

MANCHESTER PACKET

Newsletter from the Manchester Branch



No 23

April 2009

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Editorial Comments - Ian Price

We have just had the Region & Branch AGMs and a common theme was calls for volunteers. In this Issue we highlight some of the successful work of canal societies in our Branch area and opportunities where even an hour or two one day would help promote the work of the Branch or local society.

Cover photo from Victor Gibbons

Higgins Clough Swing Bridge as mentioned in ‘memories of the Peak Forest’ (in last issue of the ‘Packet’) *{Thanks Victor ed.}*

Copy Dates

It is planned to issue the packet four times a year: January, April, July and September. To help achieve this I welcome all offers of items AND/OR photographs for inclusion. Copy dates are the 15th of the month preceding issue.

Disclaimer

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

Chairman's Column – Steve Connelly

I used the term “Smiley faced Manchester Branch Chairman” in my recent reports to NW Region and Manchester Branch Annual General Meetings. This is somewhat upbeat from my usual dour and cajoling reports and stems from the notion, from a mental review of the year, that things at Manchester Branch are on the up. No longer do I have to apologise for the none arrival of the magazine, although I still have to apologise to Ian when my contribution is late [Like now!]. No longer do I have to fret about getting a sales stand stocked and manned as Andrew now has that well in order. Although Sue is trying to move on from Programme Organiser, the speakers she has arranged have been very well received. Added to this is the continued support of Dukes 92, who let us have the Brindley room at a vastly reduced rate. Tying all this together is a robust bank balance overseen by Barry that has allowed us to do all of the above and, with the help of our friend Steve Saxon at Four Points Ramble Association, also donate £600 to the Droitwich Barge Lock appeal. On the management side the chore of producing minutes is now much easier with John supplying notes of the meeting and Keith manages our new members and constantly makes suggestions and requests to HQ for material to boost the Associations, and especially the branch, membership. In fact the only down side at present is that Roger Lorenz has decided to step down from the committee. Having been Treasurer and mentor to Barry as well as all round expert Roger will be missed but we appreciate his offer of continued help and advice

The cloud that is the Association's reorganisation has a glimmer of a silver lining in respect of a nomination from a current branch chairman. I personally thought that nobody from within the Association would be brave [daft] enough to take on the enormous task of wielding the new, bigger NW Region into shape, only goes to show how much I know! However should this nominee be successful in the ballot it will mean that for the first time in a number of years our Region Chair will be from the south of the region. Align this to the arrival of two new branches, also from the south of our region and I can see a whole new emphasis taking shape. “Where it goes nobody knows” is a much used quotation but what a fun ride is in prospect?

We have resurrected the post of Events Coordinator at Sue's suggestion. This has led to me agreeing to the Branch attending the events listed elsewhere in this edition. I do however need help as it is Denise and I who manage the stand. We organise a STRICT two hour rota system and as such I can guarantee if you will help with just two hours of your time you will then be free to do as you please, it would be nice to see you!

The Inland Waterways Association – North West Region

Region Chairman's Report 2009 (from Region AGM)

Another 12 months have passed since our last run of branch and region AGMs. Now is the opportunity to review what has happened at both a national and regional level and to also look towards the future. It is also a time to thank so many people for all of the hard work they undertake for the Association in so many different ways. I know that the Manchester Branch committee has grown in numbers over the years and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their ongoing hard work and commitment. I know that they would welcome additional members to the committee but if you do not see yourself as a "committee person" there are lots of other ways you can help. Can you spare a couple of hours a month? How about offering to review some of the planning applications in your area, or helping devise the programme of events? You could write to and welcome new members to the branch or become custodian for a stretch of waterway?

THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND THE ASSOCIATION

The trustees have spent a long time reviewing the structure of the Association and I thought that it might be useful to outline the new structure and roles and responsibilities for committees, regions and branches and their officers. From September 2009 the Board of Trustees will be made up of 9 elected members and from May 2009 8 ex-officio Region Chairmen. Elected Trustees will be elected by the membership via a postal ballot prior to the AGM in September. Their terms of office will be for 3 years and they will be eligible to stand for a 2nd term. Ex officio trustees (Region Chairmen) will also be elected by a postal ballot but only of their region's membership prior to the national AGM in September. Again their terms of office will be for 3 years and they too will be eligible to stand for a 2nd term.

The Board of Trustees meet 6 times per year. Meetings are chaired by the National Chairman (Clive Henderson). There are also 3 Deputy National Chairmen – Les Etheridge, Roger Squires and Vaughan Welch. The Board of Trustees from within their membership elects deputy National Chairmen at the November meeting each year.

The Board of Trustees are responsible for determining the strategy of the Association and ensuring that IWA complies with Company Law and with Charity Law and with other legislation. Each Trustee is also a director of the company which is limited by the guarantee of each member.

The Board of Trustees delegates to its sub committees. Each committee has clearly defined roles and responsibilities which have been written by the com-

mittees and been approved by the Board of Trustees. These sub committees are Navigation Committee (Nav. Comm), Restoration Committee (Res Comm), Promotions and Communications Committee (Prom Comm), Waterway Recovery Group (WRG), Finance Committee (Fin Comm) and Remuneration Committee (Rem. Comm). Minutes of all Trustee meetings and those of Nav Comm, Res Comm, Prom Comm and Fin Comm are available via the website.

IWA also has 2 subsidiary companies – Inland Waterways Enterprises Ltd and Essex Waterways Ltd. IWEL looks after trading activities (iwashop and IWA Festivals) and any profits are covenanted to IWA. Essex Waterways looks after the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation.

With the restructuring of the Association there will be 8 revised regions (based on Government regions) and 35 “re-aligned” branches. The new regions are South East, Eastern, East Midlands, London, North East, South West, West Midlands and North West. What are the implications for here in the North West? Our region will continue to consist of North Lancs and Cumbria Branch, Merseyside and West Lancashire Branch and Manchester Branch. We will also be the home to Chester and District Branch and Shrewsbury and North Wales Branch – a huge area. As a region committee we are currently looking at the logistics of running such a large geographical area and of integrating two new branches into the region.

HERE IN THE NORTH WEST

Restoration and Navigation in the North West

In brief:

- Work progresses on the Liverpool extension and it is due to be opened this month
- Merseyside and West Lancs Branch are developing a guide to cruising the Liverpool end of the L&L Canal as they foresee more boats cruising towards the new Liverpool extension
- On the MBBC the Middlewood section has been opened
- Consultation continues on the Northern Reaches
- SCARS' continue to hold regular work parties
- Boats have cruised a small section of the Hollinwood Branch due to the opening of the new marina/development at the top of the Ashton 18
- Region Committee have held another fruitful meeting with BW to discuss both navigational and restoration issues here in the NW. This is the second time we have held such a meeting and it would appear that this is becoming a successful annual event.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for your continued campaigning work, for your lobbying and pen pushing. As I said last year this role is so important and

my prediction that it will be increasingly so in the future is apparent. It continues to be vital that we maintain a dialogue with our local MPs and local councils to inform them of the state of the waterways here in the north west. This enables them to be properly briefed on the local situation and mindful of the impacts that funding is having on the navigation authorities and within their constituencies.

I would also like to thank every one who has supported me in my role as Region Chair. I have decided not to stand for re-election as region chair. I have been a Trustee of the Association for over 6 years (two three year terms of office) and under the new guidance should stand down. In addition I feel that it is time to have a new person at the helm as we geographically grow into a larger region. I know that you will all continue to support the committee and the new Chair. Remember – it will be a postal vote prior to the September AGM – make your voice heard!

Gillian Smith

Volunteering

The value and importance of voluntary groups in the restoration of our canals has been recognized by British Waterways in with their new policy on working with voluntary groups. Examples of particular successes in the south of our region are: The IWPS at Bugsworth Basin and Macclesfield Canal Society.

IWPS - VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AWARD

British Waterways North West kindly presented the Inland Waterways Preservation Society with a volunteer Recognition Award for outstanding co-operation for the continued promotion, maintenance and development of Bugsworth Basin. The presentation was made to Ian Edgar MBE, Chairman and Site Manager of the IWPS at a BW User Group Meeting at Dukinfield Town Hall on 14th October 2008. The decision to make the Award was made by BW staff. The IPWS is very grateful for their appreciation of its work and their support, which is very welcome. Ian stressed that that this is an accolade for everyone at IPWS.

The IWPS manages the Bugsworth Basin site and has an information/exhibition centre which will move into permanent premises once they are completed. They are in need of volunteers to staff the centre anyone interested in volunteering should contact Ian Edgar 0161427 7402 or ian@browside.co.uk

MACCLESFIELD CANAL SOCIETY

Congratulations to the Macclesfield Canal Society and British Waterways for their achievement in securing a grant of £78.4k for the restoration of the side ponds at Bosley Locks, plus other projects. Of this £49.9k is from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £28.5k from Macclesfield Borough Council's Canal Partnership Grant Scheme. The rest of funding is as BW staff time.

This is serious money and has been achieved by the drive and co-operation between the Voluntary Sector and British Waterways. If all this goes well, and we are sure it will, then further doors will be opened for further restoration on the Macclesfield Canal. The Society is well on the way to completion of the restoration of the railings at Ramshaw Hall in co-operation with British Waterways. Yet again it emphasises the fact that voluntary work on canals cannot possibly proceed without a partnership particularly with BW. In the case of the Macclesfield it is already a well used through route on the Cheshire Ring and even through the dark years it was never actually closed, although navigation at times was with some difficulty! What is happening now is bankside improvements to an already navigable waterway. In addition to Ramsdell Hall the MCS volunteers actually have and will be clearing vegetation along the whole length. Such co-operation can only auger well for the new found willingness to harness the value and enthusiasm of volunteers. There are snags ahead especially as different BW regions are embracing what is intended to be a national policy with differing levels of enthusiasm.

AN INVITATION TO IWA MANCHESTER MEMBERS TO GET INVOLVED IN YOUR LOCAL WATERWAY EVENTS IN 2009

*Volunteer to help on the IWA Manchester stand for a couple of hours at one of the
events below*

or

*Try out horseboating or legging with horseboat Maria, built in 1854.
Crew are welcome and always needed. Crew forms, www.horseboating.org.uk*

or

*Bring your motorboat to an event – The Organisers of the Rochdale Event are keen to
have boats*

HUDDERSFIELD NARROW

**Wednesday April 22nd - May 5th
(about 10 days, not every day)**

*Maria horseboating from Guidebridge on the Ashton Canal to Huddersfield and return,
a total of 45 miles, 148 locks.*

Standedge Canal Tunnel Festival 2009

**Saturday April 25, legging from Diggle to Tunnel End, Marsden.
In tunnel, approx. 1.00 to 4.00 pm**

Legging horseboat Maria through Standedge Tunnel on two event days

**Sunday May 3, legging from Tunnel End, Marsden to Diggle.
In tunnel, approx. 1.00 to 4.00 pm**

*There will also be a guided walk of about 2 hours over Standedge following the boat-
horse along Boat Lane, while the boat is legged through.*

**IWA MANCHESTER BRANCH STAND IS HOPING TO ATTEND ON
APRIL 25 AND/OR MAY 3 (subject to staffing availability)**

MARPLE LOCKS HERITAGE SOCIETY FESTIVAL

Friday July 3rd and/or Saturday July 4th 2009

Horseboating *Maria*, Guidebridge to Marple top lock, Lower Peak Forest Canal
(10 miles, 16 locks)

Maria is likely to be loaded with some form of cargo.

Sunday July 5th 2009

am: Horseboating down 4 locks (16-13) to the festival in the park.

2.30 pm: Boathorse harnessing demo

*3.00 pm: Horseboating Maria, Marple to Guidebridge on the Ashton Canal (10 miles, 1
locks)*

**IWA MANCHESTER BRANCH STAND IS HOPING TO ATTEND ON
JULY 5th (subject to staffing availability)**

ROCHDALE CANAL FESTIVAL

July 11-19

A nine day Rochdale Canal Festival organised by The Waterways Trust, owners of the Rochdale Canal.

*Horseboating Maria some dates of **July 9th - 24th 2009***

During the festival, the horseboat Maria will link communities along the route of the canal.

Horseboating Maria, from Guidebridge on the Ashton Canal via Manchester to the Rochdale Canal. Via Failsworth and Rochdale, to the Summit, to Sowerby Bridge. About 7 travelling days, Guidebridge to Sowerby Bridge.

The return journey for Maria from the Ashton Canal to Sowerby Bridge on the Rochdale Canal, and return, would involve about 70 miles & 200 locks.

**IWA MANCHESTER BRANCH STAND IS HOPING TO ATTEND ON
One day (subject to staffing availability)**

.....

All enquiries about these waterway events to Sue Day, Branch Event Organiser:
sueday_horse@yahoo.co.uk 01457834863 0771112056

or Steve Connolly, Branch Chairman, steconno@btintnet.com 01942 679310

BRITISH WATERWAYS NORTH WEST WORKS PROGRAMME

The following appeared in the BW Customer Autumn 2008 Newsletter:

'NEW LOOK BUGSWORTH BASIN WILL BE A REAL CROWD PLEASER'

Bugsworth Basin is set to capitalise on its status as a Scheduled Ancient Monument with a large range of improvements that will draw visitors whilst conserving its industrial heritage.

Funding will be used to invest in upgrading the site which was a crucible of activity during the Industrial revolution that swept the North West over 200 years ago. Four new vessel moorings are being created as part of the makeover for this popular British Waterways destination.

The works will be in keeping with its historical heritage and will feature:

1.5km upgrade canal path between Whaley Bridge and Bugsworth Basin, bring improved quality surfacing and access points, enhancements and signage

Fully accessible route around the site, including towpath upgrades, new mooring rings and canal footbridge improvements

New amenities building at the Basin, replacing Blackbrook House and offering refreshments, retail outlet, exhibition space, customer bathrooms and office space for the Inland Waterways Protection Society

Interpretation signage around the Basin, plus a community arts project to enhance the visitor experience

Trial water-bus service promoting the key visitor destinations of Whaley Bridge and Bugsworth Basin

The ambitious project is designed to reflect Bugsworth's importance as a scheduled ancient monument and will deliver a high quality attraction, showcasing Bugsworth's heritage features through linked access and amenities for a growing number of visitors.

Above is the BW copy verbatim however, Ian Edgar, IWPS Bugsworth Basin Site Manager, adds for clarity:

The four new vessel mooring places have been in place since Summer 2008 and have been very successful with no problems. Two of the moorers have joined IWPS and one has become a regular Bugsworth volunteer

Although described as a Bugsworth Basin project this scheme actually extends right in to Whaley Bridge Basin, but does not include the Whaley Bridge Transshipment Warehouse which is a separate project {see *later article Ed.*}

Blackbrook House will not be replaced. The new building will provide additional facilities. The existing Blackbrook House will still provide boaters with a refuse and sewage disposal facility as well as a water point. The facilities will not be duplicated in the new building.

The canal footbridge (at the junction with the Whaley Bridge Arm) improvements are mentioned but also to be improved and restored is the Horse Tunnel under the main canal line into Bugsworth Basin.

The new Blackbrook House will be managed and maintained by the IWPS. British Waterways do not have the funding to carry out activity at the Basin to a level of quality we would expect so that is being assigned to the voluntary

Manchester Branch Area Canals

The Bridgewater Canal, The Rochdale Canal, The Ashton Canal, The Huddersfield Narrow Canal, The Lower & Upper Peak Forest Canal, The Macclesfield Canal, The Manchester Ship Canal.

In addition there are four restorations in progress within the Manchester Branch:

Hollinwood Canal; The Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal; The Stockport Branch Canal; Bugsworth Basin

WHALEY BRIDGE TRANSHIPMENT WAREHOUSE

Background

In March 2008, Heritage Works Buildings Preservation Trust was commissioned by British Waterways to undertake a feasibility study for the vacant Transhipment Warehouse and associated land at Whaley Bridge Canal Basin in the High Peak of Derbyshire. The Trust brought together a team of experienced sub-consultants for the study, led by Allen Tod Architecture.

The purpose of the study was to explore options for the economic re-use of the Transhipment Warehouse, and to demonstrate how the building could contribute to wider regeneration and community aspirations.

The aim was to find the means to turn the redundant listed building, which is essentially unused and becoming a maintenance liability, into an asset that brings greatest benefit to the community and an appropriate long-term financial solution for British Waterways.

A programme of consultation was structured to canvas views of local people at several stages and of interested organisations: Whaley Bridge Town council, Whaley Water Weekend (see Events listing), Whaley Bridge Amenity Society, Wooden Canal Boat Society, IWA, Manchester Branch, Railway & Canal Society, Historic Narrow Boat Owners' Club, Inland Waterways Protection Society, English Heritage.

About the study

The feasibility study aimed to:

- provide a current structural and condition survey of the building, indicating costs for its proper conservation repair and subsequent conversion;

- establish an appropriate and sustainable future use for the site, which will also support the wider regeneration aims of the area;
- identify a way forward for the building that is deliverable in the short-term and sustainable in the long-term.

Conservation philosophy and architectural approach

Heritage Works has a conservation philosophy which it applies to all its projects and commissions. This is based on the concept of 'cultural significance', with the Trust's aim being to preserve and regenerate heritage assets of particular beauty, architectural and constructional interest so as to retain, reveal and enhance their cultural significance. This is achieved through the application of best practice of maintenance, repair, restoration and adaptation.

British Waterways' Heritage Policy is to ensure that the heritage of the waterways is treasured as a valued national asset, acknowledging that the careful protection and management of that heritage is an essential part of the ongoing work to achieve the organisation's vision.

The consultant team's approach to this feasibility study has been to gain an understanding of the cultural significance of the site and to establish broad principles for the protection and interpretation of that significance as the Canal Basin and Warehouse are changed and developed. These include:

- To retain and reveal the original purpose of the Warehouse by ensuring that the canal arm and train tracks within the building continue to be visible
- To retain the 'open barn' form and character of the main 1832 part of the Warehouse
- To recognise the historic function of the Warehouse as part of the wider canal basin and to find new uses for it that complement the modern recreational and commercial usage of the site
- To find a way of increasing the usage of the whole Warehouse and canal basin area, so that more people can enjoy, appreciate and understand them, whilst contributing to the site's economic well being and the regeneration of the wider neighbourhood.

Heritage Works Buildings Preservation Trust Ltd

Heritage Works a registered charity that regenerates historic buildings whose cost of repair is uneconomic for the private sector (www.heritageworks.co.uk)

History of the Transhipment Warehouse

The Grade II* listed Warehouse was initially constructed during the Industrial Revolution to act as a transport interchange for the transfer of limestone from Dove Holes transported by the Cromford & High Peak Railway onto canal barges that would take it to the ironworks of Manchester where it would be used for machinery and buildings for the cotton industry. The Cromford and High Peak Railway links the Cromford canal to the Peak Forest canal and was built on canal principles with a series of inclines enabling the wagons to be raised over the hills of the Peak District. The railway is no longer in use, as it closed in 1952, and the canal no longer carries commercial traffic, but the building remains as a highly significant example of a transport heritage structure that has been little altered over time.

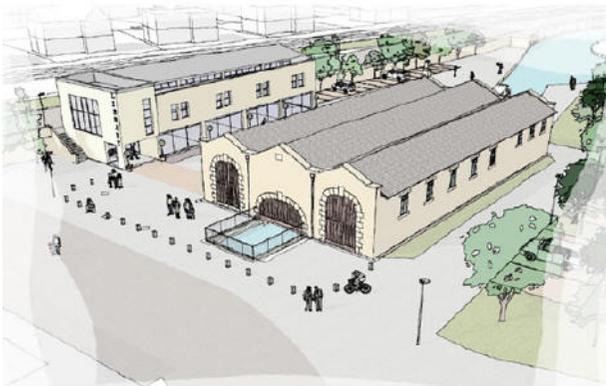


Proposals

Heritage Works undertook a Consultation process with community stakeholders and the general public to stimulate a wide-ranging debate on the future of the building.

Feedback from an initial stage of consultation was submitted to the design team who produced seven building form options demonstrating alternative configurations of extensions and new build. With feedback, and with the aid of the community steering group, these were reduced to four. These four options were developed further and the Project Team has produced 3 to be explored further with the planning authorities and potential funders. For details of the various proposals see the excellent heritage Works website for the project www.heritageworks.co.uk/whaleybridge.

An example is Proposal Y1 which has a new Visitors Center alongside the road adjacent to the Warehouse.



I would like to thank Heritage Works for permission use material and graphics from their website and acknowledge their help in preparing this article Ed.

IWA Manchester Branch Winter Talks Programme

October 2009 - April 2010

will be in the September issue & on the IWA website

The meetings are held on the 2nd Monday in the month commencing 8pm prompt
In the Brindley Room, At **Dukes 92**, Castle Street, Castlefield, Manchester

Meetings are open to members and non-members All Welcome

Portland Basin Marina – ‘New’ Dry dock

Portland Basin Marina is situated a few metres along the Lower Peak Forest Canal in a 200 year old canal arm which used to serve the mills which occupied the area. When Guy Holding began digging out a dry dock he found one already there built some 100 years ago. Guy dug out the original carefully restoring the stone work. The dry dock was last used in the 1940s after which it was filled in.

One of its claims to fame is that a lifeboat off the Lusitania, which was torpedoed and sank off the coast of Ireland in 1915, was at a later date converted here into a pleasure craft for the Bown family who still own the foundry next to the arm.



*Editor examining tyre
picked up on Ashton
flight*

For details of services available from Portland Basin Marina, including
dry dock, chandlery & day boat hire, tel: 0161 330 3133

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