



NEWS LETTER

Canals to close?

You are probably aware, from the waterways press, of the very serious threat hanging over British Waterways and the other navigation authorities as a result of the cuts in Grant-in-Aid for the year April 2006 to March 2007 that the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is intending to impose on them.

Another 2.5% (£1.5m) cut in BW's grant is threatened for this autumn, in addition to the cuts of 5% (approx £3.1m) announced in March and 7.5% (£4.5m) more recently this year. In total, this would mean a loss of over £9m to BW in the year, with 15% of its grant-in-aid lost.

BW's grant comes from both DEFRA and the Scottish Executive. This year, BW was originally advised that it should plan to receive £73.5m grant-in-aid. Of this, £62.5m was to come from DEFRA and £10.9m from the Scottish Executive (SE). The remainder is earned by BW or comes in the form of specific project funding from local authorities, lottery funders etc. The grants from both DEFRA and SE were agreed in 2005. The latter still intends to pay its grant to BW in full in 2006/07.

Owing to apparent calamitous mismanagement within DEFRA, it has been unable to meet its obligations. This was first realised during March 2006. Since then, DEFRA's financial position has worsened. The Department must pay a large fine to the European Union for its failure to make prompt payments to farmers via the Rural Payments Agency. DEFRA has also incurred substantial overspends in correcting the systems that make payments to farmers and on some other projects. No further funding is available from Treasury so the Department has decided to cut further the budgets of its responsibilities other than those related to payments to farmers.

And it's not just a one-off cut. DEFRA is now briefing BW (and the Environment Agency and the Broads Authority) about the next Comprehensive Spending Review. This is a process beginning now by which departmental spending for the years April

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

- Write to your MP at the House of Commons, LONDON, SW1A 0AA.
- Write to one or more of your MEPs (since the original problem originated in the European Commission). To find them and their addresses try www.europarl.org.uk/uk_meps/MembersMain.htm
- Write to the Waterways minister: Barry Gardiner MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, DEFRA, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, LONDON, SW1P 3JR.
- Write to the Secretary of State of DEFRA: Rt Hon David Miliband MP, Secretary of State, DEFRA, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, LONDON, SW1P 3JR. Email: secretaryofstate@defra.gsi.gov.uk

2008 to March 2011 will be decided. It has advised BW that its grant will be required to decrease still further from the level to which it has now been cut in this financial year. The consequence of this is that BW is likely to lose planned funding of £60m over the five years from 2006/07 to 2010/11.

The Environment Agency also faces dramatic cuts to its budgets similar to British Waterways. Fortunately, the impact on the navigation function with the Agency has been absorbed for the current financial year, but other parts of the Agency's work, particularly flood defence, have been extremely hard-hit, and this in turn is likely to have adverse

implications for navigation in due course. The Agency's proposed increase in boat licence fees of nearly 50% over three years looks very likely to go ahead, despite complete opposition by inland waterways interests.

It is not clear why the Treasury insists that non-farming interests should suffer

because of the DEFRA farming errors.

The long term worry is the continuing cuts in the annual grant. BW might be able to cope with a one-off cut but annual reductions are very different.

There are two key decision points in government in the near future, where the impact of public opinion could make a difference. DEFRA ministers are due to make financial settlements for the next few years with the Treasury during the next few months. This will probably not happen until early 2007, but the weight of public opinion will need to be conveyed to ministers during the period September 2006 to Christmas so that they understand that cutting grant allocation to the navigation authorities would be very unpopular.

The second decision point is when the Department's ministers apportion the budget that it gets from the Treasury. This is likely to happen in spring 2007 and further lobbying will be required in the run up to it.

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See page 4 for BW's options for saving money.

- Write to your local paper.
- Join a campaigning user group (such as the IWA) if you're not already a member.

Use www.WriteToThem.com if you have Internet access. You put in your postcode and it names your MP, MEPs and local Councillors with an easy way to send them an e-mail.

Remember to emphasise that cuts won't just hit boaters - but all who use and enjoy the waterways.

What is also needed is pressure from Cabinet (and other) ministers on Gordon Brown. So if you have a minister as your MP, then it is all the more important that you write.

BW is likely to lose funding of £60m over five years

**Don't leave it to someone else—
they could well be leaving it to you!**

August Meeting

The Society's 2006 Annual General Meeting

Thirty members attended the Society's 39th Annual General Meeting held on 27 July 2006, which was chaired by our Chairman, Paul Herbert, whilst our President, Brian Evans, officiated for the election of Officers and Committee.

The meeting followed the traditional procedure, all officer reports having been published in advance in the Society Newsletter. The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer & Membership Secretary presented their reports, highlighting issues of particular note. In summary, the Society continued to be successful with a full and varied programme of speakers and a number of enjoyable special events and outings. Whilst membership numbers had been sustained and attendance at monthly meetings had been encouraging, the Chairman expressed the need for a drive to increase membership. Our financial position remained sound and a year-end balance of approximately £1,500 had been carried forward into 2006/07. But, it had also been a sad year with the death of a number of current and former members. In 2007 the Society would be celebrating its 40th anniversary and the Committee was currently considering a special programme for the year.

Both in his report and at the AGM Paul thanked all those Society members who contribute to its success. Without the continued support of those who regularly attend our monthly meetings, the officers and committee, and the small group of members who provide active 'hands-on' assistance at each meeting, the Society would not have continued to flourish and provide so much entertainment, whilst at the same time providing some financial support to the waterways movement.

It was the Society's policy to annually review its membership subscription rates; the Committee had considered the matter and the AGM endorsed its recommendation to increase individual membership to £14 and £20 for families.

There then followed the election of Officers and Committee. All the Officers were willing to serve for a further year and were duly

elected. However, Laura Sturrock advised that, whilst she was willing to continue as Vice-Chairman, Treasurer & Membership Secretary for the ensuing year, she would then have to review her position, unless a member was willing to come forward to take over her roles. In addition, Eric Lewis had indicated his wish to retire as Secretary with effect from the 2007 AGM. Anne Coleman volunteered to take on the roles of Treasurer & Membership Secretary from next year's AGM, an offer which was gratefully accepted. Anne was elected to the (temporary) position of Assistant Treasurer & Membership Secretary and will be shadowing Laura during the coming year.

Regarding the Committee, with the exception of Martin Cripps, all other members were willing to continue and, with no other nominations being put forward, were elected. Martin, who had been a Committee member since the autumn of 1988, at which time he became Secretary, a post he held for some years, had indicated he wished to retire from the Committee. Martin had given many years of valuable continued service to the Society, more recently printing the Newsletter, at no cost to the Society. The AGM passed a vote of thanks to Martin and a suitable gift will be presented to him at a future meeting. Anne Coleman will automatically fill the Committee vacancy arising from Martin's retirement. Peter Oates confirmed his willingness to continue as Newsletter Editor and Society Webmaster.

John Silman expressed thanks on behalf of the Society to all the Officers and Committee.

Following the AGM members enjoyed an excellent recently released DVD – "Yesterday Once More... Working Boats" produced by Laurence Hogg Productions. Many thanks to Laura and Peter for providing the DVD and equipment.

Paul Herbert

Laurence Hogg produces a wide range of quality videos/DVDs covering the waterways and their heritage. Look up: www.laurencehoggproductions.co.uk

September Meeting

'Early Canalling Days on Standard 8 Cine' – Brian Evans

Oh, what a feast of nostalgia Brian gave us at our last meeting. For many years he has promised to put together some of his collection of Standard 8 Cine film of the waterways of the UK and the continent and he certainly came up trumps! The filming all took place during the 60s, 70s and 80s, with some being taken 40 years ago!

We started with film showing the 'launch', from Ken and Margaret Froud's garden, of Ken's home built narrow boat, 'Duorf' which involved a crane, carefully lifting and guiding the boat under the overhead power cables in the street and onto a low-loader for carriage to the Kennet & Avon Canal. We then saw shots of the steam powered nb 'Leviathan' also on the K&A. We moved to the Society's trip from Caversham on the River Thames in 1985. A more personal trip then with the Evans family taking Brian's brother's boat from Braunston to Foxton, and then at the 1967 IWA National Rally at Abbey Park, Leicester.

We then moved to the continent with a family camping trip to the Rhine. Back home again and to a family holiday cruise onboard Bijou Line's (remember them?) "Jade" in 1971. That cruise took the Evans' on the Staffs & Worcs Canal to the Shropshire Union, turning onto the Middlewich Branch and then onto the Trent & Mersey on their way to the Macclesfield Canal. Then we were back on the continent with a visit to the Ronquieres inclined plane in

1970; a Canal Society trip on the Kennet & Avon Canal in 1971 onboard house boat 'Kennet Valley'; and we were then abroad again at Fontinettes with two visits to the vertical lift and the locks.

Our final film was of another Evans family holiday, this time back in the 60's – 1966 to be exact. This cruise started at Warwick and took them onto the River Nene via Gayton Junction on the Grand Union Canal. That part of the trip ended at the Wellingborough Rally, the site being opposite Whitworth's Mill, which at that time was still receiving grain from Brentford by narrow boat. Then it was back to the Grand Union to Braunston, the Northern Oxford, Fazeley on the Coventry Canal through Birmingham to Tardebigge, ending the trip at Hanbury.

In between each reel of film we were entertained by Brian turning each one and winding back, changing reels and threading through before we were ready for the next one – all with Brian's running commentary and humorous anecdotes. The only things lacking were a Compton organ lifting out of the floor in front of the stage and the ice-cream girls!

Brian, you gave us a wonderful evening which I am sure the large audience all enjoyed. Brian tells me he has some more film at home so we can look forward to another film show sometime in the future.

Paul Herbert

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. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the correctness of this information, please check with the listed

contact who will be glad to confirm and supply further details of that event.

If YOU know of an event taking place that should be in this list then please contact the editor.

Time	Organiser	Details	Contact
Thu 5 Oct 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"A Calendar of British Wildlife" with Dennis Bright. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Sat 7 Oct 2006 10.30am	Southampton CS	Society boat trip on the Wey & Arun Canal at Loxwood, Sussex aboard the 'Zachariah Keppel'.	Maureen Greenham: 023 8040 6951 Email: maureen.greenham@dsl.pipex.com
Wed 18 Oct 2006 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	"The Venice of the Midlands" - Runnalls Davis talks about the canals of Birmingham. Parish Pavilion, Station Road, Chobham, Surrey.	David Millett: 01252 617364
Wed 25 Oct 2006 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	"The Military on English Canals" by Hugh Compton. The Stone Building, Newbury Wharf, Newbury.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356 Email : grahamv.smith@virgin.net
Fri 27 Oct 2006 7.45 for 8.00pm	Kennet & Avon CT	A talk by Chris Cove-Smith , who is the author of 'The River Thames Book'. Turnham's Farm Hall, Little Heath Road, Tilehurst, Reading.	John and Pam Swift: 0118 9415540 Email: johns@360swift.com
Sat 28 Oct 2006	Wey & Arun CT	Autumn Meeting at Pulborough. Exhibition from 11:00 am to 1:30 pm and meeting starting 2:00 pm about the achievements of the Trust in last 12 months. Pulborough Village Hall, Swan View (off Lower Street), Pulborough, West Sussex.	WACT Office: 01403 752403 Email: office@weyandarun.co.uk Website: www.weyandarun.co.uk
Thu 2 Nov 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	London's Waterways with the expert, Chris Cove-Smith. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 15 Nov 2006 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	"The Moving Meadow" by Peter Boyce describing a trip from Bath to London with a flowering meadow aboard a narrow boat. Parish Pavilion, Station Road, Chobham, Surrey.	David Millett: 01252 617364
Thu 23 Nov 2006	Sussex Ouse Restoration Trust	Talk by Steve Haywood, author, journalist and broadcaster, based upon his very successful book "Fruit Flies Like a Banana". Newton Room, Southover Grange, Southover High Street, Lewes, East Sussex	Secretary of SORT: Email: info@sxouse.org.uk
Fri 24 Nov 2006 7.45 for 8.00pm	Kennet & Avon CT	A talk by Venon Coles on "Midget Submarines in World War II". Turnham's Farm Hall, Little Heath Road, Tilehurst, Reading.	John and Pam Swift: 0118 9415540 Email: johns@360swift.com
Wed 29 Nov 2006 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	"The Douro River" by Roger Squires. The Stone Building, Newbury Wharf, Newbury.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356 Email : grahamv.smith@virgin.net
Thu 7 Dec 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Inter-society Waterways Quiz. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 20 Dec 2006 8.00pm	Surrey & Hampshire CS	"The Thames Creeks" with Roger Squires illustrating St Pancras Cruising Club's various visits to fascinating Thames creeks. Parish Pavilion, Station Road, Chobham, Surrey.	David Millett: 01252 617364
Thu 4 Jan 2007 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Members' Slides, Prints and Photo Competition. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 31 Jan 2007 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	"Have Boat: Will Travel II" by David Saady. The Stone Building, Newbury Wharf, Newbury.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356 Email : grahamv.smith@virgin.net
Thu 1 Feb 2007 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"Adventures of the Tuesday Night Club" with Neil Arlidge. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 28 Feb 2007 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	"The Dorset & Somerset Canal" by Derrick Hunt. The Stone Building, Newbury Wharf, Newbury.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356 Email : grahamv.smith@virgin.net
Thu 1 Mar 2007 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Ron and Myra Glover will tell us about their latest travels on continental waterways. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Wed 28 Mar 2007 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	"Waterways Past & Present" by Derek Pratt. The Stone Building, Newbury Wharf, Newbury.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356 Email : grahamv.smith@virgin.net
Fri 30 Mar 2007 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	AGM followed by photographer Alan Copeland on "Curiosities in the Chiltern". Turnham's Farm Hall, Little Heath Road, Tilehurst, Reading.	John and Pam Swift: 0118 9415540 Email: johns@360swift.com

Sussex Ouse

Sussex Ouse Restoration Trust has recently commenced work on its first physical restoration project, at Isfield Lock near Newick in East Sussex.

The lock chamber has been drained and surrounding vegetation cleared. The site was flooded to a four-foot depth at the end of May by above average rainfall, causing the river level to rise rapidly and flow into the lock chamber and surrounding area via the old cut exit to the river. Earth from the lock tail has been moved and used to fill the lower cut channel to create an earth dam to

help prevent a re-occurrence of the flooding. The invert below the bottom gates has been exposed to reveal a silt depth of about 2.4 metres (8 feet) to be removed from the chamber, rather than the one metre assessed in previous investigations. An access ramp to enable full excavation is the next part of the project to be undertaken.

Exploratory archaeological excavation will also commence on the remains of the original right-hand lock gate which is still in-situ at the tail of the lock. This lock gate must be excavated by hand prior to using

any machinery to clear the rest of the lock. Once that is done, they will move on to stabilising the west wall of the lock and starting restoration work on the better-preserved east wall.

Anyone interested in taking part in this or future work parties should contact their new project manager, Paul Morris, via e-mail at morris_paul@btinternet.com, or by telephone 01435 863683. Further information can also be found on the Trust's website at www.sxouse.org.uk

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:

Normally 1st Thursday each month at 7.45pm. (See Waterways Diary.) Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.

President:

Brian Evans.

Chairman:

Paul Herbert, 25 Rosemoor Grove, Chandler's Ford, Hampshire, SO53 1TB. Tel: 023 8026 2365. Email: paul@herbertpaul.wanadoo.co.uk

Secretary:

Eric Lewis, 51 Friars Croft, Calmore, Southampton, SO40 2SS. Tel: 023 8086 0384
E-mail: sue.eric.lewis@ukonline.co.uk

Treasurer & Membership Secretary:

Laura Sturrock, 39 Church Street, Nether Heyford, Northamptonshire, NN7 3LH. Tel: 01327 341798. Email: laura@whitenap.plus.com

Committee:

Martin Cripps, Maureen Greenham, Peter Oates, Alan Rose, David Townley-Jones

Newsletter Editor & Webmaster:

Peter Oates, 39 Church Street, Nether Heyford, Northamptonshire, NN7 3LH. Tel: 01327 341798. Email: peter@whitenap.plus.com

Society Website:

<http://www.whitenap.plus.com>

Chairman's Column

October Meeting

We are delighted to welcome back Dennis Bright to our October meeting, with "A Calendar of British Wildlife". This is the fourth visit by locally renowned wildlife photographer Dennis and we look forward to his presentation.

Mary Hill

Our members Mary and David Hill were regular attendees at our monthly meetings until they both suffered ill health, requiring hospitalisation. We were delighted to welcome back Mary at our September meeting and hope she is now able to come on a regular basis as we know she always enjoyed our sessions. Unfortunately David is currently in a Care Home but the Society sends him its

very best wishes.

Inter-Society Christmas Quiz

Advance warning that the annual Inter-Society Waterways Quiz will be hosted by our Society on 7 December. We will shortly be looking for volunteers for the Southampton Team so if you would like to take part, please contact me as soon as possible.

Refreshments Rota

We have now run out of names on our rota so need volunteers to come forward to assist with the monthly refreshments for the coming months. Please contact Gill ASAP. Many thanks.

Paul Herbert

Where will the axe fall

British Waterways are currently examining their options for reducing their spending in response to the cuts in their budget (see page 1). *Waterways World* magazine lists these possible courses of action:

◆ Less maintenance

BW has already cut its major works programme by £5m. Stoppages this winter are likely to be called off. The programme to eliminate 'statutory arrears' is currently set for completion in 2012, but this date could slip further. *Odds: 100%*

◆ Licence fee rises

The Environment Agency has announced swingeing rises. BW is likely to follow with increases of 30% or more. *Odds: 90%*

◆ Reduced manning

Winter hours on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal and River Severn have already been cut. Other manned waterways and structures, like the Weaver locks and Standedge Tunnel, could follow. *Odds: 80%*

◆ Property sales

BW has quietly been selling 'non-operational' property, such as canalside cottages, for some time. The financial need is now greater than ever. *Odds: 75%*

◆ Redundancies

BW staff have barely recovered from the last reorganisation - many are now anxious for their jobs. *Odds: 70%*

◆ Restoration cuts

Though BW has already retreated from the optimism of *Unlocked and Unlimited*, abandoning the Cotswold or Droitwich projects would cause uproar. Other restorations are very unlikely to gain financial support. *Odds: 66%*

◆ Mooring price rises

As a 'stealth tax', bankside mooring price rises could be smuggled in more easily, pleasing private sector marina owners. But this could encourage abuse of 14-day moorings. *Odds: 60%*

◆ Postpone capital works

Short-term building projects, like the new Apsley head office, could be postponed to gain a financial reprieve. *Odds: 50%*

◆ Business sell-offs

BW could gain a one-off windfall by selling partial stakes in its 'venture' businesses - for example, a coastal marina group could purchase a 50% stake in BW Marinas. But BW management is unlikely to want to mortgage future income. *Odds: 40%*

◆ Canal closures

Recently reopened waterways, like the Rochdale and Huddersfield Narrow, and little-used canals, like the Wyrley & Essington, do not pay their way; but abandonment would be a PR disaster, outraging enthusiasts and pressure groups. 'Closure by stealth' is more likely - indefinite stoppages on less well-used parts of the network. *Odds: 30%*

Waterways World - October 2006