



Chairman's Column

June Meeting

On behalf of the Society I am delighted to welcome Colin Ward to our June meeting to tell us all about "Lots to do at the Soo".

2007 Annual General Meeting

Our 40th Annual General Meeting will be held on 26 July. Due to retirements we will have vacancies for Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Auditor. It is essential that a new Secretary is found without delay as without that post being filled the operation of the Society is likely to suffer. The duties of Secretary are far from onerous and I would be pleased to discuss them with potential candidates.

Society Boat Trip

Following on from the brief item and photographs in the last Newsletter covering the Society's boat trip on the Wey & Arun Canal in April, please see the feature in this issue.

Future Trips

Further to my announcement at the last meeting, our 'Outings Organiser', Maureen Greenham, has made tentative enquiries regarding a possible Society outing in October, to either the Black Country Museum (by coach) or a horse-drawn boat trip on the Kennet & Avon Canal. To date there has been significant interest from members for both outings. We will try and determine the actual destination by a show of hands at our June meeting. It is possible that the 'unsuccessful candidate' could be held over to next year.

Anniversary Clothing

I announced at the last meeting that, after much deliberation, it has been decided to arrange for the provision of new Society branded clothing to mark our 40th anniversary this year. See further information in this Newsletter.

Society Boat Trip – Wey & Arun Canal

A party of thirty Society members and guests enjoyed a superb day out on the Wey & Arun Canal on Saturday 21 April. We started with coffee in the "Onslow Arms" at Loxwood and a look around the works underway on the adjacent canal. These included the re-construction of the nearby road bridge, to accommodate the extension of the recently reopened length of canal, and a new lock, nearly complete, on the far side of that bridge, leading to a further length of canal, already in water.

In glorious weather we gently cruised in the Canal Trust's trip boat, the "Zachariah Keppel" to Brewhurst Lock, where a working party was engaged on the lockside. (The length of canal between that lock and the road bridge by "The Onslow Arms" has had to be lowered to pass under that bridge, and Brewhurst Lock altered accordingly). We then continued to Baldwins Knob lock to Drungewick Aqueduct, an overall journey of about an hour. We all looked around that area whilst the Trust's crew wined the boat and after

'Day-Star Theatre'

Speaking of our anniversary, just a reminder that 'Day-Star Theatre' will be making a very welcome return visit to us on 4 October with a special compilation programme. Now, I know that October may seem a long way off at present but, once the summer months have passed all too quickly, the show date will soon be on us. Tickets costing £5 (to include the usual after show supper) will be on sale at our July meeting. I would hope that we can manage to achieve a 'full house' for this important anniversary event.

40th Anniversary Cake

Our member, Pam McKeown, is well known for her splendid home-made cakes. Her Christmas cake offered as a lottery prize at our December Quiz evening will be remembered. Pam has generously offered to make us a special 40th Anniversary cake. This will be enjoyed at the 'Day-Star' evening. Many thanks Pam.

Time for Tea

Gill has asked me to thank those members who have volunteered for refreshment duties – this is very much appreciated.

Joyce & Eric Mayhew

Many members will remember Joyce and Eric who, for many years, provided the refreshments at our monthly meetings until their 'retirement', mainly due to Eric's health, when we moved from the St John Ambulance Hall to our present venue. We haven't heard from them for some time but Gill saw them recently and they were glad to hear about the Society's activities and their many former friends and colleagues. Eric is still in poor health and we send them both our very best wishes.

Paul Herbert



The new lock at Loxwood nearing completion

re-embarking we returned to "The Onslow Arms" for the traditional group photograph and lunch.

After lunch we walked a short distance along the towing path to Brewhurst Mill, which is owned by

(Continued on page 4)

May Meeting

Roger Squires – ‘The River Douro’

We were delighted to welcome Roger to our last meeting to speak to us about his cruise on the River Douro, which was undertaken, with colleagues, under the auspices of “Waterways World” and Kingdom Tours, who have been jointly organising tours of waterways overseas for many years. He provided us with the location and history of the river, described the countryside and towns en route and many other interesting sights.

The Douro is one of the major rivers of the Iberian Peninsula, flowing from its source near Duruelo de la Sierra in Spain to its outlet to the sea at Porto. Its total length is 897km. For 112km the river forms part of the national border between Spain and Portugal, in a region of narrow canyons. Once the Douro enters Portugal, major population centres are less frequent. Except for Porto and Vila Nova de Gaia, at the river mouth, the only population centres of any note are Foz do Tua, Pinhao and Peso da Regua. Tributaries are small and flow into canyons to enter the larger river.

The upper reaches of the Douro within Portugal have a micro-climate allowing the cultivation of olives, almonds and especially grapes important for making the famous Port wine. The region of Pinhao and Sao Joao da Pesqueira is considered to be the centre of Port wine, with its picturesque *quintas* or farms clinging on to almost vertical slopes dropping down to the river. Many of these *quintas* are owned by multinational wine companies. Traditionally, the wine was taken downriver in flat-bottom boats called *rabelos*

Roger explained that a series of dams had been built across the river between 1976 and 1986 in order to generate electricity, each dam incorporating a lock. There were only five locks in 200km – the deepest lock had a lift of 111ft, the deepest lock in the western world – whilst the lowest only had a lift of 45ft. These locks are termed ‘shaft locks’ and each contains ‘buffer stops’ to prevent craft hitting and damaging the gates. The river, which was obviously very important for the transportation of wine to Porto, has been a navigation for several hundred years, albeit navigation was exceedingly difficult, and often dangerous, in parts. The navigation is now fully controlled, and as it is shallow in places, it is well buoyed. There are many new and well designed road crossings, some quite low, which is very strange on such a new navigation. Parts of the river pass through spectacular gorges, increasing the current and therefore the difficulty of navigation.

We heard about the traditional river craft, the *rabelos*, both sailing and rowing boats, that used to transport the wine down to Porto, through very strong currents, travelling at a fair rate of knots, controlled by huge steering oars. Each year the remaining *rabelos* take part in a race at Porto, as part of the Festival of St John.

The river is now greatly underused, despite the huge locks. Upriver there was a significant area of coal mining, now worked out, and the coal used to be transported by river. The closure of the mines was the reason a new power source had to be found, hence the dams and the hydro-electricity they generate. Sadly, many riverside industrial wharves now lay disused. However, between the middle to lower river areas there are a number of granite quarries, and the products from these, together with sand and ballast from river dredging, depend upon the river for their transportation. One rather startling sight was a purpose-built oil port, which has never been used due to environmental pressures due to the fears of spillage and oil pollution. The whole region is dependent upon tourism but, apart from large tourist boats, including hotel boats, there are very few private leisure boats – there are only five small marinas and only a few boats were seen on the move during the cruise.

We saw many beautiful sights – villages on steep hillsides; orange and lemon trees; wine terraces and the Port Wine warehouses in prime positions; the *rabelos* coming upriver under sail, with the names of the famous Ports, that we are all familiar with, emblazoned on their sails; and local fishermen in their traditional craft.

Roger’s talk also included the narrow gauge and steam railways up the Douro Valley, many now disused. A number of old railway bridges cross the river. An extra trip for some of the party was on the narrow and broad gauge steam railways of the upper river valley, some with vintage carriage stock. When the group crossed the border into Spain, to Salamanca, they saw a sign announcing that Euro money is to be provided to re-open the old railway that used to serve that region.

For those members who were unable to attend Roger’s talk, they missed a great evening. Many thanks Roger for such a fascinating presentation about an area with which the majority of those present were unfamiliar. It will certainly encourage a number of us to visit that region of Portugal.

Paul Herbert

Save Our Waterways Campaign

Michael Fabricant, MP for Lichfield, secured a Westminster Hall adjournment debate, which took place from 9.30 am to 11.00 am on 25th April on Funding of British Waterways. This provided the third such opportunity to keep pressure on government for the better funding for canals and river navigations and was exceptionally well attended.

Select Sub Committee

Monday 23 April was scheduled to be the final date on which the Environment Food and Rural Affairs Sub Committee on the Funding of British Waterways took evidence. A wide range of evidence had been given at weekly evidence sessions, including a peripatetic hearing on 16th April which took place at the National Waterway Museum at Gloucester, following a visit to the Cotswold Canal restoration. On 23rd April the Minister gave evidence and this is available as a transcript at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmenvfru/uc345-v/uc34501.htm>

Because of the nature of the evidence, which was highly critical of BW, it is understood that BW was given the opportunity of a final evidence session on 8th May.

Ministerial Meeting

IWA chairman John Fletcher met the Waterways Minister, Barry Gardiner, in his office on 14th May together with 3 MPs who support the campaign, including Chris Huhne MP (Eastleigh).

In a courteous but robust meeting, the Minister, attempted to maintain his position relating to Government’s previous investment in the network and maintenance backlog, but was firmly persuaded by IWA to move to consider the future. The Minister continued allegations against BW about its lack of transparency saying, “There may be more underlying maintenance issues not yet identified.”

The Minister eventually agreed that the Grant in Aid investment needed clear outputs, and further agreed that those outputs would be wider than the DEFRA remit.

The IWA hopes that as a result of the meeting the Minister will realise that stakeholders in the inland waterways do have a part to play in shaping future policy and contributing to the architecture of strategies to relieve the current funding difficulties.

IWA Head Office Bulletin, May 2007 and Press Release

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 7 Jun 2007 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"Lots to do at the Soo" - A look at North American Waterways with Colin Ward. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Fri - Sun 8 - 10 Jun 2007 10.00		Thames Boat Show. Beale Park, Pangbourne.	Tel: 0118 976 7498
Sat 9 Jun 2007	Wey & Arun CT	WACT will host a small and trailable boat rally at Lordings flood lock and aqueduct.	WACT: 01403 752403. Email: office@weyandarun.co.uk
Sun 10 Jun 2007	Wey & Arun CT	The Poddle - 13 mile sponsored walk in aid of Trust funds (B2133 Bridge Fund). Start at the Band Room, Village Way, Cranleigh, Surrey between 9.00 and 10.30am.	Joanne Holcombe 01483 418195. Email: poddle@weyandarun.co.uk Website: www.weyandarun.co.uk
Sat 23 Jun 2007	Kennet & Avon CT	Reading Water Fest - on the Forbury Backwater.	John and Pam Swift: 0118 9415540 Email: johns@360swift.com
Sun 1 Jul 2007	IWA Solent & Arun Br	A transit of Port Creek between Portsea Island and the mainland. This is our missing link in our bullion runs through the waterways between Portsmouth and Chichester. High water is around 13:00 BST.	Peter Boyce: 07729 139765. Email: Peter.Boyce@raymarine.com
Sun 1 Jul 2007 10.00am	Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society	Guided walk of part of the old Portsmouth & Arundel Canal. Meet at Barnham Court Farm, Church Road, Barnham. Approx. 4 mile walk, allow 4 hours & bring a packed lunch.	Tel: 01243 576701.
Wed 4 Jul 2007 5.30-8.00pm	Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society	An opportunity to cross the Chichester Canal on the unique 1820 cast iron, Poyntz swing bridge, near Chichester Canal basin. There will also be a short guided industrial walk starting at the Poyntz bridge at 7.00pm.	Tel: 01243 576701
Thu 5 Jul 2007 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Talk on the Basingstoke Canal with Roger Cansdale. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Tue 10 Jul 2007 7.30pm	Chichester Ship CT	"The Past, Present and Future of the Chichester Ship Canal" by Rick Travis, Chairman of the Canal Trust. Tickets £3.	Rick Travis: 01243 530866 Email: rick@waterside.go-plus.net
Wed 11 Jul 2007 7.30pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	Mikron Theatre present "Married to the Job...Thomas Telford and Civil Engineering". Fox & Hounds, Fleet, Surrey.	Tel: 01243 576701
Fri 13 Jul 2007 7.30pm	Chichester Ship CT	Mikron Theatre present "The Lacemakers" about John Heathcote, the inventor of the lace making machine. Training Centre, Geoffrey Osborne Construction, Stockbridge Road, Chichester. Tickets: £7.00.	Tickets from: Linda Wilkinson, 1 Chidham Lane, Chidham, Chichester, PO18 8TL. Tel. 01243 576701.
Sat 14 Jul 2007 8.00pm	Wey & Arun CT	Mikron Theatre present "Married to the Job...Thomas Telford and Civil Engineering". Tickets: £8.00 from WACT office. Free parking. Licenced bar. Cranleigh Village Hall, Surrey.	WACT Office: 01403 752403. Email: office@weyandarun.co.uk
Thu 19 Jul 2007 7.00pm	IWA Salisbury Group	Boules and BBQ. The Green Dragon, Alderbury, Salisbury.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841. Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: glover3@gotadsl.co.uk
Thu 26 Jul 2007 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Annual General Meeting with supporting programme. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Until 30 Sep 2007 10.30am - 5.00pm	Kennet & Avon CT	Crofton Beam Engines open every day. When not in steam admission: Adults £4.50, Seniors £4.00, Children £1.50, Families (2 adults & 2 children) £9.00. For steaming weekends see below.	Tel: 01672 870300 Email: eqcr59103@CroftonBeamEngines.org Website: www.croftonbeamengines.org
30 Jun - 1 Jul, 28-29 Jul, 2007 10.30 - 5.00	Kennet & Avon CT	Crofton Beam Engines Steaming weekends. Admission: Adults £6.50, Seniors £5.50, Children £1.50, Families (2 adults & 2 children) £13.00. Also steamings on 25-27 Aug, 29-30 Sep 2007.	Tel: 01672 870300 Email: eqcr59103@CroftonBeamEngines.org Website: www.croftonbeamengines.org
Until 21 Oct 2007 10.00am - 5.00pm (4.00pm Weds)	Kennet & Avon CT	Claverton Pumping Station open every Sat, Sun, Wed and Bank Holiday Mon. Non-pumping days admission: Adults £2.00, Children under 16 free but must be accompanied by adult. For pumping days see below.	Tel: 01225 483001 Email: enquiries@claverton.org Website: www.claverton.org
10 Jun, 24 Jun, 8 Jul, 22 Jul 2007 10.00 - 5.00	Kennet & Avon CT	Claverton Pumping Station pumping days. Admission: Adults £2.00, Children under 16 free but must be accompanied by adult. Also pumping on 12 Aug, 26-27 Aug, 9 Sep, 23 Sep, 21 Oct Sep 2007	Tel: 01225 483001 Email: enquiries@claverton.org Website: www.claverton.org

40th Anniversary Clothing

The grey sweatshirts purchased as part of our celebrations for the 30th anniversary of the Society in 1997, were a great success. The Committee has been examining the possibility of ordering similar clothing for this year's 40th anniversary. We have looked at samples and pricing from our usual suppliers, Jancraft.

It has been decided to order red(ish) sweatshirts and blue/green (similar to RAF blue) polo shirts. All items will incorporate the

Society's logo, suitably altered to show the 40th anniversary. Samples were shown to members at our last meeting.

We will not be able to purchase supplies in advance. Instead, we will take individual orders from members at our monthly meetings and pass those on to Jancraft. We are currently awaiting final costings.

Paul Herbert

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.

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Meetings:

Normally 1st Thursday each month at 7.45pm. (See Waterways Diary.) Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.

Wey & Arun Canal Boat Trip

(Continued from page 1)

Peter Foulger, Chairman of the Wey & Arun Canal Trust. Peter kindly showed us round, giving us a history of the mill and an explanation of its operation. Much of the milling machinery is still in place.

After expressing our appreciation to Peter a Society donation was made to him towards the future restoration of the canal. It was then time to make our farewells and return to the cars for the journey home through the outstanding Sussex and Hampshire countryside.

Many thanks and congratulations to Maureen, for a superbly organised outing. Even the weather she arranged for us was fantastic!

Historical Notes

Wey & Arun Canal

The 23 mile waterway known today as the Wey & Arun Canal was originally two distinct waterways running through Surrey and West Sussex: the Wey & Arun Junction Canal and the Arun Navigation.

Together with the River Wey and the River Arun, they formed a waterway link between the River Thames and the South Coast. The through route was opened in 1813 but was not successful. The Wey & Arun Canal was abandoned as early as 1871. To the south the Arun Navigation limped on until the early 20th Century before suffering the same fate.

The Wey & Arun Canal Society was founded in 1970 to restore the canal. The strategic importance of this canal lies in the fact that it is the only outlet to the English Channel from the national waterways system.

For full details of the navigation, and its restoration, read "London's Lost Route to the Sea" by P A L Vine. There's a wealth of information on the Wey & Arun Canal Trust's website: www.weyandarun.co.uk

Brewhurst Mill, Loxwood

The mill has been in existence since at least 1500. A major fire around 1890 destroyed the two upper floors leaving only the existing brickwork. It is not known how long the rebuilding took to complete, but it is thought that the reduced water usage during that period contributed towards the silting up of the mill pond.

The original power to drive the mill came from an overshot waterwheel situated below the ground floor. The remains of this wheel, which is thought to date from 1840, can still be seen. There is a further waterwheel outside which was built at a later date to overcome problems caused by the lower wheel being inoperable in times of flood.

In 1928 further modernisation of machinery took place and a Blackstone 41HP oil engine was installed, which ran all the machinery until 1981, although commercial grinding had ceased in 1968. That engine has been restored and is able to drive the machinery once again.

Paul Herbert



The Wey & Arun boat-trip party after the cruise on Zachariah Keppel

Error by the Editor: I'm afraid that there was an error in the web address given on page 4 of last month's Newsletter for the Hansard report on the Adjournment Debate on Inland Waterways in the West Midlands (I made a mistake copying the rather long address from an IWA report). It should read: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070327/hallindx/70327-x.htm