

inbox

The Summer 2015 issue of *Waterways* will be published in May 2015.

Editorial closing date is 29th March 2015.

Do you have something to say about IWA or Waterways?

It's your magazine so please write and tell us your views. We will aim to publish responses to letters that ask questions about any aspect of IWA policy or decision-making. Please write to The Editor, *Waterways*, c/o IWA, Island House, Moor Road, Chesham HP5 1WA or e-mail k.goss@wwonline.co.uk.

More on Welches Dam Lock

I am writing to support Ralph Knowles' letter in the Winter edition of *Waterways*. My boat is shown in the magazine as I reversed into Horseways Lock with Jonathan Chambers on 5th April last year. I was one of the last boaters to use Horseways Channel and Welches Dam Lock before the route was severed in 2006 when the Environment Agency deliberately piled the entrance to the lock. That was nearly nine years ago.

The present Peterborough Branch Committee and their predecessors have tried and tried to get some restoration work started but the Environment Agency seems to have blocked all attempts to make any progress.

You might say this doesn't matter when an alternative route along Well Creek is possible. The Well Creek Trust (all volunteers) and the Middle Level Commissioners (who receive no income at all from boat licences) have done a really good job but Well Creek is shallow in parts with some very low bridges. What if the Mullicourt Aqueduct or a section of embankment failed?

Many canal and waterways routes have been restored to full navigation after falling into

disuse. The list is impressive and we probably all have our favourites. Examples include the Southern Stratford, the Upper and Lower Avon Navigations, the Kennet & Avon Canal, the Ashton Canal, Huddersfield Narrow Canal, the Rochdale Canal and the Droitwich Canals. The Falkirk Wheel has been built, the Anderton Lift has been restored, Standedge and Leek tunnels have been reopened, the Ribble Link established and a new route into Liverpool created. Many other restoration schemes have been completed or are well under way.

I think that the main problem in restoring Welches Dam Lock and Horseways Channel is not finance (or lack of it) but of will. The technical difficulties involved in restoring the short stretch of leaking Horseways Channel appear to be similar to the leaking canal bed at Limpley Stoke that was fixed as just a small part of the complete restoration of the Kennet & Avon Canal. Rebuilding Welches Dam Lock is not rocket science; staff at the Canal & River Trust (formerly British Waterways) and IWA's Waterway Recovery Group do this all the time.

I cannot believe that this state of affairs would have been allowed to continue for so



long had it occurred on the main canal system or had it involved the Canal & River Trust/British Waterways. Would not IWA (nationally) have sorted this out by now?

Why was IWA set up many years ago? Surely it was founded to deal with this sort of seemingly intractable problem?

John Revell,
Via email

Stowmarket Navigation Corrections

I've just finished reading the article about the waterways of East Anglia (Winter *Waterways*) and I have to say I'm somewhat disappointed about the part headed Ipswich & Stowmarket Navigation. It contains a number of errors, not the least of which is the title. It wasn't the Ipswich & Stowmarket Navigation – it's actual name was the Stowmarket Navigation.

The stone for the abbey at Bury St Edmunds was not carried up the river from Caen. Most of the stone came from Barnack in Northamptonshire (now Cambridgeshire). That quarry was owned by the Bishop of Peterborough and King

William gave special dispensation for the stone to be carried toll free. Caen stone would have been carried by water round the coast, into the Wash and then down the River Lark, not by horse and cart overland from Stowmarket.

The navigation was not transferred to the East Suffolk Rivers Catchment Board – it just closed and navigation rights were lost.

All of that information appears on the River Gipping Trust website – www.rivergippingtrust.org.uk.

Spencer Greystrom,
IWA Ipswich Branch

Les Etheridge IWA national chairman responds:

I was at Horseways Lock, along with members of IWA Peterborough and Great Ouse branches last year, when John reversed his boat into the lock; I was keen to support the initiative taken by Peterborough Branch. Resolving the issue requires action both locally and nationally, and I was recently updated on progress being made by Peterborough Branch. Nationally, we are putting pressure on the EA to address all its navigation assets that are currently out of action, and that will remain the case.