



NEWSLETTER

400 not out - a long innings

The Southampton Canal Society Newsletter has now been published on a fairly regular basis since the first issue dated November 1967. Eric Lewis has a complete collection of old SCS newsletters and I have been looking through these.

Part of my interest was trying to find out who has been editor before me. Somewhat surprisingly, some editors seem to have tried to hide their light under a bushel by not announcing who they were. It seems that, for much of the time, items for the Newsletter were supposed to be sent to either the Chairman or the Secretary rather than to the editor.

I was also intrigued by the evolving methods of production. Today's use of a home computer to provide a publication of near professional quality would have been inconceivable to the early editors.

The first issue appeared as a single, stencilled foolscap sheet folded in half to give four pages. The editor seems to have been Mr Robert E Rice and Mrs Bessie Allcock did the printing (but their credits for these tasks appear only in the second issue). The newsletter gives details of the Society's second work party on 12th November at Sulhamstead Lock on the K&A (see page 3), and has a report of the Society's four hour boat trip at Newbury aboard John Gould's Motorboat *Kelston* in September.

The first year saw seven issues and ever since there have been between ten and twelve issues a year. In July 1972 it was reported that the Committee had purchased a secondhand duplicator which had been reconditioned by Roneo with a 1 year guarantee for £22.50.

The 45th issue in October 1972 was the first issue not in the folded foolscap format and was the first to comprise two sheets of paper. This also appears to be the issue when Misses Daphne and Diana Lusby became editors. The next two years saw a variety of different size issues, both in the number of pages (usually 4 or 6) and paper sizes. March 1973 was the largest ever issue (issue 50) with four pages of news plus a ten page article by Peter Wheble about a holiday on his new boat.

New Year 1975 was the beginning of a two year stint by Margaret and David Kessler-Lyne to be followed in turn by Pauline Hockley at the beginning of 1977 with issue 96. This and the following 20 issues saw the introduction of pictures drawn by Pauline's husband, Charlie. This was no mean feat when you consider that he had to draw straight onto the typing stencils (rather like a thin waxed paper) with a needle-like implement (see page 4). I am sure that I would not be editor if I still had to do it that way!

Sadly, Pauline had to give up being editor through ill health and her obituary appeared in May 1979. For a number of issues, there seems to have been no regular editor - a few seem to have my hallmark as I think I recognise an old typewriter of mine.

I have also discovered that there were two issues numbered 127 in both October and November 1979.



Telford Aqueduct spanning the BCN Main Line

Issue 347 (December 2000)

Maybe the 400th issue should have been celebrated last month!! At the 1980 AGM, the Chairman thanked Jan Durrant and Annegret Evans for typing the newsletter and someone called Peter Oates for doing the duplicating. It seems that Brian Evans became editor and Annegret the regular typist for the next few years. In August 1983, the family were involved in a car accident and an anonymous typist took over for a few months.

During 1985 there were a number of appeals for help with the newsletter, but I have been unable to

find any mention of who was editing or producing the newsletter. It seems, from the quality of reproduction, that the first edition to be photo-copied (rather than duplicated) was number 180 in April 1985.

A computer seems to have been first used in the production of the Newsletter in November 1989 (issue 227) where one page out of the two was printed with a dot matrix printer (the other page was typed). The whole publication has been printed this way from February 1990, although the computer printouts are reproduced by photo-copier.

It is not until June 1990 that we find Tony Coles is thanked for composing and typing the

Society's publication, but I suspect that Brian Evans was editor for much of the 1980's. In September 1990, the accounting firm of Hunt & Co began a long standing sponsorship to print and distribute the Newsletter. The last issue to be sponsored in this



Nutfield and Raymond descending Braunston Locks

Issue 367 (November 2002)

(Continued on page 6)

Chairman's Column and Bits 'n' Pieces

Congratulations to the Society's Newsletter

March 2006 sees Issue No 400 of the Society's Newsletter, a landmark of which we can all be proud. Issue No 1 was published in November 1967, just a few months after the formation of the Society in June. Who would have thought, when they read that first issue, that nearly 40 years on we would have reached No 400?

The first mention of a newsletter in the minutes was very early in the Society's existence, in fact at its third meeting, held on 3rd August 1967, when "The Chairman suggested to the meeting that thought should be given to the production of a newsletter which could be circulated to members". That Chairman was Brian Evans, who continued in that role until the 2001 AGM, when he became our first President. Those minutes were also signed by the then Secretary, Laurie Pearce, who of course is still an active member.

We are indebted to the various editors and others who have produced the Newsletter over the years and, particularly, to Peter Oates who has now been our editor for over ten years and, moreover, has kindly offered to continue in this role, and on the Committee, despite his recent move to the Midlands.

Congratulations and many thanks to Peter and all previous Editors, etc.

March Meeting

We are delighted that our 'home grown' speakers, David and Margaret James, will be presenting 'Odds and Ends But Not What You Think' at our March meeting, No, I don't know what it is about, either!

Spring Outing

A large party from the Society will be taking part in the outing to Whitchurch Silk Mill and Longbridge Mill on Saturday 22 April. If you still want to book, or have yet to pay for that trip, please contact Maureen Greenham as soon as possible. Maureen's contact details, together with information of this outing, were published in the last two Newsletters. [See also *Waterways Diary* on page 5].

2006/2007 Programme

I am pleased to advise that the 2006 Programme has now been completed, moreover, many speakers have already been booked for 2007 – there are not many dates still to be filled! Details until the autumn can be found in the *Waterways Diary* on page 5.

February Meeting

Rev. Peter Atwill, Padre to the Inland Waterways

Members can never say that we don't try and bring them a varied programme and our February meeting was certainly no exception. We were delighted to welcome Peter Atwill who, with his wife Lin, lives aboard and cruises the waterways on their narrowboat 'Gospel Belle'.

Peter started his talk by describing how he was introduced to boating as a child in Devon. His father had sailed on 'Endeavour' in the Americas Cup and had worked on the building of the replica of the 'Mayflower'. We then heard how Peter got involved in his career in catering, including working at Eastleigh College. When his first wife died he was left with two young boys to bring up. In due course he met Lin, a widow, also with two young children. To bring the two families closer together they took up boating.

After serving as a Minister in Southampton for 17½ years, the family moved to a new ministry in Bath. One night he had a dream about a 60' narrowboat and that led him to writing a specification, based on that dream, in bed! A while later they came across a boat for sale which exactly fitted that specification. Eventually Peter and Lin sold up and moved on to their dream boat.

40th Anniversary

I have already referred to one Society celebration and we can look forward to another, the 40th anniversary of the formation of the Society, which held its first meeting on 1 June 1967. Your Committee is currently discussing a programme of possible events to celebrate that anniversary next year. I am pleased to report that 'DayStar Theatre' will be returning to Chilworth as part of our celebrations, on a date yet to be confirmed. If you have ideas for a possible event in 2007, please do not hesitate to come forward.



Society members enjoying a trip to Crofton

Issue 366 (October 2002)

Future Printing of the Newsletter

We may be able to congratulate ourselves on reaching the 400th edition of the Newsletter, but its immediate future is far less certain. Martin Cripps, who has been printing the Newsletter for the last year or so, cannot continue after this year's AGM. Therefore, we need to make alternative arrangements as a matter of some urgency. Do you have appropriate computer printer facilities at home which you could use for this purpose, or do you have a community minded employer who might be prepared to sponsor the Newsletter, with full acknowledgements of course, or who might be prepared to assist in some way? If you have any ideas or can help in some way, can you please contact Peter Oates (contact details in this Newsletter) as soon as possible. Thank you.

Paul Herbert

After eighteen months Peter applied to become a 'Home Evangelist' and subsequently started his work on the canals. He went on to describe a number of his experiences with that particularly ministry. Unfortunately, in September 2005 he was made redundant from that Mission and, with former ministry colleagues, he started a new organisation – Canal Missions, which now has five boats working throughout the waterways system. Peter, who has a fantastic sense of humour, entertained us with some lovely stories. At the end of his presentation he showed a number of waterways related overhead transparencies. He went on to tell us he has a book in progress – 'Grave Humour' and that he sings as well, with a CD due out soon! We also learnt of his engineering skills and he is often asked to sort out problems on others' boats. Certainly a man of many talents.

Peter is certainly a busy man – immediately after his talk he was returning to Trowbridge and next day he was travelling to Lancashire, for a boaters' wedding on Saturday. Thank you so much Peter for coming to talk to us and the Society wishes you and your colleagues well with your new Canal Mission.

Paul Herbert

As we were

The following couple of pages contains a selection of items from previous editions of the Newsletter:

SOUTHAMPTON CANAL SOCIETY WORK PARTY:

A second work party was organised for Sunday 12th November. Twelve members met at the Kennet and Avon W P Blockhouse at Sulhamstead Lock where Maurice Cusden greeted us with armfuls of riphooks, axes and other useful implements.

The day was bright and dry as smoke billowed up from piles of cleared undergrowth and trees. Unfortunately, some mature trees have to be felled to allow access by the British Waterways Board dredger which will be working on the pound above Sulhamstead Lock when the bank clearance is completed.

We all returned home that Autumn evening feeling well satisfied with our efforts and full of Maurice Cusden's cups of tea which he generously provided.

Our Society has now cleared the bank as far as the first swing bridge - an effort of which we can quite justifiably feel proud!

Laurie Pearce

Issue 1 (November 1967)

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTIONS: It was agreed that these should remain the same as last year ie

10/- for each member [50p]

15/- for Husband and Wife [75p]

5/- for members under 18 years of age. [25p]

If you intend to renew your membership, please forward your name and remittance to the Treasurer as soon as possible.

Issue 4 (June 1968)

QUICK MAINTENANCE REPORT OF OUR HOLIDAY 1971

by Chris Golding.

BOAT: 45' Narrowboat "IBIS" 2' 8" draught. **DATE:** 5th to 17th JUNE

Every day rain; no more than 12 hours sun during the daytime. Started from Rugby Wharf, N Oxford Canal and headed for Hawkesbury Junc. Good depth, clean canal; passed 1 dredger (Hallelujah!). Attempted to navigate Coventry Arm. Took 3 hours for 4 miles and at 11.00 after 1 ducking, we gave in 1 mile short of the basin. Bottom far too near top. One bridge we think had been dropped straight into the canal.

Sunday - We journeyed along Coventry Canal to Curdworth (Dog & Doublet). Several butties and motors at Hawkesbury & Charity Dock, Bedworth. Silt near Atherstone terrible, bottom scraping all the way, although we passed 2 quite active dredgers (more humble bowing!!). Atherstone Locks quickest filling we came across. Shallow near Polesworth, Fazeley to Curdworth, on Birmingham & Fazeley good.

MONDAY - through Birmingham via Aston, Farmers bridge on to Worcester & Birmingham to Hopwood. Lots of rubbish at Salford Junction. Passed a Morris Minor which was lining Canal bed near Aston Bottom Lock. Progress quite good to Gas Street Basin. All B & M C Co boats still there as well as several pairs of new ones. One boatman told me he trades quite regularly to Preston Brook - with what, I couldn't find out. W & B Canal very attractive, very shallow in places.

TUESDAY - night arrives, very wet, 8 locks out of Worcester, all locks very easy to work (50 in a few miles) some shallow - no complaints.

WEDNESDAY - down on the Severn - bombing upstream at 6

mph, cor! No hold-up at Diglis Locks. Lock-keeper very helpful since he'd just had to lock down a canoe? Delayed at Stourport, lock-keeper's tea stretched an hour overtime. Up the basins and away to the "Lock Inn" past Kidderminster. Staffs & Worcs very shallow in places, little rubbish, easy deep locks.

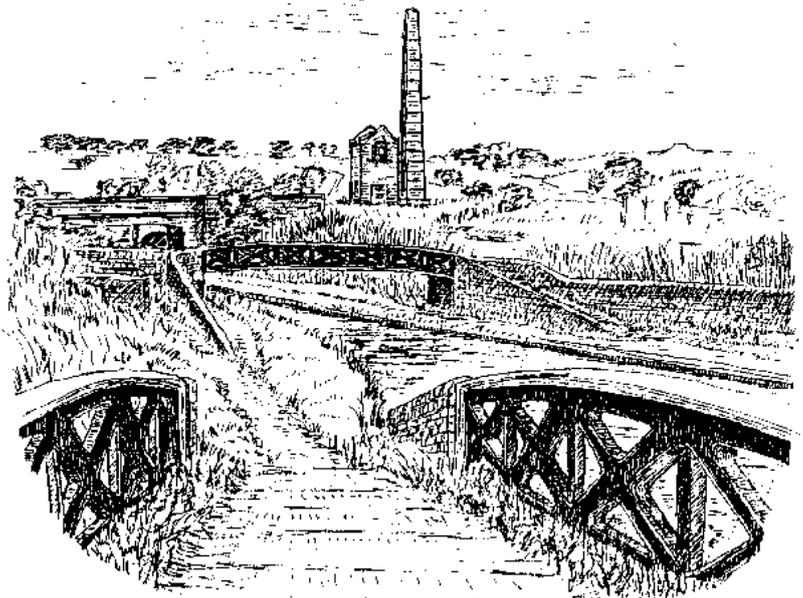
THURSDAY - up the narrows & shallows of the S & W. Past pair of NB's at Kinver. Turned up Stourbridge. Terribly shallow from Stourbridge to sixteen locks. Top lock - Bumble Hole terrible, unbelievable rubbish, mud; 1 mph improved slightly after Blowers Green where there was a dredger - epithets hurled in it's direction. Stopped before Netherton. Rain.

FRIDAY - through Netherton - big & wide down Birmingham Level - deep, no rubbish down B & F past Salford and on to Minworth. No hindrance, good until Salford where the Motorway goes.

SATURDAY - lazy day down Curdworth to Fazeley, left hand down up to Huddlesford. Very shallow up to Huddlesford 6" at the side, another 1½ mph canal for our 2' 8" draught - "Cruiseway". The sun came out this evening.

SUNDAY - Up to the "Swan" at Fradley, still shallow then down the T & M through Burton, much rubbish. Shallow (no full beer crates 'sob'), on to Findern. Another sunny day - a full 4 hours followed by a thunderstorm. Canal very poor at Burton. Didn't pass 1 boat all day.

MONDAY - a very wet windy day for navigating the 2 miles or so of the Trent. A full 8 mph on the wide deep river avoiding weirs left, right and centre AND CENTRE? Time to turn right up the Soar. Galloped on to Barrow-on-Soar, wide, deep - some weed. Excellent progress.



Windmill End

Brian Evans 1987

One of Brian Evans' many pen and ink drawings - Windmill End, BCN

Issue 340 (April 2000)

TUESDAY - through Loughborough - clean, clear & deep on to the G U C at Leicester where Limekiln Lock was a disgrace, 1 top paddle unusable, the other like trying to shift a mountain. Belgrave Lock, both top paddles out of action - vandals. Firm of Golding, Thornton & Pike - bodgers unlimited - repaired one much to our

(Continued on page 4)

As we were

(Continued from page 3)

relief and the elderly crews of 2 boats who were crying into the chamber to try and fill it up. Tied up at Wigston. Many new gates, a lot of visible dredging but many shallows between dredgings. Rain.

WEDNESDAY - through Saddington Tunnel, past swarms of flies & fishermen, moored out of Saddington Tunnel. Canal became shallower, weedier, towpath very overgrown. Rain.

THURSDAY - to Foxton & staircased up. Sun came out; very easy to work. Foxton Boat Services narrowboats passed, they have been carrying lock-gates & gravel from the Thames (Great stuff!). Dredging along the summit pound, although weedy, a definite rut where loaded N B's have scraped along. Navigated the Welford Arm. Very pleasant, a little shallow in places, a good winding point - a gem of an Arm. Thoroughly recommended 4 star Arm.

FRIDAY - saw us at the "Rose & Castle". Fair progress amid the rain, non-stop all to Watford Locks. Good to Norton Junction & excellent down to Braunston which shows what even scanty narrowboat traffic can do to a canal. At Braunston Bottom, passed about 10 pairs of Union Canal Carriers Ltd boats (Campers) several Willow Wren C T S Ltd boats still in original livery & 5 Blue Line Boats, even Bill Whitlock bade us "Good? Evening" as we snailed by. A stirring sight to see the colourful N B's there. Pity they weren't laden out whilst they are still intact - take the hint?

SATURDAY - saw us up to Rugby where we were promptly greeted by the sun as we stepped on the Wharf. Still we had our moments! Look out next year. I'd like to chat with anyone who has traversed any of the canals I mentioned to see if my comments still hold water!

Issue 32 (August 1971)

THANKS

Our thanks to Mr & Mrs "Bunny" Austin, through whose efforts we were able to keep to our planned programme at the February meeting. One of our guest speakers, Mr Tony Jervis, unfortunately sustained an accident whilst starting off for Southampton on his moped. The Austins went all the way to Southsea to pick him up. On the return journey, Mr Jervis collapsed, probably through deferred shock from his accident. Bunny and Lillian took him to Haslar Hospital at Gosport for treatment and examination and then put him to bed at their home at 4.30 am! The next day, Bunny took Mr Jervis back to his flat in Southsea and made sure that he had medical attention and that he was fit enough to be left. It is pleasant to know that we have such kind and considerate people as members of our Society.

Issue 50 (March 1973)

The editors offer their apologies for the varying sizes of paper used in the production of the Newsletter. Recently a free gift was made of paper of a now not used size of duplicating paper and it was felt, in view of the costs involved, that this could not be refused.

Issue 50 (March 1973)

Extract from

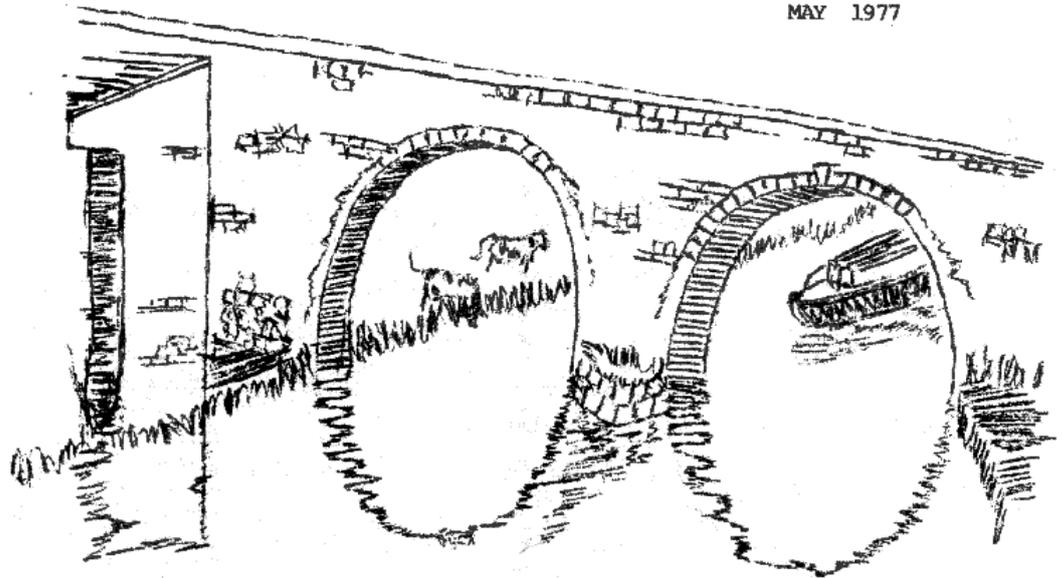
MINUTES OF THE 13TH AGM HELD ON 5TH JUNE, 1980

SECRETARY'S REPORT: He was pleased to report an overall increase in membership from 135 to 148 including 7 family memberships. Monthly attendances had increased from an average of 56 to 65 members.

Issue 134 (July 1980)

SOUTHAMPTON CANAL SOCIETY 100TH EDITION

MAY 1977



One of Charlie Hockley's stencil drawings for Issue 100

COPS SCUPPER CANAL PIRATES A hijacked canal boat was stopped by police yesterday after a family raced off in it - at 4 mph. A helicopter joined the chase after the green narrowboat was pinched from moorings at Nether Heyford, Northants. By the time they caught it, nearly 40 miles away on the Grand Union Canal at Stoke Bruerne, it had been repainted black. A man was being questioned last night. (Eva Drinkwater spotted the above in 'The Sun' on Monday, 16th February).

Issue 200 (April 1987)

NOVEMBER MEETING. Another visit (the 4th?) from Hugh McKnight with a brand new subject of which, before the meeting, we knew little.

Hugh claims to have been in the first crew to take a British registered boat into the eastern part of Germany since 'the wall' was dismantled. He gave a lively account, illustrated with first class slides, of their journey through both busy commercial waterways and quiet lakes.

We heard a number of amusing stories and from time to time were taken from the waterways briefly to visit a town centre or restaurant.

Members learned about the waterways of Eastern Germany but also had a geography lesson and even touched a little on politics.

We thank Hugh for travelling to Southampton to give us a very amusing and entertaining evening.

Issue 250 (December 1991)

BARGE IN AT FULL SPEED

The following question and answer was spotted in the Daily Mail of Tuesday, February 20, 2001 in their 'Answers to Correspondents' section:

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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 2 Mar 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"Odds and Ends but not what you think!" with SCS members David and Margaret James. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 15 Mar 2006 8.00pm	Surrey and Hampshire CS	"Charter Fairs to Village Fetes" - Peter Hammond tells of the history and development of travelling fairs and describe the life of a travelling showman. Parish Pavilion, Station Road, Chobham, nr Woking, Surrey.	Peter Coxhead: 01923 344564
Thu 16 Mar 2006 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	The author Steve Haywood talks about his book "Fruit Flies Like a Banana" about a trip from Oxford to Bristol via Gloucester and the Severn Estuary. The Green Dragon, Alderbury, Salisbury.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841. Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: ronmyra.glover@virgin.net
Fri 31 Mar 2006 7.30 for 8.00pm	Kennet & Avon CT	Branch AGM followed by: David Saady with "Have Boat - Will Travel" - a cruise from the Aylesbury Arm to Norwood Tunnel on the Chesterfield Canal. Turnham's Farm Scout Hall, Little Heath Road, Tilehurst, Reading.	John & Pam Swift: 0118 941 5540 Email: johns@360swift.com
Thu 6 Apr 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"The BCN Then and Now - early 1970's and 2005" with SCS members Eric and Sue Lewis. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 19 Apr 2006 8.00pm	Surrey and Hampshire CS	"The Andover and Southampton & Salisbury Canals" - Peter Oates will illustrate the history of these long abandoned canals. Parish Pavilion, Station Road, Chobham, nr Woking, Surrey.	Peter Coxhead: 01923 344564
Sat 22 Apr 2006	Southampton CS	SCS outing to Whitchurch Silk Mill and Longbridge Mill. Meet at Whitchurch Mill at 10.30am.	Maureen Greenham: 023 8040 6951 Email: maureen.greenham@dsl.pipex.com
Sun 23 Apr 2006	Wilts & Berks CT	Sponsored walk Chippenham to Lacock taking in the canal at Pewsham. The start will be at the Buttercross in Chippenham at 10.30 am. Entrance fee of £3 will be charged for individuals or family groups.	Peter Williams: Email Peter.Williams32@btinternet.com
Thu 27 April 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"History of the Royal Naval Cordite Works at Poole" with SCS member Bob Dukes. NB: this is the "May" meeting! Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Sun 14 May 2006	Wey & Arun CT	The Winston Harwood Memorial Small Boats Rally at Lordings, south of Newbridge near Wisborough Green, West Sussex.	Phone: 01403 752403 Website: www.weyandarun.co.uk Email: office@weyandarun.co.uk
Thu 18 May 2006 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	"Lots to do at the Soo". A look at North American waterways with Colin Ward. The Green Dragon, Alderbury, Salisbury.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841. Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: ronmyra.glover@virgin.net
Sun 21 May 2006	Wey & Arun CT	Annual Small Boats Rally at Loxwood, West Sussex.	Phone: 01403 752403 Website: www.weyandarun.co.uk Email: office@weyandarun.co.uk
Sat 27 - Mon 29 May 2006	Inland Waterways Association	IWA National Campaign Rally. The objectives of the rally are to safeguard and ensure the long-term future of the Basingstoke Canal. Also includes stalls, entertainments, crafts, refreshment stalls and public boat trips. Brookwood Country Park, near A324, close to the A322 junction.	Sally Schupke: Email: publicity@brookwood2006.com
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. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Thu 6 July 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"Waterways at War" with George Flemming. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
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: ronmyra.glover@virgin.net
Thu 27 July 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Annual General Meeting followed by waterways DVD. NB: this is the "August" meeting! Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Sun 30 July 2006	Kennet & Avon CT	Newbury Waterways Festival. Victoria Park, Newbury.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356. Email: grahamv.smith@virgin.net
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: www.waterways.org.uk
Thu 7 Sept 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"Early Canalling Days on Standard 8 Cine" with Brian Evans. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Thu 5 Oct 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"A Calendar of British Wildlife" with Dennis Bright. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
15 - 17 Apr, 29 Apr - 1 May, 27 - 29 May, 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: www.croftonbeamengines.org Email: eq01ntz9@CroftonBeamEngines.org
14 Apr - 1 Oct 2006. 10.30am to 5.00pm	Kennet & Avon CT	Crofton Pumping Station - Non-Steam 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: www.croftonbeamengines.org Email: eq01ntz9@CroftonBeamEngines.org

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.
Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.

President:

Brian Evans.

Chairman:

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Email: paul@herbertpaul.wanadoo.co.uk

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E-mail: sue.eric.lewis@ukonline.co.uk

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

As we were

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QUESTION In Hornblower And The Atropos, C. S. Forester's hero takes an express canal boat service, drawn by teams of fast horses, with other traffic obliged by law to get out of the way. Did this service ever exist?

EXPRESS canal boats (called fly-boats) existed on several canals, but the service mentioned in Hornblower And The Atropos did not. In the story, Hornblower is on his way from Gloucester to London for Nelson's funeral, following the admiral's demise at Trafalgar on October 21, 1805.

Hornblower 'legs' the packet boat through Sapperton Tunnel under the Cotswolds, and negotiates a 'flash lock' on the Thames.

The historical truth, sadly, is that the poor state of the river between Oxford and the junction with the Thames and Severn Canal prevented reliable traffic developing after the canal opened in 1789.

In 1819 - 14 years after Nelson's death - a fast boat service which by-passed the Upper Thames was operated from Gloucester to London following the opening of the North Wilts Canal.

Colin Dexter's Inspector Morse story The Wench Is Dead is based

on the real murder of a person on a Pickford's flyboat, where the passengers had to accommodate themselves as best they could amid the cargo. Hornblower's packet boat seems to be based on the more luxurious Duchess Countess, which worked a short distance on the Bridgewater Canal near Manchester. This carried a knife on its fore end to slice through towlines of oncoming boats.

Flyboats In pre-railway times paid a premium toll and were accorded priority by some canal companies. They were also worked by relays of horses and crews. They survived until well into the 20th century with some services being mechanised.

Examples of these ran between London and Birmingham, Ellesmere Port and Birmingham (the latter being horse drawn) and from Leicester to London.

One of the last flyboat services was the 'paper dasher', a nightly run from John Dickenson's paper mills at Apsley on the Grand Union Canal in Hertfordshire, to Battlebridge Basin, Kings Cross, with newsprint for Fleet Street. It survived into the late Fifties.

*David Blagrove, Commercial Boat Operators Assoc, Towcester, Northants
Issue 350 (April 2001)*

The Newsletter carries on

(Continued from page 1)

way was the October 2004 edition.

The introduction of photo-copying made it easier to include items from other sources. The Society logo had been introduced at the top of the front page in October 1986 but it wasn't until Tony's editorship that the use of "cut and paste" techniques became usual so that drawings, newspaper cuttings and even photographs came to be included. In 1993/94, Tony also started using computer publishing software to improve the layout of the periodical.

Every so often there were appeals for items for the newsletter, but if your only contact with the Society was the newsletter you still would have had to send your contribution to one of the Society Officers rather than the editor - not that many people did. During the 15 years up to 1995, only a small number of issues had more than two sides.

Tony Coles retired from the editorship at the 1995 AGM and I took over the mantle as from the September issue (number 291). Being a bit of a computer buff, I continued to develop the production of the Newsletter by electronic means.

The first issue to include colour was number 310 on the

occasion of the Society's 30th birthday (June 1997). The front page was laboriously printed (about 75 copies at nearly two minutes a time) in colour on an ink-jet printer. The other seven sides were produced normally in black and white. Our current printing facilities, available through the good offices of Martin Cripps, also permits some use of colour.

The personal acquisition of a scanner at the end of 1999 meant that almost any printed text and images could be more easily incorporated into the Society's publication. Information is now also gleaned from the internet and the use of email can transfer the Newsletter from the editor to the person making printed copies of it in minutes rather than days. Since May 1999, the Newsletter has been published not only in paper format but is available to anyone around the world (in full colour) from the Society's website and, shortly, will be sent via email to members requesting it in that format.

I hope that I have continued to inform our readers over the last 109 issues as well as past editors (whoever they were). Oh yes, my name and address can be found elsewhere in the newsletter so **you** can make your contribution.

Enlarged and updated from an article that appeared in Issue 300 (July 1996)