

# **DOUBLE NINE POCKLINGTON CANAL AMENITY SOCIETY**

**Summer 2013    No. 101**



## Pocklington Canal Balsam Bash

On Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> of June a party of 9 willing volunteers gathered at the CRT car park in Melbourne to attack an outbreak of Himalayan Balsam. This was a joint effort by the IWA East Yorkshire Branch and the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society (PCAS), supervised by two of the local CRT team from Leeds. It was also gratifying to see that a member of the public had also decided to give a hand having seen notice of the event on the IWA web site.

Behind the moorings at Melbourne is an extensive area designated as a wildlife reserve and the balsam was showing itself in a number of places, usually mixed in among the nettles as a number of us found to our cost! A substantial amount was found and fortunately the problem was tackled before the plants had flowered and set seed pods so that there is every hope that any spread can be halted, especially if the treatment is repeated next year.



After welcome refreshments taken on board the PCAS trip boat *New Horizons*, the party moved to another site at Coates Bridge, further along the canal, where a small concentrated outbreak had been discovered near to the offside

bridge abutment. This was a much less accessible area and warranted the wearing of lifejackets while working on the steep embankment close to the canal side.

All in all a worthwhile day out among pleasant company, and there is every hope that a potential problem has been nipped in the bud by the efforts of willing volunteers.

Howard Anguish. (photo Alistair Anderson)

# THE POCKLINGTON CANAL AMENITY SOCIETY

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

Patrons	The Earl of Halifax	Neil Edwards
ERYC Representative	Councillor C G W Mole	
Hon Vice-President	Mrs Sheila M Nix MBE	

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<b>New Horizons Tripboat Bookings/enquiries</b>	<a href="mailto:book.newhorizons@gmail.com">book.newhorizons@gmail.com</a> ☎ 07514 978645
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Note: Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Society, unless so stated.

## Editor's Notes

**At last it swings!** (See front cover) After many many years and frustrating delays, finally we are able to swing number 8 swingbridge. Let us hope this gives us and our supporters the impetus to sort out Coates and Walbut locks and open up the navigation to Bielby. .

I was greatly pleased to hear from Valerie Barron soon after the publication of the last issue. Val was surprised to see herself along with her late husband Gordon, in a thirty year old photograph sitting upon a weed cutter!

She shares her thoughts of those days in an article in this issue. If any more of you have old photographs or perhaps a story to tell, do please get in touch with me. More of Val's photographs can be accessed via the PCAS website using the photos section.

I received a letter from John Rhead of Bromsgrove which I reproduce below.

*I have recently spent two weeks on holiday near York and was obliged to travel the A1079. Having had a brief walk down to the top lock I decided to come back and walk further.*

*Coming from Worcestershire I have the Tardebigge flight on the Worcester & Birmingham canal a couple of miles east, the Staffs & Worcester a few miles west, the Stourbridge canal and the Birmingham Canal Navigations roughly north. A richness of blessings and I love walking towpaths.*

*I later walked from Canal Head to Coates Lock and back, quiet and very pleasant. At Coates, I spent ten minutes listening to a bird singing almost non—stop three feet out into the rushes. Tweets, trills, whistles—almost every type of song imaginable except caws or quacks. I have no idea what it was but its range and continuity were amazing.*

*The following day I walked from the Melbourne Arm to Walbut lock. A curlew flew over calling but otherwise all was quiet apart from some jets above. On the way back I found my way blocked by the resident swans and their seven cygnets sitting on the path. I know from previous experience how unpleasant a displeased swan can be and as they showed no inclination to move I carefully bypassed them in the long grass.*

*Heading home I stopped to look at the water lilies at Hagg Bridge. I didn't walk the whole of the canal, maybe another holiday. I really enjoyed walking there, it is a lovely little unspoilt canal in a beautiful setting. A real haven of peace and quietness.*

Thank you John for praising our canal. If anyone else wishes to write about their experience on the canal, I would love to receive your letter.

Thank you to all the contributors to this newsletter especially Andrew Dobson who goes to great lengths to answer my calls for specific photographs. The next newsletter is planned for October and it's not too early to think about something to send to me for consideration. Your Committee is always on hand to try to answer any queries you may have. Please do not hesitate to ask any member of the Committee for help.

## Chairman's Column

### Annual General Meeting

The society's annual general meeting took place on 24th April. There were insufficient members present for the meeting to be quorate. Nevertheless, the business of the meeting was conducted, including the presentation of a set of accounts and my report on the activities of the society during the previous year. There was no need to hold elections, as I had a further year to serve as chairman, and there were sufficient vacancies for the post of ordinary committee member for all the candidates to obtain a place.

It seemed at the time that, since the meeting was inquorate, it would be necessary to reconvene the annual general meeting at a later date. However, a careful examination of the constitution suggested that this would not be necessary. The constitution only requires that an annual general meeting is held each year, and that it conducts certain items of business. There is no requirement in the constitution that the AGM be quorate. Furthermore, the necessary business items all took place. I refer to the chairman's report and the presentation of accounts for the previous year. Since no elections were necessary, and there were no other matters requiring a vote, it was possible to conduct the meeting without the quorum stated in the constitution.

At a subsequent committee meeting, it was agreed that it would not be necessary to reconvene the annual general meeting, but that the accounts for 2012 would be resubmitted to the AGM held in 2014 by which time they will have been audited. The committee also resolved that the constitution should be amended so as to avoid future difficulties resulting from AGMs being inquorate. A suitable motion will be put before the 2014 AGM. This motion will require the approval of a quorate meeting and consequently it is particularly important that we do have a quorum next time round.

After the formal business of the meeting, we were addressed by Jon Horsfall and Jane Thomson of the Canal & River Trust. They were able to explain developments following the conversion of the old British Waterways into a trust and Jane Thomson spoke about the bid that had been made to the Heritage Lottery Fund for development works on the Pocklington Canal.

### New Committee Members

We welcome onto the committee Ernie Darrell and Peter Wood, both of whom had been nominated for election at the AGM, and were elected unopposed. I would also like to record my thanks to Adrian Lovett who served on the committee, but resigned part way through the year due to pressure of other commitments. I would also like to thank Debbie Smith, who served as secretary for a year, and remains on the committee as an ordinary member. Thanks are also due to Graham Ball our vice chairman, who acted as treasurer following the departure of Gordon Harrower. Peter Wood has subsequently taken on the role of treasurer. I am particularly grateful to him for this as we have been having difficulty filling the post. I would also like to thank Dick Watson for the amount of work that he does organising working parties.

## Heritage Lottery Fund Bid

It was reported in the last edition of Double Nine that the bid submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund by the Canal and River Trust, and with the support of PCAS, for works on the Pocklington Canal had not been successful. Since then, CRT have been working on a revised bid which will be for a much smaller scheme, costing around £700,000. It is expected that a preliminary application will be made in August, with the more formal (Stage I) application being submitted in November.

As things stand at present, this revised scheme is only likely to include a small amount of restoration works, although it will include items that should be helpful in the future when seeking funding for works that will extend the navigable length. In particular, the bid will include the funding of a Conservation Management Plan for the canal. Nowadays, such a document is regarded as an essential prerequisite for any canal restoration scheme, especially ones where nature conservation is a major issue.

As before, the society is giving its full support to this bid, although it is likely that, in view of the low level of restoration works included in the scheme, our financial contribution will be modest.

## Weed Cutting Boat

The weed cutting boat that the society purchased from CRT has remained in the car park at the Melbourne Arm throughout the Spring and early summer period. This is partly due to the rotten weather that we have experienced in the early part of the year. As I write, arrangements are being made to move the boat to private land at Allerthorpe, (now achieved. Ed) where the necessary work will be done to both the hull and the machinery. It will then be returned to the canal to serve its original purpose as a weed cutting boat.

## No 8 Swingbridge

It is pleasing to be able to report that the very long running scheme to install a pintle at No 8 Swingbridge, and thus enable it to swing, has come to a satisfactory conclusion.

## Other Restoration Issues

Since it seems likely that scheme being proposed by CRT, and hopefully funded by HLF, will not include any works to extend the navigable length of the canal, the society is giving consideration to promoting its own scheme to do this. Our intention is to use the considerable funds that we have, preferably enhanced by funds from other sources, to open the navigable length up as far as the Bielby Arm. This would involve works at both Thornton and Walbut Locks, as well as some localised dredging.

It is our intention that this should be regarded as complementary to, and not competitive with, any scheme put forward by CRT. Consequently, we are waiting to see the full details of their HLF bid before we develop our ideas further.

In the meantime, we are developing plans to improve the quality of the towpath along a length of about half a mile between Giles and Sandhill Locks. The intention is that the work will be carried out by a Waterway Recovery Group work camp that will take place during 2014. The East Yorkshire Branch of the Inland Waterways Association has already contributed £500 towards the cost of these works, and the remainder will be funded by the society.

## Bicentenary of the Pocklington Canal

The year 2015 will mark the bicentenary of the passing of the Act of Parliament that enabled the Pocklington Canal to be built. The committee has been discussing ways in which this significant milestone can be marked. Initial ideas include the organisation of a boat rally, the staging of an exhibition in Pocklington and the holding of a major dinner. Although this is a little while away, it is not too soon to start preparations, and I would welcome any other suggestions for events to mark the occasion.

Paul Waddington

## Photography tips

Firstly, my thanks to the editor Roger Bromley for inviting me to write this article on Photography for the PCAS Double Nine publication and how it can be used in relationship with the Pocklington Canal.

I thought it best to begin this article about cameras. There are basically two types of digital camera on the market, the compact camera, which as its name suggests is small and which can easily be carried in a pocket or handbag, the other is the DSLR, (Digital Single Lens Reflex). If your preference is for a compact camera with more control than most I would recommend taking a look at the LUMIX range by Panasonic. These have a built-in high quality Zoom lens which is manufactured by Leica; a German manufacturer which has now been bought out by Panasonic. My son purchased a LUMIX compact camera some three years ago with which has taken some high quality shots and if I were to recommend a compact camera I think it would be one of these.

The DSLR camera is in my opinion is by far the best all round for almost all type of photography and most models if not all, are fitted with through the lens metering (TTLM) which means that as you look through the viewfinder, you will see precisely how the shot will turn out which makes for better and easier composition of the photograph as you view your potential shot actually through the camera's lens. I personally do not recommend the use of the rear monitor or 'back screen' for photographic composition; I am given to understand that this was originally created for use by newspaper photographers, making easier for shooting photographic subjects

over high obstacles such as crowds of people for instance; which is probably ideal for their requirements. However, I am of the belief that for high quality composition in landscape and wildlife photography the viewfinder is still the best way of obtaining this.

Other advantages of the DSLR is that there are a wide selection of lenses in varying sizes and types available for a myriad of differing applications, from the standard 50mm type suitable for most uses, to Telephoto types, for medium to long distance work and Wide Angle lenses for close but wide view work.

Moving on now to achieving that 'perfect shot', of course everyone's idea of a perfect photograph varies with individual tastes and composition; therefore a few decisions will need to be made. Firstly decide on your subject, I personally feel that beginning with landscape subjects are easier especially if you are only just starting out with photography, because the subject it is not likely to suddenly run off or fly away. You can take your time in composing your landscape. If you have a central subject in your landscape try to keep this slightly off centre as being in the precise centre foreground will have the effect of splitting your picture into two halves, do not be tempted to tilt the camera either upward or downward in an attempt to accommodate the subject; the camera lens should remain level in both directions in order to obtain the best results. It may be that you are a little too close and need to step back a little or maybe use a step ladder if you need to be higher. Tilting the camera will upward will result in diminishing of the foreground and therefore throwing the picture out of proportion. Similarly, tilting the lens downward diminishes the skyline.

There are situations where you need to be at a lower level, for instance taking shots of birds and small mammals and in the majority of these cases you may need to resort to laying flat on the ground but birds in hedges and shrubs are the best place to begin. Approaching birds in these situations are quite easy, I find that simply approaching the bird slowly, holding the camera at chest level and making a quiet bird-like whistling sound which seems to make the bird relax as you get in close, then slowly raise the camera viewfinder to your eye, compose your shot and squeeze trigger smoothly, then after a brief pause move away from the bird slowly and then with some degree of luck the bird will usually remain in position and quite calm. The aforementioned technique can also work with small mammals too. Try this with garden birds and small animals if you have them in your garden as they will be used to seeing you around and are more likely to trust you and cooperate.

Andrew Dobson

I must thank and congratulate Andrew for contributing many of his high quality photographs for this issue including the front and back covers. Ed.

### **PCAS Annual Lunch**

Following the successful event last year we have again decided to have our annual lunch at the Oaks Golf Club, Aughton YO42 4PW. This will be held on Sunday November 17th. Full details will be in the next issue of Double Nine.

Memories from the past came flooding back for Val Barron when she saw a photograph of her aboard a weedcutting boat taken in 1983 and shown in the last issue.

Val kindly has provided us with more details of what happened thirty years ago.



“*Ebenezer II* came to the Pocklington Canal in 1981 having completed its daily work ferrying men and equipment back and forth across the river throughout the building of the Humber Bridge.

Many many hours were spent making it smart and suitable for working on the canal, two outdrive motors were removed from the rear—a plate fitted—then one motor, obtained from a scrapped combine harvester, was positioned centrally and fitted on the rear deck and then

*Ebenezer II* in its original condition

boxed in.

This phase was carried out under the guidance of my husband Gordon (a retired Marine engineer), Ray O’Kelly, Me and anyone else available.



Painting, alterations and a banner made by ourselves of tarpaulin, and then PCAS Workboat painted on, positioned for all to see hanging over the side.

*Ebenezer II* was now ready to be launched into the canal and moored at Baldwin’s Bridge landing.

During work parties (and often in between times) the boat was used to remove large amounts of weed, fallen trees and other debris.

Many passengers also enjoyed a sightseeing trip along the canal.



*Ebenezer II* was also used for events

The weedcutter came to our notice and was brought to a barn at Mr Terry's farm in Melbourne. Gordon, Ray O'Kelly, Me and others worked many hours in the barn, repairing and painting it until it was ready to launch into the canal at the bottom of Mr Terry's field that ran alongside the canal at Melbourne.

Everything worked so well, all were delighted with the performance—until they tried to stop —

it wouldn't!! Emergency measure was required (eg pulling a plug out) Anyhow back in the barn for a few modifications—that sorted that!

Preparations were all but complete for *Ebenezer II* and the weedcutter to take part in a VIP event, carrying passengers and demonstrating the weedcutter when Gordon was taken poorly on the very last day before the DO and was unable to go down to the canal again.



Launching of the weedcutter

What happened to the two boats afterwards I am not sure, but fear that they remained moored somewhere. Don't know!! Never saw them again.

All involved had great fun down at the canal for many years, working and playing until it all stopped rather suddenly for us." (due to Gordon's illness. Ed)

## PCAS Clothing

Following the closure of our previous supplier of PCAS branded clothing, we have secured supplies from Linela Embroidery Ltd, Unit 1 Tomorosa, Awkley Lane, Olveston, Bristol BS35 4EW or email [elaine@linelaembroidery.com](mailto:elaine@linelaembroidery.com)

Delivered prices are as follows.

T shirts	£7.50
Polos	£10.00
Sweatshirts	£15.00
Fleeces	£18.00
Caps	£6.00

Please state your colour requirement with your order.

## Birding on the Pocklington Canal

The weather forecast for Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May was that it would rain. This was a shame because 24 members of the River Foss Society had booked cruises on New Horizons for that day. In the event, the rain stopped about half way through the morning cruise.

I was at the stern looking for birds during the morning cruise. We saw or heard a total of 29 species which was a reasonable total considering the weather conditions. The highlight of the morning was a pair of Barn Owls. They usually fly at night or at the end of the day. They avoid flying in rain so when the rain stopped about noon they were hungry! We watched one of them quartering the field next to the canal and, later, a darker individual flew directly in front the boat. Another memorable moment was



Snipe

watching the display flight of a Snipe. The most common bird along the canal that day was the Reed Bunting, but when we record numbers of each species seen it is usually only the number seen at any one time.

There are, of course, many other of types of fauna along the canal and we watched a buck Roe Deer nonchalantly grazing as we sailed by him.

Thank you to the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society for providing New Horizons and allowing us to share your enjoyment of the canal. Thank you also to the efficient, charming and good-humoured crew!

Neil Moran

## ***New Horizons***

Bob Ellis, who organises the booking and crewing of our trip boat, has provided some encouraging statistics showing an increase in popularity of our boat trips since last year despite cold weather and a slow start to the season.

### ***2012 to 1/6***

8 Group bookings

297 Passengers carried  
(includes all short trips)

### ***2013 to 1/6***

10 bookings

623

There is also a growing interest in our 'Open Trips' for individuals, couples and small groups who would like to experience a longer trip.

3rd August 10am – 7 hour round trip to East Cottingwith. This will go on to the Ferry Boat Inn if river conditions permit. Only 1 place left, but cancellations are possible.

21st September, 1pm – 3 hour round trip to Gardham Lock.

There are still plenty of opportunities for group bookings of *New Horizons* on weekdays, Saturdays and in the evening (until early August). There is information about our boat trips on the PCAS website and Bob Ellis will be happy to take bookings and answer questions. Of course you can decorate the boat with balloons! Phone 07946 209644 or email [book.newhorizons@gmail.com](mailto:book.newhorizons@gmail.com).

In the first three months of the season we have had 25 PCAS members crewing. All are unpaid volunteers and we thank all of them, whether they put in a lot of time or just crew occasionally. I am particularly grateful to those who are prepared to help with painting and other maintenance work that is vital to keep the boat running reliably and in a smart condition.



*Eve learning to steer New Horizons Photo Alistair Anderson*

A new non-slip floor has recently been installed in *New Horizons*, thanks mainly to John Lewis, who is always on hand if we have technical problems or need fuel. The existing floor had become scruffy and has always been difficult to keep clean.

When I am on a longer trip, I offer to take a group photo for the PCAS website, and these photos bring back some memories. This year I remember Mary's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in April, where we had to get most of the passengers off the boat to help push open a swing-bridge jammed by a small stone.

In May we had two group trips for the River Foss Society and welcomed Ross as the youngest member of PCAS. We tell our visitors that the Pocklington Canal is one of the best for wildlife, but I was amazed to see Neil Moran's report of seeing 29 species of birds on a Gardham Lock trip, despite the side covers of the boat being down due to wet weather. Neil's article is in this issue of *Double Nine*.

In June, on a trip with the Fawcett family, I had a long chat with granddad who recounted his fascinating career in science, including meeting the three men who won the 1956 Nobel Prize for Physics for inventing the transistor. On numerous occasions, I and other crew have unexpectedly met up with friends and former work colleagues aboard *New Horizons*. Even sitting drinking a cup of coffee with one or two passengers on a cold wet Sunday afternoon can be an interesting and enjoyable experience.

Our banners, posters, leaflets and cards are certainly attracting new faces, but word of mouth is fast becoming the most important form of publicity. Some are regular visitors and Ernie's friends Ross and Eddie recently turned up bearing very useful gifts – generous supplies of tea and coffee. Do call in on a Sunday if you can spare the time. It is always good to meet PCAS members on the boat and at our Information Centre at Canal Head.

Alistair Anderson



Smart new flooring in *New Horizons* Photo A Anderson

## Working Party Report

Scrub clearance ceased at the end of March (due to the bird nesting season) on the section between Giles Lock and Sandhill Lock. The remainder of the work will be carried out over the winter season.

Several tons of soil were removed during improvements to the towpath at Coates Bridge. Some of the soil was used for bank improvements above Sandhill Lock. There is now a much safer slope down to the towpath under Coates Bridge. A memorial seat has been installed nearby Coates Bridge kindly provided by the Prince family.

Much work has been done to the towpath at Hagg Bridge. This was more complicated as the route had to remain open to pedestrians at all times. Due to this area suffering from frequent flooding, it was decided that concrete steps were the most practical solution to improving access to the towpath as this is a very steep slope. More towpath repairs at Walbut Bridge still remain to be done.

The pintle at number 8 swing bridge is now installed but still needs about three tons of counterweight to enable the bridge to swing freely. This has now been obtained with the help of our Chairman and will shortly be cut into manageable pieces and installed in the bridge.



Working at Hagg Bridge Photo Andrew Dobson

We are currently working at Canal Head weeding the newly planted hawthorn whips which were kindly donated by Henleys Nurseries. Preparations are under way for refurbishment work on the information centre, both inside and out.



Left

The repaired towpath under  
Hagg Bridge

Below

Steps under construction

Photos Andrew Dobson



In Melbourne the track from the main road to the canal has been repaired . With generous sponsorship from the Fenstone company, twenty tons of limestone was delivered and spread by PCAS volunteers. With support as well from CRT the track now is looking much improved and will benefit all users. Also at Melbourne Arm the working party has added three short paths to join the new forty eight mooring to the road. Temporary fencing was also erected to allow the newly sown grass to become established.

Thanks must be given to all the people who have volunteered and assisted in making all these improvements at various sites along the canal. There is much more still to be done and more volunteers would be welcome. We get many compliments paid to us, as we are working, by the walkers along the canal.

Dick Watson



Top

The new visitor mooring at Melbourne soon after completion

Right

The resurfaced road from Melbourne village to the canal basin. Work done by PCAS volunteers

Photos  
Andrew Dobson



# Volunteering

## Are you interested in helping?

If you have visited the Canal over the last few months you will no doubt have noticed that some hard work has gone into improving a number of features, such as tree work on the towpath, hedge planting at Canal Head and improvements to the towpath particularly at Church Bridge and Hagg Bridge, among other pieces of work.

This has been achieved by a group of dedicated volunteers working under the watchful eye of Dick Watson (with CRT support and guidance) and the quality of the work has been commented on by many visitors as well as staff from the Canal & River Trust.

Many other activities related to the Canal are not quite as obvious but are still essential to the activities of PCAS, not least the dedicated souls who regularly crew our trip boat, *New Horizons*, which operates from Melbourne every Sunday and Bank Holiday from Easter to the end of October. In addition, the information centre at Canal Head is manned by a small group of volunteers every Sunday and Bank Holiday and they provide an essential service to visitors to the canal by providing information about the canal as well as helping to raise funds by selling bric-a-brac etc. (and often encouraging donations towards the work of PCAS).

Many other willing hands give up their time regularly attending meetings with organisations such as Natural England to discuss how work can be done on the canal while preserving the wealth of natural resources for which the canal is well known. All the administration of the activities of PCAS is provided by volunteers.

However, we are always looking for more helpers. You may have some particular skills we could use in our working parties or are just interested in learning a bit more about the canal and helping, for example, with the Information Centre or crewing *New Horizons*.

If you would like to become more involved now is a particularly good time as we get close the bi-centenary of the commencement of work constructing the canal which started in 1815. Please contact our Secretary or any of the Committee (names and contact details inside the front cover of the magazine) to discuss how you could help.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Greg Dixon

## Membership Database Update

Over the last year or two we have been trying hard to update members' details to reflect any changes in circumstances which may have occurred since you joined. We would like to continue with this exercise and would be grateful if you could complete the form included with Double Nine and return to us at the address at the top of the form or to me:

**PCAS Membership Coordinator, Barn Cottage, Melbourne, York YO42 4QJ**

It would be very useful if you could:

- Indicate any changes to your address – postcodes, for example (some records don't have one).
- Update your membership type to match your current membership choice by underlining or putting a ring on the form around the line which applies.
- Update any Standing Orders (if any) to reflect the current subscription fee for your chosen membership category.
- Add a Standing Order if you currently pay by cash or cheque (this is very helpful).
- Include an email address if you have one.
- Update your Gift Aid position by ticking the relevant small box(es)
- Complete a Gift Aid declaration if possible because this allows PCAS to claim 25% of your subscription or donations, as income for the Society.

Your help with this exercise will be greatly appreciated and help us to be more efficient with our mailings of Double Nine and with being able to keep you more informed about PCAS activities.

Greg Dixon

**PCAS Membership Coordinator**

### **Forthcoming IWA East Yorkshire Social Meetings**

Held at Cottingham Methodist Church Hall, Cottingham HU16 4BD

8.00pm—10.00pm £2 to cover refreshments & hall hire. Non members welcome.

Friday September 20th Chris Sherburn will tell us in pictures and words about his trip to London with Wheldale to join in the Jubilee celebrations on the Thames.

Friday October 18th is a presentation by David Hamilton about the Driffield Canal. David is the Chairman of the Commissioners and will use a selection of photographs from his extensive collection.

## The May Bank Holiday fete at Canal Head

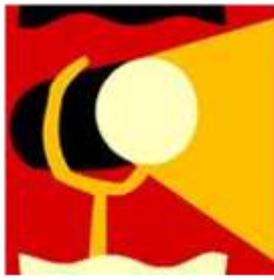
Once again we were blessed with good weather and thanks to the support of many members a magnificent total of £400 was raised for the Society. Particular thanks must be given to the people who ran the stalls and provided the catering for the day. The display of machinery was unfortunately smaller than usual due to a clash of dates with other events. However there was much to be seen of interest on the number of stalls present.



Lacemaking demonstration by Wolds Lacemakers alongside the Inland Waterways Association stand Photo Ed

## Canal Head Information Centre

This area seems to get more and more popular with ever more people discovering its charms. With extra visitors we have seen an increase in our donations, sales from the Centre, however, are still small with most people walking, picnicking or just calling in for a rest to break their journey. We are still looking for more volunteers to help at weekends in this area. If you can help please contact Dick Watson.



## **SPOTLIGHT ON:**

### **Martin Walton**

Day to day work on the Pocklington Canal

My name is Martin Walton and I'm a Waterway Customer Operations Supervisor, now working for the CRT with 34 years' service; I started with the British Waterways Board in August 1979 at Goole Repair Yard as an apprentice fitter. After serving my 4 year apprenticeship; I spent a further 6 years there until the yard was sold on. I moved to Mirfield in West Yorkshire as a Waterway Foreman looking after the upper section of the Calder & Hebble Navigation and the Huddersfield Broad Canal. After a few years I moved on to the main line of the Aire & Calder Navigation supervising works on the Knottingley to Goole Canal. For the last 13 years I have had the pleasure (and pain) to have been working on the North Yorkshire Navigation, which includes the River Ouse, from 100yds downstream of Hook Railway Bridge, up through York onto the Ure and finally onto the Ripon Canal; the Selby Canal to Knottingley and finally the Pocklington Canal.

All three canals are very different but very beautiful in their own right. The Pocklington Canal does tend to stand out though and not just because of its outstanding heritage and nature conservation features. Most people probably don't realise either that the canal is also made up of a series of Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) that sit within the Derwent Ings National Nature Reserve and being the only Remainder canal on my patch makes this a very unique and challenging canal in all senses.

The fact that the canal is a Remainder Waterway means it attracts limited funding from the annual waterway budget and we have to be more resourceful about how we get the best value for everyone's interests. Therefore we have to be careful where the money is spent and of course most of the time I think we get it right but not always you can never know everything about the canal systems even after 34 years. That said I still believe that over all we have made progress on the Pocklington and in the last 3 years the canal has been visited by Robin Evans our outgoing CEO, Director and Head of Engineering and is also currently the focus for a Heritage Lottery Bid as well as providing the location for at least three different volunteering groups over the past year.

Day to day roles vary a great deal, but water control and general maintenance are the norm. Larger tasks don't happen a lot unless we land some extra funding and in this regard Natural England's Simon Christian has been a good ally and partner for us when raising money for works in the SSSI. We have also carried out lock gate

replacement at East Cottingwith and propping of the lock at Sandhill. New lock and bridge operation moorings are in the process of been installed along the canal by contractors, including the new visitor mooring in Melbourne Arm.

Well what more can I say, I have mentioned volunteers briefly above and everyone now knows that volunteers are working throughout the nation's waterways now we are CRT. They are new to us in the North East although to be honest as most PCAS members know we have working with your good selves for many years and have, I hope, a really good working relationship across a wide range of issues and challenges. There has always been a stigma, about volunteers taking staffs jobs and to be honest the issue of working safely is never too far away at CRT and rightly so. I have to admit both crossed my mind when the PCAS volunteer's team took off. It has been a learning curve for both parties but I believe that we have made great progress. The work which has already been achieved has made a fantastic improvement to the Pocklington canal. It takes time to get an understanding of what the volunteers can achieve but also their limitations. This is not a negative, just an appreciation of what can be achieved if we all work together. Here's to the next 34 years!



Martin at the helm of *New Horizons* Photo Alistair Anderson

## From the Archives

Double Nine in June 1973 was full of good news about grants from the East Riding County Council and the Sports Council as well as the then BWB. All this money (several thousands) was used for work on Gardham Lock, Thornton Lock and dredging. The speaker at the 1973 AGM was John Dodwell who was at the time the General Secretary of the Inland Waterways Association. John commented on the generous grants and hoped that the Councillors of the 'soon to be formed' Humberside "would vote us continued support" (John recently revisited the canal in his capacity of Trustee of CRT).

Also noted was the issue by BWB of a standard key to fit all their facilities. This was available at the princely sum of 25p.

Details were also given of a Boat Rally and Garden Party to be held in Cottingwith.

Thirty five years ago in issue 35 it was announced that the Yorkshire Water Authority were to charge £5 to take your boat on the river Derwent. As well as charging, they would also inspect all boats to check they were using sealed toilets.

The Society Stall was the biggest regular fund raiser so it says in the same issue. This was of course before the days of running a tripboat.

Sheila Nix, Secretary of the society in 1978 was presented with the B. P. Trophy. "this handsome trophy, in the form of a slate lock with stainless steel balance beams' was 'to be presented annually to an individual for an outstanding contribution to the waterway cause in the North East'

### Commemorative bench for Jack Prince

A seat has been installed in memory of the late Jack Prince, just downstream of Coates Bridge. Jack lived in Barmby Moor near Pocklington, and in his later years he used to walk the towpath from Canal Head. Richard and Jane Prince (son and daughter of Jack) contacted me to enquire whether it would be possible to install a commemorative bench near Coates Lock, matching one in York Museum Gardens, placed in memory of their mother. The bench was installed by PCAS working party volunteers, who look after the picnic tables and seats along the canal.

The inscription reads: "Jack Prince was full of kindness, energy and enthusiasm and beloved of his wife, children and grandchildren. He lived into his 97th year 21.5.1913-10.12.2009".

I did not know Jack, but perhaps other PCAS members will remember meeting him at the Pocklington Canal.

Alistair Anderson

## The Mighty Redwood

I'm sure everybody remembers their first time on the canals. For me, it was October 1982, I'd seen canals in London during my recent existence as a student and in the two years since finishing, so I knew what they looked like, but I'd never actually been on one.

In 1982 came the opportunity to take a break from work as a Museum of London archaeologist on a narrowboat owned by a friend of one of our band of ex-UCL students and technical staff, and seven of us took the offer up. We had several additional friends invite themselves for some of the first week. The core of the crew, with a couple of changes, went on to drag *Redwood* to some pretty remote ends of lines, through tunnels too low, locks too narrow, and canals too shallow for two further successive holidays. This narrative tells the tale of the first two seasons, '82 and '83, each of two weeks duration.

### About *Redwood*

Built as the last of her class in 1938 by Yarwoods of Northwich, *Redwood* began life as the LMS (later British Railways) 'station boat' *Raye*, serving rail/canal interchanges on the Birmingham Canals. Originally a double-ended open day boat ('joey'), 70ft x 7ft with 3ft 6in sides (fleet number 23), after takeover of the BR fleet by British Waterways in 1954, *Raye* was one of 12 of her class converted at Stone, Staffordshire, into a long-distance butty (unpowered boat towed by a motor) with a back cabin fitted, renamed *Crewe*. Sold into private hands in 1975, *Crewe* was converted into a 'corridor style' hotel boat with a full length cabin extension and her second change of name, to *Redwood*. She could carry eight in cramped cabins, and a couple more on the bench and floor in the large lounge forward of the galley and toilet/shower. The engine room could only be reached by doors on the small aft deck where the entrance to a traditional boat cabin are, which meant sidling round the narrow walkway on the side of the cabin via side doors, or walking over the roof.

As the photos show, the station boats had beautiful clean lines; with a long straight foredeck and strong curve to the stem, *Redwood* looked like she could cut through the water. Unfortunately as her final conversion had meant adding a motorboat counter, engine room, she needed a lot of ballast to level her back out; she must have drawn around 3ft at the stern and sailed like she was carrying a 20-ton load. To make matters worse, her rudder had also been thoughtfully bent by a previous steerer and was at a noticeable angle to the tiller; a great advantage turning one way, but definitely not the other, and it required constant weight on the tiller to make her go straight. Another idiosyncrasy was the fuel tank which was split in two halves either side of the engine with an interconnecting pipe; she had a tendency to pretend to have no fuel when the other side of the tank was still half full. Being a full 7ft to start with and with no adjustable chain braces across what had been the hold, she had also developed slight middle-age spread, as had some of the brick lock chambers, and on a number of occasions, we found ourselves starting to 'hang' as the water level dropped, or stuck at the bottom as it rose around us, and had to slam the paddle down quick while we jumped about or used levers to try and free her.



The stern and bow of Redwood under her original name. Courtesy Ros Prettyman

We quickly found that the large area of cabin side acting as an efficient sail, the deep draught acting in the same way underwater, pushed by any undercurrents from weirs or river flows, while grounding on the slightest mudbank, and the bent rudder, combined to make steering *Redwood* a constant challenge. This would make us a little unpopular at times, as we bore down on an unsuspecting boat minding its own business, having lost control in shallow water, or drifted sideways, blocking the navigation, but steering was never boring!

### **1982 voyage**

A good number of our crew were already members of London Waterways Recovery Group and claimed some familiarity with the canal system. A leisured crawl was never going to be on the cards. This was going to be a marathon, stopping at as many pubs as possible and motoring on through all conditions from breakfast through to after dark, which in October was in the late afternoon. We were to make many mistakes, including 'dividing the canal junction', in other words not making the turn and hitting the bend dead centre, and also, on occasion, 'blocking the navigation' either by managing to moor the bow and stern on opposite sides of the cut through lack of co-ordination, or by entering a winding hole (turning place) which was so silted up that we 'stemmed up' (both ends of the boat ran aground, leaving us wedged across).

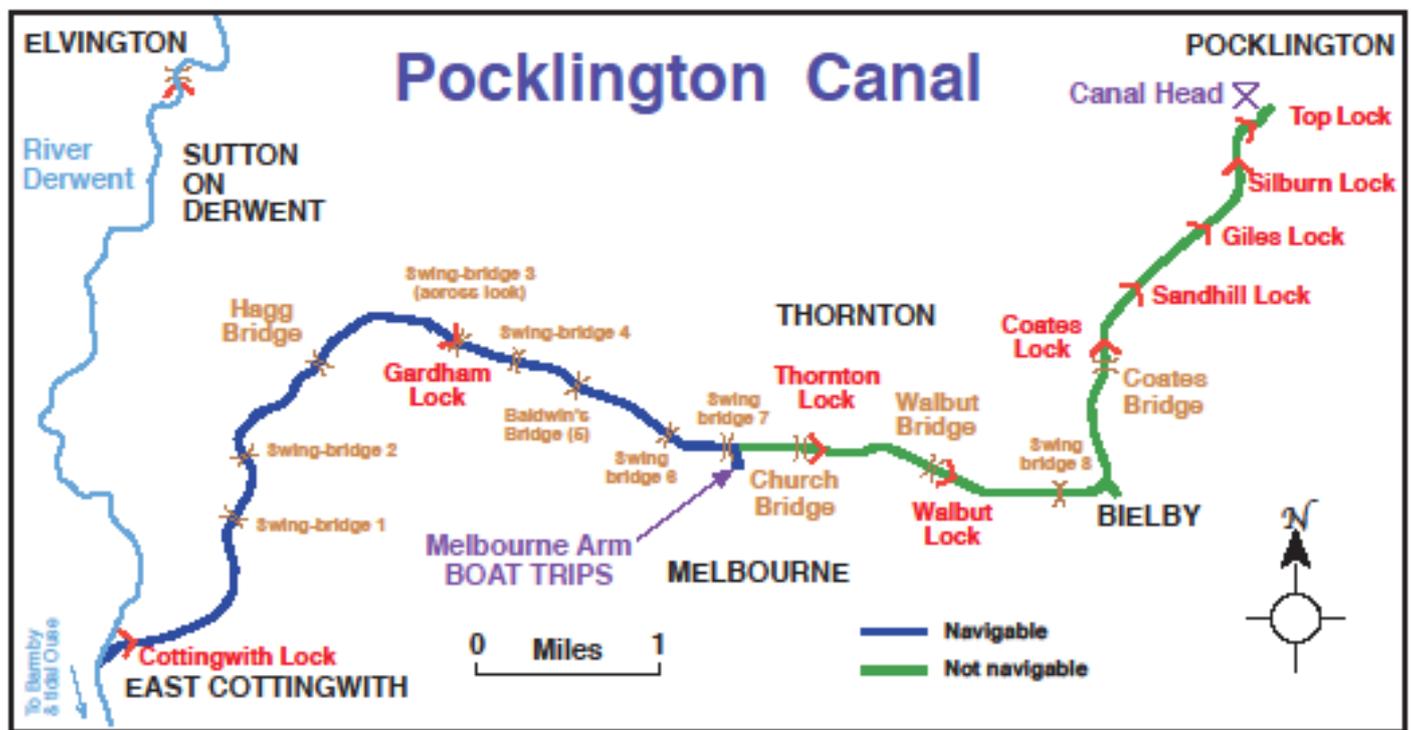
That first year, we picked *Redwood* up in the Napton area and took her down the Avon, up the Severn, Staffs & Worcs, Shropshire Union, Trent & Mersey, and back down the Coventry, leaving the boat at its then home base, Blisworth, with several long detours en route, a journey of around 350 miles, 250 locks in the fortnight.

The first part of the journey, including the locks of the Hatton flight near Warwick, followed the Grand Union. This section of the London-Birmingham motorway of the canal network was widened in the early 1930s, with the locks doubled in width to carry 'breasted-up' pairs of narrowboats or single 14ft wide boats. The concrete copings of the sheetpiled sides often bear the cast dates of each completed section (Hatton flight: 1934). A problem with the GU is that many sections are on embankments in open country, and it's easy to get blown from one side to another. *Redwood*, with its already bent rudder, skittered crab-wise at an angle, and it took a lot of weight on the tiller to persuade her otherwise, so we left her to her own devices until we met something coming the opposite way. Unfortunately, there are a lot of deep blind bends on the GU, and the sides, when you hit them, are hard.

Trevor Brigham

The remainder of Trevor's article and more photographs will be in the next issue of Double Nine Ed.

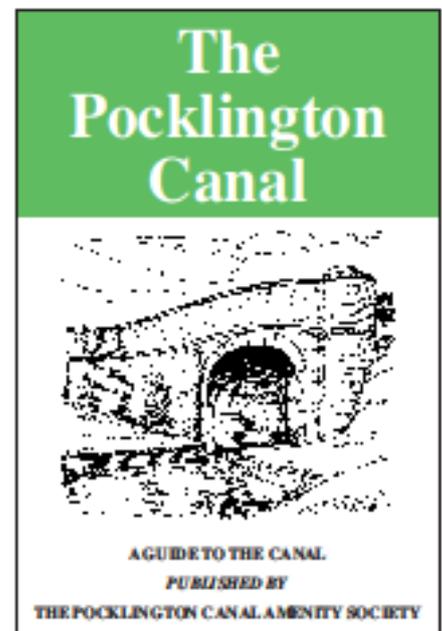
Don't forget. This and some back issues of the magazine can be viewed online with all the pictures in colour, by going to the website and following the link. You will also find the latest pictures of *New Horizons* passengers and all the up to date news. Visit [www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org](http://www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org)



## GUIDE TO THE POCKLINGTON CANAL – £3.50

This PCAS guide was revised in 2008 and includes a wealth of information about the canal and surrounding area, its history, geography, restoration and wildlife, with general maps of the area and strip maps of the canal from the Derwent to Canal Head. The guide also contains attractive line drawings and an up-to-date list of useful telephone numbers and addresses.

The Guide is available from W & C Forth, Printers and Stationers, 13 Waterloo Lane, Pocklington. Please contact the PCAS Secretary to order a copy by post (cost £4 including postage). The Guide is also available from the PCAS Information Centre and from our tripboat.



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Redwood and Monarch breasted up in Manchester Ship Canal lock

