



AUSTRALIAN CANAL SOCIETY

Devoted to the world's inland waterways

2nd February, 2009

Dear Canal Enthusiasts,

How little we know! While we were enjoying Venice vicariously in our December meeting, this amazing city itself was suffering from the worst floods in 22 years. As many of you would have done, I watched with horror as news reports showed threatening waters from the Adriatic sweeping through the city. Several people emailed graphic photos from the world press, to me. Subsequent reports reveal how residents took the annual 'acqua alta' (high water) in their stride, though hotels had many cancellations in December. It may be inconvenient, but it could be a very interesting experience to be in Venice during a serious 'acqua alta'! What photos to show your friends!



St Marks Square Sebastiano Casellati/AFP/Getty Images

Thank you to all the people who contributed to the enjoyment of our Venetian evening. Fanciful masks, a gracious Italian dance, tantalizing Venetian views, historical DVD segments, a raffle and auction of genuine Venetian items, chocolate prizes and a lovely supper, all added to the fun.

As we had some unfinished Venetian 'business' in our programme, we shall return to **Venice** in March, looking in particular at the city today and ponder its future.

Then, completely changing scene, **rural France** will be the destination. Members Ross & Jo Redfern, Ian & Joan Elliott and two friends spent four delightful weeks completing a very scenic ring, which took in the Nivernais, Yonne, Seine, Loing, Briare and Lateral la Loire canals and rivers. An increasing number of canal seekers are inquiring about French canals and the coming meeting may be a good opportunity to discover more about these popular routes, whether you have already cruised them or planning a trip there.

Steve & Lynne Brompton have just returned after a month in **wintery Britain and Germany**. Did they really make contact with eight canals, walk several towpaths and not freeze to death? In our meeting we shall hear how enjoyable the canals around Edinburgh, Manchester and London are in winter. Our meetings usually contain a few surprises, so be prepared to be entertained. Think Scotland!

NEXT MEETING

DATE Monday 2nd March, 2009
TIME 7.45 – 9.45pm + supper
PLACE Marsden Rd Uniting Church Hall
Marsden Rd, Carlingford (park in Mobbs Lane)

FEATURES

- **Venice Revisited: The present and future.**
- **6 Friends Barge in central France – Ross Redfern & crew**
- **Bromptons and Brass Monkeys!**
- walking British canals in winter
- **Scottish Souvenir Raffle**



Boating in Central France

SANDY'S SCOTTISH SURPRISES : Our good friend, Sandy Paton, Sealock Keeper at Carron, near Grangemouth at the entrance to the Forth & Clyde Canal, Scotland, has kindly sent some waterway items for the ACS. How thoughtful! The package was sent via Pam Wright, who was thrilled to be escorted around his patch last year. Now Steve & Lynne have met him at Falkirk too. Thanks Sandy, see you at the *Blue Lias* in July!

ACS OVERSEAS FRIENDS GATHERING: at the *Blue Lias* pub on the Grand Union Canal, Stockton, near Rugby on Sunday, 12th July, '09 11.30am – to 4.00pm.

Invitations have been mailed and a pleasing number of acceptances are coming in once again. I think there may be 9 Aussies who are intending to be present for the event. We know several boats will be moored there for the weekend too. Great news!

This will be the 8th Gathering since 1996 and we are looking forward to having a reunion with good friends as well as welcoming other people interested in the ACS. Contact Janet Stevenson (UK) 01530 458257 or Jan Roden (Aus) 02 9874 7584. An entertaining and informative programme is guaranteed.

* Congratulations to overseas members John & Kate Fletcher on the birth of their daughter Abigail Rae, on 26th January. This is a very exciting event and we send our very best wishes to the three of them.

* We were sad to learn that local member Neville Mackey passed away in November. We send our sincere sympathy and best wishes to Joan. We shall miss Neville from our meetings.

* Aussie narrowboat owners John & Bev Sanderson have been cruising the canals of England in their 57ft nb 'Matilda' every northern summer, for the past 6 years. They are now wishing to sell their boat to other Aussies. Contact: Phone 0432 544 028 Qld until March, then UK 07765 158 399, or email: nbmatilda@hotmail.com



Narrowboats outside the Blue Lias

NARROWBOATS VOTED ICON OF ENGLAND

(Waterscape 9th January, 2009)

Narrowboats on canals have come third in a poll of the most popular icons of the English countryside.

The poll, by the campaign to Protect Rural England, featured icons nominated by award-winning actors, writers and film makers, with the results decided by an online public vote. Narrowboating on canals was nominated by actor Kevin Spacey.

Pub signs claimed the number one spot with 14.5% of the public vote, closely followed by red post boxes.

This is not the first time that narrowboating has gained iconic status. In 2006 narrowboats joined an exclusive band of 74 official Icons of England through the Icons Project

CANAL CABBIES TAKE TO THE WATER

British Waterways has licensed London's first paddle powered water taxis on the Regent's Canal in Little Venice. The new service, much like the gondolas of Venice is available seven days a week from April to October. Using paddle power alone, expert canoeists take visitors along the waterways in open kayaks, offering a unique view of London.

Canoeing cabbies will encourage passengers to slow down, relax, take in the view and soak up the historic information, known as 'Canowledge' as they paddle the canals at up to 4 mph.

Sunrise and sunset tours are proving popular, with advance bookings being taken, and tours can even be tailored to passengers' requests. (BW Waterways)

Other 2009 Meeting Dates: Mondays, 1st June, 7 Sept, 7 Dec
Meeting apologies to Susan Belshaw ph: 9874 2295

Best wishes to you all
Sincerely yours

President

**** FERRY DAY OUTING ****
Sunday 22 March
See separate sheet for details