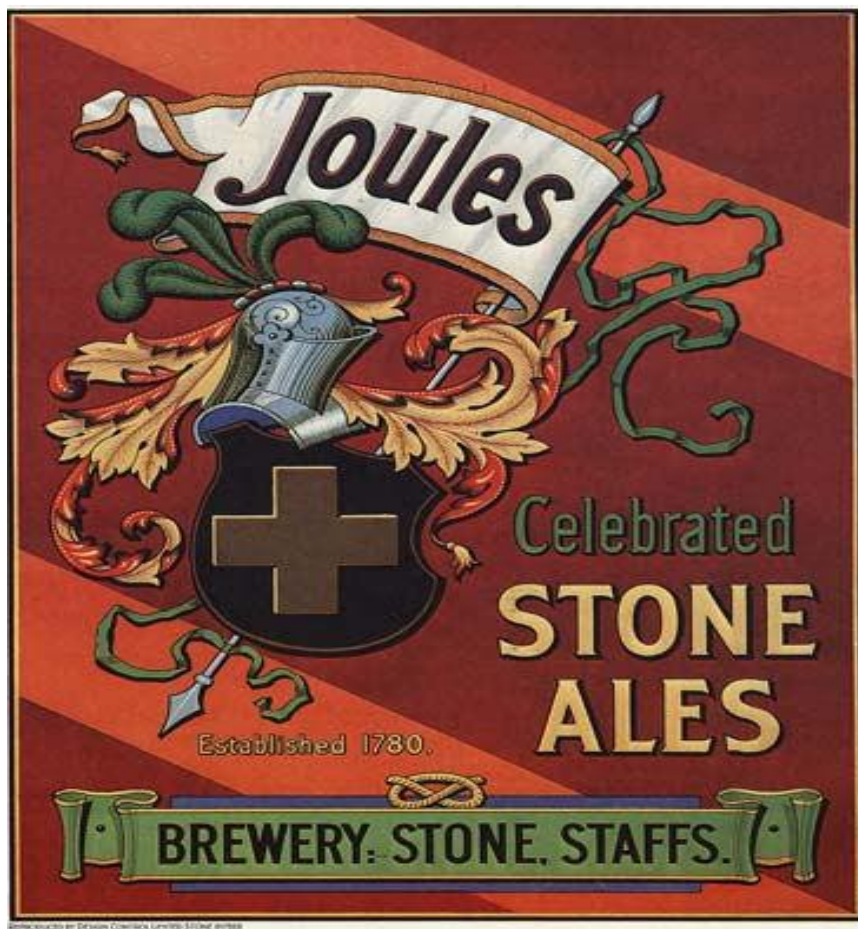


# GRAND TRUNK



Great News for Stone (see p.8)



*Picture Staffordshire Arts and  
Museum Service*

**January/February 2018**

[www.trentandmerseycanalsociety.org.uk](http://www.trentandmerseycanalsociety.org.uk)

## **Chairman's Bit**

Another new year! What will 2018 bring for our canal I wonder? Nothing to report yet (well it is only the 4th January as I write this).

Just before Christmas, however, we heard that the long-running saga of Crown Wharf in Stone looks like it is heading to a happy conclusion. The area is currently mainly used as a car park, but a potential developer had proposed to demolish some old canalside buildings and stop public access to the entire site, causing problems for the adjacent boatyard. The town council were also unhappy with the proposed redevelopment for several reasons. Luckily, a new player, Joule's Brewery has now stepped in and bought the land to build a flagship Brewery Taphouse. Their plans have, so far, met with the approval of both the council and the boatyard, and should be a much better use of this canalside area. See the full story on page 8.



Winter is always a quiet time for events on our canal with the combined effects of stoppages and probable cold weather. If you are looking for things to do, don't forget that we regularly work on the Cheshire Locks on the 3rd Thursday of each month (except December), and hold social meetings (with talks) in Middlewich on the 4th Friday of each month over the winter. Social Secretary Gillian Watson is currently arranging next season's talks-some really exciting ones are planned!

Finally, adding milepost photographs and information to our website is proving a slow process, but I have recently managed to add a page listing all the new mileposts which were installed by our society to replace those mileposts missing or unavailable. Don't forget that photos (both old and new) of mileposts for potential use on our website are always welcome, as are offers to help repaint our mileposts (especially those in Staffordshire and Derbyshire). Paint and materials are provided by the Society as well as guidance on how to do it!

**Happy New Year!**

## Editorial



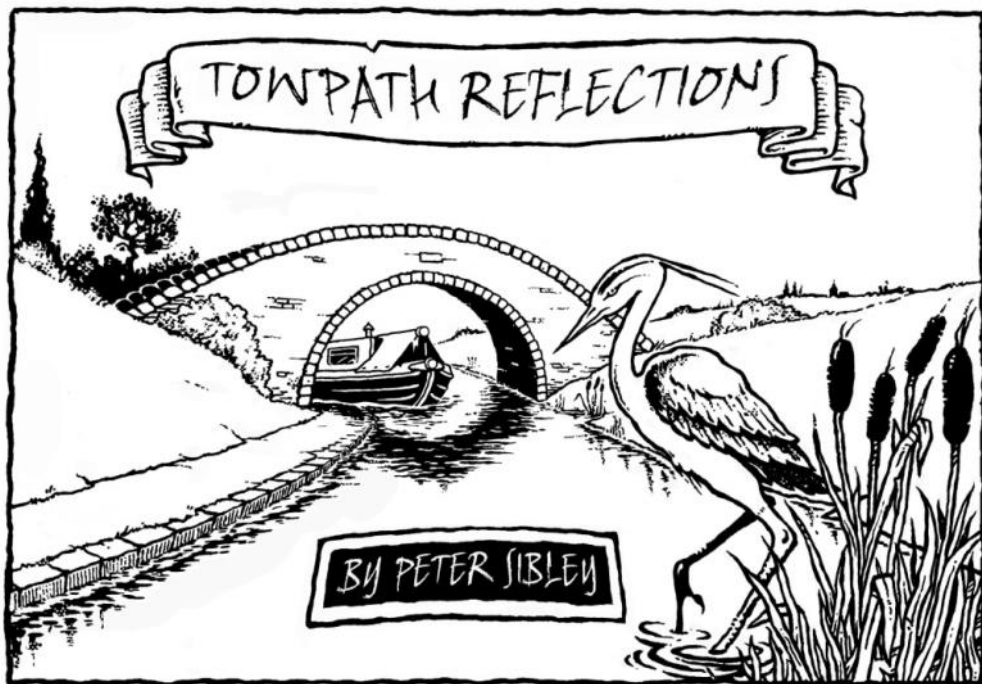
Happy New Year everyone! We have just returned from our traditional Christmas/New Year Cruise on the Llangollen Canal (sadly probably our last journey in our beloved boat *The Lady Margaret*). We could not get all the way to Llangollen, as New Marton Locks closed for repair on 2nd January, and we would have been stuck. Instead, we booked to go down Frankton Locks and cruise the Montgomery to the current limit of navigation. We had a wonderful, if very muddy time. We spent New Year's Eve at the far end of the Prees Branch and were treated to a firework display at midnight by the farm across the cut- and we didn't even have to go outside! We did lots of walking, finding our way to the point where the Prees Branch becomes dry (although it was in driving rain) and following the Montgomery on foot past the section being tested for leakage until it too ran out of water.

We also acquired some leaflets about trails through the mosses around Ellesmere and Bettisfield and squelched our way along these. I have always considered this section boring but even in winter there was lots to see, so I can recommend the exercise.

We raced home, arriving just in time to take down the Christmas decorations on Twelfth Night. The cats behaved impeccably apart from donating a very lively mouse, which we trapped in a wellie and returned to the towpath- it jumped with glee.

Something always happens to us down the Mont; this time my ancient hot water bottle burst in the middle of the night and I woke up very cold and wet. It isn't easy drying a mattress on a 42foot narrow boat!

Our new boat is now a shell and (3 foot longer) looks enormous. Hopefully I can include a picture next issue. Next trip, introducing *The Lady Beth* to the Trent & Mersey.



***We left Valerie and Peter moored at Gnosall.....***

### ***Tuesday 5th May***

A lively day weather-wise, with very strong winds and showers, sometimes very heavy. There were very few boats about. We appreciated the Shropshire's wooded cuttings all the more giving shelter from the strong winds; it was in one such cutting near the decorative Chillington Bridge south of Brewood that I spotted another kingfisher perched on a branch as we passed. We turned left at Autherley Junction and moored for the night at Coven on the Staffordshire and Worcester canal. Isn't this a collective name for a group of witches ?

### ***Wednesday 6th May***

The weather today was very much like yesterday without the sunshine. We set off this morning at 8-10am and stopped at Hatherton Junction where a branch used to lead off to join the B C N at Cannock. The bottom lock is still in use to gain access to some moorings. Hatherton Marina is sited here

at the junction. We had coffee here and stayed for over an hour to see if the weather would improve.

It didn't, so we dressed appropriately and soldiered on. It was not really enjoyable boating in these conditions. We stopped below Gailey Lock for lunch then continued on towards Penkrige. When we arrived at bridge 81 we found a scene of devastation! A vehicle had recently demolished the wall of this bridge and a lorry was perched precariously on the bridge, with a hydraulic crane retrieving large sections of the wall from the canal. There were ominous cracks in the side wall at the base of the bridge and the contractor reckoned the bridge would have to be demolished and completely re-built. I passed gingerly under the bridge when signalled by the crane operator. We moored for the night in Penkrige in a sheltered spot. I piled some more logs on our stove.

### ***Thursday 7th May***

The wind died down overnight and the odd burst of sunshine enticed us to dispense with the wet weather clothing. That was a big mistake! Half an hour after setting off the skies darkened and the rain started, so we hastily put on our boots and raincoats and the umbrella went up! The rain turned torrential and culminated in a hailstorm just as we were through a lock. However, the sun came out again by the time we reached Tixall Lock and it was as attractive as ever (as was the trip to Great Haywood past Shugborough Hall and Cannock Chase). We had planned to moor at Rugeley, but came across some old friends who live on their boat and whom we hadn't seen for a year or so, so we had some 'catching up' to do.

### ***Friday 8th May***

We were disturbed in the night by a roaring noise coming from the nearby railway. I can only assume some sort of maintenance was taking place. After breakfast we bade our friends farewell and set sail for Rugeley, where we stopped to stock up on our provisions. The wind had dropped considerably as we set off once more, bound for Fradley Junction. However, as we passed Ravenshaw Wood the engine spluttered and died and we drifted (fortunately) to the bank. We tied up as best we could but needed the gang plank to reach the towpath. I knew what the trouble was - a blocked pre-filter on the fuel pump. Fortunately I have several spares. I changed the filter and bled the engine. As it was nearly lunch time we had lunch whilst moored up.



We set off for Fradley Junction where we stopped for showers. As it was now raining we decided to stay here for the night next to a field of rapeseed. I might try to secure a couple sprigs as a special treat for Henry (our tortoise) a change from his usual dandelions.

*Crane at Fradley*

*Van at Service Block at Fradley*



### Welcome to New Members

**Mr David Shaw  
Of Winsford**



**We hope you enjoy being a member of the society**



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**Web: [www.canalcruising.co.uk](http://www.canalcruising.co.uk)**

## **Good News for Stone**

Joule's Brewery has confirmed that they have acquired the land adjacent to the Trent and Mersey canal as it passes through Stone town centre.

The plot is known as Crown Wharf and was a part of the original Joule's Brewery warehouse operation when the company exported Stone Ales from Liverpool docks around the world. Joule's was the first English beer to be exported to the United States, ahead of its rival Bass.

The site is currently utilised by Stone Town council as a free parking facility. The council had backed Joule's plans to acquire the land from the Canal and River Trust.

Joule's has for some years been looking to have a flagship taphouse in Stone, which is where Francis Joules established the second of the Joule's breweries in 1779, having moved from Salford. The company grew to occupy vast parts of Stone which became synonymous with Joule's.

***Steve Nuttall, Director at Joule's, made some comments.....***

'This acquisition provides us with an opportunity to embrace the Joule's story and return the brand to Stone with some style. Our Joule's boardroom will once again be located in Stone where the story all began. We also intend to establish a full Brewery Taphouse by the canal. This will be the first pub we have built from the ground up, it is daunting for a small company like ours and we know we need to be bold if we are to embody the spirit of Stone and embrace our brewing heritage, we simply cannot get this wrong, scary and exciting in equal measure and now we have bought the site there is no going back.'

Joule's has been working with the Crown Wharf steering group headed by Stone Town Councilor Rob Kenney.

Rob comments, 'We are delighted that Joule's has now purchased Crown Wharf for a pub which will make the canal accessible for the public, it is also wonderful to see Joule's so committed to our town. The scheme will link the town to the canal which has long been a part of the town plan. In



addition, Joule's have given a commitment that they will provide space on the site for Stone Town Council should the town want to establish a heritage centre, perhaps in Wharfingers cottage. Joule's also agreed to work with the Stone Revellers where there is the prospect of a studio theatre being a part of the development. It is possible that the Theatre could also be used as a cinema and conference centre.'

### ***Old Fire Station Building***

Before plans are drawn up Joule's and the Steering Group have approached the County Council who own the derelict fire station building which is adjacent to Crown Wharf. If this building can be bought it will become a part of the scheme which will form the gateway to the Crown Wharf for the public to access to the site

### ***Steve Nuttall adds,***

'The county council has been very supportive and we are in talks to acquire the fire station as soon as possible, once this outcome is known then the design phase will start and plans will be brought forward to the public for comments. If we are unable to secure the fire station we will bring forward a slightly different scheme with access from the current entrance. This is a great moment in our story and we are looking forward to presenting the plans for Joules to return to Stone with a new project at Crown Wharf.'

Bill Cash MP met with the Steering Group in May and is delighted that Joule's has now purchased the site for development; ***he said....***

'Of course, there will have to be consultation. I was pleased to have supported the scheme, the project has the potential to reinvigorate the centre of the town with a leisure orientated project. It is exciting to see a local company with so much history in the town returning and investing and there is a wonderful opportunity here also to add a heritage centre that can do justice to the Stone story which is so rich and I think often undersold. A permanent studio theatre in the heart of the town would be a terrific addition to the town and refocus arts and leisure in the centre of town. There is clearly still a lot to do but this news is a break point in the project, a milestone well worth celebrating today.'

Canal and Rivers Trust, Ian Sprott has expressed his support of the scheme on behalf to The Canals and Rivers Trust.

‘We are pleased to have finally agreed terms that will allow the redevelopment of Crown Wharf. The outline scheme that Joules has proposed will ensure the Trent and Mersey is much more accessible and will provide a gateway for canal users to Stone town. The broader scheme also looks very interesting to us and we will be supporting Joules and the steering group as they look to bring forward detailed plans for us and the public to consider. Crown Wharf has been dormant now for over 20 years so this is a landmark day, we are hopeful that plans will come forward with the next few months.’



*Aerial View of Site*

From *A little Bit of Stone* 08/12/2017



## **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 Brighouse**  
**[John.brighouse@waterways.co.uk](mailto:John.brighouse@waterways.co.uk)?07808878317**

*This gentleman and his writings has been brought to my attention!.....ed.*

### Steve Dyster

Steve Dyster has embarked on a new career. Teacher for twenty-three years, freelance editor, data in-putter with the NHS, Sustrans Schools officer in Stoke-on-Trent, geriatric stay-at-home Dad, joint founder of [www.sevendaycyclist.com](http://www.sevendaycyclist.com), doing the housework, published author of articles and a cycling guidebook; just published (Sept. 2017); his first set of short stories is just out. Believe it or not, there is not a single mention of a bicycle, tricycle or any other such-like means of conveyance in ***The Navigator***. (from Steve Dyster website <https://www.stevedyster.com>)

***The Navigator*** is a truly wonderful selection of fictional short stories which revolve around the extremely colourful character Job Carter. These ten tales recollect the bustling life on the West Midlands canal system, as well as the extremely adventurous life of Job Carter: whether these tales are true or merely a figment of Job's imagination we will never truly know, but it is nice to think that some, if not all of these dramatic events happened to Job, and even if they didn't they are certainly a fun read.

*As I haven't read the book myself, I have included a couple of reviews from other readers (I'm going to get hold of one though!).*

### Amazon Review

I borrowed a copy of this book from a friend (who purchased it from a local coffee shop) read the preface, which grabbed my attention on the get-go, and proceeded to read a few of the ten short stories. The chapter 'My Great-great-grandma and the Wooden Leg' was my favourite and made me chuckle on more than a few occasions. An allegorical illustration opens each chapter before the author gives a brief background preceding each story.

### Book Review by Mark Jacobson

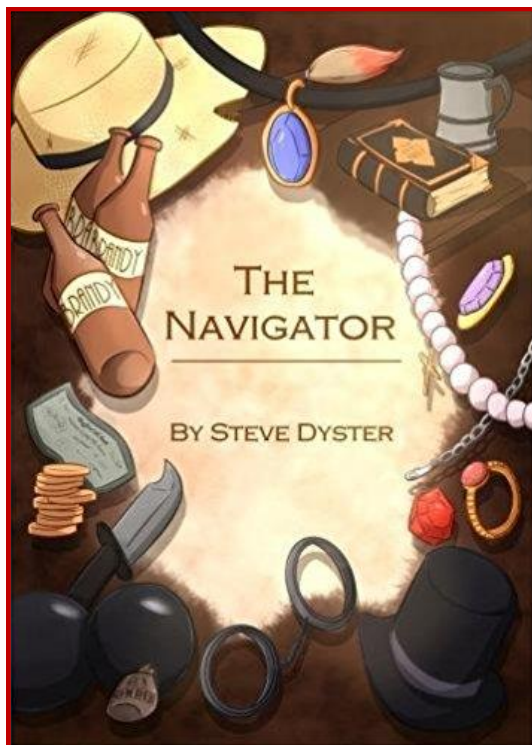
Job Carter - more a description of his occupation than his name – is a grand raconteur, or teller of tales, always about his younger days, mainly told to his son in law or grandson, and many designed to shock, but entertain, the listener. The veracity of these cannot be vouched for but their historical relevance captures the spirit of those times, from the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century.

Historically this spans four Monarchs: George III, IV, William IV and Victoria.

Starting with the bare bones recorded of Job Carter, Steve has enriched the tale by fleshing it out judiciously. The resulting narrative is easy to read, flowing from tale to tale with fluidity. Also, in using a larger than normal font size, the print is much easier on ageing eyes!

Each tale is a separate story but the character of Job Carter is exposed, likeable, if of an earlier age with different morals, so not necessarily understood in this more modern era. It also encompasses the contest between Church and Chapel which arose during this period, incorporating the temperance movement in the disputes. Job was a great believer in the sober use of ale, and less enamoured of drunken sots! At the conclusion of this enjoyable book one is left with a single question: is it an historic novel, or a fantastic tale told to entrance?

(From North Staffordshire Press website ([www.northstaffordshirepress.com/our-books](http://www.northstaffordshirepress.com/our-books))



**The Navigator  
Steve Dyster**

**Paperback, 384 pages  
North Staffordshire  
Press 2017**

**ISBN-10:0993578322**

**RRP £10.99**



## **T&MCS social calendar to April 2018**

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 February 2018**.....

Bill Walker

### **Fly Boat Saturn**

Bill will talk about the lives and history of the Fly Boatmen and the Shropshire Union Company.

**Friday 16th March 2018**.....

Derek Smith

### **Cruising on Remote Waterways**

Derek and Jeanne Smith are keen trail boaters and share their experiences in this illustrated talk that looks at cruising on remote waterways, mainly unconnected waterways that are under restoration.

Friday 20th April 2018.....

Phil Clayton

**Joeys, Joshers and James A BCN Miscellany**

An introduction, accompanied by pictures, words and music, to the beginnings, development, working life, decline and renaissance of that wonderful network of waterways known as the Birmingham Canal Navigations, together with a little about the work of the BCN Society.

**Planned Work Update on Our Canal**

26/01/2018...Vegetation will be cut back on both sides of the Western portal of Barnton Tunnel.

29/01/2018...Vegetation will be cut back on both sides of the canal from Limekiln Lock to Red Bull Lock on the Cheshire Flight (one side only at Red Bull).

Planned work to repair the fourth paddle at Aston Lock has now been put back until later in 2018, as the lock is passable with three paddles operational.

*And a quick note....*We have had so much rain this Autumn that the river section of the canal between Alrewas Lock and Wychnor Lock was closed on 15/12/2017 as the river was in flood. Thankfully this is now open again.

**Harecastle Tunnel opening times 05/01/18 to 03/03/18**

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays

North-South 8.30am and 10.10am

South-North 9.20am and 11.00am

48 hour booking required

Telephone Number 03030 404040

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

## Our mystery by the Moselle



Having sampled a few glasses of champagne in Epernay it was time to say goodbye to the River Marne and drive east to another river – the Moselle. We stayed in Moselle-side campsites at Liverdun and also near the village of Villey-le-Sec, both of which are close to the large town of Nancy in the Lorraine region of France. Whilst walking along

the towpath of the Moselle at Villey-le-Sec there was evidence of beaver activity (*see picture*) with many trees gnawed near the base and some trees felled.

The medieval town of Liverdun is built on a hill and is very attractive as is the Moselle which forms a loop around the base of the town. The whole area is surrounded by tree-covered hills. We walked up to the old town to a chateau and in the grounds were interpretation boards detailing the history of the town including some old black and white photos. Four of these showed a barge coming out of a tunnel in Liverdun which to us didn't look quite right as the Moselle is very wide here. The tourist office was closed and there were no town maps at the campsite so we were somewhat confused as to the whereabouts of this tunnel.

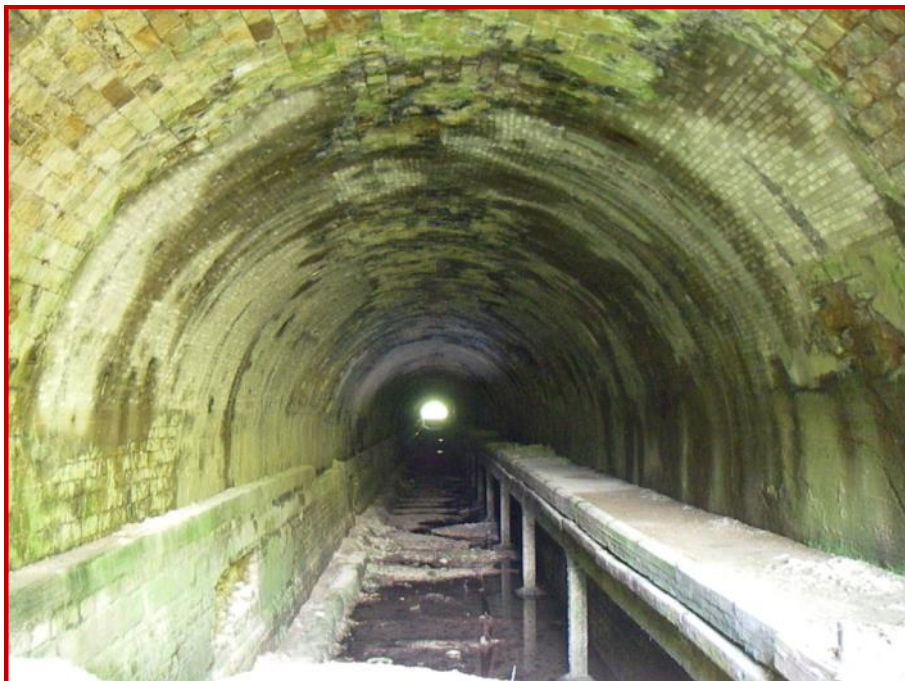
However all was revealed when we looked at our “Inland Waterways of France book”. The tunnel in the photos was actually on the Canal de la Marne au Rhin. This was the longest canal in France (195 miles) until a 14 mile section along the Moselle valley was closed after canalisation works

on the Moselle were completed between Frouard and Neuves-Maisons in 1979. This section included the canal at Liverdun. So later that day we walked by the Moselle in the Frouard direction and saw the abutments of what is all that remains of the aqueduct that carried the Canal de la Marne au Rhin over the Moselle. On one side of the river we could clearly see where a basin had been and the route the canal had taken – both filled in and the basin is now used as an open-air sports area. On the other side of the river the old course of the canal had been built upon.

We walked back towards Liverdun and saw a road signed “Rue du Port” beside which was a large open gravel and grass area surrounded by sloping grass edges – this was another basin. A road bridge went across one side of it and beyond this was the route of the canal with sloping high stone sides. The old route was covered with long grass but someone had trodden a path down so we walked along what was the old canal, dodged the stinging nettles and turning a corner there was the entrance to the  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile long tunnel which we’d seen on the photos at the chateau earlier during the day. We could see inside it; the canal hadn’t been infilled, the towpath was clearly visible on the right and we could see daylight at the other end. However we could not enter the tunnel as it was blocked by a metal grill.



It



### *View Inside Tunnel*

seemed strange that the abandoned section of the Canal de la Marne au Rhin hadn't been as a result of the arrival of the railway or lorries but was due to improvements being made to the River Moselle navigation.

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

Please send contributions for the next issue to me, Margaret English, by e-mail to [margaretetlm@hotmail.com](mailto: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 **01/03/2018!**



*See what you missed (if you didn't go!)*

### **Christmas Cruises at Anderton**

Santa swapped his sleigh for the Anderton trip boat in December as The Anderton Boat Lift played host for a seasonal cruise along the River Weaver from the 16th to 24th December- And you were invited!

*Christmas jumpers optional* - but having fun was a must .

There were festive stories and songs to sing. A place to play in Anderton's new boat lift inspired play area. There was a chance to take 'elfies' with Santa. And best of all, Santa made sure every child got a gift too.



*Below is a heartfelt plea from a lady in need!.....*

### **Crew Needed**

I am a retired woman who would like to find other older women to help crew my 45' boat. No experience is necessary as I enjoy teaching people to handle the boat.

I need practical, adaptable people who have a good sense of humour.

The boat is a 1999 ex Canaltime boat with a reverse layout and a cruiser stern. The double bedroom at the bow has a door making it private and is where crew sleep. It is next to the bathroom which is separated from the galley and sitting area by another door.

The main dates I need crew for are June 1st to 7th, travelling from Huddlesford to the Anderton Boat Lift. I would like some time travelling with crew beforehand to see how we get on.

Please contact me either by phone or email if you can help

***Lynn Evans***  
lpevans@outlook.com  
07933236785

### ***1st Voyage, 2004***





*A musical interlude  
on board with  
'Sam'.  
(crew musical skills  
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## **Santa Practices at Anderton**

*We can't have a December edition without a Santa Story!*

EVERYONE knows how Father Christmas delivers presents on Christmas Eve.

Rudolph guides his sleigh through the skies, and Santa stops off to slide down the chimney of every house where the best behaved children live.

But for homes without chimneys, he has to find another, more challenging way to get down from the roofs he parks his sleigh on.

In preparation for the big day, Santa decided to brush up on his abseiling skills on the Anderton Boat Lift. One of Santa's elves told the Guardian: "For much of the time, the reindeer make it easy for Santa to deliver presents.

"But not all homes have chimneys and some are very difficult to access, so Santa needs to keep up his abseiling and climbing skills.

"To stay in condition, Santa practices for most of the year at the North Pole but just before Christmas he likes to limber up somewhere different and interesting.

"This year he has decided to come to Cheshire and tackle this wonderful example of high precision Victorian engineering."

The boat lift towers more than 50ft above the River Weaver, which made it ideal preparation for Santa to tackle the tallest of homes on Christmas Eve.

It also gave him the chance to catch a stunning glimpse of Northwich from the top of the lift on the Trent and Mersey Canal.

***From The Northwich Guardian, 18/12/2017***

***See back page for picture!***

# TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL SOCIETY

Registered Charity No:326498.  
Registered Office: 10 Long Lane, Middlewich, CW10 0BL  
Telephone: 01606 834471

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

***Bringing Boats Back to Burslem***





*Santa abseils down  
the Anderton Lift  
(See p.22)*