

THE TUB BOAT

Newsletter of the Bude Canal & Harbour Society

No. 57

Autumn 2011



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Forthcoming Events:

- Saturday 29th October Official opening of the new underpass for the multi-use trail extension near Helebridge, Marhamchurch. Meet 11.30am at Bude Cycle Hire. See local press for further information.
- Sunday 18th December Annual Mince Pie and Sherry Walk. Meet outside the TIC at 10.00 for the walk or 12 noon in the Gallery at the Castle Heritage Centre. Adults £3, children £1
- Sunday 26th February 2012 Eleventh AGM at The Falcon Hotel at 2.30pm followed by a presentation on Pentewan by local historian Robert Evans.

Contributions for the next edition of the Tub Boat should be sent as an e-mail attachment to info@bude-canal.co.uk or copied onto a USB memory stick or CD and sent to Mike Moore (Tel: 01288 361878) to reach him by 24th December 2011.

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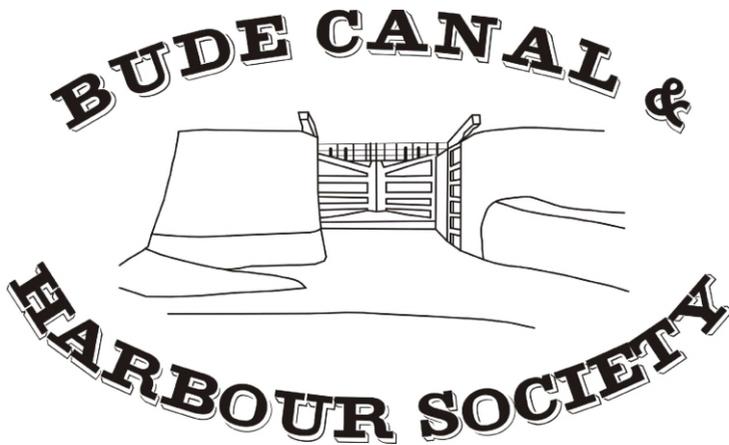
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Cover: The underpass where the new route for the all purpose cycleway will pass under the A39
Photo: Mike Moore

CREAKS FROM THE CHAIR

Though still August as I write this, it feels and looks more akin to October without the quantities of rain experienced elsewhere possibly, but bleak and sunless enough to make one look at the calendar in disbelief. Of the four outside events since June when we expect to put up our gazebo and man our stall, only the first, Bude Motor Club's show was free from rain; at the next one, the all important Bude and Stratton Heritage Day formerly Bude Canal Day, all the charity stalls were held inside the Parkhouse Centre because of awful weather earlier on when decisions had to be made. We made our usual presence for Carnival and the rain held off sufficiently to make it worthwhile but so dismal was the Saturday of Lifeboat weekend that we didn't show our faces at all. Not the best of summers then for us but it's good to report that the all important bank holiday - Lifeboat Day itself - had good weather, large crowds and took lots of money for the RNLI which is what it's about.

We continue to fight for the completion of the canal regeneration with the raising of Rodds Bridge and the provision of a slipway which would enable boats bigger than canoes and rowing boats to access the canal and having done so, to pass under the bridge through both restored locks and on to Helebridge; in short to navigate the broad upper reaches is still a pipe dream for the eternal optimists among us. This kind of situation makes a mockery of the multi-million pound restoration on which we all built our hopes and aspirations not so many years ago.

Another ongoing battle concerns the site of the former Stapleton's shipyard where the scouts and town band still have their huts. Cornwall Council, whose concerns lie anywhere but in Bude, will sell this last piece of canalside land for development rather than allow the people of Bude to acquire it for much needed accommodation for the canoe and gig clubs who have no real premises of their own. Letters have gone out to county and local councillors about this, containing suggestions from DEFRA supported by the IWA, for the retention of this kind of waterway related land for the use of the people. Replies in varying moods are coming in - slowly - so watch this space but don't hold your breath!

I had hoped to report the sighting of our otter(s) in the last few

weeks but so far I've heard of none and certainly haven't seen a whisker or a ripple of an otter along the canal myself. Ducks of several colours are plentiful where the visitor-borne food is in constant supply down at both wharves, but higher up the waterway there are scarcely any ducks and only the odd moorhen or two venturing out from the bankside reeds and grasses. I saw one heron yesterday where often two or three can be disturbed from their fishing when one is walking the tow path. It is unusual to see so little bird life on the water both river and canal and the marshes too are comparatively quiet. The ubiquitous Canada geese however are making up for the others by deciding to make their bid for freedom very early this year. Since the last week in August skeins of the noisy creatures have circled the valley from all directions and at all hours of the early evening and morning in their remarkable formations, honking their determined way to winter destinations. This afternoon in a rare bit of warm summer sunshine however, I watched a flock of martins swooping and diving while feeding on plentiful insects over the water, among them several beautiful dark blue dragon flies. It was significant that the electricity wires were beginning to look like a line of music as the birds lined up in considerable numbers while the feeding frenzy was going on. Autumn is round the corner.

Finally I spotted the following snippet which tells us that the recreational use of canals isn't the modern phenomenon most of us think!

From The Post and Weekly News; (Bude and Stratton Post).
Thursday 22nd September 2011.

"Looking Back"

130 years ago, 26th September 1891

Owing to the closing of the Druxton branch, The Bible Christians of Bridgetown will be unable to go up the Bude canal on boats as they intended doing on the occasion of their festival.

n.b. This would have been an early manifestation of the closure of the southern (Launceston) branch which was the beginning of the closure of the whole canal system, completed in 1901.

Audrey Wheatley.

Membership Report

We welcome the following new member who has joined since June:

Mr P Allsop, Swanley, Kent.

As many of you will realise, this is the time of the year when I have to remind you that subscriptions were due on 1st September for all members except those who joined after 1st May. Renewal forms (where appropriate) are included with this newsletter. Members are encouraged to return the Standing Order Form to me as it is a more efficient method of payment for the society and avoids your renewal being overlooked. Membership cards will automatically be sent to members who have already completed Standing Order Mandates and whose payments have been received. Can I also remind those members who are taxpayers and who have not completed a Gift Aid declaration that they can obtain a copy from the Treasurer.

Thank you for your continued support

Mike Moore

Bude Canal Trust Report

General maintenance of the Trust's length of canal and, especially, the towpath has been continuing through the summer. The most important, and time-consuming, work has been cutting the path. This has generally involved a cut of the full length once a month, using the mower bought earlier with the benefit of a small grant from the Balsdon Trust. The full cut, plus taking the mower from one end to the other by road, can take the best part of 5 hours and uses about 10 litres of petrol. Where possible, two mower widths are cut, about 4 feet.

The Trust has entered into an arrangement with Devon County Council to do this work and keep the towpath, which is a formal public right of way, in good condition on their behalf. A formal agreement under the Parish Paths Partnership scheme has been signed, meaning that a small yearly grant will be received from the County Council, which should cover the costs of the mower petrol at least.

Devon County Council has also installed a new footbridge on the

towpath near Dunsdon, where the old one was in danger of collapse, and this is appreciated.

Work has also continued by the Trust in cutting the canal bank alongside the path to try and reduce the brambles which have been overhanging. As the autumn draws on, it is hoped that Community Service and Lakes Trust volunteers will be undertaking project work, including some hedge-laying. It is also hoped to continue last winter's work in cutting back hedges and overhanging willows in the canal bed. It is hoped a small team of volunteers can be got together to undertake such work on a weekly basis.

It is understood that Leader 4 grants, which were suspended earlier in the year, may now be available again, although much reduced. The Trust has submitted an Initial Project Outline application for such a grant, and we now await a response.

It will be recalled that an IWA engineer visited the Trust's length of the canal last autumn and recommended certain actions on bridges and culverts. The Trust is now inviting quotes from local firms to undertake some of these works. Such quotes will be needed if we are successful in obtaining any grants.

Devon County Council installed people counters at two locations on the canal at the beginning of the year – between Virworthy and Lower Tamar Lake and at Vealand. Results for the period February-May have been received from the Council which indicate that 2,475 walkers passed the Virworthy counter and 246 passed the Vealand counter in this period. The relatively low numbers at Vealand, which is a fairly remote location, was not unexpected but the total at Virworthy was a pleasant surprise.

Finally, it can be reported that the Trust's Open Day on 9th July and Barbecue on 30th July both went very well. Thanks to all those who attended these events; we hope you enjoyed them.



Steve Church, Chairman, Bude Canal Trust

Photo - M Moore

Update on the TRAC Project

Work has started on the Project at last. The first section of work is to connect the existing multi use track to the underpass in the adjacent field, which will remove the need to cross the A39 to access the route that runs adjacent to the main road. This should be completed by mid-October.

The next section of the track is due to start on or about mid November and will be off road from Helebridge to Ball Hill on the Marhamchurch to Week St Mary road and should be completed by spring 2012.

Negotiations continue to take the route after Ball Hill off road to Titson. This has to be completed by December 2013.

The TRAC group of the Bude Partnership are liaising with the Holsworthy Market & Coastal Towns Initiative Group to form a partnership to ensure that the aims of Cornwall Council through the TRAC Project and Devon County Council's aims for a multi use track to the county border are achieved and that they link together to achieve maximum benefit. Particularly, by ensuring as much of the joint route is off road and in line with each other. Additionally, looking at the future upkeep of the track, marketing etc. At present, the name for the track from Holsworthy to Bude has been agreed to be called the 'Atlantic Ruby Trail'. This whole project has massive economic and well being benefits for the people of Bude, Holsworthy and the adjacent parishes.

Chris Jewell

Virworthy View

Swallows made a slow start this year. It did look like there would be fewer this year - but they did come gradually and indeed seem to be just as many this year judging by the amount of dropping in my garage. At this time - late September - there are still fledglings only just ready to fly. There doesn't seem to be the mass exodus as in other years. Also, I have observed a lack of bird varieties this year, a view also expressed by the bird watchers I talk to, but one day we did see a Jack Snipe close to the Lake - a master of camouflage!

In early summer I thought the blackberries would be a bumper crop - but for some reason they have not developed and are now a poor crop. The sloes on the other hand are in abundance.

It has been a struggle to keep the foliage down and off the footpath and I don't think we are entirely winning. The hard winter then a warm dry Spring made for ideal growing weather. It must be due to "Climate Change".

Our latest Peachicks have survived and are now exploring their territory around the Wharf with their mum. I think it must be fairly unusual to have all white ones.



Jack Snipe close to Tamar Lake - Geoff Lowe

Someone has painted our road red! One morning I noticed that red paint had been spread along the road for as far as could be seen. I think it must have been from a flat bed lorry taking the bend too fast with an open tin of red paint in the back - which spilled over then cascaded from the back of the lorry all down the centre of the road. I don't think the driver noticed. It's taking a time to wear off.

South West Lakes Trust sealed off the footpath at the Lake end for a while to alter the approach to the spillway. Removing the steps to the lower part of the Lake and levelling the ground to allow fishermen to get their gear down in wheelbarrows! In the process creating a very muddy path which even with re-seeding will not improve until next year.

I am still hampered with my knee problem which is restricting the amount of maintenance I can do. I am on the list for a new knee joint which will make me a 'bionic man'.

Geoff Lowe



(1)



(2)

**Pictorial report of BCHS annual
coach trip
to Bristol on Saturday 16th July**

(1) The "Flower of Bristol" approaching the landing stage for our trip on the canal and river.

(2) Onboard prior to departure.

(3) Approaching the motorway and railway bridges.

(4) Passing the "Tower Belle" at Netham lock on our return.

(5) Passing "SS Great Britain" at the end of our cruise.



(3)

All Photos: M Moore



(4)



(5)

Bude-Stratton Heritage Day on Sunday 7th August

The weather did nothing to deter or dampen the spirits of the hundreds who turned out and enjoyed the second Bude-Stratton Heritage Day on Sunday. The threat of showers did mean, however, that most of the stall-holders set-up in the Parkhouse Centre, while the vintage, classic vehicles and activities remained outside.

It was a day of something for everyone, young or old: fair ground rides, a dog agility course, sea shanties, a canoe regatta, brass bands and jazz, model railways, lots of local history and the chance to hear the lovely Cornish language spoken by experts.

Mr Showers strode among the crowds on his stilts, twisting and teasing balloons in to all manner of shapes, while in the afternoon he led a thrilling circus workshop.



Photo: M Moore

Bude Mayor Peter Moores with Tim Dingle (L) and Steve Church (R) of Bude Canal Trust in the Parkhouse Centre on Heritage Day.

The afternoon also saw children of all ages entertained by two showmen at the top of their profession; master of close-up magic and sleight of hand Richard Ready and Professor Dan Bishop with his ever-popular Punch & Judy Show.

The day's musical contributions came from two of the area's favourite brass bands -Bude Metric Brass and the Bude Town Band. Jazz-lovers were delighted by the inimitable Pig Ankle Quartet with their own foot-tapping style of Trad' Jazz and visitors were also treated to a lusty performance of sea shanties by The Barrel Rock Boys. Their performance was followed by Bude Folk, who you need only to hear once, to know they are passionate about their music, ancient and modern, local and from further afield.

"We are very pleased with the day and we've had a great response," said Town Clerk Christine Kett. "The weather didn't look too promising to begin with", she said, "but when you look at all the activities now going on, the crowds, number of exhibitors and stall holders who have turned out, you can see that the Day has been a real success."



Photo: M Moore

A model traction engine on the Castle Drive.

The classic and vintage vehicles on show attracted much admiration and not a little envy. The Bude Motor Club had a wonderful range of classic cars on show; there was a variety of vintage tractors and engines chugging away and whistling up a head of steam Kevin and Gordon Burrow's small steam engines and John Briggs with his miniature steam engine. Penzance's Dr Robert Dyke brought his beautiful 1902 White Model B-6hp Stanhope steam car, and his son Bill Dyke upheld the family tradition by driving over from Exeter in a 1920's vintage car.

Two newcomers to the event were Nick Olgard and David Smale. Nick, a member of the Military Vehicle Trust, drove to Bude in his Second World War US Army jeep and had on display a selection of weapons - the type that would have been used by the US Rangers who trained on the Bude cliffs in preparation for the D-Day Landings.



Photo: M Moore

A Jowett car near the Bude Light.

Among the many stall holders were Yarty Valley Cordials, Hi-T's Fudge, the Cornish Crisp Company; Ashtree Pottery, the Bude Horticulture Society; The Trevithick Trust; the indefatigable ladies from the RNLI; the Bude Old Cornwall Society who are a mine of information about Bude-Stratton's heritage and two Cornish language speakers from the Cornish Language Partnership.

Bude Canal and Harbour Society and Bude Canal Trust had stalls in the Parkhouse along with the RSPB, Friends of Bude Valley and the

North Cornwall Model Engineer' Society, Rolle Canal and SW Lakes Trust.

New to the event were three very entertaining activities. To children's great delight, Raymonds Amusements set up several of their popular fairground rides and stalls including Hook a Duck and Swing Boats.

Roger and Sue demonstrated and encouraged people to have-a-go with their new addictive garden game, 'Smite' while the Bude and North Cornwall Dog Training Group set-up a dog agility course in the Castle grounds and invited members of the public to put their dogs through their paces. Some wonderful sights of canine bemusement and owner frustration ensued.

The St John Ambulance was in attendance, the PA was supplied by Mr Westlake and the day was smoothly woven together by the master of the one-liner, James Kendling of Kendling & Partners, Estate Agents and Auctioneers.

"It's been a successful day", said Councillor Ian Saltern, Chair of the Heritage and Culture Committee, "and I would like to thank everyone for coming and say 'see you next year'".

Patricia Wright

VISIT TO KELLY MINE AND BOVEY TRACEY

On Sunday 18th September five members of BCHS visited Kelly Mine and Bovey Tracey on a trip organised by Adrian and Hilary Wills of the Rolle Canal & North Devon Waterways Society. We all enjoyed a very interesting day and were shown around the mine in groups of eight by a member of the Kelly Mine Preservation Society.

Although the earliest reference to mining at Kelly dates from 1797 the first official record is in 1877. The substance mined was micaceous haematite, an oxide of iron, which is used in the manufacture of anti corrosive paint and pottery glaze.



Photo: M Moore

An example of the rock mined showing the seam of micaceous haematite.

In the early 18th and 19th centuries this Devon Sand was used to assist the drying of ink on manuscript documents. The land was leased

from a local farming family for the entire duration of its life, closing finally in 1951. At this time the mining company owed the landowner rent and the miners were not allowed to remove anything from site after its closure, thus the Preservation Society started with an almost complete inventory of artefacts, although obviously in need of a great deal of restoration and renovation.



Photo: M Moore

The more recent track laid to Kelly Mine showing two different types of points used.

Our guided tour took us to two of the three known adits complete with 18" railway lines in situ disappearing into the lower tunnel. The loaded trucks were winched to a working house where initially waterwheels and later a hot bulb oil engine drove the stampers to crush the ore into powder which passed through a series of settlement beds until it was transported as a sludge to the drying sheds. There are two working waterwheels on site, one of which has been totally rebuilt. The majority of the machinery in the dressing shed has been restored and is working including two original stampers for crushing the ore.



Photos:
M Moore



Our guide demonstrating the operation of the ore jigger.

The latter, a four headed Californian stamp, was powered by a 1914 Blackstone oil engine which was used when the water wheel and water turbine were running short of water. The Drying Shed

The Blackstone oil engine used in the machine shed.

contains a newly refurbished furnace and heated drying floor and a Blacksmiths Shop together with the necessary scales for weighing the finished product. Some of the railway lines have been replaced by sturdier track from local clay works as they updated their equipment. Kelly Mine is in an area on the edge of Dartmoor that is known for its natural beauty. The entire site is visually shielded by trees and undergrowth, this screening has been retained. Water courses on the site have been kept clear and wildlife is encouraged with the aid of nesting boxes and dead wood piles.

We all then proceeded to Lustleigh village for a much needed pub lunch where we all talked about the morning's privileged



Photos:
M Moore



The old GW Brake van outside the Heritage Centre at Bovey Tracey.
experience.

The arch which is the only remains of what is thought to be a monastery in Bovey Tracey.

In the afternoon we drove to the Bovey Tracey Heritage Centre at the old railway station. Here once again we were allocated a guide who took us on a very informative tour of historic Bovey Tracey. On leaving the Heritage Centre we went over the river bridge which was built in 1642 where the old mill building was pointed out to us, and proceeded on to see the site of an early monastery and the historic development of the town. We saw several buildings that were previously used as schools started by various religious orders over different centuries in the town, from the 16th century onwards. The original town cross, initially erected in 1260, was moved in the mid 1800s to allow for the building of the present Town Hall at a cost of £800.

The first church was built between 400 and 500 AD and every church since has been built on this site. The current church was probably constructed in the late 12th century. The Devon House of



Photo: M Moore

The stained glass window in the Parish Church in Bovey Tracey. Mercy not far from the church was built as a home for wayward girls and orphans. The Old Manor House built around 1200 was the home of the de Tracey family from whom Bovey Tracey got its name. There was so much history in this town that it was just as well we had a knowledgeable guide to lead us on the tour, returning to the Heritage Centre for yet more refreshments kindly provided by the Heritage volunteers. A full and excellent day

Pam and Ralph Daniel

Producing 19th Century boats in the 21st Century!

A report & photographs by Adrian Wills.

After a break of probably no less than 150 years, boat building has returned to the wharf-side of Sea Lock at Annery, the entrance to Lord Rolle's Canal in North Devon. Where the hull of the 200 ton barquentine, 'Sedwell Jane' was once constructed, an ambitious



John and his band saw.

plan to build two full-sized, replica tub boats, (a lead and a following boat), is actually underway.

I managed to acquire copies of structural drawings of the remains of the tub boat, held at the Helebridge Workshop on the Bude Canal, quite some time ago courtesy of Bude-Stratton Town Council and a quantity of useful timber, in the form of redundant balance beams, generously donated by British Waterways.

John Bowden, a good friend of mine, owns a portable band saw. He was kind enough to bring it, towed behind his Landrover, to the Sea Lock site. Helped by Barry Hughes and Trevor Fordham, we cut the beams into sizes suitable for tub boat construction. Unfortunately the beams, being old and worn, were suffering from deep splits and rot so that there was a considerable amount of waste wood that could not be utilised for boat-building but will still be utilised as winter fuel.

Tub boats are built around 2 very large, rectangular timbers running the length of each vessel. Each of these timbers, called a 'chine', is 10½ inches in height by 9½ inches wide and 21 feet long. (Imperial measure is given since this is what would have been used at the time). The timber used to construct the tub boats would probably have been Oak and/or Elm. The balance beams are of Oak but nothing of that size could be salvaged from them. Work could not progress until timber large enough could be acquired.

After considerable research I managed to find a local timber merchant who could provide me with large sizes of sawn wood. Due to the weight of Oak, difficulty in finding trunks big enough and its exorbitant cost, the timber merchant and I settled on using Larch as a suitable alternative. Having agreed a price, I went with Hilary, Trevor and Norman Richards to watch the timber being sawn at the timber yard and to digitally record it on video.





A tub-boat D.I.Y kit!

Only later, when the sawn timber was delivered to Sea Lock, did I fully appreciate the size and, more significantly, the weight each tub boat was going to be. These tubs are seriously heavy!

Following delivery of the timber, Barry produced a hard-board template for the ribs of each vessel. Next he, Trevor and I set about selecting suitable slabs of sawn balance beam and began cutting out as many ribs as we could, trying to avoid any large splits and knots where possible.



Barry Hughes marking out the ribs

Eventually we had most of the pieces we required. We progressed onto marking out the positions on the chines where mortises had to be cut and into which the ribs would later be inserted.

Using power tools to rough-cut the mortises and saw the ribs, has helped speed up production enormously. The chines had to be cut to length and because of their large dimensions a handsaw had to be employed. Sawing by hand through timber 10½ inches by 9½ inches, whilst trying to keep the saw-cut square, takes some time

and considerable effort. We were very grateful that it was only softwood and not Oak that we were cutting through! A large auger drill bit powered by a hefty electric drill was used to cut the core of the mortises but then each had to be cleaned up using a very large wood chisel and heavy hammer. None of the tools involved in this project are less than very large!

The boat was upside-down during the early stages of construction but once provision had been made for the insertion of wheels and all the bottom planking attached it was lifted and turned over using the RB22 crane on site.

To be continued...

Mince Pie and Sherry Walk on Sunday 18th December

The Mince Pie and Sherry Walk will be the next and final event for this year.

We will meet outside the TIC in the Crescent Car Park at 10.00am and walk along the canal towpath to Helebridge returning to Bude via the coastal footpath. It is approx 4 miles and is a fairly easy route to walk although suitable footwear such as walking boots are recommended. We expect to arrive at the Castle Heritage Centre at about 12 noon to be served with sherry and mincepies. If you are unable to complete the walk you are welcome to join us in the Gallery at the Castle Heritage Centre from 12 noon where you will be able to see our latest canal displays. There will be no charge for the walk but the sherry and mincepies will be £3.00 for adults and £1.00 for children under 13. Non-alcoholic refreshments will also be available.

We will have a raffle of Christmas goodies which have been donated by members and if anyone would like to make an additional donation of a raffle prize, we would be extremely grateful. Thank you for your support.

Please complete the enclosed booking form indicating if you intend to join us for the walk and return it to Chris Jewell with your remittance by 9th December.

Betty Moore

