

BROADSHEET

Magazine of the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society



Dimmingsdale Lock

Photo by Ian Cowdale



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Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society 2018-19

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BROADSHEET

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Editorial

Happy New Year! After last year's snow that caused all sorts of disruptions to pre-Christmas plans it is pleasing to report that our Christmas Bradmore Skittles event when ahead and the Santa Trips at Stourbridge were not challenged by the weather. Reports on both can be found inside this issue.

Nine months after the breach, the Middlewich Branch has now been declared open by CRT. This is good news for the forthcoming season, as I am sure local businesses suffered from the lack of travelling boats last year as well as affecting boater's plans. From the photographs (inside) it can be seen that the repair has been effected by the use of waterproof membrane, similar to the repair on the Stourbridge ten years ago (that breach occurred in September and it was repaired by the start of the following season). If memory serves me well I think there were subsequent problems on the Stourbridge where the membrane met the original canal bed that required judicious use of puddle to fix and advice at the time to proceed at low speed, so I guess a close eye will be kept on the Middlewich site for a while.

You can read inside how four years ago the Canal & River Trust launched a last-ditch attempt to revive commercial freight carrying on the larger waterways before it died out completely. How has it fared since then? Well, the freight activity that died out over a long time period cannot instantly be turned around and required a long term plan and commitment, something becoming increasingly rare nowadays, when the focus is often on short term fixes and immediate results. So to their credit CRT have persisted with this project and hopefully it will bear fruit in the near future.

You can only assume though that British Waterways Marinas Ltd (BWML), a subsidiary of CRT, set up 14 years ago that runs 18 marinas, has not been a commercial success. You may recall that it was put up for sale last spring and it has been just announced that it is not another major marina operator who has acquired BWML, but an investment company. The details of the deal haven't yet been disclosed but CRT state the proceeds are to be reinvested in the Trust. Time will tell whether that means a straightforward re-investment, or to pay off existing debts. Of course it is assumed that an income will still be received by CRT from the marinas that all require access to canals or rivers.

As it is the start of the year, I would like to pass on my thanks to everyone who have generously contributed material to Broadsheet over this period and encourage you to continue, or start to do so. It makes my job so much easier if I have relevant material to hand.

Finally, you have until the end of January to submit your cruising award entry. Further details including details on awarded points inside this issue.

Ian Cowdale

December 2018 Christmas Celebration at Bradmore

The annual SWCS Christmas get-together took place at Bradmore on 10th December. The main theme was a skittles evening which is clearly popular as there was an excellent turnout of members. Unfortunately I could not make as my voice had disappeared the previous day.

Mary and Derek Overton kindly provided the skittles alley. Mary Overton had also arranged for members to make contributions of food for the evening and a marvellous spread of treats were duly provided.

Ann and Peter Cuthbertson organised the raffle with their usual efficiency and plenty of prizes to go round.

I am reliably informed that through 'demon skittling', Tony Gregory won overall, despite members' skills noticeably improving and becoming more competitive as the evening went on. Well done to Tony and of course to everyone who supported it.

Ian Cowdale

2018 Cruising Awards - Notice

If you wish to enter your log for the 2018 award it must be presented to Ann Pollard, our Cruising Awards Officer, not later than 31st January 2019. There is a fee of £4 which must be paid to Ann Pollard with the submission and, if you want your logbook returned by post, then please submit a suitable wrapping complete with postage, with the logbook. The cruising award rules and scoring system are published in this edition of Broadsheet.

Thank you,

Ann Pollard

AWARD QUALIFICATIONS

In the calendar year commencing 1st January 2018, to have completed any three of the qualifying gatherings and/or cruises, one of which must be a Society event (A - C) and to have earned a minimum of 800 points.

- The member claiming the award must be aboard for all the qualifying points.
- Minimum standard lock points required = 300

QUALIFYING GATHERINGS

- A. To have officially entered the Society's Summer Gathering and stayed for a minimum of 24 hours.
- B. To have attended the Society's Spring Gathering.
- C. To have attended the Society's Autumn Gathering

QUALIFYING CRUISES

- To have navigated the entire Stourbridge Canal, in either direction.
Note: This includes the Stourbridge Arm, the navigable section of the Fens Branch to Brockmoor Junction and the Stourbridge Extension Canal.
- To have navigated a minimum of 30 different miles of the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal.

STANDARD POINTS

On specified BCN waters listed below:-

Wyrley & Essington (Horsley Fields to Ogley)

Walsall (Birchalls to Pudding Green)

Daw End / Rushall (Catshill to Rushall)

Anglesey (Chasewater to Ogley)

Tame Valley (Tame Valley to Salford)

Wednesbury Oak Loop (Workshops to Deepfields)

Digbeth Branch (Aston to Bordsley)

- Two points for every mile travelled.
- Two points for every lock passed through.

On all other waterways:

- One point for every mile travelled.
- One points for every lock passed through.

BONUS POINTS

(NB. Bonus points are not doubled)

- All standard points earned in the periods 1st January to 31st March and 1st October to 31st December are doubled.
- 15 bonus points to Titford Pools.

- 10 bonus points for each passage of the 'Wolverhampton 21' flight of locks.
- 15 bonus points for navigation on the River Weaver.
- 10 bonus points for navigating to the end of any dead end canal. Note: This bonus can be applied once only for each dead end

PROOF

All logs must contain proof of reaching the recorded destinations. Examples would be dated signatures, photographs, identifiable receipts of purchases etc.

Thank you

Christmas meeting with Local CRT staff and Volunteers

As a way of recognising the work that primarily the local CRT volunteers based at the Stewponey and local staff have achieved this year, and also with putting up with our 'suggestions' for additional projects, the Committee decided to invite the volunteer group and locally based employees to an end of year 'thank you' event.

This was held at the Bonded Warehouse in early December when the Warehouse had been dressed for the imminent Santa Trips. The evening comprised refreshments and a brief presentation about the restoration of the Bonded Warehouse and the Stourbridge Arm. About 20 volunteers and staff including Terry Hodgetts came along and positive comments were received on the evening as a whole and of Chris' presentation, particularly how the canal arm and the Warehouse were mutually supportive of each other and of course the fact that much of the work had been undertaken and overseen by volunteers.

It was an enjoyable evening and the group appreciated the fact that we are aware of and value the work they put into local canals.

Ian Cowdale

Update on Dimmingsdale Lock Maintenance

Just prior to Christmas Tony Gregory took these pictures of the work that was being undertaken on Dimmingsdale Lock. New gates, top and bottom ends, chamber cleaned out etc. Unfortunately, due to H & S, it was not possible to get any pictures without fencing in them but they give a good flavour of the undertaking. And of course the result of the nearly finished work can be seen on the front cover.



Middlewich Branch re-opens following £3 million Repairs

Canal and River Trust News - 21 December 2018

The Shropshire Union Canal, Middlewich branch, in Cheshire, is due to re-open on Friday 21 December, following repairs to a major breach after a section of the 200-year-old embankment washed away into the River Wheelock below in March. More than 4,000 tonnes of stones have been needed to rebuild the canal embank-

Middlewich Branch back in water following the breach restoration



ment so that it can be refilled with water and can once again be enjoyed by boaters, walkers, runners and the local community. The work cost nearly £3 million and was funded by the Trust as well as players of People's Postcode



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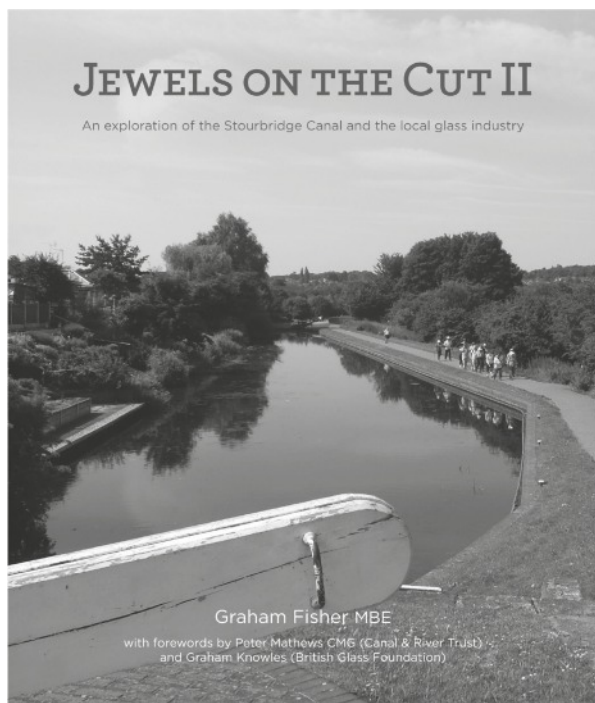
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- * *Mr Fisher has set the benchmark on examining both the canal and its attendant industries for some considerable time to come.*
- * *Erudite yet informative; a real gem.*
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About the author

Graham Fisher MBE is a former Chairman of the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society and has served on the West Midlands Waterways Partnership of the Canal & River Trust. He is also a Trustee of both the British Glass Foundation and the Chance Glass Works Heritage Trust and is thus ideally placed to comment on the canal and its industries, notably the world-renowned Stourbridge Glass.

About the 'Jewels' Trilogy

Jewels on the Cut II is part of the 'Jewels' Trilogy that offers a detailed analysis of the local waterways and the industries they served.

The other two books in the series are:

- The 2012 Portland Vase; Recreation of a Masterpiece
- Whiskers on Kittens (an appreciation of Stourbridge glass)

which both retail at £12.50 + £2.00 p&p but are available as a SPECIAL OFFER to readers of Broadsheet at £10.00 + £2.00 p&p each.

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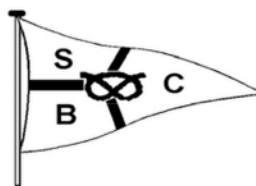
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Lottery. Generous donations from the local community also raised over £30,000 for the emergency appeal.

Contractors, Kier and CPC Civils, on behalf of the Trust, have rebuilt the 12m high embankment prior to constructing new concrete canal walls, a PVC lining membrane and concrete protection slab as well as reinstating the towpath in preparation for the reopening.

Volunteers have worked closely with the Trust, removing debris from the canal bed, carrying out towpath improvements, recovering bricks for re-use, painting lock gates and clearing vegetation. Several volunteers also undertook some hedge laying training recently, to learn how to restore the historic hedgerows that can be found along the towpath.

Andy Johnson, our senior project manager said: “We’ve been working hard on site to repair the canal as quickly as we could. We faced some complex challenges like removing stranded boats and access along the canal bed to reach the breach but we’re pleased that we can re-open the canal before Christmas.

We still have some work to do on site in January and we might need to close the towpath at times early in the New Year to complete the work. I would like to appeal to the public not to deviate from the towpath over the next few weeks as the topsoil on the verges either side has just been laid and grass seeding still needs to be done.”

Andy continues: “The Middlewich branch of the Shropshire Union Canal is not only loved by boaters but by the local community who use it to walk, cycle and run. The support for our charity’s work has been fantastic. We would like to thank everyone who has donated money and all the amazing volunteers who have given their time and effort to help restore this much-loved canal.”

Sanjay Singh, Senior Programmes Manager for environmental charities at People’s Postcode Lottery said: “I am delighted that players have supported Canal & River Trust to make this stretch of the waterway accessible again to the local communities who most benefit. Waterways provide a hugely positive experience for everybody to enjoy throughout the year and I’m delighted it will be enjoyed once more.”

Mandatory “CO” Alarms on BSS Boats to be introduced in 2019

What Boat International - Dec 2018.

Following public consultation on proposed changes to the Boat Safety Scheme (BSS), the BSS Management Committee has decided that new BSS Requirements for carbon monoxide (CO) alarms on boats will be introduced from next April.

Strong support for the changes was demonstrated in the responses to the consultation with 84% in favour of introducing a requirement for suitable working carbon monoxide (CO) alarms.

All boats with accommodation spaces subject to the BSS will see mandatory checks introduced for suitable CO alarms in good condition and in appropriate locations. The requirements are designed to keep people on and around boats safe.

Stop the silent killer

As well as protection from neighbouring boats, the CO alarms are also expected to prevent death or injury to boat owners from their own boat engines or appliances. The alarms will warn people in the area about immediately dangerous levels of CO. They can also alert craft occupants to moderate levels of CO, which can be a long-term threat to health if left undetected.



Fit a carbon monoxide (CO) detector

BSS Manager, Graham Watts says: “We want to thank all the contributors to the consultation. Your comments and views have been exceptionally valuable and have caused us to reflect a little longer before publishing the checks in order to ensure that the wording is entirely clear. The BSS will be publishing the new checks in detail in January/February 2019 on its website.

“It’s encouraging that so many contributors already enjoy the protection of CO alarms, however if you are yet to be protected, please take a look at a list of CO alarms recommended as suitable for boats by the manufacturers’ body on the BSS Stay Safe CO advice webpages.

Know the risks

Boats are built to keep water out, but this also makes them good containers for gases and fumes. There are many sources of carbon monoxide on boats including engines, generators, solid fuel burners and cookers. Canopies on deck can

allow poisonous gases to build up, rapidly reaching fatal levels. Ventilation is essential. It's known as 'the silent killer' because you can't see, smell or taste it and it kills 40 people a year across the UK while injuring thousands more.

The message is simple: carbon monoxide kills and an alarm could save your life. But the first line of defence is to know and understand the dangers and sources of carbon monoxide. It's both colourless and odourless, hence the silent killer tag, and can kill quickly if inhaled in high concentrations. At lower levels of CO as it begins to take effect, the symptoms of poisoning are similar to flu or food poisoning, and include headaches, nausea and dizziness.

CO detectors are commonplace in homes, but less so on boats despite them being the perfect place for the poisonous gas to build up. The RYA recommends fitting an alarm that is certified to the British Standard as suitable for use when camping and/or in recreational vehicles such as boats and caravans, which is known as BS EN50291-2:2010. Such CO detectors alarm at a low concentration levels to give a person time to react and regrettably it appears that these are often mistaken as false alarms rather than early warning and are switched off.

If the alarm sounds, take action to shut off sources of CO (engines, generators, open flame appliances) if safe to do so, get clear of fumes into the fresh air and seek medical attention immediately. By having CO alarms on board as a back-up, you should have a happy and incident-free time afloat. Follow fitting instructions supplied with the alarm, but if these are difficult to meet fully on a boat, then best practice placement guidance can be found in the CO Safety on Boats leaflet.

View the response

The BSS has produced a summary of the views expressed in the consultation and the BSS responses. The summary can be viewed on the BSS website www.boatsafetyscheme.org/alarmconsultation2018/. The mandatory new BSS Requirements will come into effect from 1 April 2019.

More information is available from www.boatsafetyscheme.org/co

Sale Completed of British Waterways Marinas Ltd (BWML)

Boating Business - 17 Dec 2018

BWML has been sold to LDC

The Canal & River Trust has just finalised the sale of its wholly-owned marina subsidiary, BWML. The transaction sees LDC invest in the business and supporting the existing management team.

“We are delighted to have completed the sale of BWML and will be investing the proceeds into other income-generating assets to support our core work of caring for the nation’s canals and rivers,” said Stuart Mills, chief investment officer at the Canal & River Trust. “BWML is performing well and we believe its prospects for future growth are good. Coupled with the expertise of LDC we believe the business will benefit and by extension, its boating customers will too.”

Vail Williams’ marine and leisure team provided advice to the Canal & River Trust, undertaking a review of BWML and advising on options for its disposal. LDC was advised by DC Advisory and Gateley. The Trust was also advised by Bevan Brittan and BDO. (Bevan Brittan LLP is a commercial Law firm and BDO LLP is public accounting, tax and advisory firm Ed). LDC is a UK mid-market private equity investor. (and part of the Lloyds Banking Group – Ed). It has a portfolio of 90 businesses across a broad range of sectors.

“We are excited to be able to provide the investment to support BWML’s management team in growing this established brand in order to enrich the experience of its marina users,” said Chris Wright, LDC director in the South. “With our support, management will focus on delivering improvements across the marina sites and add new locations to further strengthen its brand and market position.”

BWML was put up for sale in March 2018. The subsidiary was set up in 2004 and operates 18 marinas across England – three coastal and 15 inland, with 2,520 berths in total including 699 residential.

Its reported income in 2016/7 was £8.1m.

A Future for Freight on the Canals?

Canal Boat - 27 November 2018

Back in the 1990s, any guide describing the canals and rivers of Yorkshire and the north eastern part of the network would make a point of emphasising how these large-scale waterways were still busy with freight barges loading several hundred tonnes each and helping to satisfy the nation's transport needs – unlike the small-scale canals of the Midlands and most of the rest of the system, where regular commercial freight had died out a quarter of a century earlier.

Cargoes on the Trent, the Aire & Calder Navigation and the Sheffield & South Yorkshire Navigation included coal, stone, oil, gravel and sand. But one by one these traffics disappeared, not necessarily for reasons that were anything to do with the inadequacy of the transport system – deep coal mining was in terminal decline, while a major aggregates trade became surplus to requirements following mergers in the industry. And the same story had been repeated on other larger waterways such as the Severn and the Weaver.

By 2014, a couple of years after the Canal & River Trust took over from British Waterways, its network was carrying just three regular traffics totalling under 500,000 tonnes a year, and only one of them (oil from Hull to Rotherham) was running for more than a short distance on the non-tidal inland waterways. In a final effort to “determine once and for all whether there is any real potential” for carrying significant heavy freight in the future, CRT narrowed down the potential routes to the Aire & Calder and Sheffield & South Yorkshire (plus the New Junction Canal which links them together) and launched a project aiming to work with development partners, investigate possible improvements to the waterways, look for funding, launch a freight conference, identify likely traffics, and push the idea of putting freight back on the water to potential users. Four years on, has the project made any progress?

On the face of it, no: there isn't any more freight being carried. But behind the scenes, there's been some real progress with pretty much all of the objectives mentioned above.

As CRT's Jon Horsfall, head of customer service support, points out, the A&C Main Line runs for something like 40 miles parallel to the congested M62 and overloaded railway lines. There is sea freight from the Humber in both directions. Sea dredged aggregates are a likely traffic, with a waterside concrete mixing plant – and there's a 2m tonnes per year demand for aggregates for construction and road work in Leeds.

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority has secured a commitment for funding an inland port at Stourton, on the outskirts of Leeds, which could take more than 200,000 tonnes a year off the roads – and a planning application will follow soon, with a decision expected early in 2019.

CRT is working with the Freight Transport Association, the Leeds South Bank Strategy, a European Interreg (inter-regional) project with the Netherlands, Sweden and Belgium, and is an observer on the Liverpool-Humber Optimisation of Freight Transport partnership, which is looking at making better use of the Humber ports as a European gateway.

Once an initial traffic can be secured, CRT can look at investing in modification to maximise cargo capacity on these waterways. By enlarging a small number of bridges, and improvement works to a few locks (Bulholme Lock in particular has revetments at the bottom of the chamber walls which limit its usable size) the gauge can be pushed up to the European Class 2 (1300 tonne) size – or to container barges carry eight standard shipping containers.

In October Freight by Water 2018 conference, hosted jointly by CRT and the Freight Transport Association, took place in Leeds. And it concluded that “the time is right to increase freight by water” which should be “part of any effective multi-modal logistics strategy”, and that the Stourton plans could lead on to further development – but that “further investment in infrastructure is desperately needed for it to reach its full potential”.

So when will we see actual cargo carried? Jon Horsfall says that the first new traffic could be no more than 12 months away. Time will tell if this is the start of a revival of freight on the north eastern waterways.

Santa Stars again at the Stourbridge Navigation Trust Christmas Boat Trips

Record numbers kept Santa and his Little Helpers very busy again for the two weekends prior to Christmas at the Bonded Warehouse.

Over the period, hundreds of children and adults a day had a ride on the Blackcountryman tripboat, experienced the delights of Santa's Grotto and were entertained by his Little Helpers before meeting Santa himself. Armed with their presents, they all then went for drinks and mince pies in the Warehouse.

Much to the delight of the Little Helpers, many of the visitors said they had such a wonderful time they would be back next year.

Some comments from Facebook below.....

What a lovely Santa trip today - I have two children who have grown up and have visited Santa in many places but not here.

What a wonderful experience at an exceptional price. The wait for Santa was in an area lit up with so much to look at.

Santa himself was so welcoming and patient with our little one. She has never got close to the big man and usually ends in tears and screams but not today - testament to Santa.

Just goes to show the not so well known places with volunteers can really achieve the ultimate package. Thank you to you all.

Before he returned home to get ready for the Big Day, Santa asked for this thanks to be passed on to everyone who helped over the period and looks forward to seeing you all again next year.

Nairn Acrosss Britain-2 Trans=Pennie Canal

First transmitted in 1972, Ian Nairn travels by boat along the **canal** across the Pennines looking at the industrial area of the North on NB 'The Duchess'. The **canal** journey begins at Worsley Basin and takes in Wigan, Blackburn, Burnley, including Foulridge tunnel, past Skipton, Bingley, Saltaire, and into the 'Cotton Town' of Leeds.

Many of you will have seen this film before as the series of three is well known. I recently revisited it on BBC iplayer and was quite taken in by his insight and his undisguised despair of local authorities for the so called 'modernisation' of town centres in the 1960s at the cost of older but more substantial and historic buildings.

He also must have been the first person to identify the trend of developments turning their backs on canals and not acknowledging their existence. His background as an architectural historian clearly shows through, although with a 45 year advantage, we can see other aspects that passed him by.

Forthcoming IWA Events for 2019

IWA Canalway Cavalcade

May 4, 2019 - May 6, 2019 · Little Venice, London · London,
United Kingdom

IWA Trailboat Festival

Jun 1, 2019 - Jun 2, 2019 · Country Fest, Crooklands,
Cumbria · Milnthorpe

Ware Boat Festival

5th - 7th July

IWA Festival of Water, Waltham Abbey

Aug 24, 2019 - Aug 26, 2019

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Stourbridge Navigation Trust

Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Please return to
Mr Colin Beard, Membership Secretary
14 White Harte Park
Kinver
Staffs
DY7 6HN



YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION (1st April-31st March)

Please tick appropriate option

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Single Membership | £13.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Combined (eg husband & Wife) Membership | £13.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Junior (up to 18 years of age) and those in full time education | £1.00 |

- New members joining 1st April to 31st August pay the full rate
- New members joining between 1st September & 31st January pay half the above fees.
- New members joining between 1st February & 31st March pay the full rate for up to 14 months membership.

Full Name

Address

.....

Post Code..... Telephone.....

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- ☐ I wish to receive Broadsheet by post
- ☐ I wish to receive Broadsheet electronically

GIFT AID DECLARATION

☐ I am a UK tax payer. I would like the Society to treat all membership subscriptions and donations I make as Gift Aid Donations until I notify you otherwise.

Note: You must pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax equal to the amount we reclaim on your subscriptions & donations. Remember to notify us if you no longer pay tax or wish to cancel this declaration

WATERWAYS INTERESTS. Please Indicate

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angling | <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boating | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Archaeology | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking |
| Boat Name | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Work | |

Registered Charity No 243702

Diary Dates Bradmore Meetings

A series of talks and presentations, usually waterways orientated but with occasional eclectic contributions on a variety of other subjects - open to the public free of charge.

Meetings held at the Bradmore Community Centre, Birches Barn Road, Wolverhampton starting at 7:45pm,

Monday 14th January 2019

*The Birmingham Ring continued
Glyn and Rosemary Phillips*

Monday 11th February 2019

*A New Presentation by
Andrew Lound*

Monday 11th March 2019

*Idle Women
Heather Wastie*

Events

Electronic Broadsheet

We are now making all future copies of Broadsheet and loose inserts available electronically. This would be by "opting-in" for those members who choose to receive Broadsheet electronically.

There is no intention of discontinuing the sending out of "hard copies" of Broadsheet to other members.

Please contact Steve Gray with your name and e-mail address if you wish to "opt-in" to receive Broadsheet electronically in future.

Email wharfinger@blueyonder.co.uk

Note:- Your email address will only be used by SWCS and will not be passed on to any third party.



Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal

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