

Navigating the Old Bedford River

In November John Revell from IWA's Peterborough Branch took his narrowboat Olive Emily into the Old Bedford River via the tidal river Great Ouse at Salter's Lode. John attempted the same journey in November 2015 and managed about a mile before being forced to turn round through lack of water and a massive amount of cott weed which completely clogged up the propeller. This year he emailed EA well in advance (7th October) advising them that he proposed to navigate the Old Bedford during the period 3rd to 5th November. John further explained that he would aim to cruise all the way to Welches Dam lock and asked for confirmation that the Welney Guillotine Gate, through which he would have to pass, would be left in the raised (navigable) position. He never received a reply from EA.

John successfully entered the Old Bedford at 7.45 am on Saturday November 5th. This was not straightforward but the Middle Level Lock keeper and an EA staff member were very helpful and together with a volunteer crew including David Venn, Chairman of IWA Peterborough branch, Chris Howes, Ivan Cane and Mike Daines, Olive Emily headed off towards Welches Dam. They made



Photo: Mike Daines - John Revell reverses Olive Emily into and through the Salters Lode sluice gate to join the Old Bedford river.

quite good progress at first and soon managed to pass the one mile progress marker from the previous year. After another mile or so there was evidence of dredging on the west bank with the spoil piled up along the bank and the digger visible in the far distance. It was this dredging that had quite obviously enabled their progress up to this point.

Around three miles in from Salters Lode the river took on a glazed and milky look and the boat became engulfed in a mass of cott weed with the water level dropping to a silted muddy depth of just one foot. It immediately became obvious that they couldn't proceed any further and once again would reluctantly have to abandon the goal and turn around.

With much prodigious poling by the crew Olive Emily was slowly extracted from the glue and turned back into deeper water to make her return to Salters Lode. John had again been defeated by the same problems as the previous year; insufficient depth of water; lack of dredging and masses of cott weed.

Welches Dam lock which was stanked off by EA in 2006 has remained closed and impassable for 10 years despite the efforts of

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IWA locally and nationally, the East Anglian Waterways Association and the Project Hereward team. The “temporary” piling which was installed by EA in 2006 covers most of the entrance to the lock so it is very effective at stopping boats but rather less effective at stopping leaks which was claimed to be the reason for the piling in the first place.

The Old Bedford is not a dead end waterway leading nowhere but is part of a long established route that needs to be restored

to full navigation. It would make an interesting cruising ring. It has been navigable since 1637, well before the main canal era started. It is a statutory navigation and it needs to be maintained. Although the Old Bedford remains officially open it will remain off limits for all but the most determined boater until it is deep enough, and dredged properly. CRT has built on the long experience of British Waterways in managing rivers so that they remain navigable most of the time but are closed when flood conditions require.

Just think of the Rivers Soar, Trent, Severn, Avon, Weaver or the river sections of the Trent and Mersey or the Caldon or the Calder and Hebble to name just a few. Would the current lamentable state of affairs in this part of the Fens be tolerated elsewhere on the system? Would this have been allowed to go on for so long if CRT managed it? Would it not be better if responsibility for navigation matters on waterways that are currently managed by EA be transferred to CRT?.

IWA News

Trouble Brewing at Mill

IWA is campaigning to preserve the well known feature on the canal at Shardlow and is asking supporters to take action.

Marstons Brewery have applied to rename the iconic Clock Warehouse in Shardlow to ‘Mill on the Trent’ and make various changes to the building, including removal of the historically important sign ‘Navigation from the Trent to the Mersey’ that until recently adorned the front face of the building. The significance of that sign is that it was the name given to the proposed canal in the original canal act.

The planning application contains a heritage statement which attempts to justify the name, but contains gross errors - the building was not “originally built as a corn mill”, it was not “originally named Mill No2”, that name coming from F

E Stevens c 1940. It is not on the River Trent, it is on the Trent and Mersey Canal. The proposed name will perpetuate the myth that the central arch was to house a water wheel. It was of course for canal boats to stop for unloading and loading directly to the building above.

When the site was up for sale in 1781 it is described as “all those large and extensive wharfs and warehouses” (advert in Derby Mercury 18 May 1781). The companies involved from 1780 to 1938 all traded on the canal as general carriers. Only from 1938 to 1975 was it owned by a corn miller, whose principal milling operation was at a different warehouse in the village. (They did set up a temporary mill at the Clock Warehouse in 1940 when their No 1 Mill was being renovated after a fire.)

Following lobbying from IWA’s Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Branch the Area Operations

Manager of Marstons has confirmed that the name change will still go ahead based on confusion about the history of the building. He has stated that the navigation sign will be replaced but the Branch would like as many people as possible to make their feelings known to Marstons about this well known waterways landmark. Please email the brewery’s Area Operations Manager at mandy.fellows@marstons.co.uk to politely stress the importance of keeping this historic site correctly named and the signage retained - a decision like this should not be made due to a misunderstanding. Please copy IWA’s Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Branch (nottsandderbys@waterways.org.uk) into your correspondence so they can monitor response or do email them if you need further information before compiling a letter.

Find out about volunteering - www.waterways.org.uk/volunteer

IWA Welcomes Public Inquiry into Boston Barrier

IWA has welcomed an announcement by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Andrea Leadsom MP, that a public inquiry will be held in the new year into the Transport and Works Order application for a tidal barrier on the River Witham at Boston, Lincolnshire.

IWA called for a public inquiry when submitting its views about the impact to safety and navigation of the proposals to the Secretary of State a few weeks ago, and was among a number of organisations expressing concerns.

Gren Messham, Chairman of IWA's Navigation Committee, said "The announcement that there will be a public inquiry is great news as it will enable IWA and others to put forward the case for better provision for navigation, through re-instating the inclusion of a parallel lock and improvements to the waterfront in Boston through water level management".

While the need for a tidal surge barrier at Boston is clear, the application as originally proposed, along with the associated Navigational Risk Assessment, does not adequately or accurately set out or mitigate the risks to navigation represented by the construction and operation of the proposed barrier. In addition, the application does not appear to correctly represent the risks of fluvial flows and flooding in the River Witham once the barrier

is in place. Up to early 2015, plans for Boston's tidal surge barrier included a parallel lock and improvements to the water front in Boston which could have mitigated these concerns.

Among a list of specific concerns expressed by IWA are a lack of detail on water flow velocities around the barrier, the proposed minimum 18 metres width of the coffer dam by-pass channel, the lack of information on what is actually to be put in place by the project to manage transit by water during the construction period, and the risk of collision due to excessive flows and short sight-lines with the barrier location on a bend in the Haven.

IWA Seasonal Greetings Cards

Send good wishes to family, friends and colleagues, raise the profile of our waterways with beautiful images and support IWA at the same time - a triple whammy! Take a look at the fantastic selection of Christmas cards available at iwashop.com without having to fight through crowded shops.

IWA Mentioned in Parliament

Lord Fearn, a Liberal Democrat peer, asked HM Government how many canals were fully self-operating during 2014, 2015 and 2016. Lord Gardiner of Kimble, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, responded by stating "The Government does not hold

this information. However, the Inland Waterways Association has compiled a directory of navigable waterways in Great Britain which can be accessed on its website".

IWA's directory of waterways is available to all on IWA's website. It lists all navigable and formerly navigable waterways across Britain.

IWA's Van Appeal Reaches £120,000 Target

After 18 months of fundraising, IWA has succeeded in reaching its appeal target of £120,000! After a fantastic push in the final 48 hours of the campaign, the target was actually exceeded by just over £1,200. Thanks to a great first year of fundraising, WRG had already been able to purchase two vans in time for this summer's canal camps and will now be able to place the order for the final two in the next couple of months.

Completing the appeal is a fantastic achievement and couldn't have happened without the efforts of all the WRG volunteers, who took part in a huge variety of fundraising challenges and events over the last two years or, of course, without the generosity of the hundreds of committed donors and sponsors who contributed to the appeal.

Thank you to everyone who took part, in whatever way, big or small, and helped make it happen! You're all Van-tastic!

IWA's Canalway Cavalcade 2017 - Join Our Gang

The preparation for IWA's prestigious London waterways festival from Saturday 29th April to Monday 1st May 2017 is well underway. Over 100 boats are already booked in to this popular event so prompt booking is recommended to guarantee a space. Canalway Cavalcade is brilliantly organised by a very experienced team of volunteers but more hands and new ideas would be very welcome. To get involved in this wonderful weekend please complete the online form on IWA's website.

Spot the Paddle Pawl Stops

Following the announcement last year that CRT would cease fitting any more stops to paddle pawls (IWA Bulletin September 2015), IWA has been following up with CRT their plans for improving paddle pawl maintenance and design. In the meantime, IWA would like to know where paddle pawl stops that had been fitted earlier in 2015 still remain in place, and is asking boaters to advise of any remaining paddle pawl stops at locks on CRT waterways by emailing Alison Smedley, IWA Campaigns Officer at alison.smedley@waterways.org.uk.

IWA's WRG Awards £1500 of Training Grants to Volunteers

Three volunteers have been awarded a training grant of up to £630 each to undertake training in the use of chainsaws. The volunteers are part of WRG's Forestry Team who carry out major scrub and tree clearance for canal restoration projects throughout England and Wales. This year the team have worked on several sites from Wey and Arun Canal in the south to the Uttoxeter Canal in the Midlands and it is hoped by training up more volunteers they can do even more work in 2017!

WRG's Training Grant has been set up to assist with the cost of training volunteers in skills associated with inland waterway restoration and is open to volunteers from any canal restoration project. More details can be found [here](#).

People

Christopher Power Prize

The Christopher Power prize was this year awarded to Richard Dommatt but, as he was unable to be at the AGM to receive it, the presentation took place on Friday 11th November at an event alongside the Monmouthshire Canal at the newly restored TY Coch locks. This took place in the presence of representatives of the local council, CRT, IWA's

Parliamentarian of the Year Lord German and members of the Canal Trust and trainees from the waterworks project. On receiving the award, Richard Dommatt said: "It is an honour to receive this award on behalf of all the community members I have worked with, assisted and guided through canal restoration projects over the last 45 years. It must be remembered that one person alone cannot deliver such a special project or restore a canal alone - I have always believed in a partnership approach, engaging with other volunteers and members of the canalside communities who have a passion to deliver a successful restoration project."

The award was presented by Roger Holmes IWA South West Region Chair and Andrew Hemmings from the awards committee read the citation.

Martyn Heighton

The world of historic boats has lost a dedicated champion following the sudden death of the Director of National Historic Ships UK, Martyn Heighton. Martyn, who died on November 6, has played an important part in the maritime heritage community for many years, working with some of the biggest projects as well as campaigning for less well known ones.

In his role at National Historic Ships he was responsible for setting up the National Historic Fleet – the 200 most important boats of the 1,200 on the National

Historic Ships Register. Martyn's experience in maritime heritage was second to none: the former CEO of the Mary Rose Trust, Trustee and Executive of SS Great Britain and Director of Leisure for Bristol's Historic Harbour, the Matthew project, and organizer of the first 'International Festival of the Sea' which Bristol hosted in 1996. He also led the Merseyside Maritime Museum development in the early 1980s as part of the regeneration of Albert Dock in Liverpool.

He was also Trustee and Chair of the Technical Committee for the HMS Victory Preservation Company, Trustee of HMS Caroline, Trustee of Lakeland Arts Trust, a member of the Cutty Sark Advisory Committee, he served on the Council of the Society for Nautical Research, was a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights and a former member of the Inland Waterways Advisory Council (IWAC).

IWA Branch News

IWA Northamptonshire Branch

In the past two months IWA Northamptonshire Branch has held five work parties carrying out improvements on the Northampton Arm such as: removing fence rubbish from Lock 1; painting locks and clearing by-pass weir and channel; collecting

over 40 bags of rubbish; working at Town Moorings, Northampton clearing vegetation; pulling various shopping trollies, bicycles and other metal rubbish from the river front; used two tonnes of aggregate to fill in potholes; approximately 1000 spring bulbs planted.

Other Waterways News

New Canal Mile Posts on Leeds & Liverpool Canal

Young people from the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Prince's Trust Blackburn team have worked with CRT to install new canal mile posts as part of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal bicentenary celebrations.

The special EveryMileCounts campaign to restore or replace missing mile posts along the waterway's 127 mile route has been supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and has been helped by dozens of volunteers who have repaired or painted new mile posts and then installed them along the canal. At an event at Eanam Wharf, Blackburn, 12 volunteers explained how they had worked with the Trust's Brightwork project to develop news skills in teamwork, organisation, decision-making and time management.

Although the canal is 200 years old, the original cast iron mile markers date back to the 1890s. They were

installed as a response to legislation introduced to regulate canal freight tolls - the Railway and Canal Rates, Tolls and Charges Order of 1893. This prompted the whole of the canal to be re-surveyed and new mileposts, along with half and quarter mileposts, installed along the towpaths.

Canal Trust Plans Walk Along Lichfield Canal

A guided walk along the Summerhill section of the Lichfield Canal will take place on Saturday 3rd December. Walkers will be able to see the huge progress made this year by Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust volunteers and the many corporate volunteers from all over the country who have helped transform this section of the abandoned canal.

Starting at the Oddfellows in the Boat on Walsall Road at 11am, walkers will follow the Heritage Towpath Trail for a kilometre to the aqueduct over the M6 Toll Road. Having learned about the plans for a walkway over the aqueduct and a future proposal for a lock and pumping station to allow narrowboats to cross the Toll Road, the walkers will return to the pub around 1pm where they will be able to buy a hot drink (or something stronger) to warm up. There is no charge for this event but a donation would be appreciated.

Environment Agency Launches £1m Winter Programme of River Thames Lock Works

The Environment Agency embarked on its annual winter programme of major repairs and refurbishments to locks along the non-tidal River Thames from Tuesday 1 November.

In all, eight lock sites will have a total of £1.2m spent on them – five in Oxfordshire and one each in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Surrey. Major works include removing both pairs of lock gates at Shifford Lock near Bampton in Oxfordshire, and Kings Lock in Oxford, so that the frames can be re-faced with new sheets of timber. As each gate weighs around eight tonnes, they will be removed by crane and transported by low-loader lorry to the Environment Agency's depot in Osney, near Oxford where its in-house team of specialist craftsmen will carry out the work.

At Penton Hook Lock near Staines in Surrey, the downstream gates will be removed so that repairs can be made to the hinges that support them. To do this, the lock chamber will need to be braced and then pumped dry. Before the lock is fully drained, any fish found in it will be safely transferred to the main river – this is normally many hundreds if not thousands of fish. The annual investment in their upkeep ensures the locks are in good working order, enabling boaters to carry on cruising throughout the 135 miles of navigable waterway from Cricklade

in Wiltshire, near the river's source, to Teddington in south west London, where the river becomes tidal.

Elland Bridge Open Day

A 'Winter Open Day' event, organised by CRT, planned to take place at Elland Bridge on the Calder & Hebble Navigation (HX5 9HH) on Saturday 26 November from 9.30am to 3.30pm. Visitors will be given the opportunity to walk across the surface of the new bridge, as well as meet staff/volunteers from CRT and learn more about the bridge works. There will also be a variety of displays and refreshment in the warehouse adjacent to the bridge.

Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust is Looking for a New Voluntary Chief Executive

Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust is establishing an Executive Board which will manage its day-to-day activities and the first essential step is the recruitment of a Chief Executive in a part-time role on a voluntary basis.

A briefing pack for applicants is available from Carolyn Pascall. The closing date is 30th November 2016.

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 IWA's website. By volunteering for these clean up events you can make a big difference to your local waterway.

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

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