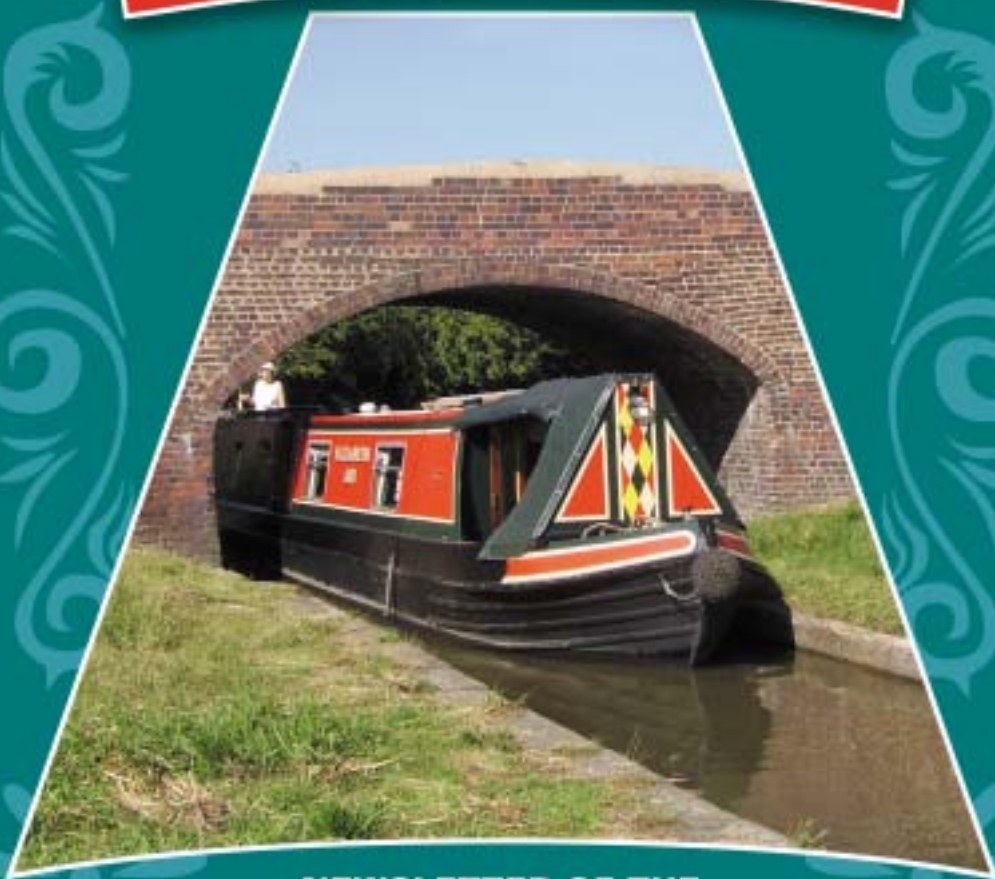




# SPOUT



NEWSLETTER OF THE  
**ASHBY CANAL ASSOCIATION**

September 2006 Where **50p** Sold Volume 35 N°3

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## What is This?

there are at least three locations on the Ashby Canal where this feature can be seen, and maybe more? Does any reader know their purpose, as well as the locations? Please write to the editor if you can help with this as this is a genuine puzzle - which we would like to have an answer for!



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# IWA Waterways Companion Award

**G**eoff Pursglove, Canal Restoration Project Officer for Leicestershire County Council, has been awarded the IWA's "Waterways Companion Award" (a fine piece of engraved Caithness Crystal glass).



*Geoff receives his award from Vaughan Welch, chairman of the IWA's Restoration Committee.*

The award is made to an authority or person who has provided the most help to a local IWA branch, waterway society or trust, in progressing a waterway restoration scheme. Geoff has made history by being the only person to receive this award for a second time.

At a ceremony held at the end of the canal at Snaresstone, on Friday 14th July, the award was presented by Vaughan Welch, chairman of the IWA's Restoration Committee. In reply, Geoff was keen to acknowledge the work done by the team at County Hall who are involved in the project - the engineers, planners, and legal officers who helped put the Transport and Works Act Order together. Some of the County Hall team were present at the award ceremony. He also thanked his

"better half", Maggie, for all her support.

IWA Midlands Region was represented by Jerry Sanders and Helen Whitehouse. The ACA was represented by its secretary Cyril Blackford, treasurer John Roddis, and work party organiser, Rod Smith. It was also good to see Gerald Box, representing the Ashby Canal Trust, and also Chris Daniels from "Waterways World". Among other family, friends and supporters present, was former Spout editor Di Everett, who supplied excellent scones, jam and cream to accompany the teas and coffees served up by Jean Roddis and Lynda Wright. Altogether, a very pleasant event, which, as a result of wide press coverage, resulted in valuable publicity for the restoration scheme. Once again, we offer Geoff our congratulations.

# Ashby Canal Association

Registered Charity No. 1063566

## Committee

### President

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Printed by Moira Replan, 17 Ashby Road, Moira, Leicestershire DE12 6DJ.

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Cover picture: Summer at Marston Junction.

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## Editor

**W**elcome to the September 2006 issue of Spout. A big thank you to all who helped with the Shackerstone Family Festival this year, despite inclement weather the show proved ever-popular with the public and boaters alike. I am always pleased to receive articles for 'Spout' and openly encourage readers to contribute. My nagging is paying off and I am becoming article-rich from an ever-expanding band of people on a variety of subjects. For example, Derek Clements who along with a friend converted an aluminium air-bourne lifeboat (designed to be dropped from a Lancaster) into a useful canal cruiser during the early post-war years. Worth waiting until December for - real 'Boys Own' stuff! Keep sending me bits, however big or small - Spout needs you!  
*Martin Bird*

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# Ashby Canal Association

Registered Charity No. 1063566

The Ashby Canal Association was formed in 1966, born out of concern caused by progressive closure of the northern 8 miles due to mining subsidence. The ACA is now actively promoting their restoration and re-connection to the navigable canal and over recent years the Associations work-parties have significantly contributed to the voluntary effort of the restoration project.

The Association seeks to promote the canal and its surroundings as an amenity for all users, whether walkers,

anglers, boaters or a canal related business. At the same time it is intent on preserving the canals rural character.

“Spout” is published quarterly and delivered to all members of the Association.

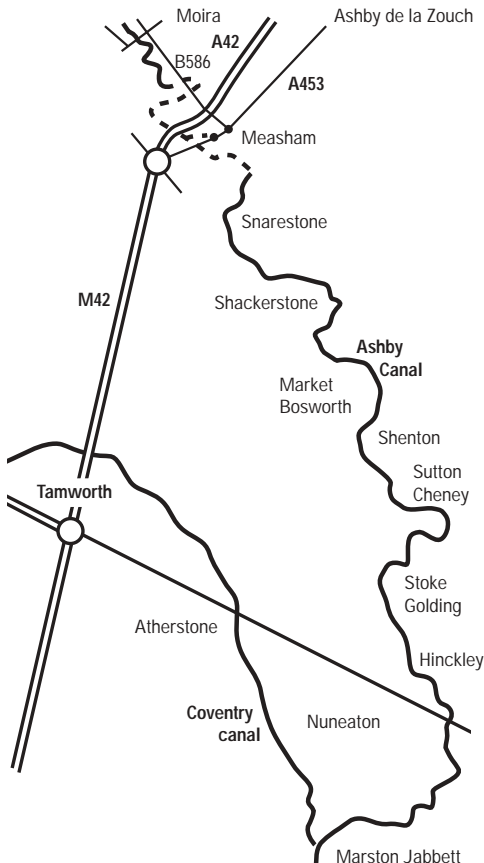
The ACA organise 8 canal - related talks through each winter at the MIRA Social Club (by the A5 at Nuneaton) usually at 7.30 on the second Monday of the month. Check our web-site for details. Entry is free, non-members are welcome and a bar service is available.

The ACA plays a major role in organising the annual Shackerstone Family Festival and boat rally in early September and fully supports the Ashby Canal Trust and their annual Moira Canal Festival held in mid-May.

The Association is a registered charity with 500 members; it receives no funding from any official source. The ACA is affiliated to the Inland Waterways Association.

Membership is open to all, see page 20 for details.

Visit our web-site - [www.ashbycanal.org.uk](http://www.ashbycanal.org.uk)



# Modern Times

By The Shackerstone Fishing Bailiff **Cyril Saunders**

**B**efore I go on to tell you my tale I would like to give a big thank you to Mr Dick Ensor of Measham, who relating to my former story, recently furnished me with the name of the "Pole". Good old Dick, he is 74 years old and has a memory like an elephant. After all these years we get to know the chap's name, it just shows - never give up hope!

My eldest son Andrew and I have had lots of things happen to us. This tale is from August last year. We were night fishing at "The Boats" on a Friday night. We had caught small fish earlier in the night and when dark we had several Tench and Bream, not fantastic. Around 1am Saturday morning there was such a row in the field behind us. Grunts, bumps etc., was it foxes fighting?

Leaving Andrew in charge of 4 rods I picked up my big lantern and walked up the towpath to the stile (everyone knows where that is). I climbed over the stile into the field, the noise continued so I pointed the lamp ahead of me. I would say about 90 yards in front were the biggest dog badgers I have ever seen, fighting like mad. I was now standing in the field with the stile to my back.

Andy was shouting, "What is it Dad?"

All at once they stopped fighting and one of them turned in top gear. I mean really fast and headed for me and the irritating beam. My mind was racing, what to do? I did not believe the situation. Now I am no John Wayne (he is my third love). "What do I do?" I thought.

The badger was galloping towards me, why? I just stood there - don't ask me why. I was about to lash out and kick it but at the last second it veered away from me and the lamp. Anyway, I don't think the kick would have had any effect at all, it would have probably broken my foot. I climbed back

over the stile.

Andy had another Tench. The night still had events in store. Around 2am the skies erupted. Rain, rain and more rain. We were both snug under the brolly's in the hedge, really cosy - damn the rods! It was lashing it down, were we mad? Then around 2.30am it happened. Andy's Carp buzzer came to life, full blast and stayed going. Never let anybody tell you that fish don't bite in the rain!

Andy shouts to me, "Come and help Dad!"

I thought, I don't think so, not in this lot!

Andy was into a really good Carp, it was pelting it down. He was doing well with the Carp and I was warm and dry. He was getting drowned, poor Andy!

The Carp snagged him and he shouted me again, "Come on Dad!"

My dedication to my son and fish kicked in and the fool got out of the brolly. We managed to get it moving again and toyed with it for another 10 minutes or so, a Carp rod test curve of 21/2 and a 12lb line. Who will win?

The Carp did. It found a boat propeller and said goodbye. Andy and I were wet to the skin - are we really mad?

We drank our last hot tea, sat moaning till it got lighter then put an end to the session. We were ready for a warm bed!

I hope you enjoy these little tales.

# ACA Meets the Planners

On 14th June, members of ACA, Cyril Blackford, John and Jean Roddis and Geoff Pursglove hosted an inspection tour of the Ashby Canal through Hinckley, courtesy of the IWA's narrow boat 'Jubilee'.

Officers from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council joined us for a look at canal side developments from the point of view of the boater and towing path walker. It was a useful event, with the planners

taking note of the waterways aspects of the many sites on the Ashby now under development. Cyril thought it was particularly valuable, enabling us to have a two-way discussion on general policies rather than getting down to detail, as he usually does when consulted on planning applications.

All in all a worthwhile afternoon.

---

## Stop Press!

### Adverse Planning Decision

It has just come to our notice that North West Leicestershire District Council Planning Committee have overturned their own officer's recommendations, against their own Local Plans, and approved a gypsy site adjacent to the route of the Ashby Canal north of Measham. This has serious implications for the development of

the canal, and the Ashby Canal Trust are currently considering the options, including taking legal action, to challenge the decision. Events are fast-moving at the moment, but Geoff Pursglove, Ashby Canal Project Officer is keeping a close eye on developments and he can be contacted on 01530 273956 for information on the current situation.

---

## 2006 Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Ashby Canal Association will take place on Monday 13th November 2006 at the MIRA Sports and Social Club, Watling Street, Nuneaton, starting at 7.30 pm.

### Election of Management Committee Members

Nominations are sought for candidates for the Management Committee. Any member may nominate one or more candidates. Nominations must be seconded by another member and the nomination must be agreed by the candidate.

The members retiring by rotation are Cindy Aston, Dave Billings, Cyril Blackford and Lynda Wright, all are eligible and are willing to be re-elected. The following form of

nomination is suggested:

I (print name)

Signed:

Nominate:

For election to the Management Committee of the Ashby Canal Association at the 2006 AGM

Seconded: (print name)

Signed:

Agreed by Nominee:

Nomination forms to be sent to the Secretary (see addresses) by Friday 13th October 2006.

# From the Chair

**A**utumn is now well and truly upon us and I hope you can look back on a summer when you enjoyed the waterways as much as we did. The long hot spell in July came as something of a surprise in Ireland and made our cruise of the lower Shannon that much more pleasant.

We have delayed this issue of Spout so as to include a report on the Shackerstone Festival and record that the Anniversary Dinner to mark the Associations 40th year took place at the end of August, thanks to all who helped and attended.

I'm sorry to bring bad news regarding the restoration project. Contrary to my optimistic comments in the June Spout, it is most regrettable that the joint National Forest (£30M) and Leicestershire County Council (£5M) bid for lottery funds was rejected and the County Council are now investigating other sources of finance for the Snarstone - Measham restoration. We await further information.

Now I turn to more personal matters. As many members will know, I have been boating in Ireland for a number of years and I hope to continue for some time yet. Over the last 6 years the Management Committee have kindly tolerated my months of absence and whilst the mobile phone and e-mail via the laptop have been of some help, I'm grateful to my colleagues for the way they've covered for me during the summer months.

However, in addition to being away in the summer, we intend to spend most of this winter abroad and clearly this presents an unworkable situation and one that is incompatible with being a committee member let alone the Chairman of the Association. Therefore, with some regret, I shall be resigning my position as from the

AGM in November. Having been in office for some 12 years as Hon. Treasurer and Chairman, I also think it's time to move aside and allow new blood and fresh ideas to come forward.

Thus, for the first time in about 6 years we will see new faces on the Management Committee which won't be a bad thing, hopefully they will enjoy the friendship, enthusiasm and satisfaction that I have had during my time in office.

**John Beaney**, Chairman.

---

## New Members

We would like to welcome the following new members to the Association and look forward to meeting as many of them, with their families and friends at some of our functions throughout the coming year.

- |     |                                     |                   |
|-----|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 464 | Mr T & Mrs L Ray                    | Nuneaton          |
| 465 | Mr R & Mrs L Kenny                  | Coalville         |
| 466 | Mr T Stamper                        | Melton Mowbray    |
| 467 | Mr S & Mrs E Thorpe                 | Desford           |
| 468 | Mr S Clarke & Miss H Burrows-Flower | Nuneaton          |
| 469 | Mr M Hudson & Miss A Hudson         | Swadlincote       |
| 470 | Mr I & Mrs A Clipstone              | Burton Latimer    |
| 471 | Mr M & Mrs M Bell                   | Nampantan         |
| 472 | Mr D & Mrs M Farley                 | Falmouth          |
| 473 | Ms F Keates                         | Swadlincote       |
| 474 | Mr M Shelton-Smith                  | Ashby de la Zouch |
| 475 | Mr I Smith                          | Stoke Golding     |
| 476 | Mr D Walford                        | Coventry          |
| 477 | Mr J Chell & Mrs D Dolman           | Nuneaton          |

# You Too can Make Fenders!

Terms like turks-head, half-hitching, crown knots and splices may sound complicated but the art of knotting is easy to master with a little guidance and practice. Over a weekend you can make a couple of side fenders, a short button, a deck matt and have a go at splicing mooring lines. Included in the cost are all the materials you need to make the fenders, the matt and the turks-heads. You will also receive a Swedish Fid (you can't do without one!) and a knot tying book with all the instructions you need for these projects plus many more. The cost of the weekend is £50 per person.

## **Etruria Industrial Museum**

Sat & Sun 4th & 5th November 9.30 - 4.30

## **Ellesmere Port Canal Boat Trust**

Sat & Sun 3rd & 4th February 2007  
9.30 - 4.30

For further details contact Dave Walker on  
Mobile: 0771 967 0026.

Email: [dwfenders@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dwfenders@yahoo.co.uk)

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# An Autumn Stroll With "Wanderer" Cont.

(No 26). Cross the entrance to the marina of Ashby Canal Centre, where boats are being repaired or painted. Some iron railings can be glimpsed in a field on the other side of the canal as you walk to Bridge 27. This supposedly was the site of the village's original sewage disposal system! (A footpath across Br.27 can be used as a shortcut back to the lane where your car is). Carry on past the boat moorings, along

the towpath through bridges 28 and 29. When you reach Bridge 30 make your way onto the road, and walk up into Dadlington village which has a lovely little 12th century church. Walk past the Dog and Hedgehog (or call in if needing sustenance!). As the road turns left, there is a path between houses on the right. This leads you across fields to the lane down which you walk back to your car.

---

## Where Do You Stand?

**W**ell yes, we assume you all stand behind the canal and its restoration, but what about when you handle a tiller? Do you stand well forward grasping the end with one hand while operating the "go" control with the other? Do you lounge against the tiller with a substantial length ahead of you? What about when you reverse the boat? It could be important, very important! A recent death up at Alrewas involved a steerer landing in the water at the stern and being drawn into the reversing blades. A similar event took place on the BCN a couple of years ago. So what could have happened. In the latter case we know for sure that the reversing boat hit an underwater obstruction and, according to reports, the steerer was catapulted into the water. The Alrewas case appears similar; but was either event as simple as that? A strong body of opinion suggests that it was not the sudden stopping of the boats that propelled the unfortunate steerers to their deaths. It is more likely that the rudder hit the obstruction first and caused the tiller to swing

violently to one side, pushing the steerer sideways off the stern. Don't believe me? Well a very close shave was experienced by an ACA member; he was pushed partially over his stern rail. His quick thinking wife only saved him from immersion. He says his boat was indeed going backwards at the time and did indeed hit something. The tiller swung rapidly over and propelled him sideways over the rail. His wife managed to grab him as he clung on.

With several tons of boat moving backwards, don't expect your tiny frame to stop it via the rudder, stand well forward and give the tiller room to swing.

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## An Autumn Stroll With “Wanderer”

This walk takes in the two Leicestershire villages of Dadlington and Stoke Golding, both of which have pubs for refreshment. The total length is just under 4 miles, but there is a short cut if you can't manage that.

Park (or moor) at “Bath Piece” moorings - where there is a convenient lay-by on the lane between Dadlington and Stoke Golding, where the road adjoins the canal. Why is it called “Bath Piece”? - refer to our “Local's Guide to the Ashby Canal” on sale at canalside outlets price £3 (end of commercial!)

Walk up the lane into Stoke Golding, passing cottages, and eventually St. Margaret's church, which is considered to be one of the most beautiful in the county. In John Betjeman's Guide to English Parish

Railway built a line under an 1866 Act of Parliament, which ran from Moira to a junction just west of Hinckley, passing through Stoke Golding. However, in 1867, the Midland reached agreement with the LNWR to build a new joint line from Stoke Golding to a junction near Nuneaton (thus creating the Ashby and Nuneaton Joint railway). This immediately rendered the first line to Hinckley redundant, and so no services operated to Hinckley. The good citizens of Stoke Golding petitioned the Board of Trade as late as 1881 requesting that passenger services should be operated. The railway companies reply was that they had never contemplated running passenger trains on the line; intriguingly they had never appeared to run any goods trains either, and so eventually, 32 years after being built, the line was taken up, having never carried any revenue earning traffic. All this time, of course, the adjacent canal was carrying traffic.



Churches it is described as a building of exceptional perfection. So please take the opportunity to visit it if you can.

Continue to the road junction by the George and Dragon, and turn right onto Station Rd. The name Station Road implies there was a railway through the village. Indeed, the railway history of Stoke Golding is fascinating because The Midland

At the bottom of the hill you will come to Ashby Boat Co's hire base, and attractive wharf buildings on your left. They have a small gift shop and serve drinks and ices. Cross the canal bridge (No.25) and join the towpath, turning left and heading north. The old railway line and goods shed can be seen beyond the towpath hedge. Walk up the towpath and just beyond the next bridge

# Random Thoughts

The temperatures in July took our thoughts back to 1976 and "The Great Drought". That was when locks all over the system were padlocked to conserve water, Restricted opening hours were applied to some while others were simply shut and that was that.



Our lords and masters down in their ivory towers at Watford, Fazeley and other sought after areas must be better at it now: certainly this time we suffered few of the restrictions of that past calamitous year. Watching the Midlands News on the goggle box, I was surprised to learn that we actually had more rain this year than in '76. If that is true, then we hardly noticed it so let's not take away all the credit from BW. (It was always BWB in '76 of course.) We were reminded of '76 as we cruised the Staffs. & Worcs. Passing a boat club we noticed a rather neglected boat with a familiar look about it. It was a Springer, the version with the rounded edges to the cabin top. An excellent idea which didn't fray any fender ropes which might hang from the hand-rail. The boat had familiar looking window frames, not the usual nautical ones. They looked like galvanised

jobs such as might be found on a brick building ashore and that's exactly what they were. Sight of the name on the stern confirmed our suspicions, this was Random. But why should this boat bring back memories of 1976? Read on and you will be enlightened.

Back then the ACA Chairman was Bob Johnson and his boat was Random. Differing slightly from Sam Springer's standard "Sampson" class thirty-six footer, it was only thirty-four feet long. This was to enable Bob to get it into his garden for fit-out. Not many boats have been fitted out in the residential centre of Hinckley. Bob's was one and John Little's Painted Lady was another a year or two later. Random performed very well with all the power that a single cylinder Sabb Diesel could muster. The engine was addicted to "Easy Start" fluid, but it always started eventually and

## Random Thoughts Cont.

served Bob well. Come 1976 and Bob decided to attend the opening ceremony of the new deep lock at Bath. This would be convenient for him as his daughter was at a boarding school in the area so two birds could be killed with one stone. Setting out in May, it would be a long cruise and would involve "weekending" the boat for much of the way. It would also involve transit of the tidal Severn to reach the Avon and Bath. The Kennet & Avon was not yet open of course. This was a bold venture to say the least. Bob would be in an escorted convoy which would only proceed under clement weather conditions. But with a single cylinder Sabb Diesel... In the event the convoy and escorts soon left Random far astern and Bob didn't actually see much of them until he turned out of the tideway into Avonmouth. So that was that, the lock was declared open, daughter was visited and a return voyage completed without any alarms. Bob even had time to take

photographs.

By now the drought was beginning to bite and the return to Hinckley Boat Club would be fraught with not just high seas. No, low canals were a much more effective barrier to completion of the voyage. Restricted opening times and complete stoppages made any intended timetable a farce. Thus it was that friends, relations and anybody else who was slightly competent were seized upon to crew the boat at times when movement was possible. Our involvement came near the end, Random had reached Great Haywood and there was a possibility of getting through to Fazeley. We were taken up to the boat and set off south. We got as far as the foot of Glascote locks, leaving the last stage to Bob, when BWB would let him through. It was now October!

*ILR*

\*No birds were harmed during the making of this voyage.

---

## Bonfire Weekend Boat Gathering

### Saturday 4th November

The accumulation of scrap wood at the end of the cut at Snaresstone is already building into a large pile ready for a bonfire. Rod the firelighter will be igniting it on the evening of November 4th. All members are invited to join in the fun. Come by boat if you can! (if not, come by car). Bring some food to put on the barbecue, some liquid refreshment to wash it down with, and enjoy an evening of warmth and good company. (NO fireworks, please).

## Answer to June Where is This?

The picture in the last edition showed a cast iron plaque with the wording Snaresstone Tunnel 250 yds (note the spelling Snaresstone - without an 'e'). Nowadays this can be seen on the outside wall of the Waterways Museum at Stoke Bruerne. Does any reader remember when it was removed to this location?



# Diary Dates

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are held at the MIRA Sports and Social Club, Watling Street, (near the A5/A444 junction) just north of Nuneaton, and just beyond the Higham Lane roundabout on the A5. There is a bar, and plenty of secure parking on the MIRA site. Meetings start at 7.30pm unless otherwise indicated. Meetings are open to everyone - you will be made very welcome, and there is no admission charge. Please come and join us!

**Mon Sep 11th** Light-hearted quiz with Ian Reid at MIRA

**Mon Oct 9th** Ron Cousens of the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society will talk about the Birmingham Canals

**Sat Nov 4th** Bonfire Weekend Boat

Gathering, Snarestone see page 8

**Mon Nov 13th** Annual General Meeting, followed by a film/slide show

**Sat Nov 25th** 10am Join the Inland Waterways Protection Society on a walk on the Moira - Snarestone section of the Ashby Canal. Details, phone Malcolm Bower on 01663 732493; e-mail ian@brownside.co.uk

**Mon Dec 11th** Les and Freda Hales will talk about Clothes of the Cut. Mince pies during the interval.

**2007 - Mon Jan 8th** Brian Holmes will tell us more about his Waterway Wanderings

**Mon Feb 12th** Bob Williams will talk about the work of the Lichfield and Hatherton Restoration Trust

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# Coconuts and Spiders!!!!

With reference to the question of floating coconuts, here is my two pennyworth! On the Paddington arm at Greenford there is a HUGE mosque and the canal in that area is awash with coconuts I have even seen gold painted coconuts. I am not sure what the religious significance is but I think I was told that it was something to do with the canal being a substitute for the Ganges and the remains of the departed floating in that direction. I don't know if there is a mosque in Hinckley but that would seem to be the explanation of the coconuts. **Claire Moynihan**

Regarding the Chairman's unconvincing draw with his Irish spiders, were they Irish conkers?

Perhaps the conkers should be soaked in Guinness, or maybe the Chairman should take more Guinness himself, then the spider problem might fade into that gloriously pleasant mist we all experience from time to time.

Regarding the Towpath Tidy coconuts, I believe they are related to Hindu funerals that require spiritual sustenance for the journey through the afterlife - the nut represents food and drink, usually accompanied by an item of clothing adorned with bangles representing money. In India this is all set on a blazing funeral pyre and pushed out into the Ganges and presumably this is where the Ashby canal comes in. **Barry Whitehouse**

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## Application for Membership

Ashby Canal Association

Please return the form to:

**Cindy Aston, 11 Saxon Court, Leomansley View, Lichfield, Staffs. WS13 8AS** Enquiries: **01543 418748**

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS.

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I/We wish to apply for the following membership:

*(Please tick appropriate boxes)*

- Single Membership £8.00 per annum
- Family or Joint Membership £11.00 per annum
- Group Membership £20.00 per annum
- Life Membership £100.00

I/We agree to abide by the rules and constitution of the Ashby canal Association

Enclosed with this form:

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Donation £.....

**TOTAL** £..... Cheques should be made payable to **Ashby Canal Association**

### Gift Aid Declaration

I want A.C.A. to reclaim tax on this and all future donations until further notice. I pay UK tax equal to the amount which will be reclaimed.

Signed .....

Date .....

## From The Treasurer

The warm summer weather brought large numbers of visiting craft to the Ashby Canal, and as a consequence the Sales and Information kiosk at Snarestone has had a busy time. Sales of replica Measham ware have done particularly well.

There was a most interesting and informative article about the real "Measham Ware" in the summer edition of the new "Narrow Boat" magazine, which included some photos from Geoff Pursglove's collection, and a bit about double-spouted teapots, and colours other than brown. The article also gave a mention to Ron Turner's modern replica Measham ware, like that which we sell on our stall. We never claim it is the same as the "real thing" but nevertheless our range of replicas sells well, and we are pleased that they are popular souvenirs of a visit to the Ashby Canal.

We have also been selling our 40th Anniversary plaque throughout the summer. Stocks are now limited, so if you haven't yet got one, please contact Lynda Wright a.s.a.p. Maurice and Jennie Kendrick looked after the sales stall while Lynda and Terry went cruising this August. Thanks to them for doing this, and also for organising the raffle of the special rug which Jennie made (pictured in previous Spout).

In an effort to encourage boaters to cruise all the way to Snarestone, and visit our stall, we have put notices up at Burton Hastings (Bridge 8), the Limekilns (water point), and the notice board on Shackerstone Station Drive. It's hard to judge what general effect, if any, these have had, though feedback from a few boaters suggests that they had seen the notice about plaques and guidebooks

being on sale. We are also pleased to report that the landlord of the Limekilns pub has now started selling our guidebook, and the Ashby Boat Co hire base also now carries a large stock of our guides.

After our £10,000 contribution had been paid towards the preliminary works for the restoration, our financial position obviously took a bit of a dip. And further financial matters loom on the horizon. One major item may centre round the possibility of acquiring a piece of land to replace what we shall lose at Snarestone. For some years, our magazine "Spout" has been printed by our friends at Moira Replan at a very reasonable cost. Unfortunately, Graham Knight, the manager there, having been very ill this summer, has reluctantly decided not to carry on with the printing activities. We wish Graham all the best, as a consequence, we have had to find alternative printers, at greater expense. Despite this, we are keeping tight control of other spending (as usual!) and are still in a sound financial position. We continue to do well with fund-raising but are considering raising subscriptions.

Our marquee attended Ashby Show in July, and we were kept busy all day. The stand was situated very close to where the canal used to run, and Geoff Pursglove had marked the spot on an aerial photograph displayed on the stand. Geoff and Maggie were kept busy with an almost continuous stream of visitors enquiring about the restoration scheme, and Jean and I were

## From The Treasurer cont.

also busy with sales. Available for the first time at the Show, for genuine enquirers who were specifically interested in the economics of restoring the canal to Measham, were copies of Leicestershire County Council's Business Plan Summary for the canal. This has been prepared as part of the supporting documentation for the funding bids, and encouragingly shows the positive impacts that a restored canal would have on the local community. It also contains annual capital cost projections from 2006/7 to 2010/11 and, importantly, estimates of future running costs and income. A surplus of income over operating expenditure is expected in the first few years, which would allow for a contingency fund to be built up. To see a

properly developed business plan made for the canal restoration is most encouraging.

The marquee attended the IWA National Festival at Beale Park, Pangbourne, at the end of August. We thank all those volunteers who staffed the stand. Following hard on its heels came the Shackerstone Family Festival. Thanks to everyone who helped us - we hope the festival will prove to be a financial success despite the poor attendance on Saturday.

The financial year will shortly be coming to a close. Time to make sure all the figures add up and the books balance, ready for the AGM at M.I.R.A on November 13th. See you then, I hope!.

*John Roddis*

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## The First 40 Years

The ACA is unique, in that we are the only waterway organisation to have run a workboat for clearing floating rubbish at the start of each season, run trip boats, replaced mile posts, held canoe races, had a lengthmans team to regularly check the condition of the whole canal, and even formed a "Trading section" to keep the canal navigable by working trade boats. Later the trading section became "Ashby Canal Transport" ACT ran for over 20 years and is well recorded in Gerald Box's excellent book "CLINGING ON" (Available at ACA's trade stall). Pause for a moment and consider your feelings if you were at an ACA meeting and found that somehow you and two reluctant others had been persuaded to try restarting the Croxley coal traffic. No

boats, no coal, no experience, no money, no idea what delivery charges should be, and a prospective customer who was determined not to have any more coal by boat. Very brave? very stupid? certainly apprehensive!

It all started 40 years ago, I was editing the IWA magazine "Navigation" and Travers Lisney who was President of the Measham Angling Club and Managing Director of "REDBANK" contacted me to help organise a protest meeting about the threatened closure of the top end of the Ashby canal. The anglers were worried that their regular loaves of bread sacrifices might not be able to take place and boaters were anxious to keep the loading bay at Ilots wharf. My job was to contact as many

# News from the AWCC

The Association of Waterway Cruising Clubs Regional Meeting this summer was held at Stafford Boat Club. The National Executive's Steering Committee deliberations were rather lengthy, so it is suggested that you look at the AWCC web site for details.

The Midlands region is to have its own page on the web site, which will deal with local matters. The place to look is [www.awcc.org.uk](http://www.awcc.org.uk). Another web site which was reported to be worth looking at for waterway related matters is [www.canalworld.net](http://www.canalworld.net)

Various points came up from BW user group reports, as follows. Fire Safety laws are coming into force in October. These may do away with some of the requirements for safety certificates. Details from another web site - [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk) The Environment Agency are to use radar speed cameras on the Thames to enforce the 5mph speed limit. All you "speedy Gonzales" watch out! Concern about unspecified delays on the Coventry Canal at Huddlesford, and Armitage on the T & M Canal connected with Network Rail's work on "four-tracking" the West Coast railway line, for which there is a Transport and Works Act Order. BW have been attempting to get clear information about the contractors' work schedules. (a new "Bailey-Bridge" type structure has recently been erected at Huddlesford). Hopefully any canal closures will be kept to a minimum, and out of the main cruising "season" if we can call it that. On the Shropshire Union, Shebdon Embankment is to have another £1million spent on it.

BW are now "hot-desking" in their offices (don't think that is anything to do

with hot summer weather) so we are reminded that all complaints need to be in writing to the relevant manager. Complaints will be followed up within so many days. (20 I think).

Remember that freephone numbers which you may use to contact BW are not free if using a mobile. Licence evasion is reported to be now less than 3% - BW have been getting better at tackling this, but they still have some problems.

Two new marinas are planned for Napton, and rumour has it that a third may be in the offing. Tree felling has taken place at Tixall Wide because of the danger of trees falling on boats. A decorative boat used for funerals has been reported operating from a River Soar marina, with the deceased's ashes wrapped in silk bundles to be put overboard by the mourners. Apparently the EA are not concerned provided there is no pollution, and so far no reports of boaters getting silk wrapped round their propeller. The issue of coconuts - reported in the last Spout - also seems to be connected with funerals. Following work at Diglis Basin, Worcester, which has caused some disruption, next year work is scheduled for Stourport Basin - bear this in mind if planning a trip. Future AWCC meetings are scheduled for Oct 21st at Coventry C.C. and Jan 13th at Soar Boating Club.

*Claire Moynihan*

## Keeping Cool

**W**hen boaters gather together, conversations often drift towards the topics of toilets and fridges. The trouble these things seem to cause! Fridges - particularly 12-volt ones - seem to be the source of many gripes about bad wiring, flat batteries, and such-like. All because we depend so much on refrigeration.

To get things in perspective, think back to the days before fridges. Earlier this year, we visited the London Canal Museum situated in Battlebridge Basin on the Regent's Canal. We went by boat - there are visitor moorings for a couple of boats outside the museum. If, however, you are having a land-based break in the capital, make for 12-13, New Wharf Road, N1. The museum is on the site of an old ice-store. A Swiss confectioner of the 1850s, Carlo Gatti (played by an actor), conducts visitors round his ice 'empire'. He imported ice from Norwegian lakes. Large lumps of ice were transported by ship to Limehouse, and from there taken by canal to his ice-store. Beneath the museum, you can visit two immense ice-pits - 42 ft deep and 34 ft diameter - where the blocks of ice were stored. Because of the great quantity of ice, it stayed frozen, and could be broken into smaller pieces for distribution

throughout the area more or less all year round. Carlo Gatti became well off, and built up a thriving ice-cream business. Fishmongers, butchers, the local gentry, all needed ice to keep food cool. Ice was imported until the 1920s, by which time technology was taking over, and commercial refrigerators were starting to be used for ice-making.

The canal museum also houses the stables for the boat horses, and has many other interesting displays, including a good collection of Measham-ware. Well worth a visit.  
*John Roddis* ide.co.uk.

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canal enthusiasts as possible and Travers (Who became ACAs first President) organised the anglers.

The meeting at Measham was chaired by Michael Macfarlane (IWA) and was very well attended. "The Ashby Canal Preservation Association" - later to become the ACA - was formed and a committee elected. Is the ACA the only canal association to be formed by the initial efforts of anglers? Gil Swarbrick, who worked very hard, was the only angler we managed to get on the committee.

At first our committee meetings were held at the Black Horse pub in Sheepy Magna and were hard work, sometimes only 3 members turned up and I had to take my wife along to take the minutes and sort out the paperwork, although she was not an ACA member. Things improved when Brian Osborne became secretary and slowly the right people joined and over the years the committee has gone from strength to strength as has the ACA.

The ACPA was formed purely to prevent any more of the canal from being abandoned, the word "Restoration" was not mentioned. In 1989 I was given the job of turning our section of closed canal into a nature reserve, it was all pegged out where trees and shrubs were to be planted, when some people at Measham decided that they wanted their canal back, crazy lot! So we got together with them and thought "Why Measham? why not Moira? or Wadlands Wharf?"

You all know the rest of the story, still gaining in momentum. *Tom Henshaw*

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## Nature Notes

Yet more sightings of water voles. Three were seen within a few minutes of each other between Congerstone and Carlton - this now seems to be a favourite spot for them. Also, one was spotted by our sharp-eyed secretary, north of Hinckley, not far from the Barge moorings, during the inspection cruise with local authority planning staff on the IWA narrowboat "Jubilee".



*IWA's boat "Jubilee" at the Limekilns. It was visiting the Ashby Canal as part of the IWA's 60th Anniversary and helping celebrate the ACA's 40th.*

Glow-worms! A member reports encountering glow-worms on the towpath of the Kennet & Avon Canal near Aldermaston, one summer evening just as it was going dark. They are a curious and fascinating sight. Has anyone seen them along the Ashby Canal?



Swans seem to be thriving, with good numbers of cygnets on the Ashby this year. A particularly protective pair of swans have been guarding their offspring near Shackerstone, bringing back memories of the well-known fearsome swan that used to terrorise boaters here several years ago!

## River Canal Rescue

Three years or so ago we reminded ACA members that the well-known boat breakdown and recovery service, River Canal Rescue Ltd, offer them a discount on their normal membership rates.

The current offers are:

**5% discount on "Bronze" membership**  
(£76 instead of £80)

**10% discount on "Silver" membership**  
(£94.50 instead of £105)

**15% on "Gold" membership**  
(£136 instead of £160)

Details of the various levels of cover from each class of membership can be obtained from RCR on 0870 2008021 (e-mail: [enquiries@rivercanalrescue.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@rivercanalrescue.co.uk)) Please indicate that you are a member of ACA. Your membership No. is on your Spout address label.

The same organisation has also teamed up with Tony Brooks of Thames Valley University, Reading, to offer Boat and Diesel Engine Maintenance Courses. The ACA secretary and treasurer both attended one of the courses at Reading earlier this year, and can vouch for the excellent quality of the tuition and the wide range of practical topics covered. If you speak to either of us at a social meeting, we can tell you more. RCR have earmarked some weekend dates for this course throughout the winter months. The cost is £100 per person. Details from RCR by phone or e-mail - as detailed above.

(Please note, ACA is happy to pass this information on to members, but doesn't offer any specific endorsement about the RCR service)

# Meet the Committee

Claire Moynihan joined the ACA committee in 2002, bringing a wealth of experience of the waterways. She has lived on a boat for more than 20 years, her present boat "Blackadder" is moored a few miles from the Ashby Canal at Baddesley Wharf, Atherstone.



She has cruised extensively, usually single-handed, with her dogs Hamish and Holly keeping her company. Friends on other boats usually cruise with her, and there is hardly a waterway in Britain she has not been on, including intrepid trips down the Bristol Channel, the Ribble Link, and down to the Thames Barrier. (But not across the Wash, though, she drew the line at that!).

As a member of that well-known gang, the Waterways Recovery Group ("Wergies") Claire has acquired qualifications in van driving and using heavy plant and equipment, such as diggers, etc., and she also a VHF radio operators licence. To add to this impressive list, she is now taking flying lessons! All this is a long way from her academic background in psychology!

She is area representative of the Waterway Recovery Group Boat Club (being one of the founder members of that club) and regularly represents them, and the ACA, at meetings of the Association of Waterway

Cruising Clubs. For many years she has been actively involved with WRG in helping out at the IWA National Festivals, wherever they might be held. This year, she has decided to relinquish that task, and is instead one of the volunteers at our own Shackerstone Festival. Since joining the ACA committee, she has looked after the selling of advertising space in "Spout" - personally recruiting many of the advertisers for what is an important source of revenue to the ACA.

Claire has recently decided to sell her boat, and have a complete change of lifestyle (and weather) by moving abroad - to Crete. So she will not be around for many more committee meetings. All the committee wish her well, and thank her for what she has contributed to the ACA in recent years.

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# ‘The National’

It seems that more and more people are attending “The National” with a caravan rather than a boat. This year at Beale Park we had quite a walk from our 'van' to the festival site.

Way back at Hawkesbury, Wakefield or Worcester for instance, the camp site was reasonably compact and no real walk from the goings-on. Despite their extra travelling distance, it was noticeable that narrowboats dominated this event compared with the normal Thames plastic types. However, at least one ACA member arrived to find a perfect mooring about an hours walk from the site (the boater's estimate). The rally plaque was claimed and then the boat was moved downstream to Pangbourne where a car was parked. From there they commuted in daily by road.

Highlight of the weekend for this caravanning boater was a trip aboard one of the craft in the illuminated boat procession. This was also really a narrowboat event plus a Wilderness Craft and a solitary fibreglass Thames boat. We had been offered a lift on the latter. Craft were to assemble at the entrance to the Beale Park lake and then cruise down to Pangbourne and back. Then they would enter the lake, bear right (starboard) and do a circuit anti-clockwise around it. This was according to our written instructions. Despite the encouragement of the patrol boat crew, entrants were reluctant to get going. This being the case we made a unilateral decision and were the first to set off in the wake of the Bill Bailey Band on the lead boat. Down to Pangbourne and back was enjoyable, if uneventful and a bit chilly. Turning into the lake we continued to tail the lead boat and enjoy the music, others followed us and all was well. He had

kept to the left (port) and was circling in a clockwise direction, but so what, he was the boss? After half a dozen or so boats had joined the circuit there was a slight gap before the next boat entered. He was a narrowboat bearing a prominent RYA logo: obviously a keen type who would be conversant with all the odd rules of navigation. He had also memorised the instructions and so bore right to circle in a counter-clockwise direction. From that moment chaos reigned, it was one of the best evening's entertainment we have had for years!



But what about the rest of the Festival? Much like any other really. Bigger of course, but nothing really new. I think that, had I not been helping man a stand and getting it there, I might have thought twice about going. We caught up with quite a few friends of long standing who we rarely see, so all in all it was quite a pleasant weekend.

*Ian Reid*

# Shackerstone Family Festival 2006

Over 80 pleasure craft and around 30 historic working boats attended the Shackerstone Festival over the weekend of 2nd-3rd September.



*Visiting craft line the canal between Congestone and Shackerstone.*

*The 2006 Annual Dinner. Tom Henshaw our President prepares to address the guests.*

On the Thursday preceding the festival, the ACA's 40th Anniversary Dinner was held at the Rising Sun, Shackerstone. After the meal, Tom Henshaw, our president gave an interesting and amusing account of the early days of the ACA and looked back over our 40 years. Everyone enjoyed themselves, and it put us all in good spirits for the festival weekend.

Saturday's weather was dreadful, and kept visitor numbers down. Some of the stall-holders had difficulties, with the high winds threatening to blow down their tents! The bad weather meant the cancellation of the flypast by the Dakota

from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, but, amazingly, the flying display by the "White Russian" Zak aeroplane went ahead and gave the crowd a display of flying skill in very gusty wind conditions.

Sunday's weather was much better, and the crowds rolled in. At 10.30 a special service was held in Shackerstone Church to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the ACA. Specially chosen hymns were sung, the church was beautifully decorated with flowers, and refreshments were provided afterwards. Our thanks to all who helped organise this special service.

# Shackerstone Festival 2006



*Crowds enjoy the sunshine on Sunday.*

The new site was very spacious, and it was filled with lots to see and do. There was the usual impressive display of classic cars, tractors and buses. The entertainment highlights included "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang", the excellent "Kangaroos Gymnastic Display Team",



*The Rev. Gill Jackson greets the congregation at the ACA Anniversary Service at St. Peters, Shackerstone.*



*Many historic working boats attended the festival.*

Toyota cars playing football, another flying display from the "White Russian", and "Dingle Fingle" with his crazy car. The Earl Shilton Church Lads and Girls Brigade band played at various venues, including the aqueduct and the railway station, and two sides of Morris Dancers entertained us at various points



*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang entertains the crowds leading a parade of classic cars.*



*Earl Shilton Band at the aqueduct.*

around the site. The ACA's ever popular floating swing-bridge was in action over the weekend, manned by volunteers from the attending boat crews.

All in all it was a most enjoyable weekend, and we thank all those on the organising committee who devoted so much time and effort in the planning and organising of the event.



*Steamboat Adamant squeezes between visiting boats.*

## Raffle Prize Winner!

The winner of the special 40th anniversary rug was Mrs N. Wileman, from Stenson. The raffle raised £250 and we thank Jenny and Maurice Kendrick for organising it, and providing such a special prize. Thanks to all who took part - your support is appreciated!

## Subscriptions

Subscriptions to the Association have been held at their present level since 2001 (£8 & £11). In order to keep pace with the rising cost of administration (postage, insurance etc) and the printing costs of the enhanced "Spout", we have a need to increase subscriptions this year. The Management Committee believe that the subscriptions should cover the main

running costs of the Association and therefore a modest increase in the "Single" and "Joint" fees will be proposed at the AGM in November. The proposed new fees are: Single £10, Joint £13. No changes are proposed to the "Group" or "Life" fees which remain at £20 & £100 respectively.

**John Beaney**

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