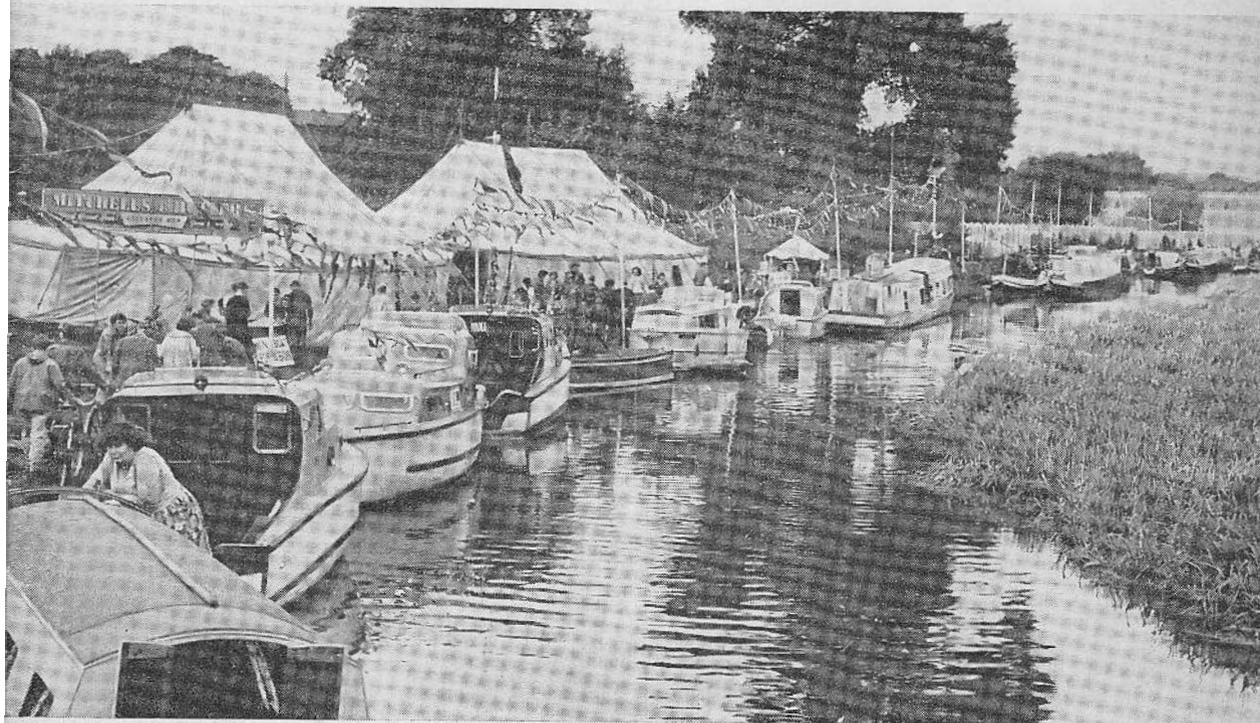


# THE WINDLASS

No. 32 OCTOBER, 1962



Stourbridge, 1962

*(Block by courtesy of the 'Motor Boat and Yachting'.)*

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## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

NOW that the mud has settled the Stourbridge Rally can be seen to have been a great victory for the Association and especially for the Midlands Branch which, in conjunction with the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Society, promoted and organised the event. Perhaps as important as the Rally itself were what might be called the fringe entertainments. I refer especially to the extraordinary correspondence in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*. Perhaps more than any other canal correspondence in a national newspaper this has shown British Waterways up for what they are—a body intent, and at all costs, upon destroying our inland waterways system. Did it matter to British Waterways that Members of this Association were willing to spend their own time and money in attempting to salvage some of the nation's heritage of canals? Not a bit! Sourly and more sourly the proceedings continued, with Mr. Ives "noting with interest" that the Rally was being held on a canal in a rather seedy state in order to draw the public's attention to it. What Mr. Ives hoped to gain by this heavy underlining, goodness knows; the only thing it did underline was the barrenness of British Waterways' policy and the generally destructive attitude that the management seem to have towards canals. As one correspondent succinctly implied, it was shocking to observe the Principal Traffic Officer of an organisation which, under the Nationalisation Act, is supposed to be encouraging the use of our canals, viewing so sourly the activities of a group endeavouring to assist him. One corres-

pondent went even further and, in a pithy verse, described the attitude as "dog in the mangerous"!

I have said, what did British Waterways hope to gain by this correspondence: what indeed? The main basis of argument seemed to be that the canal is unnavigable, and therefore all the boats that got there had little or no right to do so. As none of the craft arrived by magic carpet and more than half of the 100 involved descended the 16 locks, the assertion of unnavigability was as absurd as it was illegal.

Let us look forward to the day when our Rallies can be held under less trying circumstances. What joy it would be to co-operate fully and enthusiastically with a Commission or, facing facts, British Waterways Board (for that is to be the new title) which intended to make the waterways, as a whole, work. Please, Mr. Marples, hear us ere you slaughter (but don't come up with the next line—"I do not think I ought to listen to you"! ). Give us a Chairman who is a businessman possessed with ability to detect potential, who will see that our claims for the waterways are not the mouthings of a bunch of fanatics but the careful, considered arguments of people who have studied a subject, examined all the facts dispassionately, and yet remain convinced of the rightness of their case. We want to see the waterways used and we will help you to achieve such usage. Our efforts on the Stratford Canal show that our promises are kept: let us have some promise for you.

## COMING EVENTS . . . . RECENT ACTIVITIES

OCTOBER 14 (Sunday). *The last Branch trip of the season, on the Grand Surrey Canal, with a tour of the Docks. Depart from Cunard Gate, Plough Way, at 10 a.m. sharp. There is a car park just inside the gate, and Surrey Docks Station (Metropolitan line) is ten minutes walk away. The tour of the docks will follow the trip on the canal, and a hot lunch will be available afterwards, price 3/6. This will be the first ever trip of this nature, and an informative booklet illustrated with maps, will be sent free to all applicants for tickets. Copies will also be available to those not going on the trip, price 1/- inclusive of postage, from the Hon. Secretary. Tickets are available as follows: Members 12/6, non-members 15/-, lunch 3/6 (admission to lunch by ticket ONLY) all available from the Hon. Secretary. The boat will be Jason. Please apply early, enclosing stamped addressed envelope. The nature of this trip has made it necessary to hire Jason for two days, therefore it will be possible for those wishing to travel from Paddington to Limehouse on the Saturday to do so. Jason leaves Paddington (normal departure point, Canaletto Gallery, Blomfield Road) at 8 a.m. Saturday, October 13. For those going on the Grand Surrey Canal trip there is no charge; for others tickets are 5/- for members, 6/- for non-members, from the Hon. Secretary.*

NOVEMBER 22. *First Winter Meeting, at Bridge House, London Bridge, 7 p.m. for 7.30. Captain L. A. Munk will give an illustrated talk on his cruise on Irish waterways. Refreshments will be available.*

NOVEMBER 9 (Friday). *A new date has now been arranged for the tour of the Daily Mail offices, and this will now take place on the above date, at 8 p.m. Admission by ticket only, and tickets are available from the Branch Chairman.*

### BASINGSTOKE CANAL TRIP

OUR trip by horse-drawn barge on 29th July was a great success — a success enhanced by the appearance of Mrs. Marshall, the General Manager of the Canal Company, at Old Mark's Wharf where she greeted Members of the Branch and wished them a pleasant journey. We should like to record our thanks to the Canal Company, and Mrs. Marshall in particular, for having made possible such a pleasant outing; and also whatever weather deity is resident in Hampshire for arranging such a good supply of sunshine.

The Basingstoke Canal certainly lives up to its reputation of being one of the most lovely waterways in Southern England. The stretch we navigated, from Fleet towards Odiham, passes through exquisitely wooded country abounding in rural charm. Captain, a canal horse, provided a stalwart reminder of days gone by and the absence of diesel fumes from this particular motive power made not a few of us wish for the return of those days. Elizabeth Marshall coaxed the creature along, when necessary, with lumps of sugar, and her generally energetic furtherance of the craft's progress made those of us lounging on the vessels feel very lazy indeed: not really an unpleasant feeling, however!

The reasonable charge imposed by the Canal Company was sufficient more than to cover the heavy deficit on our last trip and Members were offered a refund on their ticket price. Instead, all kindly agreed that the total amount involved—£5 should be sent as a donation to the National Trust for the Stratford Canal Fund, so that the trip benefited more than just those who went on it.

D.W.H.

### RIVER STOUR CRUISE

THE River Stour Action Committee had a successful Cruise of boats on Sunday, September 9th, when 15 canoes and 3 dinghies cruised downstream from Langham Mill to Brantham Mill, a distance of about 7 miles. This is the total distance which would become navigable for larger boats if the locks could be operated. Weather conditions favoured the outing, and the boatmen were able to enjoy a warm sunny day. There was a strong following breeze. For many, this was their first visit to the Stour and they were impressed by the beauty of the river, particularly the reach between Stratford St. Mary and Dedham, and by the relatively good condition of the locks, some surprise being expressed that they could not be operated.

Much interest was expressed by people along the river, particularly those at Flatford and the event was extensively reported by the East Anglian Daily Times and the Harwich and Dovercourt Standard.

J. E. MARRIAGE.

# RAILWAYS FROM CANALS

by J. D. CRANFIELD  
PART V: ANDOVER CANAL

THE year 1770 saw Robert Whitworth making a survey for the Andover Canal, to run from that town down the Test Valley to Redbridge, at the head of Southampton Water. In 1772 Parliament was asked for permission to bring in a Bill, but no further action was taken because of objections about land purchase and damages. However, Whitworth later revived the plan with the same general line and this time it went to Parliament and was authorized in 1789.

The navigation began on the south side of the River Anton at Andover, followed this to its junction with the River Test. Here it crossed both rivers and followed the east bank of the latter past Romsey and Stockbridge to Southampton Water at Redbridge. It was 22 miles long, with 24 locks, taking boats 65ft. x 18ft. 6 in., and had a total fall to the sea of 179ft. It was completed in 1796.

The cost was £48,000, £35,000 in shares and £13,000 as loan debt. Trade was local in nature, coal and building materials going from Southampton Water to Romsey, Stockbridge and Andover, with agricultural produce coming down. However the traffic was insufficient, for the company never paid a dividend.

By 1827 it was eight years behind with its loan interest, and in 1838 traffic was said to be very small. On the other hand railway competition aided it and by 1851 the interest was only one year in arrears.

In 1793-4 the Corporation of Salisbury and other interested parties were gathering support for a canal from Salisbury to the sea at Southampton. It was feared that the Kennet and Avon was to join the Andover, cutting out Salisbury entirely. Surprisingly, no support came from the Andover Canal, but in 1795 the Salisbury and Southampton Canal was authorized. This joined the Andover at Kimbridge and left it at Redbridge. These two sections were partly opened in 1802 and through traffic commenced. However this did little to help either the Andover or the newer navigation.

No connection was ever made between the Kennet and Avon, nor was the proposed connection to the west end of the Basingstoke Canal. Such connections might have saved the canal, although most of the through routes which were built to the south and west failed through lack of traffic and lack of uniformity. Other proposals were for a line from Pewsey to Andover. This was to have a branch to the Basingstoke. The

latter was also to be joined to the River Itchen at Winchester with yet another branch to the Andover. How this part of the country could have supported all these canals, had they been built, is a mystery. Those that were completed did not last long. These proposals were all made during the Canal Mania, and did not get beyond the project stage.

The next phase in the canal's career was a classic of railway warfare, with the London and South Western and Great Western Railways fighting it out, the Andover Canal taking the part of no-man's land.

In 1846 the Manchester and Southampton Railway agreed to buy the canal for £30,000. A Bill was introduced but at some stage the L.S.W.R. agreed to become part owners of the canal and the proposed railway from Andover to Redbridge. The Bill was lost on G.W.R. opposition. The following year the M. and S.R. tried again and failed, but the L.S.W.R. managed to obtain a roundabout route from Andover to Southampton via Basingstoke. In 1849 the canal company took over the carrying trade on the navigation, buying the 16 18-ton barges then in use. The following year the M. and S.R. and L.S.W.R. agreed with the canal company that the canal should be closed after the purchase money had been handed over. About £9,000 was paid as an advance. The transaction was not completed and after the L.S.W.R. had opened its somewhat roundabout route, a rate war developed. The canal somehow managed to maintain its traffic but naturally its receipts dwindled.

In 1857 the G.W.R. promoted a line from Southampton to Bristol via Salisbury, and started negotiations with the Andover Canal Company. The Bill failed and the following year the canal company formed the Andover Canal Railway Company, later the Andover and Redbridge Railway, to buy the canal and build a broad gauge line to Southampton. Although intended as a broad gauge line, this depended on a G.W.R. connection. The L.S.W.R. unsuccessfully opposed it.

The canal was stopped in the Autumn of 1859, upon payment of £12,500 in cash and the same amount in shares of £10 each. The first sod was cut by Lord Palmerston on the 20th September, 1859, and construction began in a half-hearted manner. Two years later the G.W.R. was induced to take up the project and Bills were promoted in 1862, for broad or mixed gauge lines

from Enborne, near Newbury, to Andover, and from Redbridge to Southampton, and to sanction an agreed lease of the A. and R.R. to the G.W.R.

The L.S.W.R. took up the defence of its territory with a Bill for the lease of the A. and R.R. to themselves and extended the battle with a Bill for a railway from the Salisbury-Yeovil line to Bristol. The result was a long battle in the House of Commons, ending with all the Bills being thrown out.

The result was a peace treaty on the 23rd October, 1862, between the L.S.W.R. and G.W.R., whereby the latter relinquished the A. and R.R. to the former, and each bound themselves not to invade each others territory as defined by a map drawn up for the purpose. The A. and R.R. was taken over by the L.S.W.R. and connection made by an Act of 1863 to the Basingstoke-Salisbury line. The railway between Andover and Redbridge was opened on the 6th March, 1865, using some 14½ miles of the canal. The M. and S.R. had by this time left the scene, and, somewhat truncated, became the Midland and South Western Junction Railway.

Traffic increases on the line soon necessitated its doubling, and this was completed in 1885.

Other railways joined the line as the L.S.W.R. opened up its rail network, with the Salisbury and Southampton Canal providing some of the new mileage. The railway served purely local needs in its earlier days and continued to do so until fairly recently. Some through traffic has always been present, and it is a strategically placed line in wartime. Now with the growth of industry around Southampton it has become an important line, with traffic from the north and west passing through, as well as a fairly extensive diesel passenger service, part of the Hampshire dieselization scheme.

Redbridge itself has been an important rail centre since the mid 1880s, when the L.S.W.R. established a sleeper creosoting and charring works, as well as a switch and crossing shop. The works cover 22 acres with a wharf frontage of 900 feet.

Here we have an example of a canal which proved unsuccessful because of its local character, yet, due to later development in the same area has become an important link in the rail system serving Hampshire and the great port of Southampton.

**World Scoop for "THE WINDLASS"!!!  
Parliamentary Secretary Betrayed by  
Own Subconscious**

*From Our Special Correspondent  
Westminster, 4th April, 1962 (delayed...)*

**S**TUDENTS of symbolic logic will have little difficulty in disentangling the remarkable confession made by Mr. John Hay at approximately 12.40 a.m. last night during the Debate on the Second Reading of the British Transport Commission Bill.

I quote: "There is a widespread fallacy that it is much cheaper to abandon canals than to restore them. It is quite untrue." (Hansard, col. 399).

In other, and less confusing words, it is more expensive to abandon canals than to restore them. Bravo, Mr. Hay! or should it be, Bravo, Mr. A&H ?

Unfortunately the rest of the Parliamentary Secretary's speech fell noticeably below this excellent standard.

**STOP PRESS**

December 6th. Winter Film Meeting at A.E.I. House, Victoria. 7 p.m. for 7.30. Refreshments available. Films will include "There Go the Boats," history and development of inland waterways; "Boats to Birmingham," voyage of two boats from Brentford to Birmingham; and "Broad Waterways" with particular reference to the Aire and Calder Navigation.

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# Around the Waterways

## CHELMER AND BLACKWATER NAVIGATION

A TELEVISION unit from Anglia Television recently visited the canal and shot sequences showing a timber barge on its way up the waterway. For this event "Chelmsford Duke" was brought out of retirement. This is the horse which was saved several years ago by the Branch, from possible sale to a knackers yard when its owner, who had bought it from the carriers on retirement, died. By the Branch carrying on negotiations, the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Company were able to buy him. The television programme, it is believed, is to be one of a series showing 'olde worlde' forms of transport, and as such is unlikely to stress the part the waterway could play for both trade and pleasure. This could have been the type of publicity which would have followed David Cooper's intended cruise from Chelmsford to Stourbridge.

J. E. MARRIAGE.

## RIVER WEY

It is understood that certain repairs are to be carried out to Weybridge Town lock in October. These should not affect traffic. Paper-court Lock is also to have certain repairs. These are expected to commence sometime next March (note, before Easter) and will prevent passage of craft through the lock until completion of repairs which may take until Whitsun.

An interesting event took place at Guildford last June, when a scaled down replica of a Mississippi steamboat was launched. It was built by Mr. F. Mitchell of Dorking, assisted in the later stages by Mr. Jock Little, Bosun of the Guildford Sea Cadets. The boat is 23 feet long, and named the Guildford Belle. The maiden voyage was on the Thames from Hampton to London Bridge, and back, and the boat will be used for pleasure trips.

B. NICOLL and F. H. HUGHES.

## BASINGSTOKE CANAL

A LARGE leak developed in the canal at the beginning of August when thousands of gallons of water poured over the meadows leaving many stranded fish which people waded out to save. Sand bag dams were erected at each end of the affected section, one at Chequers Bridge, and the other at Poulter's Bridge. In a very short time the whole contents of the canal flooded out on to the meadows, some of the water finding its way down the flood water culvert into the River Hert. The task of repairing the leak will be a

costly one, as the nearest road is some distance away and the materials required will have to be carried across the mud covered meadow alongside the canal. The cause is not yet known.

A new type of craft, jet-propelled by water which it has sucked up was given an experimental run on the Basingstoke Canal during August, at Fleet. It has no propeller screw in which water weed could become entangled, but is propelled by a powerful jet of water, and is also steered by water. The craft has been designed for use at home and abroad on weedy stretches of water, and it can travel at about ten knots.

F. H. HUGHES.

## STOURBRIDGE

THE National Rally at Stourbridge will be remembered for more colourful and pleasant reasons than for the rain water which trickled down our necks and the mud which seeped into our shoes; the highly successful barbecue, the well-organised and fascinating outings, the sports, film shows, floating shop and cafe, the carnival atmosphere on public view day which even the recurring deluge could not quench. Over 100 boats came, from all parts, to line the canal with colour, beneath the strings of flags and lights; bringing to this industrial site a glimpse of what might be, a waterway fully utilised.

Excursions were arranged to British Waterways Workshops at Bradley which was disappointing and depressing in the extreme; the Stratford Canal which was anything but; local industries, including steel works, carpet and glass manufacturers; and a cruise took place through the Dudley Tunnel. This was a memorable trip, the tunnel itself is impressive and awe-inspiring, and whoever had the happy idea of filling its caverns with lighted night-lights and putting them in each niche in the walls, deserves highest praise. The effect was ethereal and — deeply sad; like candles at a requiem.

The Rally Dinner took place at the Chateau Impney, some distance from the Rally site, to which the lucky ticket holders were taken by coach. The writer, alas, was Cinderella, and can only say the speakers included Robert Aickman and David Hutchings.

The Rally awards and trophies were made on this occasion, and the following is a list of the winners.

A. P. Herbert Market Harborough Challenge

**Trophy** (greatest milage). — G. A. Andrews, *Shroppie Fly*.

**Peter Scott Challenge Trophy** (greatest mileage including salt water). — Angus MacDonald, *Chiff-Chaff*.

**Robert Aickman Challenge Trophy** (most enterprising and meritorious voyage having regard to the Association's campaign). — C. W. Spratt, *Stirling Castle* (Home Counties).

**City of Stoke on Trent Golden Jubilee Challenge Trophy** (for enrolling the most new members during Rally). David Cooper, *Pickwick* (Home Counties).

**Best amateur built boat.**—A. W. Jeffrey, *Aladore*.

**Best converted narrow boat.**—C. Brown, *Tom*.

**Best outboard boat.** — Peter Chaplin, *Grebe of Hampton* (Home Counties).

**Best engine installation.**—D. Humphries, *Jasmine*.

**Best galley.**—A. G. Allan, *Jimmy*.

**Best decorated cake.** — Mrs. C. Waltho, *The Penguin*.

**Special prize for best illuminated canoe.**—Sally Rogers, age 10 (Home Counties).

**Best canal side flora arrangement by a junior.**—Christine Offley, age 13, *Eileen*.

Congratulations to all trophy winners, to the Midlands Branch and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Society for organising it, to the public for supporting it, and no marks at all for the weather!

## BOOK REVIEWS

### “WATERWAYS TO STRATFORD”

**S**TRATFORD-UPON-AVON may have gained a fine new theatre and a thriving tourist industry in the last hundred years, but *Waterways to Stratford* (by Charles Hadfield and John Norris, David and Charles, Phoenix House, 30/-), makes one realize that by the same period it has lost three important trade routes connecting the town with the Midlands, with the ports of Bristol and South Wales, and with Shipston-on-Stour. These routes were the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal, the Avon Navigation, and the Stratford and Moreton Tramway. The waterway routes are described by Charles Hadfield, and the tramway by John Norris.

Charles Hadfield will need little introduction to our readers. For both waterways he gives a detailed history that will be of particular interest to all those who have been following the work of the Lower Avon Navigation Trust and the Stratford Canal Society. For instance, how many members of the I.W.A. know that the B.T.C. still pays £400 per annum to the Lower Avon as compensation for loss of tolls due to the opening of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. The completely derelict nature of the Upper Avon and the magnitude of the work that will be necessary to restore it is clearly shown in the illustrations.

The tramway section makes fascinating reading, as the difficulties of construction and subsequent maintenance so clearly described by John Norris are rather like the case today of the M.1 Motorway with its large repair bill after only three years use. The rather odd shaped wagon to be seen near the wide lock in the Bancroft Gardens is a reminder of the early horse drawn days of the tramway.

Curiously enough one man was connected with all these routes. He was William James, a great planner of railways and canals, yet he died largely unknown. The authors give us an interesting insight into his personality.

This book is produced to the usual high standard we have come to expect of Phoenix House, and Charles Hadfield, and is a must for anyone interested in canals and/or railways. Or for that matter, anyone interested in Stratford. Perhaps if the 16,000 residents of that place were to read this book (or better still, buy it) then there would be sufficient public indignation aroused to ensure not only the restoration of the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal, but the Upper Avon as well. Then the roads of Stratford and its suburbs might be freed from some of the commercial traffic that at present congests and chokes the town, and converts a tourist's paradise into a tourist nightmare.

### “THE THAMES WELCOMES YOU”

**T**HIS is the title of a guide to the River Thames from Thames Head to Teddington, written by Peter H. Chaplin, who needs no introduction to members of the I.W.A., and published by C. and D. Constable at 3/6.

This guide is lavishly illustrated, printed on art paper throughout, with maps and photographs, comprehensive in its scope, and practical in its outlook. There are lists of tributaries, headways, table of distances, lock telephone numbers, list of refuse and sewage disposal stations, notes for boat hirers, and walkers along the towpath, where to eat, and so on. One is forced to regret the paper cover; this is a guide which will be carried in both boat and car, and one can see in such flimsy covers an early disintegration from enthusiastic and repeated reference.

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S CABIN

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**I**N the last issue I wrote urging members to go and help on the Stratford Canal. I took my own advice, and spent a highly entertaining week at Lapworth, doing the catering and cooking for the other volunteers. (No, no deaths yet!) It was hard work, but tremendous fun, and must be strongly recommended to any lady members who feel the actual structural work is a little out of their sphere. I have up to now resisted the impulse to drag the feminine point of view through these columns; but now I must. Come on girls, **COOKS TO THE GALLEY!**

This year has not seen a definite Branch working party at Stratford, although many Branch members have been there. Organised trips do not seem to be popular, in general members prefer to make their own arrangements. However a letter has reached me pointing out how much cheaper it is for several members to go together, and share transport. Therefore would all members of this Branch who may be thinking of going to Stratford in the future please let me have their names and addresses and details of whether they have any form of transport. I can then compile a list and send it to each correspondent, leaving the individuals then to make their own contact.

Lapworth is certainly a bit of a trek from London. My own trip there was not without incident. A puncture on the M.1 late at night was only the beginning. After taking a wrong road I tucked down for the night in the car in a lay-by only to be roused in the early hours of the morning by the long arm of the law banging on the

window and telling me to put on the car lights! I reached my destination at 8 a.m. to be faced with a sink full of washing-up!

Sorry the fluctuations in the size of *The Windlass* has been such a cause for complaint; hope it is now stabilised. For those of you struggling to get it into the binding cases, may I suggest a ruler, a single edged razor blade, and a steady hand will put things right. But do not attempt it on the dining room table!

The Secretary of the Admiralty has sent round to the secretaries of yacht clubs whose members are entitled to apply for an Admiralty Warrant a reminder of the fact that the flying of certain flags without warrant is prohibited and carries heavy penalties. This applies to the Union Flag, the White and Blue Ensign (plain or defaced), and the Red Ensign defaced. If anyone from the Admiralty was around at Stourbridge there is going to be a nice lot of clinking in the Admiralty coffers. The number of boats using the Union Flag to dress the boat overall was high! These regulations do of course apply just as much to the canals as to any other waterway. So watch it, friends, your money is needed for more important things. Like supporting the Christmas Draw. Books of tickets will shortly be going out, with lots of luscious prizes to be won. Take as many as you can, sell them to your friends, your boss, the neighbours, take them to parties, in fact do not be parted from your book of tickets until it is empty; then send for another.

### A Plea From the Advertisement Manager

*The Windlass* has a circulation of over 900 copies each issue. Assuming that each copy is read by three people who in turn probably talk to four of their friends about it, then we have the staggering figure of over 10,000 people aware of our existence. And yet out of 10,000 people we carry at the most ten advertisements per issue.

Many people will say it is the fault of the Advertising Manager; perhaps it is true, but what about lending a hand? Among this figure of 10,000 people there must surely be at least another twenty advertisers. Whatever your line of business, however remote it seems to be from boats or the I.W.A. have a try. Remember a

readership of over 2,500 intelligent and discriminating persons—if they were not they wouldn't be interested in the I.W.A.

*The Windlass* has always run at a loss since its inception. Branch subscriptions alone will not pay for its production, so we rely very much on our advertisers. Our regulars support us in a truly noble fashion, and our thanks must go to them for making possible the high standard of presentation of our magazine. Why not join them?

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# RIVER CAM TRIP

by EDWARD TREBY

IN brilliant weather on Sunday, 2nd September, a party of some 43 members and friends made the return trip from Cambridge to Ely on the *Viscountess Bury*. A sturdy craft with a fine figurehead, reminiscent of the grain cutters and other sailing ships of yore, she is an excellent cruising vessel for the rivers of the Fen Country.

Starting from Victoria Bridge, Cambridge, we were soon passing the college boathouses on our left or port side and Midsummer Common on our right or starboard side. Farther along, we passed by the Pike and Eel Inn and it is just beyond this point that the College Head of River Race, locally known as "The Bumps" finishes. At that time, the banks are thronged with supporters from the various colleges.

After passing under the railway bridge that carries the Main Line of the Eastern Region to Ely and Kings Lynn, we were soon heading for open country. There were two locks on our route, the first we passed through is called Bait's Bite and the second Bottisham Lock, although it is some distance from the village of that name. All the lock and sluice installations are in excellent condition.

Along the Cam are many miles of tree lined banks, one of the most picturesque reaches is near Clayhithe, where the branches of the trees meet across the water at one point. There is nothing which adds so much charm and grandeur to a river or canal scene that the graceful sweep of a weeping willow at the water's edge. A number of riverside houses and cottages with attractive gardens also add colour to the scene.

Many cruising craft were seen on the Cam and the Great Ouse. The Fen Waterways are an excellent cruising area. Among the craft moored along the banks in and near Cambridge were ex Grand Union Canal Narrow Boats, converted into houseboats and which must have reached the area by way of the Northampton Arm, the River Nene and a few miles of the Wash before entering the Great Ouse near Kings Lynn. Sailing is also popular in the Fen Country. At Clayhithe, we passed a number of yachts in mid-stream from the sailing club there.

Along our route were many anglers and on one stretch of the Cam a competition was in progress. Both the Cam and the Great Ouse are excellent fishing rivers. Around Ely are some of the best eel fishing grounds in the country, often attracting anglers from afar and amongst the catches of the fishermen along the banks, we noticed a few of these delectable specimens.

A few miles past Cambridge, new banks have been built for flood defences, the bare earth

revealing the newness of the work. In the Fen Country continual bank protection work and dredging are necessary. Artificial cuts leading to various fens were also noted.

Although the adjoining land is flat, often not a hillock in sight, the Fen landscape nevertheless has a particular charm. The quiet waterways, with their families of swans and ducks, not forgetting the proverbial moorhen and the cattle grazing near the river banks, all present a picture of rural England at its best.

At the Fish and Duck at the confluence of the old West River and the River Cam, 13 miles from Cambridge, we made a short stop for refreshment. The Inn sign is most original, for it depicts that great celluloid hero Donald Duck catching a fish. The Inn, which offers good moorings, is in a very isolated position, there being only a rough track from the nearest road. One imagines that not only the customers but most of the Inn's supplies must also come by water.

The Old West River flows through a sparsely populated countryside and at Earith Junction joins the new Bedford River, an artificial cut which parallels the River Ouse as far as Denver Sluice.

From the Fish and Duck can be seen the octagonal tower of Ely Cathedral, the most prominent landmark of the Fens and a gem of mediaeval religious architecture. We were approaching the land of Hereward the Wake.

Upon resuming our journey, the river, now the Ouse proper, becomes wider, reminding one of the magnificent waterways of Belgium and Holland. Two miles beyond the Fish and Duck we reached Ely. Some members of the party visited the well-equipped boatyard of Appleyard Lincoln and Co., whilst others crossed to the left bank by the hand-operated ferry and made their way to the magnificent cathedral, which although it appears close, is a little distance from the river bank.

Departing from Ely, we again stopped at the Fish and Duck, this time for high tea, before returning to Cambridge. Our thanks are due to Stanley Tims for arranging such an enjoyable trip and to Messrs. Banham & Co. for the use of their fine vessel.

A feature of the trip which impressed members was the excellent condition of the waterways over which we travelled: good moorings, towing paths and banks well maintained and no weeds in mid-stream. If these waterways were in the Midlands or the industrial North, their cargo carrying potentialities would be enormous.

To end on a historical note, it is worthy of recall that a project for a canal connecting the Rivers Stort and Cam received parliamentary approval. Had the scheme come to fruition and a direct link between the Thames and the Fen Country been established, cruising vessels could today traverse the picturesque countryside of the Hertfordshire-Essex Border and the southern marches of Cambridgeshire. Anglers too must surely regret that such a canal was never built but musing about canals that might have been is another story.

#### NEW MEMBERS

WE welcome the undermentioned who, having joined the Inland Waterways Association and residing in the Branch area, are automatically made members of the London and Home Counties Branch for a year. We sincerely hope that at the end of their first year they will think it worthwhile to pay the Branch annual subscription of 5s. in order to continue their Branch membership. The number of Branch memberships that lapse at the end of the first year is considerable. We feel sure that some of these are accidental and result from the Branch subscription being overlooked. Please note that this amount should be paid to the head office.

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