

President's Message

My term as president of the Society began well with a rainy but fascinating tour of Allanburg and Port Robinson in May (see p. 2), for which we thank **John Burtniak** for organization, and for his knowledge of the areas visited. Then in June it was off to the UK for the CCS's most ambitious trip to date (see p. 6). With outstanding planning and organization directed by **Bobbie Styran** (who was also a great tour guide) "UK '96" was a super success. In September we had our Fall tour to Lake Erie ports and Pelee Island — another wet but enjoyable outing. I was pleased that "UK '96" included members from not just Southern Ontario, but also Nova Scotia, Vancouver and Ottawa, making the word "Canadian" in our name truly meaningful.

Looking ahead, we hope to visit "canal" areas further afield in Canada — Ottawa, Montreal and, particularly, Halifax, where we have been invited to visit the Shubenacadie Canal and other sites of waterways interest. Outside Canada, we have an invitation to visit waterways in Ireland. Next August, we hope to travel to the antique boat show in Clayton, N.Y., possibly seeing parts of the Erie and Oswego Canals en route. Trips to the waterways of Muskoka and to the Sault are also being considered. The future looks exciting as we bask in the glow of satisfaction after "UK '96".

Please let us know your thoughts on directions for the Society, not just regarding trips but also other canal- and waterways-related activities we might consider. Send suggestions either to me, or to the Editor, marked "Program Committee".

Have a pleasant Fall and a Winter filled with thoughts of locks and waterways. **Bob Sparks**

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C.C.S. welcomes new Members:

**Owen Corfield**  
1671 Gregory Rd.  
St. Catharines  
L2R 6P9

**John French Family**  
Box 9, Ennisclare Wds.  
R.R. #2, Rockwood  
N0B 2K0

**James De Jonge**  
38 Grange Ave.  
Ottawa  
K1Y 0N7

**Janis Langins**  
Univ. of Toronto  
Instit. for the History &  
Philosophy of Science &  
Technology, Room 316  
Victoria College  
Toronto, M5S 1K7

**Mrs. Jean Otter**  
264 Indian Road  
Kingston  
K7M 1T7

**Al & Jackie Rosati**  
66 Gratton St.  
Toronto  
M9N 3J5

**Mrs. Shirley Watton**  
Legacy Lane, Box 467  
Merrickville  
K0G 1N0

**Robert & Sylvia Wray**  
807 Centre St., R.R. #2  
Hamilton  
L8N 2Z7

## Spring Field Trip — 4 May 1996: Allanburg & Port Robinson

The 1996 Spring Field Trip, under the guidance of John Burtiak, looked at Allanburg and Port Robinson, two Welland Canal communities which for more than half a century during the First and Second Canal period, were important and bustling towns, but which by the 1870s and '80s, the period of Third Canal enlargement, had begun to decline. By the 1930s, and with the formal opening of the full length of the Fourth Canal in August 1932, these communities were just a shadow of their former prominence. Today, both are quiet bedroom communities along the Canal.

At one time, both had a wide range of industries, from mills, to shingle and pail factories, to foundries, and shipbuilding. Today, barely any evidence can be found of the early business buildings — and these now converted into dwellings. Just one church remains in Allanburg, and two in Port Robinson; both Post Offices have been closed, and Port Robinson has even suffered the ignominy of losing its only (Fourth Canal) bridge to an errant American freighter in 1974, dividing the community into two.

But it was not so at one time, and the Field Trip, a combination of bus drive and walking tour, examined Allanburg and Port Robinson, at the north and south ends of the Deep Cut respectively, trying on the one hand to catch a glimpse of what evidence of former times remained and, on the other, to imagine what once was there, in the two communities. Throughout the tour, it became evident that the successive canals were both a boon and a curse. Each new canal, with its enlargement through the communities, had the effect of taking up more land for an ever-wider and straighter channel, thereby wiping out established industries and related services and homes. There were not rebuilt or replaced, and hence the two communities diminished in size and their decline was inevitable.

The morning tour included a walk along the main street of Allanburg, beginning with a look at the community cemetery. It looked sad and forlorn, though it is maintained by the City of Thorold's Parks and Cemeteries department. Perhaps three dozen markers are standing, weather-worn and barely legible, leaning and near-tipping at every angle. Yet here are buried more than 200 persons, among them people of prominence who at one time were the important industrialists, builders, merchants, and leaders of the community. The nearby Upper Family cemetery was also visited, where rest members of the Upper and related families, including several who served as soldiers in the War of 1812.

Photocopies of the 1834 Keefer Survey of Allanburg and an 1850s plan from the Welland Canal office of the time, showing the Second Canal area through Allanburg provided comparisons of the layout of the community just after the completion of the First Welland Canal (1829) and the rebuilding for the Second Canal (1840s) with what can be seen on the ground today.

An Allanburg highlight was a tour inside the former Methodist Church, built in 1876 and still serving the community, as the United Church. This is a handsome structure, built of locally-made brick in a simple Italianate style, 60 ft. long, 36 ft. wide and 18 ft. high. The Church retains its exterior look beautifully, and the interior has been changed little.

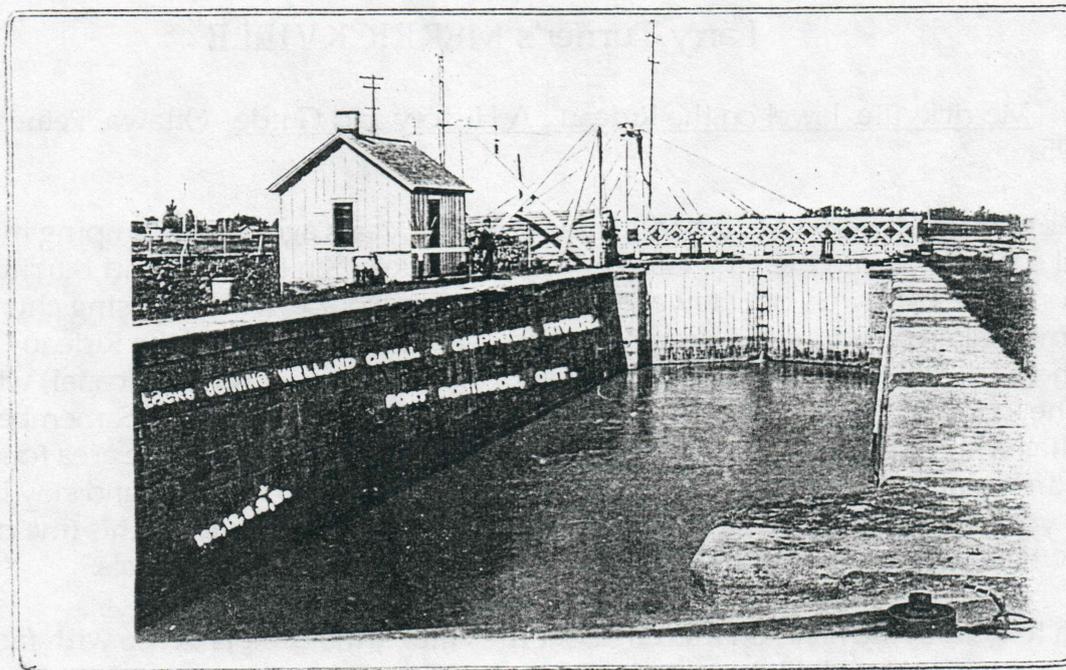
The C.C.S. Annual Meeting was held in the Allanburg Community Centre, where a delicious lunch was provided by the Centre's Womens Committee.

The afternoon tour took us to Port Robinson, where the First Canal entered Chippawa Creek — at one time important enough to be designated a port, having a population of nearly a thousand in its heyday, and with a significant shipbuilding and repair industry. Like Allanburg, Port Robinson declined, but it was a more gradual process through the Second and Third Canal eras. It was only with the Fourth Canal construction through its midst that the community was eclipsed. A walk along the main street showed a number of business buildings and hotels (now boarded up or converted into dwellings) and substantial houses, evidence of former significance as a canal port. The remains of an entry lock from the Second Canal into Chippawa Creek are still visible, but the large shipbuilding, repair and drydock area, once an expanse of water, is now parkland. Copies of plans of Port Robinson during the 1850s (Second Canal era) and in 1876 provided comparisons of then and now.

As with Allanburg, the highlight was a visit to a local church, St. Paul's Anglican, built ca. 1844. This is a fine building with a Georgian look, clad in wood siding, and featuring a striking Norman tower and a number of memorial windows, the one over the front door being in the shape of a wheel. The interior was equally charming, with the early wooden pews, beautifully carved altar, altar rail and other altar furniture.

At the end of the day, on the return home, we stopped at the Upper house on the eastern outskirts of Allanburg. Built 1812-20, this house is as solid, as comfortable, and as impressive as it must have been 175 years ago. Ruth and George Upper, the present gracious and genial owners, very kindly allowed the group to tour their lovely home, and to share in some late afternoon refreshments.

Allanburg (where the first sod was turned for the original Welland Canal in 1824) and Port Robinson have passed their days of glory as important canal communities. However, they came into being because of the Welland Canal, grew with the Canal, and later suffered and declined as the Canal enlarged and expanded. Today, both communities are aware, and proud, of their canal heritage, and they deserve to be recognized. The Canadian Canal Society will continue to examine other canal communities through the Ontario canal systems.



## C.C.S. mourns two Canals Historians: Larry Turner and Charles Hadfield

C.C.S. members may have already noted the death on 26 August of **Larry Turner**, a long-time and avid chronicler of the small towns of Eastern Ontario and their peoples (see below). Many of us will recall Larry with affection, having met him on several of our expeditions. He was a prolific writer and, latterly, a publisher, of regional and architectural history, especially concerning the Rideau and its communities: Perth, Merrickville and Ernestown. He also wrote on Classic Boats, Historic Mills, and the Loyalists of Kingston and Adolphustown. His cheery personality, and encyclopaedic knowledge will be greatly missed.

Your Editor considers herself extremely fortunate to have had the pleasure of meeting Britain's pre-eminent canals historian, **Charles Hadfield**, who died on 6 August at the age of 87. While his career was in the Civil Service and in publishing (he was the Charles of David & Charles, founded in 1960), he will be long and fondly remembered for his contributions to the study — and the making — of inland waterways history. Charles was a member of the first British Waterways Board (1963-66) and played an important role in stating the case for subsidized preservation of many of the smaller British inland waterways for amenity purposes. He also encouraged the carrying of freight on larger waterways owned by British Waterways. Charles helped found the Inland Waterways Association in 1945-46; edited (and wrote most of) a lengthy series of authoritative volumes on canals of England and Britain; encouraged his great friend Robert Legget to contribute a volume on canals of Canada; and in 1986 published World Canals (a revised edition was reviewed in the May 1995 issued of the *Newsletter*). In 1979 he and his wife Alice Mary published Afloat in America, a charming account of their 8000-mile exploration of the States and Canada by water (5000 miles) and rail, the Canadian part of which was organized and accompanied by Robert and Mary Legget. A long-time champion of William Jessop, in 1993 Charles published Thomas Telford's Temptation, an investigation of Telford's claims to credit for work which Charles felt should have been attributed to Jessop — in particular, the spectacular iron aqueduct at Pontcysyllte in Wales. Charles, like his friend Robert Legget, was truly "a gentleman and a scholar," as well as an encourager of younger researchers. We will not see their like again.

**Bobbie Styran**

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### Larry Turner's MERRICKVILLE

**Larry Turner.** Merrickville, Jewel on the Rideau: A History and Guide. Ottawa, Petherwin Heritage, 1995.

My wife Anne and I discovered Merrickville nearly twenty years ago, when camping in the Rideau Canal corridor. Even then the village, located between Smith's Falls and Burritt's Rapids (fifty-five kilometers southwest of Ottawa), was a remarkable place, with imposing churches, striking commercial architecture, a quiet atmosphere, and Locks 21 to 23 of the Rideau Canal. Like most other visitors we were drawn to the block-house (built to defend the canal) which still stands near the locks, and to the remains of huge stone-built mills. Some C.C.S. members are already familiar with Merrickville and will recall an interesting field trip to the area four years ago. At that time many of our canal-colleagues said, "We'd love to come back and stay longer here". When you do, Larry Turner's book will be your indispensable guide to this fine old community, whether you are interested in Ontario history, architecture, or canals.

Small enough to hold in the hand on a stroll about the village, the book is dense with facts and anecdotes. It has endnotes, a bibliography, a glossary of unusual terms and — an index, which

such heritage books often lack. There are several good maps, contemporary and historical. Fine old photographs, and some good new ones (taken by Mr. Turner himself) add depth. The book is based on research done mainly in the National Archives, the Archives of Ontario, and the Rideau Canal Office. As the sub-title suggests, it is divided into two parts: the first, a history of the village; the second, a walking tour of the community, with descriptions of the history and architecture of its important buildings. Mr. Turner has written other books on Ontario local history, and his Ottawa-based company "Petherwin Heritage" specializes in historical consultation.

In the 1790s a few pioneers opened up the land on the Rideau River in what would become Merrickville. The probable founder of the village was a Loyalist, William Merrick, a millowner who sought to exploit the falls here for his grist- and saw-mills. The opening of the Rideau Canal in 1832 benefitted the settlement and in the later 19th century the economy boomed. Stoves and plows were turned out by iron foundries, woollen mills produced tweeds, flannels, and yarn. By 1900 these enterprises had declined, but there are still two foundries and a pottery in operation.

Merrickville glories in having over one hundred designated heritage buildings. One finds churches in the Gothic and Romanesque Revival styles, and houses in the Georgian, Queen Anne, Picturesque and vernacular styles, many of these of fine stone or brick construction, with a proliferation of "gingerbread" and Italianate towers. The commercial structures at the corner of Main and St. Lawrence Streets would have been imposing in contemporary Toronto. The two- and three-storey industrial buildings — alas, mainly in ruins — are monuments to both the stone-cutter and the entrepreneur.

As this book clearly shows, Merrickville is an excellent place at which to study the Rideau Canal: three hand-operated stone locks, the blockhouse/museum (operated by the Merrickville and District Historical Society), a swing bridge, and the "depot" with its Parks Canada exhibit — and no parking problems! Canal enthusiasts will find day-use docking, camping for boaters, washrooms, water, and picnic tables. All of the afore-mentioned heritage buildings can be found less than a fifteen minute walk from the canal. For the less rugged canal buffs, Anne and I can testify to the good cuisine in at least three of Merrickville's restaurants.

Larry Turner's book is far from being technically perfect. For example, more careful proof-reading (admittedly a trial for any writer) could have eliminated the many "typos" which disfigure the text. Spelling errors, grammatical and syntactical problems, confusion of the plural possessive form and inconsistency of abbreviations occur often. One final nit-picking point: the word "snie" is used three times with no explanation. I couldn't find this non-household word in my three-volume Webster's and still haven't a clue. . . . Fortunately such errors can be easily corrected in a second edition which I hope will be printed when this version is sold out.

Despite these small flaws, Merrickville. Jewel on the Rideau is a gem of a book! **Rob Taylor**

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Editor's Note: A review of Larry Turner's last book, A Boy's Cottage Diary, 1904 (Ottawa, Petherwin Heritage, 1996), will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter. Unfortunately, we were not able to publish these reviews during Larry's lifetime. Having read both books, I can assure you that A Boy's Cottage Diary is every bit as enjoyable as Merrickville!

## Impressions of UK '96 (first of a series)



- Packing & wondering whether I should include back-ups (?) to my two brand-new pair of Tilley underwear.
- Manchester airport & on to Anderton Lift, then a welcome lunch after the long gap since Air Transaat's sumptuous breakfast.
- Trying to stay awake & appreciate Tony Hirst's presentation our first night in Chester. The joys of jet-lag!
- The mountain pass route to Llangollen & the hope that our coach driver hadn't trained in Mexico [Ed. note — he hadn't!]
- The trip across the unpronounceable aqueduct [Ed. note — Pontcysyllte — you try it!] with its fantastic views (with no guardrail) of the Vale of Llangollen.
- Norm chasing after a steam train at Horseshoe Falls when he was supposed to be looking at canals!
- The IRA's sense of timing so that we were at Manchester Airport on Friday — the IRA bombed on Saturday — and our group were back in Manchester on Sunday. We toured Castlefield in spite of the iijits.
- The gentleman who explained Cheddleton Flint Mill for us. Perhaps our best prepared guide who was ready and expecting us!
- "Swan" & "Mallard" and their crews who managed to moor close enough to various pubs to help us satisfy our thirsts.
- Speaking of which let me not forget "The Vicar's Ruin" (real ale) on sale at the Mill Hotel in Chester.
- The Chester Boat Rally where I got to meet Audrey Smith, National Chairman of the IWA, and the Lord Mayor of Chester [Lilian Price] and to say a few words in two languages. No, not Welsh!
- Meeting also at Chester the fascinating gentleman who had worked in Canada for forty years and now own the narrowboat "Bruce Trail," on which he lives and cruises for most of the year.

- And Walter Webb finally getting his luggage after a week!
- The Basin master at Stourport, who didn't know we were coming, giving us an impromptu presentation on the history of the Stourport canal basin & navigations. A fine example of the professionalism of B.W. people.
- Bobbie & Mark (our driver) doing a fantastic job of finding obscure canal sites. It looks easy in Nicholson's Guides but it sure is different on the road. Now we know how to get to Buxworth, Blisworth and Foxton!
- 28! All here! Let's double check. OK! 28 here! Sounds familiar?
- Our blue shirts, pins & jackets, & Tilley hats. Nobody thought we were Americans!
- Ah, Birmingham (Brum!). Bobbie, Mark & I trying to find a contact person near the ICC [International Convention Centre] and finally tracking down Ivor Caplan, who as it turned out, was the chief organizer of the IWA Jubilee Jigsaw project.
- A whirlwind tour of canal sites around B'ham including a pleasant lunch at the Bonded Warehouse in Stourbridge & a boat trip inside the Dudley Tunnel at the Black Country Museum.
- The Lord Mayor's reception at B'ham Town Hall where we had an authentic example of local cuisine: Chicken Tikka Masala with rice!
- The Malt House [pub] & the Australians! Will we plan a trip downunder to tour the Murray River navigations? I think we were invited but after a couple of pints of local bitter who can be sure? All this & a fine view of Farmer's Bridge canal roundabout as well — and, sadly, it was over as some left very early.
- It's best if Air Transaat gets out of town early. It allows lots of time for unscheduled refuelling stops!
- And I embarked on the narrowboat "Denmead" for another three weeks of canal cruising from its convenient mooring outside the Pit Stop pub.
- Images of dozens of locks and windlasses and paddles and balance beams haunt me yet; but, that's another story.

**Bob Sparks**

Editor's Note: Bob was invited to take part in the opening ceremonies of the Chester Boat Rally by Ron Evans, Chairman of the Chester and District Branch of the I.W.A. Ron had also arranged for notices in the local press, including one in the Chester *Standard* of 20 June, headlined "Boats Galore for Canal Rally" which contained the following: "The Canadian Canal Society will also be attending as part of a boating holiday in the UK." The *Chronicle* of 21 June noted "The Canadian Canal Society has organised a group visit to coincide with the IWA's 50th anniversary and members will cruise by hotel boat from Liangoilen to Chester." Unfortunately, neither paper mentioned Bob, or the C.C.S., in their reports of the rally! Nor did their photographers capture Bob as he spoke, although several members of our group did record the occasion.

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### International Association for Inland Waterways:

The first meeting of the Elected Council of the I.A.I.W. was held in Birmingham on 28 June 1996, attended by C.C.S. members **Bob Sparks** and **Bobbie Styran**, who are the only Canadian members of the Council. The Council consists of 20 members from Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States. Ron Oakley (UK) was unanimously elected as the first Chairman, with David Stevenson (UK) and David Edwards-May (France) as Vice-Chairmen. Pending the election of a Secretary, Ron Oakley will serve, with assistance from the vice-chairmen and some professional aid. The Treasure will be Mike Reid (UK).

Among issues discussed were membership (currently about 200), and subscription rates. In view of the rather cumbersome name of the organization, it was agreed that the name should be

changed to "World Wide Waterways" as soon as convenient. The next Annual General Meeting will likely be held in the US within a month of the International Canals Conference to be held in the Blackstone Valley, Rhode Island, October 1997 [further information on this when available].

It was proposed that the organizations represented by the Council should be asked to grant one year's honorary membership to any member of member associations travelling in another country. The I.A.I.W. agreed that member organizations should be encouraged to adopt this suggestion. [At a meeting of the Executive of the C.C.S. on 27 July a motion to this effect was accepted.]

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### C.C.S. Jackets & T-Shirts

To identify the C.C.S. group on our UK '96 tour in June, we purchased waterproof light-weight windbreakers (in a bright blue) with the C.C.S. logo printed in white, and T-shirts (in a lighter blue) with the logo printed in black. As **Bob Sparks** noted (above), we had no problem locating members of our group, even at a considerable distance; and those we met from other countries were impressed with our C.C.S. identification.

In response to requests from a number of members who did not go on the UK '96 trip, but who have expressed an interest in purchasing the windbreaker and/or T-shirt, we are pleased to announce that this is now possible.

If you would like to acquire either of these attractive and distinctive items, please fill in the attached form and mail, with cheque payable to Art Adams, to:

Art Adams  
2 Short Road  
GREENSVILLE, Ont.  
L9H 5L7

Please send in your request as soon as possible. Delivery will be somewhere in St. Catharines, to be announced at a later date.

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Please order for me: ( ) Blue Windbreaker @ \$29.90 ( ) SM ( ) MED ( ) LG ( ) XLG  
( ) BLight bue T-Shirt @ \$18.40 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

NOTE: P.S.T. & G.S.T. are included in the above prices.

TOTAL AMOUNT OF CHEQUE ENCLOSED = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

## Other News from the UK

The **Tower Wharf area of Chester**, scene of June's narrowboat rally, is the subject of controversial plans for redevelopment. Approval in principle was given by the City Council's planning committee during our visit to Britain, but there have been a number of dissenting voices, and demands that British Waterways re-think the proposals. Part of the multi-million pound scheme involves regeneration of the area to provide residential, business and hotel accommodation with associated parking and landscaping. One particular objection is in regard to the historic Taylor's Boatyard, an open-air structure which, it is proposed, should be glazed in. Members of the C.C.S. UK '96 group were given a tour of this area, and heard about the proposed redevelopment, on their arrival in Chester. The Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port is spearheading a movement to adopt an alternative proposal calling for restoration and continued use as a working boatyard and exhibition/museum centre, to provide the centre-piece for the redevelopment. A few years ago the nearby Telford Warehouse was successfully restored, and is now a popular restaurant and pub — as members of the C.C.S. group will recall with pleasure!

One of Britain's handful of ship canals, the **Caledonian**, running from Inverness in the north-east through the "Great Glen" of Scotland to Fort William on the west coast, is threatened with closure. The Caledonian, built by Thomas Telford, and opened to navigation in October 1822, is now leaking badly, requiring £20 million for emergency repairs. British Waterways, which runs the canal, says that it contributes £14.5 million to the tourist industry of the Great Glen and keeps almost 500 people in jobs. Whether or not this includes proceeds from the Loch Ness Monster industry (Loch Ness forms a part of the **Caledonian**) is not indicated. The eight-lock flight at Banavie, near Fort William, was dubbed "Neptune's Staircase" by the construction workers, and it is possible that the use of this term as applied to the locks of the Welland Canal can be traced by a visit to the Welland by George Bruce, 8th Earl of Elgin, who became Governor General of Canada in 1847. The Caledonian (like the Welland) was extensively rebuilt in the 1840s.

The 29-lock flight at **Devizes, on the Kennet and Avon Canal** re-opened this summer, thanks to a £1-million scheme of pumps which recycles the water used in the longest flight of broad locks in the country. The canal has been closed since 1951, in part because of a shortage of water. The Kennet and Avon Canal Trust, a volunteer organization, has laboured hard and long to restore the navigation throughout the entire canal and the re-opening of the locks is a major achievement in canal restoration. The Devizes flight rise 72 metres (.447 miles) in a distance of 3.6 km (2.23 miles).

All who have seen the famous **Iron Bridge** in the Ironbridge Gorge, the first bridge to be constructed using iron (opened in 1779), will be interested to note that another early iron bridge has been found in the grounds of a Suffolk school, after being hidden behind reeds and undergrowth for years. **Culford School, near Bury St. Edmunds**, was once the country home of Lord Cornwallis, defeated commander of British forces in the American Revolution. Cornwallis later served as Governor General of Bengal. The 28-metre (91.8 feet) bridge, built 1803, is believed to have been made from cannon captured during Cornwallis' time in India. Unlike many other early bridges, it had never been modified, and had been hidden for nearly a century by weeds in a lake in the grounds. Clearing of silt from the lake, largely by volunteer efforts, uncovered the bridge, which was immediately recognized as of national significance, and given a Grade 1 listing [top priority] by English Heritage.

## The Canadian Canal Society

Executive Officers for 1996-97

Past President: Norman Macdonald  
President: Robert Sparks  
Vice-President: Al Sykes  
Secretary: Doris Bates  
Treasurer: Carol Gaspari

Send all correspondence for the **Canadian Canal Society** to:

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L2R 7P6

Contributions for **Canals Canada** should be sent to:

Roberta Styran, Editor  
35 Towering Heights Blvd., #509  
St. Catharines, Ontario  
L2T 3G8

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### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL

Please enrol me as a member of the **Canadian Canal Society**  
I/We enclose my/our membership fee of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Category \_\_\_\_\_

Individual	\$	10.00
Family		15.00
Institution		25.00
Contributing		25.00 or more

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE: Mr. ( ) Mrs. ( ) Miss ( ) Ms. ( ) Dr. ( ) Capt. ( ) Other ( )

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Please make cheques payable to the **Canadian Canal Society** and send with application to:

Secretary, Canadian Canal Society  
P.O. Box 23016, Mid-Town Postal Outlet  
124 Welland Ane.  
St. Catharines, Ontario  
L2R 7P6