

# WINDLASS

No. 51 DECEMBER 1965

Merry Christmas

1/6



Flatford Mill, with canoeists taking part in River Stour Action Committee  
Cruise paddling in the mill pond

(Photo by Eric Boesch)



Journal of THE LONDON and HOME COUNTIES BRANCH of  
The Inland Waterways Association Ltd., Published alternate months



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# WINDLASS

DECEMBER - - - 1965

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## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES



NOW is the time of Christmas. The time of year when perhaps canals and rivers are furthest from our minds, when memories of last summer's cruises are blurred by the flames of the fire and the lights on the Christmas trees. It is at this time that I would like to remind you of the great work done by Mr. Chapman, Missionary to the Canal Boatman's Institute at The Butts, Brentford, who for the last few months had been busy collecting, and will still be delighted to receive, gifts of food, clothing and toys for distribution to all those young and old, who live and work on the canals in the London area, together with the Grand Union as far north as Braunston, such distribution being a major problem when boats are constantly on the move, and anxious children await the arrival of "Father Christmas".

This year in addition to his Christmas Tour of the canals, Mr. Chapman and myself are organising a Christmas Party for boat children living in the Paddington area. The incomparable Mr. Jewiss of Beauchamp Lodge Boys Club has lent the use of his Club premises, and it is hoped that this venture will prove a success and cause a certain amount of amusement to all concerned! Entertainers are hard to come by, and any Member reading this article who would like to help should contact myself and be assured that his services will be most gratefully received.

Another proof of the proximity of Christmas is the glut of Draw and Raffle tickets with which our friends besiege us, prominent amongst which I hope are those for the Draw organised by our Branch, and in connection with this I would like to say that although Branch subscriptions have been increased this year, your subscriptions only ensure that normal running of the Branch, the "jam" is provided by the profits of our Christmas Draw. This enables us to give money to assist in the restoration of various waterways, prepare and publish booklets such as those on the Wey and Medway, publish surveys and reports for submission to county councils, and finance the heavy costs of our Annual Boat Rally, the money for which is not generally received till afterwards, though the bills come in beforehand! These are but some of the ways in which we spread the jam, and so that this "spread" may be really effective and worthwhile, I would ask you to do all you possibly can to sell a record number of tickets this year.

As I said at the beginning, now is the time of Christmas, and from myself and on behalf of the Members of your Committee, I wish you all A Very Happy Christmas, and may the New Year bring Health and Happiness, coupled with the opportunity to explore those waterways which have long beckoned but have not yet been visited.

# Coming Events . . . Recent Activities

**DECEMBER 9th.** Winter Meeting at Bridge House, London Bridge, 7 for 7.30 p.m. Dr. Roger Pilkington will give an illustrated talk entitled "An Inland Voyage in Seven Countries". Refreshments available as usual.

**DECEMBER 12th.** Working Party on the Wey Navigation.

It has been agreed with the National Trust that the first task to be undertaken will be the cutting back of overhanging trees above New Haw Lock. By helping in this way we shall enable the maintenance staff to devote their time to other more specialist tasks, and the Committee hope the working party will be strongly supported. **MEET AT NEW HAW LOCK at 10.00 A.M.** Some tools will be available, but please bring your own if you have them. Any queries to Tim Dodwell.

There will be a further working party on Sunday, 20th February, meeting at the same time and place. The work to be done will depend on the progress made in December.

**JANUARY 16th, 1966.** There will be a working party on the River Kennet in the Reading area. Meet at 10.15 a.m. at Theale Swing Bridge. The work to be done is expected to be the final stage of the restoration of Sulhampstead Lock. Anyone wanting transport from Reading Station, contact Tim Dodwell, address and phone number on p.3.

**JANUARY 20th.** Winter Meeting at Bridge House, London Bridge, 7 for 7.30 p.m. Mr. E. Petersen will give a talk on his boating experiences, entitled "The £500 Millionaire".

**FEBRUARY 17th.** Winter Meeting at Bridge House, London Bridge 7 for 7.30 p.m. A River Thames Evening, with Mr. John Parton of the River Thames Society.

**MARCH 17th.** Annual General Meeting.

**APRIL 20th.** Annual Dinner.

## CRUISE ON THE RIVER STOUR

**T**HERE was a record entry for the River Stour Action Committee's now annual cruise down the River from Langham to Branham on Sunday, October 4th. Twenty canoes, coming from Ipswich, Harlow, Chelmsford, Ingatestone and London paddled slowly down the river enjoying both the beautiful scenery and the glorious sunshine.

This increase in number over previous years is evidence of greater public support for the Committee's campaign to both preserve the public right of navigation which exists on this river and to reopen the four locks between Langham and the tidal estuary.

The paddlers found a number of changes to last year; several trees were blocking the channel between Stratford St. Mary and Dedham. In addition all the locks had been sealed off. This is completely contrary to the River Stour Navigation Acts and the South Essex Waterworks Company Act. The physical sealing off is far more serious an act than

merely failing to maintain the locks as required by Act of Parliament and the Committee have requested the Associations solicitors to take appropriate action. The Committee fully realize the need to save water but the proper way is for the locks to be made leak-proof. This would not be very expensive.

The Committee were also concerned at the position at Dedham where the lock chamber is now empty making it difficult to portage light craft. The alternatives can be dangerous to novices and children when there is a good flow of water.

The event received good publicity in the East Anglian *Daily Times* and Local papers and the Committee views were fully reported.

J. E. MARRIAGE

## STOURBRIDGE WORKING PARTY

**B**Y train and car six members of the Branch made their way to Stourbridge on Saturday, 16th October, arriving about midday. Following lunch work commenced on digging out Lock 5 of the Stourbridge Sixteen, which has already been fitted with a new top gate. With the help of a pump to keep the water level down and a small mechanical hoist the diggers in the silt below, and the barrowmen wheeling it away just about kept up an equal pace. Meanwhile a British Waterways carpenter and driver were repairing a pair of lower gates further up the flight, which they continued right through the weekend.

As it began to grow dark we packed up for the night: one of our number was delivered to the station to make his way home, and David Tomlinson who is the organiser of the restoration work lead us off in cars to Atherley Junction and the Narrow Boat *Cactus*, belonging to his co-founder of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Society, Malcolm Braine. *Cactus* is smart and boasts a splendid boatman's cabin, but the working party spent the night in the 'clothed-up' hold after a meal notable for the variety of tins brought by each member stirred together in a large saucepan.

Next morning was foggy, but it was just possible to see the dim shapes of the granite laden working boats which had been moored astern overnight move off into the murk. Back at Stourbridge the weather improved and work went on apace. By the time the lorry arrived to take away the gear we had dug out nearly half the lock some two feet below its previous level.

A very satisfying weekend, and an interesting insight into what is being done in other parts of the country. Estimates vary as to how long the whole job will take, but David Tomlinson will persevere until the canal is open again. How soon this is depends on the support he gets from volunteers. Another organised group from the Branch will visit Stourbridge next year as we try to provide help where it is needed, but in the meantime work

goes on, and all volunteers are more than welcome. Details may be obtained from David Tomlinson, New House Farm, Blithbury, Rugeley, Staffs. Telephone Hamstall Ridware 258.

TIM DODWELL

### RIVER MEDWAY TRIP

**S**UNDAY, 12th September dawned with the promise of a fine day after a wet Saturday, and 41 members and friends assembled on Strood Pier in warm sunshine for our annual River Medway trip. After waiting in vain for a quarter of an hour for the last member of the party to arrive, we left a message for her with a waterman, and cast off at 11 a.m.

Heading downstream over the flood tide we slipped along inside the line of moored cargo vessels and lighters and at the Sun Pier turned into Chatham Reach, past the old dockyard buildings. In the distance towered the masts of the training ship *Arethusa* at her moorings off Lower Upnor, whilst nearer at hand a swarm of Firefly dinghies were racing up the reach. Threading our way through them the theatrical facade of Upnor Castle came into view and we nosed into the mud beside the hard at Upper Upnor, hoping to be able to disembark here. The plan was to land so that the party could tour the castle. However the water was too shallow for us to get in close enough, so we had to pull back and return a short way upstream to the pier at the Royal Engineers Bridging Depot. Here the harbour-master was kind enough to allow us to land. When we were all ashore our boatman laid off to a nearby buoy and we all marched through the army depot, surrounded by notices warning of alsatian guard dogs and dreadful penalties for unauthorised entry.


Once clear of the gates it was but a short walk down the quaint old street of Upper Upnor, with its white painted weather-boarded houses and glimpses of the river and grey naval vessels in the dockyard basins beyond. Entering the castle gate beside the river the custodian Mr. Cobb led us on a conducted tour of this most unusual of castles built in the reign of Elizabeth I to defend the dockyard.

We heard about its history, its uselessness when the Dutch sailed up the Medway and its later career as a powder magazine. We then wandered down to the riverside bastion beneath the walls to bask in the warm sunshine and enjoy the really fine views both up and down stream. We re-embarked at one o'clock and a quick run down river brought us to Lower Upnor. Turning in under the bows of *Arethusa* we landed at the slip and members had the opportunity of exploring this waterside village which is now a popular yachting centre. About three quarters of an hour later we cast off again, turned our bows upstream and headed for Maidstone with the tide running under us.

Past Chatham and Rochester once more we drew into Strood Pier to see if our missing member had arrived. To everyone's satisfaction we found her waiting patiently for us, so we set off again upstream with a full complement. Above the M2 motorway bridge the river is wide and the North Downs rise steeply on either hand. Driven swiftly on by our boat's powerful paraffin engine we were soon past Snodland with its cement works and paper mills; past the derelict cement works at Halling looking like shell-shattered survivors of some forgotten war; past Reed's huge paper mills with its quays filled with lighters discharging pulp and china clay; past the petrol storage tanks at Millhall, until, round a bend, the lovely old, mellow grey stone walls of the Friars at Aylesford came into view. Rising sheer from the water, these mediaeval buildings house a community of Carmelite monks.

Here we passed three rowing eights on their way downstream, and then slipping under the fine span of Aylesford Bridge we ploughed through the ever muddier water until Allington Lock appeared. Two boats were already in the lock, but luckily the gates were not yet shut and we slipped in astern of them. As it was then at the top of the tide the rise was only a few inches, so we were quickly through and away once more.

Above the lock the river's character immediately changes, and high ground and tall trees press in on



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the narrower waters. With speed now reduced we throbbed gently towards Maidstone and as we were in good time we went on through the Bridge to give members a chance to see the delightful group of ancient stone buildings the Archbishop's Palace, Parish Church and an old College which make Maidstone's river front so attractive. Turning once more we returned to Fairmeadow to disembark at 4.30 p.m. It was then but a short walk across the car park to the cafe where our tea awaited us; a satisfactory end to an enjoyable day.

DEREK SALMON

### THE NEXT RALLY

THE 1966 Branch Rally will take place at Uxbridge, at Whitsun. This Rally will be organised in conjunction with the Uxbridge Cruising Club, and the site will be the Club's moorings and adjacent towpath.

We have established a splendid tradition of Branch rallies, and this one promises to be well up to standard. Boats able to attend will cover the widest possible range, narrow boats, narrow and wide beam cruisers, from the surrounding waterways. Among the attractions already lined up for participants and public, are dinghy and canoe races, a cruise up the Slough Arm, and all the usual rally sidelines such as raffles and balloon race. *Windlass* will keep members supplied with information, and we hope to issue the Rally Programme with the April issue.

### THE OCTOBER ISSUE

THE Editor and Printers of *Windlass* regret that a good many errors appeared in the text of the last issue. This was due to a set of proofs going astray, in consequence of which the issue was printed without final corrections having been made.

The author of "Voyage into Sussex" was Mr. T. Christie; there were several wrongly spelt place names in this article. The author of "Coarse Towing" was Mr. Keith Birkinshaw, not Birtenshaw as printed. Our apologies to both these gentlemen.

### BRANCH MEMBERSHIP

Members who pay their annual subscription by Bankers Order are reminded that these require amending to allow for the increased cost of Branch Membership, which, at the A.G.M. in April was raised to 10/- per year, an increase of 5/-. Junior membership remains unaltered at 5/- per year.

It would be greatly appreciated if all Members concerned would ensure that their Bankers Orders are amended promptly.

### VALE

Branch members will be saddened to learn that our members Desmond and Gwyneth Briscoe recently suffered the grievous loss of their daughter Penny, who died suddenly on October 4th.

Penny had been seriously ill last year with ulcerated colitis, and early this year had a serious operation from which she had made a striking recovery. Her sudden illness last October took all by surprise.

Her courage in adversity and pain will be long remembered by all who knew her; her lively interest in and concern for our cause will be an example to all. Although too ill to accompany her family aboard *Samanda* to Stratford last year, she insisted they went without her. She was the driving force behind their presence both at Harlow and Blackburn this year. An account of an interview with Penny appeared in one of the northern newspapers during the National Rally, in which she spoke strongly for the waterways. Her account of the rally appeared in the Wey Cruising Club Newsletter. She frequently assisted with *Windlass*, and the account of Blackburn in the October issue was her work.

The Branch was represented at the funeral by Claire Johnstone, Stanley Tims, and Hugh McKnight; flowers were sent on behalf of the Branch by the Chairman, Mr. Michael Aplin.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to Penny's parents and brother David in their sorrow and loss. She will not be forgotten by any who knew her.

MR. and Mrs. Briscoe have given their consent to the establishment of the Penny Briscoe Memorial Fund. This will provide for an annual challenge trophy to be competed for by junior members and children of full members. As well as the challenge trophy there will also be a plaque or some other type of memento which the recipient would retain. The award will be for service to the Association, and entrants would be sponsored by full members. Full details have not yet been decided, and will be given in future issues.

Those who wish to contribute to the Fund should send their cheques, made out to The Penny Briscoe Memorial Fund, to Hugh McKnight, The Clock House, Upper Halliford, Shepperton, Middx.

CLAIRE JOHNSTONE,

Hon. Editor.

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# AROUND THE WATERWAYS

## GRAND UNION AND REGENT'S CANAL

**A**LTHOUGH 1965 has been a year of increased activity on the canal in the London area, there is still room for many more boats of all kinds.

In April, Dr. Roger Pilkington brought his new boat *Thames Commadore* up the Regent's Canal. He had planned a celebration at Little Venice on the eve of her maiden voyage through six countries of Western Europe, including the new Moselle waterway. But the new vessel, all of 20 tons, with steel plating twice as thick as that of a normal yacht to stand up to squeezes from 1350 ton continental barges, stuck in the Maida Vale Tunnel; the event subsequently took place in the Cumberland Basin. We look forward to reports of his future journeys; one is planned to Black Sea and the waterways of the U.S.S.R., another to Finland.

Punts have also been in the news, *The Times* carried an article "Across St. Pancras by Punty", on September 16, and on October 16 *The Guardian* had a long illustrated feature entitled "Punt's Eye View of London".

Cruising Clubs on the canals in the London area have had an active summer; the newly formed Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs held their first Rally at Uxbridge over the August Bank Holiday. Attended by over fifty craft, the many events included a craft efficiency and safety competition, judged by Captain Munk. The St. Pancras Cruising Club have enlarged the catwalk around the Basin to accommodate another dozen craft and Turner Marinas recently extended their moorings in the Cumberland Basin; three full-length narrow boats were to be seen moored up there during the summer.

Construction work on laying power cables beneath the towpath has now finished and the scars left by the contractors are beginning to heal, the wayleave should produce a useful additional revenue to British Waterways. The Zoo Water Buses had a record season, carrying 89,908 passengers, 14% more than last year—although sometimes we wish they would go a little slower! John James's *Jason* was as always a welcome sight, on her trips through the Zoo to Hampstead Road Locks and on longer voyages to Greenford.

With all this activity it is a little disappointing that more use was not made of the week-end lock opening, arranged by British Waterways as an experiment this summer. The Branch Committee and the A.W.C.C. are now considering proposals to put to British Waterways for 1966; any suggestions would be welcome.

OLIVER TURNER

## RIVER MEDWAY

**T**onbridge Mooring. In all 91 boats have, this year, made use of the Branch's public mooring at Tonbridge—nearly double last year's total. It

would seem that this gratifying increase is due to the publication this year of our River Medway Handbook, which publicises the mooring. It has been very noticeable how many more boats have come up through Town Lock instead of lying a little way below.

**Winter Moorings.** The Branch has non-residential winter moorings to let at Tonbridge from now until 31st March 1966, at 2d. per foot length per week. This is a good flood-free mooring in the centre of Tonbridge and is kept padlocked.

**Medway Trip.** The cafe at which we had tea after the Medway Trip on September 12th, have reported that a member left behind a green and black ladies woollen jacket. If the member concerned will contact Mr. Martin, The Three Lanterns, Fairmeadow, Maidstone, it will be returned.

**River Medway Handbook.** A new printing of our River Medway Handbook will have to be put in hand during the winter and we should be very pleased to hear of any errors and omissions for correcting in the new edition. Please send your suggestions as soon as possible to Mr. D. Salmon, Springhill Cottage, Yardley Park Road, Tonbridge.

DEREK SALMON

## RIVER STOUR

**B**RANCH members will recall that in 1963 the Action Committee prepared a report for submission to the National Trust setting out a scheme for the Trust to take over the navigation installations on the river. This was not acted upon. The Committee have however found it necessary for a limited number of copies to be prepared and some are available to interested persons. It comprises 15 pages including maps and sets out the history of the river, its condition and notes on the repairs necessary to the locks. Persons wishing to have a copy should send 7/8d. to J. E. Marriage, Budds Farmhouse, Highwood, Chelmsford, Essex.

J. E. MARRIAGE

## KENNET AND AVON

**O**N Sunday, September 26th, the Wiltshire Branch of the Trust organised a Special Rally in connection with a project for young people "Adventure on the canal".

Under the guidance of Capt. Mansfield Robinson, chairman of the Trusts Wiltshire branch, some 10 different Youth Groups took part in events ranging from talks on Canals and canal life to How to set about building or obtaining your own canoe. Fishing, wildlife on the canal and field cooking were more of the events that each group attended for half hour talks and demonstrations.

To end a highly successful day a flotilla of boats including three stern wheelers, motor boats, canoes and dinghies took part in the "break through", the

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first time boats have got through the 4½ miles to Devizes from Horton for 15 years.

The "break through" was only possible though through the efforts of the young volunteer groups who have been actively engaged throughout the summer on clearing the appalling weed and obstacles from the canal. This special rally not only showed them the results of their efforts, but also the Mayor and Mayoress of Devizes (who were on board one of the stern wheelers), and local residents along the canal. It also showed the determination of the Trust to re-open the waterway as a recreational amenity to the nation.

## RIVER WEY

FROM MR. E. E. AVERY  
Manager, River Wey Navigation  
The National Trust,  
Guildford Wharf,  
Friary Street,  
Guildford,  
Surrey.  
14th October, 1965

DEAR EDITOR,

I would very much like to express my appreciation of the opportunity given me to meet your committee members in London a month ago, and to confirm the thanks of the National Trust, and of River Wey users, for the great assistance so competently offered by your members as lock-keepers during the busier week-ends of this last summer.

Both Bryan Nicoll and Tim Dodwell are to be congratulated on an excellent piece of organisation, this being made possible by the many hours of arduous duty offered by the individual members concerned.

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to those who love the countryside and wish to explore it in peace.

However, the hard fact is that tolls and licences are insufficient to maintain the river as could be desired, and only the availability of enthusiastic volunteers can fill this need. Hence the reason for this appeal.

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Perhaps some local enthusiastic I.W.A. member would like to consider this proposition; the situation is one of the most attractive on the river, and the Trust would give every assistance and grant use of the boat house and other amenities at a most moderate fee.

Diverging further from the original purpose of the appeal, but always with thoughts of the future welfare of the river in mind, I would very much like to formulate a list of I.W.A. members who would perhaps consider accepting a position as lock-keeper on the Wey.

By the nature of things, these moderate positions must become available as the years pass, and are surely best filled by those actuated by enthusiasm, and having the knowledge of waterways and boats fostered by membership of such an organisation as the I.W.A.

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Yours sincerely,  
E. E. AVERY.



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first time boats have got through the 4½ miles to Devizes from Horton for 15 years.

The "break through" was only possible though through the efforts of the young volunteer groups who have been actively engaged throughout the summer on clearing the appalling weed and obstacles from the canal. This special rally not only showed them the results of their efforts, but also the Mayor and Mayoress of Devizes (who were on board one of the stern wheelers), and local residents along the canal. It also showed the determination of the Trust to re-open the waterway as a recreational amenity to the nation.

## RIVER WEY

FROM MR. E. E. AVERY  
Manager, River Wey Navigation  
The National Trust,  
Guildford Wharf,  
Friary Street,  
Guildford,  
Surrey.  
14th October, 1965

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# VOYAGE INTO SUSSEX

## OR A RUN UP THE ARUN

Part 2 by T. CHRISTIE

ON our way back to Pallingham Lock we halted to inspect the remains of Pallingham Quay and Docks. Unfortunately summer foliage defied even the most optimistic observations. By now the tide had fallen and we found the shallows by the farm were transformed into shingly rapids. There was nothing to do but to manhandle the boat down to the deep water. We spent about ten minutes unloading the gear and dragging her. Had it not been spring tide we would not have got so far up, and we consoled ourselves with this thought, and so back to the navigation.

Sails were hoisted in a favourable breeze and we glided down in the sunshine. The sky was bright blue without a cloud and the hills and water meadows were brilliant green, shimmering in the mid-morning heat. I dozed in a contented trance when suddenly Charlie shouted "Cables" and we went about without delay. High tension cables had been strung across the river and we were sailing straight for them. Our mast and metal shrouds would without doubt have made contact. I shuddered!

We lost our wind later, due to the shelter of the hills, so *Akapi* was rowed down to Stopham Bridge. Here we called at the White Hart Inn for beer and hot pies.

This bridge is without doubt the finest on the river, a fine stone structure built in the reign of Edward III. Lilies and osiers choke the pointed side arches, whilst the centre arch was raised and rounded in 1922 to permit navigation at all times of tide. The engineers constructed a round canal arch reminiscent of Telford's tall cutting bridges on the Shropshire Union. The ancient and modern styles mix remarkably well, though it would be interesting to see how modern architects would have tackled the matter if let loose on it. We were delighted to learn at the pub that recently a transformer for a power station had had its route diverted in favour of Stopham Bridge; it was too heavy for the other bridge. Double decker buses cross the river here regularly.

Our next detour was to make a reccy of the Rother Navigation docks branching off a mile downstream. Dressed in duffle coat, thick trousers and wellingtons, I advanced to do battle with the stinging nettles. The bottom Lock, Stopham, can be seen from the Arun, and later, when the tide rose again, we were able to take *Akapi* to its tail. The chamber itself is in apparently sound condition, as are many of the Sussex locks, being built of stone, unlike the Surrey ones which were constructed in brick. Spanning the chamber is an old rusty iron drawbridge similar to the one which, according to Dashwood,

spanned Hardham Mill Lock, just across the fields. Above Stopham Lock the cut runs in a cutting through the estates of Stopham House, whose drive crosses by an outstandingly well proportioned bridge of traditional canal style. The cutting ends as the waterway crosses meadows to join the natural river Rother, on its way from Midhurst. Proceeding no further, I returned to the boat.

The Rother Navigation appears to be another delightful waterway abandoned but in an apparently recoverable condition. The natural river sections seem quite deep and clear, reminiscent of the Kennet. Locks are few. Should the Arun become as popular as it deserves to be, restoration of this charming river would be most desirable. Compared with Stratford physical difficulties are small—a new Act would be required, however. These were the impressions we got from the first mile containing the longest lock cut. It may well be that insurmountable barriers lie further upstream.

Before descending to Littlehampton we forced a passage to the tail of Hardham Mill Lock. Tides throughout the week-end were in our favour, but even so it was necessary to be sharp, and slip into these lock cuts while the going is good. And, even more important, to get out again before you are stranded on the silt for 12 hours.

### A POSSIBLE MARINA

Whilst we waited at Hardham for the tide to ebb we chatted with a man in a passing dinghy—the first mobile boat we had seen. Having lived at Pulborough all his life he is very keen to see the Wey and Arun Canal reopened. After a lengthy discussion during which we gained much information on the river, we accepted a tow down to pulborough Bridge. Between the railway and the road bridge is a small tidal basin with potential as a marina, although road access appeared doubtful from our vantage point.

Waving good-bye to our tow, we slid beneath the bridge and down past Mr. P. A. L. Vines' residence, and the classical temple. The banks have been improved by the Sussex River Board, and Charlie decided to be nag for a while on the towpath, whilst I sat at the tiller and wound round this way and that in idyllic contentment—sounds sentimental? Go and see for yourself. On and on we glided with nobody in sight for miles, just distant hills, downs, farmsteads and cattle whilst wild flowers of all descriptions grew among the grass at the waters edge.

The sky had been threatening for some time so it was with no surprise that we felt the first heavy drops. Charlie boarded, and we decided to drift

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with the tide till the rain eased. We felt very far from civilisation as we huddled under the covers. Outside the rain plopped sullenly into the river, while the downs were clothed in a yellowish grey mist.

About a mile below Greatham, a hamlet with an attractive little church on the hill, we came to its bridge. Having no steerage way we had to row through the arches. Not far below this bridge we were hailed by a man on the lawn of a riverside cabin. He offered us a mooring for the night, and we readily accepted. There was nowhere else to moor, and we did not trust ourselves anchored in strange waters.

Apart from one occasion during the night when I got up to free the boat which had caught on the ladder, we managed very well. We awoke about 7 a.m. to find ourselves high up, and level with the lawn. It was approaching high water.

There was a heavy river mist through which we dimly made out the shape of the cabin. The river had invaded half way across the lawn and the air was filled with soft clicking sounds of bubbles escaping from the turf. The gently ebbing waters slowed down, and I watched a lily leaf come to a gentle halt before heading back the way it had come. The tide had turned.

As we paddled out noiselessly into the stream, a gentle breeze sprang from nowhere, swirling the mist, and setting our sails creaking. The breeze took us down past the junction with the Caldwellham Cut to Hardham Tunnel, now unnecessary with the recent improvement of the natural river via Pulborough. Coldwatham suited its name when we passed on the chilly misty morning. It is a very remote spot consisting, it seemed, of only a farm. We did not attempt entering the Cut as the tide was ebbing, and we might have got stuck.

Amberly Castle was our next object of interest, a crumbling fortress crowning a hillock. What an asset this is to the landscape! We wished we had time to explore. As with about all the Arun we felt as we slid among the downs that we were seeing what the boatmen must have seen, for there was nothing in sight or sound reminiscent of the present century. If you have a trailable boat and are fed up with the crowded impersonal officialdom of the Thames, then the Arun is what you are looking for. The countryside was much more enclosed now, as we sped past Bury, a small waterside community whose flint church has a traditional Sussex broached and shingled spire rising above the willows. There was a wharf here, but now only one or two old piles remain.

And so on to Houghton Bridge where we saw time since leaving Pulborough an ice cream sign. There is a railway station here and also a pub, whilst a small yacht club holds sway on the waterfront. We lowered sail and mast before negotiating the bridge safely. A stop had been planned here for Charlie to catch the train to Littlehampton in search of clutch springs. As it happened there was

nowhere to moor below the bridge, and the banks were muddy and sloped steeply. We decided to go to Arundel.

The scenery from Houghton to Arundel is perhaps the most dramatic, for the river has bitten into the feet of the downs. The Arun Gap as it is called resembles Cliveden reach on the Thames, although the tree scape is not quite so fine. The river wound swiftly this way and that, and we were unaccountably fortunate with the wind, for deflection from the hillside pushed us down reaches in the face of the prevailing wind. We sped on, the water chattering under the stern.

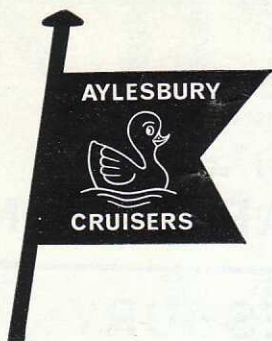
After Houghton comes South Stoke round which the river flows in a small arc. This is a charming spot, seemingly unconscious of its connection with the river which must have been its sole supplier years ago. Above Arundel there is surprisingly little to show the past commercial activity. The Thames also lacks much in this respect.

Perhaps the main drawback to the river is a common one with all tidal waters—high banks at low water. Fortunately in the lower reaches to Arundel, where this is most felt, the interest lies in the great downland which towers above the water and can be seen from a canoe. Below Arundel the reaches are longer and at low water the horizon is therefore lower.

*To be concluded*

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Mr. and Mrs. D. HEWITT, 32, Oakhill Road, East Putney, London S.W.15.  
Jeremy M. NICHOLS, 23, Sunnyfield, Mill Hill, N.W.7.  
Charles J. W. SWEET, 8, St. Philips Avenue, Worcester Park, Surrey.  
Miss Gladys BEDINGFIELD, 71-73 Upper Berkeley Street, W.1.  
Robert G. BRISCALL, 48, London Road, Canterbury, Kent.  
Mrs. Evelyn M. KNAPTON, Cherry Mount, Malthouse Hill, Loose, Maidstone, Kent.  
W. J. D. POWELL, Marlston, Woodham Lane, Woking, Surrey.  
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