



# NEWS LETTER

## Itchen Navigation Wins the Lottery

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) announced in April a grant of over £1.5m to the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HWT).

The Trust has been awarded the money to preserve the Itchen Navigation in a five year project that will create a heritage trail celebrating the outstanding wildlife and history of the internationally renowned chalk river system. The project will take in the areas of Eastleigh, Southampton and Winchester and seeks to involve members of the community in conservation and social activities.

The grant will enable the towpath to be restored and the remaining structures to be conserved. The IWA Solent & Arun Branch has been supporting and helping as a project partner since the start. Peter Boyce regularly attends meetings on behalf of the Branch Committee in his own time.

As well as stabilising and restoring the Itchen Navigation riverbanks, work will create new trails for incorporating informative and eye-catching information boards so that visitors can identify the many wildlife species and historic industrial structures around them. Visitors will be encouraged to look out for water voles in the specially profiled banks along the river and for birds and bats will be encouraged using special installation boxes. Volunteers will be carrying out preservation work on Mansbridge Lock to interpret and celebrate the industrial history of the Navigation.

Water voles, otters, and a variety of fish including brown trout and southern damselfly, are expected to flourish due to conservation along the Navigation. The Trust is looking to train 50 volunteers from local communities to undertake surveys of a range of wildlife species including otters, bats, birds and plants.

A series of activities and events are being planned along the Navigation such as exhibitions at City Mill, Winchester and Riverside Park, Southampton, community art workshops, and conservation training for volunteers.

Anna Grundy, HLF South East said, "This is a terrific project which will benefit people across the whole Itchen Navigation area. The Navigation is a unique piece of heritage with both natural and industrial elements side by side."

Debbie Wicks, Head of Conservation for HWT said, "We are delighted to have received this grant for what is a once in a lifetime opportunity to preserve the Itchen Navigation. The Navigation has the highest form of protection for wildlife in the UK because it is part of a European Special Area of Conservation. It is also a fantastic example of Hampshire's industrial heritage. We are looking forward to working with the project partners and local residents to ensure wildlife will continue to thrive here and that we celebrate our industrial heritage".

*Based on Heritage Lottery Fund Press Release - 6 April 2006*

## Wey and Arun News

### Loxwood's New Lock

The new lock at Loxwood, the first new lock built on the Canal since 1816, is nearing completion. Bricklaying has continued throughout the winter months and the second wall is complete. This rapid progress is a direct result of the enthusiasm of the volunteers who have been working three days a week in large numbers at the lock site. The new lock is 4.4m wide and will accommodate 22m long boats. The rise is 1.58m. Back pumping capacity is designed to permit 3/4 lockages per hour. The 'tunnel' under the B2133 road will be 23m long; the channel will be 4m wide with 2.4m headroom.

This is the Trust's largest current project at an estimated cost of £1.2M and is not expected to receive National lottery money. Because it depends on donations, the project has been spread over several years.

Funding for this project will be given a boost from the Annual Puddle sponsored walk which will take place on Sunday, 11th June 2006. For information contact the Trust office on 01403 752 403, email [office@wact.org.uk](mailto:office@wact.org.uk).

### Plaque unveiled at Bramley in memory of James Stanton

In March this year Neil Stanton unveiled a plaque at Wharf Cottage, Bramley, Surrey, to commemorate the cottage's association with his forebears and the Wey & Arun Canal. Wharf Cottage was originally a toll office for the Wey & Arun Canal; the first tolls were collected there on 18th December 1815. Also present at the ceremony were seven other members of the family who can trace their ancestry back to James Stanton.

Introducing Neil Stanton, Peter Foulger, Chairman of the Wey & Arun Canal Trust, remarked that Bramley was the key to reconnecting the canal with Britain's national waterways system. This was the long-term aim in which the Trust had so far invested 35 years of effort, some £3 million and many thousands of hours of volunteer effort.

The present owners of Wharf Cottage, Mr & Mrs Roger Thoday, who have lived there for over 50 years, are enthusiastic supporters of the Trust's work and the proud possessors of a picture of the cottage as it was in 1871 which has been reproduced in Paul Vine's book - London's Lost Route to the Sea.

### The 'Jessop' family tradition on the canal is revived

The Trust recently announced that David Jessop had been appointed their new Maintenance Manager

David says: "I first heard about the restoration of the Wey & Arun Canal from one of our customers, Jack Pocock, who was a builder. He saw that we were about to throw away some old paint racks and asked if he could have them for the canal depot. He collected them the same day and, as a 'thank you', presented me with a copy of Paul Vine's book about the Canal. As I share a surname with the man who surveyed and designed the canal in 1811, it seems apt to be helping to restore it, nearly 200 years later."

This appointment comes at a crucial time as more and more of the canal is restored and it is vital that the stretches that are cleared are not allowed to slide back into the undergrowth.

*IWA Cargoes Newsletter - Summer 2006*

# Chairman's Column and Bits 'n' Pieces

## As the Chairman (and Gill and the cats, of course) Sail Off into the Sunset!

A very brief Chairman's Column this month as Gill and I are off on our early summer cruise. I am delighted that Laura has agreed to step into the breach, during my absence.

### June Meeting

We are pleased to welcome Runnalls Davis to our June meeting, with the story of the women who stepped in to operate the working narrow boats during World War II.

### July Meeting

Continuing the theme of the June meeting, our speaker at next month's meeting will be George Fleming and his subject will be 'Waterways at War'.

### Next Society Outing

Following the success of the Mills outing in April, a further excursion, comprising a boat trip on the Wey & Arun Canal, is

being organised on Saturday 7 October 2006. The members present at the May meeting were sounded out on the proposal and twenty two places were provisionally booked. Based on that response, our charter of the Canal Trust's narrow boat 'Zachariah Keppel' which operates from the 'Onslow Arms' at Loxwood in Sussex, has been confirmed. The current plan is to start the boat trip on the restored Loxwood Section at 10.30am. On our return, lunch can be taken in the 'Onslow Arms'. In addition, Peter Foulger, Chairman of the Trust, has kindly offered to show members around his restored Mill, just a short distance away. It is likely that the boat hire cost will work out to less than £10 each) more details in due course). Members will be responsible for making their own way to Loxford (in accordance with our usual practice) and for the cost of meals etc.

If you would like to participate in this trip, can you please let Maureen Greenham know as soon as possible: Tel: 023 8040 6951 or email: [maureen.greenham@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:maureen.greenham@dsl.pipex.com)

*Paul Herbert*

## The Hampshire Mills Group

Following on from the Society's very successful visit to Whitchurch Silk Mill and Longbridge Mill on 22 April, I had hoped to have included an item on the Hampshire Mills Group (HMG) in the last Newsletter, but unfortunately lack of space prevented that.

HMG is interested in mills of all types, with many members who own mills and welcome the opportunity to share their enthusiasm. Some members are actively involved in the restoration work on mills and their machinery, sluices, waterwheels, turbines and watercourses. Others research the various aspects of milling and mill history – and survey buildings.

With over 240 watermill and 100 windmill sites, keeping records up to date is a continuous task. The Mills Group's millennium project was to compile a complete photographic record of all extant Hampshire mills and members also planned to update and republish the book "Wind and Water Mills of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, which was out of print.

The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) has

a 'Mills Section' which keeps an eye on all the mills in the UK and the Hampshire Mills Group works in close conjunction with them. The Group is also closely associated with Hampshire Industrial Archaeology Society.

HMG members advise mill owners on restoration and conservation and lend a hand when needed. Very often the Group is able to supply historical details and copies of old photographs. The Group is frequently consulted about planning applications involving change in mills and mill sites and has worked closely with local planning authorities.

A great deal of material that HMG has collected over the years has been passed over to the Mills Archive Trust in Reading.

If you are interested in the work of the Hampshire Mills Group or would like details of mills open to the people, contact Society member and Chairman of HMG, John Silman on 023 8025 4117.

*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 1 June 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"Idle Women" by Runnalls Davis with the story of the women who stepped in to operate the working narrow boats during World War II.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Fri 9 - Sun 11 June 2006	The Child-Beale Trust	Beale Park Thames Boat Show. Beale Park, Pangbourne, near Reading.	Tel: 0870 7777160 Email: <a href="mailto:events@bealepark.co.uk">events@bealepark.co.uk</a>
Sun 11 Jun 2006	Wey & Arun CT	34th Annual Poddle Sponsored Walk 2006. Start and finish at Mill Pool House, in Godalming, Surrey with lunch at Hascombe Village Hall. To raise money towards the gates at the new Lock in Loxwood.	Jo Beagles: 01483 418195 Email: <a href="mailto:office@weyandarun.co.uk">office@weyandarun.co.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.weyandarun.co.uk">www.weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Sat 17 Jun 2006	Wey & Arun CT	Sponsored Walk along the Wey South Path. Organised in aid of Macmillan Cancer and the Wey & Arun Canal Trust.	Bridget Glynne-Jones: 01403 752403 Email: <a href="mailto:office@weyandarun.co.uk">office@weyandarun.co.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.weyandarun.co.uk">www.weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Fri 23 June 2006 7.30pm	Reading Borough Council	Mikron Theatre. Open air performance at Abbey Ruins, Reading.	Jo Keen - Events Officer: 0118 939 0373
Sat 24 Jun 2006	IWA Solent & Arun Branch	River Arun Relay Cruise. Larger boats: Littlehampton to Pulborough; smaller boats: Pulborough to Pallingham.	Peter Boyce: 07729 139765 Email: <a href="mailto:pete@greensleeves.freemove.co.uk">pete@greensleeves.freemove.co.uk</a>
Sat 24 Jun 2006	Reading Borough Council	Reading Water Fest on the Kennet at Abbey Ruins, Chestnut Walk, Riverside Walk and the Riverside Museum from 11.00am	Jo Keen - Events Officer: 0118 939 0373

*Continued on page 3*

## Special Subscription Offer

Laura Sturrock recently received the following letter from Chris Cattrall, Editor of *Canals & Rivers* magazine:

*Canals & Rivers* magazine (formerly *Canal & Riverboat*) are offering your members a very special offer on an annual subscription to the magazine, which will be of direct benefit to your Society, Trust or Club.

For every NEW subscriber to *Canals & Rivers* taken out through your society by its members, A E Morgan Publications (publishers of *Canals & Rivers*) will donate £7 from the annual £33 subscription directly into your society's funds! This means that not only do your members benefit by getting their favourite magazine delivered

directly to their door, but your society also benefits financially.

*Canals & Rivers* has undergone a major makeover in the last few months and now incorporates more editorial pages directly reflecting boating and leisure activities on our inland waterways. Our new, 'tabbed' sections make it easier to access lifestyle, history & heritage, canal holidays, boatbuilding, boat care and classified features.

All this is now available to your membership - with the added bonus of a substantial donation to your society or club funds.

*In the first instance, would those interested in taking advantage of this offer please contact Laura.*

## Waterways Diary (continued from page 2)

Time	Organiser	Details	Contact
Sat 1 Jul 2006 10.00am	Chichester Ship CT	Walk the Portsmouth & Arundel Canal. 4 mile walk from Barnham Court Farm, Church Lane, Barnham to River Arun at Ford. Bring packed lunch. Allow 4 hours for walk. Frequent trains from Ford back to Barnham.	Jenny Pine: 01243 670786
Tue 4 Jul 2006 7.30pm	Chichester Ship CT	A Year on the Chichester Canal - illustrated talk by Carolyn Farren. The Assembly Rooms, North Street, Chichester. Tickets £3.00.	Tickets from Linda Wilkinson, 1 Chidham Lane, Chidham, Chichester, PO18 8TL (SAE please).
<b>Thu 6 July 2006 7.45pm</b>	<b>Southampton CS</b>	<b>"Waterways at War" with George Fleming. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.</b>	<b>Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384</b>
Fri 7 July 2006 Open from 6.30pm onwards	Wey & Arun CT	Mikron Theatre - I. K. Brunel from Mrs Brunel's perspective. Fisher's Farm Park, Newpound Lane, Wisborough Green. Tickets £8 to include free car parking at Fisher's Farm Park. Advance booking essential	Tel: 01483 503029 Email: <a href="mailto:office@weyandarun.co.uk">office@weyandarun.co.uk</a> .
Sat 8 Jul 2006 7.30pm	Chichester Ship CT	Mikron Theatre presents "Mrs Brunel" at Training Centre, Geoffrey Osborne Ltd, Stockbridge Road, Chichester (Next to basin). Tickets: £6.50 (child £5.00):	Tickets from Linda Wilkinson, 1 Chidham Lane, Chidham, Chichester, PO18 8TL (SAE please).
Sun 9 July 2006 5.00pm	Surrey & Hants CS	Mikron Theatre with their new production "Mrs Brunel". The Fox and Hounds, Crookham Road, Fleet.	Peter Coxhead: 01923 344564 or David Millett: 01252 617364
Thu 20 Jul 2006 7.00pm	IWA Salisbury Group	Boules & BBQ at the Green Dragon, Alderbury, Salisbury.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841. Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: <a href="mailto:ronmyra.glover@virgin.net">ronmyra.glover@virgin.net</a>
Sun 23 July 2006	IWA Solent & Arun Branch	Chichester Harbour Cruise - Itchenor to Dell Quay and beyond.	Peter Boyce: 07729 139765 Email: <a href="mailto:pete@greensleeves.freeserve.co.uk">pete@greensleeves.freeserve.co.uk</a>
<b>Thu 27 July 2006 7.45pm</b>	<b>Southampton CS</b>	<b>Annual General Meeting followed by waterways DVD. NB: this is the "August" meeting! Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.</b>	<b>Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384</b>
Sun 30 July 2006	Kennet & Avon CT	Newbury Waterways Festival. Victoria Park, Newbury.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356. Email: <a href="mailto:grahamv.smith@virgin.net">grahamv.smith@virgin.net</a>
Sat 26 - Mon 28 August 2006	Inland Waterways Assn	2006 IWA National Waterways Festival and Boat Show on the River Thames. Beale Park, Pangbourne, near Reading.	IWA Head Office: 01923 711114. Website: <a href="http://www.waterways.org.uk">www.waterways.org.uk</a>
<b>Thu 7 Sept 2006 7.45pm</b>	<b>Southampton CS</b>	<b>"Early Canalling Days on Standard 8 Cine" with Brian Evans. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.</b>	<b>Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384</b>
Sat 9 Sept 2006 10.00am	Chichester Ship CT	Walk the Portsmouth & Arundel Canal. 4 mile walk from Barnham Court Farm, Church Lane, Barnham to River Arun at Ford. Bring packed lunch. Allow 4 hours for walk. Frequent trains from Ford back to Barnham.	Jenny Pine: 01243 670786
Sun 10 Sept 2006 10.00am	Chichester Ship CT	Guided walk from Salterns Lock to Chichester Basin. Meet at Salterns Lock, Chichester Marina.	Jenny Pine: 01243 670786
Sun 10 Sept 2006 10.00am	Chichester Ship CT	Poyntz Bridge will be swung. Last survivor of the original seven swing bridges. Couple hundred yards south of Chichester Basin.	Jenny Pine: 01243 670786
Thu 21 Sept 2006 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	George Fleming, a local historian, talks about The Royal Military Canal.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841. Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: <a href="mailto:ronmyra.glover@virgin.net">ronmyra.glover@virgin.net</a>
Sun 24 Sept 2006	IWA Solent & Arun Branch	Beaulieu River Cruise - Buckler's Hard to Beaulieu Quay.	Peter Boyce: 07729 139765 Email: <a href="mailto:pete@greensleeves.freeserve.co.uk">pete@greensleeves.freeserve.co.uk</a>
<b>Thu 5 Oct 2006 7.45pm</b>	<b>Southampton CS</b>	<b>"A Calendar of British Wildlife" with Dennis Bright. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.</b>	<b>Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384</b>
<b>Sat 7 Oct 2006 10.30am</b>	<b>Southampton CS</b>	<b>Society boat trip on the Wey &amp; Arun Canal at Loxwood, Sussex aboard the 'Zachariah Keppel'.</b>	<b>Maureen Greenham: 023 8040 6951 Email: <a href="mailto:maureen.greenham@dsl.pipex.com">maureen.greenham@dsl.pipex.com</a></b>
24-25 Jun, 29 - 30 Jul	Kennet & Avon CT	Crofton Pumping Station - Steaming days 2006. Open from 10.30am to 5.00pm. Adults £5.00, Seniors £4.00, Children £1.00, Children under 5 free, Families (2 adults & 2 children) £10.00.	Phone: 01672 870300 Website: <a href="http://www.croftonbeamengines.org">www.croftonbeamengines.org</a> Email: <a href="mailto:eq01ntz9@CroftonBeamEngines.org">eq01ntz9@CroftonBeamEngines.org</a>
14 Apr - 1 Oct 2006. 10.30am to 5.00pm	Kennet & Avon CT	Crofton Pumping Station - Non-Steamng days: Adults £3.00, Seniors £2.50, Children £1.00, Children under 5 free, Families (2 adults & 2 children) £7.00. Open 7 days/week.	Phone: 01672 870300 Website: <a href="http://www.croftonbeamengines.org">www.croftonbeamengines.org</a> Email: <a href="mailto:eq01ntz9@CroftonBeamEngines.org">eq01ntz9@CroftonBeamEngines.org</a>

# 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.

## President:

Brian Evans.

## Chairman:

Paul Herbert, 25 Rosemoor Grove, Chandler's Ford, Hampshire, SO53 1TB. Tel: 023 8026 2365.

Email: [paul@herbertpaul.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:paul@herbertpaul.wanadoo.co.uk)

## Secretary:

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## Treasurer & Membership Secretary:

Laura Sturrock, 39 Church Street, Nether Heyford, Northamptonshire, NN7 3LH. Tel: 01327 341798.

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Martin Cripps, Maureen Greenham, Peter Oates, Alan Rose, David Townley-Jones

## Newsletter Editor & Webmaster:

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Email: [peter@whitenap.plus.com](mailto:peter@whitenap.plus.com)

## Society Website:

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

## May Meeting

### Bob Dukes - 'The History of the Royal Naval Cordite Factory, Holton Heath'

All our monthly speakers are certainly expert in their field and Bob showed us his extensive knowledge of the Royal Naval Cordite Factory (RNCF) which was built between Poole and Wareham during the First World War. As he explained, his talk would cover the history of the RNCF, why it was built, how it operated and a little bit about the lives of those who worked there.

As Bob explained, cordite is classed as a propellant, not a high explosive. It had been produced at Waltham Abbey since the latter part of the 19th century but in 1914 Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, decided that the Royal Navy needed its own plant to produce high quality material with reproducible properties.

A number of sites were investigated before Holton Heath was chosen, which fitted the requirements very well. It extended to some 500 acres, had the main railway line to London to the south, a road along its northern boundary, it was on pretty useless (in those days) heath land, with few people in the immediate vicinity, and there were towns nearby to supply workers.

At its peak, there were in excess of 2000 men on the site construction apparently living in large corrugated iron buildings. Welfare was looked after by the YMCA.

The RNCF was effectively self-sufficient. Apart from its own reservoir, it had a pumping station some miles away, drawing water from a series of wells in the area. There was also a gas works and electricity generators. The factory even employed its own rat catcher! A special railway station was built for the RNCF. The factory had its own internal rail system with about 4 miles of standard gauge track and 17 miles of narrow gauge, together with its own loco fleet and rolling stock. In fact, during the First World War, cordite was dispatched by the narrow gauge railway to a jetty in Poole Harbour where it was loaded into sailing barges for transport to Priddy's Hard in Gosport.

Another important facility was a fully equipped hospital; a real hospital and not just a first aid station. Patients could stay for several weeks if necessary, and the staff specialised in burns. In its 40 years

of activity the factory only had one major explosion when a nitro-glycerin plant exploded in June 1931 with the loss of ten lives.

During his talk Bob described the complicated chemistry of explosives and the ingredients involved in the manufacture of cordite, and particularly of the many dangers in the process.

We heard about the lives of the men and women who worked at RNCF, the necessary security measures and other regulations that governed their lives. Social life was not excluded and the workers enjoyed a range of sporting activities, concert parties and the like.

Bob did not neglect the experiences of the factory during World War Two and gave examples of enemy actions and various defensive measures taken by RNCF including establishing decoy sites.

Except for some specialized processes, production ceased at Holton Heath at the end of the war. The Admiralty Materials Laboratory (AML), at which Bob worked, moved to the site in 1947 and this gradually took over much of the area until, in 1957, the RNCF was officially closed and all the "danger area" and 80% of the site disposed of. AML continued for 50 years but that is another story!

Many thanks, Bob, for such an interesting talk and your old photographs of the RNCF and the people who worked there were fascinating. When the factory's Home Guard Unit was formed, a model of the site was constructed to a scale of 40ft to the inch! That model still exists and is now in the Museum of Naval Firepower at Priddy's Hard in Gosport. Although not on general public display, it should be available to view on special request.

*Paul Herbert*

**For information** - as readers will be aware from my Chairman's Column, Gill and I are away cruising. I have written the above article on board our narrow boat "The Evelyn Broadbent", moored in London in the St Pancras Yacht Basin, courtesy of St Pancras Cruising Club, immediately alongside the main line into the station of the same name. However, despite the occasional train and the hustle and bustle of Camden, on the other side of the tracks, the basin is a peaceful oasis, and we have been made very welcome.

## Free Magazines Offer

*The Society has received the following offer:*

I have a collection - in good condition - of Waterways World Magazines from December 1980 to December 1993. All but 1993 in Binders.

Would you please ask if one of your members would appreciate

them for their own collection? If so, I would be delighted to give them free of charge. But they will have to collect.

Please call 023 8073 0894 to arrange a time.

Yours sincerely

David W Bailey