

GRAND TRUNK



**‘Bells for Brindley’
Cutting the First Sod at Middleport Pottery
with Josiah Wedgwood,
James Brindley, The Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire and
organisation representatives (see p.20)**

Picture by Rupert Smedley



July/August 2016

www.trentandmerseycanalsociety.org.uk

Chairman's Bit

At our AGM in May the calendar photo competition was won by Sandra Lawson with her picture of frosty paddle gear. The standard of photographs was very high, making the choice of which pictures to use in our 2017 calendar quite difficult. The new calendar has now been printed and will be available for sale at our social meetings for £3.50. We can also supply it by post, at a cost of £5 including postage (£8.50 for 2, £12.50 for 3, £16 for 4).

Contact me before sending your cheque though if you need it/them urgently to make sure that I haven't gone boating!

We have just celebrated the 250th Anniversary of "cutting the first sod" (i.e. the ceremony to start work on building our canal) with a day at Middleport Pottery on July 23rd. Wedgwood and Brindley (looking very well for somebody celebrating their 300th birthday) both attended and recreated the historic scene for us. See full report on page 20.

Our monthly (except December) Cheshire Locks work parties reach their 4th Anniversary in August. We plan (weather permitting) to start work on lock 42 (by Pool Lane Aqueduct, which carries the Macclesfield Canal [or our Hall Green branch if you want to be pedantic] across our canal). We also plan to finally finishing off repainting the very long line of railings at lock 43 (by the Red Bull pub) which we started last October! Bad weather has been the chief reason for this very long timescale, but more help is always needed. Why not come along on Thursday August 18th and help. Work starts at 10 a.m. and finishes around 3 p.m., but there is no compulsion to stay to the end. Parking is available in the car park alongside the canal at CRT Red Bull offices.



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

The Society Stall at Middlewich Folk and Boat



***Want to know where the staff were?
Eddie was steering the Rose Queen's boat (see below)-
and Paula was taking a picture of him!***



Sorry, no room for an editorial this month (but see p.14/15!)

T&MCS social calendar September 2016 to April 2017

The location is the Big Lock and can be accessed on 2 levels. For those who prefer not to use stairs, there is access to the room at the back of the building via the door facing the lock, we can arrange for your drinks to be collected from the bar.

There is no charge (we have a raffle to pay for the room hire) and no need to be a member.

If you want to make more of an event of your evening I can recommend the food, I usually eat there before each talk.

Some speakers will bring associated objects and products to be viewed or bought, we positively encourage interaction.

To find Big Lock by road, :

Webbs Lane, Middlewich, Cheshire,
CW10 9DN

Telephone: (01606) 833489

<http://www.thebiglockpub.com>



The room will be open at 7.30pm,
the talks will start at 8.00pm,
in two 40 minute parts with a comfort break.

Contact: Gillian Watson 01606 835 606

Friday 16th September 2016

1. Early Films of Trent & Mersey Canal Society

2. Fly Boat Saturn Project 2017

Malcolm Turner, previously Chairman of the society, presents films of the society activities in the 70', 80's & 90's. **(See p.19!)**

Bill Walker and the Saturn team will explain the Fly trip from Ellesmere to Castlefield in Manchester planned for May 2017 and what support they will need to ensure it runs smoothly.

Friday 21st October 2016

Canal & River Trust

Richard Parry, the Chief Executive of Canal & River Trust will present a general overview of the Trust's progress and plans.

Friday 18th November 2016

Canal Poetry

Jo Bell, the first UK Canal Laureate, is called 'one of the most exciting poets now writing' by the poet laureate, Carol Ann Duffy. A regular on BBC Radio 4 and 6 Music Live, she lives on her boat in Macclesfield and will be reading and talking about her work as a writer.

Friday 20th January 2017

From Lancashire to Yorkshire

Andrew Hemmings - In the 1950's Britain's waterways were still full of commercial traffic and lined with the mills, factories and ports of a then leading industrial nation. This was the era captured in the photographs of the Lytham Sea Cadets who ventured from the coast via the canals of Lancashire and Yorkshire in 1958 aboard Training Ship 'Queenborough'

Friday 17th February 2017

Waterways of the low countries - from small to large

John Pomfret - The development of waterways in Belgium and the Netherlands from the 13th century looking at a number of examples of trading towns which grew up around waterways (Bruges, Ghent, Amsterdam, Groningen): More recent developments, including waterway enlargements and new waterways for freight use, enclosing of the Zuider Zee and the Delta Project, as well as development of recreational use and a number of restoration schemes.

Friday 17th March 2017

Trent & Mersey Canal posters

Peter Brown will discuss a treasure-trove of 106 Trent & Mersey Canal posters and notices, mainly dating from the 18th century. These give an impression of the canal company's management practices and worries, in a way which doesn't emerge from a study of minute books or other sources

Friday 21st April 2017

The work of the Waterway Partnership

Ray Butler (of the Manchester & Pennine Waterway Partnership) will explain what Waterway Partnerships are, and what the Manchester & Pennine Partnership does for waterway user.

Going to the Dogs!

29th October 2016

Back by popular demand!

The Society is hosting a canal-side dog-racing evening in the upstairs room of the Red Bull Public House to celebrate the onset of Autumn.

The evening will start at 7.30 pm. There will be a break about 8.30 for supper, with races starting again about 9.15 (the poor dogs need a rest!).

Bets will be 50p a go, and there will be payouts after each race.

There will of course be the traditional raffle and lots of fun.

Supper is *St. Helen's Lobby* (a sort of hotpot), followed by apple pie. The cost of this is £7.50.

Now the bad news...numbers are limited to 35, so if you would like to attend.....

get in touch with Gillian Watson as soon as you can.

Gillian.watson@me.com

01606 835606

Full Address of Venue

Red Bull Public House
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To the Source of the Seine

Continuing our motorhome trip by the River Seine, above the Amfreville locks we were now beside the non-tidal river. From Amfreville to Paris there are still many commercial vessels on the river with plenty of push-tows and large barges on the move. The river continues to twist and turn and after about 17 miles we reached the town of Les Andelys. High above this old town are the ruins of Richard the Lionheart's castle. Constructed in the 12th century it was strategically built on top of the chalk cliffs next to the Seine with commanding views in both directions and looks very impressive especially when illuminated at night.



Soon the river reaches Paris and the banks of the Seine in Paris were added to the UNESCO World Heritage Site list in 1991. Of the 37 bridges over the river in Paris the Pont Neuf is thought to be the oldest stone bridge in the city which was built in 1578.

After a large loop around the forest of Fontainebleau the Seine reaches Nogent sur Seine which is 75 miles beyond Paris. The port at Nogent has been the most important one upstream from Paris since the Middle Ages with original cargoes of flour, wine, coal, iron and wood. As we drove



towards the town we passed many large silos and there is a very busy grain terminal at the port with facilities for 1,000 ton barges. Other goods handled there are construction materials, bio-fuels and paper and there is also a shipping container loading facility.

Nogent-Sur-Seine

Nogent has an attractive historic old town centre and we particularly liked the large brick-built watermill dating from 1901 next to the Seine.

At Marcilly sur Seine the Seine and Aube rivers meet and the Seine then becomes too shallow, narrow and winding for anything but a small day-boat or canoe to navigate. However navigation did continue from Marcilly to Troyes by means of the 27½ mile long Canal Haute Seine. The canal opened in 1846 and it would appear that there were less strict planning and conservation rules at that time as a group of exceptional 12th century buildings in Troyes including a hospital, the St Étienne collegiate church and the Chapel of the Counts of Champagne were demolished in 1806 so that the canal could be built!

The Seine goes through Troyes and then heads out into the Burgundy countryside decreasing in width as it heads nearer to its source. The last large town before the source is the old market town of Châtillon sur Seine. A short distance south west of the town is the village of Époisses where a cheese of the same name is produced. Apparently this cheese is so smelly that it is against the law to take it on public transport anywhere in France!



The source of the Seine is located at the bottom of a steep valley surrounded by limestone rock and woods and is actually owned by the City of Paris. We followed the clear water of what was now just a stream up the valley a short distance, went over a tiny stone bridge and walked beside a pool to reach a man-made cave which contains a reclining nymph

that is located at the source of the Seine. A sign from here marks the start of the GR2 long distance footpath via Paris to Le Havre where the Seine joins the English Channel – a distance of 515 miles so not a trek for the faint hearted!

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

Trent and Mersey ‘Resident’ wins coveted award

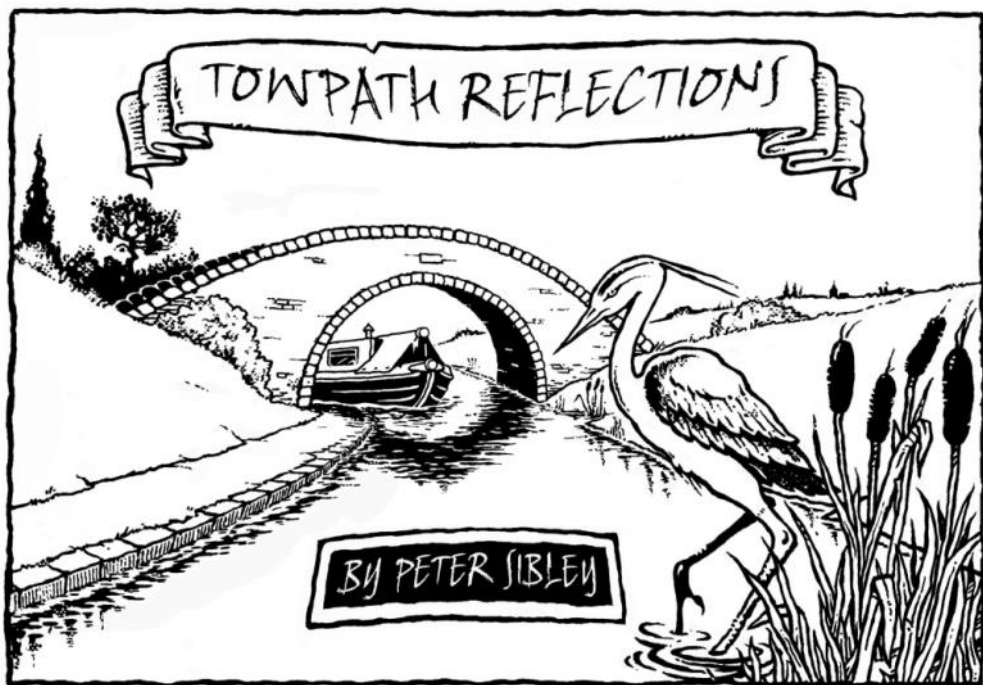
At the recent 14th Braunston Historic Boat rally, Peter Dumelow, who lives at Tattenhill Lock, won the best turned out boat award for his boat *Hadley*.



Hadley moored at Tattenhill Lock
(Both pictures Waterway Images)

Peter actively trades on the canal as a coal and fuel boat– look out for him!





Friday 16th May

It was a glorious day from sunrise to sunset, a low lying mist blanketing the fields cleared before 7a.m. and we heard the cuckoo again this morning. We set off about 7.45; the next two sections of the river are again very remote, winding and twisting round 200 degrees or more bends that put the southern reaches of the Oxford Canal to shame. Along the northern Bank are many concrete pill boxes, a grim reminder of the Second World War. At Rushey Lock we emptied our toilet and worked through the lock ourselves as the lock Keeper wasn't present. At Radcott Lock two narrowboats were already taking on water, so we topped up our supply at the next lock (which also had a bulk water supply point). We actually shared a lock with another boat here, only the second time this has happened so far on the river.

The lock keepers here are all very friendly, none more so than the lock Keeper at the next lock which was Buscot Lock. I had wanted to visit Kelmescott Manor (the home of William Morris) which is situated very close to the river with its own private mooring. Unfortunately it is only open on Wednesdays and Saturdays. We decided instead to visit Buscott Park, a National Trust property, and the lock Keeper offered us the use of the free of charge

mooring opposite his house on the weir stream. He moved his dinghy out of the way for us and gave us directions to the property. By this time it was 1:15p.m., well into his lunch break. We had our own lunch and headed off over the Weir and through the tiny village to a main road. Buscott Park is about 15 minutes walk from here. It is run by Lord Faringdon, his eldest son and his wife on behalf of the National Trust. The family still live in a small part of the house.

We were really impressed by the whole place, both the house and extensive gardens and parklands, which were all kept in immaculate condition. There was not a weed in sight anywhere in the Walled Garden. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and when we got back to the boat we made up our mind to stay the night for which we paid, after asking the lock keeper, the overnight fee of £6. 75.

He told us that Environment Agency wanted to make all lock keepers redundant and make all the locks boater operated. This would mean that they would all lose their homes as well as their jobs, which entailed not just working the locks, but maintaining the beautiful lockside gardens and the weirs as well as cleaning and maintaining the showers and toilets which exist at the locks. We bought a shower token and the lock keeper showed us where they were situated and said that he would clean them for us before we used them. They were already immaculate and far better than most of the C.R.T. showers that we had come across. We settled down for the night with just the sound of a rookery and the calming distant roar of water tumbling over the weir.

Saturday the 17th of May

Yet another grand morning, we can't believe our luck with the weather. We left Buscott before 8a.m. and progressed gently round some tortuous S bends as the river wound its way lazily towards Lechlade. It wandered through more fields ablaze with millions of buttercups gleaming in the early morning sunshine and yet more pill boxes, intermingled with stands of stately willow trees. All too soon we arrived at St Johns Lock, the last on the river. Beside the lock is a reclining statue of Old Father Thames. From here is a good view of Lechlade church and spire. It is less than a mile to Halfpenny Bridge which carries the Swindon road out of Lechlade. This hump backed single lane bridge was once a toll bridge and the fee charged to cross it was, believe



Lechlade Church

it or not, one halfpenny, and the name stuck. The toll house still stands on the town side of the bridge.

We found a field side mooring (£4 a night paid to the local farmer) and tied up just in time for our morning coffee! We then chatted to our fellow moorers, who told us that the only supermarket in town was a *Londis*. We were running short of food, so we set off resigned to spending more than usual. However, we came back with two bags laden with

reduced items for about nine pounds, as well as a (still warm) walnut and banana loaf purchased in the main Street from a stall manned by ladies raising funds for Christian Aid.

After lunch we decided to walk to the head of navigation at Ingleham, where the Round House



Halfpenny Bridge

marks the one time entrance to The Thames and Severn Canal. A stand was set up in a field close to the junction by the Thames and Severn Canal Trust, who were promoting their activities and raising funds with a little trip launch called *Ingleham*, plying up and down to the toll bridge and back. Their eventual aim is to restore the navigation from the junction at Saul on the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal right through to the Thames here at Ingleham. We crossed the little footbridge and walked through the fields back to Lechlade.

.....*To be continued*

The chairman and editor have just returned from Norway.....

The Telemark Canal

Telemark is one of the wildest and remotest areas of Norway. The canal was opened in 1892 to transport logs and farm goods to the coast. Unlike the Trent & Mersey, it comprises a passage through interconnecting glacial lakes. At 65 miles, it is shorter than our canal and has a total of 18 locks in 8 spectacular flights. The scenery is stunning and nowadays the canal is a leisure resource.



Three historic canal boats transport visitors to and from Dalen at the upper limit of navigation and Skien, a canal city near the sea and birthplace of Henrik Ibsen. It was on the *Henrik Ibsen* that we cruised the canal and enjoyed watching the lock-keepers at work (oh how we wanted to ‘help’). These enthusiastic young people raised gate paddles using levers on the gates, which were opened with

winding chains. Not a lifejacket was to be seen and lots of local children joined the boat just for the trip down Vrangfoss five-rise, locks carved out of the rock face next to a waterfall.

We were sad to leave the boat at Skien and transfer to a bus for the journey back to Oslo, maybe we can get *The Lady Margaret* across there?.... (we did see an English narrowboat tucked into the corner of an island harbour just off the coast of Oslo!).

***Chaining open lock gates
(facing page)***



Laid-back lock-keeper!



Work Party Report

Thursday 16th June 2016

With the cruising season on us and a big Euro game in the afternoon (England v Wales), this month's work party was a little smaller & shorter than normal. We still had 5 volunteers though and we continued with painting railings around lock 43 and preparing the planters in the new garden area. Good progress was made but we will be continuing our work in the same area next month. The railings do seem to continue a long way!



Thursday 21st July– nearly finished! Just a bit of railing to go!

*A warm welcome to
Mr Jim Oldfield and M/s Alex Vessey
Of Mexborough, South Yorkshire.*

*Jenny and Michael McKenna
Of Stone*

Mr Jim Hambleton of Rode Heath

*And Mr John Harris of Wostanton,
Newcastle-under Lyme*

Hope you enjoy being members of the Society





Join Us on a Canal Work Party

Cheshire Locks, Trent & Mersey Canal Monthly work party on the third Thursday each month

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 4pm 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 Brighthouse

John.brighthouse@waterways.co.uk. 07808878317

CRT Boundary Changes

CRT is adjusting its boundaries as detailed below. You will see that the Trent & Mersey Canal is split between three regions. We await with interest what difference this will make to our contact and relationship with the organisation.

The Canal & River Trust is planning to change the way it manages its Midlands waterways. The plan is that the Trust will no longer operate a Central Shires Waterway, with its team, their roles and responsibilities being absorbed into the neighbouring waterways of East Midlands, West Midlands and Manchester & Pennines.

By absorbing Central Shires into its neighbouring waterways CRT hope to be better placed to establish and grow a local presence, and develop relationships with strategic local partners while, at the same time, giving the Trust and its waterways greater local prominence.

· The River Soar, the Leicester line (Grand Union Canal) and the Trent & Mersey Canal as far as and including Dove Aqueduct just downstream of Burton upon Trent will now be part of the East Midlands Waterway. This boundary has been chosen to match the boundary between Derbyshire and Staffordshire. They can be contacted by email on enquiries.emidlands@canalrivertrust.org.uk and the Waterway Manager is Sean McGinley.

· The Caldon Canal, the Leek Branch and the Trent & Mersey Canal to Great Hayward Junction (to bridge 74) will now be part of the Manchester & Pennine Waterway. They can be contacted by email on Enquiries.manchesterpennine@canalrivertrust.org.uk and the Waterway Manager is David Baldacchino

· The Ashby Canal, the Coventry Canal and the remainder of the Trent & Mersey Canal will now be part of the West Midlands Waterway. They can be contacted on enquiries.westmidlands@canalrivertrust.org.uk and the Waterway Manager is Ian Lane.

Trent and Mersey Canal Society Talk 16th September

This will be a film of a T&MCS trip on Nb *Christina* with former Northern section chairman Chris Thompson, from Anderton to a Society Rally at Shardlow.

Captured along the way are Pat & Millie Osborn & The Coppocks, with Chris & Peter Smith, Alan Bates, the Diproses, and a number of other stalwarts either no longer with us or who have moved away. Trophies were awarded at the rally by former chairman, the late Mike Mitchell,

This will be a real trip down memory lane for many and an insight into the earlier days of the society for others.

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Cutting the Fist Sod

The 250th anniversary of the very beginning of the Trent & Mersey Canal was celebrated at Middleport Pottery in Stoke on Trent on Saturday 23rd July. The venue was chosen as being nearest to the actual spot at Brownhills where the first sod was ceremoniously cut by Josiah Wedgwood.

The idea for the day started with enthusiastic bellringers from North Staffordshire Change Ringers determined to ring bells all the way down the canal on that day. A portable belfry was set up on the pottery wharf and visitors were encouraged to have a go after the formal quarter peal was rung at the pottery.

IWA North Staffs, South Cheshire and the Trent &

Mersey Canal Society both had colourful stalls on the waterfront, and historic boat Skylark was there to catch anyone who fell in! Josiah Wedgwood, played by Ray Johnson, director of Staffordshire Film Archive, was on hand to keep the participants in order.

Mr Ian Dudson, Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire (and patron of T&MCS),



arrived on Lyndsey and Keppel in full regalia, including his sword, and the historic event was re-enacted using the silver replica sword from the 200th anniversary, which had been presented by the then Lord Wedgwood and was kindly lent by Stoke-on –Trent Boat Club.

A small play was performed, when we learnt that James Brindley was no good with paper and pen, but always had a piece of chalk in his pocket. Also that he demonstrated how to build an aqueduct to the House of Lords with the help of a large cheese!

The weather was kind, everyone was friendly and enthusiastic and what started out as a small celebration turned into a truly wonderful event.

Special thanks should go to IWA's Alison Smedley, who worked so hard to co-ordinate the day, and to Middleport Pottery for hosting the event.

Margaret English

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Sweat-Shirts and Polo Shirts

To make your purchase, simply ring or e-mail Roger or Margaret (details on p.23) to arrange payment and postage.

The garments are navy with a society logo on the left-hand breast.

Sweat-shirt -Price £15 Stock sizes: S, M, L, XL,XXL

Polo-Shirt -Price £12 Stock sizes: M, L, XL,XXL

Lady-Fit -Price £11 (to clear) Stock sizes: S, M, L,XL

Fleecies!

We are now stocking navy fleecies with a full zip opening and the society logo— lovely and warm!

After a trial with a 'small', we are currently stocking small, medium large and XL. Sizes are generous and really need to be tried.

Price £25.00— The Society has decided to retail these at cost as they are quite expensive, but very nice!

Baseball Caps (new)

One size— navy with embroidered society logo— £8.50 each



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 September/October edition is 01/09/2016.

TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL SOCIETY

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Problems at Anderton Lift

Anderton Lift was closed recently (in the peak of holiday boating season) when the gates jammed. I am grateful to Harry Arnold (*Waterway Images*) for providing the picture below of CRT working desperately on the gates.

