

THE TUB BOAT

Newsletter of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society

No. 104

Summer 2023



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Forthcoming Events for 2023:

Sat 8th July	200th Anniversary of the opening of the Bude Canal between Bude and Holsworthy.
Fri 14th July	Canal Guided Walk from Bude TIC at 10.30am
Sun 16th July	Bude-Stratton Heritage Day. BCHS tables in the Parkhouse Centre.
Sat 22th July	Celebratory dinner at The White Hart Hotel, Holsworthy. Bookings now closed
Fri 18th August	Canal Guided Walk from Bude TIC at 10.30am
Sat 26th August	BCHS tables in the RNLI Marquee on the Castle Grounds, Bude
Fri 8th Sept	Heritage Open Day at Hobbacott Incline from 10am to 4pm
Fri 15th Sept	Canal Guided Walk from Bude TIC at 10.30am
Sat 7th Oct	Two canal tours by minibus with lunch at the Red Post Inn.
& Sat 21st Oct	See enclosed booking form and page 7 for further information.

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 September 2023.

Officers

Chairman	Chris Jewell
Vice-Chair	Viki Herbert-Coulson
Secretary	Peter Daniel
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Membership Secretary	Martin Shannon
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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: "Mantis" and "Chug Chug"
waiting to enter the Sea Lock on 2 June*

Creaks from the Chair

I wonder what the summer of 2023 will bring? More excessive periods of hot weather of 30°C plus – not my favourite temperature but come July, I hope that I will be looking forward to the celebration on the 22nd at The White Hart Hotel to commemorate the start of trading on the canal between Bude and Holsworthy on 8th July 1823.

Did you watch the spectacular Coronation of King Charles III? I am very much in favour of the system of a Constitutional Monarchy and my view is that Republicans should stand for election at the imminent General Election and see what happens.

I am always impressed by the wonderment I feel when nature comes out with the colours of flowers of valerian, blackthorn, hawthorn, mallow, primroses, bluebells, and spring squill. Finally in about 7½ months from my writing of these “Creaks”, it will be December – I will be a year older, awaiting Christmas with my daughter and grand-daughter and experiencing the joys of the family. So, until then take care and be kind to each other – well at least try.

Chris Jewell

Chairman’s Report

Bude Valley Management Advisory Group – There was no Spring meeting this year, but an update has been issued by Gareth Cann, Countryside Officer (see page 14). A date will be fixed for a further meeting in the Autumn.

Bi-Centenary Booklet – The updated version has now been produced and is on sale at £1 each. The original booklet produced in 2019 is still available at £1 or £1.50 for both versions.

Bude’s Tide Mill and Bridge – Copies are now available at a cost £12 each (see review on page 25).

200th Anniversary Celebratory Dinner – We now have sufficient numbers so we can confirm that this event will take place on 22nd July as planned at The White Hart Hotel, Holsworthy to commemorate the start of trading on the canal between Bude and Holsworthy on 8th July 1823.

Compass Point – The project to move the Storm Tower inland started on 9th May when the cross on the top of the Storm Tower was removed by contractors. I attended the event along with many others including the Mayor of Bude-Stratton, local councillors, and The Grand Bard of the Cornish Gorsedd, Pol Hodge. See report on page 23.

Representation on the IWA West Country Branch Committee - As I am no longer a member of the committee of the West Country Branch of The Inland Waterways Association, I have agreed to act as the BCHS representative on that committee. The Trustees confirmed this appointment at their meeting in June.

Chris Jewell

Membership Report

	Number
Paid Membership 15 th June 2023	
Life Members	27
Annual Members	84
	<hr/>
	111
Additional family members	8
	<hr/>
Total members	119
	<hr/>

Since my report in the Spring 2023 edition of The Tub Boat we have welcomed 3 new annual members and received some late 2022/23 renewals.

As this is the last newsletter before annual subscriptions fall due for renewal on 1st September, I take this opportunity to encourage members to maintain their financial support so that we may continue with our work in helping to conserve, preserve and restore the canal and with education of the public of the former use and history of the canal and its environs. Whenever possible payment by standing order is preferred.

As previously reported, we are in the process of replacing our shed which has for many years stored equipment but has sadly reached the end of its useful life. We have been fortunate to receive two generous donations from members towards the cost and any further donations, large or small, would be most welcome. If you are in a position to assist, then please send a cheque made payable to the society to our Treasurer or make a faster payment directly into our bank account using your surname as a reference followed by the word "shed". In this case please also email our Treasurer to advise of this donation using the email address bude.canal@gmail.com Please be aware that in making a donation you accept that should we have any donations left after the shed purchase we will spend your donation in fulfilling the society's charitable objectives.

If you wish to make a donation using Gift Aid and haven't previously completed a declaration, then one is available on the Membership Application Form which is downloadable from the Members page of our web site or can be obtained from our Treasurer.

If any members require information regarding the society, please visit our website or contact me directly on bude.canal@gmail.com or 01288 356367. Thank you for your continued support.

Martin Shannon, Honorary Treasurer and Membership Secretary

Andrew Barnard

Andrew sadly died on Saturday 24th June after a short illness. He had spent a few weeks in Barnstaple Hospital previously but was then re-admitted where he passed away.

After working in banking Andy, and his brother David (an engineer working abroad) bought a railway tunnel in Devizes and constructed an indoor rifle and pistol range which was used extensively by the military and police as well as licenced GB firearms owners. They sold the business and retired to Bude where they bought and restored a bungalow in Poughill.

David tragically died some years ago after suffering from dementia. Andy then discovered Bude RNLI and spent many years as a volunteer in the shop and boat house. The RNLI was his life and he even featured as "Father Christmas" at the end of last year.

A friend of over 40 years, he will be sadly missed.

Ralph Daniel, former Trustee of BCHS and friend of Andy

Andy was a Life Member of BCHS joining in September 2007. He supported the society both financially and by taking part in many events over the years. He was also an active member of the local branch of the Old Cornwall Society assisting the archivist, Audrey Aylmer and organising outdoor visits (see below). He was a "larger than life" character who will not be forgotten.

Mike Moore

Soon after moving to Poughill, Andrew joined the Bude Stratton & District Old Cornwall Society and became an active member serving on the committee for many years.

Andrew was always ready to give practical help at any of our events especially on our Records Days. He then took over organising our summer coach trips, 'Pilgrimages' to places of interest and also to the OCS Federation Summer and Winter Festivals.

He was always patient, cheerful, and reliable and greatly missed as his health became an issue and he concentrated his energy into his chief interest of the RNLI.

In recognition of his valuable involvement in the OCS Andrew was made an Honorary Life Vice President of the Society.

Audrey E Aylmer, Cares Enesow, Archivist, Bude Stratton & District OCS

Canal visits

As part of the 200th Anniversary to commemorate the start of trading on the canal between Bude and Holsworthy on 8th July 1823, we have organised two minibus tours providing free travel to visit selected sites on the route of the former canal. These will be on the 7th and 21st October 2023 and, as numbers will be limited to 16 per trip, advanced booking is essential. There will be a lunch break at The Red Post Inn which also needs to be booked and paid for in advance. The appropriate booking form is enclosed or will be available on the BCHS website. The form should be returned to me by 30th September.



Previous canal visits in April 2019

Chris Jewell

Hobbacott Inclined Plane Open Day – 8th September 2023



Hobbacott Boat Bays in 2006

Following a decision by the landowner, it is no longer possible to walk the Permissive Path to the top of the Incline and down the incline to the bottom. This means there is currently no access to the longest canal inclined plane in the country and one of the greatest civil engineering structures in the south-west. However, BCHS have provisionally negotiated an Open Day for Friday 8th September which will give access to the incline

from 10am to 4pm. This will be publicised as part of National Heritage Open Days which run this year from 8th to 17th September. Members of BCHS will act as stewards and be on hand to answer questions. Final arrangements have yet to be determined but will be on our website in due course.

Peter Daniel

Canal Guided Walks

In February 2022 the Tourist Information Centre in Bude organised “FebFest” which was a series of events to encourage activities after the Covid lockdowns. As part of that Festival, BCHS participated in a canal walk led by Peter Daniel. The TIC thought that this worked very well and would be worth repeating on a regular basis through the summer months, for the benefit and both locals and visitors. We have agreed to run three walks this summer, on Fridays 14th July, 18th August and 15th September. The walks will be led by Peter Daniel and start at the TIC at 10.30am. Booking is via the TIC and will be £10 for adults and £5 for children. The total route will be about 4 miles in length and will involve everything from the Sea Lock up to and including the Barge Workshop at Helebridge. The aim is to return to the TIC by 1.30pm.

Peter Daniel



The new society shed erected in June (left)

And alongside the original shed which is now empty and ready to be dismantled (right)



Response from Cornwall Council to the issues raised at the AGM.

The issues raised were:

1. Dredging of the Middle Pound between the sets of inland lock gates. This will eventually silt up completely and the canal will be incapable of acting as a flood relief channel if no dredging is done at all.

Reply received from Charlotte Evans, Countryside Officer, Cornwall Council

Whilst we have made the decision to leave the area between the two inland locks non-dredged as a “wildlife refugia” for the current dredging scheme, it doesn’t preclude it from being excavated in a future operation. The purpose of the wildlife refugia is so that species have an in-situ population to repopulate the canal from, and so it is very worthwhile and mitigates the environmental effects of excavating the silt from the entire canal in a short timeframe. The inclusion of a wildlife refugia in our methodology has been recommended by ecologists and environmental advisors and was important in securing protected sites consent from Natural England for the works.

The lower zones are much more challenging to dredge due to the compounding effects of (i) lack of available bankside land to store the arisings, and (ii) presence of invasive non-native zebra mussel, hence we are focused on dredging these zones now, and finding ways to reduce the need to dredge them in future. Once these more challenging zones have been tackled, the inland zones can be de-silted on a rotational basis hence reducing future silt build up in the zone between the locks. Indeed, retaining silt deposits in this zone will help silt fall out of the water column in the up-stream zones, which is the most straightforward to dredge, due to the council having land available at Whalesborough, where the canal can be reached with a long-reach excavator.

2. The programme for the remainder of the dredging. Has there been any change to the anticipated late Autumn start date? I saw a reference to a change of contractor, is that correct?

Reply received from Charlotte Evans

At the moment we are still on-track for a late autumn start date. Different contractors have been engaged and we are confident that we have a strong and good quality interest. The works will need to go out to tender again to comply with our procurement guidelines, and we are on-track to complete this with sufficient time. Whilst the need to seek a new contractor has protracted our works development phase, it was ultimately the right decision as we need to be able to have confidence that the operations will be delivered in a compliant and high-quality manner.

3. Life of the Sea Lock Gates and their replacement. We understand that the gates may not have such a long life as may have originally been anticipated. Has provision been made for this and on what timescale?

Reply received from Chris Jones, Maritime Manager, Cornwall Council

We met with Martin Childs earlier this year to discuss the sea lock gates. Martin Childs Ltd design, manufacture and install lock gates, flood gates, sluices, including temporary works such as stop logs and have worked on the Bude Canal in the past. Our principal concern is the beams which are showing areas of rot. It is clear both inner and outer will need to undergo a life extension project in time and this is being factored into our financial plans for the harbour.

4. We also understand that there is an inoperable sluice gate on one of the lower Sea Lock gates. Has this now been dealt with?

Reply received from Chris Jones

Due to the material of the sluice gates and guides, and the fact they are un-operable during winter months to keep them free due to sand build up, they regularly seize in the closed position. Each year we have to free these and we are looking at how Canal and River Trust are moving to new materials for their sluice gates. The last time the sea lock was used in 2022, prior to low water levels preventing its operation, both sluice gates were operational.

5. Remedial works to the lower gates on the inland locks. These have not been regularly used as originally expected and consequently have dried out and are no longer watertight, as confirmed by inspection by an ex Inland Waterways Engineer. We have suggested a cheap method of protecting these assets and offered to provide up to £1500 towards the cost but nothing seems to have been done about it. What is intended?

Reply received from Charlotte Evans

Though it was not possible to use the gates last year during drought conditions, we do believe that they are in operable condition, and will begin to use them again now that there is enough water in the system. Currently we have no remedial work planned, though we will continue to monitor how they perform as they are used. If you have any additional information resulting from inspection, please do share it with us. Again, very happy to discuss.

Peter Daniel sent the following additional information to Charlotte.

I am providing the exchange of correspondence we had with Don Martin in 2020 about the inland lock gates. The original letter from our Chairman, Chris Jewell, is attached. The follow up email of 9 Sept 2020 is below. We provided Don Martin with Alistair Ogden's contact details, and he was going to contact him about it.

Subsequent reply received from Charlotte Evans

I will follow up in discussion with Don Martin and Gareth Cann about what we will do next - I suspect that a period monitoring again will now be needed, and I understand that Gareth has plans to fill the lock as far as possible now that there is more water available in the system which will allow us to re-evaluate the current situation.

Update 09/05/2023

The inland locks were tested on the morning of 9 May, during which both filled with just one of the sluices/paddles opened and are in good operational condition. The images on page 15 show the locks full and the gates open. Unfortunately, Gareth and Paul also reported evidence of some tampering/vandalism. This included forcing of an inspection pit cover and removal of turnbuckles which hold the gates open. Full details in the BVMAG Report on page 14 and the Bude Harbour update on page 17.

6. What are the proposals for the collapsed banks above Falcon Bridge in terms of both construction details and timescales?

Reply received from Charlotte Evans

The design solution is currently being prepared, including a planning application. We anticipate that a sheet-piled option will be agreed, as this will give the most robust and long-term repair whilst also having the potential to include external finishes that reflect the heritage character of the canal. The design team are also in conversation with the EA to ensure that the proposals are suitable in relation to flood risk – indeed they are in discussion about the repairs possibly helping to reduce flood risk through increasing the height of the embankment. At the moment we expect that these works will also be delivered in the autumn, however the biggest risk to the timeline is the planning approval.

7. Long-term Asset Management Plan for the whole canal. At one time this was under discussion, but we have not heard any more about it. Is it still in preparation?

Reply received from Charlotte Evans

An asset management plan was produced in 2009, however there is a view that this, or certain sections of it may need updating to bring in some changes, such as the updates to infrastructure and emerging concerns such as long-term silt and low-levels management. At the moment we are revising our low-levels protocol and will be finalising this with the Environment Agency. Following on from this, we will also consider which other sections of the management plan are a priority for revision.

8. It is reported that there are discussions between the Council and the Environment Agency over responsibility for the Breakwater. Are these discussions still ongoing or has there been an outcome?

Reply received from Chris Jones

We continue to liaise with the Environment Agency, through our Coastal/ Flood defence teams, to seek support in maintaining the Breakwater. Over £70k of funding was allocated to repairs this year to the structure from Cornwall Council. We've undertaken further repairs in recent days post Storm Noa.

9. We have been told that the repairs to Tommy's Pit have been unsuccessful. Are there proposals to carry out further work to prevent leakage?

Reply received from Chris Jones

Repairs were completed and I am unaware of significant leakage unless something has recently changed?

10. What is now happening with intended works on the Sand Railway ramp. The last thing we heard was that the Council would be re-allocating the project now that Martin Clemo has left. However, I note that there is a pre-application consultation on the Planning website which involves rock armour and an even more determined effort to obscure all evidence of the 1823 plateway. Are Historic England happy with these proposals? When will there be consultation on the proposals?

Reply received from Chris Jones referring to Paul Vincent's report - see page 17.

Reply from Charlotte Evans

The ramp has suffered significant damage in recent storms, and it is felt that without a long-term solution the features will continue to be vulnerable to erosion and potentially loss, indeed there is concern that continued damage to this location could impact the canal bank. This is why the design team have sought planning advice on a number of different potential long-term solutions. There is even significant damage to the walkway area following the recent storms, and also impacts to the canal embankment. Each solution proposed has considered the impact on heritage sensitively and it is our intention that these features will be better conserved as a result, whilst also maintaining public safety over access, which is paramount.

Advice has been sought from the historic planning service and listened to at each stage. Currently, pre-application advice is being sought as a way forward, and Historic England (and others) will have the opportunity to input via consultation if the planning application is made.

See full reports on the Sand Railway on page 24.

Further reply received from Chris Jones

Finally, on a particularly pleasing note, the harbour has recorded its best financial return to date. This is despite a continued increase in expenditure to improve/maintain the facilities.

(ED - Although the figures provided do show an improving financial position, the Harbour does not yet produce a financial surplus, but the Harbour account does now benefit from receipts from the Wharf Car Park)

Images of the conducted walk arranged for the Launceston Branch of The Old Cornwall Society on 21 June



Meeting at the Sea Lock (above)

*Visiting
Whalesborough
Lock
(right)*



Bude Valley Management Advisory Group - Maintenance Update

Tow path patching

The canal and marshes are continually monitored for any defects to ensure that users are not put at risk. This is particularly important as the tow path is used by all abilities. Any defects are rectified as soon as possible, and the tow path has been re-patched where needed.

Accommodation Bridge

The accommodation bridge needed some repairs to the posts and rails. This has been completed over the winter.

(See photo opposite)

Coppicing of encroaching vegetation

It is very important to control encroaching vegetation along the canal banks. This prevents damage and erosion to the banks, particularly from tree roots. This winter a substantial amount of vegetation (mainly Willow and Alder trees) has been removed. The stumps have been treated with a herbicide pellet to prevent re-growth. The herbicide pellet is inserted into the stump, as this is targeted it does not affect any surrounding vegetation.



Canal Culvert

As mentioned in my last update the ditch which runs alongside the towpath between Rodds Bridge Lock and Whalesborough Lock has started to flood and water has been flowing across the tow path into the canal. This is caused by a blocked culvert which runs from this ditch underneath the canal and empties out on the far side into a marshy area. The culvert has blocked before, and we have cleared it manually using draining rods with some success. A contractor has partially cleared the blockage, but it will also need to be cleared from the opposite side of the canal. This will be undertaken later this summer once the ground conditions are dry enough to allow plant to travel without causing damage to the ground.

Operation of the Inland Locks

Due to the drought last summer and the need to conserve water we were unable to work the inland locks. Now that water levels have recovered, we have started to work the locks. The pictures below show both locks full of water and fully operational. We will continue to use them periodically as long as we have sufficient water in the system.



Whalesborough Lock in operation



Rodds Bridge Lock in operation



Vandalism

Unfortunately, there was recently some vandalism to the lock gates and the inspection pit at Whalesborough Lock. Turnbuckles used to secure the outer gates to the wall had been removed and an inspection pit cover had been forced open. The cover has had to be replaced. This sort of damage has to be rectified and funded through our Countryside Sites & Trails revenue budget. This sort of deliberate damage puts even more pressure on our funding.

Damaged inspection pit cover

Summer Vegetation Management

The tow path and the paths in the Marshes are cut once a month from April to October. The Cormac gang that undertakes this work do an excellent job in a very sensitive manner. Wherever possible they are extremely careful not to cut any wildflowers but also ensure that the paths, seats etc are assessable for people to use. It is very difficult to find a balance between ensuring the site is accessible for all abilities and also ensuring that wherever possible the natural habitat and biodiversity is preserved. I believe that they deserve credit for the way they undertake this work.

Abstraction Licence

We have to monitor the amount of water flowing i.e. abstracted from the River Neet into the canal. This is a requirement of the abstraction licence that Cornwall Council has with the Environment Agency. During times of low flow, the canal can only abstract 50% of the flow of water through the fish pass next to the Weir at Whalesborough. The abstraction point is the By-Wash pictured opposite at Whalesborough Lock. A flow meter is situated within the pipe that leads from the By-Wash and the 50% split can be monitored from the readings given by the flow meter. At the time of writing, we have had a period of very dry weather and the levels in the River Neet are slowly dropping. I am hoping that we have a period rain (but not too much!!) to help levels recover.



By-Wash Sluice

Environment Agency Flood Defence Work

The Environment Agency have started work on improving Bude's flood defences. The scheme will cost £2.1 million which has come from the government's £170 million flood alleviation fund. The majority of the scheme will focus on improving the flood defences along the River Neet. However, the earth flood embankment to the rear of the Tourist Information Centre has also been widened and heightened. It has also been re-seeded with a wild grass mixture and re-fenced. We are working closely with the contractors Kier to ensure that any impact on the meadow behind the TIC is kept to a minimum. The meadow has a healthy wildflower population as well as the rare Bee Orchid. I have been in contact with the county ecologist to ensure that mitigation measures are in place and that we are being consulted on the work they wish to undertake.

Gareth Cann, Cormac Countryside Senior Sites & Trails Officer



The flood embankment behind the TIC with the wild grass mixture now established

Bude Harbour update - November 2022 to June 2023

The end of October/early November 2022, saw the close of the season with all boats vacating the moorings to the winter storage area on the Wharf car park, allowing the Heras fencing to be installed around the boats. Note:- The storm chains and bars were already installed on the lock gates during the summer's low water level/drought event.

On the evening of the 7th November, we experienced large sea conditions along with a Spring tide causing one of the ring bolts on the South outer gate to fail. This was reported to me via one of our fishermen who witnessed it, and I was able to attend site within 30 minutes to rig a temporary safety chain to re-secure the gate. Whilst on-site, I also checked the other gate, rigging a further chain for safety. That week, I enlisted a local engineering firm to manufacture two new 2m ring bolts for replacements. With the help from our contractors, Vector Rope Access, we had them installed. Whilst on-site, and to fill their day, I had them complete some pointing work within the lock chamber and pier heads.

Sadly, mid-November, we were plagued by some anti-social behaviour on several occasions by groups of adolescents repeatedly graffitiing signage and the lock gate handrails along with removing the safety bollards from the Wharf and throwing them in the canal. Regularly liaising with the community police officer, we have, so far, managed to put a stop to this.

On 5th December, Cormac were back on-site for a second time to attempt further repairs to "Tommy's Pit" (Bude's first sea pool) on the outer reaches of the Breakwater. Whilst on-site, I made use of their dumper, collecting rubbish, old fishing gear and rope that had previously been washed in from sea. I am pleased to say, so far, the repairs have held up to the challenging conditions and "Tommy's Pit" remains full to the delight of the locals!

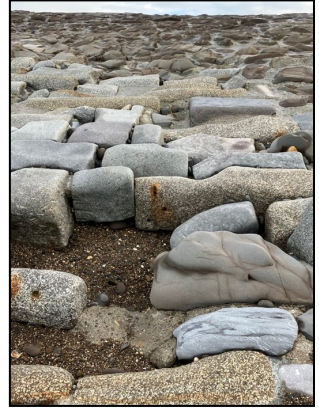
New tide table books have been printed and distributed.

In early January, local contractors, Michael Vanstone were on-site repairing the stone retaining wall along the harbour entrance road.

I have installed a new 1.2m square safety “DEEP FLOWING WATER IN CHANNEL” notice to the North quay wall following the old one being ripped off in storms. A repair was needed to the centre section, seaward side, of the breakwater, which has now been completed (*see photo on right*).



*Dredging the Sea Lock
(left and below)*



*Section of Breakwater
requiring repair*

In early May, after a long battle with Natural England, we commenced our annual dredging of the Sea Lock preparing it for the season. Sadly, on this occasion we were not given permission from Natural England to return the sand to the mooring areas, as we would usually do. This left us reverting to our 1901 powers to dredge meaning the sand had to be taken away.



This is something we are fighting to rectify for next season. The above photos make it apparent just how much sand builds up in the lock chamber over the winter. This was actually the third pile!

During the last eight months, a considerable amount of time has been taken up by repeated FOI requests by some individuals preventing my time being used efficiently elsewhere.

Repairs and Maintenance.

Work completed.

Overflow boards removed for winter.

“Tommy’s Pit” repairs on the breakwater.

General weeding and painting – volunteer group.

Repairs to private road retaining stone wall.

New ring bolts manufactured and installed.

Pointing in lock chamber and pier heads.

New box section welded to South gate storm chain saddle.

Old safety signage removed from the breakwater.

New 1.2m square safety signage installed.

Refit overflow boards for summer.

Storm chains removed.

Sea lock dredged and tested; Outer sluices unseized, inner North top strap hinge adjusted week commencing 15th May.

New key clamp safety railing fitted to steps from lock.

Work to be completed.

New oak bollards being manufactured and to be installed on Wharf car park.

New Pay and Display machine for Wharf car park.

Weeding along bank side including removing large buddleia.

New meter boards in chamber and canal.

First Lock movement of 2023

2nd June saw the first official lock movement of 2023 with local boats “Chug Chug” and “Mantis” locking out onto their summer moorings drawing a large crowd of some 300 spectators.

I have a number of enquiries for visiting vessels including three Cornish Shrimpers and a 1968 Long Keel sailing vessel and returning after a number of years sailing vessel “Boni”.

Mandatory training - Up to date including oils spill 5p commander training.

Text and photos from Paul Vincent, Harbour Master Bude

Temporary Harbour Closure

As a result of the inability to abstract sufficient water to replenish the canal the Harbour Master issued a Notice to Mariners temporarily closing Bude Harbour on Monday 26th June. The outer lock gates will be swung on a regular basis to try and keep the swinging arc and recess clear of sand to enable operation to resume when water becomes available again.

Charlotte Evans, Countryside Officer, Cornwall Council

“Mantis” & “Chug Chug” locking out on 2 June

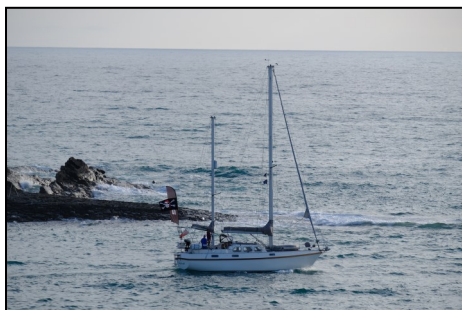


Photos by Mike Moore and Jeff Dover

**“Lady Gwyneth”, “Best Endeavour”, “ZezyToo” & “The Bobik”
locking in on 16 June**



**“Lady Gwyneth”, “Best Endeavour”, “ZezyToo” & “The Bobik”
locking out on 19 June**



Compass Point update from Bude-Stratton Town Council

The team has made significant progress by removing the first layer of scaffolding now that the domed roof has been removed. With this milestone achieved, the focus has now shifted towards dismantling the stone. Over the next week, the team will be working diligently to remove the delicate compass etchings. As part of the process, any necessary repairs will be carried out to ensure these markings can be carefully reinstated at the new tower site. Despite the complexity involved, the process of removing the stones has been relatively rapid. It is expected that by early July, all remaining scaffolding will be taken down as the stone removal progresses to a lower level.



During the works, it has been discovered that the stonework is in a more fragile state than initially anticipated. This means that additional repair work will be required in due course to ensure the structural integrity of the tower as it is reassembled.

Community Activity

As part of the community engagement, the activities program will be focused on Budehaven Community School in the upcoming weeks. The team will be giving a presentation to all the pupils, providing them with valuable insights and information about the project.

Lastly, we are thrilled to announce that the art competition is now open! Anyone between the ages of 3 to 19 can enter for a chance to win 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes. Plus, 1st place winners will have their artwork displayed at the Compass Point Exhibition at the end of the year. The closing date for the competition is 4pm on 7th July.

Issued by Bude-Stratton Town Council on 15 June 2023

The Sand Railway

I've been worried about this zone for some time, it now is evident that further damage to the cobbled area has happened in recent weeks. The pathway down from Sand Quay to the Iron Bridge will be closed in coming days. I have already met with council officers who have assured me funds are available to conduct remediation works, but as this is adjacent to the grade 2 listed lock gates, and a sensitive part of our history, planning permission will be required - which will have the standard public consultation phase. It's likely that this area will remain closed to public access for several months.

Clr Peter La Broy, Cornwall Council

Important Update:

Temporary Closure of Sand Rails Path by Cornwall Council

Cornwall Council has had to temporarily close Sand Rails Path as it has been damaged by coastal erosion. As a result, some of those cobble stones have been lost and pose a tripping hazard. So, to keep everyone safe, the path had to be closed immediately.

Cornwall Council will reopen the path once the repairs have been made. Unfortunately, we don't have an exact timeline just yet, but we'll keep you posted as soon as we know more. In the meantime, Cornwall Council are investigating how they can improve alternative access whilst the closure is in place.

Cornwall Council 15/6/23



Further update from Peter Daniel

I met Rhys Hobbs of Cornwall Council on 20th June. There has been further damage to the banks this winter and they are concerned about the integrity of the embankment and it is temporarily fenced off. They will be surveying with ground penetrating radar shortly to check for voids and will then work up solutions.

Rock armour proposals were not intended as the permanent solution. I emphasised the desirability of keeping some visibility of the features of the 1823 platway – particularly some of the line of stone blocks and the low retaining wall that marked the passing loop. Although there may be some extra concreting, they are concerned that this acts as a slipway for the waves and more restoration of the cobbling would slow them down. Ideas are being worked up at present and they will keep in touch.

Rhys Hobbs also referred to the by-pass culvert at Whalesborough Weir. They are looking at restoration of the sluice to allow water to bypass the fish weir at very low flows (see page16).

Peter Daniel

Bude's Tide Mill and Bridge

This book is a real eye opener. Since moving to Bude from Falmouth in 1948, growing up here and never wanting to leave, I have been very interested in the history of the area, especially fascinated by the early photos, mostly taken by the Thorn family.

Someone said at a recent Bude Canal and Harbour Society meeting that he started reading, "Bude's Tide Mill and Bridge" that morning and couldn't put it down! Now having read it myself, I completely understand that comment.

The book begins with a description of the geography and geology, sociology, and history of human habitation in and around Bude.

Much research has gone into these fifty-three quality pages. The front cover is a charming interpretation of how the bridge and estuary are might have been from the 12th to the early 19th century, by local artist Harry McConville. The history of Bude and its surroundings, including Roman, Norman and Saxon influence, has taken so much research that I would imagine anyone reading this book would find many more facts than they ever knew.

The building of the mill in the estuary is quite technical for me to understand, but world-wide structures have been taken into account. Not a stone has been left unturned! I would advise anyone with a love of Bude to read this book, which I will read over and over again, to try to take in all the interpretations and facts of our history from ancient times to more recent ones.

I sincerely believe, however much you already know, you will be as amazed as I am by this beautifully produced book by Nicholas Cole and his associates including David Thorn and Harry McConville.

Lesley Moores 23/05/23

Bude Canal Boundary Stones

In April we were approached by the Bude Canal Trust regarding a Bude Canal Boundary Stone which had been recovered from a property near St Annes Hill, Bude. We felt that the most appropriate outcome was to offer the item as a donation to The Heritage Centre at The Castle, Bude. This was accepted and the stone is now in their hands and they intend to put it on display alongside others which they have at The Heritage Centre. The inscription on the stone reads “BC 1839” (*see photo below*).

There are other examples of boundary stones still existing locally including those which were photographed at Werrington on the Inclined Plane during our canal tour in April 2019 and one built into the wall at Helebridge (*see photos below*).

Mike Moore



The Boundary Stone recently donated to the Heritage Centre, Bude (above left) and the stone built into the wall at Helebridge (above right)



Three Boundary Stones photographed at Werrington Inclined Plane in April 2019 (right)

Bude Canal Trust Work Report on the Bude Aqueduct

April

For the last few weeks in April the working party had been hard at work on the Vealand Bridge to Brendon Bridge section of the canal burning the piles of brash left from last year, cutting back the overhanging bushes and opening up the far bank to encourage the wildlife back.



Burning brash

Due to yellow weather warnings for torrential rain and high winds, which held us up, this took longer than planned, but we finally completed tidying up this section and moved on to the Puckland Bridge to Dunsdon National Nature Reserve section.

The last week of the month the working party was called to the Puckland section to assist a DCC-Licensed chainsaw operator in the removal of a couple of dead trees that had been blown over after the recent high winds and were blocking the footpath.



Chainsaw operator in action



First cut of the year

Whilst on site another large tree was found to have a badly split trunk with dead limbs hung up in the branches of other trees overhanging the footpath. As this posed a danger to the public using the towpath the contractor also removed this hazard. The footpath is now clear and safe for walkers to use.

The first cut of the year was at the end of the month.

There were plenty of insects around, particularly butterflies. The wildflowers were coming out although the Bluebells were still a few weeks away. We found one fallen tree at the northern end of the Aqueduct Trail; and that has been partially removed, and we marked a hole near the Holsworthy Branch that you should beware of.

May

The second week saw the working party on the Dunsdon National Nature Reserve section clearing the last of the dead trees that had been blown down in the high winds earlier this year. Those that were potentially hazardous to walkers were trimmed back after checking that no wildlife would be disturbed.

The footpath was checked between Moreton Bridge, through Puckland and Dunsdon, to Brendon Bridge and it is now free from any obstructions. It has also been mown, so come on down and enjoy the walk.



Overhanging tree being removed

This was followed by the second cut of the year. The Bluebells in the northern section were in full bloom, and the section near Puckland Bridge was full of water as a result of the heavy rain and the Working Group clearing the canal over the last few weeks. There were lots of butterflies around as well.



Bluebells



Near Puckland Bridge

The strimmer gang was in action in the third week between the Vealand bridge and the Holsworthy branch. Unfortunately, one of the strimmers broke down and had to be taken to Bridgemans in Kilkhampton to be repaired. But it could not be fixed on the spot, so the strimmer gang were a man down for the rest of the day.

The rest of the working party were investigating a subsidence on the footpath, but after an hour of digging were unable to locate the suspected fractured pipe. This will now need a mini-digger to dig out the footpath. It was nice to see walkers back on the footpath enjoying the Bluebells and other wild flowers in the sunshine.

The repairs to the footpath were carried out as planned at the end of the month. With the assistance of a mini digger, Guy our trusty contractor & the BCT volunteers eventually located the problem pipe. After rodding it, the foot path was backfilled and by mid-afternoon the footpath was open for walkers again. There were plenty of butterflies about as well as a squirrel, a small deer & a couple of hawks were spotted.

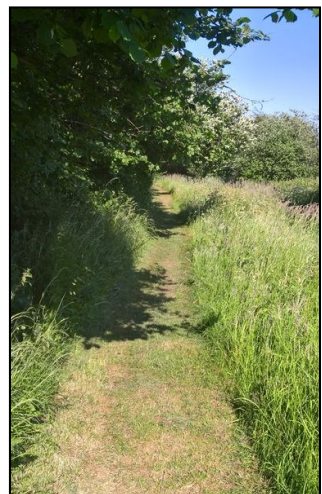


Footpath repairs

This was followed by the third cut of the year. Now that the hole near the Holsworthy Arm has been repaired the path is now clear. The Hawthorn flowers are were in full bloom, and there were several dragonflies around.

June

The path was cut by the middle of the month. It was warm, and the air was full of the buzz of insects. There were plenty of butterflies along the path, as well as the odd deer fly.



Path cut (right)



Trimming grass around the picnic table

After a couple of non-working weeks due to Amber heat warnings the working party volunteers were back on the canal by the middle of the month.

The last of the piles of brash on the Vealand section were burnt before moving on to the Brendon section. Here the hedgerow was encroaching on the footpath and was cut back whilst the strimmer gang worked on the canal profile.



Burning brash (left)



Hedgerow cut back (right)

From information published on The Bude Canal Trust Facebook Page.

Bude Canal Trust – Executive Report

Bude Canal Aqueduct land transfer to DWT – The situation remains unchanged and both sides remain committed to the land transfer, but things seem to have stalled with the respective sets of solicitors. I have tried to break the apparent log-jam as a matter of urgency and am currently awaiting feedback.

Meanwhile, proposals for the disposal of the short length of the canal at Burmsdon west of the Aqueduct over the River Tamar which lies in Cornwall, have been put to the membership of the Bude Canal Trust for their comments. This is currently the Permissive path section which has been closed to the public for some time. The prospective purchaser is willing to reinstate the canal profile, improve the footpath and rewater a length of the canal. He will also allow limited public access to this section of the canal through BCT accompanied visits. The sale of this short section of the canal will simplify the transfer of the canal ownership to the Devon Wildlife Trust and will allow this section to be reinstated and rewatered at no cost to the Bude Canal Trust. This proposal has the unanimous support of the Trustees and committee members of the Bude Canal Trust.



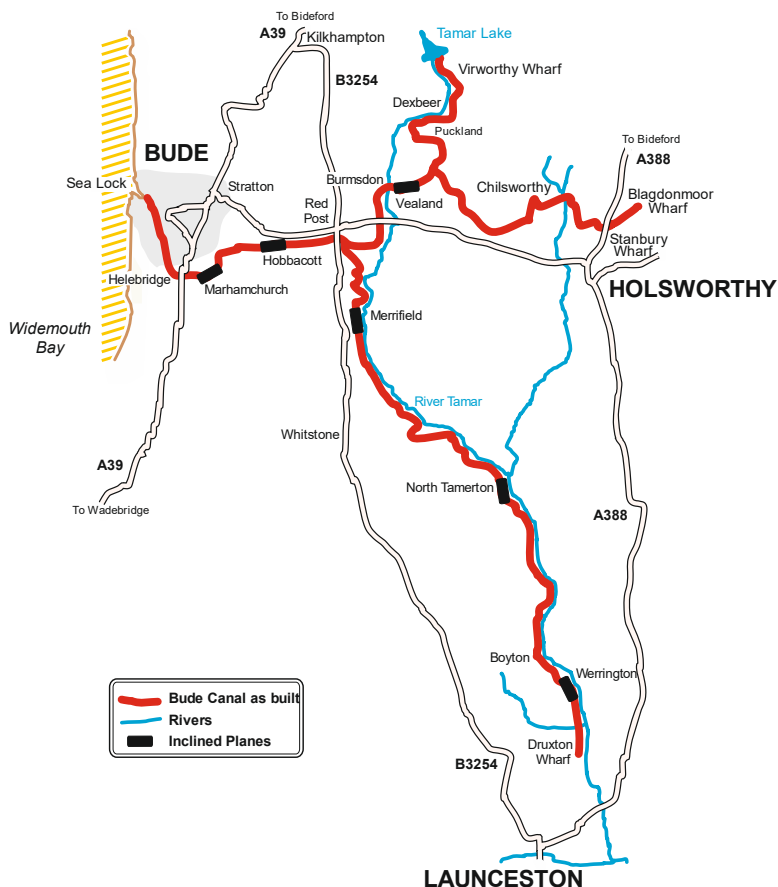
Burmsdon Farm Bridge which is on the section of canal mentioned above

Coast to Coast Route – as outlined in the last edition of *The Tub Boat*, the route is to be called the *Tamara Coast to Coast Way*. There is to be an official launch of the Coast-to-coast walk on 11 July at Bere Ferrers in the lower Tamar Valley.

Steve Church, Chairman, Bude Canal Trust.

THE TUB BOAT

Newsletter of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society



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