

WINDLASS

No. 67 MAY 1968

1/6



(R Snell)

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Journal of THE LONDON and HOME COUNTIES BRANCH of
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WINDLASS

MAY 1968

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

1967 - 1968

THE PAST YEAR has again been one of considerable achievement and success for your Branch, and one in which general membership participation reached record levels. Prominent amongst many events was the publication of the Government's long awaited Transport Bill which acknowledged the priceless amenity value of the waterways system. I have already commented at length on the Bill and will not repeat what I have said already, but I would mention that there are clauses which are dangerous and harmful to waterways. These include the repeal of the public's right of navigation on the nationalised waterways, and the proposed right of a Minister to vary the navigation standards without public enquiry or Parliamentary approval. It is vital that such issues as these are fought for and not forgotten in the overall satisfaction at the Government's support for our Inland Waterways.

The principal event of the year for your Branch was the annual Boat Rally which was held at Tonbridge. Fifty boats attended, of which one third came from the Thames - a fine effort. The Rally Site was in the grounds of the castle into which several thousands came during the weekend. Press coverage was excellent and the efforts of Derek Salmon and the Rally Committee ensured that our first Rally on the Medway was a highly successful one. Other activities on the Medway include the proposal by the River Authority to provide landing stages below all locks. Two have already been built and the remaining seven are promised for this year. As a direct result of the Rally, Tonbridge Council have agreed to provide a landing stage near the town bridge at a place where last year it was necessary to secure the services of a working party before boats could even moor.

On the Wey members have manned Pyrford Lock each week-end throughout the summer and I am most grateful for their efforts. Ttiggs lock chamber has been reconstructed and Papercourt lock chamber will be rebuilt in the near future. On the Kennet & Avon the notorious girders below Bridge Street Bridge have been removed with no subsequent report of collapse, and this removal will help considerably the arrangements being made for this year's Boat Rally which is to be held at Reading during the Whitsun weekend, 1st.-3rd. June. Reading is well served by train and road, and I hope to see many members at the Rally during the weekend.

The Trust proposed some while ago for the river Stour is very shortly to become a reality and this should benefit the navigation considerably. Whilst the Basingstoke Canal may seem neglected it is certainly not forgotten. Unfortunately all offers to restore and improve navigation are severely hampered by the negative attitude of the Canal Company who give no encouragement to any offers of assistance. We have, however, co-operated with the newly

formed Surrey and Hants Canal Society who have already achieved one success in persuading the Council to rebuild the bridge at Fleet with the statutory 6ft. head room. The Lee and Stort is in good condition and many boats now use these rivers. Harlow Town Council have commenced work on their Park Plan which includes the provision of mooring facilities which represents a delayed achievement for the Harlow Rally held at the town in 1965.

The Lock/Licence scheme on the Thames has worked well and record numbers of boats have passed through the locks. The Grand Union Canal Society founded in May 1967, on which we are strongly represented, has had a very active year. Public meetings have been held, boat trips organised for Councillors and the fight for the retention of the Slough Arm has begun. This will not be an easy struggle, and if we are to succeed it will need the support of us all.

"Windlass" has undergone a complete transformation and now appears ten times a year instead of the previous six. This means that we can give a better, quicker and more up-to-date service, and I am sure that this change will be to the benefit of the Branch and its members. These alterations will increase the work and time spent by its Editor in preparing each issue and I am very grateful to Claire Johnstone for so readily undertaking the additional responsibility.

The year was remarkable for the outstanding success of the Christmas Draw. This was organised for the first time, and I sincerely hope not the last, by Derek Clements, and the Draw made a profit slightly in excess of £400, our highest total so far. This achievement was made possible by the generous support given by yourselves, and I thank you all for this magnificent effort which will enable the Branch to play a greater financial part in the struggle for the retention of the waterways. Our summer and winter programme so ably organised by Jim Street, was varied and extremely well supported, and our winter meetings attracted between 150 and 200 people so that "house full" notices appeared regularly. We are looking for a larger venue.

The most impressive and encouraging development of the past year has been the rapid increase in membership participation. When I became Chairman of this Branch in 1964 we had an enthusiastic membership for whom a summer and winter programme was organised, but apart from supporting these there was little else they could actively do. As membership increased so did the size of the problem. Then in 1965 Tim Dodwell started his Working Parties. To begin with they were supported by between 10 and 20 people who did relatively simple manual work such as towpath clearance. Now it is not uncommon to have close on 100 people. Modest one day affairs have grown into mammoth week-end exercises in places often outside the Branch area. During the past year Working Parties have been to Marple, Stratford and Stourbridge to which four visits were made in April to ensure that the re-opening of the Stourbridge 16 took place as originally planned. Working Parties also visited the Wey, Kennet and Avon and Medway, and in February 1968 on the Grand Union we held our first Working Party in co-operation with British Waterways. This was attended by 87 people, and at the end of the day the bridge by Denham Lock had been rubbed down and painted twice, and half a mile of towpath completely cleared. I hope this spirit of close liaison with British Waterways will continue. Working Parties are also becoming mechanised, and we hope, within the next few months, to obtain further mechanical aids for navvies. From Working Parties grew "Navvies Notebook" which made its first appearance in 1966. This excellent publication is the brain-child of our fantastically hard working Secretary Graham Palmer, to whom I am immensely grateful for all the assistance and support he has given me since he joined the Committee in 1965. "Navvies Notebook" is of immense value in spreading the canal gospel, and now has a subscription list throughout the country of over 500. In 1967 Rodney Pepper started his Action Group which, in effect, entails organising volunteers for an endless variety of tasks. These range from building exhibition stands, to surveys, lectures and assisting working parties. The incredible success of the Working Party movement is due to its organisers, space unfortunately preventing me from mentioning them all, and the enormous support given by members and their friends. It is, I am sure, the most worthwhile development that has yet taken place in the Branch.

This vigorous membership participation is of enormous importance, for if canals are to survive they must have help, and there is no doubt that there is now a rapidly growing realisation amongst members how important and true this is. With this ever-increasing army of dedicated enthusiasts, a Committee to which I and all our members owe a very large debt for the work they do each year, much of which of necessity remains unknown to the people outside, I have no doubt that 1968 will be a year of even greater achievement than 1967.

MICHAEL APLIN.

BOOK REVIEWS



THE FLOWER OF GLOSTER E. Temple Thurston. David & Charles.
244pp. 35/-

For many years now a small red covered book about the size of a paperback has held pride of place on my bookshelf. It is a 1920 cheap edition without illustrations of "The Flower of Gloster" first published in 1911 and was at the time a fairly popular book by a well known professional author. It has always been my ambition to obtain a copy of the illustrated edition but its high price in the second hand book market has always deterred me. Some years ago a copy was auctioned at an I.W.A. dinner and realised £6 6/- My period of waiting is now over. For only 35/- anyone can now obtain a copy of "The Flower of Gloster" thanks to the enterprise of David & Charles who have reprinted this classic of waterway literature. L.T.C. Rolt of "Narrow Boat" fame contributes the introduction in which he explains how it has been possible after 57 years to improve on the original. In place of the rather insipid colour plates this edition includes the photographs taken by Temple Thurston during the trip which have been made available to L.T.C. Rolt and the publishers by the author's widow. The original pen and ink sketches throughout the text remain.

Some of our readers may be wondering why so much importance is placed on reading or owning this book. For me it is the wonderful soothing effect it has on the reader as the author propounds his philosophy for a full and happy life. Add to this a description with plenty of photographs of a journey from west to east through the Thames and Severn Canal, including an account of legging through the Sapperton tunnel - one of the last boats ever to do so, and then I think you will appreciate the reason for its popularity. Thoroughly recommended and let us hope that there are more reprints of this type. Perhaps readers would like to write to the Editor and let her know the three books on waterways at present out of print they would most like to see reprinted. The results of the poll will be sent to the publishers, David & Charles, so now is your chance to own a 1928 Bradshaw, a Dashwood and an Aubertin! (Reviewer's choice.)

THE KENNET & AVON CANAL. Kenneth R. Clew. David & Charles.
206pp. 50/-

It is probably a measure of the success of our campaign during the last 22 years that Kenneth Clew concludes his book on the history of the Kennet & Avon Canal with these words: "What of the future? It is certainly not the end for the canal, rather the BEGINNING".

Such a statement 10 years ago would have been unthought of even by our most optimistic supporter. We tend to forget that the post war years of the canal's history have seen much activity in official circles if not on the water. The author does not neglect this period, and has allocated two chapters of his well written and interesting book to bringing us right up to date. It is essential, as Charles Hadfield says in his foreword, that we understand the past properly if we are to make a success of the future.

The author has carried out his self allocated task in a readable and workmanlike manner. One look at the list of references is enough to show to the reader that this volume is the result of many hours of patient research. Obviously it is a must for all K & A. supporters, and if, as it is hoped, it helps towards the day when boats can pass once again from Reading to Bristol, then its publication will be doubly justified.

Josher's Column

May 1st. or 2nd. I gather were the crucial days in the House of Commons when the Standing Committee of 30 M.P.s debated the waterways parts of the Transport Bill in as much (or as little detail as the "guillotine" allowed. As this is written in April I do not, of course, know what the Committee will decide, but if it fails to change the Bill, Parliament will have a further chance when the Bill returns to the full House or when it reaches the Lords.

The attitude of members of the Association whom I have met in the last month is mainly one of consternation and dismay. The September White Paper clearly stated the Government's intention to keep the waterways; why, then, does the Ministry want to take away the public's legal safeguards in the form of the public's right to navigate the nationalised waterways and British Waterways' legal duty to maintain their waterways? The Thames Conservancy operates the Thames very well for pleasure purposes; yet they manage alright with the public being able to navigate the River. As the Government knows very well, confidence is easily dissipated and the confidence in their future that the waterways so urgently need will not fully return until the Government drop these proposals.

It is extremely difficult to understand the current position. On one hand the Government has declared its intention of keeping the waterways open for recreational use, if the increase in recreational use continues; Mrs. Castle has become a "film star" by introducing the forthcoming film "The Gentle Highway" about the beauty of the waterways; British Waterways have published a good and very glossy booklet "Leisure and the Waterways"; they had a splashy stand at the Boat Show; Burghfield Lock is being rebuilt and it looks only a matter of time before the Kennet & Avon Canal is open at least as far as Newbury; the Welford Arm of the Leicester Section summit pound is reported to be being restored by British Waterways (at whose cost I do not know); I gather that three times as much money is available this year for providing and improving amenity facilities (though I fear boats will be too large a beneficiary; British Waterways gavel lavish attention to the Denham working party. Indeed, everything looks fine.

Then one reads the Transport Bill.

It doesn't fit into the above picture at all. It goes a long way to destroying it.

One wonders why the public's right to navigate and their ability, through the Courts, to enforce proper maintenance are being abolished. I can think of two possible reasons.

Firstly, that we have been led up the garden path by the Ministry officials, who will continue to run down and close waterways. I know of an easy way the Ministry can counter this: if I was a Ministry official who sincerely wanted to keep the waterways open I would resent the above suggestion and arrange for the Ministry Press Office to write to the Editor of "Windlass". The Editor now awaits a letter; failing receipt of it, our suspicions will seem justified. (We send a copy of "Windlass" to the Ministry).

However, I do not think the Ministry would try a massive closure plan; more likely would be the snipping off of bits here and there. For example; Ellesmere Port, where it seems that the Ministry have not yet considered the question of what to do with the closed canal if it is culverted at the motorway crossings, nor the cost - which the Ministry do not have to pay. (Incidentally Manchester Corporation will be faced with a bill of £4000,000 if they fill in and pipe $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the abandoned Rochdale Canal.)

The second possible reason is that British Waterways are tired of being restricted by the law as to what they can and cannot do; that they wish to be free of their legal obligation to maintain waterways to any particular standard; that they wish to be able to do as they please, in as far as the planning rules allow. This I consider to be a more likely reason for the abolition of the public's legal safeguards.

We want to be very careful and make sure that the development of the waterways, which is bound to come with increased use, does not destroy the attraction of the waterways. I think it would be highly dangerous if British Waterways had absolute control; I gather that one leading officer of the Board does not welcome any control or advice and is not at all keen on the new Amenity Advisory Council.

It may be claimed that British Waterways should have commercial freedom to do as they please, as private enterprise companies do. Certainly, this argument was applied during the discussions on the parts of the Bill which allow British Waterways to manufacture and repair boats. But private companies are subject to the control of their owners, the shareholders, and it seems right that the nationalised industries should also be subject to the control of their owners, the public. Note that the owners are the public, not the Ministry.

At the moment, the public's two legal safeguards give them the ability to control British Waterways Board on major matters; as with shareholders, this control is not often exercised, but this does not lessen its value or checking effect. The Ministry may say that they are able to control the Board on behalf of the public. True, this is their job, but they are not themselves subject to direct public control in this respect by action of the courts.

It is worth noting that the Ministry will have the final say in any bridging schemes. British Waterways may want a canal kept open and a bridge to be built, but they are not in a good position to argue against the Ministry, as they are at present controlled by the Ministry; if the Bill goes through in its present form they will be even more controlled by the Ministry. If the Ministry said they were not prepared to pay for a bridge, British Waterways could do little except hope our objections won the day. We know from past disagreements with the Ministry that they think only in terms of bridge costs and not of the cost of disposing of the closed canal afterwards- which, to repeat, they don't pay.

IN AS FAR AS THE MINISTRY have replied to the two crucial points in the Bill, they seem to say that the right of navigation no longer exists. They appear to think that this is so because, whereas the original act enabling a waterway to be built laid down certain maximum tolls, British Waterways have, since the 1962 Act, been able to make what charges they saw fit, as long as they are reasonable. The Ministry seem to claim that the modification of the charge that may be levied effectively takes away the right of navigation.

This I cannot understand. If the law says that the public have a right to navigate upon payment of a certain fee, then how can a variation of the fee affect the right to navigate? Yet, in a letter to a constituent (presumably, since waterways were only a small part of his work, drafted by a civil servant) Mr. John Morris, a lawyer by training, said that the extent and effect of the right to navigate is now uncertain and that navigation on the Board's waterways has in practice become navigation by licence of the Board rather than by right.

Mr. Morris' letter also said that in the unlikely event of a serious failure by the Board to maintain a significant length of waterway properly, pleasure craft users would have a statutory right to complain to the Advisory Council who could make recommendations to the Minister for remedying the cause of the complaint, and that for the ordinary user this would be a much less expensive and more practical way of obtaining satisfaction than by costly and lengthy litigation. That is so, but what could the public do if the Advisory Council failed to recommend the Minister to do anything (do not forget the Minister appoints and dismisses the Council members)? Or if the Minister failed to accept the recommendations, as he is quite able to do? Again, do not forget this Council does not have any executive powers; it acts only in an advisory capacity.

I, for one, am quite happy to accept the suggestion that we can go to the Council and so to the Minister, about bad maintenance, but only as an addition to the ability to go to the Courts if we fail to obtain satisfaction from the Ministry or Council.

Mr. Morris' advisers appear to believe that Clause 128 does not alter the method by which the 1888 Railway & Canal Traffic Act allows a canal to be closed. That Act allows any waterway to be closed by Ministerial authorisation, in the form of a Warrant of Abandonment, if the waterway has not been used for three years. Clause 128 would allow an independent waterway to be closed by Ministerial authorisation, in the form of a statutory order, regardless of when it was last used. Hitherto the closure of a waterway used within three years has required a Parliamentary Act of Closure. As Clause 128 stands Parliamentary approval would not be required, as the Statutory Order would not be subject to possible annulment by either House of Parliament (as is the case with a nationalised waterway).

I am surprised that the Ministry say that all they are trying to do is to replace the relevant part of the 1888 Act by a simpler and more up-to-date procedure. It would appear they are also altering the procedure. No doubt if I have made any misinterpretations the Ministry will be swift to reply.

So write to your M.P. and any member of the Lords you may know, The debate may be over in the Commons, but there is still the Lords.

VANDALISM!

The picture below is of "Rosedale" the barge headquarters of Lord St. Davids' Regent's Boat Club after fires started by vandals had gutted her, doing £500 worth of damage, and destroying ten of the Club fleet of small boats.

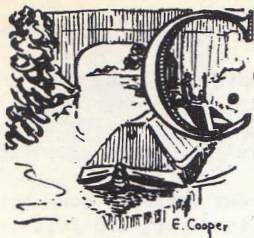
Hooligans had apparently swum across to the barge which is only approachable by water, started the fires and escaped in two of the dinghies. The hull was buckled by the heat, and all the flooring and roof were destroyed. One nine year old boy lost both his canoe and inflatable dinghy. Work on clearing up the mess and rebuilding the cabin was started immediately; although furiously angry the club members are not down hearted, and are determined to get their clubhouse restored. Both British Waterways and the Port of London Authority offered practical help, and following an appeal at the last Branch meeting I.W.A. members had a small working party.

No one can fail to be shocked and angered by the wanton destruction of something which brought pleasure to many. Some of the children happily occupied learning how to handle a boat might well turn to other less innocent past-times were it not for Lord St. Davids and the Club. Parents, school teachers and local authorities have all praised the work done; if the work is to continue assistance, in the form of donations and physical work, must be forth-coming. Materials for reconstruction must be bought, the fleet of canoes, punts and dinghies must be replaced.

PLEASE HELP. Send your donation, whether of money or materials, or take along a few hours of your time, to Lord St. Davids, 15 St. Mark's Crescent, Regent's Park, N.W.1.

(Photo by Hugh McKnight Photography)





Coming Events . . .

Recent Activities

JUNE 1st.-3rd. READING RALLY. Although only an outline programme for the public was available when the Rally Programme went to press, the Rally Committee now look forward to a busy time. There will be Sea Cadets Bands on both Saturday and Sunday, as well as most of the other main attractions. The site will really open up from lunchtime onwards on the Saturday, and it is hoped by then there will already be a good show of boats (boatowners please note). On the Monday there will be no public events, and the site will be closed down when the cruise up the Kennet takes place. We hope all boatowners who can will take part, and that they have already booked the special British Waterways licence (if required) when sending in their entry forms.

JUNE 16th. (Sunday) RIVER MEDWAY BOAT TRIP. This year's Medway trip, which will run from Tonbridge to Maidstone, will cover the prettiest section of the river. As we have not visited the Upper Medway for five years it is hoped that members will welcome this opportunity of a trip through its beautiful and varied scenery. The boat (covered accommodation with glass windows! No need to worry about the weather" will leave Old Palace Gardens, Maidstone, 200 yards above the bridge at 10.45am. prompt and proceed to the Anchor Inn, Yalding for a lunch-time stop (bring packed lunch) and then on to Tonbridge for tea. Car park at Fairmeadow, Maidstone just below the bridge, and there is a good bus service back from Tonbridge to Maidstone. Frequent trains connect London and Maidstone, and Tonbridge and London. Members 12/6 non-members 15/-, tea 3/6. Remittance with application to Mr. D.C.N. Salmon, Springhill Cottage, Yardley Park Road, Tonbridge (S.A.E. please, and cheques payable to D.C.N. Salmon). Please book your place as soon as possible.

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WINTER MEETING APRIL 18th. Ted Hill of the Peak Forest Canal Society gave a spirited account of the Cheshire Ring, its problems and their possible solution, accompanied by a splendid slide show. Mr. Hill explained the particular problems of the waterways concerned with forthright clarity and humour; those who were not fully in the picture before undoubtedly were at the end. Several slides showed the shocking amount of rubbish in the Ashton Canal, cars which had been dragged over five foot walls, etc., and during the question time at the end of the meeting Mr. Hill made the valid point that an unused canal will always be a temptation to people with such rubbish to dispose of. Restoration schemes always seem to attract a large audience to our winter meetings, and despite the short notice a good turn-out of members attended, eagerly questioned Mr. Hill, and afterwards applauded him warmly for a most interesting and entertaining evening. (A slide showing our Hon. Secretary in working party garb, adorned with mud, caused the biggest laugh of the evening.)

C.J.

ANNUAL DINNER. The 11th. Annual Dinner of the London & Home Counties Branch was held at the Washington Hotel, on Friday March 29th. After excellent food our Chairman Michael Aplin opened the speeches by reviewing the events of our Branch during the last year.

Captain Lionel Munk proposed the toast of the Branch and paid compliments to our activities and achievements. He congratulated the Editor of 'Windlass' on her excellent and topical publication. He hoped that in the new climate of public opinion more national publications would show interest in our waterways. He paid tribute to our General Office secretary Miss Kate Shepherd, who has so loyally worked for our cause, and has recently run the General Office virtually single-handed. There was applause from the room when he welcomed her as a guest to the top table. We were left in no doubt of the continuing fight that remains- there are clauses in the Transport Bill which are completely at variance

with the White Paper of September last year, and we will continue to lobby and strive for a satisfactory future for the existing and new waterways.

Dr. Roger Pilkington then replied on behalf of the Branch by stressing how even now the continent was planning and building new waterways; motorways were restricted in the way they can be constructed over waterways. A co-ordinated transport plan exists in Europe, and we must continue to strive for an official expansionist policy for waterway development here.

John Liley, Editor of Motor Boat and Yachting spoke of the great interest now being shown by the public in our waterways. He was sceptical of the White Paper, and felt it was a bureaucratic game to give victory when we might well lose. We welcomed our guests, who included Councillor R.P. Butterfield of the London Canals Consultative Committee, and hoped that that body would strive to ensure a future for the people of London to enjoy our canals.

In replying for the guests, Mr. Clive Jenkins, General Secretary of the Association of Scientific Technical and Managerial Staffs, reminded us of the raw days a few years ago when he had to fight to obtain permission to use his pleasure craft on the Regent's Canal. He felt that even now British Waterways Board were a board without vision and as a public corporation left much to be desired. Why not a co-operative of enthusiasts and users to run the waterways, he suggested.

After the speeches there was a little time to digest the food and renew acquaintances before the evening closed. A very special word of thanks to our Social Secretary Jim Street for his ingenuity in preparing a waterways menu and an excellent evening.

RODNEY PEPPER.

* * * * *

WORKING PARTIES

MAY. (every weekend) STRATFORD CANAL. If you have not yet sent in your name to Tim Dodwell and would like to spend a pleasant weekend in the open air clearing the towpath, why not do so now? Full details appeared in the last issue.

JUNE 23rd. RIVER KENNET AT BURGHFIELD. Meet at Burghfield Bridge at 10am. Tree cutting, hedge trimming and similar tools desirable.

JUNE 30th. GRAND UNION CANAL AT DENHAM. Embankment clearance above Denham Lock, continuing from February. This job cannot accommodate more than 20 volunteers so please contact Tim Dodwell not later than one week beforehand if you would like to take part.

KENNET & AVON OUTINGS. Branch working parties of 34 and 56 on the 17th. and 24th. of March respectively made a considerable impression on the work to be done at Burghfield Lock. The first party tackled general clearance in preparation for dredging the lock cut, while the second concentrated their efforts alongside the new lock chamber which was due to be dredged the following week.

TIM DODWELL.

CUT SHORTS

Illyd Harrington is to be Chairman of the Inland Waterways Advisory Council. After his splendid work on the Canals Consultative Committee of the G.L.C. one might be expected to greet the news with joy. But in a letter to the Telegraph recently he said he was saddened by a letter to that paper by our Committee Member Bob Hampson deploring the iniquitous clauses in the Transport Bill. Mr. Harrington said he regarded the Bill as the canal-man's charter. Perhaps Mr. Harrington had better read 'Josher's Column'. *** The I.W.A. General Office has a list of LOCK COTTAGES available for renting. Please send s.a.e. and if you are looking for a house, try one of these and save it for posterity. *** Sir John Hawton having retired, new B.W. Chairman is Sir Frank Price. He is reported to be buying a boat to cruise the B.C.N. *** Member Mr. J.P. Martin has written to point out the excellent article on Dutch waterways in the April Geographical Magazine. There are frequently good waterway articles in this magazine, some of the pre-war issues are well worth looking for in second-hand shops.



ROUND THE WATERWAYS

RIVER WEY. Following the very successful Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society function at the entrance to the Basingstoke Canal, a substantial number of boats cruised on up the River Wey, resulting in 19 boats mooring at Broadford Bridge at Shalford on Easter Saturday evening. These included boats from the Canal Society, the Wey Cruising Club, and the Byfleet Boat Club. Some of the latter had already cruised to the present limit of navigation at Catteshall Lock. Later in the evening there was a most enjoyable gathering at the nearby Parrot Inn. Eight boats from the Middle Thames Yacht Club came as far as Guildford, as also did a large hire cruiser from Staines. With one short exception the weather was kind the whole week-end, and many other boatowners took the opportunity to get afloat, making a busy weekend before the closure of Papercourt Lock for six weeks or so.

TIM DODWELL.

KENNET & AVON. Good progress continues to be made on Burghfield Lock, and it is hoped that it will be workable by the time of the Branch Rally. However because of the dredging problems it is likely that only shallow craft will be able to proceed through and navigate beyond at that stage. Considerable improvements have been made in the way of landing stages at locks further downstream, which there has not yet been an opportunity of inspecting personally.

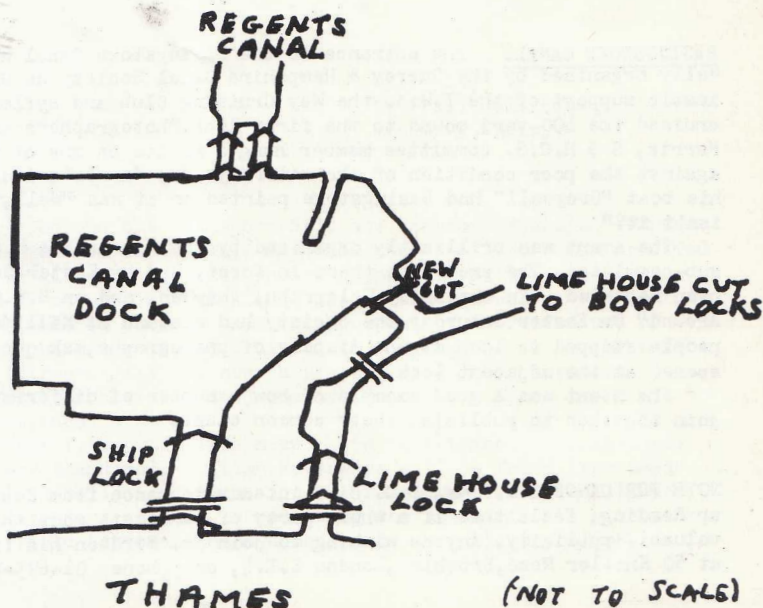
TIM DODWELL.

RIVER STOUR. There will be a camping weekend cruise for canoes and light craft on May 25th-26th. From Sudbury to Stratford St. Mary to exercise the public right of navigation and draw public attention to the need for its retention and use. Details from Mrs. J. Gough, The Bays, Fryerning, Ingatestone, Essex.

REGENT'S CANAL.

The sketch map opposite shows the new cut from the Regent's Canal Dock to the Limehouse Cut, which was opened on April 1st., the first boats passing through immediately. Stop planks have already gone in at the Limehouse Lock, and the section from and including the lock will be filled in. Map drawn by Mr. C. Halliwell. (Editor's note: Hope I have got that right, but have regrettably misfiled the accompanying letter.)

John James' famous tripping narrow boat "Jason" has now acquired a butty. "Serpens" was launched into her passenger carrying career by Miss Beryl Reid, who had inaugurated "Jason" in 1951. Motor and butty can now carry 130 passengers, thus introducing more people than ever to the pleasures of canals. Jack James from Stoke Bruerne was at the tiller.



GRAND UNION CANAL. Owing to a combination of circumstances beyond our control, the proposed Grand Union Canal Society Rally over the Spring Bank Holiday has had to be deferred, as has also the cruise from Rickmansworth to Slough. The Rickmansworth mini-rally however is being expanded. Boats are to assemble from noon onwards on Saturday May 25th. The programme on the adjacent Aquadrome on Sunday 26th. includes sailing, power boat demonstrations and hydraplane racing; trick water skiing, judo and archery; four Army units giving demonstrations including a mock battle; a model railway, logrolling and side-shows. All I.W.A. members, particularly boat owners are invited. Further particulars from myself at Halfway House, Cassio Bridge, Watford.

Little favourable progress over the refusal of planning permission for houseboats at Cow Roast has been made, but it is reported that British Waterways are issuing short term licences to give the residents a chance to make objections. It is regretted that British Waterways do not appear to be exercising their four year existing user rights.

The Slough Study Group, comprised of a town planner, a geologist, civil engineers, architects and representatives of the London Anglers Association, Slough Civic Society, and the G.U.C.S. has been formed. The Group was set up by the G.U.C.S. to study the whole area, including a possible Thames/Slough Canal and to draw up plans for its possible development as an amenity and commercial centre. It has now held two meetings and has done a preliminary survey by water.

It is much regretted that a plan to fence off the towpath from British Waterways' commercial property and allow public access to the Slough Basin has been countermanded. Although it is a public wharf, off all the adjoining land is to be let and public access will continue to be sealed off. How can this area be developed as an amenity for the public, and a case made for its inclusion in the cruiseway network under these crippling conditions?

To end on a more cheerful note; in the "Put Slough Back on the Waterways Map" campaign there is reason to believe that as a result of the G.U.C.S. public meeting in Slough, the Council, though they are adamant in their intention to fill in the last mile they are not averse to having marina facilities at the proposed new end of the Arm. Also the residential development is being planned so as not to prejudice a Slough/Thames link.

Volunteers are needed for a working party to clear the towpath of the Wendover Arm in conjunction with the Chiltern Society and the Y.H.A. Here is a marvellous opportunity to forge links with kindred bodies. Names to me please.

BOB HAMPSON.

BASINGSTOKE CANAL. The entrance to the Basingstoke Canal was the scene of a successful Rally organised by the Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society on Good Friday. With the enthusiastic support of the I.W.A. the Wey Cruising Club and Byfleet Boat Club, some 25 boats cruised the 400 yard pound to the first lock. Photographers crowded round while Robert Harris, S & H.C.S. committee member hung a notice on one of the bottom gates protesting against the poor condition of the waterway. Mr. Harris's indignant reply when asked why his boat "Greywell" had Basingstoke painted on it was "Well, that's where I want to get to isn't it?"

The event was brilliantly organised by Les Harris S & H.C.S. Vice Chairman and his sub-committee. The press was there in force, and by Easter Sunday the event had already been reported in the Daily Telegraph, the Sun, and on B.B.C. television "Town and Around" On Easter Saturday the Society had a stand at Mill Mead at Guildford. Crowds of people stopped to look at the display of photographs, ask questions, and watch the busy scene at the adjacent lock.

The event was a good example of how a number of different clubs and societies can join together to publicise their common cause.

H.D. JEBENS.

NOTE FOR CANOEISTS. Mr. L.G. Bird intends to canoe from Southwark Causeway to the Rally at Reading, feels that if a whole party of canoeists made the trip it would provide some valuable publicity. Anyone wishing to join Mr. Bird on his trip should contact him direct, at 50 Kneller Road, Brockley, London S.E.4, or 'phone 01-693-8421.



Letters to the Editor

19th. April 1968.

11 Gower Street,
London, W.C.1.

Madam,

In view of the comment upon my address in Liverpool in Josher's interesting April Column, may I make a brief explanation? My suggestion at Liverpool was that the more promising waterway recovery schemes now in hand might well lead to a National Waterways Recovery Organisation, which in turn might pave the way to the New Waterways building programme that should be the main economic objective in our field. A new organisation seems to be required partly because the Association is now working closely with British Waterways and British Waterways (very expressly) do not believe in large scale new construction at all, nor, in my opinion, are advantageous partners in the earlier rehabilitation projects. I remarked at Liverpool that the Association could still have a useful purpose to serve, but a different one: the negotiation of steadily improving conditions for pleasure boating on the cruiseways. It is quite obvious, however, that since I spoke the situation has changed completely. Very close thinking before the Association was founded led to the conclusion that there is no lasting answer to the problem of the waterways other than the establishment of a National Waterways Conservancy or a National Waterways Trust. The new Transport Bill proves that this is even truer now than it was then.

Yours very truly,

ROBERT AICKMAN
Founder and Vice-President.

* * * * *

April 19th. 1968.

Wychbold,
19 Drill Hall Road,
Chertsey, Surrey.

Dear Miss Johnstone,

Looking beyond the Transport Bill and its controversial Clauses on the waterways, I am a little worried that people may feel that the I.W.A. has achieved its purpose and may thus fail to give the Association the support it still needs.

Perhaps I might set out, as I see it, the work that lies ahead for us.

(a) The September White Paper made it obvious that the prospect of increased use of the waterways for pleasure was a major factor in the decision to keep open most of the waterways. Clearly, if the rate of increase declines over a period, or if this increase does not take place, the waterways may yet again be in jeopardy. One of our first tasks is to make sure that the increase continues.

(b) For the navigable waterways left out of the network to be retained, the struggle goes on. We know that if they are abandoned, British Waterways will be freed from their responsibilities and that local councils (and therefore the ratepayers) will be landed with a huge bill. Most of the waterways seem to be receiving the Association's attention, though one wonders whether Sheffield Corporation have been made to realise the problem

they will have if the top end of the Sheffield and South Yorkshire is abandoned. Rumour has it that they wish to build on the Basin, but that will still leave two miles of canal to deal with.

(c) There is, too, the exciting prospect of the restoration of a number of waterways; but much work is necessary before the restoration work even starts and projects could die for lack of helpers at this stage, let alone a shortage of helpers in the actual physical work.

Under this heading, however, comes the Ashton and Peak Forest Canals, where the exciting prospect has not yet materialised. Those who welcome the waterways "New Deal" (which include myself) should not forget the situation on these canals. The fact that the British Waterways Board are being sued for allegedly not maintaining these canals as the law demands makes the matter sub judice and prevents further comment, though the fact that B.W.B. are being sued demonstrates the position.

(d) For transport on the waterways, a lot of work needs to be done. The Canal Transport Marketing Board deserve every support. Traffic is declining even on the "commercial waterways". We are no nearer the start of an official inquiry into the possibility of New Waterways.

(e) The situation on the Shropshire Union Canal at Ellesmere Port shows how uncertain the future can be. The authorities are now considering closing the Canal at this point as they claim it may be too expensive to provide navigational headroom under the motorway which is to be built. I understand that our National Chairman Capt. Munk and Mr. Offley, who has only just retired from being Chairman of the North West Branch, are strenuously contesting this iniquitous idea.

It is very obvious that while the White Paper consolidated our position to a very considerable degree and gave us a stick with which to beat the Ministry and B.W.B. should it be necessary, in the future there will be as much campaigning work for the I.W.A. to do as ever in the past.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN DODWELL.

* * * * *

1, The Myrtles,
Eastwick Road,
Great Bookham, Surrey.

17/4/68.

Dear Madam,

The March issue of 'Windlass' contained a request from British Waterways that all Boat Rallies should take place outside the angling season (i.e. after March 15th. and before June 15th.) and your comment was that this seemed reasonable. I would question both the reasonableness and the logic of the arrangement.

If one assumes that on a fine summer weekend most boats will be afloat somewhere on the waterways, it would not appear to make much difference whether they are distributed throughout the country or grouped together in one place for a rally. In the latter case the angler will have the advantage of knowing where the boats are and consequently he will have a better chance of obtaining peace and quiet elsewhere.

I would respectfully submit that a more constructive suggestion would be to publish the times and places of all Boat Rallies in a national angling journal at an early stage in the year, so that those anglers who would wish to avoid boat rallies can make alternative arrangements in good time. Additionally I would suggest that the times and places of all important fishing matches are prominently displayed in a national boating magazine at an early date to assist boaters in planning their cruises.

Yours faithfully,

A.G. DAVIS.

Quiz4 . . ? ?

Don't, repeat, don't worry if you cannot answer all the questions. No one has a 100% record; you could still win the prize to be awarded at the end of the year!

1. Does the Slough Arm have any aqueducts? If so, how many?
2. How long is the top pound of the Basingstoke Canal?
3. Where are the Bumblehole Arm and Bumble Hole Lock?
4. Give the name of a flash lock on the River Lea which has recently been destroyed.
5. Give the names of the waterways carrying companies represented by the following initials; (a) S.B.C.C.C. (b) F.A.A. & B. (c) H.G.(L).
6. The Grand National race has an obstacle known as Canal Turn. Why is it so called, and if after a canal, which canal?

Answers please, to John Dodwell, Wychbold, 19 Drill Hall Road, Chertsey, Surrey by May 31st. Those replying to questions must be careful to read the questions carefully, i.e. in Quiz No 2. I asked how long is the Wyrley & Essington Canal, not how long was it!

Answers to Quiz No. 3.

1. * Radial lock gates are vertical curved steel shutters similar to guillotine Gates but pivoting through at least 90 degrees around a fixed point.
2. * Within 15 miles of Tower Bridge a lock with radial gates at each end can be seen at Carpenters Lock, Old Stratford, map ref. 161/376844.
3. * The Daw End Branch is another part of the B.C.N. again going through rural parts. All I could see of industry was some cooling towers. The Branch is part of the Wyrley & Essington Canal system, and runs southerly from Catshill Junction near Aldridge, to Longwood Junction.
4. * The Basingstoke Canal runs from the River Wey, near New Haw, to the eastern end of Greywell Tunnel. It is 31 miles long and has 29 locks, only 11 of which can be worked.
5. * The waterway carrying companies are (a) Willow Wren Canal Transport Services, (active narrow boat operators) (b) Vokins & Sons Ltd. (very active lighter and barge operators on the Thames and connecting waterways) (c) T. & S. Element (just about active, I think, in Birmingham)
6. * Yes, a navigable waterway does pass within a quarter of a mile of Lord's cricket ground; it is the Regent's Canal between Maida Hill tunnel and Regent's Park. (As one person said in their answer, Have the people moored at Broadwater taken adequate precautions?).

RIVER THAMES CONFERENCE

This Conference, sponsored by the Greater London Council and the London Boroughs Association, was held in the Purcell Room, South Bank on April 1st. It was attended by 400 delegates from the G.L.C., London Boroughs, voluntary and recreational organisations, and commercial interests.

The papers presented, together with the demonstration at the Festival Hall, outlined the study of the Thames-side environment within the Greater London reaches prepared by the G.L.C., and their proposals to provide Londoners and visitors alike with many

more frequent and pleasant views of the river. Vastly greater access to new and extended riverside walks was an outstanding feature of the new proposals.

Among the plans are views of St. Pauls and Southwark Cathedrals from the river; walkways along the whole of Westminster, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile at Wapping and one mile Kew Bridge to Syon Park; gardens at Richmond, Greenwich, Lewisham, Wandsworth and Woolwich.

The unused docks (St. Katharine's, Royal Victoria Yard and Brentford) will be used for housing, but would include yacht basins as well as open spaces.

Apart from the formal papers, contributions from the platform and the floor were heard. Whilst Mrs. Denington (G.L.C.) wondered where all the money was coming from, Sir Alan Herbert thought much of it would be wasted unless the mudflats at low tide were eliminated by the erection of a barrier near the lower reaches. Some delegates were worried about the likelihood of creating a beautiful waterfront with a slum of surging road traffic behind the facade of the architects dream. Many delegates thought the idea impracticable unless supported by thriving commercial traffic and several were dismayed at the threat to build over Brentford Dock instead of converting it into a container terminal.

Pleas from the Anglers Association and the London Natural History Society were heard for their special interests, and were warmly applauded. The Conference was ably chaired by Sir Percy Rugg (G.L.C. Chairman). After the conference a demonstration of hydrofoils took place outside the Festival Hall.

I formed the opinion that although the G.L.C. had most ably performed an immense task in their study of Thames-side in Greater London area, a better understanding of the true needs of the river - for it to be used and not just looked at - was expressed from the floor of the Conference.

E. PULL.

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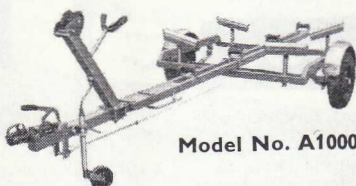
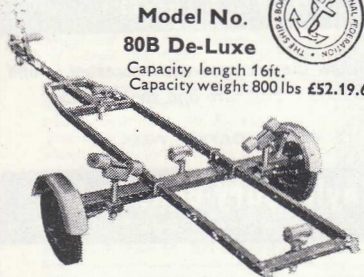
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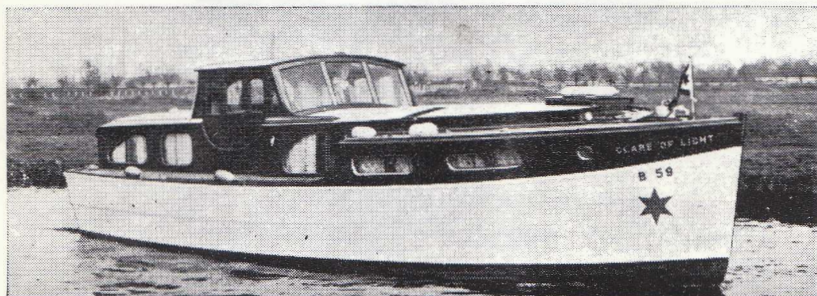
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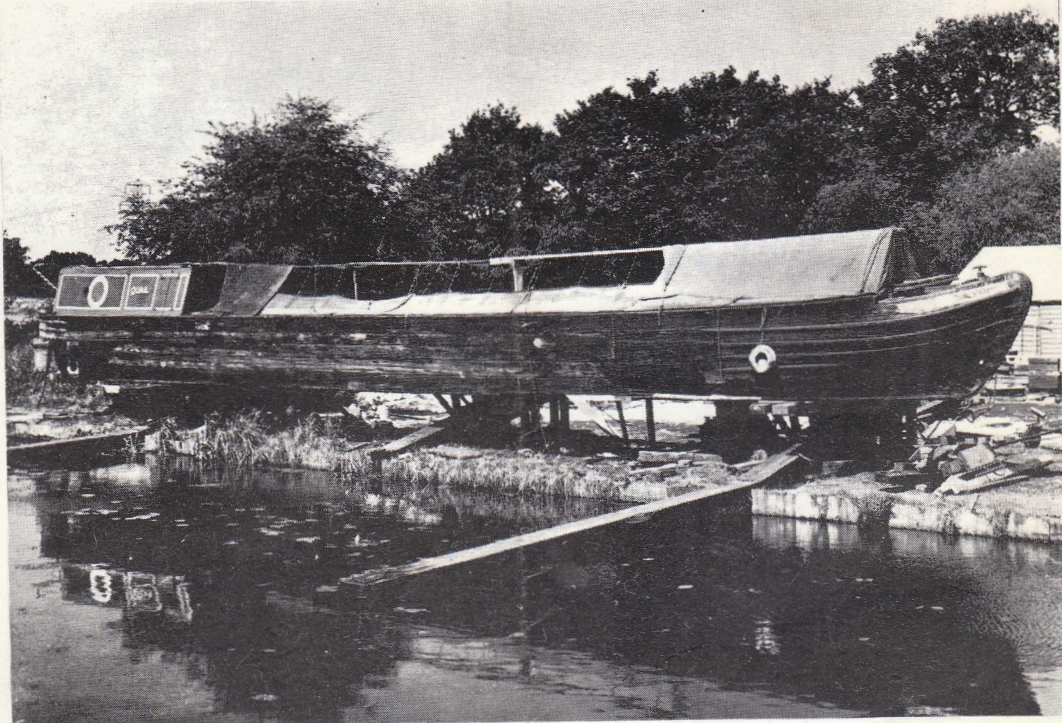
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