

DOUBLE NINE
POCKLINGTON CANAL
AMENITY SOCIETY

Autumn 2013 No. 102



Editor's Notes

We have come to the end of another successful boating season on the canal with bookings and donations again reaching excellent levels. We shall soon hear about the second Canal & River Trust bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The contents of the bid are detailed elsewhere in this newsletter. We have overcome a significant obstacle this year in succeeding in installing No. 8 swingbridge pintle and look forward to further developments during 2014.

I have now edited Double Nine for more than four years and feel it may be time for someone else to take my place. It is a great honour to produce the newsletter and I hope you have liked the content and the changes made during my time as editor. We now have colour in all of our issues and place each issue on the website soon after publication where even more colour pictures can be seen.

IWA Restoration Committee

PCAS were pleased to host the IWA when they held their ResCom meeting in the Melbourne Village Hall in July. The IWA hold their ResCom meetings at varying points around the UK and this year decided to come to the North East. Roger Bromley attended in his position of Chairman of the IWA East Yorkshire Branch and Paul Waddington was invited to join the proceedings and to give a talk about the Pocklington Canal and our aims and aspirations for the future. After lunch our visitors were taken to Sandhill Lock and a walk towards Giles let them see where we hope to have the Waterway Recovery Group working on sections of towpath in 2014.



Our Chairman addressing the IWA Restoration Committee members. Photo Alistair Anderson

THE POCKLINGTON CANAL AMENITY SOCIETY

Registered Charity 500637 www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org

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Note: Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Society, unless so stated.

Chairman's Column

The summer seems to have come and gone exceptionally quickly, with relative few items crossed off my to-do list. In fact, looking back on the Chairman's Column in the last edition, I regret to say that not a lot of progress has been made on many of the items. I hope that the autumn will be more productive.

Heritage Lottery Bid

The latest news that I have is that the HLF bid submitted by the Canal & River Trust during September is to be considered at a meeting to be held on 27th November. I presume that we will know the result before Christmas. In the mean time, there is no point in making any further comment, as we cannot influence the outcome; although I would like to give Jane Thomson full credit for the amount of time that she put into preparing the bid.

The society is still giving consideration to developing a complementary scheme that will involve the extension of the navigable length, and I expect to be able to report on this in the next edition of Double Nine.

Weed Cutting Boat

Dick Watson and John Lewis, aided by a team of volunteers, have been making progress with the weed-cutting Boat. The hull has been scraped, cleaned and re-painted to provide protection against the winter weather. The buoyancy chamber in the base of the hull as also been dealt with. This originally consisted of loose pieces of light material packed into the bilges and covered over with sheets of galvanised steel. An attempt had been made by the then British Waterways to seal these sheets to form an enclosed tank, but this had never worked well. It proved impossible to prevent dirty canal water and together with decaying vegetable matter from accumulating in this area, which was impossible to clean.

The solution that we have adopted is to fill the space with a sprayed foam, thus preventing any possibility water ingress. A specialist company was employed to carry out this work, and although the first attempt was not completely successful, a satisfactory result has now been achieved.

No.8 Swingbridge

It is pleasing to be able to report that the works at No.8 Swingbridge are now completed, with all the teething troubles associated with the balance sorted out. It is our intention to arrange for an official opening at some suitable date in the future.

Bicentenary

I mentioned last time that the committee is planning to hold a series of events to commemorate the bicentenary of the passing of the Act of Parliament that enabled the building of the Pocklington Canal. A subcommittee has been formed to plan these events that will take place during the summer of 2015. Initial ideas include a boat

rally, an exhibition in Pocklington and some sort of event based around the basin at Canal Head. We also hope to get some articles published in the local press and make good use of radio and television.

Paul Waddington

Working Party report

On August 19th No. 8 swing bridge was ready for signing off by CRT. As well as the pintle now being completed the entire bridge has been repainted by our volunteers.

From mid July we have been very busy working on the weed boat. A local haulier moved it from the car park at Melbourne to a local member's farm where work could be safely carried out with no danger to members of the public. We are very grateful to the haulier and the farmer for their help. The cutters have been removed and have been checked by John Lewis and the required replacement parts identified. Luckily these are still in production and available at 14 days notice from Germany.

The engine has been fully serviced and as the Chairman reports, the hull and flooring sorted out. The boat is now up on trestles to allow for bottom blacking whilst the remaining painting will be done next spring.

The working parties will now continue with hedge laying. This will be done firstly at Melbourne to provide a windbreak where an area will be provided for viewing wildlife. Vegetation clearance work will be done along the towpath throughout the winter.

The picnic tables at Gardham lock have been removed and will receive their annual treatment as will, in due course, the ones from Canal Head. All this means there are plenty of jobs to do and as always we would welcome more volunteers, even for the odd day or two.

Canal Head Information Centre

Numbers of visitors to the site has been very variable. From the end of May both car parks have been well used with people coming to walk their dogs, enjoy the scenery along the towpath or for picnicking. Weekly mentions in the Yorkshire Post's 'Sue Woodcock's Country Diary' have helped bring the canal's charms to a wider audience.

Temporary signs at canal head have now been replaced by purpose made ones, explaining that the site is maintained by PCAS and inviting visitors to use the donation boxes to raise funds for future works. Since we have installed the new signs we have seen a welcome increase in donations. We are still struggling for people to man the information centre and would welcome any suggestions about any changes which could be made to broaden the appeal to visitors.

You will find our Annual Lunch menu in this magazine. Please send your bookings and payment to me as soon as possible in order not to miss your opportunity.

Dick Watson

New Horizons

We are approaching the end of our tenth season of running boat trips on the Pocklington Canal, and it has been a great ten years for PCAS. It was a slow start and some of our crew will remember sitting drinking cups of tea and coffee while waiting for passengers. Our Sunday and Bank Holiday trips have been particularly popular this year, and on days when the weather has been good we have frequently had more than twelve people waiting for a trip. The photo below shows about 30 people waiting for a trip on a Sunday in August.



Photo Alistair Anderson

We are particularly grateful to Peter Hopwood and his colleagues of the River Foss Society, which has booked three trips this season. Birthday celebrations are now a popular reason for booking the boat for a special trip on Saturdays or weekdays. While writing this piece, I have received an email about a new booking for a birthday picnic trip to Cottingwith Lock.

The centre pages show some group photos from our booked trips.

Thanks very much to everyone who has helped crew and maintain the boat during the 2013 season, and to all PCAS members who have come along for a trip.

Alistair Anderson

Continuing the story of **The Mighty Redwood** from issue 101

The River Avon was another early challenge, a lovely cruising river with plenty of floating 'gin palaces', but there had been a lot of rain in September and *Redwood* was magnetically drawn towards the fast-flowing weirs set just above or alongside each of the locks, where the limited permitted mooring stages were also sometimes perversely sited. In several cases, the weir was directly ahead and the lock was off to one side behind an 'island', and we struggled to make the turn away to follow the channel; in other instances, the lock was ahead, but the weir tried to draw us off to the side. Having descended the lock safely, the tailrace of the weir, which had been waiting for us, then rammed the boat as we exited and shunted us sideways. *Redwood* was, of course, quite happy to go anywhere but straight on. I've been down this river since and had nothing like the same problems.

The Avon was followed by the equally fast-flowing Severn, a beautiful treelined river which, when empty of other boats, looked as remote as the Amazon, with herons lazily taking off and landing ahead of us much of the way from Tewkesbury. While looking for lunchtime moorings at Worcester, just to show off, I recall using the river current to execute a 360° turn in the middle of the channel without even slowing down. From Worcester we carried on without stopping to Stourport with its four linked basins and clock warehouse. On the way we passed the beached wreck of a Severn trow, one of the traditional wooden sailing boats once plying the river, with another sunk in one of Stourport's basins, presumably in hope of eventual restoration. Unfortunately, the only survivor, *Spry*, now at Blists Hill (Ironbridge Gorge Museum) is effectively a replica, reconstructed from just two bits of original timber. Like most wooden boats, a bit like 'Grandad's spade' – two new blades and three new handles. Stourport itself has been the subject of a full restoration programme, completed in 2008, with a fifth infilled basin excavated, adding to the water area.

We had quickly learned that the boat cooker, being an inefficient early bottled gas type, had the calorific powers of a guttering candle, and the average chicken casserole had to be started on Monday if you wished to eat by Friday, by which time the chicken had lost any semblance to a feathered protein-based lifeform. There had been few places to stop on the rivers, so once onto the canals proper, we adopted Wellington's 'scorched earth' policy of stopping as often as possible and eating all the pies the canalside pubs could offer, drinking all the beer, and moving on quickly before the locals arrived. Traditional canal pubs didn't do food very much food then except for pies. When 'dining' on board we lived mainly on Boddingtons, eked out with rough and ready dishes like toad-in-the-hole, a runny floury mess with half-burnt, half-raw sausages slowly drowning in it. We managed, with the help of a beer kitty, kept in an empty tin of 'Uncle Joe's Mintballs', which survived all our trips, and is quite probably still going strong somewhere on one of the former crew's voyages.

We scored all the pubs we visited in the boat's logbook for the benefit of posterity, out of five for the pub - beer, food, friendliness of staff, authenticity and general ambience. One pub, the 'Man in the Moon' scored zero, our logbook entry said simply 'No Atmosphere'. Another five points were available for the 'gents' toilets – some were an institution, in that you had to be mad to go in and came out feeling no better than before. They scored for whether it was indoors instead of out in the yard, had a 'sit down' or was just a gutter, and if so, had a light, lock, or seat. Again, a few scored

zero, being little better than a hole in the car park which you fell into in the dark – but authentic!

From Stourport, we were onto the canal network again, the Staffs & Worcs, passing through the attractive Bratch Locks, almost a staircase, but not – each of the three locks has its own sidepond. The canals generally were an interesting place in transition. The last traditional carrying had died, but a newer generation had bought some of the old working boats and were trying cargoes, mainly coal and logs for other boat owners and canalside houses which often had poor road access, and we saw many of these operating with new companies like 'Birmingham & Midland Canal Co', 'Threefellows Carrying' and 'Five Towns Carrying'.

At Aldersley and Autherley Junctions we turned north onto the Shropshire Union, passing through Autherley's entrance lock with its fall of just 6 inches, insisted on by the Staffs & Worcs management when the 'Shroppie' was built to stop the newer company 'stealing' water. Despite being only 6 inches, the lock still took forever to fill. The Shroppie was and is a beautiful canal, with a narrow and shallow early rock-cut section, only wide enough for a single boat, too shallow for *Redwood*, which bounced from rock to rock. We stopped at magnificent traditional alehouses like the Bridge Inn at Brewood and the parlour pub 'The Anchor' at High Offley, where we had to drag a sunken boat out of the middle of the cut on the approach run. The pub was (and I believe still is) run by Olive Cliff, who filled jugs from the barrels (they apparently put pumps in around 2005 to save her legs, as she'd reached her mid 70s); her husband was a great raconteur, now sadly gone.

We took the chance to stop at Nantwich, a town full of half-timbered houses which have sunk at sometimes crazy angles because of the local salt extraction. In season now it's virtually impossible to moor within a mile or two of the place because of the length of the linear moorings and popularity of the town. North of here, we turned onto the Middlewich branch, miscalculating the turn at Barbridge and 'parting the junction' with a resounding crash in front of a bridge full of people and several boats waiting their turn to enter. At the opposite end we continued north along the Trent & Mersey for a quick look at the bottom of the Anderton Lift, a wonder of the canal system; this was still working, just, but closed the following year until 2002 after structural weaknesses were found.

Turning south again, we took a short detour onto the Macclesfield Canal to pay homage to the 'Bird in Hand' at Hall Green (Macclesfield Canal), a local for one of our crew when not in London. The house did not have a spirits licence or much in the way of a bar and the landlady, Emmy Whittaker, well into her 80s, filled pint glasses in the cellar and struggled up the stairs with them, one hand on a tray, the other on the handrail. Carrying eight full glasses up the steps for us each time we bought a round nearly finished her off, so we helped by slowing down a bit and staying longer to spread the pain. It's now sadly a house, having not long survived our visit.

We continued through the Harecastle Tunnel, another of the wonders of the canal network to Stoke on Trent with the intention of exploring the Caldon Canal, turning all the cabin lights on to augment the boat's inadequate headlight. In Stoke, Johnson Brothers Potteries had recently commissioned three new boats to carry fired pottery from the Imperial Works on the Caldon Canal in Stoke to the Eagle Works for packing.

One of the joys of being on the lower Caldon with a boat which wouldn't steer properly was to meet a heavily-laden boat, deck stacked high with crates of pots and plates on a blind bend. The pottery boats finished in 1995, and Johnson's went the way of other British industries in 2005 (ie abroad – ironically to China).

The Caldon itself vied with the Shropshire Union as our favourite canal, then a quiet rural backwater off the Trent & Mersey at Stoke, ending at Froghall Basin after the short (76 yard) Froghall Tunnel, the lowest on the network, and a definite challenge for *Redwood*. It's busier today, with plans to reopen both the entire Leek Branch and the Uttoxeter Canal which will leave at Froghall via a new basin and rebuilt lock. Once out of the industrial suburbs of Stoke, the Caldon wound into countryside, passing the watermills at Cheddleton, with the FMC 'butty' *Vienna* moored outside. The mills were built to grind flint to powder for the pottery industries to add to their clay. Beyond this, the canal eventually passed into the delightful wooded gorge of the Churnet which shared its valley with the canal and a railway, now a restored steam line. At Consall Forge were limekilns built against the valley side, and also restored now by the RSPB; also there was the 'Black Lion' pub, now very popular and still with no proper road link. The only other customer in October 1982 was Jock, a retired Scot in his 60s, with his 30ft narrowboat moored outside. Jock went wherever the fancy took him, and for the moment it was the 'Lion'.

'You'll never get that through the tunnel', he declared, having looked *Redwood* over, but wished us luck having tried himself and seen a plastic 'nobby boat' enter a day or so earlier, ignoring the height gauge, and much to his joy, bending the metal bars of the 'pulpit' as he called it – ocean going cruisers have them to catch giant tunny, but for some reason, makers of plastic river cruisers also liked to fit them, presumably to pose with on the Thames. There was no winding hole (turning spot) before the tunnel for a full length boat like ours, so we either had to decide to turn at Consall or press on for the tunnel and face a possibly ignominious long reverse, facing Jock's 'Told you so' as we reversed to the 'Lion'.

Of course, we decided to go for it next morning. Like most boats, the front of *Redwood*'s cabin was upswept, and as we approached the tunnel and checked the gauging sign, it became apparent it would be touch and go. Froghall dips in the middle as a trap for the unwary, although Jock had warned us of this and we were aware that the action of the propeller served to pull the stern down in restricted water spaces and push the bows up. We therefore moved steel ballast from the engine room to the front welldeck, filled all our water containers, and switched the engine off to keep us on an even keel. Crammed onto the foredeck and front welldeck, and with the additional weight of an enthusiastic bystander, we hauled the boat through by hand, showered with brick dust and cobwebs. We removed some paint from the front of the cants (the wooden edgings along the main cabin roof), but scraped through – barely. At the other side was a tearoom and our ex-LMS twin sister, the horsedrawn tripboat *Birdswood* (originally *Ross*), but little else. A cup of tea, a piece of cake, and it was time to wind the boat and head back down to give Jock the good news at the 'Lion'. I'd like to report he ate his sporan, but he was genuinely pleased we'd made it, because we were a proper boat, not a plastic bathtub.

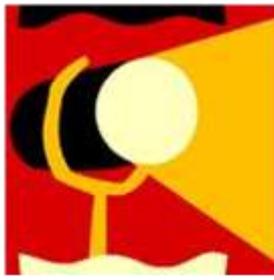
Leaving the Caldon, we passed through Stoke, having been warned not to stop there overnight because of the local bad lads, stopping at Stone, with its several interesting pubs, to take a look at the boatyard where Redwood had been converted in 1954. From there, we continued past Great Haywood Junction, passing a number of working boats, including the ex-GUCC *Buckden* and *Dipper* at Atherstone. The owner, Andy Rothen, a well-known canal contractor these days, worked the boats as a pair running coal, gravel etc for many years. They were sold and separated, the butty *Dipper* sadly being converted to a static houseboat.

Beyond Fradley and Fazeley junctions we entered the Coventry Canal, taking a brief detour at Hawkesbury Junction ('Sutton Stop') into Coventry Basin. Here, heavy industrial pollution had apparently killed all living organisms and made the canal water crystal clear. We could see prams and shopping trolleys on the canal bed with absolute clarity as if through glass, the only place we ever saw this, even in Birmingham. Coventry Basin itself felt isolated, both from the canal network and from the city; it was necessary to walk through underpasses below the soulless ring road before entering the largely post-war city centre, both mostly products of the 1960s, replacing most of what the Luftwaffe had left behind. A lived-in converted wooden butty slowly 'hogging' (bending downwards at bow and stern) at the basin entrance somehow summed the place up. Happily, the basin was regenerated in the 90s, and is quite a different location today, but then we were glad to leave and chug southwards down the North Oxford to say goodbye to Redwood at 'Blissers' (Blisworth), the end of a fortnight blessed with hot, dry weather, despite the lateness of the season.



Trevor Brigham

The final part of the story will Redwood entering Bratch Locks on the Staffs & Worcester canal be in issue 103



SPOTLIGHT ON Bob Ellis

Part One – in the beginning

I was born in Ripon, N. Yorks in 1950 and grew up in a forces family.

My father was a Chief Technician in the RAF and we moved around quite a lot in my early years, living in Topcliffe, Leconfield, Harrogate, Sundern (Germany) and Honington Suffolk, and finally Doncaster aged 15.

My attraction to water developed when about 8 or 9 as my friends and I used to walk down to the River Nidd to catch minnows in traps made from empty wine bottles. From there I moved to coarse fishing as my all consuming hobby from about age 11. This inevitably led to messing around on abandoned and semi derelict punts and rowing boats and trying (unsuccessfully on most attempts) to build rafts from various bits of rubbish.

My real boating started in 1989 when a maturing life policy allowed me to purchase a 1970's Shetland 570 with a Mercury 50hp outboard. I renamed her 'Two Jays'. This I used on the River Ouse and managed to take it all the way to Ripon and back. After throwing too much money at trying to get the engine to run properly I decided to P/X it for a 4.2metre RIB with a 25hp Suzuki outboard (no name). This was a fun outfit, light, easy to tow, launch & recover and was the start of period when myself, my 2 boys and a group of friends who had boats, started to go to Windermere in the Lake District on a regular basis.

I then decided to sell the RIB and purchased a classic 1960's aluminium Ray Wright Delta, which I named 'Delta Lady'. She was a 14ft 2 seater sports boat powered by a 1600cc pre cross flow Ford Cortina engine which would push it along at 30knots.

The problem with both the RIB & the Delta was there was nowhere to shelter from the regular inclement weather that predominates in the Lakes. So I sold the Delta and bought a Bayliner 1702 sports cuddy with a 120hp Force outboard which I aptly renamed 'Barracuda'. What a great ski boat with the added bonus of being able to shelter from the rain and (very uncomfortably) weekend on! My boys learnt to knee-board and I became an unaccomplished water skier but what fun we had in some of the most stunning scenery in the country. Then along came Prescott!! (Then John, now Lord Prescott brought in a ruling that craft should travel no more than 10mph on the lakes) That was the end of the era, 2005 was a sad time and I sold 'Barracuda' that year.

Part two of this article will be in the next Double Nine



Photos from a few of the booked trips on *New Horizons* during the 2013 season. There are more group photos on the PCAS website. If you would like to celebrate a birthday or organise a family event, give Bob Ellis a ring to book a trip for next season.

Our Visit to the Beautiful Pocklington Canal

Our canal meanderings brought us North East this year, to discover all that the River Ouse had to offer. On our map we saw the Pocklington Canal running off the River Derwent, a tributary of the River Ouse and decided to look up a bit of information.

The internet reports we found on the Pocklington Canal were usually “boater blogs” perpetuating the myth that there is “heavy weed” on the Pocklington Canal. We decided, we’d find out for ourselves as weed has never put us off visiting any canal anywhere.

We’ve been through areas of heavy blanket weed in Lincolnshire and in the Fenlands, and that can be challenging, but we were delighted to find that the Pocklington canal is not like those waterways, because it doesn’t have the same heavy agricultural run-off.

The weed on the Pocklington canal is largely made up of pretty yellow “lilies” and a few reeds. The water below them is crystal clear, and full of fish and we learn that there are some very rare water plants present in the canal that grow in very few other places. Boaters shouldn’t worry - there is nothing to snag the propeller as long as you keep the boat moving along at a steady pace. The weed problem is only a surface coverage due to lack of boaters using the waterway, which we really cannot understand.

The Pocklington canal is beautiful, and in our opinion, stands in line with the Chesterfield and Wryley and Essington canals for fish stocks, prettiness, and peaceful surroundings. We loved it!

We moored the first night, without the use of ropes. We’d come through the Cottingwith Lock and the day was late. The lilies were thick along the edges so we couldn’t quite make it to the bank. So instead we just allowed the leaves to surround the boat and secure us in their grasp for the night and we fell asleep to the sound of hooting owls. There was no other boat traffic to pull us out, so in the morning, we were still in the same spot.

We had lovely August weather and the morning sunshine brought out walkers along the towpath to experience the quietude of the canal. We found few roads near the Pocklington canal, so there was a sense of escapism and serenity to be found in listening to bird song and the hum of dragonflies as we drifted along through the various swing bridges along its navigable length. These we found in a very good state with new landing stages alongside each – a testament to the time and money spent on restoration. Cows were our only companions as we easily slung open the bridges connecting farmland.

As we approached Hagg bridge, we were delighted to find a newly installed water tap and made good use of it as the lack of water points along the length of the River Derwent had left our tank very low after several days use.

Gardham Lock, just a little further along, we found was unusual because of the swing bridge in the middle of the lock that must also be operated. Walkers stopped to watch

us, and many said they had never seen a boat use the lock before (despite having many walks along the towpath) so it was something new for them to see as well.

After the lock, the weed was much reduced and clear water guides our way along to the last swing bridge before the Melbourne Arm. Here it became evident that the little trip boat (*New Horizons*) was the reason for the open water. Just having that boat operate was enough to keep the lilies from spreading out across the surface.

The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society (PCAS), responsible for much of the restoration of the canal, give rides on NB "*New Horizons*" and passengers are only asked for a donation for their "pleasure cruise." As far as we could see, the rides were very popular. We pulled into the small basin to see quite a queue of people waiting for their turn. A lady spoke to us and said that her son had really enjoyed the ride. She was asking us about our life on the boat and said she would look into hiring a canal boat for a holiday. Certainly, the PCAS makes an impact on the locals.

We were greeted by Society volunteers and made to feel very welcome. They made space for us on the newly built visitor mooring used by the trip boat and gave us information about the area. There is a pub in the village although we didn't use it as we aren't really pub-goers, preferring instead to sit and have a glass of wine on the back of our boat in the sunshine.

The Melbourne basin permanent-moorers also seemed to be a very friendly lot – sitting together on the adjacent lawn for a bit of late Sunday afternoon banter. We didn't introduce ourselves, but had no doubt that they would have welcomed us into their midst if we had chosen to go over and chat.

We had learned from the internet, that there wasn't much left to do to restore the remaining 4-1/2 miles of the canal; three locks were completed, several bridges too – there were just 3 locks left to repair and then the canal could be dredged and re-watered to a navigable level.

We try to support canal restoration with memberships to various societies still in the midst of restoration, so we asked if we could do a lifetime membership with the PCAS for £150. Alistair Anderson came to talk to us to see if we wanted to be involved too. Unfortunately, our travel to far flung places makes that sort of commitment more difficult for us, so we had to decline.

Monday found us preparing to walk the non-navigable section of canal to "Canal Head" The day is warm but overcast – perfect for a long walk. I felt a bit like Julia Bradbury on one of her canal walks with lots of scenery changes to keep things interesting. Sometimes we were in open countryside, sometimes in wooded areas and overall, the canal looked in very good shape along its length. We imagined it wouldn't be too long to re-water the whole canal. We were impressed by the level of restoration already completed and indeed, ongoing, as we saw swing-bridge number 8 being given a fresh coat of paint.

The walk was really enjoyable and the Pocklington Canal Head looked very attractive with a basin all ready for boats once the canal is completely open.

Our walk back was a little tiring. We had looked for a bus in Pocklington, but not finding one that appeared to stop at Melbourne, we elected to walk the canal towpath again. Certainly it was attractive enough to warrant a second walk, but tired feet found the round trip a little long. We must have covered 14 miles during the day as we had explored Pocklington for at least 2 hours.

Tuesday was fair, and we began our boat trip back to Cottingwith Lock. More walkers were out enjoying the weather and a farmer strode out of his vehicle to chat to us. He was checking his fields and had spotted us, so came over and told us that he sees very few boats and it was nice to see us. We chatted a bit about the canal's charms and then he bid us a good onward journey and watched us for a while from the bridge.

On our way out of Cottingwith Lock, we met a Canal & River Trust worker. He chatted with us, asking if we'd enjoyed our visit and had we seen all the work that was underway? He was truly puzzled about the lack of visiting boats. We mentioned that the cut from the Derwent to the canal lock was a bit silted up and might put some people off. At this, the worker nodded, saying that the EA needed to be asked to do some much needed silt removal on the River Derwent.

When we returned to Selby Lock (on the River Ouse) for our trip back home, we asked the lock keeper at Selby to display the PCAS information leaflet in the CRT notice board (which was full of out-dated bumf). He declined and said he would keep it in his office – so much for publicity we thought!

We were very disappointed by the general negative attitude of many of the CRT lock-keepers whose attitude is reminiscent of the old BW days. We had hoped that there would be a much more positive attitude at promoting the facilities of the new charitable trust and all it has to offer. The CRT should ensure that the Pocklington Canal is promoted at Selby Lock!

The experience at Selby Lock was in direct contrast to the Environment Agency Lock-Keepers at Barmby Barrage on the River Derwent. They, we found, were most helpful – even trying to give us some information about the Pocklington Canal which is out of their jurisdiction.

Our final impression is that the Pocklington Canal is all ready for boats to arrive, but that dialogue between the EA and the Canal and River Society and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is poor in promoting the canal to boaters.

Would we visit the Pocklington Canal again? Yes, absolutely and will encourage others to do so – it is one of the “Waterways” best kept secrets!

Colette & Roger Nevin
nb Dragonfly

Photos opposite by the author.



Above. *Dragonfly* approaching Gardham Lock. Below. Colette looking at work still to do!



From the Archives

Thirty five years ago in Issue 36 an appeal for funds states “we only need £4000 or £5000 for a complete set of lock gates complete with a handsome plaque naming them after you!” How times change.

To help our funds we were asking members to donate any unwanted Green Shield, Pink or Co-op stamps.

Our working party was busy with preparing for a rally at Cottingwith for September 10th (1978) and also was involved with the removal of a fallen tree from the canal near Mr Baldwins bridge. (note the Mr!)

It seems that volunteers were coming from West Riding IWA, St Thomas's Scouts from York, students from Durham University IWA Northumbrian Branch as well as help from BWB to work at various sites from Cottingwith Lock to Canal Head.

We also recorded the resignation of our Founder Chairman, Eric Lount after ten years service as Chairman and the appointment of the new chairman Richard Walton.

In August 1978 the first seat was put in place near the top loack and the hope was that a seat would be installed at each lock.

December of the same year saw BWB planting trees at canal head and the site being cleared of rubbish by volunteers.

Ten years later in issue No. 56 December 1988 we report that the restoration of Thornton Lock chamber is well underway by the Manpower Services Commission. At the same time PCAS volunteers were busy with the restoration of top lock. Again it seems that volunteers were travelling from far afield to assist in the work.

The Society's sales stall was busy attending rallies and events and raising quite appreciable amounts of money. Four separate outings raised £175.50, £172.00, £182.00 and £175.00 respectively. Good amounts today let alone 1988!

Another ten years on, Issue 75 April 1998 reports about work being done at Coates Lock. Help this time came from East Yorkshire Borough Council's Employment Training Scheme. The appeal for the gates for Coates Lock, stood at £22.500. Well on the way to its target.

We reported that sales at the information centre were doing well and had raised nearly £1500 in the previous year. As now, volunteers to man the centre were desperately needed.

Details of a plan to install a slipway on the canal were also reported with the angle of the slope both above and below water level being explained. The first slipway built to this new IWA design was to be installed on the Wilts & Berks Canal in time for the National Trailboat Rally being held nearby. (maybe a project to be looked at again?)

Revised bid for Lottery funding

The Canal & River Trust has submitted a Stage 1 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). This was done following extensive discussion with Natural England, the East Riding and North Yorkshire Waterway Partnership, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and PCAS.

The Heritage Lottery Fund made it very clear that they did not wish to fund extension to navigation when it rejected the previous bid. PCAS will have to tackle this project, and at least we can be sure that we will have the support of key organisations.

In the new bid, the main task in the new HLF bid is to tackle the overgrown state of the canal upstream of Melbourne, which is progressively damaging the Site of Special Scientific Interest. Apart from that, it looks very neglected – which it is. Unlike rivers, canals are man-made and need periodic maintenance to keep them in good order and apart from tree works and maintaining the water level, little has been done over the years.

Another component of the new bid is to carry out work on two bridges. Church Bridge is attractive, as can be seen from the picture on the front cover of this magazine. If

the brickwork is examined more closely, it is obviously in considerable need of conservation to prolong its life. The photos right show the damage that has been caused by aging and use of hard modern mortar rather than traditional



lime mortar. The careful work done on Walbut Bridge in the 90s provides a good example of sympathetic conservation of an historic structure.

The other bridge to be tackled would be to modify No.7 swing-bridge to look similar to the photo below, which dates from 1909.



This would recreate an interesting historic feature of the canal, in the same way that reinstating the historic wheel-operated paddlegear has done at the locks. The intention is for volunteers to take part in the work to be done on both bridges.

There will be plenty of opportunity to help both adults and children get more involved with their

local canal without damaging either the natural or built heritage. HLF looks for demonstration of community involvement when considering bids for funding, and community involvement has been important for PCAS since it was formed in 1969.

Alistair Anderson

Long overdue replacement of the mooring pontoons at Melbourne has now been carried out. The smaller picture shows an unrepaired pontoon which had been declared unsafe to use. The larger picture shows work on the *New Horizons* pontoon. The pontoons have all received new 'tops' and most of the legs have had collars fitted but have not been replaced, which surely will mean more work is required in the not too distant future.

Once the pontoons have been replanked they then receive a non-slip surface placed on top of the planking, rather like the lock and bridge landings. (see photograph on facing page)

Photos Ed



Forthcoming events



The East Yorkshire branch is holding its annual lunch at the Cottingham Parks Golf Club on Sunday December 1st at 12.00 for 12.30 If you are interested in attending please contact Chris Stones on 01482 875894 or Roger Bromley on 01482 845099

Social meeting, Friday November 15th 8.00pm at the Cottingham Methodist Church Hall, Cottingham, HU16 4BD

'Tall Ship Sailing.' A presentation by Rowena and Adrian Lovett.

Friday January 17th 2014 will be a presentation by Andrew Brett entitled 'Boston or Bust'

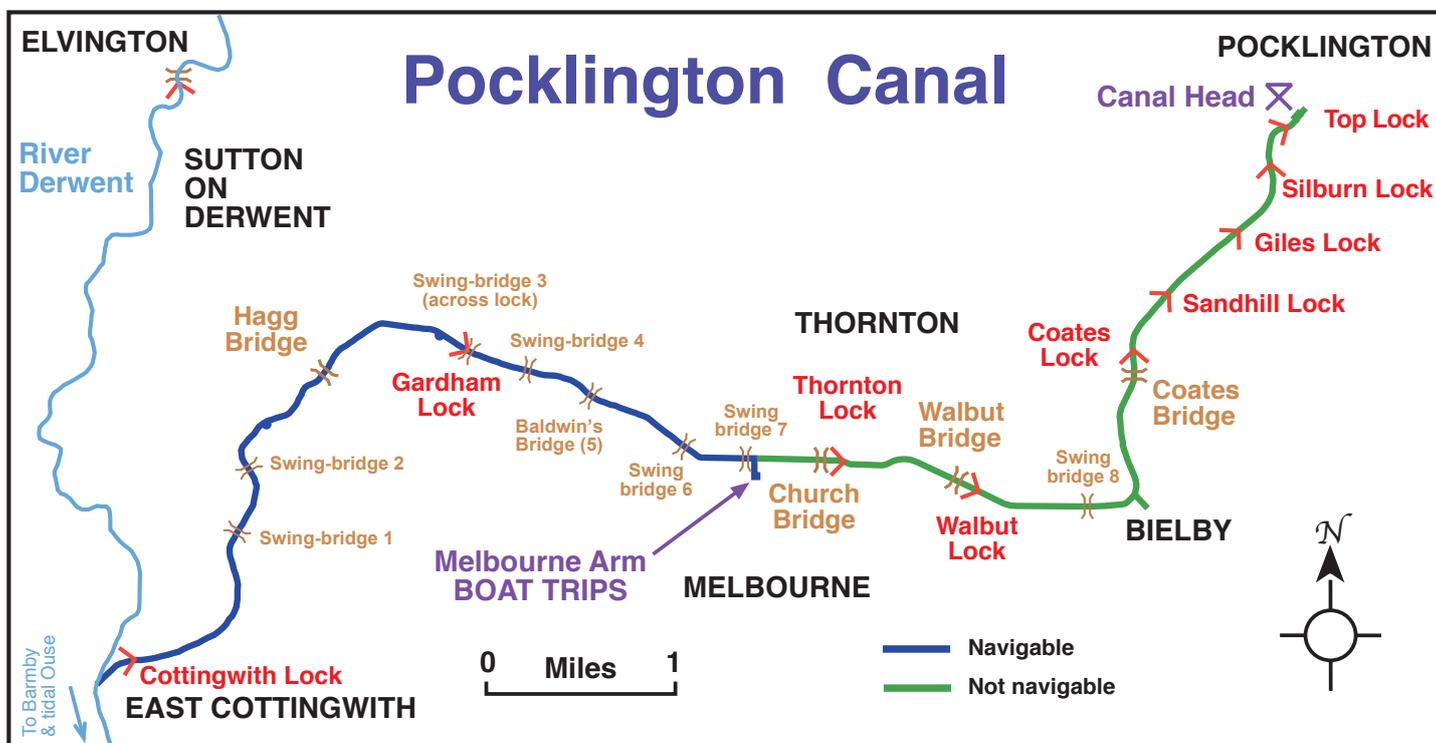
Do try to attend and show support for our fellow PCAS members who are providing the November and January entertainment.

For any further details contact Roger Bromley at roger.bromley@waterways.org.uk or call 01482 845099

Finished mooring pontoon with non-slip surface.



Photo Ed



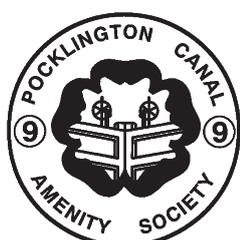
MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

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



As we know, canal head is an ideal place to visit for a picnic. These lovely ladies stopped off to enjoy theirs before continuing their journey to York races Ladies Day event and were more than happy to be snapped enjoying their bubbly and nibbles.



Photo. Ed.

PCAS ANNUAL LUNCH. NOVEMBER 17TH 12.00 FOR 12.30

Once again we are holding our Annual Lunch at **The Oaks Golf Club, Aughton Common, Aughton, York YO42 4PW** The menu is inserted in this magazine (or emailed separately if received electronically). Please clearly indicate your choices and return, with full payment to **Dick Watson, 33 Browning Road, Pocklington, York YO42 2GN** no later than the **10th of November**. Cheques should be made payable to PCAS.

Spaces are limited so please book early.

The menu and booking details can also be seen on the PCAS website at www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org

We once again thank Andrew Dobson for our cover photographs.

