A winter landscape with snow-covered trees and a picnic table. The scene is set in a park-like area with a clear blue sky. The trees are heavily laden with snow, and the ground is covered in a thick layer of snow. A wooden picnic table and a bench are visible in the foreground, also covered in snow. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

DOUBLE NINE

POCKLINGTON CANAL AMENITY SOCIETY

SPRING 2016

No. 108

THE POCKLINGTON CANAL AMENITY SOCIETY

Registered Charity 500637 www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org

Patrons The Earl of Halifax Neil Edwards
Hon Vice-President Mrs Sheila M Nix MBE

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

Welcome

This issue of Double Nine is being published earlier than usual to promote our events, which are listed on page 32. We have other events in mind and these will be published on the website, on Facebook and in the Summer issue of Double Nine.

In addition to the usual reports about what has happened since the last issue, several articles have been contributed including two on wildlife. Thank you very much to everyone who has contributed to this issue and especially to Tim Charlson for helping source material and providing photos and to Trevor Brigham for proof reading and other help.

If you would like to contribute to the next issue of Double Nine or know someone who would write something interesting for members, please get in touch. Examples of articles can be found in previous issues of the magazine and there is a growing collection of back issues on our website.

We are always on the lookout for interesting cover photos for the magazine. For the front cover, a photo with plenty of sky is ideal, but it has to be a 'portrait' rather than 'landscape' orientation unless it can be used on both the front and back covers.

While our working party volunteers are increasingly active in maintaining the canal, members will be pleased to read that work at Thornton Lock will be starting soon, funded by our Bicentenary Appeal.

As usual, the Annual General Meeting is in April. There will be at least one place available on the Committee and there is a nomination form in this magazine.

Alistair Anderson



Search for **Pocklington Canal Amenity Society**

PCAS has a **group** for Facebook users and a separate **organisation** page with announcements and news for those not registered on Facebook. We have had some splendid wildlife photos and interesting historic photos posted on Facebook, plus some interesting discussion.

Thanks very much to Roger Pattison for the seasonal photo on the covers of this magazine.

Chairman's Column

The Bicentenary Appeal

In recent months, much of my time, and your committee's time, has been spent on our Bicentenary Appeal. At the last reckoning, this reached the £100,000 mark, and so is well on the way to the target of £250,000. Nevertheless, the raising of the remaining £150,000 during the next two years remains a formidable task. Applications have been made to various charitable trusts, and others are in preparation. I would be grateful for any suggestions of further sources of funding.



A major boost was given to the Appeal by the visit of Lord Halifax to the canal on 21st October. We were able to take him on a boat trip from Melbourne to Church Bridge, from where the party walked to Thornton Lock. At the lock side, he performed a little ceremony, cutting the first sod, as the start of our works there. This was given widespread coverage in the press, both local and national, and on radio. Lord Halifax showed great interest in the

canal and in our bicentenary project, and expressed the wish to make future visits. I am very grateful to him for his help in promoting our cause.

Some of our recent events have also made a significant contribution to the fund and further ones are planned. Please give these your support. We would also welcome suggestions for further fund raising activities, especially if they come with an offer to help organise them.

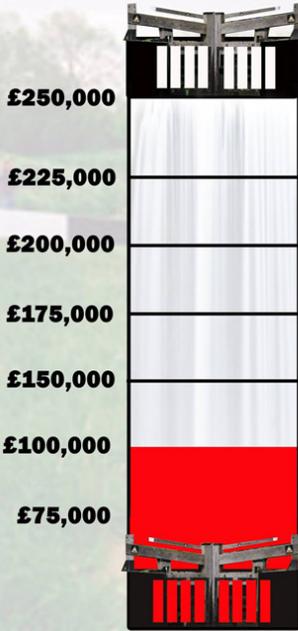
Recent Events

The exhibition on the history of the Pocklington Canal, which had been planned to take place at the Arts Centre in Pocklington was transferred to the Parish Church, because there was uncertainty about the availability of the Arts Centre. It took place over four days in September, but attracted fewer visitors than we had hoped, probably due to the less central location. Nevertheless, some useful contacts were made.

The Frog Racing in Melbourne Village Hall at the end of October was a great success, raising nearly £1,000, and I am grateful to Dick Watson, and his connections in the Young Farmers for organising this. Indeed it was so successful that we will be having another frog race in Melbourne on Friday 26th February.

Our customary November Sunday lunch took place at the Oaks Golf Club on 29th November. This year, the attendance was such that a number of people had to sit at

BE A PAL OF POCKLINGTON CANAL



Please help us raise **£250,000** to restore this beautiful historic canal from Melbourne to Bielby.

To Donate:

Please use our donation boxes

by cheque payable to:-
PCAS and send to:-
PCAS Treasurer,
64 Willow Park Road,
Wilberfoss,
York, YO41 5PS

Text PCAS18
with the amount
to 70070
eg PCAS18 £10

www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org

a table in a separate room. At the end of the lunch, the winners of our Bicentenary Grand Draw were picked. A list of these appears elsewhere in this issue.

Future Events

In addition to the race night mentioned above, several other events are planned for 2016. We expect to have an Open Day at Canal Head on the Spring Bank Holiday, and a Pims evening at Melbourne in July. Also at Melbourne, there will be a Pie and Peas Supper in October, and in November there will be our usual Sunday lunch. We also have the offer of a classical guitar concert for the benefit of our Bicentenary Fund, which we propose should take place at the Arts Centre in Pocklington. The date for this is not yet fixed, as we are waiting news of the progress of the refurbishment that is taking place there.

Canal Guide

The work on the revised edition of the Canal Guide has been completed and at the time of writing it is being prepared for printing. The new edition includes a number of revisions to the text to bring it up to date and will also, for the first time, include some colour photographs. My thanks to everyone who has helped in preparing this.

Merchandise

Tim Charlson has continued to promote and extend our range of merchandise. Information about the items for sale appear elsewhere in this edition of Double Nine.

HLF Bid

The Canal & River Trust submitted its application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for Phase II of its scheme - The Pocklington Canal, a Gem in the Landscape. If successful, this will release the money for the schemes developed in Phase I to be delivered. A decision is expected in March 2016. Jane Thomson has provided a report on page 15.

Much of the money will be spent on various environmental measures to improve the biodiversity of the canal. Some will be spent on visitor facilities and interpretative materials. Some will be spent on restoring Church Bridge, which is the canal's prime heritage structure. There is also provision for No7 Swingbridge to be modified and given an appearance similar to its original design when the canal was opened in 1818.

The Bicentenary Project

The visit of Lord Halifax marked the start of our Bicentenary Project, which we expect to continue during 2016 and 2017, and be completed by the bicentenary of the opening of the canal which occurred in May 1818. When the project is completed, it will be possible for boats to reach the junction with the Bielby Arm, an extension of the navigable length by two miles.



Work has started at Thornton Lock (see photo) with repairs to the original bywash tube. The roof of this suffered a collapse some years ago. The next phase, scheduled for the Spring of 2016, will be the employment of a contractor to drive sheet piles to isolate the lock, allowing it to be dewatered and inspected. Repairs to the lock chamber will follow during the summer, when a visit from the Waterway Recovery Group is planned. New lock gates, paddlegear and walkways will be fitted, before the piles are removed.

A similar programme of works is planned for Walbut Lock during 2017. Although we currently have enough funds to start the work at Thornton Lock, the work at Walbut Lock, and the completion of the scheme is dependant on the success of our Bicentenary Appeal, so we have our work cut out over the next two years.

New Horizons

Our trip boat, *New Horizons*, had another record breaking year in 2015, with the number of trips and passenger carryings both up. The profit from this venture is one of our major income streams, and I am grateful to all the people, both crew members and those behind the scenes, who contribute to the its continued success.

Paul Waddington

Dredging at Canal Head

Canal & River Trust contractors Land & Water carried out extensive dredging above Top Lock in November. This is done periodically because the Canal Head feeder brings in silt as well as well as water. In the past the dredging has been carried out from the bank but this time a more thorough job was done using an excavator on a boat.



Picture Quiz

This object in this photo was found submerged at Canal Head during the recent dredging work mentioned above.

The 'ball' at the top of the photo has multiple holes and it is connected to a hollow tube.

It is about 3.5 feet in length.

We don't know what the mystery object is, so please send suggestions to enquiries@pcas.karoo.co.uk or contact any of our committee members. Your suggestions will be published in the next issue of Double Nine.



Working Party Report

The painting season continued into September with the completion of No.6 swing bridge and of Top Lock at Canal Head, which is of course our most visited area – some thought we had completely restored the lock!



- The weed boat *Sheila Nix* was very busy keeping a channel clear from Melbourne to East Cottingwith. The section of canal between Hagg Bridge and No.2 swing bridge was particularly troublesome due to many floating 'islands' of vegetation comprising mostly of reeds.
- In the autumn a channel was cleared up to Thornton Lock and a few shorter boats did make that particular trip but the winding hole (turning point) does need further specialist dredging.
- The working party members completed the new water point at the 48 hour mooring, Melbourne Arm. The road from the village down to the Arm continues to require repeated repairs.
- Two new seats were introduced for passengers waiting for trips on *New Horizons* and these are now in storage ready for the 2016 season.
- John and Richard, our engineers, once again spent many hours working on the weed boat, this time on fitting safety features to allow the vessel to be used for general maintenance by temporarily removing the cutters over the winter.
- In November and December the Canal & River Trust (CRT) authorised contractors to remove approximately 2000 tons of silt at Canal Head to reduce the amount travelling down the canal and causing problems 'down stream'. The vast array of mechanical equipment attracted many visitors who wondered if they were clearing the canal all the way to Melbourne.

- PCAS volunteers meanwhile, were starting on preparations at Thornton Lock to clear the undergrowth and soil to allow an inspection of the collapsed by-wash by CRT engineers. It was found that part of the by-wash had been covered by short steel piles which were removed to reveal a hole approximately 8ft long and 4ft wide. Below this was a 3ft wide brick-lined round tunnel with a flat roof of stone slabs, creating the by-wash. The rest of the tunnel appeared to be intact. The engineers now have to decide whether to restore or conserve the tunnel or indeed to use another method of moving excess water from the top to the bottom of the lock. We should know this decision by January 2016.



Our other winter jobs included tidying the Melbourne Arm car park, replacing road-side posts at canal head car park & removing and re-treating picnic benches. And another year goes by!

So a big thank you to all the volunteers who have made this possible.

A further thank you to those who have donated security fencing, wood, paving slabs etc.

I am sure anyone visiting the Pocklington Canal would agree that it is pleasant, tidy and litter-free – all due to the efforts of the volunteers who have collectively given over 1600 hours of their time.

Dick Watson

Flooding at Christmas

York was badly hit by floods around Christmas and the Pocklington Canal did not escape. As a result of flooding in Pocklington on Boxing Day, the Bielby Beck overflowed into the canal between Walbut and Thornton locks, causing damage to the bank, blocking the Thornton feeder with gravel and causing a considerable amount of reeds to build up above the top gates of Thornton Lock. The Canal & River Trust may need to remove the gravel to maintain an adequate supply of water during the summer months. Volunteers cleared the reeds and the photo shows two PCAS supporters next to the mounds of vegetation.



New PCAS Merchandise

We now have packs of PCAS note-cards (see facing page) available to purchase. The five note-cards, priced at £3.50, each has a different canal scene and are blank inside so can be used for any occasion.

Our mugs and fridge magnets are still available at £5 and £3 respectively.

If you would like to buy PCAS merchandise or have any suggestions for fundraising, please contact me.

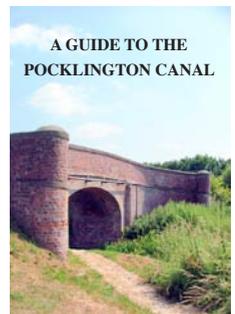
All profits from the sale of our merchandise go directly towards the Restoration Appeal.

Tim Charlson



New Canal Guide

As mentioned in the Chairman's Column, PCAS is producing a revised Canal Guide and by the time the next issue of Double Nine is circulated, the Guide should be on sale. Here is a preview of the front cover.





Restoration Appeal – Could You Help?

PCAS is on the cusp of one of the most exciting and important developments in its 46 year history. We are now close to starting repairs to Thornton Lock and hope to have this fully restored by the end of 2016 – with a bit of luck!

As you have probably seen elsewhere in this copy of your newsletter the Restoration milestone of £100,000 has been reached, which is indeed inspiring stuff BUT in order to restore the canal right up to the Bielby Arm we will require a further £150,000 which, I think we all agree, is a tall order but not insurmountable.

We have sought to generate a noticeable increase in our income through more effective and popular events; we have begun to 'raise the profile' of PCAS both locally and regionally and we are attempting to publicise the Restoration Appeal far and wide. The trip boat brings in healthy donations to PCAS and we are trying to think of any further profitable fund-raising activities that can get us to that magical £250,000 total...

This preamble leads to a direct appeal to you, our loyal supporters:

- All our members are very important to us and some of you have supported the society for many years. With the cost of three newsletters now over £6 per year we would welcome all extra support possible.
- Would you please consider making a donation towards the Restoration Appeal?

Many thanks for your continuing support.

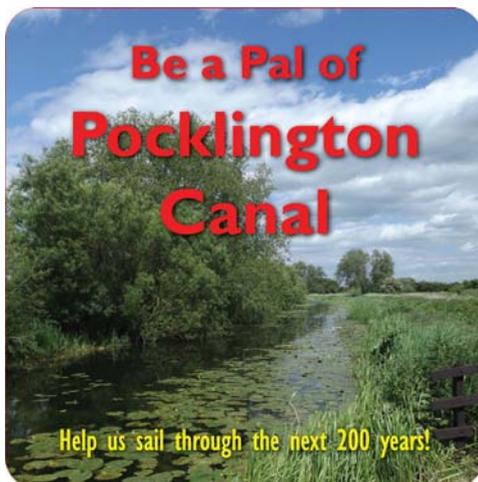
Tim Charlson

Merchandise Coordinator

07926 910717

PCAS Beermats

Our very own beer mats are appearing in local pubs, together with collecting boxes.



The 9½ mile long Pocklington Canal was built between 1815–18 to serve local communities and is now celebrating its bicentenary. To mark this event, Pocklington Canal Amenity Society and the Canal & River Trust hope to restore 2 miles between Melbourne and Bielby. There are several ways you can help us to achieve our aim and maintain this beautiful canal for future generations: –

- Make a donation of £1–£5 or £10 towards our restoration work on JustTextGiving by texting PCAS18 and the amount to 70070
- Become a PCAS member and then you could assist:
 - on our regular working parties
 - at our Canal Head information centre
 - by training to crew our trip boat 'New Horizons'



For further details about the Canal, making a donation, or joining PCAS, see our website: www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org or visit our Facebook pages

PLEASE CAN YOU HELP?

Volunteers are required to join our friendly team to create a regular rota at Canal Head Information Centre on Sunday afternoons between noon and 4pm, beginning at Easter 2016. We require 2 volunteers to be on duty at the Information Centre with a further volunteer manning the PCAS Merchandise Stall.

We try to provide information about PCAS to our many visitors whilst generating much needed income for our Restoration Appeal.

For more information please contact Dick Watson 07770 719354.

A BIT MORE HELP REQUIRED

To raise funds for our Appeal:

Jigsaws, plants, fruit & veg sell very well at events at Canal Head...

AND FINALLY...

As the restoration at Thornton Lock is due to begin very soon we will need a reliable petrol cement mixer, a Portaloo and a 'rest room'

Could anyone assist please? Many thanks, **Dick Watson**

From Melbourne Parish newsletter

Your canal is 200 years old!

An update from the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

You may have noticed some new banners appearing around the area regarding the Bicentennial Restoration Appeal launched earlier this year. The total raised has now reached the point at which we can begin preparatory work on essential repairs to Thornton Lock near Church Bridge. We were delighted that one of our patrons, Lord Halifax, visited the lock recently to ceremonially cut the first piece of turf to signal a new chapter in the restoration of the canal.

The aim of the restoration between Melbourne and Bielby is to enable the navigation of a further two miles of the canal which will benefit the overall biodiversity of the waterway. In other words it will be good for canal craft and good for everything else that lives in or alongside the waterway.

There is still a very long way to go to achieve our target but we are working very hard to generate funds through holding events in the area. We all understand the recreational importance of the canal and we want to ensure that future generations are able to enjoy it as much as we do.

If you would like to donate to the appeal or become a member of PCAS please visit our website for further details www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org

Alternatively please contact Tim Charlson on 07926 910717

PCAS Annual Dinner

The Annual Dinner at The Oaks Golf Club attracted 65 PCAS Members, friends and family on Sunday 29 November. We were well fed and watered by an extremely friendly and attentive staff who certainly had their work cut out with the popularity of the event. To cap a very enjoyable day the raffle brought in just short of £1400 for the Restoration Appeal.

Raffle Prizes (with the winning ticket numbers) drawn at the Annual Dinner at The Oaks Golf Club

1. Bush Cooker - 3066
2. Two night break in Filey - 239
3. Glider flight -1211
4. Mystery Prize – 1545
5. Anderton Boat Lift vouchers – 267
6. 6 bottles of wine – 2377
7. Framed canal picture – 1906
8. Family ticket for Burnby Hall Gardens – 526
9. Meal for 2 at Ye Olde Red Lion – 3173
10. Owl photo – 370
11. Xmas cake – 589
12. Box of chocolate truffles – 3178
13. Book 'Secret Waters' – 1264
14. Cross stitch – 257
15. Framed picture of York Minster – 185
16. Book 'Exploring Britain's Canals' – 1558
17. Crafty – Habitat – 410
18. Bottle of Cava – 430
19. Bottle of JP Chenet – 92
20. Bottle of Carta Roja – 2074
21. Bottle of Campa Vioja – 1517
22. Bottle of Mulled Wine – 1258
23. Box of Heroes chocolates - 905

PCAS would like to thank everyone who generously donated prizes for the raffle and everyone who bought raffle tickets.

Heritage Lottery Fund Progress

The last nine months has been a busy time for the HLF Pocklington Canal - A Gem in the Landscape project team. We welcomed Rachel Walker as our project Development Officer who was able to steer us through HLF's guidance to ensure that we delivered on our objectives during the Round 1 phase of our project.

These were to recruit a development officer, produce a Conservation Management Plan with ECUS consultants for the built and natural heritage, produce a Maintenance and Management Plan which would guide us in what works to do on the canal, how and when, produce an Activity Plan led by PLB consultants, which would outline any new consultation activity and detail how we are going to engage with people and the community and finally, produce a Visitor Interpretation Plan which would allow people to be better informed about their heritage, without compromising the sensitive landscape in which it will sit.

ECUS helped us to write the built heritage elements of our Conservation Management Plan, but I must extend a huge thank you to Simon Christian from Natural England and Phillippa Baron CRT's Ecologist for producing all of the natural heritage elements to provide us with one cohesive and easy to read plan.

One of the highlights for me during this development phase was when we invited a local primary school to pilot our education activities. Not only did they say yes, but they brought the whole school! We knew we were onto a good thing!



One of our pilot nature walks

Finally my thanks go out to our friends

at PCAS, particularly Paul and Alistair, Simon Christian at Natural England, Annabel Hanson at East Riding of Yorkshire Council and to Rachel Walker all for supporting and helping us to reach our goals. Our final bid was submitted on 30th November with a decision due at the end of March. Fingers Crossed!

Jane Thomson

Enterprise Manager
North East Waterways
Canal & River Trust

Frog-Racing Night

Melbourne Village Hall 30th October 2015

This was a new venture for PCAS and despite initial concerns about the welfare of the frogs involved (ours were made from plywood) the event got off to a great start with sponsors donating prize money for every race.



Runners in the first race had been bought by individuals who were unable to attend on the night itself. A quiet affair this as few spectators knew what to expect but by the third race of the evening the atmosphere and volume was increased dramatically. The younger members of the audience were showing the rest the way home!

Becoming a frog-racing jockey is a tricky skill to master and can take several drinks. Moving a wooden frog by holding a secured piece of string through its middle may seem easy but it most certainly is not - it must be seen to be believed!

The seventh and final race saw the previous six winners competing in the Grand Final. A scramble ensued to bid for the skilled jockeys and then they were off! Vocal encouragement could be heard in Pocklington..

If you didn't manage to attend in October you will have another chance to come along to our next Meeting on Friday 26th February at Melbourne Village Hall when we hope to raise another £1000 towards our Restoration Appeal target. It's a fun-packed evening for Jockeys and Owners of any age!

Dick Watson

Membership

We welcome the following members who have joined since our last newsletter.

Mr Hobson	Pocklington
Mr Jewitt	Pocklington
Mr R & Mrs CM Smith	Pocklington
Mr Marston	Pocklington
Mr Batt	York
Mrs Tippett-Wilson	Pocklington
Mr E Smith	Market Weighton
Mr Boyle	York
Ms Ambler	Wigtownshire
Mr & Mrs Stanbury	Pocklington
Mr David Steele	Knottingley

Having recently taken over as Membership Secretary I have encountered a number of anomalies.

Many of these are to do with the payment amounts. We last increased our membership rates in 2012 but several members are still paying at the older rates. **Please note that currently Annual membership is £10 per year and Family membership is £15 per year.** A full list of subscription prices is shown inside the back cover.

Please check the amounts you are paying and where necessary please amend any standing orders that may be out of date. Where possible I will remind members when their renewal is due. However, if you can keep note of the date yourself this helps me a great deal. Also please check that you are paying the correct amount.

We do try to keep our rates as low as possible but with the high costs of postage we are barely covering the cost of producing and mailing our newsletters. This also being the time we urgently need funds for restoring the two miles to Bielby makes it more important to be raising the correct fees.

We are always happy to send out Double Nine by email. A number of you already take it this way and that helps up by reducing printing and mailing costs. If you wish to choose this option please email me at membership@pocklingtoncanalsociety.org

Roger Bromley

Membership Secretary

2015- A wildlife year along the Canal and Ings

Unseasonal warm weather at the start of the year meant there were plenty of insects still around, for mixed flocks of small birds to exploit. These flocks mostly consist of Long-Tailed, Blue and Great Tit, with the odd Wren, Treecreeper and Goldcrest accompaniment as they move noisily along the hedgerows. Sometimes with these groups is the rarer Willow Tit. This is a unique British subspecies, but unfortunately their numbers have crashed by 85% between 1995 and 2011. The RSPB estimate there are only 3,500 pairs remaining. On the Ings they seem to be holding their own. I have seen a family group of four this year with another pair holding a different territory. They are more likely to be encountered in the Alder trees near the marina or by Church Bridge and if not seen, can be recognised by their “zi taah taah taah” call which is quite distinctive.

At this time of year buntings and finches flock together to find food. They also roost together overnight as added protection from predators. On the reserve we are lucky to have a Corn Bunting roost which peaked at 170 birds at the end of January. Corn Buntings are a species in decline across the country as farmland practices change and their life cycle needs to be better understood to help reverse this downturn. To this end, Natural England netted and ringed a number of these birds and fitted them with coloured rings. As it is not known how far afield they roam from the roosting site during the day, it is hoped that the coloured ring may help identify birds seen in the fields.



Most people I meet around the reserve love to see a Kingfisher. However, despite its brightly coloured plumage it can be a difficult bird to see. The leafless branches of winter offer good opportunities to see one of these birds perched overlooking the canal edge or back drains and dykes. Although it can be seen almost anywhere at any time of year it can often be spotted around the boats in the arm, sitting on a rudder

or mooring line. Patience and an ability to stand and wait can prove fruitful in seeing one of our most exotic birds. Listen out for the distinctive high pitched pip,pip,pip heralding the arrival of a fast flying individual and you may be rewarded with a view of one speeding by.

Early this spring a pair of Short-Eared Owls was seen feeding over the nature



reserve and displaying courtship behaviour raising hopes they may linger to breed. Short-Eared Owls do turn up on the Ings during winter but so far have not bred in the area. Sadly the pair moved off after a stay of about 4-5 weeks, but those lucky enough to have seen them will long remember the sight of 3 Barn Owls and both Short-Eared Owls hunting together, as a local highlight.



One September morning I was delighted to discover three young otters playing in the canal gradually drifting towards the marina where they were finally lost in the vegetation. Further sightings to the east of Church Bridge indicate that it is still possible to have a truly wild encounter with one of the UK's most exciting mammals right on our own doorstep.

One bird that has gradually been spreading northwards over the years is the Little Egret. There has been a small number over the last few years around Wheldrake Ings but this summer one has been sighted a few times around Church Bridge. Look out for a small white heron-like bird with a black bill and bright yellow feet. Also keep an eye to the skies for the distinctive silhouette of the Red Kite. They are becoming more frequent over Melbourne and Thornton Ings with their forked tail a characteristic feature.

Although the year was seen out with more unseasonal weather this didn't deter the arrival of the winter migrants, with the change of season heralded by the returning flocks of Pink-Footed Geese in early October. Heading south over Melbourne in V formations, yapping as they went I counted three flights of over 300 in the space of an hour. The final destination for most of them is Norfolk, but every year small numbers can be seen in the wider lower Derwent valley. Fieldfares and Redwings are back and currently feeding in the fields and hedgerows and the flooded fields have once again seen the appearance of winter ducks.

Despite the fact 2015 was not the best year for breeding wildlife, due to the topsy-turvy weather, the longer term cycle shows that species quickly recover given the right conditions. We can be very proud that the Pocklington Canal and Ings offer nature a very good chance to thrive. It's a shame we can't do anything about the weather!

Neil Cooper, Bird Recorder for Melbourne & Thornton Ings NNR

Photos kindly provided by Steve Jones

Left: Kingfisher and Short-eared owl. *Above:* Barn owl

Damselflies of the Pocklington Canal

I have visited the canal a few times in recent years looking for dragonflies but have only taken short walks from the canal head. Hence when invited to contribute to Double Nine magazine I thought it best to refer to Paul Aston's recent book 'Dragonflies of South-east Yorkshire'. Paul has been, until the end of 2015, the British Dragonfly Society recorder for South-east Yorkshire (which roughly corresponds to the East Riding) and has provided photographs to support my notes about the damselflies to be seen around the canal. The photographs only feature males because they are easier than females to identify.

Pocklington Canal is considered to be one of the best sites for damselflies and dragonflies in the East Riding. In his book, Paul states that 7 damselfly species and 8 dragonfly species can be seen along the canal; the overall total of 15 species is slightly more than the often quoted figure of 13 species for the canal.

Damselflies and dragonflies comprise the insect order Odonata, which means 'toothed jaw'; this reflects the predatory nature of both the winged adult stage and the aquatic larval stage. It is helpful that all British species have widely accepted common (English) names in addition to their scientific (Latin) names. However, it can be confusing that the term dragonfly is often used when referring to both damselflies and dragonflies.

Adult damselflies and dragonflies are insects characterised by having short antennae, large eyes, two pairs of membranous and veined wings and a long abdomen. Notable features of the aquatic larvae include modified mouthparts which form a prehensile and jointed structure (often called the mask) for catching prey. The larvae also have gills at the end of the abdomen; these are hidden within the rectal chamber of dragonflies but protrude as three leaf-like structures from the tip of the abdomen of damselflies.

Damselflies are delicate insects (unlike the more robust dragonflies); they have a triangular shaped head with eyes at the side. The front wings are the same shape as the rear pair. Most damselflies will perch with their wings held against their abdomen. They are weak flyers and sometimes can be seen in large numbers.

The damselflies present on the canal are members of three separate families: Demoiselles, Emeralds and the Blues and Reds. The flight periods quoted below for each species refer to the East Riding as a whole but are indicative of the best times to see particular species on the canal.

Demoiselles (Calopterygidae)

Banded Demoiselle (*Calopteryx splendens*)

Flight period: mid May – early September (peak numbers early June- mid July).



Banded Demoiselle, male

This is a very attractive insect, and is larger than other damselflies on the canal. The males have a metallic blue-green body with a blue-black band on the wings. The courtship display of the males involves wing fluttering and diving onto the water surface! Females have a metallic green body and wings with a greenish tint but no dark band. It is a species that likes slow flowing water and has been reported to be more abundant in the streams and ditches that border the canal. The closely related species, the Beautiful Demoiselle, likes faster flowing water and is not present on Pocklington Canal.

Emeralds (Lestidae)

Emerald Damselfly (*Lestes sponsa*)

Flight period: early June – end of September (peak numbers July-August).

The name *Lestes* derives from a Greek word meaning 'robber', which ties in with its predatory nature. Both sexes have a green body; males also have small areas of blue eg at the tip of the abdomen. A characteristic feature of this species is that it perches with its wings half open, hence its alternative name, Common Spreadwing. It is a species to be found in dense vegetation around margins of the canal. It is also associated with acidic heathland ponds eg on nearby Allerthorpe Common.



Emerald Damselfly, male

Reds and Blues (Coenagrionidae)

Large Red Damselfly (*Pyrhosoma nymphula*)

Flight period: late April - late July (peak numbers during May).

This is the first damselfly to appear in Spring, with emergence mostly occurring over just a few weeks. The adult is generally easy to identify because it is the only red bodied damselfly in Yorkshire. Males are predominantly red with some black markings; females are darker having more black on the abdomen (there are a variety of female colour forms, including one with no red markings). Adults and larvae are territorial; this species is unusual in that the larvae show vigorous territorial behaviour.



Large Red Damselfly, male

Azure Damselfly
(*Coenagrion puella*)

Flight period: early May – early August (peak numbers late May-late June).

Common Blue Damselfly
(*Enallagma cyathigerum*)

Flight period: late April - late September (peak numbers late May-end of August).

These two species are difficult to tell apart. To identify the males you need a good view of the blue and black markings on the top of the thorax and abdomen. Females are even more tricky to identify. Males and females also show some colour variation.

Both species are frequently seen on the canal; Common Blues tend to prefer less vegetated areas.

Blue-tailed Damselfly
(*Ischnura elegans*)

Flight period: late April-late September (peak numbers late May-late July).

This is one of the commonest damselflies in Britain. Its widespread distribution is probably due at least in part to its ability to tolerate some pollution and poor weather.

In mature males, the narrow blue band towards the tip of the abdomen is very noticeable and contrasts with the black colouration along the rest of the top side of the abdomen (note: you need to look carefully because the other blue coloured Damselflies on the canal, and the Emerald Dam-



Azure Damselfly, male



Common Blue Damselfly, male



Blue-tailed Damselfly, male

selfly, have a blue area at, or towards, the tip of abdomen). Female colouration is more variable: some look like males with a blue and black thorax; others have pink, violet or green colouration on the thorax.

Red-eyed Damselfly (*Erythromma najas*)

Flight period; early May - end August (peak numbers late May-end of July).

The mature male is predominantly black with some blue markings and a bright red eye; the blue colouration at the tip of the abdomen is particularly noticeable (note: the exact position of this blue area is different to that on the Blue-tailed Damselfly). Mature females appear darker with brown-red eyes and lack the blue tip to the abdomen.



Red-eyed Damselfly, male

This species likes to perch on water lily leaves. It is reported to be more abundant at the western end of the canal. Until quite recently, Pocklington Canal was considered to be at the northern limit of this damselfly's distribution in the UK but in the last few years the Red-eyed Damselfly has been found further north in Yorkshire.

For more information about damselflies and dragonflies, including details of the critical features for identifying each species, I can recommend the 'Field Guide to the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Great Britain and Ireland' revised edition, dated 2014, by Steve Brooks and Steve Cham (British Wildlife Publishing). If you don't want to buy a copy, one is available for loan from the East Riding library service. In addition, the Yorkshire Dragonfly Group has an excellent website run by Paul Ashton, see <http://www.yorkshiredragonflies.org.uk/>.

I hope this article encourages you to look more closely at these fascinating insects. You may find that a pair of close focussing binoculars are useful for viewing damselflies that settle on vegetation on the canal bank.

Richard Shillaker
Yorkshire Dragonfly Group

Photos kindly provided by Paul Ashton

New Horizons News



Not long before the end of the season, Ivor Nicholson took ill and he died in November. Ivor was our most active crew member last year and usually turned up early to polish the brass and make sure the boat was shipshape before trips. You may remember Ivor's article on Canal Hotel Boating in the Summer 2014 issue of *Double Nine*.

Ivor's funeral was attended by some of our crew members and Trevor Brigham has kindly written an article about Ivor and his interests for this magazine.

Our boat trips are well publicised thanks to articles in the Pocklington Post. One of these, written by Bob Ellis, who organises all the trips including arranging crew, is on the page opposite. The Open Trip dates shown at the bottom of the facing page are for individuals and small groups who would like a longer trip without booking the boat.

Jennie Brigham's article about training was written some time ago and describes how she and Ivor took training to act as skippers on *New Horizons*. Both had a very enjoyable experience, with two days of training on different waterways.

I am pleased to report that Richard Harker and Ed Westerby, who have been crewing *New Horizons*, have now taken training and welcome them as skippers during the 2016 session. The photo below shows crew John Lundie, Ivor Nicholson and Ed Westerby at a picnic provided by the Young Christian Workers during a trip to Gardham Lock in July.

We are always pleased to see PCAS members on our Sunday afternoon trips, so do mention you are a member if you call in.

Alistair Anderson



The popularity of Pocklington Canal continues to attract more and more visitors from both the local and wider community

This article appeared in the Pocklington Post

Of the 2,200 passengers who enjoyed a trip on *New Horizons* this year, some came from as far afield as New Zealand as well as many from continental Europe and all over the UK.

The boat made 87 trips during the season which, again, is a new record. As in previous years these are a combination of short 30 minute trips, requiring no booking, and longer trips by prior arrangement. The short trips run on Sundays and Bank Holidays between 12noon and 4.15pm. The longer trips, of durations from 2 to 7 hours, are available on any other days of the week.

The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society encourages donations for their boat trips rather than having fixed charges and find that passengers are generally very generous once they have experienced the beauty the canal has to offer, and the opportunity of steering a canal boat. The trips are further enhanced with information on the flora and fauna and history of the canal provided by the volunteer crews.

In 2016, the trip boat will run from Good Friday to the last Sunday in October.

As reported previously, in the Pocklington Post, the Society has now started work on the restoration of a further two miles of navigation from Melbourne to Bielby in liaison with the Canal & River Trust and Natural England. It is hoped that this work, which involves dredging this length along with restoration of Thornton and Walbut locks, will be completed in 2018 to coincide with the bicentenary of the opening of the canal.

These works are anticipated to cost in the region of £250,000, and the Society has already raised in excess of £90,000 towards this figure. If you would like to make a donation to the Bicentenary Appeal you can do so via JustTextGiving. Text PCAS18 with the amount you wish to donate to 70070 (e.g. PCAS18 £10).

You can also join the Society via the website www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org and click on membership or by contacting the membership secretary on 01482 845099.

If you would like to know more about volunteering on the canal please contact Bob Ellis, trip boat coordinator, on 01759 302873 or Dick Watson, working party organiser, on 01759 305025.

Bob Ellis

Dates of Open Trips in 2016 – book now to reserve places

Saturday 21 May, 10am GARDHAM LOCK (3 hours)

Saturday 25 June, 2pm HAGG BRIDGE (4 hours)

Saturday 23 July, 3pm GARDHAM LOCK (3 hours)

Saturday 20 August, 10am EAST COTTINGWITH (6 hours)

Saturday 17 September, 10am GARDHAM LOCK (3 hours)

Ivor Nicholson — An Appreciation

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to *New Horizons* trip boat crew member Ivor, who died at the end of November, just over a year after we lost Ernie Darrell. Although an unbelievable 78, Ivor was fit and active until his final short illness, and was an enthusiastic member of the *New Horizons* team for several years, passing his CCBM (skipper licence) in late 2014. Ivor's intention was to help fill the huge gap left by Ernie, and he went on to captain many trips, in what was a very successful year for the boat. He began, however, to feel ill in August, and to his frustration, was forced to step down in September as his health deteriorated, before he was able to complete his first full season as skipper.

As those who knew Ivor or attended one of his talks can testify, his connection with the canals goes back well before his involvement with PCAS, to the early 1980s, when he and his mother, Jessie, discovered the joys of annual hotel boat holidays. After his mother's long illness and eventual death, he continued to take these trips on his own, taking two, sometimes three holidays a year to different destinations around our extensive waterways system. For most of that time, these breaks were taken on the hotel narrowboat pairs which used to be such a feature of the canals, and Ivor learned many of the old boatmen's secrets of 'breasting up', 'long lining', and 'cross strapping'. As the number of traditional pairs dwindled, Ivor discovered *Lady Teal*, a purpose-built 60 x 13ft self-contained hotel boat, capable of travelling most of the northern system and the wide canals of the south and midlands. As the boat's picking-up and dropping-off points were not usually the same, rather than drive, Ivor habitually caught a train to the station nearest the start and then took a taxi. He took particular pride in assisting the regular crew through locks as an unpaid helper, as well as enjoying the food and good company, supplying himself with a selection of ties to wear at dinner, one for each day of the trip!

Ivor also knew a thing or two about sailing, being a member of the Humber Yawl Club, owning a small day boat at Brough Haven and taking part in dinghy sailing and racing alongside his brother, Graham. He likewise had an abiding interest in faster modes of transport, being a participant in car rallying in the 1950s, again with Graham, becoming a long-term member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists, a group of whom joined us on *New Horizons* last summer. He was also a keen motorcyclist and became involved in the 'Star Rider' scheme in the 1960s, teaching novice riders; he owned a BMW 800 and a Velocette Valiant until his death and still took regular outings.

In his early years, Ivor won a scholarship at Beverley Grammar School. After an apprenticeship at the Hull-based excavator manufacturing company, Priestman Brothers, he served three years National Service with the RAF as a radio technician, subsequently working at Blackburn Aircraft Ltd (now BAE Systems), Brough. For many years afterwards he assisted with his father's DIY business, but in 1977 he sold up and started a new career with Social Services, rising to the rank of Supervisor of a Day Centre for the elderly in Hull, until retiring at 60 to look after his mother as her health deteriorated. His interest in the care sector had already begun in the mid 1970s through voluntary work with the Multiple Sclerosis Society, and he resumed this important connection after his retirement, including assisting them as a driver. With this background, Ivor was always keen to crew alongside disadvantaged groups on *New Horizons*.

Ivor was a man of many parts, and as well as assisting in various ways at St Mary's Church, Cottingham, his many pastimes included woodturning, cupcake decoration, and most recently, knitting, much to the amusement of St Mary's ladies! Whatever he started was finished to the best of his ability, with a meticulous attention to detail. At the lunch following his funeral, the tables were decorated with dozens of examples of his woodturning, which his family kindly allowed guests to keep as a memento — a goblet takes pride of place in my cabinet.

I always enjoyed crewing alongside Ivor, and we had many long conversations with him, whether on *New Horizons* or while driving to Melbourne in his Chrysler PT; we were also fellow members of St Mary's congregation. He will be missed in all the places where he played a part.

Details of Ivor's life were taken from the funeral address by his nephew, Andrew, which he kindly supplied to St Mary's. Any mistakes are my own!

Trevor Brigham

Right: Ivor painting the roof of New Horizons

Below: Ivor and other crew members after working to get New Horizons ready for the start of the 2014 season



From left to right

Ivor Nicholson
Eric Dove
Maggie West
Bob Ellis
Trevor Brigham
Jennie Brigham
Ernie Darrell



CCBM Training

Day 1 – Chesterfield Canal, Leicester Grand Union and River Soar

When I heard that Ernie had passed away I wanted to do something that would have made him smile. Over the last 12 months he had encouraged and supported me at the tiller, restoring my waning confidence and always making me laugh. So what better way to honour his patience than to go for my CCBM and become a skipper.

Trying to do this at this time of year proved difficult but I was adamant that I wanted to do it and do it now! After sending off a number of emails with little response other than “contact us again in March”, finally Paul Unwin of the Chesterfield Canal Trust got back to me saying he was doing a course for 2 of their crew and I was happy to join them. It turned out that Ivor had also been looking to do his CCBM so I contacted him and we both enlisted for the course. Trying to find a date which the Chesterfield crew, Ivor and myself could make proved difficult but Paul was very obliging and arranged to do the first part of the course for Ivor and myself on a Friday and the Chesterfield crew on the Saturday.

So with Ivor picking me up (in Cottingham), off we went to The Chesterfield Canal to meet Paul at the Hollingwood Hub. We were both very impressed when we arrived, albeit a bit early – the Café was not yet open and there was a large car park and large meeting room. We had a quick look at the lock and walked up the towpath until Paul arrived.

The morning session started with us getting to know each other, with Paul trying to work out how much boating experience we had, then we got down to business – Boat Equipment, Check Lists, Emergency Action Plans, Knots, Bridges, Locks and Tunnels, then of course the dreaded Health & Safety and Risk Assessments.

Lunchtime was a welcome break, especially as we walked through to the café and saw their wonderful collection of sandwiches and cakes. Ivor was very impressed with the cup cakes and the sandwiches were amazing.



We had a quick lunch and carried on, which left us some time at the end of the day to drive down to Tapton Lock and take the *John Varley* Trip Boat out. Paul got us both steering, turning the boat around by different methods (using the bank, in open water, and by springing), then manoeuvring through the lock.

The Chesterfield Canal is a lovely waterway with The Canal and River Trust owning the 32 miles of waterway from the River Trent to Kiveton Park and Derbyshire County Council owning the five miles from Chesterfield to Staveley. The Chesterfield Canal Trust is campaigning to close the gap of 8 miles between the two, which includes Norwood Tunnel.

The canal was designed by James Brindley with the site engineer being John Varley, the name of our boat. Work started in 1771 and the canal was completed in 1777 with double, treble and quadruple staircase locks and the longest tunnel in the country of one and half miles for that time. Trade was coal, stone, corn, lime, lead, timber and iron, with its claim to fame being that it carried the stone that was used to build the Houses of Parliament after the great fire of 1834. The tunnel collapsed in 1907 and the last cargo was carried in 1956.

In 1989 the 20 miles of canal from Worksop to Chesterfield were derelict, but since then 12 miles have been restored along with 36 locks, 11 major road bridges and 2 marinas, leaving only the 8 miles between Staveley and Kiveton Park to go.

The Chesterfield Canal Trust operates 3 trip boats:

- The *John Varley*, built in 1992 and fitted with a wheelchair lift, moored at Tapton Lock Visitor Centre
- The *Hugh Henshall*, built in 2012, also designed for disabled use having the ability to be driven by remote control and run on silent electric power and operates from Kiveton Park
- The *Seth Ellis*, built in 2005 and operates from Retford

Day 2 – Grand Union, Leicester Branch and River Soar

Again after a few false starts Paul managed to get all 4 of us together, it was an early start as we needed to be at Quorn in Leicestershire for 8.30am (the downside of trying to do your licence after the clocks have changed and maximising the light!). I picked up Ivor at 6am and we drove to Aston fire station where Paul met us and we both got into his car to drive to junction 29 on the M1 to meet the other 2 “trainees” Bob and Ann from the Chesterfield Canal Trust. We then set off, in convoy, to arrive at Pillings Lock Marina at 8.15am. *Dandelion* was waiting for us along with Mike, one of their skippers, who was coming out with us for the day. *Dandelion* is a 70ft narrow boat given to the Trust in 2002 by the council however it needed some work and became fully operational in 2004, complete with disabled lift, toilet facilities, fitted kitchen and central heating!



From Baldwin trust website

Pilling Lock Marina proved interesting to manoeuvre out of with a narrow opening onto the canal and cross winds, then a sharp left/right hand turn depending on which way you wanted to go. Bob successfully took us out and we headed up the canal towards Loughborough with everyone getting a go on the tiller to see how the boat handled. By now the rain was falling and we all got a little soggy. Once at Canal Bank in Loughborough, Ann turned the boat around, not quite a 3-point turn, but not sure anyone else would have done any better, although bow thrusters were a help.

While on the Canal section Paul decided to run an emergency scenario. A wheelchair appeared from a cupboard along with a walking stick and Mike transformed himself into a wheelchair-bound passenger while Paul became the cantankerous passenger who walked with a stick. FIRE! As soon as a fire was declared, I, being on the tiller, got the boat to the bank and turned off the gas, Ivor and Bob got the wheelchair lift operational and ejected Mike down the slippery slope, the rain really did not help. I assisted Paul off the boat, who then walked off and had to be rescued by Ann, who as nominated skipper contacted the "Fire Brigade" giving them our location.

We then travelled back down the canal to Pilling Flood Lock and onto the River Soar. After a few days of rain the river was running quite fast and was operating on an Amber Warning, as it continued to rain we all crossed our fingers that it would not go into Red, resulting in the locks being closed and leaving us stranded on the river.

Time for another scenario – "Resussy Annie" decided to have a heart attack and became unconscious. Bob rang for an ambulance (Paul's daughter, an ambulance controller off duty) giving details of our casualty and arranged for the ambulance to meet us at the next road bridge while I gave CPR. Paul's daughter was very convincing (well it was her day job) and gave us clear instructions both for casualty treatment and ambulance directions.

I took the tiller as we continued to meander down the river, through Barrow Deep Lock practicing our lock hand signals and rope skills, with Ivor, Ann and Bob operating the paddles. Ivor took over the tiller for a while, getting thoroughly soaked but assured us that his trousers underneath were still dry. I took the tiller again and Paul asked me to run *Dandelion* aground, I obviously did too good a job and it took some time for us to get off the mud bank with Mike having to take over.

Finally off the mud, we looked for where best to turn around and start heading back. This was easier said than done: the plan was to turn around before Mountsorrel Lock but the amount of water coming down over the weir made turning difficult especially with boats moored up on one side and a fisherman on the other. So through the lock we went following the twisting river until we came to the A6 road bridge where we decided we had the best chance to turn *Dandelion* around, protected from cross winds and could use the flow of the river to turn. Again it took a couple of attempts trying to spring off the back and letting the front of the boat swing round with the current. I must say that once the boat moved the current was such that she turned like a hot knife in butter, the flow was very fast and I am glad I did not have to do a real man overboard exercise.

Finally the rain stopped as we made our way back up through Mountsorrel Lock, where we practiced man overboard procedures, through Barrow Deep Lock (still on Green traffic lights) and on up through Pilling Flood lock. Again Bob navigated us back into the marina just as the sun was setting and what was a perfect end to a long but satisfying day.

Thanks go to Paul for being so accommodating in providing the training at a time of the year that really did not lend itself to being out on the water, to Mike for letting us use the Baldwin Trust boat, to Ivor, Ann and Bob for being wonderful companions on what was a cold wet day and finally to Ernie for giving me the confidence to do this.

Jennie Brigham



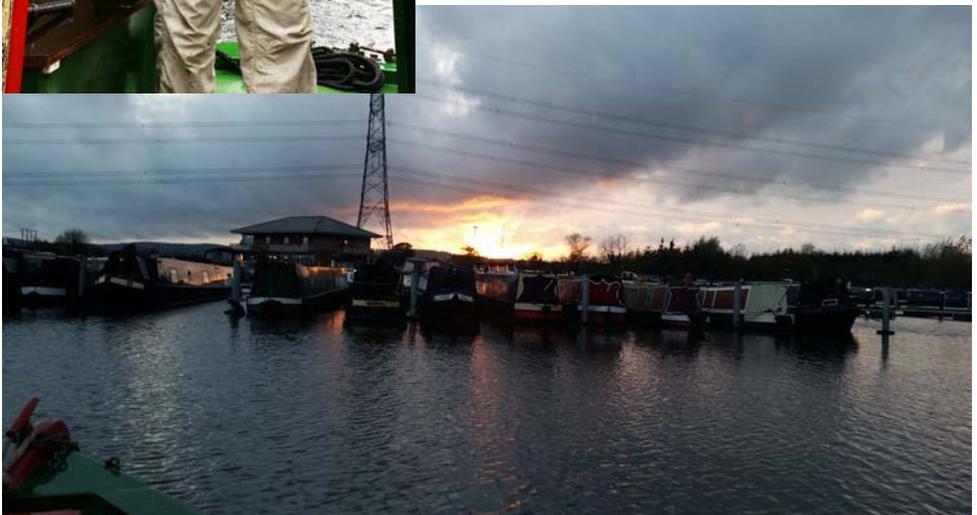
Above: Jennie, author of this article, is on the right

Left: Ivor Nicholson at the tiller

Photos by Paul Unwin, Senior Trainer NCBA

Below: Returning to base

This and the photo of John Varley by Jennie Brigham



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

2015 will be another busy year for PCAS because we need to raise a lot of money to fund the extension of navigation from Melbourne to Bielby.

Friday 26 February – PCAS Frog Racing Night

See facing page.

Good Friday 25 March

Boat trips begin from Melbourne Arm and Information Centre opens at Canal Head. Come and visit us on Good Friday, Easter Sunday or Easter Monday.

Thursday 21 April PCAS Annual General Meeting

Details can be found on page 34 of this magazine.

The AGM will be followed by films and the launch of Annual Raffle.

Spring Bank Holiday Sunday 29 May – Canal Head Spring Fête

- Tombola
- PCAS stall
- Bric-a-brac
- Book stall
- IWA information stall
- Craft demonstrations

Saturday + Sunday 23/24 July Summer Event at Melbourne Arm

Please put the date in your diary. Boat trips will be available.

Friday 14 October Pie & Pea Supper at Melbourne Village Hall

- Film show
- Auction of Promises

Sunday 27th November Annual Lunch

The Annual Raffle will be drawn after the meal

BE a Pal OF POCK canal

RACE NIGHT

FRI. FEB 26th



MELBOURNE

VILLAGE HALL

TICKETS £10

Includes stake money

Bring your own drinks

Ticket Contact

01759 305025

Pocklington Canal Amenity Society
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
The Wellington Oak, Pocklington
Thursday 21 April 2016, 7pm

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of 2015 Meeting
4. Chairman's Report
5. Presentation of Accounts
6. Membership Subscriptions
7. Fundraising
8. Election of Chairman and Committee
9. Appointment of Independent Financial Examiner
10. Any other business

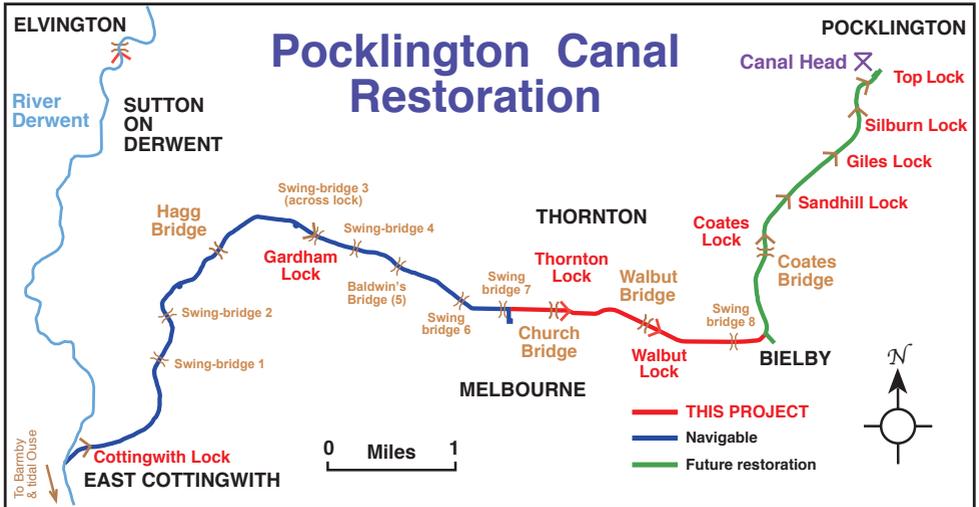
Any members of the Society wishing to stand for the Committee should make themselves known to a member of the Committee. All candidates must indicate their willingness to stand for election. Please send in any nominations, duly proposed and seconded, to the Secretary: Graham Ball, 5 Deans Lane, Pocklington YO42 2PX

Pocklington Canal Amenity Society
Annual General Meeting, Thursday 21 April 2016
Committee Nomination Form

Nominee: _____

Proposer: _____

Secunder: _____



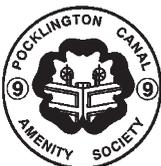
The PCAS Bicentenary Appeal is for funds to support restoration of the length of canal shown in red in the map above. At the time of writing (January 2016) the appeal fund stands at £100,000. Please help by making a donation.

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



