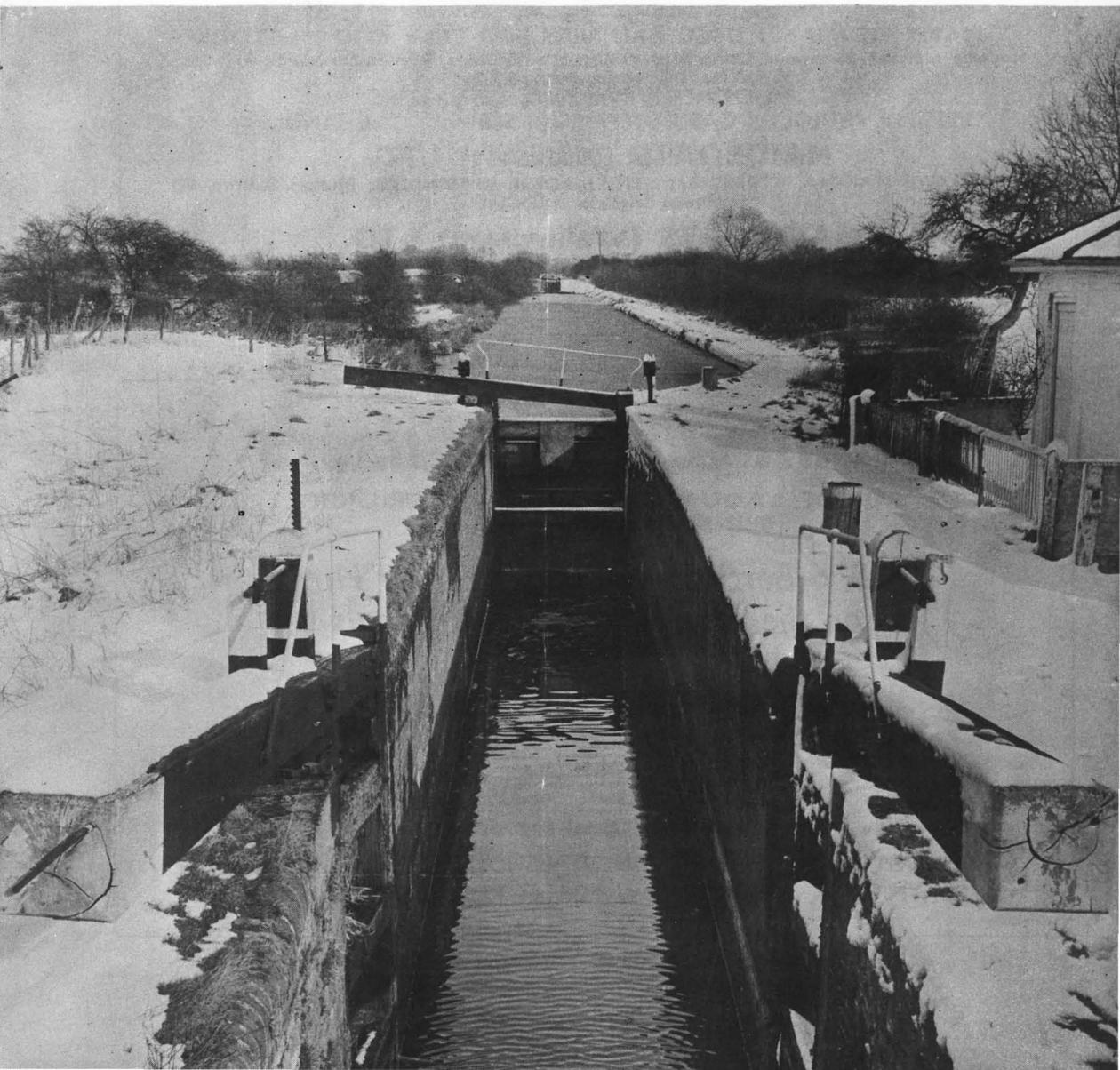


# *windlass*

**no.86      april 1970**



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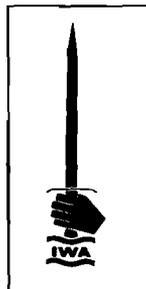
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As there are several changes in the formation of the Committee following the A.G.M. the list of Committee Members will appear in full in our next issue when the alterations will be fully listed. Cover picture: The Aylesbury Arm in Winter. Photo by P.R.KNIGHT. WINDLASS is the journal of the London & Home Counties Branch IWA and is published ten times a year. Copyright the London & Home Counties Branch IWA 1970. Copy date 14th. of the month preceding publication. Advertising rates on application. Not published in August or January.

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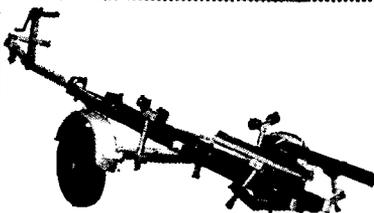
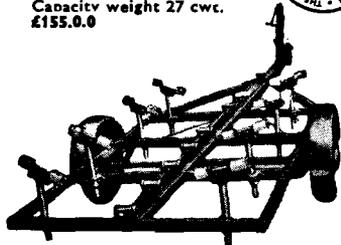
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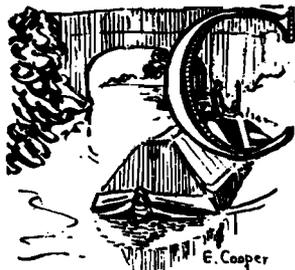
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## Coming Events . . .

### ANNUAL DINNER

★ APRIL 10th. By popular demand the Branch Dinner is being held for the second year running at The Banqueting Rooms, Lord's Cricket Ground, St. John's Wood, London N.W. 8. at 7 for 8pm. A very good menu has been chosen and a galaxy of well-known personalities invited, which, together with the sumptuous facilities of this venue, should ensure a good evening being had by all. Dress informal. Unfortunately there is a slight increase in the price of tickets, but in common with most things prices have risen and we are obliged to pass on the increase. Tickets may be obtained (but hurry; time is growing short) from J.C. Street, 52 Moreton Street, London S.W.1. Price 4/6/- please use the order form sent out with the last issue of 'Windlass'. But HURRY!

★ APRIL 12th. (Sunday) TOWPATH RAMBLE along the Lea Navigation (8-10 miles). Meet at Mill Bridge, Hertford, 10.45am. (five minutes from both stations). Connecting trains: Kings Cross for Hertford North 9.40am. and Liverpool Street for Hertford East 9.43am. Further details if required from Peter M. Ward, 21 Lemox Gardens, Dollis Hill, London N.W.10. Telephone: GLadstone 9943.

★ APRIL 19th. PORT CREEK RE-OPENING. 11.30am. at Portsbridge, Hants, by the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth. Local and trailed boats. Launching facilities. Visiting boats and shorebound spectators welcome.

★ MAY 10th. CHELMSFORD BOATING CLUB RIVER CHELMER SPONSORED CANOE CRUISE. AND TOWPATH WALK. IWA members are invited to take part. Details from M.E. Smith, 28 Goldlay Avenue, Chelmsford, Essex.

★ MAY 10th. TOWPATH RAMBLE from Slough to Uxbridge. Organised by the Slough Canal Group.

★ MAY 16/17th. HARLOW REGATTA. Boat entry forms were sent out with the last issue. Many interesting events have been organised and apart from the usual activities of a rally or regatta, there is to be a Donkey Derby and a Dog Show.

### Recent Activities

A Regatta Queen will be chosen. Further details are available from J. Wilkinson, Hallingbury Mill, Gaston Green, Bishop's Stortford. The Regatta is organised by the Lee & Stort Development Committee.

\*\*\*\*\*AUGUST 7-10th. GUILDFORD\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\* WATER FESTIVAL & RALLY \*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*OF BOATS 1970\*\*\*\*\*

### Action

Recently the Branch Stand has appeared twice at the Crystal Palace, at exhibitions organised by the Central Council of Physical Recreation. The first in conjunction with the British Canoe Union, the second a two day exhibition of dinghies organised with the Royal Yachting Association. Sales were brisk on both occasions, and our display attracted a lot of attention.

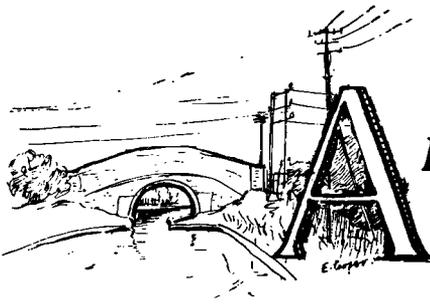
We still need more people who will give up an odd day to help publicise the Association and raise funds with the stand. The next event is the Thames Valley Boat Show, Richmond, from April 25th. to May 3rd. I would like to have the stand manned the whole time, so if you have any spare time that week please let Ron Stainton (address on p.1.) or myself know. No training is required - you just talk canals and sell literature. My address is: 4 The Ridgeway, Acton, W.3.

DAVID GIBSON.

In connection with the Local Surrey and Hampshire Schools Project mentioned in the last issue of 'Windlass', we are lending out selections of coloured slides from the Branch Slide Library, illustrating canals in general and the local canals in particular, to school teachers who are interested in doing canal projects. We wish to use every endeavour to focus attention on the Basingstoke Canal, and as we are somewhat short of pictures of this canal we would like to make an urgent plea to members to donate any suitable slides for this good cause. Please send them to me, address on p.1.

TONY DAVIS.

Would members wishing to reply to Mrs. Dodwell's appeal for volunteers in the last issue please contact her direct at Windover, Horsell Birch, Horsell, Woking, Surrey, and not c/o the Editor.



# ROUND THE WATERWAYS

## RIVER MEDWAY

In October 1969 the River Medway sub-committee decided to open negotiations with the Kent River Authority to try and get the lock charges on the river reduced. Two years ago they were raised to what we considered an unreasonable level and at that time we advised the Authority that we felt that the number of lock passes that would be issued would fall and that their anticipated revenue would not be achieved. Our fears were justified and in 1969 fewer boatowners took out passes and there was an increase in the use of locks without the payment of tolls. Therefore we asked our friends the Medway River Users Association to join us in pressing for a toll reduction.

I am pleased to be able to report that the Kent River Authority has agreed to the suggestion that the annual lock pass be reduced from £9 to £7 - 10/-. It is hoped that boatowners will now feel that the new charge is more reasonable and we ask as many of them as possible to take out such passes so as to prove to the Authority that our arguments for a reduction are justified.

We also suggested that a licence disc for display on craft should be issued with each pass in an effort to reduce evasion of tolls, a practice which of course affects all those who do pay towards the upkeep of the navigation. This proposal has also been adopted.

For several years we have been trying to persuade Maidstone Borough Council to provide public overnight moorings in the town, and they were becoming increasingly receptive to the idea. Recently the lease of the Council's Fairmeadow wall fell vacant and the Medway River Users Association have been granted the lease at a low rent to establish a public mooring on the site. Fairmeadow is ideal for the purpose, and I am sure boatowners will find it a most useful amenity. We ourselves felt that it was really the duty of Maidstone Council to provide this mooring but as that proved impossible we supported the M.R.U.A.'s application for the lease.

DEREK SALMON.

## PORT CREEK.

An important event for boating folk in the south of England will take place on April 19th. when Port Creek will be opened by Will Evans, Lord Mayor of Portsmouth.

Port Creek connects Portsmouth Harbour with Langstone Harbour, which is in turn connected with Chichester Harbour. These together make about 30 miles of sheltered and interesting waterways, offering nature reserves and cockle-banks through to water-ski areas and the Dockyard. The Creek was closed by a causeway in 1940 and has now been re-opened as part of a major trunk road scheme (an unusual twist) entirely as the result of the campaign organised by Will Evans, and with the assistance of the IWA back in 1962-4. The official opening will start at 11.30am. on April 19th. and a large flotilla of local and trailed boats is expected to follow the Lord Mayor's launch from Portsbridge, where there are two good slipways. Visiting boats and shorebound spectators will be welcomed, and give half good weather it will be a splendid occasion.

JOHN WORBY.

## RIVER STOUR

The first Annual General Meeting of the River Stour Trust was held on January 31st. and the Chairman of the Trust John Marriage reviewed the first year which was felt to be one of great progress; the Trust making its views felt in the various aspects of the river. Membership now stands at over 100 persons and organisations.

The forthcoming season would be an active one, with a working party on the river on May 3rd. a canoe cruise on May 31st. and a canoe race on September 20th. The Trust were again to have a stand at Suffolk Show, to be held this year on June 3/4th. At the Essex Show on June 19/20th. the Trust is having a joint stand with the Branch (helpers invited - contact John Marriage address on p.1.) This will show details of the Trust's campaign and details of waterways in the Branch area, in particular those in and adjacent to Essex.

JOHN MARRIAGE.

## REGENTS CANAL

Following the £20,000 face-lift to the Grand Junction Arms facing the Paddington

Arm at Willesden, the first Regent's canal-side pub is to be re-modelled. The Star in St. Peter's Street, opposite the City Road Basin, is to be re-named The Narrow Boat and provided with a terrace and windows overlooking the canal. The opening celebrations may be arranged to coincide with the Islington Festival July 4th-12th.

The Westminster City Council have received an application for planning permission for a restaurant to be built over the western entrance to Maida Hill tunnel. The Council asked the Paddington Waterways Society for their views, who replied that although their first choice would have been for an open space, they would not oppose a restaurant provided it was appropriately designed and did not cause a nuisance. Further suggestions for canal-side development are certain to follow in the future as the Regent's Canal becomes better known to the citizens of London, and it is very encouraging to see local authorities consulting local waterways societies. In this case the Paddington Society are to be congratulated on their realistic reply, recognising that good development should go hand in hand with increased revenue to British Waterways Board. The Regent's Canal Group, of which the Branch is a constituent member, had associated themselves with the Society's views.

Plans for the development at Paddington Basin may also be known soon. St. Mary's Hospital is shortly to publish proposals for its extension up to the Basin itself. In Princess Road, Camden Town an old industrial site opposite St. Mark's Crescent is to be rebuilt with ten houses with gardens down to the towpath.

This section of the Regent's Canal, from Little Venice to Hampstead Road locks is now one of the busiest in London, and one of the few provided with adequate mooring places, Maida Hill moorings, Broadwater and the Cumberland Basin. Although long term plans for the Kings Cross area and eastwards to the Regent's Canal Dock itself are known to exist, it is now three years since the publication, in April 1967, of the Study by the Regent's Canal Group, and much remains to be done.

OLIVER TURNER.

## RIVER WEY

There is to be a stoppage at Newark Lock over the period 1st-8th. April to fit new lower gates, and to carry out any further work found to be necessary. This may make it necessary to extend the stoppage, and anyone intending to cruise through this area at the time would be well advised to check the current situation.

A number of one day stoppages are also planned elsewhere to flush out some of the lock cuts - this has already been done on the Worsfold-Papercourt section, and a considerable improvement in depth is reported.

TIM DODWELL.

## CHELMER & BLACKWATER

Chelmsford Corporation have now put back into proper working order the boat rollers which were constructed at the Branch's suggestion around flood control sluices in Chelmsford, thereby linking the River Chelmer with the Waterway. The cut on the lower side which was becoming silted up is to be cleared out by dredger and the entire work will be complete in the next few weeks.

The Navigation Company held their annual meeting on February 16th. John Marriage attended for the Branch, following the Branch's purchase of a share. It was announced that tolls amounted to £2,275 for the year and moorings and lock dues to £2,686. Despite this and other income there was a loss on working of £1,199. The Directors decided to maintain the dividend of £2 per share and to transfer from the reserve to the working account £2000.

Following the success of their sponsored canoe cruise last year the Chelmsford Boating Club are to hold a further sponsored canoe cruise and towpath walk on May 10th. Proceeds go to the Club's boathouse extension fund to enable additional canoeists to use the waterway. IWA members are particularly invited to take part. Details from M.E. Smith, 28 Goldlay Avenue, Chelmsford, Essex.

JOHN MARRIAGE.

## LEA AND STORT

Over 60 people attended the inaugural meeting of the Bishop's Stortford River Society on a snowy night in early February at the Rhodes Centre at Bishop's Stortford. The Society has been formed to represent the growing interest in the River Stort amongst townspeople, particularly following the successful River Pageant held last September to celebrate the bi-centenary of the opening of the River Stort to navigation in 1769.

The Society aims at cleaning up the river and the towpath in the town and for the removal of an ugly concrete wall between the town car park and the river. It is pressing for better facilities for boating and angling, including the possibility of the introduction of a boat hire service and the establishment of moorings in the town. British Waterways Board are also

to be asked to resume their dredging operations in the urban area.

Officers and a committee were elected, Lieut.Col.R.J.Vern, who is also a Councillor, as Chairman, together with a wide range of members representing local interests.

The meeting concluded with an illustrated talk by Oliver Turner, Vice-Chairman of the Branch, on the future of our waterways today. Some members of the audience seemed surprised that so many interesting places could be visited by water from Bishop's Stortford; even Cambridge only 26 miles by road but 120 miles by water. IWA members and others resident in the area are encouraged to join the Society. Minimum subscription is 4/- per year. Applications with the subscription should be sent to the Secretary, Mr. K. Vince, 3 Linkside, Bishop's Stortford, Herts.

OLIVER TURNER.



# Working Party Page

IN BRIEF....

A Slough Canal Group has been formed as a sub-committee of the Grand Union Canal Society. On March 15th. they organised a day cruise for prominent local people and press. Mr. George Hooper will be speaking at a meeting organised for April 7th. on The Colne Valley Regional Park. The Group are also organising a towpath ramble on May 10th. and a Midsummer Invitation Cruise.

The Surrey & Hants Canal Society has produced an excellent pamphlet entitled 'Restoration of the Basingstoke Canal. Some Questions and Answers'. This has been sent to more than 250 councillors from Winchester to Kingston-on-Thames. The illustrations in this excellent booklet reveal the terrible degeneration of the canal during the past three years.

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS



LADYLINE, the Big name in boating take pleasure in announcing that in conjunction with British Boat Auctions Ltd., they will be holding their SPRING BOAT AUCTION at 2.00p.m. on Saturday May 23rd, at Market Drayton. Additional entries invited. For further details contact LADYLINE LTD., Betton Road, Market Drayton. Tel: 3101/3102/2267.

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APRIL 12th. (Sunday) RIVER WEY. Trimming back overhanging trees and other necessary jobs prior to the National Rally will be the order of the day. Meet at Stoke Bridge (A 320) Guildford, at 10am. and we shall split up from there. Transport from Guildford Station by prior arrangement with Tim Dodwell.

MAY 9/10th. STRATFORD CANAL. One of the worst blemishes on 'our' section of the canal in Stratford is the towpath between locks 52 and 53 - uneven and set about with particularly vicious stinging nettles. To improve this will be our main objective, plus a number of other jobs in the area. Volunteers played a great part in restoring this canal. Come and help prove that your interest did not stop there. Details from Tim Dodwell.

BATH MARCH 13th/14th. There was a splendid turnout, the local hospitality was great, the work being done inspiring. Unfortunately as the Editor of 'Windlass' spent most of the week-end slaving over a hot stove a full report of the goings on must wait till next time, and if that isn't a hint for someone to write it.....

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# DOWN the AYLESBURY CUT

**Brian Kingsmill**

Being an offshoot from one of the loveliest sections of the Grand Union, the Aylesbury Arm is not surprisingly a very attractive waterway. From Marsworth Junction it falls gently from the main line and passes through remote countryside until it suddenly arrives at Aylesbury. On the southern side the fields and hedges have the impressive backdrop of the Chilterns.

Unfortunately this canal has a handicap - its vital statistics - six miles, sixteen locks, and if the thought of thirty-two locks for the round trip was not bad enough, the first two at Marsworth form a staircase. It is easy to see why the arm tends to be neglected by those who suffer from lockphobia, the complaint which separates the mere boater from the canal enthusiast.

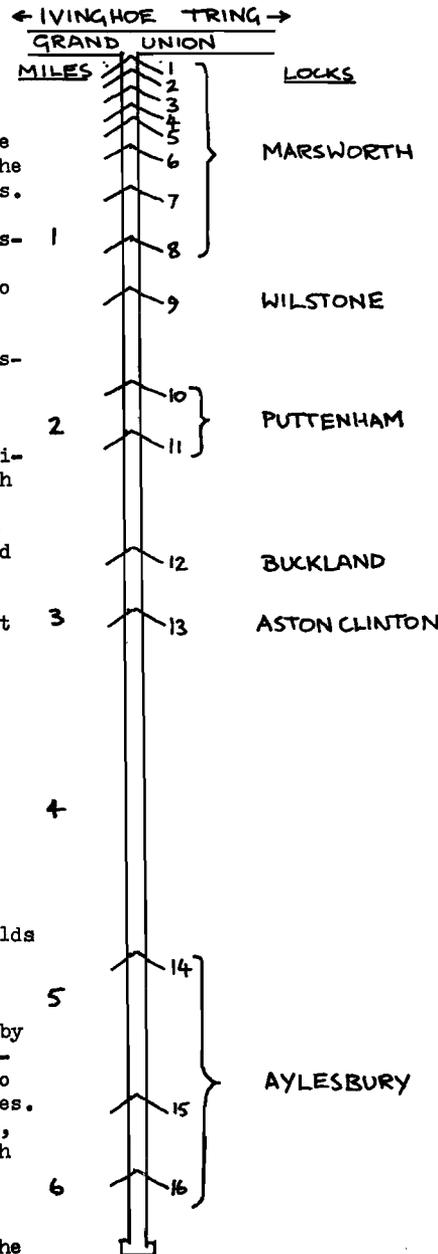
The Aylesbury Arm was the first narrow canal I ever saw, or, at any rate, noticed. At the time I was dissuaded from cruising down the locks by a local peasant; my first encounter with the 'it-isn't-worth-it' brigade, whose opinions I am sure are based on ignorance. However, the secluded channel, single top gates and narrow lock chambers had an appeal which lingered and was finally answered last spring.

Finding ourselves with time in hand on a G.U.-Oxford circuit (having been swept down to Brentford on the swollen waters of the Thames) Christine and I decided to turn off to Aylesbury. We accordingly left our overnight moorings at Marsworth and aimed our hired half narrow boat conversion at the top lock of the arm.

Locks 1 and 2, the staircase, are connected by a single ground paddle and the excess water goes over the top of the bottom gates. We managed to avoid draining the main line and were seen on our way by some B.W.B. workers who told us to leave the bottom gates open all the way down. This was because they are higher than the top gates and the abundance of water flowing down to Aylesbury might otherwise have flooded the fields and produced fuming farmers.

Locks 1 to 8, like many in the area, are called Marsworth Locks. They stretch for about a mile and are closely followed by Wilstone Locks. Like all the locks on the arm they were extremely easy to operate. A further half mile brought us to the two Puttenham Locks where the water was cascading over the top gates. The clear water of the pound that followed contained more fish, and big ones at that, to the cubic yard than any other stretch of canal I have seen.

After Buckland and Aston Clinton Locks, 12 and 13 respectively, came the one and three quarter mile pound that leads to the



edge of the town. The hawthorns were in blossom and herons patrolled ahead of us, giving typical unspectacular but picturesque rural canal scenery.

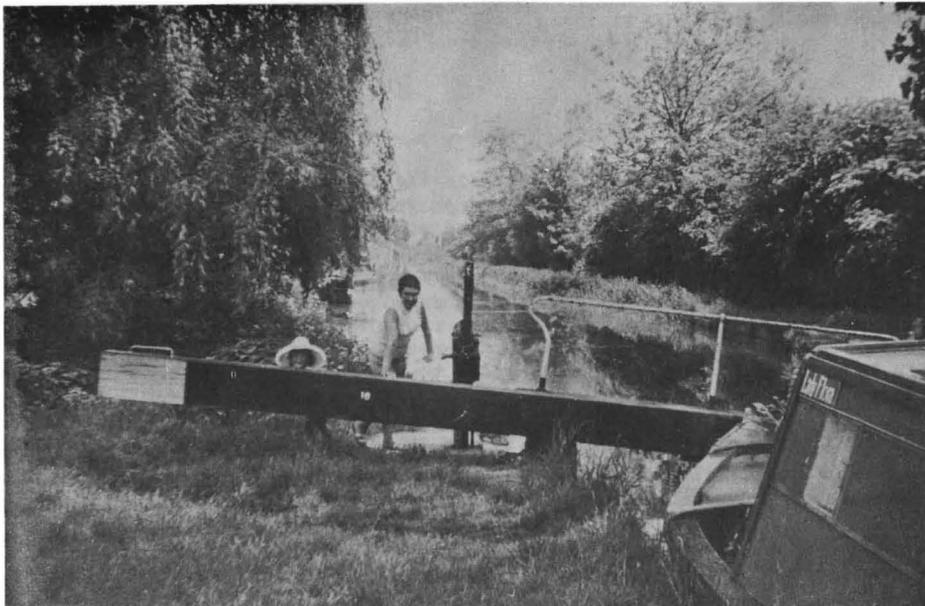
We saw B.W.B. employees trimming the towpath at several places on the way down, and at Aylesbury Lock, no.14, another was liberally slapping paint on the balance beam. Here the countryside gave way to parkland, and in the final quarter of a mile below the last Aylesbury Lock no.16, the canal became urban, but not unpleasantly so. It was disappointing though to find that we were churning up mud with our 2'3" draught for the first time on the arm.

After taking on water we turned in the Basin, which was full, and moored just outside. Entering the basin involved opening a remarkable floating footbridge that is operated by running on the spot in a crouching position while one half disappears under the other and your feet frequently disappear under the water. We were able to restock at some of the Aylesbury supermarkets, which are a short walk from the canal, and found the basin-side pub very congenial. The local swimming-pool is also nearby and we went for a foolhardy soaking in its heated water with the early June winds blasting around us. There are slipper baths at the pool, but they are only open on Friday and Saturday evenings.

The journey back next day was equally enjoyable. It took the two of us (with enthusiastic attempts at helping from our five year old daughter) about four and a quarter hours to get from Marsworth to Aylesbury, and slightly less to go back. Obviously an active third hand preparing the locks would shorten the time, and make the return trip in a day quite feasible. We

We were extremely glad that we had at last gone down the arm and found it one of the best parts of our holiday. I can recommend it as a pleasant and easy cruise and hope that more find the time to take advantage of this comparatively well maintained waterway.

Below, the arm in June; on the cover, the arm in winter. Map and photo below by the author.



# Letters to the Editor

22nd February 1970.

Colchester,  
Essex.

Dear Madam,

There are three principal issues included in the dispute over whether Josher should be permitted to exist or not. I think it helps to keep them clear and distinct.

The first is whether British Waterways should be criticised or not. It is not relevant to this question to ask whether British Waterways deserve criticising. British Waterways are a single Board charged with the responsibility to administer 3,000 miles of inland navigation. When the original companies were empowered to build and administer canals, they were required by Parliament to do certain things in the public interest. British Waterways are no less obliged today; more so, since they are nationalised and therefore supposed to act entirely in the public interest. It is a corollary of this that the public should be able to proclaim their interest- i.e. to complain and criticise. And a pressure group and its members are a part of the public.

This has nothing to do with politeness. One may state disagreement frankly and strongly and remain polite. Servile silence is not politeness.

The second issue is whether Josher should express his views. It is a hackneyed phrase that the right to express an opinion is essential for democracy. It is however true that for a voice to be silenced merely because some of his listeners dislike what they hear is for the fist of dictatorship to strike. One may ignore the speaker or better his argument, but one cannot strike him down without striking down the freedom of men.

Thirdly, there is the question of what the IWA exists for. It does not exist to propogate or protect the cruiseway. It does not exist to spread the culture and values of mass-produced mediocrity to the last recesses of England. Its purpose is to promote the survival and expansion of a better way of life, and of a better set of values, than is the lot of most of our society.

Yours sincerely,  
PETER HARRISON.

Woking,  
Surrey.

March 16th. 1970.

Dear Miss Johnstone,

I was appalled to learn in the March Windlass of the IWA Council ruling that there are to be no anonymous articles in branch journals.

As the Editor of Windlass rightly points out the anonymous article has its place in journalism, and to stifle the viewpoint of those who, for good personal reasons, do not want to be identified, must inevitably impose some censorship.

As someone who has some knowledge of journalistic matters, may I point out that it is accepted practice among the British press that provided the identity of the writer is known to the Editor of the publication concerned, anonymous articles and letters have every right to be published. If they do not accord to the 'party' or 'council' line, then so much the better. Their contribution to a stimulating and controversial Press can be invaluable.

I sincerely hope that every branch journal Editor will bring pressure to bear on the IWA Council to change this silly and illogical ruling in the interests of an important point of principle. If not I can visualise the result: branch journals will become nothing more than chronicles of trumpet blowing, back-slapping trivia.

Yours faithfully,  
JUNE SPAREY.

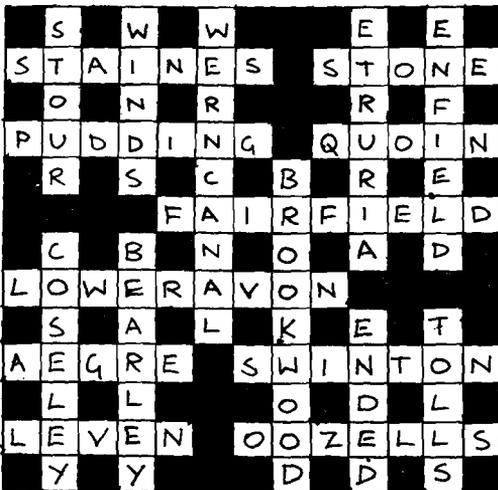
# QUIZ . . .



1. Where is Double Rail Lock?      2, Where is Ducketts Cut?
3. Which were the first three pound locks to be built on the River Thames and which authority built them?
4. Which English Canal was the first to use pound locks?
5. Which canal turner has the greatest bore?
6. Where at a lock can a collar be found?

Answers please to Roger Stephens, 38 Sandhurst Drive, Seven Kings, Ilford, Essex, by April 30th. 1970.

BELOW: Answer to Crossword No.2.



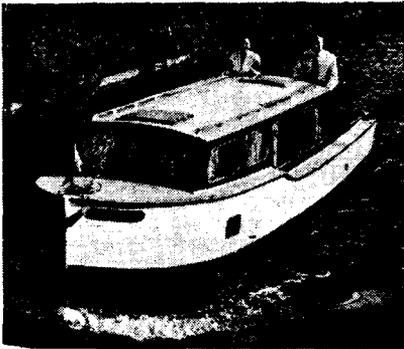
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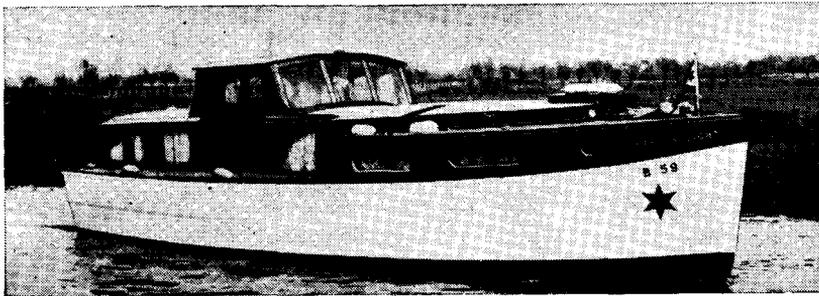
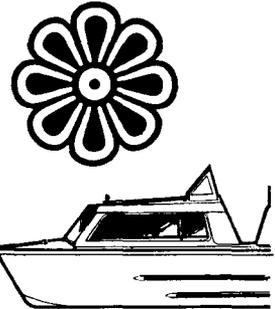
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