



# AUSTRALIAN CANAL SOCIETY

Devoted to the world's inland waterways

3rd February 2010

Hello All Our 'Canalcoholic' Friends!

I'm finding it hard to gather my thoughts in Sydney's hot and humid weather, while our overseas members are enduring freezing conditions. Thank you to those who have sent graphic photos of snowy canal scenes.

Our December 'Locked into Canals' meeting was an ambitious evening to organise, but it was very entertaining. The Gold Class seats were much sought after and I heard it whispered that there was a little bribery going on behind scenes!

We decided that not enough canal movies had been produced, so we proposed titles for some other ones. How about *Winding the Willows*, *Wuthering Flights*, *The Falkirk Falcon*, or *Jane Bennet & the Bingley Five Rise*? This was a fun night to finish a year of enjoyable meetings.

Now it is 2010 and four excellent meetings are anticipated.

**John August** shall speak on *Chinese canals* on 1<sup>st</sup> March. In July last year, he travelled with the Sutherland Astronomical Society to China to see the total solar eclipse. Along with the obligatory sightseeing spots, he witnessed the energetic Chinese economy – still using waterways for transport – an interesting riverbank town, and the Grand Canal – 'one of those amazing large scale structures that past Chinese royalty put together'.



An inspiring new project, which I've been hoping to tell you about for some time is that of the proposed *Bedford to Milton Keynes Link*, underway at present. This will be a welcome and useful connection between the Great Ouse and the Grand Union Canal. The short DVD which O/S member Joyce Pauley sent is worth seeing.

**Heather & Lawrie Anderson**, Aussie members who live afloat in the UK, and who are back here for a holiday, have organised their itinerary to be at the coming meeting. Great news! They are happy to share some of their experiences of *living on a narrowboat*, long term in England. Those of you who attended the last two *Blue Lias* Gatherings, chatted with them and enjoyed their stories.

## MARCH MEETING

**Date:** Monday, 1st March 2010 (*don't get caught out!*)

**Time:** 8.45 – 10.45pm + supper

**Place:** Marsden Rd Uniting Church Hall,  
Marsden Rd Carlingford (park in Mobbs Lane)



## Meeting Highlights:

- **China: Tourist spots, waterways, water towns, an eclipse, & the Grand Canal - John August**
- **Living on British canals, from an Aussie perspective - Lawrie & Heather Anderson .**
- **A proposed new canal route from Bedford to Milton Keynes - Jan Roden**
- **Tom Rolt Centenary Celebrations**

## MAILINGS:

This year local members with email addresses will receive Newsletters on line as well as by post. We would appreciate your feedback.

## L.T.C. ROLT CENTENARY

2010 marks the Centenary of the birth of LTC (Tom) Rolt, one of IWA's 'founding fathers'. Born in Chester in 1910 he had a passion for Victorian engineering of all kinds. As well as campaigning for inland waterways he was a lifelong vintage car and steam railway enthusiast. Tom was a prolific writer of both fiction and non fiction. His book *Narrowboat*, which chronicled his tour of inland waterways in 1939, prompted the formation of the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) in 1946.



To celebrate this centenary, a number of events are being planned around the waterways network, including a Celebration Rally in Chester, and a Centenary Dinner. Sonia, Tom Rolt's wife, and good friend of the ACS, is a valuable consultant, as recognition of her husband's importance to the survival of the British canal system is given.

Close to Oxford and Banbury, the starting point for Tom's *Cressy* cruise, the annual Festival and Boat Show at Beale Park on the River Thames (28 – 30 August) is being promoted as the Tom Rolt Centenary Celebration Event. Other events will be taking place around the *Cressy* cruise route ( Banbury, Chester, the Potteries and returning to Beale Park for the Festival). Visit the IWA website [www.waterways.org.uk/events](http://www.waterways.org.uk/events) for updates.

I wish I could be in Britain to take part in some of these events to celebrate Tom's life and work, but I hope some of you will have the opportunity to be involved in some way. Please write to tell us about it.

## THE MEANDERINGS OF MARTIN

Local member, Martin Smith (Canberra) can't stay away from the UK and shall be heading back there with his wife, Sue next week for another 12 months.

In his youth in southern England, Martin took a passionate interest in inland waterways. He has renewed some of his friendships in recent years and has now accepted a position on the Restoration Committee of the IWA. Last year he joined the Chichester Canal Society.

I am hoping that he will keep us up to date with items of interest and his experiences. Overseas Friends beware! Martin may be seen on or by a canal near you. Take him in, give him a cuppa, talk 'canals' with him for a while, and you will send him on his way a happy man!

## SOS (SAVE OUR SYSTEM)

In 2007 the ACS got behind the SOW funding campaign (remember the photos which appeared in the UK waterways media?) Last year I could see some of the results of decreased allocation of funding to British Waterways. Now, it seems there are to be more drastic cuts. It is hard for Aussie members to have a meaningful contribution, but I urge all our Friends in the UK to get involved as much as possible with petitions, rallies etc. IWA publicity material is alerting British communities to the worrying situation:



*"Waterways funding continues to be a major concern. The IWA is alarmed at the depth of the cut in grant-in-aid for British Waterway for the next financial year (2010/11) from the '09 available grant of £57.448m to £47.448m, representing a reduction of over 16.7%". Underfunding of the waterways is already leading to maintenance cutbacks and will result in inevitable deterioration of standards and even viability of some waterways. SOS 2010 is encouraging IWA members and waterway users to gather hard evidence of major and even minor problems resulting from inadequate maintenance, and reporting them to a local IWA branch, listed on the IWA website: [www.waterways.org.uk](http://www.waterways.org.uk) "We must all defend our waterways system before it is too late."*

*Even travelling Aussies could do this!*

**Other 2010 meetings:** Mondays 7 June, 6 Sept, 6 Dec.

Best wishes,

President