

Excalibur

IWA LONDON BRANCH

No.2



MERRY
CHRISTMAS
1988



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Cover Illustration: Sketch of Constables Boathouse from the River Thames, Hampton, Middlesex.



Firstly may I on behalf of the London Branch Committee take this opportunity to wish you all Seasons Greetings and a very happy New Year in 1989.

Why the Red front cover? Well, it is in keeping with the festive season, and also hides our blushes from the numerous congratulatory letters and comments received, following the first edition of *Excalibur* from such eminent people as, Norman Alborough (*Editor, Canal and River Boat*), Hugh Potter (*Editor, Waterways World*), John Gagg and many others. It could also be to hide our embarrassment for the loss of the Summer edition. This was, as they say, totally beyond our control.

The company which printed *Excalibur* made a policy decision as we went to press not to proceed with this type of production, preferring to concentrate on

expanding their specialist market of cinema and theatre programmes. This of course left us high and dry for the second edition, however all was not lost, for you are now holding the living proof of our follow-on edition.

We scoured the countryside and burnt the midnight oil for a way forward and a means to stay in production. The answer came via John Hawkins and WRG Print, so our red cover is also saying a big thank you to John on behalf of WRG, for enabling us to rush this edition to you for Christmas.

We can now offer competitive rates to advertisers in *Excalibur* and are looking for volunteers to set up a team to handle this side of the production, on our behalf.

Included in this edition are two feature articles for your reading pleasure. I hope that these, as well as the other columns in the magazine, encourage you to put pen to paper. Give us your views and comments, as we intend to incorporate the Backchat column in the Spring edition.

Waterways for All Appeal

Following on from the appeal in Volume 1, the fund now stands at the disappointingly low sum of just over £32,000. If we are to maintain our ability to support the waterway cause, in the Courts if need be, we

must replenish our fighting fund. Do send your cheques on to 114. You can also help to boost the Associations funds by selling the current lottery draw tickets; the closing date for the draw, due to the postal strike, has been extended to 31st January 1989.

Freight on Water. Great news! Civil and Marine Ltd have been granted a River Work Licence by the PLA on a 10 acre site at Delta Wharf, Greenwich. They are to construct a new jetty and processing plant to handle in excess of one million tons per annum of sea dredged aggregates. The aggregate will be brought up river by their own dredger, the 3122 grt mv *Cambourne*, which is capable of carrying 4600 tonnes of drained sand and gravel which can be discharged at the rate of 1800 tonnes per hour. This tonnage will be in addition to the four million tonnes per annum of revenue-earning cargo that is currently shipped up river through the Thames Barrier.

On 29th November the worlds latest and most advanced luxury cruise liner, the 38000 grt *Royal Viking Sun* arrived at Greenwich on her maiden voyage direct from the Wartsila shipyard in Turku Finland. Article and pictures in spring edition.

Branch News

Marion Waters

Well we are back in print again, after the expected teething problems one usually get with anything newborn. I'm sure that Malcolm has had many sleepless nights with this particular baby. From my point of view it is very good news to see *Excalibur* coming off the press once again—hopefully, you all agree.

The year has been a rather busy one compared to last year, the Branch's sales stand has been out and about, often two or three times a month. Rain, shine or monsoon (how could we forget Pontymoile), we were there, trying to persuade the public that they really were desperate to win a frog or clown, all in the name of fund raising. The amazing thing is that we gave out bundles of membership forms; they were being taken away by people at an encouraging rate of knots. Therefore, it makes even more surprising the news from IWA General Office that only 10 extra people joined the Association in the current year to September, through Branches, than in 1987. It can no longer be claimed this is due to the waterways magazines offering great temptations in the form of maps and observer books, as the Branches are now allowed to do so as well.

Plans are well under way for Canalway Cavalcade, which is not surprising as they never really seem to stop. Boat entry forms are available from Ann Hancox, 95 Grosvenor Court, London Road, Morden, Surrey (please send a SAE). At present the Branch is waiting to see if work is carried out to retrieve the towpath, on the Rembrandt Gardens side, from the Pool where it vanished to a few years back, since when even more has followed. Also there is still the major obstruction to the main towpath in the form of shoring up, due to the wall supporting the pavement cracking and subsiding. I personally feel the whole area is rapidly taking

on the appearance of a demolition site, which is a shame as Little Venice must surely be one of London's prettiest waterway attractions. Fortunately, British Waterways have now removed its rubbish barge which was moored against Brownings Island for far too long. It has been agreed, by the



Canalway Cavalcade—29 April–1 May

Branch, that if the condition does not improve by the early spring, the Rally will be a campaigning one—I wonder how often the Association decides where to hold a Rally, later finding British Waterways and the Local Authority giving them a good reason!

I would like to thank everyone who has come forward with offers of help to the various members of the Branch Committee during the last year. It has been very much appreciated and no matter how small you might feel your contribution is, to us it has made an enormous difference. Several people are now helping with the Planning and Navigation Committee and with the making of our fund-raising soft toys. But as always help is still required. Can anyone help with some typing (which could be posted back and forth) or to take the Branch minutes at the main Committee meetings. The lady who has for years taken the minutes for us quite rightly feels that the time has come to have a break, hence the search for a new minutes secretary. This involves attending approximately 12 meetings a year, taking the minutes and typing them. The Branch Secretary will give assistance if required to do so. All

offers to David Allison-Beer, our Branch Secretary.

Please do write to any of our contributors in *Excalibur*, if you so wish, or send your letter to the Editor to get it published. It is nice to know that someone out there might just read all this drive! Lastly may I wish all our members a very happy Christmas, and I hope to meet some of you at the forthcoming socials.

200 CLUB

The London Branch 200 Club, now in its third year, was formed with the objective of raising money to pay for the running of the branch. This means that the money raised by events such as Canalway Cavalcade can be used towards the restoration of waterways. The club has raised a total of over £3000 to date. Half of this has been redistributed back to the members of the club as prizes and the other half has been donated to the branch. We are extremely grateful for the generous support of all those who have enabled us to achieve this magnificent sum, but with membership at only just over 100 so far this year, there is room for more members to help carry on this good work.

A draw takes place six times each year, usually carried out by our guest speaker at the monthly meetings at University College, and there are four cash prizes in each. Cheques are sent to prizewinners. Membership, which costs £12 for a year, and can be paid by cheque or by banker's standing order for £1 per month, is open to all members of the IWA over the age of 18. You may, of course, have more than one membership.

A membership form was distributed with the August 1988 issue of *Windlass*, but if you need another, please come along to the next social meeting, or send an SAE to Dave Greatorex, 17 Manse Road, London N16 7QH.

Please note that existing members who do not pay by standing order will receive a renewal form.

Lewis Phillips
Chairman—200 Club



Take Note of Nature

Wendy Stevens

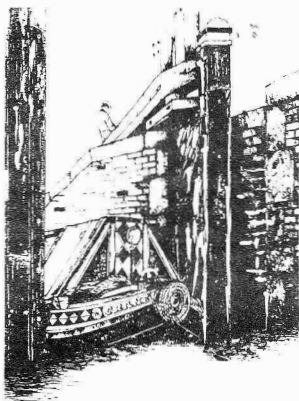


One of my favourite poets has it, that you may drive out Nature with a pitchfork, but she will continually return. When I first read that, I thought in youthful pessimism that it might indeed have been true in Roman times, and that it was indeed a lovely thought, but with All This Industry...

About ten years after I first read about the indomitable nature of Nature, I had my first canal holiday. Four of us hired a boat from the top of Johnson's Hillock Locks on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, and cruised to Skipton and back. The rural stretches were so beautiful that an annual visit, twice-yearly, even monthly could not possibly make one lose enthusiasm. To a southerner with my puritan upbringing, the sheer guilty thrill of seeing harebells in August, having enjoyed them elsewhere in May, was immense.

We had been warned, however, about the Bits Between. One of our number had been born and bred near Blackburn, and his mother still lived in Burnley. He warned us not to expect romantic pastoral visions; we should instead prepare our minds for Dark Satanic Mills, many derelict, and for mean back-to-backs. Not wishing to be judged as soft and effete southerners, the rest of us schooled ourselves to expect unmitigated ugliness in all the built-up areas, but instead we saw beauty on all sides. The mills had been built by people who had confidence in them, and who—albeit self-righteously or naively—believed that they would lead to a glorious future.

With such confidence, the owners and builders had no hesitation about putting in ecclesiastical windows, decorative gables, and 'tiddly bits' galore. These, however, were quite eclipsed by the derelict factories, even of a later and starker style, which harboured so many plants, covering and softening raw and jagged out-



lines, framing old windows, growing—in the case of trees—higher than nature intended by cheekily starting at the tops of high walls.

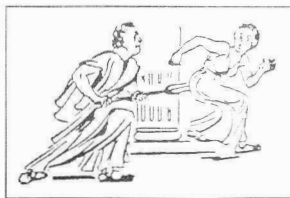
At first we were conscious only of the picture made by solid blocks of colour; the greens of fern and foliage, red of rowan-berries, deep pink of willow-herb, and the shrieking yellow of ragwort. Later we looked in more detail. It took time for us to realize that a boat with a fairly noisy engine nevertheless moved slowly enough for us to look properly! Many of the wall-growing plants can be seen by London's canals too; mauve wall germander, yellow wall pepper, blue wall speedwell, mauve ivy-leaved toadflax. It was hard to

believe that we would see all these growing in the same fortnight, for we had not yet learned that the nearness on the water seems to extend the plant seasons.

Finally, we were able to focus on the moving parts of the picture, for as more experienced canallers could have told us, those lovely plants were home and food for many creatures, the most spectacular being the butterflies, white, pale green, chalk blue, orange tip, peacock, tortoise-shell...

I've begun by telling of our own very simple-minded introduction to nature and canals, not to be insulting but because numerous conversations have taught me that ours is a common experience, and yet, while most of us can see; few notice. The majority, however, enjoy what there is to see, once it is pointed out. I learned this nearly ten years ago, when locking through at Ivinghoe with a much more experienced canaller. He asked me why I was suddenly so starry-eyed when I'd not been drinking. I pointed to a weathered brick, the toning mosses, the ferns and toadflaxes. He said that he'd never looked in detail before, but now that he had, his pleasure in that lock was permanently increased.

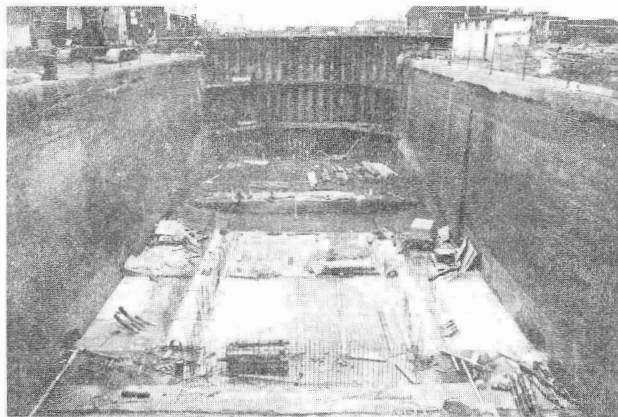
Next time I'll concentrate on London's Waterways.



Planning Matters

Eric Garland

Perhaps one of the least well known aspects of the work of the London Branch is that of monitoring the planning applications of the 37 riparian boroughs. We like to comment on all those which impact on the waterways to ensure that the waterways are treated in a sympathetic manner. At the least this means that we can ensure that the waterside developments take account of the potential of the waterways. At the other extreme, the branch has attended and given evidence at major public enquiries such as Limehouse Basin and the North Circular Road where proposals to widen the road involve the demolition and replacement of the aqueduct. We are now facing four developments in the area which will have a major impact on the canals, all of which we shall be closely monitoring: **Paddington Basin, Kings Cross, Limehouse and Brentford.**



Work starts on Limehouse Ship Lock. (New in Old). Photo—Tim Lewis

Paddington Basin we have yet to get our teeth into positively, but we are working on it, whilst at **Kings Cross** our representative has been invited to meetings with the local planning authority (Camden Council) and the developers. We feel that this development provides an opportunity, not only to conserve some of the best of our urban waterways and to re-open old arms and basins, but to actually extend the water area and provide much needed facilities. A positive view which is shared and actively pursued by the representative of BWB.

At **Limehouse** we are members of the Limehouse Basin Co-operative who intend to keep the Basin and surrounding area alive and active during the construction period and

beyond, and we have objected, constructively we believe, to the second phase. The first phase and the re-building of the ship lock is being carefully monitored although some concern is felt that the lock may not be re-opened on schedule. At **Brentford** the situation is also being closely monitored although, as yet the true nature of the proposals in extent and content is unknown.

On a slightly smaller scale our views have been sought by both the architects and Islington Council on proposals for **Battlebridge Basin**. An idea for an office block bridging the entrance to the basin has been soundly rejected at Branch, Region and National level although the idea brought some support, albeit reserved, from The Royal Fine Arts

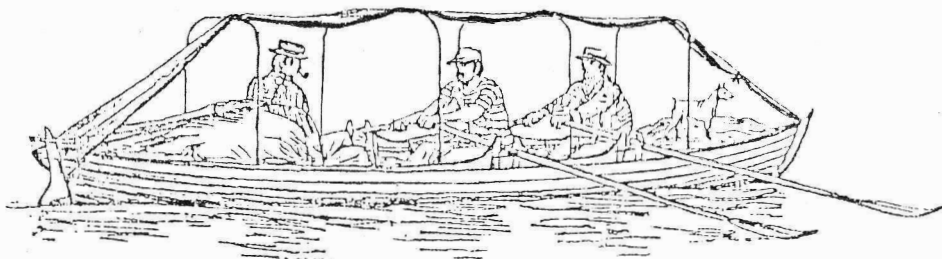
Commission. At **Little Venice** we are becoming increasingly concerned with the state that it is getting into, with collapsed towpaths, collapsing walls and the recurring problems with moorings. Some unauthorised additions have been added to the horse bridge, which is a listed structure. Two other listed bridges are threatened with total destruction and modern replacements, while a restaurant is proposed on top of the entrance to Maida Vale tunnel. All of this valuable work comes under the aegis of the **Planning and Navigation Sub Committee**. It is important to realize that we are of course a group of enthusiasts who share a common aim. But don't think that because we are amateurs, we are put off by the experts—far from it. It very quickly becomes apparent that the professionals surprisingly, often know little about canals, and that the amateur enthusiast who does, can operate on equal terms.

As ever, this vital work requires people. You do not have to be an expert, although we would be happy to hear from anyone with a professional interest.

Recently we have welcomed three new members to our committee, one representing the Grand Union Canal Society. We hope in the near future to be able to get others from the boat clubs in our area and from other allied user groups to join our committee, whose members include those with specific interests such as towpaths and inland shipping.

So if you enjoy talking about canals, and can spare an evening once a month, please come along. In the first instance, the person to contact is Branch Secretary, David Allison-Beer.





Let's Go Up the River

John. J. Cox

George said: 'Let's go up the river.' This line from Jerome K. Jerome's *'Three Men in a Boat'* published in 1889 has been said to have started the Victorian boating boom.

In fact boating had been a popular pastime since mid Victorian times. The openings of railways to the Thames riverside towns from the 1840s caused an explosion in the numbers of boatyards and boat-

changing rooms for those who would not have dreamed of being seen in their boating clothes away from the river.

punt used for racing, both amateur and professional.

Parties of adventurous young men were to be found under-

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EAST MOULSBY AND FLOATING DOAT HOUSE, HAMPTON.

BOATS LET AND HOUSED.

FIVE MINUTES FROM HAMPTON AND HAMPTON COURT STATIONS.

Throughout this period the craft gradually changed, the

taking quite long journeys, sleeping in tents or putting up in riverside towns; there are many written records of journeys lasting several weeks often using long vanished waterways. However for most London folk going up the river meant a week starting from Kingston, Twickenham, Richmond etc, in a double sculling skiff which would carry three in relative comfort. The development of the camping cover, a tent which fitted over the boat on iron hoops, made river travel a much more attractive holiday. In wet weather the boat could travel with its cover up keeping the crew more or less dry. (This practice continues today



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Near the Griffin Hotel and Market Place, and Lower Teddington Road, Hampton Wick, adjoining the Railway Bridge.

C and A. B. respectfully call the attention of the Nautical and Aquatic world to their improved Centre-board Rowing and Sailing Boat, suitable for coast or river use, thus rendering sailing an attainment not generally to be found in rowing boats. Workmanship and materials warranted to be of the best quality. Their improved Centre-board, when stowed in yacht, does not interfere with the cabin accommodation.

C. and A. B. beg to notify that they have Commenced New Steam Launches for Hire; Ashanti, 30 ft., and Amazon, 33 ft. Cabin & ft. high (patent w. c.). They will carry comfortably 24 persons, and are specially adapted for picnics or up-river excursions. The Ashanti is a great favourite having run 5000 miles in one season, and never failed to give the greatest satisfaction. These launches are not affected by weeds in the summer season, and suffer no draught of water (6 ft. 4 1/2 in.) between the above-mentioned which so often occurs in boating parties. For particulars apply to the Builders, where the launches may be seen.

Boats of every description built on the shortest notice. Floating Yacht may be had on application.

Boats Housed, etc.

ing stations all competing to provide a type of service unheard of today. Yards were open all hours providing facilities such as boat repair and hire, housing of private boats and

heavy gig giving way to the lighter faster skiff for most occasions and the heavy fishing punt developing into the lighter pleasure punt, its ultimate development being the narrow

earned enough to cover replacement costs and the introduction of cheaper glass fibre motor craft almost killed the camping boat. Most of those remaining were owned by private, slightly mad enthusiasts. It seemed that the chance to go up the river in the traditional way from West London was gone for ever, and even the great hire fleet of Salter's of Oxford faded away.

In the golden years before 1914 the boom continued with many elegant private craft being built, much gold leaf being used in decoration on these, though the boatbuilders' staple trade was the sturdy hire craft. After 1918 things seemed as before, but the motor craft which had been quite rare

In the late seventys however a boating enthusiast at Hampton started to trade as a

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PLease to inform the Reading public that he has now increased his
business on the Island by erecting an Hotel adapted for every ac-
commodation required by them. Gentlemen will find the Hotel and
the pleasure of the Island as conveniently situated as any other place
for Hiring or Mooring Yachts, being above the Lock at Moulsey, and
only thirty minutes' ride from Waterloo Station; ten minutes' walk from Hampton Court Station,
and fifteen from Teddington, through Railway Park. Ten handsome Steam Launches for hire
for private parties or river excursions, either above or below London Bridge, and capable of
up-mooring Yachts or Horse Races. All orders for engagements can be made by letter. Boating
is always on hire for excursions or dinner parties. T. G. TAGG also undertakes to build Boats,
Punts, and Canoes of every description; and by employing the best workmen and material he
hopes to give the same satisfaction he has done for the last ten years. By his general knowledge
of the trade, and his superintendence of the works, it is a safe and sure out superior craft,
such as have been so highly recommended for superior work for the last few years.

Boats for Hire by Hour, Month, or Week.
Masts, Sails, Sleeping and Excursion Tents made to order, and Boat Gear of every
description.
PRIVATE BOATS REPAIRED AND VARNISHED.
BOATS CHARTERED TO ANY PART OF THE THAMES.

before 1914 began to spread and the public's taste began to change. The boat trade as ever slow to adapt kept going, though a number of yards closed in the thirtys after a run of rather bad summers; by 1939 things were looking quite fair for those interested in boating holidays.

By 1945 things were quite different, six years of hard use and little maintenance had left most boats in a sorry state, camping hire seemed to flourish when peace returned, but gradually the skiffs and punts vanished from the scene. The fact that they no longer

repairer and the hirer of traditional craft. Today the would-be boater can once again hire camping boats fitted with a cover and everything needed



JAS. A. MESSENGER,
 BOAT AND PUNT BUILDER,
 TEDDINGTON, MIDDLESEX,
 AND
 KINGSTON-ON-THAMES.

for a river holiday. Constable Boat House, Thames Street, Hampton is a mecca for wooden boat enthusiasts. Skiffs, canoes and punts can be hired by the hour, day or week; boats are built and repaired in the traditional way and lessons in sculling and boat handling can be given. A call on 01-941 4858 will bring a brochure and visitors will receive a warm welcome, perhaps an hour trying out a traditional Thames craft may lead to you 'Going up the river.'

The late spring bank holiday saw London WRG heading north for our annual long distance dig, making good use of the three day weekend. The work site as before was the top two locks on the west side at Diggle, the highest locks in the country that volunteers are able to work on.

After a good deal of manoeuvring of plant and equipment and an incredible amount of coaxing to get the pump working the second lock down was sufficiently clear of water to make a start on clearing out the silt. An earlier working party on the same site had seen us helping to remove large quantities of silt and rubbish from under the bridge below the lock. After a lot of digging it was revealed that the top gate was lying on the floor of the lock on the lower gate cill, giving the locals a future head-scratching problem of how to remove it. Meanwhile the site of the old top lock gate was occupied by a series of reinforced concrete stop planks which other members of the group were busily removing with the aid of Kango's, lump hammers and the crane.

The accommodation was a well appointed scout hut at Meltham on the other side of the hill, giving us the opportunity of driving across and enjoying the spectacular scenery in delightful weather. Catering was provided by our London WRG leader in exile, Andy Chapman and wife Stella who like to join us from time to time on our exotic excursions north.

The Stroudwater Thames and Severn Canal Trust were our hosts in July. They had uncovered a unique device for draining the canal at various different levels and were glad of some assistance in its restoration. While some members were busily

London WRG

Report by
Eric Garland



Diggle on Huddersfield Narrow.

May 1988. Clearing Chamber

Photo—Tim Lewis

engaged in further digging to expose further surprises, other were laying concrete foundations and re-laying bricks recently excavated and cleaned; such luxuries as new bricks being too expensive for the Trust. To alleviate such financial problems the Trust run a trip boat on which we were taken to view Ryeford double lock. This was the site of an unfortunate water main burst, for which compensation is still sought. On our return trip the heavens decided to emulate the Water Authority and burst forth and subse-

quently as we attempted to work, resulting in our wettest dig this year.

Volunteer work on most BW waterways is sporadic; on the Kennet and Avon it is normally non-existent but August gave us the rare opportunity to work on that great waterway.

The scene was the splendid Caen Hill flight where a decision has recently been taken to go ahead with the construction of foot bridges over the locks. Various groups have provided money for their construction including London Branch IWA, but most of the cash has been donated by all the IWA Branches in sponsoring runners in the London Marathon. To complement this association, London WRG have now constructed one of these bridges ready for its eventual fitting to one of the locks.

The beginning of October saw London WRG scrub bashing on the Wilts and Berks canal, joining forces with Peter Smith, the work party organizer for W&BCAG and BITM (Bit in the Middle) at Foxham in Wiltshire. This was our first visit to this very beautiful canal which runs mainly through open rolling countryside. Some of our group went stump pulling with a Tirfor winch, whilst others cleared 300 yards of dense undergrowth and mature trees from the towpath and dry canal bed. The best part though was the tea in bed and excellent food provided by Peter's girl friend Josie and the centrally heated hall. Oh, what luxury.

A nice encounter came in the form of meeting Bob Kinch, a man of vision, who owns and works one of the farms we were working on. He has recently built his own accommodation bridge. He worked alongside us using his tools and equipment, and is shortly to start dredging his own section. If only other had his foresight.

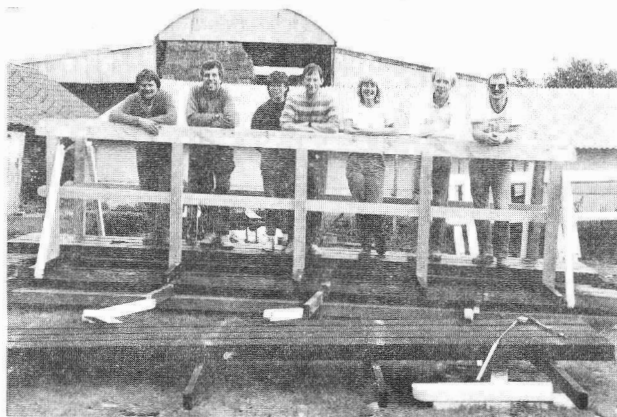
If you want to come along for a drink, or for further information, give one of the following a call:

Tim Lewis on
01-530 4767;

Lesley McFadyen
on 405 8400,
ext. 402

Eric Garland on
0322 342296;

*Come and
Join the fun*



Devises on the Kennet and Avon—August 1988—Built new bridge

Photo—Tim Lewis

Myths of the River Lea?

Keith Fairclough

In recent years several historians have stated, that during the plague of 1655, the Ware bargemen played such an important role in supplying London with provisions throughout the crisis, that they were later granted special privileges to navigate the Thames and unload at London wharves without requiring the services of a Thames lightermen. There seems to be no contemporary evidence to support either contention.

The sterling role of the Ware bargemen is not recorded by diarists such as Pepys and Evelyn who witnessed the effects of the plague, nor was it recalled by Daniel Defoe the following century in his novel *'A Journal of the Plague Year'*, even though he sought historical accuracy in that work, and was in a position to tap the oral memory of those times.

Furthermore the bargemen themselves were never to refer to

such services in their numerous submissions to the Privy Council or Parliament during the ensuing century, even though such could only have helped their case. It can be noted that in 1669 when the New River Company and the Ware bargemen were engaged in bitter argument, the company were careful to stress their role in fighting the Great Fire of London. In their replies the bargemen made no reference to their services during the plague.

It was not until 1700 that the lightermen were incorporated, and the act which granted them their privileges specifically exempted *'Trinitymen, fishermen, ballest men, western barges, and mill boats, chalk hoys, faggot and wood lighters, and other craft carrying the same'* from requiring such assistance.

Even though Ware barges are not specifically mentioned, it is

obvious that they fell within the category of exempt vessels. If they had not, the Ware bargemen would have been the first to complain of unfair discrimination. They never did, for there was no cause to.

It would be interesting to know how the ideas mentioned in the first paragraph developed. The earliest reference in print that this writer has seen is in Edith Hunt's *'History of Ware'*, published in 1946. Miss Hunt states that no documentary evidence has been found to substantiate such claims. Is there an oral tradition or other written evidence that historians have so far not discussed in print?

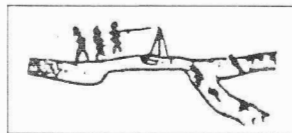


Photo courtesy of
Alan Brown (Inland Shipping Group)



Letter from America

Jeremy Frankel

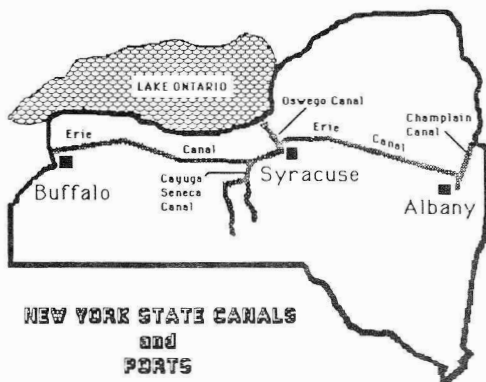
Dear Editor,

Hopefully using *Excalibur*, one can cut through editorial red tape and extend the waterways (interest) and boundary a little to the west.



(Editors Note: All overseas members of IWA are registered with London Branch. We would welcome any news you may wish to share with us, so come in Martin (Goannas) Smith from down under and all our many other friends out there.)

Anyone who may have wondered (although I doubt it) what had become of me may have caught a glimpse at the Branch Meeting in March when I gave a talk on American canals. I had decided last year to take a sabbatical from the normal drudgery of life and go exploring. Well it was not as romantic as one might think, travelling around America by Greyhound bus for 4.5 months covering some 20,000 miles looking at various waterways. A few were being used commercially but most were derelict. In all I glimpsed 43 canals including the Panama. Some are well-known like the Mississippi (45,000 ton push-tows); the relatively new "Tenn-Tom", and other less well-known examples like the Blackstone River and Canal (Massachusetts); James River and Kanawha Canal (Virginia), and the Chattahoochee River on the Georgia-Alabama border with just three locks, one of which features an 85 foot rise!



NEW YORK STATE CANALS
AND
PORTS

During my stay I was hosted by representatives of various canal societies (thank you, Roger Squires) and whilst in up-state New York I met a certain gentleman who had been on several canal holidays in England and had decided that this was just what America needed. So he built three narrow boats in his front garden for hire on the Eire Canal. This waterway runs for 360 miles across the state from Buffalo (Niagara Falls) to Albany. He also runs the only packet boat which regularly plies the whole canal whilst it is open



(during winter the canal sections are drained and the rivers freeze!) from May to October.

Having been smitten by all these new-found 'ditches' and being the first English person to steer an American-built narrow boat, I decided to return to America for the summer accepting the invitation from Peter Wiles to carry out research on the Eire Canal.

Peter Wiles, the gentleman in question owns a small fleet of boats engaged in various cruises on the canal and several lakes nearby. Involved in the business for twenty years he is certainly no newcomer to the concept of boating for pleasure. His narrow boats are 42 feet by 10 feet (the locks are 300' by 10') and sleep six with all the usual features one expects to find in a hire boat.

Anyone who is interested (whilst on holiday in America) in either three day cruises on the packet boat *Emita II* or hiring a narrowboat should write to: *Mid-Lakes Navigation Co Ltd., PO Box 61, Skaneateles, NY 13152, USA*

Yours sincerely, Jeremy Frankel



STOP PRESS:
JEREMY MARRIED LOTUS
CALIFORNIA
NOVEMBER 19th 1988.

I would like to take this opportunity to pass on all the heartfelt congratulations and sincerest best wishes for the future to Jeremy and Lotus Frankel, from all members of both London WRG and London Branch IWA.

Those of us who met Jeremy in March could not help noticing the lack of fuzz around his chin, not a romantic trip indeed! We knew then that it was not only the American canals he was pining for. Don't be in too much of a hurry, Jeremy, to start your own work party for canal restoration out there yet. (*Ed.*)

IWA THE INLAND
WATERWAYS
ASSOCIATION
Waltham Abbey
National Waterways Festival
'89
Make a date for '89
It's the Rally in the Valley
26-28th August 1989



We are looking for a budding volunteer Roving Reporter who wishes to build a portfolio as a training ground for the future.

ALSO

We require an Advertisement Manager to sell space in this magazine. All offers to the Editor, address and telephone on page 2.



Xmas Fun Page

Nikky Bates



Hello Kids,

Welcome once again to another edition of *Excalibur*. We have decided to make this edition a fun page, exactly that, fun; so here's lots of jokes and a brain teasing puzzle to keep you busy over the winter months.

Don't forget to send me your jokes or anything which you think may be of interest, or would like to see on our page, such as stories or limericks.

I must thank David E. Spencer from Jersey (one of our overseas members) for the mind-bending competition which has been sponsored by the Editor of *Canal and River Boat* magazine. The editor will award a prize for the first three correct answers received. Send your answers with your name, address and age to the Chairman, address appears on page 2). The winners will also be taken for a boat trip during the Canalway Cavalcade.

CHRISTMAS CRACKER

- Q. Why is a river rich?
A. Because it has 2 banks.
- Q. How can you help a deaf fisherman?
A. Give him a herring aid.
- Q. What lives under the sea and carries a lot of people?
A. An octobus.
- Q. Why don't polar bear eat penguins?
A. Because they can't get the wrappers off.
- Q. Which bird can lift the heaviest weight?
A. A crane, of course.
- Q. What do you get if you cross a fish and two elephants?
A. Swimming trunks.



Find the Missing River

B	R	W	B	L	Y	T	H	S	T	O	R	T	W	A	H
T	E	H	C	U	O	R	C	R	A	S	E	M	A	H	T
T	V	A	H	U	M	B	E	R	Y	E	W	F	N	W	R
E	A	R	U	N	V	H	A	M	B	L	E	O	S	A	O
R	E	F	L	L	T	D	N	A	L	L	E	W	B	V	F
R	W	E	L	O	I	N	E	N	L	O	C	E	E	E	M
A	D	U	R	L	S	E	E	T	U	E	H	Y	C	N	A
P	R	A	M	A	T	B	U	R	R	E	O	C	K	E	H
C	T	H	U	R	N	E	E	A	T	L	N	E	N	Y	T
A	N	T	A	K	E	D	Y	L	C	D	E	D	L	A	I
M	E	D	W	A	Y	R	A	E	W	I	S	S	E	Y	W

ADUR ALDE ANCHOLME ANT ARUN BEAULIEU
BLYTH CAM CHET COLNE CROUCH CLYDE DART
DEBEN FORTH FOWEY HAMBLE HULL HUMBER
IDLE LARK LEE MEDWAY PARRETT ROTHER
STORT TAMAR TEES TAY THAMES THURNE
TRENT TYNE URE WANSBECK WAVENEY WEAR
WEAVER WELLAND WEY WHARFE WITHAM
WISSEY WYE YARE _____?

Hidden in the grid are some 46 well and lesser known British rivers. Having located all 45 listed, by reading in straight lines vertically, horizontally, backwards, forwards or diagonally (a number of the letters are used more than once) you will be left with four unused letters that will form the name of the missing river. What is it?

Answers to our last word-search are as follows: PLANNING MATTERS, COUNCIL, FOOTNOTES, BRANCH NEWS, BACKCHAT, EXCALIBUR, WATERWAYS FOR YOUTH, MUD-LARKS, IWA, PLA, BWB, TOW.



LONDON BRANCH MEETINGS

All social meetings are held in the Old Refectory, at University College, Gower Street, London W1. There is car parking within the grounds and surrounding roads. One-way traffic follows north to south down Gower Street. Tube stations: Goode Street, Warren Street and Euston Square are nearby. Meetings start at 7.30pm, but the room is open from 6.30pm. Licensed bar at all meetings

19 January—The Basingstoke Canal—Arthur Dungate

16 February—Thames Traditional Boats—part 2—John Cox, 'The Other Half of the Thames'—Henley to Cricklade

16 March—Branch AGM, followed by Graham Capelin (of model boat fame) talking about Tid Tugs.

20 April—George Freeston—A Local's View of Blisworth.

29 April-1 May—Canalway Cavalcade—Little Venice

Coming Attractions—18 May, Brian Holden—Rochdale Canal Society. June, Michael Handford, IWA restoration expert, to talk on anything but the Rochdale.

Branch Outing—2 April, Rochdale Canal—at the invitation of the RCS. Details from Ann Hancox.