

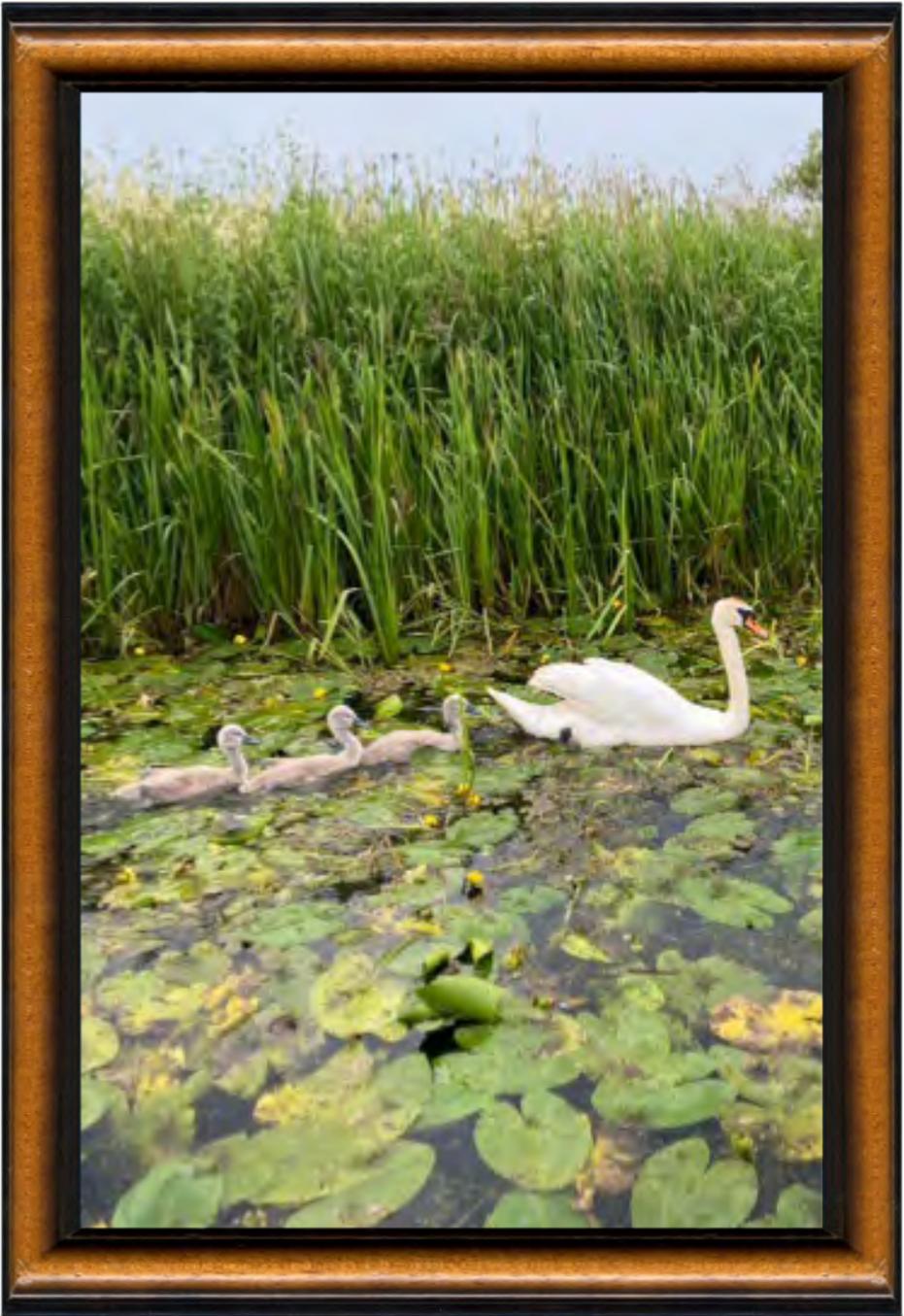
DOUBLE NINE

THE POCKLINGTON CANAL AMENITY SOCIETY
MAGAZINE



February 2022

Issue 124



There are many breeding pairs of swans along the length of the the canal. John Dickins took this image of a mother and cygnets from aboard his boat **Nutwood** in July 2021.

Editorial

Index

Page 1:	Editorial.
Page 2 - 3:	The Chairman's report.
Page 4 - 6:	Working Party Report.
Page 7:	CRT News.
Page 8:	Retirement of Phil Schofield.
Page 9:	New Horizons. Managers Report.
Page 10:	AGM 2022.
Page 11 -13:	Minutes of 2021 AGM.
Page 13:	Membership matters.
Page 14 - 15:	The canal in winter.
Page 16:	Church bridge and the Church.
Page 17:	AGM 2022.
Page 18:	Winter birds on the Pocklington Canal.
Page 19:	Antiques Evening 2022.
Page 20 - 21:	Did Nutwood really want to leave?.
Page 22 - 27:	A look back through the Archives.
Page 28:	PCAS Sales.

Welcome to your February 2022 issue of Double Nine!

The last two years have not been easy for PCAS and although the Sunday boat trips were cancelled in line with the Government Regulations, we were for most of this time still able to maintain the weekly working parties.

A big thank you goes to Richard our working party organiser and to all those volunteers who turned out to help maintain the canal during this time.

Steve Ashby, PCAS tripboat manager, is planning to restart our Sunday public taster trips. These will begin on Good Friday 19th April. Steve will also be taking bookings for the pre-booked trips.

A modest programme of events in 2022 is being planned. We will require as many volunteers as we can get to help us run them successfully. Can you help?

A new set of note cards is now available. The cards are in packs of four, each card with a different image. Envelopes are included - all for a modest £3. See page 28 for more details. Enjoy the canal!

Malcolm

Front Cover:

Winter on the canal offers many photographic opportunities.

Rear Cover:

For a part of 2021 the lower end of the canal was closed due to a defective Bridge 6. Boats in the Melbourne arm were still able to travel up the canal. Andrew Phillipson's boat Alpheus heads towards Church Bridge on a journey to Bielby.

Double Nine is published in
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by the
Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

Copy Date June 2022 Issue

Closing date for articles and reports for the June 2022 issue is the **7th May 2022**.

Submissions received after this date may be held over until the next available issue.

Opinions expressed in this magazine is not necessarily those of the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society, its Chairman or Committee.

Chairmans Report

On this occasion, I am devoting the whole of this column to the subject of the restoration of Sandhill Lock. Most readers will recall the society's Bicentenary Project, that allowed a one and a half mile length of the canal to be brought back into use in 2018. The project which included restorative works at both of Thornton Lock and Walbut Lock was undertaken between the bicentenary of the passing of the 1815 Act Parliament authorising the building of the Pocklington Canal and the bicentenary of its opening in 1818.

Following the success of this project, the society decided to embark on raising funds to enable a further length of the canal to be reopened. The Sandhill Lock Appeal was launched, and sufficient funds were raised within a short period to give us the confidence to start planning the works to restore Sandhill Lock. Starting in 2018, monthly meetings were held with CRT to plan the works, and we were expecting that a start could be made in 2019. Although initially we seemed to be making progress, the meetings gradually became less productive, and the start of the project was deferred many times.

There were many changes in the CRT staff attending these meetings, which might account for some delays, but it did seem that other factors were at play. Now, after more than three years of meetings, we found ourselves in a position where was virtual deadlock, and eventually CRT have put the project on hold. The most fundamental issue seems to be that CRT doubt our competence to undertake the project.

We have been offered three options. These are (1) that the project is abandoned, (2) that the execution of the restoration is handed over to another organisation and (3) that PCAS pay for CRT to engage a consultant of their choice to oversee the works. We have been exploring the third option, but it is looking as if it could be extremely expensive. Unfortunately, it is difficult to quantify this cost because, although we have been quoted an hourly rate for the consultants time, we have little idea of how many hours are likely to be involved. On the information that we have, it is possible that going down this route could double the cost of the whole project. Signing up to such an open ended financial commitment is something the we are not prepared to do.

In recent weeks, we have tried to get the project restarted, but at the time of writing, I have little to report. Hopefully, something can be achieved as a result of our latest initiatives, and there will be better news to report in the next edition of Double Nine.

I am very conscious that, as a result of our fundraising activities and the support of our members, around £100,000 has been raised specifically for the Sandhill Lock Project. In addition, we have been awarded a grant of a

further £100,000 subject to some conditions. So we are in the fortunate position that the project is well funded before the start of work. But, holding this amount of money brings responsibilities with it, and we have a duty as a responsible charity to spend this money on the project for which it was raised, and to spend it in a way that it is not profligate. Thus we do have an obligation to do all that we can to reach an understanding with CRT and press on with the project.

I am sorry that I am not able to be the bearer of better news, but my message has to be that we must be patient and perhaps take some time working for a resolution of the present situation. I often reflect on the history of the society over the past 50 years and recall that we have been in similar positions before. Despite many set backs along the way, we have always bounced back and found a route out of our difficulties. I am sure that we will be able to do the same this time.

Paul Waddington.

“The Astronauts may discover that there are no canals on Mars. But, personally, I am delighted that P.C.A.S. are determined to rediscover our local waterway, for the enjoyment of local people.

F. Myers Chairman Pocklington & District Ratepayers Association”

Extract from a letter sent to PCAS in 1970.



Sandhill Lock

Working Party Report

Having, fortunately, just finished the weed cutting in October, the boat's exhaust-silencer and pipework decided to fall apart and turned out to be fairly rotten throughout. A new silencer was purchased along with a good section of the flexible exhaust piping. These were refitted, courtesy of John Lewis's welding skills! many thanks John. A new waterproof cover for the boat has been made out of plastic-coated wagon sheeting which will hopefully keep the rain (& snow?) out over winter.

The work boat hold was cleaned out, given a coat of protective bitumen paint and ballast in the form of spare concrete blocks and slabs for stability. The faulty ignition switch was replaced and a spare larger battery fitted. Once licensed the boat will prove very useful transporting materials about for bank repairs etc.

Speaking of the above, our excellent "environment" team have been carrying on with bank repairs etc where needed and the footpaths under Church & Walbut Bridges have been very tidily re-stoned. The bank repairs tend to be an ongoing labour at this time of year due to the ground being soft and constantly broken down by dogs jumping in and scrabbling out again.

A lady in Bielby kindly donated a petrol engine cement mixer, albeit in need of a little TLC, for use on the canal and we also have a dumper truck requiring the same treatment. When both are brought back to full life they will, eventually, prove useful on the refurbishment of Sandhill Lock, along with other items, having been gathered in anticipation, over the last two years.

So, many thanks to all the working party volunteers for keeping going under strained circumstances and what now looks like ever deteriorating weather conditions and here's hoping for a more practically productive 2022!

Richard Harker, Work Party supervisor



Left:
Working party members clear a willow tree which fell across the towpath between bridges 5 & 6 on the 21st June 2021.



Above:
During December 2021 working party volunteers were busy re-stoning the towpath at Thornton and Walbut bridges.

Left:
"The Boys From the Black Stuff" repairing pot holes at canal head on the 1st February 2022.



Above: PCAS volunteers using the weedcutter/gatherer boat near Coates Lock clearing the canal of old and decaying vegetation which had been left from 2021.

Below: Work has now commenced to construct a landing stage, which will make access easier and safer to our boats and also provide a better mooring.



Canal & River Trust News



In November 2021 and after a series of setbacks, CRT finally completed the replacement culvert work spanning Black Dyke beck.



The canal bids farewell to Phil Schofield



CRT employee Phil Schofield retired in November 2021. Phil has been a stalwart worker on the Pocklington Canal and always helped our Society whenever he could. A celebration breakfast was held on the 2nd November 2021 at the Allerthorpe Lakes Country Park. Phil was presented with several items of PCAS merchandise to ensure he wont forget us!



New Horizon Boat Trips 2021 and plans for 2022

*Report by
Steve Ashby Trip Boat Booking & Crewing Manager*

Continuing issues with the Covid pandemic meant that 2021 was another disrupted year in terms of boat trips. Another problem which seems to be increasing in frequency was the shortage of water in the canal in the latter half of the summer, meaning that some of the locks were closed by the Canal and River Trust, reducing our options. Also, the closure of swing bridge no 6, around a kilometre west of our Melbourne base, meant that we were further restricted for several weeks. Nevertheless, during the season we managed to run 38 boat trips. Most people were generous with their donations and so the income covered our insurance and licence costs, creating some funds for the restoration of the canal. We tried to maintain social distancing between the passengers and crew and so did not permit any steering of the boat by passengers as well as encouraging all participants to sanitise their hands. As the Sunday and Bank holiday short trips inevitably involve mixing strangers, we did not run any of those trips. 8 booked trips were cancelled, all because of Covid amongst intended passengers, but we hope to rearrange those during the coming season. For the first time we hosted a “media influencer” and her family on the boat. She was very complimentary on her “Blog” but it remains to be seen how much this has raised our social media profile!



This year we are intending to operate more or less as “normal” and start short trips on Good Friday, 15th April, subject of course to the Covid situation and restrictions at the time. We will also start advertising the possibility of booked trips. All trips will be subject to availability of the boat, the canal, skippers and crew. We look forward to seeing many of our members on boat trips this year!

Spring has Sprung along the Canal

PCAS member Stuart Barkworth captured these two images at Canal Head on the 1st February 2022.



Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Black Horse, Seaton Ross

Wednesday 15th June 2022 at 7.00pm

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of 2021 Meeting
4. Chairmans Report
5. Presentation of Accounts 2021
6. Restoration
7. Committee membership
(NB no elections needed this year)
8. Appointment of independent financial Examiner

Annual General Meeting of the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society Held by Zoom on Wednesday 12th May 2021

Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman welcomed members of the Society. The AGM hadn't been held in 2020 due to the coronavirus situation and it had been decided to hold this AGM by Zoom. The Chairman thanked Alistair Anderson for making the arrangements to hold the AGM and was pleased to see one or two new faces.

Present

Twenty nine members were present and the meeting was therefore declared quorate.

Apologies

There were no apologies

Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting

There were no minutes for 2020 as the AGM hadn't been held but the minutes of the 2019 AGM had previously been published in Double Nine. Acceptance of those Minutes was approved unanimously.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported that the Sandhill Appeal had reached £200.000 in two years. A grant of £100.000 has been awarded from East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Commuted Sums Fund. Therefore it has been decided to close the Sandhill Appeal.

Works at Sandhill have not yet started; we are waiting for CRT to apply for Listed Building Consent. However we have appointed consultants to take care of the H&S requirements and hope to get some dredging done. There have been no events in 2020/2021 but two are planned- a BBQ in July and the Annual Lunch in November.

Thanks were given to the retiring committee members - Bob Ellis, John Lewis and Graham Ball - for their contribution to PCAS over the years.

A full transcript of the report will be published in Double Nine for the benefit of the general membership.

Presentation of Accounts

As there was no AGM in 2020, copies of the accounts for 2019 and 2020 had been circulated to members. There had been very little activity in 2020. Acceptance of the accounts was approved unanimously.

Although we have been awarded a grant of £100,000 towards the restoration of Sandhill Lock, we haven't received the money yet. It was explained that the money can't be released until all houses have been sold and the money passed over to the East Riding of Yorkshire fund. There are no time constraints on the money and we have stipulated that the work should take approximately three years. The Chairman pointed out that if the developers went bankrupt, we might not get anything. Under the terms of the grant, we have to spend the money and then claim it back, so really we shouldn't be spending money until we know that it is there for us to claim.

A press release has already been sent to the local paper, East Riding will be dealing with publicity. The Chairman has reported the grant to CRT, who have been sceptical as to whether we would have the money for the Sandhill restoration.

Sandhill Lock Appeal

This has been closed now and there has been some debate about opening a dredging appeal. CRT have a programme for dredging but it could be 3-5 years before the Pocklington Canal has the work done. Perhaps if we contributed, it might be done sooner. It was asked if Natural England might be interested in helping, that is something that could be raised in the future.

Election of Chairman

Paul Waddington was the sole nominee for the Chairmanship and was duly re-elected.

Election of the Committee

All members of the committee were due for re-election this year. Three were standing down - Bob Ellis, John Lewis and Graham Ball. David Tong, Ed Westerby and Rob Fouracre were standing to replace them. Steve Ashby had been co-opted onto committee in 2019 and was standing for election. The rest of the committee; Roger Bromley, Tim Charlson, Debbie Smith, Richard Harker, John Dickins, Malcolm Slater, Alistair Anderson & Sue Dickins had all indicated their willingness to continue on the committee. All were elected unanimously.

Appointment of Independent Financial Examiner

Tony Farmer had indicated his willingness to continue and was duly reappointed.

Any other business

Alistair Anderson said that there had been problems with the website and he'd been looking at the possibility of a new website. He'd been in discussions with two different website builders for ideas on costs of a new website.

Steve Ashby reported that trips will be starting from 17th May for up to six people from two households only. There are already some trips booked. We will look again after 21st June to see if the criteria has changed and we can run more trips.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

An Appeal from the Editor

I would very much like to obtain any past issues of Double Nine magazine. It would be good to have a full set to hand. I can download past issues but it is very time consuming and very costly on ink and paper!

The magazines that I need are: **all the issues before March 2001 & issues 79. 81. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 100. 101. 107. 108.**

If you have one or all of the above missing issues and would be happy to donate them to PCAS, they will be gratefully received and added to the archives.

As well as seeking past magazines, I am always on the look out for photographs, slides, negatives and press cuttings, and I have been very lucky in purchasing Pocklington Canal material from various Internet sources.

Membership Matters

Roger Bromley, Membership Secretary

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

Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

Sort Code 40-37-01

Account number 20674451

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

The Canal in Winter

Pictures by Tim Charlson

Tim captured these views between Cottingwith and Storwood during a canalside walk in January 2022.





Church Bridge and the Church

Exploring the history of Church Bridge and the church of St Michael, Thornton.



Church Bridge is a Grade II listed structure from the early nineteenth century. It is narrower than most bridges that cross over the canal.

A sandstone course on the bridge stands proud of the parapet wall at road level, presumably to prevent cart axles damaging the brickwork.

The Grade II listed church of St Michael was originally built in the 12th century and was enlarged in 14th. The west end and bellcote were added in 1890-92 by architect Ewan Christian.



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Please attend if you possibly can.

Winter Birds around the Pocklington Canal

So far winter has been kind to both resident and wintering wildlife. The lack of days of hard frosts and snow cover has allowed access to food in the soil for snipe and winter visiting thrushes. Snipe need moist damp ground to probe for invertebrates and during mild winters feed in wet fields often well away from view. Despite this, there can be hundreds of these birds quietly feeding across the wider Lower Derwent Valley, often in fields bordering the canal. However, during frosty spells when the ground is too hard to probe they are more commonly seen, being disturbed from the canal and drain edges as they try to feed in softer ground. In these conditions a walk along the canal can be punctuated as they fly up and away giving their “*ca-atch*” call (sounding like a rubber boot being pulled from soft mud). When times are hard, snipe can surprise the unwary by sitting tight and leaving it late to fly away, often when one is close as 10-15 feet.

Fieldfare and redwing, (winter visiting thrushes from Scandinavia) also find milder times beneficial, spending more time away from human habitation in fields looking for worms, after they have stripped most of the berry bushes. Again, fields adjacent to the canal can be good places to view flocks of mixed thrushes. They can be overlooked but their chattering can be a giveaway, and what seems like a rippling field on a windless day, can on closer inspection be found to be hundreds of bobbing heads as they move back and forth searching the soil. But when snow and frost make things difficult, they can be seen moving into gardens for those remaining berries on cotoneaster and pyracantha shrubs.

The water levels on the Melbourne and Thornton Ings have been a lot lower so far this winter. This has led to less chance to see whooper swans, which did appear in late October as they arrived to wetter weather, but have now moved to the Wheldrake end of the valley where the fields remain covered in water. A particular feature this year has been the number of geese feeding in stubble fields nearby. In the Melbourne area these have been mostly greylag geese, and as many as 600 have been seen alternating between stubble and flying to rest on the remnants of the floods. Just south of Hagg Bridge in fields at Storwood, about 300 pink-footed geese were grazing fields recently, flying around when disturbed but staying faithful to this feeding spot for days.

Despite the milder season, both local nature reserves and surrounding farmland continue to provide food and shelter to significant numbers of wild birds, from flocks of thrushes, buntings and finches feeding on the remaining seeds and invertebrates, to wildfowl (swans, ducks and geese) in stubble fields and wet meadows. Come rain or shine, the diversity of the local environment is able to support a variety of species, which makes it all the more important it remains preserved.

Neil Cooper, Bird Recorder for Melbourne & Thornton Ings NR

ANTIQUES AND VALUATION



EVENING
WITH



CAROLINE HAWLEY

(Flog It, Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is!, and Bargain Hunt)

MELBOURNE VILLAGE HALL

MELBOURNE, YO42 4QJ

FRIDAY 25th MARCH 2022 - 7PM

TICKETS £12.50 which includes supper

******Please bring your own drinks and glass******

Personal valuations are available by donation to the
Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

******Please bring an item for valuation******

To book your ticket contact Debbie on 01759 306070 or 07761963565
dejaysmith@btinternet.com

Payment request will be sent nearer to the time when the pandemic re-
strictions at the time are known

All proceeds towards the upkeep of Pocklington Canal

Did Nutwood really want to move south?

Our narrowboat Nutwood had been moored on the Pocklington Canal for about eight years - 200 miles and 200 locks away from home. We didn't see much of her in 2020 and she was looking very sad and neglected. So we had the brilliant idea of bringing her south; we found a mooring and started planning the move. First hurdle - the Leeds and Liverpool canal was closed and would be for several months. Road was the only option and she had to get to Goole to be craned out, a two day trip, including the tidal Ouse. However, Ocean Lock, the gateway to Goole, was closed to leisure boats. We had no alternative but to wait...



We found a boatyard near the new moorings which could crane Nutwood into the canal off the lorry and arrange the road transport. All arrangements in place, we could start the journey but Nutwood wouldn't start, an emergency engineer arrived and fitted a new battery, fiddled with the electrics and all was well. We'd missed the tide by this time and had to wait another month before we could make the journey. We'd told the boatyard Nutwood wouldn't be arriving on the date planned. The journey to Barmby Barrage, the overnight stop, should have taken five hours but took eleven. The crew spent most of that time down the weedhatch removing weed from the propeller. The next day the journey down



to Ocean Lock to enter Goole Docks took longer than expected but at last she'd reached the marina ready for transportation. These arrangements were for two weeks ahead so Nutwood was going to have some work done at Goole. "Will just take a few days" we were told, on the due date we were told "just another couple of days", this went on for two months. In the meantime we had to tell the boatyard here that Nutwood wouldn't be arriving on dates B, C or D. We were informed that they

weren't interested in our business any longer.

So we found another boatyard and made the necessary arrangements. Nutwood was finished, transport and craning arranged. A few days before the "big day", we were told the crane wasn't working. Fortunately the transport company had their own mobile crane and we arranged (for a large fee of course), for them to bring a crane to meet their lorry and put Nutwood into the canal. On the day we checked and yes she'd left Goole on time, so we went to meet her at the boatyard. We were greeted by the bright yellow jib of the crane.

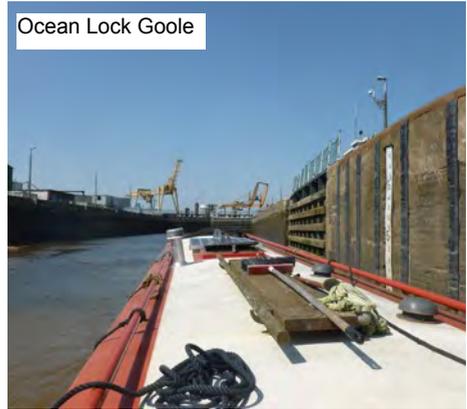
This was really happening! Then came the phone call, there'd been an incident on the M1 and all traffic had been diverted. Eventually the lorry arrived and Nutwood was dropped very efficiently into the canal. Then came the journey to the moorings - 14 locks and 10 miles away - but that's another story.....



Sue & John Dickins



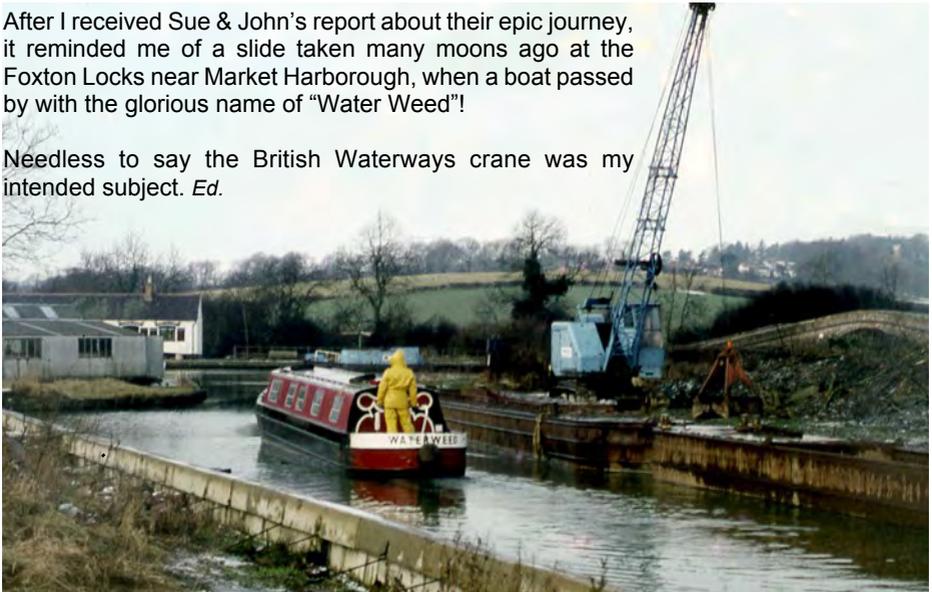
Gardham Lock



Ocean Lock Goole

After I received Sue & John's report about their epic journey, it reminded me of a slide taken many moons ago at the Foxton Locks near Market Harborough, when a boat passed by with the glorious name of "Water Weed"!

Needless to say the British Waterways crane was my intended subject. *Ed.*



A look back through the Archives.

Recycling

Definition: *Recycling is the process of converting waste materials into new materials and objects.*

Compiled by Malcolm Slater



From the birth of PCAS in 1969 the Society has recycled materials whenever possible. When the York & North Midland railway took over the running of the canal in 1848, maintenance was kept down to the minimum. When the wooden beams on the lock gates became rotten they were replaced with old railway track! As the restoration of the canal progressed, new wooden beams replaced the old railway track, some of which was later reused for seating.



A look back through the Archives



When PCAS began their restoration work they found this old flat boat which had been abandoned near Walbut Lock. In March 1970 the boat was pumped out and dragged onto the towpath and all the useable timber from the boat was salvaged for later reuse by working party volunteers.



A look back through the Archives



3rd May 1970. Some of the usable timber saved from the Walbut Lock flat boat was reused as a stop plank at Thornton Lock during its restoration.



A look back through the Archives



25th February 1996. This old sign became a 'raft' in the Coats Lock chamber to assist with access.



A look back through the Archives



A temporary bywash pipe was constructed at Canal Head during January 1991 reusing old 40 gallon drums. The finished pipe was taken in sections to be used at Walbut Lock.



A look back through the Archives



Above:
Photo from 1969.
Old drinks cans were collected and taken to a local scrapyards. This continues today and still raises modest funds for PCAS.

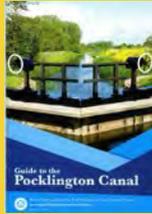


Left:
Raymond O'Kelly is shown rescuing an old paddle-wheel, which had been found in the silt of Coates Lock. This was subsequently restored and reinstated.
Photograph dated 25th June 1995.

PCAS Sales



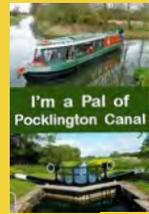
Pens 50p



Canal Guide £5



Pin Badge £3



Fridge Magnets £3



Note Cards Set of Four Cards including envelopes £3



**Brass Plaques. Head of Navigation.
50th Anniversary. Bicentenary 1818 - 2018.
£7 each**

Key Rings

Two designs to choose from.
Design No1 features New Horizons on one side and on the other the PCAS logo.
Design No2 features Thornton bridge and on the other side is a scene from the canal.
50p each



**PCAS Mugs
Five Designs Available.
£4 each**

Please Note:

Postage and packing to be added to all postal orders.
For details please contact the sales officer,
Tim Charlson 07926 910717 email: tcharlson58@gmail.com
All the above merchandise and selected pre-owned books are also available from the Canal Head Information Centre.

Remember, every purchase generates income for PCAS restoration funds!

The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

Registered Charity 500637
www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org

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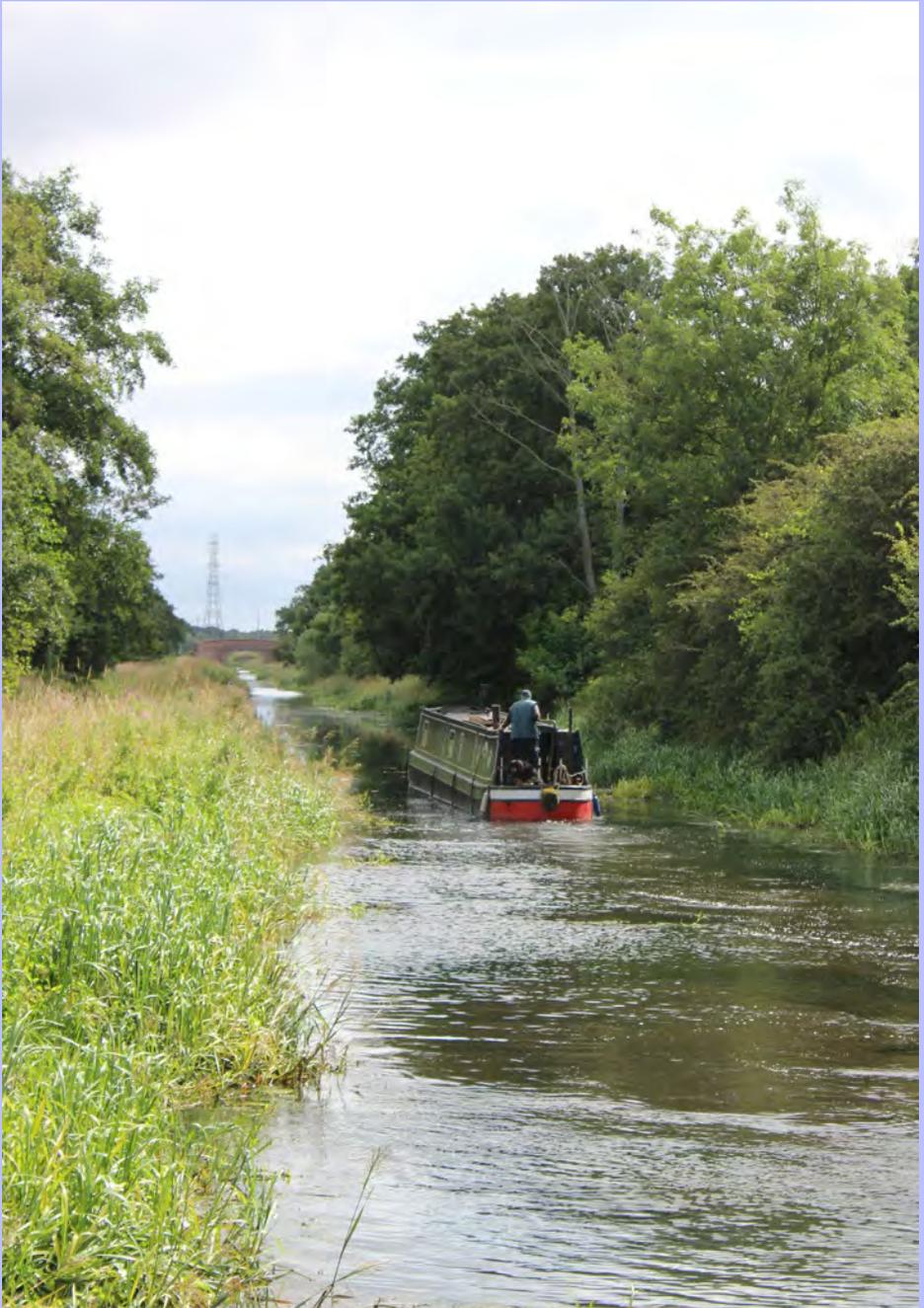
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The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society

One copy free to members