

## **British Waterways Scotland**

### **Annual Meeting**

**on 27 September 2007**

**at The Hub, Edinburgh**



#### **Steve Dunlop**

Thank you Campbell, I look at that photograph and instantly see that I've got less hair today than I did 18 months ago. The bags under the eyes seem to have increased as well, I don't think that was just last night. Its been a whirlwind 18 months for me. Before I step into the presentation I would like to first of all thank all my staff, my management team, many of whom are here, all of the staff throughout the organisation right down to the bank side, and the trade unions again who are represented here today. This very much is a team effort here in British Waterways, none of us stand alone in this huge comprehensive effort so again I'd like to reinforce my thanks to that team.

What I want to do today, initially, is respond to the Scottish Government's new agenda and you will see left and right of me that we have really tried to embrace the new government's five themes because we genuinely feel that these five themes are fantastic hooks for us/ They couldn't be better articulated, we couldn't be better positioned to place our activity at the heart of the new government's agenda and the first few minutes really is about saying here's what we are doing on the ground, we don't just talk about it but here's the reality of meeting the Scottish agenda.

In terms of wealthier and fairer people will know that the Minister has just spoken about £178m payback on the last five years of the Millennium Link. Ed Marnie sitting down there will recognise the degree of scepticism across the country, the bravery, insight, aspiration to create this Millennium Link. The reality was that not many people believed that that kind of payback would be possible. That is just the beginning and what we are absolutely confident about is that's not the end, a further 2000 jobs plus by 2011 – more in terms of construction and many more visitors to the whole network.

At Edinburgh Quay we have completed Phase 2 and we plan to sell that early in the New Year to another investor that will enable us to continue Phases 3, 4 and 5. In Glasgow, our biggest most exciting regeneration plan, not just of Scottish scale but also of European scale, 1000 acres of transformation of North Glasgow. Glasgow's hardest economic and socially deprived area.

The Scottish Government has always challenged, us. If you look back at Scotland's Canals - An Asset for the Future, the issue of our profile and appreciation of what British Waterways in Scotland achieved, one of the very clear objectives was to raise that awareness. Over the last six months these are just some of the headlines that we have achieved and throughout this presentation I am just going to remind you that our profile is building year on year. Our awareness in all political arenas is rising and Campbell and I have been speaking to Tories, to SNP to Labour to anyone who would listen to us, and all of them have shown tremendous support for the work we have been involved in. All of these recent headlines about our delivery and the healthier agenda. 25m visitations to the canal in the last year, an incredible amount of impact; 10% of the Highland GDP is based on what we put through the Caledonian Canal. Boating licences were still miles behind where England is but nevertheless a 10% year on year increase. Real progress being made and each day 5000 people - that's just the ones we count, we believe it's much higher - getting to work using safe routes via the canal.

Safer and stronger. We mentioned Linlithgow. I really would love to see the Minister doing a head to head race with John Ewing, Head of Service, in one of these cardboard boats at Linlithgow. The vision for a new bridge at Clydebank that will no longer see the canal as a separating piece of infrastructure. It will form the basis of a civic centre, it will be a place where people join up rather than are separated. What we are doing is creating over 100 events on our canals each year, we directly deliver some of them but the vast majority are delivered by communities and that's the hugely exciting part. 21 Community based rural and urban regeneration initiatives, and we are beginning to focus our attention and staff and our resources into those areas we see as a priority, so it's not the same treatment everywhere you go. We are going to focus our energy and our resources.

Our credentials are huge and we want to build on those. Last night we were really beginning to push again and it's fantastic for us to have a Minister not just for transportation and for the planning system but actually for climate change because our water resource is a huge resource. We have tried and failed in the past to try to sell our water to places like British Petroleum or Diageo, those windows are open again for us so we can be a major player in the environmental world. We are the living arteries for some of the most densely populated areas through Glasgow, through Edinburgh, the only greenery and waterway some people ever see is our canal network.

Before I leave this job we will deliver freight on the canal network, absolutely on the Caledonian, ideally on the Forth & Clyde. We are committed to taking advantage of the different set of thinking, the different arrangements in the world and the thinking around freight and we are leveraging in a huge amount of money for different projects to demonstrate the possibilities the canal network brings, we want to up the anti in maximising our land resources.

Smarter. Civil servants generally think this is the weakest area of the five themes that we contribute to We work with our Waterways Trust, who are involved in 20 schools in Glasgow

right now piloting work on the environment, piloting work on Health & Safety on the canals. They are also deeply involved in the regeneration of the area so we are reaching out into schools and we are attracting schools and kids of all ages to our facilities. 8000 kids came to use the canal last year. We are wiring it into the curriculum, it's not just the odd day here, its something that's becoming mainstream. The success of the Falkirk Wheel just continues. It was the UKs fastest growing tourist attraction last year, up 48%, beating Madame Tussauds, and again engaging kids. , I spoke last year about getting people to love the canal. If we can't get people to own the canal then it will continue to be vandalised. We have had a really big push with our kids, supporting them, getting them onto the canal and getting them to love it and as I say this is beginning to pay dividends.

That's what we've done so far, that's how we connect into your agenda now but moving forward we need to do more and what we as an organisation have to do is begin to focus and harness our energy. We can't be everywhere all of the time, we can't do all that we aspire to but what we can do is concentrate on three major chunks of activity. Primarily our job is about asset investment and management. This scheduled ancient monument is a fantastic asset, we've restored it, it has been brought back to life and we cannot under any circumstances let that slip by. If there is any squeeze on government funding then all the extra curricular activity will simply have to be lost because we cannot go backwards and let the canal infrastructure deteriorate.

The other issue is about creating destinations and driving communities and individuals and visitors onto the network and finally and certainly not least is our catalytic contribution to regeneration of substantial scale. I want to take you through what we have done in each of these areas, over last year and what we plan to do in the years to come.

### **Asset Investment and Management**

Last year when we were here we were heavily criticised for the amount of weeds in the canal and this year we did a lot better, it wasn't perfect but we did a lot better. Next year we will be buying a further weedboat so we will get on top of weed control, both from an environmental point of view and from a mechanical point of view, so we are on the case. Almost 80% of our investment still goes into dredging, embankment repairs, towpath repairs so I want you to go away from today, not believing when you see all the rest of the stuff that we are taking our eye off the ball on maintaining the asset. We absolutely are not.

95% of the people who use our canal are on the towpath so its important that we continue a high level of investment and continue to improve access to the canal and interpretation signage round it. There is much more to be done. Last year we were criticised as to where we are at Monklands, some parts of it neglected, an afterthought for us quite frankly. During this year I have asked David Lamont to lead on this and he is, with the local council and Forestry Commission, putting together a scheme to restore at least in maintenance the state of the Monklands Canal, to become much more of a park community linking into local parking right into the town centre of Coatbridge, so breathing life back into it. We still have much more to do. Its an ongoing job with regards embankments and improving bridges to make them self-operating.

### **Tourism**

We are really proud of the huge marketing push and thanks to Connect, our marketing Agency, and Grant is here today, we had a really aggressive marketing approach to the

Falkirk Wheel. We really went out there last year and it paid dividends, we demonstrated that we could turn on the heat for visitors to this wonderful attraction. They are still not spending money when they get there and Robin gives me a hard time every quarter about how this may be great for visitors, but the spend isn't great. We are going to have to continue to work on that but nevertheless the shop front window for Scotland's Canals, the Falkirk Wheel is continuing to grow and we must continue to support that in my view.

Fort Augustus. We want to grow another 21 destinations with the help of the government over the next ten to fifteen years. There will be 21 other places across the whole network that people will aspire to visit and cherish the way they do The Falkirk Wheel and Fort Augustus. Last week there was a festival in Edinburgh Quay because we really must make sure that's not just about buildings and commercial space. It must become a living vibrant place where people can have fun. We must work with our partners, the private sector, our development partners, to help grow and nurture this place. I'm hugely committed to events as a means to drive people onto the network. There is no point in having a fantastic scheduled ancient monument brilliantly maintained if people don't use it and there's no point in just marketing it as a canal. It needs to be somewhere where families and individuals want to go and have great fun and that's what we're trying to achieve. I'm really proud of those 100 events that we've been able to continue a degree of support for and again that is down to volunteers.

£2m of partnerships going into our tourism and destination effort. Visit Scotland are fantastic to us, we've struck a strategic partnership with them and they continue to support us day in and day out regardless of structural changes. That's a relationship that we really must nurture. £2m has recently been invested in the Dalriada project up at the Crinan which will transform the imagery and make sure that the canal has much more to offer than a fast passage through to better sailing waters. The Waterways Trust, my real thanks to them, they are a fantastic agent of communication, change and engagement for us across Scotland.

## **Regeneration & Sustainable Development**

We spoke last year about it, this year we've been concentrating a lot of time and energy and what I want to do is take you on a journey round the country at high level but really something to set the scene for you that year after year we will report the progress on these major long-term schemes.

### **Inverness**

As Andy mentioned the relationship between the sea and inland water is absolutely crucial and therefore we can't be introvert about looking at our own canal. We have to understand the broader context. As Russell will tell you, 40% of users of the Caledonian come from Germany or Sweden so this is an international asset of international significance. When we consider Inverness and the Caledonian that's the context because up in the Moray Firth in the next five years there will be in the order of 700-1000 new berths created, new homes supporting maritime development. All of that therefore creates a future demand for usage of our canal network and that's enormously exciting for us. Muirtown Basin, The Harbour Trust do fantastic work in Inverness re-claiming 28 acres of land out into the Moray Forth again for mixed use, leisure and commercial activity. Our ability to work with them, to harness the freight opportunities are enormous. What we see at Muirtown Basin, is very

much an area where we can bring forward substantial, very significant regeneration, building and creating for Inverness. The Council want us to deliver a new waterfront for them looking at harnessing the edge of the canal and the basin but looking much further into low performing retail areas, low performing industrial areas. This will take 10-15 years but nevertheless this will herald an enormous contribution to Inverness' economic future. It is already a fast growing city but nevertheless this is about sustainable development almost right at the heart of the city.

On a smaller scale but no less significant and picking up on Andy's point was that what we need to do when we look at Crinan is understand and appreciate that what we are sitting on in Scotland in this area is the second best sailing ground in the world, a global asset of enormous significance. This contribution of activity is greater than all the money spent on golf in Scotland. With enterprise companies there is a more strategic picture saying "how do we harness this area and have an investment programme over 20 years to make sure there is cohesion to all of this" . At Crinan we are sitting right in the middle of it and Ardrishaig, if you know Ardrishaig, is a place a bit down on its heels but nevertheless one of the jewels of that potential area. We own half of Ardrishaig, the council own the other half, Community Scotland own some housing, so the levers of control that we have to make a change in that area are enormous. Mark Smith, our Senior Planner, has been leading the regeneration effort in Ardrishaig and some of the headlines have been "the best thing to happen in Ardrishaig for 23 years" . What Mark and colleagues and partners have all done is come together as a partnership, they have raised aspiration but also raised engagement and people are absolutely buying into this vision. We can deliver and we must deliver because we have those levers of control.

Edinburgh, the bigger context linking the sea is looking at the enormous development at Leith Ports. For me it is just looking at Edinburgh Quay and the proximity to the city centre.. Later you will see some imagery from helicopter flyovers which show the proximity of Edinburgh Castle to the terminus at Edinburgh Quay. Five years ago it was a forgotten area at the end of the canal, now it is regenerated and what you can see is Edinburgh Quay 1 & 2 complete. We are not far away from making some movement on our development with MacTaggart & Meikle in the same area, which will really pretty much finalise that terminus. We are working hard with Scottish & Newcastle. You will see if you're down there, Sandra Purves and I were down there last week, a new townhouse development and you will see that the future phases didn't stop and start at 1 and 2. The great thing for me when you look at the Edinburgh City plan now is that you will see in it Edinburgh Canal quarter and you will see special planning status for Edinburgh Canal quarter and for me that's a fantastic advancement. That recognises that the city appreciates its significance and making sure that the end of the Union Canal is a true world class destination. In achieving that that means that more people will be engaged in using the whole length and breadth of the Union Canal and Forth & Clyde so for us that's a massive step forward.

Edinburgh Quay 2 has the best office accommodation this year in Edinburgh and the best and highest quality there is available. It is almost 40% let but for us its all about bringing people and vibrancy to the area.

Falkirk and Grangemouth. Whilst the Falkirk Wheel has been hugely successful what we are really keen to do along with the Council and support from the Provost and his staff is have Falkirk really embrace the significant importance of the canal. We don't just want to look at the long term, improvement of the Falkirk Wheel site, we want to look at this as a whole area and therefore with the council we are trying to rejuvenate re-energise,

regenerate the whole 80 acres of Tamfourhill that will create a new entrance, a high quality mixed use scheme, with quality residential, all of which will make a much finer entrance into the Falkirk Wheel. We have bought the Union Inn and we have also acquired sites within Tamfourhill. Rosebank site will come onto the market this year and further along the canal we have arguably our most ambitious project to date since the Millennium Link, The Helix. 400 hectares of transformation of blighted land that separates the communities of Grangemouth and Falkirk. What we aspire to do is create something that is truly a living landmark that brings back to life land that is neglected to be the highest quality greenspace linking together ten different communities. The problem we are trying to solve is the route from the River Carron into the Millennium Link and in a very British Waterways way here's how we plan to do it: Two world class pieces of iconic structure. The Angel of the North gives people a sense of aspiration and if the Angel of the North can have that impact on the North East then these structures in the middle of Scotland which will have 32m people passing every single year, will have a transformational impact on the central belt of Scotland. It will raise a different sense of place, raise people and communities sense of aspiration. To raise Stirling's concerns, when we do this and create a new marina and a new connection that will offer a hub to enter better the Millennium Link today, sail out into the Forth or indeed into Stirling and connect with what I think are very good high quality waterside regeneration efforts being made in Stirling. This is national scale and if we get our job right this will lever £46m into this blighted area and we are very confident that this does represent a fantastic opportunity for a living landmark. Andy Scott, the artist, believed in this project so much that he has made two 3metre maquettes. He stopped his work and built these things over months and if you have ever seen these in real life then you will sense how you feel about them, how they come alive, how they bring spaces alive. Andy built these at risk for himself, he believes in this so much he spent £40,000 of his own money to make this work and he said if it doesn't work he will walk away. That's the kind of passion that this project begins to engender. So please watch out for The Helix and anything you can do for it from any angle, anyone you can squeeze, please do. All support is most grateful.

Glasgow. I will only touch on certain parts of Glasgow. You've got the big issues of the Commonwealth Games and again talking about canals in the future, the city is talking to us now about extending the canal network into Glasgow, using canals as a surface water drainage mechanism. Rather than having water pouring off and finding drains to dissipate this water they absolutely 100% understand the value of canals. In the future, if we are successful in the Commonwealth Games, you could see canals helping to support the sustainable regeneration post Commonwealth Games

What I want to talk to you about briefly is our concentration on the Maryhill area. We would argue Maryhill is looking better today than it has ever looked. We place a lot of energy and maintenance and zero tolerance to graffiti and it's looking fabulous today but from December this year a planning application will go in to create a place that will deliver 800 new family homes, that's not just British Waterways but working with our partners, ISIS, who are here today. We are also working with Glasgow Housing Association, Cube Housing Association, Maryhill Housing Association who are all collectively coming together to say this is the kind of future we want for Maryhill and that's enormously exciting. This the first push on the Glasgow Canal and from December this year planning applications will go forward and delivery, within two years, will begin on the ground.

Finally, we have huge aspirations for what we have in our ownership for example Bowling Harbour at the end of the canal. We own half of the harbour, Clydeport own the other half, From Clydeport's ownership all the way up Dumbarton is land owned by Exxon which has now ceased work, with badly contaminated land all joining up to Dumbarton. What we are working very hard at the moment to do is pull together all the partners, the council the enterprise agencies, Loch Lomond National Park, all the other agencies, Clydeport. We're all working on what we describe as a plan of plans to bring together and harness the opportunity that this area brings because for us the development of Glasgow Waterside and the Clyde shouldn't stop at the Erskine Bridge, it should continue. What we want to see is our land ownership added to what Clydeport Authority are doing added to what West Dunbartonshire Council aspire to in terms of future use of the Exxon site and for us the prize is off the back of flood defence to protect for the next 200 years Dumbarton from very severe flooding. What we have is a feasibility study and Crawford McCalman who works with us, has created an innovative solution to flood prevention primarily but to add value by adding a canal on top. What that does is connect Dumbarton via flood prevention to Loch Lomond and when you do that what you have is a fantastic connection between Inland water and sea water and then inland water again. Of those 5000 boats that are locked in to Loch Lomond today, probably 3000 could come out of there, down the Clyde into the Millennium Link and across to Edinburgh and that's the kind of vision we have for this area. Some folk think this vision is pie in the sky well, folks would have said that to Jim 10 or 15 years ago about the Millennium Link. That's our vision for 10-15 years time across a broad piece.

All of that sounds very physical but actually what it's about is about people. The joy that we get, this is what gets us up in the morning and gives us the passion to drive this business forward. We can't do it without partners. There are too many to thank today but for me it's a genuine heartfelt thanks to all of you, regardless of the changes in the organisations and the shift of enterprise networks we will all endure and hopefully continue this fantastic effort over the next 10 years.

Thank you, it's my pleasure to hand over to Tony Hales, Chairman for British Waterways to say a few words.