

# **DOUBLE NINE POCKLINGTON CANAL AMENITY SOCIETY**



**SPRING 2014 No. 103**

# THE POCKLINGTON CANAL AMENITY SOCIETY

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

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**Hon Vice-President** Mrs Sheila M Nix MBE

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## **Editor's Notes**

Some of you will know of my involvement with the Inland Waterways Association. I am Chairman of the East Yorkshire Branch and a great supporter and admirer of what the IWA has achieved over the last 60 odd years and continues to do. Many waterways would have been lost forever if it had not been for determined and dedicated members who ignored opposition and fought to keep canals open and helped restore ones which were already closed.

### **SPECIAL OFFER**

The IWA is pleased to offer to all PCAS members who are not already a member of the IWA, one years free membership. As an IWA member you will receive their magazine 'Waterways' four time a year as well as branch magazines informing you about happenings in your local area. The East Yorkshire branch holds eight social meetings each year as well organising visits and canal walks in the summer months. Also as a member you will be entitled to many discounts from a large range of companies. Some of these are hire companies, chandlers, marinas etc. etc.

I do hope you will take up this generous offer.

The Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) is also a part of the IWA. Volunteers form WRG work camps at various sites all over the canal network and do all sorts of work from general shrub and tree clearance to bridge and lock repairs and also building brand new locks. We are most fortunate that WRG has agreed to hold a work camp on the Pocklington Canal next August. They will be concentrating on repairing the towpath between Giles and Sandhill locks which should make this section much safer for walkers and cyclists. PCAS has to provide accommodation and machinery and materials but the overall cost will be only a fraction of what the job would have cost with contractors.

WRG have also agreed to a smaller and shorter camp at the beginning of March when they will be clearing scrub, hedging and small trees which are growing near No. 8 swingbridge on the 'off side'. These need removing as too much shading is produced and some of the growth is hanging over the canal.

### **AGM**

We are at that time of the year again. In this issue is the agenda and a nomination form for committee members. Please do try to attend. This year we plan to make it more of a social occasion and will have a presentation/talk after the official business.

Front & back pages; The entrance to Bielby Arm. Photo Ed.

## CCBM course October 2013

Firstly, as a Southerner, although born in Yorkshire, I had better introduce myself. I am a retired bioengineer come technician with a narrowboat on the Grand Union Canal. I live with Sue, my wife, in a house in Chesham, South Buckinghamshire. We have family living in Barmby Moor and come up frequently to see them.

I have recently moved onto the "green" list of volunteers crewing "New Horizons" and would like to become a "Skipper". I think it was Bob who said this would make me responsible for the crew including providing the tea and milk! One of the requirements is the completion of the Certificate of Community Boat Management, a qualification from the NCBA and recognised by the CRT and IWA.

An Internet Search led me to the Hillingdon Narrowboat Association who run the CCBM course several times a year. So 3rd. October saw me at their base on the Grand Union Canal at Harefield with clothes, sleeping bag and enthusiasm. By about 7pm. 6 students, two trainers and an instructor had settled in on "Merlin" an 11 berth 67 foot narrowboat. Definitely communal living, 9 of us in 3 cabins and the saloon. A rota was arranged to give us all the opportunity to cook etc, and we ate at a different pub each evening.

The emphasis was on safety and we practised "Fire" and "Man Overboard" several times, Dave the instructor had this habit of shouting "Fire" or "Man overboard" at odd intervals, our first reaction being "where?" or "silly s\*d" but we did get it right and learnt a lot. The physical test was to walk along the gunnel to the ladder in a lock and climb



nb Merlin

up to the lockside. Oh yes, with a windlass in the other hand!

A highlight for me was the journey up the Thames from Limehouse to Brentford, about 3 hours of excitement and hard work. The river High Speed Cats create a large wash and didn't make any allowance for us, we shipped a bit of water and rolled and pitched around. Everybody wore a lifejacket for this part of our trip. By now we had increased our crew to 13 so it all became quite friendly.

The basin at Brentford was wonderfully peaceful after that bit of action, despite being under the Heathrow approach. Once more we went to a pub for our evening meal. The run up the Grand Union the next day (Sunday) was peaceful, Hanwell Flight of 7 locks gave us all the opportunity to put into practice our "Instructor Skills" as we took turns in the role of leader of a group. Again emphasis on safety. The last full day saw us practising winding and reversing. I was bet a pint that I couldn't turn through a bridge at Bull's Bridge and 50 yards up the cut and back out without touching the side. All went well and I was bringing the boat out again in reverse with most of the crew in the bows watching when someone moved the bank over! It was only a graze but it cost me the pint.

The last night we went off again for a meal and then back to the boat. I was one of the two crew sleeping in the saloon so it was only after the rest had gone to bed that we could turn in, about 2 am. Breakfast didn't happen on the last day. Brunch was about 12 and we had a lazy part day, returning to the HNA base about 4. By 6 o'clock we had cleaned the boat, watered up and pumped out the two grey water tanks.

Would I do it again or recommend it to others? You bet I would!

John Dickinson

## **Chairman's report**

Since the last issue of Double Nine, the committee has been working on a number of matters. Although there may not be a great deal that can be seen as visible progress on the ground, several issues have been worked on which will yield results in the fullness of time.

### **Canal and River Trust HLF Bid**

At the time of writing, we still have no definite news of the result of the application made by the Canal and River Trust to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding, although the noises that we hear do lead us to believe that a positive answer can be expected. We have to presume that there is some technical matter that is holding up an announcement.

The bid is for a scheme costing about £500,000 and including a number of surveys. Most of the physical work would be to improve the nature conservation value of the canal. It would include the removal of in-channel vegetation and the pruning or removal of trees that are giving excessive shading. Also included are restoration works to Church Bridge and to one of the swingbridges with a view to recreating some of their original features. The society has agreed to contribute £1000 to the cost of these works.

### **Extension of Navigation**

The CRT scheme does not include any works that will extend the navigable length of the canal. These had been judged too expensive and were removed from the proposals at an early stage. In response to this decision, the society has been developing its own proposals for works that will extend the navigable length as far as the Bielby Arm, a distance of about two miles.

These proposals involve the renewal of lock gates and sills at Thornton and Walbut Locks, together with repairs to the masonry and the provision of additional safety

items such as safety ladders. Some dredging is also included. The society has estimated that these works could be undertaken for less than £250,000, which is very much less than the CRT estimates.

A meeting was held with CRT early in January, at which these proposals were put to Jon Horsfall and a number of his team. There was some recognition that the involvement of CRT in the undertaking of such projects invariably inflated the costs due to the high level of their overheads and to the procedures that CRT uses. Jon Horsfall expressed the view that CRT would need to be closely involved at all stages, but undertook to investigate whether there was a way of saving some of these extra costs, by giving the society some degree of autonomy.

#### Waterway Recovery Group

Arrangements have been made for the Waterway Recovery Group to visit the Pocklington Canal on two occasions in 2014. The first will be in March when there will be a weekend of removing surplus trees and undergrowth that is causing excessive shading to the canal along a length close to No 8 Swingbridge.

The second will be a more extended work camp when the surface of the towpath will be improved on the stretch between Giles and Sandhill Locks. Along this length there are many surface roots that are a trip hazard, and in places, the towpath slopes steeply from side to side. The roots will either be removed, or the level will be raised to give an even and level surface.

#### No 8 Swingbridge

The society is planning on an official reopening of No 8 Swingbridge, probably in March. Although the works were completed some months ago, there has been a delay in CRT signing off the works as completed to their satisfaction. A suitable personality is being sought to perform this task.

#### Weed Boat: Sheila Nix

Work on the weedboat, Sheila Nix, acquired from CRT last year, has been suspended for the winter months. New cutting blades will be purchased and installed in the spring in time for the boat to be launched and put into action when the weed begins to grow. No doubt there will be plenty of work for it.

#### Bicentenary Celebrations

Plans are progressing for celebration of the bicentenary of the passing of the Act that enabled the Pocklington Canal to be built. This Act was passed in May of 1815, but our celebrations will probably extend from May to July in 2015, when we will be having a boat rally at Melbourne. Other activities will include an exhibition in Pocklington and a celebratory dinner. We also intend to make good use of radio, television and the press to publicise the occasion.

#### Annual General Meeting

Our next Annual general meeting is coming up shortly. As it happens, most of the committee members will be coming to the end of their term of office, so it is an opportunity for new blood to be introduced. We always welcome new committee members. This is also the occasion for me to thank those who have served on the committee in the recent past. It has been a busy year.

Paul Waddington

## The third and concluding part of The Mighty Redwood

### 1983 voyage

In September the following year, 1983 (another 300+ mile marathon) we were to pick *Redwood* up at the IWA National Rally at Wigan. The IWA was the first time some of us saw Mikron, the canal-travelling theatre company, who that year had three actors who would go onto greater things, including a young Mark Williams ('The Fast Show', Ron Weasley's Dad in Harry Potter). We arrived a day before the pick-up and spent the night under tarpaulin in the hold of the unconverted Leeds & Liverpool 'short boat' (55ft x 14ft) *Lune*, now a houseboat, which Mikron had used as a travelling base the previous week, as their own 70ft boat *Tyseley* was 12ft too long for some of the northern locks they'd been travelling. As well as being a camping boat, the owner of *Lune*, Geoff Wheat (who died in 2013 while still skipper of the *Fusedale H*, Humber Barges Ltd), also used his boat for coal carrying, and we emerged the following morning, cold, stiff, and dusted with nutty slack, but ready for an eventful start to our trip.

We had arranged a journey on the Manchester Ship Canal as part of a convoy of around 30 boats leaving the IWA to head south. There was real Dunkirk spirit as we assembled, including our recent berth, *Lune*, and the ex-FMC steamer *Monarch*. To go anywhere near the MSC, like the Thames, we needed a sea anchor, 2 x 120ft ropes, navigation lights, VHF radio etc, and – all important this – substantial third party accident insurance. It won't help you, but if you drown or are run over by a 500ft steamer, your nearest and dearest can have a damn good wake. As I can't swim, I found that particularly comforting.

We had no idea what to expect as we queued in pairs for the entrance lock from the Bridgewater Canal, which was tucked away under a railway viaduct. Locking down to the MSC level, we took a sharp left on leaving the gates and entered the wide ship channel to pass the old dock basins. This area of Manchester was pretty derelict in the 80s but there was a lot of building there in the 2000s, including BBC North and it's called 'Salford Quays', dontcher know. Although the quantity of freight had continued to dwindle from its pre-war peak, there were still enough passing ships, and those who have been on a ship channel will know what it's like crossing the wake of a 500ft long vessel in a flat-bottomed narrowboat, and some of our convoy were less than half our size! As we moved on, we soon entered the first of the ship locks, Mode Wheel Locks. Our entire convoy, which seemed large enough on a narrow canal, was dwarfed by the enormous chamber, which was 600ft x 65ft, with an average rise and fall of 15ft, the gates opening and closing hydraulically.

Now, one thing you must never do in any lock, but particularly the MSC, is actually moor up while waiting for the locks to cycle and then wander off without paying attention, because when they do empty, the water drops so quickly you'll be left hanging. One small boat did just that, but luckily, they managed to unship the rope from the deck cleat just as it was lifting out of the water, leaving one of the crew clinging at arms' length to both ends of a rope which was now too short to reach the deck, but was fastened to the bollard at the top. The other thing you must never do is break down in the middle of the channel. Unfortunately, shortly after we had finished laughing at said boat *Redwood's* engine decided to pack up. It was lucky that as we

started to fall behind the convoy, our plight was reported to the 'commodore' and *Monarch* volunteered to drop back and allowed us to 'breast up. We continued down the canal tied together while a succession of people who 'knew a bit about engines' stuck their head in the engine room. The engine room doors on *Redwood*, being where a traditional cabin doors would be (at the back), could only be reached by going over the roof or edging along the narrow walings by the side of the cabin while holding on to the slippery metal cants on the steel roof of the engine room. At the time we thought nothing of this, but the MSC is very deep, and I'm more cautious these days!

We thought the problem was solved by our 'experts' but unfortunately, as soon as we left the MSC and stopped to look at the fledgling boat museum at Ellesmere Port, we continued to break down sporadically all the way to Birmingham, which is nowhere near Ellesmere Port (94 miles by road, a darn site further on the canal on a busted narrowboat). The rest of the convoy had moved on and without another boat to assist, we often had to bowhaul *Redwood*, all right until you meet another boat passing

between you and the towpath, or actually want to stop quickly. We also held sheets out above the cabin roof to help us make a few hairpin bends and finally made the Oozell Street Loop near Gas Street Basin where Brummagem Boats' workshops found the solution, which if memory serves, was a leaky or incorrectly fitted head gasket.



FMC *Monarch* and an un-identified boat entering the MSC entrance lock

The problem solved, we continued to explore the Birmingham Navigations for several days. Like much of the canal system, 'Brum' had one foot in the near past and one foot in the semi-derelict present. There were still plenty of old mills, the wharves derelict, with only mysterious jets of steam blasting across the canal or the occasional outpouring of industrial effluent to show a sign of life. These were punctuated by cleared sites and new tin sheds which had turned their backs on the 'cut', not needing it for delivery or transport. The only access was the ubiquitous fire door, each one with a Brummie on fagbreak, sometimes fishing, though God only knows what was in there apart from old boots and tyres.

Here and there were signs of the older canals. The older canal bridges contained hatches in the parapets, apparently for firemen to drop their hoses during the blitz and use canal water to put out the city's many fires. One of the well-known tug owner Caggy Stevens' tugs, with his name in capitals on the side, could be seen moored not far from Gas Street Basin, with the man himself sitting on a chair on the flat foredeck. The Basin was surrounded by derelict former factories or cleared sites, the only living feature being a substantial floating community of boats tied to old jetties in the centre away from vandals, many of them former working boats, like the former Grand Union Royalty Class boat *Linda*, a tripboat at the time for Birmingham & Midland Canal Carrying Co, but now restored and taking cargoes again under its original name, *Victoria*. Three or four years after our visit, the last old buildings were cleared and when we returned in the late 80s the area had been redeveloped in the modern style which architects seem to reserve for watersides everywhere (brick with silly little balconies). The 'tattier' boats were removed and the more acceptable remainder were left as a centrepiece for tourists to gawp at. The 'James Brindley' pub, named after the famous canal engineer, was built on the waterside, but, typical of thinking at the time, a railing and lack of mooring rings prevented the pub from being reached directly by passing crews, who were presumably not the sort of people the pub wanted. At the time of writing, it had closed. Far more interesting were the back street pubs in the city, which were basic and sold nothing but mild to slake the thirst of workers in Birmingham's heavy industries. Survivors were difficult to find in later trips, and many no longer served mild.

Among the many loops and arms, we explored the dead-end Titford Branch, a late canal, built in the 1830s which had been the scene of IWA National Festivals in 1978 and 1982. Despite this, many of the leaky lock gates were already stiff and difficult to work, with weeds sprouting through lack of regular use which the Festivals were meant to promote. Dumped rubbish wedged behind the gates meant we were unable to enter some of the lock chambers without first fishing out the rubbish by nosing the bows into the gate and reaching behind with a boathook. A youth cycling in a park near us pointed an air rifle in our general direction, but kept going. Although one stretch was dominated by the massive, derelict but Grade II Listed Langley Maltings

(badly damaged by fire in 2009), the canal was a green corridor.

Titford Pool, scene of the Festival at the head of the branch, was a broad open water body.



Despite this, one of our number, Martin, decided to spin the boat on the spot, ramming the engine rapidly into forward and reverse in quick succession in non-approved fashion. The overheated exhaust set fire to the rope 'tipcat' fender next to the outlet, which had to be doused before we headed back down to do battle with the locks again in reverse order.

By this time, Martin was the sole crew member who wished to stay exploring dead end branches and loops and strange smelling stretches of peculiarly coloured water. Outvoting him, we left Brum, exploring the northern half of the Staffs & Worcs and the Birmingham & Fazeley before heading south along the Grand Union to Braunston, locking up the flight there with Mikron Theatre Company, now back on *Tyseley*, some of us spending an evening with them at the then-traditional 'Lord Nelson' pub, as their directors, Mike and Sarah Lucas, were known to one of our crew. The landlord had decided he didn't want to serve rounds to boat crews for some reason, and ignored us while he served his locals until we agreed to queue in ones and twos - more work for him! The pub itself had a large restaurant extension built a few years later and has lost much of its original character, but like many places, has had to do this to survive.

From Braunston we passed through the tunnel there and turned at Norton Junction onto the Leicester arm of the Grand Union, turning at Foxton up the Market Harborough arm to leave *Redwood* in the basin, which at the time was mainly a timber yard. We stopped at Foxton to examine the flight of locks and the remains of the shortlived early 20th-century 'inclined plane' (sloping boatlift) which was supposed to replace them. The incline was derelict and overgrown, but within a few years, the engine house at the top was rebuilt in replica, opening as a museum in 1989, with the plane cleared of vegetation with the eventual aim of restoring the boatlift, still a viable plan.

### ***Postscript***

We had a shorter break of a week on *Redwood* in 1984, picking her up at Weedon near Watford, and heading up along the Leicester Arm and River Soar navigation, down the Trent & Mersey; shortly afterwards the owners sold her, and some of us hired commercially thereafter, while five of those who had travelled with us over the years joined a syndicate and bought and restored their own boat, the ex-GUCC motor *Fulbourne*. *Redwood*, now *Crewe*, can still be seen on the canal network, externally at least, much as she was in 1982, which is, unfortunately, more than can be said for those who holidayed aboard!

Trevor Brigham

## Water plants from *New Horizons*

The Pocklington Canal is well known as a wildlife site where water plants are especially luxuriant and diverse and where rare and scarce species have been found. In summer 2013 I recorded water plants in the non-navigable canal between Pocklington and Melbourne and in the navigable canal between Melbourne and East Cottingwith. This repeated a survey I made eleven years earlier (2002) using exactly the same sites and methods (*The Naturalist* 128, 129-146, 2003). It became clear that in the navigable canal there has over the past decade been a tendency for new species to colonize whereas in the non-navigable canal the trend has been towards the expansion of uniform stands of either Reed Sweet-grass or Common Reed. Notable plants that are new to the navigable canal or have greatly increased their range include the emergent species Flowering-rush, Arrowhead, Lesser Water-parsnip, and Celery-leaved Buttercup, and also the floating-leaved/submerged species Fan-leaved Water-crowfoot and Unbranched Bur-reed.

My plant recording was done by making observations from the towpath and by using a grapnel and it required a great deal of struggling through head-high marginal vegetation to reach the central channel. A much easier way to see water plants is from the trip boat *New Horizons*. This article reflects upon plants seen from the boat, during a trip along the 500 m of canal between the Melbourne Arm and Swing-bridge No. 6, on Sunday 21 July 2013 and aims to give ideas as to what to look for when taking a summer boat trip along the canal. I made a list of water plants and my use of notebook and pencil led to enquiries from fellow passengers about what I was writing and why, leading to conversation about and identification of the diverse plants that were to be seen. My questioners were clearly gardeners and were relaxed about using Latin plant names so I have included these in the accompanying table, along with English names, in case they are helpful.

The tall marginal vegetation either side of the canal was seen to be dominated by Reed Sweet-grass while Reed Canary-grass and Bulrush were frequent and there was occasional Branched Bur-reed. Growing on the inside of the tall marginal vegetation, and therefore easier to see from the boat than from the towing path, were less-abundant emergent plants that included Flowering-rush, Lesser Water-parsnip, Water-cress, Arrowhead and Bittersweet. Much of the surface area of the central channel, perhaps about 50%, was covered by blanket weed, which consists of masses of filamentous green algae. This is probably encouraged by the high inorganic-nutrient status of the canal water. Analyses by the Environment Agency show that there are high concentrations of phosphate and nitrate. Abundant floating-leaved plants, rooted to the canal bottom, and free-floating duckweeds were also to be seen, while the water was clear enough for abundant submerged vegetation to be observed. The floating leaves and flowers of Yellow Water-lily were conspicuous as were the ribbon-like leaves of Unbranched Bur-reed trailing on the water surface. Common Duckweed and Ivy-leaved Duckweed were also abundant at the water surface, often entangled with the blanket weed and other floating plants. Below the surface of the



Emergent marginal vegetation of Reed Sweet-grass and Reed Canary-grass beyond *New Horizons*



Reed Sweet-grass



Flowering-rush



Arrowhead with floating leaves of Unbranched Bur-reed beyond

transparent water large submerged “underwater cabbage” leaves of Yellow Water-lily were to be seen along with underwater strap-like leaves of Arrowhead (its emergent leaves in contrast are arrow-head shaped). Also observed were submerged stands and loose fragments of Nuttall’s Waterweed. This North American plant was first recorded in Britain as recently as 1966 but it has become widespread. In the Pocklington Canal it co-exists with Canadian Waterweed, a closely-related, also introduced, species that spread throughout the canal network in the nineteenth century.

Visible from the boat, growing amongst the marginal vegetation, were several showy-flowered plants that are usually regarded as being species of marshes and wetlands rather than water plants. These included the creamy-white flowered Meadowsweet and the purple flowered Great Willowherb and Marsh Woundwort.

The nationally-scarce submerged plant, Flat-stalked Pondweed, was not recorded from the boat although I did find it in this length of canal in my July 2013 shore-based survey. Other water plants that were found in the shore-based survey but were missed from the boat included Greater and Lesser Pond-sedge, Yellow Iris, and Amphibious Bistort.

The canal at Melbourne is a valuable botanical resource because of the luxuriance and high species-diversity of water plants. It was noteworthy that the boat collected and pushed along masses of weed during its passage along the canal, so helping to control encroachment by vegetation and maintaining an open-water channel. Excessive canal-boat traffic causes continually turbid water that inhibits light penetration and underwater photosynthesis; it also causes mechanical damage to plants, and can lead to canals that are devoid of vegetation. In the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne, however, there are too few boat movements to affect vegetation adversely and there is perhaps synergy between plants and navigation. Boats help to maintain an open-water channel and create a range of different habitats.

Thus the Pocklington Canal is a valuable and attractive wildlife site with a balance between wide margins occupied by emergent plants and the central open channel where are found floating-leaved and submerged plants. Any readers who wish themselves to undertake study of water plants in the canal will find it useful to obtain a book to help with plant-identification; a good one is *Wild Flowers of Britain and Ireland* by M. Blamey, R. Fitter & A. Fitter, Bloomsbury, London, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2013 (£18.99) which has distribution maps as well as excellent coloured illustrations.

Ray Goulder (r.goulder@hull.ac.uk)

Photographs—Author

Table of water and wetland plants seen from *New Horizons*, July 2013

**Emergent plants**

*Berula erecta* Lesser Water-parsnip  
*Butomus umbellatus* Flowering-rush  
*Epilobium hirsutum* Great Willowherb  
*Filipendula ulmaria* Meadowsweet  
*Glyceria maxima* Reed Sweet-grass  
*Nasturtium officinale* agg. Water-cress  
*Phalaris arundinacea* Reed Canary-grass  
*Sagittaria sagittifolia* Arrowhead  
*Solanum dulcamara* Bittersweet  
*Sparganium erectum* Branched Bur-reed  
*Stachys palustris* Marsh Woundwort  
*Typha latifolia* Bulrush

**Floating-leaved and submerged plants**

*Elodea nuttallii* Nuttall's Waterweed  
*Lemna minor* Common Duckweed  
*Lemna trisulca* Ivy-leaved Duckweed  
*Nuphar lutea* Yellow Water-lily  
*Sparganium emersum* Unbranched Bur-reed

Forthcoming events at the IWA East Yorkshire Branch

Friday 21st February  
Boat Hiring by Iain Campbell

Friday 21st March  
Branch AGM which will be kept as short as reasonably possible  
followed by 'Nibbles and Natter'

Friday 11th April  
The River Derwent – Past and Present by Roger Womersley

All events 8.00pm to 10.00pm at  
The Methodist Church Hall  
Cottingham  
HU16 4BD

Entrance £2

## ***New Horizons***

Just before Christmas a card arrived bearing the message “Merry Christmas to New Horizons”. It was hand-made by Class 3 of Northcott School in Hull. The school supports autistic children, some of whom had been on the boat twice towards the end of the season. That was a nice gesture and I hope that we can welcome their pupils and teachers back on board next year.

*New Horizons* is currently at Goole, where volunteers are working on repainting the hull. Some repairs and maintenance are being done while the boat is out of the water and the roof of the passenger compartment will be insulated and lined to help prevent condensation.

I am looking forward to the time we can take *New Horizons* through Thornton and Walbut locks. PCAS has recently submitted its plans to extend navigation to Bielby to the Canal & River Trust, and money donated by our many passengers will help to make this happen. Have a look at the summary compiled by Bob Ellis about what we have achieved with the trip boat during the 2013 season.

Alistair Anderson

### ***Bound copies of Double Nine***

My favourite reference books are a set of five bound copies of *Double Nine*, containing the first 84 issues. Three of them have been pre-loved by former committee members. The last bound copy (1992-2006) documents the restoration of Walbut and Coates locks and the early days of our trip boat. We were doing a lot in those days, even though we were better about writing about our activities in the early years of PCAS.

I have collected together a set of magazines from 2007-2013 for binding, to add to my collection. A couple of our committee members are also interested in bound copies. If anyone knows where we could get the issues sewn and bound at a sensible price, please get in touch. Hopefully anyone interested in having a bound copy of *Double Nine* will already have a complete run of issues, but please ask if you are missing a recent issue. If you have back issues that you don't want, I can find a good home for them.

I would like to thank Roger Bromley for his efforts as Editor of *Double Nine* in recent years. All the issues he has edited, since July 2010, can be viewed online or downloaded from the PCAS website.

Alistair Anderson

## Working Party report

Not only because its Christmas time as I write this report, but I feel I can be happy and cheerful for the help received from volunteers over the last twelve months. At least seventeen members have helped at some time throughout the year contributing over 1000 man hours in improving the canal and the surrounding environment. This does not include another 200 hours spent on getting the weed boat back into working condition for use in 2014.

We have tackled a wide variety of jobs, one major one was helping with the installation of number 8 swing bridge by trimming its ballast so it swings easily and the final job of painting. The towpath under three of the road bridges has been improved and many of the walkers using the towpath have given favourable comments. The final bridge towpath to receive attention is Walbut Road Bridge.

The road track down to Melbourne Arm is holding up well after last Spring's work, just half a day of patching was required in December.

One large job started in January 2013 was completed towards the end of December. This was removal of trees and shrubs between the towpath and the canal from Giles to Sandhill Locks. The large heaps of vegetation created will be turned into woodchips by The Canal & River Trust in due course.

Also completed just before Christmas was removal of silt from the silt trap at Canal Head. Judging by the amount of silt now lying behind the hedge next to the field at Canal Head, the bottom of the silt trap was probably reached this time.

Looking forward to work in 2014, we will finish refurbishing the weed boat, hopefully enabling us to keep the navigation channel clearer of weed growth as well as clearing some of the weed towards Thornton Lock.



Finally, I would like to thank all the volunteers who have helped in 2013 and hope that you, and others, will continue to support our work in the coming year. Whether you paint, hedge lay or just provide labour all of this is so important. We get many nice comments from visitors to Canal Head or walkers on the towpath when they come across the working parties which makes our efforts all the more rewarding.

Dick Watson

Above. Dick with Alistair at newly painted No8 swing bridge. Photo Ed.



## SPOTLIGHT ON

### Bob Ellis

(part two)

Following the sale of Barracuda (my ski boat if you remember) I immediately changed tack (nautical term for changing direction) from power to wind and bought an Etap 22i trailer sailer, aptly named Genesis, which, after a year of cleaning/repairing, I used to take to Hartlepool and sail along the NE coast. Also in 2005 the BBC's Countryfile magazine did a piece on the Pocklington Canal which inspired my mother (who lives in Doncaster) to request I arrange a trip to this wonderful place which I duly did.

The trip was excellent and I rekindled my acquaintance with Greg Dixon who was crewing that day. I had known Greg previously through contact during my time in the local branch of Round Table. Greg gave a full briefing on the history of the canal and invited me to consider volunteering to crew *New Horizons*. After some (not a lot it must be said) consideration I decided to renew my membership of PCAS (which for some unknown reason had lapsed) and give it a go. Initially my crewing of *New Horizons* was on a very sporadic basis as I was away most weekends during the season sailing Genesis. However, over the next year or so I decided to do the Competent Crew and Certificate in Community Boat Management courses which allowed me to become a volunteer skipper on *New Horizons*.

In 2009 I sold Genesis and since then all my boating has revolved around crewing *New Horizons*. I am now the bookings manager, having taken over from Greg some 3 years ago. I am also a PCAS committee member and currently chair of the boat sub-committee which considers all things pertaining to New Horizons and the running thereof.

Being Bookings Manager involves both taking bookings for trips (excluding Sunday & bank holidays when no booking is required) and arranging crew to service the trips. All trips require a minimum of 3 crew one of whom must hold a current CCBM (or equivalent) certificate. Luckily, many of our volunteer crew have the CCBM qualification. In addition, virtually all volunteer crew have completed a recognised 1<sup>st</sup> aid course and so we can ensure there is always a first aider on board.

This season we have run 69 trips, carried 2173 passengers and raised £6264 in donations to the Society!

Season 2014 will commence on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April. All Sundays and Bank Holidays are kept for the short (30 minute) 'taster' trips which run between noon and 4.15pm approximately. No booking is required for these days but be aware that at busy times you may have to queue.

Other trips, of duration to suit the customer, can be booked for any day of the week or evenings (light permitting). Saturdays are obviously the most popular and soon get booked up. However, with a bit of careful management, it is sometimes possible to get 2 bookings in on a Saturday. The most popular booked trips are to Gardham Lock and back, 3 to 3.5hrs, Hagg Bridge and back 4.5hrs approximately or East Cottingwith (river conditions permitting including visit to Ferryboat Inn at Thorganby) and back 6 to 7.5 hours approximately.

If you (or any friends, neighbours, family) are interested in more information please get in touch. My contact details are on page 2 of this magazine.

Bob Ellis

## **New Fundraising Scheme**

We are pleased to offer a new and easy way of donating to PCAS.

Simply text PCAS18 £(YOUR DONATION) to 70070 The full amount will go to PCAS. This opportunity may appeal to long standing life members (like me!) who may wish to give an extra donation. We shall be advertising this scheme with cards and posters in the style below. If you can display any advertising material, please let me know and I will forward it to you.

Roger Bromley

**Help restore and protect  
the Pocklington Canal**

**Text PCAS18 £2 / £5 / £10**

**to 70070 to donate now. eg PCAS18 £5**

## **Skippering on the Pocklington Canal**

On the worst weekend in March 2013, with snow over one metre in depth on the road-side, along with three other hopefuls, I ventured to Skipton to take my CCBM to enable me to skipper on *New Horizons*. In driving winds and snow, we had to manoeuvre the boat along the Leeds Liverpool Canal from Skipton, proving our capability in turning, mooring, health and safety issues including fire on board and man overboard. (A bucket was used to represent man overboard!).

I was glad when April arrived along with better weather when the Sunday trips began with *New Horizons*. With regular crewing I was able to watch a pair of swans bring up their cygnets, in all it was an enjoyable season. My favourite trips have been the longer ones to Gardham Lock and Cottingwith. Pocklington Lions made a memorable trip, they came dressed up as sailors and brought a four course meal and wine along with them!

Ernie Darrell

(Editor's note. Ernie was a star volunteer in 2013, crewing on more than 30 trips)

## Forthcoming events

# The Pocklington Canal



An illustrated talk about the canal,  
including its history and restoration.  
Come and meet members of PCAS

Village Hall, Holme on Spalding Moor  
YO43 4EN 7pm, Tuesday 11 February

Free admission and refreshments  
Donations welcome

We will be organising an event at Canal Head on Sunday May 4th. There will be a number of stalls and displays and food and drinks will be available. Further details will be advertised nearer the date and will also be on the PCAS website <http://www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org>

# **Pocklington Canal Amenity Society**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**BLACK HORSE, SEATON ROSS**

**TUESDAY 8th APRIL 2014 7.00pm**

## **AGENDA**

**Welcome and Introductions.**

**Apologies.**

**Minutes of 2013 Meeting.**

**Chairmans Report.**

**Presentation of Accounts.**

**Proposed amendment to the Constitution.**

**Election of Chairman and Committee.**

**Appointment of Independent Financial Examiner.**

**Any other business.**

### **Amendment to the Constitution:**

It is proposed that Clause 7. h) be amended to read:

The quorum for the AGM is 5% of the full membership.

### **Committee:**

Any members of the Society wishing to stand for the Committee should make themselves known to a member of the Committee. All candidates must indicate their willingness to stand for election. Please send in any nominations, duly proposed and seconded, to the Secretary:

Graham Ball  
5 Deans Lane  
Pocklington YO42 2PX

**POCKLINGTON CANAL AMENITY SOCIETY**

**Annual General Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

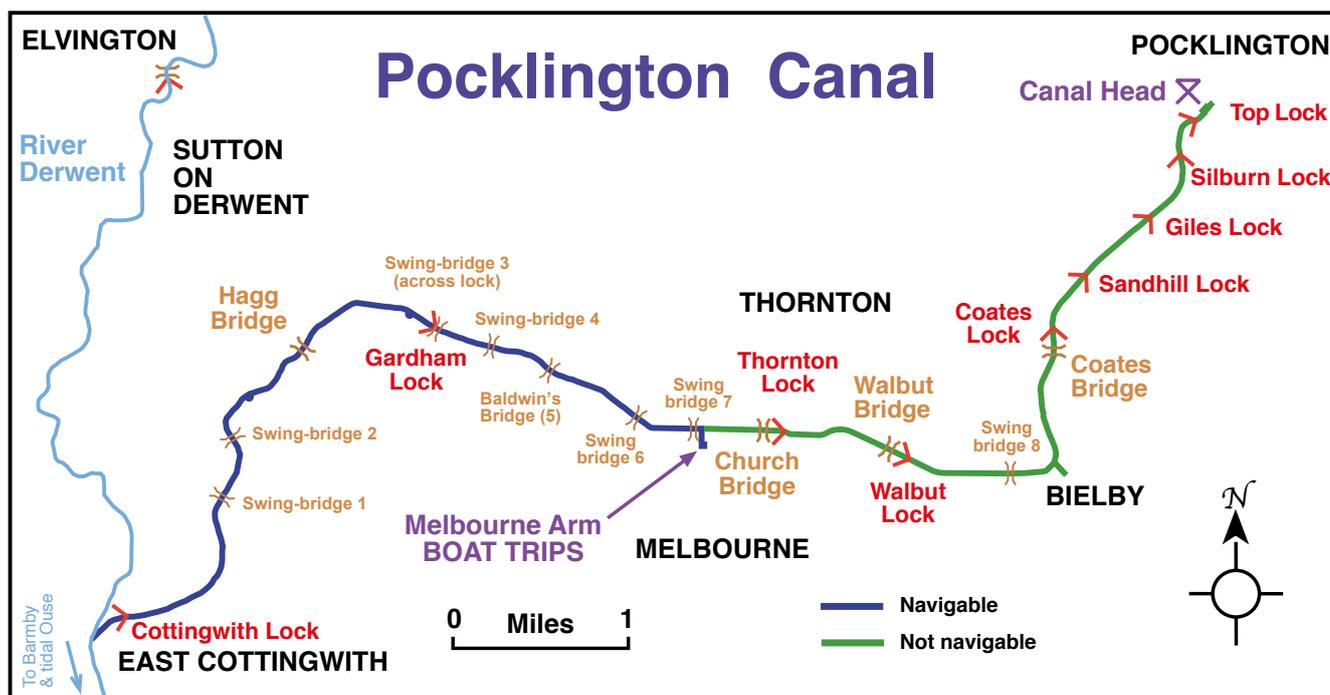
**Committee Nomination Form**

**Nominee:** -----

**Position:** -----

**Proposer:** -----

**Seconder:** -----



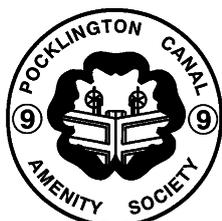
## MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Membership subscriptions run for 12 months from the date of joining PCAS. Please pay your subscription if it is due. If you pay by Standing Order, please update your payment as shown below.

### Membership subscriptions –

	Annual	Life
Junior (up to 18)	£5	-
Individual	£10	£100
Individual – over 60	£10	£60
Family	£15	£150
Family Concession	-	£90

Please notify the Membership Coordinator if you change your address



# Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

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



