

IWA The Inland Waterways Association

Excalibur

**THE LONDON NEWSLETTER
OF THE IWA**

No 1 — January 2006



**Campaigning for the
conservation, use, maintenance,
restoration and development of
the Inland Waterways.**

Registered as a charity No 212342

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*The views expressed in this
publication are not necessarily
those of the Inland Waterways
Association or of the London
Region. They are, however,
published as being of interest to
our members and readers*

Who's Who in London IWA

LONDON REGION

President: Iltyd Harrington, JP, DL

Vice-Presidents

Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti

Arthur Farrand Radley, MBE

Chairman

Roger Squires 020 7232 0987

e-mail: roger.squires@waterways.org.uk

Secretary

Robin Bishop 020 8452 2632

11 Lichfield Road, Cricklewood, NW2 2RE

e-mail: robinebishop@tiscali.co.uk

Treasurer

Mike McHugh (work) 020 8813 5200

e-mail: mike@dtl-broadcast.com

Committee members

Libby Bradshaw 020 8874 2787

Stu Carrie 01895 440231

(Middlesex Branch Chairman)

Marion Riley 07958 551760

(N&E London Branch Chair)

Dorothy Robbie 020 8857 6367

(Acting South London Branch Chairman)

Colin Edwards 020 8365 1348

(Chairman of Plan/Nav Committee)

Official not on the Region Committee

Lewis Phillips 01227 712669

(London Ring Plaques distribution)

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH

Acting Chairman

Dorothy Robbie 020 8857 6367

e-mail: dorothy_robbie@lineone.net

Deputy Chairman

Libby Bradshaw 020 8874 2787

Secretary and Social Secretary

Lesley Pryde 07787 360957

2 Hepworth Road, SW16 5DQ

e-mail: cookielesley@tinyworld.co.uk

Treasurer and Minutes Secretary

Dorothy Robbie 020 8857 6367

23 Porcupine Close, SE9 3AE

Committee members

Alan Eggby 020 8764 8294

(Sales Officer and Publicity Officer)

Andrew Mann 020 8692 3637

(Membership Officer and Croydon Canal Campaign Co-ordinator)

MIDDLESEX BRANCH

Chairman

Stu Carrie 01895 440231

e-mail: stuartcarrie@tiscali.co.uk

Vice-Chairman and Treasurer

Mike McHugh (work) 020 8813 5200

e-mail: mike@dtl-broadcast.com

Secretary and Sales Officer

Robin Bishop 020 8452 2632

11 Lichfield Road, Cricklewood, NW2 2RE

e-mail: robinebishop@tiscali.co.uk

Committee members

John Ashley 020 8572 0067

(Planning/Navigation Officer)

Keith Clayton 020 8573 0883

(Membership Officer)

Michael Harlock 01895 625524

(Social Secretary)

Terry Liddle 020 8863 2551

(Newsletter Editor)

Jim Sitch 020 8568 9659

(Publicity Officer)

Lucy Smith 07947 451376

(Events Officer)

NORTH AND EAST LONDON BRANCH

Chair

Marion Riley 07958 551760

e-mail: marion.riley@virgin.net

Vice-Chair

Tim Lewis 020 8530 0425

Secretary

Roger Wilkinson 020 8458 9476

2 Lytton Close, London N2 0RH

e-mail: rogerw9796@yahoo.co.uk

Treasurer

Ian Israel 020 8446 1823

e-mail: p.israel@which.net

Committee members

Colin Edwards 020 8365 1348

(Planning/Navigation)

Annie Chipchase 07773 553623

(Environment Officer)

Peter Nash 07958 505204

(Social Secretary)

Ted Skelton 020 8518 1903

(Membership Officer)

From the Chairman

With the start of every new year, we always need to identify what we seek to achieve during the months ahead. For 2006 I see the need to recruit many more active members and to persuade them to do something positive to support the IWA. I say this because not only do membership numbers count. Our membership fees pay the wages of HQ staff. The more we want from them, the more funds we have to find. Secondly, because most of the actual campaigning and negotiating for improvements to our waterways falls to volunteers, on both Region and Branch Committees we need to spread the load. Currently all but one of our Branch Committees have vacancies, and our Region Planning and Navigations Committee, which deals with 40,000 planning applications a year, is seriously undermanned. It is a simple fact that if we wish to protect our waterways and their corridors, then we need to actively monitor all planning requests and follow up on those where detriment is likely to occur. Constructive dialogue and positive ideas will often save the day. Simply to do nothing will mean more of the waterways heritage, that we hold dear, will be slowly eroded away. Committee work generally is far from hard, so long as there are sufficient within the team to share the load. It is for this reason that I make a personal appeal to all individual IWA members to seriously consider how they personally can help. The AGM's and elections are in March 2006. Do please consider offering your services!

The year 2006 marks the 60th birthday of the IWA. Elsewhere in this issue you will find an article on those 60 years and what has been achieved. We now need to reflect on what lies ahead. We had a welcome burst of re-openings just after the millennium, with the Forth & Clyde, the Huddersfield and the Rochdale canals all being restored. We also saw the opening of the new Ribble Link. My concern now is that the current schemes, like the Cotswold Canal, the

Droitwich and the Grantham Canal, are all finding that higher costs are delaying or reducing progress. Likewise, novel plans like that for the proposed Bedford to Milton Keynes broad gauge link, are not getting the start-up support from the authorities that they need to persuade developers and others to add their weight. Clearly, as an Association we cannot always control inflation, but we can and should ensure the political climate is right for such scheme to get some priority when funding is tight. We in London, have the prospect of the Bow Back Rivers being rejuvenated on the back of the 2012 Olympic Games. The opportunities for development of more water borne freight in this area and elsewhere are clearly there, but we all need to lobby hard to bring these schemes to reality.

It really comes back to you, the individual member, to play your part. It is easy to sit back and expect others to take on the task. The problem is that more and more are doing less and less. We in the IWA want to ensure the future for our inland waterways. It all comes back to you—the individual member. Do please consider how you can play your part and actively support London Region of the IWA. We really need your help.

There are various celebrations planned to acknowledge the 60th birthday of the IWA. One of the first major events is Canalway Cavalcade at the beginning of May. This annual event at Little Venice really kicks off the London boating year. I hope to see you there enjoying the fun. If you want to help, then please come and introduce yourself to me at the Information Stand on the south towpath. I certainly will have a job to offer you. Until then, please note the date of your local AGM. Attend it and say your piece. And, if possible, consider standing for election to join one of the Committees. The IWA needs you.

Have a Happy New Year

Roger Squires
Chairman, IWA London Region

Branch and Region Annual General Meetings

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meetings of the London Region of the Inland Waterways Association, and of its three Branches will take place at the following places and times:

South London Branch, 8pm on Wednesday 1st March 2006 at The Primary Room, United Reformed Church Hall, Addiscombe Grove, East Croydon, CR9.

Middlesex Branch, 8pm on Tuesday 14th March 2006 at Hillingdon Canal Club, Uxbridge.

North and East London Branch, 7pm on Wednesday 15th March 2006 at Spring Lea Cruising Club, Springfield Marina, Spring Hill, E5.

London Region, 8pm on Thursday 20th April 2006 at *The Lamb*, Lamb's Conduit Street, WC1.
See page 12 or the Region web site for more particulars of each venue.

AGENDA (Branch AGMs)

The Agenda for each meeting will be as follows:

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2005 AGM and any Extraordinary General Meetings held subsequently
3. Report(s) from Officers
4. Presentation of accounts
5. Business of the meeting notified under byelaw 40*
6. Notice of Committee size
7. Election to fill any vacancies on the Committee
8. Address by Region Chairman

In each case the formal AGM will be followed by another activity as listed in the *Coming Events* listing in the Branch magazines.

AGENDA (Region AGM)

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2005 AGM
3. Report(s) from Officers
4. Presentation of accounts
5. Business of the meeting notified under byelaw 40*
6. Notice of Committee size
7. Election to fill any vacancies on the Committee

The formal AGM will be followed by a discussion on the way in which the Region and the Branches can more effectively meet members needs. We would like members views on the Social Events that are organized and the locations used. Also ideas of ways by which the Region and Branches can attract better 'turn-outs' at events. This is the members opportunity to let the Committee know what they would like IWA to deliver.

* **NOTE:** Byelaw 40 provides that any member of a region or branch may propose business to appear on the agenda of an AGM of their region or branch, provided that notice of such business is delivered in writing to the secretary of the region or branch no later than 120 days before that meeting. If any such items are received, a revised Agenda for the relevant meeting will be in the Branch Newsletter which is due to be published before the AGMs.

Branch and Region Committee Elections

Nominations for election to a Branch or Region committee must be received by the appropriate secretary (details on page 2) at least two weeks before the date of the AGM. All candidates and their proposers must be paid-up members of the relevant Branch or Region, and the candidate must indicate his/her willingness to stand. Nominations and indications of willingness must be sent either in writing or by e-mail.

All elected members of a Region or Branch Committee who have held office for a term of three years have to retire, as does any member co-opted during the committee meetings since the last AGM. Members in either category are eligible for re-election, provided that they are duly nominated as detailed above.

The particulars for each Committee are as follows:

	Middlesex Branch	North & East London Branch	South London Branch	London Region
Secretary (Contact details on page 2)	Robin Bishop	Roger Wilkinson	Lesley Pryde	Robin Bishop
Deadline for nominations	28th February	1st March	15th February	6th april
Current maximum no. of elected members*	9***	9	9	6
Current vacancies	0	1	4	1
Members completing 3 years in post	Stu Carrie Robin Bishop	Marion Riley Peter Nash Edward Skelton Ian Israel Roger Wilkinson	Libby Bradshaw Alan Eggby	Roger Squires Libby Bradshaw Robin Bishop
Members co- opted since the previous AGM	Lucy Smith	None	None	None
Number of posts to be filled**	3***(4)	6	6	4

* In addition to these elected members, the Region Chairman is *ex officio* a member of each Branch Committee, and each Branch chairman is *ex officio* a member of the Region Committee.

** These figures may vary if a Branch or Region Committee decides to change the size of the relevant Committee. If such a decision is to be made, it will be incorporated in a revised Agenda to be included in the Branch Newsletter due to be published before the AGM.

*** Middlesex Branch are considering increasing their number of elected members to 10.

60 YEARS OF DEFENDING THE INLAND WATERWAYS

IWA DIAMOND JUBILEE—2006

Much has changed in Britain since Robert Aickman, Tom Rolt and others met in London in 1946 to form the Inland Waterways Association. They were men of vision. They saw the value of our inland waterways and its heritage and set out to develop a campaign of hearts and minds to convince all of the multifunctional value of our unique canals system.

At first they concentrated in drawing the public attention to the then poor state of the network, with long sections left in decay through lack of use. High profile publicity events, like that to protect the Northern Stratford Canal from closure, were key to their early success. Similarly the Northern Reaches Cruise, covering one of the last transits through the decaying Huddersfield Narrow Canal, drew local attention to their cause.

The founders saw the value of persuading people in high places to support the Associations aims. This offered useful debates in the Houses of Parliament which highlighted the decayed state of the canal system. Public cruises, such as those organised in conjunction with the Festival of Britain, were used to attract public concern. Similarly, individuals like Douglas Barwell, on the Lower Avon, led the way to show what volunteers could achieve in restoring derelict waterways.

The Association's objects set out to advocate the use, maintenance and development of the inland waterways and in particular to advocate and promote the restoration to good order of every navigable waterway, and the fullest use of these by both commercial and pleasure traffic.

By 1953 the early IWA Council had concluded that there was a need to have

a National Waterways Commission to have powers to ensure all waterways were maintained. Since 1973, the IWA has been campaigning for a National Waterways Conservancy.

Perhaps one of the earliest examples of where the IWA was able to take such an initiative was in respect of the derelict Southern Stratford Canal. Here, by quirk of [engineered] fate a single toll ticket issued to an intrepid canoeist provided the catalyst to getting the canal restored by volunteers. Robert Aickman persuaded John Smith of the National Trust that they should take over the canal. David Hutchings was persuaded to get the restoration underway. What happened thereafter is now history. But the reopening of the Southern Stratford Canal by the Queen Mother on 11th July 1964 probably did more than anything else to establish voluntary restoration of canals as an accepted principle. It also led to the rebuilding of the Upper Avon Navigation between Evesham and Stratford, which was opened by the Queen Mother in 1974.

From 1965 onwards the idea of a Waterway Recovery Group, co-ordinating the work of waterway volunteers, had been established. In 1966 the first edition of '*Navvies*' was produced. By the time the Upper Avon was reopened, volunteers were working on a range of schemes throughout the country. These included, the Ashton and Peak Forest Canals, Buxworth Basin and Great Northern Basin plus the Cromford Canal. In the west the campaign to reopen the Kennet and Avon was making some headway and so was a local scheme on the Grand Western Canal. In Wales, both the Montgomery and the Brecon and Abergavenny had activity, whilst in Yorkshire, Linton Lock, the Derwent

and the Pocklington Canal were all under review. In central England, the Stourbridge Canal, Dudley Tunnel, the Welford Arm, the Caldon Canal, as well as the Great Ouse to Bedford were all active work sites. Early near misses, such as the Basingstoke Canal and the Droitwich, were also again set for revival.

Perhaps the next major breakthrough was the reopening of the Kennet & Avon Canal by the Queen in 1990. By then, there was a clearer acceptance by the general public of the recreational value of the canals and their corridor. It was this acceptance, plus lottery funds, that triggered the revival and reopening of the two trans-Pennine Canals, the Rochdale and the Huddersfield Narrow Canal in 2001.

The fact that some of the IWA's early objectives have now been achieved

must not lull us into a false sense of security. The battle over the hearts and minds might appear to have been achieved, but it is only through continued vigilance that the future of the waterways will be secured.

The IWA has done much over the past 60 years, but all the battles have not yet been won. Major projects are still underway, like the Cotswolds Canal and the Droitwich. Both are under pressure from rising costs. Changes in towns are putting more pressures on the canal corridors. Developers, as ever, are seeking to make the 'quick buck'. All these concerns mean that the IWA has an active and wide ranging role to play if our waterways are to continue to provide that multifunctional role in the 21st century.

60 years and still going strong—long live the IWA.

Architecture of Canals

The Architecture of Canals, Derek Pratt, Shire Album 444. Shire Publishing Ltd., Cromwell House, Church Street, Princes Risborough, Bucks, HP27 9AA. 56pp, 69 coloured illustrations. ISBN 0 7478 0632 2. £5.99.

This is an excellent illustrated book of many of the well-known sites on British Canals. The quality of the illustrations reflects the author's professional approach to photography. Although many of the pictures are of scenes familiar to waterway enthusiasts the collection would make a worthwhile present to someone new to canal cruising or to someone who has yet to make up their mind on the value of exploring the canal scene.

The book is divided into six sections dealing with bridges, aqueducts, locks, tunnels, buildings associated with canal operation, and with a final look into the 21st century. A particularly fine view of a turnover, or roving, bridge is that at Congleton on the Macclesfield Canal; while a detail of Lady's Bridge on the Kanda Canal near Wilcot illustrates the architectural

detail required to enhance the amenity value of a canal on a country estate. Such a character is also shown by Dundas Aqueduct by John Rennie and Telford's Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. Before and after aerial views are included of the North Circular Road Aqueduct on the Grand Union Canal. Less familiar waterside buildings are the Cash's top shop ribbon weaving factory at Coventry and a row of stables at Bunbury on the Shropshire Union Canal. Finally, of course, must be the Falkirk Wheel and the restored Anderton Lift, but there is also an evocative picture of Merchant's Bridge at Castlefield, Manchester. A delightful book of nostalgia and well recommended.

John H. Boyes

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR
CANALWAY CAVALCADE
29/30th APRIL and 1st MAY**

If you can spare an hour or two to assist on the IWA Stands during the event, please contact Roger Squires (phone 020 7232 0987) or on the main Information Stand during the event. Every bit of help will be appreciated.

Tide Mills of London

Many members will be familiar with the range of buildings at Bromley by Bow standing at the head of Bow Creek on the river Lea and will know them as Three Mills. Many also will have visited them and have been shown the grain milling machinery and told that they were tide mills with explanations of their history. But what is the significance of a tide mill as distinct from a water mill?

There is a great deal of discussion today on the advantages of renewable energy, one of which sources is the potential power of the tides; yet this unfailing source has been recognised as vitally important since Roman times provided it can be controlled, but that control is the problem. The successive owners of Three Mills were reasonably successful in finding a solution which enabled them to control the tidal power for almost 800 years in one building after another, though the present House Mill as the show piece was erected as recently as 1776. The principle adopted was to allow the tidal flow driving up Bow Creek to pass through sluice gates into sections of the Bow Back Rivers known particularly as Three Mills Wall River and Three Mills Back River. As the tide turned to the ebb the gates were closed and the water was thus ponded back in these rivers. The water was then diverted on to the water wheels in the building through their own individual sluices thus powering the machinery in the mill. These mills, the House Mill and the Clock Mill, had between them 18 pairs of stones grinding the grain for the owners distillery producing alcohol

from which gin was rectified, the surplus alcohol being sold to the local paint and chemical industries, until grinding ceased in 1941 following bomb damage. The basic problem which was not solved was the twice daily range of the tides varying over the 24 hours so that a regular working day was impossible.

Some mills, such as Three Mills, sited on a river flowing into a tidal estuary would have their tidal water supplemented by the normal fresh water flow of their river entering the impounded tidal water but that did not fully overcome the daily pattern of change in available working hours for the millers involved.

But though we are familiar with Three Mills we perhaps fail to recognise that there were at least 20 other tide mills in the immediate London area which have used this technology of applying tidal power to their industry at various periods of the past thousand years. Most of these have disappeared almost without trace and it is only through slight and sporadic references in the documentary evidence that shows how important this engineering technology was to our forebears.

Not all, of course, were corn mills and two outstanding examples were on the Thames itself. The concept of using the tides to power pumping machinery for water supply to the community was apparently first used in Danzig (now Gdansk in Poland) in 1570 and this was followed by installations in Augsburg and elsewhere in Germany and then in London. The engineer was Peter Morris, who has been described as a

Dutchman but probably came from Danzig. The plant was installed here in 1582 but was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666 but about three years later on was reconstructed. It was further reconstructed and improved by George Sorocold in 1701/2. In 1763 after an accident to the London Bridge, which housed the machinery in arches on the north side of the river, it was decided that reliance should not be placed solely on the north side. So a complementary works was constructed by Smeaton in 1767 in the arches on the south side of the river. So these two plants operated by the tidal flow of the Thames provided a major supply of London's water until London Bridge itself was demolished in 1822/4.

Another very important mill was that at Barking which had a remarkably long life of some 700 years from c1200 to 1890. Here the power from the river Roding was supplemented by the tidal influx into Barking Creek. There is a record that in 1321/2 extensive work was done at the mill both on the structure and on the equipment while the sales of flour amounted to £19.16.11½. The mill first appeared on a map of 1653. In those early days until the dissolution of the Monasteries the owner was the Abbess of Barking, but subsequently the ownership passed through various hands until finally it was held by T D Ridley and Sons who ceased production in 1890 and the main buildings were demolished in 1922 leaving just the 19th century brick warehouse.

However, returning to West Ham and the Bow Back Rivers there was a group of mills each one sited on one of the streams whose waters rejoined with the Three Mills back rivers to form Bow

Creek. All these were tide mills and before the 1930 flood relief scheme their tail waters flowed under separate bridges under the High Road to Stratford. In Domesday Book there were nine watermills mentioned in West Ham and latterly the remaining ones were known as the Fote, St Thomas's or Pudding Mill on the Pudding Mill Stream; Spileman's or City Mill on the City Mill River; Saynes or Waterworks Mill on the Waterworks River (disappeared by 1893) and the Wiggen or Homeredes or Abbey Mill on the Channelsea River (a site of a mill in 1118). Each of these had a very long life because they were the source of flour for the London bakers. The grain came from Hertfordshire and Essex down the Lea long before the creation of the Lee Navigation in 1739. Although they were at times principally corn mills other activities were involved. For instance Spileman's was also a fulling mill while the owners of Saynes or Saines Mill had also erected an 'engine' (waterwheel) for supplying water to Mile End, Stepney, etc; and Three Mills itself at one period incorporated a gunpowder mill, as well as latterly being part of Nicholson's gin distillery; while St Thomas's was at one time a paper mill. So it can be said that the Bow Back rivers has been for centuries an important industrial estate.

Also on the north bank of the Thames was Crashe Mills at Wapping which was recorded in 1233 belonging to the Priory of Holy Trinity, Aldgate, but its subsequent history has so far remained a complete blank. There is a very rough sketch of the site though its actual location is unknown. Another tide mill about which little is known and its site

too has completely disappeared was recorded in Hackney Marsh. Monasteries and Abbeys were often technically forward in their developments and Westminster Abbey was in the fashion for it had constructed a tide mill before 1475 as a lease records the stream flowing and reflowing from the mill in the said Monastery. This mill continued after the Dissolution of the monasteries and was demolished in 1678. Another early mill was granted by Henry II to the Knights Templar on the river Fleet. Yet another mill existed to supplement the flow of water through Chelsea waterworks which was close to the site of the present Victoria Station. It was built c1726 and was known to be still working in 1775.

Turning now to the south side of the river there were at least ten tide mills but the early 19th century rapid expansion of housing, industry and railways has so destroyed the rural, albeit marshy, landscape that even the sites of the majority of the mills can no longer be identified. Records exist of a mill at Battersea, four in Southwark, one in Bermondsey, an important one in Rotherhithe, and three in Deptford.

Rotherhithe mill, also known as King's mill was originally established by Bermondsey Abbey but following the dissolution it was taken over by the Crown and was leased in 1554 to Henry Reve who utilised the water power in reconstructed premises for manufacturing gunpowder—the first place in England to use water and tidal power for this purpose. Reve apparently had no title to the marshland which he flooded and so despite his lease he was thrown out. The mill continued to be used for various purposes until it

THE 200 CLUB NEEDS YOU

The 200 Club serves a dual role. It lets IWA members have a 'little flutter', with the chance of winning a Cash Lump Sum. It also offers distribution of profits to IWA London Region to further the Region's work. If you are unable to do anything else, the 200 Club offers the ideal way to show that you are both committed and involved.

disappeared before 1786 and its great mill pond became part of the Surrey Docks.

The Neckinger river was tidal in its lower reaches and the flowing tide was penned back to serve the Neckinger mills which again had been established by the commercially minded Bermondsey Abbey but were reconstructed in 1780 as a paper mill. Another tide mill known as Savory Mill existed in Southwark up to the 18th century and stood at the head of St Saviours Dock but its operations so interfered with the shipping using the St Saviours Dock wharves that it was closed. Finally the Ravensbourne in Deptford had three mills, Lamb's Mill, King's or St Paul's Mill and probably the best known in its latter years as Robinson's Mill. This mill site is mentioned in Domesday Book and in 1293 was known as Flood Mill. By the 17th century it was the property of Christ's Hospital and was rebuilt in 1790. It later became Robinson's Mill but no longer tidal powered.

As one cruises the Thames and the existing waterways it is as well to remember the vital part these waterways have played in the growth and development of London not only as a means of commercial and passenger transport but as an important attribute to the industrial life of the bankside communities.

John H Boyes

IWA London Region 200 Club

The Club was formed some years ago to help fund the running of the Region so that other sources of income could be devoted more fully to campaigning and donations to waterways causes. At the moment the Club is well below its target of 200 members. If you have not yet joined, why not do so now? If you are a member, you can always take out an extra membership or two!

Members of the Club must be IWA members aged 18 or over. The annual subscription to the Club is £12, payable by annual cheque or standing order (either for £12 annually or £1 monthly). A member may hold more than one membership of the Club. Prizes are awarded by a draw which takes place six times a year. When the Club has its full quota of 200 members, each draw awards four prizes of £100, £50, £25, £25. When the Club has less than 200 members, prizes are reduced so that the ratio of prizes to subscriptions remains the same. The present officers of the Club are: Chairman: Stu Carrie, Secretary: Vernon Draper (address below), Treasurer: Mike McHugh (contact details on page 2). All queries should be addressed to Vernon Draper at the address at the foot of this page.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

To the Officers

I wish to become a member of the Inland Waterways Association London Region 200 Club. I have completed and enclose the standing order / enclose a cheque as payment for membership(s) at £12 each.

Full name

Address

Postcode

Phone e-mail

I am a member of the Inland Waterways Association and I agree to be bound by the rules of the London Region 200 Club.

Signed..... Date

Cheques should be made payable to "IWA London Region 200 Club"

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

To: The Manager Bank/Building Society

Address

Postcode

Please pay to Barclays Bank plc Kettering Branch, Sort code 20-45-77 for the credit of the Inland Waterways Association London Region 200 Club Account no. 80204234, quoting reference.....(*) as follows: *[(*) will be inserted by Officers when processing.]*

(ANNUAL OPTION) the sum of £..... (..... pounds only) with immediate effect and on the first day of (*) each year thereafter until further notice from me.

OR

(MONTHLY OPTION) the sum of £..... (..... pounds only) with immediate effect and on the first day of each month thereafter until further notice from me.

Please debit my account in the name of

Account no....., accordingly.

Signature..... Date

The two halves of the form should be sent to Vernon Draper at 12 Chipperfield Close, New Bradwell, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK13 0EP

Socials venue details and contact people

MEETING	VENUE	CONTACT
IWA LONDON REGION CENTRAL LONDON SOCIAL	<i>The Lamb</i> Lamb's Conduit Street, WC1 (Nearest tube Russell Square)	Libby Bradshaw 07956 655037
IWA MIDDLESEX BRANCH	Hillingdon Canal Club Uxbridge Wharf Waterloo Road, Uxbridge	Mike Harlock 01895 625524
IWA NORTH & EAST LONDON BRANCH	Springfield Marina Spring Hill, Clapton London E5	Pete Nash 07958 505204 email peter.nash@cancer.org.uk
IWA SOUTH LONDON BRANCH	East Croydon United Reformed Church Hall Addiscombe Grove, CR0 5LP (Close to E. Croydon station)	Lesley Pryde 020 8679 9866 email cookieslesley@tinyworld.co.uk
LONDON IWA / LONDON WALKS—TOWPATH WALKS	As listed, Each about 2 hours £5.50 (concessions £4.50)	London Walks 020 7624 3978
LONDON WATERWAY RECOVERY GROUP	Meeting point for digs is usually Waterloo Station 7pm on Friday to travel to site	Tim Lewis 020 8530 0425 london@wrg.org.uk
LONDON CANAL MUSEUM	12 New Wharf Road King's Cross, London N1 9RT Open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am-4.30pm Admission £3.00, concessions £2.50 Admission to talks £3.00, concessions £2.50	020 7713 0836
IWA LEE & STORT BRANCH	<i>The New Inn</i> , Roydon	Barry Banyard 07860 669279

"HOW TO GET THERE" MAPS

for the IWA Central London, South London Branch, N&E London Branch and
Middlesex Branch venues can be found on the internet at
www.waterways.org.uk/branchandregion/londonregion/venues/index.htm

Editor: Roger Squires, 46 Elephant Lane, Rotherhithe, SE16 4JD, tel: 020 7232 0987

E-mail: roger.squires@waterways.org.uk

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Published by the Region at 3 Norfolk Court, Norfolk Road, Rickmansworth, WD3 1LT
Tel 01923 711114 Fax 01923 897999

Region web site: www.waterways.org.uk/london.htm
