

Newsletter

Issue 338

February 2000

US relinquishes control over Panama Canal

The following article appeared in The Independent on Tuesday 14 December 1999.

Panama will soon have full sovereignty over its territory and the crowds came out to cheer yesterday. The Spanish King Juan Carlos, six heads of state and beribboned dignitaries from all over Latin America gathered in the isthmus to witness the ex-US president Jimmy Carter hand over the Panama Canal.

Bedecked with flowers for the celebration, the complex system of locks that raises 64 feet on a shortcut from the Atlantic to the Pacific through a 51-mile-long cut in the mountains, is no longer considered vital for American domination of the hemisphere.

The Panamanians are rather miffed that the Clinton administration has cold-shouldered their moment because of domestic politics.

When the Secretary of State Madeleine Albright bailed out at the last minute, anti-American sentiment soared. In 1906, the US president Teddy Roosevelt travelled to the canal construction site. It was the first international trip by an American president, and the absence yesterday of President Clinton, who with 60 official foreign visits is the most globetrotting chief executive on record, was taken as an intentional slight.

Curiously, though, most Panamanians are underwhelmed by the significance of the 31 December change in canal operations. Most still support some kind of US military presence in Panama, primarily to pump dollars into the economy. The US Navy retains

the right to guarantee the security of the region and also to cut to the front of the queue when sailing through the American-built canal.

When the Panamanian President Mireya Moscoso decided to mark the change with an early party rather than wait for New Year's day, she ensured a greater VIP turnout but it put a damper on the festivities.

"The ceremony should have been on 31 December at noon, when by the Torrijos-Carter treaties the canal is actually turned over, so this dilutes the significance," complained Juan Antonio Tack who as foreign minister was a negotiator for the 1977 treaties.



A ship squeezes through one of the 110 ft wide locks on the Panama Canal

With 14,000 ships passing through the canal each year, the canal has mammoth earning potential and is worth at least \$5bn (£3bn).

Earlier this year, General Charles Wilhelm, head of the US Army's Southern Command, warned that Panamanian forces would be powerless to stop rebel incursions into Panama once US forces pulled out. On Sunday, militants over-ran a Marine base on the Panamanian border and killed at least 47 troops.

The handover is seen by some as an unwelcome retreat of US power and arrangements for managing the canal have been criticised. The contract was won by the Hong Kong company, Hutchinson Whampoa, but as Hong Kong is a part of China it led some to see the hand of the Chinese People's Liberation Army in the agreement and to claim that the canal will be effectively under Chinese control.

(Continued on page 5)

December Meeting

The first part of the December meeting was entertained by a series of slides presented by our Chairman, Brian Evans.

He started off with a number of slides of the old Anderton-type lift at Les Fontinettes on the Neufossé Canal in Northern France. This saw eighty years of service before becoming redundant in 1967 when a new lock was built to replace it.

These were followed by pictures of the River Vilaine and the Canal d'Ille et Rance. Moving on to Redon on the Villaine, we saw the crossroads (cross-waterways?) where the Canal de Nantes à Brest bisect each other almost in the centre of town.

Our French visit was rounded off with a look at the large bridge across the estuary of the River Loire at St Nazaire and the tidal causeway to the nearby is-

land of Noirmoutier.

After our tour of northern France, Brian showed the meeting slides of the Arun Cruise from Pulborough to Pallingham Quay Farm in 1997. He rounded off his show at Botley Quay on the occasion of the Solent & Arun Branch's Hamble Cruise in September 1999.

Brian managed, in his inimitable style, to tell stories and give reminiscences about the places we visited through his pictures

The second part of the evening was devoted the traditional American supper. As always our members "did us proud" with a generous spread of food which was almost too much. A wonderful meal.

Peter Oates

January Meeting

During the BCN Marathon Challenge boaters are encouraged to visit difficult and remote parts of the Birmingham Canal Navigations. At our January meeting, Southampton Canal Society members followed in their wake, but by slide and enthusiastic commentary from Chris and Helen Davey. This was a kind of 'double act' where Chris talked about the BCN and the boating technicalities, then Helen told us about the organising of the competition and the awarding of points.

The BCN Marathon takes place as near as possible to the longest day to give boaters the maximum daylight

hours, but the organisation starts many months before and the last of the boatmen's logs are not scrutinised before the end of the calendar year.

The idea of the Challenge is to get boats to use difficult or unused sections of canal, for if these waters are not used they fall into disrepair and can be lost for ever.

If obstacles to navigation are found, then BW employees or work party volunteers can later be directed to the troublesome spots bringing about necessary maintenance.

The more difficult a section is deemed to be the more points are awarded for navigating on it.

All this has to be decided months beforehand and a team of scrutineers recruited to visit points on the BCN, night and day, to make sure no competitor gets into serious difficulties.

Chris and Helen Davey are to be congratulated on all the work they do in planning, organising analysing the competitors' logs after the event. They should also be complimented for the lively way in which they related all the details to our members.

Brian Evans



Smethwick - junction of the New and Old Main Lines on the BCN
One of many fine pictures (the original in colour) in Michael Pearson's book 'Canal City Souvenir' available for just £4.99

ONE-SIDED SURVEYS?

The following is reproduced from the November 1999 issue of NABO News (the magazine of the National Association of Boat Owners).

Last week I received a-questionnaire from BW that was very biased and also didn't ask the questions boaters need asking. So I've designed my own. Before filling it in and sending it to BW, please photocopy it blank, and pass it on to other boaters to repeat the process. To make a point the first question below is designed as if BW had constructed this questionnaire. It is included to raise a smile and need not be filled in.

	Very good	Excellent	Magnificent
Do you think BW is	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which statements do you agree with?	Agree	Disagree
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BW spends too much on fancy literature.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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BW charges too much for moorings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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BW charges too much for boat for Licenses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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To be charged to moor at the bottom of your own garden is extortion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Because BW loses £50m a year, BW senior salaries should not be so high.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Because there are others who would do his job better and cheaper, the Chief Executive should not receive £100,000 plus per year.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Nor should the other half dozen Senior Managers at Head office.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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"Consultation" means asking boaters how best to run BW and then discussing the options offered, in open debate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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"Consultation" doesn't mean spending our money to exclusively promote and sell BW's ideas at the expense of any we might have.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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When BW say they are going to continuously raise all prices, on all fronts, to the "limit the market will bear", do you think it will help if boaters and Boating Organisations shout loud and clear "Enough is enough"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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For the sake of our pockets, I think boaters should shout louder to BW about BW's increasing prices. "BW your prices are too high!"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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When boaters ask for more facilities their requests are used as reason to increase prices. Until BW prices are frozen, I will live with the facilities offered.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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BW asked in their questionnaire 'which other users spoil your enjoyment of the waterways?'... A question designed to set user against user and split the boating fraternity. So how does BW like this question?

Which BW Manager or Senior Manager most spoils your enjoyment of the waterways?

Signed (if you want to): Date:

Send to Dr Fletcher, British Waterways, Willow Grange, Church Road, Watford, WD13DW
 Produced by Simon Greer (0860688134) in support of clearer, simpler communication between Boaters and BW.
 Please feel free to add your own statement.

WATERWAYS DIARY 1999/2000

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 03/02/00 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Jubilee Sailing Trust by Pam Taylor.	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
Tue 08/02/00 8.00pm	Surrey & Hants CS	"The London Canal Museum" with David Moore (Chairman Friends of London Canal Museum). Westgate Centre, Woking.	Arthur Dungate: 0181 737 4896
Tue 15/02/00 7.45pm	IWA West Country Branch	Details of this meeting not currently to hand.	Bob Dukes: 01202 694830
Mon 21/02/00 8.00pm	IWA Guildford & Reading Branch	"River Wey Matters" with John Gibson (National Trust Navigations Manager) at Byfleet Boat Club, Woking.	Paul Miles: 01932 401505
Thu 02/03/00 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"Canals of South West England" by Bob Dukes (IWA West Country Branch).	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
Tue 14/03/00 8.00pm	Surrey & Hants CS	"Birmingham and the Black Country" with Ron Cousens. Westgate Centre, Woking.	Arthur Dungate: 0181 737 4896
Mon 20/03/00 8.00pm	IWA Guildford & Reading Branch	"Branch AGM and Surfing the System (at a snail's pace)" a video with Norman Woolley at Byfleet Boat Club, Woking.	Paul Miles: 01932 401505
Tue 21/03/00 7.45pm	IWA West Country Branch	Details of this meeting not currently to hand.	Bob Dukes: 01202 694830
Thu 06/04/00 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Members' Slides.	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
Tue 11/04/00 8.00pm	Surrey & Hants CS	"An evening of Audio-Visual films on 'other' canals and things" with Arthur Dungate. Films on Wilts & Berks and Wey & Arun Canals and British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. Westgate Centre, Woking.	Arthur Dungate: 0181 737 4896
Mon 17/04/00 8.00pm	IWA Guildford & Reading Branch	"Woking's Waterways Heritage" Opening event of Woking Waterways Week. At Byfleet Boat Club, Woking.	Paul Miles: 01932 401505
Thu 04/05/00 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"The Anderton Boat Lift" by Richard Drake (National Chairman IWA & Chairman of Anderton Boat Lift Trust).	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
Fri - Sun 26-28/05/00	MB&ACT and IWA South Wales Branch	National Trailboat Festival, Monmouthshire Canal, Newport, Gwent.	Phil Hughes: 01495 762823 or Don Thomas: 01633 48340
First Wed of month	IWA Dorchester Group		Graham Pugh: 01305 262305
4th Thursday of month	Wey & Arun CT	Series of 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.	John Cooper: 01243 671051

WATERWAYS QUIZ

A few questions to test your knowledge. There's no prizes but the answers will be published next month.

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|---|---|----|--|
| 1 | High tide at Teddington is how long after high tide at London Bridge? | 6 | Who wrote the first 'Bradshaws' guide to the canals? |
| 2 | When was the River Wey Navigation opened to Guildford? | 7 | What is the fall of the shallowest lock of the Oxford Canal? |
| 3 | Who wrote the book 'Narrow Boat'? | 8 | In a traditional back cabin, what other purpose does the step serve? |
| 4 | Newbury once had extensive wharves. What currently occupies the wharf site? | 9 | On which navigation is Saltaire? |
| 5 | In which county is the Hay inclined plane? | 10 | Who was the engineer of the Gota Canal in Sweden? |

Historic barges salvaged after decades in water

The following article appeared in The Independent on 18 December 1999

IN its 19th-century heyday, it was the workhorse of Britain's canal network, but a barge of a kind archaeologists had feared lost was handled with immeasurable delicacy in a £20,000 operation to salvage it yesterday.

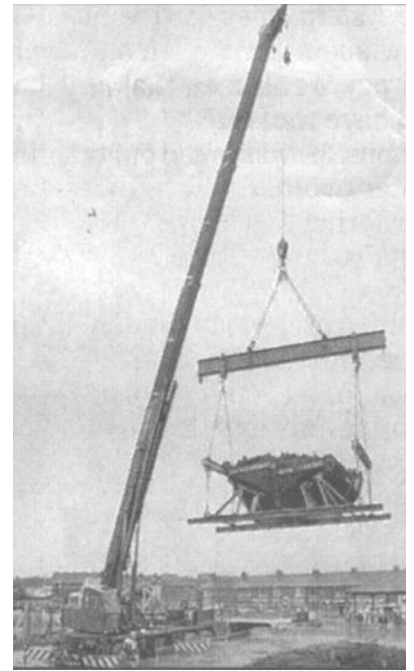
Archaeologists at the York Trust, which advised those preserving Henry VIII's flagship, the *Mary Rose*, were consulted before the timbers of the world's only surviving "canal flat", *Onward*, was lifted from a Shropshire Union Canal wharf in Chester. A wooden cradle was built beneath it before cranes hoisted up its bow.

This type of canal boat had not seen the light of day for 50 years. Flats were built in the 1800s to transport corn, linen and pig iron. They carried an astonishing 70 tonnes of freight along the narrow waterways.

Onward's length also made it adaptable to work the tidal Dee and Mersey rivers but in the Fifties, it was abandoned, buried along with other flats and narrow-boats as a cost-effective way of filling the Tower Wharf Basin at Chester. A British Waterways engineer stumbled upon the boats while developing a scheme to regenerate Chester's canalside, and archaeologists have subsequently excavated the timbers over the last year.

Two Mersey river flats, *Herbert* and *John*, which are almost as rare, followed *Onward* out of the water, yesterday. *Herbert* was badly damaged at Eastham at the junction of the Manchester Ship Canal and the Mersey in 1902, while *John* sank in the Mersey in 1989.

The three boats were immediately transported to the boat museum run by a British Waterways' trust at Ellesmere Port, Cheshire. "We are particularly interested in finding out more about the flats' ability to carry enormous loads in very shallow inland waters," said Martin Cook, who has led the salvage effort.



The canal boat 'Herbert' being lifted at Chester

Photo competition

At the April meeting we will have our annual members' slides evening. This will give everyone the opportunity to show some pictures who feels they might not have enough of interest to make up a whole evening's show. So if you can put together about 10 to 15 pictures, look them out now.

It is hoped that by April we will have the facility to project prints (up to 7" x 5") onto the screen as well as transparencies. This will be confirmed in next month's Newsletter. So if you don't take slides this will be your opportunity to show something of waterways interest as well.

Towards the end of the evening, we will be holding a photo competition which will open to all members - you don't have to be showing slides / prints earlier in the evening. What we're looking for is one picture which can be anything to do (even loosely) with the waterways. It might be scenic, humorous, anything. The competition will be judged by all those present at the meeting.

And as an incentive to enter, there will be a book given to the winner as a prize. The book is "Victorian and Edwardian Canals from old photographs" by D D Gladwin. This book contains some 168 photographs dating from before the First World War and is, we think, out of print. We are grateful to Mike Pomeroy for donating this book to the Society.

Panama Canal

(Continued from page 1)

Thus, in a low-key way, will end a US endeavour that was in its day the biggest, most complex and most expensive undertaken by the US outside its borders, a project that became a source of American pride, and international power, for most of the century. The US gained sovereign rights over the Panama Canal Zone, a 16km wide strip flanking the planned canal, in 1903, as a reward for sending a gunboat to help Panama wrest its independence from Colombia.

The canal was opened to traffic 11 years later. It was militarised during the Second World War, when up to 65,000 US servicemen were based there. Now that the Cold War is over, it is seen in Washington as a commercial transit route, no longer as a vital military asset.

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

Chairman:

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

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Vacant

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

Society Library

The Society now has two new librarians to look after and lend out books from our waterway-related library. Alan and Adrienne Howarth have taken over responsibility for our collection from Tony Fry. They say that they intend to bring many of the books from the library to most meetings. The committee would like to thank the Howarths for taking on this task. Alan and Adrienne have decided that the library books will be displayed as part of the Sales Stand. So, please go along and see them; look out a book or two.

We must also thank Tony Fry for looking after the library since Sue Lewis had to give up the job. Of late, Tony's circumstances have been such that he has been unable to attend our meetings as often as he would have liked. However, he was instrumental in ensuring this asset was not lost to the Society. As borrowers, we must ensure that these efforts have not been in vain.

FORTHCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS

3rd February 2000

Jubilee Sailing Trust by Pam Taylor.

2nd March 2000

Canals of South West England by Bob Dukes.

6th April 2000

Members' Slides and Photo Competition. See page 5.

4th May 2000

The Anderton Boat Lift by Richard Drake (National Chairman IWA & Chairman of Anderton Boat Lift Trust).

1st June 2000

Annual General Meeting (supporting programme to be confirmed)

6th July 2000

Day-Star Theatre with their new 2000 production

7th September 2000

Archaeology on the River Itchen with Dr Andrew Russel

2nd November 2000

"Navigating where others cannot reach" with Chris Coburn

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	£3.75
Llangollen and Montgomery Canals	£3.75
London - City and Docklands Atlas	£3.75
Oxford Canal	£3.75
Shropshire Union Canal	£3.75
Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal <i>with the River Severn and</i>	
<i>the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal</i>	£3.75
The Thames Map	£3.75
Trent & Mersey Canal - Map 1 Preston Brook to Fradley Junction..	£3.75
Trent & Mersey Canal and River Trent - Map 2 Great	
Haywood Junction to Cromwell Lock.....	£3.75

Ball Point Pens: Embossed 50p

Burgees: Navy Blue - screen printed Society logo on each side £8.00

Decorated Mugs: £2.25

Notelets: with drawings of canal and Romsey scenes £1.00
(by Brian Evans)

Shopper Bags: Cotton with screen-printed Society logo each side. £2.25

Society Members Badges: Enamel 75p

Sweat Shirts: 30th Anniversary in Light Grey £16.00
with multi-coloured embroidered Society logo on breast

Sweat Shirts: Standard in Navy or Royal Blue £15.00
with Society logo embroidered on breast

Tea Towels: Various colourful designs £2.50 & £3.25

Tee Shirts: Screen printed with Society logo across chest £6.50
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 01703 262365