

Excalibur

**THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION—LONDON BRANCH**

FEBRUARY 1992

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*Did you know the Lee & Stort went to Hong Kong? This young lady was giving the pace to the crew of a dragon-boat at BW's "Unlock the Capital's Canal" weekend in Islington last October
Photo: Tim Lewis*

From the Editor

A BUSY YEAR AHEAD

I hope that any of our readers who over-indulged during the festive season are fully recovered, as 1992 promises to be a busy year.

The British Waterways Bill has been joined in Parliament by the Transport & Works Bill, which has even worse implications for the waterways. I shan't bore you at length here with more of my views on the subject, partly because David Allison-Beer covers the subject on page 5 and partly because I've been asked to speak on the topic at the AGM (see page 10) and want to leave myself something to say then.

At a Branch level we shall, for the first time for many years, have not one but two full-scale Branch Rallies. We're fortunate in having an enthusiastic group of members in the Brentford area who had the idea of a rally there, ran a small 'pilot' rally last year and are raring to go with a full-scale event this July. Meanwhile Canalway Cavalcade reaches its tenth year and aims to be bigger and better than ever. Details of both are on page 5.

However I time the publication of *Excalibur*, (and that seems to depend less on my plans than on how late contributors are with expected articles!), it always seems that something important is due to happen between the date I send it off to the printers and the date you'll be reading it. This time the thing that falls into the gap is the Branch Committee's review of the area meetings we held just before Christmas and its decisions about what to do next in this line. The meetings at Hillingdon Canal Cruising Club have become firmly established: by the time you read this a February meeting is due to have taken place there, and details of a March meeting are in our Diary pages. But for some of the other parts of London it may be that we haven't yet found the right venue. I'm confident that the Branch Committee will want to continue trying: definite news in our next issue.

So it certainly looks as if we'll be busy. Please heed Eric Garland's plea on the opposite page for more people to come forward to serve on the Branch Committee: we need you.

YOUR LETTERS

I'm very pleased, for the second issue running, to be able to include a page of readers' letters. I hope this will become established as a regular feature of *Excalibur*: keep them coming. Unsolicited articles are also welcome: once again Roger Squires has turned up trumps, with a letter about the Thames and article (page 6) about a very different river.

NAME COMPETITION—THE STORY'S END

Anthony Hooper, who won the prize for the best effort by proposing no fewer than eight new names, kindly agreed to donate his prize to be raffled or otherwise used for the benefit of the Branch. Many thanks Anthony.

APOLOGY TIME

A few errors crept into the last issue, for which we apologise. The address of the Abbey Community Centre, the new venue for our Central London meetings, was correct in most of the places it was quoted, but we managed to get it wrong on the back cover. This error also crept into the text on the Draw tickets. A reader wrote to point out some inaccuracies in the placing of bus stops on the map showing how to get to the Abbey Community Centre. That one wasn't really our fault, as we used a map provided by the Centre itself, but our apologies anyway. Also on the back page we managed to get wrong (twice!) the name of the donors of the first prize in our New Year Draw. "Sovereign Marine" should, of course, be "Sovereign Narrowboats". Our most sincere apologies to them.

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FUTURE ISSUES

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From the Branch Chairman: Eric Garland

It is nice to start off with a big thank-you to all those who have bought or sold tickets for our New Year Draw. To date we have been laughing all the way to the bank to the tune of nearly £1,000. If you meant to sell some but forgot, perhaps I can remind you that you can still help by joining the 200 Club at any time. The proceeds of both will put the Branch on a sound financial footing to carry on its work and to meet the shortfall in the production and distribution of your magazine.

(More recent news and results of the Draw, plus details of the 200 Club, are on page 7.)

Our other fund-raising activities will enable us to continue our enviable record in supporting restoration projects up and down the country, as well as donations to Community and Campaign causes. Costs to fight our campaign nationally increase at an alarming rate. The loss of the latest chapter in the Derwent case will cost us money whether we stop now or continue the fight in some way. The Association's campaign also continues with an increase in Parliamentary activity, with the BW Bill and Transport and Works Bill nationally. The Kings Cross Railway Bills (1 & 2), Crossrail, possibly the Croydon Light Railway Bill and the Channel Tunnel Stratford Route still to come, will concern us at Branch level.

You will see new attempts to lure you to one of our meetings. Although our efforts in December, holding meetings in different areas, met with a varied response, it was an enjoyable experience seeing new faces, and we were encouraged by the kind words of appreciation. Thank you to all those who braved the weather, the lack of directions and my efforts to identify other people's slides. We are determined to find the right venues.

On the subject of meetings, it is the season of AGMs, the Region on 12th March in Chelmsford and the Branch on 19th March in London *(See page 10)*. The Branch has increased its maximum Committee size to 15 but at present we have 12, of whom two are resigning and one other is considering doing so. So we could be down to 9. Do please consider coming forward to help out. With the Branch Committee up to strength, the workload on individuals will be much less of a burden. If you are not sure, we will be happy to co-opt you so that you can see how it goes. Any Committee member will be very pleased to supply more information.

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From the Region Chairman: David Allison-Beer

Bills, Bills and Bills!

Bills are often in our minds in the first months of the year as we pay for Christmas and New Year Sale purchases. Bills, both parliamentary and financial have been much in IWA's mind recently. I consider parliamentary bills in this article.

The House of Lords spent much of last year considering the British Waterways Bill. As it is a Private Bill, there is the option to petition the House for changes. A number of waterway interests did this and have produced many beneficial changes. Your Branch Chairman has explained why IWA did not petition in the Lords, a decision with which I agree. We appreciate the work of these organisations and, in particular, of Lindy Foster. In recognition of this, Council has made her a Life Member of IWA.

The Lords' third reading is on 27 January. By the time you read this, it should have passed to the Commons, and IWA will be petitioning there for further changes. Unfortunately space does not permit much detail here but I will highlight some matters which concern me.

The Bill will permit BW to control closely where and how you moor, to such an extent that mooring breasted up at a rally, even it does not cause obstruction, could be stopped. Also in the Bill, BW seek powers of access to their waterways from bordering land. This will mean that it is unnecessary to be able to carry out maintenance from the waterway itself. There will be a detrimental effect on remainder waterways as navigable bridge heights and maintained channels will not be necessary for maintenance boats. The very successful 1991 National Waterways Festival was held on remainder waterways at Windmill End. After this Bill a repeat may be impossible.

On 11 November the Government's *Transport and Works Bill* was published. This alters the parliamentary procedures for carrying out works on transport systems, primarily railways, so that the requirement for Private Bills is replaced by one for Statutory Instruments. However the Bill also includes waterways, so the Secretary of State would have powers to alter or remove any waterway, including any right of navigation, without a Bill.

There is no right to petition as this is a Government Bill, so our only chance for change is through lobbying MPs. At present the Bill is in

its Committee Stage. I attended one of the Committee sittings where there was support from all parties for changes in the Bill to ensure that there was a requirement for consultation with users and/or owners before implementation of an order. The Minister has produced a draft list of bodies to be consulted which includes the National Rivers Authority where their rivers are involved and the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council where BW waterways are affected. It appears that where work will involve a waterway not covered by these bodies, which is most of those currently being restored, there is only a requirement to consult the owners. There will be a list of bodies including the IWA with which it is recommended to consult. However this will not be compulsory. A possible scenario would be where the owners have agreed to the removal of the bed of a canal on which volunteers have been working on restoration and no-one finds out about this until the work is completed. If you don't believe this, just consider what nearly happened last November when BW put up for auction part of the bed of the Sankey Canal, a canal which is currently under restoration. Only through the efforts of the IWA and the local restoration group and a question in the Commons was it withdrawn from sale. On that occasion we found out; we may not find out about works unless there is compulsory consultation.

By a few minutes' work you can help our campaign and the future of the waterways. We need every single member to write to their MP (name and address in the local library or Town Hall) expressing their concerns about these Bills. If possible write two separate letters, as the Department of the Environment will be involved with the BW bill and the Department of Transport with the Transport and Works. Your letter does not need to be longer than two or three paragraphs nor does it need to go into great detail. You can easily paraphrase my comments above and point out that you are interested in waterways even if there are none in the constituency. Please ask your MP to refer your letter to the relevant minister so they know our feelings. Your Branch Chairman or magazine editor will supply any further information you may need, or contact me, particularly if your MP shows interest. There are over 70 constituencies in London: if each Branch member writes on just one Bill those MP's should each receive about 30 letters; enough to make them take notice. This is, after all, an election year. If you have already written about one of the Bills, thank you: why not write about the other?

Branch Rallies 1992

CANALWAY CAVALCADE

Sat. 2 – Mon. 4 May at Little Venice.

Plans are beginning to take shape for this year's Canalway Cavalcade. It will be our tenth such event, so we are hoping to make it bigger and better than ever. We have a strong team running the event. Libby Bradshaw continues as Rally Director and your Editor as Rally Committee Chairman, now helped by Adrian Steinkamp as Committee Secretary. Dorothy Robbie has taken over as Cavalcade Treasurer. Trade is in the sure hands of Richard Bird who for many years was Trade Show Manager for the National. Another new recruit is Peter Jackman to take charge of Site and Services. Peter did this job for the royal re-opening of the Basingstoke Canal, so he's got excellent previous experience.

For the fund-raising we are going to focus attention on two main charities: the restoration work on the Bow Back Rivers and the *Richmond Venturer* community boat project on the Thames (as featured on TV's *Challenge Anneka* programme).

There will be some change to the events this year. Many of the old favourites will remain: the pageant of decorated boats on Saturday afternoon, Teddy Bear's Picnic on Sunday afternoon, illuminated boats on Sunday evening and the boat-handling competition spread over Sunday and Monday. This year the illuminated boats won't be followed by fireworks but by something we're calling *Music on the Water*. And Monday will feature a huge Birthday Party for Cavalcade: we're not yet certain of everything that will be involved in the latter: suggestions are welcome. Volunteers to help during the event will also be very welcome.

Meanwhile we have realised that a year isn't really time enough to organise an event as complex as Cavalcade. Cavalcade Committee wants to adopt a 16-month planning timetable, which means we want to make a start now on getting the 1993 team together. This has the advantage that people who are going to take a responsibility for any aspect of Cavalcade '93 can have the opportunity to see their opposite

number for Cavalcade '92 in action before and during this year's event. If any of our readers are interested, please get in touch with Libby Bradshaw or your Editor.

Contacts:

Boat entries	Ann Hancox	081-542 8998
Trade	Richard Bird	081-857 6367
Volunteers	Joe Busby	081-864 3591
General queries	Libby Bradshaw	081-874 2787

BRENTFORD

Sat. 11 – Sun. 12 July at Boston Manor

Readers will recall reading that the Branch backed a group of our members in the Brentford area who ran a small rally there last July in conjunction with Brentford Carnival. This was done at short notice and was very small, but proved enough of a success to encourage them and us to mount a full-scale Rally in that area this July, building on the experience of the team who ran last year's event.

This year's Rally is being run jointly with Brentford Carnival, and will use the site at Boston Manor Park, adjacent to Clitheroe's Lock, that was used for the National a few years ago. That indicates the huge space we've got available, both on land and afloat. This year marks the 350th anniversary of the Battle of Brentford which is to be re-enacted, by one of the societies that specialise in such activities, as part of the Carnival—not a routine thing to find at a Boat Rally!

In addition, the event will incorporate IWA's annual national Waterways for Youth event—the second time London will have hosted it in just under two years.

So do come and support the event: there's clearly going to be plenty to do for all the family. Boat entry forms are already printed and are available from either of the people listed below. More details in our next issue, when planning will be much further advanced.

Contacts:

Daytime	Jim Mason	081-568 7041
Evenings	Marion Scott	081-560 6044

Narrowboating on the Amazon

Whilst one expects to find narrow-beam craft on the canals of Venice, or even in China, the last place on earth one expects to see a narrow-beam craft operating as a working boat is on the broad reaches of the Amazon.

Last Summer we had the chance to visit Iquitos, Peru, on the upper reaches of the River Amazon. Iquitos is the highest point which ocean-going craft regularly reach on the river. The amazing thing is that Iquitos is over 2,300 miles from the sea, yet still 1,100 miles from the Amazon's source. The river here is already up to $\frac{1}{4}$ mile wide and 30 feet deep during the dry season, and has a flow of between 6 and 10 knots. The speed of the flow is not caused by the gradient, but simply by the volume of water upstream coming down from the Andes. It is because of this and the need to be able to go up the narrow backwaters that a special sort of narrowboat has developed as the maid-of-all-work for this section of the river.

The craft are of two main styles. The majority are around 7ft wide and 35ft long although some 'collectives' (market boats) have a 10ft beam and are 45ft in length. All the craft are locally built from wood on slipways by the river. Generally they have a hardwood frame which is covered by overlapping planks. These are flexed to shape and pinned into place. Since they take a lot of wear they are generally replaced about every three years. The craft have flat bottom sections, but with stems and skegs built into the line. However very long swims at both the bow and the stern effectively reduce the maximum floor width to around four feet. This disadvantage is overcome by the use of built-in ledge seats on both sides of the hull. Some boats have bow tanks of steel, mainly used for fuel storage, and all are powered by 4-stroke petrol engines giving outputs of between 50 and 60 HP. The combination of long swims, kant sides and deep water enable the boats to fly through the water at between 20 and 30 knots in the main river channel. I regularly covered 50 miles downstream in 2½ hours. The upstream journey took another hour.

The cabins on the boats reflect the weather conditions of the area, where the constant temperature (78-80°) and the high humidity (80-85%) demand open sides through which a breeze can circulate.

Regular tropical rain forces the need for a strong pitched roof, and these are covered with local palm leaves. Roll-down plastic side-sheets are used to protect the boats overnight and to stop cargoes from getting wet.

All boats are built with 'facilities'. This consists of an extension to the stern on which an upstanding cabin is built. The hut is approached by a single plank alongside the outboard engine. On the better-quality boats plastic loo seats hide the hole below. The flush is achieved by turning up the speed to the inboard outboard which at high revs offers a bidet effect.

We were surprised by the size of the loads carried by these craft: four or five large oil drums, baskets of bananas and general supplies interspersed by hammocks for the long-distance travellers. Much of the traffic we saw was to and from Iquitos, a town set in the heart of the rain forest and only accessible by water or air. What surprised us was the versatility of these craft. They were equally at home on the widest river sections, where the wind whips up sizeable waves, and on the narrow, winding creeks which offer the only access to the Indian villages of the River People. The shallow draft, especially at the bow, is used to moor up against the logs which act as steps and jetties on the steeply-sloping river banks.

Narrowboating on the Amazon provided us with a new look at cruising, and one that was far removed from what we know on our canals. But somehow I don't think that palm leaves on the roof and open flush loos would be very practical design features if the craft were imported to the U.K. Even so, few would stand aside from the opportunity of sampling this different form of narrow boating if the chance came their way.

ROGER SQUIRES

IWA London Branch 200 Club

In the August edition of *Excalibur* mention was made of the donations which the Branch has made over the last few years. One reason why we have managed to donate so much is that the expenses of running the Branch are largely covered by money raised by the 200 Club. Since its formation in 1985/6, annual donations to the Branch have been £360 in 1986, £600 in 1987, £750 in 1988, £800 in 1990 and (to the end of September) £400 in 1991. A similar amount of money has been returned to 200 Club members in prizes.

The overall prize money is half the total subscriptions and we pay out one sixth of the prize fund every two months—in short the equivalent of one month's subscriptions. Prize draws take place at every second Branch Social Meeting and the prize money is split four ways: half to the first ticket drawn, a quarter to the second and an eighth each to the third and fourth.

Recent prizewinners have been:
JUNE: David Stevenson, Capt. T W Alsop, R J Weldon and Mrs P Gray.
AUGUST: A C Woodhouse, Mrs J Pugsley, Lewis Phillips and J S Rose.
OCTOBER: A C Woodhouse, R J Hudson, P Faulkener and David Stevenson.
DECEMBER: Eric Garland, B Rutter, Miss J R Smith and K Morgan.

Membership is currently around the 130 mark so there is plenty of room for newcomers. Why not fill in the form on the back cover of this issue (photocopy it if you don't want to cut up your copy of *Excalibur*) and help the work of the Branch. To avoid having to renew annually you could complete the Banker's Order, either for an annual payment of £12 or for 12 monthly payments of £1. This is also advantageous to the Branch, as it reduces our postal costs.

DAVE GREATOREX

New Year Draw Result

Our New Year Draw has attracted a very encouraging response. In all 3,090 tickets were bought which represents an income to the Branch of £1,545!

To all those who have supported the Draw by purchasing tickets your committee would like to extend a big thankyou. We would also like to thank those who have sent donations to the branch for the Draw without purchasing tickets. Finally, and of equal significance, is that there have been no expenses on the Draw. The prizes have all been donated as has the printing of the draw tickets. So the income above will be the total contribution to Branch funds.

Please support those who have donated prizes to the Draw. In particular, we would recommend that members try hiring from Sovereign Narrowboats, who undoubtedly have one of the most luxurious hire fleets on the canal system and have, from the start of the 1992 season, relocated their base to Banbury on the southern Oxford. We have a certain amount of guilt about Sovereign Narrowboats as in the advertisement in the last issue of 'Excalibur' and on the Draw tickets we referred

to them as Sovereign Marine, a company that went into liquidation in the early 80's! To Ray and Elaine Treadwell, who run Sovereign Narrowboats, a big thankyou for their superb first prize and an even bigger apology for our error.

The winning tickets were drawn by our vice-president, Arthur Farrand Radley, at the Branch meeting on 20 February. The winners are given below.

1st Prize, Sovereign Narrowboats narrowboat holiday: Mr Baily of Purley. 2nd Prize, Bill Hickey narrowboat fenders or knot board: Mr Draper of Hillingdon. 3rd Prize, Uxbridge Boat Centre £50 gift voucher: Mr Flynn of London NW1. 4th Prize, 'My Fair Lady' dinner cruise: Mr Clarke of Beckenham. 5th Prize, 'Waterways World' annual subscription: Mr Beaver of Plumstead. 6th Prize, Alex Prowse waterway colour print: Mr Scott of Norbury. 7th Prize, 'Jason's Trip' lunch trip: Mrs Plaice of Eltham. 8th Prize, IWA pewter tankard: M. Pashby of Scarborough. 9th Prize, IWA silver bud vase or silver narrowboat: Mr Christie of London SE1

On the Metreau

News and Gossip of London's Waterways

BACK ON THE BACK RIVERS

There has been a welcome return to the Bow Back Rivers. The dredger *River of Hope*, featured on the front of the Spring 1991 issue of *Excalibur*, has come back on hire from Watermasters (UK) Ltd to work on cleaning up the Three Mills River under the auspices of the East London Rivers Initiative (ELRI), a partnership between Newham Borough, BW and local business Kesslers International. The re-launch of *River of Hope* took place on 7 January, hosted by the Dane Group Ltd, who have donated £2000 to the project. Region Chairman David Allison-Beer represented IWA at the ceremony. ELRI has already cleared over 1000 tons of rubbish from the Bow Back and Waterworks Rivers.

Let me take this opportunity to remind you of the KESCRG/IWA work-camp on the Back Rivers during the period 24 July to 9 August this year. If you're interested in taking part, please contact Ken Parish on 0622-858329.

THAMES MAINTENANCE CUTS

Most of us are well-used to the difficulties which stem from cuts in Government grant-in-aid to BW, but the latter isn't the only organisation with this problem. In October the N.R.A. announced a postponement of some of their planned winter maintenance programme as a result of a reduction in their grant.

HELP WANTED IN ISLINGTON

The Islington Narrow Boat Association has owned and run a community narrowboat, *Angel of Islington*, based at City Road Basin in Islington, for over 15 years. The narrowboat is used by a wide variety of local groups, from toddlers to senior citizens, handicapped and able-bodied. It is funded by a grant from the London Borough of Islington, from the contributions made by groups hiring the boat and by donations. The Association employs a full-time skipper and a part-time booking officer, but is managed by a committee of volunteers.

We are interested in finding new people to assist in running the boat, and anyone prepared to give up a little time is invited to contact Crystal Hale, 76 Noel Road, London N1, phone 071-226 4597. The skills we are looking for are secretarial, fund-raising, boat maintenance and financial.

THE TRAVELS OF PANACEA

In our August issue we mentioned how Canalway Cavalcade Director Libby Bradshaw's boat *Panacea* gets used by all sorts of people other than Libby herself. The saga continues. Libby hadn't intended taking the boat to the National this year until Peter Jackman intervened. He had booked his own boat *Triggs* into the National, but it was stranded by stoppages on the Basingstoke. So, in conjunction with various other folk he took Libby's boat instead, Libby joining them for part of the National itself. After the National, Peter had to return home and left the boat in Wolverhampton. We expected to hear that somehow it would get back to London.

During the Autumn, Libby found time to use her own boat for once, and got it as near home as Trevor on the Llangollen Canal! It was last heard of being worked South by Richard Bird (*Excalibur's* printer) and Dorothy Robbie. Who knows who'll be next.

THE BASINGSTOKE AGAIN

Do you fancy a day out in glorious surroundings with, if you're lucky, a bit of boating thrown in? If so you could join a squad doing bankside clearance on the Basingstoke Canal. If you've got a dinghy or a trailable boat, you could bring it and enlarge the flotilla. Warm clothing, stout footwear and your own food are needed. Tools and overgrowth are provided. They are currently working West of Crookham wharf (or were when this item was sent to me!) and meet on the first and third Sundays of each month. For more details ring Peter Jackman on 0483-772132. (*That's the third mention of Peter in this issue so far: is he taking over?*)

ARE YOU A SPURIOUS RADAR ECHO?

The campaign to take the sting out of the PLA's new regulations to force all vessels over 20m (which includes full-length narrowboats) on the tidal Thames to carry v.h.f. radio continues. The sharp question concerns such craft making passage between Brentford and Teddington. *Excalibur* has seen copies of correspondence between the PLA and David Daines, London

One of your Editor's days on duty coincided with a visit by Tony Baldry MP, Minister at the DOE with responsibility for BW. He was there for two functions. In the morning he launched BW's pamphlet responding to the Citizen's Charter. My impression of the document was that it contained a lot about replying to letters and nothing at all about maintaining the Cut. But perhaps that's what BW's all about now.

In the afternoon, Mr Baldry visited the IWA for a couple of presentations. The first was IWA presenting the Minister with a portfolio of two major IWA events this year in which he took part: the National Festival at Windmill End and the WRG Big Dig on the Wilts & Berks Canal. He was present for the whole time of both events and an active participant.

Then he returned the compliment by joining representatives of the computer firm Wang UK to present two computers donated by the latter, one each to IWA and KESCRG (Kent and East Sussex Canal Restoration Group). London IWA member Manton Waters was there in a dual capacity: in her capacity as an IWA Council Member she had arranged all the publicity for the event, and as a representative of KESCRG she received one of the computers.

MOORINGS AVAILABLE

Hillingdon Canal Cruising Club, who host our Area Meetings in Uxbridge, have some non-residential moorings available at their Uxbridge base on the Grand Union (southwards from the boaryard opposite the *General Elliot*. The moorings are for boats up to 30ft and the mooring fees will be at the same rate as BW Class 4. Further information is available from Malcolm Knight on 0895-254308.

LONDON CANAL MUSEUM

We'd hoped to have an article in this issue previewing the London Canal Museum in Battlebridge Basin, but at the time of writing the arrangements for the opening are not finalised, although it is expected to be soon after our publication date. The building, an old ice-house, has been refurbished, a curator appointed and a exhibits assembled. By now, WRG are due to have cleared out the old ice-pit to see what relics may be hidden in its depths. The museum still needs more artifacts for its collection. Members with something of historic canal interest to offer are invited to contact Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti on 081-882 1337. Once the museum is open, we plan to review it in a future *Excalibur*.

This annual event has come and gone. As always, IWA was represented and London Branch provided a good number of the team of volunteers on the stand. This year we were in a new position which we didn't feel was a well placed as where we have been the last few years, but at least we were adjacent to the other Inland Waterways exhibitors (not enough of them for our liking?). My impression of the three days I was there was that the crowds were thinner, but it was difficult to judge how much this may have been caused by lower attendance and how much by the fact that there was more exhibition space in use this year.

EARS COURT BOAT SHOW 1992

You may already have heard that BW propose redeveloping most of the site of their Bulls Bridge Depot, and that outline planning permission has been applied for to build a supermarket there. The Branch has lodged an objection on two grounds: (a) the loss of the present facilities, for which BW has not planned any replacement and (b) the design of the proposed building which would turn its back totally on the canal and would not provide any moorings for shoppers arriving by boat. The latest news to reach me (thanks to our member Miranda Stead) is that the DOE have put a 'hold' on the plan pending a decision whether it counts as strategic planning or not.

BULLS BRIDGE

IWA member and Secretary of the Historic Narrowboat Owners' Club, David Acknowledges that on the commercially active part of the Tideway the international standard of radio reporting for vessels over 20m makes sense, but argues that in the upper part of the tideway (where some other aspects of the new safety provisions do not apply) it is an irrelevance. He argues that the boundary for the purpose of the wharf rule need not be Teddington, but could well coincide with the end of the new bridge light system at Putney, thus freeing full-length boats on passages between Brentford and Teddington from the rule.

The tone of PLA's side of the correspondence is hard to believe. David's protest at NBOC's being referred to as a 'spurious minority' produced a reply comparing him/them/us to a 'spurious radar echo'. So now we know what the PLA think of us.

The fight (as the Law Reports don't quite say) continues.

Reminder of Region and Branch Annual General Meetings

Notice was given in the last issue of *Excalibur* that the Annual General meetings of the South East Region and London Branch will be held on the following dates:—

SOUTH EAST REGION

Thursday 12 March 1992, 8.00 pm at AEU House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford. The Region AGM will take place immediately after the Chelmsford Branch AGM. See map in the next column for how to get there.

The A.G.M. will be followed by a talk by Ron Martin on 'National Trail Boat Rallies'.

LONDON BRANCH

Thursday 19 March 1992, 7.30 pm at the Abbey Community Centre, 24 Great Smith Street, Westminster. This is close to Westminster and St James' Park tube stations and convenient for many bus routes.

The AGM will be followed by a talk by Mike Stevens on 'What is Parliament up to with the Waterways?'.

The Agenda for each meeting will be as follows:

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last AGM, together with the Minutes of any Special General Meetings held during the period since the last AGM.
3. Matters arising from the above Minutes.
4. Report of the Chairman.
5. Report of the Secretary.
6. Report of the Treasurer and presentation of accounts.
7. Adoption of audited accounts.
8. Appointment of Honorary Auditor.
9. Election of Committee.
10. Any other business.
11. Address by Guest Speaker or other event.

NOTE

Nominations for Committees should be in writing, signed by the proposer, seconder and nominee. Nominations must be received by the Branch/Region Secretary, as appropriate, not less than 14 days before the AGM concerned.

BRANCH SECRETARY

Marcia Davies

169 Langham Road, London N15 3LP

Home: 081-881 4688

Work : 071-236 4232

REGION SECRETARY

Mike Stimpson

149a High Street, Rickmansworth

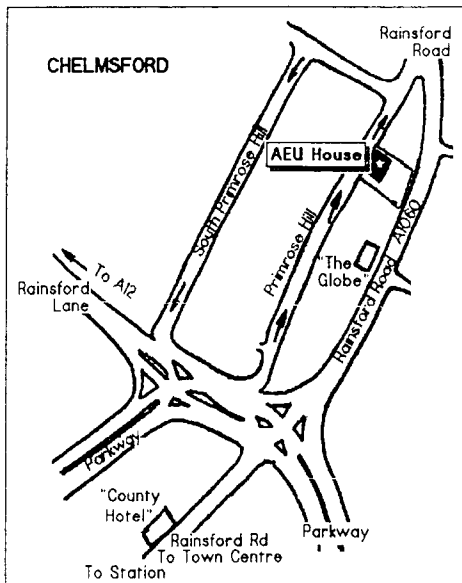
Herts WD3 1AR

Home: 0923-721559

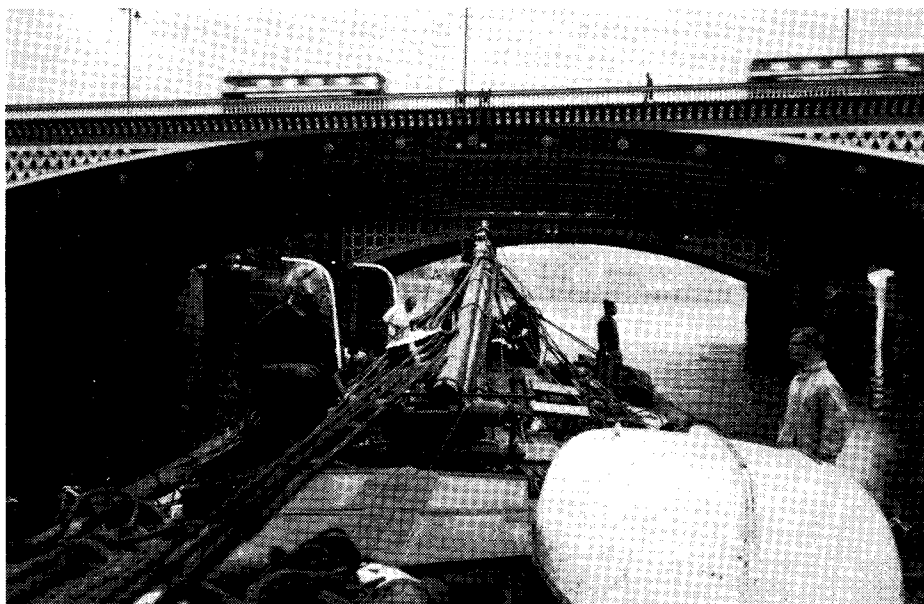
Work: 0923-770425

Mobile: 0831-815357

HOW TO GET TO THE REGION A.G.M.



A Rare Sight



The picture shows the Thames spritsail barge *Pudge*, with her mast and sailing gear lowered, passing through Blackfriars Bridge on a rare trip up the London River last Summer. *Pudge* is one of two sailing barges owned by the Thames Barge Sailing Club, an organisation, like IWA, formed in the years just after the Second World War to help preserve a threatened heritage.

The trip up the Thames was arranged as a three-week charter by a group of TBSC members. The journey started from the barge's base at Maldon and after crossing the estuary for a couple of days' sailing on the Kent coast, they came up-river on the tide and joined the TBSC's other barge *Centaur* in St Katherine's for a couple of Open Days. Next morning there was no wind, so the two barges motored down-river in company and *Pudge* lay overnight off Greenhithe. Next day, having victualled, they sailed back up-river, took on fuel from a fuel barge in the Lower Pool and lay overnight on the lighter roads there, where they lowered the masts and gear.

Off early the next day with very careful timing to make the best use of the tide without running into head-room problems at

the bridges. Through Teddington and into the non-tidal river, they lay overnight at an old timber wharf at Walton. Next day they had to go round the Desborough Loop as the bridges on the Cut are too low for them. They moored at Weybridge, opposite Shepperton lock, which is too narrow for *Pudge*, then turned and retraced their steps to an overnight mooring at Hampton Court.

The morning saw them turning again in Kingston to come up to a mooring on Railway Wharf, where they raised the gear again for another highly successful Open Day the next day. Then, with changes in the crew, it was down with the gear again and off to catch the tide at Richmond and to an overnight mooring. On Monday, a brief pause at Butlers Wharf for some more crew changes, and *Pudge* was on her way back to her home waters again. Nobody knows how long it is since a fully-rigged sailing barge came so far up-river on the Thames.

Details of the Thames Barge Sailing Club are available from its Secretary, c/o the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

Photograph by Peter Roberts

Readers Write

NAVAL ERRORS AND OMISSIONS?

I am pleased to read that London Branch has decided to retain the title bestowed on its magazine by the Founding Editor, thus bearing the emblem of the Association.

It was a great disappointment to me that your contributor allowed inaccuracies to spoil a very interesting article on Naval connections with the Thames.

The *Great Harry* was built at Erith, which in common with other towns ending in 'ithe' (Greenhithe, Rotherhithe etc) the Romans named as places where ships lie (deep water). The *Great Britain* was not launched but floated out of her dry dock at Bristol into the Floating Harbour after modification of the masonry of the dock to allow exit. The *Great Eastern* was launched sideways at Millwall, named after seven windmills formerly on the site. There are remnants of a canal on the site of Woolwich Arsenal, for the heavy gun barrels to be taken by special barges to be 'proved' elsewhere, there being no facilities at Woolwich.

That puts the record straight, but why leave out the following:

HMS Warrior was the first iron Naval vessel built by the Thames Ironworks Shipbuilding and Engineering Company. Their 30th and last, and the last on the Thames (due to the shallow water) was *HMS Thunderer*, a super-Dreadnaught. The first keel plates were laid on 13 April 1910. She was launched on 1 February 1911 but had to go downstream to deeper water at Dagenham to be fitted-out. Samuel Williams and Son built a ferro-concrete jetty called 'Thunderer Wharf, later 'Thames Terminal'. The superstructure, 12" armour, ten 13.5" & sixteen 4" guns, four 3-pounders and three 21" torpedo tubes were all completed by June 1912.

Incidentally Thames Ironworks Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. had a football team, 'The Irons' which later became West Ham United. All the details of *HMS Thunderer* are taken from an article in *Thames Police Association Journal* of Autumn 1979 by Jim Howson, a retired Thames Division officer.

RON T MARTIN
(ex SS14 Thames Division)
Shorne, Kent

Editor's Note: Surely the 'hithe' ending is Saxon rather than Roman?

MORE ABOUT THE TIDEWAY

I read Brian Milwood's letter *A Trip on the Tideway* with interest as I am greatly concerned about safety on the River. I wonder if I could offer some comment and advice.

We all must remember the Tideway must be respected and not abused. The Thames tides are fickle, and cross currents a trap for the unwary. The Thames is a busy Commercial Waterway with large craft. Any craft venturing out on the Tideway must have sufficient power to stem the tide, otherwise they are a hazard to other craft as well as to themselves. Also, essential if you are a stranger to the River, you must have a Chart (Imray Yachting Chart C2, *River Thames, Teddington to Southend*). This identifies all of the Piers and Moorings that might be used in an emergency. Lastly, no-one should start on a voyage that they cannot reasonably complete in daylight.

Before any trip on the tideway it is essential to consult the Tide Tables. Not only do these identify the High and Low Tides, but more importantly they show the volumes of the ebb and flow. Spring Tides run twice as fast as Neaps. Thus if your engine does not have substantial power you are unwise to try to push down Bow Creek on a Spring Tide since the transit time can double as against the neap.

For any transit you should be aware of the potential transit time. The normal narrowboat takes 2 ¾ hours from Limehouse to Brentford. On a neap tide the transit time from Bow Locks to Brentford is 4 ¼ hours, but on a Spring Tide this can go up to nearly 5 hours because of the long push down Bow Creek. Bearing in mind that the weekday opening times at Bow Locks are from 4 hours before High Tide at London Bridge, or, put another way, 5 hours before High Tide at Brentford, the departure window is critically small. It is thus essential to plan ahead and foolhardy to go if you cannot reach your destination in reasonable safety.

Your correspondent asks about mid-transit moorings. Regrettably these are few and nearly all require prior booking. Only in emergencies should one tie up on the various driftwood lighters and buoys along the route, and in the Tideway up to Wandsworth you will always be a victim of wash from larger commercial craft.

Subject to prior agreement the following options for mooring are situated en route from Bow Creek:

1. Greenland Pier, adjacent to South Dock Marina entrance in Limehouse Reach.
2. Opposite St Katherine's Dock Pier and a new pier under construction outside St Katherine's Dock, just below Tower Bridge.
3. Westminster Boating Base, Pimlico, in Nine Elms Reach.
4. Cadogan Pier, Chelsea Reach.
5. Chelsea Harbour Pier, Battersea Reach.
6. Putney Pier, Wandsworth Reach.
7. Hammersmith Pier, Chiswick Reach.
8. TWA Pier above Olivers Ait.
9. The barge moorings off Brentford Wharf Estate.

These are not public landings but can offer mooring options if it is essential. You should not, however, simply turn up and demand a space as you could be turned away.

My own view is that narrowboats are not best equipped for Tideway mooring and it is far better to plan each tidal transit as a single trip, locking onto non-tidal water before mooring up. The Tideway is safe so long as you plan ahead and follow the basic rules and remember to KEEP TO THE RIGHT out of the Fairway. If you do so you will have an enjoyable trip.

ROGER SQUIRES
Rotherhithe

Editor's Note:

Roger Squires is Commodore of the St Pancras Cruising Club, who organise an annual London Ring Cruise. See page 15 for details of this year's Cruise.

Readers will also be interested to know that the Branch leaflet Thames Tideway Guide has recently been comprehensively revised.

BRANCH MEETINGS

I am writing to you on the vexed and sometimes emotional subject of attendance at Branch Meetings. My wife and I live in Essex (no jokes please) just inside the M25 boundary and therefore are automatically members of London Branch of the IWA. Like many other members we are interested in the IWA but have never attended a Branch Meeting. This is mainly because I work in Central London and to attend any meeting would entail 'hanging around' for a couple of hours or more and then coming home late at night.

We were therefore delighted to find that a local meeting was planned. Our nearest venue was at Waltham Abbey, just a few hundred yards from the site of the 1989 National Rally. The meeting was held in the very pleasant surroundings of the Rammey Marsh Cruising Club, where the Club members extended a warm welcome. Everything was considered, with a minibuss available to provide transport from the local BR station, but can you imagine our disappointment to find that apart from the members of the RMCC there was just one enthusiastic young lady from WRG and my wife and I.

Mr Garland gave a superb talk and slide show on the work of the Branch, was obviously deeply committed to his tasks and was able to hide any feelings he had about the poor turnout. We enjoyed the evening and the absent members were the losers.

ANTHONY HOOPER
Iford

Editor's Note:

By the time you read this, the Branch Committee is due to have reviewed the cycle of local meetings held before Christmas and decided on future plans (details in our next issue). We are keen to reach out to Branch members like Mr & Mrs Hooper who don't find our Central London meetings convenient.



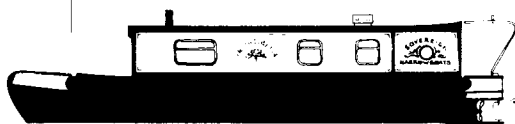
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Telephone: (0252) 615103.**



Waterways Events in and around London

FEBRUARY

Thursday 27th 7.30 for 8pm IWA Kent & E Sussex

Fountain Inn, Barming, Maidstone: Roddy McKee: *The Paddle Steamer Preservation Society and its steamers*
Dig at Hanwell

Sat. 29th—Sun. 1 March London WRG

MARCH

Sunday 1st 2.30pm

IWA LONDON BRANCH

Guided walk along the Regent's Canal from Camden to Paddington (Meet at Camden Town tube)

Saturday 7th—Sunday 8th

NATIONAL WATERWAYS

CLEAN-UP WEEKEND

Tuesday 10th 7.30 for 8pm

IWA LONDON BRANCH

Hillingdon Canal Club, Waterloo Rd, Uxbridge: *Politics & Canals* (Local Parliamentary Candidates invited unless election arrangements intervene)

Wednesday 11th 8pm

Grand Union Canal Society

Social meeting at Camelot Rugby Club, Chaulden Lane, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead AEU House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford.

Thursday 12th 8pm

IWA Chelmsford

Branch & REGION A.G.M. followed by Ron Martin: *National Trail Boat Rallies*

Sat. 15th—Sun. 16th

KESCRG

(Kent & East Sussex Canal Restoration Group) Dig at Hanwell

Tuesday 17th 8pm

IWA Hertfordshire

Hatfield Cricket Club, Ascots Lane, Welwyn Garden City: Branch A.G.M. followed by Richard Thomas: *President*

Thursday 19th 7 for 7.30pm IWA LONDON BRANCH

Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, SW1 * NEW VENUE * BRANCH A.G.M. followed by Mike Stevens: *What is Parliament up to with the Waterways?*

Sat. 21st—Sun. 22nd

London WRG

Dig: venue to be announced

Tuesday 25th 7.30 for 8pm

IWA Kent & E Sussex

Fountain Inn, Barming, Maidstone: Branch AGM

Saturday 28th 12.00 noon

Grand Union Canal Society

Noggin & Natter at the Boat, Berkhamsted

APRIL

Saturday 4th—Sunday 5th

IWA LONDON BRANCH

Branch outing to visit Yorkshire waterways.

Sunday 5th 2.30 pm

IWA LONDON BRANCH

Guided walk along the Regent's Canal from Camden to Islington. (Meet at Camden Town tube) (Kent & East Sussex Canal Restoration Group)

Saturday 11th—Sunday 12th

KESCRG

Dig on the Wey & Arun Canal

Sunday 5th 11 am

IWA Kent & East Sussex

Visit to Leigh Flood Barrier, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh, near Tonbridge

Thursday 9th 8pm

IWA Chelmsford

AEU House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford. Arthur Farrand Radley: *The B.C.N.*

Saturday 11th—Sunday 12th

London WRG

Dig on the Chesterfield Canal

Thursday 16th 7 for 7.30pm IWA LONDON BRANCH

Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith St, SW1 * NEW VENUE * Arthur Dungate: Audio visual presentation about the Basingstoke Canal and other topics.

Tuesday 21st 8pm

IWA Hertfordshire

Hatfield Cricket Club, Ascots Lane, Welwyn Garden City: Tim Whitlock: *Thomas Telford*

Tuesday 28th 7.30 for 8pm

IWA Kent & E Sussex

Fountain Inn, Barming, Maidstone: Ron Cox: *Canals of Wine*

MAY

SATURDAY 2nd—	CANALWAY CAVALCADE	Little Venice
MONDAY 4th	KESCRG	(Kent & East Sussex Canal Restoration Group) Work-camp for Cavalcade Site and Services
Sunday 6th 2.30 pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Guided walk along the Regent's Canal from Camden to Paddington. (Meet at Camden Town tube)
Wednesday 13th 8pm	Grand Union Canal Society	Social meeting at Camelot Rugby Club, Chaulden Lane, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead
Thursday 14th 8pm	IWA Chelmsford	AEU House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford. Tim and Wendy Atkin: <i>Fenland Waterways</i>
Sunday 17th	IWA Chelmsford	Possible cruise on trip-boat <i>Princess Pocobontas</i> from Gravesend to Greenwich and return. (Cost and details from Molly Beard—see below)
Tuesday 19th 6.30 pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Guided walk along the Regent's Canal from Camden to Islington. (Meet at Camden Town tube)
Tuesday 19th 8pm	IWA Hertfordshire	Hatfield Cricket Club, Ascots Lane, Welwyn Garden City: John Clinch: <i>A wet look at Asia</i>
Thursday 21st 7 for 7.30pm	IWA LONDON BRANCH	Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, SW1 * NEW VENUE * Dr Michael Essex- Lopresti: <i>The London Canals Museum</i>
Sat. 25th—Monday 25th	London WRG	Dig on the Montgomery Canal
Sat. 25th—Sun. 24th	St Pancras Cruising Club	London Ring Cruise: meet Limehouse Basin 2.30 pm Saturday
Sat. 25th—Mon. 25th	AWCC (Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs)	Rally at Brentford Recreation Ground
Sat. 25th—Mon. 25th	Wendover Arm Trust	Wendover Canal Festival on the Wendover Arm

NEW VENUE FOR LONDON BRANCH CENTRAL LONDON MEETINGS

Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BU

Tube: Westminster or St James's Park. Lots of bus routes nearby

FURTHER DETAILS FROM

AWCC	Trevor Gillam	081-866 9581
Grand Union Canal Society	Max Fedrick	0895-676814
IWA Chelmsford Branch	Molly Beard	0702-554492
IWA Herts Branch	Greta Wright	0727-860137
IWA Kent & East Sussex	Angela Madle	0634-722661
IWA LONDON BRANCH		
Canalway Cavalcade: Boats	Ann Hancox	081-542 8998
Canalway Cavalcade: General	Libby Bradshaw	081-874 2787
Canalway Cavalcade: Trade	Richard Bird	081-857 6367
Central London meetings	Tim Lewis	081-530 7926
Outing	Tim Lewis	081-530 7926
Uxbridge meetings	Mike Stimpson	0923-770425
Walks	Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti	081-882 1337
KESCRG	Ken Parish	0622-858329
London WRG	Lesley McFadyen	081-693 3266
St Pancras Cruising Club	Roger Squires	071-232 0987
Wendover Arm Trust	Roger Lewis	0442-823378

INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION LONDON BRANCH 200 CLUB

TO: The Officers

Membership number:.....

I wish to become a member of the Inland Waterways Association London Branch 200 Club
and I enclose my cheque / standing order form in payment for memberships.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

.....

I agree to be bound by the rules of the Club.

SIGNATURE: DATE:

BANKER'S ORDER

TO: (Name and address of your Bank)

..... Bank plc

Address:

.....

My / Our Deposit / Current Account number:.....

Please pay to the account of the Inland Waterways Association London Branch 200 Club, No.
80529257, sorting code 20-40-33 at Barclays Bank plc, Highbury Branch, 2 Highbury Corner,
London N5 1RE, the sum of £..... on the first day of *..... and until
further notice on the ** first day of each month thereafter / first day of that month annually.

SIGNED: DATE:

ADDRESS:

.....

* *insert the month following the current month.* ** *delete as appropriate*

TO BANK: When making payments please quote IWA Ref.no.

PLEASE RETURN BOTH HALVES OF THIS FORM TO
DAVID GREATOREX, 17 MANSE ROAD, LONDON N16 7QH

L O N D O N B R A N C H D I A R Y

CANAL CLEANUP

March 7th BOW BACK RIVERS (East London)
 Start 10am Blaker Road by City Mill Lock
 End 3:30pm Meet by Abbey Scaffolding
 Rubbish clearance

March 8th HANWELL (Ealing)
 Start 10am Hanwell top lock (by Three Bridges)
 End 3:30pm Scrub clearance

SOCIAL MEETINGS

March 12th S.E.Region AGM - Chelmsford
 Start 8pm AUEW House, Primrose Hill, Chelmsford
 March 19th London Branch AGM
 Start 7:30pm Abbey Community Centre
 Refreshments WILL be available

March 31st ORPINGTON, Kent
 Start 8pm "White Hart", High Street, Orpington
 Arthur Farrand Radley
 Canals of the South East

April 7th CROYDON
 Start 8pm "Railway Bell", North End, Croydon
 Opposite West Croydon BR and bus stations
 Speaker : Ken Parish - KESCRG (to be confirmed)
 Canal restoration

April 14th UXBRIDGE
 Start 8pm Hillingdon Canal Cruising Club
 Waterloo Road, Uxbridge
 Starts : 8pm

April 16th Central London Social
 Start 7:30pm Abbey Community Centre
 Refreshments WILL be available

April 23rd WALTHAM ABBEY
 Start 8pm Ramme Marsh Cruising Club
 Lea Road, Waltham Abbey (see map)
 Speaker : Neil Edwards (to be confirmed)
 Neil is a member of the Waterway Recovery Group
 and chairman of the Waterways for All committee

May 21st Central London Social
 Start 7:30pm Abbey Community Centre
 Refreshments WILL be available

June 23rd CROYDON
 Start 8pm "Railway Bell", North End, Croydon
 Opposite West Croydon BR and bus stations

For more details of meetings or transport arrangements contact:
 Eric Garland - 0322 342296 Tim Lewis - 081-530 7926

OTHER ACTIVITIES

March 17th Wallington Library
 to March 28th Inland Waterways Exhibition
 including display by IWA London Branch
 Help required at weekends to man exhibition
 Help also required March 16th to set up
 Contact : Rosie Limming 0895 252011

June 9th Guided Waterway Walk UXBRIDGE
 Start 7:30pm Led by David Allison-Beer, SE Region Chairman
 meet Hillingdon Canal Club

June 18th Guided walk BOW BACK RIVERS
 Start 7:30pm meet in TESCOs car park by House Mill bridge

COMMITTEE VACANCIES

There are several vacancies on the London Branch committee.
 If you are interested but do not wish to commit for a three year term, you
 could be co-opted for a shorter period (maximum 1 year). For more
 information talk to any member of the committee or phone Eric Garland.

