"WEY-SOUTH"

Volume 1. No.1 - May, 1971

A special first edition to mark the occasion of

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The Rt. Hon. Lord Egremont, M.B.E., J.P.

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Assistant Sec:

Mr. P.R. Beresford, 4 Telgarth Road, Ferring, Sussex.

Treasurer and Editor of "Wey-South":

Mr. D.F. Ball, 12 Station Road, Horsham, Sussex.

The Object of the Society is to attempt the restoration of the navigational link between the Rivers Wey and Arun, thus providing a direct water link between the South Coast and London, and also with the rest of the Inland Waterways system.

Petworth House,
Petworth,
Petworth,
Sussex.

President: .1971. May, 1971. Lord Egremont, M.B.E., J.P.

The Wyndham family has been closely connected with the history of the Wey and Arun Canal. I am therefore glad about what is being done about it now. It is a splendid cause.

I wish it well.

Tana Tanana

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WHAT THE EDITOR HAS TO SAY

Welcome, reader, to the first edition of 'Wey-South'. The fact that you are reading this shows that you are interested in the Wey and Arun Canal, and the Society thanks you for your interest. If you are not already a member, we hope that after reading "Wey-South", you will be inspired to become one. This first edition is a special one, to coincide with 'Loxwood 1871', the pageant organised by the Loxwood Parish Church Social Committee, and I cannot promise that future issues will be as voluminous as this one, but my aim will certainly be to make them both interesting and informative.

The Wey and Arun Canal Society was formally inaugurated on 17th November, 1970, as a result of a number of individuals with similar interests in the canal getting together for a joint discussion. This was

perhaps inspired by the Guildford Rally of the Inland Waterways Association and its subsequent press publicity, although certain individuals, our Secretary, John Markwick in particular, had put in a considerable amount of work in studying the canal, surveying and investigating for some time before this.

The Society was formed against a background of the most pessimistic reports and opinions, and it is only due to the determination and imagination of a few that the Society has got off the ground at all. This is not to say that the Society does not appreciate the magnitude of the task that lies ahead - the Committee members would be the first to admit that their dreams may never in fact be realised. However, by adopting a realistic attitude to the task. I feel that our formidable obstacles may be overcome, particularly in view of the growing support that the Society is now receiving.

Membership now stands at nearly 50, and continues to grow ra pidly, as publicity is beginning to take effect. You will find reports of work done so far, and our hopes for the future, contained in the various articles in "Wey-South".

Considerable inspiration to carry on has been the reward of the members of the Committee who have been engaged on preliminary clearance work at Rowner Lock. The sight of the canal reappearing from beneath the mantle of neglect under which it has lain for the past 100 years is quite incredible. Rowner Lock can be seen for the first time in generations, the lines of the bridge appear and one can almost see the line of the canal curving away into the distance.

When the project was first mooted, the favourite response was "You're mad!" Is it madness? I invite you to come and see and decide for yourself.

David F. Ball Editor

Newsletter Distribution

This being the first issue of 'Wey-South', a copy is being sent to every member. To keep costs down in future, only one copy will be sent when there is more than one member of the Society in a family.

If you would like one copy each however, please write to the Secretary who will mcdify the mailing list.

'LOXWOOD 1871'

'LOXWOOD 1871' is being organised by the Loxwood Parish Church Social Committee and will take the form of a Fête and Tableau on Saturday, 15th May at North Hall, Loxwood. The highlight of the day will be the Tableau, presented by the Ifold Players, depicting the Official Opening of the Wey & Arun Junction Canal at Alfold in 1816. Authentic proceedings will be followed, including the arrival of the 3rd Farl of Egremont and the Mayor of Guildford by horse conveyance, and the Ceremony will conclude with the party leaving by 'barge'.

It is new almost exactly 100 years since the Wey & Arun Junction Canal was legally abandoned, and it is this rather sad event that 'LOXWOOD 1871' is designed to commemorate.

'LOXWOOD 1871' will be opened by Mr. W.H.D. Riley-Smith at 2.30 p.m. Everyone is invited to dress in costume and join in the spirit of the event by living for a while in the less exacting times of a century ago. There will be a wide range of Side Stalls, including Produce and Cake Stalls, a mammoth Bottle Stall, pony rides and Teas. There will also be a Raffle, Lucky Programme Number, and prizes for the most appropriately dressed Lady, Gentleman, and Child under 14. Admission will be by Programme, price 3p.

Most places of interest in Loxwood, including the old Church site, the Wey & Arun Canal and associated buildings, will be indicated by a blue card and you will be able to trace their history in an Exhibition in the Hall. Exhibits kindly loaned by Major Elliot from his Farm Implements Museum at Bramley will also be on show. The Loxwood Judo Club will be giving a demonstration during the afternoon.

BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS IN TIME ON THE WEY AND ARUN CANAL A HISTORY OF THE CANAL BY MISS GWEN DOUGHERTY - PART ONE THE RIVERS WEY AND ARUN

1971 - work was started to try and re-open the Wey & Arun Canal exactly 100 years after it was closed.

A long history stretches b back beyond 1871 however, of the attempts to open up a route between London and the sea on the South Coast, which avoided the treacherous Channel and the Goodwin Sands.

From time immemorial the Wey & Arun rivers have been navigable in their lower reaches if not up near their sources, The Wey rises near Selborne in Hampshire and flows north to the Thames: the Arun rises about 30 miles to the east in St. Leonard's Forest and flows south to the English Channel. At their nearest point they are only ten miles apart, but it took 175 years from the passing of the first Act to unite them by the Wey & Arun Canal.

The demand for cheap transport between Guildford and London had resulted in the very early canalisation of the Wey by Sir Richard Weston in 1651. This navigation is now owned by The National Trust which effectively protects the nothern exit of the canal to the Thames.

Guildford had become a marketing centre early in its history
and it was felt that water transport would open up the hinterland
to the south. The Wey Navigation
Act 1760 continued the waterway
4½ miles further upstream and
wharves were constructed at
Sharford and Godalming. Work was
completed by 1763.

The Arun presented a more difficult problem. Below Arundel Bridge the river runs in a deep tidal channel for 7 miles and is scoured by violent tides before reaching the sea at Littlehampton

and only boats with a shallow draught can get up at low tide. Arundel developed in a similar way to Guildford as a market for the surrounding agricultural land. It was not until the 1540's that extensive work was carried out on the Arun to help stop the flooding and to widen and straighten its course. The navigation had been extended to Pallingham by the time Elizabeth I came to the throne. the old Roman Road. The distance By 1623 attempts were being made to extend it to Newbridge. The first serious proposal to link the Wey & Arun rivers was made in 1641 and used the line of the rivers with a 2 mile canal link from Cranleigh to Dunsfold, both of which were on tributaries of the main rivers.

By the early 16th Century, Arundel had become an important inland port, but the mouth of the Arun was subject to continual silting, and by the 1780's Arundel was in a decline. It was not until the American War of Independence that serious efforts were made to improve the navigation again. The Arun Navigation Company was formed in 1785 and the line chosen between Newbridge and Pallingham involved the crossing of the Arun River by an aquaduct at Olfold and the building of 3 locks, also a 13 feet high tunnel carried the canal beneath Hardham Hill and Stane Street between Arundel and Newbridge was thus reduced by 3 miles.

By the time of the French Revolution, less than 15 miles separated the navigable parts of the Wey and Arun rivers, but their eventual linking was not to take place until 1813.

During that period several schemes using different routes were proposed, the most notable of which was Rennie's Grand Southern Canal project in 1810. It was at that time that the 3rd Earl of Egrement

became interested in the canal idea; an interest which is shared by the present Earl who is President of this Society.

As a result of his interest the River Rother was made navigable to serve Petworth, the family seat.

WANTED for the Society's Archives

Any old photographs, pictures or articles of, or relating to, the Canal installations, wharves, lock cottages, (particularly Rowner Lock Cottages), personalities and working boats.

ALSO the following issues of the Sussex County Magazine:-

April,1934 - A Bygone Waterway, January - May, 1935 - Waterways of Sussex, July, 1939 - Seeing Sussex by Water,

AND a copy of 'The Thames to The Solent by Canal and Sea' by J.B. Dashwood (1868, illustrated).

DISUSED CANAL

Earth began to take it back years, years before men left it; and their horses, put to pasture, trailed their manes in the softness of fern fronds; years, before their long, brass-bound barges sank to glint among the kingcups.

No sooner were they opened for the first time, these locks and the only rush ever of a wall of water shook each bridge, quiet over stagnancy since - than dormant seeds in the clay bed sprouted, never to be put down, blod once a year and strengthened by bill-hook. The hold tightened; banks grew close with tufty hummocks. Then rose the silted bottom through the water and once again the land won back

the length of cut. A thick scum of duckweed only lies where a man might have stood once, and still have drowned. Only flies, with the drug of dusk, now dance to an oriental music where the bargees sang to the hooves.

Ted Walker.

IS AMBITION A FORM OF MADNESS?

A contribution by one of our engineers, Mr. Roderick Peryer

"Mother Nature will always have her own way in the end". That statement can at present be said to be very true of the Wey & Arun Canal. Today, after a hundred years of disuse, the old waterway has fallen into a very sorry state, the watercourse has silted up and is overgrown, the locks are crumbling or non-existent, lock gates have rotted away; in some cases, to meet 20th century needs, the Canal has been filled in and cultivated or built on. In fact it is difficult to imagine today what the barges, some of them hauling 50 tons of cargo, would have looked like as they travelled through, what was then and still is, one of the most picturesque and peaceful tracts of land in the country.

Thanks to the activity of the Wey & Arun Canal Society, the sight of boats on the canal once again may be nearer than it has been for a century past. People are at last beginning to realise that our environment and heritage are going to be, in the not too far distant future, a human need, in the rapidly accelerating 'rat race'.

But of the present - The Wey and Arun Canal Society has been formed with the ambition, said by some to be madness, of making the canal navigable again, not this time for commercial traffic, but for pleasure craft and rural recreation.

With the Society formed, the first job was to assess the possibilities of the project. At face value the canal restoration would be similar in magnitude to the original construction, including the task, similar to that of the original promoters, of persuading a section of landowners to let us try and fulfil our hopes. Whilst negotiations were in progress on this matter, a physical survey

was carried out from Pallingham Lock to Drungewick. In this, the Society received some invaluable information and assistance from the Sussex River Authority and the local people.

Then, at last, the necessary chance was offered, as we received permission from three very generous landowners to start our vast project. The survey of this section proved favourable and the enthusiasm increased because now we had the opportunity to prove our point.

The first section to receive attention is between Newbridge and a point just to the north of Rowner Lock. The restoration of this length, about 2-mile, is being treated as a pilot scheme, to gain experience for future working. The initial work involves the handblistering and arduous task of removing all the undergrowth and clearing away the obstructing trees, many of which have been lying dormant in the bed of the canal for

generations. Much of this work is undertaken by hand, but it is surprising how quickly, even with very few people, the whole area is transformed. The original stonework is exposed, the remains of lock gates and fittings are discovered, and the line and contours of the canal re-appears. As this clearance work proceeds, it is hoped, with mechanical assistance, that the channel can be dredged out and the towpath and banks restored to their original state.

Rowner Lock, the first of our venture, has been cleared of scrub and opened up to assess the best way of removing the trees, some of which have badly damaged the stonework. The stone employed in these locks was obtained from local quarries, Pulborough and Bedham supplying the major part, and today this becomes very expensive to replace. Therefore, the damaging trees must be removed with a minimum of disturbance to the structure. After this, the chamber will be dammed off and the water

pumped out to enable the repair works to commence. The Society has schemes, in the planning stage, for replacing the lock gates which will, it is hoped, be put into practice in the near future.

To summarise our programme, we hope to start repair work to this lock during this summer, whilst the trimming of undergrowth will be adjourned until next Autumn. This, our first lock, will have to act as the Society's 'classroom' so that the technical problems can be ironed out and the re-construction technique adjusted to suit our capabilities, for future restorations.

Elsewhere in this, our first News Bulletin, the dates of our 'Navvies Working Parties' are given. On these occasions, we shall be pleased to receive as much assistance as possible from those sufficiently interested, able, and willing to come and give it a try. So far our efforts have proceeded fairly slowly, but the saying "Rome was not built in a day" should also apply to the Wey and Arun Canal. A long haul lies ahead and we all know it!

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OF BIRDS & BEES

Our Editor, (Bless him!) has asked me to contribute an introductory article about the Wild Life that exists/lives along our reach of the Canal. My sole qualification for being bestowed this honour is that I have been in closer contact with the Canal than any other member of our Society - I have fallen in it! So, for my sins, I have been 'invited' to fill a space in our magazine.

'Inter-relationship' and 'Food Chain' are ecological terms often bandied about by the experts, but what do they mean in down-to-earth terms that both you and I can understand?

Do you, for instance, know that if there was an acute shortage of RUMEX HYDROLAPATHUM (Great Water Dock) it would seriously affect the diet of the GALLINULA CHLOROFUS (Moorhen)? It would, - because they are inter-related - -----

Perhaps this would be a better example: - A Kingfisher cats small fish - small fish eat small crustacea, which again depend upon minute vegetable and animal matter for their existance. This type of dependence is called a 'Food Chain', and if a link in the chain were to be removed and there was no substitute for it, it would affect all the other links in that same chain, or. more simply, it would upset the 'Balance of Nature' for in nature all living things, be they animal, fish, insect or plant, are where they are for a purpose - a purpose not always apparent to usat; first sight. Let us all always remember this, and when you are out in the country show respect for the wonders of nature; you will be well rewarded if you do!

I asked Clare and Peter, two naturalist friends of mine, to take a walk along the towpath

with me. The first sign of Wild Life we saw was a flash of brilliant blue as a Kingfisher darted along the lockpound and out under the little hump-back bridge to disappear amongst the trees; a little later, a rustle in the undergrowth, the whirrr of fastbeating wings, and a covey of Partridges took fright and flew off across the meadows to safety: down among the reeds and water irises a Moorhen trod stealthily searching for food, whilst higher up the bank, a young male Blackbird sat perched on top of a Hawthorn tree, singing for a mate, and below him, among the shrubs and bramble, the militant little Cock Robin defended his territory against all intruders.

In the willows a family of Blue Tits chattered to each other as they searched for food in the branches, and below them an eel slid silently into the water and disappeared beneath the marsh marigolds.

Up beyond the lock we saw a Roebuck leading his doe across the fields to pastures new, and beneath the undergrowth of dog rose and blackberry, the ladies smock (or cuckoo flower) added a delicate touch of mauve to the awakening earth, and the stinging nettles began to take their toll of the unsuspecting!

Down beyond the next bridge stood a Heron, on one leg, head haunched between shoulders, — a patient killer of the waterside! Near to the foot of the bridge, there appeared to be a badgers set, with traces of a recently devoured mallard strewn near the entrance, and up just beyond the fallen tree, a pair of Pied Wagtails danced above the still water in the evening sunshine.

As dusk fell, a white Barn Owl swept silently overhead

searching for its unsuspecting prey; and we wondered off into the evening mist searching for the Limeburners Arms, to restore our 'Balance of Nature'.

Other birds known to frequent the area include:

Woodcock, Corn Bunting, Reed Bunting, Chif Chaf, Hedge Acentor, Wren, Lapwing, Long Tailed Tits, Jays, Devil Birds (Swift) Swallows, Coots, Greenfinch, Goldfinch and others.

Austin Tatton-Winter.

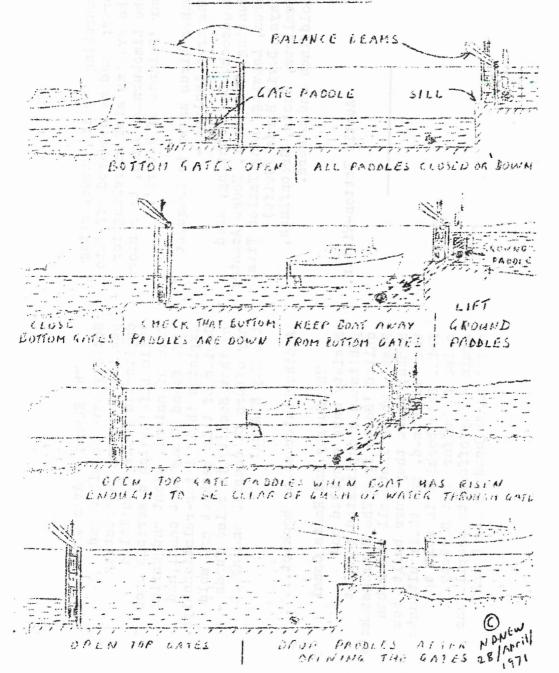
The Kennet & Avon Canal
Society have compiled and
published a very interesting
duplicated booklet entitled
'Wild Life' which describes each
form of animal, plant and marine
life found along that canal, and
explains their inter-relationships.
Copies of this booklet are sola
by that Society to raise funds any offers to compile one about
the Wey & Arun?

Another interesting booklet....

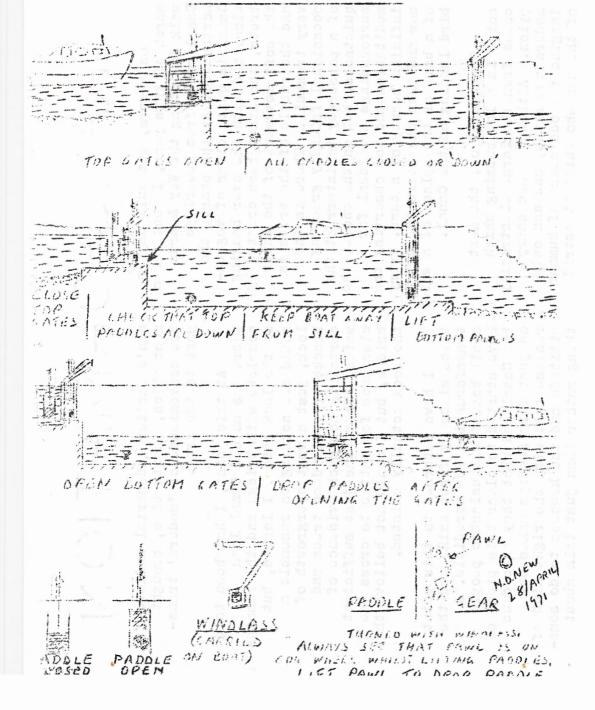
The Surrey and Hants Canal Society have compiled and published a duplicated booklet called 'Boats from The Basingstoke's Past', which lists all the known boats, where they were built, how they were used, and their ultimate fate. This booklet is sold to raise funds for that Society.

Again - any offers to compile one about boats used on our Canal?

GANAL LOCK



CANAL LOCK



TRANSFORMATION

On a warm, but dull day in March of this year, I went for a walk following the Wey & Arun Canal route from Newbridge northwards. At the start, the Canal is quite clear of vegetation, and with the over hanging trees, the atmosphere created by the soft movement of the water and the rustle of the trees is very tranquil. There is the occasional friendly greeting of a passer-by to interrupt the quietness, but on the whole, tho surroundings are ideal for meditation and for observing the infinite beauty of nature. Every now and then one hears the cry of a bird or the splash of a water bird landing on the Canal.

Continuing on, the next noise is a low buzzing which comes from the large electricity pylon. Although a necessary modern apparatus, one can only imagine the odd sense of humour of the men who built it astride man's earlier industrial achievement which, in its time, brought the convenience of 'modern' transport to the area.

At this point, I had been told there was an old Canal lock complete with bridge and the remains of the lock gates. I looked, but could see nothing to resemble a lock, just a vast overgrowth of blackberry, old dead trees and certainly not much evidence of water. There was just sufficient clearance for cattle to cross the bridge, but I could not believe that the lock actually existed.

I have returned to this point twice since my first walk, and the transformation is incredible. A small bandof enthusiastic people have started to clear this piece of the Canal and what they have done on just five Sundays makes one realise that with the right kind of attitude and the keeness to do something rather than just talk about

it, a useful and pleasant waterway could again grace the adjoining meadows. The blackberry bushes and tangled saplings have gone, the old, mostly rotten. trees are now log pilos in the adjacent field, and the lovely old stone walls of Rowner Lock have come into view.

> The old brick bridge now stands clear and proud of its position below the lock. Some trees had embedded themselves right across the lock, these have been removed and sawn up and there is now a fair amount of water to be seen.

What the newly formed Wey and Arun Canal Society are doing is so worthwhile. Apart from the physical work which is going into the general clearing as the first step in getting this section of the Canal cleared and ready for use once more as a quiet waterway, the enthusiasm of this small group of people is

spreading. Local walkers and horsemen out for Sunday afternoon exercise, stop, look and ask questions about what is going on. Some may not wish to put physical effort into helping, but most consider the idea and example worthy of the lovely county of West Sussex.

I, for one, will walk this way again.

Patricia Young.

Towpath Topic

'ere Ethel, what about it? What about what 'arry.? What about what I said Ethel? Well, what about it 'arry?

Day Bookless to LIKE TO READ ABOUT INLAND WATERWAYS?

The 'biblo' of the Wey and Arun Canal Society is 'London's Lost Route to the Sea' by P.A.L. Vine, written in 1965 and published by David & Charles.

At present, the book is regrettably ut of print, but we understand from the publishers that it will be re-printed in 1972. In the meantime, copies are available from The West Sussex County Council Public Libraries, but reservation is advisable.

Other books available from the Public Libraries include:-

Know your Waterways - Robert F. Aickman 1967.

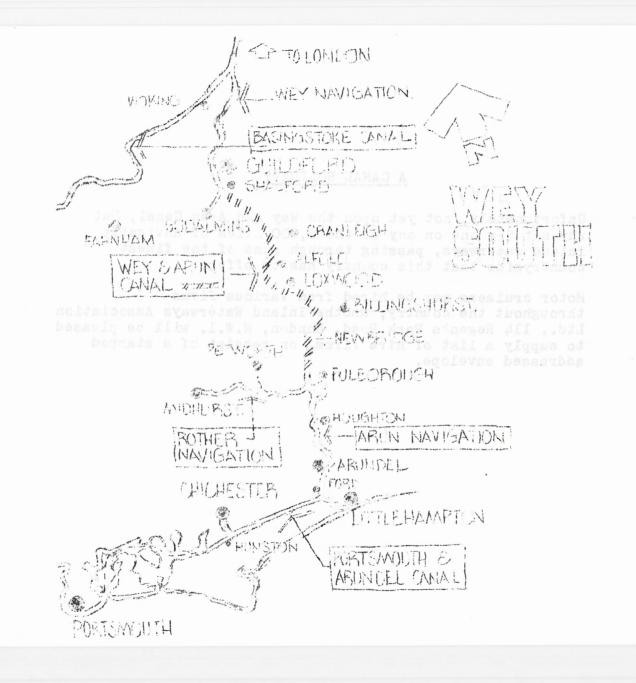
London's Lost Route to Basingstoke - Paul A.L. Vinc 1968.

Canals in Camora - John Gagg 1970.

Navigable Waterways - Lionel T.C. Rolt 1969.

Canals of South and South-East England - Charles Hadfield 1969.

Further lists of books on Inland Waterway topics will be published in future editions of this Bulletin.



A CANAL HOLIDAY?

Unfortunately, not yet upon the Wey and Arun Canal, but why not try one on any of the 2,000 males of navigable inland waterways, passing through some of the finest countryside that this country has to offer.

Motor cruisers may be hired from various firms throughout the country, and the Inland Waterways Association Ltd., 114 Regents Park Road, London, N.W.l. will be pleased to supply a list of hire firms, on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

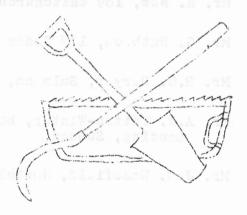
KEEN TO HELP

Here is what to do:

- 1. Join the Wey and Arun Canal Society (application form enclosed).
 - We should be quite happy if you only go as far as this, but we should like you to consider points 2, 3 and 4 below.
- 2. Find your oldest clothes, plus good boots and gloves,
- J. If you have them, get together any useful tools, i.e., bow-saws, garden rakes, billhooks, slashers, etc.
- 4. Come along and join the fun at one of our working parties. These are held on the first and third Sundays of the month, from about 10 a.m. onwards, and the present working site is at or near Rowner Lock. Access from the B2133 road Alfold Wisborough Green) near the Bat & Ball Inn at Newpound Common.

Proceed via Paplands Farm following the line of pylons to the Canal. Cars can either be left at Paplands Farm, or driven through the field down to the Canal. Please remember to shut the gates and to park tidily.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. A.G.T. Davies, 74 Parkside, Shoreham -by-Sea, Sussex.

Miss G.E. Dougherty, 53 Marlborough Gardans, Lovelace Read, Surbiton, Surrey.

Mr. J.R. Mackley, Maudlin Paddock, Steyning, Sussex.

Mr. N. New, 189 Whitchurch Lane, Edgware, Middlesex.

Mr. G. Nutbeem, 127 Cedar Drive, Chichester, Sussex.

Mr. R.G. Peryer, Sulmona, East Street, West Chiltington, Sussex.

Mr. A.W. Tatton-Winter, Bodell's Stores, 38/40 Crabtree Lane, Lancing, Sussex.

Mr. J.M. Wakefield, Northlands Farm, Billingshurst, Sussex.

"WEY-SOUTH" published and printed by THE WEY AND ARUN CANAL SOCIETY C/o 59 Ardsheat Road, Broadwater, Worthing, Sussex.

THE WEY & ARUN CANAL SOCIETY APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Subscription - £1.00, or £0.25p if under 18 years of age.
Please complete in BLOCK LETTERS.
SURNAME;
CHRISTIAN NAMES
ADDRESS
•••••
DATE OF BIRTH
TELEPHONE: HOME: BUSINESS
MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER SOCIETIES
CCCUPATION HOBBIES, TALENTS:
DO YOU OWN A CAR?
DO YOU OWN A BOAT? IF 'YES', PLEASE GIVE DETAILS:
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
I hereby apply to become a member of the Wey & Arun Canal Society and agree to abide by the Rules of the Society.
I enclose crossed cheque/P.O. value £ payable to'The Wey & Arun Canal Society'.
Signed Date Please send to Mr. J. Markwick, 59 Ardsheal Road, Worthing, Sx.

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