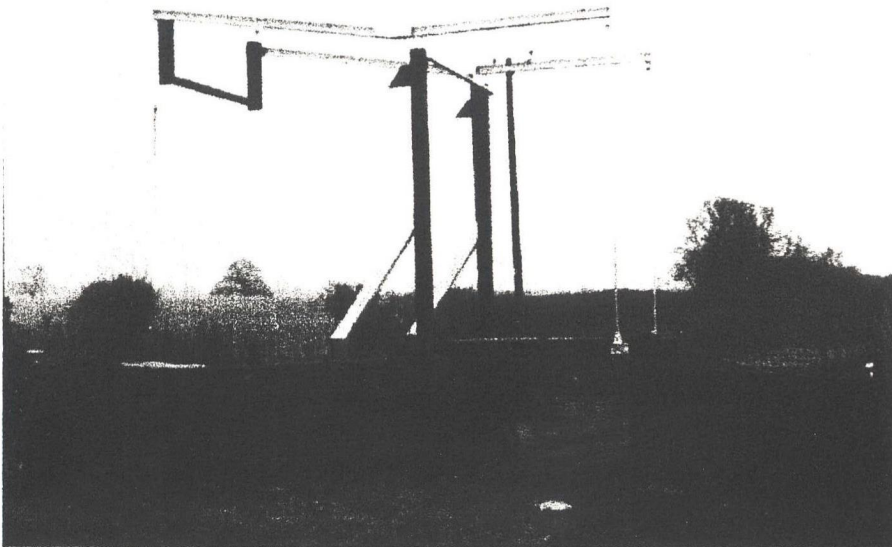


£1.00 (Free to Members)

Issue No 14
Winter 1998

*The Magazine of the Lichfield & Hatherton
Canals Restoration Trust*



Darnford Lane Lift Bridge taking shape (01/12/1997)

THE TRUST

The Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust Limited was established in 1988 as a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee (No. 2456172) and is registered as a charity (No. 702429).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Eric Wood	6 Swan Cottages, Burton Road, Whittington, Lichfield, Staffs.WS14 9NP.	01543 432231
Vice-Chairman	Phil Sharpe	34 Old Eaton Road, Rugeley, Staffs. WS15 2EZ	01889 583330
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Treasurer	Nick Grazebrook	Steps Cottage, Wolverley, Kidderminster, Worcs DY10 3RN	01562 850553
Hatherton Projects	Denis Cooper	Gorsey Lane Farm, Little Wyrley, Pelsall, Walsall,WS3 5AJ	01543 374370
Lichfield Projects	John Horton	32 London Road, Lichfield, Staffs. WS14 9EJ	01543 262466
Fund raising	Mike Smith	Brookhay Cottage, Brookhay Lane, Lichfield, Staffs WS13 8RQ	01283 790543
Marketing	Bob Williams	Norfolk House, 29 Hall Lane, Hammerwich, Burntwood, Staffs.,WS7 0JP	01543 671427
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Co-opted members

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Derek Beardsmore		6 Rishworth Avenue, Rugeley, Staffs, WS15 2ER	01889 585699
Lichfield Cruising Club Representative	Lindy Parkin	28 Beech Drive, Stretton, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs DE13 0DY	

VICE-CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Trust Vice Chairman, Phil Sharpe reports on various recent developments.

BNRR.

The Birmingham Northern Relief Road decision inevitably continues to dominate our thinking and activities. Our information sheet has had wide circulation to all the boaters and campers at the Henley National festival, to IWA West Midlands Region members in 'Navigation', to meetings of the Northern and Southern Canals Associations, to boat clubs and to many individuals. We have also had articles in IWA's 'Waterways' and Head Office 'Bulletin', news and editorial support in all three commercial waterway magazines and good local press coverage. We have written asking for support from the local authorities and to all the west midlands MPs with canals in their constituencies, and we have had or arranged meetings with the 4 local MPs directly involved.

The response has been magnificent, with a steady stream of copies of letters to John Prescott or their local MPs arriving from organisations and individuals all over the country, and even from America thanks to David Stevenson's campaigning for us at International level. We are particularly grateful for support from the British Waterways Chairman. The letters have been exceptionally well written and make many telling points. However, the replies from both civil servants and Ministers have been pathetic. They merely repeat the decision, which the writers already know about, and totally fail to answer any of the individual points made. This from a government that claims to care for the environment, to listen to the people and to believe in open government.

However, we have now been given a date for a meeting with Baroness Hayman, the Roads Minister and we will be assembling a representative delegation to accompany us. She it was that reviewed and helped resolve the Latton By-pass culvert problem and was said to be impressed by the volume of correspondence, so keep the letters coming. If your reply is nothing more than the standard brush-off then please write again and complain about their evasion and distortion. Your committee do not intend to give up on this and look for your support in taking whatever action is necessary to expose the folly of the government's dismissal of the Inspector's recommendations.

continued over

VICE-CHAIRMAN'S NOTES continued

Committees.

The Trust's main Committee, or Council, now meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month in the BW offices at Fazeley. If any Trust member would like to attend a meeting with a view to joining or assisting Council in any way please contact the Chairman or another committee member.

Time is limited at the Council meeting and as our activities expand it has been necessary to hold a number of ad-hoc meetings to deal with particular issues. Following recent extra meetings to discuss the HLF funding bid and the BNRR, we have now formally set up a Policy & Planning Group to meet monthly half way between Council meeting with the following remit:

1. To propose future policies to Council,
2. To assist Council in ensuring there is proper forward planing,
3. To deal with minor and urgent matters to avoid wasting time at Council.

Membership is currently Eric Wood, Phil Sharpe, Mike Smith, Bob Williams and John Horton, but is open to all Council members.

We also have a separate Marketing Group dealing with sales items, attendance at rallies and shows, fund-raising and sponsorship, publicity and promotion, social events, magazine printing and distribution, etc. Membership is variable and open to anyone who can assist, please contact Bob Williams for further details.

Funding Bids.

Back in February 1997 we applied for a substantial Heritage Lottery Fund grant but it was not until October that we heard the outcome. Although they liked our overall scheme, HLF will only fund at this stage works with a significant heritage value, which excludes the new section of channel at Darnford. We have been invited to resubmit a modified scheme and this will be going in soon. It will retain the land and professional services funds but limits the physical restoration funding to completing the 200m from the winding hole (lock 29) to the end of the section. We now need to find another source of funds for the 400m back to Darnford Lane.

One possibility is the Landfill Tax rebate scheme. Thanks to information from Lichfield Council and speedy work in preparing applications in October, we have 3 bids in with the Staffordshire Environmental Fund, of which the one for finishing the Lift Bridge works looks quite hopeful.

VICE-CHAIRMAN'S NOTES continued.

We have also been working on a European Regional Development Fund bid, but this depends on finding substantial match-funding and the delays with HLF have caused this to slip back again.

County Council.

Although Staffordshire County Council have long supported our restoration plans we need to be vigilant to ensure that all their various departments remember to take them into account.

The County's Development section are planning a large expansion of the Orbital Centre at Cannock which will need improvements to the drainage near the A5 east of Churchbridge. As a result of a recent meeting with us they are now designing this to be compatible with the planned restoration line for the Hather-ton canal

The County's Highways section have applied for Government funds to strengthen Muckley Comer Bridge on the A461 by under-filling it with spoil which would block one of only 4 original bridges remaining on the Lichfield Canal. We have asked them to change this to strengthening the bridge deck and its low priority means that it is likely to be postponed in any case.

Golf Course.

We have had a meeting with the management of 'Swingers', the golf driving range at Darnford Lane, who are developing a new golf course on either side of our canal. With both organisations engaged in construction on adjoining land it makes sense for us to co-operate. In exchange for allowing them access across our site for earth moving we will get some assistance with reinstating the canal banks near the lift bridge. Earlier problems over safety, traffic and drainage have been solved and at the end of the day the canal and golf course should be visually complimentary.

Fosseway Lane.

Having made good progress on restoring Lock 18 at Fosseway Lane, work there is temporarily in abeyance and we are concentrating on the lift bridge at Danford (see full report later in this issue). There is still a lot of excavation and earthmoving to do on the canal above and below the lock at Fosseway but this has been held up by lack of an agreement on tipping space. There are two separate problems that we have been trying to resolve.

continued over

VICE-CHAIRMAN'S NOTES continued.

A dispute arose between the adjoining landowner and the Council over their boundary which has led to us visiting the Waterways Museum archives at Gloucester and BW's Regional office at Fazeley to examine ancient plans and original deeds. We believe that we have now found the proof needed to confirm the Council's ownership of the full width of the lock structure and canal formation, in agreement with their lease to us.

Meanwhile we have been in negotiation with Railtrack to lease a piece of land near Lock 19 ideal for tipping the excess spoil. It is frustrating that these matters take so long to resolve but we look forward to resuming our work at Fosseyway as soon possible.

Tamworth Road.

The Trust has submitted a planning application to Lichfield District Council to excavate and restore two more locks, Nos. 25 and 26 alongside Tamworth Road in Lichfield. They are on land owned by Lichfield City Council who have offered us a lease for this purpose. There are still matters of access, drainage and funding to be resolved before we can commence but we are hopeful that it will not be long before we can start the work on what will be our third restoration site on the Lichfield Canal.

Hatherton.

Work on the Hatherton Canal continues on rebuilding the parapet at Saredon Mill Bridge.

Canal Camps '98.

The Waterway Recovery Group have agreed to our request to host another 2 weeks of Canal Camps in 1998. These will be from 1st-8th and 8th-15th August. The work is yet to be decided, depending on funding and other factors, but may include relaying the towpath at Fosseyway Lane and continuing piling and backfilling at Darnford Lane.

Publicity

Considering that we are still without a Publicity Officer (applications please to the Chairman !) we have had good coverage locally, with journalists now often ringing us for updates on progress. Not everything that then appears is entirely accurate but it is the impression that counts, and that is of a Trust pressing on with restoration and determined to fight for accommodation by the motorway

VICE-CHAIRMAN'S NOTES continued

Reports have appeared on the piling at Darnford, on grants received, on talks being given, and of course on the BNRR. The meeting with Michael Fabricant MP at Huddlesford was a real 'photo opportunity', and our objections to being expected to fund motorway bridges and demands for a meeting with the government have had wide coverage.

However, we often only see the Lichfield and Cannock area editions and may have missed coverage elsewhere, so if members could forward any reports they see in Walsall, Wolverhampton or Birmingham papers (or the nationals!) to me for our cuttings album, it would be much appreciated

Donations.

Amongst the many donations received this quarter have been £504 from the Civic Trust Community Action Network (DoE Local Projects Fund) towards our grass cutter, £50 from Macclesfield Canal Society, £371 from Lichfield DC for the lock timbers, £245 from our regular supporter Dr. Hollingworth, and many donations to the Piling appeal including a magnificent £500 from Mr. R.G. Wilkinson. Other income from Membership and from Marketing operations is accounted for elsewhere. Thanks to the above and to all who have donated materials, services and labour. These 'in-kind' contributions have double value as match funding in grant applications.

IWAAC Priorities.

Along with all other restoration societies and trust, we have been asked by IWAAC (the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council) to respond to their plan for prioritising restoration schemes. We have replied that we are happy to supply than with factual information which can be used to inform other bodies and promote waterway restoration However, along with IWA and most other canal societies, we can see no value and considerable dangers in their trying to dictate priorities based on arbitrary and subjective criteria, however well meaning the intention.

Philip Sharpe, Vice Chairman, LHCRT

The opinions and views expressed in Cut Both Ways do not necessarily represent those of the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust.

Its all Go at Darnford

During September and October, much effort was put into bricklaying particularly by Pete and Barry and also Alan whose brick saw proved indispensable in levelling the bricks on the corners of the wing walls. They were able to complete the parallel section and both wing walls on the Huddlesford side.

Our regular first Sunday of the month volunteers dug out and shuttered the foundations for the wing walls on the Ogley side and installed the re-inforcing mesh throughout. Items missing from the superstructure of the bridge as collected from Chesterfield (see issue No. 12) such as pivot pins, foundation steels and brackets were drawn and manufactured at the same time. All was now ready for waterway recovery group.

Their first group was Navvies Anonymous who came on the 15-17 November. Six cubic metres (about 12 Tonnes) of concrete were laid to complete the front foundations and begin reinforcing the brickwork of the centre section. Most of the piles left over from the summer camp were installed and also several trips were made to Fossey Lane to empty the plant compound.

We are very grateful to Mr & Mrs Gingell for their use of this, particularly during the early days of the work on that site before we had our own site entrance and working area . The removal turned out to be very timely.

The following weekend we were helped by both London wrg and wrg North East making a total force of well over twenty.

Oh the best laid plans etc.! A combination of a broken pipe on the JCB and bad weather mid-week played havoc with the track along the site - the brick lorry got stuck half-way along, the sand arrived immediately behind and a mobile phone call revealed that the ready mixed lorry had already left the depot. Many hands helped transfer the bricks into the two yellow dumpers after which the lorry was part reversed, part pushed back to the lane. This was witnessed by the concrete driver who had arrived in the meantime and was (quite understandably) reluctant to risk getting into the same predicament, this was when 'Muriel' the big dumper from Fossey came in and by 12 o'clock after much effort the concrete was in place,

continued over

Its all Go at Darnford continued

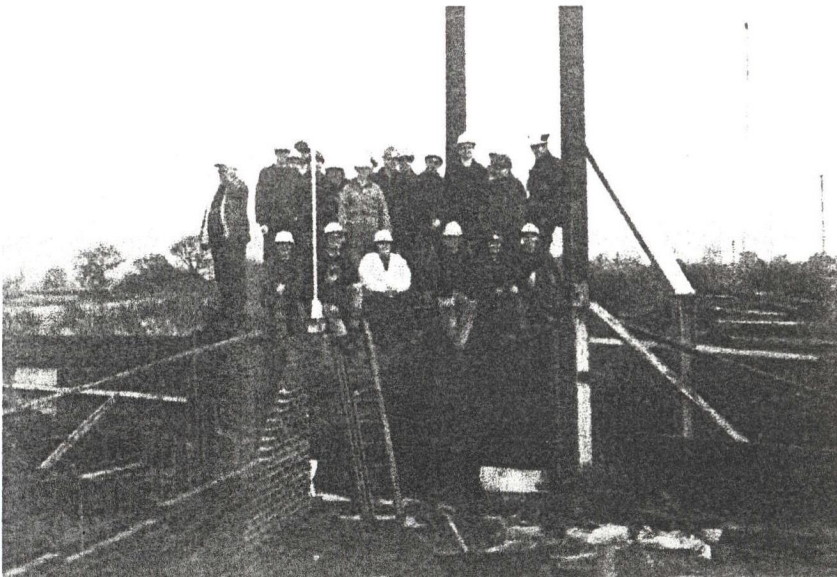
Meanwhile the brickies were laying merrily and the piling gang got into gear. That night we left the site relieved that the delay had been overcome but worried about ground conditions for the big crane due the next day.

This had been billed as the big day for the bridge, to be witnessed by prospective new members and two representatives of the press. Dry weather overnight and early arrival let the crane reach the storage point where it was set up to transfer the superstructure closer to the foundations - Then it got stuck - a combination of made up ground (over the old culvert) and a proportion of wet clay in the soil. It's own hydraulic jacks were used to raise the machine sufficient to put rubble under the wheels to let it move further.

Assembly of the structure started with careful alignment of the columns and then gathered pace with the deck and balance beams.

The site stopped for a photo-call then sand was laid on the track, the crane went straight out and the site was cleared. Particular thanks to Michael Brown, also Matt Taylor and Jen who both came for the two weekends and David Coley for the piling hammer. *The next day it rained!!*

John Horton



Chairman's Page

May I wish all our members a Happy and Prosperous New Year? During the next twelve months please try hard to win the lottery and send the Trust a few pounds to help us on our way! We have had some very generous gifts from well-wishers during the past twelve months and with their generosity we have been able to proceed at pace with the restoration on the Lichfield Canal

As this edition of Cut Both Ways is being distributed and read, members of the Trust will be seeking solutions to the possibility of getting the decision by the government improved so that we will be able to continue with the certainty of eventual success in our quest to bring back life into the Northern part of the BCN and to open up the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals.

Meetings with Members of Parliament and other people of influence are taking place. We will not be deterred in our efforts to achieve our ultimate goal in the completion of both canals.

During the past few months work parties under the direction of John Horton have continued and you will observe from the road at Danford Lane that a lift bridge has suddenly appeared thanks to all who helped with WRG over the work camps. The canal at Darnford is moving on at great pace now where much piling has been done. Trust members have been working laying bricks and helping with the piling. The canal at this point is taking shape rapidly.

One area where we need to spend our efforts in the coming months is in recruiting more assistance with the fund raising and whilst we have had the offer of some help we are still in need of assistance in this field. Anyone who is computer literate and has a few hours each week to spare should contact Mike Smith who would welcome the help.

As the work of the Trust increases it is essential that key members of the Trust put in long hours; in applying for to the various agencies; and in replying to letters received. It is inevitable that the work of the Trust will become a full time job for a few. Their voluntary work is much appreciated by the members. We must also say "Thank you" for all the letters which have been sent to MPs and Ministers from all parts of the country which are mounting up on the desks of government officials. We still need more and there is still time for you to protest about the lack of provision on the BNRR building. We look forward to a successful meeting with Baroness Hayman at the Ministry when we hope to be able to get some measure of improvement on the last offer which was not acceptable to the Trust. We fight on.

J Eric Wood Chairman.

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Local MP, Michael Fabricant meets L&H Trust Chairman J Eric Wood and L&H Trust Vice Chairman Phil Sharpe on board Eric's boat 'Credalwood' at Huddlesford Junction. Where his support in the battle against John Prescott's decision on the BNRR was sought

Have you written to your local MP Yet ? There's still time.

Photo by Harry Arnold.



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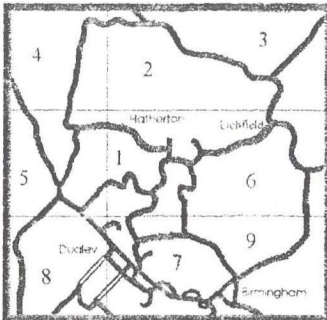
STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS!

FOR SALE!

The entire B.C.N....

Never before has it been possible to buy the whole Birmingham Canal Navigations

NEW! Available for the very first time, a precision-cast map of the whole BCN and adjoining waterways which has been hand crafted in brass and produced in the West Midlands for L. & H.C.R.T.



The diagram shows approximately how the B.C.N. map is divided into nine parts.

This unique item consists of 9 square plaques, each measuring approx. 4" by 4" which, in their entirety neatly fit together to form a "map" 12" square depicting the entire system at its greatest extent with all its wealth of junctions and arms clearly shown. The map is freshly redrawn to depict all the historic features including the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals.

You can also order a mounting frame for hanging on the wall, or perhaps to use as a table-top of distinction!

To spread the cost, the nine pieces will be released individually as numbered at two-monthly intervals over 18 months. Payment will only be required when each piece becomes available on a bi-monthly basis. Continued production of the pieces to complete the sets is underwritten for the Trust.

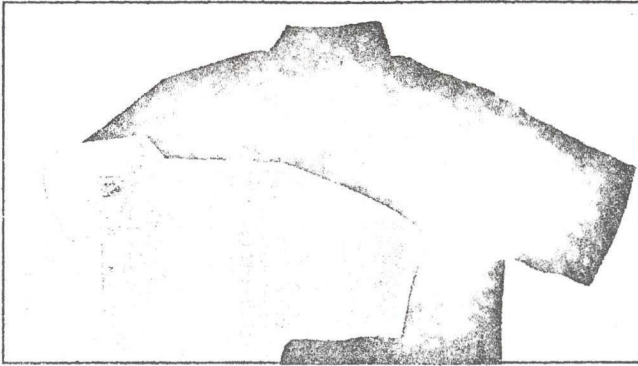
However, **there is an option to buy the full set now at a discount of 10%.**

Only £9.95 per piece, plus UK postage & packing £1, or the full set can be bought now at a total of £80 plus p & p £3.

If you need more information, please call 01543 671427

PLEASE COMPLETE THE ORDER FORM OVERLEAF
to obtain the 1st piece and Agreement Form for the remaining 8 pieces.

NEW!
*Polo Shirts with a discreet
 embroidered Lichfield & Hatherton Canals
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 logo*



This new short-sleeved jersey-style shirt has been selected for the Trust for 1998 following the success of T-Shirt and Sweatshirt sales.

In keeping with the image of the Trust already established, standard colours are navy and gray with our logo embroidered in the Trust's colours of green and blue with words in red in a panel on the front left side as worn. There is no design on the back.

BUT WAIT A MINUTE!

Do you want something different? These shirts can be completed to your own requirements at a small extra charge.....

- ♦ by choosing from the full range of colours listed below, and
- ♦ by adding any name up to 20 letters embroidered underneath the logo.



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Approximate sizes:

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Standard (navy or gray with Trust logo) £14.95 each.

Personalised (choice of colour with logo and a name) extra £2.00 each.

Please complete the Order Form opposite

Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust

PRODUCT ORDER FORM

Date _____

ITEM	DETAIL	PRICE	No.	TOTAL
NEW! B.C.N. brass map	Cast in nine pieces, issued bi-monthly up to Summer '99	Piece No. 1 and Purchase Form.	£9.95 each	#£
or OPTION of	THE FULL SET OF ALL NINE B.C.N. PIECES NOW	DISCOUNT PRICE FOR THE SET	£80.00 +£3 p/p	£
NEW! Polo Shirt Standard.....	* Medium / Large / Extra Large and see below	* Navy or Grey or see below	£14.95	#£
..... and if to be Personalised	Name to add (block letters)	* Preferred colour (see opposite)	£2.00 extra	add to the line above
Sweatshirt	* Medium / Large / Extra Large	* Navy or Grey	£16.50	#£
Video, BCN Pt. 6	"THE LICHFIELD & HATHERTON CANALS"		£14.95	#£
Dedicated piling, (covers first ten letters of name.....	Inscription: [additional requests should be listed overleaf]additional letters can be added at 50p each.)		£15.00 each	£
* please indicate your choice (subject to availability)		TOTAL COST		£
		plus £1 p & p each item marked #		£
PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES		I WISH TO MAKE A DONATION OF		£
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PLEASE COMPLETE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS OVERLEAF

Dear Members,

December 1997

One thank you letter can be difficult to write, but hundreds would be a task! On behalf of the Trust I would like to thank the very many Members and non-Members who have supported the Trust magnificently through its first year in sales, contributing not £1,000 - our target - but a total well over £4,000!!

In summary, net marketing income in 1997 from shirts, burgees, pens, videos yielded £1,150, Donations etc £1,100 and the Piling Appeal £2,141 by press date. My thanks also go to the Team of people who worked hard behind the scenes and on the "shop front" at many Shows through the year. To maintain the impetus, new products have been researched and produced for your enjoyment, the first two being introduced on these pages, with others to follow.

Please continue to support the Trust and let's make 1998 even better!

Yours sincerely,

Bob Williams,

Director (Marketing)

Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust

PRODUCT ORDER FORM (see overleaf)

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ADDRESS:

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TELEPHONE:

Additional billing
descriptions

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29 HALL LANE, HAMMERWICH, BURNTWOOD, STAFFS. WS7 0JP

PROFITS FROM SALES GO TOWARDS RESTORATION COSTS

Where you will find us in 1998..... and can you PLEASE help?

We are booked into these events so far:-

- Feb. 14-22 Boat, Caravan & Leisure Show at the National Exhibition Centre.
- Feb. 7 Jumble Sale at Penkridge Village Hall, proceeds to the Trust.
- Mar. 5 Social Evening at The Boat inn, Walsall Road (A461) nr Lichfield.
- May 23-25 a) Northern BCN National Campaign Rally, Pelsall Common.
b) Braunston Boat Show, near Daventry.
- May 25 Lichfield Greenhill Bower Carnival.
- May 30 Proposed nb "Progress" BBQ in northern BCN: details next issue.
- July 11-12 Wolverhampton Boat Club open week-end.
- Aug. 28-31 National Waterways Festival, Salford Quays, Manchester.

PLEASE SEE FURTHER DETAIL ON THE NOTICES PAGE IN THIS ISSUE

Help will be needed to attend these events. If you can find a little time just for one of them, I would be very pleased to hear from you. PICK UP THE PHONE NOW TO HAVE A CHAT WITH ME ABOUT IT..... 0 1 5 4 3 6 7 1 4 2 7.

Bob Williams, Director (Marketing)

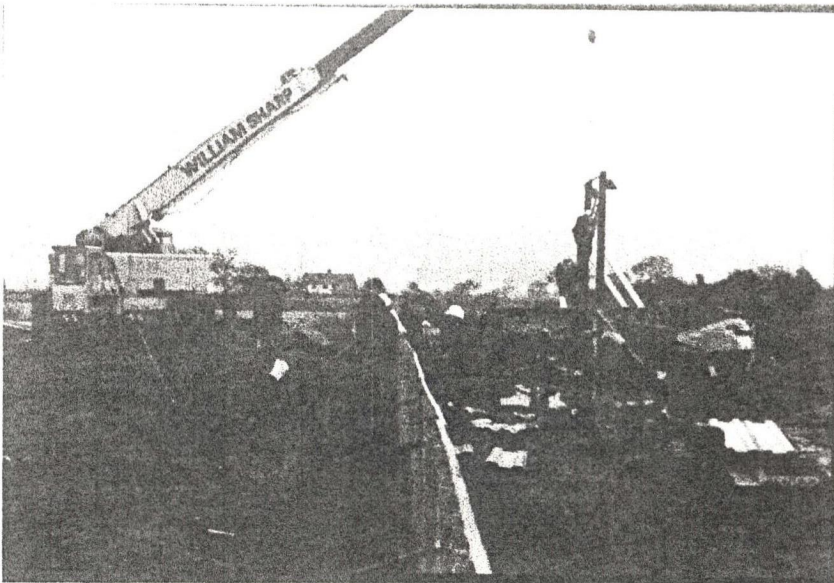
Editorial

For a change I've actually left myself room for an editorial. So may I wish all our readers a Happy new year.

Whilst being delighted to read that many of you according to our survey welcome your copy of Cut Both Ways and consider that you receive good progress reports, I'm not complacent please drop me a line if there is anything you want to see in CBW or any letters following up anything reported or the usual 'letters to the Editor' my address is on the inside of the front cover.

In the short time that I've been editing this magazine I must record my thanks to the considerable help given to me by Gerry Sanders, Bob Williams and Phil Sharpe plus all the regular contributors. However there is always room for more articles and photographs. You can send them in any format that is convenient typed, on computer disc, or even hand written (providing I can read it)

Stephen Pert



Craning the Lift bridge in at Darnford Lane

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NOTICES

Penkridge Jumble Sale. Saturday 7 February 1998, 9.30am -1.00pm

Can you join the happy band of sellers to make this another successful event? The white elephants have been gathering but there's always room for more- BUT WE DO NEED CAKES. Last year, some £250 was raised for IWA Lichfield, but this year the L & H Trust will benefit direct. Please contact Tim Burgin on 01922 51610 for details.

Boat Caravan and Lelsure Show, N.E.C., 14-22 February 1998.

Just when the B.N.R.R. issue is expected to be on the "front burner", we intend to make a prominent showing in this major Midlands Show to gain support for the Restoration work. Please contact Bob Williams, 01543 671427 if you can spare any time on the stand.

Spring Social. Thursday 5 March 1998.

8pm at The Boat Inn. Walsall Road nr Lichfield.

Whether you enjoyed our events last year, or missed them, do come along to have a good time pitting your wits over a QUIZ among friends. No booking needed. (Tel: 01543 671427)

Proposed Northern BCN Barbecue. Saturday 30 May 1998 evening

Chris Coburn and crew of n.b.PROGRESS will make another epic voyage on their way to the 1998 Festival at Salford Quays. They will cruise to the BCN and proceed via the Trent & Mersey to Chester, then up the River. Dee, along the Welsh coast to Caernarvon (weather permitting), returning to the River. Mersey, sampling its off-shoots on their way up the Manchester Ship Canall Sponsorship will be sought for waterway recovery group and L & H Trust. The Trust plan a BCN "reception" and restoration publicity.

DETAILS OF EVENT AND SPONSORSHIP TO BE CONFIRMED IN NEXT EDITION.

waterway recovery group

For further Details or subscription to Navvies (6 issues a year) For a minimum of only £1.50 write to Sue Watts 15 Eleanor Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester, M21 19FZ Cheques made payable to waterway recovery group Ltd

RESULTS OF MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

A big thank you to everyone who replied to our membership questionnaire - we had 39 replies in all, which was both positive and encouraging!

Of the replies, the response could be broken down as follows: 19 said that due to age, distance or other commitments were happy to be "armchair members", which leaves 20 offers of help in some form.

We were most encouraged by the answers to "What do you like most about the Trust?" Some typical answers were:

Your enthusiasm.

Progress reports in Cut Both Ways.

Dedication to the project.

A good Newsletter.

Getting on with the job!

Determination and a positive approach.

The commitment of the members.

The criticism we received we will take to heart and implement your positive suggestions for improvement where possible.

1998 should be a busy and active year. The Marketing Group have a full programme of events and we will be contacting anyone who said they would like to be involved further in the New Year.

D S Beardmore.

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DEDICATED PILING APPEAL CONTRIBUTORS (from last issue to year end)

NAMES (alphabetical)	RESIDENTIAL AREA	INSCRIPTIONS ON PILES
*Armitage Shanks Ltd	Armitage, Staffs.	ARMITAGE SHANKS <i>on 5 piles</i>
*Canal Craft (Broker.) Ltd	Bugbrooke, Northants.	CANAL CRAFT LTD <i>on 10 piles</i>
Bill Chope	Kings Heath, Birm'ham	BILL CHOPE
Bill Cole	Sutton Coldfield, W.M.	W.H.COLE
*Collidge & Partners	Margate, Kent	COLLIDGE & PARTNERS
Matthew Cooper	Pelsall, Walsall	MATT'S PILE
		LORRAINE'S PILE
GP & Mrs AG Haines	Lichfield, Staffs.	S G BENNETT
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Laurence Hogg	Willenhall, W.Midlands	HOGGY
Hoseasons Holidays Ltd	Lowestoft, Suffolk	HOSEASONS HOLIDAYS <i>on 2 piles</i>
Internet User Group	<i>All around the U.K.</i>	HOPWAS GIG 97 <i>on 4 piles</i>
*Lee Sanitation Ltd	Fenny Compton, Oxon	LEE SANITATION
ME & MM Leeson	Tamworth, Staffs.	PEGGY
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Clare Madge	Highfields, Leicester	DAVID MADGE
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Middlesex Canal Assoc.	New Hampshire, USA	MIDDLESEX CANAL, USA
Roger Nichols	Lichfield, Staffs.	FLASH <i>on 10 piles</i>
Mr & Mrs J E Phillips	Lichfield, Staffs.	J and M PHILLIPS
		RICHARD PHILLIPS
		ROBYN PHILLIPS
*Sea Otter Canal Boats	Bolsover, Derbyshire	SEA OTTER BOATS
Vic Stanway	Burntwood	VIC STANWAY
		MR & MRS THIRLBY
David Stevenson	Thringstone, Leicester	D.STEVENSON
P & Mrs S K Timms	Leamington Spa, Wks.	P & S K TIMMS
*Whilton Marina Ltd	Daventry, Northants.	WHILTON MARINA
R G Wilkinson	London, N1	<i>£500 towards section of piling</i>

The Trust gratefully acknowledges the above donations which amount to £1,356 bringing the total Appeal Fund contributions to a wonderful £2,341 since June!

* Acknowledged by advertisements in this issue.

As Others See Us

The following article is taken from the newsletter of wrg's Navvies Anonymous group

LHCRT vs. John Prescott

(Just when you thought all that political lobbying was over.) The fight is on...

As many of you will know the Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR) poses a threat to the restoration of the Lichfield and Hatherton canals and something needs to be done about it! It is not a case of saying NO to the BNRR as it has already been approved by the new government (and to those of us who travel up and down the country regularly past Birmingham we can see why they want this road built !) but we need to make John Prescott, the Secretary of State for the Environment. Transport and the Regions, change his mind about his decision to not include the provision (therein the cost!) of the necessary aqueduct and tunnels that the BNRR's route incurs on both branches of the canal

The NA are firm supporters of LHCRT's cause: our first weekend for them being the excavation of the hidden Fosseway Lock (no. 18) last May. A very enjoyable and satisfying job (a memorable comment from John Horton late on Saturday evening was "But I want to go home. " !). we've been back several times since and are always given five star treatment. I think it is only fair that we repay their courtesy by helping them in this latest of 'canal route vs. road' battles. This does mean it is time to put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard for those of you who have the technology!) and write a letter of protest to Mr. Prescott himself (or the new Roads Minister, Baroness Hayman, as well) to let him know there are many canal supporters out there. It worked for Latton, so why not LHCRT .? OK it might not be as much fun as driving large yellow bits of plant but without the canal trust funds we wouldn't get the chance to do so anyway. Think on it ... More importantly, ACT on it !

The Lichfield & Hatherton Canals (also known as the Wyrley & Essington) are the northern-most and more rural part of the BCN. When restored they will provide an East-West route north of Birmingham and connect the main network to the heart of the BCN which will open up a whole new set of potential cruising rings. This will enable boaters to bypass the majority of the hard industrial heritage so prevalent on the BCN, if they so wish (some apparently do !), and cruise in a more rural setting whilst enabling others to cruise through a unique combination of nature and heritage.

continued on next page

LHCRT vs. John Prescott continued

The canal network was built to service the Industrial Revolution; nowhere more so than the BCN, so to revert partially back to using it for commercial carrying as has recently been suggested (Use the canals for their original purpose? - novel idea!) would surely be easy.

The BNRR, whose plans have long lurked in the shadows, is a road scheme that was given the go-ahead in July by the new Government. Its aim is to bypass Birmingham, taking traffic from the M42 just north of its M6 junction travelling in an arc anti-clockwise to where it meets the M6 north of the M54 junction. The road, or motorway as some describe it, is to be privately financed by Midland Expressway Ltd. (MEL) and the intention is to profit from tolls charged for the privilege of its use.

The reasons for protest are many but here are some points which may be of help when composing your letter: The Public Inquiry Inspector (PII) gave incredibly favourable support to the Canal Trust's restoration but the Secretary of State (S of S) appears to have all but ignored his recommendations. At Latton, the Department of Transport's reason for not paying to install a new navigable culvert was apparently because they didn't believe the restoration project was viable. In a letter to Edward Heath, John Prescott mentioned that the "construction of the bypass was well-advanced, and the restoration of the canal was not expected to reach that part for some time" but the BNRR is not "well-advanced" and, due to their comparatively recent abandonment in the mid-1950's, the canals' routes are not yet littered with insuperable obstacles and should therefore take relatively little time to restore. The result of the Trust having to contribute fully or even partially to the cost of building the tunnels and the aqueduct would be disastrous as there would be a huge time setback. Spending these funds that are crucial to the Trust's restoration work would mean a long delay in their progress and subsequently would be more likely to lose the other parts of the BCN it connects to. The PII believes the present construction proposal of the BNRR would obstruct the restoration to "an unnecessary and undesirable extent". The PII recommends that to build the tunnels in future would be too disruptive and sees "no reason why the execution of the works (i.e. the aqueduct and the tunnels) shall be conditional upon their funding by the objector (LHCRT)". If the MEL do not pay for the 'works' it can only mean future disruption that the Inspector warns against; the S of S makes the meagre gesture that the MEL will provide the foundations for the aqueduct. To build tunnels and an aqueduct at a later date when the road is fully operational is ludicrous!! -

continued over

LHCRT vs. John Prescott continued

John Prescott doesn't believe that the "substantial expenditure required is justified" due to the Trust's work being a "long term project".

Has he not been informed that the Trust have only been going since 1988 and the amount that they have achieved? The Trust are not asking to be funded by the Taxpayer (even though the PII suggests there would be 'nothing improper' about this) but by the MEL who plan to make profit from the use of this road. The Royal Canal in Ireland crosses by aqueduct over the M50, the toll-collecting motorway that runs adjacent to Dublin; it is highly unlikely this was funded by anyone other than those who collect the tolls. The benefits to the local community around the whole BCN, to the heritage policy and to leisure and tourism that the restoration of this route would provide are great. Surely there should be some compensation for the visual intrusion the BNRR will incur on parts of the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals.

The July 1997 edition of Canal Boat made comment in their Parliamentary News (Pg. 12) about the formation of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions being a move perhaps in the right direction. However the "greater emphasis on the co-operation between these two major areas of government activity" seems to have already declined in this instance. They helped at Latton but will they hinder this one?

So why should we fight for this cause? Because we want to see this restoration project finished to benefit everybody not least of all those who live nearby it. The BCN has attracted increasing numbers of boaters through organised events (thanks to the IWA and wrg) .Next year on 23rd -25th May there is a Campaign Rally at Pelsall, partly to highlight problems that the BNRR would cause, but something needs to be done **NOW!** Only by keeping this sort of pressure up may the government actually see the Canal Systems' worth and their own short-sightedness. How the S of S for the Environment (Transport and the Regions) can completely endorse the construction of a major road in precedence over a canal whose transportation properties have recently been highlighted by the Media is beyond me. It appears the old D o T has come back to haunt us. They must be made to take the opportunity to integrate planning and transport policies to reduce not compound the decline of transport by water, be it leisure or business.

continued next page

LHCRT vs. John Prescott continued

And what is the Parliamentary Waterways Group doing about it? I don't believe we should rely on others so especially if you don't have time to come out on weekends with us please find time to pick up a pen (or keyboard) and remind John Prescott he has a duty to invest in the environment as well as transport; canals combine the two so how can he go wrong?! Maybe we should get the Birmingham and Black Countries Cycleway extended up to the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals they seem to have more clout when it comes to lobbying for the cut

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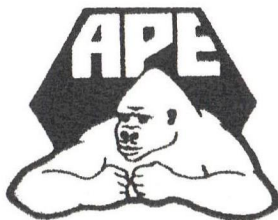
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Our thanks go to Aldridge Piling Equipment for the loan of equipment during
the recent wrg weekend digs



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WORKING PARTIES: JANUARY 1998- JUNE 1998

Working Parties are now held regularly on the first and third Sundays of each month, alternating between the two canals, as shown below. On the Lichfield Canal we are working on two sections of canal, at Darnford Lane south east of Lichfield and at Fosseway Lane south held west of the city. We may also do some work at Tamworth road. On the Hatherton we are working on 1½ miles of canal south west of Cannock. Our varied programme of work includes scrub bashing, fencing, hedging, towpath levelling, mowing, earth moving, piling, bricklaying, pointing, puddling, timber and steelwork. There are a variety of tasks available for the fit and not so fit.

LICHFIELD CANAL

Dates:		Times
Sun	1st Feb.	10am - 3pm
Sun	1st Mar.	10am - 4pm
Sun	5th Apr.	10am - 4pm
Sun	3rd May.	10am - 4pm
Sun	7th June	10am - 4pm

HATHERTON CANAL

1998

Dates:		Times:
Sun	18th Jan.	10am - 3pm
Sun	15th Feb.	10am - 3pm
Sun	15th Mar.	10am - 4pm
Sun	19th Apr.	10am - 4pm
Sun	17th May.	10am - 4pm
Sun	21st June	10am - 4pm

Bring old clothes, stout footwear, work or gardening gloves, lunch and a drink. Basic working tools will be provided although you are welcome to bring you own.

Lichfield Canal work parties are initially at the Darnford Lane site (SK 139 086) From Lichfield take the A51, cross over the A38 and turn left in front of the "Horse & Jockey" down the narrow lane to the junction with Darnford Lane. The Fosseway Lane is accessed by the railway level crossing between Pipehill and Sandfields, Lichfield (SK 101 079).

Hatherton work parties will meet at Saredon Mill Bridge near Four Crosses (SJ 947 089). This is easy accessible off the A5 just west of Cannock.

However, alternative locations or additional dates may be arranged as required, particularly on the Lichfield canal. For confirmation of the meeting point or for other information contact our two local Working Party Organisers direct

on: Lichfield Canal John Horton, 01543-262466 (home).
 Hatherton Canal Denis Cooper, 01543-374370 (work.)