

# BULLETIN

29th March 2018



Photo: Breach by Roger Evans

## MAJOR BREACH ON MIDDLEWICH BRANCH

An embankment on the Middlewich Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal between Wardle Lock and Stanthorne Lock collapsed overnight on Thursday 15th March, and will be closed for the foreseeable future. Canal & River Trust emergency engineers were on site all night dealing with the breach, and engineers and operations teams spent the next few days assessing the breach and prioritising works to be carried out including undertaking a fish rescue and tree assessment.

By Wednesday 21st March, CRT had installed a temporary

dam on the Middlewich side of the breach site, to enable water to be pumped from the Trent & Mersey Canal into the Middlewich Branch over the following few days, to refloat the 20 or so boats in the affected section and to give them access, via Wardle Lock, to the waterway system again. The boat that was between the breach site and Stanthorne Lock remains marooned.

Volunteers from local volunteer group, SUMBA, supported by IWA, took the opportunity to remove some of the rubbish from the drained section before it was put back in water, with bicycles, mattresses, tyres and traffic cones amongst the rubbish collected.

The breach is bad news for

Canal & River Trust as well as any boaters along the stretch and those planning to travel the arm in the near future. The breach at Dutton on the Trent & Mersey in September 2012 cost the charity £2.4 million and took 7 months to repair, while the 2009 breach of the Leek Arm of the Caldon Canal cost £500k and was open again after 8 months. As they did for the Dutton breach in 2012, when it raised £22k towards the cost of repairs, CRT has launched an appeal for donations towards the cost of the repairs.

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# IWA NEWS

## CRUISE IT OR LOSE IT – SILVER PROPELLER CHALLENGE

Boaters, canoeists, rowers and paddle-boarders are invited to join our campaign to keep open less frequently visited canals and rivers across England, Wales and Scotland. The Silver Propeller Challenge has been created to attract some of the millions of visitors who love being afloat on Britain's waterways to parts of the network that seldom see boats or other craft.

An initial list of 40 locations across the country indicate waterways that could be at risk due to insufficient use, or are at the limits of existing navigations where they meet restoration works and other currently unnavigable sections of the inland waterway system. In addition, there are places on restored lengths of the canals that deserve and would benefit greatly from more frequent use.

The Silver Propeller Challenge invites waterways users to visit just 20 locations on the list to qualify for a special plaque to mark their achievement.

Paul Strudwick, an IWA trustee and deputy national

chairman commented: "Each year nearly 700,000 people enjoy inland boating, a figure which soars to over two million when canoeing and paddle boarding are included, but there are many places which would be lucky to see one boat in a week let alone in a day. The Silver Propeller Challenge is a great way to experience all that the waterways have to offer and at the same time help to protect them for generations to come."

Cruising waterways to keep them open has been a central plank of IWA's successful campaigning since our formation over 70 years ago and is just as relevant today, as multiple cruises have demonstrated in 2017 on Cambridgeshire's Old Bedford River, where Welches Dam Lock has been closed for a staggering 12 years. The hope is that this new scheme will capture the imagination of the country's waterway enthusiasts and lead to a surge in visitor numbers at some fine, if overlooked, beauty spots.

The Silver Propeller Challenge is open to all waterways users. See full information about the locations and how to enter on the Silver Propeller Challenge pages online.

## PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOCUSES ON FUNDING

Transfer of the EA navigations, future waterway funding and residential moorings were among the topics discussed at a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Waterways, held at Westminster on Tuesday 13th March.

The Minister with responsibility for the waterways, Dr Thérèse Coffey MP, had been due to speak at the meeting but was unfortunately called away on urgent parliamentary business at very short notice. In her place Rebecca Pow MP, Parliamentary Private Secretary, addressed the meeting and took away a number of questions for the Minister.

John Grogan MP, Chair of the All Party Group, opened the meeting and welcomed the first speaker, Richard Parry, Chief Executive of Canal & River Trust, who gave an overview of the Trust since it was created in 2012.

On the subject of the transfer of the Environment Agency's navigations to Canal & River Trust, the meeting heard that The Minister does recognise the benefits of transferring the EA navigations to Canal & River Trust and officials in DEFRA and EA have been

instructed to discuss further with CRT to fully account for which assets would be transferred. A date of 26th April has been set to discuss the terms of the transfer, which would have to offer the best deal for taxpayers. Other subjects discussed included future funding of both CRT and EA navigations, volunteering, residential boating and navigation authority alignment of licensing and enforcement. Attending the meeting were representatives of a number of navigation authority and waterway organisations, with this being the first APPGW meeting for a number of years that waterway stakeholders had been invited to.

## HOUSE OF LORDS DEBATE THE FUTURE OF WATERWAYS

Just a few days before the All Party meeting reported above, on Thursday 8th March, a debate was held by the House of Lords on the subject of “the future of the UK’s inland waterways”. The Grand Committee debate had been secured by Lord German, IWA’s 2017 Parliamentarian of the Year, who opened by saying that the inland waterway network is a unique and precious national asset, which has the potential to transform places, enrich lives, improve mental and physical health, support communities

and promote economic development. He mentioned that unlike National Trust properties, many waterways run through deprived communities, and he asked Government to take action to realise the full potential of the waterways.

Support for the transfer of the Environment Agency waterways to Canal & River Trust was mentioned by a number of the peers who spoke, and other topics discussed included residential boating, the impact of invasive non-native species on navigable waterways, increased possibilities for the use of volunteers, pollution of the waterways and their tourism benefits.

Lord Trimble, who owns a narrow boat, spoke about the benefits of new waterway developments such as the Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway. Other speakers in the debate were Lord Lee of Trafford, Baroness Redfern, Lord Bradshaw and Baroness Jones of Whitchurch, shadow waterway minister.

Lord Gardiner of Kimble responded on behalf of Defra in his role as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for DEFRA. On the subject of the EA transfer, Lord Gardiner said “the Minister has instructed officials in DEFRA and the Environment Agency to work with the Trust on a revised proposal which fully accounts for which assets

could be transferred.” He concluded by agreeing that the waterways have a key role to play in the fulfilment of a better life for the people of this nation.

The full debate can be read on the Parliament website.

## ANOTHER BRIDGE CLOSED BY SCOTTISH CANALS

Following the alarming news in January that Scottish Canals had closed the Forth & Clyde Canal as a through route due to not having the necessary funds to carry out work on two lift bridges, Scottish Canals has now announced closure of yet another bridge, this time in Glasgow at Knightswood. This latest news means the manually operated bascule bridge will be temporarily closed to canal traffic for safety reasons.

As well as the closures, Scottish Canals has announced some changes to operating days and times across the Lowland canals meaning access along much of the Lowlands canals will be restricted this year. The impact this is likely to have on the hire boat trade is significant, and it will also affect all privately owned boaters based on the two canals. If sections of canal are closed for any significant amount of time, other structures such as nearby

locks and other moveable bridges will deteriorate through lack of use, resulting in even more funds required for repairs in the future.

Scottish Canals cite customer demand as the justification for these reduced operating days, but we believe that the previous reductions in operating days and ongoing lack of maintenance has contributed to the reduced demand.

In a letter to Scottish Canals, we outlined why we thought the indefinite closure of the coast to coast canal was unacceptable, and we are due to meet with them to discuss further. Our National Chairman, Ivor Caplan, will repeat the call for repairs to these bridges to be carried out as a matter of urgency in order for Scottish Canals to fulfil its statutory requirement as navigation authority to keep the restored Lowland canals in full working order.

As a follow up to their original announcement and subsequent to further technical investigations, Scottish Canals have said that Twechar Lift Bridge could have a temporary repair, which would allow it to be safely operated on a limited basis over the summer. Bonnybridge Lift Bridge may be able to be operated on a one-off or very occasional basis. Scottish Canals states that it is unlikely they will

find a solution that allows normal use until additional funds are available, so these arrangements are to enable any boat owner who is currently affected to move their boat to a different location should they wish to do so.

The changes to operating days and times are available on the Scottish Canals website.

Updates on our discussions will be included in our next issue of Bulletin as we are treating this news as a priority.

## VOTE NOW – IWA CALENDAR COMPETITION

Over 400 images from 75 different photographers entered to our annual photography competition have now been shortlisted to 13 for the final stage. The images feature boats, wildlife, walkers and anglers across a broad cross section of Britain's best waterways in different seasons.

Congratulations to all the finalists who will all feature on our 2019 IWA calendar and receive copies to keep or send to friends and family. It's now time to vote for your overall favourite. The winning photographer will win a £100 voucher to spend in IWA's online shop [iwashop.com](http://iwashop.com). Place your votes by 13th April 2018.

See all finalists and vote for your favourite on the IWA website.

## TUNNEL UNCOVERED ON SHREWSBURY CANAL

Work to restore the entrance to a long-ignored canal tunnel and create an attractive all-abilities towpath walk for communities near Shrewsbury got a big boost from Waterway Recovery Group's first Canal Camp of 2018. Fourteen WRG volunteers spent the week-long Camp working with local volunteers from the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust at the North Portal of the Berwick Tunnel on the former Shrewsbury Canal.

Volunteers opened up around 200 metres of towpath extending out from the tunnel portal and installed gating and fencing to allow further work to continue in future. The capping stones at the tunnel entrance and the stonework behind the lengthsman's hut were exposed, and these will see further work done by SNCT volunteers, with WRG returning for an additional Camp in May.

Our Waterway Recovery Group runs over 25 Canal Camps a year at various canal navigations around the UK. Each camp relies solely on the support of dedicated volunteers, who give their time

to restore, recover and rebuild Britain's waterways.

Canal Camp Leader, Ian Gaston, said; "The Shrewsbury Canal Camp was a resounding success. The team quickly bonded and the first task to secure the site and set up a compound for materials was completed in record time. This allowed the team to focus on the main task of clearing the canal, and they should be proud of all they achieved."

The 887 metre (970 yard) Berwick Tunnel is the only tunnel on the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals, and used to connect Berwick Wharf through to Uffington and onwards to Shrewsbury.

Alistair Price of the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust commented; "This is a very successful start to the first phase of the plan to restore the 3440 metres (2.1 miles) of the section of canal known as the Berwick Loop which, it is hoped, will provide a popular attraction in its own right as well as a very attractive section of the restored Shrewsbury and Newport Canals."

This year's aim is to remove the tree roots from the tunnel entrance stonework to allow it to be re-mortared back into place. Eventually, SNCT would like to restore the damaged portal, rebuild the lengthsman's hut and create an all-ability circular walk

down the towpath to the A5 and back along the opposite bank. The long term aim of the project by the Shrewsbury & Newport Canal Trust is to reopen the length of the canal from Norbury Junction through to Shrewsbury.

With many more Canal Camps planned in 2018, WRG hopes to continue the fantastic work of its volunteers and all they achieve. Book a space on a 2018 Canal Camp or find out more about the full programme on the WRG website.

## TONNES OF RUBBISH CLEARED IN ANNUAL BIRMINGHAM CLEANUP

Over 50 volunteers from IWA, Waterway Recovery Group, Birmingham Canal Navigations Society, Dudley Canal Trust and Canal & River Trust, joined together to carry out a massive canal Cleanup on the Birmingham Canal Navigations on 24th and 25th March.

Volunteers spent the weekend clearing tonnes of rubbish along the BCN at Wednesfield on the Wyrley & Essington Canal. A number of fascinating objects were recovered from the canal bed including tractor tyres, a large safe, a bench, a motorbike and of course the odd trolley.

The annual Cleanup is organised and run by volunteers who travel far and wide to help prevent the BCN from clogging up with manmade objects and to ensure boats can continue navigate the less well used sections.

## YOUR THOUGHTS – COTSWOLD CANALS AND THE THAMES WATER PLAN

Thames Water has recently published its draft Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP19). Cotswold Canals Trust has been lobbying Thames Water to include the Cotswold Canals as a route to transfer water from the River Severn, but this hasn't been included in the draft plan.

Cotswold Canals Trust argues that using the canal would be cost effective and provide benefits far greater than options detailed in the Thames Water Plan. The decision would also greatly accelerate the restoration of the entire canal.

The Plan is open for public comment until 29th April 2018. IWA will be submitting a response to the draft Plan and is inviting comments from IWA members. Please send feedback to [alison.smedley@waterways.org.uk](mailto:alison.smedley@waterways.org.uk).

Find out more on the Cotswold Canals Trust website.

## FIRST AID MATTERS

Well done to the 12 participants who, on Saturday 10th March, completed a One Day Emergency First Aid Course in Warwickshire organised by our Restoration Hub.

The course provided a great overview from accident procedure, bleeding and shock, to CPR, sprains and strains, hyperthermia and, more commonly bites and stings. Run by the First Aid Academy, Cara Allison facilitated the day that was attended by folk from IWA, WRG and a number of canal trusts.

Stephanie Pay, from IWA, said “The course was great and informative. We had a really good trainer with a relaxed delivery and pace – I particularly liked the CPR exercise and, although we practiced on a dummy, I feel much more confident now should I need to do CPR in real life!”

The course was provided free of charge to participants as we believe being able to equip people with the necessary knowledge and first aid skills to act safely and calmly in an emergency situation is vital to volunteering on Britain’s waterways. Additional courses are planned for later this year.

## WRG BARN DANCE KICKS UP ITS HEELS

On Saturday 10th March, over 50 WRGies attended the ever-popular Barn Dance, at Rowington Village Hall in Warwickshire, and raised a fantastic £500 to help fund this year’s Canal Camps.

Five Minutes to Midnight led the event with great music, and hungry dancers had a veritable feast of a meal provided by top WRG cooks, Jude Palmer and Eli Mathieson. There was also half-time entertainment in the form of a raffle and other games. As always the beer went down very well and generous bar-goers helped boost overall profits significantly.

Alison Smedley, who came along said; “It was a great night, thanks to all involved for organising the evening and cooking the delicious food. The last dance was the highlight of the night for me - we were all stripping the willow perfectly and frenetically right to the end.”

Thank you to everyone who volunteered, danced or drank and helped make the night such a success. IWA’s Waterway Recovery Group organises a barn dance every year to help fund the running of its 25 plus Canal Camps. Canal Camps are run by volunteers who help to restore, recover and rebuild Britain’s waterways.

## COULD YOU LEAD IWA’S CANALWAY CAVALCADE TEAM?

IWA Canalway Cavalcade, London’s biggest, brightest and best annual waterside festival taking place over the early May Bank Holiday weekend is looking for a new Chair to help organise the event.

This unique waterside event is organised and run entirely by a core team of enthusiastic, dedicated volunteers. The group meets every 6 – 8 weeks in London to discuss progress and share ideas.

The increasing success of the event means the team is looking for a candidate with previous experience of chairing committees, or a leadership role in a charitable organisation to put themselves forward for appointment as chair of the Committee for the 2019 event and ongoing.

Read the full role description and apply on the IWA website.

# IWA BRANCH NEWS

IWA is organised through a network of volunteers across eight Regions and 33 Branches across the country. To find a Branch near you go to [www.waterways.org.uk/branches\\_regions/branches\\_regions](http://www.waterways.org.uk/branches_regions/branches_regions) which will take you to information about the Branches, their newsletters, contacts and the local waterways in their area.

## NEW BOLLARDS AND SUPPORT FOR WHEELCHAIR USERS IN EAST YORKSHIRE

New cast iron bollards are to be installed along the Driffild Navigation thanks to a donation from IWA East Yorkshire Branch.

The Branch contributed £500 towards the purchase of 40 cast iron bollards to be installed at the locks during the spring and summer of 2018.

The first nine bollards are now in place at Town Lock with the remainder to be installed at Wansford, Whin Hill and others in the coming months.

The Branch also donated £500 to the Beverley Barge Preservation Society to

support the purchase of a lift to enable passengers in a wheelchair to enjoy trips on the Beverley Beck and River Hull aboard the Society's trip boat Sun. The lift is now fitted and ready for the 2018 season.

## UNCOVERING HISTORY AND LITTER IN LICHFIELD

Led by IWA Lichfield Branch, 24 walkers explored Fradley Airfield and walked parts of the Trent & Mersey and Coventry canals in March. The group toured the runway, a dilapidated hut, pillboxes and kept an eye out for a resident ghost before visiting Fradley Church to learn about the Commonwealth War Graves.

Another day in March saw 18 volunteers removing litter, four supermarket trolleys, a strimmer, a scooter, jogging machine, and two pushbikes from the Trent & Mersey Canal in Rugeley.

Steps by Leathermill Lane Bridge were repaired, the canalside notice boards were removed and taken to Fradley for refurbishment and some of the bulbs planted last year were spotted throwing out new shoots.

Read the full walk report and see future work parties on IWA Lichfield Branch webpages.

## FLOWER POWER FOR THE ASHTON CANAL

IWA Manchester Branch volunteers built a new raised flower bed at Lock 7 and turned around the soil in the Lock garden along the Ashton Canal in March. The Branch has been transforming the area by holding regular volunteer days along the Canal.

Visit IWA Manchester Branch pages online for information about future work parties.

## 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 on the IWA website. 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 online.

## 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 online.

### Contact Us

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