

Excalibur

IWA LONDON BRANCH

No.1



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Excalibur

INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION LONDON BRANCH

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Cover Photograph: The "Sea Goddess 1" sails under Tower Bridge on her maiden arrival to the Pool of London in March 1984. Photograph supplied by the P.L.A.

Editorial

Well here it is, the first edition of a brand new Branch magazine. We do hope you like the presentation which is entirely due to Stillwell Derby, who are producing *Excalibur* totally free of charge for the Branch. Do support the advertisers contained within the following pages and please mention the magazine when replying to them.

Why the name *Excalibur*?

A name without a meaning is just a name. The name *Excalibur* by definition, sets a standard of excellence which requires to be treated with respect and handled with care. We hope to achieve all three aims in the years that follow.

So why should London branch adopt the name!

From its onset, the IWA chose as a motif for the Association the symbol of the sword 'Excalibur' from 'The Lady of the Lake'. By continuing to hold the Branch meetings at

University College, Gower Street, we maintain an historic link with Robert Aikman's old home at No. 11, where in May 1946 our origins began. To this present day we keep alive the ideals mooted at that first inaugural meeting.

How was it chosen?

Whilst Eric Garland (the Branch Chairman) and I discussed the merits of producing a Branch magazine the question arose, 'if we do proceed what name should it have?' At this point my daughter Nicola, who had been quietly listening to our conversation, placed before me a sheet of paper with the name *Excalibur* written on it. The meaning of that single word cemented all our individual thoughts into a coherent theme, giving the proposed magazine an image of the future whilst maintaining a link with our past.

Aims, Direction and Content

Our aim is to report in a fresh way with a new approach infor-

mation in depth related to London's Waterways. We make no apology for being entirely parochial, we will be reporting on London to you our London Branch members. Our main aim is to foster a Club atmosphere within the Branch, ~~and a sense of belonging and togetherness, so that we may share with one another our knowledge and experiences.~~ We shall also bring to your attention through the magazine, information enabling you to maintain a closer contact with the Branch and/or participate in our many and varied social activities.

The South East Region magazine *Windlass*, as well as continuing to report on Region matters, will still carry our Branch notices and news items. *Waterways* will of course continue to enlighten you on matters of National importance.



Regular Features

Branch News: Marion Waters, (Branch Publicity Officer) will report on news items requiring in-depth and special publicity. Lewis Phillips, (200 Club Chair) will keep the Club members posted on latest news items.

Foot-notes: A team of five members will regularly report on matters related to the tow-path, covering items ranging from Conservation to Industrial Archaeology. Watch for the personalised foot-note of each contributor.

Planning Matters: David Wood, (Planning and Navigation Subcommittee Chair) will keep you regularly informed on the important role this committee performs within the Branch.

Mud-larks: Eric Garland, (London WRG and Branch Chair) will keep you up-to-date on the unit's activities and progress at the various canal restoration sites that they are currently working on.

Council News: PR officers from the Riparian London Boroughs will keep you informed on their activities related to London's Waterways.

Around the Ring: No, not the round table; this is a column for our future. We are looking for 5 members to write regularly on the current situation on London's Waterways, each to take charge of a division of London, ie, North East, South East, South West, North West and Central. It requires only 3 short reports a year, is not as daunting as it sounds and can be a very interesting and rewarding job.

Junior Page: This is where we want our younger members, to tell us what they would like to see provided for them in the way of subject matter. Items can be provided on topics, games, cartoons, puzzles or something entirely new. So come on parents, ask your children to write in and tell us what they want and we will do our best to supply their needs. A competition to name the column will be run with a prize for the winner; details elsewhere in the magazine.

Back-chat: This is your own column for any comments you might wish to make, and I am looking forward to receiving your letters. However, I am not interested in any derisory or derogatory statements, because they are simply unproductive for us all. You may be critical as you like about the magazine, the Branch and/or our activities, providing your comments are constructive, as this is the only way the Branch and Association can progress. Just remember when writing that C comes before D in the alphabet. Please enclose a SAE if you require a written reply.

Main Feature: Each issue will carry at least one article related to the waterways within our Branch area. I am rather hopeful (when you have seen our approach to the subject matter) that you may wish to contribute your own article (inclusive of photographs) of an historic nature, past personal reminiscences, or of a recent waterway holiday. Providing, of course you consider the magazine and us worthy of your input.

Whenever possible the cover photograph will be related to the feature article, ie, this first issue carries a picture of Tower Bridge (the Gateway to London) with the bascules open, which ties in nicely with a similar scene (with a punt in the foreground being driven single-handedly by a lighterman) in an article submitted by Transport on Water, who are Branch life members.

In closing I would like to draw your attention to two National Campaign issues:

1. Do please fully support the Association's "**Waterways for all - Yorkshire Derwent Appeal**" now being run on behalf of the Yorkshire Derwent Trust. Ken Goodwin (National Chair) will give a talk on this very subject at our Branch meeting on 19 May, University College, Gower Street. This is your opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and at the same time show Ken, through your attendance, that he has the full support and backing of the Branch in the long fight ahead. For if we as an Associa-

tion fail on this one, we might just as well pack up shop on future waterway restorations and at the same time, wave good-bye to the millions of pounds already invested by you on current restoration projects.

2. **Excessive Increase in Licence and Mooring Fees.** I quote from IWA Council News No. 102—"It is now time for our rank and file members to bring pressure to bear on British Waterways Board and join in a united effort".

We are now asking all our members to write an individual letter to their local MP protesting that the British Waterways Board have imposed increases considerably in excess of the rate of inflation. (Although the overall increases are calculated as approximately 11%, some boat owners will be faced with increases of 25%).

If we do not shout now, BWB will think that "New Deal for Boaters" has got them off the hook and next year we can expect the worst.

IWA Press Release dated 5 February, states the Associations latest views and calls for a freeze on licence fees until the end of December 1988.

A postcard, originated by Dave Moore, (South East Region Chair) has been enclosed for your convenience. So please use it, all boaters and non-boaters have a lot to gain from a small 13p investment. Please write in you local MP's name in front of the address.

My own view, is that we should urge the Board to adopt TWA Licencing method, ie, craft measured length x beam to generate a total in square metres, a rate per metre is then applied. Any annual percentage increase in licence fees would then remain constant to all boaters and we would pay only for the area occupied by the craft.

I do apologize for the length of this first Editorial, but much has had to be covered by way of explanation. In future I will aim to keep my notes and comments brief and to the point.

I have much pleasure in publishing the following letter from David Moore, who has in a nutshell, put the case for Excalibur.

Welcome *Excalibur*, the magazine of the largest Branch in the Association. London branch, with its large membership, has found it difficult to get a branch 'spirit', I hope that through *Excalibur* you will be able to feel more part of your branch and part of the IWA. *Excalibur* is not intended to replace *Windlass* but rather to complement it and provide for London branch members more local information and to expand on items of local importance.

I believe the best interests of our membership are served by a region magazine (as many members attend several branches) backed up by local magazines and newsletters, so WELCOME *Excalibur* and GOOD LUCK.

David Moore—Region Chairman

Branch News

Marion Waters

The period following the jollifications of Christmas and New Year through till May often seem so dull, with nothing in terms of entertaining reading happening in the Branch calendar until Canalway Cavalcade. But 1988 has kicked off with a difference. Firstly there are two new appointments of significant importance. I am very pleased to tell you that Viscount St. Davids has agreed to be our President and Farrand Radley, M.B.E., our Vice-President. The contributions of both these gentlemen to the waterways cause is enormous and I am surprised they can find time to take on these roles in addition to their existing workloads, but the Branch is more than delighted they have.

The other major event of the season is, the birth of *Excalibur*. Members of the branch committee have for a long while felt that some form of newsletter would be the best way of reaching our members who are wide spread, (London Branch also serves all overseas members of the IWA). Unfortunately, two things have always prevented this idea coming to fruition; firstly the production costs and secondly finding someone to take on the job of Editor. Both problems were solved at the same time by Malcolm Bates who not only found a way of offsetting the cost but also volunteered to be Editor. So a very big thank you to Malcolm on behalf of all the membership; you must be pottier than I imagined! One of the pages to be included in *Excalibur* which I am particularly pleased to see is aimed at the younger waterway enthusiast. Nicola Bates has taken on the task of 'Youth Editor'. I look forward to reading the views of this group in the months to come and can not help wondering whether they will voice their views more than the rest of us.

Donations—Last years Canalway Cavalcade raised a magnificent total of £3,000. The distribution of this money was agreed at the Branch Committee meeting last November. Resulting from this, donations of £500 each were agreed for the Surrey and Hants Canal Society, the Kennet and Avon Canal Society, the Wendover Arm Canal Trust, the Wilts and Berks Canal Society, the Huddersfield Narrow Canal Society and the Rochdale Canal

Society. Cheques were presented at the February social evening to Robin Higgs of the Surrey and Hants Canal Society; Neil Rumbol of the Wilts and Berks Canal Society and Martin Wood of the Wendover Arm Trust. The Kennet and Avon Canal Society visited us in December and collected their cheque at that time.

Profits from the Capital Roving Rally have been made up from Branch funds and £400 is to be donated to the Passmore Edwards Museum Trust to assist with the restoration of the House Mill at Bromley-by-Bow, the object of the rally.

Social Evenings—One of the problems of a group meeting together with a common interest is that they talk. Not unusual you say, and of course I agree, but it does seem to create the wrong impression to new members who are perhaps attending a social evening for the first time. I think it fair to say that everyone whom I have met at our social evenings is friendly, but very few of us are good at approaching the 'strangers in our midst' and speaking to them. We know we are not a clique but certainly appear to be. At the last branch committee meeting this problem was discussed, in fact not one of the committee could remember anyone speaking to them on their first few meetings! It took me almost a year to pluck up the courage to attend a social meeting in the first place, and by chance an appeal for volunteers to help with Canalway Cavalcade was made to which I responded. On reflection I am sure that if that had not have happened I might not have attended many more socials. The solution is really in the hands of all of us, if you see a 'new face' at the meeting please make the effort to speak to them, introduce them to others. The Committee members do try to remember to wear identification badges, so interrupt us if we are in deep conversation—we don't mind really.

Branch Diary—Canalway Cavalcade, May Day Bank Holiday, 30 April-2 May, at Little Venice. Some of the highlights of this event will be the official opening by the Lord Mayor of

Westminster on Saturday at 2pm followed by the Pageant of Boats. Sunday afternoon the Teddy Bears Picnic and in the evening the Illuminated Boat and Torchlight Procession followed by a firework display. Monday the finals of the Boat Handling competition will take place. Trophies to be competed for are Best Privately Decorated Boat; Best Illuminated Boat and the City of Westminster Boat Handling Trophy. If you have not entered your boat yet, contact Ann Hancox on 01-640 1446, who will send you an entry form. Volunteers for innumerable tasks over this weekend are still needed, no tasks are unpleasant!



Cheques being presented at Social by Eric Garland. Left to right: Martin Wood, Neil Rumbol, Eric Garland, Robin Higgs
Photo—Roy Squire

Branch Outing—The outing this year will be to the Basingstoke Canal and take the form of a trip on the *John Pinkerton* the Surrey and Hants Canal Society's trip boat. The date has been fixed for 16 July; the cost will be approximately £6 per person which includes the coach and boat trip. A sandwich and cake type of tea can be provided on board at an extra cost of £1.80. Should it be required a licensed bar is available. If you are interested in this or just want further information, contact Ann Hancox, telephone number above.

London Ring Cruise—News has just reached me that St. Pancras Cruising Club are organising a London Ring (Last Chance through Limehouse) cruise for the Spring Bank Holiday weekend. Those seeking more information should contact Roger Squires, evenings only 01-232 0987.

Social Evenings

21 April—Canals in Bangkok and River Lahn, two films by John Humphries.
19 May—The Yorkshire Derwent, by Ken Goodwin—IWA Chairman
16 June—Question Time with BWB.
21 July—Noggin and Natter at the Robert Browning public house, Clifton Road, W9. Tube: Warwick Avenue.

Limehouse—a Changing Scene

Michael Essex-Lopresti

Visit Limehouse Basin while you can still see remnants of the Regent's Canal Dock where exports and imports were transferred between ship and barge until the cranes were removed in 1969 and the Dock demoted to a Basin.

Go by underground to Tower Hill station on the Docklands Light Railway. Take a train to Limehouse (book your tube ticket right through); from Commercial Road turn down Branch Road towards the Rotherhithe Tunnel Approach and take the first left, The Highway, which crosses the abandoned Barge Lock before turning right to join Narrow Street. Walk to the swing bridge over the Ship Lock. At the moment the lock is 350 feet long, 60 feet wide with a depth of 26 feet at high water, but it is to be closed in June for approximately six months when it is to be replaced with a much smaller lock, the present lock takes one and a half million gallons of water to fill and the new one will need about 4% of that—which will maintain the levels in the basin and Limehouse Cut better than now.

Across Limehouse Basin, the white tower of St. Anne, Limehouse, is seen above the footbridge over the entrance to Limehouse Cut. "The foundation of St. Anne's Church was commenced in 1712; it was consecrated by the Lord Bishop of London in 1730. The Architect,

Nicholas Hawksmoor, one of Sir Christopher Wren's pupils, had in this exhibited a style remarkable for its solidity of appearance and singularity of design" (Gentleman's Magazine: October 1828). To its left is the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady Immaculate—with a statue on its roof—begun in 1926 with money raised by Father Higley, the Parish Priest, and completed in 1934 just as he died; his Requiem Mass was the first service there.

To the left of the church is an accumulator tower, built in 1852—the first in the country—to store water under pressure used to operate the cranes, lock gates and swing bridge. The old pumphouse and part of the chimney can still be seen. The 1838 viaduct along the back of the basin carried the London and Blackwall Railway, cable operated until locomotives were introduced in 1848, when an iron roof was built over the viaduct to prevent engine sparks from setting fire to the sailing ships below.

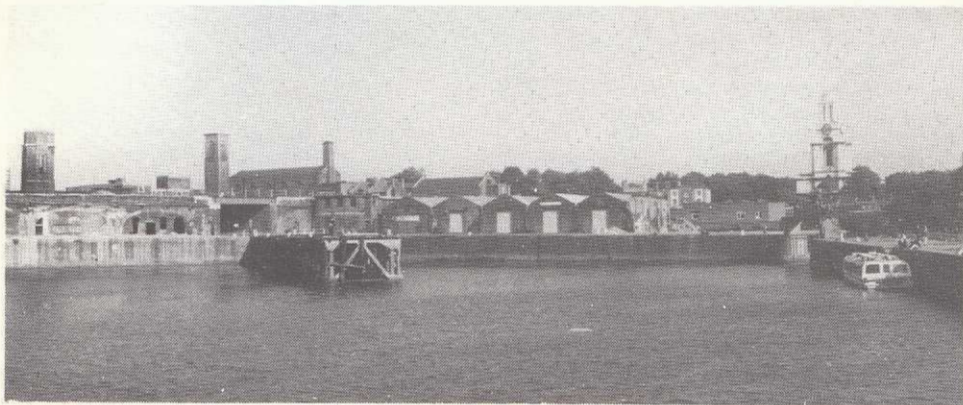
Down Narrow Street, a few yards past the swing bridge, is an iron bridge over the abandoned Limehouse Barge Lock which was the exit of the River Lee Navigation to the Thames. The overgrown lock and lockhouses can be seen on the left and on the right is the piled Thames entrance. Instead of undertaking urgent repair work on the

lock, it was closed in 1968 and a new link 50 foot wide, seven foot deep and 200 foot long was opened from Limehouse Cut into Limehouse Basin.

Further along the road is "The Grapes" featured as the "Six Jolly Fellowship Porters" in Charles Dickens' "Our Mutual Friend": "Externally it was a narrow, lopsided wooden jumble of corpulent windows headed one upon another as you might heap as many toppling oranges, with a crazy wooden verandah impeding over the water; indeed the whole house, inclusive of the complaining flag-staff on the roof, impended over the water, but seemed to have got itself into the position of a faint-hearted diver who has paused so long on the brink that he will never go in at all." Opposite the Grapes is "The House They Left Behind", once "The Black Horse". Ropemakers' Fields dates from the 16th century when the Limehouse shipyards were busy repairing and rigging ships.

Dr. Essex-Lopresti's book, 'Exploring the Regent's Canal', published by KAF Brewin Books, price £5.40 is available from the Branch Sales Stand. Also available by the same author is 'Exploring The New River', priced £4.80.

MEL



Limehouse Basin—1987

Reproduced from 'Exploring the Regent's Canal' by courtesy of Brewin Books

Gateway to the Pool of London

John McSweeney, Hon. Promotions Director, Transport on Water Association

The front cover of this, the first edition of *Excalibur* pictures London's Tower Bridge, constructed under the direction of engineer John Wolfe Barry over a period of eight years and at a cost exceeding one million pounds, from an original design concept by the City of

London's architect Sir Horace Jones. It was declared open by the then Prince of Wales on 30 June 1894. Even whilst under construction it was a popular tourist attraction and has since become as much a symbolic landmark of London as the Eiffel Tower of Paris or the

Coliseum of Rome.

The view of Tower Bridge within this article shows an early pre-war scene of the bridge at ebb tide, and abreast of a vessel (probably one of General Steam Navigation's) berthed at Irongate wharf (now the site of The Tower Hotel), a small wooden barge (punt) is being driven downstream under oars by a licensed lighterman, a further punt is visible athwart the centre span, her hand being obscured by the southern buttment.

This scene holds a certain nostalgia for the author as he served his time (apprenticeship) in a driving firm, the company's barge Roads incidently visible through the bridge, just the lower side of Traitor's Gate.

These small wooden punts were used virtually unchanged for centuries, with a registration of up to 39½ ton, they had a capacity to carry



Tower Bridge—pre 1939
Photo—Roy Squire

45 tons of cargo and were driven (rowed) single handed by licensed Freemen of the Watermen's Company using oars, each twenty six feet in length. These wooden punts were gradually superseded by craft constructed of steel which were in general use until the early seventies when they became uneconomic and were rapidly phased out. Alarmed at the destruction of these unique craft and the subsequent danger of traditional skills of driving and barge handling being lost to the trade, the recently formed Transport on Water Association decided that immediate

IWA crew Fetching on Target Barge. Collecting a flag to gain additional points.

Photo—G. Cossey



action was required and conceived a challenge match between crews of licensed freemen and apprentices competing in a seven mile barge race starting at Greenwich and finishing at Westminster Bridge. The success of this inaugural race in 1974 was such, that enthusiasts sought out the remaining punts and managed to save 23 barges from extinction. The majority of these available punts have been sponsored in every barge driving since, a race that has become the river's premier annual spectacle.

David Whiting, skipper of Shell Bay, winning the race outright for IWA, Thamesday 85.

Photo—G. Cossey



This year's event is scheduled to take place on Saturday 2 July and crews are encouraged to dress within the adopted theme, this year in celebration of the Armada. Many pleasure boats are booked exclusively to follow the race and most of the river's working tugs will attend, dressed overall, to act as starting, safety and support vessels.

Passing on the skills. Apprentice and Freeman pulling together.

Photo—G. Cossey

All river lovers are encouraged to attend with their craft colourfully dressed to compliment what is always a memorable and unique day on one of the world's most historic rivers.

For further details contact:
Transport on Water Association
(TOW) 01-476 2424.



*Homeward Bound
Photo—G. Cossey*



Planning Matters

David G. Wood

Planning matters start about half past six on the second Wednesday in the month and usually go on until we are thrown out of the Abbey Community Centre about a quarter to ten. Just time to go round the corner for a quick one. So, what do the dozen or so of us find to go on about for three hours you may ask. I suppose it's the same as we would be going on about at the bar anyway. The main difference is that as well as putting the world to right we, or some of us, write it down, post it off and get them to do something—sometimes.

The Planning and Navigation Sub-committee of London Branch IWA was set up just ten years ago when Frank Greenhow was Branch Chairman as a result of someone at 114 saying we ought to look at environment issues. It had, of course been done before by the Regents Canal Group and others, but we aren't experts, just people who want to go boating and walking the towpath in our own backyard and to know what was going on now.

We started in 1978 by learning our ABC—Arms, Basins, Cuts and Docks, listing what was where, what state it was in, who was in charge, and what we thought could be done

with it. One of our early members was Chris Cove-Smith who carried on collecting facts and figures and ended up writing *London Waterways Guide*. To find out what the official proposals were for our bits of water we started to look at the District Plans and poking into town halls to look at Planning Applications from developers. That really gave us something to chew over and we started to get the local authorities to send us plans to look at and tell them what we thought.

The planners in their town halls seemed to us then to decide on things from their desks or at best from a fleeting glimpse from a towpath gate. So Frank Greenhow got us to organise a cruise for the planners and local councillors and we got to know better the people who had the power of life or death over our bits of water. This lead directly to planning CC78, the Campaign Cruise when we had five hundred odd boats charging around the London Ring over a weekend filling in bits of paper to say what they thought of it all. After that we left running rallies to a separate sub-committee but we had a far better idea of what was needed to encourage boaters to come and use our patch. The contacts also lead to

invitations to join the planners in their committees, to get to know something of what was going to happen from the inside, and sometimes to influence their decisions.

We still look at local plans, suggest what should be done, and very occasionally go to public inquiries to have our say. Typically a monthly meeting will involve a look through the latest plans, discussions on some burning topic, or paper which might get taken up by the National Navigation Technical and Amenity Committee, often sparked off by the personal experience of the members. Perhaps the most interesting bit is the report from our BWB Liaison Officer of his monthly meeting with the Area Leisure Officer or Engineer on what they are up to at Watford and what they think of what we think they ought to be doing. The problem usually comes after the evenings chat in putting some semblance of order to our ramblings to present Minutes to the Branch Committee to make it look as if we were the intelligent incisive investigative institution they think we ought to be. Well, I suppose it's one way of spending an evening and cheaper than propping up the bar.

Editors Postscript to Planning Matters

Since the committee's inception, David has nurtured its steady growth to the present stage where planners not only ask for, but also respect, its comments. A number of the members are keen to serve on committees outside the branch, and these include: London Canals Committee, Lea and Stort Planning and Amenities Forum, River Users Group (with access to PLA), London River Authority, Hillingdon Locks Conservation Committee, Limehouse Basin Co-operative, Inland Shipping Group, Nav Tec Am and many others.

Any members of the Association can attend meetings as often as they like, there are no elections and apart from David and Ron, no Officers; you can be involved as much as you want to be. So if YOU feel you would like a say in London's waterway planning, give David a ring on 01-894 4154, and come along, you will be most welcome.

There you were, sitting in your armchair thinking 'I really must go digging one weekend' and now look what's happened. We have nearly finished the Basingstoke Canal all by ourselves. Well, we did have a bit of help from the Kennet and Avon Trust, Newbury Branch Working Party, and The Kent and East Sussex Canal Restoration Group. 'Oh yes' and The Southampton Canal Society and The Bristol University Team, The Canal Restoration Group, Guildford and Reading IWA. Then there was the 'Big Dig' at Deepcut and of course the other WRG groups and The Canal Camps. Come to think of it, the locals from the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society did quite a lot, and the full time Team and various Manpower Services Commission Schemes helped to speed things up, and everything was jollied along by the two County Councils. The important thing is that lots of different groups all played a part. The canal is nearing completion, and it has been a triumph of co-operation between all the parties.

Over ten years ago London WRG had its own lock to work on. At first it was lock 24, then on to 17, but gradually as restoration speeded up there were not enough to go round, so we all pitched in on locks such as 16 and 19 in the Deepcut flight. The main volunteer force then moved on to the St. Johns flight, recently re-opened and looking superb, and now work is being completed on the final six locks at Woodham. Restoration, however is not all lock rebuilding (or demolition—our speciality), we have helped on towpath improvements and bank piling, and volunteers are welcome to help with the specialist teams on gate construction and dredging.

London WRG



Report by
Eric Garland



Lock 11, St. Johns Flight,
Basingstoke Canal, March 1987
Photograph—Tim Lewis

The message is clear and simple. The volunteer navvies are still supplying vital assistance to the restoration movement. Locally we are at a crossroads at the moment. While we have a long distance date fixed for the late May Spring Bank Holiday weekend on the Huddersfield, with the Basingstoke nearing completion we need to find more work locally. The Wey and Arun Canal has already seen what we can do and, no doubt, will gradually become our staple replacement for Basingstoke weekends but we do

need to find other venues. The Thames and Severn, perhaps, or the Wilts and Berks; why not come along and help us to decide. We organize digs every three weeks and on the middle Wednesday evening we meet up for a social drink in a pub in central London.

The work we do varies enormously, from shrub clearance to piling, demolition to brick and concrete laying. No skills are required, we teach you all you need to know, but a sense of humour does help. Although the work can be hard (and the drinking), no one is pushed to do more than he or she feels able, but people often soon realize they have more in them than they ever thought possible.

We work all year round, accommodation is provided in village or church halls, transport can usually be provided. All you need to bring is working clothes, a change for the evening, something to sleep in and on, and something to eat and drink with. Food and transport are provided at cost, and a convivial evening, after a satisfying day's work, is usually spent in the local pub.

If you want to come along for a drink or help us digging, give one of the following a call:

Eric Garland on
0322 342296;

Tim Lewis on 01-
530 4767;

Lesley McFadyen
on 405 8400 ext.
402 or 693 3266.



British Waterways

Leisure Take a second look at London's canals

A new set of information sheets and colour leaflets on the capital's canals have recently been produced by the British Waterways Board.

Titles in the series include 'Explore London's canals', 'Wildlife on the Regent's Canal', and 'A Short History of the Regent's Canal'. A series of information sheets providing address and telephone numbers for a range of leisure activities are also available.

Copies obtainable from: London Canals Project Officer, British Waterways Board, Canal Office, Delamere Terrace, London W2 6ND. Telephone: 01-289 9897.



The Regency Connection

In 1811 when his father slipped irrevocably into madness, the fourth George became Prince Regent. George III lived for ten more years and it was not until 1820 that his son was finally crowned King in Westminster Abbey, reigning until 1830.

It was partly thanks to him that the Regency—a period bridging the Georgian and Victorian eras—was full of grace and elegance.

In 1811, the old Marylebone Park reverted to the Crown and it was decided to turn it into a place where the nobility could live in style. Such a grand scheme needed a link with St. James's and Westminster and so in 1817 Regent Street was begun to the design of John Nash, George's Surveyor-General. Carlton House, the Prince of Wales' stately residence on Pall Mall, would stand at one end of Regent Street, at the other end would be a summer retreat. However, prior to the work being completed in 1823, George had Carlton house demolished, the columns of which were used to embellish the entrance portico of the new National Gallery.

Part of Marylebone Park was renamed Regents Park. It comprised 410 acres and was roughly circular in shape. Again Nash designed the layout which included an artificial boating lake and terraces of large, unified houses surrounding the park, each with white stuccoed columns, pediments and sculpture.

Through the northern end of the park ran part of the Regents Canal. This was designed to provide a direct link between the Midlands and the Thames by extending the Grand Junction Canal from Little Venice Paddington, nine miles into Limehouse, terminating at Regents Canal Dock (Limehouse Basin). The necessary money was quickly raised and work began in 1812 taking eight years to complete. There were twelve locks, forty bridges and two tunnels. Landlords along its route fought its building, sometimes so

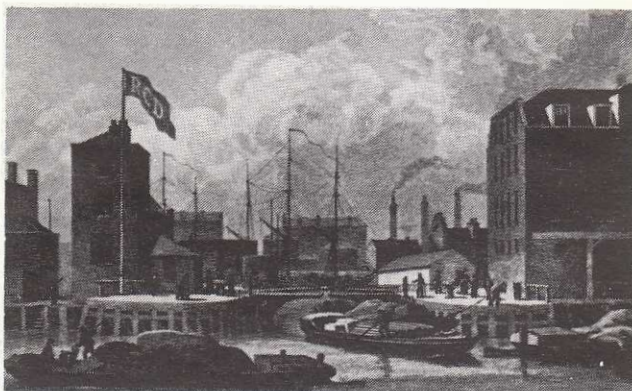
fiercely it led to pitched battles. Money went fraudulently missing and costs rose. Soon after its opening railways became the new mode of transport and the Canal never repaid those who had invested in it.

In 1821, it was finally decided that the ancient and famous landmark of London Bridge was unsafe and dangerous, and would have to be replaced. John Rennie, a Scottish engineer of Canal fame, was chosen to design the new bridge. Sited 100 feet to the west of and wider than the old bridge, it was built in Scottish and Devon granite, and had five arches instead of twenty, which enabled the water to flow more evenly beneath it and thus be less of a navigation hazard. It was opened in 1831 at a cost £2,000,000, most of which was met from the reserves of the Bridge House Estates, a charitable trust established in medieval times.

East India Dock at Blackwell followed in 1806, constructed especially for the large 1,200 ton ships of the East India Company. On the other side of the Thames between the Pool and Limehouse Reach were the Surrey Commercial Docks. Here timber ships from the Baltic and Scandinavia were handled.

Being so close to the City, the construction of St. Katherine Docks in 1828 involved the demolition of hundreds of houses, causing much homelessness. Thomas Telford, another famous Canal engineer, designed the warehouses situated almost on the water's edge so that valuable imports, such as indigo, marble, opium and tortoise shell could be unloaded straight into them.

So London's Docks, constructed during the reigns of George the III and IV had, via the Regents Canal Ship Lock, a new direct link to a navigable inland waterway canal



ENTRANCE TO THE REGENT'S CANAL, LIMEHOUSE, 26th January 1828

It was along the river that London's continuing role as a great trading centre could best be seen. In 1802, the West India Docks were built on the Isles of Dogs. In 1805 came London Dock with huge warehouses to hold tobacco and rice and twenty acres of underground vaults for the storage of wines and spirits.

system, which itself had been born and pioneered throughout the Hanovarian Dynasty.

Extracts used in this article are taken from "London Throughout the Ages" by Sheila Gove, and reproduced by kind permission of the P.L.A.

Photograph supplied by British Waterways Board.

Well kids, now is your chance to win a great competition.

We are looking for a name to head our own fun page in the magazine, it should relate to us, the junior members of the Association. It would be nice if the title was linked to the legend of King Arthur and therefore related with the name of the magazine, *Excalibur*.

Entries must be posted to me: Nikky Bates, Junior Page Editor, 5 Crescent Avenue, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 4ED.

Closing date for entries is 30th June 1988.

The name will be selected by a team of judges and the winner will be notified in writing. A full report will appear in the Christmas edition of *Excalibur*.

We are also looking for jokes, crosswords and puzzles of all kinds, so get writing.

15 word, Word Search by Alastair Bates. Answers provided in next issue.

Find the Magazine Titles

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L	K	F	O	R	B	T	B	N	E
C	X	E	W	Y	O	U	T	H	B

Be Water Wise

'Be water wise' was the message of a schools water safety competition organised jointly by the British Waterways Board, London Canals Project Officer and the Inland Waterways Association.

Schools in the east end wrote booklets or designed posters about water safety on canals. This followed each class seeing the British Waterways audio-visual presentation 'Be water wise' and working on the six point water safety code. The emphasis of the campaign was that 'canals are fun but must be enjoyed safely'.

Monica Dickens, best selling author of children's books and great granddaughter of Charles Dickens presented prizes to the winning classes. The children were able to show Monica Dickens some of their work and to ask her questions about writing books and about her grandfather.

Guardian Angels School in Mile End won first prize, a boat trip on the

Regent's Canal provided by British Waterways Leisure. Second prize was presented to Olga Primary School, Bow and third prize to Mowlem Primary School in Bethnal Green. All three schools received

representing London Branch IWA and Wendy Varcoc (London Canals Project Officer) representing British Waterways Board.

As a result of interest in canal projects by London schools British Waterways Board and Inland Waterways Association are now running a boat competition in Westminster Primary Schools.

Children will be studying different aspects of canal boats and will either be building boat models or designing posters about holidays on boats. This work will be displayed at Little Venice during the Canalway Cavalcade over the May bank holiday.

If any teachers are interested in carrying out projects on London's canals further information, resources and advice can be obtained from: London Canals Projects Officer, British Waterways Board, Canal Office, Delamere Terrace, London W2 6ND, telephone 01-289 9897



Monica Dickens with some of the prize winners book tokens donated by IWA London Branch member, Gillie Dobson, who suggested the competition. Also in attendance at the prize giving was, Eric Garland, (Branch Chair) and Marion Waters, (Branch Publicity Officer) both



Canalway Cavalcade—Little Venice, Bank Holiday 30 April-2 May.

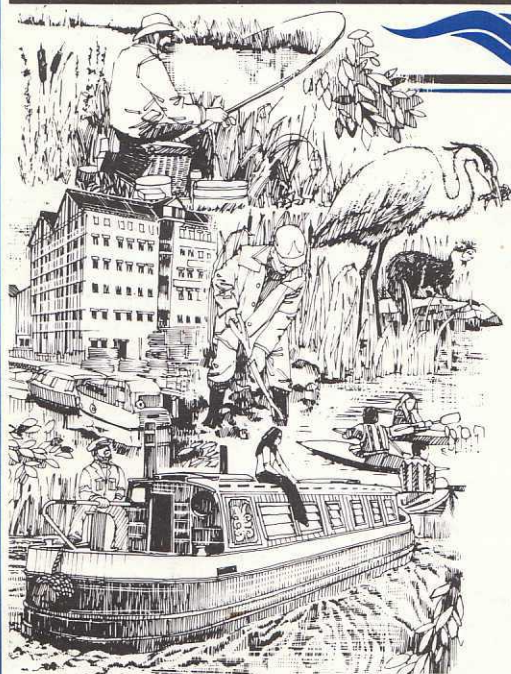
Woking 200—Bank Holiday 29-30 May.

Henley Royal Regatta—20 June-3 July. Tie essential apparel for gentlemen.

Barge Driving Race—Between Palaces of Greenwich and Westminster. Sat. 2 July.

11th Traditional Boat Rally—Fawley Meadow, Henley. 9-10 July.

The Doggets Race—London Bridge to Chelsea. 26 July.



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