

CUT
BOTH
WAYS



The Magazine of the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust

Issue 45 AUTUMN 2005



Wrg Canal Campers backfilling the wall with concrete at Lock 24
(Photo by Phil Sharpe)

National Boat, Caravan and Outdoor Show
19th-27th Febuary 2006
N.E.C. Birmingham
Volunteer now, see page 16

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

I am sure that nobody who is closely concerned in the day to day running of the LHCRT is, or ever could be, complacent. I cannot remember a time in the nearly 6 years of my chairmanship when there has not been at least one big issue which has dominated our business. I will not list them all but I need only say BNRR to set the tone. Happily, most of the outcomes have been good and the Trust's reputation has stood high. Such success comes at a price. Principally, there has come an expectation that everything will always go well and, more dangerously, a perception that "we are almost there".

Our current difficulties with the Lichfield Southern Bypass route has demonstrated all too clearly that success is not, and can never be, guaranteed. The details of this problem have been set out clearly elsewhere. The big lesson is that no matter how vigilant the Trust is and no matter how hard it works with councils, land owners and businesses its voice can fail to be heard. In the local press I used the word "dismayed" at the decision of Lichfield District Council to grant planning permission for the building of houses and the associated road system in such a form that the viability of our diversionary route is severely compromised. We are mounting a sustained attack on this decision at all levels and right to the highest reaches of government. I will not set out those details here but I can promise members that this fight will continue to the very end. We have some very strong and influential support and we are very grateful to all those who have rallied, yet again, to the cause. We are certainly aware that success cannot be guaranteed.

In some ways the perception that "we are almost there" is more dangerous. A recent reader's enquiry to the new size Guardian asked about the strange structure that a passing motorist had observed over the M6 Toll. It is a question which I have been asked often elsewhere. The Guardian reader noted that she could find no canal on the latest OS map. My reply was not published but someone else was able to put the reader straight. There was the problem neatly encapsulated. We think we are famous but we are not. The 14th Army which saved India and liberated Burma in the 1940s referred to itself as the "Forgotten Army". Equally, there is a perception that the building of the aqueduct marked the end of the project whereas the opposite is the case. We safeguarded one section of the Lichfield Canal but all the rest was left to be done. We must not become the forgotten Trust.

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Our Vision Statement

To restore the Lichfield Canal and the Hatherton Canal to re-open waterway links between Staffordshire and the West Midlands, for the benefit of the environment, amenity and prosperity of the people of the region and to enhance the nation's inland waterway system.

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN (continued)

It is vital that we remain positive. The achievements are still coming in and they are important parts of the project. The Arup Reports on the Hatherton are approaching completion and these will be vital tools in pushing forward at the western end. The purchase of the cottage at Ogley gives us an exciting toehold at the top of the Lichfield. By the time you read this work will finally have started at Cappers Bridge. Meanwhile, impressive work continues at Tamworth Road. These examples of progress show that we must be patient and determined and not expect instant success or ever believe that it will be easy. All this places heavy demands on our directors and our other small teams of activists.

It is a frequent complaint from the chairmen of voluntary organisations that there is a shortage of volunteers. It would be wrong to say that the LHCRT is short of active members. The Marketing Group and the teams of workers on both canals put in long hours and deliver the goods. The diaries of the Directors would compare well with those of many working full time in business. Yet, the numbers involved are small and the average age is high and rising. It is vital that we find even more active volunteers. Our directors in charge of finance, land and engineering need teams to support their work. When we meet to discuss the details of the work of each of these portfolios we are all the same faces. It is vital that we address this especially at a time when we are engaged in the major campaign to safeguard the route around Lichfield.

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Canal Campers re-pointing the brickwork on the towpath wall
(Photo by Phil Sharpe)

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN (continued)

I was saddened to receive the resignation of Janette Horton who has handled publicity at the Lichfield end for many years. She has also worked hard to raise the profile of the Trust in the local organisations dealing with tourism. She has been a great supporter of the Marketing Group and was a key player in the two wonderful events held at Huddlesford. The two big walks along the Lichfield Canal owed much to Jan's drive and enthusiasm. She will be greatly missed and we are highly appreciative of all that she has done. Meanwhile, the Chairman is handling publicity and is keenly aware that a volunteer living in Lichfield is urgently needed. Please feel that you can offer to help even if you have little experience in this area.

One of our most prominent volunteers received recognition at the Inland Waterways AGM held in Lichfield at the beginning of October. Our Founder/President, Eric Wood, received a Richard Bird Medal which is a kind of lifetime achievement award. Eric's input to the Waterways, not least to LHCRT, is highly deserving of recognition. Helen Whitehouse, who is one of our long term supporters and who also has an impressive waterways record also received a Medal.

Our record to date is an impressive one but there is so much left to be done. We need the help and support of all our members at all times but especially now. We need the input of the wider communities around our canals. Essentially we need local people to "take ownership" of their canals. The Trust is not working for its own glory or to feed the egos of its members but to give back to the whole community vibrant and viable canals. When that message has been fully received and absorbed, and only then, can we be sure that "the job is done".

Brian Kingshott



Canal campers reinstating the path at Darnford Lane with brick rubble and sand
(Photo by Phil Sharpe)

VICE-CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

CAPPERS BRIDGE

At last the numerous and trifling legal delays have been overcome and on 20th September we were allowed to sign the deed transferring to Staffordshire County Council the land we had purchased from Mr Burton some 8 months before for the widened road embankments and new access tracks for the replacement of Cappers Bridge. The other access agreements and the BW land transfer have also been completed and the construction contract was then formally awarded to McPhillips (Wellington) Ltd. with the start of work on site agreed for 10th October. Phew! Inevitably, some materials costs have risen due to the delay but are still within our budget. Economies have been achieved on the original design by replacing the pre-cast bridge units by in-situ concrete work, which is now necessary in any case for the parapets that were added by the planning consent, and by avoiding the need to use large cranes. However, the additional pre-cast bridge units to the same dimensions for future use for two Hatherton Canal bridges will still be supplied as part of the contract and arrangements have been made to store these near to their intended sites at Little Wyrley.

Dale Arthur who has done all the engineering and contract work on the project at Staffordshire Highways has now been promoted and we will miss his friendly efficiency, but look forward to the contractors converting his economical design into reality by the end of March 2006.

OGLEY TOP LOCK COTTAGE

More good news is progress with the purchase of the Top Lock Cottage at Ogley Junction. The funding has been confirmed and our offer has been accepted, subject to contract. The solicitors are now working to complete various minor matters and we are hopeful of being the proud owners of half a buried lock, with cottage attached, in the near future. It is our intention to appoint an agent to let the property until such time as we can proceed with restoration in this area, which will meanwhile bring in a useful income for the Trust.

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VICE-CHAIRMAN'S NOTES (continued)

EXCAVATOR

Our search for a suitable used JCB803 excavator, as described in CBW44, was successful although the machine we decided on in July was in fact a JCB804. This is essentially similar to the 803 but with slightly wider tracks, a larger dozer blade, and a longer reach which will be particularly useful in excavating the deeper than average locks on the Lichfield Canal. It is still small enough to fit into lock chambers and along the towpath but with a good digging capacity and, at only 3 years old, should give us many years of service. The cost was £12,000 which has been part financed by a grant of £5,000 from the Restoration Committee of The Inland Waterways Association. We are most grateful to IWA for this generous grant which has enabled us to acquire a newer and more capable machine than we would otherwise have been able to afford. It has already been put to good use excavating the canal channel and reinstating the towpath at our Tamworth Road site in Lichfield. The 804 has been equipped with extra buckets courtesy of our plant manager Peter Magee, and signwritten with Trust logos and an acknowledgement of IWA's sponsorship courtesy of Tudor Signs Midlands. It was on display to IWA members during their site visit to Tamworth Road on the day after their AGM in Lichfield on 1st October.

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Keith using the JCB804 to drag a quoin stone from the pit above lock 26
(Photo by Phil Sharpe)

VICE-CHAIRMAN'S NOTES (continued)

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

The history of our two canals and the part they played in the lives of the local communities, industry and agriculture is a field wide open for research. Although we have published a few historical articles in this magazine, we would like to know much more about the history of the Wyrley & Essington and the Hatherton Branch canals, and in particular to locate any photographs of them actually in use. The few pictures located so far mostly date only from the 1950s when trade had already ceased, but there must surely be photos out there somewhere showing the canals in active use. When one thinks of the impressive archives of old photos collected and published by their societies for so many other canals, such as the Cotswolds, the Manchester Bolton & Bury, or the Cromford, to name but a few, not to mention the many books on the BCN, it is hard to believe that similar material does not exist for our two canals. After all, the Lichfield section was part of the BCN and there is quite good coverage of traffic on the adjacent Cannock Extension Canal.

Much as I would like to, time does not permit me to undertake the detailed and painstaking tracking down of historic pictures, plans, newspaper reports, trade surveys, reminiscences, etc. that form the basis of well-researched publications and so far nobody has volunteered to take this on. If anyone out there thinks they could help us in this, please don't wait to be asked. The field is wide open and I am sure our editor and web master would both be only too glad to publish anything discovered. There may even be a book in it if we could collect enough material.

Phil Sharpe



LICHFIELD FILTRATION PLANT AND PUMPING STATION

LHCRT marketing stand Lichfield Medieval Market

The Medieval Market is always a very special event on the calendar of the City of Lichfield and is held in the wonderful setting around Lichfield Cathedral. The L&H Trust information stand, with Bric a Brac and Games stall is set up in the Dean's Garden and always does very well and has lots of public support at this event

For several years now, enthusiastic Trust members Jean Handley and Terry Brown have dressed up "in style" wearing fabulous authentic medieval costume and each year they select different costumes to wear. This year they were featured in the *Express and Star* and photographed on our Trust stand. They really enter into the spirit of the occasion and draw attention to our stand. Thank you both.

This is how good they looked!



Photo by Jan Horton.

DONATIONS TO THE TRUST

**We gratefully acknowledge the following donations for
amounts over £20 from 1st July to 30th September 2005.**

Name (in order of receipt)	Trust & Marketing	Land fund	Restoration fund
Mr H J Y Pringle (with sub.)	105.00		
Mr R W Lloyd-Hart (with sub.)	24.00		
Rugeley Renaissance (talk)	25.00		
Mr Eric Wood: French party boat trip	25.00		
Lichfield Plastics Ltd re JCB 804 costs	235.00		
Mr A V H Gulvin (with sub.)	35.00		
Mr T Darlington (with sub.)	25.00		
Mr P Newman (with sub.)	35.00		
Mr D B Shipman (with sub.)	35.00		
Mr B Parkes, sale of donated items	1,000.00		
Mr G H Thompson (with sub.)	50.00		
N Blears (with sub.)	25.00		
Dr J R Massy		200.00	
Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally & Canal Festival (25-6 June) profit share	200.00		
Sutton Coldfield Model Makers (talk)	25.00		
Mr & Mrs A Gilbert (Brick Appeal)	50.00		
Tudor Construction & Developments Ltd, Rubery, B'ham; charity dinner	163.50		
Alvecote Marina donated mooring fees	2,000.00		
Mrs T Dudley; hotel boating talk fee	25.00		
Mr P Westley; model railway event	50.00		
Kings Bromley Social Fund			360.00
Anonymous internet payment	25.00		
Lichfield Road Race (water station)		100.00	
Brian Kingshott	339.82		
Dr T Hollingworth	425.50		
Mr David Stanistreet (£30 x 3 months)		90.00	
Aggregated donations below £20 each	731.61		
Regular donors to appeals	165.00	397.00	15.00

For details about our Regular Giving Scheme
contact Bob Williams Tel 01543 671427
Norfolk House, 29 Hall Lane, Hammerwich, Burntwood, WS7 0JP

FUNDING NEWS

GRANTS

Purchase of the Trust's own JCB804 mini excavator reported elsewhere in this issue was generously assisted by the Inland Waterways Association making a grant of £5,000 for which we are most grateful.

The summer months have been a slow time to make any bidding progress but one new possibility has emerged from the Big Lottery with their Living Landmarks Fund. This could be for a minimum of £10million as 75% of project costs so we are aiming to submit a first round application before the new year; watch this space as events unfold.

PRIZE DRAW

Our raffle has been very successful again this year with well over £3,000 raised. If you get to read this before 12th November, there is still time to enter your tickets to be drawn at our "Black Country" social evening in Whittington.

Bob Williams

Membership rates are:

Adult £10; Family £15; Junior (under 18), Student, Retired or Unemployed £6;
Group (Clubs & Societies) £25; Corporate £200; Life Membership £200

New Members up to 3rd October 2005

Mr & Mrs D. Taylor, N.B. Bideford, Streethay Wharf, Lichfield
Ms T. Newton, Bearwood, Warley
Mr M. Haywood, Tenterden, Kent
Mr B. Tofts, Bexhill on Sea
Ms C. Fletcher, Cannock
Mrs G. Twist, Lichfield
Mr J. Mottram, Lichfield
Mr S. Burgess, Whittington, Lichfield
Mr J. Townsend, Lichfield
Mrs R.A. Blackburn, Penkridge
Mr T. Darlington, Stone
Mr A. Sturgess, Earl Shilton
Ms S. Gray, Cannock
Mr D. Bartley, Tipton
Ms A. Knight, Streetly, Sutton Coldfield
Mr C. Hale, Streetly, Sutton Coldfield
Mr J.A.T. Goer, Walsall
Mrs S.M. Goer, Walsall
Mr R. Collins, Heath Hayes
Mr B. Green, Saxlingham Thorpe, Norwich
Mr G.B. Blackmore, Brownhills
Mr T.J. Thomas, Lichfield
Heart of England Marinas Ltd, Alvecote, Tamworth
Miss K. Hudson, Penrith, Cumbria
Mr W. Chapman, Alrewas
Mr R.P.B. Udall, Upper Longdon, Rugeley

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We regret to record the death of the following members:-
Mr Richard Grafham, Lichfield, died 18th May 2005.
Mr W.H. Davies died 26th September 2005

1998 DATA PROTECTION ACT

The Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust Ltd will hold your details for marketing purposes in accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act. If you do not wish to receive updates from the Trust or any third party with whom we co-operate then please advise the Trust through Director Bob Williams on 01543 671427.

MARKETING REPORT

As I write this report the season is drawing to a close: a year that has been blessed with generally good weather for our outdoor events. We have just three more events – our SMART Van at Boley Park Co-op, the Autumn Fair (21st October) and the Black Country Night Out (12th November).

When I took on the role of Marketing Director I had little knowledge of the team, but what I did have convinced me that there was a very good, dedicated group of members who were prepared to come out and sell or talk to the public. This has proved to be the case and I am very much indebted to all those that have helped in any way. I am always afraid of naming names in case I miss out someone, so if you have helped and not been mentioned, please accept my apologies and then my thanks for everything you have done.

Since the last Cut Both Ways the team has attended the following events:

Lichfield Medieval Market 9th July

The majority of the Marketing team, led by Michael Brown, ran a very busy stand at this colourful annual event held in the Cathedral Close. This is one of the occasions when we can sell the bric-a-brac that is donated to us and therefore show a reasonable financial return for our efforts. The take on the day was £561.

Walsall Charity Market 25th July

This was another opportunity for Mike Brown and his team to sell more of the bric-a-brac (sorry, valuable antiques). The market showed a return of £237. Whilst events like this are financially rewarding for the Trust, the transporting of all the material is a problem. The ideal solution is a van, trailer, or a large estate car. Is there is anyone out there who can help with this? I would be pleased to hear from you (see back page for phone number, etc).

IWA National Festival 27-29th August

This year's event was held at Preston Brook, Cheshire. The display and sales stand occupied two gazebos which gave us some transport problems. However, using a combination of cars and Trish's boat meant that everything got there on time. Special thanks to Mike & May Brown, Bob & Sue Williams, Eric & Doreen Wood, Trish Humphreys, Phil Sharpe, Archie Roberts & Jackie Morrice for their help with transport and manning the stand.

On the whole the weather was kind but Monday opened with rain which continued until lunchtime and effectively wrote off the day. Over the weekend we took £737 and recruited four members, including a life member. We also signed up two members for the Teddy Bears Club and one dog for the Pets Club.

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MARKETING REPORT (continued)

The festival presented the Trust with an opportunity to speak to many influential people from such bodies as British Waterways, The Waterways Trust, IWAAC and IWA about our problems with the Lichfield Southern Bypass plans and to launch a petition to the Deputy Prime Minister. The Marketing Team was on hand to assist with this and over the weekend we collected more than 500 signatures.

Forest of Mercia Open Day 28th August

A small local event which this year changed its date to August Bank Holiday Sunday. How much this move contributed to the poor attendance is a matter for conjecture. We raised just £17.50.

Whittington Country & Craft Fair 3rd September

Saturday morning dawned clear and sunny for our local village fair. This was its second year and the first to be attended by the Trust. It turned out to be a rewarding day; the fine weather brought out the crowds and there was a lot for everyone to see. This is certainly something to be repeated in future years.

As was to be expected, there were questions about Cappers Lane Bridge and people wanted to know why all the hedgerows were covered over. We were able to report that, as far as one could be certain, all the problems over land were finally resolved and that work would soon start. We had anticipated some strong comments about the obstruction of the lane but there were none. £103 was raised on the day and we gained one new member.

Greyhound Boat Club Gathering 10th September

The weather was dismal at Horninglow Basin. We set up in drizzling rain which turned out to be the best of the weather; it then rained continuously. We had called it a day by mid-afternoon and went home with just £2.50.

Lichfield Running Club 10K Road Race 11th September

What has this to do with marketing? Well not a lot, except that nine members of the Marketing Group manned a drinks station and as a result got a donation of £100 for the Trust. A good return for a couple of hours work which was much appreciated by the competitors. It was appropriate that the location was on our canal where it crosses Darnford Lane.

IWA AGM Weekend 1st-2nd October

Our stand was on display at the AGM and Bob Williams gave a presentation on the work of the Trust. On the Sunday, over 20 IWA members visited the site at Tamworth Road where a small team of volunteers were at work. The visitors were able to see the progress being made and were provided with refreshments by the Marketing Team

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MARKETING REPORT (continued)

Thanks for their assistance at the above events are due to:

Mike & Bobbie Battisson, Mike & May Brown, Terry Brown, Peter & Jeanne Buck, Jean Handley, Jan Horton, Trish Humphreys, Barry Kenn, Peter Magee, Paul & Beverley Marshall, Mavis Moore, Jackie Morrice, Julie Piggot, Derek Richards, Archie Roberts, Phil Sharpe, George Simonczyk, Hilary Smith, Shirley Theaker, Bob & Sue Williams, Eric & Doreen Wood.

I am indebted to all members who turn out to man the stand and help with the fund raising and promotion of the Trust at the events. During the course of the year the team attends about 20 events and this means that some people are out almost every other weekend. This is particularly true of the small team who manage the stand and take the stock, display boards and gazebos to the events. This is one area where we can do with some more volunteers. Can you help? The stand, with display and stock, can be carried in a medium sized hatch back or an estate car. All material would need to be collected before the event (usually from Hammerwich) and returned afterwards. If you feel this is something you would like to help with please contact myself or any member of the Marketing Group.

We also have the SMART Van; I'm sure all of you have seen photos of it in the magazine. Ideally it needs a 4x4 or similar to tow it. If you feel that you can help with either of the above, please contact me (details on back page).

The Marketing Team looks forward to your continuing support at all our events and shows.

David Moore

NATIONAL BOAT, CARAVAN and OUTDOOR SHOW 2006

Where? NATIONAL EXHIBITION CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM

When? Saturday 19th February to Sunday 27th February 2005

What time? 10am until 6pm daily

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Offers to help on the stand to

David Moore, 88 Spring Lane, Whittington WS14 9NA

Phone 01543 432718 or e-mail mdlmoore@beeb.net

Press date for Cut Both Ways 46 is 5th January 2006

BOOK SALE

The Trust has been donated some out of print canal books which are offered for sale at the following prices (inc p&p):

Navigable Waterways	LTC Rolt	£10.00
Canals and their Architecture	Robert Harris	£15.00
Walking Canals	Roland Russell	£7.00
Inland Waterways of Great Britain	Jane Cumberlidge	£15.00
Birmingham Canal Navigations	SR Boadbridge	£20.00
The Canals of Britain	DD Gladwin	£10.00
Canals in Colour	Anthony Burton	£6.00
London's Lost Route to the Sea	PAL Vine	£20.00
The Kennet & Avon Canal	Kenneth Clew	£20.00
Industrial Archaeology of the West Midlands	Fred Brook	£10.00
The Leicester Line	Phillip Stevens	£15.00
Staffs & Worcs Canal Towpath Guide	Ian Langford	£6.00

We also have 6 copies (new) of 'Canal Tunnels' by David Appleby, Allan Gilbert & Paul Samuel, price £10.00 inc p&p.

First come, first served. Orders to
David Moore, 88 Spring Lane, Whittington WS14 9NA.

PROPERTY FOR SALE

In good faith and without responsibility, we report that "Canal Cottage" on the Tamworth Road, Lichfield is for sale. This is a modernised BCN lock cottage No.265 beside Lock 24 on the "Lichfield Canal" near the section under restoration. List price £349,950 Details available from the agents, Connells, Tel 01543 262376. www.connells.co.uk



The Trust receives grant assistance from the European Regional Development Fund

Lichfield Southern Bypass

The news about the Lichfield Southern Bypass is not so good. I explained the background and our concerns on this in CBW44. In early August we discovered that the Reserved Matters planning application for the Chesterfield Road housing site, including the problem section of the Bypass, was about to go before the Lichfield District Council (LDC) Planning Committee with a recommendation for approval, although we had not been notified or consulted on any of the Bypass plans. Our Publicity Officer, Secretary and myself variously spoke to and emailed all the District councillors about our major concerns over their officers' failure to consult, failure to assist us in accordance with their Local Plan and failure to ensure that Staffordshire County Council (SCC) were including infrastructure design and provision for the canal diversion in accordance with national planning policy. We asked that the application be refused or deferred. At the meeting on 8th August the planning officer admitted that the land being provided was insufficient, but councillors were told that they had already given detailed consent for the Bypass at the Outline planning stage, even though nothing other than a general alignment was available then, and that they should not even discuss the Bypass or the canal! However, the councillors ignored this and discussed it for an hour and a half, variously saying that: "they had been given false information; they were not satisfied; were bitterly disappointed; should do everything possible to protect the canal; should help the Trust; should reconsider; should negotiate extra land; it was not good planning; the road alignment should be moved; can't believe there was no consultation on a project of this magnitude; someone didn't do the right thing; and we are cowards if we approve this". They then voted to defer the application to give time for meaningful consultation and changes to be made.

However, the directors of Persimmon, the developers, refused even to talk to us and it was a struggle to set up a meeting with the County and District when everyone seemed to be going on holiday at different times, but it eventually took place, thanks to County Councillor Terry Finn, on 23rd August. LDC were defensive and offered no assistance and the SCC officers advanced the extraordinarily illogical arguments that Government Planning Policy Guidance PPG13 did not apply because the road was being developer funded, and that they could ignore the detailed requirements in the normally mandatory Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) if they so chose and because they had not carried out an Environmental Assessment. They admitted that they had deliberately decided not to meet or consult us since November 2004, which is itself contrary to PPG13, and that they were being paid by Persimmon to draw the Bypass plans without including the canal. There was some discussion about the engineering, including the balancing ponds they now planned to build across the route at the wrong levels for the canal, and we tabled an engineering report helpfully produced at short notice for us by Roy Sutton of IWA. They agreed to look at alternatives here, without any enthusiasm, but refused to even consider providing the most vital structure, the culvert under the new roundabout on the Birmingham Road unless we funded it.

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The views expressed in Cut Both Ways do not necessarily represent those of the Trust or the Editor. They are however published as being of interest to our readership

Lichfield Southern Bypass (contined)

The IWA National Waterways Festival at Preston Brook was a timely opportunity to raise a petition to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) asking John Prescott for his intervention to uphold Government policy and we collected over 500 signatures in the weekend which was duly dispatched with a covering letter. I was also able to speak briefly to Chief Executives Robin Evans of BW and Roger Hanbury of TWT, and Chairmen John Fletcher of IWA and Lady Knollys of IWAAC, all of whom expressed concern. TWT had already written and within days letters were sent to Prescott from IWAAC, BW and IWA and behind the scenes lobbying set in motion.

Although LDC knew of our efforts to get the application Called-In and their failure to meet councillors' expectations of revised plans to make better provision for the canal, they put the application back on the agenda for the next Planning Committee meeting on 5th September with no changes. The modified report effectively admitted that their previous advice to councillors about the Bypass plans was totally wrong, but without any apology, and with the only concession being to withhold permission for a landscaping plan showing the canal route planted with trees. A further email to all councillors was sent seeking their continued support, but it appears that they had all been got-at before the meeting and told that 'legal advise' required their consent. This advise was spurious, misleading and did not address the substantive issues, but councillors were browbeaten by officers into approving the application although not without some further comments that: "they were disappointed, ashamed, it was dishonourable, they were stymied by bureaucracy, and the system had failed". The decision was then rushed out 2 days later to forestall any legal challenge.

Our immediate reaction was that there was so much that was wrong about the way this had been handled by officers that a complaint of maladministration to the Local Government Ombudsman would be justified. The local Waterway General Manager Tony Harvey had written to the Council and now sought legal advice about a High Court action, since BW are concerned this could set an unfortunate precedent for developers and councils everywhere to ignore national planning policy on protecting waterway restoration routes from new highways and private developments. This is exactly the battle we fought and won 5 years ago with the publication of Waterways for Tomorrow, PPG13 and DMRB, or so we thought. However, the replies to the letters to ODPM all came from the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM), declining to intervene and missing the point entirely about the County's wilful disregard of national policy. We have since been promised a meeting with the Waterways Minister, Jim Knight which we will arrange as soon as possible.

Trust members can help by contacting their local MP about this to ask why SCC and LDC are being allowed to get away with flouting national policy on protecting waterway restoration routes. Local members in particular can contact their District or County Councillors to ask why their officers have behaved so unhelpfully over this matter and what they propose to do about it. Public pressure eventually won the argument last time over the BNRR, and we must not let the hard-won policy changes that ensued be lost through the councils' and government indifference.

Phil Shappe



The Land Rover 'corporate citizenship' scheme supplied teams of 5 or 6 employees for 2 days a week over a 4 week period, Their main job was to level and landscape the 'triangle' area below Lock 25 and to improve the access
(Photo by Bob Williams)



A selection of WRG Canal Camp Photo's
by Jan Horton in the display panel at Lock 25
(Photo by Phil Sharpe)

PRESS & PUBLICITY

Press reports in the quarter from July to September 2005 showed continued interest in the recruitment of our 1500th member with illustrated reports in *Towpath Talk* for July, *Canal & Riverboat* for August, and in the *Lichfield Mercury* as “Milestone for Molly”. Other human interest stories about our members were Barry Kenn’s fund-raising parachute jump, covered in the *Lichfield Post* as “Birthday funds plunge” and in *The Mercury* as “Leap of faith helps waterway restoration”, and a picture of Terry Brown and Jean Handley in period costume “Stepping into past at medieval market” in the *Express & Star*. Not quite human are the members of our teddy bears club who caught the attention of the *Express & Star* with “Bear boost for canals” and “Boat life is bear-able as teddies sign up for club”. Other reports included a brief piece on the Canal Camp entitled “Towpath to be repaired” in the *Express & Star*, “Bard benefits canals” acknowledging a donation from ‘Shakespeare in the Park’ in *The Mercury*, and several diary entries for our Autumn Fair.

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Members of Canal Society of New York State, USA visiting Lock 25-26 restoration during their 3-week tour of UK canals, 29th September 2005.

(Photo by Bob Williams)

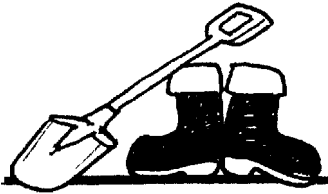
PRESS & PUBLICITY (continued)

The main news this quarter though must be the reports of our battle over the Lichfield Southern Bypass. Starting in August, the initial deferral of the planning application was reported as “Concerns over canal hits plans for homes” in the *Express & Star*, “Homes scheme on hold” in *The Post*, “Canal group delighted at homes plan deferral” in *The Cannock & Lichfield Chronicle*, and “Canal fears dead end over new road link” with “Homes on hold for waterways probe” in *The Mercury*. In September the referral back to the planning committee was front page news in the *Express & Star* as “Plans for 230 homes in return to council” and “Canals trust fury over homes plan” in *The Post*. The subsequent approval of the plans again made the front page of the *Express & Star* as “Council homes decision upsets group – Threat from canal trust”, the threat being to refer it to the Local Government Ombudsman, and “Home scheme might sink canal reopening” in *The Mercury*. The October edition of *Canal Boat* also had “New road threatens Lichfield restoration”, although the report was prematurely truncated – like the canal ?!

Phil Sharpe



The puppy is Bridie, a new member of the Pets Club owned by Alison Moore and Neil Collings at IWA National Festival (Photo Sue Williams)



HATHERTON CANAL

WORKING PARTY NEWS

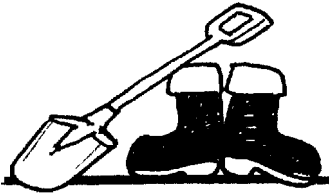
Although our advertised July work party did not happen, several of our stalwart regulars had already spent some days clearing the towpath right through the whole length from the M6 to the Roman Way, and in August a good turnout of 12 volunteers trimmed the hedge and strimmed the towpath to a fuller width from the M6 to Cross Bridge. September saw 10 of us tackling the jungle of Himalayan Balsam above and below Bridge 8 at Roman Way. It was 8 or 10 feet high in places and we were worked into the ground as well as the vegetation, although we did manage to clear all of it that was accessible. Whether it will do any good, however, in controlling this invasive menace is uncertain, as the seeds were already setting, but at least we tried. It should really have been cut a few months earlier, as we did last year, although it looks increasingly like spraying it may be the only long term answer. We hope to get back to slightly less strenuous and more productive activities over the next few months, including levelling up short sections of towpath and cutting back more of the overhanging offside trees, with suitably warming bonfires for winter days.

Please help us if you can. Our regular date is the third Sunday of each month, from 10 am, with some occasional extra days as required. Contact Denis Cooper on 01543 374370 (work) or Phil Sharpe on 01889 583330 for details of meeting places.

Work Party Dates: Sundays; 20 November, 18 December, 15 January, 19 February, 19 March.



One stone is inscribed "No. 26 1844", (see page 27)
(Photo by Bob Williams)



LICHFIELD CANAL

WORKING PARTY NEWS

Good progress has been made at Tamworth Road over the summer by our own work parties, with a Canal Camp in August and with assistance from 4 teams from Land Rover during September. From July to September our volunteers have worked there on 10 Saturdays, 9 Sundays, 2 Wednesday evenings, and 5 days midweek on a variety of tasks.

At Lock 24 all the reinforcing, concreting and brickwork on the landing stages and towpath wall below Lock 24 has now been completed and the towpath reinstated, with assistance from the Camp and the Land Rover team.

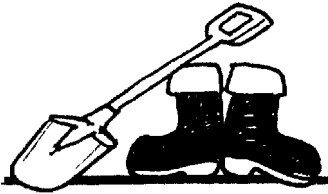
At Lock 25 the ladder recess was finally completed, only to discover that the stainless steel lock ladder that was awaiting fitting had disappeared, presumed stolen, probably only for its scrap value. Although it cost us nothing, it was nevertheless quite valuable and the annoying thing is that we had put a lot of effort into cutting the recess to fit the ladder's exact dimensions and will now need to find a replacement of the same size.

In the garden, further excavation was done to improve access to rebuild the walls, with the spoil again being transported down to the temporary mound by the A38 and, as usual, more bricks have been recovered, including from breaking up some of the large pieces from demolished walls. We also cleaned sufficient bricks to get the Canal Camp started. Excavation of a buried stone found across the demolished section of the towpath wall above Lock 26 led, as suspected, to the discovery of a whole cache of them buried in a deep pit dug far below canal bed level. The same thing was found below the lock and this looks like the other half of the missing collection of quoin and coping stones that we did not have when we rebuilt the lock 4 or 5 years ago. To prove it, one stone is inscribed "No. 26 1844", which is the rebuilding date, and is the uppermost offside bottom gate stone that we had to replicate in concrete! Unfortunately, excavating the pounds before reconstructing the locks was not an option at the time, and we now have a growing collection of stones looking for homes on future lock rebuilds elsewhere on the canal.

(continued over)



For details of Watway Recovery Group
Subscribe to Navvies (minimum (£1.50))
from Sue Watts 15 Eleanor Road,
Chorlton-cum-Hardy Manchester M21 9FZ



LICHFIELD CANAL

WORKING PARTY NEWS (CONTINUED)

A major step forward with this excavation work has been our purchase of the JCB804 (see page 7). After delivery to Peter's yard where cab guard panels were fitted, along with Trust logos and labels kindly supplied at short notice by Tudor Signs, it was transported to Tamworth Road just in time to do some excavation work in preparation for the Camp and soon proved its excellent capabilities and manoeuvrability. We have also been helped by the loan of the WRG 'red' dumper which, with its directional tipping and electric start, is a big improvement on the old 'yellow' one which is now due to go for a major overhaul. Having these machines available when needed greatly enhances our capabilities and will allow us now to better plan future work.

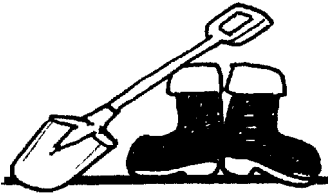
The Canal Camp from 13-20 August had 24 volunteers working mostly on consolidating and rebuilding the towpath wall in the garden, ably led by Mike Palmer and Becky Parr. The joints were raked out and re-pointed, loose and broken brickwork removed, lots of old bricks cleaned and transported, and a substantial section of the wall rebuilt. The bricklaying was greatly helped by Mik Golds and Ken from the Erewash coming over for a day. The Camp also did concreting at Lock 24, and a group went to Darnford Lane to spread the brick rubble to reinstate a firm towpath surface over the area of last years breach. Although there was a high proportion of students this time, which did give the leaders some early problems, by the end of the week I was very pleased with the progress made and the quality of the work down. Many of them had never been on a canal boat before so Ray Bown assisted at short notice by loaning his day boat for an evening trip from Streethay to Huddlesford, then returning with the other half of the party.

Other jobs we have done were putting up the new site sign made for us by Tudor Signs, and maintenance work on vegetation including below Lock 26 where ragwort has been particularly bad this year. We have purchased another strimmer second-hand to help ensure that we are not again left without if one needs repair.

(Continued over)



The completed towpath wall and landing stage at Lock 24
(Photo by Phil Sharpe)



LICHFIELD CANAL

WORKING PARTY NEWS (CONTINUED)

The Land Rover 'corporate citizenship' scheme supplied teams of 5 or 6 employees for 2 days a week over a 4 week period, and all the teams were very enthusiastic and hard working. Their main job was to level and landscape the 'triangle' area below Lock 25 and to improve the access. A considerable amount of earth moving was done with the 804 and dumper by Keith and Bob, with the Land Rover teams doing all the hand levelling, removing old brickwork, replanting trees, laying and surfacing the paths, and grass seeding the area. We now have a wide and gently graded pathway around the back of the triangle as an alternative to the steeper towpath access, both for plant and for pedestrian and disabled use. In addition, the Land Rover teams have completed the towpath surfacing and cleared up at Lock 24, cleaned and moved bricks, raked out joints and re-pointed brickwork at locks 25 and 26, dug out behind the towpath wall for future concreting and helped with several other jobs.

Over the next few months the priorities will be to continue rebuilding the towpath wall and lock wing walls in the garden and reinstating the towpath. We also hope to continue the excavation of Lock 24 and remove the excess spoil from the pound.

To find our usual work site at Lock 25 on Tamworth Road (Grid ref. SK 130 083) take the A51 out of Lichfield and the site is on the right about 300 metres after Cricket Lane. Look out for the new yellow sign. We are working almost every Sunday now, except for the third Sunday of the month (which is on the Hatherton) when the advertised date is on the Saturday, although we are often there on the other Saturdays as well. However, we may have the weekends off at Christmas and New Year! Our own work parties are supplemented by WRG and 'Dig Deep' weekend visits. We generally work from about 9 am to 4 pm and more help is always welcome, even if you can spare only a few hours. Check for additional dates or the latest plans with Phil Sharpe on 01889 583330 or Peter Matthews on 01543 318933, or visit our web site where any changes will be shown.

Work Party Dates:

November: Sunday 6, Sunday 13, Saturday 19, Sunday 27

December: Sunday 4, Sunday 11, Saturday 17

January 2006: Northwest WRG Sat/Sun 7/8, Saturday 14, Sunday 22, Sunday 29

February: London WRG Sat/Sun 4/5, Sunday 12, Saturday 18, Sunday 26

March: Sunday 5, Newbury WPG Sat/Sun 11/12, Saturday 18, Sunday 26

LICHFIELD & HATHERTON CANALS

RESTORATION TRUST LIMITED.

Registered Office: 3 Norfolk Court, Norfolk Road, Rickmansworth WD3 1LT
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).

Principal Aims : To promote the restoration of the Wyrley and Essington Canal from Ogley Junction to Huddlesford Junction (the "Lichfield Canal"), and the Hatherton Branch of the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal, and also the construction of a navigable link between the Hatherton Branch and the Cannock Extension Canal.

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