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Cover Picture: The Trent & Mersey Canal near Rugeley. KEITH GOSS

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• Dedicated insurance cover for owners who permanently live aboard their boats (additional cost)
• Personal public liability
• Marina benefits
• Medical expenses cover
• £3 million pounds third party cover

The Inland Waterways Association is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.
The democratic nature of IWA was well demonstrated at our Annual General Meeting when members voted against the proposal to increase subscription levels in line with inflation (see News pages). Within IWA, members have both the right and the ability to express their views, and trustees need to listen and take account of the views expressed. This is a major strength of our organisation.

IWA has a long and proud record of working in the best interests of the inland waterways. That is something we can be justifiably proud of, but we need to continue this work into the future.

There are two major issues facing our waterways at the current time: their long-term funding and HS2. The whole membership needs to work together to help ensure we get the right outcomes.

The previous unity between the major political parties on HS2 is starting to come under strain and I am sure some will hope that this means that HS2 will not be built. I suspect the more likely outcome is that it will be built, but at reduced cost. This could be disastrous for our waterways, as if savings are to be found mitigation works may come under considerable pressure. The importance of our work in this area remains very high. At Wood End Lock near Fradley Junction there are potentially no less than four crossings of the Trent & Mersey Canal within a very short distance.

Thanks to work done by Phil Sharpe of Lichfield Branch we have suggested an alternative alignment which would mean only one canal crossing, whilst also providing potential benefits for HS2 and reducing its wider environmental impact. At this stage HS2 has not yet accepted the advantages of our suggestion, so money has been made available to get professional validation of our alternative route. We continue our fight to maximise the mitigation that can be achieved, here and at other locations on the route.

Canal & River Trust’s funding is currently very tight and some maintenance has undoubtedly suffered. Looking ahead the government contract provides an additional £10m a year from 2015 and hopefully fundraising will produce a positive contribution, so the position should improve. The situation is very different for the Environment Agency’s navigations. Delaying a transfer to CRT beyond 2015/16, coupled with significant government funding cuts, no opportunity for the benefits of economy of scale or the ability to fundraise, simply means reduced maintenance.

Richard Benyon has been a good Waterways Minister who lasted much longer than most of his predecessors. I hope we view his successor Dan Rogerson in a similar light in years to come. I am grateful to Richard for his drive and determination in creating CRT. It is of regret that his last significant waterways involvement was to defer the transfer of the EA navigations. To follow up the letters branches have been writing on this issue, we hope to have met both the new Minister and Shadow Minister by the time you read this.

Maintaining the political pressure is very important and through all branches acting together, even if it doesn’t seem directly relevant to their locality, we gain maximum impact and influence.

Les Etheridge
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AGM Report

IWA’s 2013 Annual General Meeting was held at Ettington, Warwickshire, on 28th September. The formal resolutions to approve the accounts, appoint auditors and trustees were all dealt with swiftly, allowing national chairman Les Etheridge to make a presentation and answer member’s questions. Les Etheridge briefed members on the financial loss made at the 2013 National Festival at Watford, and this prompted a number of questions from the floor. There was also a discussion on proposals to increase membership fees, and in the end it was decided to keep the present levels of subscriptions for the coming year (see separate article). The afternoon’s proceedings were concluded with the presentation of the Association’s National Awards for 2013 (see separate article). Full minutes of the meeting are available at www.waterways.org.uk/information/minutes_of_meetings.

As there were insufficient nominations, there was no ballot for either nationally elected trustees or region chairmen. The nominations for Ivor Caplan, Gren Messham and Jim Shead (nationally elected) and Peter Scott (North East Region) were therefore approved. (See separate article about the vacant posts in Eastern and East Midlands regions). Retiring trustees Alasdair Lawrance, John Pomfret and Ian West were thanked for their work during their terms of office, John and Ian in particular having served for 13 and 10 years respectively.

No Increase to Subscription Rates

IWA decided, at its Annual General Meeting on 28th September, to maintain all its subscription rates at the current levels for at least another year. The importance for the Association of maintaining membership levels, by both retaining existing members and attracting new recruits, was recognised at the meeting, and members present decided that one way to help this was to keep subscription rates at the present levels.

With inflation running at near to 3%, the ‘no increase’ decision represents a reduction in real terms in the costs for members. In recent previous years, the Association has maintained a policy of simply increasing subscription amounts by the rate of inflation each year – so that in real terms the cost remained the same.

The Association had originally put forward a plan to do the same again this year, and apply another increase for 2014 level with inflation. Members, however, conscious of above-inflation rise in many other areas including costs of boating, determined that IWA should show a lead and do better. IWA’s subsidiary company Essex Waterways Ltd, which runs the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation, has also recently determined another below-inflation increase in mooring charges for the Navigation. There are no separate licences for using the waterway, other than for unpowered boats and canoes – and their fees are once again to remain at the same level, with no increase, in 2014.

Les Etheridge, IWA National Chairman, said “Whilst IWA’s trustees are deeply conscious of the need for the Association to maintain its income each year, it is important that we listen to what our members have to say, and the Annual General Meeting provides a good opportunity for this. The Association is a genuinely democratic organisation, and this is a great strength. The members’ decision on Saturday will, I am sure, be seen as a very positive reaction to the financial pressures facing many people including boaters, and it is good that IWA is taking a lead to keep costs down. IWA has done more for boaters over the years than any other organisation, and it was a pleasure on Saturday to chair a meeting where members’ passion both for the waterways and for the Association was so very evident.”
The work of IWA volunteers was recognised at IWA’s Annual General Meeting on the 28th September. The premier award, the Cyril Styring Trophy for the member who has made an outstanding contribution in furthering the Association’s campaign, went to Harry Arnold who started photographing traffic on the Bridgewater Canal over fifty years ago when he lived in Warrington, and became more involved with the waterways and IWA when he ran a hire boat firm at Norbury Junction.

Harry was involved with IWA Festivals for a number of years, but his biggest contribution to IWA was his editing of Waterways magazine from 1992 to 2007 during which time he raised the profile and immediacy of the magazine. Harry is also a vice-president of the Association.

The Branch Achievement Award was presented to IWA Chiltern Branch for its consistent hard work, strong committee, programme of well-attended meetings and support for local restoration projects. The branch has carried out fundraising activities, work parties and been involved with local events, including work for the IWA National Festival at Cassiobury Park, Watford this year.

Richard Bird Medals for members of the Association whose efforts and support are considered to have brought significant benefit to the Association over a sustained period were awarded to Roy Cleverly, (Milton Keynes Branch), Mick and Carole Golds (Erewash Canal), John Stockland and Margaret Beardsmore (both of Lichfield Branch), John Brice (Chiltern Branch) and the Canal Cruising Company of Stone, which was founded in 1948 by Randell Wyatt and has been run by the Wyatt family ever since August 1948. IWA founder Robert Aickman hired the Ailsa Craig from R. H. Wyatt at Stone and was accompanied by Elizabeth Jane Howard. Also on part of the trip were James and Anthea Sutherland and Angela and Tom Rolt. All six people undertook the trip on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and the passage through Standedge Tunnel, which was probably the last complete passage of the canal before its re-opening in 2001. The Wyatt family continue to actively support the work of their local IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire branch today.

The John Heap Silver Salver for an outstanding contribution to fundraising was awarded to Roy Chandler for his work in arranging third party funding of more than £1 million for the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation, managed by IWA’s subsidiary company Essex Waterways Ltd.

The Christopher Power Prize for the most significant contribution to the restoration of an inland waterway went to Bernie Jones who was elected chairman of the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust in 2011, and since then has led this challenging restoration which covers former canals of about 40 miles length running through three local authorities. The Shrewsbury Canal and Newport Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal run from Norbury Junction through Newport and Wappenshall to Shrewsbury, and include the first cast iron aqueduct at Longden-on-Tern and pass alongside Shrewsbury Flax Mill, the world’s first iron-framed building.

Nominations for the 2014 awards need to be submitted by 31st March 2014. There will be a call for nominations in the Spring edition of Waterways.
The Association has announced its plans for major festivals and events for next year, but there is to be no national festival. The Association had looked at holding a 2014 National Festival in Stratford upon Avon, and had held discussions with Stratford District Council to review the options for holding such an event in place of the usual Riverside Festival.

However, in the light of the poor attendance and financial outturn of the 2013 National Festival at Watford at Cassiobury Park, which made a loss of just over £40,000, IWA has decided against planning festivals of this type for the foreseeable future, as the financial risks for the Association are too great. IWA will, instead, put its efforts into rallies with clear campaign objectives, and proven annual gatherings such as Canalway Cavalcade, as well as supporting other major events such as Stratford River Festival and Crick Boat Show, where IWA hopes to have an enhanced presence. IWA's commitment to such events will produce more benefit for the Association, and for the waterways in general, at less risk.

2014 is an important year for the waterways of Stratford upon Avon, as it is the 50th anniversary of the re-opening of the southern Stratford upon Avon Canal and the 40th anniversary of the re-opening of the upper Avon Navigation. 2014 also sees the centenary of the birth of IWA founder Robert Aickman, who had a particular affection for the waterways around the town. IWA hopes that these anniversaries will spur further support for the proposals to extend the Avon Navigation to Warwick, for which a feasibility study is due for release in 2014. With these important anniversaries in mind, IWA has offered support to Stratforward Business Improvement District and other local organisations in the town to ensure appropriate celebrations. Stratforward, an organisation of local businesses, has been responsible for organising the annual Stratford River Festival for the past five years, and is organising an even bigger and better event in 2014, at which IWA plans to have a significant presence.

IWA has also confirmed plans to hold a number of significant events in 2014, starting with the annual Canalway Cavalcade, held at Little Venice in London over the May Day Bank Holiday weekend. This is followed by IWA’s annual National Trailboat Festival over the late May Bank Holiday weekend on the Grand Western Canal, and is to be hosted and organised by Devon County Council, and will include celebrations for re-opening the canal following the major embankment reconstruction currently in progress. IWA's 2014 National Campaign Rally, hosted by IWA Chester and Merseyside Branch, takes place at Chester in early June and will promote improved waterway connections through the city and to make better use of the River Dee and all parts of the Shropshire Union Canal in the area. IWA Festivals also plans to hold a significant event, in the style of a traditional boat rally, over the August Bank Holiday weekend, the details of which should be available at the beginning of the year. Furthermore, IWA branches plan to hold a range of rallies up and down the country. There are more details on the website at www.waterways.org.uk/events_festivals/events_festivals.

Les Etheridge, IWA National Chairman, said "IWA has a busy year planned for 2014 and our Festivals team has been tasked with an ambitious range of events to support. Festivals are important to us for the promotion of the waterways where they are held, and the engagement with a wide range of boaters, other waterway users, as well as the opportunity to draw in new waterway supporters. The old formula for IWA's National Festival clearly no longer works and a new style is needed. We intend to support a wider range of events across the country."
IWA NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FESTIVAL AT CHESTER

Tower Wharf, Chester.

IWA is to hold a National Campaign Festival on the Shropshire Union Canal in Chester over the weekend of 6th-8th June 2014.

The Festival, hosted by IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch will be held in the Tower Wharf area, and the aim will be to promote the use of the neglected Dee Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal. The vision is to see a lock in the old mill race at the end of the weir, giving visiting boats access to the River Dee up to Farndon.

The Festival will be a colourful event with music, entertainment and children’s activities.

Brian Phillips, IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch Chairman said “We are delighted with the national support for our waterways festival in Chester in 2014. The event will raise awareness about the neglected Dee Branch, raise funds, and demonstrate how a vibrant waterway can boost the local economy.”

The last Rally held by the Branch in Chester was in 2010, at which there were over 100 visiting craft of all shapes, sizes and ages, as well as traders of all kinds.

Boat booking and trade stand forms will be available shortly, from the Festival Secretary, Lesley Taylor. Please email lesley.taylor@waterways.org.uk for more information and to register your interest. Space is limited so book early to avoid disappointment.

IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch has been working in partnership with the Chester Canal Heritage Trust and Canal & River Trust to develop a waterway strategy which would be a key element in the Chester One City Plan. A suggested vision document has been presented to Chester Renaissance.

The vision will be a key element in safeguarding the Dee Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal and improving access to the upper reaches of the River Dee.

Woolston New Cut Restoration completed

A short length of the “New Cut” at Woolston, once part of the Mersey & Irwell Navigation, has been “restored” at a cost of £1.3m. The 300-yard length of canal forms part of the Woolston New Cut Heritage & Ecology Trail which has created wildlife habitats from a formerly highly polluted site. The project also improved access for the public and demonstrated novel wetland and contaminated land restoration techniques.

Local parish councils and residents are now researching the heritage of the site, focussing on the story of the Mersey flats and ‘Old Billy’, the world’s oldest horse (1760–1822). Born close to the Woolston Cut, Old Billy pulled the flats, or barges, on the navigation until the age of 59 and lived for a further 3 years “in retirement”. Anyone with any stories or photographs of the canal is asked to contact jmgreenslade47@iol.com.

The 1-mile New Cut was built in 1821 to cut off several long loops on the original river’s course, having a lock at each end rising from the River Mersey and being crossed by four swing bridges. The M&I was superseded as a through route by the Manchester Ship Canal but local traffic continued until the 1950s.

Much of the Mersey & Irwell Navigation’s infrastructure existed until the early 1970s, but the channel was subsequently infilled and the buildings and locks demolished. The Ecology trail runs from the southern junction with the Mersey at the former Paddington Lock to the site of the swing bridge by the former soap works at New Cut Lane. Part of the M & I’s route nearer to Warrington now forms the Black Bear Park, following the line of the Runcorn & Latchford (aka Black Bear) Canal.

European Regional Funding

The EU has allocated 6.2 billion Euros to Britain in order to help create jobs and boost local growth in the economy. The money is to be used for projects during the period 2014 to 2020. The fund, which is similar to the old Regional Development Funds, will be allocated regionally by 39 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

The scheme is designed so that where projects cover more than one LEP, adjacent Partnerships could work together. This provides a funding opportunity for local canal restoration trusts and societies, who are advised to approach their LEP, to discuss how their projects can aid local growth and jobs through tourism. In order to be considered it is recommended that contact is made with local officers as soon as possible.
IWA RESPONSE TO CRT BOAT LICENSING FEE REFORMS

IWA has called upon Canal & River Trust (CRT) to reconsider its proposals to reform its business boat licensing fees. The Association is concerned that, if implemented, the proposals will cause serious financial difficulty for some business licence holders.

In principle, IWA does not object to revisiting the formula of how licence fees are levied for business users, but considers that the proposals should be subject to much wider consultation and that any significant changes should be phased in over a longer period of time.

IWA is opposed to any licence increases that are in excess of the ‘inflation-only from 2014’ levels announced in CRT’s press release of 15th October 2012 when it was stated that “Trustees of the Canal & River Trust have decided to limit boat licence fee increases, for three years from 2014, to inflation only. Their decision was made at the same time as endorsing the third and final year of British Waterways’ planned licence prices which will see licence fees rise from 1 April 2013 by 4.6% (2% above inflation).”

CRT has since advised that this decision only referred to standard private licence fees, but IWA considers that the principle stated in CRT’s press release of 15th October should apply to both business and private licence holders.

**Among the points put to CRT in IWA’s response to the consultation, are:**

1. **IWA considers that the significant increase proposed for day boat licences may lead to many operators deciding to cease operating day boats. This would result in less people being able to discover the inland waterways and subsequently hire or own boats. IWA agrees with the proposal to remove the discount relating to use of locks, but considers that the overall increase would be too much for operators to bear.**

2. **The overall increase for some holiday hire boats is also excessive, particularly for longer boats. Many hire firms would be hit by this, as two families (or an extended family) often choose a longer boat to make for a more affordable holiday. Again, if those people are not introduced to the waterways because they cannot afford a week’s hire, they would not go on to become further involved with the waterways.**

3. **IWA considers CRT’s proposed overall increase in income as a result of these proposals to be excessive when the bulk of the increase (£106,000) is anticipated to come from day hire and holiday hire. It is likely that the income that CRT actually receives would be considerably less than this as a result of hire companies going out of business, or by choosing to cease hiring out boats as part of a wider business or reducing their vessel numbers. For the future good of the waterways CRT should encourage more people to take part in affordable holidays, and to do this CRT must support the hire industry or there will be far fewer hire boats available on the system.**

4. **The consultation document states that the review “did not set out to increase overall revenue from business boats” yet the proposals result in an anticipated increase of £120,000. CRT acknowledges that this is an insignificant amount in its overall running costs, but it is substantial to the affected business licence holders who would have to bear this increase.**

5. **The proposals for skippered passenger boats would hit the smaller operators hard, which could result in some passenger boats going out of business. Passenger boats often add life to under-used sections of waterway and as such should be encouraged. There has been a decline in the number of trip boats in recent years, and these proposals are likely to discourage new operators. IWA agrees that the flat fee for boats carrying over 100 passengers was too low, but is concerned that the proposed new fee structure would disadvantage some passenger boat operators and may force them out of business.**
6. IWA does not agree that the Disconnected Waterway discount should be withdrawn. It should remain as an incentive to businesses (and waterway societies) to operate on disconnected stretches of waterway, which otherwise would see little or no activity. Holiday hire boats based on disconnected waterways need to be able to compete with companies based on waterways where there is a choice of routes and longer routes available. IWA is concerned at the impact the proposals would have on waterway societies that operate trip boats where all the funds raised go towards further restoration of their canal project.

7. While welcoming the proposed ‘community boat’ category of licence, IWA remains concerned at the withdrawal of the ‘charitable discount’ that previously applied. There are some community organisations who operate boats for holidays or day trips for disabled or disadvantaged children that would be affected by this, particularly where they currently raise funds through occasional private trips that enable them to offer free or subsidised outings to those the charity is aimed at benefitting. IWA considers that waterway societies operating trip boats where all the funds go towards waterway restoration, and charities raising funds in order to run a community boat, should be eligible for the new community boat licence.

8. Even the proposed transitional rate which would cap increases at 15% next year may be enough to force some operators and charities out of business, and the full increase by 2015 may be the last straw for many others. IWA considers that CRT should not increase its income from this exercise, and that any price increases should be in line with CRT’s previous commitment of inflation only for the three years from April 2014. IWA is also concerned by the consultation process that CRT used for obtaining views on its proposals. IWA, and other national bodies who represent business licence holders, were not consulted, and the consultation was not available on CRT’s website. Existing holders of CRT business licences were consulted, although it is understood that several business licence holders did not receive the consultation documents, and were unaware of the proposals until after the deadline for comments had passed. IWA is also concerned about the short duration of the consultation, and its timing at the busiest time of year for the hire boat trade.

Navigation Committee Chairman Paul Roper said “IWA is very concerned that CRT’s proposals, whilst only raising small amounts of additional income, would have a significant impact on the viability of some operators. This would result in the public having less opportunity to get afloat on our inland waterways. CRT should not increase boat licence fees by more than inflation for the next three years.”

Canal & River Trust has said that it will consider everyone’s views before making any decisions to introduce changes.

Bedford uses Portas money to promote community boat

Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust says it has been awarded ‘Portas Pilot’ cash to encourage visitors to Bedford to get on board its new community boat.

From the John Bunyan statue at the top of Bedford High Street to the new John Bunyan trip boat, which travels up and down the river at the southern end. Businesses have been given free family trip boat tickets to encourage customers into their premises, paid for by the Portas money.

“We wanted people to make the connection between the boat and having a lovely day on our High Street,” said Christina Rowe, Director of BedfordBID which led on the Portas application, which won the town the £50,000.

“The Bedford Portas team have been very generous in their support of the boat,” said Graham Mabbutt, chairman of Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust.
**PLANNING FOR NEW MARINAS**

One of IWA’s two planning consultants, Bob Dewey (BA (Hons), MBA, MRTPI), has issued some advice on planning for new marinas, to explain how the planning system operates and how local authority planners may react to objections.

There have been a few examples recently where waterway interests or groups have supported or opposed new marinas being constructed and have tried to use the planning system to do this.

The planning system operates so that the development plan is of paramount importance in decision making. Only in very exceptional cases will decisions be made which run contrary to policies in the Plans. So the first step should always be to get involved in the preparation or revision of the development plans so that policies are put in place which deal with such matters.

When an application is being decided, the planning officer probably knows very little about the operation of the canal system and thus if you are to persuade him to your point of view, you need think very carefully how you argue your case.

The full planning advice is available on the web site or from Head Office

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**Trent Dredging**

One of the biggest dredging projects of the year, a £1 million contract, has begun on over 45 miles of the River Trent between Holme Lock, Nottingham and Marton, near Gainsborough.

This is the first major dredging of the Trent for over ten years and should see up to 25,000 cubic metres of mud, silt and gravel moved to make navigation safer.

Some reaches of the Trent, particularly on the tidal section below Newark, have often stranded less-careful boats, and sections are still used for commercial carrying.

Sean McGinley, Canal & River Trust waterway manager for the East Midlands, said: “The Trent is still used by commercial boats as well as leisure boaters so we’re pleased that by carrying out this dredging we can make their work on the water easier.”

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**CAEN HILL PUMPING PROJECT IS POINTER FOR FUTURE OF ENERGY CONTROL**

An innovative British company has installed equipment on the Caen Hill flight of the Kennet & Avon Canal that controls water pumping according to electricity demands from the National Grid.

The company, Open Energi, has fitted a box of hardware and software to the pumps that monitors countrywide electricity consumption during peak electrical demand – such as when kettles go on during TV commercial breaks – and finds other equipment around the country (such as lock flight pumping stations) that can be switched on or off to support the grid.

If the grid suddenly finds itself with unexpected excess capacity – for example, if the England football team is playing extra time and everyone defers switching their kettles on – the technology will instantly ask Caen Hill’s pumping to switch back on for a short period.

The company’s business model is that it gets paid by National Grid to adjust the flow, and ‘revenue shares’ the money with its clients. CRT hopes it can save it up to £17,000 per year in back pumping at Caen Hill alone with this system.

An Open Energi spokesman told us that this ability to deal with excess is going to be increasingly important as more renewable energy comes on line, since it is more difficult for National Grid to predict electricity supply from wind and solar power than it is from conventional power stations. Sudden breezes or sunny spells can alter power dramatically.
IWA Unveils 2014 Calendar

Following on from the annual calendar photography competition, IWA recently unveiled its 2014 calendar. During 2012 and early 2013, IWA ran a photography competition and the response was to a very high standard with nearly 550 photographs entered. The photographs were then shortlisted and voted for by the public. Winners received three free calendars each for the photographs used in the final calendar.

The calendar features photographs of the Bridgewater Canal, Caldon Canal, Coventry Canal, Dudley No.1 Canal, Llangollen Canal, Oxford Canal, River Nene, Shropshire Union Canal, River Stort and the River Thames. The winning photographs are available to view on IWA’s website.

Meanwhile the 2015 calendar competition will be launched in a few weeks time and will be announced in the Bulletin.

Canal & River Trust Winter stoppages

Canal & River Trust has announced its winter stoppage programme. In the spring of each year, the Trust begins to plan the following winter’s major works and maintenance programmes and some of these call for stoppages or restrictions.

Over the past three years CRT has encouraged more active involvement of waterway users in planning the timetable of works by publishing its plans online and inviting feedback on them. The plans for the 2013/2014 winter works programme have now been finalised and are available on the CRT website: www.canalrivertrust.org.uk.

IWA Middlesex Branch Objects to Toll House Trashing

Canal & River Trust has sold the Toll House by the Grand Union Canal at Bulls Bridge Road, Southall along with adjoining land. A condition of the sale was the refurbishment of the Toll House. The new owner is a haulage contractor and plans to use the refurbished building for his business offices. The other buildings on site are to be demolished and the yard used for vehicle and materials storage.

CRT has retained the strip of land next to the canal, so that it can use this area for moorings. IWA Middlesex Branch objected to the planning application for these works on the grounds of insufficient information, inappropriate materials and other technical issues. The application remains undecided but work on the Toll House has continued. At a recent visit it was found that the entire original timber roof structure had been removed and replaced by a higher roof of flat roof construction with steep mansard sides. This would seem an attempt to provide an additional floor of accommodation. It was noted than an existing chimney stack had also been demolished. All of this work has proceeded without planning permission and bears no resemblance to the application drawings.

IWA Middlesex Branch has been advised by the local authority that a stop notice has already been served by Hillingdon Borough Council on the owners of the site.

WHITHER BIOMASS?

Over recent years at a number of sites and at different scales there has been increasing interest in the use of low carbon bio fuels and but a short step to talk of using water transport for either imported or domestically produced fuels. Indeed, David Lowe of Commercial Boat Owners Association and Stuart McKenzie of Canal & River Trust have put the case for movement of biomass materials both on cost and environmental grounds particularly where sources and power stations are waterside. The Dalkia power station, Pollington, will use the Aire & Calder Navigation for 300,000 tonnes a year. However, there has been growing concern on the impact on farming and land use of increasing areas of timber and energy crops. Not particularly for this reason, in 2012 plans for two biomass power stations at Drax were shelved and this year trial use of biomass at Tilbury power station has been stopped and the plant is to be moth-balled.

Cost of plant generating station conversion in relation to the generating company’s current priorities was cited. For both Drax and Tilbury, anticipated considerable use of water transport goes by the board.
The use of water transport to service the Olympic Park construction was never more than a fraction of what it could and should have been despite the rhetoric in advance regarding the construction of Three Mills Lock and the potential for larger barges.

The Olympic Park redevelopment is now under way and while it is very much an integral part of the Lea Valley transport axis the possible role of waterborne freight seems not to be getting the attention that environmental considerations would justify.

A recently initiated consultation on the Canal Park Design Guide Planning application seems not to recognise any potential for waterborne freight although the 2011 Lower Lea Valley Waterspace Strategy did refer to operational loading and unloading sites for freight with public access. The Edmonton Borough’s recent Development Management document sees water transport as realistic and sustainable and the London Plan and Blue Ribbon Network express similar views.

Apart from freight potential during the construction phase the general variety of premises and functions in the area will generate considerable demand for movement of goods – waste providing the most obvious but certainly not the only example. IWA has been pressing for greater consideration of freight in overall plans.

Three Mills Lock.

CRT Trials New Options for Winter Mooring Permits

During winter many Continuous Cruisers choose to keep their boat in one place by purchasing a winter mooring permit between November and March. This year, Canal & River Trust is trialling a range of new options.

As in previous years, the Trust is offering winter moorings at some visitor mooring sites. In addition, the Trust offers a cheaper general towpath mooring permit, which will allow boaters the flexibility of mooring anywhere on the towpath for a month or more, with the exception of visitor moorings and a few other local sites. Additionally, in London, four central mooring sites have been developed that the Trust hopes will work better for boaters in the region.

Winter mooring permits will be available for periods of five months, three months or one month, starting on the first day of the month. Continuous cruisers were able to book five month winter mooring permits from 3rd October. Three month and one month permits became available from 15th October and 1st November respectively. Other boaters will be able to secure winter moorings at selected visitor sites from 1st November. The number of visitor moorings sites used as winter moorings is fewer than in previous years, as the Trust has focused on the most popular sites and reduced the number of less well-used sites.

CRT winter mooring permits are available from the moorings section of CRT’s website and more information, including prices, can be found on the CRT winter moorings page.
HS2
Another Consultation

S2 consultations have come in quick succession, the third now open and focusing on phase 2. IWA has replied to the first two consultations, on Design Refinements, and a draft Environmental Statement on the phase 1 London to Birmingham route which includes the ‘stubs’ for routes to Manchester and Leeds, the latter of which has a major impact on the Trent & Mersey Canal at Fradley. These responses are on the website, and so far we have heard nothing more.

The third recent consultation is on the phase 2 routes announced at the end of January, from Birmingham to Leeds and from Birmingham to Manchester. There have already been two small changes from the January route, near East Midlands Airport, and at Sheffield Meadowhall. Launched on 17th July, this consultation closes on January 31st 2014 and is available to view or download on HS2’s website.

In view of the large size of the documents and the variety of information they contain, IWA will prepare a ‘digest’ focusing on waterway issues to be made available via our website for the benefit of our members. Those of you who visited the National Festival will have seen the map of the phase 2 routes with ‘Canal Impact Hotspots’ marked showing HS2’s effect on current navigations, with restoration impacts in addition.

So, whether your interests are narrow or wide canals, cruiseways or commercial, from the Trent & Mersey to the Manchester Ship Canal via the Aire & Calder, HS2 is affecting waterways and restorations as it plans its routes northward. Despite occasional press comment, parliament continues to legislate for its progress, and we all need to remain vigilant to ensure our waterways’ interests are protected for the long term.

If you have any information or comments please send them to hs2comments@waterways.org.uk.

Dry Weather Speeds Repair of Grand Western Canal

Devon County Council says that the recent spell of dry weather has speeded repair of the large breach on the Grand Western Canal at Halberton. The canal is now on track to open early next year, well in time for IWA’s National Trailboat Festival in May.

The embankment is being raised slightly in order to provide additional protection against future overtopping by heavy rain. Councillor Des Hannon, chairman of the canal’s joint advisory committee, said: “The dry weather also provided a timely reminder that the aim of the project is to fix the canal and get proper control of water levels as well. We need a Goldilocks canal. Not too much water, but not too little either.”

The repair scheme is also allowing the towpath between Greenway Bridge and Rock Bridge to be widened to allow more room for bicycles and pedestrians in the future.
LOTTERY BOOST FOR MONTGOMERY CANAL RESTORATION

Ambitious plans to restore the 200-year old Montgomery Canal received a boost in October with the announcement of a £160,000 development grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The bid, led by Canal & River Trust and supported by the Montgomery Canal Partnership which includes 14 partner organisations including IWA, is a key step to securing the full grant of £3.7m and a major step forward in the plans to fully restore the canal.

Along with Shropshire Union Canal Society, IWA had provided CRT with £12,500 in grants over the past three years towards the cost of the development officer who worked up the bids for this funding.

Known for its outstanding natural beauty and heritage the Montgomery Canal runs for 33 miles between England and Wales. The canal has the largest population of rare floating water plantain in Britain and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in England and a Special Area of Conservation in Wales for its abundance of aquatic plants.

Richard Parry, chief executive of CRT, said: “This is fantastic news. The Montgomery Canal is one of the most beautiful waterways in Britain. Whilst much of it can be enjoyed today, the goal of fully restoring it has been kept alive for decades by the tireless work of volunteers. We are delighted to be awarded this development funding. It is another big step towards the canal’s full restoration and allows us to complete our application to the HLF for the full £3.7m grant.”

The Montgomery Canal Partnership aims to fully restore the canal as a haven for people and nature and bring canal boats back to the area for the first time in 80 years. Works will include: the reopening of 2km of canal; re-instatement of a ‘winding hole’ (for boats to turn) at Crickheath; towpath improvements from Welshpool to Llanymynech; and better links between communities in Shropshire.

Importantly the project aims to complete the extension of the nature reserve at Aston Locks which will extend the conservation of the important aquatic plants and secure the environmental works agreed through to Llanymynech. It will also restore historic bridges along the canal and allow work to go ahead to undertake the vital studies needed to secure the full funding needed for the project.

Thanks to the development funding the Trust will employ a temporary project manager and a community development officer to manage a range of volunteering and educational opportunities.

The funding announcement from HLF comes soon after £1m has been invested to transform approximately 14 miles of the Montgomery Canal’s towpath between Newtown and Welshpool through a partnership between the Welsh Government, Powys County Council, Sustrans and Glandŵr Cymru – Canal & River Trust in Wales.
DAVID HUTCHINGS HONoured ON AVoN Barge

David Hutchings, the man credited more than any other with the restoration of the Stratford Canal and Upper Avon, was honoured in a special ceremony on 6th September at the Avon Navigation Trust’s base at Wyre Piddle.

Leading members of the Trust watched as one of the dumb barge hoppers was named in his honour. The naming was performed by Joan Darlington, David Hutchings’s wife at the time of the Stratford Canal restoration, and had been organised by their son Job Hutchings.

The Trust owned the hopper for many years, and they believe it was originally designed and specified by David himself when he led the restoration of the Upper Avon. It never previously had a name, often being referred to as “the unnamed barge”. It has been renovated, replated and repainted.

Among the recent jobs it undertook was to bring the Bancroft Basin bridge to the Trust’s Luddington base when Stratford District Council replaced it with the present modern-era structure.

Discussions about a permanent tribute to the man and his achievements continue, after plans fell through for a river landing stage and memorial steps up to Shakespeare’s Holy Trinity Church. Various proposals have emerged, and his family and the Avon Navigation Trust hope to announce something shortly.

Meanwhile, history seemed to be saying something in August when another ANT hopper, Robert Aickman, began working with a small tug called Tom. The two working craft had been craned into Barford reach of the Higher Avon near Warwick, and are being used in the installation of a turbine generator at Barford Weir.

London Tunnelling

Thames Water’s proposals for the Tideway Tunnel to reduce the discharge of sewage into the Thames under flood conditions do not have universal support but the recently published Guide to Transport Strategy presents most positive and strong arguments for maximising use of river transport and this the IWA Freight Group wholeheartedly supports.

Tideway Tunnel will have 11 riverside construction sites and they aim to move 4.2 million tonnes on the river, reducing by 61 per cent the number of lorries that would be used. Some of the wharves could have a long-term future as bases for routine tunnel maintenance work and there is talk of crew training arrangements.

Although there were some initial problems with the unloading facility at Wallasea Island, River Crouch, Crossrail tunnel spoil from east of a main drive shaft at Canning Town is now moving out by barge and by smaller ships from Instone Wharf (Bow Creek), Beckton and Barking; there is also movement of spoil railed from Royal Oak to wharves at Northfleet. Concrete tunnel linings, pre-fabricated in Chatham, are barged to Limehouse Wharf, Bow Creek, where they are unloaded close to the drive shaft. Each of General Port Services 54m, 1,550-tonne barges, carries 320 segments, the equivalent of 40 lorry loads.

WORK STARTS ON NEW GU CANAL ARM AT STOCKTON

Canal training operation Willow Wren has received planning permission and is starting work on restoring the old Nelson’s Wharf canal arm, on the site of a derelict cement works on the Grand Union Canal at Stockton, Warwickshire.

The work includes offside bank reinstatement, restoring an initial length of the arm and basin, provision of mooring for the Willow Wren training fleet and building a new training centre. The arm should be ready to use by spring 2014, when the business will relocate from its current location at Rugby Wharf.

Willow Wren has seen an increase in business as more boaters look for professional advice and training, and wants a custom site with a variety of lock flights and a number of long straights, which the new location is able to offer.

Willow Wren proprietor said: “We introduced a new custom-built 50ft training narrowboat in summer 2011 and are refitting our 68ft narrowboat for advanced training courses in 2014. We also plan to introduce a 28ft boat for short courses later in the year.”

He added: “This is an exciting time for us as a business, especially since we have an opportunity to restore a piece of history with Nelson’s Wharf and an almost-lost canal arm.”
In the last issue of Waterways, we looked at the River Trent, together with the Erewash, Chesterfield and Grantham canals. Here we explore the eastern Trent & Mersey Canal, the Soar Navigation and the Leicester Section of the Grand Union Canal – infinitely varied waterways traversing an intriguing mix of rural and urban scenery.

**TRENT & MERSEY CANAL**

Our journey begins at Haywood Junction, meeting point of the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal and the Trent & Mersey Canal. It’s a lovely spot – home to a large hire-fleet and notable for Brindley’s slender towpath bridge. Below Haywood Lock you can follow the path to Essex Bridge – an exquisitely charming 16th century packhorse bridge across the Trent – and into the grounds of Shugborough Hall, one of the nation’s loveliest stately homes.

Overlooked by the slopes of Cannock Chase and accompanied by the Trent, the canal glides through a gentle landscape of wildflower-strewn watermeadows and rhododendron-studded woodlands, before descending the romantically-sited Colwich Lock. This is unquestionably the most beautiful section of the entire Trent & Mersey Canal.

No-one would accuse Rugeley of being beautiful, with the cooling towers of its power station dominating the skyline for miles around. But boaters and towpath walkers invariably find the town’s range of amenities useful, and it has a couple of interesting historical associations, being the scene, in 1839, of the canal murder of Christina Collins, as well as the home of the infamous Victorian poisoner Williams Palmer.
PART 2
Skirting the cathedral city of Lichfield, the T&M drifts languidly through charming woodlands – the haunt of jays and magpies, owls and woodpeckers – to the appropriately named Wood End Lock. Hereabouts the integrity of the waterway is threatened by the controversial HS2 project, but IWA and others are lobbying hard for the line to be re-routed so as to be less disruptive to this beautiful length of the canal (see news pages). In any case, it is not inconceivable that the entire project could yet be consigned to the waste bin.

Fradley Junction is a honeypot location, drawing the crowds throughout the summer months. In boating terms it is busy too, the two locks above the junction (with the Coventry Canal) and the three below being officially designated the busiest in Britain.

Barton Marina has been developed into a waterside complex in recent years, featuring designer fashion outlets, a toy shop and museum, a butcher, baker, garden centre, restaurants and a pub. There’s never a dull moment here on fine days.

“What’s that smell?” is the question that springs to mind as you approach Burton-on-Trent. It’s the tang and hops, of course, brewing being the town’s raison d’être; both Marston’s brewery and Molson Coors maltings are located close to Shobnall Basin. Shobnall Fields – an attractive expanse of green – was the site of IWA’s highly successful 2005 National Festival. Nearby Dallow Lane Lock is the last narrow-beam structure for those travelling east; wide-beam is henceforth the order of the day.

Shardlow – INLAND PORT

In its 19th century heyday, Shardlow was the classic example of an inland port, jokingly referred to as ‘Rural Rotterdam’. Carriers associated with the port included Fellows, Morton & Clayton, the Cowlishaws, J. & G. Moore, John Varley and Soresby & Flack.

The narrowboat tradition continues today, with Dobson’s long-established boatyard occupying the site where working boats were once launched and repaired. Fortunately, much of Shardlow’s historic infrastructure has survived in the form of warehouses, pubs and cottages. The finest example is the Trent Corn Mill, dating from 1780, which today serves as the Clock Warehouse pub/restaurant. It has a large central arch under which boats passed to unload their cargoes.

A host of other industries sprang up within the port, including breweries, maltings and, most importantly, animal feed millers, in the guise of F.E. Stevens. Stevens’ occupation of many of Shardlow’s canal-side buildings ensured their survival through the 20th century, until they were eventually converted for commercial and leisure uses.

Today, attractions include the Heritage Centre located below the lock, the Clock Warehouse and the village’s convivial pubs, notably the two traditional boatman’s pubs beside the old wharf: the New Inn and the Malt Shovel, the latter dating from 1779.
Mercia Marina, close to Willington, is the largest marina on the system with almost 600 berths. It boasts a full range of amenities for boaters and those arriving by car, including a restaurant/tearoom and a number of neat holiday chalets.

In complete contrast, Shardlow remains one of the most historic and picturesque villages on the entire waterway network. The wharf alone has two popular pubs, whilst the Clock Warehouse restaurant below Shardlow Lock is a popular port-of-call. There are a couple of takeaway outlets just along the road.

The Trent & Mersey Canal ends its epic 93-mile journey from Preston Brook at Derwent Mouth, a picturesque four-way aquatic crossroads. To the left is Derby’s enticing looking but unnavigable River Derwent, whilst to the right the Trent is navigable for a mile or so up to Shardlow Marina. Ahead a short section of the Trent takes us through Sawley Locks to Trent Lock and Nottingham or, in our case, to the confluence with the River Soar.

For further details of the project visit the Trust’s website: www.derbycanal.org.uk.

**Derby CANAL**

The Derby & Sandiacre Canal Trust aims to restore the Derby Canal, which left the Trent & Mersey Canal at Swarkestone, as near to its original line as possible. Successes to date include restoration of three bridges, a one-mile stretch of ditch opened along the canal’s route, and over a mile of hedges laid.

Outline planning permission for restoration was granted by the three local councils covering the whole canal length in 2011 and a masterplan for restoration prepared by the Trust has been adopted in the County Infrastructure Plan. Active support of the councils continued through 2012, particularly around three prioritised sections and a river link to the city centre. These sections are likely to be funded primarily through commercial development which is, of course, dependent on national economic conditions improving.

For further details of the project visit the Trust’s website: www.derbycanal.org.uk.
RIVER SOAR
The Soar is never going to match the Thames or Shakespeare’s Avon in the popularity stakes, but it should not be under-rated on that account, being a gentle, winding tributary of the Trent, largely free of unsightly flood defences, well-supplied with moorings and attended by a number of attractive riverside villages. Above all, it’s a quiet retreat from the hustle and bustle of other waterways, even in high summer.

Red Hill – venue for IWA’s 2009 National Waterways Festival – is the first settlement on the river as you head upstream. It provides clear evidence of its propensity to flood; even before you reach the flood-lock, you’ll observe a line of elegant riverside chalets, all raised on stilts or similar to protect them from the rising water. Over the hill, the imposing cooling towers of Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station acts as a reminder that you’re still embroiled in the industrial East Midlands, however bucolic the immediate surroundings.

There are fine moorings above Kegworth New Lock, from where you can walk to the village. The busy A6 runs through the heart of the settlement and it lies underneath the flightpath for East Midlands airport, but it’s a pleasant enough place nevertheless, with a good range of shops, pubs and restaurants.

Passing – for no convenient moorings are provided – the attractive villages of Zouch and Normanton-on-Soar, the river comes to Loughborough. In fact, the Soar itself discreetly avoids the town, embarking on a long loop to the east. But the navigation itself heads straight for the town centre, and beyond, with a four-mile canal section.

Loughborough is best known for its university, which has produced elite athletes by the score down the years, including Paula Radcliffe, Steve Backley and Sebastian Coe. But it doesn’t turn its best face to the navigation, although the well-maintained

BOAT TRIPS FOR THE DISABLED
Loughborough is the base of the Peter Le Marchant Trust, established in 1977 and thought to be the first organisation in the country providing day trips and longer holidays for the disabled and seriously ill. The Trust has three boats (two wide-beam and one narrowboat) and regularly carries around 4,000 people per year on canal trips. These outings are of immeasurable benefit to those who participate. Last year the Peter Le Marchant Trust received the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service.

For further details of the activities of the Trust visit www.peterlemarchanttrust.co.uk

It was as a textile manufacturing centre that Leicester rose to prominence in the 19th century, and it remains one of the ten largest cities in the UK. Rich in culture and history, it enjoys a truly cosmopolitan atmosphere, having successfully absorbed wave upon wave of immigrants from the Caribbean, East Africa and South Asia. The city shrugged off the decline in the textile industry and thrives today as an ever-expanding centre of commerce, sundry manufacturing and education.

By no stretch of the imagination does Leicester rank as a major tourist destination but there is nevertheless lots to see and do. Top of the list are: the National Space Centre (0116 261 0261, www.spacecentre.co.uk); Leicester Market – steeped in over 700 years in history and Europe’s largest covered market; Abbey Pumping Station – Leicester’s Museum of Science & Technology (0116 299 5111), www.abbeypumpingstation.org); Belgrave Road – Leicester’s famous ‘Golden Mile’ which is the centre of the Asian community; New Walk Museum & Art Gallery, situated within the historic New Walk area of the city, combining art and history within distinguished surroundings (0116 225 4900).
The Melton Navigation and the Oakham Canal are quite different waterways, in that the Melton Navigation was based on the rivers Wreake and Eye, and as such has remained in water with many of the lock structures being converted into weirs for flood control and maintenance of water levels. By contrast, comparatively little remains of the Oakham Canal, much of which has been filled in except where sections that remained in water have been used for angling.

The Melton & Oakham Waterways Society, formed in 1997, wants to reopen the Melton Mowbray Navigation from its junction with the Leicester Navigation at Syston to Melton Mowbray and to preserve and protect the route of the Oakham Canal. It designed and had built a trailerable dredging boat to open up the channel and, following extensive clearance work in Melton, can now run its trip boat again and is applying to stage IWA’s 2015 Trailboat Rally.

Clearance work has also been done on two sections of the Oakham Canal and the old towpath bridge that prevented boats entering the Wreake near Syston has been replaced by one with adequate clearance. The society plans to investigate extending navigation up to Syston Mill and envisions a new ‘planning hub’ at the junction via the recently formed River Soar/GU Partnership. For further information visit www.meltonwaterways.co.uk.

The towpath is invariably busy with cyclists. A 90 degree turn under the Chain Bridge marks the start of the Leicester Navigation, continuing the Soar through-route.

Heading south, riverside settlements are scarce. Barrow upon Soar is the largest of them – a bustling boating centre, the busiest since Trent Lock. It is an attractive village, and the Navigation pub is a favourite haunt for boaters, cyclists, walkers and car-borne visitors.

Above Junction Lock, the Melton Mowbray Navigation – in the guise of the River Wreake – was once navigable for 15 miles to Melton, from where the short-lived Oakham Canal took boats into the heart of rural Rutland (see right).

Hereabouts the Soar Valley was once dominated by gravel extraction. In fact, in the 1980s, one of the last regular freight traffics on the Midland waterways took place here. Watermead Country Park now makes good use of the old gravel workings, being an expanse of lakes and footpaths on both sides of the river.

Raynsway Marina, close to Birstall Lock, is where many people finish their Soar cruise, choosing to travel into Leicester by bus. For those continuing, Castle Gardens offer the best moorings. Although not quite on a par with the likes of Birmingham, Manchester and Bristol, the city’s waterside has been much improved in recent years and there is a wealth of attractions to be found away from the water (see opposite).
LEICESTER SECTION OF THE GRAND UNION CANAL

This richly-varied waterway runs from the heart of bustling Leicester to Norton Junction, where it joins the Main Line of the Grand Union Canal. Part wide canal, part narrow-beam, it traverses some of the best scenery in the Midlands and features one of the waterway network’s most iconic locations: Foxton Locks.

First though, the canal has to effect its escape from Leicester, which it does without too much prevarication. Aylestone Meadows, on the outskirts, is notable in that Tom and Angela Rolt moored here awhile in 1939 during their epic waterway voyage aboard Cressy.

A series of wide-beam locks carries the canal out of the Soar Valley. Above one such, Newton Lock, a path leads to Wistow Rural Centre, something of a misnomer as this is in fact a retail centre incorporating a range of upmarket shops and galleries. It has a pleasant cafe and an enchanting model village complete with a section of canal featuring authentic-looking locks and bridges.

Wandering languidly across the Leicestershire countryside, the canal reaches Debdale Wharf. This was for a short period the southern terminus of the canal while further capital was sought to continue the construction project.

Foxton Locks – two staircases of five chambers each – mark the end of the wide-beam route down from the Trent. Set amid some of the most appealing scenery in central England, they lift the canal up to its summit level and attract visitors in droves at weekends throughout the year. The boating action is not the only entertainment on offer. There is a waymarked trail around the site of the inclined plane (see right), a small museum housed in the former boiler house, a tearoom and a couple of popular pubs. At the foot of the locks, the Market Harborough Arm heads off to the east (see right).
The Leicester Section’s 20-mile summit level is magnificent – as remote and picturesque as anywhere on the waterway system. Highlights include Yelvertoft, a ‘time-warp’ village slumbering away in a world of its own, and the Welford Arm, just over a mile long and well worthy of exploration. Then there’s Crick, just a marina and pleasantly welcoming village for most of the year, but bursting into life each Spring Bank Holiday as the venue for the waterways’ premier commercial boat show.

The seven locks of the Watford flight – four of them a staircase – signal the beginning of the end for the enthralling Leicester Section. Ahead lies Norton Junction – turn right for Braunston, Oxford and the West Midlands, left for Stoke Bruerne, Milton Keynes and London.

**THE FOXTON INCLINED PLANE**

The Foxton Inclined Plane was designed to overcome a rise and fall of 75ft. It comprised a concrete ramp on which twin tanks each travelled on eight rails arranged in four pairs. Access was by way of canals and basins built at the top and bottom. Each tank measured 80ft by 15ft by 5ft deep, thus accommodating a standard pair of narrowboats. Guillotine gates on the tanks ensured a watertight seal. Steam power was used only to overcome friction from the machinery and wheels; as one tank ascended, the other descended, the lift being perfectly counterbalanced.

Construction began in 1898 and the lift opened for business in July 1900. Never commercially viable, it had closed by 1912 and was dismantled in 1926, its work done by two flights of locks we still use today.

The Foxton Inclined Plane Trust aims to restore the boat lift to full working order. Its museum is now well established, and much of the site has been cleared and prepared. The bottom arm has been cleared and rebuilt, and the top arm cleared and rewatered. Educational information points have also been erected around the site. The Trust continues maintenance and preparation of the site, reorganisation and updating of the museum.

For further information visit www.fipt.org.uk.

**THE MARKET HARBOROUGH ARM**

The Market Harborough Arm is an accident of history. Original plans, dating from 1793, were for a canal to link Leicester with Northampton, where it would meet the Grand Junction Canal. However, the Leicestershire & Northamptonshire Union Canal ran out of funds and was forced to terminate at Debdale for 12 years, progress onwards as far as Market Harborough being made by 1809.

But the direct route to Northampton was never built, and a new company was founded to link the Leics & Northants with the Grand Junction. Referred to as the Grand Union, it came up with a new 23-mile route from Foxton to Norton Junction, incorporating steep flights of narrow locks at Foxton and Watford. So the waterway between Foxton and Market Harborough had to accept branch status, a characteristic it has retained to the present day.

It’s a thoroughly engaging diversion from the Leicester Section’s Main Line, nevertheless. Foxton village, just half a mile along the Arm, remains comparatively little changed by the passage of time. The parish church of St Andrew still stands demurely at the top of the hill, beside the manor, while two pubs, the Shoulder of Mutton and the Black Horse welcome boaters and towpath walkers.

Market Harborough soon reaches out to embrace its waterway. Lush gardens stretch down the water’s edge, enhanced by weeping willows and forsythia bushes; there are dog walkers on the towpath, runners and cyclists too. The activity heralds the approach to the terminal basin, best known as the site of IWA’s first National Rally of Boats in 1950, and today the home of a large timeshare fleet. A sanitary station, water point and refuse disposal facilities are provided for visiting boats.

The basin’s historic warehouses have been attractively redeveloped as apartments, offices and a bar/restaurant. It’s a pleasant spot but the handsome town centre, ten minutes walk away, is even better with a good range of pubs, restaurants and tearooms.
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We talk to IWA Finance Committee Chairman
Gordon Harrower

When did you first become IWA’s Finance Committee chairman?
It was in October 2012. I had been a member of the Committee for four years before that.

What does the job entail?
The Committee serves as the guardians of the charity’s funds. We monitor the Association’s financial resources, ensuring that the resources are managed appropriately, in keeping with the Association’s articles and objectives, and in keeping with charity law. We ensure that activities have financial viability, as far as we can, and that surpluses are invested wisely.

How often does the Finance Committee meet?
We meet six times a year as a standard, with other meetings as required in between. There is also a great deal of communication by email and other means that takes place between the meetings.

Has the job changed much over the years?
That’s hard to say. I think that it has in so much as the team has grown in experience and qualification, therefore our approach to the work is very professional. There is a good finance team at Head Office and there is a good Finance Committee working with them.

How does looking after the finances of a registered charity differ from that of a profit-making enterprise?
Money is money. Charity law makes a few changes to what one does but the task in both types of organisation is similar. The main aspect has to be transparency in the things we do, whether that is for shareholders or Association members.

What have the credit crunch and subsequent recession meant for IWA?
The current economic situation has made things tougher for all charitable organisations, and for us in particular. It is difficult enough to retain and recruit members, it is even more challenging in this economic environment. Members are forced, understandably, to look at their outgoings and weigh up the immediate worth of money paid to charities. IWA is not alone in this, charities across the board are reporting similar issues. Financially, of course, the recession really dents our investments and interest rates, which is worrying going forward.

Looking forward, are you optimistic that the worst times are over?
That is difficult to say. I hope so, as it would be good to see the country coming out of the recession.
I believe that you also serve as chairman of IWA Enterprises Ltd. What does that involve? Inland Waterways Enterprises Ltd is the trading arm of the Association. The company exists solely to make profits which it then donates totally to the charity. Charity law prohibits the charity trading under its own name. So, that said, I help to steer the company in its efforts to make profits. This includes the mail order and festivals businesses.

It all sounds very time-consuming and demanding...
You are correct. When I took the job over from Les Etheridge, now our National Chairman, he said “not a lot of work to do, mainly management” He was right, but it is a big management commitment. It certainly keeps my mind busy.

Tell us something about Gordon Harrower’s background. Have you been in the world of finance for a long time?
I qualified as an accountant in 1983, and have worked mainly in financial computer systems since the mid-eighties. Most of my career I have spent working overseas, which has been good from both a personal and a professional point of view.

When did you first become interested in the inland waterways?
I have always been interested in the waterways, I think. Although it has only been an active interest since I retired in 2000 and began boating. Initially it was sea-boating, and now it is also canal and river boating.

And how did you come to join IWA?
As others have said before me in your Interview features, it just seemed the natural thing to do. The waterways are a very important resource, and when I started to get a great deal of enjoyment from them, I felt that I should be prepared to do something to ensure that I would be able to enjoy the resource for myself and my children and grandchildren.

Tell us about your earliest IWA experiences – attending meetings, joining work parties, attending festivals etc?
After I retired and had the time to become involved in the charity sector, we had retired to the Isle of Wight, so involvement from there was difficult. I instead became involved as treasurer with a local radio station charity.

Are you a boat owner?
No, not currently, although I have been. My wife and I have owned a few sea boats during our time on the Isle of Wight and we had a few seasons on the Thames. We have hired narrowboats on several occasions. When I was part of the canal charity near York I often took the helm of the charity’s trip boat. The Pocklington Canal is a beautiful waterway which is well worth visiting. We are currently in the market for a narrowboat, and are intending to actively seek a boat over the winter in time for next season.

With all your IWA duties, do you find any time to get out and about on the waterways?
No, it is difficult to find time away from my IWA duties. However, with an investment in a boat I will have more of an incentive to make the time.

Where do you like to go – and what do you like to do?
My wife and I have family all over the country so we spend a great deal of time visiting and helping with our grandchildren. We really love being grandparents. We also like to go big ship cruising, with Cunard and Saga. We are looking forward to having our own boat and cruising more of the inland waterway network.

Finally, what is the best... and the worst... thing about being IWA’s Finance Committee chairman?
The Finance Committee is a great team that I really enjoy being part of. The members are very professional, very committed people. I like to chair the meetings in a fairly informal way, which I think works and the team enjoys the work. I can’t think of a single bad aspect of my present role within IWA.
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We publish on these pages a round up of some of the branch activities that have taken place recently. If your event isn’t included here, do let Alison Smedley, Branch Campaign Officer, know next time you are organising one.

WATERWAY COMMUNITY DAY AT WHEELOCK WHARF

IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch and the crew of the historic fly boat Saturn hosted three days of activities in the June sunshine on the wharf at Wheelock, at the foot of Cheshire Locks. Access was given to the historic stables on the wharf, which remains in almost exactly the same condition as when last used by working boat horses over 50 years ago. These have not been opened up to the public for over a decade but CRT gave permission for IWA to open them up for this special event.

On 7th and 8th June around 90 children from the local primary school came in groups to undertake a range of activities on the wharf, in the stables and on board Saturn. They learned about canal carrying, horse-boat and life afloat for children of boating families a century ago. A film about horse-boat, made in 2002 and largely shot in and around the stables, was also shown.

A Waterways Community Day was held on 8th June, with IWA branch members talking to local people about the Cheshire Locks Project and other activities in the North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch area. The branch was joined by the Trent & Mersey Canal Society which had its own displays. Shropshire Union Canal fly boat Saturn was open to the public and an impromptu gathering of a number of working boats en route between festivals at Etruria and Middlewich also took place.

Chiltern Branch DONATIONS TO CANAL & RIVER TRUST

IWA Chiltern Branch has donated £1000 to CRT to help meet the costs of repairs on the Aylesbury Arm and the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal. £500 was presented to Jeff Whyatt, Waterway Manager of CRT’s South East Area, towards work on Lock 12 of the Aylesbury Arm, which collapsed in March. This is a very expensive task and the failure of the lock has closed the navigation.

The other £500 was presented to Jon Guest, General Manager of CRT’s London Area, as a contribution towards repairs to Reeds Bridge, a footbridge over the Slough Arm. The canal was closed whilst the footbridge was removed.

The cheques were presented by IWA Chiltern Branch Chairman, Dave Chapman, at the IWA National Waterways Festival, Cassiobury Park, Watford. Dave commented “We believe that canal arms of the Grand Union are an essential aspect of the character of this waterway. It is really important to ensure that the navigations are maintained and that more use is made of them. Hence we are delighted to make these donations and look forward to ever closer co-operation with Canal & River Trust.”
**Oxford WORK PARTY**

A successful work party was held by IWA Oxfordshire Branch on Sunday 1st September, when 20 people gathered at the Oxford Canal’s Hythe Bridge Arm for a day’s volunteering to spruce up the end of the canal ahead of the Oxford Open Doors event on 14th and 15th September, which saw the branch host boat trips, display and sales stands in the ‘pocket park’ at the end of the Arm, adjacent to Hythe Bridge Street in Oxford.

The work party day started with a health and safety induction, then work commenced including litter picking, vegetation clearance, pulling rubbish out of the canal and painting the balance beams of the capstan sculpture. Other volunteers litter picked and cleared some overhanging vegetation along the towpath of the arm. Meanwhile at Isis Lock, another team of volunteers painted the railings near the lock whilst others weeded and cleared the lockside of litter and leaf debris.

Concerns about parking when planning the event did not materialise, with all the volunteers opting to arrive by either foot, boat, train, bicycle, motorbike, or on the park and ride bus.

The end of the arm was a spot to be tackled, with Orange Balsam, an invasive plant that crowds out native species, being removed as well as a variety of rubbish. Amongst the rotting vegetation and general litter there was a bicycle, in full working order as one of the party demonstrated by riding it around the grassy area.

The Oxford Open Doors event a fortnight later was also a great success, with 40 volunteers helping across the two days. The branch ran boat trips for over 600 people on three boats. Many more looked at the displays and stands in the pocket park where children were able to take part in a variety of activities. Kidlington Sea Scouts helped with operating the lock and helping passengers on and off the boats. Cold and windy weather meant that the queues for the boat trips were not as long as they had been in previous years, but the event was still considered a resounding success.

**Thwaites Mills BOAT GATHERING 2013**

A boat gathering at Thwaites Mills over the weekend of 20th and 30th June, part of the annual Leeds Waterfront Festival, was held for the second year running. The boat gathering took place within the historical site of Thwaites Mills Museum, about two miles downstream from the centre of Leeds. The event was jointly organised by IWA West Riding Branch, CRT and Thwaites Mills Museum and was supported by the Sea Cadets who organised the car parking. Local boaters were also very supportive of the event.

The glorious weather was complemented by an excellent range of activities and attractions that were enjoyed by over 4,000 visitors. There were plenty of activities to amuse the children, with games of mini golf, archery and sponge throwing. Once the energy had run out, children loved playing with the sand at the IWA/CRT tent, having their faces painted or creating masterpieces with Sandy Kidz. Also on site was a bouncy castle and fairground ride, and the Safe Anchor Trust ran hugely popular free boat trips all weekend to Knotstrop Lock and back.

IWA West Riding Branch had an informative display about the waterways, and the International Guild of Knot Tyers gave impressive demonstrations of fender making techniques. The Yorkshire Association of Change Ringers gave people the opportunity to try their hand at bell ringing, and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust attracted much attention.

In keeping with the historical location of the mill, which was open and running all weekend, there was a large range of exceptional historic boats and machines present. The 99-year old Humber Sloop *Amy Howson* greeted visitors with an open sail and impressed them with a tour of her hull. Similarly, the *Kennet*, *Rainbow Sprint*, *Vulcan* and *Riger* all attracted visitors with a free tour. An appearance by the 147ft *Fusedale*, one of the commercial boats operating in the north east, completed the turnout in style, pushing the limits of the canal and locks. Visitors were also treated to historic gypsy caravans, a working Titan tractor from 1917 and a fully operational steam crane which demonstrated its power all weekend.
Northampton Branch ADOPT THE NORTHAMPTON ARM

Following discussions with CRT, IWA Northampton Branch officially "adopted" the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union Canal earlier this year. Over the summer they commenced a monthly work party, which will see invaluable work carried out on the Rothersthorpe flight of locks.

The 4½ mile stretch of the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union Canal represents probably the largest canal adoption in the country and the first work party, held on 2nd July, captured the attention of the media with BBC Radio Northampton and an ITV Anglia News team turning out to interview volunteers and film them in action at Lock 17 at the bottom of the Arm.

Lock 17, in the heart of Northampton at the gateway to the River Nene, had been chosen for the first assault because it was arguably the area most in need of some attention. It is also the entry point to the canal system from the river and first impressions count. In a very short period of time volunteers were able to complete a number of tasks to tidy up the lock area including litter picking, rubbish and vegetation clearance, weeding, applying paint to the lock gates and handrails, and painting bollards and the lock ladder landing.

The second work party, on 18th August, continued work at Lock 17 and included strimming and general vegetation clearance. The landing below the lock was lengthened revealing a bollard, long buried under three foot high overgrowth. Boats up to 70ft are now able to land crew easily rather than just 40ft previously. Shrubs and trees adjoining the lock landing were cut back to create an improved margin depth along the length of the landing and improve access to the lock. Floating debris and weed were also removed above the lock; and litter picking, edging and weed clearance was undertaken. It was good to see the paintwork, completed at the first task party at the lock a month earlier, still looking bright and shiny.

IWA Northampton Branch will be working closely with CRT and also local companies, residents associations, community and youth groups to encourage participation at these monthly work parties. Check www.waterways.org.uk for the dates and locations.

MONTHLY IWA BRANCH WORK PARTIES CONTINUE

Monthly work parties are now taking place in a number of IWA branches around the country.

The monthly work parties organised jointly by IWA Manchester Branch and CRT have continued to carry out a variety of tasks around the canals of Greater Manchester. In August and September, the work was based around Hanover Street Bridge on the Ashton Canal where a range of tasks were carried out including excavating inspection holes, unblocking drains, temporary repairs to water catchment channels, concreting for new water catchment channels and vegetation removal from access steps.

IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire volunteers painting at Church Lawton on the Cheshire Locks.

The monthly work parties organised by IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch and supported by the Trent & Mersey Canal Society and CRT, have continued to work their way up the flight of locks through Church Lawton. The four locks at this location (Lawton Treble Locks and Hall Lock) have each had their balance beams and lock furniture painted, vegetation cleared and cobbles setted weeded, leaving the flight looking much smarter for all the passing boats along this busy stretch of canal. With the locks at Church Lawton almost complete, the monthly work parties will soon be moving up the canal to Church Locks 47 and 48.

IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch also have monthly work parties on the Caldon Canal in partnership with the Caldon & Uttoxeter Canals Trust. Meanwhile other monthly work parties taking place include locations such as Lapworth, Chester and Northampton. Check the IWA website to see what is happening near you.

FORD EMPLOYEES AT WORK ON THE Lee

On Thursday 4th July five employees from Ford and two other volunteers joined IWA North & East London Branch’s work party at Three Mills Lane Bridge. CRT had kindly provided a work boat for the day so the first task was to clear the floating litter from this stretch of the River Lee Navigation before heading north to CRT’s wharf. At the wharf the volunteers spent a good few hours clearing the vegetation from the towpath, and moving it to a nearby hedge so that it could compost and continue to provide a habitat for local wildlife.

The last job of the day involved travelling slightly further north to litter pick the access path that leads to the new floating towpath. Volunteers also removed the rabbit protectors from the Blackthorn that had been planted amongst the wild flowers. The litter collected filled twelve bin bags and a door was also retrieved from the water. A good day was had by all, and thanks go to all the volunteers, Ford employees and the CRT team for supporting the event.
West Riding Branch WORK PARTIES

West Riding Branch held a successful series of five work parties over the summer. They concentrated on two different locations in the Branch’s area - the first mile of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal in Leeds City Centre and Salterhebble Locks on the Calder & Hebble Navigation. At Salterhebble they chose two Saturdays, hoping to attract passers by, and in Leeds, Friday evenings with an attempt to attract some who normally attend branch social meetings.

After a first very wet Saturday at Salterhebble, the second work party towards the end of July saw much better weather and most of the day was spent attacking Himalayan Balsam, which was greatly enjoyed by our younger participants, as well as more cobble clearing. Shire Cruisers’ narrowboat Oxford was again on hand to provide tea and coffee.

The first wettish evening in Leeds was followed by two dry ones in July and August. There was more litter picking, cobble clearing, garden weeding, and fence painting, half a rudder, and a mile’s worth of mileposts, which on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal includes quarter and half mile posts. The volunteers started at Office Lock and spread out towards River Lock and Oddy Lock. The work attracted many positive comments from passers-by and some of the volunteers were drawn from the nearby residential and office accommodation.

Appreciation goes to all the volunteers who came along, and thanks are also due to Claire, Lucy, Matt and Katie of Canal River Trust for their assistance and for providing the equipment needed.

Nottingham CANAL CLEAN UP

IWA Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Branch, working in partnership with CRT, held a very successful canal clean up along the canals of Nottingham on Saturday 21st September.

Some 19 volunteers gathered at Beeston Lock, where after a health and safety briefing they were split into two groups. One group, with lifethruts and grappling hooks at the ready, set off on CRT’s work boat, The Bollin (complete with CRT crew) for the bridges further along the Beeston Cut where it was known that the larger items of rubbish were lurking. Other volunteers, including one family group on bicycles, set off to do litter picking in the vicinity of Beeston Lock and along the Beeston Cut. At least 10 full bags of rubbish were collected.

The group on board The Bollin meanwhile were pulling out some large objects from the bridge holes along the Beeston Cut, and along the Nottingham Canal towards the city centre. Both groups congregated at the Castle Marina retail park for lunch.

Among the items pulled out of the canal during the course of the day were: numerous bicycles, several shopping trolleys, various types and models of chairs, a skateboard, a mattress, metal pipework, fabric, road cones, a television set, a cigarette vending machine, a statue of the Hindu god Ganesh, numerous tyres and one ladies thigh-high leather boot.

Most of the rubbish was unloaded from the work boat into the CRT depot at Trent Street Bridge in Nottingham, before the boat returned the volunteers back to Beeston Lock at the end of the day, collecting up yet more rubbish along the way.

Dee Branch SPRUCED UP

With IWA’s National Campaign Rally coming to Chester in June next year, volunteers from IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch have started a campaign to spruce up the neglected arm of the Shropshire Union Canal, which goes down into the River Dee at Chester.

Locally known as the Dee Branch, the canal is little used at present and the river lock has fallen into disrepair so the whole area is in need of attention. 1st Willaston Scouts Group, CRT volunteers and other local community group members joined IWA volunteers for the first work party on Saturday 21st September.

Scouts from the 1st Willaston group undertook painting of the Dee lock railings, litter clearance and weeding around the Wharf Square. Other volunteers cut back vegetation opposite the flats and re-discovered the flight of steps that leads up to the road. Prior to their efforts the whole flight was hidden amongst the long grass and brambles so this was a huge improvement. Yet more volunteers “prepped” the lock gates and repainted them in the Shropshire Union colours of grey and white.

This was the first of several work parties that will be held over the next few months (visit www.waterways.org.uk for the dates) to try and improve the whole aspect of the Dee Branch prior to the Campaign Rally, which takes place over the weekend of 6th, 7th & 8th June next year in Tower Wharf, Chester and the surrounding area.
A number of IWA branches have been out on the waterways over the summer helping boaters through locks and raising funds and awareness in the process. These events, commonly known as “Lock Winds” or “Lock Ransoms,” have taken place in several locations around the waterway network this year.

IWA Shrewsbury & North Wales Branch held its annual Lock Wind on 27th and 28th July at Hurleston Locks at the junction of the Shropshire Union and Llangollen canals. Over the course of the weekend, £475 was raised in donations and sales and branch volunteers assisted more than 100 boats through the locks. The Branch’s lockside gazebo did a brisk trade selling homemade cakes, preserves, strawberries and cream, as well as the branch’s pictorial calendar for 2014, sponsored by canal businesses in the area.

Following the lock painting and towpath maintenance on the Lapworth flight carried out by IWA Warwickshire Branch members over the last two years, a Lock Wind was held on 3rd and 4th August at Kingswood Junction. A marquee containing displays of the work of the branch and IWA literature was visited by many towpath walkers and cyclists who were complimentary about the work being done when viewing the photographs of branch work parties. The sun which had shone on the Saturday was not to last and by mid-morning on the Sunday the rain came and virtually stopped all traffic on water and land. Nevertheless, through the generosity of boaters and towpath passers-by, a sum in excess of £200 was raised.

IWA Chiltern Branch held their annual event at Marsworth over the weekend of 17th and 18th August. Branch volunteers said that Marsworth was quieter than it had ever been on one of these events, perhaps due to the pessimistic weather forecast that weekend. WOW activities were put on for children which were very popular with those people who were out and about. There was a social gathering on the Saturday night in a local pub and over £400 was raised over the weekend.

IWA Milton Keynes Branch held their annual fund raising event over the August bank holiday weekend, where branch volunteers operated the three locks at Soulbury on the Grand Union Canal, which resulted in donations of over £700.

Upton moorings RESOLUTION

IWA branches have been instrumental in helping resolve an issue concerning available visitor moorings on the River Severn. The local branches (Birmingham, Black Country & Worcestershire and Gloucestershire & Herefordshire) first became aware of the issue earlier this year when local boaters alerted IWA to CRT’s plans to allow a trip boat to use the visitor moorings at Upton-on-Severn. IWA’s concerns were raised in March at a CRT Partnership meeting, but despite this CRT announced in May (with no consultation) that the mooring, one of very few available on this part of the river, was to be re-allocated for use by the commercial trip boat, having stated that this was necessitated by the local authority introducing new access restrictions for coaches in the town centre. Upton Town Council maintained, however, that this was not the case.

IWA representatives held visits and meetings with relevant bodies including the Swan Hotel and the Town Council, during which other issues became apparent, including problems with boats over-staying on the moorings, unsafe or missing bollards and the shortage of other moorings in the area. Whilst IWA supports the operation of commercial trip boats, in this particular case IWA’s view was that CRT had not considered safety implications of boaters needing to be able to moor up in an emergency situation on a river that often sees flood conditions.

CRT proposed a revised arrangement in which the public trips on the trip boat would operate from its original moorings in the town at weekends, and the visitor mooring pontoon would only be used for scheduled charter trips for people arriving by coach on weekdays during the summer. Upton Town Council then announced, however, that as 50% owner of the pontoon moorings it was not willing to give permission for this use.

CRT has since rescinded the permission for the trip boat to use the moorings. It has also apologised for the lack of consultations and noted that it would look at increasing the visitor moorings at Upton.

IWA will continue to pursue with CRT the provision of further visitor moorings in Upton, along with general issues affecting the River Severn such as lack of facilities, lack of moorings and restrictive opening times.

Meanwhile the Environment Agency announced that it would progress completion of its intended works where rocks placed in the river were obstructing an alternative mooring site. This has now taken place and the moorings, near the Swan Hotel, are now fully operational.

In September IWA received a letter from Upton Town Council announcing an arrangement with the marina on the other side of the river for overnight free moorings and also the Town Council’s intention to raise funds for the development of additional visitor moorings in the town.

This is a welcome conclusion to a saga which came about through a lack of consultation or consideration of local and safety issues, and where IWA’s intervention along with other river users has contributed to increased availability of moorings in the area.
This summer, well over 100 volunteers from The Inland Waterways Association took part in 14 Himalayan Balsam work parties, on 12 different sites, on ten different waterways across eight different counties.

Himalayan Balsam, an invasive plant (botanical name *Impatiens glandulifera*), which was introduced to Britain in the mid 19th Century by Victorian gardeners, crowds out native plants and can take over whole areas of river and canal bank. The seeds, up to 800 per plant, are released explosively from the seed pods and can travel for up to seven metres from the plant. Control of this invasive species on the inland waterways is important for boaters as its vigorous growth shades out all natural vegetation in the summer, but completely dies back in the winter, leaving canal and river banks vulnerable to erosion, thus increasing dredging requirements.

As Himalayan Balsam is very easy to pull up, and is non-toxic, it makes an ideal task for volunteers of all ages, and this year the volunteers ranged from 6 to over 70.

IWA Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Branch removed the tallest plants on the River Trent at Beeston where the Himalayan Balsam stood at 12ft/4m high.

IWA Birmingham, Black Country & Worcestershire Branch removed Himalayan Balsam with the thickest stems at Falling Sands, Kidderminster where the base of the plants had diameters of 4in/10cm.

In total, nine IWA Branches tackled Himalayan Balsam on their local waterways. Thanks go to the following branches and all the volunteers who took part in our campaign against Himalayan Balsam in 2013:

- **IWA South Wales Branch** – two days on the Swansea Canal supporting the Swansea Canal Society
- **IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch** – five days on the Caldon Canal in partnership with the Caldon & Uttoxeter Canals Trust
- **IWA Lichfield Branch** – one day on the Trent & Mersey Canal at Rugeley
- **IWA East Yorkshire Branch** – one day on the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne and Coates Bridge, supported by the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society
- **IWA Birmingham, Black Country & Worcestershire Branch** – one day on the Stafford & Worcestershire Canal at Falling Sands, south of Kidderminster
- **IWA Chiltern Branch** – one day on the Grand Union Canal in the sideponds at Marsworth
- **IWA West Riding Branch** – one day on the Calder & Hebble Navigation at Salterhebble
- **IWA Lancashire & Cumbria Branch** – one day at the Lune Aqueduct on the Lancaster Canal (and surrounding area)
- **IWA Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Branch** – one day on the River Trent at Beeston

Details of all future IWA work parties can be found on the IWA website events calendar, or by contacting Alison Smedley, Branch Campaign Officer, on 07779 090915 or by email alison.smedley@waterways.org.uk. Stefanie Preston, Branch Campaign Assistant 01494 783453 stefanie preston@waterways.org.uk
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WRG’S
Successful Summer

A round up of activities across the country – including restoring a historic bridge at the IWA National Festival at Watford

September saw the end of a very productive canal camp summer season in 2013. Volunteers from across the country and Europe worked hard over the summer on various canal restoration projects.

In July Waterway Recovery Group volunteers visited the Cotswold Canal, helping with restoration work at Griffin Mill Lock near Strood; they created a 1km disabled-access footpath on the Wey & Arun Canal and also restored the wharf walls of Whitehouse’s Pumping Station on the Wendover Arm, Grand Union Canal, using heritage construction skills. At the end of July WRG volunteers headed east to the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation in Essex and spent the week constructing a new quadrant for Rickett’s Lock, repainting the lock gates, and carrying out towpath repairs.

Moving into August, WRG headed north to the Cromford Canal with volunteers working on site in the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Area. Volunteers took part in the rebuilding of a stone wall at Sawmills Gauging Narrow and towpath improvement work. WRG volunteers also spent two weeks working on the Chesterfield Canal helping with the construction of the new Staveley Town Lock.

Over the summer WRG also ran working holidays on the Wilts & Berks Canal, Basingstoke Canal, Cotswold Canals, Swansea Canal and the Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canals... and helped to set up IWA’s National Waterways Festival in Watford.

WRG VOLUNTEERS RESTORE HISTORIC BRIDGE ON THE GRAND UNION CANAL

One of the highlights of the summer involved working with Canal & River Trust on the repair and repainting of Lady Capel’s Bridge, a Grade II listed bridge on the Grand Union Canal near Watford.

First of all staff from CRT removed the damaged paintwork and prepared the site for WRG volunteers to restore the bridge back to its former glory. Over the following week, ten dedicated volunteers removed the damaged bricks and mortar before repointing the entire bridge. Once the repairs had been carried out volunteers spent another five days painting the bridge in a white, breathable paint.

WRG was delighted to be invited to help restore the bridge in Watford as part of the Waterways Festival’s celebration of this section of the Grand Union Canal, and thoroughly enjoyed speaking to passing walkers, boaters and cyclists about the work and WRG’s involvement in canal restoration. In total WRG volunteers spent an impressive 287.5 hours repointing and painting the bridge!

This project has helped to demonstrate the real benefits that volunteers bring to the waterways and highlights the importance of working in partnership with CRT to help maintain the waterway network.
The WRG Board is busy planning an action packed 2014 full of exciting canal restoration projects for volunteers from all over the country – and beyond. Dates for 2014 will be online (www.wrg.org.uk) at the end of November. If you would like to request a 2014 Canal Camps brochure please email jenny.black@waterways.org.uk with your name and address, or telephone Head Office on 01494 783453.

WRG volunteers in Wales.

WRG IN WALES

WRG volunteers are regular summer visitors to the Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canals and this year was no different. Over 35 volunteers were involved in repairing a bywash, constructing a new bywash weir and clearing vegetation along the canal.

As well as working on the Mon & Brec Canal, 18 WRG volunteers, working alongside the Swansea Canal Society and Canal & River Trust, spent a week at the beginning of September helping to restore a section of the historic Swansea Canal as part of a long-term project to bring the full length of the waterway back into use for boats. Whilst much of the original canal has been in-filled and associated industries have disappeared, the Swansea Canal remains an attractive wildlife corridor with around five miles still in water between Clydach and Ynysmeudwy. The long-term aim of Swansea Canal Society is to recreate a navigable link along the Swansea Canal into the River Tawe and from there to join up with the Neath and Tennant Canals.

Over the week volunteers gave Lower and Upper Trebanos Locks a revamp, with work including the rebuilding of canal-side walls, repointing damaged stonework, bank protection and clearing vegetation and debris from the locks. It is hoped that the small steps taken this week by WRG and the Swansea Canal Society will prevent further deterioration of the locks and act as the building blocks of this restoration project.

TRAINING VOLUNTEERS OF THE FUTURE

This summer WRG volunteers also successfully ran excavator driving and WOW bricklaying experiences on their stand over the weekend of IWA’s National Waterways Festival. The bricklaying activity was as popular as ever, but the overriding success for 2013 was the new ‘learn to drive a digger’ experience. Hewden Plant Hire kindly donated the use of a 3-tonne excavator allowing members of the public to learn basic excavator skills under the instruction of WRG volunteers. The experience proved to be a popular activity over the weekend, with over 80 members of the public, aged between 3 and 62, taking part in the 15-minute experience – it is hoped that it encourages a wider range of people to get involved in canal restoration work in the future.

STILL TO COME...

WRG’s main Canal Camps programme ends in October but that doesn’t mean a period of hibernation for the winter. This year there are two Christmas Camps running from 26th December to 1st January on the Uttoxeter Canal, Derbyshire and the Cotswold Canals at Eisey Lock.

Work will include vegetation clearance, so there will be plenty of scrub bashing, bonfires and other winter activities. It’s the perfect way to work off the Christmas dinner and start the New Year in style. For more details go to the WRG website or call 01494 783 453 ext 604.
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I noted the letter from David Northcott on page 43 of Waterways 241, regarding Diamond Locks. Those on the Oxford Canal may well be intended to pass a decent quantity of water from the Cherwell down the canal sections. The explanation for other shapes, be they diamond, oval-sided or round, is a very simple result of the structural demands of a hole in the ground. The ground pressure forces on the walls of a parallel-sided lock, particularly when empty, are considerable. The recent failures on some Midlands narrow locks illustrates this. Various forms of ties, or mass construction or a batter (leaning back on the walls) are used to resist these forces. It is worse if you build a lock on a river, in a flood plain, because basically you are building in mud which, as David Hutchings discovered, can be both mobile and fluid. In other words, an unsupported steep-sided hole does not stay there for long. Side walls that are oval or even completely circular form self bracing arches to resist this pressure and are easier to build in difficult circumstances. Examples abound on the Canal du Midi, the River Isle in Western France and some of the old locks on the Warwickshire Avon. But diamond shaped locks are better braced too, just try it with a cardboard model. Hence their use on the Avon again. A further advantage is that should a minor wall collapse occur, it is unlikely to immediately close the navigation because there is greater clearance. Incidentally, the ancient Avon locks being built in silt never really stop moving around and developing cracks – one of the many maintenance issues that the Avon Navigation Trust has to contend with.

Roger Clay, Director, Avon Navigation Trust

MORE ON DIAMOND LOCKS

Enjoying the Chelmer & Blackwater

I was pleased to read your item on the businesses operating on the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation in the Autumn issue of Waterways. It is my home waterway and I often visit the delightful tearooms at Paper Mill Lock, either for a light lunch or tea and tasty cakes in the afternoon. It is good to know that business is booming in these difficult economic times. Incidentally, my favourite walk is from Paper Mill Lock along to Ulting with its superb waterside church. If I'm feeling extra energetic, I sometimes continue along to Hoe Mill Lock before returning to the tearooms for some well-earned refreshment.

The achievement of turning around the fortunes of the Chelmer & Blackwater, including the provision of much-improved facilities for boaters, should rank among IWA’s proudest achievements.

Jack Hart, Rettendon, Essex

Restoring the Monty

Your interview with Alan Platt in the Autumn edition made interesting reading, not least in relation to the restoration of the Montgomery Canal. The sheer perseverance of enthusiasts such as Alan is to be highly commended – the Monty has undoubtedly been the most frustrating restoration project of them all. I first became interested in the inland waterways in the early 1980s, and discovered the Montgomery Canal on one of my earliest trips along the Llangollen Canal. Swept along on a tide of enthusiasm, and encouraged by the progress being made on other waterways such as the Rochdale, Huddersfield Narrow and Kennet & Avon canals, I naively thought I'd be cruising to Newtown by the end of the century, if not before. Now it's 2013 and we're still waiting for complete restoration! But keep at it everyone, it will be worth it in the end.

Richard Toukins, via email

We are pleased to be able to report in this issue on a £160,000 Heritage Lottery Fund development grant for the Montgomery Canal – see News pages. Ed.
**Directory - October 2013**

You can contact almost anyone in IWA using firstname.surname@waterways.org.uk

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