

BARNESLEY DEARNE & DOVE CANALS TRUST

SUMMER 2010 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Barnsley Dearne & Dove Canals Trust 2010 summer newsletter. It is sometime since we were last in touch with members to advise you of what the Trust has been doing. As part of this newsletter we are including our retiring Chairman's report to the AGM, the annual accounts for the year to 31st December 2009 along with the "Who's Who" of the Trust's Committee of Management. We hope that you find the following of interest.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As I indicated at last year's AGM that this would be my last report as Chairman of the Trust.

It is regretful that during my time as Chairman there has been little progress made on the restoration of the Canal but as we all know recent economical events have seen several major projects that would help with sections of the restoration put on hold. However, it appears that things look to be improving with Willow Bank Partnership having start up meetings and the Wakefield Power Station project going for a renewal of their outline planning permission.

We have seen the departure of three of our Directors at this AGM Bill O'Brien, Alan Barnard and Malcolm Macaskill and I offer my thanks for the work they have done for the Trust in particular to Malcolm. Also during the year Ray Helm resigned as Director and Company Secretary and thanks to him for his work as Company Secretary. I have undertaken this role on a temporary basis and will continue until the end of June should no one take on the job at this meeting so that relevant documents can be filed.

It is fortunate that Dave Smith and Ulrich Signer have joined the Board during the year and that Mike Silk and June Backhouse have agreed to again put themselves forward for re election as Directors of the Trust.

The Trust continues to be represented at the Consortium meetings and where possible at Northern Canals Group meetings.

Grass cutting around the Elsecar Basin and top lock areas has continued to be undertaken by the Probation Service.

Open meeting this year was given over to Graham Holland Asset Manager for British Waterways who talked candidly on British Waterways past, present and the future. A walk from Winterset to Royston and back was organized for members.

On the social front dinner at the Elachi Restaurant in Hoyland was arranged for members as well as noggin and natter night at the Market Hotel in Elsecar.

Finally can I thank everyone involved with the Trust for their help and the work they have put in during my time as Chairman.

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COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT [COM]

Chairman-Vacant,
Temporary Company Secretary-Peter Bolton
Treasurer / Director-June Backhouse
Directors-Mike Silk, George Cooper, Dave Smith,
Ulrich Signer
COM Members-Sue Silk, Judy Andrews, Terry Gelder
Webmaster-Rick Sterry

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CHANGES TO COM & OPEN MEETINGS

As part of the business of the AGM it was decided due to the lack of active volunteers and members attending open meetings that we would revise the numbers of open meetings for the time being.

Meetings in the future would be February - guest speaker, April - AGM, June/July - annual walk following part of the canals, December - annual dinner.

As COM business is somewhat repetitive because of the present slow movement of the restoration and due to summer commitments of COM members it was also decided to alter the number of meetings and of their content. Meetings will now be in February, March, June, September and November. Normal Trust business will be conducted as quickly as possible so that the rest of the meeting can concentrate on specific projects such as producing this newsletter.

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ACCOUNTS 2009

Please see attached accounts at end of newsletter;-
Ulrich - Editor

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ADWICK TUNNEL

Following the AGM Webmaster Rick Sterry gave a talk about Adwick Tunnel, the only tunnel on the Dearne & Dove Canal. As a result of this a walk was arranged and below is a summary of the walk.

The Walk

The walk of the area was arranged for June and was attended by a group of Trust members. We met at the car park on Queen Street at the northern end of the landscaped area which now covers locks 5 & 6 just after the kink in the canal caused by the construction of the railway and bridge. We first of all

we walked down to the Swinton flight up from the South Yorkshire Navigation [Waddington's Yard]. Tracking back from there it was disappointing to note that despite the efforts of the Swinton Bridge Action Group who have provided fishing points on the pound above the flight it was covered by a thick mat of duck weed. The area under the railway bridge had recently been in filled with limestone aggregate. Also noted still in place were the bars that protected the bridge abutment from towing ropes.

Then following as best we could the original line up to where Rick believed the southern portal would have been located. From here we followed the new line of the canal in the railway cutting and on under the new Bow Bridge. Here the dreaded Japanese Knotweed was in great evidence. Shortly afterward there is a section of the canal bed that is in water. On reaching the start of the old Manvers mine and coking site we crossed over the bed of the canal to rise up above to the approximate location of the northern portal. With the new line now deep below us we made our way back to the car park to finally to retire to the Old Moor Tavern at Broomhill to revive ourselves.

Rick is putting together an article about the Tunnel and its environs for a future publication.

Ulrich, Editor

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CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

We have revised our members listing following this year's subscription requests that were sent out with the Trust's Annual General Meeting that was held on 12th April. Several members have decided not to renew their membership which unfortunately leaves us low on active members and this is one of the reasons behind the revision of both COM and open meetings [see Changes to COM & open meetings].

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A LOVELY DAY FOR A CRUISE

Written by George Cooper, re written by George Cooper and then re re-written by Jennifer Cooper.

The long awaited morning had arrived for the trip to Dewsbury basin to have a larger propeller fitted on Genevieve. As Jen could not make the trip due to work commitments (it's a terrible job but someone had to do it) my crew for the day was Colin Ward from Ringwood Pride, who had to be bribed with coffee laced with whiskey!

We arrived at Stanley Ferry about 9am and set sail up to Broad Reach Lock, the lower gate would not open – no free phone on the wall, this had gone walkabout. Plenty of press buttons; white finger later and they finally sprang into life (some of these gates have a mind of their own).

We made good progress up to Fall Ing Lock, whose gates opened as we approached as if by remote control, and a wide beam steadily exited the lock, the colour "container base blue" (a new colour by Bodgett and Leggitt). It was "Owls" of course and at the tiller, Alice. I dropped Colin at the landing stage and preceded into the lock only to be greeted by Tony with "I've got that there for you" What had I ordered? Sonar device? NO, an anchor he had acquired, don't ask questions! Once up Fall Ing Lock and the anchor safely stowed away we were on our way. The section between Fall Ing and Thorne's Flood Lock was covered in sheet ice which Tony had kindly broken for us. By this time we were on our second ration of coffee flavoured whiskey.

Under Denby Dale Rd and contractors were busy re-building walls and forming a new towpath using dumpers and a mini-digger. I wouldn't mind one of those for Christmas (must remember to put it on my note for Santa!) We decided to attack the next flood gates together and windlass in hand set of purposefully, 20 minutes later we finally opened the gates wide enough to get the boat through. I know how Quasimodo feels now with the bad back.

The journey up to Horbury Bridge was uneventful so my ship mate decided to warm up the corned beef hash that Jennifer had prepared earlier. By this time we reached Mill Bank Lock we'd had a basin full each and were queuing up for seconds, the seconds being the black burnt bits that had stuck to the bottom of the pan, Colin insisted he liked the burnt bits so I left them for him.

On arriving at Dewsbury basin, I did a recce to find Mr Lambert (Gordon to his friends), we proceeded to launch the cradle down the slipway and steered Genevieve on to it. Gordon then disappeared to bring the crane which after an hour's time of trying still wouldn't move, something about micro switches and rams not retracting, (double Dutch to me). At this point a trusty gas delivery wagon arrived and was quickly press-ganged into pulling the cradle with boat on it up the slipway. After ¾ hour with the wagon skidding on the icy roadway, the cradle plus boat finally emerged from the cut. Anchor pin and chain safely in place the gas wagon disappeared with £4 of my hard earned cash for his trouble.

Two days later Jen and I arrived at the basin to collect the boat. Fine, the prop had been changed, not so fine the crane was still out of action. Not to worry, say Gordon, I'll ask the men laying the tarmac (Smiff I think they were called) to help. The wire rope was placed over the tow ball and the strain taken up. Jen and I were on the front deck watching the proceedings with interest. The pin and anchor chain were removed and the wagon slowly reversed; nothing happened. The cradle had stuck, the wire rope slackened and the loop decided to part company with the tow ball, by this time the cradle had decided to make its own way back into the water. All this drama unfolded before our eyes with nothing we could do about it. Have you ever been in a car when the brakes failed? Jen swiftly went into the cabin, thinking one of those comfy IKEA chairs looked preferable to the cold canal water; I was going to abandon ship but decided to stay on and prepare for ramming. After descending the slip way

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at warp factor 6 we hit the water and then the adjacent canal wall.

A few Valium later we checked for damage and started bailing out. It must be time for another coffee flavoured whiskey? As we had to get through Figure of Three locks before the stoppage we decided to set sail for home, Oh well the new propeller seems OK, we've got brakes now! But what's the rainbow colour in the water on the starboard side must be the bitumen I painted on yesterday washing off, Oh well, never mind it's a lovely day for Cruising!

On to Figure of Three, where we find a BW work boat on the exit to the bottom lock with two BW men in tea break mode (what a surprise). As I negotiated my way around the work boat I was too busy wondering why the bitumen was only washing off one side of the boat. I didn't actually notice that the £120 supersonic brass fitting tiller had decided to hide between the lock wall and gate, my nice new tiller was now banana shaped. After much tempering and many swear words (I didn't know Jen knew so many) off we went again. Oh well it's a lovely day for a cruise!

On to Broad Cut top lock and another BW workboat Oh no! not again! This time however the gates were opened and we were beckoned in. What a nice BW man, pass him a tinny, which I placed on to the lock wall, or so I thought, splash! pass another Jen! What a nice day for a cruise!

On reaching Broad Cut bottom lock we met up with a couple who had just taken delivery of a new boat. Peter from Ledgard Bridge had accompanied them so far but on meeting us decided to entrust them to our tender care. Time for Jen to take over with her "I'LL show you how to do it routine". We saw them through Thorne's flood lock and were left with the unenviable task of trying to close two gates again which proved impossible. We proceeded to Thorne's lock followed by our rainbow coloured slick of water. I must have put that bitumen on very thick if it's not dried by now? When we arrived at Thorne's lock we

noticed our friends had started without us! I toddled over and thanked them very much for not waiting! Oh well it's a lovely day for a cruise!

The rest of the journey was completed in semi-darkness so at least we couldn't see the bitumen slick that was still accompanying us. The following morning the gas locker was opened to get fuel for the stove. What's all this black stuff in here is this where Colin put all the black bits from the corned beef hash? No it's the remainder of the bitumen paint which had been tipped over in the incident at Dewsbury and had been slowly leaking all the way home. Well that explains that. Well Jen, it was a lovely day for a cruise!

George & Jen Cooper

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The Trans Pennine Trail

An article by Rick Sterry

I first became aware of the existence of the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) when walking and cycling by the Barnsley Canal in the Walton-Royston area, not far from where I live. The Trail uses sections of the Barnsley Canal and the Dearne & Dove Canal towpaths, (including part of the Worsborough branch and almost the whole length of the Elsecar branch). I decided to find out more about the trail, and so I looked at the web site - www.TransPenninetrail.org.uk - and I was surprised to find that the TPT is not just a single trail running East-West (or vice-versa), but rather a whole network of trails. The main West-East route starts on the seafront at Southport on the Irish Sea, and finishes 215 miles later at Hornsea on the North Sea coast. Of course, you could choose to do it in the reverse direction, but then you would be heading into the prevailing wind! There is a spur leading off into the centre of Liverpool, and another one leading off at Selby up to York, and the trail crosses a myriad other trails, bridleways and paths along the way. There are also a number of alternative routes to choose from between Penistone and Brampton; for example, you

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could choose to ride along part of the Worsborough branch of the Dearne & Dove, or you could go via Elsecar and down the Elsecar Branch.

There is also a North-South dimension to the TPT, starting at Leeds and finishing in Chesterfield, taking in a substantial section of the Barnsley Canal on the way. Again, there are alternative sections to the route; from Meadowhall you can branch East and go via Rotherham, or branch West and go via Sheffield. There is also a choice of two routes between Staveley and Chesterfield. This gives you the option of riding a slightly different route on outward and inbound legs.

As well as 'our' canals, the TPT follows the Leeds and Liverpool Canal for while near Aintree, the Sankey (St. Helens) Canal near Widnes, the Manchester Ship Canal near Warrington, the navigable River Don near Doncaster, and many other watercourses and rivers, including the Mersey and the Humber of course. So, one can indulge one's love of waterways as well as of walking, cycling or horse riding as the case may be, though not all of the trail is available to horse riders (yet). As a result of the trail following many waterways and abandoned railways, it is generally reasonably level and you can make good progress along it, without being some sort of health or sports fanatic - anyone can enjoy it, and indeed they do. Public roads are used here and there, often quiet ones but occasionally something busier, but the great majority of the route is off tarmaced roads.

Apart from walking and cycling the TPT in my local area many times, long before it even was the TPT, I had never experienced other parts of the trail. So, one day back in, 2005 I think it was, I set off from home on the south side of Wakefield, and joined the TPT just a mile or so away. I cycled past Barnsley, turned right past Worsborough, and eventually

found myself at Dunford Bridge near Holmfirth. Here, the old railway goes under the Pennines through the Woodhead tunnels, but the trail goes over the top to join the Longdendale Trail at the other end - the only significant climb on the whole route. I was rather pleased how far I had ridden with comparatively little effort, and I was very impressed with the scenery en route. I had to do more!

The route is comprehensively signposted, but as I was to find out, navigating it isn't quite as simple as that. As it is a network rather than just one trail, maps are extremely useful, but buying all the necessary OS Landranger maps to cover the route would be expensive and inconvenient to carry. However, the TPT in its entirety is covered by just three excellent special maps. The maps and an accommodation guide can be ordered on-line via the above mentioned web site, or you can contact the Trans Pennine Trail Office c/o Neighbourhood Services, PO Box 605, BARNESLEY, S70 9FF, 01226-772574, or email info@transpenninetrail.org.uk. Although the trail is fairly well marked for the most part, there are some places where the signage is inconspicuous, misleading, or just plain missing! The maps really are essential if you are not to go badly astray, and even then it can be a bit tricky, especially where the trail has been rerouted due to redevelopment, land reclamation etc. Also, the trail often follows slightly different routes locally, due to the different requirements of walkers and bike/horse riders - avoiding steps, for example - so you need to observe the signs carefully to see which symbols are shown.

In August and September 2006 I got my chance, and set off on my bike from Southport one day, having been driven there early. It would have been 'greener' to use public transport, but that was completely impractical unless I was prepared to spend another day just travelling. I got hideously

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lost near Aintree, partly because of me failing to spot a tiny marker, but largely because of missing and/or downright wrong signage. I only found the right route eventually by completely ignoring the signs and following my nose as it were. I must have wasted at least an hour and a half, and gone about 16 miles out of my way, so I wasn't best pleased! I had hoped to get as far as Stockport, but having wasted so much time I only got as far as Stretford before the light started to fade and my wife Tina rendezvoused with me in the car.

It was almost a month later, at the beginning of September, before I was able to return to Stretford to continue where I left off. This time I had only minor navigation problems and finished my ride at Elsecar. A week later I returned to Elsecar, and carried on as far as Saltmarsh, near Howden. The following day I was able to polish off the relatively short and easy section through Hull and up to Hornsea, feeling a great sense of achievement. More important than that, I had really enjoyed the varied scenery and places I had passed through, and meeting a lot of friendly people along the way. Since that time, I have ridden various sections of the TPT several times, ranging from just a few miles, to over 40 at a time. Some time I would love to do the whole lot again, and I think I probably will, but not all in one go obviously!

On a bicycle, I was able to do the 215 miles, (probably at least 230 allowing for navigational errors), over 4 days. This wasn't difficult on a bike, but it would take you a great deal longer to do it on foot, which is why I think a bike is the perfect form of transport on the TPT. You do not need an expensive full-suspension mountain bike or anything like that, and in fact probably the most important requirement is that it is comfortable - a racing or touring bike fitted with very narrow smooth high-pressure tyres is definitely not suitable. However, most 'ordinary' bikes will do the job fine - I've seen

all sorts on the trail, including sit-up-and-beg bikes with a basket on the front. The bike I used was in effect a rugged 'hybrid' with no suspension, and this proved pretty much ideal. It is advisable to have tyre sealant in the inner tubes, but do take a spare tube and/or patches just in case, and a few basic tools in case anything needs tightening up. I got punctures on three days out of four when I did the TPT West-to-East, but thanks to 'Slime' tyre sealant I was able to carry on regardless - hawthorn hedge clippings are the biggest threat to cycle tyres, so whatever you do try not to ride over them! Apart from that, my only advice would be take something to eat and drink, and I would definitely recommend wearing a helmet - you might think that it doesn't suit you, but it would look a lot better than bandages!

Why not have a go, even if it's just for a few hours?

Rick Sterry April 2010

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POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS ON THE HORIZON

Nine Lakes Forest Park

There is currently a proposal to create a leisure park on greenbelt land across the Wakefield and Featherstone areas. It is an ambitious plan to form an 8,000 acre tourist attraction stretching from Wakefield Road, Featherstone to Barnsley Road, Newmillerdam. The three landowners are Wakefield Council, UK Coal and Nostell Estates and they are working with Spawforth Planning to develop the scheme. There will be a section of the Barnsley Canal within the park on the length between Walton and Royston. Preliminary indications are that the developer would endeavour to make the section of the canal attractive and this might mean restoring it to a standard fit for boating.

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A business plan and planning applications are being prepared for the scheme which could attract up to half a million tourists a year. It also includes a 14km cycle route, water sports facilities and a miniature railway as part of the scheme, which could be open by 2015.

The Upper Dearne Valley

Funding is being obtained for a feasibility study to develop an area of Barnsley between the M1 and ASDA. The Willow Bank Country Partnership includes members from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and UK Coal. The plan is to link all the open land in the valley of the Dearne in this area and turn it into an attractive urban park accessible to all the communities around it. An abandoned railway line will become a proper cycleway and improvements to the towpath of the Barnsley Canal and other footpaths would provide a comprehensive network of routes. Funding has been obtained for paid workers whose role will be to co-ordinate activities and drive the project forward. Restoration of the canal may be a long term possibility but restoration of the towpath would encourage greater awareness of the canal and its environs.

A member of the Trust attended the first meeting in March and the Trust will maintain links with the partnership throughout the development.

We will watch both of these developments with interest!

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CONGRATULATIONS

The Trust is pleased to note that one of its members Bill O'Brien former MP for Normanton has received a

knighthood in the Queen's Birthday list. Many congratulations Sir Bill it is much deserved.

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CONTACTING THE TRUST

You can contact the Trust by writing to the Registered Office at 22 Cyprus Avenue, St Johns, Wakefield WF1 2RT. Telephone 01924 373866 or through our website <http://www.bddct.org.uk/home.html> click on "The Trust" then "Contact Us"

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Coming up in the next edition the life and times of Dolphin

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And Finally – trawled from a *very old* copy of "Navvies" with words by Stanley Holland and sung to the tune "Jerusalem"

NAVVIES JERUSALEM

And did that pound in Brindley's time
Wind among England's valleys green?
And was a noble flight of locks
On ev'ry lovely landscape seen?
But then the railway giants came,
With soot and smoke and fire and flame,
And they despoiled the waterways,
To England's ever-lasting shame.

Bring me my boots and grappling iron,
Bring me my mighty JCB.
Bring me my spade, O ecstasy!
Bring me a gallon flask of tea!
I will not flinch from seas of mud,
Nor shall my sludge-pump idly stand,
Till we've restored the waterways
Through England's green and pleasant land

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OK That's it for now – Happy cruising!
Ulrich - Editor