

# ALERT

NEWSLETTER

<b>CHAIRMANS PAGE 2</b>	<b>FEATURE ARTICLE 9 - 11</b>	<b>CANAL FESTIVAL 14</b>
<b>REGIONS 3 - 7</b>	<b>EDITOR 12</b>	<b>JOHN STEVENSON 15</b>
<b>CLUB NEWS 8</b>	<b>INTERCLUB COMP 12 - 13</b>	<b>LETTERS 16</b>

## AGM REPORT ISSUE



The Association held its Annual General Meeting at the Stafford Boat Club on the 14th of March. The packed clubhouse heard reports from the elected National Officers and the Chairmen of the 6 regions of the Association.

Following the presentation of awards and an excellent lunch provided by the ladies of the S.B.C. we were given a comprehensive and interesting presentation by Roger Squires on the developments and achievements over the last 50 years of the AWCC.



**Past and Present National and Regional Officers assemble on the terrace of the Stafford Boat Club at the recent AGM for a team photo.** (Photo courtesy of Erica Martin)

*Left to Right (back row)* Terry Ariss, Development Officer: Des Barnes, Communications Officer: Ian Wood, Midlands Chairman: Paul le Blique, retiring National Chairman: Graeme Bridge, Alert Editor: Trevor Gillam, London Region Chair and President: Graham Churton, National Treasurer: Bryan Pollard, North West Chairman: Garth Robinson, North East Chairman: Jean Robinson, acting National Secretary: Howard Smith, Midland President: Ralph Sullivan, South East President.

*Left to Right (front row)* Roland Dotchin, retiring National Secretary: Ann Banks, National Chairlady: David Pearce, National President: Jenny Sullivan, South East Secretary: and Pauline King, South West Chairlady.

# NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

## AWCC AGM 2015

### National Chairman's Report

I write this report as my last in post as your chairman which prompts me to reflect on my time in office and the ongoing changes our waterways and their users are experiencing. The Canal and River Trust is steadily restructuring to meet the demands of a major charitable organisation; the benefits to all users are becoming evident.

For AWCC, the highlight of last year was surely the Golden Anniversary Rally held at Black Buoy Cruising Club, hugely successful and a credit to all who organised and ran the event. In many ways an illustration of the future where all users of the waterways cooperate for the mutual enjoyment of the canals and rivers.

The Regions have been involved with so many events and successful ventures. To highlight particular examples is unnecessary, however I am sure you will forgive me for mentioning the tremendous achievement by all in South and West to revive and rebuild the AWCC presence in the region.

The transfer of management from BW to the Canal and River Trust heralded a new chapter in the history of the waterways and one where sharing and cooperation will be key. The Trust is unlocking opportunities denied to BW, new routes of funding and resource will result in a better environment for our pastime. It is very disappointing that the government denied EA Waters the opportunity to join CRT last year. The rivers are being starved of funding as monies are reduced year on year. I sincerely hope that the statement of the All Party Waterways Group that EA should transfer to CRT in the next parliamentary term comes to fruition.

It has become apparent that the AWCC way of doing business is very compatible with CRT and it's vision of the future. The way ahead will be decided by reasoned debate and cooperation; gone are the days of conflicting approach. CRT recognises that AWCC is a body it can deal with, our clubs are described as model tenants, our policies, support and approach are received with appreciation. We must continue to build support for our clubs based on EA Navigations in line with their future under CRT.

There remains work to complete in several areas including club leases, the continuation of benefit to clubs for acting as CRT License Agents and to work with the authorities to ensure the young have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of inland waterways.

This AGM will see the departure of three members of the NEC who have served the association well over the years. Roland Dotchin, our National Secretary for some years is moving on to an entirely different but admirable role in another field. Brian Rich who has been Communications Officer, and for a period National Secretary, is retiring following many years of service. Brian moved our IT based systems into a form well suited to a large, national organisation, fitting AWCC into a very busy working life. David Butcher who served as National Quartermaster, National vice President, Regional President and numerous other roles will retire from full time NEC responsibilities but will stay on as RYA Representative. Gentlemen, may I on behalf of AWCC thank you for your time and support over the years and wish you well for the future.

There will be new faces in some areas and changes of responsibility in others; I am sure you will join me in wishing all who support AWCC the very best in their new responsibilities. I am certain AWCC is safe in their hands.

In closing, I would like to thank those members of AWCC who have given me so much support and encouragement throughout my term in office; it has been a privilege working with you all.

Best wishes,  
Paul  
10 March 2015

# REGIONAL REPORTS

## MIDLANDS REGION

Midlanders are not given to trumpet blowing but perhaps we can be indulged for once. It has been a busy and enjoyable year, the most important event being the AWCC 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary rally, held at Black Buoy CC. This was a very successful weekend enjoyed by boaters and public alike. Richard Parry is now an honorary member of BBCC.

Another notable event was the Caldon 40 celebrations, marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the re-opening of the Caldon, originally masterminded by Stoke on Trent BC. The club held an open weekend in May, when club trustee Vera Rowley celebrated her 88<sup>th</sup> birthday. In September, in conjunction with local IWA branch, and the Caldon & Uttoxeter Canals Trust, the club celebrated the actual day with a two-way flotilla at Cheddleton top lock. Several club boats taking part had taken part in the original event in 1974. Two original crews came from Spain to take part, one lady celebrating her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Guests Richard Parry, Ian Dudson [Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire] and other VIPs were transported on handicapped children's boat Beatrice and day boat Joshua, day boat owned by a club member. Boat club members provided the crew for both boats and the locking team. John Dodwell attended on his boat Helen. Another successful event.

The Roving Canal Traders Association held numerous floating markets in the Midlands during the year. On behalf of the RCTA, Jackie Warren, a Stoke BC member, presented Tony Hales of CRT with a cheque for £600, a donation from the Roving Traders.

Ashby Canal Association held a very successful rally in April which included two historic working boats, loaded with coal, making a spectacular sight. The boats continued to Etruria where they attended the Etruria Canal Festival, before continuing south for a tour. The sanitary station at Snarestone has had a makeover. There will be an Easter event at Snarestone Wharf.

Stafford BC held a rally marking their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and as usual with this club, the event was a tremendous success. Stafford's AWCC Rep and Secretary, Stella Machin, was given the honour of joining the 800 year old Guild of Freeman Burgesses of Stafford.

Many clubs held events during the year, too numerous to mention, but notable are Coventry CC's July strawberry tea, and Tamworth CC boaters weekend in August.

Lichfield CC cruised the Black Country canals and a golden wedding celebration for founder members Janet and Bryan Ralph raised £620 for the RNLI. They are hosting the Huddlesford Heritage Gathering with L&HCRT in September.

Midlands region has seen many lock open days, all of which have been very well attended. Midlands Rep, Lynne Cater [WRG BC] is one such volunteer. Midlands boaters get involved with other organisations, such as local IWA branches, volunteer work parties, helping organise festivals, involvement with local environment and wildlife groups, restoration projects, Himalayan balsam removal – from north to south, west to east our the Region, even involvement on Tyneside, where one Midlands Rep lives. A recent work party on the Caldon, including Stoke on Trent BC members, has uncovered the abandoned and buried Consall Old Lock, replaced by Flint Mill Lock, when the former was affected by subsidence. At least two clubs have funded the provision of defibrillators, which is something we would like to encourage.

Midlands area has several different User Group meetings, and all are attended and reported in detail by different Reps. We are urging all member clubs to attend these meetings, to ensure that boaters' views are well represented. SSSIs are causing problems in some areas, but the right of navigation remains. Ashby CA has been working on this.

Des Barnard of Lichfield CC, has been heavily involved in discussions with and about HS2, not only for his own club but also as the AWCC Rep for the joint committee. One major area of concern was the route in the Fradley area, for which a realigned route has been agreed.

Midlands hosted the February meeting of the NEC, held at Stoke on Trent BC, with a dinner the previous evening for those staying overnight. Despite some misgivings about this meeting, Midlands Region confirms its support for the NEC, and is looking forward to working closely with the incoming officers in the coming year.

**IAN WOOD**

# REGIONAL REPORTS

## SOUTH EAST REGION

The region is made up of a mixture of both river and canal clubs as well as two nationwide clubs with no fixed base, Boaters' Christian Fellowship and Cutweb. It was good to welcome reps from Cutweb to our AGM for the first time and hope that they will be able to attend some future meetings. It has also been good to receive some communication from Aylesbury Canal Society who are planning a weekend event in September to celebrate the takeover of their new premises at Circus Field Basin and 200 years of the opening of the Aylesbury Arm.

The EA has made it clear at its Anglian Navigation Meetings that there is little funding for navigation improvements as priority must be given to flood control and maintenance of locks. This is having an impact as facilities fall into disrepair that is how many of them remain. There is no programme for volunteering in the Anglian region but the good news is that on the Middle Levels, Project Hereward is a joint volunteering project to open up the Forty Foot River in which one of our clubs is involved, Middle Level Watermen's Club. River Clubs are vital in providing facilities for visiting boaters. In discussions it appears that most people are looking forward to the amalgamation with CRT.

The region have just had an AGM when the post of Quartermaster was reinstated. The death of Clive Rowlands was reported who was a long standing member of our Committee and was our last Quartermaster. He suffered ill health in the last 6 years of his life and has been sorely missed at Committee meetings. He was also a great volunteer at Crick where he provided welcoming refreshments as well as being there to help set up and take down the stand.

The SE Region continues to attend the CRT SE User Group Forums and reports are made back to clubs. Licence Evasion and Overstaying is not the problem as it is in some other areas of the country

Our region meetings are quite well attended and clubs who do not have a rep are encouraged to send in club reports. Club reports prove to be a valuable source of lively discussion at meetings. Ideas are exchanged and issues can be aired. We aim to plan a region social trip in the autumn.

**RALPH & JENNY SULLIVAN**

## NORTHWEST REGION

Over the past 12 months we have held 5 Regional Meetings with an average of 13 clubs being represented. The number of clubs in the Region has reduced by one from 19 to 18 clubs.

Lathome Marine Cruising Association has been wound up after 40 years, caused by the ageing membership of the club and the same few volunteers running the club. I am sure we can identify with the issue of very few second generation boaters around.

### CRT User Group Meetings

The Region covers 3 Waterway Partnership, each having User Group Meetings. There are assigned representatives who attend each meeting and report back to the Regional Meetings. Local issues are raised with CRT via these meetings.

### The Role of Club Representatives

Guidance was issued to club representatives to help them understand their role and to try and have a standard approach between clubs and the Regional meetings.

### Canal Watch

We had a presentation from the Lancashire Constabulary on the scheme on the Leeds Liverpool canal and how boaters could assist the Police

# REGIONAL REPORTS

## **NORTHWEST REGION Continued**

### Marina Developments

There are currently 3 marina developments in the planning or construction stages. A proposed marina at Wrenbury on the Llangollen Canal has raised local concerns. Two marinas on the Trent & Mersey between Middlewich and Northwich are under construction.

### CRT Surveys and Consultations

Over the last year there has been a survey of mooring on the Lancaster Canal and a consultation on future processes used for the Liverpool Link. Responses have been submitted from affected local clubs and supported by the Region.

### Issues raised with CRT

There are two live issues:-

- Current Closure of the T & M canal. There has been further remedial action near the Dutton Breach of 2013 and examination of wash walls in the neighbouring stretch.
- The publication of Barnton and Saltersford tunnels near Northwich on the T & M as being suitable for unpowered craft. There is no clear line of sight through the tunnels making this a major safety issue. We are awaiting final decisions on the way forward.

Several issues have been raised with CRT including:-

- Vegetation control both on the towpath and offside
- Pennywort weed and reeds restricting navigation on the Trent & Mersey Canal
- Reciprocal Agreement between CRT and Bridgewater Canal waters
- Incidents of boats sinking in locks on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal

### Runcorn Locks Restoration

The Region supports this proposal; this is now more viable with the plan to construct the Mersey Gateway Bridge.

### River Weaver

There is support for the promotion of the River Weaver. Boats from Regional clubs attended the first Winsford Salt Fair for over 100 years in 2014, using the upgraded mooring close to the town. There is support for a link between the upper reaches of the River Weaver and the Middlewich Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal.

### Wigan Pier

There is a large scale development planned to deliver the Wigan Pier Quarter on the Leeds Liverpool Canal. A 10 year master plan has been agreed between the council, CRT and the developer.

I would like to thank all Club Representatives and Regional Officers for their hard work and support over the last 12 months.

**BRYAN POLLARD**

## **NORTH EAST REGION**

We have held 4 Regional meetings over the past year, at South Pennine Boat Club in May, Retford & Worksop in September, Tinsley in November, and our AGM at South Yorkshire Boat Club in Heck, in February.

# REGIONAL REPORTS

## **NORTH EAST REGION Continued**

Despite our Secretary's attempts to encourage more Clubs to attend and to send reports, attendance remains disappointing with an average of 9 Clubs represented out of the Region's 16. A hard-core of 4 or 5 Clubs has not sent any representatives or any reports over the past year.

At the Regional AGM last month, surprisingly all officers were re-elected unopposed. The Region President Dave Dix, and Jean & I all gave notice that next year we shall not be seeking re-election, so we shall keep up pressure on Clubs to nominate willing candidates for 2016 onwards.

North-East Region has member clubs in both North-East Waterways and North-West Waterways region. Inconveniently, CRT has this last year arranged User Group meetings on dates when Jean & I were not available, but member clubs have had representatives present to report back to our Regional meetings. Likewise, North-West Waterways has now split the User meetings to cover Leeds & Liverpool Canal and the Lancaster separately. Our Clubs on the L & L have reported back.

Many winter works have been undertaken in North-East Waterway region this winter - as works are continuing, we don't yet have the final tally. It has been noted however that on at least 2 sets of lock-gate repairs, CRT have rented large mobile cranes which have stood around unused for several weeks before being put to use. I propose to raise with the Waterway Manager the issue of lax planning which has led to such needless expense.

We attended the second annual N.E. Partnership presentation last November, which was heavy on aspirational concepts, which we hope to see being acted upon over the next couple of years. There is a considerable emphasis on promoting angling and unpowered boating in the North-East in an attempt to entice more of the public to enjoy the waterway environment.

**GARTH ROBINSON**

## **LONDON REGION**

At our A.G.M. held at Rammey Marsh C.C. last month the existing committee were elected en bloc.

The Electric Boat Association have not renewed their membership their members do not cruise on the canal system.

Most of our clubs reported that their moorings were full and they were thriving.

### Consultations

Representatives from our clubs have attended meetings of the Association of Thames Yacht Clubs, London Waterways Commission, National Inland Navigation Forum and The Canal & River Trust during the year.

### Canal & River Trust

I feel the C&R T are beginning to get to grips with Londons mooring problems, however there is much work still to do. Sorwah Ahmed boater liaison manager and his team are working hard. We have the B.R.G. set up to establish a dialogue between all the various parties involved. Continuous Cruisers will now be required to move their boats and not just shuffle a few hundred yards. Boats that do not move enough

to comply with the new conditions will not be re-licensed.

### Social Events

We only held one event last year this was our Willowtree Park annual gathering of boats

### Lastly

My thanks to Terry Ariss my vice chairman, our regional. Committee and our Club Representatives for their hard work and loyal support during the year.

**TREVOR GILLAM**

# REGIONAL REPORTS

## SOUTH & WEST

We have had several Regional meetings since last March, in different localities, with our AGM at my own boat club at Pewsey on the Kennet and Avon Canal. We were happy when the Burghfield Island Boat Club allowed us to use their premises for a meeting of the NEC. They have a lovely Clubhouse and now have a fully functional kitchen – not all of our clubs have this luxury.

Our Region covers a large area making social gatherings almost impossible, however this year we hope to organise something even though it will not be a boat gathering.

Burghfield Island Boat Club reported a lack of AWCC visitors last year – was this because few boaters came onto the K&A or simply did not stop at the first boat club after leaving the River Thames? I am not sure. Last year the club complained at one of our meetings that there was a lack of communication between the EA and CRT – allowing boats to leave the River Thames only to find the River Kennet closed. I did talk to Richard Parry about this and hopefully things would have improved this winter had the conditions been similar.

Both the Kennet and the Avon have been closed during periods of heavy rainfall but nothing like the previous year. Thrupp Canal Cruising Club also sees the effects of the River Cherwell in flood and the stop gate has been closed although again nothing serious this year.

Banbury Canal side development received planning permission and will start this year after changes to the application were submitted. The development in Jericho has also received planning permission but many conditions are still to be sorted out.

The Kennet and Avon has seen its share of boats sinking in locks – something CRT are concerned about. Just when we thought hire boat companies were dealing with this another sinking occurred.

An open day was hosted by CRT at Aldermaston when members of the public were welcomed and were allowed right into the lock chamber – luckily empty at the time.

I attended a User Group meeting last year but this was really just a rerun of the presentation by the Local Waterways Partnership held the same month. Another User Group is planned next month. We are awaiting the appointment of a new Waterway Manager.

I have attended the NEC meetings travelling to Doncaster and Reading as well as those held in the midlands.

I thanked David Butcher last year for his continued support in getting the Regional up and running again. He notified the Region of his intention to stand down this year but has promised to help with advice as and when required. We have been lucky to gain the support of a Thrupp Canal Cruising Club member – Brian Green who will hopefully take over as our President after our AGM later this month.

**PAULINE KING**

## CLUB NEWS

### DEFIBRILLATORS ON THE WATER

Two Midlands clubs have funded the provision of defibrillators for use not only by members, but by passing boaters, should it be required. Stafford BC and Nottingham YC are the two we know about, but there may be others, not only in Midlands but elsewhere on the network. Midlands suggest that it might be possible to include this on the list of 'facilities' in a future handbook. Someone's life might be saved in this way.

Over recent years it has become noticeable that defibrillators have been popping up in and around public places. The Ambulance service encourage and promote this facility, as we all know, the quick response to the shock treatment to someone having had a heart attack can be a matter of life or death.

Our members thought by having a defibrillator attached to the clubhouse would be a very worthwhile service in supporting not only our membership but also the passing boating community.

Two of our members, Andy Carver and Debs Baxter were the main instigators and driving force behind the fund raising and red tape. During 2014 we managed to raise enough money, £2,000 and purchased the defibrillator. This is now in place at the side of our clubhouse.

How it works:- The equipment is in a secure, signposted box and a code is required to open it. By telephoning the emergency services they will ask questions and if necessary provide the code to open the unit and give instructions on the use of the defibrillator.

If any boat clubs are considering obtaining a defibrillator, I am sure Andy will be more than happy to advise you on the processes we went through to obtain this.

### HIDDEN LOCK REVEALED

Boaters on the Caldon will be familiar with Flint Mill Lock but may be surprised to know the alternative name for this lock is Consall New Lock. The reason for this has been revealed recently. Volunteers including members of Stoke on Trent BC have revealed the site of Consall Old Lock [to the left of the current lock, approaching Froghall] which was replaced prior to 1900 as the original lock chamber had suffered from subsidence from the adjacent hillside, reducing its width. At the start of the work party day, the old lock was barely discernible, but by the end of the day's work, it was revealed in 'all its glory'! it is hoped that an interpretation board will be installed to tell passers-by the full story.

### EAST MEETS WEST from Bob Mennell (RWBC)

During one of Harry Richardson's long distance cruises from his home base at the Retford and Worksop Boat Club (on the Chesterfield Canal), he had the opportunity to call in to Worsley Cruising Club (on the Bridgewater Canal) and was made most welcome. Harry was so impressed by the friendliness of his visit that he suggested to the committee of RWBC that it would be a good idea if the Club invited Worsley C.C to come and visit RWBC, the committee agreed. An invitation was duly sent which was accepted and date agreed for the visit.

Thirty members of WCC arrived by coach and were greeted by three members of RWBC dressed in traditional costumes.

The plan for the day was for a trip to Drakesholes and back on fifteen boats with light refreshments on-board and in the afternoon Robin Stonebridge, Chairman of the Chesterfield Canal Trust, would give a talk on the history of the canal also outlining some of the issues and problems the proposed route of high speed rail link were causing the Trust. The visit would end with an evening meal and an inter Club Archery competition.

I am pleased to report that final scores were Worsley C.C. 300 and RWBC 299 and Worsley Team Captain collected the Trophy. (I have to add that due to pre-match practice 100 points were deducted from RWBC score!!!)The Visitors left much later than planned after many expressions of gratitude and friendship.

The visit of Worsley CC arranged by Harry Richardson has given both Clubs a great deal of pleasure and allowed the members from both Clubs to discuss the good issues and the problems each are experiencing. The general opinion was that CRT is listening to the needs of boaters and other users of the canals and tow-paths but progress is slow probably due to financial restraints. However the general feeling was that CRT has set off in the right direction and it will be a matter of wait and see.



FEATURE ARTICLE

*As David steps down as Regional President after many years service to AWCC I thought it might be good to take a look at how it all started for David and his family all those years ago. Ed*

**HOW TO OBTAIN A BOAT WITH NO MONEY By David Butcher**

As a young male living near to the coast, the sea was always a dream to have a boat but such an opportunity never arose. Then girl friends and marriage came about followed by children – very expensive times and my dream went out of the window.

This was the case for many years with my dream still in the air – how could I buy a boat - in a nutshell I could not. Then it hit – what or where were those odd pennies and three pence pieces disappearing to at the end of each day – if I could save these and other coins one day there might be enough to buy a boat. So off to the local club to see if the bar staff retained the gallon whisky optic bottles. Yes they did but there was a long waiting list. After many months my turn came about and the boat fund was on its way (and the bottle is still in use today) probably around 1983 or 1984.

Although the boat fund was now up and running, many other priorities took over such as house maintenance and minor but expensive alterations to the home – also the children growing up requiring schooling costs, cycles etc. The fund moved very slowly.

Other outside projects took over such as a new garage, relaying lawns, patios etc., the latter being a large patio with natural products such as flint and slate, the most available being flint a very hard and often large stone that when split, or knapped as it is known in



Hampshire, reveals a beautiful flat surface with numerous colours. These stones were commonly used in the Stone Age to make the tools of work.

The advice of a local farmer was taken who welcomed us to walk his hedgerows and fields to take as much flint as we could find, often making many trips deep into hedgerows.



During these trips we spotted what looked like a mass of timber but it turned out to be a wooden boat - Clare Michelle on a trailer looking very sad and neglected. With the children now growing up could this be the start of our boating on the canal system in the UK? The answer a very positive NO but it could be a start and so here we go.

It belonged to a relative of the local land owner who

## FEATURE ARTICLE CONTINUED

when living in Kent started to build the Clare Michelle and gave up half way through the construction having had a desire to go sea fishing due to his age and so brought it to Hampshire to die a natural demise. On approaching him – would he sell – the answer was ‘if the price was right’. With a very cautious wife, I just had to investigate.

Starting at the bottom the trailer was seized up solid and the tyres looking like new were absolutely rotten. The boat itself was no better and on further inspection seven large bin sacks of rubbish had to be removed, rotten leaves growing ivy, old birds’ nests etc, and the most significant item being the name painted on the bow. The transom was rotten but it would make fire wood and the hull, made of marine ply, appeared well or should I say just okay. To get into the cabin we managed to prise open the doors and on hands and knees inspect the interior. There was some seating or built in seating the most significant was a six inch hole cut into the boards with a 14 lbs commercially used jam tin with a lid below (yes this was the toilet) all to be overcome and made possible.

Next – what was it worth? We offered £140 and obviously this was turned down in total disgust. Perhaps I was rather low so the offer was upped to £145 but the owner was asking £150. He then talked about a rather large Solva outboard in the garage which had never been near the sea or canal. This was now a different picture and after some more haggling we finally paid £167.50. We freed the trailer and put some new mini size tyres and removed the boat before the owner could change his mind. The deal was concluded on 23 August 1986, the very weekend of the IWA Canal Festival at Brentford which we attended.

Now with the boat fund depleted and our purchase home and under cover, we could at least start work and assess what had to be done to get rid of all the rotten timber remove the cabin enabling it to be raised and get the trailer working correctly. With the boat now off the trailer it was not that bad a job using a blow torch and freeing oils on the trailer to quickly sort it and place it in the garden as the galvanising was in good order – all a very simple job.

The boat was somewhat more involved and with the help of my father (a wheelwright by profession and a great asset often with advice and putting his tools of the trade back into use) the first job was to get the transom out with care not to damage the hull which was generally fairly good. Between us a hard wood beam which had been taken out of a dismantled chapel in Kent, was purchased and was cut



and reassembled to make a new transom, next the cabin top was removed in total and raised ten or so inches. This kept the line of the boat correct and just about enough height to get about inside even to make the seating into a very comfortable bed. Yes the toilet was changed and a gas hob along with a wash bowl fitted – this much to the delight of our 5 year old niece who could stand at the bowl and wash up – obviously making a nice mess but a start to her domestic career.

Next came the painting which we put to one side and started on the engine. We had all sorts of problems as it just would not start but eventually and not giving in it was put down to the electronics. We made a call to BOSCH help desk explaining that although it had never been used could it be their equipment that was failing. The advice was to remove the parts and get them to their service and training area at what was Pinewood Film Studios. Upon inspection and finding they were not performing, the directive was to

## FEATURE ARTICLE CONTINUED

go to the local BOSCH dealer with the parts and a covering note telling them to order the parts under warranty. As there was no profit for them they were not very happy but we got our parts and were happy.

Still in trouble not knowing just where to go next, we eventually got in touch with Retford Motor Boat Co who, after many suggestions that failed, landed up saying we can get the engine to them. This meant a pleasant overnight stay in the area and after five or six hours they managed to get it into life. Not sure if we had to pay them anything or not we were happy the engine was running.

Now back to the boat, the transom was in, the cabin was as good as it could ever be, so we removed all of the remaining paint inside and out, plugged all the joints and apply three coats of paint – all probably found on a shelf in the workshop and back onto the trailer.

With all the work done she was no more Clare Michelle and so a new name had to be found and after much searching, friends had a small boat called MRS B – hence MRS BII was born. Loading all the possible paraphernalia into the boat, we hooked onto a friends van and off we go in convoy to Pewsey



Wharf on the K and A in beautiful weather. After considerable debate being that not one of us had launched a boat before MRS BII was in the water and tied to the Wharf. When all together and working we decided to go east – this would stop all the experienced boaters watching us and this was a good move as it took a good hour to do not a quarter of a mile in the light and we had to get back to the Wharf which was a quicker journey having learnt from our mistakes on the outward run. With the Wharf Warden's permission we securely tied up and returned home in the dark.

Upon our return the following morning Mrs BII was on the bottom of the canal but with the aid of the Warden she was pumped out and taken out of the water and Mrs BII was back in hospital for further surgery. On close examination it was decided to make rubbing rails/strakes over the hull board joints these to be stuck with water proof adhesive and screwed to make a positive seal which was a perfect modification, doubled with not to be caught out again when the boat was taken out of winter storage in the Spring the interior was emptied and filled with water to plim the boarding to seal any possible leaks and to have a happy Summer afloat on the canal and not in it.

Many happy days on the Kennet and Avon over the following three years becoming members of the Pewsey Wharf Boat Club. Having now become very hooked onto the canal system graduated first to a 19 ft Dawn Craft followed by a 30 ft steel hulled boat and a self fit out concluding with a 56 ft steel hull. Covering most of the canal network within the United Kingdom and coming off the water during 2009 making many friends during some of the best years of our lives.

**David and Maureen Butcher.**

## EDITORS PAGE

Firstly a huge thanks to the many people who sent items for the the Anniversary Special Issue. I now have plenty of interesting stuff ready to go.

The initial plan for a pre AGM publication has been put back a couple of months as we now hope to produce the issue in hard copy and without time sensitive reports etc, so it will be a bit like an ALERT ANNUAL which will hopefully be available longer term.

The usual 4 issues will be produced as on-line only as normal.

I would like to express my thanks to Brian, your retiring Communications Officer for his help and guidance on the technical aspects of on-line publication and look forward to working with Des Barnes who has taken over from Brian, He assures me you will still get the MailChimp reminders with a link when the new issue is out.

Please keep sending me you latest club news. Happy Boating, Graeme Bridge. Editor.

## ALERT INTER-CLUB COMPETITION

Thanks to those clubs and affiliated organisations who have continued to send your magazines for judging in the INTERCLUB competition.

The judge this year was last years winner, Hilary Foster from the Bridgewater Motor Boat Club at Runcorn in Cheshire. She said she found the job difficult as there was such a wide variety styles and types from the professionally produced glossy to the hand produced news letter. She eventually came up with a winner and a runner up. This years winner, who was runner up last year, is Theresa Jollands, editor of Paddle Post, the club Mag of Stoke on Trent Boat Club. The trophy was accepted on her behalf by Erica Martin.



**Theresa Jollands is presented with the “BEST CLUB MAGAZINE” Trophy by Stoke on Trent Boat Club Commodore Graham Churton**

The runner up award goes to an on-line only issue for the first time, that is to Bryan Pollard for Boats Afloat, the magazine of the Broken Cross Boat Club. The Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association received a “Highly Commended”.



**Bryan Pollard, Editor of “Boats Afloat”, the Broken Cross B.C.Magazine, receives the “RUNNER UP” award at the recent AGM at Stafford B.C.  
Presenting the Award is AWCC President David Pearce while Alert Editor and Competition Organiser, Graeme Bridge looks on.**



**Howard Smith from the Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association receives the “Highly Commended” award on behalf of the Editor of “EREWASH OUTLOOK” at the recent AGM at Stafford B.C.  
Presenting the Award is AWCC President David Pearce.  
(All photographs courtesy of Erica Martin, S on T. B.C )**

## NATIONAL CANAL FESTIVAL

### Chesterfield to host National Canal Festival in 2016

Lots of boats will be cruising on the Chesterfield Canal in Derbyshire next year.

The Chesterfield Canal Trust is delighted to announce that it has been chosen to host the Inland Waterways Association National Trailboat Festival. It will be held at Staveley Town Basin during the Spring Bank Holiday 2016.

Highlights will include an illuminated parade of boats on the Saturday night and a convoy right up to the River Rother at St Helena's on the Monday.

The Trust ran previous IWA Trailboat Festivals at Tupton Lock in 2002 and 2005. Both were hugely successful, as was the IWA Campaign Rally held at Kiveton Park in 2009.

Robin Stonebridge Chair of the Trust said: "We are delighted that the IWA has chosen to return to the Chesterfield for its 2016 Trailboat Festival. The boaters who came here in 2002 or 2005 will see a great change, both on the canal and in the surrounding area. Canals get restored by continuously making the case, by hard graft and by spreading the word and building support from across the country. Although we still have eight miles to restore, the Festival will be a good way to celebrate the Trust's efforts thus far and for visitors to have a really good time here in North East Derbyshire."

The main difference between the recent Canal Festivals held at Staveley and this one will be the number of boats. It is expected that dozens of trailboats will be moored in the basin and back towards Constitution Hill Bridge. Many will be decorated, creating a really colourful spectacle.

The Festival will include boat rides, canoeing, children's rides, plenty of entertainment, dozens of stalls plus food and drink including a Real Ale bar.

As the name implies, trailboats are towed on a trailer, thus they can go on stretches of water that are inaccessible to normal canal boats. The trailboats will be launched down the slipway at Staveley Basin. The Chesterfield Canal in Derbyshire is currently cut off from the rest of the canal because the section between Staveley and Kiveton Park has not yet been restored. Thus normal narrowboats can not get to Staveley.

IWA national chairman Les Etheridge said: "Our 2016 Trailboat Festival will help to demonstrate the community benefits that flow from the revival of functioning waterways. As well as providing a great day out, we hope the festival will stimulate renewed support from the public and local interest groups for the Trust's sterling restoration work."

Derbyshire County Council owns this section of the canal. The Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure Councillor Dean Collins said: "The newly developed Staveley Basin has made Chesterfield Canal an attractive area for boats and we're delighted to be hosting the National Trail Boat Festival in Derbyshire next year.

"We're committed to helping to improve Derbyshire's economy and tourism has a massive role to play.

"We're looking forward to welcoming the boating community to Derbyshire to enjoy our beautiful county and all it has to offer."

This issue of AWCC Alert was produced by Graeme Bridge  
5 Beresford Street, Warrington, WA1 3SA e-mail [alert@awcc.org.uk](mailto:alert@awcc.org.uk)

Contacts: President David Pearce: [president@awcc.org.uk](mailto:president@awcc.org.uk)

Chairman Ann Banks: [chairman@awcc.org.uk](mailto:chairman@awcc.org.uk)

Secretary (acting) Jean Robinson: [secretary@awcc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@awcc.org.uk)

Any views, opinions or comments expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the policy of the AWCC.

## OBITUARY John Stevenson

*John Stevenson was a very active member of the AWCC National Exec for many years as well as being a leading light at Thrupp C.C. The following is reproduced by kind permission of Wide Views, TCCC, Ed.*



## John Stevenson - End of an era

One of our Vice-Presidents, John Stevenson sadly died in October and a number of TCCC members joined family and friends at his funeral on 1<sup>st</sup> November at St. Augustine's Church, East Hendred.

John's history with boating goes back long before the formation of TCCC but in the early 1980's mooring at Thrupp was becoming popular and hence more difficult to find a spot if you went away to do some cruising, John got together with Wilf Freeth and one or two others and talked about forming a Club as, following a meeting with Frances Reed, she confirmed that BWB would prefer to deal with a Club rather than individual moorers. The inaugural meeting was held in October 1983 with 20 boats represented and the Club was formed and went from strength to strength. In May 1987 the Club had 57 boats with 87 members. John and his wife Pauline, together with others, did an amazing

amount of work for the Club over the years. When BWB said we had to become a Limited Company to enable us to have an extended 'Licence to Moor', John set about the task of forming TCCC Limited in April 1996. Directors were appointed, plus a Company Secretary, which allowed the Trustees—including John—to step down from being guarantors for any money loss.

John and Pauline were well known in the boating world as John made sure the Club joined the Inland Waterways Association as a Corporate Member and the Association of Waterway Cruising Clubs. He became a Vice-President of the Club in recognition of his work and those who moor at Thrupp have a huge debt of gratitude to him, together with other founder members, for starting a Club that is so well respected in waterway circles.

Social events have always formed a part of mooring at Thrupp and over the years several 'Meet-a-Boats' and BBQs were held, together with cruises to other parts of the Oxford Canal and the Thames. The Annual Dinner was another event encouraged by John and we even held some at Snell's Hall in East Hendred. Dreams of providing better facilities were always high on the agenda and a great deal has been achieved since the Club was formed. One thing John was always keen on seeing was a 'mooring basin' or some kind of dry-dock or slipway. The dream will continue and perhaps one day it will be achieved.

John's knowledge and contribution to the Club will be greatly missed but will be remembered with fond memories by us all. Luckily for us he wrote a Club history but if something comes up that those left cannot answer, we can no longer say "John can you help us".

Our thoughts are with his family at this time.

Pam Pugh (past Secretary of TCCC and TCCC Limited)

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

Credit Where it's Due.

At the recent AWCC National AGM at Stafford comment was made about the lack of funding for the Anglia region of EA waters, especial reference being to the poor facilities on the River Nene.

I know this area very well. I live adjacent to the Middle Level Navigations and travel the Nene at least twice a year as I go to and from the canal system.

At first I was limited to the river as my boat was too broad for the narrow locks of the Northampton Arm, then in 1985 I purchased a 'narrow boat'.

At that time all was Anglian Water Authority, later this changed to National Rivers and now it is the Environment Agency.

(I think sign writing firms made much profit from these changes.)

The river was always hard work and nothing showed improvement until EA took over. Now every year there is some change for the better; electrification of many locks; improved winding gear on top gates and those few locks with mitre gates; lengthening and height adjustment on balance beams and much improved landing stages and non slip surfaces.

I know that in some ways the Nene is a 'poor relation' to the Great Ouse. The Great Ouse Boating Association is powerful and good at lobbying for improved facilities.

The Nene lacks in public moorings and boaters facilities (luckily all the boat clubs on the Nene are affiliated to AWCC so don't mind us using their's if necessary). Those in authority do listen to what the boaters say. I make special reference to Irven Forbes who has always listened to boaters' comments, suggestions and requests. The seasonal River Inspectors are available and helpful (their mobile phone numbers are given on the signs at most locks) and we have found that in times of high water, when there is a flood alert, the duty officer couldn't be more helpful.

If CaRT take over navigation how will these things be affected?

When you have a problem on a river you can't wait days for contact with the relevant help. Many locks serve dual roles for navigation and for flood control, what then?

Some boaters wish for change because they think it will mean cheaper canal and river licences. I consider this short sighted as obviously there will be an increase as the licences will be combined.

I have always had a good relationship with the authorities and enjoyed cruising the River Nene, the locks on the Grand Union at Buckby and Braunston do not compare favourably with those on the Nene and the Northampton Arm is a disgrace, the locks are much harder to work than those on the river despite the fact that they are narrow locks and less than half the size!

Sadie Heritage

#### A RESPONSE FROM PAUL Le BLIQUE

Thank you for your letter and please be assured that my comment was concerned only with the lack of ongoing funding for EA Waterways. AWCC has always recognised and applauded the results achieved by all EA staff during a very difficult period of cuts in funding and staff reductions. I made the point regarding the Anglian Waterways Team as as late as mid January to EA Board Member, Peter Ainsworth..

You are quite correct in saying that Nene has seen many improvements particularly the electrifying of several locks; however much took place before the current financial difficulties. The Grant in Aid that represents a large proportion of EA income is set to reduce year on year as cuts bite into government spending; the Agency is preparing for a further reduction in funding this year and for the foreseeable future. AWCC has concerns for the long term security of all EA rivers. The Nene in particular deserves a better funding foundation, it is a delightful waterway in it's own right, and is of course the gateway to the Fens.

With regard to river navigation under CRT; it already happens very successfully on the Severn, Trent, Ouse, Soar and Witham where CRT is the navigation authority whilst EA retain ultimate responsibility for water management. I appreciate that the Nene is a flood control river but so are the aforementioned with the Trent and Severn being particularly challenging with huge volumes of water to control. I would have no fear regarding the future with CRT responsibility for the Nene.

It is perhaps difficult to compare locks on the Nene with those on the GU Canal due to the different nature of the waterways but many boaters find the Northampton Arm a pleasure to navigate due to the small locks and their surroundings. CRT has invested in Arm with lock maintenance and improvement and spot dredging; the joint funded footpath between Sixfields and East Hunsbury is real bonus for all who wish to enjoy the canal.

AWCC considers it correct that EA Waterways are transferred to CRT in order that their future be assured as part of the inland waterway system.

Paul Le Blique