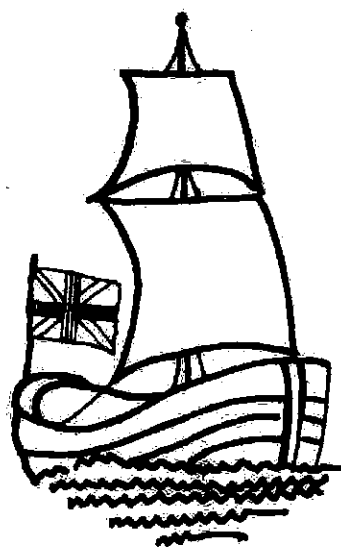




THE TROW



NO.7 AUGUST 1974



STROUDWATER



CANAL SOCIETY

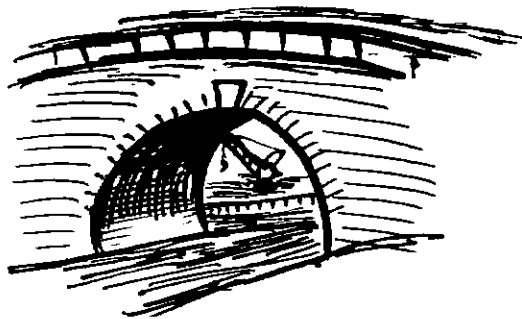


EDITORIAL

Gloucester has seen its first and very successful Boat Rally - successful not only because it was part of the Gloucester Festival Programme or that money was raised for waterway restoration, but because it proved that there is a real interest in water recreation both locally and nationally. Over a 100 boats attended the rally from all parts of the country - at a time when the tides were against boats coming down the river. Over 4000 people visited the rally in the two days. How much longer will our future planners ignore our pleas for restoration?

---000---

No. 7 Trow has been published and once more without criticism of previous issues, is it perfect or are all our budding critics frightened to put pen to paper? I hope not the latter as letters sent to councils and other official bodies all assist the cause.



Obituary.

It is with great regret we record the death of Lewis Morris on the North Stratford Canal at Lapworth. A local man Lewis campaigned long and hard for a greater use of the waterways. It is tragic that he died on a system he loved so dearly and our sympathies go out to his wife and family.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The society is growing at a spectacular rate 607 members to date, and the message to all our members is HELP. There are so many jobs which must be done and some of this can be achieved before the onset of winter. There is no excuse that you do not know what to do just ask. Virtually everyone could be found a job from operating the dragline to cleaning and repointing stonework. The restoration ball is very clearly in our court and now is the time to act.



Having just returned from Napton on the Southern Oxford Canal two things stick very clearly in my mind. Firstly the explosion that has taken place in the past three years in the popularity of holidaying at home which is borne out by the fact that even two years ago in mid summer you were lucky to find more than two or three boats accompany you up through the flight. Now there is at least two boats in each of the nine locks and more awaiting their turn at the bottom I could not help thinking that it will not be long before pressure will be brought home to the politicians by the tourist industry for a much greater extension to the waterways we have as there is still a great mileage of waterways unusable through dereliction. This thing emphasises Dr. Bouchers report for us two years ago that a restored canal would keep British money at home as well as encourage tourists to the area with the ensuing income from the influx of visitors and their support industry. Secondly at Napton this increased usage means less water being available so new pumps are being put in to recycle water back up to the summit and the exercise will take careful watching as we could well learn some lessons in modern pumping techniques.

As far as this society is concerned our major problem is still the road schemes for the Stroud Bye pass and the M5 approach as the society are unable to obtain

any firm decision from the departments concerned, it is still our opinion that the two systems could be developed side by side or over and under. It is nothing short of folly that in the current situation one form of transport is forfeited for another. I had hoped that with the formation of the new Councils an overall district transport overlord would have been appointed to attempt at an integration of the areas transport, instead the previous isolation by the various parties remains. British Rail are doing their best to isolate a valley which at one time had 17 passenger stations and numerous freight sidings, British Waterways look to the complete removal of all commercial shipping from the area in the near future. Road haulage being the only remaining support for industry is being forced into a valley which was not designed to take their ever increasing requirements in space and costs. This unplanned uncontrolled free for all cannot go unchecked for much longer and it is hoped the councils planners have the matter in hand, but I fear not.

-000-

Two main events took place in the society's calender in the last quarter firstly the Sponsored Walk which was an overwhelming success doubling last years efforts a great event and an annual must to ensure financial success to the society. It is unfortunate this years event had some upsets when walkers and public alike were harrassed by a local landowner.

Gloucester Water Festival organised jointly by the Inland Association South West and The Society attracted 100 boats from all over the country and I think the public and boat owner alike enjoyed the event, it most certainly focussed attention to the waterways of the area and I know the canal at Hempsted has never been busier. My personal tribute goes to the owner of the boat "Tilley III" who came 178 miles from Inglesham on the Thames and Severn, silly, there was me thinking it was only a thirty five mile journey.

Changes at the Top. After two hectic years Judy Powell has given over the reins of the membership to Mrs Pat Clutterbuck whose address is Acre Mead, Ryalls Lane, Cambridge, Glos. Our thanks go to Judy for the many hours of hard work which was in addition to typing the Trow and replying to many enquiries which accompanied the memberships.

Pete Swallow who has been working party organiser since work began on the canal two years ago has accepted a teaching post in some remote part of the east midlands and must reluctantly leave us. This is our loss and someone elses gain. Pete joined the committee at the very first meeting and his help has been continuously enthusiastic.

Dave Elliott has taken over Working Parties and it is certain the magic of success he has endowed the Fund Raising section with will be brought with him onto working parties. But working parties cannot work without staff so You yes You turn out and do something.

If by now you are wondering what ever has happened to the Fund Raising section then we are glad to be able to say that Mrs Ann Elliott has it all in hand. Having helped Dave organise the section to date she certainly has all the experience to take it over completely.

-000-

Cirencester Branch. Not of the Canal but of the Society. We hope very shortly to form a Cirencester Branch to take on the eastern side of the canal complete with its own committee. A winter slide lecture is also planned for Cirencester so watch for details. If you are living in the Cirencester area and want to take a more active part please let us know.

Finally the society continues to grow and we are delighted with it but unfortunately the active members do not grow in the same proportion. There is an assortment of jobs to be done so please make yourself known to the society and let us know what your talents are. There is a job for you!

WORKING PARTIES

The last few weeks have seen a marked improvement in the effectiveness of the dragline excavator at Bowbridge. Credit must go to the small party who have not only mastered the basics of an unfamiliar machine but have also developed a technique of working successfully from a raft of sleepers laid in the mud of the canal bed (the raft is unavoidable in this section, since the towpath is very narrow and has buried beneath it (just) a high-pressure gas main which could be damaged by heavy plant).

We are most fortunate in having at Bowbridge very co-operative landowners who have granted permission for spoil to be dumped (and subsequently landscaped and re-seeded) on their land. Without this co-operation, the task would be enormous.

With the dragline gathering about itself a small team of operators, it is intended to form other specialist teams to deal with specific problems. The overall working party will then be sub-divided into the following five sections:-

1. Plant Operators We need a few more volunteers in this section, primarily for dragline operation. Remember, though, that it is not all armchair digging - there are also some very heavy sleepers to lift from and lay in thick mud!

2. Builders and Bricklayers It is hoped to shortly start rebuilding the circular weir at Bowbridge and Griffin Lock. Anyone with some experience or interest in bricklaying will be particularly welcome.

3. Heavy Lifting We already have the nucleus of a team to be called upon as required which will handle all the heavy lifting (lock gates in and out, removal of trees etc.) In this section, we need volunteers with some knowledge of moving heavy objects SAFELY in confined spaces using very basic equipment.

4. Lock Repairs We already have a very small team investigating the problems and cost of making new lock gates. No further help is required at this time but those interested in heavy-weight carpentry please contact me. In this section, we urgently need volunteers to undertake the reconstruction and installation of new paddle gear initially for Bowbridge. Most of this work can be done at home. A capable and creative draughtsman would be very useful in this section.

5. General This will undoubtedly be the largest section whose function will be to support other sections as necessary. Other duties will include landscaping spoil piled by the dragline, grass cutting, preparation of sections to be cleared and maintenance of sections already cleared.

With this structure, I hope that the Society will be able to demonstrate in a practical way that it is capable of actually clearing the canal. I personally feel that this issue will be vital when our effectiveness as an organisation dedicated to the restoration of a canal is questioned - as I am sure it will be - during the imminent "Battle of Walbridge". Why should money be spent building road schemes to our specification if it can be seen that we are unable to clear the easy sections? It can be done, but a working party of six is just NOT ENOUGH ! To prove ourselves in the time available let us have six times as many and the problems of Walbridge will begin to recede.

It is encouraging to note that we now have a Saturday afternoon working party - assembling at 2pm - and also a few members keen to start a Thursday evening "shift" - assembling at 7pm. Anyone unable to come along on Sundays will be particularly welcome.

Dave Elliott.



WORKING PARTY TIMES

- Every Sunday 10am Bowbridge. Clearance with dragline.
- Every Saturday 2pm Bowbridge. Clearance with dragline.
- Every Thursday 7.00pm Bowbridge. Clearance evening. with dragline. (As long as the evenings stay light)

NOTE. Although the dragline is now fully operational there is still much manual work to be done and many hands make light work.

August 11th - GRAND WORKING PARTY - at
GOLDEN VALLEY LOCK - 10am.

Following successful negotiations with the owner Mr Mills permission is granted for us to carry out repair work at Golden Valley Lock, Chalford. A dam was built and the section above, refilled with water some years ago by Nigel Roe and Graham Pegler but has now become leaky. Work will involve removing rubbish into skips and general tidying up prior to re-flooding.



CANAL TALES

1970 was a poor year for us, searching around for jobs, following up promising leads which came to nothing. With some misgivings we tried our hand at camping. The first trip was in an April of particularly foul weather and we suffered more than the usual share of mishaps, including an engine breakdown, a blizzard and a case of mumps. By contrast our second trip in August was an idyllic cruise via the Oxford Canal, Thames and Wey to the Guildford valley, paired with the 'Elton' and the ebullient David Blaygrove. Our trip with music and beer in abundance will long be remembered, Dave having composed an epic ballad on it which (like good yarns) improves every time he sings it!

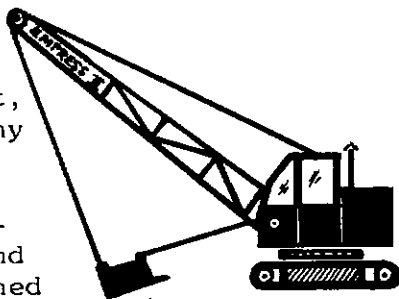
In 1971 our 'odd jobbing' continued with a lucrative couple of months North Sea gas pipe laying along the Coventry Canal, 'Comet' moving plant around and towing boatloads of pipes. The captain was paid by the contractors along with the Paddys and the diesel came free, the hire money was sheer jam on the bread and butter - small wonder boaters chase 'engineering' jobs like vultures, they came far too rarely! In mid December 'Comet' towed two boats down from Coventry to Gloucester to be used in the Westgate Bridge re-building. The trip itself was something of a minor epic, the three boats being worked down in six days by the writer and his eleven year old son, but the job almost by accident put us in the way of what has now become our principal carrying activity.

On the suggestion of a friend we ballasted 'Comet' for the towing with 14 ton of coal to be sold on completion of the trip. The response when we sold the coal along the Sharpness Canal was so encouraging we decided to see how we'd get on as floating coal merchants and develop the trade. Unfortunately the miners chose to go on strike in January '72 but, patience being one of our well tried virtues we sat tight and waited.

TONY JONES.

PLANT

Becoming Plant Engineer is not as formidable as I first thought, for previously I have not had any dealing with contractors plant. However, the task is made much easier by having keen and experienced people around to help, and anyone that was directly concerned with the Daneway and Bowbridge projects will realise just how necessary they are. I should like to thank George Simpson, Don Downey (Jock) and Dennis Downey, (all very experienced dragline operators), without whose help we would still be on the canal bank wondering which lever to pull and wearing waders and a snorkel as a safety precaution.



Progress at Bowbridge to date appears to be slow, but in only 6 weeks a team of capable operators is now emerging. In fact enthusiasm is running high and we are now starting to work Thursday night, Saturday afternoon and all day Sunday. So if anyone reading this feels the urge to join us just for a couple of hours on one of those days then you will be made very welcome. As for learning to operate the dragline all I need to say is that if you have the complete concentration to be able to drive a car around Almondsbury Interchange in heavy traffic then we can teach you easily.

Since Dave Elliott's last report we have only purchased a new reed cutter but we have made tentative enquiries about a monorail system for transporting silt, a hay baler for baling paper and another larger excavator. (hence the need for more operators) The monorail unit we looked at was owned by Bovis Civil Engineering Ltd., of Westbury, but although we were not able to buy it I found that talking to the manager and seeing the variety of machinery involved in civil engineering was very interesting. In fact we could work wonders with one tenth of the plant we saw that day.

However everything finally boils down to machines and men and lets hope I can muster plenty of those for the future.

Chris Rowland.

THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION

Why should I join the Inland Waterways Association?

A message from the Chairman South West Region.

It is, and always has been the only body organised on a national scale to protect and promote the restoration, where needed, of the canal and river navigations. Since its inception many societies devoted to the restoration of specific waterways have been founded and have flourished. All have enjoyed the support of the I.W.A.

Without the work of the Association most of the magnificent network of canals laid down by this country's earliest civil engineers, Brindley, Rennie Telford and so on, would be no more than drainage ditches today.

The membership is over 12,000 but there is room for many more. The greater our numbers the greater our strength and this already influential body will be heard in the corridors of power from an even firmer foundation.

The prime motive for joining should be the promotion of waterway interests but what does the member get for his subscription? He gets the national journal "The Bulletin" four times a year, a high quality publication which keeps him informed on a broad basis and perhaps prevents him becoming too parochial. He also receives the region journal "The Sou Wester" which keeps more local news going and carries details of events in this part of the country. If our member wishes to take an active part in the organisation he can stand for election to the branch or perhaps the region committee.

A new branch is being formed for the county of Gloucestershire and the inaugural meeting will be held on Saturday 2nd November at 2.30pm at Wheatstone Hall, Brunswick Road, Gloucester. New members

will be especially welcome. Venue will be arranged shortly and will be announced in the next Sou Wester or you can obtain the information from Stroudwater Canal Society Hon. Secretary or the I.W.A. Region Secretary:- R.F. Lane Esq., 93, Lees Hill, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 4TP. Tel: Bristol 676188.

Ron Oakley

---000---

Gloucester Water Festival Draw Prize Winners

- 03579 - B.J. Hicks 3 Sutherland Ave., Downend, Bristol. Main Prize B.
- 02592 - I.W. Major, 5 Norfolk Court, Maes-yr-awel, Radyr. Main Prize D.
- 08530 - R.W. Wright, East Twickenham, Middlesex. Main Prize C.
- 11540 - B.H. West, 5 Standish Court, Stonehouse, Glos. Main Prize A.
- 11824 - K. Hurcombe, Fretherne Road, Tuffley, Glos. Bottle of Whiskey.
- 13310 - J. McCallum, 102 Park Road, Stonehouse, Glos. Bottle of Sherry.
- 14280 - E.E.S. Shearman, 27 Bradley St., Wotton-U-Edge, Glos. Box of Chocolates.
- 10561 - M. Turner, 100 Station Road, Wythal, Nr. Birmingham. Set of Nicholsons Guides.
- 13097 - S. Lloyd, 29 Copner Road, Stonehouse, Glos. Box of Chocolates.

Very many thanks to all people that have sold and bought draw tickets for Gloucester Water Festival.

Ron Oakley.
Chairman Gloucester Water
Festival.

STROUDWATER CANAL SOCIETY

SECOND

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE STROUDWATER CANAL SOCIETY WILL BE HELD ON DECEMBER 7TH, 1974, AT STROUD SUBSCRIPTION ROOMS AT 7.30PM.

The following committee members who have agreed to stand for re-election are due to retire.

M. Ayland. D. Elliott. R.A. Coles.

Nominations should be sent to the Secretary not later than 14th November, 1974. Agenda for the meeting will be in the November Trow.

STEAM TRAIN/COACH TRIP BOOKING FORM

Please book-----seats for-----(name)

I enclose £------(50p per head) booking fee.

ADDRESS-----

Send to:- B & M Marsh, 34 Cheltenham Rd., Gloucester.
(S.A.E. if receipt required)

FUND RAISING

This years Sponsored Walk, has turned out to be an even greater success than last year. Money is still coming in, almost £2,000 in the bank to date.

Mr Boman and family of Sule-Skerry, Horsley won our Family Award of a weeks holiday cruise on Gloster Cruisers "Lucky Layabout". The other prize winners will be announced in the near future. Our Presentation evening will be on August 30th 7.30pm in the Subscription Rooms, Stroud. Presentations will be followed by a Social evening. Members and non members welcome.

The Medieval Feast at Abbey Mill May 5th was a most enjoyable evening even making a small profit. Judging by the demand for tickets we could arrange for at least a 100 next year.

We have already been to many Shows this year, with Nigel Roe still making a great success selling balloons. True profit figures can only be given at the end of the year. General Sales are improving and the associated publicity is creating a lot of interest. **NOTE. We urgently need assistance with publicity work. Already we have committee members doing a grand job with talks and slide shows but we also need someone to organise publicity displays - mainly at local shows.

Rummage Sale June 29th - Due to another misplaced advertisement in a local paper, our sale only made £30 clear, this could have been much more, but at least we have plenty of items for the next sale.

This years Barbecue will be August 17th - 8.30pm tickets £1 available from The Retreat, Amberley, Stroud, Glos.

Waste Paper - This continues to be a regular source of income, currently running at over £1000 per annum. To cope with this quantity of paper we have taken a lease on a farm building for storage, bought a $\frac{1}{2}$ ton van for collecting and also a hay baler. The fifteen

collectors have no problems with monthly collections of domestic waste - in fact we can now take a lot more. The commercial collections however are difficult since they must be done weekly during working hours. We therefore intend to employ a shift worker or Senior Citizen for a few hours each week to make a regular collection using the Societies van.

Ann Elliott.

Stroudwater Chat

LINK THAMES & SEVERN CAR STICKERS. These very successful car stickers have been reprinted and are available FREE from Bob Paget (Treasurer) S.A.E. with order please.

WORKHOUSE. The society needs help to decorate and make sound one wing of the Workhouse at Bisley Old Road, Stroud. One room will be used as a store room the one above is intended to be a club house/museum/meeting room.

Did you hear about the man who saw the society's advert in the Stroud News and Journal he was looking for the cricket results!

CANOE RACE. The first ever organised canoe race on the Stroudwater Canal took place over the weekend of Gloucester Water Festival and was under the superb administration of John Shepherd and his group of helpers. Canoes were launched at Lodgemoor Lane bridge and raced down the canal as far as Eastington where they were transported to Saul ready to restart the race up the Gloucester-Sharpness Ship Canal to Hempsted. The race was won by J Gray and M. Raybone of Gloucester Canoe Club in a shattering one hour 56 mins. A team from Redlers Conveyors won the double canoe relay in three hours 25 mins. N. Edwards of Gloucester Club who completed the whole distance solo in 2 hours 13 mins won the single canoe race. It was very pleasing that so many of the crews in the fourteen boats that started were society members.

GLOUCESTER PACKET

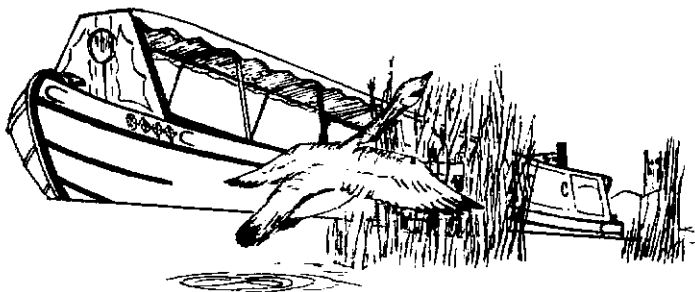
In the late 1850's a passenger service operated on the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal, then called Gloucester and Berkeley Canal, and continued with only a short break during the 1914-18 war until the early 1930's.

Two boats were used the Wave - 79' long x 17' beam and The Lapwing - 63' long x 15' beam both were naturally steam powered.

When the service ceased in 1932 I doubt if anyone thought that in a mere 40 years a packet service would once more operate on the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal. This time by a boat of different dimensions - a steel narrow boat some 70' long x 7' beam, powered by a Lister air cooled diesel engine, appropriately called "Gloster Packet".

Public trips are operated from Bakers Quay, Llanthony Road, Gloucester on Saturdays and Sundays - bookings are taken for evening and weekday trips, a bar and light refreshments are offered on board, not only is this a service to the public but a great service to the waterways in general. An ideal way to introduce ones friend to the waterways in an easy restful manner, this venture deserves every support.

The service is being operated by Stroudwater Carriers Ltd., who are well known on the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal for their winter coal sales. For further details contact:- Stroudwater Carriers Ltd., 7 Stringers Close, Rodborough, Stroud, Glos.
Tel: Stroud 2915



SOCIAL

30th August WALK-PRIZE GIVING.

The Subscription Rooms, Stroud at 7.30pm. Not only prizes but also a slide show on Canal Restoration by Dr. Johnston who has been involved in the re-opening of canals in the Midlands. Light refreshments as usual.

20th September TRANSPORT IN THE STROUD VALLEY.

This is the title of an outstanding show by Mr. L. Padin and Mr S. Gardner who have amassed a huge store of slides and knowledge. They cover a wide variety of transport with particular emphasis on the canal and its impact on the valley. Subscription Rooms, Stroud at 7.30pm. Light refreshments as usual.

29th September STEAM TRAIN - COACH TRIP.

A ride from Bewdley to Bridgenorth (55mins) on the Severn Valley Railway followed by a visit to the museum at Ironbridge (Industrial Revolution Relics). Please bring you picnic lunch. The inclusive cost will be £2 Adults and £1 Children and the coach will leave London Road Car Park, Stroud at 9.00am. Please fill in the booking form on page 14 and send with 50p deposit (per head) to B and M, Marsh, 34, Cheltenham Rd., Gloucester. Please send stamped addressed envelope if a receipt is required. For further details phone Gloucester 28407.

2nd November ANNUAL DANCE.

Put this date in your diary now! The dance will be held at the Minchinhampton Youth Club 8pm to 12.30am. Dancing to a band and a disco, light buffet included for £1 per head. Bar available. This is the social event of the year so we would like to see all our members. Tickets will be available from social committee members. For information please phone Brimscombe 3786.

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.
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

- Aug. 6th - NOGGIN AND NATTER - SHIP INN, Brimscombe, Stroud. (come and meet other members & committee and enjoy informal chat and drink)
- Aug. 11th - GRAND WORKING PARTY - GOLDEN VALLEY LOCK, CHALFORD - IOAM.
- Aug. 17th - BARBECUE - THE RETREAT, AMBERLEY - 8.30pm Tickets £1 - available from The Retreat, Amberley, Stroud, Glos.
- Aug. 23-26 - NATIONAL RALLY OF BOATS AT NOTTINGHAM Inland Waterways Association.
- Aug. 30th - WALK-PRIZE GIVING - SUBSCRIPTION ROOMS, STROUD 7.30PM Followed by interesting slide show on Canal Restoration by Dr. Johnston.
- Sept. 3rd - NOGGIN AND NATTER - SHIP INN, BRIMSCOMBE.
- Sept. 20th - OPEN EVENING - SUBSCRIPTION ROOMS, Stroud 7.30pm "Transport in the Stroud Valley" Slides by Mr L. Padin and Mr S. Gardner.
- Sept. 29th - STEAM TRAIN/COACH TRIP - see details on page 18.
- Nov. 2nd - ANNUAL DANCE - MINCHINHAMPTON YOUTH CLUB 8pm - Tickets £1 from Tony Bradford - see page 18.
- Nov. 2nd - I.W.A.GLOS.BRANCH FORMATION MEETING. (P.13)
- Nov. 23rd - CAERPHILLY MALE VOICE CHOIR - SUB ROOMS, STROUD.
- Nov. 30th - EXHIBITION & SALE OF ART - MINCHINHAMPTON YOUTH CLUB - Details A.Elliott.
- DEC. 7TH - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - SUB ROOMS, STROUD 7.30PM PLEASE MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO ATTEND.