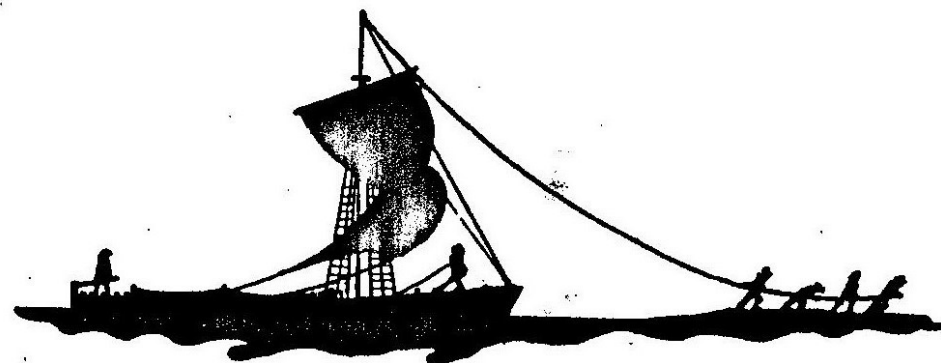


CONTACTS:

Chairman & Research	Hugh Conway-Jones 1 Grovelands, Gloucester, GL4 7JF.	Glo. 619679
Secretary & Publicity	Janet Illingworth-Cooper 2a Oxford St, Gloucester, GL1 3EQ.	(work) Glo. 20306
Treasurer	Les Dalton 4 Conway Rd, Gloucester, GL3 3PL.	Glo. 617236
Crafts	Peter Wallace 16c Grosvenor Rd, Gloucester, GL2 0SA	Glo. 24686
Dredger Drivers	Alan Conder 12 Bathurst Park Rd, Lydney, GL15 5HG.	Dean 44384
Fielding Engine	Trevor Hill 154 Cheltenham Rd, Gloucester, GL2 0JR.	Glo. 25578
Helpers Weekday Rota	Doris Toller 5 Henningsdale Rd, Gloucester, GL2 6HN.	Glo. 424272
Helpers Weekend Rota	Cherry Tomlinson 9 Somerset Place, Gloucester, GL1 1XG.	Glo. 304547
Meetings	Nick Rowles 14 Twyver Close, Upton St Leonards, GL4 8EF.	Glo. 617362
Membership Secretary	Peter Collins 16 Bewley Way, Churchdown, GL3 2DU.	Glo. 855235
Newsletter Editor	Philip Conway-Jones 1 Grovelands, Gloucester, GL4 7JF.	Glo. 619679
Restoration	David McDougall Nat.Wat.Mus., Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EH.	(work) Glo. 307009
Talks Service	Peter Thompson 43 Forest View Rd, Gloucester, GL4 0BY.	Glo. 20442
Visits	Ian Parsons Zanetta House, Church Rd, Churchdown, GL3 2ES.	Glo. 712096

LLANTHONY LOG



Newsletter of the Friends of the National Waterways Museum

ISSUE NO. 2 - SEPTEMBER 1988.

All opinions expressed in Llanthony Log are those of the editor and the individual contributors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Friends of The National Waterways Museum.

Waterside Walk at Worcester

By Hugh Conway-Jones.

Rain was falling as we walked down to the river through the Water Gate of the former abbey, and our guides ominously pointed out the flood levels inscribed in the wall there. Rain was still falling as we had lunch overlooking the river in a hotel that had formerly been the home of Edward Leader Williams, the engineer of the Severn Commission. But after that, the sun broke through, and we enjoyed a delightful walk around Worcester's waterside.

Our guides had arranged for us to go on to the island beside Diglis Locks, and we chatted to the lock keeper as he worked several boats through in each direction. We looked around the maintenance yard, clambering into the big derrick and looking out over the huge weir behind. Then we walked back across the oil dock, along the wartime riverside wharf and up to Diglis Basin, the start of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal.

A diversion here took us to see the remains of the pumphouse from which the roof came that is now over the Fielding engine in the Museum. We also identified the former Severn and Canal Company stables, now threatened by demolition, where generations of Gloucester boatmen who had gone up river behind the tug picked up their horses for the long climb up to Birmingham.

After a brief stop at the Civil War Commandery for a refreshing cup of tea, we continued along the canal towpath to Lovesmoore Basin where new waterside development fits in delightfully with the surviving old buildings. Then we left the canal to walk back through the old vinegar works and past a former glove factory which is now an impressive hotel.

No 4 to Dredge Again

The Museum's steam dredger is being prepared for a working demonstration in the Main Basin, hopefully in November. The idea is to record the operation on video, which can then be shown to visitors to illustrate how No 4 used to work. The new dredger, Thomas Fletcher, will also be working at the same time, and there is talk of a competition to see which can fill a hopper barge faster!

Enjoy a fascinating evening of waterway entertainment with the National Waterways Museum at the New Olympus Theatre, Gloucester on October 19th. Starting at 7.30 pm, John Huntley will present a 2½ hour long programme, featuring Ice Breakers (1911), The Basingstoke Canal (1913), The Kennet & Avon Canal in 1961, Painted Boats (1945) and Barging on the Prince Regents Canal in 1924. Tickets £3 in advance from:

Guildhall Arts Centre Glou SO5 0SR

~~The Leisure Centre Box Office, tel. Glou. 306788~~

Audiosonic, Eastgate Shopping Precinct, tel. Glou. 302280

Starline Travel, London Road, Stroud, tel. Stroud 5578.

Tickets also available on the night (if unsold beforehand), price £3.50.

Friends Help with Carnival Float

The Museum's entry in the Gloucester carnival procession was a replica of a canal boat that had previously been featured at the Chelsea Flower Show and other similar events. The paintwork needed some attention, and in response to an appeal for help, Roy Dunlop, Peter Wallace, Doris Toller and Betty Conder carried out an excellent job.

The idea was for the boat to be towed by a horse, but it was thought that the Museum's shire horse would not like the crowds. So a suitable costume was obtained, and Trevor Hill dressed up as the front legs with Pete Evans behind. Other members of Trevor's family joined some of the Museum staff and their families on the float wearing traditional costume.

Mysterious Message Helps Museum

Hugh Conway-Jones' colleagues at the CEGB have become accustomed to taking unofficial messages when he is not at his desk, but they really wondered what was going on when a mysterious caller said "The horse trough is outside the baths." When Hugh returned to his desk, he had to explain that the message was quite genuine. The Museum had appealed for a horse trough, and Hugh had contacted Gloucester Council to enquire where the one formerly at the Cross had been moved to.

Unfortunately, the message did not tell the whole story. Although Hugh duly found the trough outside the old swimming baths in Eastgate Street, it couldn't be moved as it was supporting some scaffolding being used in the refurbishment of the building. However, when the scaffolding came down, the trough was moved to the Museum, and it is being returned to its original use for the benefit of Peter the shire horse.

A Boatman's Cabin

By Josephine Jeremiah, >>

When my husband, Ian, and I decided to buy a 70 ft. narrowboat, I was thrilled. The idea of living in a traditional boatman's cabin, while we fitted out the rest of the boat, was very appealing. Sometime later my feelings about living in a space 10 ft. long by 6 ft. wide were changed, but it is an experience that I would not have missed for the world.

What is a boatman's cabin? Originally it was the living quarters of the boatman and his family, who steered the cargo-laden narrowboats along our canals in times past. The basic layout of the cabin has not changed for 150 years. In such a small space, there is a place for everything; not an inch is wasted.

Fitting out a boatman's cabin is a specialized job, so we obtained the services of Len Beauchamp from Braunston. As there is not such a great demand for this type of work these days, Len checked every detail of the cabin against Raymond, the last ever wooden working boat built by Nurser of Braunston.

The first time we stepped into the finished boatman's cabin was like stepping back in time. All the surfaces had been grained and scumbled by Ron Hough, a well known narrowboat painter. We counted six different finishes including swirls, stippling and horizontal and vertical graining.

The traditional decoration of the working narrowboats was roses and castles, and Ian soon started painting these both inside and outside the cabin. He also painted our Buckby cans and handbowl in the same style.

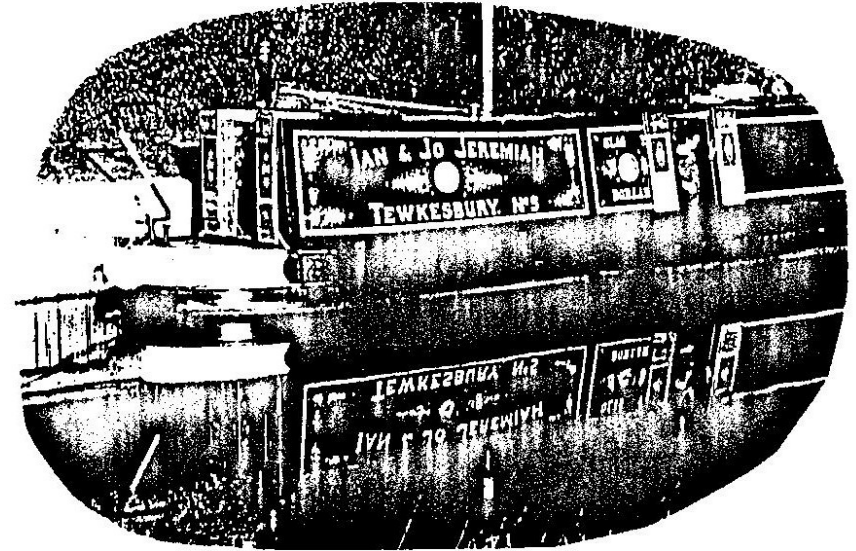
On the left, as you enter the cabin, is a Classic stove. This is a small, black, coal range complete with hob, tiny oven and brass fiddle rail. Above this is a bracket lamp, which would have originally used paraffin, but is now powered by the batteries. Next to the stove is the table cupboard, the door of which drops down to form a small table, whilst inside there is room for provisions and crockery. Adjacent to this is the only other concession we have made to the twentieth century, which is a slim wardrobe.

At the back of the boatman's cabin is the "bed hole". This is a double bed across the width of the boat, which folds up into another cupboard during the day. There is also a side bed opposite the stove. However, I constantly wonder just how the boatman and his family fitted into such a small space. Quite often Ian and I get in each other's way and there are only the two of us!

We quickly set about making the boatman's cabin into our home, trying to keep our efforts as traditional as possible. Behind the stove we hung antique lace plates, sometimes called ribbon plates, which were much loved by the boat people. The plates are an assorted bunch, just as they would have been on the old boats. Knobs and decorations stripped from an old brass bed were utilized to add to the effect.

One lucky find in an antique market was a huge, copper kettle which proved to be a great asset as we always kept lashings of hot water bubbling away on top of the stove. I must admit that I found the lack of running water rather a hardship, but the kettle helped to mitigate the situation.

Ian made bed curtains, edged with handmade lace taken from the border of an old table cloth, and I made patchwork cushions and crocheted doilies to fit over the porthole. It was all very satisfying work.



Our unusual lifestyle had its compensations. Imagine lying in bed on a cold, frosty December night, watching the stars through an open doorway. The doors were open because the stove made the cabin too hot! From our back doors we can appreciate the sights and sounds of the countryside; ducks, swans and the occasional family of mink gambolling on the opposite bank.

We have now moved out of the boatman's cabin into the cabin at the front of the boat with all its modern conveniences. However, on cold winter nights the snug back cabin is still the best place to be.

Commercial Facts about Gloucestershire Waterways (1904)

Researched by Ian Parsons.

On my book shelf, there are a few books on inland waterways and the only one without illustrations is in some ways the most interesting, because it is a factual record of 1904.

This was the high point of the railway boom but a time of decline for canal prosperity. Here are a few facts from "Bradshaw's Canals and Navigable Rivers of England and Wales."

It is a handbook of inland navigation for manufacturers, merchants, traders and others, compiled, after a survey of the entire waterway system by Henry Rodolph de Salis, Assoc. M. Inst. C. E., and director of Fellows, Morton and Clayton Ltd., canal carriers, London, for Henry Blacklock and Co. Ltd., proprietors and publishers of Bradshaw's Guides, 59, Fleet St, London and Albert Square Manchester.

It reads: "River Severn - The navigation of the River Severn may be said to commence at Arley Quarry Landing, between Upper Arley and Highley, in the county of Shropshire. Regular trade on the river is, however, only carried on between the junction with the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal at Stourport and the junction with the Gloucester and Berkeley Ship Canal in Gloucester. In times of full water a few boats manage to navigate from Stourport and up to Bewdley and Arley, but the trade is very small. The portion of the river between Sharpness and Gloucester, to avoid which the Gloucester and Berkeley Ship Canal was constructed, is hardly used at all for navigation, on account of the dangerous shifting sands and the great strength of the tide. Occasionally, however, it is used by trows desirous of saving the tolls incurred on the Gloucester and Berkeley Ship Canal. The western channel of the river from the Upper Parting via Maisemore to the Lower Parting in Gloucester is not a through route, but is only used by vessels going to local wharves. The towing path between Stourport and Gloucester is very little used as steam tugs haul practically the whole of the traffic.

"Sea going vessels navigate the river up to Sharpness Docks. Vessels of 200 tons burden can navigate up to Diglis, Worcester. Severn trows navigate the whole of the river. Narrow boats navigate the river above the entrance of the Gloucester and Berkeley Ship Canal at Gloucester. Steam tugs belonging to the Severn and Canal Carrying Company tow vessels regularly between Gloucester and Diglis and between Diglis and Stourport. Between Gloucester and Diglis, as many as two dozen narrowboats are sometimes towed behind one tug, (the boats being in parallel lines).

Sharpness New Docks and Gloucester and Birmingham Navigation Company:

Sailing vessels can navigate the canal when the water is at its full height, max. 200' x 33' x 13'-6" draught. Steamers 225' x 32' x 13'-6" draught.

Worcester and Birmingham Canal:

Maximum size of narrow boats, 71'-6" x 7'-0" x 4'-0" draught. Hauled by "animals," which means pairs of donkeys.

Stroudwater Canal:

Maximum size of Severn Trows and barges, 70' x 15' x 5' draught, carrying up to 75 tons. Hauled by "animals," which means pairs of donkeys.

Thames and Severn Canal:

Maximum size of boat, 70' x 11' x 3'-6" draught.

Midland and Great Western Joint Railways Lydney Harbour and Canal:

There is good trade done in the harbour and canal. Maximum size of Severn Trows, 100' x 24'-6" x 12'-6" draught. Steam haulage generally.

"At first sight it may seem surprising that the use of steam haulage has not become more general on the main body of the waterways of this country, especially considering the expense and risk of epidemic incurred in keeping large numbers of horses, but the true reason is that so few of the canals are at all adapted for it. The ordinary narrow boat with a capacity of about 30 tons with which the bulk of the inland trade of this country is constructed, is quite small enough already without further deduction on account of engine room space. To work at a profit such vessels fitted up as steamers, it is necessary to tow at least one boat after them. In a barge canal this works well enough as the two boats can pass the locks together, but in a narrow canal delay is caused by having to lock twice, and the towed boat has to be hauled in and out of locks by the crew."

Curator to the Rescue

We should perhaps put on record Tony Conder's brave rescue of a half-witted pigeon from the Barge Arm.

Pigeons don't swim; water is not their natural habitat. This one chose to land in the Barge Arm, and was undoubtedly about to breathe its last when Tony, clinging by his toes from the floating pontoon, hauled it out and gave it the kiss of life.

The Museum staff dried it out, gave it tender loving care, and it soon flew away.

C.T.

Urgent ! - Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Appeal For Help

By *Graham Ettles*.

The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal ran from Gloucester to Hereford via Newent, the Oxenhall Tunnel and Ledbury. It took some 54 years to build and was disused by 1881, a railway being laid on some of its line.

In 1983 a canal society was formed with the aim of preserving and recording as much of the canal as possible. With membership being concentrated around Hereford and more intact stretches of canal there, work was concentrated at that end.

Valuable work has included restoration of a short stretch of canal around the Skew Bridge at Monkhide, and restoration has been helped by some work camps organised by the Waterways Recovery Group of the Inland Waterways Association.

The Gloucester end of the canal has been neglected! Effort is now urgently needed to document what is left and make constructive proposals for conservation of the line of the canal.

This work has been given added impetus by a request from Gloucestershire County Council for details of what can be done with the canal in its area and how the line will be affected by the upgrading of the A40 via Newent.

If you can help in any way or need more information, contact Graham Ettles on Cheltenham (0242) 512802.

Crafts of the Cut

At 2.30 on Sunday 16th October, the first session of the Friends Craft Section will be held in the Museum Schools Room.

Rosemary Conway-Jones will show examples of 'Clothes of the Cut' and will talk about making costumes for the children to dress up in when visiting the Museum. About a dozen costumes are needed and volunteers are wanted to do the work at home with all materials provided.

Peter Wallace will demonstrate some simple woodwork and painting for making the large jigsaws which are enjoyed by the younger (and older) children, and he will talk about model making.

Tea and cakes will be provided, and there will be an opportunity to chat about other projects where the Friends can give much-needed help.

Canal Pageant at Museum

By *Jan Lewis Jeremiah*

During the school term, 24 children in Class Three of Brithdir Primary School took part in a fiction-based Reading for Pleasure Project on canals. Their project was based on "The Butty Boy", written by Jill Paton Walsh.

The Reading for Pleasure Project has been devised by the Mid-Glamorgan Home-School Research Group as a means of actively involving parents as partners in the education of their children. At the end of the project it is usual for the children to put on a display, concert or pageant to thank their parents for helping them with their project work.

Canal costumes were prepared by the parents of the class as part of their involvement in the project. In particular, a number of parents made authentic boatwomen's bonnets for their daughters.

On Tuesday July 19th, Class Three portrayed the History of Canals as a pageant, which consisted of narrative, playlets, musical items and dance. This was performed three times in the Schools Room at the National Waterways Museum. As well as the parents, the audiences included other visiting school parties and members of the public. The performances were thoroughly enjoyed by both participants and spectators.

Tragic Deaths when Sailing Up the River

Extracts from the Gloucester Journal provided by Pam Daw.

10 January 1791. On Wednesday last, the trow John of Bewdley (belonging to the widow Edwards) laden with iron, kelp, deal balks and other goods, sailing up the Severn, about a mile above this city, by a sudden shift of the wind, was in an instant overset, and one man was drowned.

30 November 1795. A barge, deeply laden, belonging to Owner Field of Shrewsbury, going from Bristol to that town, was overset by a gust of wind on Wednesday last near Kempsey. The persons who navigated it were happily saved, but we are extremely sorry to find that Mr. Round, an owner of Brosley, who was returning home on board this vessel and was in the cabin when she went down, unfortunately perished. The barge has since been raised.

Weather-vane Installed

The fine weather-vane now adorning the clock on top of the Schools Room was made and installed by Ray Swan. The design shown on the front cover depicts a gang of bow-hauliers pulling an early Severn trow up the river with a rope from the top of the mast. The boat and its sail were cut from brass and copper sheet, and the rigging was made from brass wire.

To get up to the clock, the fire brigade kindly brought along a turntable ladder which had to be extended at a shallow angle from well out in the car park. Then Ray walked up the ladder and knelt at the top to put the weather-vane in place, thirty five feet above the ground.

NEWS ROUND-UP

By Janet Illingworth-Cooper.

In brilliant sunshine, thousands waited at Gloucester Docks to cheer Prince Charles when he arrived to officially open the National Waterways Museum.

Although Prince Charles, who is President of the National Waterways Museum Trust, became the Museum's first official visitor on August 5th, some 40,000 people have already seen this unique heritage site since the doors opened on April 1st.

Guided by British Waterways Board Chairman David Ingman, Curator Tony Conder and Senior Architect Roger Beckett, the Prince's visit lasted more than an hour and covered the entire complex, beginning with the two floors of the Museum building.

After talking to Friends en-route about their activities, the Prince signed the visitors book and emerged into the forecourt for the unveiling of a plaque commemorating his visit.

On July 6th, the quay across the Barge Arm adjacent to the Museum was the scene of colourful activity as a Thames Television crew arrived with props and film equipment, and set about creating a set representing London's East India Dock in 1912, the next day, cameras rolled on the first episode of the thriller series Hannay, based on an unpublished John Buchan novel.

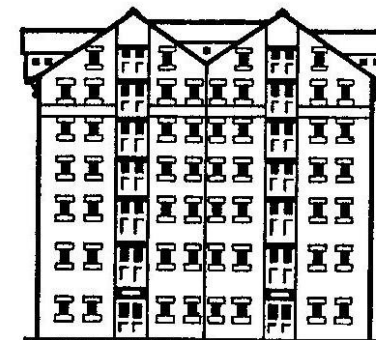
The 68 year-old Thames Barge Olive May, owned by Friends Robin and Barbara Hosler, was moved from its usual mooring on Baker's Quay to become an integral part of the set.

Youngest star on the set was Peter, the Museum's much-loved five year-old Shire-horse. The series will be screened early next year.

Logo Design Chosen

Many thanks to all those who submitted ideas for a logo in response to the appeal in the last issue of Llanthony Log. After due consideration, the Committee chose to adopt a view of Llanthony Warehouse similar to that used for the Museum logo, and Philip Moss has produced the design shown below. The arrangement of the wording has still to be finalised.

FRIENDS
of the
NATIONAL
WATERWAYS
MUSEUM



Identify Yourself

Orders are now being taken for the first batch of Friends' sweat shirts, scheduled to be received from the printer by the end of September.

Their arrival will be enthusiastically welcomed by a great many Friends, particularly those who are volunteers at the Museum. We also hope that those Friends who are unable to act as volunteers because of distance or other commitments will wish to use them to help promote the Museum off-site.

A distinctive logo (reproduced above) has been designed and executed by Friend of the NWM Phil Moss. This will appear "over the heart" in white on a royal blue 50/50 polycotton sweat shirt, available in sizes small, medium and large at a cost of £9.50. Children's and extra large sizes can be obtained as special orders.

To reserve yours, call Janet Illingworth-Cooper on Glo. 20306 (Monday to Friday, 9 to 5). Orders may be collected at Friends meetings or from Janet's workplace, first floor, 36 Brunswick Road. If you wish to have your order posted to you, please add 50p per shirt to cover the additional cost.

J. I-C.

Based on information provided by David McDougall

Winter Talks

The following talks have been arranged for the coming winter. All will take place in the School's Room at the Museum at 7.30 pm.

October 25th; Tony Conder - Creating the National Waterways Museum at Gloucester - the Museum's establishment; the problems and successes by the man at the very heart of the organisation.

February 21st (1989); Tony Paris - The Pisgah of Gloucester - the story of a barge. - The present owner will talk with the aid of slides and film of the changing life of the barge Pisgah from her early days carrying general cargo on the Canal and the Severn to her present life as a hotel boat on French canals.

December 20th; David McDougall (Keeper at the Museum) - Restoring Exhibits for Gloucester - The story of the restoration programme at Gloucester, in particular the Sabrina and narrowboat Oak. The talk will be followed by a small seasonal celebration.

Friends are also welcome at the IWA talks listed under Diary Dates. These are held at the Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club, off the Bradon Road BA080, on the left, 250 yards north of the junction with the A38.

The motor boat Oak has become the latest addition to the Museum's floating exhibits. She was built in 1934 by Charles Hill and Sons of Bristol for the Severn and Canal Carrying Company. The first of eight similar boats, all named after species of tree, she has many novel features for her time.

An unique feature of the design is that the engine is right aft instead of being at the fore end of the cabin. As this means there is no propeller shaft underneath the cabin, the floor is lower giving more headroom for the crew. Nevertheless, there is still space under the floor to accommodate ballast tanks that can be filled with water when the boat is empty to ensure the propeller is kept well immersed.

The sides of the boat are made of welded iron which gives more cargo space for a given draught. She originally had elm bottom planks, but these have been replaced with steel plates during the restoration. The unusual escape hatch in the cabin roof was provided in case of a fire in the engine room when the cargo hold was full. The cowl ventilators on the cabin are believed to derive from her builder's familiarity with larger ships. These were not repeated on the later vessels of this class, nor were they retained long on Oak. The stove pipe, engine exhaust and opening portlights also derive from seagoing vessels.

The power unit is a nine/ten horse power Petter 'S' type semi-diesel engine suitable for single unit operation. It is small compared with the fifteen horse power Bolinder engines used in earlier Severn and Canal motor boats which were intended to tow a butty. Reversing is accomplished by means of an epicyclic gearbox, although for long runs astern, the whole motor is capable of reversal to save wear in the gearbox. The main fuel tank is in the counter, forming the skin of the boat.

The Oak was used by the Severn and Canal Carrying Company to carry a wide range of general cargoes between Gloucester and the Birmingham area. The cabin layout was disliked by the boatmen because of the separation of the accommodation from the steering position, and having the engine at the back led to trouble with the gearbox and the stern tube because of the difficulty of achieving the high standard of alignment required. After the War, she became a maintenance boat on the Trent and Mersey Canal and ended up derelict at Chester. She has been restored by the Warwickshire Flyboat Company of Stocton as far as possible to the condition in which she was delivered from Bristol. Work is continuing to get the engine back in running order, but a major difficulty is the lack of any original spare parts.

Diary Dates (For further details, see later pages.)

- 20 Sept The Wilts and Berks Canal - an Illustrated History. An IWA talk by Jack Dalby at the Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club at 7.30.
- 21 Sept The Severn Bore. A talk by Eric Collins at Gloucester Reference Library, Brunswick Road at 7.30. Tickets £1.50 including coffee available in advance.
- 16 Oct Painting and Costume Making in the Museum Schools Room at 2.30.
- 19 Oct Waterways on Film with John Huntley at the New Olympus Theatre at 7.30.
- 25 Oct Creating the Museum. A talk by Tony Conder in the Museum Schools Room at 7.30.
- 10 Nov Transcribing the Canal Boat Registers at the Gloucestershire Record Office any time between 2.30 and 8.00.
- 15 Nov The Clyde Puffers. An IWA talk by Hamish Dawson at Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club at 7.30.
- 20 Dec Restoring Exhibits for Gloucester. A talk by David McDougall in the Museum Schools Room at 7.30.
- 17 Jan The Avon Ring. An IWA video show by Graham Ettles at Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club at 7.30.
- 21 Feb The Pisgah of Gloucester - the Story of a Barge. A talk by Tony Paris in the Museum Schools Room at 7.30.

Temporary Exhibitions etc at the Museum

- 17 Sep - Beauchamp Towers. A Science Museum travelling exhibition getting to grips with the principles of lubrication.
- 29 Oct
- 1 Oct Display of Oil Engines by the Mid Gloucestershire Engine Preservation Society.
(pm)
- 22 Oct - Patchwork quilts from the Waterways Theme section of the
- 31 Oct National Patchwork Championships.

Fielding Engine Scoops Top Award

The Fielding engine restored by members of the Mid Gloucestershire Engine Preservation Society has won this year's Dorothea Award. The £500 award is offered annually by Dorothea Restorations Ltd and the Association for Industrial Archaeology to encourage high standards of conservation and restoration. The scheme is specifically tailored for voluntary groups and individuals, and the work must be recorded with notes, drawings and photographs. The judge recently visited the Museum to see the engine running, and he placed it top of the ten projects competing for the award. To mark this success, a plaque will be fixed to the wall of the engine house.

Big Changes on Level 2

Those attending the teach-in on 26 July had a preview of the new multi-projector audio-visual show which gives a brief introduction to the circumstances surrounding the construction of the early canals. The commentary includes conversations between people involved in the great works or affected by them, and the extra-wide screen displays contemporary illustrations in a dramatic way.

Big changes have also been made at the other end of Level 2, where new exhibits illustrate local and national trade. There are models, photographs and maps showing the patterns of trade and the vessels used all over the country, and there are examples of the cargoes and the gear used to handle them. You may also get a ghostly glimpse of a former corn porter who used to work in the warehouse!

Widdop Engine Assembled

Alan Russell, John White and Betty Conder have been helping to clean and assemble the Widdop engine under the main stairs, using parts from two different engines. One of the cylinders has the head in place and all the pipes connected, while the other cylinder has the piston protruding to show what it looks like. The exhibit is meant to represent an engine undergoing maintenance, and there is no intention to get it working or make it look nice at present. This type of engine was used in vessels on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, Henry Widdop & Co Ltd being based at Keighley. It was also used in other tugs and large barges, and the main parts of the engine assembled for display came from a local tanker barge that carried gas works waste to the Tar Works at Sandhurst.

Transcribing the Canal Boat Registers

Volunteers are required to help transcribe the information in the Gloucester Canal Boat Registers on to simple forms. The registers were maintained under the terms of the Canal Boat Acts of 1877 and 1884, which followed concern about the living conditions of people on board the boats. The registers record information about the owners and crews and sometimes the nature of the goods carried. Details are given of about 500 boats, and several are recorded more than once as their ownership changed.

The only practical way to appreciate all this information is to get it input to the Museum's computer, which will then be capable of printing out the data in many different ways to answer a variety of questions. This will allow studies to be made of the changing patterns of ownership and trade during a time of severe competition with the railways and will no doubt also show the longstanding boating traditions in some families.

The first step is to get the information transcribed on to standard forms at the Gloucestershire Record Office. If you can spare some time to help with this, contact Hugh Conway-Jones on Gloucester 619679 or come to the Record Office, Alvin St, Gloucester on Thursday 10 November. Hugh will be there between 2.30 and 8.00 to explain what is needed, and you are welcome to join in at any time for as long or short a period as you like. After this introductory session, further transcribing can be done whenever the Record Office is open. Hugh would also like to hear from volunteers with typing experience willing to enter the information into the computer at the Museum.

Fireless Loco Arrives at Museum

The latest addition to the Museum's collection is a fireless locomotive that used to work at the former Castle Meads power station just across the river from the docks. More information will be included in the next issue of Llanthony Log. Meanwhile, anyone willing to help with derusting and painting the locomotive should contact David McDougall at the Museum, and anyone interested in finding out about its history should contact Hugh Conway-Jones on Gloucester 619679.

Volunteers at the Museum

Many Friends have put in time at the Museum this summer, talking to visitors and demonstrating skills, and there is no doubt this has contributed to the friendly atmosphere that people remark on. Many thanks to all those who have contributed.

More volunteers are always welcome. For those willing to talk about the boats, detailed notes are available from the information desk just inside the entrance to the Museum. The standard winter times are 11 to 1 or 2 to 4, but please stay longer if you can. For those who can only come occasionally at weekends, contact Cherry Tomlinson on Gloucester 304547 for a place on the rota. For those who can come on weekdays, contact Doris Toller on Gloucester 424272. Aspiring dredger drivers should contact Alan Conder on Dean 44384 to arrange training.

Situations Vacant

Drivers wanted to operate the steam engine on the dredger. Full training will be given. Duties moderate. Wages nil. Apply in person to the Chief Driver on board the dredger on Tuesdays and Thursdays, or for further details, ring Dean 44384.

Data Protection Act

To ease the task of maintaining up-to-date records and generating address labels, the information from the membership application forms has been stored on computer. Under the Data Protection Act, any member is entitled to view his/her own entry. Please check that this newsletter was correctly addressed and notify any changes to the Membership Secretary.

Next copy deadline: 1 December.

Talking to an Old Man from Sharpness

by Dr K M Tomlinson

In May of this year the Gloucestershire branch of the British Medical Association met one evening at the National Waterways Museum, where they were addressed by both Hugh Conway-Jones and Tony Conder. The importance of recording personal history must have impressed at least one member, who informed me that he had admitted an old man under his care to Gloucester Hospital, who had worked at Sharpness Docks all his life. With the doctor's permission, I have twice visited the old man, who, for ethical reasons I will refer to only by his first name - George.

George, a solemn ill-looking man with a full beard, is 78 years old. Our conversation was at first difficult until I discovered that he referred to Sharpness as "here" (jerking his thumb in the direction of the window), whereas Gloucester Dock was "down there". He started work at the age of fourteen (i.e. 1924) and continued until 1975 without ever having a holiday except for Bank Holidays. He worked mainly for Langfords the ship repairers as a marine fitter. He repaired the grain boat Pisgah after it was rammed by the Nethergarth off Berkeley Pill. She was cut from deck to bilge on the port side, but the flour cargo swelled up and prevented her from sinking. He was for a while the part-owner of a 14 ft Jolly Boat, in which he fished salmon in the estuary in his spare time. This Jolly he had bought in a damaged state for ten shillings, after which he had to build a new gunwale and knees.

I could not obtain a coherent chronological history, but I recorded some disconnected facts about his own memories. Gunpowder boats came from Scotland to Sharpness, where they were handled by dockers wearing special overboots. In a severe storm, the tide reached Berkeley Road, and there is a tree in Berkeley Park with a tide mark notched on it. There was no chapel in Sharpness, but there was a Band of Hope hut alongside the dry dock until boys burned it down. Longboats with bag cargo were difficult to load because the two hundredweight sacks had to be loaded athwartships, mouth to mouth. Longboat men were big men who wore belts with a large brass buckle from horse harness which they used to fight with when drunk. The kids used to sleep atop the cargo as this was warm - especially sugar sacks. Sugar boats came from Germany with sugar for Cadburys.

George's father Charles died in 1945, age 82. At age 17, he had rheumatic fever, so the doctor (Dr. Bridgeman) sent him to sea. He became a Cape Horner, sailing to Melbourne in the Poseidon, a tea clipper. She once made the journey in ninety days. They used to take salt to deliver to a merchant who was once a transported prisoner and had then gained his freedom. Later he became a pilot for the Dock Company.

George's grandfather Frederick was a stevedore in Gloucester but was sent down to Sharpness ("here") when the new dock opened. Later he became a pilot. He used to have two hickory posts, eight feet long, two inches at the top tapering to 4½ inches at the bottom, with the bottom covered by an iron shoe. These were used by hobblers who were hired by pilots to walk along the canal bank and help big vessels around the bands. Each hobbler had his own post, and he plunged it into a hole in the ground to put a hawser round when the vessel needed checking. Afterwards he had to take it back to Sharpness.

George's condition had deteriorated on my second visit, so I called it a day - which was a pity as I am sure he had much more to impart.

- Does anyone know what a Jolly Boat is? - Write in. Ed.

Home for Waif and Stray

A Gloucester housewife gave sanctuary to two deserted feral kittens she found in her back garden. She kept and cherished the two sisters until the time came for a home to be found for them; she christened them Waif and Stray.

Waif and Stray are now very comfortably housed in the tack-room attached to Shire-horse Peter's stable. They have access to the stable via a cat-port in the wall, and are slowly becoming accustomed to the sights and sounds of Llanthony Yard. They are still very timid and wary of humans, but the patience of Pete and Jane, who look after both horse and cats, is already showing heartening results, and in the evenings, after the visitors have left, Waif and Stray can be seen in the stable with Peter, who seems pleased to have their company.

C.T.