

Newsletter

Issue 368

December 2002

Chairman's Column

Welcome to our Visitors in the Annual Inter-Society Quiz

On behalf of the Society I am pleased to welcome our visitors who will be taking part in the 2002 Inter-Society Waterways Quiz. This year's teams will include last year's winners, the IWA Solent & Arun Branch; the IWA Salisbury Group; and, of course, Southampton Canal Society.

Whilst our Society is hosting the event, the Solent & Arun Branch, as reigning champions, has organised the Quiz. Mike Laishley, Tony Pratt and Peter Boyce have set the questions, and Mike and Tony will be the Quizmasters on the night. Many thanks to all involved.

Changes to our organisation etc

At the last Committee meeting consideration was given to the current responsibilities of the Society's officers and other committee members. It was apparent that too much of the Society's work was falling upon the shoulders of its three officers and a review was therefore carried out which has resulted in a number of changes. Please see the article published elsewhere in this Newsletter for details of those changes.

Can you type? Volunteer required!

Your Committee is looking for somebody who is willing to give up a few hours every couple of months to assist the Society and relieve your Chairman of one of his current tasks. We need somebody to take the minutes of, say, 6 committee meetings a year, plus the Annual General Meeting. If you think you can assist, please have a word with me.

Retiring Members

A letter has been received from Phyllis and Dennis Ridley, who have been Society members for many years, advising that they are unable to renew their membership because of other calls on their time. They say that they have enjoyed the meetings that they have been able to attend and they enclosed a generous contribution to the Society's funds. We are very sorry to lose Phyllis and Dennis and, in thanking them for the time they have spent with us, and for their donation, send them our very best wishes for the future.

Greetings from Mike Smetham

Speaking of long time Society members, at our last meeting Brian Evans reported on bumping into Mike Smetham, who was one of our Founder Members. Mike is fine and sends best wishes to the Society.

2003 Programme

We are cracking on with our programme for 2003. There is a danger that we might become too successful and find that we have invited more potential speakers than the slots we have available. See the item within this Newsletter.

Annual Members' Slides, Prints and Photo Competition Evening

Our January 2003 meeting will be the annual Members' Photographic evening when you will have the opportunity to show some of your more interesting slides and prints to your colleagues and even take part in a competition. See the item in this Newsletter for further details.

(Continued on page 9)



A very Merry Christmas
And
A Happy New Year
to all our readers



November Meeting - Bruce Hall

It was good to welcome back Bruce Hall, Chairman of the Cotswold Canals Trust, to our November meeting and it was pleasing to see such a large and appreciative audience, including a number of visitors.

Bruce ran through the origins of the two waterways that make up the Cotswold Canals – the Stroudwater Canal and the Thames & Severn Canal. These combine to provide a broad waterway connecting the Rivers Severn and Thames. The Thames & Severn ran from Inglesham on the Thames to Walbridge, Stroud, a distance of nearly 29 miles with 44 locks. One of its major features is the 3,817 yards Sapperton Tunnel, with its grand portals, the longest tunnel to this day on a broad canal. (Part of the tunnel has collapsed, though two thirds of the length is thought to be in good order. Restoration of this structure is estimated to cost £12m). Opened throughout in 1789, the last cargo boats crossed the summit in 1911 and sections were legally closed in 1927 and 1933. The Stroudwater Canal opened in 1779 from Framilode on the River Severn to Walbridge where it joined the Thames & Severn. It was 8 miles in length with 13 locks. In 1827 the canal was crossed on the level, at Saul Junction, by the Gloucester & Berkeley (aka the Gloucester & Sharpness) Canal. The last traffic passed through the canal in 1941 and it was abandoned in 1954.

Locks on these two waterways were built to different dimensions – those to the east being in the region of 93' x 13' (the sizes varied) to accommodate Thames barges, whilst those to the west measured c.69' x 16'2" for the shorter but wider Severn Trows. Brimscombe Port was built near to where the two waterways joined to enable transshipment between the different gauged vessels. The North Wilts Canal, completed in 1819, gave the Thames & Severn a new and much better access to the Thames at Abingdon via the Wilts and Berks Canal. In 1900 the canal was taken over by Gloucestershire County Council.

The canals transverse the beautiful scenery of the Cotswold hills. The towing path on the summit pound links six long distance footpaths.

Bruce described the various restoration works that had been ongoing over the years and the subsequent formation of the Cotswold Canals Trust. The Trust operates boat trips using their 12 seater boat.

One of the many interesting slides shown by Bruce was that of the former entrance lock at Framilode. This and the stretch of canal to Saul Junction is not part of the planned restoration programme, which will start at the first lowered bridge, a short distance east of Saul.

Now that British Waterways, The Waterways Trust, the Environment Agency and the local authorities along the route of the canal are all in favour of full restoration to navigation, this work would proceed at

a reasonable pace. It was anticipated that Phase 1 of the restoration would be completed within five years and Phase 2, leading to the full reopening, would be achieved in a further five years.

Bruce referred to the challenges that have to be overcome in the restoration of the two canals. The major challenges to Phase 1 of the restoration, at the western end of the canal, are mainly engineering, include many dropped bridges, motorways and major roads built across the line of the canal and railway crossings which have been altered since the closure; whereas the challenge of Phase 2 at the eastern end will be the buying back of the line of the canal, much of the land now being in private ownership. Some of those landowners were dead against restoration. Other issues include the difficulties of gaining access to the canal in places because of the lack of road access. There are various conservation and nature challenges and an Environmental Impact Assessment has to be carried out.

Reference was made to the Cotswold Water Park which consists of 133 lakes in the Upper Thames Valley. The water area is 50% larger than the Norfolk Broads. The restored canal will provide the link to the Water Park from the 'outside world'. Gravel extraction would be in progress for many years and there was the potential for carriage of that material via the reopened canal.

British Waterways had recently purchased the industrial estate built on the site of Brimscombe Port and was in the process of acquiring land at the junction of the Thames & Severn Canal with the River Thames, containing a Round House and the first canal lock off of the river.

In the years since restoration attempts started, c.£5m has been spent on the canals. Gloucester County Council has already restored four bridges. There are a number of redevelopment schemes along the line of the canal which will benefit restoration.

Bruce referred to the likely costs of restoration and the probable sources of funding, including an application for significant lottery funding. The total cost of complete restoration of the two canals is £82m, which includes land purchase.

He described the links that would, eventually, be reopened with the Kennet & Avon Canal via a restored North Wilts and Wilts & Berks canals.

Many thanks to Bruce for an entertaining evening and we wish you and the Cotswold Canals Trust and its partners much success with this major restoration project.

Paul Herbert

With acknowledgements to 'Inland Waterways of Great Britain' by L.A. Edwards and 'The Complete Book of Canal & River Navigations' by Edward W. Paget-Tomlinson for some of the detailed history quoted in this article.

Additions to the Library

Tony Shadick of the Ordnance Survey Cine & Video Club joined in with Society members for the visit to Crofton Pumps on the 29th September 2002.

He very much enjoyed his day and has presented a copy of his video record of the outing to the Society Library.

There is no commentary but the video soundtrack carries plenty of the noises heard in and around the pumphouse. It is self-explanatory for those who have been there and a good reminder of a happy day out.

For those who have not yet visited Crofton, it is a taste of the pleasures to come.

Our thanks to Tony for his generous gift - which can be hired by members for a few pence from the Society library.

Brian Evans

The Society is also grateful to Gerald Davies for generously giving another book to the Society Library. This time the book is 'Lock, Stock & Barrel' by Shirley Ginger.

Canals and self-sufficiency are the twin themes of this account of a couple's escape from the rat-race to a waterside smallholding and general store next to Buckby Top Lock.

As they learn about shop-keeping the hard way, other small enterprises are tackled with enthusiasm and retold with humour, as are the family's voyages round the waterways in their narrow boat *Warwickshire Lad*.

Another video has been donated to the Library, this time a professional production called 'Narrowboating - In the Heart of Shakespeare's Country'. The film traces a journey along the Worcester & Birmingham and Stratford Canals and the Upper Avon Navigation. The photography is quite good although the commentary is a bit on the bland side.

Thanks to all those who have made donations to the Library - quite a valuable resource. Alan will be pleased to hire a video or book to you for a small sum.

Peter Oates

Members' Slides, Prints and Photo Competition Evening

The January meeting will be our annual Members' Slides Evening. This will give everyone the opportunity to show some pictures - even those who feel they might not have enough of interest to make up a whole evening's show. If you can put together up to a maximum of around a dozen pictures (even just one or two) that you feel will entertain / educate / amuse your fellow members, look them out for this evening.

We have the facility to project prints (up to 7" x 5") onto the screen as well as transparencies. So if you don't take slides, you too will be able to show something of waterways interest as well.

Again, like the last couple of years, the evening will also

Photo Caption Competition



The above photograph was taken by David Butcher of our illustrious Chairman at the Society outing to Crofton Pumps at the end of September.

In view of the fact that the Society's Photo Competition Evening is to be held on 2nd January, your editor felt that all members should be given the opportunity to provide a fitting caption to this picture. Just to put a bit of edge to it, a small prize will be awarded to the person entering the caption judged best by those present at the meeting.

Don't worry if you can't make the meeting, you can still enter the competition as long as your caption gets to the editor by the evening of the meeting.

incorporate a photographic competition. To be held just before the tea interval, this competition is open to all members - you don't have to be showing other slides / prints during the evening. What we're looking for is **one** picture which can be anything to do (even loosely) with the waterways. The competition will be judged by all those present at the meeting.

And as an incentive to enter, there will be a mystery prize given to the winner.

So don't be shy, this is YOUR opportunity to show others your interest in waterways, what you've done or where you went and what you saw on holiday.

Future Programme

Each year we have our annual events, such as the Members' Photographic evening; the visit by 'Day-Star' Theatre; our Annual General Meeting; finishing off with the Inter-Society Waterways Quiz. This leaves us, of course, to fill the other eight months.

As far as the 2003 programme is concerned, to date we have confirmed the visit of 'Day-Star Theatre' in October and other bookings so far agreed include 'Wildlife on the Itchen'; 'Trip Boats on the Basingstoke Canal'; and the Residential Boat Owners Association. Other speakers/topics in the pipeline, waiting to be confirmed, include John Fletcher, the new National Chairman of the Inland Waterways Association and The Milton Keynes-Bedford Link.

It is proposed to invite David Fletcher, the retiring Chief Executive of British Waterways to visit us, and John Craven, the well-known broadcaster and journalist, in his capacity of Vice-Chairman of The Waterways Trust. Then we have such topics as Canada's Rideau Canal; the Community Boats

Association/London Narrowboat Project; and the operation of a boatyard and hire fleet base. More news on next year's programme in due course.

Consideration is already being given to our 2004 programme and we have many ideas that we will be following up. I think it can be said with confidence that the Society will have varied and interesting programmes for both 2003 and 2004.

Back to 2003 - in addition to our programme of speakers, it is hoped to organise a Society trip akin to our visit to Crofton Pumping Station this year. If members have any suggestions for such a trip, please let me have your views.

Society boat-owning members will be taking part in a number of boat related activities in 2003, including the Society's 2nd Boat Gathering at Flecknoe and Braunston in May; the IWA National Festival at Beale Park on the River Thames in August; and the Cutweb Internet Boating Club Rally at Napton Top Lock in September.

Paul Herbert

More on Boat Access

After reading the article about the hydraulic lift in the last Newsletter, perhaps our readers might be interested in my contribution.

Over the last twenty-odd years I have made numerous quickly detachable steps which simply hook over the gunwaling of the stern deck giving a safe and easy way up and down from the mooring, especially Springer hulls.

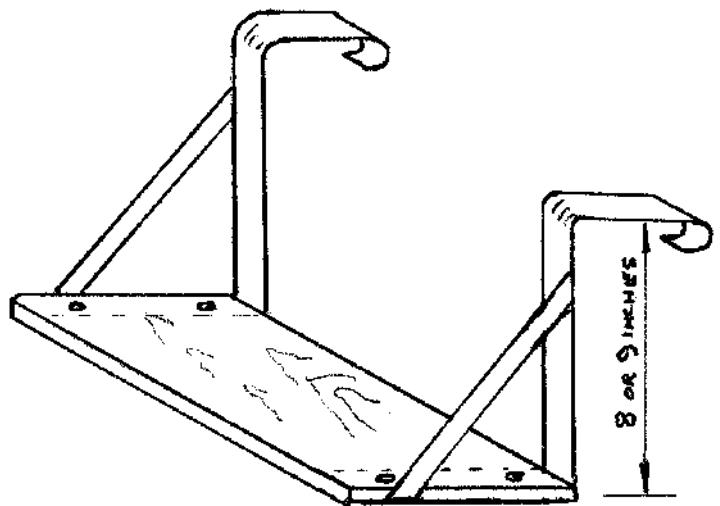
I can't claim to be the originator of the device, but the sketch shows my construction which is usually made of 1" x ¼" flat mild steel, which is easily bent cold, and a piece of ½" marine ply 16" x 8" for the bolted on step. Two stays are welded on to give extra strength. A non-slip surface to the step is obtained by a sprinkling of dry silver sand on to the wet final coat of enamel. I usually wrap P.V.C. insulating tape round the hooks to prevent chipping the paintwork. I call this device "HELP THE AGED"!

Ken Froud

P.S. If you look at Page 79 of the December issue of Waterways World, the tall good looking navy smoking a pipe is me! How the years roll by.

Lighting up the K&A

British Waterways intends to floodlight the spectacular Caen Hill flight of sixteen locks at Devizes for Christmas to celebrate the completion of the five-year £30 million Heritage Lottery Fund backed improvement works on the Kennet & Avon Canal. The floodlights are intended to create the illusion of a cascading flow of liquid colour descending



NOT TO SCALE

the locks, which stretch for over half a mile. The locks are due to be lit up from Monday 16 December to 6th January 2003. The event will also mark the 40th anniversary of British Waterways Board, which was formed under the 1962 Transport Act to take over the nationalised waterways from the then British Transport Commission from 1 January 1963.

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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 5 Dec 2002 7.45pm	Southampton CS and IWA Solent & Arun Branch	Inter-Society Waterways Quiz and American Supper	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Sat 30 Nov to Tue 24 Dec 2002	Chichester CS	Christmas Trips on n/b Egremont on the canal from Chichester Basin	Ann Lowther: 01243 787183
Sat to Sun, Tue to Thu 14-15,17-19 Dec 2002	Basingstoke Canal Authority	Santa Cruises - Basingstoke Canal Centre, Mytchett Place Road, Mytchett	Tel: 01252 370073
Sat & Sun 14, 15, 21, 22 + Mon 23 Dec 2002	Wey & Arun CT	Santa Cruises on Wey & Arun Canal - 45 minute trips, hourly from 11.00am to 3.00pm. Next to Onslow Arms, Loxwood (on B2133). £5.00 (children receive gift from Santa, adults get mince pies and mulled wine).	WACT Office: 01403 752403 wact@weyandarun.freeserve.co.uk
14, 15, 21 to 24 Dec 2003	Kennet & Avon CT	Santa Cruises from Devizes, Bradford on Avon or Hungerford	Tel: 01380 729489 for Devizes; 01225 782080 for Bradford on Avon; 01488 683389 for Hungerford
Wed 18 Dec 2002 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	Barging Through Holland. Robin Higgs, always a popular speaker, will present his canal journeys made in early September sailing a Dutch barge through the wide - and also the narrow - inland waterways of Holland. Westgate Centre, Chobham Road, Woking (adjacent to canal).	Arthur Dugate: arthurdugate@iname.com
Thu 2 Jan 2003 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Members' Slides, Prints and Photo Competition Evening	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 15 Jan 2003 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	Frank Banfield - Transport films from the Olden Days. Archive films from Frank's personal collection. Includes a historic journey on the canals to Birmingham, a trip on a Great Lakes steamer, and a hair-raising fast trip by rail. Westgate Centre, Chobham Road, Woking (adjacent to canal).	Arthur Dugate: arthurdugate@iname.com
Thu 16 Jan 2003 7.30pm ???	IWA Salisbury Group	Voyages through the centre of France - Ron & Myra Glover. Salisbury Rugby Club.	Jon van de Geer: 01722 412841
Fri 31 Jan 2003 8.00pm	K&A Trust, Reading Branch	Talk on the Wey Navigation. Southcote Library Hall, Southcote Lane, Reading	Peter Crawford: 01488 608297
Thu 6 Feb 2003 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Dennis Bright and 'Wildlife on the Itchen'	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 19 Feb 2003 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	Tony Pratt - New developments on the Wey & Arun Canal. Westgate Centre, Chobham Road, Woking (adjacent to canal).	Arthur Dugate: arthurdugate@iname.com
Thu 20 Feb 2003 7.30pm	IWA Avon & Wilts Branch	"Cradle to the Grave & Back Again" - the Mon, Brec & Abergavenny Canals - P Hughes & A. Canal Trust. Civic Centre, Wootton Bassett	Geoff Harman - 0117 9623812
Fri 28 Feb 2003 8.00pm	K&A Trust, Reading Branch	Michael Goodenough on the completion of the Heritage Lottery Fund project. Southcote Library Hall, Southcote Lane, Reading	Peter Crawford: 01488 608297
Sat 1 Mar 2003 7.30pm	K&A Trust, Devizes	Lecture on the Glastonbury Canal and River Parrett, by Ken Griffiths. Wharf Centre, Devizes	Sarah Padwick 01380 721595
Thu 6 Mar 2003 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Tony Haynes and 'Trip Boats on the Basingstoke Canal	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 19 Mar 2003 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	Re-building the Welsh Highland Railway. Robin Higgs will show the progress in restoring this North Wales 2ft narrow gauge railway, and with a new section just about to open. Westgate Centre, Chobham Road, Woking (adjacent to canal).	Arthur Dugate: arthurdugate@iname.com
Thu 20 Mar 2003	IWA Salisbury Group	"Who said yachts can't navigate the K&A?" Poole to Bristol via the Thames and Wey - John Brealey. Salisbury Rugby Club	Jon van de Geer: 01722 412841
Wed 16 Apr 2003 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	The National Trust as Navigation Owners and Operators - River Wey & Godalming Navigations. John Gibson (Navigations Manager for the River Wey Navigations) will outline some of the recent works and the NT's approach to operating this special waterway during its 350th Anniversary year. Westgate Centre, Chobham Road, Woking (adjacent to canal).	Arthur Dugate: arthurdugate@iname.com
Thu 1 or 8 May 2003 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Residential Boat Owners Association (date to be confirmed)	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
3 to 5 May 2003	Southampton CS	2nd Southampton Canal Society Boaters' Gathering	Paul Herbert: 023 8026 2365
Thu 5 June 2003 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Annual General Meeting with supporting programme	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Thu 2 Oct 2003 7.45pm	Southampton CS	'Day-Star Theatre' with their new production for 2003	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
4th Thursday of month	Wey & Arun CT	Series of interesting but not too arduous walks in Sussex come rain or shine. Lunch at well chosen establishment en route or at end. Donation to WACT appreciated.	Don Gibson: 01903 201375
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.freeserve.co.uk
All year	Chichester CS	Cruises on n/b Egremont on the canal from Chichester.	Bookings: 01243 670786

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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<http://www.users.waitrose.com/~whitenap/index.htm>

FORTHCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS

5th December 2002 - Inter-Society Waterways Quiz and American Supper

2nd January 2003 - Members' Slides, Prints and Photo Competition Evening

6th February 2003 - Dennis Bright and 'Wildlife on the Itchen'

6th March 2003 - Tony Haynes and 'Trip Boats on the Basingstoke Canal

3rd April 2003 - To be confirmed

1st or 8th May 2003 - Residential Boat Owners Association *

3rd to 5th May 2003 - 2nd Southampton Canal Society Boaters' Gathering

5th June 2003 - Annual General Meeting with supporting programme

3rd July 2003 - To be confirmed

7th August 2003 - To be confirmed **

4th September 2003 - To be confirmed

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

6th November 2003 - To be confirmed

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

* If the Chilworth Parish Hall is required in connection with local elections on 1st May 2003, we will move to the alternative date of 8th May.

** Chilworth Parish Council is unable to confirm at the present time whether the Hall will be available in August. An alternative date of 31st July has been pencilled in.

Committee and Organisational Changes

Further to the brief announcement under the Chairman's Column, these are the details of the changes that have been made to the Society's organisational structure.

The most significant change is that Eric Lewis has taken over from Peter Oates as Society Secretary. Eric, who has previously held the offices of Secretary and Treasurer, volunteered to take on this important task from Peter, who was more than willing to hand over those reins and concentrate on his other tasks of Editor of the Newsletter and Webmaster.

For some time the Committee has been considering the future of the Sales Stand. Apart from storing the stock it is quite a chore to bring it along to each meeting. Sales over the past couple of years have been poor and the level of income doesn't justify the effort involved. Therefore, it has been decided to close down the Sales Stand. The Committee has not yet made a final decision about the remaining unsold stock, but it is likely that some items will be offered

as future raffle prizes. The closure of the Sales Stand will have no impact on the new Society clothing which is on order.

Other changes concern the monthly raffle, which in future will be organised by David Townley-Jones, and the Refreshments Rota which will be the responsibility of Angela Faull.

Many thanks to all those who have taken on additional tasks. Particular thanks to Ray Brooks who has had to take the brunt of the Sales Stand duties since I became Chairman.

Whilst doling out the Society's appreciation - many thanks also to those who assist the Society on a regular basis. In particular, your Committee and Officers; Angela and all those who assist with refreshments; Alan for the Library; and Michael for his technical support. Thanks also to those who I haven't mentioned who assist 'behind the scenes' from time to time.

Paul Herbert

Questions & Answers

Very occasionally, the Society Secretary receives questions from the public about some aspect of the waterways. Most are quite simple to answer. The following was a rather unusual request and Paul Herbert felt that others in the Society might be interested in it.

At the end of September, I received the following email from a gentleman in New Zealand asking rather a lot of questions about the Itchen Navigation as it was 180 years ago.

Would your Society be so good as to help me obtain information about the Itchen Navigation in 1821? I live in New Zealand, and distance is a bit of a problem.

I come to you because of your website, which has so much information about the Canal as it now is, and some aspects of its history.

I am about to write an historical novel. I am determined that all facets of it will be historically exact.

I imagine an entirely fictional character who was born in 1807 to a farming labourer's family near Winchester (perhaps Itchen Abbas or thereabouts). At the age of 14, with the benefit of a couple of years schooling at a Dame School and a lot of bird-scaring over the corn-patches, he's sent off to Portsmouth: one less mouth to feed in a hungry, post-war depression, household..

So in 1821, he would come through Winchester, intent on getting to Portsmouth. The Winchester Museums Service has kindly given me some detail about that. Could he beg a ride on a canal barge down the Itchen Navigation to Northam, or would he have to purchase a fare on a passage or packet boat? Would the barge carry corn or wool, or other agricultural or industrial products, and if so what? Presumably the barge would have been towed by a horse. Would he pass by the floating bridge, or the pair of chain ferries built across the river (and if so, what did these look like)? What would he have seen of Winchester College after the canal journey had started at (presumably) Blackbridge Wharf. Would the barge have been highly decorated? Would there have been canal inns with names like 'The Anchor' or 'The Navigation' along the tow path? Would the navigation water have been as black as the Styx and absolutely pestiferous, but the river water fresh and clean from the 13th century reservoir? How long would the journey to Southampton take? Would he then walk on to Portsmouth, and what would he see as he walked?

The character will never return to Hampshire: he will take merchant ship, including a convict ship to Port Jackson: and then a send time, intending to settle in Sydney: but events will bring him to New Zealand where he will become a pakeha maori living with a

tribe near Cook Strait: he will be privy to some of the more exciting events that actually happened 1827-1832.

I am giving you as much detail as I can, to show you the extent of the detail that I would like. From Cobbett, and from general histories, I have been able to select Winchester and the Itchen River as the locale. But of course we do not, here in New Zealand, have access to local histories in book form.

As some regard me as a bit of an authority on the Navigation, I decided to try and answer the questions myself and I give my reply below.

I'm not sure whether somebody going from Winchester to Portsmouth would even attempt to go via the Navigation. The journey from Winchester to Northam was twelve and a half miles by water. Portsmouth is about 15 miles from there. The road direct from Winchester to Portsmouth is about 23 miles. Most people would probably go more directly by road. However, he might consider that the price of some ale for the master of the barge was better than a bumpy, slow journey by cart (where some form of similar payment would probably be required). Of course he might have walked - less than a day's walk for a fit young man. I assume he would not be able to afford a stage coach.

If he adopted this route, he would have to beg a passage on a barge - there were no passenger or packet boats on the Navigation. In 1802 there were just four barges trading on the waterway. By 1833, the proprietors' takings (see the page on trade on the Itchen on the website) had dropped so I suspect that in 1821 during the depression, maybe only two or three were in use. The cargoes carried are also mentioned on the same page of the website. Going downstream, the barge would most likely be empty although it might just be carrying some chalk (about the only downstream cargo). The barge would have been towed by one or even two horses. The upstream journey would have been difficult in some places (especially in winter) with only one horse.

The Floating Bridge operated at Woolston which is downstream of Northam. He would not have seen them from one of the barges working the Navigation as these did not normally work this far downstream but also because the Floating Bridge did not begin operation until 1836. There was a ferry which used to operate from Crosshouse Hard to the hamlet of Itchen Ferry on the Woolston (east) side of the tidal river. I think this was operated by a small sailing boat but little more than a dinghy (but I'm not sure).

Today, it is not possible to see Winchester College from the Navigation as trees and bushes have grown up into a wood in this part of the meadows between

the two. However, I have seen photos taken in the 1880's that show that these trees were not there then and most likely not there in the 1820's. See also comments below.

I attach a *[coloured]* copy of an oil painting ... by Frederick Waters Watts (1800-1862) which came under the hammer at Sotheby's on November 30th 2000. It fetched £32,700. Not sure of the exact date of the painting but probably 1850's. The catalogue described it as "a view of Winchester from the River Itchen, with a hay barge in the foreground and the cathedral and St Catherine's Hill beyond." In fact it's St Giles's Hill in the background as an unladen barge towed by two horses approaches Tun Bridge from the south. The "lump" at the back of the barge is in fact not hay but a canvas shelter. As the journey took only about seven hours each way, there was no need for permanent accommodation aboard. There is a second barge just visible on the other side of the bridge.

There are none of these barges in existence today, but this and other pictures suggest that they were not decorated - as a general rule, it seems only when boats/barges became homes that they were decorated. There does seem to be a little paint across the stern/transom of the barge. These barges were 70 feet long and about 13 feet wide. The

front and back were square (not rounded or pointed); the front was "swim-ended" rather like a punt (at least a punt in this country), ie a flat front sloping down and back from the square bow above the water to the bottom of the boat. Notice also there's a very large rudder to improve control.

To the left of the barge on the skyline, you can see the long grey roof and tower of Winchester Cathedral. The brown tower to the west (left) of the cathedral tower is the 14th century college chapel. A building with three tall black windows can also be seen - I

think this is part of the college. The journey would have started from one of the wharves - there were three: Blackbridge, Scard's (at least that's what it was called in the 1860's but it was the name of the then owner - might have been different 40 years earlier) and Domum. The red roofs you can see above the left hand end of the bridge look like the Barge Cottages where some of the barge masters used to live. These were just north of Domum Wharf. The other two were just beyond them.

The only pub currently right next to the Navigation is The Bridge at Shawford but as this was only an hour from Winchester, it is unlikely to have been used by through traffic - certainly not early in the morning. I can't think of any further south that no longer exist. There were/are pubs near the site of Northam Wharf.

The water in the Navigation is and always has been crystal clear - chalk streams almost always run perfectly clean. Modern research casts doubt upon the



use of Alresford (pronounced Alls-ford) Pond as a reservoir for the Navigation at any period, but it was certainly not used as such in the last 200 years.

I can't really say too much about what would have been seen from either road route (without a good deal of research).

Hope this is all of some use. If you've more questions about the Navigation, I'll try to answer them.

Peter Oates

Chairman's Column

(Continued from page 1)

Society Website

For those with computer access to the Internet, have you looked at the Society Website lately? Our Webmaster, Peter Oates, has made a great job of setting up our site with links to other waterways related sites, and keeping it regular updated. Go on, give it a try! Look up:

www.users.waitrose.com/~whitenap/index.htm

Updating of Membership Records

We have previously indicated the need to update the Society's membership records. Below this item, there is a tear-off slip. I would be grateful if you could complete that slip and return it to our Membership Secretary, Laura Sturrock, as soon as possible.

Raffle Prizes

Our members continue to excel with their generous donations of raffle prizes. Apart from saving the Society money this also means that we can offer additional prizes each month. Many thanks to all concerned and please keep up the good work!

Interval Refreshments

Many thanks to Angela Faull for volunteering to look after the refreshments rota in future. We do need

Membership Database

At the last Committee meeting, it was agreed to print a form in the December Newsletter for members to complete to enable us to update our membership database. It is printed at the bottom of the final page so that it can be cut off after completion without defacing the remainder of the Newsletter. Alternatively, if you prefer you may photocopy the form or provide a written copy.

your help (male or female, this is not a sexist thing!) to organise refreshments for our mid-meeting breaks, so please see Angela without delay and put your name down.

Name Badges

Over the years it has not been uncommon for members to approach one or other of the Committee to ask us to identify other members for them. The Committee has discussed the possibility of producing simple name badges to assist in easy identification. At present we are only thinking of self-adhesive paper labels. What do you think of this suggestion - would you object to being 'labelled' in this way? Please let one of the Committee know your thoughts.

Contributions to the Newsletter

In past months we have published a number of interesting articles submitted by members. Many thanks to all who have contributed. There is space for plenty more!

A Happy Christmas to Our Members

As we come to the end of yet another successful Society year, it gives me the greatest pleasure to wish all Society members a **Very Happy Christmas and New Year.**

Paul Herbert

Please attach another sheet of paper if there's not enough room on the form. It will be greatly appreciated if you use **BLOCK CAPITALS.**

If you have any questions about this form, please contact the Membership Secretary, Laura Sturrock. Completed forms should sent to Laura at the address on page 6 of this Newsletter.

The information that we require is:-

Surname and the forename(s) of each member covered by your membership subscription:	
First member	Home address
Second member
Third member
Fourth member
Fifth member
	Postcode

Telephone number(s):	
Daytime	Mobile
Eve / Weekend	Email address