

THE TUB BOAT

Newsletter of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society

No. 62

Winter 2012



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Forthcoming Events:

- Saturday 12th Jan Bude Canal Trust workparty, 10am at Virworthy Wharf.
For details contact budecanaltrust@gmail.com
- Saturday 16th Feb Bude Canal Trust workparty, 10am at the junction of the
Holsworthy branch. Contact budecanaltrust@gmail.com
- Sunday 24th Feb Twelfth BCHS AGM at the Falcon Hotel Bude at 2.30pm. To
be followed by a presentation by Dr Roger Higgs on the
geology of Bude rocks.
- Saturday 9th Mar Bude Canal Trust workparty, 10am at Dexbeer.
- Saturday 9th Mar West Country Branch of the IWA are holding their AGM in Bude.
- Saturday 16th Mar Deadline for articles for inclusion in Tub Boat No 62 to reach the
editor Clive Horton on cshorton23@btinternet.com
- Mon 1st April Publication of THE TUB BOAT No 63

Contributions for the next edition of the Tub Boat should be sent as an e-mail attachment
to cshorton23@btinternet.com or copied onto a USB memory stick or CD and send to
Mike Moore (Tel: 01288 361878) to reach him by 16th March 2013.

Trustees:	Chairman	Audrey Wheatley
	Vice-Chairman	David Phillips
	Secretary	<i>Vacant</i>
	Treasurer	Chris Jewell
	Events Secretary	Betty Moore
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		Ralph Daniel, Pam Daniel
	Membership Secretary	Mike Moore (<i>non-trustee</i>)
	The Tub Boat Editor	Clive Horton (<i>non-trustee</i>)

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Cover: Rodds Bridge Lock in winter
Photo: Chris Jewell

CREAKS FROM THE CHAIR

We have a very full canal these days.

For many weeks now I have looked out from my front windows at a swollen river and canal and a very green and soggy valley. The lane crossing the valley looks more like a muddy ditch than a road and where it crosses the river, debris and huge puddles abound, testimony to the river having burst its banks and flowed over and around the bridge and flooding the surrounding meadows. Three weekends ago after a night of non-stop rain, the valley seen from my windows was a sea of brown water rushing its way to the Atlantic. Water had surged around the top gates of both inland locks and swamped the lock-surrounds and towpath on its wild way seawards. All the area around Rodds Bridge was flooded, the lane inundated and for a while the river bridge rendered impassable. The whole valley was water. Hence, we have a very full canal these days.



Whalesborough lock and the weir. Photos: Gareth Cann

The naïve and simple-minded among readers, (myself included), might suppose the surfeit of water described in the preceding paragraph would mean that all is set for a splendid season of navigation on the canal in the coming months with both locks in use for all boats low enough to pass Rodds Bridge and plenty of activity on the little used upper pounds. Not so, alas. We have it on good authority that there is not enough water in the canal for such an extravagance as normal lock use beyond our one-off navigation event in the spring. One wonders how, one hundred and fifty years ago, this same canal carried on a regular trade in and out of the sea lock in all weathers (bar the impossible)

and made in sixty odd years no fortune for sure, but a significant difference to the livelihoods of many along its line. The source of water for the broad canal at this end is the same now as it was then, being the confluence of both rivers Strat and Neet with the canal at Helebridge. It would appear that our much fought-for, multi-million pound regeneration is to be of cosmetic value only.

Congratulations to HiWAG about whose formation you will have read in the previous edition of TTB. Their recent and first open coffee morning was very well attended by an interested public keen to know more about the ongoing campaign to save the former shipyard at Higher Wharf from development and restore it to the people of Bude as a waterside amenity. You will see more on this further on in the magazine.

This will be my last "Creaks" as I will be retiring from the post of chairman at the AGM in February. I shall not stand down from the committee and hope to make myself reasonably useful in other ways. I know whoever takes over will do a good job and I wish him/her well with similar support from colleagues as I received. In the meantime, a happy and healthy new year to all members and readers and may your support of all the society's aspirations be as "hands-on" as you can make them.

Audrey Wheatley

Membership Report

We welcome the following new member who joined in September:

Mrs A Ellison, Breakwater Road, Bude (Life Member).

Many thanks to those members who have already renewed their subscription for 2012/2013 and particularly to those who have given additional donations. However, some members have still not renewed. Would they please complete the enclosed renewal form by return to maintain their support for the Bude Canal & Harbour Society and receive future newsletters. Remember that only fully paid up members can vote at the AGM in February.

Can I also remind those members who are taxpayers and who have not yet completed a Gift Aid declaration that they can obtain a copy from the Treasurer.

Thank you for your continued support.

Mike Moore

Virworthy View

It's close to the shortest day of the year - getting dark before four o'clock means much less can be done outside plus the VERY wet weather, all the usual winter tidying up around the garden and the Wharf area is on hold. In the last issue I said the water flooded part of one of the pony paddocks - well, it seems hell bent on repeating the process on a regular basis!!

The Wharf building has for some time had water seeping in at floor level at the rear of the building, which makes it too damp to display the artifacts such as the Tub Boat wheels and mile markers as they rust. Most of these items have been removed, cleaned, painted and restored. But until the building can be dried out a bit they have not been returned.



The ground level at the rear of the building is some four feet higher than the floor. So it means digging down to put in place a drain pipe just below floor level and a waterproof membrane against the rear wall. Work has commenced on this task but because of the extremely wet weather and the unstable ground, work has had to be suspended. Initial results to drain the water away from the footings are favorable.

The large Ash tree by the Wharf shows no signs of Ash die-back at present but experts are keeping watch on this and other trees along the canal.

On a lighter note; Our peafowl don't like the wet weather and make a bee-line for the stables when it starts raining. They have

vacated the trees for the comfort and dry of the stables at night and cause chaos in a morning when I am trying to feed the ponies!. Only hardy walkers are seen at this time of the year - those who do venture out are suitably attired with wellies and stout coats. Looking forward to a dry and warm summer!

Geoff Lowe

Bude Canal Trust Report

Continuing wet conditions through the autumn has not made maintenance of the footpath any easier but access to a relatively vegetation free walk is possible despite needing wellington boots to cope with the mud which is making it a bit slippery in places.

Starting at Lower Tamar Lake the footpath still needs some attention to prevent further washing out next to the overflow pipe near Virworthy Wharf as does the leak adjacent to the sluice. Assistance is being sought to overcome both of these persistent problems. The floor of the building at Virworthy has been thoroughly cleaned as have the display boards and many of the artefacts are in the process of being salvaged for presenting with an improved display.

Work to improve on the potential flooding problem is due to begin by removing many of the large trees threatening the culverts between Cape Horn and Dexbeer plus clearing access for future work with permission being sought from adjacent land owners.



Rebuilding of the bridge at Vealand is progressing slowly due to the combination of holidays and the bad weather, Four capping stones have now been uncovered and with

arrangements being made to mechanically scoop out silt and debris each side of the bridge there is a small possibility that others may be found.

This will enable an authentic rebuild of the wing walls to follow on.

The first of the weekend organised work parties took place on November 10th at Morton Bridge. We were lucky with a break in the weather and a large area has been cleared by the small group of volunteers and it is hoped this will help to dry the ground out to create a picnic stop off point at some time in the future. The majority of the trees and undergrowth threatening to encroach into the canal were also removed and burnt giving a clear view of the original support arches retained under the road bridge. The extremely muddy section of the footpath through to Puckland Bridge has now been scraped back to the chippings laid several years ago.

Text & Photos Mike Degnan www.bude-canal-trust.co.uk

Winter Warmer

The port cullis of our local fortress was raised especially for the holding of this festive occasion at which around twenty five members and friends assembled for hot mulled wine, strudel and mince pies. These delicacies were supplied and served by Betty



All Photos:
Mike Moore



and Pam, the domestic side of our events team at beautifully decorated tables while Ralph ran a very efficient raffle which did a brisk trade. Chris had erected a small display board, while Mike, as usual, was quietly busy with his camera. This was a delightful seasonal gathering, the first, but we hope not the last, under a new name

Audrey Wheatley

HIWAG

Many thanks to all those members, families and friends who turned up at The Parkhouse Centre this morning! It was a very friendly, enjoyable occasion with some interesting and useful questions from members of the public and a great deal of evident and enthusiastic support, not only for HiWAG but also for the individual groups and societies who put on excellent displays, which were much helped by Budehaven student Ben Roberts' rolling programme of images of all of our groups. The new HiWAG leaflets were very well received - especial thanks to Harry McConville for his work with all the images we are using and the new logo.

Now for some figures! Thanks to the generosity of members who provided cakes and buns, and the non stop activity of our helpers, the coffee and cakes element of the morning raised over £78.00, which was terrific. Paul Tilzey's cheerful hard work with the raffle, realised a further £118 and sundry donations added a further £8, creating a total of £204. This was a very good result and many thanks are due to all those who helped in any way.

In addition we have received cheques today of £100 each from the Bude Canoe Club, the Bude Canal and Harbour Society and



"Chris Jewell presenting a cheque for £100 from BCHS to Steve Davenport to assist with start-up costs at the HiWAG Coffee Morning on Saturday 8th December"
(Photo: Austen Davies)

the Westcountry Branch of the Inland Waterways Association as a measure of their support. HiWAG has also received a marvellous donation of £600 from a local supporter who wishes to remain anonymous. To all of these our very warm thanks. So in total we shall be able to bank £1104 when the account is opened in the next few days - a really magnificent start, for which many thanks to all involved.

We have also begun to build up a useful data base of local people who want to be kept up to date with what HiWAG is doing, and enquiries from a number of other people wanting to become Friends of the Higher Wharf - which should be possible early in the new year.

So - a good morning indeed, and much progress made!
With all good wishes

Jeremy

Bude Valley Management Advisory Group

At the meeting on 19th November 2012, the main points of interest were:

1. In January/February 2013, Cornwall Council will be dredging the canal between Whalesborough Weir and Whalesborough Lock due to excessive silting caused in the main by the excessive amounts of rain during the year. The canal takes a lot of the flood water and as such precipitation of the silt particles are deposited in that section of the canal. Middle Pound maintains a 4'6" depth

2. The Plane keepsers Path – All the board walk areas have been covered in wired mesh to improve grip for walks.

At the top of Hobbacott Plane, the landowner has re re-routed the line of the permissive path which needs attention to make it level and wider.

3. There has been extensive work on the Breakwater to replace and secure the large stones which make up the seaward side. A review of the area where the sewerage outfall pipe passes through/under the Breakwater is due to check the seals on the pipeline.

4. Once a legal opinion has been obtained in relation to the Bude Marshes and Valley's Management Plan has been agreed, a

project to re-introduce the water vole to the Bude Valleys will probably occur. This animal is currently extinct in Cornwall and most of Devon. The current national population is 400,000 or less. In 2002, it was 1.2 million. In 1902 it was found in all parts of the UK. At that time, its common name in Cornwall/Devon was 'CAMPAGNOL'. This is of Breton origin and confirms the ancient close links between these Celtic nations.

5. Cllr Phil Tucker proposed that BVMAG should write to Cornwall Council and ask that procedures be considered to secure land needed to complete the TRAC Project. This was agreed.

6. EA Update – Under the 'Water Framework Directive', the EA were considering the River Strat/Neet area with a view to restoring river channels, flood plains and the creation of salt marsh areas to benefit the environment.

Hi-WAG

The groups continue to formalise its structure. It will soon be applying for registration as a charity. A business plan is being developed. An application for a Bank Account has been submitted. However, the main obstacle remains the securing of land at Higher Wharf from Cornwall Council.

Since the last issue of Tub Boat, several things have occurred within Cornwall Council. On 10.10.12, the then leader of the Cabinet, Alex Robertson, lost a vote of no confidence which also caused 4 other cabinet ministers to resign their posts. The new cabinet which will be in post until the elections in May 2013 for a new unitary council have a different attitude to local aspirations. We can only hope that the election allows the current balance to continue and permit Cornwall Council to have sensible and understanding conversations with groups like HiWAG and the communities within Cornwall. This is especially important as 2013 sees Cornwall being granted by Europe more funds – a post convergence fund. We need conversations and partnership not proscription and closed doors.

Bude Canal Rodds Bridge

The Society has recently had talks with David Attwell, a Cornwall Council officer with responsibilities for Bude Canal and Chris Sims, Community Network Manager for Bude with a view to overcoming the impasse over this subject. This was a useful meeting and it was agreed to meet again in January 2013, with a CC Funding Officer

to further explore further solutions to this problem.

Bude Canal Trust Partnership BCTP

This partnership, of which BCHS is a partner along with Cornwall Council, Devon County Council, Torridge District Council, Pancrasweek Parish Council, Bude Stratton Town Council, Devon Wildlife Trust, South West Lakes Trust, Ruby Country Partnership and Holsworthy Town Council has been for sometime seeking a way for funding to allow major works to be done on the 'Aqueduct Section' owned by Bude Canal Trust. These works are mainly the refurbishment of culverts and bridges. However, it has not been possible to source such funding. Recently, the main partners met with a funding expert and agreed that the partnership should consider making a bid to HLF for a Landscape Partnership grant, based mainly of the Bude Canal and adjacent lands, to protect heritage, culture and landscapes. The maximum size allowed for the site is 200 square kilometres. The preferred site includes the Upper Tamar area, Holsworthy, Bude and towards Bridgerule. The maximum final grant after development is 3 million pounds. On 7th December 2012, at the quarterly meeting of BCTP, it was unanimously agreed that an application be made for the pre-application stage for approval to make the initial 1st stage grant for development of the main grant. If this is achieved, it is a massive undertaking to successfully obtain the main grant. The effect on this area will be important and immense and help secure the canal and our unique landscapes, heritage and environment.

Barge Workshop, Helebridge, Nr Bude

As you will know, this premise is owned by Bude Stratton Town Council and stores/displays, the Tub Boat and other local heritage artefacts. BSTC are due to re-roof the building – it has been delayed by local conditions. There is now another delay due to the discovery that bats use the premises during the year. Bats, being a protected species, require BSTC to take appropriate steps to ensure that the bats can continue to use the premises after the premises have been re-roofed.

BCHS are in discussion with BSTC over other matters relating to those premises, such as opening during high summer, condition of premises and future improved usage as a heritage facility.

Chris Jewell

Events and Visitors Photo Gallery



"Cornwall Council Cabinet Member, Bert Biscoe, visits the Bude Canal on 15th November. L to R - Councillor Biscoe, Chris Jewell (BCHS) and Councillor David Parsons" (Photo: Mike Moore)



"Members of the West Country Branch of The Inland Waterways Association visiting the Bude Canal on 4th October pictured at Helebridge. L to R - Peter Kelly (Secretary), Chris Jewell and Bob Abbott (Chairman)" (Photo: Mike Moore)



" Remedial work taking place on 21st November following the collapse of the towpath between the Sea Lock and the old Museum building" (Photo: Mike Moore)



"Volunteers carrying out maintenance work on Rodds Bridge Lock on 4th October" (Photo: Mike Moore)



"Bristol Pilot Cutter 'Morwenna' during her visit to Bude on 5th September" (Photo: Chris Jewell)

Christmas in the canal zone 1952

If you go to the following link
<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/christmas-in-the-canal-zone>
 on your computer you can watch a Pathe newsreel showing what it was like 50 years ago for the troops spending Christmas guarding the Suez Canal.

Margery

Canal Art Christmas Baubles

Go to <http://www.santaspostbag.co.uk/Canal-Art-Christmas-Baubles.shtml>

Jane

View from the North



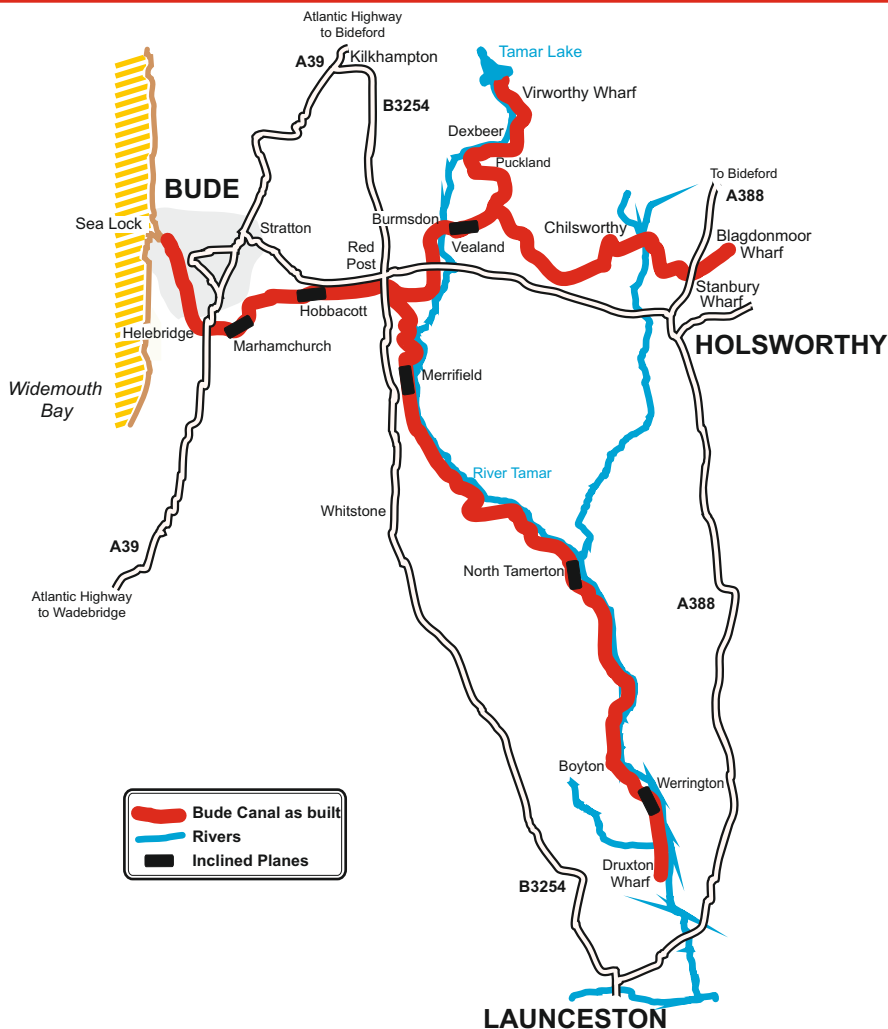
As I write this on the shortest day of the year the light is already fading and it will soon be dark. A severe gale is blowing in from the south east, the same one that prevented last night's "lifeline ferry" service from Aberdeen bringing my son home for Christmas. He'll now hopefully be back on the next ferry in 7 days time for New Year. Our daughter is also in Aberdeen and will be working Christmas Eve and Boxing Day so for the first time in 23 years there'll be no children in our home on Christmas Day. Or at least that would be the case were it not for the wonderful advances technology has made for by using the web camera you can see in the bottom left hand corner of the picture above we'll be able to Skype with both children and with Rosemary's Octogenarian father in Sussex. It's also as a result of computer advances that I'm still able to play an active part in the Bude Canal by being the "Tub Boat's" editor. So make your New Year resolution be to embrace the technology whatever your age and send me a contribution for the next edition.

Clive Horton

Photo is looking south towards Bude with Hoy Hills in background.

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