THE TUB BOAT

Newsletter of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society

No. 49  Autumn 2009

CONTENTS

BCHS Library ...................................................... 2
Regeneration Project Phase II ................................. 3
Bude Canal Day .................................................... 3
Virworthy View ...................................................... 4
Bude Carnival ......................................................... 6
RNLI Day .............................................................. 6
Something Different ............................................... 7
Future of Canal Day ............................................... 7
Membership Report ............................................... 8
Canal Work Days .................................................. 8
Sherry & Mincepie Walk ........................................ 9
Correspondence ..................................................... 9
Repairs to Rodds Bridge Lock ................................. 10
Water Supply 1899 ............................................... 12
Lifeboat Outing 1899 ............................................. 12

Cover Photo: RAF Rescue demonstration over Barrel Rock on Lifeboat Day  Photo: Mike Moore
BCHS Library
Reference item on this subject see page 3 of The Tub Boat 48.
The books held by BCHS are in the Castle Heritage Centre in Bude. They are in the Archive Reading Room and can be accessed by making an appointment through Anne Longley, Volunteer Coordinator for the Town Council, on 01288 353839. There are two sessions when the Reading Room is available: Mondays and Wednesdays 10 am to 1 pm.

Formal presentation of BCHS library books to Bude-Stratton Town Council on 1st October 2009 (left to right:– Anne Longley, David Phillips, Chris Jewell and Bude Mayor, Peter Moores). Photo: Betty Moore
Phase II - Bude Canal Regeneration Project
When the project ceased on 31 March 2009 due mainly to the demise of North Cornwall District Council and the rise of the new unitary authority Cornwall Council, it was recognised by NCDC and all of its partners, including BCHS, that three key elements had not been achieved due to various factors including funding. These were:-

i) The replacement of Rodds Bridge by a bridge with a clearance of 2.2 metres to allow navigation of the canal by boats, particularly trailer boats.

ii) A slipway above Falcon Bridge to allow safe access to the canal. The most obvious site is the land at Higher Wharf which is now owned by Cornwall Council.

iii) The reconnection of the canal to Helebridge Basin at the end of the 2 miles in water and rejuvenated canal.

With all of this and other factors in mind the Trustees have agreed a document which urges the installation of these items and additional matters to ensure the best use of and access to the Bude Valley and beyond. This document has been circulated locally to natural supporters and some very supportive comments have been received.

Enclosed is a copy of the basic document for your information.

The next step is to circulate this document to all the relevant councillors and officers of the Cornwall Council to urge them not to forget all the good work achieved by NCDC and its partners but to build on that and ensure Bude Canal is able to be what it should be, a viable and vibrant navigable waterway offering opportunities to all. Chris Jewell

Bude Canal Day
Sadly, this event was marred by almost continuous drizzle and sometimes heavier bursts of rain. Our stall together with several others was set up in the Parkhouse where they were visited by a much smaller number of visitors than had been expected. The Irish Band, Redwing, played on the stage and Pyba performed below.

At 1pm Count Nikolai Tolstoy formally opened the event to an audience of two. The ketch Ruth failed to appear but Bude Town Band, Metric Brass and the Pig Ankle Jazz band gamely played on the bandstand while in the rain the Trevithick Society's steam engines chugged forlornly on the castle green.
The steam bicycle made several brave circuits of the castle green. Meanwhile, on the Barkhouse Green, the Bude Pilot Gig Club named and launched their new gigboat, 'Aventuryans', which is Cornish for 'Speculation', the gigboat's former name.
We hope that next year the weather will be sunny and warm and we shall see them and others.

Virworthy View

Age is a funny thing! – it makes the time go quicker, days and even years get shorter! Remembering things also retards and trying to compare events and situations from year to year becomes cloudy! However, I can remember that last year at this time the hedgerow fruits, blackberries, sloes, elderberries and beech nuts were in short supply and very poorly formed. But this year is totally different. An abundance of fruit does mean that in spite of the many people collecting them – there is still enough left for the birds, squirrels and other animals. I have managed to put down two bottles of sloe gin and sloe brandy this year. Hopefully they will be ready for Christmas.

All our animals are still thriving. The one peahen with three chicks is now let out during the day and has been accepted by the menagerie – even the two feral cats. Earlier we gave an older chicken a peachick to raise. This has been successful. They are now inseparable. It just shows that regardless of
species there is no obstacle to raising a family. Sadly we have not seen the turtle (terrapin) for some weeks now. It has either decided to walk off or someone has taken him (her). We do miss it and it is surprising how many people come here and ask after it! A popular question similar to the one enquiring, “Where is the aqueduct?” Some of the goldfish in the wharf seem to have survived visits from the heron by hiding under the weeds but I don't know how many. There has been no shortage of water this summer to keep the wharf topped up and no doubt there will be plenty during the winter. Geoff Lowe

Carnival Day & RNLI Saturday

The rain was nowhere as heavy but just before we decided to pack things away the rain came down again.

RNLI Saturday was a much better day - sun shining, a little windy, but we had brisk sales, so that made up for Canal Day. Here's hoping for better weather next year. Betty Moore, Events Secretary.
Something Different

At about 3.30pm on Sunday 13 September I was leading the guided walk from the sea lock to Helebridge. About thirty yards from Rodds Bridge lock I could see in the canal something small moving across the water from the far side towards the towpath side. Whatever it was reached the side by the landing stage.

I went on to the stage to see what it was. There was nothing to be seen in the water until I saw the end of a reptilian tail just below the surface swiftly followed by the rest of the creature, a grass snake about 2 1/2 feet long floating on the surface.

On seeing that it was being watched it dived to about a foot below and set off to the other side. Through the clear water I could see the rhythmic wriggle as it swam.

About halfway its head came out, took a breath and returned below the surface and on to the far side. I did not see it come out of the canal.

I don't think I have ever seen a snake swimming before although I know that they do. One often sees unusual things on the canal and this was certainly something different.  Chris Jewell

The Future of Canal Day

Following discussions with Bude Stratton Town Council about the events - Canal Day and Gurney Day - certain changes have been agreed by the Trustees.

1. The event will be called "Bude-Stratton Heritage Weekend".
2. It will be held over two days to allow for expansion and variety.
3. It will incorporate 'Canal Day' and 'Gurney Day'.
4. The fixed day is being changed to the first weekend in August; 7th-8th August 2010. This is to make the event more available for steam vehicles etc to attend by avoiding an important steam fair in Cornwall.
5. BCHS will continue to liaise with BSTC in planning and arranging the event.

Hopefully this will help it to become known and increase its popularity.

Chris Jewell
Membership Report

We welcome the following new members who have joined since June:
Mrs V Newman, Poughill, Bude
Mr & Mrs R Hale, William Edwards Close, Bude

As many of you will realise, this is the time of year when I have to remind you that subscriptions were due on 1st September for all members except those who joined after 1st May. Renewal forms (where appropriate) are included with this newsletter.

Members are encouraged to return the standing order form to me as it is a more efficient method of payment for the society and avoids your renewal being overlooked. Membership cards will automatically be sent to members who have already completed Standing Order mandates and whose payments have been received. Can I also remind those members who are taxpayers and who have not completed a Gift Aid declaration that they can obtain a copy from the Treasurer. Thank you for your continued support.

Mike Moore

Canal Work Days

It's that time again. Last winter we held some very successful and enjoyable work days on parts of the wider canal system - out in the sticks in other words! We would like to repeat that this winter. I am planning to continue the good work done along the section at Cann Orchard. We cleared most of it last winter, so it would be good to finish that section.

Up on the aqueduct section (i.e. the canal feeder between Lower Tamar lake and Burmsdon aqueduct bridge) lies the junction of the Holsworthy branch of the canal. This is not always clear to those walking along the towpath, so we should like to open that up.

The Cann Orchard section is reasonably dry underfoot but the aqueduct section is definitely wet! At this site it will be one or two of us cutting down willows with a chain saw, while others remove the resulting brash from the canal basin and deal with it. Exactly how will depend on the day!

I am also proposing a hedge laying day along the aqueduct section. This will be a 'tuition' day at no cost but an opportunity to see how it's done and have a go. The proposed date is Wednesday, 9th December. I must know who is intending to come to this one as it will need setting up and subject to numbers as to where it will be. Contact me on the number that follows.
The proposed days are:
Saturday 31st October Lishaperhill, (nr Brendon Bridge) for cutting out Holsworthy Junction (meet SS 291 076)
Saturday 14th November Cann Orchard (Meet SS 233 047)
Wednesday 9th December Hedge laying; meeting place to be confirmed.
All events will begin at 10 am and go on until you've had enough or about 3.30pm. Bring packed lunch and any tools you may think useful, e.g. saw, prong, etc. Some tools will be provided. It would be helpful if you were to let me know if you are intending to be there. Telephone: 01288 361356
There may be further days after Christmas. Thanks, Tim Dingle.

Sherry & Mincepie Walk Sunday 13th December 2009
For the walk we will meet at Crescent car park at 10.30am to walk along the canal. Turning right off the towpath over Whalesborough Farm we then walk along the cliffs back into Bude, meeting at the Castle. The sherry and mincepies will be in the Education Room in the Castle - the same as last year. Those who are not taking part in the walk will meet at the Castle at 12 noon. The price of the sherry and mincepies will be £3.
There will be a raffle and we should be extremely grateful for the donation of a prize from anyone. Thank you for your support. Betty Moore

Correspondence
Letter from Roy Elsey 3rd August 2009
Dear Mr Wheatley,

I recently made my annual pilgrimage to Bude and enjoyed spending time walking the paths alongside the canal and strolling down historic Breakwater Road towards the majestic lock-gates and out along the cliffs above the inner harbour sheltered by the might of the Breakwater.

In my eyes these areas of outstanding beauty trigger the imagination into thoughts of the hard-working schooners and courageous sailors who used these waters and harbour to transfer goods in days gone by.

Today the harbour and the areas connected to it give pleasure to many locals and visitors alike. I have always considered the canal to be the jewel in the crown of Bude, undoubtedly the most attractive and interesting town in Cornwall. Many people have contributed to the town's many
charms, but one name will always spring to my mind. For that reason would it not be appropriate for the memory of 'Foxy' Herbert to be recognised in some tangible form, e.g. a plaque on the wall of the Old Blacksmith Museum. Many locals will recall that at a time when the canal was under threat to be filled in and converted into a car park, Foxy researched some little known Marine Law which effectively indicated that whilst any existing harbour be used by at least four or five ships then it must be maintained as a Port for the business of shipping.

With this information Foxy managed single-handed to bring to the canal the required number of boats for maintenance and repair, thus keeping his beloved canal open. His actions at that time helped to ensure the continued enjoyment of this area for all lovers of Bude.

Yours sincerely, (signed) Roy Elsey.

Repairs to Rodds Bridge Lock

At the end of September 2009, contractors repaired some damage to the towpath bank by the outfall of the bywash. Additionally they constructed a concrete base and low wall to deflect the water from the bank.

During October works will commence at Whalesborough Pound to install a spillway above the lock to cater for excessive water flowing into the canal from the River Strat at Helebridge.

Photos of this work will be in the next issue. Chris Jewell
The early stages of the work taking place at Rodds Bridge lock to prevent bank erosion.

Photo: Chris Jewell
Water Supply, September 30th 1899
A public enquiry was held at Stratton on the district council's application to borrow £9,500 for works of water supply for Bude and Stratton. A formal objection to the taking of water from the canal, as suggested in the scheme, was lodged by Bude Canal Co.

Lifeboat Outing October 1899
The lifeboat went to the aid of the 200-ton Lynx, wrecked in Port Isaac Bay on Sunday. Soon after the crew of seven were taken off with considerable difficulty, the ship vanished. The same gale wrecked the steamship Llandaff at Bude early Monday morning. Her crew of eleven were brought ashore by rocket apparatus.

A culvert under the canal north of North Tamerton which was seen during the walk organised in support of North Tamerton Church on 5/09/09
Photo: Mike Moore

Another culvert under the canal north of North Tamerton which was seen during the walk organised in support of North Tamerton Church on 5/09/09
Photo: Mike Moore
Copy for the next edition of the Tub Boat should be addressed to:
The Editor, Tregea, Lower Upton, Bude, Cornwall EX23 0LS
to reach him by 29th December 2009.

Forthcoming Events:

- Sunday 13th December  Sherry & Mincepie Walk
- Sunday 21st February 2010  Society AGM at The Falcon Hotel, Bude

Trustees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Audrey Wheatley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Chairman</td>
<td>David Phillips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Bryan Dudley Stamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Chris Jewell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events Secretary</td>
<td>Betty Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tub Boat Editor</td>
<td>Lawrence Wheatley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other members</td>
<td>Jill White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anne Longley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Secretary</td>
<td>Mike Moore (non-trustee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minuting Secretary</td>
<td>Judy Crabtree (non-trustee)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.