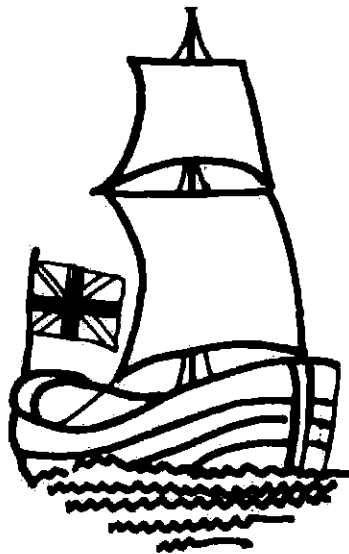


the
trow



NO4 NOVEMBER 1973



STROUDWATER



CANAL SOCIETY

FIRST

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE STROUDWATER CANAL SOCIETY WILL BE HELD ON DECEMBER 1ST 1973, AT STROUD SUBSCRIPTION ROOMS AT 7.30P.M.

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Acceptance of Provisional Rules.
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Treasurer's Report.
5. Election of Committee.
6. Election of Auditors.
7. Any other business.

Nominations for Committee

As this is the Society's first A.G.M. all committee members will be retiring, nominations for the committee should be sent to the Secretary not later than 24th November, 1973 giving brief details of suitability, past assistance to the Society etc. In the event of more than 9 nominations a ballot will be held at the meeting.

Provisional Rules for the Society pending
formation of Trust.

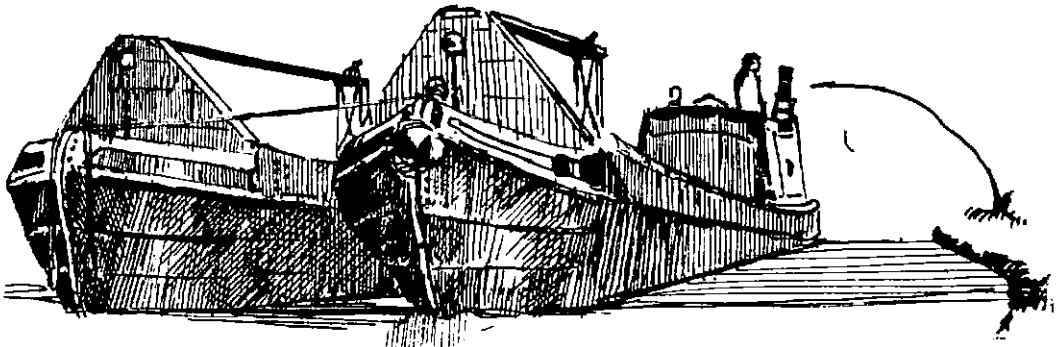
1. The Society shall be known as THE STROUDWATER CANAL SOCIETY.
2. The aim of the Society shall be:-
The restoration of the Stroudwater and Thames and Severn Canals to navigation.
3. The committee shall consist of 9 members, three of which will retire annually on rotation.
4. The committee may co-opt a further 3 members. Any member so co-opted will retire at the next A.G.M.
5. The committee may co-opt a member to fill any mid-term vacancy, to serve until the next A.G.M.
6. Any member wishing to be elected to the committee must be nominated by 2 members of the Society and the nomination received in writing at least 14 days prior to the A.G.M. The nominee should have been a member for at least 1 month.
7. Any member not attending 3 consecutive committee meetings without valid reason shall be deemed to have resigned.
8. The committee may call on any person to attend at a committee meeting and enter into discussion at the request of the chairman but will not have the right to vote.
9. The committee may form any sub-committee as they feel necessary.

EDITORIAL

With a year now almost passed since the Society's formation, four "Trows" typed, taken and collected from the printers - collated, stapled, pushed into envelopes and then finally posted, each time after many late nights with the depressing thought of is it (restoration) really worth it? The affirming answer arrives very quickly when in my travels about the County I cross one of the many sections still full of water I realize how some of the dry sections will look when restored.

Last month I appealed for old car batteries for the typewriter fund - the result has been really beyond expectations. I have received calls to collect ones, twos and threes and in several cases over a dozen at a time. Approximately 1 ton have so far been collected more will be welcomed, give me ring and I will collect. Lets have your comments also not only regarding the Trow but the Society in general.

This edition sees the completion of Mr Sims Nature Notes. I think everyone will agree this has been an interesting feature. We hope to include similar articles in the future also a series describing the canals as they are today.



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This is really a time to review the past years activities and to plan the events for the next session. In order to do this we have to think back to what was the position this time last year. Firstly no society existed whatsoever, nationally and locally only a few people had any incling that restoration was on the cards for the Thames Severn Link. Now without our prompting magazines books newspapers accept the job is under way and our thanks must go to all those people who have publicised our aims so widely and enthusiastically in many forms of media. It is rather disappointing that one of our local newspapers has taken such a stance of opposition and continued to wage a campaign of hatred which they started over twenty years ago against the canal.

In the last year we have acheived a great deal we have the support of over 400 members some of whom are prominent in the National Waterway Movement, others are either district or county councillors. We have become members of the Inland Waterways Association and also operate in close liason with the Waterways Recovery Group. All of the canal societies we have come in contact with have pledged their support to the scheme in full. Many land owners are in full agreement with the scheme although it often means depriving them of their derelict canal. Scout groups, Womens Institutes, Schools and many many others support the project but the major support must still come from the County Council itself and to date although an improved relationship is being maintained no enthusiastic voice has been even hinted upon.

Also in the past year we have achieved sufficient finances to get the project off the ground. Thanks to the sponsored walk we raised funds to purchase the Priestman Dragline. Other plant such as dumpers and a light crane are currently being pursued in

order that we have equipment sufficient to hit the canal professionally in the new year. Gone are the spade parties it will have to be Dragline, Crane and dumpers from now on.

What for next years programme. Firstly a new committee will be in power maybe it will consist of all the old faces with only a few new ones or maybe an all new committee, it is for you as the members to decide. But whoever you elect make sure your choice is one that will press on with restoration to navigation at an ever increasing rate.

What will greatly enhance the societies prospects is for members to take more of the responsibilities of running the society's activities. This is not to formulate policy the committee does this, but to run a multitude of fringe jobs, catering, signwriting, plant maintenance, display advertising, etc, etc. All you have to do is tell us what you are good at and we will fix you up with a job.

Next year will see developments which we or the County Councils experts are unable to predict. Fuel supplies are rapidly becoming critical and it is only a matter of time before the energy crunch comes. When this happens I believe road schemes could go out of the window and then what price the canals? Commerce has to get materials as before and maybe in larger quantities. Exports and Imports will have to continue and trade expand, this is where the logic of water transport comes into its own. Coal in 150 ton unit loads, gravel, containers, what have you direct from the continent to industry in the valley. The future is ours.

The Stroudwater Canal Society has launched the canals restoration policy and the future looks very promising, there are obstacles to the project but as each day passes we are more confident these may be overcome, or avoided. The tide of opinion is fast flowing in our favour, we must like the old trows, ride the tide.

NATURE NOTES

A plant with quite large, rather Snapdragon - like flowers (it belongs to the same family) is the *Mimulus*, sometimes known as the Monkey flower or Yellow Musk. In addition to a range of cultivated ones, there are three wild species though these are an introduction of fairly modern times. They are all basically waterside plants. One has pure yellow flowers, another is slightly dotted with red, and the third is blotched with it.

Before the war the stream at the old ford (now a bridge) near Hilcot was so ablaze with the red and yellow species (*M. luteus*) that people came from as far as Birmingham to see it. In the early 1950's the *Mimuli* in many places were attacked by a disease and exterminated. At Hilcot I could only find one plant, and that was on an island in the stream.

Since then they have been gradually reappearing along our waterways, and a few years ago I was pleased to see a good stand of them beside the Thames and Severn near the old canal Round House at Chalford. It was at the bottom of an almost inaccessible bank on the opposite side of the canal, but it looked like the yellow one (*M. Moschatus*).

The plants I have mentioned so far are inhabitants of the banksides. In the large (private) pond beside the Thames and Severn at Baker's Mill there is however a rather unusual plant which roots in quite deep water. On a single stem each one towers up even six feet or more from the bottom till it breaks the surface and then grows on for nearly another foot, looking vaguely like a miniature pine tree. This is the Mare's Tail. It somewhat resembles the Horsetails some of which grow in watery places, but these are related to ferns while the Mare's Tail is a flowering plant. On inspection you can see that the leaves are quite different, though the flowers which are numerous all up the aerial part of the stem are insignificant. No petals are present, and only one stamen to each flower.

There are not many suitable places for the Mare's Tail in the County now, and though hardly pretty in the usually accepted sense of the word, I find it attractive.

Naturally there are many other water plants which have colonised the two canals. This is just a sample, but I should like to repeat what I said earlier. Anything interesting which turns up I should be glad to hear about. And a suggestion for you keen botanists. A list and an ecological study of the aquatic plants between Framilode and the Daneway end of the tunnel or even further, would be a worthwhile job. There are other forms of life beside plants too. I only wish I had the time for it.

ROBERT B. SIMS,



*Mimulus
fuscus*

WORKING PARTY REPORT

This month has seen the most significant event since working parties started last December. We have now acquired a Priestman Cub Excavator/Dragline. For the non-technical amongst you this is basically a cab and jib mounted on a catapillar tracked base. At the end of the jib is a bucket which is thrown out in front of the machine and dragged back collecting earth/silt etc as it does so. The bucket when full is lifted, the jib swung and the spoil deposited in the desired place. The acquisition of this machine will speed up clearance operations and improve the lot of the dedicated few who toil ceaselessly (opening time excepted) on Sundays to clear the canal. However don't run away with the idea that the era of 'Armchair Digging' has arrived and that your assistance is not needed as there will still be plenty of shovel work on the banks consolidating spoil heaps etc.

If we are to succeed in our venture more active support will be necessary, machinery alone will not achieve anything. Not all the work involves wading knee deep in silt with a spade but a willingness to get dirty is desirable. Among the jobs that you could tackle are bricklaying and re-painting lock walls, weirs etc fencing, clearing undergrowth or just making tea! So let's see a few new faces down the cut during the coming months.

With the A.G.M. coming in December it behoves me to give you a review on the years work in order to justify my existance on the Committee.

Looked at in cold statistics the work done at Bowbridge in the terms of yards cleared means little unless you have experienced the silt lapping at your Wellington tops and backache on Mondays. Considering the conditions we have worked under without plant and machinery Bowbridge has been successful and a tribute

to the tenacity of those who have participated regularly. Thanks gang.

Ryeford where we have done a certain amount of exploratory clearance work has done well apart from the unfortunate overzealous burning of brambles leading to damage to one of the quins.

In general terms over the past year we have learnt much, mainly the hard way, and built up a basic working party crew who should go from strength to strength especially now we are mechanised. Looking forward to 1974 I envisage Bowbridge flooded by May/June and the dragline in operation at Ryeford by late summer.

PETE SWALLOW

Working Parties

First and Third Sundays - November

First three Sundays - December

Bowbridge GR 156 - 854/044

Digging silt from pound.

Start 10.00 and please bring what kit you can.

Aways

27/28 October Droitwich Dig - a national effort to launch the Droitwich Canal Trust. You too could be included in the last of thousands in this great muck shifting spectacular.

25th November B.C.N.S. Winson Green Loop.

Come fishing with a difference, landing 56lb gas ovens, with a grapnel opposite Her Majesty's Prison.

Details from Pete Swallow.

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ODE TO A DRAG LINE

For nearly a year
We've waited for this Drag Line to appear

Now it's come!
For Ann and Dave Elliott it was no fun

Because at 8 in the morning
They got the warning

That in two hours hence
The men would commence

To unload this Navvies mate
Outside poor Elliotts gate

T'was only three days since they got wet
Waiting for the concrete to set

When 'volunteers' to say the least
Prepared a standing for the Mighty Beast

As I watched it spin around
My feminine mind thought 'a merry-go-round'

If it isn't used for what it oughter
It'll amuse our sons and daughter

I don't think Dave will get a presentation
From Amberley Residents Association

So lets hope it won't have too long a stay
Before we get it on its way

To do the job thats ahead
To clear the mud from the Bowbridge bed

But enough now of all the 'woes'
This great DRAG LINE actually 'goes' !!

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is now over 410 members. This is your great chance to enroll all those that have said to you, "Yes I'll give you my membership", but they didn't have the money on them. Get round them now and see if we can get a record number of members before the Annual General Meeting.

It really is good to see all people joining the Society from near and far but one point I must make -

WE NEED YOU TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP WHEN IT EXPIRES.

As you know we really do value you as members and it helps a great deal to be able to say that we have so many members in the Chalford Hill area or perhaps Ryeford area. I know that Councillors have been astonished that we have supporters in London, Hertford and Bradford to name a few. You the members have helped in so many ways. People have sent old batteries from Tewkesbury and Bristol besides the immediate vicinity and newspapers from many of you. Also one member actually delivered a book of Green Shield stamps from St. Albans, Herts. Members have written letters to Newspapers, national and local thus gaining more members. Others have put endless time in assisting in selling balloons for fundraising and last but not least you have slogged away at clearing the mud from the canal.

We need more help of course - but most of all we need you as continued members. If your membership expires in December (and a notation will be made on the back of the Trow if this is so) you may wish to renew at the Annual General Meeting to save us both postage.

Adult	- Membership.	£1.00
Family	- Membership.	£1.75
Youth	- Membership.	50p
Pensioner	- Membership.	50p

FUND RAISING

The first few months of the Fund Raising Sections existence have seen a lot of backroom discussion on the many money raising proposals. Some ideas have been adopted with great success, notably the Sponsored Walk and later the sale of (quite safe) gas filled balloons at various shows near and far.

The Walk is intended as an annual event. Although this year's walk went fairly smoothly, we learnt a lot and hope to improve next year's event (on May 5th!) in the light of our experience. In particular we intend to improve the towpath below Daneway.

The balloons were very popular but created a lot of work and involved more support from Society members than necessary. By next year we hope to have a rejuvenated caravan, specially adapted for publicity and sales work which we hope to take to many of the popular shows with a greatly reduced crew.

Already on the stocks are plans for an old favourite - a rummage sale in the Subscription Rooms, Stroud on December 1st. In January there will be a Dog Show - details later - and on December 15th in Market House, Minchinhampton an Exhibition and Sale of Work - your chance to stock up with Christmas presents - paintings, pottery etc.

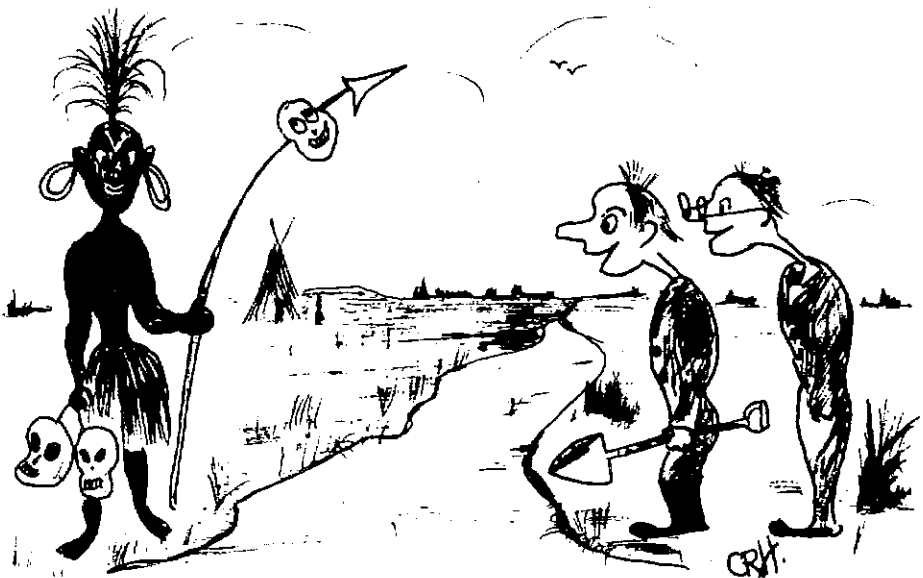
The Christmas Cards which were promised earlier haven't been possible this year. We apologise to those of you who we know were waiting for them and promise a better service next year.

In all our efforts this year we have grossed about £1600. In addition to the events mentioned above, 1975 will see the introduction of additional money makers. We hope to expand and improve the collection services already underway. Green Shield Stamps - a money maker in disguise if you like. We are not asking you to part with your entire collection - just three books, thats all. All stamps, loose or books, covering letters not required, to Andy Hiles.

A waste paper collection service has been established and is slowly gaining ground. We see this as a project which provides an opportunity for every member to participate. In addition we, as a conservation society, are taking positive steps to re-cycle a material which is becoming increasingly scarce. If you would like to save paper - cardboard, and paper sacks (best prices), newspapers and magazines (bundled and tied with strong string please) or even better become an agent for your immediate neighbourhood, please ring Lawrence Ratcliffe on Miserden 224 for a monthly collection.

Finally may I express my thanks to all those who have supported the Society, financially during the year.

DAVE ELLIOTT



"So thats what happened to the helpers on Sunday"

Reg Herrington.

COMPETITION WINNING ESSAYS

It started off with rain the canal path, was sloshy mud and water, and I was glad to be wearing my platform shoes. If I had worn my daps they would of been wet through by now. Ah! here I was at Brimscombe and that didn't take long. Now where is my sheet. Ah here it is, oh! blow I've dropped it right in a big pool of muddy water. "Can I have your sheet please said the Marshal", "I'm afraid it fell in the mud" "That's alright", he said we have had worse one's than that. The Marshal made me feel as though I was the last one, but I wasn't worried as my Uncle Nigel said "Take your time and you will be alright, you will be able to do it as easy as pie. When I met my Uncle Nigel he said "You made it alright I thought you were stuck in the mud". I laughed and handed my sheet over, as I had completed the first seven miles I was determined to do the other seven. Just think of all the money the Canal Society will have not only mine, which if I do it all I will collect £12.27p but all the rest from the others. I only joined the Canal Society a week ago on April the 29th. On the return walk I met that thick sloshy mud again. I think it must be at least a foot deep. My shoes were brown and orange when I started off, but now they all all uneven layers of dirty brown mud. Over the fence I went and I met a lady coming towards me and just at that moment, she said "You won't catch me going over that fence. Just look at me already, if I climb that fence it will make me even muddier than ever". I kept plodding on and by now I was only walking from my knees downwards as my shoes were so heavy with mud. The rain had cleared by now, but my anorak was soaked through inside and outside. I came to the Refreshment place but I decided to carry straight on.

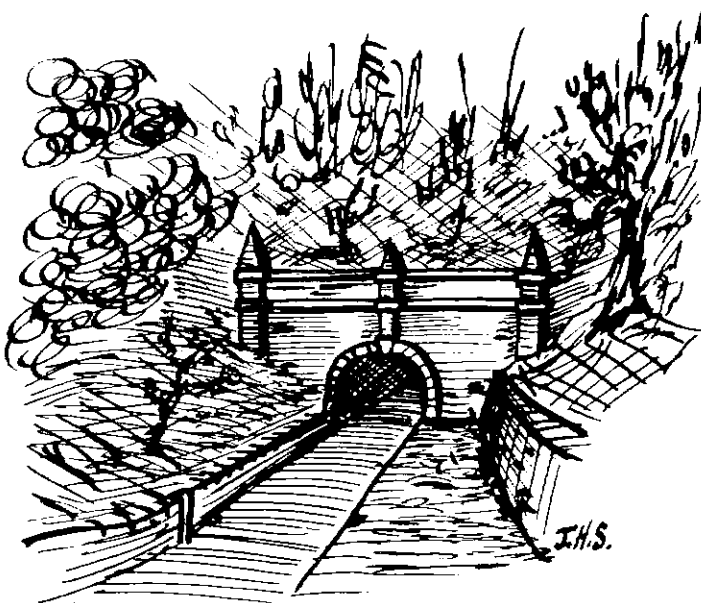
I could see an entrance with a car going by, and I gave a sigh of releif because I knew it was Brimscombe again. The Marshal said "Well done" only another two miles to go. I wasn't really tired it was just my legs. I passed the factories again and I could see my

house standing on the hill. I was just going through the gate and I turned round and I could see some boys behind me, and I was determined to not let them beat me. So over the road and along the last bit of the canal path. By now I was dying for a drink and something to eat. My luck was in and I sat down to a small feast in the station car park. As I had finished the walk of fourteen miles, I was able to give the sum of £12.27p to the Canal Society Fund.

SARA ROE age 10

On May the 6th we went on a canal walk and my Daddy was by a broken bridge making sure that no one hurt themselves and I saw lots of swans on the way and you could get a Boat through some of the places and I thought two myself it needs clearing out I thought the walk was not very long really and it was nice. We had are Sponsor Books signed and then we went on and nobody looked sad really even although it was raining I liked it very much.

KAREN FRY age 7



STROUDWATER CHAT

- GREEN SHIELD STAMPS - We now have about 27 books. Many have been sent anonymously. Still coming in and more wanted.
- TYPIST FUND RAISING SECTION - This position has now been filled but assistance always needed.
- ILLUSTRATED TALKS - Have been given to Oxford Section Inland Waterways Association, Stratford on Avon Canal Society, and Bristol Inland Waterways Association.
- STROUDWATER CARRIERS - Are starting their winter series of coal runs from the midlands to varying points on the Severn and Gloucester - Sharpness Canal.
- COVENTRY RALLY - Several boats from the Society attended this function.
- BOAT RALLY - Some thoughts being given to a local boat rally.
- CARTOONS - Required for next years publications - Canal Theme.
- LETTERS - To the Councils, M.P.s, newspapers etc from members all help the project.
- MEMBERS EVENING - Sept.14th Well received talk and slides of Canal tunnels by Mr Simpson from Newent.

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 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 from Graham Pegler. (Please include a donation for postage)

We've had good response for all sales items, and this is proving a valuable income to the Society. Many new sales ideas are in the pipeline for 1974.

GRAHAM PEGLER

UPPER AVON NAVIGATION RESTORATION

The completion of the Upper Avon is now near at hand but one major obstruction remains - money !!! and without donations now, the project will not come into being.

The Stroudwater Canal Society have constantly begged for funds from its member but if you are able to make a donation towards restoration of the Upper Avon please send them to Upper Avon Navigation Trust, Avon House, Harvington, Worcester.

MIKE AYLAND

EVENTS

- Nov 17th - MEMBERS EVENING - Cine Film & Slides of canals. SUBSCRIPTION ROOMS, Stroud. 7.30pm.
- Nov 30th - DISCO at Tunnel House Inn, Coates. (off A419 near Cirencester) 8pm. Admission 15p or 25p after 10.30pm.
- Dec 1st - JUMBLE SALE, SUBSCRIPTION ROOMS, Stroud. 2pm. (for collection of items for Sale ring Nailsworth 2416)
- DEC 1ST - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, SUBSCRIPTION ROOMS, STROUD. 7.30pm.
- Dec 4th - NOGGIN AND NATTER - SHIP INN, Brimscombe, Stroud. (chance for members and friends to ask committee awkward questions about the canal)
- Dec 15th - EXHIBITION AND SALE OF WORK, (Arts and Crafts, Pottery, Painting etc) MARKET HOUSE, MINCHINHAMPTON, Glos.
- Jan 1st - NOGGIN AND NATTER - SHIP INN, Brimscombe. (first Tuesday each month)
- Jan 20th - EXEMPTION DOG SHOW - NAILSWORTH, TOWN HALL. (by courtesy of Kennel Club) 1.30pm details from D. Elliott.
- Feb 5th - NOGGIN AND NATTER again.
- May 5th - SPONSORED CANAL WALK - (get in training now for this great event)

All entries for February edition must be in by JAN 14TH.

A cross in the box indicates your membership due in December.

