

British Waterways Scotland

Annual Meeting

on 27 September 2007

at The Hub, Edinburgh



Tony Hales

Thanks very much Steve, I love coming to Scotland. I always have a really great time up here and it was great having dinner last night rather than watching Aston Villa going down the tubes at Villa Park. I have had some wonderful visits up here and the other thing that always happens is whatever I have written down goes out of the window because somebody's already stolen all the lines, in fact the worst one was in July when we had the Institute of American Civil Engineers come over. A great big party and great credit to Sandra Purves for bringing them over to do a study tour celebrating the anniversary of Telford. I got detailed notes of Telford's achievements and what he constructed here and in Denmark and south of the border and as we greeted them they came on the boat to go down Loch Ness and I said "what have you been doing this morning" and the President said they had a fabulous morning, they'd been at the University in Edinburgh and the top Professor of Industrial Archaeology had just given them a three hour lecture on Telford, so that was the end of that one.

One cannot fail to be inspired by the range of activity that is going on here in Scotland, very ably led by Steve and supported by very talented people, and I would like to thank all of them. Partnership has been mentioned, it was great to have the Minister here, we've had very good air time and very good engagement from the Scottish Government and the officials, Alistair and Margaret are both here today. We are blessed to have such able people working for Scotland, understanding what the waterways can bring. They understand what a broad agenda is about and it is a great pleasure to come to Scotland and really engage with people who are looking at a broad agenda and understand the issues so well as opposed to some other places where we go. It is a credit to the Scottish Government. We also work with many local councils and that is again so important, we cannot achieve anything without working with the local communities and volunteers and many of the volunteer and passionate enthusiasts are represented here today. Partnership

is absolutely essential so thank you very much and as Steve says this is what makes the job fun, it's just great to be with people who care and are just moving things along.

There is some excitement south of the border as well, the work is going full steam ahead now in Liverpool for the City of Culture coming up and the construction of the link between the Albert Dock and the Leeds Liverpool canal in front of the Three Graces. That is a very exciting project which will come to fruition next year and the other one I would just mention is the Olympics which would have been a dry Olympics on the original plans that were done a couple of years ago and now canals are right at the heart of that. They will take the freight traffic in there, the lock is being constructed on that next year so we should see an opening and some movement on that and a wonderful legacy at the end of the games. Seeing what was proposed for Glasgow I am sure there will be some lessons that will flow from what we are doing in London to Glasgow.

I don't want to keep you away from the real detailed questions so I would just like to thank our retiring board members. We have three who are retiring very imminently, George Fleming, Susan Achmatowitz and Terry Tricker. George and Susan have both been active in coming up to Scotland and engaging in the consumer groups and in representing Scotland at British Waterways, they are not here today but I would like to thank them for their contribution.

Now of course, we come to Campbell, well Campbell's not going yet and I don't think Campbell will ever go. I don't know what job we'll find for him but we're not going to let him stay on the golf course, we will have to have him Honorary Captain of a ship going on the Canals. A totally extraordinary man, Campbell, who has been ten years with us, it's normally six but we couldn't let him go. He has been here with the Millennium Link, The Falkirk Wheel, Edinburgh Quay, Port Dundas, all these terrific achievements that have brought the Canals to life in Scotland and as Steve showed you just a whole range of exciting possibilities which are on the drawing board. Campbell has just been inspirational, he's not the man who just sits down and says I'm going to challenge the internal rate of return, he's not the quickest one on working out a discounted cash flow, but by golly he knows people, he knows everybody in government, he knows everybody in Scotland who is interested in the Waterways, he engages with people whatever their role is, whether its just a walk down the Canal bank, our people who work in the offices and on the banks. He engages with people of power and influence and I've always found you quite quiet actually, I've never seen you rant and rave, you've always been that quiet persuasive, curious personality which has inspired people and got things done and got things done to build better communities because that is what you are interested in. He's not going for a few months yet and we've got to go through the process of finding a successor who will find it very difficult to fit into those shoes. We may find some occasion to thank Campbell again but as this is your last Scottish Annual Meeting very sincerely from myself, from the Board, from Executive Colleagues south of the border and I'm sure from all of you, Campbell Christie thank you very much indeed.

Campbell Christie

Thank you very much Tony for those very kind words. I'm sure not all of them are justified but nevertheless I welcome what you have to say and it has been a great opportunity for me to be involved with British Waterways for so long. You've had lots of presentations today and we do have the opportunity for you to raise issues after the meeting but you have Robin and Tony and Steve here so this is your opportunity to raise strategic questions with them.

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