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The end's in sight?

We've all now endured over eight months of varying restrictions on many aspects of our lives through the pandemic. Laura and I had been planning a trip on *Stanton* to the Llangollen Canal as work on widening the bottom lock at Hurlleston was due to be complete at the end of March. Several previous attempts to use the lock in our boat had failed.

Just a few days before our departure, the lockdown was announced. No boating was the instruction. The national lockdown came to an end at the beginning of July although Leicester went into a local lockdown.

Apart from a very few short one-day voyages, we only managed a single four day trip away on the Oxford Canal before lockdown was imposed again.

Now as the lockdown is being lifted at the beginning of December, we wonder will the Christmas relaxations lead to another lockdown? Will vaccination mean an end to the restrictions? When will we boat again? Will it be a Happy New Year? I do hope so.

Peter Oates

Chairman's Column

Welcome to all our members on this last newsletter of the year, and what a year it has been.

We had all hoped when Covid-19 materialised earlier in the year that it was not going to last.

How wrong we were, our meetings cancelled and even now we do not know when we will be able to start again.

I do wonder if you, the present members, will ever meet up again.

Every Newsletter this year has asked for some feedback regarding AGMs etc but as yet we have received none so you all must be happy or have given up on the Society.

Normally in December we have our inter-society quiz when we all decide who will win so that they have to set questions the next year. This year no quiz.

January is our picture evening but I would only have pictures of my roof rebuild plus some good Thrush pictures.

At the beginning of November we had our AGM via email between myself, Aelred Derbyshire and Angela our Secretary. A report, for what its worth, is in the current Newsletter (see below).

At this point I would like to thank Peter Oates for turning out our Newsletter through thick and thin.

Lets hope the news of the possibility of a vaccine will make 2021 a better year and we can venture out and afloat again.

Please have a good Christmas.

Alan Rose

SCS Annual General Meeting Report - November 2020

Our annual AGM for 2019/2020 was carried out via email on the 5th November 2020 between

Chairman: Alan Rose

Treasurer: Aelred Derbyshire

Secretary: Angela Rose

The AGM agenda had previously been printed in the November Newsletter.

Item 1 : To approve the minutes of AGM held on the 4th July 2019. This was proposed by Alan Rose and seconded by Aelred Derbyshire. It was agreed by all committee member at the meeting that this item was accepted.

Item 2: To receive and approve the Chairman and secretary report and Accounts for 2019/2020.

These were published in the June Newsletter. Proposed that these to be accepted by Aelred Derbyshire and seconded by Angela Rose. It was agreed by all present that these should be accepted.

Item 3: To agree the continued appointment of the current Officers and committee until the next AGM. All agreed to continue till the next AGM.

Meeting then closed

Angela Rose, Hon Secretary

President update

Historic narrowboat *President* could be back in steam by Easter 2021, according to David Powell of the Friends of President, writing in the November edition of their newsletter. Thanks to a great response to their recent appeal, the costs of a new boiler have almost been met although funds are still needed for fitting. It is proposed to fit a hybrid part welded/part riveted boiler which should be more durable and will be made to the same layout, which will help as most pipework will be in place. Donations can still be made at www.bclm.co.uk or www.justgiving.com



Towpath Talk - December 2020 issue

President at Black Country Museum in 1986

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to All Our Readers

IWA Launches IWA TV – Live streaming for the inland waterways

IWA TV launches this month bringing live streamed events to the living rooms and boats of waterways enthusiasts across the country. As well as live events, more than 30 hours of carefully curated content is now available to watch on demand.

Whether viewers are interested in the heritage and history of the waterways, restoration projects or sustainable boating and what the future of the waterways might look like, there is something for everyone.

The Inland Waterways Association, the charity that campaigns to protect and restore 6,500 miles of inland waterways, has expanded its programme of webinars this year. Volunteers and presenters from across the waterways sector have been invited to discuss issues affecting the waterways today, as well as the rich history and heritage that make them so special.

IWA National Chair, Paul Rodgers, has hosted many of these events. He says “As the impact of the lockdown became apparent earlier this year, we started to move some of our events online. This initiative has demonstrated the resilience and adaptability of our volunteers and supporters.

“Members who would not normally be able to get to physical meetings have also been able to take part. Our campaigns have been brought to life with these interactive live video broadcasts in a way that we hadn’t imagined at the beginning of the year.”

Visit www.waterways.org.uk/tv to see details of future events and watch recordings on demand. All events and recordings are available to view free of charge.

Towpath Talk - 9 November 2020

Canal & River Trust publishes Boater Report 2020

The Canal & River Trust has published its Boater Report 2020 for its 34,500 leisure licence holders. The Report sets out how the Trust generates its income, including the contribution from boaters, and how that money is invested in the network.

The Report will be provided as an e-mailable PDF which will be included with licence renewals and new boat licence applications. A small number of printed copies will be available for those boaters without email. A pocket-sized fold-out containing all the key information will be available as handouts for volunteer lock keepers to give to boaters.

It details how income increased by £6.1 million in 2019/20 to £216.1 million and spend on charitable activities increased by £10.9 million, largely due to the emergency repair works at Toddbrook Reservoir.

Underlying expenditure on core maintenance, repairs and infrastructure works continued to grow, including £8.2 million spent on dredging (2018/19: £7.2 million) and £7.9 million spent on vegetation management (2018/19: £7.6 million).

This year the Report contains profiles of twelve colleagues and volunteers, so boaters can get a sense of the wide range of jobs carried

out across the Trust to help keep the waterways safe and open for cruising, and ensure boaters’ needs are met.



Above: Leaving Lock 1 on the Rochdale Canal at Sowerby Bridge.

Left: The Grand Union Canal and Marsworth Reservoir.

Bottom: Dundas Aqueduct on the Kennet & Avon Canal.



out across the Trust to help keep the waterways safe and open for cruising, and ensure boaters’ needs are met.

Jon Horsfall, head of customer service support at the Canal & River Trust, comments: “The Trust’s core purpose is maintaining the 2,000 miles of canals and rivers we look after and making the experience of using them as good as we can.

“Boaters play a central role in helping to fund the work with around 10% of our income coming from boat licences. The Report is designed to give licence holders an overview of how much it costs to maintain the waterways, where the Trust’s money comes from and where it gets spent.

“In what has been a difficult year for everyone, we have worked hard to keep the waterways open within the Government’s coronavirus

“It has also made us appreciate even more the vast range of skills held by our colleagues and volunteers whose efforts are vital to the safe operation of our canals and rivers. Without them, and their tireless work, during lockdown and beyond, we would not have a navigable waterway network. This Report celebrates just a few of these roles.

“Boaters’ feedback is important to us, with positive comments as welcome as constructive criticism, and we’d urge boaters to let us know when they’re happy with the service they’ve received from the Trust. Meanwhile we’ll continue working to make sure the waterways are open for boaters to cruise for years to come.”

The Boater Report can be viewed here:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/boaterreports>

Towpath Talk - 30 October 2020



Red Diesel

IWA have submitted the following response to HM Treasury's consultation on removing access to red diesel for propulsion on the inland waterways from April 2022:

Biodiesel more effective

In line with our work on sustainability, we believe that increased use of biodiesel would be more effective at reducing emissions in the longer term. We think that red diesel should be retained until there is wider distribution and use of biofuels. It is also likely that the cost to Government of introducing and managing the proposed change will exceed any additional income from the increased taxation.

Impact on waterways businesses

A key concern of the proposals is the impact on suppliers (including boatyards and fuel boats). The likelihood that many businesses may decide to stop selling diesel altogether would make it difficult to obtain fuel in some areas. We also object to waterborne freight not being given the same right to continue to use red diesel as railways, as this is likely to drive more cargo on to the roads. Roving fuel boats will see increased operating costs, despite the essential service they provide. This would threaten a loss of livelihoods as well as an important aspect of living waterways heritage.

Tax relief on white diesel

We welcome the proposed tax relief on any white diesel used for

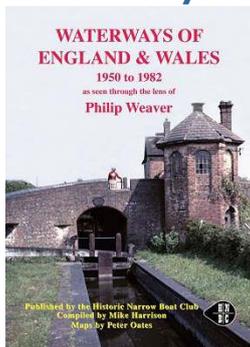
IWA's call for more electric charging points

The chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the Waterways, Michael Fabricant MP, has written to the Chancellor asking for more electric charging points on the waterways. The IWA says:

Our vision for sustainable boating outlines how developments in more environmentally friendly propulsion can help the inland waterways meet the UK's zero carbon commitments. The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the Waterways learned more about the subject of sustainable propulsion on 10th November. MPs and Lords were joined at the meeting by IWA, boating organisations, navigation authorities and other stakeholders, to hear the latest thinking. A lively discussion followed four expert presentations and concluded when Michael Fabricant MP, Chair of the Group, committed to write to the Chancellor on behalf of the APPGW. His letter (see below) focuses on 3 key issues:

- the need to invest in infrastructure to deliver more electric charging points across the system;
- a proposed boat engine scrappage scheme to encourage conversion of existing boats; and
- a move towards greater distribution and use of biofuels. This step is favoured, over the current proposal by HMRC and HM Treasury to move from red diesel to white for inland waterways craft.

Waterways of England and Wales 1950 - 1982



I would like to tell readers of a new book published by the Historic Narrow Boat Club entitled 'Waterways of England and Wales 1950 - 1982'. Following on from the successful first volume of Philip Weaver's photographs of the Birmingham Canal Navigations, HNBC has now published the promised second book. This soft back volume of 136 pages covers most of the other waterways of England and Wales, with 220 photographs taken by the late Mr Weaver between 1950 and 1982.

The book is divided into 6 chapters each covering an area of the country. Each chapter starts with one or more maps detailing the area covered with the location of each of the

domestic use, with the supplier becoming responsible for claiming the rebate rather than the current self-declaration process. Previous research has indicated fuel typically used 60% for propulsion and 40% for domestic requirements. However, we believe the new relief scheme should allow a flexible rate to accommodate fluctuations throughout the year, and variation between boaters who use a lot of fuel for propulsion and those who use less.

Tank flushing

While boats with separate tanks could continue to use red diesel for non-propulsion uses, it is unlikely that suppliers would continue to sell both types of diesel. There is also concern that although boat-owners will not be required to flush their tanks to remove any red diesel dye, it is proposed that suppliers will have to flush their tanks and we think this is unnecessary and unhelpful.

Charity exemption

There is also an increased cost to registered charities who were previously able to use red diesel at the full rebated rate. Their activities include getting disadvantaged or disabled children afloat or operating trip-boats to raise funds for restoring a waterway restoration. We believe that charities should also be exempt.

<https://www.waterways.org.uk/about-us/news> - 23 October 2020

The presentations

First off, Bowman Bradley, chair of IWA's Sustainable Propulsion Group, presented IWA's viewpoint. He pointed out that policy makers will need to develop a legislative framework to meet the sector's vision. For instance, Government would need to invest in a recharging infrastructure, to include electric charging points, hydrogen technologies as well as provide more support for biofuels.

Second up, Jonathan Collins of Cadent Gas highlighted the growing importance and developments of hydrogen-based technologies in reducing emissions from the residential, transport and maritime sector. Philip Whiffin from the University of Warwick demonstrated that the low energy and low power requirements of the majority of canal-based pleasure craft, made battery-based solutions feasible and cost effective as replacements for traditional hydrocarbon-based engines. Finally, the Group also heard about a scheme led by Oxfordshire County Council. Marine engine manufacturers, electric vehicle and infrastructure providers and other user and stakeholder groups are working together on a feasibility study to install electric charging points on the Oxford Canal.

[Michael Fabricant's letter](#) can be downloaded from the IWA website.

The [IWA's Vision for Sustainable Propulsion](#) can also be downloaded from their website

<https://www.waterways.org.uk/about-us/news> - 27 November 2020

photographs. Each image has a concise description describing its location and historical significance.

Commercial carrying was in decline at this period but industrial archaeologists as well as canal enthusiasts should find plenty of interest.

A perfect Christmas present, this book is priced at £16 plus £2.75 second class post and packing, can be ordered from the HNBC website at <https://www.hnbc.org.uk/catalogue/overview/maps-books>.

Oh, nearly forgot, I produced the maps.

Peter Oates

Crossing the M4 near Swindon

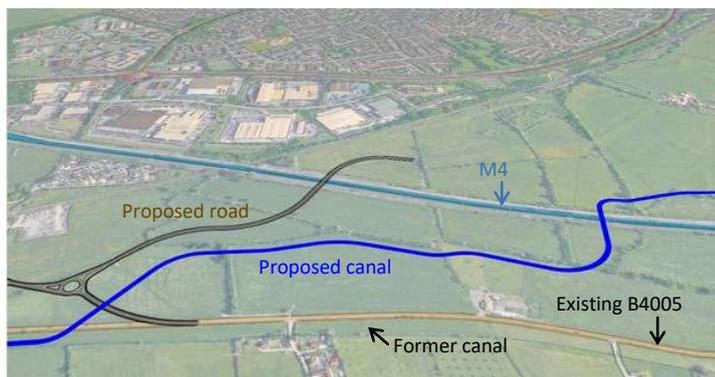
The Wilts & Berks Canal Trust's grand ambition, the restoration of the Wilts & Berks canal to link the English northern and southern waterway systems, has been clouded for many years by uncertainty about obtaining a crossing of the M4. This is about to change.

Highways England, the company responsible for England's motorways and major A roads, has awarded over £42,000 towards the Trust's feasibility studies via its Environment and Wellbeing fund. This fund is one of four standalone – or designated – funds which the organisation uses to support initiatives that deliver lasting benefits for road users, the environment and communities across England.

Gordon Olson, Chief Executive of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust, said: "We are very grateful to Highways England for their generous award and look forward to working in partnership to deliver this important feasibility study.

"The M4 is the biggest barrier to fully restoring the canal and linking England's northern and southern waterways networks, so the results could be the key to unlocking the potential of the entire project.

"In the short term it would allow us to connect the existing stretch in the Wichelstowe housing development to the north of the motorway, currently under restoration as far as the M4, with the line towards Royal Wootton Bassett to the south, more than doubling the length of



canal in water in Swindon and providing a valuable new amenity for the local community.

"In the longer term we hope it would also help to demonstrate the benefits of restoration to other towns along the historic route, including Melksham, Chippenham, Calne, Cricklade and Wantage, attracting new funding to finally start connecting all of the stretches together.

"The Wilts & Berks Canal, with its towpath and blue-green corridor, could eventually provide an important new source of local employment, tourism and recreation, as well as establishing vital new habitats for local wildlife."

Highways England Project Manager Ian Cole said: "We're delighted to support the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust with funding to scope out this exciting waterways project.

"The long-term initiative to restore the canal could also realise a great walking and cycling route and environmental improvements, all of which will attract more visitors to the area, and so help the local economy.

"We're investing in the environment and communities surrounding our road network, as well as the people travelling and working on it, to make a positive difference to people's lives. Our aim is to address social and environmental issues and add real value to society."

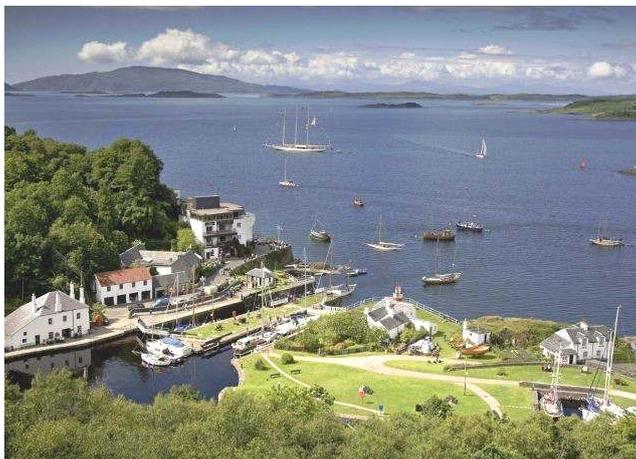
<https://www.wbct.org.uk> - 11 November 2020

Improvement work on the Crinan Canal

As part of a major investment, the first phase of major improvement works along the Crinan Canal in Scotland will start this winter.

This £3.7 million investment in the Crinan Canal is part of Scottish Canals' Asset Management Strategy which prioritises improvements on all canal infrastructure in Scotland, based on condition and risk. In addition to this work on the Crinan Canal, improvement work will also take place in the Caledonian Canal which links the east and west coasts of Scotland.

The Crinan Canal provides a short cut from the Clyde to the West Coast allowing vessels to avoid the trip around the Mull of Kintyre and the exposed North Channel. Peter Robinson, the Head of Engineering at Scottish Canals commented, "This year sees the first phase in an anticipated three-year programme of works on the Crinan Canal. The focus of the £3.7 million capital investment will allow us to improve the lock gates on the eastern section of the canal at Ardrishaig, safeguarding their operation for another 40 to 50 years. We're not only commencing lock gate replacement works this winter, we're



also investing in dredging. We will be undertaking the survey and design works on the western section of the canal. This will ensure Britain's most beautiful shortcut can be enjoyed by all for years to come."

AmcoGiffen will undertake the works between November 2020 and March 2021, and this will require the full closure of the canal. The whole of the eastern section of the Canal, from Lock 8 down to the Sea Lock 1 at Ardrishaig will be drained down to allow work on the replacing and repair of lock gates to be carried out at one time. The replacement of lock gates will take place at Locks 1 through to 4 and there will also be improvement work to some of the bridges across the canal

In the New Year, a programme of dredging will be undertaken at Ardrishaig Harbour and at critical locations along the canal.

[Maritime Journal](#) - 9 November 2020

The two ends of
"Britain's most beautiful shortcut"
Top: The locks at Crinan
Bottom: Entrance lock at Ardrishaig

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 Village 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>

Tickner's Heath road crossing gets underway

Work is moving up a gear at Tickner's Heath in Alford, where volunteers have begun a two- to three-year project to create a new canal cut and two bridges.

The route of the canal is blocked here by the causeway which carries Dunsfold Road. Originally, a brick arch bridge built in the 1810s carried the road over the canal but by 1913 the original bridge had been demolished and the road realigned onto an earth causeway. The Trust looked at several options before deciding that the best solution was to avoid the obstruction altogether and so in an ambitious project volunteers will construct a new length of canal, approximately 180m long, to divert around the causeway and create a new road bridge at a point where Dunsfold Road is straight.



The road bridge will be similar to that constructed by volunteers at nearby Compasses, at the entrance to Dunsfold Park. This bridge was recognised with a highly commended award in the Waverley Design Awards 2019.

A short length of temporary road will be built to take traffic around the bridge site during construction and a separate, parallel bridge will be built for the use of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, along with a new footpath.

With both bridges in place and the road re-opened to traffic, the new canal cut will be excavated. The last 100 yards of the existing canal will be partially filled and landscaped with areas of wetland and replacement tree planting. Hedgerow planting will add 75m of native species to the site and a reptile pond and hibernaculum are to be added.

Volunteer working parties operating several times a week have so far built a compound area on an adjacent agricultural field, created culverts and ditching, erected fencing and constructed a base for power connections. Tree protection fencing is now being installed, along with screening around the compound.

Contractors will be employed for piling, but volunteers will carry out a significant proportion of the construction and landscaping work.

<https://weyarun.org.uk> - 29 October 2020

Left: The duckweed covered canal seen looking west from the road on the earth causeway. Lower left: The proposed layout showing the diverted canal. Below: The new bridge will look like Compasses Bridge seen here.

