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## Stereoscopes

*In response to Alan's picture of the stereoscope, Annemarie Evans sent the following comments:*

I bought one that looks very similar to that - except the bit where you put your eyes was a silver colour - and it dated back to 1901. I bought it on "Trading Post" the pages of the South China Morning Post newspaper, where there would be buy and sell items in the mid-90s, so before ebay and all the stuff online. I probably looked in there for something useful for home, and came away with that.

I remember also buying a second world war field telephone the one time, too. I still have that and want to check whether it is from the fall of Singapore or Hong Kong.

My 1901 stereoscope I gave to David Bellis - the chap in the last newsletter item you saw, as he could actively use it with the 3D photos.

## Chairman's Column

Dear Members and Friends,

Well, once again we are still locked down but a light can be seen at the end of a very long tunnel. [*Are you sure it's not a boat coming the other way? Ed*]. Angie and I are due to have our jabs tomorrow (Friday 30th) at our local AR pharmacy so we look forward to a change over the next few weeks.

I would like to say thanks to our Hong Kong member for her lovely pictures taken of Hong Kong, particularly the Dry Dock. The pictures were part of a Stereoscope system which was the very early 3D photograph viewing platform in the Victorian age.

We actually have one of the original Victorian Stereoscopes that were sold by The Royal Magazine from 1898 to their final issue in 1939. The price was two shillings (10p) including postage. The publisher was Sir Arthur Pearson.



We obviously cannot plan any reopening of the society at this stage, lets hope we can sometime this year. A few of the boating meets we had planned have already been cancelled, so we trust that we can get out boating sometime in the future after having our only trip last year cancelled at the last minute.

Our President put a picture of a stool, that had been painted at Braunston many years ago, in the Waterways World with a request to try and identify the painter. Well Brian, it was almost certainly painted by Ron Hough who started his career at Braunston under the eye of Frank Nurser.

We have three paintings by Ron on PURTON. our back doors are Ron's work and just inside the cabin is one of the rear doors from the wooden motor QUAIL which we had rescued from the Kennet and Avon canal after she sank at All Cannings and was subsequently taken to Devizes Wharf and cut up with a chainsaw and dumped in a landfill site. A tragic end to an old lady.

I have spent the last couple weeks making up a shelving unit for the hold of Purton using all reclaimed timber. This to be used for food storage and possibly a small microwave!

Anyway keep safe

Alan and Angela

## Portsmouth & Arundel Canal (aka Chichester Canal)



Left top: Chichester Basin

Right top: Remains of lock at Milton.



Left bottom: Dry canal and towpath near Lidsey.



Right bottom: Poyntz Swing Bridge, Chichester



Find out more about this and other local waterways on the Society's website:

<https://sotoncs.org.uk>

## The Star Ferry and Susie Wong



*Continuing our series of occasional articles from Annemarie Evans, daughter of our President and a journalist/broadcaster based in Hong Kong, this month we look at the world famous Star Ferry and the world of Suzie Wong. Thank you, Annemarie.*



Star Ferry pictures from Brian Evans

One of my favourite things to do in Hong Kong is to take the famous Star Ferry, which has gone back and forth between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island across the famous Victoria Harbour for more than 120 years. The Star Ferry has been a part of the Hong Kong transport network since 1888 when a Parsee cook called Dorabjee Noarjee Mithaiwala decided to branch out from cooking to transporting people and goods across the harbour. The trip would take between 40 minutes to an hour in those days and early photographs show the coal-fired, steam-driven vessels and the rudimentary matt shed for the passengers on the dockside at either end.

When Mr Dorabjee started the ferry network, it was called the Kowloon Ferry Company. Then, 10 years later, it was bought by an Armenian trader called Catchick Paul Chater, later Sir Paul. He was behind many of the big companies that still exist in Hong Kong and also pushed reclamation plans – as much of Hong Kong Island is very hilly. So the reclamation went out at various stages into the harbour though, thankfully, they've stopped it in recent years otherwise there wouldn't be much of a harbour left.

Paul Chater changed the name to the Star Ferry Company and introduced the vessels that still have a similar shape and style today. Initially they were single deck, then two decks, and women in the early years travelled separately. They are green and cream and travel from Kowloon to two destinations on Hong Kong Island. There's Central, more the business district,

and Wan Chai – traditionally a pub and nightclub area where Suzie Wong hung out at the 1930s waterfront Luk Kwok Hotel in the book of the same name. In the movie *The World of Suzie Wong*, released in 1960, actress Nancy Kwan plays Suzie Wong, the Eurasian working girl who attracts the interest of artist Richard Mason, played by American actor William Holden. You might recall, they meet on the Star Ferry. She's not that interested in his patter and turns away flicking her long ponytail.

I interviewed Nancy Kwan in 2010 for my weekly radio programme "Hong Kong Heritage" when she was back for a visit from the United States, where she lives, to promote a documentary about her life. It includes how she was accompanying a friend to the Suzie Wong audition, and the director asked her to try out in front of the camera – and she got the part. It caused a bit of controversy in Hong Kong at the time. Kwan's father was Chinese, her mother was an English model. Some in Hong Kong were underwhelmed that a Hong Kong Chinese actress couldn't

(Continued on page 3)



Above: Screenshot of Nancy Kwan in the 1960 movie "The World of Suzie Wong". Photo: Courtesy of Brian Jamieson.

Right: Actress Nancy Kwan on a visit to Hong Kong in 2010. Photo: James Burden

Below: Actress Nancy Kwan being interviewed on board a Star Ferry in 2010. Photo: James Burden



## The Star Ferry and Susie Wong (continued)



A Star Ferry travels at night across Victoria Harbour between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. Photos: Annemarie Evans



(Continued from page 2)

have been chosen. In the documentary she also talks of the tragedy of the death of her son at 32 due to HIV/AIDS.

At the time of the interview, she came down the stairs of the hotel to the foyer in high wedge heels so was somewhat nonplussed initially when I asked if she'd mind if we did the recorded interview on the Star Ferry, but she was willing. So we sat and chatted as the Star Ferry gently chugged us across from Wan Chai to Kowloon. These days the trip only takes about 10 minutes. The vessels are open at the windows, and are fitted with wooden seat backs that you can flip back or forward depending on which way you are travelling when you go and sit down.

On the Kowloon side Nancy Kwan and I stood and chatted for my recording, too. I was a bit relieved about that as while I liked the idea of

the Star Ferry trip for nostalgic atmosphere, the engine sound was quite loud, so it was good to get a bit of radio dialogue with a quieter background.

The Star Ferry vessels started out as coal-fired steam engine ferries, which later became diesel engines. The ferries still have the same names of the first-generation ferries of Chater's time, including the Morning Star. Last year, the Morning Star took six months off from the harbour run to be made more environmental and in July was relaunched with a diesel-electric propulsion system. At about 25 pence, yes really, it's not only one of the best ways to see the illuminated skyline around the harbour at night, and the other boat traffic, it's also a very cheap ride.

Annemarie Evans

## Waterway investment crucial for visitors and safety

The vital importance of the waterways to the Government's aspirations for economic prosperity and the population's physical and mental health was highlighted by three navigation authorities at the most recent meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Waterways.

Canal & River Trust, the Broads Authority and the Avon Navigation Trust all reported dramatic increases in visitors to their waterways during 2020, with the restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic bringing many people to their local waterways for the first time. Visits to towpaths and riverside paths increased, along with the number of people using canoes and stand up paddleboards.

The navigation authorities also noted the impact of climate change and the role of waterways as a critical aspect of national infrastructure, particularly as a response to extreme weather events such as flooding.

They urged the Government to take a long-term view to make waterways more resilient to future environmental pressures, as well as ensure funding for current 'high-risk' aspects of waterways infrastructure.

Underfunding continues to be the biggest threat facing our inland waterways. All three speakers stressed the importance of future funding to ensure ongoing access by the whole population to safely managed waterways. IWA will continue to push the government to make sure waterways are properly funded, by raising awareness of the issues and providing a platform for navigation authorities.

Find out more about how we lobby government through the [APPG for the waterways](#).

*Inland Waterways Association - 26 January 2021*



## Pandemic highlights the value of canal restoration

As we endure another lock down, you would be forgiven for thinking the chairman of the Wey & Arun Canal Trust would be feeling rather downbeat about the coming year.

Fund raising events have had to be called off, boat trips cancelled and working parties stood down. However, Sally Schupke, who has chaired the charity restoring the 23-mile canal spanning Surrey and West Sussex for more than 10 years, is full of optimism.

She says although the pandemic has been tough on the trust's finances, members and supporters, it has brought into sharp focus the importance of its aim of creating a green corridor to be used for leisure.

The number of paddleboarders, kayakers and canoeists who took to the Wey & Arun Canal in 2020 hit a record high as the pandemic brought many more visitors to all parts of the canal.



"During the pandemic so many people have appreciated the green spaces on their doorstep. In uncertain times a walk along the canal towpath and the nature park at Shalford in Surrey have brought us calm. Seeing the beauty of nature and being out in the open air have been a lifeline for many," she said. "I can't see that changing as we come out of this dark period."

She added that the numbers of people visiting the longest restored section at Loxwood were well above average throughout the year, along with other picturesque areas such as Lordings Lock near Wisborough Green and Hunt Nature Park in Shalford, as the public discovered the beauty and tranquillity of the canal for walking and cycling.

"We have seen everyone from families with young children to older people thankful for the easy and flat walking, kayakers, paddleboarders, cyclists and horse riders, all enjoying the special feeling that being by the canal provides and importantly getting some respite from being at home and having some necessary exercise."

### Circular walk

The trust's ambition is to bring back to life the canal that once provided a waterway route from London to the south coast, and Sally says the goal is one that the trust remains focused on in 2021, opening up more sections where it can. It hopes to open a circular canal walk in Birtley, near Bramley, some time this year, providing another scenic area to explore.

## New Year makeover for Caen Hill flight

A major programme of work is underway on the four highest locks at the Caen Hill Flight on the Kennet & Avon Canal. It's a massive challenge that involves draining the adjacent side reservoir ponds (used to store water to operate the locks) down to around 0.5m deep. This allows the Canal & River Trust's engineering team to descend the 5.5m (18ft) into the locks to repair the brickwork. In keeping with the locks' heritage, the team will use traditional lime mortar, as was used when the locks were built in 1810.

Mark Evans, director for the Canal & River Trust for Wales & South West, explained: "This year the trust is spending £70k on the repair work at Caen Hill. This winter work is crucial to keep the flight in peak condition. It is iconic for so many reasons – a feat of engineering from the heyday of the canals and one of the country's longest continuous runs of lock flights." The Caen Hill Flight, at Devizes in Wiltshire, is

It hasn't only been the public who have experienced the benefits of canal restoration, though, but those 150-plus volunteers who have given up their spare time to join working parties which in normal times run almost every day of the week.

"Having to shut down working parties has been a blow," Sally admitted. "For volunteers it's not just about the maintenance and restoration work itself – although that is important to them – but the social side of working together in a team, the camaraderie. Volunteering can be so good for your mental wellbeing as well as physical health."

"Due to social distancing we had to limit numbers working over the summer when working parties were allowed to once again operate, and we were even turning people away who had offered to volunteer."

"We hope that when we get back to normal we will be able to welcome even more volunteers to our working parties."

Sally also hopes that the public will continue to support the trust through donations and membership to help it bounce back from the fall in revenue in 2020.

"We plan to hold fund raising events when we can and operate our boat cruises from Loxwood as soon as restrictions are lifted in the spring."

"Tickets for our trips that were run with reduced capacity throughout the summer, autumn and over Christmas were in big demand and we can't wait to welcome passengers back when we can."

"The pandemic has showed that the restored canal brings a lot of people pleasure, both on and off the water, and we want to make sure that continues."

Paddleboarders, canoeists and kayakers can take advantage of an annual pass to use the canal. Those who are not members of British Canoe need to purchase a licence to use the canal, which goes towards maintenance of the canal and landing stages. A licence costs £5 for a day or a special rate of £15 for an annual licence, allowing unlimited use throughout the year. To buy a licence go to: <https://weyarun.org.uk/content/boat-licence-application>



To keep up to date with news from the Wey & Arun Canal Trust, visit [weyarun.org.uk](https://weyarun.org.uk)

*[Towpath Talk](#) - February 2021 and*

*[Wey & Arun Canal Trust News](#) - 18 January 2021*

described as one of the wonders of the waterways. Its 16 locks form a giant watery staircase allowing boats to travel up, and down, the steep hillside.

Being among the busiest locks on the canal network, they require constant attention and this year the Canal & River Trust is focusing on the pinnacle of the flight – locks 37 to 40. The lock gates, scarred by the bumps and scrapes of thousands of fenders, will be relined using traditional green oak.

The towpath at Caen Hill remains open and the flight is planned to reopen to boats on March 19, 2021. Mark added: "It continues to be breathtaking – both to those on the towpath enjoying the view during part of their daily exercise today and to boaters negotiating through the locks in future months."

*[Towpath Talk](#) - February 2021*

## 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 are normally held on the first Thursday of each month at 7.45pm (see Waterways Events in this issue) at Chilworth Village Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ. OS Grid Ref: SU410184. Contact the Secretary for further information.

This Newsletter is normally published during the first week of each month in time for the Society's meeting.

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## Breach of the Shropshire Union Canal



Excessive rain and extreme weather caused by Storm Christoph resulted in a breach of the Shropshire Union Canal embankment, near Beeston, during the afternoon of 20 January.

This was reported by a member of the public and Trust staff immediately went out to investigate. Water drained into local fields and the River Gow, no houses were flooded, but a few boats were stranded on the bottom of the canal. The canal is currently without water between locks 10 and 11, a distance of about one mile.

Due to the rural nature of the breach site, access is a major challenge and from either side involves a walk of nearly one mile along the towpath to the nearest road. The Trust is grateful to the Lockgate Coffee House for allowing contractors vehicles to use their carpark.

On Friday a temporary horseshoe dam was carried by hand nearly a mile down the canal by around 25 contractors and installed at the breach site to isolate the hole in the embankment. Unfortunately the

temporary dam did not hold due to the force of the water and a further collapse of the canal bottom around the breach, meaning the affected boats continue to remain without water.

Land access arrangements are now in place with a couple of farms to allow essential access across farmland to set up water feeds through the breach area and to start repairs. A more robust clay and stone dam will be constructed around the breach site in February, allowing the canal to be re-watered either side of the breach. This will enable hire boat business Chas Hardern Boats to remobilise its fleet of narrow boats again.



A full repair of the embankment breach will take several months. Designs are currently being drawn up and finalised, but the canal is not likely to be open to navigation again until this summer.

*[Canal and River Trust News](#) - 29 January 2021*

## Covid-19 and the inland waterways

The latest national lockdown for England announced by Government on 4th January means that once again boating is restricted on our waterways. Similar restrictions are in place in other parts of the UK. In England, boating on the waterways is now limited to essential travel only. Overnight stays are only permitted where the boat is your permanent residence or it is necessary for work, education or similar reasons. Those who live aboard their boats should limit their travel to accessing essential services and facilities only.

Although maintaining boats is not now considered a valid reason for leaving your home, there is an exemption allowing people to travel to "secure their second home, caravan or boat in order to avoid it posing a risk of harm/injury to themselves or others". This guidance can be found on the [DCMS website](#).

You can continue to use towpaths and riverside paths for exercise in all areas, but you must follow social distancing rules. Please keep your distance from other people and moored boats. Many lengths of towpaths are less than 2 metres wide, so it can be difficult to keep to the Government's safe distance guidelines. This is particularly difficult where boats are moored. Please keep moving and take extra care on narrow sections.

Canoeing, rowing and using other unpowered craft are permitted, limited to once a day as part of your daily exercise. You should stay within government guidelines for permitted exercise and stay local.

For specific information about using the waterways in your area please consult the website of the relevant navigation authority.

*[Inland Waterways Association](#) - 8 January 2021*