

By Mike Daines

23 May 2019

Pictures by Chris Howes and Mike Daines

IWA Easter Cruise 2019

Eight boats set off in glorious early spring weather last Good Friday at the start of the joint 2019 IWA Peterborough Branch and Middle Level Watermen's Club Easter cruise.

The four day trip planned by Alistair Chambers routed boats on a circular passage from March to Salters Load, back through New Pophams Eau and the Sixteen Foot to the Golden Lion then onto the George on the Forty Foot and finishing on Monday via Benwick back to March.

There had been some concern that the Sixteen Foot would not be opened in time for navigation owing to overdue engineering works continuing on Boots Bridge but thankfully news came in on the Thursday that the work had been completed.

News had also been received that the Mullicourt aqueduct pump feeding Well Creek had broken down and a temporary pump was being installed at Marmont Priory lock to manage the water levels. It was later sadly revealed that an otter had caused the breakdown having been ingested into the pump and subsequently perished.

A team effort then successfully negotiated five boats through Marmont Priory lock after which a halt was called for lunch at the recently refurbished and now splendid Five Bells Inn for necessary refreshments before completing the leg to Salters Load.

Saturday saw the dawning of another beautifully warm day and a very high tide in the tidal Ouse at Salters Load. However, the temporary pump at Marmont Priory had itself failed resulting in continued low water levels for Well Creek.

To help remedy the situation, lock keeper Paul Grodciewicz was then given permission to back flow tidal water through the lock turning the normally still waters into a temporary Olympic standard white water course!

Another pleasant day's cruising ensued with a leisurely trip terminating at the Golden Lion for further refreshments and dinner.

Sunday welcomed in another dazzling morning and after breakfast everyone set off in the direction of Ramsey but the draw of a convivial lunchtime stop at the George conspired to abandon the idea of further travel to Ramsey for overnight mooring.

Monday was unhurried and relaxed as the cruise terminated back towards March via Benwick and lunch at the Five Alls. Everyone agreed that we had all been blessed with fantastic weather that compared with the soaking received at Easter 2018 made it all a trip to remember!