

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

CANAL CUTTINGS

VOLUME 10 Number 4
Winter 2022



Season's Greetings

Winter comes to Blackbrook Basin

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

Registered Charity Number 702571

2 Scarisbrick Road, Rainford,

St. Helens WA11 8JL Tel: 01744 884000

Emails:

(1) colin.greenall@btinternet.com

(2) peterkeen21@aol.com

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

Founded 1985



**INLAND
WATERWAYS**
ASSOCIATION

The SCARS Executive Committee **for 2022—2023**

Chairman: Colin Greenall

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

Tel: 07506 936730 or 01744 731746

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: 07506 936730 or 01744 731746

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, Steven Davies, Linda Dirra, Neil Forshaw, Jamie Highton,

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 and Janet Henshaw (Warrington)

Paul McQuade (St. Helens)

Kevan Wainwright (Halton)

The Inland Waterways Association:

Colin Greenall (Chester & Merseyside Branch)

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

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VOLUME 10 NUMBER 4: Winter 2022

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



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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

The Chairman's Report—from Colin Greenall

.After the upheavals Covid-19 brought to our lives, most of us will have hoped for a quieter time in 2022, but as this year draws to its close we can only wonder at the events we have witnessed at home and abroad—but let's be positive, and look to the future with an open mind and grasp the opportunities that the forthcoming year will provide.

With this posting you will have received a copy of our 2023 Calendar, which I'm hoping you will enjoy looking at and find useful. Also included are the papers for our AGM which this year will take place on January 31st at Halton Stadium in Widnes, starting at 7.00pm. It will be followed by a presentation by Paul Wright from the 8D Association on the St Helens Canal & Railway Company. Wearing his Halton Council hat, Paul has also promised an update on the water supply issue at Spike Island. The AGM has been brought forward to allow us time to consider the governance of the Society in line with the needs of our commitment to the UNESCO Bid for World Heritage Status for the Canal and the Sankey Viaduct, and to improve the general running of the Society.

Next year will see the launch of our new website, which promises to be far superior to the present one, with many new features, including an on-line shop, easier ways to join the Society and renew subscriptions, an improved archive of photographs and many more interesting links.

In September the Inland Waterways Association launched its "Waterway for Today Report" which sets out twelve key benefits to canal restoration (to read the full report go to waterways.org.uk). So, let's look forward to the New Year and hope for better things to come.

May I wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Best wishes,

Colin Greenall

News Round-Up Around the Boroughs

by Colin Greenall

HALTON

Thursday 6th October: Sankey Canal stakeholder meeting: Spike Island Water Issues

In October Halton Council held a second meeting of stakeholders and interested parties about the issues of water shortage at Spike Island and the rest of the Sankey Canal in Widnes. Paul Wright from Halton Council put forward the Council's proposals to fill in the lock and make it accessible to high tides to fill the marina and then hold it back the water using one-way flaps in the stop planks. Naturally, some members of the audience bitterly rejected this option. More work is obviously needed to try and find a solution that suits everyone. A survey of the canal infrastructure is being undertaken by a company working on behalf of the Council to pinpoint areas of the canal bed seriously effected by leakage. There is to be another meeting in January to see what progress has been made

On Friday 14th October two SCARS members attended a meeting with Jimmy Unsworth from Halton Council, to work out what volunteers could do to help with the regeneration of Spike Island and the canal environment.

ST HELENS

Friday 9th & Saturday 10th September: St. Helens Heritage Open days:

The St. Helens Heritage Weekend event took place in one of the vacant premises in Church Street Arcade. Along with Friends of Cannington Shaw and St Helens Historical Society, SCARS provided a stand to show the visitors what the Societies are doing to keep alive the heritage of the town. Various members of the Society staffed the stand over the two days and reported that people are interested in what we trying to achieve.

Below: Steve Davies and the SCARS display at the St Helens Heritage Open Days



Saturday 8th October: Recruitment Day at the Bookstop Book shop

Steve Davies took the SCARS Exhibition & Sales stand to the Book Stop Book shop in Bridge Street, St.Helens and had a good day chatting with people about the canal and managed to recruit two new members and sell a some of our publications. Steve as suggested that he is willing to follow this up with further recruitment day in November and January.

Wednesday 12th October; St.Helens Heritage Trail Launch at the World of Glass

The meeting was opened by way of an introduction by the St.Helens Rotary Chairman Paul Winstanley, who thanked everyone for coming along to this event, he went on to praise the work of our society and thanked us for supplying the information that is available on this first QR plaque which is sited on the towpath just outside. After further notable members had given an appreciation of the work that St.Helens Rotary have put into this project we all made our way outside to the canal side where the plaque was duly unveiled by the Mayor of St.Helens, Councillor, Sue Murphy. This was followed by further speeches– but then the rain came, and we all went back inside for some light refreshments.

Below: The Mayor of St. Helens, Cllr. Sue Murphy, and Paul Winstanley chairman of St Helens Rotary, unveil the inaugural plaque of the St. Helens Heritage Trail.



Friday 1st November: Restoration Sub-Committee Meeting:-

Our second meeting of the Restoration Committee took place at Sankey Valley Heritage Visitor Centre, Blackbrook, St. Helens, when our guest were Andrew Darron from Groundwork and Dr Barrie Pennington who is leading on the World Heritage Status Bid for Sankey Viaduct and the Canal. During the discussion that followed it was realised our Committee would not meet the requirements of the UNESCO inspectors and so we are now in the process of looking at ways to make improvements to the way we work. Following on from the meeting we travelled down to Newton Common Lock and walked the length of the extent of the bid, under the viaduct and as far as Bradley Lock.



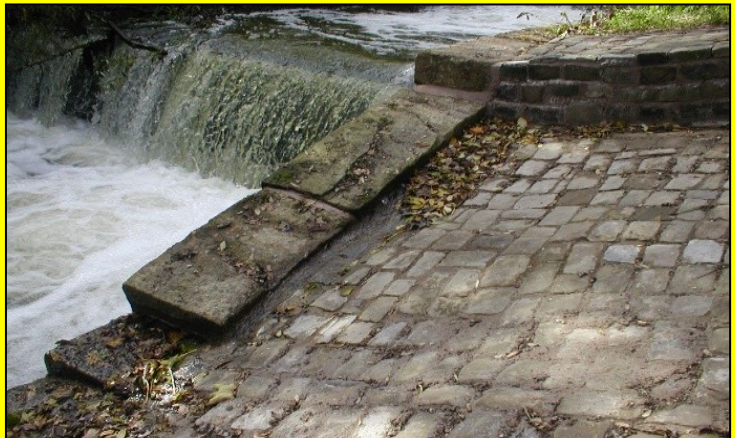
Members of the Restoration Sub-Committee, with Dr. Barrie Pennington and Andrew Darron, centre, at Bradley Lock

Borough of Culture

St.Helens has been chosen by Liverpool City Region to be the Borough of Culture for 2023. During the past three months the society has been present at Borough of Culture Heritage Sub-Group meetings to get heritage groups involved with projects to celebrate the heritage of St Helens and its surrounding districts.

Canal & Rivers Trust and Old Double Locks

Right: An image of the work Canal & Rivers Trust carried out to repair the collapse of the stone sets behind the lock wall.(as reported in the last issue of Canal Cuttings). However, the work soon proved to be inadequate as heavy rain and high-water levels began to show that water was once again getting behind the stone blocks of the lock wall. The Society has been in touch with CRT, and have arranged further meetings with their engineers in an effort to find a way of carrying out a more effective repair.



WARRINGTON

Monday 28th November; Fiddlers Ferry Power Station Site Development Consultation meeting at Halton Stadium

Ian Hornby and I attended this meeting which took place at Halton Stadium in Widnes, even though the actual site of the power station is within the Warrington boundary. This is the second of the consultative events that are taking place to assess what residents would like to see once work commences on the new development. Phase one includes the demolition of four of the cooling towers and the clearance of the coal stock yard (*Below*) to make way for the building of small industrial units etc.

We had a long chat with Keiron Tames, Emma Dickson and Charlotte Leech from Peel Natural Resources and Energy, about how best the canal could be incorporated into the development and how beneficial it would be to the people who will live there. Although the canal is not in their ownership it runs through the site and SCARS feels that it should be viewed as an asset to its overall development. This led to us progressing to arranging a site visit for the end of January. We will then be able to show them first hand some of the issues that they may be able to assist us with—and how the Canal may assist their development. We were very pleased to learn that Peel have already offered Halton and Warrington Councils use of their Bridgewater Canal Maintenance team to help solve some of the leakage problems and any other issues that are at present causing concern.

To learn more about the public consultation visit the website for the Fiddlers Ferry Public Consultation ([engaged.Space](#)).





The SCARS 2023 Calendar is now available—£7, plus £1.65 Postage—from Colin Greenall (colin.greenall@btinternet.com), or send a cheque (made payable to “Sankey Canal Restoration Society”) to him at 16 Bleak Hill Road, St Helens WA10 4RW. Also on sale at *The Bookstop* bookshop in Bridge Street, St Helens.



NOTICE

The Annual General Meeting of the Sankey Canal Restoration Society

Society Members are reminded that this year’s Annual Meeting has been brought forward from its usual date at the end of March.

TUESDAY, 31ST JANUARY 2023

At 7 pm

At the DCBL STADIUM

LOWER HOUSE LANE, WIDNES WA8 7DZ

Our Work Parties

Our Work Parties are now back on the job. Reports of their recent activities will be found on the preceding pages. You can see how even a handful of willing volunteers can quickly transform a location on the canal. Why not join them?

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

Dates and venues may be found on our social media platforms. How to volunteer:

WANTED - Volunteers

Our Work Party is now back at 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 Volunteer Coordinator & Chairman

#528064

catalyst
SCIENCE EDUCATION CENTRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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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

Work Party Reports

Saturday 3rd September : Litter Pick at Spike Island

Approximately 30 volunteers took part in a “Litter Pick” organised by the Spike Island & Canal Restoration Group and cleared the towpath and surrounding area of litter collecting 62 bags, which were left to be collected by Halton Council.

Sunday 4th September::Scrap Pull

In a joint effort between SCARS and the Spike Island & Canal Restoration Group a party of nine volunteers removed items of scrap metal from the canal bed,. The items recovered included a safe, and two oxygen tanks, - along with the usual supermarket trolleys, and bikes etc..



Some of the volunteers who carried out the Scrap Pull—and some of their haul—a good day's work!

Sunday 18th September: Bewsey Lock

Work commenced to clear the canal bank opposite the overflow at Bewsey Lock. This involved cutting back unwanted vegetation and then exposing the coping stone by digging out the overlay of moss and grass etc. Four volunteers had an enjoyable four hours uncovering the stonework and making the area more interesting to the many walkers and cyclist who use the towpath.

Below: The upper pictures show what our volunteers had to tackle—and the lower ones show their achievements.



Saturday 8th October: Litter Pick at Blackbrook

10 volunteers collected 10 bags of rubbish from the towpath and surrounding area of the canal from Carr Mill Dam to the Old Double Locks. We soon learned why we found less litter than we had expected—

another group had been out earlier in the week, and had done an excellent job, not leaving much to be collected.

However, this gave the time and opportunity for two volunteers to remove a couple of trees that had fallen into the canal. Amongst the volunteers were three St Helens Councillors who appeared to enjoy being out in the fresh air.

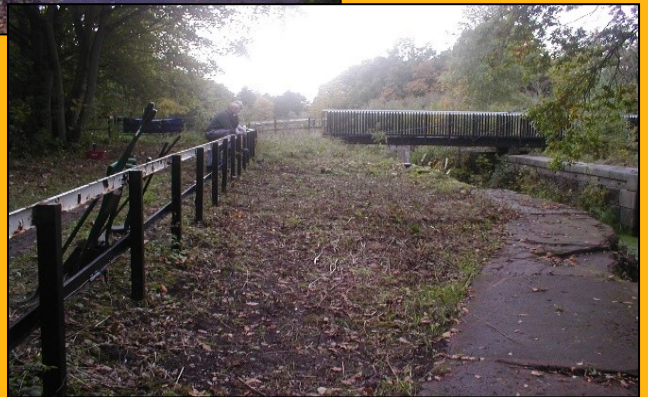
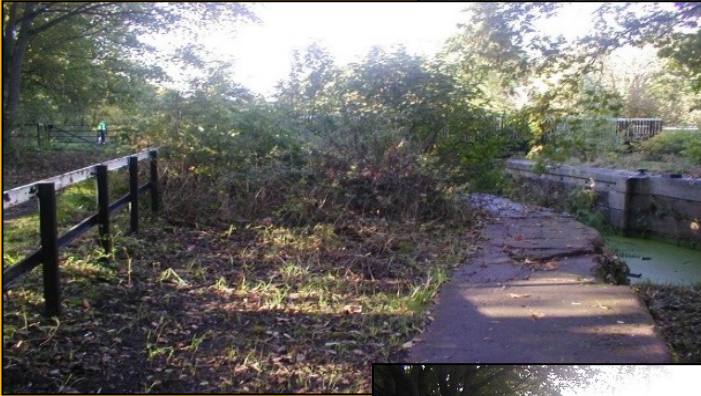
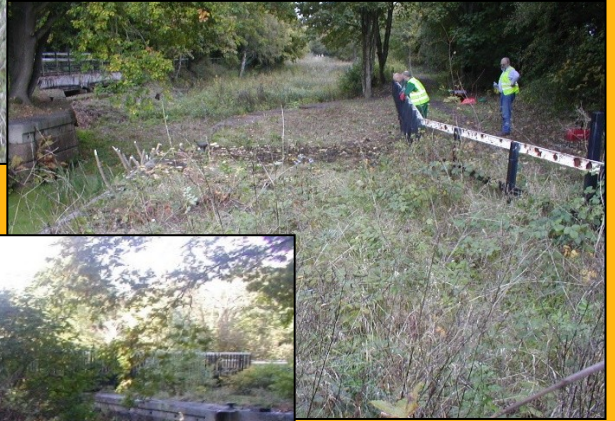


Sunday 16th October: Bewsey Lock

Four of our volunteers returned to Bewsey Lock for more vegetation clearance. As can be seen from the pictures below a lot of effort went into clearing the area with a couple tree stumps needing pulling to stop the regrowth of trees in the wrong place. The volunteers also found time to remove a tree which had fallen into the lock chamber.



Before images are to the left—with
After to the right.



Sunday 30th October: Winwick Dry Dock

It's been quite a while since Winwick Dry Dock has had a visit from our volunteers—so our six hardy souls had their work cut out. It was a chilly morning in late October when they braved the cold dawn to begin clearing the vegetation, which seems to grow with profusion in this deep trough of an ecosystem within the depths of the dock. However, they soon got to grips it, and after a morning of challenging work the results were there to be seen.

Below: The upper pictures show what our volunteers had to tackle—and the lower ones show their achievements.



Sunday 13th November; Bewsey Lock

Once more at Bewsey lock, continuing the clearance of overgrowth on the lock surrounds. At first the weather was cold and misty, but as the morning progressed the sun appeared and with that came the walkers and cyclists who stopped to ask what was going on, our five volunteers worked hard to make a lot of difference as can be seen from the pictures below.



Saturday 26th November; Winwick Dry Dock

Its back to Winwick Dry Dock to finish off the clean-up started on Sunday 30th October. Today six volunteers worked clearing more unwanted vegetation from the dock walls. The weather was kind, mild and dry, and plenty of good humour was heard coming from attached to the dock floor. Prompting the proposal to replace them with replica blocks in the future.

Compare the scenes of today's work with a month ago, and you'll see how effective the work of our volunteers has been at Winwick.



One of the wooden blocks that are attached to the dock floor, is the end of a railway sleeper where the rail chair was attached. If you look closely, you can see the impression of the chair in the wood.



Henry Berry

Your chairman recently gave a presentation about the Sankey Canal to members of the mixed fellowship group at the Ormskirk Street United Reform Church, in St.Helens, and a week or so later I received this copy of Henry Berry's biography from Mr David Hickman who said we are free to publish it in Canal Cuttings if it will be of interest to our readers.



Henry Berry (1719/20—1812) Civil Engineer

Henry Berry was born at the village of Parr, near St.Helens in Lancashire, and is thought to have spent his childhood there. No record of his birth survives, but his parents are known to have been buried at the dissenting chapel in St Helens. He was the overseer of the poor at Parr in 1742, the surveyor from 1743 and his name appears in local records until 1747. He left for Liverpool in that year and the city was his home for the rest of his life. However, he retained his links with the chapel at Parr, becoming a trustee in the 1750s.

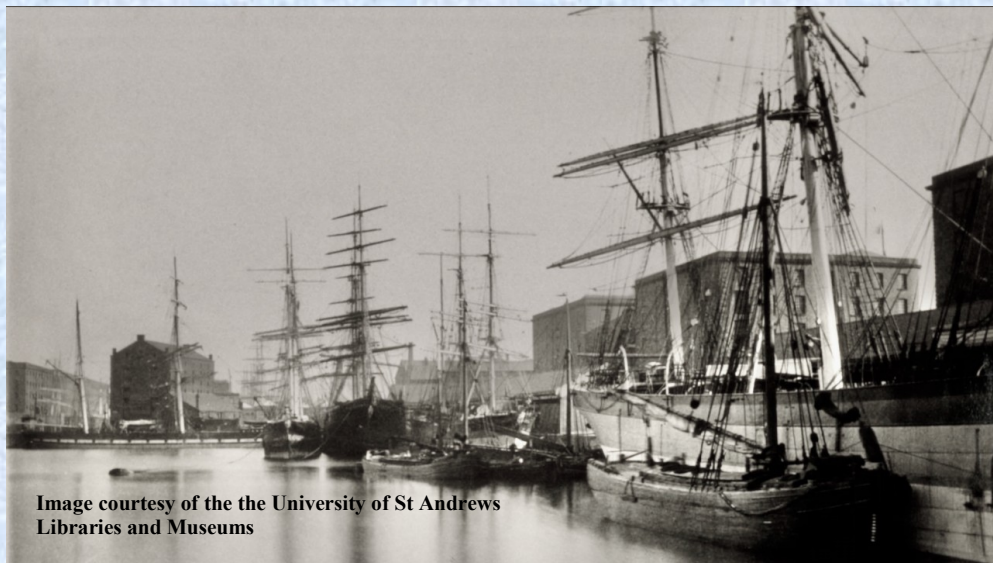


Image courtesy of the the University of St Andrews Libraries and Museums

By 1750, aged thirty, Berry was clerk to Thomas Steers (d.1750) a dock engineer employed by the Corporation of Liverpool. He may have assisted Steers in a survey of the river Boyne in Ireland in 1748, and after Steer's death Berry took over as Liverpool's Dock Engineer. His first task being the completion of the Salthouse Dock opened in 1753. (*Above*—in the age of sail, with Mersey flats, for which the Sankey Canal was built, alongside ocean-going ships for which they acted as lighters.) He retained this post until his retirement in 1789, but he was allowed leave of absence by his employers to pursue other tasks.

Usually described as a surveyor or engineer, after his retirement Berry adopted the status of a gentleman. There is no evidence that he ever married.

In 1754 Berry surveyed the Sankey Brook with William Taylor, with a view to making it navigable for the transport of coal from pits east of Prescot to Liverpool. An enabling act was obtained in 1755, but the evidence suggests that soon afterwards Berry came to favour a canal rather than a river-improvements scheme, and that with the approval of only one of the undertakers, John Ashton, Berry constructed a canal in a secretive manner, to forestall opposition to the idea. This canal, ten miles long with nine pound locks, was completed by November 1757. It was the first substantial dead water navigation built in England, preceding the better-known Bridgewater canal by some years. The effectiveness of Berry's work on the Sankey probably inspired James Brindley and the duke of Bridgewater. Berry's success led to his employment on the Weaver navigation in 1758.

He surveyed the river and proposed a canalisation scheme. He was one of three undertakers but the collapse of Pickering Lock near the mouth of the river was held to be his fault and he was dismissed from this position in 1760. As a result, he was never thereafter employed on a river improvement or canal scheme.

Berry continued to oversee the expansion of the Liverpool dock system. In 1756 he had constructed a graving dock on the west side of the dry basin (subsequently Canning dock), and in 1765 he constructed two more. By 1771 he had completed the George Dock, by 1788 the Kings dock, and he had begun the Queens dock by his retirement in 1789. Other local work included an appointment to supervise the maintenance of

Liverpool roads and pavements in 1766, the investigation of a bridge building contract for a local turnpike trust in 1772, and a survey of the Mersey shoreline for the board of ordinance to site three forts.

In 1774 the corporation of Hull formally approached the Liverpool corporation for permission to use Berry's services, and from 1774 until 1781 he was employed as the dock engineer at Hull, overseeing the construction of the largest commercial dock in the country. Since he remained at Liverpool, supervising the work by visits and letter, Luke Holt, was appointed to assist him. In the 1780s Berry was also involved in the first unrealised schemes to bridge the Menai Straits.

Whether Berry continued to give advice after his retirement has not been ascertained. He died at Liverpool on 30th July 1812 in his ninety third year and was buried at the same chapel at St Helens as his parents. His estate included property at Parr and houses in Duke Street, Kent Street and Berry Street in Liverpool. After bequests to several local charities, after ample provision for his housekeeper Mary Pembridge, it passed to his nephews and nieces and their children.

After consulting his will these changes have been made. A Codicil specifically asks that he be buried in the chapel yard and that his parent's grave in the chapel not be opened.

Additional Notes

Will reference: Lancashire RO, WCW Aug 1812

Sources:- F.R. Pope, Transcripts of registers of Independent Chapel, St. Helens 1711-1837 (1981) copy at Genealogists Society.



St. Helens Historical Society Programme for 2023

Monday, January 16th: MY UNCLE'S LIVERPOOL
Ken Robinson plus three SHHS Members

Monday, February 20th: GROWING UP WITH RUGBY LEAGUE
Alex Service

Monday, March 20th: OUR CANAL IS BORN
Peter Keen

Monday, April 17th: OUR CANAL EXPANDS
Peter Keen

Monday, MAY 15th
MARY MERRYWEATHER: PIONEER NURSE AND POLITICAL REFORMER.
Chris Jones

*All meeting will be held at the Friends Meeting House,
Church Street, St. Helens WA10 1AJ
Commencing at 7.30pm*



**INLAND
WATERWAYS
ASSOCIATION**

IWA Chester & Merseyside Branch Programme of Meetings

All meetings will be held at 7.45 pm on the second Tuesday of the month,
in the Café at the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum, CH65 4FW.

A Fun Raffle is run at our meetings and our sales shop is open for Publications

10 January 2023

Ian Wilson talks on the history and restoration of the Kennet and Avon Canal

14 February 2023

Les Green talks on the Daniel Adamson, the restored Liverpool steam tug
boat now operating on the river Weaver

14 March 2023: Branch AGM - Speaker TBA

In the last issue of Canal Cuttings, we reported on the death of Tony Hirst, a former curator of the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port.

Some years ago, Tony came to one of our members meetings to give a presentation on the Hidden History of Canals. What follows is a summary of his presentation, with pictures from my personal collection featuring some of the locations mentioned and various other points of interest.

Colin Greenall

Hidden History of the Canals By Tony Hirst,

To begin with Tony stated that most of what he would be showing us was in an area south of Manchester and no lower than Birmingham

Tony began his presentation with a view of the front cover of a Meccano Magazine, which showed a picture of **Anderton Boat Lift** and saying how rural it looked in the picture. It was from this view that his interest in canals grew and not long after he along with a friend cycled from **Poynton** to **Northwich** to find this structure only to discover it was in the midst of the chemical industry of the area.

From here on we were entertained with many fascinating pictures beginning with a view of an embankment somewhere on the **Llangollen Canal**, this turned out to be the old track bed of the **Glyn Valley Tramway** that ran from **Glyn Ceiriog** to **Chirk** carrying slate and granite. An earlier visit to **Glyn Ceiriog** had revealed the old station just as it had been left and a more recent outing there had shown that every building was still present and that it was now a visitor centre and there were plans to re-open part of the tramway.



Chirk Aqueduct and railway viaduct

The canals of **Shropshire** were a complicated system of narrow waterways and tub boat canals, linking **Shrewsbury** and other towns and villages with the Liverpool and Birmingham Canal (now known as the Shropshire Union Canal) at **Norbury**. The hilly nature of this area along with a lack of water supply meant that other ways of changing levels had to be found, this is where incline planes appeared. **Trench incline** was shown, and its workings explained along with the tub boats that used them. These craft were 20ft by 6ft and were hoisted up the inclines on cradles to keep the boats level. Other inclines were shown including the **Hays Incline** at the **Iron Bridge Gorge Museum**.

A feature of these canals was that some of the locks had guillotine bottom gates and were 81ft long by 6ft 7inches wide enabling them to take four tub boats at a time, some of the remains of these structures can still be found although their once rural surrounding is a thing of the past.

The aqueduct at **Longdon on Tern** is said to have been designed by Thomas Telford but Tony seems to dismiss this, saying that Telford had only just been appointed as engineer to the canal after the first engineer Josiah Clowes had died and that Telford had no experience of working with cast iron, and therefore suggests that William Reynolds, the iron master from Ketley, may have designed it.

In **Shrewsbury** we saw the **Canal Tavern** with the remains of the dry canal bed behind it, nearby was the canal interchange, also the first iron frame building built in the 1700s, a canal bridge nameplate **Factory Bridge** was also to be found

To the east of Shrewsbury is the canal side village of **Uffington** with its wharf and cottages still intact but no water

The warehouse at **Wappenshall Basin** is of great architectural interest with its internal unloading/loading bay. Telford Council have bought this building and let it to the local Canal Society for a peppercorn rent so that they can restore it to its former glory

Tony kept on stressing the need to keep your eyes open for the smallest of items, such as the old light bracket on the wall by the entrance to **Harecastle Tunnel** at **Kidsgrove** near Stoke-on-Trent on the Trent and Mersey Canal, this being a relic from when the canal was busy with night time workings through the tunnel, and the wooden roller at the bottom gate of one of the nearby locks with an interesting curved metal guard on the top to stop ropes getting stuck in gap between the wall and the roller.

Small inlets in the off-side bank further down the canal indicate old loops. Stonewalls showing the site of loading wharfs

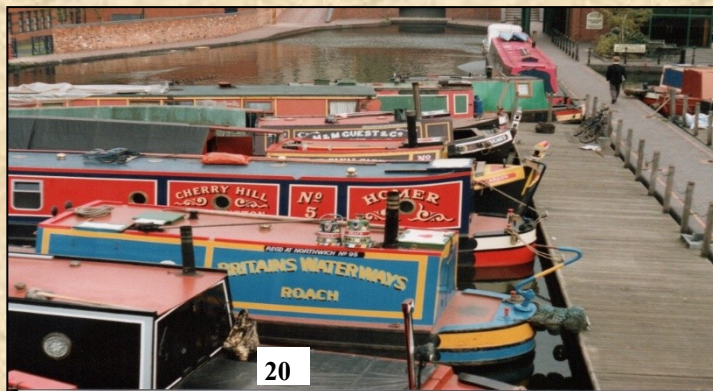
On the **Caldon Canal** something that is not really all that old is the loading ramp at **Ivy Bridge** now in a new housing development, this was where pottery was off loaded from the boats that travelled about two miles between two of the Milton Potteries in the 1980s.

Tony then began to move from place to place showing several types of traffic and location where buildings had changed, some of good and some of bad design

Back on the Shroppie at **Knighton** we saw boats delivering milk in churns for Cadburys this was brought in from local farms for the production of milk powder and then used to make "Dairy Milk Chocolate"

In **Manchester** at **Barton**, we saw a different type of cargo, the manure boat, what a job that must have been.

Then on to **Birmingham**, here we saw a now and then view of the canal looking towards **Gas Street**, some of the newbuildings don't seem to fit in with the canal but then that's progress.



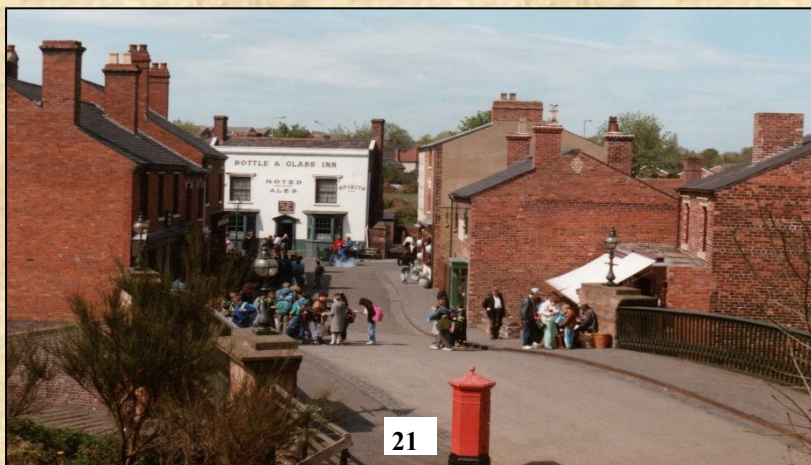
At the top of **Camp hill Locks** there is a new sanitary station that was built as part of some new development which never happened and so it remains there unused behind fencing. Nearby the locks are covered in graffiti, making a point that at one time BW staff would have cleared it off as part of their daily routine. Next, we looked along the **Garrison Branch**. This dead straight length of canal has ten bridges all within close proximity to each other. At one time this area was dark and gloomy with high buildings on each side, now most of the building have gone and the light streams in between the bridges, making for a fascinating view of an industrial canal.



Wolverhampton
Top Lock

Broad Street Bridge in Wolverhampton was shown along with **Broad Street Basin and Warehouse**. The bridge is now in the Black Country Museum having been saved when the road was widened. The warehouse and basin were in use as a British Waterways maintenance yard. The building contained a lot of modern machinery as part of its everyday use. British Waterways wanted to upgrade this building by putting in new windows to give extra light, but it was a listed building and permission was not granted for such work. British Waterways then vacated the warehouse, and a nightclub took over—and they were allowed to put in a large doorway. Money talks in these matters, but the night club venture failed, and the warehouse now stands empty. Another interesting item was a sign pointing the way to the “HORSE AIR RAID SHELTER.”

Black Country
Museum -
Broad Street
Bridge

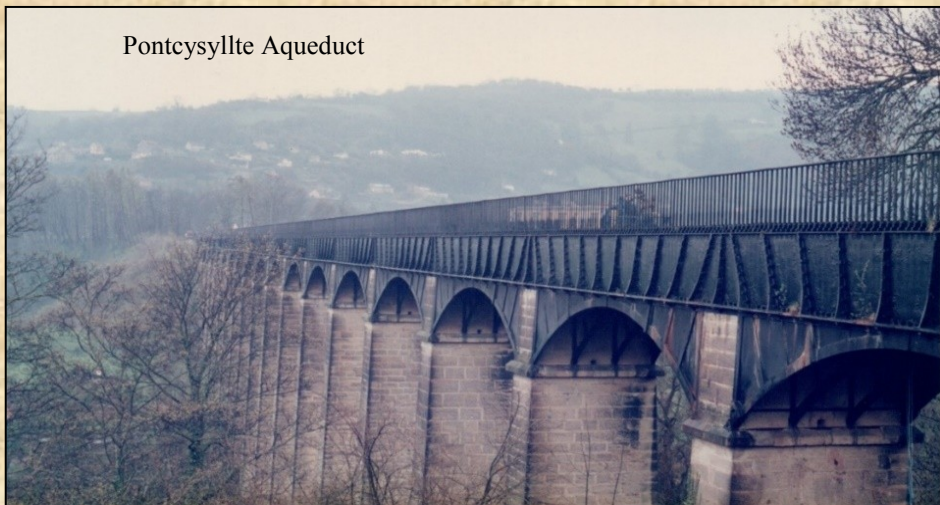


Photographs can sometime throw up more question than answers and the next slide was one such question, where was it? The picture was of a lock cottage similar to the ones on the **Chester Canal**, but where, Tony said, there had originally been nine lock cottages but only three now remained. In front of this particular cottage was a round brick-built lock keeper's hut peculiar to the **Chester Canal**. It was then realised that this photograph had been printed the wrong way round—and that the hut had been demolished revealing the cottage to be the one at **Greenfield Lock in Chester**.

A picture of a hook on the nose of **Wharton Lock** top gates was next and we were asked if anyone had any idea what it was for, the hook faced away from the lock, Tony soon answered the puzzle, the hook was used to assist horse drawn boats to get out of the lock. A short length of rope was hooked over the hook and attached to the boat, with the normal towing rope attached to the horse this gave double purchase to get the boat moving out of the lock as the boat passed the hook the rope slipped off the hook and was then stowed away until the next time it was needed.

The canal basin at the **Trevor** end of **Pontcysyllte Aqueduct** on the **Llangollen Canal** was shown and we were told how at one time this had been intended as the original route to Chester, the basin had been in use as a railway-canal inter change, it is now used for

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct



At **Chirk Bank** an old, corrugated iron shed had laid there locked up for years and when eventually opened it turned out to be a stable complete with horse tack etc. Other stables were mentioned, like the one at **Wheelock** on the **Trent and Mersey Canal**. Again this was complete even down to a candle in the holder on the end of the stall partition. This was something that was missing at the stable at Chirk Bank and actually dismissed has being a fire risk when a local old timer had pointed out that the canal holder was not there. Unfortunately, the stable at Wheelock was changed into a sanitary station by British Waterways and so another historic artefact was lost. Two other locations on the **Llangollen Canal** were next. The first at **Ellesmere** where the maintenance yard main building has been converted into residential living accommodation and the second on the **Prees Branch** at **Edaston Wharf** where the warehouse now stands out as a well-maintained residential property.

The final part of the presentation was about the **Montgomery Canal**. This section of canal runs for some 34 miles from **Frankton** to **Welshpool** and then on to **Newport**. Built in three stages its main cargo being limestone for the production of lime at the many limekilns along its banks, this was used as fertiliser for the surrounding agricultural land and beyond. The locks at **Frankton Junction** were shown and mention made of how they had laid derelict for many years until restored by the volunteers.



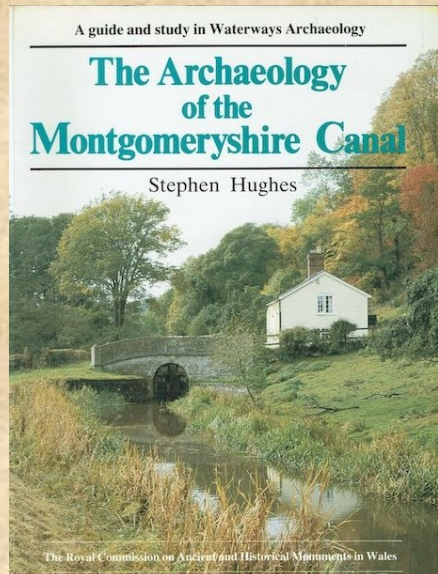
Frankton Lock before restoration

At the bottom of the locks there stands a cottage with a rather nice sunken garden this in actual fact was once a dry dock and the buildings were once the boat yard of John Beach, where L.T.C. Rolt's uncle had his narrow boat "Cressy" converted into houseboat before he sold it to him.

A flyboat service for light goods and passengers was also in operation. For example, you could leave **Newport** at 7am and connect with a train at **Rednal** and be in Liverpool by 4-05 pm, or connect with trains to places such as Chester and Shrewsbury.

Other places of interest that are well worth a visit are the Llanymynech limestone quarries and the Canalside settlement of Garthmyl with its Warehouses, Maltings, Cottages, and limekilns.

Tony finished off by recommending a book by Stephen Hughes called "**The Industrial Archaeology of the Montgomeryshire Canal**"



First stage plans to create over 2,100 jobs at former Warrington power station unveiled

First phase redevelopment plans for the former Fiddler's Ferry Power Station in Warrington launch today which will unlock over 2,100 jobs and address a long-term shortage of modern employment space in the area.

Peel Natural Resources and Energy, which acquired the decommissioned coal-fired power station in July, is consulting on proposals to demolish and develop the initial 90 acres of the brownfield site to make way for 1.35 million square foot of employment space across four units. (See concept plan below)

The first phase will be worth £126m per year to the local economy when complete and it will create 452 construction jobs each year across the four-year build programme.

It will initially require the demolition of the coal stockyard and associated buildings which Peel NRE applied to Warrington Council for in September 2022. The demolition of the four northern cooling towers will happen later next year.

Peel NRE's plans for Fiddler's Ferry are being developed in line with the 2021 Warrington Local Plan which identifies the development of around 250-acres for employment use and a minimum of 1,760 new homes at the Widnes Road site.

Peel NRE's 10 to 15-year mixed-use masterplan for the 820-acre site includes the demolition of the former power station to create industrial and logistics space to help boost jobs and a new sustainable community delivered in partnership with Peel L&P's home-builder Northstone to help meet local housing demand.

Future will also include restoration of ash lagoons as extensive new parkland and wildlife areas to enhance recreation and the environment.



The Sankey Canal runs from left to right across the bend in the Mersey, where the ash lagoons are located. To SCARS it seems natural to incorporate the canal into Peel's development plans—especially once the water supply problem is resolved, and the hoped-for re-opening of the canal between Spike Island and Fiddlers Ferry comes about.

A Development Framework is being prepared to set out the main principles of what will be delivered at the site, and a wider masterplan, will be consulted on early next year. Kieran Tames, Development Director for Peel NRE, part of regeneration business Peel L&P, said: “We recognise the importance the former power station has had in the area for over the past 50 years, and we want to invite local people to have their say on securing the future development of the site.

“Our regeneration plans for Fiddler’s Ferry will create new opportunities for investment, jobs and family housing for Warrington, Widnes, Halton, and surrounding communities.

“Our masterplan will create over 2,100 jobs and this first phase addresses a chronic shortage of modern employment space in Warrington and Widnes and will reduce the need for people to travel longer distances to work by helping companies to invest locally. We will also work with bus operators to improve transport to the development.

“Since we acquired the site earlier this year, we have been speaking extensively with key stakeholders across the region and we are looking forward to hearing initial feedback on our phase one plans from the local community.”

Initial demolition work is expected to start early next year. As many materials as possible from the first phase demolition will be recycled and reused for the development of the site.

Fiddler’s Ferry Power Station, formerly owned by SSE Thermal, was decommissioned in 2020.



The four cooling towers on the northern end of the site are scheduled for demolition in the Spring of 2023—just over 60 years since planning consent was submitted for their Construction. When fully operational from 1973 its eight cooling towers created vast clouds from the steam they exhausted. One of the towers was brought down in January 1984, Appropriately on Friday the 13th.

As the towers are highly visible over a wide area—as far as North Wales, the Pennines, and the Peak District—hundreds of thousands of people will be able to find a suitable point from which to witness their demolition.

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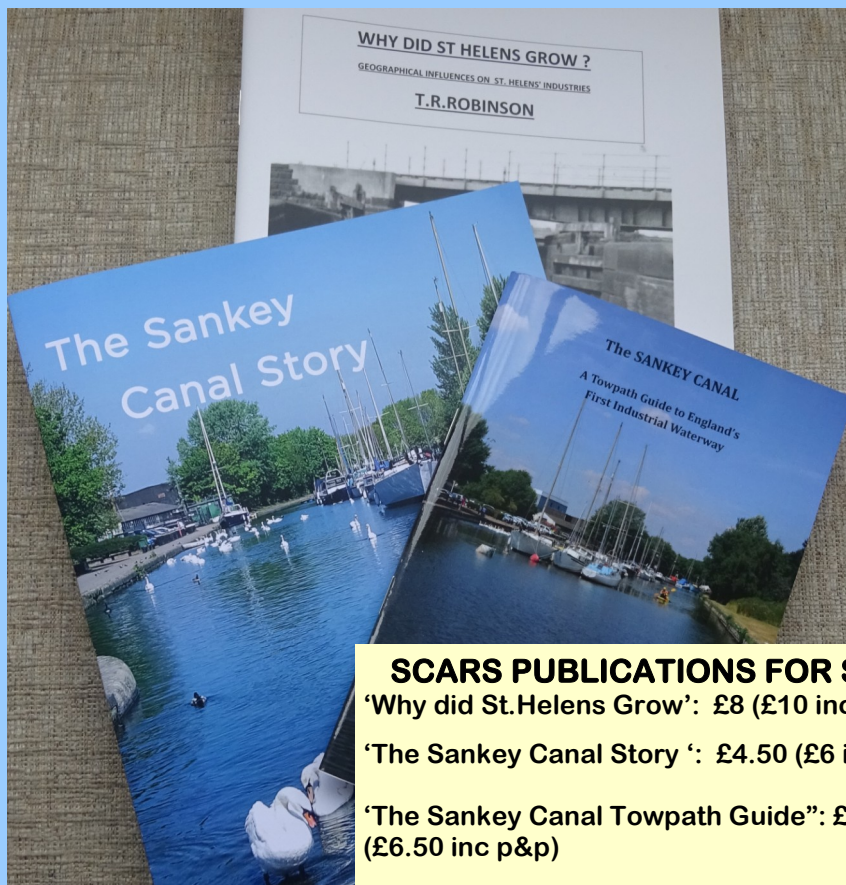
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SCARS PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

'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



Above: Looking East towards the town centre, the former swing bridge for the St Helens Junction to Shaw Street line with, to the left, the towpath crossing what was the entrance to Kurtz's basin (now infilled). To the right are the buildings of St Helens Lead Works, with Pilkington's Glass Works in the misty distance.

Below: Taken from the same position, but now looking West to where the canal has been culverted under Church Street. On the left bank, where the red car is, was the site of Melling's Stone Yard. Beyond the roadway are the buildings of the now demolished St Helens Abattoir, while the buildings of Todd Brothers, Steel Fabricators and Stockist once stood behind the photographer's position

