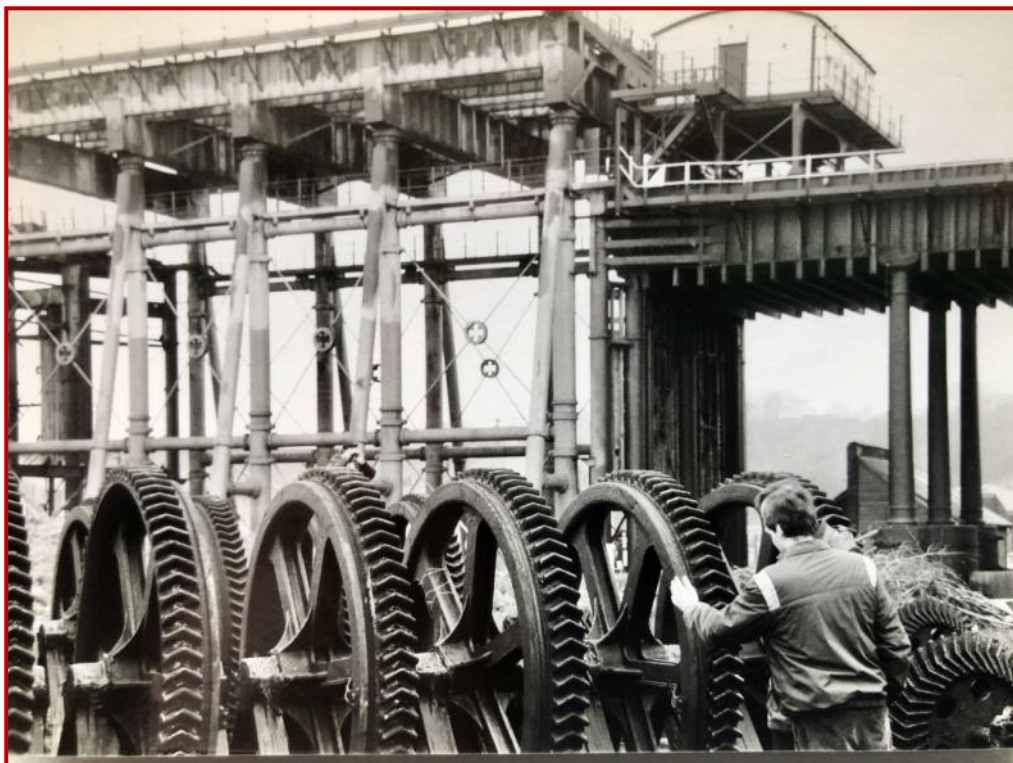


# GRAND TRUNK



*Historic Picture of Anderton Boat Lift during restoration*

*See pp. 14-15*

*Photo by the late Ted Wickens*

**March/April 2023**

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

## **Chairman's Bit**

Our February “meal and quiz” night at Red Bull went very well with 14 members enjoying themselves. We were able to tell those present that the speakers have now been confirmed for the rest of this season. On March 17th John Potter will talk about the Stafford Riverway Link, and on April 21st Andy Perkins will tell us about the Potteries Heritage Society. We also have 4 of the 6 speakers for our 2023-24 season already booked! So please do try and come along to at least some of the talks, as we need to make the speakers feel it was worth their effort in producing their talks for us.



The repair work at Anderton Lift continues to go well, and the February Open Day was well attended. CRT have successfully completed the hydraulic cylinder works (replacing the seals and bearings, polishing both cylinders and refilling with hydraulic oil). The annual maintenance has also been completed, and work has now started on the gate safety system repairs. Stop planks are being installed within the basin at the canal end and they have started to remove some of the more complicated parts ready to be replaced with the new ones. These works will continue throughout March before a full recommissioning at the end of the month. CRT still plan to re-open one side of the Lift by the Easter weekend. However they haven't yet established the 2023 passage schedule and therefore can't yet take bookings. Their current stoppage notice will be updated once the 2023 passage schedule is available.

Finally, I would like to mention our AGM, which this year will be held on Saturday 3rd June at Westport Lake Visitor Centre. The AGM itself takes under an hour, but tea/coffee on arrival and lunch afterwards are included (and there is an optional walk around the lake afterwards) so why not come along and make a day of it.

***See page 12:***

***Please let Margaret know if you hope to attend.***

## Editorial

Happy Spring everyone!

The snowdrops are out, boats are moving again and all is well with the world! We will be cruising again just as soon as we get our pitted shaft replaced (sigh). Our old boat had a good old-fashioned stern-tube greaser, and we never had a problem with the shaft. Apparently, what we need is lots of clean water– not too easy on our beloved T&M!

I was reading February's *Towpath Talk* recently and was interested to note that a section of the T&M towpath in Swarkestone has re-opened following 'improvements'. The towpath has been widened and sanitised, but is awaiting a final stone chip top surface when the weather improves. Now, I usually object to such tidying of the landscape, much preferring mud and grass. However, I realise that if funding is to be forthcoming for our beloved canal, then measures have to be taken to encourage greater use of the towpath– sad!



*Photo courtesy of  
CRT*



# Treasurer's Report – Roger Evans

*These accounts were first published in the March/April 2023 issue of Grand Trunk  
Trent and Mersey Canal Society - Annual Accounts*

	2022 Accounts	versus	2021 Accounts
<b>Income</b>			
Bank Interest	Nil		Nil
Gift Aid	£171.45		£181.25
(Note 2) Grand Trunk Advertising	£100.00		Nil
(Note 3) Membership Subscriptions	£1,010.00		£1,410.00
(Note 4) Donations	£381.00		£160.01
(Note 5) Fund Raising	£37.00		Nil
(Note 6) Sale of Goods	£374.95		£60.00
	=====>	£2,074.40	=====> £1,811.26

## Expenditure

Accountancy	Nil		Nil
(Note 7) AGM & Annual Report	£319.00		Nil
(Note 8) Grand Trunk Magazine	£1,185.54		£1,010.84
(Note 9) Insurance	£100.80		£168.00
(Note 5) Meetings (Speaker, Room Hire)	£175.00		Nil
Prizes and Engraving	£10.00		Nil
Publicity & Recruitment	£54.34		£4.66
Sales (Stock, Postage)	£27.05		Nil
Subscriptions to other orgs	£76.50		£81.50
Sundry Expenses	Nil		Nil
	=====>	£1,948.23	=====> £1,265.00

<b>Surplus in 2022</b>	<b>£126.17</b>	<b>(2021)</b>	<b>£546.26</b>
<b>(before Campaigns &amp; Donations)</b>		<b>(before Campaigns &amp; Donations)</b>	

## Campaigns and Donations

Burslem Port Trust	Nil		Nil
Cheshire Locks Campaign	Nil		Nil
	=====>	£0.00	=====> £0.00

<b>Final Surplus in 2022</b>	<b>£126.17</b>	<b>(2021)</b>	<b>£546.26</b>
------------------------------	----------------	---------------	----------------

## Notes

1) This note does NOT appear in the accounts as there was no expenditure in 2022, but it is noted here as a reminder. When Anderton Boat Lift Trust closed down, they left the residue to us. It is ring-fenced for use ONLY at Anderton Lift.

Ring-fenced for Anderton Boat Lift (ex-Trust): **£1,601.28 (2021: £1,601.28).**

2) *Grand Trunk* magazine advertising was nil in 2021 as they renewed early in November 2020.

3) Membership Subscriptions were higher in 2021 because we had 2 new Life Members.

4) Donations were higher in 2022 because our stall attended the IWA Festival of Water as well as MFAB.

5) Fund Raising and Meeting Costs were both higher in 2022 as we had 4 meetings (2021 only had 1 meeting).

6) Sales in 2022 were much higher as the stall went out twice, whereas in 2021 there were no stall outings.

Total Nominal Value of stock at the end of 2022: **£455.35 (2021: £540.00).**

7) AGM expenses in 2022 were higher as we didn't hold a physical AGM in 2021.

8) *Grand Trunk* Expenses were slightly higher in 2022 as we needed more stamps.

9) Insurance was lower in 2022 as we found a cheaper insurer.

10) Publicity & Recruitment was more expensive in 2022 as our stall attended 2 events instead of 1.

Bank Balance at the end of year: **£11,364.93 (2021: £11,238.76).**



*A snippet from BBC News 02/02/23 (with thanks to David Dumbelton for pointing this out to me.....Ed*

## Council knocks down Josiah Wedgwood sculpture by mistake

The council said the sculpture had been knocked down in a "significant operational error"



A brick sculpture of internationally-renowned potter Josiah Wedgwood has been accidentally knocked down during roadworks.

The sculpture of the head of the Wedgwood pottery founder in Stoke-on-Trent was first unveiled in 1986.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council apologised unreservedly and said it had been removed by contractors during a road widening project.

A council spokesperson said they had launched an investigation into the error and were speaking with contractors to understand what had gone wrong. The Josiah Wedgwood art installation, carved out of red bricks, was created by sculptor Vincent Woropay for the National Garden Festival in 1986. It moved to its current location at Festival Park in 2009.

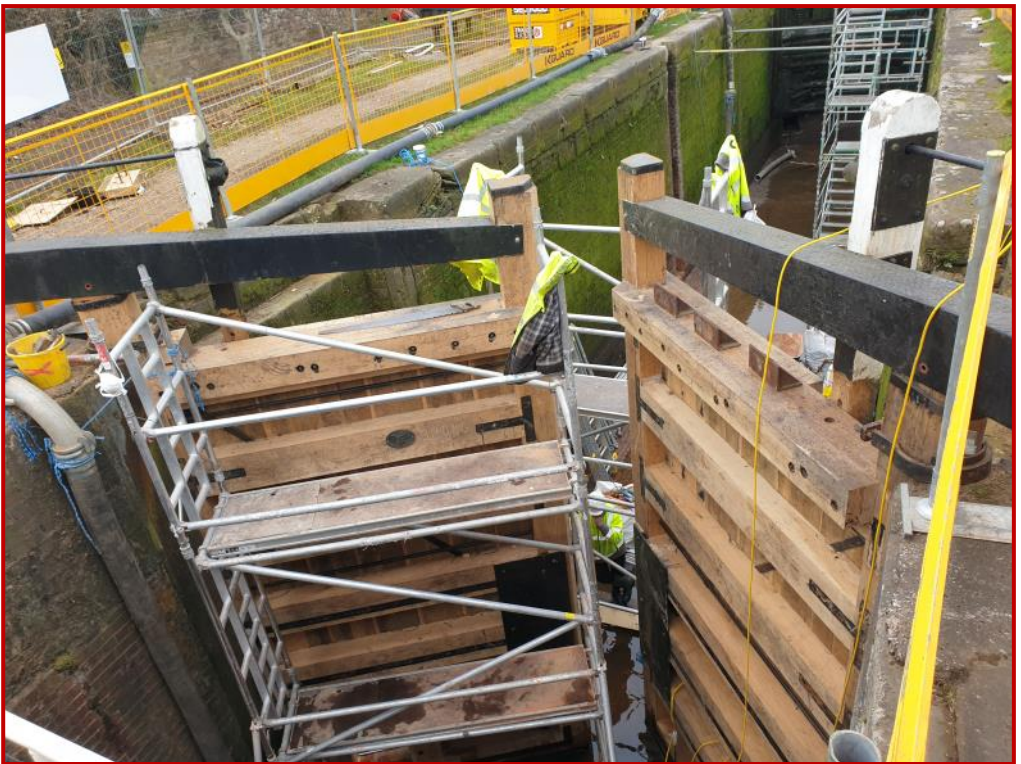
## **Stenson lock, new gates**

I think most boaters will be delighted to see, at long last, new bottom gates being fitted to Lock 6 (Stenson Lock) on the southern section of the T&M.

I called there yesterday (Thursday 2nd Feb) to see what was taking place and to take a few pictures. According to the CRT web site the scheduled stoppage is due to last until Friday 17th February.

Although I have boated through there many times, with the lock being de-watered I couldn't help but appreciate the sheer size and structure of the gates, and the amount of timber required to construct them. No wonder they are so expensive!

*Vaughn Wheatley*



## Portuguese Barges for Free

Last October we were lucky enough to spend two weeks in the Portuguese capital Lisbon. The city is built beside the navigable River Tagus which flows into the Atlantic and is used by a variety of vessels from cruisers, yachts, ferries and cargo ships to massive cruise liners.



On our list of places to visit “on a rainy day” was the Maritime Museum. Well, the rainy day didn’t happen but one day we visited the area close-by and sat in the sun in a peaceful square between the museum and the Jerónimos Monastery to have lunch. Under a canopy at one end of the square a number of old, wooden rowing boats which had been used over the centuries on the River Tagus were on display. Having finished our lunch we went for a closer look and while there saw a sign to “The Barge Pavilion” which is a part of the Maritime Museum but is housed in a separate building.



Thinking this would be about barges on the River Tagus we entered the building and the rather bored-looking Security Guard waved us through without checking whether we had entry tickets to the main museum building. We had had free or reduced admission at other attractions in Lisbon so there are some advantages to being of advanced years. The entry fee for the museum is €6.50 per person so in this case you could say we “barged in for free”!

To our surprise and astonishment the vessels on display were not river barges but an amazing collection of Portuguese Royal Barges. The most lavish was the Royal Barge built by the Royal Naval Shipyards in Lisbon in 1780 for Maria I of Portugal for the marriage of her son. The barge is 95ft long, and was manned by 80 oarsmen, 1 coxswain and 1 bowman. It is certainly very ornate and is decorated in gilded carving presenting details from flowers to classical mythology.

It was used by the Portuguese Royal family and visiting dignitaries and it was interesting to learn that its last official use was during the visit of our late Queen Elizabeth II when she arrived on the royal barge on the River Tagus in Lisbon during her visit in 1957. It must have been an wonderful sight.

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

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 May/June 2023 edition is **18/04/2023**

## **Tunnel Tales**

### ***Harecastle Tunnel 'fire' blamed on freak weather phenomenon***

Firefighters are blaming the weather - after responding to a 'fire' inside Harecastle Tunnel. The major emergency services response included firefighters from Staffordshire and Cheshire, specialist water rescue teams from fire stations in Newcastle and Tamworth, and experts from the Canal & River Trust.

They had descended on Harecastle Tunnel on Sunday, January 22. But a search failed to detect any 'fire' - and the incident has now been blamed on the weather.

A Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service spokesman said: "Crews from Longton, Newcastle and Sandyford attended along with water rescue teams from Newcastle and Tamworth. Colleagues from Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Canal & River Trust also attended.

"Using a boat, firefighters carried out a full search of the tunnel, but no signs of fire could be found". The incident was deemed a false alarm, with good intent.

### ***Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service at Harecastle Tunnel stated:***

"Fire crews believe that the 'smoke' was in fact the result of a naturally occurring weather-related incident, as when the temperature is colder outside of a tunnel than within, it can create a mist from condensation that can look like smoke."

### ***The Canal & River Trust has also confirmed the false alarm.***

A spokesman said: "No-one was in danger, someone reported smoke coming from the tunnel. When the temperature is colder outside of the tunnel than within you get a mist coming out of the tunnel that can look like smoke. The fire service has been through and confirmed it was mist."

### ***Remember the 'incident' which closed Preston Brook Tunnel?***

*(Grand Trunk, January/February)*

A boat went into the tunnel and got well stuck, they were there overnight until a narrowboat came in and found them, they had to back out and raise the alarm. The wide boat was seen going past the old Claymore yard with lots of brick dust on it.

*Brian Holt*

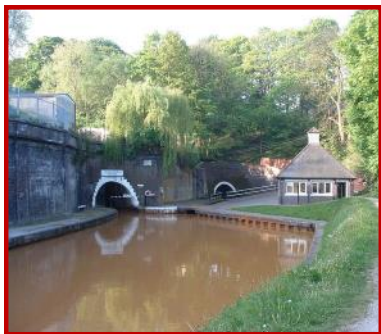
*I am grateful to Stephen Murphy who found the following on The Fire Services (Cheshire) website about the incident.....Ed*

Fire engines from Widnes, Frodsham and Runcorn along with two water incident units from Warrington and Powley Lane and the Aerial Ladder platform from Chester attended.

A boat that had become stuck in a canal tunnel in Warrington was attended by firefighters. The crews used swift water gear to get to the boat, which had snagged onto the brickwork of the bridge. Firefighters were able to release the boat.

There were no casualties at this incident. Canal and River Trust also attended.

*And finally.....Harecastle Tunnel summer opening times.*



***Harecastle Tunnel Summer opening times from 1st March 2023 to 31st October 2023:***  
Open passages are available from 8am to 12 noon, Monday to Sunday. Un-booked (Open) passage must arrive at the tunnel portal between 8am and 12 noon. There is no guarantee of passage for arrivals after 12 noon unless pre booked online the day before.

Bookable passages are available Southbound (Kidsgrove to Tunstall) at 2pm and 4pm and Northbound (Tunstall to Kidsgrove) at 3pm. Please note all bookings must be made the day before.

For direct tunnel enquiries,

Please mail [eventsnorthstaffs@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:eventsnorthstaffs@canalrivertrust.org.uk)

Please also follow the directions of our team members on site. Passage is only permitted with a working horn and tunnel light; at present we are unable to lend such items.

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/notice/24178/harecastle-tunnel-summer-opening-times-2023>

*Picture: Wikipedia Commons*

# **Trent and Mersey Canal Society 2023 AGM**

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2023**

**at Westport Lake Visitor Centre**

**Westport Lake Road, Stoke-on-Trent  
ST6 4RZ**

**10:30 Arrival + Tea or Coffee or  
Squash with Biscuits**

**11:00 AGM in the Conference Room**

**12:00 Lunch**

**cold finger buffet**

- Assorted sandwiches on white and brown bread
- Assorted vegetarian Wraps
- Cocktail Sausages
- Dips, chips & Crudites
- A selection of mini Cakes

**+ Sales Stand (TMCS clothing + 2nd-hand Canal Books)**

**13:00 (optional) Walk around Westport Lake**

**14:00 End**



*A big thank you to Sue Hasmall for bringing this to my attention.....Ed*

### Harecastle lights

We are so excited to share that ***Down The Rabbit Hole*** will be returning to

Kidsgrove across not one, but TWO nights in March 2023! 🐰

Join us on Friday 24 and Saturday 25 March to see Harecastle tunnel in a whole new light 💡

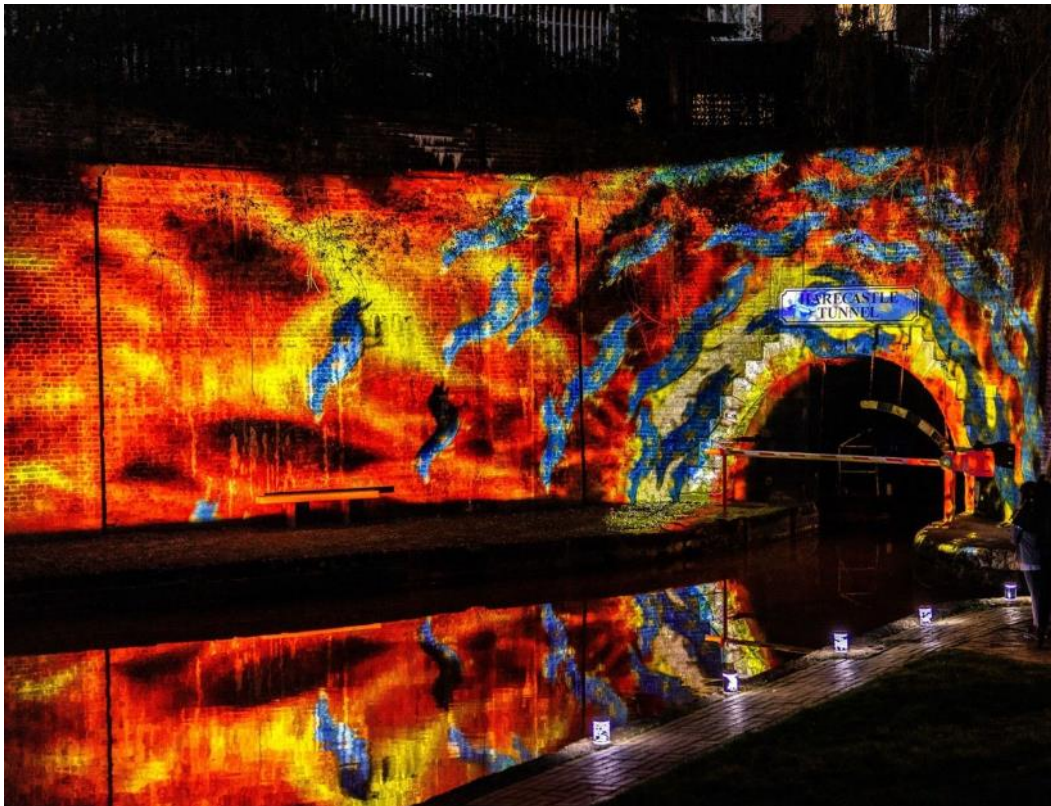
Tickets available soon! Keep a look out on our social media and website 👁️



Image by Clara Lou Photography

...

Kidsgrove Town Council GO Kidsgrove Canal & River Trust The King's CE Academy Illuminos [#Kidsgrove](#) [#GoKidsgrove](#) [#Community](#) [#LifesBetterByWater](#) [#LightTheNight](#)



## **Anderton Lift campaign memories**

Does anyone remember seeing the Anderton Lift like this? And the long, hard campaigning days of the 1980s and '90s, when restoration of the Lift seemed interminably in the balance?

I'm Sandy Wright, daughter of the late Ted and Jill Wickens, keen northern section committee members at the time, of the Lift campaign. I'd like to put together a potted history of the restoration story for the T&MCS, similar to the one about Harecastle Tunnel on your website.

My brother Steven and I have inherited many photos relating to the Lift campaign and other society activities around that time, and have many recollections of our parents' involvement in the work of the society. We remember fundraising events such as the Big Lock weekends and the petition sent from Anderton to Downing Street by narrowboat.



Our family narrowboat Thumper was moored in the old boat graveyard at Whatcroft, now a marina. I have often thought that if it wasn't for the society's tireless campaigning for restoration of the Lift, Northwich would be a very different place today, without its ready accessibility by boat. If anyone has memories of the Lift campaign, I'd love to hear from you. Or do you know of any archived records that would be relevant to my research,

e.g. the society's minutes from those dim and distant days? Might you even be in one of these photos? I think it was some sort of organised visit.

**If you'd like to get in touch, my contact details are:**

**Sandy Wright,**  
tel 07715 321835,  
email: [sandywright2@icloud.com](mailto:sandywright2@icloud.com)



*Historic  
photos taken  
by :*

*The late  
Ted Wickens*







## **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 18th January*** – Our first work-party of 2023 had to be cancelled because of bad weather.

***Thursday 16th February*** – Finally, a month when the weather let us do some work. Six of us returned to Lock 59 where we did lots of rubbing down, and some painting.



Sadly, we couldn't paint the railings or the three ladders as CRT couldn't supply us with any white Hammerite! However we did manage to paint the black metalwork and even some of the black woodwork (before we ran out of that paint too!).

We were very pleased to be visited by John Lawson (our usual leader, but currently unwell) and family.

***Ladders  
Rubbed down  
Ready and waiting  
For paint!***

*Photo,  
Margaret English*

## **ANDERTON BOAT LIFT AND A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY**

Our members will be well aware of the serious problems that have been experienced at the Anderton Boat Lift, which have resulted in its total closure whilst the extent of the remedial works is ascertained, how they can be resolved and if sufficient funding can be generated to effect repairs to restore it to full working order.

The two major problems that have been identified are misalignment of the vertical tracking of the caissons, which is causing the seals around the rams to wear, and this, in turn causes leakage of the hydraulic fluid used to drive the rams upward to canal level.

This was, of course, the reason for the abandonment of the original drive system used when the lift was first built and then rebuilt a century ago, though it must be said that the original lift design achieved many times more operations than the latest system - before it was abandoned and the electrical drive system installed.

However, new seals have been provided and the caissons can be separated from the rams, so the new seals can be fitted, and the first ram/seal repair is currently being undertaken to ensure that at least one caisson will be capable of operation this cruising season, with a target date of this Easter, so that the Weaver will again be accessible from the Trent and Mersey Canal. The date is yet to be confirmed.



The second caisson presents bigger problems as the vertical alignment of the caisson has to be rectified and this could involve a longer time scale, and bigger financial outlay, and, great news, the National Heritage Lottery Fund have announced that they are making a grant of over £500,000 for this work to be undertaken.

There are also problems with modifying secondary safety features on the 10 guillotine gates to conform with current safety standards, but rest assured that these problems are being very actively addressed by a competent, motivated team, and CRT are hoping to achieve access to further funding to develop the Lift and its site to provide youth training schemes and other attractions.

*and*

**THE DATES    SEPTEMBER 15 - 17th 2023**

### *Boat Rally*

The River Weaver Navigation Society have announced their intention to hold a Boat Rally over this weekend, in conjunction with Winsford Town Council, both organisations working together to provide (as yet, unspecified) entertainment and activities. Full services should be available with newly renovated moorings in the Marina Basin, which now boasts a water point and toilet block.

There will probably be a small attendance charge, and, of course, an opportunity to explore the bottom Flash and the whole beautiful river, if that is your wish.

***Please visit the RWNS website [www.rwns.co.uk](http://www.rwns.co.uk) and indicate your interest, as an indication of numbers will be most useful to them in planning likely activities.***

## Social season Talks 2023



It has not been possible to combine talks with those of North Staffs and South Cheshire IWA as their audience size would make Red Bull impractical. They are a friendly society who are happy to welcome visitors to their social meetings on 2nd Friday of each month (see next page).

*All is not lost, however.* Members David and Jean Clegg have stepped forward with the suggestion that members are encouraged to meet together for a meal at Red Bull on the usual 3rd Friday of the month, followed by an exciting activity in our usual room.

***17/3/2023 (March meeting)***

**John Potter will give us a talk  
on the Staffordshire Waterways Link**

**April 21st  
Potteries Heritage Society  
Andy Perkin**

7.45pm for 8pm in the  
upstairs room.

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



### **Meal and Quiz 17th February**

Congratulations to David and Jean Clegg, who organised a splendid quiz at Red Bull. There were 5 rounds, including a picture round. The quiz was canal-based, with anagrams, dingbats and questions.

14 people enjoyed a great meal and had a really good time. Alan and Anne Chetwyn were the overall winners. It was agreed that they did so well because they do not have a computer, so have to remember things!

### **IWA Talks at Stoke Boat Club**

Stoke on Trent Boat Club  
Endon Wharf  
Post Lane, Endon  
Stoke on Trent  
ST9 9DU



Admission is free and the boat club has a lovely little bar.

If you would like further information, contact:

Sarah Honeysett  
01782 772295  
*[Socalsec.nssc@waterways.org.uk](mailto:Socalsec.nssc@waterways.org.uk)*

**Friday 14th April 2023, 7.45 for 8pm**

**Challenges to our waterways of climate change**  
Speaker from CRT

Sarah has invited the Canal and River Trust to speak about how they plan to deal with challenges to our waterways caused by climate change.

# CANAL CRUISING COMPANY LIMITED NARROWBOAT HOLIDAYS



## Dry Docking Facilities

3 Dry Docks  
(Available for DIY)  
Boat Repairs & Blacking  
Pump Outs, Diesel & Gas  
Welding & Machine Workshop  
Engine Services

*Request  
your  
brochure  
today!*

## Narrowboat Holiday Hire

Choice of Excellent Routes Available

**10% Discount for CAMRA, IWA,  
CART Members**

**15% Discount FORCES, NHS  
STAFF, POLICE & RESCUE**

(See website for full terms and conditions)



Check Live Availability & Book Online!

Taster Day Hire & Overnight Stay

**Crown Street, Stone, Staffordshire ST15 8QN**  
**Tel: 01785 813982    Email: [mail@canalcruising.co.uk](mailto:mail@canalcruising.co.uk)**  
**Web: [www.canalcruising.co.uk](http://www.canalcruising.co.uk)**

**TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL SOCIETY**  
*a charity recognised for tax purposes by HMRC*

Registered Office: 10 Long Lane, Middlewich, CW10 0BL  
Telephone: 01606 834471

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

**OFFICERS**

**PATRON**

Ian Dudson CBE, KSt.J  
Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire

**VICE-PRESIDENTS**

Steve Guest, Malcolm Gray

**CHAIRMAN  
TREASURER and WEBSITE**

Roger Evans, 10 Long Lane, Middlewich, **CW10 0BL**  
Tel:01606 834471 Email: rogermartinevans@hotmail.com

**DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

Gillian Watson, St. Anns House, 107 St Ann's Road, Middlewich,  
Cheshire, **CW10 0AA**  
Tel:01606-835606 Email:gillian.watson@me.com

**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY,  
SECRETARY AND GRAND  
TRUNK EDITOR**

Margaret English, 10 Long Lane, Middlewich, Cheshire,  
**CW10 0BL** Tel: 01606-834471 Email:margaretetlm@hotmail.com

**COMMITTEE MEMBER**

John Tackley, River View, Leigh's Brow, Barnton, Northwich,  
**CW8 4HT**  
Tel: 01606 76204 Email jtackley@hotmail.com

**COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Sarah Honeysett, 14 Lodge Road, Talke Pits, Stoke-on-Trent,  
Staffs. **ST7 1QX** Email s.honeysett@btinternet.com

**MINUTES SECRETARY**

Paula Jackson, 37 Weaverham Road, Sandiway **CW8 2NJ**  
Tel: 07740356286 Email paula.dreamcatcher@hotmail.co.uk

**TALKS ORGANISERS**

David and Jean Clegg, Email: David@thecleggs.co.uk  
Tel: 07429 151313

**BURSLEM PORT  
REPRESENTATIVE**

David Dumbelton, 32 The Lea, Trentham, Stoke on Trent,  
**ST4 8DY**  
Tel: 01782-641765, Email:david.dumbelton@gmail.com

**TALKS ORGANISERS**



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

***Bringing Boats Back to Burslem***

## *Water Tap Conundrum*

On 11th February (just as we were setting off for a walk along the T& M) member Mike Walton rang to say that the water tap below Big Lock on the outskirts of Middlewich had sprung a large leak. Chairman Roger contacted CRT with the report, then we changed the direction of our walk and went to see the rogue tap.

It was indeed pouring water onto the towpath, but Roger soon identified the problem. The handle which controls the on/off function had separated from the mechanism. Roger managed to temporarily replace the handle (getting very wet in the process) and turn off the tap. He then placed the handle inside and closed the tap housing before passing an update on to CRT.

Thank you Mike for being observant and Roger for using some common sense!

*Words and Pictures by editor*



*Before*



*after*