

Excalibur

THE LONDON NEWSLETTER OF
THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION

NUMBER 28, SUMMER 1999

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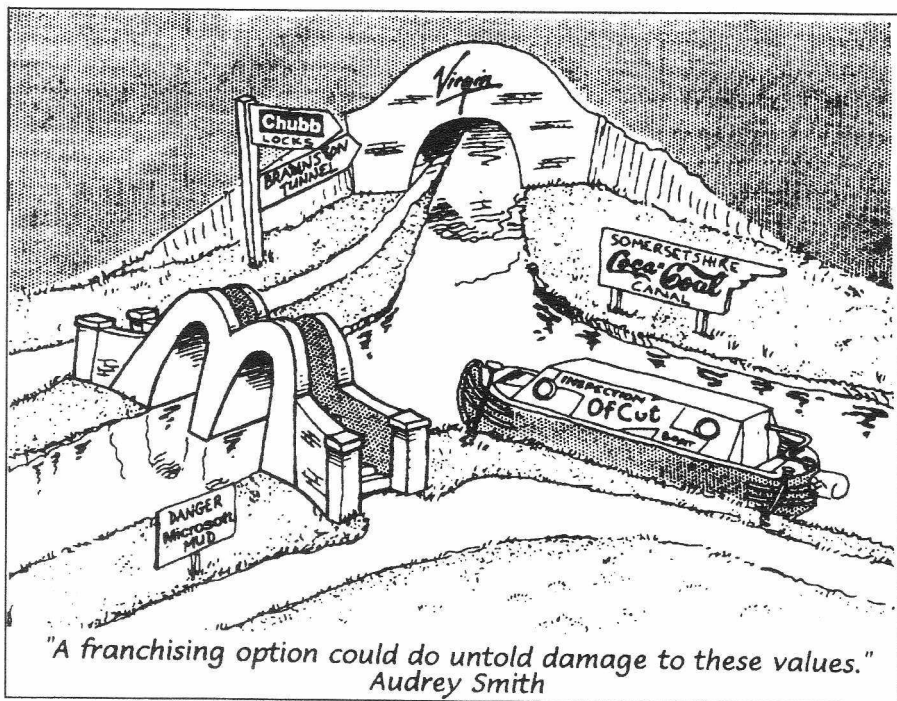
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A THREAT REMOVED!



Cartoon by Huw Davies from *The Salford Quay*, August 1998. Reprinted by permission of the artist.
See the Editorial on page 3 for the story

Who's who in London IWA

☎ = answerphone

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From the Editor

A THREAT REMOVED!

Back in March the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, made an important announcement about the future of BW, which was widely, if not always accurately, reported in the Press and was generally, if cautiously, welcomed by IWA and other waterways enthusiasts.

Before the announcement there had been a lot of speculation about BW's future. They themselves had consulted on a range of issues, among which it was clear that their own preference was to stop being a nationalised industry and become a charitable Trust, whose public accountability would be solely through maintenance contracts they signed with the Government.

Then came rumours (believed to emanate from the Treasury) of plans to franchise off BW's waterways to the private sector, as done with rail services. It was these rumours, current at the time of last year's "National" that our then national Chairman, Audrey Smith, commented on in her speech at the opening ceremony, prompting Huw Davies' cartoon (in the Festival newsletter, *The Salford Key*) reproduced on our front page.

Mr Prescott's announcement put a stop to the speculation, and contained much that we welcome. In summary, it said the following:

- * BW will remain a public corporation, but released from some of the present borrowing requirements in order to free it to set up public / private sector partnerships to fund specific projects.
- * The Government will increase BW's grant by £8 million per year for at least the next three years (and probably longer), the extra to be spent accelerating the rate at which BW can deal with those parts of its maintenance backlog which have public safety implications.
- * The Government will write off certain debts outstanding from BW to the Government at high rates of interest. These are thought to involve some £20 million loaned some years ago for improvements to the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation.

- * There would be a major consultation exercise, which has now begun, about the possibilities of (a) a membership scheme for BW aimed at people who enjoy the waterways and at relevant organisations and (b) the setting-up of a charitable trust in parallel to BW to deal with some of the non-statutory work on the waterways.

As soon as the announcement was made, BW launched an excellent new web site with all the details. For those of you with internet access, it can be seen at <http://www.waterwaypartners.co.uk/>. Or you can get a copy of the document from BW Headquarters at Watford. Your views would be welcomed by our Region Chairman, Libby. See her article on pp 6-7.

IWA has responded to the announcement with a whole-hearted welcome for the funding decisions, which we see as a victory for the campaign that we and our allies have been involved in for some years, and a more cautious position about the possible membership scheme and charitable trust. We need to know a lot more detail about these before we can comment on them meaningfully. IWA is participating in the consultation exercise which was launched (after several postponements) on 17th June. There is a series of Regional meetings, of which the London one is on 19th August. The proposals are pretty vague, and we need to use the consultation to seek out more details before we can express a meaningful opinion.

Mike Stevens

COPY DATES

No. 29	Autumn 1999	10 th Sept 1999
No. 30	Winter 1999	13 th Nov. 1999
No. 31	Spring 2000	19 th March 2000

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The Editor reserves the right to edit any article or letter submitted for publication.

ROUTES AND BRANCHES :

COMMITTEE CHANGES

We're at the end of the season in which IWA Branch and Region Committees and Officers are elected. As you are no doubt aware, the Committee for each Branch or Region is elected at its AGM, and the Officers appointed at the following Committee meeting.

First off the mark this year was South London Branch, with a very early AGM which produced no changes to the membership of the Committee. The only change to its Officers is that David Young has decided to stand down as Branch Deputy Chairman, since his work now takes him away from home quite often. He is keeping on some of his other jobs for the Branch, but we are looking for a new Deputy Chairman.

North and East London was faced with the loss of three of its Committee. Cathy Russell stood down from the Secretaryship some time ago when she was elected to national office in another organisation, and has now left the Committee. Also Peter and Lesley Cardy were moving (by now have probably moved) to Wales. Roger Wilkinson has joined their Committee as Membership Officer, but they are still looking for a volunteer as Secretary.

Middlesex Branch saw little change except that the Committee decided to do away with a specific post of Publicity Officer and to handle publicity matters on an *ad hoc* basis.

The Region AGM brought no changes to the Committee, but Dan Evans (who is active in London WRG and a "regular" at the Central London Socials) was later co-opted as an additional member.

At the subsequent Committee Meeting, your Editor stood down as Region Secretary. This was because I felt I had too much on my plate and wished to concentrate of the Editorship of *Excalibur* and other publicity work. Alison Smedley was elected in my place - she has done the job before. She will hand over her present responsibility for arranging the Central London Socials to Dan Evans with effect from 1st January 2000. The other Officers were re-elected.

MAJOR CANAL STOPPAGES

BW has published a draft list of major stoppages for the coming winter. The main stoppage "season" is from 8th November until 10th March (well before Easter), with a longer-than-usual Christmas window, from 17th December to 10th January.

There are two major stoppages in London. One is for major repairs to Islington Tunnel (1st November to 17th December and 10th January to 17th March) and the other, even longer, for the expected re-build of Bow Locks (8th November to 7th July). See the story below for more about this..

The published list also includes a stoppage on the Paddington Branch from 10th January to 10th March for Railtrack to rebuild a bridge, but the latest news is that this may be a width-restriction rather than a closure.

Paddington Basin and the arm leading to it are to be de-watered for work in connection with the development which has now started there. This will be done in two phases. The first involves the basin itself, which will be dredged and parts of the waterway wall modified to fit the new plans. This will happen during the winter. The second phase is smaller, and involves the arm from the Pool of Little Venice to the Basin. This will be de-watered for silt removal and any incidental repairs to the waterway wall that are found necessary. The dates of this have yet to be fixed, but we have been assured by BW that unless they are confident they can complete it before Canalway Cavalcade, they won't begin Phase 2 until after that event.

BOW LOCKS

In our New Year issue we published the story to date of the arguments about how to rebuild Bow Locks. The aim is to reduce silting by keeping the tide out of the semi-tidal section of the Lee Navigation from Limehouse to Old Ford Lock, including the loop of the Bow Back Rivers which is at the same level.

Unfortunately the very highest tides over-top the spit of land between Bow Creek and the navigation, and the Environment Agency is opposed to this being prevented, as they have concerns about the effect this would have on the tidal level in the rest of the

Region, Branch and Navigation news

Thames. (Yes, really!). So the modified locks will still have to allow these exceptional tides through to avoid a sudden waterfall over the towpath when the land is over-topped. Our Plan/Nav Committee and BW disagree about how often this is likely to happen.

But BW has met our other objection, by producing a design for a lock that will be workable at all states of the tide, even when the tide is higher than the navigation. Each end of the lock will be provided with two pairs of mitre gates facing in opposite directions. Unfortunately this means they can only afford to modify one of the pair of locks, and the other will be blocked off.

ANGLERS OUT OF PLACE?

A letter from BW to Sue Merrett, of our Plan/Nav Committee, told us that the London Anglers' Association, as a club, do not tolerate anyone fishing from lock areas. They ask that anyone coming across an angler along their length committing a misdemeanour should telephone them on 0181 520 7477. They fish the Grand Union from Bridge 191 at West Drayton to Lock 87 at Denham, and from Lock 72 at Hunton Bridge to Bridge 135 at Tring.

S.LONDON "TAKES PART" AGAIN

For the third year, South London Branch provided *Waterways for Youth* activities at Croydon's annual *Take Part* day for young people on Saturday 6th June. The event had been more energetically advertised than in previous years, so we were expecting larger crowds, but sadly that wasn't to be. The combination of the Derby, a football International and a rotten weather forecast kept people at home. In fact the rain held off until the closing minutes of the event. 64 youngsters started our *Waterways for Youth* programme and 46 completed it. The event saw the debut of our Branch display stand, after two years' preparation.

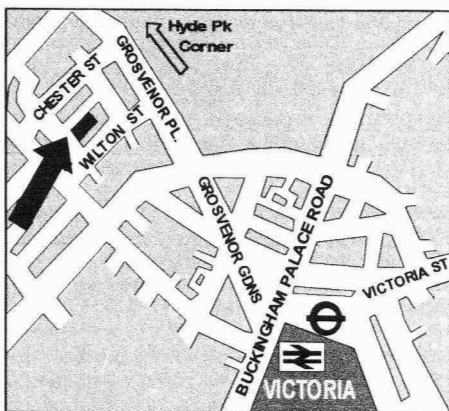
SOCIAL MEETING CHANGES

N & E London Branch have been worried for some time about poor attendances at their two Social Meeting venues in Islington and Edmonton, and have decided to organise

fewer meetings and to publicise them better in an attempt to cure the problem.

Middlesex Branch is considering moving its Richmond Socials to a new venue more centrally placed in their area. South London Branch is not changing its venues, but has decided not to run a mid-September meeting at South Norwood as this has never been well attended. So their Norwood Season will run from October to June, and their Nottingham season from September to May.

The Region's Central London Socials have had another enforced change of venue, as changed arrangements at Imperial College mean we shall no longer be able to meet there. We have found a new venue at what Alison tells me is a very pleasant pub with a range of real ales. It's called *The Grouse and Claret* and is in Little Chester Street, close to Victoria Station (see the map below).



AFLOAT UNDER SAIL

There are a few places left on South London Branch's charter of the Thames sailing barge *Pudge* for the weekend of 17 - 19 September. We shall go on board at Maldon (Essex) on the Friday evening, sail on an early morning tide on Saturday and return to Maldon on Sunday evening. The cost of the weekend is £72 including all food from Saturday breakfast to Sunday tea. Enquires should go to Mary Llewellyn (phone number on page 2).

From the Region Chairman

After our AGM in April we agreed that my report to that meeting should be included in *Excalibur* for the benefit of those who were not there. The report of course, refers to the activities of 1998, so after it I have added a few notes about what has happened since.

Report to the Region AGM, April 1999

At last year's AGM I reported on the change in BW's local structure with the creation of a new London Region incorporating London Docklands. Shortly after that meeting Arthur Saxby was moved from the London office to the Lee and Stort to become Rivers Manager and Jon Guest moved back into the Little Venice office as Canal Manager. Docklands has continued to be managed from Watford by Mark Lloyd, Commercial Development Manager, and recently Dennis Fink has been promoted from Marine engineer for the docks to local manager. The Docklands Management Advisory Group (DMAG) continues to be chaired by Jim Fitzpatrick (local MP) with Ian Valder (BW Commercial Director) as his deputy. Iltyd Harrington, our Region President and I continue to serve on DMAG and Iltyd was instrumental in a highly successful day's visit by the Duke of Edinburgh last July.

Our two Vice Presidents, Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti and Arthur Farrand Radley MBE continue to "not retire" from their activities namely towpath walks and lecture panel respectively. Michael continues to lead some of the towpath walks whilst Farrand still gives lectures. The towpath walks have totalled 33 this year with an average of 16 walkers per walk making a total of over 500 in all. Once again we would like to thank Michael for instigating these walks, the great amount of raised public awareness of the waterways they have created and the money they have raised.

The three branch chairmen have continued for a further year; Vernon Draper for Middlesex branch, Alan Russell for North and East London Branch and David Llewellyn for South London Branch. I would like to thank them and their committee members for all their hard work. In the Middlesex Branch the Richmond venue continues successfully in its second year, committee numbers have built up again and Sarah Escott has made a significant contribution, as the branch's representative, to the Region Planning and Navigation sub-committee. North and East London Branch

ran another successful Three Mills Rally in conjunction with St Pancras Cruising Club. Notably this included the introduction of Waterways for Youth activities this year with Sarah Russell taking the lead in this. Recently the fourth member of the Russell family, James, edited their Branch newsletter during his Easter holidays. South London Branch continues with its Waterways for Youth activities at Croydon's Take Part youth event. This was for the third successive year and another day is planned this June. The branch held its second parliamentary cruise last summer playing its part in the campaign for extra funding for the waterways.

On a regional level Canalway Cavalcade last May attracted a higher number than ever of historic boats with much of the site equipment carried by water. Our thanks go to David Daines on Lynx and Rupert Smedley on Ben for the part they played in making this possible. Our theme, Water the vital ingredient, had an irony to it after the Easter floods which accentuated the dangers of water, the swollen rivers preventing many boats from other waterways attending. Fortunately as there was no ice on the canal Titanic, the winner of the Marcus Boudier Trophy, was safe cruising through Little Venice! This year's Canalway Cavalcade takes place on the 1st - 3rd of May and, very aptly, takes the theme Our Waterways Heritage.

Our Planning and Navigation committee has been even more active than usual and we owe many thanks to Ron Bingham and all his committee for all their hard work. Key navigational activities during the year have included the Bow Locks replacement scheme - working for the best solution for navigation and for safety, channel dimensions - working to ensure that the local plans comply with the national BW policy, and the successful promotion of visitor moorings on the semi-tidal section of the Thames at Richmond - the result of several years negotiating with the local authority. In addition the committee received and responded to about 80 planning applications during 1998 along with a number of strategic plans including LEAP's and UDP's throughout the whole London region.

Our region magazine, *Excalibur*, has continued to be edited by Mike Stevens and

during the last year Alison Smedley has acted as editorial assistant. I would like to thank both Mike and Alison for their efforts during the year. Alison has also taken on the organisation of the central London meetings, which moved to Imperial College during the year, I am sure we would all like to thank Richard Packer who has organised the use of this venue and Alison for the interesting programme of meetings that she has put together for us.

Finally I would like to thank all the members of the region committee, its supporting committees and all others who work behind the scenes to enable us to remain such an active region.

And since then.....

Since that report was written there has been a further royal visit to Docklands & the Isle of Dogs - Her Majesty the Queen attended on 9th June this year to visit Mudchute Farm and to open the new Poplar Dock Marina. Once again credit is due to Illyd Harrington who was instrumental in these arrangements.

The BW staff responsible for the canals in London under the Canal Manager, Jon Guest, have moved out of the Little Venice office to Norwood Top Lock. The Little Venice Office is now occupied solely by BW London Region staff.

At the end of April I was unexpectedly taken in to hospital and wired up to various machines for a few days. Fortunately I have no long-term damage but recovery to full health is proving slow and I am still not allowed to return to work. I would like to thank all those who have sent their good wishes throughout this time. I have endeavoured to keep up with IWA matters, albeit on an intermittent basis.

Our new Region Secretary, Alison Smedley, kindly attended the launch of BW's *Partnership with the People* consultation in June on my behalf. Details of how to obtain further information on this are in Mike's Editorial on page 3. The IWA is keen to gather members' views on these proposals, so I would welcome your comments by letter, fax or e-mail so that I can put forward as representative a view as possible from our London Region members. The next IWA Council meeting is on Saturday 11th September, so as many views as possible by then would be helpful. Please keep the comments coming in, even if you are unable to do so before that date.

Libby Bradshaw

MORE NEWS

THE THAMES FESTIVAL

The Thames Festival will take place on the evening of 19th September between Hungerford and Blackfriars Bridges. It will begin with a flotilla of boats with two themes - historic boats and the working river today. Unfortunately the information sent to me wasn't clear about the time. At Gabriel's Wharf the London Festival Orchestra will play Handel's *Water Music* and *Music for the Royal Fireworks*.

After the flotilla there will be a lantern procession along Victoria Embankment and the evening will be rounded off with a fantastic firework display. If you would like your boat to be in the flotilla, please contact the Thames Festival Office on (0171) 928 0960.

IWA HEAD OFFICE 'PHONE EXTENSIONS

These are now as follows:-

- 21 Neil Edwards, Executive Director
- 26 Matthew Duncan, Operations Manager
- 24 & 25 Project Officers
- 29 Membership
- 30 WRG, NWF and General Enquiries

The e-mail addresses at Head Office have also been updated as follows:

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- Judith member1@waterways.org.uk
- Kate member2@waterways.org.uk
- Duncan project1@waterways.org.uk
- Ian project2@waterways.org.uk

LAST ISSUE'S CAPTION COMPETITION

Thanks to those who sent in captions for the photograph of your editor dozing.

"Captain, art thou sleeping there below?...an' dreaming all the time o' Plymouth Hoe"

(submitted by Ann Hancox)

"Catus Sleepus"

"Zzz to the power of Zzz"

(both submitted by Rupert Smedley)

and (anonymous) : *"That is the next issue of ~~Excalibur~~ he's reading, isn't it?"*

Canalway Cavalcade 1999

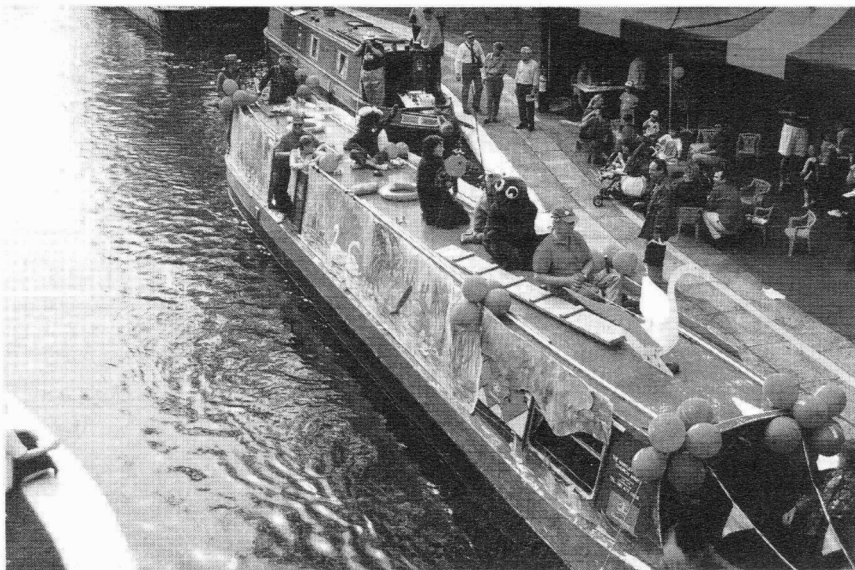


Photo : Richard Packer

This year's Canalway Cavalcade, over the May Day Bank Holiday weekend, was one of the best we can remember. Unusually the weather remained excellent for all three days, and attracted large crowds, probably the equal of any we've seen. We estimated the total attendance at something like 30,000, and we had about 150 boats there. Boaters and visitors alike enjoyed the event's usual variety of boating events, trade stalls and a diversity of entertainments. The boats that had come furthest were Pat Barton's nb *Quercus* from Gnosall (Staffs) and Helen Gardner's nb *Sussex* from Sowerby Bridge (Yorks).

The theme of this year's event was *Our Waterways Heritage*, and this linked very much with the number of working and ex-working boats taking part.

The rubbish clearance from the site was provided by a group of companies who are campaigning for the creation of a canal/road/rail interchange facility in West London. Waterway consultants Wood, Hall & Heward had masterminded the rubbish operation, and provided a Bantam Tug to power it. British Waterways had provided a lighter modified to carry a number of skips, which had been provided by

Powerday, a building and skip-hire contractor. The operation was sponsored by English, Welsh and Scottish Railways. With major developments around Paddington Basin starting very shortly, it is hoped that transport by water will be able to save the need for hundreds of lorries per week on the roads of the area.

Some 18 historic narrowboats attended, 12 of them in original working trim, along with one modern working narrowboat. One could almost count another half-a-boat, as a cargo of oak planks for use in the restoration of nb *Raymond* was there in the holds of Ivor Batchelor's pair *Mountbatten & Cedar*, two of at least seven working boats at the event with cargoes. Among these were Paul & Lyn Ayres' GUCCC pair *Aldgate & Angel* who had carried much of the equipment used for the event, and one modern working boat, John Chard & Brioni Sharman's *Stokie No.1* from the Kennet & Avon.

Campaigning was also mentioned at the opening ceremony which was performed by IWA's national Chairman, Richard Drake, supported by the Lord Mayor of Westminster and by Robin Evans, Commercial Director of British Waterways.

It was the latter who mentioned IWA's many years of campaigning and how it had done much to preserve the canals.

The one low note of the event was the fact that our Region Chairman and Cavalcade Director, Libby Bradshaw, was in hospital and unable to be with us. It is a tribute to other members of the team that her normal duties were more than adequately covered, and in particular to Ian Ferguson who bore the brunt of that task. Libby is now out of hospital and recovering at home. She has made some appearances at Region and Cavalcade Committee meetings.

The high-spot of the awards was John Ross "doing the double" by winning both the Marcus Boudier and the Cruise Electric trophies in his converted mirror dinghy, *Elizabeth Rose*, possibly the first-ever Canalway Cavalcade boat entry with a history of racing under sail.

The Buckby Can Trophy this year was shared between the Church Army on *Hartley Harlequin* and London WRG (this year on *Fulbourne*), who had won it for several successive years.

The event is developing a growing international flavour, with the ethnically-mixed local population mingling with tourists from all over the world. This year we had a TV crew with us from New Zealand, and one visitor asked our Press Office why we hadn't sent Press Releases to the *Los Angeles Times*.

Two of the prizes were won by people who helped us at the event - Linda Anfuso, the artist who donates the drawings for the Teddy Bears' Picnic, won, with her husband, the Vic Trott Memorial Trophy, and the new prize for the best first-time entrant in the Pageant or the Illuminated Boats went to narrowboat *Michael*, belonging to our stalwart helpers, the Tideway Adventurers.

Our thanks go to all who helped at the event, and especially the Tideway Adventurers and our site crew from KESCRG. Thanks also to British Waterways, the City of Westminster, Playlight Hire and everyone else who helped with contributions in cash or kind.

Next year's Canalway Cavalcade will again be on the May-Day Bank Holiday weekend, 29th April to 1st May, 2000.

The winners of the various competitions during the weekend were :-

The Marcus Boudier Trophy for the best privately-entered decoration of a boat:

WINNER dinghy *Elizabeth Rose*
(John Ross)

2nd narrowboat *Promise No.4*
(Graham Whittle)

EQUAL 3rd narrowboat *Anne Louise*
(Beryl Windsor) and narrowboat
Lichfield (Steve Dovey)

The Cruise Electric Trophy for the best illuminated boat :

WINNER dinghy *Elizabeth Rose*
(John Ross)

2nd narrowboat *Mathetes* (Brian
& Marty Seymour)

3rd narrowboat *Gnashers II*
(David Pearce)

The Graham Capelin Memorial award for the best performance in either of the above by a first-time entrant, without winning either

WINNER narrowboat *Michael*
(The Tideway Adventurers)

The Buckby Can Trophy for the best decoration of a boat by a community/ waterway group or society :

EQUAL WINNERS The Church Army
on narrowboat *Hartley Harlequin*
and the London Waterway
Recovery Group on narrowboat
Fulbourne.

The Westminster Trophy for the boat-handling competition :

WINNER Andrew Read on
narrowboat *Michael*

EQUAL 2nd Andy Vincent on
narrowboat *Caprius*, John Boswell
on narrowboat *Lupin*, Mark
Lavender on narrowboat
Tafelberg and Kevin Woods on
narrowboat *Quercus*

The Vic Trott Memorial Trophy for traditional "Boaters' Sunday Best" costumes:

WINNERS Linda & Dennis Anfuso
(narrowboat *Ann*)

The programme prize - a luxury weekend for two at the Colonnade Town House Hotel (donated by Eton Town House Group Ltd)

WINNER Graham Lacey of
Felixstowe.

ON THE METREAU

News and gossip of London's Waterways

NEWS FROM THE LONDON CANAL MUSEUM

The Canal Museum Trust has recently launched a public appeal, the Canal Museum Keystone Fund. All money raised for this will go to pay off the mortgage on freehold of the building. At present the Trust owes about £65,000 and the payment of the interest on this is a great drain on the museum's income. Currently the Trust cannot put aside money for the future maintenance of the building because of this - so the long term future of the museum - which is bound to need maintenance spending in the future - depends on clearing the mortgage.

The first fundraising event was Carlo Gatti's Birthday Party on Saturday 17th July from 6pm to 9pm at the museum. As well as raising money for the Fund it provided those who are interested in the museum with a pleasant evening together. Alex and Jenny Nunes arranged one of their barbecues, and for dessert there was, of course, ice-cream.

The Fund also has its own website (www.keystone.freeisp.co.uk) incorporating the Canalaholic's Webguide.

The Friends of the Museum plan a day out on Saturday 4th September which will take the form of a visit to the House Mill at Three Mills, Bromley-by-Bow and a conducted walk round the Bow Back Rivers. Details aren't yet to hand but will be in the Friends Newsletter, which is due out at soon.

CENTRAL LONDON SOCIAL: A WALK ALONG THE THAMES

On Thursday 17th June the last Central London social of the season took the different-from-usual form of a guided walk along the River Thames. About a dozen of us met at Embankment Underground Station under Alison Smedley's guidance. We crossed the river by Hungerford footbridge and walked along the South Bank to London Bridge, with a couple of pub stops *en route*. The South Bank gives a splendid view of all the major buildings opposite, as well as a look at things on the

near side of the river, such as the old Clink Palace and Prison and the replica *Golden Hind*. Thanks are due to Alison for arranging the walk, and her research for the excellent commentary.

ON THE ALIMENTARY CANAL?

Some more waterway brain-teasers from "Martian Floodgate", this time with a particular theme.

- 1 What is 'Dog-head Stakes' on the Kennet?
 - 2 Where are paddles called 'eyes'?
 - 3 On which derelict canal was the very tight bend called the Bull's **Nose**?
 - 4 Which canal ends at Derwent **Mouth**?
 - 5 What were Kearley & **Tonge's** premises in Southall known as to boaters?
 - 6 Which canal passes through **Bodymoor Heath**?
 - 7 The Irish call them **breast** gates. What do we call them?
 - 8 Which junction is also known as **Arm End**?
 - 9 On which canal do you need a **handspike**?
 - 10 Which canal society's magazine is called the **Wharfinger**?
 - 11 On which River Navigation is Brewery **Gut**?
 - 12 On which canal is **Manhood** End lock?
 - 13 On which canal can you ride a trip-boat through Baldwin's **Knob** lock?
 - 14 On which canal is **Great Bottom** Flash?
 - 15 On which canal is **Calf** Heath marina?
 - 16 How would you **re-foot** a narrow boat?
 - 17 Where on a lock-gate is the **heel** post?
- ...and finally...
- 18 Who organised last year's convoy from the Thames to the Medway?

Martin Ludgate

The best set of answers to reach the Editor by the end of September will earn a small prize. The answers will be in the next issue.

My apologies for not publishing last time the explanations of the Martian's (for it was, of course he) "Ten most bizarre things he's ever done in connection with the waterways". Unfortunately the explanations weren't supplied to the Editor, so I assume they were left totally to the imagination of the reader.

Editor

London WRG

Mostly we are quite an informal bunch in London WRG (we don't have a chairman or a secretary, or a constitution, or even members as such...). However, once a year we do have an AGM where we decide what canals to go digging on, what tools to spend our money on, and how to raise money to spend on tools in the first place. One of the things agreed at this year's AGM was to buy new maps for our regular Canal Game Bottle Stall at Canalway Cavalcade. It works a bit like a tombola, but each ticket has the name of a canal on it - if it's a navigable canal, you win a prize, if it's a derelict canal (or one that was never built) you don't win a prize, but you get to find out where the canal was on the map! It's very educational, and lots of people had a go over the weekend, which was as usual a great success.

This year the owners of *Fulbourne* kindly let us use their boat for the procession and we used the theme *Our Waterways Heritage* to do our own representations of some famous canal sights: Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Anderton Lift, Standedge Tunnel, Foxton Inclined Plane and, more local to London, Three Mills. The London WRGies on board dressed in varying modes of canal dress, from traditional boatman and boatwoman through war time volunteer to modern holiday maker complete with camcorder!

We've also been out on our regular digs, of course. This year we've had a couple of digs on the Basingstoke Canal after a number of years away. We were working on the bywashes for the Woodham Backpumping Project, which will pump water from below Lock 6 to above Lock 1 and should improve the water level situation on the canal.

We've also had a couple of visits to the Over Hospital site on the Hereford & Gloucester Canal. Our first task was to dismantle an old barn, which is going to be re-erected

on the other side of the site as part of a visitor centre/tea room. Since then we've been back to work at Oxenhall, further up the canal, where the locals are making good progress at House Lock.

In March we visited the Lichfield Canal. After our last visit when it rained torrentially on the Saturday, we thought we deserved better weather this time. However, due to heavy snow we had to spend the Saturday afternoon at the cinema as working on site became impossible! We made up for it on the Sunday, however, with lots of piling and backfilling at the Darnford site, and bricklaying at Tamworth Road Lock.

A number of us headed to the Midlands to join in the IWA's BCN Clean Up in March, which this year was held on the Wyrley & Essington Canal. Much rubbish was removed, and as a result another bit of canal should now be that much easier to navigate.

We've also had visits to Droitwich and the Wey & Arun during the spring and early summer. On the social side, we had a barbecue overlooking the Thames in Docklands, and in between eating lots of barbecued food had a bit of an explore around the docks.

One important piece of news is that our social venue has changed yet again, due to the *Doggets* closing for a refit. We now meet in the *Mad Hatter*, on Stamford Street just at the south end of Blackfriars Bridge.

Don't forget that details of our forthcoming digs can be found in the events pages of *Excalibur*, and our "drinks" take place on the Wednesday 10 days before each dig. Give me a call on 0181 691 7215 if you would like to know any more about London WRG.

Alison Smedley

LONDONERS ON THE B.C.N. (AGAIN)

Once again, London IWA members were very much in evidence at this year's BCN Marathon Challenge over the last weekend in June. London WRG provides much of the crew for the narrowboats *Ben* and *Fulbourne*, while Roger Wilkinson was one of a pair of enthusiasts who took it in turns to paddle the canoe *Snipe*. Ben Scott and I joined the scrutineers, since circumstances prevent us from getting *Felis Catus II* to the event.

Mike Stevens

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RAY DUNFORD 1928-1999



PHOTO : Mike Stevens

Ray Dunford, a former active member of London IWA, who moved to Preston Brook some years ago, died in June at the age of 70. What follows is an edited version of a speech I made at his funeral.

Ray had a wealth of waterways knowledge and experience. His boating started on the Regent's Canal back in the 1950s as a crewman on John James' trip-boat service, *Jason's Trip*. Through John and his father, Jack James of Stoke Bruerne, Ray had a direct line of contact to the traditions of the working boatmen, traditions with which he identified for the rest of his life and which he passed on to others. He gained his Board of Trade Boatman's licence in 1961, not because he was new to the job, but because the licence was new.

His knowledge and experience of the waterways were always freely shared, and never in an assertive or hectoring manner. Ray had a generosity of spirit of rare breadth, more than anyone else of my acquaintance.

His move North coincided with a change of work. Until then he had always had a job "on the bank", but from then on his long-time hobby of traditional canal decorative paintwork became his living. He was a master of it, and one of the first in the field to be accredited by the Guild of Waterway ; Craftsmen. It was Ray who painted and donated the Buckby Can Trophy we use at Canalway Cavalcade.

In the last eighteen months of his life, Ray found a new and wider circle of friends. Prevented by health problems from as much

boating as he had been used to, he joined the circle of waterways enthusiasts who communicate via the internet. His wealth of knowledge of the closing days of widespread commercial carrying, his willingness to offer the benefits of his experience to newcomers, and his unfailing good humour endeared him to all the virtual boating community.

Alongside these virtues went great humility. His painted ware was always referred to as "the tat", and his fascinating stories of the past were usually suffixed with "Another boring Dunford anecdote, I'm afraid." Plans are afoot to set up a permanent archive of "boring Dunford anecdotes" on the web.

Ray has left us, but he has left a mark. Messages of condolence, of appreciation, of a sense of loss came not only from people who knew Ray personally, but also from many who only knew him in cyberspace but knew the value of the man.

But most of all, his memorial is in the people he has influenced. His work at rallies and Boat Shows, and informally on the towpath made a major contribution to public awareness of the waterways.

He had a formative influence on a whole generation of boating folk. There are many people, and I like to think I'm one of them, who are better boaters - more proficient, more knowledgeable and more considerate - for having known Ray. What better memorial can any man ask?

Mike Stevens

Waterways events in and around London.

See back page for details of venues and contacts for further information.

AUGUST

- Weekend 14th & 15th LONDON WATERWAY RECOVERY GROUP: - Weekend dig on the Hereford Gloucester Canal, working on the Over Hospital site.
- Sunday 15th 2.30pm LONDON IWA WITH **LONDON WALKS**: GUIDED TOWPATH WALK: Regents Canal, Paddington to Camden. Meet at Warwick Avenue tube station
- Thursday 19th LONDON CANAL MUSEUM CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY DAY. Sessions 1100 - 1230 and 1400-1530. For accompanied children ages 6-12.
- Thursday 26th 6.30pm LONDON IWA WITH **LONDON WALKS**: GUIDED TOWPATH WALK: Regents Canal, Mile End to Limehouse. Meet at Mile End tube station
- Thursday 26th LONDON CANAL MUSEUM CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY DAY. Sessions 1100 - 1230 and 1400-1530. For accompanied children ages 6-12.
- August Bank Holiday 28th-30th LONDON ON WATER at West India & Millwall Docks. Contact ATYC for boat entries (01932 841204) or for general information phone Richard Mortimer (Events) on 01489 890006
- August Bank Holiday, 29th-30th BRITISH WATERWAYS & BROXBORNE COUNCIL: A family event at Waltham Abbey (between Waltham Town & Waltham Common Locks). Contact: Jessica Wright, BW on 0171 286 6101

SEPTEMBER

- Thursday 2nd 7 for 7:30pm LONDON CANAL MUSEUM LECTURE. Viscountess Knollys - *The work of the Inland Waterways Amenities Council*
- Sunday 5th 2.30pm LONDON IWA WITH **LONDON WALKS**: GUIDED TOWPATH WALK: Three Mills and the Bow Back Rivers. Meet at Bromley-by Bow tube station
- Sunday 5th - all day ANGEL DAY on the Regent's Canal by City Road Basin
- Thursday 9th 8pm IWA CHELMSFORD BRANCH: Jeff Howe - *The Derby and Sandiacre Canal Society*
- Weekend 11th - 12th LONDON WATERWAY RECOVERY GROUP - Weekend dig on the Droitwich Canal.
- Tuesday 14th 8pm MIDDLESEX BRANCH SOCIAL at Uxbridge. Speaker from the R.N.L.I.
- Thursday 16th 8pm IWA LONDON REGION: CENTRAL LONDON SOCIAL Mike Stevens, *History of the Shropshire Union Canals*.
- Weekend 17th - 19th SOUTH LONDON BRANCH Sailing Charter on s.b.Pudge. Cost £72. Enquiries to Mary Llewellyn (0181) 653 4862
- Saturday 18th LONDON CANAL MUSEUM participating in *London Open House*. Free admission to the Museum for the day.

Sunday 19 th 2.30pm	LONDON IWA WITH <i>LONDON WALKS</i> : GUIDED TOWPATH WALK: The Regent's Canal, King's Cross to Camden. Meet at King's Cross station, near the taxi rank.
Sunday 19 th	THE THAMES FESTIVAL - see page 11 for more information.
Monday 20 th 8pm	IWA GUILDFORD & READING BRANCH. Richard Thomas: <i>A day in the life of a Thames Tug</i>
Tuesday 21 st 8pm	NORTH & EAST LONDON BRANCH SOCIAL at Edmonton. Roger Wilkinson: <i>The Suffolk Stour</i>
Friday 24 th 8pm	SOUTH LONDON BRANCH SOCIAL at Mottingham. Roger Wilkinson, <i>The Alternative Thames</i> . (Subject to confirmation).
Saturday 25 th	IWA NATIONAL AGM in Leicester - details will be in <i>IWA Waterways</i>
Tuesday 28 th 8pm	MIDDLESEX BRANCH SOCIAL at Richmond: Dave Green, <i>The Medway in flood</i> .

OCTOBER

Saturday 2 nd	MIDDLESEX BRANCH VISIT TO GLOUCESTER DOCKS
Weekend 2 nd - 3 rd	LONDON WATERWAY RECOVERY GROUP - Weekend dig on the Wey & Arun Canal
Sunday 3 rd 2.30pm	LONDON IWA WITH <i>LONDON WALKS</i> : GUIDED TOWPATH WALK: The Regent's Canal, Islington to Mile End. Meet at Angel station, near the taxi rank.
Thursday 7 th 7 for 7:30pm	LONDON CANAL MUSEUM LECTURE. Nick Roberts - <i>Paddington Basin rises again</i>
Tuesday 12 th 8pm	MIDDLESEX BRANCH SOCIAL at Uxbridge: <i>Restoration Round-up</i>
Wednesday 13 th 8pm	SOUTH LONDON BRANCH SOCIAL at South Norwood: Walter Rose, <i>The history of bridges</i> .
Thursday 14 th 8pm	IWA CHELMSFORD BRANCH - Peter Smith - <i>Wilts & Berks Canal update</i>
Saturday 16 th	London Waterway Recovery Group outing to Legoland!
Sunday 17 th 2.30pm	LONDON IWA WITH <i>LONDON WALKS</i> : GUIDED TOWPATH WALK: The Regent's Canal, Mile End to Limehouse. Meet at Mile End station, near the taxi rank.
Monday 18 th *pm	IWA GUILDFORD & READING BRANCH. Colin Ward: <i>Lots to do at the Soo</i> (North American waterways)
Tuesday 19 th 8pm	NORTH & EAST LONDON BRANCH SOCIAL at Edmonton. Tim Lewis: <i>The Waterway Recovery Group</i>
Thursday 21 st 8pm	IWA LONDON REGION CENTRAL LONDON SOCIAL Roger Wilkinson: <i>Waterways of Poland</i> .
Weekend 23 rd - 24 th	London Waterway Recovery Group - Weekend dig on the Lichfield Canal
Tuesday 26 th 8pm	MIDDLESEX BRANCH SOCIAL at Richmond, speaker from Customs and Excise
Friday 29 th 8pm	SOUTH LONDON BRANCH SOCIAL at Mottingham. Speaker from the Lower Lee Project (subject to confirmation).

Venue details & contact people

MEETING	VENUE	CONTACT
IWA CENTRAL LONDON	<i>The Grouse & Claret</i> Little Chester Street, SW1 See map on page 5. (Nearest tube & main line, Victoria)	Alison Smedley (0181) 691 7215.
IWA MIDDLESEX BRANCH	(UXBRIDGE) Hillingdon Canal Club, Uxbridge Wharf, Waterloo Rd, Uxbridge	Michael Stimpson (work) (01923) 770425
IWA MIDDLESEX BRANCH	(RICHMOND) The White Cross Hotel Water Lane, Riverside Richmond-on-Thames	Michael Stimpson (work) (01923) 770 425
IWA N & E LONDON BRANCH	(EDMONTON) Millfield Arts Centre, Silver St., Edmonto n, N18. (near the Great Cambridge Rd. junction. 5/8 mile west of Silver Street BR station).	Tim Lewis (0181) 367 6227
IWA SOUTH LONDON BRANCH	(SOUTH NORWOOD) <i>The Albion</i> , corner of South Norwood Hill & High Street, SE25 (Close to Norwood Junction BR)	Mary Llewellyn (0181) 653 4862
IWA SOUTH LONDON BRANCH	(MOTTINGHAM) <i>The Royal Tavern</i> , Mottingham (corner of Court Rd & Sidcup Rd, close to Mottingham BR).	Neville Munro (01322) 613 428
LONDON IWA / LONDON WALKS	TOWPATH WALKS As listed. Each about 2 hours. £4.50 (concessions £3.50).	London Walks (0171) 624 3978
LONDON WATERWAY RECOVERY GROUP	Various venues. Meeting point is usually Waterloo Station 7 pm on Friday to travel to site.	Tim Lewis (0181) 367 6227
LONDON CANAL MUSEUM	12 New Wharf Road, King's Cross, London, N1 9RT Opens Tues. to Sun, 10 am - 4:30 pm. Admission £2.50, concessions £1.25. Admission to lectures £2.00.	(0171) 713 0836
IWA CHELMSFORD BRANCH	Moulsham Mill, Chelmsford	Molly Beard (01702) 554492
IWA GUILDFORD & READING BRANCH	Byfleet Boat Club, The Boat House, 4 Old Parvis Road, Byfleet	Paul Miles (01932) 410 505

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