

# 58 | Fifty Eight

## The Magazine of The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

*'Promoting the upkeep of the canals to ensure that  
the heritage is looked after for all to enjoy'*



### Reservoir Cottage by Lock 53 on The Worcester & Birmingham Canal



The Inland  
Waterways  
Association

Keeping our waterways alive

Corporate Member



Worcester-Birmingham  
& Droitwich  
Canals Society

[www.wbdcs.org.uk](http://www.wbdcs.org.uk)  
Issue 552 Autumn 2020  
Special Digital Edition

# Monthly Meetings

Our meetings are usually held in the meeting room  
behind The Weighbridge, Alvechurch B48 7SQ

**Regular Monthly Meetings will be  
reinstated as soon as it is safe to do so**

## Future Meetings

**'Canal Pushers' & 'River Rats'**

*A Talk By Author Andy Griffie on his Novels*

*(We are hoping to invite members to a live 'Zoom' meeting  
at 8pm, November 10th for this presentation).*

**'Christmas Musical Bingo' with Tony**

*on 'Zoom' at 8pm, December 8th.*

**Walk and Slides on the History of the Water Supply to  
Birmingham by Lynn Weaver of Bartley Green (TBC)**

**The River Arrow and its Influence on the History of Redditch  
by Anthony Green (TBC)**

# The Magazine of the Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

Issue 552 Autumn 2020

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We have a vibrant **Facebook** page, why not pay a visit and 'like' us?

[www.facebook.com/wbdcs.org.uk](http://www.facebook.com/wbdcs.org.uk)

We are also on **Twitter** please follow us @wbdcs58

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An email group has been set up for members to share and receive information relating to the society. To join in please send a blank email to: [wbdcs@yahoogroups.com](mailto:wbdcs@yahoogroups.com)

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**Opinions expressed in Fifty Eight are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Society, but are published as matters of interest**

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**Copy date for the next issue: November 14th 2020**

# Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

**'Promoting the upkeep of the canals to ensure  
the heritage is looked after for all to enjoy'**

**(Registered Charity No 500159)**

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**VICE PRESIDENT: Sir Peter Luff**

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**chairman@wbdc.org.uk**

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# Chair's Notes

## Hi Everyone

Back in June I said "what a funny 3 months we have had." I can now say what a funny old 7 months we have had. We have gone from lockdown to an easing of restrictions, back to lockdown, back to easing of restrictions and back to local lockdowns. Myself, I have been down to check on 'Mon Amour' only twice since March. During a normal summer I would have gone to Edgbaston to watch Warwickshire Cricket, especially the one day and the T20/20 games. We have had to cancel holidays in the UK and two trips abroad. Yes, it's been a funny summer. I hope you are all keeping safe and doing your best to follow the guidance given.

I have to admit I am jumping on the bandwagon a little because I now have 2400 packs of 2 face masks to sell. Each pack will contain 2 designs. I had to find something to do !!! One of the packs includes a poppy design and I will donate 50p for each pack I sell to British Legion. The other 2 packs I will donate 50p to the Canal Society. Each pack will cost £6.50.

Unfortunately we are still struggling with getting 'Cecilia' back up and running. The small case of sorting out the floor has escalated into a major problem which has cost the Society so far in excess of £12,000. As I am writing these notes we are having difficulty in getting the person we commissioned to do the work to complete it which puts us in a very uneasy situation. Because 'Cecilia' has not been used for a long time she is looking very much unloved and the committee has asked Martin to organise getting the outside cleaned to stop her deteriorating any more than she already is. I know that Martin and Bill have already done some sterling work on cleaning the roof. What we need to do is to remove the rust patches and recover with anti rust as much as we can. Hopefully the 'Cecilia' sub-committee will help Martin and Bill sort this out.

The committee have discussed how we can have any future meetings and we've decided to have some 'virtual' meetings. We've lined up author Andy Griffie for November 10th and online 'Christmas Musical Bingo' with Tony on December 8th. These will be presented via the 'Zoom' App. This can be done on a tablet (with Internet connection), mobile phone or computer.

*You can download Zoom from Google Play Store or the Apple Store*

In the meantime please stay safe.

*David Wheeler*



# Editorial

## *Hello Again Dear Readers*

Welcome to the latest edition of your favourite magazine. Somewhat later than usual we know but at least society members have been able to keep up to date with some things via the '58 Update' and social media. Many thanks to Tony and Mary for keeping us up to speed with this.

Unfortunately the society is still in the position of having no income other than the very valued membership subscriptions and an increasing number of voluntary contributions. Society meetings still cannot be held because of the 'covid' restrictions and all of the events that we usually engage with around this time of year have been cancelled. This includes the Black Country Boating Festival, the Stourbridge Bonded Warehouse weekend, the Victorian Christmas Fayre in Worcester as well as our own meetings and Summer walks. All very sad and costly to so many people and organisations but necessary if the country is to control the virus that has wreaked havoc throughout much of the world.

On a more positive note, in the last edition of '58', we alluded to the fact that the Alvechurch Boat Centre's bookings had 'gone through the roof'. What an understatement! We have had similar reports from other locally based hire boat companies which is great news. Having recently returned from cruising several waterways, the number of craft seen moving around the system has been staggering. So many privately owned boats, as well as shared and hired craft, have been evident with some 'weird and wonderful' designs on show (*below*).



The canals can be such welcoming and friendly places to be on with only really one example seen somewhat contrary to this and that was on the Grand Union canal between Camp Hill and Knowle locks. For such a wide waterway there was little opportunity to moor either because of silt or a lack of mooring bollards, piling or rings. To make matters worse the towpath is generally very good for everyone except boaters as much of it is all concrete so mooring stakes are just impossible to hammer in. This situation was probably reflected by the lack of boats on there who could possibly have also been discouraged by the amount of rubbish in the canal – so unnecessary. Negative comments over!



In the last edition we also reported on social distancing on the towpaths and the priority given to pedestrians. Canal and River Trust has also taken this up with their latest campaign to 'Stay Kind and Slow Down'. Further details about this campaign will appear further on. However, there still does appear to be a lack of towpath signage about this unless readers know differently? Can't help thinking though that if the campaign is aimed at for example cyclists, how many of them actually access the C&RT web site to read up on this? Again if readers have further input on this let's hear it please.

Bill, the society's volunteer co-ordinator, is apparently all smiles now that socially distanced work parties are soon to commence – more on this further on. Some of this may include cleaning the exterior of the society narrow boat 'Cecilia' which really does need doing having been unable to be used this year. The interior is yet to be completed despite several deadlines being agreed. Are there any willing carpenters out there with services to offer this registered charity?

Things are moving forward with the Lapal Canal restoration. The new 'winding hole' at Selly Oak is being worked on as we write and there is now much easier access to the 'Battery Park' retail site via the towpath and a new bridge over the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. More on this later.

Many thanks again to this edition's contributors without whom there would a lot of blank pages. If any readers have any news, views, items, anything to be included at all please get to us in the usual way. All of the contact details are on page 3 for your convenience. In the meantime, stay kind and slow down but above all, keep safe please.

Enjoy the read.

*John Hemingway*

## Lock 58

### Lock 58

Most of us will readily identify with the iconic Lock 58 at the top of the Tardebigge Flight as it is one of the deepest narrow locks on the canal system and is recognised by the 'Transport Trust' (right) whose red plaque is displayed on the old side pond wall.

But where is this other Lock 58 (below), or is it the same one we all know from a different perspective?

Let's know your thoughts please so we can reveal all in the next edition.



# 'Around & About'

In the last edition of '58' we asked about the wooden carving of a swan just alongside lock number 1 in Worcester. The following reply arrived soon afterwards from Timothy Booker:

*Thank you for your recent copy of '58. A great read as always. I noticed at the back, a comment talking of the Wooden Swan at Lock 1 in Diglis. I purchased and had the swan installed with volunteers if that helps.*

Kind regards,  
Timothy Booker  
Area Operations Manager, Worcester-  
Birmingham, Droitwich & North Stratford Canals

Many thanks Tim for your input here and well done to the volunteers who installed - looks very fitting. '58' understands that Tim has been unwell of late and hopes that he is now recovered.



In the same section of the last edition we also featured a brick structure with the date 1911 carved into one of the bricks. Judging by the lack of responses to this we can only assume that many people were too embarrassed to offer any answer! It is, or was, a gents' urinal situated on the towpath side between locks 1 and 2 at Diglis.

*No prizes for guessing when it was last used or by whom!*

## New Member Welcome

The latest new member to the society is **Martin Williams** from Droitwich. '58' offers its customary welcome and hopes to meet Martin at any future events whenever they are able to commence.

If any members need to amend their contact details please let the membership secretary know. We are particularly eager to receive any email addresses. So if you have one and don't mind receiving your copy of '58' using this method please inform our Membership Secretary Joe Morley (*details on page 4*)

## Obituary



It is with great sadness that '58' has to report the passing of Gordon Britton who lived on Aqueduct Lane in Alvechurch. Mrs. Britton is also being cared for following a severe condition last year. Both had been members of the society for many years but had been unable to attend any activities. The society's condolences have been passed to their nephew Bruce Connop.



# Membership Reminder

## Message to Members

Membership Year Ended 30th Sep 2020. With everything else going on right now you may have missed it, but we would like to remind WB&DCS members that subscriptions for the forthcoming year 2020-21 are now due. Thanks to Covid-19 our revenue streams have completely dried up because all our fund-raising activities have of necessity been cancelled. This is particularly bad news because, without going into too much detail, it coincides with the unexpectedly high cost of restoring Cecilia to her former glory, so it's particularly important that we ensure that our income from subscriptions is maintained at their current level.

The message we circulated at the end of July has resulted in the receipt of just under half the annual subscriptions due on 30th September. In addition, we are extremely grateful to those members who have been able to add a voluntary donation to their basic sub; this has reduced considerably the level of stress suffered by our Treasurer, Trevor Hyde. If you haven't yet renewed, may we once again ask that you consider making an extra donation, however small because, as Tesco frequently reminds us, "every little helps!"

Payment methods. A number of members have set up Standing Orders for their subs with their bank. This is by far the best payment method for several reasons. If that applies to you, please let Trevor or myself know, and please ignore the following. The rates are again fixed at £12 for Single, £14 for Families and £25 for Corporate membership. You can pay by cheque made out to WB & DCS and sent to Joe Morley, Membership Secretary at 82 Longboat Lane, Stourport on Severn, DY13 8AE.

Online. Alternatively, if you use online banking, you can pay by BACS to WB & DCS, sort code 30-96-97 a/c no. 00061476, using your name as the reference. If you use this method, please email Joe to let him know you have done so. If you feel able to donate a sum in addition to your basic subscription, please let him know how much is sub and how much is intended as an additional donation. Joe's email is morleyj827@gmail.com. Whichever method you select, you will receive an acknowledgement and a membership card for the year 2020-21. Until the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted we regret that we cannot accept cash payments, and PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH THROUGH THE MAIL. If cash is your only option, please give Joe a ring or text him on 07870 303413 for his advice.

Gift Aid. Finally, in respect of Gift Aid, we will assume that your eligibility remains as per this year. If your circumstances have altered please let us know.

*Joe Morley*

## Towpath Closure

### Worcester & Birmingham Canal

Location: Sixways Stadium Lock 11 to Tibberton Bridge 25, Worcester & Birmingham Canal.  
Starts At: Lock 11. Ends At: Bridge 25, Tibberton Road.

Monday 14th September 2020 08:00 until Friday 27th November 2020 18:00.

The towpath will be closed from Lock 11, Sixways Stadium to Tibberton Bridge 25 for restoring and widening works. The works, which is funded by Highways England, working in conjunction the Canal & River Trust, will include a new all-weather towpath and access improvements. The navigation remains open but workboats are being utilised to undertake the towpath improvements, so there may be short delays whilst boats are being loaded/ unloaded within this area. Please observe local diversions or seek alternative routes. To enable construction, all access points onto and off the canal along the construction site will be closed.



# ‘Nature Notes’

## Mary Green

**Nature Notes September 2020**

In July, I wrote about the loss of young waterfowl this year on the canal, because of high human footfall and increased predator activity. Nature has proved very resilient though, with more than usual second broods of birds. The pair of swans which nest near Bittell did lose their first cygnets, but they had another go and raised four lovely young swans in their second clutch. And right at the end of August I’ve seen a mallard with a new brood of tiny ducklings, undoubtedly one that lost her first ones.

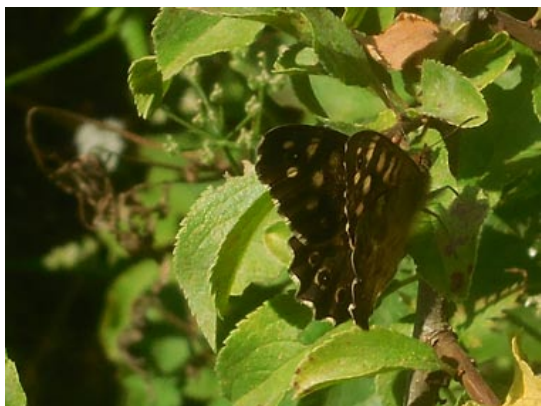
There seem to be fewer insects than some years too, and I don’t know why. There have been plenty of butterflies and moths but not so many bees, hoverflies or wasps. Here there was a distinct lack of dragonflies and damselflies in July and early August, though I have at last seen some in late August, I wondered if the dredging of this stretch of the canal last autumn had disturbed their eggs or larvae, also known as nymphs, which live in the water.

Damselflies are pale blue and quite delicate-looking, and you often see them paired up during mating – which is the only time they seem to keep still! Demoiselles are bigger and darker blue and altogether more solid. There are lots of dragonflies including hawkers, darters, skimmers and chasers, many different colours. All have transparent wings. One of the old names for them is “devil’s needle” and there were many myths about them – that they stung and could kill people and animals. This isn’t true, but they are not harmless to other creatures! These pretty insects are predators both as larvae and adults. They feed on other insects and crustaceans and even in the case of some of the really big ones, tadpoles and young fish. So, dragon seems a more appropriate name for them than the delicate sounding damsel.

It looks like being a good autumn for fruit, especially the plum family. Blackthorn bushes are full of sloes, ripening quite early though not quite ready yet. Although very bitter, they can be cooked and eaten with sweeter fruit like apples or made into jams and jellies as well as sloe gin. There are bushes full of them all along the canal. In some places there are the larger bullace or wild plums, still rather sour but just about edible raw when really ripe. They often grow near bridges, presumably where seeds have been dropped. And you may also find damsons, not a native tree but escaped from orchards. These are highly edible raw, cooked, or made into jam – or gin.

Hawthorn and rose bushes are full of haws and hips this year after a good flowering season. They are also edible like all their family. Apples are a bit more erratic. I think some of them must have been caught by frost or not pollinated, while others are again laden with fruit. The ones near the canal here are not so good as some years. But the blackberries have been great – grab some quickly before 29th September when the devil spits on them (or worse)! Ash keys are spectacular this year too, following the warm spring.

Flowers keep going into September, especially along the water’s edge which favours late flowering species like ragwort, angelica, purple loosestrife, mugwort and other lovely old herbs. The buds are just coming on ivy – time for the holly blue butterfly to lay her second brood of eggs so her larvae can feed on the buds. There’s a great variety to see before it all dies down for winter.



Top Left: Swans with second brood  
 Middle Left: Black Tailed Skimmer Dragonfly  
 Bottom Left: Hawthorn Berries

Top Right: Banded Demoiselle  
 Middle Right: Speckled Wood  
 Bottom Right: Purple Loosestrife



# Book Review

## 'A Kid off the Bank' by Colin Sidaway (ISBN 978-1- 9163934-2-4)

'58' was approached by author and publisher Dr. Colin Sidaway, with the kind offer of a copy of his latest book titled as per above. Colin was born in Lye but moved up to Yorkshire in the mid 1980s, currently residing in Harrogate. His interests include industrial archaeology, transport history and story writing.

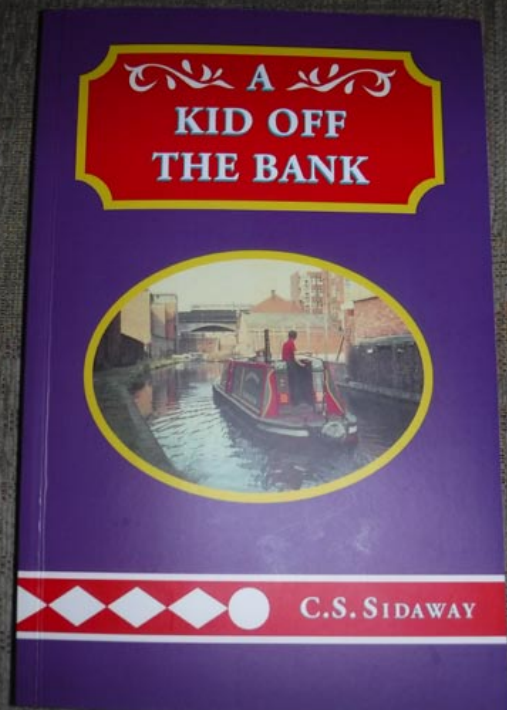
The book is about a man, Josh Woodward, walking along the canal in Walsall with his young son Oliver. Josh starts to reminisce about the life he had had on the canals and how it all seems to have changed so much. Oliver asks his Dad about his life on the canals as he hadn't ever spoken to him about it before.

He then relates to his son the long and detailed story of his past life interjected with words from Oliver making it sound just like a story he was sharing with him.

Josh had been regarded as somewhat of a posh kid by attending Walsall Grammar School in the 1930s. His father had wanted him to have experience of hard work, long hours, out all weathers and dealing with different sorts of people before he joined the family's leather business. His father subsequently arranged an apprenticeship with a family who worked the canals.

Much of the story he tells Oliver mentions so many places in and around the canal system well known today by boaters. The story is illustrated by old photographs from his late friend, John Haddock, who spent his life around Walsall taking pictures of anything to do with transport.

If readers want to find out more of this superb human story the book is available, we are informed, at bookshops for about £7.99 or just let us know if you wish to borrow the copy that Colin kindly sent us.



# Alarum Theatre

## News from Kate & Heather

We have been Highly Commended by the Women's History Network for our I Dig Canals project. Here's what Chair, Elspeth King wrote: *'The panel were particularly taken with training you offered to your volunteers and the knowledge gap your project has filled with this important piece of industrial heritage from a female perspective. You came very close to winning.'*

See <https://bit.ly/30B6Bac> for more information.

Heather has written a blog for their website, telling the story of the 1970 Dudley Dig and Cruise, using some of the memories we gathered during the project. Check the website if you would like to read it: <https://bit.ly/2GvqfgW>

We're also delighted to share some new work you can watch online:

Video: Inland Waterways Association Webinar: <https://bit.ly/30ATO7O>

In the midst of world changing events, August 11th 1945 was the quiet start of the waterways own revolution. In this webinar video, Kate Saffin tells the story of the first meeting between the Aickmans and the Rolts and the early days of the Inland Waterways Association.

Film: Reminiscences & Rally Queens: <https://bit.ly/3ivwdeN>

Do watch our new short film, one of three made recently by James McDonald, featuring Heather Wastie at Debdale Lock on the Staffs & Worcs Canal. The other two films will be uploaded soon.

Films: WaterwaysArts: <https://bit.ly/2HTWLK1>

As part of the emergency Arts Council grant we received at the beginning of lockdown, we were able to fund the growth of Waterways Arts and commission three short films. Waterways Arts is an initiative that aims to bring together those making live performance and visual art on, around or about the waterways, to provide a unity and cohesion, and to create new project opportunities, as well as promoting existing work.

## Online Writing Workshops

Having successfully found our way into running writing workshops using Zoom, we're offering two more - on Thursdays 29th October (with Kate Saffin) and 19th November (with Heather Wastie) 2:00-4:00pm. Come and learn to shape a script that grabs an audience or shape a poem on the page to add to the impact. Or both!

Here are some comments about the September workshop:

- *Expected to enjoy it. I super-enjoyed it.*
- *It got you thinking creatively and most importantly putting it into practice.*
- *Prompts excellent, good to meet people I didn't know, good to connect.*
- *I didn't think I would share my work but it was such a great environment that I surprised myself by feeling comfortable enough to.*

More info and how to book here: <https://bit.ly/3iy9leF>

We're working on ways of sharing our own writing and will let you know when there's something new to see or listen to. In the meantime...

Heather's new book! Heather launched her latest poetry collection on National Poetry Day (1st October) - To the Future, Love Cropredy. It's a collaboration with boat-dwelling visual artist Louise Regan and the launch was by way of a film which you can watch on YouTube by visiting:

<https://bit.ly/2Glvwl0>

The book is available from Lapal Publications: [www.lapalpublications.co.uk](http://www.lapalpublications.co.uk)



# Lapal Canal Trust News

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

NOTICE IS GIVEN that the Annual General Meeting of the Lapal Canal Trust will be held on Monday, 23rd November, 2020 at 7.00 pm as a Virtual Meeting on ZOOM (details will be posted on our website and Facebook) with the following agenda:-

### Apologies

1. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on 15 October, 2019
2. Matters Arising from the Minutes
3. Chair's Report
4. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of the Statement of Accounts and the Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st December 2019
5. Election of Officers: proposed by the Committee
  - President - Dr Peter Best\*
  - Chair - Dr Andrew Hardie\*
  - Chief Executive Officer - Hugh Humphreys\*
  - Treasurer - Dr Tony Whateley\*
  - Company Secretary and Membership Secretary - Dr Tony Whateley\*
  - Technical Officer - Peter Fisher\*

Committee: Denis Pike\* (WB&DCS), John Hemingway (WB&DCS), David Struckett\* (IWA), Malcolm Bates, Roy Burgess\* (Halesowen Abbey Trust, Leasowes Liasion), Arthur Moppett, Dave Pearson (IWA), Richard Chivers, Simon Dearn, Michael Payne, John Worwood, Terry Stanton\*, David Scowcroft, Megan Trusler (BUCV), Jessica Money (BUCV), Janelle Kolas, Cllr John Lines

\* also a Director and Trustee

### **We are in need of Officers for the roles of:**

Website Manager, Newsletter Editor, Publicity Officer

If you can help at all, please email Dr Tony Whateley: [t.whateley@sky.com](mailto:t.whateley@sky.com)

6. Open Forum:

## Lapal Canal Video

Our friends from the Lapal Canal Trust will be holding their virtual AGM on November 23rd (*details above*). In the meantime society friend Andy Tidy has put together the footage shown below about the Lapal Canal. This is very well worth seeing particularly for those who know the area that the canal went through. Roy Burgess, who is featured as young boy at the back of one of the boats on show, gave a talk at one of our past society meetings about the Lapal Canal.

View the video here on YouTube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPzZoeP-sEA>

The latest edition of Lapal Link has also been produced by the Trust which can be viewed on their website: [www.lapalcanal.co.uk](http://www.lapalcanal.co.uk) or ours: [www.wbdc.org.uk](http://www.wbdc.org.uk)



# Bradley Canal News

Our friends from the Bradley Restoration Society have received support for their restoration project from West Midlands Canal and River Trust which is great news.

## Bradley Arm Restoration

Dear Dave

*Further to your recent conversations with Ian Darby I am pleased to offer this letter as the Canal & River Trusts support of The Bradley Arm Restoration. This project has been in the pipeline for some time and it is fantastic to see it finally moving forward.*

*As part of this project, it is my understanding that one of the first actions will be to undertake clearance works on land owned by ourselves between the foot of the locks and Moorcroft Junction. As landowner I am happy to give permission as long as it is undertaken in accordance with our procedures to ensure this is undertaken safely.*

*As the project develops, Ian Darby, our local restoration lead will be able to support you, but in this instance, given the nature of works and the fact that we are also planning to undertake work in this area, can you please discuss this further with our local Area Operations Manager Aaron Atwal to agree a safe way forward.*

Yours sincerely, Adnan Saif, Director, West Midlands Region



The restoration (highlighted in yellow above) is approximately one mile long and runs from the CRT Locks Workshop to the Walsall Canal.

# Canal & River Trust News

## Boaters' Update September 2020

On Monday, 28th September, we launched an online consultation on a review and proposed changes to the Terms & Conditions of private boat licences.

Most of the terms and conditions remain the same, but in a number of areas they will be made clearer or strengthened to protect both boat owners and the Trust. We are proposing to change some areas and add some new conditions.

Thank you to those of you that have already responded – we had 1500 responses in the first 24 hours. The consultation survey runs for 12 weeks so please, if you'd like to have a say on the proposals please visit: <https://bit.ly/3nhwyoZ> to take part.

If you need help filling the survey in because of an illness or impairment, for example, please contact Canal & River Trust customer services and we'll make arrangements to help you.

Thank you

# Stay Kind and Slow Down

C&RT has launched a campaign, which due to social distancing is mainly online, appealing to cyclists to take it easy and slow down.

During the pandemic, in many urban areas we've seen increases in visitor numbers to towpaths, which is a great thing, but it makes considerate use of the towpaths more important than ever.

Canals and rivers played a really important role during spring and summer when more stringent lockdown measures were in force and, unable to travel further afield, some discovered for the first time that they had a wonderful place to visit right on their doorstep. We want people to continue to visit, including cyclists, but with this new campaign we're asking them to be considerate to boaters, and others, using the towpath.

The appeal of cycling on a towpath will be obvious to boaters who regularly visit or live on these 'green corridors' and cyclists will find that it's 44 times safer than cycling on a road – Department for Transport figures report 5,272 casualties in Great Britain for every billion miles cycled on the road compared to 120 for every billion on Trust towpaths. The fact remains, though, that if you're on foot on the towpath or working the locks then you have priority over cyclists and we're asking cyclists that, if they want to go fast, then they need to choose an alternative route to the towpath. This video, being shared online and targeted at cyclists living near our network, sets out the broad aims and reasoning:

The campaign isn't entirely digital though, we're also trialling, on the Leeds & Liverpool, new towpath interventions such as floor markings and speed inhibitors and we are reviewing our Better Towpaths for Everyone policy.





# Canal Birthdays

On December 5th this year the Worcester and Birmingham Canal will be 205 years old. From Birmingham to Tardebigge the navigation has sections which are even older than that as the canal was commenced from the Birmingham end making its way South in long stages owing to a lack of finance. The birth date relates to when the canal opened in its entirety.

However, next year will be 250th birthday of the Droitwich Barge Canal which runs from Vines Park in Droitwich down to the River Severn at Hawford – not to be confused with Droitwich Junction Canal which runs from Hanbury Wharf to Vines Park.

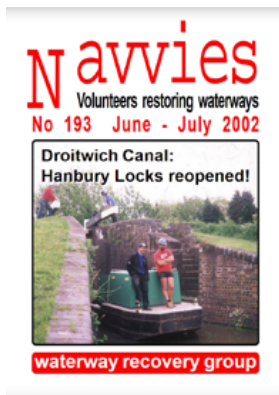
Hopefully, Covid permitting, this should be a big celebration next year.

For the purposes of this future celebration, we should count the years when the canal was 'asleep' in the total years as this does not detract from when it was actually cut. Margaret Rowley has many photographs from the late great Max Sinclair but if anyone else has any memories or pictures, particularly of the many work parties that were held, we would be pleased to make copies for use in the society's various media outlets.

Denis Pike has provided us with the following link:

<https://bit.ly/36BIIU>

Margaret has sent in a picture of one of the work parties excavating the barge lock in Vines Park.



All being well the society is looking forward to really raising the profile of the Droitwich Barge Canal.



# Volunteer News

## Bill Lambert

I hope you all remain well and have survived the isolation process without too much difficulty. I certainly hope that no one has suffered from the Corona virus.

### **Can We Re-Start our Work Parties? Yes, We Can.**

I have now had opportunity to work through all the safety advice that has filled my emails recently and have put together a risk assessment document that meets C&RT standards and has been 'signed off'. We have taken from the NHS, C&RT, IWA and WRG.

### **How will we operate?**

The risk assessment document is too large to include with the 58 magazine, but I will email it to everyone who signs up for a workday. We will need to have a toolbox talk on arrival and review the assessment and agree methods of working. However, this should all be quite straightforward and quickly done.

### **These Are Advised Rules for All Work Party Activity.**

1 Members who may be medically vulnerable should still remain away from work parties.

2 Please do not: -

Attend if you have any of the Covid symptoms,

Raised temperature, above 38°C, Continuous cough, Loss of smell or taste.

3 Travel.

Use your own mode of travel to sites. Do not share cars.

4 Hand washing.

Wash hands regularly with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds, especially: -

On arrival at site and when leaving,

Before and after eating.

When arriving home.

If soap and water are not available, then use sanitizer.

5 Social distancing.

Keep 2 metres apart from work colleagues and members of the public.

6 Minimise contact between volunteers as much as possible and where it is necessary, limit time to 15 minutes or less. Consider the use of face masks in these circumstances.

7 Keep groups of volunteers together in teams that are as small as possible.

8 If entering an enclosed space, (inside buildings, vehicle cabs etc.)

Clean hands on entering and leaving. Keep windows open for ventilation.

9 Laundry.

The virus can stay on fabric. Remember this when you arrive home so do not spread it around your family members. Wash clothes regularly on a hot wash. Consider the use of disinfectant laundry washes.



### **Welfare Facilities.**

These should be cleaned after each use. Rest areas must allow for social distancing needs and be well ventilated. Staggered rest breaks will help keep group sizes down. Rest areas should be sited away from the public.

### **General Hygiene.**

The principle is - do not share.

There will be NO on-site kitchen facilities, so please bring your own food and drinks and do not share these.

Hand tools, these must be cleaned with disinfectant wipes between each user.

(As Volunteer Coordinator, I will ensure that we have a good supply of soaps, hand towels, face masks, etc.).

### **Dates for Our Tardebigge Work Parties for 2020.**

#### **October**

Sat. 10th Sun. 11th Wed. 21st Thur. 22nd.

#### **November**

Sat. 7th Sun. 8th Wed. 25th Thur. 26th.

#### **December**

Sat. 12th Sun. 13th.

Days start at 9.30am and end around 3.30pm. (Please read notes above).

It would help if you confirm by email if you can attend.

The address for the Tardebigge site is:

Tardebigge New Wharf, Alcester Road, Tardebigge, Bromsgrove, B60 1NF.

### **Our Lime Kilns Conservation.**

You will all appreciate that over one year ago we found asbestos materials across the kilns site which meant that all work had to stop. It has taken some time to get an expert survey done and a decision made regarding the next step. Unfortunately, the survey confirmed asbestos contamination. This has meant that the adoption we had to work on as a conservation programme has now closed - so the site will be fenced off and warning notices installed. This has to be applied to protect C&RT staff, volunteers, and the public. This is an unhappy turn of events, but C&RT had no choice with asbestos contamination. Safety has to be paramount.

In spite of this, our society will still lobby C&RT to give a commitment to devise a new programme to conserve the kilns. We will work to ensure the kilns do not just become derelict and collapse.

### **A New Adoption.**

C&RT acknowledge that a new adoption will now be required. Options are being considered which will include the Tugboat Birmingham, the Top Lock, the Community Garden, and the area around the kilns site.

*My thanks go to everyone who has given me their support in the past and I hope you are able to join me again.*

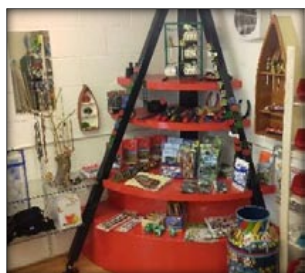
Bill Lambert

Volunteer Coordinator

Worcester-Birmingham and Droitwich Canals Society.

Email [volunteers@wbdc.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@wbdc.org.uk)

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If you are interested in canals, angling, boats, boat crewing, natural history, walking, cycling, photography, industrial archaeology, local history, canal work parties, preservation and enhancement of the environment as well as meeting up with like-minded people, then please consider joining this friendly Canal Society.

We normally hold our regular monthly meetings at the Alvechurch Boat Centre, Scarfield Wharf, Alvechurch, B48 7SQ (just behind the award winning Weighbridge pub). Meetings take place on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.45pm which are currently suspended (except July and August when we enjoy a summer evening walk). If you are in the least bit curious then please come along, as non-members are always welcome. You do not need to be a boat owner as most of our members are not. The Weighbridge Pub is just at the side of the meeting room if that helps! The meeting room has wheelchair access for those that require it. If you require any other assistance please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Presentations have included Historic Environment of the Canal in Worcester, Coal For The Ashby Canal, Cotswold Canal Restoration, Idle Women, The Cadbury Story, Lapal Canal Trust Restoration, Hereford & Gloucester Canal Restoration and Canal du Midi to name but a few.

Further details are available on our website, Facebook and Twitter where you can find out lots more about us (details below).

Our own society narrowboat 'Cecilia' is available for use by groups or individuals for half day and day trips\* (crews available). Self Steer cruises require you to be a member of the society. \*Terms & Conditions Apply.

We hope to welcome as many new faces as possible from members of the community.

**Please visit our website: [wbdcs.org.uk](http://wbdcs.org.uk)**

**(where you can also download a membership application form)**

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