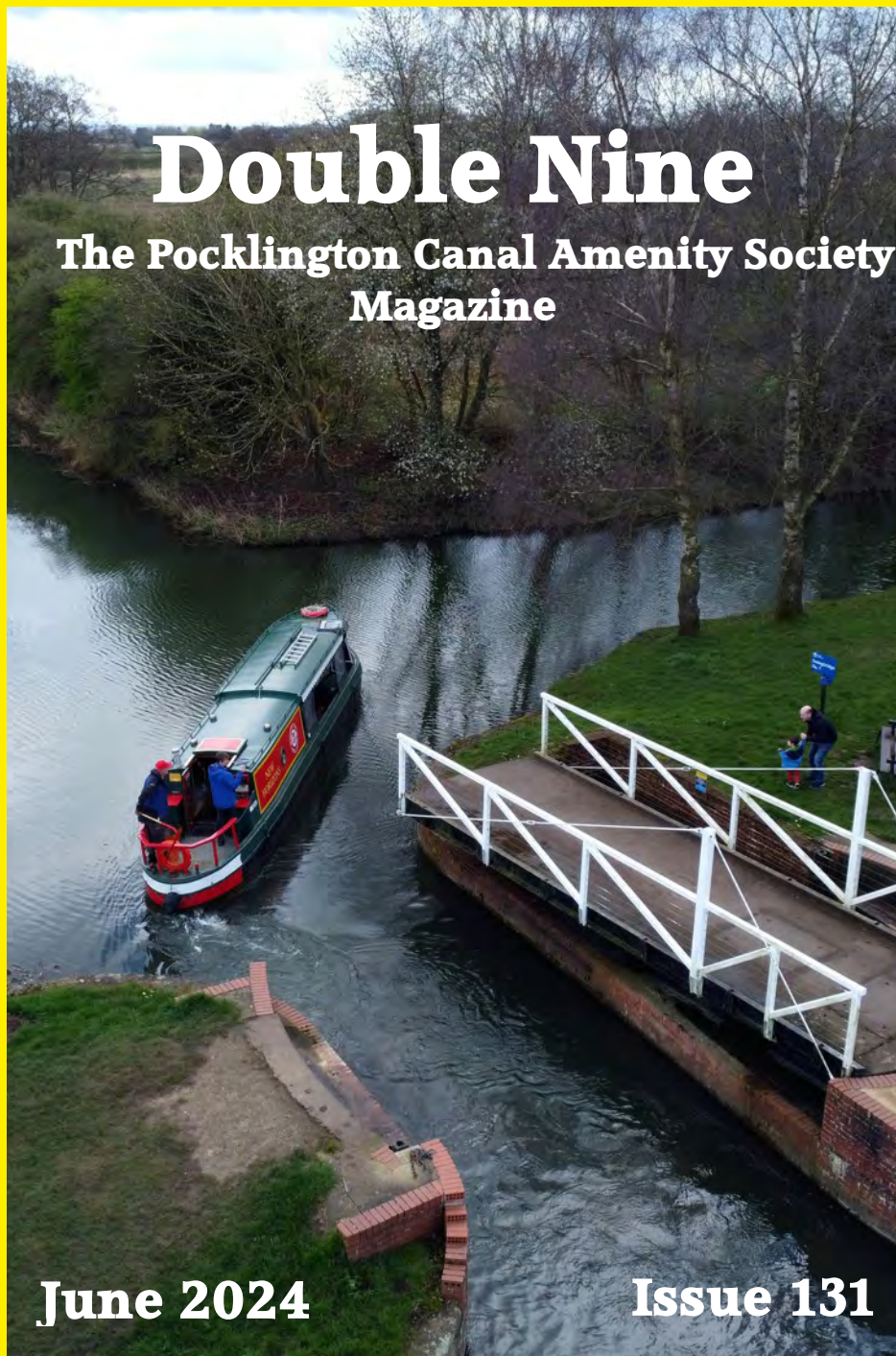


# **Double Nine**

**The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society  
Magazine**

**June 2024**

**Issue 131**





# Editorial

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Welcome to the June 2024 issue of your Double Nine!

No doubt many of you will have learned about the dramatic events at Coates Lock in March. These are recorded as an extensive photo essay in this magazine. All those that are working on the project feel very deflated, but there is hope! We cannot turn back the clock to March 7th but we can look to the future. Working in partnership with CRT, the Coates Lock project **WILL** come to fruition and boats will be travelling up to and through the lock in the not too distant future. At the time of writing we await the CRT Engineers report on the specifics of how to move the project forward.

The month of May saw the 30th Anniversary of the first public trips of our boat, New Horizons. The vessel consistently provides a steady income for the society both in donations and pre-booked midweek trips. I must say that it doesn't seem like 30 years since I was photographing the civic party, gathered at Melbourne Arm for the 'launch'. We have lost count how many passengers have enjoyed a trip along the canal with our dedicated crews!

Enjoy the canal!

Malcolm

*Front Cover:* The New Horizons returns to Melbourne Arm on the first trip of the season.

*Rear Cover:* New Horizons on route to Church Bridge.

*Double Nine* is published in  
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by the  
Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

## Copy Date October 2024 Issue

Closing date for articles etc for this issue is the  
**23rd September 2024.**

**Submissions received after this date will be held over until the next available issue.**

Opinions expressed in this magazine is not necessarily those of the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society, its Chairman or Committee.



# Chairman's Column

In the last edition of Double Nine I wrote about the works that were planned to take place at Coates Lock in March. These were to be a collaboration between the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society and the Canal and River Trust, and were meticulously planned. Fabric dams were duly installed above and below Coates Lock and the water was pumped out. Silt and debris was removed from the bottom of the chamber, and it was revealed that the lower sills were the cause of the leakage from the lock. Everything was prepared for their replacement.

However, there was an overnight incident that prevented the works from being completed. It seems that water got around the canvas dam at the top end of the lock, and got behind the wingwall on the offside of the canal. This did serious damage to the wingwall, and washed away a large quantity of soil from behind it. All the work at the site had to be abandoned.

Since CRT took the lead role on this project, it was their engineers who conducted the investigation into the precise causes of the incident. The canvas dams had been installed by a contractor, so, no doubt, they were involved as well. I have not yet heard what conclusions have been drawn, and there are not yet any plans for rectifying the damage or completing the work on the sills.

It is a great pity that this project, which we had looked forward to as an example of co-operation between CRT and ourselves, ended in such a way.

On other fronts, the work of the Society continues. Our tripboat New Horizons, resumed operations at Easter, and is set for another busy season. Not only does New Horizons provide an opportunity for the public to get to know the Pocklington Canal in an enjoyable way, but it is a very useful generator of funds for the society. I would also like to mention that the Information Centre at Canal Head will be open throughout the summer on Sundays. Second hand books and various items of merchandise related to the canal can be purchased at the Information Centre.

Members of working parties continue to do useful jobs along the length of the canal, undertaking repairs and maintaining the towpath. Working parties have always been a feature of our society and new members are always welcome to ensure that this work can continue into the future.

Finally, I will mention that there will be an open day at the Melbourne Arm on Sunday 15th September. It will be an opportunity for us to make contact with the local population and showcase the work of the Society. We hope, with the help of our members and supporters, to provide plenty of entertainment and that it will be an enjoyable occasion.

Paul Waddington

# Coates Lock Project

## The joy and the heartache..

Monday 4th March was very busy with equipment arriving by the hour. The planning had taken many months and timing was crucial. CRT staff and PCAS volunteers were working together to deliver repairs that would extend the navigable length of the canal.



*Above:* Site view after the dredging had been completed above & below the lock.



*Above:* The site security fencing was installed by the PCAS working party, a week before work was to begin.



*Above:* Monday 4th March was the busiest day of the week, with equipment arriving on site, almost by the hour. The welfare unit was careful manoeuvred..



Above: Pumps were hired to keep the lock drained - the main pump was lowered into position.



Specialist scaffolding contractors installed a bridge and steps down into the lock.





PCAS volunteers installing safety barriers along the side of the lock chamber.



Aerial view of the lock and the works-compound filling up with equipment.





*Above: Workmen preparing to install the lower fabric dam.*



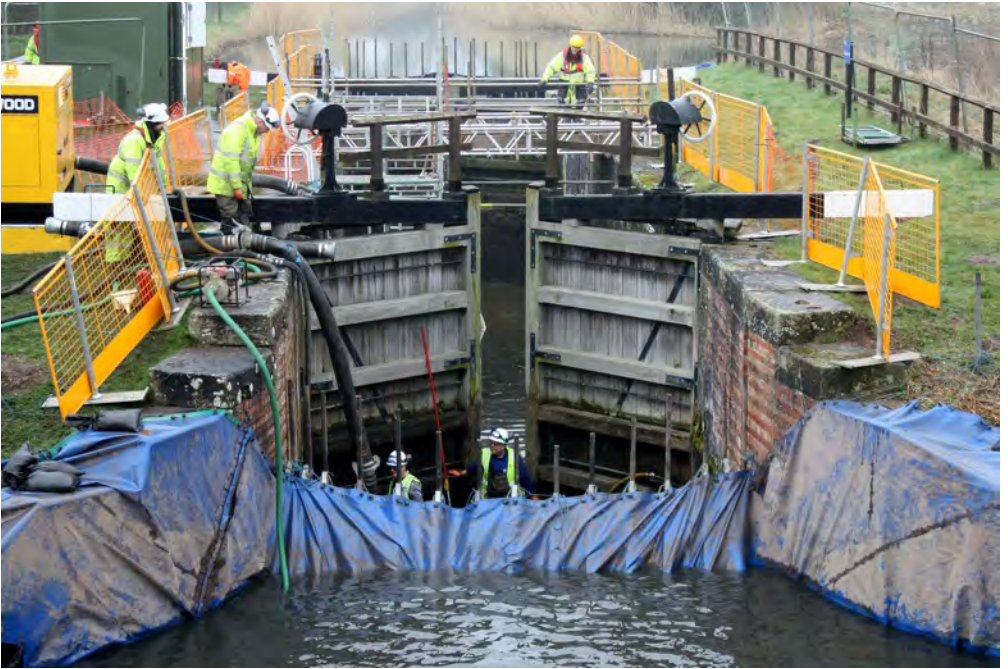
*Above & Left:*  
The steel framework being installed.





*Above & Below:* The fabric is rolled across the metal frame to create the dam.





*Above:* The lower fabric dam now installed.

*Below:* Hundreds of fish had to be rescued from the lock chamber and safely returned into to the canal above.







*Above & Left:*  
Many fish had been trapped in the lock chamber but were all rescued and safely returned to the water in the upper canal.



*Left:*  
The problematic lower cill was finally exposed. Plans to seal below them were to be undertaken the following day.



*This page:* Thursday morning, 8th March. Not a sight that anyone wanted or indeed expected to find. The chamber had filled with muddy water and foam. Closer inspection revealed that the upper offside wingwall had collapsed.







*Above & Left:*  
The lock chamber now filled with water and the collapsed wing wall.



*Left:* The lock site as it is today.  
All the equipment has been removed, only the dams remain on site.

PCAS has overcome bigger problems in the past and, working together with CRT, we shall overcome!

# Happy Birthday New Horizons

It might only seem like yesterday, but it is 30 years since New Horizons was dedicated! We have lost count of the number of people that have enjoyed a trip along the navigable sections of the Pocklington Canal.



Above: The official party dedicate New Horizons on the 22nd May 1994.



Above:  
New Horizons takes the civic party for a trip along the canal.



Above: New Horizons was one of the first boats to travel to the Bielby Arm after both Thornton and Walbut locks were reopened in June 2018 - here seen moving carefully through swingbridge 8.



Above: The ever-popular trips aboard New Horizons, illustrated in July 2018.



Above: Gardham lock is a favourite destination with pre-booked parties.



Above: New Horizons about to leave the river Derwent, en-route to Goole for its winter maintenance.



# Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

## Annual General Meeting

### 17th April 2024

## Report of the Chairman

The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society continued its efforts to promote the Pocklington Canal and its restoration as a fully navigable waterway during 2023 with a range of activities. Its committee met every six weeks, and the usual range of activities was pursued.

Working parties took place almost every week, undertaking such tasks as towpath and bank repairs, the painting of lock gates and the clearance of fallen trees. There was also preparation work for larger works at Coates Lock (mentioned below). The working party members also undertook weed clearance on the canal using the Society's weed cutting boat, Sheila Nix.

The tripboat, New Horizons, had another successful year, giving short public trips on Sundays and Bank Holidays from Easter to October. It also operated a number of longer private charter trips. The tripboat continued to be a major source of the Society's revenue.

Several public events took place during the year including a talk by Graham Sykes about his building a record-breaking steam powered motorbike. An open day was held at Melbourne in September, and we had our usual pre-Christmas lunch in November. The information centre at Canal Head was open on most Sundays during the Summer Months, which continued to provide a useful point of contact with the wider public, as well as generating revenue.

The Society's magazine, Double Nine, was published three times during the year. This magazine has been in production since the formation of the society in 1969, with the latest edition being numbered 30. I hear very good reports from far and wide about its interesting and informative content.

In terms of major projects, the Society undertook the dredging of a winding hole above Coates Lock. This is the first time that the Society has managed a dredging project. Previously, dredging has always been managed by CRT or its predecessors, although sometimes paid for by PCAS. The reason for this dredging was to allow boats to use Coates Lock, and turn around above the lock before returning, thus effectively opening up another half mile of canal. A contractor was engaged to do the dredging using a land based machine operating from the adjacent field. The material was spread on the field as a soil improver. Once the material had dried out, our working party volunteers had the task of picking out stones and pieces of brick. *(cont. overleaf)*

*(continued from p.13)*

Moving to 2024, the society collaborated with CRT in a project to cure the leakage through the lower gates of Coates Lock. This involved the installation of temporary canvas dams and the Society would fund other equipment, such as pumps, that would be required. The dewatering and clearance of debris from the bottom of the lock was successfully achieved, but an unfortunate incident caused the project to be abandoned, at least for the present. Water got behind one of the upper wing walls, causing soil to be washed away, and displacing the wing wall. We still await the report from CRT's engineers, detailing the exact cause of the failure.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the running of the Society in 2023.

---



High Water at Cottingwith Lock on the 7th March 2024.

Follow us at:

[www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org](http://www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org)



Find us on:  
**facebook.**



# **Annual General Meeting of the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society held at Melbourne Village Hall on Wednesday 17th April 2024**

## ***Welcome and Introduction***

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-chair, Tim Charlson, welcomed members of the Society and introduced himself, the Secretary and other committee members (CM) present.

## ***Present***

22 members were present. The current quorum is 19.5% of membership, and so the meeting was quorate.

## ***Chairman's Report***

The vice chair read out the Chair's report (attached). He thanked various volunteers for their work and then commented on the chair's comments about the work at Coates Lock and the unfortunate collapse of the offside upper wing wall at Coates Lock. A positive relationship with the Canal & River Trust (CRT) had developed over the last year and there had been collaboration on the Coates Lock work. £25,000 had been spent on dredging of the winding hole above Coates and removal of the material. This money had come from East Yorkshire County Council's Commuted Sums funding. The reasons for the wing wall failure were being considered; a contributory factor was water getting behind the brick work.

## ***Presentation of the 2023 Accounts***

Copies of the accounts for 2023 had been circulated showing a net surplus of £5744 compared to £7272 in the previous year. Net current assets had increased from £160.060 to £165.804. Income was mainly from boat trips, membership and donations, while most expenditure was on restoration activities, insurance and licences. The increase in membership income was noted.

The accounts were approved unanimously.

## ***Election of Chair and Committee***

All the members of the Committee were half way through their two-year terms. One member, Roger Bromley, was standing down and was thanked for his long years of service, particularly as membership secretary.

One new candidate for committee membership, Carole Jones, had been proposed and her candidature was unanimously supported by the meeting. The committee for 2024-25 will therefore be as follows:

**Chair** - Paul Waddington

**Committee:** Alistair Anderson, Steve Ashby, Tim Charlson, Sue Dickens, Rob Fouracre, Richard Harker, Richard Irwin, Carole Jones, Malcolm Slater, Dave Tong, Ed Westerby.

## ***Any other Business***

Canal Restoration issues:

One member asked whether a sum of £100,000 for Sandhill Lock made available from commuted funds by East Yorkshire County Council (EYCC) was time limited. The vice-chair said that the indication was that it was available for 10 years but this was not confirmed in writing. Another member noted that inflationary pressures etc meant that the cost of the Sandhill project, if we could ever do it, would be much higher and so more money would be needed. A member asked when Gardham Lock, which was leaking badly, might be fixed. The vice-chair said that we had brought this to CRT's attention. The member also noted that the towpath between Swing bridges 6 and 5 was being eroded by the floods. The vice-chair would also bring that to the attention of CRT although was not optimistic about work being done.

Another member asked about the signage at Canal Head, which in their view was poorly placed and meant that many people were unaware of the canal. The vice-chair would ask the appropriate authorities whether this could be improved. In response to another question about why we did not have public events at Canal Head, he said that this was due to the danger of traffic accessing the site from the A1079 and associated parking problems. Previous events at the site had been supported by the lottery-funded 3 year project which was now closed.

### **Donations**

The Chairman & the PCAS Committee wish to thank all the people who have given donations to the Society.



# Working Party Report April 2024

Rob Fouracre - Working Party Organiser

Much of our time has been spent on preparation for the work at Coates Lock. Once the dredging had been completed we had several 'walk-overs' of the field where the dredged material had been spread. We removed 11 x 1 tonne bags of rubble and stone from the field over several weeks. The site at Coates was worked on with the installation of fencing, siting of the welfare unit and, during the work, helped to remove several hundred fish from the lock and then helped with the removal of fencing and clearing the site.

At Melbourne the site was cleared for the arrival of the cills for Coates lock and the subsequent and ongoing task of ensuring they are kept from drying out. The shed was cleared of accumulated rubbish. Plans have been made with CRT to remove much of the debris on the car park. An ongoing concern is the state of the road down to the car park and we are in discussions with CRT to try to repair the surface. Contractors removed several of the large trees around the basin and we made use of the chippings that they left to resurface the path to the dipping pond.

Benches were repaired a Canal Head, Walbut and Melbourne and one of the seats at Canal Head was completely refurbished. The information centre has had the door repaired.

Banners for the boat trips were renewed and then put out. The 48hr Mooring at Melbourne was cleared ready for the Easter boat trips.

On the canal various overhead branches were removed and debris and weeds cleared on several trips with the weed boat. The culvert above Bielby was cleared of a lot of fallen trees and branches. The syphon above Thornton was likewise cleared of debris (including a hot water cylinder). Little was done regarding bank repairs due to the high water levels.

Once again many thanks to our willing volunteers and also the local CRT team who have been a great help with various tasks.

Rob Fouracre

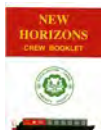
**PCAS Canal Open Day.  
Melbourne Arm  
Sunday 15th September from 11am**



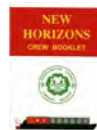
*Above Left & Right:*  
Working party volunteers repairing a seat at Canal Head and the door to the Information Centre.

*Left:*  
Bridge No7 getting a wash and brush up on the 29th March.





# New Horizons



To coincide with the launch of the New Horizons Crew Booklet, a refresher course organised by Alistair Anderson was held on the 23rd March. The course was well attended and appreciated.

*Below:* Activities on the day.



## Yorkshire Air Museum Evening

It was a full house at the Yorkshire Air Museum presentation at Melbourne village hall on the 15th March. Ian Richardson from the Yorkshire Air Museum gave a fascinating insight to the history of RAF Elvington and the aims of the Air Museum today.

*Below:*

The audience take their seats.      Speaker Ian Richardson.      Mike Clemson, PCAS



# Trees today - gone tomorrow!



On the 6th March CRT contractors cut down two large ash trees that were suffering from 'ash dieback'. The presence of the two trees so close to the Storeroom and PCAS jetty unfortunately made their removal inevitable. Full use was made of the woodchippings which were laid on the nearby path down to the pond.



**Pocklington Canal Amenity Society**

# **Family Fun Day**

**Melbourne Arm,  
Melbourne Village**

**SUNDAY 15th SEPTEMBER**

**11am - 4.30pm**



- **Boat Trips**
- **Paddle Board Taster Sessions**  
(bring a change of clothes!)
  - **Pond Dipping**
  - **Hot Refreshments**
- **Stalls & Demonstrations**

[www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org](http://www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org)

# The Bringer of Summer

There are birds that evoke springtime; the first song of the returning Chiffchaff, the sight of the swooping Swallow and the arrowing flight of the Swift. However, one bird that for generations has been listened out for, to fulfil the old rhyme - The Cuckoo comes in April, he sings his song in May, then June a different tune and in July he flies away. The Cuckoo is a true bird of summer. Arriving in mid April, most adults depart Britain in June, leaving juveniles to disperse from July through to early September.

Cuckoos are disappearing from the south and east of England and pushing northward to become a bird frequently heard in the highlands of Scotland. Despite a declining population the Cuckoo has remained faithful to the Pocklington Canal with a median arrival date of 19th April. Birds can be seen and heard up and down the canal between Hagg Bridge and Walbut Bridge during May and, with luck, one might witness a courtship chase with the female emitting her Curlew-like bubbling call - the different tune of the above rhyme. The female is the more elusive, being a brood parasite her focus is on pinpointing the nest of its target species in which to lay her eggs. Brood parasitism is basically the out-sourcing of rearing ones young. While Cuckoos are known to prey on a number of species for this out-sourcing including Dunnock, Meadow Pipit and Reed Warbler, along the canal the species that bears the burden is the Reed Warbler. The reed bed at Thornton Lock is a good place to see her in action as she watches the movement of warblers perched on the overhead wires or a nearby bush. When she has located the nest she will return once the warbler's eggs are laid and the parent is off the nest to insert her eggs into the brood. What happens next has been portrayed in many wildlife programmes, suffice to say the original brood doesn't stand a chance as the emerging Cuckoo takes over the nest and is raised by its adopted parents.

Cuckoos have been the subject of much folklore, for example, before bird migration was understood, it was thought that they spent the winter hibernating in trees. One belief particularly held in the north, was that Cuckoos changed into a hawk from August to April. This is not so difficult to fathom as their slow and heavy flight, barred chest markings and wing shape make them appear hawk-like. One local Yorkshire name for the Cuckoo is Gowk, a term used colloquially for a simpleton. To describe a young Cuckoo, particularly as it makes its first flight attempts, many ending in crash landings. However, after only a short few weeks, the same gawky bird will fly back to Africa, a journey of over a thousand miles, without any parental guidance. And with that goes the summer.

**Neil Cooper, Bird Recorder for Melbourne & Thornton Ings NR**

# Local wildlife in focus



Barn Owls have been resident near Cottingwith Lock for many years. This one was spotted at the lock early one morning. The barn owl population has recovered somewhat after a period of decline, perhaps due to the introduction of nesting boxes and improved habitat.



A young Hare is called a Leveret, up to one year of age. They are born with their eyes open and are left alone hiding during the daytime. The mother returns in the evening to feed her young.

*Images courtesy of Rick Ingham*

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## Could this be 'climate change' perhaps?

12th December 2023.

12th May 2024.



Notice edited from the Canal River Trust website:

### **Pocklington Canal - Low water**

"From 12/5/24 10.30  
Navigation closure  
Reason: Water resources

Location: Pocklington Canal  
Cottingwith Lock to Coates Lock.

The navigation is closed due to lack of water.

We are working to recover levels however we will need significant rainfall to aid this."



# Membership Matters

Thank you all for responding to membership emails as maintaining an accurate database is important so please let us know of any changes in memberships, addresses or email details.

Our bank details are:-

Sort code 40-37-01

Account number 20674451

Remember also to keep us up to date with any change to your address, email, telephone etc, so we have your latest details.

For any queries, please contact Ed - his details are shown inside the rear cover of this magazine

The Current Membership fees are:-

Annual £15

Annual Family £20

Individual Life £150

Family Life £200

For all enquiry's regarding membership, please contact the membership secretary:

Ed Westerby, 16 Hobson Road, Eloughton, Brough HU15 1JU 07925 056382  
Edward@westerby.karoo.co.uk

## **Family Fun Day 15th September 24**

Many attractions and stalls

*Special Feature:*

**Paddle Board 'taster sessions'**

(Don't forget to bring a change of clothing if you intend to have a go!)

# Canal Head Information & Sales Centre

## Report by Mike Clemson

From 28th May 2023 to April 2024 I have manned Canal Head on 41 Sundays out of 48, the remainder being when I was at other venues (the open day, the lunch at the Oaks and an event at Melbourne village hall) with the rest being rained off.

Total income for this period has held up well, although it was less in the winter months. Against this, there has been some expenditure - replacement merchandise and leaflets, the card reader etc.

The factors which have led to this level of income include-

1. Inviting donations of appreciation for being able to access such a beautiful location
2. Being able to take donations by card - at least 50% of our income
3. Being there on every Sunday, including throughout the winter months, for 5-6 on each occasion
4. Encouraging cars to park "neatly" to accommodate the maximum number at any one time
5. The sale of "doggie" items - treat bags, packets of poo bags and food/drink bowls
6. Making the site look more attractive eg by trimming the grass in front of the IC
7. Actively engaging with arrivals (and their dogs!). A significant proportion of first timers, and they all get our three basic information leaflets
8. Putting leaflets with a welcome note on the windscreen of cars at the car park near the road.
9. Recently, moving the bench on which we display twelve boxes of second hand books, to a position adjacent to the sales tables, to encourage more browsing and hopefully sales

The obvious conclusion is that we could significantly increase our income if we could man Canal Head on more days of the week, notably Saturdays. However, this would require one - or preferably two volunteers who are physically capable of setting out and taking in a number of heavy items - a sandwich board, two folding tables, the base for the CRT pennant and 12 boxes of books. They also need to be there for some hours, as the process takes up half an hour at each end, although you can be interacting with arrivals at the same time.

The upside is, of course, being in a lovely outdoor location meeting lots of interesting people, and not being tied down to do it weekly if you have other commitments - every day we open is a bonus. And - crucially - it is raising funds to support the restoration and maintenance of the Pocklington Canal. If you'd like to discuss it, email me at [mikeclenson6@googlemail.com](mailto:mikeclenson6@googlemail.com) or - preferably - call

*(Continued from p.25)*

If you'd like to discuss it, email me at [mikeclemson6@googlemail.com](mailto:mikeclemson6@googlemail.com) or - preferably - call in at Canal Head on any fine Sunday. And do you know anyone else who might be interested?

Thanks to Tim Charlson, as always, for his support and encouragement.

And finally, I have had two separate people at Canal Head say that, if they win the National Lottery, they will devote part of the proceeds to the restoration of the remainder of the canal. That makes three of us - any more to join us?

## A tranquil Melbourne Arm



**New design note cards now in stock**

The cards come complete with envelopes



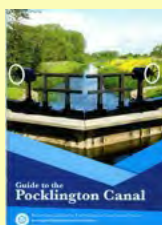
## PCAS Merchandise



Pens: 50p



Key Rings: 50p



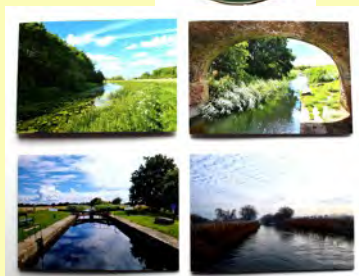
Canal Guide £5



Fridge Magnet £3



Pin Badge £3



***New design for 2024***  
Note Cards  
including envelopes  
£4

## PCAS Merchandise



Head of Navigation Plaque  
£12



Brass Plaques  
PCAS 50th Anniversary/  
Canal Bicentenary  
£5 each



PCAS Mugs  
£5 each

All merchandise is available via the PCAS website:  
[pocklingtoncanalsociety.org](http://pocklingtoncanalsociety.org)

For further details please contact:  
[tcharlson58@gmail.com](mailto:tcharlson58@gmail.com)  
07926 910717

All the above merchandise is also available at the Canal  
Head Information Centre (open most Sundays).

# **The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society**

**Registered Charity 500637**  
**[www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org](http://www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org)**

**Patrons: The Earl of Halifax & Mr Neil Edwards**

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**The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society**

One copy free to paid up members