



**NEWSLETTER No. 298  
MAY 1996**

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**MEETINGS**

1st Thursday each month at 7.45pm.  
St John's Ambulance Hall, King's Park  
Road, Southampton.

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

**2nd May 1996**

The National Association of Boat Owners  
by Peter Sterry

**Sunday 19th May 1996**

IWA Golden Jubilee celebrations:  
Guided walk along the Romsey Canal,  
Jubilee Jigsaw float and Barbecue.

**6th June 1996**

AGM followed by Waterway Videos.

**Saturday 29th June 1996**

Boat trip on the Kennet & Avon Canal

**4th July 1996**

A Lazy Summer  
by our own Paul Herbert.

**1st August 1996**

Members' slides.

**5th September 1996**

In Cressy's Wake by Tony Conder, curator  
of the National Waterways Museum,  
Gloucester Docks.

**3rd October 1996**

The Cotswold Canals Trust  
Bruce Hall, chairman of the Trust

**ROMSEY SOCIETY**

Monday, 13 May - Graham Horn talks on the 'Kennet & Avon Canal' at King John's House, Romsey. This will start at 8.00pm but as space is limited you are advised to arrive early. There will be an entry charge: Romsey Society members 50p, non-members £1.00.

**APRIL MEETING**

Rising near Luton, becoming navigable in Hertford and entering the Thames in the East End of London, the River Lee, or Lea, goes through a surprising number of changes for a short river.

All its aspects were well covered in Richard Thomas' interesting illustrated talk to the point where one felt that an actual visit to the river itself had been experienced.

Not only the river was covered, for Richard revealed many of the secrets of the Lea Valley, also the history of the navigation and towns and villages along the route.

It was obvious that our speaker had spent a lot of time on and around the river and had gone to some trouble in his research for all the details in his talk.

The barge traffic (refuse) that Richard mentioned has now been confirmed in the April issue of *Newways*, the British Waterways Staff Newspaper.

**SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

In accordance with the Constitution, notice is hereby formally given of the Southampton Canal Society's Annual General Meeting on the 6th June 1996 at St John's Ambulance Hall, King's Park Road, Southampton at 7.45pm. Any member may request an item to be included on the agenda of the AGM by giving at least fourteen days written notice of the item and its nature to the Chairman.

**BANBURY CANAL WEEKEND**

Our members Ken and Margaret Froud, who live on the Oxford Canal at Napton, have written to remind us of the Banbury Canal Weekend which will be held on 11th & 12th May 1996 near Banbury Lock as part of the IWA Jubilee celebrations. There will be free entry to this rally of narrowboats (including historic, wooden, steel-hulled, hire and private boats) and the attractions will include boat trips, crafts and demonstrations, and free entertainment such as music, face painters, puppeteers, jugglers, tombola, Adderbury Morris Men, stilt walking and fire eating. If you were thinking of seeing Tooley's Boat Yard before it is 'conserved as a major working exhibit within the proposed new Banbury Museum' (see last month's newsletter), this might be a good time for a visit.

**SOCIETY BOAT TRIP**

Don't forget the Society boat trip on the Kennet & Avon Canal which will be on Saturday 29th June 1996 from Bradford-on-Avon Wharf to Dundas Aqueduct and return. Tickets are selling well - if you're thinking of going and haven't yet paid for your passage then get in quick.

The cost of the trip will be £5.50 for adults and £4.00 for children under 16 (which does not include the cost of transport). Food may be ordered for consumption on the boat. Further details and booking forms may be obtained from Eric Lewis either at our meetings or from home (address above).

**SUIAG TRIPS**

A reminder of two trips being organised this summer by the Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group. Members of the Canal Society will be most welcome to go on either or both of these trips.

**Braunston Boat Show** Saturday May 25th - A lively and colourful day out at Braunston, the heart of the South Midlands canal network. Cost including coach transport and entry: £10 for adults, £3 for children and £8 for students.

**Bathtime** Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th July - A weekend along the Avon valley with a moderate amount of walking (around 4 to 5 miles each day). The attractions will include Claverton Pump (working), canal and river locks, aqueducts, old railways, various mills and Bath itself. Cost £60 including coach transport and bed & breakfast in Bath.

Further details of these trips from Jon Sims, 24 Nutshalling Avenue, Rownhams, Southampton, ☎ 01703 732868.

## JUBILEE JIGSAW JOURNEY START

Apart from a brief appearance on the River Hamble the day before, the the Hampshire section of the Jubilee Jigsaw started its water-borne journey to Birmingham on Easter Saturday, 6th April. Around 10 am, an assortment of boats were prepared and launched into the Itchen Navigation just above the new Mans Bridge. Peter Boyce's dinghy formed the flagship of a small flotilla of two inflatables and two canoes. Apart from being the largest vessel there, Peter's boat was the only one dressed overall in bunting. Three of the vessels were powered, possibly a first on the Navigation but all with "environmentally friendly" electric propulsion. After testing out the water, the boats assembled just downstream of the old Mans Bridge for the sending off ceremony at 11 am.

Around forty people assembled on land to watch the ceremony. These mainly comprised members of this Society and the IWA but also included a few surprised walkers out for a stroll in Riverside Park. We were graced by the presence of two mayors: Councillor Margaret Singerman, the Right Worshipful the Mayor of Southampton and Councillor June Watson, the Worshipful the Mayor of the Borough of Eastleigh.

Speeches were made by Mike Laishley, Chairman of the IWA Solent & Arun Branch, and the two mayors who then sent off the Jigsaw piece which was loaded into Peter Boyce's dinghy. Having presented each other with Civic Greetings, the two mayors also handed more greetings to Peter for onward transmission to the mayors of Romsey, Fareham, Portsmouth, Chichester, Arundel, Guildford, Runnymede, Elmbridge and Birmingham.

After a toast, the flotilla started off downstream towards Woodmill, watched by many more people out for a morning in the park. It is quite rare for a boat to be seen on the Navigation - five at once must have been almost unbelievable! The procession arrived at Woodmill soon

after 11:30 having had a long and arduous journey of nearly half a mile!

Although the mayor of Eastleigh had had to leave for another appointment, the Mayor of Southampton walked downstream to watch the Jigsaw piece being transferred across Woodmill Lane to Peter Glover's Mirror dinghy waiting for us on the tidal river. Jim Lanigan's inflatable was portaged over the road to be launched into the rising tide just below the site of the sea lock into the Navigation.

Although Peter was not due to set off until noon, there seemed little point in waiting for the appointed hour and he set sail about 10 minutes early. Just after Peter's boat disappeared round the bend and a couple of minutes before twelve, Alan White managed to arrive by car at Wood Mill after running errands for the Jubilee celebrations. Without Alan's extensive organisation on this and other Jubilee events, the morning would not have passed off so smoothly. It was the only disappointment of the day that he was unable to see the first fruits of his efforts.

Little remained except to return upstream, this time against the current. Where water swirls through the old Mans Bridge we found that the small electric outboard on my inflatable was not man enough without some assistance from my passenger Jon Sims on the oars. I am sure that the barges of yester-year would have had to be winched through this bridge. We now proceeded up the main river, past the White Swan, which at this point formed a navigable branch of the Itchen Navigation towards Gaters Mill. As the battery showed signs of running low against the strong current, we felt we ought to turn round just 50 yards short of the Mill and return to the pub. It must be many years since customers have visited this hostelry by boat. A pint and a bite to eat were a fitting end to a most enjoyable and even historic morning.

*Peter Oates*

## JIGSAW JOURNEY CONTINUED

*Peter Glover, our intrepid member afloat, has written this account of his carriage of the Hampshire piece of the IWA Golden Jubilee Jigsaw from Woodmill to Portsmouth.*

### Part I - Mirror Dinghy

Easter Saturday, with the weather looking good, I hoped to start the coastal part of my voyage at Woodmill on the River Itchen. Met members of the IWA, the Canal Society and the Lady Mayor of Southampton for the handover of the Jigsaw from Peter Boyce who had carried in his dinghy down the Itchen Navigation from Mansbridge.

Left Woodmill at 12 noon in my Mirror dinghy, full sail and a favourable breeze to negotiate the upper reaches of the river. Soon Cobden Bridge came into view, followed by the St Denys railway bridge. A wide variety of moored boats, both recreational and houseboats made the river an interesting visit, my first voyage on this stretch of waterway.

The next bridge was Northam with the TV centre building as a landmark. Around the next bend of the river was in sight of the new Itchen Toll Bridge - this time more than enough headroom for my Mirror rig. On past the modern development of flats around Ocean Village, the "Yachties' Quarter", to pass Southampton Docks with about a third of my journey completed. The light breeze from the NE still in my favour, I sailed on down Southampton Water,

passed through a large fleet of about 70 dinghies racing off Weston Shore, then past Netley Castle looking very imposing from the view offshore.

The next landmark was the oil jetty at Hamble with a large tanker, the *Fosna* from Bergen, berthed there. I had once spent the night there, taking shelter in the night watchman's hut, after being becalmed in a thick fog and a flood tide against me. Now, however, I was soon past, heading across the mouth of the Hamble River, busy with yachts a'coming and a'going. Now more than halfway, soon passing the Solent Breezes caravan camp and along the Meon shore (my familiar territory) into the small harbour at Hill Head known also as Titchfield Haven to arrive at 4.30pm after a distance of 13½ miles.

### Part II - The Titchfield Canal & the 8ft Pram Dinghy

Sunday 14th April at 10 am. A large number of people (about 20) met at Hill Head Beach car park. Peter Boyce of the IWA and George Watts, a member of Titchfield Historical Society, gave a conducted tour of the 2½ mile walk along the canal to Titchfield.

I was to meet the party of walkers with the Hampshire section of the Jigsaw and my small 8ft dinghy at the car park at Bridge Street. Having launched my dinghy into the canal at Titchfield in March 95, the day of the "Litter clean up walk", I have been 'Itchen' to try and 'Navy' it all

*(Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 2)

the way to the 'sea lock' at Hill Head. After a short paddle upstream to the footbridge near Titchfield Church, where a picnic lunch was had before a visit to the local for refreshments, the canal journey commenced at 2 pm.

The Bridge Street bridge had so little headroom, I had to lay out flat in the dinghy, hereafter renamed the 'Limbo Bridge'. In company with the returning walkers, three other bridges were negotiated, two obstructions portaged with help from the support group, the last 200 yards of thick reeds were overcome to have a final launch by the sea lock and display the IWA banner and Jigsaw section.

### Part III - Mirror Dinghy

Saturday 20th April. The final part of my journey meant rendezvous with Graham Deavin at the Camber Docks in Portsmouth at 11 am for handing over the Jigsaw section for the journey to Chichester. To be on time allowing for any mishaps meant an early start. I launched at Titchfield Haven at 7 am and with the wind a force 2 strictly unfavourable this time, coming in from the south east dead ahead, my trusty Seagull 40+ was perched on the stern, fed some fresh fuel and a new spark plug and off we go.

The first mile, I passed Lee-on-Solent, now without its pier, then the MOD ranges at Browndown into Stokes Bay. I was about half way just on 8 am and I felt happy with the situation and that I was going to make it on time. The choppy wind over tide conditions sent occasional spray over the bow and gave the Jigsaw a taste of salt water. Once around Gilkicker Point, Portsmouth Harbour entrance was in sight, although still 2 miles away. I passed Haslar Hospital and was approaching HMS Dolphin, the submarine base, just as two large P&O ferries were leaving Portsmouth and an IoW ferry was arriving. I waited until the fairway was clear then crossed the harbour entrance into the Camber Dock area at 9 am with 7½ miles covered.

I was soon met by Alan White and other members of the IWA. The slipway was very busy with other boat users. Graham Deavin and his beautiful motor launch *Dabblelyn* duly arrived and it was soon launched. The Jigsaw handing over ceremony was performed with a suitable toast to a successful continued journey.

*That must rate as one of the most unusual journeys to be taken by any of the Jigsaw pieces anywhere in the country. Thank you Peter for the first hand account.*

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### LATTON BYPASS

Several of our members have written to MPs about the building of the Latton Bypass without any provision for the Thames and Severn Canal (see last month's newsletter).

John Whitehouse has already received a reply (less than 10 days from writing): The estimate for the provision of the bridges would cost £0.5 million. "The decision that has been taken does not prevent the physical provision of bridges at some later date providing agreement can be reached on funding the cost. This is the real nub of the issue."

As John says, "It sounds like a typical stalling response is not encouraging. Judging by the speed of reply it seems that it had already been within his knowledge."

### NEW MAGAZINE

We have been told that a new Inland Waterways magazine is to hit the newsstands on Friday 10th May. Entitled Canal Boat, it is claimed to be lively, topical, colourful and pictorial appealing to the most ardent enthusiast, at the same time catering for those whose introduction to the joys of ownership is most often via a holiday afloat. To quote from the notice we've received, "Regular features will include expert boat reviews, maintenance and DIY, decoration and renovation, spotlight on selected canals and rivers, news and what's on, product reports, environmental issues, operating skills and lots more."

Whilst wishing the new publication well, with two waterway titles already on the market, it will have a hard battle on its hands to become established.

### SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

This month I have received a number of items from the membership for publication. Even with four pages this month there are several items which have had to be held over. But I would still like more contributions, especially for the 300th issue in July.

*Peter Oates, Editor*

### CANAL WALK AND BARBECUE

You will of course need no reminding of the Society's Guided Walk along the Romsey Canal (formerly the Andover & Redbridge Canal) which will take place on Sunday May 19th starting at 10.00am. The Mayor of Romsey will be getting afloat on the canal together with the famous IWA Jigsaw at around 11.30am. This will be followed by the Barbecue at Romsey Community School. It is intended that this will be held outside on the terrace and lawn stretching across to the River Test. However, in the event of bad weather, there will be room to sit under cover. The event is being organised in order to commemorate the Inland Waterways Association's Golden Jubilee.

Included in the price will be the food together with tea, coffee and squash. A licensed bar will also be available from 12.00 until 4.00. In attendance will be the Society's Sales Stand and the display on inland waterways. A raffle will also be held with, I am told, a number of good prizes. And, of course, there will also be the opportunity to meet friends and members and to put the world to right.

In addition there will be an exhibition of canal paintings by the well-known waterways artist Harley Crossley, although unfortunately Harley will be unable to attend in person.

Sales of tickets for the event are going well. Get yours from either the Editor or from Brian, price £3.50. In order to make the catering simpler (and to ensure there's enough food for you!), please buy your tickets in advance.

I would also remind you that for the walk you should have some suitable footwear (in wet weather the walk will not be desparately muddy but could be a bit slippery. Whilst there is some seating available at the school, you might be wise to bring a folding chair each if possible.

### SOUTHAMPTON CANAL SOCIETY LIBRARY

Items in the library may be borrowed by any member from Sue Lewis at our meetings. Please remember to return any books you've finished with so others may enjoy them.

## HIGHER AVON NAVIGATION

The following newspaper cuttings from the *Leamington Courier* were sent to me by Ken and Margaret Froud which demonstrate that *Nimby* is alive and well:

### Pleasure boat Plan

MP Sir Dudley Smith has hit out at plans to open the Rivers Leam and Avon to pleasure boats - Warwick Castle has also registered its concern.

The Upper Avon Navigation Trust is to carry out a feasibility study into introducing locks at Radford Semele to enable pleasure boats from the canal to move onto the Leam. Sir Dudley Smith has said he will "comprehensively" oppose the plan.

Sarah Montgomery, general manager at Warwick Castle, said: "Our concern on aesthetics is that the castle is a Grade I listed building with Grade I 'Capability' Brown landscape and it is our responsibility to ensure this aspect is conserved for posterity."

Any large scale changes to the river would need planning permission from the district council. Planning officer John Archer said further information would be needed before he could comment.

*Leamington Courier 22-3-96*

### Don't spoil this beauty spot!

#### Castle claims pleasure boats would be 'out of place' and cause pollution

Warwick Castle's general manager and head gardener have outlined their fears over a plan to open up the River Avon to pleasure boats.

Grounds and gardens manager Simon Walden is "very concerned" about proposals by the Upper Avon Navigation Trust to open the river up to leisure boats. He said it could spoil a beautiful part of the ancient town and threaten wildlife.

"We all know about the problems of pollution these boats leave behind them. I'm concerned because over the last few years we have encouraged wildlife to arrive near the castle, including mallards, swans, grebes and kingfishers. And there have been signs of otters around the Warwick area."

General manager Sarah Montgomery said she feared

"brightly coloured" pleasure boats would be out of place in the historic 'Capability' Brown landscape.

The idea being put forward is to install locks at Radford Semele to allow canal boats to cruise the River Leam and Avon, and a spokesman for the Upper Avon Navigation Trust disputes the castle's argument.

He said 50 per cent of the money spent on the scheme would go towards enhancing the natural environment, and the project would improve the Leam in particular which is a "dull river".

The plan is not yet a definite problem for the castle as any major changes have to be approved by the district council and the hearts of the National Rivers Authority experts will have to be won over. The NRA has expressed its concern about the idea and is waiting to receive more information.

*Leamington Courier 29-3-96*

### Navigation fears well off course

I am concerned about the article 'Don't spoil this beauty spot!'

If Mr Walden or Miss Montgomery had cared to visit the Inland Waterways 'Family Day' held in the Spa Centre recently they would have seen the proposals of the Upper Avon Navigation Trust and would have realised that their fears are unfounded. The proposals did not include "brightly coloured pleasure boats" going through the landscape of Capability Brown. (I doubt that he would have minded!)

Mr Walden has obviously not visited the navigation between Stratford and Tewkesbury otherwise he would have seen mallards, swans, grebes, kingfishers, herons and many other smaller birds which live on or near the river, clouds of damsel flies, dragonflies and butterflies in the summer. It simply is not true to say that boats destroy wildlife.

Perhaps Mr Walden and Miss Montgomery should study the plans of the proposed GUC-Leam link before making assumptions based on ignorance. - Mrs Kay Whelan, Park Lane, Great Alne, Warwickshire.

*Leamington Courier 12-4-96*

Thank you Ken and Margaret for your contributions this month. Have any of our other readers any comments to make about these articles?

## Southampton Canal Society Sales Stand

Enamel Society Members Badges	75p	Waterway Jigsaws (192 pieces 10" x 13 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> ")	£3.50
Embossed Ball Point Pens	50p	Screen Printed Tee Shirts	£6.50
<b>GEOprojects Maps</b>		with Society logo across chest	
Basingstoke Canal	£3.00	in Navy Blue - medium, large & extra large	
Oxford Canal	£3.75	in Red - medium	
Kennet & Avon Canal	£3.75	Embroidered Sweat Shirts	£15.00
Grand Union Canal (each)	£3.75	with Society logo on breast	
Map 1 Birmingham - Fenny Stratford		in Navy Blue - large	
Map 2 Braunston - Kings Langley		in Royal Blue - medium and large	
Map 3 Fenny Stratford - Thames		Cotton Shopper Bags	£2.25
Map 4 Leicester Line - Soar - Erewash		with screen-printed Society logo each side	
The Thames Map	£3.75	Colourful Tea Towels	£2.50
Notelets, with line drawings (by Brian Evans) of canal and Romsey scenes	£1.00	Decorated Mugs	£2.25
		Decorated Trays (two sizes)	£1.00 & £2.95

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