

THE TUB BOAT

Newsletter of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society

No. 88

Summer 2019



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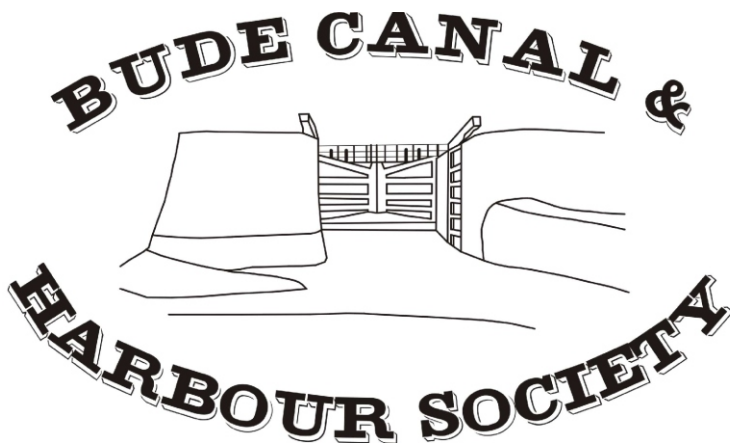
Forthcoming Events:

- Sunday 21st July Bude Stratton Heritage Festival from 11am to 4pm. BCHS stall and display panels.
- Tuesday 23rd July Commemorative Buffet with entertainment at The Falcon Hotel, Bude from 7pm to 11.30pm to celebrate the exact anniversary of building the Bude Canal. Bookings accepted until 16th July.
- Saturday 7th Sept Guided walk visiting important sites on the Bude Canal including the Launceston Branch. Booking essential. Meet at 10.00.
- Weds 11th Sept Joint presentation with the Bude Canal Trust at 6.30pm in Room 1 at The Parkhouse Centre. No charge for visitors but donations requested.
- Saturday 14th Sept Guided walk visiting the Bude Aqueduct section of the Bude Canal. Booking essential. Please note the change to the start time - we now meet at 11.00.

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 September 2019.

Trustees:	Chairman	Chris Jewell
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	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:
Werrington Inclined Plane

Creaks from the Chair

As you read this edition we are now half way through the bi-centenary year. And it is a real mix of ups and downs, but then that is life. Since I last wrote we have had the exhibition at the Castle, which was well received with some interesting comments. The Commemorative Booklet has also been well received; we started with 500 in February and now only have about 80 left, so a re-order will have been made by the time you receive this Tub Boat. It is a potted history of our canal from 1819 to 2019 and is only £1. Further details on how to obtain a copy follow this article.

The musical play 'Hidden Depths' was created and performed by 'Bude Youth Theatre' under the direction of Richard Wolfenden-Brown. It received good reports as usual. Having seen it myself I was impressed by the way it was conceived and performed. BCHS are really pleased to have been involved in this partnership project. Four Trustees and one member helped out on the performance evenings, mainly with the raffle and refreshments. Hopefully in the future one or two of the young people involved will remember the story of the Bude Canal and speak up on its importance to the town and residents. In April we had the first visit to sites on the Tub Boat Canal which went very well, the weather was kind, and the lunch break at the Countryman Inn was welcomed with a good selection of tasty food. It will soon be Heritage Day and the Bicentenary Anniversary Buffet and entertainment. I hope you are coming to that event. This covers the 'ups' but, as I have said, there are some 'downs'.

Unfortunately, Tony Philp, our new Trustee, has had to resign due to ill health. Earlier this year he had surgery on his back but the recovery has not been as good as expected and he may need further treatments. The Trustees and myself understand the situation and wish him a speedy recovery. The effect of this is that we need new Trustees, as always, but especially Trustees who can bring modern skills to the Society, that is the use of digital technology in relation to keeping of accounts, membership records and in delivering our presentations about the canal to various groups/societies that request them from time to time. This is important in the spreading of the story of the Bude Canal but also a useful tool for raising funds.

During the past winter various amounts of damage have been done to the Breakwater and the walkway beside the Sea Lock (former sand railway route) and Cornwall Council have carried out the necessary repairs. However, in April, another item of damage has come to light which probably was caused by the winter storms.

The outer north side sea lock gate has come off its pivot making it inoperable and, in effect, put the sea lock out of commission. The remedy is simple in concept but difficult in execution due to the layout of access to the sea lock. In short the large crane needed to lift the north gate cannot gain access due to the balance beams on the inner canal gates being in the closed position ie retaining the canal waters. BCHS has written to Capt. Brigden, Marine Manager for Cornwall Council, with advice on how to deal with this problem, and a suggestion for better management of the Lower Basin. A copy of the letter is included in this issue following this article. We want to see how they overcome this problem which is urgent.

The second half of 2019 beckons and we will see what that brings.

In this issue you will find details of the new membership subscription rates which will apply from 1 September 2019. If you pay your subscription by Standing Order, can you please complete and return the new Standing Order Mandate form promptly to ensure that you pay the correct amount when your renewal becomes due on 1 September. I hope you can support us in order to make the transition to the new rates as smooth as possible. Thank you.

Chris Jewell

Commemorative Booklet

Following a re-print, this fine booklet is now available for £1. If you live in the EX23 postcode area covering Bude, you can request a copy by ringing 01288 352298 and it will be delivered to you when the payment of £1 will be collected. However, if you live elsewhere the cost is £1 plus £1 for p&p. Please send your order with your payment of £2 to 4a The Crescent, Bude, EX23 8LE. Cheques should be made payable to "Bude Canal and Harbour Society".

Finally a reminder that the deadline for bookings for the Commemorative Buffet at The Falcon Hotel on 23 July has now been extended to 16 July so there may still be time to send in your form. Please call me on 01288 352298 if you wish to come to this event but cannot get your form back to me by the deadline.

In order to help those from outside the area, The Falcon Hotel will be offering discounted accommodation for visitors attending this event. If you are interested please contact The Falcon via bookings@falconhotel.com or telephone 01288 352005 mentioning the "Bude Canal Celebration Buffet". For further information about the hotel see www.falconhotel.com/.

Thank you.

Chris Jewell

Letter to Capt. A Brigden, Marine Manager, Cornwall Council, Truro

Bude Sea Lock

I write on behalf of Bude Canal & Harbour Society about the current problem at the Sea Lock where the outer north gate is inoperative due to it probably having come off its pivot, this making the sea lock unusable. This is very unfortunate but needs to be rectified as soon as possible. As you know, to achieve this a suitable crane will be needed to lift the gate to allow any repairs and for it then to be repositioned on the pivot.

The obvious difficulty in achieving this is that the accesses to the outer gate/s are obstructed by the balance beams of the inner canal gates.

To prevent the mutilation of the balance beams, as has been suggested, the safest way to give access would be to

- Install a coffer dam about 30 feet inside the inner canal gates, as was done when the sea lock was refurbished in 2000/1. This would allow this short length of canal to be drained and the inner canal gates to be opened allowing the necessary crane access to do the work on the affected gate.*
- An alternative might possibly to remove the balance beam to give access BUT you would need to seek advice from the gate makers as the gates have been in position for 18 years and it may not be possible*

Obviously the installation of a coffer dam as described and the work on the outer gate is an unexpected expense but it would seem to be the only solution that will protect the integrity of the seal lock and the canal.

I would suggest that Cornwall Council as owners of the Canal should look at a long term solution to any such incidents involving the gates of the sea lock. The most obvious being to install a stop board system just below Falcon Bridge in the short narrow section before the Lower Basin. This would negate the need for emergency expense such as a coffer dam. The draining of the Lower Basin is a much easier exercise to achieve than installing a coffer dam whenever works need to be done on the sea lock gates or indeed the Lower Basin.

Finally, I can assure you that BCHS will support Cornwall Council in achieving a proper long term solution to such emergencies or necessary maintenance to the sea lock and/or the Lower Basin. Additionally there are many local users of the Canal who rely on the canal for their lawful pursuits and interests who would be supportive.

Yours sincerely

C Jewell, Chairman, Bude Canal & Harbour Society

Membership Report

We welcome the following new members who have joined the society since March: Andrew and Coral Dinner, Boyton.

Could members who have given us their e-mail addresses please remember to send any updates or amendments to members@bude-canal.co.uk so that we can continue to notify you when the newsletter is available on-line and for us to send any other notifications or booking forms etc.

Jean Hall

Unfortunately, we have recently lost a long established member of the society. Jean Hall from Exeter who joined the society in 1997, passed away in April. Three members of BCHS attended the funeral at Exeter Cathedral on 15 May along with representatives of the West Country Branch of the Inland Waterways Association including three former branch chairmen.

Jean was born and educated in Truro but went to Somerville College, Oxford where she became a friend of Margaret Thatcher. After teaching in London and Cheltenham she spent 29 years as Head of English at The Maynard School, an independent school for girls in Exeter. Her interests included the Church, archaeology and waterways. She wrote many booklets on West Country Waterways with her companion, Joy Yeates. She also produced a range of post cards including the Bude Canal. She visited Bude on many occasions over the years attending most of our AGMs. We last saw Jean at The AGM of the West Country Branch of the IWA in Exeter in March when she seemed in good form. She will be missed by many of us in the waterways groups. We extend our condolences to her family.

New Membership Subscription Rates

Following the report in the last edition of The Tub Boat, you will note that the membership subscription rates will be increased from 1 September 2019. If you pay your subscription by Standing Order it is important that you complete a new Standing Order Mandate to reflect these new rates. A copy of the form will be sent with this magazine so can you please complete and return it promptly to ensure that you pay the correct amount when your renewal becomes due on 1 September. Details of the new rates are shown below.

Under 16	£ 10.00	Family	£20.00
UB40	£ 10.00	School	£30.00
Senior	£ 10.00	Corporate	£30.00
Adult	£ 15.00	Life	£180.00

Thank you for your assistance and for your continued support.

Mike Moore, Acting Membership Secretary

“Hidden Depths” - Bude Schools Musical Play to celebrate the Bude Canal Bicentenary

The Bude Canal & Harbour Society invited the Bude Youth Theatre to take part in the bicentenary celebrations in some way in order to publicise such a great event. Keeping the canal well maintained is very important as it is such an asset to Bude, so understanding the history encourages people, both young and old, to love and respect it.

The director of the theatre, Richard Wolfenden –Brown decided to create and perform a musical play to commemorate the building of the Canal two hundred years ago. Richard, with Thomas Marples , a senior student at Budehaven school visited all the schools in the area and ran workshops to prepare the children. The amazing result was a fast moving musical play called 'Hidden Depths' that involved many children and they were all onstage, acting singing and dancing throughout. Some of the original music was composed by Thomas Marples. This enhanced their interest and understanding of the Bude canal and their enjoyment was obvious to all who went to watch one of the five performances.

Major events, such as the lively musical opening ceremony, the building of the canal, the destruction of the breakwater in a storm, the construction of the inclined planes, the thwarting of plans to close the canal were all chronicled and skilfully woven. The accidents, the drownings, the personal joy and sadness of the hundreds of workers were all played out with precision and energy using a variety of props that included their bodies. The singing too was excellent as were the piano and saxophone accompanists.

Richard must have done a tremendous amount of research to have written such a detailed play that included so much and he, the cast, the musicians AND all the many helpers deserve the highest praise for the outstanding production. What a fitting prelude it was to the series of events which included private walks planned by the Bude Canal & Harbour Society and the Bude Canal Trust Ltd to celebrate the canal's bicentenary.

Lucille Opie



Bude Canal Guided Walk

The Bude Canal was built nearly 200 years ago under the guidance of its engineer, James Green, who then went on to build the Rolle Canal. Both canals were built as tub boat canals, although the Bude Canal was more extensive. It features the well-known sea lock at Bude, followed by two other locks on a wide-beam barge section, before becoming a tub boat canal at the foot of the first of six incline planes, with branches toward Holsworthy and Launceston.

The barge section is well known to visitors to Bude. The five miles of footpath along the “aqueduct” section from the canal feeder reservoir (lower Tamar Lake) to just beyond the (real) aqueduct over the Tamar river is also well worth a walk. This section is owned and maintained by the Bude Canal Trust (www.bude-canal-trust.co.uk). However, other remaining features are less visited.

On the 6th of April Janet and I were lucky enough to visit some of these less-visited highlights of the Bude Canal on a guided walk organised by the Bude Canal and Harbour Society. Starting in Bude we boarded the 17-seater minibus and headed to the Barge Workshop and former wharf at Helebridge, the head of the barge section, to view the remains of a tub boat recovered from the canal bed. The old A39 is impressively narrow where it crosses the canal.



We then proceeded to a layby on the A3072 to visit the head of the inclined plane at Hobbacott Down. This was powered by buckets of water descending in two wells, unlike the other inclines that were powered by waterwheels.



Following the excellent pub lunch at The Countryman Inn at Langdon Cross, the minibus then proceeded to the terminus of the canal at Druxton Wharf near Launceston. Little remains of the wharf buildings, but the canal house built for the wharf manager, the wharfinger, is still occupied.



The minibus then continued along a very narrow road to the Werrington Incline. Here the group were in luck. The farmer living in Plane cottage was very knowledgeable about the canal and invited us onto his property to view the plane and the entrance to the wheel pit.

He then allowed us to drive around the plane, as the minibus would not fit under it! (See photo on front cover)



A little further on, we viewed the site of Tamarton Aqueduct which crossed the lane, with an original culvert carrying a stream under the embankment. The final highlight before returning to Bude was the visit to Boyton Wharf, where the proud owner is a fifth-generation descendant of the wharfinger and has restored the wharf and a short section of canal.



Overall, the guided walk was an excellent day out. There will be a repeat opportunity to visit these lesser-known parts of the Bude Canal on Saturday the 7th of September. There is no charge, although donations to the Bude Canal and Harbour Society would be appreciated. For more information, or to book your place, visit their website at www.bude-canal.co.uk I can recommend it.

Michael Elliott

Coach Trip to Dartmouth on 1 June

Despite generally poor weather during the days before the trip, on the day it had improved considerably – ideal for a trip on the river. We had an excellent drive to Totnes via Plymouth where most visitors got off the coach in the town and a few carried on to Steamer Quay. It was a surprise to see such a low water level in the river at the quay and we wondered how the boat would ever get up that far to pick us up later. After relaxing at the Riverside Café we made our way back across the river to explore the town centre.



We returned to Steamer Quay ready to board the boat which we were told would be late arriving due to the low water levels. That was not a surprise as there did not appear to be any more water in the river than when we first arrived. However, the situation did improve and finally we saw our boat “The Cardiff Castle” gradually creep into sight as the levels rose. Once at the quay, passengers disembarked very quickly and we were soon on the boat and heading down the river to Dartmouth. Finally we were only 5 minutes late leaving.



The boat trip was very good with an excellent commentary. It seemed quite different compared with our last trip on the River Dart which was upstream to Totnes. The weather remained very warm and sunny.

As a special treat, when we got further down the river we could see the Red Arrows which were giving a display at Torbay that afternoon. Some aircraft flew quite low over us as they prepared for their display. That was a real bonus.





Dartmouth was busy as usual both on the river and in the town. Many headed to pubs and restaurants for meals before heading back to North Embankment to get on the coach back to Bude.

We were thanked for organising the trip (especially the Red Arrows display) and we were all pleased that we had such glorious weather. Their final question was "Where are we going for our next trip?" Any suggestions? Perhaps an itinerary which does not include a boat trip. We could consider just a trip to a particular location when you would be free to arrange your own activities during the day. What about visiting a Christmas Market? Please let us know what you think?

Betty Moore

Bude Canal Trust Report on the Bude Aqueduct

March

Continuing with brash burning on Puckland section subject to weather (Forecast not looking good).

Into March without the first week seeing any work done due to lack of available volunteers, so Puckland was delayed. Despite wet weather starting week two we continued with brash burning having several fires on the Puckland section, with some clearance of growth under the footpath hedge.



This had been identified as a section where evidence of Broad leaved Helleborine Orchids had been reported the previous year and no further strimming along this section will be needed until the autumn. Markers will be placed where any are found to be shooting in order to avoid with later mowing.



Photo 2



Photo 3

Surface water continues to enter the Broomhill section (*Photo 2*) from the higher ground on the far side of the canal, eventually passing under the footpath by Broomhill Bridge (*Photo 3*) and across the entrance to the field (*Photo 4*).



Photo 4



Photo 5

These incoming points are also bringing silt into this section that will eventually infill this canal section (*Photo 5*). Brash burning continued along the Puckland section for the remainder of March. Damage has been done to part of the large stone wall adjacent to the northern gate at Puckland Farm (*Photo 6*).



Photo 6

April

Bookings for the guided walk were coming in so the work for the first two weeks of April involved strimming round all the points of interest along the length of the Aqueduct Trail and ensuring there was a clear passage throughout.

(Photos 7 & 8).



Photo 7



Photo 8

The walk itself was on the 13th, a dry and pleasant day. The walking group, starting from the Lower Lake car park to Virworthy Wharf, stopping for a short time to view the display and information boards in the Wharf building. Confirmation of the problem at Virworthy Mill where the farm access lane had been reported as having partially collapsed through the culvert under the previously altered bridge (Canal boat access changed to smaller water flow profile.) Arrangements were later made to obtain quotes for the repair work.



Photo 9

Continuing through before a short stop was made at the Morton Bridge picnic area (Photo 9) to refuel with appreciative comments being made on the work being done to maintain easy access and the display at the Wharf. Passing the Holsworthy branch and through to Vealand car park where the ladies

decided to rest in the bus while the remainder carried on past the Filter Beds, down the Incline Plane (with a short deviation to visit the exit end of the adit) (Photo 10) from the, now destroyed



Photo 10

Wheel-pit and on to the viaduct and Burmsdon Bridges. Strimming the top of the canal bank between Vealand Bridge through to Brendon Bridge was completed in one session with a full length mowing done the following day.

The remaining week of April was taken up with successfully burning the large amounts of brash in the Aldercott Bridge section with branches from a number of wind damaged trees having to be removed and added to the fires.

May

Repairs to the Virworthy mill culvert were carried out at the beginning of May, involving initially clearing the collapsed stones (*Photo 11*) sufficiently to accept a plastic sleeve, (*Photo 12*) add shuttering to each end, (*Photo 13*) (set back from the facing stonework) pouring concrete to infill between the tube diameter and the remaining stoned culvert.



Photo 11



Photo 12



Photo 13

After the mowing, strimming of the canal bank top continued from Brendon Bridge through to Lana Bridge.

The picnic furniture was cleaned and repainted; (*Photo 14*) the stones salvaged from the repaired culvert at the Mill were taken to the Wharf area in anticipation of trying to replicate a short section of edging wall along the unloading bay area in front of the Wharf building. The remainder of the brash in the Aldercott area was moved from numerous large heaps to a smaller



Photo 14

number of bonfire sites and the contractors completed making good the collapsed facing stonework at the southern end of the Mill culvert.

The last work day of the month was taken up with canal bank cutting between Lana Bridge and Dunsdon Nature Reserve

June

Week one was again dogged by very wet weather affecting the potential jobs to be done and insufficient availability of volunteers.

Week two, only two volunteers available but weather conditions good enough to try the new mower out on clearing the Filter Beds, (*Photo 15*) long grass and quite an abundance of Blackthorn saplings. A great job was achieved after getting used to the controls and after 4/5 hours work the machine was collected



Photo 15

by Bridgmans to do an official first service/inspection for required adjustments. Unfortunately one of the Blackthorn bushes had chosen to bite back, puncturing one of the tyres.

Week three, following two days of steady rain and more expected on the work day a rest day was declared.

Mike Degnan, Bude Canal Trust

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

17 May 1919

Tuesday morning dawned to reveal a steamer ashore at Northcott Mouth, about a mile north of Bude harbour, and the lifeboat crew responded to a call. Soon motors, carriages and horses and pedestrians were streaming towards the scene of the wreck. There was dense fog and the sea was unusually calm. The crew were very surprised to learn that they were off the North Cornwall coast, believing themselves to be in the neighbourhood of Rame Head. As there appeared to be no immediate danger, the crew decided not to avail themselves of the services of the lifeboat, which was in the charge of Coxwain H Barrett, with Mr Petherick, honorary secretary of the Bude branch, on board. At low water the steamer was high and dry resting easily between two ridges of rocks and had sustained little damage. She was the Scotia LO 201, of London, owned by Mr G H D Birt, of Milford, bound from westward of Plymouth with fish. Capt H Dodd had sighted nothing for over a week and dense fog had confused his calculations. There were ten men on board.

18 April 1959

Captain Alfred William Pooley, aged 65, of Summerleaze, Polmear Road, Par, a native of Bude, who went to sea in sailing ships at the age of 14, retired last week from the position of berthing master and deputy harbourmaster at Par, where he has been for 30 years.

26 April 1969

The 25 ton tug, Fusee II is lying around just north of the swimming pool between Crooklets and Summerleaze Beaches, Bude, after being put ashore after developing engine trouble.

3 May 1969

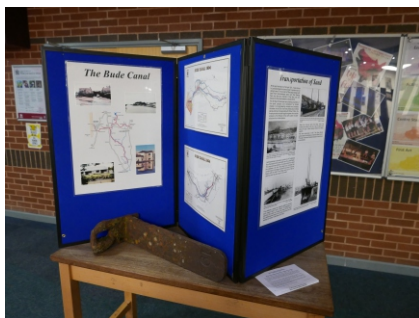
The drama of the Swansea tug 'Fusee II' is over. The vessel, which brought so much excitement to Bude after being beached by the crew is now moored in Bude canal thanks to the skill of Peter Herbert and David Currie.

26 May 1979

Mr Ken Cunningham, new curator of the Historical and Folk Exhibition at Bude, this week outlined his feelings for the future development of the museum. Subject to the approval of Bude-Stratton Town Council, Mr Cunningham would like to see a replica of a Cornish kitchen provided in the extension. He has also suggested a children's corner with contributions about the old canal from all the schools in the area.

Old Boundary Stone and Milepost

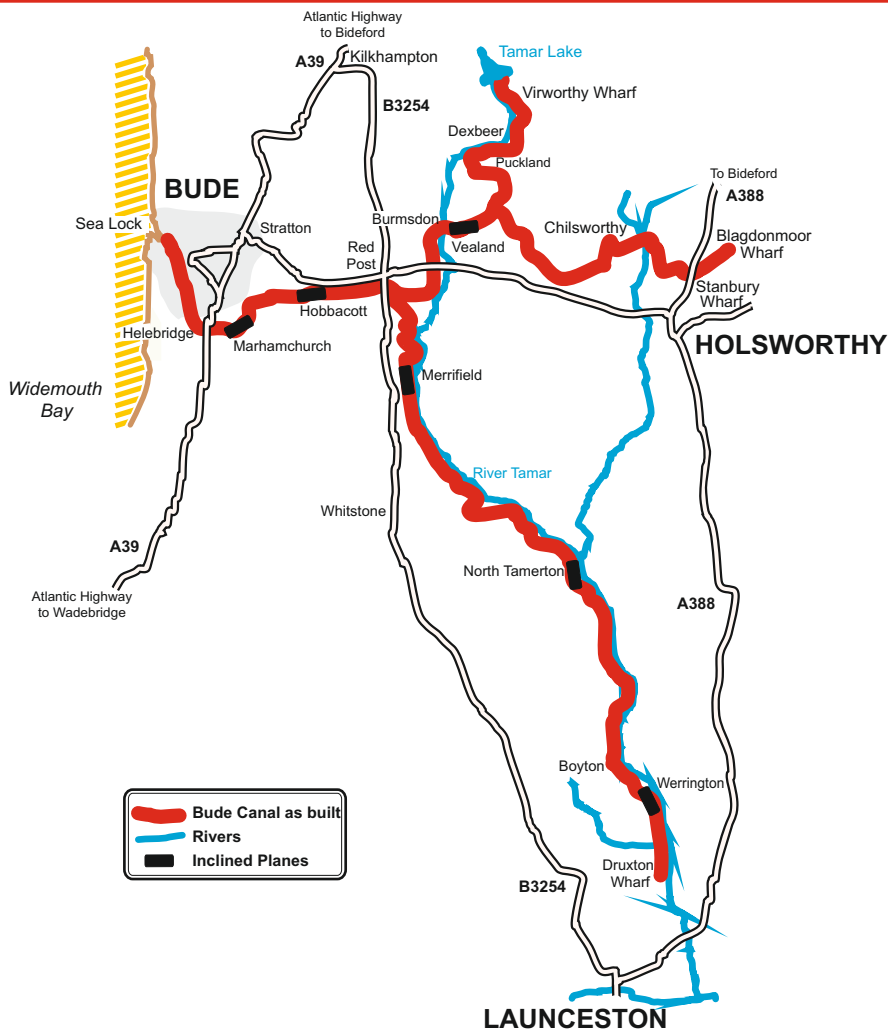
During the performances of “Hidden Depths” by the Bude Youth Theatre at the end of March we set up display panels in the foyer. When we arrived for the first performance we noticed that two artifacts had been added to the display – a boundary stone and a metal milepost. Further enquiries revealed that these items had been donated to the Bude Youth Theatre by a former resident of Tamarton Farm which was on the Launceston Branch of the Bude Canal. He contacted Richard Wolfenden-Brown when Richard was doing research for “Hidden Depths”. The stone and milepost have now been offered to Bude-Stratton Town Council for display in the Castle Heritage Centre.



Richard Wolfenden-Brown presenting a cheque for £339 to Chris Jewell for the funds raised from the raffle and refreshments during the BYT production of “Hidden Depths”. See page 6 for report.

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