

# 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'*



### Cottage on The Worcester & Birmingham Canal at Bittell Undergoing Restoration (see page 6)



# Monthly Meetings & Walks

## Tuesday 4th October: AGM

**Future Meetings:** Full details will be communicated to members via email, our website and Facebook.

*Please ensure that our Membership Secretary has your current details.*

### AGM 2022 (Postponed from September)

Notice is hereby given that the Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society will be holding its Annual General Meeting on the evening of October 4th 2022 in the meeting room near the Weighbridge in Alvechurch.

The society is always keen to welcome new people to the committee which usually meets once a month. If anyone is interested in this volunteering opportunity, or just wants to find out, please get in touch. All of the contact details are on page 4 of this edition. The committee has been running this past year without a secretary so is particularly keen to rectify this.

The agenda and minutes of the last AGM, September 2021, will be made available in due course on social media. The society's constitution is available on the web site for easy access.

Please put the date in your diaries and try to attend this event which not only elects new officers and committee but also reports on the past year's activities. It also offers an opportunity to influence what the society does in the following year. Please note that while non-members are welcome to attend, only fully paid up members will be able to vote and this time the subscription rates are being proposed for amendment.

There is usually a short presentation after the main AGM's business.

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

Issue 564 Oct/Nov 2022

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

View videos on our [YouTube channel](#)

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

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**Copy Date for the Next Issue: November 14th 2022.**

# Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

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

**(Registered Charity No 500159)**

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# Chair's Notes

It was back in the late '70s when we made an instant decision to buy a cruiser that was on sale in Upton on Severn Marina. Within a couple of weeks, we ventured up from Upton to Worcester and on to the Worcester & Birmingham Canal. At that time, we only knew it was a canal, we did not know what the name was nor did we know where it went.

We made our way up to Hanbury where we met Jim and Adie Marks who were to become lifelong friends. From Hanbury we carried on to Stoke Prior where we were confronted with around 40 boats all moored both sides of the canal. For a novice boater it was a daunting effort to navigate.

We pulled up for the night to find that we were in the middle of the Worcester & Birmingham Canal Society Annual Gathering based outside the Boat and Railway. We were invited to join in and the rest as they say is history. What followed was 40 years of boating around the country meeting and making many friends, anyone of whom you could call if in trouble. What a wonderful fraternity we are.

I am saying all this because last month Gill and myself made the agonising decision to sell 'Mon Amour', which has been our home on the water since 1987 when we had her built by Dave Elwell at Lime Kiln Boats. The end of an era that we have both enjoyed very much. Age and a massive change of lifestyle means that we will not be cruising again and we leave behind some fantastic memories.

At the moment with the committee's agreement, I am continuing to be your Chair, hopefully confirmed at the re-arranged AGM. I am still prepared to head up and organise St. Richard's Canal Festival, however, I will not be able to make future Tuesday meetings.

Changing the subject, I would like to say well done to Ed Butcher and Ian McGarr for the efforts they are putting in with training new helms on 'Cecilia' (*more on this later*). WB&DCS has and continues to, punch above its weight within the waterways movement and the rising profile of 'Cecilia' raises the profile of the Canal Society in general. Well done gentlemen!!!

*David Wheeler*

Some of our Cecilia crew, pictured by The Queen's Head at Stoke Pound, after being presented with their 'helm' certificates by Vice Chair, Margaret Rowley. Full details on this story can be found on pages 22 & 23.







# Editor's Notes

## Hello Readers

Hope you've all had a good Summer and maybe still are in some cases? While the weather has become decidedly cooler of late, possibly affecting some outdoor waterway activities, the majority of the country has been paying due respects to the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. The Royal family have generally been supportive of the Inland Waterways movement, particularly the then Prince Charles, who became involved with the restoration of the Montgomery Canal known affectionately as the 'Monty'. Let's hope that this may continue in some way as there are so many canal restorations currently being undertaken including of course the one closest to us, 'The Lapal Canal'. Along with so many institutions throughout the UK and abroad, '58' offers its condolences to the family of our late Queen.

Your society has again been very active since the publication of the last edition of '58'. The August walk along the Droitwich Barge Canal was very well prepared by Denis with many items explained and even a walk around the village of Salwarpe – more on that later. Your society stall has been present at 2 events although a third one at Tardebigge was unfortunately postponed following the passing of the Queen. The Heritage Open Days around Tardebigge were very well prepared by the society volunteers and by all accounts very well attended – more about these activities further on.

'Cecilia' has certainly been taken out and about with so many local trips as well as being at Tardebigge for the Heritage Open Weekend. Many people enjoyed a trip through Tardebigge Tunnel for the very first time. Hopefully some may decide to join the society in due course. The 'Cecilia' group of volunteers have also been planning the new livery for the boat which is due to commence very soon in Evesham.

'58' is very pleased to be able to share the progress being made on the reservoir lock cottage (*below left*) at Bittell as mentioned in previous editions. The cottage is looking really presentable and hopefully Canal & River Trust (C&RT) will be able to find suitable residents who will keep it in good tenure. There's a similar situation at the Kings Norton Junction House (*below right*) although the progress is slower possibly connected to finding a suitable tenant for the very same reasons.



Unfortunately '58' has not been approached by anyone from C&RT following the last edition's comments about a lack of communication with the society. However, we are aware that some progress is being made with meetings including some of our volunteers which we hope to report on as soon as possible. Watch this space!

Many thanks to the contributors to this edition of '58', most of whom are already busy volunteers within the society. Without these valued inputs to your magazine the '58' would not be the publication that it has become - a good reflection of a vibrant canal society often described as 'punching above its weight'. Lastly, don't forget the re-arranged Annual General Meeting due to take place on Tuesday October 4th in the meeting room behind the 'Weighbridge' pub at Alvechurch. Hope to see as many of you there as possible and enjoy the read.

*John Hemingway*

## Membership Matters

### New Member Welcome

Ian Barley from Droitwich has recently re-joined the society. '58' offers its traditional warm welcome to Ian and know that he has already been involved with our volunteers.

We hope to see Ian at any of our other society activities.

### Notice to all Members:

Your committee recently voted to increase the annual membership fee as per below:

Individuals - £15 Couples - £20 Corporate - £30

This committee decision will be presented to the society's Annual General Meeting on October 4th for further discussion and hopefully approval. Members may be interested to know that the subscriptions have remained at their current level for more than 10 years.

## Fish Shelter

This picture (*right*) was taken quite recently on the River Witham.

Conservation on the waterways is always a priority but where would anyone be able to moor there assuming they even wanted to?

Any suggestions please let us know!





# Shop Report

The stall has visited another new event since my last report. Over the August bank holiday weekend, we attended a two day rally at Bratch Locks near Wombourne celebrating 250 years of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal (*below*). Our hosts made us very welcome and we had an enjoyable weekend meeting local residents and their families. Tony and his badge making machine were particularly popular and the shop was well supported too. This relatively small rally was originally intended to be a one off event, but as it was well received by the local community, it may well be back again next year.



Two weeks later saw us at an event that we have attended on many occasions before. The shop spent two days at the Black Country Boating Festival (*below and next page*). This is a well established event that attracts large numbers of visitors. The dry weather helped to bring out the crowds and a well stocked bar and live music kept them entertained. There were lots of other things to see and do including a dog show, boat trips and a range of different stalls. The shop didn't do as well here as in previous years, possibly due to the large number of other distractions on offer.







**The next booking for our shop is 15th and 16th October:  
Bonded Warehouse Open Weekend, Stourbridge (see flyer on page 27).**

Please get in touch if you can help us by working on the stall for a couple of hours on either day. Finally, thank you to everyone who has donated second hand jigsaws. I have lost count of the number we have sold, but if I had to guess I would put the number between 100 and 150. At an average of at least £3 per jigsaw, you can see that they have raised a significant sum for the Society. As we still have plenty more jigsaws to sell, we will not be taking any further donations for the time being.

*Lynne Laniosh*  
*shop@wbdc.org.uk*

## Refreshments at Society Meetings

Emela Milne has been serving refreshments at members' meetings in Alvechurch for a number of years. Due to a change of circumstances, she is unable to continue in this role.

We are therefore looking for a new individual, or team, to take responsibility for preparing hot drinks during the interval at meetings. We have use of a water heater and mugs in the meeting room, but need to supply our own drinks, milk, sugar and biscuits - all expenses are reimbursed. There is also a small amount of washing up to do at the end of the evening.

The opportunity to purchase a hot drink at the meetings is appreciated by many of those who attend, so we are keen to have someone new in place as soon as possible. If you are able to help out either on your own or as part of a small group, please let me know.

The committee wishes to thank Emela for her valued contribution and looks forward to seeing her, along with her mother Sandra Radmore the Society President, at as many meetings as possible in the future.

*Lynne Laniosh*  
**07947 712794**

*'58' would also like to thank Emela for organising the refreshments at society meetings – Ed.*





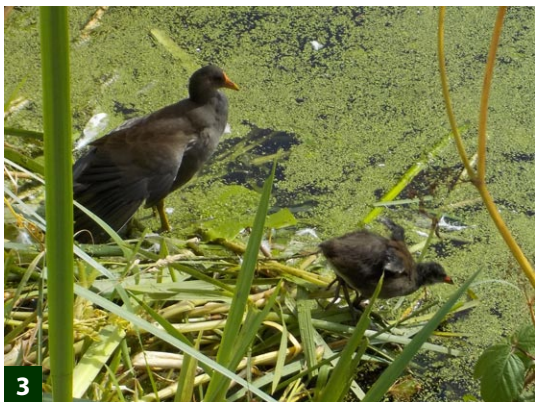
# ‘Nature Notes’ Mary Green

I’m encouraged by developments near the canal here recently which will aid biodiversity. One I mentioned last time was reduced cutting of canalside vegetation, allowing both common and rarer plants to thrive. I walked the canal with two of C&RT’s ecologists looking at places where the trees alongside could be enhanced. They have project funding for this. Two patches near Alvechurch may have new fruit trees – one where a run of old plum trees was destroyed by Network Rail during alterations to Alvechurch Station, one bearing mostly nettles and brambles after having dredgings dumped in past years.

Most of the canalside hedges near Alvechurch have good established trees. I pointed out stretches cut by farmers instead of C&RT, where horrible flail-cutting meant nothing flowered or fruited and therefore didn’t form a biodiversity corridor. I don’t think this will change any time yet.

I have also spent time with people from Barnt Green Waters who have been working with C&RT on enhancing the waters of Bittell reservoirs and associated ponds and streams, and consequently the river Arrow and our canal. They have project funding to assist biodiversity, and are working on improving the quality of the water, its plant and animal life and the water’s edge habitat. It looks as if they are doing a good job despite having to fight pollution and alien species like blue-green algae and floating pennywort.

While there I saw the resident swans which still have their cygnets, now grown big and beautiful. I also saw little egrets, which I knew were around but hadn’t seen here before. The reservoirs are home to many birds that also





appear along the canal – great crested grebes and the smaller dabchicks, cormorants, reed warblers and buntings. Herons breed there. All the waterfowl seems to have done well this year and there are new swan pairs taking up residence near me, and plenty of moorhen chicks.

The water birds will have finished their summer moults by now, so mallard drakes and mandarins have their bright colours back. Geese and swans don't show so obviously but you can see evidence in their shed feathers and the fact they don't fly so much while moulting. Canada geese have flown round again in big flocks, though they don't go far and don't migrate.

It's been a bad time for planting in this dry year, so I hope the trees that people have been adding to our canalsides haven't died. I wish sometimes they would spend money and time on looking after what we already have, but project funding means they always have to add something extra, and often have no resources to look after it.

I've looked at the stretches near the Aqueduct where the banks have been reinforced. The earlier ones this side are looking good – the replanted fringe vegetation has established and flowered well. The bare patch alongside has grown new vegetation, rather an odd mix but it will come back OK. The bigger stretch, done later, hasn't fared so well, having had a long period of drought so that even by water it struggled to get established.

The spring and summer drought brought home to me how important the canal is for our wildlife and well-being. Lawns and gardens, and even local streams, dried up but the canalside didn't. There was a shortage of insects though, perhaps drought-related even here, so I haven't seen brimstone butterflies on the purple loosestrife this year. And all the flowers seeded and died down early. But established vegetation is resilient, and hedges are covered with fruits for the winter.



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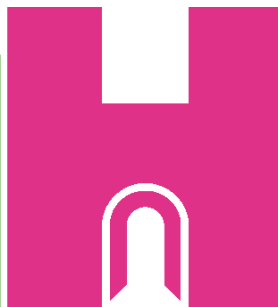


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1. ALIEN FLOATING PENNYWORT
2. BUTTERFLIES THRIVING BY WATER
3. MOORHEN & CHICK
4. SWANS AND GROWN CYGNETS
5. HERON ON BRIDGE & TREES
6. RESTORED GROWTH NEAR AQUEDUCT

# Heritage Open Days 2022

## Selection of Facebook Comments



WB&DCS would like to thank Canal & River Trust for their support.



**Canal & River Trust**  
Making life better by water

# heritage open days

## Astounding Inventions

On the weekend of September 10th & 11th the Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society organised a Heritage Open Weekend event around the Tardebigge Wharf area of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. Supported by the Canal and River Trust, our member volunteers along with some lock keeper volunteers from C&RT, guided members of the public around the top lock and wharf area giving a view of how the area would have looked when in full industrial swing. The event days themselves were part of a national fortnight of heritage events coordinated by the National Trust.

Proceedings may have been dampened following the sad news from Buckingham Palace but the heritage team organisers issued a message that the planned open days could go ahead. This would be mainly at the discretion of participants during this time of the Nation's mourning. We subsequently decided to continue with the open days at Tardebigge and felt that after everyone's commitment to the project, the Queen herself would appreciate our enjoyment of heritage and wish us to continue our encouragement of others to appreciate the heritage on their own doorsteps.

This year the Heritage Open Days focussed on 'Astounding Inventions' so the final part of the walks ended at Tardebigge top lock (lock 58) which, from 1809, was the site of an experimental boat lift. This hand operated mechanical structure would have been at the cutting edge of technology bringing visitors from across the county to marvel at its sophistication, so it was a pleasure telling its story to so many interested visitors.

Organisers were pleased that we all had a chance to take part. Alongside our guidance around the lock and wharf, we had the society boat 'Cecilia' offering boat trips through Tardebigge Tunnel, with guides describing how the tunnels were built. This seemed to go down well and could possibly become a feature of future charitable group trips which we run throughout the year.

Although initial visitor numbers were few, over the weekend a steady footfall of guests were seen. Tea, cake and sunshine attracted an increasing number of visitors. Following the sad and unprecedented events of the week, we felt the decision to continue the event was sound and seemed to be understood and appreciated by all our visitors.

For further information please visit our website: [www.wbdcs.org.uk](http://www.wbdcs.org.uk)

*Al Gibbs*





The 'before and after'. Many of the team of volunteers who did the society proud at the Heritage Open Weekend at Tardebigge.





# August Walk

## Report of Society walk on the Droitwich Barge Canal

During the early part of August the society's second organised walk took place commencing from the leisure centre alongside the Barge Canal in Droitwich. The walk and talk was organised and led by Denis Pike who had clearly carried out much preparation beforehand.

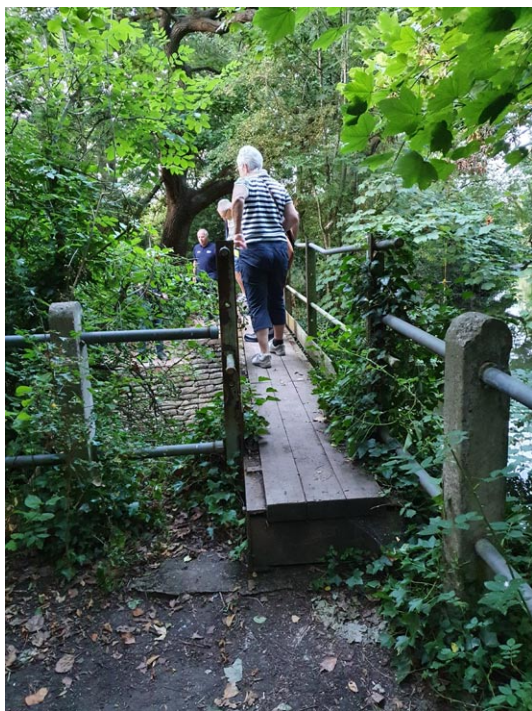
The walk headed south west away from Droitwich with Denis pointing out several structures which some in the group were not aware of. These included an overspill weir, which was set back a little from the towpath, and the currently disused swing bridge near the Coney Reed Meadow. The swing bridge was actually supported by old light railway lines which had been used during the period of restoration to transport various bulky materials.

The Coney Reed Meadow was originally formed as part of the restoration's environmental 'trade off'. The reeds had taken root in the then derelict canal bed and were transferred to their current position thereby allowing them to continue to enhance the local environment rather than being lost. The restoration of the navigation was then able to progress unimpeded.

The walkers actually looked at the reed beds, which were somewhat dry owing to the hot weather, before continuing along the canal and up into the pretty village of Salwarpe. The group was led along to the River Salwarpe, which was never far away, and shown the remains of the old mill system fed by the river. The walkers continued along the river, but had to return partly along the same route owing to a blocked pathway, and then observed the old mill which is now a private house.

The actual village has several interesting items of heritage including the church and several other old buildings, which makes it well worth another visit for those who wish to continue exploring this relatively quiet area.

The walkers then returned back to the start along the Barge Canal. A really interesting event for which Denis was thanked for his organisation.



# Lapal Canal Trust News

LCT has recently held its annual 'Walk the Line' which was, as usual, very well attended. Some of the group met opposite the new Whitehouse Wharf development and having had the explanations and pictures of what it used to look like a long time ago and more recently, proceeded to the undercroft and the new canal bed. The needs of the bridge under the outer ring road were explained before crossing the road into Selly Oak Park and joining the rest of the walkers. When the canal is reinstated pedestrians and cyclists will not need to cross a very busy road as they'll just go below it.

The walk and talk continued through the park with various items being described. At Weoley Castle, which the canal bed passes very closely, Simon gave the walkers a real insight into the history of the area and how so many of the named streets, for example, still bear some of the names from hundreds of years ago. The walkers were also shown more old pictures of what the canal bed used to look like before the infilling.

The group paused at California for lunch where there used to be some brick works, making use of canal transport, as well as the approximate entrance to long disused Lapal Tunnel. There are plans in place to develop a marina on this spot. From here the walkers were led 'over the top' through Woodgate Valley Park which is the route recommended by a feasibility report compiled in 2007 by Atkins. The group eventually passed the site of the western portal of the Lapal Tunnel, the remains of Halesowen Abbey and fishponds before reaching the main road. From here Justin explained some of the plans to cross the main road with the restoration and pictures were shown of the destruction of the old Manor Way Bridge and infill to facilitate the dual carriageway now in existence. The site of Fordrove Bridge was shown and from here the canal is more evident with towpaths either side of the canal bed which holds a small amount of water. The beautiful Leasowes Park, overlooked from the canal via the highest embankment on the system, is a magnificent viewing point which the walkers passed. The group finished at the car park near the entrance from Mucklows Hill where Helen provided refreshments for everyone. Those who needed transport back to Selly Oak were taken by Hugh.

The walkers were all very impressed with the journey and even more so with the plans for restoration. For further details please visit [www.lapal.org](http://www.lapal.org)



## Recent 'Cecilia' trips.

The 'Cecilia' volunteers have been very busy during the last few weeks. Wendy reported to the main committee the following list which shows just how busy.

23rd August: Ukraine visitors - Lapal Funding.

31st August: Age UK Bromsgrove - Lapal Funding.

1st September: Leapgate Activity Centre - Lapal Funding.

2nd September: Home Ed group.

14th September: Alvechurch Community Group - Lapal Funding.

25th September: Lock Challenge for The Lounge, Alvechurch.

26th September: Leapgate Activity Centre - Lapal Funding.

We are now receiving enquiries for 2023 which have been responded to and a list of interested parties is now being compiled.

One of the young Home Edventurers sent in an article for '58' which was unable to be included last time but here it is below:

"Home Edventurers have enjoyed getting back on the water with the freedom and opportunity that brings. Dedicated to providing educational opportunities for home educating families in our region, we've run two trips this week, and feedback for both has been exceptional.

10 year old Hayden had kindly agreed to let us share his written piece, about his trip on 'Cecilia', something he'll remember for a long time to come."

### Cecilia, by Hayden Davenport - Age 10

Today, we were going to go on a canal boat trip, but we had to wait for my little sister to finish nursery. I was very excited. We picked her up, went straight to Kings Norton train station and waited for my cousin and nanny to come. When they came, we waited for the train for 12 minutes. We got off at Alvechurch station, walked down the road, crossed a bridge, and down a little slope to the canal. The canal boat had arrived at the exact moment we got there. We let the people who were on the canal boat trip before us off.

We got on the canal boat and sat on the new purple (my favourite colour) seats that I helped fundraise for with other children, doing the Tardebigge Lock Challenge last year. I was wearing my Crew Member T-Shirt, The canal boat's name is Cecilia.

Me, my sister and my cousin sat at the front for a little while admiring the view, we fed the ducks a few oats. I went back inside. My cousin and sister were having their lunch, so I had my lunch as well. We had a picnic!

After we had our lunch, we saw two pretty swans in front of the boat. There were some ducks, and their ducklings behind them, so we fed them. They swam really fast alongside the boat as we threw more food in. That was fun!

We stopped at Hopwood and moored there. My dad got off the boat and helped pull the boat to the side and tied it so it would not float away. We went to play at the park for a little bit.

We got back on to Cecilia, and chilled out for a little bit on the new purple seats.

Neil and Nick were at the helm, steering is very difficult because to turn right you need to turn the tiller left, and to go left you need to turn the tiller right. It was like your brain, how your left side controls your right and the right side controls your left.

Neil asked mum "Do the kids like nature, trees and that kind of thing?" And mum said "eh, yes, they do!" We saw a heron in the hedgerow, as we moved closer, it flew out of sight in the distance, but we saw it again a little further along. It was not long before we were back where we started,



and moored Cecilia in. My dad helped with the ropes again. He really enjoyed helping. The rest of us got, off and said thank you and good bye to the crew members. Overall, we had a really cool afternoon!

*Very well done Hayden and we're glad you all had a good time – Ed.*

Since this trip Julie, who has been very active raising money for the boat and co-ordinating the Home Edventurer's trips, has relocated and decided that she'll no longer be able to be involved as she was. '58' would like to thank Julie for all that she has done for the society over the past few years and offer best wishes to her and family for the future.

## From Your Volunteer Coordinator

Once again we have had a busy time over the last two months the headlines being our three volunteers gaining their Helms Certificate. Well done Al, Alan and Trev and of course Ed and Ian our trainers. Also the successful Heritage Open Day (HOD) Weekend which well organised by Al Gibbs. Both of these events are reported on elsewhere in 58 so I will tell you about our other goings on that are just as important.

Around Tardebigge we continued with Bill's Work Parties. We got back to mowing after the Spring and Summer 'No Mow'mainly to get the place looking reasonable for the HOD. We have now mown the secret garden and will seed it with wild flowers to go for the flower meadow vibe. Don't worry we are keeping the apple trees that are full of apples at the moment. So we will have an orchard in a meadow. Our other big job was to stand up the display board in the Tug Boat Garden. Thanks go to Ashley Pinder at 'Crafted Boats' who was good enough to donate the angle iron to replace the rotted legs; Mike Ryan who drilled the angle iron for us and Mark Saunders who helped me erect the boards letting us use his very valuable antique spirit level; and last but not least Chris from C&RT who helped us pull it all together.



We managed to catch the usual work party team gearing up for another big day at Tardebigge who are left to right - Neil, Malcolm and Bill.



'Cecilia' has been busy recently taking out a variety of people including Age UK, various scout groups from South Birmingham, Home Ed, Primrose Hospice, Leapgate Activity Centre (see page 21) for adults with learning difficulties,

Ukrainian visitors and most recently The Lounge Youth Centre from Alvechurch. Everyone enjoyed their time on the boat as can be seen from the comments on our facebook page. If anyone has any ideas about groups / societies that may like to come out with us next year please contact Wendy. A big success this year has been our partnering with the Lapal Canal Trust. Wendy has been involved in liaising with Hugh Humphreys to set these trips up and we hope to continue with this arrangement next year.

By the time you read this we will be well on the way to Evesham with 'Cecilia' to have her painted by Smith's Marine Services in a beautiful Arctic Blue. Won't we be posh as we glide down the cut in our wonderful new livery?

We should send our condolences to Bill Lambert whose wife Shirley sadly passed away recently. She was a lovely lady as anyone who met her would vouch for. Shirley was always concerned about animal welfare so we are collecting to send a donation to her local animal sanctuary. All donations to me please. Shirley will be sadly missed so best wishes from us all Bill.

Many thanks to everyone who has volunteered on 'Cecilia', at the HOD and at our Tardebigge adoptions. Not forgetting Ed and his 'Cecilia on board quiz' which we trialled at the September meeting. Also Gemma, Georgina, Daf and Nick from C&RT who have been helping us to sort out our mooring at Alvechurch.

I look forward to seeing you all on our lovely newly painted 'Cecilia'.



**Neil Franklin**  
**Volunteer Coordinator.**



# 'Cecilia' Trips

It's been a really busy 2022 season for 'Cecilia' and the team of dedicated volunteers. We have gone from strength to strength this year. The season has almost come to a close.

Here is a list of trips that 'Cecilia' has recently taken out.

23rd August: Ukraine visitors.

31st August: Age UK Bromsgrove (*see page 21*).

1st September: Leapgate Activity Centre (*see page 20*).

2nd September: HomeEd group.

14th September: Alvechurch Community Group

*NB - this was originally booked for Primrose Hospice but they has operational issues.*

25th September: Lock Challenge for The Lounge, Alvechurch (*below*).

26th September: Leapgate Activity Centre.

*NB - this was originally booked for the National Autism Society but was cancelled due to expected rail strike.*

We are now receiving enquiries for 2023 which have been responded to and a list of interested parties is now being compiled.

*Wendy Albutt  
Cecilia Bookings*



*Chris, Ken, Neil, Al and Alan with a group from The Lounge, Alvechurch taking part in a lock challenge*

# Leapgate Activity Centre

Another great day as part of our collaboration with The Lapal Canal Trust.

Lovely feedback from Mike - " the guys got so much out of today , it was brilliant, your volunteers are brilliant and so helpful and excellent with the young people. 100% will be booking another trip up next year it was that good."

We're looking forward to seeing you again next year.....







A group from Age Uk enjoy a recent trip on 'Cecilia'.

## Society Meeting (September)

The society's AGM was postponed this year for various reasons which left Denis with a bit of a headache in how to use the booked slot in the meeting room. He need not have worried as Brett Laniosh came to the rescue at very short notice. Brett had carefully catalogued a series of old Pathe News footage which he showed to the members and friends present. The presentation showed some enthralling news



reels of waterway scenes, several of which were recognised by some in the audience even though many substantial changes had taken place since. The footage was mainly in black and white, which helped to take people back into the time of the news setting, being enjoyed by all present with several wanting to see more. Perhaps another time Brett? Many thanks to Brett for providing the society members with a superb presentation with hopefully more to come.

The evening concluded with a trial quiz from the 'Cecilia' volunteers about the local canals which could then perhaps be used with groups on the organised boat trips. Some of the questions and answers were deemed to be somewhat controversial but we hope that the thrust of the idea will be used on subsequent boat trips. '58' would be pleased to hear of any reports of how these questions were received by guests on 'Cecilia'.



# Training Success!

Having been appointed as an Accredited Training Centre of the National Community Boat Association earlier this year, the WB&DCS was pleased to certify 3 new Helms as holders of the Certificate in Community Boat Management.

This important helm qualification allows holders to skipper boats carrying up to 12 passengers, and is recognised by both the Canal & River Trust and The Maritime and Coastguard Agency as fully satisfying the requirements of the Small Passenger Boat Code.

The CCBM training covers not only the practical skills of boat handling, but also the safety and management of passenger groups, and the routine, but important, checks on the craft before setting off.

Certified WB&DCS Trainers Ian McGarr and Ed Butcher comment that the training approach of the NCBA modules is (quote), "detailed, thorough, and rigorous, and gives us both confidence in bringing helms with sufficient basic experience up to the standards required to carry passengers safely and confidently, while having the group management skills to carry a broad range of groups with different backgrounds and ensure that passengers have a great trip, and maybe learn a few interesting facts about the history of our inland waterways."

The WBDCS is proud to have carried a wide range of groups this year on our 70' Narrowboat Cecilia, ranging from family parties from the Home Education West Midlands Group, The Gay Outdoors Group, Primrose Hospice Carers, and most recently groups of refugees from Syria and Afghanistan, and displaced families from The Ukraine, and adults with learning difficulties from the Leapgate Farm Activity Centre. Residents of seniors' residential communities, local historical and walking groups have also enjoyed the benefits of time on the tranquil waters of the beautiful Worcester & Birmingham canal from our home mooring at Alvechurch.

Our pictures, on the next page, show WB&DCS Vice Chair Margaret Rowley presenting our new helms Trevor Albutt, Alan Partridge and Al Gibbs their certificates, together with NCBA

certified trainer Ed Butcher.

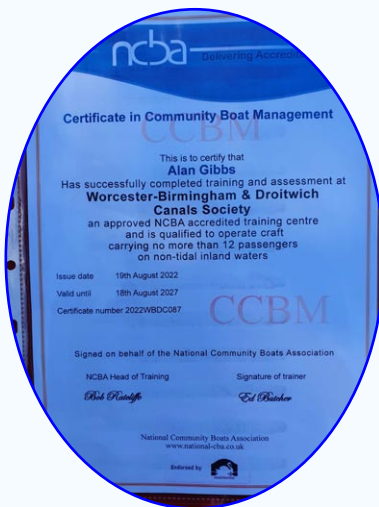
The Society is now able to offer the full range of training available from The National Community Boats Association, (<https://national-cba.co.uk>) and the Society can be contacted at [training@wbdc.org.uk](mailto:training@wbdc.org.uk).

Further details of the Society, our community boat Cecilia, and our other activities working together with Canal and River Trust in our local area can be found at <https://wbdc.org.uk>

*Ed Butcher*



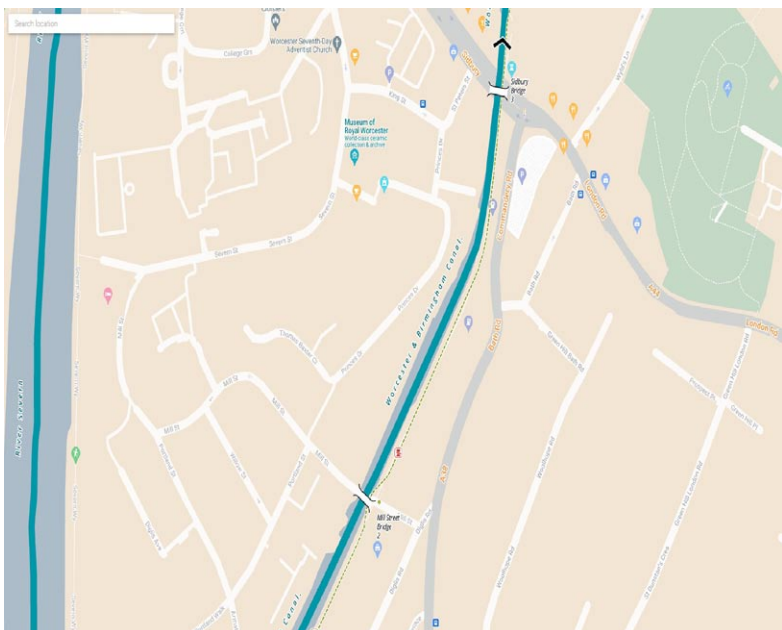




Thanks to Sarah Whitmore of ZAC Workwear - Embroidery & Printing for the fantastic Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society branding on our new life jackets. Proudly worn by WB&DCS Volunteers on their recent assessment day, onboard society narrowboat 'Cecilia'.



'58' has very recently been notified of a potentially dangerous support wall between bridges 2 and 3 in the Diglis area around the 'Worcester Porcelain' site. Our source informs that Berkeley Homes, who own the wall, have accepted responsibility and the situation is being monitored. Apparently a C&RT engineer has visited the site where several developments have taken place and many people reside mainly in flats overlooking the area. If any readers become aware of any further news please let us know.





# The Roundhouse (Birmingham)

The Roundhouse in Birmingham, based in the heart of Ladywood, has been brought back to life once again, thanks to a unique partnership between the Canal & River Trust and National Trust.

The Grade II \* listed building had stood quietly for 140 years as the city developed around it and was on Historic England's "at risk" register.

Originally designed and built in 1874 by Birmingham based architect W.H. Ward as stabling and stores for the Public Works Department and as part of a massive city improvement plan.

Imagine 40 or more horses delivering stone, lamplighters, who would take their carts and horses out to light the streets of Ladywood and the nightsoil brought from the city to be sent out via the canal to city allotments and farms. It's position tucked next to the Birmingham Old Mainline Canal close to the City centre meant area acted as a wharf and was at the industrial heart of the city. Owned by the Canal & River Trust, the building has been restored in partnership between us and National Trust. This work has been made possible thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and from Historic England.

Now been transformed, The Roundhouse building offers not only office space for local businesses, but into a place which people can use as a base to explore the city and the region's historic canals. Roundhouse Birmingham is now breathing life into the building, offering something different to see and do in Birmingham. Roundhouse Birmingham is a heritage enterprise and independent charity with a mission to see the city differently. Why not try kayaking or paddleboarding along the canal outside, take a trip on a heritage boat, learn about this unique shaped building or see the city on a guided tour.

You can now also pop in for a spot of lunch, or a barista coffee and slice of cake, at Jonathans in the Roundhouse. Serving you the tastes and ambience of yesteryear, this unique independent eatery is fitted with antiques, curios, high wooden beams, incandescent pendent lights, exposed brick walls and Victorian iron framed arched windows, making it a truly special setting.

For a full list of ways to #SeeTheCityDifferently visit [roundhousebirmingham.org.uk](http://roundhousebirmingham.org.uk)



# Donations

*We have introduced new and easier ways  
of making donations to the society.*

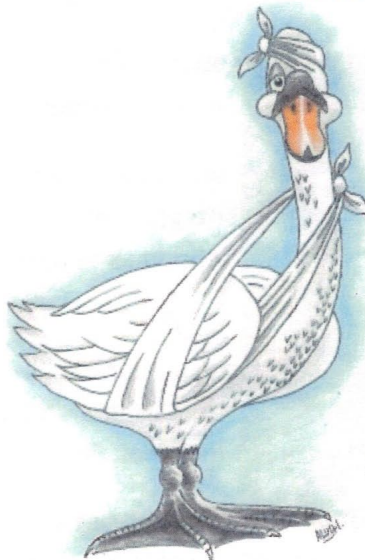
**QR Code:** We have the facility to make donations direct to the society.  
You can simply scan the QR code on our flyers and collection tins or visit:  
<https://bit.ly/3pcfp1C>



**JustGiving**  
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## Wychbold Swan Rescue

[www.wychboldswanrescue.co.uk](http://www.wychboldswanrescue.co.uk)

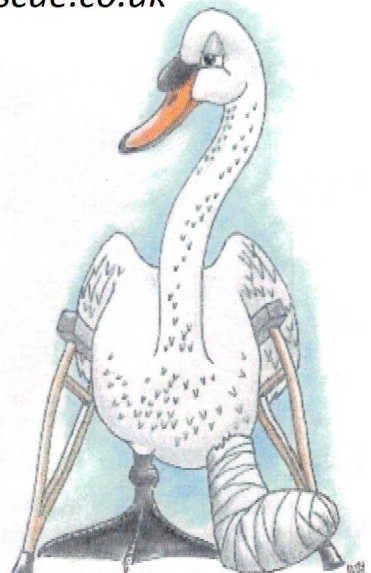


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Contact **John** and **Jackie** via email at [bridge35chandlers@gmail.com](mailto:bridge35chandlers@gmail.com)

Our friends and society members from Bridge 35 Chandlers have decided, after several years, to sell their well-respected shop at Hanbury Wharf. If any readers know of anyone interested please ask them to contact Jackie and John directly.



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

We hold our regular monthly meetings at the Alvechurch Boat Centre, Scarfield Wharf, Alvechurch, B48 7SQ (*just behind the award winning Weighbridge pub*) 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 the programme on our website, Facebook and Twitter pages*). We usually go on summer walks in July and August.

Presentations have included The Bridgewater Canal, Birmingham Roundhouse Restoration, 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.

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.

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 (*fully crewed*) for use by groups or individuals for half day and day trips (*Terms & Conditions Apply*).

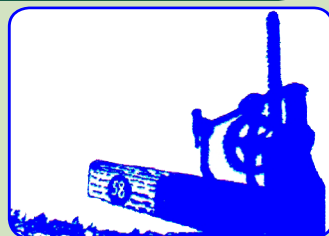
We hope to welcome as many new faces as possible from members of the community.

**Please visit our website: [wbdcs.org.uk](http://wbdcs.org.uk)**  
(where you can also download a membership application form)

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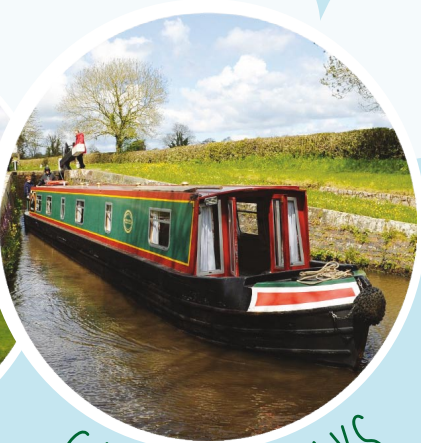
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