

# THE TUB BOAT

Newsletter of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society

No. 74

Winter 2015/16



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### Forthcoming Events:

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February BCBS AGM at 2.30pm in the Willoughby Gallery at the Castle Heritage Centre, Bude with speaker, Colin Vosper from Torquay who will give a talk on "Maritime Shortcuts". Refreshments will be available at the Café.

Tuesday 1st March Deadline for articles for inclusion in Tub Boat No 75 to reach the editor Clive Horton [cshorton23@btinternet.com](mailto:cshorton23@btinternet.com)

24th Feb to 10th March Joint Exhibition on the Bude Canal with The Bude Canal Trust and possibly the Old Cornwall Society at the Castle Heritage Centre.

Friday 1st April Publication of THE TUB BOAT No 75

Saturday 18th June History Day in the Memorial Hall, Holsworthy organised by the Holsworthy History Society and the Devon History Society with displays and sales stand.

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Contributions for the next edition of the Tub Boat should be sent as an e-mail attachment to [cshorton23@btinternet.com](mailto:cshorton23@btinternet.com) or copied onto a USB memory stick or CD and send to Peter Daniel (contact details on back page) to reach him before 1st March 2016.

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<b>Trustees:</b>	Chairman	Chris Jewell
	Vice-Chairman	Stan Noakes
	Secretary	Peter Daniel
	Treasurer	Mike Moore
	Events Secretary	Betty Moore
	Minuting Secretary	Jill White
	Other trustees	Lucille Opie, Anne Longley, Grahame Stockton
	Membership Secretary	Mike Moore
	The Tub Boat Editor	Clive Horton ( <i>non-trustee</i> )

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The views expressed by the contributors to this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society which does not accept responsibility for them.

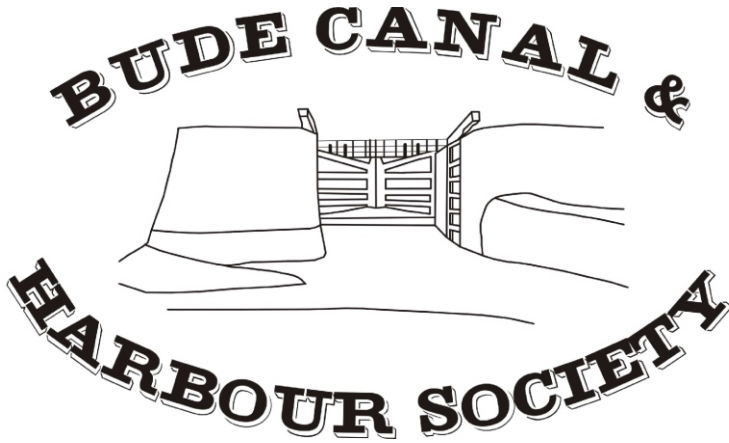
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Cover: Bude Sea Lock

All Photos: Mike Moore (unless otherwise stated)

## **Creaks from the Chair**

I am writing this report in early December with Christmas and 2016 approaching at an increasing rate of knots each day. On the basis that it may be early January 2016 when you read this, it seems logical at this juncture to say that BCHS Trustees and myself hope you all had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The Society continues to press Cornwall Council about finalising the Canal Project by replacing Rodds Bridge, with a bridge which will allow navigation, and to provide a slipway for suitable boats to enter/exit the Canal. The last occasion was on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015 face to face with the leader of Cornwall Council, Cllr John Pollard, and his deputy, Cllr Adam Paynter. We had their assurance that they would investigate various options with appropriate officers and reply direct to Mike Moore and myself. We await 'their' or 'the reply'.

Chris Jewell, Chairman



A new arrival in Bude- the Restaurant Barge

## **Membership Report**

We have not had any new members since September and unfortunately we have lost some well established member recently. Barry Hughes of Northam passed away on 17th October, Joy Ash of Hanover House, Bude on 2nd August and Mrs Norah Brown of Cheltenham also in August. They had all been members and supporters of the society for many years. We send our condolences to all their families.

Barry had been a great help to the society over many years and made an important contribution as an author and as an engineer in recreating designs of the inclined plane mechanisms which he believed to have been used on the Bude Canal and the Rolle Canal. He also played a major role in the construction of replica Tub Boats which are now displayed at Annery on the Rolle Canal.

I must thank those members who have already renewed their subscription for 2015/2016 and particularly those who have given additional

donations. However, some members have still not renewed. Would they please complete the enclosed renewal form by return to maintain their support for the Bude Canal & Harbour Society and receive future newsletters. Remember that only fully paid up members can vote at the AGM in February.

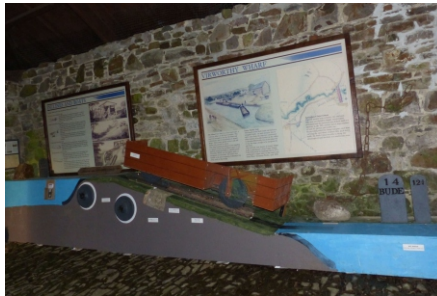
Can I also remind those members who are taxpayers and who have not yet completed a Gift Aid declaration that they can obtain a copy from the website or from me by calling 01288 361878.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and thank you for your continued support.

Mike Moore, Treasurer & Membership Secretary

### **Bude Canal Trust Report**

With several wet working days continuing during the weeks of August and September the construction of the new display at Virworthy Wharf carried on into October for its completion with the various items being clearly labelled.



Artefacts display at Virworthy Wharf

On the dry days during the same period, work, initially with a tractor and flail was used to clear the majority of the deep bramble and blackthorn sapling growth from the filter bed site. This was followed up by manual cutting back areas less accessible to the larger equipment, revealing the remaining length of retaining wall below the picnic table and seats.



Initial mechanical clearing



Hands on tidying up



A final mowing of the footpath from Vealand Bridge through to beyond Burmsdon Bridge was completed at the end of September and agreements were reached concerning partial fencing and improved gates with clearly marked clarification at the end of the Permissive Path.



Head of the incline plane    Clearing beyond Burmsdon bridge    End of Permissive Path

All the practical work was completed at the end of October and although the natural inquisitiveness of the livestock to the new fencing has caused a degree of churning up adjacent to the second gate it is hoped this will settle over time into the new year.



A wet day setting up the new fencing

New gate in place

The smaller of the two footbridges on the section of footpath passing alongside the re-watered canal through Dunsdon Nature Reserve had been recognised as a potential hazard due to rotting support beams so has been replaced with assistance from the Devon County Council Footpath maintenance team.



Replacement Dunsdon Nature Reserve footbridge

Again, at the end of October, a guided walk was given to a group of the Bude Scouts, covering the stretch of canal between the Brendon Bridge and Burmsdon Bridge with information sheets being distributed covering the three stages of development that have evolved during its 200year history. Initially the need and construction of the canal and methods used to overcome the variations in land levels, followed by its use as a piped water supply to Bude and Stratton and its current use as a maintained 5mile (8Km) footpath (the longest in North Devon) / a varying nature habitat and restoration / preservation of historical artefacts and structures.



**Guided walk with Scouts, leaders and parents**

A walking survey of the section between Virworthy Wharf and Gadlock Bridge discovered several branches and a small tree had suffered in the recent bad weather, leaving them with less than the required headroom for walkers so they were removed. Another canal profile clearance project needing planning into the Management work plan was identified.



**Insufficient footpath headroom for walkers**



**Canal profile clearance work for walkers**

Into November saw the start of renovation to one of the storage sheds (nicknamed the elephant) at Virworthy Wharf with a new paving slab base, improved site drainage, a replaced gate post and re-hung gate. The latch post for the five bar footpath gate giving access north of Virworthy Wharf was also strengthened and the risky adjacent stile was removed,



Refurbished store and fencing



Repaired gate and removed stile

Text and photos by Mike Degnan, Bude Canal Trust

**Bude Valley Management Advisory Group (B.V.M.A.G)**

At the last meeting of the BVMAG on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015 the following items discussed are of interest to the Society

1. Cornwall Council have funding to install a permanent spillway on the offside just above the top set of gates at Whalesborough. This is to allow excess water to flow into fields and reduce flooding of the towpath areas.



Current temporary spillway

2. Cornwall Council has re-applied for funds from Europe to do various works on the Canal and Marshes including dredging between Falcon Bridge and Rodds Bridge Lock
3. Cornwall Council are researching costs etc for CCTV for the



## Harbour and Wharf

4. The possibility of BVMAG working jointly or more closely with Bude Canal Trust Partnership (BCTP) in the interest of Bude Canal was raised by Cornwall Council. After a discussion about the functions of both bodies, it was agreed that there needed to be a discussion with both bodies as to the implications, advantages/disadvantages etc. BCTP next meet on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2015 and a Cornwall Council officer will attend.

**Chris Jewell**

### **Exhibition 28<sup>th</sup> February to 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

The Society will be holding an exhibition of photographs etc relating to the former use of the Canal, the restoration works on the Sea Lock (2000/2001) and the Regeneration Project of the Canal between the Sea Lock and Helebridge Basin with associated works (2007-2009). Bude Canal Trust(BCT) will also be presenting displays and artefacts about the 5 ½ miles of the Canal that BCT own from Virworthy to Burmsdon. The exhibition will be held in the Gallery at The Castle Heritage Centre, Bude, and will be open from 10am to 4pm each day.

Please note that the Heritage Centre and its cafe will be open during this period, including weekends.

**Chris Jewell**

### **Activities in Bude Valley**

Since early 2011 there has been an email circulation list\* to inform those interested in joining nature events and working parties that support the 'Bude area'\* work of the local ranger, Gareth Cann. Such local volunteer help has become even more vital as Gareth's workload has expanded to cover a huge area of Cornwall (including the Camel Trail!) as a result of Cornwall Council cutbacks.

Many of the 'Bude area' working parties are associated with the Bude Canal between Bude and Helebridge. In 2015 work was done to clear parts of the towpath, coppice willow and 'pull' Himalayan Balsam near the bird hide, and paint the metalwork on the inland lock gates.



Work party near Bird Hide



### Lock work party

A small, fairly consistent, band of people volunteer for this work. In earlier years this included some members of BCHS but recently they have been absent, even on work closely connected to the aims of BCHS. Possibly this is a result of BCHS members not hearing about these events.

While other working parties are planned before then, the first one with 'Bude Canal' relevance in 2016 will be on Thursday 10th March - to work the inland locks and carry out some towpath maintenance nearby. The meeting point is at 10am outside the Tourist Information Centre in the Crescent Car park.

As well as the working parties, there are also several nature events in the Bude Area each year, led by Alan Rowland, with the observations being recorded, via the [www.orks.org.uk](http://www.orks.org.uk) website, on the Cornwall Wildlife Trust's ERCCIS database.

If you might consider joining this email circulation, but are unsure, please contact Neil Hutson on [cycle@bude-area.co.uk](mailto:cycle@bude-area.co.uk) to find out more.

### **The canals**

They weave their way through countryside, they follow contour lines  
They tunnel through the steepest hills; locks cope with small inclines

To feed the needs of industry, they carried miners' coal  
They carried wood, they carried stone, full cargo was their goal.

They carried things from factories to distant coastal ports  
From cloth and clothes to pottery, to goods of many sorts.  
They went from grimy, bustling towns, through countryside serene  
From sooty, smoky city air to air both fresh and clean.

At first the barges pulled by horses, went at gentle pace  
Whole families all lived on them, they were a "different race".  
They worked and ate and slept in cabins small and neat and clean,  
All painted up with roses and with "fairy castle" scene.

Then engines came, (and horses went), to haul much bigger loads  
A much, much better option then, than going on the roads.  
The soft “clip clop” of horses' hooves a soothing sound to hear  
Gave way to engines' “putt-putt-putt” which sounded loud and clear.

Between the towns through fields of green, past nature at its best  
But for the bargees, working hard, there was no time to rest.  
To load the goods, to work the locks, each person played a part  
The competition was quite fierce to be the first to start.

But very soon the railways came and with them came much change;  
Much quicker and with bigger loads, they had a greater range.  
And one by one, the barges went, until they all were gone.  
Canals fell into disrepair, their “golden years” were done.

They silted up, the banks caved in, the lock gates seized up tight,  
Some lonely stretches struggled on, but most “fell out of sight”.  
Then many folk determined that canals would not be lost  
And volunteers worked long and hard, regardless of the cost,

Restoring some in full again, making them a treasure  
Giving all some wonderful facilities for leisure.  
Now boaters, anglers, walkers too, enjoy their “magic spell”,  
They once again can play their part, to serve the nation well !

*Eric Latter*

**BARRY DAVIES HUGHES**

8th March 1937—17th October 2015



It is with great sadness that I report the death of Barry Hughes. Over the past couple of years he had frequently said that he had not been feeling too well and in April 2015, was diagnosed as having terminal Cancer. Given only a few days, maybe weeks, he managed to live long enough to complete and see published, the book on North Devon Barges he had been working on for some time, and to put all his personal affairs in order. Following his diagnosis Barry occasionally continued to drive himself to Sea Lock to see what was going on almost until the very end and despite his rapidly failing health he very calmly and cheerfully accepted his fate, and for that strength and dignity he will always have my greatest admiration and respect.

I first became acquainted with Barry at the inauguration of the Rolle Canal & Northern Devon Waterways Society in 2003, in which he became passionately involved. His book, entitled 'Rolle Canal & The North Devon Limestone Trade' has become something of the Rolle Canal Society bible. Just like me, Barry was a retired teacher and as a result our friendship was something of a love/hate relationship. He was always right even when he was wrong, just the same as I am! When we decided to build a couple of full-sized replica tub boats, as were originally used on the Rolle Canal, it was not long before differences of opinion on structural techniques almost had us coming to blows. Eventually I left Barry to his own devices and he finished the project almost single-handed, constructing, what he said, were the 2 ugliest boats he had ever made. Maybe they aren't pretty but they look the part and he did a brilliant job.

Barry was, at times, the most cantankerous, awkward and self-opinionated person I have ever come across and yet once you gained his support, he dedicated his time, effort and considerable talent, to you whole-heartedly and with no thought of recompense or recognition which is exactly what he did for me, as well as the Rolle Canal Society and the North Devon Museum Trust of which he was a founder member.

Whilst working with me and other volunteers on Rolle Canal jobs Barry would often regale us with tales of his childhood growing up in Wales, National Service life in the Royal Navy and his early days in teaching. He frequently had me nearly wetting myself with laughter. He had a great deal of mischievousness about him. One of his all time heroes was Spike

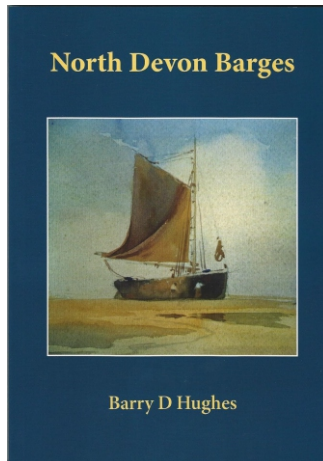


Milligan — say no more!

Despite often being told by Barry that I wasn't doing something right or that he wouldn't do it that way, I will greatly miss his wonderful sense of humour, his practical skills and being able to tap into his incredible nautical and historic knowledge.

Where-ever he is now I hope that there is plenty of his beloved Klezmer / world music which he so enjoyed, so that he may dance and sing to his heart's content. I will sorely miss him.

### **Adrian Wills**



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Available from **Appledore Maritime Museum (NDMT)**

**Odun House, Odun Road, Appledore, Bideford EX39 1PT**

# Maritime Shortcuts

## Locally and Worldwide

Researched and Presented by Colin Vosper

### **DON'T MISS IT!!**

At the BCHS AGM on Sunday 21st February at 2.30pm in the Willoughby Gallery at the Castle Heritage Centre

**GRAND WESTERN CANAL ~ 2015** was the year to celebrate 200 years since it began its first full year of operation in 1815.

**SUEZ CANAL ~ 2015** saw the opening of its newly cut and enlarged canal sections to take the modern large commercial ships.

**PANAMA CANAL ~ 2014** was its centenary year AND in **2015** it celebrated the opening of its newly constructed lock systems and deeper excavated channels to accommodate the 'New Panamax' super-size ships.

This lively and well illustrated talk examines and celebrates the amazing endeavours of the canal builders to find four major canal routes across the SW peninsula to avoid the dangerous seas off Lands' End.

The latter part of the talk includes an interesting insight into the Suez and Panama canals and finishes with a surprising time-lapse video of a voyage along one of them ~ but which one? To find out, make sure attend the AGM.

## View from the North



The New Year is often a time for new beginnings and as you read this I will in fact be in France researching a new business venture to complement our existing tour operator business here in Orkney & Shetland. Then in early March Rosemary and I will travel to the other side of the world to attend our son Craig's Wedding in California. Closer to home in Bude the New Year will see the fitting out of the new 60 feet by 14 feet restaurant barge that is freshly moored in the lower basin of the Bude Canal. I hear it is expected to have up to 40 covers when it opens.

Of course new years often present the opportunity for new experiences and I would be remiss if I didn't whilst travelling to France and California take the chance to view the Nante-Brest canal and the Venice Beach canal. But one opportunity I unfortunately will miss is to attend what looks to be a fascinating talk at this year's BCHS AGM on both local and worldwide canals.

Another new opportunity which is available to all of you reading this is to contribute something to the next edition of the Tub Boat. Although the deadline is 1st March I would request receiving material much earlier as I head off to California on 7th March and need to have the newsletter dispatched to the printers before I go.

So I sign off this time wishing you all a very Happy & Prosperous 2016 and look forward to receiving your contributions for our Diamond Jubilee edition of the Tub Boat newsletter.

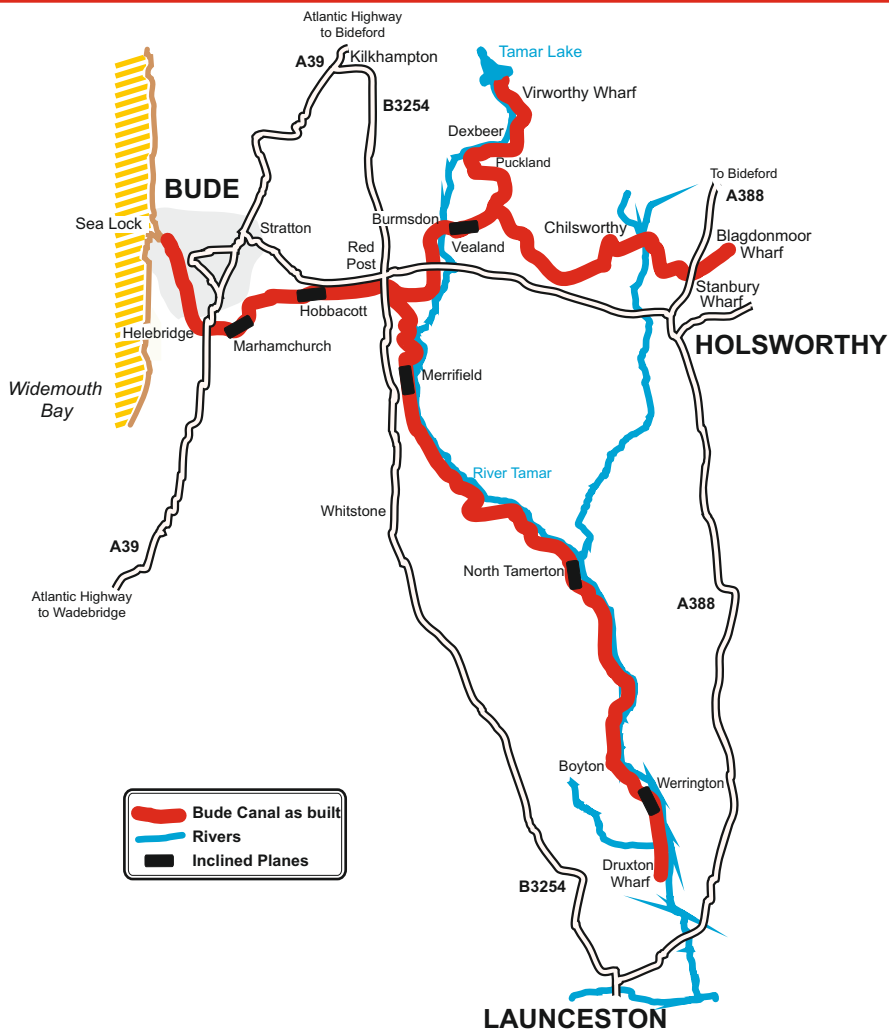
Clive Horton

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