

# TRANSCRIPT OF THE 2nd COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE 'SRL'

14 APRIL 1997

## **The Stafford Branch Navigation Heritage Trust**

Meeting No. 2 at Stafford Boat Club, 14 April 1997

**1. Present:** D.Jones (Chair), K.Boardman, R.Bowden, N.Cooper, G.Walker.

**2. Apologies:** None

**3. Minutes of last meeting:** NC read out the minutes of the inaugural meeting held at SBC on 14.2.97. Accepted.

### **4. Composition of Provisional Committee/Steering Group**

Proposed NC, Seconded KB: David Jones for Chairman. Unan.

Proposed KB, Seconded DJ: Norman Cooper for Vice-Chairman. Unan.

Proposed DJ, Seconded NC: Bob Bowden for Secretary. Unan.

### **5. Name of Organisation**

5.1 Two names were agreed after discussion:

(a) "The Stafford Branch Navigation Heritage Trust" – the organisation,

(b) "The Stafford Branch Navigation" – the project.

### **6. Reports**

#### **6.1 Norman Cooper (Vice-Chairman)**

6.1.1 Norman reported that he had sent a letter to the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port, who had replied with details of two photographs held, and they supplied a book list. The photographs were of Milford Aqueduct, and of Stafford from the R.Sow. Suggested ref.to "Britain's Lost Waterways Vol I".

6.1.2 Letter to Gloucester Boat Museum who had sent a reference list of 35 items. He and DJ will go through the list.

6.1.3 Letter to Alan Smith of S&WS, who replied that he possess 11 photographs of the branch lock in his collection. NC arranged a meeting with Alan to enquire about having copies made of the slides and also prints.

6.1.4 Visit with DJ to William Salt Library in Stafford where they did some research into the branch and produced notes on their researches. (Notes circulated to members).

6.1.5 Visit to Staffordshire Records Office, but this is temporarily out of use.

6.1.6 Reported a conversation with Edwin Fashun who navigated into Stafford, including portorage, from Baswich into the town centre in 1983, thus possibly establishing a right of way?

6.1.7 Discovered that a Mr. Parker-Offspring, from Stafford Council, had researched the branch in the 1970s and had deposited a paper on the subject at Wm.Salt Library.

6.1.8 Reported his intention to produce, as professionally as possible, an AV presentation on the subject, using his own funding for the project.

## **6.2 R.Bowden (Secretary)**

6.2.1 Sent a letter to Roger Herrington, BW waterways manager for region. Read out his reply, which was very encouraging. Roger could not, however, advise on the feasibility of the scheme. This led to a discussion of feasibility. KB noted that the branch would not waste water from the canal, as it was constantly overflowing into the R.Sow already. Also the canal never suffers from water shortage; as it is fed by the W'ton 21, Gailey Reservoir, and 3 sewage works. NC suggested an innovative system, using a paddle pump turbine, to return part of the water back into the canal. Noted that the water flows down the river, not into Stafford town. KB noted that the Sow and Penk both overflow in most Winters, and the area consists of flood plains. RB posited that navigation would not be possible during such times.

6.2.2 Received two photocopied BW market research documents, from Alan Jeffreys of the Derby & Sandiacre Trust: (a) Visits to Inland Waterways 1994, an analysis of inland waterways data from the UK Day Visits Survey. (b) a document produced as part of a millennium fund grant application giving statistical evidence of potential economic benefit accruing from the proposed Wendover Arm restoration, at year zero, year one and after five years of being re-opened. Suggesting a £2.2m benefit to area, and 87 jobs created. Alan's advice is that such evidence is a necessary step in order to obtain funding.

## **6.3 G.Walker**

6.3.1 Has been trying to contact Roy Garland with a view of obtaining information about the subject. Geoff thinks that Roy may be a very useful contact, but so far he has been unable to reach him by telephone. However he will keep trying.

## **6.4 K.Boardman**

6.4.1 Reported the information that Asda are to build a new superstore to be located where the proposed head of navigation of the Stafford Branch is to be situated. The project is under the management of Rose Developments of Cheltenham, and the project manager is Mr.Chris Lowe. It is probable that Asda may be grateful for our support, in terms of their negotiations with the Environment Agency and with Severn Trent, and also in terms of the useful publicity that our project may provide. Keith thought that we should send a letter to the chairman of Asda suggesting to him/her that there may be mutual benefit for us in some degree of co-operation regarding the site, its' landscaping, moorings, etc. It was decided to ask for a meeting with their representative to discuss the issue. RB to write. KB offered his willingness to participate in such a meeting.

6.4.2 Noted that Stafford Council supported the Stafford Branch scheme in principle, but could not offer actual assistance of any kind.

6.4.3 On a question by NC, KB offered to produce a map when time was available, and some artist's impressions of the proposed scheme for use with AV and booklet, etc. Agreed with thanks.

6.4.4 Suggested we contact the operator of the trip boat out of Milford, to seek his support. NC offered to do this.

## **6.5 D.Jones (Chairman)**

6.5.1 Written to Canal & Riverboat magazine and the reply advised us of Ian Langford's book, also suggested contacting Stafford Museum archivist, and contact S&WS. Waterways World also replied but offered nothing further than previous suggestions received.

6.5.2 Written to IWA who suggested, among other things, to contact Phil Sharpe of West Midlands region.

6.5.3 Researched books (and produced notes which he has distributed to group): Charles Hadfield "Canals of W.Midlands", Vol.5. Also Hugh McKnight's book: WW, Nicholson's and other cruising guides, "New Navvies" by Roger Squires, which was written in the 1970s. Opinion expressed in 1983 that the Branch could not be restored. KB said that this was probably because at that time Severn Trent was busily rearranging the Sow and Penk river beds, lowering the water table, etc, and the situation was that any suggestion of restoring the branch would probably have been given fairly short shrift. KB also commented that times had changed a lot since then: ST has been privatised, and also heritage projects had to be treated with much more respect. Also Lottery Funding had made a huge difference.

## 7 Name of organisation

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## 8 The Way Forward

8.1 RB had contacted WBC member Ron Fisher, a chartered surveyor, and he has indicated his willingness to help in a future survey of the route.

8.2 Thanks due to Dave Necklen, WBC member, for loan of Trust Deed from Coombeswood Canal Trust.

8.3 Suggested we need to produce a booklet similar to Shrewsbury & Newport Canal booklet.

8.4 Secretary to write to "Navigation" and other canal publications with news of our inaugural meeting and details of secretary's telephone number. Also notification to S&WS.

8.5 KB will think about the design of a logo for the project.

**Date of Next Meeting** – to be advised and circulated

## Action to be Taken (extracted from above minutes)

<i>Ref</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Organiser/s</i>
6.1.1	Reference List from Gloucester Boat museum to work through	NC, DJ
6.1.3	Meeting with Alan Smith re slides	NC
6.1.8	AV Presentation to produce	NC
6.2.2	Return loaned BW document to Alan Jeffreys	RB
6.3	Contact Roy Garland	GW
6.4.1	Letter to chairman of Asda	RB
6.4.3	Map and artists' impressions to produce	KB
6.4.4	Contact Milford trip boat operator	NC
6.5.2	Contact Phil Sharpe of IWA	RB
8.3	Booklet to organise	DJ
8.4	Letters to magazines, etc, giving news of our project	RB
8.5	Logo to design	KB