

Diary

April 2 - 4 Easter Craft Show at the Museum - demonstrations, items for sale and a chance to talk to experts in various crafts, including many Friends.

April 12 Meet your IWA Committee who will each give a short talk, slide show or video presentation. Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club 7.30.

April 15 The Severn Way - East Bank. An illustrated talk (arranged by British Waterways), to be given by Stan Gidman prior to a walk on 22 May. In the Museum Schools Room at 7.30. (Proceeds in aid of the Willow Trust)

April 17 Boat and Watersports Jumble in the Museum car park. Stalls, marine car boots and boats for sale - lots of bargains for boat owners and water sports enthusiasts. Admission £2.

April 23 Queen Boadicea II cruise to Tewkesbury 10.30-4.45.

April 26 Friends AGM followed by "Legless in Gloucester" - Richard Trelfa talking about how Shopmobility enables disabled people to roam the city centre and the docks. In the Museum Schools Room at 7.30.

May 8 Spring Engine Rally at the Museum - clear the carbon out of your pipes with a visit to this stationary engine day.

May 13 IWA dinner at the Frogmill Inn, Andoversford, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Tom Rolt's *Narrow Boat*. Contact Des Pinnock 0452 856233.

May 14 Queen Boadicea Cruise to Sharpness 10.30-4.45.

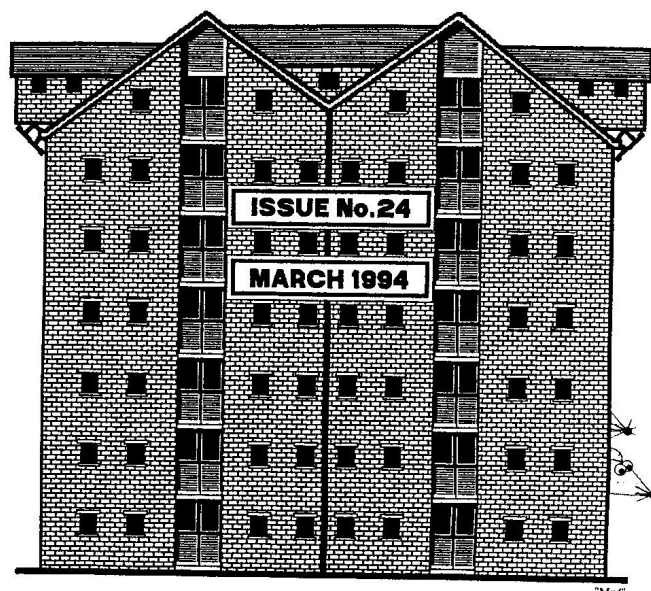
May 21-2 Horses and Tugs. The Museum's annual special weekend with horses on the land and tugs on the water. Those willing to act as stewards should contact Les Dalton 0452 617236.

June 9 Mikron Theatre Company at the Museum, performing their new show tracing the evolution of **Pubs & Ale**, at 7.30pm

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

Friends are welcome at Inland Waterways Association meetings. Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club is off the Bredon Road B4080, on the left, 250 yards north of the junction with the A38.

Llanthony Log



Newsletter of the Friends of the
National Waterways Museum

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EDITORIAL

Here really is the first Llanthony Log for 1994. I wonder how many of our readers noticed the typographical error on the front cover of the (in fact) December 1993 Issue (No.23). Please accept Richard Trelfa's and my apologies for this error.

Let us hope that 1994 will be a good one both for the Museum and the Friends. No. 4 Dredger restoration is making satisfactory progress, as reported elsewhere in this Log.

Although many appreciative comments have been received on the content of the last issue, for which Richard and I are very grateful, most of the general interest articles are from local people. As has rightly been pointed out, the Friends are associated with a National Waterways Museum, and quite a number of our members live away from the Gloucester area. Therefore if anyone in this situation feels like writing an article, (handwritten or typed does not matter) however short on some aspect of the national waterways network, for inclusion in Llanthony Log, I shall be very pleased to receive it.

One of our stalwart members - Alan Conder - has to go into hospital for an operation, probably before the appearance of this Issue. I am sure that we all wish him a speedy recovery and return to his interests at the Museum.

Finally, a reminder that Sunday 17th April is the Boat Jumble. Please help if you can, as its continuing success is very important to the Friends' future plans.

A.L.G.

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Last October, the Tall Ship "Soren Larsen" sailed from Gloucester Docks bound for her new permanent base in New Zealand. Museum Site Services Manager and former Master Mariner, Des Fforde joined her crew for the first leg of her voyage as far as Tenerife, and gives the following account of the trip.

SOREN LARSEN - 31.10.93 to 17.11.93

Sharpness Dock was almost deserted as we slipped out of the tidal basin on a grey Monday morning. But the East wind, though cold was a favourable wind and all thirty-two of us looked forward to dropping the pilot at Barry and hoisting the 'main propulsion' and *raison d'etre* of Soren Larsen: the sails.

We were a motley lot of twenty-one payings or voyage crew - some keen sailing types, some adventure holiday addicts and a few ex-seamen like me who had been sent by their wives to 'get it out of their system'. The eleven permanent crew had been working hard at the re-fit. A close-knit team, they found it hard at first to have all these strangers in their midst. Eager to help, we kept getting in the way.

We had quickly to get used to living at very close quarters. My top bunk

in a four-berth cabin took some getting into, and you couldn't sit up in it. Stowage for even the small amount of gear I'd packed was a major problem. As for the snoring.....And as we were reminded, this was *de luxe* sailing ship voyaging.

As we motored down under the Severn Bridge, we were given some commonsense safety rules by the Mate, a young Australian with a strong Sydney accent. His main point was that from then on we were a self-sufficient entity and we all had to take care, especially with water consumption. No showers that day: perhaps tomorrow if we were careful with the fresh water.

After dropping the pilot at Barry Roads the ship's routine started. The crew were divided into three watches, us voyage crew into four. This meant that as time went on one kept watch with different crew members, and had a day off in every four to help with galley duties.

When on watch, we took turns at steering the ship, keeping lookout at the bow, and 'doing a round', which meant inspecting on and below decks to ensure that all was well, no unnecessary lights switched on and the bilges empty. We then filled in an hourly log with weather details and the ship's position. Steering was surprisingly easy except that the compass card was hard to read at night, and lookout was usually very pleasant; you could perch on one side of the bowsprit and watch for other ships, wildlife and the mysterious floating containers which were said to have been washed off big ships in storms. I think this was said to scare us into keeping a better lookout!

There was one other watch-keeping duty. It fell to the midnight to four a.m. watch to make the bread, to a recipe posted in the galley. Considering that the bread was usually made by someone who had never done it before, the results were very good. Also being in the warm galley looked like a much better way of spending the cold night hours, but when it came to my turn I felt claustrophobic and couldn't wait to get back on deck.

As we left the Bristol Channel, under power with some sail up in light winds, we newcomers tried to get to grips with the complicated diagrams of the sail-handling ropes and the names for everything. Some things were easy, like the braces for hauling the yards round, but I never did master the hard ones such as the topsail yard downhauls. It was here that the crew came in to their own. Always patient, they were masters at getting people to pull on the right rope at the right time.

It may be timely to point out that the sails are handled from the deck; you don't all have to swarm up the rigging to do it. When furled, the sail is kept from billowing out by long soft ropes called gaskets which are passed around it. One or two men then go aloft and cast them off before you can set the sail again.

After clearing the Bristol Channel, as we still had a favourable wind all square sail was set and the engine turned off. Later the big gaff mainsail was set, needing two watches to do it. This was what we had been waiting for. Doing a comfortable 7 knots, Soren headed West, in order to get maximum sea-room and avoid being blown into the Bay of Biscay by a seasonable South-Westerly gale.

It was good to be free of the vibration of the engine. A sound-proofed generator was run during the morning and evening to provide power to lights and

freezers and to charge a big bank of batteries. Otherwise the batteries ran things. Other sounds began to take over as we met the Atlantic swell; the creaking and groaning of the ship's timbers as Soren began to roll.

We were now getting to know our fellow inmates and put names to faces. But in some cases the faces were turning green. We had been recommended to take seasickness pills since we had left port, but it seems that if you're going to succumb, it's just a matter of time. I was beginning to feel quite confident after taking a regular dose, but at dinner, where we all sat down around two big tables, a young Aussie in my watch called Shaun suddenly got up, climbed out over people and shot up the stairs to the deck. I had an overpowering urge to follow him, and did.

The weather now worsened. After a day when we had light winds but an increasing swell, the wind shifted to the North-West and blew. Soren sailed beautifully at 8 to 9 knots, but was by now rolling heavily. As the wind increased we shortened sail until we were running under a topsail. It was by now difficult to stay in one's bunk, let alone move around. Most of us had bruises and one, thrown up while on lookout as the ship rose quickly to a wave, jammed his leg in the hawse pipe as he came down and was laid up for the rest of the trip.

At least the water which now swept the decks was getting warmer, as we passed through the Gulf Stream, heading steadily South past the coast of Portugal. We had been at sea a week when we sighted the land around Lisbon, the weather clearing up nicely. Ah, we said, it'll be better from here on. The heavy canvas covers were taken off the skylights and we had fresh air and light down below.

The course was now set for Madeira, some 600 miles distant. The weather facsimile which we all studied carefully didn't show any isobars so far South, but the weather decided to worsen anyway. The wind blew a Northerly gale with stronger gusts, but the ship sailed as if this was the weather she was built for. We'd got over our seasickness, except for two poor souls, and got to know each other, particularly our watch mates, quite well.

My watch comprised Alf, a retired businessman from Manchester, Shaun, the Aussie maintenance man, Ollie a pipeline planner who suffered the accident which left us short-handed, and Hapzim.

Hapzim was an enigma. She was a beautiful woman in her 40's who was obviously into alternative therapies and diets. This was a slight problem as there wasn't apparently much food on board that she could eat. Once she found the excellent mixed-on-board muesli she lived on that - with water. She didn't talk much but was a good watchkeeper with particularly keen eyesight. She was the only one of us going the whole way to New Zealand, which meant she would be a year on board.

The crew were an interesting bunch, very loyal to their ship and their craft of marlinespike seamanship. I liked the Aussies and Kiwis as they reminded me of a mis-spent youth in their countries. Tich the bosun was a gem: a real sunny personality who was a pleasure to learn from. Sandy was the girl from Stewart Island, which is really away from it all. She was a deckhand and also the ship's naturalist.

On the tenth day of the voyage we sighted Madeira, having passed the

smaller island of Porto Santo earlier in the day. It is about 6000 feet high, but due to cloud we didn't see the island until we came quite close to it. We still had a strong Northerly wind which came less as we rounded to the South side of the island and headed up for Funchal harbour. We had been rolling heavily for more than a week, all had dirty, wet salty clothes and I took the opportunity to use some fresh water and get my washing done. With it drying on the rigging, I joined with the others in scrutinising the land as it got closer; an incredible tapestry of terraced fields and red-roofed houses.

By evening we were alongside the harbour wall and enjoying the fleshpots of Funchal: a dinner of local fish in a small restaurant, a phone call home from a luxury hotel, and a glass of Madeira in a bar on the way back to the ship. We agreed (we were all bosom pals by now) that this was the only way to arrive - by sailing ship.

We spent two lovely days exploring Madeira before sailing for Tenerife, where we arrived a day early due to the exceptionally favourable winds. "Eye of the Wind" was still there having sailed from Gloucester a few weeks before us.

After such a voyage the prospect of three days in a city centre hotel was somewhat of an anti-climax, so two of us went to the airport to see about flying out early. It seemed that we had a good chance of getting a spare seat on a flight, so we returned, packed, said our goodbyes and went back to the airport. Now it turned out that all the seats were taken on flight after flight to the U.K. Just as I lost all hope, two cancelled seats were found on the last flight out for three days, and we were on the way home.

Driving home down the M4 I felt privileged to have been a part, if only for a brief moment, of a floating world with the freedom of the seas; Gloucester's adopted tall ship, the Soren Larsen.

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Alan Morgan organises the 'round the Docks' trips on the vintage tug "Kennet". Here he describes one of his experiences.

MY MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT

Eric and me loafing on Kennet's red and sunny deck.

"Trips round the dock!" yells the blackboard to visitors, scarce.

Lethargy leaps overboard, a couple with children in tow. Happy family day out, "Fifty pence a head please Sir".

Eric's turn to drive, lift kids aboard, untie ropes, off we go.

Launch into well-rehearsed spiel:- warehouses, canal, river, eighteen hundred and something, Pillar and Lucy's.

Tugs. Go on at great length about tugs, no queue, why not? Round again. Big tugs, little tugs, engines, prop direction affects steering you know. Mum and Dad exchange glances, something flickers between them.

Odd. Nice people though.

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Tugs, navigation, mooring, springing off, sound signals, light signals.
Pontoon looms too soon for the kids, and me.

Tie off mooring lines, assist Madam ashore, say bye-bye to kids.

Thank Dad who says he is Captain of HMS Nottingham!

Want to die...NOW!

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PRESENTATION TO HUGH CONWAY-JONES

At the Friends' Meeting on 16 December last year, our Chairman - Peter Wallace - presented Hugh Conway-Jones, our former and first Chairman, now Secretary, with an oil painting of Gloucester Docks by the river and canal scenes artist Brian Collings. This painting was commissioned by the Committee and financed by contributions from members of the Friends in recognition of Hugh's achievement in setting up the Friends organisation and establishing it as a vital factor over the last six years in supporting the Museum's activities. Hugh wishes to thank all those who made this presentation possible and to say that it has a special place in his home.

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William Rowley writes about the current and not very happy situation on:

THE ANDERTON BOAT LIFT

At the meeting on 31st. January 1994, the Committee of the Friends of the National Waterways Museum agreed to support the campaign for the restoration of the Anderton Boat Lift and I was asked to write a few lines for Llanthony Log.

Ruth and I are both members of the Trent and Mersey Canal Society who are campaigning for the full restoration of the Lift. This listed structure is near Northwich in Cheshire is a vital connection between the River Weaver and the Trent and Mersey Canal. It was built in 1875, modified in 1908 and was taken out of use in 1983 because it was considered unsafe. The attempted repainting showed large areas of the 1908 structure were badly corroded. The machinery was removed and stored and the rest of the structure is rapidly rusting away protected by a holding primer with a six month life. It is owned by British Waterways but the Department of the Environment and English Heritage have a considerable input to its restoration. The Lift is the first of its kind in the world and the only one in the UK. Other lifts, based on the same principle, are still in use in Belgium and Canada.

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Prior to moving to Gloucester in 1989, we lived at Barnton, within walking distance of the Boat Lift. Whilst there, I worked for British Waterways and was involved in repairs to the Lift following the accident in 1981, and in its maintenance before it was taken out of use for repainting. This, for me, was a very special experience as it gave me a clear insight into the historical and engineering importance of the structure. All those working for its restoration are convinced that its preservation is best served if it is retained in full working order. Its restoration would be a considerable boost to the local economy in promoting tourism.

As part of the recent campaign, all T & M members were asked to write to their MP to request him/her to support the local Cheshire MP who "can assure you that I shall leave no stone unturned to try to secure the restoration of the Lift". The above notes are based on the letter I wrote to Douglas French who is "willing to support your campaign". We have still to decide what form the Friends' support will take.

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Edward Paget-Tomlinson, Author and Artist on various aspects of Transport, has joined the Friends and has provided the following article for the Log.

COLOURS of the CUT

My canal interest dates back to the Second War when travelling to school in the Midlands from the North West. The train crossed many waterways whose names I learned from a booklet called the "Track of the Coronation Scot", an annotated linear map of the LMS main line from Euston to Glasgow Central. Regrettably I left it in a train, but I do recall such entries as Abbots Langley near Watford, the birthplace in 1100 of England's only Pope, Nicholas Breakspear who in 1154 became Adrian IV, the house where Gunpowder Plot was hatched near Rugby and the names of rivers and canals crossed, the Lancaster, the St. Helens, the Weaver, the Coventry, the Oxford and more frequently the Grand Union. I think it was round about Blisworth, where I had to change, that I saw a narrow boat in the wartime colours of the Grand Union Canal Carrying Company. The boat must have been newly docked, she looked smart, and if one can date precisely the start of an enthusiasm, it was that moment. Later I saw Fellows, Morton and Clayton 'Ovaltine', and later still Samuel Barlow boats in plenty.

The invitation from Waterways World to illustrate canal boat liveries came out of the blue, although it was something I had in mind in any case. The Blandford series of coloured picture books on railways, tractors, aircraft, and military insignia are, I expect, known to you, so it seemed to me that one on canal boats would be a welcome addition. However a magazine series was just as good, although initially only eight sets were planned, starting in November 1987. But the sets soon proved popular and I have now done eighty with the intention of stopping at that figure, for I must admit to running out of colours, although not types of craft. But there is not much colour in a Fens lighter

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or a Yorkshire compartment boat, and I think it was wise to have stopped. But the book idea remains a possibility and has indeed been planned, although publication is not easy because of the expense of so much colour work. It would not be so expensive to publish a facsimile of all the sets of colours just as they have appeared, but a book would be an opportunity to expand the text, add photographs and draw more decorative details. The end product would be a comprehensive account of the liveries of inland waterway craft, to match the books on railway company liveries and to complement the works which handle decorative boat painting.

Preparation of the Colours month by month has been an exacting task. In case of illness or unforeseen disaster, I generally kept a month ahead of my own deadline, but on each occasion it was a matter of writing and ringing up for details. Thankfully there are many knowledgeable and helpful people in the canal world and they gave assistance unstintingly. The series would not have progressed far were it not for this army of experts, not least David McDougall here at Gloucester. He advised on the first set, the Shropshire Union and Midlands & Coast and has supplied a wealth of specifications, plans, photographs and suggestions for future sets - what about a South Wales pair, some maintenance boats, some 'light' boats on the BCN? It is not easy to single out names among so many but Alan Faulkner's contribution of registration and gauging numbers has been outstanding, enabling brief histories of the craft portrayed to be included. Sadly some of the experts have passed on, Fred Schofield and Reg Wood in Yorkshire, Ken Keay nearer here. Many have indeed said that the series was commenced just in time, thanks to the vision of Waterways World.

There have been instances where nobody could be positive about colours, and tonal interpretation from black and white photographs has been the order of the day. This could be a kind way of saying guesswork, but if I was not sure I said so. I do admit to mistakes which have been reported in Waterways World and which I hope I can rectify for a book. There was the fear every month of leaving something out, such as the pin for the tiller extension, a back end rail on a motor narrow boat. I have discovered that people are using the series to guide the painting of their boats and I am both honoured and awed by the trust put in me.

The paint used is design colour, a refined form of poster paint and the scale for the narrow boats is 3/8ins. to one foot as seen in the magazine. Other craft have been drawn to a variety of scales depending on their size. I draw to twice reproduced size, in other words 3/4ins. to one foot for narrow boats. These have formed the majority of the sets because of their variety and indeed popular appeal. One day the originals may be on show at Gloucester, but they will take up a fair space, 80 months is a long time.

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SND No.4 DREDGER

Alan Garnett describes the encouraging progress on the Dredger restoration work over the last few months.

My last report was included in Issue No.22 - September 1993 - of Llanthony Log. I am pleased to say that significant progress has subsequently been made, largely by the 'Wednesday Gang' of Jim Simmons, Dave Butler, Ken Dunn and myself, supervised by Dave McDougall. It would be unfair however to omit acknowledgement of the good work also carried out cheerfully and regularly, such as chipping, cleaning, painting and polishing by Alan and Betty Conder, Doris Toller, and Mike Pullon, with apologies to anyone else I have omitted.

Dealing firstly with the main engine, work on the two outer bearings for the crankshaft was completed soon after my last report, and restoration then continued with the reinstallation of the two pulleys for the bucket chain belt drive. These pulleys had earlier been away for shotblasting and subsequently the hub, spokes and inside rim were repainted before reinstallation work started. With this work satisfactorily accomplished, and the crankshaft and pulley assembly able to spin freely, the hand barring gear was put back in place, together with the temporary fitting of the shaft brake assembly. Attention then turned to refitting the HP and LP connecting rods to their respective crossheads and crankpins. As in the case of the crankshaft bearings, this entailed the 'blueing', judicious scraping and checking of the bearing surfaces at both ends of the rods to ensure the correct fit of these bearings to their pins. Once this was done, new thicker shims were made where necessary and fitted to the bearings to achieve the correct running clearances, and to reduce the excessive number of thin shims found during dismantling. Following on from this, work turned to installing the four rods - two per cylinder - connecting the crankshaft eccentrics to the Stephenson link motion on each cylinder and which in turn operate the steam inlet valves. This mechanism permits reversal of direction of rotation of the crankshaft by altering the timing of the inlet valves depending on which one of the two eccentric driven rods is in line with the valve rod. Once again this was a time consuming job to attain the optimum fit of the top bearings. Fortunately the lower ends only needed a small amount of fitting effort. All this has now been finished, and the Stephenson link motion threaded operating spindle and handwheel are in place. The LP inlet steam slide valve timing and adjustment has been carefully checked and adjusted, as it appeared that the setting found during post-sinking dismantling was incorrect. The HP sleeve inlet valve setting was found to be correct with no adjustment needed.

At the time of writing this report, outstanding work on the engine mainly comprises fitting the cylinder head covers, cylinder and valve chest drain lines, pressure relief valves, speed control governor, lubricators and main steam supply pipe from the boiler to the engine. It is hoped to complete this work in a comparatively short timescale to allow the engine to be operated on steam but not connected to the bucket chain, to give

a 'running-in' period for the new and refurbished components.

On final completion of the main engine, it is intended to start on the bucket chain and midships winch. The original bucket drive leather belts are considered unuseable, but Dave McDougall has been successful in obtaining four lengths (allowing two spare lengths) of brand new leather belting at a very reasonable cost from a firm near Worksop. It is understood that it has been in stock for a long time and is made from buffalo hide. In future therefore, shall we have to tell visitors that the engine provides approx.100 buffalo power rather than 100 horsepower?

The boiler fairly recently underwent its yearly survey, during which the Surveyor requested some additional cleaning of the bottom area of the inside of the shell. When this was done with long implements inserted through one of the front mudholes, the consequent removal of some large lumps of scale revealed several corrosion pits, the extent and depth of which were very difficult to assess from the limited view available from outside the boiler. Fortunately Ken Dunn was able to persuade an experienced potholing friend - Ian Sleigh - to visit the Museum on one of the 'Wednesday Gang's' days during which he made several entries via the top manhole into the extremely tight access between the boiler tubes and the shell. This allowed further scraping and vacuum cleaning to be done and modelling clay impressions to be taken of the worst pitted areas. These clay impressions were then baked in the oven of the cabin stove on the dredger and probably helped to satisfy the Surveyor that the pitting was not significant. The safety steam pressure relief valves have subsequently been satisfactorily tested and the boiler has now been passed for steaming for another year. Our grateful thanks go to Ken and Ian for their useful contribution to this satisfactory outcome.

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Goodbye to Containers

The containers that have for so long obstructed the main quayside outside the Museum have gone at last - thanks to quick work by David McDougall and money provided by the Friends.

The containers, loaned by transport firm Captain Cargo have been an invaluable aid to restoration work on the dredger. One was fitted out as a store for all the components removed from the dredger, and the other was a workshop where refurbishment of the components could be carried out. The drawback has been the loss of space and the restricted view from the quayside, and it has always been the intention to get rid of the containers as soon as possible.

In November, David McDougall saw a way of obtaining some much-needed long-term storage when he heard that two railway box vans were surplus to requirements at the Royal Naval Ammunition Depot at Gosport. On inspection, he found that they were in excellent condition and they would make appropriate exhibits as well as providing storage. Also available was a flat wagon made by the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Works, and this was just what he had been looking for to display the

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ice-boat that has been languishing for months out in the car park.

The Friends Committee quickly agreed to put up £2000 to cover the major part of the purchase price and the cost of transport to the Museum, and all three wagons duly arrived shortly before Christmas. The remaining dredger components were soon transferred to one of the vans, and then the empty containers went off the Sharpness for future use - giving a wide open quayside once again.

H.C.J.

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DONATIONS

The Treasurer is pleased to acknowledge the following donations received between September 1993 and January 1994, (with apologies for any omissions).

Boast D.J.	Norman J.E.
Bown G.R.W. & H.E.	Paget-Tomlinson E.W. & P.L.
Brett J.R.	Pedrette D.J. & E.
Connett J.R.	Pinnock D.C.
Courtenay Lord R.M. & P.A.	Robinson J.P. & R.E.A.
Darbo K.R.	Shilton D.F.
Daw D. & P.	Sizer P.J. & A.T.
Drewery R.L. & A.S.	Smith A.
Drinkwater A.H.	Smith B.E. & M.W.
Dubber E.H.S. & G.N.	Stanton J.
Gibbons N.F. & D.J.	Stoddart Stones G. & R.C.
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Lewis S.C.M. & S.B.	Wildeboer B.
Michelli F.N. & M.	Wilks R.D. & L.
Morris R.V. & P.	Williams R.
Nicholls R.A. & A.C.	

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THE BALMFORTH STEAM CRANE

Alan Conder gives an account of his operating experiences during 1993.

Under the overall supervision of Dave McDougall, the Balmforth Steam Crane has had its busiest season yet, having been in steam over twenty times. Although not always at full strength, the crane crew of Alan Conder, Allan Roberts (and Owen) and

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Charlie Wallace have been able to call upon Bryan Brown and Chris Perkins for help at weekends: Mike Pullon has acted mid-week as spare driver and has worked on day-to-day maintenance. For the last weekend of operation we were joined by Ken Dunn and Mike Whiteman.

The crane is about 110 years old and, when working, not only emits clouds of heavy smoke but also showers of oily smuts dislodged from the chimney by the exhaust steam; it's a dirty job and the crane crew are referred to as the "black gang" with suggestions that we are enjoying a "dirty weekend".

Our standard demonstration is to pick up a netful of coal sacks from a Sharpness Docks open wagon on the railway line and to unload the net into MB 'Oak'. When the wagon is empty, we reverse the process and unload from MB 'Oak' into the wagon. This demonstration is a great crowd puller and draws into the Museum visitors to the docks: and we talk about the crane and the docks and, best of all, receive the reminiscences of yesteryear. There was an elderly Indian gentleman who became very excited because he used to drive a similar crane in Bombay Docks before the last war: a Canadian who drove ancient steam logging cranes; an Australian who remembered steam cranes on lighters working in Sydney Harbour, and an extended family from New Zealand whose grandfather proved to his wife, daughter and grandchildren that he had not lost his crane driving skills. From time to time, when we deem it to be suitable, we give rides on the crane to Museum visitors, fixing them up with hard hats and anti-smut clothing and standing children on a stool to enable them to reach the controls. The sight of a small child completely swamped in oversize hat and overalls (sleeves and trouser legs rolled up), has to be seen to be believed but they are so serious that they look the part.

One such was Adrian, aged 4½, with his mother. "Well, my man", says he, "what are you doing with this crane?" At the end of his ride we had unloaded six sacks from M/B Oak. "That's not a lot" says he, "We'll have to speed up". It was lunch time and I persuaded him to come back later. I was just finishing lunch when there he was - "Time to start again". After another ride and a further six sacks, his mother removed him but, as he disappeared round the end of the warehouse he was still saying "But, mother we've still got all that coal to unload!"

"Canals 200" produced a visit from Fred Dibnah and family with a steam road traction engine: he was very appreciative of the crane (on which he rode) as we were of the traction engine.

We also steamed the crane for several publicity events, notably a GMTV programme with Floella Benjamin, a BBC Travel Show and, very recently, a programme for Central TV with Toyah Wilcox.

And it has been used on Museum work: on 8th. May we ran a successful crane drivers' course. There were five aspirants and the course covered safety aspects, crane signals, firing, operating and shutting down. Our five students were each presented with a Certificate complete with photograph and they all expressed themselves to be well pleased.

Early in the year, M/B "Wye" arrived from Sharpness with Lister trailers

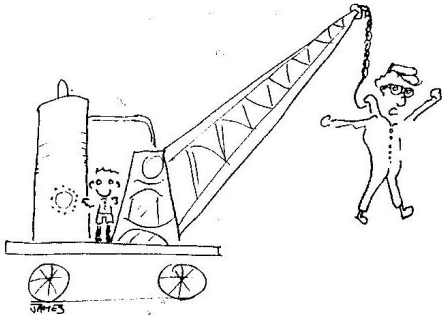
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aboard and these were duly unloaded.

On 30th. September the drive pulleys for the dredger buckets were craned into the engine room after the engine room companion hatch had been removed.

Finally, when "Lift & Shift" was over, the crane was shut down for the winter. It was a good season.

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'I no longer deem it to be suitable!'

The Friends' Annual General Meeting on 26 April

will be held in the Museum Schools Room at 7.30.

Agenda

1. Minutes of the last AGM.
2. Report from the Committee (next article).
3. Annual Accounts for 1993.
4. Election of Officers and Members of the Committee.

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5. Appointment of Auditor.

6. Annual subscription rates.

After the formal business, which should be very brief, there will be an opportunity to raise comments on how things have gone over the past year and to put forward ideas for the future. Particularly welcome will be any suggestions for speakers or visits and any offers to organise new activities.

Finally, there will be a talk by Richard Trelfa entitled 'Legless in Gloucester' on how Shopmobility enables disabled people to roam around the city centre and the Docks.

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Report of the Committee for 1993

During the year, membership remained steady at around 280, of which about 70 per cent were family members.

Restoration work on the dredger has continued with regular working parties re-assembling the main steam engine, repairing and re-commissioning the Worthington-Simpson pump, re-fitting the crews quarters and re-painting the deck and superstructure. The restoration volunteers have also completed the refurbishment of a railway goods van, continued work on the fireless locomotive and done the preliminary painting of the Midland Railway crane.

The Boat and Watersports Jumble, in April, raised over £10,000 to support restoration work and drew appreciative comments both from the public and the traders. Some of this money has been used to pay for the restoration of the narrowboat Wye.

Volunteers have regularly operated the vintage tug Kennet, taking passengers around the docks and raising over £1700. Others have worked the Museum's steam crane on special occasions, and members of the Engine Preservation Society continue to operate the Fielding Engine.

Friends played major roles in the Museum's crafts weekend at Easter and Lifting and Shifting in October. A large turn-out of demonstrators and assistants also contributed to the very successful weekend in May celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Canal Mania.

Friends helped to publicise the Museum by providing staff for the Boat and Caravan Show at the National Exhibition Centre.

A varied programme of winter evening meetings was very well supported. The quarterly newsletter has included a mixture of news, notices of future events and interesting articles written by Friends.

H.C.J.

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WANTED

CREW FOR TUG KENNET

Volunteers wanted, with understanding partners and lots of spare time, who are willing to muck in and do not mind getting dirty once in a while.

The volunteers must have good eyesight and be of almost sound mind.

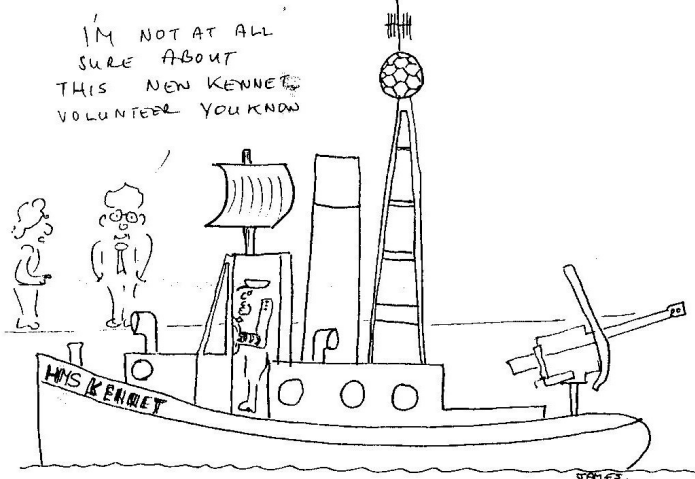
All training will be free and given by the regular skippers. It will include passenger safety, ie. man overboard, fire fighting, rules of the road, sound signals, helmsmanship, boat and engine management.

In exchange for this first class training we would expect a certain commitment towards the running of the boat at weekends.

The salary for all this work is satisfaction and fun and, of course, doubled for Sundays and Bank Holidays.

If you are interested, please contact any crew member or Des Fforde for this educational and fun-filled position.

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Friends Funds Put to Good Uses

Shortly before Christmas, Chairman Peter Wallace presented Tony Conder with a cheque for over £10,000 as the Friends contribution to a range of projects.

The major part of this money was to pay for half the cost of restoring the narrowboat Wye - the other half coming from the Science Museum. As one of the last narrowboats to be built, dating from the 1960s, Wye makes a good companion to Northwich which is one of the oldest surviving narrowboats. The restoration work included derusting and repainting the steel hull and fitting a replica of the original plywood cabin. This cabin is basically of the traditional layout, but it has an additional compartment designed to take an Elsan toilet. These toilets were not popular with the boatmen because of the smell, and this feature was omitted when a steel cabin was fitted in later years. The replica cabin has reinstated the toilet compartment, although as yet no toilet has been installed as no suitable (unused) model has come to light.

Another significant contribution from the Friends went towards the purchase and transport of three railway wagons as described elsewhere. Further money went towards the hard-chroming of the dredger engine crankshaft and the purchase of shims, nuts, bolts, paint and other materials for the dredger. Expenditure on the fireless locomotive included payment for paint and for shot-blasting and zinc-spraying components. Some money went towards removal and transport of a crane from Whitechurch, which is now awaiting restoration. Finally, a small part of the Friends donation went towards purchase of a fine model of a Thames sailing barge from the National Maritime Museum and of a book about the Manchester Ship Canal.

H.C.J.

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Good Progress with Computer Appeal

The additional donations included by many Friends with their annual subscriptions have raised over £500 towards the computer intended for the Schools Room. Moves are in hand to obtain the hardware required, and software has been identified that will allow children to access a database about canals. In due course, it is intended that the means of access will be developed in the light of experience, and there will be scope for computer-oriented Friends to help with this. In the meantime, the Committee have agreed to continue with the appeal for a further year in the expectation of reaching the original target of £1000.

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Friends Featured on Radio Gloucestershire

Alan Morgan, a regular presenter on Radio Gloucestershire, (*not of course, Friends' member of the same name who organises Kennet trips - Editor*) visited

the Museum one Tuesday morning in January and recorded interviews that were broadcast in his Club Crawl slot the following Saturday lunchtime. After a brief chat with Hugh Conway-Jones about how the Friends interact with the Museum staff, Alan spent most of his time talking with the regular restoration volunteers.

First, Alan Russell spoke about the turntables brought in from Manchester and restored to replace those that had formerly been used to manoeuvre railway wagons around the corners of the warehouses. Alan mentioned the enjoyment that parties of school-children can have pushing a wagon round on a turntable.

Ian Parsons described the operation of the fireless locomotive and outlined its former role in shunting coal wagons around the Castle Meads power station. He explained how all the smaller components had been removed for cleaning and repainting in the relative warmth of the Carpenters Shop, and in answer to Alan's question, he expressed confidence that they would all be put back together again in the right places!

Doris Toller showed Alan the intricacies of the cabin on the narrowboat Northwich and spoke of her role in keeping the brass polished and the fire lit when the weather is wet. She also referred to the work she had done on cleaning components for the dredger engine and in mopping up after some children had spilt food on the dredger floor.

Bryan Brown told of the wide range of experience he had gained in helping with projects such as laying the railway track, refurbishing the fireless locomotive and overhauling Queen Boadicea II. He also mentioned the special weekends where many other Friends come along to help demonstrate exhibits.

Terry Dellbridge emphasised the important role played by the tug Kennet in allowing visitors to get afloat and to hear something about the docks and the local waterways, and he spoke of the good relationship which exists between the Friends and the Museum staff.

Finally, Alan Morgan talked to Noel Michelli about the dredger, its capsizing and subsequent restoration. Alan commented on the polished copper piping and the sheen on the steel parts, and Noel said the engine should be ready to run again later this year.

Alan ended the day with the impression that the Friends were willing to put their hands to anything, and as to the satisfaction to be had from being a Friend, he thought Doris Toller spoke for all when she referred to meeting like-minded people, doing something that is really useful and having a jolly good time!

H.C.J.

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More Timbrell Memories

*Hugh Conway-Jones records more memories from David Timbrell of Linton near Newent who gave the Museum a type of spade known as a **graft***

"My dad was the toll clerk at Stoke Wharf, and we lived in the office by

the lock. During the First World War, my dad was away and my mother carried on - although there wasn't much to do as the trade was fizzling out. I used to lark about on the lock gates and sit on the quay wall dangling my feet over the side. I'd watch out for the boats coming through. The chaps would say "Kick that paddle down sonny", and I'd kick the pawl to let the paddle drop. When it was icy, I'd see one of the tunnel tugs come down and they'd rock it from side to side to break the ice.

"I remember one steam tug was left tied up overnight when there was a storm, and we heard the whistle start to blow. What had happened was that the rain had shrunk the cord and it made the whistle work. People came up from the village worried that there was trouble at the nearby salt works, and mum had to explain it was only the tug. She used the crank-up phone to report it, but by the time someone came, the boiler had run out of steam!

"When dad returned, there was nothing doing at the wharf and the Company decided to close the office. So we put our furniture on a longboat, and it was taken down to Gloucester where dad became a docks policeman. We moved into what we called the old dock offices in Albion St. We had No 4, and in No 2 lived Bill Voyce who was engineer for the engine house and on the fire-float Salamander when needed.

"I remember seeing two concrete ships launched into the canal near the gas works. As they went sideways into the water, a huge wave washed over the opposite bank. My brother was very keen on fishing, and he went up close to see if any fish had been washed ashore.

"One job my dad had to do was to watch the discharging of petroleum from the tanker barge, Shell Mex 7, in Monk Meadow Dock. At that time, the old tug Primrose had a boiler but no steam engine, and she was brought down each time to provide the steam to work the pump on the deck of the barge.

"Once I went for a trip on Harker's dumb barge Rosa that was towed by the motor barge Cynthia. I started from Gloucester at six o'clock on Saturday morning, and it was a roughish road from Sharpness, raining and blowing. We filled up with petroleum at Avonmouth, came back to Sharpness and moored for the night just at the start of the canal. On Sunday we went up to Stourport to discharge, and we were back in Gloucester at six o'clock on Monday night."

When David Timbrell left school, he got a job on the railway. He spent much of his time as signalman at Mitcheldean Road and finished as signalman at Barton Gates, Gloucester.

And finally, farewell to Ian

The restoration gang have lost one of their regular workers as Ian Parsons has moved to Wareham in Dorset. Ian was one of the small group who helped to set up the friends in 1988 and served as Vice Chairman for a period. He has helped with all the railway-related restoration projects at the Museum, and he intends to continue this kind of activity with the Swanage Railway Co. We wish him well