

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

CANAL CUTTINGS

VOLUME 8 Number 3
Winter 2014/ 2015



SCARS' Visible Presence

There's no missing our Work Parties now—with their new hi-viz tops. Here they're at work on their latest project, at the massive Broad Oak Basin, Parr. Read more about the project, and the Basin itself, inside.

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

Founded 1985

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Chairman's Report: From Dave Smallshaw

After a really mild late summer autumn came and went and we are now deep into the dark months of the year when our outdoor activities certainly take second place to the more hospitable climate of indoors. The year has certainly flown by and I remain pretty pleased with the progress we have made in maintaining and promoting our visions of bringing the waterway to a greater public audience and to pressing on in our project of restoring the Fidler's Ferry to Widnes length to full navigation.

For my part much of the past year has been taken up with meetings with various bodies involved in our restoration project and in opportunities to bring the canal to more public awareness. Work progresses well with the local authorities, particularly at the southern end of the waterway, and real progress to improve the existing infrastructure has been achieved with new signage at Spike Island and funding secured to renovate the sea lock there as well. To help with public awareness many talks have been given to various organisations and we have joined in with various local environmental and heritage partnerships which generally have the interests of a vibrant waterway amongst their declared aims

A major boost to publicising the projects we are currently undertaking is the excellent and comprehensive profile of the canal in January's 'Waterways World' and our inclusion in the next edition of 'Nicholson's Guide to the Waterways of the North West' which is due out in the spring.

At Fidler's Ferry we look forward to seeing the new lift bridge under construction in the new year and at Blackbrook we hope to be able to store our equipment in a secure container which will mean that Colin and a few others may get their sheds, attics and spare rooms back for domestic use.

The winter months will see no let-up in our work though, and we are hoping to get our new website up and running in the early new year and have plans to design new publicity material to promote the Society's image and intentions. We are also intending to review our current printed publications on offer and update existing information available for the public and possibly introduce new material. We also are looking at introducing new media platforms to publicise the canal.

On the ground we have a new working unit examining the signage on the Sankey Trail and looking at updating this where appropriate. The field of research goes on apace and there are certain people beavering away at local records trying to unlock the secrets of a canal that is notorious for its lack of written records and we thank them for their continuing efforts in this field.

A special word of thanks must here go to Nick Coleman for his further work on the canal with his historical journey along the waterway from Spike Island to St Helens on his 'Our Local Voice' website. His carefully worded commentary is complemented by some surely stunning photography, and I would urge you all to take a look at his work at:

http://ourlocalvoice.co.uk/?page_id=1671. So well done, Nick, – I wonder if you might like a job as webmaster of our new site when it's up!

I was also pleased to see the resumption of work parties, now under the enthusiastic leadership of John Hughes, take off. We could do with new blood on these—so if any of you have young relatives who are itching for a bit of exercise then you know in which direction to point them!

In my last report I related to you the demise of our evening social events. We still feel that sense of loss at the opportunity of meeting our members and listening to some interesting topics, but we have to face facts and have concluded that the decision was, for now, for the best. Many people don't like leaving home in the evening and especially in the dark, cold ones of winter so we moved to Sunday afternoons instead with the inauguration of our open days at Blackbrook.

After a slow start the numbers attending are improving and the day's routines are becoming adjusted to suit visitor's preferences. The short walks are proving very popular so we are now looking at setting up a weekday walking group for the summer months. ... we are even attracting new members - something we rarely did at our evening sessions! We now intend to spread our wings and hope to hold similar days at Widnes in the spring and then later at Warrington if we can find a suitable canal-side base there.

So there is plenty going on then...and plenty to do too! Anyone fancy a turn in the boat then – a couple of extra people on the oars would be very handy!

With my best wishes for the New Year to you and yours,

Dave Smallshaw

News Round-Up Around the Boroughs

by Colin Greenall

Restoration continues to progress on the Sankey Canal

Halton & Warrington

The Interlocks Project: Progress continues to be made, thanks to successful funding bids:

1. Coastal Communities Fund. A Grant of £652,708 will finance a new lift bridge at Fiddlers Ferry and create 2 direct jobs, 12 apprenticeships and up to a further 23 indirect jobs plus 40 new volunteering opportunities.

Work is not expected to start on the new Marsh House Lift bridge at Fiddlers Ferry until the New Year. However, there is also the possibility that a short section of canal beyond the bridge will be restored and used as moorings, thus giving a need to rise and lower the bridge from time to time.

The two new posts are for a Full-Time Project Manager and a Part-Time Marketing Manager, to cover the whole of the Interlocks Project from Spike Island to Fiddlers Ferry. The first has been filled subject to references. The second post-holder began work on 4th November, working Tuesday to Friday 9.00am-2.00pm, but will be flexible if needed.

2. Heritage Lottery Fund. A new application to HLF's Heritage Grants Programme has been submitted and an acknowledgement of our application has been received. The bid will be towards the upper limit of the scheme (£5 million) and will include physical restoration work and educational and promotional activities. We are now waiting for additional advice from HLF and undertaking the initial feasibility work which will be required for the Stage One Bid. Warrington BC will be appointing a consultant to work on the project.

4. Ineos Chlor & Mersey Forest Grant. As well as the four impressive Interpretation panels which are now in place at various locations around Spike Island, a heritage walks leaflet has been produced to give visitors to the area a better understanding of the history of the chemical industry on this side of the River Mersey.

Below: The new panel beside the former swing bridge onto Spike Island.



5. WREN Environment Grant. A grant of £32.250 has been awarded in principal to restore the lock gate at Spike island. (Below) Halton BC, in partnership with SCARS, submitted the bid which covers the cost of refurbishing the lock gates, cills and ground paddles, along with the removal of silt from the lock chamber and the area around the lock entrance. Work will commence as soon as the conditions of the grant funding have been met and all the necessary permission are in place.



The former Ranger Cabin at Spike Island;

In 2011 Halton BC decided to disband their Ranger Service and so the cabin which they used as their base on Spike Island became empty. It stood idle until 2012 when it was taken over by the “CATCH 22” Community Group, a national organization (catch-22.org.uk) which is in partnership with Halton BC to provide community and youth programmes. They use the cabin for various activities during the week and some weekends. SCARS have approached “CATCH 22” with a view to sharing the facility on certain weekends for “OPEN DAYS” during the summer months. This will give the Society the opportunity to communicate with the people of Widnes and let them know about the history of the canal and our aspirations on the future restoration plans. We now await a decision on our request.

SCARS on the Web

Member Nick Coleman from Newton-le-Willows has written an extensive article about the Sankey Canal and plans for its future for the “Our Local Voice” (ourlocalvoice.co.uk) website. The link to view this is: http://ourlocalvoice.co.uk/?page_id=1671

The website is well worth keeping an eye on as its aim is to monitor environmental and planning issues in the area it covers (Newton, Burtonwood, Winwick, Golborne, Croft, etc.) which the organization feel impinge on its areas of concern—the green belt, heritage and infrastructure. It declares itself as “an independent local community group”, with no political connections and is not part of any other organization, although it is affiliated to the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England and Civic Voice.



St.Helens

Activities at Blackbrook: SCARS now has the use of a storage container at the Sankey Valley Heritage Visitor Centre, Blackbrook, courtesy of St.Helens MBC.

Earlier in the year the committee decided to replace the evening meetings with “Open Days” at the Blackbrook Centre So far they are proving to be very popular. Over the past four months we have gradually tailored the day to suit the activities that people want. We now have work parties and guided walks for the energetic, and talks and slide shows for the ones who want to know about the history of the canal and surrounding area. We also provide free tea and biscuits, and our selection of maps, second-hand transport and local history books are available to buy, and visitors have a large display of our archive photographs to peruse, as may be seen in the accompanying photo from one of the Open Days. The work parties have conducted litter-picks and clearing vegetation from the footpaths in the local area.

Broad Oak Basin: In October our Work Party started to clear the encroaching vegetation from Broad Oak Basin. Pictures, and a more detailed Report, will be found on pages 10—13. This basin was used in the early years of the canal’s existence for the transshipment of coal from tramway waggons into Mersey Flats, the coal coming from Broad Oak Colliery and possibly other pits in the area. When the Sankey Valley Linear Park was being created in the 1970s three Mersey flats that were discovered buried in the partially-infilled basin. The site was excavated by a team of Liverpool University student archaeologists, who made a thorough survey of the wrecks. They then advised that they be reburied to preserve them for future investigation. So far the Society’s own history buffs have not studied the area around the basin to any great degree, and it is hoped that future Work Parties will uncover much to interest them. (*See also Dave Smallshaw’s Notes on the Basin on pages 13—16*)

Sankey Viaduct: Work on the scheme to electrify the Liverpool to Manchester Railway is progressing well. Our picture (*Below*) shows the radical alterations being made to the Grade One listed Sankey Viaduct, which crosses the Sankey Canal near Earlestown, with scaffolding towers reaching up to where the parapets have been taken down to accommodate the stanchions for the 25KV AC electric wires. The work is scheduled to be finished by the end of 2014.



Local Sustainable Transport Funded pathway to employment: *Below*, work has commenced on the next stage of upgrading the towpath along the section of canal from Bradley Swing Bridge to the St. Helens / Warrington boundary at Newton Brook. At present the only signs of progress are the tree clearance that has taken place, making space for the two metre wide tar-macadam pathway which will be laid in due course.



Events—by Colin Greenall

During the summer months our sales and display marquee has been out at various rallies and shows around the area

In July we attended the **Scarbrick Marina Open Weekend**, this was the second year of this two day event on the Leeds Liverpool Canal and is gathering pace with each year. We enjoyed good weather and plenty of interest in our canal project.

In August we attended the **Newton Town Show**. This is another show that made a comeback last year after a ten year absence and is proving a great success, all credit to a dedicated committee who are putting in a lot of effort to make it work. The weather this year did its best to spoil thing with heavy showers, but the crowds turned out and our sales team were kept busy with people telling us tales of the canal and buying our bric-a-brac and books etc.

September brings us to our final outing of the year at the **Vintage Vehicle Rally in Victoria Park, Widnes**, this show can only be described as the best free family day out in the North West. It has everything—from the usual charity and trade stalls, to the wonderful display of vintage vehicles and fairground organs, plus attractions like falconry, stationary engines and the fun fair.



The SCARS stall at Scarbrick Marina

Military Activity on the Sankey—Dave Smallshaw

Following our article in our last edition on wartime activity on the canal we are grateful to Bill Brinksman for writing to tell us of some activities in the Warrington area.

In World War II, there was a gun emplacement beside the Sankey at Buttermilk Bridge on the path from Wellfield Street to Hood Lane. This was the scene of an exercise by Crosfield's Home Guard battalion with the regular army. Further on, at the next crossing at site 4, there was also an exercise with the Warrington Home Guard and the United States Army Air Force. This was locally named "The Battle of Burtonwood". The late Wally Barnes wrote a very good account of this battle in his book of the same titled, published by Owl Books. Bill says that is good reading and is certainly humorous.

There must be much more out there on the goings-on during both World Wars and we would like to include these in future issues, so please don't be shy in letting us know about any old stories of those troubled times.

Reports From Our Work Party—*By John Hughes*

The work parties of September through to November were all run in conjunction with the SCARS open days based at the Heritage Visitor Centre at Blackbrook, St Helens.

In **September** our day started with helping to put up the gazebo and our SCARS banners and flags outside and around the Centre to advertise the open day to the general public who use the area for Sunday recreation.

After a quick brew, for those not engaged in manning the open day proceedings, it was off to the **Old Double Lock** site where our job for the day was to clear the top chamber of vegetation. Ste, Ian and Phil got stuck in to the task while I used the strimmer to clear the previously uncovered stone work around the lock and loading wharf areas which nature was already trying to reclaim.

A welcome and well earned rest, a brew and butties followed the morning's toil and further work on clearing a patch of brambles and bushes on the bank side of the top chamber was the selected project for the afternoon job. Round two was started and completed to our satisfaction and a site litter pick was organised to generally tidy up the work site and finish our schedule of work for the day.

It was then back to the Centre where our services were again used to help pack away the open day material – no rest for the wicked! Once again a very good day, maybe short a little on numbers but not effort and thanks to the team for their efforts

In **October** it was felt that it was time to concentrate our efforts elsewhere after giving the Old Double Locks site a good dose of TLC. The historic, and often overlooked, **Broad Oak Basin** was the popular choice and plans made to clear out a lot of the undergrowth that had obscured the feature from the passing walkers.

The day began as before with our team helping to set up stall for the Open Day at the Visitor Centre. All being right to attract visitors we held a quick meeting to plan our campaign it was off to site, a short walk away.

We had decided to concentrate our efforts on the south side of the basin on this occasion and by dinner time all vegetation was cleared on a twenty yard stretch on top and at the sides. Lunch came and went and the afternoon was spent cutting back tree branches and



bushes in the bed of the basin. This work opened up a clear sight-line along the south side wall of the basin which all agreed was a great improvement on the scene before our work began.

The usual litter pick and site tidy up followed then we headed back to base. After a short break and the inevitable brew it was back to work to then help to pack away the Open Day tackle. Once again it is many thanks to my fellow workers



Armed with our new “hi viz” jackets (*left*), **November** saw us back again at **Broad Oak Basin**, after the usual pre-visitor preparations for the open day. The walk there gave us the chance to review the progress already achieved and plan our next few hours work. The task was essentially to continue to clear more of the vegetation and make more of the site accessible and pleasing to the eye (*Below*). This object was certainly achieved but the basin was now yielding up some of its features and it is felt that much more can

be investigated here in future months. As expert excavations were made here in the 1970s, it was felt that the findings of the team of archaeologist involved needed to be studied before more intrusive work was undertaken. With this in mind we headed back to the ‘research centre’ at Blackbrook to help with the large amount of visitors we found there. A good day’s work and thanks to all the team.



With no Open Day scheduled for **December** we were able to get a reasonable crew out on the second Sunday and again headed out to **Broad Oak Basin** again. The weather was cold and sunny but some heavy hail showers were forecast. The task was mainly to continue the work in cutting back the tree and bush growth which had hidden the basin from public view for some years. Much progress has been made over the past months and you can now really



really appreciate the size of the structure and the importance it must have been to loading the coal for export to the salt and chemical works and to Liverpool.

By butty time a load more timber had been cleared and some of the crew's attention turned to looking at the tramway loading berth whilst others continued the work of clearing the scrub and cut branches from the site.

The activity at the loading point over the next two hours

uncovered the huge sandstone blocks (*left*) used to position the flats for receiving their cargo and some discussion followed over the various theories put forward about the remains on view. The light was now fading and a decision was taken to finish for the day and cart the tools back to Blackbrook – a decision wisely taken for, as we arrived at the Heritage Centre, the heavens opened!

Just an observation.....work party numbers have fallen lately. We know some members are involved in the open day work but we could do with some more hands on the spades. Please spread the word about our activities to all you know - everybody of every ability is more than welcome and we can always find a job for anybody with limited ability or mobility, indeed, if you don't even like getting cold we can always fix you up with a nice warm job at the Visitor Centre with our Open Day colleagues!

Thanks again to all and best wishes for the New Year,

John Hughes



In Memoriam: James Lamén

It is with much sadness that I have to report the passing of James (Jim) Lamén on Monday 8th December. Jim was a long-time member of Waterway Recovery Group North West and someone who was known to many of our work party volunteers. I first met Jim and his wife Liz in the bottom of the New Double Locks in 1986 where

we shovelled mud side by side (*right*), and from then on we seemed to meet up at various waterway events and on our work parties which involved WRGNW. Jim always had a tale to tell and joke was never far away.

Jim we will miss you, rest in peace

Colin Greenall



Broad Oak Basin—By Dave Smallshaw

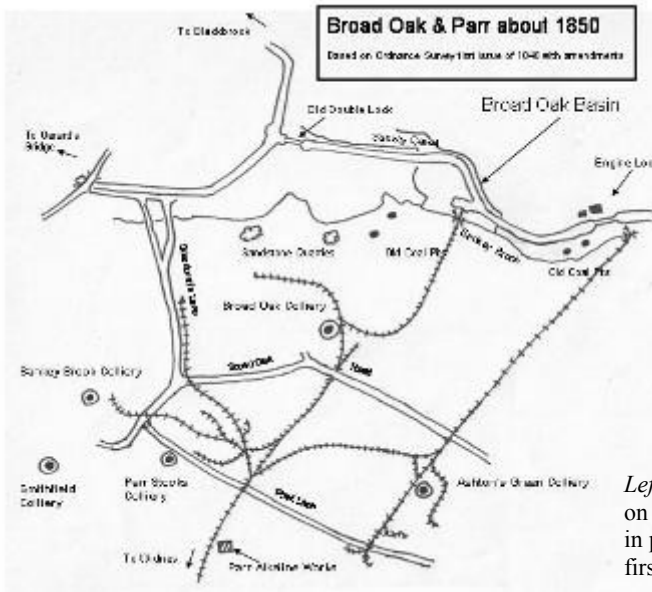
Considering that it is such a large and important component of the canal I was surprised, on researching the records I have, that its presence and history has been only sparsely covered in past editions of Canal Cuttings. In view of the excellent work being done by our work party in clearing up the site I thought that the time was right to look at what we know about the basin with the hope that this article might stimulate further research on the history of one of the earliest parts of the Sankey Canal.

It was, of course, because of the need for coal that the waterway was constructed in the first place. The problems with the turnpike road system and its punitive financial tolls prompted Liverpool businessmen to look for alternative methods of transport to support the growing city with much needed fuel. Badgered by the city's businessmen, and concerned at the growing civil unrest in 1753, the City Council allowed their dock engineer, Henry Berry, who was himself a Parr man, two days a week off to assess the possibilities of a navigable waterway. The wheeling and dealings of the local and national political scene at the time culminated in an entirely artificial cut being constructed from the Mersey at Sankey Bridges to the Parr coalfields in late 1757, and the Sankey Canal was born.

The construction proved beneficial all round. It meant that the mines at Parr had an effective outlet for their product to wider markets and, in Liverpool, the price of fuel was obtainable at much lower cost from the pits via the new waterway. Indeed, by 1771 practically 90,000 tons of coal was being handled annually down its waters.

In 1759 the waterway from Gerard's Bridge to Sankey Bridges was recorded as being 10 miles in length, but a report at the time states that the new waterway "had been open to traffic along two thirds of its length eighteen months before this". Also, an advertisement appeared in the Liverpool Chronicle in November 1757 announcing that: "Sankey Brook Navigation is now open for the passage of flats to the Haydock and Parr collieries" This would indicate the original navigable section of 1757 terminated somewhere very near the Broad Oak site. Unfortunately, there are no records on hand which describe the precise

details of the canal's construction history, the difficulties encountered, its navvies or the building of wharves or basins. Thus there is no reliable record of where exactly the canal first terminated in the St Helens area, but it was probably just south of the old double locks, as early maps of the area show that the land here was dotted with small mines.



Left: The 'Old Coal Pits' shown on this 1850 map were probably in production when the Sankey first opened to traffic in 1757

One of the main coal shippers was Sarah Clayton from Parr Hall who owned large swathes of land in the area and thus the mineral rights. Miss Clayton used the canal from its outset, which wasn't really a surprise as she was well connected with the great Liverpool merchant families and, indeed, was an early investor in the Canal Company running her own fleet of two flats of about 35 tons capacity. She was also a leader in marketing St Helens coal in Liverpool, operating under the name of Clayton, Case and Company. She was also a forthright political 'femme formidable' with close ties with the families of John and Nicholas Ashton and Thomas Case, both of whom were partners in her business ventures, and also with the influential John Blackburne, all of them prominent investors in the waterway.

In 1757 she advertised that she was able to put "new raised coal on board flats" and that "a wagon road and other conveniences are fixed in such a manner that flats may be laden in a few hours" The 'other conveniences' may refer to coal handling and tipping machinery and possibly a wharf. Canal construction pushed on northwards from here in 1757, with branches to Gerard's Bridge and part of the Blackbrook branch completed in spring 1759 with some of the northern parts only completed ten years after 1759.

The basin was certainly not built in the original scheme of things as it is certainly not contained in the 1763 survey and map undertaken by Eyes and Gaskell, but it must have been constructed pretty soon afterwards to alleviate congestion in loading coal from the many local sources.

The rapid expansion of the Clayton mines provides a good indication of the increase in production brought about by the new waterway. Development after development ensued but the bubble burst through a combination of incompetent management and misappropriation of funds, for in 1778 the Clayton mine had to be sold. This venture was, however, an isolated incident as the great majority of other enterprises thrived and went on to develop new pits for new markets for many years to come.

The first editions of the Ordnance Survey maps in 1848 (*previous page*) show an old coal pit by the basin and this may bear some relation to early activity in the area of Broad Oak Colliery. There is also a sandstone quarry in the location and investigation as to whether the stones forming the basin originate from there could be interesting if only it can be located under the houses now on the site!

The basin, for much of its active life, certainly became the main loading point for the coals of Broad Oak Colliery. The pit was situated a quarter of a mile from the canal and, according to Barker, was opened in the 1790s. It has no mention in an 1825 directory but appears to have been sunk in the 1820s by Robert Robinson and was certainly mentioned in a later directory some nine years later.

Robinson merged his mining interests and the mine was further developed by the new owners in 1845 when new shafts were sunk into the Rushy Park Seam at a depth of 780 feet.

From what we can gather the tramway to the basin was a private, standard gauge railway, although an earlier narrow gauge may have existed, as at other mines in the area. In 1832 the mine was also linked to the St Helens Railway and a string of junctions meant the local locomotives were able to haul coal around the area to export coal by rail or canal.

Other collieries in the area may also have provided cargo for the basin. Sankey Brook (sunk 1840s), Smithfield (1838) and Parr Stocks (1839) mines were close at hand and linked to the Broad Oak tramway, and a later railway linked the basin with the Parr Alkaline Works, constructed in 1834.

When the Canal Company merged with the St Helens Railway in 1845 Broad Oak Basin was probably at the height of its career, the canal was still highly competitive in transporting coal and certainly a good match for the inefficient and poorly constructed railway of that time.

Time marched on, however, and the progressive improvement of the railway and the opening of Garston Dock in the 1850s proved a turning point as coal reserves also began dwindling at the same time. The first casualty was the Smithfield mine which disappeared about 1840, then the Greenough pit at Parr Stocks closed in 1858, and Broad Oak Colliery itself a year later, with Sankey Brook struggling on until 1862. Parr Alkaline Works closed its doors in 1872 in bankruptcy and the buildings were subsequently dismantled in 1888. The Ordnance Survey of 1894 showed general abandonment and we can thus presume that the basin itself generally ceased loading about the same time.

A brief respite to the closures occurred in 1900 when a new company was formed to re-open workings at Broad Oak Colliery but the venture was unsuccessful and no mention was made of the enterprise after 1901, possibly, therefore, the swansong of the basin's active life.

After that time the canal traffic above here towards St Helens went into a steep decline and the larger pits at Havannah, Ashton's Green and Southport, just south of the basin had their own loading facilities and were also well linked to the rail network. Thus by 1919 the canal was virtually disused above Newton Common with only seven flats reported as heading towards St Helens that year. After being dormant for many years this section of the canal was finally abandoned in 1931 and left to gradually decay into an unmaintained drainage channel for some 45 years.

In 1974 St Helens Council adopted a forward looking plan to turn the area south of the Old Double Locks into an urban green space which would become a leisure asset to the neighbouring communities. The plan was to revive the Sankey Valley, which the canal follows, from the locks to Penkford Bridge. Work mainly revolved around landscaping and planting but also included was the conservation of the two extant remnants of the canal, the Old Double Locks and the Broad Oak Basin.

Work began in early 1976 with the cascading of the locks and then work began on the basin where the aim was to address the problem of removing large amounts of infill which had been deposited by early industries of the area after the basin had become disused. Other tasks included the conservation of the basin walls and the installation of paths and fences and tree and shrub planting. The work was undertaken by Job Creation teams funded by the Manpower Services Commission.

It was not long into the reshaping of the landscape of the basin that the workers uncovered the remains of a sunken and long forgotten craft of some nature. Work was stopped and the History Department at the Merseyside Maritime Museum was called in to investigate. Subsequent investigation found the bow and fore hold of a Mersey flat, a typical user of the loading facility here. This proved a major diversion to the main project but great interest had been created locally so the decision was taken to mount a full examination of the remains. Then in 1977 a second boat lying on top of the first appeared and finally a third, and later built boat, was located near to the loading staithe.

(The account of the excavation was reported by Mike Stammers of the Merseyside Maritime museum in the International Journal of Nautical Archaeology, 1997. It may be accessed here: <https://www.deepdyve.com/lp/wiley/the-excavation-of-three-mersey-flats-at-broad-oak-basin-parr-BZB9Yrvq20—Ed.>)

All three flats were uncovered by the Job Creation teams supervised by the Museums staff and measurements were made, photos taken and certain timbers were extracted and incorporated into the Museum records. The landscaping work then continued and the flats were covered again to protect their remains for posterity.

From 1979 to the present day the basin has slumbered on, nature reclaiming the landscaping attempts of man. The area around is still empty to some extent although housing has encroached on the colliery sites of old and the various rail and tramways have succumbed to road in many places. The present project of the Society is to clear out some of the unwanted greenery to expose the basin fully again and then, perhaps to try to discover more about this one time hive of activity.

As we uncover the past questions arise on the methods of loading, dimensions of the early flats and what locomotives were used to haul the coal to the wharf. It would also be marvellous if we could find further information on the pits in the vicinity, their owners and the colliers who toiled there and, ideally, the men who worked the flats in those early days. I started off by stating that records are sparse on the life and work of the basin. The Sankey Canal and its cargoes were utilitarian, not pretty. Records were probably poorly kept and most certainly lost by accident or design over the years. Every so often something crops up and a little gem of history pops out stimulate our interest and enthusiasm. Let us hope, therefore, that someday soon the story of Broad Oak Basin can be further revealed

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Unfortunately the SCARS Archive has no photographs of the Broad Oak flats, but in the 1960s Harry Arnold took this shot of flats abandoned above the Earlestown Viaduct. With no scrap value, such obsolete wooden craft were abandoned all over the canal system as traffic dried up.

As far as we know, the remains of these boats still lie beneath the rubbish with which this section was infilled in the 1970s.

Northern Canal Association Meeting Report

From Peter Keen

The last meeting of the Association took place on October 12th in the village of Chinley. It was hosted by the Bugsworth Basin Heritage Trust, previously known as the Inland Waterways Preservation Society (IWPS). The Trust's Chairman and Site Manager, Ian Edgar MBE, outlined the story of the Trust's work on the site:

The Peak Forest Canal terminated at Whaley Bridge where cargoes were transhipped for a journey by rail over the Peak Forest Railway to Cromford where the cargo would be again reloaded for onward journey via the Cromford Canal. This provided a link between the cotton towns around Manchester and the increasingly industrialised areas of Derbyshire.

Just outside Whaley Bridge a short branch canal was constructed from the main line to a small area which was to become Bugsworth Basin, a complex of wharves, lime kilns, crushing plant, warehouses and storage areas, served by a tram-road from quarries higher up in the hills, bringing limestone down for onward movement to industry, building and agriculture. The basin soon developed leaks and water loss became an on-going problem, even to the present day.

In 1958 the IWPS was formed with the objective of preserving the basin and its access canal. It has been working ever since to do this with additional aim to restore rather than just preserve. Thus when the construction of a Whaley Bridge by-pass was proposed the IWPS was instrumental in ensuring that its course did not interfere with the basin. This was a hard fought battle but was eventually won by the Society and its supporters.

The Society has now become a Heritage Trust since this offered the possibility of greater benefits. Over the years much progress has been made and links forged with other waterway organisations to the extent that a Memorandum of Understanding has been entered into with the Canal and River Trust whereby the latter group has responsibility for the water supply within the basin whilst the BBHT is responsible for the rest of the site. The new Trust has given assistance to other waterway groups, produced models of Risk-Assessment and Health and Safety documentation whilst working all over the site, building bridges, clearing tram-road courses, rebuilding wharves, walls and access tracks. By coincidence a local railway station was to be demolished so the group wasted no time in obtaining all the stonework from the station to be used on projects around the basin. There is also the on-going programme of site maintenance, grassed areas to be cut, trees to be monitored and cut back if necessary, pointing of stonework and the constant struggle against vandalism.

A recent project is the construction of a new visitor centre. Unfortunately the chosen site lay between the canal and the steep sided valley of the Black Brook which runs parallel to it a short distance away. This proposal was refused. A new site has been chosen, on much more stable ground where a two-storey building could be installed, spanning one of the old wharves. There are still difficulties however and the Trust has now proposed its 4th version of the development to the local authority in the hope of winning its approval.

As with all waterway groups the BBHT is constantly in search of volunteers to oversee such administrative positions as Site Manager, Health and Safety Officer, and responsibility for obtaining funding, membership, and liaison with other waterway users. To this end advertisements have been printed on the internet and in waterway publications. Whilst a visitor to the site would see what appears to be a success story, Ian stressed that there will never be a time when the site is "finished" - the task of maintaining the site will continue indefinitely into the future.

The second speaker at the meeting was Heather Roberts, a professional Archivist working at the People's History Museum in Manchester, whose topic was "Practical Archiving for Waterway Restoration Groups".

Heather began by stating that any collection of archive materials should be of Evidence rather than History. This evidence should be organised in such a way as to be widely available rather than simply a fact stored in a file in a box on a shelf, known only to its owner.

All the material owned by a group needs to be organised according to importance, with provision made for the future accumulation of information.

As to why groups should keep archives - they form a data bank to pass on to future volunteers, describing progress, problems, solutions and successes.

Heather pointed out that funds could be raised by selling coasters, mugs, posters etc. emblazoned with an image peculiar to the group's waterway or structure, usually a well known landmark. Archives may hold such images.

Some of the best evidence available may take the form of oral input, clearly not of original personnel in the case of very old waterways, but of those involved in the many diverse activities which make up restoration work. For example, a culvert blockage is a small occurrence but can have a snowball effect leading to flooding problems. This would stick in the mind of those immediately concerned but may not be considered important enough to publish to a wider audience.

No archive is of value if it is not accessible to enquirers. This can be done by establishing a dedicated website or data can be deposited with an Archive Depository, most sensibly one with waterways interests.

The actual storage of archives is most important. Ideally storage areas should be of a constant humidity and temperature. Enemies take the form of water, fire, mould and wild-life. Data on paper is more vulnerable, so digital storage should be seriously considered. Even this could be a problem, as rapid technical advances can lead to obsolescence.

Good archives can even be cited in legal cases to prove or disprove a contention.

Funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund is available specifically for archive development, but any application would require evidence of previous work having been done.

Materials regarding waterways can also be relevant to social history, illustrating life styles, conditions, leisure activities etc., which can lead on to Family History projects specific to individuals.

Heather then went on to describe what needs to be retained within an archive.

In addition to the Society's accounts, minutes, AGM documents, which describe its administration, maps, plans, contracts, correspondence, published articles, posters, publicity materials, and photographs are all important sources of information.

It is vital that photographs are labelled with a date, location, personnel, feature displayed and who is to be credited with the picture. If any detail is in any way uncertain it should be omitted rather than guessed at.

What not to keep :- Duplicated items and everyday documents such as petty cash accounts.

The National Film Archive will put materials into digital form but a charge will be made. The North West Film Archive may do the same at no cost. It should be noted that copyright begins with the idea, not when an article is created or published. Permission should always be obtained when publishing another's work.

Always think about the next person to view data from the archive. Every effort should be made to ensure reliability of the evidence and confidence in the archive creators.

Richard Parry, the chief executive of the Canal and River Trust appointed in May 2013, (for his biography, see <http://goo.gl/3CNSvl>) described the Trust's work and ambitions:

From its inception in July 2012 the CRT has achieved a great deal of progress, improving and managing over 2000 miles of waterway, along with docks, 72 reservoirs, wildlife conservation areas, 1,500 locks and 3000 bridges with more listed buildings than the National Trust. It has monitored 12 million visitors (half the population of England and Wales) licensed 32,000 boats, provided 20,000 jobs, and received £500M worth of public benefit. Income from property such as Canary Wharf has amounted to £40M, whilst total capital by November 2014 was £500M. From its gross income of £163M it has spent £83M on maintenance and repairs, staff, dredging, and heritage and environmental projects, meeting all the DEFRA targets set.

The Trust aims to increase income to £90M 2014-2015 and tackle over £1M of additional customer service works. Over the next ten years £80M will be spend to dredging, whilst £2M will be allocated to off-side clearance between now and summer 2014.

The acceptance of RCT was always going to be problematical since there had been wide discontent amongst waterway users with its predecessor, British Waterways. However, with a few exceptions, widespread improvements have resulted in a mainly positive response from users.

The Northern Canals are more numerous than those in the south and unfortunately are in a poorer state of repair. They involve more structures but receive less usage. They need to receive a greater share of expenditure if they are to be brought in line with their southern counterparts. The Sutton Weaver Bridge refurbishment has now been completed at a cost of £405M, whilst more millions are planned to be used on repairs to Chirk Tunnel, the Marple Aqueduct, and Lime Kilns Lock in Leicester. Further restoration will be dictated by the results of research reports which, via a full time restoration team, will target areas of greatest need.

A new factor, which was missing with BW, is the increasing use of volunteers. From 2013 to 2014 no less than 350,000 hours were spent by volunteer and community groups, including 20,000 children and 150 "Explorer" projects. 20 Welcome stations were manned and 425 volunteer lock keepers assisted boaters on their journeys.

RCT stresses the importance of partnerships, working with local authorities, local businesses, the Arts Council, Sport England and, of course, canal societies. The movement is now away from the traditional national level to regional and local levels. Whilst all canal customers are important, be they boaters, canoeists, anglers, pedestrians or cyclists, the Trust's priorities are licensing, moorings, regulation enforcement, welfare, facilities and reviews. Sharing the tow-paths is a concern, since the few antisocial people can make things difficult for the rest, but the Trust is working towards a solution.

A major positive result of recent months has been the support given by the Trust to those canal societies and partners fighting against the proposed installation of HS2 where it is seen as conflicting with their restoration plans. As a result the alignment of the line has been changed to the benefit of the projects concerned.

The RCT is working towards a 10-year strategy. Its major targets are: Places, Waterways, Resources, Influence, People and Prosperity. All income will go back into the waterways. Beyond that a 15-year plan and a 30-year plan are to be drawn up. At present the Trust has the support of most waterway users.

As always at the Association's meetings the representatives of the groups present have the opportunity to address the floor, describing their successes or failures, to offer or seek advice and to air their future plans.

Well over 50% of the speakers mentioned developing beneficial links with the Canal and River Trust be this in fund raising, equipment loan or constructive advice.

The Pocklington Canal Society has carried out work on towpath improvements, has had its new swing bridge officially opened by Richard Parry, Chief Executive of the CRT, and is planning the further extension of the navigable section of the canal following the refurbishment of the tidal lock into the River Derwent.

The Cromford Canal Society has revived a previous plan to restore lock 4, has brought on board Nottingham University to carry out a study on the future of the canal, has carried 4000+ passengers on its electric trip boat, and has changed over to colour reproduction with all its publicity materials, at no increased cost, by judicious use of the internet.

On a larger scale, **the Chesterfield Canal group** joined forces with the CRT and IWA to successfully change the route of HS2 which threatened their canal. Volunteers are working with the Waterways Recovery Group on lock restoration whilst others are preparing a revised HLF bid for funding.

Volunteers also feature in **the Macclesfield Canal Society's** successes, having cleared 11 miles of off side vegetation, and 10 bridge holes and narrows during the course of one week. Other work over a further 38 days made use of the risk assessment, staff time, tools and equipment of the CRT and involved a number of local community groups.

The Chester Canal and Heritage Trust is working towards having the canal classified as a designated area, to consider the canal as an essential part of the city's waterway system.

Work is progressing to create a strategy to improve access between the upper and lower tidal River Dee, the Shropshire Union Canal and the River Dee. Few boat owners with moorings on the upper River Dee ever visit Chester itself, so the aim is to make it a more attractive destination. A Feasibility Study is to be carried out.

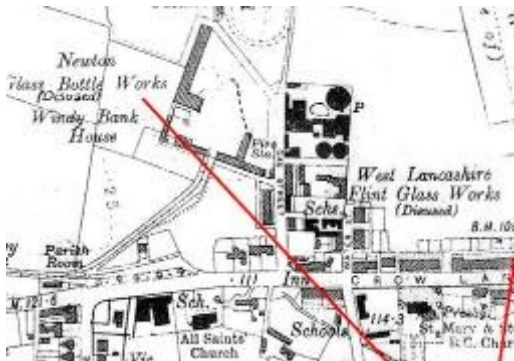
Work is needed on 8 locks on the **Lichfield and Hatherton Canals**, one of which lies on land belonging to a group of travellers, a fairly unique problem for a canal society. Funding has been granted for work on an area of neglected land but the deadline of March 2015 means that the society is under pressure to complete the work in time. 400 metres of tow path have been refurbished between two bus stops, allowing disabled users to make a circular trip. The group trialled the use of a new lining material for a proposed marina area. In every case the new lining failed, so the society has reverted to the traditional method of using puddled clay to retain the water in the cut. The re-routing of HS2 to avoid the canal has resulted in the saving of £555,000 since extensive cuttings will no longer be needed.

The Derby and Sandiacre Canal Society is pressing for the relocation of a station on the HS2 line to avoid problems with their waterway. An archaeological dig is planned to locate a lost lock chamber, whilst work continues on restoring sections of the canal walls. Approaches have been made to the local council to form a trust to forward the planned restoration.

Discussion of the **Mersey Gateway Bridge** by many delegates brought **SCARS** into the picture. Whilst obviously not a SCARS project, nevertheless it is now associated with the Sankey in the minds of many canal people. When the "Linking the Locks" project, the partnership between the Society, Halton, Warrington and Penketh High School, is added the Society's profile is raised considerably. The two proposed new lift bridges, sea lock repairs and further HLF applications indicated to all present that the Sankey restoration project has emerged from the doldrums and progress is once more being made.

Newton-le-Willows Glass—by Peter Keen

A SCARS member recently made contact to say that she owns a sugar bowl which was made locally in Newton-le-Willows, and sent a photograph (*right*) of the beautiful blue bowl for publishing here. Thanks to the fame of Pilkington Glass the name of St Helens is associated with glass-making all over the world. However, before this company became so successful there were many smaller companies in and around the town. Two of these were in Newton-le-Willows - the Bottle Works and the Flint Glass Works. Between them they produced everyday bottles for beer and other drinks, flat glass and finer work such as lamp shades and bowls. The 1933 map below shows the two Works, both disused—but it is not known yet in which the bowl was made.



Our researches reveal that the two glassworks in Newton flourished from the early 1800s. In the mid-1800s Chance Brothers and Pilkingtons set about buying up their competitors to establish what became a monopoly when the North West became the greatest producer of flat glass in the UK—Chance Brothers supplied the glass used in the construction of the Crystal Palace which housed the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, London in 1851.

Part of the buying-out process was the purchase of the Newton works, the bottle works being allowed to continue in production whereas the flat glass side was closed down altogether.

Barker and Harris in their “Industrial Town” tell us that the Ravenhead Glassworks was producing wine glasses, shades and tableware in 1822, but they make no mention of such production in Newton. The first two of these would be created by blowing glass into moulds but tableware such as sugar bowls would have more probably been made by casting molten glass in moulds. These moulds would have been in two sections which would have been split apart when the glass inside had cooled and solidified. Usually there would have been a joint visible in the item where the two moulds met and with expensive tableware this joint may have been ground away whereas with mass produced items the joint would have survived.

No such joint can be seen on the photograph of the sugar bowl so it is assumed that the piece was an expensive item, part of a larger assembly of good quality tableware.

The Society is constantly trying to expand and update its archive so any further information regarding the bowl and its place of origin would be most welcome. Please send to any committee member, contact details are on the inside cover of this magazine..

Archive pics of the Sankey

When SCARS started up in 1985 there were very few images of the canal known to exist, and one of the first things the early members did was to try to discover whether there were any others to be found. It is one of the Society's success stories that that search was successful and our photographic archive now runs to several hundred images, dating from the end of the 19th century onwards.

As the then Chairman, I approached the British Waterways Museum at Stoke Bruerne to see what they had. Apart from two Sankey Bridges' images we already knew of, all I received in response were some grainy photocopies of culvert work around Warrington, which were not really worth paying for copies of. We now discover, however, that I was misinformed, or BW's filing system was not very efficient!

In Dave Smallshaw's round-up of IWA News, below on page 25, we learn that the Canal and River Trust, BW's successor, is digitising its archive of photographs and has made the results so far available on line, at: <http://collections.canalrivertrust.org.uk/>.



If you type 'Sankey' and 'St Helens Canal' into the Search box you'll find that they hold about 50 images featuring our canal—most of them, like this 1954 flood scene at Park Road, hitherto unseen.

David Long, Editor

The Sankey Seal

A big item of local news over the Christmas period was the discovery of an adult grey seal in a field near Newton-le-Willows. It appeared to have swum up the Sankey Brook from the Mersey, and then up Newton Brook before deciding to take a look around in the fields where a dog-walker found it on December 22nd.

After being herded into captivity by police, RSPCA staff and the local farmer (*pic, above, from the BBC website*), it was first taken to an RSPCA station in Cheshire, before being transferred to a seal rescue centre in Norfolk. It has been nicknamed 'Dumbledore', a character from the Harry Potter stories, and the latest news is that it is very poorly, but lively, having been diagnosed with pneumonia. It has also had a blow to the head... which might explain its trip up the Sankey.



IWA Restoration Reports

The following items are taken from the IWA head office bulletins of the last few months. The Association's monthly Bulletin, produced by IWA Head Office, contains all the latest news on issues affecting the waterways, both nationally and locally, plus a summary of current consultations etc. The bulletins form a veritable mine of information for all enthusiasts, and members can get current and back issues by accessing the IWA website.

Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge Nears Completion

The Canal & River Trust (CRT) has announced that the £4.5 million restoration of Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge over the River Weaver, near Frodsham, Cheshire, was completed in October. The bridge, which carries the A56 trunk road, reopened to traffic overnight in the early hours of Saturday 11th October, and work then started to dismantle the temporary bridge that has kept road traffic moving over the duration of the restoration of the swing bridge. Rowing boats and traditional narrowboats have been able to pass underneath throughout the project but the Weaver Navigation is now fully open to all river traffic.

The restoration of the 88-year-old bridge, which carries 20,000 vehicles a day, started in summer 2013 and is the first complete refurbishment in its history. This project will extend its life by over fifty years.

Access to World Heritage Site on the Llangollen Canal improved

Two projects designed to improve accessibility to Wales' waterway World Heritage Site on the Llangollen Canal were officially opened on Friday 26th September. CRT projects have updated a 200-year old roving bridge built by Thomas Telford in Trevor to make it easier for everyone to cross the canal, and widened and resurfaced a stretch of towpath along the canal with the aim of making the historic site accessible to all.

Postles Bridge is a 19th century roving bridge that was built to allow horses, towing laden canal boats, to cross the canal without the need to be unhitched. Access from Postles Bridge back onto the towpath was via a cobbled ramp, which ran parallel to the canal with a steep turn at the foot of the slope. The project involved building a new ramp from the bridge to meet current disability requirements allowing people with mobility scooters or pushchairs and cyclists easier access.

The towpath improvements included widening and resurfacing 1,500 metres of towpath along the World Heritage Site between Horseshoe Falls and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, adding to the 16km of towpath already improved.

Historic Burnley Canal Wharf Secures National Lottery Funding

An historic, disused canal wharf in Burnley's Weavers Triangle conservation area is to be restored by CRT, thanks to £2 million of earmarked funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Finsley Gate Wharf, known locally as Mile Wharf, is one of the oldest wharves on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal and includes three listed warehouses, a listed canal cottage, outbuilding, former blacksmith forge and boat slipway, dating from between 1700 and 1830. HLF's initial development funding award of £262,500, supplemented by £26,800 from CRT, will enable emergency repair work to be carried out to stabilise the buildings from further deterioration. The grant will also allow CRT to commission a building restoration schedule, business plan and an activity plan to develop educational and volunteering opportunities at the site. This information will be submitted to HLF for assessment to secure the full grant of £2 million.

This funding will revitalise Mile Wharf through the creation of new local enterprises including a boat repair yard, restaurant, rental cottage and moorings. This grant has been awarded through HLF's Heritage Enterprise programme which has been designed to specifically help when the cost of restoring an historic building is so high that without additional financial intervention putting it back into use would not be commercially viable.

Lichfield Canal Restoration Safeguarded from HS2

Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust (L&HCRT) has concluded an agreement with HS2 Ltd to safeguard the restoration of the Lichfield Canal at Huddlesford under the plans contained in the Hybrid Bill for construction of HS2.

HS2's original plans, as detailed in the bill, provided for a crossing on an embankment, which would have allowed retention of the newly reconstructed Cappers Lane Bridge and canal route, with other impacts on the restoration, which L&HCRT has been in detailed discussions with HS2 Ltd on. The Promoter, the Secretary of State for Transport, has now given specific assurances on these. However, the modifications to the route around Lichfield recently announced, which also included the IWA Alternative around Fradley, have changed the impact of the route at Huddlesford.

The original route of the Lichfield Canal under Cappers Lane will be lost, as HS2 will cross at the present water level. L&HCRT engineers have devised a deviation that will instead enable a new channel to cross under HS2 and then reconnect with the original Canal line above Lock 30. HS2 Ltd has assured L&HCRT that this new section of canal will be designed into the HS2 construction programme and will be funded by HS2 Ltd.

Historic Nantwich Aqueduct Gets £200,000 Renovation

Nantwich Aqueduct, one of Cheshire's scheduled monuments, is to be conserved in a £200,000 project. Known as the 'Gateway to Nantwich', the aqueduct is an iconic grade II* structure, designed by Thomas Telford in 1826, which today carries the Shropshire Union Canal over the A534 Nantwich to Chester road.

The aqueduct, at the end of Welsh Row, comprises a cast iron trough, supported on six arches. It was constructed during Telford's lifetime and is recorded in the great engineer's biography "The Life of Thomas Telford". Although still structurally sound, the aqueduct is in need of significant renovation to maintain its condition. Work will include preparation, four coats of paint, replacement of a missing cast Iron panel and important masonry repairs and is expected to start in spring 2015. Nantwich Aqueduct has a sister aqueduct that crosses the A5 in Staffordshire, which has also been identified for investment in the future years.

Montgomery Canal Restoration Faces Further Delays

Further restoration of the Montgomery Canal could face months of delays as Natural England (NE) has advised CRT that it will reject the Trust's application for a licence to relocate newts in the area before work begins. Shropshire Union Canal Society volunteers with the support of CRT have already restored a large stretch of the Canal and have now secured grant funding to restore the next 50m stretch beyond Pryce's Bridge.

CRT has waited several months for a decision from NE who has finally advised that it is intending to reject the application as it stands. CRT have been asked to provide more compensation habitat and to revisit the application to provide more information on the proposals, including details of planned newt compensation measures for future restoration work.

It has taken NE over 130 days to process the application, whereas its stated target for determining a licence application is 30 days. CRT has criticised this delay and believes it is not the only applicant to be affected this year.

CRT Announces Proposals for Further Stoppages on the Rochdale Canal

CRT has announced that it plans to instigate additional stoppages on the Rochdale Canal. They have acknowledged that over the summer locks 2 and 92 on the Rochdale Canal have become increasingly difficult to use. Lock 2 has a problem with the cill floor, the Trust believes it has heaved, so struggles to retain water and this causes operational problems. Water loss at Lock 92 has become much worse in the latter part of the season to the extent that CRT has received reports that some people have been unable to use the lock. To fix these locks, CRT wants to add a stoppage at each location this winter, in addition to those already planned, to avoid further problems next year. The Rochdale Canal stoppage included in the original winter works plan was for January/February time to allow grouting work at Lock 8. CRT would like to move this stoppage to be concurrent with these additional works, to be held in either January or March, but cannot guarantee this will be possible. CRT has acknowledged that the addition of long-term stoppages is undesirable after the consultation and work that goes into the winter stoppage plan ahead of its release. However, it has said that it is sometimes not possible to anticipate all the work that will be needed to keep the network running when plans are made so far in advance.

CRT also plans to implement a series of short-term restrictions for the Canal to carry out works that it feels will benefit the general operation. These will be advertised through their stoppage notices service and the Trust does not expect them to cause undue delay.

New 'Build a Canal' Game Launched by CRT

CRT has launched a new digital interactive game, 'Build a Canal', designed to encourage children aged seven to eleven to engage with waterways. The game invites young people to have a go at being a canal engineer and choose their own route and select construction methods to create their own virtual waterway. The game comes with teacher notes suggesting ways the activity could be used for Key Stage 2 history, geography, music, English and maths lessons.

'Build a Canal' is available to play at CRT's River Explorers website:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers/build-a-canal>

I don't know about for children aged seven to eleven.....maybe we should all take a look!

CRT Trust Announces £50,000 Project to Digitise the National Waterway Collection

On 30th September, CRT published over 37,000 archive records and 22,000 historic images online for the first time ever. The £50,000 project is the first phase of a major project to open up public access to the national waterways collection.

The Waterways Archive is housed at the National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port and is the largest archive of waterway-related materials in the country. This important collection, which holds a wide range of primary material relating to the history of Britain's canals and inland waterways, is to be made available for the public to access online at the Trust's website. The archive images will be available for the public to purchase later in the year and CRT is already putting in place plans to digitise a further 15,000 images.

See page XXX in this issue to find out how to access the Trust's images of the Sankey.



Although we currently do not run a programme of talks, as a Society we are members of the Inland Waterways Association and all our own members are more than welcome at the local branch series of talks at the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port. It's not as far as it seems and is less than a 10 minute walk from the Merseyrail station. The 2015 series of talks on offer are detailed below:

IWA Chester & Merseyside Talk Programme 2014-15

*All meetings will be held at 7.45 pm on the second Tuesday of the month.
Meetings are held on the top floor of the Tom Rolt Conference Centre at the National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port, Merseyside, CH65 4FW.*

*A bar and coffee making facilities are available before and during meetings.
No prior booking required. Open to non-members. Free admission.*

13 January 2015

Journeys 'Over the Water' - The Mersey Ferries and their Destinations

Ken Pye FRSA, Managing Director, Discover Liverpool

10 February 2015

'The Cotswold Canals, Past, Present and Future'

Martin Turner, Chairman, IWA Hereford & Gloucester Branch

10 March 2015

'Havana to Galapagos' Cruising the Caribbean Sea from Havana to the Panama Canal

Captain Derrick Kemp, Master Mariner

14 April 2015

'Fort Perch Rock, New Brighton' – what do local people know about its hilarious history?

Derek Arnold, former Chief Engineer Merchant Navy; former Engineering Manager at Shell; military and maritime historian and present Chairman of Liverpool Anchorage Club (for retired captains, engineers, pilots, tugboatmen, et al).

12 May 2015

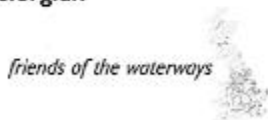
'Researching the Lives of Narrowboat Families'

Cath Turpin from the Boat Museum Society, National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port

Branch Secretary Tel: 0151 678 9300
Email - chesteranddistrict@waterways.org.uk



The Inland
Waterways
Association



Chester & Merseyside Branch

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Signed:.....

Date:.....

Please forward to:

Mike Harrison - the Treasurer / Membership Secretary
4 Darvel Avenue, Garswood, Ashton-in-Makerfield, WN4 0UA

Brian Bennett's Album: Part 8

Long-time SCARS Member Brian Bennett has kindly donated his Album of photographs from the mid- and late 1970s.



Brian photographed Hulme Lock Cottage in 1975 (*above*) when it was still being lived in. The story is that, sadly, its tenant had to go into hospital not long after.

The isolated cottage quickly became a target for vandals, and was soon uninhabitable.

By 1979 (*below*) it was a wreck.

An unusual feature (*see above*) of the Sankey's lock chambers was that wooden fenders were built into the side walls, for the protection of the sandstone structure, and the wooden hulls of the flats.

