WRG Chairman, Mike Palmer, Recognised in Queen’s Birthday Honours

On Saturday 11th June, it was announced that IWA’s Waterway Recovery Group chairman, Mike Palmer, has been awarded an MBE for voluntary service to the restoration of British waterways in the Queen’s Birthday Honours.

Mike Palmer has been the WRG chairman for 19 years and has volunteered with the organisation for nearly 40 years. He is one of the leading figures in voluntary restoration work on the UK’s inland waterways, championing best practice in health and safety, canal restoration skills and techniques, and plant operation in the field.

Mike has been involved in countless restoration projects throughout the UK, including Aston Locks on the Montgomery Canal and Hanbury Flight on the Droitwich Canal. These and other restoration projects have brought wide and substantial economic benefit to many waterside communities. Mike is a perfect example of how volunteering can be done professionally, but also with passion.

Mike said ‘It seems very strange to get an award for something that has been, above all else, tremendous fun. This award would not have happened without thousands of volunteers who believed they could make a difference. I have tremendous pride in what we have achieved together and thank all those who have inspired me along the way.’

WRG offers a unique volunteering experience. Every year, new volunteers of all ages make life-long friends, have great laughs and learn new skills along the way. There is also the chance that one day the volunteers will be able to walk, boat or cycle down a canal that they helped restore. Mike, and his team of dedicated volunteers, are at the heart of this.

Les Etheridge, IWA chairman said ‘Without doubt, Mike Palmer is the leading figure in voluntary restoration work on the UK’s inland waterways. He is widely respected by senior figures in navigation authorities, public sector bodies and by those who wield shovels and work on the waterways alike. Mike has also had a profound influence on The Inland Waterways Association as a whole through his perceptive analysis, good humour and perseverance to get the right result for the waterways.’
Several other waterway figures were also recognised in the Queen’s Birthday Honours:

- Sally Ash, appointed an MBE for services to Britain’s Inland Waterways. Sally was formerly Head of Boating at CRT.
- Julia Simpson, appointed an MBE for services to communities at risk of Flooding. Julia is currently the West Thames Area Manager with the Environment Agency and was formerly head of navigation and recreation.
- Mike Wyatt, appointed a BEM for his services to restoration work at the eastern end of the Kennet & Avon Canal.

IWA News

IWA Issues Statement on Paddle Pawl Stops

IWA has written to Tony Stammers, Head of Safety at Canal & River Trust, following announcement of CRT’s plans for discussing trials of new paddle pawl designs. IWA welcomes CRT’s plans to replace any damaged spindles and repair damaged paddle pawls but has significant concerns over one specific aspect of any new paddle design.

For some time IWA has argued against proposals for installing paddle pawl stops that would prevent the paddle pawl from being completely moved out of the way whilst a paddle is being wound down. This issue has been raised locally by IWA branches and nationally through boating forums over the last six months or so, however IWA is concerned that paddle pawl stops are included in the proposed designs being trialled, and that CRT is not taking into account the new safety hazards that would be created by this approach.

IWA considers that more needs to be done to educate boaters about replacing pawl catches in position after winding a paddle down, using the right windlass hole and not leaving windlasses on spindles once the paddle gear is wound up. Educating boaters about these three things would reduce the number of accidents. IWA believes that the installation of stops to prevent pawls being completely moved away from the paddle gear creates new hazards that could result in worse accidents occurring.

IWA looks forward to the opportunity to discuss this matter further and in greater detail with CRT. IWA also intends to work with CRT and other organisations who deliver training, such as RYA, in order to improve knowledge surrounding the safest ways to operate locks.

IWA’s letter to Tony Stammers is available to download from the website.

IWA Head Office Staff and Waterway Restoration Volunteers Take on the Welsh 3000 Challenge for WRG Van Appeal

IWA Head Office staff Jenny Black, Toby Gomm and Amber Jenkins, WRG volunteer Pete Fleming and Newbury Working Party Group volunteer Rob Nicholson, are tackling the Welsh 3000 challenge on Saturday 20th June to raise money for the WRG Van Appeal.

The challenge involves walking across fifteen peaks, including Snowdon, which are all over 3,000 feet. Due to the difficult nature of the challenge many people undertake it over two or three days but the five walkers are attempting to complete the challenge in less than 24 hours. It will be an extreme test of endurance, navigation skills and fitness as they will travel 30 miles and climb a total ascent of 9,786 feet.

The van appeal total is currently at £57,730, almost 50% of the £120,000 target and we would like to thank everyone that has supported the appeal so far. You can sponsor the Welsh 3000 team and support the Van Appeal at WRG’s website or by calling 01494 783453 ext. 611.
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IWA's National Trailboat Festival

IWA's National Trailboat Festival, hosted by Lancaster Canal Trust on the Lancaster Canal over the weekend of 30th May, was a success for those involved.

IWA's sales stand was one of the many stalls on offer at Countryfest, an annual canal side show that this year incorporated the Trailboat Festival. The team of volunteers on the stand made the most of the footfall attending the event and stood alongside WRG to raise funds and IWA’s profile.

The successful weekend was followed by a Boaters’ day on Monday 1st June, when a dedication ceremony was held about a mile north of the Festival site, on the section of the Canal that is under restoration. The ceremony recognised that work on this section of the navigation is near completion. The stretch has already been re-watered and it is hoped that it will be connected to the currently navigable, but isolated, stretch of the Northern Reaches of the Lancaster Canal in due course. Canoeists were able to enjoy this near completed stretch of the Canal at the dedication ceremony and there were a number of visitors also in attendance, including trailboats, which cruised as far as the current navigation permits, and WRG volunteers, who have supported the restoration work that has been led by Lancaster Canal Trust.

A diary style report of the Festival is available to read at the Wilderness Boat Owners Club website.

Three Months Until IWA’s Waterways Triathlon

There are only three months to go before IWA’s Waterways Triathlon at Hoe Mill Lock on the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation in Essex and places are going fast. The event takes place on Sunday 20th September with a choice of a 50km or 30km course of canoeing, cycling and running.

Places are £35 per person and all sponsorship raised will benefit two local Essex causes - Essex Waterways, responsible for managing, maintaining and improving the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation, and The Susan Trust, a historic Chelmer lighter boat restoration project.

Participants who have signed up to participate in the triathlon so far include a mixture of individuals, teams and even a dog! If you would like to be part of IWA’s exciting event, then book your place now. It will be a fantastic opportunity to see beautiful parts of the Essex countryside whilst supporting worthy waterways causes. Participants are welcome to bring their own canoes/kayaks.

Further information is available at IWA’s website or from Toby Gomm on 01494 783 453 ext.611.

IWA Provides Engineering Help for Restoration Projects

IWA, CRT and Scottish Canals have worked together to develop a document, Epic Engineering, that explores the challenges faced by waterway restoration projects and celebrates the engineering utilised to overcome them.

The document demonstrates how groups involved in waterway restoration have tackled potential project stoppers by finding solutions that have added, or will add, value to the finished project in a variety of ways.

A number of relatively common waterway restoration problems are featured in the document with each covered in a separate section. Each section has at least one case

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study with details of how the issue has been addressed by a particular group, as well as the contact details of those involved in engineering the solution.

It is hoped that the document will inspire restoration groups, stakeholders and local authorities, to overcome waterway restoration challenges through clever engineering and lateral thinking.

**Other News**

**CRT Extends Contract With Land & Water**

CRT has announced that it plans to carry out £15 million of dredging in the next two years as part of its £80 million 10-year dredging programme after it agreed a two-year extension of its dredging contract with Land & Water to complete the increased amount of work. The work will include both mainline dredging and regular spot dredging. The spot dredging programme aims to identify locations where smaller scale but regular dredging should take place to improve navigation where, for example, the depth of a canal might generally be sufficient but isolated spots might cause problems for boaters. Boater feedback is invaluable in helping the Trust’s team prioritise the work.

A £2 million programme of spot dredging is being developed for the current financial year with investigations taking place in seventy-five places across the country. These range from the tidal gates on the River Don to the Lancaster Canal to the River Lee.

In addition, £5.3 million of dredging on eleven major projects is being carried out. One project, at Zouch on the River Soar, has already been completed and a further two projects are currently being worked on at Leicester on the Soar, and on the Trent & Mersey Canal between Aston and Iron Bridge. The dredging team has also started developing projects for the next two years.

If boaters have any suggestions of locations that could benefit from dredging they can contact their local waterway, details of which can be found at CRT’s website.

**Work Starts on Wey & Arun Canal Bridge**

Wey & Arun Canal Trust has announced that work has started to build a bridge that will enable part of the Wey & Arun Canal to be opened to boats for the first time in more than 150 years.

Contractors are carrying out preparatory earthworks for a new crossing of the Wey and Arun Canal in Compasses Lane, Alfold, at one of the entrances to Dunsfold Aerodrome. The bridge is replacing a wartime concrete causeway, which is now the only obstacle to navigation on one-and-a-quarter miles of the canal. The waterway has already been largely restored between Tickner’s Heath in Dunsfold and Fast Bridge on the A281 at Alfold.

Work on the bridge, which is expected to take about six months, is being done with the co-operation of aerodrome owners Dunsfold Park and local landowners. The Trust has so far raised £421,000 towards the cost of the project. Over next winter, Trust volunteers will prepare the site for the road to be realigned. Contractors will return to do this in spring 2016 and the canal section is expected to be officially opened in the autumn.

The new canal section will join more than three miles of fully operational canal at Loxwood in West Sussex, where the Trust has a visitor centre and around 10,000 people a year enjoy excursions on its boats.

**Plaque Unveiled to Celebrate the Edinburgh & Glasgow Union Canal as an Historic Engineering Landmark**

On Tuesday 8th June, the Provost of West Lothian Council, Cllr Tom Kerr, and Professor Paul Jowitt CBE, past President of the Institution for the Study of Engineering, will officially unveil a plaque to celebrate the Edinburgh & Glasgow Union Canal as an Historic Engineering Landmark.

Find out about volunteering - [www.waterways.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.waterways.org.uk/volunteer)
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of Civil Engineers, unveiled a plaque at Manse Road Basin Linlithgow, home of the Linlithgow Union Canal Society, to mark the Edinburgh & Glasgow Union Canal as an historic engineering landmark.

The Canal, which was originally engineered by Thomas Telford and Hugh Baird and has great aqueducts striding across the Avon, Almond and Water of Leith valleys to cover the 31 ½ miles between Falkirk and Edinburgh, has been designated a ‘National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark’, one of only two recognised so far in Scotland.

The Canal was opened in 1822 but like many fell into disuse and was shut to navigation in 1965. After many years of campaigning by several canal societies including the Linlithgow Union Canal Society, British Waterways was able to restore the Union Canal to through navigation with the help of funding from the Millennium Lottery funds. It was reopened in 2001 and reconnected to the Forth & Clyde Canal via the Falkirk Wheel in 2002. It is now used by leisure boats and is managed by Scottish Canals.

The ceremony to unveil the plaque was organised and attended by members of the Panel for Historical Engineering Works Scotland on behalf of the Institution of Civil Engineers together with the Linlithgow Union Canal Society.

River Avon Bridge Damaged by Tractor

Following a collision at the beginning of June, the medieval bridge in Bidford-on-Avon will need to be partially dismantled to carry out repairs.

A tractor hit the side of the bridge and caused damage to the stone parapet, spandrel wall and central pier, which now require significant repairs. A number of different stakeholders and interested parties, including Historic England, Avon Navigation Trust, stonemasons, traffic control, county highways and the county council’s term maintenance contractor, will all be involved in the work.

The bridge has been re-opened to pedestrians but the date it will re-open to vehicles is yet to be announced.

Towpath Improvements Completed Across England and Wales

Canal & River Trust has completed three towpath improvements projects covering the Leeds & Liverpool Canal towpath in Rufford, a mile-long section of the Montgomery Canal towpath between Four Crosses and Carreg hospa near Llanymynech and the final stage of towpath improvements along the River Weaver between Northwich and Winsford.

The work was carried out to upgrade towpath surfaces and encourage greater use. It is hoped that each of the latest stretches to be worked on will benefit the local area:

- The £197,000 towpath improvements in Rufford were designed to encourage more tourists to visit the local heritage attraction, Rufford Old Hall, via public transport as the improved towpath runs between the railway station and the National Trust site.
- The work on the Montgomery Canal is part of a project that has invested over £1 million in a 14 mile section of the towpath between Newtown and Welshpool. Such improvements on the Montgomery Canal are welcome alongside on-going restoration work to re-open the entire length of the Canal to navigation, a project that has been supported by IWA and WRG for many years.
- Completion of improvement work to the River Weaver towpath between Vale Royal Locks and the Blue Bridge means that walkers and cyclists can now travel between Northwich and Winsford completely off road using the improved route.
Vote to Help Wilts & Berks Canal Trust Secure Funding for Community Asset

Wilts & Berks Canal Trust, recently saved the Peterborough Arms, a canal side pub, from being turned into residential accommodation. The Trust bought the pub with donations and loans from members but must now make the pub compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act by building a unisex disabled toilet and a wide entrance.

It has applied for £25,000 from the OneFamily Foundation to fund the work. A number of groups have applied for the funding and that which receives the most public votes will be awarded the grant. More information about the Trust’s project to turn the pub into a community asset, including information on how to vote, can be found at the OneFamily Foundation website.

Fuel Leak on the Northampton Arm

A police investigation was launched in June after a fuel pipe going over the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union Canal at Gayton Marina was drilled into, in what was thought to be an attempted theft that went wrong. As a result around 50,000 litres of kerosene leaked into the water:

The fuel mainly sat on top of the water and was contained with floating barriers, which helped to reduce the impact on local wildlife, before being removed. The cleanup has since been completed and the Canal re-opened, whilst the Police investigation is on-going.

IWA & WRG Work Party Reports

This section contains volunteer reports from IWA branches and IWA’s Waterway Recovery Group. IWA branch reports contain information from their latest work parties where volunteers have worked to help maintain their local canals. WRG reports on its Canal Camps and weekend digs to keep readers up to date with the restoration work the group has been undertaking.

Work Continues on the Uttoxeter Canal

On Thursday 14th May, IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch and Caldon & Uttoxeter Canals Trust volunteers undertook some much needed tasks on the Uttoxeter Canal. During the morning, the group completed the removal of small shrubs, self-set saplings and brambles from in front of Crumpwood Cottage. This has really started to open up the area and it is probably getting closer to how it would have looked in the first half of the 19th century, when the weir-keeper would have needed uninterrupted views of the weir and flood lock from his cottage windows. It is planned that a specialist team from WRG will remove the fallen birch from the weir during their reunion camp in November. The group noted that Forget-me-nots, possibly Myosotis scorpioides, were in flower providing subtle but welcome splashes of colour; and are interested to see what else comes into flower over the coming months. A number of mature trees adjacent to the footbridge had some of their lower branches cut back or removed that were encroaching over the walk way and threatened to poke walkers in the eyes as they crossed over.

After lunch the group moved up to Bridge 70, where it tidied vegetation from around the bridge using the original Caldon Canal Society’s slashers from when the Caldon was restored; they are still giving sterling service. Volunteers worked along the towpath giving the tree stumps a ‘haircut’ to remove the regrowth; this is something that will need to be undertaken on a regular basis, as if these epicormic shoots are allowed to grow too large it will become a much bigger task to remove them in the future. Due to the sensitive nature of the site the group is unable to remove the tree stumps.

Throughout the day there were many walkers, all of whom stopped and chatted, without exception they were all extremely complimentary and appreciative of
the hard work that has been done by all the volunteers. It was very nice for the volunteers to know that they are adding something to visitors’ enjoyment of this part of the Churnet Valley.

At the end of June the group plans to start a second Uttoxeter Canal work party each month. This will be on a Saturday to give those who work during the week an opportunity to participate. They will not follow a set pattern but will always be towards the end of the month, dates will be advertised in the newsletter and on the website. The first will be on Saturday 20th June when we will be Himalayan balsam ‘bashing’. There is a very large amount of it to remove this year, so if you are able to help it will be greatly appreciated and you will be made most welcome.

Volunteers Work at Hoole Lane and Chemistry Locks

On 30th May, IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch volunteers teamed up with CRT and volunteers from the local Labour constituency party to work at Hoole Lane and Chemistry locks on the Chester lock flight of the Shropshire Union Canal. The force of over thirty volunteers split between the two locks and with so many helping hands and good weather the teams managed to complete painting at both sites.

Two Commercial Bins Filled at Bridgwater Docks

IWA West Country Branch was at Bridgwater Docks on the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal on 6th June where ten volunteers prepared and painted the railings and cleared rubbish from the Docks. This included three bicycles, four trollies and enough general waste to fill two commercial bins with general waste.

Waterway Events

Major IWA events in 2015

29th - 31st August 2015 - Festival of Water, Northampton

IWA Branch Events in 2015

3rd - 5th July 2015 - Ware Boat Festival, Hertfordshire

4th - 5th July 2015 - Welsh Waterways Festival, Welshpool, Mid-Wales

See IWA’s Events Calendar for a full list of waterway events. You can also search by event type or find out what’s going on in your area with the map search.

Upcoming Volunteer/Cleanup Events

June

17th June Work Party - River Gipping (supported by IWA Ipswich Branch)

17th June Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Trent & Mersey Canal (IWA Lichfield Branch)

17th June Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Beeston Lock (supported by IWA Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Branch)

18th June Work Party - Trent & Mersey Canal, Cheshire Locks (IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

20th June Work Party - Greater Manchester (IWA Manchester Branch)

20th June Work Party - Bridgwater & Taunton Canal (IWA West Country Branch)

20th June Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Uttoxeter Canal (IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

20th June Work Party - River Lee, Ware (IWA Lee & Stort Branch)

23rd June Work Party - Trent & Mersey Canal, Burslem Port (supported by IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

23rd June Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Aylestone Meadows (supported by IWA Leicestershire Branch)

2015 Waterway Events - www.waterways.org.uk/events
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Keeping our waterways alive!

24th June Work Party - River Gipping (supported by IWA Ipswich Branch)

25th June Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Uttoxeter Canal (IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

26th June Work Party - Congleton (IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

26th June Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Pocklington Canal (IWA East Yorkshire Branch)

27th June Work Party - Chester (IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch)

28th June Work Party - Northampton (IWA Northampton Branch)

29th June Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Caldon Canal (IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

July

1st July Work Party - River Gipping (supported by IWA Ipswich Branch)

2nd July Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Caldon Canal (IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

4th July Work Party - River Gipping (supported by IWA Ipswich Branch)

4th July Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Bridgewater & Taunton Canal (IWA West Country Branch)

4th July Work Party - Trent & Mersey Canal, Burslem Port (supported by IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

5th July Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Caldon Canal (IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

7th July Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Aylestone Meadows (supported by IWA Leicestershire Branch)

8th July Work Party - River Gipping (supported by IWA Ipswich Branch)

8th July Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal (IWA Birmingham, Black Country & Worcestershire Branch)

9th July Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Uttoxeter Canal (IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

10th July Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Caldon Canal (IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

11th July Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Newport (supported by IWA Shrewsbury & North Wales Branch)

11th July Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Haslam Park, Preston (supported by IWA Lancashire & Cumbria Branch)

12th July Himalayan Balsam Work Party - River Avon (IWA Warwickshire Branch)

12th July Work Party - Sleaforf Navigation (supported by IWA Lincolnshire Branch)

14th July Work Party - Northampton (IWA Northampton Branch)

15th July Work Party - River Gipping (supported by IWA Ipswich Branch)

16th July Work Party - Trent & Mersey Canal, Cheshire Locks (IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

18th July Work Party - Greater Manchester (IWA Manchester Branch)

18th July Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Uttoxeter Canal (IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

22nd July Work Party - River Gipping (supported by IWA Ipswich Branch)

22nd July Himalayan Balsam Work Party - Caldon Canal (IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

24th July Work Party - Congleton (IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

25th July Work Party - Chester (IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch)

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26th July Work Party - Northampton (IWA Northampton Branch)

28th July Work Party - Trent & Mersey Canal, Burslem Port (supported by IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch)

29th July Work Party - River Gipping (supported by IWA Ipswich Branch)

**Upcoming Towpath Walks**

**June**
- 21st June Waterside Walk - Little Venice to Camden (IWA Towpath Walks Society)

- 26th-27th June Waterside Walk - River Foss (River Foss Society)

**July**
- 5th July Waterside Walk - Grand Union Canal, Paddington (IWA Towpath Walks Society)

- 8th July Waterside Walk - Saltisford Canal Arm (IWA Warwickshire Branch)

- 15th July Restoration Walk - Lichfield Canal (IWA Lichfield Branch)

- 19th July Waterside Walk - The New River (IWA Towpath Walks Society)

**IWA Member Discounts and Special Offers**

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

- ABC Boat Hire - 15% discount
- Airedale Cruising - 10% discount off skippered day cruises
- Boat Windows Ltd - 5% discount
- Boatshed Grand Union - 10% discount on brokerage
- Calcutt Boats - 5% Discount
- Canal Boat Magazine - Annual subscription for just £15
- CanalCruising.co.uk - 10% discount
- Channel Glaze - 10% discount on double glazing for boats
- Cotswold Outdoor - 10% discount
- Europcar - Special hire rates to IWA members
- Frangipani SUP Ltd - 10% discount
- Forge Studio - 10% discount
- Grand Union Diesel Services - 5% discount
- IceGripper - 20% discount
- I Love Meet and Greet Ltd - 15% discount
- King’s Lock Chandlery - 5% discount
- Lee Sanitation Ltd. - 10% on orders over £100
- Marine Megastore Ltd. - 15% discount
- Midland Chandlers - 5% discount
- Paper Wizard - 15% discount
- River Canal Rescue - Up to 15% discount
- RoadPro - 5% discount
- The Three Locks Pub, Grand Union Canal nr. Milton Keynes - 10% discount on food
- UltimateBerths.com - Free Listing
- Wavetrain Marine - 5% discount on 1 day VHF SCR training courses
- Willowbridge Marina - 10% discount on chandlery purchases and services in the yard
- Wyvern Shipping Co. Ltd - 10% discount on published prices
- Zead - Free postage and accessories

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

Please contact the membership team on 01494 783453 for the details of the offers.

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Contact us: 01494 783453 or email iwa@waterways.org.uk