abiding people may only make the situation worse and pointed out that this action conflicted with the intention of the Towpaths consultation to encourage more shared use of towpaths.



Cat Gallows Footbridge—Nuneaton

The next Central Shires UGF for our area will be on 16th October 2014.

(Report and Photo Phil Sharpe)

Special Offer on IWA Clothing with the Lichfield Branch name

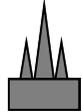
Now is the time to think of treating yourself to some nice new IWA clothing.

Special offer : Polo shirts for £10.75 (instead of the current national price of £11.25) with the Lichfield branch logo on. In stock, we have sizes Small, Medium and XL of the unisex polo shirt but we can easily order other sizes and also the lady-fit polo shirts which we will sell at the same price. The special offer closes on the 31st May 2014.

The normal price for IWA sweatshirts is £12.50 but if six or more of you order, I can let you have them for £11.50 each.

Other items are priced as per the IWA website go to www.waterways.org.uk/shop and look at clothing.

Provided the order is received by me before 31st May, you can have the branch name



embroidered beneath the IWA logo (excluding the waterproof jacket).

Please do check the sizing especially the lady-fit polo shirts. I may be able to let you try on the equivalent size before you order, just ask.

Contact me on 0776 6687102 with orders to helen.whitehouse@waterways.org.uk



A Note From the Editor

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

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

The copy date for the next newsletter is 18th July 2014, for publication in August.

Advertising

Lichfield Lines is posted or emailed to about 310 addresses covering about 440 Branch members. It can also be read and downloaded by anyone from the Branch website pages.

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

Full Page - £20 per issue

Half Page - £10 per issue

Please contact the editor to discuss artwork and layout.

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

Email Copies

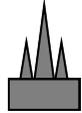
If you currently receive Lichfield Lines by post but would be happy to have future copies sent instead by email link, please inform our Membership Secretary at

neil.hodgson@waterways.org.uk

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

Thanks

Pete Gurney - Editor



Planning Matters

The more significant planning issues dealt with in the last quarter include the following, arranged by waterway.

On the **Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal** the locally controversial application for 80 houses at Radford Bank in Stafford that we objected to was refused. We rarely object to house extensions but at Newlands Close in Penkridge a large extension towards the canal would require removal of trees and have a completely blank wall facing the canal.

Along the **Trent & Mersey Canal** a 196 berth marina is proposed between Shirleywich and Pasturefields. Although generally supportive of marinas we have expressed concerns about the road access, disposal of the excavated material, location of the pump-out facility, and possible effects on the Pasturefields Saltmarsh SAC. In Rugeley improvements to the canal towpath and moorings are promised and we have commented on the connection of a cycleway to the

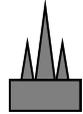


Countryside near Efflinch Lane

towpath with an improved access ramp at Leathermill Lane. At Barton under Needwood the approved housing scheme at Efflinch Lane includes a large area of landscaped open space but the latest plans still show it separated from the canal by long earth bunds despite earlier promises to reconsider this and we have again questioned the need for these. At Barton Marina an application for two single storey buildings on part of the waterfront car park to house 9 more craft shops was considered acceptable and has now been granted.

On the **Coventry Canal** approval has been given to convert the closed Anchor Inn at Glascote to a shop with a new rear extension adjoining the canal of traditional design. Approval has also been granted for change of use of an agricultural building for a boat fitting joinery business on a rural site off Quarry Lane at Mancetter but subject to removal of earlier unauthorised developments. We have previously objected to plans for a very large housing development in open countryside and Green Belt at Gypsy Lane just south of Nuneaton which would have urbanised a long section of pleasant rural canal, and these have now been refused.

The **Birmingham & Fazeley Canal** between Curdworth and Minworth is threatened with loss of rural views to the north by a large employment site at Peddimore on farmland in the Green Belt. This is proposed in the latest version of the Birmingham Development Plan despite a similar proposal being rejected by the planning inspector in 2003. We have objected and



suggested that more should be done to reclaim old industrial sites in Birmingham and in the adjoining Black Country.

The **Lichfield Canal** restoration will be affected by Main Modifications proposed to the Local Plan Strategy to include 2 large new housing sites at Cricket Lane and Deans Slade Farm. Both sites adjoin and include the restoration route which would be integrated into open space areas but affected by access roads across the canal. We have objected in principle to including such large Green Belt sites at a very late stage and without full consultation, but also asked that the policies be amended to require provision of all necessary new bridges and associated canal channel infrastructure by the developers.

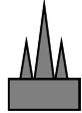
The **Hatherton Canal** restoration is also under threat long term by South Staffordshire Council's Local Plan Site Allocations document which would leave the route not properly defined and unprotected. The previous Local Plan included a specific policy safeguarding the route from prejudicial development but despite a commitment in their Core Strategy to continue this they now say it is not required. The consultation is open until 19th May and members are urged to register their objections by email, letter, response form or telephone – see www.sstaffs.gov.uk/siteallocations

On the **Wyrley & Essington Canal** at Brownhills use of the land around the basins at Ogley Lock Marina for storage of canal maintenance contractor's workboats, tugs, dredgers, hoppers, pontoons, etc. has been challenged by an Enforcement Notice which is to be decided on Appeal. We have supported this use although suggested a storage height limit and improved screen fencing to protect nearby houses.



Work Boats at Ogley Lock Marina

The **HS2** High Speed Rail scheme continues to create much work for us, and is likely to do so for many years to come. Since publication of the Hyder report confirming the viability and advantages of our alternative route avoiding the worst of the canal crossings around Woodend Lock there have been several meetings with HS2 Ltd at national level. These have been largely about technical compliance issues and the application of new European standards but a promised high level meeting with their new Chairman Sir David Higgins was delayed whilst he produced a report. This suggests constructing the line north to Crewe simultaneously with Phase 1 which could bring into question the need for the link line to Handsacre. However, we must still assume it will be built and CRT is preparing to petition Parliament against it and in favour of our alternative.



Further meetings with Staffordshire County Council's HS2 Project Manager have dissuaded them from pursuing their earlier proposal to divert the canal at Woodend and encouraged their petitioning support for our alternative. We have also explained the advantages to a community liaison group and to Kings Bromley Parish Council and Fradley & Streethay Parish Council. We continue to correspond with Warwickshire County Council about the Coventry Canal crossing at Polesworth and have had valuable support from CPRE about Fradley in their Phase 2 response.

This report covers nearly three months from late January to mid April and in total about 60 planning applications, local plan consultations and other planning matters were dealt with in this period. All of these are summarised in monthly notes which can be seen on the Planning page of our Branch website. If anybody wants further information you are welcome to phone or email me at any time.

Phil Sharpe, Planning Officer

HS2 Phase 1 Bill Consultation – February 2014

The High Speed Rail (London - West Midlands) Bill and Environmental Statement (ES) for HS2 Phase 1 were published in late November and, after two extensions, the consultation period ended on 27 February. IWA Lichfield Branch responded in detail to the previous Draft ES & Design Refinement consultation in July 2013 and the final ES includes some of the improvements that we requested.

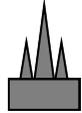
At **Curdworth** on the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal the crossing between Locks 5 & 6 now has 'low level' 2 metre high absorptive noise barriers on the parapet of the viaduct. There is also a reassurance that "any stoppage of the waterway, if required, would only be overnight".

However, the skew angle of the concrete viaduct and its adjoining embankment will have a major visual impact on the canal, as illustrated by a new photomontage. This peculiarly



distorted viewpoint manages to look simultaneously up and down the lock flight and makes the straight viaduct look curved, but shows the full impact of the structure.

The previously proposed new access road on the offside of the canal to Marston Lane Bridge is replaced by upgrading the existing track to the east of the canal, with Marston Lane now being closed for a railhead and



construction compound on the far side of the M42.

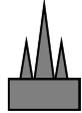
At **Cappers Lane** a temporary haul road crossing the restoration line of the Lichfield Canal has been removed and the high level viaduct passing directly above Cappers Lane Canal Bridge now has noise barriers. A proposed construction site and land take at Huddlesford Junction has also been dropped, although issues of access to the Lichfield Cruising Club moorings at Cappers Lane and the exact position of the viaduct piers remain to be resolved. The photomontage is a



panoramic view making the straight and level viaduct look curved but gives an impression of its visual impact. Cappers Lane Bridge is just visible behind the wooden poles.

On the **Huddlesford to Streethay** section of the Coventry Canal the temporary material stockpile area previously on both sides of the canal along 1.3 km and surrounding the new Kings Orchard Marina will now be only on the west side. However, there is no screening shown and IWA is asking for grassed earth bank baffle mounds and/or noise fencing of sufficient height to screen the adjacent earth moving activities for its operational period of five and a half years. This area includes a construction compound with rail sidings accessed by a new rail bridge over the canal alongside the South Staffordshire line

The **Woodend to Fradley Junction** section of the Trent & Mersey Canal is the area of greatest concern but the only concession is the general commitment that any stoppage of the waterway, if required, would only be overnight. The ES continues to regard boats as 'transitory' and therefore not affected by noise, despite the fact that boat occupiers are in general entitled by their licence to moor in any one place for up to 14 days, and it is not entirely clear from the plans whether the viaducts around Woodend include noise barriers. A photomontage, looking



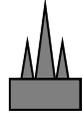
south, shows the different levels of two of the four proposed railway bridges over the canal, just off the picture to the right, with the Manchester spur on the left.

The Bill itself includes a section on Protective Provisions for the Canal & River Trust (CRT) which require amongst other things, in legal language, that plans and 28 days notice of works be given to CRT, that damage and pollution be avoided and interruptions to navigation be minimised. However, there is no mention here of navigation closures being restricted to overnight or “stoppage season” periods.

The Hyder Report

Concerned about the damage to the canal’s heritage and environment around Woodend and dissatisfied with HS2 Ltd’s tardy and dismissive response to our alternative route proposal, IWA and CRT jointly commissioned a study to outline its benefits. The final report from Hyder Consultancy provides horizontal and vertical alignment drawings and a detailed comparative environmental assessment along with estimates of the construction cost savings.

Whilst the Manchester line canal crossing can’t be avoided, the alternative alignment removes the need for the viaducts over the canal above and below Woodend Lock along with the Pyford Brook viaduct, intermediate embankments and the need for two temporary canal bridges during construction. Removing the constraints of the canal crossings allows the alignment to be lowered which reduces visual impact and noise transmission over a wide area. The report confirms our expectations that the route is technically feasible, with significantly reduced effects



on the canal, and beneficial in all other respects with reduced environmental, landscape, visual, noise and social impacts as well as giving a significant cost saving of many £million. IWA and CRT have both submitted the Alternative Alignment Study with their formal responses to the Bill and ES consultation, and meetings have taken place with HS2 and Government at high level to promote its adoption. IWA members can assist by writing to their MP to ask them to support the IWA/CRT alternative.

Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust News **Bower Queen opens Heritage Towpath Trail**

Lichfield Bower Queen Savannah Bennett and Deputy Bower Queen Charlotte Aspley officially opened the disabled-friendly section of the Lichfield Canal Heritage Towpath Trail on Sunday 13th April.

Created entirely by volunteers, the disabled-friendly section alongside the A51 Tamworth Road is part of a projected seven-mile trail on the towpath of the Lichfield Canal, which is being restored by Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust.

Savannah and Charlotte were watched by a crowd of around 70 people as they cut the ribbon to mark the official opening of the trail then walked the section, accompanied by Councillor Terry Finn, leader of Lichfield City Council, and Darren Jones and Simon Chilton, of Tempest Ford of Lichfield, who are partners with the Trust in the Love Lichfield initiative.

Special guest Paul Woolley, an advisor to spinal injury units at Oswestry and Sheffield, was the first to prove the Trail's suitability for wheelchair users.

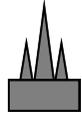
Trust chairman Brian Kingshott said: "The official opening of the Heritage Towpath Trail represents a major step forward for the Trust. We can now welcome all sections of the community to walk along the restored section of the Lichfield Canal and so see for themselves what a reopened canal would bring to the City and District."

Among the spectators was Heather Bacon, with her dog Jem, who is walking from Leeds to Cornwall to raise funds for Save the Children. Heather was taking advantage of the Heart of England Way, which coincides with the Heritage Towpath Trail at this point, when she came across the opening ceremony.

For more information on the Lichfield Canal visit the trust's website www.lhcr.org.uk.

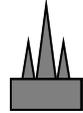


Cheers as disability advisor Paul Woolley prepares to test the Trail section suitability for wheelchair users (Picture courtesy of Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust)



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