

# ***Manchester Packet***

## **Newsletter from the IWA Manchester Branch**



**Issue 30**

**December 2010**

## Inland Waterways Association – Manchester Branch Committee

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*Cover photos: Macclesfield Canal before the real snow fall*

# Editorial

Ian Price

In this issue there important items for you to consider for the future of the national network of waterways and our local branch of the IWA. I urge you to read BW Chairman, Tony Hales' open letter and our Region Chairman, Alan Platt's, response. If you have any views or ideas that you would like to share with our members write or e-mail to me for inclusion in then 'Packet'. If you don't want them published I will still pass them on to the committee to inform us of what our members think.

Locally we are approaching Annual general meeting time and, as usual, seeking more help with running the Branch. You don't have to be a committee member to help; even an hour helping with our display stand at waterway events would be gratefully received. Sue Day is still hoping to find someone to take on organising speakers for the open Meetings. This is not as onerous a job as it might seem. We have lists of potential speakers so all that is required is to contact any selected and arrange their attendance. If you cannot attend the meeting there will always be someone who is prepared to meet the speaker and welcome them.

Also locally, please read David McCarty's article on the North West Branch of the Waterways Recovery Group and consider if you could join the band of friendly enthusiasts for a little paper collecting and fish & chips. Maybe, once the snow (I have 12-18 inches outside as I write) has cleared you could help in other ways or at a dig. Contact David for more information on this very important part of IWA.

Also in this issue, items of interest to visit and the listing of our talks programme for the New Year.

I hope you have a good time over Christmas and much enjoyment of our waterways in 2011.

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

## **Branch Chairman's Report**

**Steve Connolly**

I suppose that water is going to be often mentioned when dealing with our inland waterways but this past year seems to have raised some exceptions. Following on from the summer's lack of it we now have water taking on the consistency of concrete once again. Monday last saw us trying to move the Water Womble 50 feet so as to unload, only took us 2 hours. I must admit to thinking how the working boatmen managed in the ice age of the 40's and 60's and the consequence thereof. Now of course we are thinking of our waterways moving into the third sector, as it has come to called, but no matter how successfully this transmission is managed we all buckle under when mother nature stirs. Once again I offer my thanks to hard working branch officers. This time my thanks go to Phil Broughton for his efforts in replacing the branch web site. It is hoped to expand the site as time goes by adding a sales page which will contain the selection of 2<sup>nd</sup> hand books we gratefully accept from Werg North West in the person of John Fowley. Once again Sue Day has come up trumps with an excellent programme of speakers and with the continued generosity of our Open meeting audience we hope to break even on the current programme. Unfortunately Sue is asking to be replaced as she has a lot of commitments. As always Ian our Editor produces a magazine but again he is always glad to receive copy from others to highlight various points of view. The branch continues to safeguard our member's ideals; at least I think we do as we have very little feedback. This is also being addressed as we hope to have a forum on the branch web site in due course. That only leaves me to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a successful New Year...

## **Region Chairman's Report**

**Alan Platt**

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find an open letter from Tony Hales reporting on the current state of play in British Waterways' transformation into a third sector charity. I would like to give you my thoughts on this

document and on the 'official' IWA reaction. This is a misnomer as the IWA is a member based charity and therefore its view is that of its members, but you are aware that Trustees have given this matter great thought and in some cases have insights into the developments of the ideas and therefore I ask you to read what I have to say before you decide to disagree with it.

Our influence is obvious from the fourth line where he refers to Robert Aikman's vision for a National Waterways Conservancy. Our initiative with DEFRA has been for a new body to replace BW and include EA navigations and potentially others as well so that there are not only economies of scale to help offset the impending cuts, but also a coherency of policy and management over the different navigations. In this context I am well aware in our region of the significant private enterprise player of Peel Holdings, owners of the Bridgewater, and if I say that management of this is currently effective enough not to arouse major worries, I am sure many will disagree. We also have members in Scotland where the fate of BW Scotland will be decided by the Scottish Government. There are Scottish elections next May and I am tempted to be simplistic and say that a SNP government will be less inclined to retain BWS as part of the England and Wales restructuring than a Labour one.

In his fourth paragraph Tony Hales states there is a lot of work to do. This is perhaps an understatement. There are plans for governance which indicate a participation by stakeholders, including ourselves, at both National and local levels. The elephant in the room remains the funding, and the IWA have stated clearly and loudly that our support is dependant on a satisfactory funding model.

There is a matter that is not referred to but which arouses the interest and, in some cases, anger among many with which I have great sympathy. The current Directors of BW in some cases enjoy benefits packages which are out of step with those applying to national charities. I would ask you to consider whether DEFRA and others with influence are aware of this problem and of the need to address it, just as they must address the significant pension fund deficit revealed by BW's accounts.

So there is much to welcome in Tony Hales' letter, just as there are many questions still to be answered and much still to do. Perhaps the most important in the long term is the change of culture and cooperation

necessary. BW must consult and listen more than they have done in the past. I think they have started this process, and note a more listening tone at user group and other meetings. If this is so, and I accept it is early days, then if we are going to weather the difficult times ahead, we, the users must reciprocate and come to the table prepared to work together with them to achieve what we want, a well maintained system, our heritage and environment respected and maintained, and a future for our waterways.

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## **From the Chairman of British Waterways:**

*Dear waterway supporter*

### **GOVERNMENT GIVES THE GO AHEAD FOR A 'NATIONAL TRUST' FOR THE WATERWAYS**

*The Government has today made an important announcement about the future of the inland waterways in England and Wales, in probably the biggest shake up of our canals and rivers since nationalisation in 1948. The plan, to move the waterways out of state control and into a new independent national charity, builds on the proposals I launched at the House of Commons in May last year and on Robert Aikman's vision for a 'National Waterways Conservancy' half a century ago. When we called this proposal '2020', we thought it would take a while to achieve. The fact that the Government now wishes to adopt it as policy, replacing British Waterways with the new charity by April 2012, is a tremendous achievement and I have congratulated the waterways minister, Richard Benyon MP, on his imaginative and positive response.*

*The waterways have been utterly transformed for the better in the time since British Waterways was established in 1962 and they are used and enjoyed by more people, in a wider variety of ways, than ever before. This transformation owes its success to the contribution of countless staff, volunteers and enthusiasts. Moving the waterways into a charitable body recognises the need to build on that enthusiasm and marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in their history.*

*The Board and directors of British Waterways believe that this is absolutely the right next step for the nation's magnificent waterways. The move will attract new funding for waterways maintenance, safeguard investment and give everyone who uses and enjoys the waterways a greater role in how they are cared for. I don't underestimate the challenges ahead in making it happen, but history has shown that the waterway movement, when it pulls together, can achieve great things. There is still a lot of work to do to: develop the new governance model; agree a long-term funding contract with government and; put in place transitional arrangements. Defra will examine the inclusion of the Environment Agency's navigations, as part of a coherent plan for the waterways it funds in England and Wales, and the Scottish Government will decide whether Scotland's waterways will be in the new body. British Waterways will continue to work with government officials and waterway stakeholders to ensure good continuity, a smooth transition and a successful launch for the new body.*

*The question for us all now is not whether we should form a new waterways charity, but how we can do it. Open dialogue and involvement will be vital to making this happen and I know that Defra intend to consult with waterway stakeholders as they develop the content of the Public Bodies Bill, through which the new charity will be set up.*

*I cannot overstate what an enormous opportunity this is for the waterways, and for all those who feel passionately about their future. We must all make sure our views are heard and I look forward to many interesting and constructive debates during the next six months. With this in mind, please pass this letter on to any colleagues, friends or members who you think will be interested and feel free to reproduce it in your own publications or websites.*

*Yours faithfully*

**TONY HALES, C.B.E.**  
Chairman, British Waterways



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# THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION – MANCHESTER BRANCH

## Annual General Meeting 2010

*The Annual General Meeting of the Manchester Branch of the Inland Waterways Association will take place **at 8pm on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2010 at Dukas 92, Castle Street, Castlefield, Manchester.***

### AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of minutes of previous AGM (8/3/10) & 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. Phil Austin will talk about the lighthouse he has built at Monton beside the Bridgewater Canal, and his replica Bridgewater Canal Royal Barge built in 1890

### Statement of Committee Size

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

There are 3 retirements under the 3 year rule. They are Steve Connolly, Ian Price & Andrew Perry and they have indicated their wish to be re-elected. 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 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 meeting on the #<sup>h</sup> March 2010. Under new byelaws nominations will also be accepted from the floor of the meeting.

## Nomination form for Manchester Branch Committee 2011 –14

I (name)\* .....

Address .....

.....

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

Signed .....

Proposed by\* .....

Signature.....

Date:.....

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)

Please send to:

Branch Acting Secretary John Palmer, 53 Southwood Road, Great Moor, Stockport SK2 7DJ

## **THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION - NORTH WEST REGION** **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 2010/2011**

The Annual General Meeting of the North West Region of The Inland Waterways Association will take place on Saturday March 5<sup>th</sup> 2011 at 2. 00pm at The Anderton Boat Lift, Lift Lane, Anderton, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 6FW

### **AGENDA**

- 1) Apologies for absence
- 2) Approval of the minutes of the previous AGM held 6<sup>th</sup> March 2010, 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 no retirements under the three year rule as both members who would have been due for election have resigned from the committee.**

**There are a total of eleven vacancies on the committee this year and the Region Chair would be happy to receive nominations from anyone else who would be prepared to serve on the Region Committee.**

There will be a buffet lunch before a talk on the area by Weaver historian, Coilin Edmunson and a tour of the restored lift and possibly its control room, as well as opportunities visitor centre & surrounding canal, river & country park area after the meeting. *{if more details become available after publication we hope to put them on our web page ed.}*

**NOMINATION FORM - N.W.REGION 2011- 2014**

\*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.

# The Waterway Wot?

**'Mr Mac'**

**David McCarty**

The publicity for the Peak Forest Canal Society 'Operation Marple' in September 1969 said that they would be assisted by the Working Party of the London and Home Counties Branch of the IWA.

It was at the 'NATIONAL' of the following year, 1970, that this same group had metamorphosed into the waterway recovery group (WRG). The reasons for the change are many and varied but it did allow the (generally) young men and women to go their own way with the freedom to criticise either the IWA or more often BW.

They prospered by dint of sustained fund raising. Their policy was - and still is - to assist other canal societies by providing labour and items of plant such as dumpers and excavators and a very BIG PLUS, the people who operate them. Much experience has been acquired and passed on as required.

TWO YEARS after the Peak Forest Canal was reopened the youthful members of the working party came to the conclusion that, as the Society had achieved its objective and with the whole of the Cheshire Ring in the hands of BW, it was time to move on. They proposed at the 1976 AGM that the PFCS should transfer to the fledgling Huddersfield Canal Society. This was voted out so these young people announced that they would form a Branch of the WRG and so, on a VERY DEFINATE date – 1<sup>st</sup> January 1977 – WRG North West was born!

Usually the first move of any new organisation is to provide a Newsletter or some such however such a tract had been in existence for around TWO YEARS under the name of 'NAVVIES NOTEBOOK' (later shortened to 'NAVVIES'). Published every two months its main job was to list all the dates & details for the work sites on canals all over the country thus saving the impoverished students of the time (something's never change) the cost of having to subscribe to each separate Society just to get the details of the proposed work (the subs in those days were usually priced in GUINEAS; £1.05 in today's money!). The original minimum sub to 'NAVVIES' was half a crown (12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>p) per year and it stayed like that for years mainly because people did – and still

do – give very generously. The proud boast is that it has always paid its way! Even today the minimum is only £1.50 though this is set to rise.

WRG (usually turned into word – WERK – pronounced as in WORK) is amazing in one other respect, THERE IS NO ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION!! Anyone who comes to assist in whatever CAPACITY is DEEMED TO BE ONE OF US! Even subscribing to “NAVVIES” is not required though obviously encouraged. “NAVVIES” has moved on from typewriter and duplicator to a very high standard and has for years been printed by a member and his wife in a shed in their garden with up to date machines. In addition to future dates it prints report of the various reclamation schemes around the country. Like every bit of WRG all voluntary.

As time has gone by WRG has become more closely involved with the IWA and eventually became a part of it to the benefit of both.

From its very first days, NORTH WEST has striven to pay its way, initially by having a SALES AND EXHIBITION stand for attending suitable events. Thanks to a chance happening to one of our members to the end of our first year, we decided to collect WASTE PAPER in the North M/cr district of CRUMPSALL. Not only has this provided a steady income over the years but has provided thousands of books and much bric-a-brac for sale on our stand.

These collections ARE STILL HELD every few weeks and allow anyone who is interested in canals to contribute their time and energy to the cause. If you can lift a Tesco/Sainsbury/Waitrose poly bag you are an ideal body out in the fresh air and fighting the flab!

We leaflet – that’s me AND IT COULD BE YOU – some 1200 houses with the dates and then spend about 3-4 hours on the Saturday mornings going around and collecting and loading the skips provided by the Paper Mill. When we are finished those who wish partake of the now traditional FISH AND CHIPS (or variations) for which a nominal charge of a £1 is made. The PAPERCHASE, as it is known, has become a way keeping in touch and almost a social event and the car park of the CLEVELAND HOTEL on Crumpsall Lane is very easy to reach with METROLINK – Crumpsall station only 300 yards away or about 1 ½ miles from Junction 19 of the M60, with only one left turn required!

Over the last few months three couples, who have for years been are most ardent supporters of the Paperchase, have moved away from the Gtr M/cr area and as we need 15-20 helpers for each collection. We appeal to all members to come and join the ranks. The bigger the pool of names means that the work is spread over many.

**REMEMBER – WRG IS NOT JUST ANOTHER SOCIETY – IT IS PART OF THE IWA.**

**SO GO ON, MY PHONE NUMBER IS 0161 740 2179 (10am 'til midnight)**

**David McCarthy often called (amongst other things) “Mr MAC”!**



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# Unusual Sightseeing Opportunities in January & February

## Courtesy of British Waterways

Whilst looking for some information on 'Waterscape' I came across an invitation from BW to come and see what is happening during this winter stoppage programme. Those near(ish) to our region included:

Northgate lock, Chester on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2011

Hartley Swing Bridge, Liverpool Dock on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2011

and Stanley Ferry Workshops on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

So if you want examine a de-watered lock (without the frustration of waiting for it be watered in order to navigate it) or the guts of an ancient swing bridge as it is converted from manual to part electric operation (6 men to 2) the you have an opportunity. Look in waterscape for more details and other places to go.

**Ian Price**

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## At the Inland Waterways Museum at Ellesmere



On a recent visit our President, John Fletcher, spotted this exhibit in the Island Warehouse which will be of particular The temporary caption reads:



### ***Reconstructed Barge Container or Coal Box***

*This was made by the Museum's Boat Assistants working in the Heritage Boatyard under the Jobs for the Future Scheme*

*Barge Container or Coal Box was used to transport coal or similar ore along the canal. They were carried by boats such as Box Boat 337, which is currently undergoing restoration in the Heritage Museum*



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# IWA Manchester Branch Winter Talks Programme

## December 2010 – April 2010

2<sup>nd</sup> 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***

**December 13<sup>th</sup>**

### **ILLUSTRATED TALK & CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**

#### **The Marple Fly-Boat and the Marple Locks Tramway**

Kevin Dransfield of Stockport Heritage Trust will give an illustrated talk showing how to recognise where the fly-boat and tramway once were worked.

This is also our *Christmas Social* which takes the form of a "Jacobs Feast". (We all bring a food contribution). If you intend to come please contact Denise Connolly to let her know how many and what you are bringing so we can plug any gaps.

[dsconno@btinternet.com](mailto:dsconno@btinternet.com) 01942 679310 mobile: 07752462373

**NOTE change of venue for this meeting: Ukrainian Club, 215 Stockport Road, Guide Bridge, Ashton-Under-Lyne, OL7 0NP**

**January 10**

TBA – please look at Branch website\*

**February 14**

**Keith Warrender** - will talk about Underground Manchester, including underground canals. His books on the subject will be on sale on the night.

**March 14**

**AGM** after which: **Phil Ausin** - will talk about the lighthouse he has built at Monton beside the Bridgewater Canal, and his replica Bridgewater Canal Royal Barge built in 1890.

**April 11**

**Dr. Bob Gough** - will talk about the history, heritage, and subsequent restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, leading up to its bi-centenary in 2011

- if you would like a of Branch meetings, walks & events let us have your e-mail address (HO does not pass any personal information to Branches)

The Inland  
**Waterways**  
Association

