

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

CANAL CUTTINGS

VOLUME 9 Number 9
Spring 2021



Storm Christoph sweeps down the Sankey Valley

Scenes of flooding and the devastation it brought to families down at Sankey Bridges made it onto the National TV News and Press.

One of our Members, Judith Hogg, only had to walk a few yards from her home in Great Sankey to provide us with some less traumatic images of the flooding further up the valley—where Canada geese floated serenely on the floodwaters as the January sun sank below the Cheshire Lines viaduct carrying the Liverpool to Manchester railway.

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

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Founded 1985



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Paul McQuade (St. Helens)

Bill Woolfall (Halton)

The Inland Waterways Association:

Colin Greenall (Chester & Merseyside Branch)

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

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The Chairman's Report—from Colin Greenall

Welcome to the first issue of Canal Cutting of 2021. Although we are still in lockdown, and this situation seems likely to continue for a while yet, with the latest announcements there appears to be a light at the end of the tunnel - so maybe we can soon get back to some kind of normality.

However, life goes on and we must learn to cope with the inconvenience of not being able to do the things we would like to do.

Meanwhile, as part of our daily exercise, we are allowed to get out and walk the towpaths of our favourite stretch of canal—be it the Sankey Canal or some other canal near you live. It is indeed one of the recommendations for our well-being and other health issues that we keep active and enjoy the fresh air.

In this issue of Canal Cuttings you will find some interesting articles on Warrington Waterways, the Workers Memorial, and Sugar Production at Tate & Lyle and Sankey Sugar Works, as well as the usual News Round-Up and other interesting items.

Moving on to other issues, as I stated in the last issue of Canal Cuttings, the Executive Committee has decided that we cannot consider holding a public Annual General Meeting in the near future, so we will continue as we are until such a time as an AGM can be safely held. Because of this, you will have found a copy of the Annual Report along with this issue of Cuttings. Please email/ write to any of the Officers with your comments or queries.

On another Committee matter, it was brought home to me quite recently how fragile our position is when one of our Officers suffered serious health issues. Fortunately he has made a speedy recovery—but it concerns me greatly that we aren't able to recruit younger members to the Committee. So, please, if you have an interest in the Society, and wish to see it continue into the future - come forward and take an active role in its running.

News from around the canal; “Storm Christoph “ in January resulted in serious flooding in the Dallam area of Warrington and in St.Helens; Fiddlers Ferry Power Station will stop supplying water to the canal at the end of March. However, Warrington Council has put in a funding bid to the Environment Agency Flood Resilience Scheme for the whole of the Sankey Valley Catchment area on behalf of the three Boroughs. If successful, part of the funding will be used for the reconnection of the Sankey Brook to the Canal The result of this bid will be announced by the end of March.

Thank you to all of you who have renewed your membership for 2021. Your support is much appreciated . To anyone who may have forgotten - please fill in the enclosed Membership Renewal Form and return it to our Membership Secretary so that you will continue to receive your copy of Canal Cuttings.

Our Website and Facebook page have recently been updated, and now feature up-to-date back issues of Canal Cuttings and the Annual Reports. There is also an article on the Milestones by our past Chairman, the late Dave Smallshaw, plus a list of all the milestones and their locations.

We are pleased to welcome Cllr. Bill Woolfall as the new Halton Borough Observer to our Executive. We look forward to working with Bill and hope he can keep us well informed on things that are taking place around the canal in Widnes.

So, as the days begin to get longer and the warmer weather is just around the corner, let's hope we can soon get out and about to do some useful work on our beloved canal.

Best wishes,
Colin Greenall

COMPLETION OF THE MILESTONE PROJECT



Just before Christmas the final milestone in the Warrington Section was installed by Warrington Council, bringing to an end our programme to reinstate all the milestones with replicas of the originals. The project has cost approximately £7500.

Thanks to the generosity of our Sponsors, Dr Barrie Pennington of the Milestone Society, and the Chester & Merseyside Branch of the Inland Waterways Association, SCARS has only had to find funds for seven of the 16 milestones.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in this project—to all three Borough Councils for the installation work, and to our Sponsors for their kind generosity. Particular thanks to Dr Barrie Pennington, who first approached us in 2018 to say he had been in contact with St.Helens Council about replacing the only remaining milestone with a replica “7 Mile to Ferry Lock” stone—and from then on, we worked together to install all the milestones in St.Helens. At that point the Chester & Merseyside Branch of the IWA pledged money for four more milestones to take us over the Warrington and Halton boundaries—and SCARS and Dr Barrington were able to find further funds to complete the project all the way to Widnes Lock from both the Ravenhead and Blackbrook termini.

The breakdown of the funding for the milestones:

Dr Barrie Pennington: 8, 7, 6, 5 Mile to Ferry Lock; 1 Mile to Widnes Lock (5)

Chester & Merseyside IWA: 12, 3, 2 Mile to Ferry Lock; 3 Mile to Widnes Lock (4)

SCARS: 11, 10, 9, 4, 1 Mile to Ferry Lock; 10 Mile to Ferry Lock (Blackbrook Branch); 2 Mile to Widnes Lock (7)

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

Sadly, we have still been unable to re-start our Work Parties as hoped, but are looking to do so as early as possible after lockdown ends—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

#5210647



New CEO For the IWA

- Mr Phil Hornsey



The IWA has announced its new Chief Executive Officer (*left*)

Phil is an experienced leader with a strong strategic, development and marketing background. His people-centric approach spans a 20-year career across corporate and not-for-profit sectors.

As Director of Membership & Community at British Rowing, he led the national delivery of programmes to engage, support and grow the sport. These projects achieved record levels of participation, paying members, and unrestricted income for the organisation. Prior to joining British Rowing, Phil held senior management positions at O2, EE and Betfair.

Paul Rodgers, IWA National Chair said, “Trustees believe that Phil will be a great fit for IWA. He has the skills, experience, and enthusiasm to lead the charity into the next chapter. I look forward to working with him in the years to come.”

Phil Hornsey said, “I am delighted to take on the role of CEO at the Inland Waterways Association. IWA has a critical role to play in the future of the waterways for all users. Having spent many years on and around rivers and canals in my professional and personal life, I understand the importance of their continued protection and preservation. I very much look forward to building on IWA’s significant campaigning legacy, and working alongside the trustees, members, volunteers and staff to deliver the next phase of the charity’s vision.”

News Round-Up Around the Boroughs

by Colin Greenall

HALTON

Spike Island—Water supply;- Fiddlers Ferry Power Station have announced that the water supply to the Sankey Canal will be turned off on 31st March. Other sources which supply water to the canal will not be sufficient to maintain the present water levels. Halton Council have stated that they will monitor the situation and take action where necessary, this may lead to some emergency works, such as bank stabilisation and infilling in places.

Swing Bridge: Halton Council are waiting for costs from the contractors and, providing it is within their budget, and Mersey Gateway Crossing Board are willing to fund it, the project to replace the solid bridge (now removed) on the site of the former rail swing bridge (*left*) will go ahead this summer.



WARRINGTON

Milestone Installation:

Warrington Council completed the installation of the last seven milestones just before Christmas (*right*).



New Level Crossing for Fiddlers Ferry:

Network Rail have recently completed the installation of new crossing gates and traffic lights at the crossing on the site of Penketh Station, near to the Ferry Tavern Car Park (*right*).

The latest proposal for this line is that its route be used for a 140mph HS2 link between Lymm and Liverpool—permanently putting paid to any idea of the line's crossing of the Sankey at Sankey Bridges being removed—a major obstacle to hopes of restoring the Sankey to full navigation.

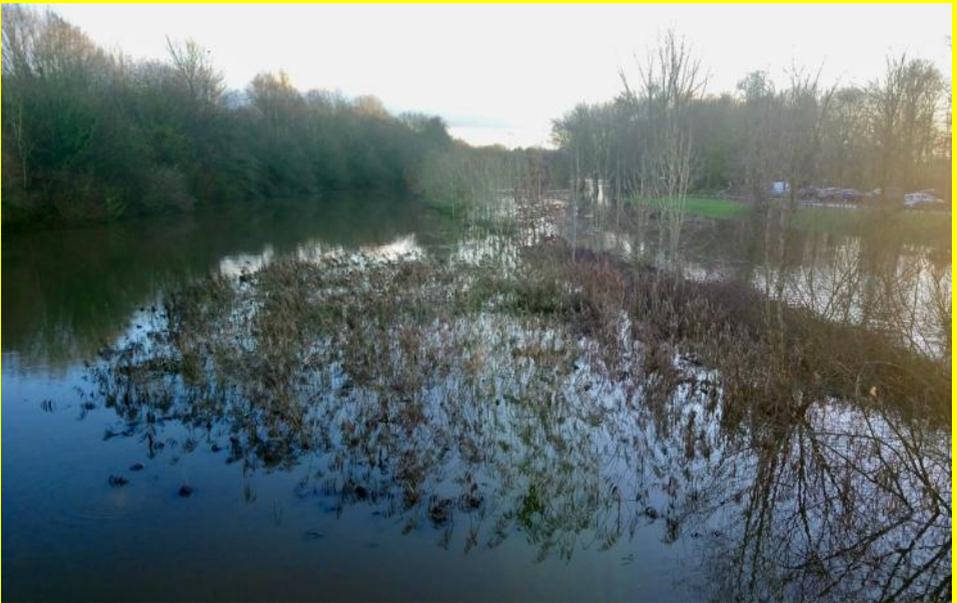


Fiddlers Ferry Planning Application:

Riverside Estates have applied for consent for their Boundary View Development on the site of the WW1 concrete boat building yard at Fiddlers Ferry. The proposals are for 35 residential units around a central open green space, with associated landscaping, a cafe and car parking.

There will also be a new boating launching facility plus 12 ground floor artisan working units and improvements to the access road from Station Road. All this is proposed work and will need a lot of planning and funding to make it work.

The site is presently industrial and commercial units, and the proposals may be what is needed at Fiddlers Ferry to bring it to life and make a more attractive area to visit.



Storm Christoph almost unites the Sankey Brook and the Sankey Canal: SCARS

Member Judith Hogg went out with her camera when the storm hit in January and took photographs of its effects on the Sankey. Our cover photograph shows the situation north of the Liverpool-Manchester railway, whilst the above shot is taken from the footbridge across from the Westbrook estates to Warrington Hospital.

Scenes like this, and the history of flooding around the lower reaches of the Sankey and along the Mersey, may raise doubts about an HS2 rail line and housing developments in this area....

Towpath Wall Repairs: Work is still required to repair the towpath wall opposite the Technology Campus on the Standish Street to New Double Locks section.

Flooding: On Wednesday 20th January Storm Christoph caused flooding at College Street (*right—pic from the St Helens Star website*) in spite of the recent desilting work carried out on Rainford Brook.

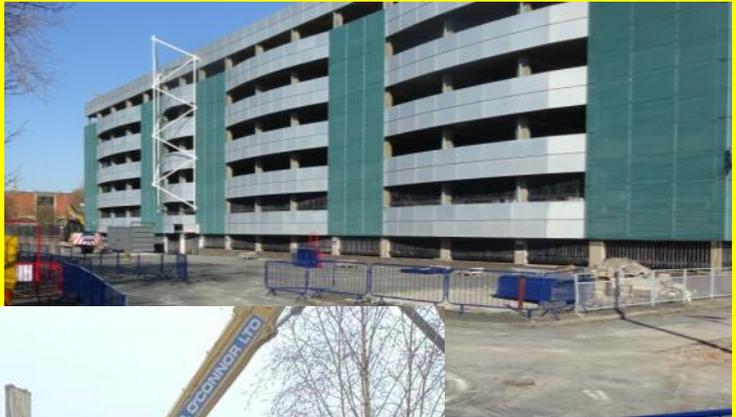
There were some spectacular scenes in Sankey Valley Park at Blackbrook due to heavy rain on the same day resulting in flooded footpaths and Blackbrook Road, near the Ship Inn



Chalon Way Car Park: After the outer cladding (*below, right*) had been removed, work began (*below, left*) at the beginning of March on the demolition of the Chalon Way multi-storey car park.

This is part of the Council's Regeneration Scheme for St.Helens Town Centre, and centres on the Ravenhead terminus of the Sankey Canal.

The site must be cleared by the end of March as part of the Government Town Deal Agreement.



Image, left, from the St Helens Star website shows demolition well under way

The early days of the SCARS: 1985-2020

The 10th October of 2020 saw the 35th year of the Society's existence. Covid-19 restrictions meant that it had to pass without ceremony—but we thought we should mark it in some way. This is the second in a series of articles about the Society's history and work.

When Boats Returned to the Sankey

Last issue's article announcing the demolition of the Chalon Way car park, overlooking the Ravenhead terminus of the Sankey Canal included a photograph of a number of small boats on the canal. The largest of them was a pontoon—and seeing it reminded SCARS Member and past IWA Chairman, John Fletcher, of the above occasion in 1990, and he has sent us some more photographs from the visit—and an article by Richard Chester-Browne about it which was published in the magazine of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal Society—owners of the craft.

MATTHEW FLETCHER VISITS ST. HELENS by Richard Chester-Browne

Following her rescue from the bottom of the M.B.&B., our workboat recently made another excursion. On September 30th the Sankey Canal Restoration Society held a small boat rally on the Sankey Canal at St. Helens on a length of canal normally used only for water supply to Pilkingtons glassworks and for fishing.

The Society needed a small boat to run trips up and down the 300 yard length and as the Matthew fitted the bill we offered to lend her. On the 29th a crowd of MB&B members met at Radcliffe to winch her onto a trailer and Colin Greenall of SCARS (and MBBCS) towed her to St. Helens. At 11.20 on the Sunday she became the first boat to navigate that length since 1919 and subsequently carried people up and down the length all afternoon, including one trip with the Mayor and Mayoress of St. Helens. About 25 boats, mostly canoes, visited the canal, including our members Neville Brydon with his cruiser and Alan Crompton with his coracle, accompanied by Bert Fearn, as well as my own inflatable.

After an enjoyable and worthwhile afternoon we brought the Matthew back to Giants Seat where she is now on the bank awaiting repainting.



Left: With the Chalon Way car park visible in the background, the "Matthew Fletcher" is readied for its launch into the Sankey

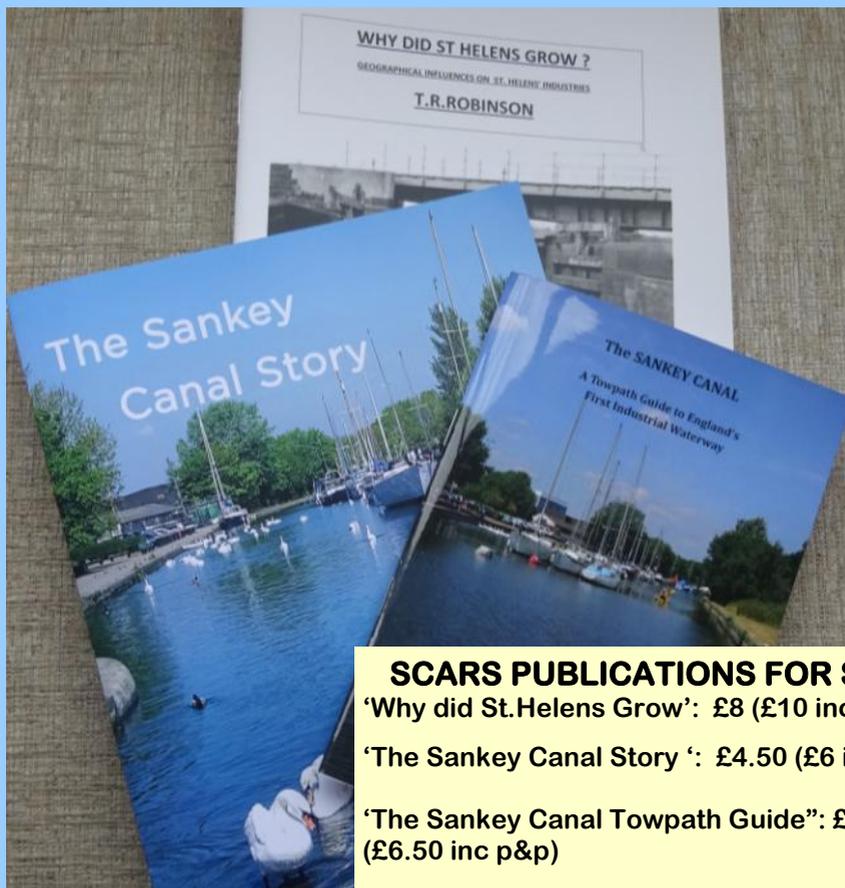


Above: One of the many trips for the public which the “Matthew Fletcher” provided during her brief visit.

Below: One of the trips was a VIP event—carrying the Mayor (Cllr. George Cleary) and Mayoress of St Helens.

Richard Chester-Browne, a long-standing former member of SCARS’ Executive and a waterways writer, is steering, and stood behind the Mayoress is a founder-member of SCARS, Ed Southworth. At the time he worked for the National Museum in Liverpool, and went on to work for Lancashire Museums, before moving to run Manx Heritage in 2009—from which he retires this April. We wish him a happy retirement.





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.

The Workers Memorial

In the last issue of CUTTINGS we expressed our regrets that we had not covered the Installation and unveiling of a new piece of commemorative artwork on the banks of the canal—the Workers Memorial in ‘Vera Page Park’, St Helens. Here is the promised article about the statue and its history—compiled by Colin Greenall from information on the website of the St Helens Workers Memorial Charity.

Below—the statue, with the canal just visible in front of the St Helens Chamber building.



The Memorial was erected to remember and honour people who have lost their lives at their workplace.

Its installation was made possible by Martin Bond and Councillor Richard McCauley, who were both inspired by a memorial to Construction Workers in Canada; they were supported by Trustees of the St Helens Workers Memorial Charity, Cllrs. Martin Bond and Paul Pritchard, and John Riley

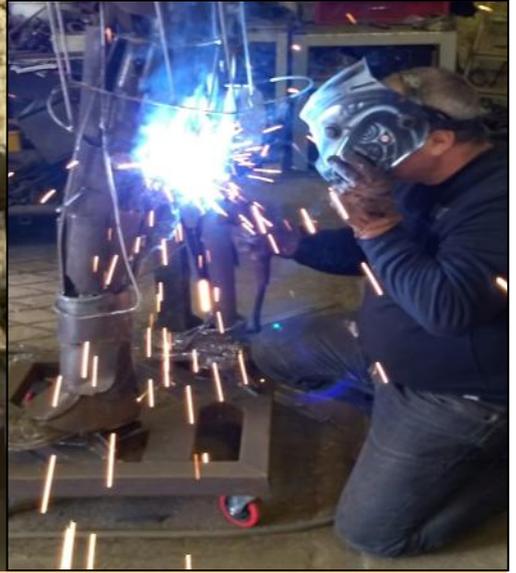
The site of the statue, Vera Page Park, was chosen by the Workers Memorial Charity, because, as the former Lyons Yard, it was home to an array of heavy industry before being regenerated.

The Workers Memorial Charity was set up in 2016 to build a memorial to commemorate the men, women, and children who have lost their lives through their jobs. Many hours of fund raising activities and a lot of planning have gone into bringing the plan to realisation.

The sculpture was created by Martin Galbavy a talented Slovakian artist and blacksmith based in Dorset, using old tools, scrap metal and a lot of skill. The Statue is made out of old tools which were gathered from the St Helens area and then shipped to Martin to be included in the figures.



While the sculpture was taking shape (*left, and below*) in Devon, preparations were in hand in St.Helens, where the foundation were being prepared in the Vera Page Park alongside of the Sankey Canal in St.Helens Town Centre.



The date set for the unveiling ceremony of the sculpture was 28th April 2019— the official Workers Memorial Day.



(*Left*) A base for the statue was excavated in readiness for its delivery on the 23rd April.

As seen in the picture *opposite*, the statue was finally fenced in by sleepers and railway line sections—a reminder that, in its heyday, the Lyons Yard site held miles of railway sidings, servicing a nearby coal mine, glass works and a chemical factory. One of the rails has cast into the side of it “Workington 1966” denoting the place and year of manufacture. The Workington steel works was closed down in 2006. Coincidentally 1966 was the year Dr Beeching started to swing the axe on the railway network.



(Left) Concrete was poured into the base and topped off with stone setts recovered from the Dock Road in Liverpool (below).



Everything was going to plan until Friday 26th April when “Storm Hannah” hit town and work had to stop. However, against the odds, the monument was ready for the unveiling, ceremony, (right) performed by the Mayor of St Helens, Pat Ireland, and attended by many dignitaries.

The St.Helens Workers Memorial Charity is now raising funding to illuminate the statue and they intend to hold an Annual Worker’s Remembrance Day on or about the 28th April where the focus will



be to remember the dead and fight for the living, and to campaign for safer workplaces.

A Town Rediscovered Its Waterways

Praise for Warrington`s Historic Waterfront Rejuvenation

Warrington, positioned in the mid-Mersey Valley, has a unique place in waterway history and the town is showing a real appreciation of these great assets. The population are now enjoying the immense open spaces this legacy of the industrial revolution has left behind and the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) Chester and Merseyside Branch are seeking to sing its praises. Les Green, the Branch`s Publicity Officer, tells us more.

The River Mersey at Warrington was, for many centuries, primarily seen as a commercial asset; a transshipment port with cargoes transferring from barges (Mersey Flats) to pack horses, boat building on its banks and its abundant fish stocks a valuable food source until the pollution of the industrial revolution. Sadly as the nineteenth century progressed, the river, heavily polluted by industrial and domestic wastes lost its fish stocks and at times it took the appearance of a river of foam as weirs upstream reinvigorated the untreated detergents from the Manchester and South Lancashire conurbations.

Up and till the nineteenth century, the town had used the river for some pastimes especially rowing, holding an annual regatta which attracted large crowds .The big employers in the town such as Greenalls Brewery and Peter Stubs, famous for hand files, entered teams. Swimming races were held at Fidlers Ferry up to 1862 but in 1863 with pollution so bad the regatta ceased.

The town then effectively turned its back on the river.



Left:
Painting of the
Warrington
Regatta in the
1840s, painted
by W Taylor,
and in the
collection of
Warrington
Museum and Art
Gallery

The nation begins to change

The Mersey at Warrington Bridge was frequently referred to world wide as a universal standard of pollution and nothing whatsoever lived in it, until legislation beginning with the River Boards Act of 1948 and culminating in the 1973 Water Act awakened the nation to the need of a massive cleanup campaign.

Sadly by the 1980's, just as the waters of the Mersey and the Manchester Ship Canal, which takes much of the flow from the Mersey River basin, were beginning to support some life, trade on the waterways was diminishing. The increasing size of world shipping meant that the newer vessels could no longer navigate the ship canal and trade slowly drifted away. The last remnants of trade on the tidal Upper Mersey and old Mersey and Irwell Navigation whose truncated sections were connected to the ship canal ceased and both the Black Bear Canal and Walton Lock became derelict. The last trade was grain to Fairclough's Mill via Walton Lock with two vessels involved till the mid 80's, they were Panary and Humber Trader, both occasionally needing a small tug for assistance in low tidal conditions.

Humber Trader was actually the last vessel to pass through Walton Lock with skipper Lennie Clark at the helm before he took her to trade on the Weaver. There, with salt bagged in Winsford and Middlewich and delivered by lorry to Anderton; he sailed to Liverpool and took a return cargo of grain to Frodsham.

Neither vessel is currently trading as Humber Trader (1959 Hull built) is now a houseboat on the River Deben in Suffolk whilst Panary (1937 Bristol built) is laid up in Huskisson Dock in Liverpool. Panary is on the National Historic Ships register

Right:

Len Clark
motors an empty
PANARY past
Liverpool's Pier
Head in February,
2015.
Photo from Flickr.



Unlike so much of the canal system, leisure boating did not take the place of commercial traffic. The river, tidal up to Howley Weir with its the disused lock, attracts the odd intrepid explorer, whilst the yachtsmen from Fiddlers Ferry Sailing club rarely raced to the outskirts of the town at Sankey Bridges. Above Howley Weir, the New Cut Canal had until the closure of the Black Bear Canal, provided its water supply via an aqueduct over the river but this was no longer navigable and the locks derelict. The Manchester Ship Canal did not encourage boaters and the Sankey Canal, remote from the main canal system, carried its last sugar traffic to Newton le Willows in 1959, formally closing in 1963, leaving only the Bridgewater Canal to boaters.

Clean waters and the town looks at its waterways again

Although Fiddlers Ferry Sailing Club was established in 1904 on the wider tidal waters downstream of the town, there was no leisure use of the river until the 1980's. The polluted waters were used both for industrial purposes and in the Fiddlers Ferry Power Station cooling towers

but the town still thought of the river as a river of filth. However, through the numerous anglers in the town, rumours began to circle of teenagers who had no luck fishing for pike in a local lake had, for fun, cast into the Mersey near a feeder stream and caught jack pike. Following that, there was a report in a local paper that a weir keeper had seen infant flat fish in shallow water in the river. Subsequently expert anglers were called in to fish a match and caught mature roach. The town buzzed with talk about the river—a river once so alive with salmon that, in the eighteenth century, a clause was inserted in apprenticeship contracts at hand-file maker Peter Stubs' that boys living in the factory could only be fed on salmon three times a week.

In 1986 local rowers working with a Rotary Club, decided to restart the Warrington Regatta and, over 120 years after the last historic Regatta, two of the original employers, Greenalls Brewery and Peter Stubs Ltd, were quick to help get the event started as race sponsors. The rowers had surveyed the river, finding it ideal with good width, few bends and no one else interested using it. The first modern regatta took place in July 1986, the rowing club was established, a club house built—and they went on to run a successful annual regatta whilst producing international standard rowers.

Below: Warrington's Parish Church tower visible in the painting of the 1840s Regatta had a tall spire added in the 1860s—but its presence in the background shows the modern Regatta taking place on the same stretch of the Mersey.

Image from the Club's website: <https://warringtonrowing.org.uk>



Increasing numbers of anglers were seen on the banks as the river re-established itself as a fishery. Warrington Angling Association took a stretch, improved the banks and began regular match fishing. Catch weights progressively got bigger as the river naturally restocked itself as large shoals of bream and perch arrived. Salmon and sea trout were seen leaping at Howley and Woolston Weirs as they began again to migrate up the river to new spawning grounds both in the Mersey and tributaries such as the River Bollin. To the annoyance of anglers, Atlantic Seals, knowing where an easy meal can be had, now regularly slip over Howley Weir on spring tides to feast on easy prey. The pike are no longer the top predator in these waters.

In the next Issue—further evidence of a brighter future for Warrington's waterways

Sankey Canal & Sugar Refining - Part one

By Mike Harrison

Background.

Have you ever experienced a smell that transports your memory back in time? I have a tin of black molasses syrup, which when I open it takes me back the late 60s, when I worked in Tate & Lyle's, Love Lane refinery (1872 and 1972).

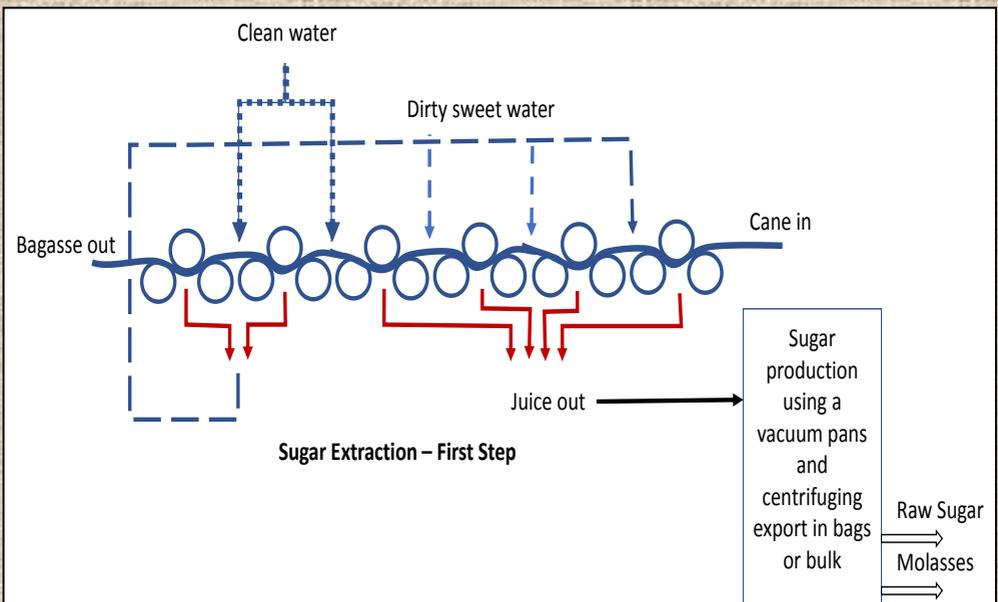
Over the years SCARS has published plenty of photographs of the relationship between the canal, and Sankey Sugar Works. However, I can recall nothing that tells us what was happening, both at the canal side or within the refinery itself. Love Lane's 100-year history is comparable with that of Sankey Sugar (1855 to c1966). So, I hope I can recall my memories accurately enough to give you an impression of the refinery and its workings by relating Love Lane operations with those of Sankey Sugar.

In the early days, there were plenty of similarities, e.g. The nature of the received cane / beet sugar, the delivery of coal, lime, and ash together with the export and delivery of the final refined sugar. Love Lane used the Leeds Liverpool canal whilst the Sankey Canal provided for Sankey Sugar. Did you know that Love Lane refinery was built around the very first Liverpool terminus of the L&L canal?

The subsidiary operations - then and later.

Before reading further, it is worth mentioning the operations below. They are common to sugar production throughout the world.

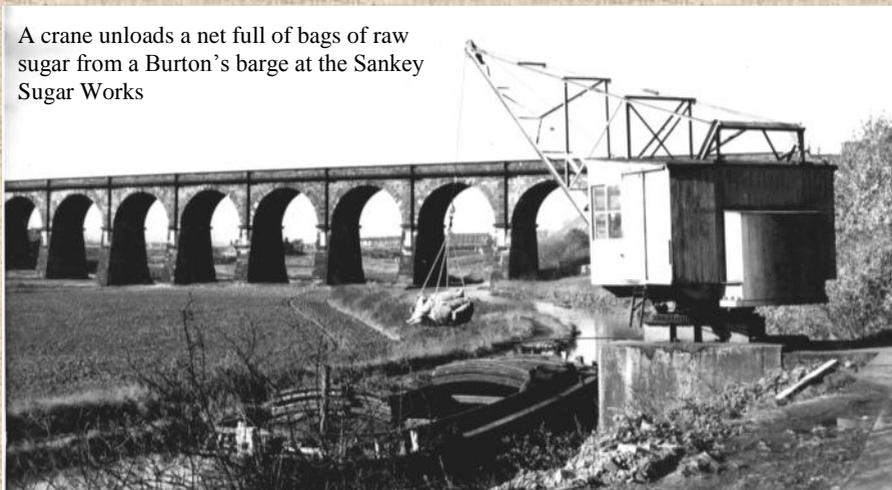
Cane sugar production in the Caribbean and Africa. After harvesting, the sugarcane stalks are brought to the sugar factory where the juice is extracted by a crushing / smashing action. During this procedure, the cane stalks are washed to extract all the sugar juice. The outgoing cane is known as bagasse and can then be used as raw material in making bagasse board or as fuel for the boilers.



The extracted juice is filtered to remove any solid particles such as dirt or bits of cane. Lime is added, which causes the impurities to settle. The remaining juice is then boiled under a vacuum, releasing it of most of its water and allowing the crystals to grow (more detail later when refining the sugar). The resultant syrup, which contains sugar crystals and molasses are separated by spinning them in a high-speed centrifuge. The molasses is kept local and can be used in the making of animal feed or rum. The remaining sugar crystals (raw sugar - about 95% pure) are covered in a thin layer of syrup and are exported to the UK.

At first both refineries processed home produced beet sugar from East Anglia. This resource is still used by the British Sugar Corporation today. Trading conditions and beet production dictated that Tate & Lyle imported cane sugar from the Caribbean and North Africa. Beet sugar is very waxy and requires a refining process that is incompatible with that for cane sugar. Hence for most of its life Love Lane produced sugar from cane. Eventually, Love Lane stopped production from cane when Britain joined the EEC, which treated beet sugar as a strategic commodity.

A crane unloads a net full of bags of raw sugar from a Burton's barge at the Sankey Sugar Works



In earlier times, raw cane sugar was packed in jute / hessian bags and transported by steam / sailing ship into Liverpool docks, where everything was handled manually. The imported sugar was held in bond until the necessary import taxes had been paid. As explained later, considerable care was taken during the refining process to avoid sugar loss (saving money) Bags destined for Love Lane were taken by road to the refinery whilst those for Sankey sugar had the luxury of a canal trip in a Mersey Flat, down the Mersey and along our canal. Latterly, the raw sugar arrived in bulk-carrying "Sugar-Ships". A special parabolic warehouse, shaped to avoid the internal forces from the mobile nature of the syrup covered sugar, was built in 1957 at Huskisson Dock. The raw sugar was unloaded by "kangaroo cranes" onto belt conveyors (bands) and fed via weighing machines (to determine the tax to be paid) directly into the warehouse. This change led to the end of carriage by barge on the Sankey, with lorries now providing the link between this facility and the RAW SUGAR SILOS in both refineries

The canals handled the South Lancashire coal and ash at both refineries. Later, these duties were accomplished by bulk road transport, although Sankey Sugar also had the benefit of a direct rail link.

Membership Subscription



Charity No: 702571

I wish to join SCARS - my subscription is as detailed below.

Individual (at one address)*		Donation**	TOTAL	Gift Aid**
General	Unwaged			YES / NO
£15.00	£10.00			
* Please indicate as appropriate		** Please indicate your wishes		

Name:	Address:	Post code:
Telephone:	Email address:	

The Sankey Canal Restoration Society
Registered Charity 702571

Gift Aid Declaration

Please help us to reclaim a further 25% by ticking the box below

I want to Gift Aid my subscription and/or donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to the Sankey Canal Restoration Society

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify SCARS: if you want to change this declaration;
change name or home address; no longer pay sufficient tax

Please forward to:

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***



This issue's two images depict the two ends of the Ravenhead Branch of the Sankey:
Above: "The Hotties" steaming away near the terminus

Below: The New Double Locks—with the lock cottage alongside still standing—
near the junction with the Gerards Bridge Branch of the original man line

