

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

CANAL CUTTINGS

VOLUME 8 Number 12
Winter 2018



SCOUTS SCOUR THE SANKEY

Members and leaders from the 8th St Helens Scout Troop at the Old Double Lock with the results of their litter pick between Newton Common Lock and Blackbrook Basin

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

Registered Charity Number 702571

2 Scarisbrick Road, Rainford,

St. Helens WA11 8JL Tel: 01744 884000

Emails:

(1) colin.greenall@btinternet.com

(2) peterkeen21@aol.com

Website: <http://sankeycanal.co.uk>

Founded 1985



**INLAND
WATERWAYS**
ASSOCIATION

The SCARS Executive Committee **for 2018 – 2019**

Chairman: Colin Greenall

16 Bleak Hill Road, Eccleston, St. Helens WA10 4RW

Tel: 01744 732031 (Daytime) or 01744 731746 (Evenings)

Email: colin.greenall@btinternet.com

Secretary: Peter Keen

2 Scarisbrick Road, Rainford, St. Helens WA11 8JL

Tel: 01744 884000 Email: peterkeen21@aol.com

Also holds responsibilities for archiving and historical matters

Treasurer: Mike Harrison

4, Darvel Avenue, Garswood, Ashton in Makerfield, WN4 0UA

Telephone 01942 723944 email mike@darvel4.demon.co.uk

Also holds responsibility for general finance

Sales Department: Colin Greenall

16 Bleak Hill Road, Eccleston, St. Helens WA10 4RW

Tel: 01744 732031 (Daytime) or 01744 731746 (Evenings)

Email: colin.greenall@btinternet.com

Work Party Organiser: John Hughes

Tel: 01744 600656 Email: johnhughes11@virginmedia.com

Assistant WPO: Ian Hornby

Website and Facebook Manager: Richard Corner

Other Members of the Executive:

Dave Callan, Neil Forshaw, Mary Presland

Observers from Partner Organisations:

(Councillors from the three Local Authorities which own most of the Canal's line):

Keith Morley (Halton) Steve Parish (Warrington)

Paul McQuade (St. Helens)

The Inland Waterways Association:

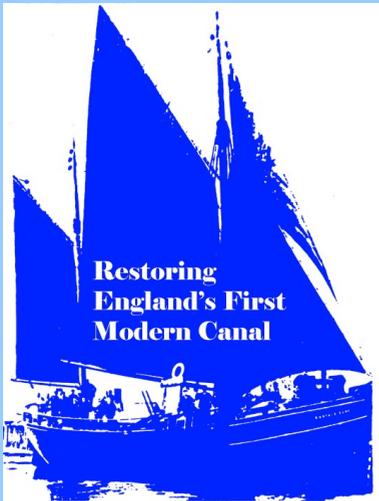
Colin Greenall(Chester & District Branch)

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

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VOLUME 8 NUMBER 12: Winter 2018

**Editor and Production: David Long
(david@scars.org.uk)**



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The Chairman's Report—from Colin Greenall

Once again it falls on me to be the bearer of sad news with the passing of one of our earliest and most distinguished members— Harry Arnold MBE. He was a well-known journalist and photographer, author, and campaigner for the inland waterways. On behalf of SCARS I offer our sincere condolences to wife Beryl and family. His obituary begins on page 13 below.

Now that the dark nights are with us it is perhaps time to reflect on what has gone on over the last few months.

At the beginning of September we held our second Heritage Open Weekend of the year at the Sankey Valley Heritage Visitor Centre, Blackbrook. The Saturday was very disappointing, mainly due to the pouring rain that persisted for most of the day, however Sunday was much better, with many people coming in to chat and look through the archive material on display. The other significant event was the Vintage Vehicle Rally held at Victoria Park in Widnes on the last weekend of the month. After last year's cancellation due to a waterlogged Victoria Park, it appeared that this year everyone wanted to make this one special—and even the weather was brilliant, with warm sunshine on both days, and thousands of visitors wanting to enjoy themselves. Our Sales and Exhibition Gazebo proved to be very popular, resulting in record sales and a feeling of great satisfaction amongst the members manning it whilst answering the many questions put to them by interested visitors.

Sadly the Heritage Lottery Bid proposed by the Sankey Canal Partnership which I described in the last Cuttings failed to get through the first round, mainly because there were 27 applications for a limited pot of money—only four bids made it to the second round. They said that they liked the scheme but felt that it lacked Heritage value and concentrated too much on community involvement.

Other news: my wife Cynthia and I, along with Alan Platt and his partner Gill from the IWA, spent a lovely evening at the Quarter Italian restaurant in Liverpool with our late chairman Dave Smallshaw's wife Fred. After the meal we presented her with the Kenwin Trophy which Dave had been awarded for his contribution to the IWA Campaign Festival at the Eldonian Village in 2017—plus all the other work he did as a member of IWA Chester and Merseyside Branch.

Some members and readers may recall that SCARS put forward ideas in the 1990s for linking the Sankey more directly with the rest of the canal system. It would be remiss of me not to mention that a new group, “The Sankey Link & Restoration Group”, has been formed to take that idea forward. Their proposed route would link with the Leeds & Liverpool Canal at Melling, using one of the routes for which a table-top study was carried out on our behalf. We wish them all the very best in their endeavours. You can follow them on Facebook.

Members will find a Membership Reminder form with this issue of “Canal Cuttings”. This is just in case they may have forgot that membership fees are due on January 1st 2019....

I'll sign off now and wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and look forward to meeting you at one of the events next year

Colin Greenall

Follow SCARS on any of the social media platforms and keep up-to-date on our activities and news. Find us on:



Facebook Sankey Canal Restoration Society

Twitter: Sankey Canal @scars567



Instagram: Sankey Canal Restoration: sankeycanal1757

Report From Our Work Parties

By Colin Greenall

In October and November our volunteers were active in the area around Blackbrook Basin and the Visitor Centre. The images on our rear cover show the work carried out on the south side of the bridge at Blackbrook—revealing the recess for the original swing bridge at the site. The image below was taken looking north from the bridge—where we have been clearing the encroaching trees and vegetation. This work will continue over the winter. In the course of the work a litter pick was carried out between the Old Double Lock and Carr Mill Dam, and trees obstructing the footpath and the basin were removed.

Our cover picture shows a group from the 8th St Helens Scouts, led by SCARS member Ian Hornby, his son Martin, and other leaders, carrying out part of their World Badge Award beside the Sankey. The group walked from Blackbrook to Newton Common Lock—and carried out a litter pick on their way back. Besides the nine bags of litter they also collected a bag of aluminium cans which they were able to weigh in for cash for the group's funds. Well done, and thanks!



WANTED

We are always in need of quality goods and books which we can sell at the various events we visit each year. So please get in touch if you're having a clear-out

Our sales stall is a real help in keeping our restoration projects going.

Contact Colin Greenall on 01744 731746 (evening) if you can help.



WANTED—Volunteers

The pics on the Work Parties pages show what just a few volunteers can achieve—with more folk, we could do much more.

Why not join in? The work you put in depends on you and what you feel capable of.

If you would like to get a little involved in an informal day in the fresh air and do something to clear up our local environment then contact me on: 01744 600656 or email me at : johnhughes11@virginmedia.com John Hughes

WANTED—More Volunteers

Our Work Parties are perhaps our most visible volunteering opportunity—but there are other roles we need volunteers for. Maybe you could help out on our exhibition and sales stand when we attend events around the area from late Spring to early Autumn; or perhaps you have a personal skill, for instance in communications or the media, which you could put to use to help promote the Sankey and our Society—even if it's simply visiting the canal every now and again, taking photographs, and putting them up on our social media sites, or carrying out research into aspects of the canal's history, or of its associated communities or industries. But don't let yourself be limited by my imagination....

To offer your services, choose a contact from page 2 of this magazine.

More Sankey Milestones

Two more milestones have been installed beside the canal— the first, (*upper pic*) “6 Mile to Ferry Lock” is located midway between Hey Lock and Newton Brook, the second, (*middle pic*) “8 Mile to Ferry lock” is positioned at the end of the watered section of canal west of Penkford Bridge.

These have been kindly donated by Dr Barrie Pennington of the Milestone Society, who has also donated a polished concrete bench (*lower pic*), which is located close to Milestone 7 near Bradley Lock.



Dr Pennington (*Pictured left by the 8-mile stone*) has donated a further Milestone—this one reads “1 Mile to Widnes Lock”. At present it is in Halton Council’s Picow Farm Road Depot, but will be located west of Carter House Swing Bridge once the canal towpath has been reopened— which hopefully will take place before the end of the year.

SCARS itself has donated two more stones, which have been delivered to St Helens Council to be installed at the 9 mile point near Havanah Flashes, and the 10 mile point between Blackbrook Road and the Old Double Locks.



If you want to leave your mark on the Sankey—why not donate a milestone yourself? They cost £350 each.....



Canal & River Trust's Restoration Manager Visits the Sankey Canal

by Colin Greenall

Earlier in the year CRT Restoration Manager Sam Anderton-Brown contacted me to arrange to come over to have a look at the Sankey Canal— mainly because CRT still own parts of it in the St.Helens area, and secondly to find out more about the canal and the work of SCARS.

The visit was arranged for Wednesday, 28th November, starting from the Visitor Centre at Blackbrook Basin shortly before 9.30am. Sam was joined Jodie Weathers, who works as the CRT's Restoration Support Coordinator & People Champion for Growing Our Trust from their Wigan Office.

After a brief visit of the centre and a chat with Dave Owen we set off on foot to look firstly at Stanley Basin. Here I gave a brief history of the coal industry of the area and the significance of the coal wagon and crane exhibited on the loading wharf. We then walked down to the Old Double Locks to point out its ranking in English canal history, as the first use of a double lock in the country. As the locks are still in CRT ownership, I pointed out the damage through erosion to the lock wall. Sadly, Sam said that such repairs would come low down on the CRT's present list of priorities. They were both impressed with how rural the canal appeared to be in such a built up area.

We then returned to the car and travelled into the town centre to view the canal at the "Hotties". Jodie was intrigued by the name and how it had come about, and said she would put something on her Facebook page about it. I gave a brief outline of how the canal was fed by the various brooks and dams and told them about where the water entered the canal outside the "Range" (*See my article featuring this underground feeder on page 21 below*)

We then skipped on to Earlestown, to look at the section of canal in water north of Penkford Bridge, and to show them the "8 Mile to Ferry Lock" milestone. (*Right: Sam and myself by the new milestone*).

While Sam and Jodie walked along the towpath to Newton Common Lock, I brought the car round to meet them there. They were impressed with the Liverpool & Manchester Railway Viaduct, and also the amount of land that CRT owned in the area between the canal and the sankey Brook—and why they owned it. Next stop was the Bradley Swing Bridge Car Park and a walk to Bradley Lock, taking a look at the "7 Mile to Ferry Lock" milestone and the new polished concrete bench nearby. Sam remarked on the sound condition and material that the locks were built from.



Returning to the car, we ate our packed lunches and and enjoyed a chat about ourselves - Sam is from Hitchin, near London, while Jodie lives in Warrington. I also gave them a copy of 'The Sankey Canal Story' and Two issues of "Canal Cuttings" each.

We then continued our journey to Winwick Quay for a look at the Old Maintenance Yard Buildings, Dry Dock and Boat House. Sam was again amazed at the size of the dry dock. He said it just looks like the workmen have downed tools and gone to lunch. Our next stop should have been Bewsey Lock but on our way there it began to rain, so I changed the plan at called in at the Waterways Car park just to show them the canal in water. They were taken aback by the width of the channel, and showed great interest the nature reserve on the far bank. By now the rain was getting heavier so it was decided to go straight to Spike Island

The traffic in Widnes was a bit slow through the road works but we got there eventually. *(Below—Sam and Jodie at the Spike Island lock)*



Sam was really taken by the new bridge and the width of the river. I explained about the state of the lock, the silting in the chamber and the damage caused to the gate by misuse. We then took a walk round the island to have a look at the wrecks of Mersey flats in the river bank, then on to the site of the railway swing bridge, where I explained about the bridge-builders Merseylink reneging on building a new swing bridge and that Halton Council have now taken on the task. *(See the Borough News Round-up, page 12, for more on this)* I explained how the Merseylink bridge had required a bridge pillar in the canal, and how the canal had been affected during the building of the bridge and the new canal wall. By now the rain was even more persistent, so we headed back to the car.

Thankfully the rain had stopped before we reached Fiddlers Ferry Marina. We looked at the lock and walked round to the Ferry Tavern, looking at the boats in the boat yard. I explained our concerns over the looming closure of the power station and the loss of our water.

We then returned to Blackbrook where we said our goodbyes - Jodie took Sam to Warrington to catch a train back to Milton Keynes before his drive home to Hitchin, while Jodie carried on the collect her husband from Lymm High School and then home to Great Sankey.

Events—by *Colin Greenall*

The final event of the year for our Sales and exhibition team was the big **Vintage Vehicle Rally at Victoria Park, Widnes**.

This event gets better year on year, and this year proved to be no exception with glorious sunshine and huge crowd. Our team of Ian, Peter, Cynthia and myself worked really hard to get everything ready for this event and it duly paid off with takings at a record level, and the amount of information given out was amazing



Above: The Society's outdoor sales gazebo

Below: Our exhibition in the marquee



News Round-Up Around the Boroughs

by Colin Greenall

ST HELENS

Bradley Swing Bridge Car Park At last we now have a proper car park at Bradley. Over the last few years this area has been slowly deteriorating into a muddy mess in times of wet weather, but this has now all been transformed by St Helens MBC, who carried out resurfacing and layout work (*below*) at the end of August.



Swan Barrier above the Old Double Locks

During the summer CRT (Canal & River Trust) have returned to the Old Double Lock to install a new Swan barrier. An earlier installation proved to be ineffective due to the strong flow of water over the lip, which eventually pulled it over the edge, thus allowing the swans to get caught in the current and pulled into the lock from which they were unable to extricate themselves. The new barrier has been installed further away from the lip of the overflow.



WARRINGTON

Bewsey to Sankey Way Over the summer months weed in the canal has become a major Problem, with the local angling group suffering great fish lose. The weed has become so dense that it takes out all the oxygen in the water causing the fish to die. The Dallam & District Community Angling Group and local volunteers work hard during the summer to clear weed etc. from the canal

HALTON

The Gateway Crossing Work continues on removing the trestle bridge and roadway from beside the new bridge. The image below shows the bridge pillar in the line of the canal— with the embankment carrying the trestle bridge still blocking the canal beyond. Once this is removed the towpath will be reopened and we can once again walk by the side of the canal to Carter House Swing Bridge and beyond.



Spike Island Swing Bridge Merseylink, the construction company responsible for building the Mersey Gateway Bridge, had undertaken to build a new swing bridge on to Spike Island, but they sadly reneged on that at the last moment. Having secured the funding, Halton Council will now be drawing up plans for the new swing bridge. This will need to be capable of carrying heavy vehicles on to the island for any future events that may take place there. A navigable canal as far as Fiddlers Ferry will then be within reach....

Social Meetings

Members are reminded that, to meet a request for a replacement for its own Talks evenings, SCARS has made arrangements for its members to attend the meetings of the St. Helens Historical Society. Whilst the topics aired may not always be canal-orientated, we think they will nevertheless be of interest from a wider point of view. Those of us who have already attended such meetings have been impressed with the speakers and the convivial atmosphere at the meetings. There have, however, been few SCARS members attending so far.

A Programme of the meetings was distributed with the last issue of CUTTINGS. Forthcoming meetings will be: January 21st: 'Wildlife Returns to the Sankey Valley', by Peter Gateley, and on February 18th: 'Early Copper in St Helens', by Mark Adams. Why not come along to the Friends' Meeting House, Church Street at 7.30pm. Admission is £1-00 and who knows, you may find yourself joining the Historical Society before the evening is over.



In Memoriam

Harry Arnold MBE

1937—2018

Harry was born in Stockton Heath, Warrington in 1937 and for the first 21 years of his life lived between the Manchester Ship Canal and the Bridgewater Canal. It was during this time that he became interested in waterways, railways and industrial archaeology which led him and his friends on many an adventure discovering the local waterways such as the Sankey Canal and destinations all over the country as an avid train spotter. At school he took an interest in art and photography and was soon making use of the school dark room to develop his own pictures. On leaving school Harry attended Liverpool Art College—where one of his class mates was none other than Beatle-to-be John Lennon.

Harry started work at a local engineering firm in the drawing office, being well thought of for his intricate drawings of industrial equipment. He also served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

He met and married Beryl and they spent their early holidays together cycling and boating, exploring canals, and befriending some of the last working boat crews.

It was at this point that he and his young family moved to Staffordshire, initially to work in the emerging leisure boat industry on the Shropshire Union Canal at Norbury Junction (Norbury Hire Boat Company)

Harry's interest in photography and his prolific writing on waterway subjects led to a move in 1968 to live at Alrewas near Lichfield, on the banks of the Trent & Mersey Canal.

As a professional journalist, editor and photographer Harry was a regular contributor to boating magazines. In 1972 he was one of the founder owners of best-selling *Waterways World*; most recently Harry was retained to write for the free distribution newspaper *Towpath Talk* – the largest circulation waterway publication.

His WATERWAY IMAGES archive and digital photographs have appeared in countless publications and also TV programmes. Harry himself appeared on screen in programmes such as BBC's *Golden Age of Canals* and he spent the summer of 2018 filming along the Montgomery Canal relating stories from the campaign and the "Big Dig" that started its restoration for a forthcoming video.

Harry was central to setting up the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port, now the National Waterways Museum. As a volunteer he energetically supported many other waterway projects and campaigns to promote and protect canals, their craft and heritage – also inspiring, enthusing and assisting many individuals on their own conservation and restoration projects.

Harry was awarded an MBE in the 2010 Queen's Birthday Honours List for the significant role he played in Britain's inland waterways scene for almost 50 years. This included

being a founder member of the Waterway Recovery Group and editing the IWA's Waterways magazine from 1990 to 2007. Harry carried out many other voluntary roles within IWA and in 2008 was appointed a national Vice President.

At the 2015 Canal & River Trust 'Living Waterway Awards' – which “seek to recognise the most inspiring and exciting waterway-based improvement projects across the UK” – Harry was presented with the first 'Outstanding Personal Achievement Award' This award further recognised the enormous contribution he made to helping make the waterways what they are today.”

As far as SCARS is concerned, Harry became a member very early on, and was a great encouragement to the fledgling Society—travelling up on a number of occasions to give talks and give support at events. His early interest in the canals around Warrington naturally extended to the Sankey, and he took many photographs of almost the whole length of the canal in the period immediately following the last traffic on the waterway in 1959 and its official closure in 1963. He readily made this valuable archive freely available to the Society, thus helping us to promote the cause for its restoration. We remember Harry with gratitude and fondness.

One of his iconic images, of a steam engine passing over the swing bridge from Spike Island is reproduced below—other images will be found on our website at: <https://www.sankeycanal.co.uk/the-harry-arnold-archive---the-closure-y>

Harry's funeral took place on Tuesday 13th November at a packed out Lichfield Crematorium, where relatives and friends paid tribute to a man who gave so much to the waterways movement. Tributes were given by Eddie Frecklton, life-long friend, Tony Leary, co-founder of the Boat Museum, Hugh Potter, fellow journalist from Waterways World, and Audrey Smith, former IWA National Chairman.



*Just published—a view of the Sankey Canal's
part in the growth of St Helens*

WHY DID ST HELENS GROW ?

GEOGRAPHICAL INFLUENCES ON ST. HELENS' INDUSTRIES

T.R.ROBINSON



Why Did St. Helens Grow? : A Snapshot in Time

SCARS members will no doubt recall that in previous issues of Canal Cuttings writers have surmised that there must be collections of photographs, diaries, sketches, paintings, and other reminiscences stored away in disused furniture or tucked away on top of wardrobes, forgotten by their owners, which could be relevant to the history of the Sankey Canal. Over the years this has proved to be true—the series of photographs from the 1970s taken by Brian Bennett which we have used on our rear cover for many issues, being just one example.

Thanks to a chance remark to a committee member a remarkable fresh example has come to light. A member of the St. Helens Historical Society mentioned that he had come across a piece of work carried out by his late uncle, Tom Robinson, back in 1950, consisting of a written text supported by maps and photographs. He asked if it would be of any use. The answer was most definitely “Yes”.

Tom was a geography teacher who improved his qualifications by attending various courses, one of which it is assumed required the production of an extended essay or dissertation on a particular subject. Tom’s brief had been to establish the reasons for the establishment and growth of the town of St Helens from the mid 1700s onwards. This dissertation was offered to SCARS.

Our members faithfully transcribed the text into a digital format, whilst Mr George Burrows digitized the maps and photographs. This facilitated the production of Tom Robinson’s 70-year-old labours as a book, entitled “Why Did St. Helens Grow?”, which we think is a veritable treasure. The text outlines the coming of industry to the town, as a result of the creation of the Sankey Canal, whilst 27 photographs, all taken in 1950, show scenes along the canal, providing a unique snapshot in time.

A review of the book, by Rob Jones, Honorary Secretary of the Merseyside Industrial Heritage Society, which provides more details of the contents of the book, follows.

“Why Did St Helens Grow?” will be available, price £8, either from the Honorary Secretary (by post add £2), at Historical Society Meetings, Wardleworth’s, or the World of Glass. This would be of great value to any local historian.



One of Mr Robinson’s unique images—the ELLESWEIR ready to unload sugar at Earlestown

BOOK REVIEW
“WHY DID ST HELENS GROW?”
BY T R ROBINSON
PUBLISHED BY SCARS

44 A4 pages, 27 pictures (half page size) 4 maps, appendices and Bibliography
Good clear print

Mr Robinson starts his story “Why did St Helens Grow” in the year **1750** when he describes the area as an undrained peat-bog and swamp. But he harks back to the sixteenth century when the St. Helens chapel of ease was built, on the track between Warrington and Ormskirk crossing the Prescott to Ashton track.

We learn that coal stands on the southern fringe of the South Lancashire Coalfield and dips steeply towards the River Mersey. This was the mineral wealth upon which the prosperity of the town was soon to be based and the earliest record of “coal getting” is **1557**.

The rapid growth and Liverpool as a seaport made a demand for coal, and to help move the mineral the Douglas River Navigation Act of 1719 eased the transport since moving it along the ill kept roads was extremely expensive.

In **1726** Parliament was petitioned for a new Turnpike and this was extended in **1749** and in **1759** to Ashton.

However, in **1755** an event of greater importance took place in the economic development of St Helens, and this was an initiative of Liverpool Merchants. They petitioned Parliament for making the Sankey Brook and its affluent, the Rainford Brook navigable. By **1759** the canal was completed but it was found that at certain tides there was insufficient depth of water, so Parliament was petitioned again for a second Act extending the canal below the Sankey Lock.

The book then covers the various alterations and extensions to the route and also the absorption of various townships which were now in a favourable position to supply the plentiful coal beneath their feet.

In **1764** Mr Robinson tells us that over 18,000 tons of white salt were shipped on the Sankey, and he also says that coal from the area was now being shipped to America.

In **1773** another momentous event took place, the British Plate Glass Company built a factory at Ravenhead, one mile from St Helens. The manufacture of glass was not new to the area since the supply of coal and sand suitable for glass making were in close proximity to each other.

The company did not make much progress, possibly due to the heavy taxation that existed at this time.

In **1780** Thomas Williams who had started copper mining in Anglesey but because of opposition regarding the fumes from the copper smelting (such as sulphur dioxide) he decided to erect smelting works near good supplies of coal and he chose South Lancashire and Swansea, South Wales. The Lancashire works were sited in Liverpool and St Helens. After **1800** the ore in Wales began to run out and the industry declined. In **1826** two brothers William and Richard Pilkington set up a factory near the canal at Pocket Nook. Later known as the St Helens Crown Glass Company, coal mines

worked very close to the glass works. Pilkington went on to be the largest employer in town and had the largest plate glass works in the Country. Mr Robinson goes on to explain why Pilkingtons located works in various places.

In **1828** two Irish manufacturers, Gamble and Muspratt, attracted by the removal of the salt duty and impressed with St Helens abundant coal, good canal and river links, and access to the Cheshire Salt industry, decided they would manufacture chemicals here. The three main chemicals were sulphuric acid (for bleaching and metal refining trades), bleaching powder and soda (used in soap boiling and glass making).

All the requirements for glass making were now in one place, soda, sand, coal, transport.

In **1842** another manufacturer arrived, Mr Kutz with his processing of sulphur pyrites, forming the Sutton Alkali Company. Naturally located close to the canal.

By **1860** 260,000 tons of salt were being made into soda and in **1846** of the 37 firms making alkali in England, 14 were in the South Lancashire area, and 8 in St Helens.

Railways came to St Helens as early as **1833** (The St Helens and Runcorn Gap Railway) branches were built primarily to move coal.

The book then summarises the customers for the products made in the area, bleach for the textile industry, sulphuric acid for the copper refiners, alkalis for the soap industries. The book ends in 1950 and reminds me of my Geography Teacher's way of explaining industry and topography, using maps that we would copy into our exercise books, in a clear and interesting way, with defined no nonsense dates.

I commend the book to the house.

Rob Jones



Mr Robinson took photographs along the entire length of the Sankey for his study, providing a valuable record from the time the canal was in full working order. This shot of the dry dock at Winwick, showing the Scotch derrick crane used to lift the footbridge across the dock mouth out of the way for boat movements, and materials in and out of the dock, is one of many revealing long-gone features which were thought to have been unrecorded, and so lost to us.

Archive Reports

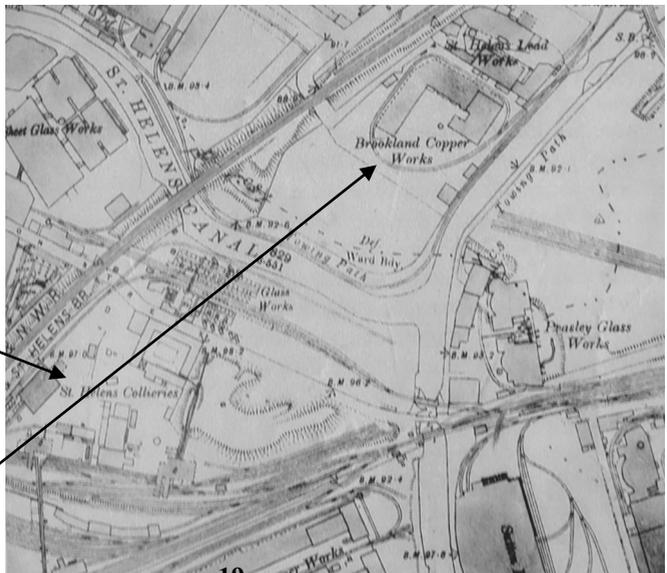
We have two Archive Reports this issue. The first is from our archive researcher, Judith Hogg, who has provided us with previous items as a result of her delving into the newspaper archives. This item was published in the Bradford Observer on Thursday, August 6th 1840. The second arose from Mary Presland's own researches.

Archive Report 1: Clare and Haddock's Pit

Singular Circumstances On the 12th inst. the water in the Sankey Canal near St Helen's was observed to rush away with great impetuosity, and without any apparent cause. In a short time the whole of the water was drained away from the line of the canal between the lock near the Union Company's glass-works, and that near the Ravenhead glass-works—nearly a mile in length. The cause was at last found to be the giving way of the bottom of the canal over an old coal-pit belonging to Messrs. Clare and Haddock. A large gang of men have since been actively engaged in repairing the damage.-----*Manchester Guardian*

There is some uncertainty regarding the precise location of the event but together and separately, Clare and Haddock were involved in a number of mines in the Ravenhead area—Union, Burtonhead, Ravenhead, and St Helens Collieries. The latter was in the angle between the Ravenhead Branch itself and the Sutton Arm, and it is possible that the 'old coal-pit' referred to related to that colliery. Old maps of the period show a number of old coal pits close to the canal in the area where it crosses the Hardshaw Brook. The Union, Burtonhead and St Helens Collieries were put up for auction in 1844, as a result of the world-wide Depression which began in the late 1830s. In 1875 the principal coal owners of St Helens came together to form St Helens Collieries Ltd., and James Haddock is listed as one of those involved.

1894 map showing the junction of the Sutton Arm at the right-angle bend in the Ravenhead Branch. Pilkington's Glass Works faces onto the Branch. In 1857 they bought and reinstated the derelict St Helens Colliery which lay behind those Works. Older maps show 'old pits' in the area occupied by the Brookland Copper Works on the opposite side of the canal



Archive Report 2: PP HENRY BERRY

As those who delve into archives will know, it is not unusual for items to be misfiled from time to time. Committee Member Mary Presland came across just such an item when pursuing her own research. Reproduced below, with notes, it consisted a single sheet of paper, approximately 4" by 7" bearing a hand written list of payments and what appeared to be the signature of "Hen Berry".

It records fairly generous sickness pay made to a John Eltonhead between mid-December 1762 and early July 1763. Assuming that the paper is at least in the correct town it would seem that Henry Berry was still active on the Sankey Canal for some years after the completion of the original canal, perhaps being involved in extensions, probably the one from Sankey Bridges to Fidlers Ferry. If it had referred to Henry's work at Liverpool Docks it is unlikely that the paper would have found its way to St Helens.

Unfortunately closer inspection of the writing revealed that some other official had signed the paper as representative of Henry Berry, so SCARS is still without any personal connection with the Sankey's builder. What a disappointment.

By Oswald
Greenhough's order →

*Receipts to John Eltonhead in
1762 his sickness by Hen Berry*

	Dec 6	To Cash to him			0.50
	11	To D. By Oswald Greenhough			0.50
	18	To D. " " order			0.50
	24	To D. " " " "			0.50
1763	Jan 11	To " " " "			0.10.6
	15	To " " " "			0.50
	22	To " " " "			0.50
	29	To " " " "			0.50
	Feb 5	To " " " "			0.4.6
	12	To " " " "			0.50
					2.15.0

Recd 17 Feb 1763 from Oswald Greenhough
Two pound fifteen shillings in full of the above of Hen Berry

*Recd 17 Feb 1763 from Oswald Greenhough
Two pound fifteen shillings in full
of the above of Hen Berry*

The Underground Waterways of St. Helens

By Colin Greenall

Flowing across the town is Windle Brook on its way to join up with Sutton Brook to become Sankey Brook and eventually flow out into the River Mersey near Warrington. Windle Brook begins its life out in the fields north of the East Lancs Road. On its way to the town centre it joins forces with Eccleston Brook, at the bottom of Swinburne Road. Eccleston Brook also begins its life in the fields and on its way collects water from Eccleston Mere which was constructed to feed the Sankey Brook Navigation. The combined waterways make their way across Ruskin Drive Sports Ground and pass under Rivington Road to reach Dilloway Street—and it is here that Windle Brook disappears underground. However, just before it does so, sluices divert water into a separate channel, which feeds the Sankey Canal; this runs at a slightly higher level than the brook.

Below: The entrance to the culvert under Queens Park, St. Helens, note on the right the two sets of paddle gear used to control water flows to feed the canal



The original course of the brook was straightened out and now flows beneath Queens Park towards Boundary Road and Kirkland Street. This was the site of Sprays Bridge (hence name of nearby Spray Street).

From here it crosses Boundary Road veering slightly north around the medical centre, then returning to its easterly course to pass behind or under the Mecca Bingo Hall and Asda Supermarket and on below the car park.

In the late 1800s as St. Helens became more industrialised and the need for housing increased, land in the town was taken to build rows of terraced houses.

It is in this area that many of the terraced houses were built and the brook flowed in a narrow strip of land between them. During the two world wars this section of brook was culverted and to the local residents became known as “ the BRUK”, a favourite play area for the children of the neighbouring streets.

The culverted brook is now flowing near to the large roundabout at the end of Kirkland Street, from here it takes a line towards The Range, before it turns left across the car park to run parallel with the canal but at a lower level. The canal feeder we saw earlier, which is at a higher level than the brook, enters the canal just in the corner by the supermarket entrance.

The brook makes a brief appearance by the World of Glass as it passes below the railway embankment only to return underground to pass beneath the canal. Then it makes its way mostly underground to join up with Sutton Brook on the other side of Marshall's Cross Road and to become the Sankey Brook.

From there the Sankey Brook passes under Parr Stocks Road and Boardmans Lane to run parallel with the Sankey Canal all the way to enter the River Mersey near Great Sankey, Warrington.

Originally, the only point at which Sankey Brook joined the canal was at Dallam Sluice, where its flow entered the canal on the West side, and left by the sluices lower down on the East side to follow its route down to the Mersey below Sankey Bridges.

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* Please indicate as appropriate		** Please indicate your wishes	

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Restoration Pays For Itself—A Case Study

Ebley Mill, Cotswold Canals, Stroud

The most recent issue of I.W.A.’s “Waterways” magazine contains an article which is most encouraging, not only to canal restoration societies but also to local authorities, businesses, developers and investors looking at possible waterway restoration projects.

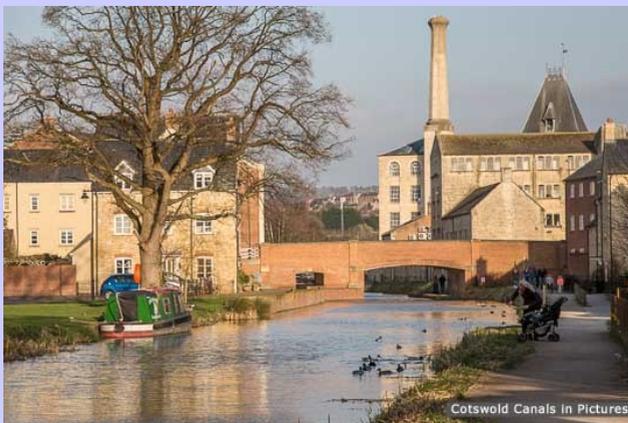
In 2008, in spite of the recession and general financial downturn, Stroud Local Authority assumed leadership of a HLF lottery bid to restore 6 miles of the Cotswold Canal adjacent to Ebley Mill, as part of a larger regeneration project.

Although occupied by a linear car park, the canal channel was excavated, the six mile section restored to water and a trip boat installed. The Mill itself was converted to District Council Offices, waterfront sites were developed, other parts of the complex have found alternative uses and 550 new houses have been built.

This as a success story in anyone’s books and has encouraged the District Council to repeat the exercise at another point along the canal.

The picture on the right, from the Cotswolds Canals website, shows the previously infilled section of the canal crossed by a new bridge. The Cotswold Canals Trust’s trip boat ‘Endeavour’ is moored on the left.

The table below demonstrates statistically the benefits which such a project has brought to Ebley Mill, thanks to the vision of local organisations, the support of the public and the willingness of investors to give their support. By thinking on a wider scale than simply canal restoration much progress has been made.



Key Indicators	Target	Actual
Private sector investment	£94M	£115M
New Business start-ups	31	59
Brownfield sites recycled	21 hectares	62.75 hectares
Jobs created	220	772
New workspace	14,000 square metres	26162 square metres
New Housing units	286	559



Before (*above*) and after (*below*) SCARS' Work Party revealed the remains of the recess for the swing bridge at Blackbrook. The replacement brick bridge was built in 1934.

