

Calder Navigation Society
Newsletter November 2022



Following an in depth analysis of his hedge fund, your Chairman is back with a few words……..

How time flies!

Here we go again with another edition of our Newsletter brilliantly put together by our editor, Richard. In the Davies household we normally buy a newspaper on Saturday in order to have a weekly TV guide. Last weekend I was a bit late in attempting to buy our paper and all that was left was “The Sun” – this newsletter contains far more interesting reading!

Read on about history, Savile and other fascinating articles.

As I write this I realise that we are only about 4 weeks away from our Cabaret Evening which we have put together in collaboration with South Pennine Boat Club. All 88 tickets have been sold, our volunteer caterers have come up with some incredible edibles and fingers crossed we are ready to go!





We were recently surprised to receive recognition from the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) commemorating our membership of 50 years and more! Another plaque to add to our collection.

Since the last Newsletter our membership has continued to grow, Richard has referred to this in his editorial and we have recently had an influx of new supporters some of whom are members of the Mirfield in Bloom team. We congratulate them in their recent achievements; they won golds in the Yorkshire in Bloom Competition and Silver Gilt in the nationwide Britain in Bloom event!

Welcome aboard to all new members and thank you for your support. Without a healthy membership we could not continue in our present form so at the moment it is onward and upward! We can only continue to be successful and operate Savile as we do with the continued support of our volunteer skippers and crew, let's hope that we can have another successful season in 2023.

Savile will be going into dry dock for the usual routine maintenance in the New Year so look out for a call to arms all you who have volunteered to help maintain her.

Richard mentions the good work done by C&RT in rectifying the faulty paddle gear on most of the locks, they have also been busy doing other maintenance such as finally replacing the flood damaged fence above Ganny Lock and we hope that they can keep up the momentum.

That's about it from me so I wish a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all,

Peter Davies



Editorial – Society Blues?

It sometimes feels as though societies like CNS have had their day. Just like video killed the radio star, it looks like social media is killing them off. Many are closing down and others are going through a managed decline with a reducing and increasingly aged membership. Very few are aiming for “Growth, growth, growth” but as we all learned recently, that does not always prove to be the best way forward.

So what of CNS, where do we fit in with this depressing tale? Looking back on this year, I think we are most certainly bucking the trend. Membership is growing slowly, Savile has done more trips and carried more people than for many a year and as a result the bank balance is a lot healthier. Perhaps the real experience of travelling the navigation by boat is more fun than watching Robbie Cumming and the gang of Youtube boaters on the screen. It certainly looks that way…

I think the society owes a debt of thanks to the people who keep the whole show on the cut. This year Peter Davies and Chris Etwell have turned out to skipper Savile far more often than they could possibly have expected. Avril has spent hours selling the outings to groups and has looked after them on the day itself. She should be nominated for travel agent of the year. Without them and the members who turn out to crew **Savile,** the society would not be looking back on a very successful year. Thanks very much everybody!

There are of course other inland waterway societies that are making a difference and John Smith’s report on the IWA meeting highlights this. John has also supplied a very interesting set of photos of the last commercial traffic on the Calder & Hebble.

This Page 3 may not quite match up to that in the Chairman’s newspaper but I hope that you find something of interest in the rest of the Newsletter……





Savile's Travels - Report from Avril our Savile Co-ordinator

I am pleased to report that 2022 certainly saw the revival of Calder Navigation Society, following two years of uncertainty due to the pandemic. Although, during that time, we were unable to show ourselves on the waterway we remained vigilant and continued to report to Canal and River Trust any defects which became apparent or were reported to us. Although we did not see any action from them during the pandemic we are now able to report that, eventually, works are being carried out.

To stimulate public interest we needed to get our trip boat Savile out onto the waterway once again. We began in April by providing short trips in Brighouse, promoting ourselves at every opportunity and we ended up with more success than I ever imagined possible. The rest is history!! All in all Savile ended up going out for trips on **32 Days**. This included the days we spent offering trips on behalf of Rycorn/Blakeleys (who added the much loved fish and chips in the deal), attending the Artisan Market, The Forties week-end, the South Pennine Boat Club open day and all the private trips which were maybe birthday celebrations, family re-unions, group meetings, an anxious lady who just wanted some quiet time with her family or quite simply "let's do something different" days!, and so much more. In total Savile gave a trip to **One thousand six hundred and fifteen (1,615) people.** Hard to believe. On reflection I see all the happy smiling faces when the participants returned from their trip, be it half an hour or a special day trip – and I think this is the future as they all say they will be back!!, and I think it's all worthwhile to try and make this life better. Some of the passengers have even signed up as Members as a sign of appreciation and their willingness to support the Society.

None of this can take place without organisation and volunteers who provide the crew of course. We maintain high standards and ensure the passengers feel safe and comfortable at all times. The compliments they have paid the crews are second to none and Calder Navigation Society could not function without them. My role as Savile co-Ordinator is made so much easier when we have these willing volunteers who give unfailing support to the Society.

As we move into 2023 we will see our 54th Anniversary and I look forward to another successful year with our trip boat Savile. The generous donations received from the public and Membership mean we can move forward and keep her afloat. We continue with our efforts to promote the use of the waterways for the benefit of all.



The Historic Boats Supplement

1) Ethel at work



In the last newsletter we published details of Ethel and Angela Jane, the last two wooden working barges on the Calder and Hebble Navigation. At that point we only had black and white photos and one sad colour photo of Ethel in a state of dis-repair waiting to be broken up at the Museum of Inland Waterways at Ellesmere Port. (Photo courtesy of Neil Harvey)

I am pleased to say that since then I discovered some colour photos of Ethel and some other Hargreaves barges as they worked on the navigation. They are from the internet photographic platform “flickr” of Andrew Crowther and they are slides from the collection of his late father, Alan K Crowther, taken on the 18th of July 1973. Ethel and two other barges are pictured at the NCB British Oak Colliery Staithe on





the Calder and Hebble Navigation near Calder Grove. They were loaded with coal here to be taken to the Thornhill Power Station near Ravensthorpe. Note that Ethel is the only wooden barge, the other two are steel.



One is barge No 61, a steel motor barge, bought new in 1938 and built by John Harker Ltd of Knottingley.

The identity of the one being loaded is not known for sure at this time. It is possibly Prodesse, built in 1937 but bought second hand by Hargreaves in 1973 from Acaster of Goole. This might explain the colours not being exactly Hargreaves colours.





The other photos show barge No 61 below Mill Bank Lock returning empty from Thornhill Power Station. The view is from an old bridge on a railway that linked Thornhill Midland Junction and Middlestown Junction, which closed in 1968.

The other is another Hargreaves barge at the lower of the two locks at Figure of Three.



I am grateful to be given permission to share these photos with you by Andrew and I'm sure you will agree they are a credit to his late father Alan who has preserved some of the heritage of our navigation in them.

Other fine examples of Andrew's father's photos are on his "flickr" account ee20213, where you can see, amongst other things, shots of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and the Rochdale Canal before they were re-opened.

John L Smith – CNS Archivist



2) White Heather



Apart from Savile, perhaps the most interesting boat based at the South Pennine Boat Club at Battyeford is the tug **White Heather**. She occasionally sets out from the Boat Club and was photographed at Brighouse Basin earlier this year.

She was built by Watsons of Gainsborough at Beckingham on the Trent in 1932 for the Borough of St Marylebone as a refuse tug. She is a copy of a tug built in 1908 originally called BIRMINGHAM and then renamed TYBURN, also owned by Marylebone Council. She was originally fitted with a 2 cylinder semi-diesel Robey Lincoln which offered 44hp at 400 rpm. She worked in the Paddington area and was registered there as number 330.

In 1939 she was taken over by Thomas Clayton of Paddington and worked extensively on refuse disposal to their pits at Hayes, Yeading and West Drayton. **White Heather** passed to British Waterways on nationalisation and, in December 1958, had a Lister Freedom Engine installed which developed 32hp at 1500 rpm. In 1972, she was acquired by T & D Murrells of Adelaide Dock, during which time she cruised extensively around many of the country's canals. She is at present fitted with a Ford 6 cylinder 120hp engine and is used both as a houseboat and for cruising.

She is the only remaining narrow beam tug built for the Regent's Canal and one of only four round bilge canal tugs still in existence.



The 2022 Cruising Season

Overall 2022 was a poor year for the Northern canal network. All three Trans Pennine canals were shut for most of the summer due to drought conditions and boaters were severely limited in where they could go. Early in the season stoppages for major lock repairs at Gargrave on the Leeds & Liverpool and at Thorne on the Stainforth and Keadby also limited the available routes.

In contrast, the Calder & Hebble was open throughout and the Canal & River Trust maintenance teams made substantial progress in tackling the large number of faulty lock paddles. At the beginning of the year almost every lock was in need of repair but now most are in reasonable condition with all four paddles working. Well done Canal & River Trust!



None of Savile's trips had to be cancelled due to flooding or water shortages and only a very few sailors needed their umbrellas. Never mind, they still seem to be enjoying themselves!

Fellow charity boat operator Safe Anchor Trust was not so lucky. As river levels dropped one of their boats ran aground in the river downstream of Mirfield and there she stayed for several weeks before it rained and a Canal & River Trust rescue team refloated her.

Problems on the Rochdale Canal have resulted in far more Shire Cruises hire boats than usual venturing on to the Calder & Hebble. They have almost made up for the smaller number of boaters from elsewhere who have been put off by the closures on the adjoining Trans Pennine canals.……Let's hope that 2023 turns out better and we have many more visiting boaters.



The Winter Stoppage Programme



The Canal & River Trust have announced the winter stoppage programme for all their waterways and there are just two this year on the Calder & Hebble Navigation.

The first closure is already underway as work is taking place at Longlees Lock now. Repairs are being made to the lock gates and ladders and they are also taking the opportunity to undertake pointing and other brickwork repairs. This lock should reopen in December.

The second and last closure will run from 3rd January 2023 until March and at long last they are going to repair the flood damaged lock landing at Woodside Mills Lock. Due to the close proximity of the lock to the works, the lock will also be closed for the full duration. This work has been programmed and cancelled before but with luck, the lock landing will finally be reinstated in time for the next boating season.

As one would expect, there are numerous closures on both the Rochdale and Huddersfield Narrow Canals. With luck the extensive repairs planned should result in fewer failures and breakdowns in the summer months.



A Tale of Two Lock Houses

Salterhebble



This is how it stands today. With much external and internal damage, and stripped of the plaque, the name sign and its dignity!

The Lock House at Salterhebble also referred to as The Lock Keeper's Cottage is a Grade II listed building which was built circa 1820 and is currently owned by the Canal & River Trust. Until fairly recently the building was occupied by a C&RT employee and since he vacated the property it has stood empty.

Early this year an eagle-eyed waterway enthusiast from Hebden Bridge came across notice of an auction to be held on 22nd February at which the Lock House would be sold with a guide price of £92,000. She was very concerned as C&RT are obliged to give notice if they intend to sell off any of their historic assets and this had not been done. She then contacted CNS and advised us of the situation, consequently a letter of complaint was submitted objecting to the sale. Other representations were made to various bodies and organisations. A CNS member who is also involved with the local branch of the Inland Waterways Association discovered that they were also unaware of the proposed sale and they took the matter up with C&RT. As a result of the involvement of CNS and the IWA, the sale by auction was postponed.

C&RT are no doubt planning to sell the cottage to generate funding when money is short, but it would surely generate long term income if refurbished as a holiday let or



offered to another employee of the Trust at a knock down rent. Another suggestion is that the area be made into a local community hub.

The local general opinion is that instead of generating a monthly rent income for perpetuity, C&RT sell the property and within a very short time period the Trust has spent the proceeds leaving no property and no money! Is this called asset stripping?

Much research was undertaken by CNS, the sleuth from Hebden Bridge and the IWA and various proposals were put forward but to no avail. This is the reasoning given by C&RT, they have repeated this jargon more than once:

"The sale proceeds are not spent on waterway maintenance, rather they are reinvested by the Trust into alternative investment assets which generate improved ongoing income to help pay for waterways maintenance. To put this into context, a property worth £100,000 generating a 1% return will generate £1,000 p.a. for the Trust to spend on waterway maintenance. If this property is sold and the proceeds reinvested for a return of 5% then this increases the contribution on waterway maintenance significantly."

C&RT have a policy whereby they believe that properties such as this in private ownership will benefit more than being in the hands of the Trust – this is not always the case as we have seen at Cooper Bridge Lock House.

In the meantime, permission was granted for representatives of the IWA and CNS to enter the building and carry out a survey. This inspection revealed that there was water flowing under the floor when the adjacent lock was filled above a certain level!

Sadly the building has recently been vandalised with the roof lead stolen. CNS has reminded C&RT that the owner of a listed building is obliged to secure the building and protect the heritage. C&RT have subsequently informed CNS that the repair works are out to tender, and they are seeking acceptance for their proposed use of a lead substitute. We wait and see what transpires.

C&RT seem determined to dispose of this asset and should they do so, it is to be hoped that the eventual owner will be sympathetic and treat the building and surroundings with respect.

This article was written by Peter Davies for the South Pennine Boat Club newsletter.



Cooper Bridge



Cooper Bridge lock cottage was sold by the Canal & River Trust some time ago, but the buyers did not keep up with the payments and it was eventually repossessed by the building society. The owners had also neglected the property and its condition was deteriorating rapidly.

It has recently been sold again and the new owner is already going ahead with a major refurbishment. The trees have gone from outside the property and work on the building is ongoing…….so things are looking up at Cooper Bridge!

IWA Meeting at SPBC 15th October 2022

The IWA West Riding Branch AGM was held at SPBC on Saturday 15th October, preceded by an interesting range of presentations from guest speakers.

Iain Duncan, Chairman of the Branch, talked about the importance of collaboration between organisations and societies to generate interest in the waterways for the benefit of all. He referred to "Waterways for Today", an IWA publication to raise awareness of benefits of waterways, citing 12 benefits in 4 case studies. This has been circulated to MPs and local councillors with waterways in their constituencies. A PDF copy can be downloaded from www.waterways.org.uk



CNS was listed on the agenda as an example of collaboration in halting the auction of the Lock House at Salterhebble, but time limited discussion. CNS is concerned for the preservation of this heritage site to which some considerable damage has already been done by vandals. See the article by Peter Davies in this Newsletter for further details about the lock house and its history.

Simon Watts, Operations Manager for the Aire Rivers Trust gave an enthusiastic presentation about work to cleanse the rivers and how it is restoring fish and wildlife along the waterway. He left some brochures for short walks near the river in the SPBC Clubhouse entrance. www.dnaire.org.uk

Nick Roberts from Trentlink Facebook Group explained the importance of the Trent in providing a corridor to the North-East, giving access to our waterways and cruising rings. Many boaters are wary of using the Trent but his group provides important information to boaters for its Safe Navigation. Well worth joining if you plan to cruise on that river. He also highlighted the low lockage (boats using locks) in our area, about 25% of the West Midlands figures and 35% of most other areas. These figures can influence spending by C&RT so encouraging use of the Trent could get these figures and hence investment in our waterways and facilities up.

The Chairman of the IWA East Yorkshire Branch, Iain Campbell, gave a summary of key events in their area which covers a lot of navigations but with few connections. He bemoaned the C&RT lack of action on the Pocklington Canal when there are volunteers and funds have been raised to restore 2 more locks, saying C&RT are wary due to the cost of then having to maintain them.

Trevor Roberts gave an inspiring presentation called Canal Connections – Life on the Water. His organisation has had some dramatic results encouraging and developing skills in young people by introducing them to the waterways. These included bringing a young man on the autistic spectrum out of his shell to learn boating skills. He is now being able to speak confidently in public and crews for canal boat trips. Other examples were young people developing traditional craft and artistic skills inspired by local heritage and wildlife by the waterways. www.canalconnections.co.uk

A computer-generated video was shown of Elsecar Heritage Centre and the area which was part of Lord Fitzwilliam's estate.

Finally, with seconds to go before the hybrid attended/on-line IWA WR AGM was due to go live, Iain Duncan returned to the subject of the Salterhebble area, the lock house, the Halifax arm and the abandoned dry dock. Admitting he did not really know what to do, he suggested forming a "Friends of Salterhebble Group" and invited ideas and input to him by email. duncan@waterways.org.uk

Further details and a summary of the meeting would be included in the new IWA Branch newsletter which he has named "Falling Waters". (Previously "Milepost"). To join the mailing list, contact him at the same email address.

John L Smith



Savile's Holiday Adventure



Nowadays Savile is pretty much a stay at home sort of a girl, but in her youth she was much more adventurous. When the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society celebrated its 30th Birthday in 1999, their trip boat was out of commission and CNS stepped in to make sure that visitors could sail along restored sections of that canal. An intrepid CNS crew took her down the Aire & Calder, on to the mighty Ouse at Goole and then locked into the Derwent to get to the Melbourne Arm on the Pocklington Canal. The Melbourne Arm is the hub of boating activity on what is otherwise a very quiet rural canal.



The two photos show her berthed on the Melbourne Arm and on her way along the canal with a party of VIP guests on 25th June 1999.



Spot the Navigation or Canal

Our mystery waterway in July's newsletter was the Market Weighton Canal which was photographed from Humber Lock looking inland. The canal entrance lies on the upper Humber near the village of Broomfleet. The first section from the Humber was opened in 1776 and the remainder by 1782. It was built primarily as a drainage canal and navigation was always a secondary function. This is still the case as navigation is no longer possible on the upper sections and the canal is looked after by the Environment Agency rather than the Canal & River Trust. The photo below shows the entrance on to the Humber looking across to Whitton Island.



This month's mystery navigation is a very short one, but not that far away from the Market Weighton Canal…... Can you name it?





Membership – An update from our Membership Secretary

It's a big thank-you to everyone for their continued support of the Calder Navigation Society. The Membership is starting to grow – however slowly - which is a positive sign that we will be able to continue and play our part in helping to promote the waterway. I will be sending out the Membership renewal forms in December but could I ask you to **please date your payments after 1st January 2023** in order to help the treasurer keep the books in good order! Many thanks.

I wish you a very Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for 2023.

Avril (Membership Secretary)

Articles & Photos for the Newsletter

Thank you to John, Peter & Avril for writing most of this Newsletter, it certainly makes an editor's life easier.

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 is all for now, the next Newsletter should be out in the spring

