

# GRAND TRUNK



*Winter evening on The Trent & Mersey*

**November/December 2022**

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

## Chairman's Bit

Our social events at Red Bull resumed in October with a fascinating talk about the Daniel Adamson. Sadly, only 10 members attended. Our next talk ("More sustainable boating" on Friday 18th November) could be our last ever talk as nobody has volunteered to take over the booking process! However, there is a possibility that we might be able to combine with the local IWA branch (North Staffs and South Cheshire) to hold talks on "their" night (the second Friday of the month) at "our" venue (Red Bull). Nothing is certain yet, except that there definitely will NOT be a talk in January. See the next issue of Grand Trunk for more information and, hopefully (if discussions go well), a list of planned talks for February, March and April.



We do, however, have full details of our Christmas Meal in this issue, see pages 10/11. So, please do come along for what is usually an excellent night of food and quizzes.

Currently (as I write) the Cheshire Flight has been re-opened for a couple of weeks, but it is expected to close again from 4th November as CRT still don't have enough water available to keep it open over the Winter. They are already worrying about the water supply for next Summer!

Another long-term closure problem is the Anderton Lift. This closed in July because of a problem with the aqueduct gates, and is not currently expected to reopen until the end of March 2023. Over the winter it is hoped to carry out the already planned program of works to replace the seals on the main hydraulic rams (as well as fix the gate mechanism).

We have been invited to a meeting at Anderton Lift next week, where we hope to learn more about the current problems and the plans to fix them. So, hopefully, we will have more news for you in the next issue of Grand Trunk.

***Roger Evans***

*Cover picture, John Lawson*

## Editorial

Hello everybody!

No room in the last issue to honour our late queen, so see page 4!

I am currently rushing to get this issue out in time for you to book our wonderful Christmas meal on 2nd December (See pp10/11).



Since the last magazine, we have had our Covid booster and flu injection, been quite ill and spent an exhausting, but very rewarding week in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

We booked because chairman Roger had a screensaver showing the old

town, and as he spends a great deal of time in front of his computer, we thought we should go there! There was, of course, not a canal in sight, but we did have the Adriatic and a large number of small boats in the old harbour to help us feel at home. A trip to the verdant island of Lokrum (it took 10 minutes) also lifted our spirits. I now know a great deal about 'The Game of Thrones', although I have never seen it.

On the canal front, matters aren't so good. After being open for a short time, the T&M from Middlewich to Kidsgrove was closed again through lack of water. The Anderton Lift is closed until April next year and Harecastle Tunnel is about to go onto its winter booking only schedule (if you can get there).

We are unable to make our usual Christmas/New Year trip up the Welsh canal because planned winter stoppages get in the way, so if we can get to Hardingswood Junction, we will probably wander up the Macc (if it's open of course). I'll let you know in the next issue.

*The investiture of former T&MCS vice-president, the late Harry Arnold*



## Fire on the Trent & Mersey

A canal boat was engulfed in a blaze near a busy canal lock in Burton. Firefighters from Staffordshire Fire and Rescue were called to the fire on the Trent and Mersey canal at 2.10am on Friday, October 14.



Firefighters from Burton and Tamworth attended the scene at Dallow Lock, in Horninglow, near to a number of houses and businesses and had to use breathing apparatus as they tackled the blaze. A water rescue crew was also sent from Tamworth to assist in the operation.

No-one was in the canal boat at the time of the fire and no-one was reported injured. An investigation to establish the cause of the fire is underway with officers from Staffordshire Police.

The Canal and River Trust have previously held events to highlight the dangers of boat fires and how they can be prevented. Other organisations such as the Boat Safe Scheme work to prevent canal fires, despite an incident like it happening being unlikely on a boat which is well maintained.

*From the Burton Mail 14/10/22*

Dallow Lock is the last single lock on the canal and the first after Shobnall Fields, where the IWA festival of water was held this year.....ED

*Dallow Lock: Roger Kidd, Creative Commons*



*Milepost 15/77*  
*Burton on Trent*

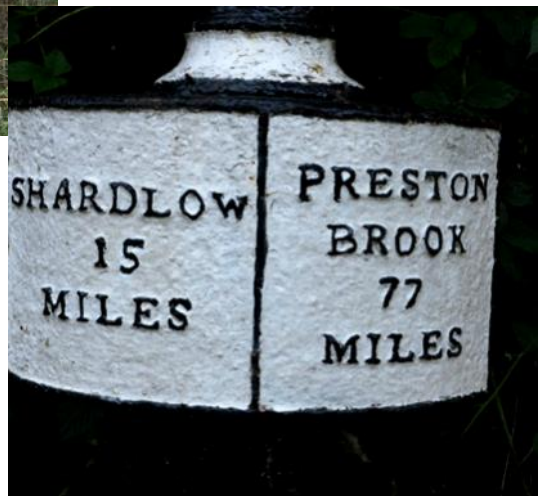
Those of you who are eagle-eyed may have noticed that this milepost (the last before Horninglow Basin) bore an incorrect number - commented on in the latest *Pearson's*.

Presumably this happened at some earlier repaint when the raised lettering became unclear.

While at the Festival of Water, chairman Roger and I gathered up our paint, leapt on our trusty bikes, took ourselves to the offending structure.....

.....and put it right!

*Margaret English*  
*Photos, Roger Evans.*  
*Both pages.*



## Milepost at Derwent Mouth



Passing the very last (additional) milepost on our T&M travels, we noticed the plaque was definitely in need of a little T.L. C!

The writing is almost illegible and badly needs cleaning and repainting



Any offers of help with this task gratefully accepted. Please contact Margaret or Roger if you can help!

*A snippet from Stoke.....*

### **Car crashed into bridge near Westport Lake**

A suspected thief has narrowly avoided ending up in a canal - in his car. The 46-year-old man, from Stoke-on-Trent, is believed to have crashed the black Hyundai Amica into a bridge at Westport Lake on Thursday evening 22nd September.

Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service attended the scene where they found the vehicle on a towpath next to the Trent and Mersey Canal. They also found 'suspected stolen items' in the Hyundai.

The suspect was located shortly afterwards and arrested on suspicion of drug-driving, possessing a bladed article in public, and shop theft.



*From Stoke Sentinel 23/9/22 (pic supplied to the Sentinel)*



*And one from Burton!.....*

### **Furniture dumped canalside at Burton**



A collection of old furniture has been dumped on a busy canalside path under a bridge in Burton. The furniture was spotted by inspectors from East Staffordshire Borough Council.

Officers from the council said that the items had been left in the underpass by the Trent and Mersey Canal in Horninglow at the Horninglow Basin. The items include a blue sofa, a pair of chairs, a larger white sofa and a pile of mattresses.

Now an appeal has been launched for anyone with any information about who dumped the furniture there to come forward. A spokesperson from East Staffordshire Borough Council said: "East Staffordshire Borough Council's Community and Civil Enforcement Team is investigating a fly tipping offence along the canal at Horninglow Basin.

*Pic. East Staffordshire County Council*

Please send contributions for the next issue to me, Margaret English, by e-mail to [margaretelm@hotmail.com](mailto:margaretelm@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 2023 edition is **18/01/2023**



## **Trent & Mersey Canal Society Christmas Meal**

**At last, what you've been waiting for!**

This year our Christmas meal will be held at our favourite venue once again.

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

***On Friday 2nd December, meet at 7pm ready to eat at 7.30.***

There will be the usual quizzes, one canal based and one general knowledge—with the usual fattening prizes for the lucky winners!

This year, the menu is arranged a little differently. There are three courses, each priced individually, Guests pay the landlord on the night.

If you would like to attend, please contact Margaret on:

[margaretetlm@hotmail.com](mailto:margaretetlm@hotmail.com)

01606834471

07790 768727

*Please make your choices from the menu on the facing page and pass these on to Margaret .*

**This is absolutely Gillian's last venture into the organisation of T&MCS social events, so let's make it a great one to thank her for 10 years of dedicated service.**

## Menu

### *Starters*

Seasonal soup and fresh bread £4.25

Farmhouse pate, fruit relish and toast £4.95

Mozzarella sticks with cranberry salsa £4.95

### *Main Course*

Traditional roast turkey £12.95

Roast beef cooked with a stilton and leek sauce £12.95

Wild salmon steak with an orange and dill hollandaise £13.95

Butternut squash, goat's cheese and beetroot burger £9.25

*All served with potatoes and seasonal vegetables.*

### *Desserts*

Christmas pudding and brandy sauce £4.95

Cheesecake £4.95

Cheese and biscuits £5.95



## Planned winter stoppages on our canal

**07-11-2022 08:00 to 23-12-2022 16:00**

**Location** Bridge 20A Railway Bridge, Trent & Mersey Canal Upstream winding hole Willington, by Bridge 23. Downstream winding hole Near Sarsons Bridge 11. A stoppage is required to carry out the completion of repairs to the railway bridge. The first phase of these works commenced in January - April 2022.

**07-11-2022 08:00 to 09-12-2022 16:00**

**Location** Culvert 46, Trentham Culvert Upstream winding hole TM-064-012 Winding Hole, Trentham. Downstream winding hole TM-065-012 Winding Hole, Bridge Road.

The works methodology on this stoppage has been reviewed further and we can now confirm that works will still begin on 07/11/2022. However, both the navigation and the towpath will be accessible until 18/11/2022. From the 18/11/2022 to 09/12/2022 **both** the towpath and the navigation will be closed. This will be the canal towpath between Bridge 106 Hem Heath Bridge and the North Staffordshire Railway path, with a small section of canal de-watered between these two points

**21-11-2022 08:00 to 09-12-2022 16:00**

**Location** Pipe bridge at Trent Close, Stone Upstream winding hole TM-072-011 Winding Hole, Lime Kiln Basin. U/S of Bridge 95A. Downstream winding hole TM-074-007 Winding Hole, Stone. D/S of Bridge 93. A stoppage is required. Third party contractors working on behalf of Cadent Gas will be refurbishing an overhead pipe crossing via fixed a scaffold. The towpath will also be closed but local diversions will be available.

**09-01-2023 08:00 to 17-02-2023 16:00**

**Location** Lock 6, Stenson Lock Upstream winding hole Winding Hole, Willington. Downstream winding hole Winding Hole, Sarson's Bridge. A stoppage is required to replace the bottom gates.

**20-02-2023 08:00 to 17-03-2023 16:00**

**Location** Bridge 7, Cow Pasture Bridge Upstream winding hole Winding Hole, Sarson's Bridge. Downstream winding hole Winding Hole, Shardlow. A stoppage is required to carry out essential masonry repairs due to cracking and missing brickwork.

## Drama at Wardle Lock (or the perils of leaving the T&M)

A TEENAGER has been praised after saving a woman who fell into the canal in Middlewich. Jacob Roberts heroically held a woman afloat for 20 minutes after she fell from Wardle Lock at around 2pm on October 16. The 16-year-old aided her in the water until Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service arrived to help.



Jacob's dad Darren said: "I just got a call to say Jacob was in the canal.

"It turns out a lady had fallen in the canal and broken her leg and Jacob just happened to be walking by at the time.

"Where the lock is, you can't really get out, so he's

dragged her about 100 metres to where you can get out, but he couldn't lift her up.

"Someone had called for an ambulance and Jacob had to stand her up for 20 minutes.

A spokesperson for Cheshire Fire confirmed a team from Middlewich Fire Station attended the incident shortly before 2.30pm.

They said: "Firefighters rescued a person that had fallen in a canal in Middlewich.

*From Middlewich Guardian, 18/10/22*

*T&MCS have always taken an interest in ‘the Monty’, as evidenced by the milepost by Aston Locks, so this is great news!*

## **“Shropshire Union Triumphant**

The ‘Golden Block’ ceremony awaits”

The first Work Party in October saw another herculean effort by volunteers of the Shropshire Union Canal Society, who have been working to restore a 600 metre section of derelict canal between Pryces Bridge and Crickheath Bridge near Llanymynech, since 2015, The Heritage Lottery Funding that has enabled the work to be done expires in October, hence the absolute need to finish the task this month.

The complicated task of removing the clay dam, that has retained thousands of gallons of water in Crickheath Basin, began mid-morning on Friday, following the installation of a temporary synthetic dam behind the existing clay structure. This was commissioned by Canal and River Trust and put in place by Contractors which then enabled, hundreds of tonnes of clay to be taken out, to reveal the concrete section of the basin, to which water proofing liner was then attached.

This removal and final shaping of the last ten metres of channel finished at 2pm on Sunday. The following three hours saw a frantic effort, to lay the four layers of waterproofing liner and cover three quarters of it with 1,000 building blocks to weight it down.

Also over the weekend stone was applied to 200 metres of the top metre of the offside of the channel, half of which was then dressed with soil, and seeded, to encourage the growth of vegetation. A further task was to remove 300 metres of existing newt exclusion fencing to restore the towpath side to its natural condition.

At the end of July there was so much work still to do, that a conclusion within the time frame, seemed to be highly unlikely, but the dedication and skill of the volunteers produced an amazing result in the ensuing months. The pristine snaking path of the lined channel, and restored towpath, has progressively, been a source of great interest and amazement to local residents and walkers alike.

The next work party will see the final 200 blocks put down including the prestigious “Golden Block” to mark the end of a remarkable chapter in the history of restoration of this beautiful Montgomery Canal.

Advanced planning is taking place, for our next Project, beyond Crickheath-Bridge. The Preliminary work of constructing a Compound Site and fencing was completed at the end of September. Main channel work will begin in 2023 and eventually link with the new Schoolhouse Bridge, which hopefully, will be reinstated by the Restore the Montgomery Group by next year.

We are always looking to encourage new volunteers, and also new members to join us. Interested persons should access our website, <https://shropshireunion.org.uk> for details of dates and contacts, also for news and information.



*Clay dam removal*

*The exposed Plinth of Crickheath Basin*



*The final set of blocking.*



*Aerial view of the final 10 metres*



Pictures by Shrop.U. Publicity, and Dalton Drones.

*The gold block is now in place!*



## **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**

### **LOOK OUT FOR THE HIGH-VIS VOLUNTEERS!**

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.

**Contact: John Lawson**  
**07940 878923 [John.Lawson@waterways.org.uk](mailto:John.Lawson@waterways.org.uk)**



## Work Party Reports

*Thursday 15th September*



Another small group (of only 4 people this time) continued work on locks 59. We managed to paint all the white woodwork (6 balance beam ends and 5 bollard tops) twice, and both top gates were also painted black. Finally, a lock-side seat was spruced up in brown, and more railings were rubbed down.

*Thursday 20th October*

Cancelled because of bad weather.

*Next work party*

Thursday 17th November

We will still be working on Lock 59 (which is the last pair of locks that we have never worked on). These locks are accessible from Betchton Road, Malkins Bank via a farm track leading to Lock 60 and Bridge 149 which crosses the canal to the stables and farmyard beyond. I am pleased to advise that we have secured a parking area adjacent to Lock 60 on the right side of the track just before the bridge. The nearest postcode to the entrance to the farm lane is CW11 4YF.

*Member Dave Brewin has kindly given me permission to print a copy of the letter he sent to CRT in September.....Ed*

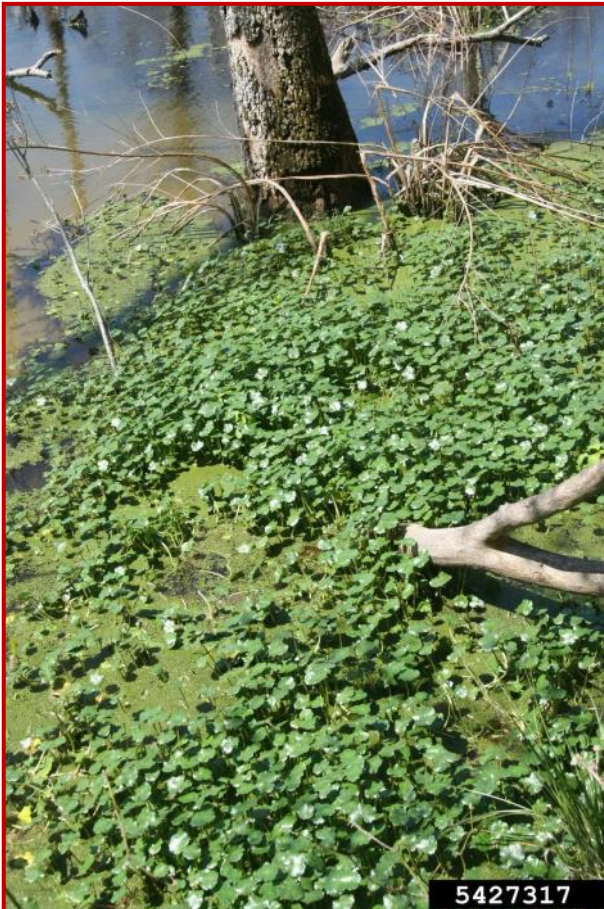
### **Floating Pennywort**

Some 6 weeks after I last cruised the length from Swarkestone to Willington I have again cruised along it in the last few days.

As you might imagine the amount of floating pennywort has increased substantially in the intervening period. Whilst still a long way from posing a hazard to navigation I noticed a number of substantial clumps that had become attached to overhanging vegetation on the offside of the canal. The stretch of a couple of hundred yards or so either side of the entrance to Mercia Marina was one of the worst although I lost count of the number of smaller clumps along the whole stretch down to Swarkestone.

Did you manage to discuss with the local team and is there a plan for dealing with it before it becomes a problem?

*Dave Brewin*



*Picture,  
Creative Commons*

## Shardlow Festival 2022

Despite the sad news of the death of the Queen—The second Shardlow Festival had a very good turn out by the public on both days.

This year we had seven historic boats in attendance and a good number of traders.

Thanks must go to Sue Hampson and her team for making this event such a successful weekend.

Hopefully it will be back on the events calendar in 2023.

*NB Perch and  
NB England*

*NB Hadley  
NB Badger*



*Steve Bates*



**Social evenings may  
continue**

7.45pm for 8pm in the  
upstairs room.

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

*See you in the spring  
see below!*

**Provisional Dates for Talks in Spring**

10th February 2023

10th March 2023

14th April 2023



No speakers have been booked yet!

See next page for details!

## ***STOP PRESS!***

### ***Can we save our social evenings?***

You will all remember that our wonderful social secretary, Gillian Watson, stepped down after 10 years in office (after carrying on for an extra year).

Grateful thanks go to Gillian for all her hard work and for the interesting and informative talks which she arranged. It looked as if our social evenings would have to cease after our grand Christmas Dinner on 2nd December (see p. 10/11).

At the eleventh hour (if you see what I mean) new committee member Sarah Honeysett has come up with a splendid plan. Sarah organises the social evenings for IWA North Staffs and South Cheshire. In common with T&MCS, numbers at these events have decreased markedly since Covid. Speakers are happy to promote their speciality, but (again since Covid) are asking for higher donations. Expecting them to travel long distances to deliver a talk to an audience of very few people is no longer an option. Sarah is sure that social evenings could be invigorated if the two groups joined forces and enjoyed meetings together.

The proposal is that these would be held at Red Bull, as being central for both organisations, but on the ***second Friday*** of the month, as that is what our IWA colleagues are used to.

Sarah is currently conducting research to establish whether enough members would attend the joint meetings to make them feasible. In the meantime, she has booked the room at Red Bull as noted on the previous page (she isn't really red and made of plasticine!), so please make a note of these dates and keep your diary free.

***More information and full details will be in the January/February 2023 edition of Grand Trunk***



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**TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL SOCIETY**  
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Telephone: 01606 834471

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

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

*Bringing Boats Back to Burslem*



*Picture, Creative Commons*

