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NEWSLETTER No. 276 MAY 1994

MEETINGS - 1st Thursday each month at 7.45 pm.
St. John Ambulance Hall, King's Park Road, Southampton.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

- 5th May - Canal dead ends - Eric Lewis.
- Canal de Nivernais - Brian Evans.
- 2nd June - AGM and film night.

APRIL MEETING. 'Return to Lock 19, Basingstoke Canal' proved to be another very entertaining addition to what can only be described as Jon Sim's series of illustrated talks. It was interesting to note the total change in the before and after slides, taken when restoration work was in progress and now that the canal has taken on the appearance of one that was never other than in good working order. It is easy to imagine Jons feelings when returning by boat to locations where the vegetation now combines with the full canal to conceal the rawness of a waterway under restoration.

RIVER ARUN SPONSORED CRUISE. S.C.S. Members Peter Glover and Jim Lanigan will be representing the Society when they will cruise, on Sunday 22nd May, in Peter's dingy, from Pulborough to Pallingham.

Some members made a start on the sponsor forms at the April meeting. We will be collecting at the May and June meetings so please consider sponsoring Peter and Jim.

Donations will be passed via the IWA to deserving canal causes. See April Newsletter.

CANAL QUIZ 1994 is provisionally booked for 8th October and the most likely venue will once again be Chichester. We have been invited to take part so will be looking for a team of 4 clever members to represent Southampton Canal Society.

NEW BENEFITS FOR IWA MEMBERS. Why not join?

- 50% discount on Weekend Breaks at Hilton National Hotels. (until Jan 1995)
- 20% off entry to National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Docks. (until Jan 1995)
- 20% off entry to London Canal Museum. (until Jan 1995)
- 20% off entry to The Boat Museum, Ellesmere Port. (until Jan 1995)
- 20% off entry to The Canal Museum, Stoke Bruerne. (until Jan 1995)
- Members' Boat Insurance - 2 months free insurance. (until Apr 1995)
- FREE entry to the National Waterways Festival, 27-29 Aug 1994 at Waltham Abbey.
- Discounted entry to the London Boat Show.

IWA CANAL CLEAN UP. According to a snippet in 'The Daily Echo' something went on down at Titchfield. Was anyone involved? If so, can you please write a note for the 'Newsletter'.

IF YOU FELL IN LOVE with Jon Sim's Basingstoke Canal Map. DON'T FRET. You can have one like it. We stock it on the sales stand along with its brother and sister - the K & A and Oxford canals.

THE BIRMINGHAM NORTHERN RELIEF ROAD. S.C.S. Chairman now has notes on Acquisition of Land, Pre-Public Inquiry Meetings and a booklet on 'Public Inquiries into Road Proposals'. If you would like to see them - please see the Chairman.

FUTURE CANALS 200 EVENTS.

- May 8th - Spring Engine Rally. Stationary engines at the National Waterways Museum, Gloucester.
- May 8th - Lancaster Canal Northern Reaches Dinghy Rally. North Road, Holme
- May 8th - 2-mile circular guided walk around Saul Junction, Gloucester and Sharpness Canal, 2pm, Saul Junction car park.
- May 14th - Bath Canal Day, Widcombe Locks, Bath. Fun, events, boats.
- May 21st/22nd - BOTO-X, Caen Hill, Devizes.

PINKERTON CRUISE. Extract from April 1994 edition of GuaRdSmAn.

An opportunity to cruise almost the entire length of the restored Basingstoke Canal is being offered by the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society, aboard the trip boat John Pinkerton, to mark the 200th anniversary of the year the canal was opened.

From 6th to 9th May the Society is operating two 2 day trips. Each cruise covers the best part of the rural 15 mile summit pound in Hampshire and the 29 locks to the Wey Navigation at Byfleet, a total distance of 30 miles. The outward trip starts at Colt Hill, Odiham and terminates near West Byfleet station with an overnight stop en route close to Brookwood Station. The return trip is from West Byfleet to Odiham, again with an overnight stop at Brookwood.

The 2-day outward or return trip costs £45 per person inclusive of morning coffee, two course lunch and afternoon tea each day. Bookings may also be made for any single days cruise, at a cost of £24 per person inclusive of lunch and refreshments.

A stop will be made at the Canal Centre at Mytchett, opened last year, for those passengers who wish to see an exhibition of the canal's history. To mark the anniversary, the name of each passenger will be entered in a free draw to win a copy of the recently republished history of the canal, "London's Lost Route to Basingstoke", signed by the author Paul Vine.

Further enquiries to:- Mrs Anne Bird, 0252 811707.

TOWPATH TELEGRAPH. News always travels fast along the waterways but soon it will begin to travel at the speed of light. That's when the fibre optic cable now being laid by Fibreway in ducts under the towpaths of the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals will start carrying messages between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Fibreway has plans to invest £30million in the venture over the next five years, but they would only lay cables to fulfil specific contracts. The cables are leased to operators but Fibreway are not operators themselves. According to the Managing Director they are not in the business of building a complete UK network. Cables are due to be laid in Manchester and Southern England soon.

Fibre optic cable contains glass fibre threads which can pass pulses of light through them in the same way that copper wire passes electricity. As well as telephone calls, the cable can transmit television and radio signals, fax messages and all sorts of computer data.

Acknowledgment to Newways and Electronics Weekly for the above information.

CHRISTMAS AFLOAT ON "BITTERNE" by Laurie and Linda Pearce.

We had planned to spend Christmas afloat last year after having a partial interior refit of the boat, which included the fitting of a Heron solid fuel stove. We were obviously keen to prove its worth. However, two days before departure, freezing weather put paid to our plans with the canal freezing solid, so Bittern remained iced up at the bottom of the garden. This Christmas we decided to have another attempt with the weather being reasonably favourable, but decided to only go as far as Kingsbury Water Park which lies at the bottom of the Curdworth Locks on the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal, about four miles away. On this mooring one can do some good bird watching and it is quite isolated. Having stored up with all the necessary items, turkey, Xmas pudding, mince pies, among other luxuries, we set off on Xmas eve morning after winding at Fazeley Junction, a short distance away. It was chilly up on the tiller but I was fortified on the 1hr 15min trip by hot coffee with a spoonfull of something extra! Linda was snug down below as she had made a good job of lighting the stove after an earlier miserable failure by me! During the evening when we nearly roasted in the cabin and finished up in summer attire, we heard the sound of Curdworth Bottom Lock operating in the darkness. When the gates opened, out sailed a gaily decorated narrowboat with an illuminated Christmas tree mounted in the bows. We exchanged Xmas greetings as they passed us by heading for Fazeley for the night. Our stove stayed alight all night so we enjoyed a comfortable night in our sleeping bags. Next morning we opened up our Christmas presents and Linda produced a superb Christmas dinner, some of which was cooked on the top of the Heron stove very successfully. It also produces good roasted chestnuts! Christmas Day passed by peacefully with some Xmas music and a walk along the towpath. A flight of Canada geese flew overhead and landed on one of the lakes.

To be continued next month.

Our thanks to Laurie and Linda for this report of their 1993 Christmas afloat.