

# Newsletter

November 1996

Issue 304

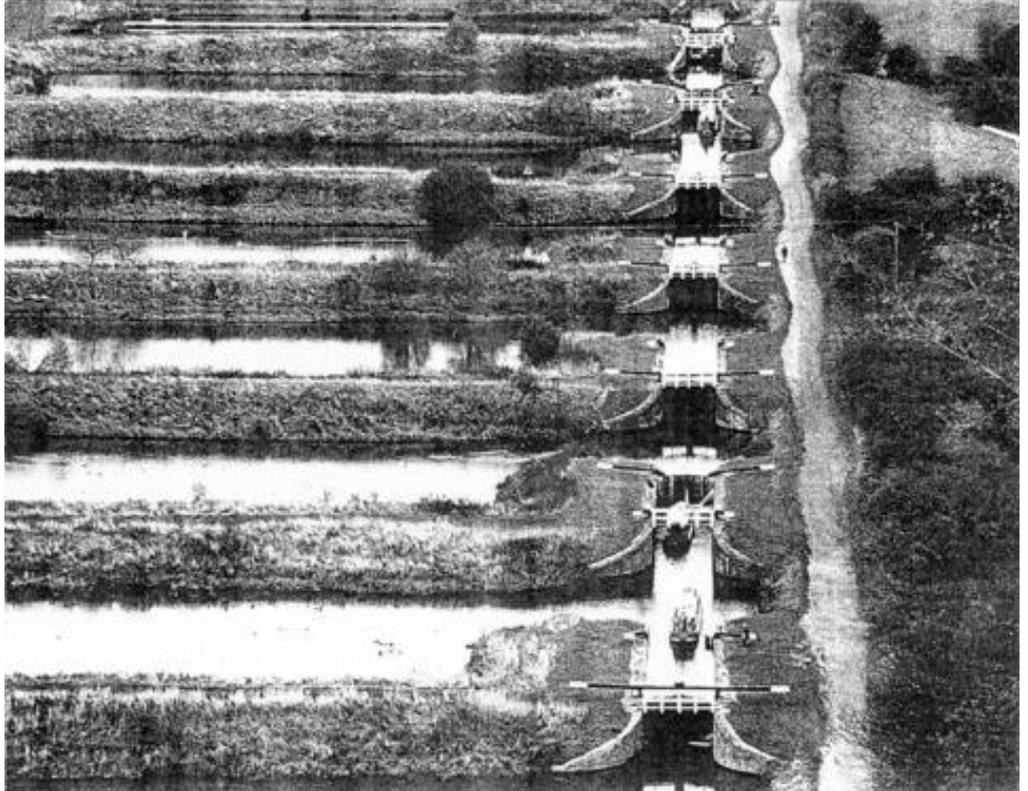
## £25M RECORD HERITAGE LOTTERY AWARD FOR KENNET AND AVON CANAL

**I**t was announced last week that the largest ever Heritage Lottery Fund award, of £25 million, will fund a programme of heritage and environmental conservation and visitor improvement works designed to protect and secure the 87 mile Kennet and Avon Canal for all waterway users.

The grant will be used to pay for a six year programme of works including embankment stabilisation, water supply improvements and lock refurbishments. The balance of £4 million is being provided by a consortium of local authorities, The Kennet and Avon Canal Trust, British Waterways and others.

Audrey Smith, IWA Chairman, said "We are particularly pleased that the Heritage Lottery Fund has seen fit to invest such a substantial sum securing the future of the K&A Canal. From the IWA's earliest days an enormous amount of volunteer time and money has been committed to saving the canal and seeing through its restoration." The application to the Heritage Lottery Fund included IWA's written support.

Mrs Smith added, "We are heartened that the allocation of lottery funds took into account that over £10 million has been raised for the Kennet & Avon Canal to date by members of the K&A Canal Trust, the IWA and other



Part of the Caen Hill locks at Devizes on the K&A

*Photograph: John Lawrence*

### **"WE NEED TO DO SOME SERIOUS PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE"**

organisations and individuals." The IWA was also one of the first contributors to the recent appeal to finance the back pumping for the 29 lock Caen Hill Flight near Devizes which came into use last August.

The IWA also welcomed the news that the works on the canal will commence this winter and include repairs to the Devizes Flight. Neil Edwards, IWA's Executive Director,

said, "Whilst the IWA have become increasingly concerned at the recent reductions in Grant-in-Aid to British Waterways, the position of waterways such as the K&A Canal, which are only partly classified as 'cruiseway' standard are even more perilous. The IWA feared that, without lottery or similar funding, insufficient investment would be made to maintain the 161 buildings and structures of historical and architectural importance, in British Waterway's ownership, along the canal corridor. Such a lack of investment could eventually have resulted in the closure of the canal."

Most of the money will be spent on engineering, with nearly £10m devoted to strengthening and underpinning the earthen and clay embankments which carry large lengths of the canal. Nearly £8m will be spent on dredging, relining the canal sides and refurbishing locks.

"We need to do some serious preventative engineering, to make sure the canal survives another 200 years", said Simon Salem, marketing director of British Waterways.

The canal was fully re-opened to navigation by HM The Queen in August 1990 after 26 years of restoration work.

*IWA Press Release 31-10-96 and The Independent 1-11-96*

1967 - 1996

READ ABOUT IT HERE FIRST

**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.

**Chairman:**

Brian Evans, 19 Lansdowne Gardens, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 8FN. Tel: 01794 517115

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David Townley-Jones

**Newsletter Editor:**

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**MEETINGS**

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

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS****7th November 1996**

Programme of Waterways Films,  
Ordnance Survey Cine Club

**5th December 1996**

Annual Inter-Society Quiz and  
American Supper

**2nd January 1997**

Further Visits to French Waterways  
Brian Evans with slides of  
the Briare, Canal du Berry, River  
Cher, River Vilaine and la Venise  
Verte

**6th February 1997**

Canalside Camera  
by Jon Sims

**6th March 1997**

Talk by Mrs Audrey Smith  
IWA Chairman

**3rd April 1997**

BW Customer Relations  
Jim Kelly

**Distributed by:**

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SO14 2AA. Tel: 01703 225255

**October Meeting**

**M**embers at the October meeting were among the first in the country to know that Gloucestershire County Council is to finance a navigable culvert under the new Latton Bypass on the Thames and Severn Canal., and that the local District Councils are likely to join in with further finance.

This wonderful news was brought to us by our speaker, Bruce Hall, Chairman of the Cotswold Canals Trust, though he made us wait for it until almost the end of the evening.

Starting at the Severn end of the Stroudwater Canal, Bruce gave us a bit of history, politics and showed us the difficulties and restoration changes as he worked his way towards the Thames.

We learned how to approach politicians, councillors, landowners, British Rail etc, saw slides of the world's first plastic bridge, restored lengthsmen's roundhouses, all shown with great enthusiasm. Even restoration of the Sapperton Tunnel, with its roof falls and problems did not seem to dampen the spirits of our speaker. One day this Severn - Thames link WILL be navigable throughout!

We enjoyed a most informative and amusing talk, and with the good news at the end, all the ingredients were there to justify our full, further support.

**New Canals for Old**

This is the title of a talk to be given by Chris Davey of the Waterway Recovery Group to the Romsey and District Society in Romsey Town Hall on Wednesday 15th January 1997 at 8.00pm. All welcome. Non-members £1.00 entrance fee.

**Best Canal Pub**

Last month we featured the first British Waterways Canals Alive! Pubs Awards. The Globe Inn at Linslade on the Grand Union near Leighton Buzzard has now won this year's national award. Strong canal theming, lots of facilities for children and excellent staff were outstanding features that helped the Globe to win.

*BW newways September 1996*

**Survey Complete**

A total of 35,000 photographs; 11,000 record sheets; 100,000 miles travelled by boat, bicycle, car and on foot - these are the measures of the BW Architectural Heritage Survey of England and Wales which began in 1988 and is now complete.

The survey was jointly sponsored by BW and English Heritage. It had the twin aims of creating a database of BW's historic estate and of recommending buildings for 'listing' because they are 'of special architectural or historic interest'. As a result of the survey a further 500 waterway buildings and structures have been listed - an indication of how poorly the canal heritage was on the old lists. Not one of the survey's recommendations was turned down by the Secretary of State for National Heritage - a 'record' according to English Heritage's Listing Branch.

Computerisation of the database is proceeding quickly, with over 7,000 records already on disk. Once the information is analysed it will have many uses. Now that we have a complete overview we can say with confidence that 'this length of canal is historically valuable' or that 'this aqueduct is unique'. Local planners and grant-awarding authorities (which include English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund) are taking us seriously. And that is good news for British Waterways.

*Nigel Crowe, BW newways September 1996*

**Yesterday was a . . .**

**Good Day for gondoliers**, as the Venice regional council voted for a change in the "Waterways Code" to permit gondoliers to serenade their passengers at any time of the day. Previously, gondoliers were allowed to sing only in the evening and at night. The new regulations also permit them to travel down the canals three abreast, rather than just two.

*The Independent 11-10-96*

**Canal Society Library**

Our librarian, Sue Lewis, is still waiting for your visit, at any meeting, to borrow any of the many interesting books on the waterways and related subjects.

## IWA WELCOMES UPGRADING FOR SHEFFIELD & TINSLEY CANAL - BUT CALLS FOR MORE

**T**he IWA has welcomed the announcement by Robert Jones MP, Minister with responsibility for the waterways, that the Sheffield and Tinsley Canal has been upgraded to a 'cruising' waterway from its previous 'remainder' classification. However, the IWA has urged the Government to amend the existing outdated legislation which makes a distinction between different classifications of waterways thereby severely restricting funding for the maintenance of 'remainder' waterways.

Work to improve the environment along the corridor of the canal has been undertaken over the last 15 years by British Waterways, the local authority and IWA volunteer work

parties. A major National Campaign Festival, organised by the IWA, was held in Sheffield in 1991.

IWA National Chairman, Audrey Smith, said "Whilst we are pleased that the Sheffield & Tinsley Canal has been reclassified, we are concerned about many other navigations which currently have a 'remainder' classification. The reclassification of this canal has only been made possible through a commitment of financial support by Sheffield City Council and we understand that the Department of the Environment are unwilling to reclassify other waterways unless similar financial commitments are made in respect of them. The present system is unfair! The majority of water-

ways are funded through Grant-in-Aid but for certain 'remainder' waterways, central funding is refused and funds have to be provided by local authorities or by other benefactors. This applies, for example, to a large part of the Birmingham Canal Navigations and to the western end of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal - it is as if the Government believes that residents of the West Midlands and Merseyside are second class citizens and not deserving of support for their waterways."

The IWA believes that the category of 'remainder' waterways as classified under the Transport Act 1968 should be abolished and all such waterways reclassified as 'cruising' waterways.

*IWA Press Release, 28 Oct 1996*

### The Sprat and Winkle Way

Test Valley Borough Council is in the process of submitting a bid to the Millenium Commission for a "pedestrian cycle path" between Andover and Romsey. If the bid is successful, it will provide a link between the two principal towns in the Borough and between several villages in the Test Valley. 75% of the Borough's population live within 3 miles of the route.

The route incorporates existing highways and public rights of way. Much of the route will run along the former "Sprat and Winkle" railway line which before that was the Andover and Redbridge Canal. Most of this line is owned by Hampshire County

Council. The southern part of the route will follow the surviving canal towpath between the Timsbury Road and Romsey. The cost of the project has been estimated at £1.9 million.

Details of the project will be on display at the following exhibitions where council officers will also be available:

Saturday 9 November at Lower Guildhall, Andover: 1.30pm to 4.00pm.

Tuesday 12 November at Timsbury Village Hall: 3.30pm to 7.00pm.

Thursday 14 November at Stockbridge Town Hall: 3.30pm to 7.00pm.

Saturday 16 November at Romsey Town Hall: 2.00pm to 5.00pm.

If you have any queries, you can

contact Steve Lees on Romsey (01794) 515117, extension 5563 or Amanda Ford on Andover (01264) 343219.

Comments on the proposed bid are invited from the public. All those received will be considered by the Council before a final decision is made. Your comments should be sent, by 28 November 1996, to The Director of Planning, Test Valley Borough Council, Council Offices, Duttons Road, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 8XG.

The Millenium Commission's decision will be announced early in the New Year. If a bid is made and is successful, work on the scheme would commence in the summer of 1997.

### 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	Notelets, with line drawings (by Brian Evans) of canal and Romsey scenes	£1.00
<b>GEOprojects Maps</b>		Screen Printed Tee Shirts	£6.50
Basingstoke Canal	£3.00	with Society logo across chest	
Oxford Canal	£3.75	in Navy Blue - medium, large & extra large	
Kennet & Avon Canal	£3.75	in Red - medium	
Grand Union Canal (each)	£3.75	Embroidered Sweat Shirts	£15.00
Map 1 Birmingham - Fenny Stratford		with Society logo on breast	
Map 2 Braunston - Kings Langley		in Navy Blue - large	
Map 3 Fenny Stratford - Thames		in Royal Blue - medium and large	
Map 4 Leicester Line - Soar - Erewash			
The Thames Map	£3.75	Cotton Shopper Bags	£2.25
London - City and Docklands Atlas	£3.75	with screen-printed Society logo each side	
The Broads	£3.75	Colourful Tea Towels	£2.50
Birmingham Canal Navigations	£3.75	Decorated Mugs	£2.25
Shropshire Union Canal	£3.75	Decorated Trays (two sizes)	£1.00 & £2.95
Llangollen and Montgomery Canals	£3.75		

## CHAIRMAN'S VACANCES Part 2

**F**rom Briare, Annegret and I moved to a beautiful campsite in the Forest of Tronçais, a few miles north of Montluçon. We stayed 9 days there for it was an excellent centre from which to visit the Canal du Berry, sadly described as a Canal abandoné, though for much of its length it is in better condition and deeper than most of our canals. Though roads have been built on the canal bed in at least two places, and we found one long dry section, the lack of good lock gates seems to be the biggest physical problem. To add to this the canal has been handed over to small local authorities, in short lengths and another big problem is the lack of will to restore or use. Many French canals seem to be going still into decline, rather like the English ones were 30 to 40 years ago.

On our first visit we found a dry section, caused by a quarrying company who have set up a crushing plant on or beside the course, robbing several miles of the canal of water.

Walking north along this section, we found the Pont Canal de Tranchasse, a beautiful stone aqueduct which strides with eight arches over the River Cher. Also without water in the canal channel, a forgotten monument,

except for the fact that the towpath is popular with walkers and cyclists. Immediately on the end of the aqueduct is a lock and, hard to believe, this has recently been filled with rubble. Whilst realising that this would prevent frost damage I feel that that was not the motive.

We drove north again to find the junction of Fontblisse where the three parts of the Canal du Berry come together and from where all kilometre posts are measured. Like many canal junctions it is well away from all roads, a kilometre towpath walk to total peace. A warm summer evening in Central France with junction, lock, lock cottage and canal lined with tall poplars casting symmetrical reflections on the still water. All that was missing were good lock gates and a few boats.

Next day we visited St Amand-Montrond, a busy little town which could be compared with Newbury. It had a deep stretch of canal with fishermen and a number of residents promenading on towpaths, shaded by huge conker trees. But why no tripping boat?

Highlight of our stay was a visit to the Canal du Berry Expo at Magnette, a

large canalside collection of canalia including two Berrichons (local barges), lock gates, kilometre posts, documents, pictures etc. Leading light at Magnette is M René Chambareau and it is thanks to him and his friends and helpers that such a wonderful museum exists.

M Chambareau is a member of the IWA and we were like a pair of excited boys as we showed each other IWA membership cards. He speaks excellent English and, despite a busy afternoon, devoted nearly three hours to our visit. Imagine this poor man's frustration as he reads about English work parties and Waterway Recovery Group in his copy of *IWA Waterways*, while his own canal slowly falls apart. Maybe one day WRG will be taking French 'holidays'.

If you are ever hurrying down the A71 - E11 motorways towards the south of France make sure to stop off for a while and see René Chambareau's museum, you would certainly be made very welcome.

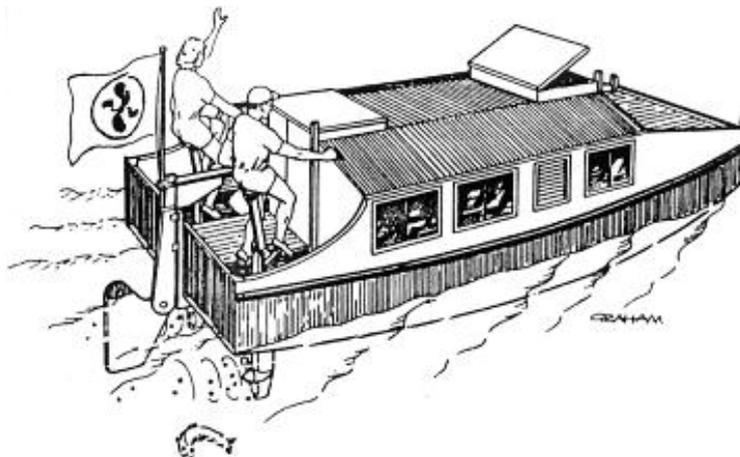
Now that you have read the book (very much abridged), come along to the January meeting and see the slides.

Brian Evans

### Pedal Power Creates a Stir on British Canals

*Escargot* is a boat that has been designed by Philip Thiel, a naval architect from Seattle, USA. A model of this pedal-powered canal cruiser was displayed in the IWA marquee at this year's National Waterways Festival at Dudley.

The boat has accommodation for two people in a plywood shell approximately 6ft by 18ft 6in. Motive power is provided by two Seacycle units positioned on the rear deck. It is said that it will require little more effort from the crew than if they were cycling along the towpath. The advantages to the environment are the lack of noise, pollution and exhaust while the crew is provided with healthy exercise.



It is now planned to build a full-size version of *Escargot* in the UK and to launch her in August 1997 at Windmill End. WRG volunteers will be crewing her in relays during her journey from Dudley via Birmingham, Warwick, Braunston and Oxford to Henley. It is due to arrive there for the 1997 IWA Festival. The Thames is renowned for the variety of craft using it but the sight of two red T-shirted Wergies pedalling silently along should cause a few spilt G&Ts.

Watch out for the Quiet Revolution in 1997! The artist's impression was produced by Chichester Canal Society member Graham Butler. Further information from UK Publicity Manager, Jon Sims on 01703 732868.

Based on articles in *Waterways World Nov 1996* and *Chichester CS Autumn Newsletter*

## IWA Criticises Squeeze on Boaters

The IWA issued a deeply critical response to the news that BW licence fees are to rise by 25% above the level of inflation over the next three years. IWA National Chairman, Mrs Audrey Smith, said "Most boat owners can ill afford any increase in licence fees on top of additional expense brought about by the Boat Safety Scheme".

This criticism follows BW's announcement that 1997 licence fees are to rise by 10.2% from 1st January and a further 10% plus inflation for 1998 and 1999. The IWA believes that these increases are a direct result of a Government directive that boat owners must be squeezed for more cash in an attempt to replace cuts in Government funding for the waterways.

The IWA has already expressed concern at the mounting backlog of maintenance waiting to be tackled by BW and the Environment Agency which could result in serious accidents and/or waterway closures unless new funding is found quickly. Audrey Smith spoke of these worries at the IWA's AGM on 28th September. Many members were determined to lobby MPs and Ministers over the coming weeks and months.

Mrs Smith said "If IWA members has received news of these massive licence increases before the meeting, I believe it would have been difficult to restrain feelings. However, I do believe that our members are perceptive enough to realise that the cause of this outrageous licence increase is Government mismanagement rather than BW greed."

News of the licence increases has been tempered by the welcome announcement that BW and the EA are to permit boaters licensed with either navigation authority up to 15 days usage per annum of the other's navigations without further charge. The ability for BW licence holders to use the Thames will benefit boaters attending the National at Henley in August 1997.

*IWA Press Release 2 Oct 1996*

## Water situation

Better rainfall and reduced demand for lockages have both helped to keep nearly all canal summits open. However, reservoir supplies to the summit of the south Oxford Canal have been exhausted and the canal has had to close at Marston Doles and Claydon Flight. The situation on the Crinan Canal was critical but the crisis seems to have passed. Reservoir holdings at 11 October as a percentage of capacity were:

Crinan	13%
Leeds & Liverpool Canal	41%
Macclesfield group	33%
Caldon group	9%
Birmingham Canal Navigations	52%
Leicester Line	21%
Oxford Canal	11%

*BW newways October 1996*

## Meet Santa Claus Boat Trips

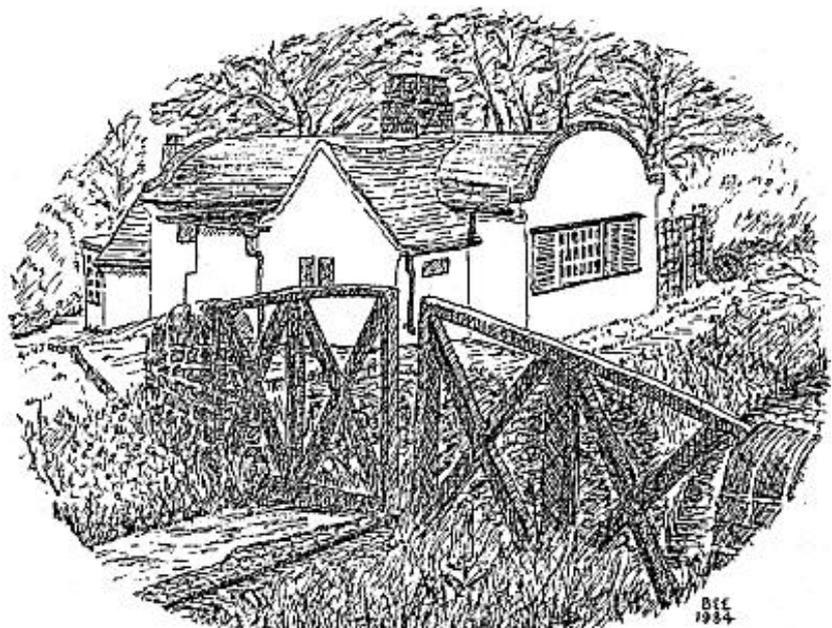
The Chichester Canal Society is organising these enjoyable Christmas trips again this year. The trip will cost £4.00 for adults and children and the latter will receive a suitable personalised present and everybody will be offered festive hospitality. *Egremont* will leave Chichester Canal Basin everyday from Saturday 30 November to Tuesday 24 December at 10.30, 12.00, 13.30 and 15.00. The maximum number of passengers is 12, irrespective of age. Trips by advanced booking only so Santa has the right presents in his sack! Bookings: Vic Nicholls on 01243 605631 or write to 7 Orpen Place, Selsey, Chichester, West Sussex PO20 0EN.

## Caley gets £2.8m

At the end of September Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland, announced the award of £2.8 million extra government funding for urgent stabilisation work on the Caledonian Canal at Fort Augustus and for preliminary work at Banavie this winter.

A further £16 million is needed over the next three years to complete the repairs necessary for continued use of the canal.

*BW newways October 1996*



Barrel-roofed cottage, nr Lapworth