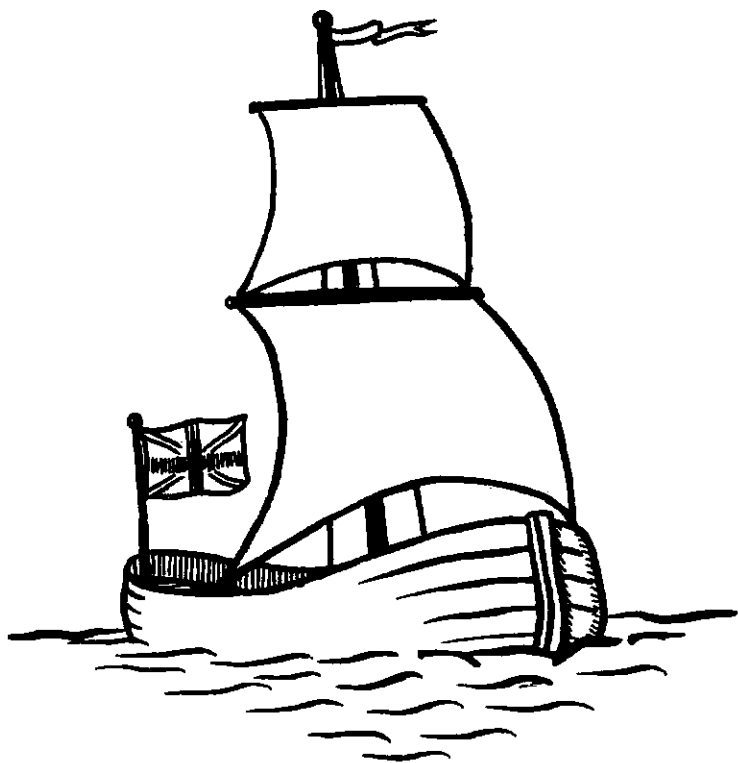


THE TROW



**Stroudwater, Thames & Severn
Canal Trust Limited**

No. 10

June 1975

Editorial

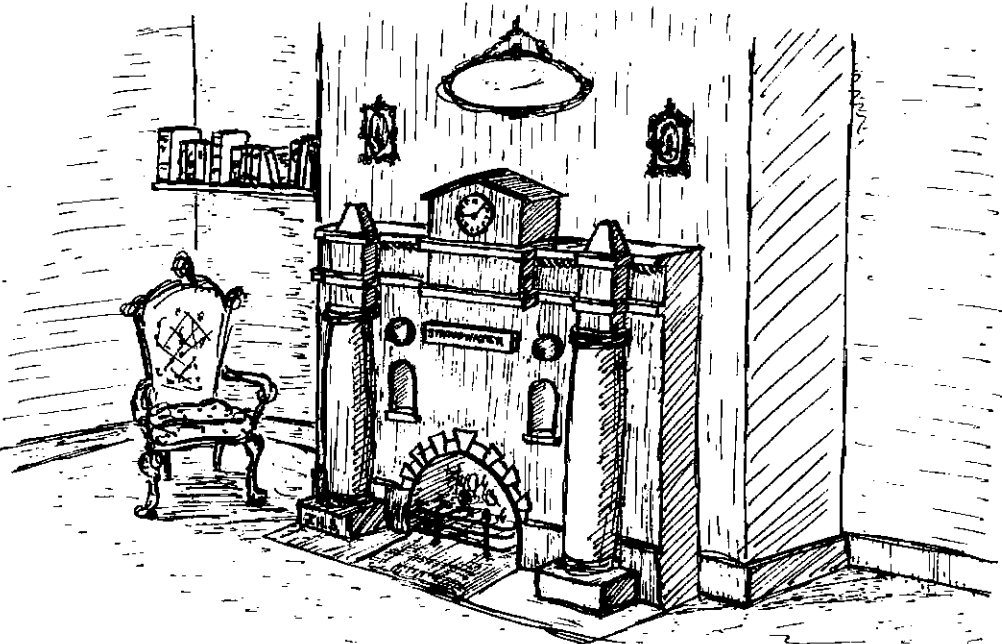
Since the last issue of "The Trow" one or two changes have taken place.

Mike Powell has relinquished the Editorship of the magazine, and I am sure everyone will wish me to extend heartfelt thanks to him and his charming wife for all the hard work they have put in over the last two-and-a-half years. I have taken over with some trepidation, and trust I shall be able to maintain the high standards set up by Mike. Needless to say, I shall be pleased to receive contributions in the way of articles, letters (of complaint or otherwise!), drawings, cartoons etc., but please keep articles as short as possible - space is at a premium.

A new cover has been designed by John Stephens, to coincide with the Society's new Trust status, and we think members will be pleased with the result.

Two appeals for help - Beryl Ayland is having to give up the Secretaryship of the Trust, as the volume of work is increasing in line with the membership, and a suitable replacement, male or female, is being sought. If anyone is interested please ring Saul 385 for details. Also, our Plant Engineer, Chris Rowlands, is seeking a successor, as he has increasing commitments elsewhere so let's hear from you - there must be a budding Brunel somewhere amongst our members!

Trow Editor: Mr.R.O.Nott, Lynfield, Frome Park Road,
Stroud, Glos. GL5 3LF
Telephone: Stroud 3014



Chairmans' Report

Much has been said and written about the policy of the Society by people who have no connection with policy-making of the organisation, and now the aims of the Trust have been agreed several points should, I think, be clarified.

Firstly, we are in existence to promote and rebuild - or build from scratch - canals, with the Stroudwater and Thames & Severn in particular. Having said this it does not mean any guarantee of success or failure - not even the planners have crystal ball's that good to predict the result either way. One thing is FACT - at Bowbridge we have rebuilt a canal, new lock gates, new paddles and all and I see no reason why over the years we cannot continue this process elsewhere.

With the flooding of Bowbridge the canal WILL be navigable to anyone who is able to trail a boat into the section. It will not have a statutory right of navigation but it will have water for public use, which is more than may be said about any other sections of the canal. We have never given any guarantees of through navigation, although we believe it is possible and even our critics agree it is highly desirable. In fact we go so far as to say we believe it to be the most desirable route in the country.

What I fail to understand are the guarantees which are required by certain factions that the money for restoration will be deposited in the Bank of England before a stone is touched, making sure there is enough to complete the whole restoration as well. I think each section should be judged on its merits, and we then proceed stage by stage, section by section, obstacle by obstacle. As for stating where the money is coming from, I am adamant that this is nobody's concern but our own, yet certain factions again categorically state that we must prove where the money is coming from. This I feel is entirely our affair - if one goes into a shop with a fist-full of pound notes to buy articles, the shopkeeper does not usually ask where one got the money from. So with restoration - fund-raising is our problem and provided we appear with the legal tender, how we come by it is our business.

Many people have expressed concern over Press reports that the restoration will cost $10\frac{1}{2}$ million pounds and will be paid for out of the rates. $\pounds 10\frac{1}{2}m$ is probably an accurate figure if a major construction firm were asked to do the job, taking two years for completion as well. But we are using volunteer or cheap labour with second-hand plant and at the moment costs are $\pounds 420$ per mile, and $\pounds 2000$ to completely rebuild a lock.

Now as for paying for it out of the rates - anyone advocating a Council with a budget the size of Stroud's allocating $\pounds 10m$ to be spent on one amenity feature just hasn't done his sums correctly, and our Councillor's are too sensible for that. It is a wonderful "scare" weapon, however - "Double the rates just for the Canal." Sorry, it won't wash - not that we are saying we would not accept ratepayers' money. The Trust has made an application for a grant from the Severn-Trent Water Authority Amenity Budget, and I am certain local ratepayers would approve of us asking for their money to be spent locally, because if we don't others will and the benefits will end up at the far end of the Severn-Trent area, 100 miles away.

I am very pleased about one aspect of the Trust, and that is the way the Cirencester Section is being administered with hardly any support from the Western Section, and with no canal at present. They are forming into the basis of a very competent group. It is hoped that work will start in the Cirencester area shortly but negotiations are still uncompleted.

MIKE AYLAND.

The Severn Trow

This is the first of a two-part article based on data collected by Mr. Grahame Farr of Portishead, and previously published elsewhere. I am indebted to Mr. Farr for his kind permission to use this material (Ed.)

The name "Trow" comes from the Anglo-Saxon word for a trough, which is usually pronounced "trow" in Gloucestershire. The craft were of shallow draft suitable for working the creeks, pills and rivers of the Bristol Channel, and had a broad beam and large open hold to ensure a good pay load.

The earliest documented reference dates from 1411, when trows were already well-established as carriers of produce from Severn-side to large centres such as Bristol and Gloucester. By the 16th Century they had spread down to Bridgwater and were making voyages as far west as Swansea, having been found most suitable for the carriage of pit coal. Dean Forest coal was also brought to Bristol and Bath via the Avon, and the Shropshire and other pits were sending coal up and down the Severn. Over the next three centuries other bulk cargoes were carried, including limestone from South Wales and salt from Droitwich, the latter being trans-shipped at Bristol for export to fish-curing centres at home and abroad.

Later trows were converted to carry more cargo by building up a "box." The original rigging of the vessels was a single mast with a large square sail, but this progressed through the 19th Century through the topsail-ketch style to pure fore-and-aft rig. Sails and cordage were of the utmost simplicity for ease of working in narrow places, under bridges and through locks.

Over 1000 trows were built on the Severn banks above Gloucester up to 1868, but they were later driven south by competition from the canals and railways and building took place at such places as Gloucester, Saul, Brimscombe, Framilode, Bristol and Chepstow. Larger vessels could now be built, an example being the FREDERICA, built at Gloucester in 1869, of 84 tons and 74.2ft long. The STROUD PACKET, originally built at Brimscombe in 1823, was "boxed" and rebuilt in 1876, becoming a 62-ton vessel of 73.2ft in length. Probably the largest trow ever built was the MONARCH, built at Saul in 1900, of 93 tons and 80.8ft long. The last trow to be built was the GEM, at Brimscombe in 1904, a smaller vessel for the limits of the Stroudwater Canal, being of 38 tons and 68ft long.

(To be concluded)

Fund Raising

Rummage Sale A Rummage Sale held at Miserden in April raised, in spite of a rather disappointing attendance, the welcome sum of £60. Our thanks to Mrs. Ractliffe and helpers who organised the Sale.

Sponsored Walk Our sincere thanks to the 600 walkers, both two-legged and four-legged) and 13,000 sponsors who participated in this year's walk. A rough calculation at the end of the day leads us to believe that we have raised a sum in the region of £3,000.

The weather was perfect "walking weather" and everyone seemed to enjoy the day - blisters apart! Our apologies to all those who were unable to obtain a Ploughman's Lunch at Daneway as, in spite of the fact that we quadrupled last year's catering requirements, demand was far in excess of supply - a lesson learned for next year!

Our thanks must also go to the Red Cross who were kindly in attendance for the whole day, and to Mr. Nolan and Vivian Young Ltd., who respectively loaned us fire extinguishers and removal van.

Again, our thanks to all those who helped make the 1975 Sponsored Walk such a successful one.

FORTHCOMING EVENT

Barbecue Supper (with cider and beer) on Saturday 16th August. Tickets £1.25 available from Ann Elliott, The Retreat, Amberley.



DIG THIS!

And you can too, by joining members of the Stroudwater Thames & Severn Canal Trust

every Saturday & Sunday at Bowbridge, or come to one of our more informal meetings in the Cotswold Bar, the Union Inn Stroud on the first Tuesday evening in each month.

Phone Saul 385 for Details

Affiliated to the inland Waterways Association.

Book Review

THE SHELL BOOK OF INLAND WATERWAYS by Hugh McKnight,
published by David & Charles - Price £4.95

This is a book about the inland waterways of the British Isles. Not about what they were, or what they might have been had it not been for some Government Act or Commission.

It describes the building of our waterways, the engineering that went into them and the structures that stand on or around them. On each page are many line drawings of those features which make our waterways so interesting and unique.

I was surprised to find details of the Lake District, somehow this section of our waterways seems to have been forgotten by other authors. There is no doubt whatsoever that a tremendous amount of research has been carried out by the author in compiling this excellent addition to the Shell range of books - nearly 500 pages in all is good value for money.

Not only just a book for the boat owner, the rambler, or indeed the industrial archaeologist but a book for anyone who wishes to increase his knowledge of our islands.

Mike Powell.

Publicity

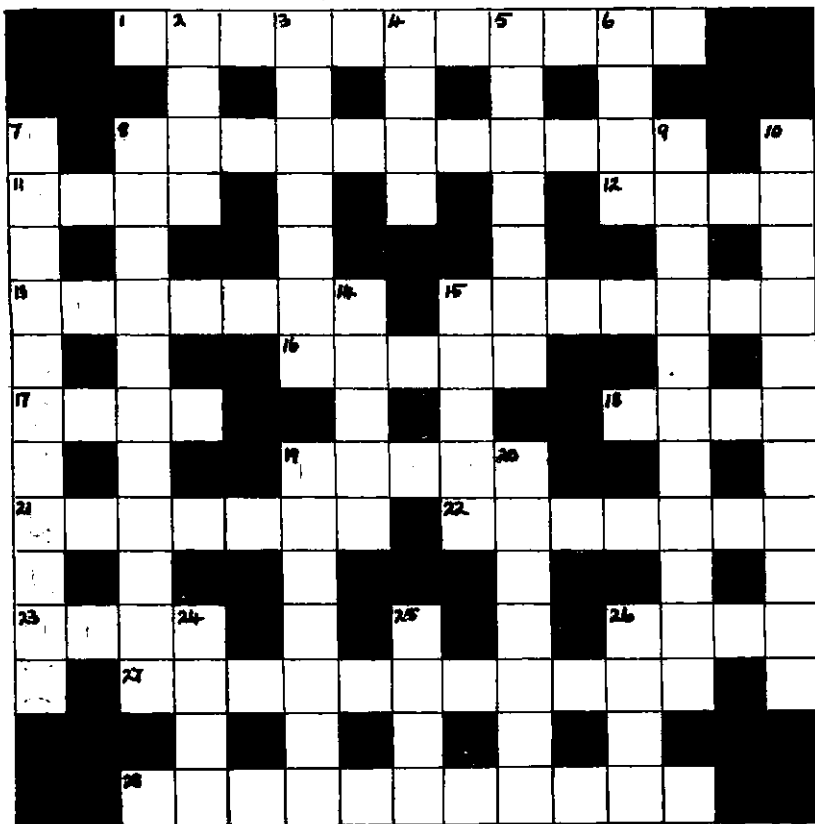
The publicity given to John Bond's excellent work on the new Griffin's Lock gates has resulted in an offer by Mr. A.J.Phillimore of Whiteshill of the use of his premises for the continuation of this work. The Trust's grateful thanks are extended to Mr.Phillimore for his generosity.

I would appreciate it if members would let me have copies of any press cuttings or other publicity affecting the Trust which they may come across, in order that these can be collated and followed up where necessary.

We have not always had a smooth ride from the local press, but we appreciate that they are in the main most impartial and the reports of the recent public meeting were very fairly presented. Incidentally, members may be interested to know that following this meeting, regular meetings with the planning people should ensue.

REG BEAGLEY

Stroudwater, Thames & Severn



Solution to
Crossword No.1

Crossword No - 2

CLUES ACROSS

1. Is it as "good for you" as the Liffey brand? (6,5)
2. Could be golf practice on the Axminster, or working-party activity (4,7)
11. Terrible name for, we hear, a rude boatman (4)
12. Often accompanies the "Water of Life" (4)
13. In spite of the answer there are just three well-known Chiltern varieties (7)
15. That gin makes navigation dangerous here (2,5)
16. He had as many eyes as 13 (5)
17. Sounds as if a nobleman can't see the end of this (4)
18. Would you sound it before you round it? (4)
19. Do it to a cricket ball, but not the lock gate if navigating (3,2)
21. This could finish up on the end of itself, if bent (7)
22. East Anglian stretch of water and Mersey craft combine to give the answer (7)
23. You can write on it, but no longer sail it (4)
26. Sounds like Cockney is becoming hirsute (4)
27. Right, commander, food here but none too clean! (11)
28. Apparatus for Oxford or Cambridge M.P. with declining support? (7,4)

CLUES DOWN

2. Not the normal adjective for canal boat (4)
3. Sounds as if foreman might do this across the Channel (7)
4. Wharf on the Rochdale Canal (4)
5. One might feel starved after seeing these on TV (7)
6. Old vessels no longer hold bitter, but have lasted for ages (4)
7. Does this Underground Station have a special Prelate's exit? (11)
8. One-time colourful barge feature, mostly blue now (7,4)
9. Most Society Members turn into these when on the towpath! (11)
10. Dick has grown fat on his boating holiday here (6,5)
14. Digging out this will no doubt do the same to the working-party's energy (5)
15. Society's accounts undergo this (5)
19. He must be a member or I'm a Dutchman! (7)
20. Say thankyou to Moroccans for putting up lists of charges (7)
24. We have one on a bridge - the Chairman's wailing variety perhaps! (4)
25. Canal system adopted in dry weather to make most use of water (4)
26. If she had a twin it would undoubtedly be Siamese (4)

Working Party Report

In defence of the progress chart shown in the last issue of "The Trow", I can only say that it was drawn up to show the time available to complete certain jobs if the Bowbridge Pound was to be flooded by May. Of course, it should have been done the other way round - estimating the time required to do each job, allowing for inevitable delays and then deciding the completion date. Needless to say, May is with us and the pound has yet to be flooded. However, work is proceeding very well indeed, and certainly the schedule produced the incentive to keep the pressure on, even if the dates were a little optimistic.

At the moment, the dam at Bowbridge is nearing completion, the new paddle gear is in and the safety grill for the circular weir is well under way. The ladies have transformed the whole area with a border of beautiful flowers on one side of the lock and three flowering trees on the towpath side. The area round the weir has been cleared by Oxtalls School to give a maximum visual effect and plans are in hand to erect a garden seat.

At the other end of the pound - at Griffin's Lock - the highlight of the activity has been the installation of John Bond's first lock gate. In the lock itself, brickwork repairs are progressing well and with the installation of the bye pass tube the job of clearing tons of mud from the bottom of the lock is about to start.

Working its way slowly towards Griffin's Lock, the drag-line is now within yards of completing its first project.

With the installation of the bye pass tube in Griffin's Lock, we hope now to begin removing the four feet or so of silt and rubbish lying in the bottom. As a point of interest, we feel that the bye pass tube - 150ft. long and made of 45-gallon oil drums welded end to end - is a good example of our ability to restore the canal at minimum cost. A quotation for a tube of similar size worked out to an incredible £20 per metre. Admittedly, this was a very good quality tube, but we feel that £60 spent on old drums and welding was a better bargain.

In preparation for a recent meeting, we calculated that restoration of sections of the canal similar to Bowbridge (i.e. the lengths between serious obstructions) can be done for less than £500 per mile at today's prices. Lock repairs depend on the state of decay but we know that Griffin will cost about £2,000 including the lock gates. These figures are accurate - we have the bills as proof - and differ sharply from the estimates recently given in the local press. Surely, restoration at these prices is the bargain of all times?

DAVE ELLIOTT

STOPPAGES. Not to be outdone by B.W.B., we thought we should produce our own list of Stoppages. The following was supplied by our Chairman - with a certain amount of tongue-in-cheek!

The following stoppage notice is effective from 0900 hours on 1st June 1975 for the Stroudwater and Thames & Severn Canals:-

Walkbridge, Whitminster Owing to an oversight in design it is not possible to move Walk Bridge, Whitminster, and craft entering the Canal from Saul Junction are currently unable to proceed beyond Walk Bridge.

Bristol Road Lock Since the construction of the M5 it is difficult to use Bristol Road Lock. This is due to a large roundabout on the site. Craft are advised to find an alternative route.

Oil Mills Lane, Ebley An accumulation of household refuse up to and above the water level has caused a temporary blockage to navigation and craft should proceed overland if necessary.

Brimcombe Port Port facilities at Brimcombe have been temporarily suspended owing to the construction of a large factory in the Basin. Alternative arrangements should be made by craft requiring transhipment facilities.

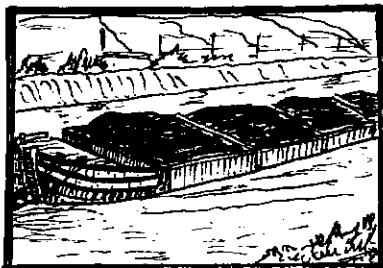
Sapperton Tunnel Owing to a sudden and unexpected collapse of a section of the roof of Sapperton Tunnel, craft are currently unable to proceed beyond the 200-yard point in an Easterly direction and two miles in a Westerly direction.

Cirencester Arm As navigators have shown a lack of interest in navigating the arm to Cirencester this branch will remain closed until further notice.

South Cerney Locks These Locks have been removed and craft will not be permitted to use the flight until further notice.

Latton Junction Navigators are advised to see notices for use of the Wilts & Berks Canal in respect to Latton Junction.

Inglesham Lock. Stoppage is being imposed on craft entering the lock from the River Thames to enable a continual flow of boats from the Thames & Severn Canal to have priority.



SOCIAL SECTION

NARROW BOAT TO SAUL - 28th JUNE

At 2 p.m. on Saturday 28th June the GLOSTER PACKET will depart from Gloucester Docks for a cruise to Saul Junction, returning about 6 p.m. Don't miss this chance to see the Berkeley Canal from the water and inspect the vital link with the Stroudwater Canal.

This is an afternoon for the enthusiast, the family and even the boozier (bar opens on leaving the dock). The GLOSTER PACKET is a well-equipped narrow boat ideally suited for this purpose. The numbers are limited so please complete the form enclosed to book seats as soon as possible.

A.S.BRADFORD.

WHISTLING MULES

We had worked through the depressing back-side of Worcester out into the country, and tied up for the night above Tolladine Lock. It was the sort of still, summer evening which makes for the best boating memories, and soon after supper an old boatman friend came by. A couple of bottles of beer were found in the stern locker and we sat on the gunwale chatting. The talk turned to horse boating.

"Of course there were horses", he said, "but donkeys were very popular after the War, the Fourteen-Eighteen that is, and we had quite a few Government mules bought from the Army. Good strong beasts they were, on an evening like this you could hear them whistling a mile away." He chuckled as the wife looked puzzled. "No, I ain't telling you a tale! You see, most of them were tubed, a steel tube in their throats to help their breathing, especially as some of them had been gassed in France, and as they were working they whistled." He made a sound like a bronchial breather by way of illustration. "Some of them lived to a ripe old age."

Goodnight's were said, and as he stumped off down the towpath, the wife went down into the cabin to make up the crossedbed. I sat awhile in the dusk thinking of other times - the mules, unsung survivors of the muddy holocaust of Flanders, whistling along the peaceful Worcester Cut.

A.E.JONES.

Cirencester Group News

The Cirencester Branch was officially inaugurated at the meeting held in Cirencester on March 22nd. Some 160 people watched John Humphries' film and Hugh McKnight's slides, and many pertinent questions were asked and answered. The branch has its own Committee which has met six times so far, and is settling into the job of looking after the interests of the Thames & Severn Canal from the Tunnel to Inglesham. The members so far are:-

Pete Boyce - Chairman, and Working Parties
Peter Penny - Secretary
Suzi Cunnington - Social Secretary
Phil Griffiths - Treasurer
Malcolm Bristow - Legal side
Chris Povey - Advance Planning
John Szwer - Fund Raising
David Viner - Historian

We hope to welcome shortly another member, Alan Neighbour, from Cirencester, and we also welcome anyone who thinks they could be of use to the Committee. We meet every two months, the next meeting being on June 4th at 15 Pembroke Street, Swindon. Three or four members also sit on the Main Committee, so that a good representation for the Eastern end is maintained.

Our activities are at present mainly searching out and negotiation with the landowners along the canal. Our first contact is with the Bathurst Estate, where we are negotiating to clear out the channel between the Tunnel portal and Charlton Bridge, and from there on to the Round House at Coates. A survey of the state of the cut has been made, and we await the result of the negotiations. We have had a large response from those interested in working parties, but up to now we have had to hold working parties on the Western section. Just a little more patience and time and we can begin at Coates, and I will circulate a detailed programme to all those interested.

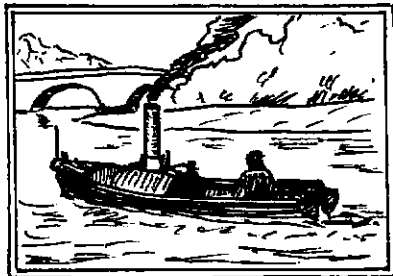
Meanwhile, approaches have been made to the Co-operative Society at Cricklade, the South Cerney Trust and the landowners at Dudgrove. The committee is collecting information about the canal all the time; original photographs from Lechlade, press cuttings, details of planning permission affecting the line, location of mileposts, and bench marks for a survey of the site of Smerril Aqueduct. This last will be conducted with professional equipment and will let us know the possible headroom below a new aqueduct. To involve the Society Members in the area, survey forms have been produced and are available from Pete Boyce. A piece of blank paper is just as good, what we need are the following details of any part of the canal that you are looking at at any time:-

Map Reference, location, type of access, type of structure, state of repair and any relevant remarks. This information should be sent to David Viner at the Corinium Museum, Park Street, Cirencester, who is correlating the information into an exhaustive survey of the canal as it is today.

On May 17th and 18th a group of "navvies" from London visit us, and will be employed on removing the gear, bought from the Co-op, at Eysey Lock, near Cricklade. The ironwork is needed at Griffin's Mill Lock at Stroud for the new gates and paddle gear. Notice of this date was too late for the last "Trow" and too soon for this one, so only those members readily accessible will have been informed. However, further work at Eysey may be possible soon after.

Members of the Committee helped with the recent Sponsored Walk, and we hope to run one down the Eastern section in the Autumn. Anyone interested in organising this, please contact me.

PETE BOYCE.



REFLECTIONS

By the canal
Alone in pensive mood
Gazing at the dark foreboding water
Reflecting the gloom in my mind.
Calm and still, yet far from peaceful,
Like the oppressive cloud hanging over me.
Suddenly I see a ray of cheerful sunshine
And the metallic blue flash of a kingfisher's wing.
I throw a stone into the silvery water
And the widening ripples mark the welcome return
Of my courage to persevere.

LCN

Sales Section

THE THAMES & SEVERN CANAL
by HUMPHREY HOUSEHOLD £3.25 + 15p p & p

SAUL ADAM by JOHN POOLE £3.00 + 15p p & p

NARROWBOAT VENTURE by JOHN POOLE £1.50 + 10p p & p

OUR CANAL POPULATION
by GEORGE SMITH £3.00 + 15p p & p

CHELTENHAM ORNAMENTAL IRONWORK
by AMINA CHATWIN (G.S.I.A.) £1.50 + 10p p & p

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE NARROW BOAT
by TOM CHAPLIN 50p + 7p p & p

CANALS & CANAL ARCHITECTURE
by JOHN VINCE 30p + 7p p & p

SIROLD 1890 - 1915
by JOHN STEPHENS £1.30 + 10p p & p

GLASS TANKARD ½ pint engraved with Canal Society Emblem, including
post and packing - £2.50

ACROBATIC KITES The amazing acrobatic kites made locally and shown
several times on T.V. These are more than just mere toys and must
be seen to be believed, including a special 70 ft tail, £3.40 + 20p
post and packing.

THAMES & SEVERN CANAL MAPS
Reproduced from an original canal map. 60p + 17p postage.

SET OF 10 HISTORIC CANAL PHOTOGRAPHS
75p + 7p postage or singly for 8p each.

BALL POINT PENS - engraved "Help link Thames/Severn Canal" 5p each.

SET OF 8 GREETING CARDS - 25p + 7p p & p.

Sales Department Mr. G. Pegler, Bourne Nurseries, Brimscombe,
Glos. Phone Brimscombe 2397

Forthcoming Events

SPECIAL Afternoon boat trip from Gloucester.

For details write to Tony Bradford or phone Brimscombe 3786

See us at Stroud Show, Stratford Park, Saturday 19th July

See us at Slimbridge Show, Saturday 26th July

Regular Events – Stroud.

Noggin' and Natter evenings 8.00 p.m. every first Tuesday in the Month at the Cotswold Bar, Union Inn, Stroud.

3rd June, 1st July, 5th August.

Regular Events – Cirencester.

Social Evenings every 3rd Tuesday in the Month at 8.00 p.m., in the Plough Inn, Gloucester Road, Cirencester.

17th June, 15th July, 19th August.

