

CANALS - WATER ACT OF LUNACY!

ONCE again an act of sheer lunacy is being proposed by our council.

I refer of course to them spending time and money considering the routing of the old Wilts and Berks canal along the old waterway through the town. Can you imagine digging up Fleming Way, the Magic Roundabout, on through to Greenbridge and out to Longcot? At what cost to the ratepayers? Madness!

The only way would be to erect a viaduct on stilts through the town. This would hardly be a tourist

attraction as the boats would pass through Swindon at least 20 feet off the ground!

I once owned a narrowboat for more than 10 years, so speak with some experience about cruising one.

At ground level in a town they are vulnerable to every passing yobbo while moored up. At night, moored up and unoccupied while the owners are having a drink and a look around the town, they become a target for thieves and vandals.

At start-up they smell strongly of diesel and whenever they have to

manoeuvre or reverse they kick out fumes. In the countryside this is no problem, but in an enclosed space between buildings on hot airless days they stink!

Imagine 10 boats passing each other along Canal Walk, midday in the hot sun without a breath of air. As the propellers go forwards and reverse, the bottom gets stirred up and the water turns to a dark muddy consistency. Aromas of rotting vegetation, drowned animals etc can fill the air.

The rats love the canal system, there is plenty of discarded food in a town - it will become heaven on earth to them. One thing is certain, the rats will be more visible. I have seen many of them while fishing at Mill Lane.

My father used to say that you could smell the canal long before you got to it when he used to go to school at Sanford Street. A long time ago, but history could repeat itself.

I do suggest that if the canal is resurrected, going around the town would be more sensible than through the centre!

As I have said before, filling the miles of canal with water will be an impossible task and unless the boats are fitted with wheels they will not be coming our way!

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