

Calder Navigation Society
Newsletter December 2021



But first, a message from the Chairman….

Time to put fingers to keyboard again, the time seems to fly by these days. Let's get to the warmer weather again!

Savile is resting again though some remedial work is taking place prior to entering dry dock all being well on January 29th. Watch out for a call for volunteer helpers nearer the time, also watch out for a Christmas card from Avril, see the New Year Resolution suggestions further on in this Newsletter!

Despite the Covid restrictions, Savile had a busy summer and her activities culminated in a full day training / familiarisation / experience session for some of our budding skippers and a good day out was experienced by all. All being well 2022 will be another busy year. May I take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part in the Savile activities during the summer months, whether they be crew or shore side helpers. Thank you all and well done!

Our membership continues to slowly grow, mainly I think due to the efforts of our IT expert Dan, who generates a lot of social media interest. We seem to have quite a following so let's hope that "likes" can be turned into "membership applications". I even received a compliment from the C&RT Operations Manager Mr. John Gibson who stated that he was very impressed with our website and its content.



We continue to act as a pressure group and notify C&RT of any observations we make around the Calder & Hebble waters, sometimes we even compliment them. We have it on good authority that they are having a concerted effort to rectify all of the lock associated defects during the winter months so we look forward to seeing the results (or not).
As part of a recent communication from me to our C&RT Regional Director I asked if invited would he be prepared to come along to South Pennine Boat Club for a Q &A session. He replied that he would be happy to and so he was invited by the Commodore of SPBC. Hopefully this event will take place in the New Year and I am confident that CNS members would be made welcome. If anyone reading this would like to submit a question or observation then please forward to me by email or in person and I will make sure that it is duly processed.

Our efforts working alongside the Mirfield in Bloom team to try and improve the visual aspect of the riverside on Battyeford Island are still in progress. We recently met with C&RT Management and our local MP to discuss the problem regarding plastic caught up in the lower branches of trees on C&RT land. We await the outcome. See the article inside called "Plastic Grows on Trees".

That's about it from me, so please stay safe everyone and have a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Peter Davies
Chairman



"My Mirfield" Awards

Chairman Peter Davies and Angela Ekkers representing the South Pennine Boat Club were presented with an "Above and Beyond" award at the recent "My Mirfield" event. The party had been postponed due to Covid. Peter and Angela accepted the award on behalf of the large number of people who helped to paint the bridge back in 2019. It was a true community effort.



The Maintenance Boats





Like almost everything else on the waterways, the C&RT workboats are not quite in the first flush of youth. As can be seen from her builder's plate, **Doncaster** is approaching her 40th birthday and is one of the newer boats in the fleet. C&RT have recognised this and are putting the boats through a major refurbishment scheme which will make them better equipped for the tasks in hand and will also update their welfare facilities. The **Liverpoo**l, based in the North West is currently dry docked at Newark and is part way through a refit that will cost between £125,000 & £250,000 for each boat. Our local boats will eventually go through the programme and return to Yorkshire as good as new.

Both **Liverpool** and **Doncaster** were built at Dunston's shipyard at Thorne on the Stainforth and Keadby Canal just a few months before the shipyard closed down.

Two more clients for the refurbishment programme are working on the winter stoppages on the Huddersfield Broad Canal. Here are **Mirfield** and the boat with **no name** at Lock 7 a few days ago.





Plastic grows on trees!



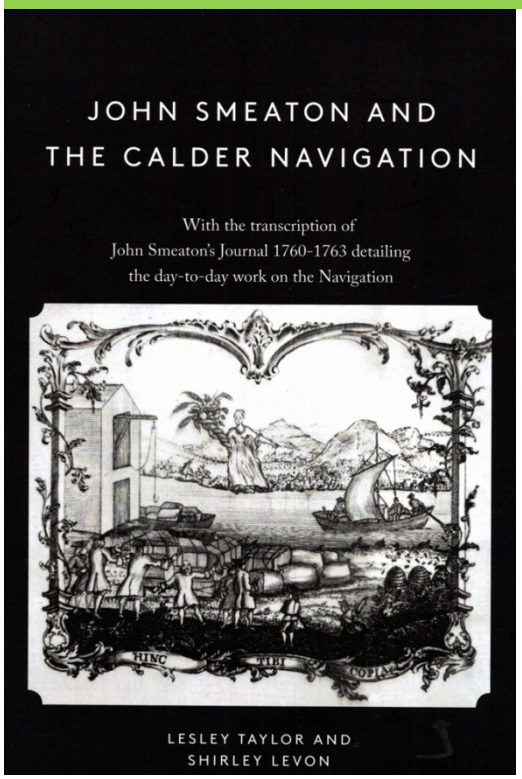
The Plastic panel spotted on location at Battyeford. From left to right – Ruth Edwards from Mirfield in Bloom, MP Mark Eastwood, C&RT Manager NE Steve Smith, Our Chairman and C&RT Operations Manager John Gibson.



As part of the campaign to brighten up Mirfield, CNS have joined with Mirfield in Bloom to try and improve the environment on Battyeford Island. The wildflower meadow should appear in full glory over the next few summers and attention has now switched to the plastic waste littering the branches of trees overhanging the river. Kirklees Council have agreed to sort out the river bank on their side of the river and discussions are taking place with the C&RT to try and tidy up the bank on the island that they own. The local MP is now involved and has visited the site.

As if often the case, it appears that money does not grow on trees but all is not lost ……and negotiations are continuing.





John Smeaton and the Calder Navigation
Do you want to know more about the early history of the Calder and Hebble Navigation? If you do, an excellent new publication from the Wakefield Historical Society is just what you need to fill in those cold and wet winter days away from the waterways.

Fresh from his acclaimed work on the Eddystone Lighthouse, John Smeaton was employed by the Calder Navigation Commissioners to superintend and construct the navigation from Wakefield towards Halifax. His detailed journal of this work from 1760 to 1763 is fully transcribed in the book. It describes the construction of the cuts, locks and weirs as work continued from Wakefield via Dewsbury, Mirfield and Brighouse.

A long introduction explores the many years before the scheme came to fruition. The story is peopled by merchants and aristocrats, surveyors and engineers, suppliers and contractors, craftsmen and labourers. There are conflicts between interest groups, disappointments in Parliament, and many delays. The practical requirements are also brought into sharp focus: the planning, negotiating and financing, and the sourcing of materials and equipment as the work began.

In his journal Smeaton, considered to be the first British civil engineer, provides an exceptional insight into 18th century construction techniques and the many problems that were encountered in the hugely ambitious scheme for this volatile Pennine river.

The book was the subject of "The Clinker Memorial Lecture". The two authors presented the lecture and it is available on the Railway and Canal Historical Society Website. The link to see this is: https://rchs.org.uk/2021-clinker-lecture/

If you want to purchase a copy, priced at £19.95p plus £3.00p for postage, you can do this by contacting the Historical Society: info@wakefieldhistoricalsociety.org.uk

If you would prefer to borrow the CNS copy of this valuable publication, then please get in touch with our archivist, John Smith, who can be contacted at:- archivist@calderns.org.uk



Winter Stoppages Programme

By the time this Newsletter floats down the ether to you, work should be well underway on two of the major C&H closures for Winter 2021 along with a further closure on the Huddersfield Broad Canal. This winter's work is as follows

Cooper Bridge Lock 16

From early November until 17th December 2021, the lock will be closed for work to be carried out on the boil on both top and bottom gates. (No, I do not know what that means either. A usually unreliable source says it means they will have the kettle on all day. If you have a reliable answer, please let us know.)

Battyeford Lock 17

The bottom gates are being replaced now and the navigation should reopen on 17th December.





The two photos were taken before work started and feature the rotten bottom gates and the pristine new ones ready to be fitted.

Greenwood Lock 19

This lock will be closed from 10th January until 18th February 2022 for repairs to the gates to cut down water leakage and there will be some repointing as well.

Huddersfield Broad Canal Locks 6 & 7

A closure is now taking place at these two locks and the canal should reopen on 17th December. Cill repair is needed at Lock 7 and planking needs attention at Lock 6.

Minor repairs

As boaters will be well aware, many lock paddles all along the navigation are out of use and in need of repair. CNS has been assured that a campaign to put them all right will take place this winter.

Stop Press

The C&RT has cancelled work at Cooper Bridge due to emergency works needed elsewhere….it appears the job has gone off the boil.



Rail v. Navigation – A 19th century battleground comes to life. Then….

The Leeds to Huddersfield Railway 1844-1848

The Leeds, Dewsbury and Manchester Railway Act of 1845 received Royal Assent on 30th June 1845 and construction went ahead. Following completion the first trains between Leeds and Huddersfield ran on 18th September 1848. The whole project was completed from proposal to completion in less than five years. Parliament were concerned that the new railway did not interfere with the operations of the Calder & Hebble Navigation and five separate sections of the Act were designed to protect the waterway. As you can read below, the section relating to the Navigation starts with a strong statement on the right of the Navigation's proprietors and continues in similar vein for a further five paragraphs.

"**And be it enacted, That nothing in this Act contained shall take away, diminish, alter, lessen, prejudice or affect any of the rights, privileges, powers or authorities of the Company of Proprietors of the Calder and Hebble Navigation in the West Riding of the County of York, or authorize or empower the said Railway Company to alter the line or level of the said Navigation, or the towing paths thereof, or to divert any of the waters therein, or any other waters which now supply or may be taken for the use of the said Navigation, unless the same last-mentioned waters be taken in such a course as not to injure or prejudice the said Navigation, or to injure or interfere with the wharfs or any of the works of the said Navigation Company, otherwise than is hereinafter specifically provided for. "**

There are no clauses to protect the Huddersfield Broad and Narrow Canals in the legislation. The promoters of the Manchester and Huddersfield Railway which joined the Leeds and Huddersfield at Cooper Bridge had had the foresight to persuade the canal owners to join them as part owners of the new railway.

So the new railway was built in less than five years and the Calder & Hebble Navigation was protected from any disruption.



Now…

The Huddersfield to Dewsbury (Westtown) Rail Upgrade 2011-????

The proposal to improve this section of railway was first made in 2011. In March 2021, Network Rail submitted a Transport Works Act Order detailing the scheme and the works required to implement it. As I write this, a Public Inquiry is in progress and is expected to last four weeks. At the end of it, the report will go to the Minister of Transport who will decide on whether the work goes ahead. Just eleven years since the plan was first put forward and nothing is as yet certain to be built.

Public Inquiry

The Works Order includes proposals to allow Network Rail to shut the Calder & Hebble Navigation and the Huddersfield Broad Canal during construction work. There does not appear to be any restriction proposed on the duration of any closures. It also proposes that Network Rail can compulsorily purchase pieces of Canal & River Trust land if needed for the construction period and beyond. Although not specifically mentioned in the order, Network Rail have also not been prepared to abide by the C&RT Code of Practice when work is undertaken on their property.

It will not surprise you to know that the Canal & River Trust objected and it was expected that they would appear as objectors at the Inquiry. It now seems that last minute negotiations have taken place between the two parties and that a satisfactory outcome has been achieved as the C&RT are no longer scheduled to take the stand as formal objectors to the plan….We will have to await developments

Rail meets Navigation

The three main places which will be affected by the rail improvement work are at Ravensthorpe where a new viaduct spanning both canal cut and river is proposed and at two points on the Huddersfield Broad Canal. The rail bridge over the Broad Canal at Lock 2 will be subject to a six month upgrade and access to the railway in the Deighton area will be on a temporary bridge over the canal at Lock 7.

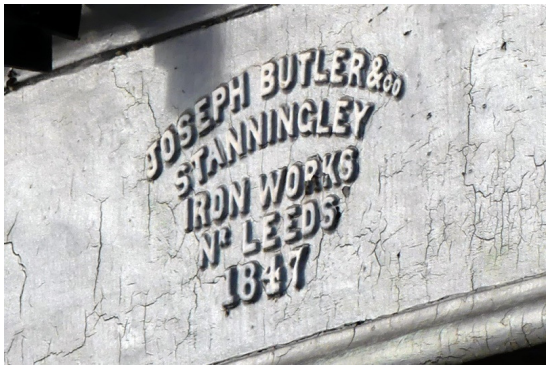


Ravensthorpe Viaduct



This is the biggest civil engineering task in the whole upgrading project and will carry the Leeds lines over the Calder & Hebble Navigation, the Spen Valley Greenway and the Calder on a new alignment to the east of the existing route.

At present the railway crosses the Navigation and Calder on two separate cast iron bridges designed by Scottish engineer Thomas Grainger and fabricated by Stanningley Ironworks in 1847. A report prepared for Network Rail states that the bridges are unquestionably of national importance as they are jointly the seventh oldest cast iron bridges on the British rail system, have been very little altered and were designed by a prominent Scottish engineer. Although they will no longer have any use for the railway, it is not proposed to demolish them. The new viaduct will be built over three and a half years and the Network Rail proposals envisage closing the canal for as long as is required during the building period. It is not surprising that the prospect of a long term closure has not gone down well with the C&RT and its customers. With luck the recent negotiations will ensure stoppages on the navigation are kept to a minimum and concentrated in the winter months.

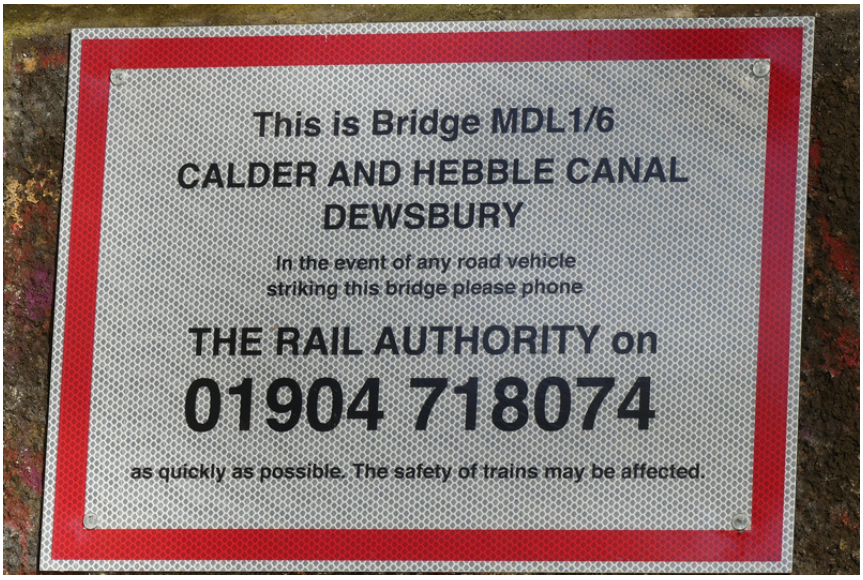






The cast iron arches can be seen in this view of the underneath of the bridge over the canal cut.

Canal or Navigation



When I offered to start writing this Newsletter, I was given some advice……..

"Write what you like but if you want to stay healthy, always remember it is a 'Navigation' and not a 'Canal'."

Oh dear Network Rail!



Savile Drydocking

Savile is due to enter the dry dock at Battyeford on January 29th next year for a couple of weeks to prepare her for the 2022 cruising season. A full survey has been carried out by our two resident marine engineers and the plan is to carry out the following works:-

1. Examine the underwater hull and apply blacking as needed.
2. Prepare and repaint the bilges underneath the passenger area.
3. Repaint the green sections of hull and decking
4. And anything else that comes to light when she is in the dry dock.

We will be looking for volunteers to help out with the work, so put aside those dreams of winter sun and join the team where the sun don't shine in the dry dock underneath Savile.

CNS New Year Resolution Service

As part of our campaign to ease the stress of the festive period, CNS is saving you the trouble of thinking up your own New Year's Resolutions. Just copy the following resolutions into your 'To Do' list and then you can concentrate on all your other plans for Christmas and the New Year…..

1) When Avril asks for my subscription to CNS, I will send the cash by return.
2) 2022 is going to be the year I take my friends/family on a day out on Savile.

To make arrangements get in touch with Avril at :-
savile@calderns.org.uk
There is a booking form on the CNS website
She can also be contacted by phone on **07870 423194**



Spot the Navigation or Canal

And just to make sure you got it right, the navigation in the last Newsletter was the River Waal in Nijmegen. In Germany the river is The Rhine but as soon as it flows into the Netherlands just a few miles east of Nijmegen, its name changes to the Waal.

Another challenge, but this one is a little nearer home.



Name this inland waterway

Articles & Photos for the Newsletter

Our aim is to publish the newsletter every three months, but sometimes we are a little short of both news and imagination. If you would like to write something for the newsletter or have ideas as to what we should be covering ….please get in touch. I can be contacted at:-

editor@calderns.org.uk

That's all for now, have a very Happy Christmas and the next edition should be out in the Spring.