



Newsletter

Chairman's Column

April 7th Meeting

This evening we welcome Colin van Geffen with his presentation on the "Flying Boats of Southampton".

May Meeting

There will be **NO** May Meeting as the hall may be commandeered for local Elections.

Proposed Boat Gathering in the Napton/Braunston area

2014 was our last informal gathering at Flecknoe and Braunston held over the weekend of the early May bank holiday. Providing there is enough interest, the event could be repeated this year on Saturday 30th April / 1st May for an afternoon BBQ. Followed with a leisurely cruise to Braunston on Sunday morning. To finish off the weekend a meal at the "Boat House" on Sunday evening is always enjoyable.

This is not an organised event, just a small number of boat owners joining up for a casual get-together. If any members with boats moored in that area would like to join in, could they please contact me as soon as possible.

Alan Rose

What lurks beneath the waterline?

A national survey to record all the weird and wonderful items people throw into their local waterway has uncovered some bizarre objects.

From a Mercedes A class car to open safes and a bag of bullets – discarded rubbish is a major nuisance to the Canal & River Trust.

Over the past five years CRT have hauled out an unexploded World War 2 hand grenade, a 16ft dead python, antique poison bottles, a Volkswagen Camper Van and a pizza delivery bike complete with a soggy pizza.

Other items include a headless Paddington Bear, a bus stop sign, bubble machine, hearing aid, a darts medal and an adult toy.

£1 million each year

It costs CRT about £1 million each year to clear the dumped rubbish, funds that could be spent on improving wildlife habitats and ensuring the waterways are navigable for boaters.

However, this is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of volume of rubbish. CRT often can't recover every item which means it lies on the bottom of the canal bed out of sight and mind to many passers-by, causing problems to boaters and wildlife.

This winter, as part of their £45 million restoration and repairs programme, CRT conducted a four month survey to record the rubbish being removed from the canals and to reveal what lurks beneath the waterline.

The survey results found that a typical tennis-court-sized lock contains the items shown in the

graphic below.

Every year thousands of plastic bags and fizzy drink cans are thrown into the waterways but just one of those cans can take up to 200 years to biodegrade and a supermarket plastic bag up to 20 years.



The rubbish is not only an eyesore but has a real environmental effect on the waterways. Tyres and other rubbish contain pollutants which leak into the water and poison fish and other wildlife. Often rubbish acts as a choking hazard and wildlife can become trapped amongst the litter.

Money could be better spent

Peter Birch, national environment manager for the Canal & River Trust, said: "I'm constantly surprised at what people throw into the canal and the quantity of litter that we retrieve. Dealing with the problem is a big task and the money could be better spent enhancing the canals for people and wildlife to enjoy for years to come."

As they come to the end of their winter restoration and repair work, CRT are calling for people to think twice about polluting their local canal or river with old plastic bags and litter.

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/>

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Bits and Pieces

£1 million dredging project

CRT have started work on an eight month project to dredge sections of the 46-mile Staffs & Worcs Canal from Tixall Lock in Staffordshire to Falling Sand Lock near Kidderminster.

Using a floating dredger, the work will focus on areas along the canal where boaters are having difficulty mooring alongside the canal, navigating through bridges or getting stuck on the approach to locks. In total around 17,500 tonnes of silt – which is the same in weight as over 13,000 fully grown hippos – will be removed from the canal.

Bath towpath upgrade

A £585,000 project to upgrade 2.2km of towpath alongside the Kennet & Avon Canal between Bath and Bathampton started in March. CRT, in partnership with Bath & North East Somerset Council, will resurface the towpath between Darlington Wharf in Bath and Bathampton Road Bridge. Work will take approximately 18 weeks to complete.

James Brindley events

Events are being planned to mark the 300th anniversary of the James Brindley's birth, and the 250th year since the first sod was cut to form the Trent & Mersey Canal. Brindley was born in 1716 near Buxton.

Waterways Events

The following is a list of waterway events taking place within approximately 50 miles of Southampton. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the correctness of this information, please check with the listed contact who will be glad to confirm and supply further details.

OS grid references and/or postcodes are shown (where known but not guaranteed) to aid location of the event.

If YOU know of an event taking place that should be in this list then please contact the editor.

Date / Time	Organiser	Details	Contact
Thu 7 Apr 2016 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"Flying Boats of Southampton" with Colin van Geffen. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ (SU410184).	Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: alanjrose@btinternet.com
Thu 7 Apr 2016 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT (Newbury Br)	Branch AGM and talk "How from the brewing of beer came boats for disabled people" by David Bruce. The Stone Building, Newbury, RG14 5AS (SU472671). Free entry. Car parking £1.00.	Email: newbury.secretary@katrust.org.uk
Sun 17 Apr 2016 10.00am	Somersetshire Coal CS	Walk - Rugbourne Farm from Timsbury Basin. Restoration update - new information boards - tour of William Smith's lodgings, Rugbourne Farm. Meet at Paulton Sewage Works, BS39 6JT (ST654576). See map at http://www.coalcanal.org/maps/other/GoosardBridge.gif	Chris Gittins: 01761 470 516 Email: chris.gittins2@btinternet.com
Tue 19 Apr 2016 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT (Reading Br)	"Wilton Windmill" – James Arnold-Baker. Grange Free Church Hall, Circuit Lane, Southcote, Reading, RG30 3HD (SU692718). £2.50 (incl K&A members) to help pay for room hire.	John Swift: 0118 941 5540 Email: swift.john21@gmail.com Mobile: 07533 886917.
Wed 20 Apr 2016 8.00pm	Basingstoke CS	"What happened when the money ran out – 18th Century Canal Tokens" by Dave Jones. Dave is a collector of 18th Century canal tokens and he has written articles on canal tokens and will talk about how tokens were made, why tokens came into being at the end of the 18th Century plus more.	David Millett: 01252 617364 Email: david.millett@basingstoke-canal.org.uk Web: http://www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk
Thu 21 Apr 2016 7.30pm	Somersetshire Coal CS	Social Evening. "The Claverton Pump and Babbage Crane" by Peter Dunn. The Radstock Working Mens' Club, The Street, Radstock, BA3 3PR (ST688547). See map at http://www.coalcanal.org/maps/other/RWMCmap.gif	Steve Page: 01761 433418 Email: membership@coalcanal.org.uk
Thu 21 Apr 2016 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	"Heroes & Villains of the Basingstoke Canal" with Roger Cansdale. It is surprising that this canal still exists. In no small part, it is due to the actions of a fairly small number of people. Sometimes soundly commercial or altruistic, or fraudulent and criminal but without these heroes and villains the canal would not exist today! The Green Dragon, Old Road, Alderbury, Salisbury, Wilts, SP5 3AR (SU182275).	Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: glover.3@btinternet.com Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841
Tue 3 May 2016 2.00-6.00pm	National Trust	This will involve a trip on the Trust's electric boat to Millmead Lock and a tour of the Toll House where the Guildford Borough Council Hydro Project harnesses the power of the River Wey using a reinstated turbine. Return trip to Dapdune followed by tea & cake. Cost £12.00 (Booking essential). Dapdune Wharf, Wharf Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4RR (SU993502).	Navigation Office: 01483 561389 Email: riverwey@nationaltrust.org.uk
Thu 5 May 2016	Southampton CS	There will be NO May Meeting as the hall may be used for local Elections	Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: alanjrose@btinternet.com
Sun 15 May 2016 10.00am	Somersetshire Coal CS	Walk - for details please contact Mike Chapman.	Mike Chapman: 01225 426948 Email: history@coalcanal.org.uk
Tue 17 May 2016 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT (Reading Br)	"The History of Salter's Steamers" – Dr. Simon Wenham. Joint meeting with IWA . Grange Free Church Hall, Circuit Lane, Southcote, Reading, RG30 3HD (SU692718). £2.50 (incl K&A members) to help pay for room hire.	John Swift: 0118 941 5540 Email: swift.john21@gmail.com Mobile: 07533 886917.
Thu 19 May 2016 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	"Waterway Recovery Group." George Eycott who looks after plant and machinery for WRG, will tell us about the activities of this group who can always be recognised by their red T shirts and hard hats! The Green Dragon, Old Road, Alderbury, Salisbury, Wilts, SP5 3AR (SU182275).	Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: glover.3@btinternet.com Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841
Thu 2 Jun 2016 7.45pm	Southampton CS	TBA. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ (SU410184).	Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: alanjrose@btinternet.com
Fri 3 - Sun 5 Jun 2016 10.00am - 6.00pm	See it for Real Productions	Beale Park Boat & Outdoor Show. Beale Park, Lower Basildon, Reading, Berkshire RG8 9NW (SU618781). For ticket prices see website.	Web: http://www.bealeparkboatandoutdoorshow.co.uk/
Sun 5 Jun 2016	Wey & Arun CT	"The Poddle" - WACT's annual sponsored walk. It is hoped that the route of this year's Poddle will include Compasses Bridge and Gennets Bridge Lock, both currently under construction.	Margaret Darvill: 01483 894606 Email: Margaret_Darvill@weyandarun.co.uk Web: http://www.weyandarun.co.uk/events2.php
Sat 11 Jun 2016 11.00am - 5.00pm	Reading BC and Kennet & Avon CT	Reading Water Fest. River Kennet, Forbury Gardens and Chestnut Walk, RG1 3AH. (SU719734)	John Swift: 0118 941 5540 Email: swift.john21@gmail.com Mobile: 07533 886917.
Thu 16 Jun 2016 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	"Serve On" is a non-profit humanitarian organisation that responds to disasters both at home and abroad and based in Salisbury. Craig Elsdon will talk about the vital work carried out by the group. The Green Dragon, Old Road, Alderbury, Salisbury, Wilts, SP5 3AR (SU182275).	Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: glover.3@btinternet.com Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841
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Thu 7 Jul 2016 7.45pm	Southampton CS	AGM. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ (SU410184).	Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: alanjrose@btinternet.com

March Meeting

“Sonia Rolt and other Idle Women” with Tim Coghlan

Tim’s introduction showed us into a boat women’s life during WW2. Of over 100 women who volunteered, only 30 stayed after their training which represented about 10 boats.

At Stoke Bruerne there is a plaque for the Idle Women. There is also a WW2 memorial situated in Whitehall, London, which recognises the seven million girls and ladies, including the Land Army, for their war efforts.

Shortly before her death, Sonia attended the Hay Literary Festival 2014 where the 70th anniversary of her late husband Tom Rolt’s great book “Narrow Boat” was celebrated as well as the “Green & Silver” years.

Sonia, born in 1919, began her war effort working in the Hoover factory making parts for aircraft. She then read an advertisement for female volunteers to work as canal boatmen and saw it as a means of escape.

After she and her two artist friends passed the brief training period, learning skills which the boat men had taken a life time to learn, they were put in charge of a pair of GUCC boats, *Phobos & Moon*, which was to be their workplace and home for the next two years.

She found the work exhausting but liberating. “Perhaps because I was an orphan with a nomadic upbringing, I thought the boatmen had something I hungered after. We soon made friends with the boaters and the people along the bank.”

Sonia married boatman George Smith in 1945 and for six years she was a full time boatwoman. During this time she was attracted to the newly founded IWA and her relationship with Tom Rolt developed. In

1951, Sonia left George for her new life with Tom.

Tim showed slides and movies of Kitty Gayford on *Heather Belle* with a group of three trainees, they had just six weeks to learn the ropes, comprising of two round trips from the London Docks to Birmingham and the Midland coalfields.

An all-girl crew on *Dipper* was worked by Evelyn Hunt, Audrey Harper and Anne Blake, all brought up in middle class families. They furnished the boat with pots and jugs, etc. from home.

Evelyn’s diary was given to the Stoke Bruerne Canal Museum where Tim was given permission to look at it (and later to publish it). He also visited Audrey aged 93 and living in Tasmania, to hear her memories. This year he finally traced the descendants of Anne Blake who moved back to her home country Argentina in 1952, her family had looked out interesting photograph’s and information for Tim.

These ladies had worked the Boat until the end of the war in 1945. The trio were often the subject of great canal photographic shoots and appeared in a Pathe News clip in 1944 as the model “Idle women”.

Tim also showed a short film on George Smith aged 96 on a boat trip with Alice Lapworth, talking about the Warwickshire coalfields and Newdigate Colliery. He still enjoyed being at the tiller. He died in 2012.

Thank you, Tim, for donating your presence to a very interesting evening shared with 39 members and friends. I hope to bring you more information on other “Idle Women” in due course.

Angela Rose

Woking Canal Festival

The Basingstoke Canal Society and Historic Narrow Boat Club are holding a canal festival in Woking over the weekend of 6th & 7th August 2016. This is to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Basingstoke Canal Society, the 50th Anniversary of the Historic Narrow Boat Club and the 25th Anniversary of the reopening of the canal. The event is taking place on the canal just east of Woking town centre and on an adjacent piece of open space known as Brookhouse Common.

The event is centred on 30 or so historic narrow boats belonging to HNBC members which are meeting up in Woking on the Basingstoke canal over that weekend. It is hoped a similar number of other narrow boats will also be attracted to the Rally. Any boaters wishing to attend can find an entry form on the BCA website. There will be a parade of boats on each day with commentary as they pass the town wharf.

On some adjoining parkland there will be further attractions for the public, Such as stalls from canal organisations and local community organisations. We also are hoping to have live music, Morris dancing, children's entertainment, a brass band and a visit from the Mikron Theatre Group over the course of the weekend (see below). There will also be food outlets and a bar on site.

Both the HNBC and Basingstoke Canal Society will have private events at some time during the weekend for their members to celebrate the respective anniversaries.

Mikron Theatre Company

The Mikron Theatre Company will be visiting the Basingstoke Canal again this year. Instead of performing in Fleet their appearance this year will be part of the Woking Canal Festival being held over the weekend of the 6th & 7th August. The festival is being held on Brookhouse Common and the adjacent stretch of canal (parking in town centre car parks).

They will be performing a play called “Pure” which is a story about chocolate manufacture over the last 150 years.

The performance will be a matinee and performed in a marquee starting at 2:45, while some seats will be available those with folding chairs are invited to bring them. Although entrance to the festival is free there will be a bucket collection at the end of the performance to support the work of the Mikron Theatre.

“Join Mikron and devour a story of many flavours – both from the past and in the present. If a business is big does it really have to be bad? Does success always have a sweet smell.”

Peter Harman



Stanton will be one of the historic boats attending the Festival.

SOUTHAMPTON CANAL SOCIETY

Established 1967

The objectives of the Society are to foster interest in canals and inland waterways, to assist in their preservation, restoration and development, and to give practical help on waterway projects.

Meetings are normally held on the first Thursday of each month at 7.45pm (see Waterways Events) at Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ. OS Grid Ref: SU410184. Contact the Secretary for further information.

This Newsletter is normally published during the first week of each month in time for the Society's meeting.

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Flood damaged waterways start to re-open

Sections of waterway in the Calder Valley, devastated by the Boxing Day floods, were due to reopen in time for the Easter weekend.

The floods caused significant damage on parts of the Rochdale Canal, Calder & Hebble Navigation and Aire & Calder Navigation and CRT were delighted to be reopening more than 12 miles of waterway ahead of the busy Easter period.

Following requests from local boaters they were also aiming to reopen the section between Brighouse and Cooper Bridge. This will enable boaters at Brighouse to access the Huddersfield Broad Canal. CRT were also reopening the Figure of Three Locks which would reopen access along the Calder & Hebble to Wakefield and beyond.

Repairs are still being carried out on the towpath and canal banks and CRT are also holding water levels down between Kirklees Top and Bottom Locks so boaters are advised to proceed with care through these areas.

However, it is likely to be June before the Calder & Hebble from Brighouse to Salterhebble can be reopened.

The section of the Rochdale Canal from Sowerby Bridge to Hebden

Bath Water Space Study

A study is to look into new methods to revitalise and transform the river and canal system around Bath. It has been set up by the Strategic River Group, which involves members of the local authority, The Canal & River Trust and Wessex Water.

The Water Space Study will look at ways of boosting the region's waterways, improving the Kennet & Avon Canal and River Avon for trade and leisure, with support of research from the River Regeneration Trust.

The study will look at the diverse range of opportunities along the

Annual subscriptions

The Society year starts on 1 April and subscriptions for 2016-17 are now due. I will be waiting at the meeting on 7 April with a freshly sharpened quill to accept your subscriptions. The subscription for this year is unchanged at £16.00 for a single membership and £27 for a joint membership.

You can pay me by cash or cheque at a meeting or send a cheque to me at my contact address or make an electronic transfer to the Society bank account: Sort Code: 40-44-25; Account number: 41289373; Account name: Southampton Canal Society. If you take the latter course please use your surname as the reference and email me so that I can expect your payment.

Please remember that there is no meeting in May in case the Hall is needed as a polling station and if you wish to vote at the AGM in July you should have paid your subscription before the meeting.

Aelred Derbyshire, Hon Treasurer and Membership Secretary

Bridge was also due to reopen for Easter. Dredging will carry on in the area after Easter but the channel is navigable. CRT are having to remove even more material than the surveys suggested and this is taking longer than planned to complete.

After Easter, focus will turn to the section above Hebden Bridge. There is more dredging to do here and some substantial towpath repairs/ embankment works in the area around Lock 12. CRT are hopeful that this work can be done in such a way that navigation will be possible before the path works are all finished but will not be certain about this until work is under way.

Unfortunately, above Lock 15, the repairs needed where a landslide has blocked the canal and work to repair the breached embankment remain uncertain. CRT are doing all they can to establish the repair timetable for this and will provide an update as soon as this is available.

The Aire & Calder Navigation, which was also badly damaged during the floods, is now fully reopened to boats.

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/>

River Avon between Bath and Keynsham, and along the Kennet and Avon Canal between Deep Lock and Limpley Stoke Viaduct.

It will also be informed by the ongoing work of the council and the Environment Agency to investigate options for managing flood risk.

The project is due to conclude its recommendations in March 2017. Opportunities for public engagement are being planned for the summer.

<http://www.canalboat.co.uk/news/>