

THE WHALEY WATER WEEKEND ASSOCIATION (W3)
20-21-22 June 2008



**From the Whaley Water
Weekend Association,
organisers of W3**

PRESS RELEASE

23 June 2008

Blue faces, grey skies, and sunny smile in boat queues!

Whaley Bridge's 2008 Water Weekend - W3 - was a massive success. Among the ingredients were blue faces from a Buxworth and Sheffield morris dance group; grey skies and rain on the Saturday, which only seemed to make people more determined to enjoy the event; big smiles when the sun came out on Sunday; and, the organisers believe, a record embarkation from the basin, nearly 800 people taking canal boat trips over the weekend.

The boat trips were all free for the first time in W3's eight-year history. This was made possible by some funding from East Midland Development Agency, facilitated by British Waterways and additional funding from Derbyshire Community Foundation.

W3 chairman Barrie Walker said: "We had initially hoped to get funding so that we could offer free child trips. But the generosity of two organisations meant we could offer free trips to everyone. Some people from out of the area were amazed that boat trips cost nothing. Our success is measured by the numbers -

784 people used our hire boats, easily a record and proof that people are fascinated by the canals of Britain."

The W3 organisers estimate that the total attendance at the event was between 1,400 and 1,600. People came from many parts of the High Peak and beyond.

The free boat trips brought people to the canal basin even in Saturday's rain. But there was always plenty of other entertainment - most of it free. A ten ton steam roller, restored by Portobello Engineering of Chapel en le Frith, was another big attraction.

One of the favourite acts was Boggarts' Breakfast morris dance group, with members in Buxworth and Sheffield. Their blue faces, black and silver sequined outfits and athletic dancing won applause.

Grey skies and steady rain did nothing to knock the enjoyment of local teen band Crucial Feedback on Saturday, as well as Goyt Valley Brass. Many of the entertainment acts, such as Punch and Judy, the petting zoo and Big Bird were cost free to families, making W3 a bonus in 'credit crunch' 2008.

Sunday dawned bright but windy, with several gazebos wrecked by the gales. Although this reduced the number of craft stalls, it brought sunshine to the canal basin. There was more music on stage from teen band Plane White and New Mills Co-op Band. And there was Irish and maypole dancing from Heage Windmillers, a group based in south Derbyshire.

The opening event on Friday was a concert by Whaley Bridge Primary School choir, and a reception for sponsors and supporters with music by folk group Acoustic Collective. Local speaker David Frith gave a wonderful talk on the history of the transshipment warehouse.

The W3 committee thanks Whaley Bridge Town Council for continued generous financial and other support. British Waterways are very strong supporters, and the committee thanks them for use of the canal basin.

The event would not be possible without the support of the sponsors and advertisers, as well as many individuals. The main sponsor was Autotech Service Centre. Primary sponsors were Chronicle Accountants, Memories of India, Mattin MacLean, Claddagh, the Jodrell Arms, Trafalgar Marine Services and The Review. Memories of India and Vito's Trattoria provided the refreshments for the Friday evening reception.

VOTING DAY

Visitors to W3 were invited to vote on optional plans for the future of the large building at the canal basin, the transshipment warehouse. Heritage Works, a Manchester company specialising in restoring old sites, is conducting a feasibility study for British Waterways on future use of the canal basin area.