

DIARY

To Jan 10 - Waterways in Focus. An exhibition of photographs by Derek Pratt in the Museum foyer.

Jan 12 - IWA video evening at the Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club at 7.30.

Feb 16 - Clyde Puffers. An illustrated talk by Hamish Dawson in the Museum Schools Room at 7.30.

Feb 20 to 28 - Friends helping on the Museum stand at the Birmingham Boat Caravan and Leisure Show at the National Exhibition Centre. Contact John or Sue Millican on 0452 722407.

Mar 5 - Canal Boat Art. An illustrated talk by Tony Lewery in the Museum Schools Room at 7.30.

Mar 12 - IWA AGM in the Museum Schools Room at 7.30 followed by social event and buffet.

Apr 3 to 24 - Exhibition of photographs by Roger Butler in the Museum foyer.

Apr 6 - Fifteen Years with the Tall Ship Soren Larsen. An illustrated talk by skipper Tony Davis in the Museum Schools Room at 7.30. Tony will describe filming for the Onedin Line, voyages to Greenland and Australia and homeward round the Horn. NOTE change from previously advertised meeting on Apr 20.

Apr 10 to 12 - Crafts Weekend at the Museum. For details, see inside page.

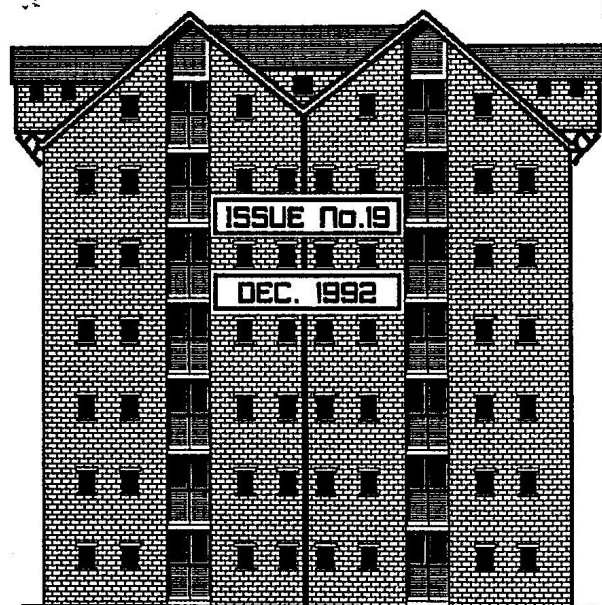
Apr 18 - Boat and Watersports Jumble in the Museum car park between 10am and 4pm. For details and volunteers needed, see inside page.

May 18 - Friends AGM followed by mystery objects game in the Museum Schools Room at 7.30. NOTE correction of date.

May 22-3 - Canals 200 Celebration - Tall ships in the dry docks and boats, horses and tugs working at the Museum. More details in the next newsletter.

For evening meetings, car access to the Museum is from Southgate St. Non-members are welcome.

LLANTHONY LOG



"Nod"

Newsletter of the Friends of the
National Waterways Museum

The "Friends" is Registered Charity No. 800282

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EDITORIAL

This is the fourth issue since I took over as Editor, and I hope, despite a few early 'hiccups', that readers are still finding the LOG to be interesting and informative. Both Richard Trelfa and I have learnt much since we produced our first issue in March 1992, and which we hope will be reflected in future issues.

Although the past year has unfortunately seen a decline in the number of Friends, the organisation has nevertheless helped the Museum to make good progress, not least in the dredger restoration and the turntables and associated rail track. Once the dredger is completed, hopefully by early Spring, attention can be turned to other projects which have inevitably had to be deferred. I wish the Museum and the 'Friends' all success in 1993.

A. L. G.

IS THIS THE REAL YOU?

I put this edition of the Log through the spell checker on my word processor. It would not accept some names, and proposed alternatives. Some of them seemed to be improvements. What do you think & do you recognise them? Lea Daemon, Alar Garnet, Dace Mac, Alar, Beady, Angel & Ton Coder, Charilly Wallaby, Alar Moral, Terra Declaring, Den Fiord, Christ Peaking, Brain Brown, Doric Toiler, Hug Coney-Jokes, Paling & Tremor Hill, Clade Calico, Start Darnel, Bodice II, & Jade Saver

Richer Trifle

Cash Support for Museum Projects

Following discussion and agreement by the Committee, two major cheques have been handed over to the Museum. One for £4304 was for half the recent expenditure on the restoration and refurbishment of the dredger (the other half being covered by a grant from the Science Museum). Around half of this expenditure has been on refitting the woodwork in the crews quarters, with further substantial sums going on welding, paint and repairs to engine components.

A second cheque for £2000 was to cover a variety of items that will help to improve the Museum's displays. The main item is a specially commissioned video that will introduce visitors to the Museum. It will be on show in the foyer and will include some of the Friends activities. Other items include posters and stills from vintage waterways films, three sets of pulleys for use in the Schools Room, a VHF radio for the crew of the tug Kennet and a contribution to the cost of replacing the bricks around the railway lines recently relayed by Friends.

The Committee has also agreed to support a longer term project to provide a computer for use in the Schools Room. Building on the work of staff and volunteers to date, the aim is to increase the information and fun elements of the Schools Room. There are several programs available that will allow children to tackle canal related problems and activities, including a database of canal dates, lengths and builders etc. Provision of a computer with a robust keyboard will allow the programs to be used by children and also by the general public. The total sum required is around £3000. The aim is for the Friends to raise £1000 by donations when renewing subscriptions, and this will help the Museum to secure grants to cover the balance.

H. C-J

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LIFTING & SHIFTING WEEKEND.

(a) A Note from Les Dalton.

Fifteen volunteers from The Friends of the National Waterways Museum helped at the Lifting and Shifting Weekend on Saturday and Sunday 3rd. and 4th. October and with the preparation work on Friday 2nd.

Their efforts were concentrated mainly on the sale of tickets and the opening and closing of the 'gate', (actually a heavy metal barrier), to allow exhibitors to enter and leave and Peter and his passengers to take a tour of the Docks.

Attention had also to be paid to the needs of a number of people who had apparently come some distance to use the Museum Car Park toilets without realising that these were temporarily in a 'no go' area, and to the efforts of others to obtain entry without paying.

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(b)...and Alan Garnett's Memories of the Weekend.

I was asked to fire the boiler on No.4 Dredger to enable the aft winch and steam whistle to be operated for visitors on both days of the event. On Saturday, having got everything ready for the Museum opening time, the rain started and went on -and on-and on, so one of my memories is of being in very wet clothes for most of the day, though fortunately with no apparent adverse effects! Doubtless this applied also to other helpers on the outside exhibits. As would be expected, visitors to these exhibits were somewhat scarce although a few hardy souls did brave the elements. Neither the steam crane nor Kennet attracted many people - in fact it was finally decided to abandon the Kennet trips and hope for better weather on Sunday. Saturday therefore was rather a disappointing day in view of all the preparation work that had been done.

Luckily the weather on Sunday turned out to be much improved, and the attendance followed suit. Dave McDougall, Alan Conder and Charlie Wallace spent much time demonstrating the steam crane in action by transferring a net of sacks from an open-topped railway wagon into the hold of the former Severn & Canal Carrying Company motor boat Oak and back again, and in the process, probably depositing black smuts from the crane's chimney on the heads and shoulders of the very interested but mainly unsuspecting audiences!

Kennet, with Alan Morgan, Terry Dellbridge and helpers was very much in demand giving trips around the Dock Basin at 50p. a time. Considerable interest was aroused by using the Museum's small Mercury tractor to shunt fruit vans and wagons along the refurbished rail track and turntable in the yard and part of the car park outside the yard gates,, supervised by Des Fforde, with assistance from Chris Perkins and Brian Brown.

Many visitors came aboard the dredger to see the video of it being operated by Museum staff and Friends before the sinking, a display of photographs of the post-sinking salvage operations, and the extent of restoration carried out, particularly the beautifully repanelled cabins. The operation of the winch and whistle proved to be very popular particularly with the younger age group, many of whom were allowed to operate these items themselves under supervision.

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All these activities, together with the display of lifting and shifting equipment in the car park and various models in the Schools Room, made all the effort worthwhile in spite of the weather's bad behaviour at the start. Many thanks to all those who helped with this event.

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CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS FLOATING SHED?



AN ADVERTISING FEATURE.
by Doris Toller.

Being a Friend of the Museum can be far from dull; one may be asked to wield tools other than chipping hammer and paint brush. Let me give you a recent example: I was asked to join Rosemary Conway-Jones at the English Tourist Board's stand at the World Travel Market at Earls Court for a craft session. She and I, dressed as women of the cut, were to demonstrate bonnet and rag rug making. As well as talking of the Museum, we met some interesting people and carried on some fascinating conversations.....

Member of Great British Public: "I think your bonnets are wonderful"

Me: "Yes, aren't they lovely. My friend here made them. Mine is black because I am in mourning for Queen Victoria."

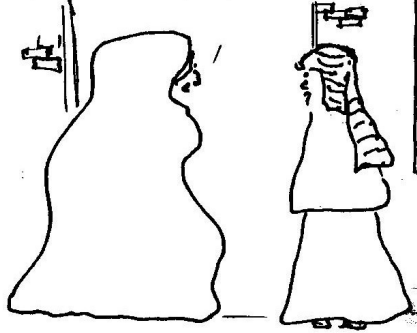
M.G.B.P.: "But isn't that Queen Victoria over there?"

Me: (approaching lady dressed in costume, and tapping her on the shoulder): "Excuse me Madam, you should be dead, I'm in mourning for you."

Queen Victoria: "Sorry about that, but what a lovely bonnet, could I get one like it?"

If you would like a bonnet as admired by Queen Victoria, apply to Rosemary Conway-Jones who will gladly sell you a pattern. (Mind you, rag rugs are easier!).

WE ARE ALMOST AMUSED



THE NATIONAL WATERWAYS
MUSEUM at GLOUCESTER DOCKS
BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT
BLACK BONNET MAKERS
HONOURED TO
SERVE HER LATE MAJESTY
QUEEN VICTORIA

JAMES

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Visit from Birchills Friends

A party of Friends of the Birchills Canal Museum at Walsall visited Gloucester in November and saw some of the activities that volunteers carry out. After an introductory tour of the docks, they went round the Museum, saw the Fielding engine and the dredger winch in action and had a trip on the tug Kennet.

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ADDITIONAL SKIPPERS FOR QB II.

Congratulations are in order to two members of the Friends - Terry Dellbridge and Alan Morgan - who have recently been granted their Boatmen's Licence, and are therefore now able to skipper the Museum's Trip Boat Queen Boadicea II for public trips on the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal and up the River Severn as far as Stourport. Well done.

A. L. G.

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Guess for whom the spell checker offered the name -
Petal Thongs?

BETTY CONDER'S REMINISCENCES.

(Editor's Note. This is the second of four articles received about the pre-opening activities at the Museum. The first one appeared in the last issue).

When Tony asked his father to help at the Museum in September 1987, I said "What about me?" Tony boggled a bit but agreed that I could tag along.

We found Tony's wife Angela already painting bridge numbers in the Sackworks and Alan joined her. Tony must have said to Dave McDougall "Find my mum something to do - she's good at polishing." So Dave gave me Sculptor's propeller and a carborundum block and launched me on a career of extreme variety characterised by permanent muckiness, extreme discomfort, continuous hilarity and enduring friendships.

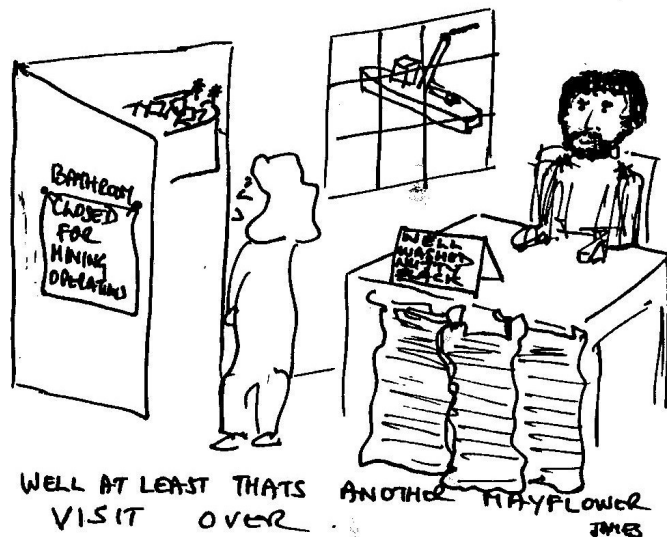
I patiently brought back the gleam to the propeller and to the bells on Level Two but I would have to tour the Museum to remember all the other exhibits I dealt with. I developed the doctrine of aesthetic dirt because I got into trouble for cleaning things too enthusiastically: if the dirt won't come off on the visitors, then you've cleaned the object enough. However, other articles had to be cleaned to Dave's personal satisfaction, and he has X-ray specs.

We worked in the Sackworks and other workers would come in and give their advice, mostly to do with the use of electrical tools or acid, things which made us shudder with distaste.

We joined the pioneers in the cottage by the Southgate Street Entrance for coffee and usually lunched in a jolly, grubby mob in the British Flag, now the Tall Ship.

That was a cold winter and the Sackworks was arctic, so I worked in the cottage on movable objects while the legitimate occupants toiled around me. A dozen people might have to put up with the smell of the chemicals I used or the banging or the filthy messes I made with rust and oil. I learned to use a heat stripper and only set fire to Sabrina's wheel once. I grasped a hammer and cold chisel for the first time under the eyes of a king of skilled craftsmen. I was banished to the backyard when Dave feared I might blow the place up.

A large crowd of people shared the cottage's bathroom which was approached through Des Fforde's office. The Evans had a caravan in the backyard and when 'Mayflower' or 'President' called, they too used the bathroom. The rest of us watched the wisps of steam and sniffed the bubble bath and hoped they would not be too long. The hot water system was dodgy and there was no regular cleaner, so occasionally one tackled the accumulated dirt and always one trawled around for coffee cups.



I remember Tony dashing down the uncarpeted stairs yelling "The Gloucesters are coming!" and you didn't know if he meant the Royals or the Regiment and neither would have surprised you. It was the Regiment: senior officers picking Tony's brains prior to modelling their own Museum.

The pressure of work increased steadily after the turn of the year and was only broken by the works outing on 'Stanegarth' from the Docks to Sharpness.

Now I often worked in the Museum building. Clad in wellies and waterproofs, I scrubbed the lock gates with

Fairy liquid and a hand brush. I perched on high piled heaps of sacks filled with Perlite, sewing up their necks with Bangladesh string. I was marooned on Walsall when someone took my ladder away and I was down in her engine room when the Television people came and they even noticed my goldfish impressions, given as I polished the perspex windows.

It never occurred to me that I would go on working once the Museum was up and running. I never envisaged the use of the working Friends. All those months of slog and fun and camaraderie have paid off in years of more slog and fun and firm friendship, amongst a growing band of like-minded souls.

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BREST '92.

Tony Conder's Account of his Visit.

C'est Fou Fou Fou -

- or so the French papers said about Brest '92. 2000+ sailing boats ranging from Russian square riggers to miniature Dutch Bottes and 1 million visitors in four days suggest that they judged the headlines about right.

The Museum went to the show along with the Boat Museum - Ellesmere Port to wave the inland waterways flag and to see what all the fuss was about.

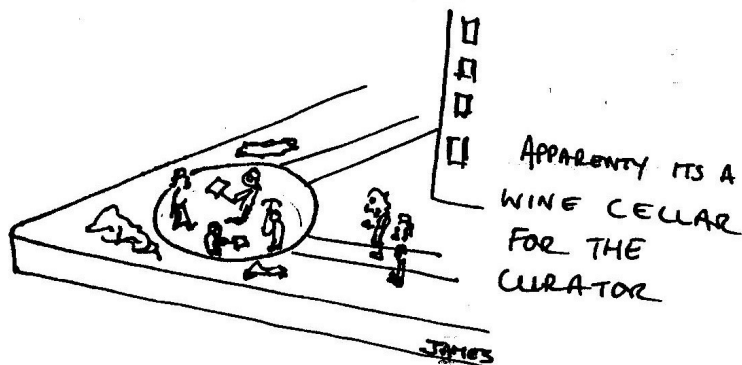
Thanks to sponsorship by Brittany Ferries and grant aid the Area Museum Council, the trip was cheap and painless. Accommodation for camping was on a football pitch and the toilet block was less than certain in its operation, but with those hazards overcome, organisation was great. Any major difficulties could be washed away on a tide of cheap red plonk.

Brest harbour was given over to ships from all countries - schooners, oyster boats, Thames sailing barges, Viking longships, Greek rowing galleys etc. etc. The French naval dockyard was opened and various ships of war were part of the event.

When the French have an event they don't waste time - the stand was open from 9am. to 10pm. every day. The show carried on until 2 or 3 every morning. For those trying to sleep, 4-6am. was best as most revellers had returned to

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camp and finished erecting their tents by 4am, and ships crews did not get up for the new day until 6!



On the first evening of the show proper, 15000 boats crews sat down to eat several tons of cray fish and salmon. All through the show the many temporary restaurants served fishy dishes constantly on the go. On the final night - Bastille night - the sky was blasted apart by the most exhilarating of firework displays.

From the Museum's point of view we made good contacts with a number of other museums, learnt a lot about working together and saw some inspiring restoration work.

If it comes round again and they hold a Brest '96, I advise you to go. The sight of a sea full of sailing boats of all kinds, the sounds of the Trafalgar gun companies cannon blasting out across the bay and the taste and smell of the food made it an unforgettable event.

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PETER'S DAY OUT.

by Pauline Hill.

Some months ago, Jane was given an invitation to attend the Bromyard Gala Weekend with Peter the Museum Shire Horse for the Heavy Horse Parade. This weekend is the culmination of the Bromyard Carnival fortnight and is always full of interesting happenings. Jane decided that this would be a good way to get Peter used to taking part in similar

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gatherings and also be a chance to advertise the Museum, so she accepted the invitation.

Pat very kindly delivered the cart on the Friday night for Tremor and Ray (who were there with engines), to mind until Sunday. On Sunday morning, Pat and Claire came with Jane and Peter who were suitably groomed ready for the show.

The day was full of interest with the Household Cavalry doing their musical ride, the Infantry Band, a Scottish Band, a display of wood chopping and a children's Motor Cycle Stunt Team. Jane, helped by Pat and Claire, put Peter's shining harness on and hitched him to his cart. Some of Peter's friends from the Museum's Horses Weekend were there together with some new friends, one of which he seemed to very taken with - a smart looking mare with a young foal.

Soon he was joining the line to go into the arena. He looked very smart and did not seem concerned when the gentleman doing the chat did not know his name, only that he was from the National Waterways Museum. Peter seemed quite happy to do the parade despite the unusual noises around such as steam engines. Afterwards he was tethered to the horse box and behaved extremely well, letting Jane go off for a wander around the exhibits.

During the day many people, some with horses of their own, commented on the good condition that Peter was in and complimented Jane on a job well done. Some recognised Peter and knew that he belonged to the National Waterways Museum, so his fame has obviously spread.

Soon it was time to hitch him up again for the second parade of the day. This time they managed to get his name right and he was presented with a red, white and blue rosette for attending, but at the time, seemed more interested in the mare alongside him. When Jane brought him out of the arena, she stopped to pick up the boys and Peter became impatient to catch up with the mare, and as a result went back to the horse box almost at a trot.

Peter had a rest and mowed the grass whilst people took photographs of him with his rosette on and then it was time to load him up and for Pat to deliver him home. Next day Pat kindly fetched the cart so that Peter could resume his duties at the Docks. Jane and Peter enjoyed the day and handed out lots of Museum leaflets, so I am sure some of the people will come along to see Peter 'at home'.

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Gloucester Boat and Watersports JUMBLE

Planning is well under way for the third boat and watersports jumble to be held in the Museum car park on 18 April 1993. The event will again be organised by the Boat Jumble Group, led by Stuart Darnley, and all the proceeds will go towards improving or extending the Museum's collection.

This year, Stuart is aiming to attract 200 traders and private individuals selling boats, dinghies, canoes, sailboards, engines, outboards, chandlery, fishing tackle, diving equipment and trailers etc.

Although primarily aimed at boating and watersports enthusiasts, those who attended last year's jumble will know that there will also be a good range of tools, fastenings, paint and clothes etc that will have wider appeal. As well as second-hand goods, traders will be selling surplus new stock at discounted prices to improve their cash flow. So put the date in your diary, and come along to see the bargains on offer.

If you have some unwanted items to sell, a car boot or dinghy space will cost £10 or a boat and trailer space will cost £15. Alternatively, Stuart will arrange to sell things for you on commission. For further details, contact Stuart Darnley on 0367 52343.

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Volunteers Needed for Jumble

A good number of volunteers will be needed on the day to collect admission fees and supervise car parking. A few people will also be required to help lay out the site on the day before, to direct traders to their spaces and to tidy up afterwards. If you can help, please contact Hug Conway-Jones on Gloucester 619679 or Charlie Wallace on Gloucester 304267. This is the Friends major fund-raising event of the year, so please come and join in. H. C-J.

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Canal Mania in Gloucester

By Hugh Conway-Jones

Just two hundred years ago, Gloucester was in the grip of the canal mania which made speculators rush to buy shares in any canal scheme in the belief that they could

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soon sell at a profit. It was on 6th November 1792 that the first meeting was held to consider a ship canal to link Gloucester with the Severn estuary near Berkeley.

The meeting at the old Bell Hotel in Southgate St had not been publicly advertised, but word got around the business community, and there was no shortage of potential subscribers. Publicity for such meetings was often kept deliberately to a minimum because promoters wanted to keep a good thing to themselves and their friends. When a Somerset paper announced that a meeting would be held at Wells to promote a canal from Bristol to Taunton, the promoters tried to keep it secret by buying up all the newspapers containing the advertisement!

There was great excitement at the 6th November meeting as those present knew they were embarking on a major project that would have far reaching consequences for Gloucester and the Midlands. The meeting agreed to seek authorisation for the canal from Parliament as soon as possible, and to cover the expenses involved, those present were asked to pay an initial deposit of one pound for each hundred pound share they wished to take up. To prevent improper speculation, it was agreed that no share could be transferred until fifteen pounds had been paid thereon.

The prime movers in promoting the canal were business and professional men in Gloucester and in parts of the West Midlands which relied on the Severn navigation. The activists were mainly from Gloucester, but the largest individual subscribers were banker Samuel Skey from Bewdley and ironmasters William Reynolds and John Wilkinson from Shropshire.

The promoters had arranged for an initial survey of the route to be carried out by Josiah Clowes, the Principal Engineer of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal. His route passed through low ground, quite near to the river in places, and had an entrance from the Severn estuary where the Sharpness new dock was later built. They also commissioned a second survey by Richard Hall, a local land surveyor, and he proposed a more inland route with an entrance at Berkeley Pill.

A respected estuary pilot advised that Berkeley Pill was the only fit place for an entrance, and so the promoters opted for Hall's route even though it required deeper cutting and it passed through higher value agricultural land. (Years later, the canal was actually

built to a different route.)

Objections from landowners and from the proprietors of the Stroudwater Canal were avoided by accepting clauses in the bill that would protect their interests, and the bill passed through Parliament easily in March 1793. Thus Gloucester's canal became one of the twenty to be authorised in what was the peak year of the canal mania. Consequently, it will be one particularly featured next year in Canals 200 - a nationwide campaign organised by British Waterways to celebrate the bicentenary of the boom year for new canals.

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MUSEUM ACQUIRES BLUE TOP BUTTY BOAT "WYE".

As a result of a British Waterways sale at Sharpness recently of a number of craft surplus to their requirements, the Museum has purchased the butty boat "Wye", which is currently moored in the Barge Arm.



Information on its history is sparse, so the following News Release has been prepared by the Museum: -

"APPEAL FOR PHOTOGRAPHS OF BRITISH WATERWAYS 'BLUE TOP' BUTTY 'WYE' BETWEEN 1959 - 1983.

The National Waterways Museum is asking for help in tracing the history of one of the latest arrivals to its collection. The British Waterways narrowboat 'WYE' has been bought by the Museum in Gloucester's historic docks and is moored alongside other floating exhibits belonging to the Museum.

Keeper of Collections, Dave McDougall, said "We think the Wye was only commercially used on the London to Birmingham route but we have not found anything to prove this. We would be very interested to receive photos of the boat which could be used to trace her history".

The 'Wye', built in 1959-60, is one of the last batches of narrowboats made for commercial canal carrying for British Waterways. She was one of the first six boats of that type to be built by Thames Launch Works at Teddington on the River Thames. Only three years later the majority of

canal carrying in narrowboats stopped after the bad winter and the boat was put to other uses.

The boat has fibre-glass covers which were designed to facilitate loading and unloading but they were not popular with the boatmen who dubbed them 'dustbin boats'. Wye used to have a ply-wood cabin (now removed) and a cabin with an Eisan toilet which the Public Health Department objected to and which was not fitted in later boats of this type.

It is thought that since 1963, British Waterways have used the boat for maintenance purposes and she has spent the last few years working on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal.

Staff at the National Waterways Museum would be very interested to hear from anyone who has information on, or photographs of the WYE during its working life as a commercial carrier between 1959 and 1963. Please contact Keeper of Collections, Dave McDougall, or Publicity Assistant, Clare Caldicott.

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WE SAY GOODBYE to PETER & SALLIE EVANS.

Peter Evans, who has been a long serving member of the Museum staff, has recently resigned. He started as Workshop Manager and lately has been Trip Boat Manager. His wife Sallie was Visitor Services Manager from October 1987 until leaving last May. They have decided to move not only away from the Museum, which has been part of their lives for nearly six years, but go to the other side of the country, to the county of Norfolk. Their new address from December 5th is:

2, ROSE VILLA COTTAGES,
BRESSINGHAM ROAD,
ROYDON, DISS,
NORFOLK, IP22 3XW.

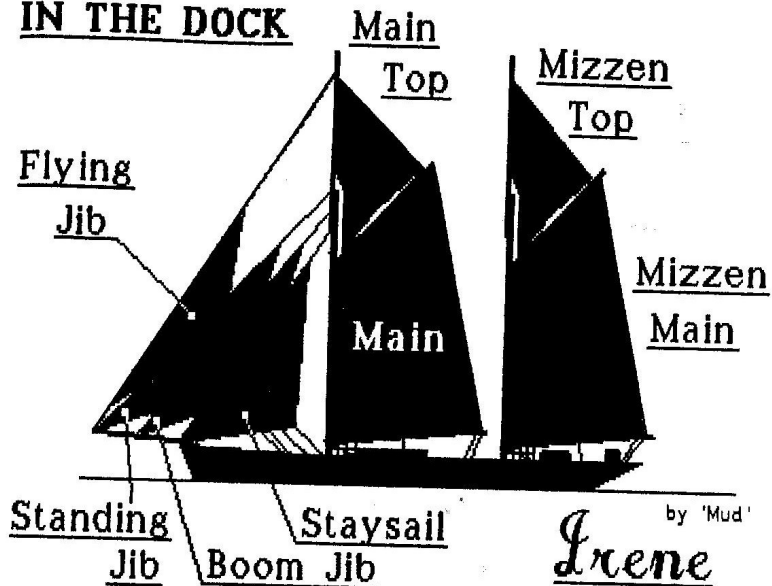
Telephone: BRESSINGHAM (0379 88) 609.

They request that any of their friends call in if they pass that way on holiday, and whatever happens, keep in touch! They would like to add their best wishes and happiest of Seasonal Greetings to everyone with whom they have had the pleasure to work.

The "Friends" also send their thanks to Peter and Sallie for all their help in the past, together with best wishes for their happiness and success in the future.

A. L. G.

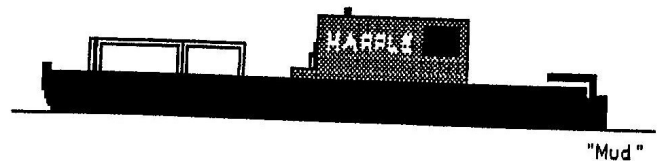
IN THE DOCK



IN THE CAR PARK

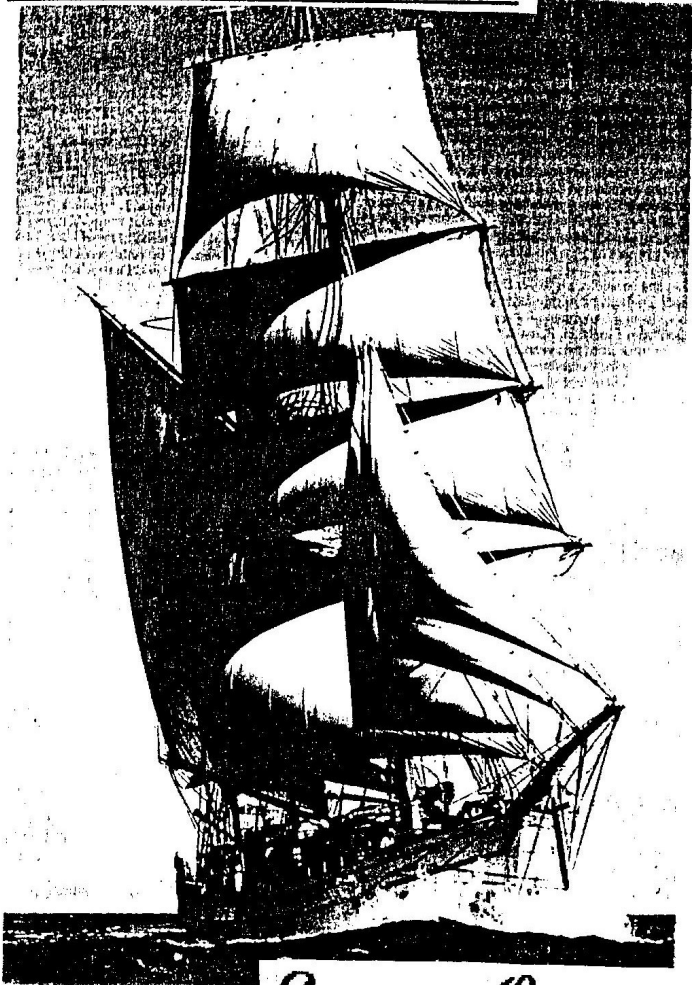
(as featured in the last issue)

For your office party.....



.....an icebreaker!

AND ON THE HIGH SEAS



Soren Larsen

GIFTS from Around the World

The Museum received some unusual presents when the tall ship *Soren Larsen* returned to Gloucester in October. As one of the fleet of vessels owned by the Square Sail company, she used to be based in Gloucester and was in great demand by film companies. She left in 1987 to become the flagship of the First Fleet Re-enactment that was part of the celebrations organised to mark the bicentenary of the founding of Australia. Later she went on to New Zealand, and she was adopted by the city of Auckland where a new maritime museum was being established.

On her return, she became the first British tall ship to round Cape Horn since 1936, and this epic voyage was marked by the Crown Agents issuing special stamps for some of the remote islands where she called. Then she took part in the Columbus Tall Ships Race across the Atlantic and came first in her class. She has returned to Gloucester for a major refit by the skilled craftsmen who work for Tomi Neilsen.

To celebrate her arrival, a party of invited guests joined her at Sharpness and enjoyed a pleasant cruise up the canal. For the approach to the docks, Gloucester's Town Cryer climbed to the crow's nest and ensured that everyone knew what was happening! Once moored beside the West Quay, skipper Tony Davies made presentations to the Mayor and to Tony Conder. The Museum received a symbolic bale of wool from the new maritime museum at Auckland and a set of first day covers for the special stamps issued to mark the voyage round the Horn.

H. C-J.