

MANCHESTER PACKET

Newsletter from the Manchester Branch IWA



No 26

January 2010

Inland Waterways Association – Manchester Branch Committee

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Programme Coordinator: Planning (joint): Conservation: Publicity:

Editorial Comments - Ian Price

We have started 2010 with an 'Old Fashioned Winter' with pictures of frozen canals on the news. If you have any pictures &/or tales to tell send them in we will try to include them in a future issue or on our share of the IWA website.

Whilst canals look picturesque give some thought to the BW staff trying to progress the winter stoppage programme in such difficult conditions. In this issue Debbie Lumb, BW NW Region Manager explains her work and calls for your views on what BW should be doing in the region. Please send them to either Steve Connolly or myself and we will discuss them with Debbie.

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 Connolly

May I wish one and all the very best for the coming year. I'm sure it will all get a lot warmer in the not too distant future, around April perhaps? Those of you who managed to get to the December Open meeting will already know of my optimism for the coming year. There is a real backbone of confidence behind this outlook as following our somewhat prolonged attempts to bring boaters needs to the fore in the management of the Rochdale 9, British Waterways have at last begun to concede that consultation is not just a way of beating BW with a stick but a genuine desire to see our waterways funded and managed for the benefit of all users and not just as a series of "honey pot sites" connected by neglected infrastructure that only gets addressed when users point out the obvious. Also conceded is the point that users know a lot more about how and why certain canal side "furniture" is present and the need for its preservation/maintenance. A point Sue Day is most happy to demonstrate, usually to the chagrin of most managing experts. Of course we all realise that funding is the major issue behind most of the maintenance decisions and this situation, along with BW third sector ideals will be well aired in 2010. In this respect may I ask you all to fully support the waterway movement in the coming year, be it in supporting the IWA's SOS 2010 campaign, volunteering as

suggested in the enclosed article from Waterway Manager Debbie Lumb, lobbying your MP regarding our aspirations or just promoting the benefits of a healthy waterway at your every chance. In respect of all of the above I would be pleased to hear of any concerns you may have. I also have campaign leaflets and IWA Parliamentary Briefing literature for those of you who wish to further highlight our efforts. I have saved the usual begging bit till last but duty calls. Keith Fowler has decided to retire from the committee on poor health grounds and of course we will miss his knowledge and experiences in his long service to the branch, service that include branch chairman, treasurer and many rally committees and of course membership secretary. This means that the branch committee is further depleted and we are in need of a Membership Secretary, anyone fancy a nice little job??

NW Region Chairman's Comments - Alan Platt

I have now had a chance to get into my new role as North West Region Chairman and it might be useful to expand a little on this. The five branches included, heading north, are Shrewsbury & North Wales, Chester, Merseyside & West Lancs, your Manchester branch and the North Lancs and Cumbria Branch which goes up to the Scottish border. It therefore extends from Telford and mid Wales to Carlisle and the Scottish border, and also includes members from Scotland .

The issues relevant in some of these areas vary widely; in Manchester, there are problems at Marple and on the troubled Rochdale , an environment very different from my local habitat of the idyllic but not always trouble free Llangollen, where another major breach appears to be mainly due to badgers undermining the canal. The role of a national trustee also has its own workload which is a new challenge. However those that complain at the travel and hours involve miss the point that no one makes us do it, and it is rewarding as well as hard work.

It is hoped that as many as possible of you will make the effort to get to the Region AGM near Warrington on March 6th; (details elsewhere). This will be the first opportunity for many members from the old North West Region to meet up with members from south of the Mersey and I hope you will make the journey.

The course of BW's restructuring continues. Trustees and National Committee members had a meeting with Simon Salem and Robin Evans of BW in September. The proposals for BW's future in the 'Third Sector' are still early in the formulation phase but two things are apparent. Firstly it appears that BW feel

that their property portfolio is always liable to be raided as long as they remain effectively a government department, and they feel that some sort of contracted subsidy would be less liable to cuts if they were a separate entity. I feel that any government grant is always at risk whether it is to a government department or to BW as an outside body.

The first of these concerns is a very real risk. There were grave concerns that their property would be included in the firesale to reduce the vast government borrowings. As I write this it was announced yesterday that this will not be so, at least for the time being. There are curious phrases in the report that give cause for concern but this is good news. This would have reduced BW's income by some £45 million a year, and led to a catastrophic reduction in their ability to maintain the system to any sort of acceptable standard. A strong public campaign was mounted, including a petition on the No 10 website that to date has attracted nearly 19,000 signatures. However BW are still faced with a major reduction in their grant.

The need therefore for IWA's SOS 2010 campaign is still paramount and it is taking shape. The aim is to try to reduce the funding cuts that have already taken place and are not likely to reduce in the current climate of tighter government spending. There are strong arguments to maintain the funding of Waterways. Neglect leads to problems and there have been several breaches in the Region over the summer. These have to be repaired, (that at Shebdon on the Shroppie cost £600,000), this must come out of operating budgets, which means maintenance cutbacks and the spiral escalates. The situation on funding is critical even without the threat to BW's property and if we want to maintain the waterways in any sort of condition we must campaign for adequate funding. There have been mutterings that the IWA is going soft on BW which are foolish. We are campaigning for BW to have adequate funds; if they waste those funds as they have done in the past then we will and do criticize them.

The detailed structuring of BW's area management teams are now pretty well finalised and as they involved redundancies, I have sympathy with those enduring the process, as anyone must who, like me, has been involved in the process from either side of the desk. The recent user group meetings provided a chance for the new area managers to make themselves known, and there are signs that the three managers of the new BW areas in the region are getting to grips with their roles.

I look forward to meeting many of you at the Branch and Region AGMs in the spring. Lastly I hope you all had a good Christmas and may I wish you the best for the New Year: have a good one!

Debbie Lumb BW NW Waterway Manager asks

What are your Priorities?

As you will all know, there have been and will continue to be changes within BW – this is only inevitable as we try to keep up and be relevant in the world around us. But what does that mean here on the ground? When I met recently with some of your fellow users of the local waterways in the North West we all agreed that I needed to communicate more with you about what resources I have, plus how you can help me do with it what is right for all of us.

So what's the starting point? Well, it starts with less money! Resources – just like everyone else and especially those within public sector – and with expected budget cuts next year are getting scarcer. There is only so much money within the whole of British Waterways and I receive a slice of that pie for our local canals. So – how can I use this slice smarter? Well, let's first look at what needs to be done.

43% of my budget is spent on personnel (14 in the office, 69 bank staff and 19 seasonals). So what do I need to spend the remaining 57% on? In the North West I have 6942 outstanding defects that need dealing with – these can be from leaking embankments to potholes. These defects – found mainly during inspections and from visitor notifications – forms one third of our job cards for



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the teams on the ground. The other two thirds are planned maintenance (of 1208 principle assets of which 363 are bridges, 124 locks and 303 culverts) plus the final third on reactive works (broken paddles, leaks, litter, graffiti, etc). The monies also have to cover other obligations such as contractual works such as vegetation management; legal compliance such as asbestos and legionella in sanitary stations, water management plus £300k provision for all the claims I am currently dealing with. Plant, equipment, vehicles and offices also need to be managed (though I am planning to reduce these soon).

As you can imagine I actually cannot do all of the above with the money I have so I need to prioritise and get inventive on how I achieve more – and that is where you come in!! I want to hear more about what you believe is a priority and what you believe we should stop doing. Yes – I said stop doing. The harsh reality is that I can only do some things at the expense of others and I need to understand what is important to you and what you are willing to wait for. British Waterways in about to start its planning round for next year – can I ask that you let your local representatives know what is and is not important to you and I will endeavour to reflect this in my local plan? Plus I ask, what are you willing to do? Volunteering is essential to our local canals as I cannot look after them on my own. Those of you at the local user group will remember my call to arms – if you paint my bridges I'll fix them!! By volunteering you help release funds and time to do other works that are needed – just think, if someone else picked up the litter or fixed a fence or painted a lock, I could fix a leak, a paddle or any other of the 6942 defects I have.

If you want to know more about the new world of British Waterways then visit our web site www.britishwaterways.co.uk/twentytwenty . If you want to know more about the local canals in the North West then visit either www.waterscape.com or contact us on enquiries.northwest@britishwaterways.co.uk .

Remember that communication is key and a two way process – tell me your priorities and I will endeavour to do my best for you. Oh, and if you have any suggestions on how I turn a £10 note into a £50 note then call me!!

THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION - NORTH WEST REGION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 2009/2010

The Annual General Meeting of the North West Region of The Inland Waterways Association will take place on Saturday March 6th 2010 at 2. 00pm at Fiddlers Ferry Sailing Club, The Lock, Via Station Road, Penketh, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 2UJ

AGENDA

- 1) Apologies for absence
- 2) Approval of the minutes of the previous AGM held 7th March 2009, and any matters arising from those minutes.
- 3) Reports from the Region Chairman and Branch Chairmen
- 4) Presentation of statements of income and expenditure, assets, liabilities and commitments.
- 5) Notice of Committee size.
- 6) Election to fill any vacancies on Region Committee.

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 are five retirements under the three year rule. These are:

Peter Glover – Rochdale Canal Society; David Smallshaw – Committee member; David Smith – Committee member; Gillian Smith – Committee member; Dan Thurstan – Region Treasurer

There is a total of eight 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.

NOMINATION FORM - N.W.REGION 2010- 2013

*Name

*Address

.....

.....

Telephone Numbers

.....

E-mail

Signed

Date

Nominee must be an IWA member in good standing.

***Block Capitals please.** Photocopies of this form will be accepted.

Please return form before or at the Annual General Meeting 6 March 2010 to:

Mrs S Thurstan, 30 Queensway, BLACKBURN BB2 4QT

Tel: 01254 200363

E-mail: sue.thurstan@ntlworld.com

Under the new bye-laws nominations may also be accepted from the floor at the AGM

PROGRAMME:

There will be a short guided walk, commencing at 11.00 a.m. taking in a section of the Sankey and the local wild life reserve. Buffet lunch from 12.00. Cost £6.00. The Clubhouse has a bar.

Lunch must be booked with:

Mr A Lawton
Secretary M & WL Branch
4 Cottage Gardens
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I/we require lunch at £6.00 per head YES NO

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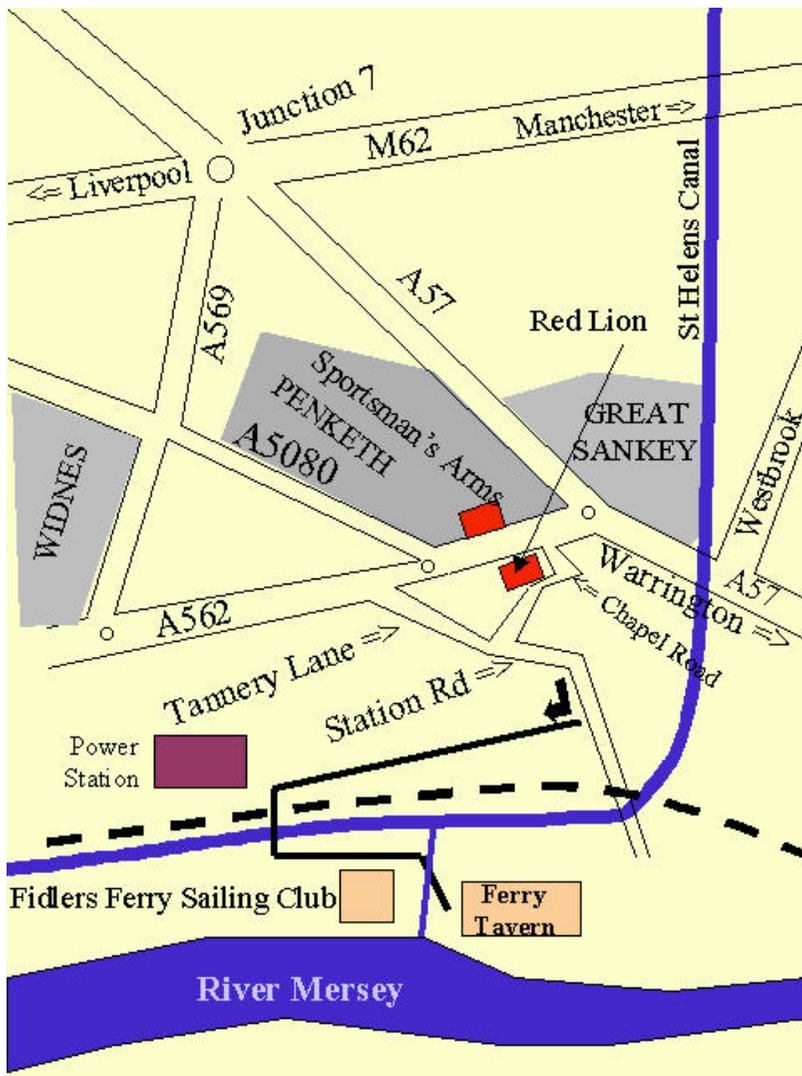
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BICENTENARY OF THE STANDEGE TUNNEL & THE HUDDERSFIELD NARROW CANAL

In 2010, the bicentenary of the Standedge Tunnel and the Huddersfield Narrow Canal should start to be celebrated. Two hundred years ago in 1810, the Standedge Canal Tunnel was finally completed after 16 or 17 years of hard labour. The first boat went through on December 10th, 1810.

However, Standedge Tunnel was officially opened on April 4th 1811, with dignitaries passing through the tunnel on boats, with a crowd of 5,000 people at Diggle to see boats enter at Diggle to voyage through to Marsden. So the bicentenary celebrations of the Huddersfield Narrow and Standedge Tunnel, in particular, begin in December 2010 to run a year until December 2011.

So what was actually happening in 1810, two hundred years ago? Boats had no tunnel yet to use, so they were unloaded, and packhorses and wagon horses took cargoes overland, right over the top of Standedge Hill, over the Pennine ridge. Below the tunnel was still being dug out, having been worked from both ends simultaneously.

What's happening in 2010? The Horseboating Society is making its annual return journey on the Huddersfield Narrow, legging Standedge Tunnel. This is Britain's longest canal tunnel at 3¼ miles long. That should be exciting, but now take note.

It is rumoured that a dragon is living in Standedge Tunnel. So the Horseboating Society will leg the boat through from Diggle to Marsden on Sunday, April 25th to lure the dragon out of its lair. The boathorse will be taken over the top of Standedge, and a guided walk is organised for those wishing to follow. At Tunnel End, Marsden St. George will await the dragon. On its appearance, St. George will slay the dragon, to rescue the golden-haired maiden strapped to the towing mast of the horseboat, and to save the trembling villagers of Tunnel End and Marsden. Please be there if you can to give courage to the villagers, cheers for St. George. and boos for the dragon.

A week later, the boat will be legged from Tunnel End to Diggle on Bank Holiday Monday, May 3rd. On that day, the tradition of parading working horses on the May Holiday will be followed. After a long Pennine winter, the horses will nearly be in their sleek summer coats. Visitors will be able to see how horses were worked as boathorses, packhorses, and wagon horses – before the tunnel opened in December 1810. Again a guided walk will follow the boathorse over Standedge, to Diggle.

So dates to be at Standedge in 2010: Sunday April 25, Bank Holiday Monday May 3, Friday December 10, and Sat/Sun Dec 11-12. More details will follow later.

Crew and leggers are always needed and welcomed by the Horseboating Society.
Enquiries: Sue Day, suesday_horse@yahoo.co.uk, 01457-834863, 07711-121-056
Website for horseboating journey details and itinerary:
www.horseboating.org.uk

PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT MARPLE WHARF

British Waterways with the development subsidiary H20 Urban LLP opened to public view and comment proposals to re-develop the site which is no longer required for BW operational requirements. The historic warehouse would be retained but converted to residential use and other outdated buildings cleared away and replaced with a terrace of houses. This has led to substantial local objections to such an extent that the developers have come round to the view that they should work with local bodies to try to gain some common ground and agree more acceptable solutions. There are several constraints on the site – it is in a Conservation Area, the length between Bridge 1 & 2 on the Macclesfield Canal is in three ownerships, (and therefore an integrated planning approach is impossible without co-operation between those various owners) and, not least, its importance in the development of Marple as a canal junction and the foundation of its prosperity. Marple Civic Society, Macclesfield Canal Society, IWPS & IWA have commented on the proposals.

The Marple Civic Society has done very well in persuading the architects/developers not to engage in brinkmanship or confrontation and a joint statement has been issued.

JOINT STATEMENT ON THE BRITISH WATERWAYS SITE AT MARPLE

Having met with the Marple Civic Society Steering Group, British Waterways and its joint venture partnership H20Urban LLP have agreed principles for an extended consultation in respect of the British Waterways' site at Church Street, Marple.

British Waterways wishes to see a sustainable redevelopment of the Marple site which enhances this important canal side location and secures a new and viable use for the historic warehouse, consistent with its longer term aspirations as recently set out in 2020 'A Vision for the Future of our Canals and

Rivers'.

British Waterways and H2O Urban LLP are committed to finding a solution which is in the long term interests of the site, the area and the canal networks.

In this respect:

No final decision has been taken on the future development of the site:

H2O Urban LLP recognises the concerns of the Marple Civic Society Steering Group and will consult further with them to explore alternative but commercially viable options in more detail within a workshop type environment;

The parties will enter into these discussions in good faith to ensure honesty, openness and mutual respect;

There will be no timescale for the extended consultation period.

Since the issue of this statement further discussions and meetings have been held and Stockport MBC Regeneration Team have become involved.

British Waterways has offered to provide a comprehensive review, including diagrams describing the work to date and the current situation.

When this is available Marple Civic Society will arrange a display in Marple Library for members and friends to view. Members of our steering group will be on hand to explain and answer questions. We expect the meeting will take place towards the end of January or beginning of February 2010.

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THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION – MANCHESTER BRANCH

Annual General Meeting 2009/10

The 36th Annual General Meeting of the Manchester Branch of the Inland Waterways Association will take place on **Monday 8th March 2010 at 8pm at Dukes 92, Castle Street, Castlefield, Manchester M3 4LZ.**
<http://www.dukes92.com>

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of minutes of previous AGM (9/3/2008) & matters arising
3. Reports from the Region Chairman & Branch Chairman
4. Presentation of statements of income & expenditure, assets, liabilities & commitments
5. Notice of Committee size
6. Election to fill any vacancies on Branch Committee
7. Talk by Ray Butler - *Canal Heritage Afloat - An Introduction to Working Boats*

Statement of Committee Size

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

There is one retirement under the 3 year rule. This is Barry McGuinness and Barry has indicated his wish to be re-elected.

This leaves 10 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 elections to the Committee (which must be in writing, signed by the proposer, seconder and nominee) should reach the Branch Secretary on or before the 8th March 2010. Under new bylaws nominations will also be accepted from the floor of the meeting.

Nomination form for Manchester Branch Committee 2010 – 13

I (name)*of

Address

Agree to accept nomination for election to the Committee of The IWA Manchester Branch for 2010-2013

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 accepted)

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THE IWPS PUBLISHES FOUR NEW BOOKS ON THE PEAK FOREST CANAL

Olive Bowyer is a long standing respected elder member of the IWPS who first privately published some widely acknowledged books on the Peak Forest Canal in the 1980's. These went out of print some years ago. Peter Whitehead and Don Baines, with Olive's co-operation, have now re-written her original text, brought up to date and added new information, where this has come to light or in consequence of more recent developments like the completion of the restoration and the re-opening of Bugsworth Canal Basin. Previous editions included drawings and maps, etc. but in these later editions many more photos have been added and the general print quality has been much improved.

The Peak Forest Canal Towpath Guide is in two separate books – Lower and Upper Level.

The Peak Forest Canal, its Construction and Later Development is the third book. Each book is £3.25 or all three for £9 including postage.

Following mention in the last '174' (*IWPS's very interesting and informative Newsletter ed.*) of the important find of an unusual Tymme Brick during the clearance of one of the side ponds at Bosley Locks on the Macclesfield Canal Peter Whitehead has done some extensive research and the IWPS has published the result as a short booklet – '*Marple Lime Works, Mineral Mill and Brick Works*'. This is a very interesting read for everyone and is priced at just £1.75 including postage this is an excellent buy.

GET A BARGAIN AND BUY ALL FOUR BOOKS FOR £10 INC. POSTAGE

All proceeds other than print costs support the IWPS volunteer management of Bugsworth Canal Basin.

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IWA Manchester Branch Winter Talks Programme

October 2009 - April 2010

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

- | | |
|---|---|
| 12th October 2009 | Tom Barkley - <i>New Zealand in Brief</i>
Its lakes, gorges, geysers and rivers including a boat trip through the Milford Sound |
| 9th November 2009 | Colin Edmondson - <i>Not so Solid Ground</i>
A trip from the salt works to Anderton looking at the old salt works, breaches, and subsidence (including some of the worst incidences in the UK) |
| 14th December 2009 | Christmas Social - speaker Alan Platt NW Regional Chairman |
| Note change of venue: Ukrainian Club, 215 Stockport Rd, Guide Bridge, Ashton-u-Lyne OL7 0NP | |
| 11th January 2010 | Glen Atkinson - <i>The Underground Canals of Worsley</i>
52 miles of ingenuity and achievement. A mysterious underworld revealed and explained. |
| 8th February 2010 | Leslie Brown - Former diver on the Manchester Ship Canal |
| 8th March 2010 | AGM followed by Ray Butler - <i>Canal Heritage Afloat - An Introduction to Working Boats</i> |
| 12th April 2010 | Judy Jones & Andrew Tegg - <i>BW Heritage Advisors talk about their work</i> |

Manchester Branch IWA

