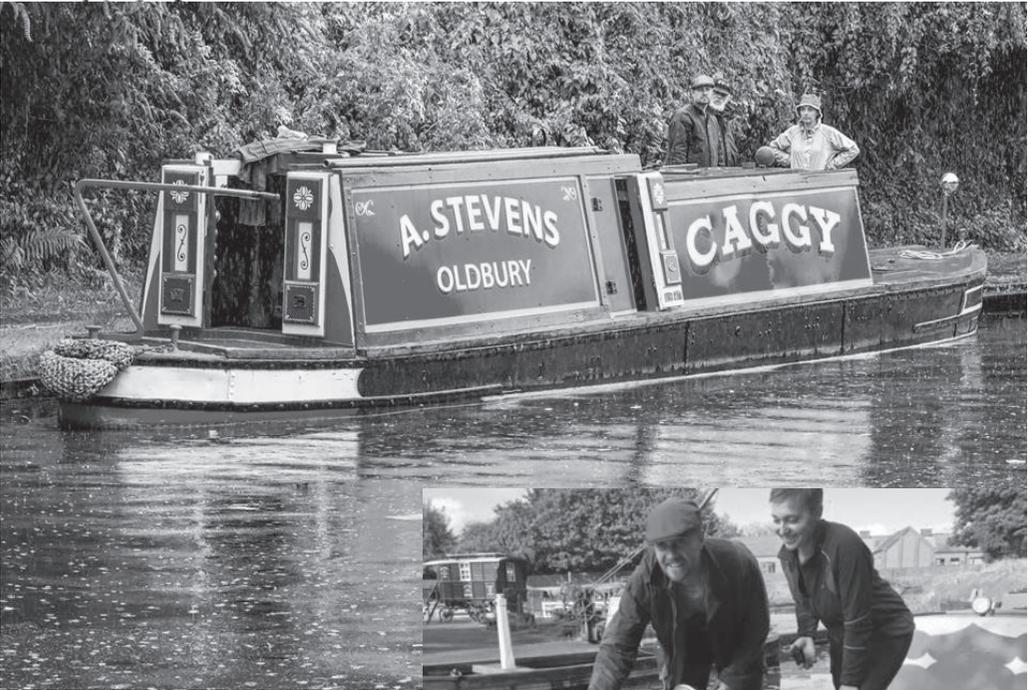




Boundary Post

**Edition 214
Autumn 2016**



Angela & Wayne Attwood, members of BCNS are the proud owners of this BCN tug "Caggy". Seen here celebrating their ownership!! I'm sure they will tell us about it in a future copy of Boundary Post.



The Journal of the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society
Free to members £1 when sold bcnsociety.com



Council Members - 2015 - 2016

President : Martin O'Keeffe

Vice-Presidents: Ron Cousens, Phil Clayton, Cllr. David Sparks, Rob Starkey,

Chairman & web man:

CHARLEY JOHNSTON 07825816623
mail@feloniousmongoose.com

Vice Chair & Rally Organiser

BARRIE JOHNSON 0121 422 4373
barryjohnson7@tiscali.co.uk

Treasurer:

DAVE DENT
38 Greenland Mews, London, SE8 5JW
020 8691 9190 dentdave@hotmail.com

Secretary: & Planning Officer

IVOR CAPLAN
tel: 07778685764 ihcaplan@msn.com

Membership

ALAN VENESS tel: 0121 355 4732
43 Pilkington Ave, Sutton Coldfield, B72
1LA email: alan.veness@gmail.com

Work Party Co-ordinator:

MIKE ROLFE 07763 171735
mikerolfe63@hotmail.co.uk

Buildings & Heritage

VACANT POSITION

Boundary Post Editor

BRENDA WARD
boundarypost@gmail.com 0121 355 6351

Youth/Community Liaison Officer

KATE SELF kateself@hotmail.com
07929401682

Archives & Heritage Boats

IVOR CHAMBERS tel: 0121 707 1690
ivor_w_chambers@hotmail.com

Social Secretary

GEOFF WINSLOW
taz.winslows@btinternet.com

Press & Publicity:

KATH O'KEEFFE
kathleenokeeffe@live.co.uk

Press & Publicity Assistant

MARTIN O'KEEFFE
hecla777@hotmail.com

Sales:

REBECCA SMITH -KEARY
smithkeary@icloud.com 01562 850234

Supporting members to Council

Health & Safety

Jeffrey Carter

Talks and Presentations

Phil Clayton 07890921413
phillipclayton@blueyonder.co.uk

Work Party Administrator

Michael Smith-Keary 01562 850234
sk63@btinternet.com

BCNS Explorer Cruise

Stuart & Marie Sherratt 07510167288
bcns.explorercruise@gmail.com

BCNS 24 Hour Challenge

Roy Kenn 01922 428644
John Carrington
bcnschallenge@gmail.com

Fundraiser:

Mike Butler

Official Photographer

Ann Johnson

Atlas & Malus Manager

Paul Smith: paul.smith879@yahoo.co.uk

Contents	Page
<i>Council Details</i>	2
<i>Editorial</i>	3
<i>Chairman's notes</i>	4
<i>First 24 Hour Challenge</i>	5
<i>Atlas & Malus Report</i>	9
<i>BCNS End of Season Rally</i>	11
<i>Swan Village Interchange</i>	12
<i>Birmingham & Other Canals</i>	14
<i>CRT Report - Ian Lane</i>	23
<i>Notice of BCNS AGM</i>	24
<i>BCNS Christmas Dinner</i>	25
<i>Book Review</i>	26
<i>New Members</i>	27
<i>Cribbing Information</i>	28
<i>Recycling the Cycle</i>	29
<i>Waterways Chaplain</i>	30
<i>24 Hour Challenge 2016</i>	31
<i>Work Party Report</i>	32
<i>The Challenge</i>	33
<i>Dudley No2 Restoration Update</i>	34
<i>BCNS Social Meetings</i>	35



Notes from the Editor

It is with very mixed emotions that I edit my last copy of Boundary Post after 12 extremely enjoyable years. I have met and communicated with so many lovely people who have sent in such interesting items for inclusion that makes this Society journal such a good read.

The One hundred miles of the Birmingham Canal Navigations is an endless source of intriguing information, whether from the past, the present and thoughts and designs for the future.

Ray Shill has contributed almost non stop during and before my editorship. He produces such well researched articles. There is always something from him to interest us all and this time a special one for my last edition which I found very interesting.

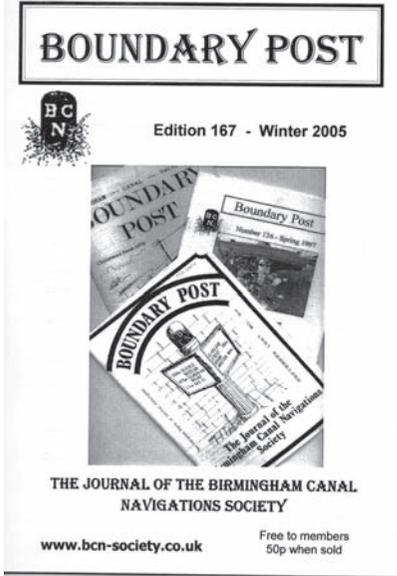
Phil Clayton, who edited Boundary Post for nine years before me has also been a great contributor, with his series on the junctions of the BCN and other occasional items. Then there is Andy Tidy with his Exploring the Other 60 Miles. There are many others who have sent in items of great interest too numerous to mention, but I mustn't forget Bob May whose photographic contributions have been well accepted and as he has donated his collection to the Society his photos will continue to be a part of Boundary Post.

Next Boundary Post

Editor welcomes any interesting relevant information relating to the BCN in the form of news items, photographs, letters, notes or articles to be sent
by

December 1st

Until a new email address is organised for the new editors use
email: boundarypost@gmail.com
and it will be forwarded to them



Writing this last editorial makes me think of my first one in edition 167, the Winter edition of 2005. I was rather clueless as to what to say and possibly the most difficult decision was what to put on the front. Putting the journal together was not too much of a problem as I merely followed the example set by Phil and just made a few alterations. I didn't want Boundary Post to be unrecognisable so stuck to Phil's format and then gradually changed parts as each edition came out.

My hand over has been made so much easier having two enthusiasts ready and waiting to "take the baton". I wish our two new editors the very best and look forward to reading their first edition.

Brenda



Chairman's Notes from Charley

By the time you read this, the cruising season will be fairly much over, and we are settling in to "Winter Mode".

I think this has been a good year – on the BCN we have had our Spring Cruise, three Explorer Cruises, the Marathon Challenge, Titford Pump House Rallies (both our own and the Allen Register's), and a full programme for Atlas and Malus with other rallies at Pelsal, Windmill End and Parkhead.

Then, (for me anyway) – the end of an era – Brenda is stepping down as editor of Boundary Post. (She has been editor for the entire time I have known the BCNS – though I realise that many other members will remember editors before her.

It has been a year that has shown our strengths and our weaknesses.

Our strengths – the ability to organise events, or help with others to do so, and the ability to move on, with Chris Owens and Sid Turner stepping up to replace Brenda as editor of Boundary Post. With the encouragement of the society (and particularly of Brenda) many more people are navigating the Titford Pools. Meanwhile Atlas and Malus are introducing young people to the canals,



and attracting younger people to join. The average age of those involved is significantly lower than the age of the Society as a whole.

Our weaknesses. Too much of the work in the Society is done by too few people, and those people are aging. This was shown particularly by the IWA rally at Pelsall. Pelsall is a wonderful place to have a rally – quite probably the best site on the BCN from a visitor’s point of view. However there is no infrastructure on site, which means that there is a huge amount of work to get the rally set up. We no longer have the manpower to do it ourselves.

We do not have the financial clout to run a fireworks display this year. Much of this is because the first Saturday in November is the 5th this year, with resultant concentration of demand, and our normal display was not big enough to get to the top of the list. It is also far from certain whether we would have all the necessary facilities at the Smethwick Enterprise Centre.

So what can we do about it? Some things are outside our control – we clearly cannot change the calendar, and we would not wish to triple the size and cost of our firework display, for the entry cost would become prohibitive.

We can do something about getting more people involved. Low key ways may help. Leave Boundary Post in your dentists or doctors surgery, or hairdresser, rather than binning it. It may stimulate interest – and can only improve the reading matter available. If you are reading this, and haven’t thought about it, joining in doing things

on the canals is good fun, if on occasions hard work. (Though many hands make light work, as the electricians proverb goes!) Contact us and join in.

Invite your young friends and family along. Children or grandchildren – particularly to rallies etc, which to my mind have more to attract this group than our meetings.

Come up with other ideas – and bring them to our attention.



Have you got a Titford Pools Plaque?

**100 + handed out already!!
Thank you to all of you it makes a difference!**

For further details:- Email boundarypost@gmail.com



1967 - 2017

50 yrs since the first 24 Hour Challenge

The 24 Hour Challenge has not run consecutively since 1967 but that seems to be when the idea was first born. This year Roy Kenn & his assistant John Carrington want to make 2017 a special Challenge. Details will follow later but in the meantime here is an account from John Dodwell & Martin Brookes who took part in that first 24 Hour Challenge in 1967 They must have been very young!!!

The first Challenge was in March 1967 and was the brainchild of Stan Clover, then the IWA Midlands Branch Secretary. At that time, one way the IWA had of encouraging people to travel widely over the national network and to visit the ends of canals was their Silver Sword Scheme. Boat owners got points – a bit like the present BCNS system - and on achieving 100 points were awarded a Silver Sword, a replica of the IWA's then symbol of the Arthurian Fighting Sword of Excalibur. To encourage all the year use of the canals, double points were awarded for winter cruising. Winning an Award usually took some months of cruising.

The late 1960s were dark days for the BCN. Most of the coal traffic from Cannock Chase had stopped and firms like Ernest Thomas and Leonard Leigh had closed down their fleets – or were much reduced. Pleasure boating was still in its infancy and the BCN was not top of the list for canal holidays. So the IWA responded in many ways - such as the 1969 National Rally in Birmingham (based on a derelict site near where the National Sea Life Centre is now) and a planning conference. It was around this time that the houses at Kingston Row were saved from demolition, largely

courtesy of a young architect working with Birmingham Council, Peter White

Stan Clover hit on the idea of publicising the BCN by trying to win a Silver Sword in 24 hours – in contrast to the usual months. It was nothing highly organised. He just announced in Navigation, the IWA Midlands Branch magazine, that he was going to have a go and invited anyone else interested to join him. Many did. We can't recall exactly how many but it could have been about 20 – certainly over a dozen.

Stan Clover had worked out that it could be possible to win a Silver Sword in 24 hours. And that this type of story would interest the Press – people like Bob May of *the Birmingham Mail* and Bob Clarke of *the Wolverhampton Express & Echo*. As nowadays, extra points were obtained for going to terminal places like Hawne Basin, Anglesey Basin, Norton Canes. Lesser used waterways attracted extra points per mile – and that meant all the BCN except the New Main Line. Add in double points for winter cruising and Stan reckoned getting 100 points – enough for the Award – was possible in 24 hours. So he chose the last weekend in March



We were among those lucky enough to take part. We were on GLENFIELD (also with a single Bolinder) which was in the course of being converted by Martin's father Albert at the yard at the end of the Bumblehole Arm, Netherton. Also in our crew was Graham Palmer, a keen BCN-ite, who went on to start the IWA's Waterway Recovery Group.

Whilst we recall most boats started at Gas Street Basin, we began about 9am at Bumblehole as that's where GLENFIELD was kept. We first went through Gosty Hill Tunnel to Hawne Basin and turned back for Windmill End- this was in the days when the Coombeswood steel works was in production and so we had to thread our way around the day boats. Having passed through Netherton Tunnel, we headed for Ryders Green Locks – which is where we recall the first major problem with BIG rubbish around the propeller. We can't remember how many hours we lost but it meant we were now some way behind schedule ("What changes?" do I hear you cry?). After Ryders Green, we headed across the Tame Valley Canal and turned left up the Rushall Canal. Carrying on, we turned right at Catshill and arrived at Anglesey Basin. John distinctly remembers it being 2am then! Martin recalls being sent to bed and, despite the noise of the Bolinder, going straight to sleep! Albert had slept earlier and steered the boat for seven hours before reaching Horseleyfields Junction at 9am. As you know, that's all on one level. It's been John's benchmark ever since. We can't remember if Albert slowed for the The Sneyd Turn but we suspect not.

So we came along the Main Line and back through Netherton – and, because of the points, back through Gosty Hill Tunnel to Hawne and then back again to Bumblehole. We reckoned of the 90 or so miles we had done, about 10 miles had been underground! Thinking about it now, we are a bit puzzled how we got to 10 miles!

We don't recall all those boats and owners who took part but the following come to mind. Stan Clover and his Worcester/Birmingham tunnel tug SHARPNESS (still around). Ken Dunham and GRANGE. Peter Freakley and JAMES LOADER, an ex-Leonard Leigh tug, also still around. I expect Alan Smith came with LAUREL (also still around, having celebrated her 100th birthday recently). Also the Currell brothers in KESTREL; George and Olive Andrews in ROMULUS with her brother Geoff Setchfield; DAFFODIL (and her single Bolinder) with the Waldrons; PENSAX and Don Gray; possibly Derek Turner from Wheaton Aston with Fox; John Gardiner and his son, although we don't think VULPES had been built by then.

Others with long memories may wish to add their own tales and/or correct our memories.

The irony of the tale is that the relevant IWA guys didn't like the idea that Silver Swords could be won so "easily", so shortly afterwards the rules were changed to prevent a recurrence! With the increasing use of the waterways, the need for the Silver Sword scheme fell away.

Just a little bit more



50 yrs since the first 24 Hour Challenge cont:

And yet....the idea of awards for the BCN lives on....and for much the same reason – encourage the use of the BCN. We've taken our boats - HELEN and TRAMP – on the last two Challenges, aiming each time to include Anglesey Basin. Each time, SERIOUS rubbish around the propeller has foiled us (one boat each). May we see you in Anglesey in 2017?



*Just 4 years after this 24 Hour Challenge the BCN Society was well established and holding Rallies around the BCN. In this photo Albert (at the tiller of GLENFIELD) & his son, Martin Brookes leaning out on the side of their boat at the BCNS Easter Rally on the Tame Valley Canal 1971. **photo Bob May***

Urban Badgers

Letters to the Editor



I read with interest your article on urban badgers and thought you might be interested to know that, a couple of years ago, there was a dead badger floating in the cut on the Netherton Tunnel Branch just near my house (one of the cottages by Tividale Aqueduct.) I am guessing it had come from the rough land of the former Revo site - there are certainly plenty of foxes there too. *Julia Bird*



Atlas & Malus Report

Paul Smith

Following on from the Summer rally at the Pump House was, as ever, the 24 Hour Challenge. With both boats already moored there it makes a convenient starting point, plus the fact that I have to work during the week so a move was out of the question. With crew on board we set off for a tour of the pools then headed down "The Crow" passing Swallow



Atlas & Malus travelling around Oozells Loop on the BCN 24 Hour Challenge, photo Kirsty Wilson

who were on their way up. Once at the bottom of the flight we managed to execute a man overboard drill, (I won't mention who it was). So minus one crew member, who headed home to dry off, we motored along the Old Main Line passing a few other participants en route.

At Smethwick locks we were rejoined by our, now dry, crew member. On to the New Main Line, around Soho Loop and after exiting Icknield Port Loop, which was a particularly tricky turn with the temporary pontoon in place, we were passed by Stalham. After turning into Oozells Street loop we headed back up the New Main Line to Factory locks. With low pounds and a couple of boats in front of us we lost some time there. After consulting with the crew it was decided to moor at Tipton for the

six hour break, this also gave us the opportunity to sample the delights of The Fountain. An early getaway on Sunday saw the boats head for the Old Main line and then turn at Brades Hall. Having waited for traffic coming up Brades we continued to Albion Junction then turned at Dudley Port to travel through Netherton Tunnel. The plan was to head to Parkhead and turn but with a lot of other boats heading that way we Winded at Primrose Bridge. After turning at Windmill End we stopped to let a couple of boats past then made for Hawne. On arrival at Hawne we made the turn into the basin under the scrutiny of many onlookers, fortunately it went smoothly. Coombeswood Canal Trust put on a superb reception for all participants ➔



with lots of food and drink. Finishing early does have the benefit of being able to watch the other teams arriving.

After a few weeks rest at Hawne A&M then had another challenge, with no less than six D of E Residentials back to back. I did have my doubts whether there would be enough interest to fill all six trips but I was to be proved very wrong! Each trip followed the same itinerary and hopefully they will have encouraged

some of the young participants to get involved in canals and boating, fingers crossed.

None of these trips could take place without the support of all who volunteer so if you fancy helping out please let me know.

A massive thanks to the following who have helped, Michael, Tug, Kirsty, Wayne, Adam, Charley, Jeff, Steve, Ivor, Adrian and Jon. ☐

Ashwood Marina

Not so much a mooring, more a way of life



The Team At Ashwood Marina Offers a Comprehensive Package of Facilities and Services to Complement Our Beautiful Moorings:

New Bespoke Boats from Perrydale Narrowboats:

Working with you to create your perfect boat for liveaboard and/or cruising expectations. Prices for owning a brand new boat, designed to your specific requirements start at £79,000. www.perrydalenarrowboats.co.uk



Used Boat Sales:

Wide range of narrowboats and cruisers covering all requirements and budgets. View new and used boat details at www.ashwoodcanalboatsales.co.uk

Want to Sell Your Boat?

We urgently need more stock, so call us to discuss.

Re-Fits:

Ranging from changing a door, to fitting a bathroom, to full fit out.

Craning & Docking:

A monthly service, giving ample time for engine and blacking works to be completed. Mooring & docking facilities available for DIY blacking and fit out work, or we can undertake for you. Also hull refurbishment, stretching, engine overhauls, painting and sign writing etc.

Visit www.ashwoodmarina.co.uk for more info or call 01384 295525

Ashwood Marina is located on the Staffs & Worcester Canal between Kidderminster and Wolverhampton



Ashwood Marina, Kingswinford DY6 0AQ
Tel: 01384 295535 info@ashwoodmarina.co.uk
www.ashwoodmarina.co.uk





BCNS AGM and End of Season Rally 4th - 6th November 2016

Due to uncertainty about the availability of the Smethwick Enterprise Centre and the cost of fireworks for a November 5th display the Society has reluctantly decided that the annual Bonfire Rally will not be held in 2016.

However we shall be holding an End of Season Rally at the Tifford Pumphouse on the scheduled weekend. Whilst there will be no bonfire we shall have all the usual facilities in place including the real ale bar and the replacement Burger Bar.

Friday evening we will be again offering pre-ordered Meals prior to the AGM, which will be followed by a 1960's Music Quiz – setting the theme for the weekend. On the Saturday evening we will be entertained by live 1960's music and would encourage visitors to dress accordingly!

Further details and entry forms www.bcnsociety.com or contact Dave Dent on dentdave@hotmail.com



Hometyre

MOBILE TYRE SERVICES

We come to you – at Work or Home

- Vast range of tyres at competitive prices
- Locking wheel nut removal service
- Mobile tyre fitting service
- No call out charge
- Puncture repair
- Wheel alignment (Tracking)
- Tyron band fitting

Tyre replacement at YOUR convenience - call FREE

0800 783 93 10
01384 660 166

Email: info@hometyre.co.uk Website: www.hometyre.co.uk



SWAN VILLAGE INTERCHANGE BASIN

Phil Wild

The BCN had probably the largest concentration of Railway interchange Basins on the whole Canal network. At its peak period, around 1900, there were over 30 such sites owned by the GWR, LNWR & MR (the latter two becoming part of LMS in the 1923 Groupings), handling over a million tons of trade per annum.

One such basin was established in 1856 by GWR, close to the junction of the Ridgacre and Balls Hill Branch Canals, on the site now occupied by the Ridgacre Pub.

The constrained siting led to the GWR constructing a more extensive replacement site on the opposite bank in 1874, which connected to the line between Great Bridge and Swan Village.

In the aerial shot, the basin can be seen to the left of the familiar Swan Village Waterless Gas Works Holder and on the map extract, the basin is directly above the words Swan Farm.

The basin had a largely local trade, including the transfer of chemical products to local chemical works. At one time JB & S Lees used it to tranship goods even though there was a smaller LMS interchange adjacent to it's Albion Works. It was also was used as a parent site to the smaller Izens and Small Heath wharves.

It is recorded that in 1909 there were seven daily freights serving the basin,



Photo above shows the current state of the Basin taken from the Ridgacre Pub Car Park and the current truncated end near the A41 Spine Road.

but by 1948 trade had dwindled to only 4500 tons per annum.

The Basin ceased being in use by 1950, with the rail sidings being used for wagon storage until the rail line between Great Bridge and Swan Village was closed as part of the 'Beeching Cuts' of the 1960's.

In the 1980's there were hopes that the basin area might be converted into a mooring site as had happened at other sites such as Hockley and Withymoor.

Some considerable effort was expended in preparing for this, as is still evidenced by the relatively good condition of the basin currently, in that it is still 'in water'.

However, the construction of the A41 Black Country Spine Road in

the mid 1990's cut off this area and the remaining Ridgeace branch from the rest of the BCN.

The condition of the remainder of the Wednesbury Old Canal between the Spine Road and Ryders Green continues to deteriorate. Whilst the area around the current terminus and winding hole area is still clear.

An aerial shot from 1946 and an extract from the 1889 OS Map of the area show the extent to which the site eventually grew.



The map extract is from the 1889 OS Map for Staffordshire LXVIII.NW which can be viewed more fully at :- maps.nls.gov/view/101597552
The aerial photo is from a 1946 Aerofilms flight (AFL3666) on the Britain From Above website and the set of photos of the area can be viewed at :- www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/eaw002086

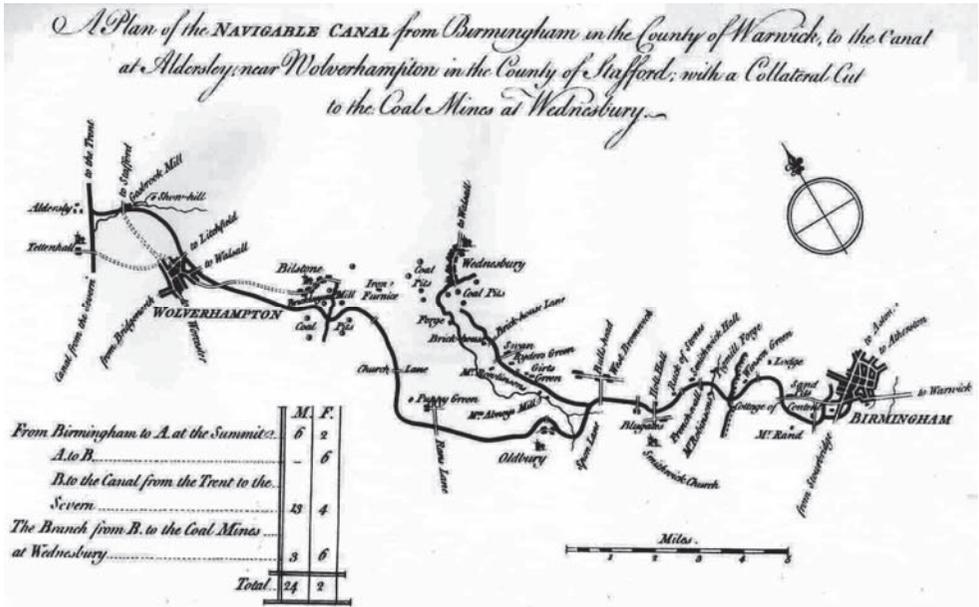
Finally, an excellent reference book on Canal Interchange Basins is that by Tom Foxon, entitled 'The Industrial Canal - Vol 2 - The Railway interchange Trade' published by Heartland Press (ISBN 0 9517755 6 1)



The Birmingham Canal & Other Waterways

Ray Shill

Ray has written a special article for my last edition of Boundary Post. I found it very interesting & extremely informative. I hope you do too.



The BCN route as amended was reproduced in the Gentleman's Magazine during 1771. Amongst the changes were the locks needed to raise the canal over the Smethwick Summit and the diversion of the canal across the higher ground of Oldbury, Tipton, Bilston, Coseley and Wolverhampton.

At less than 23 miles long the Birmingham Canal Navigation was first contemplated as one of Britain's short length waterways. Compared to the Trent & Mersey Canal and the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal, it was much shorter and comparable to the Droitwich Barge Canal in length. All four of these canals were engineered by James Brindley, although he regularly used assistants and clerk of works to assist him with the making of these and other waterways

whose construction was under his care.

In all such waterways the reasons for construction was trade and industry and the short distance movement of minerals and materials, yet as the network was created these and other water became interlinked another reason for existence was created. This was a use as a general long- distance transport route for goods, became a factor in gathering funds from tolls and through tolls.

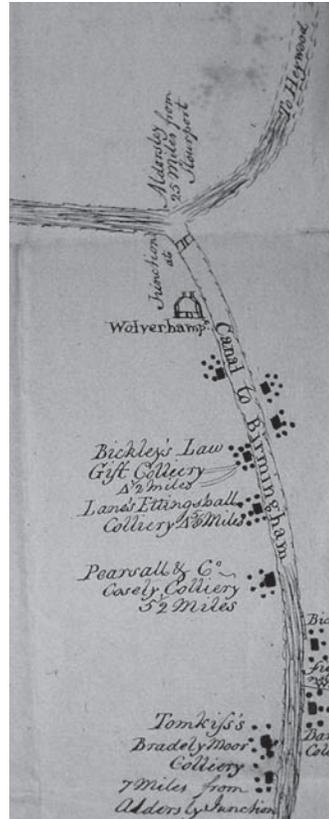
Whilst at the company owned wharves additional revenue was accrued for the use of cranes and storage of merchandise.

Transport by a navigable waterway, canal or river, became an option that encouraged the making of more waterways. Building a waterway often involved sourcing finance from investors, although not exclusively. The construction of the Bridgewater Canal relied on the Duke of Bridgewater for finance and it was he and later his executors that controlled that waterway, reaped the rewards gained but also had to invest in changing needs for the trade such as the making of warehouses, docks and quays. Building the BCN, Staffordshire & Worcestershire and the Trent and Mersey required investors to start the process, which included surveying the route and an Act of Parliament. Each may be termed a Brindley canal, but everyone was very different and an important element was how the canal was made and from where did the work start.

A common trend was the allotment of digging (cutting) contracts where contractors were paid for a particular length that was measured up for payment on completion. Several teams of cutters would be employed on adjacent lengths and the task was also the making of bridges, aqueducts, locks and tunnels that were generally assigned to separate contractors. Brick making was performed in temporary kilns using local clays that had been allowed to weather. Stone was cut in quarries that were often local to the work site, whilst timber was worked on by the carpenters who used wood to make the lock gates, bridges (such as swing bridges) and some of the buildings.

For the Trent and Mersey construction started in the Great Hayward area and proceeded south to Fradley, Burton and then Shardlow. Work also gradually proceeded north to Stoke. The major contract for the original Harecastle Tunnel was started early and was continued on for a span of years.

The making of the aqueduct over Dove near Burton was also a long term venture. This canal first opened from a transshipping place between the canal and the Trent north of Kings Mill to Stone. Work then went onto to make a junction with the Trent east of Shardlow and also construction proceeded north to the pottery district



Early map for the mines at Bilston and Coseley and was part of the documents relating to proposed Stourbridge and Dudley Canals which would have brought new coal supplies to the Staffs & Worcester .



at Stoke & Longport. Contractors were then employed to make the flights of locks from Kildsgrove that descended to Wheelock and Middlewich as well as the three tunnels on the section that joined up with the Bridgewater at Preston Brook. It was not until 1777 that the whole route from Trent at Shardlow to the Bridgewater Canal was open for trade. The building of the canal through Middlewich may have been very different had the Chester Canal Company been allowed to complete their barge canal to Middlewich. If this had been the case Middlewich may have become an inland port and the route to Preston Brook would have lost trade. As it was the slow progress made in making the Chester Canal, combined with finance issues, enabled the Trent & Mersey proprietors to successfully oppose a junction and arranged for clauses to be inserted in a subsequent Chester Canal bill to prevent a junction of the two canals.

Work on the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal started near Compton, at the Summit Level with contractors again cutting lengths or making locks. On both the Trent and Mersey and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire the contractors worked down to the lower levels, filling the canal as built with water and using boats to move spoil dug out from the cuttings to form embankments along the route. On this waterway a section of the once navigable Stour was moved so that the canal could occupy its bed. Stourport was reached in 1770 and contractors then proceeded northwards. It is unlikely that Compton Lock was the first lock made as it was above a ready water supply. But Compton would have been ready for the making of the summit level through Tettenhall towards Oxley and it was this section, from Stourport to Coven Heath that opened first during 1770. Making the canal on the descent to Great Hayward followed with a junction being made with the Trent and Mersey in 1772.

Through time there have been people who

have made strategic contributions to the waterway network. Several gained their skills working in association with James Brindley. Others had an opportunity to work with John Smeaton or William Jessop. Whilst Brindley carefully followed the construction of the Staffordshire & Worcester and employed a clerk of works (Baker) and an assistant (Green), Thomas Dadford, who had been appointed as carpenter, learnt the skills of engineering and went onto look after the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal as engineer, before moving on to be the engineer for both the Dudley and Stourbridge Canals. It was Thomas Dadford who was responsible for the construction of the original 9 locks at the Delph that brought the original section through towards Brierley Hill and Lord Dudley's & Ward's coal mines there.

Promoters for the canal known first as the Birmingham Canal Navigation first had limited intentions and the making of that waterway was simply to link the coal mines at Bilston and Wednesbury with Birmingham. There was no plan for a junction with other waterways. But this view was changed as prominent local people had a wider vision encouraged by the promotion of other waterway schemes. James Brindley was appointed engineer and he laid out a route with alternative termini in Birmingham of which one (Newhall Ring) was accepted. William Wright was superintendent and surveyor, whilst George Holloway became clerk of works for this project. According to Brindley's intended plan the BCN should have had a climb up from the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal involving 17 locks and from the top of lock 17 was level to Birmingham and less than 17 miles long! Branches were planned from the summit level (453ft od) to Ocker Hill and Hill Top. Brindley intended to make a tunnel through the hill at Smethwick and so work started on this project early. Then as contractors set up their gins to sink the shafts for the tunnel, quicksand was found and

the work was abandoned. Failure to complete the Smethwick Tunnel was a catastrophic event as the whole plan and schedule for construction had to be changed. With Samuel Simcox acting as effective resident engineer, the canal committee deliberated on an alternative. It was



Lockkeepers Cottage 151 on the original line of the Delph

a process marred by differences in opinion with the company chairman dictating one option and with a rival group whose spokesman was the articulate Samuel Garbett proposing another route. The company chairman won the day, but it was not until some additional 6 miles was added to the route and the canal was made to climb over the hill at Smethwick and the locks at Wolverhampton were increased to 20 in number (later 21). From the higher level at Wolverhampton boats had to climb another three locks to a short summit. From the branch to West Bromwich (453ft od) near Hill Top, another three were needed to reach the Wolverhampton Level (473ft od), so six locks were needed in this flight to reach the summit at Spon Lane. This short summit level at 491 ft od proceeded to Smethwick where another 6 locks were required to descend down to the Birmingham Level (453ft od).

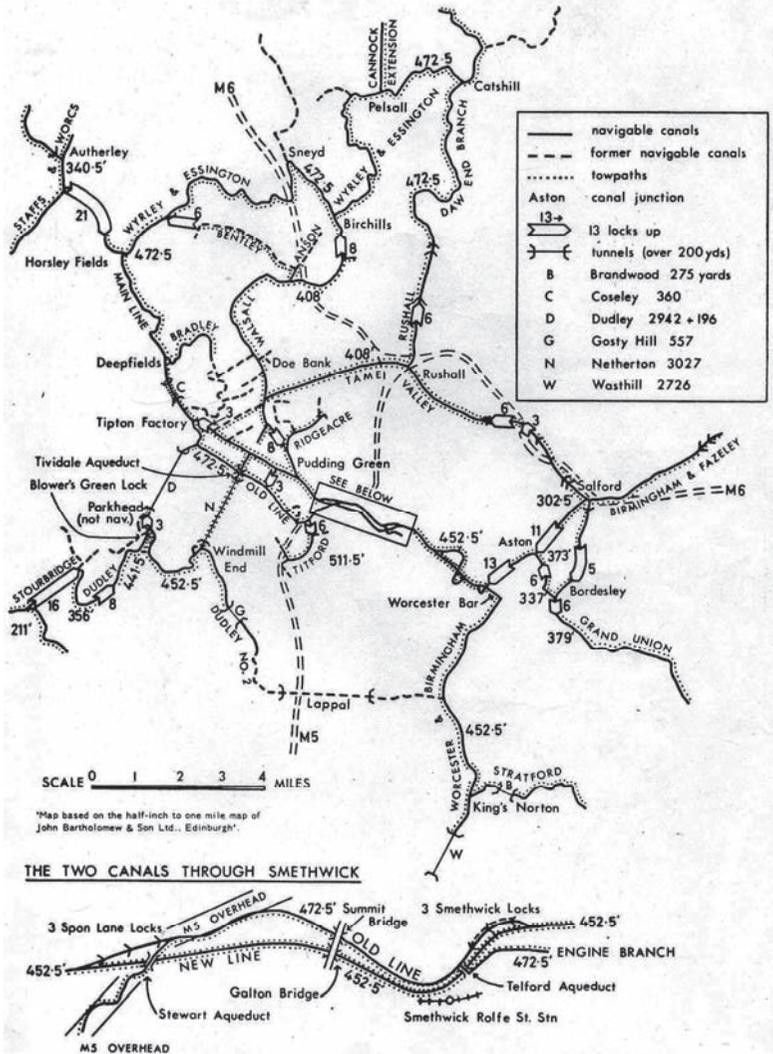
The BCN, as first built was a canal that meandered through parts of South Staffordshire and touched also on North Warwickshire and an isolated piece of Shropshire. It became a canal noted for its diverse trade, but at the start trade was then confined to a few basic commodities. Coal was the primary cargo and the prime reason for the route as planned by Brindley was to serve the various operating mines along the canal. An increase in route mileage provided access for more mines, but there still remained others placed at a distance which encouraged new waterways and basins in later times.

Principal coal mines were placed at Coseley, Bilston, Tipton, Tividale and Oldbury with the two branches, Ocker Hill and Wednesbury, serving as best they could the lower mines. For some ten years between 1770 and 1780 the Birmingham Canal Navigation operated their own carrying service for coals in competition to the private carriers, but decided to concentrate on running the navigation thereafter.

This original route was constantly plagued through shortage of water. The short summit relied on two main feeders, one from Titford, the other from the Reservoirs at Smethwick that collected water from the Thimble Mill brook. Elsewhere water was allowed to flow into the canal where mill owners were not affected. Some mine owners also came to supply water diverting water from their mines raised by the "fire engines" then of the Newcomen type.

The poor supply of water was partially alleviated though back pumping first at Spon Lane and then Smethwick. John Smeaton was invited to report on the canal and his recommendations led to a determination to reduce the level of the summit by 18ft. That achievement completed between 1787 and 1791 must rank amongst the important engineering achievements of that time, but has been little recognised, for crediting those actually responsible, the BCN engineers

THE WEST MIDLAND URBAN CANALS — WITH TUNNELS, LOCKS, LEVELS & TOWPATHS



Map shows present levels of the BCN

Samuel Bull and James Bough. Whilst trade continued to work along the canal, these two engineers managed to take down the level in two stages, alter the water supply to the canal and build a second flight of locks at the Smethwick side of the summit to deal with

Bull and Bough chose to use technology to aid this work, and the reduction of the summit saw stages on the banks constructed and horse gins employed to bring spoil up to be stored in a collection of banks or boated away to other parts of the canal. Some of those who brought coal into Birmingham



received a small payment for back carriage of spoil. It was at the colliery areas where subsidence was already affecting the canal and such spoil assisted the building up of areas that had sunk. They were also innovative in the use of portable steam driven pumping engines which were used to pump water out of sections of canal as the levels were changed. Such work was done without causing much disruption to trade with a short closure on transferring traffic onto the temporary level, in 1789 and only three weeks in 1790 for the lower level to be brought into use.

Such work was also accompanied through the building of new lines of canal the Birmingham & Fazeley, the Walsall Canal and the uncompleted Bloomfield to Deepfield Cut. All added additional mileage, but it was the Birmingham & Fazeley that added a new dimension to the BCN and that was the long distance carrying option.

The conveyance of goods and minerals had been already possible for boats to descend the deep lock 20 at Atherley and to travel via the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal to Stourport where transshipment into or out of Severn Barges or Severn Trow enabled carriage up or down river. Travelling north along the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal enabled craft to join the Trent & Mersey Canal at Great Haywood and from there they might travel to Preston Brook or Shardlow again for transfer into other craft. Lock 20 at 10ft drop proved to be an obstacle to increasing trade. This situation was improved from 1785 when Lock 20 deep lock was replaced by two new locks 20 and 21. The opening of the canal to Fazeley in 1790 provided another carrying route and also made available for the first time by inland navigation from the West Midlands to London. This essentially rural canal linked up with the Coventry Canal and provided a route to the River Thames (via Oxford) and from there Thames Barges handled the trade to the Sufferance Wharves along the river in London. From Fazeley a

second route was made available to the Trent via Fradley and Burton.

Congestion, water shortages and shoals in the waterway continued to hamper effective operations. Carriage of coal continued to increase and there was a new factor the smelting of iron from local ores and the working up to wrought iron and then finished iron. It was a set of processes that required the movement of ironstone, limestone, coal, coke and sand all of which was readily contained in the holds of the narrow boats that plied these waterways.

There was an ongoing process of repair and improvement, but there was also a need for new waterways and the committee turned to John Rennie for advice. From time to time the opinion of certain "quality" engineers had assisted water way development.

Mr Rennie's contribution included the making of the Toll End Communication 1808-1809 which linked the Wolverhampton Level at Tipton Green with the Walsall Canal and provided an important iron trade link to the Dudley Canal and Stourbridge Canal with the heart of the South Staffordshire district as well as Bilston and Wolverhampton. Rennie also suggested an extension of the Walsall Canal to the limeworks near Rushall but this was not actioned.

As the British Canal work was developed, trading links existed between the BCN and Coventry Canal at Whittington Brook and Fazeley, the Dudley Canal at Tipton, the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal at Atherley (Aldersley), the Warwick & Birmingham at Digbeth and the Wyrley & Essington at Horseley Fields. The only canal where there was no junction for boats to pass through was at Gas Street where the BCN was separated from the Worcester & Birmingham Canal by a 7ft wide bar. Here all goods had to be transhipped. Whilst there were many attempts to make a connection that did not happen until the year 1815 when an Act of Parliament was passed to enable the Bar Lock to be constructed. This work



Worcester & Birmingham Canal to Worcester and the River Severn.

Water supply for the Worcester & Birmingham Canal was then limited with the 13 mile summit level from Birmingham to Tardebigge being principally supplied from Kings Norton Brook. Once this canal opened water was sent down from the Birmingham level, which was paid for. Boats passing the Bar Lock were also subject to a toll.

The BCN did have a limited supply of water at its disposal, Smethwick Reservoir held the largest amount, but there were also smaller reservoirs at Birmingham Heath, Hansons and the Wednesbury Canal and feeders such as the Puppy Green Feeder. Water also came from the mine pumping engines at Broadwaters near Wednesbury. Broadwaters was capable of supplying more water than Smethwick and this volume was pumped into the Walsall Canal, which through the Ocker Hill pumping establishment was brought up to the Wolverhampton Level and cascaded down again through the working of the boats along the system. Broadwaters was a large stretch of pools and marsh land that was eventually drained by the working of the Broadwater engine. The company mindful of the need to assist the water supply of the Worcester & Birmingham Canal arranged for the draining of Capponfield Pool with the provision of an engine there.

BCN resident engineers continued to make suggestions for further improvements. It was also their role to deal with and progress the various requests for short branches and basins, which continued to be made to suit the development of ironworks or the transport of coal from a new mine. There were also network improvements. These included the shortening of the canal through Tivdale from Oldbury which was done during 1820 and the new canal and embankment surveyed by Jacob Twigg in 1816 that was intended to link Farmers Bridge Junction to Ladywood, in Birmingham and bypass the

canal to the Oozells. Further attempts were made to finish the Bloomfield to Deepfields Cut and the associated narrow version of the Coseley Tunnel, which linked these two lengths of waterway. The making of a new branch to Ridgeacre was also progressed to serve coal mines and ironworks. Despite this important progress, there was an underlining concern amongst the proprietors that there were various issues to be resolved with the state of the navigation. Again the services of a skilled engineer were sought. Thomas Telford was asked to come to see the canal and make suggestions for improvement. To state Telford suggested improvements would be an understatement, he transformed the BCN. His major contribution was the New Main Line that started in Birmingham and continued through to Coseley Tunnel. Features included the Deep Cutting at Smethwick that enabled the Birmingham Level to be extended as far as Albion at first and then across the massive Sheepwash Embankment to Tipton and finally from Tipton to Coseley complete with another deep cutting and a tunnel wide enough for boats to pass as well as a towpath on either side. His whole concept was to have a wide canal made with towpaths on both sides in order to reduce congestion and eliminate the regular causes of dispute between boat men as they attempted to pass each other in the narrow channel of the Old Main Line or position craft into wharves, basins or side arms. Telford also improved the water supply with the making of a new reservoir at Edgbaston in the brook valley and a new feeder from Titford Pools to supply it. Telford's inspection highlighted other short comings, which included the remarkable state of the aqueduct at Drayton. The original Pinkerton structure had been swept away in floods and the temporary solution of using old canal boats to form the aqueduct had remained until Telford found it decayed in 1824 during his tour of inspection. Work was soon begun to move bricks and other materials to this spot to reconstruct this Aqueduct.



Telford's inspection of the canal also brought innovation. The slow progress of cutting the Ridgeacre Branch was noted and at his suggestion a contractor's railway was laid down to assist moving the spoil. Such techniques had been used before and in this region William James and William Whitmore had used this construction technique to assist with the build of the Lower Stratford moving bricks for lock construction as well as spoil. It was the first recorded use of a railway used for construction on the BCN. The technique did little to help the contractor Jacob Twigg whose progress was not considered fast enough and he was sacked from the contract. His successor was the contracting partnership Jackson & Hyde who went on to perform other contracts for both canals and railways. For Twigg his career went into decline and ended in bankruptcy.

Thomas Telford had died before he was able to see the completion of the BCN works which he had instigated. He had been very busy on both road and canal contracts. As a canal engineer he had honed his skills on the Ellesmere Canal and whilst Telford is often associated with the grade 1 listed Pontcysyllte Aqueduct as it was finally built after 10 years of construction, it is best to remember him, however, for his first major achievement that was the water supply for the Ellesmere Canal where a conventional reservoir near Brymbo was replaced by the innovative diversion of the waters from Pimble Mere (Lake Bala) into the River Dee and then from the Dee along a navigable feeder through Llangollen to Trevor. Whilst Telford was engaged with the BCN he was also associated with engineering the second Harecastle Tunnel for the Trent & Mersey and making a link between the Trent & Mersey Canal and the Macclesfield Canal. The building of the Birmingham & Liverpool Junction Canal also ranks amongst his major works even if the Shebdon Embankment caused him many problems particularly in making it stable. He also encountered a similar problem in the making of the

Middlewich Branch where the Cheshire Clay proved another unstable medium to work with.

Whilst Telford transformed the New Main Line the process of BCN expansion did not end there. Talks that involved a merger of the Wyrley & Essington and the BCN became a protracted affair. Even though there was support for this outcome the important issue of share value remained an almost immovable stumbling block. Deputations went back and forth between the two canal companies until the iron master George Thorneycroft found a way to break the deadlock and set the merger process on course during 1839.

Making the Wyrley & Essington had taken some 5 years and through its construction had opened up transport links to coal mines at Essington Wood and Brownhills as well as various limeworks. Yet its biggest asset was water which through the reservoirs at Chasewater and Sneyd had an ample supply of water. The surveys had been done by William Pitt, but the contractor John Brawn and his family deserves a share of the credit for getting the canal made. There was also a degree of innovation in making this waterway and included a trial of a mechanical digging machine. Before Chasewater was made Pitt devised a system of lock and side pounds where water was saved in order to reduce water loss. His design was tried on at least one lock on the Ogley Flight. Once agreement had been ratified between the two companies (10th February 1839) new link canals between the two canal systems were initiated. The engineer who made a key contribution to these schemes was James Walker. He came into the fold with experience in railway engineering and transferred those skills to canals. His first major involvement was the Tame Valley Canal whose earlier planned route was re worked by Walker into the straight line that was constructed. The Tame Valley became the canal highway into the heart of the South



Staffordshire Iron District linking with the Birmingham & Warwick Junction, Warwick & Birmingham, Warwick & Napton, Oxford and Grand Junction Canals for a fast fly boat route to London.

Walker engineered the three link canals to the Wyrley & Essington and following the merger with the Dudley Canal in 1846 set about planning another link to that waterway. The embodiment of that engineering plan came about as the Netherton Tunnel, the Dudley No 2 straightening, Two Lock Line and the new locks at the Delph. His final contribution was the planning of the Cannock Extension Canal.

The Dudley Canal has been constructed in three major sections. Thomas Dadford had been responsible for engineering the canal from the Delph towards Blowers Green and from 1785 and until 1791 the extension that included Parkhead Locks and Dudley Tunnel was made and with it a link with the BCN at Tipton Green. Whilst Dadford had an overview of this project, his time was taken elsewhere including the construction

of the Fradley- Whittington Brook section of canal, built by the Trent & Mersey, but handed over to the Coventry Canal Company on completion. Cutting Dudley Tunnel was particularly problematical and eventually Josiah Clowes was employed as engineer to finish this task. Clowes also undertook the engineering for the third section that ran from Parkhead and involved a number of loops and curves around the hillside at Netherton and the Bumble Hole before passing through tunnels at Gorsty Hill and Lapal to join the Worcester & Birmingham Canal at Selly Oak. A basic supply of water was provided by Gads Green Reservoir, but later under Brewin various improvements were made to the route around Netherton. The cutting of a short tunnel there enabled a bypass canal to be made that avoided two loops of the original route. Brewin dammed this area creating Lodge Farm Reservoir.

It is difficult to separate the impact of the work of both Walker and Telford, but between them they created a canal network that was a credit to Britain. □

COAL BOAT ROACH

BEST PRICES ON ALL POPULAR FUELS

All popular fuels stocked

Deliveries by road and water

Wholesale enquiries welcome

Prompt, reliable service

Check out our website and blog at www.coalboat.co.uk

CALL JENNY OR JOHN JACKSON ON 07885 284812 or email coalboat@waitrose.com





Canal & River Trust

CRT West Midlands

Ian Lane West Midlands Waterway Manager

ian.lane@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Hello All and apologies it's been a while since my last update. As always there is lots of really good stuff going on but the one that's having most impact at present is around the waterway unit changes with us absorbing part of Central Shires. Overall we have grown around 30%, taking our new length of canals covered to 613km with just under 3000 assets. So whilst it is really exciting we have a lot of work to do and we just need to make sure that our level of service to all users across the old and new patch doesn't suffer. We are also looking at what happens when the Fazeley office closes next year. Given that Cambrian wharf isn't ideal for boating customers to travel to, I do want to open up Fradley as a new front of house to provide a similar level of service. I haven't got a timescale on that yet but I will keep you updated on progress.

We are also in the middle of the events season and last weekend saw the IWA's festival of Water come to Pelsall Junction. Despite the theft of bricks from the junction bridge a few weeks before, everything went well and I really hope that it went a long way to help change people's perception of the BCN and encourage them to use it more. As you know I really want to keep numbers of users growing and your involvement in promoting events and generally helping us keep the BCN maintained is greatly appreciated so thank you to everyone involved.

I am also pleased to say that moorings at Trapmakers bridge, Wednesfield, and Hollybank basin both on the Wyrley & Essington Canal, are available and have been tested out recently. I am also looking to bring more moorings to just outside Birmingham City centre and will be looking at those locations over the coming weeks.

Anyway, that's it for now but please don't forget to keep sending us your reports of the issues you come across as you travel around the system.



Holly Bank Basin



Trap Makers Bridge mooring beyond bridge on off side



Notice of the Society AGM

Birmingham Canal Navigations Society

Company Limited by Guarantee no: 04306537 Registered Charity no:
1091760

Annual General Meeting 2016 To be held in the Marquee at the Tifford Gathering 7.30pm Friday 4th November

Venue: Tifford Pump House, Engine Street, Oldbury B69 4NL

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the minutes of the 2015 AGM
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Chairman's report
5. Treasurer's report
- Approval of the Draft Annual Accounts
6. Accept the resignation of those Council Members who are standing down.
7. Election of Council Members
8. Presentation of Awards, 24 Hour Challenge, Presidents Award, Trolley Trophy & Bob Broomhall Volunteer Award
9. Any other business relevant to the Annual General Meeting that has been submitted, in writing, to the Hon. Secretary at least 7 days before the meeting
10. Close of meeting.

Mr I H Caplan, Hon Secretary BCNS, 105 Trefoil Gardens, Stourbridge, DY8 4DY email: ihcaplan@msn.com

Please contact Ivor preferably by email if you are interested in being elected to Council or wish to nominate someone, obviously subject to their agreement.

If you are able to attend the AGM please bring this copy of the agenda with you as there will only be a limited number of copies available at the meeting



BCNS Xmas Dinner *Friday December 2nd 2016*



Birmingham Marriott Hotel 12 Hagley Road, Five Ways, Birmingham, B16 8SJ

Following last year's successful evening, and in response to several requests to repeat the experience we have again booked our event at the Marriott Hotel in Birmingham at the same special prices as before. The Restaurant can cater for up to 70 diners.

First come, first served bookings with payment, including choice of menu, are required **by 11 November** to allow for easier service at the Hotel. For further information and bookings please contact

Dave Dent on dentdave@hotmail.com or 0208 6919190.

Starter:

Roasted Butternut Squash Soup, toasted pumpkin seeds (v)
Pressed Ham Hock, piccallili, crispbread
Poached Salmon, baby gem, cucumber relish,beetroot

Main Course:

All accompanied by seasonal vegetables

Roast Turkey, chestnut and sage seasoning, cranberry sauce
Rolled Rib of Beef with a red wine jus
Baked Sea Bass, shredded fennel, pressed potato, tomato and caper dressing
Fig and Caramelised Red Onion Tart, aged feta (v)

Dessert:

Christmas Pudding, brandy sauce
Dark Chocolate & Orange Torte, vanilla sauce
Apple Crumble and Pecan Tart, maple syrup, vanilla bean ice cream
Selection of local Cheeses with homemade chutney and biscuits



2 courses for £18.50, 3 courses for £22.00

Coffee/Tea and Festive Mince Pies will be served to all at the end of the meal

Book Reviews
by Norma O'Keeffe

**Edward Paget-Tomlinson
A-Z of the Birmingham Canal
Navigations**

**Historical notes by Ray Shill Editors:
Martin O'Keeffe and Peter Silvester Pubs
by Canal Bookshop, Audlem, for
Birmingham Canal Navigations Society,
2016, 179 pages, 44 colour 73 b&w illus,
2 maps, £15.95,
ISBN N 978-0-9574037-8-9**

This little gem of a book is a fitting tribute to the talents and dedication of the late Edward Paget-Tomlinson. From the Introduction by Martin O'Keeffe and the Foreword by Phil Clayton, to the very useful Index, this book satisfies all the requirements of the discerning reader.

As the text notes, the Birmingham Canal Navigations (BCN) has changed in many ways since the time of the working boat, yet thanks to a keen and devoted following it has survived as a popular leisure pursuit. The A-Z was originally serialised in the BCNS

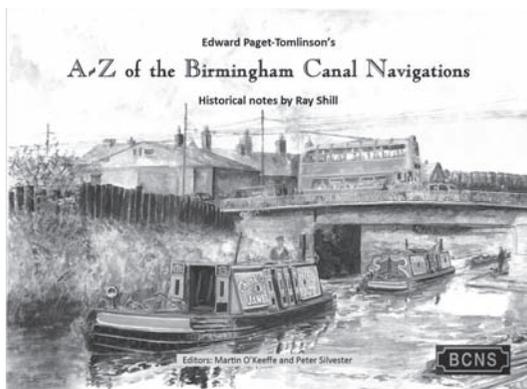
Magazine and now it is available here as a complete work. In this alphabet, where each letter is an interesting cameo in itself, A is for Anglesey Basin, and Z is for Zinc, reminding us that the BCN was originally conceived for the carriage of the raw materials that enabled Birmingham and the Black Country to become the workshop of the world.

This book has a unique quality and charm of its own: it is not only a visual treat, but a real historic record of a premier canal.

Edward Paget-Tomlinson was a renowned artist, especially in the field of transportation. Though a busy man he was never too engaged to listen and explain to even the most uninitiated, or to discuss his ideas with those of like minds.

In this work we have been given an A-Z that that could not have been bettered. It will grace every bookshelf and will always be a delight to dip into. It is not easy to make any comment that would do justice to this publication with its own special character, yet so well suited to its subject and its purpose. All those involved in its compilation are to be congratulated. Ray Shill, who has done so much to increase our historic knowledge of the BCN, has provided some excellent images, both old and new, that highlight his skilful text.

Most highly recommended. □



Welcome New Members

From our Membership Secretary Alan Veness
He would like to welcome the following
new members and hope they will join us
in the activities of the BCN Society



5 new memberships since last BP:

Simeon Mayou - Pelsall
Tracey Forrest - Quarry Bank
Jon Barlow - NB Just Perfick
Stephen & Julie Procter - Smethwick
Harald Joergens & Xiangmei Jin-Joergens - Nutfield, Surrey

Plus 14 inclusive memberships for entrants to the August BCN Explorer Cruise:

Michael & Denise Bending - Swadlincote
Athina Beckett & Jonathan Brown - Milton Keynes
John & Sue Rawlins - Poole
Jeff & Lynda Daws - Kingston St Michael
Christine Varndell - Coventry
John & Helen Smith - Letchworth
Mike & Lorraine Newman - Ware
Alan & Glenda Dodds - Wellingborough
Raymond Cross & Jane Rabagliati - Newmarket
Paul & Janine Strudwick - Chelmsford
Nick & Liz Dilly - Somersham
Michael & Lesley Skinner - Royal Wootton Bassett
Tony Walker - Grange-over-Sands
Mark & Jayne Saxon - Rickmansworth



Cribbing Information

Phil Clayton

During Ray Shill's interesting walk around the Windmill End area the other week, discussion turned to Netherton Tunnel and its shafts. They were dug from the surface using a metal ring to support the brickwork lining of the shaft. The ring was moved downwards as work progressed. I wondered if it had a particular name. Brian Ward queried what happened to the rings when the shafts not needed for ventilation were filled in. Passing through the tunnel recently, we looked to see if any evidence was visible at the foot of the infilled shafts. At one of them, I didn't note which and will check next time, the remains of a ring were thought to have been spotted in the roof brickwork. Anyway, that's not the point of this note.

I've just received my copy of the latest "British Mining", journal of the Northern Mine Research Society, which is, this issue, all about the vocabulary of Yorkshire coal mining, 1250 - 1850. There's a photo of a shaft about to be sunk on a Yorkshire pit with the ring clearly visible and, although the one in this example is wooden, it's called a "cribbing ring".

Now just how many shafts were there in Netherton Tunnel ?

Coombeswood Canal Company

Hawne Basin (Dudley No. 2)

Hereward Rise, Halesowen, B62 8AW

0121 550 1355 Mobile 07761555353

Registered Charity No. 1088978

Red Diesel (*average over last 3 mths*) 58p per litre

(*10p discount into boats*)

Coal Taybrite - 10.75 per 25kg

Multifuel - 9.75 per 25kg

Calor Gas - 13kg 22.36

Chandlery with a good range in stock and a next-day special order service.

Reasonable prices.

If you're on the slipway, give us your order the week before and everything will be waiting for you.

Open Mon to Thurs 10 to 3 Fri to Sun 10 to 4

Recycling the Cycle!



For our new members who do not know Colin Hutchinson he is one of our special members who helps the Society in a more unusual way. He has a company that designs and produces jeans for ladies and children. He donates his one off examples to the Society for sale. These jeans produce well over £1000 each year. Of course it involves a great deal of work from our volunteers but an enjoyable time for those who help. Without funds generated by our members in this an other ways the Society would not be able to function in the way it does.

Here we hear from Eileen Johnson who manages the sale of these Jeans telling us an amusing way of using an item pulled out of the canal that would otherwise be thrown in the skip. Shame you can't see the colour!

Hello Brenda, I am sending this little letter for you to put into Boundary Post if you have any space left. It's about a little project that Colin has done, and I thought it would be nice for it to go into Boundary Post..... I thought you would like to see this picture of a bicycle which was taken out of the B.C.N. Canal on a work party. It just shows what can be created out of some scrap from the canal. My cousin Colin Hutchinson likes to have a project to do so he asked Barrie if he could have an old bike that had been found in the canal. Colin took the bike home and gave it a coat of paint, bought two baskets and

some plants, and put it all together with some T.L.C. So if you find you have a spare afternoon with nothing to do, you could take an old bike, wheelbarrow or shopping trolley and make a nice feature for your garden. It's always said one mans scrap is another mans treasure. Colin enjoyed working on his project, all though he bought two or three tins of paint before he got the colour Glenda, his wife, liked, but they were both happy with the final result.

So get creative and do a feature for your garden, and send in a photo to Boundary Post.

Richard Alford - Waterways Chaplain



I will have met some of you at various BCNS events but in case I haven't my name is Richard Alford and I am a Waterways Chaplain. I became a Waterways Chaplain in June 2013 and together with other chaplains in Coventry, and the Peak Forest Canal I look after an area from Leamington Spa to Derby/ Nottingham.

The role of a chaplain is as varied as the day is long but initially we all adopt a particular part of the canal and walk the towpath on a regular basis. So every week I try to walk the centre of Birmingham, Gas Street Basin and along the canals that stretch out from there. That takes up the morning then in the afternoon I do the same in the Kingswood Junction area, taking in the Stratford and Grand Union canals.

As I walk I introduce myself to the many people I come across, boaters, fishermen, walkers, CRT staff and volunteers and as we talk very often they will tell me of concerns or joys that they might have.

Sometimes I am simply the person they can grumble at as they cannot see a way of getting rid of their frustrations. I help people through the locks, particularly at Kingswood and especially during the season with the good number of boats who are moving around. In the centre of Birmingham, I am very often asked where places are so I carry maps with me, and when I meet homeless people I carry directions for the homeless centres.

The main call on my work is assisting boaters who have found themselves in difficulty, and as a result are unable to pay for their licence, which means they may lose their boat. Sometimes these people have multiple problems which doesn't help when you are trying to access benefits, especially as very often the forms are complicated, and not set out to accommodate someone who lives on a boat. For instance, the housing benefit forms asks 'how many rooms do you have and how many toilets?' In these instances, I go with the boater to help them access the benefits to which they are entitled. I have to say most council staff have been very helpful, but very often they are unaware of what a boater can claim. Of course if they are continuous cruisers then they have to nominate a council where they spend most of their time. Very often we liaise with CRT and their Welfare Officer, Sean Williams, to enable a boater to become 'legal' or



to find a safe mooring. There are other problems such as registering with a doctor, voting or even receiving post, but generally these can be overcome. Along with the other chaplains, 40+ now, we also get involved in such things as funerals, wedding blessings, boat festivals etc., so you can see the work involves a wide variety of activities.

As I stated earlier we cover a large area, and we couldn't do what we do without people such as yourselves. For you are the people in an area who can let us know when a boater is in trouble or when you think they need someone to talk to. If you think that is the case, and you feel I can help then my contact details are Richard@rabbitwarren.org.uk or 07702 842 794.

BCN 24 Hour Challenge 2016

Another great challenge.

Notable this year for a number of firsts: Our first walking team who covered 26+ miles including over the top of Didley and Gosty Hill Tunnels.

Our first working pair as winners.

Our youngest ever participant. Well done & welcome to 4 month old Lily, although she was almost upstaged by the lady who took part almost 9 months pregnant. Wow! That's commitment.

More boats than ever braved the Walsall Canal but problems were reported on Walsall and Ryders Green locks. The Wyrley and Essington is still slow going due to silt, weed and rubbish. What's new! However overall the system is improving.

Our new Trolley Trophy was won by Dove for rubbish collection and the best decorated

boat award was won by William & Gosport who also won the overall event. I was lucky enough to watch William & Gosport working through Rushall top locks and it has been a long time since I have seen such an efficient passage. Very well done to them all.

Next year is a special year for the 24 Hour Challenge. It will be 50 years since the IWA organised their first 24 Hour BCN Cruise. That cruise led directly to the formation of our Society the following year. It is fitting therefore to finish next years Challenge at the Society's HQ at Titford Pump House. The BCN Committee, John and I will do what we can to ensure that next years event will reflect the importance of these events.

We hope you will join us!

Roy Kenn & John Carrington



William & Gosport lining up in Hawne Basin at the end of the Challenge.

Well Done!



Work Party

Report

by Mike Rolfe



August 13th This was another Work party done in conjunction with "The Challenge," a group of young people who do activities in the wider community, and today they volunteered to help us on the Tiford canal. Around twenty youngsters were with us, along with Steve Lambert from CRT, who provided extra tools and gloves. Seven BCNS members were present.

Crow was used today due to Phoenix having it's engine service. We bow hauled Crow as far as New Inn Bridge while most of us grappled ahead, this producing a fair amount of rubbish. There were two unseen things we failed to budge, no doubt stuck in the silt. On our return to the Pump House, we filled the BCNS truck with scrap metal, the rest of our haul went in the skip.

The youngsters really seemed to enjoy the day, despite getting a little dirty, and went home happy. They even provided us with some cake and biscuits at lunchtime.

September 3rd Our annual visit to Tipton for the Pre-Rally Clean up with the "Friends of Tipton Cut." Phoenix was brought down from Norton Canes by Stuart following it's engine service, and arrived on site at 10 30, ready for the clean up. The Friends did their usual jobs of hedge cutting, weeding and litter picking while Phil Barlow, Mike Ross and I checked the bridge holes, and loaded the rubbish in to Phoenix. Lunch was taken in the "Fountain," courtesy of the Friends, so thanks to Ann Johnson. Phil, Mike and I then returned Phoenix to the Pum-house for unloading, separating the metal as usual. It rained steadily while we were in Tipton.

Future Work Parties

October 29th Pre-Rally Clean up at the Pumhouse.

It is also proposed to take Phoenix back to Ocker Hill later in the year for more work on some Tame Valley bridge holes. Dates to be decided.



Sheltering out of the torrential rain during a clean up at Tipton in preparation of the Tipton Community Canal Festival.

Photo: Keith Perry

The Challenge

Launched in 2009, The Challenge is the UK's leading charity for building a more integrated society, a society in which there is understanding and appreciation of each other's differences. We design and deliver programmes that bring different people together to develop their confidence and skills in understanding and connecting with others. In 2009, approximately 160 young people participated in our programmes; in 2015 we reached circa 34,000 participants.

National Citizen Service

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for 15-17 year olds.

NCS helps build skills for work and life whilst taking on new challenges and meeting new friends. The programme involves a short time away from home, trying new things as well as taking part in a team project in the local community and much more.

NCS is a government-funded initiative that supports community engagement, social action and social mixing among young people.



Boat builders at Norton Canes since 1964

Traditional narrow boats & tugs built to your specification, from one of the oldest & most respected boat builders in the business.

We offer a full range of services including shells, sailaways and full fit outs, grit blasting, boat painting, signwriting and traditional decoration, engineering and engines, gas, plumbing and electrics.

**Norton Canes Dock, Lime Lane, Pelsall, Walsall WS3 5AP
Phone/fax 01543374370 Email: info@canalworkboats.co.uk
www.canaltransportservices.co.uk**

Restoration of Dudley No2 Canal in Harborne Wharf

The Lapal Canal Trust is focused on restoring the Dudley No 2 canal from Selly Oak to California where it is planned to build a marina with new homes. It will be a significant regeneration project creating employment and becoming a tourist attraction.

In a significant step forward a group of canal enthusiasts from the Inland Waterways' Waterway Recovery Group descended on Selly Oak for one week of intensive canal restoration work. While mainly focussed on repairing a section of the canal wall, the group also cleared the vegetation that was damaging the bridge, cleared the offside wall and greatly improved the access path.

A community effort, in addition to Ian Gaston and his team of 19 volunteers we need to thank the Bournbrook Fire Station for pumping water from the canal, district engineers for arranging for the tow path to be closed, Selly Oak Park's management for permission and support, Selco for providing materials and equipment hire at cost, Carey's for donating the temporary fencing, Worcester Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society and Canal & River Trust for support and bricks, Birmingham Canal Navigation Society for agreeing to help with a truck, Coombeswood Canal Trust for diesel fuel for the excavator, and Birmingham

University for allowing the group to use their sport centre showers. Also many thanks to Rob Green who arranged accommodation at the Stonehouse Gang Youth Club, Adrian Langley who gave us free access to the Scout Hut facilities (toilets and kitchen), Michael Winwood the kindly neighbour who gave us water and free electricity, along with the many well-wishers who viewed the work and some 2500 who followed the Facebook daily bulletins, Charles Shapcott for preparing the repair scheme used and Alex Jones, Archaeologist, for his watching brief and report (fulfilling a planning condition) We would also like to thank the Headley Trust for a timely grant award of £30,000 which helped pay for the accommodation, materials and equipment hire and will also fund further work on the restoration project.

Please follow progress on our web site www.lapal.org and www.facebook.com/lapalcanaltrust

For queries contact
Hugh Humphreys
nbhugh@gmail.com





BCNS Social Meetings
*held on the first Thursday in the month
start at 7-30pm Titford Pumphouse
Engine Street Oldbury B69 4NL
All Welcome!*

4th - 5th November- End of Season Rally & AGM at Titford P.H.

10th November - Mon & Brec Canal - An overview of the canals of South Wales and in particular the history, current condition and restoration of the Mon & Brec Canal. - Ken Turner

1st December - Christmas Social - Details on page 25

5th January - Hotel Boating Holidays in the 1950's travelling on the Midlands Canals in two narrowboats operating out of Penkrudge - Roger Butler

Martin Brookes

FOR ALL YOUR MARINE WORK

On the Stourbridge Canal, between Stourton and Wordsley Junctions

*Coach Painting - Boat Building - Fitting Out - Compliance Work
New Installation - Engine Servicing - Repairs - Welding
Hull Blacking - Breakdown Call Out Service*

***Diesel Tank cleaning and fuel filtering with minimum need for drilling
or cutting or emptying tank Mobile or at Wharf Service***

Bookings for Wharf Cranage NOW available

**All Work Personally Undertaken
Waterways Craft Guild Accredited
Free no obligation quotation**

07802 444370 or mb.tramp@btinternet.com

The BCN Society, a Company Limited by Guarantee, is a registered charity (1091760) first formed in 1968, which exists to conserve, improve and encourage a wide range of interests in the 100 mile network of Birmingham & Black Country waterways known as the Birmingham Canal Navigations. Boundary Post is the journal of the BCNS and is issued quarterly. Readers are invited to submit items of news, general or historical interest to:

The Editor, Brenda Ward. 9 Wylde Green Road, Sutton Coldfield B72 1HB
tel: 0121 355 6351 email: boundarypost@googlemail.com

Heron Maps

Creative Cartographic Publishing



Heron Maps, PO Box 3008, Reading, RG1 9RU

E-mail: maporders@heronmaps.com

Website: www.heronmaps.com

*Also available at waterside retailers, shops and
www.amazon.co.uk*

BCN, Greenways and Grand Union Canal maps **£5.99**

Ring maps **£6.50** (free postage from Heron Maps)



Heron Maps