

THE TUB BOAT

Newsletter of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society
No. 96 **Summer 2021**



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Forthcoming Events for 2021:

Sunday 25th July Bude Stratton Heritage Festival from 11am to 4pm in The Parkhouse Centre and on the Castle Grounds where we will have tables in the marquee.

Sundays 1st August to 26th September - We hope to be able to open the Barge Workshop at Helebridge from 2pm to 5pm on these Sundays subject to receiving the final agreement from Bude-Stratton Town Council and finding sufficient volunteers to cover all dates.

Under the present circumstances we are unable to plan any further events during 2021 and we are now aware that the Tall Ships Festival at Falmouth in August 2021 has been cancelled.

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 2021.

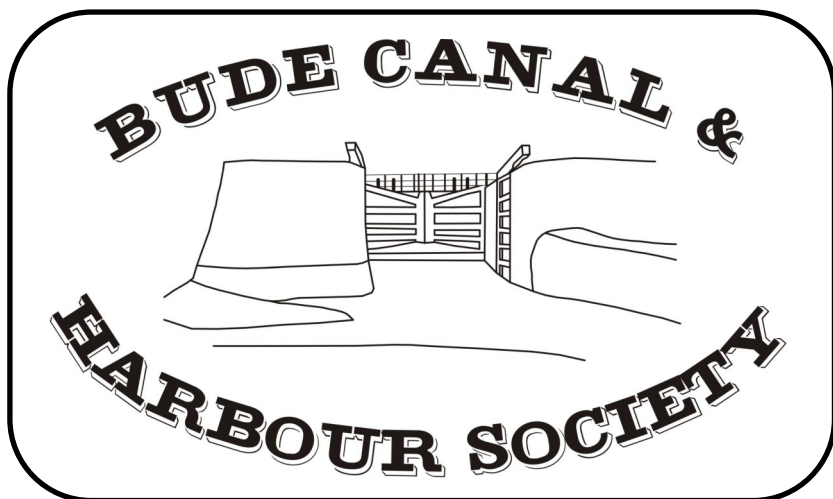
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*Cover photo: Members of BLEND working on
Peter Truscott's Bridge (see page 12)*

Creaks from the Chair

I hope that all our members, their families and friends are all safe, well and vaccinated with the double Covid jab. The way ahead is vaccination of the whole world and we are not truly safe until we are all safe. This is my view but, of course, others may have alternative views - correct or not.

There are signs that the Sea Lock will be back in operation as predicted by Cornwall Council during August. There were some important changes at Cornwall Council following the recent elections in May. The most notable was that the total number of councillors was reduced from 123 to 87. The election results meant that the Conservative Party held the majority of the seats giving them control of the council instead of a coalition of Liberal Democrats and Independents who controlled the previous council. In the Bude area some boundaries were changed and we now have three councillors rather than the previous four. The new councillors are two Liberal Democrats and one Conservative. This area includes Bude Harbour, the Sea Lock and the 2 miles of Canal to Helebridge Basin so it will be interesting to see what the new Council does with the important heritage site in their northern reaches which is better known as The Bude Canal.

Finally, Bude is busy with visitors, as you might expect, so the decision to relax restrictions on 19th July is of great importance to this tourist town when it will become clear what effect this decision will have on the town and on us individually. I repeat my earlier comment “we are not truly safe until we are all safe”. Anyway, have a safe summer and look after each other if you can.

Chris Jewell

Secretary's Report

In April I gave a presentation to Derby Canal Society via Zoom for which we received a donation of £15.

A letter prepared by Chris Jewell was sent to newly elected Councillors in early May seeking support to continue with the Canal Stakeholder meetings organised by Cornwall Council. This was sent to councillors in both Cornwall Council and Bude-Stratton Town Council and I have had a couple of encouraging responses so far.

I have been following up complaints about a powered boat and about dogs attacking birds along the canal and have referred them both to Gareth Cann at Cormac. He has taken action - see reports on page 6.

I have continued to pursue Cornwall Council officers to arrange a site meeting to discuss the works along the sand railway. A meeting finally took place on 7th July but meanwhile, the works which were scheduled to start on 21st June have now been postponed until September to allow for further consultations. See separate report on page 9.

The Canal Stakeholder's meeting took place while I was away, so we were not represented but from information circulated later by Cornwall Council, it appeared to have concentrated on the current plans for dredging the canal and on the workshop on the treatment of invasives organised by the Bude Canal Zebra Mussel Stakeholder Group on 26th May (see report on page 6). A paper was circulated which showed current progress on the dredging. The next Canal Stakeholder's meeting will be on 15th September.

Bude-Stratton Town Council are organising a slimmed down Heritage Festival on Sunday 25th July. We have decided to have three tables in the marquee which will be on the Castle Grounds. It will be open from 11am to 4pm.

We have responded to enquiries from the Census office re houseboats on the Canal and an enquiry about paddle-boarding permits.

We were contacted by a TV company responsible for Rick Stein's Cornwall who sent a picture of the Sea Lock being built. However, the picture was not actually of Bude.

Peter Daniel, Secretary

Membership Report

In the period since my Spring Newsletter Report we have received renewals from a further three members for which we are very grateful. In September annual subscriptions fall due for renewal and I would urge members to maintain their financial support so that we can 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 and if you are eligible a Gift Aid declaration increases the amount that we, as a charity, ultimately receive with no additional cost to the member. Our web site membership page <http://www.bude-canal.co.uk/membership.htm> contains all the information necessary.

Along with you all I'm sure I hope that plans to return to a pre-pandemic life come to fruition so that in future newsletters I am able to give a more positive report on membership activities.

If any members require information regarding the society, please visit our website or contact me directly on 01288 356367.

Martin Shannon
Honorary Treasurer and Membership Secretary

The Barge Workshop, Helebridge

Provisional arrangements have been made with Bude-Stratton Town Council to allow us to open the Barge Workshop on Sunday afternoons during the summer from 2pm to 5pm. It will be open from 1st August until 26th September but this will be subject to receiving final approval from BSTC. Additional Covid procedures will be in place to protect both visitors and our volunteers.

Chris Jewell.

Bude Valley update

We have recently had issues with motorised boats using the canal and causing disturbance to wildlife and local residents. Myself and Paul Vincent (The Harbourmaster) received numerous complaints and the police were contacted. One of the Bude Angling Club members saw the users and managed to take a photograph of the registration number of the vehicle, I passed this onto the police and they have visited the owner. I suspect there may be others using the canal with motorised craft so if you witness anything please could you make myself or Paul aware of the situation. Many thanks.

The following notice was put up on the canal by Cornwall Council on 17th May: "There have recently been dog attacks on young birds resulting in a gosling being killed. Please keep your dog under close control during the bird nesting season. Your co-operation is appreciated."

Gareth Cann, Countryside Officer, Cormac.

Help protect Bude Canal for future generations.

Bude Canal is a haven for wildlife and supports a range of recreational activities and businesses – but the presence of Zebra mussels is a concern for this unique historical waterway. Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*)

are a priority invasive non-native species which can have negative impacts on wildlife and the economy. The small population of Zebra mussels at Bude Canal is the only known population in Cornwall. South West Water's Biosecurity and Invasives Manager, Kate Hills, explained: "Non-native invasive species are those which don't originate from the UK and have a negative impact on our environment, economy or health. They can affect wildlife, restrict navigation and reduce biodiversity, to name a few." Zebra mussels can accidentally be spread by recreational activities such as angling and water sports but many users of the canal are not aware of their presence. There is a concern that they could be introduced to other sites.

"It has been an extraordinary year and following the release of lockdowns there has been a huge influx of visitors to many sites in Cornwall. The risk of spreading Zebra mussels is greatly increased and it has never been more timely to review biosecurity measures and ways to prevent the spread of these problematic and highly invasive species."

South West Water has a commitment to investigate the management options of Zebra mussels at Bude Canal and is working with mussel specialist Dr David Aldridge, Cornwall Council, Cormac and the Community Invasive Non-Native Group (CINNG), a Cornwall-based charity working to reduce the impact of invasive non-native species.



To coincide with the start of Invasive Species Week (24-30th May 2021), the partners have installed and unveiled a special bench near the Tourist Information Centre on the towpath of Bude Canal.

The eye-catching artwork by Greenspace Designs Ltd is to raise awareness of invasive species and to encourage water users to help protect this special site by preventing invasive species from spreading and reporting them if they do see them.

On Wednesday 26th May, interested parties attended a special free workshop to review the problem and discuss the management options. Dr David Aldridge said: "We've seen what harm Zebra mussels can do elsewhere in the UK and so by implementing effective measures at the Bude Canal we have an amazing opportunity to protect biodiversity, recreational activities and water supplies across the whole of Cornwall. Of course, any management approaches we identify need to be acceptable to all the different users of the Canal and must also protect local wildlife. We very much hope that by working together we can identify a management plan that benefits the entire community."

Canal users such as kayakers, anglers and stand-up paddle boarders can help by remembering to Check, Clean, Dry:

Check – equipment and clothing for live organisms, particularly in areas that are damp or hard to inspect.

Clean – and wash all equipment, footwear and clothes thoroughly, using hot water wherever possible. If you come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them.

Dry – all equipment and clothing, some species can live for many days in moist conditions. Make sure you don't transfer water anywhere else.

Non-native species are plants and animals which have been moved from their place of origin, accidentally or intentionally, and brought to into Britain by humans. Around 10% of these species are considered invasive. Invasive non-native species have a negative impact on the environment, the economy and sometimes human health. Non-native mammals include rats, mice, grey squirrels, rabbits, mink, deer, feral cats and ferrets and included eradicated mammals such as coypu.

For more information about Invasive Species Week see <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/>

The Bude Canal Zebra Mussel Stakeholder Group.

The Sand Railway

According to Cornwall Council, the proposed works on the Sand Railway are essential to preserve the integrity of the canal bank given increasing severity of storms and provide a safe pedestrian access to Summerleaze beach. We can appreciate that this is an issue but we feel that there is scope for a compromise which strengthens the structure whilst preserving at least some of the heritage features.



Shows Blacksmiths on Sand Wharf note plateway rails and ramp for tipping sand into Railway Wagon.
c.1900



The rails in many respects are less important than remains of the earlier plateway which is over 100 years older. Storms in recent years have exposed lines of stone blocks from the 4 ft gauge plateway built around 1820 and the low retaining wall marks the location of the passing loop on that plateway. Plateways were soon superseded by edge railways and we understand that the only other one in Cornwall was the Portreath Tramroad. These remains of the plateway are therefore very important and it would be a great shame to lose all visibility of them.



These concerns have been highlighted by Janine King, Heritage Development Officer, Bude-Stratton Town Council and she has been following up the proposals which were published by Cormac at the beginning of June. These stated that various design options had been considered that will provide substantial protection to the wall against further erosion, as well as a suitable and safe surface for pedestrians. The final solution is to construct a section of mass concrete slab over the width of the path, first covering the historic features with a granular material to protect and preserve them for the future. Her comments are shown below:

When you read the statement, you'll see that it sounds as though they are going to cover the rails, no mention is made of them remaining visible. Cormac also claim to have been in 'close consultation for some time with a local historic group', I can only assume this to be inaccurate. I have contacted Cormac myself to get some more clarity on whether or not they intend the rails to be visible. The rails are still visible in the tarmac further along, which shows that it is possible to have a safe pathway whilst retaining the rails. I am very concerned about the prospect of losing such a vital part of Bude's heritage, once the rails are covered over, they will be lost forever. Reference is also made to the rails on the interpretation board on the Castle wall. I am happy to do whatever I can to prevent this happening.

Janine King.

However, it is true that Cornwall Council had been in touch with us for a few months but hadn't at that stage provided us with any detailed proposals. We understand that the proposals are still being developed which may include etching of the line of rails or some of the blocks and in any case the rails will still be visible to the east of the sign. We believe that whilst strengthening with a concrete cap is the most likely solution further options are still being considered after consultation with stakeholders.

Peter Daniel

Bude Harbour update

A shipwright in Truro has made new railings for the inner gates in traditional English oak and they will be kept natural as painting does not allow the wood to breath and may actually contribute to them deteriorating. These were fitted on 15th June - see below.



The new pintles have now been cast and have been delivered to site and a dive team has been booked to inspect and clear debris from the inner gates canal side with new top hinge straps to be fitted. New cast shoes (see below) have now been drilled by a local engineering firm and our shipwright is fitting them to the gates today (21 July).



Vector Ropes will be doing pointing in chamber on 26th July. Pintles will then be drilled and mobilising contractors to start fitting all on the 9th August if all goes to plan! Therefore it is anticipated that the lock should be operational during August.

*From information provided by Paul Vincent, Harbour Master, Bude
Cornwall Council Maritime Section*

Bude-Stratton Town Council

At the first full council meeting following the election of the new council, a decision was taken to defer the proposal to nominate delegates to serve on outside bodies. Consequently, Cllr Simon Browning, who has represented BSTC at BCHS committee meetings will no longer attend future meetings. We wish to thank Simon for his assistance in the past and we will miss his advice in the future. Cllr Paul Tilzey has now been appointed as the council's delegate for BCHS and other canal related bodies.

Mike Moore

Peter Truscott's Bridge – The Worry Walk Project

We have recently been contacted by Jamie Wright who runs the BLEND Bude youth collective. They have now been given permission to start a project to carry out renovation work on Peter Truscott's Bridge which carries the footpath over the river in the Bude Valley. This footpath connects the Multi-use Trail with the canal towpath. They will be doing numerous visits to prepare, clean and then treat the wood and the deck. Initially they will be working from 6.30pm to 8.30pm on Tuesday evenings. Their first session was on 29th June (*see photos opposite and overleaf*). Jamie said "We think we will need at least two preparation visits and two or three treatment visits. Each one would probably be on a Tuesday evening but we may do one on a Sunday if the weather doesn't go our way!".

Jamie was wondering if any of our members would like to be involved in this community initiative? Any support would be most welcome. You can contact him on blendandskate@gmail.com and see <https://worrywalk.org/> or the BLEND Bude youth collective facebook page for the latest information,

Mike Moore





Image above shows Jamie Wright, Project Leader



The Storm Tower, Compass Point, Bude

Since the success of the Crowdfunder, BSTC Officers have been busy taking the project on to the next stage. One of the first items on the agenda was to have the site typography and laser surveyed which were completed by Mark Trewin from Datumline surveys who offered his services free of charge.

The following activities are currently underway:

- Ecology surveys as it is on a site of special scientific interest
- Ground Investigations on the proposed new site
- Consultation with Natural England
- Heritage Lottery Application

A tender enquiry will be issued seeking to engage a local architect who is RIBA registered and has heritage conservation experience. They are also interested in contractors for the works who have experience in heritage stone masonry. Any local companies keen to undertake or assist in this high-profile project have been asked to send in an expression of interest. This will help the team target local opportunities. As part of this project the BSTC Officers are undertaking a Heritage Lottery bid where they will hopefully be running a series of activities to support the project.

The Project Manager, Francesca Churchill-Zerilli, is approaching stakeholders for a particular aspect of the project where they are looking to compile what the tower means to the community, past and present, and how the tower plays a significant part in our Cornish heritage. This could be through stories involving the tower, photographs, memories, books, poetry, archives, newspapers - the list is as extensive as it needs to be.

She is therefore asking that if they are successful with their lottery bid, would any of the perspective groups be willing to volunteer to support this aspect of the project? They will need to reach out to various areas within the community to get a variety of responses as they can, this will involve recruiting some additional volunteers on to the project to help collect the information and support the end production as well. The end purpose of this mini project is towards part of an exhibition which will be displayed in The Castle and the overall production will be overseen by Janine King, the council's Heritage Officer. At this stage she is just looking for support, if the bid is successful then work can begin late September. BCHS have agreed to assist with this project.

Mike Moore

Marhamchurch Wharf

At a recent meeting of Marhamchurch Parish Council, concerns were expressed about the clearance work which had taken place at the top of the Marhamchurch Inclined Plane. This involved removal of a well-established hedgerow to be replaced by new saplings and levelling of the site. At this stage there is no evidence of a planning application so there is no indication as to what is planned. Cllr Chopak reported that enforcement officers had been informed but there was a backlog of work so there would be some delay in dealing with the matter.



Before



After

South West Water Pumping Station – Helebridge Road

At the same meeting of Marhamchurch Parish Council, the work on the pumping station was discussed. A representative of South West Water stated the following:

“As part of an ongoing commitment to protect the environment, reduce pollution and improve the bathing waters around Bude we will be working in the Marhamchurch area to upgrade parts of the sewerage network. The works will involve the construction of a new pumping station and storm water storage tank adjacent to the existing facility at Hele Road and installing a new sewer pipe to connect with the existing system. The works have now begun and are expected to take approximately six months to complete. There will be some excavations and an increase in vehicle movements during the construction, however water and sewerage services will not be affected and access to properties will always be maintained.”

A temporary road has been constructed from Helebridge to give access to the work site. Once the works are completed, the area will be returned to its original condition. As the existing pumping station was built on the Incline close to Box's Foundry, the new construction may also be on the incline. We will monitor progress.

Mike Moore

Bude Canal Trust Report on the Bude Aqueduct

April 2021

The first mowing cut of the year found several small trees lying across the footpath which were cleared with a bow saw. Of a little more concern was evidence of horse riders having been using the footpath during the wetter times when Covid19 had prevented us working. Two MTB riders were also met near Moreton Bridge, showing little concern for the inconvenience caused to walkers. New signs have since been placed on all road access gates indicating "No horse or bike riders".

The second week started a period of major catch up work, burning brash cut during the winter of 2019. Several large piles were despatched between Virworthy Mill and Aldercott Bridge, (*Photo 1*) Gadlock Bridge, through to Dexbeer (*Photo 2*) to Puckland and later, Puckland to Broomhill plus clearing the canal bank top growth and Dexbeer bridge area.



Photo1 - The first of the bonfires



Photo 2 - The remains of the brash bonfire

May 2021

Finally we came back to Lana Bridge to clear even more 2019 brash (*Photo 3*) which exposed several groups of old and new stumps.



Photo 3 - The first brash fire at Lana

During the late May mowing, a willow tree had fallen across the path, several sheep were seen near Moreton Bridge and an unusually high water level was noticed along the Puckland section following the heavy rainfall during the month although just a fortnight earlier we had been collecting really dry brash from the canal profile here for burning.

June 2021

Using winching gear with lots of digging, the large stumps uncovered earlier were dragged out of the canal profile, cut up and piled up on the far bank (*Photos 4 & 5*).



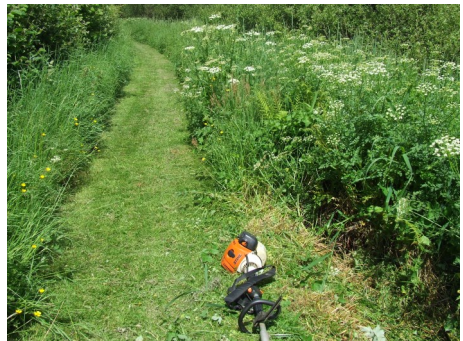
Photo 4 - Accessing the winching point



Photo 5 - Cutting the last roots

Another hot, muggy day the following week digging out Blackthorn saplings between Lana and Dunsdon NR followed by strimming the canal bank top. (*Photo 6*). No further progress due continuation of lockdown.

Photo 6 - Canal top pre-cut →



A recent edition of the Bude & Stratton Post contained an article by Bude Canal Trust in which they outlined the work of the trust and included an appeal for additional volunteer help. Anyone interested in joining our work parties which take place on Wednesdays should contact me at enquiries@bude-canal-trust.co.uk or telephone 01288 354162. Thank you for your help.

Mike Degnan, Bude Canal Trust

The Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme

An article in an edition of the Bude & Stratton Post in mid-March announced a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to the above scheme for the Tamar Valley AONB. It stated that key details of the project include "benefits for walkers will include extending the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail to run coast to coast by linking it up to the Bude Canal Path."

Apparently, work has started on some of the approved schemes, but not yet on the coast-to-coast walk. The Tamar Valley AONB have put in a further funding bid to another source specifically for this project. If this second bid is not successful the walk scheme will still go ahead using the HLF funding, but the second bid was made so that the standard of the walk can be as high as possible by adding to the HLF, which is the hope. This will enable high quality waymarking and information and improved standards where necessary, hopefully including the Planekeepers Path. Work will not start until the outcome of this bid is known, thought to be in a couple of months.

The coast-to-coast walk includes a proposed route keeping as close as possible to the River Tamar. The route will be partly on the Devon side, partly on the Cornwall side, and for much of the length on the Devon side it is proposed to provide a Cornwall alternative so that a walk all the way round Cornwall becomes possible, in conjunction with the Coast Path.

The route is likely to follow close to and, where appropriate, be on the towpath of, the Bude Canal. In addition, the coast to coast route will have links off the main route; these include links to Kilkhampton and on to Duckpool and between Marhamchurch and Bude via the Canal.



*Calstock Viaduct - an iconic structure
in the Tamar Valley AONB*

For further details see <https://tamaralandscapepartnership.org.uk/>

From information supplied by Steve Church, Bude Canal Trust

Cable Laying in Bude Bay

Recently, further work has been taking place laying cables in the area of Bude Bay. There appears to be two separate projects: one at Widemouth Bay and another at Crooklets. The same contractors had worked at both sites but the one at Widemouth Bay was not a transatlantic cable.



L/H image - Working on the beach at Widemouth on 17 June



R/H image - In the sea at Widemouth on 18 June



The “Wessex Explorer” Survey Ship was all over the place and at one point was even in Bude Harbour. This image shows her off Crooklets on 22 June much to the bemusement of the surfers and swimmers.

On 28 June the main cable laying ship, “Viking Explorer”, was identified off Widemouth Bay, but it was always 2 to 3 nautical miles away when I tried to get a photo.

The work at Crooklets is part of Google’s “Grace Hopper” project to lay a new cable from New York to accommodate the increase in traffic to Europe. The cables will land at Bude and at Bilbao in Spain. The same contractors will also be working on the Bilbao cable in August.

On 1 July a large ship loomed out of the fog off Crooklets beach, and later in the day after the fog lifted, another ship appeared. These were the “Responder” Cable Laying Ship registered in the Marshall Islands and the “Avon” Versatile Utility Vessel based in Poole.



L/H image above shows both ships on station off Crooklets beach on 1 July

R/H image above shows the “Avon” in more detail

Image below right shows landside preparations in Crooklets Car Park

Both ships seem to be on station for operations on Sunday 4 July. The Vessel Finder App showed the track of the “Responder” straight from the New York direction. We saw the “Responder” ship side on as we drove back from Widemouth Bay later and it is very long and looks big. One bystander at Crooklets earlier said it looked like a large cruise ship.



They were digging the beach all day Friday 2 July. At the end of the day Gill asked one of them if they were finished. He said *“no, they had just located the old cable and the duct near the Flex Brook where it goes into and where the new one will also fit in. On Saturday 3 July the 'back of the ship' will detach and bring the cable into the beach. (Sounds like the Disco Volante in James Bond where the ship splits into two). Then they will use a winch to haul it up to the duct and then bury it”.*



L/H image above - They found the old cable near the ducting and marked it with blue rope until Saturday

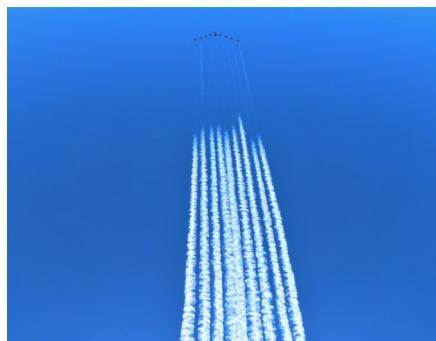
R/H image above - That very big (rusty) ship again on 2 July.

(The actual story seems to differ a bit from the news items in the National and local media)

We were busy on Saturday 3 July so missed those activities but Mike Moore managed to get some photos of the work - see below.



Text and photos by Jeff Dover



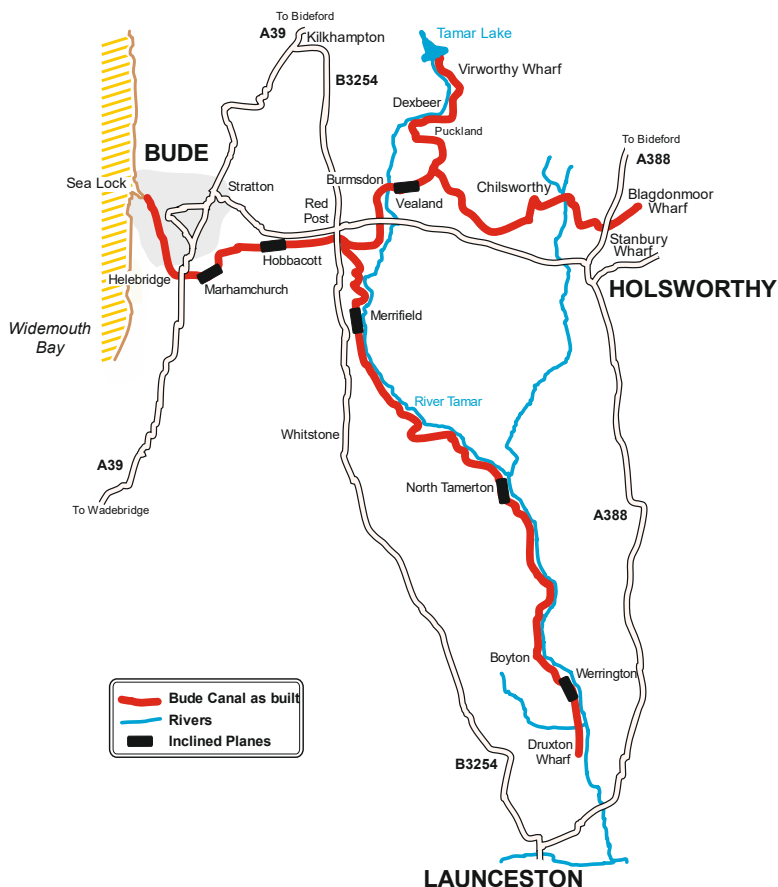
The Red Arrows fly past over Bude Harbour on Sunday 13 June following the G7 Summit.

Photos by Jeff Dover



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Enquiries to the Hon. Secretary (Tel 01288 341653)

New Inn House, Week St. Mary, Cornwall EX22 6UZ

www.bude-canal.co.uk · info@bude-canal.co.uk

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