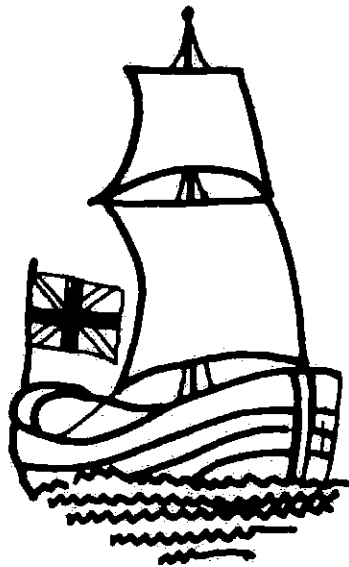


*the*  
*trow*



**NO 3 AUGUST 1973**



**STROUDWATER**



**CANAL SOCIETY**

# EDITORIAL

At last the August edition of the Trow has been printed and posted. I was going to use as an excuse for lateness - "that the typewriter had broken down" but on reading Navvies No. 43 I found that they had beaten me to it with the same excuse.

Quite seriously however the portable typewriter on which the Trow is produced is to say the least getting tired and unlikely to stand another issue. The answer is I feel to purchase a good second hand electric model that will not only stand up to the strain, but also make typing easier and a better finished product. Although the society has sufficient funds to meet this I do not feel that it is right to use money raised for restoration for this purpose, so I am starting a one man appeal (with Dave Elliotts approval) to raise the cash. As a start and finish I hope, by collecting old car batteries, so before you read any more of this magazine have a look down at the bottom of the garden to see if that old car battery that let you down in the 1963 winter and you kept "just in case" is still there. The "just in case" has happened and if it is there give me a ring or drop a line. Then I will do my best to arrange collection, we have devious means of transport at our disposal so even if you are a long way off still let me know - a good response will ensure a November Trow.

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In June I was pleased to welcome Bob Brown to the publications department with the sole and not easy job of providing a MONTHLY NEWS NOTICE this he did and has followed it up with a July and August issue. Perhaps at this stage I should explain that it is not intended at this time to send these notices to all members, time and money would not allow. I

I would like to hear from anyone who can display regularly these notices and where they will be displayed, whether it be in your works, office, shop, G.P.O. pole or even in the Houses of Parliament. It is important to know of the location so that new members can be informed where their nearest notice is. Please be sure to replace out of date notices with current ones.

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Members Comment .. P. 14.

This is no doubt food for thought and a view taken by others in the society, however with a project so important and involved it would be impossible for everyone to think, act and see alike so lets all not only be prepared to give constructive criticism but also to swallow our pride when necessary. During the Easter weekend this year Dudley Canal Trust celebrated the re-opening of the Dudley Tunnel and its adjacent canal after many years hard effort with pen and spade. While many of us sat down and said something ought to be done, both to ourselves and in the local papers, Dudley and many others were getting on with the job. Let us not waste too much time in nostalgic thoughts, lets get on with the job. To remember what the canal was should be a reminder of what the canal can and will be in the future.

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VACANCY - - - Secretary/Typist required for Fund Raising Section. Plenty of work, no pay but chance of fame! Contact Dave Elliott.

Sign Writer with own brush required. Contact Mike Powell.

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The past quarter has seen more changes outside the society towards restoration than within. A new body of County and District Councillors have been elected and they contain even more councillors who are known to be in favour of restoration than previously, but even so there is not sufficient opinion within these councils as yet to sway the balance of power in our favour. However with the County having to resort to local farmyards for new recreational areas for their populace I cannot see it will be very long before someone locally realises that every local authority from Chichester to Warley are using their canals, derelict, abandoned, in filled, come what may as an area with tremendous potential as both an environmental buffer and as a recreational area for everyone. Under the new Water Bill the authorities will be compelled to use their water space so it will be interesting to see the proposals for the Stroudwater and Thames and Severn. But do not be sold on the small pretty interlocked lakes idea as this practice has failed wherever it has occurred on the canal system. Rochdale being a prime example, the only way to keep a canal attractive is to use it as it was intended, as a navigation.

The new Gloucestershire County Council has appointed a new County Surveyor and it is rather unfortunate that his tasks will probably be fraught with more problems than any of his predecessors. He will undoubtedly within his term of office have to make a firm decision on the restoration of the Thames-Severn Link and with ever increasing demands on the nations waterways I cannot foresee any decision other than in favour of restoration. The price of refusal amounts to too great an environmental blunder to be accepted by tomorrows voters.

Personally I would like to see the whole of the County Highways Department scrapped in favour of an area land transport department which would for the first time integrate road rail and water transport into a logical system instead of three opposing camps as we have now. I am sure it would result in less tarmac and far more civilised living.

However both for the new County Surveyor and for us the Stonehouse - M5 link road presents a problem. On this project we have been fortunate in obtaining the services of not one but two highway engineers who both work for top highway construction firms and their proposals have been sent to the County Surveyor for his consideration.

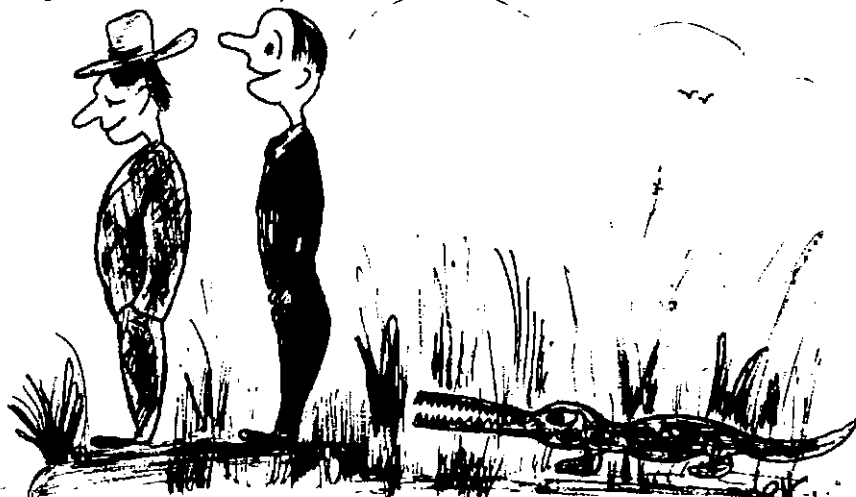
Walbridge is being considered as a site for the Stroud By-pass using a section of the canal from the bus depot to Walbridge No. 2 Lock. This is nothing short of lunacy as those amongst you will remember the fiasco in Newport where the local authorities failed time and time again to stabilize the road bed on top of the canal. However, if the engineers concerned wish to perpetuate their names in such extravagant folly the ever growing waterways movement will remember them, so will every employer from here to eternity. At Walbridge the society recommended the use of the old LMS station yard as an alternative route for the by-pass but the Department of the Environments engineer thought this would put "miles" onto the route, as this yard is immediately adjacent to the canal a new rule may be applied - 1 D of E mile = 25yds.

The first great walk is over and it was a tremendous effort by both the organisers and everyone who turned out on the first Sunday of the monsoons and my thanks go to everyone concerned especially to Dave and Ann Elliott and their assistants who ran the whole affair. It is unfortunate that some confusion

arose over receipts for the money but this was mainly due to our treasurer being whisked into isolation hospital for the first few weeks that the money was coming in. Next year we will have learned a little more and several points will be improved on, however, over £1000 is a marvellous effort for first time out. All of this money must now be put to work as effectively as possible over the next few months.

During the next quarter greater efforts must be made by all concerned. The society has done well so far but complacency is very easy and not for a society that has to grow rapidly. More and more people have to be recruited to membership also more members are wanted for jobs in organisation so don't stand back help is wanted in all directions but be warned we want people who will jump in both feet first, if you don't like the heat keep away from the fire. Everyone in this society has a responsibility to make this canal work, in its time these were the finest canals in the country, it is up to you to ensure they regain that title, we cannot fail.

(Receipts for Walk money are in the process of being sent out. Ed.)



This stretch will take some clearing but we won't find anything unusual! - Reg Herrington

# MEMBERSHIP

To date we have about 370 members. If only we can enroll a new member every day until the end of the year we will have reached our grand target of 500.

The "Boost the Membership Scheme" mentioned in the last edition of The Trow went well. Two members have actually enrolled 10 new members in the time given and many of you have made an all out effort. Well done!

The Society still have four Membership Trophies in hand so to enable members to carry on trying to enroll 10 new members for these trophies we will allow the first four to get 10 members in any reasonable time (instead of 3 months). This will enable members that have enrolled say 5 or 7 members but their time limit has run out to still have a chance.

I would like to welcome all new members to the society and ask that they feel free to write to the editor of the Trow with any comment or interesting details. Also please notify me of any change in address or wrongly spelt names etc.

By time the next Trow is printed we will be at the time for many members to renew their memberships. So I feel now is the time to ask Are you satisfied with your membership? Is there anything you feel the Society should be doing? Could you help perhaps? Do you want more Social Outings or Meetings? Your membership is essential to the Society and shows your valued support. Please support your committee by helping them with suggestions which will be of value to the restoration of the canals.

# TREASURER'S REPORT

When, in 1993, the first dump truck to be obtained by stamp saving is presented to the society, it will be named "the A.R. Hiles dump truck" in honour of the bloke who saved 695 of the 700 books of stamps needed to get it.

This will be because only one person, my good anonymous friend with a Chalford postmark, bothers to send stamps to me out of a society of nearly 400 members. Sir or madam, I will dedicate the suspension to you in recognition of your support.

Presumably you all pay your subscription because you feel that the cause is one worth promoting - so HELP PROMOTE IT!!

These stamps can buy for us the items of plant which require heavy capital outlay without touching our bank balance, which will become more and more stretched as restoration work increases. It's one way in which everybody, not only those who are navvying, can help.

Please send trading stamps, cigarette coupons or anything like MONEY to me. Must I say to my anonymous friend, "Thanks, but it wasn't worth your trouble"?

So much for the soapbox oratory. The walk has brought us in plenty of much needed funds - in fact they are still coming in so don't give up if you haven't returned your money yet - and these will bring our bank balance into four figures, most of which will be invested for a rainy day.

Money seems relatively easy to come by compared with those little green or pink things - or are you all saving up to buy dumpers?



# WORKING PARTY REPORT

The wind of change has swept through the working party scene and a new policy has emerged with the advent of the 3 week Sunday month. That is you work the first 3 Sundays and get the remainder of Sundays in the month off to recuperate.

We have now opened a second work site at Ryeford Double Locks on the Stroudwater section. The work here entails clearance of the top lock and re-bedding of coping stones. Much valuable assistance has been given here by Stroud Seascouts under the able direction of Tony Jones with a pair of sheer legs (not 'sea Legs' as was erroneously reported by Bob Brown in the new monthly news notice!) for lifting heavy timbers from damaged lock gates etc out of the locks.

The impetus seems to have run out a little at Bowbridge with coming of Summer and the prolific re-emergence of the 'great water grass' which has covered over much of the excavated sections. However rest assured it will die back in winter. When mechanical assistance may be on the way. Until such aid is a reality a big dig is called for; and in this connection help is coming from Brum in the form of muscle power from the Birmingham Canal Navigation Society as a return visit for our away at Droitwich.

Talking of aways we had one unusual outing to Woodchester to uncover the Roman Pavement. For those who missed it its not too late to join the 'cover up' sequel in August.

## Working Parties.

First Three Sundays in September

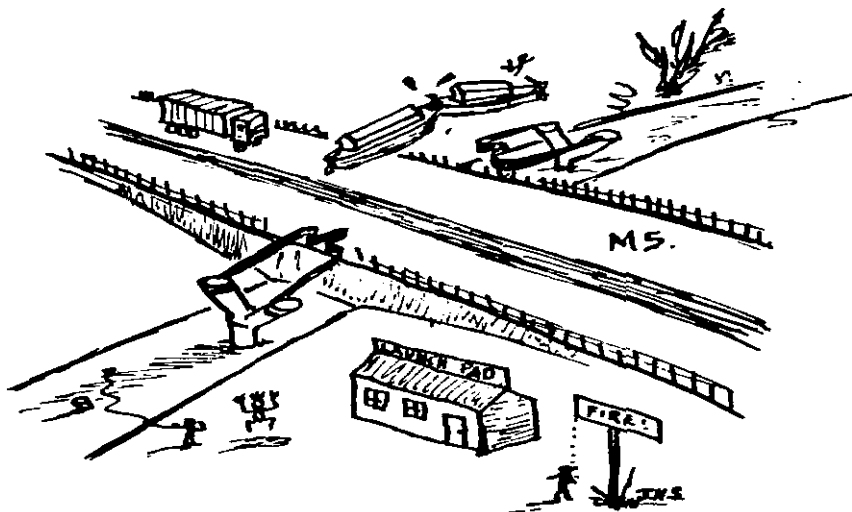
Bowbridge GR 156- 854/044 - Digging silt from  
pound.

Working Parties (contd)

First three Sundays in October  
Ryeford Double Locks GR 156 819/047

- Digging silt from upper chamber and rebedding copings etc.

Start 10.00 and please bring what kit you can.



"It was reported in the late night news that a serious accident had occurred on the M5 motorway at the Stroudwater interchange:- "That 2 Trows had been in collision, nobody was hurt seriously, but the Motorway has been closed until the next high tide"."

:Last Trows cartoon by Tony Sykes - apologies for not stating. Sequel by John Stephens. Ed.

# NATURE NOTES

The Stroudwater Canal near the old Framilode entrance peters out against the bridge to the church, in a swamp. Here for a number of years I had noticed an unusual plant, but since it was never in flower when I was there I felt non-committal about it. The brittle juicy stems pass through a marked angle at each node, the leaves are smallish, nettle-shaped and shiny, and the plants scramble over the swamp in a tangled mass.

Then one year late in September when most other flowers are over, the plant showed its hand. The swamp was scattered with small orange trumpets with expanded lower lips. At once I recognised the Orange Balsam, which is not a common plant though I have since found it along the same canal nearer Whitminster. It was originally introduced from North America and is a close relation of the much larger and more spectacular Indian Balsam (pink, red or white) which grows by the Severn as well as in places along the Stroudwater Canal, and is sometimes to be found far from water but usually then near gardens, probably as an escape. A third balsam which could easily turn up is the fairly large Touch-me-not Balsam (orange) since it occurs along the Wye.

None of these plants were originally natives of this country, and they all have fruits which at the right time explode when you touch them, scattering the seeds often with a distinct "pop" - hence the English name of the one species.

In the Thames and Severn Canal at Chalford I have noticed a spectacular plant. This is the Great Water Dock, with enormous leaves and flowering heads up to 6 feet high. It used to be common around the old meres of the East Anglian Fenland and is the

food plant of the Large Copper butterfly. When the meres were drained the plants disappeared and the butterfly became extinct. A Dutch race of the insect has however been introduced into certain nature reserves in that region, where there is still the food plant. I was once given a couple of very young caterpillars of this form and brought them down to Gloucestershire. The problem was feeding till I remembered the Chalford Great Water Dock, and they were brought up on this. They finally pupated and produced fine male and female butterflies. I still have them - probably the only Thames and Severn bred Large Coppers. Is it surprising that I am still rather attached to those Chalford plants?

R. Sims.

(To be concluded next edition)

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PHOTO COMPETITION WINNER - Mr P.J. James,  
Minchinhampton, Glos.

Photo - Bakers Mill Lower.

BALLOON RACE WINNER - Barbara Hunt, Dursley, Glos.

Balloon returned from West Germany.

ESSAY COMPETITION - Only two received both will  
receive prizes.

Karen Fry and Sara Roe.

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LOCK UP GARAGE OR SHED required in Stroud area to  
store kit etc.  
contact Pete Swallow.

# LETTERS

Dear Mike,

Work recently started at Ryeford Double Locks is progressing with speed, and no one who has joined the working parties or merely observed, could fail to be impressed by the enthusiasm of all those who have given up their Sundays to this operation. Yet an "operation" it is in more than one sense, for the patient has in fact been dismembered before our very eyes.

Should we not pause for a breathing space in our jolly heave-ho Sundays, as the lock gates are torn ignominiously apart to ask - are we really approaching these projects in the light of common sense and skill? Could we not be selective over what we dismantle from its natural and historical setting with such carefree abandon? Particularly as there is no immediate possibility of replacement. Should not a detailed survey of every existing item and facet of a lock be made before dismantling commences, so that whatever can be preserved may be left and restored 'in situ'?

Setting fire to brambles overhanging a lock face is a quick and effortless method of removing them, but does it not also severely damage virtually irreplaceable Georgian brickwork? Burning lock gates in position will likewise effectively dispose of them; but do we really want to remove other than the very disintegrated timbers, and does this not also damage abutting stonework?

Many of our loyal supporters appreciate the Canal for what it WAS, as much as for what we all hope it will one day be. Locks stripped of their original gates, mechanism and fittings, may be to some a poor reminder of our canal heritage.

Perhaps, as self-appointed guardians of the Canal we should reconsider our methods of "restoration" and bear in mind that the best publicity for our cause might not only be site clearance but acts of intelligent preservation.

Martin Hyde,  
Lock House,  
Ryeford, Stroud.

Dear Mike,

Just a brief note for the next available issue of the TROW. The University of Exeter has just published a paper of mine called "Coal, Clothiers and the Navigation to Stroud 1730-1780" in one of their series "Exeter Papers in Economic History". This is a brief resume of the first ten chapters of my book which is due out in January next year. If anyone wants a copy of the article it is available direct from the Academic Registrar, University of Exeter, Northcote House, The Queen's Drive, Exeter, EX4 4QJ. Price 75p.

Mike Handford,  
Studio Flat, 52 Park Street,  
Bristol, BS1 5JN.

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Dear Sir,

Apart for digging canals I sing (though many may disagree) folk songs and am trying at present to collect and sing songs of the canals - ancient or modern - relating to any facet of the canal scene, navigationers, openings, working songs etc. Thus I would be grateful if anyone has any words, or music which may be of help to me or any leads of any sort.

Darryl Foxwell,  
89, Horncastle Road,  
Lee,  
London, SE12 9LF.



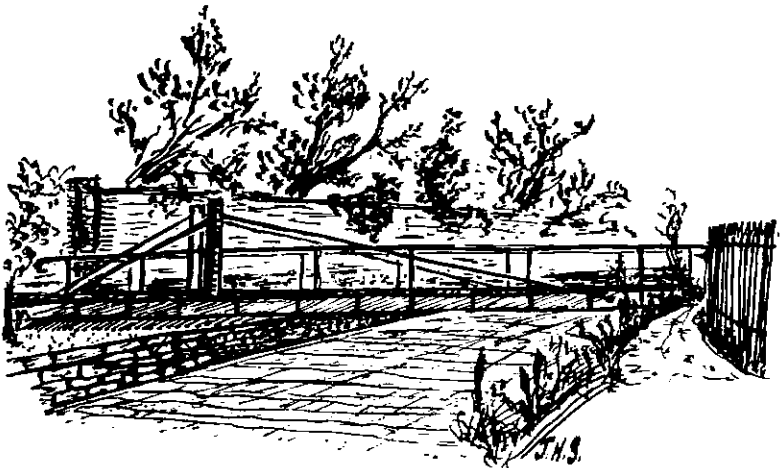
# PUBLICITY

As those members of the society who attended the Bristol Water Festival will know we now have our own display stand and a display was put up alongside the Kennet and Avon stand. I hope that anybody who saw it will pass their criticisms on to me for future use.

For assistance with this stand there are three people I would like to particularly thank. Pete and Lynne Swallow for the many days and nights put in on woodwork and varnishing and Bob Paget for providing and operating a continuous film show which attracted a great deal of interest.

I have had excellent cooperation from two local papers the Gloucester Citizen & Journal and Bristol Evening Post that have put up with my constant badgering for the last few months. One final point before I shut up and let you get on with the meat of this publication - If you see any press articles on the society in papers other than the Citizen I would appreciate it if you can send me details or perhaps the actual cutting

R.A. Coles.



# SALES

The following items are available from the Society:-

## BOOKS:

The Thames & Severn Canal by Humphrey Household. price £2.50.

Stroud 1890-1915 by J.H. Stephens (see book review) price £1.20

MILESTONE PLATES: £2.00, BALL-POINT PENS: 5p or 3 for 10p, TOILET KEYS: 25p, TIDE TABLES: 22p

- all details of above items fully covered in previous issue of the Trow.

CHRISTMAS CARDS: Specially drawn for the Society by John Stephens. (pen and ink drawings in this and previous Trows) 5 designs-2 of each. price 10 for 25p.

Donation for postage on above items welcomed - All order to:- Graham Pegler.

## BOOK REVIEW

### STROUD 1890 - 1915

A history of Stroud in pictures - 64 in all shows Stroud as it was at the turn of the century, in one volume 25 years of Stroud in an age of less haste. For those who know Stroud, knew Stroud and have moved away this is a must. Published after many years of research by the author J.H. Stephens. Only a limited quantity are being printed so order early to avoid disappointment - available from the society price £1.20 plus 5p p/p.



# FUND RAISING

Since the last edition of the Trow our bank balance has increased by well over £1000. Most of this money resulted from a most successful and well supported Sponsored Walk. At this stage it would be unfair to mention individual efforts since the winners of the various sections have still be be decided - yet money is still coming in!

In addition to the financial benefit, the Walk achieved its other objective of drawing attention to the real possibilities of restoration. Most people now appreciate the difficulties that loom ahead but this seems to have done nothing to dampen enthusiasm as the membership shows.

We received criticism from nature lovers who were genuinely concerned that hundreds of people tramping the towpath would disturb the wildlife. Whilst we agree that this is fair comment we would respectfully suggest that it is a rather short sighted policy. Surely, with restoration everything has its place but without it the dragon-flies, water rat and herons will be replaced by roads factories, car parks and rubbish.

The presentation of the Sponsored Walk awards will take place in the Subscription Rooms, Stroud at 7.30pm on Sept 14th, to be followed by a Social evening. We hope to see as many of you there as possible.

Stroud Show presented an excellent opportunity to publicise the activities of the Society. At the Show a Corporate Membership was taken out for the Stroud and Tetbury Scout Association which has effectively increased our membership by several hundred.

Whilst the Balloon Race proved very popular, the financial returns were not as high as first estimated mainly because we chose to fill the balloons with a safe but more expensive gas rather than risk hydrogen. Over 2000 balloons were released of which over 120 have so far been returned. We were able to use up the remains of gas and balloons at Painswick Show, where the Society was well represented and a reasonable profit was made. - My thanks go to all that helped so enthusiastically on both occasions.

One of my appeals in the last Trow has fallen on fertile ground. Mr Lloyd has very kindly offered to turn bowls from old lock gate timbers. These should become available shortly.

For some time now Mr Ractliffe of Miserden has raised money for another fund raising campaign from waste paper sales which he has organised personally. Now a member of the Stroudwater Canal Society Mr Ractliffe has offered to put all his efforts into raising proceeds for the society by this method. This would be a steady and worthwhile income, and we would like to hear from those prepared to save paper. In fairness to collectors we guarantee a monthly collection.

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SOCIAL - In April two coach loads of members and friends visited the Crofton Pumps on the K & A Canal. Members were very pleased with all the arrangements that had been made.

In May Mr F. Rowbottom gave members an enjoyable illustrated talk on the River Severn devoting much time to the Trows.

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Back issues of the Trow available shortly price 10p  
plus 3p stamp

# EVENTS

- Sept 4th - NOGGIN & NATTER - SHIP INN,  
Brimscombe, Stroud. (Ideal chance  
for members to meet committee).
- Sept 14th - PRESENTATION OF WALK AWARDS etc  
followed by interesting SLIDE SHOW  
of canal tunnels by Mr. Simpson.  
SUBSCRIPTION ROOMS, Stroud 7.30pm.
- Oct 2nd - NOGGIN & NATTER - SHIP INN,  
Brimscombe, Stroud.
- Oct 27th - DINNER AND DANCE - Moor Court Hotel,  
Amberley, Stroud. Tickets £1.50  
from Mrs Pindy Dunster (see Social  
Secretary).
- Oct 27th - 28th - GRAND AWAY DIG - Droitwich Canal -  
to celebrate formation of their  
Trust. Further details Pete Swallow.
- Nov 5th - GUY FANKES NIGHT (who said that)
- Nov 6th - NOGGIN & NATTER again.
- DEC 1st - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Subscription  
Rooms, Stroud, 7.30. Agenda next  
Trow. Please book this date in  
your diaries now.
- STOP PRESS - Rumoured that the Camborne with chairman  
MAO I mean Mike Ayland is attempting the  
arduous journey from Napton to Coventry  
Rally at Hawkesbury. He hopes to complete  
the journey in three days!