

# Newsletter

May 1997

Issue 309

## ACTION ON WATER

Despite slightly above average rainfall in February and March, the dry weather during most of April will have done nothing to improve reservoir holdings on much of the system. Although the average in the north on April 4th was over 90%, reservoirs on the Leicester line were down to 43% and the southern Oxford could boast only 72%. The recently started "cruising season" will inevitably mean restrictions by the end of the summer unless it's wet.

As a conservation measure, BW announced widespread overnight lock closures from 24th March in the North East, Midlands and Southern regions. Where these closures are in force, locks open at 8am and close at times varying between 4.30pm and 6pm. If current water levels can't be maintained, full closure of affected canals is likely.

BW have created a 'water task force'

to get the best out of the limited water resources this year. Money (£800,000 - £1m) has been set aside for schemes now being investigated by the self-styled 'drought team'.

The schemes will help in the long term as well as this year. Among them is a project to pump water overland from areas of surplus to BW reservoirs, and another to transfer water from groundwater pumps in the Birmingham area to the south Stratford, Grand Union and Oxford canals.

In the Braunston area, back-pumping the Braunston flight is to be instituted and pumping from the canal into Drayton reservoir is being investigated. New pumps are being installed at Napton, and pump controls improved at Hillmorton, Buckby and Marston Doles. Contracts have been let for pumps to move water from Lapworth to Calcutt

and to prepare for installation of equipment to back-pump to the Longford pound.

On the Leicester summit, reservoir refill at Welford and Sulby is being enhanced by pumping.

Various measures are in hand on the Grand Union south of Stoke Bruerne including installing additional pumps at the River Tove, Cowroast and Dudswell. Controls are also being improved at the boreholes at Cowroast and Northchurch. A back-pump is currently being installed at Cosgrove and pumping at Stoke Bruerne is being enhanced.

Also going ahead is the refurbishment of old pumps along the GU on both sides of the Tring summit: from Milton Keynes and Hemel Hempstead. Last used in the 1976 drought, the pumps and conduits turn out to be in pretty good condition. (*Why have these lain idle for 20 years? - Ed.*)

*Based on BW's newways March / April 97 & Waterways World May 97*

## SCS 30th Birthday Party

This year sees the 30th anniversary of the Southampton Canal Society and arrangements are well in hand for the special birthday party to be held at the June meeting.

The main attraction of this party will be the entertainment provided by the **Daystar Theatre Company** who have become well-known on the waterways scene in the last few years. They will be coming to Southampton to give us a special performance of their brand new play for 1997 **Something in the Water**. Judging from their previous productions, this will thoroughly enjoyable: humorous but not without a more serious side.

A buffet supper is to be provided at the interval.

We have ordered a special Society sweatshirt for the occasion. The design features a coloured SCS logo on a grey sweatshirt. These will be available at the sales stand on the night. Unfortunately, lack of space means that, for once, the Society Library cannot be

brought to the meeting.

This will be a very special night which ought not to be missed by any of our members. A number of "out-of-town" and former members are to be specially invited to the party.

The evening will be FREE to all Society members (although donations towards the cost will not be refused). In order to gauge the amount of food etc to be laid on, tickets will be issued for the meeting in advance: these will be free to members. Although primarily this is a meeting for the Society, non-members will be welcome but we will have to charge them £3.00 in order to cover costs.

Demand for tickets will to be high and admission may not be possible without one. Certainly, you will require a ticket for the buffet supper. Do not delay - tomorrow may be too late - get your ticket now from Eric Lewis either at the May meeting or write / telephone his home address (on page 2).

**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.

**Chairman:**

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

**Secretary:**

Eric Lewis, 51 Friars Croft, Calmore, Hampshire, SO40 2SS. Tel: 01703 860384

**Treasurer & Membership:**

Laura Sturrock, 27 Northlands Road, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 5RU. Tel 01794 517614

**Committee:**

Martin Cripps  
Paul Herbert  
Peter Oates  
David Townley-Jones

**Newsletter Editor:**

Peter Oates, 27 Northlands Road, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 5RU. Tel: 01794 517614

**MEETINGS**

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

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS****1st May 1997**

Paddle Steamers of the South Coast  
Alfred Taylor

**5th June 1997**

30th Birthday Party including  
Daystar Theatre Company

**3rd July 1997**

AGM plus Videos

**7th August 1997**

Members Slides

**4th September 1997**

Ownerships - shared ownership of  
narrow boats with Alan Mathews

**20th September 1997**

SCS/IWA Small Boat Cruise and  
Barbecue

**2nd October 1997**

Bristol to Sharpness  
Talk with video - Alan Padwick

**6th November 1997**

Bugsworth Basin and the IWPS  
Ian Edgar

**4th December 1997**

Annual Inter-Society Quiz  
and American Supper

**April Meeting**

It was interesting to hear how Jim Kelly had spent nearly all of his working life with British Waterways and its predecessors, for many years dealing with the public which had developed into the job known as Customer Relations.

Perhaps the most striking fact was the gradual change in attitude of those responsible, from disregard for public feeling and discouragement of waterway use, to the present where there is regular liaison between customers, public and BW staff.

We heard something of how BW staff try to eke out a limited income and why and how certain grants were applied for, and the success of the applications.

The second half of the meeting gave members a chance to question and criticise BW's recent moves - including the large increases in licence fees - and Jim was able to give some of the reasons for those actions. There was also discussion on the pros and cons of allowing the general public to cycle on towpaths.

**Arun Sponsored Cruise**

*I'm grateful to Peter Glover who has sent me the following account of last year's cruise on the River Arun:*

This year's event is fast approaching, so I had better report on last year's event (1996). Again the weather was settled with fine sunny spells. Familiar faces were recognised from the various 'Jig Saw Journey' events. Now the 'Arun Cruise' is becoming an annual get together of small boaters.

For the 1996 cruise our Secretary Eric and his wife Sue came to see the fun, Eric to join me in my 'Mirror' dinghy, quite a change from his narrow boat *Remus* and, I think, at times he wondered what he had let himself in for. Sue had decided to go for a country walk and somehow had found the picnic spot and meeting place at Pallingham footbridge. Together with several dinghies and canoes, an enjoyable lunch break was had by all and new friendships made.

This had been my third Sponsored Cruise and a total of £92 had been raised by members of the Southampton Canal Society.

For the 1997 Sponsored Cruise, I have invited Brian and Annegret to join me, to

**Thank you**

The Society has received a number of thank you letters recently. Audrey Smith wrote to Brian Evans to say how appreciative she is of the welcome given her by our members - "by the end of the meeting I really did feel as if I was among long-standing friends." She also tells Brian that "It was a real pleasure for me to take part in the Society's recognition of your commitment and I hope the memory of that evening will stay with you and your wife for many years - 30 years service as Chairman is probably a record! Please convey to your committee and the Society my very best wishes for continued success in the coming months and years."

Neil Edwards of the IWA also wrote thanking us for our donation of £100 to the Association's Golden Jubilee Appeal which was presented to Audrey Smith at the March meeting. Neil reports that "three 'new to WRG' vehicles have just been added to WRG's van fleet in addition to the purchase of the JCB already made. Only a little bit more is now needed to complete the van replacement programme but I am sure that this will be achieved."

Another thank you letter was sent to the Society by Ian Edgar of the Inland Waterways Protection Society. We recently sent the Society a donation of £20 which Ian says will be placed in the General Restoration Fund for Bugsworth Basin. "Quite apart from the fact that nobody receives any remuneration or expenses for working for the Society we still have to cover hefty insurance costs and pay our own way in maintaining our extensive equipment etc." There will be a chance to see the work of the IWPS at Bugsworth Basin when Ian speaks at our November meeting.

add to their 30 years as Chairman of the SCS and to add my thanks to Brian for his support and enthusiasm in my previous cruises.

I now have a larger dinghy which will take 3 people and able to carry more pennies and hopefully boost the SCS donations.

*So don't forget, if you can't get along to participate / see this year's event on Sunday 18th May, sponsor Peter on his voyage. For those wishing to take part themselves, further details may had from Alan White, Wheelhouse, Pottery Lane Nutbourne, Chichester, PO18 8RW. Tel: 01243 573765.*

Distributed by: Hunt & Co, Chartered Accountants, 123/124 High Street, Southampton, SO14 2AA. Tel: 01703 225255

## IWA Solent & Arun Branch Events

The S&A Branch are advertising the following events in the area (in addition to our own):

**18 May (Sun)** - Arun Sponsored Cruise, Pulborough to Pallingham - 'Cruise it or lose it'. Contact: Alan White 01243 573765.

**25 May (Sun)** - Chichester Canal "Whit Walk". Choice of two walks. Sponsors or donation please. Contact: John Cooper 01243 671051.

**8 June (Sun)** - "The Poddle" - Wey & Arun Canal Trust sponsored walk - 25th anniversary of this annual event. Contact: John Lisk 01403 752403.

**14-15 June (Sat & Sun)** - Beaulieu Classic Boat Festival, Bucklers Hard. Solent & Arun boats and stand.

**15 June (Sun)** - Chichester Canal Cream Tea Walk - Guided towpath walk from Birdham to Cream Tea. Contact: Linda Wilkinson 01243 537500.

**5 July (Sat)** - Chichester Basin Barrel Races - teams of four paddlers in spectacular racing. Contact: Paul Coppard 01903 766585.

**6 July (Sun)** - Avon and Stour Small Boat Cruise, Christchurch. Contact: Alan White 01243 573765.

**12 & 13 July (Sat & Sun)** - Mikron Theatre Company at the Chichester Canal Basin. Performances start at 8pm. Contact: John Cooper 01243 671051.

**19 & 20 July (Sat & Sun)** - "Optimist" Sailing for youngsters at Chichester Canal Basin. Opportunity to try sailing. Contact:

John Cooper 01243 671051.

**20 July (Sun)** - Chichester Canal Cream Tea Walk - as above.

**9-10 August (Sat & Sun)** - Littlehampton Regatta; WACT stall, IWA carrying mayoral greetings and "mooring news".

**10 August (Sun)** - Chichester Canal Cream Tea Walk - as above.

**17 August (Sun)** - Chichester Canal Water Fair and Steam Boat Rally. Many attractions on and off the water. Parade for all boat types; chance to cruise the canal in your own boat. Contact: Paul Coppard 01903 766585.

**23/24/25 August (Sat, Sun & Mon)** - National Waterways Festival, Henley on Thames.

**7 September (Sun)** - Chichester Canal Cream Tea Walk - Last opportunity this year. See above.

**20 September (Sat)** - Hamble Small Boat Cruise - Autumn cruise including visit Bursledon Brickworks and Botley Village Quay. Easy launching at public slipway at Swanwick. Contact: Alan White 01243 573765. Also SCS barbecue at Bursledon Brickworks.

**19 October (Sun)** - River Rother Guided Walk, Stopham to Shopham. Guided walk, donation please.

Except as noted above, further details may be obtained from:

Peter Boyce, Greensleeves Cottage, Hambledon Road, Denmead, Waterlooville, Hants PO7 6PW.

Tel (home) 01705 269642, (office and answer machine) 01730 829016, (work) 01705 693611 ext 1364. E-mail: [iwa.solent.arun@dial.pipex.com](mailto:iwa.solent.arun@dial.pipex.com)

## IWA Salisbury Group

The group is holding the following meetings at the Salisbury Rugby Clubrooms, Castle Road Salisbury commencing at 7.30pm. For further details, contact Tony Fry on 01722 710192.

**Thursday 15th May** - The Wey and Arun Canal Trust - presentation by John Wood former Secretary of the Trust.

**Thursday 17th July** - The Boat Safety Scheme - presentation by Peter Wallace Chairman ABSE.

**Sunday 14/21 September** - A boat trip on the River Wey near Guildford (rather a long trip?).

## Newspaper Cuttings

Your editor has received a number of canal related newspaper cuttings this month but a lack of space means I have to omit them (my apologies to the contributors). These are articles from *The Times* on the lack of water (March 8) and the *Sunday Times* on living on a houseboat (March 9). On March 29 a rather contentious article appeared in *The Guardian*. Whilst it refers to middle-class boaters, the thrust of the article is about proposals for the privatisation of and the splitting up of the canal system (and I thought the paper was left wing?). If anyone wants to have a closer look at these, please contact the Editor.

## SOUTHAMPTON CANAL SOCIETY SALES STAND

Enamel Society Members Badges	75p	Waterway Jigsaws (192 pieces 10" x 13¾")	£3.50
Embossed Ball Point Pens	50p	Notelets, with line drawings (by Brian Evans) of canal and Romsey scenes	£1.00
<b>GEOprojects Maps</b>		Screen Printed Tee Shirts	£6.50
Basingstoke Canal	£3.00	with Society logo across chest	
Oxford Canal	£3.75	in Navy Blue - medium, large & extra large	
Kennet & Avon Canal	£3.75	in Red - medium	
Grand Union Canal (each)	£3.75	Embroidered Sweat Shirts	£15.00
Map 1 Birmingham - Fenny Stratford		with Society logo on breast	
Map 2 Braunston - Kings Langley		in Navy Blue - large	
Map 3 Fenny Stratford - Thames		in Royal Blue - medium and large	
Map 4 Leicester Line - Soar - Erewash		Cotton Shopper Bags	£2.25
The Thames Map	£3.75	with screen-printed Society logo each side	
London - City and Docklands Atlas	£3.75	Colourful Tea Towels	£2.50
The Broads	£3.75	Decorated Mugs	£2.25
Birmingham Canal Navigations	£3.75	Decorated Trays (two sizes)	£1.00 & £2.95
Shropshire Union Canal	£3.75		
Llangollen and Montgomery Canals	£3.75		

## Jurong Isle to get tow-away link

The following is taken from a report in *The Straits Times* (Singapore) on April 8th (don't say we don't get around!!)

The new causeway to connect Jurong Pier to the new Jurong Island is no ordinary road link. A 60 metre wide section of it can be detached and towed away by tugboats, so ships can pass through.

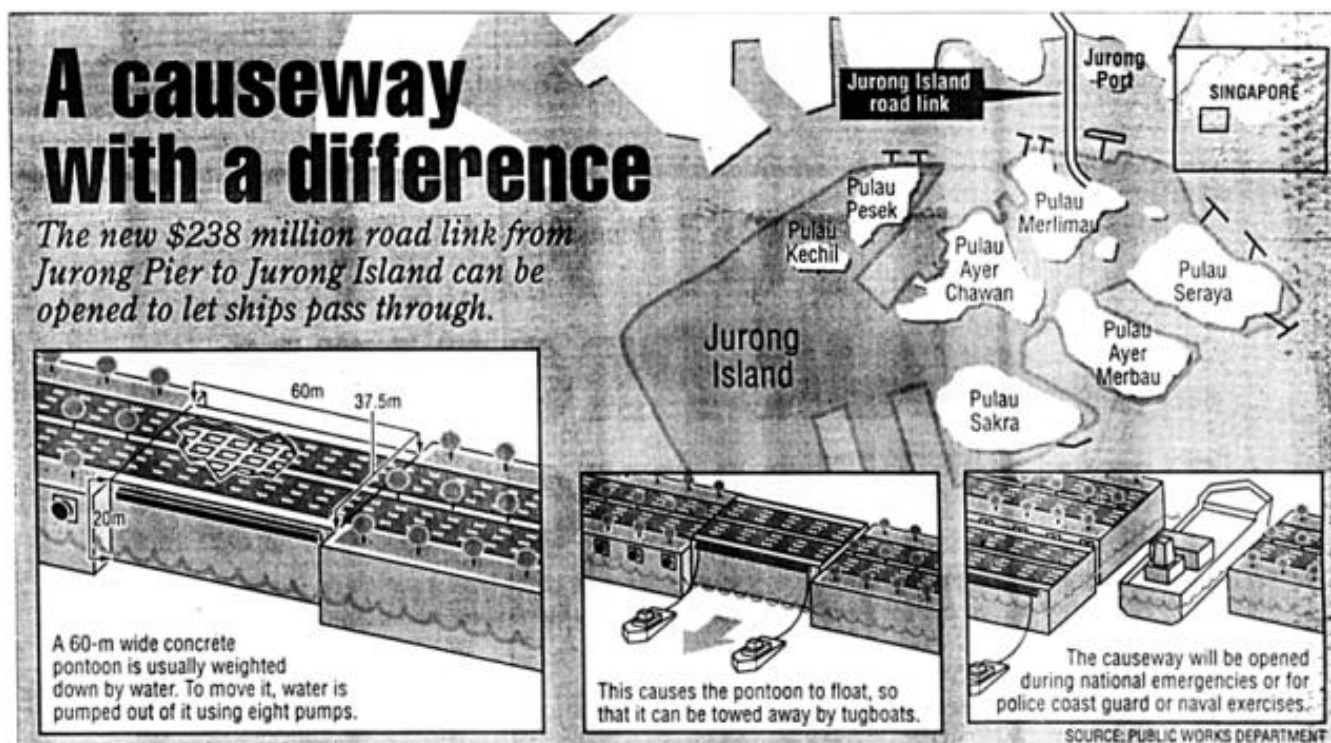
It is a world first, said Mr Koo Tsai Kee, Parliamentary Secretary for National Development yesterday. He was officiating at the contract-signing ceremony between the Public Works Department, which designed the 2.3km bridge, and the contractors. The contract is worth \$238 million.

It will connect the mainland to Jurong Island, which will be a major hub for the chemical and petrochemical industries when it is completed in 2003.

The causeway's detachable section will be removed during a national emergency or for police coastguard or naval exercises. That section is a large concrete pontoon with 84 compartments inside. Normally, it is weighed down by water. To allow the pontoon to be towed away, the water can be pumped out. The entire removal will take 60 minutes - 30 minutes to pump out the water and another 30 minutes for tugboats to move the section away.

The link will have four lanes of traffic going in each direction, to accommodate an estimated 5,000 cars an hour. It will allow companies on the island to bring in their materials by land. The causeway will be completed partially and opened to traffic by the end of next year and be completed fully by the end of July 1999.

Jurong Town Corporation is forming the new island - a \$2 billion project - by amalgamating 7 existing islands. It will have an area of 3000 hectares (7400 acres).



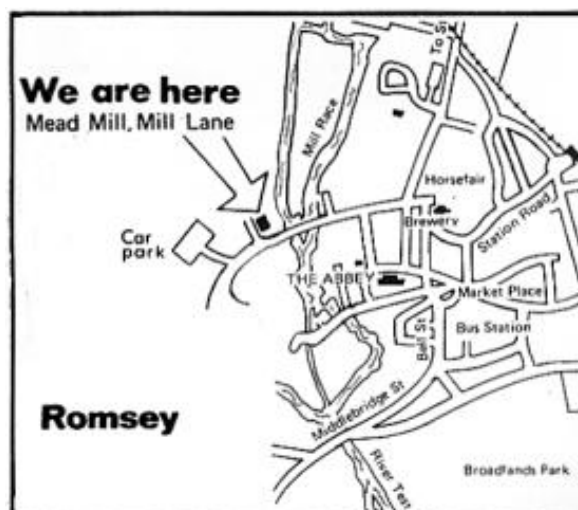
## The Mead Mill Collection

This collection, on the banks of the River Test in Romsey, has an interesting display of farming by-gones. Visitors may see the dairy, housing many items including the cheese press, butter making equipment and early milking paraphernalia.

The farmhouse kitchen with its period fireplace dating back to 1735 and the adjoining sewing and laundry rooms add to the nostalgia for those who have experienced real farmhouse living.

There is a display of harness and a well preserved collection of horse drawn implements. Many items from a local blacksmith's shop are now on display together with the wheelwright's trade tools. Other trades represented are the cobbler, walking stick maker, thatcher, country veterinary surgeon and a wide selection of tools for woodland trades.

The collection is open from Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm from April 1st September 30th. Admission: Adults 50p Children 25p. Free parking.



**Canal Boat magazine** Enclosed with this copy of the newsletter should be a leaflet inviting your subscription to the magazine.

If you do decide to subscribe using the enclosed leaflet, Canal Boat have promised to donate £5.00 to the Society (so don't forget our name!)