

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

CANAL CUTTINGS

VOLUME 9 Number 7
Autumn 2020



Threat—or Opportunity?

The closure and demolition of Fiddlers Ferry Power Station means no more water pumped from the station to keep the Penketh to Widnes section of the canal in water—will the canal dry up... or will it lead to all concerned pulling together to secure a permanent water supply to this section—and even lead to the re-opening of the canal between Sankey Bridges and Spike Island to full navigation?

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

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Founded 1985



**INLAND
WATERWAYS**
ASSOCIATION

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Paul McQuade (St. Helens)

The Inland Waterways Association:

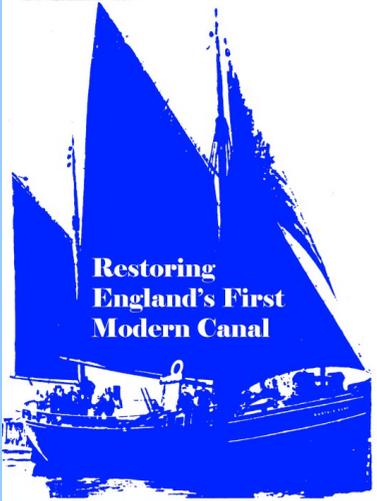
Colin Greenall (Chester & Merseyside Branch)

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VOLUME 9 NUMBER 7: Autumn 2020

Editor and Production: David Long
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The Chairman's Report—from Colin Greenall

Well here we are the summer is almost over and we are still in the grip of the Covid-19 Pandemic. I hope all our member are staying safe and well and managing to get out and keep active.

The problem of water supply to the Penketh—Widnes section of the canal is still unresolved. Whilst the Fiddlers Ferry Power Station site is being decommissioned, the water supply is being maintained, but no plans have yet been finalised beyond that period. Warrington and Halton Councils are actively engaged in trying to resolve the issue—despite social media being rife with reports that Halton Council are going to fill in the canal and build houses on Spike Island.

I must point out that both Halton and Warrington Councils are working very hard on the obvious solution—a scheme to reconnect the Sankey Brook to the canal, but this will not happen overnight because of the engineering issues involved.

We are grateful that the IWA (Inland Water Association) has become involved in this issue, and are helping to get the problem taken to the highest level with coverage in the local and national press. (See Page 16)

Even though our activities for the summer have been curtailed, things have still been happening along the Sankey Canal. Our committee has met on a monthly basis via Zoom, the Online Video Conferencing System,. This has worked well ,and kept the Society moving, but, even so, it is not quite what we would like it to be. Whilst on the subject of the committee I would like to say how sorry I am that Jeff Round has had to relinquish his position due to personal circumstances, Jeff brought new life to the group with his knowledge of canal restoration and his technical ability with social media etc.

It is hoped we can get our work parties back in action soon, though they will need to be carefully monitored due to the need for social distancing etc.

By now the remaining milestones will have been delivered to Warrington Council and are awaiting installation. (see Page 10)

On a sad note I have to report the news of the death at the age of 59 of the former St.Helens council officer Paul Sanderson who had only recently retire after serving the council for 25 years working in various roles including director for environmental protection, he was also appointed Deputy Chief Executive in April 2019 and served briefly as Acting Chief Executive just prior to his retirement. Although I only knew Paul briefly through the Sankey Canal Partnership meetings that he attended, it was obvious that he was dedicated to his role and in helping the partnership in whatever way he could.

Now let's be more positive about the future of the Sankey Canal now that the Covid 19 restrictions are slowly being lifted and people are getting out and feeling safe to venture back on to the towpath.

Halton Council has produced a booklet to promote the Sankey Canal— the Sankey Canal Advocacy Booklet. This is designed to promote interest in the canal corridor and its environs and to encourage people to visit the Sankey Valley and all it has to offer. We hope to send a copy of this out to our members soon—but, in the meantime, it is available for viewing on our website.

Finally let's look to the future, the pandemic maybe with us for a while longer but we must stay alert and safe in whatever we do in the coming months ahead.

*Best wishes,
Colin Greenall*

“Announcement”

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, all Social Meetings organised by IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch and St.Helens Historical Society are cancelled until further notice. However the Inland Waterways Association will be organising a series of online presentations for members to login into. Also IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch will be launching a series of presentations later in the year.

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

We hope to re-start our Work Parties during September—look out for an announcement on our social media platforms

WANTED—Volunteers

Our Work Party is champing at the bit to get back to work after the lockdown. If you're also wanting to tone up your muscles, why not join them? The work you put in depends on you and what you feel capable of.

Contact me on: 01744 600656

Or email me at : johnhughes11@virginmedia.com

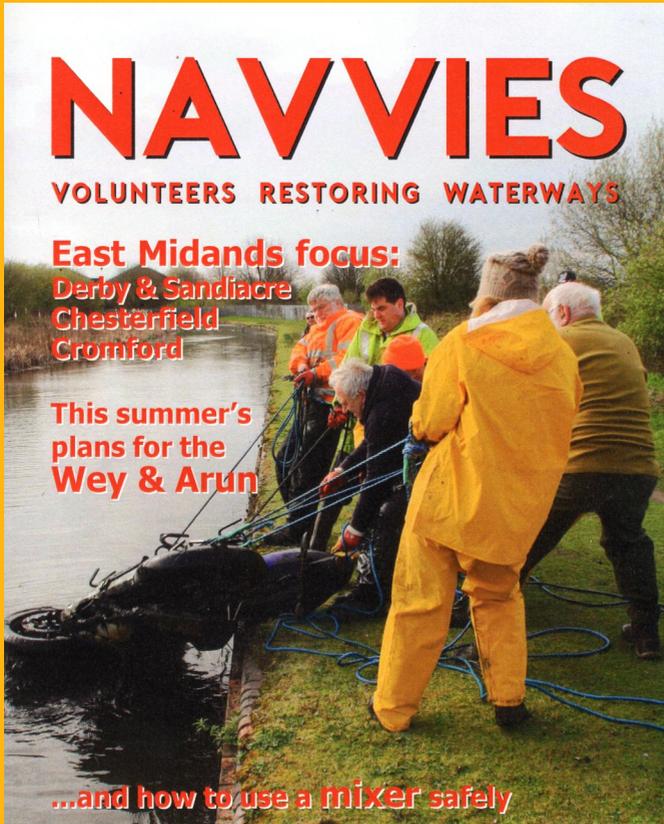
John Hughes

#524064

Where are *our* youngsters?

With the Society about to re-start its Work Parties—time to ask the question!

Those who attend SCARS work parties cannot help but notice the advancing years of the volunteers involved in the many kinds of work being carried out, be it clearing undergrowth, manning the SCARS Sales Stall, litter picking or unearthing parts of the canal's history.



The national waterways magazine, *Navvies*, regularly publishes reports on the activities of societies just like SCARS which work all over the country on the various canals which are in need of attention. These reports are supported by maps, plans and photographs showing the volunteers at work, the before and after pictures, and often describe the support they are given by the local people. There is clearly a current feeling from the public that the canals should be regarded as assets rather than liabilities.

Inside the *navvies* magazine can be found reports of the Annual Work Camps organised by the Waterway Recovery Group, the

practical arm of the Inland Waterways Association, along with updates from smaller work parties around the country. Photographs show the volunteers of all ages engaged in all manner of work, from dragging debris out of the canal (see previous issues of *Canal Cuttings*) to rebuilding bridges and clearing by-wash channels. Such has been the progress of such working groups that they have



ISSUE 294
APRIL - MAY
2019

developed their practical skills to such an extent that they can be found carrying out quite major engineering projects including the complete rebuilding of locks. Whilst these same volunteers frequently get very wet and muddy, they continue to turn up for the next project, proud to be part of the restoration movement. Their smiling faces on the photographs demonstrate their commitment and enjoyment.

An example has been selected of the Swansea Canal in South Wales. This is a dead end canal reaching northwards from the coast with no chance ever of being connected to the national network yet the volunteers turn up faithfully to work upon their canal. The photograph shows the usual Team shot at the end of a work day with smiling faces of all age groups including youngsters.



Where are the young volunteers of St Helens? When the work parties are out there is a lot of lip service paid by passers by, including an occasional young volunteer. Strangely the latter never turns up at the next work party for some reason despite having expressed their enthusiasm and willingness to help out. For some time now Society members have puzzled as to why there is support all over the country for waterway restoration groups yet there seems to be none in our area who are willing to give their time and expertise. Anyone with ideas as to how SCARS can change this situation is asked to contact any of the committee members detailed inside the front cover of this magazine.

News Round-Up Around the Boroughs

by Colin Greenall

HALTON

Spike Island Social Media ‘Fake News’: After a number of adverse reports on social media, Halton BC issued a press release which will hopefully pacified the doubters who seem to think that Halton Council will fill in the canal and build houses on Spike Island.



In fact, what they are doing in support of the restoration of the Sankey can only be stated as outstanding. They have recently pledged to build a new Swing Bridge to replace the time-expired wooden replacement for the former railway swing bridge (*above*), and to rebuild the towpath wall where water enters the canal from the Gateway Bridge storage reservoirs (*below*).



Halton Council is also working with Warrington BC on a scheme to reconnect the Sankey Brook to the Canal at Dallam in Warrington. This however may not be sufficient to keep the canal filled to its present levels due to the state of the fabric of the canal infrastructure. Any work on the reconnecting of the brook to the canal is unlikely to take place in the immediate future; this will give the councils time to look at what remedial work needs to be done to make the canal watertight again.

At present the power station is still pumping water into the canal.

The Weed Machine: In recent weeks much has been mentioned on social media about the weed clogging up the canal. Halton BC have engaged a weed removal contractor to clear the weed from Johnsons Lane Crossing to Spike Island (*below*).



ST HELENS

Old Double Locks: Concern about the bank collapse beside the chambers has resulted in CRT installing a temporary safety barrier around the collapsed bank and has promised to do a permanent reinstatement of the bank in 2023 or earlier. *(Below)*



Heritage Document : St.Helens MBC have recently published a Heritage Document for the whole of the Borough of St.Helens and the Sankey Canal features strongly in it. It contains many interesting comments such as neglect of the Sankey Valley Park, and that the Sankey Viaduct is of International Importance to the heritage of the area. (See Pages 14-15)

Town Centre Development: St.Helens Council has received £1million to help it fast track plans that could unlock up to £25 million to boost economic growth and town centre regeneration plans

Blue-Green Algae Danger: CRT (Canal & Rivers Trust) have issued an alert of Blue Green Algae on Carr Mill Dam, warning people to keep children and pets away from the water as contact could cause illness.

WARRINGTON

Sankey Milestones: Seven milestones have recently been delivered to their Woolston Depot these will be installed in the not too distant future.

Water Supply: As reported above, Warrington Council are taking the lead in plans to reconnect the Sankey Brook with the Canal within their area at Dallam.

Bewsey Lock Bridges Repaint: The bridge over Bewsey lock chamber, and the two bridges crossing the Sankey opposite Bewsey Hall Lodge are being repainted. *(Pictures opposite)*



Above: The swing bridge over the lock chamber



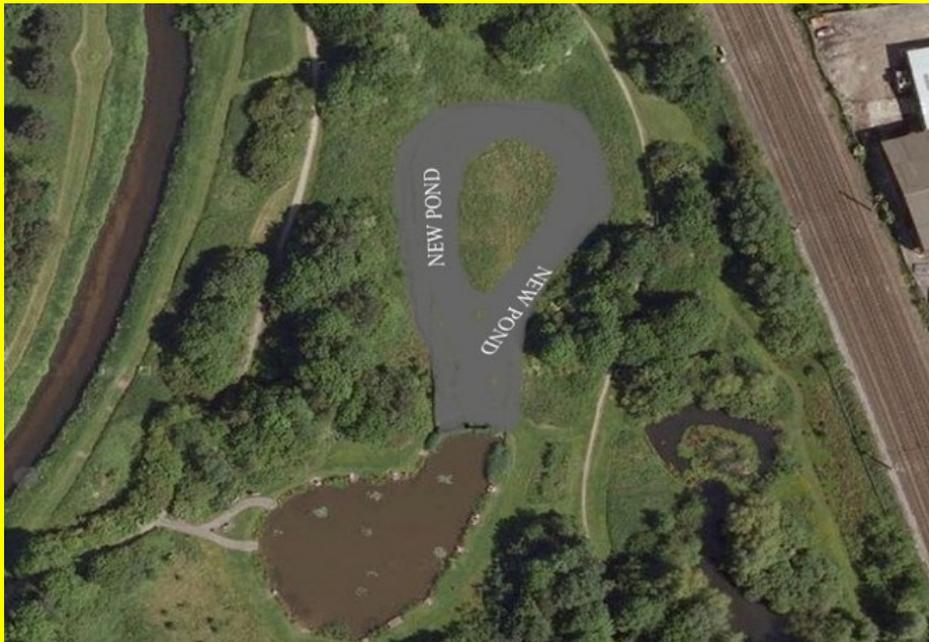
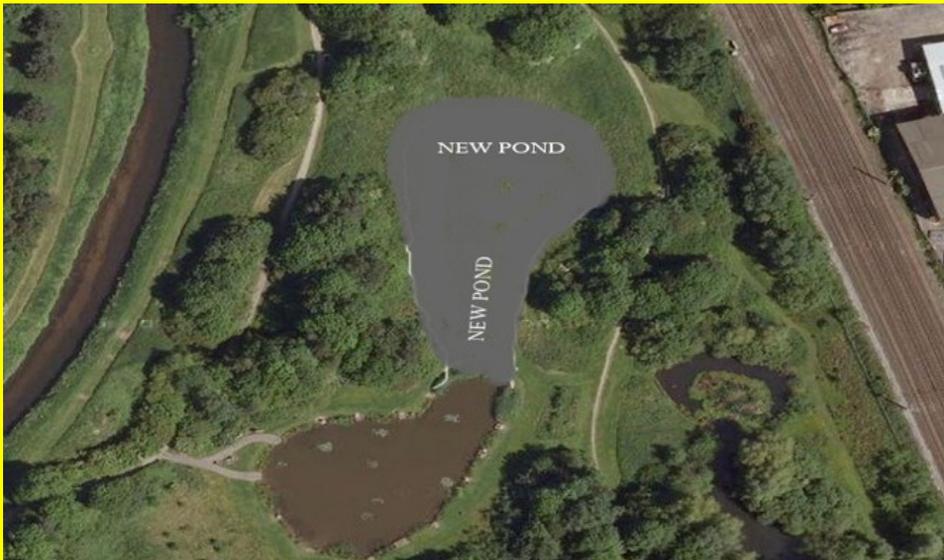
Right & below: The fixed swing bridge and the new road bridge below the lock



Fishing Pool Extension:

Local anglers will benefit from an extension to Stanners Pool. The proposed new pond will have 20 pegs including 4 double pegs that will be suitable for disabled persons and family groups. If permission is granted, and the money becomes available, work on extending the existing amenity will begin in the not too distant future.

Below are the two proposed versions of the new pond



Where—and What is Stanner’s Pool?

A Hidden Gem of Sankey Valley Park

The item in our “Round the Boroughs” feature opposite may have many of our readers wondering what is being talked about.

In the images opposite the Sankey Brook may be seen to the left, and the West Coast Main Line to the right, with a footpath visible to the right of the Brook. This area is situated just north of where Cromwell Avenue crosses over Sankey Brook and the course of Sankey Canal before crossing the railway on its way to its junction with the A49.

It is a hidden gem of peace and tranquillity in the form of Stanners Pool. The notice board at the entrance to the pool reads as follows:

WELCOME TO STANNERS POOL

Stanners pool was constructed by Warrington Council in 2001 with funding from the Environment Agency and Henry Boot Developments as an angling facility for local people.

The area was previously rough grassland and has been transformed to provide a new opportunity for coarse anglers, to improve wildlife habitats, and to increase interest for park visitors.



The pond is named after a Dallam man, Mr David Stanner who contributed greatly to the local community.

Construction and development of the pond as an angling resource took many months. After the initial digging operation were completed, suitable plant species had to be established, angling pegs built, paths surfaced, and the surrounding area landscaped. The conditions had to be right before fish stocks could be introduced.

The notice board goes on to give details of age groups and rules that apply to anyone wishing to take up a day’s fishing. It

also list the types of fish that live in the pond -these include, Rudd, Common Bream, Crucian Carp, Gudgeon, Roach, Perch, Ell and Tench

The site is managed by the Dallam & District Community Angling Group. For further information please contact Louis Morris, Chairman, on 07866729545—
email ddag@talktalk.net

St Helens Council Launches its Heritage Opportunities Report

SCARS is pleased to note that the launch of the Council's Report in May was accompanied by an image of the footpath along the line of the Sankey Canal leading up to Sankey Viaduct—one of the nation's most historic transport crossroads.



The document has been put together to assess the borough's heritage assets, advise how they can be used more effectively to help communities celebrate local history and identity—as well as boost visitor economy and town centre regeneration prospects.

Feeding into a wider strategy which links heritage with arts, events and volunteering, the document was completed before the outbreak of coronavirus, but will allow the council to look at how organized heritage attractions, sites and green spaces can be used as part of the long-term future of the local visitor economy scene.

Short to medium term targets would look to establish a St Helens Borough plaque scheme; improve heritage signage and markers; and work with the English Cities Fund to ensure that heritage and arts are considered part of regeneration plans.

Councillor Anthony Burns' role in the Council's Cabinet covers heritage and the arts, and notes that residents have got out and about more during lockdown and have been able to see and appreciate, many for the first time, sites of historic and scenic value around the borough—including those associated with the Sankey Canal. He says: "St Helens is a borough built on heritage, and while it's important to look forward, we must ensure our incredible past is part of an exciting future, as we look to build on all our strengths. Our heritage is important to us and we need to celebrate it more throughout the borough. We should be proud to have so many listed buildings, parks, open spaces, and landmarks all within a few miles of each other which may not have been used to their full potential—so now is the time to capitalize on these assets to ensure the public are able to get the most out of them, and ensure future generations know what an extraordinary place our borough really is."

Our Secretary, Peter Keen, has been studying the Report, and will be providing further analysis and comment in future issues of Cuttings. Here he gives an Introduction to the Report, and looks at the first of its Aims..

The Consultants examined a wide range of documentary evidence, visited surviving heritage sites and consulted with people representing at least 22 local organisations. A public survey was contributed to by 783 respondents.

The resulting document presents :

An ambitious vision for heritage in the Borough setting out the intended position in 2030; and a strategy to achieve the vision, with 10 aims, each of which has its own recommended projects and key actions.

The Strategy

The aims of the strategy are given below:

1. Provide and sustain capacity.
2. Further protect and enhance the historic environment
3. Develop first class heritage attractions, facilities and services.
4. Empower the Borough's heritage groups and interested individuals.
5. Respect and celebrate the Boroughs different identities and places.
6. Achieve a reputation for celebrating heritage through the arts and culture.
7. Promote the heritage offer to best practice standards.
8. Develop and maintain strategic partnerships.
9. Build momentum through early success.
10. Achieve further recognition for the Borough's most significant heritage assets.

Some of these aims are intended to be achievable in the short term, whereas others should be regarded as long-term objectives.

It should be noted that there are three strands to the vision,; Heritage, Arts and Culture, all of which will be addressed.

Recommended Projects and Key Actions

Aim 1 : Provide Capacity and sustain it

The council should :

1. Establish and maintain clear lines of accountability for heritage, the arts and culture (which could include designating it as part of a single Cabinet portfolio.
2. Review the support provided for seeking grant funding, potentially with support from the local partners.
3. Establish a virtual team to work on heritage matters, including staff across relevant Council functions (including Design and Conservation, Library and Archives, the Arts Service, Economic Development and events). The team's role could include:
4. Work with heritage groups to re-establish a St. Helens Borough Network to help the many groups work together.
5. Provide advice to heritage groups on project and bid development.
6. Lead or play a strong supporting role in the development of heritage funding bids.
7. Liaise with key local partners in the arts and culture scene.
8. Represent the Borough on the appropriate Liverpool City Region heritage, arts and culture bodies.

Press Release from the Inland Waterways Association in support of the Sankey Canal

First Canal of Industrial Revolution at risk of Drying Out Water supply ends as coal fired power station closes down

The Sankey Canal, opened in 1757, a full three years before the Bridgewater Canal, has its last part-navigable stretch between Bewsey Lock in Warrington and Spike Island in Widnes now at risk of drying out as its main water supplier, Fiddlers Ferry Power Station, stops generating electricity and awaits demolition.

Originally the canal took feed water from Carr Mill Dam in St Helens and the Sankey Brook but with in-filled sections on the line these sources have not been available and the canal's lower sections relied on the power station. This section of the canal with its towpath is both a central feature of the Sankey Valley Park and an integral part of the Trans-Pennine Trail and has seen increasing public use since restoration work began in the 1980's. Now very popular with families, walkers and cyclists, it benefits from views across the Mersey Estuary whilst small sea going craft berth in marinas at Spike Island and Fiddlers Ferry. The locks are functional along this stretch and give access to the tidal Mersey.

The canal has never really been fully recognised for its role in the Industrial Revolution and the economic development of the region. The main reason for building the canal was to develop the Lancashire Coal Field around St Helens to supply the expanding population of Liverpool with cheaper fuel, but the coal it carried was also to fuel the salt extraction industries of North Cheshire and the industrial growth of the Mersey valley. Commercial traffic lasted until 1959 when imported raw sugar was shipped to Earlestown for refining. Recognised as an important wild life corridor by local authorities and a tourist attraction, Warrington and Halton Boroughs are rushing to reconnect the canal to the Sankey Brook, but as civil engineering is involved this will take time to develop and implement. The current fear is that whilst some temporary water feeds may be possible, a dry summer could result in the bed drying out. Should this to happen there would be enormous loss in wildlife habitat, including fish kills in the heavily-stocked waters.

The Sankey Canal Partnership, made up of the three local authorities, Canal & Rivers Trust and Sankey Canal Restoration Society, have committed to the long term goal of full restoration ,whilst focusing on short term issues facing this section of canal from Spike Island to Bewsey Lock.

Over the past ten years a vast amount of money, effort and time has been spent on installing a new swing bridge at Tanhouse Lane, an electrically operated lift bridge at Fiddlers Ferry, and a further swing bridge is planned for later this year at Spike Island. Other improvements have been the upgrading of the towpaths and the installation of the canal milestones donated by the canal society and various sponsors.

Jim Forkin, Inland Waterways Association Chairman (Chester and Merseyside), said "This canal has associations with the beginning of the civil engineering profession in Britain, its success helped start the canal building manias which facilitated the industrial revolution, and it needs to be saved and restored. Global warming resulting in the closing of coal fired power stations is something we have to accept and we can only encourage the engineers working on the project to resolve the issues promptly".

SCARS' Press Release on the threat to the Sankey's water supply

SCARS as recently been informed by Halton Council that Fiddlers Ferry Power Station will discontinue its regular supply of water to the Sankey Canal.

This will mean that the section of canal between Bewsey Lock in Warrington and Spike Island in Widnes (*below*) will gradually dry up unless a new source of supply is found soon. Fiddlers Ferry Power Station has been feeding water into the canal since its restoration way back in the 1980's. This was done as a goodwill gesture at no expense to either Warrington or Halton Councils.

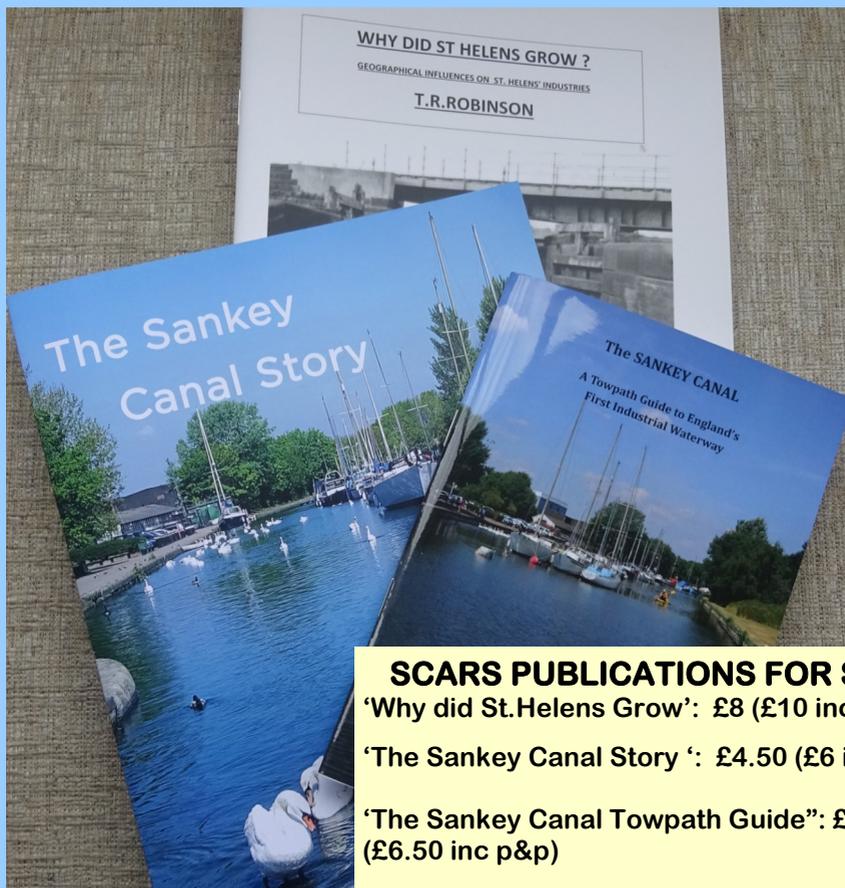


Members of SCARS Committee are very saddened at this situation but see it as an opportunity to survey the necessary work to be done to restore the canal by being able to pinpoint areas of that need special treatment, such as wall repairs, weed and rubbish clearance and desilting.

At present Warrington and Halton Councils are making a combined effort to reinstate the original source of supply from Sankey Brook. This will mean a considerable amount of civil engineering and expense to reconnect the brook and canal at Dallam in Warrington and, of course, this is not going to happen immediately. In the meantime other short-term options are being looked at;. This will undoubtedly mean that if we experience a dry summer the canal is likely to dry up completely.

Halton and Warrington Councils along with the Sankey Canal Restoration Society are committed to restoring the canal between Spike Island and Fiddlers Ferry in the not-too-distant future with the aim of restoring the whole of the canal to full navigation in the long term.

Halton Council are at present planning to install a new swing bridge to replace the now time-expired wooden bridge at Spike Island. The new bridge will be of steel and will be located in the same position as the original railway swing bridge which existed there from the time of the canal's extension to Woodend in 1832.



SCARS PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

'Why did St.Helens Grow': £8 (£10 inc p&p)

'The Sankey Canal Story ': £4.50 (£6 inc p&p)

'The Sankey Canal Towpath Guide": £ 4.80
(£6.50 inc p&p)

Order from Colin Greenall:
16 Bleak Hill Road, Eccleston, St.Helens,
WA10 4RW

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.

Local History Corner

Three men on a bridge—Bewsey Lock sluice 1949



This picture was submitted by long-time member Chris Palin who asked if we can shed any light on these three men or the location.

We can certainly help with the location - they are standing by the sluice paddle gear on the bridge at the northern end of the run-off channel by Bewsey Lock.

This channel was used to control water flow during times of heavy rain, or to drain the pound between Hulme and Bewsey Locks.

Below Hulme Lock the Sankey Brook entered the canal and then left it via Dallam Sluice on the opposite bank. This provided the canal with a water supply for the southern section all the way to Spike Island.

The Diamond shaped signs are weight restriction notices erected by the London & North Western Railway who were the owners of the canal at that time. It was normal practice to place weight restriction

signs at each end of the bridge .

Through the legs of the men standing on the bridge can be seen a thick baulk of timber, this is there to protect the sluice gate from damage by passing craft

Is it possible that the three young men are US servicemen from the nearby Burtonwood Air Base, or just three local lads out for the day?

Right—the bridge today—the lads were stood where the wooden planks are



The last of the Mersey's timber flats

Visitors to the Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port over the years will have noticed a number of sunken vessels in one of the upper pounds, one of which is a wooden sailing flat. She is one of only two such flats to survive to the present day out of the many hundreds which once worked the Mersey, the Weaver and the local coastal waters. Until the recent reorganisation of the national boat museum service there seemed to be little likelihood of her restoration but funding has been made available and she has now been installed in a purpose-built tent/shed enabling restoration work to be carried out under cover.

Her last remaining sister has been in private ownership for many years and has been moored in Morecambe Bay as living accommodation for the owner, Dave Keenan. He has been working on her restoration when time and funds allowed. Unfortunately his health has not been of the best, and he is running short of funds so her future is uncertain.

The photograph shows the vessel sitting on the seabed at low tide, although she does float when the tide floods. The mast has been shortened compared with how it would have been during her operational days. Her combing is intact and her winch can be seen on the foredeck. Apparently she floats when there is a high tide but her seams need some attention, without her pumps she would flood and become derelict. It is hoped that this will not happen.



Launched at Abel's yard, Runcorn in September 1951, she worked for the company until 1963, when she was sold to Rea's. In 1969 she was sold to St Thomas' Church, Lydiate, and was used as a youth club on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal which runs through the Parish. She was later sold with the plan for her to become a floating restaurant, but this never happened, and Dave Keenan bought her in 1976... and has been attempting to restore her since.

The OAKDALE is 72'6" long by 15'9" beam, and 6'6" deep, with a gross weight of 63 tons, and a cargo capacity of 120 tons. She is of composite construction—iron frames run lengthwise, with timber frames fore and aft, and with a greenheart bottom, with oak sides and Oregon pine deck.

She is the second-to-last wooden vessel built on the Mersey—but the last, RUTH BATE, which once sat in the Sankey at Spike Island, has been scrapped.

Sankey Memorabilia

Anyone who visits a stately home, open garden, ancient castle or zoo will be familiar with the 'gift shop', usually located at the end of the visit, displaying a wide variety of items which are inevitably expensive but cannot be classified as necessities. This is by no means a new phenomenon.

The opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was an occasion when souvenir salesmen seized the opportunity to make money. In a pre-plastic age there were none of the cheap toys, balloons and fancy hats of today but leaflets, celebratory poems, table cloths and jigsaws for the less well off and, fortunately, more durable items offered for sale to the more prosperous members of society. The latter form the surviving items which have come down to us as family heirlooms or museum pieces. We featured one such item, a meat server carrying an image of the Viaduct, in our Autumn 2019 issue. This is on view in the Local History section of Newton-le-Willows Library.

Thanks to the eagle eye of Rob Jones, an industrial archaeologist, the attention of a committee member was drawn to an advertisement for a medallion which had been struck to commemorate the opening of the railway. The medals were made of pewter, of 45mm in diameter, and contained various scenes of the opening, including the Moorish Arch and the Sankey Viaduct. Some had different scenes on opposite faces whereas others depicted a scene on one side and text on the reverse. The example here has been pierced near the top edge from where, it is assumed, it was suspended in some way by the wearer, perhaps on a watch-chain.

The image of the Sankey Viaduct was perhaps the first of a long line of sketches, paintings and engravings of this historical site which SCARS has been trying to promote over many years. It shows the point at which the first inter-city railway in the world crosses the first industrial canal in England. Even in the 1830s the location was valued, and excursions were being organised from Liverpool and Manchester to the viaduct where the passengers were allowed an hour to see the structure before returning to their respective towns.

The view is from the south west looking towards St. Helens. The small bridge in the foreground spans the Sankey Brook which flows along the west bank of the valley whilst the canal is marked by the sails of a Mersey Flat, nearly hidden in the dense undergrowth, following the east bank of the valley.

The viaduct in the background has the correct number of arches, nine, but the shapes of the arches are shown as much more pointed than the real things. This is either a case of artistic licence, or perhaps the artist relied upon the rough sketch by an assistant who dashed off a quick sketch during a site visit.





Larger souvenirs took the form of special editions of crockery, with suitable transfers illustrating the scenes at the opening of the railway. Mr Peter Raybould, a collector of memorabilia, has kindly allowed SCARS to use his photograph (*left*) of a large jug showing the Moorish Arch. Whilst being applied, the transfer of the scene has been misaligned. Mr Raybould wonders if this error makes the jug more valuable in its uniqueness....

On the right is another souvenir plate, also showing the Moorish arch, which someone may come across in an antique shop sometime.

Also from Peter Raybould comes the last bit of history. Three brass buttons are illustrated which span the life of the Runcorn Gap Railway. The first, larger button, was worn by a staff member of the St. Helens and Runcorn Gap Railway. A name change came about to The St. Helens Railway, and finally The St. Helens Canal and Railway Company.



The medal described above is now part of the SCARS archive along with Mr. Raybould's photographs.

We are most grateful for his contribution to this item. If any SCARS members come across examples of similar historic items the Society would welcome the opportunity to record them.

Roman Relic Found at Carr Mill

A long-time SCARS volunteer, carrying out litter picking in the Carr Mill area, came across a coin lying on the ground so, naturally picked it up. Assuming it was a discarded euro he put it in his pocket to examine later.

Having returned home he cleaned the coin up and was astonished to discover that it was a silver Roman coin from the time of Gordian III, AD238 to 244. It is a mystery as to how it came to be lying on the surface of the ground in Haydock, but could have been buried and worked its way to the surface over many years.

Officially classified as Treasure Trove, the coin needs to be declared to the Portable Antiquities Scheme for recording archaeological objects found by members of the public.

The finder, Chris Lyon, expressed his intention of either keeping the coin or donating it to SCARS in recognition of its efforts in keeping the dam clear of litter. He is also to return to the location of his find to see if any further items are still waiting to be discovered.



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The Sankey Canal Restoration Society
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Please notify SCARS: if you want to change this declaration;
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Mike Harrison - the Treasurer / Membership Secretary
4 Darvel Avenue, Garswood, Ashton-in-Makerfield, WN4 0UA

The Sankey Canal in 1963

Thanks to Ellen Busby for her photographs from her 1963 dissertation on The Growth of St Helens



Above: The almost dry bed of the canal looking east from the abutments of the railway swing bridge just off Boardmans Lane, Blackbrook, St. Helens. In the distance can be seen the St. Helens Sewerage works and the railway line crossing over Old Double Locks. This section has been completely obliterated, and now lies under the frontage and all-weather pitches of St Augustine of Canterbury's School.

Below: View from beside the lock cottage of the New Double Locks at Pocket Nook, St. Helens, looking towards the town centre. In the background is the bridge which carried the St. Helens Central to Lowton St. Mary's line of the former LNER and beyond the bridge you can just make out the huge gas holder which dominated this area. The narrows just before the railway bridge are the site of a railway swing bridge which connected the sites of the Globe Alkali Works

