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MORE ON THE LODES



During a recent inspection tour of several of the lodes, some of our members visited Barway and were delighted to see that Soham Lode is used, albeit perhaps not all that often, by boats. These two pictures were taken at Barway Bridge, which is well over half a mile from the junction with the Great Ouse.

The lode extends some 4¼ miles up to Lion Mills in Soham. There are no locks, but entrance doors from the Great Ouse are designed to protect the lode from high water levels in the main river. There are, however, a series of bridges, some of which offer limited headroom, the worst seemingly being Henny Pump footbridge, nearly two miles up the lode. And the draft in places is restricted.

Soham Lode was created in the 1630s when the river Snail, previously a tributary of the river Lark, was diverted to pass through Soham and then to join the Great Ouse near Barway. This provided Soham with a much improved navigation and the lode was well used by fenland lighters for several centuries.

For reasons that are far from clear, the lode was not included as a navigation in the Anglian Water Authority's Act of 1977 and hence the Environment Agency, as

successors to the AWA, seem to claim there is no right to navigate the lode. We do have to question, however, if the omission of a waterway from an Act of Parliament can effectively amount to extinguishing the historic navigation rights on that waterway. A similar situation applies to Swaffham Bulbeck and Bottisham lodes, both of which are also historic statutory navigations.

Elsewhere the threat to those lodes accessed through Upware Lock, as reported in our last issue, hopefully has receded. The problem here is that centuries of drainage have resulted in the wastage and shrinkage of the peat soil causing the land to sink. The lodes, however, have been maintained at their original level so that they can continue to drain into the river Cam and to be used for navigation. This entails regular work to raise the banks, the water level in places now being nearly 10-feet above the surrounding ground level.

Halcrow, consultants acting for the Environment Agency, have been investigating the position and in November they issued a consultation document titled "*The Ely Ouse Lodes Strategy Study*". This set out possible eight options: -

- 1: *Do nothing.*
- 2: *Carry out repairs as required to maintain the lodes at their current level.*
- 3: *Strengthen the embankments to reduce the risk of future repairs.*
- 4: *Reconstruct Reach Lode to a lower level and construct a new high level channel from Burwell Lode to Reach.*
- 5: *Reconstruct both Burwell and Reach Lodes to a lower level with a new pumping station and a new lock upstream of the junction with Wicken Lode to allow navigation.*
- 6: *As option 5 but including reconstructing Swaffham Bulbeck Lode at a lower level with a new pumping station at the downstream end of that lode.*
- 7: *As option 6 but including a new channel to bring in Bottisham Lode.*
- 8: *Construct spillways to lower the water level in the lodes (except Wicken Lode) and divert the water to an upgraded pumping station.*

Of these, Halcrow has recommended Option 2 as the preferred way forward. The matter was considered by the Association's Council on 15 November when it was decided to recommend that Option 3 should be adopted, as this seemed by far the most sensible and cost effective long term way forward.

Meanwhile enquiries about Swaffham Bulbeck Lode indicate that the entrance lock is not now passable. The Environment Agency, for flood control purposes, has modified the upstream guillotine gate and this now gives no headroom for craft intending to pass underneath. Hence the 3¼-mile lode can now only be navigated by craft that can be launched from the bank, such as canoes. The downstream mitre gates are also in extremely poor condition. And at Bottisham Lode there is a "*No unauthorised vessels*" notice barring navigation through the entrance doors, although this lode is believed to be fully navigable for over half a mile up to the site of the former staunch.

In a separate development a new cycle track is being built as part of the National Trust's Wicken Vision Spine Cycle Path to link Cambridge, Milton and Waterbeach with Reach, Burwell and Wicken without using any busy roads. As an important part of this a new bridge is being built across Swaffham Bulbeck Lode about half way up its course. Eventually another new bridge will also be built over Reach Lode and this will have to be of sufficient height to allow boats to navigate underneath, but in the interim a diversion through Reach village is involved.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Scheduled for Sunday 13th April 2008 in Spalding.

This year we are planning a venue that offers retail therapy and waterway exploration, with possibilities on how to combine the two for a family day out.

The venue is to be the Springfields Outlet Shopping with over 40 individual stores such as Marks & Spencer, Austin Reed, Lilley & Skinner, Cotton Traders and many other well known names. There is also a large garden centre, restaurant and pub. Beside these are the Springfields Festival Gardens - showcase gardens designed by celebrity gardeners including Charlie Dimmock, Chris Beardshaw, Kim Wilde and Stephen Woodhams. Fenscape, a free modern interactive centre giving the history and heritage of the fens is also situated here. You can listen to arguments for and against the Duke of Bedford's proposed drainage plans and vote. Car parking at this venue, which is on the outskirts of the town and is well sign-posted off the A16 Spalding bypass, is £2 per day. Regular river taxis provide a 30-minute trip from Springfields to Spalding Town Centre.

For the more water orientated, twelve places will be available on a chartered water taxi leaving Springfields at 10.45am. A two-hour trip will include the Coronation Channel up to the River Welland, first venturing upstream, then downstream to Fulney Lock where there will be time to try and work out how this lock, whose doors point towards each other, actually works, albeit only once per tide.

The trip will then finish at the town moorings just downstream of the High Bridge and by the Lincolnshire Poacher Inn, where others, who may prefer to catch one of the regular water taxis from Springfields, may join for lunch at 12.45.

At 13.45 water taxis will take the diners back to Springfields ready to join the AGM which will be held in the David Bellamy Community Room at the Springfield Conference & Management Centre, Fenscape, Spalding at 14.30.

As usual all members are invited to stay on for the Council Meeting that follows straight after the AGM.

Please book this in your diaries now – Sunday 13th April 2008. Costs are expected to be £10 for the morning chartered trip and £5 for each water taxi ride.



Full details will be sent out in March but in the meantime further details are available on <http://www.spaldingwatertaxi.co.uk>

(Our picture shows the fleet of water taxis having their batteries charged at their base at Spalding. To get to Springfields these boats have special permission to use the Coronation Channel, which is not generally available for navigation.)

HERE AND THERE

NEW MEMBERS: We are delighted to be able to extend a very warm welcome to the following members who have joined the Association in the last six months: Mary Black, Yelverton; Carole Bullinger, Dilham; Richard Fairman, Cowbit, Spalding; Griffon Area Partnership, North Walsham; Roy Haynes, North Walsham; Gillian Kent, Honing; Peter Owen, Swafield, Tom Moore of Dilham and Fred Unstead, East Ruston whilst links have also been established with the Little Ouse Group and with the Norfolk Industrial Archaeology Society.

TONY HINSLEY: Congratulations to our member Tony Hinsley of Soham who has been appointed a member of the Inland Waterways Association's Restoration Committee. Tony has been actively involved with the Waterway Recovery Group for many years.

ELY RAILWAY BRIDGE: After almost a six-month closure to allow for the rebuilding of this bridge following the accident caused by the derailment of the freight train on 22 June, the railway reopened on the evening of Thursday 20 December. Access to the bridge was across treacherous ground and involved constructing a new road. Coupled with the difficulty of removing the derailed train, demolishing the badly damaged bridge and installing the new structure, the work has cost Network Rail some £9,000,000.

The new bridge has a 32½-feet wide steel span resting on piled reinforced concrete abutments and there are box culvert side spans – in all the structure is nearly 110 yards long. It carries a single railway line but provision has been made for a second track as the route is destined to become increasingly important for container trains from the Port of Felixstowe to the Midlands and the north.

BEDFORD & MILTON KEYNES LINK: Sadly the B&MK Waterway Trust's hopes to be one of the three projects to be awarded £25m under the Big Lottery scheme did not succeed, the winners being the Helix scheme at Falkirk in Scotland, the Connswater Community Greenway in East Belfast and the Heartlands project in Cornwall. Whilst this is a major setback considerable good has come out of the attempt as the £250,000 that was awarded earlier has enabled planning permission to be obtained, detailed route plans to be drawn up, and detailed design for the first section of the proposed new waterway – the Milton Keynes Waterways Park – to be prepared. The search is now on for alternative sources of funding.

We attach great importance to a start being made on building this canal and the possibility of creating an initial short section out of the Grand Union Canal at Milton Keynes was seen as a distinct possibility. There was a new development last August when Richard Wood was seconded to the Trust from the Department of Communities and Local Government for an 18-month period to work towards securing the route of the canal, particularly at the eastern (Bedford) end. Out of Richard's work has come the proposal to start construction in the middle by creating a link between Brogborough Lake and dropping down through the Marston Moretaine Forest Centre into Stewartby Lake. If such a section could be opened it would give a major credibility boost to the whole project which should then gain a growing momentum of its own. Steps are also being taken to preserve the redundant cattle creep under the M1 motorway so it can be used for the canal and to create a culvert under the new Ridgmont Bypass.

RIVER STOUR TRUST: It is sad to have to report some dissensions within the Trust, making us reminiscent of events in the Inland Waterways Association in the 1950s which led to much internal strife, albeit some good came out of it as it led to the setting up of our own Association on 19 April 1958. Tony Platt, the long serving Chairman of the RST was ousted from his position at a Council Meeting in October and replaced by newcomer Peter Hesketh. Tony's wife, Lesley Ford, who had a major role such as in fund raising, was also voted off the Council with several new councillors being appointed. The action caused considerable upset in some quarters as both Tony and Lesley have worked tirelessly for the Trust, but it seems to have been prompted by a number of members who felt the need for a change. Since then members have been bombarded with a series of missives from the two sides seeking support for resolutions at extraordinary general meetings. Change must come to any organisation, including our own, but one always hopes that it can be managed in an amicable way as dissensions usually only harm the organisation itself, which everyone is supposed to be supporting.

Meanwhile the work at Stratford Sr. Mary lock of creating the new river wall with the rock-filled gabions has made good progress. After a cracking start on 21 July, 51 metres of the 180 metres had been completed by the end of August but flooding has caused lengthy delays and it has not proved possible to complete the work and the associated deepening of the channel by the end of the season as had originally been hoped. Monies are still need to finance this phase of the work whilst the restoration of the lock chamber itself and the fitting of new gates are estimated to cost £100,000.

HAWKINS ROAD, COLCHESTER: This road runs parallel to the river Colne in Colchester and is named after William Hawkins who established a timber merchant's business there in the early 1800s. In 1842 his grandson William Warwick Hawkins took over and he promoted a scheme to turn the Hythe into a large floating dock with a ship canal being built down to Wivenhoe, cutting out a narrow and winding stretch of the river so as to encourage ships bringing in timber from the Baltic. This never came about; instead he turned his attention to establishing a branch railway from the main line to serve the quay. Hawkins' business ultimately passed over to Jewsons and the remaining timber sheds are now being demolished to make the way for housing.

MIDDLE LEVEL: The Middle Level Commissioners have announced a series of stoppages from 14 January to 9 March 2008 to carry out works on the system. These include the replacement of the existing tidal guillotine door at Salters Lode Lock, the replacement of the upstream lock gates at Marmont Priory Lock, and piling and renovation work on the south side upstream wing wall at Ashline Lock together with work by Cambridgeshire County Council on the nearby Aliwal Bridge.

ST. GERMANS: After initial delays over planning, work is now proceeding apace on the new £50 million pumping station on the Middle Level Main Drain at St. Germans which is due to come on stream in 2010 replacing the existing 70-year old sluice and pumps. In a massive undertaking a giant coffer dam the size of a football pitch has been created in the bed of the Great Ouse. This will be pumped dry to enable work to begin on the foundations for the new structure that will involve 400 piles being driven 50-feet into the mud to anchor it firmly. Once completed 24,000 homes and tens of thousands of hectares will be protected from flooding.

RIVER NENE: The winter works programme included (and continues to include) stoppages at Northampton Lock No 1 (7 Jan – 10 Feb), Cogenhoe Lock No 7 (10 Dec – 20 Jan); Whiston Lock No 8 (12 Nov – 16 Dec) and Lower Ringstead Lock No 19 (28 Feb – 9 Mar). The work involved general refurbishment with the replacement of cills and wheel tracks. During the winter new paddle mechanisms were fitted at Northampton, Weston Favell, Cogenhoe, Diddington, Upper and Lower Ringstead, Denford, Wadenhoe, Perio and Warmington locks.

LINCOLNSHIRE: The Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership has an on-going series of funding bids to carry out improvements throughout the system.

No	Description	Cost	Approved
VI	New or extended moorings at nine locations, mainly on the Witham	£692,000	Aug 2007
IX	New moorings at Hubberts & Swineshead Bridges, South Forty Drain	£270,000	Aug 2007
X	Technical scoping for Phase 2 of the Fens Waterways Link	£692,000	Nov 2007
XI	Creating a multi-user path from the Pyewipe Inn, Lincoln to Saxilby	£850,000	Nov 2007
XII	Creating a multi-user path from Kirkstead Bridge to Horncastle	£600,000	Nov 2007
XIII	Refurbishment of the Bottom Lock on the Slea Navigation	£100,000	

FENS WATERWAYS LINK: By the end of last year preparatory work on the new entrance lock had been virtually completed, enabling the main construction work to start promptly in January. The works included relocating the tide level gauge station, diverting an 33kV electricity cable, sewage mains and telephone cables, relocating a zebra crossing on the road bridge over the entrance channel, temporarily diverting a public footpath, and providing a power supply for the lock and the relocated tide station. The lock is to have sector gates at the downstream (river) end and conventional mitre gates equipped with sluices at the upstream end.

LITTLE OUSE: The Little Ouse Group hopes to have the new mooring at Santon Downham ready for use by Easter, despite some delays being caused in their negotiations with Natural England. Meanwhile in December it was announced that the river at Thetford could be opened up as part of a new country park following a £6 million government grant awarded towards recreational and environmental developments as an important part of the future growth of the town. The plan is to open up both the Thet and the Little Ouse for water users, walkers and cyclists and includes a new green network of cycleways and footpaths. Whether this could mean any progress towards the new locks that will be needed remains to be seen but focussing attention on, and increasing access to, the river can only be helpful towards ultimately restoring the navigation from Santon Downham up to the town.

CHELMER & BLACKWATER: The Chelmer Canal Trust continues to wage its war against the dreaded floating pennywort that continues to threaten this navigation. Last autumn welcome assistance came from teams from the Ford Motor Company who made valiant efforts to clear sections of the Long Pound between Heybridge and Beeleigh where the weed was getting out of hand. Two sessions were held, both being assisted by Colin Edmond, the canal manager, using the canal company's work boat. Alarmingly the pennywort problem is spreading to other waterways – for instance parts of the river Waveney are now badly affected.

To cope with the considerable increase in maintenance work and improvements on the river Colin Edmond has relinquished his duties as lock keeper at Heybridge Sea Lock

and will now be based at Paper Mill, halfway towards Chelmsford. Essex Waterways Ltd is looking for a replacement keeper to be based in the cottage by the lock. Apart from operating the lock the keeper will control the berths within the basin, deal with craning craft into and out of the water, and generally maintain the facilities around the basin area. Most of the boats in the basin are sea-going craft and there are currently 110 boats moored there.

The river below the sea lock dries out at low tide so the lock is only available for 1½ hours before and for ½-an-hour after high water. This, however, is for 365 days per year and whilst a relief keeper is available, regular weekend working is involved.

The lock is provided with four sets of gates. There are two wooden pairs that point upstream with a wooden pair facing towards the sea, giving a chamber 100-feet long and allowing for about eight craft to be locked through together. There is also an electrically-operated caisson which is chain driven across the outer end of the lock chamber that can increase the length of the lock to 150-feet and allow about fifteen craft to be locked through. The correct operation of these gates is absolutely crucial for flood defence purposes and to maintain the level in the Long Pound and hence user operation is not allowed.

IPSWICH & STOWMARKET NAVIGATION

We are delighted to be able to include the remainder of the post cards kindly made available to us from her extensive collection by Kerstin Fletcher of Ipswich.



Top Left: *A stretch of the river near Ipswich, with the railway bridge in the background (postmarked July 1906).* Top right; *Sroughton Lock in about 1906.* Bottom Left: *Needham Mill (postmarked October 1904).* Bottom right: *Cooper's Mill, Needham Market (postmarked November 1915).*

THE NORTH WALSHAM AND DILHAM CANAL



Our work parties have continued throughout the autumn and winter months with considerable progress being achieved. Sunday 28 October saw a small but determined group tackling the summer's growth of brambles and nettles from the lock side at Ebridge with a large tree stump being removed from the top west corner and the channel being cleared above the top gates. The way through to the weir was then cleared with overhanging trees being cut back.

On 25 November Chris Black, George & Jill Blackburn, Carole Bullinger, Darren Cooke, Alan Faulkner, Roger Hopkins, Marc Lines, Peter Owen and David Revill assembled at Briggate and transformed the appearance of the site. Some of the growth was cleared from the lock walls but the main work took place at the head of the lock and upstream on the west side, completely opening up this area. The bad news was that a vehicle had crashed into one of the downstream bridge parapets and a quantity of bricks have fallen down onto the buttress landing below. A light barrier has been erected across the breached area and the damage should be repaired by the highway authority in due course.

During the afternoon Mr Neil Ackroyd of Canal Farm, Honing, visited the site and generously presented the Association with a full set of the 1886 large scale Ordnance Survey maps covering the entire length of the canal.

Sunday 16 December saw the first of a series of sessions at Honing (Dee) Bridge. Most of the work concentrated on preparations for the starting to clear out the Honing Arm. Using the newly acquired Ordnance Survey maps, the outline of the arm was set out and the team cut back the trees, brambles and other obstructions surrounding it to provide a level and tidy area. Records maintained by David Revill indicate that through 2007 there were 78 individual attendances spread over the various sessions and each involving an average of six hours work.

Sunday 20 January was a red letter day as a small digger generously provided by Tom Moore of Dilham started work clearing out the arm, aided by a strong work party comprising Chris & Mary Black, Carole Bullinger, Ivan Cane, Darren Cooke, Alan Faulkner, Roger Hopkinson, Marc Lines, Peter Owen, David Revill and Fred Unstead.

The digger firstly created a mud and sedge bridge to close off the arm from the river. It then moved to the far (north-east) end of the arm to begin clearance, the machine reaching out and moving, vastly more than manual labourers, however hard working, could ever hope to achieve – and all with a tiny 750cc engine. Once the mud has consolidated the intention is to edge the arm with the felled tree trunks.

Whilst David and Mary concentrated on improving their surveying qualifications by taking levels around the site, more trees were cleared from around the arm to enable

the digger to have proper access. The main work, however, was in continuing to create a new circular path first heading westwards beside the river from the mouth of the arm upstream towards the edge of the woods. From there it will then turn north-east across the soke dike through the wood eventually meeting up with Weavers Way. At the end of the afternoon a major transformation had been made in both work areas.



Honing Arm: The volunteers working to create *the new path through the jungle – the river being immediately on the left, whilst Tom Moore does valiant dredging work with the digger.*

So successful was this session that a follow up took place on Sunday 27 January with a similar excellent turn out of volunteers. And this was despite the digger having suffered a broken side track on the first session, which involved an expensive repair. The east side of the arm was dredged and several dangerous trees were removed, including one felled previously that had remained obstinately in the water, despite several attempts to remove it. Meanwhile a further 20 to 30 yards of the riverside path was cleared and a good start was made on identifying the route of the path across the soke dike. With such fine progress an additional work party is to be held at the arm on Sunday 10 February whilst that previously arranged for 24 February at Honing Lock is now likely also to be held back at the arm instead. Members should park at the Honing Triangle to be well placed for either location.

NORTH WALSHAM AND DILHAM CANAL TRUST

On Tuesday 20 November a meeting was held at the St Johns Ambulance Headquarters in Providence Place, Bacton Road, North Walsham, to outline to an invited audience the plans to create a trust to take forward the restoration of the canal as a public amenity for the benefit of the community.

The meeting was chaired by Roger Hopkinson and the main speaker was Ivan Cane, who gave an impressive PowerPoint presentation outlining the history of the canal and discussing the potential benefits to the town and to the local people of restoring the derelict canal. His talk generated considerable interest with many in the audience offering to become part of a steering committee. A wide cross section of interests attended with representatives from concerns such as North Norfolk District Council, North Walsham Town Council, the Griffon Area Partnership, the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, the Bluebell Pond Society, the Eagle Canoe Club and others.

BROADS NOTES AND NEWS

FUNDING: Early in December came the news that the Broads Authority is to receive £1.3m in Additional National Park Grant over the next three years to help it to conserve this internationally important wetland.

	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Core National Park Grant	£3,426,763	£3,604,337	£3,722,706	£3,841,581
Additional National Park Grant	500,000	500,000	400,000	400,000
Sustainable Development Fund	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Total	£4,126,763	£4,304,337	£4,322,706	£4,441,581

The three year settlement is good news for it enables the authority to plan ahead removing the uncertainties of an annual funding review. Whilst DEFRA has specified that the extra funding is to be used for environmental work it has been acknowledged that dredging has multiple benefits, not simply confined to navigation and that £250,000 of the extra grant can be used for dredging which is so badly needed. As part of this the authority is increasing tolls for 2008 by 11% for private owners and by 7% for the hire boat industry.

DREDGING: On 16 October the Broads Authority confirmed it has taken direct control of dredging operations and the plan is to achieve up to 25% more than last year, but for the same sum of money. The current target is to remove 290,000 cubic metres of mud and silt over the next five years, hence starting to overcome the heavy arrears of maintenance. Six cranes, nine barges, three tugs, two large modern barges, two dumb lighters and other plant have been purchased from May Gurney together with that company's dockyard at Griffin Lane at Thorpe, which has over 300 yards of river frontage.



(The picture shows the Authority's dredging team of ten skilled men with, on the right, Trudi Wakelin (Director of Waterways) and Richard Farley (Head of Navigation Works).)

PEGASUS BOATYARD: Following the initial planning application for the residential redevelopment of this site on Oulton Broad the Broads Authority has produced a development brief for the Pegasus and the adjoining Hamptons boatyard. It sets out what developers would have to provide in support of any redevelopment plans, but it stresses that the retention of a boatyard is deemed a very important consideration. It goes on to specify that this should be in a viable location with appropriate facilities such as pump out, long term, short term and public moorings, public access to the water front and car parking. This seems to meet most of the concerns expressed over the previous plans and we wait developments with interest.

GELDESTON LOCK: The Association was approached last August and asked to give its support to an approach to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding to preserve the lock which is in a poor state of repair and could eventually collapse into the Waveney unless preserved. We were more than happy to support the Broads Authority with this

initiative. The work planned includes restoring the fabric of the lock so that it is accessible by the visiting public, providing interpretation of its history and importance of the site, and updating the information in the local museum. This is part of a wider project that could cost up to £70,000 to create an integrated cycleway, footpath and canoe network along the river, which is currently largely inaccessible.

Ironically this lock could well be redundant if, and when, the Waveney is restored to full navigation up to Bungay, as the river is now tidal up to the next lock at Ellingham and the channel would only need deepening in places. At Ellingham some 40 years ago the road bridge was rebuilt and lowered by the county council to save money, but an undertaking was given that if the river was ever restored for navigation the bridge would be raised.

RAILWAY SWING BRIDGES: The 100-year old swing bridge at Oulton, carrying the Ipswich to Lowestoft railway line over Lake Lothing downstream of Mutford Lock is to undergo a complete £1.5million refurbishment early in 2008. The work will include a host of improved facilities such as an upgrade of the navigational lighting, electrical and steelwork repairs and a complete repaint. A stand-by generator and mechanical recovery system will also be installed. Later in the year similar work is to be carried out to the Somerleyton Swing Bridge carrying the Lowestoft to Norwich line over the Waveney and to the Reedham Swing Bridge carrying the same line over the Yare.

LOWESTOFT BASCULE BRIDGE: This bridge that carries the main A12 trunk road across Lowestoft Harbour, underwent a series of lengthy weekend closures from October to December to enable major renewal work to take place. The bridge was built in 1972 with a design life of 120 years but the operating machinery, housed in a cavern underneath, was only designed to last 25 years and was becoming increasingly unreliable. The main work has been to change the hydraulic motors, which weighed 5½ tonnes, and all the heavy equipment that is needed to raise the two leaves of the bridge.

WHERRY ALBION: Over the past few years there has been increasing concern about the Norfolk Wherry Trust's ALBION, as her hull has become badly misshapen. This could ultimately threaten the very survival of this famous boat, so the "Hog Project" was started to raise funds to provide a new keel to cure the problem. After volunteers had stripped out most of her internal fittings at her Womack Water base, ALBION was taken down to Lake Lothing on 20 September and with a high tide on 29 September she was manoeuvred onto a slipway where her hull was pressure washed and she was shored up ready for the work to begin. Initially this involved striping out the ceiling and all the remaining fittings. Meanwhile a new I-shaped beam has been constructed ready for installation to replace the present keel and support her hull. This is a major task but is now well in hand.

BUOYANT MARINE INDUSTRY: Despite the threat of cut backs and recession in the economy East Anglian boat building businesses seem to be in good heart. At the recent London Boat Show, Wroxham Marina, that produces Sheerline motor cruisers at Thorpe St. Andrew, reported full order books with customers having to wait a year for delivery. Meanwhile the region's biggest boat builders, Brundall-based Broom Boats, reported a healthy level of orders as did Oyster Yachts of Ipswich. The industry should continue to flourish as companies are investing in new technology, being backed by the East of England Development Agency.

REVIEWS

"Inland Waterways of the Netherlands", by Louise Busby and David Broad.
Published by our members Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson Ltd., November 2007
ISBN 978 0852288 976 3; 286 pages; £30.

For any member planning a boating trip in Holland, this book is a must. It provides a detailed record of all the waterways in that country with clear maps and useful details of such things as where to stop, what to see, facilities ashore and restaurant tips.

The guide is divided into nine sections – Zeeland, Great Rivers (around Rotterdam), Holland South (Den Haag & Amsterdam), Holland North (northwards from Amsterdam), Flevoland, Friesland, Groningen & Drenthe, Central Netherlands (Utrecht) and Southeast Netherlands. Each section describes the places en route and provides information about distances and dimensions, speed limits, bridge opening times and such other essential information. And the book is fully illustrated throughout.

With nearly 4,000 miles of navigable waterway Holland offers one of the most extensive yet compact cruising networks in Europe. This book is designed to be of interest not just to the skipper but to every crew member and we wholeheartedly recommend it.

"The River Great Ouse" and *"The River Nene"*. Free guides for river users produced by the Environment Agency.

We stumbled across these guides on the Environment Agency's stand at the recent IWA National Festival at St. Ives. They feature large well produced maps covering the Great Ouse all the way from the Wash up to the limit of navigation at Kempston Mill west of Bedford and including the South Level Rivers, the Cam and the Lodes and the Nene, again all the way from the Wash up to Northampton and including the Northampton Branch of the Grand Union Canal.

The guides give helpful cruising information such as cruising times, bridge head rooms, lock falls, moorings, water points, toilets and pump outs marked along the routes of the various rivers. Features of interest – for instance the world conker championships at Ashton – are mentioned and on the Great Ouse map there are helpful enlargements of all the lock areas. They are certainly recommended to anyone cruising these rivers.

Perhaps inevitably a few errors have been spotted by some of the Association's experts and these have been gratefully received by the Agency's design team. So much so that the Agency has consulted us about forthcoming maps covering the Ancholme, the Welland & Glen, and the Stour to try eliminate errors.

Strangely the guides, whilst containing full details for British Waterways and the Middle Level Commissioners gives no address for the Environment Agency. There is a national telephone number but the helpful lady there knew nothing about the guides. Anyone who wishes to obtain copies should contact Richard Burgess on Peterborough (01733) 464074 or e-mail him at richard.burgess@environment-agency.co.uk.