

THE TUB BOAT

Newsletter of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society

No. 68

Summer 2014



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Forthcoming Events:

- Saturday 27th July Stall at Bude Stratton Heritage Day
- Saturday 16th August Stall at Bude Carnival
- Saturday 23rd August Stall in RNLI marquee
- Saturday 30th August Falmouth Tall Ships Regatta, leaving Marhamchurch at 8.40 and Bude at 9.00. Coach fare, Adult £11 and children £6. This trip is now fully booked but if you are still interested please return your form without a cheque and we will add your name to our reserve list should we receive any cancellations.
- Saturday 13th September Deadline for articles for inclusion in Tub Boat No 69 to reach the editor Clive Horton cshorton23@btinternet.com
- Saturday 27th September Bude Canal Navigation Day
- Wednesday 1st October Publication of THE TUB BOAT No 69

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 13 September 2014.

Trustees:	Chairman	<i>Vacant</i>
	Vice-Chairman	<i>Vacant</i>
	Secretary	<i>Vacant</i>
	Treasurer	Chris Jewell
	Events Secretary	Betty Moore
	Minuting Secretary	<i>Vacant</i>
	Other trustees	David Phillips Jill White Anne Longley Stan Noakes
	Membership Secretary	Mike Moore (<i>non-trustee</i>)
	The Tub Boat Editor	Clive Horton (<i>non-trustee</i>)

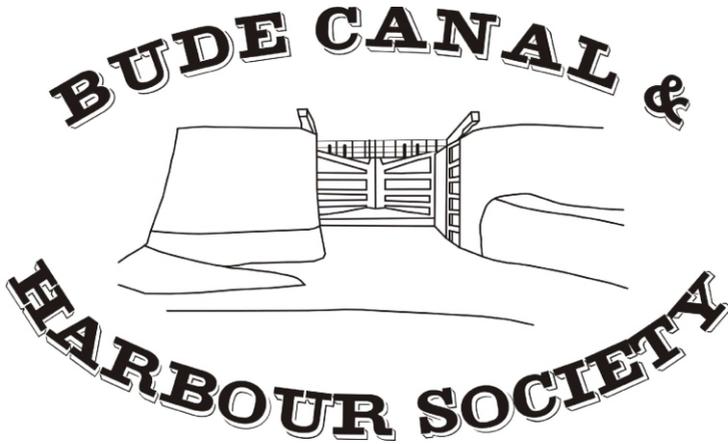
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Cover: The yacht Champus moored in the Lower Wharf outside the former museum buildings.
 Photo: Mike Moore

Creaks from an empty Chair

The society has corresponded with the Charity Commission concerning the situation of having only four trustees when the constitution requires a minimum of six trustees which should include the four officers of the executive. The Charity Commission has replied and confirmed the above situation. Thus the society is in urgent need of new trustees to be able to comply with the lawful requirements of the constitution – ideally six new trustees, some of which are prepared to take up officer posts. The current trustees are developing a recruitment plan to increase the number of trustees to ensure the continuance of the society.

However, there is some good news. Two former trustees have agreed to become trustees again but only as ordinary committee members. This helps in raising the number to six, the minimum number required by the constitution. They are Mr Stan Noakes of Stratton and Mrs Jill White of Ashwater. We welcome them and appreciate their offer of support.

Finally, the society appeals to its local members to seriously consider becoming a trustee and be prepared to take up one of the vacant officer posts. I can assure you that you will have the support and advice of the senior trustees. If you feel that you can help, please contact us by e-mail info@bude-canal.co.uk or telephone 01288 352298.

Chris Jewell

Membership Report

Unfortunately no new members have joined since the last edition of the Tub Boat which means that we have had no new members at all in 2014. Perhaps existing members could encourage their friends to join as the membership numbers have been declining recently due to the loss of long serving members. Following the loss of Bryan Dudley Stamp which was reported in the last edition of the Tub Boat, we have unfortunately lost two more well established members. Sylvia Rymell passed away on 24th April following a long illness and Lawrence Wheatley on 7th May.

Sylvia, with her husband Tony, were the mainstay of the West Country Branch of the Inland Waterways Association in the early days of the branch and by enthusiastic fund-raising and lobbying were influential in the restoration of the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal. They were also instrumental in encouraging local enthusiasts in Bude to set up the original Bude Canal Society in 1990. Sylvia was Chairman and Secretary

at various times during her time on the West Country Branch committee. We pass on our condolences to Tony and his family.

Again Lawrence was part of a team with his wife Audrey who were founding members of the original Bude Canal Society and he served as the Tub Boat editor for many years. He also supported Audrey in her role as Secretary and the Chairman of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society. We pass on our condolences to Audrey and her family and wish Audrey well in her recovery following a recent operation.

Mike Moore

Bude Canal Trust Report

April saw the collecting and burning of brash along the Vealand section and the preparation of the area and footings for a stable base for the new table and benches at Moreton Bridge. This was finally completed with everything in place at the end of the month, just in time for an organized conducted walk for a group from Cornwall Wildlife Trust from Lower Tamar lake to enjoy their sandwiches. They appreciated the effort but unfortunately with the onset of heavy rain we all took refuge at Puckland Farm.



Picnic table preparation at Moreton Bridge



Ready for Use

Conducted walk for CWT members



May brought on a rapid growth of all the vegetation plus several over laden branches, all needing attention and the section between Puckland and the first Dexbeer accommodation bridge was made a start on, also removing some of the excess trees in the canal profile.



Before clearing Puckland section



A big improvement.

June An attempt to cut the grass along the full length was partially thwarted by a broken drive belt but was completed last week with a follow up cut using the new mower and strimmer which cleared much of the overhanging vegetation along both sides from Puckland towards Aldercott Bridge.. Simon and his team from DWT removed the excess material under the footbridge at the northern end of Dunsdon Nature Reserve to create a clearer flow in the event of future flood water and the small leaks along the recently watered section were also worked on last week with the water now being raised up to its planned level. As at Virworthy wharf, these leaks will have to be constantly reviewed to evaluate any further problems.



Footpath cleared of excess growth
All photos & Text by Mike Degnan



Three of the team Mike, Robin & Tim

Helebridge

Various photographs of the recent clearance work carried out by the Environment Agency at Helebridge clearly showing the course of the original channel to the canal basin.



All photos by Mike Moore

Stories From A Working Canal

In the course of researching family history I have made notes of many stories which caught my eye. The following are just a few of these relating to the Bude Canal. They cover a period of around 100 years and reflect various aspects of life along a working canal, starting from when it was first opened.

That respected and liberal character Mr Blackmore of Exeter had the gratification of seeing launched on the water of the Canal, two barges of thirty tons each, and many Boats his property, and of receiving on board their manure and merchandize for Holsworthy, thereby setting a praiseworthy example to men of capital, to commence a Trade, the result of which promises to be no less lucrative to them than highly advantageous to the holders of shares.
Exeter Flying Post, 17th July 1823

On the banks of the new canal at this exciting time was the Falcon Hotel. Bude was not just beginning to grow as an industrial centre but as a tourist centre, too. In those early years most of the buildings we know today had not yet come into being and visitors at the hotel would have enjoyed unimpeded views to the surrounding countryside and the sea.

The reputation of Bude in this county is fast rising into celebrity as a watering place, the air being found to be salubrious and beneficial to health. Upwards of five hundred persons of fashion and valetudinarians have visited the place during the present season. The accommodations afforded the company have exceeded all preceding years, especially since the re-opening of the Falcon Hotel by Mr Hewitt under the patronage of Sir Thomas Dyke Acland. The house is fitted up with an eye to the comfort of families, and we should not be surprised if in a few years Bude was to vie with some of our more celebrated watering-places.
Royal Cornwall Gazette, 1st September 1826

But come autumn and winter when the 'valetudinarians' had left the weather posed challenges.

Several experiments have been made within these ten days past with an ice-boat ... on the canal, which has proved to be most satisfactory in its operations, breaking and clearing the ice, though of many inches thickness, in a more expeditious manner than could have been conceived possible. It was drawn by two horses, and travelled at the rate of four miles an hour, performing its work to the admiration and surprise of the beholders.

The West Briton, 15th January 1841

Bude

The continual ground sea on this coast has prevented all vessels from going in and out of this port. The fleet are all at home to spend Christmas together, which has not occurred for some years past.

The Cornish Times, 2nd January 1858

Sadly the canal was the scene of many tragedies. Here is just one example.

Stratton – Melancholy and Fatal Accident

On the 5th instant, Abel Yelland, who has worked the incline plane for several years past, at Merrifield, in the Parish of Bridgerule, on the line of the Bude Canal, was down in the pit with the other workmen, about the machinery (without having taken the precaution to secure the works above) when, melancholy to relate, a boater, coming up with a trip of boats, welled the water out over the banks, which put the water wheel round, and the machinery in motion, by which the unfortunate man's thigh was fearfully crushed.'

The Cornish Times, 9th October 1858

Abel Yelland did not survive the accident, leaving 'a widow and family to lament his untimely end'. The family comprised at least six children. They appear in the 1861 census, living with their mother, Charlotte, at Merrifield. She had remarried but her children with Abel are meticulously recorded as the sons and daughters of her first marriage (not standard practice in the census). The youngest, Sarah, would have been no more than a baby at the time of her father's accident.

But alongside the industrial tragedy there was a more romantic view of the canal as expressed by 'A Visitor' who also quoted the poetry of 'a local muse'.

Continuing on our course to where the canal widens into the large basin (on one side of which are the wharves and warehouses), we come to the Falcon-terrace:

Where first is built the grand hotel,

The 'Falcon' is its sign.

The traveller there may please himself

With brandy, gin or wine

The great canal you here behold,

Extending many a mile,

With boats and barges, sloops and ships,

All built in different style.

A steamer tows the vessels in and out of the harbour, as well as the barges going inland to the foot of the incline plane, about two miles distant.

East Cornwall Times, 21st September 1861

The steamer mentioned in this extract was called the 'Bude Light' and is recorded in the 1861 census. Its captain was Thomas Beer who is described as 'Engine Driver Steam Engineer Bude Light'. He was helped by Thomas Found, aged just 11, described as 'Steam Engineer Assistant Bude Light'. Thomas was the son of William Found the 'Harbour Master and Lock Keeper' and one day he would become Bude's harbour master in his turn.

The 'Bude Light' did not remain in service for long but discussion of another form of steam engine was already underway. The following comes from a report on a meeting about the Launceston and South Devon Railway Bill.

... Mr A Shepard, coal merchant, examined: the supply of coal to the neighbourhood was from South Wales, partly to Bude whence it came by canal as far as it extended, and then by carriage. He also obtained coal from Boscastle, and some was brought up the Tamar. The coal brought into the district this way was distributed about 7 miles round of [Launceston] town. The Bude Canal is often deficient of water in summer. About 3000 tons were brought from the southern quays and 5000 from Bude and Boscastle. The cost of coal brought by Bude to Launceston was £1 2s 8d. If by Plymouth and the line it would be only 19s 6d ...

Launceston Weekly News, 15th March 1862

The wreck of the Bencoolen on Summerleaze Beach in 1862 with the loss of the lives of so many of its crew in clear view of those on the shore traumatised Bude's small community and received wide publicity. The following summer many gathered by the canal for the inauguration of a new life boat.

A new lifeboat and appendages have been generously presented to the Bude station by the surviving children of Mrs Elizabeth Moor Garden, - the wife of the late RG Garden, Esq of River Lyons, King's County, Ireland, and one of the lords of the manor of Treleigh, Redruth, Cornwall. On Friday last (the 19th instant) the subscribers to the Life Boat Institute and their friends, met at the station, at Bude, at twelve o'clock, and after inspecting the boat etc partook of a lunch at the Falcon Hotel, at 1.30 pm. At 3 pm the boat was removed from the station, containing its appointed crew of 11 men drawn by 6 horses, with a man riding each near horse – the horses and men wearing rosettes. Preceding the boat were the amateur and brass bands of Stratton and Kilkhampton.

Launceston Weekly News, 27th June 1863

Meanwhile Bude was continuing to develop as a 'watering place'.

Visitors to Bude – This healthy watering place has remarkably grown in the estimation of the public. At the time of the cutting of the canal, about 45 years ago, Bude contained only one Inn, the Villa, and about a dozen houses. It has now two good hotels, three licensed houses, and a population of from 700 to 800, occupying about 180 houses. The salubrity of the air is unquestionable and this season, from the finess of the weather, a very large number of visitors have been attracted here for the renovation of their health by sea-bathing and by exercise on the downs and breakwater. Launceston Weekly News, 17th September 1864

And industrial activity continued, too. For example, boat building and repair.

Launch at Bude – On Thursday afternoon the schooner Ellen Martin was launched from the yard occupied by Mr Stapleton into the Bude canal. The Ellen Martin, belonging to Capt O Davey, has during the winter months been lengthened and undergone a thorough repair. The afternoon was exceedingly fine, and many spectators were present to witness the event. The launch itself was an exceedingly pretty sight, and passed off quite successfully. A luncheon was provided for the workmen and others at the expense of Capt Davey. The band of the Stratton Musical Union was also present, and contributed much to the gaiety of the afternoon. Launceston Weekly News, 29th April 1865

There will have been plenty of children among the spectators as Mr Arthur, headmaster of Bude Haven National School, reported:

In the afternoon no school – Capt Davey's vessel, the Ellen Martin, being launched; nearly the whole of the children were absent.

School Log, 20th April 1865.

The next year Mr Arthur recorded:

Some are away about the Coal in Canal endeavouring to save what they can from the bottom.

School Log, 8th May 1866

This was coal which presumably which had come into the harbour by ship as part of the 'coasting trade'.

Owing to the fine weather, the coasting trade at Bude has been unusually busy during the week ending May 26. Ten coasters arrived with an aggregate of 780 tons of general merchandize.

Cornish and Devon Post, June 4th 1887

At Bude last week, the Lady Acland and the Ceres arrived with goods from Bristol. The Annie Davey, the Ant, the Infanta, the Ocean, the Stuckley and the Sir T D Acland with coals.

Cornish and Devon Post, 25 February 1888.

Shipping continued as the end of the century approached and there was still work in the ship yard.

The ketch 'Ceres' was successfully launched from the ship-building yard of Mr Harry Stapleton on Saturday afternoon at Bude. Her owner is Mr W Petherick, who has spared no pains to make good the damage done to his vessel by her stranding on the north side of the harbour last November.

Cornish and Devon Post, 19th May 1894

But with the arrival of the 20th century many changes were taking place in and around the Bude Canal.

Bude's last life boat day

... Upon the boat's arrival back, a crowd of juveniles had gathered at the locks to have their last ride in her up the Canal to the station. A touching incident was the St Gennys band striking up 'Auld Lang Syne' during her passage on the Canal.

Cornish and Devon Post, 1st September 1923

My father was probably one of those juveniles. He remembered feeling scared as a small boy when his father lowered him into the boat far down below him between the inner and outer lock gates. We have reached the realms of living memory and the end of 100 years of stories but of course this was not to be Bude's last life boat day nor the end of the stories of the canal.

IWA Trailboat Festival



One of our members, Joy Yeates, manning the IWA West Country Branch Stall at the IWA Trailboat Festival on 24th May. Unfortunately the event closed early due to the continuous rain which turned the site into a quagmire.

Photo Report by Mike Moore of Bude's Multi Use Trail Extension



A



B



C



D



E



F

A The Start of the surfaced trail.

B Entrance to the extension to the multi-use trail at the bottom of Helebridge Road

C The new bridge built over the river.

D The end of the surfaced section of the trail.

E The next section at the moment is just a footpath through a fenced off area of the field but I understand a picnic area is planned for this site.

F Another photo of the new bridge built over the river.

Lawrence Wheatley, 14 June 1920 – 7 May 2014



After leaving school, Lawrence worked as an office boy at a firm of solicitors in Lincoln's Inn Fields, London and was then promoted to Chancery Junior. He studied at evening classes to gain further qualifications and after two and a half years moved to another firm of solicitors near Southwark Bridge. In the summer of 1939 Lawrence decided to apply to the RAF for a short service commission as a pilot but at the interview he was offered training as an Air Observer with the rank of Sergeant which he accepted. On joining the RAF, he completed navigational training at Desford and was then involved in bombing and gunnery at Acklington before joining Squadrons 144 and 16. Following discharge at Finningley, he served as an armourer in Uxbridge, Bridgnorth and Melksham, travelling to the Middle East, Greece, India and Japan. On leaving the RAF he trained as a teacher at Watford and taught for six years at Norbury Manor followed by thirty years in Welwyn Garden City where he became Head of English and finally, Head of Lower School. During this time he gained an honours degree by working part time at Hatfield Polytechnic, passing out at the age of 55. He moved to Bude in 1987 following Audrey's retirement.

Lawrence had been unwell since last September and was taken into Barnstaple Hospital in February and later transferred to Holsworthy where he died on 7th May. We send our condolences to Audrey and her family.

Betty Moore

View from the North



On the isle of Shapinsay the local heritage centre has two displays this summer. One reflects on the “eve of war 1914” and the other looks at 100 years of the Brownies. Both show how the shaping of our future depends on the willingness of individuals to give their time freely. We cannot know what our sacrifice of time will bring, for those in 1914 it was freedom for this country and for Brownie leaders it has created a generation of young ladies who are well equipped for helping others. At this time Bude Canal & Harbour Society is in need of individuals who are prepared to make the sacrifice of time as trustees. It would be a very fitting tribute I think to the hard work and dedication of both Lawrence Wheatley and Bryan Dudley Stamp if we were able to report in the next Tub Boat edition that all the currently available trustee places had been filled as well as having a full executive committee.

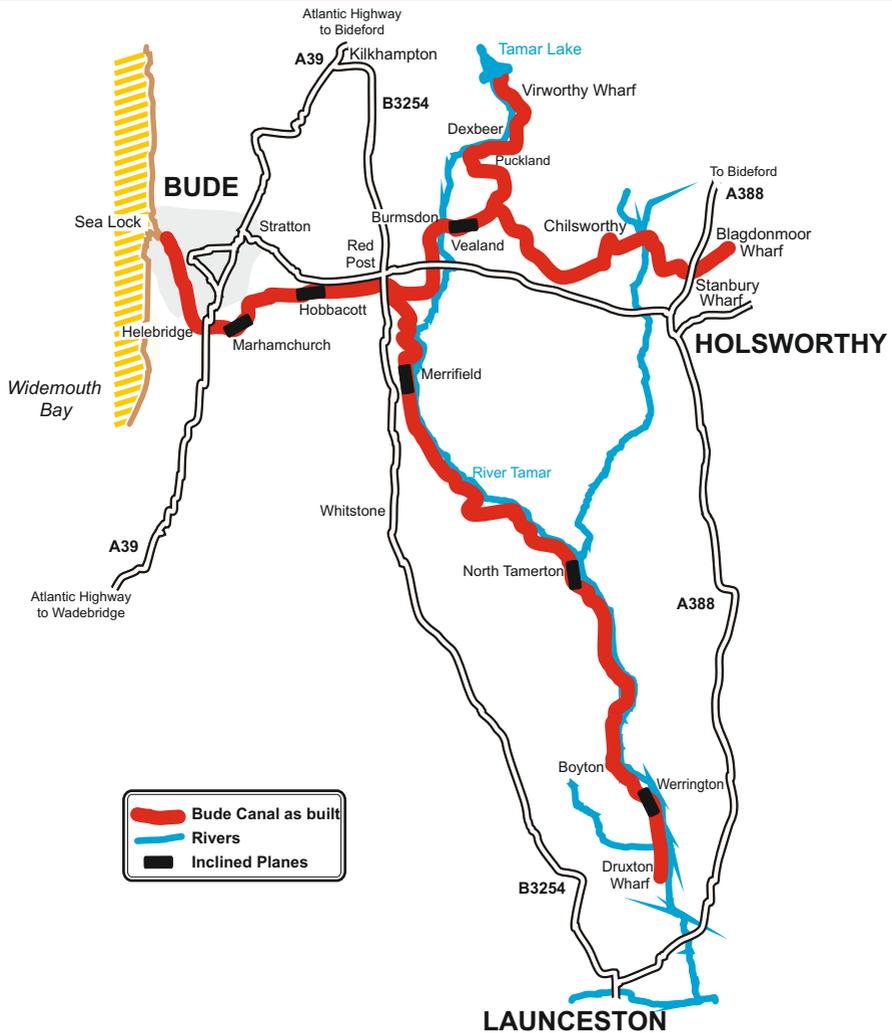
Clive Horton
Editor



Photo M Moore

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