

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'



VIEW OF THE WORCESTER & BIRMINGHAM FROM TARDEBIGGE MOORINGS



Monthly Meetings

**Our regular monthly meetings are
currently being held online**

**Public monthly meetings will
be reinstated as soon as possible**

Summer Walk

August Sponsored Walks
(see page 8 for more information)

Future Meetings

AGM on 'Zoom' plus speaker
7th September at 7.15pm
(see page 26)

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 557 Aug/Sep 2021

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

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

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Front cover photo by Tony Brannon

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

I would like to start off my Chair's report this month by saying to Mary Green on behalf of the Committee my absolute thanks for the tremendous job she has done in her position of Society Secretary. Mary has been an absolute stalwart in making sure we as a committee acted correctly, always reminding us of things to do and generally keeping us in good order. Mary did all of this even in the middle of a serious illness. As many will already know, Mary will be stepping down from her role at the AGM in September and we are now looking for a volunteer to step forward and take over. I am sure we have someone out there that can keep us in an orderly manner.

By the time you are reading '58' we will have passed by "freedom day" with lockdown restrictions being eased. Me personally? I will still probably conduct myself in a very similar manner to what I have now become accustomed to doing. I will maintain social distance where I can and I will continue to wear a mask especially on public transport. In other words I will be very cautious going forward at least until the autumn when we will see how the easing of the restrictions is panning out.

Having said all of that I am pleased to see that the 'Cecilia' volunteers have started day trips again which will give the Society some much needed income. They have worked very hard to get her back into shape and we owe them all a vote of thanks.

Talking of much needed funds we will be holding a sponsored towpath walk along the Worcester & Birmingham and both Droitwich Canals (or a canal nearer to you) at any time during the month of August. You can do any part of the canals individually or in a group, it is entirely up to you. The important thing is that you get sponsored. More details on how to participate are on page 8.

The AGM in September will be held via zoom but we have discussed if we could get back to meetings October/November. The one problem confronting us at the moment is the size of room at ABC. Do we want to be crammed into a small room? The answer is no we don't so we are looking at options. One option we have talked about is a possible double meeting with a zoom option as well. We will of course keep everyone closely informed.

David Wheeler



Editor's Notes

Hi Readers,

Hello everyone, hope you have all been managing to keep cool and stay healthy during these still somewhat troubled times. Your society has been busy as usual since the last edition of '58'. The last members' online Zoom meeting was about the Derby and Sandiacre Canal Restoration Project which, as usual, went down very well with those able to access Zoom. More about this further on. An advantage of using this for meetings is that members who are unable to travel to the usual meeting room can safely access the talk from their own home. Conversely, the society is unable to sell teas, coffees and raffle tickets but that is where we are at this moment in time. Your committee is considering holding meetings, possibly from October at a venue yet to be determined, but offering both the usual attendance as well as Zoom which should help all round. We shall see what transpires there so watch this space as well as social media.

The society's narrowboat 'Cecilia' has now undergone much renovation work not only including society volunteers but also volunteering friends from 'Railtrack' - again more about this further on. The volunteer crews have now commenced taking trips out again so if any readers see them out on the cut please don't forget to give them a wave.

The first of the society's planned walks took place recently and how good this felt to just be outside with other people. The walk will be reported on further in this edition.

It has now been confirmed that the Inland Waterways Association's Festival of Water will be going ahead during the August Bank Holiday weekend. This will take place at Perdiswell, just by Bilford Locks on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. Your society has been represented on the organising committee as well as our friends from the Pamela May Trust, and our volunteers may well be involved with the preparations. If this of interest to anyone please contact our volunteer co-ordinator Neil Franklin who should soon have some details of what, where and when.

Your society may well be involved with a smaller joint event hopefully to be held in Vines Park Droitwich, involving the 'Salt Fest' and the 'Food Fest'. This is currently being planned for the weekend after the 'Festival of Water' in Worcester. Many of the boaters and associated activities from the Worcester event could possibly attend this one in Vines Park. Boaters could either cruise up the Severn to Hawford and then up the Barge Canal, or cruise up the Worcester and Birmingham Canal to Hanbury Wharf Junction and then down the Junction Canal into Droitwich. Could well be a busy time.

Speaking of which, the local boatyards are continuing to be very busy with their hire fleets almost all out with holiday makers. The canals are now very busy which can only help things all round after the disruption during the past year or two. '58' just hopes that the recent increase in covid cases does not drive us all back to lock down again. Masks, hand gel and social distancing should be the norm as mentioned in the Chair's Notes.

Changing the subject somewhat, C&RT has given notice of various stoppages which have been planned on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal. Lock 50, which is alongside the lower part of Tardebigge Reservoir, is included as well as work around the university which is intended to

continue although on different dates. It is pleasing to note that the winding hole directions to boaters, given on their web site, appear to be far more accurate now than on previous occasions which '58' reported on a few editions ago. However, the advice for the university area mentions Bridge 79c which once again does not seem to appear to feature on any canal maps. Where the actual winding hole is, there are no bridges over the canal at that point. Still, an improvement on previous but not quite there yet unless someone from C&RT could be so kind as to contact us and inform if we are wrong?

With lots more to digest further on, could our grateful thanks to all contributors please be noted as without these good people there would be no '58' as we have become accustomed to receiving? If anyone else would like to submit anything we would be pleased to receive and consider for another edition. Hope to see as many of you as possible on the sponsored walks and other forthcoming events your society should be present at.

Enjoy the read.

John Hemingway

Obituaries



It is with great sadness that '58' has to report the passing of members and friends of the society.

Al Harris was society treasurer and eventually finance auditor. Al passed away quite suddenly following a fall while out shopping. Several society members were present at his funeral or attending virtually. Al was well known on the

canals not only for his boat 'Beagle' but for his work at Alvechurch Boat Centre where he became the technical director. His wife Daphne, who passed away some years ago, used to bring her art groups to the canal on Summer evenings with much of the work being bought by boat owners whose craft featured.

Jim Marks, whose boat 'Tub o dore' used to be seen on the orchard moorings at Alvechurch many years ago, was a longstanding friend and past member of the society as well as a regular attendee to the annual lunch. Jim had been ill for some time but at the time of going to press '58' has not had any further information.

Terry Stanton was a friend of the society and a driving force behind the 'Lapal Canal Trust'. He had been suffering from ill-health for quite some time before passing away recently.

'58' offers its condolences to the family and close friends of Al Harris and Terry Stanton as well as to the family and close friends of Jim Marks – particularly Adie and Denise.

Sponsored Walks: Walking The Canals

The Worcester & Birmingham Canal The Droitwich Canals or a Canal Near You

SPONSORSHIP

Many of you may know we are not having our regular second summer walk in August. Information was published in the last edition of '58' (556) in the article on page 8. After input from members and the committee we have decided to ask you to do a sponsored walk on any date in August. It doesn't matter how far you walk so long as it's along one of our canals or a canal near to you. You would need to select a start and finish point and let Tony Brannon know where you went and when you have completed it. Please encourage family & friends to take part as well. Sponsorship forms and leaflet are available to print off. Sponsorship money can be paid directly into the society account (full details on the form) or via JustGiving (further details available on request). If you are unable to print these then let Tony know and he'll post forms to you. They will also be available for download from the society website: www.wbdcs.org.uk

GROUP WALK: Saturday 21st August

Some of you might like to walk in a bigger group and maybe push yourself a bit on the day on Saturday 21st August starting at 8am. We are planning to walk and boat ride all the way from Alvechurch to the end of The W&B in Birmingham in two groups.

The idea is that one group has a sponsored walk into Birmingham while another group takes a trip on 'Cecilia' at the same time. The first walking group would then return on 'Cecilia' whilst those who arrived on 'Cecilia' will walk back to Alvechurch on their sponsored walk. It's around a 10 mile 4/5 hour walk. If you think this may be too much you can always catch a train and walk a shorter distance. We would all meet up in Birmingham, hand out leaflets and chat to the public about our society for an hour or so.

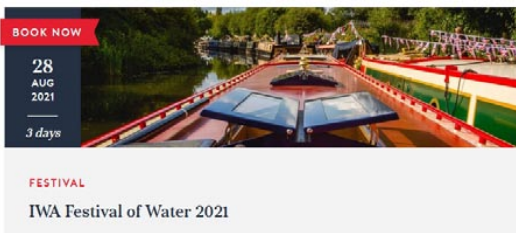
Hopefully we'll make a bit of noise and attract some good publicity.

If you would like to take part on this trip/walk then let Tony know ASAP as spaces are limited. Please use the email address fiftyeight@talktalk.net

If you are unable to commit to a walk then perhaps you could help by offering lifts to friends and family or handing out leaflets.

Please return your completed sponsorship forms to Tony. These should be posted to WBDSC SF, 74 Station Road, Alvechurch B48 7SD or handed to any committee member.





The IWA Festival of Water is due to take place on 28th - 30th August 2021 at Perdiswell Park in Worcester. We have booked a pitch for our two gazebos to attend on all three days so, assuming the event is able to go ahead, we will have plenty of space to take our shop along with the potential for other activities such as badge making and membership/volunteer recruitment.

Our friends from the Lapal Canal Trust may also be joining us.

To get maximum benefit from the weekend, a team of helpers will be needed before, during and after the main three days. Whether you have helped us at events before or not, please consider whether you are able to offer your support on this occasion. Jobs to be done include transporting gazebos, shop stock and other infrastructure from Alvechurch to Worcester (and back again) and setting up and taking down gazebos, shop, displays etc as well as working on the stall during opening hours (10am – 6pm on Saturday and Sunday, 10am – 5pm on Monday).

I will be able to circulate more details once I have received final stallholder instructions from the organiser. In the meantime, please put the dates in your diary and if you are able to offer help, or want to ensure that you receive future updates, please email me at shop@wbdc.org.uk

More info and booking forms are on page 22.

Lynne Laniosh

Donations

We have been looking for ways of making donations to the society easier.

QR Code: We have the facility to make donations direct to the society. You can simply 'scan' the QR code on our flyers and collection tins or visit <https://bit.ly/3pcfp1C>

Just Giving: We have also set up a 'JustGiving' page. Simply go to the [JustGiving website](https://www.justgiving.com/worcester-and-droitwich-canal-society), create an account or log in and then do a search for our society.

Many thanks to Lynne & Trevor for setting these up.





'Nature Notes'

Mary Green

It's been a difficult year for our wild birds along the canal, largely through unusual weather. Mallards are our commonest water birds. They nest in odd places away from the water (my friend had a nest in her broad bean patch.) They nested really late this year. Those with early broods (April as usual) lost many. There were still new-hatched ones in July, so there were little ones, nearly fully-grown adolescents, and males losing their colours as they do after the breeding season, all at the same time.

By August the ducks and drakes look alike, but you can tell them apart by beak colour. Even the gorgeous mandarin drake loses its colours and looks like the female, though with a bit of scruffy crest.

Ducks are good mothers, though the males don't help much after the ducklings arrive. They are not monogamous and each may have more mates than the one they are paired with. They even interbreed with other ducks, though not Mandarin ducks. Sometimes the mother duck struggles to keep a large brood together. I saw a dog disturb a brood nearby – one of the ducklings scurried away in a panic and the mother couldn't find it. Occasionally ducks help each other out: they don't seem to mind being near other broods.

The Canada geese did well. They come back to nest in the same places, near water, the female making a nest from down from her breast. This year those here had good broods at the usual time. The gander stays very close to the nest and aggressively sees off other males. After the goslings arrive they stay in



their own unit, though as the goslings grow up they join more with other families. Goslings grow up incredibly quickly – hatched in May, adult colours in June and grown up in July. Ganders don't lose their colours like drakes, both sexes looking the same. But geese do moult, and during that time they are grounded – you won't see them flying much over summer. Later in August they remember their migratory instinct and wheel around in large flocks, not actually going anywhere.

Swans are very different. They nested near here again, returning to the same place. They are serially monogamous (our pair changed partners a few years ago!) and very careful parents. They build their huge twiggy nest on the water's edge, away from predators if possible. They are aggressive if threatened, protecting their family for a long time. Cygnets grow up slowly, not leaving their parents till the winter and keeping traces of their baby colours for a year.

Moorhens had a bad year. I didn't see any chicks here. Some nested very late (on fragile reedy nests half-in the water) but lost either their eggs or young chicks to predators - herons, gulls, rats and mink. Even in a good year their success rate is poor. They are timid creatures and run or swim away from their nests and young when startled. Those that survive are lovely fluffy black chicks with enormous feet (perfect for running on water-lily leaves), growing into gangly adolescents which seem to be all leg.

I didn't find the reed warblers by Bittell reservoir this year, but there were reed buntings there instead. They are not as noisy as the warblers, but very attractive in the way they perch on the reeds. There are also herons (a great predator), black-headed gulls, and the occasional kingfisher. Then along the hedges are all the woodland-edge song birds. The canal is a great bird habitat as well as a plant corridor.



1. CANADA GOOSE & GOSLINGS
2. GROWING UP GOSLINGS
3. MALLARD WITH DUCKLINGS
4. NESTING SWANS
5. MANDARIN DRAKE
6. YOUNG MOORHEN

Update on Biodiversity on The W&B

On Biodiversity Day at the end of May, I took groups of people along the canal from Alvechurch to look at how the canal contributes to biodiversity. What we were looking at was places where there are perennial native trees and plants growing out fully to flower and fruit at all levels from the big old oaks to the small pathside flowers. These will then be habitat for all the insects, birds and beasts we also need around us. Although the canal is a human construct for industry and commerce, it has become a real asset for biodiversity. It's a recognised Local Wildlife Site.

We saw good stretches of the canal where this happens, with a huge range of flowers right from early spring through to late summer and then fruits and seeds through the autumn and winter. Unfortunately, we also had to walk past areas that are part of the C&RT's new experimental mowing regime. This is supposed to help with biodiversity, but it seems to have the opposite effect round here. Great stretches of the aquatic fringe vegetation are being mowed down regularly through spring and summer, ostensibly for visibility reasons but apparently because there is just a bend on the canal on the map. Our canal here has suffered from being particularly bendy.

In one group, the C&RT's ecologist, Paul Wilkinson, came with us and agreed with me that much of the new mowing was inappropriate. The same stretches have been mown again twice since then, and the growth that comes back in between is already starting to look limited. What happens if you keep mowing in the growing season is that only some plants come back - tougher grasses, nettles, plantains and dandelions for example - and you lose the diversity.

I think there will be another cut this month. However, if the mowing stops after that, there shouldn't be any permanent harm. Plants can normally survive a bad year.

In July I met with Paul again, and also met Gemma Hessey, the new local operations manager for this area. We had another look, up to Bittell, also looking at the health of the Dead Arm where I showed them the regenerated woodland and the success of the planting of creepers and trees by the causeway. Paul was concerned with the health of the water in the dead arm and will take this up.

He will take our discussions forward into his response to the experimental mowing. It's clear that on other canals, and on ours nearer Birmingham, the new regime has helped wildlife, but they haven't got it right here.

As it happened, Gemma was meeting Adnan Saif, the Regional Director of C&RT, for his first visit to the part of the canal, so I had a good chance to talk to him too. He had been speaking recently to potential corporate partners for the canals, and said they were all keen to be involved in helping biodiversity. The problem is in knowing how best to do this. Paul and I contributed some ideas.

Reversing the loss of biodiversity over past centuries is no easy task, but the canal can be a major contributor to regeneration if people understand it and want it to.



Mary Green

Left: Damselfly on hogweed seeds - a sign of biodiversity

Right: Diverse flowers on the aquatic fringe

Membership News

Your Membership Secretary would like to remind members that our membership year began on 1st October 2020 and will end on 30th September 2021. In the same way that all racehorses are deemed to have their birthday on the same day (1st January - not a lot of people know that), every member of our Society is deemed to have joined on 1st October, regardless of the date they signed up. This seems odd, but it does simplify the task of collecting members' annual subscriptions. There is a bonus for new members who joined after 1st April each year because their subscription is valid for up to 18 months.

For the vast majority, your subs become due on 1st October 2021. While we have all been suffering the effects of the covid-19 pandemic, your Society has been forced to rely on members' subs and, thankfully, many generous extra donations. As all of our fundraising activities have been cancelled there has been no income from any other source other than subs and Gift Aid receipts. Hopefully, we will be able to resume our normal activities very soon but until then your subs and donations are our only means of funding Cecilia's upkeep and the continuing overheads, from which there is no escape, such as public liability insurance..

So, we must ask you once again to look between the sofa cushions and the kids' moneybox and anywhere else so that you can keep us afloat for another year. The level of subs hasn't changed: £12 for a single member, £14 for a family and £25 for Corporate membership. By far the easiest way to pay is by BACS transfer, or by good old-fashioned cheque if you don't do online banking. If you prefer the former, our bank details are Lloyds Redditch branch Sort code 30-96-97 account number 00061476, using your surname and WB&DCS subs as the reference. If using a cheque, please make it payable to WB & DCS and post to Membership Secretary, 82 Longboat Lane, Stourport-on-Severn DY13 8AE. You could always make a Standing Order for renewal on 1st October every year, but we regret that we cannot offer a Direct Debit alternative. If you like this idea, that would be very welcome, but please drop us an email so that we know not to hassle you each time the renewal date comes round.

Many thanks, and here's to a healthy and normal year, in which lockdown has nothing whatever to do with the dreaded virus.

Joe Morley

Membership Secretary

New Member Welcomes

The following people have joined the society:

Jean Brant from Bournville.

John Talbut from Alvechurch.

'58' offers its customary welcome to the society and looks forward to meeting up with both Jean and John at any of our future activities.

CECILIA....you're breaking my heart...(I wonder if Paul Simon is a secret member of WB&DCS?). A typical day's work for the Cecilia Volunteers gives an insight into recent events on the ongoing refurbishment of our dear old boat.....

As the essential re-flooring and refurbishment project nears completion, volunteers continue to give freely of their time and energy to make the boat as attractive as possible



for user groups. The last thing needed a few days ago was to find that the starboard front saloon window had suffered a crazed pane, which urgently needed replacing, with user group trips booked for the following week. Thus it was that on one of the hottest days of the year a group of willing workers set about putting things right. We checked first with the local glass depot that a hardened or laminated glass cut to size replacement was possible.

The first job was to get the entire metal window frame removed from the cabin side. Not so easy, given the amount of dried out sealant and multiple screws needing careful removal.

Having got the frame out, and the crazed pane made safe with duct tape, off we went to the glass depot where "leave it with us until the boss gets back" gave us no choice but to return to the boat. A call within the hour, from the now returned boss, made it clear that the business of getting the frame apart, and the pane out, was not going to be done by them.



Back we go, this time with the drill kit and a sense of trepidation. The glass depot were



helpful in providing a fold down table in the car park on which to work. "Can't let you in here.....health and safety!" Cutting a long story short, with a little careful work and much aided by the Torx screwdriver bits, we dismantled the frame, removed the offending pane, and watched with awe as the chap cut and shaped a new piece of laminated safety glass with cutters and nibblers. The frame went back together pretty easily, and off we went triumphantly to refit the unit to the boat.

Cecilia News cont.

At which point we realised that the boat having been turned around to allow some painting, the window in question was on the offside.

Since turning the boat back was going to take the thick end of an hour, (ABC having yet again filled the winding hole with hire boats) it was decided that the craft should be gondoliered across the cut to a vacant jetty on the offside.

The jetty was not long enough. Never mind, with a little careful positioning of feet the



window was re-sealed and fixed back in place, and nobody fell in.

It should be noted that Volunteer co-ordinator Neil Franklin managed the project from a seated position, while the minions did the work. Happy to report that all was well, if a little sweaty in the end, and Cecilia is fit again for passengers.

Ed Butcher

Where would the society be without volunteers? - Ed

75th Anniversary of The IWA

Readers may recall from the last '58' editorial, mentioning this occasion which will be part of the forthcoming Festival of Water at Worcester. The Association was formed the year following the meeting which took place by Tardebigge top lock in 1945 on board 'Cressy'.

The commemorative plinth was unveiled in 1982 and the picture below, originally printed in issue 21 of the IWA's magazine 'Waterways' for which we are grateful, shows some of the people present at the unveiling.

Cyril Smith, who was President of the then Worcester & Birmingham Canal Society, can be seen alongside another society stalwart, John Gardiner, delivering a speech to those present. There are



Cyril Smith, President of Worcester & Birmingham Canal Society, speaking at the unveiling ceremony of a plaque to commemorate the occasion in 1982

also some other recognisable faces in this picture including John Burman. Please let us know if you recognise anyone – even if it is yourself!

John Gardiner used to own a small tug boat called 'Vulpes' which is currently moored in Netherwich Basin Droitwich.

A video of this event was produced but '58' is unaware of its whereabouts so if anyone has any information about this we would be pleased to hear from you.

Volunteer News

Dear Colleagues, Farewell Presentation

I am sure you will have heard by now that I am standing down as the Volunteer Co-ordinator for our canal society. The reason is for family circumstances and the health needs for my wife. I will do my best to attend workdays as a volunteer, but I cannot now manage the extra hours needed to act as co-ordinator.

I really do wish to thank everyone for the very generous 'Retirement Do' you all gave me a few weeks ago. This really was quite a surprise as I imagined that I would just stand down and then carry on. The bottles of wine you gave me were a more than generous gift. I am happy to confirm that having now sampled them they are exceptionally good indeed. (I fear now that this means you know me too well?).

I shall not be leaving volunteering with our society as I wish to continue as much as I am able to with the Tardebigge projects, as well as help to crew 'Cecilia', so I still have a lot to look forward to.

May I also add as an aside, that the most recent workdays are the first time I have seen Cecilia in many months. The last time was the condition after Rico left. So, may I compliment everyone who has worked over recent weeks to turn her around. She really does look good now and is quite a different boat. Using paint rather than varnish has changed the interior so she looks much brighter and more cheerful. The 'Cecilia transfer' on the chairs add a distinctive touch too. My congratulations to everyone on a job well done.

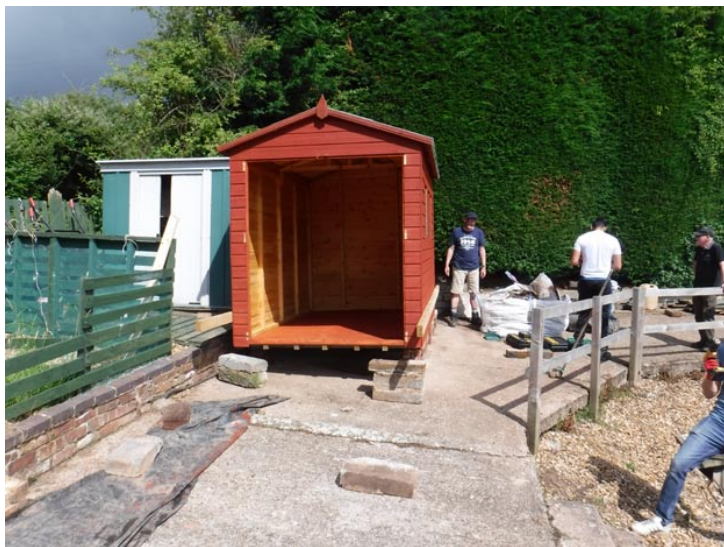
My grateful thanks to you all and I shall look forward to catching up with you on workdays and may I wish Neil well who has taken over the role of Co-ordinator.

Good luck to everyone,

Bill Lambert

Work Party News

As volunteer co-ordinator, Neil arranged for some people from 'Railtrack' to spend a couple of days with other society volunteers to empty the wooden shed, paint it, reposition it and return the stock which had been stored overnight on 'Cecilia'. It was quite a task with some other



maintenance work also being carried out on the adjacent metal shed. The volunteers then did some external painting tasks on 'Cecilia' until the rain came down in 'stair rods'.

However, the sheds are now safer with the wooden shed in a better position than previous. We would like to thank Joe Amis from Bromsgrove who rebuilt the base and Luke Reeves, Shad Ali, Richard Morgan and Libby Lynch from 'Railtrack', all of whom worked hard alongside other society

Volunteer News cont.

volunteers to complete tasks that really needed doing following the easing of some of the covid restrictions. Many thanks to all of the volunteers who all stated how much they had enjoyed the experience.



A Story of Volunteering on the Canal by Neil Franklin

'He Giveth and he Taketh Away'

A Story of Volunteering on the Canal

It can be hard work on C&RT's work parties particularly in this hot weather. I volunteer once a week with the Thursday Work Party. A month or so ago we were asked to cut back the



encroaching bushes on the footpath at Diglis. We use modern battery powered strimmers, hedge trimmers and blowers. The batteries are black, six inch square boxes that you push into place. You know they are home when you push them in and hear the second click. There were five of us in the team Alistair, David, Steve, Mark and me (left)

We cut back the first section of bushes along the footpath next to lock one then moved to the next stretch at the start of the canal where Alistair's strimmer ran out of power. He took out the spent battery and snapped in a new one. He swung the

strimmer round and there was a splash as the battery fell out of the strimmer into the cut. He hadn't double clicked! What could we do? No one volunteered to go in and get it. We borrowed a little magnet off a boater but the batteries are plastic. We had a litter picker, we could feel it but we couldn't pick it up. I marked the position of the battery's watery grave with a crayon. We will be back next week.

A few days later our Cecilia Volunteers were conscripted into painting the side of the boat from the gunnell, sorry John gun whale, down to the runner including the fore deck. The team included Ken, his neighbour Mike, and me. Before we could start painting we had to rub down

some rusty bits. A job that required elbow grease and kneeling down on the ground for long periods. To avoid this and help out, let's face it, ageing work force I had managed to borrow from Trevor a wire brush attachment for an electric drill. It was with much pride that I produced the attachment and a drill from my bag and handed them to Ken. Yes my boys, your Volunteer Co-ordinator has looked after you again! Ken almost skipped along the footpath to where Mike had started rubbing down the old paintwork. "Look what I've got Mike, this will make short work of the rust," he enthused. He spun open the jaws of the drill and inserted the brush and closed the jaws around the spindle.



When I arrived at the 'Wonkey Lass' it was obvious that they would have a magnet. The back doors were open, the engine compartment was wide open and there was the happy sound of hammer on metal coming from inside the boat. "Hello," I called out.

"B****r off," came the helpful reply. I pressed on knowing that boaters are natural curmudgeons. "I wondered if you had a fishing magnet we could borrow.?" I asked.

With a flourish he squeezed the trigger and the wire brush spun out of the drill into the canal! Many jaws dropped at this turn of events. What had we done? How could we tell Trevor his pristine brush was at the bottom of the cut? I looked around in despair and noticed another boat opposite the marina crane with its rear doors open. "I am sure they will have a magnet to retrieve the brush," I thought and set off towards our saviour.



“Should have one somewhere,” said my new friend. Much banging of lids and drawers ensued where upon he produced a square magnet on a rope the type much loved by metal hunters.

I ran back to the boys with the answer to our problem only to find they had cadged a fishing net from the crew of the ‘Happy Frog’ which was being lifted out of the canal (*right*) by the biggest lorry crane you have ever seen. Undaunted, I pushed through the crowd now swollen by the crew of ‘Happy Frog’ and plunged our saviour into the water. After five minutes of plopping the thing up and down it was evident the magnet was not going to retrieve the brush. We returned to the net. Younger readers should here be reminded that we refer to the fishing net and not the internet of which they are so fond! After a few unsuccessful passes with the aforementioned we pulled it out to check. It was full of stones, we were just about to throw them back when Mike said, “It’s in there”. We shook the thing and would you believe it, there it was tied up inside and covered with stones, Trev’s brush. How we rejoiced, ‘Sweet Caroline’ sang Ken. I took the magnet back to the ‘Wonkey Lass’.

“Did you pick it up?” he asked.

“No”, I replied.

“I didn’t think you would,” he said, “It’s never worked for me!”

But I had plans for that net!

The following Thursday I jumped out the car with our saviour in the air. But then Steve opened the doors of his camper van thing and produced this huge, brand new, mega magnet. We lifted it out of the box, it stuck to the door, we slid it off the door.

When we got to where the battery had fallen in we lowered it down, it stuck to the top rail. It took two of us to pull it off. We lowered it again carefully into the water and it stuck to the piles. It took three of us to prise it off. The next time we gingerly lowered it down well away from the side straight on to the battery! How we cheered, 5 old men very happy in Worcester holding this dirty box in the air. The rest of the day was hot and sticky. Alistair strimmed like a man possessed. I got uptight because no one moved our bags out of the way when I was on the hedge strimmer. Eventually we finished, bushes all cut back neat and tidy. We picked up all our gear ready to walk to the ‘Commandery’ to meet the pickup. Mark had his ruck sack on his back, the strimmer in one hand and his safety helmet in the other containing the strimmer reel. He lowered his hands to show he was ready to go and the reel fell out of his helmet, rolled slowly across the footpath and plopped into the canal. Yes he giveth and he taketh away!



Summer Walk: July 2021

Our first society walk for two years took place in early July with the majority of participants arranging to meet at the 'Coach and Horses' at Weatheroak. The walkers made their way back along the road, down a small country lane and along a bridle path towards 'Little Radford Farm' where they were met John Newey and his model boat club members. Once everyone was signed



in, including those who went straight there, we were given a short talk about the club itself and then given a free rein to look at the superb model boats which were on display in the club house. Unfortunately the weather was not very kind and on this occasion the boats could not be taken

down to the pond for a working display. However, everyone enjoyed the venture and could look very closely at the minute details exhibited on the models, predominantly built by model boat club members.

Society members made donations to the RLNI which is the model boat club's chosen charity. Most of the walkers made their back to the 'Coach and Horses', albeit via an amended route, and then enjoyed the hospitality of the pub for the rest of the evening.

Those members who were unable to see the model boats may get another opportunity as they will be on display at the 'Festival of Water' in Worcester during the August Bank Holiday weekend. Since that walk some society members have arranged another visit to the model boat club where several of their craft were seen actually on the water – and very good they were too.

'58' would like to thank John Newey and his colleagues for making the society so welcome. If any members would like to arrange another visit of their own please get in touch and we can attempt to arrange



Report on the June Meeting

Report of the June Meeting via Zoom.

The June meeting was delivered (online via 'Zoom') by Chris Madge from the Derby and Sandiacre Canal Trust. Chris informed the meeting that it was originally the Derby Canal but the company spread its wings to include a wider area. Having identified the need to transport coal, lime and iron, a pub meeting took place in 1791 to plan things including a possible route connecting with the Erewash Canal and the River Trent.



Derby and Sandiacre Canal

Eventually in 1793, an Act of Parliament was passed authorising the raising of finance to construct the new canal which was open to navigation in 1796. The canal

was cut to accommodate wide beam craft and involved Benjamin Outram and William Jessop who were both well known to many canal companies.

The canal ran from Swarkestone on the Trent and Mersey Canal to Derby and Little Eaton, and then onto Sandiacre on the Erewash Canal in Derbyshire. In the early days goods transported included silk, stone, milk for Cadbury's, chalk and flint as well as coal. Passengers were also carried on 'fly boats' particularly on market days.

The canal, which always remained in private hands, was reasonably successful until the arrival of the railways around 1840, when the usual decline in trade followed as the goods could be transported faster and in much larger quantities. Various sections of the canal were subsequently closed over time with parts filled in. Early attempts at restoration, including an IWA protest cruise,



were thwarted as the whole waterway was officially closed in 1964. However, since 1994, there has been an active campaign to reopen the canal coordinated by the Trust which was formed the previous year.

Chris went on to describe the substantial progress being made so far and likened the restoration to the Droitwich Canals campaign which meant reconnecting to other existing waterways. The plan is to make use of the River Derwent into Derby itself where the world's first factory – the Derby Silk Mill - has been reopened. Swarkestone lock cottage has been restored with the next challenge being the blockage created by the A50. Another lock, Shelton, has been infilled but the bridge by it is alright with a local company who own it, showing much support.

The Trust has many skilled people within its membership, particularly engineers. There is also much support from political parties. The Trust wants to restore the canal as near as possible along the original line which could then become a cruising ring with many walkers already apparent on the towpath route.

They progress the restoration by making use of the private sector of industry and grant



applications thus facilitating commercial interests. The Trust focuses on bio-diversity, heritage wildlife and offers employment opportunities. Sporting opportunities are also offered by the restoration programme, for example, cyclists and paddle boarders.

The Trust has a 'master plan for which they need about £60m which should boost the Derby economy and produce a 'domino' effect. They intend to make use of the largest river in central England which is not yet accessible to boats. This would create regeneration opportunities with positive benefits to wildlife, heritage and above all enjoyment. Even Rolls Royce is one of the Trust's supporters.

The progress so far is impressive including ownership of 6 miles of the canal, planning consent for water abstraction rights and having control of 94% of the route. Much of the progress is 'developer driven' with housing projects being persuaded of the value added of being near a restored waterway, for example, at Sponden where 300 metres of the developed is land now owned by the Trust.

The 'Waterway Recovery Group' has also been involved with lock restoration and at Draycott there is a plan to manage roadway floods by utilising the restored canal. The canal cottage there, which has lain derelict for 30 years, has been purchased and is being developed for community use thus creating income generation. Network Rail are involved as the railway has suffered from floods caused by 'Storm Christopher'. They have funded a scheme which now allows water to safely drain into the canal where voles have been spotted, so a count is being carried out. The Trust aims to enhance the environment and a trail boat event is being planned for the future.

The Derby section has an electrically powered trip boat 'Outram' which gives a commentary by

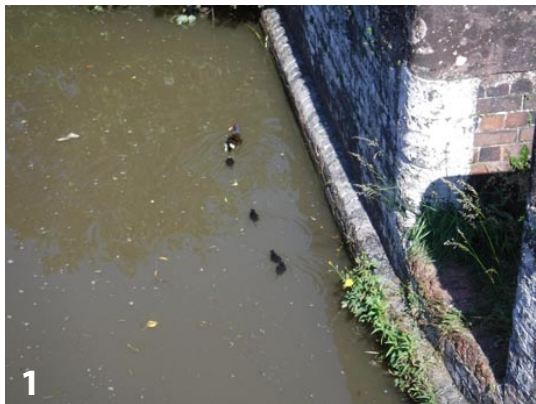


the actor David Suchet, highlighting many heritage features to the public which would not normally be seen. They have even taken part in an environmentally friendly plastic collection.

Chris was thanked by all of the participants of the meeting for his superb fully illustrated presentation. For those who were unable to attend, or for those who wish to know more, the Trust has an excellent web site which gives so much illustrated information and well worth searching out.

To find out more please visit: www.derbycanal.org.uk

The mid-Worcestershire Cruising Ring has so much for visitors to see and enjoy. Below are a selection of photos of some of them taken in the past few weeks. The flora and fauna are superb. Wonder if this is a first that a family of baby moor hens holds up navigation at the bottom of the Tardebigge Flight? If readers wish to send in any of their own pictures from around the waterways please email them to the editor for consideration.



1/2. Newly hatched moor hens at the approach into Tardebigge bottom lock. 3/4. Towpath repair work completed at the lower part of Tardebigge Flight. 5/6. Families of swans around the Hanbury Wharf Junction area.



7



8



9



10



11



12

7. Lock 6 on the Droitwich Junction Canal with considerate mowing around the chamber.
8. A scaled down replica of the 'Mayflower' in the yard opposite Netherwich Basin – our friends from the Droitwich Pamela May Trust are supporting this activity.
9. Beautiful trees alongside the Droitwich Barge Canal.
10. Swans protecting their offspring on the River Sever between Hawford and Bevere Lock.
11. Bridge 29 on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal showing good maintenance work.
12. A recently renovated Bridge 34 (Coffin Bridge) just below Hanbury Wharf Junction.

Weaving Yarns

Heather Wastie of Alarum Theatre writes....

I've been so busy recently I haven't had chance to blog about my latest creation! It's an audio trail I produced for Alarum Productions with sound designer Sam Frankie Fox.



*View from Windmill End Bridge
(photo by Brenda Ward)*



Stewarts & Lloyds, Coombeswood, 1972

'The Netherton Cut to Coombeswood' celebrates the history of the Dudley No 2 Canal, based on a 2.5 mile walk between Windmill End Junction and Coombes footbridge.

It features oral history interviews, music, historical information, poetry from me in Black Country spake and much more!

I also did an interview about it with Jason Forrest for the Milk Bar podcasts. You can listen (from 26:25) on Podbean or watch on YouTube.

From di-Da di-Da to tiddley-pom, we will play with syllables and stresses to give our writing a sense of rhythm. After looking at examples in song lyrics and poetry, we will write our own poems, both individually and as a group.

Find out more on the Weaving yarns website: <https://weavingyarns1.wordpress.com/>

Society AGM 7th September 2021

The meeting will be a virtual one, on 'Zoom', starting at 7.15pm.

Details and link will be sent beforehand including phone number for those without sufficient internet connection.

As, at every AGM, the officers will be up for re-election: David Wheeler as Chair, Margaret Rowley as Vice-Chair, and Trevor Hyde as Treasurer. Mary Green is retiring as Secretary, and as yet there is no nominated replacement. Some of the current committee will be up for re-election: John Hemingway, Bill Lambert, Martin Hancox, Lynne Laniosh, Malcolm Bates. The others: Denis Pike, Joe Morley, Tony Brannon, will be up for reselection next year as they each stand for two years. There are two new committee members who were co-opted during the year up for confirmation, Neil Franklin and Wendy Albutt.

There will be reports from the Chair and Treasurer and the presentation of the Bridge 63 Trophy.

The AGM will be followed by a short talk.

Other Societies' Meetings & Events

Aug/Sep 2021

BCNS:

Meetings held 7.30pm at Titford Pump House.

Details of all of the following and much more at www.bcnsociety.com

2nd Sept: Our Bluewater Cruising Adventure (Part 1) by Wayne and Angie Attwood.

11th & 12th Sept: Black Country Boating Festival at Windmill End.

1st Oct: I Dig Canals – Alarum Theatre.

IWA Birmingham, Black Country and Worcestershire Branch:

Meetings held at Coombeswood Canal Trust, Hawne Basin, Hereward Rise, Halesowen B62 8AW at 7.15 for 7.30.

Meeting details available from Meeting Organiser Dave Pearson 01299 404273 / 07527 197842 or Chairman Bob Fox bob.fox@waterways.org.uk

3rd and 5th Aug: Continuing the Himalayan Balsam Bash at Falling Sands, Kidderminster.

Programme to control this fearsome plant and its unwelcome invasion.

18th Aug: Tardebigge Tidy. 28/29/30th Aug IWA Festival of Water at Perdiswell Park, Worcester.

IWA Lichfield

Meetings held at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane, off Walsall Road Lichfield WS13 8AY, 7.15 for 7.30pm.

15th Sept: Public Meeting. 16th Sept: Guided Walk 20th Oct: Public Meeting

IWA Warwickshire

Meetings held at Sports Connexion Leisure Centre, Ryton-on-Dunsmore 7.00pm for 7.30pm. No post-covid period arrangements available as we go to press.

IWA Festival Of Water (Worcester):

August 28th to 30th: More information on page 26

Stratford-on-Avon CS:

Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of each month at The Navigation, Wootton Wawen at 7.30pm.

Wed 25th Aug: Clive Henderson hosting the Mikron Theatre at his home in Lapworth.

Details can be found here:

<https://mikron.org.uk/tour-dates-detail?show=2021-08-25-the-bridge-house-lock-2-lapworth-top->

Hereford & Gloucester Canal Trust:

Social evenings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at The Royal Oak, Much Marcle. Meet at 7.30 for 8.00pm.

Visit <http://www.h-g-canal.org.uk> for up-to-date information or call Janet Moulton on 01432 264366

Joe Morley



**INLAND
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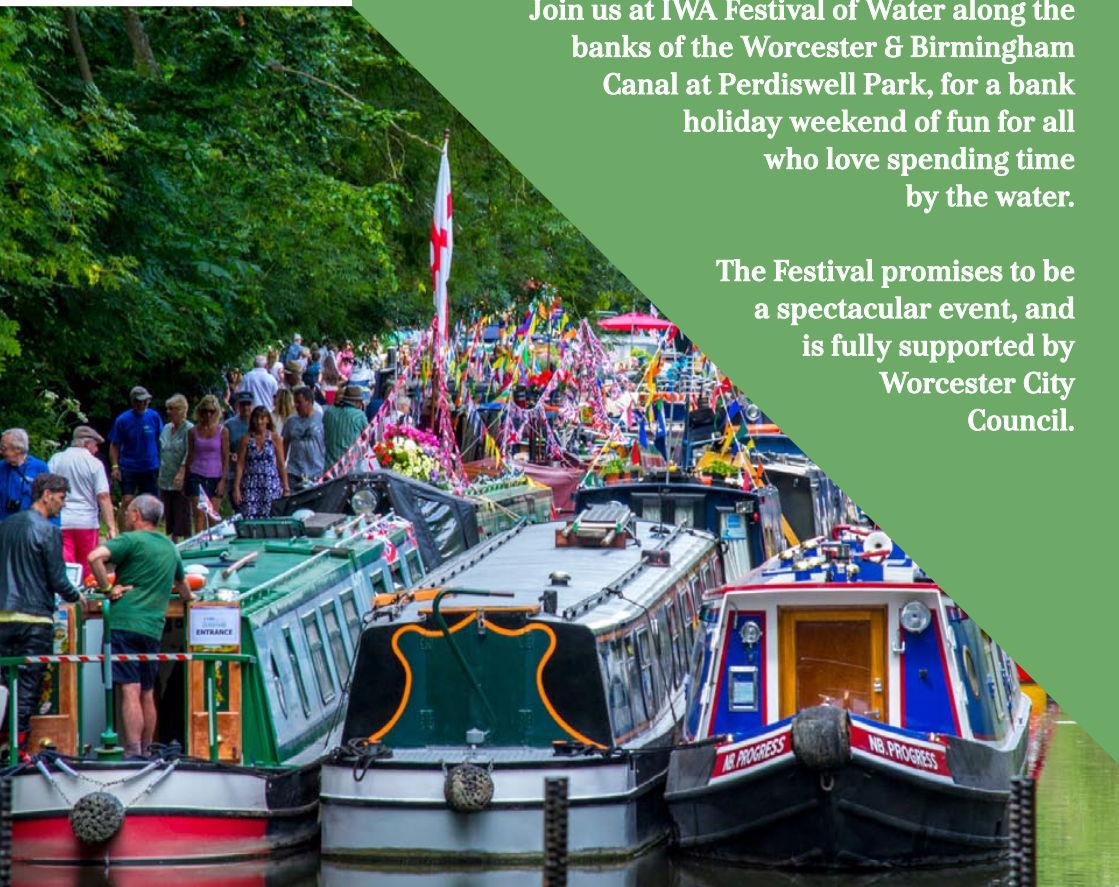
IWA FESTIVAL OF WATER 2021

28TH TO 30TH AUGUST
WORCESTER & BIRMINGHAM CANAL

**FREE
ENTRY**

Join us at IWA Festival of Water along the banks of the Worcester & Birmingham Canal at Perdiswell Park, for a bank holiday weekend of fun for all who love spending time by the water.

The Festival promises to be a spectacular event, and is fully supported by Worcester City Council.



- Stalls & Crafts
- Children's Rides
- Illuminated Model Boats
- Fishing taster sessions

- Coracle demonstrations
- Real Ale Bar
- Live Music
- Drive a Digger

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WATERWAYS.ORG.UK/FESTIVALOFWATER

MAKE IWA FESTIVAL OF WATER PART OF YOUR SUMMER PLANS

Alongside the large gathering of boats, you will enjoy a whole host of entertainment including music, food, drink, children's activities and Victorian fairground rides including swing boats.

Have a go at fishing and see demonstrations of a coracle and an electric punt! Model boats will be on display, and you can also drive a digger with our Waterway Recovery Group.

LOCATION: IWA Festival of Water, Perdiswell Park, Droitwich Road, Worcester WR3 7SN. The public entrance will be off the A38 Droitwich Road.

DIRECTIONS: Visit waterways.org.uk/festivaldirections for directions by car, public transport or on foot.

NEAREST STATIONS: **Worcester Shrub Hill** – 2.1 miles (From Droitwich, Kidderminster, Bromsgrove, Birmingham, Pershore, Evesham)
Worcester Foregate Street – 1.6 miles (From Malvern, Hereford)

BUSES: 144, 144A and 36 all go to and from Crowngate Bus Station and Perdiswell.

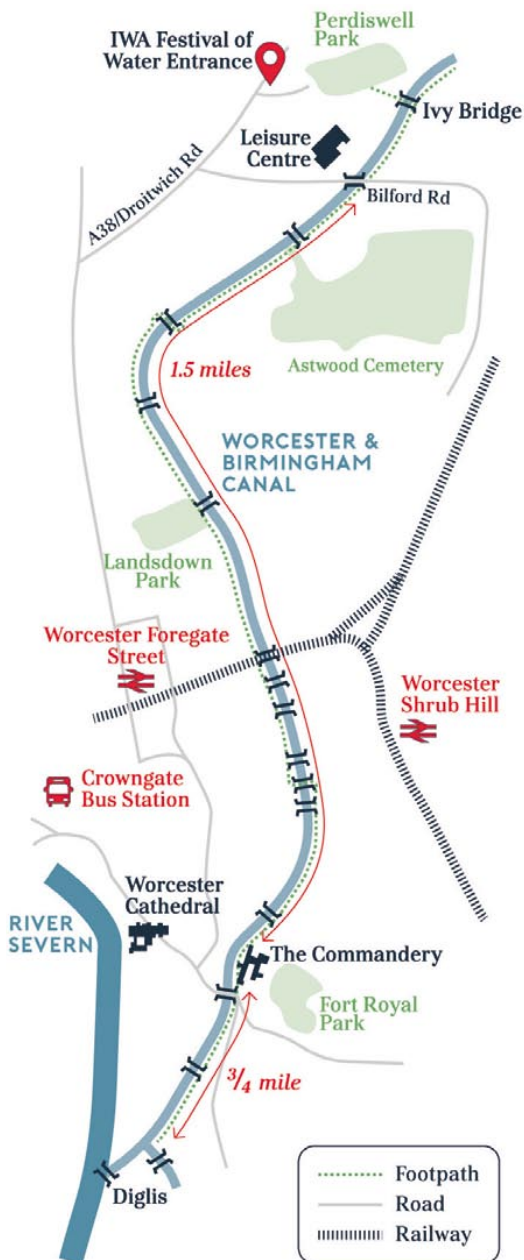
PARKING: There is free parking on site, or you can park in the City centre and walk along the canal to the festival.

OPENING TIMES:
Saturday and Sunday – 10am – 6pm
Monday – 10am – 5pm

CONTACT US:

☎ 01635 414 567

✉ event.enquiries@waterways.org.uk



IWA's 'Festival of Water' is organised by The Inland Waterways Association which is a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee. Company registration number 212342. Registered Office Road, Chesham. HP5 1WA. Photo © Andrew L

IWA Festival Of Water Event August 28th - 30th 2021

A full programme of music and dance will take place in IWA's 75th Anniversary year. And where better to have the celebrations than on the waterway where it all began, the Worcester & Birmingham Canal?

Entry to the festival and car parking is free. Limited spaces are still available for traders and caterers. booking forms. These can be downloaded online at: <https://waterways.org.uk/support/ways-to-get-involved/events/iwa-festival-of-water>



Supported by



IWA FESTIVAL OF WATER BOAT & CAMPSITE BOOKING FORM

28TH-30TH AUGUST 2021 ON THE WORCESTER & BIRMINGHAM CANAL AT PERDISWELL PARK, WORCESTER

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 boxes A & C)
- ☐ Campsite Booking (Complete information below and boxes B & C)

Name Title First Name Surname

Address

Town

County

Daytime Tel. No. Postcode

Mobile At least one phone number is required

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? Yes No

Cats Dogs

Planned arrival date

DATA PROTECTION

We will never sell your data. We will never pass your data to any third party. We will never pass your data to any third party. We will never pass your data to any third party.

Please tick relevant payment method box

- ☐ by BACS Account IWA Events Account, Sort code: 20-45-77, Account no: 50977470, quoting as reference either the credit name or your point code
- ☐ 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 2 wreathbands for Evening Entertainment (4 evenings)

Additional wreathbands £5.00 each

Children (16 or under) free of charge

Plaques £7.00 each (the booking placed after 15th July, postage may be required)

Quantity Total

£

£

£

£

GRAND TOTAL

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

Or send your completed form to FoW Booking Form, IWA, Island House, Moor Road, Chesham, HP5 1WA

FoW20 Booking V1.0



Supported by



IWA FESTIVAL OF WATER TRADERS & EXHIBITORS BOOKING FORM

28TH-30TH AUGUST 2021 ON THE WORCESTER & BIRMINGHAM CANAL AT PERDISWELL PARK, WORCESTER, WR3 6PS

Please note that this form is NOT for Catering bookings

Opening Times: 10am to 6pm (5pm Mon)

Telephone: 01635 414567 event.trade@waterways.org.uk

Name Title* First Name* Surname*

Company*

Address*

Town

County

Postcode*

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

Mobile

Email*

Arrival date (day/s)

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.

* Boxes 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

* 24 hour overall site security will be provided.

Promotional Information for Website & Programme

Special Requests & Other Information

Email the completed form as a pdf attachment to event.trade@waterways.org.uk or print out the form, complete it and post it to: Events Office, IWA, Island House, Moor Road, Chesham, HP5 1WA

RESOURCES REQUIRED (ALL PRICES EXCLUDE VAT)

LAND BASED TRADER OR EXHIBITOR

☐ Land based pitches 3m x 3m @ £95 (£84 inc VAT) £

*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 or adjacent to your pitch. Charges will apply, please discuss with the organisers.

Trade car park ☐ 10m pitch parking Length m Width m

WATER BASED TRADER OR EXHIBITOR

☐ Water based trading @ £95 (£84 inc VAT) per boat £

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

REGISTERED CHARITY

Charity No. for registered charities a 3m x 3m pitch or boat is discounted to £45 (£54 inc VAT). There are no discounts for optional extras.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS (subject to practical considerations)

PURCHURE (enter number of items required in each box)

☐ 16 x 2m Brexite tables @ £5 (£4 inc VAT) (note 14) £

☐ Samsonite folding chairs @ £2.50 (£3 inc VAT) £

140V ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

☐ 4 Amp electricity supply @ £25 (£30 inc VAT) £

☐ 16 Amp electricity supply @ £80 (£96 inc VAT) £

☐ 32 Amp electricity supply @ £150 (£80 inc VAT) £

The 4 Amp & 16 Amp electricity supplies are terminated using an IEC 60309 IIA socket. An adaptor is required to convert to a IIA socket. If required a suitable adaptor may be purchased from us.

☐ Adaptor 16A to 13A @ £8.33 (£10 inc VAT) £

☐ Additional wreathbands for evening entertainment £4.17 (£5 inc VAT) (note 22) each booking includes two wreathbands £

EVENT CAMPSITE

Do you wish to use the event campsite @ the discounted trader's price £20.00 (£22 inc VAT) per pitch? (also see notes additional conditions)

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

PLEASE TICK RELEVANT PAYMENT METHOD BOX (ALL PRICES EXCLUDE VAT)

☐ by BACS Account: IWA Events Account, Sort code: 20-45-77, Account no: 50977470, quoting either the company or organisation name as a reference Sub Total £

☐ by calling IWA Head Office 01494 783453 to use a Debit or Credit card VAT £

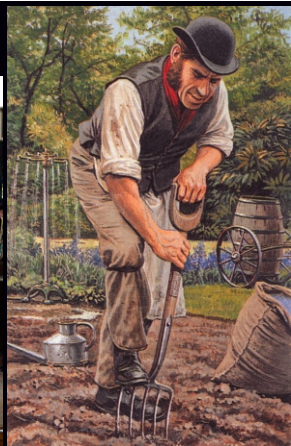
☐ by cheque payable to Inland Waterways Association posted with this form if submitted by post GRAND TOTAL £

FoW20 Trade V1.0

Membership Matters

Do any members require their details updating? Please contact our membership secretary Joe Morley as soon as possible. We are particularly keen to have correct email addresses in order to email out '58' as well as invite you to our monthly 'Zoom' meetings.

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Droitwich Canal Swing Bridge 19

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www.wychboldswanrescue.co.uk



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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 The Bridgewater Canal, Coal For The Ashby Canal, Cotswold Canal Restoration, Idle Women, The Cadbury Story, Lapal Canal Trust Restoration, Hereford & Gloucester Canal Restoration, The Montgomery Canal, The Wiltshire & Berkshire Canal and Chance's Glassworks.

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*

**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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