



Newsletter

November 1997

Issue 315

HAVING A BREAK

Ken and Margaret Froud, two of our members who live aboard their boat near Napton, have recently been on 'holiday' to get away from it all. I am grateful to Margaret for providing this account.

Our planned holiday with friends on *Rajah Brooke* was to cruise the southern GU and visit Aylesbury before drydocking our boat *DUORF II* on 12th October at Yardley Gobion on the way back.

However, two days out from Napton, Fred and Phylis had to return home as a family member was seriously ill. The prospect of working wide locks on our own was daunting as very few boats were on the move, and we missed the cheerful company of our friends.

Visiting Milton Keynes shopping centre was our first frustration. Our up-to-date Nicholsons guide tells you to moor at Bridge 82A. This we did BUT there is no access on to the dual carriageway from the canal and never has been!! A passing cyclist recommended cruising on to Pear Tree Bridge Marina and catch a bus.

After a pleasant tour of the shops and a chat with David Kessler-Lyne in John Lewis' about SCS and the 30th Birthday Party we attended, it was time to catch a bus back to Pear Tree Bridge. Bus driver after bus driver declared they didn't go there. Then a lady front-seat passenger argued that that one did! We took her word for it and got on - she was right.

Later on that same day we came across contractors laying fibre optic cables. Their equipment was everywhere - on towpath and in barges and one of these sank in the bridgehole No 99 at Willowbridge Marina just as we approached it, leading to a hold-up of 24 hours! Two pumps were brought in, together with plastic sheeting and sandbags to empty the loaded barge of water. After several hours - and just as it was getting dark - the pumps failed and the sandbags tumbled into the barge. Everyone then went home to try again next day.

More sandbags and a much larger pump arrived in the morning, together with a much larger presence of BW personnel. After four hours more, the barge was raised sufficiently to pull it clear - when it promptly sunk again! What happened subsequently we do not know, as it was a relief to get under way again separated from the noise of

equipment and traffic. Still we did get a few chores done while waiting.

The weather was perfect for nearly three weeks and we cruised as far as Watford. Rickmansworth had been our planned turnaround point, as we intended to surprise a boating friend of ours there. But on checking her address we discovered she lived in Berkhamsted, so the surprise was on us as well as we had passed through Berkhamsted two days previously! We much enjoyed our meeting.

The narrow locks of the Aylesbury Arm were quick and easy to work - it was a pleasant diversion from the main line of the GU.

Then came disaster - I fell over at Marsworth Locks closing a bottom gate and broke my left wrist very badly. Ken got the boat round to Pitstone Wharf where an ambulance soon arrived to take us to Stoke Mandeville Hospital. We were there all day, and I had to return the next day but one to have my arm replastered and X-rayed - not easy when the hospital is twelve miles away from the canal.

We had to keep on the move as our drydocking date was in four days time. Fortunately, a Wyvern hire boat brought us nine locks and a swing bridge to Leighton Buzzard; our son-in-law (who lives near Bedford) took us to hospital from there and we had a taxi back. Another Wyvern hire crew brought us through the next locks to Milton Keynes. It poured with rain all day and we passed 300 fishermen taking part in a match - not ideal boating conditions, but we did get to the dry dock at Yardley Gobion with two hours to spare.

Four days later and *DUORF II* is looking much smarter, all done single handed by Ken. I haven't been able to help him at all. This afternoon (16th October) the dock will be flooded - then there are 27 locks between us and Napton to negotiate.

Thank you very much for the story, Margaret. I trust that your wrist is feeling much better and I'm sure all our members will join me in hoping you get well soon.

Get Well Soon

Apart from Margaret Froud's recent difficulty (see article elsewhere in this issue), a little bird tells me that Society member Joan Reed from Braunston has recently been in hospital with the prospect of more surgery looming ahead. Our sincerest best wishes to you, Joan, and let's trust that you have a speedy recovery.

Water Success

BW themselves describe their management of its water resources this summer as "Magnificent". Despite the driest 2½ years since 1850, there were no canal closures for lack of water. Restrictions were relaxed on many canals and some summits were able to sustain unrestricted passage.

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

Secretary:

Eric Lewis, 51 Friars Croft, Calmore, Hampshire, SO40 2SS. Tel: 01703 860384

Treasurer & Membership:

Laura Sturrock, 27 Northlands Road, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 5RU. Tel 01794 517614

Committee:

Martin Cripps
Paul Herbert
Peter Oates
David Townley-Jones

Newsletter Editor:

Peter Oates, 27 Northlands Road, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 5RU. Tel: 01794 517614

MEETINGS

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

October Meeting

In presenting his 'Bristol to Sharpness', Alan Padwick constantly emphasised the dangers involved when taking a narrow boat out onto tidal waters. Every detail of the journey must be well planned and all precautions taken to ensure a safe and enjoyable journey.

With excellent, clear diagrams Alan pointed out the route taken showing navigation markers, and this coupled with the strict timetable enforced by the strong tides of the Bristol Channel made a very exciting talk.

After the tea break, we went by video through the whole experience again. Seeing how small the two narrow boats looked at the bottom of a towering quay at low tide and plodding through the racing currents, viewers could well see the reasons for planning and safety that Alan had put over so well during the evening.

Chichester Canal Society 'Santa Special' Boat Trips Christmas 1997

Period of Operation: 29th November to 24th December

Departure Times (Canal Basin): 0915, 1030, 1200, 1330 & 1500

Cost: £4.00 per passenger, adult or child. (NB No concessions)

Rewards: Every child will receive a present from Santa
Every adult will receive festive refreshment

Booking: Advance booking essential
Contact Vic Nicholls on 01243 605631

NB Book early to avoid disappointment

FORTHCOMING SCS EVENTS

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 6th November 1997 | Bugsworth Basin and the Inland Waterways Protection Society - Ian Edgar |
| 4th December 1997 | Annual Inter-Society Quiz and American Supper |
| 1st January 1998 | "Paris to Switzerland" with Ron and Myra Glover |
| 5th February 1998 | BT Global Challenge by Tom White |
| 5th March 1998 | Somersetshire Coal Canal by Roger Halse (Chairman of Somersetshire Coal Canal Soc) |
| 2nd April 1998 | "Lots to do at the Soo" - A look at N American Waterways with Colin Ward |
| 7th May 1998 | River Lea (Part 2) - Bow Back Rivers by Richard Thomas |
| 4th June 1998 | Daystar Theatre with their new show for 1998 (admission charge) |
| 2nd July 1998 | AGM and Waterways Videos |
| 6th August 1998 | Members' Slides |
| 1st October 1998 | "Black Country Waterways" with Ron Cousens |

**Subscriptions**

This is just a further reminder to members that subscriptions to the Society for the year 1997-8 became due back at the AGM in July. Please also note that the rates were increased at that meeting to: Single £6.00 and £9.00 for the Family rate. By any reckoning still a bargain for 12 meetings, newsletters etc!

Distributed by: Hunt & Co, Chartered Accountants,
123/124 High Street, Southampton, SO14 2AA.
Tel: 01703 225255

Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society

SHCS holds a series of illustrated talks each winter. The venue is the Westgate Centre, Woking, alongside the Basingstoke Canal, at Chobham Road Bridge. Meetings start at 8pm. Admission free. Tea, coffee and biscuits provided.

11 November (Tue) - "The River Lee" by Richard Thomas. (NB Richard visited SCS with this talk some months ago. This is another opportunity to see the talk, before Richard's visit to SCS next May with a second talk on the River.)

10 December (Tue) - An informal Social Evening. If you have any slides, please bring them with you. We may even have some more of those hot mince pies which disappeared so quickly last time!

13 January (Tue) - "A Visit to China" by Robin Higgs. Robin was Chairman of SHCS for many years and campaigns extensively on behalf of our inland waterways. He is also President of the Mid-Hants Railway (the Watercress Line), and his interest in railways worldwide has resulted in a number of trips to see railways in foreign lands.

10 February (Tue) - "Direct Television from Alexandra Palace" by Arthur Dungate. Arthur produces Audio Visual displays for SHCS. He used to work for the BBC Television Service in the 1950s. This talk recounts some of his experiences of Television in those pioneering days.

IWA Guildford & Reading Branch Events

The branch are holding the following meetings at the Basingstoke Canal Centre, Mytchett Place Road, Mytchett, Surrey (off A321 Frimley - Guildford road). Talks are illustrated by colour slide or video. Doors open 7.30pm, start 8.00pm.

24 November (Mon) - "Manufacture and Transport of Gunpowder in Surrey" by Prof A Crocker.

26 January 1998 (Mon) - "River Thames, Limehouse to Lechlade" by Ian Fletcher.

23 February 1998 (Mon) - "Basingstoke Canal, History and Restoration" by Tony Harmsworth.

23 March 1998 (Mon) - Branch AGM, followed by "Limehouse to the Medway by Narrow boat" by Norman Woolley.

20 April 1998 (Mon) - "Kennet and Avon Heritage Lottery Fund" by John Laverick (BW Project Manager).

Boat Rally: July 1998 - Godalming Working Boat Rally. Largest ever (?) gathering of working boats at the southernmost point of Britain's connected inland waterway system. Full weekend event, precise date still to be confirmed. All information from Mike Adams 01483 773512.

IWA Salisbury Group Events

20 November (Thu) - Presentation on the Dorset & Somerset Canal by Derrick Hunt at Salisbury Rugby Clubrooms, Castle Road, Salisbury at 7.30pm. Details from Tony Fry on 01722 710192.

10 March (Tue) - Panama (provisional) by John Humphries. John in association with Hugh McKnight has in previous years presented 16mm films of his voyages along the canals of the continent. Although circumstances have prevented him from visiting SHCS recently, hopefully in March he will be able to present a film trip, possibly on Panama.

8 April (Tue) - "The Foxton Inclined Plane" by Mike Beech (Curator of the museum of the Foxton Inclined Plane Trust). This talk will detail the Trust's plans to restore and rebuild this engineering marvel to full operation.

CANAL SOCIETY SALES STAND

GEOprojects Maps

Basingstoke Canal	£3.00
Oxford Canal	£3.75
Kennet & Avon Canal	£3.75
Grand Union Canal (each)	£3.75
Map 1 Birmingham - Fenny Stratford	
Map 2 Braunston - Kings Langley	
Map 3 Fenny Stratford - Thames	
Map 4 Leicester Line - Soar - Erewash	
The Thames Map	£3.75
London - City and Docklands Atlas	£3.75
The Broads	£3.75
Birmingham Canal Navigations.....	£3.75
Shropshire Union Canal.....	£3.75
Llangollen and Montgomery Canals.....	£3.75

Notelets – with drawings of canal and Romsey scenes..... £1.00
(by Brian Evans)

Tee Shirts – Screen printed with Society logo across chest £6.50
in Navy Blue - medium, large & extra large
in Red - medium

Sweat Shirts – 30th Anniversary in Light Grey..... £16.00
with multi-coloured embroidered Society logo on breast

Sweat Shirts – Standard in Navy or Royal Blue..... £15.00
with Society logo embroidered on breast

Burgees – Navy Blue - screen printed Society logo on each side..... £8.00

Shopper Bags – Cotton with screen-printed Society logo each side ... £2.25

Tea Towels – Various colourful designs..... £2.50 & £3.25

Decorated Mugs..... £2.25

Society Members Badges – Enamel 75p

Ball Point Pens – Embossed 50p

Proposed Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR) Effect on Restoration of Lichfield & Hatherton Canals

Last week, our Chairman received a letter from the Chairman of the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust asking for our support on the problems raised by the BNRR. The following is the text of this open letter addressed to all members of the Southampton Canal Society

Dear Brian

Can you imagine what it would cost to provide TWO canal crossings AFTER the BNRR has been built when they could be done as part of the original construction? The likely answer is "so much that the work would be very seriously delayed"!

It is now widely known and accepted that restoration of the Wyrley & Essington Canal, Ogley Section (named the Lichfield Canal) and the Hatherton Branch of the Staffs & Worcester Canal (named The Hatherton Canal) is well in progress with considerable finance and effort already expended. Representations to this effect were made at the second Public Enquiry into the proposed new toll motorway and were totally upheld by the Inspector who recommended the requirements for restoring both Canals be included during the construction of the Motorway at the private developer's expense.

In July, a decision letter issued on behalf of Rt Hon John Prescott, MP, Secretary of State for Transport, Environment and the Regions tersely stated without reason there should be no provision for the "Hatherton Canal", and minimal foundations only during road-building to enable a "Lichfield Canal" aqueduct to be constructed by the Trust later (albeit without any claim for any loss of tolls).

These points are put more fully in the enclosed "BNRR letter" with extracts from the report and the reply. We are seeking every possible support from all parts of the country as the decision seriously affects the future prospects of the whole of the forty miles of Birmingham Canal Navigations which are in much need of revitalisation. Restoration of the two Canals would provide an opportunity for boats - and other canal users - to pass in and out of the BCN in the north east and north west, creating several new cruising rings in the Midlands.

Can I ask you please to bring this letter and enclosure to the attention of your members and encourage them to write to their Member of Parliament to take up with the Secretary of State the need to reconsider the decision in favour of providing for the Canals during the construction of the Motorway. NB The volume of letters was a major influence in changing the recent "Latton" decision.

Since I wrote last March, several Clubs have taken Group Membership of the Trust which is very encouraging support. Others are again invited to do so by asking me for the necessary papers. We are doing our best towards achieving full restoration but on this vital issue of the BNRR, WE NEED EVERYONE'S HELP NOW. Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Yours sincerely

J Eric Wood
Chairman

A copy of the enclosed "BNRR letter" is attached to this newsletter. Your editor feels that this matter is important enough to be advertised as fully as possible to our members. Please take the time to read the letter. I and your chairman ask you all to seriously consider writing to your MP on this matter. Don't leave it to someone else to object on your behalf because they could be leaving it to you!

I am sure that you have enough material in the attached letter to compose an objection, but I am sure that even the briefest letter stating that the Secretary of State's decision needs to be reviewed is better than nothing. Such a letter does not need to be lengthy, a simple statement of one or two reasons for objection is sufficient. It is a fact that the number of letters about the Latton crossing was a major factor in the change of fortunes on the Thames and Severn Canal. A few minutes of your time and your letter CAN make a difference!

The Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust Limited

Dear Supporter,

THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION ON THE BIRMINGHAM NORTHERN RELIEF ROAD

You will have heard that the Government has agreed that the Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR) is to be constructed. You may also have heard various stories about the effect this will have on our plans to restore the Lichfield and Hatherton canals. Some of those stories are untrue due to inaccuracies introduced by the media who, though trying to support us, have got the message wrong. Here is the real version!

Our two restoration projects are not doomed! However, the Secretary of State's decisions have presented us with a major setback - and this despite the total support of the Inspector at the Public Inquiry. In his report the Inspector not only stated that he considered that Midland Expressway Ltd (MEL) should build an aqueduct to permit the BNRR to pass under the Lichfield Canal and tunnels to permit the Hatherton restoration route to pass below the motorway and some of its side roads, but he also recommended that MEL should pay the full costs of both. The Inspector's report will delight to every waterway enthusiast who has the chance to see it. His support is very detailed, extremely comprehensive and is clearly designed to block every avenue of attack open to the road-building lobby. As you can imagine the Trust is delighted with his report - and angry with the Secretary of State's (S of S) reaction to it.

Though endorsing all the recommendations which support the construction of the motorway, the S of S peremptorily dismisses the construction of the canal crossings on the grounds that the restoration is a long term project and of 'precedence'. He concedes that MEL should construct the foundations for the aqueduct but states that the Trust should build, at its own expense, the aqueduct and, believe it or not, pay for the construction of the tunnels at Churchbridge to be built later under the fully operational motorway. We do not believe that John Prescott, who is now Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions or his 'Environment' and 'Regions' staff had any hand in the production of his decision letter which smacks of the heavy hand of the old Ministry of Transport in the former 'roadbuilding is king' era. The Trust intends to seek to persuade the S of S to change his mind and, when we have marshalled the right package of political support (cross party, local and national) we intend, together with the IWA, to seek an interview with Mr Prescott for that purpose.

How can you help? We doubt that a petition alone will have much effect and think that letters of support from as wide a field of supporters would be much better. We also do not think that hundreds of signed copies of one identical letter will be very effective either. **If you wish to help, please will you write to your local M.P. and/or to John Prescott, in your own words, drawing on some of the points listed overleaf**, - the points are in the main taken from the Inspector's report and the S of S's decision letter.

With our Thanks,
L&HCRT

POINTS FOR YOUR LETTER OF PROTEST

His Address:

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP, Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions
Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, LONDON, SW1P4DR

Extracts from S of S's Decision Letter

1. para 51. The S of S notes that the Trust's work is a long term project. "The S of S does not **therefore** consider that the substantial expenditure required to implement in full the alternatives 18 (ie the aqueduct) and 77 (ie the tunnels) as recommended by the Inspector is justified. He has decided that it would not be appropriate to require their adoption as part of the BNRR scheme."

2. para 52. "...he considers that the national strategic significance of the BNRR ... outweighs the local plan policies for the restoration of the canals. It is therefore reasonable that the construction of the BNRR ... should take precedence over the canals' restoration where conflict between the two arises."

The Company is a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee and is registered as a charity - Charity No 702429. This Trust is supported by the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) a non profit distributing Company Limited by Guarantee and registered as a Charity

Points Made in the Inspector's Report

3.para 10.5.3.2 "... there is no conflict of principle between the construction of the BNRR and the restoration of the canals; any conflict that there might be residing in the details. Of the two, the BNRR is plainly the more demanding and of higher national importance, and in my view it is both correct and reasonable that its alignment should take precedence over that of the canal restoration where a choice has to be made between them. However, taking precedence does not seem to me to imply over-riding other normal standards, policies or requirements that are not incompatible with precedence."

4.para 10.5.3.11 "As far as benefit is concerned, the forecast level of visitor expenditure, per annum, arising from the restoration of the canals is of much the same order of magnitude as the total capital costs of the works requested by the Objectors." ... "The other benefits to be obtained from opening up the northern BCN as a practicable set of holiday cruising rings seem to me to be substantial. Apart from making better use of an under-utilized resource and widening choice in the field of leisure, to the benefit of British and foreign tourism, it also appears beneficial in the terms of heritage policy." " Taking all of these matters together, I conclude that the protection of the restoration of the canals would be beneficial, both in absolute terms and in relation to the estimated cost of that protection."

5.para 10.5.3.20 On the subject of who should pay for the Trust's works: "..... So far as general principles are concerned, it is my understanding that responsibility for works required to ensure that the project complies with the Development Plan would normally lie with the developer, and I consider there to be no injustice or unreasonableness in this. I further understand that the responsibility would not normally lie with an objector whose objections were based upon Development Plan policies adopted in the public interest. I see no reason why the execution of the works justified by such consideration should be conditional upon their being funded by the objector."

6.para 10.5.3.21 "Having regard to these and all other material considerations, I conclude that the construction of the BNRR as presently proposed would obstruct the restoration of both canals to an unnecessary and undesirable extent, contrary to both general policy and emerging specific Development Plan policy, and that other material considerations do not indicate that there is any good or sufficient reason why this should nevertheless be permitted."

7.para 10.5.3.27 On the subject of the Department's legal powers (and written very tactfully because the Inspector is not a lawyer). "For these reasons, and taking full account of all the other material considerations, it appears to me to be reasonable to proceed on the basis that the Department and/or MEL probably do have powers under which the works requested by the Objectors, or works to similar effect, could be carried out. If this is so, despite the suggestions by the Department to the contrary, I can see nothing improper in the S of S expending monies on such works to the same extent as would be required of any other developer of such a project, nor do I consider that such expenditure on the part of MEL would be improper."

8.para 10.10 Summary of Conclusions. Sub para f. "Notwithstanding the foregoing general conclusions, the Published Scheme had a number of design or other features which could be improved further. Some Alternative arrangements suggested by Objectors could with advantage to the public interest be made. The most outstanding of these concerned the need to avoid further prejudice to the restoration of the local canals."

Some Additional Points

The BNRR is a Privately Financed Scheme. We are not asking for the Taxpayer to finance these crossings.

The financial benefits of our restoration falls to the Public - the population of the West Midlands Region who will gain from the money the boaters spend as they cruise. The restorations will provide direct full time jobs in running the canals and in those waterside businesses that will develop along the canals. The money the boaters spend will cause other jobs to be created (or at least safeguarded) indirectly in the pubs, shops, restaurants and farms along the cut, and not just on our two canals, but across the Northern BCN.

The S of S's decision that the Trust must raise the funds for the crossings will delay the completion of the canals by many years and therefore delay the commencement of the financial benefit to the Region. Why? Because, he says, the expenditure is not justified.... Whose expenditure? MEL's! - a private company who is building this road not as a service to the public but to make a profit from the Tolls they will collect for the next 53 years!

Also, why is the fact that the restoration is considered a long term project the reason for deciding (see extract from para 51 above) that the expenditure is not justified?

Conclusion

We hope we have provided you with enough ammunition to write a letter of protest. The punch line is simple. MEL should pay for the crossings and should construct them either when they build the BNRR or at a later date when they are actually needed.

If you write we would appreciate it if you could send a copy of your letter and any reply you might receive to Phil Sharpe (34, Old Eaton Road, Rugeley, WS15 2EZ - 01889 583330) who would be happy to provide additional information if you would like it. To all those of you who take up your pens on our behalf - **very many thanks indeed.**

The Trustees of L&HCRT