

MANCHESTER PACKET

IWA The Inland
Waterways
Association
Manchester Branch



Standing guard over Hulme Lock, Castlefield

Jan 2006

No. 18

Inland Waterways Association Manchester Branch committee

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Editorial comment

by Rohan Jackson

Back in West Bengal

Once again I find myself putting this newsletter together in the gentle winter warmth of India. Yesterday I walked over the canal in the north of Kolkata. It has been drained, dredged, and they appear to be rebuilding its sides. Presumably it is intended that it should see traffic once again. However as a local pointed out, it is likely that it will just see the level of refuse that it contained previously.

I spent 7 months of 2005 out cruising on our own waterways, and can honestly state that I saw minimal large rubbish. A friend texted me to say he had run over a car; but I didn't even scrape a trolley! This is testament to BW, EA and our very own *Womble*. The fact that larger stuff I did see, surely came from boats is nothing for us to be proud of: gas cylinders, 12V fridges... No one has responded to my last editorial regarding the need for more environmentally conscious boating. Perhaps I should not be surprised from a community that uses Toilet Blue?! Of course our waterways are in a cleaner state than Kolkata's, but there is much more we can do.

I finally got to see the centre of Birmingham - a regeneration I have heard so much about. I could not fail but be impressed. Not all the buildings are beauties, and I never saw what was there before; but what I saw this autumn was a watery city centre that is busy with boats and pedestrians. Residents, locals, visitors. Brum may not have the weather but it has sufficient venues for a cafe culture. And this draws people in.

Contrast that to our own Castlefield, something I had been rather proud of, to date. The place is dead: there is little to bring people to the waterside: Dukes 92, one restaurant, one cafe, one bar (with its 6 regulars). While this gives undisturbed mooring it offers no 'facilities'. There are no shops, no life - simply neat little flats that are the preserve of the wealthy.

As our Chair raises the issue of Heritage in regeneration, we also need to remind developers that regeneration is not just about new housing. Brum shows it should be much, much more.

From the Branch chairman

by Steve Connolly

This issue's cover picture was chosen for various reasons, not least of which is to generate a discussion regarding the occasional conflict between Heritage and Regeneration. The image shows the St George's Island development on the 'island' surrounding the disused but still intact Hulme Lock. I have raised my concerns regarding this development to various bodies ever since it became apparent that the main 14-storey building

was to be built only 2 meters from the canal copings; the balconies now actually overlook any vessel on the water - a somewhat daunting prospect on a gloomy evening. Sadly this development dwarfs/overshadows the historic aspect of Hulme Lock and the canal in general, creating a narrow canyon effect. I also wonder how long it will be before the new occupiers comment on the run down

- *continued overleaf*

From the Branch chairman

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aspect of both lock and railway arches. Whilst the development has merit in its design and would be welcome in the city centre, it is out of place in Castlefield. Do I recall Castlefield being called Britain's first urban heritage park by the Central Manchester Development Corporation? How times and values have changed! Perhaps you would like to contribute to this discussion?

In contrast to the above I was grateful to receive an invitation to the launch of the Middlewood Development in Salford, which is fundamental to the start of the restoration of the Manchester Bolton and Bury canal. Grateful because it gave me a chance to observe the enthusiasm of all the major players involved in, what I am led to believe, is the first major canal restoration that is driven by regeneration. And boy what plans they have! A huge, multimillion pound scheme to redevelop what is now a very large open space but what was, a short while ago, a run down corner of Salford. The plans do however leave plenty of space around the canal to enjoy the multitude of new buildings. A prerequisite for a healthy waterway environment?

The Hollinwood Canal Society working weekend took place on 2nd to 4th December. Some 20 folk took up the invitation to stay over Saturday night at nearby Dale Grove School. When I arrived on Sunday large amounts of brush had been removed and root tirdoring was in full swing. When all had been tidied up the Valley Aqueduct and adjoining stop plank narrows on the Fairbottom Branch canal were visible for all to appreciate. One of the difficulties in this work is the delicate balance between the aims of the society and the concerns

of the Rangers in what is in essence a nature reserve. The delicate negotiations are left to Project Manager, Ed Mortimer!

The memorial to our Dennis is moving on apace - perhaps Dennis is up there smoothing things along? The kind folk at IWPS have offered to do the groundwork preparation for what will be a fingerpost at the entrance to Bugsworth Basin. I think I am right in saying that most of the funds required have been donated (including a request to BW) and the best news, especially for Margaret Fletcher who is leading on this, is that planning permission is not required. On the subject of The Inland Waterways Protection Society, Manchester Branch has received a big thank you in the October issue of 174 for our efforts with the plaque at Marple. Our pleasure folks!

As the AGM approaches I would ask if anyone would like to join us on the committee. Being low in numbers limits the the activities we can manage, and new blood will also bring new ideas to promote the aims of the Association and boost the branch coffers which are gradually draining due to increased venue costs. The committee has a pressing need this year as Roger Lorenz can no longer continue as Treasurer and my Denise is finding it very difficult to attend committee meetings to prepare the minutes. The branch would also benefit hugely from the services of a person capable of promoting the branch activities in the role of Publicity officer. Due to the electronic age in which we live none of these positions, apart from Minute secretary, involve many evening meetings. So if you fancy doing something that makes a difference, please get involved.

From the Region chairman

by Margaret Fletcher

Ian Gall

Ian Gall, one of our region vice presidents, has died recently. Ian will be greatly missed by so many people in the waterway movement. I always think of Ian as "Mr Castlefield" because of all the work he did to get the Castlefield area in Manchester changed from a grotty area to one where boaters and walkers wanted to visit. It is also a popular tourist attraction. Ian was the administrator for National Waterways Festivals for many years as well as being one of the association's insurance officers. Some of my first memories of Ian are of him having his boat craned into the Rochdale Canal in 1986 at the M66 Protest Rally in Chadderton and then when he was one of the Rally Directors for the Inland Waterways Association National Rally in Manchester in 1988.

The National Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on 1 October in Litchfield and was very well attended. In the morning there was a branch and region officers meeting. After lunch the Annual General Meeting was chaired by one of our vice presidents, Dr David Fletcher CBE.

Celebration to mark the start of major restoration of the Manchester Bolton & Bury Canal

Some of you may know that one of my other roles is that of Chairman of the Manchester Bolton & Bury Canal Society. On 21 October there was a celebration to mark the start of restoration of the Middlewood site.



The launch event of the MB&BC. Credit: John Fletcher

- continued overleaf

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From the Region chairman

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Funding for the £4.2m restoration of the first phase at Middlewood has been granted from European Objective Two Funding, the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and Salford City Council.

The 500 metre stretch will reconnect the waterway with the River Irwell through the £600m Middlewood Locks commercial development site which will include housing, hotels, restaurants, bars and leisure facilities.

The 15¼ mile long Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal is one of the last major waterways in Greater Manchester to require restoration. Work started on the first phase in October 2005 with the Middlewood section due to be navigable by the end of 2006.

Work will include the construction of a new canal channel, three locks, two basins and a footbridge. A tunnel was incorporated into the design of the Manchester and Salford inner ring road to accommodate the future restoration.

This was a great day for myself and other members of the society and we look forward to seeing this section complete and work starting on the next section.

Region AGM

I enjoyed reading in the last edition of Towing Path Topics (North Lancs & Cumbria Branch magazine) all the accounts of the IWA National Rally in Blackburn in 1965. One of the articles was by Jennifer Hindshaw whose father, the late Dr. David Owen, held a role similar to chairman of Manchester Branch. My love of waterways started when we lived in Blackburn. I am particularly pleased that Jennifer Hindshaw, is to be our guest speaker after the region AGM in March. I look forward to meeting her and hearing from her first-hand how the waterways have changed over the years.



*Excavation of Lock Three which will be rebuilt in the Middlewood site.
Credit: Paul Hindle*

The Inland Waterways Association - Manchester Branch Annual General Meeting 2005/6

The Annual General Meeting of the Manchester Branch of The Inland Waterways Association will take place on Monday March 13th 2006 at 8pm at Dukes 92, Castlefield, Manchester.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of minutes of previous AGM (14/3/05) & any matters arising
3. Reports from the Region Chairman & Branch Chairman
4. Presentation of statements of income & expenditure, assets, liabilities & commitments
5. Business of the meeting notified under byelaw 40
6. Notice of Committee size
7. Election to fill any vacancies on Region Committee

Statement of Committee Size

The statutory requirements which were agreed 14 September 2002 state that the Branch Committee shall be comprised of a maximum of 16 elected members.

Two committee members are due for re-election this year - John Palmer & Roger Lorenz and both have indicated their wish to be re-elected. One co-opted member of the committee has indicated their wish to be elected on to the committee.

This leaves 8 vacancies on Branch Committee and the Branch Secretary would be **happy to receive nominations from anyone who would be prepared to serve on the Branch Committee.**

Nominations for election to the Committee (which must be in writing, signed by the proposer, seconder and nominee) should reach the Branch Secretary not less than 14 days before the meeting. i.e. **before 27th February 2006.**

The Inland Waterways Association - North West Region Annual General Meeting 2005/6

The Annual General Meeting of the North West Region of The Inland Waterways Association will take place on Saturday March 4th 2006 at 2.15pm at the Inn on the Wharf, Manchester Road, Burnley.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of minutes of previous AGM (5/3/05) & any matters arising
3. Reports from the Region Chairman & Branch Chairmen
4. Presentation of statements of income & expenditure, assets, liabilities & commitments
5. Business of the meeting notified under byelaw 40
6. Notice of Committee size
7. Election to fill any vacancies on Region Committee
8. Address by Mrs Jennifer Hindshaw

Statement of Committee Size

The statutory requirements which were agreed 14 September 2002 state that the Region Committee shall be comprised of a maximum of 16 elected members plus the Branch Chairmen.

This year there no retirements under the three year rule.

There is a total of 8 vacancies on the committee this year and the Region Secretary would be happy to receive nominations from anyone else who would be prepared to serve on the Region Committee.

Nominations for election to the Committee (which must be in writing, signed by the proposer, seconder and nominee) should reach the Region Secretary not less than 14 days before the meeting i.e. **before 18th February 2006.**

The Inland Waterways Association - North West Region Annual General Meeting 2005/6

**Saturday March 4th 2006 at 2.15pm
The Inn on the Wharf, Manchester Road, Burnley**

Directions

From the M65, leave at Junction 10 and take the A671 for Burnley town centre. At the traffic lights bear right into Trafalgar Street. At the roundabout take the first exit (Manchester Road) and enter the gates on the left.

Programme

10.30am

Guided walk round Weavers' Triangle and visit to Manchester Road Wharf and the Toll House Museum (meet in the car park)

12.30pm

Lunch - this **MUST BE PRE-BOOKED**

2.15pm

Annual General Meeting

.....
I intend going on the guided walk: YES / NO

I require lunch at £6.00 per head: Number of lunches

Please make cheques payable to: IWA North Lancs and Cumbria

Name:

Address:

Please return this form to:

David Smith, Brewery Wharf, 15 Dark Lane, Whittle-le-Woods, Chorley, PR6 8AE

Nomination form for Manchester Branch Committee 2006-09

I (name)*of

address

agree to accept nomination for election to the Committee of The IWA Manchester Branch for 2006/2009.

. Signed

Proposed by*

Signature

Seconded by*

Signature Date:

NB: Nominee, proposer and seconder must be members of The IWA in good standing.
(*Block Capitals please. Photocopies of this form will be accepted.)

Please send to:

Branch Secretary, D Connolly, 27 Hooten Lane, Leigh, WN7 3BY. Tel: 01942 679310.

To reach by **27th February 2006**.

Nomination form for North West Region Committee 2006-09

I (name)*of

address

agree to accept nomination for election to the Committee of The IWA N.W. Region for 2006/2009.

. Signed

Proposed by*

Signature

Seconded by*

Signature Date:

NB: Nominee, proposer and seconder must be members of The IWA in good standing.
(*Block Capitals please. Photocopies of this form will be accepted.)

Please send to:

Regional Secretary, M Sadler, 99 Maypark, Bamber Bridge, PRESTON PR5 8JE.

Tel/fax: 01772 338694. To reach by **18th February 2006**.

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WANTED: volunteers

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To volunteer please ring Audrey Smith on 01257 274440.

Been on the Nene?

by John Trickett

What a wonderful summer 2005 gave us. Sitting here now onboard with fires lit, rain on the roof and the wind whistling outside in the Basin, it's a good time to reflect on the season's boating.

Not part of our early plans, we detoured and spent two weeks on the Thames between Oxford and Lechlade. Could there ever be a more lovely stretch of river in England? We sat for hours in the evening light above Rushey Lock, watching barn owls hunting until night fell - unforgettable. Alas so is the Nene.

varying states of construction, and hopefully this depressing introduction to the river will change for the better in time, with further regeneration. We moored here upstream of Town Lock for the night. Why not? If boaters believed all the rumours we would never go anywhere!

Armed with the Environment Agency licence, essential key and Imray's River Nene guide, we entered Town lock, with no knowledge of this river. A great feeling of inadequacy prevailed within.



NB. Utopia on the Nene. Credit: John Trickett

The Northampton Arm of the Grand Union is a wake-up call for things to come: 17 locks in five miles and without doubt the lock gear takes some moving at times. Towards Northampton between Locks 16 & 17, the canal is degraded, unkempt and had us hoping for a winding place. The canal joins the Nene just west of South Bridge. New housing developments abound in this area, in

As a young hydrographic surveyor in West Africa I was once swept 15 miles downriver out to sea in a small aluminium dinghy, through a slight misjudgement of the time of Slack High Water. We were rescued some 18 hours later by the company's river pilots, and consequently suffered their wrath and ridicule, but the incident left me with a

- continued overleaf

Been on the Nene?

- continued

great respect for rivers and the powers they hold. Rivers are dangerous places to be, and I treat them with the utmost respect.

So it was with great relief that we shared the lock with a boat from March in the Fens, returning from a long trip up the Llangollen canal. Thankfully he had a good knowledge of the Nene and

willingly shared this with us. We also benefited from his company for the 57 or so miles and 37 locks to Peterborough.

The Nene locks are neither pretty nor user-friendly although a number of the guillotine gates have been changed to electrically assisted operation - an ongoing conversion. However the paddle gear for the V gates which are upstream of the locks are arduous to operate.



Instructions for lock operation are clearly displayed and straightforward. The lock must be left with the V gates upstream closed and the guillotine gates downstream fully open. If however on approaching the lock the V gates are chained back open and the guillotine gates partially lifted the lock has been 'reversed' and no attempt should be made to navigate. This is done in times of flood.

Some bridges are very low and should be approached with caution. My boat's cabin was built 3" higher than the norm, as I am a tall man, so I suffer greatly from exhaust and chimney loss. Only to find now with increasing years,

Guillotine lock gate on the Nene. Credit: John Trickett

that my height is shrinking faster than the Arctic ice cap.

After leaving Northampton and Abingdon Lock, the outlook along the river improves greatly, where the river passes through a large flood plain. Once downstream of Weston Favell Lock the river adopts a reasonably constant width in its journey to Peterborough.

Moorings are few and far between as are water and service points. Luckily our companions had marked our maps with good mooring points along the whole river, some free and some with a small nightly charge levied.

Fortunately for our passage down the Nene the weather was perfect with no rainfall for some considerable time. The river improves with distance and the wonderful village names, such as Aldwincle, Wadenhoe, Fotheringhay and Wansford-in-England beckoned us onward - and they don't disappoint. The Northamptonshire countryside is beautiful and the river is flanked by unspoilt meadows throughout its course. There are many nature reserves, villages and churches steeped in history - remains of many Roman settlements. Beautiful old mills about the locks occasionally.

However, I shall remember the Nene for its abundant wildlife. It is a naturalist's paradise: green woodpeckers can be seen in numbers, together with red kites, buzzards, and owls, to name but a few. Dragonflies flourish

along the length of the Nene. It is well worth taking time out to look and explore this beautiful river.

On our return upstream I cunningly left my keys in the control box at a guillotine lock whilst being distracted in conversation by the owner of the adjacent farmhouse. At the next lock, the gentleman I had chatted to, stood waiting with my keys. Where do you get kindness like that these days?

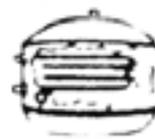
The Nene is a wonderful river, and one we hope to return to again in the future, it is undoubtedly hard going at times, as the lock operations are arduous. The answer must be pair up with friends, or new friends as we did.



Arduous locks on the Nene. Credit: John Trickett



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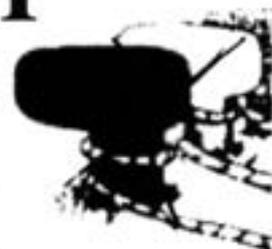
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Tales from the Water Womble

by Steve Connolly

Winter 2005

Most people bemoan the dark winter mornings, cheered on their way to warm offices by dire warnings of flood & snow from sympathetic, smiling, but smug, weather persons. Whereas we on *Womble* buy in a plentiful supply of long socks & thermal underwear, make sure the spare gas bottle is full and last but not least, make sure the jar of chocolate is full. The satisfaction that this mode of operation gives is second to none, as for instance, arriving at Preston Brook after a 16 mile motorbike ride, turning the gas fire to three, putting the kettle on and preparing a four-spoon cup of chocolate with just a tot of rum (Navy Regulations, Article 6). There can be no finer start to a working winter's day than to sit with one's feet on the fire, sipping hot chocolate 'extra', whilst the day-coat warms above the fire. It's a hard life!

One thing, the only one in fact, that I admire about contractors is their ability to be out in all weathers, especially as they will not have had the magic cup of chocolate. Or at least I think not. It's quite comical to observe a mandatory hard hat perched atop a woolly hat. Last month I hoped the steel erector working 150ft up above my head on the St George's development didn't have frozen hands: a 22mm spanner will pick up quite a bit of speed from that height. Now the firm hands of the steel men have been replaced by the butter-fingered insulation installers. These men appear to have limitless amounts of spray-foam: either that or they lack accuracy as the canal has lots of foam sausages floating about. The irony is that the new occupiers will be the first to complain if their outlook is marred by floating rubbish. (I wonder what the correct PC description is: *Detritus Aquaticus*?)

Once more the bare branches adjacent to the Freightliner Terminal reveal the horrendous amount of rubbish left by truck

drivers queuing to use the terminal. All will be covered soon as vegetation takes over. Perhaps that's the philosophy at Trafford BC - biodegradation? The marquee men have been back to the MUFC car park No.3 alongside the canal and the Manchester Evening News tells me it is for an ice rink. If we get a freezing few weeks I can see Bridgewater HQ picking up on that idea. Skating days out to Dunham Massey anyone? Licensed of course!

MUFC have kept me well entertained over the last few months observing the construction of the two new quadrants at the stadium corners alongside the canal edge. This addition to bums on seats must be costing a fortune but is perhaps a more realistic investment than some recent player acquisitions. An added bonus for me is that the *Detritus Aquaticus* doesn't collect now that the wind patterns have been changed by the new construction and the removal of the large trees that were in the way of progress.

That empty looking expanse that is the new marina at Watersmeeting is currently experiencing the touch of the contractor, as groundwork commences for the infrastructure required to make it the hub of canal-side facilities. I hope they realise that any rubbish they generate will remain in the pool due to the vagaries of the wind in that area.

Finally the Urban Splash scaffolding islands at Broadheath which prevented boaters getting brained by falling 22mm spanners have been removed, as have the dreary looking bushes close by - bushes that harboured all sorts of rubbish that I could never reach without danger to life, limb (mine!) and spectacles. The whole area looks lots better but I reckon the steel-clad industrial building next door is being eyed up by those who appreciate potential development sites.

Navigation notes

BRIDGEWATER CANAL

Barton Aqueduct operating times:

1st January 2006 to 5th March 2006
inclusive: 9.15am to 4.30pm.

18th March 2006: 12 noon to 9pm

19th March 2006 to 1st October 2006
inclusive: 9.15am to 9pm

2nd October 2006 to 31st December
2006 inclusive: 9.15am to 4.30pm.

Close for annual maintenance:

4.30pm 5th March 2006 to 12 noon 18th
March 2006

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The Branch welcomes new members

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members to the Branch. Do please make yourself known to us if attending any Branch events; if you have any concerns or contributions, please do not hesitate to contact any of the committee.

Mr K Birch - Salford; Mr J Connor - Stockport; Cooders Ltd - Knutsford

Disclaimer

The view expressed by our contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor or the IWA. They are, however, published as being of interest to our readership.

Copy dates

Both the Manchester Packet and the Chariman's Newsletter will be published twice a year. This will enable members to be kept as up-to-date as possible with events, activities and progress.

Manchester Packet	15 March 2006	(Published April 2006)
Manchester Newsletter	15 June 2006	(Published July 2006)
Chariman's Newsletter	15 September 2006	(Published October 2006)
Manchester Packet	15 December 2006	(Published January 2007)

The editor will be pleased to consider contributions for future publications. Articles can be submitted in hard copy, by email (inline or as Word attachments) to iwa@nomadit.co.uk, or on CD posted to the Branch chair.



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At the beginning of 1991, we decided to apply for BS5750 Part II for Quality Assurance as an added guarantee to our customers and we were awarded our registration in September 1991 and all our propellers and stern gear, including shafts and glands, are backed by this certificate.

In addition we offer a complete repair and refurbishment service for your propellers, shafts and stern gear, etc.

As well as our own manufactured products, we also supply the well known and proven 'C' Grease which has been specially formulated for our company for use in all types of stern gear or any application where there is water present.

Throughout the inland waterways system, our company is well known and we have a reputation for giving a service second to none no matter how large or small your requirements.

**Eden Works, Belgrave Mill, Honeywell Lane,
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Marine Engineers & Sole Manufacturers of Tanks Adjustable Bookcase Strip