

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'



LOVELY SPRING DAY ON THE W&B IN ALVECHURCH

Monthly Meetings

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

**Our regular public monthly meetings will be
reinstated as soon as it is safe to do so.**

Chance Glassworks at Smethwick

**a 'Virtual Talk' with Mark Davies on 'Zoom'
at 7.45pm on April 6th (Log-in from 7pm)**

Future Meetings

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)

*Members will be emailed shortly before any online meeting with information on how to join in.
Please ensure that our Membership Secretary has your current details.*

The Magazine of the Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

Issue 555 Apr/May 2021

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www.facebook.com/wbdcs.org.uk

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

View videos on our [YouTube channel](#)

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

Copy date for the next issue: May 14th 2021

Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

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

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Chair's Notes

A belated Happy Easter to everyone. I hope you had a nice and safe weekend.

I am really pleased that we have managed to hold Zoom meetings for the past 3 months. They have created far more interest than I thought they would and Denis has managed to find some interesting speakers. Talking of Zoom meetings, we have decided that we must hold an AGM this year. Because of covid restrictions we did not hold one in 2020 so it will give Trevor the chance to show 2 years accounts together. The AGM will be held in September and a link to the meeting will be sent out closer to the date.

Unless we can talk Mary into changing her mind it is anticipated that she will be resigning as Secretary at the AGM so we will be looking for someone to take over. If anyone is interested and wants to know more I am sure Mary would help.

Easter saw us able to meet up to 6 people in our garden and it was lovely to see Tracey and Ian for the first time since Christmas, even though we still kept to the social distance rules. What a difference it was to see people on the news congregating in local parks in the thousands and leaving tonnes of rubbish behind for volunteers to pick up. Thoughtless and selfish comes to mind. I listened to a member of Canal & River Trust on BBC Hereford & Worcester on Good Friday who was talking about the relaxation of the covid restrictions. He anticipated a huge number of cyclists and walkers over the Easter Weekend but also anticipated a huge clean-up operation afterwards. What's wrong with some people? Why can't they just take the rubbish home? Why do they have to dump it in the countryside?

STAY SAFE

David Wheeler

Committee Positions

As readers will be aware, the society has an annually elected committee that takes charge of society affairs. There is also a 'Cecilia' sub-committee which deals with much of the day to day issues concerning the boat.

If anyone has any interest at all in finding out about, or possibly serving on, our committees then please do get in touch. Organisations such as WB&DCS are often on the lookout for people who can bring new ideas forward.

The society may be looking to recruit a new secretary at our next AGM, the date of which is not available at present due to current covid restrictions. The needs of the role can easily be shared if anyone is interested. Please give this your consideration.



Editor's Notes

Hi Readers,

Hope everyone is still keeping safe, well and socially distanced during these soon to be eased, yet still troubling times. As the weather becomes warmer, which it certainly is as this edition of '58' is being compiled, we are awaiting things to start moving on our canals albeit somewhat curtailed. The latest Canal & River Trust information for boaters indicates that as of March 29th, limited amounts of boat movements will be allowed with the emphasis being on 'staying local'. This is all very well for those who live fairly near to where their boat mooring actually is, but for those who reside further away from their craft travel is being discouraged at the moment. In any event, staying on board overnight is currently not permitted, unless of course the craft is residential as many are, in which case the normal requirement to move on after a 14 day stay remains suspended. This latter point applies particularly to those who are classed as 'continuous cruisers' or for those live aboards who were unable to get back to their usual mooring place for whatever reason.

Continuing along this theme, C&RT are indicating that as from no earlier than April 12th, holidays lettings should be allowed with the interpretation that this similarly applies to boaters. So cruising and staying on board should be permitted as well as hire boat lettings. The proviso for this being restricted to one household or support bubble per boat. The 14 day rule concerning the mooring of boats should also be re-instated. This certainly sounds as though the canals could well spring to life again very soon, although in reality canal towpath users have possibly never been as numerous, such is their relatively safe popularity.

Lastly on this theme for the time being, no earlier than May 17th, indoor mixing on boats should be allowed with up to six people or, if it is more people, two households. Incidentally, all of the above rules apply in England as there are variations elsewhere in the UK. So there you have it readers, couldn't be clearer could it? '58' really does hope that this measured approach works while still remembering the social distancing rules as far as possible and the usual use of hand gel etc.

In the last edition of '58' the editorial posed the question of the accuracy of some of the information posted by C&RT particularly concerning the nearest winding holes to the planned maintenance work. The example given in the magazine was related to the works being carried out at 'Coffin Bridge' just below Hanbury Wharf Junction:

"Upstream winding hole: Tibberton between bridges 25 and 26. Downstream winding hole: Junction with the Droitwich Junction Canal."

Problem with this information is that it is the wrong way round; Tibberton being downstream of 'Coffin Bridge' with the Droitwich Junction Canal being upstream. There were also other examples of inaccuracy: the planned work at lock 25 on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal indicates:

"Upstream winding hole: Tardebigge, between Bridges 57A and 58. Downstream winding hole: Astwood Lane, between Locks 18 and 19."

The nearest upstream is the basin just by Tardebigge top lock. No need to go further on to the

winding hole by the 'Anglo – Welsh' boatyard which is described as being “*between bridges 57A and Bridge 58*”, the former which does not appear to exist. Downstream from the maintenance job, the nearest winding hole is by the 'Black Prince' boatyard not several locks lower down the Astwood flight.

The maintenance work scheduled for lock 18 gives the downstream winding hole as the Junction with the Droitwich Junction Canal. There is in fact a winding hole nearer than that between Astwood Bottom lock and the Droitwich Junction Canal.

The work being carried out on lock number one in Worcester indicates that the upstream winding hole is “*Bath Road Basin*” which does not appear to exist. The nearest turning point should be in Diglis Basin itself. All very confusing for boaters who may not be familiar with this area of the waterway system. Possibly just as well that boat movements have not been allowed for some time now due to covid restrictions. Perhaps local canal societies could be consulted when future information such as this is about to be given out? Over to you 'Canal & River Trust'!

Having said all of this, some much needed maintenance work has, and still is, been carried out in order to keep the canals safe for us all to enjoy. We are all very grateful for the work being undertaken.



Lock 25 Repairs: Photos by Mads Cleaver

Changing the subject somewhat, your committee has been having much discussion about canal festivals for this year - or not. Despite the easing of lock down restrictions there is still the fear that the number of attendees could prove problematic and therefore unsafe. Many of us will have seen the recent news where large crowds have gathered in some areas, for whatever reason, with little regard for social distancing. The Inland Waterways Association is still continuing with plans to hold their 'Festival of Water' at Perdiswell in Worcester during the end of August Bank Holiday weekend. However, whether this actually goes ahead is yet to be determined. WB&DCS is represented on this planning committee and so we should know fairly soon whether or not it is to go ahead in some form or another. There have also been discussions about other festivals which normally take place on or near the local waterways e.g. Black Country Boating Festival, Droitwich Saltfest, St. Richard's Canal Festival, Stourbridge Bonded Warehouse plus several other

possibilities. We have even heard that 'The Crown' in Alvechurch, just by Bridge 61, are planning on holding a Beer Festival in mid - August. If any readers have any thoughts on these deliberations please do let us know.

Apart from all of this, your society has been holding its regular members' meetings and committee meetings – all on Zoom, which have proved to be very popular. Without this technology there would not have been any visual connection with society members and friends, some of whom have stated their preference for this kind of meeting which cuts out any travelling. Unfortunately it also cuts out any tea, coffee refreshments, use of the 'Weighbridge' and our monthly raffles usually organised by Sue Hancox. However, this is where we are for the foreseeable future – Watch this Space!

Readers may be aware that our very own Volunteer Co-ordinator, Bill Lambert, has been having some medical treatment recently which means he will be unable to participate in any of our work parties for the time being at least. '58', along with all readers, offers Bill our best wishes for a speedy and safe recovery. *(We still expect to see you on our Zoom meetings Bill so no hiding away please – Ed).*

Many thanks to all who have submitted things to this issue of '58' with the usual plea for any ideas, views, pictures etc. from readers to be sent in for possible future use please. Hope to see as many of you as possible at our next member and friends Zoom meeting due early April.

Enjoy the read

John Hemingway

Obituary

It is with sadness that we have to report the passing of society friend, Ray Jones. Ray had been ill for a number of years and many will remember him for being somewhat of a driving force behind the Lapal Canal Trust which is actively supported by WB&DCS. Ray had been both treasurer and membership secretary for a number of years before ill health intervened. '58' sends it condolences to Helen, who was also involved with LCT as magazine editor, and to all close family members and friends.

New Members Welcomed

We are pleased to welcome into society membership Peter and Kim Niblett from Fownhope in Herefordshire.

'58' offers its traditional warm welcome and hopes to see both Kim and Peter at any future society activities including our popular Zoom meetings.

If any members require their details updating please get in touch with our membership secretary, Joe Morley, as soon as possible. We are particularly keen to have correct email addresses in order to send out '58' as well as invite you to our monthly 'Zoom' meetings.

Letter to the Editor

Battle of 'Cressy'

In the last edition of '58' we featured an article about some of Tom Rolt's campaigns to save the canals as well as his relationship with Peter Scott who initiated the Slimbridge Wild Fowl reserve just below Gloucester. Our long standing member and canal expert, Colin Scrivener, has brought to '58's attention some inaccuracies in that article which was based on information from another source. Colin writes:

Hi John,

That is another interesting 58 that landed in my inbox. I was particularly interested in the article about Tom Rolt and Cressy. Unfortunately that whole episode has shown how history is rewritten. Basically the bridge in question, bridge No 2, was a drawbridge NOT a swing bridge and it is in TUNNEL LANE, Lifford. For very many years I have tried to get these statements corrected without much success. Lifford Lane starts on the crest of bridge No 1 above the guillotine lock where it makes an end on junction with Broad Meadow Lane. It then heads to the Bredon Cross on the Pershore Road passing over the W&B canal at bridge 73, the only canal bridge wholly in Lifford Lane. Tunnel Lane joined it at the bottom of the dip between the two canals, crossed the drawbridge by Sturge's Chemical works, and then wound its way across fields to recross the canal above the tunnel portal to join Monyhull Hall Road. That end was changed with the building of a housing estate in the '50s and the middle part was closed and incorporated into sports fields. The stub of the road across the bridge from the works gave access to garages behind the houses in Dunster Close. The name "Lifford Lane Bridge" was used by Robert Aickman who probably thought it sounded better!! Tom Rolt always referred to it as "the bridge at Lifford". For your interest I am sending you a copy of Tom Rolt's original article and some pictures plus my account of an early passage.

There, that has got that off my chest, hope you don't mind and don't get too bored by my ramblings. Best wishes and stay safe, Colin.

There is absolutely no chance that '58' would ever be bored by your input Colin, please be assured. On the contrary, we would really like to hear more 'ramblings' from you as well as from others of course. There's a hint to other readers!

Having checked the geography, Colin is absolutely correct in his assertions. In the 1980s there was an actual swing bridge there often operated by young people from the local area, whether boaters required it or not. However, there is now no bridge at all over the canal at Tunnel Lane.

Pictures - credited to Colin.

Extract From Colin Scrivener's Memoirs

I had met Ron North and family on 30th April 1950 when they had brought their boat Cornwall along the Stratford canal leading a small group of boats on a protest cruise organised by the newly formed Midland Branch of the IWA and went on a cruise from the drawbridge at Majors Green to Kingswood junction on May 1st. The story continues:-

During the week Ron North contacted me and I was invited to join them again, so on the following Saturday afternoon I met the boats at the drawbridge and we set off for Kings Norton. We struggled slowly through the shallow waters, having particular problems through the bridges around Yardley Wood which normally only saw the passing of the rowing boats from the two local boat stations. Then came the excitement of passing through the Brandwood Tunnel where we had more problems with the rubbish thrown into the canal from each portal. The deck of the damaged drawbridge at Tunnel Lane had already been jacked up and we crept underneath with

hardly an inch to spare before heading for the junction lock. We had to dodge the drips from the raised gates of the unique guillotine lock as the boats were worked through. At the junction we turned right into the Worcester & Birmingham canal and continued in deep water to Cadbury's wharf at Bournville where the Rosalind lived and Cornwall was to be temporarily kept. This wharf was still used by the boats coming from the Knighton factory and those which took chocolate crumb to Frampton-on-Severn.

The area around Kings Norton junction had looked so interesting that I went back a few weeks later by bicycle to have a better look. I took pictures of the fleet of five smartly turned out day boats that were used by the Kings Norton Paper Mills to bring their coal from Cannock Chase. The Tunnel Lane bridge looked very sad with the balance arms pointing forlornly to the sky, but the area around the stop lock was totally captivating. To step down from the road onto the towpath at this quiet place of still water, with well cared for gardens each side of the bridge, the mellow brick toll house that had turned its back to the world, and the towering frames of the guillotine gates, was like stepping back in time. How different it all is now!

From that start I became very involved in canals and the waterway movement. The following extract is self explanatory:-

One afternoon in March 1950 I was cycling along the towpath with my friend Geoff Parker and as we approached Majors Green we found the cruiser Lorelei coming through the drawbridge heading towards Kings Norton. We followed along the towpath and before long our help was welcomed as, apart from having trouble with the shallow water, the engine was giving problems from overheating due to rubbish in the it's water cooling pump. With the two of us pulling on the towline slow progress was made as far as Yardley Wood where they decided to stay for the night to repair the water pump and we had to leave them to go home. The Lorelei was owned by the Briggs family from Bristol, and was going home from Banbury on the last leg of a long campaign cruise around the country which, I understood, had included a passage of the Kennet and Avon canal.

We had arranged to come early in the morning to help them on their way, as the passage of the bridge at Tunnel Lane had been booked for 9 a.m. When we arrived at 7 a.m. we found that the pump had been repaired and they were ready for the off once our bicycles had been put on board. As Lorelei had quite a deep keel only Mr. Briggs stayed on board, so as to lighten the boat as much as possible, even so repeated groundings needed all the help of the shore party. The two of us with Mrs. Briggs and the two children all pulling on a long towline managed to maintain progress. The worst problem occurred at Brandwood tunnel where bricks had been thrown down from each of the portals. We eased the boat over the heap of rubble and Mr. Briggs set off into the darkness while we followed the path over the top to the other end. No mishaps had befallen Skipper or boat in the tunnel and, after getting the boat over the bar at this portal, we carried on to the bridge where we arrived just before the booked time of 9 a.m.

We found that the lorry load of equipment and men had only just arrived, so that while they prepared to lift the bridge we had time to have a very welcome breakfast. The bridge at Tunnel Lane had been a standard pattern Stratford canal wooden lift bridge. During the war the uprights for the balance beams were found to have rotted at the base. As the canal had been closed and partially de-watered the bridge the lifting chains were removed so that the bridge could not be operated, leaving the balance beams pointing to the sky. At the same time some static water tank sections had been fitted to each side and some girders added to the deck to strengthen it. In order to lift the bridge two large baulks of timber were fastened along each side of the deck. These projected about two feet beyond each end to provide the jacking points. Four large jacks were used, one at each corner, and the deck was raised by about six inches allowing blocks to be put under the beams. The jacks could then be put on blocks and the whole

procedure repeated several times until sufficient clearance had been achieved. In order to have the greatest possible political effect requests for raising the bridge were usually made for a Sunday as the men would then have to be paid premium overtime rates.

With the headlamp removed to save extra lifting of the deck, Lorelei was pulled under the bridge at ten thirty, but it then took a further hour to reach and get through the guillotine lock and on to the Worcester canal. With our bikes still on the boat we went with the Briggs family to Tardebigge New Wharf. It was a pleasure to cruise along the deep water of the Worcester canal, the ten miles to Tardebigge took only half the time we had spent going two and a half miles on the Stratford canal. After looking at the canal depot, with its interesting collection of boats, and inspecting the deep top lock, we said goodbye to the Briggs family and cycled home.

Lorelei had the distinction of being the last boat through the old bridge on Sunday March 13th, as the D.& I.W.E. had already decided to replace the bridge, which showed that the persistence of the I.W.A. had paid off. A new steel swing bridge was fitted later that month, making the northern section of the canal once again open to through traffic. The swing bridge is now over fifty years old and had, until recently damaged by vandals who had burned a stolen car on the deck, remained in good condition.



- 1. 'LORELIE'
UNDER TUNNEL
LANE BRIDGE,
FEB 50**
- 2. TUNNEL LANE
SWING BRIDGE,
AUG 55**
- 3. SWING BRIDGE
NO.2 FROM
TUNNEL LANE,
MAR C. 60s**

Adventure on the Stratford Canal

By L. T. C. Roft (Hon. Sec. of the Inland Waterways Association)

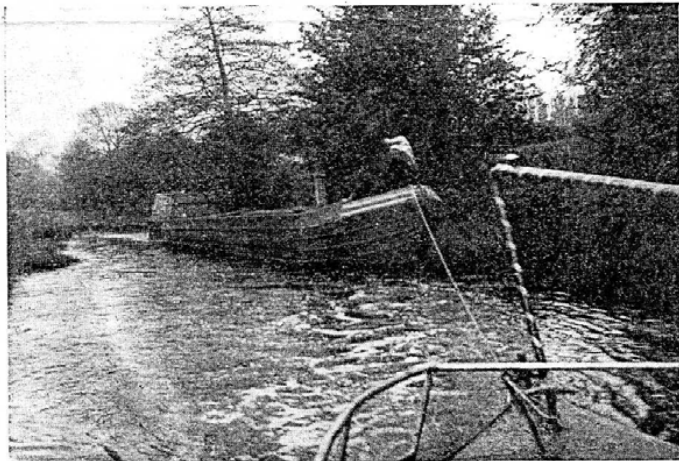
AS those who read Mr. J. H. Stables's recent article on the Stratford-on-Avon Canal (published in "The Motor Boat" for March, 1947), will know this waterway, 25½ miles long, connects the Worcester and Birmingham Canal at King's Norton with the River Avon at Stratford-on-Avon. It is divided into two sections of almost exactly equal length by a short spur linking the canal to the main line of the Grand Union Canal at Kingswood.

When the canal was constructed, the River Avon was still navigable from Stratford to Tewkesbury, so that it formed part of a through route from Birmingham to the Bristol Channel. When the Upper Avon Navigation fell derelict, however, the southern section of the canal from Kingswood to Stratford became in effect a "branch line" serving the town of Stratford only. Thus, while our association

(The photographs are by Angela Roft.)



"The driver of a tractor at work in a neighbouring field was induced to drive his machine . . . on to the towpath."



"We took the 'Bilster' in tow, and managed to get her moving once more."

believes that the restoration of this portion to good order would be of great benefit to the town of Stratford, and the people of Birmingham, and should be made the subject of a vigorous local campaign, it must be acknowledged that its commercial value as a link in the system of inland water communication is limited.

With the northern section of the canal from Kingswood to King's Norton, however, the case is very

different, and its present state of dereliction is a far more serious matter of more than local concern. There are a number of cogent reasons for this which may be enumerated as follows:

(1) It is the natural route for commercial traffic operating between the Grand Union Canal and wharves on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal which serve the industrial area of South Birmingham, also between

the Grand Union and Worcester and the Severn area generally. The canal was in fact used in this way by one of the largest and best-known firms of Canal Carriers until 1937, when, according to their own statement, they were forced to abandon the route. Although lightly loaded, their craft encountered such difficulties owing to the bad state of the navigation, that its use was no longer an economic proposition.

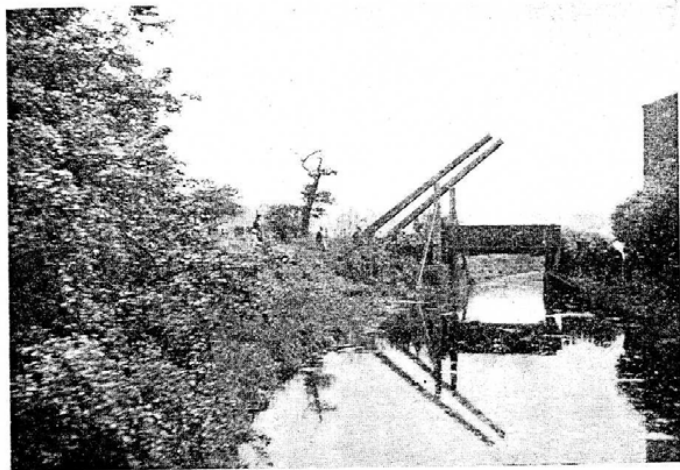
(2) The canal forms a valuable alternative route into Birmingham from London in the event of the Grand Union Canal route being closed by enemy action or other cause.

Excellent Water Supply

(3) With reservoirs at Earlswood, the canal possesses an excellent water supply which is virtually never utilized. The Grand Union Canal, on the other hand, frequently suffers from a shortage on the long level between Hatton and Knowle in dry seasons and has to resort to pumping.

(4) With the closing of the Thames and Severn Canal, the Stratford Canal became a part of the natural route for pleasure craft wishing to travel between these two rivers via the Worcester and Birmingham, Grand Union, and Oxford Canals.

(5) For 11 miles from King's Norton to Lapworth Top Lock the canal is on the same level as the 15-mile summit of the Worcester and



"We approached the famous (or infamous) Tunnel Lane Bridge."

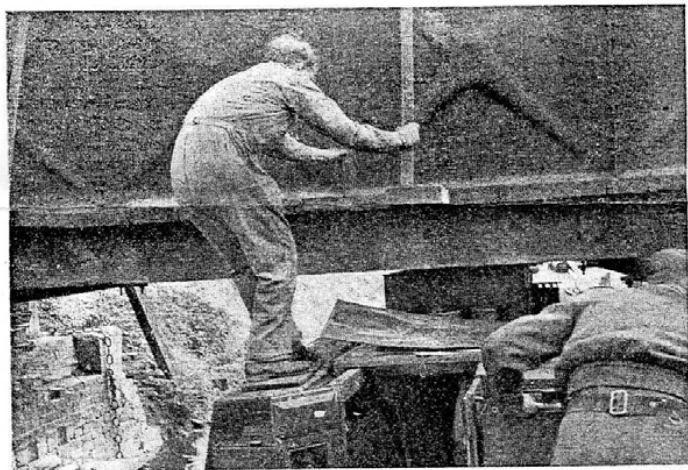
Birmingham Canal between Worcester Bar, Birmingham and Tardebigge. The two canals thus form an ideal cruising ground for the Birmingham district.

With all these points in mind it will be realized why the Kingswood—King's Norton section of the Stratford Canal has taken a prominent place in The Inland Waterways Association's campaign for waterway restoration.

In 1941, when I first traversed this waterway, I knew little of the canal's history and imagined that it was still in commercial use. I was surprised and shocked to find it in a semi-derelict condition. Although at that time I got through with little difficulty, I realized then that the waterway would be impassable by a fully laden craft. During the war years canal carriers in the Midlands repeatedly stressed the importance of the waterway and urged that something should be done. Nothing happened. The canal continued to deteriorate, and, in fact, no boat used the waterway between the time of my last passage and the present occasion.

No Headroom

The circumstance which prompted this second passage was the information, supplied by our Birmingham members, that a drawbridge at Tunnel Lane, Lifford, near the northern end of the canal, had been replaced by a fixed steel structure, allowing no navigable headroom. This news was made the more significant because it coincided with reports of similar obstructions on the Kennet and Avon and Bridgwater and Taunton Canals, both of which are also owned by the Great Western Railway. Happily,



"The bridge had been raised by jacks on to wooden packing until it gave us just sufficient headroom."

the Bridgwater and Taunton obstruction has since been challenged and consequently removed.

We lost no time in requesting our member, Lord Methuen, to ask a question in the House of Lords concerning this obstructive bridge. This he very kindly did, receiving from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport the following reply:

"Stratford-on-Avon Canal. It is true that this waterway is not in first-class condition, but it is not correct to say that traffic has been forced off the canal because of navigation difficulties. The canal was maintained in good condition until 1932, but at that time the average traffic had declined to one barge per day (most of the movements

being short hauls) and the standard of maintenance then became somewhat lower. Traffic practically ceased in 1937, when the canal was completely navigable with a reasonable depth of water throughout its whole length. The Great Western Railway, who own the canal, are alive to their statutory obligations to maintain it in navigable condition and still keep the waterway open with a proper supply of water.

"You mentioned the obstruction caused by a bridge over the canal at Tunnel Lane. It appears that the bridge in question is normally able to swing, but the free end has been temporarily fixed. The bridge could be jacked up without difficulty to permit the passage of craft, and notices to this effect have been exhibited at appropriate places, intimating that passage can be arranged at 24 hours' notice. The swing bridge is due for reconstruction at an early date."

It was on the strength of this reply that we decided to give notice of intended passage through the canal, and on Saturday evening, May 17, 1

brought my boat "Cressy" off the Grand Union Canal at Kingswood in readiness to begin the journey at 2 p.m. on the following Monday. I had informed the company that I hoped to clear the canal by 5 p.m. the following day, though naturally even the possibility of making the through journey was problematical.

When she had passed through the canal before, "Cressy" had been drawing 2 ft. 9 ins. aft, but anticipating the results of six more years of neglect, I had taken the precaution of removing ballast until she drew little over 2 ft.

To our surprise we found that the company had chartered a steel motor boat of standard pattern, the "Bilster,"

from the Grand Union Canal Co.'s Hatton depot, and arranged that this craft should precede us through the canal, starting at 10 p.m. This boat was drawing 3 ft. 6 ins. aft, and from our previous experience of the canal we seriously doubted its ability to get through. Coming over the junction the "Bilster" had run fast aground and broken the shearing coupling on the propeller shaft. However, a new coupling was fitted on the Sunday, and punctually at 10 a.m. she started away.

At two o'clock "Cressy" followed, with our Chairman aboard, and began the ascent of the Lapworth flight of 19 locks which lead up to the 11-mile summit level. It is not the policy of railway companies seriously to neglect canal works which are obvious to the eye. On the whole the locks worked well, some of the gates had been recently renewed, and we reached the summit quickly and without any untoward incident.

Improved Closed Water System

At the top of the locks there was a lot of duck-weed which, though it did not trouble our propeller, effectually choked the strainer on the water circulating system. I had reckoned with this difficulty, however, and overcame it in the following manner. I carry a large tank on the cabin top which supplies water to the bathroom and which, by closing a stop valve, can be filled by the circulating pump when travelling. At the same time there is a two-way tap on the suction side of the pump which enables the

bilges to be pumped out by the same means. Thus it was only necessary to connect a hose pipe from the cold bath tap to the bilge suction to form a closed cooling system independent of the canal and which, thanks to the large capacity of the tank, did not produce overheating. The arrangement worked admirably and we were able to plough through weeds and mud without any trouble on this score.

We encountered weed difficulty of a different order in the neighbourhood of Hockley Heath, where there was more reed than water, and where floating masses, cut loose by the passage of "Bilster," were sucked into our screw. Fortunately, since "Cressy" has no counter, I was able to free the screw readily when it became so bad that the usual kick astern was of no avail. But for the best part of a mile we resorted to bow-hauling until, to our relief, the water became much clearer. The crew jumped aboard at a bridge and enjoyed a well-earned rest while "Cressy" was able to forge slowly but steadily ahead until 8 p.m., when we moored for the night where the feeder enters the canal from the Earlswood reservoirs, almost exactly half-way along the section.

Next morning our progress was equally uneventful until we reached the drawbridge near Solihull Lodge. Not only was this bridge difficult to lift, but the fact that one of the stop gates just through the bridge would not open fully, forced "Cressy" under the lower part of the inclined

platform so that her cabin top would not clear. In order to get under we had to ballast her with bystanders.

Pilot Boat Stuck

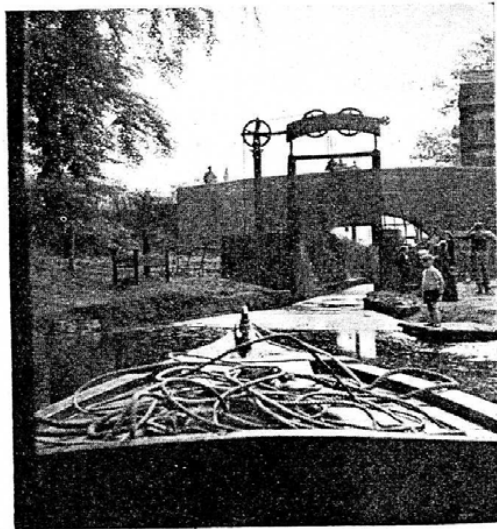
Having negotiated this obstacle, we proceeded along the embankment only to come upon the "Bilster" stuck beneath the arch of the next bridge. Her steerer was busy fitting yet another spare propeller shaft coupling. When this job was finished another attempt was made to get the "Bilster" through the bridge. Most of the gang sent to raise the Tunnel Lane Bridge had arrived to help, but despite all their efforts on the towline she again stuck fast.

From this point, as far as King's Norton, the canal passes through the outer suburbs of Birmingham, and it appears to be the habit of those living in this district to throw all their rubbish over the canal bridges. Consequently, at each bridge there is a bar of brick-bats and assorted scrap-iron which the owners of the canal appear to be at no pains either to prevent or to remove. All manual efforts having failed to get the "Bilster" over this obstruction, the driver of a tractor at work in a neighbouring field was induced to drive his machine through the hedge on to the towpath, whereupon internal combustion succeeded where muscle had failed. I was very relieved when "Cressy" then floated through the arch without such drastic aids.

We then paused for lunch to allow the other boat to draw ahead, but



"We came upon the 'Bilster' stuck beneath the arch of the next bridge."



Approaching the guillotine stop lock at the junction with the Worcester and Birmingham Canal.

when we resumed we had scarcely covered a quarter of a mile before we came upon her again stuck fast, this time in the middle of the canal, and once more resisting the efforts of her perspiring bow-hauliers. There then ensued our greatest stroke of luck, for we were able without much difficulty to coax "Cressy" past the "Bilster." Having done so, we took her in tow and managed to get her moving once more. When we approached the next bridge I was not prepared to risk a broken propeller, so we cast off the tow, stopped our engine, and floated under the arch. As I expected, we grounded on the usual bar of rubbish, and it took four men to haul us through. This being so, there seemed little hope for the "Bilster," with her deeper draught, so we carried on alone and did not see her again. I heard later that she remained there that night, and that a horse was sent to her aid next day.

Hauling Through

Thereafter, at each bridge, we adopted the same procedure of shutting off and hauling through, in most cases the effort required being considerable. I reflected that if the labour summoned to assist the "Bilster" had been employed for a week in raking up the rubbish from under these bridges, all this trouble would have

been avoided. Similarly, in the tree-lined cutting at the approach to the tunnel near King's Norton we again resorted to bow-hauling as a precaution because the waterway was full of tree branches either blown in by recent gales or flung there by wood collectors.

Having negotiated the tunnel without incident, we were soon approaching the famous (or infamous) Tunnel Lane Bridge. So far from being "a swing bridge temporarily secured at one end," this is a fixed steel structure completely superseding the original wooden drawbridge. It had been raised by jacks on to wooden packing until it gave us just sufficient headroom. Just beyond the bridge a works on the canal bank ejects ashes into the canal, a practice which the G.W.R., apparently, take no action to prevent; with the result that the waterway had been practically filled in at this point. A large gang of helpers was necessary to drag us through, after which we were able to proceed under our own power for the last few hundred yards to the guillotine stop lock which marks the junction with the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. I confess to a feeling of relief when we sailed safely out of the lock into waters where no propeller-breaking obstructions lurked beneath the surface.

The conclusions to be drawn from this experience of the "Cressy" and the "Bilster" are fairly obvious. We saw remarkably little evidence to show that the Great Western Railway were, in fact, "alive to their statutory obligations to maintain the canal in navigable condition."

It is 15 years since canal traders first endeavoured to induce the company to dredge the canal because they could no longer carry through it an economic load. We of The Inland Waterways Association are more strongly convinced than ever that the company should be compelled to honour their legal obligation by restoring this important waterway to effective navigable condition. Meanwhile we would urge all those who are suitably situated and who possess suitable craft, to seek passage through the canal. A number of our members have already expressed this intention.

Helpful Employees

In conclusion I should like to put in a word for the G.W.R. officials, lengthmen and lock-keepers on the spot. It would be a great mistake to hold them responsible for a policy which they have no option but to accept. Without their ready assistance, in fact, we should never have been able to complete our journey without a much larger crew.

Lower Bittell Reservoir Cottage and Wast Hills Tunnel Keeper's Cottage



Featured in the last edition of '58' was an article concerning two unoccupied properties (*pictured left*) along the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. These being by Lower Bittell Reservoir and above the Southern portal of Wast Hills Tunnel.

'58' has since learnt that the cottage above the tunnel entrance is not owned by Canal & River Trust but have not yet found out by whom. The property is still there and remains boarded up with advertised security so someone somewhere presumably wishes to look after and renovate the building at some point. Unless anyone out there can offer any further information, watch this space!



The cottage at Lower Bittell is actually owned by C&RT although it is not from them directly that our information is derived, which is a little disappointing. However, we have been informed that work has been carrying on for some time on this property with one of the main concerns being the lack of drainage for such as waste water. Our

information indicates that the property has now been connected to the main sewer which is presumably somewhere alongside the Bittell Road. We also understand that the foundations of the building also requires a lot of attention.

'58' hopes that the property can soon be made habitable now that this major environmental improvement has been made. Once again any further information would be very welcome.



‘Nature Notes’ Mary Green

I find April and May the most beautiful time on the canal. This is not just fanciful: it is the time of growth and flowering and young birds when the stage is set for the rest of the year’s fruitfulness. It’s a good time to see how biodiverse the canal and canal-sides really are.

Canals are human-made but can provide a wildlife corridor through farmland and built up areas. It may sound odd that we need wildlife corridors through farmland, but we do. Only a few farmers in this area are genuinely regenerative in their approach. We have a responsibility to make sure the canal provides a species-rich environment. Fields around the canal are often monoculture arable or “improved” grazing, with close-clipped hedges, and consequent lack of insects, birds and animals. The canal makes sure nature thrives here.

The C&RT are generally good at maintaining water quality to encourage fish, waterfowl and other aquatic creatures. They are sometimes less enthusiastic about some of the plants that grow in water, but these are important to the insects and the whole water environment. Reeds, rushes, sedges, water lilies, water plantains, arrowheads and many other plants grow in the water’s-edge and you begin to see them in spring, but generally can’t see the insect larvae and other small creatures among them.

When it comes to the canal-sides there’s good and bad practice. Biodiversity needs flowering plants at all levels from the daisies and silverweed at the path-side to the tops of the blackthorn, wild cherry and oaks. Too often these are mowed or flailed and don’t reach their potential, so can’t root properly or host



1



2



3

other wildlife. C&RT don't have resources to manage the hedges in the way they would like, but they could make sure no hedges are cut across the top and are never cut in the growing seasons.

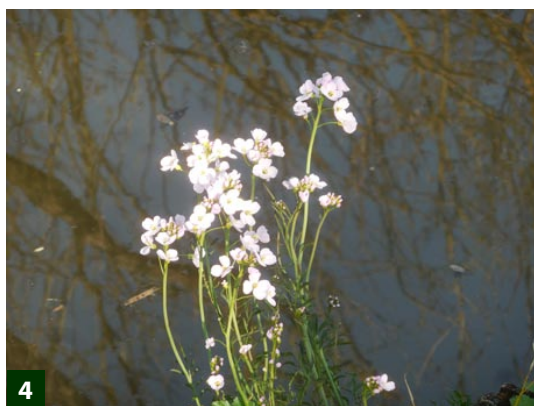
Where it's well done, though, they're a wonderful local nature reserve. Old trees like oak show where the canal was carved out of woodland or followed old hedge lines. Alders and willow line stretches where the cut wasn't already wooded. Underneath are hawthorn and blackthorn, flowering now, and under them bluebells, cow parsley, ground ivy and wild garlic. April and May are prime times for hedge and under-hedge flowers. If they aren't there, there has been bad management.

Fortunately, the off-side of the canal is often unspoiled and has continuous blossom, starting now and lasting till midsummer. However, the trees that side are often right on the water's edge so have fewer flowers growing under them.

Later in the spring the water's-edge plants start to flower and should not be cut down as they maintain the corridor through to the autumn. Sedge, lady's smock, marsh marigolds and hemlock-water-dropwort start in April, with irises in May.

Where the canal goes through villages and towns it is even more important. Gardens by the canal are likely to have clipped hedges and to get rid of wild flowers ("weeds"), but if grown sympathetically they can create a great mix of vegetation. They also host and feed birds. Really built-up areas need more human intervention: perhaps planters with herbs or wild flowers, or climbing plants up walls or fences, and bird-boxes. Ironically, the most biodiverse places are often in the scruffy wastelands along neglected bits of canal, where native plants can thrive and host all the other wildlife. I've noticed this at both ends of our canal, in Birmingham and Worcester.

When you enjoy seeing ducklings, cygnets, moorhen-chicks and goslings in spring, remember the network of biodiverse plants that supports them if allowed to grow.



4



5



6

1. BLACKTHORN BLOSSOM ON THE OFF-SIDE
2. CONTINUOUS FLOWERING PLANTS
3. DUCKLINGS AND WATER LILIES
4. LADY'S SMOCK
5. MAY TREE FLOWERS
6. SILVERWEED BY THE TOWPATH

Are There Fairies In Alvechurch?

If you go down to the canal today, you're sure of a big surprise!

One or more of the 'locals' in Alvechurch have taken to 'decorating' the trees along the towpath close to Bridge 61. These 'fairy houses' have been popping up like a 'Banksy' when nobody is looking. Perhaps it's a 'Canal Banksy'? Three trees have so far been adorned with these cute decorations and are causing quite a stir on the local Facebook page for the area.



March Meeting

The First Canal by David Shimmings

The talk centred on the Bridgewater Canal, the “first industrial canal”, but before this David looked at earlier canals.

2330 BCE – Egypt. Canal to take stones for pyramids at Giza 6 miles from Nile across flood-plain. Small ports created for loading and unloading. 2-3 million blocks were shifted.

6th Century CE – China. The Grand Canal from Beijing to Hangzhou. Mostly for agricultural produce and troops. Became the longest in the world later.

950 CE – first canal in England. Glastonbury canal took building material to build an extension of the Abbey.

1548 - Brandenburg Germany

1642 – France, basically a straightened river

1681 – France, Canal de Midi – linked Bay of Biscay to Mediterranean with central canal between two rivers. Rise and fall of 700 ft. The Duke of Bridgewater knew of it

1757 – Sankey Brook Navigation near Warrington. Built to carry coal and materials for glassworks on Merseyside. Not technically a canal to avoid needing an act of parliament.

However, very little of Sankey Brook used and mostly a new cut, so could be the first industrial canal here. Was crossed by the first railway.

The Bridgewater Canal – named after 3rd Duke of Bridgewater created by him to serve his coal mines, runs between Manchester, Runcorn and Leigh. David took us on an illustrated trip along it.

Features included:

Packet House where passenger boats loaded and were then pulled by fast galloping horses.

A visit by Queen Victoria in 1851 by barge, going to Worsley Hall for dinner – the crowds frightened the horses and the Duke of Wellington fell in the canal.

Clock tower where the clock was made to strike 13 at 1pm by the Duke of Bridgewater. His workers claimed not to hear the single strike that brought them back to work at 1pm so he made sure they did.

Aqueducts and swing bridges with water tanks to take the Bridgewater over the Manchester Ship Canal.

Sailing barges called “Mersey flats” in early days.

Good photos of modern metro along canal, and modern tower block near Victorian stack.

Boats called LS Lowry and Emmeline Pankhurst.

A separate licence was needed to go on the canal and there were some underground by-passes to avoid this. There are many tunnels buried under the Manchester/Salford Quays area.

Several members had cruised the Bridgewater Canal.

Other early canals were mentioned especially the Fosse Dyke dating from Roman times.



Mary Green

The meeting was well received by those present whose numbers continue to increase with the popularity of Zoom. '58' offers its thanks to David for his interesting presentation. (Ed)

A Walk Around Upper Bittell Reservoir

The canals in our area have so many items of infrastructure with most of them being easily seen by passing boaters and pedestrians in particular. Sometimes, particularly when engineering and maintenance work is happening, under water structures are revealed and many people may be fascinated with what is there to be seen. Examples of this include emptied locks, dewatered sections, below water level bridge works etc. C&RT have, prior to the current covid restrictions, had well organised visits to many of these structures.

Many canal users, however, are enthralled by what there is to see and enjoy regardless of engineering works and drained sections. Quaint bridges, tunnels, aqueducts, bi-wash weirs etc. the list goes on. However, there are many infrastructure items which are possibly not as well known to the majority of canal users in some cases because they are either not so obvious or very near to the main waterway thoroughfare. Several examples of these may be found on all three of our canals and the society in the past has organised Summer walks to explore some of them. The latest walk was possibly the one which showed some of the now derelict and privately owned lock chambers of part of the old route followed by the Droitwich Junction Canal.

However, there are still a number of places which may be accessed and not necessarily on private land. One such example is Upper Bittell Reservoir, one of several excavated to serve the seemingly insatiable appetite for water supplies needed to service the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. A few years ago Denis led another planned walk up to the Old Pumphouse and surrounding area which was a real 'eye opener' to many who marvelled at the scale of engineering even though all now disused and derelict. The path alongside the South Western side of the reservoir, which is on top of a purposely built embankment, offers fine views across to Lower Bittell Reservoir and beyond. Barnt Green Sailing Club make use of the upper reservoir and their base can be seen clearly from here. However, there is still a lot more of the reservoir to be seen with a path alongside the Northern edge just past Cofton Richards Farm.

Walking up the bridle path towards Cofton Lane past some lovely buildings particularly 'Tower House', the now footpath turns North East and heads towards the Northern edge of Upper Bittell which is signposted as a SSSI. The path can be a bit narrow and muddy but well worth walking as a completely different perspective of Upper Bittell may be seen. This path eventually joins the Birmingham Road on Hopwood Hill, almost opposite Lea End Lane, which goes over the Worcester and Birmingham Canal just South of Wast Hills Tunnel.



John Hemingway

Alarum Theatre

The latest news from our friends at the Alarum Theatre Company

5TH ANNIVERSARY BLOG POST

As we continue to celebrate our 5th anniversary, on our second significant date (the date of our first phone conversation) we shared a blog post with Five Quick-Fire Questions for Heather Wastie. Hope you enjoy reading it. It was put together by Jess Saunders who was with us on work experience and is now working hard to complete her final year at the University of Birmingham.

Visit <https://bit.ly/2Py4oKk> for more information.



Heather Wastie (photo by Jess Saunders)

WALKING THROUGH WATERWAYS HISTORY

Audio trail project in Dudley commissioned by Creative Black Country

We are delighted to have been commissioned by Creative Black Country to run a project to engage and connect local people during lockdown.

The aim of the project, called 'Walking Through Waterways History', is to involve the local community in gathering material for an audio trail celebrating the Dudley No 2 Canal between Windmill End Junction and Coombeswood, an area once lined with industry, including the once huge Stewarts & Lloyds tube works, where over 2000 people worked.

As well as chatting online with local groups, we're keen to hear from anyone familiar with the area with suggestions as to what could be included in the recording.

Read our blog post for further details, and please send us any stories or memories you have of this stretch of canal. Visit <https://bit.ly/3cNp7CT> for more information.



View from Windmill End Bridge (photo by Brenda Ward)

Lapal Canal Trust News

Our friends from the Lapal Canal Trust are preparing for the new winding hole to be excavated at Selly Oak on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. This work is due to commence any time now and will be opposite the new section of canal immediately North of the Bristol Road over bridge.

Some preparatory work has been necessary on the non-towpath side so that the excavation can go ahead as planned. A small but well organised work party completed this work on a bitterly cold Easter Monday with Denis Pike leading the way owing to him being qualified to do the work.

Denis was assisted by Peter Fisher and Hugh Humphreys along with Justin Malpass and Arthur Moppett. The work was carried out with safety being the prime consideration and all went perfectly to plan.

We now await the contractors to commence their work. *(Photos by Hugh Humphreys)*







Volunteer News

Bill Lambert

I do 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 and I am sure that many of us are enjoying the process of getting our vaccinations.

Can We Re-Start Our Work Parties?

The lockdown restrictions are being eased at the end of March. People will then be able to meet outdoors in a group of up to six. Having said that, if people suspect that they may have the virus then they must self-isolate as before. I will look again whether face masks and social distancing will still be required, and our policy for safe covid working will still apply.

Therefore we should be able to have our work parties starting on: -

April 2021

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

May 2021

Sat. 8th Sun. 9th Wed. 26th Thur. 27th

June 2021

Sat. 12th Sun. 13th Wed. 23rd Thur. 24th

We will re-start at the Tardebigge yard and meet up at 9.30am.

I would ask please that people let me know if they are able to join us so we can plan accordingly. I will confirm with people via email.

Our Narrowboat 'Cecilia'

As we reported in the last issue, Cecilia has undergone a significant amount of repair work through last summer and originally it was hoped that our volunteers would be able to finish off the work after the carpenter had vacated. Now that restrictions are easing, I will have a discussion with the Cecilia Group, and we will form a plan to allow work to re-start. I will send out details a little later.

Could There Be Events Later This Year?

There could potentially be a festival or two later this summer. Inevitable, this will be governed by the coronavirus situation as no one can predict what the lockdowns will be several months ahead. Our society is looking at some events to work around the IWA Festival taking place at Perdiswell near Worcester 28/30 August. IWA are taking the approach that they will continue as if it was going to happen for now. Our society is trying to consider whether a mini St. Richard's Canal Festival could take place on 21/22 August in Droitwich.

All of this is very tentative at the moment as there are so many potential restrictions that could be in place. So, we agreed to keep planning but without anything definite. Please watch this space.

However, for the time being: -

Please remember that hand washing is still in place, wear a face mask and keep social distancing.

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

Bill Lambert

Volunteer Coordinator

Worcester-Birmingham and Droitwich Canals Society.

Email volunteers@wbdc.org.uk

Mobile 07815 986012

STOP PRESS: Please await contact from Bill who may not be able to attend any work parties (see Editorial).

Volunteer Ranger



The face shown here looks somewhat familiar to WB&DCS. Joking apart, '58' offers its congratulations to Ian McGarr on what we assume is a well earned promotion?

Welcome to Ian McGarr, new Volunteer Ranger for the top and bottom ends of Alvechurch on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal.

Swans

Mary Green captured these 2 photos of mating swans on The W&B in Alvechurch



Heritage Corridor

As readers may recall from a previous issue of '58', your society has been asked to input an initiative to develop a heritage corridor which could include much of the canal infrastructure and surrounding area described in the following response. Neil, Alan and Bill have put together the society's response based on the information requested, and very comprehensive it is.

If any readers wish to input to this, or even just want to find out more, please contact Bill Lambert who should be able to help along with Alan and Neil's support. '58' hopes that the society's input to this project really does help to move things on positively and we can be involved appropriately. Many thanks to our three members for taking a lead here.

Response to a proposal to develop a HERITAGE CORRIDOR for NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE.

1. What is North Worcestershire?

On reflection we feel that the original title of 'North Eastern Worcestershire Heritage Corridor' is more appropriate as it keeps the area of the corridor more focused on the unusually industrial nature of this corner of Worcestershire with its direct links to the industrial revolution. Unlike the rest of the county that is mostly rural.

2. Boundaries?

Following our opening statement we see the central corridor being the Worcester and Birmingham Canal (opened 1815) from West Hill Tunnel down to the old Salt Works site (1825) with legs off to Redditch and Bromsgrove attractions. This would also pull in other places of interest like the Lickey incline (1835), the Chartists' settlement at Dodford (1849) and lastly anchored by the Avoncroft Museum.

We see the canal as the North/South Corridor with the East/West possibly being based on the Monarch's Way footpath.

3. Why is your site important - Worcester and Birmingham Canal?

The Worcester and Birmingham Canal was originally intended as a wide barge canal from Birmingham to Worcester to transport coal more economically down to the city from the Black Country. However it also opened up a route to get manufactured items down to Gloucester and so to the oceans. It also gave industrialists in Redditch a super highway for their goods. It is of historical importance nationally and internationally that many of the structures are listed.

4. Why is this place important - unique – historically / culturally?

At 2.5 miles the Tardebigge flight of locks is the longest continuous flight of narrow locks in the country. Top lock was originally a boat lift, the first of its kind. There are many links to the story of the industrial revolution. Tardebigge Church has Anglo Saxon beginnings, rebuilt in the 18th Century.

5. What are the values of the place and their importance to the community?

Civil engineering/tunnelling. Originally formed the link to the outside world. Various wharves provided places to land building materials for the local area and change the face of Bromsgrove. Particularly Braziers Wharf which was rented by J & A Brazier of Worcester Road, who with his sons John and Albert, built many of the fine buildings of Old Bromsgrove.

6. What features of the place have intrinsic value?

Lime Kilns, Ice breaker steam ship 'Birmingham', buildings of the Sharpness New Docks Company at Tardebigge New Wharf, the reservoir and the old pump house. The unspoilt countryside gives a bucolic feel to the whole area.

7. Why is it a landmark?

See 4 and 5 and 6

8. What events have occurred here?

The building of the canal, which has been the focus of many heritage and nature walks, is the main feature. The major event was the establishment of the Inland Waterways Association when Tom Rolt met Robert Aickman on the canal boat 'Cressy' at Tardebigge New Wharf.

The dilapidated state of the canal network at that time and its imminent closure drove them to form the Inland Waterways Association. Rolt's book 'Narrow Boat' gave the impetus needed for thousands of men and women to start volunteering to transform the derelict canal system into the waterways we now have today.

9. What is its significance to the area today and its culture and (possibly) contemporary World events?

See above

10. What is its significance to other heritage and culture(s)?

Transportation of many different goods including needles out to the world and chocolate chip to Cadburys.

11. The physical, human, cultural and financial resources available?

The canal from Tardebigge down to the old Salt Works site is already a conservation area. C&RT have a yearly budget for the upkeep of the canal utilising a work force of directly employed and contracted personnel along with volunteers. WB&DCS has a small team of experienced local volunteers.

12. The target audience/visitor profile?

All ages, particularly walkers, including any disabled persons and local school visits. Passing through boaters and holiday tourists. Holiday boat hire companies at Alvechurch (ABC Boats), Tardebigge Old Wharf (Anglo Welsh) and Stoke Wharf (Black Prince).

13. The themes and stories that should be presented?

History of the canal and links to other areas. Building of the canal, the navvies and their families. The narrow-gauge railways with tubs pulled by donkeys. Working on the canal (legging through the Tardebigge Tunnel). The life of boatmen and their families, living on canal boats. Pat Warner's 'The Lock-Keepers Daughter', George Bate, working on the wharf. The 'Queens Head' at Bates Wharf Stoke Pound, originally run by John Bate a blacksmith who had a workshop and forge at the back of the pub.

Many other stories of the people who lived and worked on or by the canal environment.

14. The most appropriate places at which to tell the stories?

Heritage trail around Tardebigge. Information boards along the canal particularly at Pump House, Tardebigge Reservoir and old wharves.

15. Appropriate, effective, imaginative and interactive media to use?

Signage and QR Code.

Compiled by the following members of the Worcester-Birmingham and Droitwich Canals Society:

Neil Franklin

Alan Gibbs

Bill Lambert

10 years ago

Ten years ago British Waterways, who were in charge of our waterways at that time, responded to a letter from someone called Mary Green (believe we have heard that name somewhere before – Ed). Mary had contacted them about fish dying in the 'dead arm' – (we assume pun unintended). BW's explanatory letter appeared in the March 2011 edition of '58'. Makes some of us wonder how fish in much shallower garden ponds survive the frost if BW's explanation is the general pattern of events in other settings?

Dead Fish in the Old Arm of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal at Alvechurch: The Official BW Response

In January 2011, approximately 70 dead fish were recorded in the old arm off the Worcester and Birmingham canal at Alvechurch. The fish are believed to have died due to the prolonged cold weather, the canal arm had been frozen for over a month and the ice had reached depths of 15cm.

Under these frozen conditions, dissolved oxygen levels are likely to have fallen to levels which would suffocate the fish, this decline in oxygen would have occurred for a number of reasons:

- fish will continue to respire and use up oxygen, but oxygen will not be replaced from the atmosphere due to the ice layer,
- fish will be excreting and the breakdown of this matter will also use up oxygen (ammonia levels are also likely to rise, which could prove toxic to fish),
- in these conditions fish tend to shoal together, the effect of this will be using up oxygen in a localised area.
- The shallow nature of this arm, will also exacerbate the low dissolved oxygen levels.

As conditions worsened, the fish would have been unable to move away as under such low temperatures their metabolism would have gradually slowed to a semi - dormant state.

At Alvechurch, a causeway had been installed across the arm during the summer 2010 and it has been suggested this could have contributed to the fish deaths.

The installation was subject to a BW environmental appraisal in which fish movement between the arm and the canal was included.

The engineer who supervised the construction of the causeway has confirmed that the large pipes that were installed to allow fish movements, were installed extending well beyond the stone bund i.e. it would be highly unlikely for them to be obstructed by stone. The engineer has also checked the site following the fish death incident and cannot see anything obstructing the pipes.

The weather conditions were severe and prolonged and the waterway has experienced other similar fish deaths in other canals, especially at locations with shallow water and low flow. At one site, field readings reported dissolved oxygen levels at 20% and ammonia levels at 2 mg/l, both of which would lead to fish deaths. The evidence suggests therefore that the mortalities were due to extreme conditions.

To: Nick Worthington

Subject: Bridge 64a, Worcester & Birmingham Canal

Hi Nick

I met the guys working down by the dead arm today – they'd just re-laid the causeway after replacing and realigning the pipes. The bloke explained to me how silted up the pipe had been. Thank you for acting so promptly in this. I hope the fish come back – and that we don't have that kind of cold again!

Mary Green

Joining with volunteers

BW MONTHLY January 2001



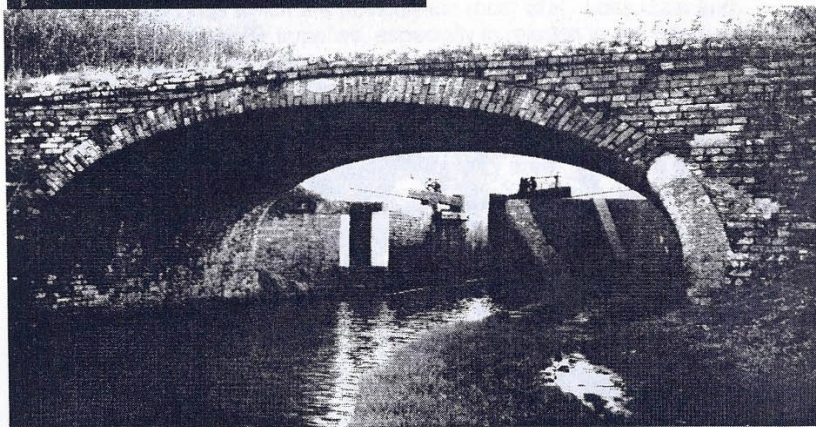
Twenty volunteers from the Worcester & Birmingham Canal Society and Droitwich Canals Trust have been working alongside BW to restore bridge 50 on the Tardebigge lock flight. By clearing heavy vegetation, the volunteers saved BW at least 3-4 days' work. The bridge was repaired using reclaimed bricks and heritage lime mortar, topped by new sandstone copings for which the volunteers gained part-funding from the Inland Waterways Association. BW staff involved were Neil Bedford (right of picture) Phillip Gibbs, Kevin Kirkland, John Riddle and Mick Wong (left of picture).

20 years ago

The society was involved in restoring Bridge 50 on the Tardebigge Flight and judging by the condition of it in the lower picture, not before time!

Below

Bridge 50 before restoration



BCNS Cruise 2021

Our friends at the Birmingham Canal Navigation Society (BCNS) are hoping to organise a campaign cruise to promote the reopening of the Bradley Canal and encourage more use of the Walsall Canal.

The completed entry form, for those boaters able to attend, should be returned to the address on the form not WB&DCS. The form can be downloaded from here: [Walsall Campaign Cruise](https://bit.ly/3cMp8H0)
<https://bit.ly/3cMp8H0>

BRIDGES OPENED ON SATURDAY



Walsall Campaign Cruise

Friday 14th Saturday 15th Sunday 16th May 2021

Contact Details

Name _____
Address _____

Telephone No. _____ Mobile _____

Boat name _____ Length _____ Draft _____
Arrival date _____ Approx. arrival time _____

Entry to include a brass plaque £10.00

The itinerary for the cruise is to start from your chosen location but aiming for a Friday night at Moorcroft Junction on the Walsall Canal. We hope to get some lock volunteers on Ryders Green to assist passage. On Saturday morning we will have a brief publicity event for the Bradley Canal Restoration and then cruising to Walsall Town Wharf for Saturday night. A number of boaters are then heading to Wolverhampton for Sunday night so anyone is free to join in if they wish. We will also try to supply lock wheels on the Walsall locks.

Please make cheque payable to The BCN Society and return with this form to:
Barrie Johnson, 7 Moor Farm Drive, Bartley Green, Birmingham, B32 4JH



1. All entries are given on first come basis. The complete and correct form is submitted. You should attach a cheque for £10.00 payable to the BCN Society. The entry fee is £10.00 per boat. The entry fee is not refundable.
2. For a full list of the bridges open on each day see the website.
3. The entry fee is not refundable. The entry fee is not refundable.
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11. The entry fee is not refundable. The entry fee is not refundable.
12. The entry fee is not refundable. The entry fee is not refundable.
13. The entry fee is not refundable. The entry fee is not refundable.
14. The entry fee is not refundable. The entry fee is not refundable.
15. The entry fee is not refundable. The entry fee is not refundable.

Confirm that I have read and agree to comply with these conditions

Sign _____ Date _____

Office use only

Entry Number _____
Date entry received _____
Type of payment _____ Cash/Cheque
Cheque Number _____

IWA Festival Of Water Event 2021

Our friends at the IWA are preparing to send out booking forms even though it is not definite that the Festival of Water event is allowed to go ahead. These can be downloaded online at:
www.waterways.org.uk/support/ways-to-get-involved/events/iwa-festival-of-water
if any readers are interested in following up.



IWA FESTIVAL OF WATER BOAT & CAMPSITE BOOKING FORM

Come and enjoy IWA's Festival of Water from a fantastic vantage point. Please complete the booking form to reserve your mooring or campsite pitch. The fee is just £35 and includes access for two people to all of the evening entertainment over four evenings. OR book online at waterways.org.uk/festivalofwater

Please select from the following

- ☐ Boat Booking (Complete information below and return to IWA)
- ☐ Campsite Booking (Complete information below and return to IWA)

Title First Name Surname _____
Name _____
Address _____

Town _____
County _____

Daytime Tel. No. _____ Postcode _____
At least one phone number is required

Mobile _____

Email _____

Are you a member of IWA? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is anyone on board / in your unit registered as disabled? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is this part of a block booking? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you willing to help at the event? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Will you have any pets with you?
Cats ☐ Dogs ☐

Planned arrival date _____

A Craft Name _____
Registration Number _____

Type of Craft
Narrowboat ☐ Cruiser Stern ☐ Historic Motor ☐
Traditional ☐ Historic Butty (FOC) ☐
Tug Style ☐ Butty (Powered) ☐
Cruiser ☐ Dinghy ☐

Construction
☐ Steel ☐ Aluminium
☐ Iron ☐ GRP
☐ Wood

Preferred Access
☐ Bow ☐ Centre ☐ Stern

B Type of Unit
☐ Trailer Caravan ☐ Tent
☐ Motorhome ☐ Other _____

Please use your own washing facilities
Water, toilets and waste disposal will be available

C Dimensions
Boats - include fenders, outboards, davits etc
Camping Units - include awning if one which but exclude gas ropes

Length _____ m. Beam/Width _____ m. Draft _____ m.
or _____ ft. in. or _____ ft. in. or _____ ft. in.

Special Requests & Other Information

Supported by



IWA FESTIVAL OF WATER TRADERS & EXHIBITORS BOOKING FORM

Please note that this form is NOT for Catering bookings

Title* First Name* Surname* _____
Name _____
Company* _____
Address* _____

Town _____
County _____

Daytime Tel. No. _____ Postcode* _____
At least one phone number is required

Mobile _____

Email* _____

Arrival date (day/ny) _____

Traders / Exhibitors set-up from 1pm Friday 27th August

Your Products or Services _____

Notes

- By submitting a completed form and paying the fee you accept our terms and conditions overleaf.
- Boats marked * are required information.
- You are responsible for the security of your stand and stock at all times.
- You may be permitted to stay overnight in the vicinity of your stand. Please discuss your requirements with us at 24 hour overall site security will be provided.

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RESOURCES REQUIRED (ALL PRICES EXCLUDE VAT)

LAND BASED TRADER OR EXHIBITOR

Land based pitches 2m x 3m @ £50 (E14 inc VAT) per pitch _____

Vehicle details: How many vehicles will require parking in the free trade car park OR please supply dimensions of vehicles or trailers that you require on an adjacent to your pitch. Charges will apply, please discuss with the organisers.

Trade or public parking _____ Length _____ m. Width _____ m.

WATER BASED TRADER OR EXHIBITOR

Water based trading @ £50 (E14 inc VAT) per boat _____

Please also complete a Boat Booking Form (no additional charge note 12) so the Waterways team can allocate a suitable mooring.

REGISTERED CHARITY Charity No. _____
For registered charities this fee will be discounted to £45 (E14 inc VAT). There are no discounts for optional extras.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS (subject to practical considerations)

FURNITURE (enter number of items required in each box)

4m x 2m Trestle tables @ £5 (E6 inc VAT) (note 14)	_____
Small folding chairs @ £2.50 (E3 inc VAT)	_____
4m x 2m electricity supply @ £25 (E30 inc VAT)	_____
16 Amp electricity supply @ £80 (E96 inc VAT)	_____
32 Amp electricity supply @ £150 (E180 inc VAT)	_____
For registered electricity suppliers are terminated using an REC 60009 BA sticker. An adaptor is required to convert to a BA sticker. If required a suitable adaptor may be purchased from us.	_____
Adaptor BA to BA @ £8.33 (E10 inc VAT)	_____
Additional whiteboards for evening entertainment	_____
4.47m x 1.5m table (each table includes two stools)	_____

EVENT CAMPSITE

Do you wish to use the event campsite @ the discounted trader's price (£25.00 (E32 inc VAT) per pitch) does not include additional resources

Please complete a Campsite Booking Form (note 13) so the Campsite team can allocate a pitch.

PLEASE TICK RELEVANT PAYMENT METHOD (ALL PRICES EXCLUDE VAT)

By BACS Account: IWA Events Account, Sort code: 20-45-77, Account no.: 5097250, quoting either the company or organisation name as a reference

By calling IWA Head Office 01494 783453 to use a Debit or Credit card

By cheque payable to Inland Waterways Association posted with this form if submitted by post

GRAND TOTAL _____

DATA PROTECTION

You will be sent information using your email address about relating to your booking and volunteering opportunities. Tell us the ways you would like to hear about the other side work we do and to support our fundraising activities.

How would you like your data processed?

I would like to hear from IWA	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Please tick "Yes" or "No"	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Send the form, save as a pdf and email to event.entries@waterways.org.uk

Please tick relevant payment method box

☐ By BACS Account: IWA Events Account, Sort code: 20-45-77, Account no.: 5097250, quoting either the company or organisation name as a reference

☐ By calling IWA Head Office 01494 783453 to use a Debit or Credit card

☐ By cheque payable to Inland Waterways Association posted with this form to the address below.

Mooring / Pitch Fee £35.00
includes a withdrawal for Evening Entertainment (if evenings)

Additional vouchers £5.00 each (children 16 or under) free of charge

Plaque £7.00 each (for bookings placed after 15th July, postage may be required)

GRAND TOTAL _____

Send your completed form to FoW Booking Form, IWA, Inland House, Moor Road, Chesham, HP5 1WA

FoW20 Booking V1.0

FoW20 Trade V1.0

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E: bridge35changers@gmail.com

Company Registered No 5241966

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Black Prince Holidays Ltd, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 4LA
www.black-prince.com

Wychbold Swan Rescue

www.wychboldswanrescue.co.uk



07786434793

- 07867672758

Registered Charity No.

1041947





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 usually hold our regular monthly meetings at the Alvechurch Boat Centre, Scarfield Wharf, Alvechurch, B48 7SQ (just behind the award winning Weighbridge pub). Meetings are currently being held on 'Zoom' on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.45pm. If you are in the least bit curious then please come along, as non-members are always welcome (we publish joining instructions on our Facebook page). You do not need to be a boat owner as most of our members are not. 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* (currently suspended due to Covid restrictions).

**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

(where you can also download a membership application form)

[Facebook.com/wbdcs.org.uk](https://www.facebook.com/wbdcs.org.uk) | [Twitter: @wbdcs58](https://twitter.com/wbdcs58)



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