

Newsletter

Issue 374

August 2003

Chairman's Column

Sheila Davenport MBE

I was saddened to learn of the death, on 27 June, of Sheila Davenport MBE, one of IWA's most stalwart supporters and volunteer workers. Sheila, who had worked in support of the IWA for more than thirty years, died peacefully in hospital at the age of 72, following six months of illness. Sheila carried out many roles for the IWA including managing the Sales Stand, assisting at Head Office, assisting with the organisation of the National Rallies and managing the IWA Marquee at National Rallies and National Waterways Festivals until very recently.

It is impossible, within this column, to ably describe the many and varied tasks Sheila undertook for the IWA. Her unstinting service was recognised with awards of the John Heap Salver, the Cyril Styring Trophy – and public recognition, at last, came in the 2003 New Years Honours when Sheila was appointed an MBE. I will be writing, on behalf of the Society, to the IWA and Sheila's family.

Robin Higgs OBE

On behalf of the Society I am delighted to be able to congratulate Robin Higgs who has been awarded the OBE in Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday Honour's. Robin, chairman of the Southern Canals Association, former chairman of the Surrey & Hants Canal Society, a former member of IWA Council and former chairman of IWA's Restoration Committee. Robin is also a well-known figure in steam train preservation circles, which was rather apt as I was able to make the announcement of Robin's award at our Society's July meeting when our talk that evening was on the Talylyn Railway. I will be writing to Robin to pass on

Old Shropshire Canal

In the first of two articles from our Warwickshire Branch, Margaret Froud sends us details of a recent holiday:

The canal stables alongside the end of the Old Shropshire Canal at Brierly Hill have been tastefully converted into holiday apartments and we stayed in one of these at Coalbrookdale so as to visit the Ironbridge Gorge Museum. It was a fascinating few days spent walking up the Hay Incline Plane and along the towpath of the canal, still in water, to Blists Hill Victorian Village. There are ten museums

the Society's congratulations.

2003 Visit by 'Day-Star Theatre'

Don't forget, tickets are now on sale at £4 each for this year's performance by 'Day-Star Theatre' on 2 October 2003. A light supper is included in the ticket price. Day-Star's new play for 2003 is "Another Fine Day" which takes us back, once again, to the canalside village of Sandy Edge. (See synopsis on page 5.)

Discounted Entry to Waterways Museums

We have received a number of tickets from The Waterways Trust which offer 25% discount on entry to the following museums:-

- The Canal Museum, Stoke Bruerne
- The National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Docks
- The Boat Museum, Ellesmere Port

Tickets can be collected from the Treasurer's table at our monthly meetings.

September Newsletter

It will not be possible to publish a September Newsletter. Our September meeting falls either during, or immediately after, the summer cruises of our main contributors (you know who I mean) who will also be attending the National Waterways Festival at Beale Park. It will not, therefore, be possible for them to produce copy and do the necessary physical work to produce the Newsletter. Normal service should be resumed in October.

Paul Herbert

covering china, pipework, tiles and ironwork all of which contain a wealth of information. There is also, of course, the famous BRIDGE.

The owners of the Old Wind House are enthusiastic about the canal and its history and gave us a guided tour. The canal ended in four short, parallel arms between which there were two vertical shafts and lifting gear in the middle to lower and raise the tubs to the inclined plane below. Very little remains to be seen today, only the outline of the canal bed and a humpback bridge hidden in dense undergrowth.

Margaret Froud

July Meeting - The Talyllyn Railway - Peter Kent Mason

We again fielded a large audience for our July meeting when Peter Kent Mason spoke to us about the Talyllyn Railway, one of the 'Little Railways of Wales'.

After first introducing himself and his assistant on the projector, wife Jacqueline, Peter explained that he had visited the Talyllyn Railway on 191 occasions, the first being in 1948 at the age of seven. He started his presentation by giving us a brief history of this narrow gauge steam railway, Built on a gauge of 2 feet 3 inches, the Talyllyn Railway is one of a number

enthusiasts, led by Tom Rolt (famous, of course, in the world of canals) sought to prevent the railway's closure and scrapping and, thanks to the generosity of Lady Haydn Jones, the Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society (the first such organisation in the world) was allowed to take over the running of the line. By then the railway was in a very sorry state with the one operable locomotive, in very poor condition, struggling to pull the trains along an overgrown and perilous track.

Since 1951 great improvements have been made; volunteer members of the Preservation Society now provide most of the train crew and station staff required to operate the line, and assist with maintenance work and with many other activities. The track has been re-laid, locomotives have been acquired and rebuilt, additional carriages have been constructed, a safe and flexible signalling system has been installed, and the many other improvements needed to cater for the much increased number of passengers have been carried out.

But the Talyllyn is still very much the railway it always was, a rural byway where the pace of life is gentle, the average speed of the train is still less than nine miles per hour, and passengers can have an unhurried journey along the beautiful and unspoilt Fathew Valley. Both the original locomotives and all the original carriages remain in regular use to this day.

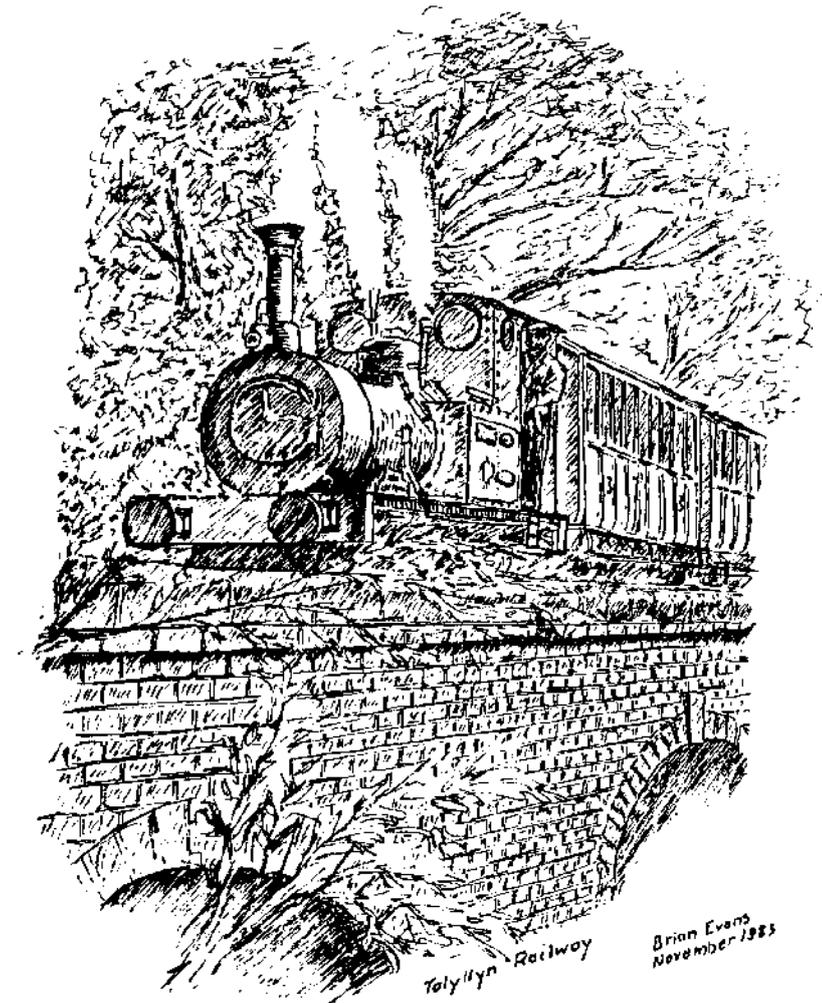
The visual part of Peter's presentation started with a 6 minute silent monochrome film made in 1950. There followed a splendid collection of slides which showed the railway stock, the landscape through which the railway runs, its buildings and a number of personalities involved with the running of the line.

The biggest surprise to the audience was to learn of the drastically falling visitor numbers to the Talyllyn Railway, and other preserved lines in Wales, and Peter explained the main reasons for this.

Peter and Jacqueline made a thoroughly entertaining double act which kept us amused the whole evening. Many thanks to you both.

Paul Herbert

(The history information in this article was taken from the Talyllyn Railway website which can be found at: www.talyllyn.co.uk Another useful website to visit is Erik Ledbetter's [Trainspotting in Wales](#).)



of narrow-gauge lines in north and mid Wales built in the 19th century to carry slate, in the Talyllyn's case from the Bryn Eglwys quarries near Abergynolwyn. Opened in 1865, the line runs the seven and a quarter miles from Tywyn (on the Cardigan Bay coast) to Nant Gwernol, from where a series of horse-drawn tramways, including two inclined planes, continued into the mountains. The slate traffic ceased in 1946 following a serious rock fall in the quarry.

In 1950 the line's owner, Sir Henry Haydn Jones, died and the future for the Talyllyn Railway looked very bleak, as it had been losing money for some years. In 1948 Tom Rolt, had visited the railway and, subsequently, following Sir Henry's death, a group of

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 31 July 2003 7.45 pm	Southampton CS	Peter Oates & Laura Sturrock will be showing various pictures from around the system. Please note that this meeting will be the week before the first Thursday of August.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Sat - Sun 16 & 17 August 2003	Chichester Ship Canal Trust	Chichester Canal Water Fair with a Pirate Theme - Canal Basin. All day fun and frolics on the Chichester Canal. Chance to cruise the basin and waterway on Sunday.	Fair: Ann Lowther 01243 787183 Cruise: Peter Boyce: 02392 269642, pete@greensleeves.freereserve.co.uk
Sun 17 August 2003 10.00 am	Somersetshire Coal CS	Walk 5 - Camerton to Timsbury (5 miles). Meet at the entrance to the Camerton Heritage Centre. Park in Durcott Lane	Roger Halse: 01249 652846
Fri - Mon 22 to 25 August 2003	IWA	National Waterways Festival at Beale Park near Pangbourne on the Thames. IWA Solent & Arun Branch stand to be transported to and from site by working narrow boat. Peter Boyce wants help with this and manning stand.	Festival Hotline: 0870 240 2438. Peter Boyce: 02392 269642. E-mail pete@greensleeves.freereserve.co.uk
Thu 28 Aug 2003 9.45 am	Wey & Arun CT	Bay Bridge Canal. Where? 6 miles walk. 09.45 am The Partridge, Partridge Green [lunch] Junction B2135/B2116. Depart 10.00 am. 3 hours. Donation to WACT appreciated.	Don Gibson: 01903 201375
Thu 4 Sept 2003 7.45 pm	Southampton CS	Tim Boddington on the Macclesfield Canal and adjoining waterways.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Sun 14 September 2003 12.30 to 17.00	IWA Solent & Arun Branch	Hamble River Cruise - Swanwick to Curbridge and Botley Quay.	Peter Boyce: 02392 269642. E-mail pete@greensleeves.freereserve.co.uk
Thu 18 Sept 2003 7.30 pm	IWA Salisbury Group	Barry Eagles on "Wessex Steam" at Salisbury Rugby Club.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841 or Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322
Sun 21 Sept 2003 10.00 am	Somersetshire Coal CS	Walk 6 - Midford to Wellow (6 miles). Meet opposite the Hope & Anchor. Park in/off Twinhoe Lane. Please do not park in pub car park.	Roger Halse: 01249 652846
Thu 25 Sept 2003 9.45 am	Wey & Arun CT	The Border Party. (5 miles). 09.45 am Sir Roger Tichbourne [lunch] 1 mile north Loxwood B2133. Depart 10.00 am. 2½ hours. Donation to WACT appreciated.	Don Gibson: 01903 201375
Thu 2 Oct 2003 7.45 pm	Southampton CS	'Day-Star Theatre' with their new production for 2003	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 15 Oct 2003 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	Waterways Wonders with Richard Thomas. A tour of some of the engineering marvels around the waterways. Westgate Centre, Chobham Road, Woking	Arthur Dugate: arthurdugate@iname.com
Sat 18 October 2003	Byfleet Boat Club	Visit Chilworth Gunpowder Mills south of Guildford beside River Wey. Produced gunpowder for 300 years up to 1920.	James Bell: 01932 830493
Sun 19 October 2003 10.00 am	Somersetshire Coal CS	Walk 7 - Wellow to Single Hill (6 miles). Meet at Wellow Church. Park in Wellow	Roger Halse: 01249 652846
Thu 6 Nov 2003 7.45 pm	Southampton CS	IWA National Chairman John Fletcher	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Sun 16 Nov 2003 10.00 am	Somersetshire Coal CS	Walk 8 - Single Hill to Radstock. Meet at the Village Hall. Park in the Village Hall car park	Roger Halse: 01249 652846
Wed 19 Nov 2003 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	Barging into Burgundy by Dick Allan. Problems, costs and benefits of taking a narrow boat to France and his trip south. Westgate Centre, Chobham Road, Woking	Arthur Dugate: arthurdugate@iname.com
Thu 20 Nov 2003 7.30 pm	IWA Salisbury Group	Eric Lewis talking about "Around Britain by canal in the 70s" at Salisbury Rugby Club.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841 or Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322
Thu 4 Dec 2003 7.45 pm	Southampton CS	Inter-Society Waterways Quiz and American Supper	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Until 28 September 2003	Kennet & Avon CT	Crofton Beam Engines - Open daily from 18 April to 28 September inclusive from 10.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Steaming weekends: Bank holiday weekends plus the last weekends of June, July and September.	01672 870300
Until 19 October 2003	Kennet & Avon CT	Claverton Pumping Station - Open every Sunday, Wednesday and Bank Holiday from Easter until 19 October 2003 from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 pm (last admission 4.30 p.m.) Tel. for Pumping Days.	01225 483001 www.claverton.org
Until 5 October 2003	Surrey & Hampshire CS	Public cruises on John Pinkerton. Every 1st and 3rd Sunday afternoon except Bank Holiday weekends plus Weds, Fris and Suns 19 & 31 in August. 2½-hour round trip leaving at 2.30 pm from Colt Hill Wharf. Sun 24 & Mon 25 Aug 1¼-hour return trip starting at 11.30 am, 1.30 pm and 3.30 pm from Fox & Hounds, Fleet.	Info and Bookings: 01962 713564 (10 am - 8 pm)
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.freereserve.co.uk
All year	Chichester CS	Cruises on n/b Egremont on the canal from Chichester Basin.	Bookings: 01243 670786
Until 26 July 2003	National Trust	1653 & All That! -The History of the River Wey Navigations. An exhibition at the Surrey History Centre, Goldsworth Road, Woking.	NT Dapdune Wharf: 01483 561389

Salford

The thriving Salford Quays complex is just part of this city's dramatic post 1990s revival, says Robert Liebman.

After an absence of six years, bananas reappeared in greengrocers' stalls in Salford in 1946. Postwar recovery might have been inevitable, but postwar prosperity was another matter entirely.

The town of Salford is just across the River Irwell from Manchester city centre, but the city of Salford, which includes the districts of Eccles, Worsley, Irlam, Cadishead, Swinton and Pendlebury, totals 37 square miles and extends a considerable distance westward.

Once prosperous and populous, by the mid-1970's the docks, steelworks and engineering companies were declining and unemployment was rising, hitting 14 per cent in 1980. Between 1920 and 1970, the population fell from more than 200,000 to 125,000.



Lowry Centre beside the Manchester Ship Canal

But by the 1990's, the Lowry Centre was revivifying Salford Quays [formerly part of Manchester Docks]. This imposing arts' complex contains homes, shops, offices, restaurants, pubs and hotels. Opposite the Lowry on the Manchester Ship Canal in Trafford is the Daniel Libeskind-designed Imperial War Museum North. Soon, Salford Council was reporting news even more heart-warming than the reappearance of bananas: "More people now work in the Quays than in its heyday as a major seaport." Unemployment was 5.1 per cent in 1998, and the Lowry attracted more than a million visitors in its first year.

Salford had derelict brownfield sites to spare, and property developers have been erecting luxury housing, much of it waterside. Tom Bloxham's Urban Splash, which pioneered urban regeneration in Manchester, recently agreed to refurbish the interiors of a large swathe of Victorian terraces in Seedley and Langworthy.

The Lowry Centre has greatly intensified the association of the artist with the city, which was also the birthplace of actors Albert Finney, Ben Kingsley and Robert Powell, conductor Sir John Barbirolli, and

physicist James Prescott Joule (1818-89).

"Salford is very mixed," says estate agent John Nutter of Brimscombe Nutter. "We have Coronation Street-type terraces for £15,000, up to homes selling for more than £1m in Ellenbrook and Worsley." At the top of the market are the many attractive, starkly



Bridgewater Canal at Worsley

black-and-white, half-timbered homes typical of this part of the northwest.

Salford University, Hope Hospital and many new businesses contribute to a ready supply of renters, but Nutter counsels caution: "Buy-to-let has been strong, and in the last two years a significant number of private landlords acquired three or four investment properties. But any area can sustain only so much, and returns are probably diminishing slightly. We could reach saturation in the not too distant future."



Ontario Dock at Salford Quays

The above article appeared on the Hot Spot page of the Property section of The Independent on the 25 June. Thanks to Brian Evans for spotting it. As Brian says, "How times change."

Book Review

WINDLASS IN MY BELT (A Canal Adolescence)

Published by Waterways World, Burton on Trent
290pp Price £14.99
ISBN 1 870002 96 2

If you, as I have, an interest in the real purpose for which our canal system was created then you simply must read this charming, but very practical, story of a young Northampton lad growing up with long distance canal carrying still going on within a few miles of his home.

The canals were still places of work not holiday when in 1954 John's interest was first kindled on the Northampton Arm of the Grand Junction (Union) Canal. His interest in canals is increased by his parents not only taking a canal holiday but a little later buying, as a weekend retreat, No 4 Canalside at Stoke Bruerne from none other than Sister Mary herself. Through her good offices John is introduced to Alec and Lily and their family who run the "pair" Redshank and Greenshank and the single motor Warbler.

This good hearted and caring family take John to their hearts and he in turn works hard for them. Thus begins an extremely well written account of the last days of long distance commercial carrying, mostly coal to Croxley or Southall but also visiting other parts of the system, including a commercial cargo on the Thames! All this achieved in holidays and weekends from school. The account includes two canal holidays and even work on board a hotel pair!

I would recommend this book to any serious student of commercial carrying but also to anyone who enjoys a good read.

Plainly, but clearly written, as befits a, now retired, headmaster this story of the last days of commercial work on the canals is a little gem and should be read by all who have come to boating "on the cut" in the holiday age as a reminder of when it was a workaday world and of the people whose whole philosophy was to "Get the Boats Ahead".

John Silman

'Dolgoch' at Tywyn Wharf in 1949, with the complete passenger stock.

(Photo: Talylyn Railway Archive)

Another Fine Day

As a taster for the Day-Star Theatre performance at Chilworth on 2nd October, here is a synopsis the new play they will be performing:

It's a year since the canal embankment in Sandy Edge sprang a leak and emptied millions of gallons of water onto the allotments, the playing fields and the new executive houses. The gaping hole has been plugged, the houses have dried out and what passes for normality has returned to the sleepy canal side village in the heart of 'Middle England'.

One of the new houses has been sold on to Jeremy a director of a well known supermarket chain. The country cottage style executive home provides him with an idyllic haven where he can spend the summer weekends sitting in the garden, strumming his guitar and watching the boats go by on the embankment. His wife, Eleanor, sees it all from a different view point. After all she has to spend the week days there too and she is very, very bored.

When a boat turns up on the embankment one fine weekend carrying Holly and Rick, a couple of anti capitalist eco warriors with more than a passing interest in Jeremy then surely his weekend rural peace is about to be shattered. On the other hand a hint of impending excitement might just be what Eleanor needs.

The third and final story from Sandy Edge is a mouth watering menu of food, drink, principles and profit. All washed down with a helping of cold revenge on a fine spring day.

Tickets for the show are available from Eric Lewis (contact details on the back page) or at Society meetings. Price £4.00 to include our usual light refreshments after the performance. Buy your tickets now to ensure that you have a seat and sufficient food.



Photo: Talylyn Railway Archive

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:

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

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Brian Evans.

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

FORTHCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS

31st July 2003 - Peter Oates & Laura Sturrock will be showing various pictures from around the system. Please note that this meeting will be held the week **before** the first Thursday of August.

4th September 2003 - Tim Boddington on the Macclesfield Canal and adjoining waterways.

2nd October 2003 - 'Day-Star Theatre' with their new production for 2003

6th November 2003 - IWA National Chairman John Fletcher (to be confirmed).

4th December 2003 - Inter-Society Waterways Quiz and American Supper

Engine Transplant

Margaret's second article in this issue describes another incident with their boat this year:

The engine in DUORF II had worked for 25,300 hours when it suddenly seized up without warning. It had given us 23 years of trouble free boating when this happened on our way to Banbury at Little Bourton Lock. Our friend, fellow boater and engineer, Peter Downer, lives in Little Bourton and soon came to our rescue by giving us a tow behind his boat RILL to the Arm he rents from BW at Banbury, where we were stranded for almost a week in very congenial company.

A telephone call to Alan Rose, who is BUKH agent, in Southampton meanwhile elicited the fact that he had an identical engine in stock newly reconditioned. He told us we could have it straight away as he and Angela were coming up to LIBERTY on the Engine Arm at Napton the next day, and would bring it with them! So within 24 hours the old engine was removed and the new one installed in record time - a crane being available on site.

It took Ken a day and a half to make all the connections and the new engine started immediately the key was turned. However, damage must have been caused to the oil pipe at the bottom when it was being lifted in as oil started pouring out into the bilge. Alan came all the way back from Southampton to fix it which was an awkward time consuming job in a confined space. It is now working perfectly and the newspaper under the engine remains spotless!

So we now have a "new" hull and a "new" engine - a very expensive year!!

Margaret Froud

Thanks

Many thanks to everyone for the donations to Cancer Research UK in memory of Peter. The total amount donated came to £1520.00. We were able to present this to Dr Christian Ottensmeier, who was Peter's consultant and is a Senior Lecturer for Cancer Research UK. He was very grateful for the extremely generous donations to fund their research efforts.

Sue and Eric Lewis

More Thanks

I would like to extend a thank you to all those members who have contributed copy for this newsletter: Margaret Froud for her two articles, Brian Evans for the cutting and his drawing of the Tallylyn Railway and John Silman for his book review. Of course we must not forget our stalwart regular: Chairman Paul Herbert.

Editor