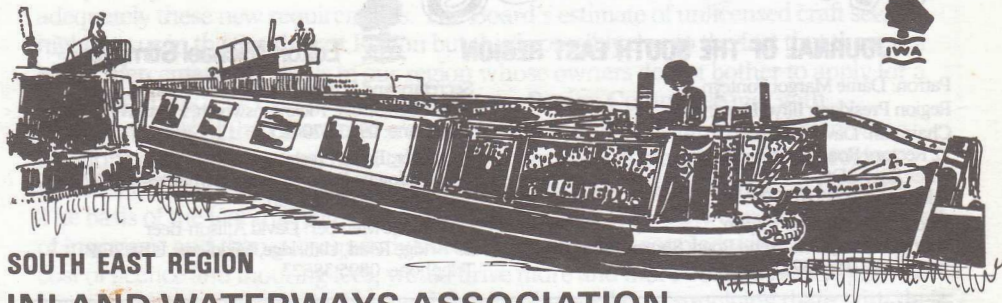


WINDLASS



SOUTH EAST REGION

INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION

CERTIFICATE No.

202

NUMBER OF SHARES

25

THE BIRMINGHAM AND MIDLAND CANAL CARRYING COMPANY LIMITED

(Incorporated under the Companies Act 1948)

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GIVEN under the Common Seal of the Company

on the 4th day of May 1965

Inland Waterways Association Limited,
(London and Home Counties Branch)
3b Drayton Road,
TUNKERSIDE,
Kent.

R. A. Valle (Secretary)

A. M. S. King (Director)

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July 1990

Number 191

Windlass

JOURNAL OF THE SOUTH EAST REGION



**Inland Waterways
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Editorial—Michael Stimpson

Windlass was complete last week when I heard the news that Richard Bird had suffered a heart attack and was likely to be off work for some time. I am sure all members of the Region and its branches will join me and the Region Committee in wishing Richard a speedy recovery to full health. Many of you will know of the considerable effort Richard puts into the IWA's activities, both at Region level and at National level.

At Region level he is responsible, amongst other things, for the printing of *Windlass*, but his activities for the Region and its branches do not stop there. More importantly, he is the powerhouse behind the trade event at the National Waterways Festival and at most of the Rallies over the past ten years or so has been mainly responsible for the success, in financial terms, of the Rally itself by promoting the most important activity in the organisation of the Trade Show and its peripheral activities. As an exhibitor at The National Waterways Festival each year I know full well the amount of effort and time Richard has put into ensuring the success of the trade stands and was deeply shocked and saddened to hear of his illness.

On behalf, therefore, not only of the members of the South East Region, but of the IWA nationally, I wish Richard a speedy recovery and, in the meantime, a pleasant rest.

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Reverting now to the original text of my editorial...

Concern amongst members appears to be growing that the welcome proposals of British Waterways to make insurance compulsory for vessels on their system during the next six to twelve months and, in the not too distant future, Certificates of Compliance compulsory for all vessels, is due to the belief that it may not be possible to enforce adequately these new requirements. The Board's estimate of unlicensed craft seems higher to us in the South East Region but this is possibly due to the fact that there is a higher percentage of vessels in our region whose owners do not bother to apply for a licence and it is now over two years since your Region Committee met with representatives of the Board and were promised action. It is fair to say that in some locations action has indeed been taken, but there are still many parts of our region where it is difficult, if not impossible for visiting boats to find a convenient mooring. The basis of the fear that some members seem to have is that the need to provide proof of insurance and then subsequently proof of compliance, coupled with the increasing cost of licence and mooring fees, would drive more and more boat owners to give consideration to not licence their craft putting the burden of supplying them with their financial income from the boat owning sector to a higher percentage.

I am aware of at least one commercial operator who has decided not to trade this year due to the high financial demands being made on him by British Waterways, and it may well be that we are starting to see the killing of the goose which lays the golden egg.

The IWA has long called for compulsory insurance and, indeed, has always insisted on third party insurance at its rallies.

Of equal concern (and some IWA members are guilty here) is the increasing instance of speeding on the waterways in recent years. It is now the norm to find boats travelling at too high a speed and unusual to find boats slowing down to pass small craft. Motor cycles and trail bikes still whirl along the towpath despite the fact that this is prohibited, and even television soaps are advocating the use of canals for the disposal of unwanted dead bodies.

With the high cost of housing in the region, the soft option of living on a boat is obviously very attractive. Perhaps the canal rangers and patrol officers can cope, but possibly some advice to the board to assist them in their job would be as follows.

- 1—Instead of squeezing those who are already paying, concentrate on those who are not.
- 2—Give even more consideration to the provision of proper residential moorings.
- 3—Ensure regular visits by British Waterways staff to areas known to be used by illegally moored boats.
- 4—To have more frequent licence checks (I was last asked to produce mine about six years ago!).

I would be pleased to receive letters on the subject from members and also to publish the comments of British Waterways if any official would care to put pen to paper.

Finally, may I thank all of the members who have commented kindly on the revised format of the last edition of *Windlass*, with special relation to the location of all of the region events in one grouping. It was a one off experiment and this will now be continued. However, I have had one criticism in as much as that it should be more easily locatable, and depending on how the text of the edition fits the resulting pages after type setting we will either use the centre pages or the back pages for ease of reference.

Region Chairman's Report—*David Moore*

This a piece I did not expect to be writing as it was my intention to stand down from the post of Region Chairman following the AGM. However to mis-quote Oscar Wilde 'The report of my demise is premature'.

One item which has been causing much discussion within the Region has been the proposed restructure, and I am pleased to say that I believe we have now at last found an acceptable resolution to all the branches and you will find elsewhere in this edition of *Windlass* an announcement of a special general meeting to approve the resolution. In the meantime we will progress the necessary arrangements for the split to take place on the 1st January 1991.

On that date it is proposed that Oxfordshire, Guildford and Reading and Solent and Arun branches will leave the South East Region to form a new region, and it is further proposed that within two years there will be a further split when London Branch will become a region in its own right.

This particular piece of business has taken up a lot of time and I am very happy that we do appear to be reaching a conclusion, and my decision to continue as Chairman owes a lot to the resolving of this problem.

As the summer events begin, I am sure there are many posts to be filled and an offer of help would be appreciated and could lead to a rewarding experience. Especially with the forthcoming changes in the region structures, the branches will need additional committee members and, of course, we will have to find bodies to form complete new region committees.

Another area I would like to put in a plea for is Waterways for Youth, as our Association needs the enthusiasm and energy of young people and if you have any ideas to encourage the younger generation or would like to be involved in this part of our campaign then please contact John Croot or your local branch committee.

The Association has been considering the announcement from Robin Garrett about wide beam boats above Berkhamstead, and Alan Swaisland (The Grand Junction Region Chairman) has met Robin Garrett and has made our position clear, inasmuch as we do not accept that the Grand Union is narrow north of Berkhamstead (*try taking a breasted pair through Leighton Buzzard!*—Ed). However, we do understand Robin Garrett's concern with wide beam boats mooring at unsuitable places and causing problems to other navigators. We feel that a rigid policy is not the answer and are prepared to go along with Robin Garrett's solution to see how it works out. In the meantime, NTA would be happy to hear of any problems you may encounter as a result of wide beam craft. I believe that here BW have acted early and not allowed the problem to reach major proportions.

Finally, may I say a thank you to all the members who turned out at the branch AGM's—it was a very good opportunity to hear the comments and ideas from the 'grass roots' of the Association, and also to the many who expressed their thanks to me for my services as Region Chairman—it was nice to know my efforts had been appreciated.

Region Stoppages

Napton and Claydon lock flights will be closed between 6 pm and 8 am until further notice due to the low water situation in Boddington Reservoir.

Outside of our region the lack of water is being felt and the same restrictions apply at Hillmorton, Stoke Bruerne, Cosgrove locks and the Northampton arm.

Inland Waterways Association, South East Region Notice of Special General Meeting

A Special General Meeting of the South East Region will take place on Thursday 13th of September commencing at 8 pm at AUEW House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford.

The purpose of the meeting is to consider and vote on the following resolution proposed by the Region Committee.

That as of 1st January 1991 the Guildford and Reading, Solent and Arun and Oxfordshire branches of the Inland Waterways Association will cease to be members of the South East Region of the Association, and from that date they will form a new region yet to be named and that the assets of the existing South East Region be audited on that date and be split between the existing region and the new region in proportion to the number of members in each of the two regions and that the sum held in the National Waterways Restoration and Development Fund on behalf of the existing region will be split in like proportion and that a further restructure of the South East Region takes place by the 1st January 1993 to create a separate London region.

No other business may be conducted at the meeting.

Waltham Abbey Festival

When a National Waterways Festival is held in a region's territory that region is given permission to suggest the allocation of some of the profits to promote waterway restoration. The South East Region Committee have, therefore, agreed to suggest that the resulting funds be allocated to the WRG and KESCRG Transport Appeals.

South East Region AGM

The Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday 19th April and the minutes of that meeting will appear in the next edition of *Windlass*.

After the reports of the Officers an election was held for the one vacant committee post, and David Allison-Beer was formally elected to be a member of your Region Committee.

At the subsequent region committee meeting the existing officers were re-elected to their positions, David Moore as Region Chairman, Brian Freshney as Region Treasurer, Michael Stimpson as Region Secretary and Ron Martin as Vice-Chairman.

Our new National Chairman, David Stevenson, addressed the meeting and explained to the region members about many of the problems facing the IWA at the present time. He renewed his appeal for postage stamps, trading stamps and petrol stamps and reminded members of the importance of sending these to 6 Spar Lane, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 1JB, pointing out that we raised £1,100 in 1989 and hope to increase this to £1,250 in the current year.

A full and frank discussion was held on the subject as to whether or not London Branch could be split into more than one branch area, and no useful conclusions were reached.

Canalway Cavalcade by Marion Waters

Yet again Canalway Cavalcade was a great success and for the first time since the event started eight years ago we had no rain at all, and as a result of this the towpaths were packed with people, proving the theory that Londoners all go to Southend or Brighton when the sun shines to be wrong.

Another first for this year was finally discovering how many boats can be satisfactorily moored in the pool of Little Venice, the answer in fact is about ten less than the 121 entries we had. The Berthing Master trying to move boats in and out of their moorings had a task similar to trying to remove the middle can from one of those wonderful supermarket displays that we all long to destroy, and every time a boat needed to be moved three others had also to shuffle around at the same time to make room.

The Pageant was a great success and we were delighted to have London Underground sponsoring a boat for the first time this year. It was good to see so many entries for the best privately decorated boat award, which was won by Adrian Steinkamp with his boat *Chyna Too*.

The official opening ceremony was conducted by the Right Worshipful The Lord Mayor Councillor Simon Mabey and the National Chairman of the Inland Waterways Association, David Stevenson. The pageant of commercially sponsored and decorated boats entered the pool after the official opening and then went along the Regents Canal past London Zoo to Camden and then turned round and made the passage back to Little Venice.

Throughout the entire week-end there were folk singers, musicians, Morris dancers, live theatre groups, children's entertainers, model boat displays, canoe displays and boat handling competitions, plus much, much more. A large Trade and Craft Fair was also part of the event.

Saturday evening brought a splendid illuminated boat procession and the biggest surprise had to be the discovery that Kent and East Sussex Canal Restoration had posh non-digging clothes and anyone wishing to see the photographic evidence can do so at the London Branch Sales Stand throughout the year.

Trafalgar House Developments with British Waterways support sponsored one of the biggest firework displays we have yet had.

Our congratulations to everyone who assisted with the running of the event and special thanks must go to the Westminster City Council for their support and to KESCRG for their valued help throughout the week end.

A special visit to Canalway Cavalcade was made by *President*, which has had much restoration work carried out on her since she was bought as a derelict hull in 1973. *President* is now jointly owned between the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and the Black Country Museum where the boat is normally kept.

Operation Raleigh team clears Regents Canal

In April and June, ten Operation Raleigh volunteers with two British Waterways Board men were to be seen clearing rubbish from the Regents Canal in an attempt to achieve two objects, one to raise money for under-privileged children on a venture week-end and the second one to get rid of some of the rubbish.

They were using the British Waterways rubbish clearing boat *Clearwater* which is based on the Regents Canal. Mark Bensted, the manager of the London Waterways stated 'we are currently clearing rubbish from London's canals (*I've never seen them—Ed.*) and groups like Operation Raleigh help to highlight our efforts to make the canals a place Londoners can enjoy and be proud of'.

The Birmingham and Midland Canal Carrying Company Limited

It would be assumed from the front cover of *Windlass* that one of the queries raised at the region AGM has been inadvertently answered.

The region accounts each year show an entry for investments, and this has always been reported as being 25 shares in the Birmingham and Midland Canal Carrying Company, but it was admitted at the AGM this year that no one was sure where these shares were.

Some time ago the Region Committee discussed moving the bank account as it was held at a branch which was not convenient for any Committee member and certainly not the Treasurer, and it was generally agreed that there would be no problem in moving the account to a branch of the bank nearer to the Treasurer's address.

No action was actually taken until, out of the blue, the Treasurer received a letter from the Bank saying that the branch at which our account was held was being closed down, which prompted the action already approved by your Region Committee. On the transfer of the account lo and behold the Securities Manager of the branch forwarded to the Treasurer the missing share certificate, which is depicted on the front cover.

Sawbridgeworth Publicised

British Waterways have announced that they have issued a leaflet on the Lee and Stort navigation concerning Fishiobury Park and a circular walk following the official opening of the trail on Sunday 10th June. The circular trail is waymarked in both directions and allows you to chose a walk between one and three hours following the distinctive signs. Anyone interested in a leaflet should ring 0992 555257.

Kennet Alive 1990

Kennet Alive is a series of events staged jointly by the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust, British Waterways, Edinburgh Council and Newbury District Council to celebrate the final linking of the canal into one again after many years construction. It ranks as one of the most important periods in the history of the Kennet and Avon canal and the importance of this to local as well as national interest is underlined by the fact that, to conclude all the exciting events that are being held in July, H. M. The Queen will open the final link on August 8th 1990 at Devizes, thus allowing canal enthusiasts to enjoy the whole route in one.

On Saturday 21st July 1990, the largest and most varied Festival and Boat Rally ever staged at Newbury will be held at Victoria Park, Newbury, incorporating the waters and banks of the canal. Victoria Park is a large and level park area lying directly adjacent to the canal and the main Portsmouth/Oxford road. There is ample parking facility surrounding the area allowing easy access and the main shopping area of Newbury is only about two minutes away.

Because of the importance of this event, extensive coverage on the local radio, television, newspapers and magazines is being arranged and a full publicity programme has been set up to maximise upon every opportunity, to promote the water based activities, entertainments, both amateur and professional, being held in the large marquee. There will be side-shows, trade stands, children's funfair and many other participating events.

For further information contact the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust, Canal Centre, Crouch Lane, Devizes, Wilts SN10 1EB.

REGION ROUND UP—*Michael Stimpson*

Thursday 12th July—CHELMSFORD BRANCH

Informal gathering at the Horse and Groom, Wroxwell Road, Chelmsford.

Saturday 29th July—LONDON BRANCH

MIKRON THEATRE in a London Branch Sponsored performance at The Fishery Inn, Harefield—difficult to find without a Nicholsons!—by Coppermill Lock.

Thursday 9th August—CHELMSFORD BRANCH

Informal Gathering at the Horse and Groom, Wroxwell Road, Chelmsford.

Saturday 8th September—K&ES BRANCH

Meet at 6.30 at the Car Park, Faith Street, Maidstone for a walk along the towpath to Allington and back.

Wednesday 12th September—OXFORDSHIRE BRANCH

7.30 for 8 at The Wise Alderman Banbury Road, Kidlington for a talk by Fred Harding on A Cruise to Stockholm on the Gota Canal.

Thursday 13th September—REGION

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING—CHELMSFORD BRANCH

John Boyes on The River Lea Navigation at AEUW House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford.

Thursday 20th September—LONDON BRANCH

Dr. Roger Squires on Canals in China at The Union Jack Club, opposite Waterloo Station.

Saturday 29th September—LONDON BRANCH

Bus trip to Nottingham sightseeing and National AGM—see branch report.

Wednesday 10th October—OXFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Restoration of the sailing barge Cambria by Tony Ellis at the Wise Alderman, Kidlington.

Thursday 11th October—CHELMSFORD BRANCH

Jim Mason from Brent Marine at AEUW House

Thursday 18th October—LONDON BRANCH

The Regents Canal by Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti at the Union Jack Club, Waterloo.

Tuesday 23rd October—K&ES BRANCH

The Basingstoke Canal by Robin Higgs and Arthur Dungle 8.30 at the White Hart, High Street, Orpington.

Wednesday 14th November—OXFORD BRANCH

Members Slides of the years celebrations and prize draw at the Wise Alderman, Kidlington.

Thursday 15th November—LONDON BRANCH

The Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal by John and Margaret Fletcher at the Union Jack Club, Waterloo.

Saturday 24th—OXFORD BRANCH

Branch Dinner—see branch report.

Wednesday 12th December—OXFORD BRANCH

Christmas Social at the Wise Alderman—Tickets required.

Thursday 13th December—LONDON BRANCH

Grand Auction and Mystery Slide Quiz at the Union Jack Club, Waterloo.

Wednesday 9th January—OXFORD BRANCH

Birds of the Oxfordshire Waterways by J. Bruckyer at the Wise Alderman, Kidlington.

Thursday 10th January—CHELMSFORD & K&ES

Inter Branch Quiz at AEUW House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford.

The Windlass Story Continued—David Moore

We ended the history of *Windlass* at issue 25, August 1961, and, oddly enough, we seem to be starting again at the beginning, as issue 26 has the identical cover to issue 1—a map of the branch. The National at Aylesbury is announced and BTC (British Transport Commission) are still locking Hanwell and only allowing boats between Bow Creek and Ponders End in 'organised convoys', for which one week's notice is required and 'all expenses incurred... will be charged to the organiser'. The Kennet and Avon becomes a Trust and a branch geography shows the distribution of members.

Number 26 reports on the National at Aylesbury and that the National Coal Board made special arrangements to load a pair of boats so that they could arrive at the Rally for opening. The Rally did not live up to everyone's expectations and one bright young thing was heard to remark 'I expected it to be like Henley'.

The next four issues devote much space to the recently published Transport Bill and BTC were seeking powers to close a further thirteen stretches of canal, including part of the Huddersfield and also the Chesterfield above Worksop, members were asked to protest to their M.P's.

It seems to have been effective because in issue 30 the report of the debate in the House says that there was 'an unusually high attendance' of members present. There was a measure of success in that the original wording would have meant that there would have been no duty to maintain the Grand Union because it had never been owned by a Railway Company. Finally, on the Transport Bill, a quote from Mr. John Hay, Parliamentary Secretary at 12.40 am on the 12th April. 'There is a widespread fallacy that it is much cheaper to abandon canals than to restore them—it is quite untrue.'—Oops, I don't think that was quite what he meant to say.

In issue 34—Toys Wanted. 'This Christmas give a toy for a child of the working boats'. This plea was from the Canal Boatman's Institute at Brentford.

Front cover of issue 35 shows *Robert Aickman* being launched (not our founder, but the latest addition to Lionel Munk's fleet). The ceremony was performed by Mrs. Peter Scott. It was on this boat that I spent my second canal holiday and in the process met David Hutchins and some of the Winson Green prisoners, although I did not know at the time who they were.

No. 39 (December 63) sees the River Wey being presented to the National Trust by Harry Stevens, they already operated the Stratford Canal and it was understood they intended to maintain the Wey as a navigation as well, which, of course, they have done. Also at this time we read of the newly formed River Thames Society holding a week-end conference at Oxford on the future of the river for recreation.

August 63, the National comes to London, Little Venice is the setting for our annual gathering and *Windlass* reports that 350 members attended the Rally dinner at Alexandra Palace.

Issue 41 carries a cover picture of the first boat to reach Stratford from Lapworth and a report of a meeting at which Robert Aickman and David Hutchins outlined our considerable progress in changing attitudes of 'them'. The attendance exceeded the hall's capacity.

August 64 and the Royal opening of Stratford by the Queen Mother and a proposal to build concrete tracks in the bed of the Paddington arm to take hovercoaches to London Airport. The scheme will cost £7,000,000 and the coaches will travel at 80 miles per hour.

No. 45 December 64 and you could have bought yourself a very nice Christmas present, as BWB issued a list of vacant lock cottages and we were invited to make an offer—I wonder how many of them still survive?

The next issue has the Boat Show Stand on the cover, how different from today. Very few books were published in 1965.

A supplement in No. 48 gives details of week-end lock openings in the London area. After years of negotiation with BWB at last our campaign pays off and you can buy a narrowboat for around £1,500 and the freedom of the canal is yours, even at the weekends.

This takes us on to issue 48 and the end of this chapter, except to say that throughout this period there has been an excellent series of articles from J. D. Cranfield entitled 'Railways from Canals'. Very informative and well researched.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Mr. Stimpson,

Chris de Wet's article in the last edition of *Windlass* suggested that the Basingstoke canal will be open to boat traffic from the Wey navigation from September this year and I should like to correct that impression. Restoration of the Basingstoke canal is almost complete and we hope to have all major work finished and the canal in water throughout its length by September 1990.

This is, however, far from saying that the canal will be opened to through navigation at that stage. Much still remains to be done and it would be unwise for any of your members to plan to use the eastern end of the canal between Frimley lock (lock 28) and the junction with the Wey navigation before the 1991 season.

This office will issue a press release for the benefit of all waterway users as soon as the date has been fixed for the Basingstoke canal to accept boats entering from the Wey navigation.

Yours sincerely, P. A. Field
Director—Basingstoke Canal

Dear Michael,

I was interested to read David Moore's comments about the history of *Windlass* and that of the early days of the London and Home Counties Branch IWA, including the fact that I was the only one to know him.

It is true that I attended the founding committee meeting of the branch, and one of the most important decisions of that first meeting was to decide to publish a branch magazine, name it and appoint Peter Chapman as the first Editor—a position, if I remember correctly, he accepted rather reluctantly.

David suggests that it would be interesting to hear of what happened to those initial committee members.

I cannot help you on all of them, but, of course, Peter Chapman is still active in the waterways world. Not only is he connected with T. Harrison Chaplin Ltd., the well known waterside construction firm, but he has also recently written a most informative book on water conservation, on which he is an authority.

Dr. Saunders, the first Honorary Treasurer died some years ago and Peter Scrutton disappeared into the west country about 30 years ago and, as far as I know, is no longer connected with the inland waterways.

As for me, I was Chelmer representative in those early days with Peter Scrutton the Stour representative.

On his leaving the committee, in the absence of any other volunteer, I also became Stour representative, remaining as did many other of the others on the committee until the branch became the region.

I have always been proud of the fact that during the time that I was Chelmer representative the Chelmsford Rally of Boats was held, which lead to the opening of the Chelmer Blackwater Navigation to pleasure craft and also the setting up of the Chelmsford Branch of the IWA, of which I am currently a member.

David also mentions the Grand Contour canal. As I recall it, on the death of the founder, J. F. Pownall, the Grand Contour Canal Association was incorporated into the IWA and some sort of statement was made at the time that they would keep the scheme alive.

With national water shortages for all purposes in the south-east likely to continue and probably to worsen, particularly with the greenhouse effect, surely it is time for the IWA to give the plans a dusting down and some publicity.

Yours sincerely,
John Marriages

Dear Sir,

When I first went to a branch meeting nobody spoke to me, so I went and spoke to them.

Now I am London Branch Secretary, an elected member of the South Eastern Region Committee and a corresponding member of the National Restoration Committee.

Where did I go wrong?

Yours faithfully,
David Allison-Beer

Walking on Water—by Michael Stimpson

Well, perhaps not the correct title but it sounds better than dancing on the towpath. Members of the Region who attended the National Waterways Festival last year, Canalway Cavalcade or the Wendover Rally will have been entertained by groups of people dressed up in funny clothes and waving hankies around. Devotees to The Archers will know that these are demented snowmen, dancing something called North West Clog Morris. You cannot always believe the media as both sides at the rallies (in common with the side dancing on The Archers) were, in fact, Cotswold Morris sides.

To explain, there are many types of Morris dancing traditions in the country. The most common in our area being the Cotswold style or tradition, but there are also many examples of sides dancing North West clog and border. You may even be lucky enough to see a Molly side or a Rapper side performing, although these are fairly rare. Morris sides seem to have an affinity to the canal system and our own Council member, David Blagrove, was a member of Rose and Castle Morris (note the name) for many years whereas in Leighton Buzzard we have a side called Grand Union Rapper, and in our own region we have Grand Union Morris who sport a booty tiller on their waistcoats.

Years ago Grand Union Morris was mainly populated by boat owners, many of whom lived on their boats, and although this is not quite the case these days, there are still many boat owners in the side. The same can be said for Phoenix Morris who were dancing at the Wendover Rally.

There seems to be a common affinity between interest in canals and interest in folk music and dance and you will rarely find a boat rally without some form of folk entertainment. Nobody is really sure of the true origins of the Morris, although it is widely believed to be a pre-Christian fertility rite.

Women have an unbroken record of dancing Morris, although it is fair to say that without the male influence in the early part of the century the tradition became somewhat diluted.

The name Morris dancing is a term of equally uncertain origins to the tradition's

history, some saying that it is of Moorish origin, others saying the term is derived from Morisco dancing from southern Spain, but although we can find vague mentions of the Morris in the 1600's and 1700's it was only in the 1800's that any real effort made to record the dances, which was very lucky indeed, as the gap between the end of the 1800's when the last male Morris sides were known to frequent the countryside, and its resurgence half way through this century would surely have resulted in the tradition dying had the dances not been recorded on paper by Cecil Sharp. Many members will, of course, know Cecil Sharp House which is the headquarters of the



English Folk Dance and Song Society, where for many years the IWA held its Annual General Meetings.

The common theory of Morris is that it brings good fortune to the crops and fertility to the land if you rise before dawn on May 1st and dance the sun in and most Morris sides throughout the country actually do this. In modern times we have mixed sex Morris sides, although in the past it has traditionally been for sides of women or men. However, there is evidence that men's sides, being short of members, have used honorary men—women dressed up in the same kit.

If you watched the Morris dancing at last year's National Waterways Festival at Waltham Abbey or saw the sides dancing at the Canalway Cavalcade or Wendover, and would like further information of your local side, please contact Cecil Sharp House or the Region Secretary.

BRANCH REPORTS

LONDON BRANCH—*Marion Waters*

London branch are sponsoring two performances by the Mikron Theatre Company this year, the first being on Wednesday 25th July on the Thames in the Richmond/Twickenham area, the second on Saturday 29th July at The Fisheries Inn, Harefield. In addition to the meetings shown in the 'What's On' section, the branch are hiring a small coach for the 29th September to take interested London branch members to Nottingham for the day, the morning being spent looking around Nottingham with an opportunity to visit the Nottingham Canal Museum and then after lunch move on to the AGM of the Association. Anyone interested in taking advantage of the travelling arrangements should contact Tim Lewis on 081 530 7926 no later than the end of July. London Branch is organising a Waterways for Youth week-end to be held at Little Venice on the 13th and 14th October and anyone interested in offering their assistance or requiring further information should contact Marion Waters on 071 530 4767. In addition to the regular walks organised on the Regents Canal by Dr. Essex-Lopresti, the London Branch is organising a walk on the 4th November along the Grand Union Canal around the West Drayton/Yiewsley area as part of its assistance to the Colne Valley Groundwork Trust and anyone wanting further information should contact the Colne Valley Groundwork Trust on 0895 832 662. Finally, don't forget that our venue for branch meetings has been changed to The Union Jack Club which is opposite Waterloo Station.

SOLENT AND ARUN BRANCH—*G. H. F. Skinner*

I am glad to have had an opportunity to join a charter party on the R.A.T's Dory *Damsel Fly* which operates between Houghton and Stopham Bridges on the River Arun and I have never before witnessed such an abundance and variety of wildlife in such a short period of time. Almost every breed of British water bird was there to be seen as well as some migrating foreigners, and it was quite a sight to see a crow chasing off a heron in flight and a cormorant diving to catch a fish which was much too big for it to carry. There were kestrels, kingfishers, a variety of buntings and tits, together with many other small birds of which I am not familiar, together with an assortment of wild ducks, geese and several swans breeding on their nests. The River Avon Trust is the only full time water based field study group in the country and their success over the past three years is such that they have recently purchased another boat, a 45 seater, which is the fifth in their fleet. Being a non profit venture their charges remain highly competitive and long may they continue to operate.

CHELMSFORD BRANCH—*John Gale*

In addition to the meetings over the Waltham period, Chelmsford Branch have challenged Kent and East Sussex Branch to a quiz and this will be held on Thursday 10th January at Chelmsford, and it is understood that various individuals are starting their revision already. A date not to be missed, so put it in your diaries now if you have them!

An outing on the 13th May (was that date an omen one wonders?) was not the sort of success we have come to expect. Instead of being over subscribed, we were under subscribed and we made a small loss. The Chelmsford Branch boat trip was not an unmitigated success. We did consider cancelling but we would still have had to pay most of the charge, and this would have resulted in a large loss. The general opinion is that a long coach journey and the price (to include the coach) put people off and rumour has it that next years outing will be on the Chelmer and Blackwater and will include a slap up meal—watch this space.

GUILDFORD AND READING BRANCH

Guildford and Reading Branch Committee Member, Pat Barton, is spending the summer on a 2000 mile waterways tour in aid of the charity boats for the handicapped.

Pat left Godalming on the 7th April and at the time of writing (late May) was still on schedule at Castleford, Yorkshire. Her journey will take her and the 60 ft. narrowboat *Quercus* via Ripon and Llangollen to the National Rally at Gloucester for the August Bank holiday week-end and then it is home via Cambridge and hopefully a newly reopened Basingstoke canal.

Pat's work colleagues at Godalming gave her a magnificent send-off to the tune of £600 sponsorship, IWA Guildford and Reading branch have promised a further £200 and the branch slide show *Find the Lucky Locks* run by Ray Carnell would be donating the whole of the 1990 *Lucky Locks* profits to Boats for the Handicapped.

Meanwhile, cash collection en route has raised £300 so far and, in addition, local press and radio have shown considerable interest wherever Pat and *Quercus* have visited. Sponsorship or contributions have also been obtained from various commercial concerns including Hoseasons Holidays, Calor Gas and B.P.

The money raised during the summer will help Boats for the Handicapped to buy a narrowboat fitted out for handicapped passengers and available for holiday hire.

Notwithstanding the amount of money donated or promised, Pat would always be pleased to receive more and you can sponsor her per mile of the total journey, for a mile of your favourite waterway or for a fixed sum, large or small. You can do this by telephone, and the number to ring is Godalming (0483) 869204 and the line will be open until mid-September!

Your River Wey representative on the Branch Committee is now Andy Holbrook who can be contacted by telephone at Camberley (0276) 26954 or by writing c/o The Branch Secretary. Andy has already established contact with the National Trust and we hope that relations between ourselves and the Trust, which have been a bit strained recently, will be restored to their original friendly basis.

Coincidentally we were pleased recently to present the Trust with a cheque for £300 which was part of the proceeds of last year's Guildford Water Festival and we understand that it will be spent on the museum and exhibition project which the Trust are setting up at their headquarters at Dapdune Wharf in Guildford.

Meanwhile, on the Basingstoke canal, your Branch Chairman, Brian Percy, continues to devote much time and energy to ensuring that boats are not unfairly excluded from using the canal where restoration is now approaching completion. Physical reopening of the canal is scheduled for the 1st September this year, although much maintenance work, in addition to restoration, needs to be done before then.

Hopefully everything will be in good order for the rumoured Royal opening in May 1991.

Turning to the River Thames, members may have read before of the sterling work done by Tony Davis in representing their interests on the Users' Committee. With the formation of the National Rivers Authority, Tony has been invited to serve in a similar capacity on the Regional Rivers Advisory Committee, but representing the interests of many river user groups rather than solely the IWA.

Our congratulations to Tony on this accolade, although it presumably means even more of his spare time engaged in this activity. Your comments on the Thames from the boaters' viewpoint are nonetheless welcome and you should write to Tony at 4, Mount Pleasant, Weybridge, Surrey.

OXFORDSHIRE BRANCH REPORT—*Chris Groves*

The last edition of *Windlass* came out just in time for the auction of boat gear at Banbury but unfortunately the item giving information relating to this was omitted. For this we apologise to our members, but even so the event was successful and made over £200, and we owe our thanks to John Clinch and his team of helpers.

The bi-centenary coal run followed soon afterwards and was the subject of quite a lot of publicity. The small event at Banbury to mark the arrival of the coal on the early May Bank holiday was enhanced by the interest and attendance of the local MP, Tony Baldry, who is also Junior Minister responsible for the coal industry, and also we were very pleased that our National Chairman, David Stevenson was able to attend. Although we did not have as much help as we expected from the unloading and distribution of the coal it was carried out in a few days, and many letters of thanks have been received from the elderly people who were nominated by Age Concern to receive it and without any doubt they were all very appreciative and many recalled times when their relatives used to unload the coal when it regularly arrived by canal.

As part of the bi-centenary events, British Waterways are holding a photographic competition, closing date—31st August. Full details of this can be obtained by telephoning the Oxford Canal Office on 0926 812912.

Enclosed with this edition of *Windlass*, to Oxfordshire Branch members only, are details of a proposed dinner on the 24th November and any member of the Association who would like to attend and has not received the details is asked to contact Norma Perry on 0993 831293.

On September 8th there will be a gathering of boats at Braunston Marina with entertainment sponsored by Braunston Marina Ltd. Although this is being organised by the Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Branches, we hope that many of our members will attend, either by water or by road and the date has been fixed in the hope that it will be convenient for those who will be returning from Gloucester.

British Waterways have introduced a mooring scheme at Cropredy which has resulted in much reduced mooring space for visiting boats and we are looking into this as well as many problems elsewhere; any members encountering difficulties in mooring their craft are to let one of the branch committee know.

Speaking of the Committee, following the AGM, there are still four vacancies on the Committee and with impending moves away from the area it is likely that there will be even more, so please will any member who feels that he or she would like to help, on however small or large a basis, contact the Branch Committee and volunteer.

Finally, in the last edition of *Windlass* we did not make it clear that the event on the 1st January was organised by British Waterways, and for this we apologise.

The original idea for anything to be done to celebrate the bi-centenary came from the IWA Oxford Branch, and later other organisations were encouraged to arrange events under the overall banner of the celebrations. The details of Oxford Branch meetings will be found in the Region Events List and it should be remembered that we will continue to meet on the second Wednesday in every month from September onwards at 7.30 for 8 pm in the Wise Alderman public house which is situated on Banbury Road, Kidlington, near Oxford, where there is a good car park and the location is easily found beside the Oxford canal where the Banbury Road crosses it at the north end of Kidlington.

KENT AND EAST SUSSEX BRANCH—*by Angela Madle*

Our AGM was well attended but carried on too long to avoid seeing the programme Secretaries Interesting Slides at the end.

The Branch stall was taken out for the first time this season on the early May Bank holiday to a horse show at Hillendenburgh, near Sevenoaks. Unfortunately, although the day was lovely, the crowds did not materialise and no fortunes were made.

We had a very interesting talk from Jane and Dave Green about their life aboard their boat *Willie No Name* in April.

Our boat trip for the handicapped youngsters on May 19th was once again blessed by excellent weather and everybody arrived on time and a good time was had by all, including the stewards and helpers. These trips were a suggestion of our Secretary in Waterways Fortnight Year about five years ago and have gone from strength to strength since then. We have now acquired a small boat in which we hope to start taking parties out later this year.



Boat trip for the handicapped—May 1990



The Club dinner on May 19th on the trip boat *Rene Roy 4* went swimmingly. We set off just after 7.30 and returned to land at 10.30, all the while enjoying animated conversations and a lovely meal prepared by the boat's new chef, Toby. Even though it was only a small party it was a great success.

South East Region Chairman—Dave Moore enjoying club dinner with IWAKES treasurer and his companion

Illegal Boats in Islington

British Waterways Board issued two press releases in May, one on the 15th and one on the 24th. The one on the 15th stated that they were taking action to remove illegal boats in Islington and that they had sent letters to the owners of the 30 boats currently moored there without authority requesting that they remove them by the 21st May.

The stretch of canal at Vincent Terrace is one which has been earmarked for proper moorings to be located, including residential moorings, and the location of the illegally moored craft was preventing work progressing in this direction.

On the 24th May (three days after the deadline given to the boat owners) the Board issued a press release back-peddalling somewhat and stating that they had met the Islington Council and the local MP and the Board gave the boat owners a further eight weeks to find alternative moorings and 28 day notices are to be issued on Monday 18th. BWB are planning to offer non-residential moorings a mile further along the canal to ease the present situation. However, as the majority of boats at Vincent Terrace are residential this move may not be particularly helpful. Eight of the thirty offending boats had left the site by the 23rd May and, in a letter dated the same date to most of the remainder, Mark Benstead wrote 'British Waterways is not opposed to the residential use of boats but such use requires provision of basic amenities and planning consent from the local borough.'

Guided walks along the Regents Canal

Dr. Essex-Lopresti's successful walks along the Regent's Canal continue through the summer and all walks start at Camden Town underground station and walkers are invited to make a contribution towards IWA funds. Each walk takes about two hours and either goes to Islington or Paddington.

The dates for the walks to Paddington are Tuesday 24th July at 6.30, Tuesday 14th August at 6.30, Sunday 2nd September at 2.30 and Sunday 4th November at 2.30.

Walks to Islington are Tuesday 17th July at 6.30, Sunday 5th August at 2.30, Tuesday 21st August at 6.30, Sunday 7th October at 2.30.

Branch Information

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