



# NEWSLETTER

## Chairman's Column

### May Meeting

There is **NO** May Meeting as the hall is always reserved on the first Thursday of May as a polling station for any possible elections.

To help keep everyone in touch the May Newsletter is necessary as it helps keep us all up to date with waterways issues.

### April Meeting

Thank you to Paul and Gill Herbert and to Eric and Sue

Lewis for standing in for us at the April meeting. It's a shame we missed Tony's excellent photographs, and Rob's cake.

### June Meeting

The Society meeting on Thursday 7 June will be see Peter Boyce, a member of the IWA Solent & Arun Quiz team, who will be talking about the history of the wooden narrowboat *Lucy* built in 1953 and his on-going restoration of her.

*Alan Rose*

## Helping fish to find their way

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust is working on a project to remove obstacles in the Itchen Navigation which prevent fish from travelling upstream. Salmon, trout and eel are in decline in UK rivers and these improvements will allow freshwater fish to reach new areas in which to live and breed.

Malm Lock near Shawford once functioned to float barges carrying coal up the river on their journey from Southampton to Winchester. Barges were used to carry cargo on the Itchen Navigation between 1710 and 1869. Since barge use on the Navigation ceased, Malm Lock has been modified into a weir which creates a 3 metre step in the watercourse. This barrier is so tall that no fish can get past the old lock.

Man-made obstacles in rivers are a particular issue for Atlantic salmon. Although salmon are good leapers, large obstacles in rivers combined with shallow water cause a barrier for upstream travel, as salmon can only leap over obstacles when they can launch themselves from deep water. It is important that salmon can navigate up and down our rivers, as adult salmon spend most of their adult life at sea, but breed in fresh water. They use sensory clues to find their way back to the river they were born in to reproduce.

Now (February) is a good time of year to spot big salmon in the river, as the females will be making nests in the riverbed for their eggs. They use their tails to make indentations in the gravel in which they lay their eggs, creating nests which are called 'redds'. Young salmon remain in the river for between two and six years, before they transform into a 'smolt' and head out to sea.

Atlantic salmon populations are endangered in over 30% of UK rivers. The decline in numbers of 80% in the last 30 years is due to a number of factors including pollution, lack of suitable spawning sites with clean gravels and an increased number of man-made obstacles in rivers which make migration impossible.

At Malm Lock, the Wildlife Trust will be installing an

extra side channel, which will provide a route for salmon and other fish around the lock. The project, which is being funded by the Environment Agency and the Heritage Lottery Fund, is due to start in the Spring. The new channel will not only help fish passage but will increase the velocity of the water, which will improve the river for other wildlife too. Faster river flows carry silt downstream, leaving clean gravels available for salmon to spawn in and aquatic insects to live in.

The Wildlife Trust has been carrying out a series of engineering works on the Itchen Navigation over the last four years as part of a Heritage Lottery Fund project aimed at improving the river for wildlife and public access. The Itchen Navigation was chosen as a focus because of its wildlife value, historic interest and accessibility.

The River Itchen system is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which recognises it as one of the best chalk rivers in the whole of Europe. As well as salmon, the Itchen Navigation is home to trout, eel, otter, water vole, kingfisher and rare dragonflies. The old towpath which was used for animals drawing barges up the Navigation in the 18th century is now a public footpath, allowing rare access to a wildlife-rich chalk river. The Wildlife Trust project has helped stabilise 2.5km of the Navigation's river banks and improved the standard of 4.5km of footpath on the Itchen Way. Wildlife-friendly engineering methods have been used to enhance the river for fish, water vole, birds and insects.

To find out more about the Itchen Navigation, visit [www.itchennavigation.org.uk](http://www.itchennavigation.org.uk) and the Society's own website [www.sotoncs.org.uk](http://www.sotoncs.org.uk)

*Romsey Advertiser, 3 February 2012*

*Thanks to Brian Evans for spotting this article and the letter on page 4 in his local paper. My apologies for failing to include them in last month's Newsletter.*



## 2012/2013 Annual Subscriptions

Just to remind members that membership subscriptions for the year 2012/2013 became due on 1 April. Joint membership costs £25.00 whilst individual membership is £15.00.

Many thanks to those who have already paid their subscriptions. If you haven't yet paid yours I would be grateful if you could please send me a cheque, my address is at the top of the last page of this Newsletter. Thank you.

*Gill Herbert, Treasurer & Membership Secretary*

# Waterways Diary

The following is a list of waterway events taking place within approximately 50 miles of Southampton. 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.

Recently, OS grid references and/or postcodes have been added (where known but not guaranteed) to aid location of the 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 3 May 2012</b>	<b>Southampton CS</b>	<b>There will be NO May Meeting as the hall is reserved for use as a polling station</b>	<b>Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: <a href="mailto:info@apas-engineering.com">info@apas-engineering.com</a></b>
Sat - Mon 5 to 7 May 2012	Byfleet Boat Club	Weyside 2012 - live entertainment, competitions, variety of stalls, BarBQ, boat jumble and Bric-a-brac. The New Inn, Send, GU23 7EN (TQ017560).	Byfleet Boat Club: 07500 718262
Mon 7 May 2012 10.30am	Wilts & Berks CT	Sponsored walk (5 miles) starting from Chippenham Market Place, SN15 3HF (ST921732) to the Bell, Lacock, much along the canal towpath. Entry is just £4 per family/group. Sponsorship is optional.	Peter Williams: 01249 652248 Email: <a href="mailto:peter.williams@wbct.org.uk">peter.williams@wbct.org.uk</a>
Tue 15 May 2012 7.30 for 7.45pm	Kenet & Avon CT / IWA Reading & Guildford	"A Tale of Two Steamers" - Roddy McKee talks about the 'Waverley' & 'Kingswear Castle'. The Grange Free Church Hall, Circuit Lane, Southcote, Reading, RG30 3HD (SU691719)	John or Pam Swift: 01189 415540 Email: <a href="mailto:swiftjohn21@gmail.com">swiftjohn21@gmail.com</a>
Wed 16 May 2012 10.00 for 10.30am	Cotswold CT	Wildlife Walk (2 hours) along the Stroudwater Navigation from Bonds Mill to Ryeland Double Lock returning along River Frome. Meet at <i>Café at The Mill</i> in the Bonds Mill Trading Estate, Bristol Road, Stonehouse, GL10 3RF (S0793052). Park in car park close to lift bridge.	Cotswold Canals Trust Office: 01453 752568 Email: <a href="mailto:mail@cotswoldcanals.com">mail@cotswoldcanals.com</a>
Wed 16 May 2012 6.30 - 8.30pm	Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail Project	Mills and Meadows Guided Walk - a 3 mile circular walk led by project leader Polly Whyte. Meet at St Catherine's Hill car park on Garnier Road, Winchester (SU483280). Suggested donation: £2.	Polly Whyte: 01489 774413 Email: <a href="mailto:pollyw@hwt.org.uk">pollyw@hwt.org.uk</a>
Thu 17 May 2012 10.00am	Wey & Arun CT	4 mile circular walk from the Bat and Ball, Newpound Lane, Wisborough Green, Billingshurst, RH14 0EH (TQ060267) visiting parts of the canal. NB: There are many stiles on this walk and a short section will be on fast road. Meet in pub car park. Please check permission if you intend to park in the pub car park.	WACT Office: 01403 752403 Email: <a href="mailto:office@weyandarun.co.uk">office@weyandarun.co.uk</a> Web: <a href="http://www.weyandarun.co.uk">www.weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Thu 17 May 2012 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	"European Locks, Lifts & Structures". Ron and Myra Glover will show slides and explain the function of many of these structures found on the European waterways. The Green Dragon, Old Road, Alderbury, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP5 3AR (SU182274).	Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: <a href="mailto:glover3@gotadsl.co.uk">glover3@gotadsl.co.uk</a> or Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841
Sat 19 May 2012 10.30am - 3.00pm	Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail Project	Big Day Out at St Caths. Join us in celebrating 100 years of The Wildlife Trusts at our Family Fun Day. Learn about our vision for a living landscape across the Itchen Valley and South Downs. Activities include guided walks, trails, bug hunts, wool spinning, hurdle making. Refreshments available. Park at the St Catherine's Park and Ride a short walk from the reserve S023 9NP (SU483280).	Polly Whyte: 01489 774413 Email: <a href="mailto:pollyw@hwt.org.uk">pollyw@hwt.org.uk</a>
Sun 20 May 2012 10.00am	Somersetshire Coal CS	Walk - Paulton Basin and the Dry Dock. Meet: Paulton Sewage Works, Paulton BS39 6JU (ST654576).	Derrick Hunt: 01225 863066 Email: <a href="mailto:derrickjohnhunt@btinternet.com">derrickjohnhunt@btinternet.com</a>
Sun 20 May 2012	Wey & Arun CT	Pulborough to Pallingham Cruise. The aim of this cruise is to demonstrate each year that there is a right of navigation. Further details and entry form: <a href="http://www.weyandarun.co.uk/PulboroughPallinghamRally2012Form.pdf">www.weyandarun.co.uk/PulboroughPallinghamRally2012Form.pdf</a>	John Taylor-Cram: 02392 250463 Email: <a href="mailto:tractor1936@btinternet.com">tractor1936@btinternet.com</a>
Sat-Mon 2-4 Jun 2012	Cotswold CT	Stroud on Water Festival incorporating the IWA National Trailboat Festival. Marling School Playing Field, Cainscross Road, Stroud, GL5 4HE (S0838052). Tickets: £5.00 adult, £2.00 child 5 to 17.	Web: <a href="http://www.stroudonwater.org.uk">www.stroudonwater.org.uk</a> Email: <a href="mailto:info@stroudonwater.org.uk">info@stroudonwater.org.uk</a>
<b>Thu 7 June 2012 7.45pm</b>	<b>Southampton CS</b>	<b>Peter Boyce's talk on the wooden narrowboat "Lucy" built in 1953. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, S016 7JZ. (SU410184).</b>	<b>Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: <a href="mailto:info@apas-engineering.com">info@apas-engineering.com</a></b>
Fri 8 Jun 2012 10.00 - 11.00am	Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail Project	Story Walk: The King of the River. A walk along the Itchen Navigation at Allbrook following some of the animals who thrive along this waterway. Suitable for children aged 4 to 10 accompanied by adults. Meet outside the Ham Farm Pub, Twyford Road, S050 4LF (SU456207). Street parking is available nearby. Suggested donation: £2 per child.	Polly Whyte: 01489 774413 Email: <a href="mailto:pollyw@hwt.org.uk">pollyw@hwt.org.uk</a>
Fri 8 Jun 2012 2.00 - 3.00pm	Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail Project	Story Walk: The Day the Barges Came. A walk along the Itchen Navigation at Mansbridge going back to a time when barges ruled these waters. Suitable for children aged 4 to 10, accompanied by adults. Meet by the river at Woodmill Lane, next to the car park (SU440151). Booking essential. Suggested donation: £2 per child.	Polly Whyte: 01489 774413 Email: <a href="mailto:pollyw@hwt.org.uk">pollyw@hwt.org.uk</a>
Sun 10 Jun 2012	Wey & Arun CT	40th Annual Poddle Sponsored Walk. Start at North Hall, Loxwood, Sussex, RH14 0SF (TQ038319). Details and sponsorship form from <a href="http://www.weyandarun.co.uk/PoddleForm2012-s.pdf">http://www.weyandarun.co.uk/PoddleForm2012-s.pdf</a>	Joanne & Kevin Holcombe: 01483 418195 Email: <a href="mailto:poddle@weyandarun.co.uk">poddle@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Sun 10 Jun 2012 10.00am - 5.00pm	Rotary Club of Chichester Priory	The Chichester Rotary Dragon Boat Challenge 2012. The Rotary Club and Cancerwise are holding Dragon Boat races at Chichester Canal Basin, PO19 8DT (SU859041) to raise money for local charities.	<a href="http://www.chichesterdragonboats.org.uk">www.chichesterdragonboats.org.uk</a>
Sat 16 Jun 2012	Kenet & Avon CT and Reading Borough Council	Reading Water Fest. Chestnut Walk, Reading, RG1 3AH (SU720734).	John or Pam Swift (K&ACT): 01189 415540 Email: <a href="mailto:swiftjohn21@gmail.com">swiftjohn21@gmail.com</a>
Sun 17 Jun 2012 10.00am	Somersetshire Coal CS	Walk - Aqueduct to Viaduct. Meet: Brassknocker Bottom, Monkton Combe, Bath, BA2 7JD (ST781621).	Mike Chapman: 01225 426948 Email: <a href="mailto:mike@chapman76.fsnet.co.uk">mike@chapman76.fsnet.co.uk</a>
Wed 20 Jun 2012 10.00am	Wey & Arun CT	3½ mile circular walk from the Sir Roger Tichborne, RH14 0QS (TQ036333) visiting parts of the canal including Southlands Lock currently under restoration. Meet in pub car park. Please check permission if you intend to park in the pub car park. Towpath can be very muddy.	WACT Office: 01403 752403 Email: <a href="mailto:office@weyandarun.co.uk">office@weyandarun.co.uk</a> Web: <a href="http://www.weyandarun.co.uk">www.weyandarun.co.uk</a>

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# Waterways Diary

Continued from page 2

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Wed 20 Jun 2012 10.00 for 10:30am	Cotswold CT	Wildlife Walk (2 hours) along the Stroudwater Navigation from Bonds Mill to Ryeland Double Lock returning along River Frome. Meet at <i>Café at The Mill</i> in the Bonds Mill Trading Estate, Bristol Road, Stonehouse, GL10 3RF (S0793052). Park in car park close to lift bridge.	Cotswold Canals Trust Office: 01453 752568 Email: <a href="mailto:mail@cotswoldcanals.com">mail@cotswoldcanals.com</a>
Sat 23 Jun 2012 7.30pm	Mikron Theatre	'Can You Keep a Secret?' Fleet Football Club, Calthorpe Park, Fleet, GU51 5FA (SU803535). Refreshments available.	Tel: 01252 617364
Sun 24 Jun 2012 2.30pm	Mikron Theatre	'Losing the Plot.' Eyot Centre, Wargrave Road, Henley on Thames, RG9 3JD (SU770820). Bring own picnic and chairs.	Web: <a href="http://www.henleyallotments.org.uk">www.henleyallotments.org.uk</a>
Mon 25 Jun 2012 7.30pm	Mikron Theatre	'Losing the Plot.' The Rowbarge, Station Road, Woolhampton, Reading, RG7 5SH (SU572664). Food and refreshments available.	Tel: 0118 9712213 Web: <a href="http://www.rowbarge.hcpr.co.uk">www.rowbarge.hcpr.co.uk</a>
Wed 27 Jun 2012 7.30pm	Mikron Theatre	'Can You Keep a Secret?' The Bounty, Bourne End, Bucks, SL8 5RG (SU890871). Food and Refreshments available.	Tel: 01628 520056
Thu 28 Jun 2012 7.30pm	Mikron Theatre	'Losing the Plot.' The Two Brewers, St Peter Street, Marlow, SL7 1NQ (SU851862). Food and drink available.	Tel: 01628 484140 Web: <a href="http://www.twobrewersmarlow.com">www.twobrewersmarlow.com</a>
Fri 29 Jun 2012 7.30pm	Mikron Theatre	'Can You Keep a Secret?' The Rowbarge, Station Rd, Woolhampton, Reading, RG7 5SH (SU572664). Food and refreshments available.	Tel: 0118 9712213 Web: <a href="http://www.rowbarge.hcpr.co.uk">www.rowbarge.hcpr.co.uk</a>
Sun 1 Jul 2012 6.00pm	Mikron Theatre	'Losing the Plot.' Forbury Gardens, The Forbury, Reading, RG1 3EJ (SU718736). Bring your own picnics, chairs and blankets.	Tel: 0118 9390771
Mon 2 Jul 2012 7.30pm	Mikron Theatre	'Can You Keep a Secret?' The St George and Dragon, High St, Wargrave, Reading, RG10 8HY (SU785788). Food and refreshments available.	Tel: 0118 9404474 Web: <a href="http://www.stgeorgeanddragon.co.uk">www.stgeorgeanddragon.co.uk</a>
Wed 4 Jul 2012 7.00pm	Mikron Theatre	'Can You Keep a Secret?' Goring Lock, The Lock, Goring, RG8 9AE (SU596809). Bring your own picnics, chairs and blankets.	Tel: 01484 843701
Thu 5 Jul 2012 8.00pm	Mikron Theatre	'Losing the Plot.' Waterfront Café, Benson Marina, Benson, OX10 6SJ (SU613916). Tickets must be booked in advance (£10) by phone. Bistro Menu and Bar available.	Tel: 01491 835631
<b>Thu 5 Jul 2012 7.45pm</b>	<b>Southampton CS</b>	<b>AGM followed by Cheese &amp; Wine. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ. (SU410184).</b>	<b>Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: <a href="mailto:info@apas-engineering.com">info@apas-engineering.com</a></b>
Thu 5 Jul 2012 7.30pm	Chichester Ship CT	Talk on Chichester Canal Restoration. An update on the restoration of the canal from Chichester to the sea. At Donnington Parish Hall, Stockbridge Road, Chichester, PO19 8QT (SU854034). Tickets £3.00 on the door.	Linda Wilkinson: 01243 576701 Email: <a href="mailto:membership@chichestercanal.com">membership@chichestercanal.com</a>
Fri 6 Jul 2012 7.30pm	Mikron Theatre	'Can You Keep a Secret?' The Trout Inn, St John's Bridge, Lechlade On Thames, GL7 3HA (SU223991). Food & Drink available from 6pm	Tel: 01367 252313 Web: <a href="http://www.thetroutinn.com">www.thetroutinn.com</a>
Sat 7 Jul 2012 10.00am	Sussex IA Soc & Chichester Ship CT	A linear guided walk (6 miles) along the old Portsmouth and Arundel Canal towpath from Barnham Court Farm, Church Lane, Barnham, PO22 0BP (SU956036) to Hunston. Bring packed lunch. Parking at the start.	Linda Wilkinson: 01243 576701 Email: <a href="mailto:membership@chichestercanal.com">membership@chichestercanal.com</a>
Sun 8 Jul 2012 10.00am - 4.00pm	Sussex IA Soc & Chichester Ship CT	Poyntz Bridge open. Situated approx. 200 metres south of Chichester Canal Basin (SU859039), this bridge is possibly the only single span 1820 cast iron swing bridge in the UK. Plus a display of photos and artefacts. At 2.00pm there will be a guided walk around the canal basin led by Alan Green.	Linda Wilkinson: 01243 576701 Email: <a href="mailto:membership@chichestercanal.com">membership@chichestercanal.com</a>
Sun 8 Jul 2012 7.30pm	Mikron Theatre	'Losing the Plot.' Donnington Parish Hall, Stockbridge Road, Chichester, PO19 8QT (SU854034). Tickets (£7.50) by phone or on the door. Refreshments available.	Linda Wilkinson: 01243 576701 Email: <a href="mailto:membership@chichestercanal.com">membership@chichestercanal.com</a>
Sat 14 Jul 2012 10.00am	Sussex IA Soc & Chichester Ship CT	A linear guided walk (4 miles) from Salterns Lock, Chichester Marina, along the towpath to Chichester Basin seeing the engineering features and remains. Parking available at the Marina, PO20 7EJ (SU835010).	Linda Wilkinson: 01243 576701 Email: <a href="mailto:membership@chichestercanal.com">membership@chichestercanal.com</a>
Tue 17 Jul 2012 7.30pm	Mikron Theatre	'Can You Keep a Secret?' The Plough Inn, High Street, Long Wittenham, Abingdon, OX14 4QH (SU546938). Food and Refreshments available.	Tel: 01865 407738
Sun 22 Jul 2012 10.00am - 5.00pm	Kennet & Avon CT (Newbury Br)	Newbury Waterways Festival. Victoria Park, Newbury, RG14 1DR (SU473673).	Graham Smith: Tel: 01635 580356 Email: <a href="mailto:GrahamV.Smith@virgin.net">GrahamV.Smith@virgin.net</a>
<b>Thu 2 Aug 2012</b>	<b>Southampton CS</b>	<b>There will be NO August Meeting as the hall is unavailable.</b>	<b>Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: <a href="mailto:info@apas-engineering.com">info@apas-engineering.com</a></b>

## Mikron Theatre Tour 2012

The venues on Mikron's tour nearest to Southampton are listed in Waterways Events above. The two plays on this year's tour are:

### Losing the Plot

The gardeners of Thistledale Allotments are a rag-bag bunch of diggers and dreamers. Strong personalities frequently clash over the best treatment for mealy bugs, and the annual *'Heaviest and Longest'* competition is always a time when old feuds and new flirtations threaten to undermine the fragile peace.

Then Harvey from the Council pays them a visit and they realise that they must pull together, or forfeit their precious plot forever. But can they agree on a strategy? How will they convince Harvey of the vital role allotments have played in the life of the nation for centuries? What will they do when things inevitably get completely out of hand?

### Can You Keep a Secret?

Riots in our city streets, the worst economic crisis for decades, a long war fought abroad with no sign of progress.

Sound familiar? Welcome to England 1812. Whilst the country's elite enjoy lavish balls and chattering salons, textile mill workers fight for their livelihoods by smashing up the machinery designed to replace them. Luddism - a fight for rights or fear of progress? Direct action or mindless vandalism?

In the back room of a Yorkshire pub, a young lad is 'twisted in'. He takes the oath of secrecy and joins the Luddites. But why won't he give his real name, calling himself instead after the movement's mythical founder, Ned Ludd? What is he hiding? And who was Ned Ludd anyway?

## April Meeting

Tony Shadick

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There was a very disappointing attendance of only sixteen members at our April meeting. I cannot remember any time when we had such a small audience. It is appreciated that this was immediately before the Easter weekend when some members may have been on holiday but Tony's interesting presentation deserved a higher turnout.

As a member of the OS Cine and Video Club Tony accompanied our members on a number of Society trips over many years. In the early days he captured those moments on cine film, more recently converting them to digital images.

The evening opened with a 1968 boat trip from Fenny Compton to Braunston on board 'Water Ouzel'. There were many familiar faces of past members who belonged to the Society over forty years ago! Another, and more recent, boat trip took members on the restored section of the Wey and Arun Canal at Loxwood, going through two locks to the (then) recently opened Loxwood Aqueduct.

We then moved from the water onto the Midhants Railway with a steam trip on the Watercress Line from Alresford to Alton and back. Many of our current members were on view, particularly Eric Lewis, in his new Southern Railway uniform, during his training as a Travelling Ticket Inspector. Wife Sue, now also very involved with the catering side of the railway, was also present.

Back on the water, but tidal this time, Tony was able to take us onboard the restored Harbour Defence Motor Launch 'Medusa'. As

'HMS Medusa' she took part in the D-Day Landings. We shared in Tony's excitement on board 'Medusa' as she powered up Southampton Water. 'Medusa' will be taking part in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant on the River Thames in June.

Tony's presentation continued with views of old stationary engines, traction engines and vintage working farm machinery at the Dorset Steam Fair before finishing off at a Goodwood Revival Meeting.

Many thanks Tony for such an interesting meeting, it was a great shame there were so few members present to enjoy it. If I have left anything out, my apologies to Tony. He has more old film preserved on DVD which can be shown at a future meeting.

And more.....

### Rob Unsworth

Rob had celebrated a significant birthday recently and kindly brought in a huge chocolate cake and several bottles of wine to share with other members during the refreshment break. The wine was appreciated and the cake was delicious. Despite the few people there we 'managed' to eat all of the cake (some had second helpings) with only a very few crumbs left! It was a lovely celebration and we wished a Rob a very Happy Birthday. Many thanks Rob.

*Paul Herbert*

## Canal a worthy jubilee project

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SIR: The Queen's Diamond Jubilee this year has prompted queries about possible ways to mark the occasion locally. All over Britain, one can find excellent practical examples of how Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated.

One of our least-utilised but best local resources, the Redbridge and Andover Canal (Barge Canal), runs from behind the Plaza along the valley to Timsbury. It is a unique resource with enormous potential which many in Romsey don't even know exists, while those who do use it complain about its state.

The canal path has fallen into a state of ill-repair from Fishlake to Timsbury, where it is uneven, weedy, narrow and muddy, while being totally inaccessible to less mobile folks. A dilapidated bench collapsed years ago and no seats remain. Various voluntary groups slash weeds back occasionally, but in high summer the canal path becomes almost impassible.

The water board, who cleared the canal bed at intervals, seems to have ceased to do so and now trees overhang in many places and

plants clog the canal from bank to bank, making it impossible for craft to negotiate it.

The shortest and safest walking/cycling route from residential areas north and east of Romsey (including new housing being built at Abbottswood) into the town centre is along this canal. The enormous recreational potential of the canal north of Fishlake for the town's population is clear, though sadly ignored by councillors.

If you agree that this beautiful part of our heritage is a worthy contender for the start of a Diamond Jubilee Year Community Improvement Project, perhaps you can register interest/support for the idea by contacting me care of the Advertiser. A meeting to discuss ways to progress such a project could be arranged for all those interested.

CATHERINE M COX,  
Cupernham, Romsey

*Romsey Advertiser, 24 February 2012*

## Reservoir Watch

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March was an exceptionally mild month and the driest for the UK since 1953. Most of the country reported less than half the average rainfall, further intensifying the drought and extending its spatial extent. According to the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, much of the drought-affected region recorded only 30-40% of the March average rainfall. The winter recovery in groundwater levels has been extremely weak, river flows in March were more typical of late summer. Total river flow for the October-March period was the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest (after 1975/6) in a record starting in 1961.

In terms of British Waterways reservoir stocks, the Oxford & Grand Union, GU South and GU North groups are of particular concern, being well below their long term average for this time of year. Although there was some modest refill over the past month due to

the occasional rainfall (assisted by the implementation of Drought Schemes to pump additional water into some reservoirs), the overall water resource position for these parts of the network is of concern.

Water levels on the Kennet & Avon Canal are being closely monitored and similar restrictions to those on the Grand Union could be implemented there subject to water availability.

British Waterways will be reviewing the effect these restrictions have had in reducing demand for water over the Easter period along with projections of the future water resource position for the next few months of the main boating season, and will reissue an updated map in due course, highlighting any changes to the restrictions if they are considered necessary.

[www.waterscape.com](http://www.waterscape.com)

Further details can be found at <http://www.waterscape.com/features-and-articles/features/british-waterways-reservoir-watch>

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## Reading stores to face abandoned trolley fines

A Berkshire council is to start fining supermarkets at least £15 for every dumped shopping trolley it recovers.

Proposals to charge businesses for trolleys found abandoned were approved at a Reading Borough Council cabinet meeting on Monday.

Councillor Paul Gittings said the council was meeting the cost of recovering an average of 300 dumped trolleys every year.

The new charges will come into force in July.

Businesses offering customer's trolleys would start "using coin operated systems and ensure their employees patrol the local area", said Mr Gittings, who is Reading Borough Council's lead member for environment and climate change.

Under the plans, the council will charge £15 for removal, £7.50 a week for storage, £15 for returns and £50 to dispose of a trolley.

Mr Gittings said: "It's more symbolic than anything else but there is a serious side to this - we don't want our rivers and waterways full of trolleys."

He said he was told that when comedian David Walliams swam into Reading during his Thames challenge for Sport Relief, one of the first things he came across was a shopping trolley.

"As lead member I'm focused on ensuring Reading stays as neat and tidy as possible," he said.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-17734557> 17 April 2012

## Work to begin on Bedser Bridge over Basingstoke Canal

Building work is due to begin on a new pedestrian bridge over the Basingstoke Canal in Surrey.

The existing bridge in Woking town centre and a section of the canal towpath will be closed from 23 April to allow construction to start.

The new bridge is to be called Bedser Bridge in recognition of Surrey and England cricketing heroes Eric and Sir Alec Bedser from Horsell, in Woking.

Woking Borough Council said the old bridge had reached the end of its life.

### 'Minimise disruption'

The Lightbox museum and gallery will be open as normal during construction but diversions will be in place for pedestrians and

cyclists until early 2013.

"We are keen to minimise disruption for both residents and visitors and would like to apologise for any inconvenience as a result of these works," said the council's deputy chief executive Douglas Spinks.

The new bridge will give access to and from Woking town centre, Brewery Road car park and the new Living Planet Centre being built for WWF-UK alongside the canal.

The conservation charity has been at its current HQ, Panda House in Godalming, for more than 20 years.

Planning consent for its new building was granted in February 2011.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-surrey-17666606> 10 April 2012

## Wey & Arun Canal Centre opens at Loxwood

A crowd of over 200 enthusiastic supporters and guests attended the official opening of the Wey & Arun Canal Trust's new visitor centre, at Loxwood in West Sussex, on 1st April.

Mike Coleman, Chairman of West Sussex County Council, cut the red ribbon and saluted the exceptional work by all the volunteers.

The new building is only the latest presence of the Trust at Loxwood, which forms the heart of the restoration. The first was a wooden ticket office in the car park, followed by what they called the 'black shed', a corrugated iron lean-to behind the nearby Onslow Arms pub.

But in the last decade, with 10,000 boat passengers a year and tens of thousands towpath walkers, this had become completely inadequate.

The Trust then started thinking about a larger log cabin. However, a chance meeting with generous sponsors led to an even more ambitious idea for a very 'green' building. Designed by Fordingbridge, a specialist in environmentally sensitive buildings, the new centre uses sustainably sourced materials and exceptionally low energy requirements. The centre has been entirely financed by private fund-raising by Trust supporters.

Speaking at the ceremony, Sally Schupke, the Trust's chairman, said she hoped Loxwood residents would be proud of the canal in their village. She remembers that one of the first jobs canal restorers had carried out in the area was to remove tons of glass from the canal bed behind the Onslow Arms, which had been used as a bottle dump.

The opening ceremony also honoured Tim Jolly, a Trust stalwart



who died in 2010 at the age of 62. Tim used to spend most summer Sundays at Loxwood helping on the Trust's publicity stand and sharing his enthusiasm with visitors.

Sally Schupke also paid tribute to all volunteers who had been involved in the building, including project manager John Pryce and the Trust's conservation adviser, Ian Burton, who produced the landscaping design.

The Canal Centre is now open every weekend until the Autumn. Further information is available on the website [www.weyandarun.co.uk](http://www.weyandarun.co.uk).

[www.waterwaysworld.com](http://www.waterwaysworld.com) 4 April 2012

# 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.

**President:**

Brian Evans.

**Chairman:**

Alan Rose, 33 Brackley Way, Totton, Hampshire SO40 3HP. Tel: 02380 632558 (day) 02380 675312 (eve)  
Email: [info@apas-engineering.com](mailto:info@apas-engineering.com)

**Vice-Chairman:**

Paul Herbert. Tel: 02380 262365. Email: [p\\_herbert1@sky.com](mailto:p_herbert1@sky.com)

**Secretary:**

Angela Rose, 33 Brackley Way, Totton, Hampshire SO40 3HP.  
Tel: 02380 632558 (day) 02380 675312 (eve)  
Email: [info@apas-engineering.com](mailto:info@apas-engineering.com)

**Society Website:**

<http://www.sotoncs.org.uk>

**Treasurer & Membership Secretary**

Gill Herbert, 25 Rosemoor Grove, Chandler's Ford, Hampshire, SO53 1TB. Tel: 02380 262365. Email: [p\\_herbert1@sky.com](mailto:p_herbert1@sky.com)

**Committee:**

Maureen Greenham, David Townley-Jones

**Newsletter Editor & Webmaster:**

Peter Oates, 39 Church Street, Nether Heyford, Northamptonshire, NN7 3LH. Tel: 01327 341798.  
Email: [scs@whitenap.plus.com](mailto:scs@whitenap.plus.com)

**Meetings:**

Normally 1st Thursday each month at 7.45pm (see Waterways Diary). Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ. OS Grid Ref: SU410184.

## Droitwich Easter Gathering of the Historic Narrow Boat Club



gave an excellent talk and presentation on his years spent in the 1970's leading the initial stages of planning and renovation of parts of the waterway to prove that the two Droitwich Canals were worth saving.

Peter Oates came up to join in the "Droitwich Dig" in 1973 which was the first major restoration event.

However, despite the valiant attempts of volunteers, large amounts of funding had to be found, which culminated in the final stages involving BW during the first decade of the new millennium. The canals fully opened in July 2011.

On Sunday afternoon, an auction of "tat" donated by boaters was held, the proceeds of which are going to the Inglesham Lock Appeal. In the evening Peter and Laura, from SCS, kept us all keen with their Waterways Quiz.

The Romans knew Droitwich as "Salinae," the place of salt. It is known that there has been a settled community here for over 2000 years. Hence the Guided Town Walks and the Evening Ghost Walk were particularly exciting.

Finally, time to move Purton on, through to the River Severn and up to Stourport. Catching the train back from Kidderminster, the highlight of the day was to see the repainted A4 Class steam locomotive Bittern coming out of the Severn Valley depot onto the Main Line. We did not mind being held up on our journey by this superb sight.

*Alan & Angela Rose*

Above: Some of the boats at Netherwich Basin, Droitwich.  
Below: A4 Bittern at Kidderminster Station.



After a very warm, hot, weekend working our way up through the Hatton Flight, we returned to our boat *Purton* by train on the following Sunday, bringing with us with changeable weather. Slow going, due to low water levels and rubbish up to Kings Norton Junction, then on to the Tardebigge locks. We find this flight of locks very interesting and once the "pace" is set we are off! This time we endured rain, wind and sleet - it was a long day.

Wednesday am: through Hanbury Junction onto the Droitwich Junction Canal. BW provided assistance at the first lock and explained how to work the side pounds situated in the next few locks. He said I looked experienced enough to carry on through while he waited for an oncoming hire boat.

Alan and I felt very excited going through the "new section of new locks": one, then two in a staircase at the bottom of the flight. After a final height check, *Purton* eagerly crept though the low culvert beneath the M5 with a clearance of 1" according to Alan. I reckoned 3". We then continued through some further new sections and into Droitwich and Vines Park.

The basin in the park provided a very pleasant mooring with about 40 historic boats and a few modern boats passing through. The Bank Holiday weekend was busy, quite a few local families and other people from farther afield walked around. They showed lots of interest in the boats and peeping into the back cabins, mostly the doors were left open for this reason.

The Droitwich Working Men's Club was made available for our use. On Friday evening, Dave Turner, a historic boat owner,