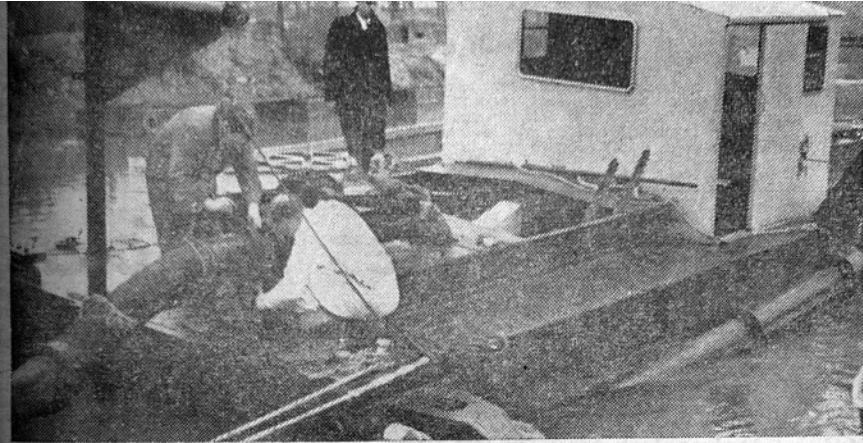


Dredgers move in to clear the way for cruisers **DARING PLAN FOR YACHTS BOOM**

'I ain't Father Christmas'—man behind £10,000 scheme

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Engineers examine the pipe connections on board the floating suction dredger which is deepening the River Stour at Tuckton Bridge.

A DARING plan launched by a private company this week to open up Christchurch Harbour to larger craft may make it a popular yachting centre.

The company, Tuckton Riverside Services Ltd., whose principal, Cdr. Michael Wallrock, lives in Bournemouth, started dredging channels which will enable 70ft. motor cruisers drawing 6ft. of water to sail up the Stour as far as Tuckton Bridge.

All manner of river-users will benefit from the scheme which is expected to cost £10,000 to carry out.

But the man behind it, Commander Wallrock, made his position clear.

PROBLEM

"I don't want to give the impression I'm Father Christmas, because I ain't," he said, bluntly. "I can't afford to be."

His own extensive business at Tuckton Bridge will benefit. He builds and repairs boats, lets out moorings, and runs hire and pleasure craft which are a familiar sight on the harbour and river.

He is planning to ask those who benefit from his dredging, including Christchurch and Bournemouth town councils, to contribute towards the cost.

He cannot force anybody, but all the boat-building yards had promised to contribute, he claimed. His problem is: how to deal with the contributions.

"What I am doing now is what a normal harbour board is doing," he said. "I would rather be divorced from it. All I want is to recover my expenses. I don't want to make a profit."

Commander Wallrock said the dredging equipment being used had cost his company £10,000 and was specially built for the job.

A floating suction dredger in front of Tuckton Riverside Services is sucking up as much as 70 cubic yards—about 15 lorry loads—of river soil a minute and pumping it through iron pipes to a field on the other side of Willow-way.

About 10,000 cubic yards of soil are expected to be dumped on the field which belongs to Christchurch Corporation, raising it about 3ft.

Trenches have been dug to soak the surplus water, estimated to reach the field at the rate of 1,500 gallons a minute, back to the river. The operation will last about three weeks.

THE BAR

Other channels are to be dredged near the Bournemouth bank of the River Stour at Wick and of Grimbury Marsh.

More dredging is possible on the Bar at the entrance to Christchurch Harbour.

The soil from the 200ft. long 30ft. wide channel to be dredged at Wick will be dumped at Broadwater with the permission of Bournemouth Corporation which recently bought the property.

Christchurch Sailing Club has agreed to buoy the channel and will put some moorings there.

Commander Wallrock said this was the most "doubtful" channel, but he hoped it would remain unsilted for at least three years.

The Grimbury Marsh channel would last for a long time, he believed. About 10,000 cubic yards would be dredged up and dumped somewhere in the region of Mother Siller's Channel,

About the harbour entrance Commander Wallrock said: "We have got to look at the Bar, and if it needs doing we will do it."

SMALL TIDE

He believed the harbour would be a lot more popular if the public could get into it more easily. But because of sandbanks the depth of the water in some places was as low as 6in. at low water in the summer.

The rise and fall of the tide was small, and the depth of water was only 4ft. 6in. at high water.

"There is no authority whatever and nobody will do anything that incurs expense," said Commander Wallrock, "so nobody is taking any dues. I, as a private bloke, have had to lump it or do something about it."

Commander Wallrock, who lives at Wick Farm House, Wick, is 42.