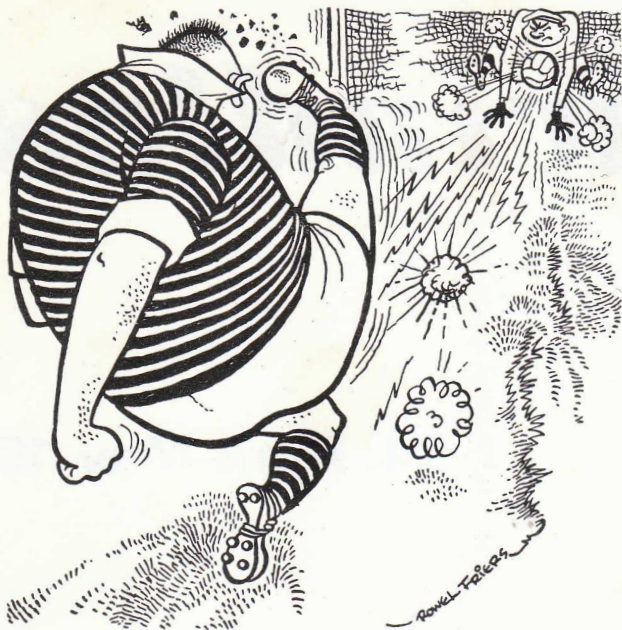


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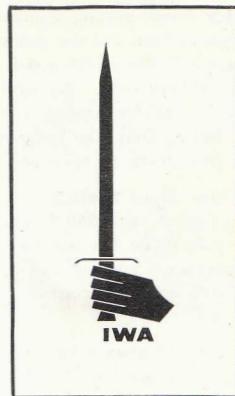
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THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION LTD
General Office: 114 Regents Park Road, NW1
Chairman: John Humphries
General Secretary: Robert Shopland

If you did not recognise it, last month's cover illustrated the London and South East Branch area and some principal waterways. Unfortunately, the Sussex Ouse was mistitled the River Rother.

At the Branch AGM on March 18th, David Gibson made some strong remarks about the IWA - its organisation and its members. Some of his points were a little harsh and John Humphries pointed this out afterwards. Nevertheless it is true that there is frustration among a number of IWA members and a feeling that the body as a whole is lacking some of the drive it once had.

I think these feelings have arisen largely since the passing of the 1969 Transport Bill, which appeared to guarantee the existence of much of the British Waterways system and ended a lot of speculation (there were, of course, many things it failed to do).

There will always be differences of opinion within any organisation, but the present situation seems to reflect a more basic feeling. It is as if the Bill, in essence, represented the conditions of truce at the end of a long war; the IWA, in a mixture of relief and disappointment, suddenly found itself spiritually exhausted.

Since then, the aims have not changed but a planned campaign of action has not appeared and, as a result, the momentum which had built up began to diminish and fragment into different directions.

Paradoxically, the British Waterways Board suddenly found itself with a definite policy and after twenty years of nationalised dithering began to look ahead and take the initiative in some areas.

At the same time the IWA membership is rising fast and in our branch area so fast that the organisation is having to make changes to cope with the numbers.

It seems to be a good time to look at the future role of the IWA within the context of the inland waterways of Britain as they are likely to develop under the present BWB set up. Their philosophy is basically to maintain the canals and river navigations in their present state, primarily as a recreational amenity.

The cost of maintenance is to be offset by three sources of income:

Mooring and licence fees

Sale of water

Local authority grants or development schemes

(Under the third heading, we must not forget the work the Board has done in encouraging local authorities to help save "remaindered" waterways).

You will notice that I have not mentioned commercial carrying. The reason given is that without major development programmes, our waterways will never be able to provide an economic transport service. The schemes for London and Liverpool at present being evaluated could bring in some much-needed

finance but they are unlikely to have a significant effect on the large part of the remainder.

Given this general outline of the future as I see it, what should be the specific objectives of the IWA?

The first point is that the organisation still has to fight for the lives of some navigations - those remaindered and those outside the BWB's ambit. Examples of these in our area are the eastern Kennet and Avon Canal and the Basingstoke Canal.

The principal ways in which this work has to be done is well illustrated by these two Canals. In the first case it is a question of money and labour; for the Basingstoke it is a question of campaigning (of course, if that is successful money and labour will also be required).

These aspects have always been the most important of the IWA activities in the past, but now their emphasis is changing. Official recognition of the waterways' value has been achieved, so most campaigning today is for specific waterways and therefore much of the work is on a much more local scale.

Money and labour are also needed for a navigation whose retention has been agreed in principle. The difficulties experienced by their management in maintaining them with too few staff, and now that heavy traffic has ceased, mean that voluntary labour is an essential requirement.

The value of working parties cannot be over-emphasised. They carry out essential work, involve people more than any other activity, provide interest and beneficial publicity locally and stand out as concrete examples of the IWA's work.

A responsibility of the IWA which has, so far, not occupied much of its time is keeping a close watch on the development of the canals as recreational amenities. This matter, more than any other, is the cause of internal disagreement in the IWA at this time.

One often hears comments about canals becoming "as bad as the Broads" or derogatory comments about glass fibre "noddy boats".

If objection to the Broads type of development is that of overcrowding, then I fear that some of our members are going to be a little disappointed. It is difficult to see how the numbers and types of craft could be limited - even if this kind of control was desirable.

On the other hand, the visual amenities of the waterways must be given every attention. The types of buildings which appear must be carefully considered under planning regulations and the proliferation of unsuitable advertising material must be prevented.

(continued on page 6)

WHAT'S ON - WHAT'S GONE

DIARY

MAY 29-31

Spring Bank Holiday RTS Rally, Fawley.
Contact: Miss Jocelyn Scott, 44 Elton Close,
28-30 Upper Teddington Road, Hampton Wick,
Kingston, Surrey (01-977 5423)

JUNE 19-20

Branch Rally, Reading.
Contact: Ralph Radbourne.

The Water Festival is to be combined with Reading Canoe Club's 24-hour relay race and will be campaigning for the restoration of Tyle Mill Lock. This should improve the financial prospects but means that the boat cruise proposed for the Sunday is not practical. The Branch Committee is considering arranging a visit to Crofton Pumping Station on that day.

Activities on the Saturday evening will include a Barbeque and Dance, music by a local folk group, and a traditional jazz band and a fireworks display.

If you would like to help, the organisers would be pleased to hear from you. Posters advertising the event are obtainable from Ralph Radbourne.

JULY 10 or 11

Branch Cruise through Regent's Canal and Hertford Union. An organiser is required - please contact David Gibson.

AUGUST 13-16

National IWA Rally at Northampton.

WORKING PARTIES

MAY 23 River Wey

Please come to the first local working party for some time, upstream of the boathouse at Send. For details contact Graham Palmer 01-346 4949.

Annual General Meeting - March 18th

The AGM was a relatively straightforward event this year, although it came at the end of a very full twelve months for the Branch. The highlight was of course the Guildford Rally, so successfully organised under the leadership of Desmond Briscoe, who sadly had to resign Chairmanship of the Branch shortly afterwards. No successor has yet appeared and we are very fortunate in having Oliver Turner to shoulder the responsibility.

It was agreed that the name should henceforth be the London and South East Branch. The constit-

utional rules, as circulated with the previous issues of Windlass, were adopted with the addition of a rule allowing ordinary members to call a special general meeting.

The Committee can be seen on page 1. The only new member elected was Tony Davis, the others were re-elected or had previously been co-opted. We are sorry to lose Tim Dodwell and Ron Stainton, who retired at the meeting, as well as those we lost during the year.

The financial situation was not unhealthy, but an unsatisfactory point was that almost the whole of the membership subscription was used for the production and distribution of Windlass - and postage has now risen by 50%.

Winter Meeting - February 25th

How many different types of narrow boat were there? Members who remembered, despite the post strike, the February meeting were treated to a highly interesting talk on narrow boat building by Malcolm Braine, of Norton Canes Docks, Staffs. Mr Braine set up his firm some seven years ago and is such an acknowledged expert that he has cornered most of the narrow boat repair trade (although, in our own Branch area, the Boatyard at Iver on the Slough Arm always seem to have one narrow boat or another on their slipway).

How many types? Mr Braine knows of at least 394! 200 of which originate from the Birmingham Canal Navigations (where there were once over 500 private basins and arms!)

We desperately need early issues of Windlass. If you have any spare copies from before 1968, please send them to the Editors.

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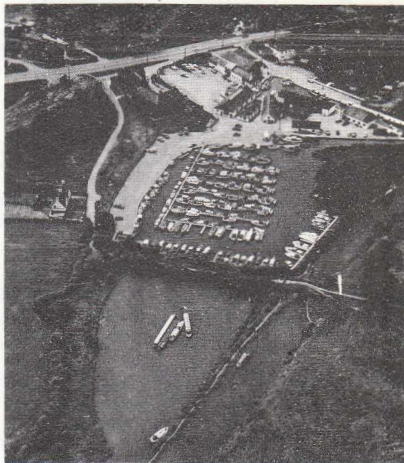


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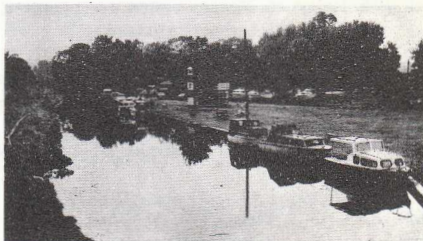
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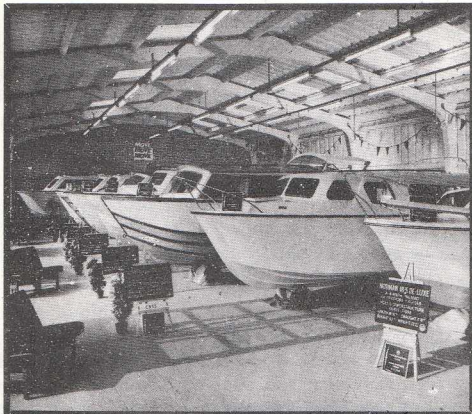


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Nantwich,
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RIVER MEDWAY

The Medway Ports Authority recently announced that, among other changes, the charge for power pleasure boats passing through Allington Lock has been increased to 25p (5/-) each way. An increase of 82% even in these inflationary days must be considered unreasonable and an unfair imposition on the large number of boatowners who use this link between the Upper Medway Navigation and the tideway. The River Medway Sub-Committee has, therefore, complained to the Authority about the new charge and has suggested that it be reduced to not more than 20p (4/-). This move is supported by, and in conjunction with, the Medway River User's Association and it would be helpful if all boatowners who use Allington Lock would write, as soon as possible, to the M.P.A. at Sheerness Docks, Sheerness, Kent, to reinforce the protests that have been made.

Tonbridge Mooring

It may be necessary to organise a small working party to carry out some work to fencing, etc. on the mooring site and if any members living locally are prepared to help would they be kind enough to get in touch with me at Tonbridge 3751.

Derek Salmon

RIVER WEY

Work is expected to start early in April on the new road bridge in Guildford between the two existing road bridges in the town, on the site of the existing footbridge linking the bus stations. Warning signs will be displayed and a minimum channel of 25 feet should be available at all times.

There will be a stoppage for about 10 days at New Haw Lock between Easter and Whitsun for fitting new lower gates and repairing the upper gates. The precise dates are not yet known, but the work will probably be completed by mid-May. Anyone intending to cruise in the area should check the current position with the Wey Navigation office.

This summer we have again been asked to help with manning Pyrford Lock at weekends. Volunteers are asked to contact Martin Steiner at 4 Arundel Gardens, Winchmore Hill, London N 21, (01-886 3884) The main emphasis will be on Sundays between Whitsun and August Bank Holiday, but help on Saturdays and Bank Holidays will also be welcome.

Reasonable proficiency in lock-working is desirable, but tuition can be arranged for novices. This is a pleasant way to spend a day in most attractive surroundings, with the chance to "chat up" passing boatowners and bystanders. Later in the summer it is hoped to build a new by-pass weir at the lock.

Tim Dodwell.

(continued from page 2)

I have said nothing about commercial carrying promotion as a function of the IWA because it seems that no significant amount will ever reappear on the Amenity Waterways. We should give every assistance to the Narrow Boat Trust, and the enthusiasts who run working boats, because they will soon be the only survivors.

The demise of working boats will mean that silting and weed growth will increase and maintenance work will have to be increased. The IWA will have to make sure that this does not result in a deterioration of channels to unusable levels.

This "watchdog" status is another important feature of our activities. I am not proposing that we should be constantly snapping at the heels of the BWB, but we should be able to give them helpful advice from time to time.

Finally, what about the membership of the IWA? Our founder, Robert Aikman, was once reported as saying that he would much prefer a few hundred militants to thousands of members of a boat club and this point was made by David Gibson at the AGM.

I appreciate the sentiments, but it is a fact of life that in any organisation it is a minority that does most of the work. Numbers themselves can be significant, as John Humphries said at the same meeting, when the IWA is trying to influence authority

Paying a membership fee indicates some level of interest - it is up to the rest of us to involve (if necessary, educate) new members. That is the primary aim of the changes proposed by the London and South East Branch Committee.

Colin Isaacson.

Regents Boat Club. Visit to National Rally of Boats, Northampton.

Would any boat owning members of the branch be willing to take one or more members of the Regents Boat Club to the National Rally this summer? This would be very much appreciated, as we would like to have as many of our members at this event as possible. If you feel you would like to help us in this way, please write to me at the address given below, stating as far as possible the following details:

- 1) Number of children you would take (if more than one)
- 2) Whether you would prefer a boy or a girl, and
- 3) The preferred age of the child allotted to you, (members range from 8 to 14 years old).

My address is: C J D Probert, 34 Sutherland Avenue, Petts Wood, Orpington. BR5 1QZ.

Telephone Orpington 29160.

Please write to me as soon as possible, even if you can only make a provisional offer of a place.



Letters to the Editor

22 Ladywood Road
Cuxton
Kent
27th March 1971

Dear Sir,

Those Narrow Boats

I read with anguish the letter from Roger Pilkington in Windlass (February 1971) in which he encourages members to give up any ideas about campaigning for "those narrow boats".

The reasons why we should fight to keep these boats going have been stated countless times and are obvious to anyone who has seen the deterioration of the canals over the last few years. Narrow boats at present provide the only means of commercial goods carrying on the majority of the canals and if we meekly allow them to disappear as Mr Pilkington suggests, we must accept not only that the canals are useful only for pleasure boating, but also that the IWA has been preaching a lot of nonsense all these years.

We have had long enough since the White Paper to appreciate that amenity waterways, or "cruiseways", are substandard canals regarded (not surprisingly) as a luxury item when the public money is handed out.

The stated aims of the Association are to advocate the development of the Waterways and their fullest use for both commercial and pleasure purposes, not to watch the system being turned into a nationwide version of the Norfolk Broads.

The most practical way to start campaigning in earnest for commercial traffic is to try to prevent the death of those narrow boats.

Brian Kingsmill.

12 Upper Way
Farnham
Surrey
18th March 1971

Dear Sir,

Dr Pilkington's letter in February's Windlass puts commercial carrying well and truly in the right perspective and anyone who read that excellent article "There go the boats" in January 8th issue of 'Motor Boat & Yachting' will know that narrowboats are not commercial, i.e. profitable, for owners or crews.

Unfortunately the publicity that the minority canal users, the narrowboat men, get in the boating press, radio and T.V. has created a very poor public image of the I.W.A. and the extract from the 'Observer' published in Windlass No 93 is, I think; not the BWB's view but that of a lot of ordinary boaters, anglers and towpath walkers.

The 'folksy' image is not helped by the venue of the AGM.

There is food for thought in other reports in the last two Windlasses. It is reported that there are 2800 members in the S.E. Region and that there are 24000 boats on the non tidal part of the Thames alone. Add the number on the canals and other rivers in the area plus non boat-owning enthusiasts and that membership looks rather low. Would it be because of the I.W.A. are purists?

However, with the fine weather ahead I shall soon be joining the majority of 'ordinary joes' in my small, fibreglass, outboard driven, roughly boat shaped vessel cleaning my rubbish as I go and trying not to damage what I hope will one day be busy waterways, busy with pleasure craft - of all types.

J W Pegram.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ No. 21

- 1) On the Southern Oxford Canal the 22 locks from Napton to Banbury all have a pair of bottom gates, while the 17 locks from Banbury to Oxford all have a single bottom gate.
- 2) Pershore lock on the River Avon is unusual in being diamond shaped and only has a full depth of water down the centre of the lock chamber.
- 3) Wisbech formerly stood on the mouth of the Great Ouse but a cut at Littleport diverted the waters and the estuary silted up. In the reign of Henry VII a canal 40 miles long was cut from the River Nene at Peterborough via Wisbech to the sea.
- 4) Stanstead, Fenny Stratford, and Nafford locks all have a Swing Bridge over the lock chamber.
- 5) Welford (40 acres), Naseby (81 acres) and Sulby (35 acres) reservoirs feed the summit level of the Leicester Arm.
- 6) A mitre post is the vertical post of a lock gate furthest from its hanging.

The winner will be announced in next month's Windlass.

Newspaper Collection

Help is needed to collect salvage paper from members in the Hampstead, Regents Park and Walthamstow areas of North London. No storage space is required, only a car or van and a few hours every month. My telephone number is 01-888 3308 day or evening. Collections in North London are going very well and will raise over £25 this month.

Harvey Cooke.

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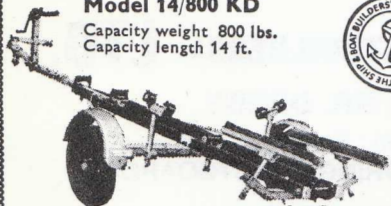
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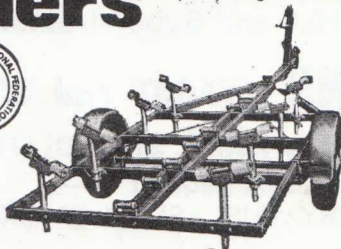
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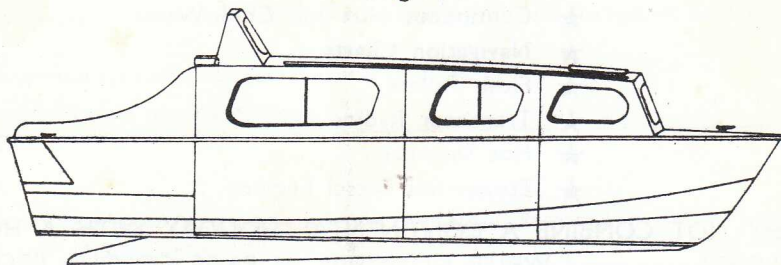
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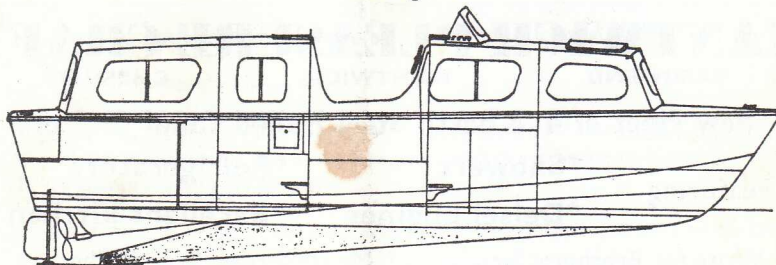
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