



## Chairman's Column

### July Meeting

We are delighted that our President, Brian Evans, has agreed to present another of his nostalgic evenings with 'Tales, Slides and Cine Film'.

### Society Silent Auction and Quiz Evening

Whilst Gill and I were unable to attend last month's Silent Auction and Quiz Evening, due to a family bereavement, I understand that the evening was very successful despite the disappointing turnout of only eighteen members (our lowest by far for many years). This was a shame as the Committee endeavoured to introduce something new into our usual programme of speakers. It is hoped that a write-up on that evening will appear in next month's Newsletter.

### River Thames Trip

A brief write-up on the Society's River Thames boat trip on Sunday 7 June is also included in this Newsletter.

### June Newsletter

Congratulations to our Newsletter Editor, Peter Oates, for pulling out all the stops for last month's issue. The photographs (in colour, for those who receive their copy by email) were splendid, particularly those in the 'Lucy' feature.

## Vote for Stourport Canal Basins

The project to restore Stourport-on-Severn's Canal Basins to its former glory has reached the semi-finals of the National Lottery Awards. The £1.65 million restoration project is part of the heritage category competing against nine other semi-finalists for the title of 'Best Heritage Project'. Now in their sixth year, The National Lottery Awards recognise the difference that lottery-funded projects, both big and small, make to local communities across the UK, and celebrates the achievements of the people behind them.

The Stourport project in Worcestershire included:

- The restoration of 29 listed buildings and canal structures;
- Landscaping around the canal basins, providing green areas, public pathways, interpretation boards, public artworks, newly created open spaces for public events, such as markets and open-air theatre productions;
- Improved access for people with disabilities;
- Archaeological digs, which exposed the foundations of an old tollhouse and discovered a long-hidden tunnel.

The three projects in each category with the most number of votes will go through to the finals of the awards and another round of public voting later in August.

Voting for the semi-finals, which started on 22 June, ends at midday on Friday 10 July. If you have access to the Internet and wish to learn more about the Stourport Project or to vote, go to:

[http://www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk/awards/shortlistitem.cfm?id\\_category=5&id\\_entry=77](http://www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk/awards/shortlistitem.cfm?id_category=5&id_entry=77)



Back ends at Cambrian Wharf, Birmingham, July 2003.  
Picture © Peter Oates

## Annual General Meeting 2009

In accordance with the Constitution, notice is hereby formally given of the Southampton Canal Society's Annual General Meeting on the 30th July 2009 at Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth Road, Chilworth, Southampton at 7.45pm.

### Next Month's Meeting

At our next meeting, on Thursday 30 July, the Society will be holding its 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting. The agenda, officer reports, accounts etc will be published in the August Newsletter which will be emailed/posted out early enough for members to be able to read all the documentation before the meeting. Whilst a few spare copies will be available at the AGM can all members please bring along their copies of the August Newsletter. This will avoid additional printing costs for the Society.

### Day-Star Theatre Visit – Friday 25 September

Just a reminder that Day-Star Theatre will be making a return visit to the Society in September. Their production on this occasion will be "An Unpleasant Business" – which Day-Star describe as 'Another weird and wonderful, witty and whacky take on rural life with the distinct possibility of an unexpected twist or two'. As usual, the show will be followed by an American Supper. Tickets at £8 each are not yet available but bookings can be made at any Society meeting – please see our Treasurer, Anne Coleman, or Secretary, Angela Rose.

*Paul Herbert*

*Paul Herbert*

Any member may request an item to be included on the agenda of the AGM by giving at least fourteen days written notice of the item and its nature to the Chairman, Paul Herbert (contact details on back page of this Newsletter).

## May Meeting Roger Squires - "The Panama Canal"

We were delighted to welcome back Roger Squires, to speak to us on this occasion about the Panama Canal, its history, future and a cruise he took through this famous waterway in February 2008.

As Roger explained, there had been five different schemes over the years to build a canal across the Panama isthmus. These included Spanish schemes in the 1500's and 1800's; a proposal by an international company, also in the 1800's and the (in)famous project proposed by de Lesseps in 1879. With the success he had had with the construction of the Suez Canal just ten years earlier, de Lesseps was confident he would complete his scheme. The building of his canal would dramatically reduce the time and mileage when travelling between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, for example it would save a total of 18,000 miles on a trip from New York to San Francisco.

The canal as built is approximately 51 miles, with three sets of locks. It was constructed in two stages. The first between 1881 and 1888 being the work carried out by the French company, headed by de Lesseps and secondly the work by the Americans which eventually completed the canal's construction between 1904 and 1914.

The French company ran into numerous difficulties, both technical and financial, and eventually, in 1899, their attempt at constructing the canal was seen to be a failure. The American Government then stepped in, taking over the project, commencing work in 1904.

It is obviously impossible to give full details of Roger's presentation in such a write-up but with the use of an excellent

visual presentation he described all the tribulations facing the French and American builders, including the 'Panama Fever' which had decimated the earlier company's work force and the way the Americans overcame those; the building of an extensive railway network to both deliver materials and the removal of vast quantities of excavated spoil; and the actual construction of the canal itself.

Roger went on to describe the cruise he took through the canal in 2008 onboard P&O's 'Arcadia', which apart from showing the canal and its scenic environment also showed the workings of the canals and the busy locomotives and their crews who shepherd ships through the lock flights.

The last section of Roger's programme dealt with the future of the canal and its planned expansion. The existing canal can only accommodate ships carrying up to 65,000 tons, but ships able to carry 300,000 tons have been introduced. The current locks are in two lanes but the new development entails a third lane with two new sets of locks at both the Atlantic and Pacific mouths of the canal, excavation of access channels to the new locks, and the widening and deepening of the existing navigational channels. The improvements will accommodate post-Panamax vessels, the latter being far too large for the existing system. The new locks are planned to open for traffic in 2014.

Many thanks Roger for such an interesting and entertaining evening.

*Paul Herbert*

## How Times Change

*The article in the May Newsletter about the Admiral Nelson pub reopening reminded Brian Evans of times past. Thanks Brian for sharing this with us.*

On June 15th-16th 1968, I hired Willow Wren's 50 seat Water Ouzel. The booking was principally for the Ordnance Survey Cine Club, but some members of the infant Canal Society and others swelled the complement.

On the Saturday the coach arrived at Braunston from Southampton around 10.00am and when the passengers had settled into Water Ouzel we set off to the Oxford Canal. Annegret, our small son Andrew and I accompanied the party on a small twenty footer owned by my brother Don. David Gibson, an early Canal Society member, who shared a boat, which had been based on half a wooden working boat, with his mother, also cruised in company. The idea of accompanying Water Ouzel was to give the cameras more to shoot at.

The boat crews spent the night at Fenny Compton and the coach-load returned to Southampton.

Sunday morning another party arrived and the return journey began.

After descending one of the locks on the Napton Flight, the bottom gates were opened but Water Ouzel stuck fast. There was a lot of pushing and shoving. A long rope was run out and many of the passengers hitched up. All of a sudden the boat was free, the rope slackened and a large portion of

the Ordnance Survey sat on its bum on the towpath.

Back at Braunston the coach party loaded and left. We stayed on in Don's boat for the night.

Next day we took a walk up the Braunston Flight. We coincided with a pair of Birmingham & Midland CC boats which were carrying coal. The couple crewing had a young baby, and in addition the lady had some washing to complete and a lunch to prepare. So I helped the captain work up the flight, also taking photos as best I could.

They disappeared into Braunston Tunnel and we were feeling hungry. So back to the Admiral Nelson to find out what we could get. Unfortunately only a drink and a pie. However, on a blazing hot June day the bar was beautifully cool.

We had just ordered when the landlady asked us if we would mind

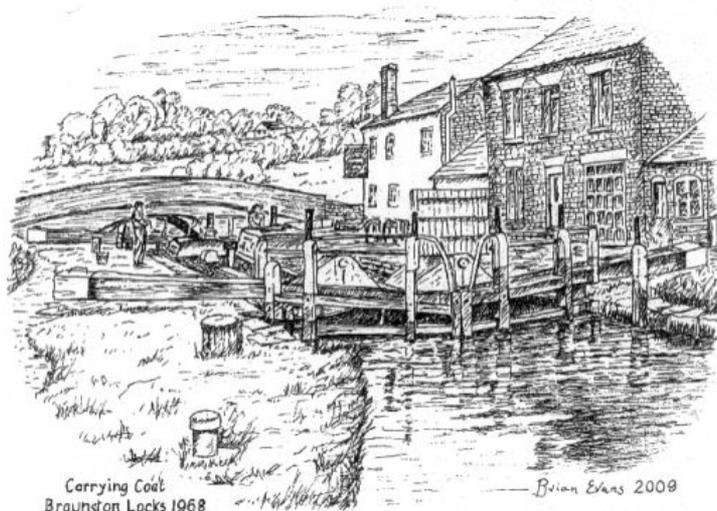
leaving the bar. The brewery dray had arrived with a delivery and the landlady was concerned that the deliverymen may report back to the brewery that she had a child in the bar. Andrew was a little over two years old.

Outside in the sunshine the metal pub seats were too hot to sit on - probably more use for frying eggs. I cannot remember where we ate our pies - standing up, sitting on the grass, maybe on a lock beam.

Now I read in the Newsletter that the Nelson serves meals.

How times change.

*Brian Evans*



# Waterways Diary

The following is a list of waterway events taking place within approximately 50 miles of Southampton. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the correctness of this information, please check with the listed contact who will be glad to confirm and supply further details.

Recently, OS grid references and/or postcodes have been added (where known but not guaranteed) to aid location of the event. If YOU know of an event taking place that should be in this list then please contact the editor.

Time	Organiser	Details	Contact
Thu 2 Jul 2009 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"Tales, slides and cine film" an evening with Brian Evans. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ. (SU410184)	Angela Rose: 02380 403982 Email: <a href="mailto:info@apas-engineering.com">info@apas-engineering.com</a>
Thu 2 Jul 2009 7.30pm	Chichester Ship Canal Trust	Talk: "Past, Present & Future of the Chichester Canal." At Christ Church, South Street, Chichester. Tickets £3.00 from Linda Wilkinson.	Linda Wilkinson, 1 Chidham Lane, Chidham, Chichester, PO18 8TL. Tel: 01243 576701
Thu 2 Jul 2009	Wey & Arun CT	Mikron Theatre Company: "Tales of the Thames - journeys up and down the riverbank". Fishers Farm Park's theatre, Wisborough Green, West Sussex, RH14 OEG (TQ058268). Tickets £8.	Web: <a href="http://www.mikron.org.uk">www.mikron.org.uk</a> WACT Office: 01403 752403 Email: <a href="mailto:office@weyandarun.co.uk">office@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Fri 3 Jul 2009 7.30pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	Mikron Theatre Company: "Tales of the Thames - journeys up and down the riverbank". Fox and Hounds, 71 Crookham Road, Church Crookham, Fleet, GU51 5NP. (SU803530) A collection will be taken after the show.	Web: <a href="http://www.mikron.org.uk">www.mikron.org.uk</a> David Millett: 01252 617364 Email: <a href="mailto:d.millett7@ntlworld.com">d.millett7@ntlworld.com</a>
Sat 4 Jul 2009 7.30pm	Environment Agency	Mikron Theatre Company: "Tales of the Thames - journeys up and down the riverbank". Donnington Parish Hall, Stockbridge Road, Donnington, Chichester PO19 2QJ. (SU855036) Tickets £7 from Linda Wilkinson.	Linda Wilkinson, 1 Chidham Lane, Chidham, Chichester, PO18 8TL. Tel: 01243 576701. Web: <a href="http://www.mikron.org.uk">www.mikron.org.uk</a>
Sun 12 Jul 2009	IWA Solent & Arun Branch	IWA Solent Branch river trip on the Stour. Start from Christchurch. (SZ1692)	Brendan Whelan: 01903 816012 Email: <a href="mailto:solentandarun@waterways.org.uk">solentandarun@waterways.org.uk</a>
Thu 16 Jul 2009 7.00pm	IWA Salisbury Group	Boules & BBQ at the Green Dragon, Alderbury, Wilts, SP5 3AR. (SU183274)	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841 Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: <a href="mailto:glover3@gotadsl.co.uk">glover3@gotadsl.co.uk</a>
Sun 19 Jul 2009 10.00am	Somersetshire Coal CS	Walk - The K&A Canal at Claverton. Meet: A37 Warminster Road.	Mike Chapman 01225 426948
Sun 26 Jul 2009	Kennet & Avon CT	Newbury Waterways Festival. (SU473672)	Graham Smith: 01635 580356 Email: <a href="mailto:GrahamV.Smith@virgin.net">GrahamV.Smith@virgin.net</a>
Thu 30 Jul 2009 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Annual General Meeting followed by supporting programme (details to follow). Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ. (SU410184). NB this is the "AUGUST" meeting.	Angela Rose: 02380 403982 Email: <a href="mailto:info@apas-engineering.com">info@apas-engineering.com</a>
Thu 3 Sep 2009 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"History of the Kennet & Avon Canal" with Peter Jordan. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ. (SU410184).	Angela Rose: 02380 403982 Email: <a href="mailto:info@apas-engineering.com">info@apas-engineering.com</a>
Sun 20 Sep 2009	IWA Solent & Arun Branch	IWA Solent Branch river trip on the Hamble to Curbridge and Botley. Start from Swanwick. (SU495092)	Brendan Whelan: 01903 816012 Email: <a href="mailto:solentandarun@waterways.org.uk">solentandarun@waterways.org.uk</a>
Fri 25 Sep 2009 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"An Unpleasant Business" by Day-Star Theatre (see below) followed by an American Supper. Tickets: £8.00. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ. (SU410184). NB this is the "OCTOBER" meeting and is NOT on a Thursday.	Angela Rose: 02380 403982 Email: <a href="mailto:info@apas-engineering.com">info@apas-engineering.com</a>
Thu 5 Nov 2009 7.45pm	Southampton CS	'Life Before WRG' with Tim Dodwell. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ. (SU410184).	Angela Rose: 02380 403982 Email: <a href="mailto:info@apas-engineering.com">info@apas-engineering.com</a>
Thu 3 Dec 2009 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Annual Inter-Society Waterways Quiz. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ. (SU410184).	Angela Rose: 02380 403982 Email: <a href="mailto:info@apas-engineering.com">info@apas-engineering.com</a>
Sun 19 Jul, 16 Aug, 20 Sep, 18 Oct 2009 2.00pm	Paul Barnett	Guided tours through the remains of the Purton Hulks led by Paul Barnett, Marine Historian. Donations in aid of Severn Area Rescue Association. or £3.00 per person. Approx 2 hours weather permitting. Meet Purton Lower Bridge, Gloucester & Sharpness Canal (SO692044).	Paul Barnett: 07833 143231 Email: <a href="mailto:barnadillo@aol.com">barnadillo@aol.com</a> Web: <a href="http://www.friendsofpurton.org.uk">www.friendsofpurton.org.uk</a>

## Day-Star Theatre An Unpleasant Business



The village of Oakley Magna no longer has a shop, a post office, a school, a pub or a bus service. It is, on the whole, apart from the annoying teenagers in the defunct bus shelter, a quiet village.

So when Septuagenarian Daisy Thomas is found hanging upside down in a disused abattoir it is easy to imagine how the locals feel. Except that no one much liked the old lady. In fact most villagers openly disliked her. She'd been a bit of a nuisance over the years with her objections to fox hunting and G.M. crops and barn conversions and vehicles speeding through the village. And it's not as if she was a real local. She'd only been in the village forty years and before that no one knows anything about her.

Detective Inspector Gibson and Detective Constable Saunders arrive from nearby Market Kingsley to unravel the truth behind this unpleasant business. They lead themselves up and down several garden paths and even back to the most wanted man in England in 1966. And they bring with them their own personal baggage.

Another weird and wonderful, witty and whacky take on rural life with the distinct possibility of an unexpected twist or two.

Day-Star will be appearing on **Friday 25th** September at 7.45pm. Tickets price £8.00 will be shortly available from the Secretary, Angela Rose or the Treasurer, Anne Coleman (contact details on back page of this Newsletter).



# 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.

## President:

Brian Evans.

## Chairman:

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Email: [p\\_herbert1@sky.com](mailto:p_herbert1@sky.com)

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Email: [info@apas-engineering.com](mailto:info@apas-engineering.com)

## Treasurer & Membership Secretary

Anne Coleman, 14 Redmoor Close, Bitterne, Southampton, SO19 4DH. Tel: 023 8044 2552. Email: [wiseowl@tcp.co.uk](mailto:wiseowl@tcp.co.uk)

## Committee:

Maureen Greenham, Peter Oates, Alan Rose, David Townley-Jones

## Newsletter Editor & Webmaster:

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Email: [scs@whitenap.plus.com](mailto:scs@whitenap.plus.com)

## Society Website:

<http://www.sotoncs.org.uk>

## Meetings:

Normally 1st Thursday each month at 7.45pm. (See Waterways Diary.) Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ. OS Grid Ref: SU410184.

## Society River Thames Boat Trip

Thanks to a large contingent from the Pomeroy family, thirty members and guests enjoyed the Society's summer trip on Salter Bros 'Reading' from Wallingford to Abingdon on the River Thames on Sunday 7th June 2009.

We all managed to find our way to Wallingford and to the landing stage where 'Reading' was moored. Off we went on our cruise to Abingdon, passing through Benson Lock, Day's Lock near Dorchester, Clifton Lock, and then the final lock before Abingdon at Culham. Shortly after we passed the new link to the currently derelict Wilts & Berks Canal before passing under Abingdon Bridge and mooring at the landing stage at Nag's Head Island.

We had about an hour's stopover in Abingdon and we all wandered off in different directions to tour this famous riverside town. Unfortunately, being a Sunday the town centre was rather quiet but luckily a number of coffee shops were open and many of us enjoyed their beverages etc. It was then time to re-embark on 'Reading' for our journey back to Wallingford.

Throughout our trip we saw numerous examples of the wild life of this part of the Thames Valley. Apart from the high numbers of Mallard, we saw Moorhens, Coots, Swans, Canadian Geese and various other breeds of ducks not recognised by the writer. The highpoint was obviously the sighting of the Red Kite, flying above our boat on both the outward and return journeys.

The weather during the cruise could best be described as 'changeable' – with the occasional light shower. However, that certainly didn't spoil the enjoyment of our outing.

As we left 'Reading' back at Wallingford, we posed for the mandatory group photograph.

All in all, a good day out that I am sure we all enjoyed. Many thanks to Maureen Greenham for organising another successful outing.

*Paul Herbert*



Above: The SCS party in Wallingford posing alongside Salter Bros 'Reading'.  
Below left: The old (original) Town Hall in Abingdon.  
Below right: The downstream approach to Benson Lock & Weir  
Pictures © Paul Herbert

