

Sou'Wester

May - August 2016 / Issue 172
IWA South West Region



**Caroline Jones presenting Phil Hughes with the
Brian Sheppard Award.**

South West Region Committees

South West Region Committee:

Chairman:	Roger Holmes	Members:	Bob Abbott
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Sou'Wester Editor:	Joyce Potts		Peter Kelly
Navigation Committee			Lynda Martin
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Chairman:	<i>Vacant</i>		
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West Country Branch Committee:

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Hon. Treasurer:	Ray Alexander		
Minutes Secretary:	Chris Jewell		
Volunteer Co-ordinator:	Mike Slade		

To get in touch, please see "Contacts" inside the back cover

Region Chairman

I spent a busy 12 days attending the branch AGMs in March. It was good to see so many members attending. This is the time to ask questions and give your views . . . As with this magazine we may not all agree with the views expressed but will not restrict the opportunity to raise them.

I was pleased to see new members on some branch committees and sorry to say goodbye to others. It would be wrong not to mention John Gornall and his wife Rosemary. John has been chair of Avon and Wilts branch for some time and active for many years before that. He was a stalwart of the region committee and I am sure everybody will wish them both all the best in the future. I know that John has said that he will be back in a less active role when his health improves.

I look forward to each year at AGM time for the little trips that are arranged. I will remember this year for South Wales branch putting me in a small electric boat and taking me into the locks at 14 Locks Centre on the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal.

On a lighter note the Region committee is looking at two possible sites for a region outing later in the year. Once the details are finalised it will be announced here or if that is not possible then by email.

It is now becoming more usual to communicate by email although we must not forget those who prefer other means. Successful communication needs Head Office to have everybody's latest details. It would be helpful if your changes you could inform membership@waterways.org.uk

Roger Holmes

Notices

IWA Avon and Wilts Branch 100 Club

The winners of the Spring Draw for the Branch 100 club were:

1st prize:	Mr Phillips	£29.50
2nd prize:	Mr Yearndal	£17.70
3rd prize:	Mr Ware	£11.80

The monies raised this year will be donated to the WRG Van Appeal. If you would like to participate in the 100 Club draws (3 per year) please contact: vivienne.m.hook@blueyonder.co.uk

News

Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Campaign

IWA was well represented at a public drop-in information session held at the Bridgwater Arts Centre on the afternoon of Thursday, 10th March, the purpose of which was to provide an update on the progress of the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier and the steps that are being taken to determine how and where it should be constructed.

The drop-in session was hosted by Sedgemoor District Council and the Environment Agency along with CH2MHill, the consultants. CH2MHill were appointed last December and have been tasked with reviewing a range of potential locations for the barrier, gate arrangements, silt implications and navigation issues. An 18-month timescale for this work means that it will need to be completed by mid-2017 at the latest. The drop-in session included a number of information boards setting out the 7 potential locations for the tidal barrier that have been identified, together with a summary of the criteria affecting each location. Determining the location for the tidal barrier is one of the early items on the agenda.

A separate meeting for 'stakeholders' in the Tidal Barrier project was held in the morning and this was attended by Roy Sutton, IWA Hon. Engineer and myself. Some 35 representatives of various interested parties were present. Presentations were given by the Environment Agency and the consultants on the tidal barrier and also by Sedgemoor District Council who summarised the implications for the recent local plan consultation and in particular the impact of the barrier on future housing developments. The next meeting for stakeholders is scheduled for July and a sub-committee of stakeholders is to be set up to help consider barrier operation, silt and navigation matters.

IWA has submitted a number of Reports to Sedgemoor District Council and the Environment Agency which deal with issues that are of concern, including maintaining navigation once the barrier has been built, enhancing navigation above the barrier during the boating season utilising the 'half-tide' barrier concept, and providing for a lock to be constructed either as part of the barrier or alongside it. The 'half-tide' barrier concept would impound water above the barrier at approximately 4.45m AOD, thus facilitating boating under the various bridges on the River Parrett at least as far as Stanmoor (the confluence of the Rivers Tone and Parrett) and in addition reopening of the Barge Lock, thus providing access between the River Parrett and Bridgwater Docks.

Ray Alexander

Befriending the Exeter Ship Canal

The inaugural meeting of the Friends of Exeter Ship Canal was held on Monday 22nd February at the Exe Water Sports Association, close to the Ship Canal and the Quay. This initiative was promoted by the Exeter Civic Society's River, Canal and Quayside group, with support from IWA's West Country Branch. All those present voted in favour of establishing the "Friends" and a strong committee was formed to take it forward.

IWA West Country Branch Chairman, Bob Abbott and Volunteer Co-ordinator, Mike Slade both spoke at the meeting and welcomed the initiative to set up the Friends. The Branch will continue to provide support to the Friends as it builds up its activities over the next few years, in particular helping with the establishment of Volunteer Work Parties along the canal and its towpath.



The Exeter Ship Canal is just 5 miles long and runs from Exeter to Turf Lock, where there is a Sea Lock at the entrance to the canal from the River Exe. The canal was the first to be built in the country with pound locks and was originally opened in the autumn 1566 – this autumn thus sees its 450th anniversary. A key aim of the Friends will be promoting it as a valued asset of the community.



For further information about the Friends of Exeter Ship Canal please contact: John Monks /

jbmonks@btinternet.com

From The Bulletin / Ray Alexander

Photos courtesy of Exeter Civic Society



“Clean for the Queen”

Members of the Avon & Wilts Branch litter picking on “Clean for the Queen” day on 5th March on the Kennet and Avon Canal near Bradford on Avon. The Branch also held their AGM on the same day.

*Photo courtesy of Tim Wheeldon,
Secretary Avon & Wilts Branch*

Canal & River Trust Work Parties on the Kennet & Avon Canal at Bradford on Avon

There are about 40 volunteers (men & women) in the group. Some work winters, some work summers, some do three months work then go away for three months.

We are nearly all retired people and work Monday, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays each week. Each day there will be about six volunteers on the job. The projects include Offside Vegetation Management, fencing and rebuilding of walls using traditional lime mortar techniques, see photo.

If you wish to join us, ring Derrick Hunt on 01225 863066 or email:

derrickjohnhunt@gmail.com

Thank you to Derrick Hunt, Volunteer Work Party Organiser, CRT for article

Somersetshire Coal Canal Restoration

We have started further restoration at the western end of the northern branch. The work has started at the terminus ie Timsbury & Paulton Basins and approx 800 metres has been excavated. More information is available on the Society’s website: www.coalcanal.org



Work parties are usually held on the first Sunday of each month. Contact either Derrick Hunt: 01225 863066 / derrickjohnhunt@gmail.com or Adrian Tuddenham: 01225 335974 / editor@coalcanal.org.uk

Thank you to Derrick Hunt, Committee Member, Somerset Coal Canal for article and Adrian Tuddenham for the photo of bridge over dry dock entrance.

Swansea Canal Society

TEAM EFFORT AT TREBANOS LOCK:

The first WRG Summer camp on the Swansea Canal worked at Lower Trebanos Lock in 2013. They were the catalysts for our society's continuing restoration there and they have been back every year since.



This is what the wing wall and off side looked like in 2013 (top photo) and December 2015 (bottom photo).



It has been a team effort. The Swansea Canal Society has no more than 150 members. Yet ten to twenty of us work every Tuesday come rain or snow and each July the WRG (Waterways Recovery Group) has returned and brought with them their expertise and their enthusiasm. The Canal and River Trust (CRT) who own the canal have provided the materials and taught us the craft of laying walls and repointing with lime mortar. We have involved the community: Staff of Virgin Media and Lloyds Bank have carted barrow loads of the local Blue Pennant Sandstone to the lock; Swansea University Conservation Society have repointed the pound wall; the carers and clients of the

Whitethorns Day Care Centre have been an ever present source of support and enthusiastic help; the owner of Green Farm Riding Stables next to the lock has allowed us to leave our own and the WRG heavy plant in their grounds. Slowly but surely we have all moved forward together.

The most contentious aspect of the restoration has been getting access to the lock chamber in order to repoint it. It is an obvious health and safety issue and there have been times when failure to sign off the safety of the stop planks has caused frustration and delays. This can be extremely galling if you are WRG volunteers and have only five days on site. Somehow we all came through some fractious times and the lower lock chamber has now been completely repointed



apart from the five or six upper courses where scaffolding will be needed next July for the WRG volunteers to finish it off.

Apart from the lock itself we have been mindful of leaving the residents who live on the canal side some improvements to their immediate environment. The unadopted road which acts as both a tow path and access to the properties and the riding school has very poor run off and in times of heavy rainfall the excess has run back into the properties' gardens instead of running into the canal. When we built the 50-yard retaining wall below the towpath we included steps down to the canal complete with a

drainage channel which take the excess rain down into the canal. This has meant that the residents have a very high tolerance level whenever we get stone dust on their cars!

Thanks to a grant from the Welsh Government we now have our own cement mixer. The sand and lime has always been provided by CRT. The trailers to take all the material and tools from the CRT depot in nearby Clydach to the site a mile and half away were again generous gifts from our local Co-op supermarket.

We are a small society, our canal is not yet linked to either the Neath or the Tennant Canal and it has just five miles in water but Team Trebanos has shown what can be done. One day that spirit will get the Swansea Canal back another nine miles into the centre of Swansea.

Photo above: lower lock chamber

CLYDACH LOCK: LITTLE AND LARGE:



Here on Clydach Lock, 'adopted' by us from the CRT, we presented 'little Clydach Lock' to its big brother and floated a scale model of a Swansea Canal Day Boat up to the gates. The old derelict Lock

must have been overcome with nostalgia.

Michelle, floating her boat in the photo on page 8, made both excellent models for us, and they were the main attraction at the exhibition we held at the Clydach Library over four days in early March. We were trying to highlight the plight of Clydach Lock in preparation for a planned complete restoration. We have members with a lot of engineering experience so we just need the go ahead from CRT to make it a reality. The lock, one of only a few in Britain with a pulley system of opening the lower gates, is in a reasonable state, and we have acquired some grant money to start work on it, with other applications for larger amounts in the pipeline.



We also had the support of volunteers from the M&S 'Spark Something Good' initiative and they braved appalling weather one Tuesday to join us in rebuilding the tow path wall alongside the Lock which you can see in the

above picture.

And just in case you can't see 'little Clydach Lock' in all its glory in the first photo, alongside is what it looks like up close and personal!

It has now become a star in its own right and took a trip to the YMCA in Swansea at the end of March where our artist in residence, Cheon Pyo Lee, added his own creative embellishments to it.

Thank you to Martin Davies, Secretary of Swansea Canal Society for these reports and photos.



If you vote in Wales this May

Tony Pugh, South Wales Chairman

The Welsh Assembly Elections take place this year and IWA Central Office is to run a campaign to lobby every candidate standing for the Welsh Parliament (Senedd).

Wales has Proportional Representation, the minor political parties **WILL** be allotted seats in the Senedd this May, we must lobby the smaller parties and convince them that canal restoration is a vote winner. Polls predict there will be no overall control. We have never had a better time to get our message across.

The three Main restoration Projects in Wales are:

- **To restore and connect the Swansea, Neath & Tenant Canals to the sea at Swansea**

[Swansea and Neath & Port Talbot Plans](#)

<http://www.swansea.gov.uk/fabianwayplan>

http://www.npt.gov.uk/PDF/ldp_proposals_map_jan16.pdf

- **To restore the Montgomery Canal from Newtown to Welshpool and reconnect to the rest of the UK at Llanymynech**

[Montgomery Canal](#)

<https://www/hlf/org/uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/boost-montgomery-canal-restoration>

<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2016/02/10/montgomery-canal-restoration-bid-to-cost-about-30-million/>

- **To restore the Monmouthshire Canal through Cwmbran and connect to the sea at Newport, Gwent**

<https://www/hlf/org/uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/boost-montgomery-canal-restoration>

<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2016/02/10/montgomery-canal-restoration-bid-to-cost-about-30-million/>

Lobby each of your candidates asking them to commit to the full restoration of the canals in Wales.

That is what the IWA was formed for and you can do it from your armchair.

References:

The Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canals Trust

<http://www.mbact.org.uk> ,

The Neath & Tennant Canals Trust <http://www.neath-tennant-canals.org.uk/>

The Swansea Canal Society <http://www.swanseacanalociety.com>,

Friends of the Montgomery Canal

<http://www.montgomerycanal.me.uk/mwrt.html> ,

The Shropshire Union Canal Trust <http://www.shropshireunion.org.uk>,

Cadw, Heritage in Wales

http://cadw.gov.wales/docs/cadw/publications/First_Industrial_Nation.pdf

A tip to open all the links shown above

Go on line and open the online magazine then Ctrl + Click to open each of the links in turn.

Brian Sheppard Award

The region presents an award annually to a member who it is felt has furthered the waterway cause in the region. It was presented at the South Wales branch AGM recently - to Phil Hughes who is the Manager of the Fourteen Locks Canal Centre at the top of Cefn Flight of Locks on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal.

It was a great honour to have Brian's daughter, Caroline Jones (ex waterways museum and active in the Hereford and Gloucester Canal Trust), to present it to him.

Here is the speech she made:

My dad was born in Pontypridd near the Glamorganshire Canal in which he became interested at an early age. He became an IWA member and had an absorbing interest in canals – in their history and engineering and in cruising widely over our waterways system. An engineer by profession, we lived for many years in the Bridgend area and, latterly, after retirement, he moved to Llansawel, Carmarthenshire, with dad retaining his waterways interests.

In January 2001, Dad died suddenly whilst abroad on holiday. A substantial sum of money, donated in lieu of flowers by many people attending the funeral, was given to the IWA South Wales Branch. The Branch Committee decided it would

be appropriate to commemorate dad's life and his contribution to the waterways cause by making an annual award. The South West region committee asks for nominations and decides annually who should receive it.

Our family decided that the award should take the form of an authentic model of a Glamorganshire Canal Boat designed and made by John Burden, who is an acknowledged expert in this field.

Last year it came back to South Wales and was given to Margaret and John Gwalter and this year's recipient is also from this area.

This year's recipient is a proud North Walian and all his boats have been named after his home area.

He joined Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust (MBACT) around 1989 to help the campaign to get Crown bridge raised. In fact, his was the first boat to go under the newly rebuilt bridge in 1994.

He became chairman in 1998 and served three years.

He was instrumental in getting IWA to bring the 2000 IWA Trail-boat Festival to Newport and then using that successful festival to push Newport Council into getting MBACT involved in running the canal centre. Despite the setbacks there, it is a wonderful advertisement for the waterways in the area. He has also served on the South Wales and Severn waterways partnership for CRT and I have heard that his contribution there has been tremendous. He has been all over the UK delivering his animated and interesting talks, promoting the M&BC and is a deserved winner of this award. He is retiring soon and we all wish him well with the leisure days in front of him although he still needs to return to as he is needed for the duck race!

Thank you to Roger Holmes and Tony Pugh who both submitted this article and to Roger for his photo on the front cover.

Maximising Your Waterway's Tourist Potential

Many coach companies and tour organisers these days include canal/river cruises in their itineraries, e.g. the Llangollen, the K & A, the Leeds and Liverpool, and Grand Western canals plus of course many of the rivers are just some of the ones that benefit greatly from this.

There is a good opportunity to take advantage of a very lucrative and expanding market which could also do a lot of promotion.

As Tour Organisers we, Mike & Joyce Potts of Trips and Tours (Hereford), are aware of what many of the operators are looking for in their tours and how Trusts/Societies can take best advantage of these opportunities. We are not advocating arranging the following for you but are willing to help in any way we can.

There are a number of markets available here:

- A simple short boat trip - enough for an hour or hour and a half's cruising is ideal
- Boat trip with lunch supplied at base or aboard depending on boat size
- Guided tour of the canal/waterway either aboard their own coach or by hired transport

If there is a heritage railway nearby, work jointly with them for a full day out. This also gives you much extra potential, tapping their market for joint days out. Both organisations will benefit.

If the boat only takes about 25 or so, split the group into two and occupy the other half with another activity.

From running a local lunch club we know that the materials to supply a two course lunch plus tea and coffee/tea & biscuits during a mid morning break for a group can be provided for about £2.00 per head, even less if some food is donated. You would need to add venue hire costs.

People do not object if you allow about £5 - £6 into the cost of the ticket for this, bearing in mind that you can easily pay £2 - £3 for a coffee and £5 or so for a baked potato. This is a good money earner.

One advantage that Trusts/Societies have over commercial companies is volunteers. The more you can include at modest cost the more you can charge for tickets but still be good value for money.

There is quite a bit to investigate, regulations and legal obligations must be met, but most of these can usually be dealt with reasonably easily.

There are lots of different opportunities available and there are many other groups that could be interested in these ideas such as U3A, WI etc.

Mike Potts, Trips and Tours (Hereford)

Numerical Control Centre Event 7 - 9 October, 2015

By Di Warner of DBA, The Barge Association

DBA was invited to send a delegate to the final event in the Numerical Project's calendar.

I was able to attend the whole event, from the Wednesday evening dinner at the Diglis House Hotel adjacent to the River Severn in Worcester to the lunch in a restaurant in Gloucester Docks on the Friday.

Delegates from the following project partners were present at this event:

Voies navigables de France (VNF), Waterrecreatie Nederlands (WN), City of Eindhoven, City of Eijsden-Margraten and Canal & River Trust (CRT).

Following a dinner with the Mayor and Mayoress of Worcester as guests, we travelled to Hatton in Warwickshire the next morning. CRT provided a tour of their Control Centre adjacent to the Grand Union Canal, demonstrating the remote operation of Sandfield Bridge, a swing-bridge on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal (G&S) over 60 miles away. In addition to 5 CCTV images on one screen, a computer-generated image of the structure details the step-by-step process on a second screen. The final outcome of this project will enable boaters to operate a certain number of bridges and locks from a smart-phone application, with the system overseen from the Control Centre. CCTV and tannoy systems will be in place at these sites plus a Help Button similar to those already in place at railway stations.

CRT also have a Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition system (SCADA), currently enabling:

- scheduling of staff

- scheduling of assets (vehicles & workboats)

- monitoring 'stations' around the system

- controlling 'stations' around the system

Handheld devices have been allocated to staff across CRTs 11 Waterways Regions enabling them to access SCADA out on the cut as well as in the office.

Currently, 600 stations can be monitored and controlled via SCADA. These include pumping stations and sluices in addition to the lock and bridge being trialled.

The new Water Management Act 2018 will require CRT to request to abstract water from rivers, so very close monitoring will be needed. Staff can see trends at the locations so may be forewarned of any impending issues with e.g. water levels.

To enable scheduling of workboats and vehicles, CRT have installed trackers so scheduling staff are aware of the location of each asset and can request the vehicle nearest to an incident to attend.

On Friday we went to Sandfield Bridge on the G&S where the Cotswold Canal Trust trip boat was used to demonstrate the operation of the bridge using a smart-phone. We went back and forth onboard the narrow boat so several delegates could take control.

The event ended with a trip to Gloucester Docks and lunch with Richard Parry, CRT CEO, and Nick Worthington, CRT Regional Waterways Manager.

Numericanal is an Interreg North West Europe-funded project.

“European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), better known as *Interreg*, is one of the two goals of the EU Cohesion Policy and provides a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from different Member States.

The overarching objective of ETC is to promote a harmonious economic, social and territorial development of the Union as a whole.”

“*Numericanal* connects the Regional & National strengths and experience of six partners active in the field of ICT and Waterways Management, to create a transnational strategy for the development of e-services, information and communications along smaller-dimension waterways.”

The project has identified ways to reduce costs and increase efficiencies in the management of these waterways across North West Europe through implementation of innovative ICT-based approaches and tools. It ran until September 2015 and in this time formed partnerships with stakeholders with expertise in the field and set up events to inform the public of the findings.”

Thank you to Paul Goldsack, editor of Blue Flag (the DBA’s magazine) for permission to use this article.

Branch Reports

IWA Gloucestershire & Herefordshire Branch Report

Our new venue at the Warehouse in Gloucester has proved a success with having a cafe on site and bar. This has given us the opportunity to socialise more with many people arriving early for a drink etc. So we will continue using the venue next year with the option to use the larger room if necessary. This season has been a great success with a consistent turnout. I will not pick out a particular speaker as such as this year I think we have had the best program we have ever had. Highlights being probably Clive Henderson's video of Robert Aickman talking about restoration and in particular the talk we had on the ships using the Sharpness Docks and surrounding waterways, was fascinating for all with a unique collection of photos and information with excellent photography.

The automation of bridges on the G and S is, it seems, going ahead. Sandfield will have trials throughout this summer to get the protocols right and generally make sure everyone is happy. That is the road users and boaters. Restrictions will now be put on roads leading up to the bridges. This is to be welcomed as, at some, the situation with parked cars blocking the roads has become unacceptable. CRT are paying half the cost of these works. The operation of the bridges by boaters has yet to be finalised and I can assure you that IWA is very much involved in helping get this right.

It is good to see that both the regeneration of Bakers Quay and Llantony Abbey are going ahead, this will greatly improve the waterside at Gloucester and make it even more of a destination.

By the time you read this we will know if the HLF have granted the £15m required for Phase 1B of the Stroudwater restoration so at present there is not much to say .

Hereford and Gloucester Canal Trust continue to grow and progress, many of you probably do not realise it but they operate two excellent restaurants. The Wharf House at Over where fine dining rules and The Maisemore at Newent which is a pub also, why not give them a try knowing at the same time you are contributing to the restoration of the canal

Martin Turner, Branch Chairman

IWA West Country Branch Report

Here follows a West Country Branch update relating to some of our activities which amongst many others, were conveyed to our well attended branch AGM held on 19 March at the Boat & Anchor pub, Bridgwater.

We have organised over 70 volunteer working parties since the date of our last AGM on 7 March 2015. We have painted wooden and metallic structures, litter picked from towpaths and canal side, removed Himalayan Balsam, planted bulbs, hedge cutting and hedge laying, tidied and improved picnic and car park areas. These efforts total approaching 2,200 hours which at even at the minimum wage rate is worth well over £15k. This was all safely carried out with good humour and diligence by more than 70 volunteers many of whom regularly travel and some from long distances. For these efforts, we the committee, sincerely thank them as do the canal users.

To support this workload many of us have now been approved to Crew and Helm Canal and River Trust's (CRT's) Usk Valley workboat and work flat platforms. For this we have had to undergo boat training, assessments and tests some of which have been demanding, time consuming and onerous. It has included the much quoted but necessary risk assessments and method statements and additionally many have undergone machine familiarisation plus first aid and water safety training. We anticipate the demand for our volunteers can only increase, a sad reflection on ever tightening budgets within the CRT and Local Authorities.

There are other smaller, but not lesser, projects in progress. For instance, up-stream on the non-tidal section of the River Parrett, Langport town council is hoping to position landing pontoons along the very nice 'Cocklemoor' bank side in the town centre (free parking!) and the re-building of an existing EA slipway for use by trail boats, kayaks, canoes etc. The West Country branch is supporting them in their endeavours and they are planning a 9-day Town festival starting on 18 June to include water activities and even possibly a trip boat experience.

Further south we have been involved in supporting and advising a new water users group at Exeter who have recently been inaugurated as the "Friends of Exeter Ship Canal", which incidentally is 450 years old this year and claims to have been the first ship canal built. The CRT is currently discussing with Exeter Council their possible interest in managing it for them at some point in the future. We will continue to encourage and support these groups and maintain links with them.

We continue discussions with CRT regarding the Bridgwater and Taunton canals' (B&TC) shortcomings such as lost or unsuitable winding points, inadequate clear

lay-by areas to allow bank-side mooring, lack of marked visitor moorings, lack of water at certain times as well as problems associated with weed growth which is beginning even now.

Our campaign for the construction of a new Slipway is slowly gaining pace and we have already received our first donation towards what will undoubtedly become a planning permission, and later, the level of funding needed issues. If we are ever to attract more boating and visitors onto the B&TC, this slipway will be fundamentally important because the only other suitable access is some 14 miles up-stream at Bathpool near Taunton, and that only by key access.

Another subject dear to our hearts is the planned Tidal Barrier to prevent Somerset flooding again, to be built down-stream from Bridgwater on the River Parrett. The committee are maintaining a continuous watching brief and regularly attend strategic committee meetings with the Local Authority and the Environmental Agency. We are actively supported by IWA's Honorary Engineer, National Committees and the Regional Committee. We need to ensure that navigation rights are maintained but also that there are facilities for boats to enter and leave the river at least as far as Bridgwater town-centre. A parallel objective is to enable craft to move to and fro between the canal and the river utilising the existing but unusable Barge Lock.

Bob Abbott, Branch Chairman

IWA Avon & Wiltshire Branch Salisbury Group

BOATING UPSIDE DOWN - ROBERT DEAN: At the January meeting, Robert Dean, chairman of the Kennet & Avon Trust, gave us a talk about boating in Australia. While he was working in New Zealand he pined for the waterways and canals of England, and as a result he hired a boat on the Murray River in South Australia. He said we forget how vast Australia is and, therefore, how long the Murray River is compared with waterways in England.

Facts: - The Murray is 1,722 miles in length, navigable for 1,986 Km. In all that length it has 4 dams, 16 storage weirs & only 15 locks! Only one third of the water passing down the river actually reaches the sea, the rest is used for the irrigation of crops and supplying the population of the few towns en-route.

The Murray passes through very remote countryside and through three Australian states. Compared with the Devizes to Westminster canoe race, the Murray holds the world's longest canoe race of 405 miles. Cargoes originally transported were grain, wool and timber. These cargoes are no longer transported by water because they are all now carried in road trains.

Ten years ago Rob, Julie and their 14 year-old daughter hired a "house boat"

which is based on a catamaran with two floats and square accommodation built on top. It has all modern facilities and comforts, space for outside living and includes air conditioning. Rob chose a boat with paddle wheel propulsion but found it difficult to steer. As the accommodation is on one flat platform the Ford engine is mounted on the back deck together with a very large cold box and the inevitable statutory large BBQ.

The trip they took was on a tiny fraction of the river, just 50 miles. They started in South Australia and passed into New South Wales. It was interesting to note that they were not allowed to carry fresh fruit over the border from one state to another and, as they were so remote, they did not pass through anywhere to stock up with new supplies.

The River Murray flows very slowly, so for overnight moorings they would just put the blunt bows of the craft into the bank where they secured their mooring lines to trees or mooring pins.

Wildlife was abundant: pelicans, kangaroos, emus and reptiles. There was also a large variety of colourful birds particularly parrots. There was a possibility of snakes and Rob demonstrated the walking technique used to avoid such creatures. He also said that fortunately the Murray River does not have crocodiles so swimming was a regular pastime.

Due to the size of the river, other boats were few and far between and Julie became concerned when they moored in sight of another boat, about 100m away in case they were invading the other boat's privacy. (Can you imagine this happening in England?!) Each craft on the river carries a VHF radio and if an emergency occurs it is obligatory to relay messages back down the line of boats to the hire base as one radio cannot transmit over the total distance required. Messages may well be necessary if a boat runs aground when attempting to travel too close to the bank or up side channels and creeks or if there is a mechanical breakdown.

Rob and Julie enjoyed this excursion as it was totally different from boating in Britain. They said that they are planning to return at some later date.

PORT TO PORT: In February, we saw the return of Paul Barnett accompanied by his colleague Janet Presley. His talk took us on a pictorial journey along the 16 mile length of the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal comparing the navigation in the early 1950s to as it is today.

Paul achieved this by the use of a series of re-discovered photographs from the early 1950s, comparing them with photos taken by Janet when travelling along the navigation in recent years. Along the whole length of the canal we were shown the photographs of original scenes, including docks, bridges and vessels

moored in the ports, then modern images taken from exactly the same spots.

It was particularly interesting to see what buildings still remain today, those that have been demolished and the numerous cranes that have disappeared and no longer line the skyline. "Health & safety" could now be seen in abundance particularly with high fences that prevent access and exploration of interesting areas.

Surprisingly, Paul informed us that the ports are in fact more active today than they had been in the 1950s. This is largely due to the increase in leisure activities in modern times.

THE SOUTH PENNINE RING: At our March meeting we were joined by Roger Squires from London who gave us an illustrated talk. He explained how he and a group of friends cruised the ring starting from Sowerby Bridge in hired narrow boats over two weeks. This route has only recently been reopened over the Pennines in 2001/2002 as much restoration and manpower was needed together with the re-routing of certain parts. We were shown how the original route had been found under car parks, roads and new buildings so solutions had to be found.

The canals were only made possible with the use of many locks, cuttings and tunnels over hilly, almost mountainous terrain. The purpose of these waterways was to connect industry & transport in the area and we saw many mill buildings and old factory chimneys.

Roger showed us canals running through Manchester and places like Huddersfield and Rochdale which are still major industrial areas today. We also saw Bugsworth Basin which was a place where tram lines came together so that materials could be transported by water, this area has now reverted to nature but one could imagine what it would have looked like in its heyday.

We were also saw examples of turnover bridges, aqueducts and tunnels that were constructed 200 years ago mainly by manual labour in order that this ring could be completed often in competition with other canal projects in this area. Roger also showed us how problems had to be solved, one of which was where a farmer had to maintain a path for his cattle and as a result a floating movable section of towpath had to be built under a bridge. This has to be floated out of the way every time wide boats wish to pass under the bridge.

In the fortnight they passed through the longest canal tunnel, 197 locks, rose to a height of 200m passed through rough industrial areas and beautiful rural scenery. To end, Roger described the trip around the Pennine Ring as hard work but immensely satisfying and enjoyable.

Ron & Myra Glover

Forthcoming Events

**Invitation to Trail Boats to Visit
Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust
Summer Carnival Festival
Saturday, 20th & Sunday, 21st August, 2016
Over, Gloucester, GL12 8DB**

We are seeking about six trail boats to spend the above weekend for the above event.

Further information is available by e-mailing cdpascall@aol.com or by calling 07947 108726.

IWA Avon & Wiltshire Branch Salisbury Group Programme

Venue: The Green Dragon, Old Road, Alderbury, Salisbury, SP5 3AR

Thursday, 19th May 7.30pm

“Waterway Recovery Group.”

The WRG was founded in 1970 & is the national coordinating body for voluntary labour on the inland waterways of the UK. The role of **George Eycott** is to look after the plant & machinery as well as being on the transport team. George will tell us about the activities of this group who can always be recognised by their red T shirts & hard hats!

Thursday, 16th June 7.30pm

“Serve On” is a non-profit humanitarian organisation that responds to disasters both at home and abroad. They are based here in Salisbury. We discovered them practising their water rescue skills in the River Avon at Harnham Mill. **Craig Elsdon**, the operations manager, has agreed to come and tell us about the vital work carried out by the group.

Thursday, 21st July 7.00pm Boules & BBQ at the Green Dragon.

Waterways in the IWA South West Region

Avon & Wilts Branch

Rivers Avon & Severn:	Tidal navigation that is the responsibility of the Bristol Haven Conservancy, downstream of the second Severn crossing
Avon Navigation:	Hanham to Avonmouth, including River Avon & Bristol Docks
Kennet & Avon Canal:	Hanham Lock to Froxfield Bridge
North Wilts Canal	
Somersetshire Coal Canal	
Wilts & Berks Canal:	Kennet & Avon Canal to County Boundary 1m West of Shrivenham

Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Branch

Coombe Hill Canal	Gloucester & Sharpness Canal
Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal	Leominster Canal
Lydney Canal	
River Severn:	from Mythe Bridge, Tewkesbury to a point on the tidal navigation which is the seaward extent of responsibility of the Gloucester Harbour Trustees, downstream of the Second Severn Crossing
Stroudwater Navigation	Thames & Severn Canal
River Wye:	Hay-on-Wye to Severn Estuary

South Wales Branch

Brecon & Abergavenny Canal	Glamorganshire and Aberdare Canals
Monmouthshire Canal	Neath & Tennant Canals
Swansea Canal	River Usk
River Wye - Hay-on-Wye to source	

West Country Branch

Bridgewater & Taunton Canal	Bude Canal
Cann Quarry Canal	Chard Canal
Dorset & Somerset Canal	Exeter Ship Canal
Grand Western Canal	Liskeard & Looe Canal
Par Canal	River Parrett
Somerset Navigations	Stover Canal
Tavistock Canal	River Tone
Torrington (Lord Rolle's) Canal	

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Next Issue of *Sou'Wester*

The next issue of *Sou'Wester* is due out in September.

Please send all copy to the Editor at

souwester@waterways.org.uk by

Monday, 1st August, 2016.

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of IWA.

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www.waterways.org.uk

Wanted & Unwanted?

Items wanted:

Any Gardening/Scrub clearing hand tools, long handled Rakes/Hooks, grappling irons and large nets etc. etc. for West Country Branch Volunteers canal side work.

Can collect. Contact

Email: mike.slade@waterways.org.uk

Items Free to Collector:

Old but good Overhead Projector (Not Power Point). Also small portable TV/ Video player.

Phone Bob Abbott (Somerset area) on mobile or leave message.

07850 529102.

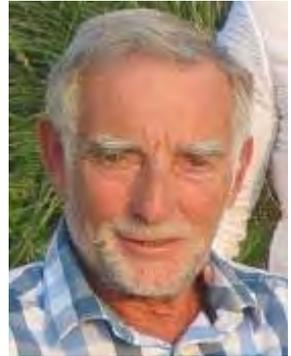
Maritime Shortcuts

Locally and Worldwide

Researched and Presented by

Colin Vosper

This lively and well illustrated talk examines and celebrates the amazing endeavours of the canal builders to find major canal routes across the SW peninsula to avoid the dangerous sea off Lands End.



The latter part of the talk includes an interesting insight into the Suez and Panama canals and finishes with a surprising time-lapse video of a voyage along one of them ~ but which one?

To find out, make sure you book the canal talk :-

MARITIME SHORTCUTS

DON'T MISS IT!!

Contact: vosper99@tesco.net

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