

WINDLASS

Autumn 1983

Number 168

Crossing the Great Divide

Your Branch Committee needs you—but it does not have to be a full-time commitment as Andrew Dobson makes clear in this article directed primarily at London Branch members. Although Andrew's intention is to strengthen the Branch Planning and Navigation Sub-Committee, his contribution has implications for all IWA members.

Appeals for further voluntary help are endlessly made within canal circles and very probably throughout voluntary associations around the world. I am sure that the emperor Caracalla's baths committee, if ever such existed, would have had a small active nucleus and a much larger non-active membership; the latter were probably living dangerously.

Members will probably, therefore, be wondering what makes this appeal different especially coming as it does in the wake of correspondence on this topic in 'Windlass'. The answer is simply that I, as one of nature's spectators, have crossed the great divide from inactivity to activity, albeit of a very modest degree. For the previous fourteen years I remained, apart from protest letter writing, a non-active member. I can now say that this divide can be crossed painlessly and easily.

The first step, if not already taken, is to attend social meetings at University College in Gower Street, WC1. The speakers are mostly very interesting, parking is easy and there is an excellent pizza restaurant near the British Museum. This latter could perhaps be a partial repayment for previous efforts in the galley by the distaff side. It is certainly refreshing to be amongst fellow enthusiasts who do not stare rudely mouths agape when such topics as the BCN are raised. The meetings though remain relatively sparsely attended for the most part.

It should be said however that the branch committee are very conscious that the welcoming of newcomers, especially if alone, has not been as comprehensive as possible and it is hoped to remedy this.

Assuming therefore that attendance at the social evenings has been accomplished, the next step is to make oneself known, if not already so, to David Wood who is the Chairman of the IWA London Branch Planning and Navigation Sub-committee, with a view to possible attendance at sub-committee meetings which are held once a month in Central London. No election is required to this committee, but although David Wood is a solicitor it must be pointed out that free legal advice is not available.

Once on this sub-committee one's involvement can be precisely as little or as much as one feels able to make. For my own part for example I spent the weekend of the 1983 NWF 'Canalcade' cruising the South Stratford and was not involved in any way with the event. I have nevertheless not had my membership revoked, been ostracised, or sent to the Coventry Canal. (*We're just biding our time—Farand Radley, Branch Chairman.*)

For those therefore with little time available, there is still a valuable contribution that could be made out of many such opportunities for service and I hope that just a few who read this article will rethink this important question.



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Windlass

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Copy which is not received by the deadlines given will **not** be included. **You have been warned!**

Around the Region

Chelmsford Branch

We have now received all the sponsorship from the walk (105% to be precise as many people rounded up their contributions!). The Branch Committee was also in the fortunate position of having too much money in its bank account in addition to the walk money. At the Committee meeting on 12 September, it was agreed to 'round up' the cheques. £1000 has been presented to the Restoration Fund, £300 to Guildford Branch's Lock One Fund and the final cheque of £300 will be presented to the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust at our October Social Meeting.

Thursday 13 October: David Record talks about the Kennet and Avon Canal.

Thursday 10 November: Roy Cox talking about French canals—'South on Southern Comfort'.

Thursday 8 December: Christmas Party (£1.50).

All meetings are at AUEW House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford at 7.45 for 8.00pm.

Guildford and Reading Branch

River Wey Civic Cruise, 10 July:

Superb summer weather was the order of the day when on Sunday 10 July the Branch were hosts to the Mayor and Mayoress of Guildford and about twenty other guests, many from Guildford and the neighbouring Waverley District Councils, on a Civic Cruise on the River Wey. This cruise, which was part of the Guildford Festival, was from Guildford Waterside Centre, through the town centre to St Catherine's Lock, a distance of about three miles, thence returning to the Centre. A convoy of ten boats, owned by local members, was used for the occasion, headed by the 50-year old launch 'Glass Slipper'. The Festival and the good weather had brought a huge number of people to enjoy the river, the stretch from Millmead Lock to St. Catherine's Ferry being thronged with rowing boats, trip boats, canoeists, anglers, swimmers and towing paths walkers—a microcosm of the universal appeal of waterways. The guests were thus able to witness the tremendous variety of leisure interests being pursued, and to see how a navigable river is such an asset to the town. Various suggestions for improvements to Guildford's riverside scene were discussed, and the IWA thinks that its opinions and ideas were favourably received.

Branch Meetings: All meetings held at British Telecom Sports and Social Club, Bell House, Leapale Lane, Guildford commencing at 7.30pm.

Monday 21 November: Dave McDougall—'The Black Country Museum'.

Friday 16 December: Christmas Gathering.

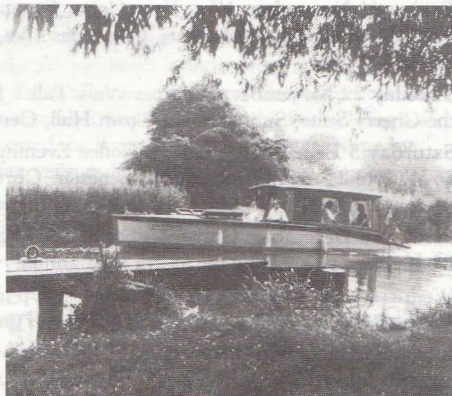
Monday 23 January: Alan Simpson—'Exploring Disused Canal Tunnels'.

Friday 24 February: Joint meeting with K&A Trust. Southcote Library, Coronation Square, Southcote, Reading.

Monday 19 March: AGM. Film, noggin and natter evening.

Monday 16 April: Joint meeting with Wey and Arun Trust. Speaker to be announced.

Working Parties: Lock 1—Basingstoke Canal, 3rd Sunday of the month, details from Working Party Organiser, Dick Harper-Wilson, Weybridge 42074.



50-year old launch 'Glass Slipper' conveying the Mayor of Guildford, and her daughter the Mayoress, and IWA Guildford and Reading Branch Chairman on IWA Civic Cruise. (Boat engine covers open for cooling)

Photo: Ray Camell

Hertfordshire Branch

During the summer break, a letter was circulated to members of the branch enclosing the programme for 1983-1984. Any member who has not received this should contact Mrs. Julie Hatful, 32 Field Way, Hoddesdon, Herts. At our first meeting about 70 members, double our usual attendance, enjoyed an illustrated lecture by Dr. Roger Squires entitled 'Droitwich Canal, Past, Present and Future'. We hope that members and interested friends will attend future meetings, commencing at 8.00pm at Hatfield Cricket Club, Ascots Lane, Welwyn Garden City.

Tuesday 15 November: Hugh McKnight—Waterways Postcards.

Tuesday 20 December: Christmas Social Evening—including archive films of the Grand Union and Regent canals in the 20's and 30's.

Tuesday 17 January: Phil Orton—Working Boats.

Kent and East Sussex Branch

Friday 11 November: West Kent Coffee Evening at the home of Mr. David Strivens, 15 Quarry Rise, Tonbridge. Refreshments, Christmas sales, Canal and Railway library and exhibits etc. 8.00 to 10.00pm.

Tuesday 22 November: 'Thames Walk Talk'. Joint meeting with the Ramblers Association in the Cherry Suite, Sittingbourne Town Hall, Central Av, Sittingbourne, Kent. 7.30 for 8.00pm.

Saturday 3 December: Medway Coffee Evening at the home of Miss Angela Madle, 56 Windmill Street, Frindsbury, Rochester. Christmas sales, refreshments, Canal library and exhibits etc. 8.00 to 10.00pm. Medway 722661 for directions.

Friday 16 December: Christmas Social Evening at the 'Wheelers Arms', Albert Street, Maidstone. This will be the fourth such annual event—please do come.

Wednesday 25 January: Illustrated talk—'Up the Cut', by Mr and Mrs J. R. Emerson. Venue will be the 'Kelsey Arms', St. John's Road, Tunbridge Wells.

In addition there will be a meeting in February which may be in East Sussex, the AGM in March and the Annual Dinner in April; also a second and hopefully larger boat event on the Rother in May. Dates will be advised in the Branch News Letters.

London Branch

Branch Events: All meetings take place in the Old Refectory, University College of London, Gower Street, WC1 at 7.30pm. Ample car parking; nearest tube is Warren Street; own bar. The meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome. *Note:* Owing to building work the entrance is now in Malet Place, off Torrington Place.

Thursday 17 November: 'Commercial Carrying on the Canals'—Di Murrell, Mike Baldwin and Mr. Luty (BWB Freight Services) pose the problems in current commercial carrying on the canals and invite your questions.

Thursday 8 December: 'The Philosophy of Preservation'—Dr. Neil Cossons, O.B.E., M.A., F.S.A., F.M.A.,—Ex-Director of Ironbridge Gorge Museum and now Director of the National Maritime Museum.

Thursday 19 January: 'The Droitwich Canal'—Past, Present and Future—Slide show by Dr. Roger Squires.

Thursday 16 February: 'The New River'—Illustrated talk by Dr. Essex-Lopresti.

Thursday 15 March: Branch AGM, plus illustrated talk by A. Farrand Radley on the 'B.C.N.'

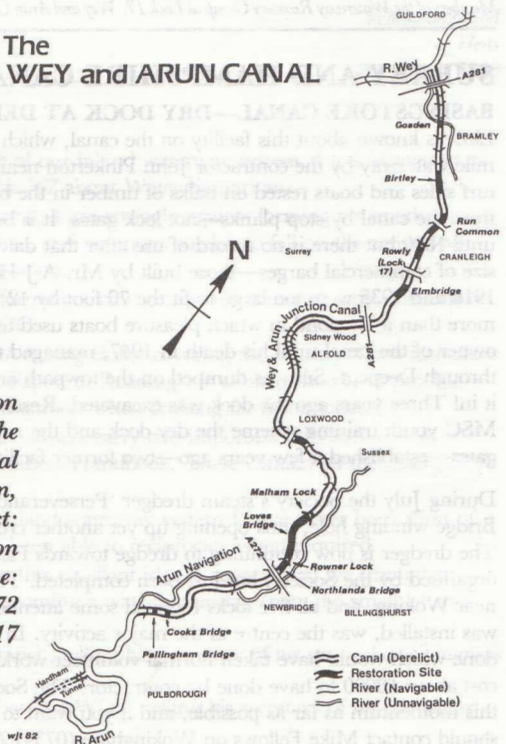
Kolossal Kanal Knit: Members are reminded of this fund raising exercise which appeared in the August 'Waterways' No. 138. The London Branch organizer is Mrs. Beverly Bates, 5 Crescent Avenue, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 4ED; Tel. Hornchurch (04024) 56622, to whom garments and enquiries should be sent.

News from Canal Societies

WEY AND ARUN CANAL TRUST RESTORATION PROGRESS

During the summer, Lock 17, near Cranleigh in Surrey, has been the scene of much activity as the Trust played hosts to the Waterway Recovery Group's Summer Work Camp. It was the first time in the 13-year history of the restoration of the Wey and Arun Canal that volunteers have carried out two week's full time work (including weekends!) and the results are awesome. The crumbling side walls of the lock were taken down to the first course of stone, the rubble removed from the lock chamber, and the sides rendered safe to prevent further collapse. A concrete base was then cast in sections along both sides of the lock to provide a new foundation for rebuilding the lock walls in brick—this required a lot of work preparing the shuttering and mixing vast quantities of concrete. Also at lock 17, work was carried out on the concrete pads for the return walls for the new lock bridge, as well as assisting the bricklayer with his work on rebuilding the lock approach walls. The western entrance to an old brick culvert to the north of the lock was cleared of growth and rebuilt using original bricks. Some of the navvies also helped out at Rowner Lock, near Newbridge in Sussex, where a new concrete pad above the top gates had to be cast to stop leaking. A new cill for the stop planks was installed—a tricky job involving manoeuvring an oak beam nine inches square by 14 feet in length into position by the lock's top gates. Some clearance work was also done on the Sussex site where the MSC have recently completed their job of rebuilding a lock bridge. This concentrated effort at Lock 17 has boosted the Trust's restoration programme by many months. The Wey and Arun Canal Trust are very grateful to the Waterway Recovery Group for organising and running the camp, and to the dozen-or-so volunteers who gave up other holiday pleasures to come along and work so hard during this fortnight.

The WEY and ARUN CANAL



*For further information
and news about the
Wey and Arun Canal
restoration,
please contact:
Sally Thomson
Telephone:*

*(Home) Hassocks (079 18) 6172
(Work) 01-688 3117*



Members of the Waterway Recovery Group at Lock 17, Wey and Arun Canal—July 1983

Photo: Sally Thomson

SURREY AND HAMPSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY

BASINGSTOKE CANAL—DRY DOCK AT DEEPCUT

Little is known about this facility on the canal, which was constructed as part of the original 37 mile waterway by the contractor John Pinkerton nearly 200 years ago. The dock was built with turf sides and boats rested on balks of timber in the bottom of the dock, the entrance being sealed from the canal by stop planks—not lock gates. It is believed that the dock may have been in use until 1890 but there is no record of use after that date. The reason may be due to the increasing size of commercial barges—those built by Mr. A J Harmsworth on the canal at Ash Vale between 1918 and 1935 were too large to fit the 70 foot by 12 foot dock. By the 1920's it had become little more than a lily pond in which pleasure boats used to be moored. In 1939 Alec Harmsworth, owner of the canal until his death in 1947, managed to persuade the military authorities to dredge through Deepcut. Silt was dumped on the towpath and also in the dry dock which effectively filled it in! Three years ago the dock was excavated. Restored by 16-year old school-leavers under an MSC youth training scheme the dry dock and the adjacent workshop for constructing lock gates—established a few years ago—two former facilities have been re-established at Deepcut.

During July the Society's steam dredger 'Perseverance' completed dredging to the Blacksmiths Bridge winding hole, thus opening up yet another cruiseway for the trip boat 'John Pinkerton'. The dredger is now continuing to dredge towards Fleet. In Surrey a very successful work camp, organised by the Society, has just been completed. The work site was the St. John Flight of locks, near Woking, and all five locks received some attention, though Lock 8, where the bypass channel was installed, was the centre of the major activity. In the two weeks of the work camp, work was done which would have taken normal volunteer working parties about five months, or would have cost about £8000 to have done by contractor. The Society's regular working parties aim to keep up this momentum as far as possible, and if you want to join in and help this happen, then you should contact Mike Fellows on Wokingham (0734) 787428.

Readers like John Clinch's idea!

John Clinch is on to a winner with his 'Water Samaritans' scheme if the response from readers is anything to go by!

John Morgan (Secretary, Kent and East Sussex Branch) welcomed the idea and offered to co-ordinate the scheme in the Branch area. His committee are concerned that the scheme should only be used for genuine emergencies and not be abused 'for the odd boathook'.

Writing from Daventry, Big Annies' skipper, John McLaren, considered the scheme an excellent idea and felt it mirrored the Saab Owners Club scheme. He suggested that several levels of service would be needed:

- technical help
- local knowledge for emergencies, boating facilities and transport
- provision of temporary mooring facilities for those moving their boats at weekends.

John added that CB radio would be useful here.

From Godalming Ivo Page offered to help on the upper Wey saying that he and his wife would have been glad of such a service when he broke his ankle at the Barley Mow at Clifton Hampden. (He claims to have been 'quite sober' at the time!).

Lorna and Danny Gilga (hope I've got that right) live at Reading in a house backing on to the Kennet above County Lock. They would be willing to participate in the scheme and emphasise the importance of local knowledge.

Another correspondent, Ian Fletcher ('Api Wanderer') has written thoughtfully and at length and I feel his letter deserves publication in full so here it is:

To: *The Editor*
Windlass

Wheathampstead
Herts
2nd August 1983

Re: Water Samaritans

Dear Sir,

As someone who continually cruises the whole of our inland waterway system, I was interested to read the letter from John Clinch in *Windlass No.167* about Water Samaritans.

While agreeing wholeheartedly with his sentiment, I am strongly against forming yet another organisation, with yet more initials to remember, and yet more burden to fall on the active few who are prepared to run any voluntary organisation.

However, the main reason that I am against forming a new group is that one already exists and has done so for nearly twenty years; it is AWCC.

AWCC is an association of some 80 plus boat/cruising clubs, covering the country 'from Lancaster to London, from Boston to Brecon, and from Ripon to Reading'. It exists primarily to provide temporary moorings and emergency help for members when cruising far from home.

Whenever I cruise, in addition to Nicholson's, I always carry two important publications—a current copy of *Waterways* and an AWCC Members Handbook. These contain all the emergency phone numbers that one may need.

In more than 1800 miles of travelling on our inland waterway system I have never been short of information and help when needed, and have been able to reciprocate when required.

Rather that form a new organisation to pursue this excellent idea, I suggest that we strengthen existing organisations. Anyone interested in becoming a water samaritan (note the small letters) should:

- 1 Play an active part in his IWA Region/Branch, telling his Secretary of his particular willingness to help others, where possible.
- 2 Join a boat/cruising club which is a member of AWCC, telling his secretary of his particular willingness to help others, where possible.

3 Encourage his boat club to become a member of AWCC.

4 Above all, do as most fellow boaters seem to do, offer help or at least a cheering word when passing any boaters who appear to be in trouble.

Yours faithfully, Ian Fletcher, nb Api Wanderer.

Finally, I must add that I believe that the name 'Water Samaritans' is very likely to be confused with *The Samaritans* founded by Chad Varah, and I know from other letters that I am not alone in thinking this. I am sure you all know that *The Samaritans* offer a life line to those who are depressed and distressed and who might well think that the organisation John Clinch proposes is a Samaritan Group. Imagine their feelings if they got in touch, only to learn that John's organisation was to help boaters!

Perhaps Water Travellers' Aid would be a better name?

A NEW CHAIRMAN FOR TWA

Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for the Environment, has appointed Roy Watts CBE as chairman of the Thames Water Authority for five years from 1 October 1983. He succeeds Geoffrey Edwards, who has been chairman of the authority since 1978. Mr. Watts is 58. A graduate of Edinburgh University and an accountant by training, he joined British European Airways in 1955 and became BEA's chief executive in 1972. In 1974 he was made a member of the British Airways Board. He was chief executive of BA from 1979 to 1983 and has been deputy chairman of BA since 1980. Married, with three children, he lives in Buckinghamshire.

That was a gongoozler, that was!

Elsewhere in this issue Andrew Dobson discusses his conversion from being a gongoozler to becoming an active member of London Branch Committee.

London Branch urgently need:

- a Publicity Officer
- a Site Manager for the 1984 Canalway Cavalcade
- Volunteers to man a sales stand at Camden Lock (also selling boat trip tickets)—a job which might suit a retired couple.

If YOU would like to follow Andrew's example by taking on one of these jobs please contact Chairman Farrand Radley or Secretary Ron Bingham whose telephone numbers are on page 2.

SILVER SWORD AWARD

Among those recently awarded a Silver Sword is Dr. J. P. Hale, (Hertfordshire Branch) whose boat is 'Lutra Parva'.

ARUN CHALK BARGE

The hull was taken up river during Waterways Fortnight propelled by Heath Robinson's navy! Two outboard-powered cruisers were lashed to her sides and although progress was slow she got there in the end. There is a possibility that she will eventually find a home as a trip boat on the Chichester Canal when she and the canal are both in working order. A Perkins P3 engine, a prop shaft and tube have been donated, but a prop and a gearbox are still needed. The latter would need to be two or three to one reduction and the drive plate will take a Borg-Warner or PRM box, but any make will do. The prop must not exceed 18 inches diameter to avoid cavitation when unladen. The pitch is not too critical. Pat Arman, Chairman of the Arun Chalk Barge Society is very grateful to members who have responded to the appeal. Regrettably it has not been possible to take up some of the offers either because of unsuitability or lack of cash.

SMALL ADS

WINDLASS—A member has a complete set of 'Windlass' dating back to May 1971 which he wishes to dispose of. If you are interested and prepared to collect them from an address in Staines, then a call to Staines (81) 56208 will salvage them.

NARROW BOAT—Monkshaven, steel 40 ft., 4 berth, fully fitted, excellent condition; owner must sell, bargain at £6740. Ian Hyde, Marina, Fenny Compton 461.