



Newsletter

Issue 341

May 2000

Meeting a happy couple who just float through life

Ken and Margaret Froud, who live on the Oxford Canal at Napton, often send in canal related articles from their local paper, the Leamington Spa Courier. This article appeared on Friday March 3rd, 2000 and may be of interest to members. Thanks to Ken and Margaret.

THIS week's Lifestyle Zone looks at an intrepid couple living a very different lifestyle - running a floating hotel on a pair of canal narrow boats.

Martin and Debby Rushbrooke had an enviable lifestyle. They met when they were very young (he was 15, she was 12), grew up together, were married young and had good well-paid jobs.

Martin was in computers and Debby worked as a finance officer for a college. They had a large comfortable house in Hampshire and looked set for life.

And then came the madness - or the stroke of genius! The Rushbrookes, who had enjoyed a couple of canal boat holidays in the past, decided to sell up and buy a couple of narrow boats and set up a floating hotel business.

"It was a big gamble - we even sold our house. Our parents went mental and everyone thought we were mad. We knew virtually nothing about boats - there couldn't have been anybody greener than us. Other boat people gave us two years," said Debby.

But that was in 1986 and now in the year 2000 Martin and Debby are the longest-running hotel boat company in the business.

Originally from Rye in West Sussex, the couple have now lived in Kineton for six years and have a young son, Matthew, aged six.

Their pair of floating hotel boats, Brackley and Ellesmere are wintering at Saltisford Canal Trust before the season starts in March. Traditionally, hotel boats work in pairs - Brackley is the one with the engine, and she tows the butty Ellesmere silently behind.

Brackley was built in 1974 for Colliery Narrow Boats as a passenger trip boat. The Rushbrookes bought Brackley first and had her converted to an hotel boat in 1986.

Ellesmere, was built in 1930 for use on the Birmingham Canals. Birmingham [sic] Waterways Board sold her to the Huddersfield Canal Society for use on

a restoration project. The Rushbrookes bought her and renovated her themselves.

That first year, 1986, the Rushbrookes operated their business with just the one boat, adding the second a couple of years later. Martin's family had been in the hotel business for years but apart from that, the couple knew nothing.

They had a couple of crew - Martin drove, Debby did all the cooking and the venture was a huge success. In fact one of those very first guests still books her holidays with them every year and has become a firm friend.

Said Debby: "We take nine guests either as singles or couples, and there are four crew and generally the cruises are for a week at a time between March and October.

"Before we had Matthew and when he was a small baby we would leave our house and not return to it at all for seven months. But once Matthew had started school we thought things would change and seriously considered selling the boats.

"They were on the market and people would come and look at them but in the end, we realised we couldn't part with them. Now we take it in turns. Last year I spent the season on the boats and Martin and Matthew would join me at weekends. This year, it's my turn to stay home," said Debby.

Running the business is a mammoth task and the couple have to be fearsomely organised. All the dry food for 14 people for every mealtime for seven days has to be bought and stored, with fresh goods bought at the last minute.

Debby returns at weekends with piles of washing from the beds and does it all at home. On board guests are served morning tea, a full breakfast, morning coffee with biscuits, a light two-course lunch, afternoon tea with cakes and a four-course dinner at 7pm prompt.

And this all in a small galley on a standard domestic cooker!

The Rushbrookes have five months off a year when they work on the boats, (re-painting takes place every year) and plan their own holidays. "We try to get

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April Meeting

Members at the April meeting saw the Society's new episcopes in action for the first time making it possible to include both prints and slides in the Members' Evening.

As usual it was an evening of variety with subjects to suit all tastes.

Proceedings began with slides of English, Scots and Welsh castles by Eric Mayhew followed by the Canal du Berry and Canal d'Orléans from Brian Evans.

Alan Howarth presented slides on the Llangollen and Caldon Canals.

Eric Lewis had brought along prints of the Crofton Pumphouse and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal so the

episcopes came into use for the first public showing.

Paul Herbert's pictures featured creatures of the cut.

The show was rounded off by Laura Sturrock who used both slides and maps to tell us of a reconstructed water pump near the Tinplate Works at Melingriffith on the former Glamorgan Canal.

Then followed a photo competition in which seven members took part. It was won by Alan Howarth with a slide showing the shadow of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. He received the book 'Victorian & Edwardian Canals from Old Photographs', kindly donated by Michael Pomeroy.

Brian Evans

Obituary

It is with regret that we have to inform members of the death of Leslie Russell at the age of 96. Les has been a member of Southampton Canal Society almost since the beginning and, for a number of years, was the Society Treasurer.

In those early days, SCS members regularly attended working parties and Les was usually there, his energy outlasting some of the younger ones. Maybe it was all the effort he put in to maintain his beautiful and productive garden that kept him fit. In the days when committee meetings were held at the Russell residence, it was not unusual for the other members to come away with some of his fresh vegetables.

We send our heartfelt condolences to Toni and family.

Brian Evans

Trip to the Wey & Arun Canal

Jon Sims is organising a trip on behalf of the Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group (SUIAG). He has extended the following invitation to all members and friends:

I would like to ask if anyone at SCS would like to go on the trip I am organising to the W&A Canal. I have fourteen seats available. The coach will leave the Boldrewood Centre car park at the University, Basset Crescent East at 8.30am on Saturday June 10th.

We will be looking at the Loxwood Link (1.5 miles towpath stroll) including Drungewick Aqueduct (or at least where it will be). We also hope to have a look at the mill and gas engine owned by Trust Chairman, Peter Foulger. The Onslow Arms will no doubt welcome all or packed lunches may be taken. In the afternoon, those who can cope with a modest walk of 3

Annual General Meeting

In accordance with the Constitution, notice is hereby formally given of the Southampton Canal Society's Annual General Meeting on the 1st June 2000 at St John's Ambulance Hall, King's Park Road, Southampton at 7.45pm.

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.

To speed up proceedings on the night, a copy of the Chairman's Report to the AGM is included in this Newsletter. It is hoped that the copies of the Treasurer's Report and provisional accounts for the year to 31st March 2000 will be posted to members. As the post of Secretary is currently vacant, there is no Secretary's Report.

It is hoped that the formal business of the AGM can be completed quickly so that most of the evening can be devoted to Hugh Gough and more of his canal videos. Some members may remember last September's meeting when Hugh was a last minute fill-in booking. Hugh still has a lot of footage of cruising in this country to show. "Better than many professional videos" was the verdict last year. This showing promises to be as good if not better.

miles can visit the really good bit, viz Orfold Aqueduct with its waterwheel for raising water from the river to the canal and the nearby turf sided lock. The less ambulatory may like to enjoy a boat trip on the Link, passing through some of the restored locks. Any left over time will be used to explore other bits.

Cheques made to SUIAG for £12 will secure a place. Send them to me at 24 Nutshalling Avenue, Rownhams, Southampton, SO16 8AY. First come, first served.

Cheers, Jon.

WATERWAYS DIARY 2000

The following is a list of waterway events taking place within approximately 50 miles of Southampton.

Hopefully you can find something to interest you. If YOU know of an event taking place that should be in this list then contact the editor.

Date	Organisers	Details of Event	Contact
Thu 04/05/00 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"The Anderton Boat Lift" by Richard Drake (National Chairman IWA & Chairman of Anderton Boat Lift Trust).	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
Sat & Sun 20 - 21/05/00	IWA Solent & Arun Branch	Arun Navigation Campaign Cruise - Day 1 Littlehampton to Pulborough; Day 2 Pulborough to Pallingham and return. Boaters may cruise one or both days.	Alan White: 01243 573765
Fri - Sun 26-28/05/00	MB&ACT and IWA South Wales Branch	National Trailboat Festival, Monmouthshire Canal, Newport, Gwent.	Phil Hughes: 01495 762823
Thu 01/06/00 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Annual General Meeting followed by more waterway videos by Hugh Gough	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
Sat 10/06/00 8.30am	SUIAG	Trip to look at parts of the Wey & Arun Canal - see invitation on page 2	Jon Sims: 023 8073 2868
Sat - Sun 10- 11/06/00	Ashby Canal Ass, Moira Furnace Trust & IWA	National Trailboat Festival, Moira, Ashby Canal - On newly restored, 3/4 mile length of canal	Cyril Blackford: 01455 6148169
Thu 06/07/00 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Day-Star Theatre with "The Last Run", their new show for 2000. Tickets £3.00	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
Sun 09/07/00	Local Rotary Clubs	River Arun Paddle - tide assisted from Littlehampton to the Black Rabbit (Offham) with barbecue at the pub. Entry fee passed on to RNLI. Contact Peter King, 20 Admiralty Road, Bognor Regis PO22 7DN	Peter King (see left - phone unknown)
Sun 09/07/00 2.00pm	Chichester Canal Society	Guided walk & Strawberry Cream Tea. Start Salterns Lock, Chichester Marina. Adult £3.50, child £2.50	Canal Basin (day): 01243 771363
Sat 15/07/00	Chichester Canal Society	The 19th Annual Beer Barrel Races. Commences 2.00pm at the Canal Basin, Chichester	Entry forms: 01243 671051
Sat 22/07/00 7.30pm	Chichester Canal Society	Mikron Theatre presents "Traveller's Fare" at The Geoffrey Osborne Conference Centre, Stockbridge Road, Chichester (close to Basin). Adult £5.00 child £4.00	Canal Basin (day): 01243 771363
Sat - Sun 29- 30/07/00		Newbury Waterways Festival	Bob Wetton: 01635-41018
Sun 30/07/00 9.30am	IWA Solent & Arun Branch	River Itchen Cruise - Itchen Bridge to Woodmill and Mans Bridge - on both tidal and non-tidal parts of the river.	Alan White: 01243 573765
Sun 20/08/00	Chichester Canal Society	Canalside Water Fair with a Pirate Theme. Chichester Basin. Adult 50p child free. Starts at 12 noon.	Canal Basin (day): 01243 771363
Sun 20/08/00	IWA Solent & Arun Branch	Chichester Canal Cruise in association with Canalside Water Fair	Alan White: 01243 573765
Fri - Mon 25- 28/08/00	IWA	IWA National Waterways Festival at Waltham Abbey on the River Lee	Ian Gall: 01925 740291
Thu 07/09/00 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Archaeology on the River Itchen with Dr Andrew Russel	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
Fri - Sun 15- 24/09/00	National Boat Shows Ltd	Southampton Boat Show, Mayflower Park, Southampton	
Sun 17/09/00 10.30am	IWA Solent & Arun Branch	Beaulieu River Picnic Cruise - Buckler's Hard first downstream, then upstream to Beaulieu for a picnic	Alan White: 01243 573765
Thu 02/11/00 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"Navigating where others cannot reach" with Chris Coburn	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
Thu 07/12/00 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Annual Inter-Society Waterways Quiz and American Supper	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
First Wed of month	IWA Dorchester Group	Evening meetings. Further details from Graham Pugh.	Graham Pugh: 01305 262305
4th Thursday of month	Wey & Arun CT	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 <i>Zachariah Keppel</i> on the restored canal at Loxwood.	John Lisk: 01493 752403.
All year	Chichester CS	Cruises on n/b <i>Egremont</i> on Chichester Canal.	Bookings: 01243 670786

Manchester Ship Canal's new role: Building ships

The following article appeared in The Independent on Tuesday 28 March 2000 and was sent in by Brian Evans:

By Ian Herbert, Northern Correspondent

WHAT IT lacks in the deafening enterprise of traditional dockside metal-bashing, a small repair yard has made up for in imagination by bringing shipbuilding back to the Manchester Ship Canal after a gap of more than 80 years.

The canal's last ship-builders worked between 1900 and 1914 for the select group of large lines enticed to the area by the Ship Canal Company as it tried to whip up oceangoing traffic. The latest output, by contrast, comes from Lengthline, a ship-repair company employing just 50 people at Salford Docks. In their heyday, in 1950, the docks employed almost 2,500 people for repair work and were looking to recruit more.

Lengthline has already dispatched a trawler for a Scottish shrimp fishing crew by road but its next two vessels will be of even of more symbolic importance as they are to be floated in the canal and sailed across the Irish Sea for their purchasers. The company has further contracts for an aluminium catamaran, a 200-tonne dredger and two cargo vessels - the largest of which is 1,500 tonnes.

Manchester - which famously stole trade from Liverpool by creating the inland port which linked the city to the sea in 1894 - is again aping its rival by diversifying out of ship repair into construction. The

Cammell Laird yard, where HMS Unicorn was the last vessel built seven years ago, has moved into leasing and has asked Government to cancel restrictions on merchant shipbuilding at the yard so it can bid for contracts to build cruise vessels.

The city's shipbuilding heritage is a shadow of Liverpool's, however, and its new products owe a debt to the flatpack age. A Dutch prefabrication company makes laser-cut panels, which Lengthline assembles. "This speeds up the process, keeps costs down and makes the yard more competitive," the latter's chairman, Peter Lye, said.

Lengthline was set up as a co-operative 12 years ago after the Manchester Dry Dock Co went into receivership, and it began building boats when the repair market flattened out.

The yard is hardly a major employer - three apprentices have joined on the back of the new contracts and it is hoped a further 10 or even 20 may be recruited. But even this number could not have been anticipated when the larger container ships and the decline of traditional industries seemed to spell doom for the docks from the Seventies.

Mr Lye is one of 20 Lengthline men who worked for the Dry Dock Co until it crashed. He says the industry demarcations have now gone. "We go for any stuff as long as we can build it," he said. His company proved the point last year by constructing the landmark Lowry Bridge, which spans the canal at Salford.

Waterways Quiz

A few more questions to test your knowledge. There's no prizes but the answers will be given next month.

- 1 What does the Barton Aqueduct cross?
- 2 Who made the River Wey navigable to Guildford?
- 3 Hampton Court Palace is next to the Thames for easy access to London. Who had it built?
- 4 What canal links the Regents Canal with the River Lee Navigation?
- 5 How long is Blisworth Tunnel?
- 6 When was the Wey & Arun Canal first navigable to commercial traffic throughout its length?
- 7 Who is the pub at Gas Street Basin named after?
- 8 What was Worcester Bar originally used for?
- 9 How long is a Sheffield-sized keel?
- 10 What is different about locks on the Oxford Canal below Banbury, compared with those above?

Last month's Quiz answers:

- 1 The Bridgewater Canal opened from Worsley to Manchester in 1761.
- 2 As well as navigation, Standedge Tunnel serves as ventilation for the adjoining railway tunnels. It also transfers water from the east to the west side of the Pennines.
- 3 The false bows used in Tom Pudding trains were called Jebus.
- 4 There are 7 sets of gates at Teddington Locks.
- 5 Cheddleton Mill used to grind flints to produce a powder used to glaze pottery.
- 6 John Cunliffe wrote the Rosie and Jim stories.
- 7 The Basingstoke Canal was officially reopened in 1991.
- 8 The traditional Norfolk sailing cargo vessels were called Wherries.
- 9 The Anderton Lift was designed by Edwin Clark.
- 10 The waterway carrying the most trade in Europe is the River Rhine..

Annual General Meeting - Chairman's Report

Our monthly meetings have once again been full of interesting subjects of great variety, from narrow canals to ocean going with the Jubilee Sailing Trust. We saw slides / pictures / video of holiday cruising, campaign cruising in Birmingham, restored waterways, derelict (at present) West Country waterways and even an evening with railways.

Despite the variety, the average attendance for the year May 99 - April 00 was slightly down on the previous 12 months and that included a gathering of 68 people to see Day-Star perform. We sadly slipped below the 30 mark per meeting.

In November, 11 members had travelled to the Byfleet Boat Club for the Inter-Society Quiz. Our brilliant team – Paul Herbert, Eric Lewis, Tony Coles and Peter Oates battled with the cream of the Surrey & Hants Canal Society, IWA Solent & Arun Branch, and IWA Guildford & Reading Branch – and emerged triumphant (just) to bring the little trophy back to Southampton. We look forward to the next quiz in December.

A small group of members met in Romsey in July. The outing began at the Romsey Signal Box Project where they were given a very interesting talk and demonstration. Members then walked the towpath of the Andover Canal from Romsey to the Timsbury Road, finishing up with a drink in the sunlit garden of the 'Dukes Head' pub.

Members' Evening in April was once again very interesting with a variety of subjects. It was also notable in that those present were introduced to the Society's new episcopes and this machine now will enable those who use only print film to show their pictures. Our thanks to Dave Townley-Jones for purchasing the machine (with discount) on behalf of the Society. To round off Members' Evening, there was a photo competition for slides and prints, in which seven members took part. The winner was Alan Howarth, and he received the handsome copy of 'Victorian & Edwardian Canals from Old Photographs' donated by Michael Pomeroy.

I would like to thank the committee members for their support and assistance. Peter Oates in particular for a very busy year on your behalf in which he produced another series of excellent

newsletters to keep members informed of events. The committee has survived a year without a Secretary and Peter has arranged some of the forthcoming programme. On top of all this he has, using his own computer, maintained a website so that the wider world knows what we are up to.

Our thanks to Paul Herbert for producing excellent committee meeting minutes, storing the Sales Stand and setting it up at meetings.

Laura Sturrock and Hunt & Co have again financed production of the 'Newsletter' and postage of it to those members not present at meetings. We are very grateful for this valuable service.

As usual I must thank Joyce Mayhew and her helpers for providing welcome refreshments at our meetings.

Finally, thanks to those who have sold raffle tickets and to members who have donated prizes. The raffle forms quite an important part of our function. Members will have noticed in recent 'Newsletters' that a number of donations have been sent off, mostly to help with restoration projects.

Nationally, waterway restoration seems to be becoming the 'in thing'. Government, local authorities, British Waterways and the Environment Agency seem all to be more co-operative. In fact, the Chairman of Waterways Recovery Group, Mike Palmer, was, in a recent 'Navvies', bemoaning the fact that there seems to be nobody left to argue with.

It is true that restoration is speeding ahead in many places too numerous to mention, and finance is forthcoming from many quarters in large lumps. However, there are still awkward problems – Lichfield and Hatherton to name but two. And bear in mind that all the above authorities have only jumped to due to pressure exerted on them by the likes of us. Take off the pressure and no doubt they would relax too, and there would also be the likelihood of many undesirable developments. The future of waterways does, though, look exciting.

I look forward to our next meeting when Richard Drake, present chairman of the IWA, will visit and give a slide show on the Anderton Lift. Richard is also chairman of the Anderton Boat Lift Trust.

Brian Evans

Hotel Boats

(Continued from page 1)

away in January, and we do, like the sun - our favourite place is Florida!", said Debby.

Christmas and New Year are usually spent on their boats with guests who sometimes charter the pair for a family or friends celebration.

"We spent the millennium on the boats with guests,

had fireworks and hooters blaring, it was great fun.

"It's hard physical work on the boats and I must admit I go to the gym through the winter to keep my fitness up. I have to be able to keep up with the young crew members! It's a way of life for us now and I don't think we'll change."

For more information, you can contact Debby and Martin at Rushbrooke Narrow Boats on 01926 642060.

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
St John's Ambulance Hall, King's Park Road,
Southampton

Chairman:

Brian Evans, 19 Lansdowne Gardens, Romsey,
Hampshire, SO51 8FN. Tel: 01794 517115

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Vacant

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



Don't forget that the Day-Star Theatre will be visiting the Society again this year on 6th July. They will be presenting their new show for the year 2000 which is entitled "The Last Run".

It is the story of an old wooden narrow boat, a quirky mystery which surrounds her and touches all who come in to contact with her over the last fifty five years.

Tickets for this event are now on sale at a cost of £3.00 each including the light refreshments that will follow. These are available from Peter Oates at meetings or by post from the address given above (sae appreciated). These will be sold on a first come, first served basis so buy yours as soon as possible.

FORTHCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS

4th May 2000

The Anderton Boat Lift by Richard Drake (National Chairman IWA & Chairman of Anderton Boat Lift Trust).

1st June 2000

Annual General Meeting followed by more waterway videos by Hugh Gough

6th July 2000

Day-Star Theatre with "The Last Run", their new show for 2000

7th September 2000

Archaeology on the River Itchen with Dr Andrew Russel

2nd November 2000

"Navigating where others cannot reach" with Chris Coburn

7th December 2000

Annual Inter-Society Waterways Quiz and American Supper

CANAL SOCIETY SALES STAND

GEOProjects Maps:

Inland Waterways of Britain	£4.75
Basingstoke Canal	£3.00
Birmingham Canal Navigations	£3.75
The Broads	£3.75
Caledonian Canal & the Great Glen	£3.75
Coventry & Ashby Canals	£3.75
Grand Union Canal (each).....	£3.75
Map 1 Birmingham - Fenny Stratford	
Map 2 Braunston - Kings Langley	
Map 3 Fenny Stratford - Thames	
Map 4 Leicester Line - Soar - Erewash	
Kennet & Avon Canal	£3.75
Llangollen and Montgomery Canals	£3.75
London - City and Docklands Atlas	£3.75
Oxford Canal	£3.75
Shropshire Union Canal	£3.75
Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal with the River Severn and the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal.....	£3.75
The Thames Map	£3.75
Trent & Mersey Canal - Map 1 Preston Brook to Fradley Junction..	£3.75
Trent & Mersey Canal and River Trent - Map 2 Great Haywood Junction to Cromwell Lock.....	£3.75

Ball Point Pens: Embossed 50p

Burgees: Navy Blue - screen printed Society logo on each side £8.00

Decorated Mugs: £2.25

Notelets: with drawings of canal and Romsey scenes £1.00
(by Brian Evans)

Shopper Bags: Cotton with screen-printed Society logo each side. £2.25

Society Members Badges: Enamel 75p

Sweat Shirts: 30th Anniversary in Light Grey £16.00
with multi-coloured embroidered Society logo on breast

Sweat Shirts: Standard in Navy or Royal Blue £15.00
with Society logo embroidered on breast

Tea Towels: Various colourful designs £2.50 & £3.25

Tee Shirts: Screen printed with Society logo across chest £6.50
in Navy Blue - medium, large & extra large; in Red - medium

Visit the Sales Stand at Society meetings and place your orders with Paul Herbert or Ray Brooks - or ring Paul on 01703 262365