

THE TUB BOAT

Newsletter of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society

No. 102

Winter 2022/23



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Forthcoming Events for 2023:

Sunday 19th Feb	BCHS AGM at The Castle Heritage Centre (see page 4)
Sat 8th July	200th Anniversary of the opening of the Bude Canal between Bude and Holsworthy.
Sun 16th July	Bude-Stratton Heritage Day.
Sat 22th July	Celebratory dinner at The White Hart Hotel, Holsworthy.
Autumn	Two canal tours by minibus with lunch at the Red Post Inn.

Further details in the Spring edition of The Tub Boat.

Contributions for the next edition of the Tub Boat should be sent as an e-mail attachment to editor.bchs@gmail.com or copied onto a USB memory stick or CD and sent to Mike Moore (Tel: 07790 744823) to reach him by 15th March 2023.

Officers

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Secretary	Peter Daniel
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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: Barrel Rock (see page 6)

Creaks from the Chair

The timing of this issue is based on the copy date of mid-December which makes it difficult to wish you best wishes for Christmas but I hope that you were able to be with your family or someone you care about. Likewise, now that we are in 2023 to wish you a 'Prosperous New Year' has a hollow ring to it when it is very likely that 2023 will be anything but prosperous so I wish you all best wishes for the coming year.

Finally, in 2023 on the 8th July will be the 200th Anniversary of the opening of the Bude Canal for trade between Bude and Holsworthy and the society are making plans to celebrate this important event which will include a Celebratory Dinner and free guided visits to former canal sites in October. Both of these events will be bookable via BCHS. Full details will be shown in future editions of The Tub Boat. However, the cost of these events could be affected by price increases but hopefully we will still be able to continue with these celebrations to mark this important anniversary.

Chris Jewell

AGM on Sunday 19th February 2023

As usual, our AGM will be held in The Gallery at The Castle Heritage Centre, Bude. The day will start at 11.00am with a presentation given by Mr Ian Harrison, Chairman of the Rolle Canal & Northern Devon Waterways Society assisted by Michael Elliot. A light buffet lunch will be available from 1.00pm which must be booked and paid for in advance using the booking form which will be enclosed and also available on our website. The cost is £13.35 which includes tea or coffee.

The formal AGM follows starting at 2.30pm. Please attend, if possible, to enable the meeting to be quorate as the constitution requires a minimum of 12 members to be present. In addition to the usual re-election of Trustees we have just been informed that Lucille Opie intends to stand down as a Trustee at the AGM. We wish to thank her for many years of service to the society which have been extremely valuable and wish her well in her retirement.

Chris Jewell

Membership Report

We are very pleased to have welcomed 1 new life member and 3 new annual members since my last report. Unfortunately, 6 previous annual members haven't renewed and at the time of writing we have 27 life members and 76 annual members. Membership cards have been issued to all renewing members so if you haven't received yours please let me know.

Thank you all for your continued support and should anyone require any further information please contact me directly on 01288 356367 or email bude.canal@gmail.com.

Martin Shannon, Honorary Treasurer and Membership Secretary

Barge Workshop – Summer 2022

BCHS manned the Barge Workshop from 3rd July to 25th September last year and all sessions were double manned except on 10th July when it was closed as one of our volunteers tested positive for COVID.

The total number of visitors and locals attending was 192 which was slightly higher than in previous years. This may have been because of the Communications Officer of Bude-Stratton Town Council using social media to increase public awareness of the Barge Workshop and its opening times.

Chris Jewell

New Logo for BCHS.

By now you should have noticed our new logo printed on page 3 of this edition of The Tub Boat. This is part of our objective to address our previous lack of visibility on social media and we were advised that our original logo would be unsuitable for this purpose. When Tim Martindale became a trustee, he designed some alternative versions of a new logo from which the trustees selected the one shown in this newsletter. Tim has now kindly given his consent for us use this version and the trustees have decided to adopt it to replace our original logo which has been in use since the formation of the society. All the current trustees like this logo – we hope that you also like it.

Chris Jewell

Storage Shed

For a number of years the society has been using a shed to store larger items of its property such as tables and gazebos. The shed is in the grounds of Ebbingford Manor and is beginning to show its age after having a tree fall onto it and it being moved three times so we feel that now is the time for it to be replaced. We think that a smaller shed would be suitable as the nature of our fundraising activities has changed over recent years but the cost would be in excess of £1000 which would be required by April 2023. If any member wishes to make a donation towards the cost of this new shed, they should send their donation to the Hon. Treasurer stating that it is towards the cost of the replacement shed. Thank you.

Chris Jewell



The shed in 2004



The shed today

Barrel Rock

The Harbourmaster has recently organised the repainting of the barrel in bright green and it looks quite vivid in the sunshine on a calm day. Even on the super high tide in late November it still looked prominent in the stormy conditions.



Jeff Dover



The Planekeepers Path

Following an enquiry by Steve Church about the information board at the top of the Hobbacott Incline, Gareth Cann, Countryside Officer, replied that it disappeared a year or so ago and he had no idea what happened to it. It was attached to the fence with vandal proof screws, so someone must have been determined to remove it. He also stated that the permissive agreement had been terminated by the landowner. The boardwalks and bridges through the valley had also become dangerous to use and had to be removed. He believed that the landowner was still happy for people to visit the incline plane, but only as part of organised 'heritage' open days.

He said that the path along the valley at the bottom of the plane was closed as it is a permissive path i.e. not owned by Cornwall Council and not a statutory PROW. The original project was implemented using European funding that was accessed by NCDC. Unfortunately, the boardwalks, bridges, fencing and access furniture would all need to be replaced, and this would amount to a substantial cost. Cornwall Council does not have access to this amount of funding with the current budgetary pressures.

For further information see the Bude Canal Trust Report on page 19.

Mike Moore



The boat bays at the bottom of Hobbacott Incline in 2006

Tide Mill, Bude

Following the article on page 22 of the last edition of The Tub Boat, Nick Cole and David Thorn visited the Barge Workshop recently to examine a large section of timber. This was done with the consent of Bude-Stratton Town Council but was done at their own risk and with the assistance to two other volunteers. The piece of timber was about 3m long with a square section of 30cm and it was rolled over so that the other sides could be examined. After taking photographs and detailed measurements, it was rolled back into its original position which was adjacent to the Tub Boat. Messrs Cole and Thorn are re-examining old records to try and identify the exact site of the tide mill and confirm when it was built. When they have completed their enquiries, they intend to publish their findings and place them in the public domain.

Chris Jewell

Compass Point

On Boxing Day Cllr Peter La Broy broadcast a video from Compass Point explaining the difficulties of managing the project to move the structure further inland to avoid it being lost due to coastal erosion. See <https://www.facebook.com/cllrpete/videos/3359683337682710>

However, now that ground surveys have been completed and all permissions have been obtained, the work can go out to tender and contractors can be appointed with an expected start date in the Spring. The window of opportunity to complete the move means that the work must be completed before the end of September. We thank Peter for this update and hope that he will be able to give further progress reports as the work progresses.



Bude Canal Maps 1904

The photograph on pages 10 and 11 shows the presentation of the above maps which were redrawn and presented to Bude-Stratton Town Council and Budehaven School.

Here is a little story to go with this presentation. One day in early 2000, I went to the council offices which were, at that time, in The Castle at Bude for some photocopying for the then reformed Bude Canal Society. During my visit, I was informed that, in the adjacent Council Chamber, the Council's Archivist, Mr Harvey Kendall, had been showing some of the original maps of the canal to a member of the public. I therefore went in and Mr Kendall allowed me to look at the maps. They were hand drawn by Mr W. J. Dunbar, a civil engineer from Liskeard and were approximately A1 size. There were eight maps and each map included a set of explanatory notes and they were the conveyancing documents for the sale of the canal from Bude to the reservoir built for the canal which is now known as Lower Tamar Lake.

The society were given permission to photograph the maps with view to printing enlarged copies from the photographs. Photographs of the maps were taken by local professional photographer, Ross Hoddinott, and slides were produced as we used slides for our presentations about the canal at that time. Unfortunately, when the slides were scanned and enlarged, stains appeared on most of the images which was disappointing, so following further discussions with David Martin of Martin Group Services, he suggested that it would be better for the maps to be redrawn using modern computer techniques. This proposal was agreed by Bude-Stratton Town Council which included retyping the accompanying set of notes. The only reason for this final drawn-out solution was that late 19th Century technology was not compatible with current 21st Century technology. The whole process was finally completed in 2006 by which time the Bude Canal Society had evolved into the Bude Canal & Harbour Society which became a registered charity (no. 1086646). The project was funded by grants received from "Awards for All" and Bude-Stratton Town Council

However, these important maps and documents are now available in a modern form so that they can be easily read digitally or in print. The set of eight maps and notes are now available to purchase individually or as a complete set by contacting me on 01288 352298. All in all, a very interesting exercise.

Chris Jewell



PRESENTATION OF CANAL

Left to right: Bryan Dudley-Stamp, Hon Secretary BCH; Jane Addy, Budehaven Community School; Cllr Neil Burden, Regeneration Partnership; Cllr Barry Garvie, Mayor, Bude-S

Photo: Ma



AL PLANS - Summer 2006

S; Ray Shaddick, Bude & District Old Cornwall Society;
n, North Cornwall District Council, Chairman of Bude Canal
Stratton Town Council; Audrey Wheatley, Chairman, BCHS.

ary Neale

Cable removal



Removing cables from Crooklets Beach



Ship removing cables out at sea

The Company that laid sub-sea Transatlantic cables in September 2021 for Google from New York to Bude and onwards to Bilbao returned in October/ November 2022 to remove redundant sub-sea cables from Bude to Paris. Their Company Archaeologist explained that the ‘Beach Crew’ use heavy equipment to remove the redundant cables from Crooklets Beach down to the low water line and mark that point with a Buoy. Later, specialist ‘Sub-Sea Equipped Ships’ arrived to remove the redundant cables from further out to sea.

Jeff Dover

Bude Harbour and Canal from your local councillors’ point of view.

There have been so many promises and plans made then abandoned, to dredge the canal over the last few years, that I’d almost given up hope that it would ever be done.



But thanks to a combination of maintaining political pressure and a new Countryside Officer (Charlotte Evans) who has been putting in a lot of effort to secure the funding needed – just under £1m, we are now in a position to go ahead. See the Press Release on page 15.

We all know that invasive species of Zebra Mussels in the harbour section and Himalayan Balsam in the upper section cause significant extra work with careful monitoring and treatment of the silt that is removed. This along with the need to respect the Water Vole population means that the job isn't as easy as it could be. I'm hoping that work will already have commenced in the upper sections by the time you read this, then subject to consents being given by Natural England the rest of the canal down to Falcon Bridge will be dredged in 2023. I paddled my kayak from the lock gates to Helebridge last summer and was shocked to see how badly silted and shallow the canal is, especially towards the Helebridge end.

In the summer of '22 we had the long, hot and dry spell which led to the drying event. This gave a stark and highly visible reminder of the need for dredging and also the poor condition of some of the canal embankments. In particular, the drying led to the area of bank adjacent to Falcon Bridge to collapse. This has been temporarily secured by dumpy bags of hardcore and cordoned off in order to make the area safe. Engineers have visited to inspect the banks and have made some proposals for repairs. At present I'm told the favoured method is for steel sheet piling which will provide a structurally sound and watertight bank. I'm hoping that the engineers will make the area visually acceptable and would prefer the piling to be faced with local stone, but I imagine that may be difficult as the added cost will be significant. As part of the planning process, local activity providers have already been consulted and a launching area has been requested for small watercraft which we believe will help to avoid further damage to the banks. The current timescales for repairs are not possible to state as the plans are not yet costed. Once the final plans are made for the repairs and costings are in place, then I'll be pushing very hard to identify funding so that the canal is properly repaired as soon as possible.

In early '22, I ticked off one of my 'bucket list' items and joined the lock crew. I was able to be a part of operating the sea lock gates twice before the low water levels in the canal meant that further lock operations weren't possible. It was fascinating to see the lock gates in operation and to reflect on how many ships would have been through the lock chamber over the last couple of hundred years. I believe that our lock gate is the only manually operated fresh water to salt water lock in the UK and is a unique part of not only our heritage but of national importance.

The gates were replaced relatively recently, but when the pintles were replaced at the beginning of '22 it was evident that the timber has not lasted well. Replacement gates will be on our minds in the next few years. The lock chamber has been affected by sand accumulation over recent years, meaning that diggers need to be brought in at the beginning of each season to clear it. The growth of the big sand dune at Summerlease probably isn't helping and some gabion baskets have been removed from the rear edge to try and encourage recirculation of sand out into the moorings. Ongoing management of the sand in this area is going to be a subject that we'll have to address in order to make the harbour financially viable. The Maritime Manager for Cornwall has been putting his mind to this and has some ideas which may help.

Storm Eunice caused damage to the Breakwater, which took some time to become evident. Once we were aware of the extent of the damage, plans were made by Cormac Engineers and just under £100k was spent on repairs to the broken up stonework under the Barrel and also to try and get Tommy's Pit watertight again. Further work was done in early December and 18 cubic metres of grout were poured into the sea facing wall of the pool. This appears to have stemmed the leaking, but confidence of the repair is not high. At present the grade two listed Breakwater is the responsibility of the Harbours Board who have limited funds to maintain the structure.



We are exploring whether the responsibility for the structure should be that of the Environment Agency as it acts as a flood protection asset for Bude. This is something that we'll be working on in early '23.

I am determined that our unique Canal and Breakwater are properly respected by Cornwall Council and have been working hard over recent years to make sure that funding is provided to ensure proper maintenance takes place. However, I'm not convinced that we've been doing the best we can. Some of the repairs have been carried out at last minute and not to a standard that I am perfectly happy with. I shall be lobbying for a full and

detailed survey of the whole structure, from the end of the Breakwater, right up to the Incline Plane at Helebridge. Once we have this, we'll be in a much better position to properly understand what will be needed to bring everything up to a reasonable standard. The most important thing then, will be to make sure that proper investment into maintenance and stewardship of our wonderful canal and harbour is made so that it can all be enjoyed by future generations.

*Peter La Broy,
Cornwall Councillor (Bude), Bude & Stratton Town Councillor (Stratton)*

A major scheme to dredge the Bude Canal is due to start soon.

The programme, which will be delivered by Cormac, will reinstate a safe navigable depth for watercraft along the canal and restore the role of the canal in carrying flood waters as part of the flood defence strategy for Bude. Works are due to begin on January 23, depending on weather conditions, and should be completed before the summer.

For safety reasons, the canal will be closed for the duration of the in-water dredging operation by Lutra Marine, expected to be from late January through February. There will also be restricted access on sections of the tow path and cycleway. Dredged material from the harbour and upper wharf will be stored temporarily in the adjacent carparks and then transported away by lorry. As a result, part of the Harbour Car Park and half of Crescent Car Park will be closed during the works. Summerleaze and Crooklets Car Parks will remain fully open.

Councillor Martyn Alvey, portfolio holder for Environment and Climate Change for Cornwall Council, said: "This is a long-anticipated scheme that will bring huge benefits to Bude and those who enjoy the canal via boats and other watercraft. This programme will also help increase flood resilience and restore the role of the canal in carrying flood waters and in turn make the area more resilient to the impacts of climate change."

A public meeting about the scheme will take place in Room 4 at the Parkhouse Centre (Bude Stratton Town Council) on Thursday, January 12, 2022, at 1.30pm. Residents and businesses owners are invited to come along to find out more about the scheme and ask any questions they may have. There is no need to book. To find out more about the dredging programme, visit the Let's Talk Cornwall website.

Press release issued by Cornwall Council on January 5, 2023

World Surf Kayaking Championships 2022 held in Bude Harbour and Summerleaze Beach

The 2022 Surf Kayak World Championships were held in Bude between 29 September and 8 October and were hosted by Bude Surf Life Saving Club. The competitors paraded with their national flags along the Wharf and across the Sea Lock Gates. The competition started at Crooklets, but because of bad weather it was transferred over to Bude Harbour and Summerleaze for the better conditions there. The competitors paddled out in turn up through the Harbour Channel to the Barrel Rock for their competitive surf runs into Summerleaze for judging.

Jeff Dover



Competitors parading national flags over the lock gates



Competitor surfing in from Barrel Rock



Bude Flood Defence Project

As mentioned in the report in the last edition of The Tub Boat, further vegetation clearance work took place on the river bank as scheduled during October in anticipation of the reptile relocation. However, there does not appear to be any signs of construction taking place on the Ergue-Gaberic Way flood wall.

Mike Moore



Bude Canal Trust Work Report on the Bude Aqueduct

The report in the last edition of The Tub Boat turned out to be the final report from Mike Degnan on the work party activities on the Bude Aqueduct as he retires from his position as a trustee of The Bude Canal Trust. We thank Mike for all the work that he has done over many years since the early days of the Trust, and we appreciate his regular contributions to this publication. Well done Mike.

Mike Moore

Gerald Fry

We are saddened to hear that Gerald Fry passed away on 2 January. Gerald was the mainstay of the volunteer work parties from the very early days of the society. He continued this work when The Bude Canal Trust took over the Aqueduct Section of the canal until he finally handed over to Tim Dingle and Mike Degnan. Gerald will also be remembered for his regular slide shows which he used to promote the work of the Trust. His contributions to the Trust and his background knowledge of the canal in its entirety will be sorely missed. Thankfully some of the Aqueduct section has since been photographed with his guidance.

We send our condolences to his wife, Audrey and the family.

Mike Degnan & Mike Moore

Obituary

It could be said that without Gerald and his enthusiasm for the canal, and perhaps especially the Aqueduct branch, that length would have effectively been lost to posterity. Even when NDC owned the Aqueduct branch in the 1990s Gerald was at work on the canal and the towpath making sure the profile was retained as far as was possible and clearing a way through what was at one time an impenetrable jungle on the towpath. If he hadn't done that there would have been no Trust permissive path and therefore no definitive right of way that was established on the permissive route in the early 2000s. And that would have meant no public access to the whole 5+ mile length. Later, he became an invaluable source of information and experience for the work parties organised by Tim Dingle and Mike Degnan to draw on.

Indeed, as a mark of our thanks to Gerald for his early work and later advice we made him an honorary Life Member of The Bude Canal Trust. He is a loss to the canal and its history.

Steve Church, Chairman, Bude Canal Trust.

Bude Canal Trust – Executive Report

Bude Canal Aqueduct Transfer - Negotiations with the Devon Wildlife Trust on transfer of BCT's land are continuing. At present, details are in the hands of the organisations' respective solicitors. No issues have been identified to date by either party which should jeopardise the transfer going ahead in due course and at a recent joint site meeting attended by members of BCT's Committee and DWT's Chief Executive and responsible officers the commitment of both parties to the proposal was emphasised.

Coast to Coast Route and Planekeepers' Path - The Coast to Coast walking route proposed as part of the Tamara Landscape Partnership Heritage Lottery funded work undertaken by the Tamar Valley AONB is still very much on track. Improvement works on paths are being undertaken further south and a guide text with directions and information on features of interest has been drafted. The intention is that the route will be publicised and opened in 2023. For further details see:

<https://tamaralandscapepartnership.org.uk/tamara-coast-to-coast-walk/>

It was hoped that the Planekeepers' Path could form part of this route but at present it is unlikely that there will be sufficient funds to undertake all the necessary repairs, at least initially. Our aspirations for a cul-de-sac there -and-back route from the top of Hobbacott Down to the bottom of the inclined plane appears to be in doubt due to the closure of the permissive path (see update on page 7). This would have been a diversion of interest from the through route, which will follow the parallel public footpath. If funding becomes available later there is still a longer-term desire to revive the Planekeepers' Path route.

Steve Church, Chairman, Bude Canal Trust.

Letters to the Editor

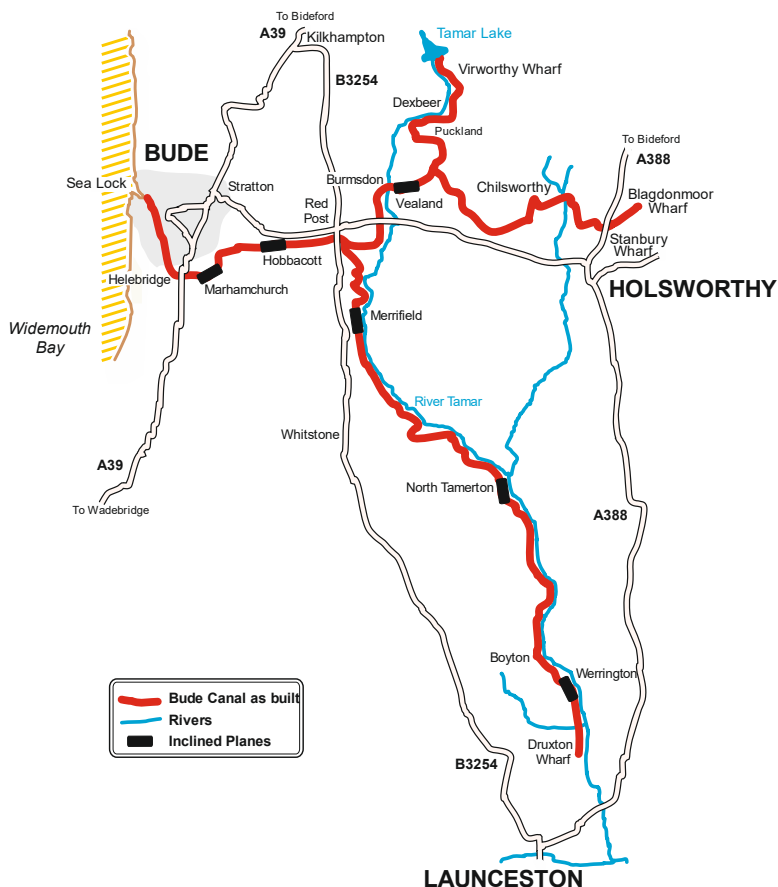
Unfortunately, our appeal for letters to be published in The Tub Boat has not been successful so it will not be included as a regular item in future editions. However, if anyone wishes to send in a contribution in the future, we will be pleased to publish it.

Mike Moore

PS - We have just been informed that long standing member, Yvonne Lowe passed way on 23 December. Condolences to her husband, Geoff and the family. Geoff and Yvonne supported The Bude Canal Trust by cutting the footpath around Virworthy and Geoff was formerly Treasurer of the Trust. BCT owes them a lot of gratitude for their long membership and contributions to the Trust.

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