

# ❧ CLOGS & GANSEY ❧

*Newsletter of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Society*

*No. 34 Autumn 2014*

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Wigan yard in 1972, with **Darwen** moored up outside the slipways, built in 1958. This area has completely changed, with the power station demolished and new buildings lining the canal on both sides. There were several streets of terraces houses, both here and up the locks, nearly all of which have now disappeared.

## ***Make your web browser Everyclick!***

Now we have Charitable status, we have registered with Everyclick.com, where, if you register your cause as the **Leeds and Liverpool Canal Society**, we earn 1p for each search, as well as commission on online shopping transactions. It doesn't sound much until you think how many searches we might do between us, and it is free money!

For new users: Go to [www.everyclick.com](http://www.everyclick.com) where you can set up a fundraising account for **Leeds and Liverpool Canal Society** (don't use &). And finally...beware of other search engines 'taking over' your default search facility – make sure you always search via Everyclick.

Using this service over the past few months, I have raised over £7 without any additional work necessary. If enough of you use Everyclick donating to the L&LCS, we should be better off by a few hundred pounds every year.

# *Society News*

## ***AGM***

Our AGM will be on 7th March 2015. The provisional location will be Rolls Royce Social Club, on Skipton Road, Barnoldswick, at 2.00pm. We will probably open up ***Kennet*** in the morning. An official notification will be sent out in the New Year.

## ***Promotion, Sales, etc.***

We still need someone to help with promoting the Society, such as by sending out Press Releases, as we have not been too good at this to date. We also need someone to look after sales on ***Kennet*** and at other events. Please can we have a volunteer or two! It should not take too much time, and will help making things a bit more efficient. Please contact a committee member, if you can help with any of these jobs. This edition of ***Clogs & Gansey*** is also a little light on Society news, partly because I don't get sent much, but also as I am busy re-writing my history of the canal, which has to be ready early next year for publication in 2016.

## ***Sty Lane, Bingley***

The Planning Application for housing here, and the installation of a new, much larger, swing bridge, has been called in for re-evaluation by December 19th. Our member, Colin Thunhurst, <colinthunhurst@compuserve.com> is acting on our behalf in putting forward canal-related issues.

## ***Clogs & Gansey***

Sorry that this edition is a bit late, but I am currently rewriting my history of the canal for the 200th anniversary, and that is taking much of my time at the moment.

## ***Other News***

### ***Brightwork Project***

CRT have just appointed Andy Wild to look after their Brightwork arts and community project in East Lancashire, and he can be contacted at: Brightwork Project Officer (Pennine Lancashire), Canal & River Trust, Canal Cottage, Lowerhouse Lane, Rosegrove, Burnley, BB12 6HU. Email: andy.wild@canalrivertrust.org.uk. No further details at the moment as he has only been in post a few weeks.

### ***Super Slow Way***

This is a funding project for arts and community projects which is still in its formative stages. There was an opening event at Burnley on 24<sup>th</sup> November, but it was not too clear where the Canal Society or ***Kennet*** would fit in. Heritage did not appear in the promotional information, and neither did existing canal users to any extent. We will have to wait and see what develops.

### ***NW Waterways Partnership AGM***

This was held in Blackburn on 13<sup>th</sup> November, and also launched their 10 year Strategic Plan. I personally felt it was rather lack-lustre, particularly as the head of CRT, Mr Parry, was unable to attend at the last minute. Community involvement was given as a major role for the Partnership, though they have not yet talked to the Society about our success in promotion of the canal.

## *Hospital Barges on the L&LC*

David Long, email: david@scars.org.uk, sent me the following. Does anyone else know anything about the subject. I had heard of something similar at Stockbridge, but not this one.

I'm researching my article for the next Journal on Hospital Barges in France - but I'm also researching Red Cross Auxiliary Hospitals in the Wigan area in WW1 - having found a plaque in our local church relating to one which used what is now our nearest restaurant here in Standish.

This week a librarian in the Museum of Wigan Life found me the Report on these hospitals. Parbold was the first place in the district to set up a VAD - Voluntary Aid Detachment - which ran the hospitals, and also organised working parties to make bandages, and knit 'comforts' for the troops, etc. In the end, the Parbold VAD didn't run a hospital, but was central to the organising of workrooms.

In July 1914 two exercises were held to test the readiness of the VAD for its wartime role. One involved the Standish and Wigan areas - and the other was at Parbold, at the end of the month. As part of that exercise the detachment equipped a barge as a floating hospital.

Have you come across this before? I would assume that they would want a clean barge for this - so would have gone to Ainscough's for a flour barge, given the Ainscough mill at Parbold. It would be an interesting snippet to include in my article - but even better if further details could be uncovered about the episode. Any ideas on where to look? Also, are there any pics of Ainscough barges of the time?



David also sent this unusual view of the Wigan flight, taken from the tower of his former church.

## ***Kennet* — 2014 Season**

This has been the third and final year of our Lottery Funding. This has seen ***Kennet*** mainly on the west side of the country, taking in Runcorn, and the furthest south we have taken her to date. On her journey ***Kennet*** attended 8 events and hosted 8 school visits, with some 3900 visitors. The season started with ***Kennet*** taking part in the **ELWY Boat Club Easter Rally** at East Marton. Over the weekend the club members visited ***Kennet*** and had a 'reception' with slide show. This was followed by ***Kennet***'s traditional visit back to the **Skipton Waterways Festival** where Leeds & Liverpool Canal Society first took her in 2008 after BW agreed to the loan of ***Kennet***. Once again it was a very successful weekend.

***Kennet*** then started her travels westward, stopping at Hyndburn for the first two school visits of the season and the first for Hyndburn. On the Saturday, ***Kennet*** was also open for the **Hyndburn Heritage Day**.

A short trip to West End to host a visit of the local primary school, where two of our Captains Harry Belshaw & Ken Barnes, attended in their 'younger days'. Harry & Ken enjoyed reminiscing about their early involvement with the working boats like ***Kennet***.

***Kennet*** then continued to Burscough for 2 school visits and the **Burscough Heritage Weekend**. ***Ambush*** and ***Victoria*** (Heritage Long Boats) were also there to add to the interest. ***Severn*** (a sister boat of ***Kennet***) passed between ***Kennet*** & ***Victoria*** on her way to Liverpool – a rare opportunity to see the area as it would have been in its 'hey-day'.



***Kennet*** at Burscough, with Viktoria and Attractive in the foreground.



**Kennet** passing one of the sets of stop plank groves fitted in the Liverpool area during the war to prevent damage should the canal be hit by a bomb, as happened at Sandhills.

The School's visits saw the first use of our new large floor map of the canal which illustrates the development of the canal and cargo movements. Also used was 'The Mary Lawson Story', an illustrated book which tells the story of Mary Lawson's life on the canal in her own words. **Kennet's** next port of call was Litherland Wharf to join with the **Pride of Sefton** for the CRT **Sefton Explorers School Visits**. Another first for us all to have school visits from Sefton. A hugely successful two days despite our Yorkshire volunteers having some difficulty with the 'local dialect'. Our thanks to Katie Jackson, CRT Education Coordinator (North) for her input and organisation.

At the end of the second day at Sefton, **Kennet** started her journey to the **Bridgewater Motor Boat Club**, Runcorn, where she arrived on the Saturday ready for Dry Docking on the Sunday. This enabled the hull to be pressure washed for our regular Insurance Survey and then re-blacked. At the same time our BSS was revalidated. We are very grateful to the volunteers from the BMBC for carrying out the work. While at the boat club, **Kennet** was viewed by the club members and on the next day by the public on the towpath side. In late August she was opened at the end of the arm as part of the **Unlock Runcorn Fun Day**. This was organised by the **Runcorn Locks Restoration Society** to raise the profile of the 'Unlock Runcorn' campaign. September saw **Kennet** at the **Crooke Boat, Beer and Folk Festival** over the weekend 20th-21st. Another successful weekend with many very interested visitors, some of which volunteered to help **Kennet** 'fly' up the Wigan Flight on the Monday on her journey to Reedley Marina. Many thanks to one and all.

Whilst at Reedley Marina, **Kennet** was used as a venue for a meeting with Andrew Stephenson MP, a member of the **Parliamentary All Party Waterways Group** and the local MP. This was



**Kennet** near Netherton on her way to Litherland, with Wilma Belshaw knitting socks on the cabin. Examples of her work can be purchased at events, with profits going to support **Kennet**. She also gives demonstrations on **Kennet** at events. Anyone else have such good ideas for providing financial support for **Kennet**?

followed later in the week by a reception for invited guests on **Kennet** at Burnley Wharf to promote **Kennet** in the area and to build up connections for the future. We were honoured to have the Mayor and Mayoress of Burnley attend.

As part of our week in the superbly restored **Bank Hall Dry Dock** with a new roof, to have the topside paintwork refreshed, **Kennet** featured in their official opening by the Mayor of Burnley. **Kennet** is now back on her home moorings at Greenberfield awaiting updates to her hold area in the New Year before next season.

The success of this year is in no small part due to the 32 volunteers who spent more than 2750 hours and travelled over 7500 miles by car and public transport.

The year hasn't been without its problems as in previous years, mainly **Kennet** being slowed up or stopped due to the 'bottom of the canal being near the top' and lock gates not fully opening. Many thanks to everybody who have given their time and effort to ensure **Kennet** continues to be a success and move forward each season with her development.

### ***Winter Period***

We are now in the process of completing our 'paperwork' to claim the last of our HLF grant. This will be followed early in the New Year with a meeting of the Working Group to organise the winter programme of working parties and 2015's season.

**Life for our volunteers would be so much better with more volunteers to spread the load.**

There are always plenty of opportunities to help both moving and staffing **Kennet** along with helping the 'backroom volunteers' – if you are interested in helping then please contact us:-  
Email: [friendsofkennet@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofkennet@gmail.com) Tel: Harold Bond on 01535 630597



**Kennet** passing Linacre Gas Workd site, where the opening for coal deliveries are one of the reminders of this important traffic on the canal.



Tarleton in 1971, with Northern Counties Carriers camping boat **Frank** awaiting some maintenance. This is another place which has changed much as it used to be a real graveyard for old boats of all types.

## *Burnley Dry Dock*

*Kennet* in the newly reopened dry dock in Burnley on the 17th October for the official re-opening of the dock. Les White, who was responsible for bringing the dock back into use, has already done some work for us on *Kennet*. Below are a couple of photos taken at the official re-opening, which was done by the Mayor. He had been on *Kennet* the previous week and was extremely interested in the canal's heritage. Are there any other elected people we should be inviting to visit *Kennet*? Contact the dock via: <http://bankhalldrydock.co.uk>



Right: The stone sides of the dock are very low, though probably not as a result of subsidence. I did wonder if the dock originally had sloping grass sides, like a turf lock, which would make handling long wooden planks easier.

## **Wigan Piers: Draft Notes, August 2014**

*Derek Winstanley <dwinstanley84@gmail.com> emailed to ask me what I knew about the canal in Wigan and the Pier, and the following is part of his notes on the subject. Does anyone else have any comments?*

The first recorded pier head or wharf for unloading or tipping coal into canal barges in the Wigan Basin area was in 1822, when permission was granted to Thomas Claughton to construct a railway from his mines in the Poolstock/Goose Green area to the canal. The original 'pier head or wagon tippler' at 'Pottery Croft Wharf' was very close to the current symbolic tippler. In 1842 Meyrick Bankes of Winstanley Hall used Claughton's railway line as the end stretch of his railway from his colliery in Winstanley to the canal in Wigan. John Thompson represented the iron industry along Pottery Croft Wharf and Meyrick Bankes finally bought Thompson's Pier Head in 1850. These 4 ft narrow-gauge railways utilized gravity and horse power to transport coal down to the canal. In 1878, Meyrick Bankes introduced a narrow-gauge steam locomotive, **Eleanor**, to transport coal from his Winstanley Colliery down to the canal, and in 1882 **Louisa** was added. In 1885 Bankes' Winstanley Colliery was leased to Winstanley Collieries Co. Ltd. In 1886/87 the narrow-gauge line down to the canal was changed to standard gauge and a standard-gauge steam locomotive was introduced. In 1905 a four coupled saddle tank locomotive named **Winstanley** was added, followed in 1916 by **Billinge**, a similar locomotive. Following closure of Leyland Green Colliery in 1927, a tippler on the canal in the Potteries was demolished in 1929, although it is not known when that particular tippler was built. A symbolic replica of a tippler was installed in 1986? The original pier head for Claughton's Colliery railway and later Bankes' Winstanley Colliery railway thus was the first documented Wigan Pier.

A few years later, c.1825/28, independent railways from German's colliery in the Billinge Road/Newtown area and Blundells Pemberton Colliery ran along what today is Victoria Street to separate terminals, or pier heads on the canal near Seven Stars Bridge. Hennem's 1829 map shows the terminal points just to the south of the bridge. The much more detailed 6 inch Ordnance Survey (OS) 1849 map shows the terminals just to the north of the bridge, which is the location of a coal yard shown on the 1802 map. Based on the 1849 OS map and the Land Plan of the Liverpool, Bolton and Bury Railway, Townley, Smith and Peden state that German's pier head was north of the bridge and Blundell's to the south. However in looking closely at the OS map it is clear to me that both lines crossed the road and the pier heads were to the north of the bridge. I have not seen the Land Plan. Perhaps the location of the pier heads changed over time. Both railways were narrow gauge, probably 4 feet, laid on iron edge rails and worked by gravity and horse power; they did not use steam locomotives, nor did they convert to standard gauge. Both railways were abandoned in the 1860s.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, George Formby Sr. sang songs and told music hall jokes about a Wigan Pier. His son, George Formby, took over the music hall stage in the early 1900s. The lyrics describe a long, wooden, pier-like structure in Wigan. There are two stories that relate to the origin of the music hall Wigan Pier and two structures that have been interpreted as being pier like. The first story is that George Formby Sr. noticed a long wooden structure on leaving Wigan North West Station for Blackpool. Mike Clarke believes that the East Lancashire

Railway's wooden viaduct, which extended some 500 yards from near Miry Lane to the River Douglas on the Bury to Liverpool line west of Wallgate station, could have been Formby Sr.'s Wigan Pier. The 1849 OS map shows a lengthy viaduct at this location. The wooden structure was filled, probably in the late 1880s, to form an embankment for the then Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. The other story, relayed by Hannay and Winstanley, is that in 1891, not long after leaving Wallgate Station, an excursion train from Wigan to Southport was delayed on the outskirts of Wigan and passengers saw a long wooden structure that reminded them of Southport Pier. According to Hannay and Winstanley, this was the 1,050 yard long wooden gantry built in the late 1880s that carried a double line of rails from Lamb and Moore's Newtown Colliery across the River Douglas, the canal and the Wigan to Southport main line railway to Meadows Colliery by Frog Lane. It thus appears that the music hall term Wigan Pier originated as reference to one of these two structures and was made famous in songs and jokes and in George Orwell's 1937 book 'The Road to Wigan Pier'. In 1937 neither of the wooden piers nor any of the railway pier heads, or tipplers, had survived, which made the concept of Wigan Pier even more of a joke.

History reveals that there were coal yards near Severn Stars Bridge in 1802 and railway pier heads at three locations in the Wigan Basin by the 1820s. The most prominent one was the tippler on the site of the current symbolic replica of a tippler; this is where coal in wagons from Claughton's and Bankes' Winstanley Collieries was tipped into canal barges. The pier head of this railway was the first Wigan Pier in 1822. The pier heads for German's and Blundell's railways near Severn Stars Bridge were the second and third Wigan Piers. Music hall songs, jokes and folklore leave open the possibility that two different wooden railway structures were interpreted as piers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century: a wooden gantry from Newtown to Frog Lane, and a wooden viaduct crossing the canal and River Douglas just to the north of Severn Stars Bridge. The tippler on Pottery Croft Wharf in Wigan basin remains an appropriate site for celebrating a rich history of Wigan Piers and a symbol of Wigan's development during the Industrial Revolution.



### ***Junction 12 on the M65 and the canal***

There is a short standard 8mm film taken on 27th July 1976 on Youtube which shows the cutting of the first sod at what we know now to be junction 12 of the M65. The Ceremony was undertaken by councillor Catherine Sumner Clough on this historical day in Brierfield, Lancashire. The film also goes on to show the demolition of the old canal bridge down Lindred lane.

The link is below, for those with internet access:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_detailpage&v=cAshEQq5yQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=cAshEQq5yQ)

Uploaded on Nov 14, 2010

## ***Canal Boatman, Caleb Patchett***

We have been given permission to reprint this account, which was originally published in *Windhill Memories*. I suspect that his memory had failed him in that his father must have worked on the L&LC.

My father worked for the Aire & Calder Navigation Company at Leeds, he was a fully fledged canal boatman. Sometimes as a boy I used to go with my father, when I did he fastened me with a rope to the chimney so I couldn't fall overboard. He used to say, *'Tha's come up to see so tha' can stop their till I let tha' down'*. It did not matter how cold it was I had to stay there.

All my school holidays were spent on the boat with my father, I always went away somewhere, if only to the pits. For a while I worked in the mill half time then later full time. When I was older my father said, *'Tha's going with me'*. So that was the future for me.

A canal boat was 65 ft. long and just fit into a lock, the fore end was for the mate and where they kept the fodder for the horse. In one corner of the cabin was a little bin where he could put in half a sack of corn, on the spare side he kept two bags. If they went short they could call at any corn merchants to buy more and charge it to the canal carriers or whoever they were working for.

We would set off Monday morning, you would hear a tap on the floor at 5am. *'Come on lad go down and feed that horse and we'll have a cup of tea'*. We set off towards Leeds past Buck Woods, Thackley, Apperley Bridge and Rodley to Leeds. From Leeds you went from the canal to the Aire & Calder Navigation. Between the river and the canal where they join there is a length of water where there is no towing path, you had to wait for a steamer to take you down the distance between the Leeds & Liverpool Canal and the Aire & Calder Navigation, two different canals until they joined. At Leeds you had to walk the horse through the streets and round all the back lanes of Leeds on to the other side.



The bottom lock on the Bradford Canal in 1953.

Leeds & Liverpool Canal Carrying Company had warehouses in most towns all the way from Liverpool to Leeds, there was a large warehouse on Wharfe Street at Shipley and another big one at Leeds. Boats came from Liverpool loaded with sugar for Leeds, they were what we called white boats but were not like the old canal boats, they were built entirely different, the stern was a bit rounder and they could get on faster. They also had little steam boats that carried about 35 tons of coal. At the back they had a fired boiler and a small steam engine - some people called them tug boats, we called them all sorts. They started making diesel boats at Keighley. They carried 35 tons of coal of their own and pulled a boat behind which carried a 30 ton load, this saved a horse besides pulling two loads.

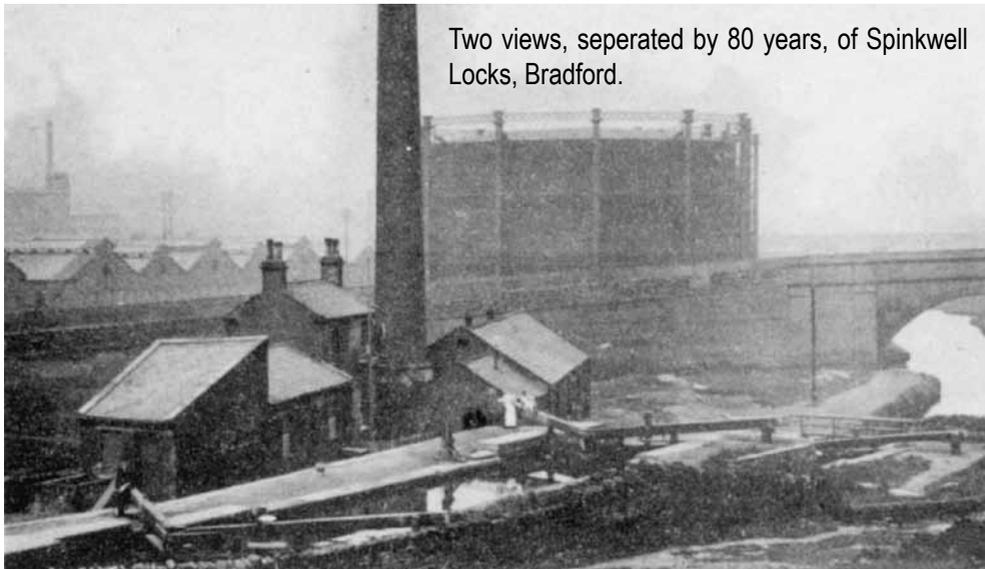
Near the Yorks / Lancs border is Foulridge Tunnel - almost a mile long. When you get there you had to wait for a steamer or leg it through, this meant you had to lie on your back and push with your feet against the side or top of the tunnel. If the wind was against you it was hard work, but if the wind was with you my father put up a sheet of cotton to make a sail to blow us through.

On occasions we had to go to Manchester Docks to bring back wool for Saltaire Mills Dye-works, there were a lot in the wool trade at that time. When we loaded the wool, to get the weight in we had to lay it over the sides because unlike coal it wasn't a dead weight. We had to place a plank across the two side rails so that we could see over the top of the wool to steer the barges, we just had enough room at the sides to get through the bridges.

When we slept on the boat my mother had to '*barge up*' for two families. My father had a large basket, in it would be four loaves, two flatcakes, 1lb of margarine, tea, 2lb of sugar, bacon, salt, marmalade and jam. Everything went in. It wasn't an easy life for my mother, it was like keeping two homes going.

With a horse it took six or seven days to get to Liverpool, but with a steamer only two and a half days. We would come from Liverpool for a length then start *locking up*. The Leeds & Liverpool Canal goes up - then down [to Manchester?], then up again, over the Pennines.

Two views, seperated by 80 years, of Spinkwell Locks, Bradford.



There are twenty one locks at Wigan but there are only three that are really in Wigan, others are at Ince the next area to Wigan. We had to change horses at various places such as Five Rise Locks at Bingley and at Skipton, there were also places where you could stay. We also went to Bootle and Birkenhead for sugar, a lot came from this area, I think there must have been a lot of sugar mills about there.

Diesel boats had the engine at one end and the accommodation at the forward end. On ordinary boats there was a big cabin for the captain and another for the mate. They all had a stove and kettle, the mate had to look after the chaff and corn etc. The man at the front had all the comfort. Boats that we called '*weekly boats*' like C. F. Taylors (mill) just had ordinary cabins, so long as there was a cabin, a fire and a place to eat that was it. There were no steps, you just had to drop down onto the locker, straight on your backside, pull your table down, get your tea and sugar out and put your kettle on, if it was smoky it didn't matter - smoke tea is good for indigestion. You carried fresh water around, various places supplied it, there was one at Gargrave one at Five Rise Locks (Bingley) and another at Apperley Bridge and Leeds. Taps were kept in boxes at the lock side. When the weather was bad and you were steering you put on a top coat, and when your coat was wet you changed into another and dried the wet one on the stove, you always wore your oldest clothes. When we had casual labour they had to sleep with the mate, there were lodging houses but not special houses for '*boaties*', boats were never left unattended.

When they were breaking in a horse they took on an extra man. A canal horse is specially trained to always pull on its chest whereas a dray horse pulls on its shoulders. Horses were nearly always muzzled or they would stop and eat the leaves off the trees. It was always worked out, when you came to a lock you had a nose tin for the horse and he would feed whilst you were going down the lock. My father was a great believer in keeping a horse well fed.

A boat horse collar was always prone to rub the horse sore. My father never had a collar that didn't fit, if it wasn't a good fit he'd work at it and bray it until it fit. It's surprising how easy



a boat will move once you get it going, I've pulled 50 ton of coal by myself, you get your boat hook onto your shoulder and just push, and the boat will float provided there is enough water underneath. That's why they always like the canals to be full, my father would say to me when they were coming down, *'I'm nobbut bahn to put so much in - 40 or 50 tons'*.

Weighing a canal boat, you wouldn't think they would weigh them would you? But they could. What they did, you'd go to Castleford and go into a dry dock, you stayed there until your boat dried. Then they would run water into the dry dock and then put 5cwt. weights into the boat and lower it down. Every time they put so much weight in they would mark on the front to whatever you were going to take, about 45 to 50 tons. (It would take 55 ton but that wouldn't do because we didn't take 55 tons). There were two 'strips' of copper down the side of the boat, back and front, marked off in spaces about the width of your finger, each one represented a ton. Now what we did, we looked forward and aft to these markers, my father would say, *'Get forward and see what that plate is reading'*. He had a knack of his own, you see, he'd go forward and say to me, *'Bring that dredger here'*. Well that dredger was a piece of iron that had been used to fix railway lines to the wooden sleepers. I'd go aft or wherever he was and it would make a nearly a ton in difference to the weight, that was one of the catches you see.

A canal boat had at the front what they called a 'cratch' for the ropes, there was a thick rope for towing and what was called a canal line and a river line. The tow line would be about 2in. thick, a river line about 3/4in. and a canal line 1/2in. We used to coil them all up on to what was called a 'crab', and that was done whether it was wet or cold. When the canal was frozen you had to wait until the ice breaker came. There use to be an ice breaker at Shipley which was built like a 'vee' and it had a fitting on the front on to which you fastened a rope for the horse to pull. When they were breaking the ice there were two or three horses pulling and there were also six men at each side rocking the boat in order to break the ice. They had a steam ice breaker but we couldn't wait for that because it didn't reach us until dinner time. At one time there used to be an ice boat moored at Gallows Bridge, Shipley.

We didn't own our horses they all belonged to the firm. If you had a horse you always took that horse. That was your job, you had to look after it, keep it clean, see that it didn't get sore and feed it. My father, when we came to a lock always put the food tin on the horse, so that it could be eating whilst the boat was going down the lock. The horse was always the first to be looked after, as soon as you got to the stables where you were stopping at night the horse was always dealt with before you made your supper, get some straw into the stable and some bedding down for the horse.

Some horses wouldn't get down to sleep, they would stand up sleeping. How they did it I don't know. Other horses would get down, and when they did you had to go in the morning and start brushing them down. They'd been laid in the hay and 'horse muck' and you had to clean his backside and make him tidy, get your curry comb and brush, clean him down and see that his feet were clean. They had different shoes for boat horses than cart horses, a cart horse had a studded shoe for the roads, a boat horse had a fiat shoe for the canal bank. That is why you never saw a boat horse pulling a cart because it couldn't stand on the road. My father always looked well after his horses, if you hadn't a good horse you hadn't a living. Canal life was a grand life but hard.

## ***Bedale Beck***

You may wonder why I am including photos of Leeming Lock, which doesn't at first seem to have anything to do with the Leeds & Liverpool. The navigation was promoted in 1767-1769, the same time as the Leeds & Liverpool, and I have recently found correspondence which shows that, to some extent, it was considered as a branch off the 'Grand Canal' scheme which became the Leeds & Liverpool. You will have to wait for the new edition of my Leeds & Liverpool history, hopefully to be published in 2016, to find out more.

Returning to the photos, the earlier one shows the upper entrance to the lock, the bridge having been built when the lock no longer seemed likely to be used. The upper sill seems to have been almost entirely constructed from wood, with just a single row of stones to raise the level. The floor of the lock was probably wood, as is still found on the earliest Leeds & Liverpool locks. The use of a stone or brick invert to form the lock floor was only just being introduced circa 1770, and was not widely used until the 1790s. It would certainly be worth making a full survey of this lock in order to find out more about traditional canal engineering of the mid-eighteenth century.



Leeming Lock on the Bedale Beck Navigation which was to serve the town of Bedale. The upper photo, by Mr Voce, dates from 1967, with the lower taken in October 2014. Vegetation now hides much of the lock remains.



## **200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Canal's Completion in 2016**

We are still looking for ways of celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of the canal from Leeds to Liverpool. As you can see from the inscription on Britannia Bridge below lock 84 (historically Lock 20 at Wigan), the locks there opened at the end of October, when a flotilla of boats traversed the whole canal. Pottery Road Bridge has a similar inscription, but more difficult to see behind the iron girders used to widen the bridge.

### ***Memories of a Wartime Canal Boatwomen***

This new book, with the memories of Nancy Ridgway, the only female volunteer captain of a boat on the canal towards the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War is now available. There is an introduction looking at the story behind the boatwomen training scheme on the L&LC, with a good number of photos. The book is being published for the National Waterways Museum, who obtained the transcript of Nancy's story, and will cost £4.99. Copies are available on **Kennet**, and we have had more printed recently, so plenty are available. We also have copies of our brief history of the canal, and Geoff Wheat's book on **Canal Transport Ltd**, both at £3.00.

### ***Christmas Carols***

See your President in another role this December. He is singing in several carol concerts and services: 7-00pm on the 7<sup>th</sup> in Settle at the Community Choir Concert in the Parish Church, 7-30pm on the 13<sup>th</sup> in Giggleswick Parish Church with Langcliffe Singers, early afternoon on the 14<sup>th</sup> at Gawthorpe Hall, 7-30pm in the Longitude Gallery, Clitheroe, in aid of MacMillan Nurses, and at Gisburn Parish Church's Carol Service on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December. I'm entitled to go 'Bah Humbug' after that!

### ***L&LCS COMMITTEE MEMBERS***

**President** (& Newsletter editor): Mike Clarke, 8 Green Bank, Barnoldswick, BB18 6HX, 01282 850430.

**Chairman**: Freda Childs, 16 Lingmoor Drive, Burnley, BB12 8UY, 01282 427950

**Secretary**: Mrs Margaret Hammond, Warren House, 27 Skipton Road, Gargrave, BD23 3SA, 01756 749301

**Treasurer**: Ken Watson, 4 Birtwistle Court, Kelbrook Road, Barnoldswick, BB18 5TB, 01282 219985

**Membership Secretary**: David Morley, 10 Rowan Close, Walton-le-Dale, Preston, PR5 4LZ, 01772 462555.

Ken Barnes, 23 Buttermere Drive, Oswaldtwistle, BB5 4RE, 01254 395773

Mike Hustler, 10 Meadow Way, Barnoldswick, BB18 6HP, 01282 816476 or 07929 915487

Lynton Childs, 16 Lingmoor Drive, Burnley, BB12 8UY, 01282 427950

Cris Shave, Ivy House, Main Street, Bradley, BD20 9DG, 01535 631975

Harry Belshaw, 238 Blackburn Road, Oswaldtwistle, BB5 4NZ, 01254 236249.

Harold Bond, 2 Cross Lane Mill, Bradley, BD20 9QB, 01535 630597

For Society queries, the email address is:  
leeds.liverpool.canal.soc@gmail.com  
And for **Kennet** queries:  
friendsofkennet@gmail.com.