

Excalibur

**THE LONDON NEWSLETTER OF
THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION**

NUMBER 13, WINTER 1993

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Norman Alborough, editor of 'Canal and Riverboat', presenting your Editor (in the hat) a cheque for the Canal and Riverboat Tom Rolt Award at the National Waterways Festival at Peterborough on August Bank Holiday

Photo: Tim Lewis

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From the Branch Chairman and Editor

THE TOM ROLT AWARD

The announcement that *Excalibur* won its category in the Canal and Riverboat Tom Rolt Awards for this year was just in time to get into the late news page of our last issue. These awards are sponsored by *Canal and Riverboat* magazine and awarded by the I.W.A. This years judges were David Stevenson (IWA National Chairman), Harry Arnold (Waterways journalist and editor of *IWA Waterways* and Norman Alborough (Editor of *Canal and Riverboat*).

The awards come in three categories. *Excalibur* was the winner in the category for the best IWA Branch of Region publication. In the category for the best Canal Society publication, there was a joint award to the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal Society and *Pennine Link*, from the Huddersfield Canal Society. The winner in the category for boat clubs was the Dunstable and District Boat Club's *DDBC News*.

I was pleased to join my fellow editors in receiving our awards from Norman Alborough at the National Waterways Festival at Peterborough on August Bank Holiday.

The award brings a cheque for £100 to the Branch, and the Branch Committee has agreed to spend a large slice of this on the current issue of *Excalibur*, by increasing its size to 20 pages so that we can still run *Smallsword* as a full four-page pull-out, without cutting down our other editorial content. You will notice that our advertising content is getting a bit more regular, and I live in hope that this will generate enough income for the bigger size to appear regularly.

GRAND NEW YEAR DRAW

The time for this has come round again, and you will find tickets for it included with this issue. That is, unless you are one of our overseas members. We've decided not to send Draw tickets to them this year, because last year's experience showed that the slowness of surface mail makes the timing impossible (in many cases) for them to buy tickets and get their returns back to us in time. We're trying to think of an alternative way of getting round this problem for the future, but for this year we have not come up with anything. But overseas members who want to help the Draw are invited to send us contributions. The purpose of the draw is to help pay for the running of the Branch (including helping fund *Excalibur*) so that money raised by events such as Canalway Cavalcade can all go to waterways causes.

BRANCH RE-ORGANISATION

It is not long since London IWA achieved Region status. Part of the plan was always to divide the present London Branch into smaller units, and the Branch Committee is in process of considering just how this can best be done. We very much want the views of the members on this subject, so please read the article on pages 6 and 7 and let us have your response.

MORE THOUGHTS FROM BRUM

I wrote my last editorial part-way through our use-it-or-lose-it cruise of the BCN. On the whole we were impressed with how much of the BCN has undergone real improvement since we first discovered it, some fifteen years ago. We only had one real worry. We had planned to go up the Titford Canal, but were warned by a BW lengthsman not to try, as the level at the top was some two feet down. My worry is lest this is the norm for that canal. If so, it will never get used, and if we can't use it, then we'll very likely lose it. I have written to BW's Waterway Manager for the BCN on the subject. If *Excalibur* readers come across similar situations elsewhere, please (a) publicise them and (b) write to BW. Unless we fight, we can't win.

Mike Stevens

FUTURE ISSUES

Publication Date	Copy date
No. 14 Spring 1994	18 December 1993
No. 15 Summer 1994	5 March 1994
No. 16 Autumn 1994	9 July 1994
No. 17 Winter 1994	8 October 1994

The IWA may not agree with opinions expressed in this magazine but encourages publication as a matter of interest. Nothing printed may be construed as policy or an official announcement unless so stated, otherwise the Association accepts no liability for any matter in the magazine. Although every care is taken with advertising, no responsibility whatsoever can be accepted for any matter advertised.

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The Editor reserves the right to edit any article or letter submitted for publication.

On the Metreau

News and Gossip of London's Waterways

TOWPATH WALKS

Readers will remember that last December we entered into partnership with *London Walks* so that IWA walks would benefit from the massive publicity produced by that organisation and yet be separately identified in that programme as being arranged and led on behalf of the IWA, which continues to receive all profits.

There is no doubt that this has been an outstanding success; we have increased the number of walks and the range of waterways covered and each walk is attracting more people than before. At a rough estimate it seems that about half of those attending have read about the walks in the waterways press.

In the first eight months of 1993 we have guided more than three times the previous annual total, and so far this year the income to IWA has quadrupled. Michael Essex-Lopresti, who organises these walks, told us at a recent Branch Social that he hopes that the total raised for IWA by the walks in 1993 will be about £1500 by the end of the year: roughly half what the walks have raised in the previous 16 years! Some time next Spring, we look forward to our 5000th walker.

In October, your editor was delighted to have no fewer than 39 people join him for the first walk of Three Mills and the Bow Back Rivers in the IWA/London Walks programme.

From November 1993 until May 1994 walks will be held on the first and third Sundays of each month at 2.30 pm with an extra walk on Boxing Day morning. The walks will be on the following routes (Meet at the Underground station indicated):

1993

- 7 Nov New River: Highbury to Angel (*Meet at Highbury & Islington*)
- 21 Nov Regent's Canal: Paddington to Camden (*Meet at Warwick Avenue*)
- 5 Dec Regent's Canal: Camden to Islington (*Meet at Camden Town*)
- 19 Dec Bow Back Rivers & Three Mills (*Meet at Bromley-by-Bow*)
- 26 Dec (11am) Regent's Canal: Camden to Islington (*Meet at Camden Town*)
- 1994
- 2 Jan Regent's Canal: Islington to Mile End (*Meet at Angel*)
- 16 Jan Regent's Canal: Mile End to Limehouse (*Meet at Mile End*)

- 6 Feb New River: Manor House to Highbury (*Meet at Manor House*)
- 20 Feb New River: Highbury to Angel (*Meet at Highbury & Islington*)
- 6 Mar Regent's Canal: Paddington to Camden (*Meet at Warwick Avenue*)
- 20 Mar Regent's Canal: Camden to Islington (*Meet at Camden Town*)
- 3 Apr Regent's Canal: Islington to Mile End (*Meet at Angel*)
- 17 Apr Regent's Canal: Mile End to Limehouse (*Meet at Mile End*)
- 1 May Regent's Canal: Camden to Paddington, ending at Canalway Cavalcade (*Meet at Camden Town*)

APOLOGIES . . .

. . . for the fact that our last issue contained a mis-print in the date of the November Central London Social, creating a non-existent Thursday 15 November. Such are the perils of modern technology that the list of dates I sent to other magazines was taken from the same computer file and perpetrated the same error.

200 CLUB WINNERS

JUNE

- £58 No. 93 Mr B G Butler New Malden
- £29 No. 58 Miss R Limming Uxbridge
- £15 No. 44 Mr A J Butterworth Chelsfield
- £15 No. 126 Mr A R Sawyer Bexleyheath

AUGUST

- £58 No. 56 Miss R Limming Uxbridge
- £29 No. 263 Mr A Hooper Ilford
- £15 No. 180 Mr R J Hudson Hanworth
- £15 No. 42 Mr D Allison-Beer Uxbridge

OCTOBER

- £58 No. 210 Mr T P O'Hare Heathfield
- £29 No. 228 Mr F L Willis, Hayes, Middx
- £15 No. 213 Mr K P Hayter Banbury
- £15 No. 263 Mr A Hooper Ilford

The 200 Club exists to raise money for the running expenses of the Branch, particularly the cost of meetings. We've noticed that quite a few recent winners have been people who have taken out multiple memberships, so if you've only got one membership, you know what to do to improve your chances. Membership costs £1 per month: details from Sue Blake or Dorothy Robbie (phone numbers on page 2).

HARTSHILL UNDER THREAT

I know it is not in London, but I am sure other London members will share my concern at the news that British Waterways are planning to close the Hartshill maintenance yard on the Coventry Canal, following recent changes in their management structure for the area. The yard dates from the 18th century and contains a number of listed buildings. It was extensively refurbished as recently as 1991. The Ashby Canal Association and the Coventry Canal Society are worried that BW's plans to let off the site piecemeal will lead to fragmentation and the loss of boating and educational facilities. If you want to support them, write and express your concern to Mr S Sim, BW Regional Office, Peel's Wharf, Lichfield Street, Fazeley, Staffs, B78 3QZ.

LONDON AREA STOPPAGES

The BW Winter Stoppages list has only a few entries with our Branch/Region area. The Hertford Union is to be closed from 1 November to 17 December for repairs to bridges. Old Ford lock (the one on the Lee Navigation) will close from 4 January to 20 March for re-gating (very necessary, I am told). There is to be stoppage or restriction on the Paddington Arm for British Rail bridge repairs. The date of this isn't yet known: best to check with BW London Canals Office at Little Venice (071-286 6101) if you plan to use the Paddington Arm this winter.

Islington tunnel will be restricted to 8am-6pm opening from 1 November to 23 January for safety works and will close for 7-12 February for investigation works. Several Regents' locks are due for closures for gate repairs. They are Sturts (8-21 November), City Road (7-12 February), Acton's (7-13 February) and Mile End (21-27 February).

Just outside our area, Lot Mead lock on the GU will be closed for various repairs during 7-20 February, and Lady Capel's Bridge for a complete rebuild during 4 January - 20 March.

On the Thames, Teddington Barge Lock will close from 3 January to 6 March, but the Launch and Skiff locks will remain open. The rest of the Thames locks are outside our Branch/Region area. There are a number of short stoppages and one long one: Hambledon Lock from 1 October to 3 March for a complete rebuild.

CONGRATULATIONS to Branch member Martin Ludgate who is the new editor of *Navvies*, WRG's national newsletter.

OLD BARGES AT YEADING, circa 1950

I

Interred in waste land down our way,
Just off the Paddington Cut,
Are relics of an earlier day,
A period perhaps best forgot.

Yes, relics of unusual kind
In a disused waterway;
Decrepit narrow barges we find,
Left here to just rot away.

Now weed-infested and crumbling,
The wooden carcasses here lie,
Submerged in dank and reedy bog
And almost hidden from the eye;

Abandoned understandably in haste,
When Yeading ceased to be
Depository for London's waste,
And this spot was left fallow.

II

Their graveyard is a former dock,
Originally for the brickfield
Which made the well-known London Stock
From the local brick earth yield.

Of variegated hue; orange, brown,
Or grey, fawn; these ubiquitous
Bricks everywhere are found in town.
They helped to house the populace

Of London and its many suburbs;
Proud public buildings as well
As humble terraced dwellings
And grand town houses for the swell.

In its turn London then contributed
To the re-making of Yeading
(When the brick earth had been depleted)
With household waste as in-filling.

III

These wood hulls slowly integrate
With the soil: and in time (now near?)
This ground someone will cultivate—
Or, maybe, houses will blossom here.

F E Bennett

The above poem was sent to me by Robin Gray of British Waterways. Its author Fred Bennet tells me that the poem was originally roughed out in the early 1950s when he found some abandoned narrowboats in waste land near Spikes Bridge, not far from the Willow Tree pub and the present site of our advertiser, Willowtree Marina.

New Branches for London

THE BRANCH COMMITTEE WANTS YOUR VIEWS

BACKGROUND

When London was pressing for Region status we talked about whether or not the new Region ought to consist of a single Branch or ought to divide into a number of new Branches. The decision went in favour of the latter course, although it was realised that this could not be done overnight. We are thus in a transitional position, with a single Branch co-terminous with the Region until such time as we are ready to split into smaller Branches.

A couple of years ago the Branch Committee set up a network of out-of-centre social meetings as potential springboards for future Branches. We made a policy decision to allow the new Branches to evolve naturally rather than to impose a pattern from the centre.

Uxbridge meetings, initially organised by Mike Stimpson, rapidly generated a strong and regular audience and gave birth to our Middlesex Section. S E London meetings at Mottingham have also proved a success with a steady attendance. The same is true, but on a smaller scale, at Croydon. In N E London we have tried several venues, seeking one that attracts a significant audience, and have recently launched a series of meetings at Hazelmere Marina, once again with Mike Stimpson at the helm and now under the title of the Lea Group. The first of these has taken place with encouraging attendance and enthusiasm.

The Branch Committee feels that the time has come to prepare for the next steps: perhaps the natural evolution needs a little prodding, but we are confident that we now have a good base from which to proceed, and would like to aim at replacing London Branch by a number of smaller Branches by 1 January 1995.

WHAT NEXT?

It cannot be long before the Middlesex Section feels ready to become a fully-fledged Branch, and it would not be right to stand in their way when they feel the time has come. When this happens we shall need to define the boundaries of the new Branch, and the Branch Committee feels that this would be done best in the context of a known plan for the whole split.

We have never drawn a boundary for the Middlesex Section. While they are a Section rather than a Branch, this is not crucial. But once we split into multiple Branches, the question of boundaries will need to be decided.

Any member of IWA is entitled to choose what Branch he/she belongs to. When we split, we ought to offer the choice explicitly to existing London Branch members. But new members not expressing a choice are allocated by Head Office to the Branch in which they live. So it is important that new Branches have a big enough catchment area to be self-sustaining in the long term. In particular, this may well mean that when the Middlesex Section achieves Branch status, it will need a wider boundary than that to which it sends mailings at present.

ONE SUGGESTED PATTERN

Different suggestions for the number of new Branches have varied from 3 to 5. When this was discussed at Branch Committee, there was a strong consensus that a pattern of three Branches of roughly equal membership would be likely to produce strong Branches. We thought that these might be West London (based on the existing Middlesex Section), South London (based on the existing Mottingham and Croydon groups; possibly, but not necessarily, meeting in alternate months at the two venues) and North London, based on the new Lea Group.

There are differing views as to whether South West London (where we have not at the moment got a local group) should, in such a pattern, be part of West London or South London. One of the Committee's next tasks is to look on the map that shows where our members live and come up with some possible boundaries.

Whatever pattern we devise, it need not tie us for ever: there could always be a subsequent re-arrangement of boundaries with or without the creation of further Branches. At some future date, for example, a separate South West London Branch might be formed.

SHOULD THERE BE A CENTRAL LONDON BRANCH?

In discussions at Branch and Region Committees, two distinct views on this have emerged. Nobody has suggested that the Central London social meetings should stop. They are well-supported by members, but many of these live nowhere near Central London. Many people who live some way out but work centrally find it convenient to stay in the centre for the meetings before travelling home. The difference of view is about whether these meetings should be the

focus of a Central London Branch, or be organised by the Region.

The Branch Committee's firm view is that when outer London is covered by flourishing Branches, the home-address-driven way of allocating new members will not make a Central London Branch sustainable unless its boundaries are set so widely as to threaten the viability of some of the other new Branches. It is also questionable whether members of the outer Branches will want to support the Central meetings if they are not 'theirs' in some sense. At present there is a very significant overlap in the audiences at the central and out-of-centre meetings. For these reasons we would like these meetings to become a Region responsibility.

The opposite view is taken by, among others, Region Chairman Mike Stimpson, who would like to see four or five new Branches altogether, including one for Central London.

OVERSEAS MEMBERS

One question we shall have to resolve is what to do with our overseas members, who are all allocated by Head Office to London Branch unless they ask to be placed elsewhere. The above thoughts have been framed purely in terms of our London-based members. Branch Committee has suggested the possibility of overseas members being members of the Region but not of any of its Branches. We believe that this is not possible within the Association's Rules at present, and if we wanted this solution we would need to persuade IWA Council to change the rules. Another possibility is to have a Branch exclusively for Overseas Members, but it hard to see how this could have Officers and a Committee! This is something we will discuss with the national Association.

ONE OR TWO STAGES OF CHANGE?

Assuming, for the sake of argument, that the 3-Branch pattern mentioned above were to be agreed, then there are two possible ways of arranging the change-over. It could happen either all at once, or in two stages. The decision depends on how soon Middlesex Section wants to progress to Branch status. If they were ready for this before the other two areas, then we could make a first split into two: West London and 'the rest'. At some later date 'the rest' would split into North and South.

TIME-SCALE

If we go for the two-stage process, it would be possible to target the first stage of this change for the next AGM. The second stage would

probably be possible for 1 January 1995. If we decide to make the change all in one go, the 1 January 1995 would be a good target date. On the whole The Branch Committee feels that we ought to get on with things. The danger of an over-long transitional period is that the people involved tend to lose sight of the goal. We have already experienced this to some extent in the delays we suffered in achieving Region status: let us try to avoid the same thing happening again.

BRANCH AND REGION ACTIVITIES

The Central London meetings are not the only activities which could be either Branch or Region responsibilities after the split. There are a whole range of things: *Excalibur*, the Sales Stand, the New Year Draw and others, where there would be a choice of either handing them over to Region or dividing them up and replicating them on a smaller scale in each of the new Branches.

A number of us feel that what will succeed in London may well not be the same as what works elsewhere and that we may need a more active Region than is the standard national pattern, with less Branch-based activity. Planning and Navigation Committee has already become a Region responsibility because everybody felt that when a split happens, this job could only sensibly be done for London as a whole. This may be a precedent for other aspects of our work.

Nobody seems to think that several small Branch magazines would be a good idea. It follows that *Excalibur* would become a Region responsibility but, of course, with considerable input from the new Branches. Formally this is a decision which has to be made jointly by the new Branches and the Region Committee after the split has taken place. But clearly the present Branch and Region Committees would be able to make such a recommendation to their successors. The two committees are of one mind, and are even considering whether to make this change on 1 January 1994 even if no new Branch is coming into existence then. This is not a change that will be noticeable to the readers of *Excalibur*; but one that is basically about funding and lines of responsibility.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

There are a lot of questions to be resolved. The Branch Committee will need to draw up a formal proposal for consideration by IWA Council, but first wants to consult our members. If you have views on any aspects of the above, please send them to the Branch Chairman, Mike Stevens (address on page 2) by 1 January.

Mike Stevens

From the Region Chairman – Mike Stimpson

First of all I should start the Region Chairman's 'bit' by congratulating Mike Stevens and the *Excalibur* team for winning the 'Rolt' award this year. For those of you who do not know, the 'Rolt' award is to acclaim the best Region or Branch magazine published during the year for IWA Members. I am very pleased to hear that London's magazine achieved this accolade. Congratulations to Mike and the team for this triumph.

This edition of *Excalibur* is due to come out at Christmas time, so perhaps I could take this opportunity to wish you all a prosperous and enjoyable Christmas and New Year (should that be the other way around?) and to remind you of the fact that you can support the IWA by purchasing Christmas cards—I believe that the wife of one of my predecessors is masterminding this part of our activities.

As you all know from the last edition of *Excalibur*, the National Waterways Festival next year is due to be held just outside our Region's territory at Waltham Abbey where, co-incidentally, we have recently formed a new group, which I am pleased to say is running very well indeed.

Members of the London Branch who would like to become involved in 'The National' next year are asked to contact a Branch Committee member at one of the social meetings, who will put forward their name and address to the event committee. There are many ways you can help, either prior to the event or over the weekend itself or, indeed, in setting up or taking down the site. With a massive event like this there is always lots to do and the more people we get the easier it will be. I am sure you are all looking forward to attending the event.

Returning to our social meetings on the Lea, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Hazelmere Marina, who have duplicated the efforts of the Hillingdon Canal Club, whose assistance was highly valued in the foundation of what has become our Middlesex Section.

Your Region and Branch Committee are considering how best to steer these groups and sections into Branches over the coming years. We hope to arrive at a situation where the existing London Branch can be split into new Branches, although there is some debate at the present time as to exactly how this should be done.

My view is to let nature take its course and, as groups develop and expand, allow them to progress naturally to the condition where

Branch status can be applied for. Having visited both the Mottingham and Croydon groups, I am pleased to learn that they feel able to merge and between them form a section, holding meetings alternately at each location. This makes geographical sense and in due course hopefully they will form a Branch.

The Middlesex Section is certainly well along the road to Branch status and the Lea Group has every intention of following the same road as the old Uxbridge Group and hopefully form a Section in the winter of '94/5.

As you will know from reading *Excalibur*, we have social meetings at a number of venues. Please try and attend them if they are close to you, as they are arranged for your benefit. If there is a topic you would like to see covered or, better still, you could speak about, of if you know someone who can, please let us know.

You have presumably joined the IWA because you are interested in one aspect of the waterways or another, and these talks certainly provide an interesting focal point for the waterways enthusiast to learn more about his or her interest, and there is, of course, the social side as well. I certainly enjoy attending the social meetings, even though on the odd occasion I hear the same talk in two different places: I always pick up something I have missed on the previous occasion!

A reminder that the AGM notices are in this edition of *Excalibur* for the simple reason that the next edition will be too close to the AGM date to give the legally-required period of time for an AGM Notice. I know that many members consider the AGM to be a boring necessary evil and try their best not to attend! Actually we do need you there: if you can spare the time for the AGM please do come along.

If you are attending one of the social meetings for the first time, please make yourself known to one of the Branch or Region officers—we all wear (or are supposed to wear) our little white IWA badges, which always tell us who we are and most of the time what we are.

Returning finally to the subject of AGMs, I was very pleased to see such a high turnout of London Region members at the National AGM which was held at Bath. My wife and I stayed for the entire weekend, and this was the first time that a Waterways Weekend had been centred on the AGM for a number of years and made it far more enjoyable. I would like to finish with my congratulations to the Avon and South Wilts Branch for organising such a splendid weekend.

Readers' Letters

A REQUEST FOR HELP

Dear Mike,

I am a member of IWA attached to the London Branch who, together with my wife, will be spending 6 weeks on the Oxford and Grand Union Canals and the Thames about August next year. We would like to spend a week exploring London and ideally moored on the Regent's Canal. It occurred to me that there may be one of the London members who will have a mooring vacant at that time which we could hire for a week. The week we are likely to be in the area is 24-30 August. The canal boat we will be using is a 50ft narrowboat. I would appreciate hearing from anyone who may be able to help.

A second enquiry is in regard to an epicyclic windlass known as the LADYLASS WINDLASS. I have written unsuccessfully to the address given in the June '93 issue of *Canal & Riverboat* magazine but to no avail. It seemed to me that this would be very helpful for more difficult paddle-gear and for weaker crew members, and I would like very much to know how one goes about obtaining one.

Yours sincerely,
Malcolm Jones

Christchurch, New Zealand

EDITOR'S COMMENT

If anyone can help, I will forward their replies to Mr Jones. British Waterways have allocated three (free) visitor mooring areas in Central London: on the Regent's Canal at Islington and Camden and on the Paddington Branch adjacent to Little Venice. My own choice of these for a week's stay would be the Islington one, which is as conveniently placed as the others and quite a lot quieter. I hope Mr and Mrs Jones will visit the National Waterways Festival at Waltham Abbey (27-29 August) while they are in the area.

REGION BOUNDARIES

Dear Mike,

The area of IWA London Region is the same as the London Branch, namely Greater London, which is composed of the ex-GLC London Boroughs. This includes some London Boroughs like mine which still retain their pre-GLC postal addresses: I live in the London Borough of Bexley, which is in London Region even though my postal address is still Kent.

New members are allocated to the Branch and Region in whose area they live, but a member can, if he wishes, choose to change to another Branch (and its Region) by giving notice in writing to Head Office.

When it comes to the waterways for which a Branch is to be responsible, membership boundaries are not always appropriate for this purpose. For example the Greater London Boundary crosses the Lee Navigation and the Grand Union main line several times, splitting off short isolated lengths of waterway. Therefore sensible boundaries of waterway responsibility have been agreed with our neighbouring Branches. These are the M25 on the Lee and Batchworth road bridge (just below the lock) on the GU.

Similarly it has been agreed that Kent and East Sussex Branch will be responsible for the Dartford and Crayford Navigation, and Chiltern Branch for the Slough Arm.

Guildford and Reading Branch suggested to us that it was silly for us to be responsible for a relatively short stretch of the non-tidal Thames, and it was agreed that the boundary, as far as dealing with the navigation authority was concerned, should be Teddington weir. This leaves London still responsible for Teddington lock, which we felt desirable because it provides access to and from the tideway through London. London Region has considerable experience and expertise with its tidal locks and their peculiar problems.

Ron Bingham

Chairman, IWA London Region Planning
and Navigation Committee

RESIDENTIAL BOATS

Dear *Excalibur*,

I joined IWA two years ago, as I hope one day to live on the water. I am now in a position to do so, but still find it very difficult to find out where all the residential moorings are (and indeed where people sell their boats!). I am looking for a mooring (maximum half-an-hour's drive from Wandsworth), and wonder if anyone can help me draw up a list of possible sites.

I must say that (triggered off by this last issue of *Excalibur*) I had been wondering if there was a bias towards canals, as the Thames doesn't get much of a mention. I am usually the silent member who contributes little other than my membership and purchase of lottery tickets—but then I am not afloat yet!

Yours sincerely,
Ms Vanessa Matthews
London SW18

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Has anybody out there any information that would help, either for publication in these pages or for me to forward to Ms Matthews?

1994 New Year Draw

The 1993 IWA London Branch New Year Draw was again a success, raising nearly £1,200 for Branch funds. Your committee has therefore decided to organise a further Draw for 1994. The aim of the Draw is again to raise funds to run our basic activities: for room hire for committee and social meetings; work in making representations to various authorities, producing and mailing 'Excalibur', monitoring planning applications and generally safeguarding our local waterways. We include two books of five 50p tickets with this issue of 'Excalibur' and hope that you will support our efforts.

As can be seen from the list below we have a splendid selection of prizes. The first prize is a one week holiday for four at a Cotswolds cottage alongside the Stroudwater canal, for which we're grateful to Michael Handford, who runs the IWA/WRG Stamp Bank.

Thanks also to those companies, organisations and individuals who have helped us by donating the other Draw prizes: a gift voucher for £50 (Uxbridge Boat Centre Ltd); a gift voucher for £50.00 (High Line

Yachting Ltd); a dinner cruise for two aboard 'My Fair Lady (Paddy Walker); an Alex Prowse waterway colour print (Alex & Jan Prowse); a one year subscription to Canal & Riverboat (A.E.Morgan Publications Ltd); a one year subscription to Waterways World (Waterway Productions Ltd); a copy of 'Stanford's River Thames' by Graham Hayward; a pewter tankard (IWA Sales Ltd); a copy of 'Through the French Canals' by Philip Bristow; and a family Admission ticket to the London Canal Museum.

We hope that you will support your Branch by entering the Draw yourself and by selling tickets to your friends or colleagues. More books are available from Richard Bird, 23 Porcupine Close, Mottingham, London SE9 3AE ('phone 081-857 6367) or any London Branch committee member. The Draw will take place on 17 February, 1994 at the London Region Social Meeting at the Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, London SW1. The meeting commences at 7.30pm and the winning tickets will be drawn at about 9.00pm.

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Waterways World

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Alex Prowse presenting one of last year's prizes, a fine art print, to Sidonie Ferguson. The presentation took place on Alex's gallery barge, Bloom, at Little Venice during Canalway Cavalcade in May.

PHOTO: Mike Stevens



Notice of Section, Branch and Region A.G.M.s

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meetings of the Middlesex Section, London Branch and London Region will be on the dates and at the places shown below:

MIDDLESEX SECTION

Tuesday 8 March 1994 at 8 pm
at Hillingdon Canal Club,
Waterloo Road, Uxbridge

LONDON BRANCH

Thursday 17 March 1994 at 7.30 pm
at the Abbey Community Centre,
34 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BU

LONDON REGION

Thursday 21 April 1994 at 7.30 pm
at the Abbey Community Centre,
34 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BU

Nominations for the Committees should be in writing, signed by the proposer, seconder and the nominee. Nominations must be received by the Section Secretary (Alison Struckett), the Branch Secretary (Sue Blake), or the Region Secretary (Rosie Limming) as appropriate, not less than 14 days before the AGM concerned. All addresses are on page 3.

AGENDA FOR EACH MEETING

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the last AGM and any Special General Meeting held since.
3. Matters arising from the minutes.
4. Report of the Chairman.
5. Report of the Secretary.
6. Report of the Treasurer and presentation of accounts.
7. Adoption of accounts.
8. Statement of Committee size.
9. Election of Committee members.
10. Appointment of Hon. Accountant.
11. Any other business

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Waterways Events in and around London

DECEMBER 1993

Weekend 4th/5th	LONDON WRG AND KESCRG	Dig on the Basingstoke Canal. Contact: Tim Lewis (081-539 7926)
Sunday 5th: 2.30 pm	LONDON IWA WITH 'LONDON WALKS'	GUIDED WALK ON THE REGENT'S CANAL: CAMDEN TO ISLINGTON. Meet at Camden Town tube station. About 2 hours. £4 (Concessions £3) Contact Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti (081-882 1337)
Tuesday 7th: 8pm	LONDON IWA: LEA GROUP	SOCIAL MEETING at Hazelmere Marine, Highbridge St, Waltham Abbey (off Station Road). Speaker: Tim Siddaway: <i>The ageing infrastructure</i> . Contact: Mike Stimpson (0923-770425).
Wednesday 8th: 8 pm	LONDON IWA: CROYDON	SOCIAL MEETING at the Ship Inn, High Street, Croydon (Just south of the central pedestrian area: 10 mins walk from either East or West Croydon BR). Speaker: Martin Ludgate: <i>London Waterway Recovery Group</i> . Contact: Mike Stevens (081-674 9387)
Thursday 9th: 7 for 7.30 pm	LONDON IWA: CENTRAL LONDON	SOCIAL MEETING at Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith St, SW1P 3BU. Quiz and Auction. Contact: Tim Lewis (081-530 7926)
Thursday 9th: 8pm	CHELMSFORD IWA	AEU House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford. Christmas Social. Contact: Molly Beard (0702-553392)
Tuesday 14th: 8pm	LONDON IWA: MIDDLESEX SECTION	SOCIAL MEETING at Hillingdon Canal Club, Waterloo Road, Uxbridge. Christmas Party. Contact: Alison Struckett (0344-774228)
Tuesday 14th: 7.30 for 8pm	KENT AND EAST SUSSEX IWA	Fountain Inn, Barming, Maidstone. Christmas get- together with MRUA.
Sunday 19th: 2.30 pm	LONDON IWA WITH 'LONDON WALKS'	GUIDED WALK ON THE BOW BACK RIVERS AND THREE MILLS. Meet at Bromley-by-Bow tube station. About 2 hours. £4 (Concessions £3) Contact Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti (081-882 1337)
Tuesday 21st: 8pm	HERTS IWA	Meeting at Hatfield Cricket Club, Ascots Lane, Welwyn Garden City. Members' Christmas Social and Supper. Contact Greta Wright (0727-860137)
Sunday 26th: 11.00 am	LONDON IWA WITH 'LONDON WALKS'	GUIDED WALK ON THE REGENT'S CANAL: CAMDEN TO ISLINGTON. Meet at Camden Town tube station. About 2 hours. £4 (Concessions £3) Contact Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti (081-882 1337)

JANUARY 1994

Sunday 2nd: 2.30 pm	LONDON IWA WITH 'LONDON WALKS'	GUIDED WALK ON THE REGENT'S CANAL: ISLINGTON TO MILE END. Meet at Angel tube station. About 2 hours. £4 (Concessions £3) Contact Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti (081-882 1337)
Tuesday 4th: 8pm	LONDON IWA: LEA GROUP	SOCIAL MEETING at Hazelmere Marine, Highbridge St, Waltham Abbey (off Station Road). Speaker: Tim Lewis: <i>The work of London WRG</i> . Contact: Mike Stimpson (0923-770425).
Tuesday 11th: 8pm	LONDON IWA: MIDDLESEX SECTION	SOCIAL MEETING at Hillingdon Canal Cruising Club, Waterloo Road, Uxbridge. Speaker: Mike Stevens: <i>The B.C.N.</i> Contact: Alison Struckett (0344-774228)
Thursday 13th: 8pm	CHELMSFORD IWA	AEU House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford. Speaker: Colin Mead: <i>The Sea Cadets</i> . Contact: Molly Beard (0702-553392)

Sunday 16th: 2.30 pm	LONDON IWA WITH 'LONDON WALKS'	GUIDED WALK ON THE REGENT'S CANAL: MILE END TO LIMEHOUSE. Meet at Mile End tube station. About 2 hours. £4 (Concessions £3) Contact Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti (081-882 1337)
Tuesday 18th: 8pm	HERTS IWA	Meeting at Hatfield Cricket Club, Ascots Lane, Welwyn Garden City. Members' slides evening. Contact Greta Wright (0727-860137)
Thursday 20th 7 for 7.30pm	LONDON IWA: CENTRAL LONDON	SOCIAL MEETING at Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith St, SW1P 3BU. Speaker to be announced. Contact: Tim Lewis (081-530 7926)
Weekend 22nd/23rd	LONDON WRG	Dig on the Thames and Severn Canal. Contact: Lesley McFadyen (081-693 3266 - evenings)
Thursday 25th: 8pm	KENT AND EAST SUSSEX IWA AND CHELMSFORD IWA	Gravesend Sailing Club. Annual inter-Branch Quiz. Contact: Angela Madle (0634-722661)
Friday 28th: 8 pm	LONDON IWA: S.E. LONDON	SOCIAL MEETING at The Royal Tavern, Mottingham (corner of Court Rd and Sidcup Rd: very close to Mottingham BR station). Speaker: Mike Stevens: <i>One-offs, oddities and relics</i> . Contact Dorothy Robbie (081-857 6367)

FEBRUARY 1994

Tuesday 1st: 8pm	LONDON IWA: LEA GROUP	SOCIAL MEETING at Hazelmere Marine, Highbridge St, Waltham Abbey (off Station Road). Speaker: Jim Macdonald: <i>Boating disasters</i> . Contact: Mike Stimpson (0923-770425).
Sunday 6th: 2.30 pm	LONDON IWA WITH 'LONDON WALKS'	GUIDED WALK ON THE NEW RIVER: MANOR HOUSE TO Highbury. Meet at Manor House tube station. About 2 hours. £4 (Concessions £3) Contact Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti (081-882 1337)
Tuesday 8th: 8pm	LONDON IWA: MIDDLESEX SECTION	SOCIAL MEETING at Hillingdon Canal Cruising Club, Waterloo Road, Uxbridge. Speaker: Richard Drew: <i>Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust</i> . Contact: Alison Struckett (0344-774228)
Thursday 10th: 8pm	CHELMSFORD IWA	AEU House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford. Speaker from English Nature: <i>Waterway wildlife</i> . Contact: Molly Beard (0702-553392)
Weekend 12th/13th	LONDON WRG	Dig on the Wilts and Berks Canal. Contact: Tim Lewis (081-539 7926)
Tuesday 15th: 8pm	HERTS IWA	Meeting at Hatfield Cricket Club, Ascots Lane, Welwyn Garden City. Hugh McKnight: <i>The Danube and Rhine</i> . Contact Greta Wright (0727-860137)
Wednesday 16th: 8 pm	LONDON IWA: CROYDON	SOCIAL MEETING at the Ship Inn, High Street, Croydon (directions above). Speaker to be announced. Contact: Mike Stevens (081-674 9387)
Thursday 17th 7 for 7.30pm	LONDON IWA: CENTRAL LONDON	SOCIAL MEETING at Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith St, SW1P 3BU. Speaker: David Bolton: <i>The early days of the IWA</i> . Contact: Tim Lewis (081-530 7926)
Sunday 20th: 2.30 pm	LONDON IWA WITH 'LONDON WALKS'	GUIDED WALK ON THE NEW RIVER: Highbury TO ANGEL. Meet at Highbury and Islington tube station. About 2 hours. £4 (Concessions £3) Contact Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti (081-882 1337)

MARCH 1994

Tuesday 1st: 8pm	LONDON IWA: LEA GROUP	SOCIAL MEETING at Hazelmere Marine, Highbridge St, Waltham Abbey (off Station Road). Speaker: Peter Coyne: <i>The Canals of Scotland</i> . Contact: Mike Stimpson (0923-770425).
Weekend 5th/6th	LONDON WRG	Dig on the Wey and Arun Canal. Contact: Tim Lewis (081-539 7926)

Sunday 6th: 2.30 pm	LONDON IWA WITH 'LONDON WALKS'	GUIDED WALK ON THE REGENT'S CANAL: PADDINGTON TO CAMDEN. Meet at Warwick Av. tube station. About 2 hours. £4 (Concessions £3) Contact Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti (081-882 1337)
Tuesday 8th: 8pm	LONDON IWA: MIDDLESEX SECTION	SOCIAL MEETING at Hillingdon Canal Cruising Club, Waterloo Road, Uxbridge. AGM followed by Brian Daubney: <i>Restoration of the House Mill</i> . Contact: Alison Struckett (0344-774228)
Thursday 10th: 8pm	CHELMSFORD IWA	AEU House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford. SE Region AGM followed by Jim Norfolk: <i>Journey along the Grand Union</i> . Contact: Molly Beard (0702-553392)
Tuesday 5th: 8pm	HERTS IWA	Meeting at Hatfield Cricket Club, Ascots Lane, Welwyn Garden City. AGM followed by Chris Davey: <i>W.R.G.</i> Contact Greta Wright (0727-860137)
Thursday 17th 7 for 7.30pm	LONDON IWA	BRANCH AGM AND CENTRAL LONDON SOCIAL MEETING at Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith St, SW1P 3BU. AGM followed by a Waterways Quiz. Contact: Tim Lewis (081-530 7926)
Sunday 20th: 2.30 pm	LONDON IWA WITH 'LONDON WALKS'	GUIDED WALK ON THE REGENT'S CANAL: CAMDEN TO ISLINGTON. Meet at Angel tube station. About 2 hours. £4 (Concessions £3) Contact Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti (081-882 1337)
Friday 25th: 8 pm	LONDON IWA: S.E. LONDON	SOCIAL MEETING at The Royal Tavern, Mottingham (corner of Court Rd and Sidcup Rd: very close to Mottingham BR station). Speaker: David Stevenson: <i>Postscript to Peterborough</i> . Contact Dorothy Robbie (081-857 6367)
Weekend 26th/27th	LONDON WRG	Dig on the Thames and Severn Canal. Contact: Tim Lewis (081-539 7926)



MUSEUM

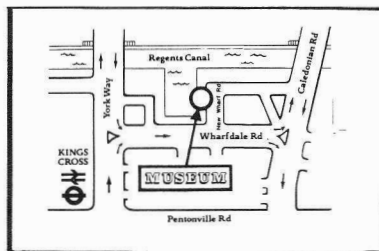
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Late News

CROYDON UP-DATE

Since the *Waterways Events* page went to press, the speaker has been arranged for the Croydon social meeting on 16 February. Brian Daubney will talk about the restoration of the House Mill at Bow.

LONDON BOAT SHOW

The 1994 Boat Show at Earls' Court is from 6 to 16 January 1994 and the IWA stand will be in the same place as last year. This year there are two changes which may be of interest to *Excalibur* readers. Firstly, the show will include twice-daily talks on matters of boating interest, some of which will be given by IWA London Branch members. The Branch contribution to this aspect of the show has been co-ordinated by our Vice-President, Arthur Farrand Radley. Secondly, IWA members can get in to the show at a discount by booking tickets in advance. The discounted price is £5.50 (£2 off the normal price). Contact Mike Stimpson, 6 Norfolk Road, Rickmansworth, Herts, WD3 1QE before 21 December, with a stamped self-addressed envelope. Cheques should be made payable to IWA. This is part of IWA's new policy of providing financial benefits for members.

ST PANCRAS C.C. NEWS

St Pancras Cruising Club write to tell us of their latest improvements. They have recently installed electric points around the basin, and also a pump-out facility which will be available by appointment. ('phone 071-278 2805).

BOW BACK RIVERS

Grants have been agreed for the next stage of dredging programme, which will, among other things, complete the dredging of the 'navigable loop' from below Old Ford Lock through the Back Rivers to Bow Bridge. Work is expected to start at around the time that this issue reaches you. At the same time, preparations of a new edition of the Branch's leaflet *Discovering the Bow Back Rivers* are nearing completion: so both aspect should be ready for all the boaters we want to persuade to explore the Back Rivers on their way to or from next year's National at Waltham Abbey.

LONDON CANAL MUSEUM

The Museum is now almost totally dependent on a voluntary work-force to keep it going. They are keen to find the services of somebody who will give a few hours per week to doing various clerical jobs for them. If you are willing and able to help, please contact Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti ('phone 081-882 1337).

CORRECTION

Due to an Editorial muddle (I mislaid the 'photo I originally planned to use!'), the photo on page 11 is wrongly credited. It should be credited to Richard Packer.

BOATWATCH

Boatwatch schemes, growing in popularity across the country, are arrangements to protect boats against theft and vandalism by linking the informal "towpath telegraph" to the Police. Such a scheme has now reached the Southern Grand Union between Cowley and Weedon. Five police forces are liaising with BW to set up the scheme. Contacts in our part of the area are: Cowley to Harefield, PC Mark Hankins (0895-251212); Harefield to Rickmansworth, PC Ian Sizer (0923-244444).

CAN YOU HELP?

With more Branch and Region activities taking place in more places around London, we need to increase some of the equipment we use. Specifically we want to buy two things: firstly another good quality slide-projector, stand and screen and secondly some more portable display boards for use at exhibitions, shows etc. A recent meeting of the Region Committee decided that these would be good things on which to spend some of the money we inherited from the old South East Region when we split off from them. We wondered if there is anyone among our members who might have the right contacts to help us buy any of these items at a discounted rate. If you can help, please contact any member of the Region Committee ('phone numbers on page 2).

The Editor wishes
A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
to all our readers.





Smallsword

The Younger Person's View of our Inland Waterways

Issue 2

Winter 1993

SAFETY BY WATER

Water is dangerous! Don't forget it.

During this year some young people have been hurt, and a few have been killed along our canals and rivers.

Accidents like the one on the Kennet and Avon Canal where a child was drowned are rare, but if you remember that water is dangerous you can make sure that you don't have one.

Travelling on a boat, or walking by water it is very easy to forget where you are. There are always so many things to see. **So why don't you make sure that you wear a lifejacket, even if you are walking along a towpath; yes, even if you can swim!**

If you fall into water it will be a surprise to your body and your body will take a few moments to realise where you are. If the water is cold it will take longer. It will also take some time for anyone on the bank to find a way of helping you. If you are wearing a life jacket it will mean that while you and your friends are sorting out what to do you are floating, not drowning

Roman Canal Found ?

50 Archaeologists have been working on a site on the borders of Norfolk and Suffolk. They are excavating the site of a Roman settlement before it is lost under a new road. The site has been known about for a long time, but the new road meant that it had to be excavated now. The Artifacts that have been found include Roman houses, water wells, and the remains of what looks like a Roman Canal. The 130m long watercourse by-passes a loop of the River Waveney, and while it is difficult to date it accurately it appears to be as old as the Fosdyke cut, which is probably Roman.

The excavations will have to finish by the end of this year, but the samples and artifacts that have been taken from the site will help the Archaeologists to create a picture of how the area was in Roman times.

When the new road is built across the site the River Waveney will have to be straightened, the road designers have looked at many routes for the new river route, and the best route that they can find for the river is along the old Roman Canal.

What a tribute to Roman engineering!

Canoeing Holiday

200 Canoeists from all over the world spent two weeks this summer paddling along the River Thames. The Canoe Camping Club organised the trip from Lechlade Bridge to London to celebrate the club's 60th birthday. Many of the canoeists were under 16, some with their families, some on their own. The youngest person taking part was Sam Corke who was only 6 months old (he was with his parents).

On their journey they were accompanied by two narrow boats as support vessels.

Along the route there were visits arranged to Stratford upon Avon and to Windsor, where the castle still covered by scaffolding dominates the river.

After their two weeks travelling down the Thames they finished their voyage outside the Royal Festival Hall on the South Bank of the Thames.

Canoeing is one of the easiest ways to get on water under your own power. Many young people have had their first taste of canoeing with Waterways for Youth events or through their school or youth club.

If you would like a list of the canoe clubs in the London area please write to Sidonie at the address on the puzzle page.

Smallsword Competitions

Did you enter the competitions in the first issue of *Smallsword*?

We think that you may not have seen the competitions. So we are extending the deadline for both competitions to the 31st December 1993. There are three prizes to be won in the **CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION** and two in the **WORDSEARCH PUZZLE**.

If you didn't get your copy of the first issue of *Smallsword* look in the middle of the Autumn issue of *Excalibur*, or write for a copy enclosing your name and address to:

Sidonie Ferguson
58 Blurton Road
Clapton
London E5 0NJ

Smallsword is published by IWA London Branch with *Excalibur*, the London Newsletter of the Inland Waterways Association, at 114 Regent's Park Road, London NW1 8UG.

The IWA may not agree with the opinions expressed in this magazine but encourages publication as a matter of interest. Nothing printed may be considered as policy or an official announcement unless so stated, otherwise the Association accepts no liability for any matter in the magazine.

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Editor Ian Ferguson, 58 Blurton Road, Clapton, London E5 0NJ.