

*Stroudwater, Thames & Severn  
Canal Trust Limited*

# THE TROW

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

Number 52

Spring 1986



COPY DATE FOR THE  
NEXT TROW  
2nd JULY

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

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

If you are one of those people who reads the 'Trow' from back to front, then you will have already learned that Deryck Watkinson has unfortunately decided to step down as Editor of the Trow due to his increasing commitments outside the Trust. I should like to add my thanks for his past efforts in this department and I am pleased to say that he will still be involved in liaison with the printers and will be keeping in touch.

I am looking forward to my new position as Editor and to the sacks full of items intended for the 'Trow' which will be landing on my doorstep. All contributions will be gratefully received be they photographs, articles or in fact any items with a vague canal theme. The more I receive, the better the quality of the 'Trow'!

DAVID JOWETT

FRONT COVER: Another step closer to a completed lock - Jon Willis at work on the paddles.

## Secretary's Report

April is said to be the time when a young man's fancy turns to love - it has been known to affect older men too! As Secretary of the Trust it is the time when one looks over one's shoulder and also plans for the future and hopes.

We, as a Trust, have worked hard for years and are now beginning to show results for the years of hard effort that have been carried out by dedicated volunteers, many of whom have moved on as their circumstances change. What were considered major victories only a few years ago, now are every day occurrences.

Unfortunately, the general public has a short memory and forgets the state of the canals, only a few years ago. They do not realise the physical effort put in by volunteers giving up their time or Trust employees to reclaim the accumulated dereliction over the years. At Blunder Lock volunteers removed over 300 cubic yards of silt and a tangled mass of undergrowth BEFORE they could start work on restoring the structure! The M.S.C. dredging team dredged out up to EIGHT FEET of silt (the mud was above the old water level in places!) out of the Ryeford section of the canal and removed tons of fallen timber. This year we have completely rebuilt the Trust dredging equipment, we desperately need 3,000 bricks for Blunder Lock and the necessary timber to build the lock gates. The material costs, without labour, for these items is approximately £10,000. Our planning application for the 'Marina', still held up by the County Surveyors' 'Requirements' which have not been finalised, cost £901 taken from the money raised by the Sales Stand.

What we are not getting, but other Canal Restoration Trusts such as the Surrey & Hants, Droitwich, Cromford, Kennet & Avon, Thames & Medway, Chichester are, is financial input and commitment from our local County and District Councils. Our whole credibility and ability to raise funds for our work which is for the benefit of the public at large, i.e. mainly local ratepayers, would substantially increase with similar support. Nevertheless we still require the full support of our members in political, physical and financial support for our project. I hope all who read the 'Trow' will please think about and consider these words.

### TRUST COUNCIL

Deryck Watkinson has regretfully resigned from his offices of Trust Council Member and 'Trow' Editor due to other commitments. Deryck has contributed largely to the Thames End Branch, of which he remains Secretary, and the overall policy of the Trust during his period of office.

Richard Attwood has been co-opted to fill a casual vacancy on the Trust Council. Richard has been much involved in the clearance of the Wallbridge Pound and is both a practical restorer and a Chartered Engineer.

### GRAND 1986 DRAW

There was a disappointing response from the general membership, with several notable exceptions, this year less than 25 per cent

bothering to return tickets. Consequently the profit, which will be used towards restoration, fell to £1800 this year, if only the other members had sold their tickets, or sent equivalent donations we would have exceeded £5,000 and our finances would be a lot healthier!

#### TROW CONTRIBUTIONS

We are heartened by the response to our recent request for photographs, articles and reminiscences, some of which appear in this 'Trow' - please keep them coming in, we need more.

DAVID H BOAKES

## M.S.C. Work Report

Throughout the winter months, work has continued on the M.S.C. dredging scheme at Ryeford and despite the inclement weather, much has been achieved.

Unfortunately, the servicing and rebuilding of all the equipment has taken longer than anticipated which is due partly to the difficulty in obtaining spares for aged, and in some cases obsolete, machinery, and partly to the problems in finding engineering firms both willing and able to fabricate new parts. Rebuilding is now nearly complete and we hope to restart dredging in the near future.

Whilst waiting for parts, the M.S.C. workers have been variously employed on necessary jobs elsewhere on the canal. Some of you will have noticed that the hedge between Blunder and Newtown Locks has been expertly laid, making the canal more visible from the road, and after fifty years of neglect is much more presentable. In the pound above Ryeford Double Lock, a drainage channel has been dug extending back towards the infilled section by Holly Tree House. This has succeeded in draining much of the silt in the canal bed which will make the task of dredging this section much easier.

Ryeford Double Lock is being prepared for restoration with the removal of the silt from the top chamber which has revealed the brick bottom to be in very good condition. Much undergrowth and rubbish has been cleared from this area which has occasioned much comment and interest among the members of the general public who use the towpath. It is hoped that some of them will become involved in the volunteer work on the canal.

In the near future, we hope to extend the present scheme by fifteen or so people, to include a gang of bricklayers and a bank maintenance gang. Working in conjunction with the dredging team this will enable faster, more efficient and more complete restoration of this stretch of canal.

HOWARD LUCAS (M.S.C. C.P. SUPERVISOR)

## Thames End Branch

The branch continues to meet regularly and is seeking to extend publicity and fund raising activities, as well as work on the ground. Our Jumble Sale finally took place in Swindon, attracting useful attention but less money than we hoped, and we made our usual annual appearance in the Brunel Plaza. A Branch of the Nat West Bank, also in Swindon, has agreed to allow us some display space in a usefully conspicuous position. In the meantime our waste paper collection rounds are keeping up a modest trickle of funds into the kitty.

Two of our members attended the inaugural meeting of the Higher Thames Trust, to indicate our support for this new and important body, and we are hoping that 1986 will be a year of gathering momentum. To return to the publicity theme, the Branch is hoping to appear at the Cricklade Show and the other celebrations being planned this year in that town.

### THAMES END WORK PARTY

Our work parties have continued, persisted even, in spite of the cold weather but the content has had to be modified to take account of the fact that you can't lay bricks or set concrete if the temperature persists in staying well below zero. At least, not with the resources available to us. Mainly we transferred our activities to clearing towpath between Latton and a point to the North of Wildmoorway Locks. Having rediscovered this section of the canal, a start was made in clearing up in the locks themselves. This gave us the opportunity to size up the next stage of the job, which includes trees which have actually grown in the lock walls during the last half century. The long freeze eventually turned to our advantage, as the ice became thick enough to walk on and it was possible to walk into the lock chambers after due checks. We also enjoyed the experience of being able to retrieve dropped objects without recourse to fishing nets or magnets on strings.

Many of the tree stumps have been removed and in due course it is hoped to rescue some of the vintage ironmongery which is around. In addition there were some extra work parties to move the lock gates to the new Plant Site and continue vital maintenance work on the Jones crane. This machine is now more willing to travel than it was, provided that the larger pebbles are cleared from its path. On the whole, the Branch feels that we had a reasonably active Winter, and is grateful to those hardy souls who came from far and wide to help us.

DERYCK WATKINSON

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### FOR SALE

IN AID OF TRUST FUNDS. An old style Automobile Association car badge No. 2C82885. is for sale to the highest postal bid to reach the following address by 25th May.  
Richard Attwood, 7 Hidcote Close, Eastcombe, Stroud, Glos.



ABOVE: Wilmoreway Lower Lock after clearance during winter.

BELOW: Cerney Wick midweek with the pound above looking like canal!



## Western Branch

The Winter weather seems to be making a reluctant departure, but the Western Branch has been by no means dormant. Over my wellies in mire in the head of Blunder Lock this afternoon, I was informed that the Editor wanted copy for the Trow in five days time - ah well, from the shovel to the pen!

Recent Branch meetings have been well attended and it is encouraging that more Trust members are attending and making positive contributions to our deliberations. At least one got co-opted for his pains, but don't think we'll shanghai you for your interest, all parties are welcome. There has been much discussion of our programme for the current year, particularly on publicity and fund raising.

The Social evenings at the 'Bell' continue to be most enjoyable. We hope every so often to provide an added attraction such as the slide shows given by Ron Nott in January and by David Boakes in April. A good spread is provided and a raffle makes the evening profitable. We recently received £100 from the Gloucestershire Branch of the I.W.A. which was much appreciated and went towards buying a concrete mixer to supplement the aged and long-suffering machine at the Eastington worksite. Further expenditure has made us self sufficient in tools for the Wallbridge to Bowbridge worksite. No source of income is too small to be ignored, such as placing collecting bottles on the bars of various pubs. (We have plenty of labels available for anyone who can place a bottle in their friendly local!) Help in kind often comes from the unlikeliest sources. We have had practical help from a signwriter and two welders, (non Trust members incidentally), one of whom went on to sell thirty odd books of draw tickets at work for us! It is an encouraging indication that we are not working in isolation and that our efforts are gaining the notice of the general public.

As a concluding note, Committee member Richard Attwood has been producing some excellent publicity material for free distribution, including a particularly useful map of the canal showing access points, worksites, etc., and would welcome enquiries (Telephone Brimscombe 885057).

TONY JONES

### EASTINGTON / BLUNDER LOCK WORKPARTY

More silt has been removed between the temporary piling and concrete dam, though the piling had to be reinstated after 'blowing' at its base during the sudden bad weather prior to Christmas. It is now holding back water rather too well!

Two new ground paddies and frames in oak have been made and installed for the upper end of the lock and the curved sill wall in the chamber is nearly completed in readiness for casting a new concrete sill. The upper wing walls require 60 - 70 per cent rebricking as as they were in poor condition above water level and

take the continuous pressure of the pound above. All coping stones have been removed and loose brickwork below demolished. When a firm wall with good face is reached, rebricking will begin very soon now.

Two timber lock gates from St. John's Lock on the Thames have been moved ready to have their heel posts reset (the taper across the gates is too great for Blunder Lock).

Again, we would have far more to report if more volunteers came forward - so much of the work is truly unskilled - anyone can be taught to mix mortar or fill a dumper with bricks. Please do try to help out if you have the time, or if not, do tell friends who may be very willing to 'have a go', - our facilities at Eastington are good but underused! Our working dates are to be found at the back of 'The Trow'.

ALAN JONES

Jon Willis works on the paddles for Blunder Lock (left) as 'Dug' Blake prepares the frames down in the head of the lock (right).





WALLBRIDGE / BOWBRIDGE WORKPARTY

Recent weeks have seen steady progress in the restoration of the Wallbridge/Bowbridge pound.

A group of eleven students and friends from Bristol University had a very productive day on 16th March continuing to widen the waterway at Bowbridge in spite of the very wet weather. On Sunday 23rd March a party of Scouts and Guides from Rodborough spent the afternoon clearing overhanging undergrowth and rubbish from the offside bank at Wallbridge. The afternoon was rounded off with a huge bonfire at the head of Wallbridge Upper Lock.



ABOVE: Rodborough Scouts and Guides helping on Wallbridge pound.

The next day saw the start of the vandal season, when two shopping trollies fished out of the canal were thrown into Wallbridge Lock and the Trust's work punt was 'borrowed'. Most vandalism seems to take place between late afternoon and early evening, so if YOU have some time to spare, then why not take a walk along the towpath at this time? Remember, vandals are cowards and vanish into thin air when humans are around.

In spite of the Easter snow, summer is expected to take place soon. The Wallbridge pound is navigable to rowing boats and canoes. So, Trust members, use it!

RICHARD ATTWOOD

## Sponsored Walk

Due to circumstances beyond our control, we regret any inconvenience caused by the previously announced SPONSORED WALK '86 date being amended to SUNDAY 15th JUNE 1986. Whilst the walk will be along the mainly unrestored Thames & Severn Canal from Wallbridge to Daneway, we are also changing the start from London Road Car Park to the CHEAPSIDE CAR PARK in Stroud. This will allow walkers to commence at Wallbridge Upper Lock and walk the full length of this pound before the alterations to be caused by the proposed Stroud East/West Bypass later in 1986.

Can we please ask all members to take part or encourage and sponsor a friend or younger relative to take part. Not to put a fine point on it currently the Trust needs every penny it can raise to carry out its work and the higher its self generated funding, the more credibility it receives when appealing to other sources. Also over the years the 'Walk' has become a social occasion when new friendships are made and old ones renewed - so come along and have an enjoyable day in the Glorious Gloucestershire countryside, visit a pub perhaps and help your Trust.

A sponsor form is enclosed, but plenty more are available if you wish to make up a group or take part in our successful charity profit sharing scheme. Incidentally, those who receive complimentary 'Trows' (Councillors, Officers, etc.) are more than welcome to take part!!!

See you on the day.

DAVID H. BOAKES



The canal at Bowbridge - A year ago you could not even see the sky through the trees and undergrowth - never mind the culvert!

## Ron Nott

My first physical acquaintance with the Stroudwater Canal Society, as this Trust was then, was meeting a small dapper man, behind a 'trade stand', at Fairford Steam Fair on a beautiful sunny day in the seventies - the man was Ron Nott.

We exchanged the usual pleasantries - I believe I said 'You're wasting your time trying to reopen those canals' and received a wry smile in reply. Ten minutes later I walked away with several hard-to-find canal books and a belief that the project was possible.

Over the years I have come to know and appreciate the work Ron, Shirley and their family have done quietly on behalf of the Trust and the Stroudwater Navigation - Ron currently is Secretary to the Company of Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation. Ron was a highly successful Editor of the Trow and when I became Secretary of the Trust diffidently offered to take over Sales - there was no money, two cardboard boxes of bits and pieces and two copies of every 'x town as it was' that had been published!

From this beginning Ron, and Shirley, have built up one of the finest Sales Stands in the canal restoration scene, appearing at virtually every major and minor event where sales could be made. Profits from the Sales Stand have got the Trust out of many a tight corner over the years, including the £901 required at short notice for our 'Marina' planning application, making its contribution to the Trust nearly £2000 in the current twelve months.

Ron and Shirley have been the public face of 'The Trust' for many years and now they have decided to call it a day and concentrate on other things - grandchildren perhaps? Our sincere thanks and appreciation for good work well done. We regret your decision and hope to see you more, socially, in the future.

DAVID H. BOAKES.

## Anagram

Simply shuffle the order of the letters to form names of 10 canals.  
No prizes - Answers below

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Devon Tank Anne   | 6. I Cleaned Radar    |
| 2. In Go Baskets     | 7. Routed Straw       |
| 3. An Under Way      | 8. A Red Loch         |
| 4. A Running Do      | 9. And Men Have Rests |
| 5. Send re Army Tent | 10. Got Money Mr.     |

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1. Kennet And Avon 2. Basinstoke 3. Wey And Arun 4. Grand Union 5. Trent And Mersey 6. Aire And Calder 7. Stroudwater 8. Rochdale 9. Thames And Severn 10. Montgomery

## Boat Launch at Wallbridge

It is recorded in Mr Household's 'Thames & Severn Canal' (p 119), that the first boats built for the Company were launched from a temporary yard at Wallbridge, while the canal was under construction, in 1784. History has a habit of repeating itself and the first work boat has just been built for the Trust under an arch of the old Midland Railway bridge at Wallbridge Wharf. The idea for the new addition to the Trust's fleet came around last year while bow-hauling the flat on Wallbridge Pound. While a very useful craft, it is very substantially built and the thought was voiced that we needed something about the same size but rather more portable.

The matter rested until around Christmas when, by a happy coincidence, the Western Branch acquired a quantity of 2" x 2" timber and some sheets of shuttering plywood. With the permission of the landlady of the 'Bell' our store under the railway arch became a boatyard, with light and power run from her outside wash house. Customers parking in the pub yard on many an evening were intrigued by the sounds of industrious carpentry as the Branch Chairman and assistants gave the idea shape. One is never alone when building a boat and progress was followed with great interest by the regulars. Not only interest, but also practical help, such as a friendly welder providing all the necessary ironwork and the carpenter who, after doing a job for the pub, gave us two hours of his time (and saved our blisters) wielding his screwdriver. The end result is a strong 16 feet by 4 work punt, light enough to be easily portaged round obstructions or trailed to other work sites and with surplus materials in hand a second one will follow.

The launch took place on Sunday 13th April during a short break in the rain and was attended by over sixty people including a large percentage of non Trust members. The traditional launching ceremony was performed by Nancy Green, landlady of the 'Bell' who was presented with a bouquet of flowers. The boat was then bow-hauled to Bowbridge and back in a time of 43 minutes and 55 seconds, an important time because of the sweepstake organised in aid of Trust funds, - we don't miss a trick!

Though our first boatbuilding venture is on a more modest scale than William Large's 30 ton 'Endeavour' and 'Adventure' over two centuries ago, it is to be hoped that our work punts will be equally useful and the forerunners of a new generation of craft to be launched on the canal.

### WORK PUNT FUND

Three more work punts are still needed and the cost for materials will be about £180. Members who would like to assist with a specific project are invited to contribute. There are of course alternatives to cash contributions - do you have or can you contribute 2" x 2" timber,  $\frac{1}{2}$ " (12mm) or  $\frac{3}{4}$ " (18mm) Exterior Grade or Marine Plywood? We would welcome sponsorship by a Company or Organisation after which a boat would be named. If you can help please contact me on Stroud 2915.

TONY JONES

# Higher Thames Trust

Following the recent formation of a Higher Thames Trust, you may be interested to learn of their objectives. Should anyone require further information, please contact John Winstone at 'The Bushes, Bayswater Road, Headington, Oxford, OX3 9RZ. (Telephone 086 735 232)

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## HIGHER THAMES TRUST: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE.

- To make it possible to use the existing right of navigation on the River Thames between Inglesham and Cricklade as soon as possible.
- To provide a navigation bridgehead at Cricklade with the potential for a junction with:-
  - A restored Stroudwater, Thames & Severn Canal over the Cotswold Hills to the Cotswold Water Park, Sapperton Tunnel, Stroud, Gloucester and the River Severn.
- and/or
- A restored Wilts & Berks Canal along the North Wilts Branch, passing to the west of Swindon and along the main line to Chippenham, Melksham, and the restored Kennet & Avon Canal to Bath and Reading.
- To bring the well established amenity, leisure and tourist benefits of a cruising waterway for the first time to the communities of Cricklade, Swindon, Cirencester, Tetbury, Malmesbury, Highworth, Fairford, Burford, Witney etc.
- To accommodate all the interests associated with a waterway including angling, cruising, boating, wildlife in flora and fauna, conservation and ecology.

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The Trust is established with Memorandum and Articles of Association and is being registered as a Company and a Charity. A Committee of Management and Officers are now active. Strategies and plans to achieve the Objective are being developed. Members are being enrolled and Activity Groups are being formed to make progress in the fields of Planning, Public Relations, Conservation and Ecology, Engineering, Finance etc.

A Feasibility Study has been completed by the leading Consulting Engineers, 'Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners' and concludes that it is feasible to make the river navigable by building three locks and weirs and dredging the channel.

Discussions are taking place with Thames Water, relevant Local Authorities, waterway organisations and other interested parties.

A newsletter will be issued at intervals to members.

JOHN WINSTONE February 1986.

## Tales from the Cut - Docking

'Docking' - putting a boat in the dry dock for full repair or repainting - was a pleasant break from carrying, tempered only by the anxiety of spending hard-earned cash, and the boats not earning during the docking period. At Charity Dock there would generally be two or three pairs alongside for minor jobs, or waiting to go up the Moira to load. During the Summer, when most docking work was done, the working boaters preferred to avoid the crowded pleasure boats and gongoozlers at Sutton Stop and the Furnace pub was handy to the boatyard gate. Docking was a sociable occasion and the ready help provided by the boaters was appreciated by the yard staff.

The dock having been cleared of all loose timber and gear, the drain would be bunged with its oak plug and the upper stop plank lifted from the grooves in the dock entrance. The filling of the dock generally took around half an hour, the planks being drawn in succession as the level rose to minimise the influx of silt. With the dock on a level the boat would be walked in and positioned, not without much debate. 'To 'ee a bit Jesse' - 'No, she's too far over' - 'Forrud a bit Ted' - 'That ain't right Joe' - Shurruup you beggars, lets Have a look, she's right at that, leave the line as it is, who's running this b\*\*\* yard anyway?' At last, with the matter settled to the satisfaction of all parties, the stop planks would be replaced and the plug pulled.

The emptying was a slow business, fags would be rolled and mugs of tea handed out by the boaters' wives as we watched the level slowly fall. After the boat had settled and with most of the water expelled, the kids descended with nets and buckets to chase the fish which had been trapped by the filling. With a few inches of water yet to go we got down with brooms to sweep any silt towards the drain, a vital job. An eel was spotted and all joined in the chase. Immediately, in the scrum to grab the prize, someone would go on his backside, a bucket of water would be thrown, and the fun started. With boatmen and yard hands wrestling in the muddy water, kids screaming with excitement, the dogs barking and the wives shrieking encouragement, Joe half-heartedly tried to restore order, but bedlam reigned!

Eventually the uproar would die down, we would clamber dripping and laughing out of the dock. Perhaps someone had the eel, but more likely it had escaped down the drain. Kids would be grabbed and towelled down, dogs called to heel and grinning Dads told off. Joe and Jesse wedged the stop planks down and trickled a couple of shovels of ash from the forge down outside them to seal off the chinks. A tactful hint from Albert, 'About dinner time Boss' - 'O.K. Come on you daft beggars, the round's on me, not that you deserve it'. A hurried tumbling into cabins to make ourselves presentable and in minutes we were trooping across the road in Joe's wake to the welcoming doors of 'The Furnace'.

## The Port of Brimscombe

A tourist in the Cotswolds, coming across the village of Brimscombe on his travels, might well be tempted to pause awhile, and take a short stroll beside the River Frome in an easterly direction. His thoughts might well be - 'There's not a lot of interest here, apart from the natural beauty of the area, which is marred by the present conglomerate of factory buildings'. He could be forgiven - unless he be canal-minded - for not knowing that the area, now covered mostly by Messrs Benson's factory and car park, was once a place of water, wharves and work-boats and the scene of great commercial activity - which in these later years was to change to industrial use.

When the construction of the Thames & Severn Canal from Wallbridge, Stroud to the River Thames at Inglesham, Lechlade, was finally completed in 1789, a Port House had been built by one Thomas Cook of Painswick, who was also incidentally the contractor for the erection of Gloucester Gaol between 1786 - 1791. The site for Brimscombe Port was chosen chiefly because the valley of the River Frome at this point was wide enough to allow a basin holding a stretch of water some 700 ft long and 250 ft wide, and wharfage capable, it is said, of holding up to 100 vessels at a time, - this being very necessary as it was also the furthest point that the Severn Trows (or sailing barges) could reach, - due to the width of the canal and length of locks on the route. A few however, were able to proceed as far as Bourne Lock. Thus it was that Brimscombe became the transshipping place for the goods being water-borne to be transferred to the smaller and narrower Thames barges (or longboats) - able to negotiate the narrower canal, shorter locks, and Sapperton Tunnel for the rest of the journey to the River Thames at Inglesham. Whilst there were a number of other wharves on the Thames & Severn Canal, Brimscombe was by far the largest, and a place where work went on often both by day and night, and its very strongly-built warehouses (which in later years were used to house Brimscombe Polytechnical School) - entailed the use of very heavy timber to cope with the weight, volume and the security of the merchandise usually stored there.

This ranged from grain in sacks, hogheads of cider, cases of copper, bacon, timber, earthenware, hemp, currants, stone and much else besides. Seperate provision was made for the safe storage of coal on an island off-shore of the central wharf, and away from the attention of the pilferers - even then very active. Sited here with its own offices were a forge, can store, salt store, small warehouse and a boat gauge. This latter was necessary to gauge length, width, water displacement and weight of craft wishing to enter the Thames & Severn Canal, and for the purpose of fairly assessing freight charges and checking pay-loads against the various fraudulent ways by which some bargees sought to cheat their owners, and avoid payment. This became a matter of great concern, as bargees carrying coal would often 'swoop' some of their valuable commodity for food, and it is reported that in the first month of its use the gauge and weighing machine saved £500 in this respect. Doubtless, life for the bargees and canal workers generally was very hard in those days, as one can well appreciate, when records show that four men often unloaded forty tons of coal in four hours by barrow and gang plank - two men in the barge and two handling the barrows. It must be remembered that in the period to which this article refers, the road system, generally, in the country areas consisted mainly of rutty earth tracks, often trodden in Winter

into lakes of mud and slush by the horse and coach traffic of the day. This being so - after the Industrial Revolution, which saw a considerable number of mills and factories spring up in the valleys of this area, the owners of these concerns, were eagerly seeking transport which would prove cheaper, quicker and easier both for getting their manufactured goods to consumers and also to bring in the raw materials and later the coal, which with the invention of the early steam engine, was soon to displace the water power, then universally in use. Another factor making the Port of Brimscombe a strategic point, was the war with France, which meant that land transport across England via our canals was far safer than the round the coast and channel route.

First dreamt of in the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1st - one Robert Whitworth was the engineer primarily responsible for planning the Thames & Severn Canal, which took eight years to build - (although many others were subsequently to be involved) and as the work progressed, the various sections were brought into use, and in 1789 the first boat was able to make the journey through Sapperton Tunnel, which had been officially opened by King George III in that same year, after five years of frustration, worry and hard work. At its best period, Brimscombe Port provided employment for a staff of seventeen, comprised mostly of clerks, carpenters, wharf men, labourers, a mason and a blacksmith, and also adjoining were two dry docks for boat repairs, whilst nearby on the site that the Olympic Varnish Co. now occupies, a dockyard existed for the trades of boat building and barge construction.

It is also known that one Richard Miller, an apprentice in the Brimscombe Port Office from 1793, later prospered and subsequently set up on his own as a barge master, carrier and coal merchant, and even in the year 1818 founded the Brimscombe Port Bank (which failed in 1822), one of whose guinea notes is still in the possession of the Stroud National Westminster Bank. It is sad to reflect that well within a period of one hundred years all this vast enterprise, with the coming of the railways, gradually began to fall apart, and to read that the owner of a hitherto prosperous wharf installation and boat building business was obliged to move out because of dwindling trade. Incidentally it was this same person who had periodically shipped loads of stone to London for use by the masons erecting statues for the Houses of Parliament.

Finally, after use for a time as the old Polytechnical School, the warehouses at the Port were finally demolished in 1964, the wharves having disappeared and the basin and canal infilled soon after World War II. Almost nothing remains of the large number of old Trows and barges built in Brimscombe, some of whose names and long length of service make interesting reading. Examples being the 'William of Bristol', built 1809, the 'Stroud Packet', built 1823, the 'Elma of Gloucester', built 1854 and the 'Palace of Chepstow', built 1827. A Severn Trow was reported to be still operating under sail in 1939, and the last craft to be built at Brimscombe was the 'Gem' in 1904.

In the narrow confines of this article it is impossible to cover even a fraction of the story, but those interested would do well to read Humphrey Household's Book, 'The Thames & Severn Canal'.

H. C. SHARP



## Membership Matters

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the Trust:-

Mr. D. Bailey	Woking, Surrey
Mr. M. H. Franklin	Swindon, Wilts.
Mr. P. G. Hookway	Winterbourne, Bristol
Mr. P. McDermott	Proctor, Vermont, U.S.A.
Mr. T. A. Rawlinson	Stonehouse, Glos.
Mrs. M. E. Scannell	Stroud, Glos.
Miss J. D. Shearing	Thundersley, Essex
Mr. D. Stevens	Stroud, Glos.
Mr. C. J. Williams	Matson, Glos.
Mr. A. L. Wright	Stroud, Glos.

We seem to have lost touch with several Trust members who have had their 'Trow' returned marked 'Gone Away'. Would anyone who knows of their whereabouts please get in touch.

Mr & Mrs R.F. Conyers-Dixon, 4A Monmouth Rd. London W2.  
 Mr & Mrs J.H. Farthing, Quarry House, Cliffords Mesne, Newent, Glos.  
 Miss D Holland, Upper Mill, Woodchester, Stroud, Glos.  
 Mr & Mrs M. Matthews, 272 Haslucks Green Rd. Shirley, Solihull.  
 Mr & Mrs S.W. Owen, 7 Highwood Ave. Cheltenham, Glos.  
 Mr & Mrs D.C. Toll, 26 Longmead, Abingdon, Oxon.  
 Mr A.F. Hudson, 39 Forest Drive, Banchory, Kincardineshire, Scotland.

If you are about to change your address, do please let me know. I regret that this will not bring a pantechinon and a canal working party to your door, but if you let me have your new address this will ensure that your 'Trow' lands on YOUR doormat rather than that of the registered office bearing the legend 'GONE AWAY'. Please send your change of address details to David Jordan, 6 Hazelton Road, Marlbrook, Bromsgrove, Worcs, B61 0JE.

DAVID JORDAN

You are invited  
to  
WESTERN BRANCH A.G.M.

At Stonehouse Community Centre. Mon 9 June.  
Please come. All are welcome 7.30p.m.

The meeting will be followed by a  
SLIDE SHOW

featuring our Canals and showing progress.  
See you there.

I am instructed by the Council of the Stroudwater - Thames & Severn Canal Trust Limited to inform the membership that at their meeting on Wednesday, 9th April 1986 pursuant to para. 8 of the Trust's Articles of Association, the member's annual subscription rates will be increased to the following amounts from 1st June 1986.

Adult	£8.00 (Minimum)
Family	£10.00 (Minimum)
Youth (Under 18)	£5.00 (Minimum)
Pensioner	£5.00 (Minimum)
Affiliation	£10.00 (Minimum) Schools, Clubs etc.
Life	£200.00 (Minimum) Subject to discretion of Trust Council

The increased fees are payable, by all members joining and by existing members when their next renewal falls due, after 1st June 1986. Members paying by Bankers Order and/or making Deeds of Covenant will receive the relevant forms for amendment before the renewal date. It was further agreed that any members not paying the increased fee, from the date of their first renewal after 1st June 1986, will be deleted from the 'Trow' circulation list.

DAVID H BOAKES

Tel: Swindon 750776

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**The Pub on the Cut**

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed a £5.00 donation, preferably to be used towards the Wallbridge to Bowbridge pound of the Thames & Severn Canal in Stroud.

I can just remember being dipped in the First World War in the sluice-overspill for the lock above Bowbridge and went for many walks along that stretch in the early 1920s and learned to dive in Ham Mill Lock. So I have a nostalgic interest in that part especially of the canal.

I sincerely hope that the Canal Trust will keep in very close touch with the Nature Conservation group over the road building and canal realignment by the railway viaduct. I last was down there about two or three years ago, appalled at the squalour and dereliction, and also by the pollution in the canal itself. I don't quite know what is meant by a 'marina' on the canal: too much tidying up, noise and activity would drive away what remains of the wildlife, and I hope attention will be paid by the correct authorities when building actually begins. After all, perhaps the main point of the resurrection of the waterway is not the traffic, but the plants, birds, fish and insects. One doesn't want sanitised or sterile water: local councils are notoriously anxious to turn streams into gutters, and miss about every opportunity to enhance the natural attractions of open water. The current practice of leaving one side of a waterway available for wildlife is much to be commended. I do realise that income must be generated to pay for the continuous expense of maintenance.

I wish the Trust well.

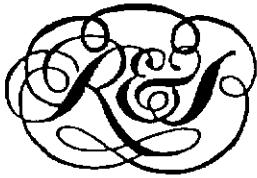
CHRISTOPHER COX  
Newport, Shropshire.

## Grand Draw 1986

The following prizewinning tickets were drawn by the Chairman of Stroud District Council, Councillor Roy P. Nicholas, at the Stroud District Council Offices on Tuesday 22nd April 1986.

PRIZE	TICKET NO.	WINNER
£250	07370	J S Bennett, Chislehurst, Kent.
£150	37612	M Fountain, Stonehouse, Glos.
£10	10950	M Harris, Stroud, Glos.
£10	17571	Miss C A Austin, Richmond, Surrey.
£10	20127	Mrs K Holland, Bedford.
£10	21949	J A Puttock, Bristol.
£10	22170	B R Sinclair, Poringland, Norfolk.
£10	27785	A P Wynter, Rodborough, Stroud, Glos.
£10	36542	D Beavis, Chalford, Glos.
£10	36735	C K Davis, Stroud, Glos.
£10	36791	Mrs M Smith, Chalford, Glos.
£10	37687	J Chapman, Stonehouse, Glos.

We thank all those who supported the draw by purchasing and selling tickets on behalf of the Trust, resulting in the sum of £1,800 being available to aid the improvement programme for the Stroudwater and Thames & Severn Canals.



# Coaches

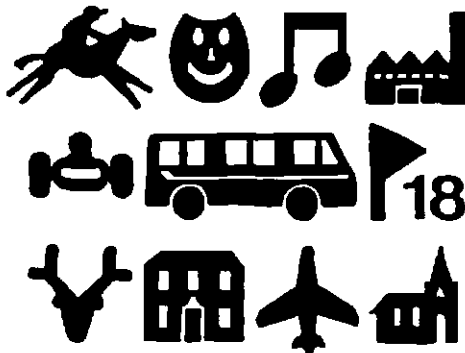
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## Stroud Canal Carnival

On SUNDAY 1st JUNE at 10.30a.m. the STROUD CANAL CARNIVAL takes to the water at WALLBRIDGE in STROUD.

Following the success of last year's event, the attractions for this year's event have been extended to hopefully create a carnival atmosphere and a day out for the family. There will be food and drinks and ice cream available and the adjacent pub, The 'Bell' for those who prefer something stronger. Entry is free to members of the public with ample free car parking in Stroud.

At the centre of the events is the Raft Race with prize categories such as Best Dressed, Best Ladies, Fastest Raft, to keep the competitors on their toes. In addition visitors will be able to see canoe racing and perhaps take a trip on the canal.

Help is still required and we would welcome your involvement. Any organisation or individuals who wish to help, enter a raft or just wanting more information, please contact, BERNARD DONOVAN, (Tel:Stroud 77541).

## Dates for your Diary

Sunday 1st June	STROUD CANAL CARNIVAL
Monday 9th June	Western Branch A.G.M. & Slide Show.
Sunday 15th June	SPONSORED WALK

THAMES END BRANCH MEETINGS at the Red Lion, Cricklade. (Tuesdays)  
May 13, Jun 10, Jul 8, Aug 12.

WESTERN BRANCH MEETINGS at the Bell at Wallbridge, Stroud (Mondays)  
May 12, Jun 2, Jul 7, Aug 4.

NOGGIN & NATTER at the Bell at Wallbridge, Stroud (Thursdays)  
May 15, Jun 19, Jul 17, Aug 21.

THAMES END WORK PARTIES. Contact N.Melchior (Swindon 762510)  
May 31, Jun 1, Jun 28,29, Jul 26,27, Aug 30,31, (Sat/Sun)

BLUNDER LOCK WORK PARTIES. Contact Jon Willis (Gloucester 416694)  
May 11,25, Jun 8,22, Jul 6,20, Aug 3,17. (Sundays)

WALLBRIDGE/BOWBRIDGE. Contact Tony Jones (Stroud 2915)  
May 18, Jun 15,29, Jul 13,27, Aug 10 (Sundays)

IN ADDITION There is usually work at Blunder Lock on Tuesday evenings, at Wallbridge on Thursday evenings and some Saturday working. Please contact the appropriate organiser for details.

BACK COVER: The road bridge at Eastington in 19..? We should be interested to hear from any member who can put an accurate date on the scene or perhaps inform us of the identity of the people in the picture.

DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

ARCHIVIST	DAVID J VINER B.A. A.M.A. 8 Tower St., Cirencester, Gos., GL7 1EF
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	DAVID JORDAN. 6 Hazelton Road, Marlbrook, Bromsgrove, Worcs., B61 0JE
ASSISTANT MEMBERSHIP	GEOFF GARRAWAY. 29 Mill Farm Drive, Paganhill, Stroud, Gos., GL5 4JZ
PRESS & PUBLICITY	BRUCE HALL. Springers, Watledge, Nailsworth, Gos., (Nailsworth 2384)
SALES MANAGER	POSITION TO BE FILLED SHORTLY

THAMES END BRANCH

CHAIRMAN	ROBIN P TWINING. 285 The Cullerns, Highworth, Swindon, Wilts., (Swindon 763243)
SECRETARY	DERYCK WATKINSON. 12 Hampton Grove, Meysey Hampton, Cirencester, Gos., 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, Gos., GL5 3RB (Stroud 2915)
VICE-CHAIRMAN	DOUG BLAKE. 19 Stratton Road, Gloucester, (Gloucester 415843)
SECRETARY	CLINT TAYLOR. 43 Regent Street, Stonehouse, Gos., GL10 2AA (Stonehouse 3485)
TREASURER	ALEC WHITEHOUSE. 37 Cotswold Green, Stonehouse, Gos., GL10 2ET (Stonehouse 2284)

WORKING PARTIES

CO-ORDINATOR	ALAN JONES. 2 Wyclift Villas, Uplands, Stroud, Gos., GL5 1VG. (Stroud 78656)
EASTINGTON (BLUNDER LOCK)	JON WILLIS. 82 Chatsworth Avenue, Tuffley, Gloucester, GL4 0SD (Glos.416694)
WALLBRIDGE/BOWBRIDGE	TONY JONES. 7 Stringers Close, Rodborough, Stroud, Gos., 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 TEAM	PHIL GRIFFITHS. 10 Smythe House, The Waterloo, Cirencester, Gos., GL7 2QR. (Ciren. 4160)
	DES PINNOCK. 7 Vicarage Close, Churchdown, Gloucester GL3 2NE (Churchdown 856233)

