



Chairman's Column

Ann Dukes

We haven't seen Bob and Ann Dukes at recent meetings, and as they are regular attendees, I was a little concerned. However, on the morning of our last meeting I received an email from Bob with the news that Ann is currently unwell. We send our best wishes to Ann and a 'Get Well' card has been sent from the Society.

2007 Society Programme

I am pleased to report that our speakers programme for 2007 is now complete and we are currently booking for 2008. See the appropriate item below and always keep an eye on Peter's 'Waterways Diary' published in every issue.

March Meeting

Whilst we enjoy welcoming visiting speakers, it is always gratifying when our own members give us a presentation. This month is certainly no exception with Ron and Myra Glover returning to give us their latest talk about their cruising on the continent – this time on the Rivers Maine, Rhine and Lahn, in Southern Germany.

Skittles Evening

As you read this Newsletter there is only just over a week to go before our Skittles Evening to be held at "The Kings Head" in Hursley on Friday 9 March. Response to date has been very good with 26 bookings to date. However, there are still a few places left. In the past this event has sold out and I would be delighted if we could continue that tradition. I am sure that we will be able to persuade Rogan to organise a similar event later in the year if this one proves popular with members. So don't miss the opportunity of joining with your colleagues in this excellent social event. Full details are advertised on the back page of this Newsletter.

Spring Outing

If you haven't yet booked for our boat trip at Loxwood on the Wey & Arun Canal on Saturday 21 April, you might be too late. The Canal Trust's narrow boat "Zachariah Keppel" can only accommodate 30

passengers and, as I write this article, 26 places have already been booked! Full details of this outing appear on the back page of this Newsletter so don't delay. It is likely that we will open a 'reserve' list in the event of cancellations.

February Newsletter

Many thanks to our Newsletter Editor, Peter, and to our Printer, Andy, who still managed to produce our February issue at the thirteenth hour, despite a technical glitch which had delayed its normal production timetable.

Donation

At the February Society meeting Brian and Annegret Evans held a 'Secret Auction' of a commemorative plate. The successful bidders were Rogan and Lynn Olding who also made a donation to the Society, for which we are very grateful.

Interval Refreshments

Many thanks to Ann Fry who kindly donated the biscuits for our February meeting.

40th Anniversary Celebrations

Please see the separate item on page 4 providing an update on our plans to date.

Itchen Navigation

We have received Issue No.6 of the Itchen Navigation News from the Project Team. Due to shortage of space in this issue, details will be held over to the April Newsletter.

Inland Waterways Association

The IWA, to whom our Society is affiliated, is currently undergoing two consultation exercises. One is a review of its structure, particularly concerning its Branches and Regions; the other is a review of its communications with members and the 'outside world'. IWA members are being asked to submit their comments and views on these two issues by 30 April 2007. Copies of the two consultation papers can be obtained from IWA Head Office or downloaded from the IWA website

Paul Herbert

2007 Society Programme

As our speakers' programme for 2007 is now complete I thought it would be useful for members if I provided a brief outline.

At our early April meeting Peter Boyce will be speaking about 'The Moving Meadow', his experience of transporting a section of meadow, complete with wild flowers, along the canals. He will also be telling us about his maintenance work on his narrowboat tug 'James Loader'. Later that month that well known waterways personality, Roger Squires, will be taking us to Portugal to visit the River Duoro, from Oporto to the Spanish border. Then, in June, it's off with Colin Ward to Canada for 'Lots to do on the Soo'. It has been some time since we have had a speaker about the Basingstoke Canal but this will be remedied in early

July with a visit by Roger Cansdale of the Surrey & Hants Canal Society. This is followed at the end of that month by our Annual General Meeting, with supporting programme. In September Colin Scrivener will be 'Reflecting on the Fifties' whilst in October our friends Pete and Jane will be making a very welcome return with 'Day-Star Theatre' and a compilation of their previous productions. The performance will be followed by a buffet supper. (More about that visit in a future Newsletter). In November Neil Arlidge will be telling us what exactly 'The Tuesday Night Club' is, and all about their waterways adventures. We will finish off the year, as usual, with the Annual Inter-Society Waterways Quiz and American Supper in December.

Paul Herbert

February Meeting

The Royal Military Canal - George Fleming

George first visited the Society last July when his topic was 'Canals at War'. He will readily admit that his knowledge of canals is limited and he discovered the Royal Military Canal almost by accident as part of his studies into military history, and in particular, 2nd World War 'Pillboxes'. During his visit to the canal he met by accident the daughter of the man who is responsible for its maintenance. George distributed copies of a map of the canal and surrounding area to the audience and that proved to be most useful during his presentation.

In introducing the Royal Military Canal George reminded us that, in the early 1800s, England once again faced the threat of invasion from Napoleon, who had amassed an army of some 130,000 troops together with about 2,000 boats on the coast near Boulogne. English thoughts turned to how to defend the Romney Marsh – a low lying stretch of coast which was expected to be the landing point for any French invasion. The Marsh had been left virtually undefended in the belief that it could be quickly flooded and thereby create an impassable barrier. However, there was concern that this defensive measure, by itself, was unworkable, and there would be chaos and damage to the 28,000 acres of valuable agricultural land in the event of a false alarm.

It was then decided to construct a canal around the back of the Romney Marsh. The excavated soil would be piled on the northern bank to form a parapet, behind which troops could be positioned and moved out of sight of the enemy, along a specially built military road. The canal would not be built in a straight line but would have kinks to allow guns to be positioned at those points that could then fire along the length of the canal if the enemy attempted to cross it. (However, those kinks subsequently made the canal fairly useless as a viable commercial waterway).

The canal as built is 28 miles long running between Seabrook in Kent to Cliff End in East Sussex, of which 22.5 miles is canal and the remaining 5.5 miles is made up of the Rivers Rother and Brede, effectively turning Romney Marsh into an island. It is the third longest defensive monument in the British Isles after Hadrian's Wall and Offa's Dyke.

The canal construction was not without its problems, with overruns both on the construction timetable and costs. Building started in October 1804 but by May 1805 the canal project was close to disaster and work had stopped. As a result, the contractors and the consultant engineer, the renowned John Rennie, were dismissed. The project was then put in the hands of the Quartermaster-

General's department with Lt. Col. John Brown, Commandant of the Royal Staff Corps (whose original idea the canal had been) in command. Navvies dug the canal itself whilst the military built the ramparts and military road, and turfed the banks. At its peak there were 1,500 men working on the canal. The change of command and the greater work force speeded progress; however concessions had to be made ... so that for most of its length the canal is half its projected width and depth. The canal wasn't finally completed until April 1809 and cost £234,310 - a huge amount in Georgian England and entirely state funded.

George described how the route of the canal was protected by a number of gun batteries and other fortifications with barracks etc. Later, the famous Martello Towers, with their formidable guns, were erected along the south coast.

The canal was considered by many to be a white elephant of the largest proportions and a huge waste of public money. However, it proved to be an excellent military obstacle, though never tested in battle. The Government desperately needed to find ways of recovering some of the money spent on the canal and in 1807 opened it to navigation and collected tolls. However, the canal was never successful and the last ever toll was collected in 1909.

Although never being called upon to defend the nation, the canal fulfilled one of its intended duties, the improvement of irrigation and drainage of the Romney Marsh. Today the canal is used for angling and non-powered boating, the only powered boat permitted being for management/maintenance purposes. Rich in wildlife, parts of the canal are a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the remainder is a Local Wildlife Site. The inoperative Iden Lock, connecting the canal with the River Rother, can still be seen today as can some of the adjacent original military buildings, including the officer's house and barracks.

As previously, George's knowledge and quick-fire presentation left many of the audience breathless at times. Many thanks George for another interesting and exhilarating talk. I know all those who attended enjoyed your presentation and learned a great deal, not only about the Royal Military Canal, but about Romney Marsh and the surrounding area.

Paul Herbert

(The above write-up was based on my cryptic notes taken during George's talk and content of the Royal Military Canal website, to which full acknowledgement is given).

Save our Waterways Campaign

The next round of waterway protest events is due to take place over the weekend 3rd to 4th March. IWA is concerned that these should be well supported and is urging all its branches and allied groups to show their support - and in particular to demonstrate support right across the waterway community, and to show strength of support from the wide diversity of people who use the waterways. Events at the following locations have already been announced and more are in the planning stages.

Ashton-under-Lyne, Banbury, Braunston, Camden Town, Cheddleton, Devizes, Fradley, Garstang, Hertford, Leicester, Leighton Buzzard, Macclesfield, Marsworth, Newbury, Northwich, Paddington, Pewsey, Tarleton, Trevor.

It is hoped that this round of events will have a strong focus on local waterside communities and will have active involvement by non-boating groups as well as boaters. If you care for the waterways, you are urged to make an effort to attend one of the protest events. Not going by boat is not a valid reason for failing to go.

And at the same time, a resolution in support of the campaign will be debated at the Liberal Democrat Spring Conference in Harrogate.

It was originally thought that by the time of this year's Budget in the Spring the campaign would have been either won or lost. That now seems unlikely. The crucial decisions are those concerning the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review for the next three years. It seems highly likely that these will not be made until the change of Prime Minister has happened, so there's a need to keep the campaign going rather longer than some expected.

Further information about the campaign can be found at the following websites: www.saveourwaterways.org.uk and www.waterways.org.uk/News/DefraFundingCuts

Based on material on the above websites

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 confirm and supply further details of that 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 1 Mar 2007 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Ron & Myra Glover will talk about "The Rivers of Southern Germany: The Main, The Rhine, and The Lahn". Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Fri 9 Mar 2007 7.30pm	Southampton CS	Skittles Evening at the Kings Head, Hursley. Tickets £10 to include buffet meal. Booking essential.	Rogan Olding: 02380 263660 Email: olding@freenet.co.uk
Thu 15 Mar 2007 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	"The canal that never was – Friends, foes, families, feuds, finance and failure." Derrick Hunt will be talking about the Dorset and Somerset Canal. The Green Dragon, Alderbury, Salisbury	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841. Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: glover3@gotadsl.co.uk
Wed 21 Mar 2007 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	"The Manchester Ship Canal" with Richard Thomas. Parish Pavilion, Station Road, Chobham, nr Woking, Surrey.	David Millett (01252 617364) or Peter Coxhead (01932 344564).
Wed 28 Mar 2007 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	"Waterways Past & Present" by Derek Pratt. The Stone Building, Newbury Wharf, Newbury.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356 Email : grahamv.smith@virgin.net
Fri 30 Mar 2007 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	Reading branch AGM followed by photographer Alan Copeland on "Curiosities in the Chiltern". Turnham's Farm Hall, Little Heath Road, Tilehurst, Reading.	John and Pam Swift: 0118 9415540 Email: johns@360swift.com
Sat 31 Mar 2007 10.00am	Kennet & Avon CT	Canal Clean Up Day. Meet at Canal Centre, Devizes Wharf.	Alice Boyd: 01380 724701 Email: alicebf2@aol.com
Sat 31 Mar 2007 7.30pm	Kennet & Avon CT	Devizes Branch AGM followed by talk from a representative from the RSPB on the birdlife of the Pewsey Vale. Canal Centre, Devizes Wharf.	Alice Boyd: 01380 724701 Email: alicebf2@aol.com
Sat 31 Mar - Sun 15 Apr 2007	Chichester Ship Canal Trust	Easter Bunny Boat Trips. A surprise for every child! Tickets: £7.50. Advanced booking essential.	Val Owen: 01243 377405 (9am to 7pm)
Thu 5 Apr 2007 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"The Moving Meadow" by Peter Boyce. He will also be talking about the work he has carried out on his tug 'James Loader'. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Fri-Mon 6-9 Apr 2007 11.00am - 16.00pm	Wey & Arun CT	Hourly Easter Special Cruises on canal at Loxwood. Chocolate eggs and gifts for children, refreshments for adults. Tickets: £7.00. Booking essential.	Enquiries and bookings: 01403 752403 Email: easter@weyandarun.co.uk Web: www.weyandarun.co.uk
Sat-Sun 7-8 Apr 2007	Surrey & Hampshire CS	Bridge Barn Rally, Woking Canal Festival	Tel: 01252 370073
Wed 18 Apr 2007 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	"The canals de l'Est and the Rhone au Rhin" - an illustrated talk by Robin Higgs. Parish Pavilion, Station Road, Chobham, nr Woking, Surrey.	David Millett (01252 617364) or Peter Coxhead (01932 344564).
Sat 21 Apr 2007 10.30am	Southampton CS	Society boat trip on the Wey & Arun Canal at Loxwood, Sussex aboard the 'Zachariah Keppel'. Meet at the Onslow Arms, Loxwood, Sussex.	Maureen Greenham: 02380 406951. Email: maureen.greenham@dsl.pipex.com
Sat 21 Apr 2007	Chichester Ship Canal Trust	Boat Cavalcade, including the CSCT tug fleet and small trailable boats. Launching in the canal basin in Chichester, south of the railway station.	Dave Anderson: 01243 771363 Email: daveandcolleen@tiscali.co.uk
Sun 22 Apr 2007 10.30am	Wilts & Berks CT	Sponsored Walk from Chippenham to Lacock and back (approx 8 miles).	Peter Williams: 01249 652248 Email: peter.williams32@btinternet.com
Wed 25 Apr 2007 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	Wey & Arun Canal Restoration Update with Jim Phillips preceded by AGM. The Stone Building, Newbury Wharf, Newbury.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356 Email : grahamv.smith@virgin.net
Thu 26 Apr 2007 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Roger Squires takes us to Portugal and talks about the River Duoro, from Oporto to the Spanish border. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
6 Apr - 30 Sep 2007 10.30am - 5.00pm	Kennet & Avon CT	Crofton Beam Engines open every day. When not in steam admission: Adults £4.50, Seniors £4.00, Children £1.50, Families (2 adults & 2 children) £9.00. For steaming weekends see below.	Tel: 01672 870300 Email: egcr59103@CroftonBeamEngines.org Website: www.croftonbeamengines.org
7-9 Apr, 5-7 May, 26-28 May, 30 Jun - 1 Jul 2007 10.30am - 5.00pm	Kennet & Avon CT	Crofton Beam Engines Steaming weekends. Admission: Adults £6.50, Seniors £5.50, Children £1.50, Families (2 adults & 2 children) £13.00. Also steaming on 28-29 Jul, 25-27 Aug, 29-30 Sep 2007.	Tel: 01672 870300 Email: egcr59103@CroftonBeamEngines.org Website: www.croftonbeamengines.org
8 Apr - 21 Oct 2007 10.00am - 5.00pm (4.00pm Weds)	Kennet & Avon CT	Claverton Pumping Station open every Sat, Sun, Wed and Bank Holiday Mon. Non-pumping days admission: Adults £2.00, Children under 16 free but must be accompanied by adult. For pumping days see below.	Tel: 01225 483001 Email: enquiries@claverton.org Website: www.claverton.org
8-9 Apr, 7 May, 27-28 May, 10 Jun, 24 Jun 2007 10.00am - 5.00pm	Kennet & Avon CT	Claverton Pumping Station pumping days. Admission: Adults £2.00, Children under 16 free but must be accompanied by adult. Also pumping on 8 Jul, 22 Jul, 12 Aug, 26-27 Aug, 9 Sep, 23 Sep, 21 Oct Sep 2007	Tel: 01225 483001 Email: enquiries@claverton.org Website: www.claverton.org

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.

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Meetings:

Normally 1st Thursday each month at 7.45pm. (See Waterways Diary.) Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.

40th Anniversary Celebrations

Members are aware that 2007 is the Society's 40th Anniversary – the actual anniversary being on 1 June. I am hoping that we will be able to publish a special Anniversary Newsletter that month.

Some of the 'special' activities already organised for 2007 include next month's Skittles Evening and the Boat Trip on the Wey & Arun Canal in April. If the skittles evening is as successful as anticipated I am hopeful that similar events will be organised later in the year. We are currently investigating a further boat trip this summer and, perhaps, a Barbecue to coincide with another outing. The visit by 'Day-Star Theatre' in October was specially arranged as part of our anniversary plans.

Our anniversary year will, of course, extend into 2008, and I anticipate that further events and outings will be organised during that spring and summer. We are already investigating additions to our speakers' programme next year and invitations have already

been sent to Harry Arnold and David Blagrove, amongst others. We are also hoping to attract a Boatyard/Hire Fleet operator and one or two demonstrators of (land based) waterways skills.

I made reference in a previous Newsletter to special anniversary clothing being produced. This project is currently under discussion with the supplier and available items are likely to include sweat shirts, polo shirts, and rugby shirts – all bearing a special Society logo, similar to that produced for our 30th anniversary in 1997. Watch this space for further details!

Paul Herbert

Editor's Note: May I appeal to you, the readership, for any articles, stories, anecdotes, etc that you feel might be of special interest for our Anniversary Newsletter at the beginning of June. At least you shouldn't be able to say that I haven't given enough warning!

Peter Oates

SKITTLES EVENING

THE KINGS HEAD, HURSLEY
FRIDAY 9 MARCH 2007 - 7.30PM



£10 PER HEAD INCLUSIVE OF BUFFET

Menu:

Curry
Sweet & Sour Chicken
Lasagne
Vegetarian Option

Bookings and further information from

ROGAN OLDING
Tel: 02380 263660
Email: olding@freenet.co.uk

SPRING OUTING & BOAT TRIP

WEY & ARUN CANAL
LOXWOOD RESTORED SECTION



On nb ZACHARIAH KEPPEL

SATURDAY 21 APRIL 2007 - 10.30AM

Meet at the "ONSLow ARMS", LOXWOOD, SUSSEX

Visit to the restored Brewhurst Mill

ADULTS: £7.50 CHILDREN: £5.00

Bookings and further information from

MAUREEN GREENHAM
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