

Stroudwater Thames & Severn Canal Trust Ltd.

TROW

Number 68

Spring 1990



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

30p

Contents

COPY DATES

SPRING.....30th JANUARY
SUMMER.....30th APRIL
AUTUMN.....30th JULY
WINTER.....30th OCTOBER

THE VIEWS & OPINIONS IN
IN THIS MAGAZINE DO NOT
NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE
VIEWS & OPINIONS OF THE
STROUDWATER - THAMES &
SEVERN CANAL TRUST LTD

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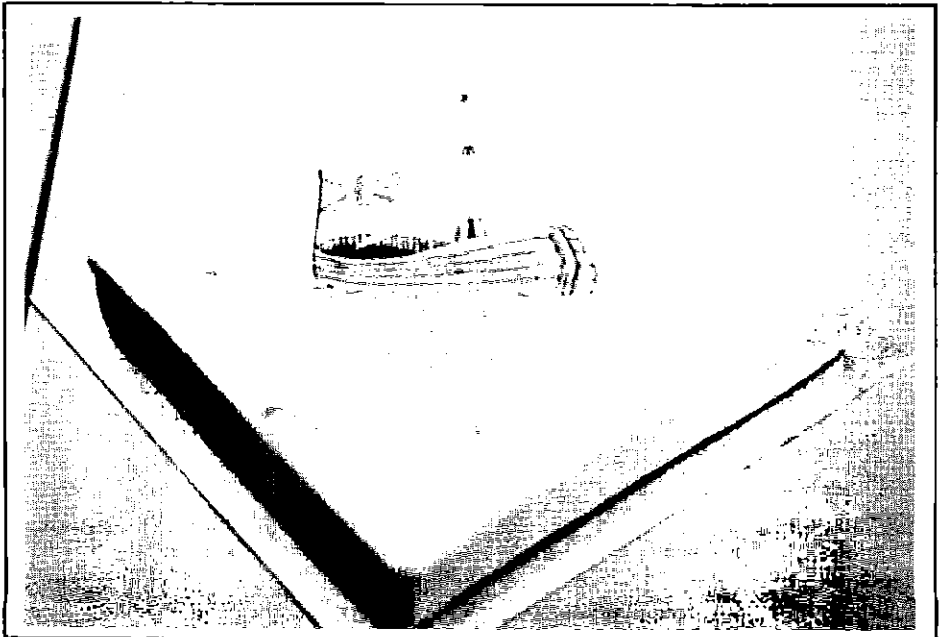
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Compilation and Layout by David Jowett

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Pictorial

The cake below was baked by Sally Jones to celebrate the bicentenary of the Thames & Severn Canal. Members attending the A.G.M. in January were fortunate enough to taste it!



Trust News

Trust Council members are in close touch with the IWA team organising the 1990 IWA National Waterways Festival. A 20ft square marquee is likely to be allocated to the Trust for Sales and Displays which should generate a high profile at the rally. The Sales Stand will also be present at the National Trailboat Rally at Hebden Bridge in May.

The AGM (for the year 1988-89) was held on 20th January in the plush surroundings of Stroud District Council's chamber. Thanks to SDC for their help with the hire of the room. After the business, the large gathering celebrated the passing of the bicentenary year by consuming a delicious cake baked by Sally Jones. Chris, her husband, reported good business on the sales stand. Indeed, sales in general are booming. Take a look at the Sales page to see what's available.

A successful dinner was enjoyed by a very full function room of Trust members and guests at Cirencester last November. The diners, who were celebrating the bicentenary of the opening of the Thames to Severn route, were treated to several interesting speeches after the meal.

A blank Thames & Severn share certificate is now being held, for the Trust, by the Corinium museum in Cirencester.

Ken Burgin, who has recently rejoined the Trust Council, has submitted proposals to appoint a Project Officer by the Countryside Commission to work on the eastern end of the canal route. Ken has also been appointed Field Officer for the area.

Stroud Valleys Project are due to start work shortly on the improvements to Wallbridge Upper Lock. The project will include creation of a picnic site.

It has been noted by the Trust that a fence, across the towpath at Dudbridge, is illegally placed.

Recent publicity in the national waterways press for the Trust publication, "Restoring the Cotswold Canals" has produced a healthy nationwide demand for the booklet.

Discussions have taken place between the Trust and the Ramblers Association.

The annual inspection of the Stroudwater Canal, by the Company of Proprietors, will take place on 23rd May this year.

Thames End Branch

Report by DERYCK WATKINSON

Whenever water levels permitted, and crews were available, we have endeavoured to run boat trips into Sapperton Tunnel this quarter. These are very much enjoyed by those who participate and attract useful amounts of money and publicity. The trips even carried a T.V. crew but, as is the manner of T.V. production, a couple of hours of work appeared on the screen as a fairly short glimpse. Better luck next time. Perhaps on future occasions we can ferry in enough light to show some of the many interesting things which are to be found in our two hundred year old man-made cave.

The vital ingredient is water of course, and there is a growing belief that we may have, in the tunnel and Kings Reach, the only known example of a tidal inland waterway, judging by the speed at which the level rises and falls. Some of the leaks have been located and attempts made to reduce them, but there are obviously more to be dealt with, if we are going to run trips with any regularity.

There was a rather pointed silence at a recent Branch meeting when somebody referred to the Disneyland solution. Apparently, visitors can travel round the site on a Mississippi riverboat, except that it is a fake, running on rails in a foot of water. Even though our tunnel must be the flattest, straightest two miles of ready made track bed in the country, the proposal failed to attract a seconder. There was even mention of a clause in our contribution covering the expulsion of persons considered to be rocking the boat, let alone putting it on rails, and the episode was put down to the Red Lion's excellent ale and the presence of a meeting of the Swindon & Cricklade Railway Society at the other end of the lounge.

In the meantime, the Branch would like to hear from persons with a knowledge of rain making ceremonies!

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Western Branch

report by **KEN BAILEY**

Newtown spoil heap was finally levelled at the end of last year. The area is now relatively tidy and once gates have been craned into Newtown Lock, the area will be ready for grassing and conversion into a picnic site. The small compound by Newtown now contains only the Priestman crane and a few monorail cars which should be moved shortly.

The pound above Blunder Lock is now fully back in water with a punt and one reed cutter moored there. A recent visit by London WRG (who were due to work on the flooded Dock Lock) saw the clearance of most of the floating debris from this area.

Work finally resumed at the spill weir (see Trow 62). Three volunteers from the "Francis Turner Group" completed rebuilding of the one front culvert. It is hoped that local volunteers will soon be free from other tasks to continue the rebuilding.

Looking ahead we plan to pollard more of the overgrown willows by Dock Lock and work in the area of Beales Lock, removing undergrowth and fallen tree branches. It is hoped to encourage local residents to take part as happened very successfully at nearby Belvedere Mews. We also hope to assist the Thames End boys to fit top gates at Cerney Wick in the next few months.

Finally, if anyone is thinking of coming along any Saturday or Sunday, it does help if you can let me know in advance, so that the weekend work can be planned.

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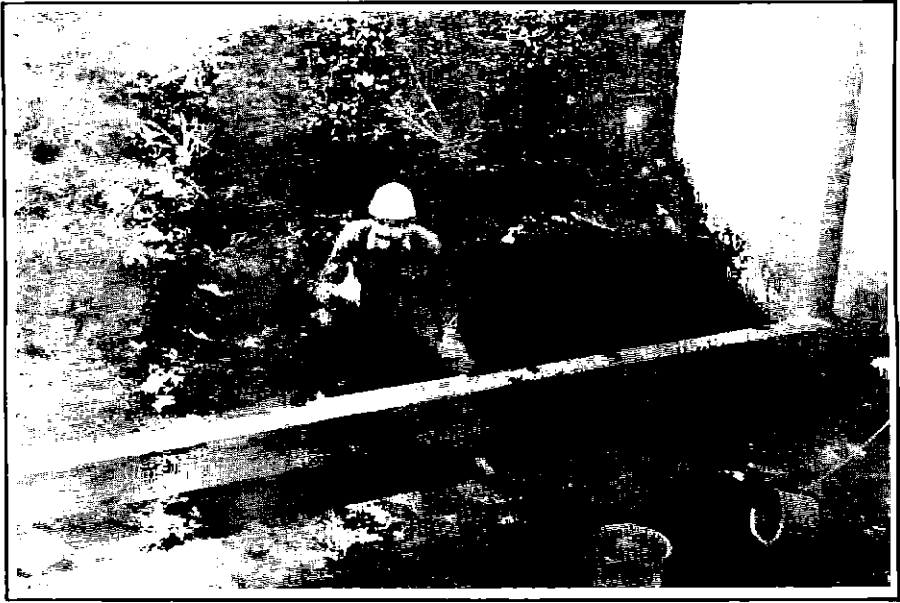
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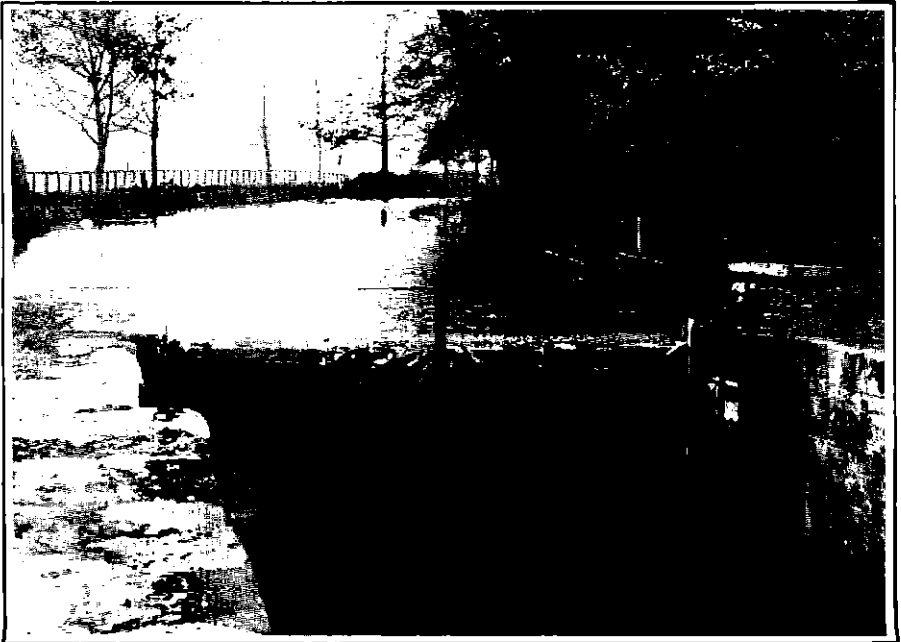
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Blunder Lock Stop Planks. Ken Bailey sets the level before the concrete base is formed (above) and the result is plain to see (below) with the pound back in water. Note moored boats!



Members' Walk

Walk Guide RICHARD ATTWOOD

Once again this year, there will be a series of six Summer Walks on the first Sunday of each month. As in previous years, the walks will be gentle meanders starting at 3:00pm and lasting for about 1½ hours.

March 4th - Meet at Bowbridge, Stroud (OS ref 162 858044) to visit Jubilee Bridge.

April 1st - Meet at Ebley Mill visitors' car park (OS ref 162 830046) to explore Ryeford Double Lock.

May 6th - Meet at the old road by Cricklade bypass (OS ref 163 098947) to explore Latton Basin and the North Wilts Canal. Leave Cricklade by the Cirencester road. The old road is just before the bypass.

June 3rd - Meet at Chalford Round House (OS ref 163 892024) to visit Beales Lock.

July 1st - Meet at Riverside Park, Lechlade (OS ref 163 212992) on the A361 to visit Inglesham.

August 5th - Meet at Walk Bridge, near Saul Junction (OS ref 162 760089), to explore the start of the Stroudwater.

The annual inspection of the Cotswold Canals takes place on September 1st and 2nd. More details in the summer issue of the Trow.

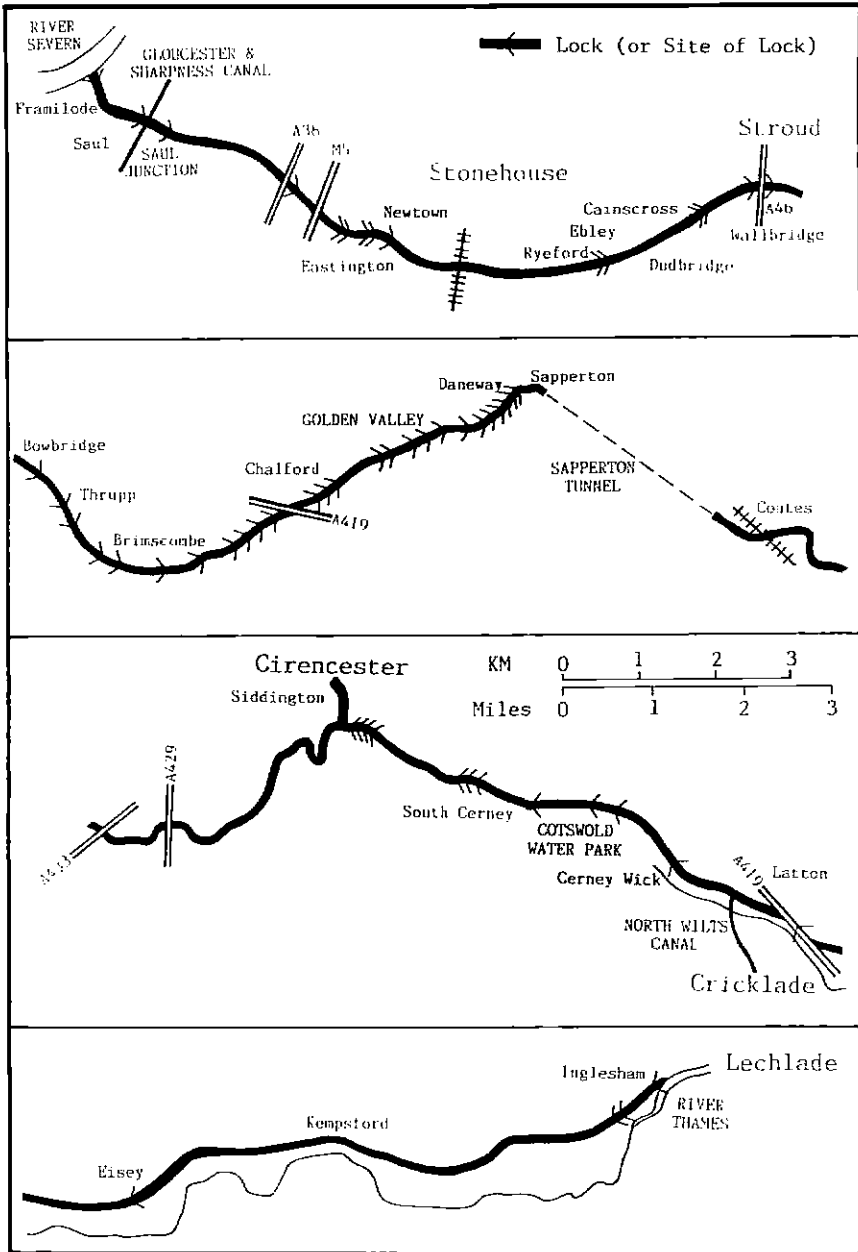
The Open day at Blunder Lock will take place on October 7th when there will be guided walks and an opportunity to inspect the progress of restoration on the Eastington Flight

In response to numerous requests from some of our distant members, I am pleased to print the map opposite. Although the simplest of maps, it will help members who are not familiar with the locality of the canals, to locate the various locations mentioned in reports. The map has already appeared in the Trust publication "Restoring the Cotswold Canals" as well as on the publicity/membership leaflet. David Jowett

STOP PRESS

Gerney Wick Lock gates will be on the move on Sunday 18 March from Spine Road Information Centre to Gerney Wick Lock. We need your help! Please ring Robin Halliday on 0672 513400 for details. PLEASE make this the day you volunteer to help!

The Route of the Canals



Survey

Survey by RICHARD ATTWOOD

On many occasions as both Chairman of the Western Branch and as Membership Secretary, I have posed the questions "What is the purpose of the branches" and "Who are its members?".

The Trust Council have recently pondered these questions and the result is the pull-out questionnaire in this copy of the Trow which I hope you will return to me at the FREEPOST address (UK mainland addresses only).

The purpose of a branch is to provide a focal point for members with a particular interest in that part of the canal. The function of the Branch Committee is to develop a social life for that branch, whether it be small working parties, skittles matches, carnival floats etc.

At the present time there are two branches. The Western Branch, based in Stroud, and the Thames End Branch, meeting in Cricklade.

It is anticipated that in the next year or so there will be sufficient members to form a new branch, to be called the Summit Branch, based on the Cirencester/ Tetbury area.

The questionnaire gives you the members the chance to indicate your interest in the activities of one, all or none of the branches. You can also indicate your interest in helping the Trust and make any comments that you wish.



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Bridges and Pipelines

Field Officer KEN BURGIN

No one explained exactly what a "Field Officer" was supposed to do when I was given the title. However, I suspect the Trust Council were just trying to describe the function of someone who tends to bump into problems along the canal and then tries to sort them out. Strictly speaking, I am supposed to be the Field Officer for the eastern part of the Thames & Severn, due to my familiarity with that area gained when I lived in Cricklade. However, living in the old lock keeper's house on the Eastington flight of locks as I do, meant I could not resist getting involved when British Gas and British Telecom started digging up the road just outside my house

As their trench approached the canal, it was pointed out to British Gas that their new pipeline would cause expensive problems when the canal bridge was to be rebuilt (1992 in the Trust's plan). Even though they were only a few days work away from the canal crossing, their engineers were prepared to alter the plans to accommodate the new bridge. The timetable went something like this:-

Friday - Problem identified.
Sunday - Canal and road levels measured for the Trust by
..... Tony Burton from Nailsworth.
Monday - Tony draws up plans for a new road crossing.
Tuesday - British Gas agree new route but need written
..... permission from the Company of Proprietors of the
..... Stroudwater Navigation. The Canal Company reacts
quickly and the necessary document is provided.
Wednesday - The trench reaches the canal crossing on the new
course.

The gas pipe runs in steel across the tail of Pike Lock at a level that will give over 8 feet of headroom for boats. Thank you Les Abdulla, David Barnfield and Ted Hall from British Gas, who together with Pat Walsh and his team from Thompson (the contractors) have helped save several thousand pounds from the cost of building Pike Bridge as well as much inconvenience for gas customers. Thanks also to Tony Burton and the Company of Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation for their help and swift actions in this situation.

Thanks are due to British Telecom who included an extra loop of cable in anticipation of the new Pike Bridge during their recent work. This will allow the cable duct to be raised for the new bridge without disturbing the customers.

Thanks also to Pencil Engineering Consultants of London who are involved with the design of long distance fuel pipelines for various bodies. The Trust's first dealings with Pencil were in connection with the Midland Pipeline Project which runs from Fawley near Southampton to Birmingham. This crosses the Thames



& Severn Canal at Latton where it drops well below the bed of the canal, protected by concrete. The canal banks were reinstated and re-puddled after the pipe was laid. Pencol's new project is a pipeline between Calne and Fairford, again to carry liquid fuel. It will cross the infilled canal near Kempsford, not far from Oaklands Bridge. The Trust has identified the place where the canal and pipeline cross with the aim of ensuring that the pipe passes well below the canal bed.

Over the last year, it proved quite impossible to get any meaningful response out of the Department of Transport, regarding Latton Bypass. All letters provoke a buff slip of paper promising a full reply soon, but none arrives. However, it is understood that there have been delays in the planning phase. The Trust is very anxious to know whether our proposals for a navigable bridge have been accepted - we await the reply with great interest.

Gloucestershire County Council have recently re-opened the length of towpath between Siddington and South Cerney Locks - a difficult job well done. The path has been impassable for decades and is already being well used by locals. Features of interest in this section are Cowground Bridge, the remains of a swing bridge, the site of the Churn Aqueduct (now spanned by a new footbridge) with an enormous overflow weir nearby, and the deep cutting just before South Cerney Top Lock. The towpath is now complete between Siddington Top Lock and Eisey, a distance of about 7 miles. The bad news is that G.C.C. engineers took one look at Cowground Bridge and condemned it as an unsafe structure. The Trust has met the owner and hope that a way will be found to save the bridge, which is one of the very few to have escaped the demolition gangs on the eastern part of the Thames & Severn. In the meantime, the path will be diverted around, rather than under, the bridge. Any offers of assistance gratefully received!

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Last Autumn, I set out from the Daneway public house at Sapperton with the intention of walking to the Tunnel House Inn at Coates. I have walked the canal many times from the Daneway through the Golden Valley towards Chalford, but had never travelled in the opposite direction. I was in for a pleasant surprise on what proved to be a very agreeable October day.

The towpath meandered through a quiet wooded valley, vibrant with colour in the autumn sunshine. The dry canal bed will provide the Trust with plenty of work, as nature has once again taken over, with sturdy saplings abounding where the water should be. After a short walk, the Daneway portal of Sapperton Tunnel appears, together with a ruined cottage to the right of the tunnel entrance. The present state of the building suggests that it may not be standing for very much longer. The portal is in better condition and whilst not as ornate as the Coates portal, it must have looked impressive in the canal's heyday, (old pictures show this to be true).

The path now crosses over the tunnel and a route can be taken to Coates, following the line of the tunnel fairly closely.

The Coates portal of the tunnel has been restored to its former glory by the Trust and is well worth a visit in its own right. It is situated a few yards from the Tunnel House Inn and so is easily accessible by road.

I had been hoping for a boat trip into the tunnel, but on this occasion the level of water in Kings Reach would not have covered my boots! I settled instead for a pint and a ploughman's and decided to visit again after a period of heavy rain.

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Dear Sir,

I am a member of the Trust who is precluded by age, state of health and place of residence, from taking any active part in restoration, but I eagerly await each issue of the TROW and take great interest in such activities, though I do not delude myself that full restoration will be achieved in my lifetime; but I must write to congratulate Nicholas Melchior on the splendid work recently done at the Coates portal of Sapperton Tunnel in constructing the steps from Tunnel House Inn.

I first saw the canal in 1956, when the portal was a truly awe-inspiring sight in its creeper-festooned decay, though one must admit that the reconstruction (which I saw again with great surprise in 1980, not knowing it had been carried out!) was a fine and worthy operation. At the former date Daneway portal had not suffered vandalism and the battlements were intact; I wonder if there is any possibility of that being restored?

I rather think that Dave Bayliss is referring to the restored Coates portal in his excellent "End to End Walk" report when he somewhat optimistically says, "the tunnel is still in a very good state of repair". Has he seen the Daneway portal, and more importantly, has he read Freeman Fox Braine & Partners' Feasibility Report, which sets out in horrifying detail the present conditions in the tunnel?

However, as a retired civil engineer who has some very small experience of tunnelling, I know that given adequate finance, modern civil engineering techniques, of which those magnificent men who built the canal two centuries ago never dreamed, make restoration - including reconstructing the tunnel and completely waterproofing the summit pound - present no serious problems. Alas, what has not progressed a single millimetre in those two centuries is the deliberately contorted, obstructive perversity of the legal mind (so utterly opposed to the directly practical thinking of the civil engineer), which will make the problem of determining ownerships and acquiring those parts of the canal which have been built over, an infinitely more difficult task.

I wish all those engaged in both operations well.

MAXWELL H. S. HOLGATE Worsley, Manchester.

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Membership Matters

Membership Secretary RICHARD ATTWOOD

This quarter we are pleased to welcome the following new members:-

JA Hunt, London.	AJ Ryan, Kings Stanley, Glos.
J Heaney, Eastcombe, Glos.	R Whitcombe, Upton-upon-Severn.
I Waller, Amberley, Glos.	B Daniel, Brimscombe, Stroud.
D & K Howe, Carlisle.	L & W Golding, Stroud.
DQ Hook, Gloucester.	HJ Pullen, Stroud.
JJ Harris, London.	DG Pope, Eastington, Glos.
J Wisdom, Minchinhampton.	AJ Chadwick, Coventry.
RC Fawcett, Kings Stanley, Glos.	

PLEASE REMEMBER THE COTSWOLD CANALS IN YOUR WILL

Please consider leaving the Stroudwater - Thames & Severn Canal Trust Ltd a legacy in your will. Our finances depend very largely on membership subscriptions and the generosity of supporters. The Stroudwater - Thames & Severn Canal Trust has achieved much over the years, but if it is to restore the Cotswold canals, more money is needed. A legacy, however small, would be a very real help.

Below is a form of words to send to your solicitor with a request that it be included in your will or added as a codicil. He will do the rest. Mention to him that the Stroudwater - Thames & Severn Canal Trust Ltd is a Registered Charity and that all gifts to it are free of inheritance tax.

"I give the sum of £..... to the Stroudwater - Thames & Severn Canal Trust Ltd of 1, Rowcroft, Stroud, Glos for its general purposes, and the receipt of the treasurer or other proper officer for the time being shall be a good discharge for my executors."

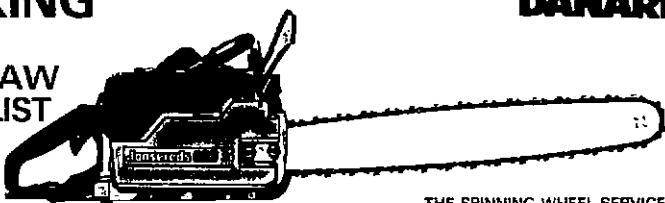
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Sales

Sales Manager CHRIS JONES

As this is the first Trow of 1990, this is a list of all items that have been added for the new year together with popular ones from last year.

Of particular interest is the highly acclaimed Strategy Document, published by the Trust which details the canal restoration programme for the next five years (Price £2.00)

Also of note are black & white framed prints of our canals produced from photographs by Amanda Fisk. Available in clip frames in two sizes at £4.00 or £5.50 (see opposite).

BOOKS

The Flower of Gloster (E. Temple Thurston)	£ 6.95
S.T&S. Canals in Old Photographs (Cuss & Gardiner)	£ 6.50
S.T&S. Canals Towpath Guide (Handford & Viner)	£ 6.50
Thames & Severn Canal (Viner)	£ 3.80

TRUST PUBLICATIONS

Restoring the Cotswold Canals	£ 0.50
Strategy Document	£ 2.00
A Brief History of the S.T&S. Canals	£ 0.20
S.T&S. Canals by Canoe (Chris Jones & Mark Loxton)	£ 1.00
The TROW (all issues available)	£ 0.30
Walk Sheet 1. Coates & Sapperton area	£ 0.20
Walk Sheet 2 Chalford to Sapperton	£ 0.20
Walk Sheet 3 Stroud to Chalford	£ 0.20
Walk Sheet 4 Stroud to Eastington	£ 0.20

TRUST FASHION ITEMS!

Baseball Hat (with printed logo, green & white)	£ 3.75
Ties (with embroidered logo, navy blue)	£ 6.50
T Shirts (with printed logo, green)	£ 4.50
Sweat Shirt (embroidered logo, Light Grey, Navy Blue or Bottle Green)	£13.00
Tennis/Sports Shirt (Cotton with embroidered logo, White, Sky Blue or Mint Green)	£12.00
Sweater (Acrylic with embroidered logo, Navy Blue)	£14.00

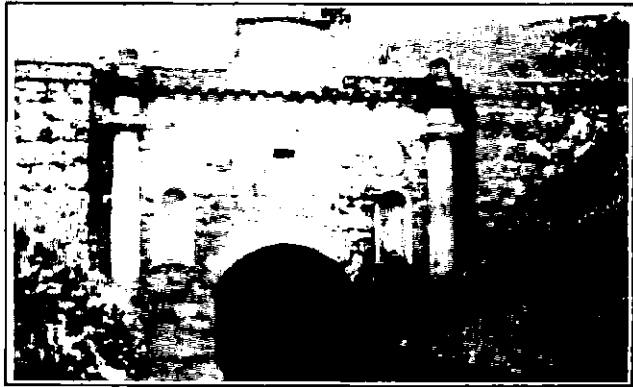
TRUST MISC.

Car Sticker (May your silt disperse & puddle thicken)	£ 0.30
Framed Prints (In Clipframe - see opposite) 200x250mm	£ 4.00
210x295mm	£ 5.50
Thimble (Hand painted Round House)	£ 3.00
Thimble (Hand painted Buckby Can)	£ 3.00

All items are available from:- Chris Jones, The Courts, 27 Walton Road, Clevedon, Avon, BS21 6AE. Please add 50p per order for postage & packing (£5.00 overseas). Cheques & postal orders should be made payable to "S. T&S. C. T. Ltd."



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Sapperton Tunnel,
Coates Portal.



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(Other scenes are available from the Sales Stand)

Dates for your Diary

Sun	4 Mar	Members' Walk, Bowbridge to Jubilee Bridge*
Mon	5 Mar	Western Branch Meeting
Tue	13 Mar	Thames End Branch Meeting
Sat	17 Mar	Skittles Match (in Stroud area)**
W/E	30 Mar	Thames End Branch Working Weekend (& 1 Apr)
Sun	1 Apr	Morning Car Rally**
Sun	1 Apr	Members' Afternoon Walk, Ebley to Ryeford*
Mon	2 Apr	Western Branch Meeting
Tue	10 Apr	Thames End Branch Meeting
W/E	28/29 Apr	Thames End Branch Working Weekend
Sun	6 May	Members' Walk, Latton Basin & N. Wilts Canal*
Mon	7 May	Western Branch Meeting
Tue	8 May	Thames End Branch Meeting
W/E	26/27 May	Thames End Branch Working Weekend
Sun	3 Jun	Members' Walk Chalford Roundhouse/Beales Lock*
Mon	4 Jun	Western Branch Meeting
Tue	12 Jun	Thames End Branch Meeting
W/E	23/24 Jun	Thames End Branch Working Weekend
Sat	14 Jul	Summer Barbecue.**
Sun	7 Oct	Trust Open Day at Blunder Lock

WESTERN BRANCH WORK ON VARIOUS PROJECTS EVERY WEEKEND

* see details in Members' Walks article.

** details available from Jeffrey Shaw. (see opposite).

Due to the increase in social events organised by Jeffrey Shaw, the Western Branch Noggin & Natters have been suspended.

IWA EVENTS (Gloucestershire Branch)

Fri 16 Mar 7.30pm National Waterways Museum, Schools Room
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING I.W.A. Gloucestershire Branch

Thu 19 Apr 7.30pm National Waterways Museum, Schools Room
SEVERN SCRAPBOOK A talk by Fred Rowbotham. ("Friends" Event)

Sat 12 May GLOS 90 TRIP in conjunction with S.W. Region.
Coach from Nat. Waterways Museum to Haw Bridge. Join trip boat
"Heather Spray" for return to Glos. Docks. Adult £6 Child £4
Info. from Mr. R. Eames Tel:0225 475572

Tue 22 May 7.30pm National Waterways Museum, Schools Room
FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM A.G.M. followed by RESTORATION COMEDY,
an account of the "Friends of the Waterways Museum" at work by
Tony Condor and David McDougall.

FRONT COVER: Valuable computer paper is recycled by Bill Evill, Mick Day and Doug Blake (LtoR) BACK COVER: Chalford Roundhouse - the side away from the canal that you usually don't see.



Who's Who in the S. T. & S. C. T. Ltd.

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WESTERN BRANCH

CHAIRMAN	RICHARD ATIWOOD	7 Hidcote Close, Eastcombe, Stroud, Glos., GL6 7EF (Brimscombe 0453 885057)
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THE TROW

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