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Editor's Musings

Memories

For reasons beyond my control, I'm unable to publish Part 4 of the Memories series about the Society's early years. It will appear next month.

Future of the Society

Last month I asked that members write to the Newsletter about their views on the future of the Society. Apart from Brian Evans' letter published last month, utter silence! Although I was not at the AGM, I have heard that strong feelings were expressed by some members at that gathering. I had hoped that all these views could be expressed through the pages of this Newsletter - a means of communicating with all other members and having a considered discussion. October's Newsletter will appear before the next Committee meeting.

But rather than write to me, it is more important every member expresses their views to the Committee before their meeting on 16th October. You might wish to keep your feelings private but the Committee cannot come to a considered conclusion without knowing ALL members' views about YOUR society's future.

Peter Oates

Chairman's Column

September Meeting

Tonight, please enjoy Gordon's family trip exploring the waterways in Ireland - in particular the Rivers Shannon and Erne. His detail and photographs, as in his previous talks, are very interesting.

October Meeting

On the 5th October, a local area dating from the Saxon times became known as Itchen village together with the Itchen Ferry, and to this day the well-known Diaper Family.

Cheryl Butler will share her interest of the area with us.

November Meeting - Day-Star Theatre

On the 2nd November, Pete and Jane of the "Day-Star Theatre" will be at Chilworth with a new production "The Last Run" about running a pair of boats carrying tea from the docks up the Grand Union. It will be interactive for the audience. Buy your tickets (price £10) at the September meeting from Aelred or from Angela in October.

The Future of the Society.

On page 12 of the August Newsletter, the Committee members after lengthy discussions put forward, "just ideas and options for the future"

and as a basis for discussion included these under item 7 on the Agenda of the AGM.

They welcomed the lively comments from members present at the meeting but, from the Committee's point of view, it all moved on too quickly from a general discussion.

The next committee meeting is on 16th October 2017 when a number of issues raised will be taken into consideration. Further details will be included in the November Newsletter.

The Committee members would appreciate your comments. Our addresses, emails and phone numbers are on the back page of every Newsletter.

To date we have had only two responses.

Thanks

Finally, thank you to Eric and Sue Lewis for their memories from 1969 when Eric became interested in the Canal system. Sue too caught the bug in the early 70's.

Thanks to Annemarie Evans for this report in the August Newsletter.

Thank you to all our members for your continued support.

Alan Rose

Victorian Waterway Journey Recreated

A Victorian gentleman's historic voyage to the South Coast on inland waterways has been commemorated by a flotilla of small boats on the River Wey. Canoeists and kayakers followed the first part of J B Dashwood's trip to the Solent 150 years ago, on the River Wey, Wey & Arun Canal and the River Arun. The commemoration - "Dashwood Day" on Saturday, July 8th - was organised jointly by the National Trust and the Wey & Arun Canal Trust.

The flotilla navigated from Thames Lock at Weybridge down to Gun's Mouth at Shalford, where the Wey & Arun Canal connects with the River Wey navigation. Dashwood, his wife and their dog travelled south in a small yacht in July 1867, on their way to see a Royal Navy Spithead Review staged in honour of the Sultan of the

Ottoman Empire. They arrived in the English Channel after several days of adventures while being towed by horse down the canal through Surrey and West Sussex.



Two of the boaters setting out from Thames Lock on the Wey & Arun Trust's "Dashwood Day" voyage in vintage costume

"Our congratulations to all who navigated the whole length from the Thames to the Wey & Arun on Dashwood Day," said Wey & Arun Canal Trust chairman Sally Schupke. "We are very grateful to Richard and Vanessa Smith for setting up their refreshment stall at Coxes Lock Mill, which certainly helped the canoeists keep going. The

canal was formerly closed in 1871 but we are working hard to bring the entire waterway back to life so that boaters can again follow Dashwood's entire route," added Sally.

IWA Bulletin 10 August 2017

Waterways Events

The following is a list of waterway events taking place within approximately 50 miles of Southampton. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the correctness of this information, please check with the listed contact who will be glad to confirm and supply further details.

OS grid references and/or postcodes are shown (where known but not guaranteed) to aid location of the event.

If YOU know of an event taking place that should be in this list then please contact the editor.

Date/Time	Organiser	Details	Venue	Contact
Thu 7 Sep 2017 7.45pm	Southampton CS	The Shannon and Erne Waterways. Family cruising in Ireland with Society member Gordon Osborn.	Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ (SU410184).	Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: alanjrose@btinternet.com
Sat 9 Sep 2017 11.00am-3.00pm	Wey & Arun CT	Guildford's Treadwheel Crane. Heritage open day. Come and join volunteers from the Wey & Arun Canal Trust at the Town Wharf in Guildford (opposite the White House pub and St Nicolas church - also, Church tower open during the morning for visits to the top and bell chamber) and see the Guildford Treadwheel Crane.	Town Wharf, Millbrook, Guildford, GU1 3DL (SU994494).	Trust Office: 01483 505566 Email: events@weyandarun.co.uk Web: weyarun.org.uk/drupal/events23
Sat 9 Sep 2017 11.00am-5.00pm	National Trust	Heritage Open Days, Dapdune Wharf. Hands-on activities for children, plus interesting facts for adults as we air the archives and artefact collection. Guided walk at 2pm from Dapdune to the Town Centre and the tread wheel crane. Adults: £3.95 Child: £2.30	Dapdune Wharf, Wharf Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4RR (SU992502).	National Trust Navigations Office: 01483 561389 Email: riverwey@nationaltrust.org.uk Web: https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/
Sat 9 Sep 2017 2.15pm-5.00pm	Wey & Arun CT	Guided circular walk. Heritage open day. Visit Whitley Rail Bridge and Josias Jessop's canal swingbridge, Shamley Green, and join us on the Wey & Arun Canal Trust's new Callcott Reilly walk trail. Further details at https://weyarun.org.uk/content/get-some-glimpses-canal-history . Free of charge (donations to WACT welcome). Please pre-book online, by email or phone by 8 Sep 2017.	Church car park, Church Hill, Shamley Green, Guildford GU5 0UD (TQ032434).	Trust Office: 01483 505566 Email: events@weyandarun.co.uk Web: weyarun.org.uk/drupal/events22
Sun-Sat 10 Sep 2017 2.30pm-5.00pm	Wey & Arun CT	Heritage open day guided walk from Gunpowder Store (Shalford) to Bramley. Approx 2.5km, 2 hours, starting from Stonebridge Wharf, the walk follows parts of the course of the original canal to the former Bramley Wharf. Further information at https://weyarun.org.uk/content/get-some-glimpses-canal-history . Gunpowder Store may also open. Free of charge (donations to WACT welcome). Please pre-book online, by email or phone by noon, 8 Sep 2017.	Meet at Gunpowder Store, Stonebridge Wharfside, Shalford, GU4 8EH (SU998465). Parking available at Broadford Business Park, Shalford GU4 8EP (SU998467) (behind the Parrot Inn) on the A248 Shalford-Godalming road.	Trust Office: 01483 505566 Email: events@weyandarun.co.uk Web: weyarun.org.uk/drupal/events21
Sat 16 Sep 2017 19.00am-22.00	National Trust	Bat evening. Discover the bats that make the Wey their home by joining Triggs Lock Lengthsman, Chris, for a short walk with a bat detector. There will also be the opportunity to see some bats up close. Please bring warm clothes. Price: £3.00 Booking essential.	To be advised.	National Trust Navigations Office: 01483 561389 Email: riverwey@nationaltrust.org.uk Web: https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/
Sun 17 Sep 2017 10.00am	Somersetshire Coal CS	Walk - a Visit to Claverton Pump. By the Kennet & Avon Canal. Limited parking at Ferry Lane (please car-share if possible)	Claverton Pumping Station, Ferry Lane, Claverton, Bath, BA2 7BH (ST790643). Please check with Pete Dunn.	Pete Dunn: 07719 911421
Sat-Sun 23-24 Sep 2017 10.30am-4.30pm	Kennet & Avon CT (Crofton Br)	Crofton Engines Steaming Gala. Adults: £8.00 Concessions: £7.00 Children under 16 Free.	Crofton Beam Engines, Crofton, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 3DW (SU261623).	Web: www.croftonbeamengines.org
Sat 23 Sep 2017 11.00am-dusk	National Trust	Wey River Festival, Dapdune Wharf. Boaters and visitors alike are welcome to celebrate everything that is great about the river. There'll be plenty to do such as crafts, Surrey Wood Turners and many other foodie and activity stands. The illuminated pageant at dusk is the highlight of the day, lighting up the river from the centre of Guildford.	Dapdune Wharf, Wharf Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4RR (SU992502).	National Trust Navigations Office: 01483 561389 Email: riverwey@nationaltrust.org.uk Web: https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/
Sat 30 Sep 2017 10.00am-5.00pm	The Claverton Group	Claverton Pumping Station. Adults: £6.00, Children under 16 free, no concessions.	Claverton Pumping Station, Ferry Lane, Claverton, Bath, BA2 7BH (ST790643).	Tel: 01225 483001 Email: enquiries@claverton.org Web: www.claverton.org
Mon 2 Oct 2017 7.30pm-9.30pm	Wilts & Berks CT (Royal Wootton Bassett Br)	Crofton Beam Engines. Peter Turvey will give a talk about the Crofton Beam Engines. (Peter is Chair of the Crofton Branch of the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust.)	The Angel Hotel, 47 High Street, Wootton Bassett, Wilts, SN4 7AQ (SU068826).	Jenny Stratton: 01793 850310 Email: jenny.stratton@wbct.org.uk Web: www.wbct.org.uk
Thu 5 Oct 2017 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"Itchen Village, Itchen Ferry and the Diaper Family." Talk about a local subject by Cheryl Butler.	Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ (SU410184).	Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: alanjrose@btinternet.com
Sun 15 Oct 2017 10.00am	Somersetshire Coal CS	Walk - T.B.A.		

Waterways Events (continued from page 2)

Date/Time	Organiser	Details	Venue	Contact
Wed 18 Oct 2017 8.00pm	Basingstoke CS	"History and Restoration of the Cotswold Canals" - Clive and Jill Field will give a presentation consider the influences, past and present, of recreating the 36 mile link between the Rivers Severn and Thames.	Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham, GU24 8AZ (SU974615)	Malcolm Brickwood: 07437 200021 Email: chobham.talks@basingstoke-canal.org.uk Web: www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk
Thu 19 Oct 2017 7.30pm	Somersetshire Coal CS	The Contractor's Railway - The story so far by Adrian Tuddenham.	Radstock Working Men's Club, The Street, Radstock, BA3 3PR (ST688547). For location see map here	Steve Page: 01761 433418 Email: membership@coalcanal.org.uk
Thu 20 Oct 2017 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	"Heroes & Villains of the Basingstoke Canal" That this canal exists at all is largely due to a few people who appeared at critical points in its history. Their actions were in some cases soundly commercial or altruistic and in others fraudulent and criminal. Roger Cansdale tells the intriguing story of these heroes and villains.	The Green Dragon, Old Road, Alderbury, Salisbury, Wilts, SP5 3AR (SU182275).	Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: glover.3@btinternet.com Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841
Sat 21 Oct 2017 10.00am-5.00pm	Wilts & Berks CT	WBCT Annual General Meeting. 10.00am Presentations and visits. 2.00pm Formal meeting.	Ellendune Community Centre, Barrett Way, Wroughton, Swindon, SN4 9LW (SU145806).	Dauntsey Lock Canal Centre: 0845 226 8567 Email: info@wbct.org.uk Web: www.wbct.org.uk
Thu 2 Nov 2017 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"The Last Run." This year's production by Day-Star Theatre. Tickets now available - £10. See Chairman's Column on page 1.	Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ (SU410184).	Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: alanjrose@btinternet.com
Wed 15 Nov 2017 8.00pm	Basingstoke CS	"The RNLI 'it's not all at sea'" - Colin Brown will talk about the charity which rescues 24 people a day.	Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham, GU24 8AZ (SU974615)	Malcolm Brickwood: 07437 200021 Email: chobham.talks@basingstoke-canal.org.uk Web: www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk
Thu 16 Nov 2017 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	"The Thames Sailing Barge" These craft were commercial vessels with flat bottoms built for the shallow waters and rivers of the Thames Estuary in the 19th century. Gareth Jones, a member of the Thames Sailing Boat Trust, will recount the history of these craft and their use today.	The Green Dragon, Old Road, Alderbury, Salisbury, Wilts, SP5 3AR (SU182275).	Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: glover.3@btinternet.com Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841
Thu 16 Nov 2017 7.30pm	Somersetshire Coal CS	A Pictorial Journey - continued by Roger Halse.	Radstock Working Men's Club, The Street, Radstock, BA3 3PR (ST688547). For location see map here	Steve Page: 01761 433418 Email: membership@coalcanal.org.uk
Sun 19 Nov 2017 10.00am	Somersetshire Coal CS	Walk - The K&A at Bradford-on-Avon.	Meet at K&A car park, Bailey's Barn (off Moulton Drive), Bradford-on-Avon, BA15 1BX (ST826600).	Derrick Hunt 01225 863066 Email: workparty@coalcanal.org.uk
Thu 7 Dec 2017 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Annual Inter-Society Waterways Quiz. IWA Salisbury Group as last year's winning team (again) will be organising the Quiz and the evening is hosted by SCS. The traditional American Supper will finish off the evening.	Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ (SU410184).	Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: alanjrose@btinternet.com
Thu 14 Dec 2017 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	Christmas Dinner.	The Green Dragon, Old Road, Alderbury, Salisbury, Wilts, SP5 3AR (SU182275).	Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: glover.3@btinternet.com Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841
Wed 20 Dec 2017 8.00pm	Basingstoke CS	"Wildlife along the Canal" - Dave Williams and Kathryn Killner will give an overview of habitats along the canal and then specific information about things to look out for, in particular how to spot signs of otters, water voles and dormice, amongst other species.	Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham, GU24 8AZ (SU974615)	Malcolm Brickwood: 07437 200021 Email: chobham.talks@basingstoke-canal.org.uk Web: www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk

Tropical catfish found in Walsall Canal

A tropical fish usually found in the Amazon Basin in South America has been discovered in a Black Country canal. The leopard pleco, from the catfish family, was spotted by contractors who had drained Walsall Canal for maintenance work.

Sold to eat algae off the side of tanks, it is thought someone has dumped the unwanted fish in the waterway. The Canal and River Trust believes it must have been recently as it would not have survived a winter. John Ellis, national fisheries and angling manager with the trust, said the fish - which has not been sexed - had done well not to be eaten by a native pike.

The canal was drained between Locks 1 and 2 at Ryders Green for the work by MEN Fisheries on 7 August and an electric current passed through the water to temporarily stun the fish so they could be gathered in a net and removed.



"You'd expect to find the normal, native species when doing this, like perch, bream, or roach," he said. "But this was totally out of the blue.

"At first, the contractors thought it was a bull head - a native fish that is quite rare to find as they've suffered from pollution - but when they were looking at it, it was nothing of the sort.

"They took it back to their headquarters and put it into a tank. If a fish is eating, it's healthy and

it's happily now munching its way through the algae on the side of that tank."

But Mr Ellis appealed to people not to discard unwanted, foreign species into UK waterways. "Obviously someone decided they didn't want it and put it in the canal, but that's not the right thing to do as there's lots of issues there, especially around bacteria and parasites," he added.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/> 16 August 2017

Having your cake and ...

Unfortunately omitted from last month's Newsletter was this picture of this superb cake (as always) made by Pam McKeown to celebrate the society's jubilee year and was part of the post-AGM nibbles and chat.



An update on licensing consultation

Following the completion of the opening stages of their boat licensing consultation, Canal & River Trust have published a report on the views aired in the second stage of the consultation.

The second stage of the consultation involved a series of workshops, which were held across the country and included a cross section of the boating community.

In the next few weeks CRT will invite all boaters and boating groups to take part in the third and final stage of the consultation, where they will put forward a series of proposals on the future of boat licensing. These proposals will have been informed by the first two stages of the consultation.

Ian Rogers, customer service and operations director at the CRT, comments: "I'd like to thank everyone who has taken part in the boat licensing consultation so far – the conversations have been thought-provoking and are helping us shape the final stage of our consultation.

"The proposals will be published on our website, as well as hard copies available on request from our offices, so everyone will have a chance to see them.

"It is important that we have a full view of boaters' thoughts and feelings to help shape the future of licensing. Please take advantage of this opportunity to make your voices heard."

Find out more about the boat licensing consultation, including reports from stage one and stage two at <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/national-consultations>.

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/> 31 August 2017

Woking Grand Prix plan

McLaren has unveiled "absurdly ambitious" plans to bring a round of the Formula 1 World Championship to the streets of Woking.

A statement said: "The team believes that a street race around some of the Surrey town's most famous and celebrated spots would raise Woking's profile, enabling it to join the ranks of Monaco and Singapore as one of Formula 1's most glamorous and iconic race locations", with tongue firmly in cheek. McLaren said it has yet to formally present the plans to Woking Borough Council.

Kennet & Avon Waterways celebrates its volunteers



83-year-old John Webb, who volunteers for the Canal & River Trust, has recently been awarded a Gold Volunteer Award in recognition of him giving over 2,000 hours to help care for the historic Kennet & Avon Canal.

John is one of 40 volunteers that have been awarded a special gold badge by the Trust this year. The aim of the award is to celebrate the amazing contribution volunteers have made in helping to keep the nation's canals looking good for the thousands of visitors throughout the year.

John, who lives in Bath and is a retired Chartered Quantity Surveyor, has been volunteering with us since we were formed in 2012 and helped establish the Towpath Taskforce group in Bath. The group meets weekly and carries out various tasks including removing graffiti, cutting back overhanging trees, filling in potholes and painting lock gates.

As a keen boater John has taken an active role in restoring the Toll House at Dundas Wharf, the 'Hovel' at Bathampton, re-building the historic timber crane at Burbage Wharf and landscaping the canal junction with the River Avon at Widcombe. John is also Honorary Vice President of the Kennet & Avon Trust.

Steve Manzi, volunteer coordinator at the Canal & River Trust, said: "We are so lucky to have John volunteering with us along the canal and I'm delighted he has been awarded this Gold Award in recognition for all his hard work and commitment in helping us care for the waterways. Volunteers really help bring our waterways to life and we want more people just like John to donate their time and help us care for and preserve these 200-year-old open air museums so everyone can enjoy them."

John Webb, said: "It is a privilege to be given the opportunity to put something back into our waterway system which, as a boater, I have enjoyed exploring over the past nearly 50 years. A bonus is working with a wonderful band of fellow volunteers. Without their help and support being given this award simply would not have happened."

The Bath branch of the Towpath Taskforce meets every Thursday from 10.00am to 3.00pm and is always looking new volunteers. Find out how you can volunteer or donate money to support the work across the Kennet & Avon waterways region.

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/> 3 August 2017

The owner of Silverstone has confirmed it had activated a break clause to cease hosting the British Grand Prix after 2019.

McLaren's submission involves a number of new and innovative proposals, including the hosting of the Formula 1 paddock on floatable pontoons that will be anchored along the Woking-Basingstoke Canal.

What's the usual canal licence fee for Grand Prix cars?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/> & [Basingstoke Canal News Autumn 2017](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/)

Dogmersfield slip - nearly finished

Much to everyone's relief, navigation past the Dogmersfield slip re-opened in July. *Madam Butterfly*, a cruising boat operated on the Basingstoke Canal by the charity Accessible Cruising, passed through without difficulty - plenty of depth of water there.

It was clear though that a considerable amount of work still remained to be done and at the time of writing in mid-August it looks as if the contractors will not be disappearing until, probably, October.

Going through in July, the protruding heads of the ground anchors that are intended to keep the piles upright looked rather intimidating and dangerous for passing boats.

However, a more recent trip revealed that in front of them there are now rows of wooden posts with what looks like nicospan mesh between them backfilled to the piles. This produces a shelf about a foot

wide in which, presumably, plants will grow and eventually improve the look of this stretch of the canal again.

The ground anchors were apparently a major cause of delay for the project, as the original design pulled out of the soft ground.

The towpath itself between the slip site and Blacksmith's Bridge has also seen a huge amount of work, intended to raise it and reinforce the embankment. Again, this all looks a bit stark at the moment but will be green again by next summer.

According to the BCA's James Taylor, the work should keep things stable here for at least the next 125 years! Let's hope that John Pinkerton's cuttings and embankments don't have any more surprises in store for us.

Basingstoke Canal News Autumn 2017

Right: Work at the Dogmersfield cutting on the Basingstoke Canal in August

Below: Congratulations to our Chairman and Secretary who won the Alfred Ritchie Cockerel Award for the best working boat at the IWA Festival of Water



Off to the Festival of Water

Finally, we let go the ropes on Sunday 13th August and cruised in *Purton* up to Brinklow in 6 hours. On the Monday, we passed through Hawkesbury stop lock, on to Nuneaton and down the 11 locks at Atherstone. This involved 10 hours motoring by the time we moored at Fradley Junction. We made good use of the facilities the next morning. Now on the Trent & Mersey canal. Going through the locks we met Harry Arnold. He is one of the old enthusiasts: a writer and photographer. He keeps in touch with SCS with our Newsletter and our current situation was briefly discussed.

We moored that night at Branston of pickle fame. Next on through Burton-upon-Trent which is widely known for its brewing industry, which originated in the 13th century. We moored later near the old Willington Power Station site.

On Friday we cruised through the very interesting and attractive canal village of Shardlow, with the Trent & Mersey going through its centre, on our way to Derwent Mouth and the end of the T and M.

Next it was on down the River Trent, under the M1 through a flood lock with traffic lights. We continued down through the manned Sawley

lock, to the Erewash Canal at Trent Lock. Having passed through the lock, we moored up for two days after a pub lunch (our first). We then paired up with the Big Woolwich *Fulbourne* for the run up to the festival site at Ilkeston.

At this point it should be mentioned that in 1941, *Purton* and her butty *Stoulton*, on their way from Langley Mill to Croxley Mill in London, managed to burst through the bottom gates at Sandiacre Lock where they spent nearly a week carefully offloading their cargo of coal with the use of buckets. (We had no problem this time). The marks are still in the wall of the lock cottage were the lock beam swung back and hit the wall.

On the Monday, we left the site and headed up to Langley Mill at the head of the canal, watered up, stayed the night and headed back down with acquaintances from Byfleet Boat Club that we met last year. At the time of writing, we are on our festival mooring looking forward to the coming weekend.

Alan and Angela Rose

To be continued

SOUTHAMPTON CANAL SOCIETY

Established 1967

The objectives of the Society are to foster interest in canals and inland waterways, to assist in their preservation, restoration and development, and to give practical help on waterway projects.

Meetings are normally held on the first Thursday of each month at 7.45pm (see Waterways Events in this issue) at Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ. OS Grid Ref: SU410184. Contact the Secretary for further information.

This Newsletter is normally published during the first week of each month in time for the Society's meeting.

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthamptonCanalSociety>

Wilts & Berks Canal - Studley Grange

Between Royal Wootton Bassett and Swindon is the Studley Grange section of the Wilts & Berks Canal. Other than urban environments, this 1.2 kilometre stretch of canal is possibly the most difficult section of restoration to be undertaken. Nowhere else along the route through the countryside do we face the challenges of restoring the canal next to a landfill



site. The neighbouring land, which BIFFA have used as a landfill site for many years and which is now being closed, is physically much higher than it ever was at the time the old canal ran past it. But we did have an opportunity to make use of the landfill to save hundreds of thousands of pounds providing that we completed the project before closure of the site and addressed the major engineering challenges inherent in building the Studley Grange section.

We did it: a task that looked to us almost impossible from an engineering and funding point-of-view was completed through the support of our enthusiastic members and with funding from large donors and from our membership. Eventually we needed substantial loans from three of our members in 2016 and 2017, who have been exceptionally supportive of our endeavours, to complete the project and cope with the cost overruns. We are arranging the official opening of the Studley Grange section shortly.

However the scale of the works at Studley Grange has put the Trust under considerable strain and we have difficulties that we must face up to. The need for the loans arose because of significant cost overruns. These additional costs related to many factors, from the discovery of a great-crested newt through adverse weather to variations in the work undertaken, but also to significant failings by contractors. The Trust too has made mistakes in how the contract was negotiated and in how the project was initially managed. The current management of the Trust commissioned a quantity surveyor, expert in contracts management, to review the whole project and to identify where various parties may be at fault both inside and outside the Trust. This will form the basis of claims against those parties.

Nevertheless we have completed the work and now have to deal with

ensuring that we can repay those three members, who have lent us a total of almost £300,000.

We, as Chair of the Board of Trustees and as CEO, have been dealing with these issues since our appointment in the autumn of 2015, and the new Executive in July 2016 began the process of raising additional funds. We

may recover some money from our claims against the various parties, but much will have to come from the continuing support of our membership. We need to complete this now.

Needless to say we have learnt from the mistakes made in the past, and we have and will make changes to the way the Trust operates at all levels.

We have targeted raising an extra £25,000 each year from extra regular donations from members, and also from new membership. This is why we designated 2017 as the first membership-drive year. We will also need to increase the annual membership fee.

How can you help?

We are appealing to our membership, and other supporters, for you to donate a regular monthly amount of £5 or more to the Trust in order first to repay the loans and then to build our financial reserves for the future.

We need regular monthly payments, which can be made online by com-



pleting a Direct Debit or PayPal subscription using the link below. After completion of the form you may add a one-off donation.

Alternatively, if you can only make a one-off donation, then please also follow this link: <https://www.wbct.org.uk/member-donation?view=form>

Thank you

We are both confident that the Trust can recover from these mistakes of the past. The work that you have done over the past years is highly valued and appreciated both within and outside the Trust. We do not intend to let this extremely difficult, but temporary, situation damage the future of the Trust and all that we are striving to achieve.

Roderick Bluh, Chairman Jonathan Till, CEO 11th August 2017