

WINDLASS

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1/6



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

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WINDLASS

FEBRUARY - - - 1966

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

ON December 16th 1965, perhaps as an additional Christmas present, the British Waterways Board published its anxiously awaited final report, to which they gave the title "Facts About the Waterways". Before I commence to comment upon its contents, I would like to say that I consider it to be a most factual and comprehensive survey of our canal system as it is to-day, and it is obvious that it has been prepared with great care and is the result of considerable effort, much of which has been devoted to discovering and recording detailed information about every principal canal in the country. All this has resulted in a well-documented survey that is well above the normal standard of H.M.S.O. publications, and which gives credit to the Board who compiled it.

I feel that before one criticizes the Report it is necessary to appreciate the brief under which the B.W.B. have had to work, and from which the Report has been prepared. The Board was sent up by the Transport Act in 1962 and was given a 5 year interim period in which to study and report upon the canals of this country. During this time they were bound to maintain navigations to the same standard as they were when they assumed control, and every effort had to be made to reduce the annual deficit to the lowest possible level. At the end of the 5 year period i.e. 1967 "they would be required to put all those waterways where relief from the obligation to maintain as navigations had not been obtained (i.e. those which are not closed) into a fully navigable condition". Of course further legislation can alter this situation, but at present no alterations have been made.

This then is the Board's problem, and they have tackled it by successfully reducing the annual deficit by a quarter of a million pounds—a not inconsiderable achievement, they have also published two reports, an Interim Report which appeared in December 1963, and now this Final Report which gives their official view of the canals to-day.

Whilst one can readily appreciate the difficulties which confront the Board, I cannot agree with their findings, for throughout the Report's length of over 100 pages, there lurks the constant impression that the Board is of the opinion that the canals, with few exceptions, are finished. True they admit that there is a small potential for pleasure boating, true they state that commercial carrying makes a profit on waterways like the Aire and Calder, Calder and Hebble, Sheffield and South Yorkshire, Trent Navigation, Weaver, Lee, Gloucester and Sharpness Canal and the River Severn, but these are the favoured exceptions. Carrying on the narrow canals they consider a thing of the past, and over all hangs the gloom of despondancy. At no place in the Report is there even a hint of any visionary thought as to what could be done to remedy the present lamentable situation. Their attitude seems to be that these are the facts, nothing can get better and indeed things are worsening daily.

This implication makes it a most dangerous report, for when viewed in isolation by people in high places having no knowledge of the canals, such people must almost inevitably accept the views put forward that the majority of canals no longer fulfil, or indeed have ever fulfilled any great commercial function, and that they have only a limited future for pleasure cruising and for use as water channels.

No attempt is made at any time to give the reasons for the decay and decline of the canal system over the past 150 years, or indeed to compare that decline with the remarkable growth of continental waterways during the same period. A typical example of this negative attitude is seen in that section dealing with narrow boat carrying, where one reads that "the history of narrow boat carrying is one of long-continuing decline". No effort is made to explain the varied reason for this decline, not least among which was the buying up of the Canal Companies by the railways, in an effort, regrettably successful, to stifle and defeat a more economic form of transport, and one that offered a serious threat to the future of the railways themselves. Can it be that the Board is conscious of the fact that where private firms have managed to operate boats at a profit they themselves have incurred heavy losses? Here again the tremendously inherent danger of the report is obvious, for only those with a knowledge of canals will know the other side of the carrying picture.

Neglect of the Past

I agree that the Board's brief was to state the facts as they appear today, but present conditions reflect the neglect of the past, and it is regrettable that no effort was made to examine that past. It was Patrick Henry who said, "I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging the future but by the past." I wonder how long it will be before successive governments learn the truth of those words and relate the condition of canals today to the intrigue and malice they have been almost constantly subjected to in the past?

One point though on commercial carrying that I was heartened to see was the stress it laid on the importance of security of maintenance for a reasonable period, it suggested 25 years, if trade on the canals is to expand. Unfortunately this fine thought applied only to those canals already listed, but at least the idea is there, and perhaps some day it may spread.

In line with previous policy the Board has refused to consider the system as a complete and integrated one, and instead has treated each canal on its own merits. While I agree that every canal should be examined separately, they should then, so to speak, be tied together, for one is often dependent on the other. They have also failed to recognise the vast potential revenue represented by the anglers, of whom there are over three million in this country. Those of them who fish the canals pay very little for that privilege and very often old angling rights to riparian owners bear little resemblance to modern costs and are long over due for amended legislation. It is a fact, and an interesting one, that if everyone who fished on the canals paid an additional 10/- per year, the Board's annual deficit would virtually

disappear. Yet the Board's attitude to angling is to include their revenue from it under the heading "Other Revenue", where it collects a mention of two lines. Whilst accepting pleasure boating as a form of revenue and indeed giving it its own heading, they then proceed to give the impression that the cost of collection barely compensates for the amount received. Admittedly the boating boom may have slackened slightly, but in an affluent society with increasing leisure and a growing interest in boats, the canals are ideally placed to reap a rich harvest—providing of course, they are still there to do so.

It is a matter of regret and possibly disappointment that whilst the Board acknowledges the help and advice they have received from various voluntary organisations such as the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust, at no time do they mention or even hint at the existence of the I.W.A. This is particularly strange when they stress the fact that "solid, assured, and practical help is likely to speak louder in influencing the future of individual waterways than by any amount of wordy agitation". Surely we of all organisations have proved over and over again that we will do any job however menial however difficult, if it will help to restore, maintain or improve a navigation? We do this because we believe in canals; we certainly do not demand official praise, but it would be nice to be appreciated at times.

One thing that I was delighted to see in the report was the statement that the lower section of the Grand Union which includes the Paddington Arm, the Regents Canal and the Hertford Union "offer a great potential in avoiding road congestion in and around the metropolis" and as such, although not financially solvent, should be included with the Caledonian and Crinan Canals in a Special Group which should be subsidised and retained, this is excellent news. I was also pleased to see elsewhere that whilst the Board welcomes the plans to develop the environs of the Lee into a Regional Park, they make the important and valid point that such a development must not be allowed to "hinder the continued life of the Lee as an important navigation with all that it contributes (and the more that it could) to the alleviation of congestion." It is a pity that this last remark is not elaborated on at any point in the Report.

The Cost

This Final Report consists to a large extent of figures, and these show in the final analysis that the sum involved between eliminating the unprofitable canals over a period of 10/12 years and of keeping them open for pleasure boating and possible commerce, is approximately £300,000 per year. The annual cost to the nation, irrespective of whichever decision is made is £600,000 per year. No figures are quoted as to the annual cost to the nation during the 10/12 year elimination period, but it must obviously be well in excess of £300,000 which will eventually

represent the annual saving. The Board quote elimination costs of £6,000 per mile for rural narrow canals, and £9,000 per mile for rural wide canals. I personally consider these costs have been underestimated, but even if one agrees them to be correct, the cost of eliminating 500 miles of a rural wide canal is approximately £4,500,000 which represents the cost of subsidising the uneconomic waterways for 16 years. What I find quite amazing is that when all is said and done all that is at stake is a sum of £300,000 per year—an amount which in this age of colossal national expenditure i.e. motorways which will cost £1,500m. over the next five years, is so trifling and petty as to be absurd. I think that

it is the small additional cost of retention that will exert the greatest influence for the greatest good in our struggle to save the canals for surely no government for such a very small saving would eliminate a heritage which can give so much to the future?

There are two sides to every coin, and it was our old ally "Motor Boat and Yachting" who in their excellent review of the Report compared it with our own "New Waterways" published last June. Whether or not the Government will be so enlightened remains to be seen, but all those who believe in the waterways should fervently hope and pray that our recommendations are remembered.

Branch Christmas Draw 1965

1st Prize (Cruise) went to ticket No. 10172—J. Warburg, "Leisurelea", Hamm Court, Weybridge.
2nd Prize (Electric Blanket) 03517—Mrs. H. Field, 12 Chestnut Close, Frittenden.

Other Prizewinners

04554—R. F. Jones, 22 Manor Road, Hampden Park, Eastbourne.
00287—E. Davis, 2 Wincanton Road, Southfields, S.W.18.
21957—Major J. Paton, Gate House, Frittenden, Nr. Cranbrook.
16265—J. J. Brooker, 4 Hickman Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford.
21708—C. W. Groves, Gable Cottage, Binfield Heath, Henley-on-Thames.
04571—J.A.T.R., Queen's Head, 61 High Street, Chelmsford.
03363—G. A. Cook, "Hope View", Glazebury, Nr. Manchester.
00019—G. Dale-Smith, "Meirionfa", Beddgelert, Nr. Caernarvon.
14730—Mrs. B. K. Fitter, "Truneys", Temple Gardens, Staines.
02883—Mrs. Franklin, "Beechfield", Holbrook, Horsham.
00279—S. Daniell, "Whitelands", Hill Brow Road, Esher.
12507—K. J. Grainger, Fairfield House, New Town, Uckfield.
06941—A. Brewer, Old Cedars, Woodlands Close, Bickley.
24328—C. E. Marshall, 19 Benskin Road, Watford.
20682—P. Bird, "The Sutors", Tite Hill, Englefield Green.
02264—Mrs. Z. Burr, 525 Uxbridge Road, Hayes.
20327—K. J. Grainger, Fairfield House, New Town, Ockfield.
16679—P. Dawes, 14 Hamm Court, Weybridge.
03446—J. Wilson, c/o W. J. Tatam Ltd., Forum House, 15/18 Lime Street, E.C.3.

06423—N. R. Chaplin, 63 Franklyn Road, Walton-on-Thames
21018—Mr. Townsend, 28 Kensington Mansions, S.W.5.
14900—M. Trask, 35 Frankland Road, Croxley Green.
03808—Mrs. Samuel, 44 Fountain House, Park Street, W.1.
05474—Mr. Ashford, Fairmount, Heath Road, Woking.
02375—Mrs. B. M. Ayling, 81 Pollards Hill South, Norbury, S.W.16.
03844—Mr. Plowman, 4 Melbourne Court, Welwyn Garden City.
14739—J. Byron, 5 Ashview Close, Ashford.
02022—A. J. Richmond, 18 Malyon Road, Witham.

We regret that there was some confusion over the price of the raffle tickets. It was in no way the fault of our Press Officer, Mr. Hugh McKnight, that the wrong price was given in his circular letter, where the amount was given as 1/- instead of 6d. In fact no one has suffered who paid the larger amount, as they were awarded extra tickets.

We extend our thanks and congratulations to David Harman for his hard work and success.

We would also like to thank Medway Hire Cruisers Ltd. for donating the first prize of a week's cruise, Geoffrey Dibb for so many copies of his Waterways series as prizes, and Stanley and Jean Tims for having the draw at their house (Capt. Munk officiating) and sending out the prizes.

Finally, our thanks to all who bought and sold tickets, making this one of the most successful draws ever, and ensuring plenty, to quote our Chairman, of "Jam". We hope all winners were pleased with their prizes.

Coming Events . . . Recent Activities

FEBRUARY 17th. WINTER MEETING at Bridge House, 7 for 7.30. London Bridge 7 p.m. for 7.30. Mr. J. Watson Parton, of the River Thames Society, "A River Thames Evening".

MARCH 17th. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Tenth Annual General Meeting of the London and Home Counties Branch of the Inland Waterways Association Limited will be held at the Bridge House Restaurant, London Bridge, London, S.E.1. on Thursday, the 17th day of March 1966 at 7.30 p.m. for the purpose of transacting the business of the Annual General Meeting.

The Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. G. Spratt, and the following members of the Committee retire by rotation: Messrs. Cooper, Salmon and Street. All these have indicated their willingness to stand for re-election.

Captain E. A. Quick having been co-opted on to the Committee during the past year retires in accordance with the Branch Rules and offers himself for re-election. It is requested that any other nominations for election be made in writing to the Honorary Secretary to reach him not later than Wednesday, 2nd March 1966.

Any member who wishes to place any other resolution before the meeting is also requested to inform the Honorary Secretary by the same date.

After the formal business Mr. Robert Aickman will give an address on matters of current interest. This will be followed by a film of the 1965 Branch Rally at Harlow.

DAVID HARMAN,
Honorary Secretary.

FEBRUARY 19th/20th. WORKING PARTY AT PYRFORD. A further working party has been arranged in the Pyrford area over this weekend. The work will again mainly consist of tree cutting but there may be some other jobs to be done as well. It has been suggested that the working party should be spread over two days to enable members who cannot manage a Sunday to take part. Meet at Pyrford Lock at 10.00 a.m. on both days. Anyone requiring transport from the railway stations (Byfleet and New Haw) should contact Tim Dodwell in advance.

MARCH 19th/20th. STRATFORD CANAL WORKING PARTY. It is hoped to organise a party of members to go and work on the Stratford Canal over this weekend; those interested please contact Tim Dodwell, who will supply further details.

APRIL 29th. ANNUAL DINNER AT THE ZOO. Please note the date given in the last issue was wrong, the dinner will be on the 29th, NOT the 20th. Please see display panel, and use the application form for tickets.

WHITSUN. BRANCH RALLY AT UXBRIDGE. Patron, Earl Alexander of Tunis. In conjunction with the Uxbridge Cruising Club. Canoe races - raffle - civic ceremony - pleasure trips - balloon race - film slide show - free car park for land based ralliers - cruises to Slough - and many more exciting events and activities. Further news in the next issue of *Windlass*, and in the official rally programme. Plan your Whitsun Holiday now, UXBRIDGE.

AUGUST 5th—9th. NATIONAL RALLY AT MARPLE.

WORKING PARTY AT LIMPLEY STOKE

ON the morning of November 20th a number of Branch members made their way by road to Limpley Stoke. En route some of the party spotted a stern paddlewheel vessel proceeding along the Kennet and Avon canal through Devizes. Giving chase on foot they were just in time to see Father Christmas arrive at the wharf and become engulfed in a noisy throng of children.

The party, 14 strong, assembled at Limpley Stoke at midday, and began assisting the K. & A. Trust members. The work consisted of clearing weeds and digging out faulty puddle from the bed of the drained section. The local group seemed well organised, having not only an autoscylthe (a mechanical weed cutter) but also a considerable length of light railway with tipping trucks loaned by A. E. Parr Ltd., running along the towpath. The latter provided considerable amusement not only to the younger members of the party, but also to some adults!

Some members stayed overnight with friends, some at a youth hostel, and the remainder at the headquarters of the Bath Sea Cadet Corps. Here they were well accommodated and some thoughtful person had even switched on the heaters before the party arrived. In the evening (after a short inadvertant tour of Bath by some) a meeting of the I.W.A. South Western Branch was attended. Films were shown, including some of Stratford working parties and the Stratford Rally. Between films, auctions were held of an extraordinary variety of goods, the London party joining in.

Sunday proved mainly dry, but a little colder. On the way to the site a stop was made at Bathampton to examine a landslip which threatens the canal and has resulted in a short section being isolated by stop planks for safety. The Dundas aqueduct was also visited, this being the site of the beginning of the derelict Somerset Coal Canal. The lock chamber leading to the K. & A. is now only a flower bed.

Work continued, apart from a short break for lunch, until dusk. Tools were returned to the hut, and after coffee and cakes members began to disperse. What was seen of the countryside prompted several remarks that a return visit would be welcome; there is certainly enough work to make it worthwhile. The thanks of the party are due to the Sea Cadet

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E. H. PULL

WORKING PARTY AT NEW HAW

THE encouraging total of 37 people took part in the working party held on the Wey Navigation on Sunday, 12th December.

Besides members of the Branch these included a strong contingent from our members, the Way Cruising Club, and local houseboat residents and Mr. Vincent Lucatelli. Mr. Lucatelli has recently joined the maintenance staff and owns and lives on board the Motor Narrow Boat *Cantley*. He and Mr. Avery has spent some time in the previous week marking the trees which were to be cut down, and when the working party arrived it looked as though there was far more to do than could be done in one day.

We were very fortunate to have the assistance of our member, Mr. Bill Hicks, with his tripping launch, *Parmachene Belle*, who provided a ferry service between the lock and the working site and performed many other useful functions.

Although the task appeared formidable, nevertheless, with the assistance of two power saws brought along by members of the working party, work proceeded at a tremendous rate and at the end of the day not only had all the marked trees been cut down, but a large proportion had been trimmed and stacked and the brush wood burnt.

This was a most successful operation and it is hoped it will often be repeated in the future. Our very sincere thanks are due to Mr. Hicks for the use of his boat, to Messrs. Radbourne and Hudgell who provided the power saws, and as well, of course, to all those who worked so hard. The National Trust River Wey Navigation have particularly asked for their appreciation to be passed on to those concerned.

T. DODWELL

WINTER MEETINGS

THE gloomy days of winter have been enlivened by two excellent meetings at Bridge House. The November one took the form of a waterways quiz organised by Capt. Munk, which tested thoroughly our knowledge, memories, and capacity for blind guessing. Capt. Munk conducted the quiz with great good humour, and most generously awarded several prizes. No one succeeded in scoring 100%!

The second part of the evening was given by Hugh McKnight, and was a show of the magnificent slides he took on the way to the Blackburn Rally. For those who had not made the trip it was a fascinating look at those most beautiful waterways of the North, and a pleasant reminder for those who had been.

The December meeting took us further afield. Dr. Roger Pilkington showed an exciting collection of slides of the European waterways on which he cruised in *Thames Commodore* last summer. The waterways of the continent were, compared with ours, as the motorway is to the country lane. The degree of automation and use of closed circuit television being particularly exciting. The enormous barges with their batteries of ship to shore telephones, and living quarters guaranteed to make the modern housewife green with envy were also striking.

A collection was taken at the meeting for refugee children, which raised over £15.

NEW BRANCH PUBLICATION

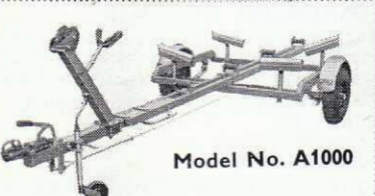
The Essex and Suffolk Stour—Sudbury to Brantham Lock, a handbook of historical and general information on the river, with a detailed description of the navigation, and map. Illustrated, and with coloured cover. This is the third in the series *Waterways of the Home Counties*, published by the Branch, and is in every way a worthy companion to the already known and commended handbooks to the Wey and Medway.



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AROUND THE WATERWAYS

RIVER THAMES

The Branch has received the following letter:-

THAMES CONSERVANCY

Burdett House,
15, Buckingham Street,
London, W.C.2.

Dear Sir,

Pleasure Craft on the River Thames Registration Fees and Lock Tolls

The Conservators have had under consideration the rapid growth of the traffic through the locks and are of the opinion that a simplification of the present methods of collecting tolls for the passage of pleasure craft through the locks would be of considerable benefit to the river users in many ways as well as to reduce the delays which arise through the congestion of vessels at locks during the busy season. It is considered that a combined annual charge to cover the registration fee and free passage through all the locks on the River Thames under the Conservators' jurisdiction is the best solution but it will be necessary for the Conservators to promote a Bill in Parliament to amend the relevant provisions of the present Thames Conservancy Acts.

The proposed combined charges are set out in Appendix A to this letter and these have been based upon an evaluation of the *actual* receipts from registration fees and lock passes and tolls in respect of each type, size and class of vessel in the two years 1963 and 1964. It is emphasized that the total revenue from these combined charges will only equal in total the actual revenue under the present system so that no element of increased income is being sought by the Conservators. In addition it was felt that certain additional concessions should be granted of which the most important are

- (i) discount for launch charges paid for three years in advance.
- (ii) short period registration of small craft.
- (iii) reduced charge for vessels registered for the first time on or after 1st September in any year.

A Bill as referred to above was deposited in November 1965 and it is not anticipated that the revision could come into effect before 1967.

The Conservators naturally wish that these proposals and their background should be made known and explained to the various Bodies and Associations of river users and, at this stage, this letter and the enclosures are intended to briefly indicate the Conservators' proposals. If you require any further information on, or would like to discuss any particular aspects of, these proposals please let me know in order that the information may be forwarded or a meeting arranged.

I am most anxious, if at all possible, that you should know, in advance of the Bill, what our pro-

posals are, and be in accord with the new proposed arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

G. E. WALKER

Editor's Note.—As Appendix A referred to is a lengthy schedule of charges, we do not reprint it here. Briefly, the amount payable will be that of the current annual licences, plus the cost of a lock pass for seven locks, e.g. 20'-30' cruiser would pay £12 a year.

BRANTHAM LOCK

FOR some time now the River Stour Action Committee have been concerned at the condition of Brantham Lock, where a large hole has existed behind the lock wall. This hole was steadily enlarging and if not checked it was feared would meet the channel above the lock, causing the upper gates to be by-passed.

In order to prevent this from happening, the Branch committee had authorised the financing of repairs to the wall, and at one stage the Action Committee had requested help to carry out the repairs. In November the form of repairs was decided upon and soil piled on site ready for the repairs to be carried out the following weekend. Before this came though the wall suddenly collapsed, having been undermined.

Possibly as a result of the extensive publicity given on both Television channels and daily newspapers the South Essex Waterworks Company, who we claim are responsible for the upkeep of the lock, announced that as a "good will gesture" they were to repair the damage. This has since been done. The Branch Committee have agreed that the money they were to have donated towards the repairs may instead be used on other repairs to the lock and the Action Committee are now investigating what this money can best be used on.

There is still in stock a few copies of the Action Committee's report to the National Trust suggesting that they take over the navigation installations on the river. Persons wishing to purchase a copy should send 7/8d. to J. E. Marriage, Budds Farmhouse, Highwood, Chelmsford, Essex.

CHELMER AND BLACKWATER NAVIGATION

THE contract for the construction of the flood prevention scheme in Chelmsford to the rivers Can and Chelmer is due to finish on April 1st. The new sluice has now been finished and the boat rollers round it, which will, for the first time, link the two rivers with the Chelmer and Blackwater Canal, are now almost finished.

The Branch is proposing to organise a cruise of boats in April to celebrate the construction of the rollers, which were built at their and the Chelmsford Boating Club's suggestion. The cruise will start

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at Waterhouse Lane and end at Little Beddow. The Canal Company have indicated that owing to water shortage it will unfortunately not be possible for the locks to be operated, so craft must be confined to those which can be portaged.

The Branch is, however, hoping that members with dinghies and punts will come along as well as canoes to make a better show. Portaging is fairly easy in most places. Outboards, providing they do not pollute the water are permitted. Further details, send s.a.e. to J. E. Marriage, Budds Farm, Highwood, Chelmsford, Essex.

J. E. MARRIAGE

RIVER WEY

A NEW bottom gate is being fitted to Mill Mead Lock, and the lock is out of use until further notice. Bower's Lock will be closed from April 13th to May 26th for reconstruction and fitting of new upper lock gate. Trigg's Lock will be closed between May 11th and 26th for bridge repair and lower gates.

The National Trust have available leaflets setting out their regulations, and charges. There is a special reduction for I.W.A. members, on the visitors' special return passes which last for two weeks. The reduction, of 25%, must be applied for in advance. Copies of the scale of charges, regulations and navigation instructions can be obtained from the River Wey Navigation Office, Guildford.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

DEAR MISS JOHNSTONE,

Please may I ask the courtesy of *Windlass* to record my very deep appreciation of the great generosity of the I.W.A. members to our Canal Christmas Fund? Some lovely cash donations are revealed in our balance sheet. But we are also very grateful to those kind donations of clothes, groceries, toys and sweets. I travelled 1,074 miles around the canals of the Home Counties; I distributed 330 toys, 12 lbs. sweets, 14 lbs. of fruit, and balloons, hats and crackers galore. I suppose I must have given away 5 cwt. of clothes, and we had three grand parties. Please assure the various helpers of our deep appreciation of their unselfish service. Thanks also for the helpful donation of £5 from the good I.W.A.'s funds, it was a great help.

Yours sincerely

F. J. CHAPMAN

The Canal Boatman's Institute,
The Butts,
Brentford.

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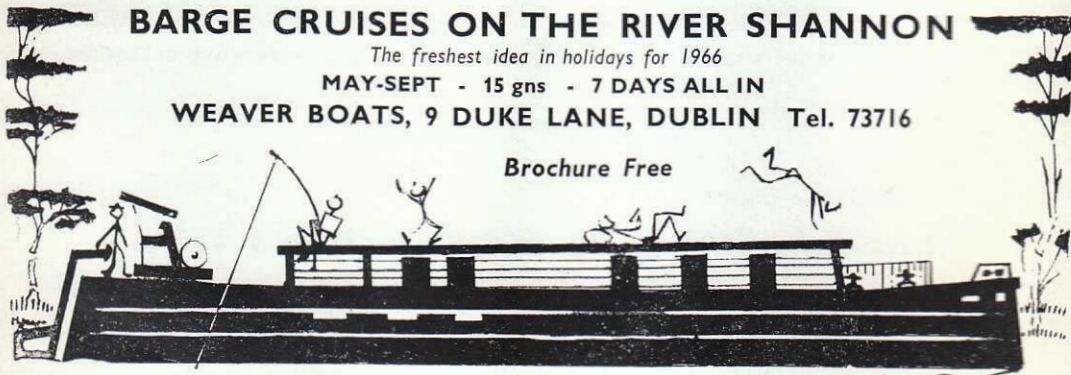
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It's snowing.

Never mind that. You go down and make a nice cup of tea—and bring the post up with you.

You expecting something?

Of course: that canal cruising holiday brochure I sent for.

Can't imagine summer. Wonder what the canals are like now.

You go and get that brochure and we'll see if it's got icicles on it.

Where did you send for it then?

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From The Editor's Cabin . . .

QUITE a lot of you liked the feature "Cynical Songs for Battered Boaters", and I feel sure some of you must have some good titles of your own. Why not write and let me know them? If I receive enough good suggestions to make up another Top Twenty I will use it in a future issue. No inventions, please; in fact composer or recording artist's name must be mentioned.

One of the less brilliant things about the last issue was the removal of the I.W.A. head office to an entirely fictitious address. I visited the new office in Regents Park Road recently, and can only describe them as palatial and imposing, with a wonderful view from the windows overlooking Primrose Hill. I seem to remember reading elsewhere a request for a chandelier to adorn the main office. I do endorse this; a chandelier is exactly what it needs. Surely someone has a few spare ones lying around?

A new supply of binders for *Windlass* will be available soon. They will hold 24 copies and will be bound in dark blue. Some of you have been wanting these badly, so now is your chance.

Our committee member Stanley Tims had the right idea just before Christmas about use of waterways. He took his baby son, John Cameron, to be christened by boat. Just at dusk one Sunday some fisherman at the steps by St. Peter's church were surprised when one of the large Tims' cruisers drew in, and a party of people disembarked, the baby carried by his godmother-to-be. It was at this church that Jean

The column for gossip, scandal, and tittle-tattle and Stanley Tims were married, they used the river then, travelling from the church in a launch.

If anyone has borrowed any of the Editor's books, would they please return them forthwith? On looking through my shelves I was horrified to see how many were absent. Rolt's "Green and Silver" being one of them.

May I take the opportunity of having a column of my own for once to make a few suggestions to those of you who may be thinking of writing for *Windlass*? I would rather have typewritten contributions than handwritten ones; but I would far rather have handwritten items than none at all. But it would help greatly if you would all remember to use block capitals for all proper names. It is often possible to guess a word from the context; but correct spelling of a proper name is different matter. People are so touchy about how their names are spelt. I myself am no exception; I hate being addressed as Johnson.

The Council for Nature is holding its Second Wild Life Exhibition at Alexandra Palace from April 21st to May 1st. The Association has been invited to have a stand. The problem of staffing the stand is a difficult one, as the exhibition is open all day. Would any members of the Branch prepared to help please get in touch with the Branch Chairman Mr. Aplin as soon as possible. It is strongly felt that we should be represented at this type of Exhibition.

Cover Picture

THE Editor cracked her impatient whip at *Windlass's* long suffering Staff Photographer Hugh McKnight, saying: "We went to press last week. Where the hell's the February picture?" Miss Johnstone had made her point: copy dates should be strictly adhered to. Far from adhering to anything, Mr. McKnight was frankly stuck! What with having to select cover illustrations for *Windlass*, *The Bulletin* and sundry other publications which Mr. McKnight is too modest to mention, life seemed to be hardly worth living. However, the vision of the Editor's impatient whip was unquestionably the greater evil, so the machinery for finding a solution was oiled and put into operation.

The thought of that whip sparked off the first of a series of inspirations which set the Photographer searching through his files of extinct canal characters.

Having discarded several faded daguerrotypes of a mid-Nineteenth Century boatman flogging his emaciated donkey up Tardebigge Flight, he came upon a female figure who bore a striking resemblance to his tormentor: a resemblance further echoed by the flowing horse's tail attached to traditionally decorated Ram's Head. By now there was no holding back his creative genius! Then followed an extended period in his Frankenstein-like laboratory, where spells were woven and incantations chanted. (Actually, it was all frightfully complicated: Cf. *The Ilford Manual of Photography*.)

"But what's it all in aid of?" wails I.W.A. Member No. 4033.

A sad face from the past, which has long wondered at the plight of our canal system. How much longer must she grieve?

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VOYAGE INTO SUSSEX

OR A RUN UP THE ARUN

Part 3 by T. CHRISTIE

We had to lower the mast once more for the railway bridge at Stoke, and afterwards sailed blissfully down towards the Black Rabbit Inn which stands on a chalk ledge above the water. There is a wharf and steps here whilst behind the pub and beyond the motor road chalk cliffs rise vertically to be crowned with fine clumps of beeches. Our route now lay away towards open country. Arundel Castle appeared across the meadows, and we knew we had not far to go. Soon the moorings began on the outskirts of the town, and we stopped for a tidy-up and something to eat. Charlie went into Littlehampton and returned triumphantly waving clutch springs.

Arundel Bridge, like Pulborough, has strong rapids at low water, and is known to be dangerous. Navigation should only be attempted by those with a powerful boat or a sound knowledge of boat handling. There is a very active boating community here, whose moorings of piles and ladders stretch half a mile above the bridge. Most boats were for estuary use, although I understand several explore upstream. Just below the bridge lies an Arun wide boat in excellent repair, and belonging to the Sussex River Board.

Probably the best view of Arundel is obtained from this reach. In my opinion it rivals Windsor seen from the Thames. The town is dominated by the castle perched on a bluff, and the fine Roman Church recently created cathedral of the new diocese of Arundel and Brighton. Houses of every sort scramble up the hill to get a grandstand view of the Arun as it winds across the flats to the English channel.

Below Arundel the Littlehampton Harbour Board takes over the care of the river, and a small charge is made for navigation. The banks have been built up and lined with blocks of chalk to resist the wash of the tide, and passing craft. Traffic was busy down here, and as we motored down punching the tide, we passed several tripping boats and private powered craft. The Downs receded into the distance as we wound this way and that. Sea spray tingled our nostrils and a fresh breeze rippled through the miles of waving grasses on either side.

We called our final halt at Ford railway bridge, a fixed structure since 1956, to examine the junction with the Portsmouth and Arundel Canal. Unfortunately there is very little to see except a reed filled ditch trodden in by cattle. Even this fades away to a shallow depression beyond the first road. Unless one knew of the canal it might be mistaken for a sewage ditch from some farm. The 17th century Ship and Anchor still stands although bereft

of a licence and is now a tea cottage and office for the pleasant, clean and quiet camping site nearby. Anyone wishing to sleep by the remains of the Portsmouth and Arundel could do worse than book in here. There is good fishing in the river over the sea embankment, and on a sunny day the atmosphere is fresh and relaxing.

I returned to the boat to find Charlie chatting excitedly to the crew of a fibreglass boat which had drawn alongside. They were saying how much they, and fellow club members at Littlehampton wished they could get through to the Wey and Thames via the canal. We told them that there were hundreds of Thames craft who would like to reach the Arun, the Isle of Wight, the Solent, Chichester, Poole and Portsmouth harbours and elsewhere, but as the canal is impassable, they are forced to trail, or have trailed their craft each year. We came to the conclusion that if enough pressure was applied at both ends, the possibility might one day be seriously considered. Let us hope soon.

And so on down to the sea. It was close on high water when we set off on our last spin. To our right we could see the grim buildings of Ford prison. Charlie, his eyes sparkling shouted "Plenty of restoration labour at hand!" It was not long before we passed beneath the swing bridge at Littlehampton, and saw the open sea at last.

This part of Littlehampton is a real watery place; yacht clubs abound and rows of elegant yachts nod with the gentle swell. On the opposite bank the waterfront is pleasing enough with jumbled cottages and warehouses sunning themselves. The sea is dark green and foamy, and the air filled with the cry of gulls. We took a run down to the Bar, where I took my last slide. After trying one or two spots, we were recommended the British Railway Coal Coaster Wharf above the swing bridge, and accordingly made fast. Charlie paid the harbour dues, 1/- from Arundel. After a brief discussion of the trip, I said good-bye to Charlie, and took the train to Victoria. Charlie had a few more days, and planned to beat round the coast the Newhaven.

What is my opinion of the Arun Navigation as a waterway? It is like most of our waterways, unique. It has just the right balance of adventure and relaxation. The tide is not really fearful, but strong enough to be exciting and the channel below Pulborough is quite clear—there are no apparent shoals. We kept to the centre or the outsides of bends, met with no trouble even with the centre plate down. At the widest near Littlehampton the river is little more than 200 yards wide. I should say it is quite safe for the novice and would make a good ground for

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learning the finer points of tidal navigation. There is no formality or charges above Arundel Bridge, simply put your boat in and enjoy yourself. There is a speed limit of 6 knots, which is ample speed for the river.

If anybody wants a week-end afloat in the peace of the Sussex Downs let him trail his boat to Pulborough, Arundel or Littlehampton, and discover for himself all that the Arun has to offer. For those fancying a country tramp, there seems to be a tow-path of sorts throughout the length, although in places the vegetation can be hostile! The canoeist who can portage has the charming Rother at his disposal. As for the Wey and Arun Junction Canal; after a thrilling week-end on the Arun one word is fixed in my mind:

"REDEMPTION!"

NEW MEMBERS

BRANCH MEMBERSHIP

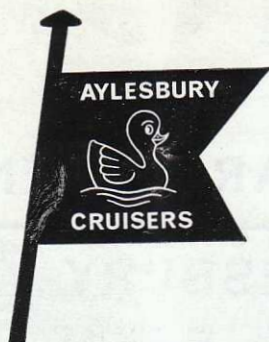
Members who pay their annual subscription by Bankers Order are reminded that these require amending to allow for the increased cost of Branch Membership, which, at the A.G.M. in April was raised to 10/- per year, an increase of 5/-. Junior membership remains unaltered at 5/- per year.

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

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FREE BROCHURE



AT ARM'S LENGTH

**AYLESBURY
BOAT BASIN**



Come and visit our large floating display of new and used narrow beam cruisers and narrow boats. Moorings available here and at Marsworth.

Aylesbury Boat Basin can be reached by canal at the end of the Aylesbury arm of the Grand Union Canal or by road, situated on the main A.413, close to the town centre.

NEW BOATS for early delivery

23ft.	4 berth centre cockpit	Dolphin		£1,100
20ft.	2/4 berth aft cockpit	Dolphin		£ 750
19ft.	2/4 berth aft cockpit	Dolphin		£ 595
22ft.	4 berth Six Ten Freeman			£1,545
24ft.	4 berth Burnham, Stuart 8			£1,575

If your boat is for sale, please send us details.

Open 7 days a week. Mondays by appointment.



AYLESBURY BOAT CO. LTD.

The Boat Basin, Aylesbury, Bucks.

Telephone Aylesbury 2209