



## NEWSLETTER No. 293 NOVEMBER 1995

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### MEETINGS

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

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

#### 2nd November 1995

Vessels on London's Rivers in the 1930s  
by Dr Edwin Course.

#### 7th December 1995

Inter-Society Waterway Quiz  
and American Supper

#### 4th January 1996

DIG95 and the Waterway Recovery Group  
by Chris Davey.

#### 1st February 1996

Explore the Panama Canal and the River  
Douro by Hugh McKnight.

#### 7th March 1996

The History of Postcards Featuring  
Hampshire and Canals by John Silman.

#### Sunday 19th May 1996

IWA Golden Jubilee celebrations:  
Guided walk along the Romsey Canal and  
Barbecue (see separate article).

### IWA SALISBURY GROUP

The Salisbury Group of the IWA Avon & Wilts Branch will be holding two meetings at Salisbury Rugby Club, Castle Road, Salisbury on the following dates :

- Tuesday 23rd November 1995: "Gullivers Travels and Update."
- Thursday 25th January 1996: Group AGM followed by "The Irish Waterways."

All Southampton Canal Society members and friends will be welcome. For further details about the group and its meetings should contact the group's secretary: Mrs Pat Sharp, telephone 01980 622677

### OCTOBER MEETING

*The BCN Waterways in Birmingham & the Black Country* proved to be a popular subject with members, and drew a larger audience than we have seen for some months. Their attendance was well rewarded by one of the most amusing talks that we have ever had; a double act by Ron Cousens and his wife, prominent members of the BCN Society.

We saw slides covering most parts of the BCN taken over many years. With having their own boat and regularly cruising the area, they were able to bring us right up to date with many of the developments along the system.

The Cousens illustrated that much of the BCN waterway mileage passes through greener surroundings than most of us were aware and also showed that Birmingham's canals provide a much friendlier environment than we would expect of such a busy, large built-up area.

**VERY MANY THANKS** to Sue and Eric Lewis for accommodating our speakers overnight after the October meeting.

### IWA GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

As part of the IWA Golden Jubilee celebrations, the Southampton Canal Society is to host a guided walk along the Romsey Canal between approx 10.00am and midday, returning to Romsey Community School for a Barbecue with a licensed bar to 4.00pm. The artist Harley Crossley will also be attending and exhibiting some of his pallet knife oil paintings of waterway scenes.

This will also be one of the few opportunities to see the Solent & Arun branch's part of the IWA waterway jigsaw. Parts of this jigsaw will be coming together from all over the country to be assembled in Birmingham for the World Canals Conference on the 26th - 28th June 1996.

The jigsaw piece will visit Romsey Canal, Fareham Quay, Portsmouth Canal, Chichester Canal, River Arun, Wey & Arun Canal, Wey Navigation, River Thames and the Grand Union Canal. It will travel by towpath and boat for most of the journey and will meet other parts of the jigsaw from Sussex and Guildford & Reading on route before arriving at the Convention Centre in Birmingham by boat.

So book the date (Sunday 19th May 1996), come along and witness a little of the Jigsaw Journey in Hampshire.

### IWA GOLDEN JUBILEE BOAT RALLY

A good, old-fashioned boat rally, organised by IWA Guildford & Reading Branch will be held on 1st & 2nd June 1996 on the River Thames at the Promenade, Reading. It will welcome all boaters whether members of the IWA or not. In addition to receiving and sending off the branch's jigsaw components, the weekend will feature two evenings of crew entertainment, with the daytime emphasis on waterborne competitions and displays and a full programme of Waterways for Youth activities. Entry fee £10 per boat including commemorative brass plaque. For entry form, send SAE to IWA, Silcroft, Mill Lane, Yateley, GU17 &7TE.

### EXETER SHIP CANAL

The West Country Branch of the IWA intend to celebrate the Golden Jubilee on the Exeter Ship Canal over the weekend of 15th & 16th June 1996. In 1566 life began for the Canal when John Trew constructed a weir to feed water into it. It is in fact the first post-Roman canal to be constructed in Britain and has seen many a fine sea-going vessel pass through to Exeter Quay.

The weekend will provide:

- A unique opportunity to cruise on the Exeter Ship Canal, either on your own boat or on a chartered vessel.
- Lunch at Turf Lock Hotel uniquely positioned beside the Exe Estuary.
- Return cruise back to Exeter (almost certainly calling at Double Locks Inn!).
- A social evening in Exeter Canal Basin with overnight mooring for boaters.
- Cruise through Exeter Quay along the River Exe (boats dressed or illuminated).
- Take a free Sunday morning guided tour with the Exeter City Redcoats.
- Visit Exeter's famous Maritime Museum and its impressive collection of boats.
- Conclude the weekend with Sunday lunch at one of the Quayside eating places.

At present it is too early to give details of likely cost as negotiations are still in progress with Exeter City Council regarding lock and bridge fees (normally expensive but could be free for this event). Anyone interested in this event is asked to register their interest by contacting E W Edge, Ashwood, Back Lane, Newton Poppleford, Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 0EY (01395 567553).

## TRIP TO I.W.A. FILM SHOW IN LONDON - Sunday 7th January 1968

I had booked up the required number of seats according to the notice published in I.W.A. Bulletin No.80. Unfortunately the entire programme was changed, and had it not been for the Chairman's sharp eyes, the details of the changed programme, in Bulletin No.81, would have passed un-noticed.

Fortunately, it was possible to manipulate the bookings and seats were obtained for the best of the three performances. As it did not start until 8-30, I risked the wrath of the members and went ahead, booking a coach, in order to save a late drive back from London.

We left Southampton at 4-30 p.m. in good time in case of bad weather, but were blessed with a fine clear evening, and stopped for a "cuppa" in a rather seedy "caff" at Camberley, and for something else in rather more civilized surroundings when we reached London.

The performance started with "The Prendergast File" - a prize-winning amateur film in colour, about a civil servant who was sent to investigate Canals, with an eye to their closure, but who became enthusiastic about them and recommended improvements instead. That he should be so audacious as to recommend positive action cost Mr. Prendergast his job, but the film ends with Prendergast passing in his own boat, with his Civil Servant-type bowler hat floating forlornly away. This film included some very good and authentic Canal scenes.

Next came short extracts from old news-reel films, showing some interesting scenes of horse-drawn boats, early powered boats and other items of interest.

"Barging Through London" made in 1924 followed showing the progress of a horse-drawn barge (yes a barge, 14 ft. wide, not a Narrowboat) from the Thames at Limehouse to Paddington Basin. A silent film, with interminable pauses to read, learn and inwardly digest each caption. One of the most fascinating aspects of this film was whenever a road crossed the canal, we were treated to a wonderful vintage street scene, with tramcars, solid tyred open buses, and ladies wearing maxi-maxi skirts. It was a great pity the railway scenes were not included but we did see a lovely little train puff over a bridge in the background!

Finally, the film we really came to see - "Painted Boats". This starts as the story of two canal families, the Smiths and the Stoners.

### Southampton Canal Society Library

Please return any books to Sue Lewis at meetings for the benefit of all members.

### Southampton Canal Society Sales

Embossed Ball Point Pens 50p  
Fibre Tip Pens 75p

#### GEOprojects Maps

Basingstoke Canal £3.00

Oxford Canal £3.75

Kennet & Avon Canal £3.75

Grand Union Canal £3.75 each

Map 1 Birmingham - Fenny Stratford

Map 2 Braunston - Kings Langley

Map 3 Fenny Stratford - Thames

Map 4 Leicester Line - Soar - Erewash

The Thames Map £3.75

Notelets, with line drawings (by Brian Evans) of canal scenes £1.00

Waterway Jigsaws £3.50  
192 pieces 10" x 13¾"

Screen Printed Tee Shirts £6.50  
in Navy - large & extra large  
in Red - medium

Embroidered Sweat Shirts about £15.00  
in Navy or Bright Royal - medium

Colourful Tea Towels £2.50

Decorated Mugs £2.25

Decorated Trays £1.00 & £2.95

The Smiths being an old fashioned family with one horse-drawn boat, and the Stoners being more progressive with a motor and butty. A good deal of historical and technical commentary was included, and the difficulties of canal children receiving any education was spotlighted by a scene where Alfie Stoner was rescued from a tricky situation with a school-teacher when his young niece came to the schoolroom and said that Alfie must go now, as the boat was leaving. Inevitably Mary Smith and Ted Stoner were on friendly terms but were having a very unsatisfactory courtship, as they could only snatch a few quick words as their boats passed, punctuated by Mr. Smith cursing the Stoners for stirring up the mud with their engine.

A very dramatic scene shows Mr. and Mrs. Smith legging through a tunnel, to the detriment of Mr. Smith's bronchial chest and Mrs. Smith's varicose veins, although Mrs. Smith and Mary are cheered soon after by the news that "Sunny Valley" is to be fitted with an engine (?). This is a great shock to Mr. Smith, however, and he does not live to see his powered boat emerge from the yard.

Mary managed further meetings with Ted Stoner, and they agreed to be married at Stoke Bruerne. The film ends with Mary and Mrs. Smith managing their motor "Sunny Valley" between them eventually arriving at Stoke to find that Ted has been called up for the Army, the 1939-45 War having by then started.

A few inaccuracies were included unfortunately (shades of "The Flower of Gloster!") the worst being that the Smiths arrived at Stoke Bruerne from the wrong direction. Also shown was the Smith's boat first of all as a horse-drawn boat, and then, after 'fitting' the engine, as a motor. This seems very unlikely, and as there is in existence a picture of "Sunny Valley" as a horse-drawn boat, it would seem that the film company painted up a motor boat to serve as the powered "Sunny Valley". However, these are small criticisms of an otherwise fine film.

We left London at 10-45 p.m. passing Earls Court to pay homage to "Gypsy Moth IV" and after a fast run reached Southampton at 12-45 a.m.

*This article, written by Mike Smetham, was first published in the Southampton Canal Society News Letter No 2 of February 1968. It is the first of an occasional series of reprints from Newsletters of yesteryear.*

### INTER-SOCIETY WATERWAY QUIZ

At our December meeting, a waterways quiz will be combined with our traditional American Supper. It is expected that the visiting teams will include the Wey and Arun Canal Trust, Chichester Canal Society and the Solent & Arun branch of the IWA. It is proposed that the quiz should get under way promptly at 8.00 pm so don't be late if you wish to be sure of getting a seat.

Come along, not forgetting to bring some food for the American Supper, and support your quiz team to show our guests what a large crowd we can muster.

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