

British Waterways Scotland

Annual Meeting

on 27 September 2007

at The Hub, Edinburgh



Campbell Christie

We are particularly glad that so many of you have managed to get here and participate in what is an important event for British Waterways Scotland. I am delighted to be joined on stage by Stewart Stevenson, our new Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change. He will be addressing you later this morning and can I ask you to join me in welcoming Stewart to our meeting today.

I am also joined on the stage by Tony Hales, British Waterways Chairman and to Robin Evans the Chief Executive of British Waterways and Steve Dunlop, Director Scotland.

This is the 8th Annual Meeting of British Waterways Scotland since devolution and this is an important event in British Waterways Corporate calendar as an open forum to raise awareness of Scotland's Canals and their opportunities for leisure, tourism and business. I have to emphasise also it's a listening occasion. We want to hear what you have to say, however, it's not the only opportunity our partners, users and the public have to discuss their needs and issues regarding Scotland's canals with us.

British Waterways Scotland has an extensive programme throughout the year to engage with our stakeholders and hear what our users and partners want to say to us about how we are operating the waterways in Scotland. We decided that we would have a slight change of format this year for the Annual Meeting. There will be an opportunity to ask questions of a strategic nature and of relevance to the Minister after the Minister has spoken and there will be a session at the end of the business when questions of a strategic nature can be raised for Tony and Robin on detailed questions about operations, foliage and so on. We have desks at the back manned by people who can really give you the answers to questions about operations so I hope that you will make use of those question stations.

Before asking the Minister to speak I just want to say a few words about our situation and the support that British Waterways has from the Scottish Government. The new Scottish Government continues to work with us, helping us to unlock the potential public benefit of Scotland's canals by encouraging public bodies in Scotland whose activities are relevant to work with us in partnership. Partnership working was identified in the policy document "Scotland's Canals - An Asset for the Future" as key to ensuring Scotland benefits widely from the investment made in recent years in the canal network. The Scottish Canal Development Group is a Scottish wide partnership which is chaired by the Scottish Government that brings together public bodies with a common interest in contributing to and benefiting from our vibrant canals.

We appreciate the previous Scottish Government's commitments, not only financially, but also its good work undertaken in partnership since devolution to raise awareness of Scotland's Canals and their associated opportunities for leisure, tourism and business. With their support British Waterways has enjoyed the success of turning what was, as many of us will remember a liability into a much-loved national asset.

British Waterways Scotland is at a critical stage in its ongoing transformation and is looking to seize the opportunities leading from the revitalisation of the canal network to make it work better for the people of Scotland. In order to do that we have submitted our business case for the Scottish Government's tri-annual spending review this Autumn. The outcome of the spending review which will cover the period 2008-2011 we are told will be tight, but we believe that British Waterways ticks many of the boxes that are important to the new government in the strategy that they have set themselves for the period ahead.

British Waterways is in a unique position with its activities touching upon so many different government policies such as tourism, leisure, regeneration, economic development, the environment and heritage. This is an opportunity for British Waterways Scotland to demonstrate not only our successful delivery of projects often working in partnership but also our valuable contribution to the Scottish Government's five strategic objectives, essential so that Scotland can prosper. These strategic objectives are to be smarter, wealthier, fairer, to provide safer and stronger communities and greener communities. We think that fits very well with the work that we are doing in British Waterways Scotland and I am pleased now to ask the Minister, Stewart Stevenson to address you. Stewart is the new Minister for Transport and our new Minister. He has very quickly, I think, appreciated the role of British Waterways, he is a sailor, a salt sea sailor more than on the canal but I'm hoping we get him on the canals as frequently as he used to sail competitively on the salt water. Although his constituency is Banff & Buchan and his home is there he has been a long term resident of Linlithgow so our colleagues from Linlithgow Canal Society here today will welcome Stewart to the Canal Society in Linlithgow on any occasion if he wants to see the good work they have been doing there over a long period of time. Indeed it was Linlithgow and the other Canal Societies in Scotland who were there at the forefront of campaigning for the re-opening of the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals in the Millennium Link. Stewart could you address our annual meeting please.



Stewart Stevenson

First of all I would like to thank Campbell for inviting me here today. It gives me great pleasure to be the first SNP Government Minister to attend and speak at a British Waterways Scotland annual meeting.

I would also like to thank Tony and his team, including those on the stage this morning, for a very informative and enjoyable last evening. I am afraid that due to Parliamentary commitments I am not able to stay for the whole morning but I look forward to hearing as much as I can about our canals in Scotland.

I have already been able to make a couple of visits to Scotland's canal network since becoming a Minister. I have been struck by the wide range of work that British Waterways undertakes in Scotland. Not just in the context of the construction, building, maintenance and renewal of these great assets but also its contribution to the wider fabric of Scotland.

It is the breadth of British Waterways' activities which links so well with our Government's focus on creating a more successful country with the opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

We have identified 5 Strategic Objectives - Wealthier and Fairer; Healthier; Safer and Stronger; Smarter; and Greener. Unusually for a single body, British Waterways' activities can, to a greater or lesser degree, have a positive impact on all these areas.

Since devolution, the Scottish Government has made a very significant investment in our canal network. Government grant of over £80 million has enabled British Waterways to deliver a safer and more robust canal infrastructure in Scotland. This has ensured that across the Highlands and Lowlands our canals contribute to the quality of life for communities and businesses alongside canals, as well as for visitors to our canals.

In August I had an enjoyable day out at the Kirkintilloch Canal Festival. Thanks to the Forth & Clyde Canal Society for an all too brief boat trip aboard "Voyager". This was great fun.

Kirkintilloch is a fantastic example of a community capitalising on the rebirth of the Forth & Clyde canal following the completion of the Millennium Link. It was an ideal opportunity to witness at first hand what our canals can offer. I was left in no doubt that the canal is an important part of this community's lives now and will be into the future.

That visit highlighted one example of the tremendous success, value for money and community spin-off of the Millennium Link and Falkirk Wheel project. One of the most successful Millennium projects in Britain. This was delivered under British Waterway's stewardship but with the Scottish Government, local authorities, enterprise networks and other partners working closely together – a good model for the future.

A report on the economic impact of the Millennium Link has just been completed by independent economic development consultants Roger Tym & Partners. This report commissioned by British Waterways and Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley shows that the Millennium Link canal restoration has acted as a catalyst for regeneration across Scotland's central belt. It has helped to deliver over £178 million of investment and over 4000 jobs in the past five years. In addition the Falkirk Wheel, the world's first and only rotating boat lift, has developed into one of the country's leading visitor attractions with 1.6 million visits recorded since April 2003. The magnificent structure has also picked up a host of prestigious engineering and tourism related awards.

The research also shows that over 1,000 new homes have been constructed and 92,000 square metres of commercial floor space built since the ambitious canal restoration started in 1999.

Since the canals reopened, increasing numbers of people have taken advantage of the leisure opportunities on the waterways as part of their drive for a healthy lifestyle. Figures for 2006 show a very impressive 14.5 million visits to the Lowland canal towpaths. I have a little house in Linlithgow where the towpath is just below and so I see all the users.

Increasing numbers of boats have been recorded year on year with over one hundred additional moored boats on the Lowland canals. The commercial boat sector is also making progress with a number of additional commercial vessels on the Lowland canals.

Sensitive development activity across both canals has increased significantly over the past few years with the canal network now playing an active part in the creation of a wealthier Scotland. The impressive mixed-use scheme at Edinburgh Quay is thriving and represents a landmark development at the eastern terminus of the Union Canal.

The Glasgow Canal Regeneration Partnership is pushing forward a long-term plan. This will help to create safer and stronger communities across the Glasgow branch of the Forth & Clyde Canal from Port Dundas to Maryhill over the next 15 to 20 years.

The catalytic effect of the canal restoration on the Lowland canals has not been confined to Glasgow and Edinburgh. A wide range of canal related projects and initiatives have already brought benefits to communities across the central belt of Scotland.

At Bowling a major refurbishment programme has been undertaken to create an events space and a range of boater and visitor facilities, whilst towpath improvements are also being undertaken on the stretch of canal which leads from the village to Clydebank.

Auchinstarry, situated at the mid-point of the Forth & Clyde Canal, has been transformed from a previously degraded site into an attractive, thriving rural location, set within a stunning landscape. The canal has been widened to form a larger basin with 49 new pontoon berths, which I understand were filled within 2 months of opening.

The Clydebank Rebuilt project has placed the canal at the heart of a major regeneration push in the town, and British Waterways continues to play an integral role in the partnership moving forward.

Reference has been made to Linlithgow. In that town the community has embraced the revitalisation of the canal corridor with the town's annual Canal Fun Day now a firm fixture in Scotland's events calendar.

The Linlithgow Union Canal Society continues to introduce the delights of our inland waterways to thousands of people every year, with education at the heart of all their activities. I used to be a member of this and knew Mel Gray well. I was a financial supporter rather than being hands on. There is no doubt the society's new Canal Heritage Education Centre will be a valued new resource for schools in the area.

The restoration of the Lowland canals has also created a green corridor across Scotland from Edinburgh to Bowling. They boast an array of flora and fauna - thriving as a result of environmental improvements in and around the waterway. On the Caledonian Canal, where my wife used to live at Muirtown, the 10 year £20 million lock stabilisation programme has secured the long-term future of the waterway. It has provided a platform to continue to explore the development of a range of leisure and freight opportunities. For the first time in many years the Caledonian is now open for business throughout the year.

Almost 1,500 boat licenses were issued on the Caledonian in 2006/07, up from the previous year, with a significant percentage of visits coming from mainland Europe.

British Waterways, in conjunction with various partners, is looking to develop a number of key destinations across Scotland's canal network. This long-term strategy includes plans to develop Muirtown Basin in Inverness and Fort Augustus on the Caledonian Canal.

Canal side development at Fort Augustus is considered a major opportunity to put the village firmly on the tourism map. 30,000 visits were made to the canal heritage centre in 2006, an increase of 68% on 2005, with around 300,000 tourists visiting the lock flight every year. British Waterways is now looking to build on this strong foundation and further develop rural regeneration and engagement in the area.

In June, the inaugural Splash! Community event at Muirtown in Inverness attracted thousands of visitors. It laid the foundations for similar canal based events in the years to come.

After these success stories I was not surprised to learn that the Helix project is amongst 23 projects short-listed for the Big Lottery Living Landmarks Programme. The Helix project has been promoted by British Waterways Scotland, in partnership with Falkirk Council and Central Scotland Forest Trust. It plans to transform, revitalise and regenerate a 300-hectare site between Grangemouth and Falkirk. It will include the development of an innovative lock structure to rival the innovation of the nearby Falkirk Wheel.

One of only three Scottish projects to make it this far in the process we await with considerable anticipation an announcement in October as to whether any of these Scottish projects have made it to the last eight. I wish BW very good luck.

Canals extend into so many areas of government policy. They contribute to integrated transport, protection of our natural heritage, Scotland's economic regeneration, planning and development. In addition they contribute to Scotland's leisure, tourism and health through activities such as boating, fishing, walking and cycling.

I had the pleasure of meeting with Campbell and Steve at British Waterways' offices at Muirtown basin in Inverness recently. Inverness is Scotland's fastest growing city and I was pleased to hear from British Waterways first hand about their plans for Muirtown Basin and their commitment to close partnership working. An example of this was their engagement with Highland Council and others to identify technically feasible solutions to the proposed new road crossing of the canal at Inverness. This is important for many people in the area.

These are but a few examples of British Waterways' very strong commitment to working with partners to identify opportunities and turn shared plans into successful projects delivered on the ground.

British Waterways plays a full part within the Scottish Canals Development Group, a partnership chaired by the Scottish Government that brings together organisations with a common interest in contributing to, and benefiting from, vibrant canals.

As scheduled ancient monuments, Scotland's canals are a key part of our heritage and it is vital that we continue to develop and protect this built heritage and the natural environment, which surrounds it, for the benefit of future generations.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Campbell Christie for all his very considerable efforts over the last 10 years as a member of British Waterways' Board. He has ensured Scotland's interests have been fully taken account of by the Board over that time, as well as contributing to the Board's wider vision.

He was part of the British Waterways Board which oversaw what seemed to many the unlikely dream of the re-opening of the Union and Forth & Clyde canals. It became a reality through Campbell's contribution. This was a truly unique venture, once again linking Edinburgh and Glasgow and the Forth and Clyde by canal. I know from my officials who have had many dealings with Campbell over the years that his warmth and positive approach will be much missed as he goes into retirement from this post.

I am sure others who have first hand experience of his contribution to the Board and Scotland's canals in general will be saying more later this morning. However Campbell may I be the first today to wish you the very best of luck for the future.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for listening and I hope that you enjoy the rest of the day and that Scotland's canals continue to go from strength to strength.

Campbell Christie

Thank you very much for your speech and good wishes for my retirement and I fully intend to be retiring on the golf course getting that handicap down. I will resist all efforts to be recruited elsewhere, maybe. Thanks very much for your speech and the commitment you

have shown and the Scottish Government has shown to the work of British Waterways, and your encouragement to work in partnership with all of the other public sector and private sector organisations we are involved with. Without that support and original document from the Scottish Government urging other authorities to work with us I'm not sure we would have made the progress we have made, so thanks very much for that. Perhaps some of you will want to raise some questions with the Minister before he leaves.



Question & Answers

Robert Hunter Stirling Council

Campbell referred earlier to Scotland's Canals - An Asset for the Future and I wanted to reinforce that in somewhere like Stirling and down the river in Alloa and Bo'ness, we have a huge asset that we are capitalising on as well. We have supported the Helix project and recognised the benefits of water activities so I just hope the Minister will recognise that potential as well.

Stewart Stevenson

I can say a little bit about Bo'ness because that's where my grandfather was born. It's been encouraging to see the case has been made successfully, Investment in 2001 was £8.6m and in 2007 up to £14.8m – that's evidence that governments and political parties across the spectrum value the contribution of the canals and have been seeking to make investments that build on the success.

Provost of Falkirk

It was good to hear the kind words of the Minister in regards to the Helix Project. There are a lot of hopes built on the lottery funding being successful. One of the main features of the project is as you say the improved accessibility to the Forth from the canal itself. The Millennium Link is not quite from Forth to Clyde at the moment. In the event of the bid being unsuccessful do you see the Government stepping forward to finance that link from the Canal to the Forth?

Stewart Stevenson

A perfectly proper question to which I have to give a politician's answer I'm afraid. The spending review is what will be setting our budget for the years to come so I certainly wish the project every success and I hope that we are able to get the money from the lottery to take it forward. We will certainly grunt, heave and strain to find ways of supporting what

British Waterways are doing and the existing projects but I'm afraid I don't even know where the cheque book is far less do I have the pen upon which to write.

John Edmonds

IWAC

I was most encouraged by the Minister's speech. A couple of weeks ago the Inland Waterways Advisory Council were given the opportunity to see some of the regeneration, both social and economic, in the Lowland Canals and we were impressed by what was going on in Glasgow and the commitment of the Council and of British Waterways Scotland. So now in view of the last answer, a plea rather than a question. When I hear the phrase spending review, the shorter word "cuts" forms in my brain. The plea is I very much hope that the spending review will not put in jeopardy all this amazing regeneration work on which Scotland has every right to be very proud.

Stewart Stevenson

Spending reviews are a case where we look at everything we spend money on and my budget is £2.6billion. That shouldn't alter the fact that even if my budget was £100 we would need to look at every pound. However I think it's clear from the figures in front of me that there is a recognition in government on how effectively the sums of money we provide for British Waterways Board are leveraged into greater sums of money that are drawn in because of the key anchor point of investments made by British Waterways Scotland, so I think there is a strong case there. It competes with other cases but I'm certainly hopeful that we can continue to provide appropriate support that isn't a blank cheque! Nothing ever is in this life and we in government don't know what settlement we will have, we will know shortly, but it is very clear that the kind of year on year increase as we have seen in our budget will not this year be of the same order and this of course causes us to look at everything we do and turn every penny three times instead of twice.

Lesley Thomson

I was hoping that the Minister might be able to enlighten us this morning since we are all coming to terms with yesterday's announcement about Scottish Enterprise, VisitScotland, local authorities, what he thinks that impact might be on the canal network and, given that there are so many live projects that the Canals are working on, how that massive re-organisation might impact on some of the projects.

Stewart Stevenson

The announcement yesterday was part of our general de-cluttering the landscape agenda. It will see our seeking to have more of the people who sit in offices in Glasgow out engaging in real projects by bringing the delivery mechanisms closer to the point of application. Through one for the Highlands & Islands and six for the rest of Scotland, we should improve our ability to understand the local needs. We are beginning to bring the Councils closer to what's going on. Ring-fencing the allocation of funds we give them and having agreements with councils that are related to the outcomes that we agree should be delivered. I think the whole philosophy and yesterday's announcement is part of this, it is about delivering power and responsibility back to people who are closer to the point where projects are delivered but of course within a strategic framework laid by government and within our funding package that government very largely controls, so I think it's a very positive announcement

that we made yesterday. It should shorten the lines of decision-making and communication for local projects but still it leaves that relationship directly with British Waterways Scotland directly with government and preserves the importance of that relationship while strengthening those on the ground.

Bob Wakeley
Linlithgow Union Canal Society

I was very pleased to hear what the Minister said about what was going on in Linlithgow and sad that he hasn't joined recently and I'm just going to say to the Minister that there will be something in the post shortly.

Stewart Stevenson

Thank you for that, its like many of these things, as a busy person I used to support the Society financially but the sight of Mel Grey up to his thighs in cold water digging weed out, I'm afraid I will not be joining that happy band. As Minister I have to restrict my direct involvement in organisations that we are supporting but believe me even if you don't have my membership you certainly have my support.

Councillor Graeme Reid
Stirling Council

I have the pleasure of being the Environment portfolio holder so many of the interests within my portfolio are matched by yourself at national level. My interest is mainly in policy and particularly the fact that your title includes climate change. I was very keen to hear some of the prospective policies you might be bringing forward that will affect flooding and flood management for the canal systems throughout the Central Scotland belt as well as the rest of Scotland.

Stewart Stevenson

We have in Scotland, although perhaps not as adversely as England recently, some significant flooding events that are quite different in character from recent history so that's a wake up call to us about what is happening to our climate. We in government are planning to bring forward a flooding bill which will focus on mitigation but also prevention and appropriate areas to build houses on, it will focus on restoring a number of our flood plains which are of course the safety valves for much of our river network. That is a matter for Mike Russell rather than myself directly. Climate change is a long term agenda, we know that the extra CO2 that we put in the atmosphere over the last few decades, even if we stopped our present rate of production it will be 40 years before the world sorts it out and we get back to where we were, so it is an urgent problem. We are setting targets for 2050, that tells you that it will transcend the life of a single parliament, the life of a single administration. Indeed this minister hopes to be 104 years old in 2050 so many of us will not actually be here to see if we meet these targets and that is why it's important of course that we de-politicise the agenda and seek utterly to build consensus. That is why I'm working closely with spokespeople from other parties in the parliament to ensure they have access to advise the civil service and to try and identify an agenda that we can take forward.

Councillor Graeme Reid
Stirling Council

The fact that you are bringing forward a flooding bill and having been involved in technical advisory aspects in some of the other aspects that went through on the previous administration, will you be consulting widely and hoping to bring in the local voice of people

like myself and other councillors around the area that have some involvement and commitment to both our constituents and to policy?

Stewart Stevenson

I think you can take for granted that we will be consulting very widely. We had a flooding summit with key stakeholders and representatives from all over Scotland in Perth three weeks ago. Two of us Ministers were there participating actively which I think is a very clear indication of how seriously we are taking this subject. So yes, we've got to do it because it's another example of how Edinburgh can't understand the local implications of everything that goes on and we have to draw people in from all over Scotland to be part of the consultation of that bill, the formulation of the statutory framework, and the implementation of the detail after the passage of the bill.

Andrew Carnduff

I'm delighted to hear that you're a sailor, I represent the Saltwater Group and the integration of that far greater waterway to the Inland Waterway. Britain has 12,000 miles of coast and only about 2000 miles of canal. I am particularly concerned that the development should include the linkage between the inland towns and activities with the coastal towns and activities. Our friends here in Falkirk and Stirling mentioned that and you have mentioned Inverness. There's the whole of the west coast as well that Campbell has just mentioned, and Loch Lomond. We hope that your policies will extend the remit of British Waterways to encourage the linkages that go into the saltwater and bring our European friends through both the Lowland canals and Highland Canal that regenerate the west coast.

Stewart Stevenson

I think I'm correct in saying that only 3% of the world's water is fresh water, the other 97% is saltwater. That's probably by volume and not by area, I'm not certain and I've drunk a fair bit of it involuntarily in my sailing career but yes absolutely accept that the linkage between the sea and the freshwater is part of it. I referred in my speech to investment at Bowling, that linkage is obviously with the Clyde. I myself as a sailor have gone through the Crinan Canal and you can see the importance of economic activity and tourism of course, which you are referring to on the west coast at the entrance and exit to the Crinan Canal. I also referred to Muirtown Basin at Inverness which is of course a saltwater based development and where British Waterways is involved so I take that point on board.

Campbell Christie

Minister, thanks very much for being with us we really have enjoyed your speech and your contribution and for dealing with our questions. We enjoyed being with you last night and for the opportunity of you hearing what we had to say and us to hear what you had to say but we really have enjoyed being with you and we hope that we will be able to have you back with us next year, I may not be here, but I look forward to your continuing support of British Waterways. Thank you very much.

That was a very worthwhile contribution from the Minister and thanks to those who raised questions, that was very helpful. We now move on in the agenda and I'm going to hand you over to the Director of British Waterways Scotland, Steve Dunlop. This is Steve's second Annual Meeting and he has certainly made an impact since becoming Director, Scotland. You will see from the presentation that he is about to make just how wide ranging has been the work that he has headed up in the two years he has been with us.



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 ante 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, it's something that's becoming mainstream. The success of the Falkirk Wheel just continues. It was the UK's 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.



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.



Questions & Answers

Pat Scott

User

Thank you to the staff, I found Steve's talk inspiring thank you, it sounded great. In the Caledonian Canal I'd like to thank all the staff, they are wonderful, your biggest asset. The foreign boats you are talking about are coming through and the patience of your staff is amazing but the question I want to bring up is one of freight, when you were talking about it last year there was a lot in the paper about the freight that was going to be moving through the Caledonian Canal from the Glendoe project and that's well on and we haven't seen any evidence of freight being moved. Given how difficult the roads are in that area and how good it would be to move the freight by the canal I wondered what the developments on that were.

Robin Evans

First of all on the people, I couldn't agree more. I had a wonderful holiday on the Caledonian Canal last year and one of the problems with the job I have is that you never have the chance to spend time with people and I found our people on the Caledonian just as you described them. It wasn't just because I was there, I saw them doing it with everyone else and the great thing is that's replicated throughout British Waterways, on every survey we do 95% of the customers rate our services as good or excellent with regards the service they get from the people on our canal and those people deserve a huge vote of thanks from everyone in British Waterways so I agree entirely on that. Scotland has a great opportunity for freight, we find freight south of the border very difficult to achieve and grow cause big boats require our dredging to get the water beneath them and that's very expensive. We also have to man most of our structures when we have freight traffic because bog boats are forever stopping, this adds considerably to our costs. In Scotland with the manned structures and very deep canals we have the opportunity and Steve shares that. There are particular issues on the Glendoe project I know but Steve is much abler to talk about that.

Steve Dunlop

It's an excellent example of an opportunity missed in Glendoe. For those of you who don't know, Glendoe is at the side of Loch Ness and an enormous Hydro Power Station which entails the tunnelling into the hillside for 20km up to quite a high loch and for us when we looked at it, it seemed to us that with the scale of the project and the potential for the aggregates, the digging out of those tunnels, there was the potential for 800,000 tonnes of material to be transported across that very fragile Highland network not least coming through Fort Augustus where we have a few hundred thousand visitations. We really launched ourselves into this opportunity supported by the Scottish Government. We did all that we possibly could to bring a business case and a valuable option to take whatever aggregates that had to be moved. We had a plan to do that but unfortunately it was too little too late. The negotiations would probably have had to take place 6 years in advance so by the time we got to that stage the clock had already started ticking with a very expensive contract, and every day delay would have cost many thousands of pounds so it was with deep regret that we were unable to deliver that. We have spoken to the board at SEPA, the local authority and we have made a pledge to each other that if there are any other schemes of that nature, scale and opportunity we will start at the very beginning and capture that opportunity. We lost out there but the process of engagement will mean that we are absolutely ready next time so if anybody hears of any projects of that scale please come straight to myself or David Lamont.



Hamish Taylor
Boat Owner

As someone who uses all three canals I see more and more petty regulations creeping in. You can now only spend 30 days in the north but when you get to retiring age you like to be able to go there. now there is also 24 hour moorings with £8 per night. You would think that the less petty regulations the better.

Steve Dunlop

I think there will be an issue of detail where the Canal Managers Richard and Russell can certainly deal with you but I do agree and acknowledge that Scotland is a generation behind where England is where demand overstretches what the supply is for moorings and visitations. We in the Lowlands are very much about market making and that means doing all we can to encourage people, so when you tell me stories like that that means that there are issues there and that means there may well be some barriers in place. We want to be active in stimulating a market and therefore we have to do that sensibly. We have to make economic charges that make sense but equally our role is to stimulate growth and make sure that we reach the level of usage in England. I will ask at the breakout sessions for Richard and Russell to speak to you specifically about those issues.

Robin Evans

We have very many challenges and right up there is the challenge of keeping the unique atmosphere and the different life you have on the Canals and life is more regulated, there's no question about that, environmentally, health and safety, legally, we are all being regulated far more and we do accept that challenge to ensure that we make the canals a pleasant safe place to be for everyone. But at the same time complying with the regulations and also making sure that you enjoy them. We are aware that it is easy to put up another sign, to make another charge because that's what we're under pressure to do from the regulators. We are trying all the time to keep those canals special and when you think we are getting it wrong do tell us.

Andy Carnduff

On this occasion I'm not speaking so much for the Salt sea sailors but for the pleasure sailors including my friend there who has a boat. I wonder what position British Waterways has taken along with Her Majesty's Revenue in terms of the continued supply of fuel for

boats. I would very much hope to hear that you were acting strenuously to ensure that there was access to supply of fuels and that this wouldn't cost the suppliers too much in terms of establishment of own tankage and all the rest that goes with that. Could you offer us a couple of words on your support for minimising taxation and having fuel available?

Robin Evans

The red diesel debate's been going on for a long time. We took a strategic decision two years ago that we would support British Marine Federation of which we are a member and the British Marine Federation with the grouping of Canal enthusiasts and societies has been incredibly effective at lobbying on the red diesel issue and that has been our tactic. We were concerned that if we as a public authority went head to head with Treasury this would give them a reason to silence us and therefore silence the debate so we were very keen to support the British Marine Federation. We have been supporting them perhaps not as verily as some of you would wish but if you talked to Rob Stevens of the BMF then you will know that we have absolutely been supporting their campaign, unfortunately we have not got the answer that we all wanted but there is still a lot of work going on to delay implementation so we agree anything which makes boating more expensive, creates barriers to access as Steve calls it, is something we are very much against.

***Anne Street
Boat Owner***

In Steve's presentation I was heartened to notice that you mentioned you were doing work on the bridges to make them boat operated on some locks, is there a timescale for this? I know there are differences of opinion on this within the boating community because some people want the BW assistance to carry on, others don't, so I think it's got to be one of those things that has an option.

Steve Dunlop

We have a very active programme. What we have been doing is trialling some of the locks with the societies so we are testing that with users. The end result will be compromised across the network, some will move to a more user operated structure than we currently have but there will be one or two that will require our assistance. There is a programme of activity which David Lamont and Phil Martin are managing.

David Lamont

There are certain locks that are more strategic; the sea locks for example are ones where there is a huge safety issue associated with. Each of the lock structures across the network aren't exactly the same so there are a number of issues just with the mechanics of how we go about that and we need to move very sensitively towards how we might have user operation. Some boaters we know are certainly capable of undertaking these operations but since I've joined British Waterways I have taken an active role of getting onto the water and understanding lock structures and understanding boats going down the canal and I can see for myself equally how there are some serious health & safety issues that might be raised when we do let people operate their own locks. What we need to do is understand what sort of training would be required, what sort of additional infrastructure should be brought in to make the locks safe to work and also understand what sections of the community we really shouldn't have operating the locks because there is a risk with people operating lock structures as I'm sure you understand. We do have lock structures being operated by users just now in the Crinan so we know it is possible, and we know from the success in England and Wales where user operations are seen as fairly standard so there is still a journey to go

on. We are in a pilot phase just now in understanding what the mechanical aspects are of lock structures and what needs to be modified and when you have understood all that there is a cost and a timeline for managing the implementation so we are pretty much in the starting blocks. I would like to see in a 12 month period a pilot being concluded and that will then point the direction of travel and what the investment programme might be and how we segregate users from those that can be allowed to use them and those that we probably want to protect.

Campbell Christie

It was only at our last board meeting that we were discussing some of the health & safety issues associated with users of the canal. Very often hire boat users, inexperienced users have great difficulty as a result of their own operation of the locks. There is a balance to be struck between those who are confident and able to deal with that problem on their own and new people coming onto the canals being happy to be helped through what is quite a frightening experience for inexperienced users.

Robert Hunter
Stirling Council

Steve and Richard have spoken the past couple of years about the fairly major study that you were doing with Scottish Enterprise about moorings and I just wondered where that is. We are looking at a small boat users guide right up to Stirling, we had a meeting a couple of weeks ago in the rowing club in Stirling and anecdotally the rowing club were saying that they would frequently turn the corner heading to Stirling old harbour and find boats flying Swedish, Dutch and German flags which was something we had not been aware of but again just an indication of demand that we are not familiar with, boats coming up the river into Stirling and staying overnight and using the facilities.

Steve Dunlop

The results of that study are imminent and again we are very grateful for the funds from the Scottish Government towards that exercise because it is entirely wrapped up in how we assess demand for the whole of the west coast and how that integrates with the Forth. It really is about bringing all that information, all that data together which has informed The Helix project and indeed the Leven project. That demand study is out at the moment, it's almost complete and I think we are just assessing the impacts of that. It will become public in the very near future so we will send you a copy of that information.

Pete Simpson
Zazou

We have the flagship development, Edinburgh Quay, which is a struggling development because there are many commercial properties unlet. I'm sure that British Waterways is working to get those properties let and bring Edinburgh Quay to life. It would be useful if people who are operating businesses or doing things on the canal like our restaurant boat, the Reunion Community boat, Edinburgh Canal Society were involved more in consultation with what we can do to bring that area to life. Initiatives have been taken by British Waterways but we are not consulted about them in advance, we are not invited, and we are the people doing the stuff and we would like to operate more out of Edinburgh Quay, to be given priority, to be encouraged to have business there but we need your help, support, encouragement and involvement in that place to make it work.

Steve Dunlop

I recognise some of that and I agree with all of it, there was a festival last week and we are very clear that we need to step into a business support development phase for those businesses that have begun to take route at Edinburgh Quay. That is critical for us and our partners but there is no reason why the consultation and engagement that we have developed right at the end of the canal shouldn't extend right through the Edinburgh Canal Quarter which would include your business and Re-Union. I'm very happy to take that away, that is something that Richard and Ronnie will work on and therefore I will give you that commitment that we will include you in the plans for Edinburgh Quay as a destination as that moves forward.



Campbell Christie

I want to bring to an end the question and discussion session and maybe just say a few words in conclusion. This will be the last occasion that I will chair this meeting so I'm sad about that but I'm sure many of you will be pretty pleased to move onto someone new who will deal with things in a different way and maybe even a better way. One of the advantages of being a Non Executive Member of BWB is that you have a longer life than the politicians who put you in place so when I was asked to do this I was just reflecting. If you go back ten years and think about those developments in ten years, you really get the satisfaction that politicians don't get because you are there at the beginning and you have a chance of being there at the end, very often the politicians and civil servants move on.

If you go back to the mid 1990s and think of where we were then and where we are now in Scotland there really has been ten years or more of absolutely unbelievable developments on the canal network in Scotland and just so that I don't miss out my thanks to people let me say I really have found it very inspiring to work with some of the people I have worked with over that period. Jim Stirling was here for a number of years, a key figure in Scotland and it really was Jim, a great delight to work with you, George Ballinger and your team.

In terms of technical solutions George was the man and I remember when he first showed us the Kelpie idea we just looked at him and said "come on George your pulling our leg" but the possibility is really inspiring so Jim thank you very much to you and your team and others who I have been very pleased to work with and following Jim, Steve to you and to your team for the work that you have done in taking forward the engineering solution to build the Millennium Link, to carry out the stabilisation of the canal and so on. All of those decisions were taken, the theme now is what you are doing to take all that forward because

it is really inspiring and also can I thank your colleagues in British Waterways Scotland Group, many of them who are here today who have been a support to all of these things.

When we had devolution, when the responsibility for British Waterways Scotland was transferred to the Scottish Executive we thought that it was important to have a group that could be an interface between British Waterways and the politicians and British Waterways Board to make sure that Scottish issues were well understood in the British Waterways Board and the Ministers could feel there was a conduit in Scotland that could be helpful to ensure that Scottish issues were put before the British Waterways Board. The British Waterways Scotland Group has performed that function and I'm very pleased to have worked with so many of you over the past ten years I have been involved.

Just reflecting back my first involvement was when I was the General Secretary of the Scottish TUC and I knew about the waterways marginally and I lived within a drive and a seven iron of the Union Canal and worked on the Union Canal but didn't have much idea of what was involved and it was Jim and his colleagues who approached the STUC to be one of the supporters for the bid for the Millennium Link. That's when I first really began to give some thought to the issue and I have to say that when talking to people at that stage before I became involved, they told me what they were going to do and they were going to dig up the M8 and M80 in order to allow the Millennium Link and I thought "you must be joking" . The miracle was how well even at that stage the construction was carried out, handled in a marvellous way and that has been part of the great delight of working for British Waterways because the quality has always been at the centre of what they do. Never taking shortcuts, finding ways to move forward and doing it in a way which produced an end product of quality and that's one of the messages that I would want to pass on to Ministers, what has been achieved has been achieved because British Waterways has used what has been made available to it financially and this is to produce quality solutions. What would be unacceptable, if we don't have the funding in the future then the priority will still have to be the maintenance of the asset because that's what in perpetuity will be there for us.

The Millennium Link was a great feature of what has been achieved during the period I was involved. I was involved in early discussions about the bid when I was with Scottish Enterprise, when I think Jim managed to persuade Scottish Enterprise they should be supportive of the building of the Millennium Link. We had to find finance to put alongside the Millennium Fund in order to build the Millennium Link and I remember the debate with the Glasgow Development Agency when Crawford Beveridge from Scottish Enterprise said "you have to put your amount into the pot in order for Scottish Enterprise to make this contribution to the Millennium Link" and my colleagues and the Board said "what do we want to do that for, what's going to be in it for Glasgow?" Fortunately there was enough common sense in the debate to say well that's going to be positive and the funding came from Glasgow.

I'm sure the same problem existed in many other areas, all the local authorities along the Millennium Link had to find the money to provide financial support and that was achieved. Now of course, everyone claims that was a great project, but the local authorities had the same debate, was this going to be value for money. The Caledonian and the Crinan are tremendous features in Scotland but the bulk of the population in Scotland are in the central belt and what has created interest in British Waterways has been in the centre of Scotland to have this great asset that people can visit, people feel part of, it's part of their communities, it has been a delight to have been there at the start, there at the concept, being as critical as anyone about some engineering solutions, but now seeing what a great

catalyst it is for regeneration, for involving communities. It is fantastic to have been there at the beginning and as it now begins to take off and how we get value from it is really a delight.

Falkirk is competing for the title of the Canals Capital and I remember the first time Jim and others were showing us the location of the Falkirk Wheel. I'd lived in Falkirk for a number of years and Tamfourhill was never in my vista. I drove past it but there wasn't a lot to attract you to Tamfourhill and it was a mile away from the canal but how wrong could you be. I thought this would be a great achievement, the thought of building a stretch of canal was challenging enough but I remember Jim saying "look at the vista as you look out onto this wilderness". That was going to be The Falkirk Wheel and now when my grandchildren come up from the south the first thing they say is "I want to go to The Falkirk Wheel". Some of them just want to play in the kids playground but it really is tremendous.

I remember as well on the Board the engineers came up with the first solution and it was just going to be a traditional lift. Our Engineers had enough ingenuity and it was Stuart who reported to the Board that we want to be looking forward, we will have something that is different. We saw designs and then to see it all coming to fruition, to be standing on the structure before the final building was completed and to see it now it has been worthwhile and now how we use that as a way forward, is magnificent. There is a picture of the Queen, those of you who were there on that day, it bucketed down. I remember meeting Lord & Lady MacFarlane who were sat in the terracing with no cover and the rain was pouring down and then the Queen arrived and the sun came out, blue sky. George Greener tells the story that they had a podium where the Queen and George went to press the button to get the wheel to revolve and it's true to say that the button did nothing so the Queen presses the button after she made her speech and she looked at George and said "Mr Greener I don't think its working". Of course it wasn't working at all, it was the operators at the foot of the Wheel, they had to press their button and get the Wheel to operate.

The Wheel of course was a catalyst that led to so many stimulating developments that we've seen since. Edinburgh Quay, it may not be 100% but it's a hell of a lot better than it was at the end of the Union Canal before and the potential that we have now to develop a real canal hub in the centre of Edinburgh is tremendous. Hopefully we will have the development of the MacTaggart & Meikle site but the real prize is the brewery site at the end of the Union Canal, which could provide a range of economic regeneration benefits.

The Opening of Port Dundas was another tremendous moment in my vista when we got Speaker Michael Martin to come along and open the development. I've known Michael for so many years but he really was very chuffed at being able to do that and to have the lock named Speakers Lock. Those of you will remember we had traffic jams on the M8 as cars were driving past thinking what was going on in Port Dundas. Probably some of them didn't recognise it as Port Dundas but it was an amazing day.

Just to finish, my favourite development on the Forth & Clyde is Auchinstarry; I mean what a wonderful development that is. Not so much that it has provided marina facilities which were badly needed and which helped generate activity on the canal but it is a wonderful location and of course just up the hill from Auchinstarry is the village of Croy and just along is the village of Kilsyth, further along there is Twechar, all mining communities devastated as the result of the loss of mining industries in the 1950s and 60s. Just to bring economic activity there is a real demonstration of how we can use the water in that positive way but the thing that delights me is the thought that we can say to people, come to Croy and Kilsyth for your

holidays in order to benefit from the waterway activities in Auchinstarry. Those of you who know Croy and Kilsyth and the thought of people coming for their holidays it is just tremendous. Maybe two or three years down the line we will have the pub sorted.

Now Champions League, we just have to win the league, we might not win it this year, but next year just a possibility so maybe two or three years down the line. We're on our way anyway and that's really marvellous. Just to conclude in the future, what Steve was saying today really brings together all of what we've been about over the past ten years, in order to see waterways at the centre of a lot of economic activity in Scotland, leveraging large sums of money for very little in the way of public expenditure. Just to get the Helix project complete, what can be done to get the canal into the River Forth, how it will fit in with the development at Bo'Ness and Stirling, tremendous, let's hope we can do that.

The vision for taking the canal structure into Loch Lomond in order to release the boats in Loch Lomond onto the Clyde and into the Canal. What's happening in Clydebank, how Clydebank is being revitalised and the role the canal plays in that.

The completion of Fountainbridge project, development around Tamfourhill, Rosebank into The Helix area, it is marvellous. I won't be here in ten years time to see those coming to fruition but that really is what we can visualise from what has been achieved over the last ten years. I have been very pleased to have been a part of that, I'm very pleased to have worked with marvellous people from British Waterways who found the solutions. Every time there is a problem there is always an engineering solution and we have people who are brilliant at being able to do that. It's been great working with them and it's been great to be part of British Waterways Scotland.

Thank you.

Attendees:

Ms Christina Armstrong	UZ Events
Mr Mike Balmforth	Clyde Marine Press
Mr James Bell	T&G Union
Mr Chris Bell	Wave PR
Mr Chris Breslin	ISIS
Mr Iain Campbell	Edinburgh Canal Society
Mr Andrew Carnduff	Salt Water Group
Dr Campbell Christie	British Waterways Board
Mrs Nicola Christie	British Waterways
Mr Steve De La Rosa	British Waterways
Ms Lesley Dobbin	
Mr Steve Dunlop	British Waterways
Mr John Edmonds	Inland Waterways Advisory Council
Mr Robin Evans	British Waterways
Mr Andy Gallagher	British Waterways
Ms Sarah Govan	Historic Scotland
Mr Graeme Haines	T&G Union Representative
Mr Tony Hales	British Waterways
Ms Margaret Horn	
Mr Robert Hunter	Stirling Council
Mr Guthrie Hutton	British Waterways Scotland Group
Ms Carole Keltie	British Waterways
Mr Tom Kent	Union
Mr David Lamont	British Waterways
Ms Olivia Lassiere	British Waterways
Mr Allan Leal	Fresh Water Group
Mr Malcolm Loney	Forth & Clyde Canal Society
Mr Jim Lonie	Linlithgow Union Canal Society
Ms Barbara Lyon	Re-Union
Ms Susan Manson	
Mr John Meikle	
Mr Crawford McCalman	
Mr Jim MacKay	SEPA
Ms Katie MacKie	
Mr Ed Marnie	Scottish Enterprise
Mr Phil Martin	British Waterways
Ms Eva McCracken	British Waterways Scotland
Mr Derek MacDonald	Boater
Mr Duncan McGhie	Inland Waterways Advisory Council
Ms Rose McGowan	
Ms Fiona McIntyre	
Mrs Alison McLeod	British Waterways
Mr Robert McMaster	Falkirk Council
Mr Richard Millar	British Waterways
Mr Alan Muir	SIWA
Ms Marie Neilson	
Ms Alison Payne	Forth & Clyde Canal Society
Mr William Petrie	Argyll & Bute Council

Mrs Sandra Purves	British Waterways Scotland Group
Mr Bill Purves	British Waterways Scotland Group
Mr Graham Reed	Stirling Council
Provost Pat Reid	Falkirk Council
Ms Helen Rowbotham	British Waterways
Mr Ronnie Rusack	Canal Society
Mrs Fiona Savage	British Waterways
Ms Pat Scott	Caledonian Canal
Mr Tom Scott	Caledonian Canal
Mr Paul Seenan	British Waterways
Mr Peter Simpson	Zazou
Mr Ronnie Simpson	British Waterways
Mr David Smith	British Waterways
Ms Ann Stark	Stark Events
Mr Jim Stirling	British Waterways
Mrs Anne Street	Bridge 1940
Mr Duncan Sutherland	British Waterways Scotland Group
Mr George Taylor	Boater
Ms Lesley Thomson	Liddell Thomson
Mr Russell Thompson	British Waterways
Mr John Wallace	British Waterways
Mr Gary Watt	ISIS
Mr Bob Wigley	Linlithgow Union Canal Society
Mr Brian Wilkinson	T&G Representative
Mr Alastair Wilson	