

# WINDLASS

No. 72 NOVEMBER 1968

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(R. Snel!)

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*Journal of THE LONDON and HOME COUNTIES BRANCH of  
The Inland Waterways Association Ltd., 1*

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## *From the Editor's Cabin*

For some time now people have been saying 'What is the I.W.A. doing about the Basingstoke Canal?' and 'What can I do to help the Basingstoke Canal?'. Now the I.W.A. and the Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society have collaborated to produce an excellent report with the self-explanatory title of 'Basingstoke Canal: the Case for Restoration'. That answers question no. 1. And here is the answer to question no. 2.

You can help by buying the report. Read it. Digest it. Write to the papers about what it says. See that your local library gets a copy even if you have to buy another and donate it yourself. Write to the two County Councils concerned about it. Get the support of other organisations such as anglers, naturalists, boat clubs, resident's associations and ramblers. Show it, lend it, give it, to people you think may have influence in the right quarters.

The cover picture of this issue, taken from the report, will show how worthwhile it is to restore the Basingstoke Canal.

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I hope no one will say 'Windlass' exceeds its terms of reference by devoting so much space to the Ashton Canal, well outside the Branch area. This is no time to be parochial; too much is at stake. The much quoted saying of John Donne "Any man's death diminishes me, for I am involved in mankind" applies here. A threat to a Northern waterway is felt in the South because it is part of a system. Our degree of involvement with the Ashton problem was demonstrated by the size of our contingent at 'Operation Ashton'.

# Josher's Column

During the last month many very serious things have happened. In the House of Lords our friends fought hard and won two very important amendments to the Transport Bill. Briefly these were that the public have a right to navigate our waterways after payment of licence fees, and also that disregarding the Transport Bill the courts would have jurisdiction to hear the case of the pending legal action on the Ashton Canal. Through maneuvering of the whole Transport Bill the sections relating to waterways have not had the benefit of full debate in the House of Commons and it was only at the eleventh hour in the Lords that these vital amendments were won.

Before you have a sigh of relief and rush off to tell the wife the good news, wait!

As we go to press the House of Commons was asked by the Government to reject completely the two amendments granted in the Lords, and our efforts to give the public some rights have been dashed by the stroke of the politicians pen. We now await the Royal Assent to the Transport Bill and the new legal position which follows from it.

Make no mistake about this. From now on all of us whether boaters, walkers or fishermen use the nationalised waterways by the grace of the Ministry of Transport and British Waterways Board.

From the beginning of the 1968 Transport Bill we have striven to continue the public right to use the canals and to obtain some legal standing upon which to act should the powers that be mishandle our interests. Legally we now have no rights. We are told that we have an Advisory Council to look after our interests. I doubt whether they can undertake effectively to cope with the multitude of problems that will soon be with us. Somehow the word has got around that the politicians have done a good job with the waterways and the Transport Bill, and that we have nothing to fear for the future.

I have the greatest forebodings now.

At Ashton, near Manchester, in September, the greater part of the waterway world staged one of the most thrilling events of our history and showed once and for all that the Ashton Canal, the Cheshire Ring, and voluntary work had a future. The words of our Founder in 1961 (Bulletin 63) reflect the situation to this day relating to the Ashton and the Cheshire Ring. I quote; 'The case for the Ashton Canal is the very essence and epitome of our case for all the waterways. On the Ashton Canal everything is at stake'.

Now this remainder waterway and the completion of the Cheshire Ring in all its glory lie aside from our commercial and amenity network and the night of the long knives approaches.

In the month of October a meeting was called between British Waterways and all the local authorities on the lower Peak Forest and Ashton Canals. The legal representatives of the plaintiffs in the court case were banned from this meeting; 15 local authorities and 12 other organisations who are known to favour the restoration of the complete Cheshire Ring were NOT present. NO facts as to the cost factors were presented officially to the meeting, I am told. Three out of the four Councils on the Ashton stated to B.W.B. that they had no desire to keep the Canal in any state; they may have their reasons for this attitude; but I resent the manner in which this meeting was conducted.

Should some foul deed be planned now on the Ashton Canal then it only remains for permission to be sought from the Minister of Transport to carry out the deed. We may not hear that the Minister has given his consent; there is no legal reason why we should be told. Things can be decided here in a very short space of time.

In London the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council has not spoken yet on the Ashton - they were not officially represented at Operation Ashton in September either. As a matter of supreme urgency I want to hear what they think officially about the Cheshire Ring. There is now no more important issue on our network than this.

The Ashton situation could soon spill over onto all the other remainder waterways and without a word the Slough Arm, the Erewash and much of the B.C.N. to mention but a few could go within a short space of time.

I do not like what has happened on the Ashton this month. British Waterways Board, by holding their October meeting in such a manner have destroyed my confidence. I feel that the whole manner of the meeting can leave little but distrust in our minds. Can B.W.B. now really convince us that we have nothing to fear here or anywhere else? I hope that they will come out into the open and state their views fully; a complete and factual reassurance is now required from them.

If the Ashton issue is played as I now suspect then either with or without rights we will fight all the way. Let us be prepared to take up again the sword of the I.W.A. and with a newly sharpened blade go forward to fight and above all educate the thinking of anyone who stands against the complete and prompt restoration of the Cheshire Ring for the benefit of all local people, and all users.

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To the north of London the planners are hard at work planning the new town of Milton Keynes. Environment is a word all planners use, and here we have just one physical attribute to the siting of this town - the Grand Union Canal. I have no doubt that the environment of this town will take the canal as a major part of its planning, and the citizens of Milton Keynes will be proud of their town centre.

Through Surrey and Hampshire there runs the Basingstoke Canal, almost as a Sleeping Beauty, this canal slips slowly away year by year. Now comes a joint publication of the London & Home Counties Branch I.W.A. and the Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society. This excellent book, advertised elsewhere in this issue, presents to us the facts and the future needs of the surrounding area. The town of Woking is destined to have a population of 100,000 by 1981. In twelve years the environment all along the canal will have changed and amenity will be a major problem.

I hope that the planners on the Surrey and Hampshire County Councils are studying the canal very carefully. If the present attitude to this canal continues much longer, it will be too late, and in twelve years time we shall remember their lack of foresight. Some people want to make this beautiful canal into a series of lakes unconnected as a whole; we for our part will have no sympathy with this idea. The canal was a navigation and a very beautiful one at that. Unless the whole is used as such, then the planners can expect no help from us. Take away any part of the existing canal from the Wey to Greywell Tunnel and the whole fight is lost.

Surrey and Hampshire County Councils have the opportunity of using the Basingstoke Canal for a regional park and the benefits of this park would be appreciated by naturalists, walkers, fishermen and many others. I hope the planners read the publication carefully. We will be only too pleased to help them in their plans, but it is the canal that interests us, not stagnant ribbons of water.

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LESLIE MORTON

It is with sorrow and a profound sense of loss that we have to record the death, at the end of September, of Leslie Morton. His name will ever be synonymous with that of Willow Wren; this was the inspiration which kept narrow boat carrying alive. The waterways world is the poorer for his going; he will not be forgotten. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Morton in her sorrowful bereavement.



Events

NEWS

ACTIVITIES

# ROUND THE WATERWAYS

## WINTER MEETINGS

**NOVEMBER 21st. OPERATION ASHTON EVENING.**  
7.30 at the Albert, Victoria Street, S.W.1.  
An evening of slides and film of the great event. Come and refresh your memories or see what you missed. Refreshments available; parking is easy and public transport (buses and underground) conveniently near.

**NOVEMBER 24th. (Sunday) TOWPATH RAMBLE** from Alperton, on the Grand Union, as far as is possible into London (Paddington or Maida Vale). Meet outside Alperton Station (Piccadilly line service 15-20 minutes) 10.30a.m. Enquiries to GLA 9943.

**DECEMBER 12th. CHRISTMAS PARTY.** Venue to be announced in the December issue of "Windlass". Last year's party was a great success, so make a note of the date now and be prepared to come and enjoy yourselves.

**MARCH 28**  
**1969 ANNUAL DINNER AT LORD'S TAVERN,** at the headquarters of cricket, Lord's Cricket Ground, St. John's Wood. Make a note of the date now; a delicious menu has already been chosen, and excellent speakers invited.

## WORKING PARTIES

**NOVEMBER 16th./17th. COVENTRY ARM - CROFTON PUMPING STATION.** Two weekend attractions! The main effort will be concentrated on the Coventry Arm, assisting the Coventry Canal Society in the removal of rubbish and clearance of floating reeds. Accommodation will be provided at a nearby school with refreshment facilities near at hand. We shall travel up on the Saturday morning, hoping to arrive about 11a.m. Full details from TIM DODWELL.

A subsidiary party will be travelling to Wiltshire to give a hand with the restoration of Crofton Pumping Station. Work is expected to include stripping No.1 boiler and preparing it for testing - there are also

many other tasks waiting to be done. Full details from ROBIN HIGGS, 18 Barnsford Crescent, West End, Woking, Surrey. Tel: Chobham 7314).

**DECEMBER 1st. (Sunday) SLOUGH ARM.**  
In conjunction with the Grand Union Canal Society, we shall be having a final effort before Christmas. The work involves clearing the towpath, and probably removing rubbish from the canal. Bring your own tools if you can. Meet at the bridge by the Iver Boatyard in Mansion Lane at 10a.m. Anyone requiring transport please contact Tim Dodwell in advance.

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For the ramble along the Slough Arm on October 13th. initially four of us set out, at 11a.m. from Uxbridge, but were joined by two more at Cowley Lock. We reached the junction about Midday, and almost immediately the towpath became at times pretty overgrown and distinctly hazardous (plenty of scope for a working party!). Lunch was taken at a wayside shrine, the Swan in Iver village. On nearing Slough, the towpath improved somewhat and it was good to see a fair bit of activity in and around Iver Boatyard. The only black mark was a lot of junk which had been tipped in near a caravan site.

At the Middle Green Road bridge, centre of auto controversy, we were met by Mr. Richardson of the 'Slough Observer' a leading campaigner against the proposed Slough road scheme, and a party of residents. A photograph was taken, some questions answered, and then we went on right to the end, emerging onto the Stoke Road, through a timber merchant's yard, at 4.30. The party then dispersed home for tea (and the Forsythe Saga!) On the whole, a fairly successful first venture.

PETER M. WARD.

## RIVER MEDWAY

Although the September flood was the worst on the River Medway within living memory, the actual navigation works were little affected. However, considerable silting took place at some locks and East Farleigh Lock is impassable. Two bridges were brought down by the flood water with the result that the river is blocked at these places also.

The Wagon Bridge at Snoll Hatch has lost one abutment and the span is in the river, and Cannon Bridge at Tonbridge has been completely washed away. Both abutments and the span are in the river and the banks have been very seriously cut back. A large area of the bank, including the towpath has also been lost, immediately below the bridge. In view of these obstructions, and as the River Authority's dredger is out of action (it was swept away and sunk in the flood) it will probably be some time before the river is re-opened to through navigation.

**REGISTRATION OF BOATS.** For several years the River Medway Sub-Committee has been urging the Kent River Authority to investigate the possibility of their charging registration fees on all boats on the Medway as a means of raising more equitably the increased revenue that is required to carry out improvements to the navigation. At present the Navigation Act only allows them to levy lock tolls, with the result that boats which do not use the locks do not contribute towards its upkeep. Earlier this year the Authority decided that it appeared that the 1963 Water Resources Act might give them the power of registration, so they applied to the Ministry of Housing & Local Government for permission to make the necessary bye-law. This application was refused by the Ministry on the grounds that the Act does not give River Authorities such power.

Further negotiations have taken place and I am sorry to have to report that no progress has been made, and that there appears no possibility of registration being introduced in the foreseeable future. This is a sad blow to our hopes that the steep increase in tolls introduced this year could be reduced by making all craft contribute to the cost of running the Navigation.

As a result of this setback the River Authority have recently decided to maintain the present high scale of charges for 1969, even though the heavy tolls introduced in 1968 resulted in fewer licences being taken out and actual revenue falling below the

higher yield anticipated. No differential charges related to length of craft, for which we have pressed, have been introduced either, and we shall continue to try to get a change of mind on this point. The only concession made is that the single lock and one day tolls now cover return the following day instead of same day only. This will benefit boats spending a week-end up the river.

**LANDING STAGES.** Substantial and well built landing stages have now been completed at the tail of all locks on the Upper Medway and a great improvement they are to the Navigation. The River Medway Sub-Committee is particularly gratified as we first suggested their necessity way back in 1964. I can also report that before next season notices are to be affixed to the stages to prevent their mis-use by anglers and some thoughtless boat-owners. Fearing that the stages would be obstructed and boats frustrated from using them for their proper purpose, we suggested early this year that suitably worded notices should be provided. At that time the Authority thought our fears probably unfounded, but the experience of this season has proved us right and the notices are to go up. We were supported in this matter by the newly formed Medway River Users Association.

**PUBLIC MOORINGS.** The length of river bank in Tonbridge which members and friends cleared for the 1967 Branch Rally has now been officially declared a public mooring by Tonbridge Urban District Council, who have spent £140 on improvements. Unfortunately the newly laid footpath was washed away in the recent floods.

It is a pity we cannot report such good progress in our efforts to get Maidstone Corporation to provide a badly needed public mooring in the County Town. Our first suggestion was that the old Bridge Wharf, now a car park and right in the centre of the town, be turned into a mooring, but after lengthy negotiation this was turned down on the basis of expense, though the sum involved was not very large for a town of that size. We have now put forward a proposal that Waterside Wharf be used. Whilst this site is not quite so well placed, it requires less expenditure and discussion about it continues. If any members living in Maidstone can lobby their local councillors on this matter we should be grateful for their help.

DEREK SALMON.

## RIVER WEY

Despite fears that considerable damage might have been done to the navigation works in the recent floods, remarkably little harm was suffered although a considerable length of the banks were at one time under water. The top of short sections of bank were washed away in one or two places, notably on the towpath between Coulson's Bay and Penfold's Boat-house at Weybridge and in the Guildford area, but in most cases the necessary repairs have now been completed. In addition a number of trees in the river sections came down, but not so as to prevent navigation.

A fortnight later when the Wey Cruising Club held its annual competitions below Papercourt Lock the river was still flowing swiftly, and the lock at Walsham Gates was in regular use for a period. One result of the flooding has been the strange appearance of the water meadows where debris, particularly straw, has been washed up against hedges and left hanging on barbed wire fences.

On October 13th. a working party of Branch Members tackles clearance of overhanging trees below Send - a job to which we will have to return in due course as the channel is badly overgrown in that area. Over the same weekend a large party of Venture Scouts from South West London assisted in clearing up flood debris and levelling silt deposited on the towpath in the Guildford area.

The lock manning scheme has now come to a close for the winter and it is clear that Pyrford Lock was more popular, both from the point of view of nearby 'amenities' for volunteers, and from the number of boats worked through. A big thank-you to all who helped, and particularly to Alan Pizzey who organised the roster. He will be looking forward to hearing from you next year - I hope!

TIM DODWELL.

## KENNET AND AVON CANAL

The I.W.A. Council has offered to provide over £10,000 towards the cost of restoring Tyle Mill, Ufton and Padworth Locks on the section between Reading and Newbury. The restoration of these locks, together with that of Towney Lock (which is a major rebuilding job) would re-open the Kennet from the Thames to Aldermarston. Let us hope the go-ahead is given soon.

In Wiltshire the 'Charlotte Dundas' has now started operating on the Long Pound between Devizes and Pewsey, following the installation of new machinery. Details of

booking arrangements etc., will be available in due course.

TIM DODWELL.

## RIVER THAMES

During the winter months lock-keepers on the Thames will go off duty one hour before sunset, instead of at sunset as previously.

Several Birmingham & Midland working boats have been seen on the river; further information would be appreciated by the Editor.

## BASINGSTÖKE CANAL.

Since the last report an inspection has been made of the breached Ash Embankment and as yet no attempt has been made to repair it. Although not more than 12ft. wide the breach extends to the bed of the canal, so that the ten mile section eastwards to the Wey Navigation is effectively cut off from the main water supply at Greywell, near Odiham. Will the New Basingstoke Canal Company repair the damage? In answer to a letter published in the 'Farnham Herald' the company's solicitor Mr. H.D. Swales replied; "It will be apparent that all effective means were taken immediately after the event to render the position safe and the Canal Company are in consultation with two firms of consulting engineers to establish what long-term steps should be taken."

Further westwards at Eelmore, scene of the breach which was repaired by the R.A.E. sandbags and stop planks used to dam the canal whilst repair work was in progress are still in position. There are no signs of the obstructions being removed. One question is now being asked; Who will pay for the repair work? The R.A.E. (i.e. the taxpayer) or the Canal Company?

The Army has again expressed an interest to purchase a  $4\frac{1}{2}$  mile section of the canal which passes through Ministry of Defence property between Aldershot and Ash. At a press conference Major-General Charles Stainforth, General Officer Commanding the South East, at Aldershot, stated they wanted to turn it into 'some sort of lido for the use of the Army and the public.'

No progress has been made with the Canal Company, which apparently wants some authority to buy the whole of it for a reported sum of £50,000

The joint I.W.A.-Surrey & Hants Canal Society publication 'Basingstoke Canal; the Case for Restoration' launched on September 26th. received wide coverage in the National



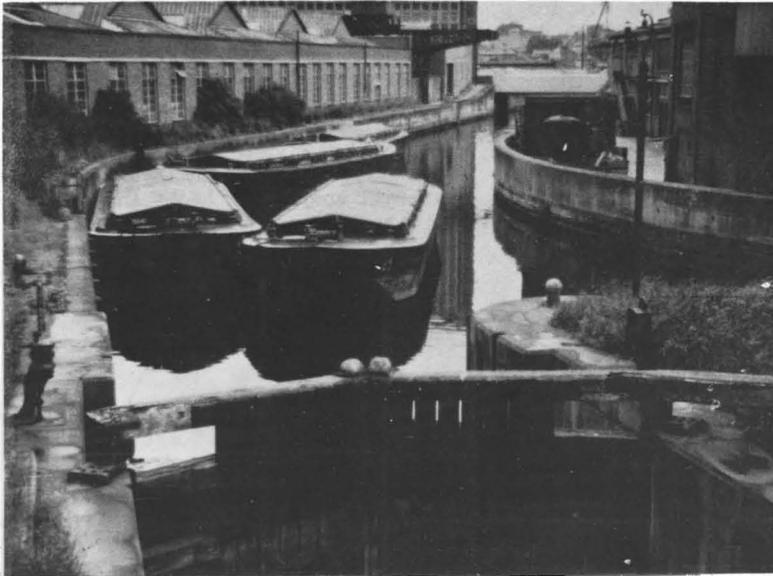
# THE BOW BACK

On the Lower River Lee Navigation, between the junction with the Hertford Union Canal which climbs up to the Regents Canal, and Bow Locks where there is the choice of braving the tidal Bow Creek or taking the Limehouse Cut to the Dock, there are two less conspicuous turnings to the left which lead to an assorted collection of channels known as the Bow Backs.

It is said that they were originally dug at the order of King Alfred to draw water from the upper reaches where the marauding Danes were on the rampage, and leave the invaders' ships stuck high and dry. The first bridges across the navigations were built in the twelfth century after Queen Matilda, who at the time was having a running battle with Stephen for the throne, received a soaking when crossing at Old Ford. The bridge over the main river was a single arch shaped like a bow, which gave the district its name. This bridge was connected to Charles Bridge across the Channelsea River by a causeway that was many years later to become Stratford High Street, the All.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many of the channels drove mills in the area, such as City Mills and the Three Mills. Some navigational improvements were carried out in the latter part of the nineteenth century, following the construction of the Hackney Cut, by-passing the River Lee between Lee Bridge Road and Old Ford, and the Limehouse Cut, but in the 1910's and 1920's the Bow Backs were following the familiar pattern of decay, giving off evil smells and used as rubbish dumps.

After years of pressing, stressing the dangers of flood-



ing and to health, West backing from the Government drainage and navigation.

The old course of the river after leaving the navigation at Carpenters Road which is by lighters, there is the Channelsea River. Station, under the High Street. These were attached to the river and taken over by Henry VIII about a quarter of a mile to the Abbey Creek, before joining the Mills.

After passing the locks, the river turns southwest and then goes roughly parallel to the navigation at the tail of the Waterworks River which becomes the Three Mills into Bow Creek.

The second, City Mills. One branch, generally known as St. Thomas's Creek, while the other fork is the Mills Back River which is the Three Mills. The short cul-de-sac known as St. Thomas's Mill Street.

Before the major improvements were flood gates across the navigation and along the Street. There was a large Lock that was falling (Flood relief etc.), and new locks were constructed.

The Waterworks were widened and dredged to form a new flood channel, the River to the Channels, and the electrically operated locks.

The City Mills were and given a constant flow at Carpenters Road and open access to the Wharfs.

A second lock works were officially opened by Belisha, Minister of Transport, at his beacons.

Today, following the closure of both City Mills and City Mills Lock.

(left; City Mills Lock, Bow Back River)

# BACK RIVERS <sup>b</sup>/<sub>y</sub> Brian Ki

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ing and to health, West Ham Corporation finally got financial backing from the Government to make radical improvements to drainage and navigation in the 1930's.

The old course of the River Lee winds across Hackney Marshes after leaving the navigation at Lee Bridge. Just before reaching Carpenters Road which marks the start of the factory area served by lighters, there is a junction on the left bank that leads to the Channelsea River. This runs in a wide loop past Stratford Station, under the High Street and down to the site of Abbey Mills. These were attached to West Ham Abbey which was founded in 1131 and taken over by Henry VIII in 1538. Here the river splits for about a quarter of a mile, the right hand channel being known as Abbey Creek, before joining Bow Creek near the tail of the Three Mills.

After passing under Carpenters Road, the Old River Lee turns southwest and has three branches from the left bank going roughly parallel to the Southwest before it joins the Lee Navigation at the tail of Old Ford Lock. The west branch is called the Waterworks River until reaching the High Street, when it becomes the Three Mills Wall River which passes through the Mills into Bow Creek.

The second, City Mills River, forks near the High Street. One branch, generally called the Bow Back River but also known as St. Thomas's Creek, joins the Navigation just above Bow Bridge, while the other fork is an unnavigable stream called the Three Mills Back River which takes a more southerly course also through the Three Mills. The third branch from the Old River Lee is a short cul-de-sac known as Pudding Mill River, and formally as St. Thomas's Mill Stream.

Before the major reconstruction of the thirties, there were flood gates across the Old River Lee at its junction with the navigation and also on the Waterworks River near the High Street. There was a lock on the Bow Back River called Marshgate Lock that was falling to bits. As a result of the 1930 River Lee (Flood relief etc.) Bill many of the channels were widened and new locks were constructed.

The Waterworks and Three Mills Wall Rivers were both widened and dredged to improve the drainage from the area and a new flood channel, the Prescott was dug from the Three Mills Wall River to the Channelsea where the water level was controlled by the electrically operated Prescott Sluices.

The City Mills River was widened, dredged and diverted and given a constant level of water by the building of locks at Carpenters Road and on part of the site of City Mills which gave access to the Wharfs on the Waterworks River.

A second lock was also constructed at Bow Lock and the works were officially opened in 1935 by the Rt. Hon. Leslie Hore-Belisha, Minister of Transport, who is better remembered for his beacons.

Today, following the decline in commercial traffic, both City Mills and Carpenters Road Locks have fallen into disuse. City Mills Lock has a Basingstoke like appearance with (left; City Mills Lock & junction of City Mills River with Bow Back River.

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garage doors.



# RIVERS <sup>b</sup>/<sub>y</sub> Brian Kingmill

West Ham Corporation finally got financial permission to make radical improvements to navigation in the 1930's. The River Lee winds across Hackney Marshes to Stratford at Lee Bridge. Just before reaching Stratford marks the start of the factory area served by a junction on the left bank that leads to the City Mills River. This runs in a wide loop past Stratford High Street and down to the site of Abbey Mills. West Ham Abbey which was founded in 1131 and destroyed by fire in 1538. Here the river splits for the first time, the right hand channel being known as the Three Mills Wall River which passes through the Mills and joins the River Lee near the High Street.

The City Mills River, forks near the High Street. The left hand channel is called the Bow Back River but also known as the Navigation just above Bow Bridge, and the right hand channel is an unnavigable stream called the Three Mills Wall River. The left hand branch from the Old River Lee is a wide channel called the Lee Navigation as it passes through the Mills and joins the River Lee near the High Street.

For reconstruction of the thirties, there was a new channel called the Lee Navigation which joined the Old River Lee at its junction with the River Lee on the Waterworks River near the High Street. The Bow Back River was cut to bits. As a result of the 1930 River Lee improvements many of the channels were widened and straightened.

The Lee Navigation and Three Mills Wall Rivers were both widened to improve the drainage from the area and a new channel called Prescott Channel was dug from the Three Mills Wall River where the water level was controlled by the Prescott Sluices. The Lee Navigation River was widened, dredged and diverted to the level of water by the building of locks at the site of the City Mills which gave it a new name the Waterworks River.

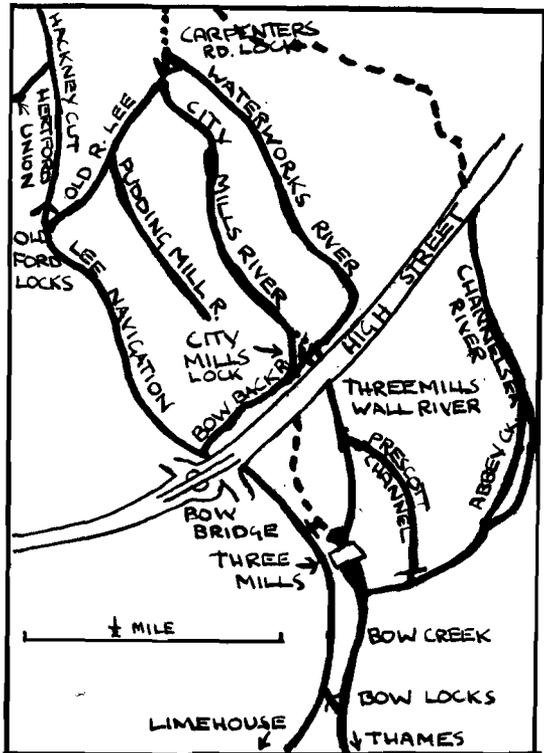
A new lock was also constructed at Bow Lock and the River Lee was opened in 1935 by the Rt.Hon.Leslie Hore-Randall, who is better remembered for

his work in saving the decline in commercial traffic, the Waterworks River has fallen into disrepair and has a Basingstoke like appearance with its silted up channels at the junction of City Mills River with

sadly sagging balance beams and a luxuriant vegetable growth. The lock cottage is empty and the street lamps along the lock side are bulbless and rusty. An extra pair of gates nailed firmly shut has been erected below the bottom lock gates, pointing towards the Waterworks River.

Above the lock both commercial and pleasure craft can be found. There are half a dozen cabin cruisers of various shapes in the water and about the same number rotting on the stocks on the side. The towpath along the City Mills River is something of a challenge. There are five foot stinging nettles for much of the way and the railway bridge is by-passed by a Jack-the-Ripper type alleyway, but as Carpenters Road comes near the towpath clears and is lined with double parked lighters. At the junction with the Old River Lee there is an iron bridge reminiscent of the Oxford Canal.

Carpenters Road Lock has the distinction of radial gates. Viewed from a boat, these open with an action similar to up-and-over garage doors. The lifting is carried out by



steel ropes connected to mechanised winches situated on footbridges above the lock gates. Although the lock is kept painted and oiled and looks mechanically sound it is used very rarely and contains a lot of rubbish and plant life.

The Old River, Lee, apart from the longer drop to the water, has an almost rural appearance for the quarter mile to the Lee Navigation. There are the remains of a pair of flood control gates and a family of ducks just above the entrance to Pudding Mill River. This latter channel is very narrow and does not appear to have been navigated for some years. There is a new factory on the right hand bank and turf has been laid down to the water's edge, although there is an abandoned van halfway down the unkempt left bank.

The Three Mills Wall River has a path along the edge from the High Street to the Three Mills, which housed a nineteenth century gin distillery. In one of the disused buildings the vast wheels of the original mill mechanism can be seen.

After the old wharfs beside Bow Creek at the tail of the Mills, the path turns left alongside the Channelsea River and crosses the Prescott Sluices. A lot of commercial craft go to the chemical factory on the opposite bank. The towpath continues to the High Street but boats no longer go above the site of Abbey Mills where there was a lock until fairly recently, which made way for a new road. The Channelsea is here crossed by another unconnected waterway, the Northern Outfall Sewer.

A lot of the area around these waterways is waste, with enormous recreational potential, much of which is already appreciated and is to be hoped that some of the non-tidal stretches can be successfully incorporated into the Lea Valley Scheme.

Reference:- '50 Years a Borough 1886-1936 (West Ham)' Ed. D. McDougall.  
Curwen Press, Plaistow, E.13. 1936.

(Below: Junction of City Mills River, Old River Lee and Waterworks River (through lock, which is Carpenters Road.)



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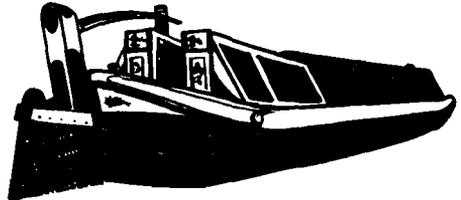
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# Letters to the Editor

Dear Madam,

May I be permitted to reply to "Josher's" comments on my letter published in your September issue?

The point is that a statutory right to navigate is only enforceable in practice if the necessary money is available to the British Waterways Board, which is not the same thing as the Government. The cases quoted by Josher do not support his argument; if I remember rightly, the injunction sort in the Reading Bridge case was refused, and even he would hardly contend that the result of the Gould case was that the Kennet & Avon is navigable. As far as the trapped cruiser was concerned, the owner's claim would not have been for failure to maintain a waterway in navigable condition, but for negligence. There is nothing in the Bill to prevent such a claim in future. (See the Lord Chancellor's statement in Hansard at Col.732)

Lord Nugent's remark at Col.729 overlooks the fact that the Board cannot "immediately rush to the Minister and convince him that this canal is little used nowadays and that it would only be sensible to reclassify it" Nor can the Minister "immediately give an order for reclassification". There would have to be the full procedure on consultation laid down in schedule 13 of the Bill before this could happen. No doubt Lord Nugent did not expect to be taken any more literally than I did when I referred to a canal being closed by Warrant "the day after" a successful action against the Board.

It is rather misleading to say that the House of Lords disliked the provisions of section 104 intensely. It would be fairer to say that two or three members of the Committee voiced I.W.A.'s fears on the subject. No vote was taken and it is impossible to say whether the Committee as a whole would have sided with I.W.A. or with the Government. However, if we can get something better than section 104 as now drawn, excellent. If we cannot, I for one will still be satisfied that we have done well. All that is now wanted now is a spirit of cooperation between ourselves and British Waterways Board, and the future is bright. I am delighted to detect in the last paragraph of Josher's Column this month a certain warming towards the Board. I am sure that in this instance the olive branch is likely to be far more productive than the barbed typewriter.

P.S. Sorry, no Operation Ashton. Time, distance & broken leg do not permit.

Yours faithfully,  
JOHN HANKINSON. Hove, Sussex.

JOSHER replies:-

If I may reply again to Mr. Hankinson, I am delighted to see that he is taking such a keen interest in what is undoubtedly one of the most important matters in the waterways world at the moment. I hope that others, like he, are getting copies of 'Hansard'.

A reply to Mr. Hankinson's letter is a must, even though it means going into considerable detail. I understand the Reading Bridge case as follows; the bridge was to be rebuilt, but credit squeezes meant that the work was postponed a number of times. Eventually an injunction was sought against Reading Corporation for obstructing the navigation under the bridge. Before the full hearing, an interim injunction <sup>was</sup> sought which was dismissed by the judge, not because our case was invalid but on the grounds that as the plaintiffs had taken nearly 20 years to bring the action they could wait a bit longer until the full hearing; before that occurred the bridge was rebuilt. Undoubtedly the pending action meant that the work was not "squeezed" out yet again.

The John Gould case resulted in damages being paid to Mt. Gould for his loss of trade as his boats were trapped at Newbury by the lack of repair on the K. & A. His bringing the case caused the 1956 British Transport Act, which relieved British Waterways of their duty to maintain the canal in any better state than it was in in November 1955 - a classic case of an illegality being made legal. Mr. Gould only received damages as he was unable to exercise the public right of navigation and had suffered loss thereby.

The Lord Chancellor has now privately agreed that after the Bill is law a claim for damage to a boat caused by the Board's negligence will not be valid if British Waterways have previously contracted out of liability. British Waterways do just this in condition No. 8. of their pleasure cruising licence form. Hitherto the existence of a right of navigation has meant that this condition was invalid; not so now.

I was present at the debate on July 22nd. in the House of Lords and I do not think it misleading to say that the House disliked Clause 104, subsection (6). Three Conservative peers and two Labour peers spoke against the subsection, which enabled the Minister to intervene and prevent the Courts from issuing a maintenance enforcement order, and Lord Nugent of Guildford, leading for the Opposition, made it clear that had the Government not said that they would look again at the matter, he would have asked the House to vote on the matter, in which case it is highly likely that the Conservative peers would have outvoted the Government.

I am in agreement with Mr. Hankinson that a spirit of co-operation is needed between ourselves and British Waterways. One can see this working on the Kennet and Avon, albeit terribly slowly, and at Stourbridge, the Welford Arm and the Denham working parties.

But it does not help matters if the outstretched olive branch is snatched by British Waterways, broken in half and thrown on the fire. This is just what has happened on the Erewash Canal where a working party was arranged in agreement with British Waterways, only for the local workmen to be told not to lower the water levels nor to assist in any way at all. There is an account elsewhere of what has happened recently on the Ashton Canal. British Waterways' behaviour there has had the effect among everyone to whom I have spoken of putting the clock back to the bad old days of mistrust. The patient work of Mr. Allen, General Manager (who left at the end of October) of building up trust and dispelling suspicion has been largely destroyed.

Two sides are needed for co-operation, Mr. Hankinson!

\* \* \* \* \*

The Canal Boatman's Institute,  
The Butts,  
Brentford, Middx.

7.10.68.

Dear Miss Johnstone,

A busy year of canal visitation in the service of all and sundry has been a rewarding endeavour. We have toured the canals from Coventry to London on four occasions, meeting all the commercial boat crews, the lock keepers, house boat dwellers and hundreds of cabin cruisers. The Mini Bus we acquired last Christmas, holding twelve people in comfort, has taken many old ex-boat pensioners on trips from Brentford to Bugbrooke, Buckby, Braunston, Hawksbury Stop, and four times to the seaside. Its been Christmas all the year round.

My note book is full of cases where I think a good present at Christmas would bring joy. Most of them are on our few remaining cargo boats; in our lock houses; among our two hundred old infirm folk. But I have met several among house boats in and around London where I think a visit would be appreciated.

I have met several I.W.A. members on the canal this summer. They have cheered me. Perhaps they would like to know that once again we are planning an extensive Santa Claus tour from 14th. December to 25th. December. Gifts of toys, sweets, groceries and clothes would be very acceptable at this Institute right now.

With sincere thanks,  
Yours truly,  
F.J. CHAPMAN.

# Quiz . . . . . 7. ? ?

1. Where are these locks on the Grand Union? (a) The New 'Uns;(b)Sewerage Lock.
2. Where are (a) Newbold Tunnel; (b) Unstead Lock; (c) Diglis Basin ?
3. By which main road would you approach Hampstead Road Locks?
4. Give the carrying companies represented by these initials: (a) C.W.B. Co.,Ltd., (b) E.C.L. Ltd.,; (c) J.J.T. & Sons Ltd.,
5. How far up the River Thames does regular commercial carrying vessels work?
6. Where is Birchills Junction?

Answers to John Dodwell, Wychbold, 19 Drill Hall Road, Chertsey,Surrey, by end of November. NOTE: There is a correction to make to last month's answers to Quiz No. 5, Sweeps 2 are nos. 54 and 55 at Berkhamstead; obviously they cannot be no. 50. This was not ignorance on my part just a typing error .(John's,not mine - Ed.) Eric McDowell has given me the G.U. lock questions, for which I thank him.

## ANSWERS TO QUIZ NO. 6.

1. The Moira Cut is the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal and is so called as it used to go to Moira before the top end was closed because the cost of repairing coal mining subsidence damage was deemed to be too much.
2. The waterways carrying companies are; (a) L.B. Faulkner, who used to trade from Leighton Buzzard; (b) Erith and Dartford Lighterage Co.,Ltd., who work on the Thames; (c) Cawoods Wharton and Co.,Ltd., who among other trades carry the coal to the new Ferrybridge (C) Power Station on the Aire and Calder.
3. Grand Union Locks; Alberts Two are nos. 75 and 76 in Cassiobury Park in Watford;Nags Head Three are nos.34-36 at Seabrook, north of Marsworth.
4. Aldersley Junction is where the Staffs. & Worcs Canal meets the B.C.N. at Wolverhampton (not to be confused with Autherley where the S & W meets the Shropshire Union);Yarningale Aqueduct is a small one on the Southern Stratford Canal, between Lowsonford and Preston Bagot;; Cowley Tunnel is an 81 yards long tunnel on the Shropshire Union.
5. Four places with 'Stoke' in the name; Stoke Bruerne; Stoke Prior (Worcs & Birm.Canal); Stoke on Trent; Stoke (River Wey). (There are probably others.
6. The largest craft capable of going from Hull to Leeds are the 480 ton capacity oil tankers on the Esso run.They use the Humber,River Ouse and the Aire & Calder Navigation.

ESS \* STOP PRESS \* STOP \*

The first Winter Meeting of the 1968-69 season took place at the Albert, Victoria on October 24th. when a large crowd of over 100 watched a varied programme.

The curtain raiser was a short colour and sound film 'The Boat People'; a pleasant if sugary picture of life on narrow boats.

The rest of the evening was an illustrated talk by Hugh McKnight on canal boats which featured many fascinating slides of early steamers, horse drawn boats, canal costume and historical events. A most interesting evening.

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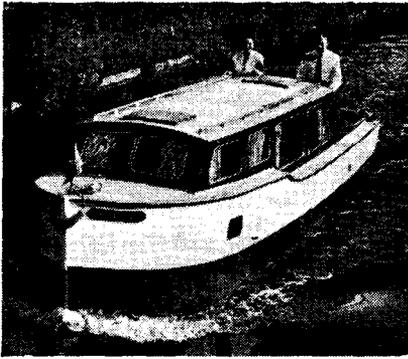
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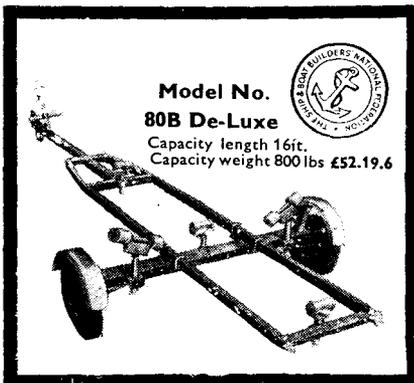
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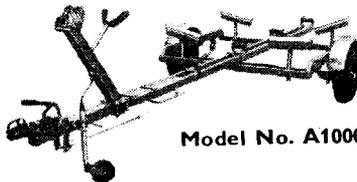
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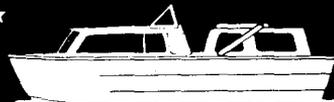


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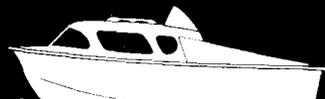
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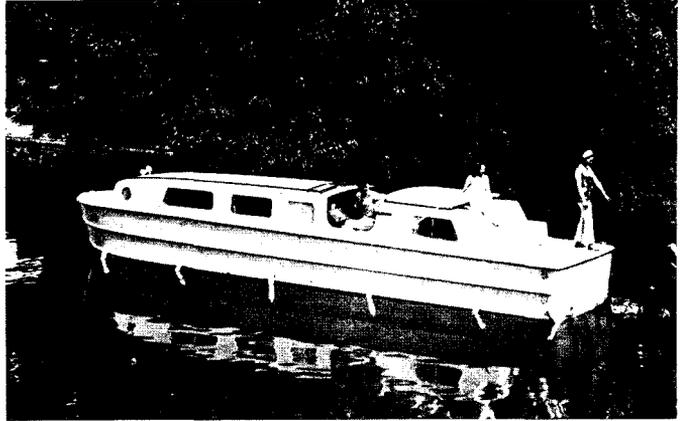
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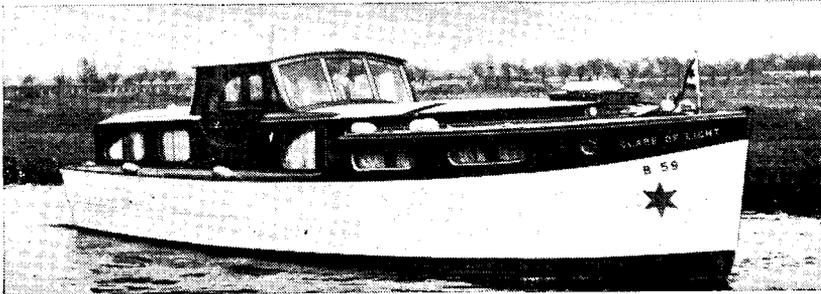


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