

# DOUBLE NINE

THE POCKLINGTON CANAL AMENITY SOCIETY  
MAGAZINE



June 2022

Issue 125



Carder bee on Ragged Robin by the pond at Melbourne basin.  
*Image by Steve Ashby*

# Editorial

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Welcome to your June 2022 issue of Double Nine!

The canal has sprung back to life! One of the first visiting boats, *Girl 1A* arrived over the Easter period. It left the canal and then headed for Blisworth on the 15th February.

PCAS is always pleased to welcome new volunteers in our various departments. Can you spare an hour or two to help us?

A very big thank you to all those members who responded to my appeal for back issues of "D9" magazines in the February issue. We now have a complete set from 1982 which includes two bound volumes and a large folder of press cuttings. Any magazines before 1982 would be most welcome to add to the collection, which makes my job so much easier.

Looking back through our archive is a fascinating experience, revealing just how much the canal has changed, in some respects at least. In other ways, it has remained reassuringly familiar.

Malcolm

*Front Cover:*

After two years of shut-down Alistair Anderson was at the helm of New Horizons as the boat headed out down the canal with the first of the ever popular open trips on the 15th April 2022.

*Rear Cover:*

A reflective moment in the Melbourne Arm.

*Double Nine* is published in February - June - October by the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

## Copy Date October 2022 Issue

Closing date for articles and reports for the October 2022 issue is the **7th September 2022**. 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.

# Chairmans Column

On this occasion, I have decided that the best way of reporting on the latest state of affairs concerning the restoration of Sandhill Lock, and our relationship with the Canal and River Trust is to reproduce my latest letter to Richard Parry. At the time of writing this column (which is the beginning of May), I have not received a reply. Easter has, of course, intervened, which could possibly explain some delay, but it is time for a follow up letter, which I shall be sending shortly.

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1st April 2022

Dear Richard

Sandhill Lock, Pocklington Canal

Thank you for your letter of 7th March which I received by email via your secretary. I would also thank you for setting out and reviewing the events that have brought us to this position that we find ourselves today. I don't think that there is much difference between us when it comes to recalling the historical events of the last couple of years.

Firstly, I would like to assure you that the integrity of the structure at Sandhill Lock was never at any risk from the proposed trail pits which were planned in September last year. These works had been planned in conjunction with our consultants, and would have had any impact on the structure of the lock.

It would seem that the Trust and the Society share the ambition of seeing the Pocklington Canal fully restored, and it is my belief that this can best be achieved by our two organisations working closely together.

The difficulty the Society has specifically relates to the proposal that it fund CRT's employment of a consultant - more particularly, to the fact that the cost of this consultant is both unknown and uncapped. We have, of course, studied the proposed brief and the proposal from Ian White. Our calculations, based on his employment over a period of three years, indicate that his fees are likely to equal, or possibly exceed, the total cost of the project as originally envisaged.

I note that in the final paragraph of your letter you acknowledge that the proposal will be at some cost to PCAS. However, I suspect that you may not appreciate the extent of this cost, and it could double even or triple the overall cost of the project. I don't think that any responsible organisation, especially one dealing with charitable funds enter into such an arrangement.



Certainly, it remains the case that PCAS is not prepared to proceed on this basis.

We need a different solution. If there were to be a cap on this element of the cost, that might be one way forward, or there might be other approaches. It is my request, and that of the Society, that together we search for a solution. We have members who are prepared to attend meetings to discuss the matter more or less at any time. I would also like to reiterate that a substantial part of the funding for this project is a commitment from East Riding of Yorkshire Council to contribute £100,000 as a *commuted sum* resulting from developments in the locality. We have had a meeting with ERYC yesterday, when it was confirmed that relevant developments had reached the point where the current round of funds are about to be released. The Council are now wishing to finalise the phasing of further distribution of these funds. They expressed particular concern the the Listed Building Consent application for our project had still not been submitted. I fear that this element of the funding could be lost if the project continues to be stalled.

I very much hope that we will be able to find a way of overcoming the present difficulty, and that the project can be put back on track.

Yours Sincerely

Paul Waddington



PCAS volunteers along with members of the waterways Recovery Group removing trees and shrubs at Sandhill Lock on the 17th March 1993.

# Working Party Report

Most of the work this quarter has been carrying on with the usual spring “clean up” and finishing off the major bank repairs.

Benches, tables etc have been cleaned down and re-stained at the locks on the upper reaches. At Melbourne & East Cottingwith the lock gate beams have been teak oil treated. Older dilapidated plank benches at Melbourne and No8 bridges have been removed and new ones constructed and installed.

Work has now started to clean and prime the paintwork on various bridge rails etc, ready for their summer coat.

Weed cutting has now finished but there seems to be a lot of loose debris collecting at various points which is giving the weed boat crew more practice.

On the mechanical side of things; the landing stage for the work boats at Melbourne has been completed and is a great boon, providing safe access to our work boats. The safety certificate requirements for the work boat are now complete and awaiting inspection. The 4 wheel trailer & dumper truck gifted to us are in the process of refurbishment and the damaged brickwork at Bridge No7 is under repair.

The boat trip roadside hoardings were erected at the beginning of April, ready for the Easter restart.

My usual thanks to all volunteers for their continued enthusiasm. Better weather is coming, so let's “carry on up the canal”.

Cheers, Richard Harker, Working Party Supervisor



A busy scene in the Melbourne Arm with working party volunteers attending to both boats at the new landing stage.



This storage shed at Canal Head was erected by volunteers in May & June 1982 (*top picture*) and has lasted 40 years! The shed received a fresh coat of timber treatment on the 8th March this year. The drainage channel at the rear of the store was also cleaned and cleared of debris. Note the two bird boxes affixed to the rear wall.





*Left:*  
Excavating the holes  
for the new bench at  
Bridge 8.  
12th April 2022.

*Right:*  
The new bench is put  
in place. The team are  
checking that it is level  
and firm.



*Right:*  
And finally the all  
important load test!





*Above:*  
The new landing stage at Melbourne, giving safe access to the PCAS workboats.

The lifebelt holder at the Melbourne Arm received its annual spring clean in April.



Early in the season part of the brickwork on bridge 7 at Melbourne suffered damage, possibly due to the bridge being closed too vigorously.

*(Top image)* PCAS volunteers repairing the damage on the 18th May.

*(Lower image)* Work was well underway to fix the damage when this image was taken on the 22nd May.



#### Donations

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





Floating weed on the canal can be a particular problem throughout the year, often blocking the navigation (*above*). The weed cutter/gatherer boat is kept very busy removing the floating islands, often working until late in the day. It is seen (*below*) on the 24th April working between Gardham Lock and Hagg Bridge.



**See the workboat in action on YouTube.**

# Back to normal on *New Horizons*

PCAS did not run short trips in 2020/21 because of Covid. Following the lifting of restrictions we have resumed our half hour trips where we encourage children to have a go at steering. Easter was late this year and the weather was kind. Over the three days we carried 183 passengers on 22 short trips. With the sides rolled up the boat is well ventilated and hopefully members living locally or visiting the area will come along for a trip. Please let the crew know that you are a PCAS member.

Steve Ashby, who takes bookings for the longer group trips and also arranges volunteers to crew the boat, should be busier than last year and with luck we will have a good season. At one time we had to head down the canal and Gardham Lock still remains the most popular destination for trips, but with both Thornton and Walbut Locks in use we can head up the canal as an alternative.

Information about short trips and booked trips can be found on our website.

I am very grateful to all the volunteers who helped to do repairs, maintain the engine, clean and repaint *New Horizons* before the start of the 2022 season. I hope that all the crews will help to keep the boat presentable during the season. Thanks to Rob Fouracre for arranging first aid training for skippers and working party volunteers.

Two members will be going through our induction process before becoming crew and hopefully they will join Judy Westerby, Nigel Chadwick and Pete Walker our last group of new crew members.

Several years ago we looked at the possibility of taking card donations from those who turned up on a Sunday without cash. This Easter we realised that prompt action was now needed and we are testing a portable card reader. Without WiFi, these card readers are dependant on the network used by mobile phones and the signal strength is not strong at Melbourne Arm. Assuming that card/phone donations are successful on the boat we will soon have a card reader at the Canal Head information centre too. The donation bucket for cash will remain on the boat as will our donation boxes beside the canal.

Alistair Anderson

## **Interested in becoming a Volunteer?**

Can you spare a few hours to help PCAS? We require volunteers in all departments including help at the Sales and Information Centre, and with Boat Crewing and the Working Party. Full training will be provided!

*Please contact the relevant department head. Details can be found inside the rear cover.*



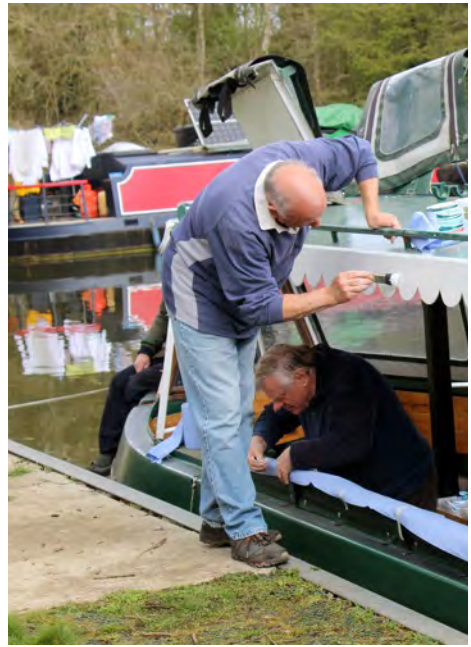


(Above)

Jenny & Trevor Brigham, along with Alistair, prepare the boat on the 2nd April.

(Top right) Nigel Chadwick gives *New Horizons* a fresh coat of paint.

(Below) Working party volunteers paint the stern on the 10th May.





**15th April** Back in action after a two year stoppage.  
New Horizons heads out of the Melbourne Arm for Swingbridge 6, providing the ever popular Sunday open trips (*above*).  
(*Below*) The boat making her way back to the Arm.







## New Horizons celebrates the Queen's Jubilee



(Above) Noel Feather and Jon Spence decorating *New Horizons* with Union Jack bunting in readiness for the Queen's Jubilee on Friday 5th June.

(Below) Ed Westerby guides *New Horizons* through swingbridge No 7 on the Jubilee weekend.





Pocklington Canal

## Our new postcard!

### Membership Matters

*Roger Bromley, Membership Secretary*

Thanks to all of you who are renewing subscriptions by standing order. It is so much easier to run the database in this way. If you do not yet have a standing order our bank details are as follows:-

Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

Sort Code 40-37-01

Account number 20674451

Please remember to let me know if your address, email or telephone number changes. We will only contact you with information relevant to your membership.

**You can also join PCAS via the website:**  
[pocklingtoncanalsociety.org](http://pocklingtoncanalsociety.org)



# Melbourne Arm - a few weeks in Winter

For a couple of weeks in early February I was unable to watch the wilder Nature Reserve and Ings. So I decided to focus on the immediate surroundings of the Melbourne arm - the canal just east and west from bridge 7, the boat dock and nature pond area. How interesting that turned out to be!

One of the first things I noticed was the immature heron that spent time in the arm. This bird, distinguished from the adult by its grey head colouring, rather than the white of a mature heron, was tolerant of humans and only flew when approached too closely. Even then it only moved the minimum distance to feel safe. The more observant passerby may have noticed the strange diving duck that also took up residence. Again, she, for it was a female goosander, displayed tolerance to disturbance along the footpath, cruising back and forth with head half submerged looking for fish.

Lucky observers may have seen the panic she caused as small fish jumped clear of the surface to try to avoid being dinner. The brown head and grey plumage denoted a female, but later a drake in splendid white livery with a head of iridescent green sheen, arrived to accompany her fishing operations. Goosanders are members of the merganser family of fish eating ducks known as sawbills. This is because the inside of their beaks are lined with serrated teeth for gripping slippery fish. This is the second year a pair have turned up, for a few weeks at this time of year, in or near the arm, before moving to breeding grounds, possibly further north of here. A potential family group of little grebes, as many as five, can also be spotted in the canal near the entrance to the arm. However you will need to look hard, as unlike the previous two species, these are wary of any disturbance and dive under water quickly, surfacing slowly and often undercover of vegetation along the water's edge. All of these species have one thing in common, they eat fish of varying sizes and the arm provides this in abundance. Another resident in the boat dock is the immature swan that seems content to pick up tit bits from around the boats, and again appears healthy as well as quite tame.

A big surprise early one morning was a pair of ducks that did not look like any duck I would expect to find wild in the UK. They waddled along the boardwalk warily before flying off. I was sure I had seen this species before, and on further investigation (Google) was able to determine where I had seen them - Australia! They were Australian wood ducks or maned ducks, due to the male having a mane-like crest at the back of the head. I saw them again on a previous occasion along the canal, but not since. While they could fly strongly and did not show any leg rings, they must have escaped from a wild fowl collection. Apparently rare in the UK collections, it would be interesting to know who might have lost them.

In addition to these, I recorded a total of fifty two bird species in the defined area (including the rare willow tit), either in the trees, on water, singing or flying over, which is remarkable for such a relatively small area that was traversed regularly by both people and dogs. It just shows what wildlife there is so close around us if we care, or time to look. The words of the famous poem seemed so very apt- *What is life if, full of care, We have no time to stand and stare?*

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

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## A new walk through the trees

*Below:*

A new footpath has been created at the Melbourne Arm. The land, owned by the Carstairs Countryside Trust, has been cleared of all the brush and weeds, which is now letting in more light.



*Above:* The start of the new path.



March 22

May 22 - Nature has already started to reclaim the walk!

# Antiques Evening

A very successful "Antiques Evening" was held in March by TV expert and friend of PCAS, Caroline Hawley.

The Pea and Pie supper which accompanied it was superb!

Thank you to Debbie and her team of helpers for a great evening.



*(Top)* Tim Charlson introduces Caroline Hawley.

*(Above)* Debbie Smith and Tim Charlson discuss the merits of the antique clock.

*(Left)* Event organiser Debbie Smith with Caroline Hawley.





Members of the audience were invited to bring along some of their antiques for valuation by Caroline.







Caroline Hawley had a very busy evening..





Ros Sibley was busy during the evening selling raffle tickets. The table had been full of prizes, generously donated.



*A look back through the Archives.*  
*Waterside Gala & Daft Raft Race*

20th July 1980

**“Half the fun of a raft race is getting wet!”**

*Compiled by Malcolm Slater*

After much hard work by PCAS...

The Waterside Gala and Daft Raft Race was an idea to show off the canal to the public and invite them to share an afternoon by the waterside. Of course the weather had to turn after several weeks of warm sunshine - the Saturday turned out to be wild and squally! Sunday morning was very much the same, making preparations very difficult. Councillor and Mrs James Crichton, Mayor and Mayoress of North Wolds, arrived to open the event under a very grey sky. Mrs Crichton dedicated Bob Pearson's new seat outside the information point. Maria Sissons and Amanda Wootton presented them with a Society mug and a potted plant. (Councillor Ivor Loney gave a vote of thanks). The weather did not seem to matter when the raft race got underway. Many well known business had entered rafts in the race, including Croda Chemicals, Timm Grain from Goole and the Kings Head from Bedale who later went on to win the race and also the Tug'o'War, taking home the trophy and a barrel of beer. Model boats, Hot Dogs, stalls etc, all made up the afternoons attractions.



And they are off! One of several raft races held on the day gets underway. It looks like half the residents of Pocklington have come to support PCAS.





*(Above)* The Inland Waterways Association raft gets ready for the start.

*(Below)* Timm Grain, the millers from Goole, entered the “Flour Power” raft.







The Northumberland Branch of the Inland Waterways Association raft was on the water for most of the day with different crews and survived relatively unscathed!





Some say that half the fun of a raft race is getting wet, and could be correct for at least some of the participants as these pictures will perhaps show.





## *A look back through the Archives*



*(Above)* Julia Burrows & Mrs Sissons take a rest whilst preparing the new seat which is dedicated to Bob Pearson on 13th May 1979.

*(Below)* Some nineteen years on: Paul Waddington along with Barbara & Richard Young enjoy the sunshine on Bob's seat. 28th June 1998.





## PCAS has a New Website

PCAS has a new website, the address remains unchanged:  
**[www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org](http://www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org)**

We now have an online shop where visitors can purchase merchandise, memberships and make online donations. The system is secure and accepts card payments. Users can choose whether to apply Gift Aid to membership and donations, which boosts our income at no extra cost.

*Membership* As with the printed membership form, there is a choice of individual and family membership for both annual and life membership. New members will receive a welcome letter from the membership secretary Roger Bromley.

*Merchandise* Perhaps this is an unfamiliar term for sales but it is now widely used. In our case, sales help support PCAS. Tim Charlson arranges delivery of goods ordered via the online shop and we will continue to sell the same items at the Canal Head information centre and at events.

*Donations* Various amounts can be chosen, such as £5, £10 and £20. Anyone wanting to donate £15 can choose a £5 donation level and times this by three. This allows donations to be handled by the payment system.

*Contacts* We have moved away from publishing committee members email addresses and the old enquiries email address is no longer active. It had often been used to send junk mail. Now we ask visitors to fill in a simple enquiry form that will be forwarded to the relevant person, who can then reply by ordinary email.

The website has information about the canal including maps and photos. There is also information about PCAS and how members can get involved in a variety of volunteer activities. There is an archive of older issues of our magazine Double Nine, which give an insight into what PCAS has been doing over the years. Debbie Smith will promote PCAS events on the website and Sue Dickins will take care of recording payments and Gift Aid received. We have a team!

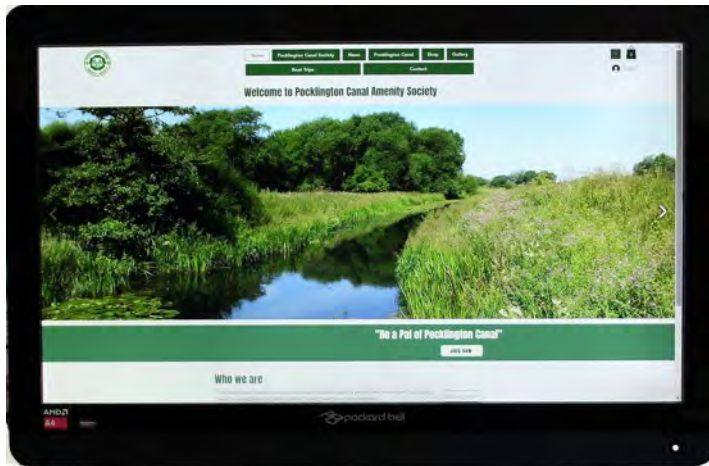
Information about boat trips on *New Horizons* can be found on the website and there is a link to our Facebook group.

The intention is to keep the website up to date, which had become very difficult with the previous system due to obsolete software. The new website was created by *WebsOnline*, a local company, which will be providing support

When needed, though it is easy for us to update most of the content without help.

PCAS was one of the first UK canal societies to have a website, back in 1995, when the Pocklington Town Council offered PCAS the opportunity to have a website on their server. That was in the days when home users needed a dial-up modem (and computer) to get online. Broadband was unheard of. We have moved on. Please have a look at our new website.

**Alistair Anderson**



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

## **Sales & Merchandise**

Over the past couple of years, despite global upheaval, we have raised funds from the sale of second-hand books & PCAS merchandise from the Information Centre next to the canal at Canal Head.

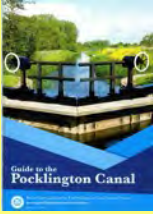
We open it on Sundays afternoons and Bank Holidays at the same time that the trip boat New Horizons is operating at Melbourne - noon until 4.30ish.

It's enjoyable to meet visitors to our lovely waterway, many of whom have not experienced it before.

We have a wonderfully dedicated group of volunteers and we are always looking for more people to help open up the Centre one Sunday afternoon per month, whenever they have time or the inclination.

Please contact me if you are interested in helping out - we need you!  
Tim Charlson 07926910717 [tcharlson58@gmail.com](mailto:tcharlson58@gmail.com)

# PCAS Sales



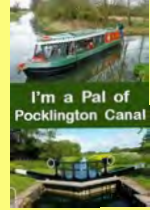
Canal Guide £5



Pens 50p



Pin Badge £3



Fridge Magnets £3



Set of Four Notecards including envelopes £3



Brass Plaques.  
Head of Navigation,

50th Anniversary & Bicentenary £7 each

Key Rings  
Two designs to choose from.  
50p each



PCAS Mugs Four Designs Available.

£4 each

## Please Note:

P & P to be added to all orders.

For details please contact the sales officer on 07926 910717

email: [tcharlson58@gmail.com](mailto:tcharlson58@gmail.com)

All the above merchandise and selected pre-owned books are also available from the Canal Head Information Centre.

**Remember, every purchase generates income for PCAS restoration funds!**



# The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

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

Patrons: The Earl of Halifax & Mr Neil Edwards

## PCAS Committee

**Chairman:**

**Paul Waddington**

Church House, Main Street, Hemingborough, Selby YO8 6QE  
01757 841022 waddadux@gmail.com

**Vice Chairman:**

**Tim Charlson**

62 Hunters Way, York.YO24 1JJ  
07926 910717 tcharlson58@gmail.com

**Secretary: Steve Ashby**

01904 489593 07955 245193 Stevejashby@gmail.com

**Treasurer: Sue Dickins**

22 Nutkins Way, Chesham, Bucks. HP5 2BE.  
01494 784571 07970 875939 pcas.treas@gmail.com

**Membership:**

**Roger Bromley**

40 The Dales, Castle Park Cottingham HU16 5JS.  
01482 845099 07758 572271 roger@roger.karoo.co.uk

**Trip Boat and Website Manager**

**Alistair J. Anderson**

14 George Lane, Walkington, Beverley HU17 8XX.  
01482 801825 alistair.anderson@pcas.karoo.co.uk

**Trip Boat Booking & Crewing Manager:**

**Steve Ashby**

01904 489593 07955 245193  
Stevejashby@gmail.com

**Fundraising & Merchandising:**

**Tim Charlson**

62 Hunters Way, York YO24 1JJ  
07926 910717  
tcharlson58@gmail.com

**Events Coordinator & Social Media:**

**Debbie Smith**

69 Percy Road, Pocklington, York YO42 2LZ.  
01759 306070 dejaysmith@btinternet.com

**Working Party Organiser:**

**Richard Harker**

07702 741211 richard.rhph@talktalk.net

**Double Nine Magazine Editor:**

**Malcolm Slater**

07932 535665 malclslater879@gmail.com

**Other Committee Members:**

**John Dickins, Rob Fouracre, David Tong & Ed Westerby**

**New Horizons trip boat Bookings & Enquiries:** [book.newhorizons@gmail.com](mailto:book.newhorizons@gmail.com)



# The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

One copy free to members