

CUT **BOTH WAYS**

**FIRST
EDITION
SPRING
1993**

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE LICHFIELD AND
HATHERTON CANALS**



**SUPPORTING THE LICHFIELD AND HATHERTON
CANAL RESTORATION TRUST**

INSIDE:

• BOAT SECURITY • TOWPATH TALES • YOUR SAY • MUCH MUCH MORE

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A WELCOME FROM THE COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Committee, welcome to "Cut Both Ways" - the official magazine of the Friends of the Lichfield and Hatherton canals.

with limited resources) and there is a danger of a downward spiral to decay and even less use. The words "use them or lose them I" do indeed ring true here.



The key to all this is to promote greater use of the Northern BCN as a cruising route, and to highlight the economic and environmental advantages of doing so. At the same time pressure should be brought to bear to upgrade these canals to "Cruiseway" status - implying a better standard of upkeep.

We believe that the best way to promote greater use of the BCN is to open up at least one through route, preferably two.

Whether you have purchased this magazine out of curiosity, or whether you are an ardent canal enthusiast, we hope that you will find something of interest - if not then please let us know!

In this edition it is important to stress what we are all about.

The Northern Birmingham Canal Navigations (BCN) are the residual part of what was once an extremely intricate transportation system - the canals of the Midlands were the veins and arteries of the industrial revolution.

Although these canals venture well out of the industrial centre into rural solitude, the only way back to the main canal network is to return to that centre as routes northwards have been closed.

This of course is excellent for students of industrial archaeology but not so good for those on holiday wishing to pass quickly to the open countryside. It is indeed unfortunate that more people do not brave some of the less pleasant parts as the Northern reaches of the BCN are rural and splendid in their isolation.

It is this latter point which is most relevant. The 1968 transport act provides that the British Waterways Board maintain remainder waterways such as the Northern BCN on a cost effective basis. With little use of the canals it is not cost effective to keep them to a high standard (although local management does of course try hard

The Lichfield and Hatherton Canal Restoration Trust Ltd. has been operating as the steering group for the project since 1987. Recent successes in securing funding and breaking the "credibility barrier" mean that it is now time for a membership arm - "The Friends of the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals"

We will support and raise funds on behalf of the trust, who will remain the steering group for the projects.

Enclosed with this magazine is a membership form which explains the restoration schemes in more detail - suffice to say that even the prospect of opening up a through route should contribute to the secure future of the BCN.

In future issues we will discuss individual aspects of the restoration schemes in detail - we also hope to have some important news about land acquisition.

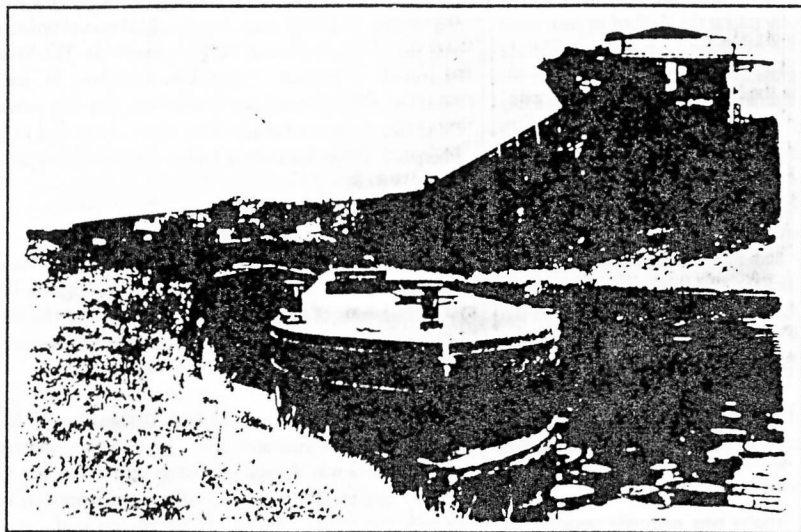
In the meantime we welcome you aboard and hope that you will stay with us I.

John Morris
CHAIRMAN, FRIENDS OF THE LICHFIELD AND
HATHERTON CANALS

TOWPATH TALES

BY ARTHUR TRUBY

This is not a history of the Black country canals, but is intended rather as the opening up of a ragbag of memories of incidents throughout my life with the Black Country canal network.



SPON LANE LOCKS TODAY

I feel that there is a need for these reminiscences to be recorded, since many are unique and give a cross section of Black Country life, which, if not brought out in print, may be lost forever. My early years were spent with the canals as a background, and they were busy in those days, particularly with local traffic. I have seen that traffic die out. It is saddening to have seen this facet of industrial life passing from our ken seemingly unmourned. So this work has become a challenging as well as pleasing task.

Most of the period covered here is that between the wars, when even halfpennies were hard to come by. In those days a walk along the canal towpath was often all the recreation which could be afforded. Having been born in a house on the border between west Bromwich and Oldbury with the Oldbury Old Canal loop at the foot of the garden, it seemed inevitable that Midland waterways would have some influence on my early years.

In the far off days of the 1920's the towpaths of local canals were extensively used as promenades by local people. My family was no exception. An uncle used to take me for Sunday morning walks along the canal bank from Albion Gasworks to Bromford lane, then alongside the three Spon Lane Locks to Spon Lane itself, and for a mile

walk home to Sunday dinner.

On such walks I learned of certain religious services which used to be held on the "spoil banks" near to the locks; crowds used to flock there to listen to the "Middle Lock" preachers. These events began long before I was born, and I never learned why services were held at the Middle lock, or who the preachers were. The spoil banks are

now overshadowed by the M5 Motorway which forms a roof over the canal for some considerable distance

During my early years, these little hillocks were often the scene of secret gambling. Little dens of youths congregated in grassy hollows, using playing cards and a metal device called a "put and take", which I was always told was the Devil's plaything and consequently not allowed to possess.

When cards were used and a Jack was dealt the players would mutter "Penny for the watcher" and all participants would put a penny into the hat. Some similar provision would also be made when the put and take was used. The watcher might be seen, apparently aimlessly strolling on the banks, but in fact keeping a sharp look-out for Policemen. Immediately the arm of the law was sighted the den of gamblers would break up, having first rewarded the faithful watcher.

A friend once saw a team of gamblers rushing away from their little game in disarray, the watcher having let them

TOWPATH TALES

down. As my friend approached she noticed that in their haste they had left money scattered around. They put, so she took!

On one occasion my uncle and I tried a variation to our Sunday morning walk by taking the Telford or new canal line instead of going via the Spon Lane locks. We made the mistake of walking the towpath on the South side, for on this path there were no exits to street level until we had reached the industrial area of Smethwick, Soho, which was a focal point of the Industrial revolution. We felt that there would be another kind of revolution if we didn't find a quick way home, because in the Black Country of the nineteen twenties there was only one place to be at lunchtime on Sunday and that was definitely at home. Sunday dinner was definitely fixed and unalterable event. It seemed a long way back that day, walking a mile to the Hawthorns and then boarding a tram direct to the expected chastisement and a very late dinner.

In 1927 came the great June thunderstorm causing floods, damage and several deaths by drowning, particularly in the Spon Lane area.

An even greater catastrophe was narrowly avoided. In Smethwick the Telford line of canal and the main Wolverhampton to Birmingham railway line run parallel for a mile or so with the canal lying some forty feet below railway level in the deep Galton cutting. On the evening of the storm, shortly after a local train had passed, a section of railway embankment loosened by torrential rain was swept in to the canal just to the East of the Galton bridge. The canal was blocked and the railway was closed for a long time, and I still have dim memories of cranes and dredgers being used at the spot.

This was not the only time that the main line of canal had been put out of use by storms. It was similarly affected on the ninth September 1899 when storm water caused a breach near Barnett's brickworks on the straight and dreary stretch of canal near Dudley Port.

Other canalside walks in the twenties and early thirties included the Tame Valley Canal at Newton, usually on route to the recently opened Red House park. This is an area where high embankments suddenly give way to deep cuttings, and one of these cuttings is spanned by the High

Bridges, whose proper names are Scott Bridge and Green Lane Bridge.

There was also a very awkward stretch of road which in those days formed the main route between Stone Cross and Walsall. The road made a right-angled turn in order to pass under the canal near the Navigation inn. The West Bromwich - Walsall Buses, one travelling in each direction, were so timed that it was likely that they would come face to face with each other either at this spot or at an equally dangerous railway bridge a few hundred yards nearer Walsall.

A story concerning this aqueduct was to the effect that a cyclist who was speeding down from Stone Cross failed to make the turn correctly and came to grief against the brick abutments of the bridge. People were said to be able to point, months after the occurrence, to the blood-marks on the bridge where the cyclist's head had struck.

Between the aqueduct and the High Bridges the Rushall Canal branches northwards and I have often wondered why this canal was always referred to as the Ganzey. An unlikely explanation is that Ganzey is a corruption of Ganges, also a waterway, but of a far different kind.

In my youth at Rushall junction there was always a large fleet of "rubbish boats". The rubbish had been brought by canal and was then tipped down its bank on the West Bromwich facing side. That long and high embankment acquired a tremendous width by reason of the large quantities of rubbish which were tipped down its slopes in those years. The unsightly nature of this embankment was plainly visible from the high ground of West Bromwich on the opposite side of the Tame Valley. When walking along the towpath of the Tame Valley Canal it was expedient to cross the roving bridge to the path on the other side when passing this odorous site. Tipping eventually ceased and the bank is now decently overgrown.

James Brindley's original line of canal in Smethwick, lying some 20 feet above the parallel Telford canal and its cutting, was improved in the late 18th century by the elimination of certain locks which gave an extremely short summit level with consequent problems of water supply. The site of this former level is still plainly visible as its bed now forms a well used and broad footpath between

TOWPATH TALES

Roebuck Lane and Brasshouse lane. Although much eroded in places, the path is in good condition, and the sandy soil washed down forms "deltas" in the waters of the present summit level. This footpath high above the canal was the route usually taken by my family when walking from West Bromwich to Smethwick. Near its Roebuck Lane end there are a few stunted bushes of hawthorn and gorse between which the route passes, and down the slope towards the water are a few large trees. Not much in the way of afforestation, but this sylvan touch, coupled perhaps with the tree-covered bank on the far side of the canal, was responsible for the name by which local people knew this footpath. It was always called "through the woods".

These are what I would call urchin's waters. When the boys from West Bromwich attempted to walk along this path they were sometimes met by similar bands of Smethwick urchins, not however harmless and of good behaviour as were the West Bromwich boys.

They were aggressive and sprang at us from hawthorn and gorse, and occasionally from the branches of a tree. They asked if we were from West Bromwich, and if so did we know that we had crossed their border line. These Smethwick boys did not want us on their territory and a rough and tumble usually ensued. But of course we of west Bromwich were always the little innocents. It was the urchinry of Smethwick who started it all.

Urchin's waters they are still. High up on one of the trees overhanging the canal a length of rope with a large knot in its end may occasionally be seen hanging. This is how the youth of a later generation has, and may still literally have its fling. Grasping the knot, the urchins swung outwards in an arc over the canal, and then back to safety.

I once saw them doing it two at a time on the same rope. As there were two others awaiting their turn, I asked if they could all go together. Just to show me, they did. They spun round and aloft in a tight cluster and so back to the bank. Perhaps I ought not to have tempted them, for although the rope seemed thick enough the tree was dead.

When I passed by some months later I noticed that the rope was very much shorter and that there was no knot in the end. I wondered.....!

Towpath walking at night was sometimes undertaken, and without street lamps the lamps of heaven shone more brightly. It was whilst walking along the canal near Coseley one night in 1934 that I made my own discovery of a "new star" Nova Herculis - which had been officially discovered by another amateur astronomer before dawn that same morning.

There is usually a way off the canal at most bridges, but there are exceptions to this. A friend who shared my interests of rock climbing and canals had been informed by me that for at least three miles there was positively no way to reach the road from a certain stretch of canal in the Midlands. My friend immediately assured me that there was indeed a perfectly good exit from towpath to footpath. I had walked that stretch of canal on many occasions and told him that I knew every gate, stile and fence giving access. This was easy because there weren't any. But of course he knew better. He explained his route in detail, "You ascend the bridge abutment for about fifteen feet to a narrow ledge. Then you traverse delicately to the right using a poor joint in the mortar as a handhold for balance. This brings you to the keystone of the arch. You can use an old telephone wire installation just above for a running belay if you like but it's not very safe. Then go straight up, using an eroded brick or two for footholds. The last few feet provide a neat mantelshelf problem and the water is a long way below. Belay the rope round a tree by the roadside and bring up the second man".

"Doesn't anyone wonder what you're up to?" I asked.

"Well," said my friend "a policeman who passed by just after we'd reached the top did think it rather odd to see us coiling up a hundred foot length of rope at the roadside!".

I shall not give the location of what is probably the only rock climb to be recorded on British Waterways property in case other climbers try their hands (and feet) and thereby incur the wrath of the authorities. What is more, I have not tried the climb myself.

The water is indeed a long way below.

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Continued in the next edition

YOUR SAY

YOUR SAY

"Your Say" is intended to be an outlet for longer letters. We intend to allow this space in every edition of "Cut Both Ways" for members (and non members) to air their views.

The editorial team stress that the views contained within may not necessarily coincide with their own.

In this edition Julie Wickington shares her thoughts on Canals as a Wildlife haven.

CANALS AS A WILDLIFE HAVEN

Canals were once the backbone of British industry, providing means of quick and easy transport for bulky and heavy goods. With the advent of railways providing even faster transport the use of canals began to decline, with many abandoned or falling into disrepair and ruin.

All has not been lost - these waterways have a very important ecological role in the dispersal of species and colonisation of new habitats by plants and animals. Canals can be very important as corridors along which species can disperse to reach new areas of wetlands.

Species of flora and fauna likely to be found in the canal environment

The flora include Common Reed, Great Reedmace, Branched Bur Reed, Reed Sweet Grass and Great Water Dock. These marginal plants offer good cover and offer an excellent habitat for birds such as Mallards, Teal, Wildfowl, Widgeon and Swan.

Submerged and floating plants include Water Lily, Water Milfoil, Water Crowfoot, Starwort and Arrowhead. These are another food source for birds and can attract insects such as Flies, Dragonflies and Damselflies, from which ducks can feed.

Plants such as Duckweeds, Frogbit and Rigid Hornwort provide food and cover but they require management because they grow rapidly and may cover the surface of the water.

Fish can include Rainbow Trout, Carp and Roach thus providing opportunities for fishing.

Management techniques

The management techniques that take place need to include the conservation of existing species colonised into that area, providing an important recreational outlet and an area of high wildlife value.

In the management planning process it is important to remember that wetlands are constantly changing systems. Any cutting back or removal of overgrown vegetation should always leave some areas untouched, so that plants can recover from the disturbance and the previous diversity can be maintained. It is also necessary to retain some mature plants to allow the process of regeneration to take place.

When canals are dredged and deepened this must be undertaken with care, to allow survival of the canal species.

Julie E J Wickington February 1993

Editors note;

The subject of conservation must always be on our minds. Recent events elsewhere suggest increasing extremism on the parts of boaters and conservationists alike, which is a disturbing trend. There need not to be a conflict of interests; for instance, the passage of boats does help to keep the level of surface cover down, thus helping to maintain the rest of the canal environment.

CANALS AS A WILDLIFE HAVEN

An old-fashioned concept perhaps, but MODERATION is the name of the game. Users of canals want a pleasant environment in which to pursue their activities, be it boating, walking or fishing. The very attraction of canals is that they are a ribbon of tranquillity in a hurried world, and no one would wish to change this.

Canal enthusiasts and Conservationists can form a formidable alliance and it is in our interests to maintain such an alliance. Two things are certain;

1. It is in the interest of those opposing canal restoration to set Conservationists and Canal enthusiasts at each others throats thus removing the possibility of a broad agreement and unified front.
2. A ditch in the ground filled with water (ie a canal) is more environmentally sound than a ditch in the ground filled with rubbish for convenience or personal gain.

Does anyone out there have a view on conservation and canals ? - please let us have your letters.



An eyesore



or an amenity for all?

I REMEMBER

"I've always been fascinated by boats, in fact I would have liked to have gone into the Navy but an accident at the lock house at Calf Heath put paid to that. I think boats are in my blood though."

It's not surprising that Ron Farr has boats in his blood. His grandfather, father and mother were all lock keepers, not to mention his father's step - brother. I suspect however, that Ron's parents had a different mode of transport in mind when they christened him Ronald Andrew Farr (R.A.F.)! The accident which Ron referred to happened when he was 8 years old and living with his parents at the lock keepers house at the bottom of the Hatherton Branch near its junction with the Staffs. and Worcs. at Calf Heath. He fell down the stairs of the house and cracked his spine. This may have stopped him going to sea but it didn't end his love affair with boats. As we sit in the lounge of his house in Great Wyrley I can see in front of me a wooden scale model of a narrow boat, surrounded by trophies won for boat building.

Ron, now 60 years old and retired from the printing industry, is a member of Rugeley Power Station model boat club and most of his spare time is spent building perfect replicas of an assortment of boats.

But it was of the past that we talked with Ron telling me about his family's involvement with canals.

"My grandfather, Jonathon Farr, was the foreman of the yard at Stourport basin before he became the lock keeper at the Bratch. Every night he would meet up with a friend to walk along the towpath to a nearby pub. One night, when they were walking back my grandfather suffered a heart attack and fell into the canal near Bumblehole lock. There was a chap moored nearby who helped to get him out but it was too late. The chap's name was Harry Butler and he had to attend the inquest at Tipton so he walked there and back and pocketed a shilling for expenses. I'll tell you how I know that later.

After my grandfather's death, my father took over at the Bratch in order to keep the family together, that would be in the early 1920's. He had a relative named Bill Farr who was the lock keeper at Calf Heath. Now this is another sad story. I've read that he had a daughter who fell into one of the locks at Calf Heath and was drowned and he was pulled into the canal by a horse tow rope and was also drowned! He's buried in the churchyard at Sharesill! It

was at this point that I told Ron he had done the right thing in moving to Great Wyrley and that he ought to stay away from canals!

Anyway, after Bill Farr drowned, my father was given the lock keeper's house at Calf Heath. My parents moved their belongings in a barge on its way back from Stourport after delivering coal. The lock keepers house was very isolated in those days. They reckon that Bill Farr always slept with a loaded pistol under his pillow just in case! My father was not very well paid and although we lived in the house rent free there was never a lot of money about. These were two acres of land with the house and my father kept fowl and pigs and grew his own fruit and vegetables. he also grew sweet peas which he'd sell to the traders at Wolverhampton market for a few pennies.

Alongside the house were six stables used to house the horses for towing the boats. These was always plenty of manure for the garden!

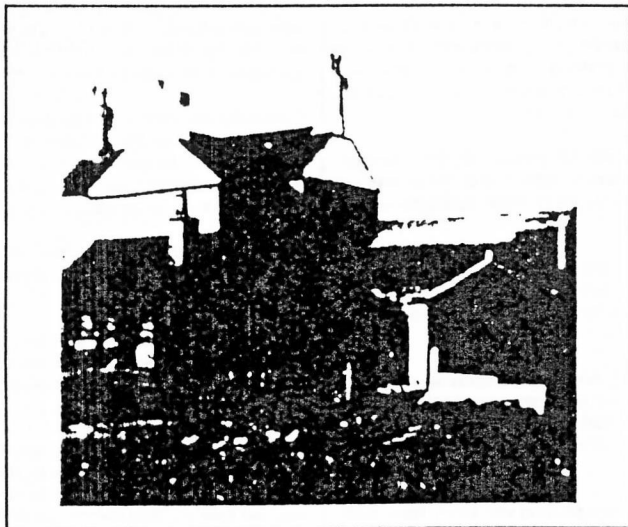
Another thing we were never short of was coal. The purpose of the Hatherton branch was to reach Cannock coalfields and most of the traffic on the branch was coal on its way down the Staffs. and Worcs. to feed the power station at Stourport. A lot of the boats were owned by T. and S. Element although some of them were Number Ones. One of my father's jobs was to 'weigh' the boats when they got to Calf Heath. Motor boats would carry about 28 tons while a butty, either towed or horse drawn, would carry about 32 tons.. The boats would be 'weighed' by using a simple measuring stick which would measure the distance between the top of the Gunwhales and the level of the water. After Calf Heath the boats weren't weighed again so after weighing my father could have all the coal he wanted. There were six fireplaces at Calf Heath which were all made up throughout the Winter. My father would only have the best coal and that was coal from Littleton Pit. Quite often the coal would be in one huge block which we'd have to break with a sledge hammer.

We weren't the only ones to have free coal though. To the boatsmen time was money and the quicker they could deliver the coal to Stourport the more bonus they made. Now, because the boats were never 'weighed' again after Calf Heath, the boatsmen would get rid of some of the

I REMEMBER

coal to reduce the weight and speed the barge up. The usual place to do this was the sharp bend after the junction with the Hatherton. This bend was known as Devil's Elbow and as the barge went round the bend the boatmen would be busy shovelling coal into the canal.

I saw the ice breaker a number of times. In fact I used to get a ride up to Walkmill Lane and back. The ice breaker was about 25 to 30 feet long with strengthened bows which formed a point. The ice breaker was powered by a Morns Vedette marine engine which was painted grey.



RON'S COTTAGE A LONG TIME AGO!

Because of this the canal soon became silted up along that stretch and the dredger would have to come to clean it out. The slurry from the canal would be emptied onto the side near the railway line. These were a few villagers in the know who would come along and collect the coal out of the slurry.

I only saw the dredger work along the Hatherton once which is surprising as the canal used to silt up a fair bit around Four Crosses. The dredger was a steel barge with a large steel boiler and steam driven crane with a bucket on the bows. Either side of the barge were large detachable stabilising floats which would have to be removed for the barge to get through the locks. The bucket would be emptied on to a second barge which followed the dredger along.

For those purists - we know that a barge would not fit down the canal but we have quoted verbatim!

More of Ron's memories in the next edition.

If you can add to Ron Farr's memories or have any memories of the Hatherton branch or the Ogley (Lichfield) Canal then please contact Phil Vaughan at 130, Fairview Road, Penn, Wolverhampton. WV4 4TE.

LOCKS TO SAVE POUNDS?

A common sense guide on how to secure boats and possessions.

By Phil Vaughan

Although most of us would like to think otherwise, there has always been a strong connection between canals and crime. As soon as the gangs of navvies moved in to an area to start work on creating the canal network, local landowners had to greatly increase the number of gamekeepers that they employed. Poaching in particular was extremely prevalent amongst the navvies and early boatmen. In addition disorder and heavy drinking was not uncommon.

As canals became the integral part of Britain's transport infrastructure, stealing, disorder, fighting and heavy drinking became part of the everyday life of those constantly on the move.

Although breaking in to boats was very rare and stealing personal items from other boatmen unheard of, pilfering from the loads being carried was looked upon as some sort of perk of the job.

Nowadays, crime generally seems to be epidemic and canal users are suffering the same as all other members of society. Instances of vandalism, theft and burglary are becoming common and not always within built up areas or around the BCN.

Many boats these days are equipped with luxury items such as Colour Televisions, Microwave Ovens and other such expensive goods. It would appear that there are now many more worthwhile items to steal from our boats and that there are many more people prepared to steal them.

So how can we reduce the chances of becoming a victim of crime in this day and age?

One of the greatest deterrents to a thief is "natural surveillance". If a thief believes that he may be observed whilst committing a crime there is every chance that he will not bother and that he will move on to look for an easier target. It therefore follows that the more natural surveillance afforded to your boat then the greater the reduction in risk.

If a choice is possible when deciding upon permanent moorings, then try and choose a location which is overlooked by residents or passers by. If someone actually lives at the site then better still.

In addition when deciding upon temporary or overnight moorings, that idyllic, out of the way spot may also be ideal for the thief to operate whilst you are relaxing in a nearby hostelry!. So from now, natural surveillance is another factor to be

considered when searching for temporary or overnight moorings.

How are you with locks? - the security type that is!

Make sure that your boat has good quality locks on twin leaf doors as they can be overcome fairly easily. Ideally such doors should be secured by a five lever mortice dead or sash lock with a rebate set. This will allow one door to be secured to the other, which should be secured in place with an internal locking bolt. Although all this sounds technical, these are all terms that any locksmith or hardware salesman should be familiar with.

Serious consideration should be given to the fitting of an alarm system to your boat. Several types are now available but should your boat be left for long periods of time, for example over the winter, you will either need a very low wattage consumption or a method of keeping the battery back up system recharged.

There is an alarm system available which has been designed for caravans and boats and features its own solar panel to keep the battery topped up.

It is also possible to have an alarm system attached to a radiopager - in the event of an attack on your boat, the pager will give you instant notification. If you are near to your boat you can then respond instantly.

One of the greatest benefits of an alarm system however, is the deterrent effect. A thief is invariably looking for easy pickings and the fact that your boat is protected by an alarm system may well save you from becoming a victim.

One of the easiest and cheapest ways of protecting your property is to permanently mark items with your home postcode and house number. This is a unique reference to you and not only makes the thief's job of disposal more difficult, but assists the Police if they catch the thief subsequently. It also helps to make a photographic/serial number record of valuable items.

Finally, what about the boat its self! - boats have been known to be stolen so why not etch the windows as you would a car?. Easy to use chemical etching kits are now available for DIY use and such markings can prove to be an effective deterrent against theft.

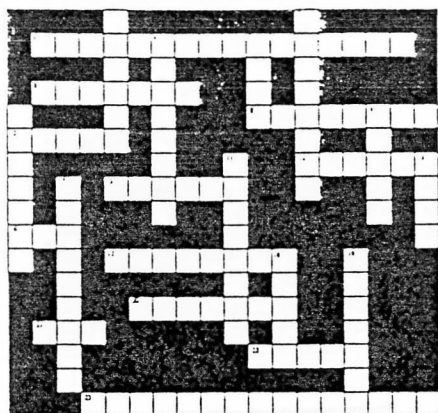
CANAL CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 3 (and 19 down) FMC canal carrying company (7,6,3)
- 6 Slicing canal engineering feature (7)
- 8 Ancient arab's finger jewellery to tie a boat to? (8)
- 10 "Leogy" canal (5)
- 12 French push to dig with (6)
- 15 "Joker" boat, named after that Fellow? (6)
- 16 Black road liquid cargo (3)
- 17 Early boat engine, often confused with vintage champagne (8)
- 20 Water bowl or water fowl? (7)
- 21 The Canal Rescue Volunteers (1 1 1)
- 22 A charity you can rely on (5)
- 23 Telford's new straight canal (10 5)

DOWN

- 1 Dredger boat with no depth (6)
- 2 Pld boatman's meeting place for barbecue beef? (8)
- 4 Breezy girl who can be brassy (8)
- 5 Boatman's cabins required more of this! (4)
- 7 Track beside canal (7)
- 9 A "new" read - many are written about boating too (5)
- 11 Pioneering canal engineer - who sounds a bit like a dogs mottled coat! (8)
- 14 Socialising like this is hard slog! (9)
- 17 Security device to get a boat along on a gradient? (4)
- 18 To do serious boating, you must be a early one of these type of locks (5)
- 19 See 3 across (7)



LETTERS

We welcome your letters and comments

Please send these to John Morris, 70 Spring Lane, Whittington, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS14 9NA

ADVERTISING

Free adverts are available to members although a donation for this facility is welcome! In addition we welcome advertising from the trade For rates please contact the above address

IN THE NEXT EDITION

- More about the Birmingham Canal Navigations
- Restoration update
- More Towpath Tales
- Your letters (please!)
- The answers to the crossword

DO YOU DIG CANALS? IF NOT, NOW IS YOUR CHANCE!

Working parties are currently concentrated on a section of the Hatherton canal on the southern edge of Cannock. Here we have been cutting down 40 years of undergrowth, laying and planting hedges, reinstating and resurfacing the towpath, and building an access ramp from an accommodation bridge. There is a variety of tasks available for the fit and not so fit. Anyone with bricklaying skills will be particularly welcome.

Dates	Times
Sunday 18th April	10am - 4pm
Sunday 16th May	10am - 4pm
Sunday 20th June	10am - 4pm
Saturday 17th July to * Saturday 24th July inclusive	
Sunday 19th September	10am - 4pm
Sunday 17th October	10am - 4pm
Sunday 21st November	10am - 4pm
Sunday 12th December	10am - 4pm



COME AND JOIN THE FUN!

* All week - Work Camp: Volunteers from Waterway Recovery Group of IWA

We generally meet at the back of the car park of the Roman Way Hotel on the A5 at Cannock. This is on the south side of the A5 a few hundred yards west of its junction with the A460.

Bring old clothes, stout footwear, work or gardening gloves, lunch and a drink (although we have been known to repair to the Four Crosses pub at lunchtime!). Basic working tools will be provided although you are welcome to bring your own.

The location and nature of working parties may change, particularly if we start new work on the Lichfield Canal.

For confirmation of the meeting point or for further information contact Denis Cooper, Trust Working Party Organiser, on 0543 371769 or Jack Waldron on 0785 840714