

National Rally Issue

# WINDLASS

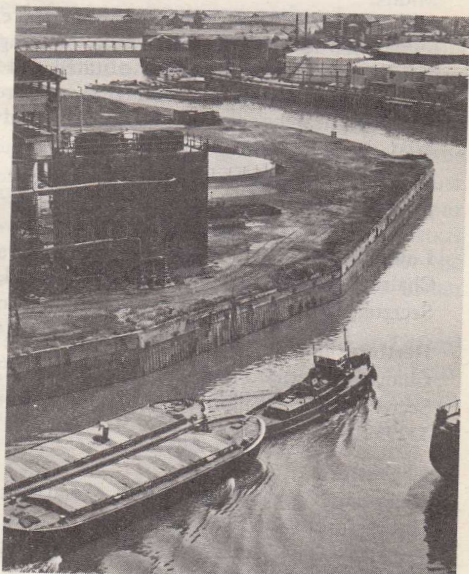
September/October 1978

Number 145

## Which sort of canal do you want?



*Derek Pratt Photography*



*Derek Pratt Photography  
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**this . . .**

**or this.**

**For in the final analysis it will be one or the other. There is no middle course.**

### **Editorial**

Some months ago the Region Inland Shipping Committee published the article that appears elsewhere in this edition and from which these comparative photographs are taken. Inland shipping may seem a long way from holiday cruising on the Shropshire Union or wherever, but there is a connection. Dennis Howell says that, of course, the narrow canals



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are only suitable for pleasure cruising and, in any case, there's no waterbourne trade for the wide canals and rivers. However, having just worked *Swan* over the mud on several so-called "pleasure" narrow canals, and she only draws 2'9", it is obvious that we are not far from this picture of dereliction on the Surrey Canal, simply because no Government is prepared to spend money on improving the situation as shown in the picture of Bow Creek.

As it says in the caption there is no middle course.

The article was circulated to various MP's, councillors, civil servants and the press etc and has recently been reprinted for a further widespread distribution in the event of a general election. We thought that it would also be of general interest to our members if we published it in *Windlass*. Printed copies are available from Glenn Knight if required.

As I write this I am sitting in Gas Street Basin, a sad shadow of its former self. The wooden hoardings and car parks which have replaced the warehouses are no sort of improvement and, of course, there are now very few boats, apart from holiday craft. Having literally sledged round Soho loop last week I cannot see where BWB hope to put these boats when they turn them out of the basin, and where they hope the security will come from escapes me. Two days cruising on the BCN when only two boats were seen moving and no more than fifteen moored-up has at least revealed what the Board expects from Gas Street — the sterile dereliction of Little Venice with its water buses and painted tow paths.

In *Windlass* 144, mention was made of Hermetite Ltd at West Drayton, who have recently landscaped their canal frontage. This enlightened attitude towards the visual amenity value of canal side industrial sites is a great improvement over the usual approach of turning a corporate back on the canal and using both wharf and sometimes water as a rubbish dump. Hermetite are to be congratulated for their public-spirited work. They are not alone in the London Area. Three or four sites have been greatly improved recently, some for no other reason, it seems, than just to look good. We would be interested in hearing from our readers about any other Companies who have improved their frontage whether for staff use or simply to make the odd corner more attractive. A mention in *Windlass* for the Company, a possible new Corporate Membership for I.W.A. and a pleasanter' urban canalscape for all could result.

One of the purposes of rallies such as the IWA National Waterways Rally held at Titford Pools over the Bank Holiday weekend and reported elsewhere in this issue is to publicise the work of IWA and to attract the new members who will increase our effectiveness. In this issue you will find an appeal for each member to help with gaining new members. We would commend this to you as a way in which every IWA member can actively support the Association and it's work.

Since assuming editorial responsibility for *Windlass* one subject has been brought to my attention more than any other. It's usually a question phrased as "is *Rover* coming back?" At first I thought that a dog had been lost and why ask me anyway? But then I found some back issues and found the "*Rover*" column. For those members who haven't read *Rover*'s ramblings he/she/it is a sort of Nigel Dempster or William Hickey of *Windlass*. Further enquiries revealed that some of his previous writings had stirred up quite a hornets nest in certain quarters, and that hopefully *Rover* had passed on to greater things. However through the editorial letter box dropped the letter and column from *Rover* that you can read elsewhere in this issue. I have decided therefore that as long as *Rover* isn't too bitchy (if she's a lady dog) public demand seems to have brought *Rover* back. However there is one small problem. I.W.A. policy dictates that, all articles are signed or at least acknowledged by their authors, trouble is nobody knows who *Rover* is so, sir or madam, if you are taking yourself so seriously as to wish to perpetuate your column you will need to tell us who you are. Its up to you.

## Region Chairman's Review

On the day that the Government's Observations on the Select Committee Report on the British Waterways Board was published, our National Chairman sent the following telegram:-

*'I.W.A. deplors the Government's rejection of the Select Committee's Report on the British Waterways Board, especially the non-implementation of the Fraenkel Report and the procrastination of the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation.'*

This telegram was sent to nearly twenty members of both Houses of Parliament including the Prime Minister, Minister of the Environment and Leader of the Opposition. A press Release was also issued but our views on the Government's negative attitude to the Select Committee Report received scant press coverage compared with that given to the publication of the Report.

We now know what the Government's intentions are - to please themselves and disregard the advice of their own select committee and the views of I.W.A., the B.W.B. and other informed bodies. The IWA Council will be studying the Government's Reply in detail and deciding what action we must take. Clearly IWA has a fight on its hands and it is one we must not lose - How often has this been said?

An article was published recently in the Conservative News under the title "Who Cares Now for our Environment? asks Eldon Griffiths, Former Environment Minister". The article was headed by a one - third page picture of Eldon Griffiths steering a narrow boat on the Trent and Mersey Canal. So what, we ask, would be a Conservative Government's plans for the Waterways?

As I write these notes the press is speculating on the date for a General Election, and, by the publication of this 'Windlass', Mr Callaghan may have made his decision. If there is to be an election campaign we have a first class opportunity of face-to-face questions with the candidates of all parties to find out what their intentions will be if elected.

Of no less immediate concern is BWB's decision to introduce overnight closures on certain lengths of canal. The text of our correspondence with the Board has been published in Council News, which you should have been able to read at your Branch Meetings. IWA's views were put by the National Chairman and Vice-Chairman at a meeting with Senior Board Members. The latter were left in no doubt that IWA would never accept that locks could be closed during daylight hours unless it could be shown to be absolutely necessary.

IWALK is behind us and the financial results were reported in Windlass 144. Clearly the event must be counted as a success as far as the financial return is concerned. What was something of a disappointment was the low numbers of our members who walked and the lack of publicity gained in the National Media. Although Chelmsford's walk had more walkers than the Branch has members, and Guildford's walkers were equivalent to 80% of their members, many of the 1400 walkers in the Region were from other organisations. The walk's success has made the Association start thinking of another walk at some future date. If all IWA members were to support this the South-East Region could raise as much as was raised in the whole country this time, and in addition the numbers would without doubt attract the attention of the National Press.

The Autumn is approaching and no doubt will bring its crop of stoppages, probably more than usual IF Fraenkel work is being done. What with stoppages, our fight for the survival of the Waterways and all the other problems we are faced with, it looks like a long hard winter.

*Michael West*

# London's Freight Motorway

## The Problem of the Heavy Goods Vehicle and the Road System

Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) are currently causing considerable damage to roads and to public services - such as sewers and mains - under the roads. Kent County Council have calculated that the 32 ton HGV causes 15,000 times as much damage per mile as the average car, and the HGV covers *four times* the annual mileage.

Central Government makes no pretence to charge capitals costs of new roads to road users, and in the 1976 Transport Policy document (Vol. 2, pages 112 & 114, tables 2 & 4) the Government admitted that maintenance costs were £208 million more than tax revenues from commercial vehicles per year at 1975/6 prices. Currently the GLC and the London Boroughs are subsidising the HGV by repairing metropolitan and district roads, sewers and other public works & services out of rate income.

If the EEC proposals for 40 tonne HGVs and reduced driver-hours are accepted, both maintenance and transport costs will increase. These costs will have to be borne by the ratepayer and consumer.

Large slow lorries are jamming the streets of London delaying both public and private passenger transport.

In 1976 traffic accidents resulted in 6,580 deaths and 79,000 serious injuries, a 3% increase on 1975.

This country has the highest child accident rate in Europe.

Lorry routing has been shown to be unworkable and the "Motorway Box" unacceptable environmentally.

## What Viable Alternatives are there to Road Transport?

Rail and waterborne transport use a quarter and a fifth respectively of the fuel per tonne mile used by road transport. They cause less pollution, are safer, and the track exists. One train with a two-man crew carries 1000 tonnes; massive push-tow barge-trains used in other countries cope with 100,000 tonnes.

In almost every case it is cheaper to retain a waterway unused than to fill it in, and rivers, like the Thames and Lea must be maintained for flood prevention reasons. The less rivers and canals are used commercially the more they cost the ratepayer and taxpayer.

There are many public and private wharves on the Thames, although some are threatened by re-development. The Thames is served by several lighterage companies with substantial spare capacity. Other waterways could be improved more cheaply than building alternative roads.

## What is the Capacity of the River Thames?

A main restriction of the Capacity of craft using the river is the height of the bridges. Currently 2700 tonne ships regularly travel to Wandsworth, and 645 tonne ships regularly travel to Isleworth.

Conventional Thames lighters vary in size from 80 to 350 tonnes and up to 6 can be towed by one tug and crew. 350 tonne LASH barges are regularly towed to Brentford where the cargoes of wood pulp are transferred to lorry for delivery to canalside mills in South Herts. LASH, SEABEE and European Class 5 (1350 tonne) barges could be navigated at least as far as Isleworth.

## How can we Expand the River Thames?

The Thames is already served by the rivers Lea, Darent and Roding, all accessible to

lighters.

The Grand Union Canal can cope with the smaller Thames lighters serving large areas of London north of the river.

Proposals exist to enlarge the lower Grand Union Canal with a transshipment depot adjacent to the north orbital motorway and/or the M4.

## **Our Inland Waterway System could be an Extension of a Modern European System.**

France conveys 9.1% of internal freight by water, Germany 22.5%, Netherlands 38.5%, Belgium 26.6%. Also many European industries are served by ship. Most exports and imports between the UK and our EEC partners are, however, transferred from ship to lorry or vice versa, and this double handling has to be paid for by the consumer. Ships and seaborne barges can convey goods from source to destination, or to a depot for local light lorry distribution, without transshipment.

## **But the River Does Not Pass my Shop!**

No-one pretends that everything should be carried by boat - local deliveries are the job for highly manoeuvrable vans and trucks. Waterways are ideal for bulk movement of goods to local areas for final distribution. Why should London's imports be off-loaded at East and South coast ports to continue their journey by road? Given proper incentives to use river wharves and docks rather than the already over-loaded trunk and minor roads they can come all the way by water.

## **London - to Be? or Not to be?**

The Capital's population is declining and Industry is leaving but London needs industry to remain healthily diverse. Industry must be encouraged to remain and return, and it needs transport. Transport needs routes, and routes are what we have, virtually unused and in the most congested parts of London!

## **Public or Private Investment?**

Thames lighterage and canal carrying have traditionally been private enterprise activities. If the river is to take much more of London's freight, political encouragement with a firm declaration of intent must be given. For the canals to be maintained to a commercial carrying standard and the public wharves etc. to be safeguarded requires Central and Local Government initiative, as does any improvement to a larger standard or an improvement to the road or rail system to maintain or to provide the same capacity. The GLC should insist that any investment in transport improves the lot of Londoners economically and environmentally.

## **What is the Life of a Lorry?**

Most hauliers have to replace their vehicles in less than five years. A recent survey of working commercial craft (BWB 1976) shows the average age to be 19 years, ranging from 2 to 64 years, the majority being between 8 and 25 years.

## **Statistics Show Water Transport to be a Winner.**

Figures published by the British Waterways Board and the Inland Shipping Group show that waterborne transport is the most economic. Fuel efficiency increases with size - the smallest craft carrying 100 tonnes achieves 214 tonne/miles per gallon, 700 tonne craft achieves 368 tonne/miles per gallon. Typical units on the Thames comprise a tug with 1000 tonnes cargo in lighters, or the equivalent of 40 HGVs. Modern push-tows can be much

larger.

Our need to conserve oil indicates that a shift away from road haulage is essential. (Next to the aeroplane road haulage is the most wasteful form of transport).

## Summary

**The track is there, the cargo is there, some of the infrastructure is there - at least one waterside warehouse in East London was recently rebuilt including facilities for waterborne goods should the Company ever "decide to return to water carriage" - & the need is there. All that is now required is the desire, the decision, & the investment. This is where YOU come in. It needs your help, your support, your action. Please contact Glenn Knight, Inland Waterways Association, South East Region Inland Shipping Committee, 25 Tudor Way, Hillingdon, Middx UB10 9AA.**

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## Rover Resuscitated

To the horror of some, but the delight of many, (it says here) Rover lives on, I'm back as before with some old bits, some new bits, some borrowed bits or even some (B.W.B.) blue bits. My temporary absence was caused by a certain unnamed I.W.A. member who reported me as being rabbid, thus causing an extended quarantine and regrettably, while I was in Wormwood Scrubs' Kennels, I lost contact with some of my old friends and contributors, so if anyone wishes to let me have any lively canalside gossip that is humorous, contentious or just plain interesting, please pass it on, same old method.

I wish the new editor luck and hope the same fate doesn't befall him as happened to his predecessor. Just a couple of words of advice though Neil, avoid lavatorial humour at all costs. You really mustn't print disaster stories about loos however amusing it seems. I got into more trouble for leaving my column in the Piccadilly Publics than even for gently libelling people. You'll be glad to know that in future I'm using the G.P.O. system rather than more unorthodox post boxes.

The other point is that you must also avoid publishing too much pro-commercialisation stuff. Most members like motorways, unless they are going to be in their own back garden, but they don't want "their" canal ruined by thundering great barges. This is in fact completely the opposite from the Associations stated aims, but no matter, with the Governments total rejection of the Select Committee's report on BWB there isn't much chance of us getting any more commercial carrying on the cut. In fact there probably won't be a canal system in a few years, just a few truncated duck ponds, which should please the ducks, but could make boating difficult.

The Government's attitude to transport in general is quite unbelievable. There was this little bit in one of the better quality papers recently (I only use the best quality kennel lining. I mean, who on earth wants to sleep on Page 3 of the Sun, especially if he happens to be a dog), anyway the Telegraph had this bit about the A11 being renumbered and direction signs being removed because people were not using the new M11. This road was built much against the wishes of most of the local population and at a cost that makes Fraenkel look like petty cash. The fact that this unwanted road was built in the wrong place, isn't going to stop the D.O.T. they like motorways *and they Haff Vays of making you use them!*

Guildford Branch tell me there's no truth in the rumour that the K & A are giving 1984 as their opening date because they don't want to be overshadowed by the Basingstoke. Seriously though folks, you've done a grand job and I for one am looking forward to being taken for a ride up all that lovely re-opened canal, or even for a run up the towpath.

I've been known to criticise British Waterways on more than one occasion and many of my comments in this column were attacking some of their sillier policies, but no one was happier than I to see the pat on the back they got from the Select Committee. You try and run your finances on a loss budget and see how well you succeed, it's not easy. Mind you they still do stupid things, like selling old boats for a scrap price less than the cost of scrapping them, when they could sell them as boats and actually *make* money for a change. It really was embarrassing to hear Tony Grantham trying to justify their action. Is there any reason why he always get lumbered. Still at least the Murrell's were angry enough to get the Beeb interested so that it didn't go unnoticed. Anyway if they are really worried about someone buying one of their boats and then letting it sink (and I can't find any record of this happening to an ex-working boat bought by a carrier) how come we didn't hear about the offer made by Roger Lorenz, that he would remove from the cut any of these boats that did sink and no cost to the board. Funny, that offer was omitted from the broadcast, and to my knowledge, Roger has still heard nothing from BWB. Mind, it's interesting to see that Cygnet, the Cowburn and Cooper Butty, which has been under water in the entrance of the Slough Arm for some time has been raised and towed away for repair and restoration by Narrow Boat Owners Club members, while the fate of the B.W.B. motor "Bayham" hangs in the balance on the slips at Bulls Bridge. I sometimes wonder who's out of step with whom.

Oh and they're still filling in London's waterways. After losing Maypole Dock last year (Maypole Dock? never mind, nobody knew where it was anyway!), on April 27th Hillingdon Council approved a scheme by BWB to fill in Broads or Pococks Dock to enable the area to be used for storage purposes. Broads Dock was 1120 yards long and points directly to the West Drayton Motorway spur road. Soon the Board's pile drivers could be thumping steel across the dock, and the offside could lose another of the features that make cruising interesting. In Lewisham the council has put out to tender the construction of 800m of new 7.3m wide asphalt surface carriageway and junction with Ilderton Road S.E. 14 on the line of the drained and abandoned 18m wide Surrey Canal. And down on the Thames Sir Robert MacAlpine & Sons Ltd are going to dump sludge, to fill in the mouth of the River Ingrebourne at Rainham Creek as part of the Thames Tidal defences. They'll be finding excuses for Limehouse dock next.

While I'm saying nice things about B.W.B. I'm very glad that London Branch gave Jack Peppiatt a pat on the back for rushing round and informing everyone, especially Mikron, when the G.U. had to be closed at Hunton Bridge because of a leak. If someone puts in extra effort over and above what they are paid for, then lets encourage it. Lock staff and lengthsmen are very good at going the extra mile, if it spread to administrative staff as well the Board would be revitalised.

Well that's it, I'll see you in the next issue, censorship permitting.

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## Regional Silver Sword Awards.

Congratulations to:-

J.R. Adams of Southampton with his boat 'Planet Neptune' and other hire boats.

J.C. Weston of Worthing with his boat 'Bambi'.

Mrs L.M. Mack of Walthamstow with her boat 'Festina Lente'.

A.F. Perdue of Staines with his boat 'Elmwood'.

M. Petch of Barnet with his boat 'Kipling'.

# National Rally Report

Saturday 26 August, 1978. Three 'o clock and a pleasant sunny afternoon. A strange rural setting in the middle of Birmingham suburbia, overshadowed by the M5 motorway striding across the site. The canal pools bursting with 400 boats, a strange expectancy, a hush (apart from the motorway lemmings) and Sir Geoffrey de Freitas, KCMG, MP for Kettering declares the Black Country '78 National Waterways Rally open. Sir Geoffrey, announcing his acceptance of the Presidency of the IWA went on to introduce the inauguration of the Association's major new project this autumn for the restoration of the first four miles of the Montgomery Canal. The project will be coordinated by Graham Palmer and the Waterways Recovery Group in association with the British Waterways Board.

Boats had been gathering at Titford Pools for some ten days previously and the site began to take shape in the week before the rally. By Friday night excitement was beginning to mount and when the boat crew meeting was convened at 8.00pm the entertainments marquee was (literally) overflowing. IWA Chairman, John Heap, introduced Rally Chairman, George Andrews and BWB Chairman, Sir Frank Price. After the house notices had been delivered Sir Frank spoke at some length about the problems facing the Board and consequently canal users. He spoke of the dismissal of the Fraenkel Report and the Select Committee Report, and the misleading press coverage, including the Denis Howell interview in *Canal and Riverboat Monthly*, which might lead us to think that the Board now had unlimited funds to improve everything. Whereas the actual picture was a little different - due to the problems of lack of manpower, union insistence on more money for (66%) more work and Government refusal to sanction pay code breaking deals it was almost impossible to spend such Fraenkel money as has been allocated. He also broke the news of the Braunston Tunnel closure due on October 1 until further notice.

Although well received and well questioned, he went on a bit and consequently when the Waterways Recovery Group presentation "An evening with WRG Northwest" started a lot of people who still hadn't eaten since their arrival left the marquee and missed one of the most professional and humourous presentations of the whole rally. The WRGs traced their



Photograph: Geoff Terrill

beginnings through the fight to restore the Lower Peak Forest and Ashton Canals, through various 'digs' and agonised cries of "Wur's Parlmur?" (a typical boss, Graham Palmer, never seems to be around when needed) and on to their latest project, coordination of the new programme of restoration on the Montgomery Canal. It should also be mentioned here that without WRGs there would have been no rally anyway. All site services and day to day management of the rally was handled professionally (and unobtrusively) by WRG volunteers and we would like to endorse the other thank you's given to the group.

The main showground, grouped around the display arena, contained stands from virtually every canal society, restoration group and IWA branch. Judicious shopping around could net some fine bargains - from solid cast brass windlasses (the real ones that is) at £6 to old style **hard** cover Nicholsons at £1.50 and the original of the July Waterways World calendar painting at £90. There were craft stands, working steam models and radio controlled narrow boats (complete at £120!), boat engines and chandlery for sale, ropes and fenders and a positive industry producing 'canal' painted ware from Buckby Cans to a gozunda (sorry, more lavatorial humour!). With the Friends of the Earth (a poster showed a picture of the earth from space and a caption saying "This is the Earth - don't spend it all at once"!), home made jewellery, canal artists working on site, tombola competitions, IWA national lottery and the fairground all tastes were catered for, and it didn't rain once all weekend.

There were displays and shows. Pumpkin Pie entertained the children every morning, Mikron were as good as always, the Magic Lantern show surprised a few people (they couldn't do that then, could they?), and the Narrow Boat art gallery was on display. Saturday nights "Folk in the Black Country" with Pumpkin Pie, The Black Country Men and Iron Butty was excellent and their Black Country humour went down well. Sunday night saw "Jazz at the Pool" with the Pete Allen band. Their music to both "Trad" aficionados and the non-enthusiast alike was quite breathtaking, in particular the drummer and Pete Allen's clarinet solos. The Sally Anne were there on Sunday Morning (and well attended, too). Dudley Town Band played twice, the police sub-aqua team dived in the large pool and ROSPA life saved, also in the large pool. The ex-working boats from Ellesmere Port Museum were immaculate and well worth visiting. As usual many people were amazed at the thought of "Bringing-up the family in that space?"

## The 25th National - one of the most successful yet

"Many people" is a very apt description of the rally. On the opening Saturday over 10,000 visitors passed through the turnstiles. On Sunday there were over 20,000 and on the Monday over 17,000, on their way to making this 25th National Rally one of the most successful yet. The rally awards were keenly contested. A full list will appear in *Waterways* in due course, but a few trips are worthy of special mention here. The longest voyage award went to *Calden Witch* owned by D.Salt, who between 1st July and 25th August covered over 1100 miles on his 'way' to the rally site. That was 1,100 miles **not** lock miles. The Lister Marine Trophy, for not quite winning a longest voyage trophy, went to *Edward Bear* owned by J.M.Lane for 830 miles and 373 locks - which as runners up go isn't at all bad. The most meritorious unpowered voyage went to *Chad* owned by C.E.Dalton, who had **rowed** all the way from Oxford. These awards were presented by the Bishop of Birmingham on Sunday afternoon after he had been round the Pool on John Heap's *Birchills No 2* and performed a service of 'Blessing the Boats'.

On Monday night when WRGs started stripping the site it was almost impossible to believe that the rally was over and that it was another year to the next 'National'.

What was evident was that the 'cameraderie' of the cut is alive and well and was certainly living in Tifford over the bank holiday weekend. Even for those crews whose ideas of perfect relaxation is a canal all to themselves on a New Years day there was something at

the rally. In fact there was something for everybody. So here's to Northwich '79 - see you there.

## Waterways Rally Waterways

The symbol of the Rally was a beam engine pump house. Although this was based on the engine house on the original rally site at Windmill End there are also remains of an engine house at the top of Oldbury locks on the way to Titford Pools. This now houses the electric pumps used today. One of the problems associated with the Titford rally site is water supply. Every boat passage of the locks, both up and down, requires a lock full of water, about 50,000 gallons. Nearly 400 boats attended the rally, which means that 20,000,000 gallons of water poured down Oldbury locks. All this water was back pumped by BWB at the maximum rate of 100,000 gallons an hour, and to the Board's credit, water supply, so far as the boats were concerned, was no problem at all.

The man in charge of the pumps at Oldbury also knows some of the history of the installation. He told *Windlass* that there had originally been a beam engine at Oldbury and asked if we would like to see the pit. Well, a pit is a pit is a pit. But then he explained that this pit dropped the full rise of Oldbury locks (45 feet) and that there was a culvert the full length of the locks. In other words, as a mine pumping engine was to be used, and as modern piping methods were unavailable an artificial mine shaft was constructed to enable the mine pump to pump a mine. So that was how they did it!!! Not only could they dig canals but the early engineers were pretty good at lateral thinking also!

There was one other advantage: most early canal works were something less than economic in manpower terms, but once the beam engine was installed, one engine driver and his relief would be able to maintain their level virtually single handed. Today **two** electric pumps are required to match the technology of 200 years ago. So much for progress.

However, considering the problems of supplying enough water for the rally, it is not out of place to record here another sincere thankyou to Birmingham area engineer Mr. J.C. J.C. Brown and his staff for helping to make the rally at Titford possible.



Photograph: Geoff Terrill

# **Autumn Holiday?**

*Still time to book with*

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## Your Letters

The Editor,  
Windlass.

P.O.Box 7,  
Battersea Dogs' Home.

Dear Sir,

I see you've now taken on the Editorial responsibilities for "Windlass". You may not have heard of me but I'm "Rover".

Look up some back issues and you'll see what I mean.

Most people seemed to like the column, although it did get your predecessor into trouble from time to time.

If you print the column, I'll post another to you for the next issue.

If you don't want "Rover" just don't publish. I know that some of the powers that be don't approve of my canine wit so I won't be surprised if I don't appear.

All my love  
Woof, Woof,  
Rover

P.S. Please excuse typing - but you try typing with a forepaw.

The Editor,  
Windlass.

Thames Street,  
Weybridge, Surrey.

Dear Sir,

John Dodwell's letter in Windlass 144 raises some interesting points although the question of giving priority to passenger steamers at Thames locks has been the cause of controversy for a number of years.

Unfortunately, such is the traffic on the Thames at weekends during the Summer, that it is not unusual for boats to wait two or three hours at the smaller locks to pass through. Passenger steamers, being large, do at some locks require the lock to themselves and giving priority to them can cause a delay of anything up to half an hour to the private boat owner.

Over a period of years, various organisations representing Thames users objected to the priority given to passenger steamers and the Guildford Branch felt that it should support their view. Charges for private craft on the Thames are now very substantial and we did not think it right to support a policy which was opposed by most of our members.

The real solution to the problem is to rebuild the smaller locks of the river. Under the old Thames Conservancy management there was a programme of lock rebuilding. Unfortunately, when this was changed to the Thames Water Authority this was stopped. It does look as if Romney Lock is going to be rebuilt in the year 1979/80 but apparently the rebuilding of other locks is dependent on boaters paying more money.

I am afraid that navigation is no longer the priority on the Thames. Water supply and sewage are the real priorities to the new Authority. Perhaps this makes a very good argument for the IWA's proposals for a national navigation authority?

Yours faithfull,  
M. McGrath  
Guildford Branch.

# Around the Region

## London Branch News & Events

All meetings are at 7.30 pm at the "Jubilee Tavern", York Road, London, SE1. (Opposite County Hall.)

**Wednesday 13 September:** Dr. Roger Squires 'Canals of Brittany'.

**Wednesday 18 October:** Arthur Farrand Radley. "Off-peak in the Peak District".

**Wednesday 15 November:** Graham Palmer of Waterways Recovery Group.

**Wednesday 13 December:** John Jackson's film of "C.C.78; The London Ring."

**Thursday 18 January:** Neville New. "Continental Canals."

**Thursday 15 March:** Branch A.G.M.

### Sutton College of Liberal Arts events

Lectures being given at the College during Autumn 1978 at The College Lecture Theatre between 7.30 and 9.30 pm are as follows. Entrance 40p (25p O.A.P.'s and u. 18s).

**Wednesday 20 September:** Kenneth Clew "Caledonian Canal"

**Friday 29 September:** Robert Dewey "Huddersfield Canal"

**Wednesday 11 October:** Derek Bayliss "Surry Iron Road"

**Wednesday 18 October:** Martin Denney "Narrow Boat Trust"

**Wednesday 29 November:** Mrs G. Roberts "River Medway"

**Wednesday 6 December:** Bert Dunkly "Around the Midland Canals"

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## Hertfordshire Branch News & Events

All meetings are on Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock & are held at the Beehive Public House Beehive Lane, W.G.C.

**Wednesday 27 September:** Film evening presented by Mr Wade of British Waterways Board. *Welwyn G.C.*

**Wednesday 11 October:** Joint meeting with G.U.C.S. *Rickmansworth*

**Wednesday 25 October:** R. W. Squires 'Waterways Restoration Movement' *Welwyn G.C.*

**Wednesday 29 November:** Alan Simpson 'Canal Tunnels' *Welwyn G.C.*

A Branch Social evening will be held in December 1978. Full details will be advised later by way of Windlass.

**Wednesday 31 January:** Dr. David Hilling 'Barge Carrying Systems' *Welwyn G.C.*

**Wednesday 14 March:** Joint meeting G.U.C.S. *Rickmansworth*

**Wednesday 28 March:** A.G.M. (Followed by talk from Graham Palmer 'We dig canals') *Welwyn G.C.*

In addition to the above programme we hope to arrange at least two outings - one in October/November (possibly to Bulbourne B.W.B. yard and Little Tring pump house) and either a visit to Ironbridge, Shropshire, or to Wisbech to visit the docks and to see the remains of the Wisbech Canal sometime in Spring.

Details of Christmas Social evening will be sent to all members.

### IWALK

The Organising Committee, under the Chairmanship of Steve Willatt, would like to thank all members who helped in any way in organising this successful week-end, particularly those who gave up one or two whole days during IWALK attending at our several checkpoints along our routes. Many walkers expressed their thanks for the facilities

provided and members were kept busy over the week-end giving help. Several walkers praised the unique arrangements of the Herts. Branch in arranging for walkers to walk at any time throughout the day, in either direction along the towpaths between our many checkpoints.

The towpaths along the Rivers Lee & Stort and the G.U.C. were all walked and those taking part appreciated the quiet and traffic-free environment. Indeed, many of the walkers, introduced to the waterways over the weekend, intend to take a greater interest in this neglected amenity. The walkers represented a cross section of the public aged 4 - 60 and included a Tring Brownie Group and a sponsored dog from Hemel Hempstead who pulled his owner all the 10 miles to Marsworth. One walker was delayed on the Lee during Saturday because of the need to report a mailbag of undelivered letters, including income tax demands, which was found floating in the river at Pickett's Lock near Cheshunt.

On Sunday the first starter was Mr. Sam Reece of Frogmore, St. Albans who camped overnight so as to be sure of an early start for his walk from Marsworth to Watford. Conditions were good generally except along the upper reaches of the Stort where some of the first walkers had to forge a passage along the overgrown towpath.

The Committee were particularly grateful for the facilities provided by Mike and Lindy Foster of Bridgewater Boats at Castle Wharf, Berkhamsted, and by Bill and Marion Hayes-Allen of McTench's Boatyard, Rye House.

We were also grateful for the help of Red Cross, St. John Ambulance and the British Waterways Board without whose help this event would not have been possible.

#### **Wendover Arm**

The Branch was represented at a recent meeting of interested organisations called by Dacorum District Council to consider the future use of the Wendover Arm of the G.U.C. The meeting resolved to encourage the retention of the Arm as a nature reserve but the Branch Committee does not agree that use of the Arm should be restricted and will be making further representations to the District Council.

#### **Working Parties**

Graham Banks is proposing to arrange working parties on the Grand Union in the Autumn to complete towpath improvement work. The Branch hope to be able to defray the cost of materials by using some of the proceeds of IWALK for this purpose.

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## **Chelmsford Branch News & Events**

All meetings commence at 8 p.m. and are held in the Civic Centre Chelmsford, in the Committee Room.

**Wednesday 18 October:** Wine & cheese party (£1) in the Basement Lecture Room.

**Thursday 9 November:** Roger Squires on Waterways Restoration.

**Thursday 14 December:** A.C. Stock In the Wake of the Sailorman.

**Thursday 11 January:** Peter Came Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation.

**Thursday 8 February:** Annual General Meeting Members' Slides & Stories.

**Thursday 8 March:** T.B.A.

**Thursday 12 April:** Frances Pratt Waterways Wildlife.

**Thursday 10 May:** John H. Boyes Essex from the Air.

There is good and bad news about pleasure use of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation. The good news is that pleasure boats moored at Paper Mill Lock continue to increase in numbers. Also Treasure Island - the piece of land adjacent to the Lock - is to be let to the Newham Outdoors Activities Centre as an annexe to their barge "Mamgu" and Fairplay House. They plan to use the Island as a canoeing and boating centre, thereby adding still

further to the recreational use of that part of the navigation.

The bad news is that numbers of canoeists taking part in the annual Chelmer Canoe Race, organised by the Chelmsford Boating Club this year comprised only about 50, instead of the normal 100 or so craft that this national event usually attracts. Enquiries by the Club indicate that visiting paddlers are staying away because of the weedy conditions suffered on the navigation for the past few years, and the Club are urgently considering how to regain the lost popularity of the race - one of the best known in the racing calendar.

### **Southern Route**

Plans for a new by-pass around Chelmsford are again under consideration and despite being rejected at a public enquiry, many people are now pushing for the alignment to be the so called "Southern Route". Besides cutting through miles of attractive countryside it would slice through the Chelmer Valley and run parallel to the navigation for nearly a mile on an embankment thereby destroying the peace and remoteness of part of the valley - already under pressure in other parts. Affecting the Chelmer considerably less would be the "central route" - which makes considerable use of the route of the existing by pass.

### **Susan**

Restoration of the Chelmsford Branch's Lighter "Susan" is now proceeding satisfactorily. A bad leak has been plugged and the vessel has been retarred and painted. New floor boards have been fitted and an engine - a Triumph Herald car engine - is at present being fitted. Hopefully, the boat will be available for use on the Navigation later this year.

### **IWALK**

Sunday June 11th, and along the Chelmer and Blackwater Canal strides David Aplin, a participant in the Chelmsford IWALK. Tired but still cheerful he completes fourteen miles to Heybridge Basin achieving a total sponsorship of £65.00. A truly remarkable effort, for David Aplin is not quite eight years old.

### **Towpath Walks**

In addition to the Branch's very successful IWALK event along the Chelmer, the towpath between Chelmsford to Maldon is increasingly being used for sponsored walks by a variety of organisations. This summer there has been at least one such event each weekend, thus bringing back into use the old towpath which up till now has not been used greatly by walkers.

### **River Stour Trust Open Day**

The River Stour Trust recently held an Open Day where the main item on display was their restored Stour lighter, rebuilt as the result of a Job creation scheme and the only vessel of its kind in the world.

Also on show were plans for the restoration of the former Navigation Basin at Quay Lane, Sudbury, which the Trust is shortly hoping to commence as a further Job Creation scheme.

### **Former Navigation Basin at Sudbury to be Restored**

Planning permission has now been granted to the River Stour Trust for the restoration of the old Navigation Basin at Quay Lane, Sudbury Suffolk.

At the present time the basin is derelict and unsightly, having been partly filled with builders rubble. It is proposed to employ nine men for a period of six months to clear out the basin and dredge the approach channel, so as to complement work currently being carried out by the Sudbury Dramatic Society who are converting a former waterside granary into a live theatre.

It is also proposed to construct new wharf sides, with bollards and mooring rings, designed to match the granary as well as carry out landscaping and tree planting. When complete the basin will be available as a public moorings for river craft, including the Trust's restored Stour lighter.

The Trust is hoping to carry out the scheme under a Manpower Services Commission Job Creation Scheme and have made application to do so. Initial reaction by the MSC is favourable as the project not only provides temporary jobs but the subsequent use will be

of lasting benefit to the community.

Estimated cost of the project to the Trust will be in the region of £10,000 for the cost of materials and will be the largest project yet tackled. The Trust will welcome contributions towards this scheme, and all donations should be sent to:

Mr Ben Bloys, Bloys Garage, Gainsborough St., Sudbury, Suffolk.

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## Oxford Branch News & Events

### Sunday 8 October

The IWA and The Phoenix Cinema, Walton Street, Oxford, jointly present a John Huntley film show, commencing at 3pm. Films to be shown include: Basingstoke Canal *circa* 1913; Ice Breakers on the Grand Union in 1911; Scenes from the Regents Canal in 1924; the Kennet and Avon Canal in 1956; and the full length feature film *Painted Boats*. All these in the comfort of a modern cinema.

### Thursday 12 October

The Buckingham Section of Oxford Branch is also showing the John Huntley films at Elgiva Hall, Chesham, Bucks at 8pm.

### IWALK

Yet again our final total has surpassed all expectations: over £920 and several new members — about ten in all. Our celebrity walker, Kenneth Cope, intends to spend his next holiday on a canal (as a direct result of his involvement in IWALK). The local brewery who sponsored our walkers in free beer has also donated a cheque to our funds.

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## Guildford & Reading Branch News

Guildford Branch has now changed its name to Guildford & Reading. We feel this new name better reflects our revised boundaries after the formation of the Solent & Arun Branch.

### Basingstoke Canal

Volunteers are urgently needed for all types of work, everywhere on the canal on every weekend. The canal societies Ansaphone gives details of future work parties. Phone Farnborough 45032.

### Lock 1 Project

Upper ground culverts will need replacement with concrete pipes — a specialist contractor's job. Fund raising is urgently needed and helpers are slow in coming forward. **Help Please!**

### Working Parties

Working parties are all on Sundays: September 17; October 22; November 19; December 17. All enquiries to Dick Harper-White, on Weybridge 42074 or Peter Jackman on Woking 72132. We also need storage for plant and equipment within a few miles radius of New Haw. Any offers to either of the above.

### River Thames

Lock keepers report hydraulic gate operating gear is being damaged by gate slamming during out of hours navigating. This is having a serious effect on traffic and affected locks are having to be padlocked at night. Please operate locks correctly when lock keepers are off duty.

## Kennet & Avon

Reading Branch working party have been asked to vacate Widmead Lock by BWB. This is apparently due to the work being too extensive for volunteers. In place of this turf-sided lock, the brick locks at Colthrop or Midgham are suggested.

## Wey & Arun

Clearance work is continuing around Birtley, south of Guildford. Details from Richard Jamey on Leatherhead 75051.

## River Wey

Thames lock was closed for an emergency stoppage between 10-14 July. A cill started leaking and complete replacement was found to be necessary.

Commercial traffic returned after an absence of 10 years to Coxes Mill. Tam Murrell with nb Towcester carried a pilot load of grain from Weybridge, transhipped from the peniche *Iron Queen* owned by David Hastings of Teddington. The load was experimental but the traffic could return on a regular basis.

## Canal Study Weekend

There will be a canal study weekend at Woodlands Park College, Stoke d'Abernon, Cobham, Surrey. Speakers will include Mr and Mrs O. Bryce of nb Bix and Frances Pratt. Details from the Principal.

## I.W.A. Membership

Organisations such as the Inland Waterways Association are only as strong as their members. The more members we have the more influential we can become.

Frank Greenhow, London Branch Chairman, recently suggested to his members that if each one were to recruit one other then Membership would double. He's absolutely right!

In the South East Region we have over 4000 I.W.A. members. Most I am sure have at least one friend who shares the same interest in fishing, walking, industrial archaeology,

# IWA membership application form

To: The Membership Secretary, The Inland Waterways Association,  
114 Regent's Park Road, London NW1 8UQ

I/We wish to apply for membership of the Inland Waterways Association and enclose the sum of £..... to cover the annual subscription of:

Husband and Wife Membership .....	£5.00
Adult Membership .....	£4.00
Junior Membership (under 18) .....	£1.05*
Overseas Membership .....	£7.50**
Corporate:	
Allied waterway societies, schools, etc. ....	£4.00
Angling Clubs, Boat Clubs, Hire Cruiser & other Boat Companies, Local Authorities .....	£7.50
Industrial:	
Firms employing up to 25 people .....	£7.50
Firms employing 26-100 people .....	£25.00
Firms employing over 100 people .....	£50.00
O.A.P. ....	£2.50
O.A.P. Husband/Wife .....	£3.50
Life Membership .....	£84.00

Name in Full .....

(Block letters, please)

Address .....

Occupation .....

Signature/s .....

Date .....

Office held if Corporate membership required .....

Introduced by (where appropriate) .....

\*Date of Birth if under 18

\*\*Outside Europe

W

including membership of the ..... Branch. (Not to be used as a Membership Renewal Form)

boating, photography or whatever. If you could all sign up that one friend not only would membership double but revenue would increase by over £20,000 per annum. This would lead to a more powerful lobby, less threatened closures or even more re-openings.

So here's a challenge to South-East Region members, Let's see how many new members we can sign up. We cannot all serve on Committees, dig canals, organise events, walk towpaths, or even attend Branch Meetings, but we can all ask our friends to join IWA. I will personally award a Magnum of Champagne to the member with the most new application forms signed.

Please send the completed forms to:-

Neil Carter, Editor 'Windlass', Narrow Boat 'Swan', Willow Wren Wharf, Hayes Road, Southall, Middx.

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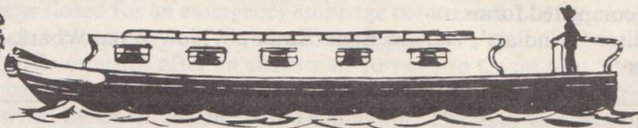
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