

# BULLETIN

30th April 2018



## NEW CANAL BLOCKED BY NEW ROAD SCHEME

IWA is supporting the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust following the announcement by the State for Transport, Chris Grayling MP, for a scheme to upgrade the A421 between Milton Keynes and the M1, which will have a major impact on the viability of a proposed new waterway.

The Bedford Milton Keynes Waterways Park, which would provide a new link from the Grand Union Canal in Milton Keynes to the River Great Ouse in Bedford, is important as it would provide a new link to the waterways of East Anglia, as well as creating a new waterway cruising ring and extending considerably the waterways accessible from the south by wide beam boats.

The route of the proposed new waterway, for which plans are well advanced, appeared to be protected in all the relevant Local Plans, until the announcement that Government had found £22.5m to turn the stretch of road between Milton Keynes and junction 13 of the M1 into a dual carriageway, with no

provision for the proposed waterway to pass under the road. Planning permission is already in place for the culvert, and the Trust has been reminding transport planners of this over the last two years.

Following a vigorous campaign by the Trust the road building consortium, led by Central Bedfordshire Council, has now recognised the importance of the waterway, and offered to make provision for it - at a cost. The Trust would have to pay for the cost of a culvert - estimated at about £3m. In addition, the Council has asked the Trust to pay £150,000 within 3 weeks to fund the design costs for the culvert which wasn't included in their original designs.

Although other major campaigns have raised significant funds for similar projects in the past, £3m is a considerable amount of money to add to the cost of the new waterway. In the short term, the requirement to find £150,000 in only a few weeks is also challenging.

IWA is supporting the Trust in campaigning for:

- Recognition that the Bedford Milton Keynes

Waterway Park should be endorsed as part of the infrastructure planned for the Oxford/Cambridge corridor (and therefore properly funded).

- Support from partners to secure funding for the culvert to ensure the A421 upgrade fully meets local plan policy, as other projects have been required to do.
- Help from Consortium partners and other agencies in building a strong business case and bidding for available funds.
- The need for a more realistic timescale so that a way forward is achievable.
- Support to raise short term funding for the design fees for the A421 culvert.

IWA members and supporters, particularly those living in the constituencies which the new waterway would pass through, are asked to write to their MP in support of Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust's campaign, and to ask him or her to write to the Secretary of

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State for Transport to ask for full support for the provision of a crossing to be included in the scheme.

A letter template is available. MPs whose constituencies the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway would pass through are:

- Mohammad Yasin MP - Bedford
- Nadine Dorries MP - Mid Bedfordshire
- Mark Lancaster MP - Milton Keynes North
- Iain Stewart MP - Milton Keynes South

## IWA NEWS

### CAMPAIGN TO REMOVE DEE BRANCH BLOCKAGE

A 'temporary' flood barrier which had been in place for over two years has been removed from the Dee Branch in Chester, following a successful campaign by IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch and pressure from Canal & River Trust.

The Environment Agency completely blocked passage of the Dee Branch back in March 2016, when they installed a flood defence barrier. The Dee Branch is a branch of the Shropshire Union Canal, which gives access to the tidal River Dee and, for suitable boats, to the Upper Dee above

the weir in Chester. Although the branch has in the past been unusable due to siltation, CRT dredged the channel 3 years ago and it should in theory have been navigable apart from the flood barrier being in place.

An agreement had been reached between EA, Cheshire West & Chester Council and Canal & River Trust for a removable steel barrier to be inserted in the River Lock. The barrier would normally be stored off-site and only inserted when there was a risk of very high tide and flooding in this part of Chester.

Once EA had 'experimentally' inserted the barrier to make sure it fitted it was simply left in place, rather than being used in the manner intended. IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch raised the matter with EA, and also with CRT who had given notice that it would charge EA for every day that the barrier remained, which CRT was entitled to do under the agreement. The Branch welcomes the subsequent removal of the barrier and will be keeping a close eye on the situation in future.

Clearing the blockage will allow Arthur Davies, Harbour Master at Rhyl Harbour, to undertake a planned circumnavigation of Wales in May. His proposed navigation of the Dee Branch will be a welcome test of EA and CRT positions.

Any blockage of the Dee Branch would jeopardise one of the key elements of the Chester Waterways Strategy, supported by IWA, which is the plan to open up a link between the Shropshire Union Canal and the upper reaches of the River Dee by building a new lock in the mill race at Chester Weir.

### TREVOR BASIN WINS IWA CALENDAR COMPETITION

A shot of the Trevor Basin on the Llangollen Canal has been awarded top prize in our annual photography competition. The winning photo taken by Mark Fetherstone, received the most public votes out of the 13 shortlisted photos.

Mark said "The light was perfect and filtering beautifully through the trees along with the mist and the fire that was lit on the boat it made for a great composition, not to mention the timely entrance of the Mallard ducks!"

Mark will receive the top prize of £100 to spend at IWAShop.com plus copies of IWA's 2019 calendar featuring the photo. The calendar will be available to buy from August 2018.

## COUNTDOWN TO IWA CANALWAY CAVALCADE

London's biggest annual waterside event brings over 100 historic and modern canal narrowboats to the pool in Little Venice over the early May Bank Holiday weekend. Free to the public, IWA Canalway Cavalcade is organised by IWA volunteers and features live music, street food, crafts, boat parades and competitions.

From mime and puppet shows in Rembrandt Gardens, to crafts, canoe taster sessions, and a children's trail of activities, there's lots to see and do for all the family. Children can find out how a lock works, build bridges and much more. Visitors can get involved by voting for their favourite themed or illuminated boat during the processions.

New for 2018 is a full programme of local groups, musicians, bands and dance groups in the Amphitheatre area, in addition to jazz and blues in the pool, toe tapping original folk music in the ale tent and Morris sides.

The full programme is now available to preview ahead of the event on the IWA website.

## CARBON MONOXIDE WARNING

The Boat Safety Scheme has renewed warnings about the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO), following a number of incidents over the last two years which resulted in the deaths of four people, with another two having emergency medical treatment. The warning is targeted particularly at owners of boats with large petrol engines and focuses on the risk when boat engines are run whilst the craft is moored.

Investigations by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) have demonstrated how exhaust gases from petrol engines can flow back inside through slightly open flaps on cockpit covers. The gaps in the covers can act like a funnel to channel exhaust fumes into the covered cockpit area, and then fill the boat interior with a massive volume of CO in seconds.

Over the past 20 years, 19 boaters have died and a further 21 were sent to hospital when CO in exhaust fumes from inboard, outboard and generator engines entered the boat. The Boat Safety Scheme gives the following advice to boaters:

- If you can smell petrol-engine exhaust fumes in the boat, kill the engine

and get out fast before you inhale any further toxic fumes.

- No amount of CO should be thought of as safe, even low concentrations over longer periods can cause long-term health problems. CO is a colourless and odourless gas, but when it is mixed with the other petrol engine exhaust gases that you can smell, you can be confident there is a risk you need to deal with immediately.
- The symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to flu or food poisoning as the toxin begins to take effect, and include headaches, nausea and dizziness. If anyone is indicating they are suffering, get them medical help. If the symptoms are severe – call the emergency services.
- As time passes, or the amount of CO builds, symptoms can worsen, with chest pains and breathlessness and go on to seizure and unconscious. The early recognition of the symptoms is critical, because if nothing is done, death can follow quickly.
- Because of circumstances where you may not smell the exhaust fumes, or you are asleep, it is critical to have one or more certified CO alarms (BS EN 50291-2). They need testing routinely and never remove the batteries.
- Even if your batteries are

desperate for a charge, don't run an engine on a moored boat if the exhaust fumes are being drawn inside. Wait until the wind changes or move to a different mooring.

- Be a good neighbour and don't run petrol engines where exhaust fumes could enter a nearby boat cabin.

More information about staying safe from CO on boats is available on IWA's website or the Boat Safety Scheme website.

## OLD BEDFORD RIVER – IWA 2018 CAMPAIGN CRUISE TO WELNEY AND WELCHES DAM LOCK

Of all the destinations included in IWA's Silver Propeller Award, Welches Dam is probably one of the most challenging locations on the connected system. The good news is that boaters are being offered a chance to get there by taking part in an organised flotilla of boats on a campaign cruise on the Old Bedford River.

Regular Bulletin readers will have read of the previous campaign cruises on this statutory navigation managed by the Environment Agency and this larger event takes place this summer between Sunday 19th and Wednesday

22nd August, ahead of IWA's Festival of Water at St Neots. Although 2 days have been allowed in each direction to enable more boats to take part, the number of boats taking part will be restricted due to the limited time available for boats to pass from the tidal Ouse through Old Bedford Sluice on the level. Boats will also need to be 50 ft or less in length to take part. Local and visiting boats, including those on their way to the Festival of Water at St Neots, are welcome to take part and are invited to express their interest at this stage by emailing Alison Smedley, IWA Campaigns Officer.

There are also plans for associated gatherings to support the campaign cruise to take place simultaneously at Horseway Lock and at Salters Lode, so even if you can't take part, why not support the campaign by gathering at one of these locations. People are also encouraged to take part with canoes or small portable boats, or just to go for a walk along the river in the Ouse Washes Nature Reserve and enjoy the unusual sight of a number of boats in addition to the wildlife for which the area is renowned.

Watch out for further information and details about how you can get involved in the next issue of Bulletin or in the Facebook event.

## MIDDLEWICH BREACH CAUSED BY "OVER-TOPPING"

In total, around 70 metres of the embankment carrying the Middlewich Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal over the River Wheelock was lost just before midnight on Thursday 15th March, draining the 1.4km pound between Stanthorne and Wardle locks and dislodging some 4,200 tonnes (2,800 cubic metres) of earth.

A total of 14 boats were trapped, one on the 'wrong' side of the breach. The other 13 were refloated on 22nd March, after Canal & River Trust had installed a portable dam to seal off the breached section and pumped up to 865,000 litres of water back into the canal from the Trent & Mersey Canal. Of the 13 boats, eleven were locked down through Wardle Lock onto the Trent & Mersey Canal, while the owners of two boats with off-side moorings elected to stay.

At a North Wales & Borders Waterway user forum in Nantwich on 17th April CRT attributed the breach to "over-topping", stating that the "freeboard" at the point of the breach had previously been recorded as being a little lower than elsewhere on the embankment, though "not worryingly so". The cause of the over-topping is thought

to have been that the paddles at Stanthorne Lock, above the breach, had been raised during the night and left open.

Engineers from CRT and its contractors, Keir, are assessing the means and method of best achieving the repair and currently expect to have a repair schedule available by the end of May. Until then, a date for re-opening the Middlewich Branch is largely speculation, but CRT is talking about it being unlikely before the end of the year and at a cost of £2-3 million.

Most of this will have to come from CRT funds and it will probably have an impact on other CRT remedial projects, though it won't necessarily affect next winter's stoppage works. In the meantime CRT has launched an appeal - the Shropshire Union Canal: Emergency Appeal. IWA Shrewsbury District & North Wales Branch made an initial contribution to help get the appeal underway and is pleased to report that donations have now reached more than £20,000.

## NAVIGATION COMMITTEE SEEKS ANGLING EXPERTISE

IWA's Navigation Committee, which monitors and responds to all matters relating to the use and maintenance of all navigable waterways

in England, Scotland and Wales, is looking for new members, and in particular someone with experience and knowledge of angling.

Navigation Committee is made up of a representative from each of IWA's Regions, along with other directly appointed members with relevant experience. IWA is always looking to expand on the skills and knowledge available on the committee by recruiting new members. Applications from those involved with angling, as well as other interested individuals who feel they would have the right interests, skills and experience to get involved with the work of the committee, would all be welcomed.

Navigation Committee meets 5 or 6 times a year, with some meetings held virtually and others held in the Midlands. IWA membership is a requirement for membership of any of IWA's national committees.

Applications together with a brief resume should be sent to Alison Smedley, Campaigns Officer.

## 12 MILLION TONNES OF FREE PUDDLE CLAY, SAND & GRAVEL UP FOR GRABS

Does your local canal restoration need any canal lining or embankment building material? How about 12 million tonnes?

The High Speed Railway project, HS2, is likely to have surplus clay, gravel, sand, etc. available as a result of the planned construction works and has asked if the waterway restoration community could use some of this surplus material, rather than it being used for landscaping etc.

Obviously the material would need to meet an appropriate specification to be suitable for incorporation in any project, and transport and storage issues would need to be addressed, but in theory this could be a very useful help for several canal restoration projects.

The HS2 project is at a very early stage with regard to its materials availability so we're asking for expressions of interest at present from any society that has a need for lining or earthworks materials.

Phase 1 of HS2 from London to Birmingham and Lichfield is planned for construction between 2018 and 2026, with Phase 2a from Lichfield to

Crewe between 2020 and 2027. Phase 2B to Manchester and Leeds will follow on later. Whilst the main source of material such as clay will be the tunnels in London there may be other local sources further north as well, so many restoration projects could potentially benefit.

It is understood that the materials will be delivered to a central location from which interested organisations could collect the materials when required.

CRT's National Infrastructure Services Manager, Peter Walker has kindly offered to provide a co-ordinated response to HS2 from restoration groups. Peter has already informed HS2 that several waterway charities may be interested in using some of their surplus material, but they have asked for an estimate of quantities. So if you can provide him with a rough estimate of what volumes of material you could use and when, along with the best contact person in your organisation, he will aggregate this as a preliminary estimate for HS2 to see if it is a practical proposition.

You can contact Peter Walker and please also copy in IWA's Restoration Hub . If you might be interested please let Peter know as soon as possible, although it is appreciated that estimating quantities may take longer.

# IWA BRANCH NEWS

## NEW MOSAIC NATURE TRAIL ON NORTHAMPTON ARM

The new mosaic nature trail on the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union Canal, featuring 34 mosaic designs, was officially inaugurated by Northamptonshire Deputy Lieutenant Joan Kirkbride on 21st April 2018. This exciting new feature was made possible by a legacy from John Faulkner – a long-standing and active supporter of IWA, hard work of volunteers from IWA's Northampton Branch led by Geoff Wood and Mick Butler, the designs of pupils from two local primary schools, and the talent of mosaic expert David Bowers.

The finished trail boasts two mosaic panels at each of the locks of the Northampton Arm, one recording an aspect of canal life, the other forming part of the nature trail with a letter identifying the aspect of nature pictured. The trail doubles up as a challenge for children, to collect all the letters and work out the phrase they spell. In return they will be rewarded with a Certificate of

Achievement. For full details of the Challenge, visit IWA Northampton Branch web pages.

Whilst unveiling the trail at Lock 10 at the heart of the Rothersthorpe flight, Mrs Kirkbride observed "It makes me very proud to be here on this lovely day to support such an ambitious and enterprising venture. The canals in Northamptonshire are one of the county's greatest assets, sometimes sadly not appreciated as fully as they should be by the general public. But what has been achieved here on the Arm by all the volunteers is quite remarkable, helping to make the canal environment so attractive and welcoming. Hearty congratulations to all involved. May your good work continue."

IWA volunteer Mick Butler told those assembled that indeed the good work would continue as "plans are already well advanced for a large-scale mural under the M1 bridge depicting the history of Northampton – this is just a short walk from Lock 10 and is an area which has been blighted by graffiti for years. Watch this space for an exciting transformation."

## CLEARING OFFSIDE VEGETATION

Over the past four months, IWA Lichfield Branch has been

carrying out offside vegetation clearance along the Trent & Mersey Canal on a trial basis for Canal & River Trust.

A group of Branch members were put through some basic training ahead of the first offside clearance work party in December between Great Haywood and Rugeley. The branch concentrated on the areas that posed a problem for navigation such as the narrow sections, approaches to bridges, bends, and opposite moorings, and intends to get involved again in October when next winter's work begins.

## BRUSHCUTTER GIFTED TO LOCAL GROUP

IWA Ipswich Branch has donated a powered brushcutter to volunteers working to restore the Blyth Navigation. Halesworth New Reach Working Group (NRWG) took delivery the new brushcutter in April.

Having been presented with the much-needed new piece of kit, Mr Burns said: "We hope one day to open up the waterway as an amenity attraction both for town residents and visitors. The gift of a new petrol brushcutter will make our maintenance of the towpath and canal banks a lot easier. We are very grateful to Ipswich IWA for their generosity."

Last year, the NRWG launched their new work punt named after Patrick Stead, a wealthy maltster who worked to preserve the navigation when it was widely used in the 18th and 19th centuries. It will be used over the summer months to clear litter and debris from the water.

They are also aiming to achieve a host of other objectives, including re-planting trees, restoring two derelict locks, replacing a footbridge and providing information boards.

## GRAPPLING IN THE COVENTRY CANAL

20 volunteers used grappling hooks to haul items out of the water and litter picked along the northern end of the Coventry Canal at Hawkesbury Junction in a Cleanup organised by IWA Warwickshire Branch in April. The efforts were concentrated at the bridges as far as the footbridge at Longford.

The group filled the workboat with rubbish. In addition to the usual bicycles and trolleys, the team pulled out a lot of bases for road cones, a vending machine from a gents' toilet, a crystal ball, a handbag with cards, sandbags, tyres and a small, empty, safe.

See IWA Warwickshire Branch web pages for future work party dates.

## SHIP IN A BOTTLE FOUND IN GRAND UNION CANAL CLEANUP

Dozens of volunteers turned out in April to give the canal through Milton Keynes a major spring clean. A total of 65 volunteers clocked up over 500 hours' work over the two days, hauling an estimated 6 tonnes of rubbish out of the canal, plus dozens of hours spent preparing for the event.

Members of IWA Milton Keynes Branch were joined by staff from the Canal & River Trust and volunteers from The Parks Trust, as well as volunteers from Santander, Worldpay and Leica Geosystems.

The group worked north from Fenny Stratford to Old Wolverton, with an overnight stop at Giffard Park. Walkers cleared the towpath and hedges of litter and larger items of rubbish, and vegetation was cut back on blind bends on the canal.

The usual variety of items was recovered including a large dinghy, bikes and motorbikes, supermarket trolleys, timber, chairs, a car clamp, running machine, various shoes, old fishing rods, and a ship in a bottle.

IWA Milton Keynes Branch is grateful to Canal & River Trust for its support with staff, workboats, dredger and safety

equipment, to The Parks Trust, Santander, Worldpay and Leica Geosystems for the splendid contribution made by their volunteers, and to the Wyvern Shipping Co Ltd for sponsorship, and for providing the tug for the hopper, support staff, and the specialist grappling hooks used on the hopper.

IWA Milton Keynes Branch will hold its next Canal Cleanup in the autumn, from Fenny Stratford to Leighton Buzzard. See IWA Milton Keynes web pages for more information.

## ASHTON CANAL IN BLOOM

IWA Manchester Branch volunteers continued to spruce up locks on the Ashton Canal by planting flowers and herbs in the garden at Lock 7. Volunteers also collected two big bags of rubbish from the towpath.

Find out about future work party dates on IWA Manchester Branch web pages.

## WRG VOLUNTEERS CLEAR RIVER PARRETT SLIPWAY AT LANGPORT

IWA West Country Branch and Langport Town Council organised a weekend visit to Somerset on 21st - 22nd April by Waterway Recovery

Group's 'Bit in the Middle'.

WRG volunteers spent the weekend removing a number of saplings and clearing several years' worth of silt, mud and grass from a slipway on the River Parrett at Langport. The Town Council had acquired the slipway from the Environment Agency in 2016 as one element of its programme to increase the use of the non-tidal "Upper" Parrett for leisure and recreation purposes and to thereby bring more visitors into the town.

The weekend was a great success and paves the way for a second phase which is to repair some damaged elements of the slipway that are currently submerged underwater.

The photographs show the 'before' and 'after' slipway and show the enormous difference made by the volunteers. IWA West Country Branch and the Town Council thank WRG for their work and also Langport resident and IWA member Ian Macnab for all his help and also for taking the volunteers on a trip on his wooden heritage boat "The Duchess of Cocklemoor" on the Sunday.

## IWA VOLUNTEERS CLOCK UP 5,408 VOLUNTEER HOURS

The waterways of Somerset have benefited from 5408

hours of attention from volunteers from IWA's West Country branch. Over the last twelve months the branch has organised an impressive 201 work parties, on average attended by around 8 volunteers who each manage at least 3 hours of support.

Their massive contribution to the area has been recognised by way of a citizenship award for top volunteer Steve Bulgin who leads the work parties in the Taunton area. Steve received his award from the Mayor of Taunton on behalf of Taunton Deane District Council in the name of his work and that of all the local IWA volunteers. Congratulations to Steve and his volunteers.

## UPCOMING VOLUNTEER / CLEANUP EVENTS

To find out what branch activities and working parties are going on in your area have a look at IWA's events calendar. By volunteering for these clean up events you can make a big difference to your local waterway. You can also search by event type or find out what's going on in your area with the map search.

To advertise your restoration/cleanup events in the bulletin please add details to IWA's events calendar

## IWA MEMBER DISCOUNTS AND SPECIAL OFFERS

The following special offers are now available exclusively for IWA members:

### Enjoy the Waterways Through Hire Boats and Leisure

ABC Boat Hire - 15% discount on holidays

Airedale Cruising, Yorkshire Dales BB18 6TP - 10% discount off skippered day cruises

Blackwater Boats, Essex CO4 5HF - 10% discount off boat trips

CanalCruising.co.uk - 10% discount

Canal Boat Magazine - 12 issues for £21.99 + Gourmet Society Plus

City Centre Cruises - 10% discount for Sunday lunch cruises

Frangipani SUP Ltd - 10% discount

Jenny Wren, London NW1 8QS - 10% discount off cruises

Middlewich Narrowboats - 25% discount off hire price of Willow

Wyvern Shipping Co. Ltd- 10% discount on published prices

### Eating Out

Bounty Pub, Bourne End SL8 5RG - 10% discount off food

Clifford Arms, Staffordshire ST18 0SR - 10% discount off food

Fingerpost Pub & Restaurant, Pelsall WS3 5AU - 10% discount off food

Kings Lock Tearooms, Leicester LE2 8LT - 10% discount off food

Ring 'O Bells Pub, Marple SK6 7AY - 10% discount off food

Three Locks Pub, Stoke Hammond MK17 9DD - 10% discount off food

Wharf Pub, Bugbrooke NN7 3QB - 10% discount

### Better Value on Boats and Equipment

Boatshed Grand Union - 10% discount on brokerage

Boat Windows Ltd - 5% discount

Calcutt Boats - 5% online discount

Channel Glaze - 10% discount on double glazing

Cotswold Outdoor - 10% discount

IceGripper - Special offer on ladies walking boots

Kings Lock Chandlery - 5% discount on purchases excluding all fuels (diesel, gas, coal, wood, etc)

Marine Mega Store Ltd - 15% discount

Midland Chandlers - 5% discount

RoadPro- 5% discount

Solar Technology International- 10% discount on PV Logic Narrow Boat Kits & Foldup Panels

Willowbridge Marina - 10% discount on chandlery purchases and services in the yard

Zead - Free Postage & Accessories

### Services

Europcar - Special hire rates to IWA members

Forge Studio - 10% discount

I Love Meet and Greet Ltd - 15% discount

Lee Sanitation - 10% on orders over £100

Paper Wizard - 15% discount

River Canal Rescue - up to 15% discount

Wavetrain Marine - 5% discount on selected training

Please note: All discounts and offers are entirely at the organisers' discretion.

To see details of how to take advantage of these offers, please go to the IWA Members discount page.

For IWA members who receive a printed copy of this bulletin in the post, please contact the membership team on 01494 783453 for the details of the offers.

Members can also support IWA with a Narrow Boat magazine subscription

## BOAT INSURANCE

IWA has an arrangement with insurers Navigators & General and River Canal Rescue that provides top quality boat insurance and access to the basic waterway rescue service for boat owners, with the added benefit that every policy taken out and subsequently renewed helps IWA, and thus furthers our charitable work for the waterways.

See more information about the IWA insurance scheme for boaters.

### Contact Us

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