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TEN GOOD REASONS
TO BE AN IWA MEMBER

Your support is vital in helping IWA to:

1. Campaign for properly funded waterways
2. Provide a voice for you
3. Help improve your local waterways
4. Defend the waterways from unwelcome development
5. Give practical financial and political support for waterways restoration
6. Provide expert advice for waterway managers and restoration groups
7. Organise restoration holidays for young people
8. Provide over 5,000 days of volunteer labour each year
9. Arrange affordable insurance for waterway organisations
10. Enable greater appreciation of the waterways through education and experience
AGENDA
The Column of the National Chairman

The announcement that the government has amended the route of HS2 in Staffordshire is great news for the waterways around Fradley Junction. Our campaign to get the plans changed has been an impressive IWA success. I warmly congratulate everybody who has played their part.

What started as a Lichfield Branch initiative grew into a national IWA campaign and, working together with the other waterways parties, particularly the Canal & River Trust, we have shown just what can be achieved through a positive and constructive approach that has ended up providing benefits beyond the navigable waterways.

As significant as the route change is, there is still much to do in respect of HS2. For example, whilst not caused by the re-alignment at Fradley, the new route creates problems for the restoration of the Lichfield Canal. Whilst Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust has been promised that the difficulties will be resolved, it quite rightly wants cast iron guarantees. IWA will support the work to make sure these are obtained.

Our petition in relation to Phase 1 of the route also included our requirements for good design of crossings and proper noise mitigation measures. We remain on the case!

Phase 2 of HS2 also contains issues that threaten the waterways, particularly for the Chesterfield Canal and the Aire & Calder Navigation, and we will be looking to achieve outcomes as good as that at Fradley as we strive to protect our canals and rivers.

IWA has a long and proud history of fighting for and protecting all our inland waterways. What matters is not only what we did in the past, but what we do in the future. Through a positive and constructive approach, I am determined that we continue to do so for many years to come. Our success at Fradley shows just what can be achieved when we combine our local and national skills, harnessing our knowledge and determination with our reputation and political influence.

As a membership body, what we achieve is down to what our members bring to the organisation. Allying this to our small number of committed and professional staff, we have achieved a fantastic amount. With even more active support from members, we could make an even bigger impact on the future of our inland waterways. We welcome all support for IWA’s campaign to protect and improve our inland waterways. If you can help, whether through volunteering to help with one of our many activities, or in any other way, please contact Stefanie Preston at Head Office who will be pleased to discuss this with you (telephone 01494 783453 or email stefanie.preston@waterways.org.uk).

Les Etheridge
For more than 40 years the Inland Waterways Protection Society has worked to save and restore this complex of canal loading and transhipment basins in the Derbyshire Peak District. Now a Scheduled Ancient Monument and with restoration largely complete, the role of IWPS is one of managing and promoting Bugsworth as a destination venue, attracting more than 50,000 visitors a year, hence the change of the name to Bugsworth Basin Heritage Trust.

The charity now wishes to strengthen its management and volunteers teams, through recruiting volunteers to fill the following roles:

- Deputy Site Manager
- Health & Safety Administrator
- Webmaster/designer
- Bugsworth Basin Guides
- Shop Assistants
- Maintenance Volunteers
- Publicity Officer

All of the above roles are voluntary and unremunerated. For further details please see the Trust’s website at www.bugsworthbasin.org

Relevant induction and training will be provided and some direct expenses will be reimbursed.

Job specifications from applicants to Dr Paul Symns, who is advising the trustees, at paul.symns@homecall.co.uk, who would also be happy to respond to requests for telephone discussions.

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IWA AGM Report

IWA’s 2014 Annual General Meeting was held at Leek on 27th September. The formal resolutions to approve the accounts and auditors and to note the appointment of trustees were all dealt with swiftly, allowing national chairman Les Etheridge to make a presentation, with contributions from Gordon Harrower (national treasurer) and Gren Messham (chairman, Navigation Committee) and to answer members’ questions. The afternoon’s proceedings were concluded with the presentation of the Association’s National Awards for 2014 (see separate news report). Full minutes of the meeting are available at https://www.waterways.org.uk/information/minutes_of_meetings/minutes_of_meetings.

As there were insufficient nominations, there was no ballot for either nationally elected trustees or region chairmen. The appointments of John Butler, Ray Carter and Gordon Harrower (nationally elected) and Paul Strudwick (London Region) and Gareth Jones (South East Region) were therefore noted. (See separate report about the vacant post in Eastern Region). Retiring trustees Paul Roper and Richard Collet-Fenson were thanked for their work during their terms of office, Paul in particular having served with distinction as chairman of Navigation Committee during a critical period for the waterways with the run-up to the formation of Canal & River Trust.

IWA Welcomes Parliamentary Report on CRT

IWA has welcomed a report published by the All Party Parliamentary Waterways Group (APPWG) on progress made by Canal & River Trust since it became a charity in 2012. The report recognises the achievements made by CRT in a relatively short amount of time such as its establishment as a charity with a new governance structure, generation of new funding streams and increasing volunteer involvement.

IWA particularly welcomes the focus on the transfer of Environment Agency waterways to CRT. The report recognises the commitment from CRT, EA and the Government, to the transfer of EA waterways, and recommends that the transfer should take place within the next Parliament.

The Group’s recommendations on moorings are also welcomed, which include the implementation of a national strategy to tackle issues with overcrowding, as well as create new moorings to help alleviate the stress on current provisions and reduce the need for enforcement. The Group also asked the Trust to review the present auctioning of moorings in favour of a system that allows for more socio-economic diversity on the waterways.

Les Etheridge, IWA National Chairman, was one of the witnesses to the evidence session held by APPWG on 21st July to understand the aims, goals, progress and challenges of the new charity. Other witnesses included Dan Rogerson MP (current Waterways Minister) as well as representatives from CRT, EA, and British Canoe Union. In his evidence, Les spoke strongly about the benefits of transferring the EA navigations to CRT and the need to sort out the mooring problems in areas like London where he stated that the problems were causing a breakdown in the camaraderie that usually exists in the boating community.

Gren Messham, chairman of IWA’s Navigation Committee, said: “We welcome the findings of the report, particularly the clear support for the transfer of EA navigations to CRT, subject to the right funding package. This would address some of the long-term funding issues which currently threaten EA navigations. IWA also supports the Group’s recommendation for CRT to implement a national mooring strategy, and the creation of new moorings, to address the increasing number of craft appearing on the waterways. There are significant problems with moorings in some areas, particularly London, that have to be addressed. IWA wants to see these problems resolved such that all boaters get a fair opportunity and we see this as an important and immediate task for CRT.”

Sonia Rolt

Shortly before we went to press the death was announced of IWA Vice President Sonia Rolt. A full obituary will appear in a forthcoming Bulletin and in the next issue of Waterways. See also page 15 of this issue.
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HS2 Re-aligned

IWA has welcomed a decision by the Government to adopt the proposals, put forward by IWA and Canal & River Trust, to re-align the route of HS2. The Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin MP, made the announcement on 1st October.

The new route avoids much of the popular and historic Fradley Junction to Woodend area of the Trent & Mersey Canal, and the need for a large worksite alongside the Coventry Canal between Streethay and Huddlesford.

Assurances have also been given that HS2 will ensure that restoration of the Lichfield Canal can continue. The assurances being given on the restoration of the Lichfield Canal needs to legally confirm that the excellent work done by the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust can continue unimpeded both now and in the future.

IWA’s Lichfield Branch originally identified the major impact that the proposed HS2 route would have on the area around Fradley Junction in March 2011, and subsequently identified an alternative route. IWA then worked with the local waterway groups to refine proposals and in September 2013 agreed with CRT to commission renowned engineering consultancy Hyder Consulting (UK) Ltd to develop a report to confirm the viability of our alternative route. The report demonstrated a credible route, which had significantly less impact on the area and the potential to reduce construction costs by around £50m.

At the visit by the Select Committee on 16th September, we were able to visually demonstrate some of what would be lost with the help of a passing boater, and we are very pleased that HS2 has recognised the case we put forward.

Whilst delighted with the current outcome that greatly reduces the impact on the Fradley Junction area, there is much more to do on HS2 both in terms of the impact on other parts of the waterways and in terms of noise mitigation and design quality. As well as continuing direct engagement with HS2 Ltd and other stakeholders, both IWA and CRT have used the petition process, an agreed Parliamentary procedure, to formally ask for the Bill to be amended.

Les Etheridge, National Chairman, IWA said: “IWA has been campaigning for several years for a better deal from HS2 on waterways, especially at Fradley. It’s great that our pragmatic approach has been taken on board, saving this iconic location and providing assurance, which we need to see detailed, to protect the important Lichfield Canal restoration. As ever, IWA will continue to work hard to protect the inland waterways so that everybody can continue to enjoy this fantastic national asset to the full.”

Trailboat Festival News

Boat and camping booking forms for the IWA National Trailboat Festival 2015 are now available to download from IWA’s website.

The Festival will take place at the Westmorland Show Ground, Crooklands, Cumbria, on the northern reaches of the Lancaster Canal over the weekend 30th May to 1st June. Hosted and organised by Lancaster Canal Trust, the Festival will be part of the ‘Country Fest’ show, an annual canal-side event. The Country Fest is a two-day show and will take place over the weekend with activities for the whole family, with a boaters’ day on the Monday including a visit to Hincaster Tunnel, and hopefully an opening of the restored stretch.

Meanwhile, IWA is pleased to announce that the IWA National Trailboat Festival 2017 is to be hosted by Ashby Canal Trust. The Festival is planned to take place on Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th May 2017 with a tour of the canal restoration work for boaters attending the Festival on Monday 29th.

IWA Trailboat Festivals are held on landlocked and isolated stretches of waterway, or waterways that are too shallow for narrowboats. These events are usually organised by groups with a strong interest in restoring and developing a local waterway or a feature on it, or promoting an under-used waterway. Such organisations are invited by IWA to bid to organise one of these festivals as a means of increasing public support for their project and interest in the waterway.
IWA’s annual awards were presented at the Annual General Meeting on 27th September. The awards recognise contributions made to the Association and to the inland waterways.

Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust received the Christopher Power Prize for its significant contribution to the restoration of this important cross-country route. The Trust has held regular work parties over many years on both canals, with assistance from Waterway Recovery Group. Both the Lichfield and Hatherton canals now have professionally produced Feasibility Studies to guide the restorations, and several sections of land have been acquired with others under negotiation. The Trust has proved able to rise to major funding challenges, and acquired increasing support from the local authorities to protect the routes.

Chester & Merseyside Branch received the Branch Achievement Award for the Chester rally, which was one of a regular series of biennial rallies that have significantly raised the profile of the waterways over the years. The Branch has been campaigning to repair and reopen the River Lock leading onto the River Dee and allow navigation above the weir to Farndon. The Branch has also undertaken a lot of work with Chester Canal Heritage Trust members, in partnership with CRT, Cheshire West and Chester Council, to develop the Strategy for Chester’s waterways.

The John Heap Salver Award goes to Bernard and Joyce Snell for their outstanding contribution to raising funds for the Association. The Kent and Sussex Branch members have worked tirelessly for IWA over 20 years, by organising trail boat rallies and other events, along with manning stalls, and raising significant amounts of money for the branch and relevant projects.

Richard Bird Medals were awarded to IWA volunteers – Christopher Skelhorne, Ron Evans, Philip Sharpe, Roger Savage and Gillian Bolt – to recognise the benefit these members have brought to the Association over a sustained period.

Chris Skelhorne has been active in undertaking a wide variety of roles since the 1970s. He was the first Secretary of Stoke-on-Trent Branch, becoming the chairman in 1977. He was one of the main organisers working with members of the Trent & Mersey Canal Society organising the very successful Trent & Mersey Bicentenary Celebrations. He has also led a series of projects improving the waterways in the Stoke area.

Ron Evans has been an active member of the Chester, now Chester & Merseyside, Branch for about 30 years. He has held a number of committee positions, including publicity officer, newsletter editor, chairman and currently treasurer. He is involved with a number of other local waterway organisations and has assisted many in achieving their objectives, which link to those of IWA.

Philip Savage has had a long and active involvement with IWA and the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust, leading a number of teams relative to the M6 Toll Road navigable crossing, and recently worked on the realignment of the HS2 project, proposing a new route that would save Wood End Lock. He has been the planning officer for Lichfield Branch since 1991 and has been the website editor since 2010.

Roger Savage has been the driving force behind the Cheshire Locks Project, having a plaque in memory of Pat & Millie Osborne placed on one of the new A500 road bridges and organising a Staffordshire Waterways Marquee at IWA festivals. He also initiated the Staffordshire Waterways Group, bringing together navigation authorities, local authorities and waterway groups in the Staffordshire area. He was a major force behind the Burslem Port project.

Gillian Bolt has been a very active member of the Chester & Merseyside Branch, but this award is for her dedicated work to develop and expand the reach of IWA’s Wild Over Waterways (WOW) project for young people.
IWA’s Saul Waterways Pageant took place over the Bank Holiday weekend, 23rd-25th August, with a variety of boats displayed at their best and events and entertainment enjoyed by the public. Despite the variable weather, around 2,500 visitors enjoyed the pageant at Saul Junction on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal.

The event featured live music, markets, refreshments, a real ale bar and a daily lucky programme prize draw. A diversity of interests on and around the waterways were showcased including activities such as walking, fishing and cycling, as well as demonstrations and water-based competitions. Crowds gathered in the afternoon to watch the boat-handling competition and the illuminated boat parade later in the evening.

An especially popular attraction at the event was the parade of historic RNLI lifeboats, spanning the last 60 years, brought to Saul by lifeboat enthusiast Phil Trotter of R.W. Davis & Sons, the well-known Saul Junction boatbuilders. The lifeboats paraded past the pageant site at Saul Junction daily and were moored on site all weekend. Two old steam launches and a steam traction engine joined the pageant on Saturday and Sunday.

There was also an unexpected attraction of the occasional stately passage of tall ships returning from filming in Gloucester Docks. Over 50 other visiting boats lined the canal for a considerable distance. Cotswold Canals Trust, located next to the Pageant site, was also busy providing trip boats for the public.

The Saul Waterways Pageant celebrated the restoration work taking place on the Cotswold Canals. During the Pageant, IWA’s Waterway Recovery Group worked with the Trust, to restore the canal at Bowbridge Locks near Stroud. Members of the public were invited to go along and see WRG in action.

IWA is saddened to report the death of one of its past National Chairmen, Richard Drake, who passed away on 26th September. Richard was greatly involved with IWA, not only as National Chairman from 1998 to 2002, but also as Chester Branch Chairman and Western Region Chairman. Most recently, he undertook the role of Chester & Merseyside Branch President and attended IWA’s Chester Campaign Festival as the special guest.

One of Richard’s great lifetime achievements was seeing through the full restoration of Anderton Boat Lift as chairman of Anderton Boat Lift Trust. Richard was present at a ceremony to mark the Lift’s Heritage Engineering Award earlier this year. Prior to retirement and taking on the national chairman role, Richard held a senior position at Allied Bakeries’ computer centre in Merseyside, and had previously had an army career, during which he had earned the British Empire Medal for his computer work.

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IWA’s Finance Committee is looking to recruit one or two further new members over the coming year and would welcome expressions of interest from IWA members who would be interested in serving on the committee. Ideally candidates should have a corporate governance background (ideally in a management role in a medium or large commercial company or other substantial charity) and the time to contribute to oversight and strategy development for the Association’s finances. The committee meets six times per year, usually on Saturdays in the Warwickshire area. If you might be interested, please contact Gordon Harrower (committee chairman) or Neil Edwards (chief executive) at Head Office.

IWA is creating some exciting plans for growth. So its new Marketing Committee is looking to strengthen its team with the recruitment of one or two new members and would welcome expressions of interest from IWA members to serve on the committee. Candidates should have good marketing skills and either a commercial or membership background as well as the time to contribute towards marketing strategy and direction for the Association. The committee meets about six times per year, usually in the southern midlands. For further details, please contact Paul Birkett (acting chairman) or Neil Edwards (chief executive) at Head Office.

Opportunities occasionally arise for new members on all IWA’s national and local committees. If you would like to get involved, please contact the relevant committee chairman or Neil Edwards at Head Office. See the directory on page 48 for contact details – or you can contact almost anyone in IWA using firstname.surname@waterways.org.uk.

Richard Drake BEM

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What Future for Freight on the Thames?

At an IWA London talk on Thames freight the question was asked whether recent increases in traffic could be expected to continue. The point had been made that a main factor determining demand for freight movement by barge was the building industry – resulting, over the centuries, from general urban growth and all too frequent damage by fire and the need for re-building. The Great Fire of 1666 was just the most dramatic of many. Demand inevitably fluctuated and, for different reasons, this is still the case.

Construction of Thames Water’s Lee and Crossrail’s tunnels are effectively one-offs and Thames Water’s Tideway Tunnel and a possible Northern Line tunnel extension to Nine Elms would provide further demand of a finite nature. The Tideway Tunnel could provide some new wharves and continuing barge traffic. It is possible that HS2 developments in the Old Oak Common area could also generate some short term or even longer term demand. Continuing demand is likely to come from a large number of waterside development projects either already in progress or at the planning stage. Canary Wharf, Wood Wharf and Lots Road are obvious examples. Work at Battersea is underway and other development projects along the river, such as at Silvertown and Greenwich, favour waterborne freight as the modal choice.

If we are to capitalise, as we should, on the many advantages of the water option, pressure may well have to be put on local authorities, many of which seem to know little about water transport and its advantages and potential. Interesting and valuable research is currently being carried out by students of a University College, London, masters degree programme. It has drawn attention to the gap between official rhetoric and actual implementation, possibly a result of the fragmentation of the parties concerned with water freight promotion and the need for better co-ordinated pressure.

Overall, construction traffic apart, ever growing quantities of waste will continue to need disposal and Transport for London is forecasting rapid expansion of demand for passenger movement – ‘bus’ services, sightseeing and charters. Continuing high levels of river use seem assured for the future.

Freight growth in North West

A Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport-sponsored seminar in Liverpool in July provided an opportunity to see and learn more about traffic development on the Manchester Ship Canal. With Peel Ports now controlling the ports of Liverpool and Manchester and the linking MSC, they are thinking very positively about this continuous water highway as a single port facility.

When it opens next year, the Liverpool2 post-Panamax container terminal on the river will double the port’s container capacity and undoubtedly increase container movements along the MSC. Tesco’s introduction of the 160 TEU weekly capacity Daisy Dorado push-tow unit in 2007 for movement of imported wine provided a most valuable demonstration of waterborne capability and a number of other firms have adopted container movement. This has made necessary an increase in the capacity of the MSC container shuttle – to the 200 TEU of the Monica, then 260 TEU of the Coastal Deniz and 366 TEU of the Thea II introduced in July this year. This has allowed container traffic on the MSC to increase from 3,000 TEU in 2009 to nearly 20,000 in 2013.

As an element in this vision of a gateway to a wide range of sites across the UK Peel Ports is at Ellesmere Port to develop Port Cheshire. Ellesmere Port is already served by the MSC container shuttle but the new facility is intended to provide a multi-modal hub for ‘bespoke’ facilities with flexible easy of access to rail and road networks. Ports no longer call themselves ports – they are multi-modal logistics platforms!

Region Chairman Vacancy

There were no nominations for the post of region chairman for Eastern Region for election at the recent AGM. Under IWA’s rules for the appointment of region chairmen (see www.waterways.org.uk/information/governing_documents/governing_documents), nominations for this post are invited to serve the remaining term of office, until the 2017 AGM, and should be submitted to the chief executive at Head Office by no later than Friday 2nd January 2015 along with a brief biography, autobiography or statement not exceeding 400 words, for publication as part of any ballot paper (which would be included in the February 2015 edition of Waterways).

Information for potential new trustees (including region chairmen) is available at www.waterways.org.uk/information/governing_documents/national_constitution. If you would like to discuss the possibility of standing as chairman of IWA’s Eastern Region, please contact either Neil Edwards, chief executive (Tel: 01494 783453), the national chairman, or any other region chairman for an informal conversation.
Following on from a successful Campaign Festival held in Northampton in 2011, IWA has announced that it plans to hold a major waterways event on the River Nene over the August Bank Holiday Weekend, 2015.

The event, taking place Saturday 29th to Monday 31st August, will be centred around the waterfront at Becket’s Park. The Northampton Festival of Water is being organised jointly by IWA Events Team and IWA Northampton Branch, with the full support of Northampton Borough Council, the Environment Agency and the Canal & River Trust.

The main aim of the event will be to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Northampton Arm in 1815, which connected the Grand Union Canal (or Grand Junction as it was then known) to the Nene in Northampton, creating a route to the East Anglian waterways and the Wash by water. The Arm replaced an earlier horse-drawn railway between Gayton Junction and an unloading point at Far Cotton where a restored historic crane still stands. The Arm enabled ironstone and limestone to be carried to local blast furnaces, grain and flour to and from mills along the Nene, coal from North Warwickshire and timber from London’s Surrey Docks to Northampton.

The Festival of Water also aims to promote Northampton’s riverside, to recognise the value of the waterway to the town and its people and to encourage more people to use the river for boating recreation and leisure.

There will be an array of attractions on and off the water providing a fun day out for all the family. Up to 200 boats, including leisure, trade, heritage and working narrowboats, are expected in the marina and along the riverfront as well as a wealth of smaller craft such as canoes, rowing boats, sailboats, windsurfers and ribs. There will also be opportunities for visitors to get afloat on board trip boats and water taxis.

Northampton is the gateway to Peterborough, Ely, Cambridge, St Ives, Huntingdon and Bedford via the Nene, Middle Level and Fenland waterways and the Environment Agency are making special temporary licensing arrangements to encourage boaters to explore these comparatively little travelled waterways.

Sue Cant, Environment Agency Northamptonshire waterways leader, said: “We are delighted that IWA’s Festival is returning to Northamptonshire in 2015. We hope that visitors to the festival will not rush home at the end but take the opportunity to explore the Nene, which is one of the most scenic waterways in the country and a hidden gem of the county. The festival will help to secure Northampton as an inland waterway destination and encourage further improvement to the town’s waterfront and river corridor.”

Councillor David Mackintosh, Leader of Northampton Borough Council, said: “For generations the Nene was a source of wealth as our town’s industries imported materials and exported products along the canal network. Today our riverside is a wonderful place to relax and the Northampton Festival of Water is set to be a wonderful celebration of our town’s connection with the Nene. The Festival is set to be a fantastic event with something for all ages, and well worth a visit to Northampton.”

IWA Events Team Chairman John Butler said: “I have been impressed from the start by the level of commitment and enthusiasm for this event locally, and I have no doubt that we can look forward to a weekend to remember. As a boater I am always excited by the prospect of visiting new waterways, and I intend to make the most of this opportunity to explore the waterways beyond Northampton. So put it in your diary now and come along to see what Northampton has to offer – you won’t be disappointed.”

There will be no admission charge although visitors will be encouraged to make a donation. Attractions will include a market and fundraising stalls and the Events Team would like to hear from boaters, charities and local groups who are interested in having a stall and fundraising for their chosen cause and for IWA. More information is available on IWA’s website.
Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge Reopened

Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge over the River Weaver, near Frodsham, Cheshire, was reopened on Saturday 11th October after a £4.5 million restoration.

Rowing boats and traditional narrowboats have been able to pass underneath throughout the project but the Weaver Navigation was expected to be open to all river traffic by the end of October. Work has also started to dismantle the temporary bridge which has kept road traffic moving while the restoration of the swing bridge took place. The successful temporary bridge was a later addition to the original plans, included partly because of IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch’s involvement in the initial consultation. The Branch was keen to emphasise that IWA was happy with the restoration plans but reluctant to support a project that involved severely restricting road access on the A56 in and out of Frodsham, a route taken by 20,000 vehicles a day, for over twelve months.

IWA’s Navigation Committee was also involved with the project from early 2012, when IWA lobbied the All Party Parliamentary Waterways Group to support British Waterways’ case to ministers that it was unfair for BW, which was soon to become Canal & River Trust, to bear the full cost of the work at an estimated £4 million. The Committee believed that the fact that the bridge was not just a waterways feature but also an important part of local infrastructure that carried the busy A56 trunk road over the navigation had to be taken into consideration when sourcing funding. After the project went to consultations with Defra and the Department for Transport, the funding that BW/CRT was expected to provide was reduced to £1 million with further funding supplied by Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Department for Transport. The restoration of the 88-year-old bridge started in summer 2013 and is the first complete refurbishment in its history. The bridge now has a new deck and beneath the bridge extensive refurbishment of the unique buoyancy tank structure on which the bridge swings was carried out. The completion of this work will extend the bridge’s life by over 50 years. At a special ceremony to mark the project’s completion on Friday 10th October, a vintage Leyland Cub lorry and a modern day HGV, supplied by Huntapac Produce Ltd, drove across the bridge to highlight the vehicle weight changes the bridge has had to cope with since it opened in 1926. On the river, a flotilla of rowing boats from Runcorn Rowing Club and boats from the River Weaver Navigation Society also joined in the celebrations.

Successful IWA Raffle

By the end of September, IWA’s Waterways Restoration Raffle had already raised over £6,000 towards its £10,000 target since it was launched at the beginning of August.

IWA is donating 100% of the profits towards waterway restoration projects run by IWA corporate members, and an IWA volunteer-led moorings improvement project on the Cheshire Ring. The raffle gives you the opportunity to decide which project you want to support with every ticket purchase.


Several waterway restoration societies are doing particularly well, with Friends of the Cromford Canal in the lead having received over 280 nominations. Other restoration groups can emulate this success, as IWA is offering free supplies of the tickets to all restoration groups to distribute to their supporters.

As well as supporting waterways restoration you could have the chance to win: a two-week boating holiday with Middlewich Narrowboats; a one week boating holiday with the Wyvern Shipping Company; a two-night boating break with Cambrian Cruisers; and many other fantastic prizes.

The response to the raffle has been excellent and IWA would like to thank everyone who has donated prizes, purchased tickets and made additional donations so far. The raffle will be drawn on 16th January 2015 at IWA’s Head Office in Chesham. For more information visit www.waterways.org.uk/raffle.


Above: Boating on the Cromford Canal – whose society, Friends of the Cromford Canal, is receiving lots of nominations to benefit from IWA’s restoration raffle.
Busy Summer for WRG

September saw the end of a very productive Waterway Recovery Group Canal Camp summer season, with over 2,500 volunteer days spent restoring the canals of England and Wales. Based on an average of six hours of volunteering per day that amounts to an impressive 15,000 hours of canal restoration by WRG volunteers.

Over the summer WRG volunteers visited 12 sites. They worked on the Cotswold Canals helping with restoration work at Bowbridge Lock near Stroud; they created a nature trail on the Driffield Navigation; and installed a new landing stage on the Basingstoke Canal. Volunteers also spent two weeks on the Chesterfield Canal constructing a concrete wall near Staveley Town Lock as well as digging out Ironville Locks on the Cromford Canal to allow for a restoration survey to be undertaken.

One of the highlights of the summer involved making significant progress towards the restoration of Inglesham Lock with WRG volunteers contributing over 300 volunteer days to the project. Volunteers cleared a large volume of silt and debris from the entrance to the lock chamber to allow for new stop planks and a sandbag dam to be installed. The work will allow for a full survey of the chamber to be undertaken by one of IWA’s Honorary Consultant Engineers, once the rest of the lock chamber has been cleared.

Over the summer, WRG also ran working holidays on the Shrewsbury and Newport Canals, Uttoxeter Canal, Pocklington Canal, Grantham Canal, Lancaster Canal, Swansea Canal and the Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canals.

Amber Jenkins, WRG’s new assistant volunteer coordinator said: “This is my first summer with WRG and I have met so many enthusiastic volunteers who aim to have fun whilst making a big impact restoring canals. It’s amazing to see how much 18 volunteers can get done in one week ... from laying a new towpath to installing stop planks and filling 2000 sand bags!”

HEAD OFFICE STAFF GET DIRTY

Five members of IWA’s Head Office staff spent a total of 83 days getting outdoors and dirty with WRG this summer, working on waterways such as the Basingstoke Canal, Chesterfield Canal, Cotswold Canals (including Inglesham Lock), Driffield Navigation, Lancaster Canal, Pocklington Canal and Uttoxeter Canal.

Participants were Amber Jenkins (assistant volunteer coordinator) who learnt about diggers on the Uttoxeter Canal; Toby Gomm (fundraising officer) who shovelled smelly mud at Inglesham Lock; Stephanie Pay (design & web content assistant) who got busy with a paintbrush on the Basingstoke Canal; Gemma Bolton (website & design officer) who helped with block laying on the Chesterfield Canal; and Jenny Black (WRG volunteer coordinator) who assisted with relining a section of the Lancaster Canal.

Future Camps

Why not join us for WRG’s Reunion Weekend on the Chesterfield Canal, 8th-9th November. Or how about working off your Christmas dinner and starting the New Year in style by joining our Cotswold Canals Christmas Camp, 26th December-1st January 2015.

For full details of both these camps visit www.waterways.org.uk/wrg or telephone Head Office on 01494 783453.
WRG’s Building Bridges Award

IWA’s Waterway Recovery Group received a Commendation at Canal & River Trust’s Living Waterways Awards ceremony, which took place on 24th September at the Royal Armouries in Leeds. The Commendation was awarded for a joint Building Bridges project between CRT and WRG, which was nominated for the Community and Volunteering Award.

The main aim of this project is to improve working relations with CRT, using three to four projects to develop a suitable framework, allowing volunteers to work on more technical projects with CRT in the future. At the end of the project, WRG plans to create a handbook *Bridge Restoration Guide for Volunteers*, which can be used by community and adoption groups to undertake more technical restoration work along their waterways. It is hoped that by working together, attitudes will change and volunteers will be actively encouraged to preserve structures along the waterways.

This year WRG and CRT have been working on Bridge 178 on the Grand Union Canal, in partnership with Black Jack Lock Residents Association. Re-pointing work was carried out on the bridge in October and it will be repainted and finished in the spring of next year.

WRG’s Assistant Volunteer Coordinator, Amber Jenkins, who received the award on behalf of WRG along with volunteer George Rogers, said: “The Commendation for WRG recognises what can be achieved when organisations work together for the benefit of the waterways. WRG volunteers have an exceptional collective knowledge of the historical and technical aspects of waterway structures, as well as a tireless dedication to seeing them restored.”

The awards themselves were split into eight different categories. The categories and winners were as follows: Art and Interpretation: Rochdale Canal Connections. Contribution to the Built Environment: Scale Lane Bridge. Community and Volunteering: Wirral Community Narrowboat Trust. Education and Learning: Floating Cinema. Natural Environment: River Irwell. Recreation and Tourism: Stoke Bruerne Events. Restoration of Historic Environments: ‘Relighting the Fire’ of Ellesmere Forge.

The Outstanding Achievement Award was also presented to Sonia Rolt, IWA Vice President, for her tireless efforts to improve the waterways (see also page 6). Sonia first became involved with the waterways as a trainee boatwoman during the Second World War. Since then Sonia has been a life-long waterways supporter, including in many of IWA’s early campaigns, published *A Canal People: The Photographs of Robert Longden*, edited and written introductions to several of her late husband Tom Rolt’s books and received the OBE for services to industrial archaeology and heritage in 2010.

Walk for WRG

With support from IWA Warwickshire Branch, the Association is organising an eight-mile sponsored walk along the Stratford upon Avon and Grand Union canals on Sunday 22nd February 2015. The walk aims to raise at least £1,000 (hopefully more) towards buying two new minibuses for IWA’s Waterway Recovery Group next summer, which will cost more than £25,000 each.

WRG’s small fleet of minibuses and small goods vehicles are a vital part of their operation, transporting tools, equipment and volunteers across the country to carry out waterway restoration work. Some of the existing vehicles show signs of ageing and the WRG Board has concluded that replacements are needed. IWA plans to launch an appeal in the New Year and this sponsored walk will be the first fundraising activity of a number planned to support the appeal.

The eight-mile circular walk, starting at Lapworth Village Hall, will take you along idyllic stretches of the Stratford upon Avon and Grand Union towpaths as well as through country lanes and fields, with country pubs to stop at for lunch, before arriving back at the village hall for afternoon tea and a well-deserved rest. It promises to be a great day out and will help raise funds to continue WRG’s vital work.

If you would like to participate you can register quickly and easily online: www.waterways.org.uk/iwalk or telephone Toby Gomm at IWA Head Office. Places are £5 per person and under 16s go free, after which it is over to you to raise sponsorship to support WRG. Children under 18 need to be accompanied by an adult.

Once you have booked your place you will receive a welcome pack with directions, a map of the route, a kit list and a sponsorship guide. The walk will begin at 11am, but you can sign-in from 10am onwards. There will be marshals along the route to provide you with words of encouragement and show you the way if your map reading skills are a bit rusty!

To find out more about the walk visit www.waterways.org.uk/iwalk, email walk organiser Toby Gomm at toby.gomm@waterways.org.uk or telephone him, number as above.
Christmas Cards & Calendars

Christmas Cards - £3.60 Per Pack
Printed on high quality card. Supplied in packs of ten of one design. Includes envelopes. 178mm x 127mm (7” x 5”). Designs taken from original paintings and photographs are the copyright of the artist or photographer. Message inside reads “With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year”.

Code X100: Comet in the Moonlight
From an original painting by Alan Firth ©

Code X101: Winter in the Potteries
From an original painting by DWG Gardham ©

Code X102: Blisworth Tunnel
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Code X104: The Wendover Arm in Winter
Photograph by Chris Sargeant ©

Other cards available include...

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From an original painting by Alan Bamford.

Message inside Christmas cards: “With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year”.

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All bargain packs consist of a mixture of designs from previous years. With envelopes.

Bargain Pack A Code X025 - £12.95
60 Christmas Cards. Five cards each of twelve traditional paintings.

Bargain Pack B Code X026 - £8.75
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25 Christmas Cards. Five cards each of five traditional paintings.

Designs may vary from those illustrated.

Code X103: Heavy Hoar Frost, Near Rugby, Warwickshire
Photograph by Roger Butler ©

2015 IWA Calendar - £3.60
One month to view with space for daily notes. Twelve months from January 2015 to December 2015, illustrated with a waterway scene in a detachable postcard format. 320mm x 172mm (12.5” x 7”) approximately. Envelopes for the calendar are available separately.

Calendar Envelope
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Code X035: 2015 IWA Calendar
Featuring waterway scenes in a detachable postcard format.

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Includes navigation and historical information, visitor moorings, marinas and boatyards, boat hire, shops and distance markers, tourist information centres, pubs, nature reserves, parks, long distance paths, public toilets and caravan and camp sites.

The Broads Code HM11
Avon Ring and Droitwich Ring Code HM09 - £6.50
Birmingham Canal Navigations Code HM16
Grand Union: Braunston to Kings Langley Code HM17
Grand Union: Birmingham to Milton Keynes Code HM19
GU Canal: Stoke Bruerne to Leicester Code HM21
Kennet & Avon Canal and River Avon Code HM10
Llangollen & Montgomery Canals Code HM13
Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Code HM15
Oxford Canal Code HM14
Stourport Ring & Droitwich Ring Code HM20 - £6.50
River Thames and the Thames Path Code HM12
Leeds & Liverpool Canal West Code HM22
London & East West London Code HM23

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The River Thames Code IM06 - £9.95
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Towpath Guides - Nick Corble
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Chesterfield Canal Code GP36
Coventry & Ashby Canal Code GP05
Forth & Clyde Canal Code GP06
GU Part 4 Leicester, Soar & Erewash Code GP10
South Pennine Ring Code GP30
Staffs & Worcestershire Canal & River Severn Code GP21
Trent & Mersey 1: West of Burton-on-Trent Code GP23
Trent & Mersey 2: East of Great Heywood Code GP24
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NORFOLK BROADS
Along with the River Thames, Broadland is where Britain’s tradition of large-scale pleasure boating began at the end of the 19th century. For well over a hundred years, a network of rivers – the Bure, Yare and Waveney and their tributaries – have provided safe boating for generations of boaters, many of them families and first-timers. And then there are the Broads themselves, shallow lakes resulting from peat extraction in the 13th and 14th centuries, where stately sailing boats drift lazily across the water under vast East Anglian skies. This is, in short, a magical cruising area offering a very different experience to that available elsewhere on the British waterway network.

NORTHERN RIVERS
RIVER BURE
Once navigable up to Aylsham, the Bure’s current head of navigation lies three quarters of a mile above Coltishall at the site of an old lock. Coltishall is a popular and picturesque spot with boaters and car-borne visitors, the convivial Rising Sun being one of its prime attractions.

Wroxham is the ‘Queen of the Broads’. It throbs with activity, both on the water and on land, where the long-established Roys of Wroxham is said to be the “largest village store in the world”. There are trip boats, day boats, hire boats and sailing boats, all messing about on the river in the time honoured fashion. Wroxham Broad, a short distance downstream, is quieter and is home to the Norfolk Broads Yacht Club. Nearby Salhouse Broad is even more peaceful, offering wonderful moorings at the village staithe.

Horning rivals Wroxham for popularity, with a plethora of smart riverside homes and several boatyards. The Swan Inn is one of the Broads’ best known pubs, an imposing black and white building with lush waterside gardens. Look out for the paddle steamer Southern Comfort, patrolling its home waters.

Below Thurne Mouth, confluence with the River Thurne, the Bure traverses typical Broadland scenery – low-lying marshland with wide-ranging views. Acle bustles with boats of all shapes and sizes, and it can be hard to find a place to stop here in peak season. Stokesby, just downstream, is a sleepy hamlet with desirable moorings at the Ferry Inn – first come first served!

Winding its way between high mud banks, the Bure exhibits a strong tidal effect on the approach to the Stracey Arms, the last mooring place before Great Yarmouth.
Clippesby Mill, near Upton, River Bure.

All photos by Robin Smithett unless otherwise credited.
The Norfolk Broads became a fashionable boating area from about 1880 onwards, a wide range of small craft, large sailing cutters and specially converted sailing wherries being available for weekly hire. Motor cruiser hire began in earnest in the 1920s and for a hundred or so years this has remained a popular cruising area, attracting generations of first-time and family boaters to its network of lock-free waters.

One of the earliest hire boat operators was Herbert Woods, who in the late 1920s took over the family boat building business and turned it into a thriving enterprise. The company expanded steadily over the years, soon moving into the hire industry, and today operates from the Broad Haven complex at Potter Heigham on the River Thurne. Herbert Woods recently amalgamated with Crown Travel to further expand its fleet.

Another name synonymous with the Broads hire industry is Richardsons. The company was set up by Robert Richardson in the mid 1940s, operating from a small boatyard at Oulton Broad. Expanding rapidly, Richardsons moved to Stalham, where it is still based today, its hire fleet being one of the largest on the Broads.

Boating holidays on the Norfolk Broads became inextricably linked with the two major agencies, Blakes and Hoseasons. The latter celebrated its 70th birthday this year. It was started in 1944 by Wally Hoseasons, a boat builder and harbour master at Oulton Broad; his son James (Jimmy) served as managing director for many years, during which time Hoseasons played a major role in popularising hire boat holidays, not only on the Broads but also on the UK canal network and throughout Europe.
Another of the Bure’s tributaries, the Thurne, leads north east to some of Broadland’s most iconic locations. First though you reach Womack Water, leading to Ludham Staithe, before arriving at Potter Heigham – another of the Broads’ tourist hotspots, where riverside chalets, pubs, restaurants and fast food outlets set the tone. Dating from the 13th century, the notoriously low stone bridge only has some 6ft 6in clearance at normal water levels and hire boats require a pilot to take them through. Close by the bridge is Broads Haven, a major Broadland enterprise that was started by pioneer operator Herbert Woods way back in 1929 (see above).

Above Potter Heigham it’s a different world, with considerably less razzamatazz, smaller boats and narrow waterways. As you approach Martham Broad, keep to the marked channel across this shallow expanse of water, and carry on to West Somerton Staithe, a lonely spot only a mile from the coast at Winterton.

Retracing your steps, Candle Dyke takes you – via Heigham Sound and Meadow Dyke – to Horsey Mere. At the end of Horsey Dyke stands a much-photographed windmill; from the top are stunning views of the tranquil Broads and the restless North Sea.

This lovely north east corner of Broadland offers one last hurrah: Hickling Broad, one of the largest expanses of water on the Broads.
**RIVER YARE**

Norwich is one of the nation’s finest small cities and its waterfront certainly doesn’t let it down. The head of navigation for all but the smallest of craft actually lies at Bishop Bridge on the River Wensum, and good moorings are provided close by: a good base for visiting the magnificent cathedral, museums and galleries for which Norwich is justly renowned.

The Wensum’s confluence with the Yare lies a short distance downstream, the surrounding area being the site of much recent building work, including houses and apartments, retail parks, pubs and restaurants. But countryside appears below Postwick, with especially attractive moorings available at Bramerton Common amidst attractive woodlands.

Brundall is a long-established boating centre, but development here has always been more restrained than on the northern rivers. Broom’s is one of the best known Broads’ boatyards, whilst Coldham Hall Inn is an attractive and welcoming hostelry.

Rockland Broad – reached by a narrow cut off the Yare – never fails to enchant, a dreamy stretch of water rich in wildlife. You can proceed, with care, to the attractive staithe opposite the New Inn at Rockland St Mary – the perfect place to spend a quiet night.

Back on the Yare, landmarks come thick and fast: the sugar beet factory at Cantley, the small car ferry at Reedham and the railway swing-bridge, a short distance downstream. At most states of the tide, it has sufficient clearance for holiday cruisers to pass without the span being opened.

**NAVIGATION ADVICE**

When crossing Breydon Water, it is imperative to keep between the green and red posts as depths shoal rapidly outside the channel. The crossing should never be attempted in fog and the wearing of lifejackets is essential. Breydon Bridge has an opening span but pleasure boats should use the side spans which are marked with red arrows.

Passage between the River Bure and Breydon Water (and vice versa) can only be made at slack water, so as to pass safely under two bridges at Great Yarmouth. If arriving early from the Bure, it is possible to wait at Great Yarmouth Yacht Station, but coming from Breydon Water there is nowhere to wait, so correct timing is crucial. For tide timings and other navigation advice contact the Broads Authority: 01603 610734, www.broads-authority.gov.uk.

It should always be remembered that Broadland rivers are tidal to well inland, and this has to be taken into account when tying mooring ropes and negotiating low bridges, those at Potter Heigham (Thurne) and Beccles (Waveney) being obvious examples.

Haddiscoe Cut – a dead straight ‘canal’ linking the Yare to the Waveney at St Olaves – heads off to the right, while the Yare itself flows north east, passing the marshland of Haddiscoe Island. Berney Arms Mill is not to be missed. Owned by English Heritage, it is one of the highest on the Broads and provides never-to-be-forgotten views of this wonderful landscape. The Berney Arms pub offers ‘last chance’ moorings before you come face-to-face with mighty Breydon Water.
RIVER WAVENEY

Many seasoned boaters regard the Waveney as Broadland’s loveliest river. Geldeston, where the riverside Locks Inn attracts patrons from far and wide, is the head of navigation for motorised craft. The river’s upper reaches have a character entirely unlike the rest of Broadland – not unlike the Little Ouse in the Fens. This is not altogether surprising, for the rivers’ sources lie almost within touching distance of one another.

Beccles Bridge is low, preventing larger craft from travelling further upstream.

The town itself never disappoints visitors, with its jumble of characterful side streets and ancient church of St Michaels, whose high bell tower serves as a landmark for miles around.

Windswept and remote, the Waveney traverses eerily quiet marshland; only the Waveney River Centre, with moorings, shop, pub and entertainment complex, breaks the spell. Passing the entrance to Oulton Dyke, you come to Somerleyton. The village is without doubt one of the sights of the district. The premier attraction is, of course, Somerleyton Hall, an old manor house converted into an imposing mansion in Victorian times; both hall and grounds are open to the public.

Beyond St Olaves, where moorings and refreshments are available at the Bell Inn, the Waveney flows into Breydon Water, overlooked by the melancholy outline of Burgh Castle standing watch on its rocky outcrop. Suitably prepared and at the correct state of the tide, craft must cross Breydon Water to reach the River Bure and the northern Broads.
RIVER CHET
The diminutive River Chet represents a worthwhile diversion from the main river. Narrow and winding, it runs for 3½ miles to the head of navigation at Loddon, where excellent moorings are available. The village repays exploration, with a distinctive mill and a good selection of shops, pubs and restaurants.

OULTON BROAD
Oulton Dyke leads into Oulton Broad and ultimately to Lowestoft – England’s most easterly town. Seagoing craft can enter the broad via Mutford Lock. Oulton Broad once boasted over a dozen boatyards, but sadly none exist today. Nevertheless, this is a popular expanse of water with sailing craft and the yacht station provides visitor moorings and a good range of facilities. Many people use this as a base for a visit to the seaside, which lies just a couple of miles away.

CARING FOR THE BROADS
The Broads Authority, which is based in Norwich, celebrated its 25th anniversary this year, having been established in 1989 to manage the Norfolk Broads in their entirety. Previously, these waterways had, rather incongruously perhaps, been under the control of the Great Yarmouth Port & Haven Commissioners. The year 1989 also saw the Broads finally being awarded equivalent status to the National Parks of England and Wales, a concept that had long been mooted.

During the Broads Authority’s period of tenure, there has been a substantial improvement in water quality throughout the Broadland rivers, with the Authority gaining widespread recognition for its work in managing wetland habitats. It has also developed expertise in the management of reedbeds and the restoration of shallow lakes.

In 2009 the Broads Authority’s remit was expanded to include Breydon Water, where it has since put in substantially improved safety measures on what is potentially one of the most difficult areas for inexperienced boaters to navigate.
The East Anglian Waterways Association was established in 1958, its mission being to campaign for the preservation, restoration and good management of all inland tidal waterways in East Anglia.

Over the past 50 plus years, EAWA has achieved numerous successes, working closely with other organisations, among them IWA. These include: the reopening of Well Creek on the Middle Level Navigations; dredging of the Old West River in the 1960s; restoration of Welches Dam Lock; making donations to help the Sleaford Navigation Trust to purchase part of its navigation; lock lengthening on the Middle Level Navigations; and lobbying for re-opening of Black Skuice Drain and the Fenland Waterways Link. EAWA also played a major role in the restoration of the upper reaches of the Great Ouse and was instrumental in the setting up of the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust.

EAWA’s current projects are wide ranging and include: working with partners to support progress on the Fens Waterway Link; supporting the Sleaford Trust to reopen the upper part of the navigation within the town; working closely with both the Nene Waterway Task Group and the Great Ouse Boating Association to enhance the two rivers for the benefit of all; supporting the River Gipping Trust in its aim of preserving the historic heritage of the Stowmarket Navigation; working with the Broads Authority and other bodies with an interest in the Norfolk Broads.

New members are always welcome. Membership of EAWA costs a minimum of £5 a year (although most members voluntarily contribute more). For further information call 01206 767023, or visit www.eawa.co.uk.

The North Walsham & Dilham Canal originally ran from Antingham to Dilham Dyke, a distance of just over eight miles. The original Act of Parliament promoting the canal was passed in 1812, but it was 1825 before construction work actually started. For some years the waterway was successful, with flour and grain heading to the coast at Great Yarmouth, and building materials and coal coming inland.

Competition from the railways brought about declining cargoes from the 1850s, and within 30 years there was virtually no commercial traffic on the canal. In 1927 the section from Antingham to Swafield Bridge was closed and relatively few remains of this section can be discerned.

The canal was never taken over when the remainder of the waterway network was nationalised in 1948. Consequently, there is no public right of way along the towpath, the adjoining land being in private ownership.

Restoration of the canal was kick-started by the East Anglian Waterways Association, which was instrumental in the establishment of the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust in 2008. Much has already been achieved and the canal is navigable, by small craft, from Dilham Dyke up to Honing Lock. Twice-monthly working parties are held on the canal, organised by EAWA and the trust, and extensive clearance work has been carried out around many of the locks.

From Ebridge Lock to Swafield Bridge the canal is now owned by the Old Canal Company. Substantial restoration work has been carried out at Ebridge, but the Environment Agency – apparently concerned about water quality issues – has placed a stop order on further activity.

Meanwhile, the Old Canal Company has done a superb job in restoring Bacton Wood Lock, whilst the adjoining quay, where wherries once called, has also been sympathetically rebuilt.

To continue this most viable of restoration projects, the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust welcomes new supporters and working party volunteers. For details call 01652 535111 or visit www.eawa.co.uk and follow the appropriate links.

The River Gipping, which rises near Stowmarket, was a ‘commercial’ waterway back in the Middle Ages. Famously, stone for the abbey at Bury St Edmunds was imported from Caen in northern France and transported up the Gipping to Stowmarket.

A navigation along the Gipping was first proposed in the early 1700s, but it was 1793 before the waterway was opened, linking Stowmarket and Ipswich – a distance of some 16 miles. It was, initially at least, a commercial success, main cargoes being coal and slate inbound, agricultural products and hops outbound. Somehow surviving railway competition, the waterway was still carrying fertilisers and other chemical products in the early years of the 20th century. But by the 1930s traffic had
virtually ceased and control of the navigation was transferred to the East Suffolk River Catchment Board.

IWA’s Ipswich Branch has played a major part in restoration work on the Ipswich & Stowmarket Navigation, such that in 2006 it received the Dorothea Award for Conservation from the Association for Industrial Archaeology. The good work is now being progressed by the River Gipping Trust.

Three lock chambers have so far been restored – Bosmere, Creeting and Baylham – and work is continuing around Pipps Ford Lock to restore the bywash. A medium term aim of the trust is to reopen a limited length of the navigation on which to operate a trip-boat, probably between Needham Market and Baylham. For further information contact the trust by calling 03303 308531, or visit www.rivergippingtrust.org.
RIVER STOUR
The Stour – the river immortalised on canvas by Constable, Gainsborough and Nash – is without question one of the most beautiful of English rivers. It has been navigable since the turn of the 18th century, the River Stour Navigation Act being passed in 1704.

In 1968 the River Stour Trust was established to successfully campaign against the proposed closure of the navigation, and since that date the trust has worked to maintain through navigation on the 25 miles from Sudbury to Manningtree.

It has restored three of the 13 locks – at Great Cornard, Dedham and Flatford – with work proceeding at Stratford St Mary Lock; access points are also being improved at various locations along the river. Every summer a Sudbury-to-the-Sea weekend is staged, attracting up to 500 people in canoes, kayaks and other small unpowered craft.

In 2013 the trust restored a 160-year-old Stour lighter, the John Constable, with the aid of a £120,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The vessel won a medal in the prestigious 2012 Mansura Trophy Awards and joins the trust’s fleet of electric trip boats operating at Sudbury, Flatford and Dedham, allowing thousands of people a year to enjoy the charm of this world-famous river. Meanwhile, a visitor centre at Great Cornard, just south of Sudbury, enlightens visitors as to the history, ecology and future restoration prospects of the navigation.

For more information on the River Stour Trust call 01787 313199 or visit www.riverstourtrust.org.

RIVER BLYTH
An Act of Parliament in 1757 authorised work to make the River Blyth navigable to Halesworth, some 14 miles inland from the coast at Southwold. Four locks were constructed and the navigation was open to Halesworth by 1761.

Trade was steady for almost a hundred years, but began to decline in the 1850s. Occasional traffic continued until 1911, but the navigation was finally abandoned in 1934.

From the sea, Southwold Harbour provides access to the Blyth, which is navigable, with reducing depths, to Blythburgh, some 5½ miles inland.

AYLSHAM (BURE) NAVIGATION
The River Bure was originally navigable for some nine miles above Coltishall, through to Aylsham. There has been no public right of navigation for many years, although the Bure Navigation Conservation Trust has carried out some minor work to improve access for canoes; sadly, some local landowners remain hostile towards the waterway being used for canoeing.

A footpath follows the river in places, and some basic facilities for walkers have been provided in the form of wooden seating. The installation of a series of interpretation boards is underway.

Wivenhoe, River Colne.

RIVER COLNE
Colchester’s tidal River Colne has a long history of navigation dating back to Roman times. Few navigational works were ever carried out, however, and the reaches above Wivenhoe dry out completely at low tide. Commercial traffic ended towards the end of the 20th century and, to all intents and purposes, Colchester can no longer be regarded as a port.

Nevertheless, the Colne is popular with pleasure boaters who take particular delight in exploring its many sheltered creeks, and picturesque waterfronts, notably that at Wivenhoe. The head of navigation is at Hythe Bridge, some 11 miles inland from the sea at Colne Point.
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Tony Harrison:
1935-2014

IWA is saddened to report the death, on 31st July, of Tony Harrison, former IWA consultant engineer and trustee.

Tony had been an IWA member for over 50 years. In the 1950s, when based in Birmingham, he canoed on the then about to be abandoned Southern Stratford upon Avon Canal. He gained a postgraduate Diploma in Hydraulics at the Delft University and moved to work at the Wallingford Hydraulics Research Station. At this time, he was an active member of IWA Oxfordshire Branch, eventually becoming its chairman. Later he continued to live in Goring when commuting to Watford, where he developed best practice for civil and building contract administration at the Building Research Establishment.

Soon after IWA’s then Honorary Consultant Engineer Philip Ogden retired in 1989, Tony offered his services in this role. He was appointed jointly with Roy Sutton, and was simultaneously co-opted to IWA’s then fledgling Restoration Committee. His contract administration experience was especially valuable at that time as a large number of waterway bodies, including IWA, were commissioning consultancy contracts with rather loose terms of reference that allowed firms producing poor work to still be paid. Tony instituted good practice in this area, not without opposition, and his paper Managing Consultancies on Inland Waterway Projects (now in the IWA Technical Restoration Handbook) is referred to by many other bodies. Tony subsequently promoted and managed the production of the entire IWA Technical Restoration Handbook, over a period of two years, with 20 papers (some by several authors) going through an exhaustive revision and peer-review process overseen by Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions.

Tony’s expertise in hydraulics and hydrology benefited numerous restoration projects and navigable waterways alike. Water supply to the Basingstoke Canal was an area where he gave advice over many years, enabling the managers of the canal to estimate when they would need to close it based on data from the aquifers and advising on alternative water sources in an area that is very short of water. Tony’s detailed knowledge of the intricacies of water distribution and abstraction in the waterways around Denver led to his appointment to a working group that oversaw how the Environment Agency and the water companies controlled flood discharge and water abstraction in the face of environmental requirements.

Tony served on IWA’s Restoration Committee for 20 years and chaired it for five years. His period at the helm coincided with a flurry of millennium and post millennium major projects and was very busy. Tony also served as IWA’s representative to the Wiltshire & Berks Canal Trust and represented IWA on the Cotswold Canals Partnership and a variety of other working groups and bodies.

Tony was a nationally elected trustee of the Association for 15 years and a member of IWA’s Navigation and Finance committees. His expertise also spread into successfully managing stocks and shares, chairing the investment group that was tasked with making sure IWA’s funds were invested securely yet profitably.

In recognition of Tony Harrison’s enormous contribution to IWA and the wider waterway movement, we reproduce over the following pages David Bolton’s ‘Canal Pioneers – Tony Harrison’ article, first published in the October 2001 issue of Waterways World. It detailed Tony’s love of both inland waterways boating and sailing, his hydraulic engineering studies at Delft University in the Netherlands, and the ways in which he put his extensive knowledge into practice for the benefit of navigation projects throughout the world.
Tony Harrison says that he has a “life-long interest in water – not just waterways”. This interest has given him a great deal of pleasure from early days in canoeing and sailing; it also led to a career spanning three decades in hydraulic research; and now in retirement, he is placing his knowledge at the Inland Waterway Association’s disposal as one of the Honorary Consultant Engineers and Chairman of the Restoration Committee.

His first memory of boating was on a trip on the river at Stratford upon Avon in 1939 in the company of his parents and one-year-old sister, Susan, who was constantly trying to step overboard! Only about a year later Tony and his sister were sent as evacuees from the war to Canada, where Tony stayed with a couple he called Aunt Dorothy and Uncle Matt and their own family who were his third-cousins. They lived in Toronto though they spent the long summer holidays at a wonderful lakeland area called Muskoka. For two or three months Tony and his cousins lived around the water and spent their days swimming and boating. His uncle had a fine launch on which they went shopping; Tony learned to sail and to row in other boats. “I have great memories of those times which were essentially water-based holidays,” he recalls. “For some reason, I was always fascinated with water and enjoyed watching the boats going through a lock at a place called Port Carling.”

“One thing I particularly remember is that there was a sandy beach with a little jetty and I used to pull a model boat along on a piece of string, fascinated with the wave pattern that it created – on more than one occasion, I was so fascinated that I walked right off the end of the jetty!” Although Tony did not realise at the time, this was a curious precedent of the kind of the work that he was to become involved in years later.

Discovering Midland Canals

By 1944, Tony and Susan returned to Britain and it must have been a sharp contrast to find themselves living in the Midlands, firstly at Hopwood, near Alvechurch. “When we lived there, I was about eleven or twelve years old, and I used to walk the dog down a nearby lane to the Worcester & Birmingham Canal near the southern end of Wast Hill Tunnel,” he recalls. “I didn’t realise how lucky I was at the time as I saw some of the last carrying narrowboats which much intrigued me.”

Subsequently, their move to King’s Norton brought him to another notable canal area and they were only about half-a-mile from King’s Norton Junction. By the time he was in his late teens this burgeoning interest in waterways stimulated Tony to look for a convenient, yet economic, means of exploring further around the canal network. The solution was a 21ft, two-seater, canvas-covered canoe with a long fore end for stowing camping gear. “I took up canoeing because I read about it in a book called the Junior Weekend Book and..."
then William Bliss’s book, *Canoeing* – it all sounded terribly exciting. We started out on the River Arrow near Alcester and quickly discovered the limitation of a canvas canoe was that it snagged easily on underwater obstacles. By the end of the first day – and several emergency patches later! – I realised that it would be better to stick to proper navigations such as canals.

Tony and a friend, Charles Corfield, made day-trips to Earlswood lakes and Tardebigge, paddling through some of the longest tunnels. “There were no rules about going through tunnels then and our system was two torches held aloft to illuminate the walls and direction by the person in the rear seat while the person in front paddled – that’s how we found our way through tunnels as long as King’s Norton and we simply hoped that if there was an approaching boat, they would see us! In fact, we never did meet any other boat.”

Paddling in this manner through tunnels as long as 2,726 yards must have been quite a challenging and awe-inspiring experience; also, the lack of noise and movement of water meant that it was possible to appreciate the clarity of the water and the circular shape of the tunnel. “On the flat and calm canal at the tunnel entrance, you feel as though you are in the middle of a circular hole floating along in space.”

“We set off down the Avon wherever it was possible to boat. As all the former navigation structures had disappeared, it was a wild sort of river and there were serious rapids by the old weirs”

In those immediate post-war years, Tony found the conditions on the canals were free and easy. They camped by locks. Since the canoe was not allowed to use locks they avoided them by carting the craft around locks, previously identified on Ordnance Survey maps, on a home-made trolley. The main problem was weed. “On the Leicester Line, every time you put your double-ended paddle into the water you lifted out a mass of stringy weed – there was only a narrow route through the middle which had been cut through by the few motor boats on the move.”

Subsequently, Tony was a student at Birmingham University. After taking their final exams, he and a friend, John Scott, undertook a two-week trip by canoe starting at King’s Norton, down the Worcester & Birmingham Canal and River Severn to Sharpness, then walking the canoe on its trolley for two days across the Cotswolds, re-launching on the Thames at Lechlade, and back along the Oxford, Grand Union and northern Stratford canals.

They were interrupted in the course of this trip by an unexpected demand to be interviewed by an external examiner, a visiting professor. “He hadn’t given any notice of this so all the students were spread around the country doing various things and parents were hunting for us. We were recalled just in time from somewhere near Lower Heyford on the Oxford Canal where, fortunately, we had left a poste restante address. Later, we heard that our parents had come looking for us the previous night and just failed to find us, hidden around a bend. Unfortunately, it spoilt the feeling of freedom and being away, and we had to shave off our newly grown beards to meet the professor!”

**Canal Restoration Involvement**

Tony’s interest in canal restoration must have been stimulated by an earlier trip when he canoed down the then derelict Stratford Canal. This was two years before the famous canoe trip in 1957 which had produced the toll ticket instrumental in preventing the closure of the canal. By demonstrating that the canal had been used for navigation within the previous three years, Warwickshire County Council’s request for abandonment was refused, paving the way for the Stratford’s restoration. Tony recalls that there was sufficient water in the canal to canoe until they reached the Wilmcote flight where the course was dry into Stratford town.

They carted the canoe over land to the nearest point of the River Avon which, at that time, was completely derelict apart from the reach within the town. “We set off down the Avon wherever it was possible to boat. As all the former navigation structures had disappeared, it was a wild sort of river and there were serious rapids by the old weirs. We had lots of problems in negotiating around rapids that were too fierce to shoot – since we had camping gear and clothing we didn’t want to capsize! Eventually, the trolley broke, and we finished the trip just beyond Bidford-on-Avon, I think.”
Tony Harrison’s other life-long passion for water-based recreation has been sailing. At about the age of 16, he joined a school party sailing on the Broads in a small yacht. “There was no auxiliary power other than ‘boy power!’” he recalls. “So, if there was no wind, we either quanted it with a long pole or towed it behind the dinghy or pulled it from the shore – using up lots of youthful energy!”

After qualifying in Civil Engineering at Birmingham University, Tony undertook his national service in the RAF as an officer in the Airfield Construction Branch and he was fortunate to be posted to Germany where there were opportunities for sailing. “I had a fair measure of independence in my work of pavement testing at various airfields as my squadron leader boss never visited me on site as long as I sent in my reports on time. It was a wonderfully flexible job so that I was able to adjust my schedule according to the quality of sailing opportunities, such as in Berlin and on the Baltic!”

**Hydraulic Engineering Studies**

On demobilisation, Tony’s fascination with water attracted him to go on a diploma course in Hydraulic Engineering at Delft University, the Netherlands, one of the leading centres in this subject. He received a thorough training in many aspects of water engineering and navigation, including the design of locks and weirs, siltation and dredging; and there were many opportunities for travelling around Northern Europe to see different navigation and hydraulic sites.

When he started looking for a career job, Tony decided again that it had to be work connected with water and an ideal opportunity was offered in 1958 at the then Hydraulics Research Station (HRS) at Wallingford (subsequently privatised as HR Wallingford). During the 25 years that he worked at Wallingford (eventually as Head of Rivers & Drainage Division), he was involved in several overseas studies of navigation projects. The first was of the River Plate in Argentina where Tony was involved in a major project of field and model studies of new navigation channels connecting Buenos Aires with the delta of the River Parana. Subsequently, he undertook a further UN funded study of improving navigation along the River Paraguay.

Although Tony has been a member of IWA since 1954, he is conscious that for some years he was prevented from playing an active part for various reasons: the commitments in bringing-up a young family was one factor. He also felt restricted at times by possible conflict of interest in working for a government establishment.

He was pleased when some funds became available to HRS Wallingford which were to be spent on expanding their horizons of knowledge, i.e. undertaking projects interfacing with their hydraulics work. “This gave me a reason to put some effort behind waterways and I supported some research work in the Economics Department at Reading University called The Amenity Demand for Recreation being carried out by Michael Stabler and Sally Ash, who subsequently worked in British Waterways’ research department,” he says. “They were looking at the economics of showing that there were benefits from waterways in addition to the direct revenue from licences. I thought that this was exactly what needed to be done since this was the time in the mid-1970s of the Fraenkel Report, with the government dithering over expenditure on the back-log of maintenance and still considering large-scale closures.”
Tony’s division subsequently sponsored research by the Dartington Amenity Research Trust on the ‘Financing of Water-based Recreation’. In 1978 Tony wrote a strongly argued paper for The Surveyor magazine entitled Waterways provide good value as a leisure source. After detailed analysis of BW income/expenditure, Tony developed an interesting concept of making a comparison between the public cost of using waterways, and swimming pools and parks. He demonstrated that waterways provided by far the least expensive recreation based on unit cost per person hour.

IWA Oxford Branch Chairman
When IWA’s Oxford branch was set up, Tony failed to become elected to the committee at his first attempt! “It was interesting because nowadays you cannot persuade enough people to take part, whereas in those days you competed!” he remarks. “Anyway, at the second attempt I was elected and a year later found myself to be chairman which was rather sudden promotion and, in a way, it was an awkward period when I was Commodore of Goring-on-Thames Sailing Club and Chairman of the IWA branch!” He had joined the sailing club shortly after starting work at Wallingford and remains an active member – now sailing a Laser dinghy – to this day.

During the time of his chairmanship, Tony was pleased that the branch raised the funding for and commissioned a study of the restoration of the Thames from Lechlade to Cricklade – “probably one of the first professional feasibility studies that IWA was involved in”.

“It was interesting because nowadays you cannot persuade enough people to take part, whereas in those days you competed!”

After spells with the Department of the Environment in the Chief Scientist Group, and with the Building Research Establishment (where he gained useful experience in drawing up specifications and contracts), Tony retired in 1995. A few years earlier he offered his services to IWA. The timing was exactly right as Philip Ogden wished to retire from his post as Hon Consultant Engineer and he was replaced by Roy Sutton (looking after structural issues) and Tony (water). Two years later he was elected to the Council of IWA and he became chairman of the Restoration Committee two years ago (1999).

Speaking of the latter role, he explains that their job is mainly a national one: “to lobby government on issues of national importance. “For example, they have looked into the allocation of Heritage Lottery grants, guidelines for new road/canal crossings, and into changes in funding, such as the Land Fill Tax credits scheme. The committee is also involved in IWA’s funding of restoration work. He takes pride in the initiative the IWA took over a new traditional style bridge to be built over the restored Chesterfield Canal: not only was IWA able to make a grant of £5,000, but the committee’s advice enabled the local authority to save £20,000 on costs by suggesting an alternative design. “I was very pleased that we were taken seriously and it was recognised that we knew something about the subject,” he says.

Water continues to be as fascinating to Tony Harrison today as it was some 60 years ago when he went on his first river trip. For much of his life, he has worked behind the scenes in scientific research and development; more recently, he has been able to satisfy his ambitions by being actively involved with IWA, particularly on the burgeoning restoration situation. Despite this heavy commitment, he still finds time to indulge his two passions of canoeing and sailing.
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We publish on these pages a round up of just some of the recent activities carried out by IWA branches around the country. If your event isn’t included here, do let the Branch Campaign Team at Head Office know, ideally in advance so that they can assist with publicity and planning where that would be helpful. Alison Smedley (alison.smedley@waterways.org.uk) covers branches in the four regions in the north of the country, and Stefanie Preston (stefanie.preston@waterways.org.uk) is the contact for branches in the south.

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE & SOUTH CHESHIRE BRANCH

North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch has been busy at a number of sites. This has included regular work parties at Congleton on the Macclesfield Canal, where the branch initially began work parties because the town has been selected as one of ten UK finalist’s for Britain in Bloom in the large town category.

On 27th June, the branch and other volunteers decided that the work parties would become a monthly event thanks to continued support from local residents, volunteers from across the area, Congleton Town Council, Congleton Sustainability Group, Canal & River Trust, Sustrans and Northern Rail. It was agreed that the work parties will initially focus on the canal area around Congleton station with plans to look at improving the whole area from Congleton Wharf through to Buglawton at a later date.

Come late July it was all hands on deck with judging for the Britain in Bloom awards scheduled for 6th August. The branch and other volunteers headed out for the monthly work party on 25th July and then decided to hold two additional work parties on Saturday 2nd and Monday 4th August to complete those final preparations around the canal in order to ensure it was smart and ready for the 6th. Once again there was good support for both these ‘final tidy up’ work parties.

Judging took place on Wednesday 6th August and as part of the assessment, the judges were shown the volunteers’ work around the canal area near the station. The judges made specific comment about how good it was to see the results and in particular praised the community spirit of the work parties.

In addition to the Congleton work parties, North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch volunteers have also been on the Caldon Canal. Throughout July, the branch held five Himalayan Balsam work parties to tackle the invasive species. A number of groups joined to help out, including Light Seekers Youth Group, Caldon & Uttoxeter Canals Trust and young trainees from the Churnet Valley Living Landscape’s youth engagement project. The branch also held work parties in August and September at Cheddleton Top Lock to prepare the site for the Caldon Canal Community day held at the end of September.
Is your branch doing something that demonstrates the great work that our members do? If so let us know - send your story and pictures to stefanie.preston@waterways.org.uk.

MIDDLESEX BRANCH

Maybe it was the predicted bad weather, the World Cup, Wimbledon or just a busy Saturday, but it was a very small party of volunteers that turned out to help with Middlesex Branch’s canal clean-up on the Paddington Arm of the Grand Union Canal in Alperton on Saturday 28th June. It was clear that the rain was there for the day and the volunteers would have the added challenge of dodging participants of the Grand Union Challenge who were running, walking and paddle-boarding 100km along the canal for charity.

The group decided to concentrate on litter picking and beer cans, soft drink cans, bottles were removed from the towpath. In the afternoon, the work party pushed on to the North Circular viaduct, which appears to be a popular stop to drink, eat and dump rubbish. By the end of the day, and despite the late start, an estimated 50 to 60 bags of rubbish had been collected and the attendant CRT workboat was noticeably fuller.

NORTHAMPTON BRANCH

On Tuesday 1st July, Northampton Branch’s regular work party was joined by employees from Santander. The work party decided to make the most of the sunny and warm weather and chose lock painting as the task for the day. The group split into four teams, three of which were assigned to Lock 2, 3 or 4 on the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union Canal, whilst the fourth team undertook a litter pick around the locks.

By mid-afternoon, the locks were looking significantly better having received a fresh coat of paint and a general tidy-up in the surrounding area. The completion of these locks was an important step for the branch as it has now painted just over half the locks on the Northampton Arm as well as the hut at Lock 1, which was finished at the branch’s work party on 7th September. It is hoped that, with some good weather over the autumn and winter, the last of the locks can soon be painted.
In 1989, in conjunction with British Waterways, Warwickshire Branch installed a fingerpost at Kingswood Junction on the northern Grand Union Canal where it links with the Stratford upon Avon Canal.

Subsequently, spring bulbs were planted at the foot of the fingerpost in memory of Doug Smith who co-ordinated the installation of the signpost. Doug also created the iconic Lockmaster maps of the canals and waterways of England and Wales while living in a barrel roofed cottage beside the lock at Dicks Lane on the Stratford Canal.

Over the years, the fingerpost had suffered at the hands of the weather. In particular, the post was rotting at its base and the paint in the lettering needed renewing. Warwickshire Branch members dismantled the post and concreted in a new ‘godfather’ with the help of CRT Towpath Taskforce volunteers. IWA members then repainted the post and fingers, which were then re-attached to the post on site.

The 1989 plaque was repainted together with a new one which was unveiled at a ceremony on Wednesday 9th July, exactly 25 years and 25 hours after the 1989 ceremony.

West Country Branch had a successful Himalayan Balsam work party on 24th July on the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal. Thirteen volunteers and two CRT staff turned out and contributed 56 volunteer hours to the Himalayan Balsam campaign.

After a few months of pulling out Himalayan Balsam, the Branch was happy to have a change of task at its work party on Saturday 23rd August. Volunteers began work to paint the large amount of metal machinery, bollards and rings at Bridgwater Docks on the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal. Eleven volunteers gathered at the Docks and collectively gave 50 hours, getting the task of painting over 50 objects off to a good start. The group plan to continue the work, weather permitting, over the next few months and once finished will have given everything from bollards and rings to winches and sluice paddles a new lick of paint.
In July and August, Birmingham, Black Country & Worcestershire Branch returned once again to Kidderminster area of the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal. At the work party on Wednesday 9th July, volunteers tackled Himalayan Balsam along the three quarters of a mile between Falling Sands Aqueduct and Round Hill Bridge.

On 13th August, the volunteers were painting at Caldwell Lock in Kidderminster where they gathered to litter pick and paint lock beams. Seven IWA members turned out as well as a passing cyclist who kindly stopped and gave a few hours to help with the painting.

Following on from these monthly work parties on the Staffs & Worcs Canal in the Kidderminster area, the branch moved slightly further north for their work party on Wednesday 10th September. The volunteers met at Wolverley Lock, where they painted the lock. The day was once again supported by CRT West Midlands’ Volunteer Co-ordinator, Murray Woodward, who brought the van with tools and refreshments.

Almost twenty volunteers turned out in Nottingham for a clean-up of the Nottingham Canal from Meadow Lane towards the city centre, on Sunday 21st September. The day had been organised by Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Branch in partnership with CRT, and the volunteers included IWA members, boaters and local people who wanted to get involved in cleaning up the surrounding area.

One team of volunteers set off on CRT’s workboat Bollin, to tackle offside and waterborne litter, and submerged rubbish. Meanwhile, two teams of volunteers with grappling irons got to work and had soon pulled out their first haul of rubbish from the lock chamber at Meadow Lane, before making their way along the first mile of canal, extricating numerous bicycles, shopping trolleys, fence panels and other assorted items. Later in the day, a large amount of scrap metal was pulled out from the canal in the vicinity of Trent Lane.

Litter picking was carried out between Meadow Lane Lock for over a mile towards the city centre, whilst other volunteers weeded and cleared vegetation from around the lock, sanitary station service block, and along towards the first bridge.

By the end of the day, all the rubbish had been unloaded at CRT’s Trent Lane depot, where it filled one skip, and all the scrap metal went into a large pile to be taken away for recycling.

BIRMINGHAM, BLACK COUNTRY & WORCESTERSHIRE BRANCH

almost twenty volunteers turned out in nottingham for a clean-up of the nottingham canal from meadow lane towards the city centre, on sunday 21st september. the day had been organised by nottinghamshire & derbyshire branch in partnership with crt, and the volunteers included iwa members, boaters and local people who wanted to get involved in cleaning up the surrounding area.

one team of volunteers set off on crt’s workboat bollin, to tackle offside and waterborne litter, and submerged rubbish. meanwhile, two teams of volunteers with grappling irons got to work and had soon pulled out their first haul of rubbish from the lock chamber at meadow lane, before making their way along the first mile of canal, extricating numerous bicycles, shopping trolleys, fence panels and other assorted items. later in the day, a large amount of scrap metal was pulled out from the canal in the vicinity of trent lane.

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Leicestershire Branch combined its Himalayan Balsam pull on the Leicester Line of the Grand Union Canal on 22nd July, with a work party to remove Floating Pennywort. Eighteen volunteers met at Leicester Rowing Club where two work boats were available. The Himalayan Balsam was cleared from the towpath side above Freeman’s Meadow Lock, and the Floating Pennywort was removed from the river above the weir.

LANCASHIRE & CUMBRIA BRANCH

On Saturday 19th July, Lancashire & Cumbria Branch held a Himalayan Balsam pulling work party in partnership with the Friends of Haslam Park and Preston City Council on the Lancaster Canal. Fourteen 1-tonne builders’ sacks were filled with the pulled up vegetation and emptied by the park wardens for rotting down in their yard.

SHREWSBURY DISTRICT & NORTH WALES BRANCH

Over a dozen people tackled the Himalayan Balsam on the Shrewsbury & Newport Canal on Saturday 12th July at a work party supported by Shrewsbury District & North Wales Branch. The area to the east of Town Lock was cleared of Himalayan Balsam, as well as some work being carried out along the banks through Victoria Park. Body harnesses were used to access the area immediately below Fishers Lock where the bank dropped away and the invasive plant was hard to reach. Two boats were used to take people across the canal to access the offside and other difficult areas and to transport vegetation across the canal for disposal.

In the afternoon the volunteers helped members of Shrewsbury & Newport Canal Trust who were taking part in a ‘dinghy dawdle’ along the full length of the canal. Participants paddled when they could and manoeuvred the boats around obstacles like infilled locks by hand. Three canoes took part and it was good to see pleasure boats on the canal in Newport again.
Is your branch doing something that demonstrates the great work that our members do? If so let us know - send your story and pictures to stefanie.preston@waterways.org.uk.

IWSCH BRANCH
The River Gipping Trust, supported by Ipswich Branch, has been hard at work on the River Gipping over the summer and completed the new bridge base and abutments over the by-wash and weir at Pimps Ford. The new timber bridge, constructed by volunteers, was then transported and put into place, but this is not the end of the work. Further plans are being developed subject to formal consents being given.

CHELMSFORD BRANCH
Chelmsford Branch and Essex Waterway Recovery Group joined forces over the weekend of the 6th and 7th September to complete a range of tasks at Hoe Mill on the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation. With the help of staff from Essex Waterways Ltd (the Chelmer & Blackwater's navigation authority, a subsidiary of IWA), volunteers laid eight tonnes of Type 1 surfacing; created a new rainwater soakaway; built, fitted and painted new eaves, fascias and cladding to the store building; installed new gutters and downpipes on the store building; and tidied the stores inside.

LICHFIELD BRANCH
On Saturday 26th July, ten volunteers from Lichfield Branch turned out to continue the good work at the "Bloody Steps" and this included the removal of Himalayan Balsam on the Trent & Mersey Canal. The team made an early start on mowing and strimming the area from the steps up to the bypass bridge, and during the morning another volunteer was trained with the CRT strimmer and presented with his certificate. The morning’s work also comprised painting the railings on the aqueduct over the River Trent, litter picking and Himalayan Balsam pulling.

OTHER NEWS
TWO BRANCH ANNIVERSARIES
Middlesex Branch celebrated its 20th anniversary at Slough Canal Festival over the weekend of 13th and 14th September. Branch volunteers attended with the publicity stand and were pleased to be part of what was a very successful event, with double the number of boats attending than in previous years (probably due to the recent completion of long awaited dredging). As well as its stand, the branch brought along a celebratory cake, which the Mayor of Slough cut on the Sunday so that boaters could enjoy a slice.

The second big celebration was held by Ipswich Branch, which marks its 40th anniversary this year. Each year the branch committee organises a weekend away for members. This year’s was special, lasting three rather than two days to allow more time to celebrate the anniversary. The trip included visits to Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway, the Dungeness lifeboat station, the Woodchurch Village Life Museum, Biddenden Vineyards, the Kent & East Sussex Railway, Battle Abbey and Yesterdays World.

The branch also held an anniversary lunch, on 4th October, at which current and past branch personalities celebrated the anniversary. Guests included National Chairman Les Etheridge, well known author Steve Haywood and Ipswich Branch’s first Chairman David Stevenson.

Details of all IWA branch events can be found on the IWA website events calendar. If you would like to get involved or have any suggestions for future work parties, please contact the IWA Branch Campaign Team: Alison Smedley, Branch Campaign Officer 07779 090915; alison.smedley@waterways.org.uk
Stefanie Preston, Branch Campaign Assistant 01494 783453; stefanie.preston@waterways.org.uk
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I look forward to receiving my copy of Waterways – a generally well-produced and informative magazine. I especially like your regional features, last issue’s South West Midlands article being a good example. The quality of the photographs was superb!

However, I should like to suggest that you include more maps within your pages. They don’t have to be too detailed but should just show the location of a particular waterway within the context of the waterway network. Once again referring back to the South West Midlands, I suspect there are other IWA members as well as me who are not entirely certain as to the exact course of the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal. It would often be helpful too if you could include a small map alongside some of your longer news items.

Liam Jenkins, Via email

We are always pleased to receive members’ comments, suggestions and criticisms. Mr Jenkins, and no doubt others too, will be pleased to note that a number of maps are included within this issue’s East Anglian Waterways feature – see pages 18-28. Ed.

Good news... and bad

There were lots of good news stories to be found in the Autumn issue of Waterways, notably the successful IWA festivals held at Chester, Little Venice and Tiverton earlier this year. Well done to everyone who worked so hard to make these events go with a swing!

It is disappointing though to read of the continued problems at Welches Dam Lock and Horseways channel on the Middle Level Navigations. As a long-standing admirer of these remote and atmospheric waterways, I vividly recall Horseways Lock being officially reopened in the mid-1980s, by the then IWA National Chairman, the late Ken Goodwin. He had, as I remember it, travelled all the way from his home in Mid Wales to perform the ceremony. Then came all the hard work carried out by IWA volunteers and others which resulted, some years later, in Welches Dam Lock being restored.

We owe it to everyone involved in these campaigns to keep up the pressure, as I believe our Navigation Committee is indeed doing. Welches Dam Lock needs once again to be repaired and reopened as soon as possible, to restore the southern through route – via the Old Bedford River – between the Great Ouse and the River Nene.

Ralph Knowles, Kettering

Visiting the Chelmer & Blackwater

The Interview with Roy and Chris Chandler in the previous edition of Waterways was particularly interesting. It also highlighted for me what a good job IWA has done in turning around the fortunes of the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation in the nine years since it took over the management of the waterway in November 2005.

As a northerner living several hundred miles from Essex, I confess to never having visited the Chelmer & Blackwater but plan to put that right next summer. I’ve done my research and look forward to taking a boat trip along the canal, lunching at the Paper Mill Lock tearoom and enjoying a pint or two at one of the atmospheric pubs at Heybridge Basin that I’ve read about. I can’t wait!

Gary Harvey, Via email
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