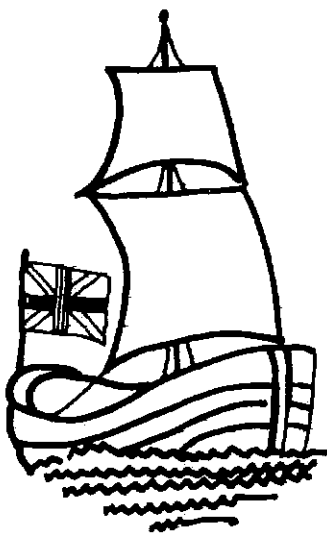




# THE TROW



NO.6 MAY 1974



STROUDWATER



CANAL SOCIETY

# EDITORIAL

On June 22-23rd this year a Water Festival and Boat Rally is to be held at Hempsted Bridge on the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal. As Rally Harbour Master I feel I had better use this space to explain all about this event.

The Festival was suggested by Gloucester City Council as part of their Festival '74 and we as a Society were asked to organize things. Knowing the large amount of work involved the Society asked the assistance of the South Western Branch of the Inland Waterways Association which was gladly given - a joint committee was formed.

What will the Society gain from the Water Festival? Firstly it will introduce many people to the waterways and give the Society more publicity. Secondly, subject to good weather and a good attendance, some money should be added to the funds.

The Festival will be a two day event with activities on the water and ashore - trade stands - many boats - John Player has agreed to bring the steam boat "Hero" as featured in the "Onedin Line" on BBC TV, also the Royal Navy narrow boats are expected. There will be a barbecue-supper for boat crews on the Saturday night.

Included with the Trow (probably if ready) is a book of draw tickets that we would like you to sell if you can, as you will see from the tickets several good prizes are being offered. It is not possible to segregate people who have offered to sell tickets from those who have not so if you are one of the latter please just ignore these tickets.

For those members who have boats please bring them to the Rally the more boats the better - Rally Forms are available from me at:-

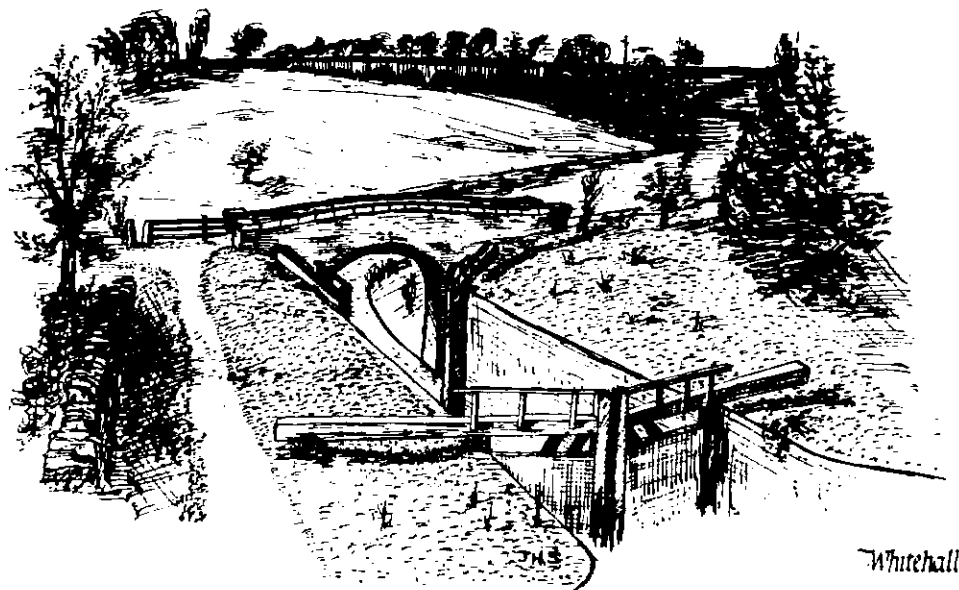
"Lamorna", Nymphsfield Rd., Nailsworth, Stroud,  
Gloucestershire. Tel: Nailsworth 2416.  
(045 383 2416)

As part of the festival on Sunday morning a Cruise-In is planned - from the festival site to the junction with the Stroudwater Canal at Saul - to draw attention to the need for restoration.

This Festival/Rally is believed to be the first ever to be held on the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal and one of the few to be held on a commercial waterway - please come along and bring your friends and help make the occasion successfull in every way.

Next edition - a report on a very successfull Water Festival!!!

MIKE POWELL



Whitehall

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Job satisfaction for the Chairman is to be approaching Whitehall bridge on a beautiful April morning at a steady 3 miles per hour to the sound of a single cylinder air cooled diesel engine echoing down the Golden Valley. No we have not opened the top 14 miles and not told anyone it was on the society's "Yellow Peril" dumper with a yard and a half of gravel poised delicately over the front wheels. April working parties have been following up the admirable work done by Manor Park School in cleaning the tow path from Daneway to Pucks Mill which was supplimented by many days of dedicated work by Tom Robinson. Gravel is being spread along the towpath which itself has in many places been recut and the whole area improved both visually and physically. This is a tremendous job as in the first two weekends 50 tons of gravel was transported  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Daneway to Pucks Mill by an impossible route which meant building a 20 foot wide bridge to enable the fleet of hired plant to cross the River Frome. I want to thank all those who took part as I know the result will be appreciated by all users of the tow path for some considerable time to come. It was laid as an amenity for the public and society members especially those on our Sponsored Walk on May 5th.

## Sponsored Walk

This walk is essential to the future of the society and IT IS YOUR responsibility to support this event. A lot of effort has been put into the organisation don't leave the task to other people even if you only get a few sponsors every little helps, we need the money - you need the exercise.

The Social side of the Society is now being very well organised under Tony Bradford's efficient management and it is nice to know aother department of the society is becoming independant of the main committee. Two very good meetings have been held

since the last Trow although Derick Applins interesting lecture on caving was missed by many, this was our fault in placing an advert in a media that has no events column and our meeting was to be seen adjacent to situations vacant after Painswick organist wanted. More important meetings of ours were placed after money lenders and before washing machines in the same paper.

Walbridge is an ever present problem the brewery site has been removed partly and the contractors have left a particularly unsightly part of demolished building for many weeks now. I hope this is not part of a deliberate "lets clear the eyesore and put in a quick roundabout" scheme by the authorities.

April sees the publication of the Inland Waterways Associations report "Barges or Juggernauts"? calling for the long term reappraisal of Inland Shipping for bulk carrying. This is wonderful news but before we have more misinformed editorials predicting coasting vessels up to Thrupp at the economic sacrifice of local industry let me say that I believe using the modern applications of Barge Traffic with BACAT SEABEE AND LASH systems an economically and environmently valid solution is provided, to the currently pollutive and precarious transport system dependant on small unit loads with ever increasing fuel and environmental costs. This is wonderful news and what we have been saying for a long time.

\*"Barges or Juggernauts?" can be obtained from I.W.A. 114 Regents Park Road, London N.W.L. at price 50p

### Boat Trip 74

Don't forget this trip. Book Now! See more details later.

## ADVANCE PLANNING

A number of members have noticed the addition of Advance Planning to the list of Officials on the inside front cover of the last edition of the Trow and have asked what this involves. In this first report, I will try and explain how Advance Planning fits into the organisation, and give an indication of the present state of plans.

The main aim of the Society is fairly simple; to restore the through navigation from the Severn to the Thames. To achieve this aim we have to work in various ways, and the Committee of the Society is responsible for ensuring that all necessary action is taken. Publicity and political pressure is necessary to convince the Authorities that the canal can and must be restored, and we are confident that the Society will succeed in this. However, if we are to be recognised as realistic, it is important that we demonstrate to these Authorities that our plans are feasible, and that we can carry them out efficiently.

The Committee have made provision in the organisation for three linked posts to ensure that the restoration work is carried out effectively. These are Advance Planning, Project Co-ordinator and Working Party Organiser. At the moment the work of the Project Co-ordinator is split between myself and Pete Swallow. The work involved in these posts can be divided into two main parts.

First, the long term planning, which means preparing possible schemes for the various obstructions which we have to overcome and discussing these schemes with the landowners, Local Authorities, etc. Having decided on a particular scheme, detailed drawings have to be prepared showing, for example, the line of the new canal cut and the size and level of new locks.

Second, the short term planning, which will become more the responsibility of the Project Co-ordinator. This means deciding on priorities of work over the next six months or so, and making sure that the necessary plant and materials are available. At this stage, all the necessary information is handed over to the Working Party Organiser so that he can decide how much labour he needs for each job, and can plan the necessary supervision.

The major tasks to be undertaken in the near future by Advance Planning include a complete examination of the existing condition of the canal, the preparation of schemes for restoration including alterations to roads and bridges, the preparation of plans showing ownership over the whole length, and the location of possible tipping places for excavated material. In addition, we have to decide on the dimensions to which we are going to work. A circular has been sent to a large number of organizations asking for their opinions - if you wish to comment please get in touch with me.

At present, my attention is focussed mainly on the length of canal west of Sapperton Tunnel, and particularly the areas from Whitminster to Eastington where a new length of canal is required, and from Stroud to Brimscombe where most of the working party effort is being employed. By the end of the year, I hope to have prepared a viable scheme for the restoration from Frampton to Daneway, and will then be able to turn my attention to the more difficult problems east of the tunnel.

So far, I am working without an Advance Planning sub-Committee, and if any member is interested in assisting in this work, please contact me. It is not necessary to have any particular skill, since most of the work will consist of looking at the problems and discussing possible solutions.

In future issues, I intend to deal with the canal in sections, giving an outline of the present condition, the problems to be solved, and an idea of some possible solutions.

# MEMBERSHIP

GOOD NEWS! We now have over 530 members to date. People seem to be joining more and more. This number is arrived at even after people that have not renewed over three months ago have been taken out.

ABOUT RENEWALS Please try and renew you membership as soon as a reminder is sent. As it helps greatly with postage etc. Also if you leave if until you 'have time' you may never remember to find it! We are all the same - so renew promptly because the Society values your membership greatly.

BANKERS ORDERS This is a very simple affair and saves the Society and you loads of time and worry. It will help greatly if you fill out a bankers order - especially in future years as renewal reminders will not be necessary.

Some of you 'distant' members may dispair thinking how can I join in the Sponsored Walk or the Working Parties living so far away. Well now's your chance BRING YOUR BOAT TO GLOUCESTER WATER FESTIVAL or just come yourself by road. We will be very glad to see you there. Like the Stroudwater project it is a challenge not to miss. There's space for hundreds of boats on the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal and for hundreds of people on the Rally Site. Come and join us and give Gloucester an awakening!

One last thing I must remind you about it please - please let us know your change of address. Send it to the Membership Secretary, address page 2. It is so sad when we get literature returned "Gone Away" or "Removed".

Keep those memberships coming in - get your friends and family to join - we must be one of the most rapidly growing waterway societies in the country!



# WORKING PARTIES

Many of you may be wondering why the air over Bowbridge is not blue with the haze of diesel fumes from our fully restored and operational plant. The answer is that we are in the hands of the lawyers who are drawing up the lease for the Bowbridge to Air Plants Section. The draft lease has been prepared but cannot go through until we have the legal status of a Trust. The Society's Solicitors are at present working upon the Trust Instrument which will be put before the Charity Commissioners as soon as possible.

However, it is not a case of 'all dressed up and no place to go' as we have been exploiting other worksites in the last quarter.

Ryeford The pound above the double locks has been cleared of timber and all the brushwood has been burnt off. Much of the clearance work on this section was done by Wycliffe College as part of their 'Sponsored work in'.

Orchard Lock Brimscombe Blue School Wells (who I suspect are impervious) dragged Orchard Lock in torrential rain and managed to fill two large rubbish skips (provided by GCC Surveyors Dept.) with an incredible collection of 15 bike frames, 36 spare bike wheels, 12 car wheels, 8 prams, 3 cookers, 2 car bonnets, 1 washing machine, 1 car wing, 2 bumpers, 1 engine block and a vast quantity of household refuse and sundry unidentifiable objects. This haul represents approximately half the rubbish in the lock. The other half much of it too heavy to be dragged with a grapnel will have to be craned out at a later date. In addition to this Blue School have also dug a drainage channel along the length of the pound to ease the flooding of the adjacent industrial premises.

Daneway An all out assault has commenced to improve the tow path between Pucks Mill and Daneway (i.e.

the part not maintained by the Council) prior to the Sponsored Walk. This operation is the first to date with mechanical plant both our own and hired and will involve laying some 60 tons of gravel over 2000 yards of tow path. We hope to achieve this ambitious project before the deadline of the walk by holding working parties both Saturdays and Sundays.

Always We spent a back breaking day at Titford with the BCN barrowing shale for the towpath to the Oldbury Locks - "The Crow" prior to their Restoration Rally under the sadistic eye of the tractor driver from Warley Borough Council Parks and Cemeteries Dept who loaded our large barrows. By the heaped up quantities he placed in them, from the comfort of his tractor seat, with the fore-end loader, we suspect he was on a commission from the Cemeteries Section for new business.

### Future Working Parties

First 3 Sundays of the month - meet Bowbridge.  
for 10.00 (late comers see notice board for venue)  
prior to moving off to worksite.

PETE SWALLOW

# NAVVIERS

is published by the  
Waterways Recovery Group  
and for 25p a year anyone interested  
in promoting restoration and development  
of every navigable waterway  
by voluntary work, can find out  
whats happening.

write to -

Graham Palmer

**WATERWAY RECOVERY GROUP**

4, Wentworth Court, Wentworth Avenue,  
Finchley, LONDON N3 1YP.



# CANAL TALES

While the boats were being docked and refitted we were also busy looking to their future employment. For months letters were written and promising leads followed, my brother and I travelled many miles as we visited potential customers from London to Liverpool, how soon our rosy hopes were blighted! It wasn't that there wasn't any work for boats we gathered, the potential customers were generally interested and sympathetic but always had valid reasons as to why boats couldn't be used - more tonnage than the available craft could handle, too slow, lack of handling facilities, handling costs - to mention a few. (The arguments on handling are one of the hard facts of waterway transport, while water transport may be the cheapest transport, the associated handling of cargos is usually the cost factor which cancels out its advantage over road and rail.) With the boats ready for work the prospects of our 'own' traffic looked pretty remote, of existing trade we had little choice, as novices we had only the Croxley traffic which always required more boats.

Probably one reason why the Croxley coal traffic was always short of boats was the rate, which was such as to attract only the desperate boatmen who couldn't find alternative employment or were too proud to sign 'on the Labour', to the first category we certainly belonged! Our net rate after toll payment was 14/- per ton for a round trip of ten to fourteen days, including unloading by the boats crew using a decrepit crane or if the crane broke down (a not infrequent occurrence) by shovelling. Without going into detailed economics it is perhaps sufficient to state that our crew, my brother and mate, considered an average of £5 a piece per week good going! We were fortunate to get a couple of better paid loads to Southall and the Croxley rate was increased slightly when the Ashby Canal Association took over the traffic. A great deal of work was put in by the Association to continue the traffic (and their Trading Section has since become Ashby Canal Transport Ltd., the only case I know of a canal society actively supporting and promoting canal transport.)

Sadly, the coal traffic declined, we carried our last Croxley load in January, 1970 and the contract was terminated shortly afterwards.

During this first phase of our carrying career my brother proved a good captain, having been flung in at the deep end with no previous experience of narrowboats he learned the hard way. The normal hazards of boating all came his way, some he admitted to and other incidents were reported with relish by our boatmen friends! However, as we had found during our time at Charity, while the odd mishap such as 'stemming up' (running aground) was considered rare entertainment real emergencies raised ready help. On one occasion when the butty ran into the motors stern only the timely arrival of a Willow Wren pair saved Comet from sinking. Water was pouring in through a split in the counter and only a frantic spell of shovelling the coal forward to trim the stern up forestalled sinking. The leak was plugged with rags and firewood wedges and, after a pot of tea, the cargo was re-trimmed and the boats went on their way. After unloading at Croxley a friendly mechanic from the mill welded the split with gear 'borrowed' from the workshop.

With the end of the Croxley contract prospects looked bleak. With the end of the famed Blue Lines coal contract to Southall came what appeared to be the end of regular long haul narrowboat trade. Notwithstanding the waves of nostalgia and pious regrets, while the working boats suddenly became desirable collectors items at inflated prices (a trend which continues) we decided to hang onto our boats and see what turned up.

TONY JONES



# FUND RAISING

## FUTURE EVENTS

Sponsored Walk, May 5th At the time of preparing this report preparations for the walk were well in hand. Already we have in circulation some 1300 booklets with the schools still to be supplied.

The weeks cruising offered as a family award seems to be creating a lot of interest but the Scouts and Youth Clubs - as yet - do not seem particularly interested in the canoe. Both Amberley and Blue School are defending their shields against competition from Stroud, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucester and Malmesbury.

During the past few months over 50 tons of gravel have been spread on the towpath below the Daneway Inn. Overhanging branches have been cut back and the towpath widened and levelled. We hope that these measures will avoid a re-occurrence of last years quagmire.

Medieval Feast Planned for May 11th at the Abbey Mill, Tewkesbury, this trip is now fully booked with a goodly list of reserves to cover possible cancellations. Thankyou for your support - next time we'll book a larger coach.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

Waste Paper We are now collecting about 2 tons per week, increasing steadily. We desperately need help with the collection service and also with subsequent sorting and baling. Please contact Mr Bill Kinsman on Stroud 3667 EVENINGS ONLY or myself if you can spare a couple of hours each week. With recent substantial increases in the price of waste paper, this is now a very profitable venture and we need all the help we can get.

CHELTENHAM - Members in the Cheltenham area only contact Reg Beagley on Chelt. 33837 for regular collection.

Credit for the income to date must go to Lawrence Ractliffe of Miserden who started the scheme and expanded it, single handed, to a point where six of us can now only just cope.

Lottery We hope to launch a '100' Club in the next Trow. The only detail available now is that payments must be made by Banker's Order only. No cash deals will be accepted.

Christmas Cards In the near future 10,000 Christmas cards will be printed. We are, therefore, anxious to hear from anyone who is willing to fold a few of these cards in their own homes. It's a quick and simple job - even the children can help.

Batteries Several tons have now been collected and sold resulting in an income of about £100 to the society.

DAVE ELLIOTT

#### PLANT

Since my appeal in the last Trow for a permanent Plant Engineer, Mr. Chris Rowlands has offered his services. During the dragline overhaul Chris proved himself to be a most capable and conscientious engineer fully aware of the problems of maintaining not-so-new plant.

In future Chris will co-ordinate all activities involving plant with the object of providing reliable facilities for the working parties. To do this successfully is certainly not a one man job and further assistance is required on plant maintenance. Contact Chris Rowlands on Leighterton 245.

DAVE ELLIOTT

## SOCIAL

Yes, another committee has been formed. This one is to keep you "social", so we can be recognised by the red blazers and toothpaste smiles!

Our first "event" was an illustrated lecture at the Subscription Rooms Stroud, on 9th March. A very large and appreciative audience were entertained by Mr A. Richardson who showed a remarkable selection of colour slides of British birds. Mr Richardson is obviously a very knowledgeable ornithologist although this is only really a side-line since he specializes in moths!

The second open evening at the Subscription rooms on the 5th April was also an illustrated talk. Again the speaker Mr D. Aplin was clearly an expert both on caving and photography. By the end of the evening it was quite clear what attracted the potholders into the dark damp and often hazardous regions under the ground and some members accepted the offer of an expedition under the Forest of Dean.

HELP! If anyone would be kind enough to help with catering (mainly serving teas etc) for future social events would they please telephone Carole or Tony Bradford on Brimscombe 3786.

BOAT DAY TRIP Sunday 4th August, 1974. A day trip from Stroud by coach to Gas Street Basin. Here we shall board a Traditional Narrow Boat and cruise for the day along the Worcester-Birmingham Canal. Mid-day buffet will be included. Bookings to be in as soon as possible. Closing date 30th June. (Bookings not accepted after that date) Price £3.00 adults and £1.50 children. O.A.P. £2. (Coach, Boat and midday buffet included) Details and bookings to: Mr R. Phelps, 16 Chedworth, Newent, Glos. (S.A.E. with bookings please)

Note Final details will be sent about 3 to 4 weeks prior to trip if you require immediate acknowledgement please send extra stamped addressed envelope.

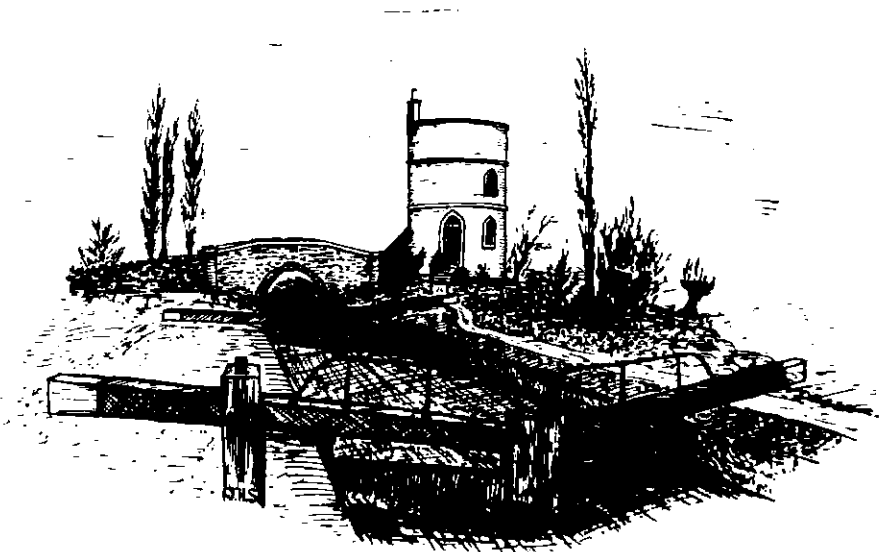
TONY BRADFORD

The sun was already well overhead and I could see the look of anxiety on the crews faces. Ahead of us lay the final flight of locks with a beautiful canal-side pub at the top.

"If we get stuck in the mud again it'll be closed" exclaimed one parched voice.

I eased the throttle open having little care for the speed limit. Shafts of sunlight filtered down through the overhanging trees, and the 'snap' of our diesel engine echoed through that sheltered valley.

As we rounded the last bend I could see the water level in the summit pound was well down. Undaunted, the crew left off and sprinted for the pub. I parked the dump truck ready for our next load of gravel.





# Stroudwater Chat

Heard on Working Party -

Wife: Is this practice for gardening?

Husband: No. Instead of it!

\*\*\*\*\*

These Dumptrucks are good - Look at the size of the ash-tray!

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JUNE 1ST - UPPER AVON to be re-opened.  
Ceremony performed by Her Majesty  
The Queen Mother.

\*\*\*\*\*

BARBECUE - Aug 17th at The Retreat, Amberley.  
Tickets (limited to 60) £1 each.

\*\*\*\*\*

MONTGOMERY CANAL - Seven miles to be restored by  
the Prince of Wales Committee and the Royal  
Variety Club of Great Britain.

\*\*\*\*\*

SAUL (at junction of Stroudwater Canal and  
Gloucester Sharpness Canal) Only available  
car park for boat crews has been taken over!!

\*\*\*\*\*

BOOK REVIEW Canals and Canal Architecture by  
John Vince. (See sales items) First published in  
1973 this book provides a brief mouthwatering guide  
to the major features of our canal heritage. It  
is well illustrated and should be of interest to  
both the newcomer and the 'hardened' enthusiast.

# SALES

The following items are available from the Society:-

## BOOKS:

The Thames & Severn Canal by Humphrey Household.  
price £2.95.

Stroud 1890-1915 by J.H. Stephens. price £1.20.

A Short History of the NARROW BOAT by Tom Chaplin.  
price 50p.

Canals & Canal Architecture by John Vince.  
(see book review) price 30p.

## MILESTONE PLATES:

Replica Thames & Severn milestone plates - full size made of fibreglass, black on gold or black on white. Would make ideal wall plaques.  
price £2.00.

## BALL-POINT PENS:

Retractable ball-point pens marked Stroudwater Canal Society. 5p or 3 for 10p.

## TOILET KEYS:

B.W.B. toilet keys for use on waterway sanitary stations. All boat users require these - on sale to current licence holders. price 25p.

## PICTURES:

Approx. 5" x 4" pen & ink drawings - in transparent case - of Thames & Severn Canal features.  
price 40p each or five for £1.50.

Donation for postage on above items welcomed - All orders to:- Graham Pegler, Bourne Nurseries, Brimscombe, Stroud, Glos. Tel: Brimscombe 2397.

# EVENTS

- May 4th - SKITTLES MATCH - SHIP INN, Brimscombe, Stroud. BCNS Working Party Team v Stroudwater Canal Society Team. (details P. Swallow)
- May 5th - SPONSORED WALK - Fund Raising Event of the year - walk from Stroud to Daneway and back.(Refreshments and transport provided free)
- May 7th - NOGGIN AND NATTER - SHIP INN, Brimscombe, Stroud (chance to meet committee members whilst enjoying informal chat and drink)
- May 11th - MEDIEVAL BANQUET - Abbey Mill, Tewkesbury, (Fund Raising Event)
- June 22-23 - GLOUCESTER WATER FESTIVAL and BOAT RALLY, Hempsted Bridge, Gloucester-Sharpness Canal. 11am to 6pm Sat/Sun.
- July 28th - I.W.A. Walk along Stroudwater Canal. details from M. Ayland, Riverside, Priding, Saul, Glos. Saul 385.
- Aug 4th - BOAT/COACH TRIP - See page 16.
- Aug 17th - BARBECUE - Amberley (Fund Raising Event - see inside for details)
- Aug 30th - PRESENTATION OF WALK AWARDS - Guest Speaker. Subscription Rooms, Stroud.. 7.30pm.

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NOGGIN AND NATTER - All Noggin and Natters are the first TUESDAY each month. Ship Inn, Brimscombe.

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O & I (INSTANT PRINT) Northgate, Gloucester.