



NEWSLETTER

Chairman's Column

December Meeting – Inter Society Waterways Quiz and American Supper

We are again delighted to host the popular Inter-Society Waterways Quiz and I would like to welcome the participating teams. It has become traditional for teams from IWA Solent & Arun Branch, IWA Salisbury Group and Southampton Canal Society to take part, as they will be again this year. In addition, I would like to extend a particular welcome to the team from the Chichester Ship Canal Trust. The Chichester Canal Society (as it was then) hosted the very first quiz in October 1993, won on that occasion by IWA Solent & Arun Branch. Chichester again hosted the following year's event when Southampton Canal Society took the honours. This year's Quizmaster is Chris Davey and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chris for his efforts – it is certainly not an easy task to devise such a quiz. As always, the Quiz will be followed by an American Supper, enabling our members and guests to socialise.

Cuts in the Government's Funding of the Waterways

Following on from the articles published in the last two Newsletters concerning DEFRA's cuts in the Government's funding of the waterways (thanks to Peter Oates for his coverage) on behalf of the Society I wrote to the Secretary of State at DEFRA, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, DEFRA (the Waterways Minister) and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, protesting over the proposals. I also wrote

to the following local Members of Parliament, seeking their support:- Sandra Gidley (Romsey); Chris Huhn (Eastleigh); John Denham (Southampton Itchen); Alan Whitehead (Southampton Test); Mark Oaten (Winchester); Julian Lewis (New Forest East); and Mike Hancock (Portsmouth South). I received a very helpful response from Sandra Gidley, Mike Hancock showed a lot of interest, and John Denham issued a press release to Radio Solent but, as they didn't consider the waterway cuts to be a local issue, decided not to cover the story. Society member Ray Brooks was very helpful in providing information that assisted me in my task. Many thanks Ray.

See page 2 for more information about the campaign.

January Meeting

A further reminder that next month we will be holding our popular annual Members' Photographic Evening and Competition. Full details are published in this Newsletter.

Seasonal Greetings to all our Members

We have now reached the end of our programme for 2006, another very successful year for the Society. It gives me the greatest pleasure to wish all Society members **A Very Happy Christmas and New Year**. We celebrate our 40th anniversary during 2007 and we have an interesting programme lined up, more details will be published in the next Newsletter.

Paul Herbert

Members' Photographic Evening and Competition

The meeting on the 4th January will be our annual Members' Photographic Evening. This will give everyone the opportunity to show some pictures - even those who feel they might not have enough of interest to make up a whole evening's show. If you can put together up to a maximum of around a dozen pictures (even just one or two) that you feel will entertain / educate / amuse your fellow members, look them out for this evening.

For those with a digital camera, we should be able to project digital photos as we tried for the first time last year. Please bring your pictures (virtually any format will do) either on CD or USB Flash/Pen Drive. This year, we should be able also to read memory cards (such as CF, SM, SD, XD, MMC, Memory Stick) as long as your editor remembers to bring along a card reader to connect your card to the computer's USB port. Please contact Peter Oates if you have any questions about this.

As usual, we can project prints (up to 7" x 5") onto the screen as well as transparencies and digital pictures. So if you don't take slides or digital pictures, you too will be able to show something of waterways interest as well.

Again, like the last few years, the evening will also incorporate a photographic competition. To be held just before the tea interval, this competition is open to all members - you don't have to be showing other pictures during the evening. What we're looking for is one picture which can be anything to do (even loosely) with the waterways. The competition will be judged by all those present at the meeting. And as an incentive to enter, there will be a mystery prize given to the winner.

So don't be shy, this is YOUR opportunity to show others your interest in waterways, what you've done or where you went and what you saw on holiday.

Peter Oates



**A very Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year
to all our readers**



SAVE OUR WATERWAYS

DEFRA U Turn? Well a partial one!

Is a slight DEFRA change of heart signalled? The movement to secure the future well-being of Britain's inland waterways by persuading government officials to listen to reason, and then put into place protected funding arrangements for the navigation authorities, is rapidly gaining momentum.

Indeed DEFRA has already slightly loosened the purse strings.

Does the latest news emanating from DEFRA point to a softening of attitudes by the fund providers, and if so was it as an early result of the growing public pressure?

Restoring £1.5 million is a start at least. Perhaps the government officials concerned have woken up to the fact that they are in dire need of some positive spin!

In essence, it seems that the expected third stage cut on British Waterways' budget for the current year is not now take place. BW had initially been warned to expect further cuts following the actual £7.6 million deduction from their 2006/07 budget. The word from DEFRA is that this has now been 'relaxed' and, as a consequence, BW can go ahead and spend the rest. However, the earlier damaging cuts are still well and truly in place, and as a result there are still questions over the network's future. Nor does it mean that budgets for the years from 2007 onwards are safeguarded.

A spokesman for BW made the following points: "This is not extra money from DEFRA, but merely allows BW to commit to spending five per cent of its remaining reduced budget for 2006/07. Of course, we would prefer to plan to invest over a 12 month period because this gives greater certainty in project planning, and there are also efficiencies of scale in purchasing works in one go rather than piecemeal."

The amount of grant now 'not to be cut' from the current budget is in the region of £1.5 million.

Select Committee Inquiry into Waterways

"Excellent news" was the reaction of the British Marine Federation, IWA and Royal Yachting Association in response to the news that the DEFRA Select Committee plans to hold an Inquiry into Waterways early in the New Year. The news of the Select Committee Inquiry came as leaders of the campaign against the cuts met supportive MPs in the House of Commons at a meeting chaired by Bob Laxton MP, chair of the Parliamentary Waterways Group.

It is understood that the Inquiry will look into a range of issues affecting all waterways including those managed by Environment Agency. The Inquiry presents the opportunity to make the wider case for our rivers and canals set against the problems both agencies are facing due to the £200 million deficit in DEFRA finances.

IWA Chairman John Fletcher stated, "It is to be hoped that MPs will explore how the deficit originally arose, as ministers have given different explanations in recent weeks. Was this, as I suspect, a panic-struck, back-of-the-envelope exercise, with waterways being a major loser? The Inquiry will hopefully answer these and other questions such as what effect will the cuts have upon our waterways?"

Neil Northmore, RYA Government Affairs Advisor, said "MPs expressed concern that many of the government's own wider policies would be affected if these cuts continue. The cuts will impact upon all beneficiaries and stakeholders of the waterways, and in particular the loss of navigable waters will seriously affect participation in water based sports, which are enjoyed by people of

all ages and from all backgrounds."

The Select Committee will formally announce its Inquiry in the next few days and invite written submissions from interested persons. Evidence sessions will then be held probably early in the New Year.

The organizations supporting the campaign will all be submitting evidence and hope to be called to the public sessions.

Parliamentary Debate cancelled

On the evening of Monday 6th November it was decided in the House of Commons that all Westminster Hall debates for Wednesday 8th November were to be cancelled. This was because of prorogation of the House: the current parliamentary session was about to come an end and the House would rise until the Queen's Speech on Wednesday 15th November.

IWA expressed great regret that the Adjournment Debate about the "Impact of grant reduction on the work of British Waterways", secured by Sir Peter Soulsby MP, did not take place on 8th November. IWA is urging MPs to re-apply for the debate in the new parliamentary session and to express the concerns of all waterway users again through Early Day Motions and continued questioning of Ministers.

New Early Day Motions

With the end the old session of Parliament, no more signatures could be added to the then existing Early Day Motions. With the start of the new session, MPs were able to table new Early Day Motions.

Charlotte Atkins MP has re-tabled her highly successful Early Day Motion from the previous session of Parliament. The new EDM is no 90, and already has 174 signatures as at 25 November. Peter Ainsworth MP and Bob Laxton MP (chairman of the Parliamentary Waterways Group) have also submitted new Early Day Motions supporting the waterways and criticising the DEFRA funding cuts (EDM nos 50 and 53 respectively).

Boating MP Des Turner has sponsored a new EDM (235) concentrating on the Environment Agency and the effects of cuts on their navigations and rivers.

Many more MPs have indicated their support while others have written to DEFRA ministers Barry Gardiner and David Miliband.

It is important that MPs support all these Motions, especially the resubmitted Motion by Charlotte Atkins MP.

Please make sure your MP is aware and supports these Early Day Motions.

In brief we have to ask our MPs to, once more, sharpen their quill pens and sign the "new" EDMs 50, 53, 90 and 235. What a waste of everyone's time! Maybe Guy Fawkes' only mistake was getting caught....



Write to your MP

The budget cuts imposed on BW and EA could be the most serious threat to our waterways for many years and everyone who cares for the waterways is urged to do everything in their power to make their views known. That includes YOU!

For contact details of your MP, go to the following web site: <http://www.writetothem.com/> or write to him/her at: The House of Commons, LONDON, SW1A 0AA.

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November Meeting

“London’s Waterways” – Chris Cove-Smith

It has been many years since Chris last visited Southampton Canal Society and we were delighted to welcome him back. Chris is an acknowledged expert on London’s waterways and is, of course, the author of ‘The River Thames Book’, the essential guide to cruising that major historic waterway. He has had an interesting background – a Special in the River Police; a Thames Lock Keeper, and currently a skipper for Salter Bros who have been operating regular ‘steamer’ schedules on the river for many years.

Chris started his presentation by referring to the proposed cuts by DEFRA to the waterways budgets, affecting both British Waterways and the Environment Agency (there had been a general discussion amongst members at the start of the meeting) and, in particular the likely effect on the River Thames. There were already navigational problems on the river caused by lack of dredging at locks and over-hanging trees etc.

He displayed a map depicting London’s waterways – both canals and rivers. He then went on to show us a large and wide range of slides, some old – some new, covering the entry to the Grand Union Canal at Brentford Locks, the Paddington Arm, the Regents Canal, and into Limehouse Basin. Then it was up Bow Creek to the tidal barrier and Bow Locks. Back on to the river and down to the Thames Barrier. Back into Central London to visit all the famous sites such as Tower Bridge, HMS Belfast, Tate Modern, Palace of Westminster. Then up to Teddington and much, much more.

During the second half of the programme there was a fairly intensive question and answer session, one of the main issues being the current under-use of the Thames for cruising.

Many thanks Chris for an entertaining evening.

Paul Herbert

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. 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 of that event.

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

Time	Organiser	Details	Contact
Thu 7 Dec 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Inter-society Waterways Quiz and American Supper. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 20 Dec 2006 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	“The Thames Creeks” with Roger Squires illustrating St Pancras Cruising Club’s various visits to fascinating Thames creeks. Parish Pavilion, Station Road, Chobham, Surrey.	David Millett: 01252 617364
Thu 4 Jan 2007 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Members’ Slides, Prints and Photo Competition. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 17 Jan 2007 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	Tony Ellis - “The future of the Thames Sailing Barge ‘Cambria’.” This barge was the last British registered vessel to trade under sail alone. Parish Pavilion, Station Road, Chobham, nr Woking, Surrey.	David Millett (01252 617364) or Peter Coxhead (01932 344564).
Thu 18 Jan 2007 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	Don Cross from Wessex Explore Tourist Services will talk about The Salisbury Avon Navigation. The Green Dragon, Alderbury, Salisbury	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841. Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: ronmyra.glover@virgin.net
Fri 26 Jan 2007 7.45pm for 8.00	Kennet & Avon CT	“Water Mills of the Kennet” with Brian Eighteen. Turnham’s Farm Hall, Little Heath Road, Tilehurst, Reading.	John and Pam Swift: 0118 9415540 Email: johns@360swift.com
Wed 31 Jan 2007 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	“Have Boat: Will Travel II” by David Saady. The Stone Building, Newbury Wharf, Newbury.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356 Email : grahamv.smith@virgin.net
Thu 1 Feb 2007 7.45pm	Southampton CS	“Adventures of the Tuesday Night Club” with Neil Arlidge. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 21 Feb 2007 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	“The RNLI Teddington Lifeboat Station” with Bob Tough. Parish Pavilion, Station Road, Chobham, nr Woking, Surrey.	David Millett (01252 617364) or Peter Coxhead (01932 344564).
Wed 28 Feb 2007 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	“The Dorset & Somerset Canal” by Derrick Hunt. The Stone Building, Newbury Wharf, Newbury.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356 Email : grahamv.smith@virgin.net
Thu 1 Mar 2007 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Ron & Myra Glover will talk to us about The Rivers of Southern Germany, The Main, The Rhine, and The Lahn. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 21 Mar 2007 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	“The Manchester Ship Canal” with Richard Thomas. Parish Pavilion, Station Road, Chobham, nr Woking, Surrey.	David Millett (01252 617364) or Peter Coxhead (01932 344564).
Wed 28 Mar 2007 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	“Waterways Past & Present” by Derek Pratt. The Stone Building, Newbury Wharf, Newbury.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356 Email : grahamv.smith@virgin.net
Fri 30 Mar 2007 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	AGM followed by photographer Alan Copeland on “Curiosities in the Chiltern”. Turnham’s Farm Hall, Little Heath Road, Tilehurst, Reading.	John and Pam Swift: 0118 9415540 Email: johns@360swift.com
Thu 5 Apr 2007 7.45pm	Southampton CS	TBA.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 18 Apr 2006 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	“The canals de l’Est and the Rhone au Rhin” - an illustrated talk by Robin Higgs. Parish Pavilion, Station Road, Chobham, nr Woking, Surrey.	David Millett (01252 617364) or Peter Coxhead (01932 344564).
Wed 25 Apr 2007 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	Wey & Arun Canal Restoration Update with Jim Phillips preceded by AGM. The Stone Building, Newbury Wharf, Newbury.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356 Email : grahamv.smith@virgin.net
Thu 3 May 2007 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Details not finalised but Roger Squires promises us “something exotic”. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384

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:

Normally 1st Thursday each month at 7.45pm. (See Waterways Diary.) Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.

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Brian Evans.

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<http://www.whitenap.plus.com>

A Tale of Two Palaces Buckingham and Westminster

Your Chairman is Honoured

At an informal ceremony at Buckingham Palace on 23 November, our Chairman, Paul Herbert, received the award of a President's Certificate from HRH The Duke of Edinburgh for his "exceptional contribution to the playing fields movement".

Paul, who is a life member of the Hampshire Playing Fields Association (HPFA), has been a member of its Executive Committee since 1980. He is now its Vice-Chairman, Chairman of the Grants Committee and a Holding Trustee.

HPFA, which is a registered charity, was founded in 1926 and its primary objective is to promote and support children's play and voluntary sport in Hampshire. The Association is affiliated to the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA), whose Patron is HM The Queen, and its President is HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

Annual Meeting of The Waterways Trust

As Chairman of Southampton Canal Society I was invited to the Annual Meeting of The Waterways Trust which was held at The House of Commons on 23 November. When I first received the invitation I was unsure whether to attend, but when I received notification of my visit to the other Palace, the same morning, I decided to make a day of it in London.

The meeting was held at The Palace of Westminster at the invitation of Andrew Miller, the Member of Parliament for Ellesmere Port & Neston and a great supporter of the waterways. In his brief welcome Andrew gave us some valuable advice on the subject of lobbying MPs. A debate on the Queen's Speech was in progress in the main chamber but a number of MPs were able to pop in to the Waterways Trust meeting from time to time to join

Andrew Miller.

Many well known figures from the waterways were in attendance including David and Sheila Suchet, Sonia Rolt, David Blagrove, Chris Coburn, Harry Arnold, David Fletcher, Roger Squires, John Fletcher, and many more.

The agenda covered the Overview of 2005/06, the Trust's work in Scotland and its Museum funding campaign. The subject of the proposed DEFRA cuts and the likely effect on the Trust's income from British Waterways, whilst not an agenda item, was obviously not neglected. The main current concerns of the Trust are the ongoing campaign to secure Government recognition and funding to enable free admission to the Trust's museums; and the protection and conservation of the historic boat collection. Concerning the former, all waterways enthusiasts are encouraged to write to their MPs seeking parity of the waterways museums with other national museums. Regarding the latter, the Trust has secured £100,000 from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) to fund a Project Development Officer dedicated to taking forward the Trust's strategy for the boat collection and start to win new funding for management of the fleet.

As I am sure Members will be aware, in February this year the Trust launched its new website www.virtualwaterways.co.uk providing access to its Virtual Waterways Archive catalogue free of charge from anywhere worldwide. The Waterways Archive is the largest collection of waterways material in the UK.

I have a copy of The Waterways Trust's Annual Review 2005/06 – "People Love the Water" if any member would like to peruse it.

Paul Herbert

DEFRA Cuts

(Continued from page 2)

This is a most important letter, as your own MP has an obligation to reply to you.

- Ask the MP to sign one or more of the Early Day Motions relevant to the waterways campaign (see above). Even if you've written before about signing the motions, ensure that the new ones are signed by him/her.
- Talk about the benefits given by specific waterways (if there are any) within your MP's constituency, including regeneration, open space, wildlife, industrial heritage. Use local examples.
- Ask the MP to take the matter up on your behalf with David

Miliband (Environment Minister), Barry Gardiner (Waterways Minister) and Gordon Brown (Chancellor of the Exchequer). If they do so, your MP will be obliged to seek a response along with giving his or her own views on the proposed cuts. Suggest to your MP that in doing so, they might like to use some of the points listed in last month's Newsletter. (If you've thrown yours away, you can find another on the Society website.)

- Ask for their continued support by raising questions in the House and urging them to re-apply for the Parliamentary debate on the "Impact of grant reduction on the work of British Waterways".

Article based on items in Towpath Talk, IWA Press Releases, websites www.waterways.org.uk and www.saveourwaterways.org.uk