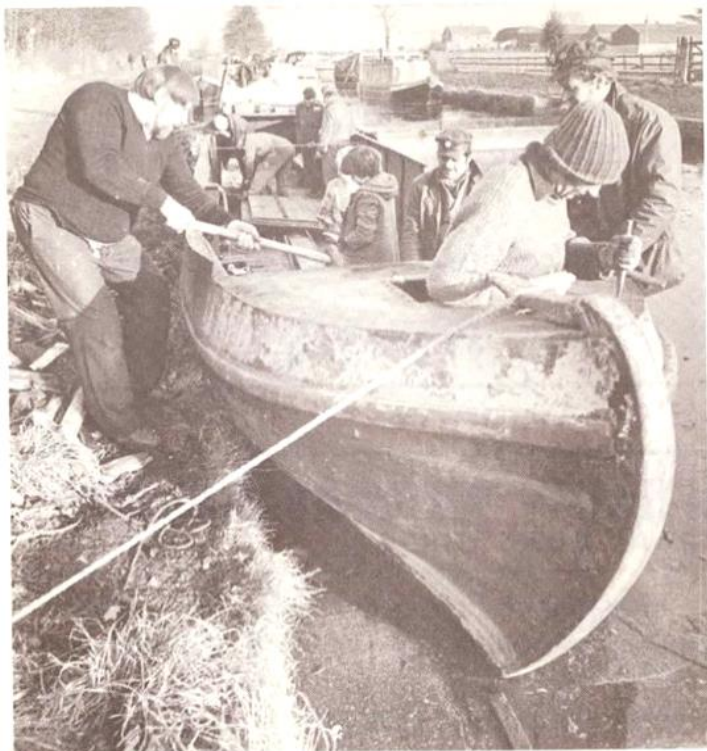


GRAND TRUNK

Grand Trunk



March,

1981

NB Kangaroo (see pp. 18-20)

November/December 2020

www.trentandmerseycanalsociety.org.uk

Chairman's Bit

As you will have seen from the front cover. Margaret has been making good use of our archives to research an article. I decided to audit our collection of Grand Trunk back-issues, and the results were rather disappointing. Many early issues are missing from the archive, and several of the later issues have missing pages, blank pages, or pages torn out.

Thanks to a very generous donation of his entire collection by Ian Andrew, I have been able to add 5 missing issues to the archive, as well as replacing several incomplete/damaged copies with better examples. So, you can guess what is coming! Does anybody else have a collection of back-issues (especially issues before 1991)? Even if you don't want to part with your collection it would be useful to know who has copies of the missing/damaged issues. Please contact me and let me know.



Unfortunately I don't have a list of "missing issues" as we don't know how many issues there were each year until 1991, but I do have a full list of those issues which are in the archive and can email that to anybody who wants to check their collection. We have the very first 2 issues from April and May 1974 (although not in very good condition), but then nothing until March 1977. From 1977 to 1980 we have 3 or 4 issues annually, but are unsure which issue are missing as the dating of issues is "a bit random". From 1981 to 1986 we believe that we have all issues (but some have faults). From 1987 to 1990 we have some issues but, again are unsure if any are missing. From 1991 to 1999 we have all issues, but some have missing/blank/damaged pages. From 2000 onwards all issues are in reasonable condition, with no known major faults.

Roger Evans

Doesn't it make a nice change to have a *Chairman's Bit* that doesn't mention mileposts?.....Ed.

Editorial



Welcome to the last edition of 2020– and what a year it has been! By the end of March we were all locked down, with no boat movement and very little travel of any sort. The tow-paths became refuges for people desperate for somewhere away from the streets where they could have their allowance of 1 hour of exercise per day. From the 5th of June we could boat– but not stay out overnight– cold comfort for those whose craft were some distance away. When unrestricted boating recommenced it seemed as if every boat in the country was on the move! Locks and vegetation management had suffered from the months of idleness and broken paddles and stoppages were rife.

We managed several longer trips as well as daily outings (all usually involving *mileposts*), and fell in love with the Ashby Canal. It seemed as if the dreaded Covid 19 was somehow less important on the water and we felt very privileged to be able to enjoy this. I hope you have all managed to stay in good spirits and been able to enjoy the canals, walking, boating, cycling, fishing or just looking.

I miss the social events very much. At the moment we are unsure when these can recommence. Our social secretary (Gillian) feels it is time for a change of officer (please see page 9). We are very grateful to Gillian for her years of excellent service and are glad she is remaining on the committee.

Christmas will not be the same this year. At the moment we are banned from being with our family, so may well spend the whole festive season afloat. We usually head for Llangollen on boxing day, but I have a feeling we might not be welcome in the land of the leek and daffodil at the moment!

*Have the best possible Christmas
and a positive New Year!*

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 January/February 2021 edition is **01/01/2021**.

Weir by Poole Lock

Thought members might be interested these pictures of the bypass at Lock 42 recently. We had heard reports from boaters that water had been spilling all over the sides of the lock making it both difficult and dangerous to operate the lock. (The following boat had just emptied lock 41 into the pound). They had called out C&RT to sort it out.



However, when I was there a few days later, en route to Middlewich and Chester, the bypass was as you can see in the first pic. and the staining evidence shows that it had been brim full for some time. I also noted the pound water overflowing the lock just level with the top of the coping stones.

When we returned 10 days later having gone round the 4 Counties Ring, I took the second and third pics. and can now see how the weir should look. My question is ‘ Why did C&RT not sort it out straight away? ‘ and, ‘Why don’t they check it every day like they used to when I moored below that

lock? Presumably they are short staffed...
Curious

Patrick Marks

From CRT on 18th September!



A blocked by-wash culvert has also been discovered by Lock 42, Limekiln Tow-path Side Lock on the Trent & Mersey Canal.

Our engineer is currently in the process of organising a CCTV survey to establish the cause of the

blocked by-wash and is in discussions with our Local Heritage Team about the method of repair for the damaged stop plank groove.

Given the heritage constraints of the site (the lock is Grade II Listed) it is anticipated this will take in excess of 6 weeks before works can commence onsite. As a result, the lock will remain closed and an update will be provided by Friday 30 October.



More about mileposts

Returning from a cruise along the Caldon Canal we decided to moor over-night at the South portal of Harecastle Tunnel, ready for our booked 9 a.m. passage the next day. Having time to spare (as we weren't rushing for a tunnel passage) we finally managed to stop and check the condition of all 4 mileposts and their plaques (as all are replacement mileposts) between Etruria and the tunnel.



The first one (Shardlow 57, Preston Brook 35) was near a short arm off the canal into the old Garden Festival site, between bridges 118 and 119. The milepost itself was in good condition, although the paintwork had a few scratches. The plinth had obviously been removed when the towpath here was converted into a cycleway, and the plaque simply reset into the surface of the cycle path. Consequently the surface of the plaque was badly worn with the society logo section particularly badly affected. The actual raised lettering of the inscription is still perfectly readable however.



The next milepost (58/34) was opposite the site of the Burslem Arm. The milepost itself was partially hidden by vegetation, so we removed that and gave it a quick clean, although some graffiti saying "JOHN 20" couldn't be quickly removed. There was no sign of either the plaque or the plinth, so we decided

to dig down to see if it was buried. After about 4 inches of stony ground we gave up the unequal struggle, and moved on. Since arriving home we have compared our photographs of the milepost to those taken by Phil Myott in 2003. It looks like the plaque would be further underground than we excavated (assuming that it is still present).



The next one (59/33) was just before Westport Lake. The milepost was sadly in need of care and attention, with the paintwork worn through and missing over large areas. Again there was no sign of plinth or plaque.

However after digging down (through slightly easier ground this time) we hit something solid. Enlarging the hole slightly we were able to clearly see (and photograph) part of the society logo on the plaque. We considered excavating the rest of the plaque, but this would have left it at the bottom of a hole which would just fill with water, so we carefully refilled the hole back to ground level.

Comparing our photographs to those taken by Phil Myott in 2003, it looks like the ground level was raised when the cycle path was constructed and the plaque (on the plinth) was just buried, rather than being raised and rebuilt.

Our guess was that the old towpath surface (when excavated to give a flat solid surface for the cycle path to be laid on) was simply thrown to one side and the plaque buried without anybody knowing or caring!





Our final milepost (60/32) was by bridge 129C. This was the site of the last new milepost installed by our society, and there was a large ceremony at its unveiling. The milepost itself was slightly rusty in places but didn't look too bad. However the plaque here was totally missing, with just a bare plinth below the milepost. Comparing our photographs to those taken at the unveiling ceremony it was noticeable that the plinth has been modified (or replaced) since it was originally built (e.g. there are a different number of bricks along the front edge). As part of this change the plaque was installed ABOVE the level of the plinth rather than set into the plinth, so it would have been relatively easy for it to be damaged (or even stolen)! Comparing our photographs to those taken by Phil Myott in 2003, it looks like the plinth had already been modified by then, but the plaque was still present.

Further comparison showed that a flight of steps (right by the milepost in the unveiling photographs) was missing by 2003, but the bridge had been built by then.

Our guess is that they had to move the milepost when the bridge was built and didn't understand why we had set the plaque INTO the plinth instead of being ABOVE it.



So, all in all, not a very good result. All 4 mileposts (of which 2 need attention) are present, but 1 plaque is missing, 1 is buried, 1 is probably buried (or missing) and 1 is badly worn. The milepost section of our website has been updated with all this information and some pictures.

Roger Evans

WANTED

Social Secretary

Our current incumbent, Gillian Watson, has been in post for 9 years and feels that a fresh approach is needed, she will not, therefore organise any more talks (although the ones cancelled by the pandemic have merely been postponed!).

Gillian has worked extremely hard over the years, soldiering on through venue changes and unavoidable cancellations. She searched tirelessly for new and exciting speakers, and will be greatly missed.

Duties consist of organising a venue and series of talks (normally held on 3rd Friday of each calendar month) between October and April.

In recent years Gillian has also arranged a Christmas Meal at the beginning of December, liaising with the relevant landlord.

The post includes a seat on the Society Committee. The committee *normally* meet bi-monthly at a member's home to discuss Society matters. Attendance would not be obligatory however.



Expressions of interest to Roger or Margaret please. Gillian is happy to help the successful applicant to find their feet.

Reproduced below are questions raised by Weaver Navigation Society with CRT relating to our T&M. Included with permission!

Northern T&M – vegetation control

I cruised down to Kinver in August. I noted that on the Middlewich Branch, the SUC and the S&W, if necessary I could pull onto the towpath side in emergency to moor on the overwhelming part of the waterways. The T&M is the other way with weeds, nettles etc growing 5 to 6ft tall and thick with it. In addition there are saplings growing out of the washwall. Looking at where the grass on the towpath has been mowed, I can only guess that the mower operative will not go near the edge as he cannot see the edge and doesn't want to end up in the canal. When someone complained earlier in the year about the state of the T&M canal bank, he was told it was due to lockdown holding back work. The truth is it has been left too long to a point where a standard strimmer or mower will not tackle the job. When the concern was raised with Richard Parry (not only about the T&M) and a comparison made with the Bridgewater where boaters could get ashore safely on an estimated 97% of the canal, he responded by saying that there should be no difference in standards between waterways. I cruised last weekend from Anderton onto the Bridgewater. In some places it was like cruising on a river with no towpath in sight! In a number of places the reeds are narrowing the channel. Bearing in mind that C&RT hold the safety of staff, volunteers and customers as its highest priority, the question is, when will action be taken to sort the problem?

Anderton Lift

As I understand the situation, there are long standing cracks in the ceramic coating on the outside of the rams. The apparent intension is to close the Lift for at least a season if not a year to dismantle the Lift and effect repairs. Can you advise?

Paddleboarders

Is C&RT still content to let them paddle through the tunnels? It is dangerous enough with canoes. How will paddleboarders cope with wide beam boats on many of the corners on the T&M?

Wide beam boats on narrow canals

There is a growth in the number of wide beam boats cruising what are considered narrow canals. Often the owners have limited experience. Our local concern is on the northern T&M. There is a boat yard at Wincham Wharf (north of Broken Cross) which launches and sells wide beam (and narrow) boats on behalf of Collingwood Boats (see their website – <https://>

www.collingwoodboatbuilders.co.uk 'freedom to go wherever you please'). They have been selling 9ft wide boats which aren't too much of a problem but one day I passed one that looked like 10ft or more beam under way. I passed one 2 weeks ago, moored which was 12ft 6ins beam (Euro Cruiser). I spoke to Clive Myers, one time head of National Express who was a part owner of Orchard Marina and Park Farm Marina on the Middlewich side of Broken Cross but is still involved with Wincham Wharf. The wide beam craft are intended for residential use and if they stay permanently in a local marina (Orchard Marina) and never venture out, Ok.



Orchard Marina is currently drained, the jetties have all been removed as has the dry dock. The intension is to turn it into a residential location. Boats in Orchard do not have to have a C&RT licence whereas boats in Park Farm Marina do. The boats which were in Orchard Marina were moved to Park Farm Marina whilst Orchard Marina is being revamped.

If the owner wants to go cruising, then that is a problem. When wide beam working boats were in use on the wide canals, they were steered by competent people and the boats created and maintained a suitable channel. That has long gone. Even on wide canals (L&L), very wide beam craft can be a problem. We appreciate that wide beam craft are a revenue source for C&RT, but should C&RT not stipulate what the maximum dimensions should be for craft based on their waterways and allowed to cruise ?

Our feathered friends

Whilst staying at home during lockdown we had time to look through a box of canal related papers and articles that we had kept and added to since we bought our first narrowboat in October 1987. We bought NB *Emily* from Venetian Marine on the Middlewich Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal and then moored for the following ten years on the Trent & Mersey Canal Anderton Marina.

One of the more amusing articles we found was the Anderton Marina Summer Newsletter for 1997 which had been sent to us after we had left Cheshire in the spring of that year to cruise south and moor on the Kennet & Avon Canal as Terry's employer and work location had changed.



At Anderton Marina there had been a pair of resident swans for many years who were called Syd and Gladys and every year they built a nest made up of grasses and reeds on the grass bank close to where boats entered the marina.

The swan family of 1996



Syd having a bad day!

With incubation taking about a month we used to eagerly await the first sighting of their cygnets who stay under the watchful eye of their parents for about a year. According to the Marina Newsletter in the middle of May 1997 Syd and Gladys became parents again but despite ten eggs being in the nest only two hatched and made their debut at Anderton. Within days they were in the water, paddling like mad to keep up with mum and dad and each day they got bigger and bigger.

We don't know whether it was a competition held at the Marina but it was decided to name the two cygnets Terry and Annette in our memory as we had moored there for a decade. Someone obviously had a good sense of humour and we wonder how many other members of the TMCS have had cygnets named after them!

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

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**ALL SOCIAL MEETINGS CANCELLED FOR 2020-21
SEASON!**



CANCELLED

**Red Bull Public House
Congleton Road South,
Stoke-on-Trent
ST7 3AJ**

Above is a picture of our usual meeting venue, don't forget where it is! Unfortunately, because of the restrictions on meetings and social distancing rules, it has been decided that there will be **no** social season this year. Speakers have been asked to defer their interesting talks until 2021-22.

We want you all to be safe!



For further information contact: Gillian Watson 01606 835 606

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Join Us on a Canal Work Party

We are back!

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 John.Lawson@waterways.org.uk

September Work Party



On 17th September 7 willing volunteers scraped the remaining 9 sections of the heritage metal rails around the wash at lock 65. The bare metal was then painted with 2 coats of white paint. Surrounding vegetation was trimmed back and topped. All three lock ladders received a second coat and the bottom balance beams of the offside chamber were prepared and painted.

***Heritage Railings
Painted!***

*Photos
John Lawson*

***October work party
report is on p.22.***



Steve Bates recently passed on to me a couple of photos of Kangaroo, a narrowboat owned by the Society in the 1980s. I became intrigued and went hunting in the archives for more information- here is some of what I found.....Ed.

Narrow Boat Kangaroo

Kangaroo was built in 1928 at W.J. Yarwood & Sons of Northwich for Fellows, Morton and Clayton carrying company. She cost £500 and her Birmingham Registration number was 1509. Her F.M.C. number was 71 and she was paired with the butty *Norfolk*. Cargoes carried varied from china clay, flint, chocolate crumb, and spices and raw materials for sauce-making. She was mainly based in the Birmingham area, but *Kangaroo* occasionally ventured as far afield as Nottingham and Derby.

From 1963, she was used as a maintenance boat by British Waterways, until purchased by the Society in the early 1980s. *Kangaroo* is a Narrow Boat of iron riveted construction with a wooden elm bottom and was in near derelict condition when she became part of T&MCS for the princely sum of £250.00. Had she not fallen into the hands of dedicated volunteers, it is extremely likely she would have been destroyed.



Since then *Kangaroo* spent some time on loan to a Manpower Services Commission group working on the Trent and Mersey Canal, for which a small fee was charged. It soon became clear that *Kangaroo* was in urgent need of re-bottoming, which was likely to cost in the region of £3,000 if done professionally. In the light of this, the Main Committee felt that a review of the future of the boat was required.



In the summer 1988 edition of *Grand Trunk* Steve Guest wrote: 'As you may be aware, I have recently taken on the responsibility for the raising of funds to restore the Society narrowboat *Kangaroo*. We need to raise about £10,000 for the complete restoration project.'

Steve asked for volunteers to help with painting and scraping as well as appealing for donations. He organised a boat gathering and sponsored walk and pointed out that if each society member could raise £20.00 in sponsorship, then new bottom planks could be purchased and the boat made watertight.

By 1991 it was clear that *Kangaroo* could not be used in conjunction with the type of work parties the society was undertaking at that time. Other pressing matters (like the restoration of The Anderton Boat Lift) precluded finding the massive number of man-hours needed to restore the boat. The committee decided that the only alternative was to sell *Kangaroo*. Steps were taken to return donations totalling £1,800 intended for the boat's restoration.

The Historic Narrowboat Society website confirms that *Kangaroo* entered

private ownership in 1991. One great point in her favour was that she had never been converted for leisure use.

According to the website, she was restored to her FMC livery, and in 2005 could still be seen around her original haunts.



**A work party in the dry dock at Swan Line Fradley
removing the engine room from *Kangaroo***

With thanks to Steve Bates

The pictures on the previous pages are snapshots taken from the 1985 November/December edition of Grand Trunk and show Kangaroo at work on loan to The manpower Services Commision.

The cover picture shows a work party at Fradley, showing Roger Lee, Rob Davies, Steve Bates' dad Alan Bates and Steve.

Planned Winter Stoppages on T&M

Lock 1, Derwent Mouth Lock, near Sawley, Trent & Mersey Canal

Starts: 15/02/2021 08:00 Ends: 05/03/2021 16:00 inclusive

Installation of a bridge over the lock balance beams. 01/06/2020: The information above is a draft notice of works planned as part of our winter 2020/21 stoppages programme.

Bridge 17, Deepdale Bridge, Barrow upon Trent, Trent & Mersey Canal

Starts: 11/01/2021 08:00 Ends: 05/02/2021 16:00 inclusive

Carry out repairs to address voids under the towpath. 01/06/2020: The information above is a draft notice of works planned as part of our winter 2020/21 stoppages programme.

Stoppages 2/11/20-11/12/20

Bridge 180a, Whatcroft Hall Lane Railway Bridge, Rudheath, Northwich, Trent & Mersey Canal

Third party contractors, working for Network Rail, will be removing the existing railway bridge, carrying out repairs to the bridge abutments and installing a new bridge. The canal will not be dewatered but a fixed pontoon and scaffold will be in place throughout the works.

Bridge 56, Tuppenhurst, Trent & Mersey Canal

The navigation will be dewatered to allow repairs to the bridge towpath wall. 01/06/2020: The information above is a draft notice of works planned as part of our winter 2020/21 stoppages programme.

Bridge 99, Siddals Bridge, and Lock 34, Meaford, Trent & Mersey Canal

A stoppage is required to carry out works including: Bridge 99: repairs to the abutment and wash wall coping. Lock 34: top and bottom gate refits, ladder improvements, brickwork and coping repairs.

Lock 30, Lime Kiln, Stone, Trent & Mersey Canal

A stoppage is required to enable the replacement of the tail-bridge. 01/06/2020: The information above is a draft notice of works planned as part of our winter 2020/21 stoppages programme.

Restrictions to navigation (including twinned locks on The Cheshire Flight) have not been listed.

October Work Part Report

8 intrepid volunteers made good use of the painting weather. A further coat of white Hammerite paint was applied to the remaining nine sections of the by-wash rail. The bottom gates on the offside lock chamber were prepared and painted, including paddle gear and beams.



Bridge rails were scraped and painted. Four strapping posts were prepared and painted.

The rails on the top gates of both chambers and paddle gear were also scraped and painted. Additional painting was completed on Lock 66 – mooring posts and top gates. Finally, the area was cleared of litter.

John Lawson

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

Bringing Boats Back to Burslem



***Local artist Rob Pointon
Discovered at work on the Cheshire Flight***

Photo John Lawson