

*Stroudwater, Thames & Severn
Canal Trust Limited*

THE TROW

*The Official Magazine for Members and Friends
working to restore the Cotswold Canals.*

Number 55

Winter 1986 / 7



30p

COPY DATES		Contents	
Spring	10th February	Secretary's Report	3
Summer	10th May	A.G.M. Report	5
Autumn	10th August	Thames End Branch Report	8
Winter	10th November	Western Branch Report	10
THE VIEWS & OPINIONS IN THIS MAGAZINE DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THOSE OF STROUDWATER THAMES & SEVERN CANAL TRUST LTD'.		Reminiscences of the Canals	12
		Tales from the Cut	
		-Running Water	16
		Poem -They're cleaning up the waters	18
		Sales	19
		Dates for your Diary	20
Published by the Stroudwater Thames & Severn Canal Trust Ltd., a Registered Charity, at 1 Riveredge, Framilode, Glos.			
Printed by Earle & Ludlow, 77 Victoria Road, Cirencester, Glos.			

Editorial

One of the problems encountered with production of the Trow is the delay between "happenings" and publication, so I would like to use this space as a "stop press".

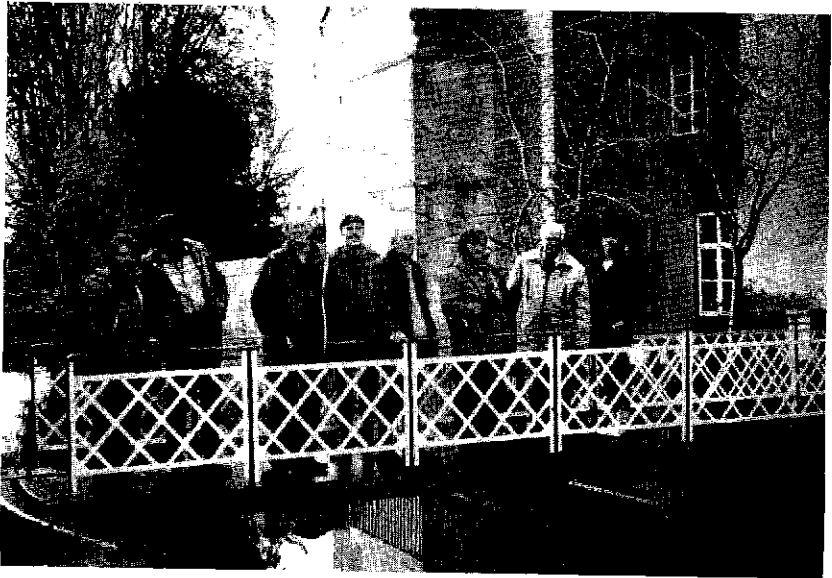
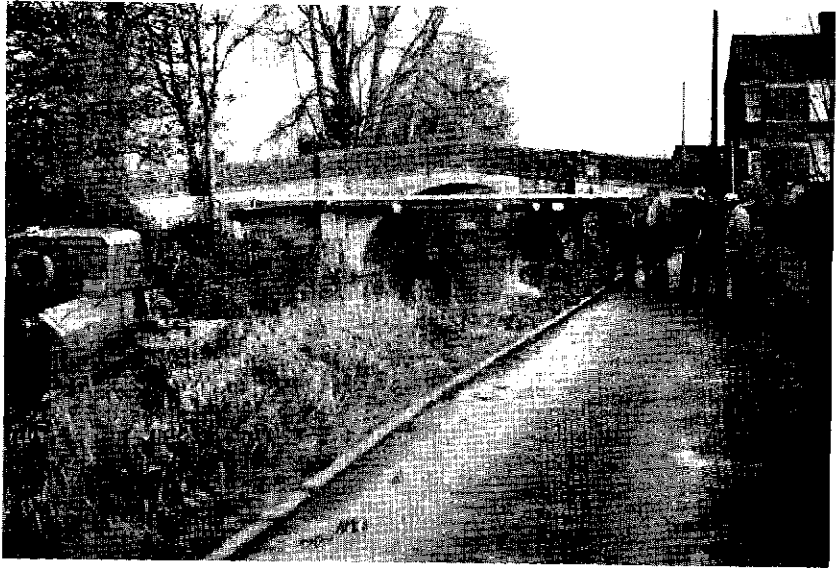
On Sunday 16th November a group from the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society were treated to a tour of our canals by David Boakes and Bruce Hall. Tony Jones and myself were also there to lend a hand and a good time was had by all despite the soggy conditions experienced in the morning. Starting at the tunnel we made our way down to Eastington stopping off at some of the "good bits" in order to see some of the sights and explain our progress to the guests, who seemed to be impressed.

When involved in a project such as ours it is difficult to measure progress and it is only when you stand back to see the overall picture, as we were able to do on that Sunday, that you see the achievements and that we are moving onward and upward.

DAVID JOWETT

FRONT COVER :

Ken Goodwin presents Tony Jones with the Boat Enquiries Trophy awarded to the Western Branch



Secretary's Report

This report is written after the Eleventh Annual General Meeting had taken place and I have had time to reflect on the feeling of the meeting. As you will see elsewhere, we had Kenneth Goodwin, National Chairman of the Inland Waterways Association, and the Chairman of Stroud District Council, Councillor Roy P. Nicholas, in attendance, and both gave encouraging speeches as to the future of our project. Mr. Goodwin went one better and promised further I.W.A. funding for us. This will make a total of £3000 this year, an indication of the importance that is being attached to our work nationally. Councillor Nicholas congratulated the Trust on its activities, and hinted towards the future and a possible involvement with the Council.

Our new M.S.C. C.P. Scheme is rapidly filling, and already the work carried out by Howard Lucas and his team is impressive. A most important aspect of the new Scheme is the increasing co-operation between the volunteers and the Scheme workers. The newly rebuilt dredger has now cleared Ryeford Basin, and is being aimed towards the Ship Inn. The Bank Gang have vastly improved the area between Bonds Mill and Newtown Lock before they make tracks for Coates.

The Western Branch has had a most encouraging year, particularly their income from the trip boat at Wallbridge. This has not only brought in much needed finance, but has also resulted in much publicity for the Trust; in fact Councillor Nicholas commented on the enjoyable trip he and Ken Goodwin had taken on the canal before the Annual General Meeting. The volunteer section of the Branch are extremely active in the Stroud area, and there has been an encouraging increase in membership as a result of their activities.

Our Thames End Branch has continued to manfully restore Gerney Wick Lock and carry out works in the area. Due to relocation of key members, the Branch is actively looking for both new volunteers and officers, if anyone is out there in the Cirencester/Cricklade/Swindon area.

Once more you will note in the package those five little jotting pads with a face value of £1 each. Yes, we are having another Grand Draw. If every member can sell, or make a donation, equivalent to the face value of the tickets, we will have approximately £3000 profit. Please do your best, because Grant Giving Trusts always ask us how much of our funding is self-generated, and the more this is the more it helps our cause.

Finally, as this is appearing in the Winter edition of the Trow, may I wish all our members and friends a Happy Christmas, and hope that the Trust will continue in 1987 on its present upward path.

DAVID H BOAKES

OPPOSITE:

Members of the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society admire progress on the dredging work at Ryeford (above) and some of the party try out the swing bridge (below).



Ryeford Basin after dredging. The dredger is now working beyond the bridge.

A.G.M.

At the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 25th October, members were fortunate in having several distinguished guests, among whom were Kenneth Goodwin, National Chairman of the Inland Waterways Association, and Councillor Roy P. Nicholas, Chairman of the Stroud District Council. Peter Chalmers, Liaison Officer for Stroud District Council and Sir John Knill, one of the Trust's Vice-Presidents, were also present.

Ken Goodwin presented the Sponsored Walk Awards, noting that this year the Walk had raised some £900. In his speech he stated that there were 70 - 80 canals and waterways being restored at present, and that the I.W.A. considered that the Stroudwater and Thames & Severn canals had a high priority. Relations between the two associations were now very good, and the Trust had already received £1000 from the I.W.A. Following a tour of the two canals two weeks previously, a recommendation was being made to their Finance Committee for a further donation of £2000 to be made, news which was very well received.

Councillor Nicholas, in his opening remarks, stated that Stroud was now moving forward, as were the canals. Attitudes throughout the District were changing, and Councillors were at last beginning to realise that the canals were an amenity that already existed in the area, and should be promoted. A working party had been set up to liaise closely with the Trust. Tourism was a growing industry in the area - Councillor Nicholas had been on a boat trip at Wallbridge just before the meeting - and he wanted to see more of this kind of



Smiles all round as Graham Ettles presents a cheque for £400 to Mike Reynolds for main Trust funds.

activity. He hoped that funds would shortly become available to be used in conjunction with M.S.C. labour, and he urged all those present to continue seeking money and materials from local and national bodies. He also congratulated the Trust on the work they had carried out so far.

Graham Ettles, Chairman of the Gloucestershire Branch of the Inland Waterways Association, then presented cheques of £50 each to the Thames End Branch and the Western Branch, and a cheque of £400 to the main Trust funds. This money was raised from various fundraising activities they had carried out during the year. The cheques were gratefully received by the relevant Treasurers.

The formal business was carried out, with the meeting being brought up to date with the activities of the Trust since April of this year. An interesting discussion then took place on the future activities of the Trust. It was stressed that we had now entered a new era, with 30 people being employed on the M.S.C. Scheme. If we were to get the support of the Local Authorities, then we must be seen to be professional, to operate as a Company, to plan ahead, to produce a workmanlike job. The future was seen as a utilisation of M.S.C. workers for the physical restoration, with the role of volunteers changing. Volunteers would be expected to explore the ground and carry out preparatory works, to become more fundraising and P.R.



Sarah Sheen receives the Elliot Trophy from Ken Goodwin

oriented, to build and run the trip boats, to organise social events in the area, and become more involved in the planning and organising of the Trust's activities.

The Secretary reported on a survey he was presently carrying out on the Stroudwater Canal. This would be submitted to the Stroud District Council, and would be the basis of discussions with them. It will also be made available to the public, grant making Trusts and industrialists to aid fundraising for the projected programme of works.

The members present expressed their thanks and appreciation to David Boakes for the many hours he spent, both day and night, in promoting, organising and negotiating on behalf of the Trust. As a token of their thanks, David's wife Margaret was presented by Bruce Hall with a basket of flowers.

DAVID JOWETT



LEFT: Ben Muir waits for his cup held by his owner, Rob.

RIGHT: Walk regular, Rebecca Woodward with the cup she has made her own.

Thames End Branch

Most of our activity since the last report has been on those lock gates which have been "pending" for rather a long time. It is cheering to relate that the first of the top-end gates has now been suitably shrunk and is having the metal strapping plates refitted. In the course of the work we have learned various things which should enable us to do the second gate rather more quickly. Such as the fact that a small electric chain saw is a lot easier than a hand saw for forming tenons, and how to flip half a ton of timber without dropping it on your toes.

Another item of encouraging news is that several fresh faces have appeared at Branch meetings and working parties recently. Some of our more devoted supporters had found themselves with less time to spare in recent months, leading to meetings without a quorum and some rather light working parties. It is what you might call an occupational hazard of our kind of voluntary activity, but it is a great relief when another wave of troops appears, and a bonus when some of the old hands still appear now and again. These observations must not be taken to indicate that the rest of our supporters can heave a sigh of relief and order some more racing pigeons or a hang glider. We could still derive great benefit from two or three people with the ability to organise happenings or shindigs, which give pleasure to large numbers of people whilst keeping our activities in the public eye. It seems that what you might call social skills are not very well developed in people who are at home with cement mixer and chain saw, which is just another way of saying that it takes all kinds to restore a canal.

Finally, it has been decided not to hold a work party on 27th or 28th of December. The last work party of 1986 will be on the 29th & 30th of November, and the first in the new year will be 31st January & 1st February. Activists please note.

DERYCK WATKINSON

The Clothiers Arms

1 Bath Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire

Free House

WE WISH ALL OUR REGULARS AND MEMBERS

AND FRIENDS OF THE TRUST

A MERRY CHRISTMAS

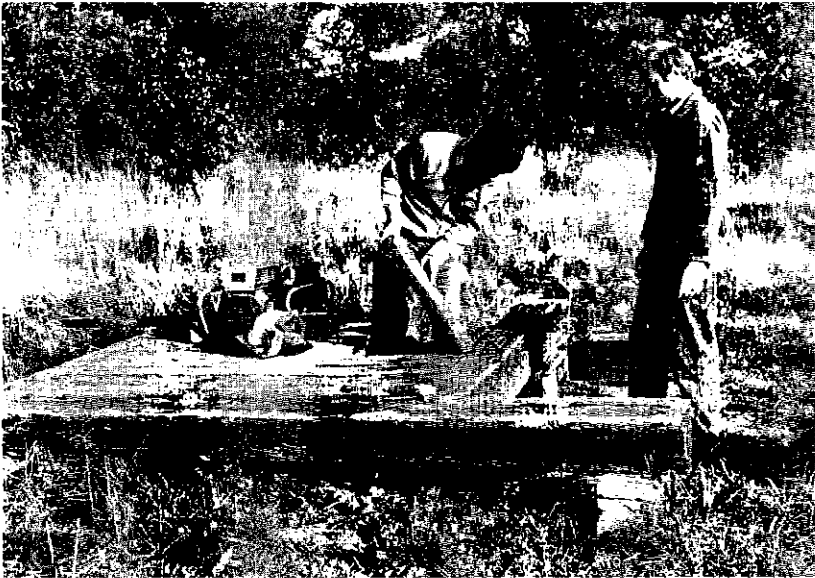
AND A

PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR



Luciano & Aline Magalotti

Telephone Stroud [04536] 3801



Two photos showing progress on the lock gates for Cerney Wick
(Photos: Peter Chadwick)

Western Branch

With the Trow now coming out at regular intervals, it seems I've hardly read through the current issue before the Editor is after copy for the next one. However, David is to be congratulated in cajoling those of us who are less than handy with the pen to our best efforts in order to get the Trow out on time.

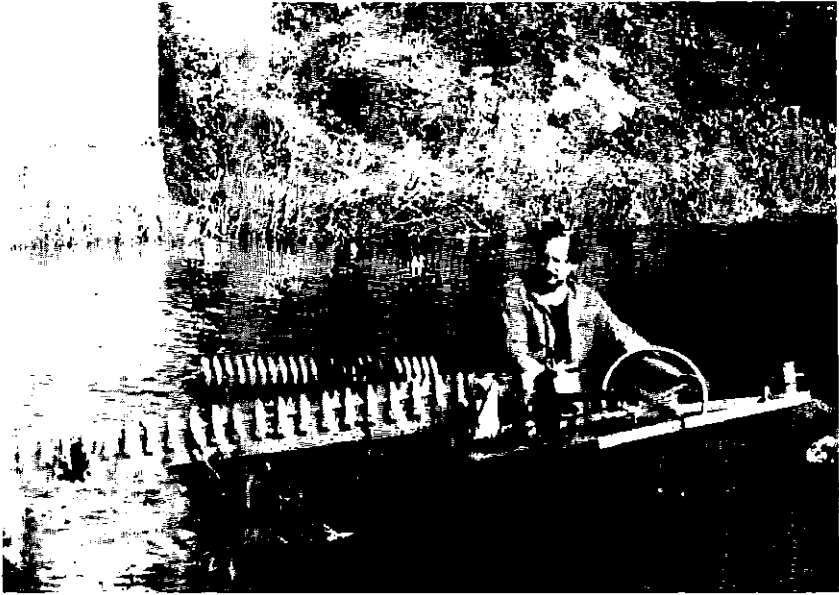
The Branch Committee is sorry to lose Elaine Scammel, who is moving out of the area. Since the formation of the Branch Elaine has run our sales stand with quiet efficiency, for which she has our grateful thanks. Bill Evill has been co-opted to the Committee, being a Trust stalwart of long standing he is most welcome. A guest at our October Branch Meeting was Mr. McCleary, Stroud District Councillor for Rodborough. Having been on the Wallbridge boat trip the previous Sunday, and taken polite exception to the steerer's commentary on local government, he came to express his personal support of the Trust's aims and explain the current policy of the District Council towards the canal. His favourable report on the Council's attitude was most welcome and, being further endorsed by the Chairman of Stroud Council at the Trust A.G.M., gives us real hope of accelerated progress. Our thanks also, to Mrs. McCleary, who wrote a very nice letter to Stroud News & Journal praising the boat trips and the Trust.

The last trips for this year were run on Sunday 26th October. With the pound some six inches down, due to the blowing out of our bank leak at Frome Aqueduct and the feeder blocked with Autumn debris, negotiating shallow spots with full passenger loads such as the Midland bridge was somewhat fraught, the local vandals having anticipated the bypass contractors by dumping chunks of masonry over the bridge. The work party did their best, but the outboard propeller blades collected a few more notches!

We intend to run trips on Bowbridge and, possibly, Griffin Mill pounds next year while the bypass goes through Wallbridge and to concentrate alternative work parties in that area. Much work has already been done by a small band led by Graham Peglar and son, Simon. With the punt 'Aline' now available this clearance can progress. The Trust has come in for some criticism for allowing these pounds to deteriorate, but this has been because our scant volunteer labour force has had other more pressing priorities. In fact the deterioration has been mainly superficial, but with the aim of enhancing the Trust's credibility (and funds!) by trip boating there in 1987, the work can now be considered as urgent. All extra help there will be very welcome and extremely worthwhile.

Though the Wallbridge pound will be drained while the infilling for the bypass is carried out, this will present excellent opportunities for low and dirty deeds! The range and scope of projects for voluntary effort are widening alarmingly - would that our volunteer workforce increased to match the challenge!

TONY JONES



ABOVE: Mick Day at the helm of the reed cutter

BELOW: Underneath the arches. Take a last look - this scene will disappear when the new road is built.



Reminiscences of the Canals

We are very pleased to print the second concluding extract from a series of articles which first appeared in the "Stroud News" in August 1948. They were based on the memories of Mr. William Staddon of Chalford who was seventy five at the time and had spent most of his life working on the canals.

We are very grateful to Mr. Mason, Editor of "Stroud News & Journal" who has kindly given permission to reproduce the article.

"Once our boat and that captained by Mr. Webb were waiting for a load of timber at Pangbourne, and my father and Mr. Webb had gone up into the woods to see the saw men. Harry Stephens, the mate of Mr. Webb's boat and myself decided to have 'tea for two'. The boats were lashed together but, because of their shapes, there were naturally spaces between them for'ard and astern. I stepped from one to the other with the bread, but forgot the sugar basin, and when I went back for it I slipped and went under the boat's bottom. With my hands above my head, I worked my way along to the stern, under water, of course, and as soon as my head appeared above the surface, Harry Stephens pulled me out. But I was nearly a 'goner'. All my bad past, and my good past as well, flashed through my mind, and I could see my parents as plain as I can see you at this minute. I wrung the water out of my clothes, and put out the line to dry the rest. When my father got back he remarked; ' Oh, Willum's been in the water', but I didn't tell him how nearly he had lost his son forever. I have been in the water many times, and although I worked on it so long, I cannot swim, and I don't know that I ever tried much to learn".

Next came the story of that very severe winter that has been the subject of so much local comment. "I shall never forget when I was about 20 years of age. We had two loads of birch timber for the Stroud Valley. Tugs were breaking the ice on the Gloucester and Berkeley, but in the Stroud Canal we got frozen in the Shallow Lock at Whitminster, and were there for fourteen weeks without moving an inch. We used to spend a certain amount of time at home but had to visit the boat periodically. Here at Chalford the ice was 15 inches thick, and but for the locks one could have skated from the Thames to the Severn. At Chalford we had sway boats and bonfires on the ice.

"At that time I was working for Mr. Jesse Smart, a brother of Mr. James Smart. All the time the boat was in the ice, Mr. Smart kept his horse stabled, and when it was at last possible to move, the horse, on its way to the barge, showed signs of stumbling. While I had stopped behind for a few minutes, the horse then only about a quarter of a mile from the boat, stumbled and fell into the water and ice. It was impossible to save it from drowning, but later we managed to get a noose round it and pulled it out with the help of another horse. Lord Fitzhardinge had the carcass for the Berkeley Hounds, and Jesse had to send for another horse to pull us home".

Asked about food, Mr. Staddon said they always had a good cupboard on board. Their diet consisted mainly of meat and vegetables.

"There was always plenty of beef, ham, pork or sausages, and I was very fond of spearing pike, which gave a bit of variety. One thing I was always glad to get home for was to have a piece of bread and butter, as my father did not have either cheese or butter on his boat. I remember once we were going up a street in Worcester, a butcher was hanging out a bullock's head complete with tongue outside his shop. 'How much for the 'chaff box' governor?' asked my father. 'How much will you give?' enquired the butcher. 'A crown', replied my father. 'It's yours', said the butcher. Fancy that, with tongue and all for five shillings. It was English too - none of your Argentine rubbish, so tough that you can hardly stick your fork into the gravy. The butchers can't help themselves, of course, but if Mr. Strachey had allowed the farmers more feeding stuffs, things might have been better. Just think of the bacon we used to get for 6d a pound!

The method of keeping the Thames & Severn supplied with water was described by Mr. Staddon, who became acquainted with this technicality when after being a lock-keeper at Stroud, he was appointed wharfinger at Cirencester.

"From twelve o'clock on Saturday nights until twelve on Sunday nights", he said, "we were permitted to take water in, and from Cirencester I had to go up to Bolton's Mill, on the 'feeder' stream, draw up the sluice which allowed water from the River Churn to enter the canal at Cirencester Wharf every Saturday night, and drop the sluice every Sunday night. In addition there was a pumping station at Coates (Riverhead). Here there was an old-fashioned beam steam pump that had come originally from a Cornish tin mine. This pump was used to maintain the level on the nine mile long Daneway-Siddington stretch, and I often helped to drive it. The engine had a nine foot stroke, could lift 250 gallons per stroke at eight strokes per minute, and worked at a boiler pressure of 20 lbs. to the square inch. She was very economical, but very tricky. There were no governors on her like there are on present day engines, and you had to keep the steam pressure 'just so'. A quarter of a pound rise would make a difference, and if you didn't notice the first warning tap of the beam she would hit everything from under her. While I was on the job, although I had to cycle from Chalford, I had to be at work punctually at 6 a.m. The foreman, who lived on the premises, was very particular indeed about the time I arrived".

Asked about the rates of pay existing at that time, Mr. Staddon said the ordinary payment for work of a general kind was 16/- per week. "If you had an extra job, like the ones I have described, you would get 18/-. Working on the boats, however, was a different matter. Then you undertook to do the voyage for so much, which included the food you had to buy and also animals to draw the boats".

Continuing his story of the water supply, Mr. Staddon said there was a spring called Caswell, and further down paddles by which water could be admitted in the seven locks at Daneway, at Puck Mill, Baker's Mill, Black Gutter (Chalford), Bourne and Griffin's Mill. "These could be opened between midnight on Saturday and midnight on Sunday, but I am afraid we used to exceed the time limit sometimes".

From water supply to the maintenance of the channel was a natural step, and Mr. Staddon turned to dredging and scooping. "I was in charge

of the dredger on the 'T & S' and actually went to Staines to fetch her when she was bought. We took her to Birmingham and a new boiler was fitted and the engine overhauled. We came from Gloucester to Stroud under our own steam, but we had to take off the propeller because it was no use in the 'T & S'".

"Once, while I was on this job at Cricklade, Sir Douglas Dorington came to interview me. I didn't know who he was, but I was able to leave the dredger as the men had several boats of mud to discharge, and he and I walked down the canal a quarter of a mile, and had a most interesting chat. This dredger had a line of buckets and discharged the mud into accompanying boats. We used to let the farmers have this mud for manuring their grassland. On the canal we also had the scoop boat. The scoop was made of leather mounted on iron, and as this filled with mud from the bottom of the canal, a winch would raise it, and the operator give it a turn so as to empty the mud into the well of the boat - or rather punt - which would carry about thirteen tons. Another piece of equipment of those days was what we called 'Noah's Ark', a sort of mobile carpenter's shop which travelled up and down the canal for the purpose of conveying men and tools for the maintenance of locks. And we used to repair those locks so that they would not waste a pint of water. Dredging and scooping, of course, were carried out in the summer. In the winter the canal used to get frozen up and we had to lay by".

Lying by, however, did not mean a rest very often. "I remember one incident of the old days. It used to be the custom to stop the use of the tow paths by the public one day per year so that the Company's rights of ownership might be preserved. One day the path from Stonehouse swing bridge through the meadows to Kings Stanley was closed. Ted Hill, the foreman, who lived at Dudbridge, saw twelve or fourteen schoolboys approaching the 'prohibited area'. When asked where they were going, they said 'Along the tow path'. Ted told them they could not as the path was closed, but there was a scuffle and Ted was knocked into the canal and broke his ankle. I was working with the Carpenters, Messrs. Croome, Ingram and Stephens, at the time, and a message came that I was to go to the office.

"When I got there I was told of the accident, and that I had to take Ted's place, at any rate, temporarily and possibly for good. When I said I would do my best, my chief said: 'Come down next Saturday on your bicycle and I will get the time sheets and the money just right. You can go by express to Kemble and come back, paying the wages to the lock keepers on the way'. On the Saturday when I got to the office the boss said: 'Bill, you are taking Ted's place, and you will be meeting all kinds of people. I want you to do the same as I have - treat every man as a rogue until you find he is honest!'. I said: 'That hasn't been my way. I treat everyone as honest till I find otherwise'. 'It's too late, Bill, they've had you by then', was the retort, and if I had followed that advice I should have been much better off than I am now".

In reply to a question, Mr. Staddon described the method of 'working' boats through the two-and-a-quarter mile long Sapperton Tunnel. "We used to hook 'wings' on the boat, lie on them with our legs over the side and then cross one foot over the other along the sides of the tunnel, thus forcing the boat forward. In certain places - the rockings - there are only the arches of the tunnel to contend with.

You must remember that the tunnel was blasted out of solid rock and in some places the roof is as high as a telegraph pole. There was another method. In the construction of the tunnel wall half a brick was left out here and there, and a pole thrust into these cavities would force the boat along. You had to mind not to miss the hole of course, or else you were in the water. I have pushed an empty boat through Sapperton tunnel in an hour and a quarter".

Mr. Staddon is like the late Mr. J. H. Smart and many other people who knew the canal well, critical of its end. He claims that on the Daneway - Siddington stretch the fine blue "puddle" was dug out and replaced with clay from the other end of the tunnel. "This clay was sandy, and as luck would have it there was a hot summer while the work was being carried out, and that soon cracked the clay, and those responsible had 'had it' ".

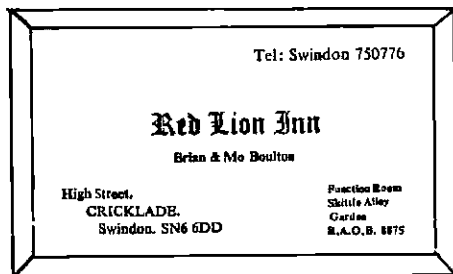
He ended with a warning: "If they ever block this canal up so that there is not a channel there will be trouble. High Street, Chalford will be flooded. There is a terrific amount of water coming out of these Chalford banks and the brooks are no longer cleaned out like they used to be. If the canal ever does get blocked up someone is going to be sorry. I have known people in Chalford Bottoms have to live upstairs, while all their furniture was floating about on the ground floor, even as things are now. What would happen if water had still less chance of getting away I cannot think".

Membership Matters

We are pleased to welcome the following new members; -

Mr. & Mrs. S. Baker	Brimscombe, Stroud, Glos.
Mr. & Mrs. G. M. Goodall	Stonehouse, Glos.

To those new members who do not appear above, don't despair! Your names are working their way through the pipeline and will be with us by the next issue of The TROW.



Tales from the Cut - Running Water

To the working boatmen of our acquaintance, consummate artists at coaxing their deep loaded craft along the confined cut, working boats on river navigations - "running water" in their parlance - was considered no light undertaking. Though older boatmen had tales of working the Thames from the tideway to the upper reaches (the "West Country"), when we started boating the only regular traffic using a river was grain from Brentford to Wellingborough on the Nene. The "Wellingbro' Run" was reckoned an adventurous enterprise, with some justification. Narrowboats are underpowered for such work and take careful handling on a fast flowing river. In former days it was not unusual for motorboats as well as horseboats to be put in charge of a tug under adverse conditions; old photographs of the Severn show long trains of "longboats" under tow.

The Severn had a particularly evil reputation amongst our contemporaries and, after we started running coal down to Gloucester, our stock in the boating fraternity rose considerably as "they mad b**s as runs the Severn". Our enhanced standing we cultivated, with no undue modesty, in the boaters haunts such as Gas Street and Sutton Stop. Unfortunately our recitals of the perils of the river backfired when, requiring a crew to work "Comet" and "Betelgeuse", while we tripped with the "Gloster Packet", there were no takers. We eventually took on a keen couple, if relatively inexperienced at working boating Jim and Dinah. As it turned out, their first trip nearly fulfilled the dire warnings of well-wishers!

Having loaded at Gopsall up the "Moiria", they proceeded via Braunston, up the Grand Union, through the North Stratford and down the Worcester & Birmingham, Jim keeping me informed of progress by 'phone. After arriving at Diglis Basin, Jim reported good sales there and suggested stopping there "a day or so". When several days had passed, suspecting a certain reluctance of my new Captain to proceed further, I had to firmly remind him that while appreciating his Worcester sales drive, coal was urgently required by our customers down here! The following morning I had word from the Diglis Basin lock-keeper that they were on their way.

I had carefully, as I thought, briefed Jim as to the various snags of the route and didn't feel unduly concerned. He later phoned from Upper Lode Lock to say they were O.K. and Dave, the lock-keeper, would let Gloucester Lock know they were coming. At around midday John at Gloucester Lock 'phoned. "Hello Tony, the boats have got here in a manner of speaking". "What's that John. What do you mean 'in a manner of speaking?'". "Well they missed the lock and they're halfway down to the weir. They're O.K. at present but I think you'd better get over here - they're not too happy!"

I "got over there" pretty rapidly to find John's report of the situation a masterpiece of understatement! Instead of breasting up well up towards the Upper Parting, they had come down with the butty on the usual long line and, slowing down to run the butty alongside approaching the lock, had been caught by the back eddy at the entrance and swept down past. Only Dinah's presence of mind, in leaping for the far bank with a heavy spare towline and checking the boats on about the only post available, had saved them. Now the boats lay some hundred yards below the lock with the brown Severn sluicing greedily past them and the ominous thunder of

Llanthony Weir just downstream. To say the least, Jim and Dinah didn't look too happy, and neither was I, but it was no time for recriminations or post mortems, but time to retrieve our boats!

Having got round by the old Castle Meads power station road to the same side of the river as the boats, we decided the first job was to get the motor pointing the right way. With a line from the fore end this was easily done, Jim cast off the line to the butty, "Comet" swung with the current and I waved him to "wind up" the throttle. Going flat out "Comet" crept painfully ahead against the current, but it was obvious she would make no progress with the butty in tow. Jim let her come into the bank and lie on the headrope while we considered our next move.

I had serious thoughts about getting a tug out, and then thought about salvage claims. While on friendly terms with the Gloucester tugmen, this was a different situation to the odd "Hitch" on the end of a train of hoppers. In the circumstances, considerations of friendship would be sorely tried with the sweet scent of "salvage money" in the air! However, I kept my misgivings from Jim and Dinah, and John on his side of the river had not been idle in the meantime.

Our predicament had gathered a small crowd of interested spectators and John had thoughts of turning the idle hands to our advantage. Producing all his available rope, and sheering across from the lock knuckle in his punt, he attached one end to the motor's fore end stud and, on returning to the quay, passed the other end of the rope along the spectators. With the throttle wide open, and the crowd heaving under John's instructions, "Comet" moved ahead! Dinah passed a short line from the butty's stern and together the boats inched up to the quay. With willing help they were dropped down into the lock and were soon safely in the docks.

Dinah, plastered in mud from her leap to the shore, and having been calm and confident through the fraught operation was now close to tears. John's wife took her into the house for tea, sympathy and a hot bath. Jim began sheepish apologies and explanations but John cut in. "Let's go up the cabin - no sense standing out here nattering". From a cupboard under the control panel he produced a bottle of scotch (probably a present from the Severn Yacht Club) and three glasses. "I reckon we've earned this", he said, pouring generously, "And never mind drinking in working hours - this is my late lunch break! Now I want half a ton of cobbles, there's five hundredweight at Hempstead, Bill wants a couple of bags, there's about two ton wanted at Pilot and they're all after coal at Fretherne...".

As it was, Jim and Dinah proved a good crew and good friends and after that first trip became experienced "Severnners", running the river winter and summer without further mishap. We still keep in touch, though for the last four years they have been barging on the continent. Though Jim has stories to tell of working his "small" 380 tonner on the ice bound Scheldt and runs from Germany to the Mediterranean, neither he or Dinah have forgotten the back eddy at Gloucester Lock and their first trip on "running water".

Poem

They're cleaning up the waters of the Stroud canals
A first-class start was made on the Thames and Severn
Compared with what it used to be like, oh my word
It's gone from Hell to something nearer Heaven.

They're cleaning up the waters of the Stroud canals
And though its not as clean as they would wish
It is good enough for moorhens who have raised some lovely chicks
And good enough for quite a lot of fish

They're cleaning up the waters of the Stroud canals
And they've done a good job tidying the banks
It takes a lot of labour and it takes a lot of cash
A donation is a way of saying 'Thanks'.

They've started giving boat rides on the Stroud canals
From Wallbridge down to Bowbridge is the trip
A steady hand controls the boat and when you're getting off
Another steady hand won't let you slip.

Now you've heard about the work they're doing on the Stroud canals
All volunteers, a real hard working band
So come on down and see what they've done to Stroud's canals
Or better still, come down and lend a hand!!!

JO SILVER



Sales

19

The following items are available by post from our Sales Manager, Richard Attwood, 7 Hidcote Close, Eastcombe, Stroud, Glos., GL6 7EF. Please add 40p per order to cover postage and packing for any value under £10. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "S. T & S. C. T. Ltd"

Trust Notelets (Pack of 8 with envelopes) Local canal views	£0.60
A Canal Walk Through Stroud	£1.25
Trust Tea Towels (show several views of canals)	£1.85
Trust Key Fobs	£0.50
Trust comb in case	£0.30
Trust Keyring with penknife or scissors or clippers	£0.75
Trust Bookmarks	£0.30
Observers Book of Canals	£2.50
World Canals (Charles Hadfield)	£20.00
The Changing River (Anthony Burton)	£9.95
The Flower of Gloster (E. Temple Thurston)	£11.95
Randwick and Roundabout (Evelyn Pollard)	£5.95
Village Heritage (Miss Pinnell and the children of Sapperton School)	£10.95
Bread Upon the Waters (David Blagrove)	£9.95
Road Travel & Transport in Gloucestershire	£5.95
Tudor Gloucestershire	£5.95
Goswold Churches	£4.50
The Aeronauts (L.T.C. Rolt)	£5.95
Birds of Gloucestershire (C.M. Swaine)	£8.95
Gloucester Docks (Hugh Conway-Jones)	£4.95
British Canals (Charles Hadfield)	£12.50
And last but definately not least, The Stroudwater, Thames & Severn Canals Towpath Guide (Handford & Viner)	£5.95

All orders will receive 4 FREE postcards of the canal and orders of £20 or more will also receive a MYSTERY GIFT!

THE BELL

Wallbridge Upper Lock
S.T.R.C. & S.C.T.

Headquarters of
S.T. & S.C.T. Ltd.
(Western Branch)



The Pub on the Cut

Dates for your Diary

DECEMBER 1986	Mon	1st	Western Branch Meeting
	Sun	7th	Alternative Work party (Bowbridge)
	Tues	9th	Thames End Meeting
	Sun	14th	Blunder Lock Work party
	Sun	21st	Alternative Work party (Bowbridge)
	Fri	26th	WESTERN BRANCH BOXING DAY WALK (Contact Clint Taylor S'Hse 3485)
	Sun	28th	Blunder Lock Work party
JANUARY 1987	Sun	4th	Alternative Work party (Bowbridge)
	Mon	5th	Western Branch Meeting
	Sun	11th	Blunder Lock Work party
	Tues	13th	Thames End Meeting
	Thurs	15th	Western Branch Noggin & Natter
	Sun	18th	Alternative Work party
	Sun	25th	Blunder Lock Work party
	Sat	31st	Thames End Work party (& 1st Feb)
FEBRUARY 1987	Sun	1st	Thames End Work party (& 31st Jan)
	Sun	1st	Alternative Work party
	Mon	2nd	Western Branch Meeting
	Sun	8th	Blunder Lock Work party
	Tues	10th	Thames End Meeting
	Sun	15th	Alternative Work party
	Thurs	19th	Western Branch Noggin & Natter
	Sun	22nd	Blunder Lock Work party
	Sat	28th	Thames End Work party (& 1st March)

WESTERN BRANCH MEETINGS are held on the first Monday of each month from 7.00pm in the lounge bar of The Bell at Wallbridge in Stroud. Any members and friends are welcome.

WESTERN BRANCH 'NOGGIN & NATTER' SOCIAL EVENINGS also at The Bell on the third Thursday of each month from 7.30pm. A free buffet is provided and once again all members and friends are welcome. Past Social Evenings have included Slide Shows, Boat Trips and Barbecues.

THAMES END BRANCH MEETINGS are held on the second Tuesday of each month from 8.00pm at The Red Lion at Cricklade. Any members and friends are most welcome - come and find out what we are doing.

BLUNDER LOCK WORK PARTIES are held every other Sunday as shown. Also Tuesday evenings, some Saturdays and Bank Holidays. Cooking facilities, toilets and a heated workshop are provided as is tea at regular intervals during the day. Please ring for details.

WESTERN BRANCH ALTERNATIVE WORK PARTY is a roving group which operates at various points on the canals as needed. Ring for details.

THAMES END WORK PARTY is centered on Cerney Wick Lock. New workers are always welcome on the last weekend of every month. Once again please ring for details.

BACK COVER: Marston Meysey Round house shortly before restoration work started (Photo: Peter Chadwick)

DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

ARCHIVIST DAVID J VINER B.A. A.M.A. 8 Tower St., Cirencester,
Glos., GL7 1EF

MEMBERSHIP DAVID JORDAN. 6 Hazelton Road, Marlbrook, Bromsgrove,
SECRETARY Worcs., B61 0JE

ASSISTANT GEOFF GARRAWAY. 29 Mill Farm Drive, Paganhill,
MEMBERSHIP Stroud, Glos., GL5 4JZ

PRESS & BRUCE HALL. Springers, Watledge, Nailsworth, Glos.,
PUBLICITY (Nailsworth 2384)

SALES RICHARD ATTWOOD. 7 Hidcote Close, Eastcombe, Stroud
MANAGER Glos., GL6 7EF (Brimmscombe 885057)

THAMES END BRANCH

CHAIRMAN ROBIN P TWINING. 285 The Cullerns, Highworth,
Swindon, Wilts., (Swindon 763243)

SECRETARY DERYCK WATKINSON. 12 Hampton Grove, Meysey Hampton,
Cirencester, Glos., GL7 5JN (Poulton 661)

TREASURER NICHOLAS MELCHIOR. 28 Grove Hill, Highworth,
Swindon, Wilts., SN6 7JN (Swindon 762510)

WESTERN BRANCH

CHAIRMAN TONY JONES. 7 Stringers Close, Rodborough, Stroud,
Glos., GL5 3RB (Stroud 2915)

VICE-CHAIRMAN DOUG BLAKE. 19 Stratton Road, Gloucester,
(Gloucester 415843)

SECRETARY CLINT TAYLOR. 43 Regent Street, Stonehouse, Glos.,
GL10 2AA (Stonehouse 3485)

TREASURER ALEC WHITEHOUSE. 37 Cotswold Green, Stonehouse,
Glos., GL10 2ET (Stonehouse 2284)

WORKING PARTIES

CO-ORDINATOR CLINT TAYLOR. 43 Regent Street, Stonehouse, Glos.,
GL10 2AA (Stonehouse 3485)

EASTINGTON DOUG BLAKE. 19 Stratton Road, Gloucester,
(BLUNDER LOCK) (Gloucester 415843)

ALTERNATIVE TONY JONES. 7 Stringers Close, Rodborough, Stroud,
WORKPARTY Glos., GL5 3RB (Stroud 2915)

THAMES END NICHOLAS MELCHIOR. 28 Grove Hill, Highworth,
Swindon, Wilts., SN6 7JN (Swindon 762510)

THE TROW TEAM

EDITOR DAVID JOWETT. 1 Oxford Terrace, Springfield Rd.,
Uplands, Stroud, GL5 1TW (Stroud 4832)

DISTRIBUTION PHIL GRIFFITHS. 10 Smythe House, The Waterloo,
TEAM Cirencester, Glos., GL7 2QR. (Ciren. 4160)

DES PINNOCK. 7 Vicarage Close, Churchdown, Gloucester
GL3 2NE (Churchdown 856233)

