

Mile Post



The Magazine of the West Riding Branch



The Inland
Waterways
Association

May/June 2008

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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.

Front cover.

This sculpture is to be found just outside the canal basin at Sowerby Bridge, which is on the Calder and Hebble Navigation.

Chairman's Thoughts

It's voting at the National AGM, then? Why bother? It's been over two years of reports, discussions, meetings, presentations, charts, and now we have a final proposal for IWA's future organisation that every member can consider.

Why not give all members a full description of all the advantages, and a postal voting slip for each of us to say 'yes' or 'no'? Hmmm. Because the Trustees decided to implement all the changes that it could, under its existing authority, then put the remaining constitution changes to the National AGM in September. Members can either attend to vote, or follow the instructions in the Spring 'Waterways' to appoint a proxy to vote for them. The twenty people at our Regional AGM all wanted Council to have the confidence in our members and in the merits of the Modernisation Package to put it to a 'yes/no' postal vote, but it doesn't look likely to be done that way.

Who are these Trustees, anyway? What a dull name! I thought we had a 'Council'? IWA's governing body has been called 'Council' since we began in 1946, but that's one of the changes; Council want to be a smaller body to concentrate on strategy, to delegate everything else to Navigation, Restoration, Finance and other Committees, and recognise in the new name their function as the trustees of IWA-as-a-charity. They say it will all improve communication, define roles and responsibilities, reduce bureaucracy and increase empowerment to get on with the job. It was explained in the article 'Modernising IWA' in the November 2007 'Waterways'.

But we had a much more complicated chart displayed at our Branch AGM – five different colours of boxes, boxes within boxes within other boxes, committees of committee chairman who have no authority to do anything, fat arrows, thin arrows, crossing arrows.... OK, OK . The new diagram is slightly simpler than that.

Not as simple as the current structure, though, and one of the really good ideas for the future has been diluted.

As mentioned at the Branch AGM, the waterways lobby is less influential with Government and Navigation Authorities than it needs to be, in large part because we are so fragmented. We have seen in the last month yet another national organisation set itself up to recruit paying members and, no doubt, it will seek separate representation on consultative groups. Waterways people always have passion and commitment to the cause, and our enthusiasm can make the smallest fracture generate separate organisations. With the proposed new Special Interest Groups, there is just a chance to reverse the process; to reach out to these separate groups and encourage reuniting under our IWA banner with its strong and historic 'brand', while still maintaining a distinct programme of activities within SIG membership.

But the Region AGM was told that SIGs were just for peripheral interests like fishing, that these potential members already had their own specialist organisations and the idea was unlikely to work. Well, that's one reason why showing SIGs 'reporting' to Regions on the new chart is a bad idea and why we need a different vision to see their full potential.

The new smaller Trustee Board will not have Regional representatives. In our electronic age, we no longer need to carry information across the country via people who happen to live 'near' where we do. Also, one of the reasons that Northumbria Branch has closed is that most of their members had their primary waterway interests within the Midlands canals rather than near their homes, and there was insufficient interest in a Branch based on those happening to live in Northumbria. Special Interest Groups can allow us to join with others of the same waterways interest and rely less on geographical Branches to retain IWA members and give us all good value for our donations.

However convoluted, all these trustees are elected by the members; so the 'democratic deficit' talked about at Branch AGM will be less of a problem, surely? The new Trustee Board will have, eventually, just nine Trustees, all elected directly by the members; the committee then elects one of their number to be National Chairman, and there is a limitation of two three-year terms before someone else takes over; I think the same is intended to apply to all the committees at all levels. That is an improvement, albeit a small one.

To appreciate the full value of elections we need to stand back and look beyond who is doing what jobs now. We are a campaigning organisation; we want to change things; we want the waterways to be better than they are; we need energetic people to take responsibility for our IWA. To aspire to one of the jobs is in an honourable aim, and in seeking election we need to say what we believe needs to be done and how we will do it. We need to trust the members to elect the person most capable of delivering the vision that they present. And that applies to all levels within IWA, however well or badly the incumbents are currently doing. Elections with more candidates than jobs are a sign of a healthy and vibrant organisation.

But early IWA divisions on policy and personality have made us very defensive and very slow to change: once becoming Chairman of something, it is too easy to just carry on, relying on politeness rather than enthusiasm to nod through the re-appointment for 'yet another year'.

Overall, it's a 'Yes' to the changes, but wishing it could have been better? It's certainly a balance between keeping what's good from the tradition of IWA, the name 'Council' for example, and renewing the bits that need improvement, such as introducing direct elections to all chairmanships. Neither of those examples is in the proposed changes, so I'm intending to listen to what is said between now and September and balance it before voting.

The important thing is for all members to do the same and express a view in some way. It's best to attend the National AGM in person, but if that's not possible for you, and it's a clear YES or a clear NO, then (as I understand how it's to work) please fill in a proxy form for the AGM's chairman to cast the vote in the way you have decided. If it's not clear for you, and you know another member who is attending who knows your broad views, then appoint them as your proxy.

Or if you can write your views briefly, I would be pleased to be appointed your proxy and do the best I can to vote accordingly. Or do the same if you wish to help with a 'West Riding' view, which the Branch committee will seek to arrive at, slightly nearer the time.

If you're with me this far, do have a good waterways summer – give us a wave if you see *CopperkinsII* or *Odyssey* or *Fulbourne* and write in the diary: Branch Meeting 8pm, 12 September 2008 Centenary House for "The Life of Donald Bailey and his Bridge" by Pablo Haworth. See you there.

Peter Scott
Branch Chairman

'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 branch meetings.

Mr M Hunter and Ms P Lloyd
Mr J Spencer and Ms M Gray
Mr Andy Raine and family
Mr and Mrs P Briggs
Mr R Sturdy

Leeds
Skipton
Ilkley
Thirsk
Bradford

INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION
WEST RIDING BRANCH
AGM

Minutes of the 2008 AGM held at Centenary House, Leeds, Friday 14th March.

Present: 21 members

1. APOLOGIES Alistair Furniss, Roger Womersley, Ted Ellis, Margaret Ellis, Iain Scott, John Reeve (Regional Chairman, attending East Yorkshire AGM)

Peter Scott introduced the committee and people who assist the committee.

Committee is currently:

Chairman	- Peter Scott
Secretary	- Ian Moore
Treasurer	- William Jowitt
Membership	- Chris Pinder
Minutes	- Liz Pinder
MilePost editors	- Tricia Laing - Robert Laing
Website	- Elaine Scott
Member	- Elliott Mosley

..... assisted by

Meeting co-ordinators:

Katie Sayles
Alistair Sayles

Badges and stamps collection:

Ellen Sayles

Telephone contact:

Alistair Furniss

2. MINUTES OF THE 2007 AGM Held at Centenary House Leeds on Friday 9th March, as published in May 07 Mile Post, are accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting. Proposed by Liz Pinder. Seconded by Ian Moore.

3. MATTERS ARISING: Non

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

There has been cross party support for the waterways despite waterways funding being led by Barry Gardiner, someone, not interested in waterways.

Good campaigning by IWA at parliamentary level and the campaign has involved a lot of volunteers.

At Branch level we have targeted members with e mails and letters with information about branch meetings. We now have name badges and a signing in book at meetings. The web site is being developed and we hope to encourage sharing walking and boating with others, publicising routes and times of excursions.

Engaging with British Waterways: The Branch Chairman and Secretary have attended several User Group meetings. Boaters in Sheffield Basin during last year's floods used the complaints procedure to get the canal re opened. The management of water restrictions has been discussed. Navigability measurements –It doesn't say in the customer service standards about keeping the waterway open for navigation.

Standedge Tunnel has been open 2 days a week and the new steps built at Diggle portal prevent horse use for horse drawn boats. Chairman is to attend a meeting with British Waterways re Rochdale restrictions. Several committee members attended the Licence Fee consultation meetings. Most members feel more needs to be done about unlicensed boats and the Mooring Tender Trial was not a good thing. There is a problem of fragmentation. British Waterways has too many different groups to consult with.

IWA Reorganisation: Using 'Schematic IWA Diagram' most recent structure was outlined. Trying to revitalise the Ouse-Ure section.. Northumbria Branch is considering winding up.

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT

We've had another busy year.

We had 3 new committee members join at the last AGM in the form of William Jowitt, Peter Scott and Elaine Scott. But have lost one as Patrick Rout resigned last year. Alistair Furniss took on the job of branch

telephone contact, joining a number of people who are doing jobs for the branch without being on the committee.

The branch continues to produce a newsletter thanks to Bob and Tricia Laing, and the branch takes the stand round various events thanks to Liz and Chris Pinder and all who have helped with that.

We attended various meetings and responded to e mails, letters and phone calls. We continue to do our best with limited man power. More volunteers to assist with jobs like monitoring planning applications would be an asset.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

William Jowitt thanked Elliott Mosley for his years as treasurer. The accounts were presented to the floor.

7. OTHER OFFICERS

The 'Mile Post' Editors thanked all who have sent in articles and thanked the team who help to send it out.

Committee tasks: these have been published in 'Mile Post' Please contact a committee member if you can help.

Contact Elaine Scott if you know of a good venue to display leaflets.

8. STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE SIZE: to be left at 12

9. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

It was agreed that the meeting consider a single resolution appointing the whole committee.

Proposed by Peter Scott. Seconded by Ian Moore.

It was agreed that the following be members of the committee:

Until the AGM 2009: William Jowitt, Chris Pinder, Elaine Scott

Until the AGM 2010: Bob Laing, Liz Pinder, Peter Scott

Until the AGM 2011: Tricia Laing, Ian Moore, Elliott Mosley.

Proposed by Peter Scott. Seconded by Ian Moore.

The meeting closed at 21.15

A MORNING SURPRISE.

We have been boating on the UK canal system since our first cruise in 1984. Then it tended to be during the schools' Easter breaks but as the children have grown up and fled the nest in more recent years our trip has tended to be in the spring at the end of April and in to May.

There can not be any better place to be than in the British countryside in spring time and what better way to enjoy this experience than to be on a narrow boat. Over the years we have developed our own check list of items to take with us, waterproof clothing of course, binoculars, camera etc but also including things such as a dictionary, wild flower, tree and bird reference books and so on.

Not only can we see all the usual colourful spring flowers, bushes and trees either in bloom or in the early development of their fresh new foliage as we pass gardens but out in the countryside one has the joy of experiencing the sighting of wild flowers such as the delicate pale yellow primroses, cowslips, all of which have survived the ravages of winter. Trees are coming to life again in their own time after their winter hibernation so there is the wonderment of the full range of fresh green leaves developing as well as blossom whether it be the forsythia (we start cutting and bring it into the house in January), the pink / red mock currant, the hanging yellow blooms of laburnums and of course the horse chestnut – there can not be any tree more majestic than the horse chestnut in full bloom in spring sunshine.

The “birds and the bees” are busy on their nests or with small chicks bobbing on the water, swans are either on their nests – watch out for dad, not one to argue with - or fluffy cygnets, if you are lucky they are getting a lift on mum's back, or are taking their first swim. Swallows are arriving from their winter roosts, chattering and skimming the water. Then there

is the sudden flash of orange and turquoise - Ah! that was a kingfisher – what a treat.

Although we have always hired canal boats for our canal jaunts, we feel that gives us complete freedom as to when and where we go. This year we were unable to get away at our usual time in spring but for several years we have considered that September would be a good time to be out on the canals so this year seemed to be the year. Weather can be good in September and this September proved to be the case and school and college students have gone back to their studies.

We set out from Acton Bridge on the Trent and Mersey Canal, traversed the Shropshire Union Canal Middlewich Branch and headed down (or is it up?) the Shropshire Union Canal to the Staffs and Worcester Canal. We had no set plan for how far we would go we just wanted to go as the mood took us.



On our return journey along the Shropshire Union Canal apart from the bird life you would normally expect to see we were lucky with several sightings of kingfishers and we had a couple of sightings of a large bird of prey in a highly wooded section between Norbury Junction and Shebden

Wharf. On consulting our book I came to the conclusion that it was a goshawk – could that be possible?

We were moored for the night adjacent to Bridge 55 at Goldstone Wharf. As I opened the curtains in the morning I was surprised to see a large black bird on the water close to the boat. It immediately dived under water and disappeared from view. A short time later I saw it again

and was able to photograph it. Incredible as it seemed to us it had to be a cormorant and this was affirmed later as another boater had spotted the same bird as it was on the tow path with its wings outstretched to dry in typically cormorant fashion. What was a cormorant doing being so far inland and away from its normal habitat?

Have you experience of an unusual sighting or experience whilst on the water?

Happy boating.

Geoffrey and Katie Berry.

VHF Requirement on River Ouse below Skelton Railway Bridge

Associated British Ports (ABP) who are the Competent Harbour Authority for the Port of Goole and the River Ouse below Skelton Railway Bridge near Goole, have written to say that they are now enforcing their existing bylaws on leisure craft as well as commercial craft. This includes the requirements for VHF radio.

The area covered is the tidal Ouse below Skelton Railway Bridge and exit and entry to and from the river into the port of Goole. Above Skelton Railway Bridge, British Waterways are the Competent Harbour Authority and there is no change here. There is also no change on the tidal River Trent below Gainsborough which is also controlled by ABP.

Further details can be found at
www.humber.com/Yachting-and-Leisure/Pleasure-Craft/index.asp

ABP's contact details are PO Box 1, Port House, Northern Gateway, Hull HU9 5PQ. Tel 01482 327171. E-mail hull@abports.co.uk

THE A 38 CORRIDOR –THE TRENT VALLEY

This is an area delineated by the River Trent. The valley is broad and shallow, particularly between Derby and Tamworth, an area which I grew to know intimately from the air during my 15 month sojourn at RAF Burnaston, now the site of the Toyota factory. The landmarks of the valley included Burton on Trent, where the smell of the then Bass Brewery could be detected at several hundred feet in the air, the various power stations with their highly visible cooling towers, and the River Trent itself. This and several other water features, like the River Erewash, were clearly observable, as was the A 38 from Derby to Birmingham. This road and the railway was followed and frequently crossed by a stream of water which I now know as the Trent and Mersey Canal. Further water features included several worked out or working gravel and sand pits. The area had the usual crop of weird English place names including Etwall and Alrewas (For anyone using the A 38 this latter village ought to be a “must” as the village grocer has the best selection of wines and spirits I have seen!). Recently I got to know this area from the ground (and water) when the nb Copperkins II was based at Barton Turns, but it was only this year (2006) that my attention was drawn to a possibly lesser known feature of the area – the National Memorial Arboretum. Care must be taken to include “Memorial” as there is a National Arboretum near Gloucester – an entirely different venture. The worked out sandpits have traditionally been left as water filled areas but recently a more imaginative scheme has been developed to avoid the possibility of perpetuating a “lunar landscape” in the valley. This has been aided by a happy coincidence, firstly of the visit of Group Captain Cheshire VC to Arlington Cemetery USA where there is an established Memorial Arboretum, and the availability of a worked-out sandpit of some 55 acres next to some spoil tips and a further area of gravel workings which I imagine the pit owners were bound to reinstate. In any event the area was allocated for Arboretum purposes, and a Trust was set up to manage the project. In 1987 the scheme was formally declared open. It was originally intended as a Military venture, but in development other categories have been included. These have ranged from Police to Girl Guides and to still-born children. Plots have been laid out for each category and within each plot plaques have been erected in a variety of

imaginative ways to mark the reason for each plot. As an example, there is a plot consisting of a piece of the original Burma Railway track together with a memorial building used as a museum. There is also a Merchant Navy plot which contains a tree for every ship sunk during the Battle of the Atlantic.

The recent floods damaged it by washing out many trees which are having to be replaced..

The pearl of the area is the non- denominational Memorial Chapel. Each day an assembly is gathered at 10.30 so that there can be a 2 minutes silence at 11am. The Chapel roof is supported by 12 roughly stripped pine trunks on each of which a local sculptor has carved representations of the face of one of the Apostles, which does impart a Christian dimension. .Adjoining the Chapel there is a well stocked Souvenir shop, next to a café serving hot and cold food.

There is ample free parking on the site and admission is also free. If you are moored at Barton Turns or passing on the A 38, and have a few hours to spare, a visit is well worth the effort.

For experts there is a reasonably comprehensive web site.

By Alistair Furniss

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 end of August. We look forward to hearing from you.

We would like to give a big thank-you to all the people who have already sent us articles for inclusion in the Mile Post. You have made our job much easier and our magazine more interesting.

Survival (barely)!

The following poem was sent to us by Pat and Barry Mumby who you may remember recently contributed some articles about their travels on the Rochdale canal. It was written by their son David. Pat and Barry tell us, "We left our son David in charge of our boat in January. The weather was atrocious, he was working nights, had trouble with his car, but still had to look after our boat. This poem tells of his experiences during that time."

"Have a peaceful time," they said.
"Make yourself at home,
Me and Dad have gone away,
Any problems, Phone!"

"There's croissants in the freezer,
Chicken, chops and all.
Me and Dad aren't far away,
Any problems, Call!"

"Just keep the battery topped up high,
It's not much of a task.
You know my number, I have two,
Any questions, Ask!"

I finally got here Monday, late,
I guess 6pm or so.
The battery's showing 51,
The fire was just aglow.

Engine on, crank it up,
Stoke the fire up high.
Scoured the fridge, to my surprise,
A lonesome Wilson's pie.

Thanks a lot; I'll have that now,
Don't mind if I do.
Half a pizza wrapped in film,
He he I'll have that too.

In the corner, roaring fire,

Battery 82.
Piece of cake this boating lark,
There's nothing left to do.

Tuesday morning, weary head,
Straight to sleep for me.
Car booked in for half past 12,
'Cos it's failed its MOT.

Battery showing 65,
The fire is wearing thin.
Can't do owt about it now,
The stupid car's booked in.

I'll sort it out when I get back,
I shouldn't be too late.
It only needs a tyre,
And a tweaking of the brake.

"Just leave it there," mechanic said,
"I'll call you when it's done."
Got back here at 6pm,
Battery 61.

Panic sets in, sweaty palms,
A quickening heart rate.
Better get the engine on,
I've only got till 8.

To add to that, the fire's died,
Oh what am I to do?
I need to get more charcoal,*
But I also need the loo.

9pm I can relax,
Everything complete.
Time to go to work now,
Though I'm feeling kinda beat.

Wednesday morning, weary head,
Straight to sleep again.

Alarm set to wake me up,
'Cos the car's rebooked for 10.

Heard alarm then fell asleep,
I overslept one hour.
Jumped straight into mucky clothes,
No time for a shower.

Reached the garage slightly late,
No sign of anyone.
"Leave the keys," mechanic said,
"I'll call you when it's done."

Mechanic called at 4pm,
"Your car is good to go".
Got back here at just gone 5,
The traffic was so slow.

Engine on, throttle up,
Enough to stop the beep.
Fire has died just for a change,
I really need to sleep.

7pm and all is calm,
I'm getting good at this.
Grabbed a shower, made some tea,
Hey this is kinda bliss.

Thursday morning, weary head,
Climbed into bed once more.
Turned alarm off, shut my eyes,
I'll sleep today for sure.

10am jumped out of bed,
The noise outside was scary.
The barge was rocking too and fro,
I said a quick Hail Mary.

Staggering out the bedroom,
I was amazed at what I saw.

Kitchen cupboard doors flung open,
Pans scattered on the floor.

Took a glance outside the window,
The sky so dark and mean.
This truly was the perfect storm,
The worst I've ever seen.

The mighty storm had done its worst,
It left a trail of woe.
The canvas sheet had been ripped from
Its aluminium pole.

The wind was violent, hard and fierce,
But I was acting fast.
I had to get that canopy down,
There's no way it would last.

Feel unsteady on the deck,
I damn nearly took flight.
But stubbornness took over,
I would NEVER lose this fight.

The canopy now safe inside
I gave the door a tug.
Then turned and to my horror
Saw an ember on the rug.

With three huge leaps I reached the fire,
Scooping up the burning coal.
Alas I was not quick enough,
In its place it left a hole.

I sat upon the sofa with a grin upon my face,
Charcoaled face, wet through and aching head.
I'm sure in years to come I'll smile remembering this week,
But for now I think I'll just climb into bed.

*Ed's Note.- Poetic licence -Charcoal can produce Carbon Monoxide when burned.
Carbon Monoxide can be lethal if the area is not well ventilated or if air supply is limited. Thus, NEVER burn Charcoal inside home, boat, vehicle or tents.

A STORMY INTRODUCTION TO THE HUMBER, AT AGE 16.

The Mary had been bought on the continent as a one hundred and twenty foot dumb barge, she was an old, all riveted but finely built boat. John Harker (Tankers Ltd.) Knottingley, must have spent a great deal of money converting her. A very nice cabin was fitted forward and in the engine room a six cylinder National diesel engine and a huge steam boiler were installed. Pipes in the shape of coils were fitted in all the tank bottoms, through which steam could be pumped to keep the heavy oil cargo warm and liquid. A steam pump was fitted mid-ships on the deck. We had loaded our cargo, two hundred and twenty tons of tar by products at the Knottingley works of the now defunct Yorkshire Tar Distillers, to be discharged at the port of Immingham on the Lincolnshire side of the Humber, not far inland from its mouth. That February morning in 1953, found us penning down Goole's Ocean Lock, in the flood pen in company with several other barges, both loaded and light. Flood pen is so called because it is the first pen made after the ebb ceases and the tide begins to come back, the flood. The word light is used to describe an un-laden boat. There was already a stiff breeze blowing out of the north-east. We left Ocean Lock and Mary's bows were turned into the tide which we would be punching for the next couple of hours. The light boats out of the same pen passed us, but we easily out-ran the loaded keels and left them far behind. The skipper told me that before we left the river Ouse and ran into the Upper Humber, the cabin and fore peak hatches would have to be battened down, as by then she would be throwing spray, at least over her head. We all managed to get a meal, I then made some tea and battened down the two hatches. The traffic on the river consisted of mainly loaded barges heading for Goole or perhaps Selby and a couple of coasters late on tide timing their arrival at Goole for high water. Coasters out of Goole, loaded with coal overtook us leaving the Mary wallowing in their backwaters. Several tankers of John Harkers fleet that had left Knottingley light, very early that morning came haring past us, their steerers waving us a greeting as they did so. Amongst the things that were explained to me on our way down river, was the reason why we had left Goole so early on the tide, it was to allow us to

arrive at Immingham with enough time to save water onto our berth behind the jetty. We encountered a few biggish waves in Walker Dykes and a few more off Barton Ness, a notorious place for big waves which the old boatmen called Barton bulldogs. The Humber bridge crosses near this particular place. We arrived at Immingham with ample water, she was rounded up to face the ebb and dropped back onto her berth without too much trouble despite the now strengthening onshore wind. But then she offered little air draft, was drawing seven foot round and had about as much free board as a plank, under power the wind did little to affect her. With this ever freshening wind the skipper feared the worst and the Mary was very well moored, even our spare five inch ropes were put to use, some around piles and others onto the big iron bollards on top of the jetty. A mooring wire fore and aft was also ran out. Slacking the mooring ropes as necessary we waited for the boat to settle on the bottom, which would keep her out of mischief for several hours. As we waited we connected up the six inch semi flexible pipe through which our cargo would be pumped ashore. With her firmly on the bottom, we took the opportunity to undress and go to bed for a while. I was not expecting to get much sleep, for you have never known anybody like these old boatmen of yesteryear, if they were not up standing on the ladder looking out, they would be lying in bed smoking, filling the cabin with smoke, or up prodding the ashes out of the fire grate then clattering about putting on more coal. This only applied to black oilers, for petrol tankers were electrically heated. All night, even with the river level low, the strengthening wind had hurled waves at and through the jetty to batter us, there would be bigger waves still to come before high water.



In what seemed no time at all, we felt her nudge the jetty and heard the mooring ropes creak, the tide had turned, flood had come and she was afloat. Even though the wind had risen now to a howling fury and waves were coming through the jetty to batter the boat, we made some tea and had a smoke before donning our foul weather gear, and I for one went out reluctantly into a world that had seemingly gone mad. Waves were rolling in un-impeded straight off the North Sea to almost destroy themselves on the jetty that we were laid behind. The jetty took a bit of the sting out of the waves anyway, whilst the wind shrieked through the long disused coal loading hoist, and to make matters worse sleet was now being driven horizontally by the wind, hitting any un-protected part of us like pellets. The light ropes which usually kept the discharge pipe permanently lashed down, had to be slacked now to allow the pipe to move with the motion of the boat.

We were huddled in the wheelhouse waiting for the visual signal from the shore depot for us to start pumping. When it came, I was dispatched to open the valve on the shore line and the engineer put steam to the pump which took a minute or so to pick up the oil. Then the rhythmic thumping, which would last about two hours as our cargo was pumped out, started. Tankers discharging, have to have their fore tanks emptied first, so that the lifting of the boats head makes the liquid run to the loading/discharge pipe. One of which is near the aft bulkhead in every tank, in the middle of the boat, with its end just clear of the boats bottom. Slowly Mary's head lifted, the waves could now get under her bows, lift her, then drop her with a smack back into the water. This happened several times before the fore mooring wire broke, its lethal jagged end whipping back on board. "Get up on top and take a heaving line with you", I was told. Grabbing a line, I scarpereed up the steel jetty ladder, and from the top threw down one end of the heaving line. The skipper will tie the bowline in the broken wire I thought, but he didn't, I hauled up the broken end. To tie a bowline in a mooring wire takes a bit of doing, to tie one when one's wet hands are blue and stiff with cold is terrible, but I managed it and a further twice after. During these knot tying operations I was careful not to get too close to the edge of the jetty, for fear of being blown off. Had the wire broken anymore, I doubt if it would have been long enough for us to use, but any rope/wire with a knot in it, is more susceptible to break when put under strain. When my services were not required, I

found what shelter I could amongst the skeletal frame of the coal hoist, standing behind the widest girders. I was wearing a genuine ex Royal Navy duffle coat. For this coat, especially the hood, I shall be forever grateful for the protection it gave me that day.

The main engine was running now, it had started easily in the hot engine room, and now with the wheel lashed hard over and the engine in ahead gear, they were trying to hold her something like steady alongside, to give the tanks the best chance of draining. One can tell when a tank is draining as the pump will suck air causing it, the pump, to race. The Mary was riding high in the water now, the cargo almost all out, the skipper going from tank to tank just cracking a valve to cut down the suction, allowing the oil to get to the pipe. And so it went on until nothing more could be pumped out, then a blast on our air horn informed the shore depot that we had finished pumping, a man waved, acknowledging our signal, the pump was stopped and I shut down the large valve on the pipeline. Our tanks should have been inspected by some-one from the oil depot, but no-one was going to face that walk down the jetty in such atrocious weather. All the heavy ropes and the two mooring wires were slacked and I let go of them, the wires being fed directly into the boats cofferdams, the ropes being hastily coiled around the tank lids to prevent them from sliding or being washed overboard. My time on the jetty top was over and with the utmost caution I climbed out over the jetties edge, my frozen hands clinging grimly on as my groping foot at last found the rungs of the jetty ladder. Carefully I transferred onto the ladder and made my way down, then chose my time to step onto the pitching deck. Safely back on board I made my way forward to the only rope still holding the Mary, a back spring into which her engine was running at almost full ahead to keep her along side. A shout from the skipper and the engine easing down told me to let go of the rope, as soon as I did she was paying away, so the engine had to be sent on again to keep control. I hastily coiled the rope around a tank lid and hopped it aft to the wheelhouse. As the boats head came around the end of the jetty a wave caught her under the starboard bow. With her stern in a trough her head reared up and she listed alarmingly to port. "Bloody hell," or words to that effect I thought, "She's going". But her head slipped down into a trough then it was her sterns turn to be lifted, and the engine raced momentarily as the propeller came out of the water. She had to be held athwart the wind and waves for a

while as the skipper drove her away from the bank. During this time Mary was hurled around terribly. At last her head was turned up river and the only motion then was when a wave came up under her stern and one could feel the boat surge forward under the weight of water. Still frozen through, I went down into the hot engine room to thaw out. When the feeling came back into my hands I popped my head up out of the hatch and my beloved flat cap was plucked off my head and whirled away. I for one breathed a sigh of relieve as we ran into the calm waters of Hull harbour, found a berth and gratefully tied up. When I went below I found the cabin in a right mess, cupboard doors had flown open and food stuff and things were strewn all over the place. The three of us got buckled in and pretty soon we had things back to normal. Later that evening I went to the pictures (cinema) while the skipper and engineer went to the pub. We were not to know it at the time but during the storm the east coast had taken a terrible battering, with over three hundred people dead, and we thought we were having a hard time.

My elder brother was doing his National Service at the time and his regiment was employed working nights, filling sandbags for use on the coastal defence. They were there for a good while and my brother said they must have filled many thousands of sand bags

The soldiers were in temporary billets on an RAF base and the blokes stationed there complained that they were being awakened early by them coming in off nights. Perhaps these worthies should have been sent to the coast to help stem the breaches.

Kenneth Burden.

Author's note.

The policy at this time of John Harker (Tankers Ltd) carrying department, was that trainees under the age of seventeen were not allowed to go down the Humber. It seems likely therefore, that no qualified mate was available for this trip, so I as a lad, was dragooned in to it.

Following from the list of work in the last Milepost, could you help with...

Leaflets

- We have recruiting leaflets and small posters together with some display stands for the leaflets
- They could be
 - Displayed in a public place – library, boat yard, pub
 - Carried on a boat to hand out to the public
 - Carried while walking to give to interested people

News stories

- Collect references to waterways in your local news media
- Or through their web sites
- Collect references to planning applications on or near the waterways

Stamps etc.

- Waterways Recovery Group collects used stamps, printer cartridges, post cards and die-cast cars to raise money. We even have our own West Riding Stamp collector who collects stamps at our meetings. (See page 25.)

If you could help with any of the above, please let me know - Elaine Scott
3, Moorbank Drive, Sheffield S10 5TH, 07980 953880

elaine@homescott.free-online.co.uk

Wear your logo with pride

We all had a copy of the IWA logo to stick on our cars, boats etc. (If you need any more just contact Elaine as above)

We can now have this logo together with 'West Riding Branch' on a polo shirt. If you would like one, let Elaine know by 12 August and they will be ordered, hopefully to be available by the September meeting. Cost is £13.50 each if collected in person or £15 posted.

Stamps (and other things) Wanted!

WRG Stamp Bank is alive and well and continues to raise money for canal restoration. How it works is simple I collect items which can be sold for cash or exchanged for goods, either for direct use or to sell on.

What do I collect? As the name suggests, the main activity involves stamps; new or used, UK or overseas. It would be really helpful if stamps from the general mail were left on paper, trimmed with a margin of about 6mm (1/4 inch) all round. I spend many hours cutting surplus paper from the stamps which have been received: this is the philatelic equivalent of brick cleaning and I have a large backlog. If anyone is interested in helping out it's actually quite therapeutic! Stamp collections can be sold in albums or stock books and there is no need to unmount these. When the stamps have been sorted they go to the Shropshire Union Canal Society to help fund work on the Montgomery Canal.

Aluminium can be sold for recycling if collected in sufficient quantity. Cans and foil are the main sources, preferably crushed to reduce the volume. Steel cans should be avoided (if it is attracted to a magnet it's steel) as they have little value. Foil comes in many forms; as milk bottle tops, food/takeaway trays, yogurt pot lids, wrapped round chocolate, etc, but please avoid plastic packing which looks like foil, crisp packets and the like. Generally, if you screw it up and it stays put it's aluminium; if it tries to spring back to shape it's plastic. Old aluminium saucepans and other items are also accepted. When sufficient has been amassed the aluminium is transported to York, where the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society has an arrangement with a local scrap dealer who is prepared to pay for what, to him, are small quantities.

Coins and banknotes are also accepted. If current, these can be collected together and sold to someone visiting the appropriate country. If old, they can be sold to dealers, or as a last resort can be melted down! The main recipient of these is the Chichester Ship Canal Trust in Hampshire. A traditional source of income for Stamp Bank has been trading stamps; Green Shield and the like. Yes, people still find these tucked in the back of drawers and send them in.

Coupons for exchange for items, as given for example by petrol companies, are also welcome. Unfortunately cigarette vouchers are now worthless as the schemes have been shut down to discourage smoking. This is a shame because the catalogues used to have useful items like digging spades and steel tape measures which could be used directly by restoration groups, as well as providing sale items or raffle prizes. I

currently need someone who has the time to persuade the companies to exchange out-of-date vouchers. Would suit someone with a telephone and the necessary cheek!

As one source of income dries up, another opens. A relatively new venture is collecting empty toner and ink jet cartridges and old mobile phones. These are sold to raise money for the restoration of the Wilts & Berks Canal. Again, it is the accumulation of small quantities into bulk amounts that makes the venture worthwhile. We have also done well with a collection of old die-cast models, Dinky Toys and the like. Please turn out your old toy box and pass on your old model cars, whatever their condition.

How much is raised? This is difficult to answer, as much material goes to canal societies to add to what they collect themselves. The target for stamps is £1000 a year and Stamp Banks aluminium contributes a reasonable proportion of the £400-500 a year made by PCAS. Items of goods can be used as sales items of raffle prizes to indirectly add to a canal society's funds. Toner cartridges vary tremendously depending on type, but some can realise as much as £5.

How do you get stuff to Stamp Bank? Quantities which can be posted can be sent to **IWA/WRG Stamp Bank, 33 Hambleton Grove, Emerson Valley, MILTON KEYNES MK4 2JS**. We have a collecting point at the IWA stand at the National Waterways Festival (look for the blue barrel) and other events that the IWA attends. I can sometimes make arrangements to collect larger quantities through various contacts around the waterways system - contact **steve@morleytowers.org.uk** or phone **01908 520090**. If digging with Essex WRG, bring stuff with you! Who benefits from Stamp Bank? The main recipients have been mentioned, but in recent years projects such as the Foxton Inclined Plane Trust, the Buckingham Canal Society and regional WRG groups have received donations in cash or kind. Although we're not talking Heritage Lottery Fund millions, Stamp Bank makes a valuable contribution towards various schemes' running costs which would otherwise have to be found from elsewhere. Thank you to all, known and anonymous, who have contributed in the past and all future contributions will be most welcome.

Steve Morley

Editor's note - you can also give your stamps to Ellen Sayles at branch meetings.

EVENTS

This listing only covers events that we were aware of when it was compiled. If further details are required on an event please refer to the contact information below.

Saturday 14th June Leeds Waterfront Festival at Brewery Wharf 12 noon to 6pm. The festival is a mix of arts, culture and raising awareness about the environment, with arts and crafts market, live entertainers, musicians, guided walks and a barbeque. Contact Ruth Bull on 0113 281 6804 or email ruth.bull@aireactionleeds.org.uk
Visitor moorings will be available in Clarence Dock.

Saturday 28th June Dragon Boat Racing on River Aire in Leeds between Crown Point Bridge and Leeds Bridge starting at 10.30am. Contact Amanda Wingfield on 0113 242 2426.

Sunday 6th July I Love West Leeds Festival at Armley Mills. See the mills transformed with live music, artists and performances, all for free. Contact Jayne Earnshaw on 0113 263 8556

Sunday 13th July Dragon Boat Racing on River Ouse at York between Scarborough and Lendal Bridges starting at 10am.
See website www.yorkrotary.co.uk/dragonboat.htm

Sunday 27th July Dewsbury Canal Festival (10am-5pm) at Dewsbury Canal Basin, Mill Street East, Dewsbury WF12 9BD.

13-14th September 2008 National Heritage Open Days Weekend

See website www.heritageopendays.org

On Saturday the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Society will have a display at Bingley Five-rise locks. For further details see website <http://townsleyb.members.beeb.net/lfcs/>

Thank you to all the people who came along and supported the branch stand at Skipton Waterways Festival. Come and see us at York and Dewsbury. See above for dates. The stand will also be at the IWA National Festival during the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Fifty Years Ago

This appeared in IWA Bulletin of May 1957. A different era, but substituting the Bedford and Milton Keynes proposals for the Bishops Stortford to Cambridge link, the remainder is similar to the Fenland Link proposals that have a recent boost with money secured for an autumn 2008 reopening of the Black Sluice waterway through a new lock at Boston

Grand Northern Canal

The Scheme for a Grand Northern Canal was devised by our Council Member, Mr Patrick W. Saunders, Managing Director of Messrs. Waterways Projects Ltd., and was included in the Submissions delivered by that firm to the Bowes Committee. It has already attracted detailed feature articles in many newspapers along the proposed route.

The waterway would provide a new and shorter navigation channel between London and the West Riding of Yorkshire, and would be built to take 100-ton barges, or possibly larger.

The route followed would be from the Thames via the Rivers Lee and Stort, both of which would have to be widened and enlarged; an entirely new waterway between Bishops Stortford, the navigable limit of the River Stort, and Cambridge, the navigable limit of the River Cam (a navigable waterway linking these points has been proposed several times in history); the River Cam and the River Great Ouse to Denver Sluice; a new waterway from Denver Sluice to the River Witham in the vicinity of Boston, but utilizing existing navigations between these points, including the Middle Level Navigation, the Wisbech Canal, the Rivers Nene, Glen, and Welland, Black Sluice, and sundry drainage channels; then to the West Riding by the River Witham, the Fosseydyke Canal, and the River Trent, which gives access to such existing navigations as the Aire & Calder Canal, the Sheffield & South Yorkshire Canal, and the Yorkshire River Ouse, with their tributaries and extensions. The latter include the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, which reaches right across the Pennines. They also include, the Dearne & Dove Canal, serving what will shortly be the biggest coal-raising unit in the whole country.

As between Denver Sluice and Boston the country is almost entirely flat, there would be few locks. At first, it would be possible to avoid the cost of adapting existing navigations to form a new route between these points, by sending craft across the Wash between the Great Ouse

estuary and the Witham estuary, though in the long run the inland route is likely to be found desirable.

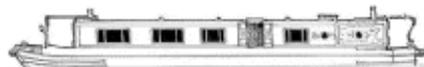
To avoid locking up to a high summit level, as in the earlier schemes, it is suggested that between Bishops Cleeve and Cambridge the navigation might pass for some of the way through a tunnel.

By using this new water-route, 100-ton barges (or larger) travel at all times from Leeds to London in 60 hours, from Sheffield to London in 63 hours, and from Keadby to London in 59 hours. All barges could travel freely on both the Thames and the Humber, and into the docks on those waterways.

A main reason for the new navigation, would be to relieve congestion on the Great North Road. As will be seen, much the greater part of the waterway would utilize existing navigable rivers and canals; and, although at present details of cost cannot be provided, it is quite certain that the waterway; would cost vastly less than the improvements necessary to enable the Great North Road to carry an even larger volume of industrial traffic than at present. It will be remembered that the Minister of Transport's current figure for the cost of new roads is £300,000 per mile.

The Scheme has been communicated to the Ministry of Transport; whose spokesman observed as follows:-"The Scheme would require a lot of money, and I am doubtful if money would be forthcoming from Treasury sources. If some very rich gentleman in the country were prepared to finance it, then I suppose we should have to look very carefully into the question of the land involved. At the moment, it is very much a thing in the air."

It is to be observed that the spokesman does not suggest that the Scheme is either undesirable or impracticable; and even seems to imply that it might be within the financial compass of a single individual, though a very rich one. This is improbable; but, in the national interest, we earnestly appeal for an investigation by the industrialists of the West Riding, for whom the gain from the Canal would be enormous, to judge by the experience of other countries.



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Programme of Events for 2008/2009.

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.

- 12th September 08** “The Life of Donald Bailey and his Bridge”
by Pablo Haworth
- 10th October 08** “The Canal Card Collectors Circle”
by Trevor Ellis
- 14th November 08** The Horseboating Society by Sue Day
- 12th December 08** Christmas Social and Members’ slides
- 9th January 09** "Restoration of the Chesterfield Canal".
By John Lower
- 13th February 09** Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal
by John Fletcher
- 13th March 09** AGM
- 3rd April 09** Waterway Engineering by Laurence Morgan

*Talks arranged by Alastair and Katy Sayles, 32 Pymont Drive,
Woodlesford, Leeds LS26 8WA. Tel 0113 393 4517
Email: kandal@btinternet.com*

All the 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