

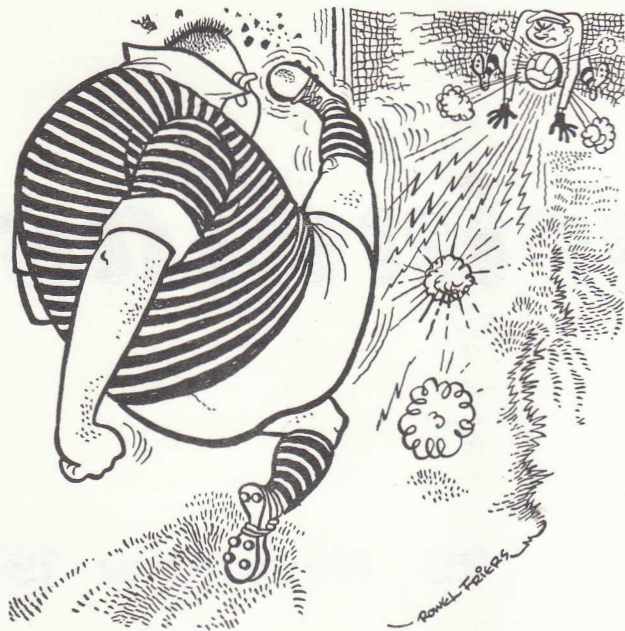
# *windlass*

**99 November 1971**

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## SAVE PADDINGTON BASIN

The Greater London Council has now called on the Minister for the Environment to hold a public enquiry on the future of Paddington Basin. It is unlikely that this demand will go unheeded so we must start making preparations for presenting our case.

As we go to press, we hear that the Minister has rejected proposals for building a hotel of 'massing and geometrical lines' in the unique setting of the Avon Gorge near the Clifton suspension bridge. This followed a public enquiry in the summer after Bristol City Corporation had granted outline planning permission.

A leading part in the campaign was played by IWA members. This good news must encourage us in our fight to save Paddington Basin.

Mr Neil Thorne, Chairman of the Central Area Board of the GLC Environmental Planning Committee said that loss of the Basin would be irreparable. These thoughts were echoed by Ian Nairn in the Sunday Times. He reminded us that it is the same Lord Llewellyn-Davies and Partners, who were recently prevented from removing the portico of the Tate Gallery, who are now trying to fill in the Basin "at a time when the waterways are really coming into their own for recreation".

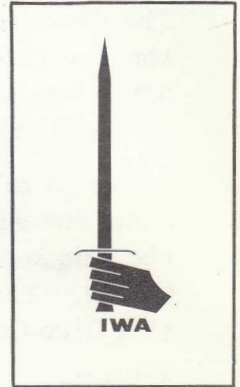
Camden Borough Council has recognised the amenity value of the canal and has voted to spend money on improving its environs, with the aim of attracting local residents to it. Not far from the Basin is the popular 'Little Venice' - a prime example of the value of urban waterway on the surrounding area.

British Waterways Board has insisted that it requires the money from the sale of the Basin and adjoining land. Your Branch Committee has been given to understand, however, that both of these are privately owned and only leased to the Board, in which case the profit to emit from any sale would be small.

To take part in any enquiry will require legal advice and information on planning and development considerations. Your committee has agreed to put aside a sum for legal costs but we must depend on help from members of the Branch with relevant knowledge to help prepare our case. Would anybody who can help please get in touch with David Gibson.

## London and South East Branch

Patrons: Dame Margot Fonteyn and Sir John Betjeman.  
Branch Chairman: Illtyd Harrington, 16 Lea House, Salisbury Street, London N.W.8.  
Secretary: David Gibson, 4 The Ridgeway, Acton W.3.



### TOWPATH TOPIC

#### Commercial Carrying

You may have been forgiven for thinking that BWB has in the past, not done all it could to encourage commercial use of the waterways. After all, Sir Frank Price himself was quoted recently as saying that he could not see the Midlands canals being used for carrying. Your doubts are now confirmed.

BWB has just (September 1st) introduced new licensing regulations for commercial carrying craft on cruising and most remainder waterways which should make sure that they are never again used for this purpose.

The most blatant dissuader states that if a carrier requests the Board to improve the maintenance standard of a waterway route beyond its statutory (Transport Act) standards, the carrier will have to pay the cost, plus overheads and including a profit margin!

The statutory standard has, of course, never been satisfactorily established, but that its level is low (a deliberate pun) can be inferred from these extracts of a letter by the M.D. of the Birmingham and Midland Company to the GUCS newsletter -

"The Wolverhampton level was generally several inches down. Mr Wigley has witnessed the depressing sight of our loaded craft sitting a foot above their normal loading line on a bed of rubbish awaiting assistance. "Apart from the tinal removal of everybody's right to navigate, the maintenance standards 'imposed' by the Transport Act (which many enthusiasts appear to have complacently accepted) meant that even on the Shropshire Union Canal main line we could expect no help whatsoever if in difficulties with a normally loaded pair (about 48 tons). Even those happily cruising about in a craft of a mere two foot draught will come to realise the effect of this in a few more years."

Two more quotations from the regulations will drive the point home -

"The Board shall in no circumstances be responsible for any stoppage or delay to craft however arising."

"The owner shall be absolutely responsible for obstruction caused by the craft (whether by act or default of the owner or not)."

Last month I suggested that everybody wrote letters calling for modern commercial waterways. I was delighted to see that I had been forestalled by Charles Hadfield, who had letters published in The Times and the Financial Times. However, I have seen no sign that any of the nearly 3,000 Branch members responded to my plea.

If any-body can still be bothered to put pen to paper, here is an extract from Mr Hadfield which might help:

"The image of canal transport in Britain is of a painted narrow boat carrying 25 tons puttering picturesquely along a tree lined cut; on the Continent it is of a 1,350 ton standard barge, or of a push-tug behind lighters carrying 1,000 tons or more, equipped for fast running and working on waterways as modern as motorways in their engineering. That is why new waterways are being built, and old ones rebuilt, in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany."

I realise that many members only wish to see narrow boats trading again. Can I point out that if major routes are built to modern standards, narrow boat traffic will undoubtedly be encouraged on the old narrow 'feeder' canals.

If 1% of our membership would write one letter that would be 300 separate bits of propoganda for our cause. If your letter to a newspaper is not published it will still influence the editor - and he can be a powerful ally.

Colin Isaacson

# WHAT'S ON - WHAT'S GONE

November 15th - Oxford Section, inaugural meeting at 7.30 pm at Council Chamber, St Aldates, Oxford.

November 18th - Members Discussion. We know how many different views there are in the IWA, let's hear some of them on this evening. Tell your committee what they should be doing. If you cannot make it in person, send your points to David Gibson to be raised at the meeting. 7.15 for 7.30 at The Albert, Victoria Street, London SW1. Nearest underground station St James's Park - plenty of parking space.

December 15th - Christmas Meeting

DECEMBER 9th - Irish Railway Record Society 'A review of Irish Waterways' illustrated talk by D Lawrence. Fred Tallant Hall, 153 Drummond Street, NW1, at 7.15 pm. IWA members welcome.

## WORKING PARTIES

November 13/14. Norton Canes, helping the Narrow Boat Trust by preparing their new moorings and work shop on the Cannock Extension Canal, just off the A5. There will be plenty to do and accommodation has been arranged. Contact Richard Cooper, 2 Cannaes Court Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, (NBT Working Party organiser).

WINTER CAMPAIGN. It is hoped to have people working on the Wilmcote end of the Southern Stratford Canal every weekend of the winter. Details next month.

MARCH 24/25. 1972 "the most fantastic working party ever".

## IWA AGM

It was decided that Council members should be elected by ballot, papers being sent out with November 'Bulletin'. When filling yours in, remember that this Branch, half the membership is at present unrepresented.

Robert Shopland has resigned as General Secretary of the Association. He will however continue to edit Bulletin and advise on general publicity.

## ANGLERS

BWB has proposed that anglers should be charged £1 pa to fish in its waters. The Branch has written to IWAAC to support this proposal, with the following comments-

"We note from the 'National Angling Survey 1970' that the average course angler fishes 46 times per year and spends about £1 per outing - £46 per year. On this basis, a payment of £1 pa amounts to approximately 2% of his expenses; this would appear to be an extremely reasonable payment.

"Over 14,600 pleasure craft were recorded on the BWB's navigations in August 1970 and pleasure craft revenue was £170,000. This compares with a total angling revenue of £22,200, about £15,000 from rivers and canals, and the balance from reservoirs. For rivers and canals in 1970, the angling count was 32,800. Assuming that one in three anglers were out, 100,000 anglers produced £15,000 - 15p per angler per annum. This compares with an average of £11.70 per boat per annum.

"We believe that boaters can and should live together with the anglers and enjoy the amenities of the waterways. With the necessary maintenance canals would soon cease to be navigable and there would be no angling - you cannot fish in an abandoned canal. The existing contribution from each angler seems low in proportion and we therefore support the Board's proposal, believing that this would lead to a better all round position on the Board's waterways for all amenity users."

The IWAAC has expressed its sympathy with these views.

## BASINGSTOKE CANAL

The Government is to sue the New Basingstoke Canal Company to recover the money spent to repair the canal bank breached at RAE Farnborough in September 1968.

## SLOUGH ARM

The transportation study carried out for the Slough Corporation states that there is no need to utilise the canal as a road up till 1980, now is it likely to be the best solution before 1991.

Delighted at this, the Slough Canal Group has co-opted another member, John Hayward, and is hoping to persuade the Council to adopt the two miles or so of towpath in its area and turn it into a linear park.

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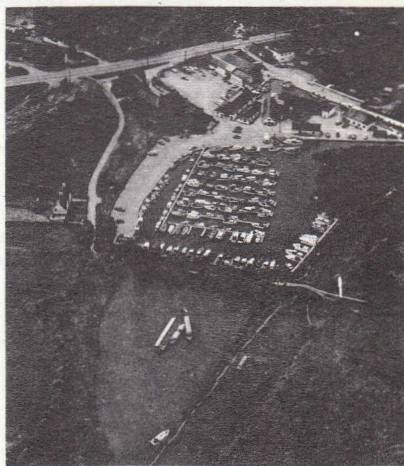


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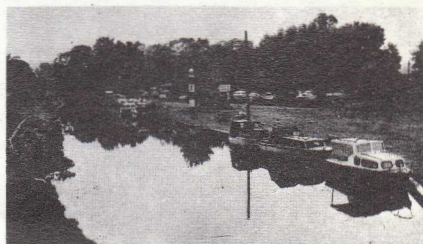
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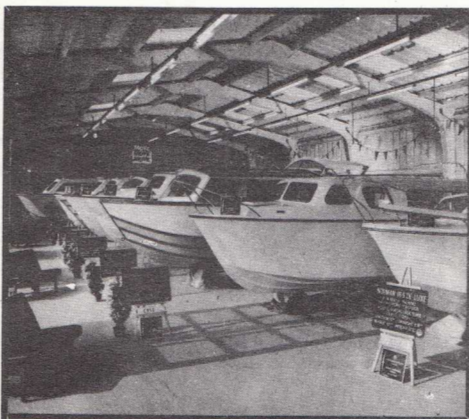


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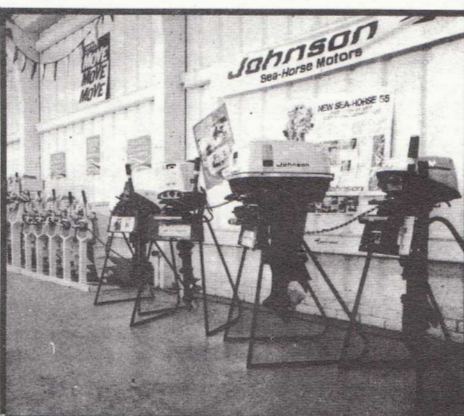
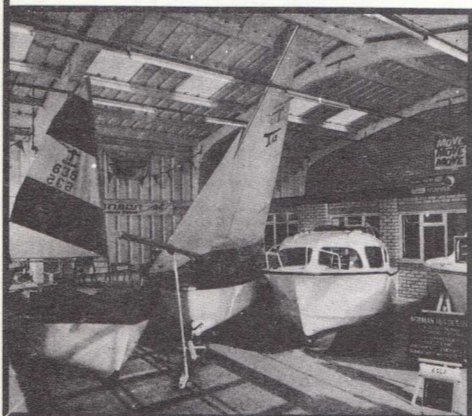


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## UPPER THAMES

First step in trying to limit the size of craft on the Thames has been taken by Oxfordshire's planning committee. In granting a hire fleet operator permission to have 18 craft they have said none is to be over 30 ft in length. He is appealing at an inquiry re-opened by the Minister on this one point of limitation. RTS are supporting him on ground that this new power granted to the many planning authorities on the river - a power not held by the statutory authority, the T.C. is bad in principle and likely to have worse results in practice. (It will be remembered that Surrey C.C. tried to get planning control over private moorings in their county plan review.)

Anglers have bought fishing rights from Eton College (not paying a penny towards the river, they can afford rumoured price of £1,000 a year) from upstream of the Brocas. "No mooring" notices have been placed along the whole towpath from the Windsor by-pass bridge upstream. This includes the concrete faced popular moorings opposite the racecourse and looks as if it might include the new frontage being paid for by T.C. by Queen's Eyot. With their other land they now control almost all the towpath from Windsor to Bray lock.

After their two month summer break the Conservators had a busy meeting yesterday. As you were warned several months ago boat registration fees are likely to double in 1973. Application is to be made to the Environment Minister for revision after consultation with certain associations as laid down in the 1959 Act.

Registration fees have been static for 20 years and by 1976 it is estimated that registration charges will be less than half the cost of the navigation service alone. "The present contribution by boat owners to the upkeep and improvement of the river is becoming proportionately less each year". Last year the boat income to the T.C. was £102,358. Navigation cost alone was £134,000. Between 1972 and 1976 the capital expenditure in rebuilding Sandford, Bell Weir, Romney and Boveney Locks will be £1,091,000.

Have not told you of Sandford lock before. It is now 135 years old, in a very poor structural state and needs a complete rebuild. It - and therefore the river - will be closed from Oct 1 1972 to March 31 1973. Work includes diverting the weir channel below the lock so that you should not get the "side swipe" in future. Incidentally the new lock will have side entry filling ducts which should reduce the hazards of being leading craft in the lock!

## KENNET AND AVON CANAL

Greenham Lock is leaking under the top gates and is to be repaired by contractors at a cost of £25,000 to BWB. What a pity they could not call on IWA volunteers - the balance of the cash could have been used elsewhere on the 'Kennet cruiseway'.

## RIVER STOUR

The cruise organised to establish navigation rights in the face of angling resistance passed off without incident. The Eastern Sports Council is organising a meeting of interested parties to discuss the problem

## UPPER AVON

Do not forget to watch BBC2 on Wednesday November 10th when the 'Look Stranger' programme features the Upper Avon restoration.

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## BRANCH REORGANISATION

Oxford - a meeting has been arranged for Monday, November 15th at 7.30 pm, to be held in a room next to the Council Chamber at St Aldates, Oxford. It will be chaired by the Mayor.

Hugh Compton.

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## N.W. Museum of Inland Navigation

Manchester was the venue for the inaugural public meeting of the North West Museum of Inland Navigation, on Friday 8th October. The aim of the Museum is to preserve in working condition examples of Inland Waterway craft of all types - their history, fitting, and painting; the tools and equipment that made and repaired them; and the lore of the boatmen who worked them. Narrow boats, Wide Boats, Flats, Tugs, Maintenance Boats, and Icebreakers - it is hoped all types will be represented, restored to their original liveries, and kept, whenever possible, afloat and in working order. A variety of craft have already been promised, and two - the ex. Thomas Clayton horse-boat "Gifford" and the ex. Shropshire Union flat "Mosssdale" - are already being repaired.

The proposed site for the Museum is at Preston Brook. Architects drawings have been prepared and discussions are in hand with the Runcorn New Town Authority. Preston Brook is an ideal site, being accessible to both wide and narrow beam craft and on the edge of a large population area with good access for visitors by water, road, and rail. The Museum will be administered by a Charitable Trust/Society which will also be a Limited Company. It is hoped that members will be able to assist with restoration and other work.

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Grateful thanks to all those who dug old copies of Windlass out of their cellars. We needed them for the British Museum, who discovered that they had no copies of Windlass and requested one of every issue since its birth in 1957.

I am sorry I cannot write to the many members who responded to our plea, but I hope the knowledge that their Windlasses now reside at the British Museum will give them some satisfaction.

### WINDLASS circulation

Our apologies to those of you who did not receive their September issues. This was due to a fault in the labelling system which we hope will not re-occur. If you would like to obtain a copy, please write to the Circulation Manager.

### THE NORTHAMPTON RALLY

We went to the Rally on a narrow boat and can best write about the Rally from a narrow boat point of view. This means that instead of being near the green lawns to witness the elegant embarkation of the Royal Tour we got the gritty end of the moorings, out of range of the loud-speaker commentator, out of sight of the Harbourmaster's Office, but closer to the City's pubs. For most of the time too we appeared to be out of range of the lavender boat, and by the end this was getting desperate. We also seemed to have rather less leisure than most, for every time it rained - which it did frequently - our visitors brought a load of partially combusted fuel ash from the tow-path on board, which had to be cleared up. But even if as a result of this we never quite knew whether all the activity and shouting at the centre represented a demonstration of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation or a preview of Lord Longford's Continental tour, one thing was clear - everyone enjoyed themselves enormously and the whole thing was a great success.

We set off from Godalming at the end of July and came by way of the Thames and the Oxford Canal to Braunston and Stoke Bruerne. By the time we had completed the journey up the Northampton Arm we had done 114 locks and over 200 miles. This, of course, was nothing compared with those who really tried, but it made an interesting journey.

The Wey never looked better than on that sunlit July day and we were sad to leave it and the friendly lock-keepers behind. Grandad (aged 82) was with us on the Thames, up which he had punted and sculled as a boy having lived in Henley around the turn of the Century. He had made his last trip on the river in 1904 and commented that it had not changed much, though there were rather less punts about.

It was while we were going up the Oxford that disaster struck - just below a lock a load of brushwood tangled with the propeller and a coupling fractured with a bang like a gelignite bomb. Being rendered thus engine less there was nothing for it but to bow-haul the 'Phobos' into Banbury and this we set out to do, after placing our ten-year old daughter in charge of the helm. Hardly had we hauled two miles, however, when salvation appeared in the shape of John and Margaret Ashford on 'Rocador'. Never was the sight of fellow-members of the Club more welcome. Most competently and nobly they attached a line to our bows and tugged us into Banbury where we were able to carry

Addresses are now taken from IWA office, which should help to ensure that new members obtain copies sooner than in the past. This means that the branch Addressograph machine is no longer required. Anyone interested in purchasing it should write to the Branch Secretary.

out a repair. Without 'Rocador's' help we might indeed have become divorced, and it is doubtful whether we would have got to Banbury that night. We greatly enjoyed the Oxford Canal and recommend it to any members who have not navigated it. It compares with the Wey for beauty and although we had been alarmed before we set out by fearsome stories of shallowness and silting-up we must record that it compares favourably with the Wey in this respect.

In Stoke Bruerne we met John Humphries and 'Clevanđa' as prearranged and formed part of the seven-boat convoy taking M.P.'s down to the Rally. We took our legislators through Blisworth Tunnel, lunched them well in the BWP maintenance yard at Gayton, transformed for the purpose, and made their children work the locks down the Arm to Northampton. As an exercise in lobbying it was undoubtedly effective - some M.P.'s already showed great knowledge of the waterways and others were willing to learn. At least those who participated can now speak in the House with authority and first-hand experience. Among them were many who are influential within their own party and we were left in no doubt of their goodwill. From the point of view of public relations it was less successful, since other boats attempting to negotiate the Arm had not had the purpose of the exercise explained to them, did not understand that the M.P.'s had transport waiting in Northampton to take them back to London, and resented their passage. There is something to be learnt from this for next time.

At Northampton the moorings extended over a mile and a half, from the South Bridge at one end to the rural Peadies Meadow at the other, with boats moored two and more abreast (the narrow boats were moored in places six abreast) along both banks of the river. The centre of the Rally was in Becket's Park, approached through the famous guillotine lock, where the river branches to encompass two islands, one of which has a lake in the middle. The majority of the Club boats were moored together by the islands not far from the Avon Cosmetic Factory.

Statistically and financially the Rally was a great success, despite the weather. We already knew before we left Northampton that 560 boats attended, that 50,000 visitors came during the four days of the Rally, and now we hear that the net profit should be over £4,000. All this is excellent.

The organisation of the Rally overall was also good, and much hard work by volunteers had gone into it. The sideshows were splendid - we particularly admired the gaily-decorated steam roundabout, with the most marvellously snorting horses that any child could desire, and Goldoni's mechanical organ with its magnificently moustached conductor and painted ladies banging percussion instruments. Among the outdoor exhibits the Waterways Recovery Group, which deservedly won the prize, was outstandingly impressive; and among the indoor exhibits, the Greenwich Workshops for the Blind stole the show with their ropework and fenders. Their products deserve to be bought for their quality as well as for the courageous industry they represent.

Something had, however, gone awry with the allocation of moorings. Last-minute changes meant that little attempt was made to put the narrow boats into their intended slots, and on arrival one simply lay where one fell. One should also squarely face the issue of whether it is right to divide the boats quite so

sharply into categories: narrow boats look well en masse, but they were not fully utilised as crowd-catchers at this rally. Nor is it a good thing to emphasise fortuitous divisions in the ranks of waterways enthusiasts by segregation. In this respect the Guildford Rally was much better planned than either its predecessor in Birmingham or the present one.

Lastly amid the euphoria of record profits let us not ignore the question we heard on several sides - are the National Rallies getting too big? Some feel they are outgrowing the sites available and what can reasonably be expected of volunteer organisers. The time may have come when, like the big Agricultural Shows, we should be considering professional management, a permanent site for the National Rally and greater emphasis on a selected number of Regional Rallies. In the long run this may be the best way to avoid chaos, maintain people's interest and enjoyment, and keep up the flow of funds. It might also mean that we could have another manageable rally on our own beautiful river in the not-too-distant future.

Tom & Jennifer Sewell.

## QUIZ ... ?

### QUIZ NO. 24

- 1) Name a navigable flight of narrow locks consisting of -
  - (a) 10 locks
  - (b) 11 locks
  - (c) 12 locks
  - (d) 13 locks
- 2) Name the canal tunnel which -
  - (a) Is reputed to have been swum by a cow
  - (b) Runs parallel to a railway tunnel and is interconnected.
  - (c) Passes through natural caverns.
  - (d) Was opened out in 1868.
- 3) Which river, over part of its length, has the ruling, keep to the left?
- 4) What have Pilling's, Ferrybridge, and Wakefield locks in common?
- 5) In what year were each of the following Grand Union Canal branches opened -
  - (a) Slough
  - (b) Wendover
  - (c) Aylesbury
  - (d) Northampton
- 6) Where, at a lock, can an apron be found?

The prize, this month, for the first correct, or nearly correct answers received will be Stanfords Inland Cruising Map. Answers please to Roger Stephens, 38 Sandhurst Drive, Seven Kings, Ilford, Essex.

The winner of Quiz No 23 was Mr M Cottrell.

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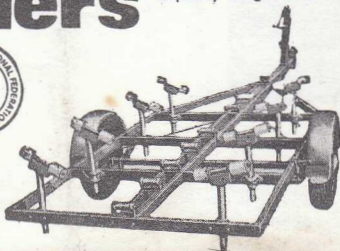
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