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MEETINGS - 1st Thursday each month at 7.45 pm.  
St. John Ambulance Hall, King's Park Road, Southampton.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

1992

3rd December - American Supper and a talk on Owls by the Ringwood Owl Centre complete with a couple of live owls.

1993

7th January - B.W. Boat Standards by George Gibson, Marine Surveyor.

4th February - Historic Portsmouth by George Haysom. (Mr Haysom spoke to us in July 1991 on HMS Warrior)

4th March - The Wey Navigation by Bob Nicholls of The National Trust.

1st April - "No job for a gentleman" by Commander Compton-Hall, RN Retd., MBE. History & development of the submarine by the Director of the RN submarine museum at HMS Haslar.

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NOVEMBER MEETING. Hugh McKnight began the evening with a short slide show on Belgian lifts, new and old, then followed up with a 16mm film by June Humphries on the same subject. As usual Hugh had many little stories to tell about the slides and the film gave us the moving version as Hugh and the Humphries took their boat 'Avonbay' up and down both the vertical lifts and the inclined plane at Ronquieres.

He continued the programme with slides of the opening of the new Rhein-Main-Donau (Danube) Canal in Germany. 'Avonbay' having been the first British registered boat into Eastern Germany after the wall came down the crew were keen to also be the first to use the new canal. Once again Hugh was able to give us many facts and make the show most interesting. In fact it was one of the longest meetings that we have had for some time.

As on his previous visits Hugh brought a large selection of books for sale, many of them now out of print.

Before he left, Martin Cripps 'booked' him for another visit in about a years time when hopefully there will be the cine film of the new canal opening and a slide show of 'Avonbay' on the Danube.

CORRECTION. Last month a line at the end of 'Adventure Afloat' disappeared onto the cutting room floor by mistake. The last note should have read:-

"Thanks to Peter, one of our younger members, for his report of a school trip on the canals that has kept us interested for the last 3 months."

THANKS to those members who join in and help Joyce Mayhew with the tea making and washing up.

CHICHESTER CANAL. Following our talk by John Cooper in October we have received a list of the major events in 1993. (The dates are provisional)

19th March - Annual General Meeting.

4th April - Fun Run.

3rd July - Gala Carnival Float.

4th July - Strawberry Walk.

10 or 17 July - Beer Barrel Races or Water Fayre.

12 or 16 July - Music Concerts.

RHINE-MAIN-DANUBE. When Hugh McKnight was talking at the November meeting he said that there was a chance for anybody (who can afford it) to take a trip on the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal.

The cruise lasts 12 days, 5th-17th July 1993, and covers 600 miles. It starts from Passau on the Austria/Germany border, travels through the Altmuhl Valley, passes over the highest summit level in Europe (1330 ft) and then descends the River Main to its junction with the Rhine at Mainz. The last day is spent cruising through the Rhine Gorge.

The cost? - if you say it quickly it doesn't sound too bad - £1,075.

I.W.A.-SALISBURY GROUP. We have a list of the meetings of the Salisbury Group.  
 Thursday 28th January - Ron and Myra Glover talking, with slides, about their recent French canal trip.  
 Thursday 25th March - Progress on the Wilts & Berks Canal by Peter Williams or Neil Rumbold.  
 Sat/Sun 27/28th March - Involvement in the clean up weekend with IWA Avon and Wilts Branch at Claverton Pump.  
 20th or 27th May - Boat trip - possibly 'Ladywood' from Bradford on Avon.  
 Thursday 29th July - Barbecue - venue to be on the line of the old Southampton/Salisbury Canal  
 Thursday 28th September - AGM - speaker to be decided.  
 Meetings to be held at the Salisbury Rugby Club, Castle Road, Salisbury.  
 Further details from Dave Hankins, 759 Netheravon Road, Durrington, Salisbury, Wilts, SP4 8AX. (please enclose an SAE) or phone 0980 53734.

THAMES & SEVERN CANAL. October 18th was the day 16 members of 'Southampton Leggers' went in search of the Thames & Severn Canal. (Southampton Leggers is the name Jon Sims has given to this group - drawn from canal enthusiasts and industrial archaeologists)

Our minibus headed north through Marlborough and Swindon and on towards Cirencester before stopping on the A419 just outside Cricklade. About 200 yards from the main road we crossed the line of the Thames & Severn Canal and then, in the garden of a private house, was Latton Basin. This basin, about 200' x 60', is largely intact and was the entrance to the North Wilts canal. This canal was opened in 1819 and gave an improved link, via the Wilts & Berks Canal, to the River Thames.

We walked along the T&S Canal to Cerney Wick Lock and roundhouse. The lock has been the subject of some restoration and the roundhouse is one of five along the canal, and looks in very good condition. The roundhouses were built about 1790 with 3 storeys. The ground floor was a stable and the two upper floors as living accommodation. The walls were 20" thick and internally the rooms are 16' 10" in diameter. This roundhouse has a upright conical roof. We walked on to the entrance road to the Cotswold Water Park where there are some very interesting information boards about the T&S Canal and the Water Park.

The minibus was waiting to transport us to the Coates Portal of Sapperton Tunnel. Here we walked to Coates roundhouse, which is in a poor state of repair, but at least we were able to go inside and have a look around. This roundhouse was different to Cerney Wick in that the roof was inverted, lined with lead and used to collect water for the occupants. Unfortunately the roof no longer exists. As we walked back to the tunnel some bright spark suggested that we 'Challenge Anneka' to restore the Canal (29 miles in 3 days - a bit much even for her). The Coates portal was restored in 1976-7 at a cost of £6000 by the Canal Trust.

We drove over the top of Sapperton Tunnel to the site of Daneway Bridge Lock, now a car park for the Daneway Inn. Here we sat outside and had our lunch, not bad for the middle of October. The building was constructed in 1784 as a base and accommodation for the navvies constructing the tunnel, and became a public house before it was sold by the canal company in 1807.

After lunch we walked to the West portal, not nearly as impressive as the Coates portal, but some restoration work has been carried out. Retracing our steps past the pub we started walking downhill towards Stroud (241' lower than the summit through 28 locks). Immediately after the pub is Daneway Wharf, now landscaped in a private garden. The wharf was used to unload boats before the tunnel was completed (3 years after the canal reached there) and later as a lay up point for boats waiting their turn to pass through the tunnel. Partway down the valley the towpath is raised and runs between the canal and a reservoir (now private), formerly a mill pond which was bought by the canal company to try and preserve water supplies for the lower part of the canal. The canal now passes several old mills, some restored and some derelict. Another roundhouse is passed at Chalford, very nicely done up in a pleasant garden. Our walk finished at Brinscombe Port, originally a transshipment point between Severn trows and the Thames barges. A pleasant day out organised by Jon Sims and Peter Oates made all the better by the weather.

PS. Five minutes after getting on the minibus for our journey home we had a tremendous downpour - a good job we decided not to walk any further.