



AUSTRALIAN CANAL SOCIETY

Devoted to the world's inland waterways

9th November, 2015

Greetings 'Canalcoholics'!

In the last couple of weeks I've been browsing among my British inland waterways magazines acquired since the 1970s! They are stacked neatly in yearly bundles in three cupboards, but increasing lack of space means they MUST GO! Meanwhile, with our December meeting in mind, I'm looking for articles to support our December theme "Steaming Towards Christmas".

As I leaf through the pages I'm struck by their developing attractiveness and size of the issues, the breadth of subjects, the growing sophistication of narrowboats, and the tremendous changes that have been occurring in waterways themselves.

Most of all I'm impressed by the number of great 'characters' who have played such important roles in inspiring, maintaining, restoring and creating the wonderful network which we have today. There are boatmen and their families, enthusiastic leaders, those who have been prepared to get their canal restoration hands dirty, writers and photographers - in fact, people from all areas of society who have made their mark, and have been recognised through the magazines' pages.

Today we are beneficiaries of these men and women of the past, and appreciate the great work of the present generation which keeps alive the spirit and hard work of those previous generations. With exciting visions for the future they are willing to put in the hard yards to make it all happen.

In Sydney we are 'STEAMING TOWARDS CHRISTMAS' on MONDAY, 7th DECEMBER, from 6.30 - 10.00pm.

- * Come early to 'Marsden Moorings' for drinks & nibbles** or drift in when you can for an entertaining evening.
- * Wear (optional) an item of clothing that suggests a day out on a historic steam boat or train** e.g. boater, straw hat, scarves, ribbons, flowers, waistcoat, bow tie.
- * See Steam Models on display.** Maybe even a working model.

7.30pm Programme in the 'Engine House'

To people of today steam transport summons romantic notions. Ably supported by some great dvd 'spots' we shall roam from the working of steam engines to the story of various types of canal steam boats in the UK. (Some even had personalities!) and the evolution to newer propulsion methods. Why did steam railways make their assault on canals?

Presenters to include Chris Johnson, Ken James, Derek Wolfson, and Lynne Brompton.

Join in *The Transport Race of the Century: Great FUN!*

**** Christmas Goodies Raffle.**

Christmas Supper: Steamed Christmas pudding, cream & custard

Place: Marsden Moorings, Uniting Church hall, Marsden Rd, Carlingford

Parking: Mobbs Lane or at the rear of the church. (Enter by the drive on the right hand side.)



Steam transport - jigsaw

CANALTIME COFFEE: These informal occasions took off in a big way last January, and we are gearing up for another summer one on **Friday, 15th January** at a Sydney waterside location, to be announced at the coming meeting, with details by email to follow.

OVERSEAS FRIENDS OF THE ACS GATHERING, BLUE LIAS, 5 - 6th September.



As usual ACS friends headed to the Blue Lias by boat and car from near and far. The weather was surprisingly brilliant after disappointing summer weeks. The Aussie and British flags fluttered beside each other on the flagpole and the Blue Lias staff welcomed us back to this superb canalside location bursting with flowers. We gathered on the immaculate lawn alongside our line of boats displaying ACS burgees. I'm always thrilled to see canal enthusiasts, who have formed friendships through the ACS, catch up with one another. It was great to make new friends too.

We were honoured that the Inland Waterways National Chairman, Les Etheridge had agreed to be our lunchtime speaker. After a generous roast dinner, Les spoke about the invaluable work of the IWA, its recent achievements and inspiring plans for the future.

I am truly grateful for the continuing support of previous chairmen, and was pleased that David Stevenson, and Audrey Smith were able to be present once again. (An apology was received from John Fletcher).

We remembered the Grand Dame of the Canals, Sonia Rolt, who had been such an admirer and encourager of our ACS. She became a personal friend, and I think of her often.



Les and Anne Etheridge
with Audrey Smith

Phil Carr, our own quizmaster, led the boaters in another hilarious pub quiz on the Saturday night.

BUZZING BIRMINGHAM. There seems to be an amazing new energy in the once uninspiring inner city. From my canalside hotel near Gas St Basin I walked for miles (in two days) along its canals, and was blown away by the fantastic new library set in a transforming area of historic buildings linked by inviting new squares. The regeneration of the city is an eye-opener.

SEPTEMBER REFLECTIONS. My fortnight spent on the North Oxford, Grand Union and Stratford Canals with great friends, gave me reason to appreciate English canals more than ever. The sense of satisfaction climbing Hatton's 21 locks and gazing back down the flight and across to the distant tower of Warwick's St Mary's church was enormous. Then, turning on to the intimate South Stratford and approaching the narrow Lapworth lock flight, I realised afresh why Britain's narrow canals give me the greatest pleasure.

THE DEATH OF PAMELA WRIGHT last month, was a great shock. This was particularly sad, as it came so soon after her husband, ACS Past Vice President Richard's death. Our sympathy goes out to her family.

Another recent loss was that of **Bobbie Styran**, our ACS link person in Canada. Bobbie was a prominent leader in North American canal societies.

2016 MEETING DATES TO NOTE NOW: Mondays 7 March, 6 June, 5 Sept, 5 Dec.

A Merry Christmas to you all.

Jan Roden

President



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