

THE

WINDLASS

No. 28 FEBRUARY 1962



WORKING at WOKING

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The Inland Waterways Association Ltd. Published every other month.

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

TRANSPORT BILL

Once again the Transport Bill has been published and most members will now know that the British Transport Commission is seeking powers to close a further thirteen stretches of waterway. A complete list of the threatened portions is published in the issue. Several of the stretches we have not campaigned for recently, although their loss is to be deplored. Note that the portion of the Ashton Canal referred to is not the main line for which the Association is at present fighting, but it seems regrettable that Stockport (hardly a sleepy, rural village) should be deprived of its waterway link.

There has been no traffic on the River Calder section for several years, but one of the National Coal Board's large collieries used to have a loading staith on its banks and the lock giving access to the River from the Aire and Calder navigation is still workable. The Burslem Arm of the Trent and Mersey Canal still carries commercial traffic! The official reason given for its closure is mining subsidence. The stretch of the Huddersfield Narrow and Broad Canals includes the bottom two locks of the Narrow Canal and the part the of Broad Canal on which the maintenance works and offices of the former Canal Company are built.

But four stretches are of particular interest in this dreary list: the Chesterfield Canal, West Stockwith to Worksop; Dudley Canal (including the Tunnel); Erewash Canal, Langley Mill to Ilkeston, and the Cosgrove-Old Stratford section of the Stratford and Buckingham Canal. When the Redevelopment Committee considered these four stretches of waterway they recommended that the Minister should not grant abandonment powers to the Commission; by overriding this recommendation the Minister lays himself open to the charge of being more influenced by the British Transport Commission's anti-canal diatribes than objective, factual recommendations put forward by his advisers. Much time and effort is spent by the Redevelopment Committee's members in considering the evidence submitted to them; it is insulting that these public spirited person's conclusions should be rejected. Is the Minister taking this Committee seriously?

COMING EVENTS

- FEBRUARY 4th.** Woking Rally working party. Meet at Monument Bridge, Woking, 10.30 a.m.
- FEBRUARY 14th.** Winter meeting at the Bridge House Restaurant, London Bridge, 7 p.m. for 7.30. Robert Aickman, Founder and Vice-President of the Association will talk on all aspects of canals, and canal cruising particularly for beginners and those whose enthusiasm outweighs their practical knowledge. After an interval for refreshments, (licenced bar) there will be a Quiz, to test out general knowledge. Please, be punctual!
- FEBRUARY 25th.** Working party, as above.
- MARCH 11th.** Winter meeting at the Lyric Opera House, Hammersmith, 7 p.m. for 7.30. Noakesoscope display. The Noakesoscope is one of the more elaborate forerunners of cinematography, the machine has four lenses in vertical series, and the glass plates used in it number many hundreds, separated into sets. The four lenses allow the four images to dissolve into one another and to produce elaborate illusions of movement. One set of 200 depicts scenes of English canal and rivers at the turn of the century. A showing of these scenes, with a few others, will be given at the Lyric Opera House on the above date, under the auspices of the London and Home Counties Branch and in conjunction with Friends of the National Film Archives. Mr. Aickman will give the commentary. Refreshments will be available (licensed bar).
- MARCH 18th.** Working party, as above.
- MARCH 25th.** Branch Dinner, at the House of Commons. Tickets price 30/- each available from Mr. J. Street; address on previous page. Please send remittance and stamped addressed envelope with your application. Dress, lounge suits.
- APRIL 8th.** Working party, as above.
- APRIL 20th.-23th.** Woking Rally. Put a red ring round these dates in your diary.
- MAY 3rd.** Annual General Meeting of the Branch. Full details in next issue.
- AUGUST 13th.-16th.** Ninth National Rally of Boats, at Stourbridge, under the auspices of the Association and the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society.

JANUARY BRANCH MEETING

The sumptuous private cinema of Messrs. Associated Electrical Industries was kindly placed at our disposal for the showing of films and slides of the Aylesbury Rally. About sixty members were expected, and tea for that number provided; over one hundred came.

Mr. Hart's film was first shown; this, the product of long but inspired hours of work made a perfect start to the entertainment. Selina, a baby featured in several of the Rally films miraculously grew several years older and provided the film's commentary. And oh how we revelled in that publicity! Did the innocent viewers of, say, Pathe Pictorial, realise just how carefully staged the 'natural' shots were; and just how many cameras at a time focused on that donkey. Mr. Hart removed the veils.

Also shown were films made by Pathe, and the National Coal Board, The nice things said about the Association in the latter must have surprised many. In addition a short film of a Stratford Canal working party was shown, and slides of the Rally. Finally we saw two N.C.B. Mining Reviews featuring the underground canals, and Peter Froud's coal carrying to the Royal Worcester Porcelain Works.

A surprise addition to the programme was provided by Sir Arthur Elton, Chief Publicity Officer of A.E.I. and well known person in the film world.

He is the owner of a magnificent collection of old and rare documents relating to transport, and a number of canal items (diffidently introduced as offshoots of the owner's railway collection) were displayed in the canteen for the delectation of perambulating eaters during the interval. An array of comestibles and antiques rarely equalled in the history of the branch met the eye; or at least, the eyes of those early upon the scene. Sixty divided by a hundred is much less than one. Apologies to those who saw only the antiquities.

Mr. Carol Johnson M.P. a member of the Redevelopment Committee also attended, and made a brief speech at the end of the proceedings, as did Mr. Aickman. Mr. Johnson seemed happy to see so many people enjoying, even if vicariously, our waterways. We hope that he, and other members of the Redevelopment Committee will visit future Branch Meetings.

Finally, our thanks, most sincerely, to Mr. Taylor of A.E.I. who made the whole evening possible. But for him we should not have had such splendid surroundings for our meeting, and to him is due the success of it. He, in conjunction with our member Mr. Street, made all the arrangements, ensured that the overflow eventually became seated, provided refreshments (to our numbers, please note) and generally made the evening a memorable occasion.

Around The Waterways

RIVER MEDWAY

In the last issue of *The Windlass* it was reported that the Castle Hotel, Tonbridge, is to be demolished, which will almost certainly mean the loss of its useful landing stage. The River Medway sub committee therefore wrote to the Tonbridge Urban District Council to ask that, if possible, a landing stage be included in any future plans for the site. The Council considered the matter and replied that they agreed with our views. They have therefore written to the owners of the property to ask them to include a landing stage in their redevelopment plans if they can possibly so do.

Anyone who has visited Tonbridge by water will have seen the unsightly industrial development that has occurred just below Cannon Bridge. When the local authority gave permission for the development a condition was made that a screen of trees was to be planted between the factory and the river. Notwithstanding this the trees were never planted, because the firm concerned was not interested in the loss of amenity. Also the Tonbridge Urban District Council did not press the matter.

As this development has such a detrimental effect on the approach to Tonbridge by water, the River Medway sub committee thought it about time the Association took a hand in the matter. Recently therefore, I wrote a letter to the Tonbridge Urban District Council pointing out the loss of amenity and asking that the screen of trees be planted as was originally stipulated. As a result of this letter the Council have at last taken a firm stand, and the trees have now been planted. There is no doubt that the views of this Association are now respected by and carry weight with the Council.

Among repairs carried out by the Kent River Board to the navigation works this autumn has been

the installation of a new pair of bottom gates to Eldridge Lock. The gates were constructed at the lock-side, some of the old timbers being re-used.

DEREK SALMON.

CHELMER & BLACKWATER

I recently met the Deputy Borough Engineer at Chelmsford to discuss the boat rollers which are to be built at the new sluices in the centre of Chelmsford as described in the October 1961 issue of *The Windlass* and several modifications are to be suggested to the River Board by the Council.

J.E. MARRIAGE

RIVER STOUR NAVIGATION

The Essex River Board have now informed Mr. Riggs of the Action Committee that they are not prepared to undertake the repair of Brantham Lock. The Branch Committee are investigating the possibility of repairing it by volunteer labour.

J.E. MARRIAGE

KENNET & AVON

Two vital public meetings are to be held on the restoration of the Kennet & Avon. There will be prominent speakers, and coloured slides will be shown. The meetings will be held at Reading Town Hall on Thursday February 8th. at 8p.m. and at Smith Bros. Assembly Rooms, Westgate Buildings, Bath, on Friday March 16th. also at 8p.m. All are urged to attend, and help make these Meetings turning points at this crucial moment in the Canal's history.

EDITOR

THE WOKING RALLY

Several members have expressed their intention of coming to this Rally, and we are delighted, but would they please make it definite by contacting the Harbour Master, David Cooper, address page. 3 Maximum craft dimensions are; Length, 70'0", beam 13'3", draft 3', but craft of deeper draft may be able to participate.

Working parties have been arranged for the following dates; February 4th. and 25th. March 18th. and April 8th. Do please come and help, bring your friends and enjoy some healthy exercise in the fresh air! The happy group on the cover of this issue will give some idea of our activities. So far the obstacles removed from the canal include bicycles, prams, old tyres, bedsteads, and part of a motor cycle combination! Working parties meet at Monument Bridge, Woking, at 10.30 a.m.

A Rally Programme is being prepared, and all members will receive a copy shortly.

RAILWAYS FROM CANALS

by J.D. CRANFIELD

PART II THE CROYDON CANAL

This canal stemmed from a proposal by Ralph Dodd in the late 1790s for a canal from Wandsworth to Croydon. This was surveyed by Dodd and Rennie but deemed impracticable, as tapping the Wandle's water supplies would interfere with the many miles along its banks. In 1799 a railway was proposed to Portsmouth via Croydon. A canal was also proposed from Deptford, through Clapham to Kingston, with branches to Epsom and Croydon. These varied ideas emerged finally as three projects:— 1. A canal from Rotherhithe to Mitcham, 2. a canal from Rotherhithe to Croydon, and 3. a railway along the Wandle to Croydon. All three obtained acts in 1801.

The Croydon Canal Company had agreed with the Grand Surrey Canal that the former should join the Grand Surrey at New Cross. This caused the Grand Surrey to extend its line to form the junction in 1807. The Grand Surrey had already, in 1803, decided to turn itself into a dock rather than a canal company.

Now that both a canal and railway were to be built to Croydon in direct competition it is worth noting that the town to be so lavishly served with communications to the Metropolis had a population of only some 7,000. Here is one factor, the lack of traffic, already emerging as to the downfall of both the original canal and the railway.

Dodd's 1799 plan was for a canal taking boats of up to 20, tons, its section to be 24 feet wide and 3½ feet deep. It was to run west of Beckenham and Sydenham, east of Lewisham, then west of Deptford to Rotherhithe. Two inclined planes were included at Deptford and New Cross. The estimate was of £25,000 for 12 miles.

RENNIE AGAINST LOCKS

Rennie also reported on this line, and also on another with locks through Penge Common, Sydenham, Brockley, New Cross and Deptford to Rotherhithe. He stated at the time that he did not see much future in the project and that something other than a locked canal was preferable.

Despite this a locked canal was adopted, shortened to join the Grand Surrey Canal at New Cross. The length was 9¼ miles, and there were 26 locks in the first 2¾ miles to Forest Hill to take the canal up 155' 9". Thence to Selhurst it was level and then there were two more locks in the last mile into Croydon to take the canal up a further 11' the canal's depth was 5 feet and the locks 6' x 9'.

The capital was £50,000 with powers to raise a further £30,000. Part of the latter was to finance waterworks schemes for Croydon, Dulwich and Streatham, but these came to nothing. The company managed to raise £68,000 under their first act, but in 1808 they applied to Parliament for permission to raise another £30,000.

The canal was opened on 22nd October 1809. Traffic to Croydon was coal and general goods, with stone, timber, lime, and fuller's earth going to Loudon. The company was already in debt and needed further money to complete their works. Authority was obtained in 1811 to increase the capital. Total cost of the canal was £127,000.

Now railway and canal were in direct competition but neither was very successful, and neither company ever paid a dividend of more than 1%. At some stage between 1809 and 1811 a branch was built from the Surrey Iron Railway to the canal basin at Croydon for exchange traffic with Croydon, Merstham and the Godstone Railway, and extension of the Surrey Iron Railway.

INCREASING DOUBTS

Doubts were again voiced after the opening, this time by W. Stevenson writing about the "General View of the Agriculture of Surrey", where he said that although doubtless of advantage to the country the canal could only survive if its export trade to the Metropolis was sufficient. This of course has always been the problem in a purely agricultural county.

In 1810 when the Grand Southern Canal was proposed to run from the Medway to Portsmouth a branch to the Croydon Canal was included. This was to have been a canal capable of taking Thames Barges, but even if it had been built it is doubtful whether much through traffic would have developed, the steam ship being destined shortly to take over in coastal shipping.

While the Croydon Canal could compete with the Surrey Iron Railway, which was horse worked the moment the steam locomotive was trustworthy, its fate was sealed. In 1834 Joseph Gibbs surveyed a new line of railway to Croydon using the bed of the Croydon Canal. This survey was accepted by the board of the proposed London and Croydon Railway. The board then immediately offered the canal company £30,000 for their works. This offer the canal company rejected, also an increased one of £35,000. Instead they asked for £40,000. Deadlock

followed and the railway company decided to go ahead with their Bill and sort out the purchase during its passage.

DOCK TROUBLE

Only 37 barges were working the navigation at the time, possibly due to the difficulty of working through the Surrey Canal docks, where trouble was always present due to the dock traffic interfering with the canal boats. When the railway threatened, the barge owners asked for and received a promise of compensation to the value of their boats. In July 1835 the two companies went to arbitration as to the price to be paid for the canal. The railway company had three valuations made, based on the actual value of the works and land. These came to between £16,000 and £18,000. The canal company asked for £52,500 which would include compensation. Obviously the should be on the basis of the canal's usefulness as a navigation and this the railway company realized too late. The result was that the jury's final valuation for the canal was £40,250, which was just over the sum originally asked. The purchase was completed on 21 July 1836 and the canal closed on 22 August 1836. Trade on the canal had been dropping for some time and in 1830 its £100 shares had been quoted at £2 with no rate of interest given. However this canal was one of the first to encourage pleasure traffic and angling. In fact what remained after conversion to railway was still so used under the railway company.

The railway company was incorporated on 5 June 1835 and the line was opened throughout exactly four years later. Its length was slightly less than that of the canal, $8\frac{1}{4}$ miles, as it joined the London & Greenwich Railway at Corbett's Lane. The first three miles from Croydon to Anerley were built on the bed of the canal and the station and depot at West Croydon were erected on the old canal basin. Where the canal had climbed by 26 locks up to Forest Hill, 2 deep cuttings had to be excavated at New Cross and Forest Hill, itself.

FISHING ALLOWED

Stations were built at New Cross (now New Cross Gate), Dartmouth Arms (now Forest Hill), Sydenham, Penge, Anerley, and The Jolly Sailor (now Norwood The Junction). course was fairly level, except for the steep climb from New Cross to Forest Hill. It is also of interest to note that passengers using the line were allowed to fish in the remaining stretches of the canal. The line was opened in 1 June 1839.

Today, electrified and serving a vast, highly populated area, it is one of the busiest lines in London, a far cry from the 37 and boats working the Croydon Canal in 1834.

Here we have an example of a canal, built late, and due to old fashioned methods of construction and lack of substantial traffic, it succumbed early on in the railway age. The Surrey Iron Railway also closed at an early date, quicker and more comprehensive passenger transport being an essential requirement of the rapidly growing suburbs of the Metropolis. A pity, but the long term view was rarely in vogue in early Victorian times. South London could well do with as much open space for recreation as possible.

CHRISTMAS HAMPER

Following the receipt of a letter from Mr. Chapman of the Canal Boatman's Institute at Brentford, asking for toys for the children living on board the working narrow boats on the Grand Union, the Committee discussed a proposal that a hamper be given by the Branch to one of the families. I was duly asked to contact Mr. Chapman to make the necessary arrangements for the hamper to be presented to a family with a number of small children. The fortunate ones being the Powells with the youngest, two year old Micheal, with five brothers and sisters.

Once the family had been chosen, the search was on to find the whereabouts of the boats Alton and Wey worked by Charlie Powell. After several conflicting reports, they were found to be arriving at Bulls Bridge from Birmingham on Friday, 22nd December. With a matter of a few hours to the start of the holidays, the presentation was made by Mrs. Maureen Nicoll with the able assistance of your Branch Chairman and myself, assistance being needed as the hamper was made up of two large heavy cartons of Christmas fare for the whole family. A coincidence must be reported in that the Wey is used as a "change boat" whilst the Powells usual butty is undergoing repairs. The connection between the Wey on the Grand Union and Mrs. Nicoll of Arcturus on the River Wey was purely accidental.

B.A.J.N.

THAMES CLOSURES

The Thames Conservancy report that **MOLESEY LOCK** will be undergoing repairs and will be **CLOSED TO TRAFFIC** during the following periods:—

- 2nd February to 6th February,
- 9th February to 13th February,
- 23rd February to 27th February,
- 2nd March to 6th March,

THE BOAT SHOW

By OLIVER TURNER

The 8th. international Boat Show was held on 3 to 13 January and for the third time at Earls Court. It is now probably the largest show of its kind in the world although last year's attendance of 320 thousand will probably not be met this year. There was nearly 500 individual exhibitors, including firms from both East and West — Poland, East Germany and Hungary exhibiting for the first time alongside the stands from the USA, Canada and many Western European Countries. The show is undoubtedly a reflection of the enormous growth in the popularity of all forms of craft and cruising and of the desire to 'get away' on the water by either power or sail, a growth that our Association has done so much to foster and support.

This year's show contained a number of new and interesting features but the general impression was a little disappointing. There were again a number of those craft, often very expensive, whose main feature was one of chrome and glitter and of which, although they were no doubt reasonably seaworthy, one felt the new owner would soon tire. But there were also many fine craft to be seen; of the small power boats on show, a good example was a very cheap little two berth 15 foot craft with no frills at £225 (without motor), which would be useful for weekend cruising on either inland or sheltered sea water; in all nearly 30 firms were showing craft costing below £250.

Beam Problem Unsolved

Another most attractive small boat, also for coastal or inland cruising, but perhaps more suitable for the real enthusiast at almost £660, was a 17 foot 2/4 berth cruiser designed to a very high standard of workmanship, of hot moulded mahogany and complete with good but simple fittings. Of the higher priced 4/6 berth motor cruisers, there were several good examples, but few that seemed to have been designed with the narrow canals in mind. I believe that our designers still have quite a long way to go before a really good boat of about 25 foot and with a beam of under 7 foot is produced. The narrow beam presents a challenge, but it is undoubtedly upon our canals and rivers that the next generation of small cruisers will be most used and to travel any



(Block by courtesy of Motorboat & Yachting)

distance, some narrow locks must be used. Sailing cruisers are generally less suitable for inland waterways, although there are wide rivers where they can be used, and there were at the show quite a number of these craft that were well designed and good value. The sailing craft also seemed to have less of the showy and expensive fittings that were a feature of so many power craft, which is perhaps why some good 2 berth 17 foot craft were available for around £440. The show had the usual number of special features some of them new.

The Boats For Beginners section was an innovation and would be useful for those about to take up sailing for the first time. There were a number of good exhibitions by hire cruiser companies and all seemed to be doing a fair amount of business. Our own stand had been redesigned and contained a series of panels with good photographs, the best map of the inland waterways to be seen at the whole show and a selection of books and literature. I was told that up to midday on the last Saturday some 50 new members had joined and many more application forms had been handed out; £130 worth of books and maps were also sold. Congratulations to the most hardworking organisers and to all those who helped to man the stall.

Missed Chances

British Waterways had a large stand in a good position on the ground floor, the main feature of which was two boat exhibits; the Water Baby, the popular 2 berth cruiser that has now been in use for about three years and a new boat, the Water Miss, a more luxurious 2/4 berth cruiser again designed by British Waterways, which made her debut at the show. But the accompanying literature was poor, there were few 'give aways' and no photographs or even simple planes of the craft on show (at least on the three occasions I visited their stand). A new cruising map was also advertised, but this turned out to be a poorly reproduced black and white affair which omitted many of the non-commission controlled navigable waterways and contained a number of bad inaccuracies — the Avon was shown as fully navigable from Evesham to Stratford on Avon (how we wish it were), with no mention of the southern section of the Stratford Canal; perhaps

THE RIVER WEY

Rising in Hampshire in the vicinity of Alton, the river flows through Godalming, Guildford and within a short distance of Woking to join the Thames at Weybridge. This is the river proper but our main interest lies in the navigable channel which is part natural river and part man-made waterway. From Weybridge to the High Street Bridge, Guildford, the navigation is that of the River Wey Navigation; a private waterway of Wm. Stevens & Sons with Mr. Harry W. Stevens the present proprietor. Above the High Street Bridge, the navigation is under the jurisdiction of the Commissioners of the River Wey with Mr. Stevens as General Manager. This section of the waterway, sometimes known as the Godalming Navigation, continues as far upstream as Godalming Wharf — the head of the navigation.

From Weybridge to Godalming there are sixteen locks:— Thames, Weybridge Town, Coxes, New Haw, Pyrford, Walsham Gate, Newark, Papercourt, Send, Triggs, Bowers (or Burpham), Stoke, Mill Mead (Guildford), St. Catherine's, Unstead, & Cattershal. The first twelve locks belong to the River Wey Navigation. Three of these are turf-sided with New Haw Lock having only one side of masonry.

By Act of Parliament in 1671 in the reign of King Charles II, the river was made navigable for barges up to Guildford. Later, in the reign of King George II, a further Act was passed in 1760 for the river to be made navigable to Godalming Wharf. Before this latter action took place, the High Street of Guildford crossed the river by means of a ford. This was situated a short distance above the present bridge which was built to enable craft of three foot draught to work up to Godalming. The official maximum draught for craft working up to Guildford from the Thames being 3'6". Due to silting up of the canal sections, craft with a draught exceeding three feet are apt to find it heavy going and will be touching bottom especially on the canalised part between New Haw Lock and Walsham Gate and between Papercourt and Send locks. In spite of these draw-backs, the journey all the way to Godalming is through some of the prettiest parts of Surrey and gives the traveller the sense of isolation in the midst of one of the most populated counties around London.

For those who wish to see parts of the waterway and who are without craft of their own, Guildford makes a good starting point with a forty-five minute trip by electric launch The Pilgrim from the boat house of Leroy's to St. Catherine's Lock and return. In the opposite direction a trip of two and a half hours is offered aboard the Narrow Boat Arcturus to Sutton Place and return from Mill Mead.

This waterway besides joining the Thames has junctions with the Basingstoke Canal above New Haw Lock and the Wey & Arun Canal (now derelict) a short distance above St. Catherine's Lock. In its earlier days the Wey formed part of the through route from London to the South Coast. It is still the southernmost section of our present network of inland waterways; it being possible to navigate from Godalming to within a few miles of Ripon in Yorkshire.

B.A.J.N.

BOAT SHOW CONTD.

the cartographer confused these two waterways. It also seems unenterprising of British Waterways not to use at least part of their exhibition space to record some of the commercial traffic they are carrying or to encourage new traffic. A few sample rates, at least on the wide waterways they are trying to develop, might have been very effective; many of those at the show who were looking at boats for their holidays and for pleasure must have been employed in industry and commerce.

Mention should be made of the famous canvas covered long boats from Tristram da Cunha one of which was on show; alongside this a group of Islanders were building a replica of the type of boat in which the entire population of the Island was taken out to sea before being taken away to safety. They have been boat builders all their lives and from making boats mainly of driftwood, many are now being employed by boat builders on the South Coast, where their services are in great demand; let us hope their skill is being well used.

NEW MEMBERS

HARRIS, Mrs. A.J.D. 6, Northampton Park, London, N.1.

SHORT, John Piercy Esq., 72, St. Margaret's Court, Twickenham, Middx.

CARROL, Delmar, Esq., 50 Forest Court, Edgware Road, London, W.2.

KINSEY, Harry Neill, Esq., 3, Berryfield, 37 Chislehurst Road, Bickley, Bromley, Kent.

FROM THE EDITOR'S CABIN

The December feature on the Regent's Canal Trip carried some pithy comments on the week-end closure of locks which have aroused considerable interest. Will, therefore, anyone who has been, or is likely to be frustrated or inconvenienced by this closure business please write to the Editor, quoting chapter and verse? This applies equally to people wanting to get up from Brentford through the Hanwell flight, as well as those wanting to reach the Lee via the Regents Canal.

A new water-side resident on the Regent's Canal is Viscount St. Davids, who had just moved to 15 St. Mark's Crescent, N.W.1, where he has built a landing stage, and would welcome visits from friends and fellow members. He owns the motor punt Magdelayne. This particular stretch of the canal has been named New Bruges by the residents, who are tired of saying they do not live at Little Venice!

The first prize in the Christmas Draw of a weeks cruise donated by the Aylesbury Boar Co., was won by Mr. A. M. Jenkinson of Bromley. The portable radio was won by P. Cutting, of E. 13, and other prize winners were D.N. Smith, Epping; Mrs. R.E. Brown, Streatham; Capt. L. R. Munk, Thames Ditton; J.E. Cowin, Hanwell; W.J. Walker, S.E.26; R. Casselton, Tunbridge Wells; D.A. Redston, W. Drayton; A.S. Fleming, Watford; J. Sherfield, Farnham; Dr. J.C.F. Hopkins, Walton-on-Thames; J. McGeown, S.W.15; Dr. J.A. Vernon, Ascot; D. Salmon, Tonbridge; E.J.F. King, Peldon; Mrs. Craven, S.W.17; H.N. Boswell, S.W.18; C.W. Groves, Reading; A.M. Parker, Hayling Island; W. Turner, Southall; and Mrs. Davies, Redbourne. Very many thanks to Brian Ambrose for organizing the draw with his usual efficiency. The draws are a vital source of Branch funds, and by your generous support of them you are supporting our cause. Many thanks to all who bought or sold tickets; congratulations to the lucky winners, and better luck next time to all others (the Editor included)

Now that the season of Christmas is over and the time for disposing of unwanted seasonable gifts is come, how about a small advertisement in these pages. There has of late been very little demand for such space. But why not make use of our more than reasonable terms, for letting your fellow members know about your engagement, marriage, or new baby? For telling about a boat, or engine, or what-not, for sale? A firm Editorial eye will, of course be kept on the what-nots, and any adverts of a doubtful nature will be ruthlessly suppressed. Our rates are 3d. per word, box number 1[- extra. Cash with advert, stamped addressed envelope if you want a

receipt. For the benefit of both advertisers and other contributors The Windlass goes to press on the 7th. of the month preceding publication.

Our cover picture this issue will give readers some idea of the fun we have at the Woking working parties. (Try saying that six times in rapid succession!) It is the work of Hugh McKnight, to whom we offer our thanks for lending us such a fine photograph.

The British Transport Commission Bill 1961 recommends the following waterways for abandonment. The Stockport Branch of the Ashton Canal (not the main line); Part of the River Calder Navigation; The Chesterfield Canal above Worksop; The Cromford Canal at the Langley Mill end; Part of the City Road Basin (a navigable channel is to be left); Buckingham Arm beyond Old Stratford; Grand Weston Canal; Part of the Huddersfield Broad, and a small section of the Huddersfield Narrow Canals; Part of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canals. The Swansea Canal; and the Burslem Arm of the Trent and Mersey. The foregoing were approved by the Redevelopment Commission. The following four sections were not so approved. The Chesterfield Canal, Worksop-Stockwith; The Dudley Canal, 2½ miles section, including the tunnel; The Erewash Canal, Langley Mill to Ilkeston; and the Buckingham Arm, Cosgrove to Old Stratford. Members are urged to write to their members of Parliament to protest against this action, taking the line that the closure proposals in the Bill should not be allowed to go through at a time when there is other legislation before Parliament providing for the waterways to be vested in a new and independent authority. So sharpen your pens, dust off your typewriters, and load down the postmen; but don't forget to make the letter sound spontaneous, hundreds of letters phrased exactly as the above sentence will not do!

Letter to the Editor

The news of the Rally at Woking has aroused much interest, and we print in full the following letter:—

CRUISING ON THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL

Over last Easter and the previous weekend three cruisers were at various times on the move on the Basingstoke Canal, finally descending the six locks of the Woodham flight in company on Easter Sunday. The venture was principally organised by Mr Charles Poulter whose converted lifeboat 'Mary Toft' had engine trouble on the first Saturday and remained at the lock-keeper's cottage by Arthur's Bridge at

Woking until the return journey. However C.B. Carter's 2-berth outboard cruiser 'Wagtail', with a crew from the Cambridge University Shipping Club, went on through the locks at St John's and the first lock at Brookwood before being halted by a lock-gate which needed collaring back at Lock No. 13! These two had been intended to pioneer the way for a larger party of craft from the Wey Cruising Club over the Easter holiday. Unfortunately, for various reasons, only Mr. R. Ritchings Althea arrived—a smart motor yacht 35ft long and drawing 3ft 6ins. She came as far as Woking, winding by the Gasworks, on Easter Saturday. In the meanwhile Lock 13 had been repaired and, the previous Thursday Wagtail had gone on through that and the next locks to the tail of Davidsons' Lock (No. 15). Here lack of water due to a stoppage further up the canal and the time available for the trip prevented any attempt being made on 'The Fourteen', though shortly afterwards Locks 15 and 16 were used by the canal staff for locking through a maintenance pontoon. Next day we returned to Woking to join the other boats, for the return to the Wey.

During the course of the trip it became clear that the scepticism we had met in various quarters concerning our chances of success was ill-founded, and it was very pleasing to show the numerous curious spectators that the locks were workable, for all they thought they were not. Certainly it was not like cruising on the Thames, as at all but three locks the bottom gates had to be "sheeted" with tarpaulins, and at two absence of upper balance beams required the use of ropes and tackle, while two pounds, one at Sheerwater, the other at St Johns's required filling before we could go on, and some paddle gear was missing. These, and the fact that some locks were slow in filling were only a challenge to us and the lock-keepers to press on, and, if necessary, improvise. To the lock-keepers especially high praise is due for their determination and resourcefulness. In fact so well did things go that, when offered two more men to help on the first Sunday, they turned down the offer.

This is undoubtedly a very attractive canal to navigate, passing as it does through a great deal of woodland and heath, with the trees in places meeting overhead above the locks. It is to be hoped that as many people as possible will take the chance to come on it to the rally that is to be held at Woking next Easter. Soon, I hope, I shall be able to go back and navigate the canal right through to Greywell where the tunnel fell in in the 1930's. From what I have seen from various points on the towpath it will be well worth the effort.

I am trying to collect in one place all possible information, historical and otherwise, about the canal, and I shall be very glad to hear from anyone who can help. I will try and answer any questions.

T.H.W. Dodwell, Dover House, Chertsey.

AQUATIC WEED CONTROL CREDITED WITH SAVE OF "MAJOR INDUSTRY"

This is the title of an article in "Agricultural Chemicals" of October 1961 about the destruction of weed on a large lake in a holiday area of New York State. A voluntary organization was set up for the purpose ("The Chatauqua Lake Association") because the weed was seriously interfering with use of the lake for boating, swimming and fishing.

Sodium arsenite was the principal chemical used, although a small area was treated with granules of 2,4-D, and annual cost of spraying operations was put at \$20,000. The Association was not permitted to spray further than 200 feet from the shore. The State Water Pollution Board permitted the use of sodium arsenite provided that the maximum concentration of arsenic in lake water did not exceed 10 parts per million; the concentration aimed at in the sprayed areas was 7.5 parts per million. Results are claimed to be spectacular. The types of weed are not named. — R.M.

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