

Calder Navigation Society
Newsletter March 2024

Here comes the Spring…



And springing into action on his typewriter, it's our chairperson……..

Spring is in the air! Time for a few words from me again.

After another successful Savile drydocking she is now looking pristine and ready for action, more on that from Avril later in this edition of our Newsletter.

Do we have any plans for this year? We have already done our bit for the C&RT "Weedathon" whereby we cut back all of the seedlings and saplings on the towpath side of Battyeford Cut.

Every time I go over Ha'penny Bridge at Battyeford I see a bridge in need of some cosmetic attention so I am hoping that some volunteers can be mustered to do a quick clean and paint touch up where necessary. Warmer weather would be a help! Also there is a job to be finished at the Cooper Bridge Lock in way of the stable block which is in need of a coat of paint. I will try to persuade C&RT to come up with a colour scheme and we can get this completed when the weather is a bit warmer.



I have recently tried to obtain an update on the Salterhebble cottage situation but for some reason C&RT are slow to respond, I will keep on pestering them.

I and no doubt you the reader will be aware that celebrations have taken place for the 250 year anniversary of the Bingley 5 and 3 rise locks. There has been media coverage of late which to me show lock gates and associated equipment badly in need of a coat of paint. Should have called on the CNS lock painting team before the event went public!

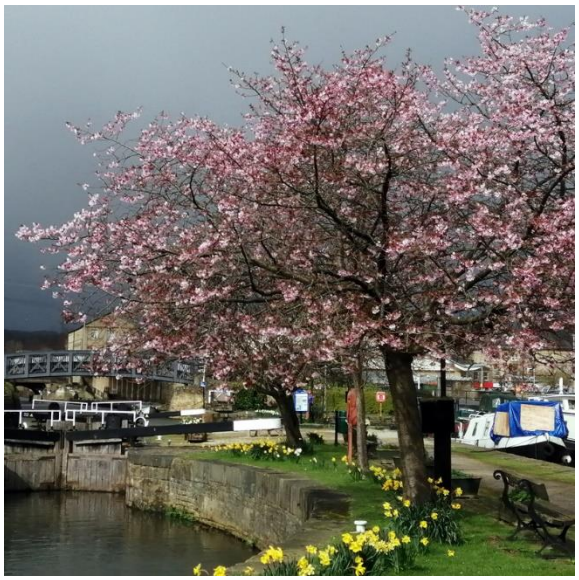
Speaking of events, last year C&RT introduced a system whereby organisations such as CNS would have to pay a fee when holding events such as our Brighouse cruises. Just before Christmas we received an email stating that we would be exempt from the fee “in recognition of your partnership and positive impact on our canals and communities”. Good news indeed!

Both Avril and I have taken the decision to step down from our roles after this current year, Chair Person, Savile Co-Ordinator, Social Secretary and Membership Secretary will all become vacant positions. We gave notice of this at the recent AGM so hopefully there is plenty of time for someone to step forward to take over, we sincerely hope so! Please give this some thought and if you would like to fill one of these roles then let us know and we can arrange for a seamless handover. There is absolutely nothing onerous regarding our decisions, age is rapidly catching up and it’s time to hand over the reins and put our feet up.

That’s about it for now, many thanks for your continued support of our Society,

Peter Davies

Chairperson





It has all been done before…..

As we sail up and down the navigation in **Savile**, we carry on a grand tradition of days out on the water. And just to prove it, here is a cutting from the Brighouse Echo from Friday 20th July 1888

CHURCH OF ENGLAND TEMPERANCE SOCIETY : Band of Hope Excursion.— Last Saturday afternoon an enjoyable excursion to Spring Grove Gardens, Colne Bridge, was made by the members of the Band of Hope connected with the Brighouse Church Temperance Society. The company numbering about 150, including a few adults, assembled near the canal basin at two o'clock, where a large boat kindly lent by Mr. Henry Mellor, of Brighouse, had been moored, and on this ample accommodation was afforded for all. Colne Bridge was reached, after an enjoyable ride down the river, at 3-45. Tea and buns were served in the gardens, after which flat races for boys, skipping contests for girls, and also three legged races for boys, and other games, for the winners of which prizes were given, were indulged in. Nuts and spice were also distributed. The homeward journey was commenced at 7-45, and Brighouse was reached in safety shortly after nine o'clock. Despite the somewhat unfavourable nature of the weather, a very enjoyable afternoon and evening were spent.



Unfortunately we cannot repeat this grand excursion as we do not have ample accomodation for 150 and Spring Grove Gardens closed in 1930. But you can still go sailing, so turn to the next page to see how Savile has been prepared for 2024.



Preparing for Savile's Summer Season - The Drydocking



Like all inland waterway professionals, we start with a management meeting, then set one man to work while the rest of us continue with the decision making process.

After the hull has been steam cleaned, it is time for the artists to get to work blacking the bottom, essential to keep the dreaded rust away.





Then we came to the technical part, replacing the rubbing strake that over exuberant skippers had severely damaged on lock walls. The new wooden strake needed to be bent to fit and that required a steam box. The Mark 1 steam box failed as our engineers now know that when you introduce super-heated steam to plastic pipes that they just melt away.

The Mark 2 steel box illustrated here was much more successful and the new strake is now in place.

Thanks to all the volunteers who worked on the drydocking.





Preparing for Savile's Summer Season - The Crewing

Now that the boat is ready, what about the crew?

The Maritime & Coastguard Agency is responsible for ensuring that all UK boating activity is carried out legally and safely and their influence extends many miles inland as well. One of their rules is that every vessel carrying passengers must have a qualified skipper in charge. CNS already has several qualified skippers ranging from a Master Mariner to holders of the RYA Helmsman's Certificate but to make sure that there is always a qualified skipper available, four more keen volunteers are training for the RYA Certificate next month. Thanks for stepping up to the challenge!
Our insurers also insist on more paperwork and all crew members need to have a proper induction and training record. These records have been printed and will be in use this year. A fully refurbished Savile will set sail in 2024 with a fully qualified crew

So let's here from Avril - Our Savile Co-ordinator

I thank all those who have renewed their Membership for 2024. I could not approach sending out the renewal forms in the usual way this time, due to my hospitalization, but thanks to the internet it was dealt with and was a success. Without you we cannot ensure the continuation of CNS which is so important during these uncertain times.

The bookings for boat trips aboard Savile are looking healthy even now – people who enjoyed a trip last year seem to be coming back for more. When we have operated at the Brighouse Artisan Market, South Pennine Boat Club open day and the Brighouse Forties week-end I am sure the books will be full as they were last year.

I will try and arrange a social event at the end of the year but haven't decided on the format yet. The last two have been really successful when we had Roger Davies and Lee Roberts, and then Dolly night. They get harder to beat but we will try.

You can tell from the above that I deal with Membership, trip bookings aboard Savile, and Social. I feel the time has come for someone else to take the reins and would ask if anyone is interested in taking over any of these duties in 2025 then please come forward. I think we would benefit from a new mind on the job – mine is becoming a little worn out now!

Have a good summer and we look forward to seeing you during our activities.



Welcome to the Navigation

At Fall Ing in Wakefield, the Calder and Hebble Navigation ends and boats travel onwards on the Aire and Calder Navigation.



It certainly looks pleasant enough on the ACN, there is even a big blue sign to welcome you.



On the other hand, leaving the ACN for the C & H is not quite so welcoming.

Perhaps the C&RT could try and recruit a team of volunteers to look after Fall Ing lock. It could be a really attractive location if the rubbish and graffiti were removed and some flowers planted.



Winter on the Calder & Hebble



This winter should have been an ideal opportunity for our waterway's team of continuous cruisers to keep on cruising. There were no planned winter closures and the navigation was scheduled to remain open throughout.

It did not turn out this way. It rained and it rained and it rained and the high river levels have put a stop to boat movements for weeks on end. This scene at Brighouse is fairly typical. We have, however, been spared the flooding and damage that has afflicted other parts of the network, the East Midlands in particular has been hit very hard.

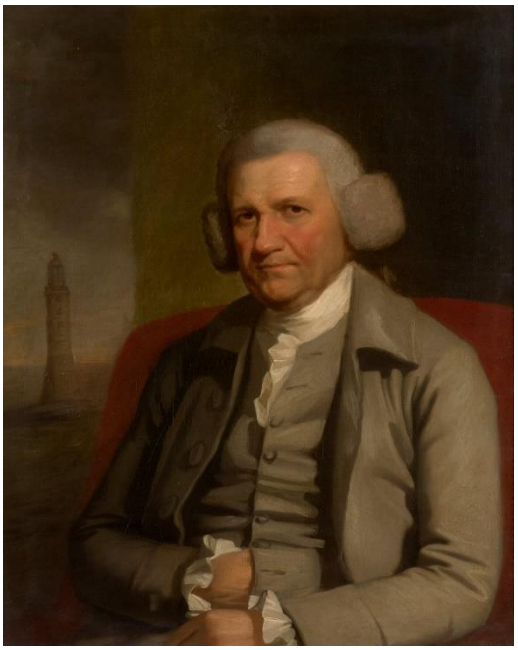
The saturated ground and a severe gale or two have also led to a number of trees coming down including this one just above Ganny Lock that blocked the cut for over a week.
With luck the rain will ease now and boats will be able to start moving again.





Happy Birthday John

John Smeaton was born in Austhorpe, Leeds on 8th June 1724 and this year marks his 300th birthday.



So why is he important to CNS? Looking at his picture, you might think that he invented headphones. That isn't true but he certainly does feature in the lyrics of "I predict a riot" by the Leeds band, The Kaiser Chiefs.

John Smeaton was the very first civil engineer and he invented the term to distinguish his type of work from that of the military engineers of the period. He began his career as a mathematical instrument maker in London and wrote scientific papers that led to his election to the Royal Society. During 1754 he visited the Netherlands where he studied canals, harbours and mills.

He learned a great deal from his experiences in the low countries and when he returned to England, his first great project was the Eddystone Lighthouse. This established his reputation and the men behind the proposed new navigation in the Calder Valley appointed him to survey and design their waterway. They probably thought that a man prepared to take on the western ocean could sort out the flood prone Calder. He worked on the Calder & Hebble Navigation from 1758 until 1770.

The Calder & Hebble was his first major inland waterway but he was also commissioned to design several others including the Ripon Canal, the River Lee Navigation, the Forth & Clyde Canal and the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal. Not content to remain a canal engineer, he also built bridges and harbours. Major bridges were built at Perth, Coldstream, Cardington and Hexham. His harbour works ranged from Peterhead in north east Scotland to Charlestown in Cornwall. He was clearly a very busy man and a prominent figure in the industrial revolution.

If you would like to know more of John Smeaton's works on the Navigation, CNS has a copy of the book "John Smeaton and the Calder Navigation" and if you would like to borrow it, then please get in touch with our archivist, John Smith, who can be contacted at:- archivist@calderns.org.uk



Team Davies prepares to hand over the reins…….

At our AGM this year, we heard that society membership was rising slowly and that unlike many other societies, membership was not in decline. It was also good to hear that the donations from Savile's trips had given a welcome boost to the society bank account and the financial position was much better than it had been for years. Even the very successful "Dolly" evening at the South Pennine Boat Club had made a small profit. These successes were in no small part due to the work of our chairperson, membership secretary, Savile coordinator and social secretary or in other words Peter and Avril.

There was just one item of concern. As Peter has told us in his opening notes to this Newsletter, he and Avril have decided that 2024 will be the last year that they are able to devote so much of their time to the society. There is no doubt in my mind that Team Davies will leave the society in a much better position than when they took on their present duties and I am sure that we all owe them a vote of thanks.

It does, however mean that we are looking for members to step up and fill the vacancies. Although Avril is capable of multi-tasking most of us find that impossible, so we are looking for four keen volunteers to take over the four roles. Peter and Avril are not leaving the country and will be on hand to give advice to you if you would like to take on one of these roles. We also have an experienced committee to provide more support.

If you think you would like to take a more active part in running the society, please get in touch with Peter or Avril and they will be able to explain what is required for each role.

So please give it some thought – we would love to have you join the team.



The Winter Weedathon

25 downed saplings & 50 frozen fingers

This year the North East region of the Canal & River Trust had a new initiative to deal with the large numbers of saplings that grow between the navigation and the towpath. They christened it “The Winter Weedathon” and the work had to be undertaken in February! I thought that this was their idea of a cruel joke, but not so, the work needs to be done before the nesting season starts in March. They asked all the local canal charities to get involved and of course CNS was keen to take part.



There was an amber weather warning for snow on Thursday 8th February, so what better day for the five intrepid CNS volunteers to set off on **Savile** to clear the undergrowth from Battyeford Cut. Fortunately they were able to finish the task before the worst of the snow arrived and about 25 saplings were cut down and cleared from the cut.

The Safe Anchor Trust has also been active and they worked to clear saplings from Greenwood Cut.





Aquatic Harvesters



Armed with more sophisticated equipment than handsaws and loppers, contractors have also been working to clear the navigation of weeds and other debris. Here is a Convers weed harvester heading out of the river lock at Brighouse. Convers is a Dutch company that specialises in building all sorts of equipment for waterway maintenance. These boats are powered by a hydraulic anti-coiling auger which ensures that they can get through weed that would bring a narrowboat to a complete stop.

A second larger vessel has also been clearing the navigation. This one is the nautical equivalent of a lawn mower with a grass box but is a pig to steer according to the man at the controls.





The War on Plastic……..Update!

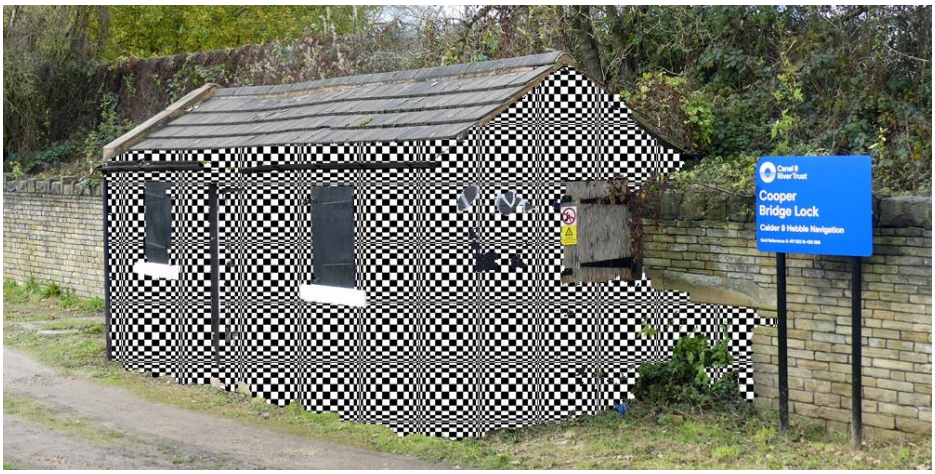
Why are they not doing anything about single use plastic bottles?

In the last Newsletter we featured new legislation to cut down on plastic waste. I have now discovered that the Government made a policy decision to introduce a cash deposit scheme for plastic bottles in 2018. They now hope to have it up and running by 2028, just ten years after the original policy announcement. It took the Irish government just four years from policy announcement to implementation of the scheme. It feels like someone has bottled it.

Still studying the shade cards

We have not yet been told what colour the C&RT would like us to paint the Cooper Bridge shed/stable but a usually unreliable source has managed to smuggle a forthcoming news release out of C&RT HQ. And here it is!

C&RT Draft News Release – Not to be issued until 1st April 2024



A major review is taking place to update our corporate image to stress what a dynamic and forward looking organisation we are. Our new colour scheme for canalside huts blends the traditional black and white so beloved by our customers, with an exciting twist based on the dazzle painted warships of yore. The artist's impression above, featuring the Cooper Bridge shed, gives a great impression of how we plan to decorate our heritage buildings for the new look waterways of the next decade.

It's fun to hear from the IWA!

Although our short navigation is obviously our priority, a lot is happening nationally to try and protect our waterways, so from this issue onwards we will be including news from the IWA. The next two pages are an introduction to their activities.



INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION

IWA CANALWAY CAVALCADE

4th - 6th May 2024 | Little Venice, London

#CanalwayCavalcade

There's something for everyone at Canalway Cavalcade; a vibrant canal festival in the heart of London's waterways. Whether visiting by boat or on foot, it's a bank holiday weekend of fun for the whole family!

FREE ENTRY

Visit our website to find out more about the event:

WATERWAYS.ORG.UK/CAVALCADE

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INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION

BECOME A MEMBER

Join our community of like-minded people from all walks of life and show your support for the waterways. The Inland Waterways Association is the only national charity that works to preserve and restore all Britain's 7,000 miles of canals and river navigations.

JOIN IWA

your support can make a difference

Only IWA does all this, and more...

- We campaign for the waterways and champion regeneration
- We lobby Parliament and fight to improve the waterways
- We offer practical support and advice on waterways restoration
- We run Waterway Recovery Group which supports restoration projects

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

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Doreen – The original trip boat of the Calder Navigation Society

In our last Newsletter in November, we published an article about the formation of CNS and the Society being based at South Pennine Boat Club. In that article we mentioned the similarity between our original trip boat Doreen and our current boat Savile.





At the end of the Newsletter, we asked if anyone had further information about Doreen. Shortly after that we received an enquiry via our Facebook page about Doreen as follows:

"Hi, I'm a skipper on Windermere and am researching the history of passenger vessels on the lake. I was very happy to follow the research trail and find that Doreen had a career, post Windermere. I've been doing a bit of digging and found a reference to an article about her in the Calder Navigation Society Club magazine. I was wondering if anyone at the club has any information or photos about the vessel's career on the canal, such as operation dates, engine changes, and what happened after she was replaced by Savile etc.
For context I have traced the history of over 70 Windermere launches, so any history regarding Doreen would be extremely gratefully received."

…… and this prompted a more intense search. As a result, I'm pleased to say that we are now closer to knowing her current whereabouts.
Yet again Keith Noble came to our assistance with an informative article that he has written and uses as notes for his various talks. Keith's notes refer to her having a thorough overhaul at Freebody's Boatyard at Hurley on Thames. To quote Keith, "THE place for work on wooden launches".





After researching the boatyard, an email was sent to them with a couple of photos, Doreen as owned by CNS, and a photo of a boat called Doreen, which we thought might be our Doreen. They do look very similar.



At our February Committee Meeting I had to confess I was not very optimistic about it being the Doreen of CNS. There appeared to be some significant discrepancies in the build of the beautifully restored Doreen in the photo and unfortunately, I had not had any response from the boatyard. After a couple of weeks without any reply hopes were fading but, to my delight, the following morning I got a response. The boatyard was able to confirm that the photo of the restored Doreen was indeed our Doreen. The email read:

"*Thank you for your email - apologies for the lengthy delay in replying. Yes, this boat was restored by our company during the 1990's and she does appear to be the same launch as the one your organization owned, although she had been remodelled with new saloon, deck etc.*
We haven't seen Doreen here at the boatyard for a good number of years, however I do recall spotting her I believe, on the riverbank at Marlow a year or so ago. Unfortunately, we have no leads as to her current ownership."



It looks like Doreen went to a good home, and she is probably still in use on the Thames. If anyone sees her in their travels, please do take a photo and let us know.

John L Smith - CNS Archivist

PS - A copy of Keith's notes and some photos were duly sent to our interested skipper from Windermere and a generous donation was made to our Society funds as a result. Thanks again Keith for your support.

Spot the Waterway - Results



In case you missed the clue, the boat in the photo is flying the Red Dragon flag, and although not obvious from the photo, an entire male voice choir onboard is giving a rendition of "Men of Harlech".

Yes, you guessed it. It is a Welsh canal, the Monmouth & Brecon Canal in the Brecon Beacons. I tried a hire boat holiday on the canal last year and can strongly recommend that you do the same. The scenery is wonderful, there are several good pubs along the route and Brecon and Abergavenny are well worth a visit. The canal is certainly shallow but who wants to rush through such a beautiful landscape.



Spot the Waterway – The next challenge.



Where could this possibly be?

Where can I find more CNS news?

This Newsletter is just one of the ways members can keep up with what is happening in the society. If you want to know more, check out our website at:-
https://www.calderns.org.uk/
We are also on Facebook, and our posts can be found by searching for the **Calder Navigation Society.**

Articles & Photos for the Newsletter

Our aim is to publish the newsletter three times a year, in March, July and November. Any articles or photos for the Newsletter should reach me by the first day of the month in which the Newsletter is published. If you would like to write something for the newsletter or have ideas as to what we should be covering, then please get in touch. I can be contacted at:- **editor@calderns.org.uk**