

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'



Canal scenes on the way down to Droitwich; do any readers recognise them?



The Inland
Waterways
Association

Keeping our waterways alive

Corporate Member



Worcester-Birmingham
& Droitwich
Canals Society



www.wbdcs.org.uk

Issue 573 Summer 2024

Meetings/Walks

Summer Walks/Meetings

Tuesday 2nd July: 7.15pm start.

A Walk around Droitwich to be led by Danny Spike. Distance less than two miles. We will stop at various strategic locations to compare what the town and canal look like now compared to old maps, photographs from the days of salt making and brine baths. Some features of the canal restoration will also be shown. Meet at the Waitrose car park on the Saltway, WR9 8LB.

Tuesday 6th August: 7pm start.

‘An Walk From The Saltway to The Coffin Bridge’

led by John, Ed & Tony.

Maybe a drink and natter at The Eagle & Sun afterwards.

Meet at The Gateway public car park
on Hanbury Road, WR9 7DX.

Parking charges apply.

AGM

Tuesday 3rd September: 7.45pm start.

Meeting room behind The Weighbridge Pub

Scarfield Hill, Alvechurch B48 7SQ

followed by a short presentation by John Hemingway

‘The Huddersfield Narrow Canal’

For those members who only receive a printed copy of ‘58’

please go to our website for the most up to date information. www.wbdcs.org.uk

The Magazine of the Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

Issue 573 Summer 2024

CONTENTS

Page 2:	Forthcoming Monthly Meetings.
Page 4:	Society Contacts
Page 5:	Chair's Notes.
Page 6 -7:	Editor's Notes.
Page 7:	Post Box Topper.
Page 8:	New Members. Obituary. Raffle Prizes. Mikron Theatre Group.
Page 9:	Meeting Reports.
Page 10:	Heritage Open Weekend.
Page 11:	Little Radford Model Boat Club. Poetry Corner.
Page 12-13:	Nature Notes.
Page 14 -15:	Some pictures from St. Richard's Canal Festival.
Page 16:	'Cecilia' News.
Page 17:	Lapal Canal Trust News.
Page 18 -19:	Life of a Boat.
Page 20 -21:	History Corner Part 1.
Page 22-23:	History Corner Part 2.
Page 24-25:	Primrose Memory Walk.
Page 25:	Boat for Sale.
Page 26-27:	Volunteering Notice. Festivals and Fayres.

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

www.facebook.com/wbdcs.org.uk

We are also on **X** (formerly known as **Twitter**) please follow us @wbdcs58.

View videos on our [YouTube channel](#)

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

Copy Date for the Next Issue: August 14th 2024

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)

PRESIDENT: Sandra Radmore

VICE PRESIDENT: Sir Peter Luff

CHAIR

David Wheeler

01527 833359

chairman@wbdc.org.uk

VICE CHAIR

Margaret Rowley

vicechair@wbdc.org.uk

SECRETARY

(Vacant)

secretary@wbdc.org.uk

TREASURER

Trevor Hyde

01527 880158 or 07770 971146

treasurer@wbdc.org.uk

Committee

Denis Pike:	programme@wbdc.org.uk	07870 939121
John Hemingway	58@wbdc.org.uk	0121 445 2223
Bill Lambert	williamlambert729@yahoo.com	07815 986012
Wendy Albutt	bookingcecilia@yahoo.com	07769 551462
Neil Franklin	neilwbdcsvolunteer@gmail.com	07857 294196
Ken Robinson	scouserefc@hotmail.com	07891 071041

The ‘58’ Team

Editor/Advertising:	John Hemingway	58@wbdc.org.uk	0121 445 2223
Design:	Tony Brannon	fiftyeight@talktalk.net	07763 468893

Contacts

Membership Secretary	Tony Brannon	membership@wbdc.org.uk	07763 468893
Programme Secretary	Denis Pike	programme@wbdc.org.uk	07870 939121
Volunteer Co-ordinator	Neil Franklin	volunteers@wbdc.org.uk	07857 294196
Cecilia Bookings	Wendy Albutt	bookingcecilia@yahoo.com	
Website	Brett Laniosh	webmaster@wbdc.org.uk	01527 880118
Media, Print & Website	Tony Brannon	contact@wbdc.org.uk	07763 468893
Historian	Ian Hunter	historian@wbdc.org.uk	



Chair's Notes

I have to say, what an amazing effort everybody made to make St. Richard's Canal Festival 2024 a success.

I arrived on site about midday Thursday to find that all of the planning we had made over the previous 10 months had actually worked. Vans were collected Tuesday and trips made to collect equipment. Marquee and volunteer tents were erected early Wednesday, fencing and toilets arrived on time and more trips to collect equipment which meant when I arrived everything was going to plan. Could this last? Thursday afternoon Neil and myself set about marking out the site, which we did and completed by early Thursday evening. It was as though we actually knew what we were doing !!! The plan changed over the next few days but Neil and Bill between them sorted things out. Friday came and we opened the festival to the public and what happened – it rained and went very cold! The heaters we had hired failed to work and we started the festival in a sombre mood hoping that the weather would change. And change it did. How lucky we were, Saturday, Sunday and Monday was a complete change to Friday night which meant we enjoyed a huge number of visitors into Vines Park. I have to highlight the fact that Nick, Sue and their family and friends put in a sterling amount of work behind the bar, and without their help, we would not have coped with the number of visitors we had. The Duck Race on Monday was another huge success, the dog show attracted a good number of visitors, and we ended the festival on a high. St. Richard's Canal Festival is now a very popular event for Droitwich Spa, is well established on the waterways calendar, and seems to be getting more popular each year; can we sustain the huge effort? I hope so!!

I also have to say a huge "Thank You" to Paddy; with the sad news of losing Gill just a few days earlier. We all shared our condolences with him and are all very grateful for his major input to making St. Richard's Canal Festival another success.

David Wheeler



Editor's Notes

Hello Readers

Here we are again following on from the big one at Vines Park, Droitwich. St. Richard's Canal Festival certainly went off well despite the real risk of being a 'wash out' such was the weather



we'd been having, and still are! A tree had actually come down on the site a few days prior such was the concern. The Friday evening was very wet but the rest of the days were pretty good and the crowds certainly came out in their thousands. During the Sunday night's entertainment, the 'heavens opened' but still people stayed until the end with many wanting to remain in the marquee such was the rain. More about the festival will appear further on but do hope that those able to attend enjoyed the occasion, which is why the society plans and delivers it every year. Thanks must be

recorded here to the massive effort put in by the volunteers both during the build - up, the event itself and the taking down and tidying up of the site afterwards. A truly magnificent effort by all – thank you so much!

Because the festival site's main clearing up day is Tuesday, the usual members' evening took place the following week and was delivered by Kev Maslin, a well - known photographer, particularly of heritage canal boats. More about this features further on inside as well as a report of a previous meeting.

Still no news about the re-opening of the towpath on the Tardebigge side of Shortwood Tunnel. However, thanks to the 'eagle eyes' of Ed, we can report that work has actually commenced on the remains of the replica 'Wych Barge' in Vines Park Droitwich. Pity this was not done before the last St. Richard's Canal Festival, but it certainly is a step forward from the damaged remains that had been present for a few years. Apparently additional work to improve the site is to be carried out including heritage style seating and later in the year a salt worker statue, produced locally, is to be installed. '58' looks forward to seeing these improvements and thanks Wychavon District Council in advance.



In this edition there will be Mary's Nature Notes, Lapal Canal Trust News and Heritage Open Days News to name but a few. This magazine relies on volunteers to both send items in and to produce the finished document. If anyone wishes to send in anything at all for consideration, please do not hesitate to do so and if you do not wish to see your name in print that request will be actioned.

Unfortunately Tony Brannon was unwell during the festival weekend and was unable to attend to his usual selling of duck race tickets. However, despite the illness Tony still managed to input the social media interest in the society, St. Richard's Canal Festival in particular, as well as arranging for things to be brought down to the site: Tony said.....

"I just thought I'd share some very encouraging results from our two Facebook pages over the last 90 days. The one (with the higher figure) is from St. Richard's Canal Festival page and the second from the WB&DCS page. The St. Richard's Facebook page was extremely busy over the festival period. It goes to show how many thousands have been following us.

Many thanks to the volunteers who kept me up to date with photos and information during the festival period."

Performance

Followers: 1,042

Last 90 days

Reach 14,631 +2K% from previous 90 days	Content published 29 +100% from previous 90 days
Engagement 2,650 +7K% from previous 90 days	Net followers 104 +2K% from previous 90 days

Performance

Last 90 days

Reach 7,849 +435% from previous 90 days	Content published 59 +97% from previous 90 days
Engagement 1,613 +225% from previous 90 days	Net followers 19 +2K% from previous 90 days

Enjoy the read.
John Hemingway

Postbox Topper

A 'mini' version of 'Cecilia' was recently featured as a postbox topper on Bear Hill in Alvechurch.



New Members

'58' would like to extend a warm welcome to new members:

Philip Bladon of Redditch, **Liz Butterfield** of Edgbaston.

Dave Hodson of Hollywood.

We hope that you will be able to join in and meet as many members of the society as possible at future meetings and activities.

Obituary

The last edition of '58' shared the news of the passing of Sue Freeth. We have since been informed that husband John had also passed away possibly 2 years before. '58' was not aware of this until recent times but nevertheless report it for readers' information. We have received no further details at all about any circumstances.

As mentioned in the Chair's Notes, '58' passes onto Paddy Grice our sincere condolences for the recent and tragic loss of Gill, who was a friend and supporter of this society. Several society members and friends were present at Gill's funeral in Old Swinsford, near Stourbridge, with the general feeling being that she would have been pleased to see everyone.

Raffle Prizes

The society's monthly meetings, excluding the Summer walks, usually take place in the meeting room behind the 'Weighbridge' pub in Alvechurch. The room clearly has to be paid for which part of the membership subscription is utilised. However, Sue and Martin Hancox organise a raffle to supplement the society's costs and prizes are always needed. If anyone has anything which could be deemed to be a suitable raffle prize, such as an unwanted gift, do please consider donating to the society. Sue would be very pleased to receive at any of the society meetings. If by some chance Sue is not available, please give to any other committee member and it will be passed on.

Many thanks.

Mikron Theatre Group

MIKRON

THEATRE WHERE YOU ARE

www.mikron.org.uk

The Mikron Theatre Group will once again be travelling around the canal system on their narrow boat 'Tyseley'. They are due to be presenting their live theatre shows at 'The Weighbridge' in Alvechurch on August 21st and 22nd. They are also due to perform at other venues in the vicinity

both before and after these dates – www.mikron.org.uk gives further details.

One of the productions is called 'Common Ground' which focusses on a 'hill-arious' ramble through the countryside tracing the history of land access in England. The Pendle and District Ramblers are looking forward to their 50th anniversary walk and find that the pathway has been blocked by the landowner. The walkers encounter bulls, beavers and sheep in their quest for freedom and fresh air.

The other production is called 'Jennie Lee' – the radical MP you've never heard of! In 1929, Jennie Lee left her coal mining family in Scotland to become the youngest MP – so young that she, as woman, couldn't even vote for herself. Jennie fought for the betterment of most people's lives via education, wages, health and housing. She had a role in the formation of the Open University and expansion of the Arts Council. The founder of the NHS, Nye Bevan, was her husband but the play is about Jennie Lee herself.

If any readers attend either of the productions '58' would be pleased to hear your views.

Meeting Reports

The April meeting featured a presentation given by John and Jennie Jackson who used to run a coal carrying business on their narrowboat 'Roach'. Readers may have seen 'Roach' along the canals in recent times; same boat but different owner, Rich, who carries out a similar business but also includes such as gas, fuel, paraffin etc.

John and Jennie shared many slides of their boat in various locations with one aspect in particular being highlighted – the actual loading up of their cargo. This looked very hard physical work particularly as the various grades of coal have to be bagged up and weighed separately before loading. They also needed to load at different wharves dependent upon where they were situated. Customers were not only from other boaters but also canal side cottages and other properties relatively near the waterways. The trade was far and wide and on at least one occasion, John brought 'Roach' to St. Richard's Canal Festival in Droitwich, where several boaters replenished their stocks.

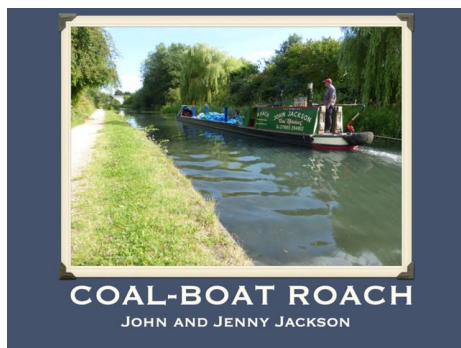
The meeting itself was absolutely packed out with John and Jennie being given a massive round of applause for their presentation.

The later than usual, owing to St. Richard's Canal Festival clear up, May Meeting featured a well-known photographer and BCNS member, Kev Maslin. The title was 'Chasing the Boats' which is what Kev described during his presentation. He specialises in taking pictures of Heritage Canal Boats and arranges to meet the crews at various points on the system hoping to get some good pictures. Kev certainly appears to have been successful with some stunning pictures at different venues shared with those present. He receives calls, messages, emails and also makes use of social media in order to arrange things with the boaters and even then sometimes the timings

were out. Either he was too early or they were – such is life on the canals!

Kev showed us some superb pictures from the canals and also uses some of them for his special calendar, one of which he kindly donated to the society as a raffle prize.

After the presentation Kev received the usual WB&DCS appreciative applause



Heritage Open Weekend: 14th/15th September

Some of you will recall Worcester- Birmingham and Droitwich Canals Society (WB&DCS) supporting last year's Heritage Open Days (HoDs). This year's society days in September are part of a national fortnight of heritage events coordinated by the National Trust and in our case, also supported by Canal and River Trust (C&RT). This year's topic is '**Routes, Networks and Connections**' which fits nicely into our local history stories.



For those of you new to this event, it takes place around the Tardebigge New Wharf area and consists of our member volunteers, along with some volunteers from C&RT, showing members of the public around the top lock and wharf area giving a guided view of how the area would have looked when in full industrial usage.

Our event will run over the weekend of 14th and 15th of September. Again, this year we are inviting society members to take part and help on these days which are very informal. In the past they've been very enjoyable and rewarding for both volunteers and visitors.

Here are some things you may want to join in with viz: society and C&RT members to act as guides for small group members of the public. There will be planned time for volunteers to visit the site to discuss information we can provide to visitors (several dates to plan will be offered during August). There is no pressure to memorise a script as most volunteers from last year said they remembered what they found interesting and could show others these sights, referring to a 'crib sheet' if there were other things they wished to impart. We have a local history information booklet and will be updating this along with producing information boards. Contributions to this are always welcome.

On the days, we will need help to set up and staff our society gazebos; volunteers to run the bottle bag Lucky dip stall; assistance with providing tea/coffee etc. and cakes for visitors; we also require, if possible, cake makers to provide some goodies that can be sold.

This year we plan to place a gazebo on the wharf grass island. This will be for information boards and to attract potential new society members which we will need to staff in order engage with visitors. These days are a great way to promote our society, provide information and hopefully raise some funds.

Community narrowboat 'Cecilia' will be on hand to take guests on trips through the Tardebigge Tunnel to the Old Wharf. We will require volunteers to support the organisation of this on both days. We will also need volunteer support to collect event feedback.

Our event submission has been accepted and is on the Heritage Open Day website – just type 'Tardebigge' in the events search box to access or use this link: <https://bit.ly/4eq6vGF> or the QR code below.



We hope this broad overview may help gather volunteers from the membership for a variety of roles with plenty of time to meet up, talk about the project, provide opportunities to walk around and build confidence for those who want to try their hand at guiding. If you are interested or want more information, please drop me an email:

alangibbs456@btinternet.com or phone me on 07398709048

Alan Gibbs

Little Radford Model Boat Club



Society friends Little Radford Model Boat Club, who are based near Alvechurch, displayed their superb craft at the recent St. Richard's Canal Festival. They are always an attraction that the crowds love to see. On this occasion, the heavy rain the night before caused quite a current near the Max Sinclair Barge Lock in Vines Park. So much so that one of the model boats was washed down a large overflow pipe leading to the adjacent River Salwarpe. Unfortunately the large pipe was blocked with debris thereby not allowing the model boat to exit into the river.



Fortunately society volunteers were on hand to rescue the craft by entering the river, clearing the debris and rescuing the stricken craft which incidentally, had not taken on any water. The owner, John Newey, was very pleased to get his model boat back which was relatively large. We hope that this incident has not put the model boat club off from joining St. Richard's Canal Festival in future.

'Poetry Corner' Poem by Mary Green

Towpath Conversation

Another towpath conversation. We lament
The demise of the moorhen's nest: every time
Someone said they had pictures of the eggs
I knew she had skittered off across the water
And then once too often. Rats or heron.
Then he says "The swans have hatched"
And I have to go. There they are, still
Under her wing, but out in the sunshine
By the musky hawthorn tree, shielded by scrub
Guarded by her cob, standing proud
Watching across the water, safe from us.



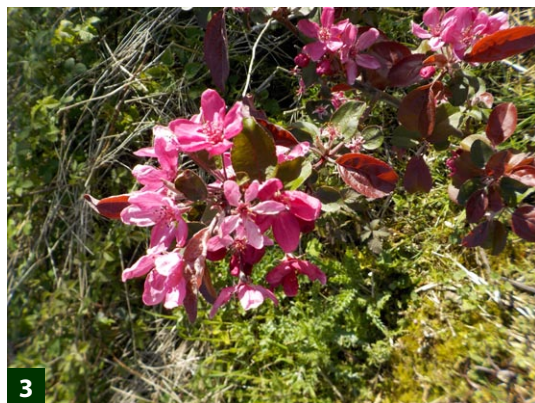
'Nature Notes'

Mary Green

Following my last article about good conditions along the canalside here near Alvechurch, I took a group of people on a wildlife walk there in early April. I chose it as somewhere we could walk without being knee-deep in mud, the towpath between Withybed and Grange Lane being well surfaced nearly ten years ago now. The same can't be said for the walk the other way towards Bittell reservoirs, where I would have loved to take the group but the towpath is muddy to the point of being dangerous. A neighbour is encouraging people to pressure C&RT to do something about it because this is such an important part of local walking infrastructure and wildlife monitoring. I know they don't have funding but hope that something like the proposed 8 Hills Country Park project might help with attracting some. If we are serious about getting people out of their cars, and getting them to see biodiversity in action, canalside paths are worth investing in.

Walking the canalside, we saw an environment where trees and bushes were allowed to grow to maturity and flower and fruit, so hosting the myriad other creatures that depend on them. We saw vegetation that had died down naturally over winter and was regrowing at the right time and with better balance. When it's cut back, it can try to come back too soon and get damaged by cold weather, the tough plants like grass and dock starting to dominate over others which provide diversity.

We found an ancient ash tree, estimated 500-odd years old, in a place with bluebells and veteran oak trees both sides of the canal. Here the canal has helped preserve ancient woodland, and we noted wood anemones



growing by the towpath.

We saw a hedge which had been flail-cut for years but has been left to grow for three years now and had borne fruit last year for the first time. Orchard fruit trees planted last year by WB&DCS for C&RT were thriving and have all come into blossom. The work on the bank recently done by C&RT was well done and will contribute to the life of water creatures like water-voles and otters. All in all, we saw a waterway originally designed for the demands of industry but which now was a linear nature reserve.

We encountered our pair of swans on the way, but since then I have only seen one of them around. I hope this is the cob and that the pen is on a nest nearby, rather than that one has died. By the time this comes out I may know.

I saw my first ducklings on 24 April and have noted a Canada goose on the nest nearby. My first brimstone butterfly of the year here was by the canal in late March and orange tip butterflies were plentiful during April. The latter's caterpillars feed on garlic mustard, which is thick and plentiful along the hedge side of the canal, and lady's smock, which is all along the waterside. There are greenfinches, chiffchaffs and blackcaps in the trees alongside now joining the blackbirds and thrushes.

The canalside hedges were full of blossom this spring, with blackthorn early then wild cherry then hawthorn. I have found some of the earlier-flowering midland hawthorn, our ancient species, as well as the common hawthorn, which blossomed slowly in the cold weather. On the walk we also saw more unusual blossom. By a bridge was a hedge-full of bullace (wild plum), and near it some elm, struggling into flower. The canal habitat helps save these.

Later in May the male swan disappeared as well.

Footnote:

On 2 June the pair of swans reappeared with three strong-looking cygnets.

Glad I was right!



4



5

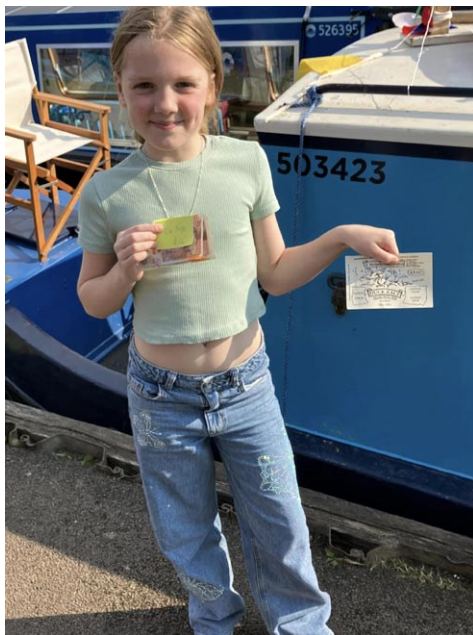


6

1. NEW ORCHARD TREE IN BLOOM
2. MIDLAND HAWTHORN
3. NEW ORCHARD CRAB APPLE
4. ANCIENT WOODLAND REMNANT BY CANAL
5. SWANS NESTING BY THE CANAL
6. NEW DUCKLINGS

St. Richard's Canal Festival (A Selection of Photos)

The festival itself takes a lot of organising and subsequent staffing as mentioned elsewhere. So many people have a good time over the Bank Holiday weekend including participating in the Great Droitwich Duck Race, which sold 1,500 tickets - a record!



Two of
the duck
race
winners!



St. Richard's Canal Festival

These pictures show some of the festival but certainly not all. If anyone has any more they would like us to share please do send them along to us even though the event was several weeks ago.



'Cecilia has been out and about over the past few weeks. Here are a selection of photographs.



Cecilia in Lock 52 on the first stage of her three day voyage down to Vines Park in Droitwich for the St Richard's Canal Festival. The gallant crew took it down from Alvechurch to Stoke Prior, negotiating the Tardebigge Flight with aplomb and little difficulty.



Dudley No 2 Canal Weoley Park Bridge (1796)

**RESTORE THE
LAPAL CANAL**
www.lapal.org

Society friends from the Lapal Canal Trust are eagerly awaiting the outcome of their Heritage Lottery Fund bid due to be announced sometime in June. Some further questions have been asked of the Trust concerning its ability to further fund raise, the small tunnel underneath the ring road and the provision of water to fill the new section, presumably from the Worcester & Birmingham Canal. All of these have been answered, and evidenced, as the hoped for outcome approaches. Watch this space and the LCT social media!

Meanwhile, arranged trips for the SENSE charity have continued despite some very wet weather, which actually required the stove to be lit in order to keep people warm and dry. The groups have visited

both the Cube and the Castle Fine Art Gallery at the Mailbox as part of their trip into the City from Selly Oak. '58' looks forward to further news in the near future.





Many readers will be aware of our friends at Crafted Boats who are based at Tardebigge New Wharf and Stoke Prior on the W&B Canal. They have also taken over a new base on the Oxford Canal. Much of the work that has been carried out on 'Cecilia' has been done by Crafted Boats.

Not only do they actually build, paint and maintain boats they also dispose of them when the vessels become unsalvageable. The following article was kindly sent to us by Aaron Pinder who describes the 'end of life' attention that is sometimes required of boats which are beyond salvage.

Crafted boats Ltd carrying out end of life of a canal boat.

Background

- The owner brought the boat off Facebook marketplace back in November 2023 for £8,000, with no survey or prior inspection before purchase, to kit out and live aboard.
- Come Feb 2024 the boat then sunk by the Hopwood House, was refloated and towed back to our Tardebigge dry dock for us to assess.
- After assessing the boat, we found it had been badly over plated twice in the past and the rudder tube was thin; we found the cause of the boat sinking was a leaking stern tube and rainwater.
- Due to the poor condition of the boat and to bring the hull back up to a good safe condition, would've cost the owner more than it's worth. This led to the owner making the difficult decision, but the responsible one, of paying £3,000 for the boat to be properly disposed of.

The narrow boat 'Union Maid' was a 40ft boat built in the 1970s.

Disposal

- As the boat was at our dry dock in Tardebigge and the scrapping of it would be done down at our yard at Stoke Prior, we had to move her by canal, but due to the C&RT stoppages we couldn't do this till mid-March. In the meantime we kept her afloat with bilge pumps and we tried to get the engine working, unfortunately we didn't.
- This meant we had to bow haul her down the Tardebigge and Stoke flights - a total of 36 locks.
- When she arrived at Stoke Prior we pulled her in to the slip way which was not easy; due to the rot on the stem post it fell apart on us as we were pulling her in and had to reinforce it to get the boat in. We made a start on dismantling the boat, commencing at the bow, working our way to the stern and separating all the different materials along the way ending at the bedroom.
- Once the inside was cleared, we removed the fibreglass roof and cabin with the forklift and broke up into pieces to go into the skip. We then removed the ballast which will be reused for hard core. We removed the engine (Lister) which we'll sell on ebay for spares or repairs; the hull was then cut up into pieces to weigh in for scrap metal.

Hidden corrosion

- As the boat (like most) had been spending its life with water in the bilge, corrosion wasn't just happening from the outside it was also corroding from the inside where this area can't really be inspected and maintained.
- The boat had twice been over plated (over plate on over plate) which is unsafe and should have never been done. The plates weren't properly attached to the boat and allowed trapped water between the plates.

Time

- It had taken us 20 works hours to move the boat, 6 hours pulling the boat in and 46.5 hours to dismantle and dispose of the waste.

The boat consisted of

- 1390 kg of wood • 990kg of general waste • 820kg of brick and paving slabs
- 130Kg of glass • 320Kg of steel • 22Kg of copper • 23Kg of aluminium
- 11Kg of copper cable • 27Kg of stainless steel • 24Kg of brass • 32Kg of battery
- 100ltr of engine oil and Diesel

Environmental

- Where we could we have tried to recycle as many of the material as we can but unfortunately some bits just can't be recycled, like general waste which will be incinerated to generate electricity.
- Our site at Stoke Prior has a fully array of waste recycle centres which meant we didn't have to transport the waste/recycled material off site.

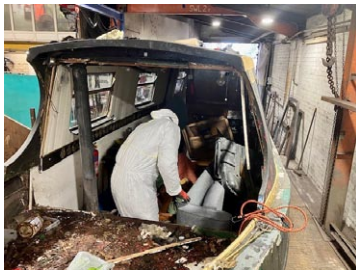
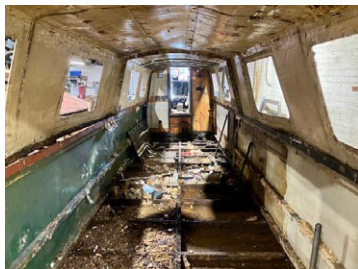
Cost

- Where it has cost us about £380 to dispose of the waste material, weighing in the metals has generated about £1,540. But it has taken us 84.5 hours in labour to complete the process.

Conclusion

- With canal boats getting older they reach a point when they need to be disposed of; they become uneconomical to repair and need to be professionally dealt with. That's why we at Crafted Boats Ltd. now offer the full life cycle of canal boats, from building new, to carrying out all types of repairs, to now responsibly disposing of them to make the canal a better place.

(Many boaters can probably cite several instances where this service would be appropriate rather than just abandoning the boat and creating an unsightly hazard – Ed)



History Corner (Part 1)

As mentioned briefly in a recent edition highlighting some articles in a 1994 '58', the society was then to embark on a celebration of 25 years in existence.

RALLY REPORT

Saturday and Sunday the 9th/10th July saw the Rally to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Canal Society, at Stoke Works. We were blessed with wonderful weather for both days, although various sporting activities on the telly appeared to keep many people at home. Although a lot of boats were fairly late booking to come to the Rally, we did in the end have nearly 50 boats, each of whom was given the very smart chromed plaque. We also were delighted that Doris Cox was able to attend.

David Bezzant performed an able job as harbour master. He had a slight accident with his keys, however, the extra one recently added to the bunch proving the straw that broke the camel's back as far as the cork to keep them afloat was concerned. It didn't. Hurrah for Sea Searchers.

Roy Thomason, MP for Bromsgrove performed the official opening ceremony, arriving by boat all the way from Wharf Cottage (about 200 yards). He was accompanied by an industrialist, Rupert Wilcox-Baker, who was 'trailing' Roy's work in a reciprocal arrangement by spending a weekend in the Constituency. After an entertaining speech, they looked around the whole rally, accompanied by Mike and Andrew Stumpf. They both professed to have enjoyed their afternoon very much, and Rupert may well re-join the IWA as a result, of which he used to be a member.

We had about 15 stalls in all, including charities such as the RNLI and Swan Rescue, as well as craft stalls and information stalls. The Farm Animal Sanctuary brought along some animals and there were pony rides and a bouncy castle on Saturday. All in all, there was a lot geared towards small children, who will, after all, become our members of the future. They all certainly seemed to enjoy themselves, finding buried

The Boat Rally event was held at Stoke Works, where the 'Boat and Railway' pub is, and was the home base of the society at the time. The society President was Rene Dowler, Chair Mike Woodhead, Treasurer Caroline Woodhead and Secretary Sandra Radmore. The following article about the whole weekend appeared in '58':

eggs, dressing up as canal characters, making badges, and painting. The Upton Warren Canoe Club came and gave us a demonstration of how canoeing is a family activity, showing a variety of different types of canoes and with some young children taking part.

BW pulled out all the stops for us, for which we were touched and grateful. Swift was present, having completed a lengthy journey to Stoke Works, crewed at various stages by Waterway Managers and others. There was also a dredger, which ran balloon picking-up competitions. This in addition to a very professionally presented tent, with information boards, leaflets, dressing up and badge making. In particular, two boards were created by BW especially for the Society, giving brief details of the history of the canal and the Society, with accompanying photos. These have been presented to us to keep and display at other events. We are very fortunate to have these.

On the Saturday evening, a full house listened to Cosmotheke, who entertained us with music hall songs in their usual inimitable style. They tell us that canal audiences are the best to perform to - do they feel some sort of affinity with our own type of madness?

Breakfast was served by the Boat & Railway, where Steve and Pam worked like Trojans all weekend. Rumour has it that they had to sleep for a week afterwards to recover! The great ice cream wars of Stoke Works were narrowly avoided when two were inadvertently booked, by ourselves and the Country Club.

And finally, there is absolutely NO truth in the rumour that Andrew Stumpf has taken to patrolling the canal by unlicensed canoe. He was just using it to measure depth, we are assured. That could explain the uncontrolled wobbling action displayed by him and Mike while inspecting all the boats present!

CW

History Corner (Part 2)

Tardebigge Tug Boats.

In the last edition of '58' AI described some background to the tug boat 'Birmingham' exhibited at the New Wharf and details of how the initiative benefitted the canal company's working practices.

THE TUNNEL TUGS WORCESTER AND BIRMINGHAM OF THE W & B CANAL

At our Society meeting in March 2003 Cath Turpin and her husband Mike gave an interesting talk mainly on the history of the motor tug *Worcester* which used to tow unpowered working boats through tunnels on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, and which, having been twice restored, is now cared for at the Boat Museum, Ellesmere Port. Cath Turpin has, for some time, been researching in depth the history of the tugs on our canal and the fruit of her labours is an eighteen-page article in *Waterways Journal* Volume 7 published Spring 2005.

The article, which is illustrated with many photographs, begins with an account of the introduction of the steam tugs *Worcester* and *Birmingham* in 1877 followed by *Gloucester* in 1878, *Stoke* in 1895, and *Droitwich* (a conversion of the committee boat *Harriet*) in 1909. By 1908 the earlier steam tugs, though still serviceable, were needing increasing repairs and so the first oil-fuelled motor tug *Sharpness* was commissioned in 1908. This was followed by the ordering of two identical motor tugs, built at Queensferry on the River Dee for Penman & Co. by Abdella & Mitchell. These twin tugs which started work on the W/B Canal in 1912 were named *Worcester* and *Birmingham*, and, to distinguish them from their steam namesakes, they were known as *Worcester Oil* and *Birmingham Oil*.

The motor tug *Worcester* remained in use as a tug, mainly towing boats through Tardebigge and Shortwood Tunnels, until 1955. It then continued in occasional use as an icebreaker until and after being purchased (together with the tug *Sharpness*) by Precision Dies & Tools Ltd of Tardebigge in 1959. It finally left our canal c.1963/4 when purchased by Philip Murray for his own use as a holiday boat on the Macclesfield Canal. Eventually in 1972, after several years of neglect and deterioration and Mr Murray's death, it was donated by a nephew, who now owned the boat, to the then recently formed organisation we now know as the Boat Museum.

The motor tug *Birmingham* remained in use for only five years on our canal. Following the termination of several years of tug towage available between Tardebigge and Gas Street Basin in Birmingham it had become redundant and it was sold in 1917 to Marylebone Borough Council. It was

A 2005 picture, provided by Ian Hunter, shows the exhibit base being put down for the tug to be placed on.

The May and June editions of '58' from the same year offer a little more to the story:

renamed *Tyburn* and was used for transporting rubbish along the Regent's Canal from Paddington Basin to various canalside tips. In 1939 this service was taken over by Thomas Clayton (Paddington) Limited and its use for rubbish disposal continued until c. 1952, after which the boat was used for maintenance work on the Grand Union Canal, being based at Uxbridge. About 1957 *Tyburn* was acquired by Wyvern Shipping of Leighton Buzzard, converted into a holiday hire boat and renamed *Perseverence*. In 1968 it was bought by Reedings Primary School, Sawbridgeworth, near the River Stort in Hertfordshire, and used by the Headmaster Peter Hodgson for taking pupils on trips mainly at weekends. In 1974/5 it passed to the first of three, in turn, private owners. Eventually, in the late 1980s, it was abandoned in a sorry state at Uxbridge and retrieved by BW. Once its historical significance was realised, it was taken to the BW Bradley Yard to be restored and renamed *Birmingham* under the "Friends of Working Boats" project. The intention was that once restored, it would be located at Tardebigge New Wharf where it began its working life. Unfortunately full restoration has not yet been possible but the hull has now returned to Tardebigge New Wharf where it is on display together with some interpretation material.

Cath Turpin is to be congratulated on the persistence of her researches and on the wealth of detail she has unearthed about the tunnel tugs and especially about the adventures of *Birmingham Oil* in disguise during its many years away from our canal.

(Waterways Journal Vol.7, price £5.99, The Boat Museum Society, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port CH65 4FW)

Alan White



primrose **Memory Walk**

Hanbury Hall
Sunday 7th July 2024

Walking together in celebration of our loved ones



BOOK HERE:
primrosehospice.org/events/memory-walk

OR CALL:
01527 889796

Kindly sponsored by
THOMAS BROTHERS
The Funeral Directors

 **primrose
hospice**
Care Compassion Community

Primrose Memory Walk

Walking together in celebration of our loved ones.

Bring your family and friends together and walk in memory of your loved ones at the Primrose Memory Walk at Hanbury Hall on Sunday 7th July 2024. With every step you will be creating new memories while changing the lives of terminally ill people – now and into the future.

Join us for a colourful, emotional and uplifting family-friendly walk and receive your very own yellow Memory Walk t-shirt and Dedication Sign for you to personalise with details of your loved ones. When you cross the finish line you will receive a seed medal which you can plant, so you can watch your achievement grow!

There are two routes available, a short accessible stroll or a longer route which takes you around Hanbury Hall's grounds and up to the glorious views from Hanbury Church. Suitable for individuals, families and groups of all ages and abilities, dogs are more than welcome too!

Registration fees are £15.00 per adult, £10.00 per child or £60.00 for a group ticket for 6 people.

Find out more and register here: <https://primrosehospice.org/events/memory-walk/>

If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer at this event, please feel free to contact the Primrose Hospice Fundraising Team on 01527 889796 or events@primrosehospice.org

Our 2024 Memory Walk is being kindly sponsored by Thomas Brothers The Funeral Directors

Boat For Sale



Hugh, one of our members, is selling his 60ft narrow boat with cruiser stern. Built by Orchard Marina in 2008, the Isuzu 42hp engine has done around 1600 hours. Hugh has been very pleased with his boat, but the broker has described the boat as looking tired and recommended a selling price of £62,000, only a little more than the cost of building. Boat is moored at Gas Street Basin. If you are interested, contact Hugh on 07970 766554
Hugh is having a new electric boat built in Bromsgrove.

Volunteering

Our next work parties at Tardebigge and Alvechurch for June are:

Monday and Tuesday the 24th and 25th.

The details remain the same as before. We will start at Tardebigge at 9.30am.

Please keep your fingers crossed for good weather.

My thanks to everyone,

Bill Lambert.

Fayre & Festival

Our volunteers attended a **Summer Fayre at the Primrose Hospice**, Bromsgrove on Saturday 15th June. Our gazebos were set up early in the morning. By the time the festival opened it was



pouring down with thunder and lightning! Fortunately the poor weather did pass leaving a day of sunshine and showers. We did well with our 'bottle bag lucky dip'. This is a great way of raising funds for our society. If it fits in a bottle bag, you don't want it then please pass onto us at our monthly meetings or give to one of our volunteers.

Members of our society also attended the **Selly Oak Festival** supporting the Lapal Canal Trust. At least there wasn't thunder and lightning there but there were several heavy showers. Our society usually attends this festival in full but, unfortunately, it clashed with the Primrose event.





primrose
hospice

Care Compassion Community

PRIMROSE HOSPICE & PUDDLE PARTY PRESENT

ORCHARDFEST

FRIDAY 9TH AUGUST 2024 | 7PM - 11PM

SATURDAY 10TH AUGUST 2024 | 12PM - 11PM

PUDDLE WHARF FARM, 20 REDDITCH ROAD, BROMSGROVE, B60 4JN

SAVE THE DATE • HEAVY METAL RACKET • BIG SKY ORCHESTRA
BIG CELL • SPIDERS WEBB • SPLIT SECOND • DR CORNELIUS
THE BARBS • MARK WEST
MORE ACTS TO BE ANNOUNCE SOON



FESTIVAL AND CAMPING TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM
[PRIMROSEHOSPICE.ORG/EVENTS/ORCHARDFEST](https://www.primrosehospice.org/events/orchardfest)
OR SCAN THE QR CODE



CAR PARKING ON SITE
GAZEBOS WELCOME
CAMPING AVAILABLE

07377 262449



ALL FUNDS RAISED
WILL GO TO



primrose
hospice

Care Compassion Community

Kindly supported by:



Donations

We have introduced new and easier ways of making donations to our 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
We have also
set up a
'JustGiving' page.
Simply go to the
JustGiving
website:
[https://www.
justgiving.com/
wbdcsc](https://www.justgiving.com/wbdcs)



Located at the junction of the Worcester – Birmingham and Droitwich canals
Bridge 35 Changers – Customer service that's a cut above the rest

Dogs, cycles, motorcycles
and walkers all welcome

Snacks & Refreshments

Diesel, Gas, Coal, Oil, etc.

Provisions and Supplies

Solar Panel supply & fit



Bridge 35 Changers

(Formerly Jeremiah Boats Ltd)

Unit 3 Hanbury Wharf

Hanbury Road

Droitwich

WR9 7DU



bridge35changers

07380 187513

E: bridge35changers@gmail.com

Company Registered No 5241966



Crafted Boats Ltd

Specialist Boatbuilders and Repairers.

www.craftedboats.co.uk ♦ Tel: 01527 876438

Chandlers



Gas, Coal, Red diesel
Paints, Engines spares/ Service
Batteries, Cable, Hoses
Snacks and Refreshments
Provisions and Supplies



Dry docking



Pressure washing and blacking
Grit blasting and epoxy coating
Hull repairs and over plates

Top side Repaints



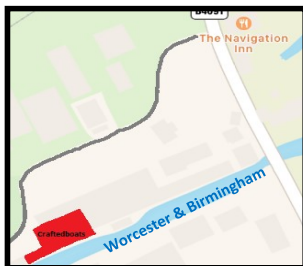
SHIRE

Authorised Shire

Sales Centre

Engines—Spares—Service

BARRUS



Crafted Boats

Tel: 01527 876438

Units 8-11,

138 Hanbury Rd

Bromsgrove

B60 4JZ



CALOR

PROUD MEMBER OF
BRITISH MARINE
LEADING THE INDUSTRY



LIFE IN THE SLOW LANE

- * 90 MODERN BOATS - THE YOUNGEST FLEET ON THE CANALS
- * INDEPENDENTLY INSPECTED AND TOURIST BOARD GRADED
- * 9 BASES STRATEGICALLY SITED TO COVER THE MAIN CANALS OF ENGLAND AND WALES
- * SHORT BREAKS - WEEKENDS AND MIDWEEK

Telephone (01527) 575115 for our latest brochure



BASES AT CHIRK ON THE LLANGOLLEN, NAPTON ON THE OXFORD, ACTON BRIDGE ON TRENT ON THE TRENT & MERSEY, PEAK DISTRICT (STOKE ON TRENT) ON THE TRENT & MERSEY, STOKE PRIOR ON THE WORCESTER & BIRMINGHAM, FALKIRK ON THE FOURTH & CLYDE, ELY IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE, BRADFORD ON AVON ON THE KENNET & AVON, CLIFTON ON DUNSMORE ON THE NORTH OXFORD

Black Prince Holidays

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

THE WEIGHBRIDGE INN

Real Ales & Beer Garden

Just a minutes walk from Alvechurch Train Station



Open 7 Days Per Week

**See Website For
Opening Hours**

0121 445 5111

the-weighbridge.co.uk

Scarfield Wharf, Alvechurch, B48 7SQ



Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

www.wbdcs.org.uk | X @wbdcs58

Facebook @wbdcs58.org.uk

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 (disability compliant). 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 River & Canal Rescue, Bradley Canal Restoration, Staffs & Worcester Canal, Life and Times of a Canal Coalman, Chance's Glassworks and lots more.

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 and full day trips (*Terms & Conditions Apply*).

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

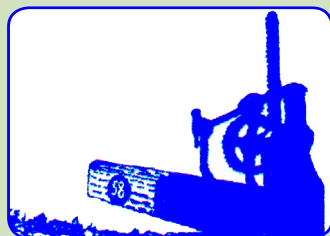
Please visit our website: wbdcs.org.uk

(where you can also download a membership application form)

Facebook.com/wbdcs.org.uk | X (formerly Twitter): @wbdcs58



Registered Charity
No. 500159





ABC BOAT HIRE

ESCAPE TO THE WATER



Take an
adventure close
to home with a
Holiday or Short
Break!

abcboathire.com | 0330 333 0590



LOCATIONS
Nationwide



Rated 4.6 / 5 on
feefo



FANCY JUST A DAY?

Explore the **secret waterways** of Britain on
one of our self-drive Day Boat Hire
narrowboats from 12 locations.

abcdayboathire.com | 0330 333 0590

