

# IWAKES NEWS

Spring 2007

Issue No 20



*IWAKES' Tent at the National Festival, Beale Park with Jennifer & Ron Watts (TMCA), Gill Robertson and Hazel & Ted Lintott (SORT)*

*Medway Queen stripped of superstructure & fittings to start repair*



**Kent & East Sussex Branch**

# Forthcoming Events

**Thur 8th February 2007: 7:45pm: “To Holland by boat”**

Gravesend Sailing Club, The Promenade, Gravesend.

**John Epton** presents a video of a trip from Gravesend to Holland by boat. This is a TMCA event.

**Thur 22nd February 2007: 8pm: IWAKES AGM**

**and “A Wee Dram on the Forth and Clyde”**

St Nicholas Church Hall, Poplar Grove, Maidstone.

After the short AGM (Agenda: IWAKES 19) **Bernard Snell** will present an illustrated talk about the **Scottish Canals**.

**Mon 12th March 2007: 8pm: IWA South East Region AGM**

The New Inn, Roydon, nr Harlow, Herts. Agenda: IWAKES 19.

**Sat 17th March 2007: 8am to 1pm: and**

**Sun 18th March 2007: 8:30am to 2pm: Crayford Creek Clean Up**

The final 100 yards of the Navigation to Vitbe Mill is now closed by several overhanging and fallen trees. IWAKES is clearing these in partnership with TMCA, Essex WRG and Thames 2000. Boots and gloves are essential. Other protective gear will be provided. Location map opposite. No loos on site; but the ‘Jolly Farmers’ is friendly. There will be hand-washing and soft drink available; but no running water for washing.

**Sun 1st April 2007: 9:30am: Fund Raising Ramble for TMCA**

Five level miles, starting from the Ship & Lobster Public House, Denton Wharf, Mark Lane, Gravesend and returning in time for hot lunch (bring own sandwiches & drink for mid-way stop).

Contact Bernard Snell (back page or Mob 0775 528950 on day).

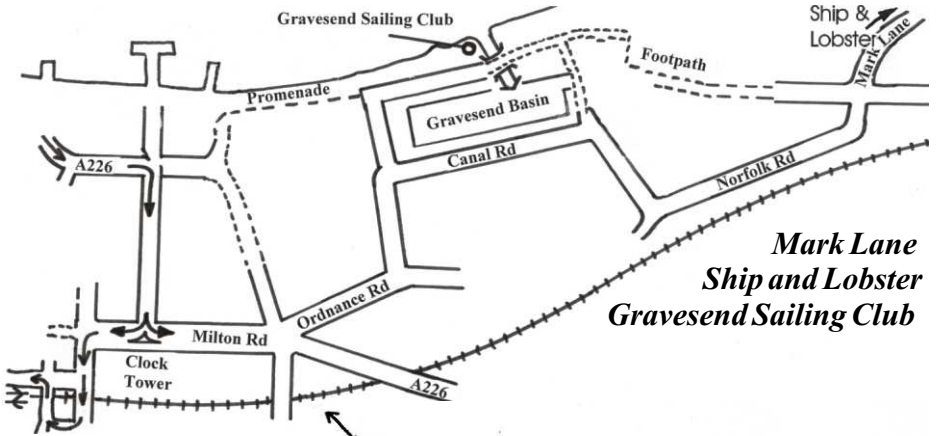
**Sun 13th May 2007: Thames & Medway Canal Event**

Outdoors at Mark Lane, Gravesend (with a static display at St Andrew’s Art Centre). All very welcome at this TMCA event.

**Thur 24th May 2007: 7:45pm: Gravesend Historical Society**

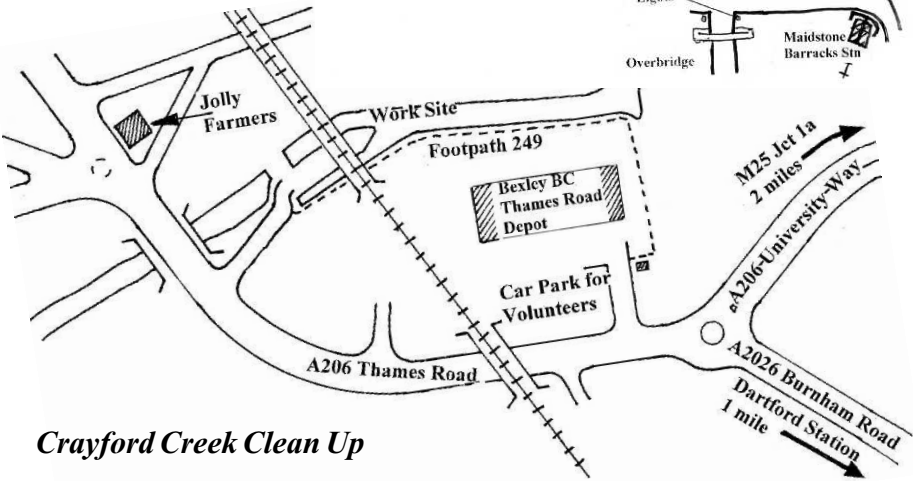
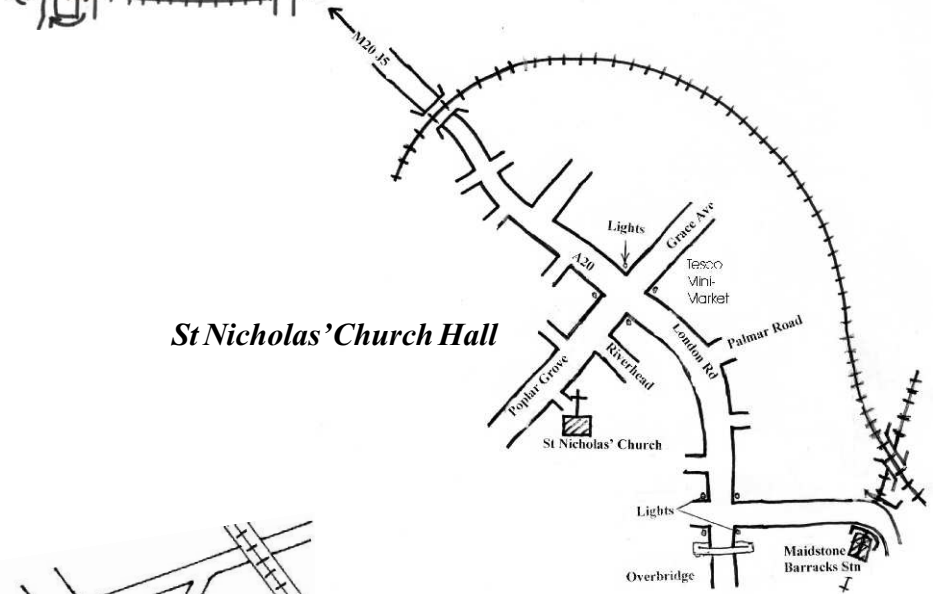
Gravesend Sailing Club, The Promenade, Gravesend.

Presentation by Mrs Sandra Soder. This is a TMCA event.



**Mark Lane  
Ship and Lobster  
Gravesend Sailing Club**

**St Nicholas' Church Hall**



**Crayford Creek Clean Up**

# Chairman's Report

2006 was a very exciting year for our branch with the visit of NB Jubilee in July being the highlight. We have had very positive feedback from the Dartford councillors, one of whom attended our Christmas meeting. We have submitted our reply to their Representation process regarding the Dartford Council Core Strategy policy and are awaiting contact from them regarding the next stages of the consultation.

At the IWA AGM held in Bromsgrove in September we were given details of the report carried out to assist the IWA in moving forward. There will be changes in the way Council, Committees, Regions and Branches are structured and talks are on-going with a view to implementing any changes during 2007. These changes should be viewed positively because IWA needs a new framework to progress through the next 60 years and make it fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to continue its work as an effective campaigning organisation.

Speaking of campaigning, you will no doubt be aware from reports in the waterways press that DEFRA have cut the funding to British Waterways and further cuts year on year are anticipated. These cuts will have a detrimental affect on what work BW can afford to do to maintain and restore the canal system. The EA have also had funding cuts which will affect their work on rivers and flood defences. The IWA held a number of protests which took place over the last weekend in November and I was able to attend the rally at Gas Street Basin attended by over 60 boats (sadly I had to go by train!) It was timed to take place outside the BBC Midlands Studio whilst the Politics Show was recorded so there was lots of publicity for the cause. The next stage of the protest will be a Palace of Westminster Campaign cruise on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2007 and a petition will be presented to 10 Downing Street in February. Full details of the cuts and the protests can be found on the IWA website ([www.waterways.org.uk](http://www.waterways.org.uk)).

My thanks to all members for their continued support and in particular to the committee and members who worked so hard to make the visit of Jubilee such a success.

*Gill Robertson*

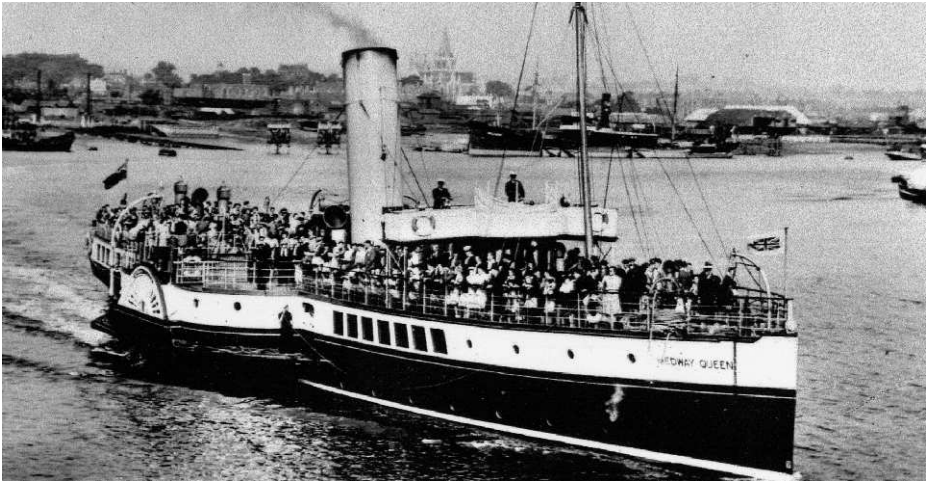
# Treasurer's Report

At the end of the financial year on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006 we held a balance of £3587.56 of which £1087.71 remains ring-fenced for TMCA. Our deficit on the year was £234.87. Full accounts will be available at the AGM in February. Anyone who wishes to have a copy e-mailed to them should contact me on [clive@cowstead.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:clive@cowstead.freeserve.co.uk). In IWAKES 19 I asked for a replacement for me as treasurer as I hoped to stand down at the AGM. We are still looking. If anyone reading this can help please contact me.

*Gill Robertson*

# The Queen gets £1.8M

The Medway Queen, that is. Members of her preservation society have been successful in their bid from the Heritage Lottery Fund. I imagine a purist may say this report is hardly a topic about waterways but then this is no ordinary boat with no ordinary past. Built in 1924 for the New Medway Steam Packet Company to specifically serve the River Medway she provided pleasure trips to Sheerness, Herne Bay, Margate, Southend, and Clacton. Constructed on the River Clyde in Scotland by Ailsa Shipbuilding Company she was a classic estuary paddle steamer being 180ft long, 24ft beam, 50ft wide over the paddle box and 134 tons.



She attended the Coronation Review at Spithead in 1937 and was converted from coal to oil burning in 1938 joining the ranks of the Royal Navy as HMS Medway Queen in 1939. Now she embarked on the most famous episode of her career during the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940. Her previous conversion from coal to oil was now to prove of great significance undertaking the crossing of the Channel 7 times to rescue over 7000 men and shooting down 3 enemy aircraft for which she gained 4 awards for gallantry. On her last trip she was badly damaged and feared lost but eventually limped back safely into Dover. In 1953 she once again attended the Spithead Review this time for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and was finally taken out of service in 1963.

I have fond memories of taking a trip on her myself in 1959 with a new girl friend who incidentally I later married. We did not realise then that her cruising days were almost over. The above print shows her decks crammed with holiday makers around 1950. The cover picture, taken only recently, shows her stripped almost bare ready for her eventual second life. You can find out more about the Medway Queen Preservation Society on [www.medwayqueen.co.uk](http://www.medwayqueen.co.uk) or contacting the Press Officer on 01634 252848

*Bernard Snell*

# Thames & Medway Canal

About half a dozen members (and growing) gather at either Higham or Gravesend. At Gravesend its usually strimming, litter-picking and tidying, with occasionally larger pieces of dross (cars!). At the Higham end, for some reason, persons take great pleasure in dumping all manner of household rubbish. Three-piece suites, freezers, fridges, parts of beds, unknown quantities of double-glazing, computer parts, car parts, office chairs, garden chairs (some of which are worth keeping for when we need a break) and well over 100 tyres. Luckily we have people in high places and following a phone call to the council a lorry arrives and the heap disappears.

Pararail recently came to Canal Road, Higham and cleared the roadside of scrub and trees. This has made our job a lot safer as we can be seen better by all the vans, cars and lorries that seem to use the road to the local industrial area. Also the canal is a lot more visible now (is that a good thing or bad?). We will soldier on, enjoying the fresh air and companionship. *Angela Acott*



# Royal Military Canal

Alan Hales has kindly offered to become IWA Kent & East Sussex Branch Representative for the Royal Military Canal. It's a big job, spanning two districts, two counties and with two authorities and we are very grateful to accept his offer. Alan's contact details are on the back page.

# Sussex Ouse

This year 24 days have been spent working at Isfield lock. Initial site preparation work and time spent grading the access ramp took up the majority of this time, but was essential preliminary work and will not have to be repeated. Excavation of the lock tail, almost up to the surviving lock gates, has taken 4 working days using the manpower of SORT members. Paul Morris, the Project Manager, estimates that, working at a similar rate, the 50ft or so left to excavate would take around 20 working days, or approximately all of next year's allotted time. Dates available to work at the site are restricted due to the site being very close to a pheasant shoot. However, KESCRG have indicated that they are happy to allot a weekend excavating at the site in the early summer, and this will dramatically advance the work and their offer is much welcomed and appreciated by SORT.

SORT's Vision Document has now been produced, with the aid of a grant from the IWA. The first 1000 copies have been printed and an official launch is being organised. The objective of the official launch is to bring SORT and its aims more prominently to the notice of local authorities, parish councils, the Environment Agency, Natural England, angling associations, the Ramblers Association and anyone who could be considered as a potential partner. Invites to these official bodies are in the process of being sent out. Once officially launched, the Document will be available to all SORT's membership and to the wider waterways audience.

*Hazel Lintott*

## Rother & Romney Flood Plan

The major responsibility of the Environment Agency is to reduce the risk of flooding and its consequent effect on people and the environment. Clearly, they need to make best use of public money and take decisions concerning flood management and protection with due regard to the views of local people. The Environment Agency delivers on this responsibility by inviting consultation on their policies and plans and we have recently reviewed the Rother and Romney Catchment Flood Management Plan (CFMP). These documents detail the flood risk on the area, any likely impact on people, property and the environment and develop a plan of action. The plan is based upon the Environment Agency providing flood warning systems, providing sustainable flood defences and discouraging inappropriate development in flood risk areas.

Although the link between navigation (our interests) and flooding (everyone's interests) may seem a little tenuous, we believe it is important to ensure that navigation interests are not forgotten. To that end your Committee has made appropriate and positive comments to the current consultation phase of the Rother and Romney CFMP. If anyone would like further information on this topic, please contact either our Rother Representative or our Royal Military Canal Representative (details on the back page).

*Mike Hannan*

# Your Committee

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