

THE TUB BOAT

Newsletter of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society

No. 98

Winter 2021/22



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Forthcoming Events for 2022:

Friday 28th Jan Bude Canal Trust AGM at 2.00pm. at Pancrasweek Parish Hall.
The agenda includes a proposal to transfer ownership of the Aqueduct section of the canal to the Devon Wildlife Trust.

Sunday 6th Mar BCHS AGM at The Castle, Bude starting with a presentation at 11.00am followed by a Buffet Lunch at 1.00pm and the formal AGM at 2.30pm.

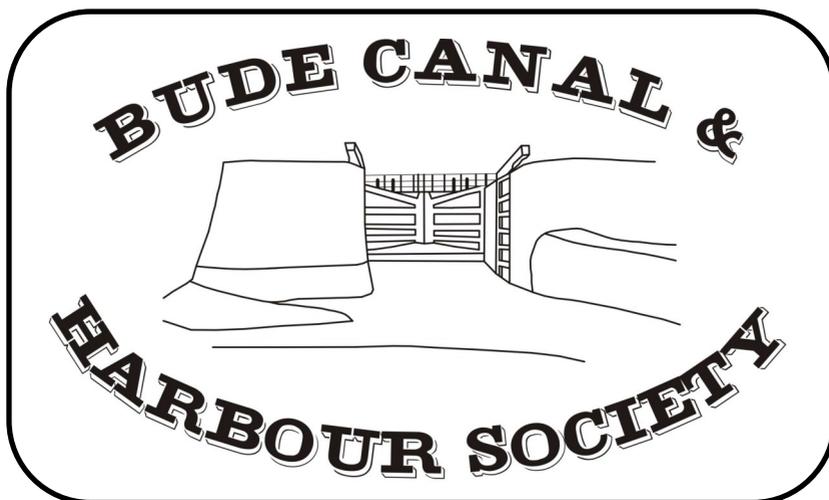
Please see pages 4 & 13 for full details of these events.

Under the present circumstances we are still unable to plan any further events during 2022 but we will give another update in the next edition of The Tub Boat.

Contributions for the next edition of the Tub Boat should be sent as an e-mail attachment to bude.canal@gmail.com or copied onto a USB memory stick or CD and sent to Mike Moore (Tel: 01288 361878) to reach him by 15th March 2022.

Trustees:	Chairman	Chris Jewell
	Vice-Chairman	Lesley Moores
	Secretary	Peter Daniel
	Treasurer	Martin Shannon
	Membership Secretary	Martin Shannon
	Events Secretary	Betty Moore
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	Other Trustees	Lucille Opie
	The Tub Boat Editor	Mike Moore (non-trustee)

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 photo: Virworthy Wharf

Creaks from the Chair

Firstly, thank you to all members who have renewed their membership or who have given donations.

Welcome to 2022 and best wishes for the coming year. It seems very similar to 2021 in that COVID-19 is still with us in all its forms. I hope you are vaccinated with at least your second dose and possibly your booster. Also please wear masks, keep your distance and, of course, keep washing your hands. One good thing from 2021 is that a social media campaign has found five or six new members who wish to be trustees from the AGM in 2022. This is heart-warming and will ensure that BCHS will be able to operate and comply with the minimum number of trustees which is six as required by our constitution. BCHS welcomes their involvement, and we look forward to getting to know them better.

You may have noticed that you received your Autumn edition of The Tub Boat rather later than normal. On behalf of the Trustees, I apologise for the delay. Covid 19 and other issues played a part in this delay. The Trustees will be looking at our procedures to ensure that “The Tub Boat” returns to its normal schedule for production and distribution going into 2022 and beyond.

AGM 2022

The AGM will be held on Sunday 6th March 2022 at The Gallery in The Castle Heritage Centre, Bude. The day starts at 10.00am with setting up the tables and displays and at 11.00am I will give a presentation about the Sea Lock. There will be a buffet lunch at 1.00pm which should be ordered in advance using the enclosed booking form and costs £11.35 per person which is payable with your booking. The cost of any additional food or drinks will be charged separately on the day.

The AGM itself will start at 2.30pm and will have to be completed before 3.45pm as we have to vacate the room by 4pm. The good news, as mentioned in the “Creaks from the Chair” is that by then BCHS will have five or six new Trustees to fulfil the aims of our organisation.

The Trustees ask all members who live in the Bude Stratton area to attend the AGM to ensure that the meeting is quorate and can take place as planned. Thank you and we hope to see you on the 6th of March.

Chris Jewell

Membership Report

We are very pleased to have welcomed five new members since my last report. On the flip side unfortunately four previous members have notified that they won't be renewing and a further six subscriptions remain outstanding. Overall, we are likely to start 2022 with a net annual reduction in membership of six so we are extremely grateful for your continuing support in helping to conserve, preserve and restore the canal and with education of the public of its former use and history. Membership cards have now been issued to all renewing members so if you haven't received yours, please let me know.

We are very pleased to be able to hold an AGM in 2022 which, as reported on page 4, will be on 6th March. I would strongly encourage those of you who are able, to come along. Having missed holding an AGM in 2021 and with a much-reduced level of activities since March 2020 it gives us an opportunity to become reacquainted and for old and new members alike to meet the committee.

Thank you again for your continued support and should anyone require any further information please contact me directly on 01288 356367 or bude.canal@gmail.com.

Martin Shannon
Honorary Treasurer and Membership Secretary

Bude Harbour update - October 2021

The Harbour has been very busy this year with the obvious re-instatement of the outer sea lock gate pintles and shoes, closely followed by the lifting in of the outer gates. I am very pleased to say, all went to plan!



The Lockgate Crew at work - photo: Jeff Dover

Our Sea Lock is now operational, and we have successfully locked out “Tina Maria”. They have gone on a short break and are hoping to return to be locked back in for the Winter along with “Mistral”.



*“Tina Maria” rounding Barrel Rock on 12th October on its return to Bude
photo: Jeff Dover*

There are still some small maintenance repairs to complete, as always, and these are in hand. Earlier in the year new railings made from traditional English oak were installed on the inner gate walkway. I repainted the original outer gate railings for this year as they weren’t in as bad a state as the inner ones but am due to replace them as budget allows. Also, I now intend to revert back to my plan and get the remaining winding gear cast and replaced.

During the repairs process, I had a new strap hinge installed to the South inner gate and checked the North one. I have had divers in the canal inspecting the inner gates and sluicing the build-up of silt which allowed for a smooth operation.



“Mistral” leaving the Sea lock on 17th October - photo: Jeff Dover

In May, the Wharf car park was finally handed back to Maritime, something I have been pushing, for the last six years. This will greatly increase the income for the harbour and go a long way towards paying for the lock repairs.

I have some outstanding repairs to complete, the crumbled paving by the fire station being one of them.

During the Summer months, we noticed a big increase in trailered visiting boats paying to use the slipway and over the August bank holiday weekend alone it took £300.

Also during the Spring, I wrote and had published an 11-page piece in the Maritime South West Journal no.34 giving the history to date of the harbour and canal and promoting us for visiting craft.

October will mark the end of the season as local boats start to load for over-wintering and I will look to re-fit the storm chains and bars in preparation for Winter, aiming to crane out the boats there after.

*Paul Vincent, Harbour Master, Bude
Cornwall Council Maritime Section*

The Sand Railway

A recent reply from Cornwall Council indicated that the works had again been delayed due to Historic England's refusal to support the concrete overlay option, even with mitigation measures outlined previously such as the rails being represented and chairs lifted. They have therefore gone back to Cormac to look at what options they still have, but on the face of it these are limited and likely to be much more costly. Apart from affordability, the other key issue is, of course, sustainability and resilience to future storm/wave action without the need for frequent and expensive repair visits. Finding a solution that fits with HE requirements and provides this level of protection at an acceptable cost is clearly therefore a challenge, but they will endeavour to identify a long-term solution as soon as possible.

In the meantime, they will continue to monitor the situation, especially following high sea levels where the surface may be impacted, and where required put in place temporary repairs to keep the status quo until the permanent solution can be put in place. They will be in contact with all relevant parties again to keep everyone informed of progress.

Mike Moore



*Mr F V Milton,
Publicity Department of LSWR
inspecting the
original plateway
near the iron bridge
circa 1921/2*

Bude Canal Stakeholder meeting - 15 December 2021

The quarterly meeting of the Canal Stakeholders Group, convened by Cornwall Council, was held online on 15th December 2021. The meeting, which was hastily convened, was led by Cornwall Councillor, Peter LaBroy, and Don Martin, Cornwall Council Officer whose remit includes the Canal. Also present were myself; Gareth Cann, Cormac; Alan Whittle, BCT; Helen Fincham, Community Link Officer; Peter Williams, Cornwall Councillor and Peter Daniel, BCHS (for part of meeting only).

The main discussion was a presentation by Don Martin who reported on the progress with the dredging programme for 2022/23 covering the following topics:

- Water Vole Survey
- Zebra Mussels
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Natural England
- Habitats – assessment of regulations
- Bathymetric Survey
- Leppitt Associates - Waste Consultants
- Lutra Consulting – Zones to be dredged
- Discussions with the Environment Agency covering a review of the areas to be dredged and how to optimise extraction and waste disposal.
- Consents for the phase 2 surveys, the Habitats Regulation assessment and from Natural England and the Environment Agency.
- Timescale for dredging – Winter is the best time so anticipate starting in October 2022.
- There was no discussion on the Inland Locks or remedial works on the Planekeeper's Path
- There was no comment on the letter from the IWA about regeneration works on the canal

The Chairman then opened the meeting for questions. These are shown below:

- “Is it known what volume of silt is to be removed?” – “The estimate is 1 million cubic metres”.
- “The question of dredging the canal has been ongoing since 2010 and it keeps being put back. The previous date given was the first quarter of 2022 but now it has slipped back to the fourth quarter of the year. Why is this?” – “Yes, that is accepted but negotiations are complex and if the E.A. can be persuaded that the Bude Canal is important as a flood relief system, this will give access to large grants which will enable us to have a proper maintenance programme for the whole canal”.

Finally, the Chairman advised the group that its interests would be returned to the Bude Valley Management Advisory Group (BVMAG) which meets twice a year usually in March and September.

Chris Jewell

Bude Canal Trust Report on the Bude Aqueduct

September (continued)

Jon from Virworthy Wharf Cottage had mown the section up to the Lower Lake and we followed through with the bank top trim. (Photo 1)

A little over enthusiasm to clear some of the smaller trees on the way back resulted in almost losing wellies in the silt. (Photo 2)



Photo 2 - In the silt



Photo 1 - Mown and bank top trimmed

Virworthy Mill to Aldercott had some exceptionally overgrown vegetation which was cut back.

Whilst clearing the vegetation between Vealand and the Holsworthy Branch, burning brash and removing tree remains, (Photos 3 & 4)



Photo 3 - Burning brash



Photo 4 - Tree taken down & site cleared



Photo 5 - Ash trees almost dead

several Ash trees were observed with signs of die back. *(Photo 5)* We resumed strimming and brash cutting between Aldercott Bridge and Cape Horn on the way to Wooda Bridge, the longest section without any other access points throughout.

October

Several weeks of this month's work coincided with rain in the forecast. To start the month we returned to the Virworthy Mill section to clear further vegetation from the canal profile and clearance of trees and branches. This was followed by another workday of rain.



Photo 6 - Cutting brash & branches



Photo 7 - Finding leak near Cape Horn

However the week after that was dry enough to continue the work towards Wooda Bridge where we carried on with the same work, cutting, stacking, logs and brash *(Photo 6)* whilst slowly closing in on Wooda Bridge.

On the way back, a successful search was made for the leak near Cape Horn *(Photo 7)* and clearing a fallen tree.

November

Reports of trees which have been blown down by the recent high wind between Dexbeer and Gadlock bridges resulted in the work parties again being split, two to finish the work just north of Wooda and two to remove the fallen trees. *(Photos 8 & 9)*



Photo 8 - Tree down



Photo 9 - Tree cleared

December

Last cut of the year before the Christmas break. Fallen tree clearance between Lower Tamar Lake and Virworthy before moving to the Incline Plane, clearing one fallen branch *(Photo 10)* whilst checking the water treatment building leak and board walk planks for repair.



Photo 10 - Branch down at the pump house

Hope to see some of you walking the Aqueduct Footpath in 2022. In the meantime, have an enjoyable Christmas and Best Wishes for a Happy New Year.

Mike Degnan, Bude Canal Trust

Bude Canal Trust – notice to members of delayed AGM

Dear Bude Canal Trust Member

On behalf of our chairman, Steve Church and the trustees of the Bude Canal Trust, I would like to invite you to our Annual General Meeting being held on Friday 28th January 2022 at the Pancrasweek Parish Hall, Pancrasweek, Holsworthy, EX22 7JS starting at 2.00pm.

The Bude Canal Trust is currently facing an uncertain future due to declining membership, the inability to attract new or younger members, dwindling finances, increasing difficulty to secure grants and an aging volunteer workforce. The following document “Future Possibilities” written by our Chairman, details the situation the Trust is facing. It offers a possible way forward to overcome these issues through the transfer of the Aqueduct Section of the canal to the Devon Wildlife Trust who already have responsibility for much of the land adjacent to the canal.

The Trustees would very much like to learn your views on this proposal before making any final decision and in view of the implications for the long-term future of the Trust would ask you to please make every effort to attend the AGM. Consequently, an advisory voting form is attached for you to indicate your view on the matter which should be returned by Friday 7th January.

Having considered the issues at length, it is the unanimous recommendation of the Trustees that BCT members vote in favour of the proposed course of action to ensure the long-term future of the canal from a historical, cultural and wildlife perspective.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting where Covid precautions will be in place.

Best regards

Robin Edmonds

Secretary, Bude Canal Trust Ltd

Bude Canal Trust and Bude Canal Aqueduct - Future Possibilities

Background

1. The Bude Canal Trust owns the Bude Canal Aqueduct length of the Bude Canal between Lower Tamar Lake and Burmsdon. This includes the canal profile and several associated features including the canal towpath.
2. Between Lower Tamar Lake and the Tamar Aqueduct Bridge, i.e. the Devon length, the towpath forms a definitive public footpath. The Bude Canal Trust maintains this to an appropriate standard on behalf of the Highway Authority, Devon County Council, and with financial help from the Council under its P3 scheme.
3. The Trust also maintains to the best of its ability the historic profile and other features in order to maintain the Canal's heritage.

The Trust's Stewardship of its Lands

4. For some time, the Trust's Management Committee has had concerns over how it can continue to maintain the Canal, associated features and footpath in its ownership.
5. The Trust undertakes a regular maintenance programme of works to maintain the towpath to appropriate public footpath standards and to maintain and if possible, improve the canal profile and its associated features.
6. This work is undertaken by a small work party who meet to execute the necessary works generally on a weekly basis. The work party is not only small in numbers but also consists of members who mostly are "not as young as they used to be".
7. Numerous attempts have been made to extend the size of the work party and, especially, to add younger members. Despite these attempts through local advertising and appeals there has been little success.
8. In addition, appropriate maintenance of the associated features of the canal often requires specialist skills which, in turn, cost money. The Trust's funds are very limited and the only feasible way of

acquiring the funds needed is through bids to grant aiding bodies. This grant-seeking and application process is itself a skilled task and again numerous attempts have been made through advertising and appeals to recruit someone who would be willing to act on behalf of the Trust in this capacity. Yet again, there has been no success.

9. The Trust's Management Committee feels it might have a greater chance of establishing a better presence locally, and thus being more successful in its search for practical and administrative help, with a high-profile local personality on board who would be able to speak for the Trust and its work and the importance of this work. Such a personality has not come forward.

A Way Forward

10. The concerns and difficulties outlined above have led the Management Committee to consider other ways forward.
11. In December 2020 the Devon Wildlife Trust announced that they were looking to acquire additional land. Such land would need to be appropriate for their purposes, i.e. include nature conservation value and/or relate to existing areas of wildlife importance.
12. Following this announcement, in January 2021 the Bude Canal Trust approached the Devon Wildlife Trust to enquire whether they would be, without prejudice, interested in acquiring the Canal Trust's lands.
13. As a result of this approach, meetings have been held between the two Trusts to discuss the possibility of the Wildlife Trust acquiring the Canal Trust land. Neither body has fully committed to the idea but, informally, officers of both Trusts have agreed that the proposal is worth pursuing, being to the benefit of both bodies.

The Possible Future

14. In the light of this, the Devon Wildlife Trust has drawn up a draft Heads of Terms document. This confirms that the intention of the Wildlife Trust is to:-
 - Continue managing the canal and its immediate surroundings so that its heritage value is maintained and enhanced;

- Seek opportunities to enhance the canal's value for wildlife within the channel, the immediate surroundings and across the wider landscape;
 - Maintain public access along the entire length of the canal.
15. The Wildlife Trust has also drawn up its Vision for the canal, were it to acquire it. This includes the creation of a stunning landscape regenerated for wildlife and people in the area, with the canal forming the backbone and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage.
 16. These principles are completely complementary to those of the Bude Canal Trust. They are also in line with the Trust's Vision Statement, approved by the membership in 2012 and with the Trust's proposed application to the HLF's Landscape Partnership Project in 2013, aborted due to lack of administrative back-up. On that basis the Canal Trust's Management Committee is minded to recommend to its members that the principle of the ownership of the Bude Canal Aqueduct lands being transferred to the Devon Wildlife Trust be agreed. The Committee is of the opinion that the Trust will have fulfilled the objectives of its Memorandum of Association to preserve, conserve and restore the Bude Canal – these requirements having been transferred to the Devon Wildlife Trust as being more able to achieve the objectives than the Bude Canal Trust.
 17. There remain a number of details to be resolved prior to any final agreement. These include the ownership of the Burmsdon section which is outside Devon and maintenance of the public footpath (whether DWT or BCT will continue with the P3 arrangements, who will undertake the day-to-day maintenance, ownership and storage of the maintenance tools).
 18. The future of the Bude Canal Trust is also to be resolved if it gives up ownership of the canal. One option would be to disband the Trust as now being superfluous. Alternatively, the Trust's Memorandum of Association could be amended so that the body continues but with different objectives. In this case, the Wildlife Trust has suggested it

would be appropriate to establish a management group incorporating the Canal Trust to ensure the experience and expertise of the Canal Trust in maintaining the canal is not lost.

19. The future of the Bude Canal Trust Partnership would also need to be resolved. The Partnership was established originally at the behest of Devon County Council to provide backing and overseeing for the Bude Canal Trust's area of ownership, which will no longer apply. It may be the Wildlife Trust's management group referred to above could also incorporate the Partnership – that would presumably be for them to decide.

*Steve Church, Chairman & Trustee, Bude Canal Trust
October 2021*

The Bude Canal Trust AGM – 28 January 2022

Following the letter sent to the members of the Bude Canal Trust and their Chairman's statement "Future of the Bude Canal Trust" reproduced above regarding the offer from Devon Wildlife Trust to take over the length of canal in Devon currently owned by the Bude Canal Trust, their members must vote to agree to this proposal for it to proceed. Both BCHS and the West Country Branch of the IWA have an interest in the future of this part of the former Bude Canal and, as a representative of both organisations, I intend to ask the following questions at the Bude Canal Trust's AGM:

1. Does the Bude Canal Trust have written assurances that the canal heritage assets will be protected by Devon Wildlife Trust should the transfer take place?
2. Will the IWA Leaflet No.12 "Bude Canal – Lower Tamar Lake to Burmsdon Section" which describes the walking route along the Aqueduct section be recognised by Devon Wildlife Trust as a relevant leaflet in the short term? Both BCT and BCHS have a significant quantity of this recently updated leaflet.

Finally, subject to clarity on the above questions, BCHS agree that the proposed transfer of ownership of the Bude Aqueduct Section of the canal to Devon Wildlife Trust is an appropriate way of securing the future of this section of the Bude Canal.

Chris Jewell

A pictorial journey along the Bude Canal from Lower Tamar Lake



Spillway at Lower Tamar Lake



Former adit supplying water from Lower Tamar Lake to the feeder arm



Signpost at start of walk



Canal towpath towards Virworthy Wharf



Virworthy Wharf and Display Building



Bridge sections on display at Virworthy Wharf



Inside Virworthy Wharf Display Building



Brendon Bridge in 2009 following renovation



Burmsdon Aqueduct in 2009 following renovation

Letter from Jane Ricobi

I thought these pictures may interest you. My great grandad Thomas Hockridge worked on the canal just before it closed, he and his family stayed living in 1 Wharf Cottages, Helebridge while he was a navy on the Bude railway. When that opened the family moved away to get work. The cottages my mum took in the 1950s. The couple is my great grandparents Thomas and Sarah Jane Hockridge and I think that this picture was taken just before they left Bude. The sailor is their son, my grandad, who was born at Helebridge in 1892. I think it was taken in 1911 when he joined the Royal Navy.

As far as I can work out the family lived at Helebridge from about 1889 to 1899. If you have any ideas how I could find out more about their time there I would be very pleased as I am very interested in my family history.

Thanks for your assistance.

Jane Ricobi



*Thomas and Sarah Jane Hockridge
(left) with their son (above)*



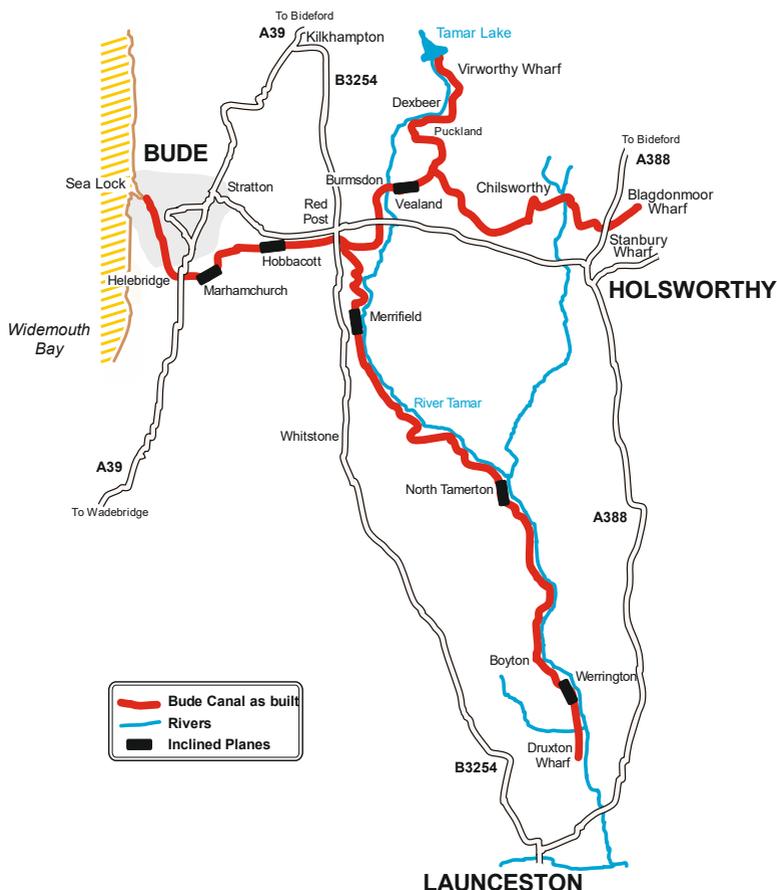
1 Wharf Cottages in 1911.

Apparently, there were originally three small cottages here but now they have been converted into two dwellings as shown below with Wharf Cottage on the left and Hill View Cottage on the right.



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Enquiries to the Hon. Secretary (Tel 01288 341653)

New Inn House, Week St. Mary, Cornwall EX22 6UZ

www.bude-canal.co.uk · info@bude-canal.co.uk

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