

Bude Canal Navigation Event



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SOUTH WEST REGION COMMITTEES

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The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Inland Waterways Association or of the South West Region. They are, however, published as being of interest to our members and readers.

REGION CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am writing this at our house in France on our last visit before we move out here permanently at the end of June. Over here there doesn't seem to be any question about the value of the waterways. This contrasts with the position in England. As I reported at the Branch and Regional AGM the date for the start of the Canal and River Trust has not been confirmed as the necessary Orders have not yet completed their passage through Parliament. Although there are many encouraging signs about CART, not least the improved funding that the interim trustees have secured from the Government, this uncertainty and some other issues are not giving the confidence for many people that they were seeking.

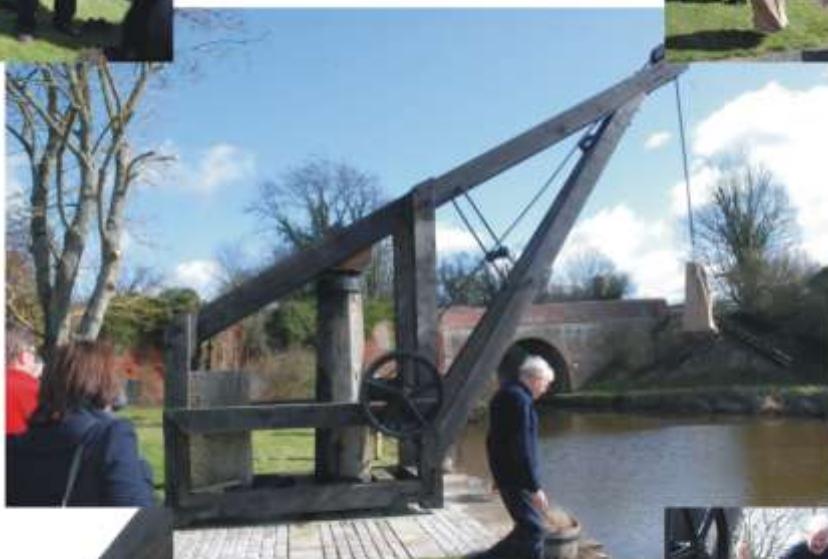
IWA continues to work towards closing the gap between income and expenditure, and some difficult decisions have had to be made. One of the questions about CART is over their stated aim to make as much use of volunteers as possible. Of course, apart from a relatively few staff at head office, IWA is run completely by volunteers. If people were won over to volunteering for CART rather than IWA then this would put IWA in a difficult position both in terms of people to do things but also if membership drops so does income. Our income and expenditure gap then widens. People join IWA for a number of reasons and we will all have to make the case for a strong IWA independent of CART.

The AGMs have all happened and have gone well with some good attendances for such meetings. I am always struck by the commitment of the Branch Officers and Committee Members and we have a lot to thank them for. At the Regional AGM I presented the Brian Sheppard Award to John Webb. It is always a pleasure to give recognition in this way to people who have made an exceptional contribution. John will be familiar to you as regular contributor to Sou'Wester and the magazine has recorded many of his successes over the years.

As this is my last chance to do so in the magazine, I want to thank you all for the support and friendship you have given me in the last two years. In particular to the Regional Committee who have helped me enormously and made my job easier and a real pleasure. We will continue boating regularly in the UK and we will also continue to be members of IWA. So we will be taking a great deal of interest in CART and the future of the waterways in England and Wales. Thank you and I hope that your enjoyment of our marvellous waterways is not diminished in the coming years.

Chris Birks

Dedication of Burbage Crane



Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Branch Report

The branch continues to be active., the committee has identified two major items to campaign for this year:

A. The safety of the approach to Gloucester Lock (The Quay) this is a difficult approach made worse by the bad state of the wall and chains. This structure appears to be owned by Gloucester City Council who are reluctant to spend any money on it.

B. The dredging of Gloucester Dock which is slowly filling up with silt This is a problem that BW seem unable to solve and the latest idea is to maybe send the silt down the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal. In other words shift the problem on. BW appear to forget the massive sum they receive from Bristol Water; This abstraction of water from the canal could well be the reason that water is pumped from the river to Gloucester Dock introducing the silt which is now a problem.

The branch has produced a guide to the river Severn and Canal below Tewkesbury so if anybody is thinking of navigating this area they should find it useful. Contact the branch for an electronic copy or it will be available at locks etc along the river and canal

The social events are in their summer break and meetings will resume in September details will be sent with full details later in the year.

It is still of concern that we have not got email addresses for some members; If you do not receive emails from the branch committee but would like to, please forward your email address to: gloucandhereford@waterways.org.uk

Finally can I draw you attention to the articles in this issue about the celebration of Gloucester Lock I hope to meet you all there.

If you need to contact me I am only an email away roger.holmes@waterways.org.uk

**Roger Holmes, Chairman,
Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Branch**

Avon & Wilts Branch Report

At the end of my report in the last issue of “Sou’Wester”, I mentioned the need to find a fresh Branch Secretary, to take over from me, as I could hardly carry out both the duties of Branch Chairman and Branch Secretary. I am pleased to report that Jeanne Aldous offered to take over as Branch Secretary, as she was already dealing with the Minutes of our committee meetings. At the Branch AGM at the end of March, my wife, Rosemary, volunteered to become the Branch Membership Secretary, so adding one further person to our Branch committee for the coming year.

The rest of the Branch committee remain the same as before: Geoff Harman, David Chalmers, John Lewis, and Tim Wheeldon. At the time of writing, we are due to meet in a further few days, and at that meeting, posts and duties will be discussed and allocated. It may be possible for greater detail to be provided on the inside front cover of this issue if it reaches our Editor in sufficient time.

Any additional offers, from any members living anywhere in Wiltshire or in the area of the former county of Avon, to give any practical help to the ongoing work and endeavours of the Branch, whether on, or off, committee, will be gladly welcomed.

At the time of the Branch AGM we became aware of the distinctly better terms for funding the Canal and River Trust over a period of fifteen, rather than ten, years and also that the Prince of Wales had accepted the position of Royal Patron of the incipient new Trust. There can be little doubt that the public response to DEFRA’s earlier, original offer of a settlement was instrumental in persuading Government that a serious re-consideration was essential. Now we wait for the definitive date in the course of this year when the new Trust will ‘go live’ in replacing British Waterways.

Our congratulations to my predecessor, John Webb, for becoming this year’s recipient of the Brian Sheppard Award, which was presented to him at the Region AGM in Newport just after Easter. This is a trophy (not ship-in-a-bottle, but a model Glamorgan Canal barge passing through a lock in a glass bottle), which is awarded annually by South West Region to the member, or members, in recognition of significant contribution to the Association’s campaign in the Region, or some part of it.

The late Brian Sheppard was a very active member of South Wales Branch, and the award was established by his family in his memory, during the time that his daughter, Caroline Jones, of Lydbrook, in the Forest of Dean, was Hon. Secretary of the Region.

The summer months are normally a time for being out-and-about and not indoors attending meetings, whether business or social, or otherwise. However, before the autumn arrives and Geoff Harman produces another season's social meetings with speakers, about which, no doubt, more in the next issue, let me draw your attention to the trip which David Chalmers has organised on the PS Waverley at the end of August from Clevedon pier, and returning there in the evening. No canals involved, I'm afraid, and no rivers other than the estuarial waters of the River Severn, but it will touch the coastal boundaries of three of our Region's four branches. Do book to come if you can.

If you boat on the K & A, and are anywhere in the area of Burbage during the summer, take a good look at the newly-refurbished wharf crane (on the offside of the canal), which has largely been resurrected through the efforts of John Webb and a few other IWA members, and also members of the K & A Canal Trust, Claverton Branch, with the support and encouragement of the Crown Estates and their agents. An interpretation board, funded by this Branch, will in due course be installed on the towpath opposite, to explain the history as well as the workings of the crane, and the story of the wharf deep in Savernake Forest.

Those of you who live in the north, south and east parts of Wiltshire, as well, no doubt, as those in some parts of South Gloucestershire and North Somerset, will probably not have heard that the River Avon in Bath was peremptorily closed to navigation for several weeks at the end of last year and in the first few weeks of this year, when a footbridge across the river was declared unsafe by the local authority. It meant that boats were trapped on the Bath lock flight, as they were unable to enter the river, and anything coming upstream could not pass Weston Lock. Happily that navigation issue is now resolved, although the footpath beneath the bridge remains closed. Canals can be closed to navigation at short notice for a number of possible reasons, but it is most unusual for a navigable river to be declared unnavigable.

Restoration work continues on the Wilts & Berks Canal, at several locations, and as I said at our Branch AGM, it is a good belief that one day in the next few years a spur from the K & A at Semington will actually begin to exist. Although not in our Branch area, the IWA national restoration project at Inglesham, at the eastern end of the Cotswold Canals, is not so very far away, and there is now just one large final push to raise the necessary funding for three weeks' Canal Camps this summer to complete the restoration work. If you, all of this Branch's members, contribute, say, a fiver, that's £3000 or more towards the remaining balance of just over £40,000. The Branch's allocation from the 100 Club this year will be going to this appeal, and our thanks, as always, to John and Doreen Kemp for their work in administering the 100 Club, and to the members who support it.

I intended writing a much shorter report this time in comparison to last time, but this one has grown until it's almost as long, so I'm going to stop right now. You'll be welcome to contact me if I've caused any controversy, or maligned anyone or anything. A happy and healthy summer to everyone.

John Gornall, Bristol, Branch Chairman

Waverley Excursion 29th August 2012

We have the opportunity to enjoy a cruise on the Waverley, the world's last ocean going paddle steamer, on Wednesday 29th August. This year we are offering either a cruise from Clevedon leaving at 14:00 calling at Penarth and then arriving at Minehead at 16:45 for time ashore or you can stay aboard and take a cruise to Porlock Bay. We leave Minehead at 18:00 and return via Penarth arriving at Clevedon at 20:45.

The Waverley has full catering facilities on board including snacks and hot meals plus a coffee shop as well as a bar.

Costs: To Minehead only, £27 (Senior Citizen P £25).
To Minehead plus cruise to Porlock Bay, £29 (Senior Citizen £27)

Bookings: Telephone David Chalmers 01179720423 and tell him whether you want to go to Minehead or do the cruise to Porlock Bay.

Cheques should be made out to David Chalmers, 40 Greenleaze, Knowle Park, Bristol. BS4 2TL. Please enclose an SAE. Closing date for bookings is Tuesday 14th August.

West Country Branch – Chairman's Report

This is my first Branch Chairman's report having been elected at the recent AGM, it was perhaps inevitable that after many years of valuable and sterling service by Adam & Jane Pilgrim over many years there was going to be some committee changes. It's certainly going to be a hard act to follow. Hopefully some new blood will see events move forward in these changing times not least of all influencing how CaRT begins to shape up.

I have long standing memories of several family holidays on waterways during the 60's and 70's hiring narrow-boats from the long gone "Bijou Line" and then later supporting my brother who owned and operated the small hire fleet on the Chelmer & Blackwater in Essex which is in many ways not unlike our very own Bridgwater & Taunton being essentially landlocked. The latter however had illusions of grandeur when the grand plan was to link the English Channel with the Bristol Channel thus avoiding Lands End -a dream still deep in the hearts of many members!

About 10 years ago my wife and I bought and refurbished a 26ft Dawncraft named "Sunshine Too" then having got the bug we specified and purchased a 47ft narrow-boat called "Meander Lily" which proved to be everything we had dreamt of --well it was when we finally snatched it almost complete from a boat builder who had taken our money just before the "Ceased Trading" sign went up!!! That's another long story! Therefore I feel my Waterways apprenticeship is nearing its completion.

However, my thoughts are now very much to the future having (almost) retired from my own engineering, transport and training businesses operating in the highways, construction and health&safety spheres. My aim is to devote time to IWA matters and other voluntary roles, as well as keeping the allotment productive, hopefully imparting some nuggets of accumulated wisdom along the way. I am already speed reading a multitude of background information being usefully fed to me by my erstwhile and enthusiastic fellow branch committee members.

There are many meetings, events, functions, working groups, fundraising/open days and the like both to attend and yet to organise and so I repeat earlier committee requests for members to contact myself or any of the branch committee where we may be able to support you with not only our bodies(!) but possibly with some finance; BUT.....we need to know your plans for this year/next year with as much notice as possible.

**BOB ABBOTT, Chairman,
West Country Branch**

Boats in South Wales

Swansea Community Boat



This boat is now operational, as well as running trips up the River Tawe at weekends for the general public it is available for private functions, corporate hospitality events and for schools and community use as a “floating classroom” It is licensed to carry 45

passengers and is wheelchair accessible.

For further details or to make a booking contact:

Wayne Morgan on 07785 347549/01792 844141 or,
Email: wayne.morgan@scbt.org.uk.

Public boat trips lasting about 2 hours start from the Marina outside the Waterfront Museum on Saturday and Sunday at 12:00 and 14:30

Neath Canal

Canal boat trips from Neath towards Tonna starting from landing stage by B&Q Neath Town centre. The **Thomas Dadford** will be running as listed below from 06 April - 28 September 2012, Bank Holidays and Saturdays and then during School Holidays Tuesdays and Thursdays. Trips start at: 11am, then on demand.

Adults £4, Children £2. Charters available at other times.
For full details: Phone 01792 426449.

Mon & Brec Canal

The Trust’s trailable boat “**Edith Elizabeth**” does not do a regular service but will be providing boat trips at many events throughout the year including the Trailboat Festival in the Cotswolds. This boat has just been awarded a grant of £5000 to upgrade its trailer.



Enfys being restored in a workshop at Uskmouth Power Station.

The Trust has bought an old canal boat which it wishes to refurbish for use on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal as a Community Boat resource. It will seat 38 passengers, be eco-friendly, being driven by electric motor, and have a wheelchair lift. It will be operated by Trust volunteers on the navigable section of the canal.

The Trust is extremely grateful for the generous help and support given to the Community Boat Project by locally based companies in particular Scottish and Southern Energy

Other than for a commercial trip boat at Brecon, no boat is available (other than our small craft) for the community to experience the canal by water. With the new larger boat, the aim is to include all sections of the community who will be encouraged to take a trip on this beautiful waterway to learn about its history and wildlife. It will allow the Trust to cater for those needing a wheelchair, and accommodate a whole school class on board, in effect functioning as a floating classroom. The Trust believes it will help to raise the profile of the canal and to assist in its mission to promote and restore it.

Islwyn Canal Association

The Association has been awarded a package of grants totalling £24,000



for a boat on their stretch of the Crumlin Arm of the Mon & Brecon. The “**Islwyn Lily**” will start making trips in early June, 7 days a week if there is the demand. They will carry 11 passengers and will start from Whyson’s Wharf.

For more details ring 01633 615668.

South Wales Branch membership notes:

Melingriffith Pump

Inland Waterways Association (South Wales Branch) members are invited to join members of Oxford House Industrial History Society and the Friends of Melingriffith Pump to see the restored engine in operation, hear a short explanatory talk and join a guided 2 hour walk to view remains of the Glamorganshire Canal, the river weir and water feeder and the Pentyrch-Melingriffith railway. Meet at Melingriffith at 6:30pm Friday 13 July 2012

New E-Newsletter

The South Wales Branch has launched an E-Newsletter. To subscribe send an email with 'Subscribe' as the title and your email address in the body to: southwales@waterways.org.uk.

Avon & Wilts Branch – 100 Club

First draw of the year – 29 March 2012 – Result

The first draw of the year took place at the end of the Avon & Wilts Branch AGM 29 March 2012. The lucky winners are:

First prize Mr Peter Jones, of Swindon

Second prize Mr P Milnthorpe, of Bleadon, Weston-super-Mare

Third prize Mr Charles Jenkins, of Devizes

Ron Oakley Memorial Plaque

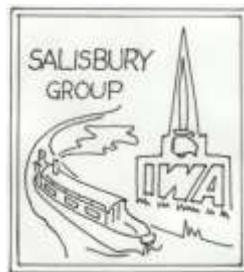


Inland Waterways Association.

Avon & Wilts Branch

SALISBURY GROUP

REPORT- March 2012



At the January meeting, Tony Fry, who has been exploring the canal system for over 25 years by hiring, joint ownership and finally on his own boat, described journeys in the North West of England made during these years. So far he has covered 4700 miles of canal and Pauline, his wife, has worked the 2844 locks! The area of England he was describing on this occasion was based on the Cheshire Ring and the navigations adjoining it.

Starting off at Acton Bridge on the Trent & Mersey, Tony's talk took us through the Preston Brook Tunnel branching off to the end of navigation at Runcorn, on to Manchester along the Bridgewater Canal, over the Barton Swing Aqueduct and of course a view of Wigan Pier along with the story of its history.

Returning to continue along the dark and dingy, but full of character, Rochdale Canal, that in the past cost £28 to pass along, he then went on to the Ashton and Peak Forest Canals with a detour to Bugsworth Basin before continuing south on the Macclesfield Canal. At the end of the journey Tony traveled down the Anderton lift in order to explore the River Weaver.

Tony described the industrial features viewed on route along with much of their histories. In particular the old mills now converted into modern apartments and the bottle kilns of the potteries. Passing through the steel works which at that time one could still see the crucibles of molten steel. From the cotton industry we went into the salt industry especially the famous Lion salt works and also in that area the Bisto gravy factory. He also remarked on the miles of pipe work constructed for the chemical industry. This talk introduced these canals to some members whilst others were reminded of their travels in this area in the past.

In February, Adge Roberts came to talk about the nine-mile stretch of the Portsmouth and Arundel Navigation between Ford and Hunston. This navigation was planned to help connect London to Portsmouth. It was designed by John Rennie to cross the flood plain of the River Arun at a height of twelve feet above the water level of the relatively flat coastal plain. There were two locks at each end, at Ford and Birdham. Adge showed pictures of various aspects of the navigation along this length. There are recent archaeological finds, which have been excavated, and we were shown the conservation work carried out along this stretch

We were given information about the engine housing at Ford that contained a Boulton and Watt beam engine. The engine house has been demolished but the engine keeper's house still exists. Swing bridges have been excavated and parts of the bearings have been found. Mini aqueducts were built along the length to allow water to drain from the coastal plain towards the sea. The foundation of bridges that once crossed the navigation have been found and excavated.

It was interesting to view the remaining parts of this navigation and although it will probably never be restored we now have a detailed view of a once important navigation.

We met Robert Wright at the last steaming of 2011 at Crofton where he was demonstrating his art skills and exhibiting his work. We invited him to visit Salisbury IWA Group, which he did at our March meeting, to talk to us about the history and development of narrow boat painting over the years.

Robert started by giving various explanations as to why roses and castles were originally used for boat decoration. We were told about four main original artists in this field and how their styles differed. He then introduced us to the work of modern canal artists and the fact that they not only paint boats but also run courses and write books on the subject.

Robert is a Journeyman of the Waterways Craft Guild and he explained that the Guild was founded to maintain standards and to preserve the traditional styles of waterways art. His talk finished with a short video of himself demonstrating his own style of painting a rose

Robert's talk and power point presentation was very detailed and informative and was very much enjoyed by the Salisbury Group.

Ron & Myra Glover

Navigation Event on the Bude Canal



On Saturday 31st March, a flotilla of gigboats and canoes gathered in the Lower Basin of Bude Canal to navigate the canal from the Basin to Helebridge using the inland locks at Rodds Bridge and Whalesborough.

Nine boats from the Bude Canoe Club (a mixture of Canadian Canoes and kayaks) and two gigboats (Regatta and Breakwater) with members of Bude Pilot Gig Club set off on the trip at about 10.40am. Both the gigboats and the canoes were locked through both of the locks together on the outward and return trips. All of the boats were back at Lower Basin by 1pm. Overall, the event was well received and successful.

The purpose of the event was twofold:

1. To highlight the need for a public slipway for access to and from the canal.
2. To make use of the restored inland locks by boats (other than the contractors during the project). This event was only the second time that locks had been used by non official boats since at least 1922, if not longer.



Finally, Bude Canal & Harbour Society would like to thank Bude Canoe Club, Bude Pilot Gig Club and Cornwall Council Environment Services (East) for their participation and support in this event.

Chris Jewell, Bude Canal & Harbour Society.

Photographs by Mike Moore

West Country Branch AGM



The Opening of Gloucester Lock in 1812

Gloucester Lock, linking the Main Basin to the River Severn, was formally opened for the use of barges in October 1812. A large crowd gathered to see the first barge enter the basin, and although the event was marred by a tragic accident, it paved the way for a new era in the history of Gloucester.

The structure of the lock, with two chambers in a staircase, had been built in the 1790s while work was also underway on the adjoining basin and ship canal. However, all work stopped in 1799 when most of the original share capital for the project had been spent, and an attempt to raise more was not successful. Thus the basin and that part of the canal that had been completed were left full of water while the proprietors considered what to do next.

At that time, the river was much used by shallow draught sailing barges which discharged cargoes at the city Quay to the north of the lock. These cargoes included coal from Shropshire and a wide range of other goods from Bristol and towns up the river. However, as the river at Gloucester was then tidal, the barges either had to risk resting on the bottom as the tide went down or had to hold off from the Quay to remain afloat in what little water remained. To avoid these difficulties, some barge owners asked if they could start using the basin for a reasonable charge, but no agreement was reached and so the lock remained unused.

Twelve years later, the matter came to a head again following the opening of a horse operated tramroad between Gloucester and Cheltenham in June 1811. The tramroad initially ran to a wooden jetty on the river bank 250 yards south of the lock, but this was not adequate for the traffic that wanted to use it. With this additional stimulus, the Canal Company Committee agreed to open the basin to the public, and they arranged to clear the mud that had been allowed to accumulate in the lock due to the lower gates having been left open to the river.

Thus it was that on Monday 5 October 1812, a large crowd gathered to witness the first barge enter the lock. Those present most likely included members of the Canal Company Committee such as barrister and banker William Fendall, solicitor Robert Playdell Wilton, wine merchant David Arthur Saunders, pinmaker Charles Weaver and ironmonger John Tovey.

Also present was John Wheeler, clerk to the Canal Company, who had made all the arrangements for the opening, but he was about to suffer a tragic loss.

As the barge laden with coal passed from the river into the basin, some young men thought they would help celebrate the event by firing three swivel guns – small cannons mounted on swivelling stands. Wishing to cause a louder report than usual, one young man inconsiderately rammed down the charge very forcibly with wet wadding, and when the match was applied, the chamber burst and wounded three of the bystanders.

Mr S Dowdeswell, a respectable farmer of Standish, died on the spot, leaving a young widow and three infant children. The youth who fired the fatal charge lived only until the following night, but his friend survived and later recovered. These two were described in the *Gloucester Journal* as ‘sons of respectable individuals in this city’ - without quoting names. However, a much later report gave the name of the youth who fired the fatal charge as Mr Wheeler. This was evidently William Wheeler, son of the Canal Company’s clerk, who was buried at the Southgate St non-conformist chapel on 11 Oct 1812, age 20.

The basin was soon in regular use by trows and barges bringing coal from the Forest of Dean and the Midlands and timber and roadstone from further down the estuary. Much of the coal was loaded on to tramroad wagons to be taken to Cheltenham, as this route competed successfully with the existing route using the Coombe Hill Canal. Tolls were collected by lock keeper John Jones, who had worked for the Canal Company in other capacities for over fifteen years.

Usage of the lock showed up a few problems, and the job of sorting them out was given to John Upton who superseded Wheeler as clerk to the Canal Company in 1813 and also took on the job of engineer. He found that the lock emptied itself in two hours because the lower cill was merely embedded in mortar on the natural clay, and so he arranged for stout grooved piles to be well driven down in front of the cill. He also removed obstructions which prevented vessels entering the lock at low water in the Severn, he erected posts with chains along the east side of the lock to prevent accidents and he removed several pieces of stone which had been pushed into the lock, preventing the gates from being either opened or shut.

Meanwhile, usage of the basin continued to prosper, and this stimulated plans for restarting the digging of the ship canal which had been dormant for so many years. When in due course this was completed, it brought the largest sea-going ships of the day to Gloucester - but that is another story.

This description of the events in 1812 was written by local historian and IWA member Hugh Conway Jones.

Sources: TNA RAIL 829/4; GJ 12 Oct 1812; GC 1 Sep 1900; GFHS Burial Index; The Gloucester & Cheltenham Tramroad by David Bick.

LOCK 200

Gloucester Lock was opened in 1812 (The canal was opened later). To celebrate this event the Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Branch and the Gloucester City Centre Community Partnership are to hold a celebratory weekend on 8th and 9th September 2012.

This event will include an event at the lock on Saturday afternoon when local children will travel through the lock dressed for the period followed by a parade of historic boats.

The area around the dock will feature stalls from boating organisations and traders together with food stalls and hopefully some general traders to. There will be re-enactors about again dressed in Georgian period. The event is part of the National Heritage Week.

Our Branch has been given free moorings throughout the docks and we hope to attract a large number of other boats to complement those locally based and showcase the IWA to everybody.

Additionally, it is expected that boater's events will be held in the Gloucester Yacht Club on Friday and Saturday evenings.

If you wish to bring your boat the cost is £15 a proportion of which will be given to a local restoration project. A unique plaque will also be available to purchase at cost. Entry forms are at present available by email from: lock200@waterways.org.uk.

We hope to see as many boats as possible for this important event; **it will be a great weekend!!!**

Roger Holmes

Llanthony: Hydro-Electric & Flood Relief Scheme

Richard Benyon MP, the Minister for Inland Waterways, together with David Penny from the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust (HGCT), announced the above scheme to an assembled audience at Gloucester on 12th December 2011. Those present consisted of executives from British Waterways and the Environment Agency together with directors and cabinet members of the Local Authorities of Herefordshire and Gloucestershire as well as other invited participants at the invitation of Richard Graham, the MP for Gloucester (and new Vice President of the HGCT).

The day was to permit the Minister to open the Environment Agency's new flood storage scheme at Horsebere Brook and to launch British Waterways locally as a charity. After the Minister had delivered his speech, he handed over to David Penny to launch the £7m scheme at Llanthony to create a new lock which will also serve as a flood relief channel and a major hydro-electric scheme. As well as being a huge asset to the community residing either side of the River Severn's route, the scheme is set to earn the HGCT a good return once operational.

It will take several years to reach the stage of acquiring planning permission and other consents, but it will now be full steam ahead, led from the HGCT headquarters at The Wharf House, Over, to reach that objective.

The MP for Gloucester, Richard Graham, praised the scheme, saying: "This is the most exciting environmental project Gloucester has seen for a long time. It's an opportunity to generate significant green revenue from hydro electricity for the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust's work, improve the quality of water brought from the river to the Docks, construct a new Llanthony Lock connecting the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal with the River Severn and Gloucester Docks, and to provide flood relief.

What vision, what prospects - and what enthusiasm in the high level audience from the public, private and voluntary sectors who heard the presentation. David has done a great job carrying everyone with the idea: now we must run with that momentum and keep everyone together as the Trust digs into the detail. All of us in the City are excited."

Nick Worthington, from British Waterways, added: "Clearly, the potential here is huge."

The Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal

The Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal took 53 years to build and was completed in 1845, making it the last major route built in Britain (apart from some navigations in Birmingham and the Manchester Ship Canal). The canal stretched for 34 miles from the River Severn at Gloucester, via Newent, Dymock and Ledbury to the city of Hereford, using twenty two locks and three tunnels. The Canal was formally closed in 1881 to allow construction of the Ledbury to Gloucester railway which in turn was closed by Dr Beeching in 1964.

The Canal Society was formed in 1983 and in 1992 became the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust, a registered charity. The Trust has an ordinary and corporate membership of over 1,300 nationwide and abroad.

The Trust's objective is to fully restore the 34-mile Canal, from its connection with the 2,500-mile inland waterway network at Gloucester to the centre of Hereford. The Trust has major restoration sites in each county, which together extend to over four miles, and plans to progress several other developments in the near future.

Editorial

It is pleasing to say that there is much variety in this issue and serious business is happening throughout our Region, therefore it is difficult to know where to start. However.....

As I am now “Cornish by Choice” – and have a badge to prove it (!) I will start with the Navigation Event in Bude at the end of March. This event was undertaken by Pilot Gigs, Canadian Canoes and Kayaks who travelled up the canal through the locks, stopping at Rodds Bridge before returning back down to the Lower basin. The aims can be seen in the article. Suffice for me to remind you here that the Region has an interest in this bridge having pledged £1000 to the cost of raising it sufficiently to get a small boat further up the Canal.

Moving further up the Region we come to Nynehead where the West Country Branch made a pre-AGM visit to the Nynehead Lift and stretches of the canal that once flowed through the area. Members were guided by Dennis Dodd who owns the land where the lift and a section of the canal is situated. Members of other Branches, who have also visited the area, will be interested in the page of photographs to remind them of what has gone on since they were last in the area.

Further up the M5 we come to Bridgwater where the plaque dedicated to Ron Oakley (Past President of SW Region) was replaced back in February. I have selected a number of photographs and placed them together to create a collage of photographs to show what has been done in the name of the South West Region of the IWA.

Further up the M5 then turn left into Wales where Margaret Gwalter has written an interesting and informative article on the boats owned by the various canal trusts in South Wales. Whilst in the area, it is of interest that at the AGM, the Region was fortunate to find a volunteer for the Committee

Back into England and into Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Branch territory you will find some interesting articles on the Hydro Electric and Flood Relief schemes around Llanthony then, further on, an interesting article on Gloucester Lock and a glimpse into the bicentenary celebrations that will take place in September.

Now, finally we head across the Avon and Wilts area to the Burbage Crane and its new base (which the SW Region paid for) ; Some photographs of the finished article, featuring John Webb, who was project Manager for the overall task. Our congratulations to him on the award of the John Sheppard Trophy.

And finally, keep up the good work and please forward all articles for Issue 162 by 31 July please. **Peter Kelly**

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