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

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS.**

- 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 - 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.  
3rd March - Our Waterways Heritage by Mrs Frances Hart, Chief Executive of the Inland Waterways Association.  
7th April - Return to Lock 19, Basingstoke Canal - Jon Sims.

**DECEMBER MEETING.** A jolly good time was had by those who took the trouble to turn up. The evening began with an audio/visual presented by Gill and Paul Herbert. Slides and a sound tape made by pupils of Gill's school, Calmore, on one of the canal camping holidays of recent years. These have been going on for many years and the school staff, parents & friends have become experts at operating the canal trips. However it was obvious from the slides and commentary that there is always something new. It was also refreshing and very amusing to see a slide show approached from the point of view of very young people.

As usual there was ample food for the American Supper and a ready supply of tea provided by Joyce Mayhew and her helpers.

A small collection of souvenirs and keepsakes were on display. After refreshments the owners of these items explained how or why they had them, and in many cases treasured them. This turned out to be an extremely amusing exercise for several of the souvenirs had quite a story to go with them.

Eva Drinkwater attended and throughout the evening was dressed in her homemade boatwomans outfit complete with beautiful bonnet.

One cause for concern, however, was the poor attendance. Do members not like American Suppers or meetings with a friendlier atmosphere - where they can get to know each other?

Would you rather have a normal meeting with a speaker?  
Please let the Chairman know your feelings.

**KENNET & AVON CANAL APPEAL IN STITCHES.** Canals 200 events are always fun and good for a laugh, according to the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust's Terry Kemp who says "Now we're in stitches for real."

1994 is the bicentenary of the Kennet & Avon Canal. Winter open days and a programme of Canal 200 summer events and celebrations are being planned. Now, as part of the Trust's Water Appeal, the well known needlecraft company DMC have produced four beautiful needlecraft kits in association with Michael Rea Designs. Two are in cross stitch and two in embroidery and all capture that special waterways magic.

Each kit costs £14.50 and can be bought conveniently by post, at no extra cost. There is also another special bonus - each kit purchased will provide a donation of £2.00 to the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust's Water Appeal. Since the Water Appeal's launch in March 1993, events and activities have already raised in excess of £100,000.

For an order form for the British Canals Collection of needlework kits, contact: The Kennet & Avon Canal Trust, Couch Lane, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1EB (please enclose an SAE)

**MEON MARSH SEALOCK.** In last months newsletter there was a brief note about the discovery of an old sealock near Titchfield. Below are some further details taken from a leaflet published by Hampshire County Council.

#### HISTORIC BACKGROUND.

Up to the 1600's the river Meon was tidal, but sheltered, and Titchfield was probably a port for sea-going craft at the head of the estuary. Hence the expression, Haven. It is believed that it was Henry, the third Earl of Southampton, who completed the sealock in 1611 as part of an ambitious scheme to close the Meon estuary and replace the tidal channel with a canal. The mouth of the river was blocked and the salt marshes were reclaimed as pastureland. Two new sluices were built under a newly created embankment to control the flow of water. Access from the sea to the canal was by a simple staunch lock. This meant that ships had to wait to be floated into the lock at high tides. All of this was a major engineering achievement.

The canal is thought to be one of the earliest domestic navigation systems of its size and scale, but it became redundant within 100 years of its construction. The three-arched road bridge which was built on top of the sealock has been the only visible historic feature until the recent discoveries.

#### LOCATION AND SIGNIFICANCE.

The structure is located just north of the Meon foreshore, on the road leading from Titchfield to Hill Head. It is incorporated in a small bridge which allows traffic to cross the old Titchfield canal. Recent clearance work at this point has revealed this remarkable piece of history. In addition to the bridge with its old arches and abutments, short sections of Quay walling complete with moulded stone kerbing have been discovered extending back on both sides of the canal in each direction

Its historic significance has been recognised by the Department of the Environment by being "Listed" as a Grade II structure which gives it special protection.

#### PROPOSED WORKS

Hampshire County Council, Fareham Borough Council, English Nature and English Heritage are working together to help look after the structure and its setting.

Some initial works have already been carried out. These include essential clearance and repairs to the sealock/bridge, the cutting back of vegetation, improved footpath links and explanatory interpretation boards. But further, more substantial works will have to be undertaken quickly and this will require the local road to be closed for several weeks whilst essential structural work, restoration and carriageway modifications are completed.

It is planned to restore the lock as near as possible to its original form. This will entail exposing and rebuilding the ancient arch faces and the retaining walls forming the original lock basin. It will result in the road being narrower over the lock.

In the interests of highway safety, it will be necessary to make minor changes to the bridge approaches and introduce a priority system for vehicles together with traffic calming measures. The existing width restriction will remain in force and a viewing platform and pedestrian access will be provided.

Funds for the project are being drawn together from several sources within the County Council together with a contribution from Fareham Borough Council.

