

## **Sarratt Local History Society**

### **Local Canals : the changing scene      by Michael Lee**

Using his collection of personal photographs and historical illustrations, Michael Lee took us on a leisurely journey in time along the Grand Union Canal (originally named the Grand Junction Canal) in our local area. Started in 1793 as a more efficient way of carrying heavy goods than the winding, poorly surfaced roads of the time, the horse-drawn barges carried cargoes of stone, coal, gravel, flour, timber, paper etc. and wharves, mills and quarries were established alongside it. Tolls and taxes were charged and local landowners were given to having disputes over their 'rights' .

Gradually as the roads improved and rail freight was developed the Canal was virtually abandoned, until it took on the role we now know and became the tranquil, dreamy waterway of today, used solely for leisure and as a haven for wildlife.

**Angela Colman**