

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

CANAL CUTTINGS

VOLUME 9 Number 3
Autumn 2019



Great Crested Grebe on Carr Mill Dam

Look closer—and this could be a grebe with a grebance!

However, it is naturally totally unaware that part of its nest is plastic—one of our environment's greatest threats. It will be also be unaware that, because plastic simply does not break down into any kind of natural substance, that generations of its offspring will know the same piece of plastic as part of their environment. Our grandchildren might be able to photograph the same scene!

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

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Founded 1985



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Paul McQuade (St. Helens)

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Sankey Canal Restoration Society

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VOLUME 9 NUMBER 3: Autumn 2019

**Editor and Production: David Long
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The Chairman's Report—from Colin Greenall

Well it has been an interesting summer so far, with wonderful, warm sunny weather and then heavy rain leading to floods and a near disaster at Whaley Bridge with the partial collapse of Toddbrook Reservoir.

On the Sankey we have had floods closing College Street in St.Helens and news of flooding in Warrington.

At our committee meeting on Thursday June 13th we were informed by Cllr Keith Morley (Halton BC) of the imminent closure of Fiddlers Ferry Power Station and that within four weeks they would not be in a position the guarantee a water supply to the Sankey Canal. If this were to happen it would have a tremendous impact on our future plans to restore the canal.

However it as now transpired that the Power Station will continue to supply the canal with water up until the end of March 2020. In the meantime measures need to be taken to find a solution to the water supply issue.

Moving on to other things, three more milestones have been installed in St Helens—the third having had to await permission from the gas line people (Cadent). Now we need to get on with providing milestones in Warrington.

Our sales and promotion marquee has been out doing local shows which so far have been well attended and rewarding with the amount of interest shown in what we are trying to achieve.

CRT has awarded us with an Adoption Certificate to work on the sections of the canal in their ownership for a further three years.

New sign posts are appearing around St.Helens Town Centre thanks to a multi-agency working group. “Sankey Canal” is featured on four of the seven new destination signs— something to lookout for next time you’re in St.Helens. This group are working towards an application for Purple Flag Status for the night-time economy of St.Helens, which in turn will become part of the regeneration of St Helens Town Centre in which the canal will play a pivotal role.

Included with this issue you should find a copy of our revised membership leaflet, please make good use of it and if you require more copies please get in touch.

I would like to add SCARS’ congratulations to the St Helens Council representative on our committee, Cllr. Paul McQuade, on his recent elevation to Deputy Mayor and to his forthcoming year in office as the Mayor of St.Helens for 2020-2021

I hope you enjoy this edition of “Canal Cuttings” and that you find the contents Interesting. We are always looking for new material and fresh contributors—so if anyone out there has stories to tell about canals, railways or local history etc, and would like to see them in print, please get in touch— it would be nice to have more input from outside of our usual contributors.

Best wishes,

Colin Greenall

Follow SCARS on any of the social media platforms and keep up-to-date on our activities and news. Find us on:



Facebook

Sankey Canal Restoration Society

Twitter: Sankey Canal @scars567



Instagram: Sankey Canal Restoration: sankeycanal1757

Events This Summer

By Colin Greenall

The Scars Roadshow

So far our summer events programme has proved to be very successful, with our Exhibition and Sales Stall flying the SCARS' flag in St Helens and Warrington Boroughs. At this point I would like to express a very big 'Thank You' to everyone who has kept our sales stall so well supplied with books and bric-a-brac this season.



Monday 27th May: Rural Craft Fair at Willow Park, Newton-le-Willows:

This annual Spring Bank Holiday event organised by the St.Helens Ranger Service was, as ever, a huge success, bringing together all kinds of crafts, such as stonemasons, wheelwrights, saddlers, bee-keeping, birds of prey demonstrations, and stalls, ranging from face-painting, bodging, ferret racing, plant sales - plus musical entertainment and a barbeque. Also the nearby Church of St Peter's was open to view and provided additional refreshments and toilet facilities.

Altogether a really good day out, and a very profitable one for the society in terms of meeting people and sales of our bric-a-brac and pre-owned transport books. Many thanks to all to volunteers who helped on the day.

Wednesday 5th June: Taylor Park, St.Helens: World Environment Day Event:

Our Information Marquee was on duty—our thanks to John Hughes for giving his time to staff it. Unfortunately this took place during a period of unsettled weather resulting in a poor attendance.



Sunday 23rd June: Queens Meadow, Lymm: Historic Transport Rally:

This rally, now in its seventh year, comes at the end of the week-long Lymm Heritage Festival, and gets better and better each year. There is much to see and do on the Queens Meadow Showground itself, and down on the nearby Bridgewater Canal there are historic boats, whilst in the village there is a drive-past of vintage vehicles, and a model railways exhibition in the village hall—plus all the stalls and entertainments on the showground. (Among the shows in the arena was the stunt cyclist, who can be seen soaring high against the trees, *above*). Probably the highlight of the day was the fly-past of the RAF's last Dakota C47 aircraft (*right*).

For us the day went well, the weather was kind, dry warm and dull. Plenty of interest from people who came to look at what we are doing and to tell us about their connections to the Sankey Canal. Many thanks to Peter Keen and Ian Hornby for their help and support on the day.



Saturday 3rd August: Menzes Park, Newton-le-Willows: for Newton Town Show:

This is another event that is going from strength to strength with the passing of each year. This year we had the army display, motor cycle stunt team, helicopter rides, plus lots of charity stalls (*below*) for people to support.



We had a wonderful day, the sun was out, the crowds came, and we had many people enquiring about our work and telling us their stories about the canal. Thank you to Ian Hornby, John Hughes and Mike Harrison for their assistance on the stand.

The Scars Roadshow Programme for September

14th & 15th: Leigh Canal Festival

22nd & 23rd: The IWA Waterways Restoration Showcase

On board the “Daniel Adamson” steam tug in Albert Dock, Liverpool

28th & 29th Vintage Rally, Victoria Park, Widnes

Guided Walks along the Canal



Saturday 29th June: Merseyside Industrial Heritage Society:

We had the pleasure of hosting approximately twenty members of the Society on a guided walk along the section of canal from Newton Common Lock (*above*) to Bradley Swing Bridge and return. Their visit to the Sankey Canal was part of an extended itinerary which began at Hamilton Square in Birkenhead and ended up at the Slitting Mill at Blackbrook.

Saturday 8th June: Heritage Weekend Guided Walk: Carr Mill

Torrential rain meant that the planned guided walk around Carr Mill Dam deterred folk from turning up. However, our guides are made of sterner stuff—and decided to further their knowledge of the canal’s feeder reservoir, by exploring the banks of the dam. Fortunately, the rain subsided, and three of us spent a very pleasant morning negotiating our way around this beautiful stretch of water.



A carved boulder marks where the Goyt Brook enters the Dam — as Peter Keen and Dalibor Ulbrick discovered



The boathouse, café and launching ramp at Car Mill Dam, from across the water

SCARS' Heritage Open Day

Sunday 9th June: Sankey Valley Heritage Visitor Centre, Blackbrook

After the wet of the previous day, we were pleased that our Open Heritage Day enjoyed better weather, and we welcomed visitors who came in to look at the archive material and view the old photograph which were on display (*below*). Once again many thanks to the volunteers who turned out to help on the day



Guided Walks—the Future

In one form or another SCARS has devoted time to organising guided walks along the canal for most of its existence, most recently associated with our ‘Heritage Open Days’ at Blackbrook. Despite the publicity given to them, they have not attracted as many people as hoped for—although those who have turned up have appreciated them greatly, and have enjoyed themselves. After much discussion it has been decided to stop these regular offers of a Guided Walk.

Instead, we will offer guided walks to any group or organisation which might wish to learn more about the Sankey Canal by taking a walk along its tow path on an ad hoc basis. All the organisation has to do is contact a Committee Member (see page 2 for their contact details) giving a choice of dates on which they would like to take a group on such a Walk—and SCARS will do its best to supply a guide.

Our feedback from our work parties, our exhibition stall, and other contacts leads us to think that this should be a welcome offer to many groups, and we will try to make it known whenever we’re in contact with members of the public, other societies, council officials etc. Society Members could also do their bit—if anyone hears that there is interest in such an event, please inform one of the committee.

Peter Keen (Hon. Sec)

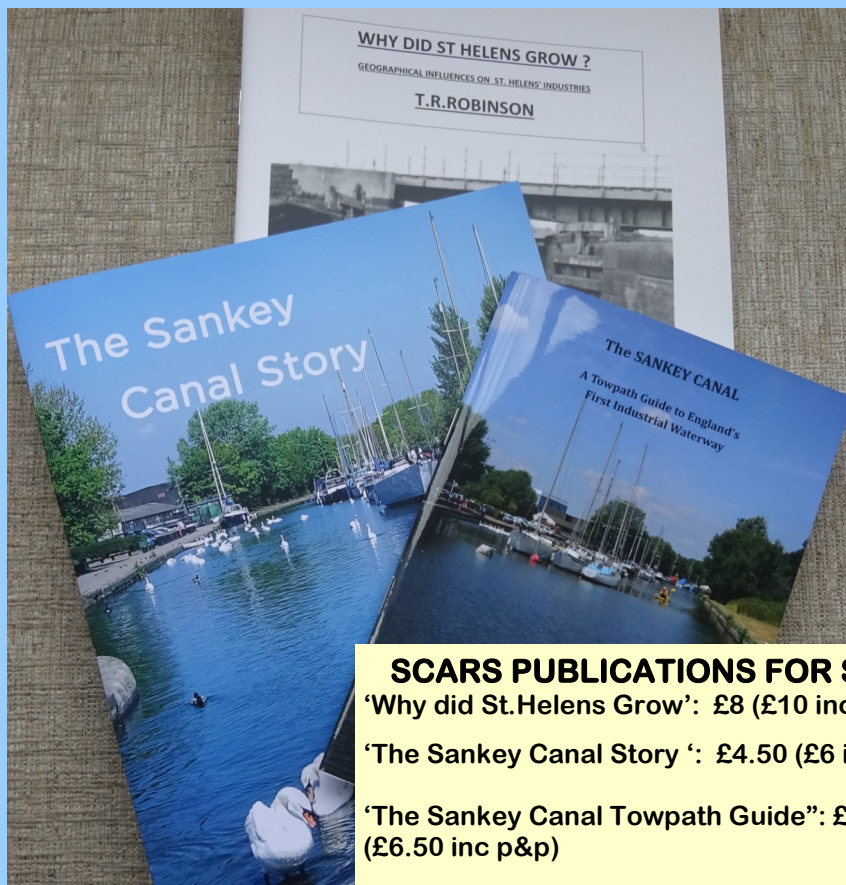
A Rare Sankey Souvenir

In a display cabinet in the Local History room in Newton-le-Willows Library on Crow Lane East is this magnificent pottery meat server—with a (fanciful) depiction of the Liverpool to Manchester Railway’s Earlestown Viaduct crossing the Sankey Canal. Whilst depicting many features of the view from the North quite well, the presence of a castle on a hill beyond the viaduct is more than a little strange.



The maker’s mark on the back of the dish (*inset*) depicts a chain bridge with the word “VIADUCT” printed across the platform. The initials in the shield above are difficult to read, but include E W and Y or S. Any further information on this plate would be appreciated.

David Long



SCARS PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

‘Why did St.Helens Grow’: £8 (£10 inc p&p)

‘The Sankey Canal Story ‘: £4.50 (£6 inc p&p)

‘The Sankey Canal Towpath Guide”: £ 4.80
(£6.50 inc p&p)

Order from Colin Greenall:
16 Bleak Hill Road, Eccleston, St.Helens,
WA10 4RW

WANTED—More Volunteers

Our Work Parties are perhaps our most visible volunteering opportunity—but there are other roles we need volunteers for. Maybe you could help out on our exhibition and sales stand when we attend events around the area from late Spring to early Autumn; or perhaps you have a personal skill, for instance in communications or the media, which you could put to use to help promote the Sankey and our Society—even if it’s simply visiting the canal every now and again, taking photographs, and putting them up on our social media sites, or carrying out research into aspects of the canal’s history, or of its associated communities or industries. But don’t let yourself be limited by my imagination....

To offer your services, choose a contact from page 2 of this magazine.

News Round-Up Around the Boroughs

by Colin Greenall

HALTON



Fiddlers Ferry Power Station Closure: The news that the power station is to close in March 2020 did not come as a surprise, but what did focus the mind was the threat that the water supply could be cut off this year. However, it has now been promised that the water will continue to be supplied until the final closure of the plant on March 31st 2020. Our image of the power station, taken by AirCam's drone, shows how overgrown with vegetation the canal is as it passes between the plant itself and the settlement lagoons on the left. Clear water is visible adjacent to the Mersey in the upper left corner. Perhaps the remedial work which will take place when the plant is eventually demolished will provide long-term benefits for the canal—and a permanent water supply....

Widnes Towpath Re-opening: Nearly two years have passed since the new bridge overhead was opened to traffic—but we still do not have a date for when the towpath of the canal will be reopened, following the removal of the access track to the trestle bridge built across the marshes.

Spike Island Bridge: There is more cheering news regarding the replacement bridge at Spike Island—Halton Council have completed the necessary detailed survey and ground investigations for the bridge location, and also have the first draft for the new bridge design. They have also stated that the bridge will go ahead in spite of the concerns over the water supply situation described above

Building Development at Tan House Lane: We have been made aware of a proposed building development to the north of the canal and to the west of Tan House Lane. Although the application for 248 houses including access, open space and associated infrastructure does not directly impinge on the Sankey, we monitor such nearby developments carefully.

ST HELENS

New Milestones—and Interpretation Boards: Three more milestones, at the 10, 11, and 12 mile points, have been installed by St Helens Council, and SCARS are looking at producing Interpretation panels for the canal based on our Towpath Trail Leaflets. We are also happy to be able to report that the accidentally broken Milestone 7 has now been replaced.



Flooding: There continues to be a problem with flooding in the College Street /Merton Bank Road area, with frequent occurrences over the past few weeks. The cause would appear to be the overgrowth of reed in the brook but as yet the Environment Agency is reluctant to dredge this section of Rainford Brook, which was diverted into the bed of the Sankey from Gerards Bank to Park Road in the 1950s.

Purple Flag initiative: The council are at present working on plans to improve the night-time economy of the town centre, and have asked SCARS to be involved with the process, which will hopefully lead to Purple Flag Status being achieved. New destination signage around the town centre is part of this—and the canal has been added as a destination on these (below).



WARRINGTON

Sankey valley Park water management plan: The council, working in partnership with the Environment Agency and Dallam and District Community Angling Club, has implemented a four-point water management plan to help eradicate some of the more vigorous aquatic plants which now occupy the canal between Bewsey Lock and Sankey Way.



Water lilies (*above*) are now causing major concern and a programme of treatment is to be implemented in the autumn to reduce the growth of this plant in the coming years.

Western Link Scheme: The scheme to build a town centre relief road across the Ship Canal, the Mersey, and the Sankey has now received conditional Government funding. In April 2019, Warrington BC were informed that funding to a value of £142.5m of the estimated total £212m build cost would be forthcoming.

On 8 July, the Council Cabinet agreed to accept the conditional grant offer made by the Department for Transport, and to progress work on the scheme over the next three and a half years in order to submit a detailed major scheme business case. If the scheme goes forward, it is anticipated that work would begin in 2023, and the road would be in use by 2026.

Right: Below Bewsey Lock a heron patiently waits for a passing fish





Waterways Restoration Showcase

Restoring the North's Abandoned Waterways

Meet the teams on board the S.S. Daniel Adamson in the Albert Dock over the weekend of the 21st and 22nd September

In a unique partnership aimed at promoting the work of canal and waterway restoration societies to the public, the Inland Waterway Association (IWA) is to host an exhibition with many of the Societies involved in major restoration projects in the North West at the invitation of the team running the steam ship Daniel Adamson (The “Danny”). This “showcase” of the Societies’ work and achievements will be held on the promenade deck of the “Danny” - and entry to this exciting event will be entirely free.

The vessel is moored outside the Maritime Museum in the Liverpool’s Albert Dock complex and it will be open to the public from 10-30am till 4.00pm on both days.

There will be ten societies exhibiting from as far afield as the Lancaster Canal to the North, Montgomery canal to the south and Manchester, Bolton & Bury canal to the east. Experts from the societies will be on hand to explain their current work and exciting plans to bring back into use some of the nation’s important transport history assets. SCARS will be there, of course—with our exhibition—and our Chairman will be giving a talk.

The 1903-built steamship is herself a wonderful example of restoration in the North West being fully restored to working order through a £5million restoration project part funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

In the ship’s opulent art-deco styled lounges visitors will be entertained to a full programme of informative presentations from a number of the organisations present, and the Inland Waterways Association combined with the Canal and River Trust will have stands on the quayside.

The ship will be open for tours and light refreshments served in the galley

Jim Forkin IWA Chairman (Chester and Merseyside) said, Thanks to the kind offer of DAPS, waterway restoration societies can showcase their work to the public in one of the most popular of the nations tourist attractions. The great work these volunteer led bodies do helps develop the many financial, healthy living and environmental benefits derived from restoration and caring for the region’s assets.

Les Green Trustee (DAPS) said, The Danny, when moored in especially prestigious locations such as the Albert Dock (*right*) is an ideal venue for all manner of small exhibitions and promotions and we were delighted the IWA and C&RT agreed to come on board.



In Memoriam—Brian Holden — the Canal Pioneer who refused to admit defeat



SCARS Members of long standing will remember, in the early days of work parties, that Brian Holden would often turn up to our work sites, becoming a familiar figure. As a committee member of the Rochdale Canal Society, Brian had much to offer, in that his Society had already gone through its teething troubles and he was able to give valuable advice to the SCARS Committee, including an outline constitution which was adapted and put to good use over many years.

Brian's motto was 'never say never'. Bringing the Rochdale Canal back into use was said to be 'The Impossible Restoration' - and that was the title of his Talk to SCARS in our early days. But the impossible became possible—thanks to his energy and dedication. After fifty years of dereliction, the Rochdale Canal was restored to navigable standards in 2002, allowing boats once more to journey between Manchester and Sowerby Bridge and onwards to the east coast.

The restoration of the Rochdale was a massive, complicated undertaking, involving many organisations. It needed a firm hand at the helm to communicate with them all, give battle to the inevitable bureaucratic resistance, whilst at the same time encouraging his ever-changing bands of volunteers. It was Brian who joined the various links together

and it is no exaggeration to state that without him the Rochdale would not have been restored, or perhaps have still been a work in progress.



Almost a year after Brian's death, aged 87, a memorial bench has been installed alongside the Rochdale Canal at Littleborough by the CRT and the Littleborough Civic Trust. The bench was created by CRT workers and bears a brass plaque recording Brian's achievement in restoring the Rochdale for everyone's enjoyment.

Over 40 people attended the installation ceremony, including many of Brian's colleagues, local authority figures and representatives of the many canal organisations with which he had had contact over the years.

It had been mooted for some time that a permanent memorial would be suitable to show the appreciation felt by so many for Brian's considerable contributions to the Rochdale Canal and to many the bench is acceptable in this role. To others, however, his memorial is the canal itself which flows in front of those availing themselves of a moment's rest on his memorial bench.

Archive Report

SCARS' Canal Cuttings compilers come across materials from a number of sources, word of mouth, newspaper articles, history archives etc. Best of all are those sent in by Society members recalling some aspect of the life of the canal and its surroundings area..

Developments at Sankey Bridges: “Buzzword”, November 1984

A recent acquisition is a magazine named “Buzzword”, produced by the BPB. It is always difficult to identify a company from initials but a possible candidate in this instance is the British Plaster Board, an international plaster company which was purchased in 2003 by Saint Gobain and had a link with Pilkingtons. The above data was obtained by internet. The slim eight page magazine contains the Sankey Bridges article, a list of books available from the BPB concerning the starting of small businesses, selling and marketing, franchising and advice for self employed and small businesses. It goes on to print a two page spread on How to get the most out of your accountant, an editorial celebrating two years of existence, a crossword and an item concerning the planning of its forthcoming winter programme. Not a huge international concern then.

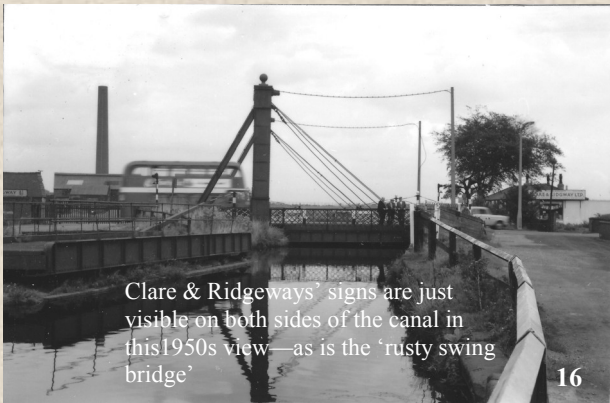
Closer examination of the editorial reveals that the publisher is the Warrington Business Promotion Bureau. (why not WBPB ?) which does what it says on the tin, offers advice to the business world, specially the small trader.

The item on Sankey Bridges begins with a mention of the buildings in Warrington which are undergoing restoration and converted into small businesses. One such building, a former Victorian house (*below*), is located on the banks of the Sankey Canal and is now the Sankey Bridges Business Centre, occupied by around ten businesses.

In the past however the scene at Sankey Bridges was very different as the canal formed the hub of the transport system of Warrington. The house was the home of John Clare, an early shipwright on the canal, and his premises on both sides of the canal were kept busy.

Even before the canal had been extended northwards the area was of importance. The brook formed an important fishery, produced water power for the mill and was the location of warehouses and wharves on the short navigable section leading into the Mersey.

With the building of the canal a lock was constructed into the river just to the south of the present bend in the canal's course. This was still used until 1830 by boat skippers attempting to avoid the newer locks at Filders Ferry which incurred an extra cost of 2d per ton on the coal carried. The first recorded tradesman based at Sankey Bridges was in fact a coal merchant, serving the local area with coal from the St. Helens pits.



Clare & Ridgeways' signs are just visible on both sides of the canal in this 1950s view—as is the 'rusty swing bridge'

In 1792 a local trade directory mentions William Clare and Thomas Clare, Mariners, and by 1807 their joint company, William Clare and Sons was rope-making and shipbuilding at Sankey Bridges. The company mainly built Mersey Flats, although schooners, lighters, sloops and steamers were also built. The 'Santa Rosa' was a well known product of the yard and was photographed a number of times.

Traces of the dry dock survive on the eastern bank of the canal, to the north of Liverpool Road. An 1871 directory describes Clare and Coy as “Shipwrights, rope-makers and freighter to Liverpool, St. Helens, and all parts of the Rivers Weaver, Mersey and St. Helens Canal.” In addition it offers “flats for hire and freights arranged”. Also “the company are wholesale and retail dealers in slats, cisterns and slabs, lime coal, tiles fire bricks etc..” Through marriage the company became Clare and Ridgeway in the 1870s and a ‘Clare’ company lasted until the 1930s.

Close by the house is a rusting iron turn-bridge which once carried the main Warrington to Prescott road, and in the days of the turnpikes an iron toll bridge with a toll house existed close by. (*The bascule bridge in the photograph replaced the main swing bridge in the 1920s*)

In 1864 the London and North Western Railway took control of the canal and built an extension to Clare’s house. Bricks near the eaves still bear the initials LNWR. By this time the canal was in decline serving only Widnes Chemical works and, until the 1950s, the Sankey Sugar Works, after which point the canal fell into disuse.

The article finishes with a list of the current occupants of the Business Centre, which proved to be so successful that similar schemes had been introduced elsewhere in the borough.



The photograph (*above*) shows the Sankey Canal from the eastern bank looking to the north west. The features shown are a brick-built house with shuttered ground-floor windows, a white building, seemingly refurbished which, it is assumed, is the Clare house, the long building with a single chimney stack is a lead works, the notice board is on the far side of Liverpool Road on what is now Jessops’ yard and next one can see the railings of the “rusting turn-bridge” which SCARS members have spent so much time restoring. Of these features only the Lead Works building and the turn bridge survive—the bascule bridge having also been removed. It is unfortunate that, as often happens, the photograph has been printed across two pages, limiting the quality of reproduction.

If anyone can add further information to this article this should be handed or sent to any committee member as detailed on page 2 of Canal Cuttings.

Local History Corner

1: William Ireland— Bicycle Maker and Pioneer Motorist

Peter Keen's research has revealed an article published in Archive, the journal for British Industrial and Transport History, Issue 27, September 2000. This item is based upon it.

Whilst it is well known that Henry Ford produced cars in what became known as Trafford Park, it is less remembered that an infant car-making concern existed not too far from the Sankey Canal. The instigator was William Ireland.

Born at Barrow Hall in Sankey in 1870, his father was a well known tool maker. Indeed, nearby Warrington was renowned for its tool making around the turn of the century, being allied to the cotton industry in North West England.

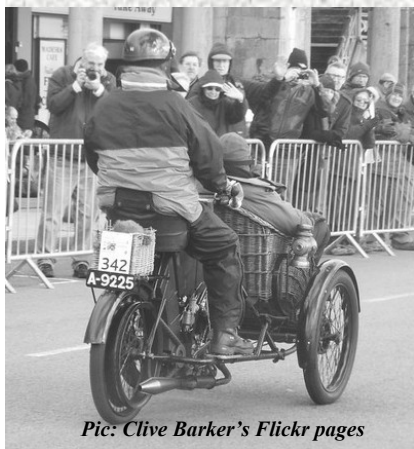
William's first cycle ride took place upon a velocipede, a pedal-less contraption, with iron-rimmed wooden wheels, moved by the rider's feet. Around the same time, the "Ordinary" or Penny Farthing was becoming popular and on reaching his 16th birthday William was to become the proud owner of his own penny farthing, though it was only second hand. It was the prize in a local raffle.

In the 1890s came the "Safety" Cycle, the type more familiar to today's cyclists with wheels the same size and a less hazardous mounting method. Again William was able to acquire a second hand machine, a Humber with solid tyres. Despite the primitive roads of the time, he travelled to Coventry, to London, to Dieppe and Paris via Newhaven.

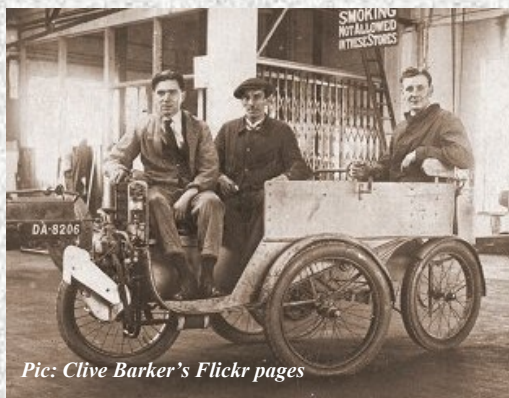
He worked in his father's firm for some years then moved to Coventry to build Humber Cycles. When his father became ill, William returned to Sankey and took over his tool-making business. Large stockpiles of tools had been built up by his father, but these were not selling locally so William loaded a selection onto his cycle and rode to London, where he sold them to one customer with the request for the rest. This heavy load travelled to London by water, commencing its journey on the Sankey Canal.

William then began building bicycles at a time when they were becoming hugely popular. At his wedding in St Mary's Church, Sankey, the wedding party consisted of no less than three cycling clubs, all of whom arrived at the ceremony on their bicycles.

A new venture for William was the building of Forecars. These were motor tricycles with two wheels at the front and handlebar steering by the driver who sat at the back behind a wicker basket chair carrying the passenger (above). However these were not popular and by 1905 they were defunct, replaced by motorcycles and sidecars.



Pic: Clive Barker's Flickr pages



Pic: Clive Barker's Flickr pages

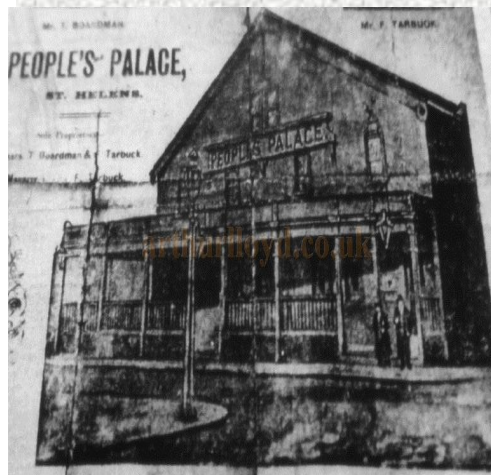
He then began selling cars as well as building. One of his sales vehicles was a Sunbeam Mabley, a four wheel car with its wheels arranged in a diamond pattern rather than the usual format (*opposite, bottom*). They had a very short life.

Reverting to bicycle production he attended a trade show at Parr Hall, Warrington. When the premises at Sankey became too small to house his works, he moved to Sankey Bridges tram terminus which offered more space.

When William received his call-up in WW1, local professions got him excluded because of his mechanical expertise which they thought would be more valuable on the home front. After the war William concentrated on car repairs rather than cycle making and in 1920 moved to premisses in Leigh Street, Warrington. The buildings consisted of a three story block, a two story side block and a workshop. The showroom was on the ground floor whilst the upper floors were devoted to offices and stores. There he displayed Sunbeams, Wolseleys and Rileys.

William sold his business and retired in the 1920s to Ambleside in the Lake District where he died in 1968. A busy man and a busy life.

2: The Theatre Royal—Part 3



In 2009 Enid Pennington produced a detailed history of the Theatre Royal in St Helens. The item which follows is based upon this material, and has been submitted as a topic of local interest by Committee member Dave Callan

The Royal's old rival, the People's Palace (left), has not fared so well. First it was sold and re-named the Hippodrome. Then, seduced by Hollywood, it became a cinema. All its theatrical traditions were lost. Now it is a Bingo Hall but, in contrast, with a sense of purpose and a bit of luck along the way, The Royal stuck doggedly to its original task of providing "live" shows. However, despite its successes, the Royal closed on 2nd April 1984.

The late Tony Hewitt of the Unnamed Players asked Enid Pennington of the same group to call a meeting of Chairmen and Secretaries of local societies. Such was the degree of interest that she called a public meeting at the Theatre Royal on 10th May 1986.

The decision was taken to form a FRIENDS of the THEATRE ROYAL under the presidency of Lady Pilkington and Chairmanship of Tony Hewitt, with the aim of restoring the Royal to its former glory.

The account from which the above item was adapted was written dates from 2009. Since then much has been done to revive the theatre.

The Friends created a Trust which, together with Regal Productions, has operated a continuous programme of performances of many types, including drama - serious and comedy; music- classical, country, pop and brass; dance - professional and amateur, national, and local groups. And, of course that audience participation performance loved through the ages, the Pantomime. It is hoped that this happy state continues.



ST HELENS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Programme
2019—2020**

This season's meetings (unless otherwise stated) will be held at the Friends Meeting House, Church Street, St. Helens WA10 1AJ, starting at 7.30 p.m.

2019

Monday September 16th

CRYSTAL SKULLS AND HUMAN HEADS

Mark Olly

Saturday October 19th (10am to 4pm)

OUR 60TH BIRTHDAY (Tickets Needed)

**Please see the Programme
opposite for the day's events**

Monday October 21st

OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Monday November 18th

SPANISH FLU AND THE LIVERPOOL PRESS

Chris Jones

Monday December 16th

PRE-CHRISTMAS GATHERING (6.30 for 7.00 p.m.)

2020

Monday January 20th

THE RUNCORN LOCKS PROJECT

Graham Wallace

Monday February 17th

DIGS AND DISCOVERIES

Robert Skinner

Monday March 2nd

ANNUAL DINNER (6.30 for 7.00p.m.)

Saturday March 14th (11am Liverpool)

POO, WEE, TICKS AND FLEAS

A Health Walk

Chris Jones

Monday March 16th

THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY IN THE NORTH WEST

Diana Leitch

Monday April 20th

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

James Crossland

Monday May 20th

A.G.M. at 7.00 pm followed by

THE BATTLE OF WARSAW 1920

Charles Esdaile

Secretary: Mary Presland
01744 23141

Treasurer: Norma Cresswell
01744 754962

St Helens Historical Society
60th Birthday Celebration

Saturday 19 October 2019

Programme

10.00am: Assembly and coffee

10.30am: Alan Crosby: 'Sixty years on, how local history has changed since the late 1950's'

12.00: Lunch

1.30pm: Charles Esdaile: 'The last days of chivalry - the English Civil War and after'

3.00pm: Interval

3.15pm: Birthday cake and other delights

4.00pm: Goodbye and have a safe journey



WANTED—Volunteers

Our Work Parties always achieve more than you'd expect from the numbers involved—but with more volunteers, we could do much more. Why not join in? The work you put in depends on you and what you feel capable of. If you would like to get a little involved in an informal day in the fresh air and do something to clear up our local environment then contact me on: 01744 600656 or email me at : johnhughes11@virginmedia.com John Hughes

#526064

IWA Chester & Mersey Branch Programme of Meetings 2019-2020

*All meetings are held at 7.45 pm on the second Tuesday of the month in the Cafe, Ellesmere Port Boat Museum, CH65 4FW—with our fun raffle
Our sales and shop are available for Christmas Cards and Publications.*

8 October 2019: Corey Estenson (Manchester Metropolitan University, Mansion Researcher at Tatton Park, Weaver Hall, and Lion Salt Works (Northwich):

A Talk on the construction phase of the Manchester Ship Canal (1887 -1894) and how the owner of Tatton Hall, Wilbraham, 3rd Baron Egerton, came to be the Chairman of the Manchester Ship Canal for the entire period of construction.

Corey will also have vintage postcards, illustrated with watercolour drawings by one of the Engineers that worked on the Ship Canal, to be given out free at the end (thanks to Weaver Hall for supplying them!).

12 November 2019: Graham Wallace: The Restoration of the Runcorn Locks

This long-abandoned flight from the Bridgewater Canal down to the Manchester Ship Canal is being revived with the redevelopment of Runcorn old town. With major new boat moving structures proposed : an inclined plane, boat lift and marina.

11 December 2019: Our Christmas party— mince pies, sherry and our bumper raffle

Dan Cross: The steam tug Daniel Adamson- a talk on the restoration of this famous boat and its current sailing programme on the Mersey, river Weaver and Manchester Ship Canal.

14 January 2020: Colin Greenall: The restoration of the Sankey Canal.

England's first canal of the industrial era. This canal runs from the Mersey to St Helens.

Colin has been a prime mover in the continued campaign to progress its restoration. He outlines its history, restoration progress and future plans.

11 February 2020: Liam Cooper: (Midlands Region, Canal and River Trust Boating and Customer Service Manager, Red Bull Office) A Talk on **the new C&RT**—organisation , maintenance challenges, and future priorities in the area.

10 March 2020- Branch AGM

Followed by **Derek Arnold**, (local, Wirral-based expert on our naval and maritime history) A talk on how the **Royal Iris and Royal Daffodil** got their names. These two much-loved Mersey ferry boats have an heroic history.

April 2020: Ken Pye: (Managing Director of Discover Liverpool) A talk on

Liverpool's maritime heritage; a fascinating selection of maritime facts and fantasies.

You will hear and be entertained by glorious stories of Sea Shanties; Maggie May and Liverpool's 'sailors' comforters'; Lord Nelson's Coffin and 'the boy who stood on the burning deck'; a Life on the Ocean Wave; the Scouser who announced the Armada; privateers and the Carnatic and Mentor; and the Sea Monster and the Ghost Ship.

JIM MOLE

Membership Subscription



Charity No: 702571

I wish to join SCARS - my subscription is as detailed below.

Individual (at one address)*		Donation**	TOTAL	Gift Aid**
General	Unwaged			YES / NO
£15.00	£10.00			
* Please indicate as appropriate		** Please indicate your wishes		

Name:	Address:	Post code:
Telephone:	Email address:	

The Sankey Canal Restoration Society
Registered Charity 702571

Gift Aid Declaration

Please help us to reclaim a further 25% by ticking the box below

I want to Gift Aid my subscription and/or donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to the Sankey Canal Restoration Society

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify SCARS: if you want to change this declaration;
change name or home address; no longer pay sufficient tax

Please forward to:

Mike Harrison - the Treasurer / Membership Secretary
4 Darvel Avenue, Garswood, Ashton-in-Makerfield, WN4 0UA

“CUTTINGS” REAR VIEW: Part 3

Our new rear cover photographic feature comes courtesy of AirCam Services of St Helens, and will feature the Sankey as seen from their drone-mounted cameras.



For this issue’s shots we have moved to the Widnes end of the Sankey—to illustrate three items reported on page 11 inside: the continued blockage of the canal by the access road across the marshes, (*ringed 1 above*), the plans for replacing the fixed bridge to Spike Island with a moveable one (*ringed 2, above*), and (*below*) the way the canal become choked with weed as it nears the power station.

