

GRAND TRUNK



*Harry Arnold MBE
(1937-2018)
Former chairman and Vice-president*



January/February 2019

www.trentandmerseycanalsociety.org.uk

Chairman's Bit

Let's start the New Year with some good news! The "Middlewich Breach" has finally been fixed and the canal was re-opened on Friday 21st December. The following day we cruised our boat home from Barnton and, after lots of revving and mud-swirling, moored her safely outside our house. The canal was very busy for the next few days, mainly with boats heading back home through the re-opened section before the scheduled stoppages on our own canal started on January 2nd. Even now there is still a fair bit of traffic.



This welcome re-opening means that there should be lots more boats passing through the Cheshire Locks in 2019 than there were in 2018. You will often have read (either in *Grand Trunk* or on our website) of our work (along with IWA NSSC) on these locks since we started in August 2012. Finding details of when we worked on a particular lock has become slower as each year passes with more web-site pages to scroll through. Recently I compiled an index of these working-parties for our website so that readers can now quickly go straight to the relevant web-site page to read about a particular lock. This index (www.tamcs.org.uk/cheshire-locks) shows that we have worked on 22 locks so far, leaving just 4 more to go before we can start all over again. Hopefully the locks will still be in much better condition than when we first repainted them!

Finally, you will probably have already read lots of obituaries for Harry Arnold in other magazines. So, instead of simply printing the same long series of facts about his life, our editor has chosen to print memories from the early days of our own society (some from people who knew him then, others from Harry himself in an article he wrote for our website).

Editorial

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Our Christmas season got off to a great start with *The Lady Beth* finally making it home. It was wonderful to turn into The Middlewich Branch and Wardle Lock without having to give it longing looks as we crept past. The lock cottage family had been betting over which boats would return first and handing out chocolates to every crew. We were a day late as I was at work on 21st, so we got the last two sweeties– thank you very much!

Following a hectic family Christmas, it was wonderful to provision the boat at the bottom of the garden (we promise never to take her prime location for granted again). Unable to get back from Llangollen (as Hurlston Bottom Lock closed for rebuilding on 2nd January), we spent a couple of nights going up as far as Wrenbury, then returned to the Shroppie main line. Our goal was an evening meal at Goldstone Wharf before returning. I am pleased to report that the food is still excellent! We were wet, cold and muddy much of the time, but the cut was really quiet and we moored up for lunch every day (never been known before). Our boating cats behaved impeccably, even returning home with a pet mouse in residence in the bathroom (this has since been released into our garden, completely unharmed). We spent our evenings watching all 14 episodes of *The Jewel in the Crown* while sitting by a roaring fire. Still my favourite cruise of the year!

Now that we are once again connected to our beloved Trent & Mersey, next planned trip is renewing our acquaintance with the Four Counties Ring, just a few jobs to do on the boat first– oh and I'd better send out *Grand Trunk!*

Please send contributions for the next issue to me, Margaret English, by e-mail to margaretetlm@hotmail.com, by post, or by hand. Remember, this is *your* magazine. Contributions from the South especially welcome!
Last date for inclusion in the March/April edition is **01/03/2019!**

Back to Brittany

After a wonderfully hot summer at home we returned to Northern France in September where the lovely weather continued for the three weeks that we spent in Brittany. We walked beside some of the Ille et Rance Canal which runs from the tidal lock at Lyvet (south of St Malo) through the Brittany countryside to Rennes – a distance of 53 miles with 48 locks.

We walked along the towpath the four miles from Dinan to the lock at Lyvet and in the marina spotted two narrowboats amongst the many cruisers and yachts. Until 1830 the River Rance was tidal as far as Dinan but a dyke was built at Lyvet in the early 19th century as part of the Ille et Rance Canal thereby leading to commercial carrying supplying wood, cider and agricultural produce. A bridge was built in 1896 but destroyed in August 1944. It was replaced in 1950 and a swing bridge by the lock was added in the 1970s.



Dinan Port From Viaduct

We spent a while in the nearby medieval town of Dinan which must be one of the prettiest towns in Brittany. There's a 13th century castle, twelve towers and walls surrounding the old town which is a warren of narrow streets with many half timbered buildings. The Rue de la Cordonnerie is pedestrianised and is known as "thirsty street" as it has nine bars! Dinan is built on top of a hill from which there is a brilliant view down to the port on the Ille et Rance Canal.

The quay at the Dinan port is lined with old stone houses, an abundance of traditional restaurants and crêperies, and chandlers' shops. There is also a very narrow stone bridge across the navigation dating from the 15th century. By the early 19th century this bridge was too narrow and weak to cope with the increasing traffic. A new viaduct was built over the navigation which was opened in 1852 and consists of ten arches supporting the 820 ft long structure at a height of 131 feet – there are amazing views from there if you have a head for heights.



We walked along the towpath from the port under the viaduct to Pont Perrin lock where there was a very pretty lock-keepers cottage and garden. Flowers were in bloom around the lock and a couple of cruisers were

moored there. The lock-keeper obviously had a sense of humour as there was a plaque on the cottage, a bit like the blue plaques here, which in French said "On this site on the 2nd of April 1791 absolutely nothing happened".

Annette & Terry
NB Emily and Steamboat Sidney
Kennet & Avon Canal

For those members further South along our canal– you might be interested in the following.....

IWA Lichfield Branch

Wednesday 20th February 2019 – “Focus on the Lichfield Canal”. An illustrated talk by Bob Williams of Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust on progress with the restoration project. 7.15 for 7.30 pm at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, WS13 8AY.

Wednesday 20th March 2019 – Annual General Meeting and Social Evening. The short formal business of the AGM will be followed by a review of our year in photos, and then a social interlude with refreshments. The evening will conclude with an illustrated talk on progress with the Stafford Riverway Link restoration project by Ivor Hind, SRL Chairman. 7.15 for 7.30 pm at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, WS13 8AY.

IWA Lichfield hold regular meetings during the winter months on the third Thursday of the month. They also hold regular walks and work-parties.



As Grand Trunk is a bi-monthly publication it is often not possible to publish details of these. If you are interested, please contact the branch – they would be delighted to hear from you!

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How can anyone do justice to the amazing life of our late vice-president, Harry Arnold? I decided I couldn't do better than reproduce his own reflections on becoming involved with the embryo T&MCS.....Ed

On arrival at Fradley Junction in 1969 as a partner in Swan Line Cruisers (and to live here in Alrewas) I was approached by a number of moorers – particularly the late Ben Lee – and asked would I head-up founding a ‘Trent & Mersey Canal Society’; Ben said “this canal needs one”. He didn’t realise how prophetic his words were to be.

I declined, with the excuse that I wanted to stay clear of any more voluntary work for the time being. A few days later a gentleman of rather precise

military type bearing strode into the Swan Line shop. This was Roy (Royston V.F.) Torrington, senior Derby fire officer and chairman of IWA Midland Branch.

He said, “You are Harry Arnold aren’t you? A committee member of IWA North West Branch until you moved here?” I couldn’t deny either of course so he followed it with “Midlands Branch committee meets a week next Thursday at Sutton Coldfield – Be there!” So this led me down a whole new voluntary path within IWA – joining a committee that had such luminaries on it as David Hutchings, George Andrews, Crick Grundy,



**Harry at the unveiling of Derwentmouth milepost
20/01/1985 (Waterway Images)**

Tom Henshaw and Stan Clover – some of whom I had at least met. Also, after a move into waterway journalism, it led to the starting of Waterways World.

Harecastle Tunnel collapsed (Ben was proved right) and the Trent & Mersey Canal Society was founded in 1974 – by Steve Guest and others – initially to campaign for the tunnel’s reopening. The campaign was successful of course but I was mainly involved in covering it as a journalist. I had joined T&MCS but, because of other commitments – such as also being involved in the starting of the Waterway Recovery Group – kept my distance.

Then one day the then T&MCS Chairman, the ebullient Roger Lee – who was to become a great friend – called at my house, ostensibly to hand-deliver my copy of the magazine. Now when a chairman calls on you – be on your guard – he is after something. I know, I have used the same technique. Roger told me this story of the ambitious event the society was planning to celebrate the forthcoming 1977 bicentenary of the canal and some of the problems they were having with certain aspects of the work of the organising sub-committee; particularly my speciality of press and publicity. To compound matters Secretary Mike Mitchell had broken his leg.

So Roger charmed me into ‘just coming along to a sub-committee meeting’ which led – beyond the successful event at Wedgwood – to taking over editing the magazine (renaming it **Grand Trunk**), membership and chairmanship of the Southern Section committee, the main committee and eventually chairman of the society. My wife Beryl and the family were also soon very involved.

Along with the campaigning, it was a time of meeting many new friends, having great laughs, and cementing those friendships, many of which have lasted until this day. The only regret being those who have passed on. But we have lasting and loving memories of good times with them. This – and working for the future of the Trent & Mersey Canal – is what a waterway society is all about. So your support by being a member of T&MCS is not only vital for the canal but you can have a good time too.

However – Just beware if the chairman comes to call. Before you realise you could be stepping into his (or her) shoes!

Harry Arnold MBE

Some personal memories from Roger Lee.....

**Harry Arnold. M.B.E. (known to friends as H.)
(Press & Publicity & later Chairman of the Trent & Mersey Canal
Society)
Owner of Waterway Images**

Harry had a way of playing good humoured tricks on his friends. I remember Harry giving me an invitation to a Jolly at the N.E.C. to launch a boat or book. Arriving at the door to the suite where it was all happening, I saw Sir Frank Price (Chairman B.W.B) and Brian Haskins (Area Engineer Northwich) as I went across to speak to themsuddenly I was accosted by this blond, well dressed young lady. She asked if I was Roger I said yes and she handed me a glass of champagne.

Lunch was called and she took me by the arm and sat me next to her...I could not believe my luck. When it was all over and Harry and I were walking to the Car Park, I asked him who she was; he said she was the P.A. to some multi national distributor. I said why did she lock onto me then, she was very attractive? Harry replied I told her to keep an eye on you as you were one of the V.I.P. sponsors of the day.

Can anyone remember the Bi Centenary Programme? It was magnificent, one of the T&MCS members tried putting it together in the first place, and it was rubbish!! Next committee meeting I said we had a problem with the programme- it looked very home- made and unprofessional. Harry said ‘give me all you have got so far and I will do you a rough’.

As some of the older members will recall Harry was the Man for writing articles (give him the filling of what you want to say and he would give you an article, complete with pictures, print ready, and with double space for alterations if you wished). The result was a Great Souvenir Programme full of facts and interest- one which I am sure many members still have today! Harry knew very many important Waterway People and was always happy to introduce you to them, Laurence Sanders of Stenson and sponsor of the 1st milepost unveiling for one, Sir Frank Price and the full Board of the British Waterways. He would also talk to you about people he assumed you knew as well as he did, which sometimes would leave you wondering what

the hell he was talking about! Harry was no saint, he fell into tantrums easily (*Oh bloody hell mate*) often accompanied by waving of arms and jumping up and down, but within minutes, all was forgotten as you worked on a project together.

I was asked ‘what will you do now that the Bi Centenary is finished?’ Bill Sutton the then Fradley Lengthsman said, ‘you could replace some of the old mileposts which are in hiding around the length of the T&M. We don’t have the time or manpower to do it’. So Harry, myself and Alan Bradshaw set about finding them. All we needed was a work force, black & white paint and the many sponsors to pay to have a milepost dedicated to businesses, their loved ones or as a memorial to The Great Grand Trunk Canal. Thus began the Milepost Campaign and once again, Harry was a great help by finding some of the more influential sponsors and taking the pictures for posterity.

We were allowed room in the Fradley maintenance building to store and repair/repaint them, using one of the original mileposts, Harry arranged for a mould and Ppaque to be made for future sponsors. I now believe we have run out of places to put them. At every dedication there was Flash Harry to record the event.



Harry owned a tremendous library of waterway pictures of people, places, boats and canal problems. On one occasion he was approached by someone who had been told Harry had some canal pictures. The chap in question enquired if by any chance Harry had a picture of President under steam emerging from Blisworth Tunnel?

Harry wrote back Yes! Northbound or Southbound?

Harry was a very loyal and helpful friend, sometimes we could go for ages without contact, but when we did meet either at a function, jolly or bumped into each other in Alrewas, it would seem as if we had seen each other only last week.

Cheers Harry..... I miss you already.

Roger Lee {Now Roger Davies-Lee}
Chairman, Vice Chairman of the T&M.C.S. and Joint Director with Chris Skelhorne of the Bi-CC.

And now the official biography.....

Harry Arnold MBE passed away at the age of 81 on Thursday 1 November 2018 following a stroke almost three weeks earlier. He was well known as a waterway's journalist, author and photographer who was instrumental in many waterway campaigns since the late 1950s

Originally an engineer and industrial artist, he was been professionally involved in waterways and the marine industry for over 50 years, starting as a partner in a horse-drawn hostelboat, based on the Bridgewater Canal, then moving full-time into holiday boat hire and narrowboat building.

In the 1970's Harry was appointed as first part-time paid secretary of trade body the Association of Pleasure Craft Operators – now British Marine Inland Boating (BMIB); his work then included the introduction of the “pump-out” system to inland boatyards. Most recently Waterway Images has worked with BMIB on PR matters; daughter Julie will continue to work with Harry's photographic archive to develop the collection alongside her own work in tourism and as an independent QAB assessor.

As a professional journalist, editor and photographer Harry was a regular contributor to boating magazines. In 1972 he was one of the founder owners of best-selling *Waterways World*; most recently Harry was retained to write for the free distribution newspaper *Towpath Talk*– the largest circulation waterway publication. Harry continued to write for *Towpath Talk* until his stroke. His last piece was the obituary for David Wain (another of our vice-

presidents) which was published in the November 2018 edition.

Harry's Waterway Images archive and digital photographs have appeared in countless publications and TV programmes.



He was awarded an MBE in the 2010 Queen's Birthday Honours List for the significant role he played in Britain's inland waterways scene for almost 50 years. This included being a founder member of Waterway Recovery Group and editing IWA's Waterways magazine from 1990 to 2007; Harry carried out many other voluntary roles within IWA and in 2008 was appointed a national Vice President.

At the 2015 Canal & River Trust 'Living Waterway Awards' – which “seek to recognise the most inspiring and exciting waterway-based improvement projects across the UK” – Harry was presented with the first 'Outstanding Personal Achievement Award'.

Harry's funeral took place on Tuesday 13 November at 2.30pm at Lichfield & District Crematorium. A moving service was attended by mourners wearing every canal society uniform you could think of. There was a gold windlass on the coffin.

It won't be the same without you, Harry.

Change of Venue for 2018/2019 season Talks

For the coming season , all events will be held in the upstairs room at:

**Red Bull Public House
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*Talks are 7.30 for 8.00pm
(Get a drink and come on
upstairs!)*

*For further information
contact: Gillian Watson
01606 835 606*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
15/02/2019	The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway	Patrick Marks
15/03/2019	The Wooden Canal Boat Society Story	Chris Leah

Please do come along, support the Society and have a great evening. The usual raffle will take place, society goods will be available, and all talks are absolutely free!

Christmas Meal 2018

Christmas festivities began with the Society Christmas meal at Red Bull public house at the beginning of December. The food was delicious and there was a general knowledge quiz (quite easy) and a canal-based picture quiz produced by Anne Chetwyn (definitely challenging!). The prizes (of course) were chocolate Santas. Everyone received a free raffle prize and a great time was had by all.

Next question....which unusual and amazing venue will Gillian find for our AGM-WATCH THIS SPACE!

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The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the [Trent and Mersey Canal Society](#). They are, however, published as being of interest to our members and readers

Stoke-on-Trent is working very hard to improve and popularise its canal corridor. It is with great sadness that we report the incident documented below

Towpath mugging at Etruria in December

Police are hunting for four youths after a man in his sixties was robbed at knifepoint and pushed into a canal.

Officers were called to Sunny Bank, off Newport Lane, Middleport, at around 2.30pm one afternoon following reports of an attack.

The man was walking along the Trent and Mersey Canal, from Westport Lake towards Etruria, when he walked past the group sitting on a bridge near Middleport Pottery.

One of the group, described as Asian and aged in his late teens, jumped down and began threatening the man before brandishing a knife from his waistband.

Forcing the man to hand over cash, a second member of the group, described as white and younger than the first, pushed him hard in the chest causing him to fall into the water.

The group then ran off towards Westport Lake, while the man, who is unable to swim, was helped from the water before being taken to hospital with minor injuries.

Detective Sergeant Vanessa Furnival, of Staffordshire Police said the man had been left shocked by the incident and appealed for any witnesses to get in touch. She added: "This was a frightening experience and to push the man into the canal after robbing him was a callous act and unnecessary".

A photo of the scene of the crime is shown on the facing page.

From The Stoke Sentinel.



Welcome to new members

Ann and Gareth Pollard

Of Stourbridge

And

Martyn Smith of Southport

We hope you enjoy being members of the Society



Good News for Burslem Port

More than 130 jobs could be created if ambitious plans to restore the disused Burslem Port Canal go ahead.

An economic impact report commissioned by groups aiming to reopen the Burslem Branch Canal says the project would create 133 jobs, 270 canalside homes and attract 6,500 extra visitors per year.

The new report says it could attract inward investment of £16m, generating nearly 300 temporary construction jobs.

The long-term strategic action plan, written by Peter Brett Associates, also says the project, which could cost around £5m, will deliver:

- 1) A restored canal arm;
- 2) a mooring basin for boats;
- 3) recreation facilities, including a children's play area, cycle hire and nature walks;
- 4) outdoor sporting activities beside the canal, including fishing, cycling, canoeing and paddle boarding; and.....
- 5) 'attractive' waterside living in the Slater Street area.

This historic canal could be dug up and brought back to life... and even host 'water taxis'!

The report follows news Stoke-on-Trent City Council has given £45,000 towards the imminent first stage of the project – a restored footpath – from its community investment fund. The Canal & River Trust (CRT) has added £5,000 of its own.

Roger Savage, Burslem Port Trust chairman and TMCS member said: “This month marks a really exciting step change in plans to restore the canal. This short canal arm has been closed since 1961 when a breach occurred near its junction with the mainline Trent and Mersey Canal. This new report confirms there is sound economic benefit for investing in the restoration of the canal.”

David Frost, chairman of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, said: “It is great to see this important piece of Stoke-on-Trent's industrial heritage being brought back to life.

“It will be a valuable addition to the growing range of tourism, cultural and leisure destinations developing in and around the city, and will also contribute to our wider plans to regenerate Etruria Valley.”

The Burslem Port branch canal served the Mother Town from 1805 until its closure in 1961.

It ran for around three-eighths of a mile between its junction with the Trent and Mersey Canal, near Newport Lane, and Furlong Mills.



The city council and CRT are working on an area-wide £1.5 million project to improve canals. Around 6,000 people a year use the Trent and Mersey Canal, while 5,000 use the Caldon Canal.

CRT enterprise manager Simon Papprell said: “We know people feel happier and healthier by water, so this regeneration would bring significant benefits for residents.”

The first stage of the project is a half-mile all-weather footpath, following the line of the former canal towpath.

Press release



Join Us on a Canal Work Party

Cheshire Locks, Trent & Mersey Canal Monthly work party on the third Thursday each month Jointly with IWA North Staffs & South Cheshire

Why not join us for our monthly work parties, on the Cheshire Locks between Kidsgrove and Wheelock, carrying out vegetation management and other tasks in the fresh air and good company?

Work parties run from 10am to 3pm on the third Thursday each month (except December) and volunteers are welcome to come for a couple of hours or all day. The meeting place varies each month, so please contact us for details.

All tools and equipment will be provided. Volunteers are advised to wear old clothes, stout shoes and to bring waterproofs in case of rain and a packed lunch if staying all day.

Contact: John Lawson
07940 878923 johnandsandra@uwclub.net

Painting Pierpoint Locks

These locks are an anomaly on the Cheshire flight as they have never been duplicated. The difficulty of road access means that they tend to be forgotten about.....



But.....

The last Cheshire Locks work party of the year saw the isolated locks rejuvenated with fresh paintwork and neat numbers.



Photos by John Lawson

Fine George's Bridge

From time to time the Society query planning applications along the line of the canal. Dave Brewin, our 'roving reporter in Derbyshire has been pursuing the renovation of this canal bridge in Weston on Trent for some time.

Reproduced below are his comments to the local council:

I have looked at the application on behalf of the Trent and Mersey canal society and would comment as follows:

- 1. There** is no mention of removing the Armco type barrier that was installed without permission. It is essential that this is removed as part of the works.
- 2. We** see no need to install metal bollards to prevent vehicle access. The bridge was built to give farmers access to the field on the other side of the canal. Other similar bridges in the area are not blocked off in this way and we see no need to block this particular bridge. I very much doubt that the damage to the bridge was caused by vehicle damage as the application states. I would suggest instead a weight limit sign be installed on the bridge approach as many other bridges in the area have.
- 3. Will** the work require a temporary blockage to navigation whilst the work is carried out? If so the Canal and River Trust must be consulted.



Overall, the society is pleased to see, at long last, some progress is being made to repair this bridge.

The works are now almost complete (just awaiting coping stones) well done Dave!

Historic picture copyright Roger Kidd

TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL SOCIETY

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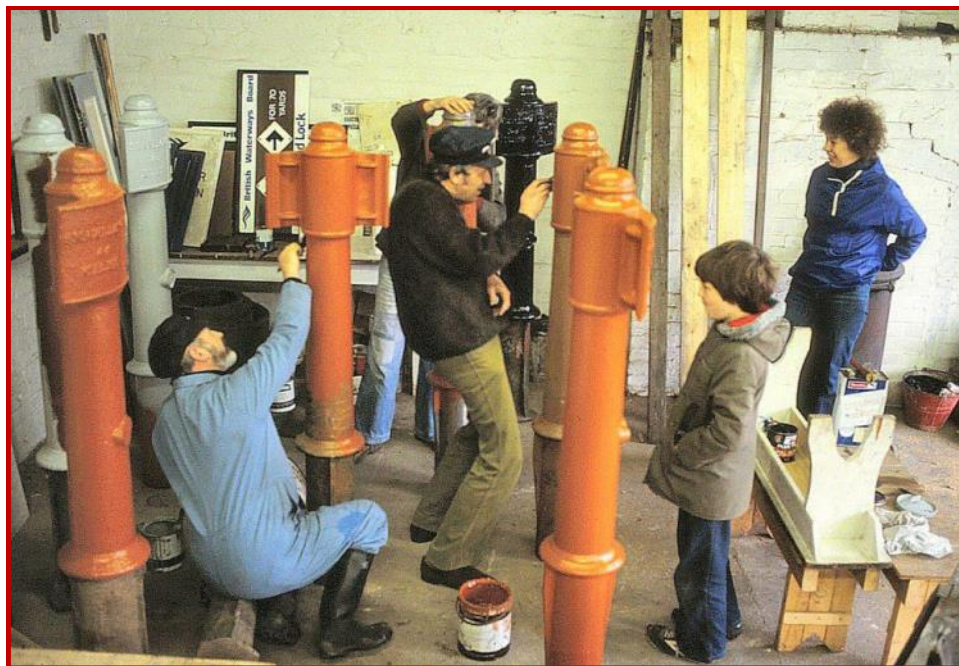
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*The Trent & Mersey Canal Society is proud to
support Burslem Port*

Bringing Boats Back to Burslem



*Photo by Waterway Images
Painting the four original posts that were found under rubbish
in one of the arches by Dallow Lane Lock, before replacing
them through Burton. It is – by courtesy of BW – in the work-
shops at Fradley.*

*Rob Davies in the centre, with son Andrew watching him to the
right. Another great T&M character - Billy Bird – is on the
left.
(See obituary p.11)*