



**NEWSLETTER No. 292
OCTOBER 1995**

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MEETINGS

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

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

5th October 1995

The BCN Waterways in Birmingham & the
Black Country by Ron Cousens.

2nd November 1995

Vessels on London's Rivers in the 1930s by
Dr Edwin Course.

7th December 1995

Inter-Society Waterway Quiz
and American Supper
(As we won the last one at Chichester,
we host this year's quiz.)

4th January 1996

Speaker to be confirmed.

1st February 1996

Explore the Panama Canal and the River
Douro by Hugh McKnight.

7th March 1996

Speaker to be confirmed.

GREETINGS

Along with her subscription for 1995-96,
Joan Reed of 'The Maltings', Braunston,
sends her regards to members of SCS.

NATIONAL WATERWAYS FESTIVALS

Preparations are well in hand for the 1996
IWA Black Country National Waterways
Festival - The IWA Golden Jubilee Festival.
This sees a return to the site of the 1991
Festival at Windmill End in Dudley &
Sandwell.

It has recently been announced that the 1997
Festival will be held on the River Thames at
Henley.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Our speaker, Dean Clark, grew up in the Portsmouth area, worked as an architect - some of his years with British Rail - and latterly as historic buildings architect with Hampshire County Council. From his boyhood days as a young railways enthusiast right up to the present, he has taken photographic slides. So our evening was non-stop variety; much of it about railway and dockside buildings - the kind of heavy metal that, in this age of plastic, is usually only seen in preservation.

Because of his recent work with HCC, many of Dean's slides were local. Members were able to recognise scenes or see what was there before what they know now. His commentary was as informative as the pictures, quick-moving and ready to answer questions that popped up. A very enjoyable evening and so interesting that we would all have readily stayed for more.

MAP CATALOGUE

The Society has just received the 1995-6 catalogue of maps from GEOprojects. A number of publications are in preparation for Spring 1996: Llangollen & Montgomery Canals, Shropshire Union Canal and a map of the Inland Waterways of Britain.

A number of street maps and atlases of towns are available from GEO including London City and Docklands at £2.50. Also, if you holiday in the sun, there are maps of Cyprus, Egypt and other Middle Eastern areas. If you would like to see the catalogue to order, please ask at the sales stand.

IWA/WRG STAMP BANK

Please don't forget the IWA/WRG Stamp Bank that continues to raise valuable sums to further waterway restoration. During the last year, proceeds from collections made nationwide have raised over £2400 for various restoration schemes. Martin Cripps is happy to receive your contributions to the bank at Society meetings in the form of used postage stamps, petrol tokens, cigarette coupons, aluminium foil, etc.

QUESTION: What is the fastest time anyone has travelled through all the locks of the Tardebigge lock flight on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal?

The Worcester and Birmingham Canal rises through 58 locks in 16 miles from the River Severn to the centre of Birmingham. Tardebigge Lock flight, the foremost grouping of narrow canal locks in the world, comprises 30 locks in about 2 miles raising the canal 217ft beside the Lickey railway incline.

These locks were originally numbered from 1 to 30 but are now numbered from 58 at the top to 29 at the bottom. Times for completion of the flight haven't often been recorded but the average would be around three hours.

The canal was opened in 1815 and freight traffic continued until 1961. Cadbury's chocolate were among the last users, carrying crumb to the Bourneville factory.

A.J. Conder, Curator, National Waterways Museum, Gloucester.

I went down Tardebigge in November 1990 in a hire craft with six experienced adults crewing, two for the lock ahead, two for the lock behind and two on the boat. We met no other craft and completed the flight in 1 hour 50 minutes, arriving at the Queen's Head at 19.50 where they didn't believe us either.

D.J. Griffiths, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset.

The above question and answers were spotted by our member Terry Phippard in the Daily Mail of 12/9/95. I don't know what others think about such 'record breaking' performances, but I feel they achieve little other than probable damage to the fabric of the canal. If you work out Mr Griffiths' performance they took an average of 3 minutes 40 seconds per lock *including* the two miles of intervening pounds. If you keep to the 4mph speed limit, this distance should take at least half an hour alone. Is rushing about the canals what the waterways are about? I am interested in other's opinions on this or any other waterways matter. My thanks are due to Terry for sending this cutting in and also to Tony Coles for sending me the Working Boats article overleaf.

Editor

LOCAL CRUISES

Alan White, Solent & Arun Branch IWA, sends thanks to all those Southampton Canal Society members who sponsored Peter Glover on the 1995 Pulborough to Pallingham (River Arun) Cruise. Next year's cruise will be on 12th May.

Due to shortage of water, the Small Boat Cruise on the Wey & Arun Canal, planned for 1st October had to be cancelled. It is now hoped to hold it towards the end of March 1996. Further information about this should be available by the end of

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LOCAL CRUISES (Continued from page 1)

January from Pat Perry Barton on 01428 606496 or John Ward 01483 278016.

1996 is the Jubilee year of the IWA and, besides the Pulborough to Pallingham Cruise, it is hoped to arrange a combined "cruise 'n' walk" on the Chichester Canal towards the end of April as part of these celebrations. There will also be opportunities for individuals to participate in the carrying of a Solent & Arun jigsaw piece on various journeys on the region's waterways as part of the nationwide "Jubilee Jigsaw Journey".

JUBILEE JIGSAW JOURNEY

As part of the celebration of the IWA Golden Jubilee in 1996, a giant waterways jigsaw is planned to be brought together and assembled in Birmingham. The pieces are currently being made at Birmingham Art College, with one or more pieces to be distributed to each IWA branch. The idea is that each of these pieces will be returned to Birmingham, travelling as much of the way as possible by water. The pieces will then be assembled vertically on scaffolding on the side of Birmingham Conference Centre, covering several floors.

The pieces for the Solent and Arun Branches area will be about 1 x ½ metre in area. Whilst the plans have not yet been finalised, the idea is that the piece covering southern Hampshire will travel around as many local waterways as possible. The number of waterways to be visited is not yet finalised. This will be partly dependent upon the support the IWA receives from people in the area. Please let Brian Evans know if you are willing to be involved in some way.

The Hampshire piece will then be united with the West Sussex piece at a ceremony on the Chichester Canal on the 21st April 1996. It will be rowed from Chichester Harbour through Salterns Lock into the Canal. It should be noted that, although usable, it is quite rare for this lock to be operated. The West Sussex piece will be brought from Chichester Basin along the canal by the Mayor of Chichester. A small festival is to be organised on the Canal with the opportunity for SCS members and others to take their own small boat for a cruise on the Canal. Launching facilities for boats up to about 12ft will be available and no charges will be made for cruising!

Southampton Canal Society Library

Please return any books to Sue Lewis at meetings for the benefit of all members.

Southampton Canal Society Sales

Embossed Ball Point Pens 50p
Fibre Tip Pens 75p

GEOprojects Maps

Basingstoke Canal £3.00
Oxford Canal £3.75

Kennet & Avon Canal £3.75
Grand Union Canal £3.75 each
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

Notelets, with line drawings (by Brian Evans) of canal scenes £1.00

Waterway Jigsaws £3.50
192 pieces 10" x 13¾"

Screen Printed Tee Shirts £6.50
in Navy - large & extra large
in Red - medium

Embroidered Sweat Shirts about £15.00
in Navy or Bright Royal - medium

Colourful Tea Towels £2.50

Decorated Mugs £2.25

Decorated Trays £1.00 & £2.95

Later, the two pieces will be taken by wheelbarrow to the River Arun. They will be transported part of the way along the River Arun from Pulborough to Pallingham on the annual cruise on 12th May. The journey along the Wey and Arun Canal will be partly on foot and partly by water where possible. Once on the River Wey, transport will be by water to Birmingham.

WORKING BOATS AT NEWBURY

In the September Newsletter there was a report about 3 traditional working boats taking pipes for the back pumping scheme on the Caen Hill flight.

On their journey from the Erewash Canal to Devizes these three boats joined with 20 others at a National Gathering of traditional working boats. This took place at Newbury over the weekend of 29/30th July and was the first of its kind to be held at Newbury for over sixty years.

The gathering was sponsored by Messrs Wimpey Minerals Ltd who supplied cargoes for working boats which came loaded from Bristol, Nottingham and even Manchester. During the weekend, some apprentices from Wimpeys built a small 'boat' in the middle of the boating lake in Victoria Park, opposite the wharf in Newbury, as a permanent reminder of the gathering, using materials brought to the site by narrowboat.

Also, during the weekend, 20 tons of coal was loaded onto one narrowboat bound for Denham on the Grand Union and 40 tons of grain loaded onto a pair of boats, bound for Tewkesbury, by Doltons, who are the former owners of the mill west of Newbury Lock.

On arriving at the site on Sunday, the first impression that this was something out of the ordinary was the number of people standing on the A34 road bridge over the canal. When we got out of the car, the first thing we heard was the sound of a traditional Bolinder semi-diesel engine. On walking round the site, the sound was found to be coming from *Dane*, which with its butty *Ditton*, were two of the three boats which went on to Devizes.

One boat that it was nice to see (for me anyway, having just read the book) was *Hesperus*, which was previously named *New Hope* when owned and written about by Tom Foxon in his book "No 1". This boat, along with quite a few others, was moored under the A34 road bridge, which was about the coolest place on a very hot day indeed.

It was great to see so many traditional boats at Newbury for the first time in many years. The bonus was the boats being loaded and unloaded. Let's hope it's not another sixty years before it happens again.

Tony Coles.

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