

Excalibur

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION—LONDON BRANCH

AUGUST 1991

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Colin Powell of the Neath and Tennant Canals Society receives a London Branch donation from Branch Chairman Eric Garland near Neath Abbey on 6 April (see page 9)

Photo: Tim Lewis

From the Editor

HERE WE ARE AGAIN

The first issue of the revived *Excalibur* finally happened, a little later than we had hoped, as you probably deduced from the contents. Thank you to Alan Cheal and Richard Bird, typesetter and printer respectively, and to members of London WRG who did the donkey-work of stuffing envelopes. Thanks also to those of you who commented favourably. I hope that readers will be glad to hear of the Branch Committee's decision that *Excalibur* will appear four times a year. Future publication and copy dates appear at the end of this editorial.

CANALWAY CAVALCADE

Wearing one of my other hats, I was heavily involved in this year's Canalway Cavalcade, which is reported on pages 12 and 13. It was from Cavalcade that David Daines started his voyage in *Lynx* to the Basingstoke Canal reopening, as he describes on pages 5 to 7.

MORE ON THE BACK RIVERS

Our Spring issue's feature article on the Bow Back Rivers is followed-up in this issue by Wendy Stevens' article on the wild-life of the area (page 10). Wendy has also written the review (page 16) of BW's London Canals resource pack for schools. The Back Rivers also crop up in an item in *On the Metreau* on page 9.

DEATH OF THE BRANCH PRESIDENT

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of Viscount St Davids who had served for some years as Branch President, an honorary office to which he was appointed in recognition of his pioneering work on the waterways, especially in London. An obituary by the Branch Vice-President appears on page 11.

OUR GRAND COMPETITION

Thanks to those readers who wrote in to suggest alternatives to the name *Excalibur*. The judges have seven or eight to choose from and are about to begin their deliberations. It is hoped that the November issue will appear under the new title, and that the winner will receive his/her prize at a Branch Social sometime in the Autumn.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Almost nobody has responded to my request last time to let me know the sort of articles you want. If you don't, then what you'll get is just the articles I dream up and write or commission. So if you suspect you've got different waterways interests from mine, tell me what you'd like to read about and I'll try to provide it. Some readers' letters would also be very welcome. If you've not got time to write anything longer, then I'm always on the look-out for snippets of news and gossip for the *On the Metreau* pages.

THE BW BILL

David Allison-Beer, in his Region Chairman's letter on page 4, mentions the IWA is taking an interest in the Private Bill which is before Parliament. I was present for one day of the Lords' Committee hearings of the various petitioners against the Bill, since (in a private capacity) I had been helping the spokeswoman for one of the petitioners to prepare her case. Some of the evidence and argumentation was quite impressive. Personally I was disappointed that IWA Council decided to hold off from involvement until the Bill goes into the House of Commons. I'm sure they must have had reasons for doing so: I wonder whether they'll ever tell us what they are? Surely one of the prime purposes of IWA is to take a leading part in the debate on this type of legislation, not to tail behind others who take the first steps.

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FUTURE ISSUES

Publication Date	Copy Date
November 1991	21 September 1991
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From the Branch Chairman: Eric Garland

Welcome to the second edition of your Branch magazine, now, we hope, a regular quarterly journal. There were some delays in getting the last edition to you. Our apologies, especially to members with Kent addresses, whose copies were extremely late. We have taken steps to ensure that the problems were overcome, but it will be some time before everything is ironed out smoothly. At present the IWA computer can only print labels jointly for South East and Thames and South Regions. Eventually we will be able to get labels printed for individual Branches, but of course by then we in London may find ourselves operating as a Region.

A volunteer has come forward to organise speaker meetings at Uxbridge for the Autumn/Spring programme. As I write I do not know if these are finalised. If they are then they will appear in this edition. Hopefully there may also be meetings in the S.E. London area this winter. We still need suggestions and volunteers to increase activities in other parts of London, not just meetings but rallies, walks, visits etc. A boaters' gathering was held at Brentford on 13/14 July. The branch helped and made suggestions, but it was basically a local effort and it is set to grow bigger and better next year.

I am writing this on an Inter City train which is not going where I want to go. My destination is Devizes, but that town does not have a railway any more, let alone a station. It does, of course, now have a waterway connection to the main system, and I was fortunate in being able recently to navigate not only the K&A but also the Basingstoke Canal, over 100 miles of navigation. It is unlikely that such a large mileage of waterway will ever again be opened up within the space of a year. I also had the honour of representing the Branch at the Basingstoke re-opening and at a small ceremony on the Caen Hill flight at Devizes to thank all who had built and paid for the lock footbridges. I could not help but spare a thought for those who supported these restorations in their early days but were not able to be present at the culmination of their efforts. Without their vision we would not have been celebrating.

The next phase of canal restorations has far more problems to overcome than was the case in the past, but if we do not now work on, and support groups on, canals that sometimes do not seem to have much hope of ever being re-opened, we will end up much like the British Rail network, with little chance of reaching the many towns that were once part of the connected system. It is gratifying that restoration groups which receive support from the branch have recently worked on projects that include the Wey and Arun, Wilts and Berks, Chesterfield, Montgomery and Grand Western canals.

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From the Region Chairman: David Allison-Beer

At the end of May I was in Cumbria for the induction of a vicar into his new parish. Effectively this service is an introduction to the parish and the parishioners. Whilst my new parish is secular it is appropriate that I begin my first report as Region Chairman with an introduction. I was introduced to canals from my push-chair in 1957 and joined the IWA whilst at school. I think it cost £1! I claim over 30 years varied use of the canals from the conventional to learning to sail in a converted canoe on Tixall Wide. More recently I was secretary of your Branch before retiring at the last AGM to take on the region role.

Our region now covers three Branches—London, Chelmsford, and Kent and East Sussex. We have a committee of 10 including the Chairmen of each Branch, plus Ron Martin (Vice-Chairman), Carlyle Smith (Treasurer), Dave Moore, John Gale and Heather Mitchell (Chairman of SE Inland Shipping Committee). One person whose services we have been lucky to retain is Mike Stimpson as Region Secretary. At the last AGM he said he wished to stand down, but a little coercion seems to have worked. Within the IWA, the Branch or Region Secretary is the person who is responsible for the smooth running of the committee. Mike is a master at this, as well as a knowledgeable contributor to region meetings and a skilled editor of the now deceased *Windlass*.

As reported in the April edition of IWA Waterways, last February IWA Council discussed the aims of the Association. Some have unfortunately misconstrued this as saying the IWA is not interested in boaters. This is not true. The IWA is not solely a boaters' organisation, but I can assure all boaters that we view their activities as very important to the IWA. It is the use of waterways by boats which has helped to keep a number of the lesser used ones open for us all to enjoy.

Examples of our recent efforts on behalf of boating are:

- * The IWA has put pressure on BW to increase the time for the implementation of the Boat Standards, which has resulted in the recent revision to the timescale delaying commencement until 1993.
- * The IWA has a Second House undertaking on the BW Bill which has just finished its consideration by a House of Lords Committee. At the time of writing we await the filled (amended) Bill before a final decision is made on our action.
- * Almost £2000 has been committed to assist in a legal challenge of BW's right to charge for end of garden moorings.

IN THE REGION:

- * Ron Bingham and I have met with BW over the proposed closure of the Paddington Branch of the GU for the rebuilding of the North Circular Road. (As reported in the August edition of *Excalibur—Ed.*) Some of you will have also seen my letter on this subject to one of the commercially published waterway magazines.
- * I have also written to BW about the inappropriate use of towpaths on the Slough Arm and the Lee for competitive cycling and running races.
- * As well I have protested to the PLA about the requirement to carry VHF radio on all boats over 20 metres (66 feet) on the tidal Thames. The PLA General Directions requiring VHF came into force on June 1st.
- * Ron Martin has taken up with BW the Standards as they relate to trailboats.
- * Mike Stimpson has written at length to Robin Garrett, BW SE Region Manager over BW's proposals for increasing permanent and temporary residential moorings.

I hope that next time someone says the IWA does nothing for boaters you will quote these examples.

Coals to the Basingstoke



'Hands across the sea.' David Daines on Lynx shakes hands with Roger Flitter, Dredging Manager of the Basingstoke Canal (on the dredger)

Photo: Ginny Milland

'Hey, David, you know something about canals; what did that ditch behind the office use to be?' 'That ditch', I told them, 'is the Basingstoke Canal and it's being restored.' This answer was often treated with disbelief by my office colleagues: well, now I have the photographic evidence to prove the point. *Lynx* and I have been there, along with some hundreds or so other boats attending the grand Royal re-opening celebrations on Friday 10 May.

This is a gem of a canal. It's not a fast through route to anywhere. Keep your Grand Union schedules for the main lines, take your time here. The locks are new and need a little time and use to settle in. Some gates leak more than the Basingstoke Canal Authority would like, some paddle-gear is

heavy or has gear-meshing problems but the BCA is wise to the faults and enthusiastic about solving them. Treat the equipment with care and enjoy the surroundings.

There is a desperate need to conserve the meagre water supplies here, and to this end we were organised into 'mini convoys' of two or three boats to enter the canal and progress up the 28 locks to the site of the re-opening celebrations at Frimley Lodge Park. The surroundings are very attractive and, at times such as on parts of the Deepcut flight, almost spectacular. Here there are tall, wooded hills and large lakes or flashes accompanying the canal. The worst stretch must be the long, slow, shallow grind through Woking, a town obviously not yet appreciating its canal.

A long, straight cutting leads from the

Deepcut top lock, no.28, after which the canal crosses the four tracks of the ex-LWSR main line, soon followed by the site of the opening celebrations. It was while ascending the top lock that I met Tony Harmsworth, the grandson of the owner of the canal during the first half of this century. Tony has a wealth of interesting anecdotes about the working of the canal in those days. *Lynx* may well be the first-ever full-length working motor boat to reach so far up the canal, since all the working boats of old here were horse-drawn.

So to the opening celebrations. HRH the Duke of Kent arrived by helicopter shortly after 11.30 am and made his way to the dais where he was introduced to a number of worthies concerned with the restoration of the canal. A short drama was then enacted, in which representatives of the various bodies involved in the work of restoration each gave a brief presentation. The Duke then visited the stands in the marquees before embarking on the *John Pinkerton* for a cruise through the assembled boats to the accompaniment of various steam whistles, horns etc. from their owners. In the evening a grand firework display was staged, followed by a procession of illuminated boats.

It was during the day that the manager of the dredging operations on the canal, Roger Flitter, had approached me with a suggestion. I had already delivered some of my small load of smokeless fuel to houseboats moored at Woking, but what a splendid symbolic act it would be to take the remainder to the steam dredger at Fleet. Wise counsel was taken regarding the feasibility of this operation, most notably from Tony Harmsworth, in the light of which the decision was made to 'give it a try'. It was just too good an opportunity to miss.

So, at lunchtime on the Saturday, *Lynx* and I set off to follow the official cruise of boats heading Westward, having first taken

down cratch, mast and stands in order to fit under the very low (5'10") bridges. I caught up with the flotilla at Ash lock, where further celebrations of the re-opening were taking place, after which I again followed the fleet Westwards.

Those bridges were certainly low—I even had to take my hat off! At Pondtail bridge a kind lady handed me a small bottle of 'Scottish falling-over water' as a reward for my efforts so far, but from here the going became really sticky. One expects problems with a 3' draught and I had been warned that from here to the dredger would be the 'make or break' stretch. My word, the engine worked hard! The bottom was soft, sticky mud and much too near the top. I found that combination, with the engine regulator wound well open but the prop unable to turn at the appropriate speed, not at all good for the engine. I was nevertheless just able to keep the momentum of the boat going. Then the boat ahead of me had to stop! I knew I could not get going again from this enforced halt, so I backed away down the channel I had just dug out, charged forward from there, and we were on the move again.

At long last the dredger came in sight, but we still had to reach it. Spurred on by the cheers of the dredger crew, we ploughed (literally) forward until all at once we were in the deep water alongside. The first waterborne delivery of fuel to the dredger from the main system since it was moved to the Basingstoke Canal was a reality. Bags of coal were ceremoniously handed across, to the clicks of countless cameras.

The following day, *Lynx* and I continued Westwards as far as the 'Barley Mow' at Winchfield. I had been warned that beyond here the canal became increasingly shallow. Indeed the last half-mile or so to the winding hole was once again so slow that it seemed prudent to turn here and return East. Again the stretch between the



nb Lynx at Frimley Lodge Park

Photo: David Daines

dredger and Pondtail bridge was very slow, but at least I now knew it was possible.

I have related the problems I had on this trip, but the surrounding scenery would have made it worthwhile even without its original purpose. The upper reaches wind and turn through very pretty countryside, remote yet passing several fine houses hidden among the trees. Indeed trees are a feature of this canal, very few stretches being without them. Owners of boats with open holds beware of leaves, twigs and squirrel droppings!

The reception given by the local people to the sight of boats on the canal was almost without exception warm and friendly; perhaps fishermen stayed at home! Let us give full and generous thanks and praise to the Surrey and Hants Canal Society, the Basingstoke Canal Authority and the two Local Authorities together with the countless volunteers who gave, each in their own way, to make this dream come true.

DAVID DAINES

EDITOR'S NOTE

For those of you who are interested in such things, David's boat, *Lynx*, is a Small Northwich boat built for the GUCCo in 1935. Yes, 'Lynx' is her original name : it's one of the lesser known constellations. On nationalisation she served in the BW SE carrying fleet and later in the maintenance fleet. She was originally a butty and was converted to a motor about 15 years ago with her present engine, a Lister HR2. She has also been fitted with a steel bottom in place of the original wooden one.

On the Metreau

News and Gossip of London's Waterways

RADIO ON THE TIDEWAY

General Directions for Navigation in the Port of London 1991 were approved on 8 April and came into force on 1 June. The main requirement which affects users is that all boats over 20 metres (66 ft) navigating the tidal Thames below Teddington must carry an operational VHF radio capable of communicating with the Thames Navigation Service. Copies of the General Directions may be obtained free from the Thames Navigation Service, Royal Pier Road, Gravesend, Kent DA12 2BG. Tel:0474 322010.

IWA at Branch and Region level is trying to persuade the PLA to grant an exemption for narrowboats making a passage between Teddington and Brentford (and possibly even Limehouse), but it is far too early to predict success in this.

Readers are reminded that to use a VHF radio users must have passed Department of Trade exams and obtained the relevant licences.

The 1978 PLA byelaws require that all craft navigating the Thames carry the navigation lights required by the Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea. (Available from the RYA. Cost £2.75).

Tideway Notes published by IWA London Branch are currently being updated to include these and other navigation changes. These will be available from the Branch in the Autumn.

SLOUGH CANAL DAY

On Sunday 22nd September a day of activities and events is being organised by the Colne Valley Groundwork Trust in conjunction with the local authorities, IWA, BWB and Grand Union Canal Society. Entry is free and it is hoped to include free boat trips from Slough Basin and Langley Wharf to the site at Bloom Park which is beside the canal between Middle Green Road and Uxbridge Road. Everybody is welcome, especially boats which should receive a plaque if they navigate the full length of the canal to the basin. Further details from the Groundwork Trust on Uxbridge (0895) 832662.

MOBILE AGAIN

Kent and East Sussex Canal Restoration Group (KESCRG) have just taken delivery of a replacement 12-seater minibus after theirs was stolen last autumn. This has been financed by a grant of £3000 from funds held in the National Waterways Restoration and Development Fund on behalf of the Association's South East Region, £500 donated by our London Branch, £500 from the Stamp Bank and the insurance claim.

BRANCH SALES TAKE OFF

The Branch Stand did good business at the Wendover Canal Festival over the Late Spring Bank Holiday weekend, but really took off on the Monday afternoon. As your Editor was returning to the main site from his boat towards the end of the afternoon he had a splendid view from the footbridge of the stand, seized by a sudden gust of wind, floating delicately into the air and performing a back somersault. Fortunately the show was nearly at an end and there were not many members of the public in the vicinity, or there could have been some nasty injuries. As it was, two of the Branch volunteers very nearly went into the air with it.

CANAL CLEAN-UP

A longer-term date for your diary: the next national Canal Clear-Up weekend is planned for 7 and 8 March 1992. London Branch is hoping to arrange several activities in different parts of London. Suggestions to the Branch Committee please.

ACCIDENT PRONE

Keep clear of Dave Dent and Ann Tilman! Dave, having broken his leg at Cavalcade (see page 13), came to the Wendover Festival on crutches and was one of the folk who nearly went for an involuntary kite ride (see above). At the same event, Dave & Ann's daughter Sam also broke her leg in a pothole. Is Ann next, or is she really a failed mass murderer?

BRANCH DONATIONS

One of the main things that London Branch does with the money it raises through its activities is to make donations to various waterway causes. Among the donations made in the past year (or about to be made) are the following:

- * £750 to Beauchamp Lodge for a mobile phone as part of equipping nb Victoria to take parties including the disabled.
- * £200 towards expenses of a Dig on the Bow Back Rivers.
- * £200 to sponsor two performances by the Mikron Theatre in July.
- * £300 to the Pirate Club.
- * £500 to the national WRG vehicle appeal.
- * £500 to KESCRG for their transport appeal and £300 towards their other running costs.
- * £300 to the dredger appeal for the Manchester Bolton & Bury Canal.
- * £300 towards the Rochdale Canal restoration.
- * £300 to the Neath & Tennant Canals Society, presented on a Branch outing to South Wales (see front cover picture).
- * £250 to London WRG for general expenses.

EAST LONDON RIVERS INITIATIVE

Clearance work on the Bow Back Rivers goes from strength to strength. With new sponsorship from Grand Metropolitan Hotels, work is now planned for two years, including building a bridge to, and a picnic site on, an island near Carpenters Road lock. Bass Charrington, who own the Three Mills site, are supportive and there are hopes that Tower Hamlets Council will also assist.

Kesslers International, one of the earliest and most enthusiastic sponsors of the project, have won the Community Investment section of the prestigious Dragon Awards for business involvement in the community. These awards are sponsored by the City of London (but operate nationally), and administered by the Prince of Wales' charity, Business in the Community.

PADDLE STEAMER TRIP

The Branch is hoping to arrange a trip on the paddle steamer Waverley when she is in the London during September/October. Details are not yet known as I write but are likely to be by the time you read this. If you're interested, contact Tim Lewis on 081-530 7926.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, WRG

This October sees the Waterway Recovery Group's 21st birthday, which they plan to celebrate with a Big Dig on the Wilts and Berks Canal near Wantage over the weekend of 12/13 October. They aim to show that there is the same enthusiasm and commitment in the 90's as there was in the '70s for such events as ASHTAC and Deepcut. They have work for 1000 volunteers, accommodation for 600 with a separate 'family room', a camping site for up to 50 caravans and tents and arrangements for a 'Navvies Night Out' party for 700. London WRG will be taking part and volunteers can make contact through the phone number on page 15.

RESCUED BY PIRATES!

Not quite what one would expect. Canalway Cavalcade Director Libby Bradshaw is also heavily involved in other things and complains that she doesn't get enough time to use her boat, *Panacea*. It even had to be ferried to and from Cavalcade by willing friends as she was busy elsewhere. Libby fancied going to a Rally she wasn't running, so friends ferried it to the Wendover Festival for her, and she actually had time to boat back to her mooring at Cowley. Unfortunately the ferry crew had omitted to check the fuel level and *Panacea* came to an ignominious halt on the way back. The Pirate Club's boat *Pirate Princess* happened along soon after and interrupted its cruise for long enough to enable its steerer, Giles, to get Libby and *Panacea* back under way. Thank you, Pirates.

GOINGS-ON AT BRENTFORD . . .

There was a gathering of boats at Brentford over the weekend of 13/14 July in conjunction with Brentford Carnival. The gathering was a small one organised by local enthusiasts under the auspices of IWA London Branch. They hope to organise a bigger event there next year.

. . . AND IN ISLINGTON

A weekend of activities for young people is planned for 5 and 6 October at Islington Boat Club, run by a number of organisations, including BW and the Pirate Club. IWA London Branch will be participating. By the time you read this, details should be available from Robin Gray at the Canal Office at Little Venice (phone 071-289 9897).

The Bow Back Rivers—Eastenders' Waterside

It may well be that when Nature is driven out with a pitchfork she continually returns, but how about more modern chemical pollutants? One place where we can find out is the area of the Bow Back Rivers, in particular Three Mills and Mill Meads.

It seems that since the Middle Ages, the ugliest, noisiest and smelliest of profit-making activities were exiled from the City of London, often to these areas of reclaimed marshland. By the nineteenth century it seemed perfectly natural that hazardous industries such as chemical works and match factories should be sited here. The substances used led to long-term ill-health on the part of the workers and penetrated the soil of the area. It would be interesting—and possibly horrifying—to know the effects on plant and animal life at the time.

Nowadays, walking from Three Mills along Abbey Creek to Prescott Sluice and across Mill Meads to Abbey Mills pumping station, you see trees and bushes, dense grass of a perfectly ordinary green, and a great many wild flowers, from the rather tough and scrubby wasteland varieties to feathery vetch and delicate-looking soapwort. There are also a great many 'garden escapes', such as sweet peas, Michaelmas daisies, bachelor's button and buddleia. The wild flowers have an extended blooming season, apparently quite common for plants growing near water. Yet there is something odd about some of their colours. In particular, many flowers which are usually pink are mauve or sometimes quite a deep purple.

Last time I was there, a few years ago now, this 'wrong' colour was most glaring in the mallows, especially the marsh mallows. I imagined that this would deter any maker of traditional home-made sweets from using the roots of any mallows growing here. Yet the blackberries were delicious, much appreciated by birds and humans; on that autumn day there was the lovely sight of a chirm of goldfinches feasting on thistle-heads. Earlier in the year I had found dandelion and burdock growing together beside Abbey Creek and Bow Creek and an elderly angler told me that when he was a boy his aunt would gather these plants from here and make a dandelion and burdock drink better than any of the shop stuff.

He seemed healthy enough, and pleased about the variety of fish in the water: perch, chub, roach, a great many eels, and flatfish more usually found in the sea. These fish in turn feed gulls and a few kingfishers.

There are, of course, other birds than those I've already mentioned, in particular a remarkable number of sparrows. Some birds are attracted by the insect life supported by the plants, and one must not forget the bees and the many coloured butterflies, the latter most abundant around the many buddleias.

The plants also provide habitat and food for slugs and snails, which in turn are food for hedgehogs. This would perhaps be an unglamorous end for a species of water-snail in the area, of a kind found nowhere else in Europe. They are natives of African rivers and are believed to have come to England on the underside of ships, moving into the canals and the River Lea from Limehouse.

Back on the land, the area is a good hunting-ground for feral cats, and indeed for domestic ones, since there are still rats, and field mice are increasing.

Turning left along the path above the Northern Outfall sewer, we should see many differently sized and coloured spiders working in the hedge. Crossing the High Street we come to City Mill lock, with roses reverting year by year to a wilder appearance. Sniff at the buddleias for a strong and almost alcoholic scent of honey. Follow the City Mill River to its junction with the Old River Lee and turn left towards Old Ford locks. This is where you are most likely to see kingfishers.

At certain times of year you will crush water mint underfoot on the walk from Old Ford locks along the Lee Navigation to Three Mills bridge. In fact the vegetation is fairly unrestrained in all the areas mentioned, so tough shoes and leg-wear are necessary except where there have been recent towpath clearances.

Although one may feel that nature has fought back magnificently in this small area, our chemical warfare against her is nowadays too widespread to make such a recovery likely again without help. Is it significant that at least one substitute for an aerosol spray grows in Mill Meads: Canadian fleabane, which when tucked into a collar is an ozone-friendly way of ridding a cat of fleas.

WENDY STEVENS

Obituary— Viscount St Davids

Our Branch President died on 10 June 1991 aged 74. He had cancer and told me over the phone that it was terminal and that he knew the date. This was typical of him.

His entry in Debrett's *Distinguished People of Today* gives us all the background:

ST DAVIDS, 2 Viscount (UK 1918); Sir Jestyn Reginald Austen Plantagenet Philipps (sic); 14 Bt (E 1621); also Baron Stange de Knokin (E 1299); Baron Hungerford (E 1426); Baron de Moleyns (E 1445); s of 1 Viscount ... suc to Viscountcy 1938, to mother's Baronies 1974; b 19 Feb 1917; Educ Eton, Trin Cambridge; m 1 (1s, 4d) ... 2 ... 3 Evelyn Marjorie. Sits as Independent in House of Lords. Lt RNRV. Style—the Rt Hon the Viscount St Davids; 15 St Mark's Crescent, London NW1.

The National Chairman headed a distinguished contingent of IWA mourners at his combined cremation and Memorial Service. There was a long notice in the *Times* of 13 June followed by a supplementary by our own Di Murrell on 29 June. The Pirate Club, which he founded in 1966, has written a piece stressing its initial spark and originality under him: official tributes from 114 and Watford will appear shortly. So all I can do now is to offer some personal random thoughts about a unique personality.

Perhaps it was the Hungerford in one of the Baronies he inherited from his mother that inspired his lifelong love of waterways, and indeed his thirty-year long association with the Kennet and Avon was triumphantly rounded off this year.

He joined the last War as a rating in the RNRV, rising to Petty Officer and finally to Lieutenant with an exceptional record—he actually designed a new sailor's knot.

He then concentrated on inland waterways, both nationally and in our local waters. He lived for a time on the motor yacht *Tortoise* in Paddington Basin while trying unsuccessfully to get a waterbus service going, and then found a productive streak developing electric propulsion. Fearful of recriminations from his neighbours in St Mark's Crescent, he designed his experimental *Silver Sail* to the exact length of the width of his garden backing onto the Regent's Canal: this restricted its battery power and neutralised any local objections, though he told me later he needn't have worried about a bit of overlap! He was a keen exhibitor at the annual Boat Show and pioneered the establishment of a linked chain of plug-in points for re-charging up and down the country from the Staffs and Worcs and now progressively along the Thames.

He once ferried me along to Little Venice and back in *Silver Sail*; it was a delightful trip and he followed it up by appearing regularly at Canalway Cavalcade with Marjorie offering 'trips round the bay' (i.e. Little Venice) for all and sundry, especially kids. He would then return to his model railway at home, a creation of vast sophistication right in line with his ever-widening spread of enthusiasm.

When he appeared at that Branch Meeting in 1987 to be elected its first President, we all got the feeling of the man; he straightaway set course round the assembled company and asked each one present for his views of the set-up of the Branch and the Association. This was Noel Coward in *In which we serve*, running a Happy Ship.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to his widow, Marjorie (formally Marjorie Viscountess St Davids), professionally for long the Information Officer to the Institute of Personnel Management and personally his devoted companion for thirty years. We shall not see his like again.

ARTHUR FARRAND RADLEY
Branch Vice-President

CANALWAY CAVALCADE 1991

LITTLE VENICE, 4-6 MAY



A general view of Cavalcade: not 1991, but one with better weather

Photo: Roy Squire

Even before most members had received the Spring edition of *Excalibur*, 1991's Canalway Cavalcade had come and gone. Once again the record for the number of boats attending was broken; this year we reached 120. It was fortunate that some specifically chose to lie on the Delamere Terrace visitor moorings since this meant that Harbourmaster Chris Port could just about squeeze in all those who wanted to be in the pool.

The opening ceremony on Saturday afternoon was performed by Robin Garrett (BW Regional Manager), Councillor David Avery (Lord Mayor of Westminster) and David Stevenson (IWA National Chairman). Presentations of Branch donations were made to London WRG, KESCRG and the Pirate Club by Branch Chairman Eric Garland. The pageant of boats followed immediately,

more than ever of them, and more of them decorated. Winner of the trophy for the best decorated boat was Jane and Ian Barrett's *Jane B*, dressed as 'Paddington Mews' with some unthinkable number of teddy bears on board. In the sponsored boat category, London Underground's Bakerloo Line retained their own challenge trophy with their tube train built on Graham Capelin's *Marab*.

Sunday was marred by poor weather which reduced the numbers of the public who came. The Teddy Bears' Picnic in particular suffered from having to move into a marquee at short notice because of rain.

The usual boat handling competition attracted even more entries than usual and was therefore run in three sessions, two on Sunday and one on Monday. It was good to see some full-length boats taking part after a few years without any. Sunday evening

produced an excellent boaters' barbecue arranged by St Pancras Cruising Club, but the weather did not encourage us to linger and use the floating bar. Later came the parade of illuminated boats followed by the usual firework display. *Jane B* scored a 'double' by adding the trophy for best illuminated boat to the one they had won the day before, and the winner in the sponsored boat category was the British Gas entry on board Peter Jackman's *Triggs*.

Monday morning saw the conclusion of the boat-handling competition, which was won by Neil Todd with *Baltic*.

Other activities over the weekend included canoe displays by Beauchamp Lodge and the Pirate Club, a visit from a Chinese Dragon Boat and the usual excellent selection of musicians and other entertainers, including the Daystar Theatre Company who performed on board the Colne Valley Passenger Boat Service's ex-Leeds & Liverpool short-boat *Farnworth*. There was the usual selection of stands of waterways organisations and traders, and most seemed to do quite good business despite the weather.

Contributions to the atmosphere and activity of the event are always provided by the various resident attractions at Little Venice, including Alex Prowse's art gallery on the barge *Crook*, the puppet theatre on the barge *May Brent* and the trip boats run by the London Waterbus Company and Jason's Trip.

It was good this year to have *Lady Rose of Regent*'s participating more fully in the event. Apart from providing the venue, as always, for the VIP reception on Saturday lunchtime hosted by BW, they also ran a raffle in aid of the Pirate Club and managed to arrange a surprise visit by John Inman to draw the winning number on board the editorial battle-wagon, *Felis Catus II*.

If the event awarded a medal for gallantry, it would certainly go to this year's pageant master Dave Dent, who energetically marshalled the illuminated boats from his own boat *Albatross* while suffering increasing agony from what was later discovered to be a broken leg resulting from a fall earlier in the day.

Many thanks are due to everyone who helped: the Cavalcade Committee, the workforce from KESCRG and all the other

volunteers, as well as to all those organisations who provided various forms of sponsorship and help: the City of Westminster, BW, Brent Marine and all those who sponsored boats in the pageant or individual events or entertainments.

At the time of writing it is too early to forecast the financial outcome, but we are hoping for our usual healthy profit which goes into the Branch funds from which our donations to waterways causes are made (see page 9).

FORWARD TO 1992

Next year will be Canalway Cavalcade's tenth anniversary, so we are hoping to make the event even bigger and better. Already the team is beginning to take shape. Useful contacts are:

Director: Libby Bradshaw—081-874 2787

Chairman: Mike Stevens—081-674 9387

Trade: Richard Bird—081-857 6367

Boat entries: Ann Hancox—081-542 8998

Sponsorship: Rosie Limming—0895-52011



*John Inman on board nb Felis Catus II
to draw a raffle in aid of the Pirate Club*

Photo: Mike Stevens

Waterways Events in and around London

AUGUST

Sunday 4th 2.30 pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Walk from Camden Town station along the Regent's Canal to Islington
Tuesday 13th 6.30 pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Walk from Camden Town station along the Regent's Canal to Paddington
Wednesday 14th 6.45 pm	Ramblers Association	Walk from Bromley by Bow station along the River Lea and Hertford Union Canal to Mile End
Tuesday 20th 6.30 pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Walk from Camden Town station along the Regent's Canal to Islington
Saturday 24th 1.00 pm	Borough of Ealing	Cruise from the 'Hambrough Tavern', Ealing to Horsenden Hill (£3.50, booking essential)

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 1st 2.30 pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Walk from Camden Town station along the Regent's Canal to Paddington
Thursday 12th 8.00 pm	IWA Chelmsford Branch	AEU House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford: <i>'The Great Grand Junction'</i> : Alan Faulkner
Saturday 14th—Sunday 15th	LONDON WRG DIG	Hanwell
Tuesday 17th 8pm	IWA Herts Branch	Hatfield Cricket Club, Welwyn Garden City: <i>'Mining'</i> : Richard Ferrari (BW)
Thursday 19th 7 for 7.30pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Union Jack Club, Sandell St. (near Waterloo Stn): <i>'The Cotswold Canals Trust'</i>
Sunday 22nd	SLOUGH CANAL DAY	
Tuesday 24th 7.30 for 8pm	IWA Kent and E Sussex	Fountain Inn, Barming, Maidstone: <i>'Management of our local rivers'</i> : Brian Richomme (NRA)
Friday 27th 7.30 pm	Paddle Steamer <i>Waverley</i>	Paddle Steamer Preservation Society Cruise from Tower Pier through Thames Flood Barrier and return
Saturday 28th 10.00 am	Paddle Steamer <i>Waverley</i>	All-day cruise from Tower Pier to Gravesend, Tilbury, Southend, Whitstable and return
Sunday 29th 11.00 am	Paddle Steamer <i>Waverley</i>	All-day cruise from Tower Pier to Gravesend, Tilbury, Southend and return

OCTOBER

Saturday 5th & Sunday 5th	<i>'Unlock the Capital's Canals'</i>	Activity days for young people at Islington Boat Club
Sunday 6th 11.00 am	Paddle Steamer <i>Waverley</i>	All-day cruise from Tower Pier to Gravesend, Tilbury, Southend and return
Sunday 6th 2.30 pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Walk from Camden Town station along the Regent's Canal to Islington
Monday 7th 11.00 am	Paddle Steamer <i>Waverley</i>	All-day cruise from Tower Pier to Gravesend, Tilbury, Southend and return
Thursday 10th 8.00 pm	IWA Chelmsford Branch	AEU House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford: <i>'The story of T Harrison Chaplin Ltd'</i> : Peter Chaplin
Saturday 12th & Sunday 13th	LONDON WRG DIG	Wilts ans Berks (National WRG Big Dig)
Tuesday 15th 8pm	IWA Herts Branch	Hatfield Cricket Club, Welwyn Garden City: <i>'The Basingstoke Canal'</i> : Robin Higgs
Thursday 17th 7 for 7.30 pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Union Jack Club, Sandell St. (near Waterloo Stn): <i>'Friends of President'</i> : Richard Thomas
Tuesday 29th 7.30 for 8pm	IWA Kent and E Sussex	Fountain Inn, Barming, Maidstone: Dave & Jane Green on their award-winning <i>Willie No-Name</i>

NOVEMBER

Sunday 1st 2.30 pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Walk from Camden Town station along the Regent's Canal to Paddington
Saturday 9th & Sunday 10th	LONDON WRG DIG	Basingstoke Canal (to be confirmed)
Tuesday 12th 8.00 pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Hillingdon Canal Cruising Club, * NEW VENUE * Waterloo Road, Uxbridge.
Thursday 14th 8.00 pm	IWA Chelmsford Branch	<i>A boatbuilder's view</i> : Stephen Goldsborough
Tuesday 19th 8pm	IWA Herts Branch	AEU House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford: <i>'The River Stour'</i> : John Marriage
Thursday 21st 7 for 7.30pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Hatfield Cricket Club, Welwyn Garden City: <i>'Boats and disasters—as seen by a surveyor'</i> : James Macdonald
Tuesday 26th 7.30 pm	IWA Kent and E Sussex	Union Jack Club, Sandell St. (near Waterloo Stn): Norman Alborough, Editor of <i>Canal & Riverboat</i>
Saturday 30th 12.00 noon	Grand Union Canal Society	Fountain Inn, Barming, Maidstone: <i>'A view of the River Medway'</i> : Gay Roberts
		Noggin and Natter at the Paddington Packet Boat, Packet Boat Lane, Cowley Peachey

DECEMBER

Tuesday 3rd 8.00 pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Hillingdon Canal Cruising Club * NEW VENUE * Waterloo Road, Uxbridge
Tuesday 3rd 7.30 for 8pm	IWA Kent and E Sussex	<i>IWA directions for the future</i> : Mike West
Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th	LONDON WRG DIG	Fountain Inn, Barming, Maidstone: Get-together with the Medway River Users Association
Thursday 12th 7 for 7.30pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Venue to be decided
Thursday 12th 8.00 pm	IWA Chelmsford Branch	Union Jack Club, Sandell St. (near Waterloo Stn): Auction and Quiz
Tuesday 17th 8pm	IWA Herts Branch	AEU House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford: Christmas Social with members' slides.
		Hatfield Cricket Club, Welwyn Garden City: Christmas Social

FURTHER DETAILS FROM

Borough of Ealing	Charlotte Deason-Barrow	081-758 5916
Grand Union Canal Society	Janet Parish	0442-252519
IWA Chelmsford Branch	Molly Beard	0702-554492
IWA Herts Branch	Greta Wright	0727-860137
IWA Kent & East Sussex	Angela Madle	0634-722661
IWA London Branch		
Waterloo Meetings	Tim Lewis	081-530 7926
Hillingdon Meetings	Mike Stimpson	0923-721559
IWA Walks	Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti	081-882 1337
London WRG	Lesley McFadyen	081-693 3266
Paddle Steamer <i>Waverley</i>	(credit card bookings)	041-221 8152 or 0446-720656
Ramblers Association (London)	Derek Purcell	8 Dryburgh Mansions, SW15
Slough Canal Day	Colne Valley Groundwork Trust	0895-832662
'Unlock the Capital's Canals'	Robin Gray	071-289 9897

Review:

'London's Canals Yesterday and Today'

RESOURCES PACK FOR SCHOOLS

The pack was funded by BW and produced at Hackney Teachers' Centre with input from the Canals in Hackney Users Group. It consists of ten folders in a handy box:

- 1 Teachers' Notes
- 2 How the Regent's Canal was built
- 3 Boats and boat people
- 4 Horse power
- 5 Canals at work
- 6 The changing face of canals
- 7 Canal surroundings
- 8 Keeping canals alive
- 9 Canals and wildlife
- 10 How to find London's canals

Humanities-based teachers might think first of history and geography when they look at the drawings, photographs and original documents gathered here, and primary teachers might feel that they can already provide these subjects without yet another project. However the Teacher's Notes point out *'The new factor presented with the National Curriculum is the inclusion of Science as a heavily weighted subject. Many teachers, especially in the primary sector, are less experienced in science teaching than in Language and Mathematics at this present time. The choice of a project with a heavy Science bias eases the job of a teacher trying to link in various educational elements.'* I would add that teachers who use the pack are likely to gain confidence as they move from 'their' subject areas onto the scientific topics.

Those who still ask 'Why let children muck about with projects when they ought to be Doing the National Curriculum?' will perhaps be reassured by the list of skills and knowledge which the pack aims to foster: speaking and listening, reading, writing (in various modes); Maths Attainment Targets 1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14; Science A.T.s on the exploration of science, the variety of life, processes of life, human influences on the Earth, types and uses of materials, Earth & atmosphere, forces and energy.

But, educationists' jargon aside, is it good on canals? I think it is.

Canal enthusiasts tend to dismiss objectors to canal-building as Georgian or Victorian NIMBYs, but the material on the building of the Regent's shows how such a change can cause genuine distress. There are documents showing objections and answers, estimates of cost—we are reminded that the final cost was almost twice the original estimate—contemporary drawings of work in progress and reports of accidents to navvies.

The 'Boats and boat people' section neither glamorises working boat people's lives nor the reverse. Will the drawings of canal craft lead to a generation of gongoozlers who never call a narrow-boat a barge? From different sizes of boat we move to different sizes of load that could be pulled, and an explanation of why the original canals were so sorely needed (and still are?) in the 'Horse power' folder. There is interesting information on the care of the horses, with several photographs, and a rather shorter account of the use of steam and diesel.

'Canals at work' takes us from the early days to the growth of the railway network. The story of Blow-up Bridge is reproduced from the Illustrated London News of 1874. More recent newspapers are used extensively in 'The changing face of canals' to show how people had to fight against closures and for the acceptance of the London canals as leisure amenities. Architectural features, cleaning up and canal ecology are well covered, and finally no-one is allowed to imagine, as did many local visitors to our Mile End Rally in 1982, that the London canals are isolated and not part of a wider system.

We are told that the pack has been tried out successfully in Hackney, both in the class-room and on the towpath. Teachers are also given information about a wide variety of waterways activities, with necessary addresses and 'phone numbers.

I have only two criticisms. One concerns the lack of visual clarity in much of the source material, which is intended to be photocopied but might challenge the ability of the average school's photocopier.

Secondly, I should like to know whether the compilers asked any questions about London's non-white population in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, some of whom lived around Limehouse. Were their skills those of sea-going rather than inland craft? Did they cling to the companionship of fellow-nationals, perhaps afraid of jobs that took them into unfamiliar and entirely white-populated countryside? Did they think canal work was not respectable? Or were there, in fact, black and Asian canal workers around London (or Bristol, or Liverpool)? Does anybody know? Given the nature of London's school population, it would be a pity if the question had not been raised.

WENDY STEVENS

The resources pack is available from British Waterways, Canal Office, Delamere Terrace, London W2 6ND, phone 071-286 6161 price £17 + p&p.