

Newsletter

Issue 386

October 2004

Chairman's Column

Day-Star Theatre

As always, we are delighted to welcome back 'Day-Star Theatre' for their annual visit to the Society. However, this is also a very sad occasion as their production of 'Taking a Chance' will be their final production at Chilworth as Pete and Jane have decided to end their waterways tours this year. In fact, this performance to the Southampton Canal Society is their final appearance after many years of touring the waterways. They will now be concentrating on productions nearer to their home base at Audlem on the Shropshire Union Canal. A synopsis of 'Taking a Chance' is published on the back page.



Tickets have sold very well and it looks as if we will have to hang out the 'house full' board again. After the performance we will enjoy a tasty supper.

Under Royal Patronage?

As is usual, Society members assisted Peter Oates with the staffing of the IWA's stand at this year's Southampton Boat Show. On the Tuesday the Stand was graced with the presence of HRH The Princess Royal, who had particularly asked to visit the stand. Peter was presented to Princess Anne who demonstrated her knowledge of the inland waterways and was obviously interested in what Peter had to tell her. Also in attendance on the stand during the Royal visit were Society members Ray Brooks, Sue and Eric Lewis, and yours truly. An official photograph was taken of HRH with Peter which we had intended to publish in this Newsletter. However, at the time of writing this column, that photograph has not been forthcoming from the Boat Show Press Office.

Society Outings

A party of fifteen Society members and guests enjoyed a most interesting tour of Gales Brewery in Horndean (especially the free samples!!!), a boat trip on the Chichester Canal and lunch at 'The Bull's Head' at Fishbourne, on 1 October. Fortunately the weather stayed dry, despite some ominous looking clouds during the



afternoon. Everyone agreed that it had been a superb outing and we all owe a debt of thanks to member Maureen Greenham for organising the day, and for overcoming some of the 'obstacles' that occurred in the planning. Many thanks Maureen (and to husband Brian, of course) for all your hard work. See the group photograph elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Our next planned outing will be to the Weald & Downland Open Air Museum at Singleton sometime next Spring. Watch this space for advance details.

The Newsletter

This is the last Newsletter to be sponsored by Hunt Johnston Stokes Limited (previously Hunt & Co) as Laura leaves her long association with the company to pursue an independent career. HJS/Hunts have



generously printed and posted the Newsletter for many years and

the Society is very grateful for their support. The Committee is currently examining a number of printing options. Obviously, it would be very convenient (and cost effective) to the Society if we were able to secure alternative sponsorship. Do you work for a company or organisation which might be prepared to sponsor the cost of printing and possibly posting the monthly Newsletter? If you have any suggestions along these lines, can you please contact Peter, the Editor, as soon as possible.

She certainly wasn't the 'Weakest Link'

I hear that Society member Anne Coleman appeared on TVs 'The Weakest Link' a week or so ago. She did very well ending up as the runner-up. Well done Anne!

November Meeting – Change of Speaker

As members will be aware, Roger Squires was due to give a talk on 'The Thames Creeks' at our November meeting. Roger was due to go on holiday the day following his talk to us but unfortunately (for us) his tour arrangements have been

(Continued on page 4)

September Meeting

The Wisbech and Upwell Tramway and Wisbech Canal by Andrew Ingram

Another well attended meeting – a nice ‘habit’ to have!

In recent years we have enjoyed many particularly interesting and varied programmes but our September speaker was one of the most interesting talks for some time, combining as it did, both canal and railway themes, and by a speaker who grew up in that area and certainly knew his subject (and, in fact, has written two books about it).

The aim of the Wisbech Canal Company’s Act of 1794 was to reopen the Well Creek, thus restoring navigation between the rivers Great Ouse and Nene. The work of dredging, straightening and widening over five miles of waterway was completed by the end of 1795.

A railway from Wisbech alongside the Wisbech Canal and Well Creek to Upwell had been proposed in 1873, but the scheme lacked sufficient funds. In 1880 the Great Eastern Railway decided to try an experiment: building the line as a standard gauge railway, but within the provisions of the 1870 Tramways Act. This allowed the line to be constructed with less stringent regulations, and therefore less expense, than a conventional railway.

The tramway opened on 20 August 1883, but services initially were only to Outwell. The extension to Upwell came into use on 8 September 1884. The tramway’s most distinctive feature was its motive power, with 0-4-0T steam tram engines being used and, later, Sentinel locomotives.

Following the opening of the tramway, toll receipts on

the Wisbech Canal fell steadily, with no dividends being paid to shareholders after 1896. Commercial traffic on the canal ceased in 1922, just five year’s before the tramway’s passenger service was withdrawn on 31 December 1927 – due to competition from road transport! The goods service continued however, eventually outliving the passenger service by thirty-eight years, enjoying a period of great activity from 1945 to 1950 when petrol was rationed, with double-headed fruit trams of up to sixty vans becoming common in the season.

The tramway was completely closed on 23 May 1966, with the line laying dormant until the tracks were finally lifted in Spring 1968.

Of particular interest was the link between the tramway and Rev. Wilbert Awdry of ‘Thomas the Tank Engine’ fame. Wilbert Awdry lived in the area and one of the popular characters in his ‘Thomas’ books, ‘Toby’, was based on the steam tram engines used on the tramway.

Andrew’s talk was both interesting and amusing with many funny anecdotes. His presentation was illustrated with a large number of slides – both of the canal and tramway in their heyday, and more recent images showing the remains (few) and the site of the routes of both transport links.

Many thanks Andrew for such an entertaining evening. Andrew has a number of other talks within his programme so it is possible that he may make a repeat visit to the Society at some time in the future.

Paul Herbert

Sale of Surplus Sales Stand Items

Amongst the former Sales Stand stock we have the following items for disposal:-

- Various GEOprojects Waterways Maps including the Basingstoke, Kennet & Avon, Oxford, Grand Union, Shropshire Union, Llangollen & Montgomery, Coventry & Ashby, Staffs & Worcs, Trent & Mersey, Lee & Stort, Macclesfield & Peak Forest, Worcester & Birmingham, Caledonian, and the Broads.
- Society 30th Anniversary Sweatshirt – Grey (Medium).
- Society Tee Shirts – Navy Blue (Medium).
- Society Shopper Bag.
- Society Membership Badges.
- Canal Miniatures.

For details of prices and up to date availability, please see me at any Society meeting.

Paul Herbert

WATERWAY EVENTS *(continued from page 3)*

Time	Organiser	Details	Contact
Sat 11 to Sun 12, Sat 18 to Wed 22 Dec 2004	Wey & Arun CT	Santa Cruises on the Wey & Arun Canal £6 (hourly from 11am to 3pm). From Onslow Arms on B2133 in Loxwood.	WACT Office: 01403 752403 wact@weyandarun.freemove.co.uk Web: www.weyandarun.co.uk
All year	Wey & Arun CT	Cruises on n/b Zachariah Keppel on the restored section of canal at Loxwood.	WACT Office: 01403 752403 wact@weyandarun.freemove.co.uk Web: www.weyandarun.co.uk
All year	Chichester Ship CT	Cruises on n/b Egremont on the canal from Chichester Basin.	Bookings: Jenny Pine 01243 670786 Enquiries: 01243 771363

WATERWAYS DIARY

The following is a list of waterway events taking place within approximately 50 miles of Southampton. Hopefully you can find something to interest you.

Whilst every effort is made to ensure the correctness of this information, please check with the listed contact who will be glad to supply further details of that event. If YOU know of an event taking place that should be in this list then contact the editor.

Time	Organiser	Details	Contact
Thu 7 Oct 2004 7.45pm	Southampton CS	'Day-Star Theatre' with their 2004 production 'Taking a Chance'. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Fri 8 - Sat 9 Oct 2004. Fri: 2 - 8pm Sat: 10am - 4pm	Wey & Arun Canal Trust	Wey & Arun Canal Exhibition to promote the canal restoration through Bramley. Bramley Village Hall.	WACT Office: 01403 752403 wact@weyandarun.freereserve.co.uk Web: www.weyandarun.co.uk
Sun 17 Oct 2004 10.45am	IWA Solent & Arun Branch	Guided walk along Itchen Navigation from Winchester to Bishopstoke. Guide: Peter Oates. Meet at Winchester Railway Station.	Andy Berncastle: 023 80273599
Sun 17 Oct 2004 10.00am	Somersetshire Coal CS	Walk - Devizes Lock Flight	Mike Chapman: 01225 426948
Thu 21 Oct 2004 7.30pm	IWA Avon & Wilts Branch	Idle Women at Work - Sonia Rolt. Thornbury, nr Bristol	Geoff Harman: 0117 9623812
Wed 27 Oct 2004 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	The Gunpowder Plot - Richard Thomas. The Stone Building, Newbury Wharf.	01380 721279
Thu 28 Oct 2004	Wey & Arun CT	Walk from Onslow Arms, Loxwood (on Surrey/Sussex border)	Don Gibson: 01903 201375
Thu 4 Nov 2004 7.45pm	Southampton CS	'The Thames Creeks'. This talk was to be given by Roger Squires but he cannot attend. David Pearce will present Roger's intended programme. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Thu 18 Nov 2004 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	Eric Lewis on "Little & Large in the North West." Huddersfield Narrow, Manchester Ship Canal, River Weaver. At Three Crowns, Whaddon.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841 or Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: ronmyra.glover@virgin.net
Thu 18 Nov 2004 7.30pm	IWA Avon & Wilts Branch	Birmingham & Black Country Canals - Ron Cousens. Riverside Inn, Saltford Marina.	Geoff Harman: 0117 9623812
Thu 2 Dec 2004 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Inter-Society Waterways Quiz and American Supper. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Thu 9 Dec 2004 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	Christmas meal at the Fox & Goose, Coombe Bissett.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841 or Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: ronmyra.glover@virgin.net
Thu 6 Jan 2005 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Members' Photographic Evening and Competition. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Thu 3 Feb 2005 7.45pm	Southampton CS	'Venturing into Germany' with Ron & Myra Glover. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Thu 3 Mar 2005 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Eric and Sue Lewis on "Little & Large in the North West." Huddersfield Narrow, Manchester Ship Canal, River Weaver. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Thu 7 Apr 2005 7.45pm	Southampton CS	The Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal with Cliff Penny. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Every Sun, Wed & Bank Holiday until 31 Oct 2004	Kennet & Avon CT	Claverton Pumping Station. Open 10.00am - 5.00pm. Telephone for pumping days.	Tel: 01225 483001. Email: enquiries@claverton.org Web: www.claverton.org/
Every Sat, Sun & Bank Holiday until 31 Oct 2004	Kennet & Avon CT	'Rose of Hungerford' - Public return trips, lasting from 1.5 to 2 hours, from Hungerford Wharf at 2.30pm. Also on Weds at 11.30am until end September. Adult £5 Seniors £4 Child £3 Family £14	Richard and Diana: 01488 683389
Every Wed, Sat, Sun, Bank Holiday until 31 Oct 2004	Kennet & Avon CT	N/b Barbara McLellan - Trips from Bradford on Avon at 11.30am (not Weds) and 2.00pm. Some tickets can be booked in advance or turn up 30 minutes before the trip.	01225 868683 Email: Westwiltsbook@aol.com
Every Sun & Bank Holiday until 31 Oct 2004	Kennet & Avon CT	N/b Jubilee - Trips from Brassknocker Basin Visitor Centre at 12.00 noon to Claverton return 2.00pm and depart 2.30pm to Avoncliff return 5.45pm. Also Tue afternoons until 17 Sept. Claverton - Adult £5 Senior & Child £4 and under 6's free. Avoncliff - Adult £6 Senior & Child £5 and under 6's free.	Mike Kelham: 01749 850169 Web: www.bath-narrowboat-trips.co.uk
Sat 27 Nov to Fri 24 Dec 2004	Chichester Ship CT	Father Christmas Boat Trips from Chichester Basin. Adults & Children £7.00. Advanced booking absolutely essential.	Alison Slaney: 01243 536933 from 18 Oct 2004 from 9.00am to 7.00pm
Sat 4 to Thu 23 Dec 2004	Basingstoke Canal Authority	Christmas Canal Cruises from Canal Visitor Centre, Mytchett. Booking Essential - books open October 1st!	BCA: 01252 370073
Sat 11 to Fri 24 Dec 2004	Kennet & Avon CT	'Rose of Hungerford' - One and a half hour trips from Hungerford Wharf with hot mince pie and a glass of sherry or wine for adults. Present for the children. Everyone meets Santa. Bookings only on Sats.	Richard and Diana: 01488 683389
Dec 2004	Kennet & Avon CT	'Kenavon Venture' - One hour Santa Trips from Devizes Wharf. Adults £4 including a glass of mulled wine. Child £4 including a present from Santa. Booking essential.	01380 729489

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Chairman's Column

(Continued from page 1)

brought forward by a day so he will now not be able to join us. However, Society member David Pearce has kindly stepped into the breach and will be presenting Roger's intended programme.

Inter-Society Waterways Quiz

The Society will be hosting the 2004 Inter-Society Waterways Quiz on 2 December. We are now seeking nominations for the Society Quiz Team. The Society has achieved many successes in previous quizzes and is the current 'champion'. I know that many Society members have a significant knowledge of the waterways and I invite them to put their names

forward to me, as soon as possible. As usual, the Quiz will be followed by an American Supper.

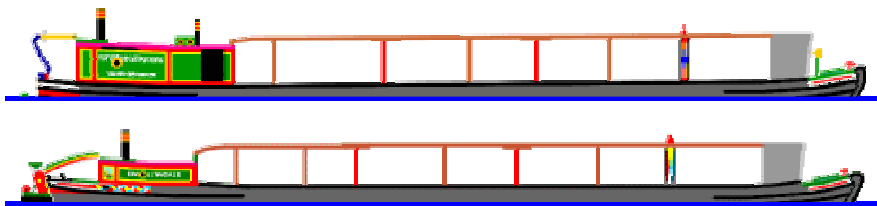
Sale of Lace Plates

I understand that Peter Boyce of the IWA Solent & Arun Branch has some 'traditional' lace plates for sale and these will be on display at our December meeting, during the Quiz.

Refreshments Rota

We are now seeking the names of volunteers to assist with our monthly refreshments for February 2005 onwards. Please don't leave this important task to others - give your name to Gill.

Paul Herbert



Narrowboat holidays

Your editor recently received an email from a local narrow boat timeshare owner. I reproduce a slightly edited version of this below in case any of you might be interested.

Hello,

I must admit I was a little surprised to find a Southampton Canal Society with the absence of any canals, though a happy find all the same.

Our interest in canals is really due to the selling skills of a timeshare salesman who left us the owners of 2 holiday weeks on a six- berth Narrowboat at Barton Turns (Lichfield) for seventy odd years.

This is not an unhappy prospect, (though sometimes I wonder at his achievement) and has for the last 3 years at least, given us some delightful family holidays touring the Midlands.

Next year however we have decided to take a break, rent out the weeks and use the money to do something else. This leaves us with the problem of advertising the weeks.

To this end I have made contact with other Narrowboat timeshare owners in a similar position (two of whom plus ourselves having Southampton addresses) in order to try and develop a website for this purpose, which can be found at: www.canalbarge.co.uk

Now of course I am wondering how to promote the website, a problem with which you are no doubt familiar.

There may be those among you who similarly wish to advertise holiday weeks (who are welcome to have an entry on the site) or even those who might have an interest in the weeks the site has to offer.

I must admit as a "Timeshare owner" rather than a "Boat owner" I feel a bit of an Interloper and would sympathise with those who feel the likewise. I also feel a bit uneasy about trading off the romance of these water-bourne holidays for anything as crude as money, but then as a family we have to live in the real world.

Obviously this is a new venture and it is difficult to know what the weeks are worth or the level of interest.

If you find the time to view the site or have any comments or suggestions to offer your feedback would be most welcome.

Many thanks

Ron Merriman



SOCIETY OUTING OCTOBER 2004

Above: Full barrels awaiting despatch and drinking.

Middle: Relaxing at the Bulls Head, Fishbourne before tackling the afternoon.

Below: Chichester Cathedral and Canal near Hunston.



Photographs:
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Llanthony Warehouse,
The Docks, Gloucester GL1 2EH
Telephone 01452 318220
Facsimile 01452 318202
www.thewaterwaystrust.co.uk

Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales

17th September 2004

Dear Peter

The Waterways Museums campaign for government funding

I am writing to you and your members to support our bid to government for new funding for the waterways museums at Gloucester Docks, Ellesmere Port and Stoke Bruerne, which are operated by the Waterways Trust.

Together the three museums hold the inland waterways collection designated by government as nationally important. £1.1m pa for ten years is needed urgently to conserve the collection and provide for free entry.

The waterways museums have suffered from lack of funding for many years. In recent years we have secured new sponsorship from British Waterways but more is needed, even though our costs have been reduced to an absolute minimum. Now we also face competition from nationally funded free entry museums, which have seen our visitor numbers fall by over 11% and net income reduced by nearly £100,000 pa.

We believe the waterways museums should be funded on the same basis as the national museums for rail, maritime history and mining which receive government support worth between £8 and £19 per visitor and offer free entry.

With new investment the waterways museums can realise their full potential for education and life long learning, and as centres for excellence for cultural tourism and public enjoyment. But without action these museums and the many treasures they hold could be lost.

How you can help - write to your MP

The most important way you can help us is by writing your local MP (at The House of Commons, London SW1 0AA) to express concern about the current funding for the waterways museums. We know that letters will make a difference and create pressure for action by the government.

Letters do not need to be long but should be written in your own words and refer to some of the key points made above [*and below*]. There is more detail at www.thewaterwaystrust.co.uk

Alternatively you can also send a fax direct to your MP from the Trust's website. The website makes this very easy!

Please send a copy of any letter by post to Roger Hanbury at The Waterways Trust, Llanthony Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EH or roger.hanbury@thewaterwaystrust.co.uk

In addition we are running a petition (copy opposite). Please return the sheet with signatures to The Waterways Trust. The petition can also be signed on line at www.thewaterwaystrust.co.uk. Whilst we welcome signatures we cannot emphasise too much that a letter to your MP will have the greatest influence.

With your help we believe we can safeguard the waterways museums for present and future generations and bring to life the continuing story of the waterways that have shaped our cultural, social, economic, technological and environmental development in the UK over 300 years. Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Roger Hanbury
Chief Executive

Between them, the three museums hold the largest collection of historic waterway craft in the world.

The Trust are constantly seeking new funding to improve the Museums, for example over the next 12 months they will invest £1.4m at Ellesmere Port, raised from the Heritage Lottery Fund and local authority and European funds, to improve the exhibitions and visitor facilities. In total they have won project grants worth over £3.75 m since 1999. The Waterways Trust has been successful in securing sponsorship worth £4.45 per visitor of non-government funding, but this cannot cover its costs and the museums must therefore charge for entry.

Despite the best efforts of staff and volunteers over many years, the collection is in long-term decline for want of adequate funding and a critical point has now been reached. An additional £1.1 million per annum for the next 10 years is urgently needed:

- £300,000 pa to meet costs of day-to-day management of the collection
- £500,000 pa to overcome the conservation backlog and
- £300,000 pa to enable the museums to offer free entry to all.

The IWA has pledged its support to this campaign.



Museums Funding Campaign

We the undersigned support The Waterways Trust in its appeal to Government to take urgent action to provide new funding for the national waterways museums at Gloucester, Ellesmere Port and Stoke Bruerne:

- to conserve the nationally important inland waterways collection
- to allow free entry for all

Name	Address & Postcode	Signature

The information you have provided will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act

Please return to: Lisa Smith, The Waterways Trust, Llanthony Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EH

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.

Meetings:

Normally 1st Thursday each month at 7.45pm.
Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.

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Brian Evans.

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4222

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<http://www.whitenap.plus.com>

FORTHCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS

To save space, this feature is now fully incorporated in the Waterways Diary (see page 3).

Oxford Canal - There was an emergency stoppage on the Oxford Canal for just over two weeks during September between lock 41, Shipton Weir Lock and lock 42, Roundham Lock, following a culvert collapse between the two locks, near Thrupp. Temporary dams were installed while the 200-year old brick structure was replaced and the canal re-opened on 24th September.

Don Evans - (brother of our Chairman) has been awarded the Richard Bird Medal by the IWA. He joined the Association in 1960 and became a member of IWA's Inland Shipping Group in 1975. Since the 1960s, he has served on the committees of the original West Midlands Branch and now West Midlands Region.

Day-Star Theatre

Welcome to Southampton, Pete and Jane Marshall. 2004 is Day-Star Theatre's 23rd and final annual Waterways Tour. Indeed, the performance at Chilworth on the 7th October is to be the last appearance on this tour.

on the water

Day-Star will still be based on the Shropshire Union Canal at The Old Stables, Audlem, Cheshire. As well as developing their "Rural Tours" and continuing with their "Plays and workshops for schools" and "Roses and Castles painting weekends", they will be working on other new projects.

Taking a Chance

The play, 'Taking a Chance', centres around one canal side building and is set in two different times. In the summer of 1963 the Profumo scandal had just rocked the political establishment, Kim Philby was settling down to life in the Soviet Union and Ready Steady Go was about to make it's first appearance on the telly. The building is a run down pub and Iris and Cedric are struggling for any custom at all after the longest prolonged cold spell in recent history and a general decline in canal traffic. The pub is appropriately called The Cat in Hells Chance and a lack of road access means that the beer is delivered by canal but unfortunately the canal does not deliver the customers.

In 2004 the building is long since derelict and is up for sale. There appear to be three interested parties who would like to buy the property. However the lack of any legal road access means that the chance of owning a detached isolated canal side property could mean taking a chance. There is the smart, Porsche owning business woman. There is the couple who live on a boat and want a bit of space on the bank. And there is the un-co-operative farmer who owns the track that nearly reaches the building. He says he doesn't want to buy it..... yet

The play flits from the present day to 1963 and back and goes some way to explain the eventual demise of the Cat in Hells Chance pub. It is also about taking a chance but it is worth bearing in mind that to take a chance could mean to take a risk or it could mean to take an opportunity.

Oh yes, the other thing that happened in the summer of 1963 was the Great Train Robbery. Just about a mile from the Cat in Hells Chance pub actually.