



Newsletter

Issue 356

November 2001

Chairman's Column

A much briefer Chairman's Column this month, you will be pleased to note.

Suggested Coach Trip

At the end of the October meeting Terry Phippard spoke to me suggesting the possibility of the Society organising a coach trip to a suitable waterways location. The Committee would be pleased to consider such a trip if there was sufficient interest from Members **and** if someone would be prepared to volunteer their services to organise it.

One problem with coach trips these days is the hire cost of the coach itself, which can often be prohibitive unless there is a guarantee of filling all the seats. That was the reason why the arrangements for the last Society trip to the Kennet & Avon Canal involved members using their own cars to get to Bradford on Avon where we joined our trip boat to Dundas, rather than hiring a coach. On that occasion that arrangement worked very well, with car sharing being popular. However, it is doubtful whether this would work to a destination in the Midlands, for example.

However, please let either Peter Oates or me have your views on this suggestion.

Southampton Canal Society Boat Rally

As a significant number of Members moor their boats in the Napton area, Terry came up with another suggestion – to hold a Mini Boat Rally/Get Together/BBQ in that area. A great idea Terry and I have already sounded out a number of our Members who expressed their support for such an event.

So, it is suggested that the Spring of next year could be a good time and providing that we can arrange a date convenient to the majority, we will go ahead with arrangements. I will be contacting Members with boats moored in that area, or within a short cruising distance, later in the year.

Inter-Society Waterways Quiz – 6 December

There is just over a month to go to our annual hosting of the Inter-Society Waterways Quiz **but** to date no one has volunteered to join the Society's Team. It would be an awful embarrassment if the Southampton Canal Society couldn't field its own team, **so please come on**, speak to Peter and Laura at the November meeting and give them your name.

*Editor's note: Another engagement means I, for one, will **not** be able to take part in the quiz.*

Paul Herbert

CANAL DAY MEMORIES

by Laurie Pearce

This is the second part of Laurie's remembrances of "the old days". Part 1 appeared in last month's issue of the Newsletter.

The following year (1974) I realised my ambition and bought my first narrow boat, a 29ft David Piper hulled traditional boat which was based at Norbury on the Shropshire Union, thanks to a Policy which had just matured! I brought it down to Tyle Mill on the K&A where I was fortunate enough to obtain a mooring.

Bittern No 3 served me well with its twin cylinder Lister engine being the height of reliability. IT boasted a boatman's cabin with all the trimmings, but lacked a weed hatch! It also lacked the necessary fittings etc to conform with the Thames Conservancy regulations!

My worst moments were on my way to a rally on the

Slough Arm of the Grand Union. Incessant rain caused the River Brent to rise 3ft overnight whilst we were moored between Thames and Brentford Locks to a riverside warehouse. I was awake all night loosening the mooring lines every hour, and next day it was hair raising plod against the swift current until we reached the safety of the Hanwell flight of locks. I had prayed desperately that we didn't foul up the propeller with all the flotsam we were encountering.

I spent a three week holiday doing the Thames, Grand Union and Oxford canals again, also a trip to Lechlade and beyond to the original entrance to the Thames & Severn Canal. Being painted in traditional style complete with Buckby can etc, we always attracted much interest on the Thames in those days, as narrow boats were a rarity on the river

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Adventure Afloat 2001

For something over 22 years the top year (currently 10 and 11 year olds) of Calmore Junior School has spent a week each spring/summer term on the Grand Union Canal. This is not a holiday cruise but a very active educational trip where the children have to undertake various research projects and other relevant work.

Many years ago we gave an illustrated talk to the Society on a previous 'Adventure Afloat' trip.

Until a few years ago the party, which could number up to 100, including teachers and parents etc, were accommodated on camping boats based at Braunston, their cruise taking them as far as Fenny Stratford and back. Whilst in all these years the route has remained unchanged, the nature of the boats has. With the gradual demise of the camping boats, the school had to switch its booking to 'hard tops'. The last camping pair to be used were 'Calisto' and 'Ara' but these were to be split up and sold after 'Adventure Afloat 2000' and both have now reverted to their original carrying role.

Therefore, alternative arrangements had to be made for 'Adventure Afloat 2001' and this involved hiring seven narrow boats (most of which were full length), from three different companies, operating from two bases over 4 hours cruising apart. For those interested, the boats were as follows:- 'Pennine', 'Chiltern' and 'Great Britain' from Union Canal Carrying Company at Braunston, London Narrowboat Project's 'Megan' and 'Merlin', also based at Braunston, and 'Crane' and 'Dipper' hired from Willow Wren at Rugby.

On this year's cruise there were 56 children and 23 adults, the latter being Calmore teachers, parents and volunteers – many of whom have been assisting with 'Adventure Afloat' for many years.

There are very strong links between 'Adventure Afloat' and Southampton Canal Society and, in turn, with the London Narrowboat Project (LNBP). It is essential that all boats on such trips are crewed by very experienced steerers. This year's steerers were Society members Gill & Paul Herbert (Gill is Headteacher at Calmore), Ray Brooks and Eric, Sue & Peter Lewis (Peter's fiancée Tracey also worked as a volunteer on this year's cruise). All steerers of the London Narrowboat Project's boats have to hold the Community Boat Associations Steerers Certificate following training/assessment and a practical examination. Gill, Paul, Ray and Eric all hold that certificate (as do the other two steerers used this year). In addition, Ray holds other boating qualifications and is also a Cover Skipper for LNBP.

As one can imagine, the planning for such a trip takes many months and starts soon after the previous cruise has ended. The logistics include booking of the necessary number of boats; letters to parents very early on ascertaining which children in the year group would like to go; the collecting in of the monies; the

'booking' of steerers and other volunteers; meetings with parents explaining the details of the trip; allocation of children and volunteers to each boat; training sessions with all the children including health and safety aspects, working locks, throwing ropes etc; meetings with steerers and volunteers; and a major task – the necessary purchase of all the food and other stocks to last such a large party a week.

In the days immediately preceding Adventure Afloat 2001 the Quartermaster and her Assistant carried out the massive task of shopping for the trip. A number of volunteers then worked in the School Hall allocating the food and other essentials (including toilet rolls etc!!) to each boat, and packing it away in bread baskets and boxes.

And then, the day that the excited children had been waiting for all year arrived. On a bright and sunny Saturday morning in June everyone arrived at the School and the place buzzed with anticipation. Whole families arrived to see off their children. The children and volunteers stacked their belongings (clothes for the week plus waterproofs and sleeping bags) alongside their boat provisions. In due course the three coaches arrived and the major task of loading the provisions, the cloths bags etc and finally the children started.

In due course off went the loaded coaches with families and school staff waving them off and the journey to the canals began. As every year, there was a stop at Chieveley Services at the A34/M4 Junction for refreshments and loos and then back on the coaches for the final stage of the journey. Because it had not been possible to hire sufficient number of boats from Braunston, two additional boats were hired from Rugby. So, whilst the coaches containing the main party proceeded to Braunston Bottom Lock, the third coach travelled on to Rugby. Travelling separately by car were Paul Herbert and Peter Lewis, the steerers of the two Rugby boats, who had to arrive before the children in order to sort out the boats and determine where everything had to be stored.

As the coaches arrived at their respective bases everybody helped to unload the coaches and carry everything to the boats, making sure that all food and belongings were stored on the correct boat! A major task in itself. Then the steerers had to check over the boats with the boatyard staff whilst the volunteers checked inventories. Then it was off with the children to get them fitted out with their life jackets – essential equipment (even for able swimmers) that had to be worn at all times when they were on the bank, working the locks, or even sitting in the bow well or standing at the stern.

When everything and everybody had been sorted, the five Braunston boats then made their way up the Braunston Locks with the children and adult crew members working through the flight, receiving further

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Canal Day Memories

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then.

Subsequently, personal circumstances required a more accessible boat. So with great reluctance Bittern No 3 was sold and a new 32ft non-traditional boat was purchased in 1977 from Club Line Cruisers of Coventry. Problems arose with the engine on the journey back to the K&A, a 1.5 BMC water cooled unit, and the end result, after much wrangling, was a new engine brought down from Coventry and fitted in the boat, with great difficulty, on my mooring at Tyle Mill.

Bittern No 4 did a fair amount of cruising including the River Wey to Godalming, two Hawkesbury Rallies, and a Henley Traditional Boat rally. But again, fate took a hand which meant a purpose built boat had to be built in order to continue canal cruising. With economy in mind, I settled on "Steelcraft" of Brierley Hill on the Stourbridge Canal. They produced a 36ft sturdy boat in 1983, but lacked a "posh" finished interior. I also discovered two gas leaks whilst on the trip back to Tyle Mill. It brings to

mind the old adage, "You only get what you pay for"! I understand the builders went out of business a year or so later when the owner died!

I eventually realised another ambition, to moor my boat at the bottom of my garden. So after moving house to beside the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal, we were able to explore new waters such as the Llangollen Canal and River Trent to Nottingham.

There comes a time when rising costs and advancing years cause problems and so Bittern No 5 was sold and is now based at Weedon on the GU, still retaining its original name.

Linda and I have now moved back to the Southampton area and can now start attending the SCS meetings once again, but I will still retain happy memories of all these years on the "Cut".

Thank you, Laurie, very much for sharing your reminiscences of days past and passed on the canals. What a difference there was on the waterways of nearly 40 years ago when compared with today.

Caption Competition



The lighthouse looming just yards away should have given him some hint that he was in hazardous waters. But 79-year-old sailor Alan Waller was sure he could ease his boat through a gap in the rocks. However, his confidence was badly misplaced ... followed rapidly by his £100,000 motor cruiser.

With a sickening crunch, the luxury vessel became impaled on the reef and - as the tide receded - it ended up balanced high and dry 20ft above the waves. Mr Waller, from Newbury, Berkshire, had been planning to sell his pride and joy, named Power Game II.

Now, instead, he is ruefully assessing the cost of damage to its hull. He had taken the boat out for a

final spin off the coast of Guernsey in the Channel Islands. The Platte Fougere reef, where he foundered, is notorious for catching out even experienced sailors.

The keel of the boat was so heavily stuck in a crack in the rocks that it took a salvage team 12 hours to ease the vessel out. Mr Waller and a friend who was aboard with him suffered cuts and bruises. "It was like hitting a wall in a car," he said. "There was a thousand to one chance the boat would land like that."

Salvage expert Richard Keen said that even at high tide the hull remained a foot above the waves.

Reproduced from the Daily Mail of Saturday, August 18, 2001 with acknowledgement.

Such an unusual picture led our Chairman to suggest that it would be a good idea to ask our members to put their thinking caps on. So ... now's your chance to be a sub-editor and think up a good caption for this picture and earn yourself a prize into the bargain. So suggestions (on a piece of paper or by email please) to the Newsletter editor by the 1st December. Don't forget to include your name. The captions will be judged at the December meeting.

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. 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 01/11/01 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Members' Slides and Photo Competition - slides and prints. Remember the event when you're out and about on the waterways this summer.	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
Thu 15/11/01 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	Richard Elder from the AWCC (Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs) and David Smith from the BSS (Boat Safety Scheme) revue body. At Salisbury Rugby Club.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841
Sat 24/11/01 to Mon 24/12/01	Chichester CS	Father Christmas trips from Chichester Canal Basin. Most popular event. Book early in November. Trips offered for adults as well for the kids - with seasonal refreshments included.	Jenny Pine: 01243 670786
Thu 06/12/01 7.45pm	Southampton CS and IWA Salisbury Group	Inter-Society Waterways Quiz and American Supper.	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
Thu 17/01/02	IWA Salisbury Group	Ron and Myra Glover talking about their 2001 voyages through the Dutch Canals. At Salisbury Rugby Club	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841
Thu 04/04/02 7.30pm	Southampton CS	John Silman will be giving his illustrated talk on "The History of the Postcard" which had to be postponed from last July.	Peter Oates: 01794 517614
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. (currently in abeyance due to Foot & Mouth restrictions)	John Lisk: 01493 752403.
All year	Chichester CS	Cruises on n/b <i>Egremont</i> on Chichester Canal.	Bookings: 01243 670786

Adventure Afloat

(Continued from page 2)

training 'on the job'. Then through Braunston Tunnel with the kind of noise you would expect from five boatloads of excited children. On to Norton Junction and Buckby Locks where the boats traditionally moor for their first overnight stop.

Meanwhile, some miles away, in the Rugby Arm of the North Oxford Canal, the two Willow Wren boats had been loaded, the crews given their safety talk by the steerers (joined by a party of American students who were about to take their first trip on the English canals and also wanted to hear what to do and what not to do!) and then started their four hour journey to Braunston where they would then follow the rest of the fleet.

The children on board the two Rugby boats were delighted that they were not with the other boats because it meant that they had a longer cruise and, also, three more locks – the narrow flight at Hillmorton. This was the first time that Adventure Afloat boats had ever passed through narrow locks so this was another first for these crews.

Heavy rain dogged much of the cruise to Braunston, which was also experienced by the crews of the other boats which had, by now, moored at Buckby Locks. Because of the weather it soon became obvious that it would get darker that night earlier than had been anticipated and there was concern that they wouldn't catch up with the other boats before darkness fell. However, after eating dinner/supper on the move (with steerers Paul and Peter having to eat their sausages and beans in the rain – bit soggy!) and passing up the Braunston flight and through the tunnel, Norton Junction was soon in sight. It just left Buckby Top Lock to navigate and then the rest of the fleet came in sight – and then, suddenly, it was dark!

We were wet, we were tired, but everyone was still excited to be on board the boats as they prepared for their first night afloat.

What would the morning bring.....?

Paul and Gill Herbert

(To be continued next month)

Bits and Pieces

Enclosed with this copy of the Newsletter should be several leaflets about the Waterways Trust that Roger Hanbury was unable to give us at the October meeting. Some of the photography is quite attractive.

A number of books have been donated to the Library in the last few months. The Society wishes to say thank you very much to their donors. Among the books given are:

- *A Canal and Waterways Armchair Book* by John Gagg. This 144-page book discusses a whole range of

waterway topics spending approximately a page on each subject.

- *A Canalside Camera 1845-1930* by Michael E Ware. This book contains 115 photographs taken around the canal system during the period in the title.

- *Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park - Official National Park Handbook*. This fascinating book describes the history of this 185 mile long American canal, how it was built, how it was worked and its contribution to the local economy. There is also information about the canal today. Pop along to the library soon!

TOO LITTLE AND TOO MUCH

Our month-long holiday at the end of September was to be a leisurely cruise of the Leicester ring. All went well until we reached Kilby Bridge Lock where British Waterways were waiting with the news that three miles of canal had been completely drained of water overnight through Blaby. The next day the accumulated convoy of boats got as far as Blaby bridge where another wait ensued as this hadn't brought sufficient water down the canal to proceed further. We all managed to scrape through to Kings Lock at Leicester by nightfall.

THEN it rained all night! On locking through Leicester the following day we made the mistake of stopping below Limekiln Lock as the rain had become torrential. Two hours later the river was really moving fast - then a Council Ranger came along on his motorbike on the look-out for boats under way. He told us another narrowboat had just locked through Limekiln Lock and it wasn't really safe to stay where we were because of flooding - of course we couldn't turn, so both boats after a conference decided to go on.

Belgrave Lock which takes boats down on the River Soar proper had a fall that day of about six inches instead of over three feet and the towpath below the lock was already under water. The Ranger told us that Thurstaston Road Bridge has a very shallow arch and it is approached round a right-hind bend - it could be tricky. What he didn't tell us was there is a spillway on the left bank just as you get to the bridge, and that is where the trouble started! The boat we were with went through the bridge first and scraped its cabin edge all the way along. Ken was confident we had sufficient engine power to get under the middle of the arch but half way through the water pulled the boat sideways until our cabin scraped the bridge as well. When it reached the side hatch, which

has a raised top and was bolted down, there was an almighty crack and one of the hinges flew off into the river leaving the top split open and rather distorted!

We carried on to Thurstaston Lock, both boats having difficulty negotiating the tight bends in the river, and there we remained until the excess water had subsided, which it had by the next day.

We didn't really enjoy the rest of our trip down the Soar, being intent on getting back on to the Trent & Mersey Canal where we could relax in safety from the effects of water.

As a result of our delays through Leicester we were getting rather desperate for facilities. British Waterways do not have any between Kilby Bridge and Barrow on Soar -- there is nothing now in Leicester itself so we wrote to B.W. about it and received an apologetic reply, hopefully something will be done soon.

Now we are back on The Arm and Ken has been busy making good the damage to our offside hatch - it had to be knocked into shape and welded and now keeps the rain out!

Margaret Froud

Thank you Margaret for yet another contribution to the Newsletter - even if it describes rather a frightening experience. It just shows that English weather is not as meek and mild as some would have us believe. In Margaret's letter, she also included this snippet about two members who used to live in Stockbridge:

We called on Alan and Sonia Moore at Hopwas - their son has taken over GUELROSE now, in fact they live on it. They both send greetings to all who know them.

THE BUSIEST CANAL IN THE WORLD

Suez and Panama may be more famous, but the Kiel Canal carries more ships - it is the busiest canal in the world. The Nord-Ostsee-Kanal, as it is officially known, provides a 60-mile short-cut between the North and Baltic Seas - saving a journey around the north of Jutland of 200 miles. The canal is nearly 400 feet wide, and transited by 60,00 ships every year - twice as many as Panama.

The origins of the canal start with King Christian VII of Denmark who built the "Eiderkanal". This used stretches of the Rivers Levensau and Eider to link the two seas. It was completed in 1784, creating a link from Kiel to the mouth of the Eider at Tønning. However, it was only 10 feet deep and 100 feet wide.

After a century of discussion on the expansion of the canal by the German navy and the steamship maker

Schweffel & Howland, Emperor Wilhelm I laid a foundation stone in 1887. Eight years later, 9,000 workers completed the canal. The work was far easier than in Panama, because the canal fluctuates from 80 feet above sea level to 10 feet below - a modest range.

On 20 June 1895, the German imperial yacht *Hohenzollern*, carrying Emperor Wilhelm II, sailed through the canal, followed by a convoy of 24 more ships, 14 of which represented other seafaring nations. The following day, the final stone was laid in Holtenau and the waterway was named the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Kanal.

You can go on a short day tour of the locks, the major ones being in Brunsbüttel and Holtenau. For a longer cruise, a few companies include the Kiel Canal as part of a larger itinerary. Fred Olsen Travel (0800 783 0432,

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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
Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton

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Society Website:

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

Kiel Canal

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www.fredolsen.co.uk offers a number of cruises that pass through the Kiel Canal, such as the Baltic Summer and Merchants & Mariners itineraries. But perhaps the best way to see it is from the extraordinary railway line south from Rendsburg. In order to attain the height necessary to clear the canal without obstructing shipping, the line loops around and over itself before making a grand and stately arc across the canal.

ELECTRA GILLIES

This article first appeared in The Traveller section of The Independent on 14 July 2001. Thanks to Brian Evans for spotting it.

October Meeting

Due unforeseen circumstances, the write-up of the October meeting is not available to print this month and so will be held over until next month.

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 and the Great Glen	£3.75
Coventry & Ashby Canals and the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal.....	£3.75
Forth & Clyde and Union Canals with the Crinan Canal.....	£4.75
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

Huddersfield Broad & Narrow Canals with the Ashton Canal.....	£4.00
Kennet & Avon Canal	£3.75
Lee and Stort Navigations with the East London Ring.....	£4.75
Leeds and Liverpool Canal	£4.75
Llangollen & Montgomery Canals	£3.75
London - City and Docklands Atlas	£3.75
Macclesfield and Peak Forest Canals with the Ashton Canal	£4.75
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 (by Brian Evans)...£1.00

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 023 8026 2365

FORTHCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS

1st November 2001

Members' Slides / Prints Evening and Photo Competition - slides and prints. For more details see article elsewhere in this newsletter.

6th December 2001

Inter-Society Waterways Quiz and American Supper. Organised jointly with IWA Salisbury Group.

3rd January 2002

To be confirmed

7th February 2002

To be confirmed

7th March 2002

To be confirmed

4th April 2002

John Silman will be giving his illustrated talk on "The History of the Postcard" which had to be postponed from last July.