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NEWSLETTER No. 258 OCTOBER 1992

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

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

- 1st October - Speaker to be confirmed.  
5th November - Film & Slides on Canal Lifts in Belgium and the new Rhine-Main-Danube Canal plus the opportunity to purchase waterways books - Hugh Mcknight.  
3rd December - American Supper and a talk on Owls by the Ringwood Owl Centre complete with a couple of live owls.

SEPTEMBER MEETING. 'Big Digs and Little Digs' was yet another amusing slide show by Jon Sims. A large number of the slides were taken on the Basingstoke Canal at the many working parties that Jon attended.

It was possible to follow the restoration progress at certain locations and viewers could also note great changes in the type of plant used and how working party organisers had become safety conscious and introduced better standards of clothing and equipment.

Jon moved up to date with some fine pictures of the 'Big Dig' at Wantage on the Wilts & Berks Canal (attended by over 1000 navvies) which he also reported on for 'Waterways World' magazine.

He finished up with a few shots of the family visit to this years IWA Trail Boat Rally at Taunton.

Jon was seen taking notes at Southampton Boat Show so will he have another page or two in 'WW'?

We were pleased to welcome Chris & Helen Davey of WRG to the meeting. They were able to give up to date answers to members questions on canal restoration and as the organisers of 'Big Dig' gave an insight into the organisation of an event with over 1000 participants.

IF YOU MISSED the August meeting - then you also missed a delicious slice of Southampton Canal Society 25th Birthday chocolate cake, kindly made for us by Mrs Bebbington.

INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION Solent & Arun Branch are proposing to hold an Annual Canal Quiz Competition. It has been suggested that the prize would be a trophy in memory of Gerry Skinner. Maybe the first quiz would take place in February '93. What do you think of the idea? Would you like to take part?

THE NEW Rhine, Main, Danube Canal opened in late September. Did you see much about it in the press.

CHICHESTER CANAL SOCIETY are looking for volunteers to make simple notice boards in good time for next years events. Any offers?

Also volunteers to help with next years WATER FAYRE at the Canal Basin. Organising commences in January for a possible July date. Tel:- (0243) 573839

CANALS 200. Industrial Heritage Year 1993, promoted by the English Tourist Board, has prompted British Waterways to declare next year 'Canals 200'.

The Canal Age reached its height in 1793 when 62 canals - half the canal system - were either being promoted, planned or built.

Special Canals 200 events are being planned at waterways museums and on many canals throughout the country to attract newcomers and enthusiasts alike for an insight into what the waterways have to offer for recreation, reserves for wildlife, variety of landscapes and industrial archaeology.

Special publications include a Canals 200 calendar (already available), a 'coffee table' book by Anthony Burton and a set of four commemorative stamps to be issued in July by the Royal Mail.



The next day everybody was busy and working the locks after another tremendous breakfast.

Again everyone was very enthusiastic we cruised on to Cosgrove where the other boats stopped to empty the loos. We didn't have to stop because we had a pump out loo. After this our crews got off to work the single lock before we moored a little way after the lock, at Wolverton aqueduct, for lunch.

After lunch we went down under the canal so that we could sketch the aqueduct from the river. After about 20 minutes of sketching we returned to the boats and set off again.

During the afternoon we redrew the sketches we had made earlier. We had a great variety of materials that we could use so we had some really super drawings. Whilst we were drawing we passed the mural of a railway scene on the wall of the railway depot. Everybody liked it.

We cruised on to Fenny Stratford where we went through the six inch lock, turned, and came back through again where we moored for the night. After tea, in the evening, we again visited a local sports field to play games.

The next day we didn't have to be up so early because we were going to Bletchley Leisure Centre.

After a nice long lie in, a delicious fry up and a good wash we set off to the leisure centre. When we arrived we were split up into groups and sent off to our first activity.

My group had racket ball first and bouncy castle second although I missed out on these activities ( but thats another story ). Next on the agenda was green bowels, this was very hard but very enjoyable. Then swimming, the one good bath of the week! This was followed by lunch, which was very nice because we could buy what we wanted from the canteen. After our lunch had gone down it was back to the sports. Next was badminton, it was surprising how many shuttlecocks were lost!!

After this was unihoc. This was my favourite, although we lost 5-4. Last was trampolining. I didn't take part in this activity because of my weak ankle but it was fun watching the others fall over.

When we had finished our activities at Bletchley we went back to the boats and cruised on to Newlands Park where we moored and had a delicious meal cooked by our brilliant chef.

In the evening we walked through the park to the Peace Pagoda which is a monument built by some Far Eastern Hindu's as a symbol of peace.

The monument consists of a gold statue set back in to the main block, seven religious pictures situated around the main block and seven discs on the roof. The whole field in which it is situated is lit up.

Next we walked over the hill to the Labyrinth which is a kind of maze where you have to try to get to the middle. I managed to do it in about 10 minutes.

After we had finished at the Labyrinth we returned to the canal side for an American sing song with Miss Johnson an American student who was working with us.

The next day we walked in to Milton Keynes where we visited the shopping centre. We found that there was a great variety of different shops from bookshops to supermarkets. We enjoyed this time a lot because it was our only time of freedom. When we had finished at the shopping centre we returned to the boats and set off for Great Linford.

When we arrived we sketched the alms houses and a delightful little church. As a contrast to this we went to see the houses with solar panelled roofs, these were very impressive to see.

When we had filled in our diarys we returned to the boats and set off again towards Cosgrove. Again everybody wanted to steer the boats, as the weather was excellent.

**TO BE CONTINUED**