

WINDLASS

No. 57 DECEMBER 1966

MERRY XMAS 1/6



PORTAGE AT FLATFORD LOCK

See news item on page six

(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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From the Editor's Cabin

The place; a stretch of canal, somewhere in the country. The time: the future. The characters: a small girl, and a man, in a dinghy. They round a bend, and before them is a dam across the lock.

"Oh Grandad! Can't we go any further?"

"Not any more, darling; we used to many years ago."

"What happened?"

"Well, they said there was not enough boating on this stretch of canal, so they shut off the locks."

"What are locks, Grandad?"

"Don't you remember, we saw some when we were abroad last summer. They enable boats to get from one level to another."

"Aren't there any in England any more?"

"Oh yes, there are some, but not on the canals."

"It does look pretty the other side of that wall. Why didn't people use the lock when it was there?"

"There is a long stretch without locks in the other direction, and all the people who had boats here didn't want the effort of working the locks, so they crumbled and got dangerous and the authorities built the dam instead."

"Grandad, used there to be lots of boats here?"

"Yes indeed, many of them. Often the painted narrow boats would come through on their way to Birmingham with cargoes on board."

"Birmingham, Grandad! But how? Where is there a canal in Birmingham?"

"There used to be lots of them, dear, do you remember we stopped one day and looked at the remains of Gas Street Basin before they built the big fly-over? The one that wasn't big enough when they had finished?"

"Didn't anybody mind when they stopped the boats coming?"

"Some people did, but there weren't enough of them, and the few who did care got tired in the end and gave up too."

"What did you do to help, Grandad?"

"Oh I joined some society that was trying to persuade the authorities to keep the canals. They used to hold meetings sometimes, but I didn't go very often. They had working parties too, when they were trying to keep some of the locks repaired, but it was very hard and dirty work and they didn't like people who just wanted to watch. They wrote books, pamphlets and had magazines too, but they were very seldom read. They had rallies too, but it was often a boring trip getting to them. They used to argue among themselves sometimes, and some of them left because they didn't like the way others were doing things. It was all very sad."

"Grandad, don't you wish you had worked harder? Wouldn't it be lovely to go through that lock And go all the way to Birmingham?"

"It's time we turned back now, it will take us a

long time to get home with all those big lorries on the road."

"But Grandad, don't you wish the boats could come through here again? Wouldn't they still be coming if you had fought harder?"

"Yes, dear, they would; but it's too late now."

The dinghy disappears round the bend again, and the water lapping against the walled off lock chamber echoes the words "Too late, too late, too late"

The place: YOUR CANAL. The time: YOUR LIFETIME. The characters: YOU and YOUR GRANDCHILD ??????????????????

THE first issue of *Navvies Notebook* was issued with the October number of *Windlass*, and congratulations to its Editor on an excellent beginning to a successful run. Subscriptions are coming in, but many more subscribers are needed. Working parties are a vital part of the work being done by the Association in the fight for the waterways, and the more people we can get to come on them, the quicker and better will the work be done. *Navvies Notebook* is designed for all interested in working parties in all parts of the country, and is not confined to the Branch area either for its news or its readership. Please take out a subscription now from Graham Palmer, 4 Wentworth Court, Wentworth Avenue N.3. It only costs 2/6 a year, and the second number is already out (its good). Take out a double subscription, and leave a copy at your office, or school, college, or local youth club; take them along with you on working parties; its hard work, but there is that satisfying feeling that one is really doing a vital job for the cause. Even if you cannot go to working parties yourself, do take out a subscription to show your friends and colleagues; you may find hidden talent in your office as I did. A workmate persuaded his unofficial motor bike club to come and work on the Basingstoke Canal at the time of the Woking Rally.

Too many people seem to be bringing motoring manners onto the waterways. Living by the riverside I am often appalled by the speed at which craft cruise. The idea that one slows down when passing moored craft never occurs to some people; no one likes to see their boat being crashed against the landing stage or have one's supper tipped into one's lap, but this happens all too often. There used to be a spirit of camaraderie on the water, if a boat was in trouble one slowed down and offered to help. All too often nowadays boats sweep past without even slackening speed, leaving one swearing as spanners and sparking plugs roll into the bilge with the wash. Vandalism increases steadily; outboard engines are stolen, boats cast adrift to be smashed to pieces over weirs, and windows shattered by airgun pellets. One is left wondering if in trying to encourage people to use the waterways we are making a stick for our own backs by attracting an undesirable element.

Josher's Column

ON 18th October 1966, the Ministry of Transport issued the following Press Notice (the italics are mine).

"Pleasure Boating on Inland Waterways Transport Minister's Consultations"

All interested in the preservation of a network of inland waterways for use for pleasure boating are being invited to give information and views to Mrs. Barbara Castle, Ministry of Transport.

The Government's White Paper on Transport Policy accepted as the basis for the development of new policy the broad factual analysis in the British Waterways Board's Report "The Facts about the Waterways". It also promised consultations with the Board and with all others concerned with the recreational and amenity use of the nationalised inland waterways, to determine how large a network it would be justifiable to maintain for use by powered pleasure craft.

The Ministry is now writing to Regional Economic Planning Councils, Regional Sports Councils and interested local authorities, asking for their views, as well as to Associations representing waterway enthusiasts, individual canal societies, boat clubs, boat-hiring and boat-building interests. But the Minister is anxious that any other organisation or individuals with views or useful information on the subject should let her have them.

Most of the British Waterways Board's existing waterways which provide attractive amenities are not, *and cannot be*, economic transport waterways. The Board's Report explained that, in whatever condition these waterways are maintained, their cost to the public is unlikely to be less than about £600,000 a year for some time to come—and that in general the waterways could at little or no extra cost continue to provide for canoeing and angling.

But for pleasure cruising in *powered* boats—an increasingly popular pastime—maintenance of sufficient depth of water and of locks and other extra work is at present costing about another £340,000 per annum, even allowing for the 1965 all-time record revenue of £100,000 from pleasure craft licences etc. The aim must be to increase revenue and to keep costs down, but this will be a gradual process. Meanwhile, some continued subsidisation will be necessary.

The principal object of the present consultation is, in the light of these facts, to decide upon a network of waterways which it would be justifiable to keep open for use by pleasure boats in the *immediate* future. As was made clear in the White Paper, the Government considered that it would be wrong to allow waterways of potential future value to go out of service in such a way that they could never economically be restored to use. The network will, therefore, include not only more popular waterways

(of which obvious examples are the Lancaster Canal, the Llangollen Canal and the southern end of the Oxford Canal) about the future of which there can be little doubt, but also less used waterways in order that experience may show what opportunities for increasing use and increasing revenue may exist.

The size of the subsidy for pleasure boats on the waterways must, like all other subsidies, be subject to review in the light of experience; and the "pleasure boat network" will be reviewed again after five years and then at regular intervals.

Between reviews, waterways in the network will be closed only in exceptional circumstances e.g. where public safety, unexpected and disproportionate expense or other considerations of overriding national importance are involved. In this substantial period between reviews, every opportunity must be taken to develop pleasure traffic and bring the opportunities for recreation offered by the waterways to the notice of potential users. The reviews will take into account the use made of the network and the success achieved in increasing pleasure boat use and revenues, and of prospects for the future. Thus, *it will be for those who use the waterways for recreation to show what facilities they wish to support.*

Individuals or organisations who wish to comment on the selection of waterways which *might* be retained for use by *powered* pleasure boats should write to the Ministry of Transport before the end of this year."

Comment

You will see that the Government writes off most of the waterways for transport purposes. This decision appears to be based on the British Waterways Board's Report "The Facts", which, among other things, showed that the roads have twice the productivity of the canals—but this was only done by underestimating the canals' productivity by half! But productivity is not the only criteria by which to judge canal transport; it is substantially cheaper.

As for pleasure boats, observe that the threat is to *powered* pleasure craft: angling and canoeing, the Government thinks, can continue on canals closed to powered boats, although a look at the weed-choked lower Peak Forest Canal would show it what happens when powered boats do not use a canal. The Press Statement gives very good news about three popular canals, but note that the extensively used Macclesfield Canal—said to rival the Llangollen in beauty—is not included. Many other canals, e.g. the much-praised Leeds and Liverpool Canal, have a question mark over them.

The Press Statement shows clearly what we must do. We must use the waterways to show we want the whole system retained and we must write.

But what to write in your letters? Well, put down your own ideas, talk of your own favourite water-

way; that will have more effect than everyone writing the same. But bear in mind that in 1965 40,000 people hired canal boats for their holiday; and the words I was once told:

"Some people on holiday go to the seaside or to a holiday camp, live it up, and come back to work tired out. Some rush across Europe and come back to work tired out. Others take a canal holiday and come back to work refreshed." Your local authority, be it county, urban or rural council, will, if a B.W.B. waterway runs through its

area, be writing to the Ministry of Transport; the Ministry of Transport will be deciding the legislation to put before Parliament; and all Members of Parliament will be voting on the proposed legislation. YOU can influence the final decision by writing to all the three bodies or people mentioned above. We don't all own boats, we aren't all anglers and we can't all go on working parties, but we can all write. Don't forget that Mrs. Barbara Castle has asked you to write to her: if you don't, you will have only yourself to blame if the waterways are closed.

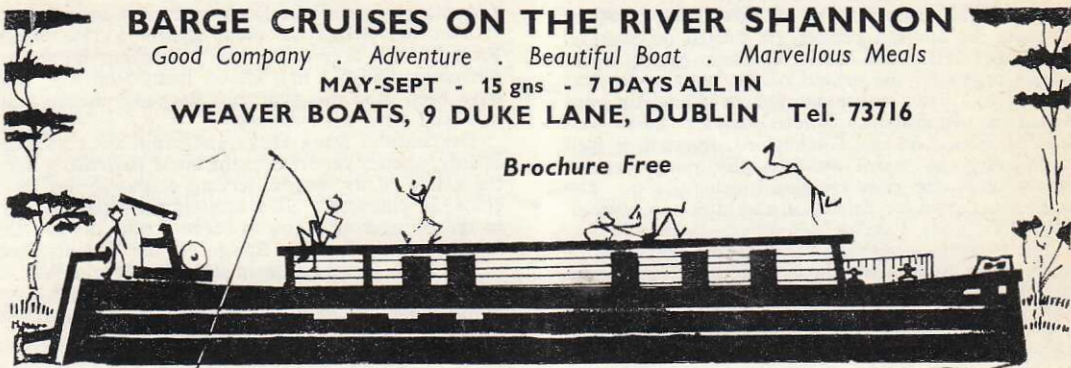
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ROUND THE WATERWAYS

RIVER STOUR

THERE has been a flurry of activity on the River over the autumn period. It started on Sunday, September 25th when the River Stour Action Committee organised the second of the years cruises on the River. This cruise started at Langham and ended at Brantham. Fifteen canoes took part coming from London, Chelmsford, Ipswich as well as locally. In warm sunlight the party cruised slowly down the river creating much interest. The event was filmed for Television and later appeared on BBC TV "Look East".

The party were disappointed to note that all four locks were still obstructed, which is completely illegal. Apart from the navigation aspect, at Dedham it is positively dangerous in certain conditions, and may result in death by drowning owing to the portage position being unusable. If this occurs the Authorities concerned will be responsible.

The next burst of activity was on Sunday October 9th, when at about 9 o'clock in the morning Major Logan Brown in his two berth cruiser set out from Mistley upstream. Also in the boat was Miss Pamela Cobb, Council member of the Association, and a reporter of the *East Anglian Daily Times*. After some difficulty they passed through Brantham Lock, operating the paddle gear and proceeded up to Flatford Lock. Owing to the obstructions they were unable to proceed and large notices drawing attention to the right of navigation were pinned in the lock gate. The event received considerable publicity in the following edition of the *East Anglian Daily Times* including two large photos.

At midday a further party assembled at Brantham Lock in response to an announcement in *Windlass* that a working party was to be held. As byelaw permission had not been received from the Essex River Authority, the working party confined themselves to a reconnaissance of the conditions of the lock. This included investigation of the depth of silt in the chamber which was found to be about 18 inches. Some of this was removed together with some dangerous timber and pieces of iron. This event was filmed for BBC TV and John Marriage, Bill Brown and Harold Webb (Hon. Sec. Stour Action Committee) were interviewed by the side of the lock chamber. This event was also shown on BBC "Look East". A sound recording was also made to be broadcast on BBC Midlands Home Service.

J. E. MARRIAGE

BASINGSTOKE CANAL

IN March one of the houseboats was moved from Scotland Bridge at West Byfleet to Hermitage Bridge at St. Johns, so that with other houseboat movements all the first eleven locks from the Wey have been used this year, but the only visiting craft observed have been canoes.

The death of Mark Hicks, the bailiff at Crookham, in July, already reported in the latest *Bulletin*, robbed the Canal of its longest serving employee and of a colourful character. In a reminiscent mood he used to tell of steering a towed barge across the flooded meads below Chertsey Bridge on the Thames, and of a trip to Birmingham in the First World War to collect narrow boats when the canal barges were requisitioned. The hulks of some of them can still be seen in Greatbottom Flash at Ash Vale.

T. DODWELL

KENNET AND AVON CANAL

THE girders at Bridge Street Bridge are still in position, but the new bridge is making good progress, and should be finished early next year. Reading Branch of the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust are planning a Grand Cruise (possibly a rally) to celebrate the removal of the obstruction. Everyone should see to it that they make at least one trip up the river next season to emphasise the demand for full-scale restoration.

T. DODWELL

STRATFORD ON AVON CANAL

THE following notice has been issued by the Canal Manager, Major C. B. Grundy:

During November and early December there will be numerous and extensive stoppages on the National Trust owned section of the Stratford on Avon Canal, in order that locks may be cleaned out and gates refitted. It is not at present possible to give exact details of these stoppages, but anyone wishing to use the canal during this period should contact the Canal Office, Lapworth, in advance.

RIVER CHELMER

FOLLOWING the completion of the new boat rollers around the new sluices adjacent to the Town Centre, attention was drawn to the need for landing stages to be built above and below the new rollers as it was somewhat difficult for boat users to get out of the boats. As a result Chelmsford

Corporation agreed to erect landing stages exactly to advice given. Unfortunately owing to labour shortage they were unable to undertake to build these for the summer, but agreed to supply the materials and working parties erected the stages. As a result, working parties comprising mainly members of Chelmsford Boating Club assembled several Saturday afternoons and some evenings to erect the stages. These are now complete and in constant use.

J. E. MARRIAGE

RIVER THAMES

LACONITE Limited, manufacturers of Plastic Coated Wall Panels have recently brought on to the market their new Woodgrain decorative Panels.

To meet the need for expansion to house machinery for their new product, early this year they acquired a new factory site beside Walton Bridge. The site, facing south on the banks of a rural stretch of the Thames, has wonderful possibilities for the future for the inward shipment of raw materials from the Port of London.

RIVER MEDWAY

ON October 17th the Kent River Authority lowered the water level between Sluice Weir and Hampstead locks to enable repair works to be carried out to the wall below the automatic sluices

at Sluice Weir. At the same time normal maintenance work is being carried out on Anchor Sluices at Yalding and a check is being made for navigational hazards. The water level is being restored by December 17th.

Members have again been reporting that certain landowners along the river have been attempting to prevent boats from mooring to the towpath bank, and we have given full details of each incident to the Kent River Authority for their action. Such attempts at restriction must be resisted, and the River Medway Sub-Committee is watching the matter very closely.

The demand for I.W.A. season lock passes has been greater this year than ever before. The number of passes available was 36, and quite early in the season it was obvious that this number would be insufficient to cover all applications. We therefore asked the Kent River Authority for an increase and we are glad to report that they were most co-operative, and the maximum number has now been raised to 50, with a more flexible arrangement for a decision about possible increases in the future. In all 44 passes and handles have been issued this season.

Again the Branch's public mooring for visiting boats at Tonbridge has been well used; 91 boats making use of it during the season. There is no doubt that this amenity is much appreciated, particularly by hire boats. It is worth noting that the number of boats tying up this gear exactly corresponds to last year's total—91 in each case—surely a most extraordinary coincidence.

DEREK SALMON

Congratulations to our member, Mr. D. M. Jex on his enterprise. He took this photograph of his car, showing how it has been set out as a sales stand at Pyrford Lock, where Mr. Jex has been doing volunteer lock-keeping this summer.

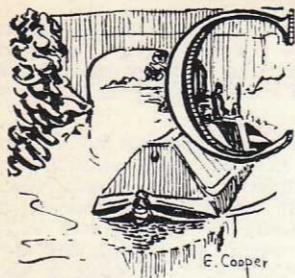


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Recent Activities

MEETINGS

DECEMBER MEETING CANCELLED

JANUARY 18th At the Albert Public House, Victoria Street S.W.1. 7. for 7.30 Lord St. Davids and Mr. D. Jewiss will speak on their youth organisations on the Regents Canal.

JANUARY 19th. Public Meeting, Watford Town Hall, 8 p.m. The speakers will include Capt. Lionel Munk, Mr. E. Doubleday, County Planning Officer for Hertfordshire, and an M.P. Bring your friends and support this meeting, the theme of which will be The Threat to the Grand Union.

FEBRUARY 15th At the Albert. Mr. D. D. Hutchings on the Kennet and Avon.

BRANCH SPRING RALLY. The 1967 Rally will be on the River Medway, at Tonbridge. Further details will be announced in the next issue.

WORKING PARTIES

DECEMBER 11th. (Sunday), River Kennet in the Sulhamstead Lock area. Meet at Theale Swing Bridge at 10.30 a.m. Transport from Reading Station can be arranged and further details obtained by contacting either Jim Dodwell or Graham Palmer.

JANUARY 15th. (Sunday) River Wey. Tidying up operations at Thames Lock Weybridge (1st lock on the navigation). Meet at 10 a.m. Transport can be arranged from Weybridge Station; contact as above.

FEBRUARY 18th./19th. Weekend visit to the Stourbridge Canal where help is urgently needed to get the Sixteen Locks reopened. Details available as above.

LONDON'S CANALS

IT was distinctly cold at 8 a.m. when I joined the throng at Hampstead Road Lock, awaiting the arrival of *Jason*. The Zoo Buses *Water Nymph* and *Water Wagtail* were already there, as was one of the cruisers due to accompany us.

Then, with a blare of trumpets *Jason* rounded the corner and worked into one of the parallel locks. We were sorted out and despatched to our boats.

Through Hawley and Kentish Town Locks we went, preceded by a British Waterways Board man who was whizzing up the towpath astride one of the

'Mules' which are normally used to haul the barge traffic. It was for me the first time I had navigated through "Darkest London" and although the surroundings were by no means pretty, it was at least interesting.

We passed St. Pancras Basin on our right, and plunged into Islington Tunnel. Emerging into the light again we made our way past a number of basins which for sheer size amazed me. Sometimes we were locking through the parallel locks where they were both operable, sometimes, and it seemed more often, waiting outside whilst *Jason* and her escort of small cruisers, *Debra*, *Water Iris* and *Sybilla*, worked through. The fishermen had emerged by this time, and caused constant amusement at the way some of them were perched on outcrops of rock or concrete, seemingly with no means of access to the bank, looking for all the world like roosting seagulls.

Extra passengers had joined us by this time, and as a special bonus the sun decided to give us the benefit of its presence. About mid-day we locked into the vast Regent's Canal Dock and watched John James perform aquatic acrobatics with *Jason* in the deep water of the dock. Landfall was made on the far side, where Mrs. Spratt and her helpers immediately set out a sumptuous spread on a table on the dockside.

With a flash of mayoral chain our guests joined us, and were introduced to the I.W.A. representatives and the Dockmaster. The guests included Mr. Illtyd Harrington, Chairman of the G.L.C. Canals Consultative Committee, Councillor A. E. Skinner, Deputy Mayor of Camden with the Deputy Mayoress, Dame Florence Keyford, J.P., Alderman John Orwell, Mayor of Tower Hamlets and his lady, Alderman A. J. Coman, J.P., Mayor of Islington and his lady, Lord Kinross (whom we subsequently welcomed as a member of the Association) and Mrs. Lionel Hale, daughter of Sir A. P. Herbert, I.W.A. President.

Owing to Board of Trade regulations we passengers could not stay aboard whilst the boats moved out through the large ship lock into the Thames and made the tricky 'U' turn into the Limehouse Cut Lock. One moment of excitement came when we saw a large merchant ship heading for the dock from which

the Zoo buses were emerging. Whilst we were tensing ourselves for the crunch, the ship dropped anchor and screeched to a halt just outside.

Looking surprisingly small our flotilla bobbed around into the Limehouse Cut and we were re-embarked in the lock, which was a bit difficult as, even when the lock was fully up, there was a sizeable drop into the boats from the lockside. Pressing on towards Bow Locks we passed numerous lighters full of timber, and the boat I was on did more than pass them; we made even more intimate contact as we lurched and banged against their steel sides. Near Mile End the tide had risen so much that the Zoo Buses had to steer their roof ventilators between the girders of one bridge to enable it to pass underneath with about $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch to spare. Soon afterwards we made the turn into the Hertford Union, negotiated its three locks, rejoined the Regent's Canal and set course for home in the gathering dusk.

In all a very successful trip and a triumph of organisation on the part of Oliver Turner.

G.K.P.

BRANCH TRIP ON THE WEY

SUFFERING as I do from mild canal-itis, caught from two badly infected sons, I decided to go on probably the last trip of *Arcturus II* down the Wey Navigation. This was from Guildford to Weybridge on Sunday, July 31st, and proved to be most enjoyable. We were a full boat-load, of about fifty passengers, and were welcomed on board by Bryan Nicoll, who later instigated a most welcome cup of coffee.

We set off soon after 11 a.m. in rather dull weather, but all determined to enjoy the day. We had some lovely views of Guildford Cathedral, first on our left, then on our right, as the river wound round. We passed quite close to Sutton Place, owned by Paul Getty, and near here we met our first contretemps.

On an awkward bend, amidst pelting rain, we stuck fast on the bottom. Luckily, there was a passing cruiser, who gave great help by taking ropes

over to some intrepid ones who had somehow got to the opposite bank; by pulling and tugging they got us free, and the cruiser went on her way. By now the storm was over, and in brilliant sunshine, we were able to enjoy our sandwiches.

Twice more during the day we went aground, but by shifting the cargo (ourselves!) from one end to the other, also by "rocking", a very nerve-racking performance, we managed to get clear.

Coming along to Pyrford, we admired the excellent clearance work that has been done by a Branch working party. The effect is to make the canal look nearly twice its usual width, without spoiling its charm. A great many people disembarked at New Haw, but the few of us who stayed on board were able to enjoy the attractive stretch between Weybridge Town Lock and Thames Lock, where the trip ended.

We made our way homewards, having had a very enjoyable day spent "away from it all", in the friendly atmosphere that seems to be typical of canal-minded people.

DOREEN DODWELL

THE BRANCH COMMITTEE

THE following changes have taken place on the Committee. Oliver Turner has been elected Branch Vice-Chairman. Capt. E. Quick has moved away from the area, and has resigned as Lee & Stort Representative. David Cooper has resigned from the Committee due to pressure of other commitments, but remains as Advertising Manager for *Windlass* in an ex-officio capacity. Tim Dodwell has taken over from him as Kennet & Avon representative. Ernest Pull has become Commercial Representative.

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RIVER THAMES SOCIETY CONFERENCE 1966

by GEOFFREY BROWN

THIS was held this year at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, and was the fourth in a series of annual conferences organised by the Society.

Most of the College buildings, Gothic in style, were erected in 1845, although the Tithe Barn was built some 200 years earlier. Delegates received superb service from the staff and this together with the accommodation which was in single rooms made this an ideal conference centre.

The informal opening of the Conference took place on Friday evening with a Sherry Party, one delegate managing to catch up on a lot of lost sleep while this went on around him. In an after dinner speech the Chairman of Cirencester Rural District Council, Councillor Lt. Col. C. E. de B. Biden welcomed delegates to the College and declared the Conference open.

Immediately following this, Divisional Officer Kemp of the London Fire Brigade gave an illustrated talk on the History of the Fire Fighting Services. This talk was included in the programme in recognition of the Centenary of the London Fire Brigade.

With an early start on Saturday morning, we had a Symposium on the Thames Countryside. Miss Grace Udall in her opening speech from the Chair, reminded the Conference that while we must be idealists we must have a practical approach to all planning, and that while tree preservation was talked about by many it was in fact practiced by only a few. The first speaker was Mr. Kenneth Cooper, M.T.P.I., the County Planning Officer for Wiltshire, who outlined the plans for doubling Swindon's 100,000 population by 1981 with all the social, recreational and amenity problems involved. Capt. Barlow, of the Berks, Bucks, and Oxfordshire Naturalist's Trust then spoke of the increasing threat to the existence of wild life due to the rapid development of the Thames Valley. The Trust's main aim is the protection of birds, beasts, butterflies and wild flowers in the three Counties and we were surprised to learn that birds such as the Kingfisher and the Heron were in danger of becoming extinct in the next few years along the Thames. To me, another surprising fact was that without stinging nettles there would be no butterflies! There followed speakers representing the Farmers, the Parish Councils, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and the Brewers all giving their views on the future of the Thames Countryside.

After lunch we came to one of the highlights of the Conference. A Colloquy on the Thames and Traffic. Councillor Mrs. I. L. Phillips is Chairman of the G.L.C. Highways and Traffic Committee and proved to be a most impressive speaker. She gave a short history of the crossings of the Thames both by bridge and ferry and then went on to point out

that the Thames is really the root cause of the traffic chaos in London, with the Docks being the life blood of the City. In reply to a question, Mrs. Phillips stated that the Regent's Canal was not her Committee's responsibility and matters concerning it were entirely in the hands of the British Waterways Board. This seemed to me to be a peculiar attitude, the Canal being able to carry many thousands of tons of cargo through the heart of London without causing any congestion. Mr. Roger Calvert, M.A., A.M.INST.T., well known in I.W.A. circles, managed as always to amaze the Conference with details of the fantastic tonnage carried on even the smallest canals in Europe, and the effect this sort of waterborne tonnage could have on traffic congestion particularly in London. Mr. Calvert continued by mentioning that in the last fifteen years waterborne traffic on the continent of Europe (including Russia) had doubled. He quoted one canal in Belgium, no less heavily loaded than many of our canals, carried 100,000,000 ton miles, per annum.

Mr. Poulson, of the *London Evening News*, was the next speaker, who outlined his Newspaper's plan for a shelf road along the Embankment, published some ten years ago, and considered by many to still be the answer to the West End traffic congestion. The "shelf" would not only carry a road but also a promenade with gardens and cafes etc., to provide a decent night life with the River as a constant source of interest. It is worth noting, that whilst the plan has been virtually ignored by the Governments over the last few years, the road improvement scheme at Blackfriars Bridge is almost identical to the *Evening News* plan.

Although the delegates were not actually paraded and marched into the next lecture, it was whispered that the idea did cross the Secretary's mind as the speaker was Major T. W. G. Farmer, R.E., South West Regional Officer of the Ordnance Surveys. In an all too short address he explained the methods employed to tackle the enormous task of remapping the Country and then keeping the maps up to date.

The final session on Saturday was devoted to a mammoth paper on The Thames in History, delivered by Mr. Charles Hailstone and dealt mainly with the Kew, Barnes and Putney areas. We heard of the salmon, sturgeon, turbot and soles that used to be caught at Barnes, of the brickfields at Acton and Shepherds Bush and of the teams of men that towed barges. Many delegates expressed the hope that the paper will be printed and made generally available.

Another prompt start after breakfast on the Sunday saw the Conference back at work with a Discussion Forum on the Thames and Recreation. Among the speakers were representatives from the

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C.C.P.R., The Camping Club, and the Amateur Rowing Assn. Opening the Session, Mr. Bennetto of the Surrey Branch, Royal Life Saving Society, told the Conference of the work of the Society in encouraging as many school children as possible to learn to swim, by issuing personal safety awards, and teaching all aspects of life saving. Delegates were delighted to hear of the Surrey Branch's volunteer patrols on the banks of the Thames which have saved nine lives this year. Councillor Mrs. Austin of Egham stated that in appreciation of the service provided by these young people her Council would be paying their out of pocket expenses. The speaker from the Camping Club outlined the history and the future plans of the Club and Miss Cowie of the C.C.P.R. told of the instructor training courses held on the Thames at Bisham Abbey. She also emphasised the need for reservoirs to be made available for sailing and canoeing training. Rowing and the Thames are synonymous and the speaker from the Amateur Rowing Association reminded the Conference that as half of all the Rowing Clubs in the Country were situated on the Thames it was essential to the sport that the facilities on the River should be maintained and if possible improved.

After some discussion the Conference divided into groups to consider various items dealt with during the weekend. Your delegate joined the Industry and Trade Group where it was generally agreed that large continental type barges moving on the Thames were essential to the future of the Docks, so important to London. Unfortunately both the P.L.A. and the Thames Conservancy refuse to encourage commercial carrying traffic. The other groups discussed "Recreation" and "Landscaping and Amenities" the latter expressing grave concern at some of the disgraceful and hideous development along the banks of the River ruining the natural beauty and threatening all the wild life. Unfortunately there were no delegates from the Councils in whose areas many of these eyesores are being built.

We dashed home under the threat of fog wondering if our hopeful dreams for the River will come true or be shattered by the builder who prefers to erect housing estates that look like a cross between Dartmoor Prison and Belson. Why do we have to spend all our time fighting to preserve our beautiful heritage, the Countryside?

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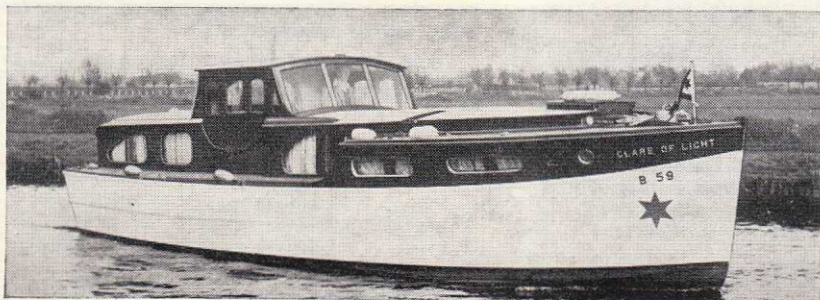
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Canal Boatman's Institute,
The Butts,
Brentford.

DEAR EDITOR,

Your readers may appreciate a word about Christmas festivities on the South Eastern Canals. Santa Claus will tour the cut from Sutton Stop Coventry to Leicester Road Rugby; from Braunston Depot through Buckby, Stoke Bruerne, Leighton Buzzard, Tring, to Watford. From Uxbridge through to Limehouse Dock on to Hoddeston on the River Lea; from Brentford up to Croxley Green. It is proposed to spend 14th to 24th December on this happy tour. My 'sleigh' is an Austin A55 van; my resources derive from a host of benevolent people, many are your readers.

On 17th December we have a Christmas party in this institute for 70 handicapped pensioners. Visits will be paid to 112 people scattered all over the canal but now retired. At Braunston I was told last year "I've lived too long; my wife and generation are dead, my kiddies are grandparents. No one wants to know an old canal pensioner". A lovely Christmas grocery parcel and a few minutes talk, and the dear man withdrew his words, "I wish I were dead".

On our commercial boats we have 39 families, made up of 39 men, 36 women, 41 boys and 37 girls. On some unexpected bend on the canal these good folk will see the red robed philanthropist and receive toys, sweets, old clothes and groceries.

We do not forget the many lock families, some of whom are ex-boatmen; all are happy to receive a visit from Santa Claus. Even on some of our houseboats there are children who love to see and receive the venerable visitor.

Gifts of toys, goods and cash are trickling in. I wish to thank your kind readers. If they should be on the Canal at Christmas it will be grand to see them.

Yours sincerely,
F. J. CHAPMAN.

Dover House,
London Street,
Chertsey,
Surrey.
29.10.66

DEAR MISS JOHNSTONE,

At this time in the struggle to keep the canals—it seems that the Government's proposed policy would allow it to close canals by Statutory Order, against

which there is no appeal—may I put forward a few ideas which may be able to help a little.

(a) I should very much like to see the Branch having a mobile display stand which could be used at non-I.W.A. waterway meetings, e.g. local cruising club rallies etc. What I have in mind is something like the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust's Dormobile van. Having such a stand would enable the I.W.A. to be present at a number of functions with the minimum of fuss—arrange with the organisers to just drive up and unload, say, a couple of tressle tables, taking the photos and books etc. out of the van.

(b) Another idea is that a car sticker should be designed and issued to all members. The sticker would be suitably worded so as to state the uses of the waterways. In this manner, many more people could become acquainted with what canals and rivers are and should be used for.

(c) A further idea is that the I.W.A. should consider sponsoring angling and photographic competitions. This, it seems to me, would emphasize the I.W.A.'s interest in non-boat amenity uses of the waterways and help to increase membership.

Obviously, one cannot go fully into the details of ideas in a letter, but I hope there is sufficient detail for members to brood on.

I would welcome suggestions and offers of help (I haven't a Dormobile or similar van) sent to me at the address above. I don't think I could carry out all these things alone, so therefore I need help and shall be very disappointed not to receive it. But I hope that in this time of great danger for the canals I shall not be disappointed.

These ideas have not been put to the Council or to the Branch Committee for approval, but when developed a bit more, their agreement will be sought.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN DODWELL.

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CANAL SONGS

by Mike Raven

I and my brother Jon have done some work on the collection of Midland Folk Songs and in the course of this collecting came upon four local Canal songs, three of which are contemporary. A folk group known as the Black Country Three has recorded one of these songs, namely the Dudley Canal Tunnel Song, on an EP issued by the Wolverhampton Folk Song Club.

Dudley Canal Tunnel Song

This song was written by the members of the Dudley Canal Tunnel Preservation Society as a work song while legging the narrowboats through the two mile long tunnel.

'Hard Life on the Cut'

The words and music of this song have been reconstructed by Ian Campbell, from a fragment collected in Birmingham. It is not a very good song.

HARD LIFE ON THE CUT

It's a hard life on the cut
Doing the work of a full-grown man
Pushing a barrow and shov'lin coal
Plenty of work on her hands.

It's a hard life for a wife on the cut
Spending her days with a bargee man
Sharing his work through the good times and bad
Coping as best she can.

Its a hard life for a mum on the cut
Rearing her family the decent way
Mending and cooking and keeping them clean
Nothing but work all the day.

(The word 'Bargee' must be a Campbell reconstruction!—EDITOR.)

'Old Sam' and 'The Rosemary'

These songs were written by Peter Dodds, a young man who lives for canals and narrowboats. Whilst studying engineering at Birmingham University he lived on a narrowboat and has written many songs connected with local canals.

OLD SAM

Come gather round my bonny lads,
Let loose your pretty girls,
And I'll tell you a famous tale,
About the old canals.

Old Sam he came from down Pensnett,
Hard by an ancient mine,
And every day till sun had set,
He worked the old main line.

Now Oldbury's a filthy place,
No trees, no leafy glades,
But you could see Sam's smiling face,
As he's locking down the Brades.

In Netherton he loaded slack,
For Wolverhampton due,
In Dudley Tunnel on his back,
He 'legged' the old boat through.

Now up in Wolverhaption Town,
He wooed a fair maid, but
When he got wed to settle down,
She made him leave the cut.

Old Sam he broke his heart and died,
'Twas never of old age,
With his last breath he cursed the bride,
Who killed his heritage.

Don't be misled by pretty women,
And curse the ones that try,
For if you are a boatman born,
A boatman you must die.

FOOTNOTE BY THE EDITOR

'The Dudley Canal Tunnel' Song, 'Old Sam' and the 'Rosemary' were first published in Folk Lore and Songs of the Black Country, edited by M. & J. Raven (Wolverhampton Folk Song Club, 1965). At present out of print, second edition in preparation.

'Hard Life on the Cut' has been published in the Ian Campbell Song Book (Heathside - Sing 1965). They have also recorded it.



BOOK PAGE

THIS month we review two books and a magazine that are published by David & Charles. They can all be described as covering the subject of Industrial Archaeology of which canals are an important section. It is felt that the interest of most readers embraces this wider field and we hope from time to time to include further reviews on this subject.

Stone Blocks and Iron Rails Bertram Baxter
272 pages David & Charles 45/-

The author is chairman of the Railway and Canal Historical Society. Tramroads acted as feeders to many canal and river navigations such as the S. Wales Canals and the Rivers Wear and Tyne in the North. Lesser known routes are to be found wherever industry developed in the 18th and 19th centuries. For example a tramroad once connected Temple Grafton Quarries to Wilmcote Wharf on the Southern Section of the Stratford Canal.

At one time over 1500 miles of tramroads were in existence. The author traces the rise and fall of these lines, some of which survived until the Second World War. A comprehensive gazetteer of 100 pages lists them all in detail on a county basis. Full bibliographic details are also given. Of course it is not possible to give all the information that some readers may require about their own local tramway but in many cases these are covered by separate publications (see next review).

Stone Blocks and Iron Rails will appeal to anyone who is interested in canal history. It is well illustrated with 16 pages of photographs and the reviewer, although not an expert, found it gave him a better understanding to the background of our transport system 100 years ago.

The Haytor Granite Tramway and Stover Canal
M. C. Ewans 72 pages David & Charles 17/6

Last September I climbed to the top of Haytor rock on Dartmoor. Visibility was poor as a heavy mist lay in the valley below but looking east it was possible to see a faint line stretching round a distant hillside. Further exploration on foot revealed that it was the route of the granite tramway now scheduled as an Ancient Monument on Dartmoor. Heavy granite sets marched relentlessly across the moor and descended into the valley below. This was all I saw of the tramway.

The author's book, now reprinted in hard covers, fills in the rest of the story. The tramway, built in 1820, was Devon's first railway. It was used to take granite from the quarries on Dartmoor to the Stover Canal that in turn carried it down to the Teign estuary. The granite was used for such buildings as the British Museum, London Bridge and the National

Gallery. Also in the area were clay mines and was primarily for carrying this clay on the first part of its journey to the Potteries that the Stover Canal was built. Much of it still remains in a derelict condition.

The book is well illustrated with photographs some of which were taken by our member H. J. Compton. Unfortunately the line diagrams were not up to the same standard of the rest of the book. A good map can do so much to help the text whereas a poor one merely causes frustration.

Otherwise Mr. Ewans has done more than the title would suggest. In actual fact this little volume traces the rise and fall of industry and transport in the Teign valley and as such makes very interesting reading. A good book to have with you when on holiday in the area. I wished I had had a copy with me last September.

Industrial Archaeology The Journal of the History of Industry and Technology. Annual Subscription £2 2s.

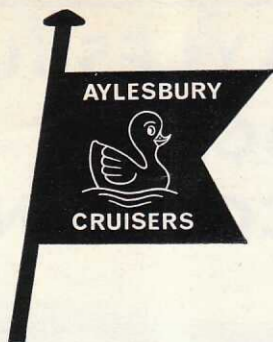
Now in its third year members may be interested to know of the existence of this journal that can be obtained by direct subscription only to David & Charles. It covers all aspects of the subject the Editor being Kenneth Hudson M.A. of the University of Bath. The current issue includes items as diverse as Salmon Fishing Weirs in Ireland, a Lace Market in Nottingham and the St. Rollox chemical works. It is nearly 100 pages thick, well illustrated and appears quarterly. D.C.

Irish Inland Waterways Holidays. Cruising on the Grand Canal Guide and Gazetteer. E. C. Barrett, B.A. 18 Berkeley Street, Dublin 7, Ireland. 36pp illustrated and maps 3/6

This is the indispensable guide to the Grand Canal including the Barrow, which every visitor to these lovely waterways should have. The layout is similar to the British Waterways Cruising Guides, and the contents include a short history of the Grand Canal, an article on coarse fishing, statistics, and navigation hints. I used the guide myself when I visited Ireland last year, and found it excellent.

1967 Waterways Calendar Published by British Waterways Board, Melbury House, Melbury Terrace, London, N.W.1. 7/- inc. postage.

Contains magnificent photographs by Eric de Mare. A must for all canal lovers which fulfils a long felt want. C.J.



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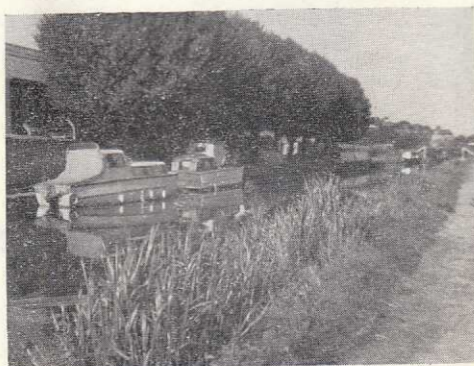
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