



# Chairman's Column

## May Meeting

Because of altered holiday arrangements, Roger Squires was unable to visit us last year but I am delighted to welcome him to our May meeting. Roger will be taking us to Portugal with his talk about the River Duoro, from Oporto to the Spanish border.

## Spring Boat Trip

Because of our early 'May' meeting and, therefore, very tight deadlines for this Newsletter, I am having to write my input on the eve of the Society's sell-out boat trip on the Wey & Arun Canal on 21 April. A full report of that outing, together with accompanying photographs, will be published in the June Newsletter. [Editor's note: However, see the last minute item included below. As Paul says, a full report will appear next month.]

## Annual Society Boat Gathering

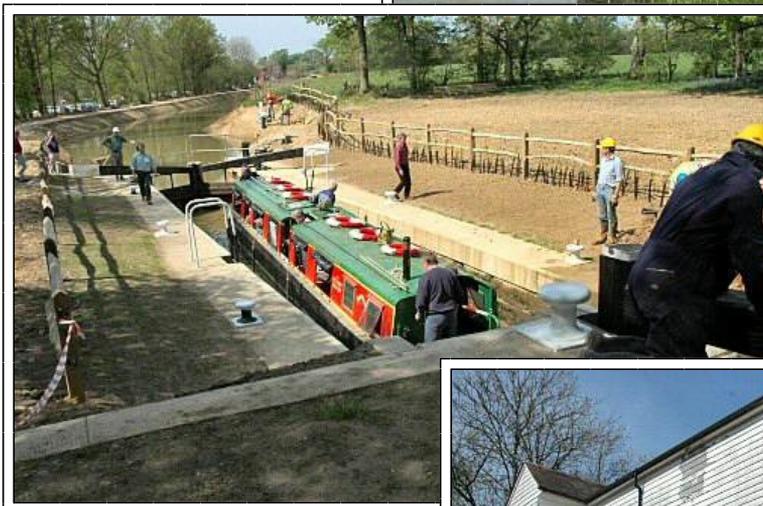
It has become customary over the early May bank holiday for a number of Society boaters to get together

## Society Boat Trip

Saturday morning was blessed with bright, warm sunshine when members and friends gathered at Loxwood for their "day out". The weather was the icing on a most enjoyable cake - a day to remember.

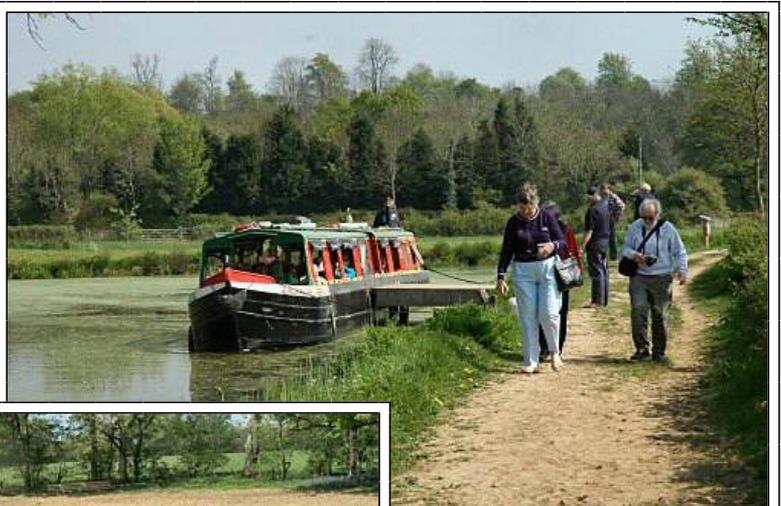
Whilst a full report will appear in next month's Newsletter, in the meantime here are some pictures taken by Laura Sturrock to give a flavour of the occasion.

*Peter Oates*



Returning through the newly modified Brewhurst Lock (complete with working party)

Members at Brewhurst Mill visited during the afternoon



The Zachariah Keppel at Drungewick



for an informal gathering. Unfortunately, we have had to postpone the 'event' this year due to a number of reasons. The majority of regular and potential participants (including Gill and myself) were unable to make it because of holidays, cruising or generally unavailability. However, it is hoped to arrange an alternative weekend during the summer.

## Chairman's Email & Internet Connection

Because of problems with my Internet provider, I have lost my connection. I am therefore unable to send or receive any emails. If you need to contact me for any reason can you please revert to the old tried and tested methods of telephone or the post. Many thanks.

## Refreshment Volunteers

Gill is looking for volunteers to help with the refreshments at our monthly meetings, from June onwards. All offers of help are appreciated.

*Paul Herbert*

# April Meeting

## Peter Boyce – ‘The Moving Meadow’ and his boats

Peter is very well known to our Society and we were delighted to welcome him to our April meeting to talk to us about his experiences of ‘The Moving Meadow’ and the heavy maintenance work involved with his boats. I had been concerned that we might have had a sparse audience for Peter’s talk as I was aware that many of our regular attendees were away on their Easter holidays. However, I was delighted to see so many of our members there that evening.

So, what is ‘The Moving Meadow’? Basically, it is a wildflower meadow, which was commissioned for Bath Sculpture Garden, an initiative of Bath Spa University’s School of Art and Design and a programme led by sculptor, Michael Pennie. The aim of the Sculpture Garden is to revive the tradition of contemporary sculpture in Bath and contribute significantly to the visual culture of the city. Artist Tania Kovats was commissioned to design the installation of



the meadow, with the help and support of a team of students and staff from the School of Art and Design. Two meadows were grown simultaneously, one of which will remain permanently at Bath Spa University’s Sion Hill campus as a visual reminder of the project.

The project involves a working butty (‘Betelgeuse’) that housed the floating meadow, being towed by a tug (‘James Loader’) from Newbridge in Bath along the Kennet & Avon Canal to the Thames at Reading and thence via the Grand Union and Regent’s Canals to Camden in the East End of London. MEADOW, which is approximately 50’ x 6’, then spent some time moored at The Drawing Room, one of the contemporary art venues located on the canal. ‘Betelgeuse had to be prepared in advance in Bath to ensure that its cargo, the meadow, was in full flower during its journey to London in June last year.

The intention of the project was that “MEADOW will trace a line in the landscape, making a connection between two places, and leaving a trace of its journey in the mind of all those who encounter this floating garden.

MEADOW is both an idea of a landscape and a floating miniature landscape itself. The waterways of this country are hidden conduits or green fingers that were once essential lines of communication and trade; the brilliance of their engineering remains in these elegant cuts through the landscape. The canals are slow routes, well used by a diverse population of walkers, cyclists and river people, and as such MEADOW will seek out an unexpected audience. This is in addition to a more familiar art audience that will be targeted in the towns and cities MEADOW passes through”.

Peter, the owner of ‘Betelgeuse’ and ‘James Loader’ skippered the boats on their journey from Bath to London, and artist Tania accompanied the moving meadow, delivering workshops at selected locations along the way. Peter described the work involved in preparing his butty for this most unusual cargo, including loading the wire cages containing the cut turfs, and the ongoing maintenance of the meadow during its three week journey – at least there was no

problem with a watering supply! It was interesting watching the meadow continuing to grow during the cruise, with the various wild flowers developing.

Peter illustrated his talk with photographs of the journey and gave examples of some of the humorous aspects of the trip. Examples included the dogs who jumped onboard the meadow, not realising it was on a boat; the offer of a goat to keep the grass down; and the man strimming the towpath edge who also nearly included the meadow in his maintenance. When moored up, the meadow naturally merged into the tow path vegetation! Peter described the great interest in the meadow from passers-by. They attended Reading Waterfest and other events on route.

In the second part of the evening, Peter described the history of his boats. The full length butty ‘Betelgeuse’ was built in steel and elm in 1935 for the Grand Union Canal Carrying Company. The 40’ tug ‘James Loader’ was built of oak and elm and towed coal boats for a living until the late 1970’s. Both boats have been used recently in the coal trade and are shortly to start on the mineral traffic on the lower Grand Union Canal. Peter restored both boats and his presentation mainly focused on ‘James Loader’ in the Basingstoke Canal dry-dock at Deepcut.

Peter had hired the dry-dock for three weeks and intended to replace some of the damaged planks on the hull of his tug. However, on his way to the Basingstoke Peter discovered that the Thames was in flood but, nevertheless, he had to continue to meet his Easter deadline for the dry-dock. He encountered a whirlpool on the approach to the entrance to the River Wey and then discovered that the Wey itself was short of water!!!

As work progressed removing the old planks from the bow section of ‘James Loader’ Peter discovered a lot more damage and rot which, obviously, had to be cut out and replaced. With the aid of photographs Peter described how he progressed the necessary work and the various processes involved. With only a diminishing three week window he had to urgently source suitable replacement timber, get that cut into planks and carried to the dock. He had to construct his own steamer out of old oil drums, in order to heat the wooden planks to be able to bend them into shape. We were all fascinated how, without any previous experience of this type of work (though Peter admitted to some basic woodworking classes at school) he



knew the elements required – and had undertaken the necessary research and understood the techniques.

Whilst Peter was beavering away at the bow of ‘James Loader’ his partner, Irene, was painting and sign-writing the stern cabin. Quite a team!

Peter described some of the problems he encountered and the day a duck flew into the dry-dock which, despite much coaxing with bread on a plank leading up to the dockside, refused to abandon them. Still, the incident gave them some light relief.

All the work planned for ‘James Loader’ was completed on the deadline, much to Peter’s relief, and considerable credit.

As can be expected, there were quite a few questions of Peter from the audience. Many thanks Peter for such an enjoyable and informative programme. Good luck with your canal-carrying.

*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
<b>Thu 26 Apr 2007 7.45pm</b>	<b>Southampton CS</b>	<b>Roger Squires takes us to Portugal and talks about the River Duoro, from Oporto to the Spanish border. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.</b>	<b>Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384</b>
Fri 27 Apr 2007 7.45pm for 8.00	Kennet & Avon CT	Talk - speaker details not known. Turnham's Farm Hall, Little Heath Road, Tilehurst. £2.00 requested for hall hire.	John or Pam Swift: 0118 941 5540. Email: <a href="mailto:johns@360swift.com">johns@360swift.com</a>
Sun 29 Apr 2007 10.30am	IWA Salisbury Group	Visit to Fussell's Balance lock on The Dorset & Somerset Canal at Mells near Frome. Meet 10.30am, visit the excavation site, lunch at The Talbot Pub where artefacts and plans may be viewed. Cost approx £2.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841. Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: <a href="mailto:glover3@gotadsl.co.uk">glover3@gotadsl.co.uk</a>
Sun 29 Apr 2007	Cotswold CT	Canamble 2007 - Sponsored walk starting at Wallbridge Lock, Stroud and following the towpath for all of Phase 1A of the restoration. Start between 9.00am and 10.30am. Walk length 6 or 12 miles.	Richard Attwood: 01453 792021 Email: <a href="mailto:richard@raash31.co.uk">richard@raash31.co.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.cotswoldcanals.com">www.cotswoldcanals.com</a>
Wed 16 May 2007 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	Pablo Haworth with "The story of Bailey Bridging" with details of bridges on the Basingstoke Canal. Parish Pavilion, Station Road, Chobham, nr Woking, Surrey.	David Millett: 01252 617364 or Peter Coxhead: 01932 344564
Thu 17 May 2007 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	Richard Thomas will be talking on "Waterway Wonders". A tour of some of the engineering marvels around the waterways system. The Green Dragon, Alderbury, Salisbury.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841. Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: <a href="mailto:glover3@gotadsl.co.uk">glover3@gotadsl.co.uk</a>
Fri 18 May 2007 7.45pm for 8.00	Kennet & Avon CT	Talk - speaker details not known. Turnham's Farm Hall, Little Heath Road, Tilehurst. £2.00 requested for hall hire.	John or Pam Swift: 0118 941 5540. Email: <a href="mailto:johns@360swift.com">johns@360swift.com</a>
Sat 19 May 2007	IWA Solent & Arun	The annual Gerry and Ivy Skinner memorial cruise from Pulborough to Pallingham and back, to maintain regular navigation of the tidal River Arun. For small boats and canoes. HW at Pulborough about 17:00 BST.	Peter Boyce: 07729 139765. Email: <a href="mailto:Peter.Boyce@raymarine.com">Peter.Boyce@raymarine.com</a>
Sun 27 May 2007 (NB change of date)	Wey & Arun CT	WACT will host a small and trailable boat rally at Loxwood on the Wey & Arun Canal. Come and see the progress on the new lock and road crossing, and view the new aqueduct.	WACT: 01403 752403. Email: <a href="mailto:rallies@weyandarun.co.uk">rallies@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
<b>Thu 7 Jun 2007 7.45pm</b>	<b>Southampton CS</b>	<b>"Lots to do at the Soo" - A look at North American Waterways with Colin Ward. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.</b>	<b>Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384</b>
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: <a href="mailto:office@weyandarun.co.uk">office@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
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: <a href="mailto:poddle@weyandarun.co.uk">poddle@weyandarun.co.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.weyandarun.co.uk">www.weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Sat 23 Jun 2007	Kennet & Avon CT	Reading Water Fest - on the Forbury Backwater.	John and Pam Swift: 0118 9415540 Email: <a href="mailto:johns@360swift.com">johns@360swift.com</a>
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: <a href="mailto:Peter.Boyce@raymarine.com">Peter.Boyce@raymarine.com</a>
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
<b>Thu 5 Jul 2007 7.45pm</b>	<b>Southampton CS</b>	<b>Talk on the Basingstoke Canal with Roger Cansdale. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.</b>	<b>Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384</b>
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: <a href="mailto:ecqr59103@CroftonBeamEngines.org">ecqr59103@CroftonBeamEngines.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.croftonbeamengines.org">www.croftonbeamengines.org</a>
5-7 May, 26-28 May, 30 Jun - 1 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 steaming on 28-29 Jul, 25-27 Aug, 29-30 Sep 2007.	Tel: 01672 870300 Email: <a href="mailto:ecqr59103@CroftonBeamEngines.org">ecqr59103@CroftonBeamEngines.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.croftonbeamengines.org">www.croftonbeamengines.org</a>
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: <a href="mailto:enquiries@claverton.org">enquiries@claverton.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.claverton.org">www.claverton.org</a>
7 May, 27-28 May, 10 Jun, 24 Jun 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 8 Jul, 22 Jul, 12 Aug, 26-27 Aug, 9 Sep, 23 Sep, 21 Oct Sep 2007	Tel: 01225 483001 Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@claverton.org">enquiries@claverton.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.claverton.org">www.claverton.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.

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## Meetings:

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

## Save Our Waterways Campaign

### Adjournment Debate – Waterways in the West Midlands

Charlotte Atkins, MP for Staffordshire Moorlands, secured a Westminster Hall adjournment debate, which took place from 9.30 am to 11.00 am in the Houses of Parliament on 27th March on "Inland Waterways in the West Midlands". This provided another good opportunity to once again raise the issue of funding cuts to British Waterways in particular, and to keep pressure on government for better funding for canals and river navigations. IWA hopes that this might be the first of a series of regional debates on inland waterways issues regarding the impact of the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs' funding cuts on British Waterways, the Environment Agency and the regional economies, regeneration, tourism, etc, and IWA has lobbied other MPs to apply for similar debates.

The previous adjournment debate on the inland waterways at Westminster Hall, won by Sir Peter Soulsby MP, and held on 6th December, was very well attended by MPs, many of whom spoke to illustrate issues on waterways in their own area. Fourteen MPs took part in this latest debate and all bar the minister were very positive. The full transcript is available at

[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/hallindx/70327-x.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/hallindx/70327-x.htm)

All the key points that IWA had hoped and lobbied for were raised and although the waterways minister, Barry Gardiner MP, had 15 minutes to reply he failed to address any of the main issues. It is clear that the Minister and his officials were very unhappy at how well briefed the MPs were - a testimony to IWA's good contacts and the continuing strength of the campaign.

### Further Adjournment Debate on the Inland Waterways

Michael Fabricant MP, (Member of Parliament for Lichfield]) secured a Westminster Hall adjournment debate, which was due to take place from 9.30 am to 11.00 am in the Houses of Parliament on Wednesday 25th April on "Funding of British Waterways"

Every effort was being made to encourage MPs to attend and take part, particularly those who have not been able to contribute to the two previous adjournment debates, secured by Sir Peter Soulsby MP and Charlotte Atkins MP. It was hoped that local issues that have arisen as a result of the cuts would especially be highlighted; for example any waterway regeneration projects that could be affected, or deferred maintenance projects. These were the issues MPs needed to know about to be able to raise during the debate.

Feedback from reliable sources in Parliament continues to indicate that the message is being heard and decision makers are having to take note.

### Where next?

IWA has expressed its appreciation of the very considerable practical support demonstrated by such a wide range of members and supporters, particularly in the activities over the weekend 3rd and 4th March. It is felt that the inland waterways has achieved a very significant profile and goodwill with the vast majority of MPs.

However, there remains a need to maintain this through the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review, which will affect the budgets for all areas of government over the next few years, and in any re-juggling of departmental responsibilities for the election of a successor prime minister, when it is possible that the inland waterways, and British Waterways in particular, could find itself funded by a different part of government. It seems highly likely that the Spending Review will not be made until the change of Prime Minister has happened and possibly not until September, so there's a need to keep the campaign going rather longer than some expected.

In considering the need for continued communication to politicians; in particular writing letters to MPs, the IWA is deeply conscious that waterway supporters cannot afford to be complacent with the success to date, and must continue to remind the ministers that Government's Waterways for Tomorrow commitments are now being broken. Council was concerned that this winter's reductions in maintenance were in danger of being the thin end of a wedge.

IWA is continuing to encourage waterway supporters to write yet again to their constituency MP, and also the MPs who cover the areas in which they use canals and rivers. This time, MPs should be encouraged to ask the Waterways Minister, Barry Gardiner, how he equates the document Waterways for Tomorrow with the recent actions of the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, and to request that he addresses an area of the document that they are concerned about, illustrated by examples relevant in their community – such as wildlife, regeneration, freight, etc. If supporters ask about specific issues that are important to them, it helps avoid junior civil servants churning out standard replies.

The Waterways for Tomorrow document is available at:

[www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/iw/tomorrow/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/iw/tomorrow/index.htm) and latest news from [www.saveourwaterways.co.uk](http://www.saveourwaterways.co.uk)

*Taken from various IWA sources*