

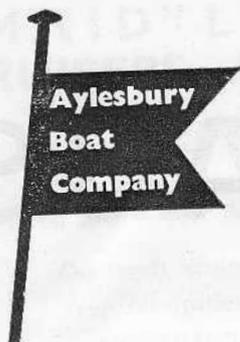
THE WINDLASS

No. 23 APRIL 1961



BY BARGE UP THE WEY — NEWARK MILL

"THE WINDLASS" is the two-monthly journal of
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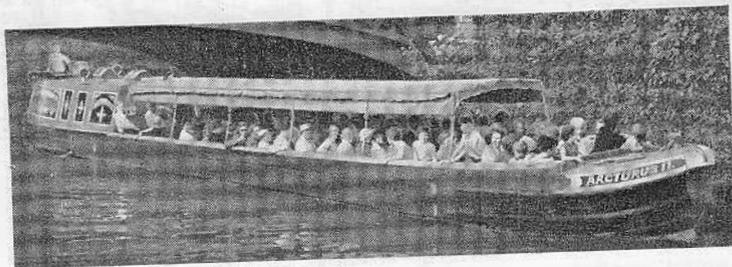
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COMMENT

The Englishman's Thames

ONE afternoon a week or so back we were at Weybridge wanting to cross the Thames where the towpath changes sides below Shepperton Lock—wanting the more desperately because it did not seem as though we could. We continued to want, but also decided to find out why.

So a few days later we telephoned the Thames Conservancy.

We recalled that, ten years ago, a plan had been advanced for a through walk between Lechlade and Teddington, broken only where it changed sides of the river, and there supplied with a ferry. How was the plan going?

It wasn't. Been abandoned about five years ago for lack of money.

What about Shepperton? What about a ferry between the two trailing ends of towpath? *You just cannot get across. Do you regard that as a satisfactory state of affairs? I don't know what you mean.*

Do you, or does the Thames Conservancy, regard it as satisfactory that one cannot cross here? *I'm not going to answer that. What is the position elsewhere?*

We were asked to hold the line and we did—for a long time. Then a new voice arrived, which must be as nameless as the first. *And the conversation that ensued, it assured us, was just as unofficial. If we wanted an official statement for publication would we kindly write to them outlining the points on which we sought to be reassured. Not, the voice added, that it wanted to appear bureaucratic.*

And that was it in a nutshell. Bureaucratic. But much more nicely so than most pensions and tax-grubbing officials are bureaucratic.

For to join battle on the most frustrating subject with a T.C. servant is to be completely disarmed instantly. Such charm and superficially apparent desire to please is almost unparalleled in this democratic age, and yet the T.C. has it.

Where then is the rot? Does it lie concealed beneath this olde-worlde facade, or are the two more directly related? In other words, is the Thames Conservancy out of date? We believe so. We think it needs galvanising into life to make it more aware of what is required of it, less aware of what its Act permits it to do and permits it to leave undone.

To the question, what about the people who want to walk along the towpath, came back quickly the reply, straight from the book—*it is a towpath, not a public right of way.*

Of course it is a public right of way. There may not be a clause in the act to point it out to the gentlemen in Norfolk Street, but let us do so: the Thames is a part of England for everybody to enjoy. The T.C.'s job is to care for it, prevent its abuse, and provide upon it what people whose heritage it is want. To hell with the Act, if it has ceased to serve.

Another thing—this time as the owner of a cruising boat. On the waterways of the much-maligned (and quite rightly so) British Transport Commission, one may connect a hose to a standard fitting on fresh water taps at clearly indicated intervals. Asking to couple up a water hose on our First River is like asking for wine.

Perhaps standpipes might be fixed at every Thames lock side, even though there may be no accommodation for them in the Act.

No amount of water taps, however, will be of use unless boats can afford to cruise the Thames.

Comment (cont'd)

Small craft can afford to. For a narrow boat or a barge, though, to cruise from Teddington to Lechlade would cost in the region of £25. That, of course, is iniquitous. But it's in the Act.

Comparisons may be odious, but there are worse things: and to compare the efforts, achievements, and faults of B.T.W. and T.C. may not be unprofitable. Neither is perfect—although with all the nice things people are always saying about the latter, it appears that a misconception is forming along those very, cankerous lines—and both have much to learn on the subject of what is required of them.

Perhaps a rewarding springtime resolution might be for them—both of them—to devote a considerable amount of time to reading up that subject.

For Your Diary . . .

APRIL 21. *Third annual dinner at the House of Commons. Under the sponsorship of Humphrey Atkins, M.P. Reception at 7.30 p.m. for dinner at 8 p.m. A previous tour of the Houses of Parliament will begin at 6.30. Tickets are available (at the time of going to press) from Mr. J. C. Street, at 52 Moreton Street, London, S.W.1., price 28s.*

APRIL 30.—*Narrow Boat "Arcturus" will leave Mill Mead, Guildford, at 11 a.m. (9.50 a.m. Portsmouth train from Waterloo). Lunch at The Parrot, Shalford: bring your own sandwiches if you like. Godalming is the objective, and return to Guildford early evening. Boat has waterproof awning. Adult members 12s. 6d., junior members 6s. Non-members, 15s. Tickets in advance from Roy Mack, 15 The Gateway, Woodham, Woking.*

WHIT SATURDAY.—*Kennet and Avon Canal Association Rally at Newbury.*

MAY 13 and 14.—*Weekend working party on the Stratford and Avon Canal. (See note in Around the Waterways).*

MAY 30.—*Fifth annual branch meeting, Bridge House Hotel, London Bridge, 7.30 p.m. Agenda to include chairman's and treasurer's reports, election of officers, and—any other business.*

JUNE 4.—*Medway boat trip Tonbridge to Maidstone. Leave Town Bridge, Tonbridge, 10.45 a.m. Bring sandwiches to personal taste (or fit to swap). Tickets from D. C. N. Salmon, Springhill Cottage, Yardley Park Road, Tonbridge, Kent, 12s. 6d. members, 7s. 6d. juniors, 15s. non-members. State if tea is required on arrival at Maidstone.*

NEWS SPOTS

British Waterways have offered half-price tolls for craft travelling to the Aylesbury Rally in August.

* * *

Coinciding with British Waterways' display of craft at Little Venice in March, Mr. John James, in his Canaletto Gallery there, organised an exhibition of paintings of canal scenes. For the first time, the boat display included craft belonging to members of the Association of Pleasure Craft Operators.

* * *

Hostelboats, Ltd., who operate holidays on horsedrawn narrow and wide boats on the canals and Upper Thames respectively, have a full calendar this year, beginning in May. Details of these inexpensive holidays (they start at six guineas a week all in) may be obtained from the firm at the Watch House, Hawthorne Road, Stretford, Manchester.

* * *

On May 20, the four-year-old hire fleet of J. Tims and Sons, Ltd., of Staines, will become five strong when "Secret Water" commissions. However this 80-year-old firm operated a hire fleet before the war, which was subsequently dispersed. A catalogue which is obtainable from the firm shows that the fleet is up to the highest standards on the Thames.

* * *

Upon joining the Inland Waterways Association new members are automatically made members of their local branch, and no branch membership fee is payable during the first year. We sincerely hope that you will find the activities of the branch of interest and benefit, and that you will continue to be a member at the end of the first year by paying the 5s. annual branch subscription. Any member residing outside the area of any branch may become a member of the branch or branches by paying the appropriate membership fee to the general office of the association.

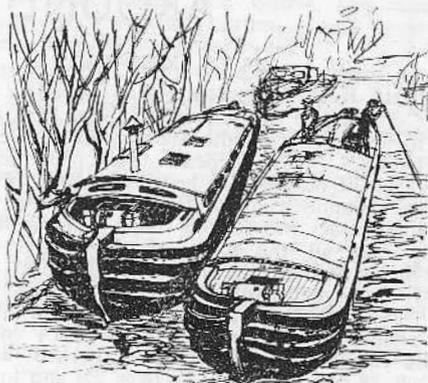
* * *

Sixty members attended a film show at the Bridge House Restaurant on February 16th, when films made by the National Coal Board were shown. These included items on coal traffic on the Staff. and Worcs. Canal; the underground canal system at Ellesmere pit, Bridgewater Canal (supplemented by remarks by Mr. D. Horsfall on his recent trip along these canals, to be published in the I.W.A. Bulletin); and coal traffic along the Bridgewater Canal. Slides of the Basingstoke Canal were also shown.

BY BARGE UP THE WEY

BY JENNY HADDLETON

Jenny and David Haddleton's introduction to the canals—in the form of a holiday spent on a narrow boat—was some time ago now. But it was a little over a year ago that they bought Kate and proceeded to convert her into one of the most gracious of homes afloat. David is an advertising executive, Jenny an artist, sculptor, metal worker, potter, weaver . . . and so on.



Speedwell alongside Kate

IT WAS a cold, grey day when I joined *Speedwell* at New Haw. I was particularly interested in making this journey with her to Guildford for repairs because David and I had just converted her sister, *Kate*, into a home.

In the wake of the launch tug, we chugged past the boats at New Haw and under the railway where the Bournemouth Belle contrasted strangely with our silent progress. I saw kingfishers and squirrels and shaggy highland cattle—and wondered whether the passengers on the express did.

On the lawns of a red-brick mansion stands a fine old plane tree, and beyond it, a narrow, white-railed bridge: now the navigation has left the populated areas and slides through farm and woodland. Then, above Pyrford lock, more cruisers and, strangest of sights, odd foreign birds peering at us from their cages on the deck of a converted barge.

Rounding a bend, is an old, buttressed brick wall, partly hiding a rambling house; and the barge master talked of the prize fighters who trained there in days gone by.

At Walsham Lock we brewed up and there was more talk, this time of the cut and the folks who work the narrow boats, as barge master, tug skipper, and driver recounted their stories. The lock cottage at Walsham is perched high: before it the navigation lock, behind it the roaring weir where the river parts company. And the lock keeper was called to shut down some of the sluices when the launch tug stuck hard on the bottom. The water rose and the launch tug was freed.

It was strangely exhilarating to swing along the broad river between flat meadows. The launch tug was travelling fast now and the freedom of

it all was another contrast with the motion on the man-made cut.

Then we were in the cut again, rising through grass-sided Newark Lock, and across the fields stood the ruins of the priory, built on the Pilgrim's Way, now looking grey and sinister. At Newark Bridge we had another stop, this time for the water to be lowered. The launch tug was too high or the bridge was too low: so we waited, blankly gazed upon by black and decaying Newark Mill. It is one of the oldest mills in the country and looks it, this amazing wooden building with its strangely placed windows, mellow, tiled roof, and assortment of odd angles. If it is not soon repaired it will surely collapse.

Flat and winding was the haul to Papercourt Lock, another of the surviving turf-sided variety, looking more like a deep pond with its rounded sides. The lock cottage is isolated indeed, drawing water from a well and with no electricity.

Through Old Woking a handful of bungalows enjoy waterfronted gardens and pylons stand in the meadows. The cut is bordered by bamboo and rhododendron.

Beyond the Cartbridge the canal is shallower, and by the time we reached the next lock it was late and the pump on the launch tug was blocked with mud. So we left her there with her tow and caught the bus home.

From 8.30 in the morning to 3.30 in the afternoon we had travelled the lovely miles of the Wey. We got back by bus in half an hour. But there was something very satisfying about the gentle journey along the cut. But for the launch tug, much of it could have been 100 years ago. It was an experience far, far from the clatter of underground trains. As far as you could find,

AROUND THE WATERWAYS

RIVER MEDWAY

THE Kent River Board have agreed to continue this year the scheme enabling I.W.A. members to work locks on the Medway themselves (writes D.C.N.S.). The scheme began last year as a result of negotiations between the branch Medway sub-committee and the river board. A system of lock passes was started which allowed the holder to use all the locks of the Upper Medway Navigation for the period of the pass.

The scheme operated from March 27 to October 15, inclusive. Cost for the full period is £5 for boats over 20ft., £4 under 20ft. A pass for 28 days for any length of boat costs £2. Applicants must be over 21, and forms may be had from Mr. D. Salmon, Springhill Cottage, Yardley Park Road, Tonbridge, Kent.

The scheme is for the use only of I.W.A. members—with boats of their own or hired craft—and it is hoped that many members will take advantage of it. It saves the irksome business of giving advance notice of passage to the river board, thus allowing the fullest enjoyment of this beautiful and peaceful river.

The River Medway Sub-Committee has been pursuing its negotiations with the Tonbridge Council concerning the provision of a public mooring place in the centre of the town. In spite of the efforts of our member Councillor L. Willard and a long personal consultation between the secretary of the sub-committee and council officials, the council have turned down our proposals. This short sighted attitude is to be deplored particularly in view of increasing pleasure boating on the Medway. However your committee are not taking this as the last word and other avenues are now being explored.

Members who trail their boats will be interested to learn that a concrete slipway has recently been built in Tonbridge. It is at R. Allen (Tonbridge) Ltd., General Engineers, Lyons Crescent, Tonbridge, (Telephone Ton. 3499) who are prepared to allow launching. It is necessary to make advance arrangements for use of the slipway as the works are not always open at weekends. The slipway is rather steep.

BASINGSTOKE CANAL

AT A meeting on January 17, there was a discussion on the Basingstoke Canal and it was agreed that the branch should take energetic steps towards improvement of the state of the canal (writes R.M.) Accordingly a sub-committee was formed and it met on January 30. This meeting decided that a basis for future action would be a technical report and the secretary was asked to obtain expert assistance for this.

Our members The Wey Cruising Club were, at the time of going to press, planning to cruise up the canal, starting the weekend before Easter and extending over Easter. We hope to publish an account of this trip in the next issue.

LEE AND STORT NAVIGATION

THE Lee and Stort Development Committee is to organize a motor cruiser rally on the Stort in June, and a regatta at Ware in September, (writes R.M.). The chairman, Mr. H. A. H. Burgess, of 11 West Street, Hertford, would be glad to hear from I.W.A. members in the vicinity of Hertford and Bishops Stortford who could assist in the work of his committee.

KENNET AND AVON CANAL

THE *Redevelopment Scheme for the Kennet and Avon Canal* was published on February 17. Copies were then sent to Members of Parliament, the Press, all local authorities along the canal, yacht clubs, etc., and to all members who had ordered them in advance. Nearly 100 London and Home Counties members have so far bought this report, which represents really excellent value at 5s. (post free).

The Inland Waterways Redevelopment Advisory Committee, for whom the scheme was prepared, received their copies earlier in February. We await their reaction with the greatest interest.

The scheme has been received favourably by *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, and local newspapers along the canal.

STRATFORD-ON-AVON

THE object of a working party from this branch on May 13 and 14, will be to help repair and re-equip locks and weirs on the two miles of canal between Kingswood Junction (Lapworth) and Lowsonford (writes R.M.). It will be based on Lapworth. Tools will be provided, but extra gardening and brick-laying tools will probably be useful.

Accommodation will consist of a field for camping by the canal and a shed with cooking stove that will accommodate twelve men. Boats may be moored at Lapworth, near Kingswood Junction. Hotels are at Henley-in-Arden (six miles) and Warwick (10 miles).

Lapworth is a small village 2½ miles west of the Warwick to Solihull A.41 road at Chadwick End. Journey by rail is from Paddington via Leamington Spa. For example, on Friday, depart Paddington 5.10 p.m. or 6.10 and arrive Lapworth 7.18 or 9.18; on Sunday, depart Lapworth 4.50 p.m. or 6.1 and arrive Paddington 7.50 or 9.20 (these times must be checked with British Railways).

Those intending to go should inform Roy Mack at 15 The Gateway, Woodham, Woking (phone 4634) before May 4, and should indicate if they can offer or will require a lift in a car, and if they want to book sleeping space in the shed. On arrival, report to the Manager's Office (manager: David Hutchings) at Junction Cottage. Members must make their own provision for food.

The Stratford-on-Avon Canal Committee has drawn up the following provisional schedule:— first year: Kingswood to Lowsonford, 2 miles, 11 locks; second year: Lowsonford to Lock 40, 8 miles, 8 locks; third year: Lock 40 to River Avon, 2½ miles, 17 locks.

The fulfilment of this schedule depends on the help received. If this first London and Home Counties Branch working party is well supported others will be held, perhaps at intervals

of six to eight weeks. Of course, the canal committee has working parties almost every weekend, and these are open to all.

CHELMER AND BLACKWATER NAVIGATION

NO FURTHER progress has been made in the negotiations for pleasure traffic on this waterway, and people interested in using it should continue to follow the advice given in these columns in May and August 1960 (writes J.E.M.).

It is hoped that it will be possible for the branch to hold an outing on this attractive waterway during the summer if a barge is available; and it would be nice if Chelmsford Duke, the celebrated barge horse this branch helped to save from the knacker's yard, could be persuaded to tow it.

" CRESSY "

Sir,

Whilst at Stone in Staffordshire, on the Trent and Mersey Canal in 1956, I was told by Mr. Wyatt, the proprietor of the Canal Cruising Company, that Mr. Rolt had brought "Cressy" to his wharf and asked him to buy it. Wyatt refused on the grounds that it was rotten—literally—and it sank. He pointed to the obvious remains of a sunken narrow boat situated to the north of a permanently moored narrow boat converted to a houseboat. I have often wondered at these statements which saddened me considerably at the time.

Whilst on the subject of Mr. Rolt's *Narrow Boat*, you might be interested to know that in August, 1959, when I visited Banbury, the way to Tooley's boatyard was much as described on page 19, with the exception of the sign proclaiming the sale of "tripe, ox heels and neats foot oil for sale," which I could not discover. When I revisited the place at Eastertime in the following year it was to witness the destruction of the property on the corner of Factory Street, upon which the almost illegible sign had been affixed.

One last point: on page 63, Rolt describes the village of Braunston which, whilst it cannot have altered very much with the passage of time, nevertheless has lost the diminutive cottage so graphically described. There has been some "development" at the eastern end of the village in the shape of a small council housing estate, so I assume some wise authority in an impregnable position "improved" the place by sweeping it away.

Yours etc.,
H. E. WOOD.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WINDBAG

Sir,

On page 208 of the January *Windlass*, "windbagism" is mentioned by a reader. I am not the writer of that sentiment, though I must say that I agree with him (or her), and am always reading in various I.W.A. publications absolutely erroneous statements.

On page 202 of the January *Windlass* your contributor writes, "The Willow Wren Co. are regularly delivering cargoes, of aluminium to Aylesbury." In fact, only two deliveries have been made since the Aylesbury Arm has been re-vitalised; and though future traffic is said to be in the offing, by no means can it be described as "regular."

As a really good example of I.W.A. exaggerated optimism, I suggest you read the report of the K. & A. now available. Therein, the K. & A. is described as a "vital link" and as an ideal base for hire cruisers if it were open. How can a base be ideal if one has to leave and return the same way? It might be pleasant and so forth but hardly "ideal."

Yours etc.,
C. L. LOVELL.

c/o. The Aylesbury Boat Co.,
The Canal Basin,
Aylesbury, Bucks.

24, Elm Road,
New Malden.

Letters (cont'd)

DETAILS WANTED

Sir,

I would be very grateful if you could publish the following in your next magazine:

Narrow Boat Register: please supply the following information—present owner; original owner; original work; construction wood or metal; length; engine; where moored; house boat, holiday boat.

Yours etc.

R. W. F. SMALLMAN.

Yieldingtree Railway Museum Trust.

QUITE SURE?

Sir,

You may be able to make use of the following information.

Are you certain that the narrow boat on the cover of the January *Windlass* really is the "Cressy." There is unfortunately no full-view drawing in L. T. C. Rolt's book and there is some considerable differences when the photo is compared with the plan and such views of "Cressy" as appear in *Narrow Boat*. I saw "Cressy" some sixteen or more years ago when she was moored at the top of the 30 locks near Bromsgrove, but she may have been altered since those days.

I walked along the Buckingham Arm about four years ago. I wrote at the time to Mr. Aickman and he mentioned also having walked along it ("in so far as this is possible," a reference to the overgrown nature of the towing path). I must admit being under the impression that it had been legally abandoned. In view of the fact that this appears not to be so, I hope that at least the method is brought into the open, and the culprits named. Did the rot set in during G.U.C. days before the war, during the wartime administration, or after nationalisation?

I managed to penetrate to Hyde Lane Lock which is attractively situated in a wood. The condition is similar to that lock nearer to Buckingham. An interesting point is that although as Mr. Marriage reports there is a full head of water where canal and river co-mingle, yet the growth of weed is so considerable that there is only a mere trickle of water at Hyde Lane over the cill which is unimpeded by gates. Never before have I seen such a vivid illustration of the power of surface tension through weed-growth to prevent this free flow of water. Buckingham, though at one time it claimed to be a county-town was never large. No doubt the main reason for building the arm was water-supply. At the present time it can be reasonably asserted that no water from the Ouse reaches the grand Union main line near Wolverton. Things may improve a little when the weed dies in the winter, but water-shortages seldom occur in winter! The lock cottage near Buckingham was occupied by tenants of the B.T.C., but I gathered from the wife that her husband was not working on the canal. The cottage is adjacent to a farm.

Yours etc.,

"A CORRESPONDENT."

(Name and address supplied.)

No. 22

For the benefit of readers who keep their copies of "The Windlass," issue number 22 was incorrectly datelined January. This was a printer's error and should, of course, have read February.

The illustration below is by permission of the Editor of "The Motor Boat and Yachting"



New Members

A WARM welcome is extended to the following—

- MARTIN, David Bernard, 5, Firsby Road, London, N.16.
 LITCHFIELD, Dr. J. W., 36, Eaton Rise, Ealing, London, W.5.
 HUNT, Benjamin William, 61, Salmon Street, Kingsbury, London, N.W.9.
 SMITH, Edward Alfred Francis, 142, Babbercombe Road, Bromley, Kent.
 TEASDALE, John, 52, Claverton Street, London, S.W.1.
 JELLEY, Victor Louis, (Junior) 36, Elmbourne Road, Upper Tooting, London, S.W.17.
 HAIGH, Mrs. Dorothy, Woode, Heronsgate, Chorley Wood, Hertfordshire.
 HAMMOND, Miss Barbara, 37, Thames Village, Chiswick, London, W.4.
 BROWN, Geoffrey, 26, Consfield Avenue, New Malden, Surrey.
 CLENT, John Howard, 27, Worplesdon Road, Guildford, Surrey.
 ROBERTS, A. J., Wyndham, 203, Wendover Road, Egham Hythe, Staines, Middlesex.
 ROKICKI, Janusz, 10, Wynauid Villas, Wittington Road, London, N.22.
 HOWELL, Michael John (Junior), 22, Broughinge Road, Boreham Wood, Hertfordshire.
 DYER, Clifford Percy, 16, St. Stephen's Close, Southall, Middlesex.
 HARDIMAN, Rupert Stanley, 110, Kinveachy Gardens, Charleton, London, S.E.7.
 HOBSON, Lawrence R., Godolphin, Woodham Lock, West Byfleet, Surrey.
 MERSON, Miss Betty Wilma, 37, Thames Village, Chiswick, London, W.4.

* * *

- ROSE, Miss Jean, 14, Fanshaw Avenue, Barking, Essex.
 SPURGEON, Roy Steven, 38, Kirkley Road, Merton Park, London, S.W.19.
 STRANG, Colin Henderson, 3, Anglesea Lodge, 23, Portsmouth Road, Kingston-on-Thames, Sy.
 HARRIS, Ned., 62, Fairwater Avenue, Welling, Kent.
 PURSE, Sydney, M/V "York," Cowley Lock, Cowley, Middlesex.
 APLIN, Eugene Michael, Fairways, Summerfield Road, Loughton, Essex.
 FENNESSY, Edward, Group Captain, C.B.E., Red Lodge, Goddington Lane, Orpington, Kent.
 DEW, Raymond M., Red Cottage, 14, Hillsleigh Road, London, W.8.

- ELLIOT, Mrs. Verena J., 5, Fordham Court, De Vere Gardens, London, W.8.
 MYLAM, Henry James, 148, Warren Drive South, Tolworth, Surbiton, Surrey.
 NASH, John Wynne, 29, Lytham Avenue, South Oxhey, Hertfordshire.
 WILLIAMS, Ian Fraser, 242, Upland Road, London, S.E.22.
 APERGHIS, Elias, 2, Sutton Court, Chiswick London, W.4.
 COTTRELL, Flat 2, 57, Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7.
 ELLIS, Stanley G., Flint Cottage, Shoreham, Sevenoaks, Kent.
 FISHER, K. N., Woodward, 14, Albert Place, London, W.8.

* * *

- GORING, Lionel Morton Philip, 2, Roxburgh Road, London, S.E.27.
 HARDWICK, Donald Hugh, 24a, Southern Road, Fortis Green, East Finchley, London, N.2.
 LANGLEY, B. (Junior), 3, Church Paths, Icklesford, Hitchin, Hertfordshire.
 MARCHANT, A. C., 29, Fairfax Road, Old Woking, Surrey.
 MATTHEWS, Richard, 27, Eaton Road, Southcourt, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.
 MILLER, Thomas Derrick, 20, Neville Street, South Kensington, London, S.W.7.
 WHYATT, Anthony (Junior), 20, Brandville Road, West Drayton, Middlesex.
 VINCENT, Leonard Godfrey, 44, Windermere Avenue, London, N.W.6.
 SELBY, Frederick B., 99, Windermere Road, Ealing, London, W.5.
 SHAW, T. Glenn, 4, Sackville Road, Cheam, Sy.
 NEWELL, Peter J. C., 3, Sheen Lane, Mortlake, London, S.W.14.
 SWAYNE, Mrs. Elizabeth Mary, Lanesborough Preparatory School, Guildford, Surrey.
 VARLEY, D. L., 10, East Towers, Pinner, Mid.
 BALAAM, John James, 2, Bridge Court, Witley Gardens, Southall, Middlesex.
 BANKS, John Norman, 30, Slades Hill, Enfield, Middlesex.
 KENDRICK, Dr. Peter, Flat 7, Arundel Court, Jubilee Place, London, S.W.3.
 PERKINS, Mrs. Hannah, 28, The Gateway, Woodham, Woking, Surrey.
 COUPER, David Anderson, 16, Pentland Street, London, S.W.18.

From the Editor's Cabin

A DROOLING sentimentality over steam—and especially steam tugs and barges—is one of my pet indulgences. So the sequel to my recent note on the new lease of life for the Thames tug "Ham," which sequel, incidentally, has come far more quickly than I would have feared, saddened me no end. It was when I learned shortly before going to press that on her sister, "Barnes," the boiler fire went out for the last time on February 10, and, for Barnes, no diesel powered reprieve. Only the breaker's yard.

"Barnes," as I have remarked before, is (or was) very beautiful. I shall never forget seeing the slender shape of her, half-real in the morning mist, off Mortlake as she thumped her way gently up the river on the flood tide. More like a Turner picture she looked, her tall, thin stack above the low, narrow-gutted hull. And I shall remember the strangely precarious sensation, clutching a mug of hot tea in her wheelhouse, high up over that slender hull: it was almost like being in a crow's nest. That was the only occasion I travelled aboard her, and in tow of us was "Tuba." I was taking delivery of her and, when we went about to put her on some barge roads in Chelsea there was that odd, insecure feeling as, dozens of feet below us, "Barnes's" forefoot touched the bottom.

Although not actually at Dunkirk, her contribution was afterwards to tow up Thames from the Medway several craft that had taken part in the evacuation.

I make no apology for this obituary to one of the more beautiful sights on London River.

Brighter Side

On the brighter side, I predict that it will be a long time before steam passes from among London River tugs. You have only to go to Tower Bridge at any time of the day or night, to see "Tower Bridge Tug," as the brass plate on either side of her upperworks says.

When the City of London Corporation were seeking authority late in the last century to build Tower Bridge, so the story goes, the bargemen working to the Upper Pool objected on the grounds that they would not be able to sail in as they had been used. So a clause was included in the act requiring the City to provide, free and for all time, towage through the bridge. Hence the Tower Bridge Tug, which to this day lies with steam up above the bridge when the tide is ebbing, below during the flood. Backwards and forwards she goes, tide by tide, but rarely justifying the contract which another act of Parliament would be required to rescind. The firm retaining the contract put an elderly skipper

before his retirement in charge of an elderly steam tug with a crew of apprentices. And between journeys back and forth through the bridge, the elderly skipper passes to his crew the benefits of his long years of experience.

Most encouraging since the last issue has been the number of letters I have had from readers, some of which are published in this issue. In themselves, these letters are often very interesting, but, more important from my point of view, they indicate that *The Windlass* is doing its job—more or less.

Funny story—but lamentably a true one. I was walking along the towpath of the Regents Canal between St. Pancras and Camden Town Locks one day in February when I noticed a B.W. butty being loaded with builder's rubble by two coloured gentlemen.

Although they had a shovel each and plenty of room to work together, they only worked singly, in shifts of a minute or two, while the other looked on approvingly. A shovelful averaged two half-bricks, one of which was destined for the drink, the other for the boat which had long been loaded down and was quite firmly on the bottom. But still, albeit without enthusiasm, the workers potted on.

"Activities on this site will, in due course, be transferred to our large railway siding premises when extensive building operations there have been completed." So says a notice board over the wharf buildings of John Moon and Son, Ltd., timber importers, alongside the Wey at Mill Mead, Guildford. Beside it, another notice proclaims. "Redevelopment scheme—the site sold." The redevelopment part has to do with a new chain store—so much needed, no doubt.

Sending us photographs of all this, our member (whose signature I dare not guess at) adds: "I regret the passing of an essential and picturesque industry connected with the River Wey for so many years, and its substitution with yet another chain store."

Don't we all, sir!"

Quote

I quote this month from a commercial brochure—that of Hostelboats, Limited, the enterprising concern specialising in inexpensive holidays on the waterways: "When we find a vibrationless, noiseless, fume-free engine, occupying no space aboard, untroubled by weeds and running largely on grass—then perhaps we'll change. Until then, while towpaths remain . . . we will stick to the horse."

Judging from the enthusiastic response to a reunion held by this firm back in November, they may well!

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Miscellaneous

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