

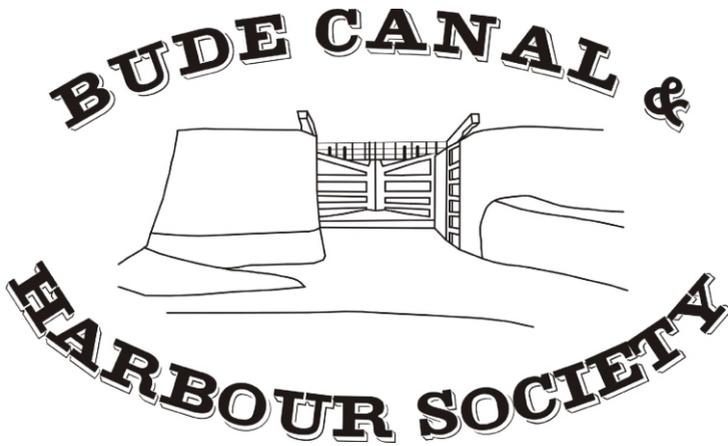
THE TUB BOAT

Newsletter of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society

No. 58

Winter 2011





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Cover: The Bude Harbour and Breakwater
Photo: Mike Moore

CREAKS FROM THE CHAIR

A very happy and healthy new year to all our members and may 2012 bring achievements and satisfaction in as many of our ambitions and aspirations as one dare hope for.

Here in Bude we continue to agitate for the unnecessarily elusive completion to the canal regeneration which would enable boats of a decent size to pass under Rodds Bridge and having done so, to continue unobstructed into the canal basin at Helebridge through the beautiful old canal bridge which carries the old A39 over both canal and river within a few yards of each other; it's a by-way these days but still much used by walkers. Our ambition for a slipway to enable such boats to access the canal in the first place is part of the ongoing campaign to save the site of Stapleton's shipyard from random development by Cornwall Council and become instead, a valuable waterside base for the gig and canoe clubs and an asset to Bude and Bude people.

After some very wild and wet weather the canal is very full of water but the birds are all down the Bude end.



A cormorant in full flight over the Bude Canal : Photo Mike Moore

Still only one report of an otter has been forthcoming and that on the river by the Strand in Bude. It was devouring a grey mullet according to Chris who reported the sighting. Up the other end of the canal on Whalesborough land, the new lake below the Weir Cafe has been much patronised by some of the thousands of transitory geese which have passed over us throughout the Autumn, mostly the ubiquitous Canada geese but also, when I was up there in November, one pair of Barnacle geese.

Though thin on the ground our committee continue to do all we

can to further the work of the society and much is planned for the year ahead though serious thought needs to be given to many aspects of our activities. Some of us are of an age when 'many hands make light work' has real meaning and the work of this society is no exception. There are fewer people now to do some of the heavy jobs when we take the society elsewhere for publicity and fund-raising. So I end with my usual plea for more hands, bodies, feet on the ground and - if you've got any - brainwaves!

Finally I spotted the following snippet which tells us that the recreational use of canals isn't the modern phenomenon most of us think!

From The Bude & Stratton Post December 22nd 2011.

LOOKING BACK

120 years ago. 26th December 1891

Nine degrees of frost were registered at Launceston this week. Druxton Canal is frozen over and a large number of skaters have enjoyed themselves there.

Audrey Wheatley.

Membership Report

Many thanks to those members who have already renewed their subscription for 2011/2012 and particularly to those who have given additional donations. However, some members have still not renewed. Would they please complete the enclosed renewal form by return to maintain their support for the Bude Canal & Harbour Society and receive future newsletters. Remember that only fully paid up members can vote at the AGM in February.

Can I also remind those members who are taxpayers and who have not yet completed a Gift Aid declaration that they can obtain a copy from the Treasurer.

Thank you for your continued support

Mike Moore

Bude Canal Trust Report

Following on from the autumn edition, work has continued through to the end of 2011 with general footpath and canal profile maintenance throughout sections along the whole 8km length including clearance of fallen trees and repairing fencing round the perimeter of the Filter Beds. We were very fortunate in having the necessary materials donated to us by Fenceline to complete this outstanding work.

The footpath hedgerow along the section between Tamar Lake and Virworthy Wharf had become very overgrown again and has now been cut back. Two sections of this footpath over an approximate 200yd. length have sunk over time to a point where any slight rise in the water level causes it to overflow creating potentially further problems. We are currently in negotiations to rebuild the height of the canal bank and then raise the footpath level with several tons of chippings, hopefully before spring time.

Earlier in the year it was discovered that many of the historical features of the canal which were situated along the section between Vealand Bridge and the base of the Inclined Plane had been hidden by the long overdue clearance of vegetation. The required grass cutting had reduced at the end of the growing season and therefore much of the manual work has been concentrated on the weekly Thursday visits, cutting back swathes of blackthorn and willow growth, both along the nearside bank and in the canal profile itself on this section.



Although introduced by The North Devon Water Co. after the demise of the canal, the remains of the diversion weir and overflow pipe are now visible as is the entry pipe to the Filter Beds.

It was hoped to start burning much of the accumulated brash in November when a small number of volunteers offered to assist but unfortunately the weather turned for the worse and six of us continued with cutting and piling.

This work continued through the remainder of November into December when eventually, despite the continuing wet spell just before Christmas we chanced making a concerted attempt and cleared several hundred yards. We hope to continue this into the New Year therefore the next workday has been arranged for Saturday 28th January. If you can join us please contact either Mike Deganan on 354162 or Tim Dingle on 361356. Thank you for your assistance.

Devon Wildlife Trust have erected two new information boards along this section, one adjacent to the small car parking area at Vealand Bridge and the second part way down the Inclined Plane.

After a geo-survey carried out in the area at the top of the Inclined Plane in May and an exploratory hand dig it was decided to bring in a mini digger to try to find the top of the wall(s) of the wheel pit. Disappointingly, despite searching in several potential locations, nothing more substantive was found than a small number of large stones and a couple of bricks with indications of lime mortar attached. We then moved down to the lower end hoping to find evidence of the boat bays, unfortunately, also without success. Work has also been started to remove the trees on the Inclined Plane to open up a direct line of sight down its length.



Beyond the end of the official footpath approaching the Aqueduct over the River Tamar some improvement work has been carried out by the farmer to replace the barbed wire fence with a Hunting Gate with post and rail fencing. Following the removal of bramble etc along the fence line a contractor cleared some 160mtrs of drainage ditch on our behalf to meet our obligations as owners of the canal.

Although this section is only a permissive path under and beyond Burmsdon Bridge, it is hoped further negotiations will improve both the access and enjoyment of walking this last section albeit with no through route.

Estimates have now been acquired for the repair of bridges and culverts, as recommended by the engineer's report commissioned through the IWA. The estimates are very substantial in size, and mean that most of the work will only be possible with the benefit of grant aid. As indicated in the Autumn report, it is possible that Leader 4 funding may become available again, but amounts are now smaller than previously and, although our work meets many of the grant requirements, we will still need match funding.

We are hoping to hold another Open Day in the summer, and we are looking into the possibility of holding this in conjunction with the Devon Wildlife Trust's event at Dunsdon Nature Reserve. This would involve a dual event, based at both Dunsdon and Pancrasweek, with the possibility of walks along the canal between the two. Keep an eye open for information on this possible event.

Steve Church, Chairman, Bude Canal Trust

'Your Society Needs You!'

This is a plea to members who live in the Bude area. If you are reasonably active and can spare some time at various times during the year, would you consider some volunteering to help the society with its activities?

These fall into two main groups

1. Manning the sales stall at public events
2. Assisting in the opening of the Barge Workshop at Helebridge on Sunday afternoons between the last Sunday in July and the last Sunday in September



The society's sales stall on the Barkhouse Green at the Navigation Event in March: Photo Mike Moore

For either of the above you would NOT be by yourself and you would receive some basic 'on the job' training.

If you can help or would like to know more about the activities, please make contact either on info@bude-canal.co.uk or 01288 352298. Thank you. Chris Jewell

The future of Higher Wharf, Bude

Are you interested in the future of this land?

Did you take part in the 'HIWAG' petition OR Bude Stratton Town Council's Survey during 2010? If so, we wish to make you aware that this matter is on the agenda of the next Bude Community Network meeting on 9th January 2012 when Cornwall Council officers will attend to give an update on the future of Higher Wharf and answer questions.

The meeting is open to the public and starts at 7pm in Rooms 2/3, The Parkhouse Centre, Bude. Public questions are permitted.

Come and show Cornwall Council how important this area of land is to the people of the Bude Stratton area. Your attendance is important even if you do not intend to speak. We must show Cornwall Council the strength of public feeling on this issue.

Thank you

Trustees of Bude Canal & Harbour Society
Registered Charity 1086646

Sherry and Mincepie Event – 18.12.2011

Unfortunately, due to the lack of support, this event was cancelled.

Chris Jewell

Producing 19th Century boats in the 21st Century! Continued from the last edition of the Tub Boat

A report & photographs by Adrian Wills.

The next stage in its construction is to attach the ribs, corner posts and knees. Before this happens however Barry wants to use this base as a template on which to lay out the chines for the lead boat. This boat has a pointed bow-end and a great deal of very careful measuring must now be made to the second set of chines in order to calculate the correct angle of the prow before there is any attempt to mark out and saw joints in them. Only when we have worked out exactly how and where to cut them can these pieces be put aside and work continue on the first boat.

Further along the construction process is the addition of wheels; the features of these tub boats which makes them unusual canal boats.



Since there are no suppliers of ready-made tub boat wheels, which is hardly surprising, they will have to be custom-made. Once again Bude-Stratton Town Council has come to the aid of this project. The council has kindly allowed me to borrow from the Helebridge Workshop an original wheel, its bearings and mounting brackets, so

that an accurate wooden copy can be made.



Having measured the wheel Barry will fabricate a wooden copy on his wood-turning lathe. This copy will be taken to a foundry and will be used as template or mould into which molten iron will be cast to produce modern, replica wheels.

I have already had some tentative discussions with a foundry master about having this work undertaken and hopefully it will not be too long now before a brand new tub boat can take to the road. I mean, canal, I think?

AGNES

Whilst searching for more information about the loss of the Capricorno (see Tub Boat No.54), I found the following interesting article on the Internet about the Agnes.

"Tucked away in a corner of the Bristol Channel the Ketch "Agnes" may be found quietly tending her inauspicious trade. In the midst of a teeming panorama of shipping perhaps the onlooker may be excused for passing her by. Her transom bears the legend "Agnes, Bideford" but the faded letters under this, show her in the "Agnes" of Bude, port of Bideford. In true sail coaster fashion of yesterday: Bluff bowed but with a fine run aft, she certainly warrants more than a casual glance. She is in fact the only surviving example of a hull model so typical of the mid 19th century. The word "surviving" suggests that she is on her last legs, but I must add that the "Agnes" today is one of the strongest wooden coasters afloat. If you ever go on board, look at those massive frames, knees and planking. Solid seasoned timber of a type rarely marketed nowadays. Indeed those timbers go back before the vessel's official launching date of

1904. The little Agnes boasts a career dating from 1805 when she first took to the water at Bude as the Ketch "Lady Acland". In 1904 she was the subject of a skillful piece of shipwrighting, when she was cut in two and lengthened by 13 feet. This alteration was done at Henry Stapleton's yard at Bude, where the Ketch was hauled broadside out of the water onto oak runners. A complete new elm keel and keelson was fitted and when finished the vessel showed no sign of the original cut in her hull. Her 3 ½ inch planking was oak



to the turn of the bilge and pitch pine above. In the course of re-rigging she had the mainmast of the "Wild Pigeon" fitted. This craft (also Bude owned) had been wrecked outside her home port earlier that year. A square yard from another local wreck, the Austrian barque "Capricorno" supplied the mizzenmast. Thus the "Agnes" of the 20th century was born, treenail-fastened, stronger than ever and capable of stemming over 100 tons of grain or coal. Owned by Nicholas Tregaskes of Bude, she resumed trading to various west country and Bristol channel ports with the occasional

runs further afield around the land to the south coast and channel islands. Her work saw her in waters which are about the toughest in the home trade, especially in war time. The coast line from Padstow to Hartland Point has a vicious record of lost ships, but the old Agnes took it in her stride with nothing but the free wind and the skill of her crew of three to drive her. For 15 years she traded without complaint, in peace and war until 1919 when she was sold out of Bude to Braunton (Devon) owners. Her new home laid claim to a large fleet of sail coasters, and owners, they were the pioneers of auxiliary power in these craft. To keep pace with fashion the Agnes accepted her first power unit, in the shape of an Invincible 40 bhp semi-diesel. Though slightly reduced in rig (her flying jib was discarded and mizzen changed to trysail) she still carried a good working spread of canvas.

Up until 1939 the Agnes was a familiar sight in waters from Avonmouth to Bude though the task of keeping her going in the face of growing motorship and rail competition was a tough one. During this period she was in the capable hands of Capt Billy Mitchell, Senior. An accident which occurred about 1930 is worth recording. At this time she was trading to Solva (Pembroke) and while riding it out off St David's she parted her cable and went on the rocks. Her keel was scoured off flush to the garboards but fortunately her staunch build enabled her to come off without further damage. She was taken unladen to Appledore where a new keel was fitted. In the late thirties she worked to the tiny North Devon cove of Watermouth apart from regular trips down to Bude. During the war years the Agnes carried out noble service on the vital grain trade, mainly between Avonmouth, Barry and Swansea. Many of her fellow craft were requisitioned for barrage balloon work at Falmouth and most of them were never traced again. But the Agnes came through to face a post-war world of progressive speed.

By 1948 her old Invincible was deemed past its best and was replaced by a 60 bhp Widdop oil engine and another jib was discarded. Her main gaff topsail was retained. Until 1951 though she carried a smaller mainsail than that of her pre 1919 days. Until 1954 she secured fairly regular employment, mostly in the Bristol Channel area, but in August of that year she was laid-up in Braunton Pill and placed on the sale list, For six long months she lay there while nearby another well-known Ketch, The "Clara May", was abandoned and stripped of her gear and engine and would probably never again go to sea.

Early in 1955 The Agnes went back to ownership in the place of her builder. Her new owner-skipper, Mr Peter Herbert of Bude, soon he had her back in commission and the Ketch responded with the fine performance of 40 cargoes by the end of the year. The Agnes is now to be seen in the Bristol Channel ports of Avonmouth, Barry and Swansea, and in Appledore or Bideford, even down the coast at Padstow and Wadebridge. Her cargoes are mostly dry grain and millers produce and this in itself is a remarkable tribute to the tightness of her hull. On one passage south in June 1955 she created a stir in Bude when she put into Harbour for the night, The first trading vessel to moor inside the Breakwater for some years. Indeed it is a sad change from those days of the not so distant past, when masts and rigging were a familiar spectacle in the Bude Canal."

"Since this article was written the Agnes has been sold to Mr A.Barr, a young Scotsman who intends taking her to Australia via Panama. His crew were recruited through a press advertisement in the style of the famous Cap Pilar Venture, before the second world war. The Agnes's refit at Bristol will include additions to her present working canvas. Mr Barr is no stranger to Ketches as he went Foreign in another Bristol Channel craft, The Enid, some years ago."

The Agnes story was most interesting - there was a lot in the newspapers around 1956 or so, about her proposed voyage round the world. The crew were all novices and they only made it to the West Indies where she was wrecked in a hurricane and abandoned. A sad end!

Anne Longley

Canal Recipes

Boxty

Ingredients

500g potatoes, peeled and grated
500g cooked mashed potato, cooled
400g plain flour
2 tsp baking powder
2tbsp melted butter
salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
200ml milk
8 rashers of streaky bacon

Method

Fry the bacon and allow it to cool. If you like it crispy or softer, it does not matter. Cut into strips or large dice and set aside. Reserve bacon fat for frying.

Place the grated potato into a clean tea towel or muslin and squeeze over a bowl. Extract as much liquid as you can by holding the loose ends of the towel and twisting the ball of potato ever tighter. Allow the liquid to settle for a few minutes. You will have a yellowish liquid and a layer of white starch. Carefully drain off and discard the liquid but collect the starch and add it to the potato.

Place both lots of potato into a large bowl. add the flour and baking powder and mix well. Stir in the butter and season to taste.

Add the milk, a little at a time, beating after each addition to incorporate fully. Add only sufficient milk to make a stiff and thick mixture once absorbed.

Form the boxty into 8 squares or rectangles.

Heat a large pan, and use the reserved bacon fat to fry the 'cakes' either 2 or 4 at a time. Turn occasionally until they are evenly golden brown on both sides. Warm a proportion of the bacon pieces when the boxty is almost ready and serve two per person with the bacon either on top or to the side. Repeat for the remaining portions.

About this recipe:

Although Boxty, sometimes pronounced as 'Boshty' by Anglo-Irish Gypsy neighbours some years ago, is claimed by some to be a regional peasant dish in parts of England, it was almost certainly introduced by the Irish 'navvies', or Navigators, who were first brought into 18th Century England to dig the canals. More were brought in during the 19th Century to expand the canal system and later to dig the railways that supplanted them. They would often cook the boxty on a shovel kept for the purpose, over an open fire.

Panama Canal Cake

Ingredients

1 cup flour, all purpose
½ cup melted butter
½ cup chopped nuts
16 ounces whipped topping
1 cup powdered sugar
8 ounces cream cheese
3 cups cold milk
4 ounces instant chocolate pudding mix
4 ounces instant vanilla pudding mix
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ cup chopped nuts

Directions

Mix flour, butter and nuts.

Press into a 9x13 inch baking dish. Bake in a 400 degree F. oven for 10 to 15 minutes until browned.

Cool.

Combine one container of whipped topping with the powdered sugar and cream cheese.

Spread over cooled crust. Mix 1 1/2 cup cold milk with chocolate pudding and spread over the cream cheese layer.

Mix 1 1/2 cups cold milk with vanilla pudding and spread over the cream cheese layer.

Top with one container of whipped topping and sprinkle nuts over the top.

Editor: If you have any favourite Canal recipes that could be included in future editions of the Tub Boat then please send them in.

TRAC Photo Report

Opening of the new underpass under the A39 on Saturday 29th October. This is the first part of the scheme to provide a multi-use off-road trail between Bude and Holsworthy in collaboration with Devon County Council which will be known as “The Atlantic Ruby Trail”.



Sign erected giving details of the project



Walkers and cyclists using the new path towards the A39 underpass



The ceremonial opening of the underpass. Left to right – Michael Grills (Landowner and Marhamchurch Parish councillor), Councillor Paula Dolphin (Cornwall Council), Chris Hariades (Project Manager) and Linda Emmett (East Cornwall Local Action Group).

Some of the first walkers and cyclists to use the new underpass



All Photos: Mike Moore

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Forthcoming Events:

- Monday 9th January 2012 Bude Community Network meeting at 7.00pm in Rooms 2/3, The Parkhouse Centre, Bude for an update on the future of Higher Wharf by Cornwall Council officers
- Saturday 28th January Bude Canal Trust workday on the Aqueduct section. If you can join us please contact either Mike Degnan on 354162 or Tim Dingle on 361356.
- Sunday 26th February Eleventh AGM at The Falcon Hotel at 2.30pm followed by a presentation on Pentewan by local historian Robert Evans.

Contributions for the next edition of the Tub Boat should be sent as an e-mail attachment to info@bude-canal.co.uk or copied onto a USB memory stick or CD and sent to Mike Moore (Tel: 01288 361878) to reach him by 17th March 2012.

Trustees:	Chairman	Audrey Wheatley
	Vice-Chairman	David Phillips
	Secretary	<i>Vacant</i>
	Treasurer	Chris Jewell
	Events Secretary	Betty Moore
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	Other trustees	Bryan Dudley Stamp, Anne Longley Ralph Daniel, Pam Daniel
Membership Secretary	Mike Moore (<i>non-trustee</i>)	
The Tub Boat Editor	Clive Horton (<i>non-trustee</i>)	

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Corporate Member of

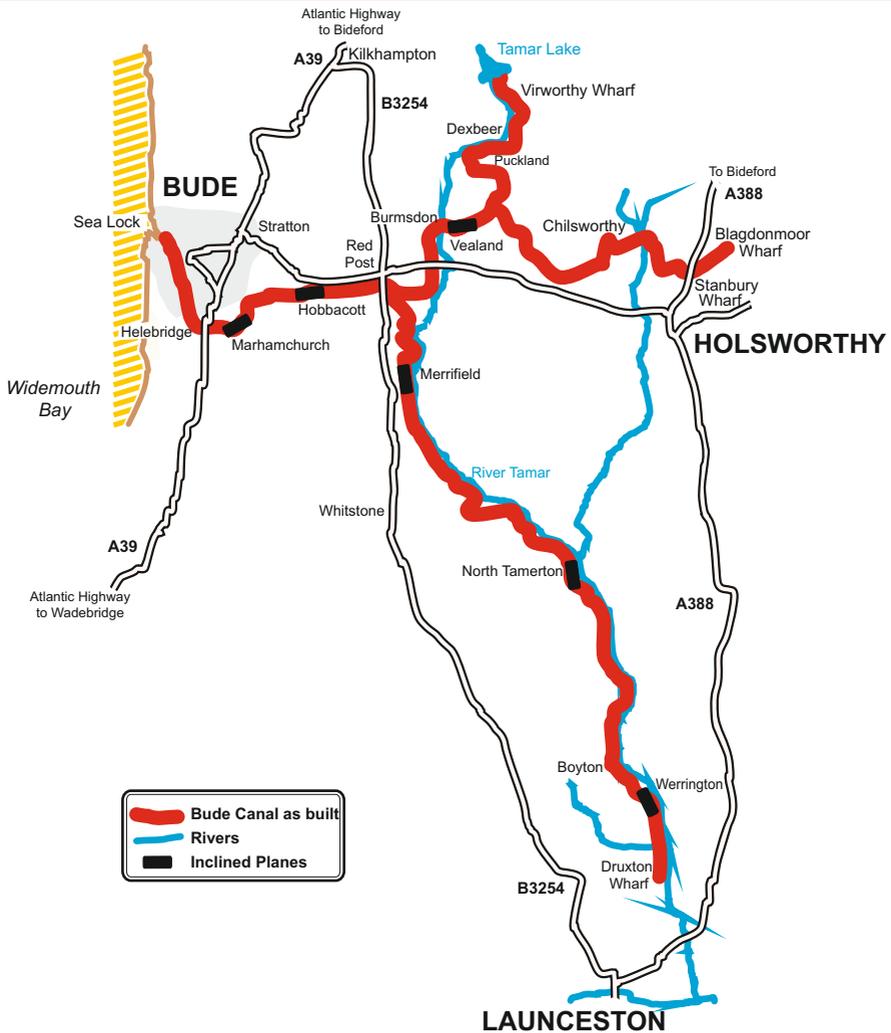


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