

Mile Post



The Magazine of the
West Riding Branch



September 2006

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

Chairman' Comments

It is with much sadness that I start my comments by reporting the death of Frank Rigby at the beginning of August. For all of us at West Riding Branch who knew Frank and those of us who worked with him on committee, his calm, friendly, kind and sometimes humorous approach made it a pleasure and privilege to be with him.

Some Branch members were able to attend his funeral and other IWA friends who were at Beale Park had a get together in his memory. We will all miss him very much. (see tribute on page 5.)

Festivals

Over the summer we have attended 3 more festivals with the branch publicity material and gazebo.

The York Dragon Boat Festival was a good day out. We played host (by sharing our stand space) to the Ouse-Ure section and to the River Foss Society. It was a lovely sunny day and we talked to lots of people.

The Dewsbury Festival, revived after about a 5 year absence, was well organised and well attended. Certain committee members got involved in a boat pull and at the end of the day helping to manoeuvre a reluctant donkey into a trailer! It all goes to make it a memorable festival.

It was great to return to Beale Park for the National Festival. Once again our Jubilee display and publicity material drew lots of interest and we didn't stop talking to members of the public and fellow IWA members all weekend. We ended up manning the stand all the time, there was so much to say!

Thanks to everybody who has been involved or helped in any way at the 5 festivals the branch has attended this year. Especially to Ken Nelson on retiring from leading the 'chippy' team at the Nationals. (Ken your 'swan song' was brilliant!)

Social Meetings

The social meetings got off to a good start, with the September meeting. Thanks to everyone who attended. If you haven't joined us yet do come along, give your support, meet new IWA friends and have a good time.

We look forward to seeing you.

Chris Pinder

Frank Holmes Rigby 7th February 1930 - 4th August 2006

We are very sorry to report the death on the 4th of August, of Frank Rigby, former chairman of the IWA West Riding branch.

I'm sure all of those who attended the branch social meetings will remember Frank's introductions.

Frank was branch chairman and secretary from 1992 to 1997. He continued as vice-chairman for the following 5 years when the branch had no chairman and so was in effect still doing the chairman's job.



He and his wife Barbara also produced the branch newsletter from 1998 to the end of 2003. Frank stood down as a vice-chairman in 2004. And he and Barbara finally retired from the committee in 2005.

During his time as chairman he did a lot of work for the branch. For example, he was the prime organiser of the token load which was transported by water from the Tower of London to the new Royal Armouries in Leeds in 1996 (the IWA's Golden Jubilee year). And of the boat gathering in Clarence Dock to mark the opening of Royal Armouries.

Frank was not just known to West Riding branch members. Frank and Barbara's narrowboat Palapalani (Hawaiian for Frank and Barbara) was moored down near Lichfield. They also had a caravan in which they attended many National Festivals. At this year's National at Beale Park, a number of people said how sorry they were to hear of Frank's death. And on the day of the funeral there was a get together to remember Frank by members of the National set up team who knew him.

Frank was proud of his roots in Gloucester, where he remembered the Cadbury boats and helped on the oil tankers on the Severn as a teenager during the war.

He went into teaching and ended up as a special school's headmaster. Frank was also involved with many other organisations such as the Rotary Club and his local church.

Frank's funeral took place in a packed St Mary's church in South Milford on the 14th of August and was attended by members of the branch committee. Our condolences go to Barbara, daughter and son-in-law Carol and Nick and grandchildren Emily and Simon.

Can You Help?

Programme of Events 2006/7

1. We are looking for volunteers to collect our speaker from Leeds Railway Station and return after the talk.

One speaker needs to be collected on 13th October 2006 and another speaker and wife for 9th February 2007. If anyone is interested please let us know as soon as possible.

Programme of Events 2007/8

1. We are looking for someone not to give a talk but who will look at the British Pathe website and arrange for us to view some of the old canal films which are available. www.britishpathe.com

2. If anyone has any ideas, contacts or suggestions for future talks please let us know.

Alastair and Katy Sayles
32 Pymont Drive
Woodlesford
Tel:0113 393 4517
kandal@btinternet.com

The Mile Post.

Is there anyone out there who could help the branch by writing something for inclusion in the Milepost. Have you been on an interesting boating trip? Tell us about it. Is there something waterways related you feel strongly about? Write us a letter about it. Any amusing stories? Tell us all! E-mail us at boblaing@blueyonder.co.uk, hand it to one of us, or post it to any committee member before the beginning of January. We look forward to hearing from you.

Silver Surfers

by Alastair Furniss.

Part 1.

When I was about to retire my children decided that I should be educated, and they provided several obsolete computers in succession to try to lure me into the twentieth (then) century. As a result I was later to obtain a more modern machine which has mastered me completely – but at least it allows me to use it as a word processor from time to time – hence this effort.

You may feel that there is little relevance to this magazine, but I must disclose a further educational exercise by the family.

Part 2.

One day in 1991 I was asked if I could arrange to deliver my younger daughter to Middlewich where her elders had arranged to hire a boat. Thus it was that on Saturday 25th May we arrived at the boat yard. As we were relatively early they kindly offered their Aged Parents a short trip. We duly embarked on “Maple” and cast off. As a result of my helmsman experience in a 12 foot sailing dinghy on the lake at West Kirby in the 1930s, I was deemed to be an expert, and was told how to operate the throttle. I was then instructed to proceed to the next junction and turn right. I was somewhat concerned that 60 foot in front of me might cloud my judgment, but immediately entered the junction reasonably well, but was shaken to see a bridge immediately ahead. This was not a “normal” bridge, but a duplex, the first part being the normal brick arch, the second part being a horizontal concrete modern road bridge. For a novice this was a bit of a problem. I had noted that the headroom under the road bridge was not great, and as I lowered my head accordingly I heard a loud crunch, and the stove chimney deposited itself on the cabin roof. This disconcerting event dis-

tracted me so that I failed to note a boat approaching. I immediately closed the throttle, which I forgot would lose steerage way. Unfortunately no one had told me to keep to the right, so as a more experienced motorist I tried to keep left, resulting in some comment from the oncoming boat. “Maple” then adopted a “blockship” approach across the canal. In response to my anguished cries the crew left the cabin and came to my aid, apologising to the other crew. I later realised that such vagaries of activity are not unusual in the vicinity of yards where boats are hired!

This then was a first for me.

A further first was “car shuffling”. We had left our car at the yard. One of the crew was delegated to provide transport and had brought his 2cv ahead for the purpose. This mode of travel was another first!

We never expected to spend more time on the canals, but records indicate that we have had 36 canal trips, 8 of which have been over Christmas. We never expected to spend Christmas in the middle of Birmingham, but we have had several Xmases there and we did manage to have a family dinner for eleven in two boats breasted up near to the Sea Life Centre.

We have enjoyed our trips so far and hope to enjoy more. Our highlights have been the Anderton Lift and the Falkirk Wheel. The tranquility of the journeys, interspersed with weeds round the prop, (and one case of a cofferdam across the cut necessitating several miles of reverse travel), mean that boredom does not set in.

You may wonder about my helmsmanship – my daughter has always had fears because I can’t steer behind my back. Normally I stand with one foot on the side of the stern. But because I had a blackout last year she treats me like the one chick of a mother hen, and I am confined to the lower deck – I still enjoy it, especially if it is raining outside!

Hotel Boats **by Joe Barr.**

In 1985 I went on a hotel boat holiday. That I have been every year since, sometimes twice, is self explanatory.

Doubtless many boaters will think doing their own navigating and catering to be half the fun of the thing. Hotel boats are suitable for the older and less agile. So much of the system is one boat wide with few passing places, that such tricky navigation may be better in the hands of experts.

The route of my first such holiday was from Chester to Stourport. The former was rail accessible the other involved a taxi or bus to Kidderminster.

Joining day is usually a Saturday. The crew and guests get to know each other over welcome drinks, and dinner is served later. The small number of people means a high standard of service and attention.

Though towpath walking is enjoyable, fine weather is preferred for it. Some of the towpaths you come across are in poor condition.

When canals were a serious means of transport locks must have been time consuming and journey extending. Whilst under no obligation, guests are welcome to help with them. That provides an appetite for the adequate catering.

Crew members take breakfast orders whilst delivering tea or coffee. Fruit juice and cereals are self service, and there is a generous choice. Lunch is light. Quiche and salad are favourites. The evening meal is heavier with a starter, main course, dessert and choice of cheeses.

Drinks are available on an honesty basis. Guests enter them in a book and receive the bill before departure.

On the last day the crews like the guests to vacate their cabins by mid morning so that they can service them for the next guests.

Falkirk to Bowling on the Forth and Clyde Canal - 2006.

Left Leeds by car at 8am on the Saturday morning bound for the Falkirk Wheel and Alvechurch Boat Hire Centre. Arrived at 12.30, parked car and picked up our BW Car Parking permission sign. Told Hamish at the boat centre we had arrived and went for a walk till it was time to collect "Orange Weaver" at 2.30.

Left the wheel basin at 3.20. We had already rung BW Scotland and told them we were heading towards Glasgow and where we planned to stay the night. After an hour or so we saw 6 lock keepers at the Bonnybridge Lift Bridge. A couple of the lock keepers were training for the coming season, and they started to raise the bridge, on four hydraulic rams, for us to pass under. They asked us where we were stopping for the night and so they met us again at Lock 17, took us through the lock and even tied us up, the boat I mean. We didn't have anything to do except hold the ropes in the lock. They wished us goodnight and we would see them in the morning at Lock 18 at 9am.

As we chugged up to the next lock we could see it was all ready for us to go straight in, and this arrangement continued for the 19th and 20th. Just had to hold the front and back ropes and they did the rest. Filled up with fresh water at the Auchinstarry basin where BW Scotland have an office, subsequently the team knew when we were leaving so that they would meet us to open Twechar and Hillhead Bridges. Two different bridges again, Twechar lifted on two rams and Hillhead was a huge swing bridge. Arranged where we were to meet BW again the next day and we were on our own again. Stayed the night at Applecross Street Basin, Glasgow, the head office for BW Scotland. It is easy to walk down into the town from here and pick up the open top bus. BW are planning for the canal to be opened all the way to Port Dundas, nearer the centre of Glasgow via the Bascule Bridges in the Basin.

The next day we met BW lock keepers (6 of them again) at Maryhill Locks at 9.30. Two boats going down into Bowling. They are really

lovely locks, apart from the area they are in, and included crossing the Kelvin aqueduct. The lock keepers left all the locks open since we were the only two boats using this stretch of the canal over the next two days.

Temple Locks next. The lock keepers stopped here for their breakfast so we had a brew. Went through a few more bridges and passed through Clydebank where there is, reputedly, the only sail through fish and chip shop. They were delicious too.

Dalmuir Drop Lock was next and we couldn't wait to see it. The lock had a boom across to stop boats going into it which was lifted when we arrived and we were on the east side of the bridge all roped up again. BW believe in ropes. There are ½ million gallons of water in the lock which have to be pumped out to allow us to pass under the main road and over to the west side of the bridge. The water coming back in is gravity fed and quite powerful if you are near the inlet pipe which we were. You need good gloves to stop the rope burns. In all it took 40 minutes to complete the cycle, and then we were away again.

The Ferryroad Bridge and lock 37 are directly underneath the Erskine bridge and we never realised. It does look high and very impressive, especially when it started to snow.

Arrived at Bowling Basin at 5.15 pm, it was a long day considering we didn't do much, 18 locks and 7 seven bridges. If you had to do this trip single handed it would have taken much longer. BW did mention that next year the locks may all be "DIY".

What a beautiful place the basin is, the weather was great, for March. Snow on the hills, blue sky, and the Clyde flowing along side. The basin is locked up at night and there is a night watch man patrolling every hour. I don't know if that makes you feel safe or not.

Over the main road from the basin there is a railway line going either to Balloch, Helensburgh or Glasgow and the trains are every 20 mins each way. A brilliant service, so we walked on a disused railway line to

Dumbarton and got the train the rest of the way to Balloch, on the banks of Loch Lomond and after a great pub lunch, caught the train back to Bowling. What a great day.

Left Bowling at 9am, the lock keeper, only one, was waiting for us. He took us through lock 38 then we met up with the rest of team under the Erskine bridge and we were away back up again to Glasgow.

The husband on the boat which accompanied us through the locks spent the whole of the day on the roof to avoid getting wet from all the water pouring over the lock gates. If the only Leeds and Liverpool canal had that much water.

We had to stop twice coming out of locks to unclog the weed hatch but other than that it was a pleasant journey again.

After leaving the lock keepers at 5 pm we went straight to the Stables Bar and visitor's moorings, for a very nice meal, and a rest. It is tiring watching others work.

We had made our arrangements once again with BW for the return through the bridges and locks 20 to 17 and they were spot on to the minute. What a brilliant service

The canal is beautiful and wide in parts, the scenery is wonderful too, and well worth a boat hire trip to say you have done it. We would think about doing it all again in a couple of years when Port Dundas and the new basin in Edinburgh city centre are open.

By Bill and Jane Hutchinson.

Inland Waterways Association

West Riding Branch

Press Cuttings

04.06.06

The Observer A computer generated picture advertising new apartments in the heart of Leeds featured both the Leeds & Liverpool and the River Aire sparkling clear. T'were not always thus and developers nowadays can cash in upon years of others' altruistic campaigning. An article in the same issue dwelt upon Urban Splash in Manchester, where new canals are being built to enhance new development. That's as well because not everyone would agree that this particular development would enhance existing canals.

12.06.06

Halifax Evening Courier BW's 2006 wildlife survey is under way and Jonathan Hart-Woods, their Environment & Heritage Manager, was asking all canal users to report water vole sightings. Information gathered will be added to BW's species database. They are, of course, interested in all flora & fauna, not just the water voles.

17.06.06

Yorkshire Post Magazine Reporter Michael Brown took his grandson for a trip on the Leeds & Liverpool and absorbed all the usual statistics and history, both natural and otherwise, whilst enjoying the scenery both natural and man made. He commends the canal to other cyclists as being both traffic-free and cost-free. Clearly he had forgotten, temporarily at least, the old adage about free lunches.

30.06.06

Ripon Gazette Ripon Canal Carrying Company boat, 'Yoredale', carries 5,000 people a year. Now they have added the electric narrowboat, 'Pride of Ripon' to their fleet which will run ½-hour trips on weekend afternoons and at other times can be hired for private excursions. To book phone 01765 604144.

15.07.06

Yorkshire Post In its Country Week Supplement, the Yorkshire Post recommended a circular walk from Greetland Sowerby Bridge and returning via the towpath of the Calder & Hebble. The supporting photographs eschewed the dramatic countryside en route and concentrated on hire boats at Sowerby Bridge wharf.

29.07.06

Yorkshire Post We all knew that the Pocklington Canal is a haven for wildlife and now it's official. " It is awash with dragon flies and damselflies.....the rare bittern visits in winter and the water vole and otter have been seen". Good! These creatures are often seen along waterways with more intense boating.

02.08.06

Halifax Evening Courier Canals' photogenicity means that they often get incidental publicity. A feature on Sowerby Bridge was illustrated by two pictures of the Rochdale Canal and Calder & Hebble Navigation although the text had very little about canals.

18.08.06

Ripon Gazette Laurence Morgan, BW's Yorkshire manager was delighted that Julie Freytag had been highly commended in the Waterways Length Awards. Julie looks after a length of the Ripon Canal and the West Riding Branch congratulates her too.

22.08.06

The Independent Geneviève Roberts acknowledges that boats have for a long time provided homes for the romantic, the retired and the mildly eccentric. (How many boxes do you tick?) RBOA estimates that there are 12,000 people permanently living on boats. The pressure of rising property prices means that more and more people, especially Londoners and the young, find living on canal and river craft attractive

25.08.06

Halifax Evening Courier The Mikron Theatre Co, is based on the Huddersfield Narrow at Marsden and is programmed to do its Pennine Autumn tour again this year. The Courier picked on two venues in Hebden Bridge but others can be found in the waterway magazines or on Mikron's website www.mikron.org.uk. (And on page 15 of this magazine.)

02.09.06

Yorkshire Post Starting a series on Yorkshire's rivers, water quality in the Aire strikes an optimistic note. Sampling water at Leeds Bridge the Environment Agency's field officer compares it favourably with Venice. Sewage works along the Aire Valley have been upgraded over the past quarter of a century and that the investment has been worthwhile was evidenced by an astonished angler landing a salmon at Eggborough.

09.09.06

Yorkshire Post In Leeds "...change is in the Aire." (Yo! Ho!) Joking aside the river is now cleaner than it has been in the past 200 years and developers are falling over one another to realise fat returns on money invested in riverside plots. Whilst no doubt welcoming the cleaner river and tidier riverside, Leeds Civic Trust is concerned that the nature of new developments, mostly flats, hotels and offices, is, overall, a planning failure. "Where are the people? Where can children play? Where are the boats?" they ask. Twenty years ago they campaigned under the slogan, "Let's put Leeds-upon-Aire", but sadly their vision is not being realised.

09.09.06

BBC Radio 4 In 'Open Country' early this Saturday morning (repeated the next Thursday lunchtime) Richard Uridge took a trip legging through Standedge Tunnel. The programme covered the tunnel's history and current operation. Open it thankfully is, though whether it really qualified as 'open country' seemed to be stretching a point! Unusually for such programmes the facts were mostly correct but is it really the only tunnel in the world with an S-bend in the middle? That is a feature often attributed to several others in England.

APPEAL:- Please send any cuttings which are even remotely relevant to waterways to me, Keith Noble, at The Dene, Triangle, Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire H6 3EA. Don't forget to mark each one to show which paper or magazine it came from and the publication date.

Mikron's 25th Autumn tour 2006

October.

Tues 3rd 8pm CO

Nosh

95 Northgate, Almondbury, nr Huddersfield

Tickets £17 to include two course meal served from 6pm. Reservations in advance. £5 cash/cheque deposit required for all bookings.

For further details tel: 01484 430004

Millennium Sponsor:

Sun 8th 8.30pm CO C

The Swan

Main Street, Addingham, nr Ikley

Food available from 5.30 - 7.30pm. Booking recommended

tel: 01943 830375

Tues 10th 7.30pm Mrs B

East Cottingwith Village Hall

East Cottingwith, York

Tickets £5. For further details tel: 01759 318530

Weds 11th 7.30pm Mrs B

Horbury Library

Westfield Road, Horbury (next to old Town Hall)

Tickets £8 (£6 concessions), £1 discount for Friends of Horbury Library.

For further details tel: 01924 303060

Fri 13th 7.30pm CO

Craven Cattle Mart
Gargrave Road, Skipton

Tickets £8 (£6 concessions) For further details tel: 01756 791411 or
book online www.themarttheatre.org.uk

Sun 15th 7.30pm CO

Square Chapel Centre for the Arts
10 Square Road, Halifax

Tickets £8 (£6 concessions). For further details tel: 01422 349422
Millennium Sponsor: James Sykes

Tues 17th 8pm Mrs B

Nosh

95 Northgate, Almondbury, nr Huddersfield

Tickets £17 to include two course meal served from 6pm. Reservations
in advance. £5 cash/cheque deposit required for all bookings. For fur-
ther details tel: 01484 430004

Millennium Sponsor: David & Joan Franco

Fri 20th 7pm Mrs B

Brontë Boats

The Marina, New Road, Hebden Bridge

Tickets £20 to include 3 hour cruise along the Rochdale Canal on the
luxury trip boat, Verdopolis, and supper on board. Advance booking
essential tel: 01422 845557 info@bronteboats.co.uk
www.bronteboats.co.uk

LAST NIGHT OF 2006 SEASON!

Sat 21st 8pm Mrs B

Marsden Mechanics

Peel Street, Marsden, nr Huddersfield

Tickets £8 (£6 concessions). Available from Mikron (01484 843701),
Mechanics Hall office (01484 844587), Marsden Information Point
(01484 845595) or on the door

Millennium Sponsors: Hey Green Country House Hotel and Michael
Blake, Taxation Consultant

Show Sponsor: Geoff Wheat

KEY

Mrs B:

Mrs Brunel

A life with Isambard Kingdom Brunel

CO:

Carrying On

Building the future at a Cheshire shipyard

C :

collection, no tickets; we'll take your money after the show!

‘A Warm Welcome!’

The West Riding Branch extends a warm welcome to these members who have joined us since the last Mile Post. We hope to meet you at some of our social meetings.

Mr Hotham	Leeds
Mr Teague	York
Mr Baker	Skipton
Mr and Mrs Barrow	Bradford
Mr Cruickshank	Leeds
Mr Jarvis	Wetherby
Mr Fawcett	Holmfirth
Mr Anderton	Keighley
Mr Mullen	Leeds
Mr and Mrs Rowling	Bradford
Mr Wayne	Huddersfield
Mr and Mrs Wearmouth	Harrogate
Mr and Mrs Backhouse	Leeds
Mr Stack	Wakefield
Mr and Mrs Scott	Sheffield

Your Branch Needs You!

As you may have noticed on page 19, your committee still **desperately** needs new members. We are now at an all time low of only eight committee members

We only meet around six or seven times a year, usually in each other's houses.

Please consider joining us. Why not come along to a meeting to see what goes on. We may even try to bribe you with coffee and biscuits. Speak to any committee member to find out when and where the next meeting will be held.

We look forward to seeing you!!

Committee Members 2006 / 2007

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Committee member Vacant

Committee member Vacant

Committee member Vacant

Committee member Vacant

Regional Chairman

John Reeve
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Home 01642 580350

Programme of Events for 2006 - 2007.

All meetings take place at 8.00pm on the second Friday of the month, in the top floor Social Club, Centenary House, North Street, Leeds, LS2 8AY.

- 13th October 06 - The 60s & 70s - Looking Back .
John Greenway
- 10th November 06 - Sustrans & the National Cycle
Network in relation to waterways.
David Stevens.
- 8th December 06 - Christmas Social.
- 12th January 07 - Talk About Mikron Theatre.
Peter Toon
- 9th February 07 - The Canal Du Midi.
Nicholas Hammond
- 9th March 07 - AGM
- 13th April 07 - A Russian Voyage - Tom Barkley

All the social meetings organised by the West Riding Branch are open and everyone is invited. Any member of the general public is allowed to attend and members are invited to bring friends. The Inland Waterways Association campaigns for the Conservation, Use, Maintenance, Restoration and Development of the Inland Waterways, which are part of our heritage, and are there for the benefit of everyone.

For further information please contact 01274-581413