

THE TUB BOAT

Newsletter of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society

No. 89

Autumn 2019



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Forthcoming Events:

Sunday 23rd Feb AGM at The Castle Heritage Centre, The Castle, Bude.

Details of other events in 2020 will be published in the next edition of The Tub Boat.

Contributions for the next edition of the Tub Boat should be sent as an e-mail attachment to bude.canal@gmail.com or copied onto a USB memory stick or CD and sent to Mike Moore (Tel: 01288 361878) to reach him by 15th December 2019.

Trustees:	Chairman	Chris Jewell	
	Vice-Chairman	Lesley Moores	
	Secretary	Peter Daniel	
	Treasurer	<i>Vacant</i>	
	Membership Secretary	<i>Vacant</i>	
	Events Secretary	Betty Moore	
	Minuting Secretary	<i>Vacant</i>	
	Other trustees	Lucille Opie,	Anne Longley
	The Tub Boat Editor	Mike Moore (<i>non-trustee</i>)	

The views expressed by the contributors to this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society which does not accept responsibility for them.



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Cover Photo:
Dislodged gate on the Sea Lock

Creaks from the Chair

As the year skips by, heading for 2020, the events to celebrate the Bi-centenary of the start of construction of the Bude Canal on 23rd July 1819, are all but completed. The only event still outstanding is the navigation of the Canal from the Sea Lock to Helebridge using the two inland locks. The repairs to Whalesborough Lock originally planned for May/June have not yet to be done but are now scheduled for September 2019.

The situation regarding the Sea Lock has not been entirely resolved.

Cornwall Council have now received the results of the survey on the south lock pier which confirmed that it is suitable to take a crane capable of working from that pier rather than the north pier. This approach is due to the balance beam on the north side not being in a condition that would cope with being removed to allow access for a crane to the north pier. Cornwall Council expect to receive a quotation from the contractor soon which will be used to prepare a proposal to present to the council for the necessary funds to complete the work. Meanwhile, the Sea Lock is not in use and the local Harbourmaster has had to refuse 10 vessels wanting to lock into the Bude Canal since it became unusable. A direct loss of income for Cornwall Council through mooring charges that would have been paid.



Close up of the dislodged gate on the Sea Lock

This was most unfortunate and irritating.

BCHS are still seeking a Trustee to take on the responsibilities of Treasurer and/or Membership Secretary. Anyone who would be prepared to take up these responsibilities should contact me on 01288 352298 or via info@bude-canal.co.uk BCHS really need someone to do this if we are going to continue to operate. Please help if you can.

Chris Jewell

The Future of Bude Canal

BCHS are awaiting a date for a meeting with Mr Don Martin, a senior officer from Cornwall Council, to discuss a late reply regarding the future of the canal and other issues.

However, in the meantime, on Sunday 21st July, I had two brief conversations with John Gimpson of the Bude Coastal Communities Team, and with Peter La Broy, Cornwall Councillor for Bude.

Mr Gimpson advised me that the BCCT had a 'Memorandum of Understanding' with Cornwall Council, Local Enterprise Partnership, and Bude Stratton Town Council concerning developments in the Bude area. There were five areas of interest, one of which was Bude Canal.

Later that day Cllr La Broy mentioned to me that on 23rd July 2019 the Economic Growth and Development Team from Cornwall Council was coming to Bude for a visit and a discussion about Bude. Cllr La Broy intended to take the team to view the Sea Lock and urge them to invest in the Canal as a whole because there are many ongoing problems to be dealt with. He asked me for a comment and I advised him that BCHS's view was to complete the intent of the Canal Regeneration Project and re-instate navigation on the canal between Bude and Helebridge, by resolving the problem of Rodds Bridge and the lack of a slipway to give access to the canal, and to develop a management plan for the Canal. Also that BCHS were opposed to Cornwall Council's intention to sell the Higher Wharf for development on the basis that since 1967 this site was provided and has been used by community groups such as Bude Town Band and Scouts. The site should be redeveloped for continued community use. Coincidentally it is the best site for the slipway and, of course, currently owned by Cornwall Council. The other adjacent land that they own ie Crescent Car Park, is a logistical nightmare when considering a slipway. If and when restoration to navigation is pursued a slipway could be built at the Helebridge end of the Canal. However this would need consent and/or involvement of the landowner. BCHS are not against this; we want the canal to be a working waterway and navigable for the almost two miles of its length. Our mantra is 'Partnership'.

I understand that the view of the 'Economic Growth and Development Team' was favourable but with no timescale. So as usual, watch this space.

Finally, there is still the problem of water voles, although there is some evidence of self-limiting of numbers and loss to natural predators.

Chris Jewell

Membership Report

We welcome the following new member who joined the society since June: Jacqui Heard, Stratton.

As many of you will realise, this is the time of the year when I have to remind you that subscriptions were due on 1st September for all members except those who joined after 1st June this year. Renewal forms (where appropriate) are included with this newsletter. Members are encouraged to return the Standing Order Form to me as it is a more efficient method of payment for the society and avoids your renewal being overlooked. Membership cards will automatically be sent to members who have already completed Standing Order Mandates and whose payments have been received.

Some members who pay their subscription by Standing Order have still not updated their Standing Order Mandates to reflect the new subscription rates which applied from 1 September. It is important that all Standing Order mandates are updated now so that your subscription is renewed at the correct rate next year. If you wish to pay for any shortfall in your renewal this year please send me your payment or complete a bank transfer crediting the society's account. Our account details can be found on the Standing Order Mandate form which will be sent to you if appropriate. Please quote your Membership No. as a reference. Thank you for your co-operation.

Can I also remind those members who are taxpayers and who have not completed a Gift Aid declaration that they can obtain a copy from the website by downloading "The Way Forward" or phone me on 01288 361878.

Thank you for your continued support

Mike Moore, Acting Membership Secretary

Bude-Stratton Heritage Festival

This year the Bude-Stratton Heritage Day organised by Bude Stratton Town Council was held on Sunday 21st July and for a change was a beautiful warm sunny day with clear blue skies. The events were mainly on the Castle Green but with other events and stalls on the Barkhouse Green and in the Parkhouse Centre and Ivor Potter Hall.

The Town Council had paid the cost of transporting the two wooden replica tub boats, constructed by Adrian Wills and the late Barry Hughes, from Mr Wills' canal site at Annery near Bideford. These tub boats are full size replicas of the Bude Canal Tub Boat. There were similar boats on the Rolle Canal between Bideford and Torrington, which was the next canal constructed by James Green, the Engineer who built the Bude Canal. These tub boats and Mr Wills stall attracted a lot of interest from the public.



The replica Tub Boats on display outside the library



The Stover Canal display on the Barkhouse Green

Also attending the event were the Stover Canal Trust from South Devon, The Rolle Canal and Northern Devon Waterways Society, The Bude Canal Trust Ltd, and our Society, Bude Canal and Harbour Society. BCBS were in the Ivor Potter Hall with our stock sales table and the, now completed, 18 display panels which tell the story of 'Bude Harbour and Canal – The early days'.



We raffled a framed print by Harry McConville, local artist who is well known for his seascapes, local scenes and sailing vessels connected to the Canal and Harbour at Bude. The winner was Mrs Lea Deely of Bude.

The Bideford Youth Pipe Band attended the event at the request of BCBS and funded by us; always a favourite and crowd pleaser. With the good weather and a good attendance, this was a suitable celebration in the Bi-centenary year of Bude Canal.

Chris Jewell

Buffet and Entertainment Event – 23rd July 2019

This event organised by BCHS and The Bude Canal Trust Ltd was the celebration event to recognise the bicentenary of the start of construction of the Bude Canal on 23rd July 1819. It was held at the Falcon Hotel, Bude, from 7pm to 11.30pm with an excellent buffet, presentations of commemorative plaques to Bude-Stratton Town Council and Holsworthy Town Council's respective Mayors, and entertainment provided by local groups 'Friggin Rigg'in' and 'Cousin Jack'. At the start Chris Jewell, chairman of BCHS, welcomed everyone and introduced the guests, Cllr Bob Willingham, Mayor of Bude-Stratton, Cllr Mrs Joanne Heaven, Mayor of Holsworthy, with her consort, Mr Karl Heaven, and also Mr & Mrs Rupert Brendon, the proprietors of the Falcon Hotel.



Following the buffet and celebration cake, BCHS's Chairman presented Cllr Bob Willingham with a framed glass plaque which recorded the commemoration of the bi-centenary on 23/7/2019. Mr Steve Church, Chairman of Bude Canal Trust, similarly presented a plaque to Cllr Mrs Joanne Heaven, to likewise record and recognise the bi-centenary event.



*Presentation of the
Commemorative Plaque
to The Mayor of Holsworthy*

*(l - r) Chris Jewell
(Chairman of BCHS),
Steve Church
(Chairman of The
Bude Canal Trust),
Joanne Heaven
(Mayor of Holsworthy)
and Mick Stanton
(The Bude Canal Trust)*

The attendees were then entertained by 'Friggin Riffin' and 'Cousin Jack'. They were both well received with renditions of local folk and shanty songs. The evening ended with a spirited rendition of 'Trelawney' by both groups and the audience.

Comments from those attending indicated an enjoyable evening in every way and a suitable celebration of the bi-centenary.



The Celebration Cake



Cousin Jack



Friggin' Riffin'

Footnote - On 8th July 2023 it will be the bi-centenary of the official opening on the Bude Canal. In 1823 a party of subscribers with goods travelled by tub boat from Bude to Holsworthy on the canal. At Holsworthy they paraded into the town with a brass band playing and had another impressive celebration. It has been mooted that in 2023 a celebration could be held in Holsworthy to note this bi-centenary. Just a thought?

Chris Jewell

Harry McConville – Exhibition at Heritage Centre

On Saturday 13th July, with other BCHS members, I attended the opening of Mr McConville's exhibition of paintings of Bude locations, including many based on the canal and harbour areas. The exhibition which ran until 1st August was opened by Bob Willingham, Mayor of Bude & Stratton, and I was invited to say a few words. I explained that when BCHS were planning events for the 2019 bi-centenary, being a fan of Mr McConville's style of paintings, I suggested to him that perhaps he might like to have an exhibition in the Heritage Centre in July. In due course an exhibition was arranged and was dedicated to the bi-centenary being organised by BCHS, for which BCHS are very grateful.



*Harry McConville (l)
and Chris Jewell (r)*



There was a crowd of at least 30 people present who then viewed the display of Harry's work, from wonderful seascapes to detailed paintings of local ketches in sail leaving Bude. A fitting display that went well with the celebrations for the bi-centenary of the start of construction of Bude Canal in 1819.

Chris Jewell

Back to School

Early in 2019 BCHS, through Mrs Lucille Opie, a Trustee, asked Bude Junior and Bude Infant Schools (now known as Bude Primary Academy) at Broadclose, Bude to be involved in the bi-centenary year of Bude Canal.

BCHS supplied to each school laminated historic images of the Canal, a DVD of 'The Ups and Downs of Bude Canal' which is about the sea lock and inclined planes, various leaflets, and a copy of the 'Bi-centenary booklet – Bude Canal 1819-2019'. Lucille asked the schools if they would organise a poetry competition, the subject being the Canal. However, the week 15th – 19th July the Junior School spent the whole of the activity week studying the canal. Poetry Day was on 17th July and the poems were then judged by a professional poet. BCHS agreed to supply five first and five second prizes in the form of book tokens.

On Friday 19th July I spent an hour in the company of two classes of 8 year olds for a Question and Answer session about the Bude Canal. They were well briefed with prepared questions, most of which I was able to answer or explain. On Tuesday 23rd July, Lucille and I attended the school assembly and presented the prizes for the winning and second place prizes for each of the five years at the school. It was a pleasure to be involved and see all these bright eyed young ones with their whole lives ahead. What wonders will they come to know? Also to recall how different school is in 2019 compared with when I was eight, many years ago. My hope is that in years to come some of these children will recall their interest in the Bude Canal when younger and become an adult enthusiast who will want to preserve the Bude Canal as it heads towards its 300th anniversary. Subject to climate change etc, which seems to be our fate, as there is no real evidence or action being taken by the authorities who can make the radical changes needed.

Chris Jewell



*Children from Bude Primary Academy
on the beach with their replica
Tub Boats*

The Bude Canal studied at Bude Primary Academy for activities week in July

This year we are celebrating the bicentenary of the canal and there have been many interesting events taking place. We contacted the Bude Junior and Infant Schools (now known as Bude Primary Academy) and asked if they would run a project about the canal at some point during the year and were delighted when we were told they would spend the whole of their activities week doing a project on the Bude Canal. There were workshops where they designed and made paper boats and bridges and built a canal on the school field. They studied and learnt how the unique Bude lock and inclined planes worked. They had an art day, drawing and painting pictures of the canal. There was a poetry competition kindly judged by the well respected leader of a local poetry group Kate Compston and book tokens were given to her chosen top two from each year at an assembly the following week. An exhibition of the work from all years was set out and finally, the children, with parents and teachers walked along the Canal to the Weir noting the wildlife and fauna, even counting butterflies!

We, the Trustees of the canal are extremely grateful to the schools. The teachers deserve accolade for the time spent organising, writing the timetable and teaching about the canal. We feel that, along with the wonderful musical play 'Hidden Depths', performed at the Budehaven Community School, all the young people of Bude have been really well educated this year about the Bude Canal and we hope they will always love and respect it, our greatest asset to Bude along with our Sea pool.

Lucille Opie



Chris Jewell giving a presentation on the history of the Bude Canal on 11 September. This was followed by a further presentation on the Restoration of the Sea Lock and the Bude Canal Restoration Project

A pictorial report on the second canal tour on 7 September



Chris explaining the original route of the canal at Helebridge

Visitors examining the remains of the Tub Boat on display in the Barge Workshop at Helebridge



Some visitors walked to the bottom of Hobbacott Incline to examine the boat bays where some vegetation had recently been cleared

A pictorial report on the second canal tour on 7 September



The view inside the entrance to the wheelpit on the Werrington Incline



The site where the canal aqueduct crossed over the road at Tamerton



Andrew Dinner (right) welcoming visitors to his section of the canal at Boyton Wharf



The BCHS gazebo at The Farmers Market on 30 August

Bude Canal Trust Report on the Bude Aqueduct

June (continued)

Two mowing cuts of the footpath were attempted on alternative days during weeks three and four with some degree of success. The Fence line surrounding the Filter Beds was cleared (*photo 1*) along with the Incline Plane (*photo 2*) and top of the canal bank to Vealand Bridge.



Photo 1

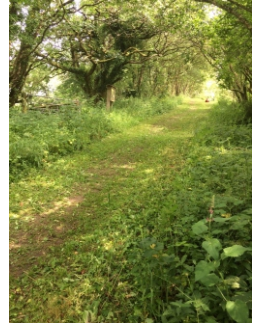


Photo 2

July

A walking survey was carried out along the full length of the Aqueduct to establish a comprehensive list of work requiring external funding applications to maintain the archaeological features along its length.

Several willow trees (*photo 3*) and splitting branches observed the previous week as being a potential hazard to walkers were taken down.



Photo 3



Photo 4

Temporary repairs were carried out to the fence at the start of the Permissive path at Burmsdon (*photo 4*) and an attempt to clear the footpath from the bottom of the Incline Plane over the Aqueduct Bridge through to the last field was eventually abandoned when a drive belt to the mower blade gave up under the pressure.

The repairs to the broken fence at Burmsdon (*photo 5*) and the footpath clearance to the last field were completed leaving the very last section to the end of the Permissive path to be included in the winter work schedule.

The last week incorporated clearance work round the bridges at Vealand, plus the stoned boat mooring protection wall at the Holsworthy junction and the privately constructed bridge at the Holsworthy Branch and Brendon Bridge. With the top of the bank between Brendon Bridge and Dunsdon Nature Reserve being strimmed to finish the month off.



Photo 5

August

Unfortunately, due to a leak under the sluice boards at Dunsdon Nature reserve this section had almost completely drained. The long overdue bank and hedge strimming at the south side of Dexbeer was started and cutting back branches of yet another fallen tree.

Three weeks into the month and the last of the Broad Leaf Helleborine Orchids in bloom at Puckland kindly marked out by Sue & Colin Field to avoid us inadvertently mowing them. A total of nineteen were spotted along this section, mostly further off the footpath.

Chilsworthy Inter Parish walk group completed an end to end walk (*photo 6*).



Photo 6

Into the third week and after yet another tree fallen at Vealand was cleared away and a second at Cape Horn the vegetation was cleared round Gadlock and Wooda Bridges (*photo 8*).

The bridges at Broomhill (*photo 7*) and Morton were both cleared of vegetation but the depth of water and silt adjacent to Puckland and Morton Bridges made it difficult to access properly.



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9

Moving on then to clear Dexbeer Bridge. The pipe work installed by the water board at a time when they considered the structure of the original raised section across the valley at Wooda was threatened with a possible collapse was also trimmed of vegetation at each end (*photo 9*).

To finish the work for the month (despite the torrential rain) the stone work at the exit end of the old water feed culvert from Lower Tamar Lake was cleared of vegetation and the overhanging hedge through to Virworthy Wharf was cut back. All the structures along this section were strimmed to clear vegetation. Two invasive plants are at Virworthy 'Red Bistort' escaped garden variety and Purple Loosestrife.

September

Summer growth at Virworthy Wharf had totally taken over but the first week of the month provided the opportunity bring it back under control (*photos 10 & 11*) and another tree collapsing over the footpath was cut back.



Photo 10



Photo 11

With the stone wall that provided a bank protecting the mooring place at the Holsworthy Junction it would seem logical for a similar wall to have been built along the side of the unloading bay at Virworthy as depicted in the artists impression on the display board. Despite several exploratory digs nothing has been found, so possibly with the closure of the canal the stones provided 'free' material for

various other buildings in the area. Using fresh stones donated to the Trust we are rebuilding a short replacement length in front of the Wharf building (*photos 12 & 13*).



Photo 12



Photo 13

The guided walk on the 14th will hopefully create a wider interest among the local community.

Mike Degnan, Bude Canal Trust

Extracts from “Looking Back” published in the Bude & Stratton Post.

25 July 1959

Centre of a controversy some time back, when local opposition was marshalled against the Urban Council's proposal that it should be the subject of a warrant of abandonment, the lower reaches of the Bude Canal are apparently to remain in use.

7 July 1979

A Bude boatman, Mr Colin Cotterell, will be told that he can continue to use the port for his commercial activities for the time being. Meanwhile North Cornwall Council's environmental services committee is to discuss the use of the port for commercial purposes and what charges should be imposed.

8 September 1979

An anchor from a steam trawler which was wrecked on the North Cornish coast near Bude has been recovered from the sea and is now on display at the town's museum. It was found by Mr Tim Marshall while diving off Sharpnose Point near Duckpool, and it was recovered with the help of Mr David Currie and his crew. The anchor is from the fishing trawler 'Miura' from Milford Haven, which was wrecked at Stanbury Mouth on March 29, 1927. It had a crew of 12.

Bude Lifeboat

An article was also published in the Bude & Stratton Post recently looking back at the history of the Bude Lifeboat from 1901 when a new lifeboat carriage was acquired which allowed the boat to be launched and recovered without the horses having to go in to the sea. A practice was arranged when the boat was taken to Widemouth for a test launching. The following report appeared in the *Post* describing the new system of launching the lifeboat into the water: 'The boat was quickly got to the water's edge and turned ready for launching by the new method. To the uninitiated a little explanation. The old method of launching necessitated the horses going out into the water before turning the boat, so that when she was turned she was in deep enough water to float. This meant that with five pairs of horses in a line the leading teams must be nearly swimming before the boat is in far enough, and the difficulty of accomplishing this feat has always made launching in a rough sea practically an impossibility. The new method, which, by the way, is heartily approved by the inspector, Lieut Hall, does away with the necessity of turning the boat in the water.'

Unfortunately this does not really explain how the new method works but I assume that it involves the horses reversing the carriage into the water as shown in the photograph which accompanied the article. (Ed)



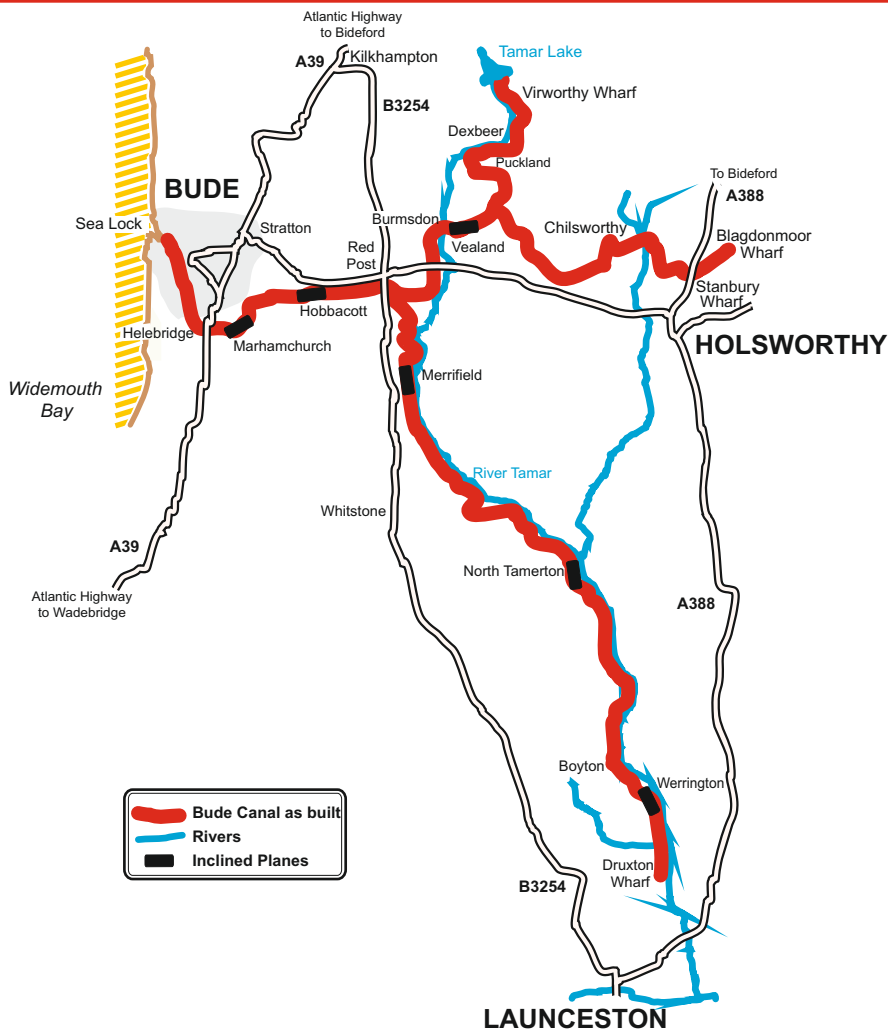
*Horses pulling the Bude Lifeboat into the sea.
It is not clear whether this was before or after the new procedure was introduced
as it is not the same photograph which was mentioned in the article*



And finally - the sun setting over the Bude Canal

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