

Newsletter

Issue 347

December 2000

SOCIETY TO HAVE NEW HOME

After some difficult deliberations, the Committee has decided that the future venue for our meetings starting in February 2001 will be the Chilworth Parish Hall.

A strong influence upon the decision was the survey of members' opinions about the impending move. The Committee would like to thank all those members who took the trouble to help in the decision process. Twenty five copies of the questionnaire that was included with the October issue of the Newsletter were returned to the Secretary. When taking joint memberships into account, these represented 48% of the membership living within 50 miles of Southampton (this excludes those living in the Midlands and France).

The survey concentrated on three main topics: how do members get to meetings, what days of the week are most suitable and where might we meet.

Just one couple stated they sometimes got a lift with someone else, only one person indicated that public transport was used and just one reply indicated walking to meetings was an option. However, all respondents (including those just listed) gave their own transport as a method of getting to meetings. Some considered car parking was important. In view of these answers, it was felt by the Committee that mode of transport should not be a major constraint upon the decision.

About half of those who replied to the survey stated that Mondays and/or Fridays were not suitable. Approximately 25% would not like the meeting night changed to either Tuesday or Wednesday. As a result, the Committee felt that Thursday night should be retained.

St John's Ambulance are to open a new hall in the Millbrook area (actually in Freemantle which is between the city centre and Millbrook, but near Millbrook railway station) during the summer and they

have asked us to join them there. So we asked if the Millbrook area would be acceptable as a venue. 92% of those replying said they were in favour.

However, for about six months we need to find a different venue which was why we asked about alternative locations. About half of the questionnaires provided answers on this matter ranging from "Anywhere within say 20 miles" to five giving specific venues, only two of which put forward actual locations in the centre of Southampton.

The Committee also considered where members lived. In general terms, some 15% approach the city from the west and about 25% from the east. The remainder, approximately 60%, come from a generally northerly direction.

A further factor taken into account was cost. The rent we pay for the hire of our present hall is very low - in fact we found no other venue as cheap.

We were unable to find anywhere in the central area of Southampton that was anywhere near the present cost, was available on a Thursday and with adequate nearby parking. The one hall that we did find best matching all the criteria under consideration was Chilworth Parish Hall.

It is appreciated that some may find this location less convenient than the present St John's Hall - indeed wherever we chose would probably not suit some. We have made provisional bookings for six months (ie to July). If the membership feels that the new hall is unsuitable, we can reconsider in due course. However, as a result of our inspection of the hall, I am sure we will enjoy our meetings in Chilworth.

I have been preparing maps to show exactly where the hall is but haven't had time to finish them. With a bit of luck they will appear in next month's Newsletter together with written directions.

Peter Oates



November Meeting

For those members who get excited about a drop of flood water over a spill-weir, or a crosswind on an aqueduct, our November meeting, 'Navigating where others cannot reach', must have sent the excitement graph off the top of the chart.

Our speaker, Chris Coburn, has cruised the canal and river system extensively, but, not satisfied with that, he has on a number of occasions taken his narrowboat *Progress* out to sea.

His presentation began with a video recording showing short excerpts of a whole list of maritime adventures including crossing the English Channel, The Wash, the Bristol Channel from South Wales to Cornwall, just 4 miles inshore from the Atlantic, and a number of tidal estuaries.

Chris's main subject for the evening was a journey from the Midlands to the North Wales coast, 'Cut to Caernarfon', to publicise and raise funds for the restoration of the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals.

He used sequences of video and in between enlarged on the detail shown, and told many amusing additional stories of happenings and of characters he met on the way.

Beginning as close as possible to the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals, he then visited the Black Country Museum to pick up, as a present for the town of Caernarfon, iron fittings that had been preserved from old narrow boats that had at one time carried Welsh slate inward to the Midlands.

Then on to Chester and the River Dee, where the

saltwater journey began.

Often there were problems. For a day or two *Progress* was stranded on the sands of the Dee Estuary until a favourable tide returned.

The trip continued round the Welsh coast where some of the most interesting video shots were of a young local pilot navigating *Progress* beneath the Menai Bridge.

There was a warm reception in Caernarfon and much interest was generated by such an unusual craft in the vicinity.

The iron narrowboat fittings were exchanged for Welsh slate which was to be delivered to the museums at Ellesmere Port and Dudley.

The return journey was just as full of interest and excitement. A visit to Conwy and the River Conwy was followed by a trip up the River Mersey for as far as possible with a narrowboat, before entering the Manchester Ship Canal and calling at the IWA National Festival at Salford Quays.

Safely back on the 'cut' the slates were delivered to the two museums and, some months later, at the London Boat Show, the proceeds of the trip, over £5000, were presented to Waterway Recovery Group and the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Trust.

This is a brief summary of a very exciting voyage and we were honoured to have the 'sailor' himself come to tell us all about it.

Brian Evans



Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust Limited

Founder and President: J. Eric Wood

Dear Mr Evans

6 November 2000

I have received today a payment of £100 through Chris Coburn in respect of a donation following a talk he gave to your Society last week. Please thank your members for their generosity towards Chris who you will know is passionate about overcoming problems put in the path of achieving restoration of the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals.

As you may have read in the waterway press from time to time, the Trust is proceeding well with restoration work, making every effort to tackle political problems. Chris is a constant inspiration to us through his driving force in campaigning at the highest levels. Other schemes have faced such problems and succeeded: so shall we!

One part of our restoration has been the reconstruction of Lock 25 close to Lichfield City centre. An appeal for funding parts of the paddle gear brought a generous response and I shall recommend that this unexpected donation should be used with those monies to have that work completed in the near future. A suitable acknowledgement will appear in the next issue of our Members' magazine.

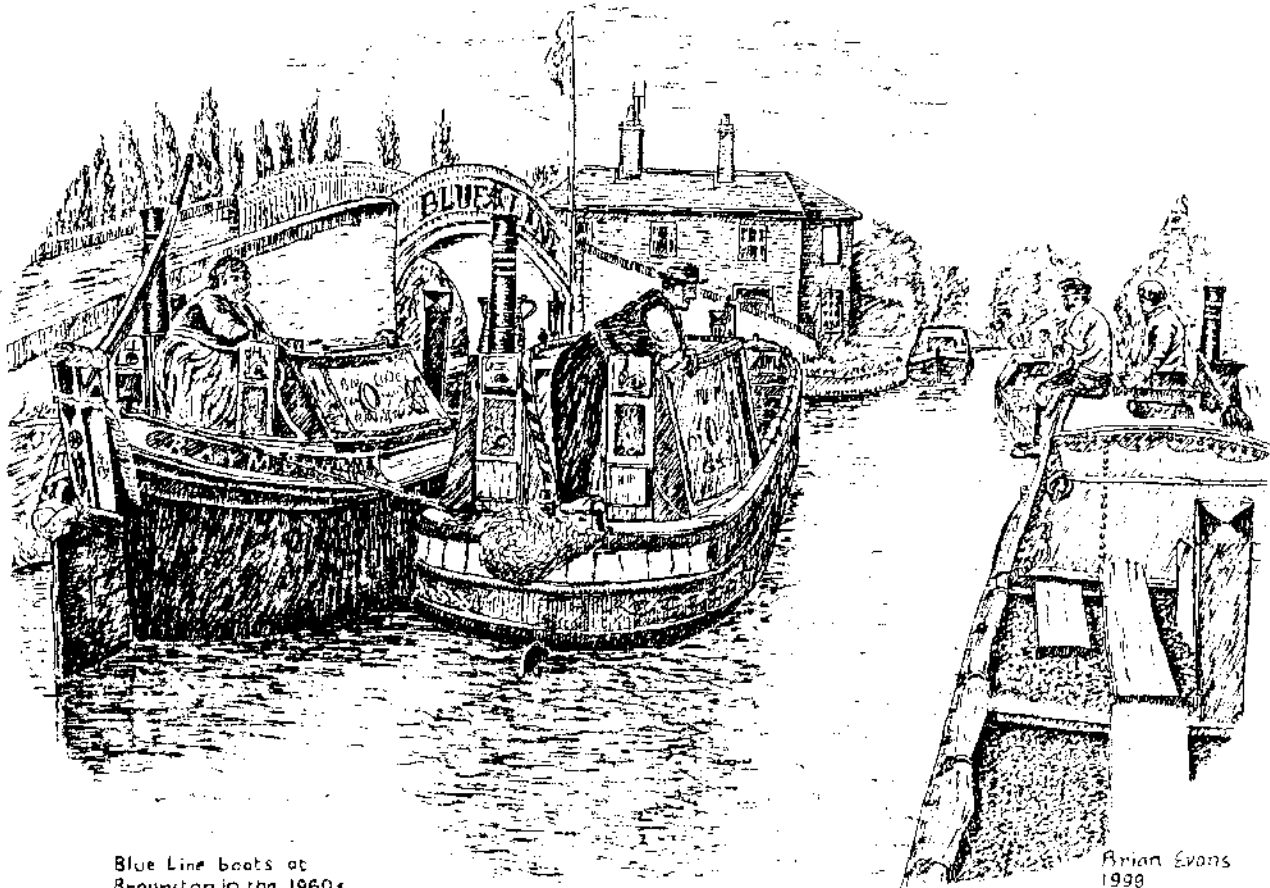
Yours sincerely
R. O. WILLIAMS Director (Finance)

WATERWAYS DIARY

The following is a list of waterway events taking place within approximately 50 miles of Southampton.

Hopefully you can find something to interest you. If YOU know of an event taking place that should be in this list then contact the editor.

Date	Organisers	Details of Event	Contact
Thu 07/12/00 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Annual Inter-Society Waterways Quiz and American Supper	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
Thu 14/12/00 7.30pm	IWA Avon & Wilts Branch	"Christmas Punch Up" - Social gathering with mince pies and punch. Salford Village Hall (signposted from the A4), Bristol.	Bob Kelley: 0117 9744221
Thu 18/01/01 7.30pm	IWA Avon & Wilts Branch	Talk by Chris Davey on the BCN Challenge. Riverside Pub, Salford Marina, Salford, Bristol.	Bob Kelley: 0117 9744221
Thu 15/02/01 7.30pm	IWA Avon & Wilts Branch	Talk about the Grand Western Canal by Tony Rymell (Chairman of the Grand Western Canal Trust). Riverside Pub, Salford Marina, Salford, Bristol.	Bob Kelley: 0117 9744221
Thu 01/03/01 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Speaker from the 'Friends of Raymond' talking about the restoration of this wooden narrow boat. NB venue for this meeting yet to be arranged.	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
Thu 05/04/01 7.45pm	Southampton CS	'Last of the Narrowboat Families' - a talk by Terry Putnam about narrow boat carrying in the late sixties on the Grand Union	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
First Wed of month	IWA Dorchester Group	Evening meetings. Further details from Graham Pugh.	Graham Pugh: 01305 262305
4th Thursday of month	Wey & Arun CT	Interesting but not too arduous walks in Sussex come rain or shine. Lunch at well chosen establishment en route or at end. Donation to WACT appreciated.	Don Gibson: 01903 201375
All year	Wey & Arun CT	Cruises on n/b <i>Zachariah Keppel</i> on the restored canal at Loxwood.	John Lisk: 01493 752403.
All year	Chichester CS	Cruises on n/b <i>Egremont</i> on Chichester Canal.	Bookings: 01243 670786



Blue Line boats at Braunston in the 1960s

Brian Evans
1999

Future speakers

Please help your Committee to help you.

We are anxious for your ideas on the kind of topics/speakers for future meetings.

If these decisions are just left up to the Committee members we cannot guarantee that we are providing a varied programme which meets the interests and expectations of the wider membership. So come on - let Peter Oates (or any Committee member) know what you would like to see and hear.

DROITWICH CANALS TO BENEFIT FROM IWA LEGACY

The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) today announced that the Neil Pitts Award is to be made to the Droitwich Canals Trust. The Award of £100,000 comes from a legacy of nearly £0.5 million left to the Association by Neil Pitts, an IWA member from the West Midlands area. Although only 11 km in length, the Droitwich Canals provide a unique historical combination: the western Barge Canal, connecting the town to the River Severn, was one of the earliest navigations in Britain, while the Junction Canal, connecting to the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, is an example of one of the latest and most sophisticated narrow canals of the 19th Century.

Part of the Barge Canal has already been restored to navigation by the Droitwich Canals Trust. The Trust is a key player in a Partnership with the District and County Councils, British Waterways, the Environment Agency and the Wildlife Trusts, which is committed to achieving the full restoration of both canals. As part of this larger restoration project, the Neil Pitts Award will be used to complete the full restoration of locks 1 to 3 on the Droitwich Junction Canal, with the Trust providing the balance of the cost of the project of £7,900.

The Award will cover the cost of lock gates and the restoration of tail bridges and all lock gear to full operational standard at the three locks. Improvements will also be carried out to the adjacent towing path and boundary hedging, and sympathetic signage will be erected to interpret the lock flight and the Canals' history. The Trust will also put up a cast-iron plaque at the head of Lock 1 acknowledging the contribution of the late Neil Pitts. Much of the work will be done by volunteers from the Waterway Recovery Group, assisted by the Trust's own workforce, under the overall management of a British Waterways project team, and should be completed by the end of 2001.

Locks 1 to 3 are immediately accessible from the junc-

tion with the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, where many visitors stop, so the restoration will raise the profile of the Droitwich Canals. The full restoration of both canals will enable a 22-mile cruising ring to be created, including the River Severn and the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, which will benefit the local economy through income from visiting boaters. A linear park will also be created as part of the larger restoration project, providing recreation and public amenity for local people and visitors alike.

Margaret Rowley, Chairman of The Droitwich Canals Trust said "The Trust is delighted to receive the Neil Pitts Award from IWA. It represents a vital contribution to the funding package for the restoration of the Droitwich Canals. It also demonstrates the significant commitment of the Trust and its partners towards the restoration project. The Award will help to raise the profile of the restoration project and should enable it to attract further funding from other sources."

Mr Tony Harrison, Chairman of IWA's Restoration Committee said "IWA is pleased to be making the Neil Pitts Award to the Droitwich Canals Trust, which has worked very hard over the years to campaign for the restoration of both Droitwich Canals. Now that a successful Partnership has been formed and some funding has been secured, IWA hopes that full restoration can be achieved in the near future, which will bring benefits for locals and visitors alike."

The Neil Pitts Award comes from a legacy of nearly £0.5 million left to IWA in 1998 by the late Neil Pitts. Although the legacy was not tied to a specific purpose, the Association's Council thought that such a generous bequest should be marked with a permanent memorial such as a waterway restoration project.

IWA Press Release, 29 November 2000

Following the talk by Frank Stokes at our October meeting, our Chairman has received the letter below:

INLAND WATERWAYS INTERNATIONAL

Dear Mr Evans

8th November 2000

This is to acknowledge the receipt of a cheque from the Southampton Canal Society sent to me by way of a donation to the IWI at the instigation of Frank Stokes.

Thank you for the cheque, we are a non-profit organisation and rely on our members, and I understand you are one, for financial support so all donations are very welcome.

I enclose a few membership leaflets which other members of your society may find to be of interest.

With best wishes to you and the Southampton CS.

Yours sincerely

Ron Oakley,
Life Vice-President

LEGACY TO HELP RESTORE THE WENDOVER ARM

The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) today announced a grant of £92,127 to the Wendover Arm Trust. The money was left in a legacy to the Association by the late Tim Wilkinson, the well-known waterways author, to finance restoration work on a southern waterway. The Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal is currently navigable for almost 2 km, from the junction with the Grand Union main line at Bulbourne to the stop lock at the pumping house at Little Tring.

The Wendover Arm Trust will use the award to complete the lining of the next section of the Arm, a length about 260 metres from the present head of navigation. This section passes under Little Tring Bridge, which is currently under reconstruction using funds raised by the Trust, and ends at the former winding hole at Little Tring. The work will be done largely by the Trust's own volunteer force, which has worked on the Canal since the 1980s, and is planned to be completed in 2004. The Trust will erect a cast iron plaque by the restored section as a permanent memorial to Tim Wilkinson.

Restoration will enhance the local amenity value of the canal, which is popular with walkers, ramblers and fishermen. The creation of a turning point at the end of the restored section will enable full length narrow and wide beam boats to cruise the whole length of the navigable Arm and turn at the end. Through raising the profile of the Canal, the Trust hope that additional funding agencies will be encouraged to contribute to the cost of restoring the remainder of the Arm.

Roger Leishman, Restoration Director of the Wendover Arm Trust, said. "I am honoured and delighted that the Trust has been chosen as the recipient of the grant. Restoration of the navigable channel

through Little Tring Bridge to the winding hole will enable full-length narrow boats to cruise to and through Little Tring and back for the first time in nearly a century. The award of the grant also represents a much appreciated recognition of the many hours of voluntary time and labour invested in the restoration work by Trust members to date. Fundraising by the Wendover Arm Trust will continue, so that plans for further restoration beyond Little Tring to Aston Clinton can be put into action."

Tony Harrison, Chairman of IWA's Restoration Committee, said. "The quality of applications for the Tim Wilkinson Award was very high, but IWA feels that it has made the right choice in giving the award to the Wendover Arm Trust. The Trust has worked extremely hard at fundraising in recent years, but has not been eligible for grants from several funding agencies because of its geographical location. Moreover, the Wendover Arm was well known to Tim Wilkinson, whose formative years were spent in nearby Berkhamsted, so the restoration project is a very appropriate and tangible memorial to him."

The Tim Wilkinson Award comes from a bequest left to IWA by the well-known waterways author, Tim Wilkinson, who died in August 1999. Tim Wilkinson captained a pair of narrow boats, with his wife, for the Grand Union Canal Carrying Company in the late 1940s. Unusually for the time, he had no previous experience of canals, but took the job after a chance meeting in a pub. A recurring war injury forced his retirement from boating and he became the landlord of a Cornish inn. His interest in waterways remained and he wrote a book called 'Hold on a Minute' which was published with the encouragement of IWA founder Tom Rolt. The copyright to this book has also been left to the Association.

IWA Press Release, 29 November 2000



The Telford Aqueduct carrying the Engine Arm over the New Main Line, Birmingham Canal Navigations

From a slide taken by Laura Sturrock, June 2000

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:

1st Thursday each month at 7.45pm
St John's Ambulance Hall, King's Park Road,
Southampton (Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth
from February 2001)

Chairman:

Brian Evans, 19 Lansdowne Gardens, Romsey,
Hampshire, SO51 8FN. Tel: 01794 517115

Secretary:

Peter Oates, 27 Northlands Road, Romsey,
Hampshire, SO51 5RU. Tel 01794 517614

Treasurer & Membership:

Laura Sturrock, 27 Northlands Road, Romsey,
Hampshire, SO51 5RU. Tel 01794 517614

Committee:

Martin Cripps, Paul Herbert, David Townley-Jones

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Society Website:

<http://www.users.waitrose.com/~whitenap/index.htm>

A Gentle Yuletide reminder to one and all

Christmas Pub performance

The Folly Pie Pub, Napton, Warwickshire
Thursday 28th December 9pm

The Christmas Cruise

An updated version of a *Day-Star* Christmas special which was first performed in 1995. It's Christmas Eve. The canal is dark and freezing cold but it is also away from the usual Christmas hype and tinsel covered insincerity. Add a bottle of whisky, a few songs, a bit of humour, a boat with a life of her own, some surrealistic thinking and memories.

Day-Star Theatre will leave you with a warm seasonal glow. There will be a collection after the performance

n.b. it may not be possible to eat and watch the performance because of space so why not come early and eat before the play. The Folly 01926 815185

www.ownerships.co.uk/daystar.htm

CANAL SOCIETY SALES STAND

GEOProjects Maps:

Inland Waterways of Britain	£4.75
Basingstoke Canal	£3.00
Birmingham Canal Navigations	£3.75
The Broads	£3.75
Caledonian Canal & the Great Glen	£3.75
Coventry & Ashby Canals	£3.75
Grand Union Canal (each).....	£3.75

Map 1 Birmingham - Fenny Stratford

Map 2 Braunston - Kings Langley

Map 3 Fenny Stratford - Thames

Map 4 Leicester Line - Soar - Erewash

Kennet & Avon Canal

Lee and Stort Navigations.....

Leeds and Liverpool Canal

Llangollen and Montgomery Canals

London - City and Docklands Atlas

Oxford Canal

Shropshire Union Canal

Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal *with the River Severn and*

the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal.....

The Thames Map

Trent & Mersey Canal - Map 1 Preston Brook to Fradley Junction..

Trent & Mersey Canal and River Trent - Map 2 Great

Haywood Junction to Cromwell Lock.....

Ball Point Pens: Embossed

Burgees: Navy Blue - screen printed Society logo on each side

Decorated Mugs:

Notelets: with drawings of canal and Romsey scenes

(by Brian Evans)

Shopper Bags: Cotton with screen-printed Society logo each side .

Society Members Badges: Enamel

Sweat Shirts: 30th Anniversary in Light Grey

with multi-coloured embroidered Society logo on breast

Sweat Shirts: Standard in Navy or Royal Blue

with Society logo embroidered on breast

Tea Towels: Various colourful designs

Tee Shirts: Screen printed with Society logo across chest

in Navy Blue - medium, large & extra large; in Red - medium

Visit the Sales Stand at Society meetings and place your orders with Paul Herbert or Ray Brooks - or ring Paul on 023 8026 2365

FORTHCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS

7th December 2000

Annual Inter-Society Waterways Quiz and American Supper

4th January 2001

'Southampton Canal Society and St John's Ambulance Hall'.
Brian Evans and Peter Oates will look back at our association
with Kings Park Road

1st February 2001

To be arranged

1st March 2001

Speaker from the 'Friends of Raymond' talking about the
restoration of this wooden narrow boat

5th April 2001

'Last of the Narrowboat Families' - a talk by Terry Putnam
about narrowboat carrying in the late 60's on the Grand
Union