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NEWSLETTER No. 271 DECEMBER 1993

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

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

- 2nd December - American Supper and Mini Exhibition.
1994
6th January - Another Three Men in a Boat. A late 1950s journey around
England's Waterways, in a Thames camping skiff by Roger Hardy
3rd February - Our Waterways Heritage by Mrs Frances Hart, Chief Executive
of the Inland Waterways Association.
3rd March - Rhine-Main-Danube, a full length documentary 16mm colour film
with sound approx 1hr 30m long. By boat from the Rhine to the
Upper Danube by Hugh McKnight.
7th April - Return to Lock 19, Basingstoke Canal - Jon Sims.

*** A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS ***

NOVEMBER MEETING. 'An Artists View of the Waterways' certainly turned out to be a colourful evening. We were impressed with the way in which Harley Crossley could take an old photograph and make a painting bringing colour and life to the scene and often humour through a little artists' license. He showed many slides - first of scenes and then of the resultant painting and it was impressive to see how each slide of the landscape was also taken through the eye of an artist. Many of the slides were dramatic having been taken in the early morning.

Harley gave his talk in confident, enthusiastic and sometimes excitable manner. If we were to give ratings then this was a 1st class meeting.

ANOTHER 'BITTERNE' CRUISE. (continued)

Six days later we decided not to tempt fate any longer, especially when a BW patrol boat passed us by, so we set off back towards Beeston at 9.30 am, through the Trent section which took us longer with the current against us, through Cranfleet Lock and Cut where we turned left, and giving Thrumpton weir a wide berth entered the Soar Navigation. The first lock, Redhill, is a flood lock, so we passed straight through. The next lock, Radcliffe, has been rebuilt under a flood relief scheme, and the old lock remains a few yards away infilled, but amazingly still retaining its original gates and lock beams. The same thing has happened at Kegworth. One would have thought that a restoration Society such as the Wey & Arun would have been glad to have had these surplus gates and beams etc! The Soar comprises much pleasant scenery and a good depth of water, but can cause problems in times of heavy rain when flooding can occur.

Six locks later and seven hours cruising from Nottingham, we reached Loughborough and moored up in the small British Waterways basin and yard. We understand it is closing down, a great pity, as it is a handy mooring and very secure, as one requires a BW key to gain access or exit from the yard. It is also very handy for the ma shops, especially a nice fish & chip restaurant of which we took advantage the next day!! We explored Loughborough for the three days we were there and enjoyed a guided tour of Taylor's Bell Foundry which has produced many famous bells for over a century, including Great Paul in St. Pauls Cathedral, and more recently, the Malta Siege Bell now installed in Valetta overlooking Grand Harbour.

Time factors prevented us from going on further, so reluctantly we set off on our return journey, still in fine weather, and made our leisurely way home again back to Fazeley and to a pile of letters, bills and unsolicited mail!!

Laurie and Linda Pearce

CONGRATULATIONS to Capt. Norman Lucas & wife Betty on having recently passed their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

TRADING STAMPS, postage stamps, tokens etc... still being collected for the IWA. Please bring them along to meetings.

NOW THAT we have moved on from our Canals 200 exhibition in Eastleigh - what next? We still have our portable stand that could be put up in your local library.

ARE YOU wearing a Southampton Canal Society Tee Shirt or Sweat Shirt?

GEOprojects maps. You have seen the Basingstoke and K & A Canals maps. We now have the Oxford Canal Map in stock also.

Prices - Basingstoke £2.50 - K & A £3.25 - Oxford £3.75.

DONATIONS have been made as follows:-

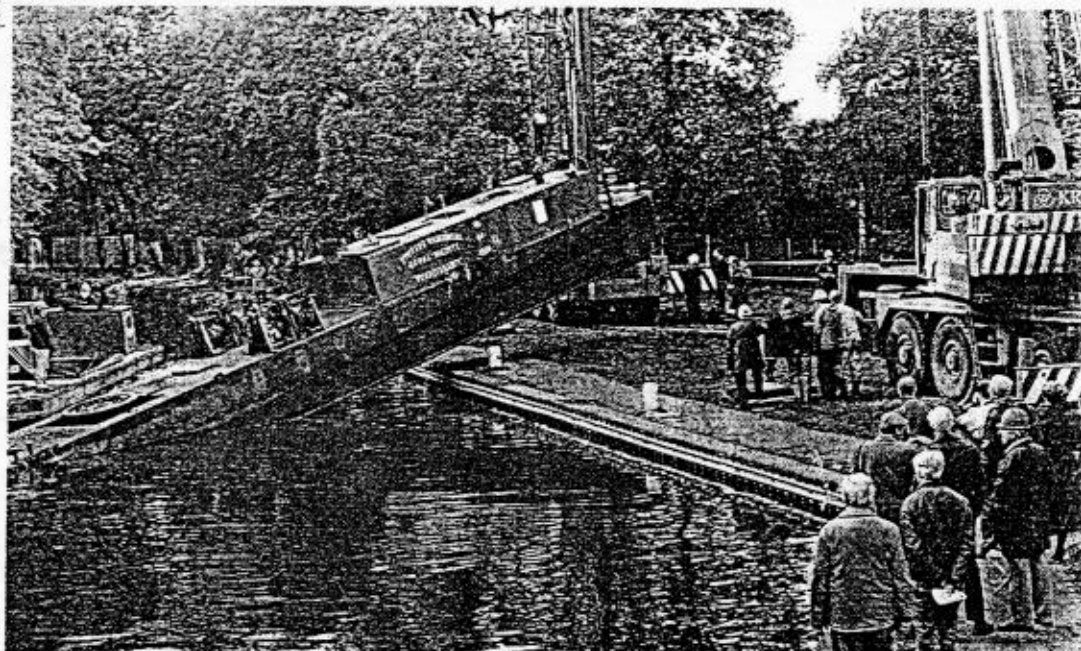
£50.00 to the Wey & Arun Canal Trust following John Wood's talk in September.

£50.00 to the Ashton Appeal (Montgomery Canal) following Richard Thomas' talk on NB President in October.

OLD SEALOCK DISCOVERED. An historic sealock originally associated with the drainage works undertaken by the third Earl of Southampton has come to light in the marshes south of Titchfield. Further details in a future newsletter.

PERSEVERANCE COMES

ASHORE. Dozens of well wishers gathered to say farewell to an old friend retiring after nearly 20 years hard labour on the Basingstoke Canal. The steam powered dredger 'Perseverance' completed the mammoth task of clearing thousands of tons of silt from the 200 year old canal earlier this year.



On Wednesday, October 27th, she

was hauled from the water in Fleet to be taken to the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port in Cheshire. There she will be restored to her original glory to become a floating exhibit under full steam.

It was a heart stopping moment for the canal volunteers when the 31 ton, 70ft long hull was lifted out of the water. The state of the hull had not been checked for 20 years and there was a chance it could break in two. The dredger, thought to be the last remaining vessel of its kind, was loaded on to three transporters in a day long operation and driven under police escort to her new home.

Dredger manager Mr Mike Munro said "We're sad to see an old friend go, but it has performed an invaluable job and we are delighted that it will be preserved and exhibited in one of the country's leading waterways museums."

'Perseverance' - the name given to the dredger by the Canal Society - was one of six built for the Grand Union Canal Company by Grafton Canes of Bedford in 1934 and was used on that canal between London and Birmingham.

In 1973 the Canal Society found the vessel abandoned on the Kennet and Avon Canal and bought her for £225. The dredger was stripped down by volunteers to the last nut and bolt before being passed officially safe. She was launched at Colt Hill, Odiham, in 1974 to be put to work. Over the years she has battled through mechanical problems, thick ice, droughts and fallen trees from the 1987 storm to cut the channel from North Warnborough to Pondtail Bridge in Fleet.

A much smaller dredger will be used to keep the channel clear in future. Mr David Millet, of the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society, said "While we would have liked to keep the dredger on the Basingstoke Canal, it's not really practical. At least it's going to have a good home where it will be displayed and steamed as part of a fleet of historic inland waterways craft."