

# 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'*



**'Buckby' Can. Hand Painted by Sandra Radmore. See Page 8.**



The Inland  
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Worcester-Birmingham  
& Droitwich  
Canals Society



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Issue 574 Autumn 2024

# Society Meetings

**Meetings are 7.45pm start  
unless otherwise stated.**

**Tuesday, October 1st**

**The Huddersfield Narrow Canal**

**A Presentation by**

**John Hemingway.**

**Tuesday, November 12th\***

**Archie (the dog) will be helping to explain  
the work of 'Medical Dogs' and how they  
can help diagnose if a human is ill.**

**He will be accompanied by his owner  
and canal enthusiast Geoff Lambert.**

**Tuesday December 3rd**

**Our Annual 'Natter, Noggin and  
Quiz Night' with Denis & Tony.**

*Meetings are held in the meeting room behind The Weighbridge pub,  
Scarfield Hill, Alvechurch B48 7SQ. All welcome. Free admission.*

*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](http://www.wbdcs.org.uk)**

**\* second Tuesday of the month as the first Tuesday will be bonfire night.**

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

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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: November 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:**

**VICE PRESIDENT: Sir Peter Luff**

### **CHAIR**

**David Wheeler**

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**[chairman@wbdc.org.uk](mailto:chairman@wbdc.org.uk)**

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# Chair's Notes

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of our President, Sandra Radmore. Sandra had been a member of the Canal Society from the very first day of the society's inception and over the years held every post on the committee. Sandra became a very close friend, and my endearing memory will be the huge smile I got when her daughter, Emela bought Sandra to St. Richard's Canal Festival in May this year. The sparkle of memory was instant and will remain with me forever. Thank you to John Hemingway who represented the Society at Sandra's funeral. The Society was a huge part of Sandra's life and she will be missed. I also understand the society will be a beneficiary, God Bless You Sandra.

Older members will remember Barrie and Brenda Morris. After my first stint as Chair, I handed the reins over to Brenda who remained Chair until her untimely passing, introducing me to her nurse in hospital as her bit of vice. I had agreed to be Vice Chair if Brenda took over as Chair. Again, the Canal Society had been a huge part of their lives. Unfortunately, we lost Barrie last year but we had a piece of good news that Barrie and Brenda had made the society a beneficiary in their will.

Unfortunately, I was unable to be with you at the Annual General Meeting. Our Vice Chair, Margaret Rowley, gave you my report in my absence. I would just like to say thank you yet again to the committee for their continued support; I would like to say thank you to the

'Cecilia' and volunteers' sub-committee for their continued success and I must end with a huge personal thank you to society treasurer, Trevor Hyde (left), for his unstinting efforts in keeping our finances afloat. Trevor became a friend following the society's involvement as 'charity of the year' at Bromsgrove Beer and Cider Festival. The following year I became the festival organiser and helped Trevor with the finances. During that weekend I asked Trevor if he would consider taking the role of Treasurer for the canal society; the rest is history!! Because of health reasons, Trevor is having to stand down and I wish him all the best in what must be a very disturbing time for him and his family.

As many members know we present 'The Bridge 63 Trophy' at our AGM. I'm very pleased to tell members that the recipient of the 2024 award is Trevor. Well done Trevor!

*David Wheeler*





# Editor's Notes

## Hello Readers

I trust you are still having as good a summer (almost into autumn) as possible wherever you are and whatever you're doing.

Your society has been as busy as ever with walks, talks, meetings, volunteering - whether it be on 'Cecilia' or maintaining the mini orchard on the towpath at Alvechurch. We have held our Annual General Meeting which, as well as the usual reports and elections, included a short presentation from that well renowned speaker Danny Spike who shared information from a recent visit to the Grand Western Canal – a change from the previously advertised topic.

Unfortunately, we also reported on the passing of our long-time society activist and latterly President, Sandra Radmore. Sandra had been involved with the society since its inaugural year, 1969, and a more detailed report will feature further on in this edition.

The last edition made mention of the development work taking place in Droitwich's Vines Park in relation to the depiction of the Wych Barge 'Volunteer'. '58' welcomed this improvement and is pleased to report that the task now appears to be completed - very well done to all concerned.





Some years ago '58' featured the old W&B canal society trophies which unfortunately had remained unused particularly since the change of name to the now 'Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society'. The society committee agreed that they could be used elsewhere and are now on display in 'The Weighbridge' pub for all to see. More about this further on. See p20.



Also in this edition will be Mary's regular Nature Notes as well as Lapal Canal Restoration News, Volunteering News, Heritage Open Days plus meeting and walk reports and much more. Many thanks again to all of the contributors to this edition of '58' – a magazine put together by volunteers from volunteers. Volunteers, where would we be without them?

On the front cover of the last edition appeared some pictures of canal scenes taken a little earlier this year. Did any readers recognise any of them? The first two, although not as clear as we would have preferred, were a family of actual geese (not the common Canada variety) not usually seen on the local waterways, just above Astwood lock cottage on the W & B. The other two pictures showed Tardebigge Reservoir overflowing into the canal, such was the rainfall then, and the new locking gear fitted to Tardebigge bottom lock during last Winter's stoppage. The paddle gearing appears to have 2 spindles for whatever reason? The C&RT staff working at clearing the site were uncertain as to their purpose. Can any readers offer any explanation?

One last thing dear readers (don't forget we recently held our Annual General Meeting) so please do give some serious consideration towards joining the committee as we are really in need of some new nominees, particularly for Secretary and Treasurer. The winner of the 'Bridge 63' Trophy was also announced following individual committee member nominations. See you later and please enjoy the read.

*John Hemingway*

# Obituaries

**Sandra Radmore:** already alluded to in the Chair's Notes, Sandra was our society President and had been suffering ill-health for quite a few years, which explains why we had not seen her at society meetings where she was a very regular attendee. The last time we actually saw Sandra was when her daughter, Emela, brought her down to St. Richard's Canal Festival in Droitwich during last May's bank holiday weekend. Sandra enjoyed meeting up with old friends and to some society volunteers that she had not met until then.

Sandra was a very long standing member of the society from its inaugural times. Looking through past editions of '58' there does not appear to have been any job that she had not taken on within the society - such was her commitment until ill-health curtailed things.

In Loving Memory Of  
Sandra Radmore  
12th February 1939 - 29th July 2024



"Bring me sunshine in your smile  
In this world where we live there should be more happiness  
Bring me sunshine, bring me laughter, bring me love"

Stourbridge Crematorium Chapel  
Service conducted by Reverend Kim Topham  
Friday 16th August 2024, 10:20am



Donations in memory of Sandra are being collected for  
**Alzheimer's UK & The Sunshine Club**  
and can be made online at:

<https://sandraradmore.muchloved.com/>



Attendees at Sandra's funeral in Stourbridge were offered a special packet of forget-me-not seeds to be planted "... with love to grow a living memory of Sandra". These will be passed over in due course to society volunteers to decide where they may be placed.

Emela, agreed to us using the picture of the 'Buckby' can, which Sandra had painted (see front cover) as well as '58' using the order of service particularly to promote the chosen charities.

*'58' sends its deepest condolences to Emela and Chris along with all close family and friends.*

**Jane Burman:** '58' has been informed of the passing of Jane Burman a number of weeks ago. Jane had been suffering ill-health for some years but we were nevertheless shocked to hear the belated news from John. Both John and Jane are very long standing members of the society being involved with the actual formation in 1969. Both were also heavily involved with the then 'Droitwich Canals Trust', which was the main body driving the restoration of both Droitwich Canals, culminating in their reopening to all in 2011. Jane was also very interested in the wildlife which relied on the existence of the canals for their livelihoods.

*'58' sends its belated condolences to John along with close family and friends.*



**Pete Jones:** Another passing that we have to sadly report on. A former member and supporter of the society, Pete Jones, passed away very suddenly on his boat at Alvechurch a short time ago. Pete's passing was all the more shocking as many of us had been with him in 'The Weighbridge' only the night before he was discovered, with everything being as normal. Pete's funeral and took place at Redditch Crematorium on September 6th, with the wake being held at 'The Weighbridge' afterwards. Attendees were requested to wear bright summery clothing as Pete invariably wore himself – even in winter.

*'58' offers its condolences to Pete's son Alex, close family and friends.*

## New Members

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

**Steve & Gillian Garlick of Plymouth.**

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.

## 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.

## Correspondence

*The following correspondence was sent out to volunteers a few weeks ago.*

*'58' has reproduced an edited version for readers as per below.*

Dear Colleagues,

Our society has recently had a meeting with C&RT to discuss and review our adoptions. There have been various changes within the terms and conditions which has caused much discussion. The result is that we have now decided to cancel our adoptions. This means that there will no longer be work parties at Tardebigge as from this email. This is a great pity considering all the work our society has put in since we started in 2013.

Our thanks must go to everyone who has helped us with our volunteering over the years. You have provided so much to assist the C&RT, and we are sorry that it has ended in this way.

*Bill Lambert.*

## Committee

'58' is happy to report that member, Alan Gibbs, is now on the main committee following the recent AGM. Alan brings a wealth of knowledge about the heritage side of our canal. He has been mainly responsible for putting together our 'Heritage Open Weekends'.

A new email address has been set up for all 'heritage matters' which will arrive in Alan's inbox: [heritage@wbdc.org.uk](mailto:heritage@wbdc.org.uk). If you want to know more about the heritage side of things then please contact him.

# Heritage Open Weekend: 14th/15th September 2024

The weekend of September 14th and 15th saw the volunteers of the Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society taking part in the Heritage Open Days (HODs) event around the Tardebigge New Wharf area of the Birmingham and Worcester canal.

Supported by Canal and River Trust our member volunteers, along with some lock keeper volunteers, 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 are part of a national fortnight of heritage events coordinated by the National Trust.

This year's topic of Routes, Networks and Connections led us to develop new information boards and stories describing the growth of the canal and its role in moving goods locally, when being constructed, to developing regional industries along its route and finally enabling passage of goods from around the world into Birmingham.

Using the experience of the past events this was a very slick set up operation this year, despite the initial surprise of our gazebos in their usual place now being on the main car park for the Tardebigge show!

This year we were also joined by our friends from the Bromsgrove and District Amateur Radio Club who broadcasted the event to their members locally and around the world. For further information see their website and the BIWOTA site 'British Inland Waterways On The Air'.

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



Thankfully the weather was better than initially thought, although it did cloud over on Sunday which probably reduced footfall. The volunteers guided small groups around the area and returned their guests to the gazebo for tea and cake before some visitors went for a boat ride on 'Cecilia' through the Tunnel to Tardebigge Old Wharf.

This year we also increased our ties with the Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils' Cultural Compact for North East Worcestershire project (ReNEW) with our event appearing in council flyers. During the event our volunteers worked hard on collecting feedback from visitors.

Feedback confirmed that guests fully appreciated our warmth and good humour as well as feeling informed and entertained by our descriptions and stories. Building on this success in engaging interest in the heritage of the Tardebigge Wharf area may well support our own future projects by applying for small grant funding from the ReNEW project.

In conclusion another enjoyable event. In fact, it went down so well that even with slow but steady footfall we raised over 500 pounds for the Society.

For further information see our social media where you can catch up with our updated new historical information, see event pictures and view our fabulous drone footage.

So that's it until next time!

*Al Gibbs*  
*WB&DCS Heritage Coordinator*







# 'Nature Notes'

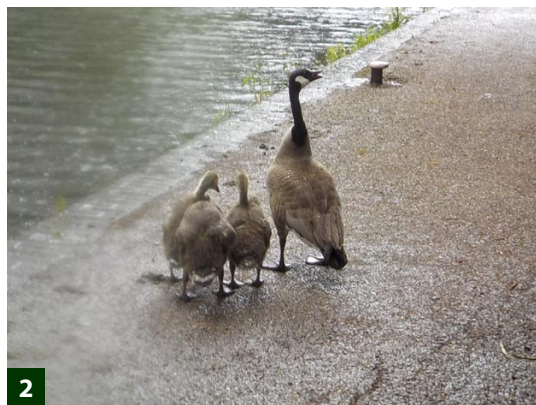
## Mary Green

We have continued to have a peculiar year for nature. The unusual warm wet winter and cold wet spring were a challenge. Grasses flourished but other flowering plants didn't. There has been a real lack of insects, even worse than in these recent declining years.

Here the decline certainly isn't due to habitat loss. The vegetation along the canal has been very good, diverse and strongly flowering, unlike that in some of the fields. It wasn't cut down last winter but died back naturally and has come up really strongly. I've seen a herb that is getting quite rare - tansy - in flower here on the canalside where it hasn't been for years. But the insects I would expect to see - especially butterflies and dragonflies - just haven't been there. This doesn't bode well for next year's butterflies since this year's haven't been there to lay their eggs. Dragonflies could fare better as they can live longer in the larval stage, but I'm not hopeful.

This is bad news for creatures like bats which enjoy the insects along the canal, as well as for many birds and fish. However, waterfowl seem to have done quite well, with mallards, swans and Canada geese all raising good broods of young here and not affected by the weather. The swans that nested near here (Withybed) and had three cygnets seem to have moved territory to further up the canal near Bittell. The cygnets are still buff-coloured and will stay with their parents till the start of next year. Another pair of swans are about with no young.

The Canada goslings are already grown up and will soon be taking to the air with their parents, wheeling around but not going far, presumably with a vestigial migratory instinct.



Because the plants have done well, there should be enough fruit and seeds for those creatures who eat them, though this too is variable. Trees that flower early, like cherry-plums and sloes, don't have much fruit coming. I don't think it was so much late frost on the blossom as lack of pollinators in the wet. Later flowering trees like hawthorn and elder have done better and are mostly covered with berries. There are hazel nuts, though not profuse. At the time of writing acorns look hopeful. They have formed and are still very small but look as if they might ripen OK and be plentiful. Ivy is flowering next for late berries, so I hope for late insects. It'll be a bit of a mixed year for the mammals like squirrels and mice, and birds like jays and blackbirds, that feed on nuts and fruit.

Seeds on herbal plants look fine though – all the umbelliferous plants like hogweed and water dropwort and other canalside flowers like meadowsweet and willowherb are setting seeds beautifully this year. The smaller birds love these, and you may see flocks of goldfinches on thistles near the canalside. And the little orchard planted alongside the canal here has done really well. All but one of the trees are healthy and several have a crop of apples, with one pear. Thanks to our volunteers for this.

There have been good sightings of other wildlife. I have seen a water vole nearby and the C&RT man who comes and chats to people by the bridge here has too. I met a frog on my late walk home from the Weighbridge and several people report sightings of otters nearby. The canal has some of the best biodiversity around even in a peculiar year!



1. TANSY
2. CANADA GOOSE AND GOSLING
3. SWANS AND CYGNETS
4. APPLES IN THE NEW ORCHARD
5. FLOWERS FLOURISH CANALSIDE



# Meetings/Walks

## June Meeting

The well attended meeting in June was actually a hybrid Zoom meeting which was delivered by Duncan Moore. The topic was about taking a fresh look at the 'Lost 60 miles of the Birmingham Canal Navigations' [BCN]. Even though the evening was somewhat interrupted by network issues, Duncan managed to show the meeting much of what remained of the abandoned parts of this unique system of canal transport over a large area as well as what some used to look like; the area includes the 'Black Country' as well as within the Birmingham borders.

There was inevitably some lament at the losses that occurred particularly in the post war years with some, such as the Bradley and Lapal Canals, which are currently undergoing restoration. Some of the losses which happened were blamed on the drop off in commercial carrying while others with little or no reason at all. There was clearly no thought at the time for alternative uses of the canals as this society, and such as the Inland Waterways Association, continually promote.

Despite the media problems during the presentation, Duncan was thanked in the usual WB&DCS way for engaging with us.

You can find lots of canal videos on Duncan's You Tube channel: <https://bit.ly/4e8YEgo>

## July Walk

The July walk offered another opportunity for members and friends to explore Droitwich, led by Danny Spike with support from Ed Butcher, who lives locally. The 'walk and talk' commenced opposite Vines Park going across the road, through the park and up the hill path across the railway to St. Augustine C of E Church at the top of the hill. The walkers were shown the views from the top of the hill which gave real insight into the spa town itself.

The walkers were then led down towards Church Lane and Crutch Lane, crossing Chapel Bridge and then on towards the main town while throughout having points of interest shared with some no longer actually in existence. On into the town itself with some buildings highlighted including some with evidence of subsidence owing to continual brine pumping. The nearby Barge Canal had been cut in the 18th century to facilitate this industry.

Several other points of interest were shared with the walkers by both Ed and Danny before they were thanked for their efforts with some retiring to a local hostelry.



## August Walk

Our August walk, led by Ed Butcher and John Hemingway started at The Saltway car park, close to Droitwich and ended at the 'Coffin Bridge' on the W&B close to the 'Hanbury Turn'. We have a full report on this over the next three pages.



# August Walk

## Hanbury Locks and Coffin Bridge *writes Ed Butcher*

In a now well established tradition, the July and August Society monthly meetings were replaced by guided walks. In the absence of the well-known society walk leader Danny Spike, I was asked to lead the August walk along with John Hemingway.

A group of around 20 met up at the Droitwich Gateway carpark, actually on the line of the old Droitwich Junction Canal, situated about half way up the Hanbury flight of locks.

### The Little bit of History. ...

#### 1) Canals of the West Midlands.

Before setting off on our short walk we spent some time discussing why the W&B canal exists in the first place. With the Industrial Revolution generally quoted as starting in earnest around 1760, the era of canal mania was due to follow immediately after. The Bridgewater Canal opened in 1761 and is generally accepted as the first true canal to come into commercial use and heralded canal mania, with many canals being proposed in the years 1790 > 1810. Canals carried goods far cheaper and far safer than horse and carts.

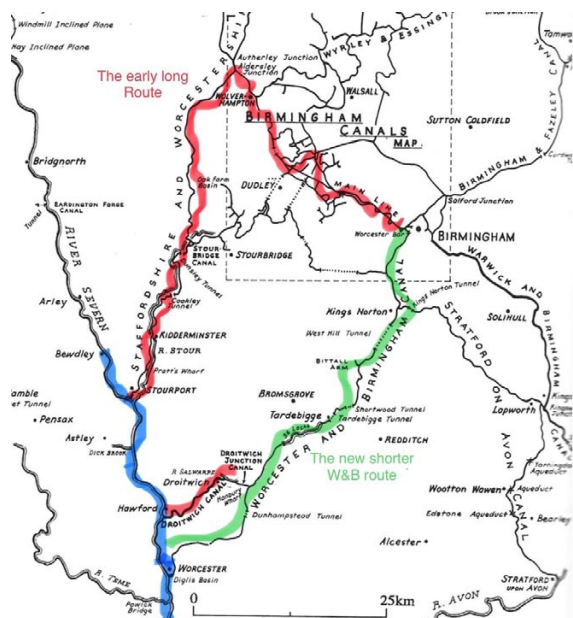
By the 1780s the areas of Birmingham and the Black Country were thriving and producing manufactured goods of many sorts along with the existing trade in coal, iron and limestone. The already well established sea trade between Britain, India and the Far East was increasing rapidly. The manufacturers of the Midlands had relied on road transport to convey goods via the River Severn onwards to the major ports of Gloucester and Bristol until the opening of the Staffordshire and Worcester shire Canal in 1772. This coincided with the completion of the canal from central Birmingham to meet the S&W at Aldersley Junction, north of Wolverhampton.

The inset map shows in red the canals available from Birmingham and the Black Country to reach the River Severn at Stourport, following the opening of the S&W. The Droitwich Barge Canal opened in 1771, driven by the highly successful salt industry.

The problem is obvious! It was a very long way round from Birmingham to Stourport, and the river highlighted in blue although navigable up to Bewdley, was highly unreliable due to variable levels. The solution was that a canal was needed to take the much shorter route directly from Birmingham to the Severn further south at Worcester, already a well-established inland port. The eventual route of the W&B, shown in green, tells its own story. As an aside, note the gap between the Droitwich Barge Canal and the W&B. A gap not filled until 1854 by the opening of the Droitwich Junction Canal.

#### 2) The Worcester & Birmingham Canal

The Act of Parliament proposing its construction was put forward and passed consent in 1791. Work started in earnest in 1792 as a 14ft wide barge canal.



The line reached Kings Norton Junction in 1796 to meet the new Stratford on Avon Canal, and through the West Hills Tunnel to Hopwood in 1797, but did not reach Tardebigge until 1807. The promoters had run out of money and construction was halted.

A new Act of Parliament in 1808 enabled work to restart. Driven by the cost of construction of the locks needed to drop some 448ft down to the river at Worcester, and by concerns about water supply, the decision was taken to continue as a narrow gauge canal. The eventual opening of the canal to join the river at Diglis would not happen until December 1815.

Back to the Walk....The Hanbury Top 3 on the Droitwich Junction Canal

The Hanbury flight these days consists of 7 locks down to the River Salwarpe and on to the Barge Lock in Vines Park at Droitwich. The gateway carpark stands on the original line of the canal, abandoned in 1939. Following the construction of various dwellings since abandonment and the construction of the M5 the canal has been re-routed, and this section was visited on a previous walk. We took the short walk up to L3, where we spent some time discussing the unusual paddle controlled side ponds of the 3 locks. These are deep locks, a few inches short of 11 feet rise, and driven by concerns about conservation of water the side ponds were constructed. The side pond paddles, when properly used, save half a lock-full of water at each passage. It does slow things down considerably, and involves extra windlass operations...some boaters have been known not to bother.

At the top lock, we paused to examine the *automatic water level indicator signage*, (which contrary to rumours, has absolutely nothing to do with the low headroom of the M5 culvert) but actually advises boaters of possible unnavigable water levels on the canalised River Salwarpe below Lock 7, as well as the River Severn around Bevere Lock immediately below Hawford, where the Barge Canal joins the Severn.

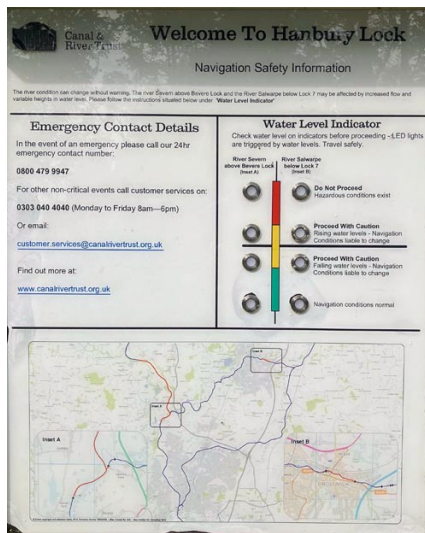
Incidentally, if you're visiting this rather posh outlying area of Worcester City, please be careful to refer to it as "Bev-uh-ree" The use "Bev-ear" will get you tutted at!

A short walk leads to Hanbury Junction, where the Droitwich Junction Canal ends as it joins the W&B canal along the 5 mile pound. To avoid confusion with the terminology, the 5 mile pound refers to a pound which is 5 miles long from Astwood flight bottom lock 17, to Offerton flight top lock 16.

From the junction we rejoined the towpath south towards our eventual destination.....

*Coffin Bridge.*

Lying some 400 metres south of Hanbury Junction, is Bridge 34, the Grade 2 listed structure known as Coffin Bridge. A brief aside... as we passed the wharf at the junction, John pointed out to us the rather curious structure resembling a small lighthouse, which some enterprising



person constructed by modifying the mast of an old abandoned wharfage crane. Some odd things one sees along the cut.

Anyway...Coffin Bridge. The history lacks detail, and various writers offer slightly different explanations as to how this curious structure came to exist. But the basic story is straightforward.

It was very usual when a canal was proposed for various landowners to demand that canal companies provided bridges where roads and paths were interrupted. This extended also to farm tracks, where bridges were normally provided to allow access to agricultural land. These were known as accommodation bridges, and were invariably constructed wide enough to allow passage of a farm wagon or cart, drawn by a pair of oxen or horses. Landowners wanted a lot of bridges, canal companies wanted to build as few as possible.

In this case, the issue was a footpath used by farm workers living in the area around Huntingtrap\*\* Common, and the substantial farm of the same name, to get to their place of worship, (and site of the all too regular funerals at that time), at the Church of St. John The Baptist in the village of Hadzor. This footpath would be interrupted by the canal. Although a road bridge was built to carry what is now The Saltway over the canal only a few hundred yards to the north, it seems the locals prevailed, and the influence of the Church might have played a part.

What is certain is that the canal company reluctantly agreed to a bridge, but in order to save construction costs, and perhaps refusing to acknowledge the need for an accommodation bridge so close to the road bridge, provided a bridge only wide enough at slightly over 3 feet between parapets, to allow foot traffic and the safe conveyance of a coffin.

So there you have it. Coffin Bridge.

\*\*Huntingtrap Farm and Common are referred to in the early Ordnance Survey map of 1883 as such. The bridge, although clearly shown, is not named. By the next update in 1903 the bridge has become Coffin Bridge. Subsequent os maps show that Huntingtrap remains the name of both farm and common, with the change to Huntingtdrop first recorded in 1962.

Curious, and for anyone who wishes to research the old maps, the entire collection of Ordnance Survey maps of Britain is available to view online (free of course) on the website of The National Library of Scotland at. <https://maps.nls.uk/view/101586418>

## ***Below Hanbury Wharf***

*There are three old bridges on this stretch  
Accommodation bridges, serving farms and houses.  
Coffin bridge is highly humped and narrow  
Just big enough, I guess, to carry the dead  
To the old church among the trees.  
Hadzor bridge is inaccessible now  
But beautiful, with its carved stone number.  
Hammonds you can cross, a footpath leading  
You down to the settlement and farm.  
Not till the fourth do you find a road.  
So it is quiet, with high reeds and willow-herb  
And shade on a hot summer's day.  
Nearby the railway and the motorway  
But here the old main way is gently crossed  
By bridges only suitable for feet  
Human or animal, quietly from field  
To field, from life to death.*

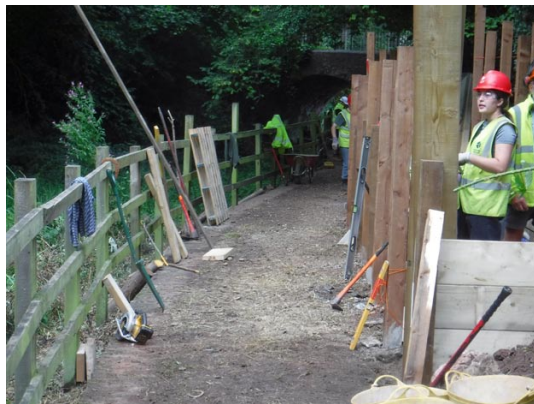
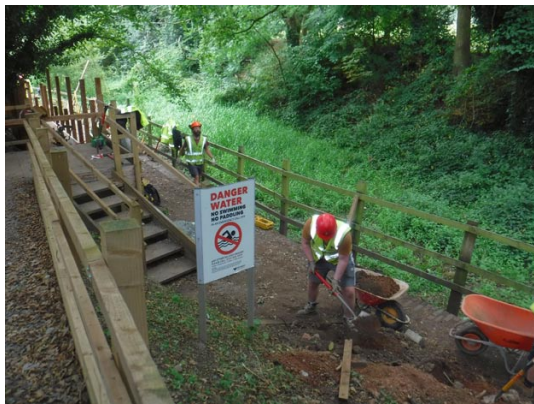
***Poem by Mary Green***

***Ed Butcher  
Aug 2024***



# Lapal Canal Trust News

The biggest development in this restoration project this year has been the very recent completion of the steps and ramp alongside the canal bridge in Selly Oak Park. This bridge, possibly the oldest in the whole of the Birmingham Canal Navigations, now allows all towpath users to access the park and join what will be a new towpath, on the other side of the canal. Anyone needing such as wheelchair or pram access can now use this newly created facility. While LCT facilitated all of this, thanks really does need to be recorded here to the Inland Waterways Association's Waterway Recovery Group, who spent a week's camp completing the ramp having constructed the steps some time ago. As many readers will be aware, WB&DCS supports the LCT with some members serving on the steering committee, so very well done to all concerned. The next major task is to plan a re-submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund in order to progress the restoration further including the much needed link to the W & B opposite Whitehouse Wharf. Watch this space!





Walk the Line  
2024

Selly Oak to the Leasowes

Saturday 28th of September

Lapal Canal Trust Sponsored Walk 2024

Our friends from the Lapal Canal Trust continue to be busy with the restoration project particularly in the Selly Oak area. Unfortunately the Heritage Lottery bid, which would have involved a re-connection with the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, was turned down but this has not deterred the Trust. Quite the opposite in fact with the annual 'Walk the Line', scheduled to take place on September 28th, going ahead as planned with participants being asked to seek sponsors if possible. The sponsor form is printed here for anyone wishing to join in whether sponsored or not. The walkers will be leaving the Scout Hut in Gibbins Road, Selly Oak at noon on the said date. Everyone is welcome to join in either for the whole or part of this annual event. Sponsor form can be downloaded here: <https://bit.ly/4e6Yg1Q>

If you can confirm participation, or have questions please let Hugh Humphreys know at: [nbhugh@gmail.com](mailto:nbhugh@gmail.com)

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Lapal Canal Trust  
Sponsorship Form  
SPONSORED 'WALK THE LINE' SEPTEMBER 28th 2024

Name of Participant: .....

Start Point	Finish Point	Distance Walked	Date Completed

Gift Aid: Make your donation worth 25% more. Please note - you must be a taxpayer paying more tax than the amount we reclaim in order for us to claim Gift Aid from your sponsorship.

Name	Address	Postcode (essential for gift aid)	Sponsorship Per Mile/ Whole Distance	Amount Collected	Gift Aid (please tick)	Tick If Paid

Please make your payment by JustGiving <https://bit.ly/4cnY5lt>, bank transfer (BACS), QR Code or cheque made payable to Lapal Canal Trust.  
Lapal Canal Trust, HSBC, Account No: 91517856, Sort code: 40-23-03. Please use the reference 'Sponsorship2024'.  
Please note: money paid via 'JustGiving' will be collected by Mr. John Hemingway (Trustee) on behalf of Lapal Canal Trust.



Thank you for your Help and Contributions  
LAPAL CANAL TRUST is a registered charity No. 2721675



# Trophies

## Past Society Trophies at 'The Weighbridge'

As mentioned in the editorial, the society has a number of old trophies which unfortunately cannot be used now since the name change which does not allow sufficient space for any amendments. These trophies have been kept in a box just gathering dust but following discussions with Chris at 'The Weighbridge', are now displayed in the pub along with other canal related artifacts which have been mainly donated by WB&DCS. Chris and his staff have always been very supportive of the society and so we're very pleased that at least these items may be viewed by any interested parties. Incidentally, Chris will be leaving the pub in the next month and so it is fitting here that we say a big thank you to him with best wishes for the future employment. This will be after the Autumn Beer Festival which takes place on September 20th

and 21st.

The Trophies.

1/ Chairman's Cup – small silver cup donated by Norman Cox [Founder Chairman] for cruiser handling.

2/ President's Trophy – silver cigarette case donated by Norman Terry [Founder President] for narrow boat handling.

3/ Worcester Birmingham Cup – donated by Cyril Smith [President] and crew of 'Silver Mist' for longest distance travelled to a society boat rally.

4/ Joan King Trophy – donated by Tony King for best ladies' boat handling competition.

5/ Bulmers Cup – donated by Bulmers [presumably cider company?] for the longest distance travelled on the W & B.

6/ Droitwich Elm Trophy – made from a slice of a tree trunk removed from the bed of the Droitwich Barge Canal during restoration. Reason for this trophy unknown at this point in time.

7/ 2 sided plate on a wooden mounting made by Bob Allen [presumably of Allen's boats?] for best safety conscious boat engine installation.

8/ 2 or 3 small unused cups presumably for a past society organised event.

*Any other information about these will be gratefully received and please do look at them when next in 'The Weighbridge'.*





# Canal & River Trust News

C&RT have recently listed some of the issues they have had to deal with during the last few weeks. Some of the items listed may well have been observed by '58' readers while most will not have been as elsewhere on the network. The current big challenge, apart from the funding issue which still needs all of our support, will undoubtedly be the removal of invasive plants such as floating pennywort which is appearing in abundance again including on our local canals.

- Removed nine wind-blown trees that were impeding navigation

- Fixed seven sets of lock paddles

- Carried out six general lock repairs, such as repairing quoins, brickwork and beams

- Repaired three sluices

- Repaired two bridges

- Carried working on two piling projects

- Carried out/facilitated bathymetric surveys (a water-based survey that maps the depths and shapes of underwater terrain)

- Repaired one Elsan

- Repaired one pump outstation

- Carried out one dive survey

- Conducted/facilitated 17 bridge inspections

Since we started sharing these statistics (12 July 2024), the totals are:

- Removed 56 wind-blown trees that were impeding navigation

- Carried out 38 general lock repairs, such as repairing quoins and brickwork

- Repaired 19 bridges

- Fixed 19 lock paddles

- Repaired 15 pump out stations

- Fixed (or in the process of fixing) 11 embankments

- Fixed 11 customer service facilities (such as toilets)

- Repaired ten Elsans

- Repaired eight sluices

- Removed four sunken boats

- Carried out three boater safety activities (such as placing buoys around hazards, etc.)

- Worked on three dredging projects

- Repaired three culverts

- Worked to control three invasive species (Pennywort, duckweed etc.)

- Removed two sunken cars

- Carried out/working on three piling projects

- Carried out/facilitated two bathymetric surveys (a water-based survey that maps the depths and shapes of underwater terrain)

- Two stoppages due to nesting birds

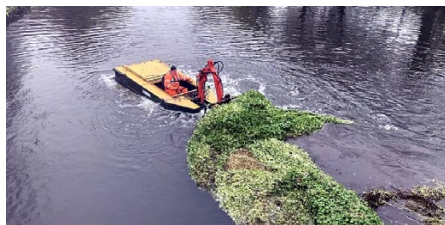
- Carried out two dive surveys/repairs

- Annoyingly had to clear one lot of illegal fly tipping (well, one that required a stoppage. There were plenty more!)

- Conducted/facilitated 49 bridge inspections

The above list doesn't include any work conducted purely on towpaths, water management, major reservoir projects and so on – it's just a flavour of what we've been doing to help boaters keep moving on the cut!

A work boat removed floating pennywort, a carpet-like plant that covers the canal surface.



# Cecilia News

As some of you may know the paint job that was carried out on 'Cecilia' was okay but we have experienced problems with the painting of the roof as, after a short time, the paint started to peel off. Remedial work was carried out to fix this but it really didn't work. Our intrepid team of volunteers decided to take matters into their own hands and repaint the roof themselves. This included a complete strip back and several coats of 'Hammerite'. We are sure you'll all agree a sterling job has been done by all. *The grab rails will eventually be painted blue.*



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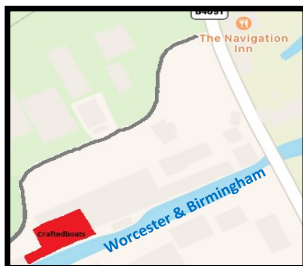
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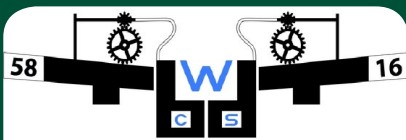
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## Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

[www.wbdcs.org.uk](http://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.

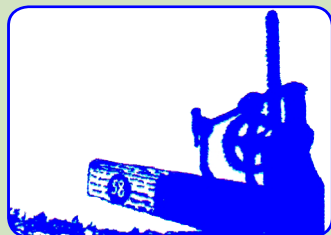
## Please visit our website: [wbdcs.org.uk](http://wbdcs.org.uk)

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