

# BROADSHEET

July - August 2020

*Greensforge Lock*



*Photo by Ian Cowdale*



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f Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society

Number 676

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## Editorial

Welcome to our summer edition of Broadsheet. In the last edition back in March, I was anticipating our Spring Cruise followed by the Summer Gathering, both of which had to be cancelled because of the prevailing condition at the time, together with the later postponement of our AGM. As it stands now, Rotary Printers are operational, hence this copy of Broadsheet, but we are still waiting on whether Bradmore will be open in September for our first meeting of the season and possibly our AGM.

Clearly you will have seen that Steven Gray, our Publisher has been very busy creating a refreshed front cover for Broadsheet. I hope you like it as it represents a lot of work. What you may not be aware of, is that he has been even more industrious and has created a Facebook page for the Society that is unsurprisingly called 'Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Society'. Hopefully among other uses, in these changing times, it will provide an additional means of sharing information for us.

At this time we can now visit our boats and use them but not stay overnight, as they are classified as holiday homes. It is rather an anomaly, as no such restrictions apply to residential boats, who can move freely if they wish and is something that you will see inside, that the Canal and River Trust is trying to address.

Possibly creating much journalistic copy during the lockdown period has been the situation that developed, as excessive numbers of people tried to take their exercise on clearly restricted width towpaths. This has affected people in different ways, as a recent article from the BBC shows in this issue. CRT obviously did not anticipate that certain urban towpaths would be inundated, but their response of posting notices and then updating them was not very effective.

There are couple of interesting contributions from members you can read about this month. Peter Freakley tells us about an old friend and previous Society member's recent book and Carole Cooper has sent us a fascinating and far sighted article from the 1960s, about how the canal system could be used to accommodate increasing leisure time. As Carole summarised. It will never catch on!.....

A major independent report has found 'poor design' and intermittent maintenance over the years' led to the failure of the dam at Toddbrook Reservoir in Whaley Bridge. More than 1,500 people were evacuated from the town in Derbyshire, when the spillway wall at the reservoir began crumbling during heavy rainfall in early August last year. A 'danger to life' warning was issued and unprecedented scenes followed. The findings are balanced and interesting. I have included a brief (and hopefully balanced) summary of them in this issue, with a bit of a 'health warning'. As with any report which is properly written, it should really be read in full. It is easy to select certain paragraphs that support specific opinions and views. Finally just a reminder that this year's membership renewals



understandably slowed over the last few months but Colin Beard is eagerly awaiting those which are still due.

Next issue will be the September edition. I hope by then we can share some more definite plans with you.

Ian Cowdale

## **Coronavirus & Boating Update, 5 June 2020**

5<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Now that navigation on most parts of the network is possible, many boaters have been able to enjoy a cruise on their boat. However, for others, this hasn't been realistic because overnight stays on boats (if it's not your primary residence) are not currently allowed.

We continue to speak with Government about this point and a letter from our chief executive, Richard Parry, to the waterway minister earlier this week set out why we want the waterways to return to normal as soon as possible. This includes the ability to stay overnight on your boat even if it's not your primary residence. Specifically, we wrote that:

- Being aboard a boat for a continuous period is integral to allowing navigation on the inland waterways,
- Boaters are typically self-sufficient, spending their time largely in the open air (where the risk of transmitting the virus is known to be much lower) or in their private on-board space with their own facilities,
- Using a boat for navigation presents a very low risk to virus transmission,
- Social distancing requires little additional effort when operating a boat on inland waterways and daily distances travelled are modest.

We also pointed out that it's not just private leisure boaters who are affected by the current rules. Many waterway-based hire-boat businesses, who are currently unable to trade, and unable to access Government assistance schemes, face precarious futures if they cannot operate (and generate the income vital for their survival) this summer.

You could also highlight this issue, and reiterate the points above, to your own MP. In the meantime you might want to read the answers we've given to a whole host of other questions about how coronavirus is affecting the waterways and boating.

Please stay safe and stay alert at all times.

Damian Kemp,

Boating communications manager, Canal & River Trust



## **BWML Loses Thames Development Appeal**

Boating Business – 01 June 2020

British Waterways Marinas Ltd (BWML) has lost an appeal against a planning decision preventing development of Limehouse Basin Marina on the River Thames. BWML had proposed to add five pontoons, four to provide formal leisure moorings and the fifth for 24-hour visitor mooring, but planning was refused. The subsequent appeal was also rejected on the grounds that the development would harm navigation and the character and appearance of the water-space of the marina. Other issues, namely the effect on neighbouring residents, water quality and water habitat provision were not found to be of concern. Ruined views and more congestion



The planning inspector concluded that the proposal would noticeably reduce the spaciousness of the area which is a key 'blue open space' within London's Blue Ribbon Network, a strategic system of water-spaces covering the Thames, its tributaries, canals, docks and other water bodies.

Whilst the inspector conceded that the development would not substantially harm the appearance of the area it was nevertheless felt that the reduction in spaciousness and consequent obstruction of views would have an adverse effect. Limehouse Basin is a vital 'port of refuge' for craft from further along the tidal Thames and the Continent. The proposal would reduce 24-hour visitor mooring resulting in an annual unmet demand of several hundred vessels per year. It would also entail relocation of pump-out facilities. Taking these concerns together, the inspector concluded that the proposal is likely to contribute to congestion on the waterway and harm navigation.

Only the High Court can quash the Planning Inspector's decision.

## Lengthmans Scheme

A report came into me at the last Bradmore meeting from Angela and Dave Clark, that several shopping trolleys were submerged in the canal between bridges 15 & 16 at Kidderminster (Tesco area). The next day I reported this to C.R.T., who said they would get the local gang to look into it. A few days later reading a copy of "The Shuttle" I came across a report of volunteers fishing for shopping trolleys. The article is enclosed and states that the volunteers are known as "The pickup artists" and have an internet address pickupartists@outlook.com. Looking on the internet I discovered this group is sponsored by C.R.T. You live and learn !!!  
Derek Overton

## From the Kidderminster Shuttle

By Jack Rawlins  
jack.rawlings@newsquest.  
com Twitter @ksshuttle

A COMMUNITY-spirited team have been busy fishing for shopping trolleys and other discarded objects from the canal in Kidderminster. The Pickup Artists worked together with The Canal and River Trust to clean up a small part of the canal near Tesco in Weaver's Wharf on Tuesday (February 18). The team had to stop early after filling their van with more than 10 trolleys as well as bikes, baskets and fencing. Michelle Medler, from The Pickup Artists, said: "We have previously



Volunteers fished for trolleys in the Kidderminster canal

been dipping in Stourport but this is the time we have held one in Kidderminster. "We hauled out so much this morning that we had to stop. We enjoy it so much we could have kept going. I don't know why you want to trolleys into the canal. I would like to see more people named and shamed when they are caught. "We are going to make the canal clean-up more of a regular thing". She thanked volunteers for their enthusiasm and Tesco for providing free parking and hot drinks for the group. The Pickup Artists are having their annual general meeting on Friday at Sons of Rest Sutton Road starting at 6.30pm.

The public are welcome to the event and enquires can be made to the pickupartists@outlook.com

## **IWA Festival of Water, Worcester will take place in 2021**

IWA News - 17 April 2020

The extension of the Covid 19 lockdown has led us to take the decision to cancel our 2020 Festival of Water. The Festival had been due to take place on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal in Worcester over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Paul Rodgers, IWA National Chairman said "I know that this will disappoint a great many people, many of whom travel from around the country to join us, but with the continuing uncertainty surrounding the spread of the virus, we felt cancelling the event was the right decision to take. The safety of our volunteers and staff, and of everyone who contributes to the event, is obviously paramount. The festival team will be contacting our traders, caterers and exhibitors."

Jane Elwell, chair of the Events Committee, said "Team members have already invested a great deal of time and effort in organising the event and I thank them and the many supporters of our wonderful Festival. We look forward to working with you all again next year."

However the good news is that we plan to be in Worcester's Perdiswell Park over the August Bank Holiday weekend 2021. We look forward to welcoming boaters and visitors to celebrate with us and Worcester City Council next year.

## **West Midlands Development Slammed by the IWA**

*IWA News - 01 Jun 2020*

**The UK government's decision to approve the West Midlands Interchange planning application will destroy parts of the Staffordshire & Worcester Canal, argues the Inland Waterways Association (IWA).**

The Strategic Rail Freight Interchange is a proposed development of 14 warehouses surrounding the canal and its conservation area. Together with support from the Canal & River Trust and a local protest group, the IWA submitted a summary of objections which it felt were well understood by the Planning Inspector.

**Shocking decision**

The Planning Inspectorate Report and Secretary of State decision was published in May and IWA has expressed dismay at how little weight has been given to its concerns, calling the Inspector's view that the heritage value of the area is 'low' and the impact of development 'less than substantial' shocking.

The IWA dismisses the Inspector's assessment of the boatyard at Gailey Wharf as 'unkempt' and that the impact of the development would be 'negligible' and is concerned that the government views previous industrial development as carte blanche to damage the area further.

Also rejected is the assertion that any effects on the conservation area would be outweighed by public benefits, arguing that these benefits are not outlined. Indeed, the IWA argues that there is no proven need for the 'excessive' development and

that its location is inappropriate for the market it will serve, instead bringing unnecessary traffic on already congested roads.

## **A Book from the Past**

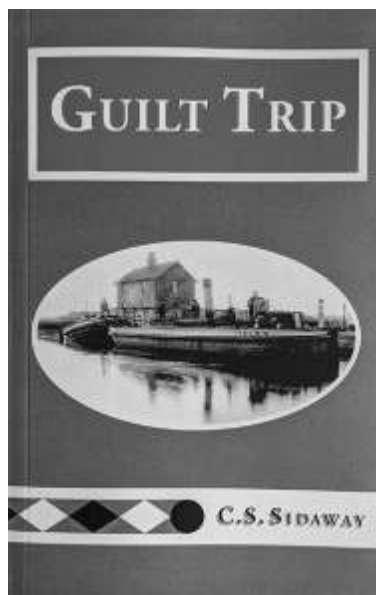
There are now only a very few long standing Society Members, who can remember back to the late 60's and name the Broadsheet Editor. It was Mr Colin S Sidaway. He and I formed a lasting friendship during these early campaigning years to save the canal waterways, by 'using it or losing it' and it was during those days when our own interest jelled as we cruised so many miles of the canal system together. Colin with a small cruiser and myself with James Loader. We travelled extensively together because our boats would easily and safely go into the same narrow lock, the cruiser being tied closely to the stern of my boat. Our companionship rapidly matured as we explored so many of the threatened waterways that were being grossly neglected.

After many years of campaign cruising we became separated. Colin changed his occupation and moved to live in Yorkshire. We both sold our boats and time rapidly passed by as we each went on our own ways. Nevertheless our waterways interests were continuously maintained, but in different ways.

Very much to my surprise Colin's interests had moved on to writing and publishing books relating to the waterways (and more). Completely out of the blue (as they say) the postman delivered a letter-parcel containing a book written by Colin. This was his latest publication called 'Guilt Trip', about a young Yorkshireman who had a burning desire of becoming a tug driver responsible for a coal train. This was some 20 plus compartment boats chained together behind the tug carrying approximately 800 tons of coal. Just imagine meeting one of these floating trains snaking along various Northern waterways, heading towards Goole, or leaving there empty. In the story, tragically things went wrong, so get a copy and read about Jonty's life story. It is a good gripping read as he reflects back over 50 years.

Colin really has his heart in the inland waterway system and is able to write in a very entertaining way. Not only was he our Society Broadsheet Editor, he was also a founder member of the BCN Society in 1967, who's aims are to conserve the 250 mile canal system.

*Peter J Freakley*

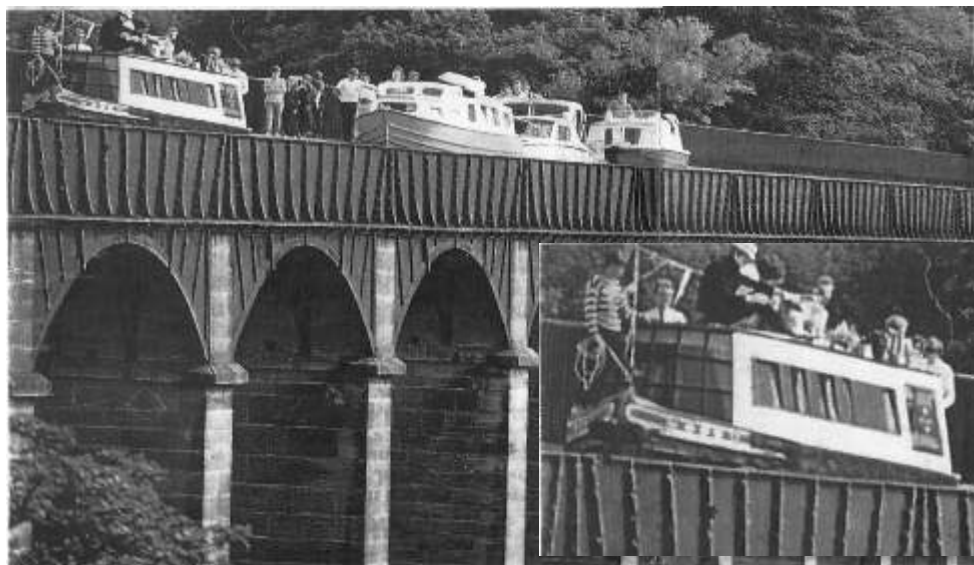


## Wide World of the Narrow Way

*AA Drive Magazine – Autumn 1967*

Three thousand miles of canals and waterways, relics of Britain's industrial revolution, wander through peaceful pastureland and cut into busy town centres. PROFESSOR COLIN BUCHANAN, planner and transport consultant, tells why these forgotten thoroughfares must become the playgrounds of tomorrow

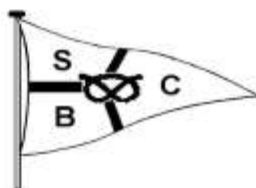
Young Holidaymakers discover the joy of cruising over the river. This robust monument to the men who made Britain's canals is the 1007 ft long Pontcysyllte aqueduct which carries the Llangollen canal 121 ft above the river Dee (map



21C,AA Handbook) Built by Thomas Telford, the aqueduct was opened in 1805 Foulridge Summit and Tardebigge Tunnel, Anderton Lift and Gunthorpe Basin and Hermitage Sluice - what names these are! Strong names taking one to an age when Britain's industrial pulse was beginning to quicken. A short-lived age but a for all that, when prodigious feats of earth-shifting-cut and fill, tunnel and bank were undertaken with pick, shovel and barrow. An age when engineers were engineers and architects, managers and economists, unaffectedly building their robust monuments which, happily, we can still admire today.

To contemplate the future of the canal system is, in quite a real sense, to contemplate the future of Britain. It seems probable that there will be at least seventy million people in Britain by the end of the century. For most people, work will still be the order of the day. However, many of the dull, dangerous or grinding

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tasks will have been eliminated; people will have more real wealth and leisure; and the Standard of education will be higher.

This upward tendency has been characteristic of social trend for a couple of centuries, and there is no reason to suppose that it will not continue. What will this milling population be doing with its increased leisure time? Unless this crucial social question is attended to, there will be bored people around with time on their hands, and bored people, especially bored men are apt to become dangerous. It is certain that the great majority of these people be living in urban areas. For urbanisation is the essential basis for an industrial nation. But these urban areas need not be the tight huddles represented by Liverpool, Manchester and other products of the industrial revolution.

There is almost certain to be a move towards more spacious living conditions: and if we meet this demand with properly designed residential areas there should be scope for people to spend some of their leisure time in rewarding activities, including especially the chance for men to have the satisfaction of working with their hands.

But whatever resources are provided within urban areas people will seek to spend part of their time outside them and the motor car will provide the means of escape. As car ownership increases the pressure on countryside and coast will become intense. Devon and Cornwall many people would say, are saturated already in the summer season: the coasts within reach of London are crowded out: parts of the New Forest are at risk of being rolled flat by visitors cars; and the national parks are attracting steadily increasing numbers to an extent that threatens to destroy the very things that people go there to seek. More national parks will be needed, including perhaps a new New-Forest. Every resource will have to be brought into use. And these include the inland waterways.

Britain's 3000-mile network of navigable inland waterways stretches across the heart of England, from Thames to Severn, from Humber to Mersey and diagonally from Thames to Dee and Severn to Wash. With the exception of the navigable rivers the waterways are narrow and beset with locks. It is difficult to see this network playing more than a marginal role in the transport system of our small country with its overdeveloped railway system and a motorway system gradually coming into existence. It is unlikely that heavy investment in the canal system could be justified.

But as a recreational asset the waterways have enormous potential for a variety of open air pursuits – boating angling walking and natural history. And they are full of interest to anyone concerned with our industrial history.

The movement to realise the recreational assets of the canals is underway. The British Waterways Board has shown itself aware of the potential. The Inland Waterways Association exists to foster public interest and to prod authorities, There

are many local societies doing what they can to restore canals or to prevent others decaying.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that Britain will eventually need every mile of this delicate pattern of waterways to assist in the provision of worthwhile recreation outlets. Nor can there be any doubt, in the broad sense, that the community will be able to afford to maintain and to improve the waterways for its own pleasure. Further decay of this invaluable national asset must be halted by any means possible.

*This AA 'Drive' 1967 article was given to me by Peter Freakley in the year of publication. (I am the 'young holidaymaker' on the far left of the picture).*

*Professor Buchanan argues for greater use of the canal system for leisure.*

*Of course, we all know this would never catch on, didn't we?*

*Regards Carole Cooper.*

### **Canal Towpath exercise: 'I can't Socially Distance'**

BBC News - 20 June 2020

The number of people using canal tow-paths has increased by almost 200% in urban areas since lockdown began.

On a narrow tow-path, social distancing is difficult to achieve but for those with limited access to green spaces it is often one of their few options. Some canal visitors in Birmingham said they were once an "escape" but edging past others filled them with anxiety.

"Living in the city centre, canals have always been my escape," Ruth Millington, who lives in a studio flat in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, said. She has no garden and relies on the city's extensive canal network for exercise. "It's so important for my mental health," she said. With famously more canals than Venice, it is no surprise the waterways are significant to the people of Birmingham. The Canal and River Trust reported that, since lockdown came into force on 23 March, the number of people using the canals in inner-city Birmingham had increased by 171% - from a daily average of 463 to 1,254.

For Ms Millington, the increase has meant her outdoor activity has had an adverse effect on her mental health instead of a positive one. "I've found my usual walk along the canal stressful because the paths are so busy and this has added to



my anxiety," she said. "The narrow paths can't accommodate all of the cyclists, runners, dog walkers and groups of people walking together." The Canal and River Trust charity reported a "shift in usage" from busy tourist hotspots in favour of less-used tow-paths in residential areas, "often amongst less affluent communities where green space is often at a premium". Burnley, Sandwell and Blackburn have seen the greatest increase in visitors to the canal network, while the number of visitors to canals in tourist hotspots such as Camden, Paddington and Birmingham's Brindley Place has dropped by more than half. A growing body of research links parks and green spaces to wellbeing, *although millions of people in the UK do not have access to parks or green spaces nearby*. "My mental health is really suffering from being inside," Ms Millington said, adding she was now having to balance the risk of not being able to social distance against the impact on her wellbeing.

It is a balance the Canal and River Trust is deeply conscious of. The charity put up signage across its network encouraging people to limit their use of tow-paths but said it was working to manage social distancing without cutting off access to green space from those least likely to have gardens or live near parks. "Our canals provide, for many people, a vital green or blue route on-their-doorstep, but people must limit their use and act considerately at this time," the Trust's chief executive Richard Parry said. "Canals can be a lifeline for people, but only if we use them responsibly

Raj Sanghera has just bought a house which backs on to the Birmingham New Main Line canal. He said the canal had become his main access route into town and, since lockdown, a place he took trips out. "We've really embraced canal life." He said he had noticed "a massive increase in people" using the tow-paths and so has had to change his habits to better maintain social distancing. "It puts me off going at 'peak times'," the keen runner said. "I'm getting up earlier to go out to avoid people." The number of visitors is exacerbated by the fact only one side of the canal is paved, he said, forcing the majority of people on to one side of the tow-path where they are further restricted by overgrown shrubbery.

For boater Tim Morley, the increase in people using tow-paths has been noticeable - on some days they have been akin to "a motorway", he said. He lives with his partner on a boat in Hockley Port, a section of canal off Birmingham's Soho Loop near the Jewellery Quarter. "We've been trying to exercise every day and the tow-path is the natural place to do it," he said. But the network was "never designed for that volume of people," he said, and he has instead taken to walking around local industrial estates to avoid people using the tow-paths. "We don't want to be near people but we also want to offer space to people who live in flats and only have access to the canals for a couple of hours a day."

Mr Morley, who works all over the world as an academic facilitator, has been living on a boat for three years. Part of the advice issued by the Canal and River Trust was for pedestrians and cyclists to avoid areas where boats are moored to protect boaters. "When you're moored, you're inches from the tow-path," Mr Morley said, but added Hockley Port was closed to members of the public, "so we don't really get people walking past us".

The Canal and River Trust said it wanted people to continue using the network, "to enjoy the benefits of spending time by water". "We're just asking that they be responsible and considerate when doing so."

## **Toddbrook Reservoir Independent Review Report overview of findings**

By Professor David Balmforth 10 February 2020

My overall finding is:

The cause of failure at Toddbrook Reservoir on the 1 August 2019 was the poor design of the spillway, exacerbated by intermittent maintenance over the years which would have caused the spillway to deteriorate. It has not been possible to say whether it was the poor design or the intermittent maintenance that was the primary cause of failure on the day. With consistent good quality maintenance over the years leading up to the event the spillway may not have failed. However, it would have been unlikely to survive the probable maximum flood which is many times greater than the flood in which it failed. My remaining findings are summarised below.

Was there anything prior to 1 August that could have undermined the integrity of the spillway, and/or identified any actual or emerging issues with the dam?

The original design of the auxiliary spillway was flawed for the following reasons:

- the concrete slabs of the spillway chute were too thin
- the slabs did not have sufficient reinforcement
- the dowel bars in the transverse joints were inadequate 44
- there were no dowel-bars or water-bars in the longitudinal joints
- there was no underdrain to the spillway.
- there was no cut-off between the spillway crest and the puddle clay core of the dam

All the above factors contributed in some way to the failure. The spillway was not fit for the purpose of conveying the probable maximum flood.

It would be unfair to the findings of Professor Balmforth to further summarise details of his finding and recommendations, or to risk changing the context by extracting paragraphs from the report but the full report can be found by searching online for:

Toddbrook Reservoir Independent Review Report

Richard Parry, the Trust Chief Executive, said: "I welcome the publication of the independent report into the cause of the spillway failure at Toddbrook reservoir last summer, and its recommendations to enhance safety across all reservoirs in England and Wales.

"Keeping people safe is always our top priority; we welcome any steps that reduce risks to local people and are fully committed to acting on all the lessons learnt from this incident and taking the actions arising from both these reports.

"Once again, I would like to thank the emergency services for their heroic efforts last summer, the residents of Whaley Bridge who have coped magnificently with the disruption, together with the Trust's employees, volunteers and partners. "The Trust has begun preliminary work on repairing Toddbrook reservoir prior to its full restoration, and we remain fully committed to liaising closely with the local community as our repair work progresses."

The Trust said it is reviewing the design features of all reservoirs it operates as a result and strengthened its reservoir team with an experienced engineer. Reservoir surveillance and vegetation management is said to have been 'enhanced'.

The Trust said it has also earmarked an additional £30 million for reservoir works over the next three years on top of its existing annual £25m programme of works. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said the government accepted a series of recommendations to further strengthen reservoir safety.

## **Vital work to resume on Unlocking the Severn Project**

Towpath Talk - April 27, 2020

Construction of four fish passes along the River Severn in Worcestershire, paused on 25 March due to the coronavirus pandemic, is set to resume in the coming days.

*The Unlocking the Severn project* team has worked extensively with the contractor, Kier, to develop safe working practices to ensure work can be undertaken in accordance with government guidance. Three of the project's sites at Bevere, Lincomb and Holt, are remote and the work can be carried out without any restrictions to the public.

At one site, at Diglis, a short section of the narrow riverside path by the works won't be available for periods between 7.30am and 6pm on Mondays to Fridays. This will ensure the public and site staff are separated and are able to follow social distancing rules. Signage will be on site to show the alternative route.

*Jason Leach, programme director* explains: "We're following government guidance to keep everyone safe while we take this opportunity to make progress on constructing the fish passes whilst river levels are low.

"Works were previously held up by the prolonged River Severn flooding over winter and this is a great chance to take advantage of the drier spring and summer weather and lower river levels make work easier and safer, whilst undertaking

this work during the lockdown also means there is less traffic and reduced disruption to the public. Please help us by respecting social distancing guidelines if you are in the area."

The Unlocking the Severn project is one of the largest of its kind ever attempted in Europe and has been made possible through funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the European Union LIFE programme. Unlocking the Severn is being led by the Canal & River Trust with its partners, Severn Rivers Trust, Environment Agency and Natural England.

## **Hunt for 'Canal Pushers' amid fears that women are being targeted**

ITV Report - 14 June 2020

A number of cyclists have been 'pushed' into Worcester and Birmingham canal by a 'ten-strong gang'. Sophie Watson, 26, said she was left bruised after being pushed into water on Friday evening (June 12). She said it happened on a stretch of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, between the University of Birmingham and The Vale student accommodation. Another woman was said to have been pushed in further along the canal.

It is reported that police received claims that five women were thrown into the canal in separate attacks on Friday. It's believed the group were aged between 14 and 17 and on bikes.

Sophie said she had been cycling alongside the canal from the University of Birmingham back towards her home in the Jewellery Quarter, when the incident happened. The 26-year-old had been passing a group of teenage cyclist who had stopped when one of them pushed her into the water. They then cycled away towards Stirchley, laughing. Making her way home after the event she came across another women cyclist being helped out of the canal.

A West Midlands Police Spokesperson said: *"We were called to reports of a woman cyclist being pushed into a canal near Carver Street, Birmingham just after 6.40pm Friday evening (June 12). "We are also aware of reports on social media of other similar incidents and would urge anyone with information to get in touch with us." "Officers in the neighbourhood teams will be linking in with partnership agencies including Canal Watch to offer support and reassurance to those using the city's canal networks."*

A Canal and River Trust Spokesperson said: So very saddened to hear about this. "Thankfully, incidents such as this are rare but very serious and should be reported to the police if not already. "Always looking to make areas as safe as they can be."

(Four walkers were also assaulted and thrown into the Leeds-Liverpool canal in two incidents by a gang of 15 moped riders on 26 May. All required hospital attention.)

## The Queens Award for Voluntary Services



Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust News

Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust Volunteers have been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK.

The volunteers support our internationally important heritage site, ensuring the Dudley Canal Tunnel and limestone mines remain at the heart of the community. Volunteer activities are wide ranging from learning volunteers supporting school visits teaching children about rocks and fossils or black country industrial heritage; befriending volunteers who run the Chit Chat conversation club in the Gongoozler cafe every Tuesday morning engaging with those in the community who may be feeling isolated; to garden and towpath volunteers ensuring visitors have a great time on the boat trips and the site and surrounding waterways are kept clean and tidy.

The Trust's Volunteer Co-ordinator, Rebecca Cooper-Sayer says "I am so proud of our team of volunteers. They all work so hard in their different roles and I am thrilled that this hard work and dedication has been recognised in such a prestigious way"

Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust is one of 230 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year. The number of nominations remains high year on year, showing that the voluntary sector is thriving and full of innovative ideas to make life better for those around them.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service aims to recognise outstanding work by volunteer groups to benefit their local communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Recipients are announced each year on 2nd June, the anniversary of the Queen's Coronation. Award winners this year are wonderfully diverse. They include volunteer groups from across the UK, including a community shop in Cornwall, an environmental group in Swansea, a group working with refugees and vulnerable people in Stirling and a thriving community arts centre in County Down.

Representatives of Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust will receive the award from John Crabtree, OBE, Lord Lieutenant of West Midlands later this summer. Furthermore two volunteers from Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust will attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace in May 2021, along with other recipients of this year's Award.

Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust's CEO, Traci Dix-Williams says: "It's amazing news. We are delighted that the work our volunteers do has been recognised in this way. Volunteers have been the backbone of the organisation for almost 60 years. Their hard work and dedication has helped ensure that the Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust, a heritage site of international importance, is preserved and remains at the heart of the local community".



## Public urged to report sightings of tree pest Oak Processionary Moth

Gov UK - 28 May 2020

As Oak Processionary Moth season begins, the Forestry Commission reminds the public to report sightings of the tree pest Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) caterpillars. Oak Processionary Moth was first identified in London in 2006 and has since spread to some surrounding counties. The caterpillars and their nests contain hairs which can cause itchy rashes, eye and throat irritations, and should not be touched under any circumstances at any time. The greatest risk period is May to July when the caterpillars emerge and feed before pupating into adult moths.

OPM caterpillars feed on oak leaves and can increase trees' vulnerability to attack by other pests and diseases, making them less able to withstand adverse weather conditions such as drought and floods. A government programme is in place to limit their spread from areas where they are present.

The pest is established in London and surrounding areas but the majority of the country is designated a Protected Zone, which means it is free from the pest.

The Forestry Commission, working in partnership with others, have an annual programme in place to tackle the pest, with an ongoing programme of surveillance, treatment and research.

Andrew Hall, Forestry Commission Operations Manager, said: At this time of year, many people are enjoying green spaces and it's really important for the public to be aware



of the risk of tree pests like Oak Processionary Moth and to report any sightings via our [TreeAlert](#) website or by calling the Forestry Commission. This will help us with our programme of treatment and enables us to slow the spread of this pest. Any sightings should be reported to the Forestry Commission via its Tree Alert online portal. Alternatively, people can email [opm@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:opm@forestrycommission.gov.uk) or call 0300 067 4442.

Nests are typically dome or teardrop-shaped, averaging the size of a tennis ball. They are white when fresh, but soon become discoloured and brown. The caterpillars have black heads and bodies covered in long white hairs which contain proteins which can cause itchy rashes, eye, and throat irritations. They can also occasionally cause breathing difficulties in people and pets, so should not be touched under any circumstances.

For more information on how to identify OPM, including common mistaken species, visit [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/opm](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/opm).

## **Membership Renewal 2020**

Just a reminder about Membership Subscriptions:

Membership renewals have understandably been affected by recent events, resulting in more than normal being outstanding for the time of year. Renewals were due on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. Our membership subscription again remains unchanged, as follows:-

SINGLE MEMBERSHIP	£13.00
COMBINED MEMBERSHIP	£13.50 (e.g. Husband & Wife)
JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP	£1.00 (up to 18yrs of age) & those in full time education

Remittance in the post should be addressed to:

14 White Harte Park, Kinver, South Staffs, DY7 6HN.

or passed to a Committee member at Bradmore

Thank you

*Colin Beard*

*Membership Secretary*

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# 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 .....

Email .....

- ☐ 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 ..... ☐ Volunteer Work

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## **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*

*Meetings will resume when Bradmore reopens*

## **Events**

***Autumn Cruise 2020***

*T.B.A*

## **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 chose to receive Broadsheet electronically.*

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

*Please contact Steve Gray by email to [wharfinger@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:wharfinger@blueyonder.co.uk) with your name and email address if you wish to "opt-in."*

*Note:- email addresses will only be used for the communication of society information and will not be passed to any third party.*



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