

WINDLASS

July, August, September, 1981

Number 159

Godalming Waterways Festival



The River Wey, above Town Bridge, Godalming

Lammas Land, opposite Godalming Wharf. 19-20 September, 1981

In the last edition of *Windlass* the attractions of visiting the Festival by boat were spelt out. However, it is not necessary to own a boat in order to attend and enjoy the proceedings, the site is readily accessible by car, bus or train (Farncombe Station), and all are welcome, before, and after, the Festival opens. Why not come along to the Canal and Folk evening on Friday, September 18, sing along with David Blagrove, Rock Salt, Geoff & Jeff, but chiefly.....yourselves!!

On Saturday and Sunday September 19 & 20 all the usual rally attractions will be available,

Continued on page nine



Inland Waterways Association

South East Region

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Region Chairman's Notes

Council has decided to open a Robert Aickman Memorial Fund. This will be initiated in the August issue of "Waterways". As yet no decision has been taken with regard to the form of the Memorial but several suggestions have been received and the matter is under active discussion. The final decision will depend to some extent on the amount of money donated and I am sure members will wish to ensure that a fitting memorial to our founder is established.

The Association will be represented by Counsel at a public enquiry into the Anglian Water Authority's proposed Recreational Waterways (General) Bye Laws 1980. In addition we have started injunction proceedings against the Middle Level Commissioners and both these costly actions are going to result in a heavy drain on our Campaign for the Rights of Navigation Fund. All profits from the National Lottery go to this Fund and it is, therefore, important that as many tickets as possible are sold. It is worth noting that this year alone IWA has allocated almost £20,000 of our funds to the waterways campaign. £5,000 will be spent on the AWA enquiry, and some £8,000 has been earmarked for the Middle Level injunction. £3,000 goes to the IWPS for the purchase of a JCB, £2,000 to the Droitwich Canals Trust, £1,500 to the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society and £1,000 is being spent on research by our legal advisers into the past present and future implications of PRON (the Public Right of Navigation) and the lack of PRON on the Inland Waterways. A sum as yet undetermined, is being made available for the Yorkshire Derwent Trust.

We are still awaiting a reply from British Waterways Board to our objections to certain anomalies in the current BWB licence charges. Our request for earlier and meaningful consultation has been supported by other interested bodies.

The General Secretary, John Taunton, has received a letter from the Department of the Environment regarding the Southern Stratford Canal. In this Giles Shaw has assured us that the consultation on the future of this Canal will include a conference of interested parties. This Conference will consider papers prepared by the Department, the ad-hoc Stratford Canal Committee and British Waterways Board. IWA has given its support, in principle, to the ad-hoc committee's proposals. The financial issues will also be given consideration at the Conference.

British Waterways Board have now started work on Stoke Bardolph Lock on the Trent Navigation and expect to have it open in plenty of time for the IWA National Rally and Waterside Arts Festival, Leeds, in August. Members will have seen details of the event in *Waterways* and, whilst Leeds is about as far from Lee Valley as it is possible to go by water, I hope that as many SE Region members as possible will be able to get there, by road or rail, if not by boat. Don't forget the special offer of Hotel accommodation - why not treat yourselves to a bonus holiday?

The future of IWAAC still remains in doubt. Local discussion meetings with interested bodies have been held throughout the country and a final meeting has been held in London to which all national bodies were invited. The result of all these discussions has given IWAAC plenty of independent evidence to submit to the Minister to show that IWAAC should not be abolished. IWA has been involved in this consultation at all levels.

Finally, there have been two events in the Region since my last notes which must be singled out for comment. These were the very successful weekend conference organised by London Branch entitled 'Londons Waterways - Tarnish or Sparkle' and the launch by Oxford and South Bucks Branch of their Upper Thames Navigation feasibility study.

Reports on both these events are contained elsewhere and they are prime examples of the way in which the Association's branches can make a major contribution to the national campaign. Congratulations are due to both branch committees and I know that all IWA members will look forward to further success in achieving the goals of these two campaigns - the improvement and revitalisation of London's waterways and the extension of the navigable Thames to achieve a link with the Thames and Severn Canal.

Michael West

Editorial

The Editorial for this edition of '*Windlass*' takes the form of comment on several non-related topics which in some ways have interlinked implications.

Firstly, there is the subject of the late arrival, yet again, of the previous edition. There were many good excuses, but no sound reasons, why this occurred. Most of the type-setting was completed in good time, and there were just the final details of Robert Aickman's Memorial Evening still to arrive (of which more later). By the time these details had arrived, our hardworking printer was physically relocating his business premises and once the magazine was finally printed, the despatch team (& family) were on holiday. These can only be excuses - they should have been planned for and the magazine should have appeared on time. In many ways this was the most significant '*Windlass*' that the present team have prepared.... and we failed.

Robert Aickman founded a mighty organisation in IWA and we couldn't even announce his memorial service in time to enable our readers to attend. There is no meaningful way to apologise to Robert, or to his friends for this failing, and in a most inadequate manner '*Windlass*' can only say how desperately sorry we all are that it was this particular edition that had to go wrong - for there will be no 'next time' for us to make it right.

At the memorial gathering to Robert Aickman, which took place at the Royal Society of Art on 22nd April, Sir Geoffrey de Freitas, President of IWA, Sir Peter Scott and Mr John Smith, Vice Presidents of IWA all paid tribute to the founder of the Inland Waterways Association. Sir Geoffrey felt that Robert, 'a pressure group in himself' had left behind the best memorial of all, a living Association that is daily continuing with the work that he himself had started. In his remarks John Smith said that Robert's fight for the waterways was his plea for a return to more civilised values, and Sir Peter Scott struck a most responsive chord when he said that he couldn't understand why it was that Robert had never been afforded the recognition of the official 'honour' he so richly deserved.

Others taking part were Elizabeth Jane Howard, who read some extracts about the early days of IWA, and Margaret Rawlings, who read some of Robert's loved prose and poetry. There were also some musical memories, and the evening, which was arranged by Jean Richardson and other friends, ended with Sir Peter Scott quoting a few words from the epitaph of the poet John Keats, which he felt best summed up the life and works of Robert Aickman, '.....whose name was writ in water'.

Robert Aickman is remembered perhaps more for his blatant physical campaigning for the waterways, as much as any other aspect of his involvement with the waterways movement, and it is not necessarily the wrong place to discuss the attitudes to campaigning that are presently creating 'lively' discussions wherever the dedicated and enthusiastic meet.

As usual, the letter columns in this edition reveal the differing, but still dedicated, aspects of our readers' feelings towards this subject. Some people criticise IWA for lack of present day campaigning, and it has not been unknown for '*Windlass*' to voice thoughts along these lines. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that there are many different ways of campaigning and 'getting the point across'. Behind the scenes negotiations, maybe never to be publicised, can achieve remarkable results, especially when, as in IWA's case, the negotiating body has achieved a measure of credibility and respectability. 'Stand up in Court' legal action can achieve great results, both in stopping encroachment of our interests, and in generating publicity and public awareness of the continual need for vigilance and action in the protection of the waterways.

In addition, the Region Chairman's column gives full details of the £20,000 that the Association is spending this year on various other methods of 'getting the message across', and these are just some of the current 'campaigning' projects.

What have come to be regarded as 'traditional' rallies with all the razz-mattazz of beer tents and lotteries, side shows and boat shows, are also a legitimate means of campaigning, even if the publicity is limited and the main 'raison d'être' seems to have degenerated into



Browning's Pool, Easter, 1981

"We Protest"

"Blisworth is our M1. Repair it."

fund raising. (On the other hand, no fund raising - no £20000 to spend - see above). In spite of all these activities, a growing number of the more activist enthusiasts are saying, louder than ever, that IWA has stopped campaigning. This is both true, and untrue, which may seem to be something of a conundrum. That this is untrue, has been spelt out in the last couple of paragraphs. That is true, is demonstrable in the fact that the Association has largely stopped creating 'Aickman' style protests per-se, and these are needed today more than ever. If it was right for Aickman and Rolt to force boats along the Northern Stratford all those years ago, if it was right to hold a rally on the Southern Oxford in 1955, and on the Bridgewater in 1971, to campaign against the closure or for the reopening of a particular individual waterway, how much more important is it today to campaign against the closure of Blisworth Tunnel and Folly Bridge, the lowered water levels at Boddington Reservoir, and the Netherton Tunnel closure, (which is now into its 5th year), **in addition** to such other activities as the AWA & Middle Level legal actions and the donations to Canal Restoration Societies?

So who is now campaigning? The answer is that the people are. People like you, and people like me, people who care about the waterways and the awful state that they are in. For instance CANAL, the Campaign for Action on Navigations and Locks, is in fact a non-existent organisation, which was 'launched' in order to create a name for the organisation of the protest rally held in Brownings Pool at Little Venice on Easter Saturday. As Mr Thorn says in his letter elsewhere in this issue 'No side shows - no beer tents - no entertainments, just genuine enthusiasts, boaters and non-boaters alike informing.....of the pent-up frustration they felt, due to closed locks and tunnels etc.' Official representatives also attended from such disparate organisations as APCO, AWCC, IWAAC, etc, but strange to relate, after their Chairman had made what was arguably the most pro-waterways campaigning speech of the decade, no British Waterways Board staff were there. This was all the sadder, because of all the very considerable publicity generated

by the event was in support of Sir Frank Price's speech and asked for more Governmental support for his Board at this critical time in the life (and death) of the waterways. Over 150 boats and probably 2000 people attended the event and the Pool has never looked better, indeed the whole area was literally throbbing with excitement. The Zoo Bus even managed to maintain its scheduled runs amidst the general *melee*, and Charlie Greens' skill in manoeuvring 'Water Buffalo' was applauded by all the boaters present, surely the most critical audience ever visited on a working boatman. His passengers must have wondered at the sight that met their eyes as they navigated their way to the Zoo.

Quite amazing press coverage was achieved with a total of seven different radio spots, one national spot on BBC TV News, three national Sundays and two national Dailies. There was also much local paper comment, including the front page of the Oxford Mail - and all because people like you and people like me said 'Enough is enough, we protest' Some people even wanted to join CANAL (difficult!), many said that the event should have been seen to be organised by IWA ('after all, that's why I pay my subscription'), and many people generously helped to cover the costs with their donations (from the Bank Managers indirectly funding the event, many thanks!) It would have been an even more successful event if you had been there as well.

But perhaps you were at Folly Bridge a fortnight later when the Lee and Stort Development Committee held a protest Rally to draw attention to the non-repair of Folly Bridge in the centre of Hertford. Fifty boats made it to the head of navigation on the Lee and much interest was created locally. The local press turned out in force, including comment in the local Civil Service Trade Union news letter, and attention was again focused on a closed and (officially) forgotten corner of the system. It wasn't an easy event to attend, but again people like you and people like me made the effort, including much support from non-boating members, many of whom attended Sunday night's sing-song in *The Old Barge*, which could — sadly — become an annual event. Those present were enthralled to hear, amongst other performances, David Blagrove's rendition of the modern 'Single Bollinder Song' and his own dramatic verse 'The Ballad of Blisworth Hill', which were the highlights of a memorable evening. The commemorative tape recording was won, not unnaturally, by Ray Butler, in spite of his slanderous/libellous comments about the 'Windlass' teams boating activities.

Mention of Blisworth Hill leads us naturally on to the next protest rally which took place at Blisworth and Stoke Bruerne over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend. Again some fifty or sixty boats were in attendance, only one, suprisingly, had travelled all the way from London and had attended the other two rallies (even the Editor opted out of this one). Once again the media turned out. BBC TV 'Nationwide' filmed the event on the Sunday and gave it a national showing on the Monday, and there was also much local press coverage.

So what? Three separate protests, one general, two specific have now taken place. Nothing concrete has resulted, except that the Board have now gone on record with a non press release from the Chief Engineers Office, which was mysteriously available at the Stoke Bruerne event. This stated that the problems at Blisworth were undoubtedly due to the faulty construction by Jessop 200 years ago, (the implication being that he really should have used 1980(BWB) techniques if he wanted the tunnel to last until the 1980's, 200 years is a long time!!) and that contrary to the previous information the repairs would now cost £1,500,000 (three times the original estimate) and that no start date could be envisaged at present. A full transcript of this letter will be available with copies of Council News and Waterways News at the next meeting of your local IWA Branch or local boat club. But at least we know where we stand now, which is more than we did before the rally!! So perhaps something concrete did result, Council has been trying to achieve some sort of official comment for the last six months. Although two of these events were ad-hoc non-official events, the IWA Council quite naturally fully supported all of these events and their objectives. And this is the dichotomy that we face, the official campaigning and policy and what might be called the non-official policy. In my opinion both spheres of activity are equally right and equally relevant, but, and this is the big but, both need to be organised in the name of the Inland Waterways Association.

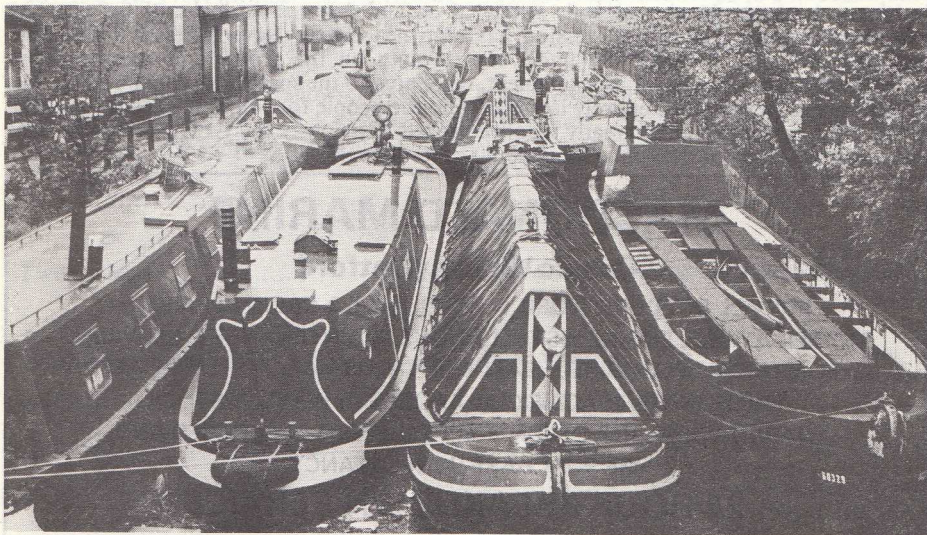
I stated earlier that there is no CANAL organisation, but this non organisation was responsible for the largest, most successful, waterways protest London has ever seen. The

L&SDC is a worthy organisation, and the stalwarts of Northampton Branch and others deserve much praise for the Blisworth Rally, but these events **MUST** be part of, and not be separated from, IWA's public and private campaigning activity. Perhaps the greatest continuing tribute to Robert Aickman would be to re-introduce his style of active protest campaigning back into the forefront of IWA activities.

Similarly the proposed Federation of Canal Societies. How much stronger and more effective will this new organisation be if it is established as a separate but integral part of the Inland Waterways Association, so that all of the waterways interests speak with a single voice, for the total is always greater than the sum of the parts.

Sometimes, however, the sum of the parts does not *numerically* add up to the total that ought to be expected. During last year's IWA Council elections, in which your Editor was elevated to such lofty heights, the maximum number of votes cast was for our National Chairman, who polled slightly less than 650 votes, or 3% of the Association's membership, (The Editor being elected on a 1% poll). The subsequent AGM attracted the massive turnout, including the 15 members of Council, of **45 people present, a staggering 0.23% of our membership**. The 1981 Surrey and Hants Canal Society AGM, reported elsewhere in this issue, attracted nearly 20% of their membership to hear of their society's success.

This is the last edition of *Windlass* to appear before this year's Council elections and AGM. It follows that if as an individual member you are content with the status-quo, or if you cannot become more involved, then, as last year, you need do no more than look forward to the next edition of *Windlass* when the continuance of the status-quo will undoubtedly be reported. However, as an individual member, in the same way as when voting at any local or general election, you have the opportunity to register your satisfaction with the management of Council for the last year by voting for its continuance, or to register your dissatisfaction by voting for change. It was suggested that last year I attempted to use *Windlass* for my own electioneering and a certain amount of controversy resulted. This year I am not involved and therefore have no axe to grind. It has previously been announced in *Waterways* that this year three members of Council retire by rotation and are eligible for re-election. They are Graham Palmer, founder of Waterway Recovery Group, and largely responsible for the success of the present day restoration movement. Alan Rowe, Chairman of Council's Restoration Committee and one of Graham's hard



"We Protest"

We have the right to navigate, the lorries have no right to cross. BWB repair the bridge for lorries, but not for boats.

"We Protest"

working WRG team, and Ken Hawkins, a member of Council's influential F & GP Committee.

Unfortunately, due to pressure of work and the need to devote more time to the restoration movement, Graham and Alan have decided to stand down. So far, three other candidates have come forwards. First is Beverley Stainer, SE Region Secretary. Her involvement in the publicity of 1980's National and the recent Little Venice Rally, did much to ensure their success and she is already committed to the equal success of Water Freight 80's and the 1982 National at Titford Pools in Birmingham. Beverley would be the first (for some considerable time) and only woman on Council. Also standing is David Blagrove, a long-time member of the Association, founder member of what is now Northampton Branch and a previous branch Chairman for many years. David is a well known canal 'personality' and responsible, in part, for the success of the Blisworth Protest Rally. Chartered surveyor Hugh Perks, a conservation surveyor to many historic buildings, is another candidate for election. Hugh, a former Thames bargeman is consultant editor to *Coast and Country* and has a considerable knowledge of, and interest in, inland and coastal water freightage. There may be other candidates as nominations are not due until 1 August, 1981. *Windlass* is obviously not campaigning nor yet electioneering, for any one, or all four of these candidates. The choice is up to all of us, people like you and people like me. I am not saying who to vote for, but for God's sake, or rather IWA's sake, **do** vote for somebody. You merely need to return the ballot card from the next issue of *Waterways* on which **you** vote for the candidate(s) of your choice in order to add your influence to the Association's work for the next twelve months. It's the only way that changes can be made, if change is what you want. The 'activists' of CANAL, L&SDC and Blisworth might say that change is what we (by which is meant 'they') want, but is it what the silent majority want? Only your votes will answer that question.

Finally, on a slightly lighter note, it is interesting to see that having completely ruined any attempts at fluent, or indeed any other kind of lockwheeling, at Hampstead Road locks on the Regents Canal in Camden Town, the CEGB, whose works have completely blocked the towpath here, and in many other places for the past few years have granted a 'concession' whereby a BWB sanitary station key will open the padlocks to boaters about their legitimate business. Having recently struggled up and down these locks, I, for one, am extremely grateful that this concession has been negotiated. Nevertheless it's all rather strange. The cable is being laid under the towpath on the grounds of economy, but unfortunately the priority for reinstatement, compared to the speed with which road works are completed, seems to be entirely lacking. And the people for whom the canal serves its' prime purpose are the most greatly inconvenienced. Obviously the CEGB knows as little about lockwheeling as '*Windlass*' does about cable laying!!

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including a full programme of land-based and water-based events. On the River Wey the restored steam-powered narrow boat *President* and the butty *Northwich*, resplendent in their Fellows Morton and Clayton livery will be on public display. There will also be a 'row-past' of traditional Thames craft and a 'glide-past' of the electric powered boats which have gathered to celebrate the Godalming Electricity Centenary. During Saturday afternoon the canoes which will have been taking part in the relay race from Fleet should be arriving on site, hopefully, not at the exact same time as the *Surrey Advertiser's* 'River Princess' beauty contest is due to take place.

On both days the Mikron Theatre will be performing. 7.30 pm on Saturday will see a performance of last year's magnificent restoration saga, 'Mud in Your Eye' and at 12.30 pm on Sunday there is a rare opportunity to see Mikron's most requested show from the last ten years, 'I'd go Back Tomorrow'. The 'Real-Ale' beer tent will be open all day, and as at last year's 'National', some of the beer will have arrived on site by water, (on it, not in it!!) Many other events will be taking place and there will be the usual Trade Show and Canal Society stands at which to browse or stock up on early Christmas presents.

The Festival is open to the general public on Saturday from 12 noon - 6.00 pm and on Sunday from 10.00 am - 6.00 pm. Admission is 30p adults and 10p children. This is an event not to be missed, make a note in your diary today, and don't forget, if you've made it all the way from the 'National' to the Wey, then your Rally entry comes free.

Crew Supper and Concert

Why not start the Festival by giving the cook and the crew a night out at a very reasonable cost. Whether you arrive at Godalming by boat or car you are welcome to join in the Friday night celebrations which commence with a chicken supper and continue with an evening of (Canal) folk singing which features David Blagrove and his well known.....repertoire!!

The non-profit price for the meal is £2.00 per head but it is important to know beforehand how many people to expect. It will be difficult to cater for those who have not booked in advance. All IWA members in the vicinity on Friday night are invited to come and join in the festivities.

Food: 8.00 pm - 9.00 pm Concert: 8.30 pm onwards.

Book now on the form below. Tickets for boat crews will be in their boaters' packs on arrival; others please send SAE for return of tickets. Applications to: Ulick Palmer, Wychwood, The Ridgeway, Cranleigh. Surrey. GU6 7HR. Phone: Cranleigh 4754.

.....
I would like Tickets for the Crew Supper at GWF on Friday, 18 Sept

I shall be arriving by boat..... / land transport.

Name

Address

.....
I enclose a cheque made out to Godalming Water Festival 1981 for £2.00 per person/and an SAE if appropriate.

Rapid Progress on the Basingstoke

A joint management committee is to be formed by Hampshire and Surrey County Councils to run the 32-mile Basingstoke Canal. The unprecedented move was announced at the Annual General Meeting of the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society.

The Canal Society has been pressing for the Canal to be managed as an entity in the interests of creating a uniform standard of maintenance and for the benefit of users. Angling, boating, natural history and rambling organisations, together with the Canal Society, will be represented on the management committee which will be formed in the Autumn.

Over 200 members of the Canal Society attended the Annual General Meeting held at St. Andrew's Hall, Frimley Green on Saturday, April 11th.

In a report on the last year's progress made in restoring the Canal, the Society's Chairman, Mr Robin Higgs said that what had been expected to be a year of consolidation had proved to be one of considerable progress. 'I do believe we are now past the halfway stage, and that the momentum will increase as time goes on,' said Mr Higgs.

The Society had continued to make a significant contribution towards restoration. At the western end of the canal, voluntary workers had made good progress dredging the waterway to the extent that 4½ miles from North Warnborough to Dogmersfield were now cleared.

Rapid progress had been made on re-lining the ¾ mile Ash embankment which was expected to be completed and re-filled with water later this year. Mr Higgs paid tribute to the voluntary working parties, lead by Mr Stan Meller, who had laid a railway line along the embankment to transport clay for re-lining the water channel. The work is being done in co-operation with the two County Councils.

Emphasising the need for the Society to continue raising money and attract funds, Mr Higgs said that the Society now employed 5 fulltime workers on restoring the canal whose wages would amount to £22,000.

Concluding his report, Mr Higgs recorded the recent deaths of two people who had taken a special interest in the future of the Basingstoke Canal, Mr Robert Aickman, founder of the Inland Waterways Association, and Mr David Pumfrett, a former Chairman of Hampshire County Council's Recreation Committee, who had been influential in the Council's decision to purchase and restore the waterway.

The Society's Treasurer, Mr Bryan Jones reported a healthy financial position with an excess of £12,000 in income over expenditure. But he warned that the Society would have to raise considerably more money this year in order to meet a planned expenditure of £48,000.

The Society's President, the Earl of Onslow, announced a decision for a contribution towards restoration funds to be made from the proceeds of the annual horse trials to be held at Clandon Park in October.

Mr Ted Williams, the Society's Membership Secretary, reported a current membership figure of 1,396.

Thanking the Hampshire and Surrey County Councils, owners of the Canal, for their co-operation over the last year, the Society's Vice-Chairman, Mr David Millett reported that the Society now had an active committee in Woking under the chairmanship of Mr Peter Coxhead, who had organised a successful Woking Town Day attended by the Mayor of Woking and Cranley Onslow, Member of Parliament for Woking. The Committee had also raised well over £5,000 from a sponsored walk.

Mr Millett expressed the Society's gratitude to Mr Richard Allnut for raising funds from charitable trusts and to Mr Ted Williams for organising the Society's annual draw which had raised over £5,000 in the last three years.

A varied social programme had been run throughout the year, Mr Millett reported, including weekend trips to other waterways, social evenings at Farnborough and Woking,

a Barn Dance and the third annual Canoe Trial organised in association with the Westel Canoe Club.

In a series of illustrated restoration progress reports, Mr Frank Jones, manager of the Manpower Services Commission's work Experience Scheme operating on the Deepcut flight of 14 locks, said that the 15 places for unemployed school-leavers had been filled throughout the year. A new scheme, increasing the number to 32, had recently been authorised.

Mr Jones reported that work on restoring the 14 lock chambers was now almost complete and new lock gates had been built, and in some cases already installed. Work was now starting on the Brookwood locks.

Mr Jones said that valuable assistance had been given by the Royal Aircraft Establishment where apprentices had built two pairs of lock gates, and trainees organised by the Construction Industry Training Board had spent three weeks bricklaying at Lock 14.

In addition to restoring locks, the work Experience team were currently engaged in re-building Cowshott Manor Bridge.

A highlight of voluntary workers in-put was reported by Mr Mike Fellows who said that 20,000 man hours had been worked in restoring Deepcut lock 19. Volunteers had also been responsible for completing Lock 16.

Other volunteers continued to make progress on Lock 5 at Woodham and Lock 1, while it was hoped to start work on Lock 9 and 10 at Goldsworth later this year.

A record profit close on £11,000 from operating the Society's trip boat, *John Pinkerton* was reported by Mr Peter Fethney. Part of the proceeds, which go towards restoration of the canal, were allocated to the newly re-built bridge over the canal at Broad Oak. Operated on the Canal from Colt Hill, Odiham, the *John Pinkerton* will commence trips during the Easter Holiday, and charter bookings are still available for the 1981 season.

In reports on the two County Councils' activities, Mr David Gerry, Canal Manager for Hampshire said that work had centered on Fleet where the canal rangers had been engaged in towpath levelling, necessary tree felling, re-construction of a culvert at Glen Road and some dredging work.

Recently the canal rangers had modified Crookham swing-bridge and planted 1,000 saplings on a silt dump at Lousley Moor. The rangers were currently undertaking repairs to an embankment adjacent to Tundry Pond at Dogmersfield. This again, necessitated felling trees, Mr Gerry said regretfully.

Bank reinforcement work had also been undertaken in the vicinity of bridges, and Work Experience teams had been helping with the re-lining of Ash embankment under the leadership of John Arnold.

This year Mr Gerry said it was hoped to establish official car parks at Colt Hill, Odiham and Barley Mow Bridge at Winchfield.

Surrey County Council, who had completed some of the most difficult dredging of the canal at Woking during last year, were continuing to support the Work Experience Scheme employed on the Deepcut flight of locks. The Council was also contributing to the cost of employing a carpenter building lock gates. It was reported that the Sports Council had agreed to make a substantial grant to Surrey County Council for restoration work.

Waterway Proposals in Chelmsford District Plan

The value of a waterway organisation putting forward its suggestions for improving its waterway to the local Council is underlined in a recent Topic Report on Recreation issued for comments by the Chelmsford Town Centre.

Some years ago the Chelmsford Branch of the IWA sent to the Council proposals for extending the navigable limits of the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation right into the centre of the Town, either by constructing a new lock next to sluices barring the way or by constructing a short linking canal from Chelmsford Basin to the higher river level. At the

same time, they put forward more modest schemes for improving both the Chelmer and the Can for light craft for some miles upstream by the provision of landing stages and portage paths around the various weirs.

The latter ideas have been officially adopted by the Council and are to be carried out as part of a rolling programme of improving riverside facilities. At the same time the major scheme has been put forward and approved by the Council as a suggestion. Among the attractions recognised by the Council is the possibility of a public trip boat being able to operate from Central Park downstream towards Maldon and the attraction of motor boats being able to penetrate right into the town centre.

The report also notes that Chelmsford Basin is currently unused and, as suggested by IWA, has a potential for period moorings for motor cruisers and facilities for winter overhaul.

All these ideas have the support of most of the recreational organisations in the town including the Chelmsford Inland Waterways Advisory Group, an informal organisation including representatives of the Chelmsford Canoe Club, the Chelmer Lighter Preservation Society and individual waterway enthusiasts.

Further Restoration at Sudbury Navigation Basin

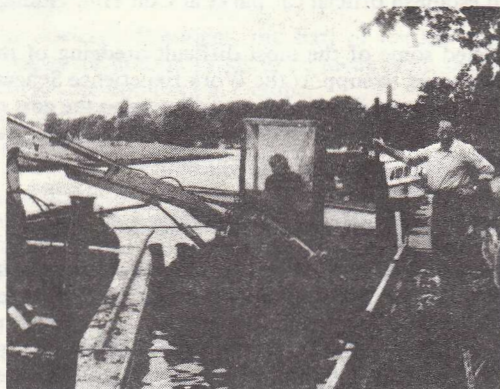
The River Stour Trust are pleased to announce that the clearance of the second arm of Sudbury Navigation Basin will be undertaken in July of this year.

This hundred yard channel will be cleared in a month long operation by the 819th Civil Engineering Squadron of the United States Air Force as a practical training exercise for their men making use of heavy earth moving equipment.

The cut has been disused since the turn of the century and is now completely silted up and overgrown. When the work is complete it will be transformed into an attractive water area. As well as providing space for moorings the channel will provide a water access to a nineteenth century granary, at present derelict, which the Trust hope eventually to acquire and use as a headquarters and navigation museum.

In response to pressure from the Trust, the owners of the property, which is listed, have recently carried out repairs to the roof to make it wind and water tight.

When the current clearance project is undertaken the clearance of the Sudbury Navigation Basin complex will be complete so far as is possible.



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Inland Shipping News

Water Freight

For several months the South East Region Inland Shipping Committee have been investigating the possibility of holding a major exhibition devoted to promoting all aspects of national and international inland shipping. During this period it became apparent that there are many different organisations in the UK all working to the same end of promoting transport by water. We felt that an exhibition could go a long way to bring together all these organisations and hence present a more united front to influence public opinion and government attitudes.

So, we are pleased to announce that an event, entitled **Water Freight 80's**, is being held on 25-30 March, 1982. The event is being organised in partnership with the National Waterways Transport Association. **Water Freight 80's** will consist of two elements, an exhibition, being organised by the IWA and a conference being organised by the NWTA. The four-day exhibition will be held in and around Limehouse Basin from 25-28 March and will consist of land based as well as floating exhibits. All IWA members and the general public will be welcome to come along on the two public days, Saturday and Sunday, 27 and 28 March. The two-day conference will be held at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London SW7 on 29 and 30 March.

We are intending that the event will not only create a forum for all national and international companies involved in water transport to promote their services but the assembled vessels and displays will represent a tangible alternative to more roads and heavy goods vehicles in our major cities. It is this alternative that we wish to heavily publicise to industry, the general public and government. The objectives of the joint event are as follows:

- 1. To demonstrate the economic and environmental advantages of inland waterways transport.*
- 2. To demonstrate the energy efficient aspects of water transport.*
- 3. To specifically highlight the position of the River Thames as London's vast underused freightway.*
- 4. To generate sufficient local and national publicity to bring the event and its objectives and conclusions to the attention of both the general public, industry and local and national government.*

It is also intended to summarise and publish the results and conclusions of the event to all participants, and other interested bodies, about four months after the event. There has never been an event of this nature held in UK in the past and the organisers look forward to its success, in bringing the importance of the industry to the forefront of government transport planning.

It is particularly apt that **Water Freight 80's** should be held in 'Maritime England Year' in which many other events depicting our maritime heritage are being staged.

Further details are available from our Publicity Officer, Neil Carter.

London's Waterways - Tarnish or Sparkle?

Over the weekend of 27-29 March, 1981, London Branch held their conference on the future of London's waterways at the Ifor Evans Hall of University College, London. Over forty speakers and delegates attended and the conference must be considered a triumph for the organisers.

Michael West, the Region Chairman, took over the chairmanship of the conference because of the last-minute illness of Frank Greenhow, who master-minded the event. On the Friday evening Illyd Harrington, introducing the conference, gave the BWB view that London must seize all opportunities for freight traffic and must try to educate its citizens to appreciate the potential uses for amenity and tourism that its waterways offer.

Saturday's proceedings were opened by Dr David Hilling, the ISG Chairman, who gave an excellent resumé on the growth and development of a typical port. He related the decline of the commercial use of London's waterways to the decline of London as a port. In London the difficulty in converting the existing inner city docks to specialist handling equipment precipitated the growth of ports like Tilbury, further downstream. However, Dr Hilling considered that the future potential of the Thames lies in developing a West London port, to which Continental self-propelled barges could ply direct. He also thought, that despite the bad start in the UK for barge carrying systems, and in view of both their continual development overseas and the minimal facilities required, there may yet be a greater use of these systems in the future on our estuarial waters.

London Branch Navigation and Planning Sub-committee members, David Wood and Chris Cove-Smith, gave a detailed appraisal of London's waterways and Marcus Boudier detailed the various arms and basins off the GU and Regents canal and suggested uses for these largely unused water spaces. Several exceptions were quoted such as City Road and Battlebridge basins as examples of good use of these spaces. On the other hand, Paddington and Limehouse were two large spaces, which if developed thoughtfully, could greatly enhance the potential of London's waterways. In the afternoon there was a well organised coach tour of some of the features discussed earlier in the day including Limehouse basin, Battlebridge, St Katherine's dock and the Bow Back rivers. In the evening an *Any Questions?* was held. The commercial use of London's waterways was discussed at length as was the need to persuade the public that the capital's waterways were a going concern. A climate must be created where business has the confidence to invest in waterway related activities. Two members of the panel, Mr Tony Scott, of the London Federation of Anglers, and our National Chairman, John Heap, emphasised the point that boaters, anglers, walkers and

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all users of the waterways should work **together** to maximise the use of those waterways. Mr Scotts' presence did a lot to help the understanding between the various users of the waterways.

On the Sunday morning Barry Martin, Secretary of the London Port Promotion Committee, agreed with Dr Hilling that the best hope for greater use of the Thames in the future lay with self-propelled sea-going barges. His thoughts on the greater use of London's canals were pessimistic. He also mentioned the uneconomic running factor in lighterage activities of the National Dock Labour Scheme. The next speaker, Dr John Parker, of the Central Area Development Unit, GLC, endorsed the need for riparian co-operation. St Katherine's Dock, though only one solution to Dockland's many problems was a success on balance, and the Canalway Parks scheme was a most encouraging initiative. We then heard from the Chairman of IWAAC, David Wain, who also looked to the extension of the Canalway Parks and the Canalway tow-path right through London, thereby attracting a 100% grant from the Countryside Commission.

Michael West led the final session. He was joined by John Heap, David Wain and Dr John Parker in summarising the conclusions of the conference. Four main points were raised:

Statistics on current potential use of the waterways and surrounding areas were vital.

A financial policy must exist embracing both the public and private sectors.

Paddington and Limehouse Basins development problems must be tackled urgently.

A continuing dialogue with all like-minded persons should be maintained working initially towards the establishment of a **Canalway Park Trust**.

The delegates departed at lunchtime and all agreed that the weekend had been not only very interesting and enjoyable but of great value in helping towards the greater use and development of London's waterways.

Letters to the Papers

It is not unknown for *Windlass* to 'go on a bit' on the subject of publicity for the waterways and how any individual member of IWA can join in an active campaign for the price of a postage stamp. Member Roderick Brown did just that recently when his local paper published a letter on that hoary old subject of the connection between discarded lead shot and the death of swans. The *Croydon Advertiser*, which has a circulation of well over 100,000, printed a letter from the National Anglers Council suggesting that the lead (shot) poisoning occurred as a result of the additives in fuel, Mr Brown and others were quick to point out that boaters don't leave lead shot laying around and that the blame could well be back in the anglers court. The full correspondence is printed below. This is a very effective way of widening our audience and the beauty of it is that anyone can play, so next time YOU see any mention of a subject even remotely connected with the waterways send a letter to your local paper, you'll probably see your name in print and help 'the Cause' at the same time.

While we're on the subject of anglers and boating this rather sad story only helps to further illustrate the wide gap that exists between the interests of both anglers and boaters. As a national 'waterways' pressure group IWA represents the interests of all users of the waterways, not just the boaters, and while all the different users have as many different reasons for their enjoyment of 'their' waterways, the antagonism and lack of understanding between boaters and anglers is the most notorious. For this reason, Lewis Harris, the secretary of the South East Region of the National Federation of Anglers was invited to attend a recent IWA South East Region committee meeting. The most obvious point to arise from this meeting was that neither the anglers nor the boaters understand, nor yet want to understand, the problems that each separate interest has to face. As a result of this meeting it is hoped that *Windlass* will be able to carry articles in future issues stating something of the anglers point of view, and that in turn we will be able to contribute our ideas to the local anglers publications. After all, we all enjoy our pleasures on what are largely the same stretches of water.

Sir, — I read with much interest the letter from Mr R S Hopkins about preserving wildfowl and animal life — but he had made the same mistake as many others in blaming anglers solely for the decline in all forms of wildlife.

The real culprits are boats and the river authorities, and not anglers.

The amount of craft using our rivers, streams and canals has increased by over fifty per cent in the last ten years.

It is a known fact that a part of all waterfowls' diet is waterweed of various kinds. Tests have proved that all weeds are now heavily contaminated with an agent which is used in petrol and diesel to reduce engine wear.

This chemical is absorbed straight into the birds' system, causing high lead levels in the blood.

Then there is the dredging of breeding sites and food of all kinds in attempts to create more sites for boats and public leisure activities.

So I appeal to all wildlife lovers and members of the RSPCA. They should fight the private building of boat marinas wherever they occur, and should complain and produce evidence every time a water authority moves in with its dredgers.

D J Vincent,

National Anglers' Council Instructor.

Sir, — As a member of the Inland Waterways Association, an occasional angler and a lover of wildlife, I was interested in last week's letter from Mr D J Vincent about preserving wildfowl and animal life.

It may be a fact that waterweed contains lead which is digested by birds. It is a fact that lead shot has been found at high concentrations in their stomachs.

Lead shot tends to be discarded by anglers rather than by passing boats, as does nylon monofilament line, which not infrequently maims wildlife.

Mr Vincent would do well to remember that thousands of anglers fish in the canals of Britain, particularly in the Midlands, water which would have been filled in many years ago were it not for those who fought to preserve them.

Overwhelmingly the preservationists were people who had the temerity to wish to use canals for boats. That fight was partly won, but how long will the waterways exist without the boats?

Of course there is a case against overuse of waterways, whether by boats, anglers, water-skiers or dumpers of bedsteads.

W H Hawkes, Regency Walk, Shirley.

Sir, — It was with great interest that I read the letter by Mr D J Vincent regarding angling, wildlife, boating, etc., on canals and navigable

rivers.

Canals were purpose built waterways specifically designed to allow boats to carry cargoes from A to B, the fact that they now provide fishing, plus many other recreational aspects (towpath walking, etc), is an additional bonus.

Navigable rivers have had boaters and fish existing side by side from time immemorial, and should continue to do so.

If canals were not dredged and maintained, they would eventually silt up, fall into disrepair, and become waterless.

For example, Mr Vincent can catch his fish in the western end of the Basingstoke canal, but he won't catch any on the eastern section, because it hasn't yet been restored to navigation for boats, and restocked with fish for the anglers' benefit — and a very large part of this restoration has been done by voluntary labour.

The Inland Waterways Association, of which I am a member, represents anglers as well as boaters.

I would suggest we stop slinging mud at each other and, with our respective boating and angling bodies, get together to work towards one basic aim, to make our waterways cleaner, tidier and more healthy for both the fish and wildlife and also ourselves.

R R J Brown, Northwood Road,
Thornton Heath.

Sir, — A high proportion of lead poisoning in swans is directly attributable to lead shot. According to the British Trust for Ornithology, in a limited investigation in the Midlands into the causes of the death of 206 swans, 52 per cent were shown to have died from lead toxicity resulting from the ingestion of anglers' lead split shot and ledger weights.

The investigation continued and 373 swan corpses were examined. The gizzard and intestinal tracts of 173 out of 200 lead poisoned swans were examined to count and identify ingested foreign objects — anglers' lead split-shot were recovered from 150 birds; 29 birds had also ingested ledger weights.

Other items of fishing tackle recovered included 38 hooks. 11 Swivels, three wire traces, two Newark pinweights and a 5-inch long balsa-wood float. Nylon fishing line was a common occurrence.

Modern monofilament fishing line, cheap hook-to-nylon and split-shot are now part of our throwaway society and have considerably aggravated the problem.

We do not blame all anglers for the present state of affairs.

R J Hopkins, Executive Director, RSPCA.

Chelmsford Branch Sponsored Walk



After weeks of planning, Sunday 7th June has passed, and the Chelmsford Branch Sponsored Walk has taken place. The weather was kind to us - it may not have been sunny but at least it was dry!

After some delay (the mini-bus was lost!) the patiently waiting walkers were treated to the rare sight of a WRG Land Rover containing thirteen people and a dog coming across the bridge to the car park under full throttle. They had had to remove the car park height gauges to get in - but that's another story!

About half-an-hour later about sixty walkers set off on the 14 miles to Heybridge Basin. Thankfully, most of the mud had dried up since the previous week when the organisers and marshals walked, but there was still one patch about seven inches deep - and one poor unfortunate lady went face down in it!

The first six arrived in under 3½ hours including stops for refreshment while the rest arrived anything up to two hours later. Although the number of walkers was slightly disappointing, the proceeds were not, as the event grossed just over £1,100. After expenses have been deducted nearly £1,000 is available for restoration.

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Canal Museum Trust

Mrs Dinah Hutchinson was appointed Chairman and Archivist of the new London based Canal Museum Trust at the first annual general meeting held on 4th March, 1981. The Trust has been formed by the Regents Canal Group to advance public education in the history and use of inland waterways, by the preservation and display, for the benefit of the public, objects, and other material of historical or other interest associated with inland waterways.

The Honorary Secretary is John Sell of the Canal Conservation Committee, Camden, and the Treasurer in Len House of the London Branch of the Inland Waterways Association. The Trust have under consideration the establishment of a Museum in the Battlebridge Basin area of Islington in conjunction with the London Narrow Boat Association whose Chairman, John Yates has served on the steering group. There is also under consideration the acquisition of a canal barge to serve as a floating base for the Museum until a suitable land base is established.

Membership of the Trust is open to all persons sympathetic to the objects of the Trust and the rates for subscription for 1981/2 have been fixed at £3 for full members, £2.50 for associates, students and senior citizens with a corporate membership subscription of £5.

Your Letters

The Editor,
Windlass.

Elm Lane
Reading.

convince those that matter that we do not just seek investment in waterways merely to provide us with good boating facilities, employment per £ spent is probably higher than in most spheres.

Dear Mr. Editor,

On page 6 of your number 158 edition you say that you have had no letters against PRON, which is not perhaps surprising, as those who favour something are usually more vociferous than those who are not so much involved.

I will have no part in a campaign which seeks to achieve the impossible. It is not even as useful as wage campaigners who seek 25% increase and then accept 15%, as we know that any restoration of the Right of Navigation has gone for ever.

As one who has been associated with waterways for probably longer than any of your readers, (joined IWA almost at beginning and made first canal trip nearly 50 years ago and still carrying on) I feel that such campaigns as PRON detract from the public image of the IWA. You in fact give the reason why the campaign is a non-starter in that no Government is likely to grant any Right of Navigation again and this is obvious. You go on to say however that the campaign will draw the public's attention to the state of the waterways but why do it in such a roundabout way?

Yours faithfully,
D D Hutchings

What we seek is a considerable sum of money to spend on the waterways and the resultant increase in employment will probably be more than results from injecting vast sums into the nationalised industries such as BL, Steel and British Airways. However BL etc have greater shouting power via the Unions and we must somehow get a greater appeal and work diplomatically lobbying in places where it has some appeal. Absolutely essential is the need to

The Editor,
Windlass.

The Toll House
Bulls Bridge Wharf,
Southall, Middx.

Dear Sir,

I've been giving further thought to the idea of the restoration of a Public Right of Navigation. It would seem to me that the principal benefit would be to oblige the Navigation Authorities to keep their maintenance and repair stoppages to a minimum. They would be required to revert to the now rare situation of maintaining a navigable channel around their stoppage wherever possible or ensuring an alternative route, and doing as much preparatory work as possible in advance and stopping traffic only when absolutely necessary. BWB in particular now have a two or three week stoppage to put on new gates as a

matter of course rather than the day or so which might be essential, and an enforceable PRON would obviously be to the boat owners' advantage.

On the other hand there are great benefits (albeit only theoretical unless they are pressed for) from the present statutory obligation to maintain waterways to particular minimum standards. A Navigation Authority might be able to argue that a PRON is being upheld even if all that can navigate is a canoe. It is obviously far more satisfactory that they be obliged to maintain it to given explicit standards, particularly in respect of the maximum dimensions of craft. At present for instance anyone with a craft drawing 3' 10" or less who hits the bottom in the navigable channel between London and Birmingham should have a claim for damages against BWB, who have a statutory obligation to maintain that depth under the 1968 Transport Act.

The Board try to evade this statutory maintenance obligation by means of their Licence Conditions (Aug. 1980) which every licence holder is forced to agree to. Two of these Conditions are that the licensee is absolutely responsible for any obstruction caused by his vessel (for instance were it stuck in an undredged bridgehole), and that the licensee agrees to "indemnify the Board... against all liability for... damage to property" (e.g. his boat) "arising out of... the state of the Board's... waterways.... whether or not.... caused by the act or neglect of the Board". These Conditions apply to all classes of mobile craft, Pleasure, Hire, Commercial, and Mobile Houseboats, but would appear to be in breach of recent consumer protection legislation given BWB's present statutory maintenance commitments. This consumer protection would not necessarily apply where there simply an undefined Right of Navigaiton.

In respect of the Board's various Conditions generally, it has always seemed rather iniquitous that their Byelaws must receive Parliamentary approval but that they can effectively extend these at their whim by means of non-approved conditions.

But to return to their statutory obligations, what money the Board have available is used predominantly for works in the interest of public safety. Very little gets spent on works in respect of navigational problems such as dredging. It would actually benefit Sir Frank Price's case for more money if every time your boat hit an obstruction in the navigable channel you sent a postcard to the relevant Engineers or Section Inspector telling him so. A Treasury official can be shown a leaking embankment and appreciate need of money for repair. He won't appreciate

that a canal is in urgent need of dredging unless we boatowners and co-owners of the canal let him know in emphatic terms and point out how much damage it is doing to the bottoms of our boats. In this regard if a boat is holed or breaks its propeller on an obstruction and the boatowner can demonstrate that the Board had previously been notified of such an obstruction then he should be in an excellent position to sue the Board, notwithstanding the licence conditions.

Although it might seem from the several letters of ours in recent issues of *Windlass* that the Board can do no right in our eyes this is far from the truth. To adjust the balance a little we would like to put on record our warm welcome to John Ludford the new Section Inspector for the G U Norwood Section. All bridges from W. Drayton to Bulls Bridge have just been dredged, and the section are now apparently to also dredge all bridges on the Paddington Arm. Also highly commendable was the section's work on the Bulls Bridge stop gates. A 2 week stoppage was scheduled this Spring for inspection and any necessary repair. This was cancelled for lack of money. Instead a dredger was sent in, and in less than a day and with no navigational stoppage the gates were dredged of rubbish and tested. This is exactly the well-organised attitude towards maintenance that is required if an annual licence is to mean what the name implies rather than being as in practice a permit for 6 months only.

Yours faithfully,
Tam Murrell

The Editor, Sutton Hill Road,
Windlass, Bishop Sutton, Bristol.

Dear Sir,

I found all the letters about PRON in *Windlass* 157, following a previous article, most heartening in that there is clearly an amount of enthusiasm about and a desire to get something done to improve the deplorable state of the BWB network. This is not to say that I agree with some of the sentiments expressed about the merits of PRON.

In the *Sou'wester* (a sort of *Windlass* of the South West) of October last, I wrote the following "Saving the odd exceptions, rights of navigation were established by statute to protect boat users from obstruction of their highway by other interests. The laws were designed to define and enforce rights as between one private body or individual and another or between the private interest and a local authority. They were not rights given to private interests as protection

against encroachment by central government.

Nationalisation of many of the navigations and of the railways brought them into public ownership together in 1948 and it was largely against encroachment by the railways that navigation rights on these waterways existed. Not surprisingly, the 1968 Act abolished these rights. And Navigation rights, performing their original purpose, are very important and must be firmly defended, as they were, successfully, in the passing of the Anglian Water Act. And anyone who thinks the government, any government, will provide us with a stick with which to beat it is living in cloud-cuckoo-land".

This, I believe, is the political realism of the situation. Pro-PRON, anti-PRON and don't know PRON are, I hope, united in wanting the maximum maintenance it is possible to achieve, it is a question of how best to reach for that goal and here perhaps a little history may help. The Kennet & Avon Canal was closed, except for some isolated sections, in 1951 in spite of the existence of a public right of navigation. Seventeen years later the navigation right was abolished during which period the canal had remained closed. By contrast the Ashton Canal was re-opened in 1974 without the existence of any navigation right.

David Blagrove quotes from the judgement of Mr Justice Roxburgh, and the result of that case was for the plaintiff who had suffered loss because of the closure of the navigation. The plaintiff was, quite rightly, awarded damages but what Mr. Blagrove does not say is that the navigation was not re-opened as a result of the case and, yes, it is part of the very same Kennet & Avon mentioned above.

I started this letter by saying that it is heartening to find so many members showing enthusiasm for the cause. It would be even more so if they directed their undoubted talents to writing to the Secretary of State for the Dept of the Environment or if they prefer to the Prime Minister, arguing the case for better maintenance. I am sure *Windlass* would be pleased to print copies of what they wrote. This would, surely, be of more practical use.

Yours faithfully,

R Oakley

Chairman, IWA South West Region

The Editor,
Windlass.

Mill Street,
Bishops Stortford, Herts.

Dear Sir,

May I, through your pages, put a point to the regional membership.

What I would like to ask is, is the current IWA

membership at £6.50 worth paying?

When I was persuaded to join at the 1979 Boat Show I was given a whole list of reasons why I should join.

Let me say here that I have been a waterways and shipping enthusiast for many years, although I am not a boat owner. I have however, subscribed to *Waterways World* since the first issue.

Now let me examine what benefits I get from IWA membership. I get very little for my £6.50. I am too far from any branch meeting centre and so my only benefit is magazines. Since joining, *Windlass* has dropped from six to four issues a year, and is now so reduced in size as to be hardly worth looking at. The Spring issue cannot be worth much more than 20p + postage. I would be surprised if 50% of my subscription brings any return. As to the campaigning section, at IWA this appears to be a toothless inactive body who are able to do very little.

When my subscription is due again next January I shall seriously have to decide if it is worth my while to renew solely for the purpose of receiving seven magazines, which by the time of receipt are largely out of date.

Yours sincerely,

B F Bridges

P S "Around the Region" is a complete waste of paper and should go first.

The Editor,
Windlass.

Fairlawn Drive,
East Grinstead, Sussex.

Dear Sir,

Windlass No. 157 is a lively issue, but I think it is sad you and your correspondents spend so much energy pleading for more Government finance to help the inland waterways.

I am an occasional boating holiday maker. It is good that the Government should contribute to leisure and recreation, but why should we expect the State to subsidise our holidays?

A week on a narrow boat this Summer will cost around £200. Perhaps for your next issue you might invite a financial expert from BWB to tell us how much of this £200 will go to the Board and how much more the Board would need:—

To maintain all existing waterways in good working order, and

To carry out restoration of derelict navigations within a reasonable time scale, and

To establish a modest programme for extending the network, especially in attractive scenic areas.

This may appear a tall order, but I believe that there are two valid arguments for self-sufficiency.

Firstly, the Government should give any spare cash it has to help the homeless and the starving

of the Third World, not to us as we glide, diesel-driven, between the lush meadows of England. Secondly, until we make the canals and rivers pay their way, we shall always be at mercy of every change in the financial policies of the State.

Yours faithfully,
Derek Thorogood

The Editor, High Street, Wilburton,
Windlass. Ely, Cambs.

Dear Sir,

Couldn't 'Around the Region' in *Windlass* be cut out altogether? As most of the events have already taken place when we get the magazine, I can't see that this information is 'vitaly important' as stated in the second paragraph of your editorial in *Windlass* 158. On the contrary, it is useless!

Perhaps, therefore, these pages could be allocated to something useful - like more features or regular items that will not disappear.

Yours faithfully,
Martin Wesley.

The Editor, Bridge Street,
Windlass. Winchester, Hants.

Dear Sir,

I have been reading the correspondence on the deterioration of the canal system with interest. Two points occur to me -

(i) The IWA should take the BWB to court immediately to enforce their legal obligations. Apart from anything else, this will create valuable publicity on the true state of the waterways.

(ii) At the same time the IWA should mount a public relations campaign to persuade the Government that it is desirable to spend money on capital projects to reduce unemployment. Since areas other than canals are likely to benefit from such activity - the IWA should consider joining with other groups to promote this case (such as British Rail etc.)

The odd thing is that while the main canal system collapses, the restoration movement is flourishing! - in several instances on projects which are obscure or have little chance of ultimate success. Surely this is misapplication of effort? (Don't misunderstand me - I'm not decrying major restorations, such as the Basingstoke or Kennet and Avon Canals). In the present situation we are liable to end up with a few 'restored' stretches, while the rest of the system collapses. Perhaps then the restoration movement will turn its attention to the Grand

Union.
Keep up the good work on *Windlass*!
Best wishes,
C. Wright

The Editor, Troy Close,
Windlass. Harefield.

Dear Sir,

As a long standing member of this Association, I was becoming disillusioned by the lack of apparent public campaigning to improve our waterways. In recent years it has seemingly become permissible to express our views only at National Rallies or through Branch and Regional magazines.

It was, therefore, with some curiosity and surprise that I read about the proposed CANAL protest to be held at Little Venice. I duly attended and found something of the spirit which I thought the IWA had lost. No side shows, no beer tent, no entertainments provided. Just genuine enthusiasts, boaters and non-boaters alike informing the members of the public, the gentlemen (and the ladies) from the press, of the obviously pent-up frustration they felt due to closed tunnels, lock etc. etc.

If a group of ordinary canal enthusiasts can persuade 150 boats to come to Little Venice, then surely it can be done all over the country. Just imagine 1500 boats and the publicity we would gain if handled professionally.

Now we have found the spirit - don't lose it, use it.

Yours sincerely,
A Thorn.

The Editor, Edgwarebury Lane,
Windlass. Edgware.

Dear Sir,

This is a plea to all members in the London area from amongst the something like ten thousand people who read *Windlass*.

I wonder how many of these would fit into the category of a prospective navy? Over seventeen, male or female, single or married, and not too worried about getting mucky!! We, in London WRG, would love to see some new faces on a regular basis. Now don't all rush at once! Even if we only gain ten more people, that would be fine. We are concentrating our work on the Basingstoke Canal where we have been appearing for over five years and can cope with just about any task! We hope to be moving into the Woking area soon, so it's not too far from home.

Another scheme which is very popular amongst

Around the Region

London Branch Events

Thursday 17 September: Illustrated talk by Bev Morant of the U S A Canal Societies. ' Why American Canal Societies are not involved in restoration. '

Thursday 15 October: ' Silver Sword Waterways ' by John Gagg (illustrated). Both events 7.30 pm.Old Refectory, University College, Gower Street, London.WC1.

The ' Five Rings ' Cruise

This event took place on May 2nd - 4th amid rain, wind and hail. Despite the typical Bank Holiday weather conditions, 16 boats completed all or part of the route, with 14 boats going up the Thames Tideway on the Monday. As well as the main ' London Ring ', boats navigated the tidal and non-tidal Bow Back Rivers, the Hertford Union and the Limehouse Cut.

Members of the Odd Boat Society, (which was very well represented), and others also penetrated such little used waterspaces as Kensal Green Gasworks Basin, Wandsworth Creek, The Kensington Canal and the Rivers Crane and Ember. The steering system of at least one Odd vessel never quite recovered from the first of these diversions; otherwise the only hazard encountered were the Isle of Dogs Youth Club Boat (in Islington Tunnel), and small boys on the Limehouse cut throwing large stones, presumably to replace the thunderbolts which Mother Nature had neglected in her weather plan for the weekend!

Events:

23 August 1981: London Borough of Merton are holding a Canoe Safari on the River Wandle. Meet at Goat Green, Mitcham, at 2 pm. The route is suitable and some canoes are available from the Council. It will also be possible to walk the route. If you are interested, please contact John Fitzgerald in Merton Parks Dept. on 01-648 0425 as all these details are only provisional.

Hertfordshire Branch News and Events

Tuesday 15 September: 'London Waterways' - Martyn Denney.

Wednesday 28 October: Joint meeting with GUCS at Rickmansworth Hockey Club, Scots Hill, Rickmansworth (A412) at 8.00pm. Details to be announced.

Tuesday 17 November: 'You don't only drink it' - A Ellis (Water Space Amenity Commission).

Tuesday 15 December: Christmas Social.

All branch meetings are held at Hatfield Cricket Club, Ascots Lane (nr Queen Elizabeth II Hospital), Welwyn Garden City, unless otherwise stated.

Planning Proposals: The Branch Committee has considered the public notice of an intended pipeline from Kingsbury, Warwickshire to Buncefield, Hemel Hempstead which will cross various waterways, including the Grand Union Canal. As the proposal is of interest to several Branches and Regions, the matter has been reported to General Office for action.

Eastern Council for Sports and Recreation: The Branch has contributed to a draft Regional Water Recreation Strategy and a discussion document has now been introduced. This has been distributed to all interested parties and considered by users at an open meeting held on 8 April, 1981 at County Hall, Hertford.

Working Parties: Two working parties were recently engaged within the Branch area and it

is intended to hold further working parties. Branch members are invited to help and volunteers should contact either Trevor Taylor, 388 Grace Way, Stevenage, Tel 51623 or John Jarvis, 27 Bedford Road, Hitchin, Tel 59314, for details of locations and arrangements.

Chelmsford Branch News and Events

The 1981/2 programme has been finalised and is as follows:-

Thursday 8 October: 'Basingstoke Progress' by Dick Harper-White (at which we intend to present a cheque from the sponsored walk).

Thursday 12 November: 'The Narrow Boat Trust' by Martyn Denny.

Thursday 10 December: Christmas Party.

Thursday 14 January: 'IWA Visit to French Canals' by John Boyes

Thursday 11 February: AGM and Members' Slides

Thursday 11 March: 'Restoration of the Great Ouse' by Alan Rowe.

Thursday 8 April: 'Britain's Waterways - Past, Present and Future' by Graham Avory (BWB).

Thursday 13 May: 'The Past Afloat' by Anthony Burton (we understand that this is in the middle of his new television series).

All meetings take place at the AUEW House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford at 7.45 for 8.00 pm.

Due to circumstances beyond our control, two of the talks in the published programme of events had to be altered since the last *Windlass* went to press.

John Boyes was unable to give his talk on 'IWA Continental Trips' in May, but at only 48 hours' notice was able to fill a similar gap in March. He showed us some fascinating glimpses of Sweden and France.

The talk by John Gagg broke all the Branch records for attendance with 72 members present, all of whom enjoyed a very interesting and amusing talk on 'Cruising in Circles'.

The May talk was by Frances Pratt on 'Our Waterways Heritage'. This was also arranged at short notice and was well up to Frances' usual standard.

The final event for the 1980/1 programme is the Branch Sponsored Walk (thanks to the Editor you should find a brief report on this elsewhere in *Windlass* - written two days after the final emergency copy date).

Sales Stand: Doug Harper, our Sales Officer, would like to take the Branch stand to more events this year. If you know of any suitable events in your vicinity, please let Doug know - his number is Chelmsford 63976.

Talks: If any member is willing to assist our lecture panel by giving illustrated talks to Women's Institutes, etc. etc., please contact Gerald Parker at 01-524 6229. This not only benefits Branch funds but also helps 'spread the word'.

Guildford and Reading Branch News and Events

Saturday and Sunday, 19 and 20 September: Now is the time to prepare yourselves for the Godalming Waterways Festival. The entry fee for each boat is £5, which includes a souvenir plaque. An entry form can be found in *Windlass 158* or obtained from Brian Percy on Marlow 4575. A separate license is required for the Wey Navigation to Godalming (details from Guildford 61389). A slipway is available at Stoke Lock, Guildford.

Sunday 27 September: A week after the Godalming Festival a commemoration stone will be set in place at Lock 1 on the Basingstoke Canal in memory of the late Harley Watkins. A

memorial fund was also set up in his name. The narrowboat Lancing will also be attending the occasion. Road access to the lock has been improved for motor vehicles. Further information is available from Tony Davis on Weybridge 44261 or 43322 (daytime).

Reading Waterways Festival: Despite the poor weather conditions, our indomitable IWA members turned out in force to support and to provide the necessary voluntary efforts required. Over 80 boats were entered and around half as many caravans braved the muddy site.

Several interesting events were also organised by Reading Borough Council and these were shared between the land and water arena. On Saturday the official opening was made by the Mayor of Reading. Following the opening, interesting displays were given, including a sheep dog display, followed by the RNLI and the Red Devil parachute team. The fireworks display in the evening was quite spectacular.

On Sunday the boat handling competition was won by *Brambling*. Sunday events included wrestling and Earl Major's Motor Cycle Stunt team. A barn dance in the evening proved very popular.

Monday was mainly a day of competitions for canoes and boats. The Festival finale was played out by the Derby Regalia Band.

We wish to thank the Reading Borough Council for their financial backing and support. Last, but not least, thanks are due to Brian and Angela Percy and their supporting team for the behind the scenes organisation.

Thames Water Authority, Liaison Committee News: The TWA have now found thirteen additional 24 hour mooring sites which will double their existing number of free sites. The TWA will be preparing them this summer, and their whereabouts will be published in the next *Windlass*. A full report on all licenses, including short-term charges, is being prepared by TWA for the Autumn meeting. In the interest of reducing the speeding and subsequent wash from boats on the Thames, radar guns and 'wash meters' have been put on trial by TWA. There are still no signs that TWA will change their minds about lock opening hours or Wednesday morning closures for lock cleaning; but despite their unmoving attitude, we made our displeasure known and made alternative suggestions.

Oxford and South Bucks News and Events

The Programme sub-committee are busy compiling a feast of entertainments for you in the coming season.

Wednesday 9 September is the first meeting and will be held at Morris Radiators Sports & Social Club, Woodstock Road, Oxford at 8.00 pm.

Companion Report

The branch had a very successful launch to the press and other interested parties of the Companion Report on the 'Improvement for Navigation of the Higher Thames' at Cricklade Town Hall on Monday, 11th May. Over 60 people attended, (thanks to Branch members who came) including John Young of 'The Times', who wrote a good article which appeared the following day. Articles should also appear in waterway orientated magazines. We are very grateful to John Gagg who kindly took photos for use with various articles being written.

Everyone concerned with the project had expected some opposition to the scheme on the day, but although people voiced reservations it had a generally good reception. David Hutchings of UANT and Robin Higgs of the Surrey & Hants Canal Society - both gentlemen having firsthand experience of complicated far-sighted schemes - added favourable comments to the proposals. We are at present organising meetings with

interested parties and would welcome comments from SE Region members.

Should anyone require a copy of our Companion Report, or indeed the full Feasibility Study, please contact Pam Pugh at 10 Vanner Road, Witney (Tel: Witney 71139). The price is 50p for the Companion Report and £5.00 for the Feasibility Study, both including postage.

Banbury Section

This section held a very successful 'Waterways Auction and Fayre' in April. They raised over £600 to be split between various good causes and are already planning the event for next year.

Bucks Section

The Bucks section held their second AGM on 16 April at the Bailey Room, Crown Hotel, Amersham. The retiring Chairman, Mr David Atkins was pleased to report a particularly successful year. The programme included a number of well known speakers talking on a variety of subjects and included the first public showing (a world premiere - no less!) of a BWB film made in the early 1930s, which was very well received. All the meetings were well attended and so as a result the section's finances are in good shape.

A vote of thanks was given to David Atkins who has served as Chairman for the past three years, during which the section has become firmly established.

Following the AGM, two BWB films from their library were shown and the meeting concluded in the bar in the usual manner.

The Committee have now appointed their new Chairman, Mr Tim Underhill and we are now starting to plan an exciting programme for the 1981/2 season, which it is hoped will be even better supported.

Kent & East Sussex News and Events

Friday 10 July: Coffee evening at the home of Mr & Mrs Tom Wells, 'Gowans', Singleton Road, Great Chart, Ashford, Kent.

Sunday 13 September: Branch Annual Outing. This will now be to the Basingstoke Canal and will include a boat trip on the 'John Pinkerton'. Coach transport from Ashford, picking up at Maidstone and Reigate. Bookings, approximately £5.00 to David Strivens, 15 Quarry Rise, Tonbridge. Tel: Tonbridge 356412.

Sunday 27 September: Informal outing to the Kennet and Avon, including Devizes flight and Crofton Pumping Engines. This proved to be too far for practical coach transport and will therefore be carried out by private car, making your own arrangements to get to Devizes at 12 noon. The committee will endeavour to arrange lifts wherever possible. Liaison will be through Carlyle Smith, 22 Downs Road, Istead Rise, Gravesend. Tel: Southfleet 2336.

Branch Annual Dinner: As usual this was a most successful event with an entertaining speaker. Mr G L Collard of the National Waterways Transport Association gave a stirring account of his efforts to popularise water transport in the face of Government apathy. Two outstanding points from his address were the infamous Government statement to the EEC, that water transport in the UK was too negligible to report and the fact that Sheffield and South Yorkshire navigation will be too small after rebuilding to take the new European standard size inland waterway cum sea-going trading vessels. Another white elephant?

Small Boat Rally: This duly took place upstream from Tonbridge on 17th May and 19 out of the 21 entrants braved the heavy showers of the morning to win through to a sunny afternoon. This event proved that *Canoes Rule OK*, as two canoes were the only entrants to get through to Penshurst. The next most successful were the inflatables, although the Publicity Officer sheared his propeller drive at one of the notorious water level pipeline crossings. A hazard hopefully absent from more navigable waters.

Solent and Arun Branch News and Events

Friday 16 October: At Portchester Community Centre at 7.30pm we do battle with the Surrey and Hants Canal Society in the 1st Round of Waterways Quiz 1982. Come and support your local team. By the way if you have a reasonable knowledge of the waterway network and fancy yourself as a quiz panellist give our Hon Sec a ring - if its down to the committee we'll be annihilated.

Friday 13 November: At Fernleigh Centre, North Street, Chichester at 7.30 pm. A film and slide evening and Christmas Fayre.

Friday 4 December: At Brighton - since this is Kent and East Sussex Branch territory the location is secret for the moment.

July 12 Chichester Canal Walk: Arranged by Portsmouth and Arundel Canal Society, there will be a guided walk from Birdham to the Canal Basin, a distance of about 4 miles. This is essentially a gentle evening stroll starting at about 6.30 pm. Further details available from Gerry Skinner - Telephone Worthing 203514. Transport from the Canal Basin to the start point is being provided by members of this branch.

An Appeal

In connection with a river access improvement scheme still in its early planning stage we would like to hear from someone practiced in the art of civil engineering who would be willing to give a little time to this project.

We shall have our sales stand at a number of local shows this summer but desperately need something to sell besides the usual books and maps etc. Anything suitable and saleable gratefully received. Anyone able to help with these matters please contact Alan White.

Obituary

Christopher Power. With deep regret we record the death of Chris Power who died on 26 April. Chris was a founder member of our branch and was Hon Treasurer until March 1980. We offer our sincere condolences to his widow, Avril Power.

IMPORTANT: I have a new address - future material for 'Around the Region' (and contributions to my mortgage!) should be sent to: Valerie Dilnot, 413 Gander Green Lane, Cheam, Sutton, Surrey SM3 9QY. Phone number to follow, British Telecom willing!

WINDLASS PUBLISHING PROGRAMME - 1981

Windlass Number	Copy Date	Emergency Copy Only	Publish Date
Oct/Nov/Dec - 160	25.8.81	5.9.81	22.9.81

Classified Advertisements

ANTIQUÉ CANAL MAPS and PRINTS - write with SAE for personal quotation stating area of interest or visit our shop, **PRINTED PAGE**, 2-3 Bridge Street, Winchester. Tel. (0962) 4072.

SINGLE ENDED JOEY BOAT HULL FOR SALE. Suitable for house boat or motorising. £1,500 ono. Also **PETTER PJ3M** c/w gearbox and controls. Any sensible offer over £700. Contact **Bill Blaik 01-444 0823.**

CANAL CABIN CRUISER, NAUTICUS 27. 4-5 Berth, 1972. Ford 1100cc with Transa Drive. Cooker, heater and fridge. Lying Norfolk Broads. Executor sale, £5,250 ono. Phone Norwich 738445.

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All classified advertisements must be prepaid, cheques etc to be made payable to IWA South East Region and all copy to be sent to Jane Bird, 184 Petts Wood Road, Orpington, Kent, no later than the emergency copy date as published for the issue required.



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The Inland Waterways Association National Rally and Waterside Arts Festival Leeds 15th & 16th August 1981

During last years National Rally one of the questions that the papers continually asked was whether we could supply 'local colour' for their stories about the event, such as boats that had travelled from, to, or through their particular area. This years publicity team in Leeds are finding it equally difficult to create publicity here in the South of England. The South East Region Committee have therefore decided that it would be helpful to supply our own stories. Time is however extremely short and we need to know as a matter of extreme urgency how many SE Region members are taking their boats to Leeds and how many would have done had Blisworth Tunnel been open. It will then be possible to create some publicity around the Blisworth Tunnel problem and its influence on members cruising plans. It is intended to supply pictures and stories to the media along the route of the Lee, Regents, Grand Union, Thames and Southern Oxford during the run up to the Rally, but to be really successful we need your help. So on receipt of this paper could you contact Windlass Editor - Neil Carter, N/B Swan, Willow Wren Wharf, Hayes Rd. Southall, Middx. 01-848 8054 or South East Region Secretary Beverley Stainer, N/B Eridanus, Benbow Way Mooring, Cowley, Middx. Uxbridge 59341. in order to co-ordinate a concerted press campaign about the problems we face. Having read all this paper you will see just how important it is to protect the line of our 'M1'. Why not join in and lend a hand, preferably upon the tiller of your boat?!!

NEWS FLASH

4.00pm Tuesday 23.6.81

Blisworth Tunnel Now Open to Cruising Boats.

Today saw the inaugural passage of pleasure craft through Blisworth Tunnel thus 're-opening' the tunnel after several months closure. This critically important event took place, not as might be expected, amidst a blaze of congratulatory publicity, but almost, one might say, surreptitiously, for without the eagle-eyed observation of concerned IWA members it may well have passed off totally unremarked, which is probably the way it was planned.

Late this afternoon the gates at the entrance to Blisworth Tunnel were unlocked and the ex-BWB water bus 'Water Rambler' which has recently passed into private ownership made the first triumphant passage since the tunnel was closed. 'Water Rambler' was sold last month by the Boards dispersals officer, and left Bulls Bridge depot on its way north on Friday afternoon. It would appear that conditions in the tunnel are not as bad as had originally been thought for not all the Board personnel who crewed their ex-passenger craft through the tunnel found it necessary to wear the mandatory protective helmets, and it would also appear that it also proved possible for 'Water Rambler's' new owners to stay on board in the passenger cabin, rather than be ferried over the top, as was the case last year. Unfortunately no extra lighting was fitted so it was not possible for the London Area Engineer, who was also reported to be aboard, to conduct any inspection of the tunnel during the 40 minute crossing of Blisworth Hill.

It is very sad that notice of this intended re-opening was not publicised, for it would then have been unnecessary for various other boaters to pay £20-£30 to have their boats lifted out round the tunnel earlier in the year.

There is, sadly, a disappointing sequel to this story for after 'Water Rambler' had disappeared down the cut, the gates at both ends of the tunnel were firmly relocked and

Blisworth Tunnel returned to its mouldering abandonment. However there is a normal to the story. The message is now plain, all that is needed to take a boat through Blisworth Tunnel is that it has just been brought from the Board, or alternatively that a toll of £1,500,000 is paid in advance!!

Leeds 15th & 16th August 1981



Danger - Closed?

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