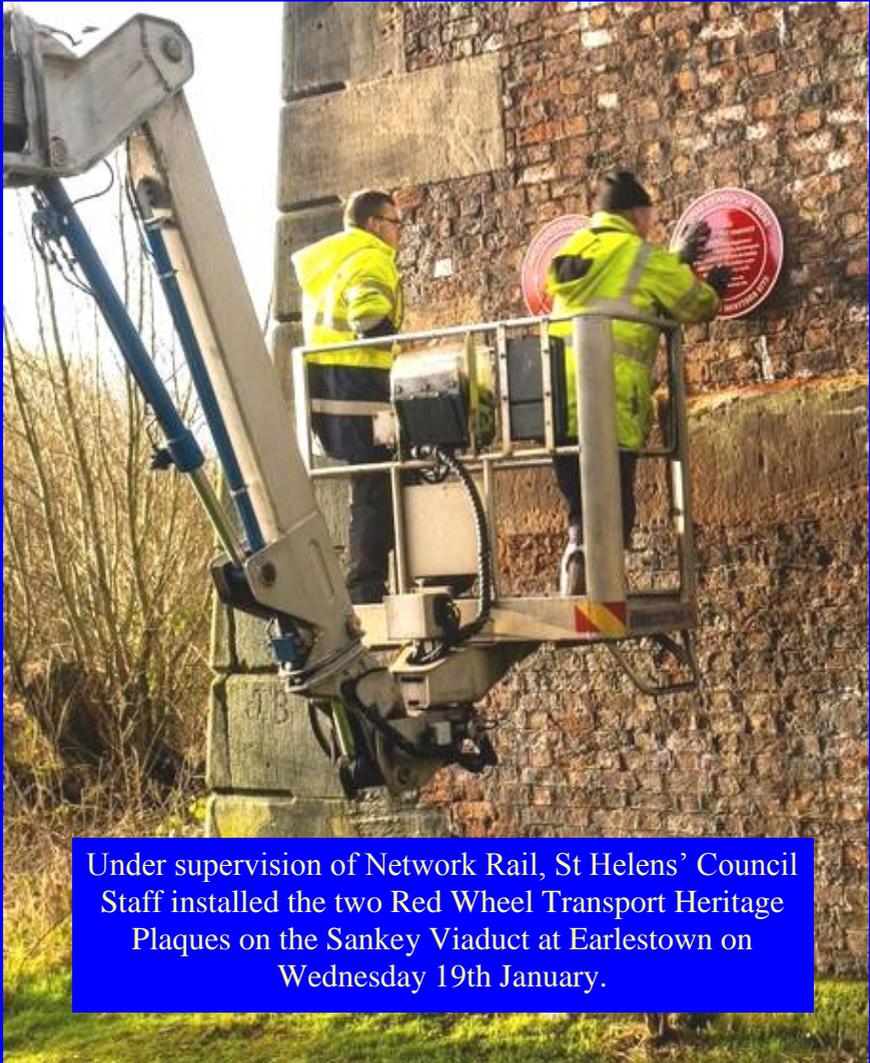


Sankey Canal Restoration Society

CANAL CUTTINGS

VOLUME 10 Number 1
Spring 2022



Under supervision of Network Rail, St Helens' Council Staff installed the two Red Wheel Transport Heritage Plaques on the Sankey Viaduct at Earlestown on Wednesday 19th January.

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



The SCARS Executive Committee for 2019 – 2022

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.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: Ian Hornby

Tel: 01744 813943 Mobile: 07753 289765

Website and Facebook Manager: Richard Corner

Other Members of the Executive:

Dave Callan, Linda Dirra, Neil Forshaw, John Hughes,

Cllr. Richard McCauley, Mary Presland,

Observers from Partner Organisations:

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

Steve Parish (Warrington)

Paul McQuade (St. Helens)

Kevan Wainwright (Halton)

The Inland Waterways Association:

Colin Greenall (Chester & Merseyside Branch)

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

CANAL CUTTINGS

VOLUME 10 NUMBER 1: Spring 2022

**Editor and Production: David Long
(dave.w.long@icloud.com)**



CONTENTS

- 3. The Chairman's Report**
- 5. Red Transport Plaques Installed**
- 7. News from the Boroughs**
- 11: SCARS Work Parties Restart**
- 13. Burscough Heritage Group Folds**
- 14. Heritage Photography Project**
- 15. Anderton Lift; Born a Hero?**
- 16. Inside the Sugar Works—Final Part**
- 20. Two more views at Ravenhead**

The Chairman's Report—from Colin Greenall

Welcome to another issue of our magazine, I hope you are all well and looking forward to some better weather than what we have just experience. Although the world seems to be in turmoil at present, let us look to the future with some confidence that things will settle down.

In our last issue there was an article about Henry Berry which the author Brian Leyland kindly gave us permission to use, sadly Brian recently passed away after a lifetime of working to promote his hometown of St Helens.

Towards the end of last year Groundwork lost out on an application for funding from the Community Renewal Fund, but, undaunted by this decision, they are now pressing on to work with SCARS to carry out work along the line of the Canal. In March work will commence on a project to open up the view of Sankey Viaduct with tree clearance to remove vegetation that at present obstructs the view of this magnificent structure.

During the summer months our sales and exhibition gazebo will hopefully be attending events, so far, we will be at Chester for the IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch Boat Gathering and Newton Town Show.

The Integrated Rail Plan for HS2 which was published in November is causing us concern because of the proposed low-level crossing of the canal at Sankey Bridges. Letters have been sent to various MPs and HS2 Ltd stating our concerns

The towpath leading to New Double Locks in St. Helens is now fenced off due to the Council's concern about health and safety. Hopefully, this issue will soon be resolved, and the towpath reopened.

Canal and Rivers Trust have promised to deal with the damage at Old Double Locks and to replace the swan boom with something more substantial.

Two Red Wheel Transport Heritage Plaques have been installed on Sankey Viaduct to commemorate the importance of the canal and the railway crossing.

Another Blue Plaque will be installed at the United Reformed Church in the centre of St Helens. This will be placed above the gravestone of Henry Berry close to the church entrance.

We are working closely with St. Helens' Rotary to complete the first phase of the Heritage Trail which features the canal. This is due to be launched in late March or early April.

Our friend at the Phoenix Amateur Photographers is asking for people to be interviewed with their experiences of the canals of Halton.

On Monday 28th March we will be holding our Annual General Meeting at the Black Bull Hotel, Knowsley Road, St. Helens starting at 7-30pm. After the formal business of the meeting, the visiting speaker will be Doctor Mark Adams, one of Merseyside's leading archaeologists who will describe the Archaeological Excavation at the Prince's Half Tide Basin.

Please consider joining our Committee. We need some younger committee members to continue the work of the now-ageing members, at a time when their workload is increasing. Among our membership I am sure there are many who would like to come forward, but perhaps feel a bit nervous about committing themselves— well I stepped forward in 1985 having never been on any kind of committee... and the rest is history as they say.

Well, that's enough from me, enjoy this issue and remember we need your stories to fill these pages.

Best wishes,

Colin Greenall

The installation of the Red Wheel Transport Heritage Plaques at Sankey Viaduct

The plaques were installed by St. Helens Council on January 19th. Here is some background to the event:

"The National Transport Trust was founded in 1965 and is the only national body which promotes and encourages the preservation and restoration of Britain's transport heritage in all its forms – road, rail, wings and water. The Transport Heritage programme commemorates Britain's rich and globally important legacy in the development of transport. Its aim is to present a comprehensive overview for each site, in a way that will attract a new and wider audience. The most significant of these locations are marked by erecting a National Transport Trust Heritage Plaque or "Red Wheel" on the physical site.

Historic England gives equal status to the Trust's Red Wheels as to their own blue plaques. Dr Barrie Pennington nominated the canal and viaduct as a joint effort so that both can be commemorated as existing in the same place.

The Trust has awarded its prestigious plaques to the Sankey (St Helens) Canal and the Sankey 'Nine Arches' Viaduct as significant engineering 'firsts' and for their contribution to the Industrial Revolution. As the Canal used to run under Arch Three of the Viaduct, we have been able to secure permission to place the two 'Red Wheels' next to one another there."



The two plaques are propped against the base of the arch pier as the workers prepare the site

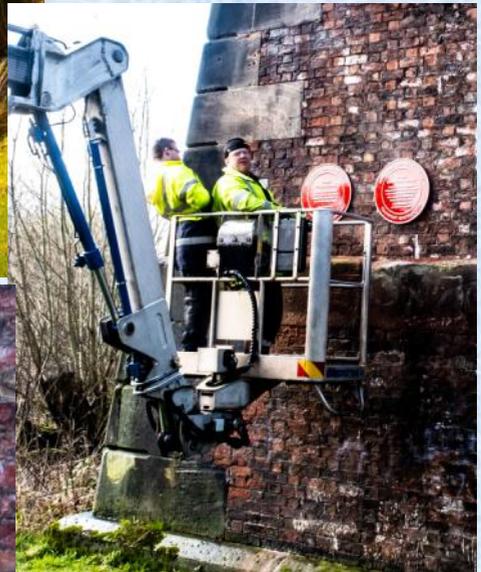


Left: Drilling the holes for the fixing bolts

Below right: 'How do they look?'

Below left: Close-up of the plaques

Bottom: Job done



News Round-Up Around the Boroughs

by Colin Greenall

HALTON

Swing Bridge at Spike Island: The latest news from Halton Council is that a temporary wooden footbridge will be installed on the site of the original railway swing bridge. The water supply issues remain the same, that they are assisting Warrington Council in their efforts to find a permanent solution.

Phoenix Amateur Photographers are appealing for members of the public who have a story to tell about the waterways, industry and local businesses to meet up with them between 1 and 3 pm on Wednesday Afternoons at the CHI Cafe, Phoenix Park Ave, Castlefields, Runcorn WA7 2LW . there is no fee, and all are welcome.

Contact Barrie Davidson, Email to : baznox45@gmail.com

ST HELENS



New Double Locks, Footpath Closure: People are asking why the footpath past the New Double Locks has been closed. The reason for the closure is a health and safety measure by St Helens Council who now deem the Locks as a danger to the public, due to the unsafe nature of the footbridges and surrounding area.

A second Blue Plaque to commemorate Henry Berry is to be installed on the United Reformed Church in St Helens Town Centre It will be placed above his gravestone near the entrance of the church.



Nine Arches (Groundwork) Project:

In March work starts on a project to clear trees from the area between the viaduct and Newton Common Lock (*Above*) to give a clearer view of this historic land-

mark. Groundwork will be leading the project in conjunction with St Helens Council and SCARS, and will be employing a contractor to cut down the trees and to chip them along with grinding down the stumps to ground level. The area will then be flailed and waste vegetation removed from the site, SCARS volunteers will be asked to assist at various times during the project. The inset image shows a site meeting with (L-R) Ian Hornby (SCARS), Rec Cathey & Ian Jones (Groundwork), Peter Morris (St Helens Council) and Dr Barrie Pennington (SCARS).

Heritage Trail: SCARS continues to work with St Helens Rotary on the Interpretation QR Codes.

At present they are looking at the interesting features along the town centre length of the canal such as Kurtz Basin by the railway crossing next to Matalan and the wooden roller on Corporation Street Bridge (*right*), which was put there when the flats were hauled by horses to protect the tow-rope from chaffing on the masonry of the bridge.

St Helens Rotary also has proposed that the section of canal between Corporation Street and Standish Street should be used as the site of a Watersports Centre (*See pic opposite*).





CRT have promised to bring forward the repairs to Old Double Locks (*See damage, above*) to this year instead of next. This, and work to the swan boom, is long overdue



Job done! L-R: Ian Jones (Groundwork), Colin Greenall (SCARS), Rec Cathey (Groundwork), Anthony Brandreth & Gary Stevens (St Helens Council), Dr Barrie Pennington (SCARS), Pete Morris & Mike Roberts (St Helens Council) pose beneath the newly-installed Transport Heritage Plaques on the third arch of the Sankey Viaduct.

WARRINGTON



Repairs to Fiddlers Ferry Lock: In preparation for repairing the leaking top gates, a coffer dam is being constructed above the gates. Blocks with Lego-like studs on the top, and matching holes underneath, are lowered into place.

Swing bridge at Sankey Bridges: Although Warrington Council had announced that the relief swing bridge at Sankey Bridges was to be removed last July, it is still in situ.

The Integrated Rail Plan for HS2: As you will all by now be aware the Integrated Rail Plan for HS2 intends to build a third high speed line between Liverpool and Manchester this it says will involve building 40 miles of new track linking Warrington with Marsden in Yorkshire and using the existing Warrington low level line into Liverpool, which crosses the Sankey Canal at Sankey Bridges on the site of a former railway swing bridge. We are hoping that HS2 will listen to us and raise the track bed to accommodate a pedestrian underpass plus space for canal boats to navigate below the track when plans are in place to make the canal navigable again.



On a recent visit to Sankey Bridges and the site of the intended low-level crossing, it was noted that works have been conducted on the towpath level crossing. New gates and warning signs have been installed, along with red and green lights to tell pedestrians when a train is due. (Above—the site of the former swing bridge, with, left, the new gates, signs, and signals)

Advance Notice of Future Work Parties

You will have read on page 8 that SCARS will be taking part in the project to clear away vegetation obscuring the view of the Sankey Viaduct—so our Work Parties are on the road again at last!

We will also be tackling overgrown vegetation at Blackbrook and elsewhere in the coming months.

Work Parties are organized at the weekends—and mid-week if volunteers request it. All tools are provided (but you can bring your own if you wish).

See below for how to volunteer:



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 at: colin.greenall@btinternet.com

Colin Greenall
SCARS Volunteerr Coordinator & Chairman

#5250647

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



St Helens Historical Society

Next Presentation for 2022

Monday 21st March

At 7.30pm

Via Zoom—or at the Friends' Meeting House, St Helens

Lewis Lesley:

Just the Ticket

Horse-drawn Trams in Liverpool

*For further details of the Zoom link, please contact
sthelenshistsoc@gmail.com.*

catalyst
MUSEUM GALLERY CENTRE AND HOUSE

Visit Schools Museum About Us Community
News Contact Us

What's On?

We put the fun in science

Catalyst is open Tuesday to Sunday offering a host of interactive exhibits, museum archives, historical galleries, family shows and hands on workshops!

Book your visit (essential) Donate



Farewell to the Burscough Heritage Group

The restoration of Burscough Wharf some years ago brought a welcome new venue to the village, with its shops, dining facilities and craft outlets. Whilst much of the practical work was carried out by contractors, a large part in the project was played by volunteers. They formed themselves into Burscough Village Canal Heritage Group with a later name change to the Burscough Heritage Group.

Over its life of ten years the BHG created a programme of activities designed to reach out to as many members of the local community as possible. Their activities included visits to schools and other organisations, an annual Heritage Weekend, evening meetings during the winter months and researching, creating, and installing information boards around the village. The Group also installed a bench beside the Leeds to Liverpool Canal to allow viewing of the wharf with its cobbled surface, its mooring bollards and restored crane along with passing vessels.

As with most societies, the most active were those with the most enthusiasm, the ones who turned up regularly and were willing to try any task. Again as with other societies, personnel changes, people grow older and are no longer able to work so hard so membership gradually reduces. This situation has overtaken the BHG so an appeal went out for new members. Sadly there was no response so reluctantly the society was wound up in September 2021. It is hoped that at some future time new people will come forward to continue the good works.



Councillor Kennedy and Tom Spencer first sit on the BHG bench
Image Cw 7775 by Colin Wareing of Colin and Carole's Creations

One of two new benches at Burscough Wharf dedicated by the Councillor at the Group's final public event on 17th October 2021. They were in memory of former members Kath Webster, Mike Allen and Sheila Petherbridge. (From the Group's Facebook pages)

**What do you know about the trades,
the people, and the industry
along the waterways of Halton?**



Made possible with

**Heritage
Fund**

**Phoenix
Amateur
Photographers**

A graphic of a camera lens with a yellowish-orange glow in the center, positioned behind the text 'Phoenix Amateur Photographers'.

**Phoenix Amateur Photographers, in partnership with
the Sankey Canal Restoration Society in a project to
produce a chronicled documentary about Halton's
waterways.**

**If you have ever lived or worked around these water-
ways, or have any knowledge to share, and/ or you
want to become part of the team, please contact:**

Barrie Davidson on 07776391196

Or email baznox45@gmail.com



The Anderton Lift: Re-build Anniversary Celebrations



Originally built in 1875, the lift allowed boats to move the vertical 50 feet between the Trent and Mersey Canal and the River Weaver, then a major navigable waterway. After more than 100 years of use the lift was closed in 1983 following problems with corrosion caused by the salt in the river and the surrounding salt fields.

For years the dismantled lift lay rusting in an adjacent field whilst

volunteers worked on fund raising and lobbying anyone with influence in the waterway world. Finally, in the Millennium year, the lift was reopened by HRH Prince Charles after reconstruction to restore the link between the two waterways.

However in the current year, the 20th anniversary of the rebuild, it has been announced that further work is needed to keep the lift in use. The whole structure needs a repaint whilst the hydraulic rams which support the caissons need some attention -all of which it is hoped to be achieved by 2023.

To celebrate the anniversary a season of events is planned to include a steam fair, open days, a 10K run and family fun days. The programme will commence on March 26th with public celebrations on site and the start of the season for boat trips. See the Canal & River Trust website for more information: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/anderton>



Born A Hero? - by David Long

Whilst researching in Ormskirk churchyard recently, I came across the headstone seen here—I think it was the skull and crossbones which caught my eye—and then the unusual middle name of the deceased. Then I spotted the next line: Late 17th Lancers & One of the Six Hundred. I realized then that this was a man who had taken part in The Charge of the Light Brigade during the Crimean War.

A bit of Googling took me to a website where I found James Ikin Nunnerley's account of the event—and some of his life story. His heroics started on the Bridge-water Canal when he was 12 years old. He and two brothers called Mason were in a rowing boat on the canal at Warrington. As they passed a barge, one of the brothers leapt up and sprang onto its deck. The impetus of his leap turned their boat over—with his brother trapped underneath. Young Nunnerley managed to rescue him and drag him to safety on the bank.

Sankey Canal & Sugar Refining - Part Seven

By Mike Harrison

Machining, granulation, and export.

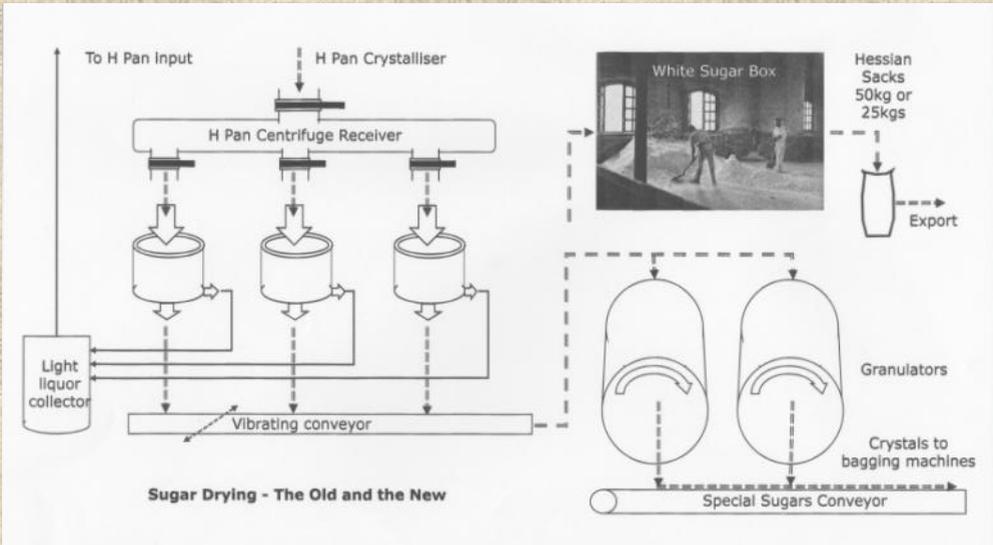
The H Pan crystalliser's output massecuite comprises large sugar crystals held within a light liquor with additional smears. This feeds a distribution vessel where hydraulically operated gate valves operate to provide in conjunction with their operating cycles, the massecuite to the three centrifuge machines.

Each centrifuge machine consists of a conical shaped basket covered in a stainless steel "cloth" (the holes are short narrow slots), with the major diameter 1.2m and spinning about a vertical axis.

The massecuite is fed via an infinitely variable orifice into the bottom of the conical basket, that spins at a maximum 1100rpm for 20s. Centrifugal force throws the massecuite upwards while the syrup is spun off. When the sugar is in a thin layer at the top of the basket it is considered as washed. It is then rinsed manually with hot corporation water using a low throughput, fan type spray. Discharging the sugar is achieved with the basket rotated at c5rpm and where a plough scrapes the sugar off the cloth and directs it to the bottom of the basket.

The light liquor is ultimately returned to the "H" pan as a smear reducing drink. The crystals drop directly onto a vibrating conveyor and ultimately to the back of rotating granulators. Here, steam pipes heat the air, which passes counter-currently to the sugar flow, evaporating off all remaining moisture. In the route described the special crystal sugars are conveyed to the "Specials Building" where they are sieved before onward packing and export.

There are several sugar lines operating elsewhere in the refinery. With adaptations, all sugars pass through similar granulator sequences and on into the various packing facilities.



Given the age of the refinery, granulators are a relatively new addition to the sugar conditioning process. Previously, all sugars were individually routed to the appropriate "box" in the white sugar conditioning house. Here, the sugar crystals are spread onto the floor of a steam-pipe heated room and turned constantly by hand until dry. No doubt this form of conditioning operated at Sankey Sugar.

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

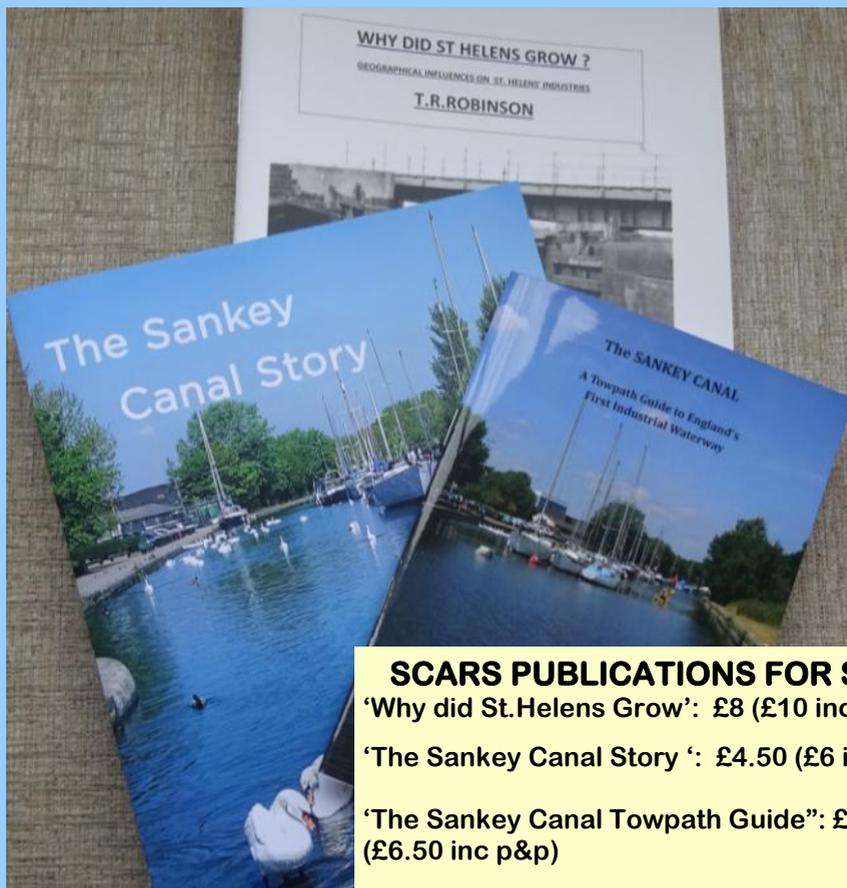
I want to Gift Aid my subscription and/or donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to the Sankey Canal Restoration Society

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



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 Sankey Canal in 1972

We continue displaying the collection of archive photographs, taken by Wilf Britch in 1972. Our thanks to him for sending these interesting images of a bygone time along the Sankey within the St Helens area



These two images follow on from one another geographically—the image below being taken from beyond the fence before the bend seen in the image above.

Above: Looking towards the former junction with the Sutton Branch of the Canal—to the right, where the two Pilkingtons' sand wagons stand. The footbridge, which looks as if it crosses the Canal, is entirely to its right—being there for workers to gain access across the sand yard to Watson Street. The sand was so fine that anyone walking over it would sink and drown. Windle Brook flows behind the wall on the left—note the re-used stone rail sleeper blocks in the canal wall—and the erosion of the towpath.

Below: Around the corner, looking towards Church Street, the rails used to run into Darglish's Foundry. The Lead Works and Todd's Foundry are beyond, with the Lyons Yard sidings buffers visible across the canal. Windle Brook crosses the canal under the straight section. Beyond, in the far distance, is the swing bridge carrying the line from St Helens Junction to Shaw Street (now Central) Station.

