

# BULLETIN

31st October 2018



Photo left to right: Neil Edwards, Chief Executive IWA; Mike Palmer MBE, IWA Trustee and Chairman Waterway Recovery Group; Alison Smedley, IWA Campaigns Officer; Kevin Brennan MP; Lord German; Robin Stonebridge, Chair Chesterfield Canal Trust; David Marshall, Canal Project Manager Stroud District Council; David Drew MP

## WATERWAYS RESTORATION DISCUSSED AT WESTMINSTER

Waterways Restoration and the benefits it brings from day one were the main topic of a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Waterways Group held on Tuesday 16th October at the House of Lords, hosted by Lord German.

Case studies were brought to life through presentations from IWA Trustee and Waterway Recovery Group Chairman, Mike Palmer MBE and Robin Stonebridge from the Chesterfield Canal Trust and David Marshall from Stroud District Council.

As well as a number of MPs and Lords, many waterway restoration organisations were represented at the meeting.

You can request a copy of the new report promoting the social, environmental, economic and historic value of restorations in progress as soon as it is published.

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# IWA NEWS

## MIDDLE LEVEL BILL CLEARS FINAL HURDLE

On 16th October 2018 the Middle Level Bill successfully passed through the House of Commons for the final time.

In 2016 the governing body, the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) introduced a Private Bill to Parliament to bring MLC in line with other navigation authorities by enabling better waterway management powers and increased provision of facilities and moorings in connection with their navigation function.

The Bill now just needs Royal Assent to formalise it as an Act of Parliament. For the first time boats on the Level will be subject to Registration, and the need to prove they have liability insurance and are compliant with current boat safety standards. The new law will allow the Commissioners to remove sunken or abandoned boats, and generate income to be invested back into boating facilities. Under the new legislation MLC will use published guidance from IWA to set the standards to which facilities must be provided, with 25% of boating income to be invested for this purpose.

MLC is the navigation authority for the Middle Level river system, which comprises 100 miles of navigable waterways in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. The Middle Level is a network of mainly man made drains and rivers which keeps Fenland free from flooding. It broadly covers the area of land, much of it below sea level, between the Rivers Nene and Great Ouse. The legislation which governs it had not been modified for over 150 years and did not recognise leisure boating, which has grown in popularity since the 1950s.

MLC will at last be able to register up-to-date bye-laws with DEFRA and establish a Navigation Committee. The Commissioners embrace volunteering, and are currently looking at how they can introduce a scheme to promote greater public involvement in the preservation and enhancement of their waterways.

## SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ASKS FOR IWA'S VIEWS

We have responded to a request from the Scottish Parliament for advice concerning the state of Scotland's waterways, following a Public Petitions Committee on 27th September where the Lowland Canals Association

sought the appointment of an independent water ombudsman for Scotland. The petition was successful and the committee agreed to write to various bodies, including IWA, for advice.

We welcomed the opportunity to assist in this matter and took the opportunity to tell the Scottish Parliament about a number of concerns that we have already raised with Scottish Canals, particularly on the Lowland Canals, including:

- The closure of the Forth & Clyde Canal as a through route for most of 2018. The additional funding from Scottish Government has enabled contracts to be let with work due to start in January 2019, nearly a year after the two bridges failed in February 2018.
- The number of locks and other lift bridges in desperate need of maintenance – such as the poor condition of lock gates and bascule bridge operating mechanisms. The current tally of broken infrastructure amounts to five inoperative bridges and one inoperative lock (on the eastern end of the Forth & Clyde Canal where the waterway descends to the Kelpies and Grangemouth).
- Ongoing and long-term issues with operating the

## COTSWOLD CANALS WATER TRANSFER

locks means that user-operation is difficult. Scottish Canals' staff have to operate many of the structures, and in recent years have imposed more restricted opening times which don't take into account tide times at sea locks, and make it difficult for boaters to use the canal.

- The lack of dredging which puts off deeper draughted sea going boats using the Forth & Clyde as a coast to coast route.
- Weed and vegetation is now starting to choke up the canal, not helped by the lack of boat movements.
- The impact on the hire boat trade and tourism as a result of the restrictions and closures this year.
- With sections of canal closed for significant lengths 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.
- An Asset Management Strategy published by Scottish Canals in June 2018 includes the suggestion that whole sections of the Lowland Canals could face closure.

All these issues were included in our response to the Scottish Parliament, along with support for a waterway ombudsman, or an alternative scheme that would hold Scottish Canals to account to ensure that the waterways in Scotland, and particularly the restored Lowland Canals, have a more secure future than is otherwise likely to be the case. Another possible solution might be to reinstate IWAC in Scotland, and if this was done, we have recommended that its remit should include all 500 miles of navigable waterways in Scotland, not just those operated by Scottish Canals.

Our response also compared the situation in Scotland to what is happening in England and Wales, and recommended the reinstatement of user group meetings to allow two-way exchange of information. We also noted Canal & River Trust's very different approach to its Asset Management Strategy, which is based on how they will improve asset conditions over the next 5 years whereas Scottish Canals' strategy allows for planned closures of sections of waterway and abdicating all responsibility for maintaining navigation.

Read our full response to the request for information from Scottish Parliament on the IWA website.

Another opportunity has arisen to persuade Thames Water to use the Cotswold Canals scheme as a way to transfer water from the Severn to the Thames.

As well as providing a huge boost to the restoration of the Cotswold Canals, and the associated health, leisure, community and benefits to the local economy of bringing waterways back to life, it is proposed that the scheme would be relatively cost effective for Thames Water.

Thames Water has published their response to the public consultation on their draft Water Resource Management Plan reported in our Bulletin earlier this year and have produced a revised draft.

Thames Water's preferred solution to ease London's water shortfall in the near term was the Teddington Direct River Abstraction scheme. This has now been abandoned, and a revised plan has been proposed, which also bypasses opportunities offered by using the waterways. The new plan is sufficiently different that it requires a further public consultation period, giving us another chance to make a difference.

We are supporting the initiative from Cotswold

Canals Trust to use their network of waterways by providing national backing to the proposals and responding to the consultation.

Supporters are also encouraged to respond to the consultation. The deadline is Wednesday 28th November 2018. More information is available on the Cotswold Canals Trust website.

## BOOST TO NORTHERN REACHES OF THE LANKY

Findings have been released from a research project commissioned to help guide development of a new 27 mile towpath trail from Kendal to Lancaster.

More than 350 people were surveyed by marketing students from Lancaster University as part of the research commissioned by Lancaster Canal Regeneration Partnership (we are one of eight members in the Partnership alongside Canal & River Trust, Cumbria County Council, Kendal Town Council, Lancashire County Council, Lancaster Canal Trust, Lancaster City Council and South Lakeland District Council). Among the contributors to the research were local residents and potential visitors from outside the area.

The findings confirm that there is a huge appetite for a long distance waterway path, linking communities along the route of the Lancaster Canal. People are particularly keen to have the benefit of an all-weather surface, with well-maintained vegetation, possibly involving voluntary groups.

The students made recommendations for branding, interpretation and an increased use of digital and social media for spreading the word about the Kendal to Lancaster Towpath Trail.

Our 2019 Trailboat Festival will provide a further boost to the project as part of celebrations for the bicentenary of the northern reaches of the Lancaster Canal. Organised by our IWA Lancashire & Cumbria Branch, the Festival will be held alongside Country Fest over the weekend 1st - 2nd June near Crooklands. Trailboaters will be invited to cruise the newly restored "First Furlong" and admire the restoration work, including the four mile stretch of towpath from Kendal to Natland, which is currently in development.

For more information about the Lancaster Canal Towpath Trail, take a look at the Lancaster Canal Regeneration Partnership website.

For more information about IWA Trailboat Festival visit the IWA website.

## EU COURT OF JUSTICE RULES AGAINST USE OF RED DIESEL

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has announced that it has lost its defence against the Court of Justice of the European Union ruling that the UK has failed to fulfil its obligations on fiscal marking of gas oils and kerosene. This ruling could affect future use of red diesel for leisure boats, with implications for boat owners and boatyard operators.

We are working with RYA and British Marine following this announcement to assess the impact of this decision. Whilst our primary concern is that diesel procurement does not become more difficult (or more expensive) in the UK as a result of the ruling, we do also have a number of members who take their boats to the waterways of Europe (including Ireland) who will be affected by the judgement.

HMRC is now examining the judgment and will announce how and when the UK will adjust its practices in due course. A meeting with HMRC to be attended by RYA, British Marine and IWA is now being sought at the earliest opportunity to discuss the implications of the loss of red diesel for the propulsion of recreational craft.

## ADDITIONAL SILVER PROPELLER LOCATIONS

Launched earlier this year, our Silver Propeller Challenge is designed to encourage waterway users to visit waterway locations that are infrequently visited by boats and other craft.

A number of you are already taking part in the award which involved visiting 20 locations on our list in a waterways vessel, and we want to build on this to make the campaign bigger and better in 2019. Some of you have already given us feedback and suggestions for additional locations, but we would like to hear from more of you. We are looking to add locations with a campaigning angle that could be added to the scheme for next year, so please let us have any suggestions.

A couple of people have commented that some locations aren't accessible by full length boats (such as Brandon on the Little Ouse, only accessible to boats of 40ft or less due to the size of Brandon Lock). There are other places too, such as any of the locations on the narrow canals where no boats wider than 7ft can reach. That is part of the reason for having over 40 locations to choose from but only having to visit 20 of them to get your Silver Propeller plaque. Don't

forget, too, that the IWA Silver Propeller Challenge is open to anyone, not just boat owners. So whether or not you own a boat it doesn't stop you visiting some locations by hire boat, trip boat, or by dinghy, canoe or paddleboard if you are feeling adventurous. A submitted list of 20 visited locations can include a mixture of all these ways of getting to them.

The current list of locations on the website has been updated with a few additional bits of navigational information, and we plan to add more information over the coming months. We hope to have a full pack of information about all the locations – so if you discover any particular great tips about somewhere you have been, even if it's just a recommendation for the best cake at a nearby café, or where to hire a rowing boat from, we'd love to hear from you.

Let us know if you have any feedback or additional locations that fit into our campaign categories by emailing [silverpropeller@waterways.org.uk](mailto:silverpropeller@waterways.org.uk).

## COTSWOLD CANALS TO HOST CHRISTMAS CANAL CAMP

Our main Canal Camps programme of week-long working holidays ends in

October, but that doesn't mean our Waterway Recovery Group volunteers go into hibernation for the winter. Work to bring derelict waterways back to life continues all year round and every year we run a Christmas Camp from the 26th December through to New Years Day.

This year work will see over 30 volunteers continue last year's efforts in the Cotswolds with plenty of vegetation clearance, bonfires and other winter activities. It's the perfect way to work off your Christmas dinner and start the New Year in style. Accommodation is at Brimscombe Port near Stroud.

## MIKE CARTER PLAQUE UNVEILED IN CHESTER

On Wednesday 24th October saw over 80 people gathered at the top of Northgate Locks in Chester to celebrate the late Mike Carter with a plaque on the sandstone wall.

Mike, who sadly died in 2017, was North West Region chairman from 2015 and northern deputy chairman of IWA's Navigation Committee. During his time as North West Region chairman Mike led the team that organised IWA's festival at Eldonian Village in 2016 which was a great campaigning success as it encouraged local people to engage with their canal.

The plaque was organised by IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch and co-funded by Chester Canal Heritage Trust. Christine Carter performed the unveiling and was accompanied by their two daughters, Katy and Jenny, and other members of the family.

## IWA NAVIGATION COMMITTEE SEEKS WRITERS

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.

Navigation Committee is a group of people 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 would be welcomed from any interested individuals who feel they would have the right interests, skills and experience to get involved with the work of the committee. The committee is particularly looking for volunteers who would like to get involved in drafting and co-ordinating policy documents and consultation responses, and for a volunteer

who would like to take on the role of minutes secretary.

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.

Expressions of interest with a brief resume of your background, skills and experience should be sent to Alison Smedley, Campaigns Officer [alison.smedley@waterways.org.uk](mailto:alison.smedley@waterways.org.uk).

## PROMOTING WATERWAYS IN GREATER LONDON

IWA Middlesex Branch was busy through September supporting events that promote waterways in the area. Slough Canal Festival over the weekend of 8th - 9th September held in Bloom Park attracts visitors to the pretty but very underused Slough Canal, which runs 5 miles from its junction with the Grand Union Canal at Cowley Peachey to its terminus in Slough.

The Branch also supported Hayes Canal Festival the following weekend, which saw hundreds of local people take part in boat rides, kayaking, paddle boarding and fishing along the Grand Union Canal, with live music and

activities for children. Finally over the weekend of 22nd & 23rd September the branch supported the Open House Weekend with guided tours up the seven lock Hanwell Flight on the Grand Union Canal in West London.

## LINSLADE SCOUTS HELP WITH CANAL CLEAN-UP

Members of a Linslade Scout group joined IWA Milton Keynes Branch for its second Canal Cleanup of 2018 in October.

Supported by Wyvern Shipping Co, the event focussed attention on the recovery of rubbish along the Grand Union Canal from Fenny Lock, Bletchley to Grove Lock, just south of Leighton Buzzard.

At the busiest point, 43 volunteers were involved including 11 volunteers from The Parks Trust, and volunteers from Canal & River Trust. The group was also supported by a narrowboat towing a pan (shallow draught workboat) from which its crew could tackle the offside vegetation and rubbish.

The next Cleanup in the area will take place next Spring. Find out more about IWA Milton Keynes Branch on the IWA website.

## CLEANING UP THE NORTHAMPTON ARM

IWA Northampton Branch organised a work party on 7th October along the Grand Union Canal's Northampton Arm. Volunteers carried out extensive vegetation clearance along the towpath. The Branch adopted the stretch in 2013 and has spent the past five years maintaining, making improvements and installing attractions along the stretch.

## 30 BICYCLES PULLED FROM THE GRAND UNION

Over 50 volunteers filled a hopper with debris in the latest grapple of the Grand Union Canal in Leamington. Volunteers included scouts from the 1st Sydenham troop, the Warwick University Ladies Hockey team, members of the Leamington community canal group, and local residents.

The haul included 30 bicycles and 10 trolleys, plus tyres, some railings, a microwave, an engine block, a sofa, a heavy pump valve, a big reel of orange cable, a sewing machine, a large valve key, a child's rocking horse and a street sign.

## CLEANING & SCREENING ON THE ASHTON

In October, volunteers filled 18 black bags with assorted litter from along the Ashton Canal along with two panels of rusted 'Heras' fencing. IWA Manchester Branch adopted a length of the Canal two years ago and have carried out regular work parties ever since. The work party was used as an opportunity to promote this work and Operation Ashton, a massive cleanup project which took place half a century ago and contributed to the restoration of the Ashton Canal and the reopening of the Cheshire Ring in 1974.

At the next work party on 17th November, there'll be a screening of Mike Heap's film of 'Operation Ashton' in 'The Strawberry Duck' pub at 2pm. The work party will take place at Lock 13 on the Ashton Canal.

## BARTON & DUNSTALL ESTATE WALK

15 walkers assembled outside Barton Turns Marina on 13th September for a walk past landscaped lakes, through Dunstall Estate woodlands and gorgeous views of the Trent valley.

The guided walk organised by IWA Lichfield Branch saw walkers learn about the history of Dunstall Hall and its notable owners through the years. The group then followed the route past the deer park and along the Trent & Mersey Canal.

## IWA MEMBER DISCOUNTS AND SPECIAL OFFERS

Many of the offers below can be claimed simply by using your IWA membership card. For others, log in or phone the membership team on 01494 783453 for details.

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

### Enjoy the Waterways Through Hire Boats and Leisure

ABC Boat Hire - 15% discount on holidays (Direct Bookings Only)

Blackwater Boats - 10% discount on boat trips

CanalCruising.co.uk - 10% discount on holidays

Canal Boat Magazine - 5 issues for £5.00

City Centre Cruises - 10% discount for Sunday lunch cruises in Manchester

Frangipani SUP Ltd - 10% discount on adult beginner 'Stand Up & Paddle' lessons

Jenny Wren- 10% discount off cruises

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

### Eating Out

To take advantage of eating out offers you just need to produce a valid IWA membership card.

Kings Lock Tearooms- 10% discount on food

Ring 'O Bells Pub - 10% discount on food

The Fingerpost Pub & Restaurant - 10% discount on food

The Bounty Pub - 10% discount on food

The Clifford Arms Pub - 10% discount on food

The Three Locks Pub - 10% discount on food

The Wharf Pub - 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

Channellglaze Ltd. - 5% discount on double glazing

Cotswold Outdoor - 10% discount

IceGripper - 20% discount on ICETrekkers Diamond Grip

Kings Lock Chandlery - 5% discount (exclusions apply)

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 worth up to £16 when buying a Z-200 WiFi Adapter or Z-250 3.5G Dongle

### Services

Europcar - Special hire rates to IWA members

Forge Studio - 10% discount

Harbour Clean - 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 1 day RYA SRC VHF Licence Course

**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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